

Handrail Refinishing

The original 1888 Bois D'Arc handrails topping the balusters of the grand stairs of the Texas Capitol will be carefully refinished. This unique wood is prized for its both its hardness and flexibility. These characteristics made it the perfect choice for this unique application, which receives much handling and abrasion. Mockups of several finish systems were tested to minimize impact on the original wood, while providing a durable and maintainable coating that will protect this unique historic feature while showing off its distinctive grain and color.

Fun facts:

- *The designer of the Capitol Grounds, William Munro Johnson, patented the use of Bois D'Arc street pavers which were used extensively in Dallas, where he was the city engineer.*
- *It was used by Native Americans for bows, which is the origin of its primary name, French for "bow wood."*
- *The fruit of this tree required mastodons to ingest them to spread their seeds during the last Ice Age.*
- *Also known as Osage Orange, it is a native Texas tree species with a range centered in northeast Texas and spreading into neighboring states over the ancestral territories of the Osage Native American tribe.*
- *Yet another name of this tree species is Horse Apple, for its large, hard and bumpy fruits which were superstitiously used for pest management.*
- *It has a fourth name, Hedge Apple, due to its historical use in dense linear plantings that created impenetrable barriers before the invention of barbed wire for fencing. The strong, rot-resistant wood was also used for fence posts.*
- *A large Bois D'Arc tree is part of the Trail of Trees on the Capitol Grounds.*

