

Ancient Monuments Laboratory
Report 42/97

WALL PAINTING CONDITION AUDIT,
WHARRAM PERCY CHURCH, NORTH
YORKSHIRE

J Davies
T Manning

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Summary

This condition audit of wall paintings at Wharram Percy 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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Wharram Percy Church North Yorkshire

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

Property name	WHARRAM PERCY CHURCH		
Region	North	County	North Yorkshire
Location of painting	Chancel		
Orientation	NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS		
Century 17 th	Date	Height (cm) 0	Width (cm) 0
Subjects included			
Scrollwork			
Text(s)			

Description

The church of Wharram Percy exists as a roofless building (except for the chancel) in an isolated area. It and the surrounding remains of a deserted medieval village were excavated fully during the 1970's.

'The parish church of St Martin served Wharram Percy and four other townships in the parish... Its investigation has... been recognised as a fundamental part of the study of the [deserted medieval] village and it is the only survival above ground of the medieval structure of the village... The church was still in intermittent use until just after World War II, but during the 1950s and 1960s there was rapid decay. The roof has now been taken off and the walls consolidated as a ruin by the Department of the Environment.' (Hurst, d.u.:36)

'The present church is the remains of a once much larger structure with north and south aisles, the pillars of which are now embedded within the north and south walls. The present chancel (again a reduced version of a larger chancel once on the site) is of seventeenth century date, with minor nineteenth century alterations.' (Hurst, d.u.:passim)

Fragments of black painted post-reformation text and border decoration are present on the upper central area of the north wall and on the upper eastern area of the south wall.

A wall painting including an unidentified figure has also previously been recorded on a pillar within the north wall of the nave. Unfortunately no evidence for this was identified during the present audit.

The site was placed in the guardianship of the D.O.E. by Lord Middleton, probably in 1971. (Hurst, d.u.:36)

Photographic Record

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

DOE negative search;
Wharram Percy Church
7-11-89

A8158/5 'The interior showing a partially cased column, and the painted inscription above, overlaying the former facade.'

A8158/32 'The interior showing the junction between the Chancel and the North Wall of the Church.' Also shows B&W text inscription.

TM/JD Audit 1995 (July).

Bibliography

Anon, 'Wharram Percy', Current Archaeology, Vol. 5, No.2, March, 1975 ? (Photocopy in file)

Hurst, J.G. St Martin's Church, Wharram Percy, journal unknown, date unknown, 36 - 39. (Photocopy in file)

2 General Audit Information

Property name	WHARRAM PERCY CHURCH	County	North Yorkshire
Region	North		
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS		
Century 17 th	Date	Height (cm) 0	Width (cm) 0
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	11/07/95

Overall condition score **3**

Recommendations

This site is extremely isolated and the survival of any painted decoration is remarkable. The remains of paint are extremely fragmentary and therefore have been assigned Condition Score 3. However, no formal treatment appears necessary at present.

Periodic inspection should be carried out in order to assess the stability of the fragments and to allow for implementation of any conservation treatment as necessary. Detailed recording and general photography are also required.

3 Audit Information: Technique

Property name	WHARRAM PERCY CHURCH		
Region	North	County	North Yorkshire
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS		
Century 17 th	Date	Height (cm)0	Width (cm) 0
Auditor(s)	TM/JD	Start date	11/07/95

Overall Condition Score 3

Stratigraphy

Layer type	Support Layer	Specific condition Score	2
Thickness	50 cm		

Comments

The supporting walls have been consolidated and are in fair condition. The roof above also appears stable, however a small area of relatively modern plaster has been lost from between the timber ribs. It is imperative to keep the remains of the post-Reformation text sheltered from the elements and the roof should therefore be carefully maintained.

Layer type	Ground Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness			

Comments

The painting is executed on a fairly thick limewash ground which has been applied directly onto the stone support. Brushstrokes are visible in the limewash ground, most of which appear to be vertical, indicating an 'up-and-down' brush movement.

Layer type	Paint Layer 1	Specific condition Score	3
Thickness			

Comments

Thinly applied black paint. Fragmentary remains only.

Identified pigments	Colours
---	black

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

Property name	WHARRAM PERCY CHURCH		
Region	North	County	North Yorkshire
Location	Chancel		
Orientation	NORTH AND SOUTH WALLS		
Century 17th	Date	Height (cm)0	Width (cm) 0

DETERIORATION AND DAMAGE

Deterioration phenomena

Type loss

Location General, only fragments remain.

Comments Access was limited to ground level, therefore full comments on the condition and deterioration of the remaining paint fragments cannot be made. Extensive loss of the scheme has occurred and only fragments remain in situ. The site has been exposed for several years although the roof has now been repaired.

ADDED MATERIALS

Repairs

Type unidentified

Location structure

Comments It appears that the support has been repaired. No evidence of repairs to the painting were observed, however access was restricted to floor level. 'Scotch mortar' (cement and coarse aggregate) repointing is present throughout.

TREATMENT

Past Treatment

Type VARIOUS

Date 01/01/01

Person Unknown

Comments It appears that various structural works to consolidate and repair the building structure have been carried out.

Proposed Treatment

Type MONITORING CONDITION

Date 11/07/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Periodic inspection of the remains should be carried out in order to monitor their condition and implement treatment as necessary.

Type RECORDING AND
DOCUMENTATION

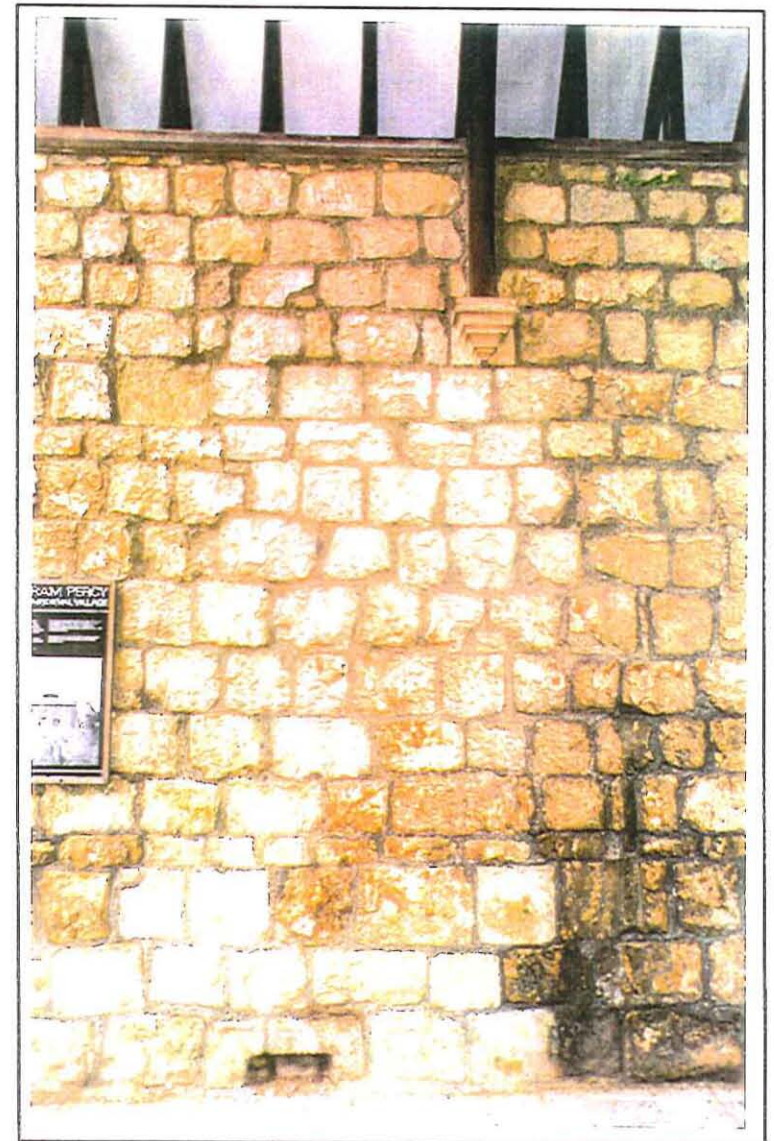
Date 11/07/95

Person TM/JD

Comments Documentation, recording and photography of the paintings should be carried out.



South wall, chancel, east end, traces of text and other decoration



North wall, chancel, note painted inscription at top of wall