

MS.02 Method Statement

Wallpaper Removal

1. Scope of Works

- This method statement describes the careful removal of existing wallpaper from historic lath-and-plaster internal walls within a listed building, followed by preparation for redecoration using a appropriate breathable, mineral- or lime-based paint.

2. Heritage Considerations

- All works must respect the historic fabric and comply with listed building consent requirements.
- No abrasive techniques, harsh chemicals, or excessive moisture may be used.
- Any discoveries of unexpected historic finishes or decorative schemes must be reported immediately to the architect or conservation officer before proceeding.

3. Materials & Equipment

- Low-tack protective sheeting
- Soft wallpaper-scoring tool (non-aggressive)
- Steam-free, low-moisture wallpaper remover or warm water sprayers
- Natural cellulose sponges and cloths
- Plastic or wood wallpaper scrapers (no metal blades)
- Conservation-approved filler for fine surface repairs
- Breathable primer (limewash primer, casein primer, or equivalent)
- Breathable topcoat paint (e.g., limewash, clay paint, silicate paint)

4. Protective Measures

- Floor coverings and adjacent finishes protected with non-adhesive sheeting.
- Switches, sockets, timber panelling, and any fragile architectural details masked or boxed in.
- Works to be carried out in a well-ventilated space without excessive humidity.

5. Method of Work

5.1 Initial Inspection

- Inspect the wall to identify loose plaster, cracks, or hollow-sounding areas.
- Any sections at risk of detachment must be stabilised before wallpaper removal.
- Photograph existing conditions prior to work.

5.2 Wallpaper Removal Process

1. Lightly score the wallpaper surface using a non-aggressive scoring tool, avoiding any action that could gouge or weaken the plaster below.
2. Apply minimal moisture using a spray bottle of warm water or a conservation-grade wallpaper-softening solution. (Avoid over-wetting, which may soften or destabilise lime-based plaster.)
3. Allow moisture to penetrate for several minutes.
4. Gently lift and peel the wallpaper using a plastic scraper or by hand. (Remove in small sections to avoid pulling or stressing the plaster.)

5. Repeat as needed, ensuring moisture exposure remains controlled.
6. For stubborn areas, apply a second light misting rather than increasing force.
7. Collect all removed paper promptly to avoid contamination of the workspace.

5.3 Post-Removal Cleaning

- Gently sponge the surface with minimal clean water to remove adhesive residue.
- Do not saturate the wall; allow natural drying between passes.
- Once dry, inspect for cracks, friable plaster, or areas requiring consolidation.

6. Repairs & Surface Preparation

- Fill hairline cracks with a breathable lime-based filler.
- Larger defects to be repaired using compatible lime plaster.
- Sanding, if required, must be minimal and carried out using fine-grade abrasive pads.
- Once fully dry, apply a breathable primer appropriate to the selected topcoat.

7. Repainting Using Breathable Paint

1. Ensure the substrate is completely dry and dust-free.
2. Apply the first coat of breathable paint (limewash, clay paint, or silicate paint) using brush application to maintain vapour permeability.
3. Allow adequate drying time between coats as per manufacturer recommendations.
4. Apply subsequent coats until an even finish

- is achieved, typically 2–3 coats.
5. Avoid using vinyl, acrylic, or non-breathable paints under any circumstances.

8. Quality Control

- All work to be supervised by a suitably experienced contractor familiar with heritage plaster.
- Architect or conservation consultant to inspect and approve the prepared surface prior to painting.
- Any accidental damage to historic fabric must be reported immediately.

9. Waste Management

- Dispose of wallpaper and associated waste in accordance with site waste management protocols.
- Protect the site from water drips or slurry; all materials to be removed cleanly at the end of each shift.