

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 54/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR, KENT

J Davies  
S Stewart

AML reports are interim reports which make available the results of specialist investigations in advance of full publication. They are not subject to external refereeing and their conclusions may sometimes have to be modified in the light of archaeological information that was not available at the time of the investigation. Readers are therefore asked to consult the author before citing the report in any publication and to consult the final excavation report when available.

Opinions expressed in AML reports are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England.

Ancient Monuments Laboratory Report 54/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR, KENT

J Davies  
S Stewart

Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Strood, Temple Manor, 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.

Authors' addresses :-

Ms J Davies  
PAINTINGS CONSERVATION STUDIO  
English Heritage  
Inner Circle Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4PA

Ms S Stewart  
PAINTINGS CONSERVATION STUDIO  
English Heritage  
Inner Circle Regents Park  
London  
NW1 4PA



## Strood, Temple Manor Kent

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

---

<b>Property name</b>	STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR		
<b>Region</b>	South East	<b>County</b>	Kent
<b>Location of painting</b>	first floor		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			
Various decorative motifs			

---

## Description

In 1159 the Manor of 'Strood Temple' was given to the Knights Templar by Henry II. The Knights Templars were an order of 'warrior monks' established in the Holy Land, during the Crusades, in order to protect both sacred sites and pilgrims. In 1128 the Pope confirmed their status and exempted them from the ecclesiastical rule of Bishops. They accrued great power and 'corporate' wealth, acting as bankers, to the aristocracy and royalty. Temple Manor appears to have functioned as a lodging for Templar dignitaries on route between London and Dover, as well as being part of the complex of timber structures which were the stores, kitchen, etc. of the surrounding farm. The stone hall appears to date from c. 1240. An account of 1308 refers to a Great Chamber, a Chapel, a hall and a barn on the site. The ground floor of the stone structure is comprised of a three bay vaulted undercroft. The high upper storey is entered by an arched door in the north wall, at first floor level, reached by an external staircase. The Hall contains an outer and inner chamber. The outer chamber is thought to have served as a public room for conducting business, and the inner chamber to have provided privacy for visiting dignitaries. The north and south walls of the outer chamber have wall arcades, with arches rising from continuous seats, (three on the north and five on the south) originally with Purbeck marble shafts. The outer chamber was illuminated by single lancet windows to the west and north, and two lancets in the south wall. The stone mouldings to the doorway and arches are finely carved, indicating the importance of the building and the interior decorative scheme.

In 1307 King Philip IV of France ordered the arrest and prosecution of the Knights Templars for various irregularities, giving him the opportunity to attempt to seize their wealth. Philip's influence over the Pope forced the Pope to dissolve the Templar order throughout Christendom in 1312. Their property was in theory ceded to the Knights Hospitallers, however several of the European kings contrived to gain control of their lands. After the dissolution of the order of the Knights Templar (1312), Strood was controlled by King Edward II. In 1342 the manor was granted by him to his kinswoman Mary of St. Pol, Abbess of Denny. In 1539 Henry VIII's reformation dispossessed the Abbess of Denny of all of its properties and the manor passed into private hands until the early 20th century. Several additions were made to the building in the 17th century, including the eastern extension with the large bay window.

The estate was gradually eroded by sales of land, by the construction of the railway track between the house and the river in c. 1854 and the destruction of the Medieval bridge between Strood and Rochester in 1856. In 1929 the City of Rochester paid £17,000 for the estate, intending the land to be used for industrial development. The Manor house was then sub-divided into cottages. The house later fell into disuse. The Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings made recommendations for the house and locals petitioned the council to spare a few acres of farmland as a 'green oasis'. In 1947 the house together with half an acre of land was declared a scheduled Ancient Monument. In 1949 the roof collapsed, exposing the thirteenth-century painted interior of the first floor hall to the elements. In 1951 the ruins were taken over by the Department of the Environment and an extensive programme of restoration works carried out between 1951 and 1958. A northern timber frame extension and single storey hall, known from archaeological evidence and early photographs were in such poor condition that they were beyond salvaging and their remains were dismantled during the restoration project. Notes in the Conservation Studio file appear to refer to a site meeting during 1991 at which remedial building repairs were appraised.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PAINTED DECORATION

---

The wall plaster throughout the room was decorated with masonry pattern, in red on white, and various decorative motifs in black and yellow. It should also be noted that areas of a blue-green paint layer over hair plaster exist on the north and south walls within the 17th east extension to the room.

### NORTH WALL

Between the east wall and the eastern window on the north wall there is one large fragment; 80 x 100cms and a smaller piece. Between the eastern window and the western window there are two large fragments, each approximately 330 x 120cms, one recessed within the wall arcade. Between the western window and west wall, surrounding the entrance door, there are several large pieces, 100 x 40, 45 x 25cms and fragments within an area 380 x 360cms. No original plaster below 120 cm was noted in this area.

### WEST WALL

400x400cms: there are numerous fragments within this area. No original decoration was noted on this wall below 120cms.

### SOUTH WALL

400x800cms: between the west wall and the west window of the south wall there is one large patch, 190x155cms, and two small patches, 26x20cms and 25x13cms. Between the west and east windows there are three large patches 100x70cms, 60x150cms and 130x120cms (in arch). Between the east window and east wall there are three fragments: adjacent to the east wall 120x60cms and 100x20cms; to the middle 80x120cms.

### EAST WALL

400x400cms. This wall was pierced by insertion of a wide seventeenth-century extension. The southern portion of the remaining wall has a fragment approximately 300x75cms. The northern portion of the remaining wall contains a fragment approximately 300x55cms. The original masonry pattern has been overpainted with layers of grey, red and green 'distemper'.

### Photographic Record

29/6/94 EH 'current' contact photo files; Interior view to west, May 1990 J900367.

DOE negative search;

North elevation; 1949, roof off; DOE A570/2 South elevation, c. 1949, roof off, window inserts, etc.; DOE A570/1.

### Bibliography

Beaulieu, Lord Montagu of, English Heritage, London, 1987.

Rigold, S.E. Temple Manor, Strood, Rochester, Kent, H.M.S.O, London, 1962.

Rigold, S.E. Temple Manor, Strood, Rochester, Kent, English Heritage supported and sponsored by Gateway, London, 1990.

Rigold, S.E. 'Two Camerae of the Military Orders', Archaeological Journal, CXXII, May 1966, pp.86-132.

Wadmore, J.F. 'The Knights Hospitallers in Kent', Arch. Cant., XXII, 1897, pp.251-5.

Wood, M. The English Mediaeval House, 2nd. edn., Bracken, London, 1983.

Wood, M. 'Thirteenth-Century Domestic Architecture in England', Archeological Journal, CV, supplement, 1950.

Unpublished internal report; Strike, J. 'A Study into the future of Temple Manor, Strood, Kent. A Paper for Discussion', Central Architectural Practice, June 1988.

## 2 General Audit Information

---

<b>Property name</b>	STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR	<b>County</b>	Kent
<b>Region</b>	South East		
<b>Location</b>	first floor		
<b>Orientation</b>	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b>	<b>Width (cm)</b>
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	SS/JD	<b>Start date</b>	21/06/94

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

### Recommendations

Although fragmentary, the remains of 13th-century decoration are extensive and an important testimony to the original appearance of the room.

Unfortunately however, the condition of all areas is poor; both the paint and render layers are delaminating and all original surfaces are covered with wax and dirt. A programme of conservation is therefore required in the near future. Initially this should include an in-depth preliminary condition survey, documentation, recording and photography upon which an overall treatment strategy can be based. Subsequently, treatment will probably include readherence of the paint and plaster layers (fixing and grouting), insertion of repairs as necessary, testing to reduce the damaging wax coating and surface cleaning. In addition a monitoring programme should be implemented. [Approximate timescale for condition survey and treatment: 2-3 conservators, 2 months, within 2 years].

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

---

Property name STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR  
Region South East County Kent  
Location first floor  
Orientation NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS  
Century 13<sup>th</sup> Date Height (cm) Width (cm)  
Auditor(s) SS/JD Start date 21/06/94

**Overall Condition Score 3**

#### Stratigraphy

---

Layer type Support Layer Specific condition Score 2

Thickness 60 cm

#### Comments

Support is of flint and Kent ragstone rubble also with some chalk blocks to the interior (the ceiling vault of the undercroft is made of chalk ashlar, those in the upper chamber may have been spare or reject blocks?). There are stone 'greensand' quoins to the windows, arcades and door. There are Purbeck marble shafts to the doorway (and originally to the arcades). The stone quoins are in poor condition. There are many repairs to the support and replacement quoins dating from 1954 (inscription 'AM 1954'). The west wall, originally an exterior wall, with a lancet window at high level is now an internal partition wall due to the seventeenth-century western extension.

---

Layer type Render Layer 1 Specific condition Score 3

Thickness 1 cm

#### Comments

Lime/sand render with the addition of stone dust. Chalk and brick inclusions are apparent in some areas. Sand aggregate is very yellow.

---

Layer type Ground Layer 1 Specific condition Score 3

Thickness

#### Comments

Red pigment thinly applied ground.

---

Layer type Paint Layer 1 Specific condition Score 3

Thickness

#### Comments

Red, yellow and black pigments thinly applied over render layer 2 (ground).

Identified pigments Colours

--- red

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

---

Property name	STROOD, TEMPLE MANOR		
Region	South East	County	Kent
Location	first floor		
Orientation	NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST WALLS		
Century	13th	Date	Height (cm)
			Width (cm)

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

Type loss of cohesion (render layer)

Location General

Comments

---

Type losses (paint layer)

Location General

Comments Where the paint layer has been lost a lighter 'shadow' is visible, indicating the original position of painted pattern.

---

Type delamination (paint layer)

Location General

Comments

---

Type delamination (render layer)

Location General

Comments

---

Type pitting (surface)

Location General and extensive.

Comments Original stone quoins are in very poor condition, and are deteriorating due to pitting, spalling and flaking.

---

#### Mechanical damage

Type keying marks

Location The west end of the wall is much more extensively keyed than the east.

Comments The more extensive keying of the western end of the north wall may be explained if the inner chamber was partitioned at some point during its history and a smaller western 'room' re-plastered (?).

---

Type scratches

Location General

Comments

---



## ADDED MATERIALS

### Accretions

**Type** dust

**Location** General

**Comments** The earth floor is very loose and friable and therefore easily disturbed by visitors. This must be causing large quantities of dust, which naturally settles on all surfaces, including the wall paintings.

---

**Type** cobwebs

**Location** General

**Comments** A fine network of cobwebs is visible.

---

**Type** unidentified deposit

**Location** Western end of north wall.

**Comments** There appears to be some efflorescence (?) associated with cement repairs to the western end of the north wall.

---

### Coatings/Coverings

**Type** wax

**Location** General

**Comments** A wax 'preservative' coating appears to have been applied to areas of early decoration. This has now darkened considerably. Dirt seems to have become embedded in the coating.

---

**Type** distemper

**Location** General

**Comments** A grey distemper appears to have been applied to all walls.

---

**Type** plaster

**Location** East wall

**Comments** A plaster layer containing hair extends over areas of the east wall, south and north sides and may be covering original decoration. The layer has been covered with blue-green 'distemper'.

---

### Repairs

**Type** cement

**Location** General

**Comments** Cement (?) repairs to cracks and small damages have been carried out. There appears to be some efflorescence associated with cement repairs to the western end of the north wall.

---

**Type** lime:sand

**Location** General

**Comments** There are several areas of replastering which appear to be of at least two dates. There are no edge repairs.

---

**Type** mud:straw

**Location** General

**Comments** There are various areas of re-plastering using a mud/straw mix.

---

## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

**Type** APPLICATION OF COATING                      **Date**

**Person** unknown

**Comments** The application of a wax 'preservative' coating and a grey 'distemper' appears to have been carried out. No details of previous interventions have been found.

---

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

**Person** unknown

**Comments** Several types and dates of repairs are visible. There do not appear to be any records of when, or by whom, each phase of repair was carried out.

---

**Type** UNCOVERING    **Date**

**Person** unknown

**Comments** From the evidence of keying marks it appears that the thirteenth-century paintings were at some stage plastered over, therefore uncovering must have occurred at some stage. No details of previous interventions have been found.

---

### Proposed Treatment

**Type** CLEANING    **Date** 21/06/94

**Person** SS/JD

**Comments** The removal of the wax coating should be considered to reduce the rate of deterioration of paint and plaster layers. The legibility of the paintings could also be considerably improved by surface cleaning to remove dust, dirt and grey distemper.

---

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION                      **Date** 21/06/94

**Person** SS/JD

**Comments** Edge repairs to support the fragile render layers are urgently required.

---

**Type** FLAKE FIXING    **Date** 21/06/94

**Person** SS/JD

**Comments** The paintings are in a fragile condition, with considerable delamination of the paint layer.

---

**Type** GROUTING    **Date** 21/06/94

**Person** SS/JD

**Comments** The paintings are in a fragile condition, with considerable loss of cohesion and delamination of the render layers.

---

**Type** MONITORING CONDITION                      **Date** 21/06/94

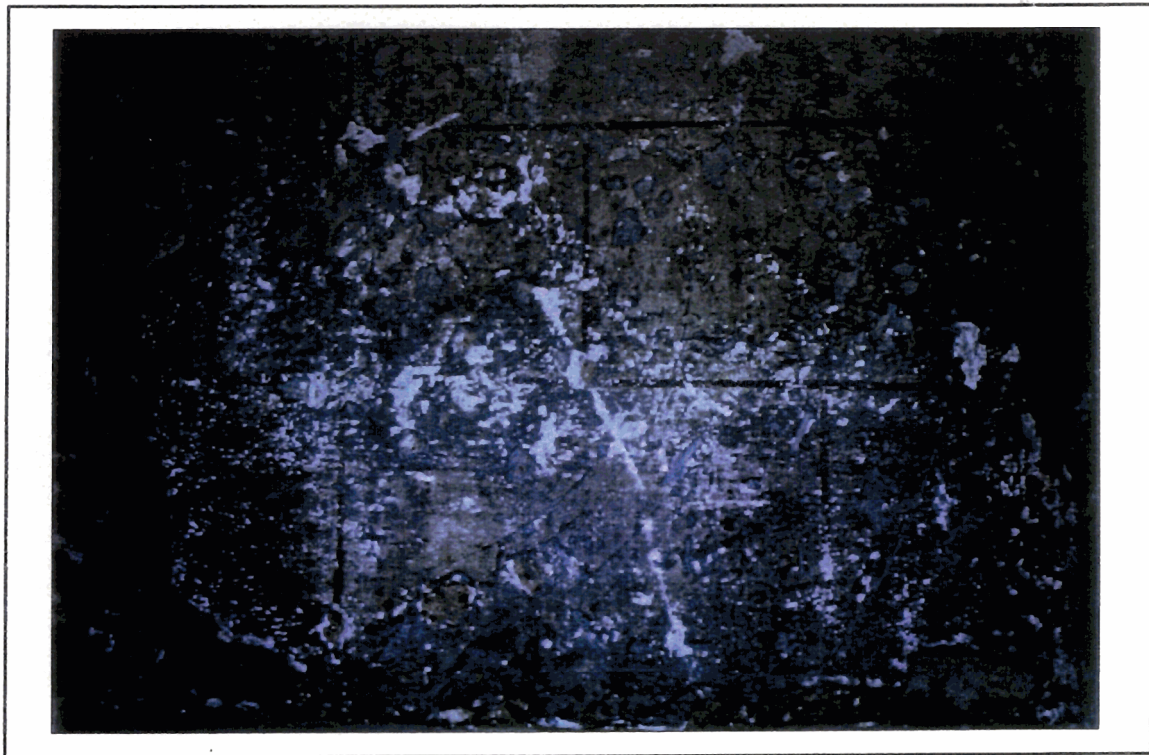
**Person** SS/JD

**Comments** The paintings are in a fragile condition. Some programme of monitoring should therefore be undertaken. It is understood that the responsibility for the care of the building is to be returned to Rochester City Council.

---



First floor, general view to east



First floor, east wall, south side, detail