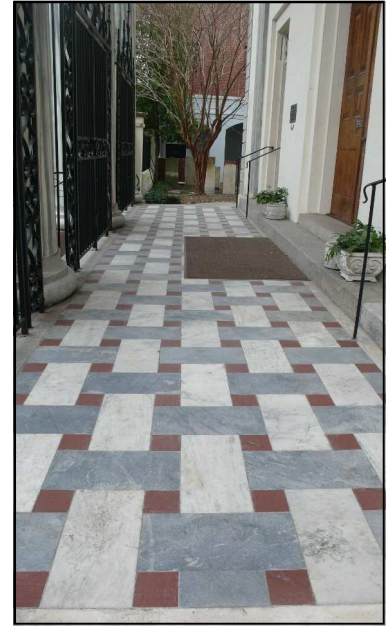




**SAINT MARY'S CHURCH PORTICO** Charleston, South Carolina



**Client/Owner**

Joseph K. Opperman, AIA/Saint Mary's Church

**Location**

Charleston, SC

**Project Dates**

2004

**Materials**

Marble

Granite

Iron

Slate

**Services Provided**

Condition Assessment

Conservation Treatment

St. Mary's Parish Church, built in 1889 in Charleston, South Carolina, is distinguished as the oldest Roman Catholic Church in the Carolinas. It served as the Mother Church for the Dioceses of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

Conservation Solutions, Inc. (CSI) was contracted to treat the portico floor and wrought iron entrance gates as part of the parish's restoration of the church façade. The floor consists of red slate inserts in a field of decorative marble tiles bounded by granite steps. The slate had de-laminated and left trip hazards within the soiled and stained but otherwise sound stone floor. An exact match for the original stone was researched and located in western Vermont. Each damaged tile was carefully cut out and new stone set in full mortar beds. The entire floor was cleaned of soiling and iron stains before being re-grouted. Losses in the stone were filled with cementitious custom mortar compounds and toned to match.

The typical Charlestown wrought iron work was stripped of previous coatings and assessed. Missing and severely damaged pieces were restored with newly formed iron elements to match the originals prior to the damage. Each was re-installed in its original location using hot-forged riveting and in-situ welding. The restored gate was then re-coated to its historic color.