

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 26/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
STOKESAY CASTLE, SHROPSHIRE

J Davies  
T Manning

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STOKESAY CASTLE, SHROPSHIRE

J Davies  
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Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Stokesay Castle includes a wall painting record, general audit information, documentation of original materials and execution of the painting, and deterioration and damage including previously used materials and treatment, as well as proposals for treatment and monitoring strategies.

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## Stokesay Castle Shropshire

The following report has been generated by the Wall Painting Section database. This archival system provides a computerised record of all wall paintings in English Heritage Historic Properties and is intended to comprehensively document the collection. Each report has been subdivided into four sections to present the data in a clear format. These include:

**1 Wall Painting Record:**

Includes a description of the site and paintings, as well as archival information, such as bibliographic references and photographic records.

**2 General Audit Information:**

Describes any monitoring undertaken and a synopsis of future conservation requirements.

**3 Technique:**

Documents the nature and condition of the original materials and execution of the painting which is described according to its stratigraphy and any related analysis.

**4 Deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment:**

*Deterioration and damage* lists the types of alterations which may have occurred, that is either deterioration (natural alterations such as cracking or delamination) or mechanical damage (such as graffiti).

*Added Materials* documents all non-original materials present on or within a painting. These may include naturally occurring substances (accretions, such as dirt and dust) or deliberately added materials (coatings, coverings and repairs).

*Treatment* documents previous interventions and proposed treatment and monitoring strategies.

Throughout each section, an area of painting is assigned a number between 1 and 4 which is intended as a general indication of present condition. These are: 1 good, 2 fair, 3 poor, 4 unacceptable.

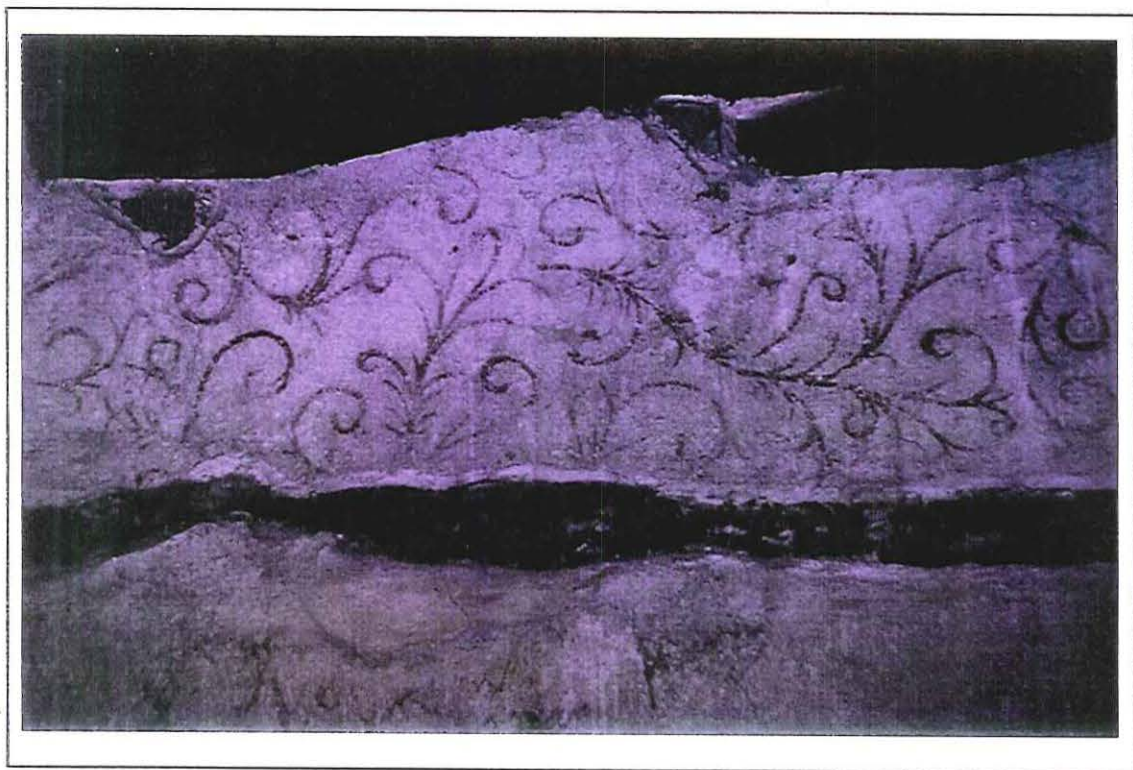
This report is based on information gathered prior to March 1996 and does not include any changes in condition, further research or treatment undertaken after this date. Amended editions will be produced as necessary.

# Contents

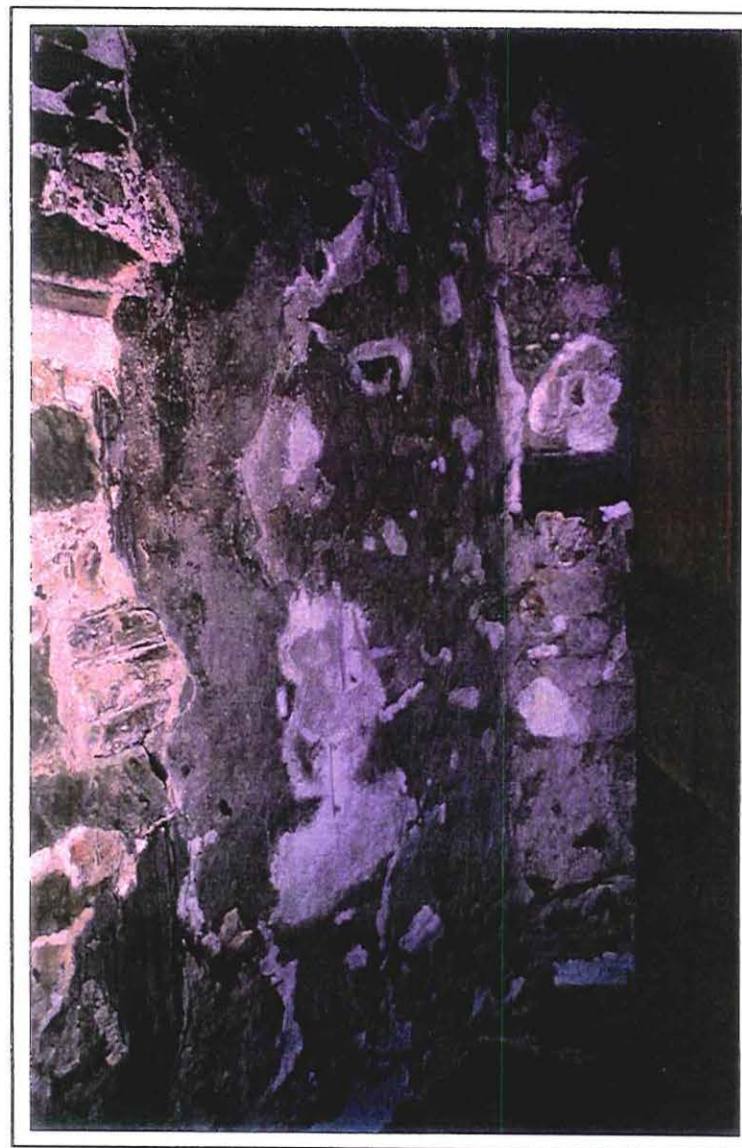
**1** North Tower, Basement (Buttery)

**2** Great Hall

**3** Passage-Block, Garderobe



North Tower, basement, (Buttery), northwest wall



Interior, passage block, garderobe, east and southeast walls



# 1 Wall Painting Record

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|                          |                                 |                 |                |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Property name            | STOKESAY CASTLE                 |                 |                |
| Region                   | Midlands                        | County          | Shropshire     |
| Location of painting     | North Tower, Basement (Buttery) |                 |                |
| Orientation              | NORTH, SOUTH, AND WEST WALLS    |                 |                |
| Century 14 <sup>th</sup> | Date                            | Height (cm) 380 | Width (cm) 290 |
| Subjects included        | Foliate scrollwork              |                 |                |

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## Description

The dimensions given above are the approximate dimensions of the room.

From Babington & Welford 1991:1-2:

### DATE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

---

'Stokesay Castle is situated in a lush valley north of Ludlow in Shropshire, and is one of the finest surviving fortified manor houses in England. Its importance lies in its largely unaltered state, and as an example of a compact, defensible, domestic unit it is without parallel in medieval architecture.'

'The main building complex is arranged on the west side of a single small bailey and consists of a hall and solar block linked to an earlier three storey tower on the north side, and an imposing detached tower, again of three storeys, on the south side. The bailey is enclosed by perimeter walls now considerable reduced in size, and surrounded by a dry moat. Most of the original service buildings, such as the kitchen and the bakehouse, which would have occupied the castle bailey have long disappeared, and the gatehouse, a fine late sixteenth century timber framed building has replaced an earlier medieval gatehouse of stone construction.

The hall and solar block with associated defensive south tower are known to have been built by Laurence de Ludlow, a wealthy wool merchant of that town, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The complex is of considerable architectural quality, and testifies to the affluence of the builder. Stokesay's precarious location close to the Welsh border necessitated more than tokenistic defenses, and it is documented that in 1291 Laurence was given a license to crenellate by Edward I. Despite its militaristic appearance Stokesay was very much a home, and there was a clear emphasis on comfort. Indeed, contemporary records indicate that there was glazing in the residential areas - an early example of such a luxury in a manorial context.

The north tower belongs to an earlier phase of building, which has been put variously between 1140 and 1240; certainly a date of c.1200 would seem acceptable. And recently the jettied timber-framed third storey has been dated to c.1300, which would make this a particularly early example of this style. The north tower was probably begun as a stone solar tower, probably associated with a timber hall, and its basement was clearly a pantry and buttery area. It still retains its original beaten earth floor, as well as a rectangular pit in its northern projection, which probably served as an ice store for salted meat.'

### NORTH TOWER, BASEMENT (BUTTERY)

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'The foliate decoration survives on upper parts of the northwest, north and west walls of the room, with fragmentary remains on the others. The paintings consist of scroll-work design in red, on a limewash skim on plaster, and presumably would originally have covered the entire wall surface.

The rather free and unstructured appearance of the scrollwork suggests it to be of fourteenth-century

date. A similar style of decoration is found in the Luttrell Psalter, on Sir Geoffrey's horse trapings, and also to a certain extent on the painted heraldic shields in the Richard de Bury chest, both examples from the second quarter of the fourteenth century. These designs, however, are notoriously difficult to date precisely because there are no securely dated examples, and especially not in wall paintings.

The context of the paintings is rather curious. The basement room was clearly always a service area, and leads off from the 'screens end' of the hall, rather than the 'dais end'. At some stage the room's function must have changed, perhaps to a parlour or chamber. However, there is no evidence of there ever having been a fireplace or hearth in the room. So what were the circumstances of the paintings production? Perhaps an answer can be found in documentary sources, although here one enters the realm of speculation.

In 1290 it is recorded that the Bishop of Hereford visited Laurence de Ludlow at Stokesay and stayed for ten days as his guest. He brought with him his retinue who would naturally have to be housed, and amongst whom one imagines there would have been some eminent people. In 1290 Laurence had barely completed his hall and solar block. He had not yet received license to crenellate and the southern tower was not yet built. It is conceivable then that given such a shortage of space the north tower basement might have been temporarily converted to residential use, and hurriedly decorated. This might explain the bizarre notion of a painted buttery.

Late thirteenth-century parallels do in fact exist for this type of decoration, especially in metalwork. An example of this is the iron scroll-work grill of Eleanor of Castille's tomb in Westminster Abbey. Rinceau work of this type was also extensively used as background decoration for stained glass, and an example of this may be found at Merton College, Oxford, which again dates to the 1290s. However, without more research this argument remains conjectural, and a safer dating of the decoration to the early fourteenth century is probably more acceptable.'

#### **Photographic Record**

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; no images of wall paintings.

DOE negative search;

Stokesay Castle; no relevant DOE negatives found.

B/W print and colour slide, CB 1991

Colour slide TM/JD 6/95

#### **Bibliography**

J. Alexander and P. Binski, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, RA, London, 1987, cat.189.

C. Babington and P. Welford, *Stokesay Castle: Conservation of the early fourteenth-century painting in the north tower basement*, unpublished report, English Heritage, January 1991.

M. Hall, 'Stokesay Castle, Shropshire: The property of English Heritage', *Country Life*, 31 March 1994, 72-77.

Sir P. and Lady Magnus-Allcroft, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, Derby 1986.

J. Munby, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, EH guidebook, London, 1993.

M.E. Wood, *Thirteenth-Century Domestic Architecture in England*, *Architectural Journal*, CV, Supplement, 1950, 64-70.



## 2 General Audit Information

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|                      |                                 |                        |                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE                 | <b>County</b>          | Shropshire            |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                        |                        |                       |
| <b>Location</b>      | North Tower, Basement (Buttery) |                        |                       |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | NORTH, SOUTH, AND WEST WALLS    |                        |                       |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>                     | <b>Height (cm)</b> 380 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 290 |
| <b>Auditor(s)</b>    | TM/JD                           | <b>Start date</b>      | 21/06/95              |

**Overall condition score**        **3**

### Recommendations

The room is damp, with biodeterioration present along the lower parts of the walls. However, the windows are unglazed and there may be adequate ventilation. Monitoring of the environmental conditions within the room and moisture movement within the walls may serve to highlight underlying causes of deterioration.

Visual monitoring of the condition of the painting should be undertaken on a routine basis. (5 year cycles of inspection may be suitable)

Some conservation treatment is required to secure lower areas of the painted plaster, preferably within the next few years. This should include insertion of repairs and grouting [Approximate timescale: 2-3 weeks].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

|                          |                                 |                 |                |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Property name            | STOKESAY CASTLE                 |                 |                |
| Region                   | Midlands                        | County          | Shropshire     |
| Location                 | North Tower, Basement (Buttery) |                 |                |
| Orientation              | NORTH, SOUTH, AND WEST WALLS    |                 |                |
| Century 14 <sup>th</sup> | Date                            | Height (cm) 380 | Width (cm) 290 |
| Auditor(s)               | TM/JD                           | Start date      | 21/06/95       |

**Overall Condition Score 3**

#### Stratigraphy

---

|            |               |                          |   |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Support Layer | Specific condition Score | 2 |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|

Thickness 00 cm

#### Comments

The support is of rough-dressed mudstone.

---

|            |                |                          |   |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Render Layer 1 | Specific condition Score | 3 |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|

Thickness - 3 cm

#### Comments

Render layer 1 is comprised of a fairly coarse plaster, applied in a reasonably thick layer.

---

|            |                |                          |   |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Render Layer 2 | Specific condition Score | 3 |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|

Thickness

#### Comments

Render layer 2 is comprised of a thin fine limewash skim.

---

|            |                |                          |   |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Ground Layer 1 | Specific condition Score | 3 |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|

Thickness

#### Comments

A limewash ground is present.

---

|            |               |                          |   |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Paint Layer 1 | Specific condition Score | 3 |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|

Thickness

#### Comments

'A coat of limewash was... applied and the foliate sprays freely painted on this in bright red. Two types of red pigment are apparent, one probably a red ochre, the other a brighter orange colour and so possibly a red lead. The orange may be the fragmentary survival of a later repainting of the scheme.' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

#### Identified pigments Colours

--- red  
--- orange

## 4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

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|                      |                                 |                        |                       |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE                 |                        |                       |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                        | <b>County</b>          | Shropshire            |
| <b>Location</b>      | North Tower, Basement (Buttery) |                        |                       |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | NORTH, SOUTH, AND WEST WALLS    |                        |                       |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>                     | <b>Height (cm)</b> 380 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 290 |

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** delamination (render layer)  
**Location** Render layer 1, W., N. and S. walls.  
**Comments** There are numerous hollow pockets at low level. Access was not possible at frieze height, however it is known that grouting of the upper area was undertaken in 1991 (Babington, 1991).

**Type** delamination (render layer)  
**Location** Render layer 2  
**Comments** Babington (1991) noted the delamination of the thin skim (render 2) from the underlying plaster (render 2) and undertook consolidation treatment. The phenomenon is still present in several areas, possibly indicating an active deterioration process.

**Type** cracking  
**Location** Various, especially E. side S. wall and W. side, N. wall.  
**Comments** Render layers 1 and 2 have suffered cracking, apparently associated with delamination. Several of the cracks are hairline (and wider) and some may still be moving.

**Type** loss of cohesion  
**Location** Red paint layer.  
**Comments** Loss of cohesion within the red paint layer was noted by Babington (1991) but it was decided to monitor the situation and delay consolidation treatment until absolutely necessary.

**Type** flaking  
**Location** Various.  
**Comments** The limewash ground is blistering and beginning to flake in several areas.

**Type** loss  
**Location** Various.  
**Comments** The limewash ground has been lost throughout the majority of the lower parts of the plaster.

**Type** general erosion

**Location** Lower walls.

**Comments** There has been general loss due to weathering of the soft mudstone support, resulting in loss of render, ground and possibly paint (which may have only been applied to upper areas) from the lower walls. Old cement-type repairs now stand proud of the original stone support where the surface of the stone has been lost.

---

**Mechanical damage**

**Type** graffiti

**Location** Numerous, lower walls.

**Comments** Numerous pieces of graffiti are present on the lower (accessible ) walls. The appearance of the graffiti was 'toned down' by Babington (1991).

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## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** Render layer 1, especially S. wall and W. side, N. wall.

**Comments** Limited areas of green algal growth in powdery formation are present in the lower render where its surface is exposed by loss.

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**Type** algae

**Location** Support, base of walls. Especially E. wall and S.E. corner.

**Comments** Green algae is present on lower walls, probably indicating high moisture levels within the lower areas.

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### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** Paint layer 1, especially on S. wall, E. of doorway.

**Comments** Small patches of limewash - overlying the paint layer - are present in many areas.

---

### Repairs

**Type** modern plaster

**Location** Base of walls - various.

**Comments** 'Pink' mortar - possibly lime based with cement additive?

---

**Type** cement

**Location** Base of walls, especially NW and N walls

**Comments** Dark grey, cement rich 'Scotch mortar' with very coarse aggregate. Present as blobs and drips over the wall surface.

---

**Type** modern lime plaster

**Location** Upper areas and spot repairs.

**Comments** Fine lime repairs, probably attributable to Babington (1991).

---

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** Edge repairs and larger patches.

**Comments** Unknown date, apparently lime based repairs have been inserted to hold edges and damages secure.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 01/01/01

**Person** Unknown

**Comments** Various types of repairs have been made to the plaster in the past, some of which appear to contain cement.

Babington, prior to the 1991 campaign, described them as follows: 'There is no evidence of any formal conservation treatment in the past... However, fairly extensive lime mortar repairs were made both to the painting and to the remnants of base plaster on the lower parts of the walls, some of which are now in fairly poor condition. Unfortunately, some of these repairs have a high cement component, and cement was also injected into the base of the walls and the plaster itself. This seems to be most concentrated in the plaster on the north west wall, while on the north side cement drips are visible' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

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### Past Treatment

**Type** DUSTING **Date** 01/01/91

**Person** Babington

**Comments** 'Prior to fixing, the paintings were brushed free of the dust which had accumulated at the top of the walls. Particular care was necessary with the powdering paint of the decorative scroll-work, and for this air-puffers and small sable brushes were used.' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

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**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 01/01/91

**Person** Babington

**Comments** It appears that flake fixing was carried using dilute lime after pre-wetting with water and IMS. Babington records 'Fixing commenced at the base of the painting, where the flaking was worst. Areas of flaking limewash were re-laid, using either a paint brush or syringe, after pre-wetting with water:IMS (2:1)... Any especially delicate areas were first protected with eltalene tissue or lens tissue applied with water.' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

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**Type** GROUTING **Date** 01/01/91

**Person** Babington

**Comments** 'Areas of delaminated plaster skim or base plaster were faced... [using acid free tissue and water] and then prepared for grouting by injection with water:IMS (2:1). The grout (1 part HTI ((500 m seive)): 1 part lime (1mm seive):0.05 part Plextol B500, plus water to dilute) was finely ground in a pestle and mortar. Prior to use the mixture was further diluted as necessary, and injected using syringes and large needles. Once grouting was complete light pressure was applied to ease the plaster back in position, after which the facing was lifted away, and the area left to dry... A press was only necessary for one thicker area of plaster on the north-east wall. In this case the plaster was supported with a small padded press overnight.' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

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**Type** PRESENTATION/REINTEGRATION **Date** 01/01/91

**Person** Babington

**Comments** 'Finally, to improve presentation some of the worst graffiti was disguised with a thin colour wash using Winsor and Newton watercolours.' (Babington, 1991:n.p.)

---

**Proposed Treatment**

**Type** CONSOLIDATION **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** TM/JD

**Comments** Babington (1991) suggested that it may in time prove necessary to consolidate powdery areas of paint. From limited examination on site it appears there has not been significant further loss since 1991 and therefore consolidation is not yet urgent.

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**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** TM/JD

**Comments** Minor edge repairs and crack filling are required.

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**Type** GROUTING **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** TM/JD

**Comments** Grouting to re-adhere the delaminating render layers is required.

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**Type** MONITORING CONDITION **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** TM/JD

**Comments** Monitoring of the condition of the painting together with a survey of environmental fluctuations and the movement of moisture within the building fabric is required. The base of the walls are clearly damp, however there is good ventilation within the room which should allow relatively rapid drying out.

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# 1 Wall Painting Record

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|                          |                          |                |               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Property name            | STOKESAY CASTLE          |                |               |
| Region                   | Midlands                 | County         | Shropshire    |
| Location of painting     | Great Hall               |                |               |
| Orientation              | NORTH WALL, OVER DOORWAY |                |               |
| Century 14 <sup>th</sup> | Date                     | Height (cm) 70 | Width (cm) 70 |
| Subjects included        | Unidentified scene       |                |               |

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## Description

### DATE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

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'Stokesay Castle is situated in a lush valley north of Ludlow in Shropshire, and is one of the finest surviving fortified manor houses in England. Its importance lies in its largely unaltered state, and as an example of a compact, defensible, domestic unit it is without parallel in medieval architecture.'

'The main building complex is arranged on the west side of a single small bailey and consists of a hall and solar block linked to an earlier three storey tower on the north side, and an imposing detached tower, again of three storeys, on the south side. The bailey is enclosed by perimeter walls now considerable reduced in size, and surrounded by a dry moat. Most of the original service buildings, such as the kitchen and the bakehouse, which would have occupied the castle bailey have long disappeared, and the gatehouse, a fine late sixteenth century timber framed building has replaced an earlier medieval gatehouse of stone construction.

The hall and solar block with associated defensive south tower are known to have been built by Laurence de Ludlow, a wealthy wool merchant of that town, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The complex is of considerable architectural quality, and testifies to the affluence of the builder. Stokesay's precarious location close to the Welsh border necessitated more than tokenistic defenses, and it is documented that in 1291 Laurence was given a license to crenellate by Edward I. Despite its militaristic appearance Stokesay was very much a home, and there was a clear emphasis on comfort. Indeed, contemporary records indicate that there was glazing in the residential areas - an early example of such a luxury in a manorial context.' ( Babington & Welford 1991:1-2)

### THE GREAT HALL

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'The hall was the principal public room of the manor house, as its impressive size suggests. The walls would originally have been plastered, whitewashed and decorated in places: traces of painted decoration have been found at the northern end. The six large windows (and two half-length ones at the north end) were glazed in the upper half but only shuttered in the lower half; the shutters would therefore have been kept closed in cold or windy weather, making candles or torches necessary inside the hall...

The northern or "lower" end of the hall was nearest to the service areas, such as the kitchen and buttery. It may have been screened off from the rest of the hall as an area for food preparation, although no trace of a screen survives...

At the north end of the hall is a timber staircase, one of the most remarkable survivals at Stokesay, since medieval staircases have usually been replaced in later times.' (Munby 1993:21-24)

Very little of the original decoration of the hall survives. Traces of red paint on a limewash ground were observed over the north door into the buttery.

## Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; no images of wall paintings.

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DOE negative search, no relevant negatives found.

Colour slide TM/JD 21/6/95

### **Bibliography**

J. Alexander and P. Binski, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, RA, London, 1987, cat.189.

C. Babington and P. Welford, *Stokesay Castle: Conservation of the early fourteenth-century painting in the north tower basement*, unpublished report, English Heritage, January 1991.

M. Hall, 'Stokesay Castle, Shropshire: The property of English Heritage', *Country Life*, 31 March 1994, 72-77.

Sir P. and Lady Magnus-Allicroft, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, Derby 1986.

J. Munby, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, EH guidebook, London, 1993.

M.E. Wood, *Thirteenth-Century Domestic Architecture in England*, *Architectural Journal*, CV, Supplement, 1950, 64-70.

## 2 General Audit Information

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|                      |                          |                       |                      |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE          | <b>County</b>         | Shropshire           |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                 |                       |                      |
| <b>Location</b>      | Great Hall               |                       |                      |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | NORTH WALL, OVER DOORWAY |                       |                      |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>              | <b>Height (cm)</b> 70 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 70 |
| <b>Auditor(s)</b>    | TM, JD                   | <b>Start date</b>     | 21/06/95             |

**Overall condition score**      **4**

### Recommendations

The scant remains of painting over the north doorway are important in that they appear to be the only survival of original paint within the Great Hall, giving some indication of its decoration. However, these remains are extremely fragmentary.

These remains have been allotted a poor condition score mainly because of their vulnerable position within the room. They are in poor condition -- flaking and lifting from their support -- but as this area is so easily accessible, and frequently used, by visitors, it was considered to be at high risk from inadvertent mechanical damage.

Conservation treatment could be limited to flake fixing and possible further uncovering [Timescale: 2 people, 1 week]. Access into the Buttery would have to be closed for the duration of any conservation work.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

|                          |                          |               |               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Property name            | STOKESAY CASTLE          |               |               |
| Region                   | Midlands                 | County        | Shropshire    |
| Location                 | Great Hall               |               |               |
| Orientation              | NORTH WALL, OVER DOORWAY |               |               |
| Century 14 <sup>th</sup> | Date                     | Height (cm)70 | Width (cm) 70 |
| Auditor(s)               | TM, JD                   | Start date    | 21/06/95      |

**Overall Condition Score 4**

#### Stratigraphy

---

|            |               |                          |   |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Support Layer | Specific condition Score | 1 |
| Thickness  | 00 cm         |                          |   |

#### Comments

The surrounding wall consists of rough-dressed mudstone, with fine ashlar around the doorway. The mudstone support was originally rendered (as in the Buttery), and the ashlar appears to have been prepared with a limewash ground. The extremely fragmentary remains of paint survive only on the ashlar support, just above the door, and therefore only this stratigraphy is discussed within this audit.

---

|            |                |                          |   |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Ground Layer 1 | Specific condition Score | 4 |
| Thickness  |                |                          |   |

#### Comments

A rough limewash ground has been applied directly to the ashlar support.

---

|            |                |                          |   |
|------------|----------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Ground Layer 2 | Specific condition Score | 4 |
| Thickness  |                |                          |   |

#### Comments

A second limewash ground has been applied. Thick brushstrokes visible.

---

|            |               |                          |   |
|------------|---------------|--------------------------|---|
| Layer type | Paint Layer 1 | Specific condition Score | 3 |
| Thickness  |               |                          |   |

#### Comments

Fragmentary remains of an orangey-red pigment.

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Identified pigments | Colours |
| ---                 | red     |

## 4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

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|                          |                          |               |               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Property name            | STOKESAY CASTLE          |               |               |
| Region                   | Midlands                 | County        | Shropshire    |
| Location                 | Great Hall               |               |               |
| Orientation              | NORTH WALL, OVER DOORWAY |               |               |
| Century 14 <sup>th</sup> | Date                     | Height (cm)70 | Width (cm) 70 |

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

Type flaking

Location Ground layers 1 and 2

Comments The limewash grounds are cleaving and lifting from the stone support. These flakes are particularly vulnerable as they are directly over a doorway which leads down some stairs into the Buttery, and passers-by may inadvertently touch the stone in order to support their descent.

---

#### Mechanical damage

Type substantial losses

Location Entire -- paint remains only fragmentary

Comments Much of the loss has probably been caused, or exacerbated by, visitors entering the buttery and using the doorway as support. There is also the possibility of deliberate vandalism, and removal of flakes of limewash, as the remains of paint are in an easily accessible area.

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** dust

**Location** Entire

**Comments** There is a general accumulation of dust over the remains of limewash and paint.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** Surface

**Comments** There is a general accumulation of cobwebs over the remains of limewash and paint.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** limewash

**Location** Entire

**Comments** Several layers of limewash (at least 4) are present over the remains of paint. These could be serving to protect the painting as they make it less visible, and therefore less susceptible to vandalism.

---

### Repairs

**Type** cement

**Location** Pointing and other areas of mudstone support

**Comments** Dark grey, cement rich 'Scotch mortar' with very coarse aggregate.

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**Type** modern plaster

**Location** Throughout surrounding mudstone support - various

**Comments** Pink mortar, possibly lime-based with cement additive?

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## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** STRUCTURAL REPAIRS **Date** 01/01/01

**Person** Unknown

**Comments** The building has undergone structural repairs at various dates, as evidenced by the different types of repair mortars visible throughout the support. However, there is no evidence to suggest that any measures were ever undertaken to preserve the layers of limewash.

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### Past Treatment

**Type** MONITORING CONDITION **Date** 01/01/91

**Person** C. Babington/ English Heritage

**Comments** During the conservation work carried out on the paintings in the Buttery, C. Babington examined the remains of paint over the Buttery door, and recommended that treatment be carried out in the near future.

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### Proposed Treatment

**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** TM, JD

**Comments** Flake fixing is urgently required in order to re-adhere the fragmentary limewash layers.

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**Type** UNCOVERING **Date** 21/06/95

**Person** JD, TM

**Comments** There are several layers of limewash obscuring the red decoration in areas; it is a possible option to remove these in order to retrieve more of the original design. However, it must be stressed that the amount of original material yet to be discovered is probably minimal.

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# 1 Wall Painting Record

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|                      |                                   |                 |                |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Property name        | STOKESAY CASTLE                   |                 |                |
| Region               | Midlands                          | County          | Shropshire     |
| Location of painting | Passage Block, Garderobe          |                 |                |
| Orientation          | SOUTH, EAST, AND SOUTH-EAST WALLS |                 |                |
| Century 14th         | Date                              | Height (cm) 200 | Width (cm) 200 |
| Subjects included    | Various decorative motifs         |                 |                |

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## Description

### DATE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

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'Stokesay Castle is situated in a lush valley north of Ludlow in Shropshire, and is one of the finest surviving fortified manor houses in England. Its importance lies in its largely unaltered state, and as an example of a compact, defensible, domestic unit it is without parallel in medieval architecture.'

'The main building complex is arranged on the west side of a single small bailey and consists of a hall and solar block linked to an earlier three storey tower on the north side, and an imposing detached tower, again of three storeys, on the south side. The bailey is enclosed by perimeter walls now considerable reduced in size, and surrounded by a dry moat. Most of the original service buildings, such as the kitchen and the bakehouse, which would have occupied the castle bailey have long disappeared, and the gatehouse, a fine late sixteenth century timber framed building has replaced an earlier medieval gatehouse of stone construction.

The hall and solar block with associated defensive south tower are known to have been built by Laurence de Ludlow, a wealthy wool merchant of that town, in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. The complex is of considerable architectural quality, and testifies to the affluence of the builder. Stokesay's precarious location close to the Welsh border necessitated more than tokenistic defenses, and it is documented that in 1291 Laurence was given a license to crenellate by Edward I. Despite its militaristic appearance Stokesay was very much a home, and there was a clear emphasis on comfort. Indeed, contemporary records indicate that there was glazing in the residential areas -- an early example of such a luxury in a manorial context.' ( Babington & Welford 1991:1-2)

'Between the solar wing and the south tower is what has been called a "passage block". This really consists of two long and narrow rooms, one on the ground floor reached from the undercroft, the other on the first floor reached from the solar itself. These rooms seem to have been added about 1300 and about 1650 respectively to provide additional storage and sleeping accommodation. However, neither leads into the south tower, and neither is really a "passage".' (Magnus-Ailcroft 1986) 'The latrine replaces an earlier one... it has a seventeenth century door and shows traces of red and black wall painting' (Munby, 1993:30).

### THE GARDEROBE

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The garderobe is located on the first floor of the 'passage block', at the southern end of the building. It is built into the buttress which flanks the northwest corner of the South Tower, and has a small window facing west. It is an extremely unusual place for the existence -- or survival -- of painted decoration, but there are substantial remains which appear to be contemporary with the structure.

The decoration consists of groups of red and black leaf-shaped flowers and another red unidentified shape, scattered throughout the lower half of the plaster. These appear to float in space but were presumably linked at some stage by stalks or stems. In the upper region, black stars are grouped together in a similar manner. Perhaps the walls were originally decorated with a garden landscape; or, more simply, fields of

decorative motifs. If either is the case, it is still an unusual and important survival.

#### **Photographic Record**

29/6/94 EH current contact files, no images of wall paintings.

DOE negative search: no relevant negatives found.

Colour slide TM/JD 6/95

#### **Bibliography**

J. Alexander and P. Binski, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400*, RA, London, 1987, cat.189.

C. Babington and P. Welford, *Stokesay Castle: Conservation of the early fourteenth-century painting in the north tower basement*, unpublished report, English Heritage, January 1991.

M. Hall, 'Stokesay Castle, Shropshire: The property of English Heritage', *Country Life*, 31 March 1994, 72-77.

Sir P. and Lady Magnus-Allcroft, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, Derby 1986.

J. Munby, *Stokesay Castle, Shropshire*, EH guidebook, London, 1993.

M.E. Wood, *Thirteenth-Century Domestic Architecture in England*, *Architectural Journal*, CV, Supplement, 1950, 64-70.

## 2 General Audit Information

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|                      |                                   |                        |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE                   | <b>County</b>          | Shropshire            |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                          |                        |                       |
| <b>Location</b>      | Passage Block, Garderobe          |                        |                       |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | SOUTH, EAST, AND SOUTH-EAST WALLS |                        |                       |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>                       | <b>Height (cm)</b> 200 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 200 |
| <b>Auditor(s)</b>    | TM/JD                             | <b>Start date</b>      | 21/06/95              |

**Overall condition score**      **3**

### Recommendations

The wall painting is currently being damaged by the impact of the door into the south east wall. It is opened and closed frequently by visitors and there is visual mechanical damage to the original plaster. This is potentially extremely serious but could be halted by the insertion of a door stop into the floor. It is therefore recommended that this is undertaken as a matter of priority.

Some conservation treatment is urgently required to clean and secure the painting. This would require one conservator (as the interior space is extremely limited) and should include surface cleaning, insertion of repairs, flake fixing and grouting [Timescale: 1-2 weeks].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

|                      |                                   |                        |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE                   |                        |                       |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                          | <b>County</b>          | Shropshire            |
| <b>Location</b>      | Passage Block, Garderobe          |                        |                       |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | SOUTH, EAST, AND SOUTH-EAST WALLS |                        |                       |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>                       | <b>Height (cm)</b> 200 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 200 |
| <b>Auditor(s)</b>    | TM/JD                             | <b>Start date</b>      | 21/06/95              |

**Overall Condition Score      3**

**Stratigraphy**

|                   |               |                                 |   |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Layer type</b> | Support Layer | <b>Specific condition Score</b> | 2 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---|

**Thickness**      00 cm

**Comments**

The support is comprised of rough-dressed mudstone. There are tell-tales present on the north wall to either side of a repaired crack, which obviously indicates a concern with movement within the wall. Otherwise the support appears to be in good condition.

|                   |                |                                 |   |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Layer type</b> | Render Layer 1 | <b>Specific condition Score</b> | 3 |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|

**Thickness**      - 2 cm

**Comments**

It is difficult to identify the lower render layer as it is covered by a second render and edge repairs. It appears to be a lime/sand render containing black (crushed slate? ) and reddish aggregate. These aggregates may have been available locally as they are similar to those observed on the walls of the Buttery (North Tower, Basement).

The render layers are present on the south-east and east walls. On the majority of the south wall it appears that the ground layer has been applied directly to the stonework which is more evenly dressed than on other walls. In general it seems that the walls were only roughly plastered to fill in the unevenness of the support.

|                   |                |                                 |   |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Layer type</b> | Render Layer 2 | <b>Specific condition Score</b> | 3 |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|

**Thickness**

**Comments**

The second render layer is of a similar composition to render layer 1, however the granulometry appears slightly finer.

|                   |                |                                 |   |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Layer type</b> | Ground Layer 1 | <b>Specific condition Score</b> | 3 |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------------------------|---|

**Thickness**

**Comments**

A thick limewash ground, with visible brushstrokes, is present on all walls.

|                   |               |                                 |   |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Layer type</b> | Paint Layer 1 | <b>Specific condition Score</b> | 3 |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---|

**Thickness**

**Comments**

Thinly applied red and black paint.

**Identified pigments    Colours**

---                      red  
 ---                      black

## 4 Audit Information: deterioration and damage, added materials, treatment

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|                      |                                   |                        |                       |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Property name</b> | STOKESAY CASTLE                   |                        |                       |
| <b>Region</b>        | Midlands                          | <b>County</b>          | Shropshire            |
| <b>Location</b>      | Passage Block, Garderobe          |                        |                       |
| <b>Orientation</b>   | SOUTH, EAST, AND SOUTH-EAST WALLS |                        |                       |
| <b>Century</b> 14th  | <b>Date</b>                       | <b>Height (cm)</b> 200 | <b>Width (cm)</b> 200 |

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** delamination (render layer)

**Location** Widespread.

**Comments** Delamination is affecting both render layers 1 and 2.

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**Type** flaking

**Location** General.

**Comments** The limewash ground is flaking in several areas from the render and support layers.

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**Type** loss

**Location** Extensive.

**Comments** There has been loss of all layers in the past in many areas.

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#### Mechanical damage

**Type** cracking/fracturing

**Location** S.E. wall where door impacts into wall.

**Comments** The current damage caused to the wall plaster by the impact of the door is potentially serious. This damage could easily be prevented by inserting a door stop in the floor slightly in front of the wall.

---

**Type** graffiti

**Location** Various.

**Comments** The graffiti is disfiguring and its clearly visible presence possibly tempts certain viewers to add more.

---

## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** dirt  
**Location** General.  
**Comments** Not too disfiguring.

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**Type** dust  
**Location** General.  
**Comments** Not too disfiguring.

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**Type** cobwebs  
**Location** General.  
**Comments** Not too disfiguring.

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### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** unknown  
**Location** Especially E. wall, low level.  
**Comments** In some areas the painting has a slightly shiny surface possibly indicating the presence of a coating. The nature of the coating (if present) is unknown, but it certainly does not appear to be wax, and in addition, does not appear to be contributing to deterioration.

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### Repairs

**Type** cement  
**Location** S.E. wall.  
**Comments** These cement-type repairs have dripped down the surface of the plaster. They are similar to those observed in the Buttery (North Tower, Basement) which were thought to be related to injection grouting.

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**Type** modern lime plaster  
**Location** Throughout.  
**Comments** The modern lime-type repairs consist of edge repairs and 'plug' repairs to holes. They are quite carefully executed and may have been carried out by a conservator.

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**Type** modern plaster  
**Location** Limited number, throughout.  
**Comments** These repairs appear to be of lime plaster and have limewash toning over their surface. They are quite carefully executed and may possibly have been carried out by a conservator.

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**Type** hair plaster  
**Location** S.E. wall, S. side.  
**Comments** The hair plaster repairs contain coarse sand together with hair. The date of the hair plaster repair is uncertain but possibly pre-dates the twentieth century.

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## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

Type VARIOUS Date 01/01/01

Person Unknown

Comments No records of treatment have been found. However it is clear there have been a number of campaigns of repair to the painting.

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### Proposed Treatment

Type DUSTING Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Careful dusting (by a conservator) could improve the appearance of the painting.

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Type FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Further minor edge repairs and modification of existing edge repairs are urgently required.

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Type FLAKE FIXING Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Minor flake fixing may be required.

---

Type GROUTING Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Grouting to re-adhere the delaminating render layers is urgently required.

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Type MONITORING CONDITION Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments The routine monitoring of the condition of the painting should be undertaken.

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Type VARIOUS Date 21/06/95

Person TM/JD

Comments The wall painting is being damaged by the impact of the door into the delicate plaster of the S.E. wall. By introducing a (visually sympathetic) doorstep this potentially serious damage could be instantly halted.

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