

MS.01 Method Statement

Brick Paint Removal, Cleaning and Repointing

1. Scope of Works

- This method statement outlines the careful removal of paint from one area of external yellow stock brickwork, followed by gentle steam cleaning of the remaining elevations, raking out existing mortar, and repointing in a compatible flush lime mortar finish. All works are to comply with conservation best practice and the expectations of Historic England.

2. Heritage Considerations

- Yellow stock bricks are soft, porous and easily damaged by aggressive cleaning methods; abrasive systems must not be used.
- Modern cementitious pointing is inappropriate and may be contributing to moisture retention; removal must be controlled to avoid brick damage.
- Only breathable, non-destructive methods may be used.
- Any unexpected findings (e.g. earlier pointing, decorative treatment, or structural concerns) must be reported to the conservation officer before proceeding.
- No work is to proceed without appropriate listed building consent, where required.

3. Materials & Equipment

- Low-pressure steam cleaning unit (e.g. Thermatech or Doff system) with operator trained in heritage work
- Plastic or stainless-steel pointing rakes (no power tools)
- Soft bristle brushes
- Non-ionic detergent (if required, subject to testing)
- Conservation-grade poultice paint remover

(alkaline or solvent-based, non-caustic, approved after patch tests)

- Lime mortar mix: NHL 2 or lime putty mortar matched to historic samples (final specification subject to analysis and approval)
- Natural fibre brushes and wooden floats
- Protective sheeting and temporary barriers

4. Sequence of Works

4.1 Preliminary Testing & Approval

- Conduct test panels (approx. 1m²) on inconspicuous areas to confirm the most suitable paint removal technique.
- Test three options where appropriate:
- Steam-only test
- Poultice paint removal
- Poultice followed by steam rinse
- Allow the conservation officer and architect to inspect results and approve the final method.

4.2 Paint Removal from the Selected Wall

- Prepare the area with ground protection and temporary barriers.
- Lightly moisten the painted surface to aid softening (no saturation).
- Apply a non-caustic, conservation-grade poultice paint remover to a thickness recommended by the manufacturer.
- Allow sufficient dwell time for the paint to lift, monitoring regularly to ensure the brick surface is not affected.
- Remove the poultice by hand using plastic scrapers and natural sponges—no wire brushes or metal tools.
- Rinse using low-pressure steam cleaning

(Doff/Thermatech) to remove residues.

- Repeat as necessary in a controlled manner, always avoiding damage to the brick face or arrises.
- Allow the wall to dry naturally and assess for remaining traces of paint; further targeted treatment may be undertaken if appropriate.
- No abrasive blasting, high-pressure washing, or chemical etching is permitted.

4.3 Steam Cleaning of Remainder of Building

- Using the same low-pressure steam system, gently clean the remaining brickwork to remove dirt, biological growth, and general surface contamination.
- Maintain low nozzle pressure and keep the lance moving to avoid thermal shock.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to a single area.

4.4 Removal of Existing Pointing

- The existing modern weather-struck mortar is to be removed by hand only using narrow chisels or brick rakes.
- Depth of raking-out: minimum 1.5–2 times the joint width or until sound historic mortar is reached.
- Mechanical tools (angle grinders, power chisels) are not permitted.
- Brush out dust with soft brushes and lightly moisten joints prior to repointing.

4.5 Lime Repointing (Flush Finish)

- Prepare a breathable lime mortar to match the historic mortar in colour, texture, and aggregate.
- Pre-dampen joints to ensure proper bonding.
- Apply mortar in layers using small pointing

irons, compacting gently without smearing the brick faces.

- Finish in a flush joint (not recessed or weather-struck), lightly brushed back for texture once thumb-firm.
- Protect the works from direct sunlight, wind, and frost for a minimum of 7 days using damp hessian and breathable covers.

5. Protection & Environmental Controls

- Ensure adequate ventilation but avoid drying too rapidly.
- Protect adjacent windows, timber, and stonework from poultices and steam.
- Prevent runoff from contacting sensitive materials.
- All waste to be disposed of responsibly as per site waste management requirements.

6. Quality Control & Monitoring

- All works to be supervised by a contractor experienced in the conservation of listed buildings.
- Regular inspections by the architect/conservation consultant.
- Mortar samples and repairs approved on-site before continuing with full repointing.
- Any issues discovered during works must be reported immediately.

7. Completion

- Final inspection with the conservation officer (if required).
- Site to be left clean with surrounding areas reinstated.
- Ongoing maintenance guidance to be provided to the client.