

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 29/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
BELSAY CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

C Babington  
S Stewart

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BELSAY CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

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Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Belsay 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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## **Belsay Castle** Northumberland

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.

# 1 Wall Painting Record

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<b>Property name</b>	BELSAY CASTLE		
<b>Region</b>	North	<b>County</b>	Northumberland
<b>Location of painting</b>	Great Hall		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH AND EAST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Figurative			
Heraldry			
Naval scene			
Various decorative motifs			

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## Description

There are three layers of painting (14C; 15C; 17C). The south wall and window contain the most representative example of each scheme.

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### SOUTH WALL

The paintings on this wall comprise:

1 EAST SIDE: A late 15C heraldic and naval battle scene which is at present covered by a layer of facing tissue applied during a previous treatment - for a full description see documentary references. This scheme measures 225 (height) x 327 (width).

2 EAST SIDE: The remains of a later chequer pattern below the heraldic and naval battle scene, apparently C17.

3 WINDOW: Two layers of painting on the splays and soffit of the south window: the upper layer appears to be contemporary with the naval and heraldic scene and the lower is probably part of the original decoration of the hall (first half - middle 14C - See D Park's notes below):

SOFFIT: The two soffit ribs show: faint traces of white rosette design; white rosettes on a red background, bordered with black stripes across the width; small rosettes, black on white. The space between the ribs has a white ground with black and red stencilling; bordered red stripes with a black foliate design (stencilled?); red large rosettes (stencilled?). All this decoration appears to be part of the first layer of painting.

#### EAST SPLAY:

1ST LAYER: (probably corresponds to level of soffit decoration). Curving red lines, some black dots. Is this the vine-scroll pattern that Middleton refers to? (see below). Some of the plaster centre left side appears very coarsely 'brushed' (as mentioned by Middleton).

2ND LAYER: Discoloured limewash ground with 'black' design - not much apparent but appears two horizontal black bands across base of surviving plaster (about half way up height of wall); also some black curving lines top right.

#### WEST SPLAY:

1ST LAYER: Red design on white background, some rosettes similar (but not identical) to rosettes on space between ribs of window soffit - the lines appear similar to 'vinescroll' pattern on east splay.

2ND LAYER: (similar to east splay). Grey black paint on plaster ground - different tones of grey and black - design not legible.

The traces of angels previously recorded on the west side (see below) are no longer evident.

## DOCUMENTARY REFERENCES

### 1 MIDDLETON (1910)

'At Belsay the walls of the large living room have been so ornamented, though the plaster thus decorated is now nearly all perished away, and the small remains of the painting that are left are now scarcely perceptible. In the splay of the southern window, however, it can be seen that the walls were originally finished with a very thin coat of plaster brushed on with a coarse brush, or perhaps a bunch of birch twigs; and on this plaster has been painted, in a dark red colour, the branches of a vine or other climbing plant. This plaster has, at a later date, been covered with a slightly thicker but still thin coat of plaster carried all round the room. Upon this plaster on the upper four feet of the walls were painted tree trunks with the stumps of lopped branches, on which were hung shields, three only of which could at the time of the reparations be distinguished...The tinctures of some of the above are doubtful, for the faded colours have been touched over with neutral colour in modern times...the tree trunks were on green ground'.

### 2 LEACH (1896)

[Leach's description of the 1890's compares closely with the design visible today, although it is unclear how much has been lost over the last century].

'without question, the hall was completely covered with paintings on the upper wall, the lower part being probably hung with arras, afterwards replaced by panelling. I find indistinct traces of figures in several places.'

#### [WINDOW]

There are indications of two distinct paintings on the window splays, the first consisting of an outline pattern in red and black, very little of which now remains, and the second of a somewhat more elaborate character...The window splays, as before remarked, have certainly been decorated on two occasions, the second painting being, I think, not much later than the first. All the details, as far as possible, I have copied. They present no striking peculiarities beyond that they were all, without exception, stencilled.

#### [HERALDIC AND NAVAL SCENE]

The principal remains are on the south wall on the eastern side of the window, and consist of two parts. The upper depicts some naval scene, painted in the usual brown outline colour on the plaster. The only other colour in this portion is an ochreous brown, with which the hulls and masts of the ships are painted, with no attempt by hatching or other wise to represent light or shade. There is, moreover, no attempt to indicate water surface, which is somewhat rare. The lower part must have been a fine piece of colour when executed. The ground, I have no doubt, was green (probably somewhat brighter than that of the drawing sent herewith), diapered with clusters of tiny white flowers having red centres.

On this background stood, at more or less regular intervals, tree trunks, with both roots and branches displayed, but lopped off, suggesting the celebrated "Ragged Staff". These are painted a brick red, outlined with white, and "high-lighted" by white hatching. On some of these trees are hung shields, three of which remain with armorial bearings upon them. It maybe that these shields bore the arms of various families connected by marriage or otherwise with the owner of the Castle, or possibly one of the numerous confraternities of the middle ages was accustomed to meet here, and the shields bore the arms of its members. Again the insufficiency of the remains forbids more than vague speculation.

#### [W SIDE]

'On the western half of the south wall I discovered faint traces of two angels, painted in outline with great delicacy'.

#### [CHEQUER PATTERN]

'On that part of the wall, at the south end, which was probably hung with arras, I find traces of a cheque pattern in black, grey, and white (also figures half-size)...this I should say must have been painted considerably later than the upper wall - possibly even as late as the 17th-century.'

### 3 DAVID PARK - SITE VISIT NOTES 1980:

#### [WINDOW]

'FIRST LAYER OF PAINTING: 'On both splays of the south window are remains of a simple foliate pattern. There is also, on the east splay, part of a plain horizontal border; and on the south wall, immediately to the east of the window, part of a vertical border and other slight remains. The plaster, described as 'very thin' by Middleton (1910), 28 was applied with a coarse brush, the marks of which are clearly visible. The foliate pattern is red, and the borders black. Some of the glass in the south window (found to be open in June 1980) is broken; and recent graffiti are incised into the painting on the east splay. Much of the painting on the splays is covered with 15th-century(?) painting, which may also overlay more painting on the south wall. The south window should be repaired, and the painting protected from vandalism. It urgently requires cleaning and conservation. It might be desirable to uncover the areas which exist beneath the later painting. The quality of the painting seems very average. The painting appears to be on the first layer of plaster (see Middleton (1910), 28), and can be regarded with some confidence as part of the original decoration of the castle, which dates from the first half or middle of the 14th-century (see Simpson (1940), 79; Pevsner (1957), 85).'

'S window: remains of another layer of plaster with painting on - paint now black - seems same layer as black etc. on soffit - green background now appears grey-black....Middleton says plaster now nearly all perished away - this is certainly not true - a considerable amount overall survives'.

#### [HERALDIC AND NAVAL SCENE]

;...not much detail of ship now visible from ground'.

#### [WEST SIDE]

'..certainly no angels discernible here now'.

CHEQUER PATTERN: '..no earlier plaster appears to be underneath 17th-century chequer pattern...' 'pattern is not as regular as Leach shows it, and slightly misleading to say shows it 1/2 size - white squares vary in width - some about 8.5, some about 10.25cm.' The whole of the lower part of the south wall, to east of the window, is painted with a perspective chequer pattern in black, grey and white. This painting is on a much thicker layer of plaster than the medieval painting above; it has been suggested that it may be of 17th-century date (Berwickshire Naturalists' Club (1896-8) 146). There are now several large holes in the plaster; the painting is also covered with recent graffiti - some incised. Like the medieval decoration, this painting urgently requires treatment.

CONDITION OF CASTLE AND PAINTINGS: DP notes: 1) concrete floor of this chamber; 2) tower itself basically in fairly good condition; 3) however, windows of hall - much of glass broken by vandals, one light in north window completely gone; 4) the wall paintings are in appalling condition; 5) tower open to vandals - many written and incised graffiti - eg. over C17(?) on south wall - graffiti partly incised, and partly large black in "charcoal" - possibly applied with burnt cork - ie should be possible to remove them quite easily; 6) wooden roof of hall quite good; 7) much, apparently fairly recent, cement repointing throughout Tower - eg. in Hall itself - very roughly done.

[The windows are now repaired and the tower secure].

4 Caiger-Smith, pers.comm. with D.P. 14/6/80: '....a remarkable late XIV century scheme of decoration'.

5 DP's notes: Pevsner 1957, 85: 'The L-plan for instance remains at Chipchase, a castle in its details very near to Belsay. Both are undated and both seem to belong to the early to mid 14th-century'. Also: '...the hall has a fireplace and the remains of painted mural decoration'.

6 DP's notes: Simpson 1940, 79: 'Its date of erection is unknown, but the architectural detail clearly points to the 14th-century, and probably to a fairly early date therein. The square-faced ashlar masonry is characteristic of the first half of the century'.

7 DP: O'Connor, 20, vii, 80: early C14 window at Wing (Bucks) - tree with shield suspended from it, tree partially lopped.

8 DP: painted frieze of Great Chamber of Gilling Castle (N.Yorks) - c.1575-85 - trees with (many) shields suspended from them. NB. see DP's notes in site file for further discussion of history of castle.

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## EAST WALL

Leach (1896) mentions: 'And on the east wall I found indications of a figure in a red robe, which was probably at least four feet high. Nothing definite is left of the figure excepting the left arm, which is placed "akimbo"'. (38).

However, all that remains now are:

### WINDOW (SOUTH END)

1 two very fragmentary areas approximately 1.5m<sup>2</sup> to either side of the window at the south end of the wall. The paint layer is black(?) with some red and appears to be a continuation of the heraldic scheme, with traces of the earlier red vine-scroll scheme below.

2 small black, red traces of paint on soffits and splays. The red foliate decoration of the earlier scheme is evident under the later C15? scheme on the south splay. These traces are very fragmentary.

### WALL (NORTH SIDE)

3 a continuation of the scheme on the north wall onto the east wall, north side showing a horizontal border at base, with the trace of a tree painted in dark red colour over the blue-black colour. There are also traces of red vine-scroll scheme beneath. The dimensions of this area are 80cm (height) and 91cms (width).

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## NORTH WALL

The paintings on the north wall comprise:

### WALL, EAST SIDE

1 The same late 15C heraldic scene as found on the south wall which again is covered by a layer of facing tissue applied during a previous treatment. One shield decoration is visible (showing a white cross-shape) with a decorative border beneath (ie. at height at which this plaster begins - NB. the plaster is divided - the first type of plaster (presumably the chequer pattern scheme) extends 270cms above floor height and above this is the heraldic scheme which continues onto the window splays - this presumably would have extended the height of the original walls. It continues onto the east wall, north side).

### WINDOW

2 The same two-layered decoration as found on the south wall window. The dimensions of the window are 380cm x 17.7cm (towards interior).

MIDDLETON (1910), 28: 'The tinctures of some of the above [south and north wall shields] are doubtful, for the faded colours have been touched over with neutral colours in modern times...The tree trunks were on green ground'.

LEACH (1896): 'On the upper north wall of the north-east corner I found traces of similar treatment to that of the south wall, but nothing is left beyond a shield (sable, a saltire argent), and faint traces of the "tree trunk" painting. Round the north window was a stencilled border, a portion of which, full size, I have drawn. On that part of the wall, at the south end, which was probably hung with arras, I find traces of a check pattern in black, grey and white (also figured half-size). This, I should say, must have been painted considerably later than the upper wall - possibly even as late as the C17' (39).

[NB. when Leach refers to 'upper north wall' he means the upper part of the lower floor wall as the Great Hall was originally floored half way up the present height of the hall to allow for an extra floor.

D PARK SITE VISIT NOTES 1980: ' all north wall painting now hard to make out, except shield...shield is

not complete, as Leach shows it. Lower right part destroyed; large areas of this plaster on east side of window are missing; plaster badly away from wall bottom right of shield; two nails in wall, one of them sticking through surviving part of shield; plaster badly cracked in places; very dirty; all this wall painting now hard to make out....north wall painting badly needs cleaning.'

### **Photographic Record**

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files.  
No images found.

Photograph search, DOE files, EH photo library (JD24/03/95)

Belsay Castle; 11/1980 A(CN)10429/1-7.

Photographic prints in studio files.

A(CN)10429/1 'Room F200 - S. wall'  
A(CN)10429/2 'Room F200 - S. wall'  
A(CN)10429/3 'Room F200 - S. wall'  
A(CN)10429/4 'Room F200 - N. wall'  
A(CN)10429/7 'Room F200 - S. wall'

8-80 A10381/84 'Castle and Manor House from N.W.

### **Bibliography**

Ferguson, 143-4, 'Appendix II. Remains of Ancient Mural Paintings', report of Messrs F.R. Leach & Sons, 145-6. (Description of paintings).

History of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club, xvi 1896-8.

Hodgson, J., A History of Northumberland, pt.II, vol I., N-u-T 1827.

Hugill, R. Borderland Castles and Peles, N-on-T 1970.

Long, B., Castles of Northumberland, Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1967?

Middleton, A.E., An Account of Belsay Castle in the County of Northumberland, N-u-T 1910.(History and description of the castle and brief description of the painting on the south wall).

Pevsner, N., The Buildings of England: Northumberland, Harmondsworth, 1957, 85-6.

Simpson, W.D., 'Belsay Castle and the Scottish Tower-Houses', Arch Aeliana, 4 ser, XVII, 1940, 75-84.



## 2 General Audit Information

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<b>Property name</b>	BELSAY CASTLE	<b>County</b>	Northumberland
<b>Region</b>	North		
<b>Location</b>	Great Hall		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH AND EAST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	CB/SS	<b>Start date</b>	08/11/94

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

### Recommendations

NOTE: On the basis of this audit a six-week programme of conservation was undertaken May-June 1996 as part of the collaborative training programme with the Courtauld Institute of Art. This offered the opportunity to attend to the recommendations outlined below. The results of this project are described in a subsequent report, 'The Great Hall, Belsay Castle: Conservation of the Wall Paintings', May-June 1996.

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#### NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS

A campaign of treatment should include

- removal and replacement of unsuitable fills/repairs
- removal of tissue facing
- grouting to readhere areas of delaminating plaster where necessary
- surface cleaning
- full graphic and photographic documentation

In addition, the fragmentary remains of decoration on the east wall require plaster repairs, surface cleaning and recording.

It is recommended that this programme of work be carried out within at least 3 years [Timescale: minimum 6 weeks].

**MONITORING:** It is recommended that tell-tales be installed over the cracks within the south wall window and checked periodically to assess any active movement. General environmental monitoring is unnecessary as the Great Hall is an unheated but well-ventilated space.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

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<b>Property name</b>	BELSAY CASTLE		
<b>Region</b>	North	<b>County</b>	Northumberland
<b>Location</b>	Great Hall		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH AND EAST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	CB/SS	<b>Start date</b>	08/11/94

**Overall Condition Score**      **3**

#### ***Stratigraphy***

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<b>Layer type</b>	Support Layer	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	1
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**Thickness**      00 cm

#### **Comments**

Coarse irregularly-cut rectangular sandstone blocks.

#### SOUTH WALL

Coarse pointing - lime mortar including stone inclusions. Some cement pointing around apex of window arch. NB The Condition Score for the stone support in the window is 3 and for the east side of the wall the Condition score for the stone support is 1.

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<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
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**Thickness**

#### **Comments**

#### SOUTH WALL

1ST SCHEME (C14): This scheme is principally found on the splays of the window. The render is a lime mortar of uneven thickness to a maximum of 1cm with a rough undulating finish showing a fair amount of pitting and loss. White inclusions - probably chalk. It is not clear whether this render layer continues onto the soffit of the window (ie. is this just a thick limewash ground applied directly over the support?). Brushstrokes are evident on the east splay of the window (as mentioned by Middleton).

#### NORTH AND EAST WALLS

1ST SCHEME (C14): a full examination of the fragmentary traces of this scheme was not possible. However, it may be assumed that the areas which remain are in the same condition as those found in the window of the south wall.

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<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 2	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
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**Thickness**

**Comments**

SOUTH WALL

2ND SCHEME (15C): unevenly applied lime render with sand, chalk, coarse aggregate, and charcoal and brick inclusions.

EAST WALL

2ND SCHEME: a full examination of the fragmentary traces of this scheme was not possible. However, it may be assumed that the areas which remain are in the same condition as those found on the south wall. Additives include charcoa, brick/tile, calcium carbonate/chalk.

NORTH WALL

2ND SCHEME: appears to be one layer but facing tissue prohibits a thorough examination. However, the render is of a white appearance with a fine texture with a smooth trowel finish. Additives include charcoal, brick/tile and calcium carbonate/chalk.

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<b>Layer type</b>	Render Layer 3	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
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**Thickness** cm

**Comments**

SOUTH WALL

3RD SCHEME (17C CHEQUER PATTERN): This plaster extends from floor level to a height of approximately 270cms (immediately below the C15 heraldic scheme). There does not appear to be any earlier plaster layers beneath.

EAST AND NORTH WALLS

3RD SCHEME (17C CHEQUER PATTERN): very fragmentary remains.

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<b>Layer type</b>	Ground Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
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**Thickness**

**Comments**

SOUTH WALL

1ST SCHEME (14C VINE-SCROLL PATTERN): possibly limewash.

EAST WALL

A thick white background is evident on the ribs and spaces of the window soffit and this may possibly be a limewash ground.

NORTH WALL

2ND SCHEME (15C): continuation of the heraldic and naval scene.

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 1	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>	cm		
<b>Comments</b>			
SOUTH WALL			
1ST SCHEME (14C VINE-SCROLL PATTERN): red, black and white pigments are visible on the splays and soffit of the window.			
EAST AND NORTH WALLS			
1ST SCHEME (14C VINE-SCROLL PATTERN): Fragmentary traces of the red vinescroll are present.			
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
---	red		
---	black		
---	white		

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 2	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>	cm		
<b>Comments</b>			
SOUTH WALL			
2ND SCHEME (15C): The scheme on the east side is obscured by facing limiting a thorough examination. However, the continuation of this scheme onto the window splays shows a grey/black paint layer (the documentary references refer to this layer as green).			
EAST WALL			
2ND SCHEME (15C): a full examination of the fragmentary traces of this scheme was not possible. However, it may be assumed that the areas which remain are in the same condition as those found on the north and south walls. Pigments include red and black.			
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
---	grey		
---	black		

<b>Layer type</b>	Paint Layer 3	<b>Specific condition Score</b>	3
<b>Thickness</b>	cm		
<b>Comments</b>			
SOUTH WALL			
3RD SCHEME (17C CHEQUER PATTERN)			
<b>Identified pigments</b>	<b>Colours</b>		
---	black		
---	white		

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

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<b>Property name</b>	BELSAY CASTLE		
<b>Region</b>	North	<b>County</b>	Northumberland
<b>Location</b>	Great Hall		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH AND EAST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 15 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

**Type** staining  
**Location** throughout  
**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Some black staining of paint layer, especially on soffit of window. Also substantial drip-marks (as well as drip-marks from the glue used in the facing treatment).

EAST WALL

Generally

NORTH WALL

Drip marks are present associated with the application of the facing and are particularly evident running below the area of faced plaster. There is also staining resulting from past water infiltration in the window splay.

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**Type** losses (render layer)  
**Location** throughout  
**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Generally the lower areas of the window splays are more damaged with greater loss to plaster. Large losses are also present in the 15C scheme which have been repaired with polyfilla.

EAST AND NORTH WALLS

Throughout

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**Type** delamination (render layer)

**Location** throughout

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Particularly ship and heraldry scene. The chequer pattern is less hollow but otherwise similarly affected. Delamination is present throughout both render layers 1 & 2 in window splays, as well as soffit plaster, especially at the edges. However, it is not clear whether the plaster is actively delaminating or whether the voids are static.

EAST AND NORTH WALLS

Delamination and voids throughout.

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**Type** general erosion

**Location** throughout

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

All the surface has been generally eroded through water infiltration with substantial drip-marks (as well as drip-marks from the glue used in the facing treatment). The stone support is eroded in some places in the soffit and splays of the window. Render layer 1: general pitting and erosion throughout. Render layer 2: badly eroded in lower areas.

EAST AND NORTH WALLS

Throughout.

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**Type** cracking

**Location** throughout

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

substantial cracking following the mortar joints of ribs and the spaces between (there is also a small amount of cracking on the west side, lower half).

EAST WALL

Throughout.

NORTH WALL

In window splay, especially following joints of stone in soffit.

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**Type** losses (paint layer)

**Location** south wall window soffits

**Comments** Substantial loss to paint layer and ground throughout. The paint layer generally is highly vulnerable and is likely to be delaminating.

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### ***Mechanical damage***

**Type** scratches

**Location** throughout

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Fine and coarse scratches throughout but especially on render layers 1 & 2 in the window splays.

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EAST WALL

Fine and coarse scratches throughout but especially on render layers 1 & 2 in the window splays.

NORTH WALL

Extensive.

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**Type** nail holes

**Location** south wall

**Comments** 7 on west splay in window, 9 on E splay in window and 4 in soffit - all nails have old rusty appearance and their original function is unclear.

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**Type** graffiti

**Location** south and north walls

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

West window splay, lower left on stone support.

NORTH WALL

Extensive in window splays.

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## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** dirt  
**Location** extensive  
**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Substantial surface dirt is present under upper edge of tissue facing - it is likely that much of the surface dirt covering the 15C scheme has been fixed by the application of the facing adhesive.

#### NORTH WALL

As with the south wall, dirt is collecting on the upper edge of the tissue facing.

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**Type** bird excreta  
**Location** east wall  
**Comments**

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**Type** bat excreta  
**Location** north wall  
**Comments** collecting on upper edge of plaster area on north wall

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**Type** biodeterioration  
**Location** north wall  
**Comments** In window, west splay, upper half.

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**Type** cobwebs  
**Location** north wall  
**Comments** In window, west splay, upper half.

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**Type** unidentified deposit  
**Location** south wall?  
**Comments** A note in the Studio files (undated, A Stanzyck?) mentions that 'surface of the painting is covered with a fine cloudy layer of debris (this could be cement? or plaster but does not appear to be salts)'.

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### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** facing paper  
**Location** south and north walls  
**Comments** Applied over ship and heraldry scene. Note in Studio files (5 October 1981, A. Stanzyck?) states that 'the overriding priority at this stage should be the protection of the paintings to stop any further deterioration in their condition. This could be achieved by the application of a protective facing which could then be removed just before the final restoration takes place. I would suggest that the facing should be applied before any building work commences and not removed until it is complete. If there is to be major work, roofing etc. requiring scaffolding some more substantial form of protection, for example hardboard on a wooden frame erected approximately four inches from the face of the painting would be desirable'.

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**Type** P.V.A. (Poly (vinyl acetate))  
**Location** south and north walls?  
**Comments** Note in Studio files (undated, A. Stanzyck?) mentions: 'Before I arrived the painting had been given a thin coat of PVA (to consolidate the surface and make the decoration visible)'.

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### Repairs

**Type** gypsum  
**Location** south and north walls  
**Comments** Plaster of paris or probably pollyfilla applied in the mid 1980s. All repairs have an untidy application and are unlikely to be functioning efficiently. Used as repairs for large losses throughout.

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**Type** cement  
**Location** on south wall window soffit and throughout east and north walls.  
**Comments** Localised edging repairs and small fills.

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**Type** lime:sand  
**Location** south wall  
**Comments** Perhaps lime mortar used for localised repairs used on soffit.

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**Type** unidentified  
**Location** south wall, east and west window splays at inner corners  
**Comments** Small patches of plaster which are white with fine hair plus green glass inclusions. It is possible that these are repairs.

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**Type** unidentified  
**Location** north wall  
**Comments** Pink repairs in window splays.

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## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** APPLICATION OF COATING      **Date** 01/01/01

**Person** unknown

**Comments** Note in Studio files (undated, A. Stanzyck?) mentions: 'Before I arrived the painting had been given a thin coat of PVA (to consolidate the surface and make the decoration visible)'.

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**Type** CLEANING      **Date** 01/01/01

**Person** unknown

**Comments** Note in Studio files (undated, A. Stanzyck?) mentions: 'some cleaning was attempted to remove the PVA. Acetone was used and various attempts were made to remove surface dirt and the 'cloudy' film. The surface dirt could be removed easily but the cloudiness has proved extremely difficult'.

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

**Person** Unknown

**Comments** Previous cement repairs are present, especially around the soffit of the window on the south wall. Numerous other repairs on east and north walls.

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

**Person** unknown (A.Stanzyck?)

**Comments** Note in Studio files (undated, A. Stanzyck?) mentions: 'To consolidate the plaster injections were made through the existing lacunae and through drilled holes where no other entry point was possible. PVA/water/pollyfilla was used as injection consolidant. Before injection the appropriate sections were faced with eltoline tissue and Beva 371 in white spirit'.

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### Past Treatment

**Type** TISSUE FACING **Date** 01/01/84

**Person** A Stanzyck

**Comments** This is an extremely poor quality and inappropriate treatment affecting the main areas of original decoration on the north and south walls. The precise date of this intervention is not clear.

Note in the Studio files (5 October 1981, no name): 'I feel that the overriding priority at this stage should be the protection of the paintings to stop any further deterioration in their condition. This could be achieved by the application of a protective facing which could then be removed just before the final restoration programme takes place. I would suggest that the facing should be applied before any building work commences and not removed until it is complete. If there is to be major work, roofing etc requiring scaffolding some more substantial form of protection, for example hardboard on a wooden frame erected approximately four inches from the face of the painting would be desirable'.

Note in Studio files (undated, A. Stanzyck?): 'To consolidate the plaster injections were made through the existing lacunae and through drilled holes where no other entry point was possible. PVA/water/pollyfilla was used as injection consolidant. Before injection the appropriate sections were faced with eltoline tissue and Beva 371 in white spirit'.

Note in Studio files (A.Stancyck, November 1986): 'The project at Belsay is progressing. One of the two large wall paintings is now consolidated and completely secure. Work will start on the second painting and extensive fragments of painted decoration surrounding it in the near future. The technical problems are almost identical in both paintings therefore the same methods of consolidation will be used under my direction. I would suggest that the next stage of the project starts in March 1987 if this is acceptable to Mr Keevil, Mr Cross and directing team members'.

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**Proposed Treatment**

**Type** CLEANING **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** Cleaning of surface dirt after removal of tissue facing on north and south walls.

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**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** Replacement of unsuitable repairs and new edge repairs will be necessary in all areas.

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**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS REMOVAL **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** All of the plaster of paris and cement repairs should be removed and replaced with a more suitable material.

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**Type** FLAKE FIXING **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** Paint layer generally needs stabilising on all schemes, but particularly on the soffit of the window on the south wall.

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**Type** GROUTING **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** SOUTH WALL

Grouting is required to the window splays and possibly on the 15C scheme.

EAST WALL

Grouting will probably be necessary as part of the stabilisation of the plaster.

NORTH WALL

Reattachment of loose or detaching areas of plaster.

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**Type** MONITORING CONDITION **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** Window splay south wall: tell-tales on cracks in soffit - check within reasonable period (1 year?). General environmental monitoring unnecessary - unheated well-ventilated hall space.

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**Type** TISSUE FACING **Date** 08/11/94

**Person** CB/SS

**Comments** The tissue facing should be removed as part of an overall campaign of conservation.

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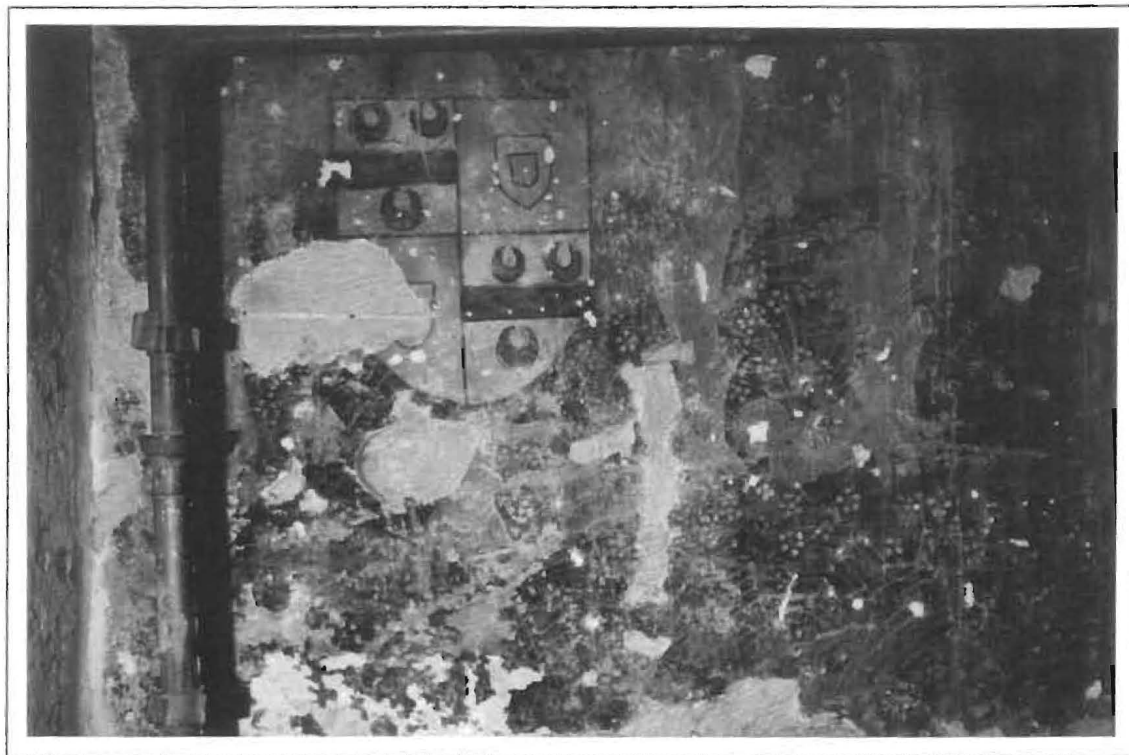
South wall, east side, naval scene, *before* removal of tissue facing and Polyfilla repairs, May 1996



South wall, east side, naval scene, *after* removal of tissue facing and *during* removal of Polyfilla repairs, June 1996



South wall, east side, area of fictive tapestry and heraldry, *before* removal of tissue facing and Polyfilla repairs, May 1996



South wall, east side, area of fictive tapestry, *after* removal of tissue facing and *during* removal of Polyfilla repairs, June 1996