

## Revealing Pitzhanger



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### Background to the project

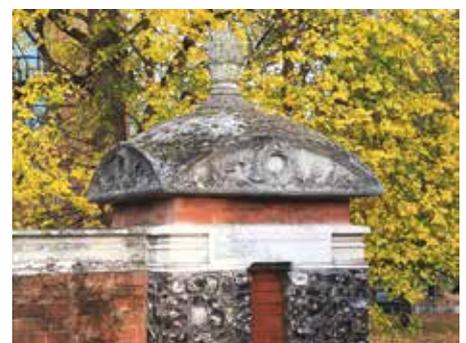
In 1800 John Soane designed Pitzhanger Manor, in then rural Ealing, as his dream country retreat. An invigorating walk from his city home in Lincoln's Inn Fields, it became a place to relax and entertain friends and clients, including painter JMW Turner and King Louis Philippe of France. By 1800 Soane had achieved fame and fortune, largely thanks to his position as Architect and Surveyor to the Bank of England, and he wanted a country estate to reflect his standing in society, but also to showcase to his clients his skills as an architect. Soane enjoyed designing Pitzhanger around his growing collection of art and antiquities, including Hogarth's series *A Rake's Progress*, which was purchased specifically for Pitzhanger. But first and foremost Pitzhanger was to be a place of entertainment: Soane called the surrounding 28 acres of parkland (still there today as Walpole Park) his 'pleasure grounds', and the design of the mock Roman ruins on the estate was intended for the amusement of guests.

Pitzhanger is vitally important in the Soane story as a rare example of a building Soane designed, built and lived in himself. It was here that Soane tested some of his most innovative and exciting architectural ideas – ideas he then applied and adapted in subsequent works, including at his own city home. We see his trademark use of caryatids, the canopy dome on ceilings, decorative piers and of light as an architectural tool, as well as extraordinary and elaborate paint schemes, an idiosyncratic take on classical design and a meticulous attention to detail.

### Costs of the project

Over the last two centuries, since Soane sold Pitzhanger, its various owners have made some significant alterations and additions to the house. But though often concealed and overpainted, the key elements of Soane's design and decoration remain remarkably intact. Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust is committed to a £12 million project to peel back the subsequent layers so as to reveal Pitzhanger as it was in Soane's time, to conserve his work and to reinstate some of the Manor's key features destroyed over the years.

To date £10 million has been raised from generous grants and donations by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Ealing Council, Arts Council England, other trusts, foundations and individuals. However a further £2 million remains to be raised in order to complete the project and to enable this gem of a building to be conserved for future generations, so they too can enjoy its beauty and quirkiness, be inspired by Soane's creativity and study his innovative design.



### Images (clockwise from top left):

*Bird's eye perspective of Pitzhanger Manor, C. J. Richardson, 1832, by courtesy of the Trustees of Sir John Soane's Museum*

*School activity at Pitzhanger © Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust*

*Pier of entrance arch architectural detail © Pitzhanger Manor & Gallery Trust*

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### Scope of the Project

The project involves the sensitive conservation and repair of the entire Pitzhanger estate. Subsequent Victorian and Edwardian extensions to the Manor will be removed, and key features of Soane's design, lost over the years, will be reinstated. These include Soane's spectacular conservatory overlooking the Park, and the elegant colonnade between Manor and adjacent Gallery (housed in the 1930s art-deco style building alongside the Manor and built on the site of Soane's kitchens). Paint analysis has been commissioned of all of Soane's original decorative paint schemes in the Manor to enable these to be reinstated.

The contemporary Art Gallery will be upgraded with improved environmental conditions to allow for a provocative programme of exhibitions with loans from leading collections. A brasserie – The Garden Room – will be constructed in the Manor's walled kitchen garden, and the surrounding landscape returned to its Regency splendour. The Manor and Gallery will be made accessible for all visitors, and an exciting scheme of interpretation, designed to engage audiences young and old, will be installed telling the story of Soane's life and work.

*The paint analysis strip shows a slice through the wall paint in the Eating Room... taking us back in time*

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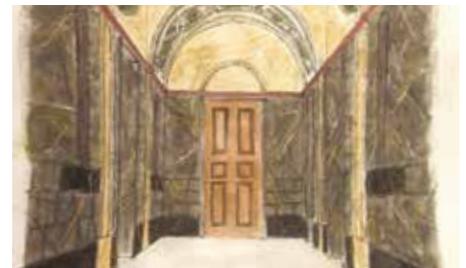
Paint analysis strip in the Eating Room, courtesy Michael Bowles  
Stone roundel for Pitzhanger Manor in course of carving, 2017, courtesy Tchad Findlay  
Marbled paintwork of the entrance Tribune, watercolour courtesy of Hare & Humphreys



### Progress to date

The Victorian infill between the north side of the Manor and the Gallery has been successfully removed: this has meant that, for the first time in over 150 years, visitors' first view of the Manor is the vista that Soane intended. As the infill came down the building team was delighted to discover that the north façade was remarkably undamaged and the condition of the facing bricks was good. Stone masons are working on carving replacement pilasters and stone roses for the two that were demolished when the infill was built. Removal of the infill now creates space for the reconstruction of Soane's long-since demolished colonnade.

Paint specialists Hare & Humphreys have completed their painstaking research into the decorative paint effects that Soane used throughout the interiors of the Manor, which have been long since painted over, so these can be reinstated. They have identified pigments rarely used in the domestic setting, and a very dramatic marbled design for the entrance hall and tribune, which would have made a striking impact on guests as they entered the Manor for the first time.



The paint analysis strip shows a slice through the wall paint in the Eating Room in the older Dance Wing of the Manor, taking us back in time through all the different paint schemes to the paint used in Soane's and before that Dance's time.

A talented team of skilled stone masons from London Stone Carving has been carving replacement roundels and stone roses with meticulous care and beautiful results. Pitzhanger is delighted to be supporting such specialist craftspeople in their trades.

Work is progressing on conservation throughout the Manor, reinforcement of the Gallery's weak foundations and construction of The Garden Room.

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[www.pitzhanger.org.uk](http://www.pitzhanger.org.uk)