

Method Statement

Removal of Cement Render and Application of Lime Render
31 Rose Street, Wokingham

Submission to Local Authority Conservation Officer – Grade II Listed Building

1. Introduction

This document has been prepared in response to the Conservation Officer's request for further detail regarding the proposed removal of the existing cement-based roughcast render and its replacement with a breathable lime-based render system.

The intent of the works is to improve the performance and longevity of the historic fabric by removing an inappropriate modern cement render and reinstating a traditional, vapour-permeable lime render more suited to the building's age, construction, and heritage significance.

All works will be carried out with a conservation-led approach, prioritising the protection and retention of historic masonry and minimising intervention wherever possible.

2. Existing Situation

The building is currently finished with a cement-based roughcast render. This material is considered incompatible with traditional solid wall construction due to its low permeability and rigidity, which can trap moisture and contribute to deterioration of underlying masonry.

The proposed replacement with a hydraulic lime render (EcoRight system) will enhance breathability and allow moisture to evaporate naturally, thereby supporting the long-term condition of the structure.

3. Principles of Work

The methodology is guided by the following conservation principles:

- Minimum intervention
- Reversibility where possible
- Use of compatible and breathable materials
- Retention of historic fabric
- Careful, controlled workmanship by experienced operatives

4. Methodology

4.1 Pre-Commencement

- Listed Building Consent and any required approvals will be confirmed prior to works.
- A photographic condition survey of all external elevations will be undertaken.

- Scaffolding will be erected to provide safe access and will include protective sheeting as required.
- All adjacent features (windows, doors, stonework, joinery) will be carefully protected.

4.2 Removal of Existing Cement Render

The removal of the cement render will be undertaken with extreme care to avoid damage to the underlying historic masonry.

- Removal will be carried out primarily using hand tools (chisels, mallets, scrapers).
- Mechanical tools will only be used where strictly necessary and will be low-impact and low-vibration.
- Works will proceed in small, controlled sections.
- Edges around openings and corners will be particularly carefully handled.
- The bond between render and substrate will be gradually broken to avoid pulling out masonry units.
- No aggressive techniques (e.g. cutting discs across masonry faces) will be employed.

This careful approach ensures that the removal process does not harm the historic walling fabric.

4.3 Inspection of Substrate

Once the render has been removed:

- The exposed masonry will be inspected for condition, defects, and areas of deterioration.
- Any loose or damaged material will be identified.
- A record of findings can be provided if required by the Conservation Officer.

4.4 Masonry Repairs

Where repairs are necessary:

- Localised repairs will be undertaken using compatible lime-based materials.
- Cementitious repairs (if present) will be removed where feasible.
- Replacement masonry units (if required) will match the existing in material, size, and appearance.
- Joints will be lightly raked and repointed using appropriate lime mortar.

All repairs will be minimal and targeted, ensuring maximum retention of original fabric.

4.5 Preparation for Lime Render

Prior to application:

- The substrate will be cleaned of dust and loose debris.

- Masonry will be lightly dampened to control suction.
- Background conditions will be assessed to ensure suitability for lime application.

4.6 Application of EcoRight Hydraulic Lime Mortar

The new render system will be applied in accordance with both traditional practice and manufacturer guidance.

- A suitable NHL-based lime mortar (grade to be agreed depending on exposure) will be used.
- The render will be applied in multiple coats:
 - Base/scratch coat
 - Float coat
 - Finish coat
- Each coat will be applied to an appropriate thickness and allowed to cure sufficiently before the next is applied.
- Surfaces will be keyed between coats to ensure adhesion.
- The final finish will be agreed with the Conservation Officer to ensure it is appropriate to the building's character.

4.7 Curing and Protection

Lime render requires controlled curing conditions:

- Newly applied render will be protected from rapid drying, direct sun, wind, and frost.
- Dampened hessian sheeting will be used where necessary.
- Adequate curing time will be allowed between coats and after completion.

5. Safeguarding Historic Fabric

At all stages, the works are specifically designed to avoid harm to the historic structure:

- Use of hand tools for removal minimises vibration and impact.
- Incremental working prevents uncontrolled detachment.
- Continuous supervision ensures issues are identified early.
- All operatives will be experienced in traditional materials and heritage work.

6. Render Finish and Detailing (Heritage Requirements)

In response to the Conservation Officer's comments, the following approach is proposed:

- Finish Type: The final coat will be a traditional fine sand finish, consistent with historic practice and visually aligned with the approved finish of the new extension.

- **Colour:** The render will incorporate a natural pigment within the lime mix, avoiding reliance on modern surface coatings. This will ensure a consistent, breathable finish and visual coherence between the original building and the extension.
- **Paints/Coatings:** No non-breathable paints will be applied. If a coating is required, only a breathable limewash or mineral-based system will be used.
- **Consistency with Extension:** Sample panels will be prepared if required to ensure the colour, texture, and finish match between the existing building and the extension.

Detailing and Materials

- **No Metal Beads or Mesh:** The use of metal angle beads, stop beads, or metal mesh reinforcement will be avoided as inappropriate modern interventions.
- **Arrises and Edges:** Corners and edges will be formed traditionally by hand.
- **Reinforcement (if required):** Any reinforcement will be limited to appropriate, non-metallic, and breathable materials compatible with lime systems, subject to approval.

7. Conclusion

The proposed removal of the cement render and its replacement with a lime-based system will be undertaken in a careful, controlled, and conservation-led manner.

The methodology ensures that:

- The existing historic masonry is protected during removal works
- Any necessary repairs are sympathetic and compatible
- The new render enhances the building's performance and heritage value

This approach accords with best conservation practice and is not expected to result in harm to the significance or fabric of the listed building.