

Ancient Monuments Laboratory  
Report 57/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,  
WAVERLEY ABBEY, SURREY

J Davies

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### Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Waverley Abbey 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.

Author's address :-

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



## Waverley Abbey Surrey

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>	WAVERLEY ABBEY		
<b>Region</b>	South East	<b>County</b>	Surrey
<b>Location of painting</b>	lay brothers range		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTH, SOUTH WEST WINDOWS		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 200	<b>Width (cm)</b> 75
<b>Subjects included</b>			
Masonry pattern			

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## Description

Waverley Abbey was the first Cistercian house in England, founded in 1128. The remaining ruins date from the 13th century. Brakspear (1905) noted remains of original plastering on the south wall of the southernmost chapel, near the piscina. D.Park (1981) recorded various fragments of plaster with incised masonry pattern and traces of lime white (particularly in the Cellarium), but did not find any traces of colour.

The only fragments found during the present survey were those noted by D. Park in the cellarium (lay brothers' refectory). The dimensions given above are the approximate largest sizes of the fragments. There are five fragments remaining: West wall, south window, south splay; fragments within an area 200 x 40. West wall, south window, north splay, 100 x 40. South wall, west window, east splay; 190 x 75 (west splay is ashlar). South wall, east window, west splay; 180 x 65 (east splay is rubble, probably originally also had incised imitation ashlar). South wall, east window, soffit; 65 deep x 210 across width of window (at its widest).

## Photographic Record

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

DOE negative search;  
Incised plasterwork only.

## Bibliography

H. Brakspear, Waverley Abbey, 1905.

Park, D. notes from a site visit in 1981, Courtauld internal document.

## 2 General Audit Information

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<b>Property name</b>	WAVERLEY ABBEY	<b>County</b>	Surrey
<b>Region</b>	South East		
<b>Location</b>	lay brothers range		
<b>Orientation</b>	SOUTH, SOUTH WEST WINDOWS		
<b>Century</b> 13th	<b>Date</b>	<b>Height (cm)</b> 200	<b>Width (cm)</b> 75
<b>Auditor(s)</b>	JD	<b>Start date</b>	19/07/94

**Overall condition score**        **2**

### Recommendations

The incised plaster appears to be in good condition, although a few minor repairs are required. This area has previously been conserved by EH architectural conservators, using lime based techniques. The Abbey is cared for under a two year maintenance specification and inspection plan which allows for regular repair to the area over a 2-3 year cycle. This should be satisfactory, as several areas are now in need of small edge repairs and grouting.

A photogrammetric survey of the site has been carried out and would be helpful in documenting any remedial conservation work carried out on the plaster.

### 3 Audit Information: Technique

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Property name WAVERLEY ABBEY  
Region South East County Surrey  
Location lay brothers range  
Orientation SOUTH, SOUTH WEST WINDOWS  
Century 13th Date Height (cm) 200 Width (cm) 75  
Auditor(s) JD Start date 19/07/94

**Overall Condition Score 2**

#### ***Stratigraphy***

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Layer type Support Layer Specific condition Score 2

Thickness

Comments

Rubble (ragstone?) construction, ashlar dressing.

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Layer type Render Layer 1 Specific condition Score 2

Thickness 0-3 cm

Comments

Construction skim over coarse rubble. Aggregate varies from pebbles c. 1 cm down to fine sand.

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Layer type Render Layer 2 Specific condition Score 3

Thickness 0.4 cm

Comments

Lime/sand render with incised imitation ashlar layer. Aggregate varies from 0.4 cm down to fine sand. Render has a white appearance. No ground, limewash or paint layers remain on surface. The ruins are on an exposed site, therefore delicate surface finishes are likely to have been lost. The incisions have apparently been formed by pressing a straight edge (0.3-0.5 cm wide) into the damp plaster.

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

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Property name	WAVERLEY ABBEY		
Region	South East	County	Surrey
Location	lay brothers range		
Orientation	SOUTH, SOUTH WEST WINDOWS		
Century 13th	Date	Height (cm)200	Width (cm) 75

### DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

#### Deterioration phenomena

Type delamination (render layer)

Location General

Comments A limited amount of delamination was noted, which accounts for the condition score (3) assigned to this layer, although the plaster appears to be generally in good condition.

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#### Mechanical damage

Type graffiti

Location General

Comments Some carved into the plaster and some in charcoal (?) over the surface.

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## **ADDED MATERIALS**

### **Accretions**

**Type** biodeterioration

**Location** South wall, west window, east splay.

**Comments** Appears to be yellow and red lichen.

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### **Coatings/Coverings**

**Type** limewash

**Location** Edge repairs to south wall, west window and west wall south window.

**Comments** Brown 'mineralised' limewash. Surface is hard, impervious, shiny and patchily brown.

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### **Repairs**

**Type** modern lime plaster

**Location** General, edge repairs.

**Comments** Appears to be soft lime mortar.

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## TREATMENT

### Past Treatment

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

**Person** English Heritage architects?

**Comments** Lime mortar edge repairs and other treatments appear to have been carried out (limewatering, grouting?). Discoloured limewash shelter coat to some repairs has become hard, impervious and therefore unsatisfactory.

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### Proposed Treatment

**Type** FILLS/REPAIRS INSERTION      **Date** 19/07/94

**Person** JD

**Comments** A few edge repairs are (again) required.

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**Type** GROUTING      **Date** 19/07/94

**Person** JD

**Comments** Some minor grouting is required.

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**Type** UNCOVERING      **Date** 19/07/94

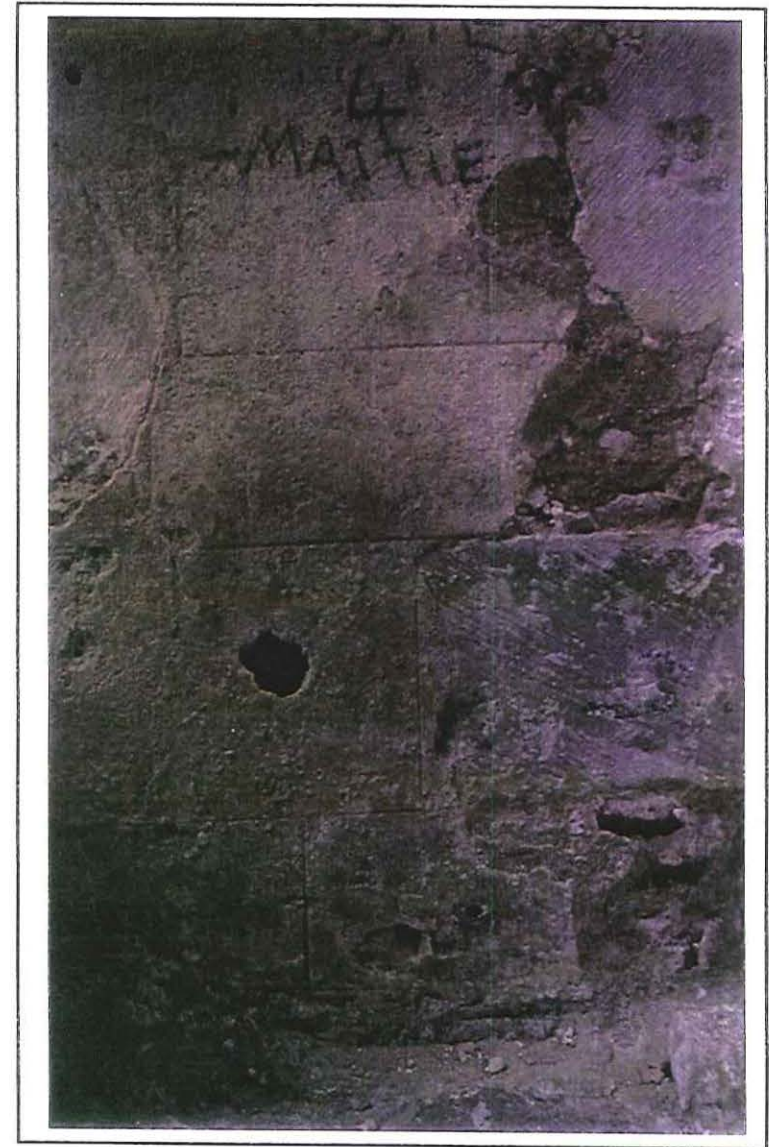
**Person** JD

**Comments** Removal of unsuitable limewash would be advantageous.

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Lay-brothers range, general view to north



Detail of incised masonry pattern