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TIMBER WALL PANELS - REFURBISHMENT

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Approaches to Refinishing Timber Wall Panels

Like other wall surface materials, board panelling can become damaged by everyday wear and tear. Boards can become gouged, scratched, dented, and dinged. Minor scratches and dings can be hidden or covered up, but you may want to replace panels that are more seriously damaged with new panels that match the existing panelling.

Real wood panelling is usually individual boards jointed together, but a lot of “wood” panelling is actually thin photo-laminated sheets designed to look like solid wood. This is an important distinction, because real boards can be repaired using conventional woodworking methods, while faux wood requires more cosmetic treatment.

Repairing Scratches

A slight scratch in a board, for example, simply reveals more of the same wood below, while a deep scratch in panelling can expose a paper backing or plywood core. Panelling sheets also have a clear surface film that is hard to match with any type of protective finish.

Though it is difficult to conceal repairs to veneer or simulated materials, minor scratches and gouges in both sheet and solid-wood panelling can be concealed with a putty stick of matching colour. When using a putty stick, fill the scratch and then wipe away any putty on the surface of the panelling with a clean cloth.

For severe scratches may be able to conceal scratches with furniture polish or an “almond stick”—a compressed fabric stick impregnated with almond oil.

Repairing Gouges

Deep gouges in solid wood panelling can sometimes be repaired if replacing the panel is not a convenient option.

1 Using fine sandpaper, lightly sand in line with the wood grain to remove the finish from around the gouge.

2 Next, run a hot iron over a damp cloth placed over the damaged area to raise the wood fibres to the level of the surrounding wood. Use an iron and damp cloth to raise the wood fibres.

3 Using a putty knife, fill the gouge with putty that matches the panelling. Let it dry and then lightly sand the area smooth, working in line with the wood grain.

4 Finish to match the surrounding area. A deep gouge in woodwork can also be repaired by gluing in a new piece of the same type of wood. If you glue in a new section of wood, clean away any dried glue around the edges of the repair and sand the entire section around it before you restain.