Overview

This method statement outlines the proposed scope of works and associated procedures for construction activities to be undertaken on the 2nd and 7th floor spaces within the Rylands Building, Manchester. The Rylands Building is a prominent and historically significant structure, currently undergoing redevelopment to transform its internal spaces while retaining key architectural features. This Method Statement should be read in conjunction with all supporting Heritage support by SLHA and JBA.

This project involves the replacement of sprinkler heads and associated pipework within the cupolas, 2nd floor and 7th floor of the Grade II listed Rylands Building, a site of significant architectural and historical importance. Due to the delicate nature of the structure, careful removal and reinstatement of plasterwork will be required to facilitate the installation while preserving the original fabric of the building.

Proposed Works

It is proposed that the current services within the ceilings and walls are removed & in instances replaced, this will require the following builder's work:

- Chasing out of plaster and substrates
- Removal of existing services
- Introducing new services to replace the old M&E system.
- Making Good Historic Plasterwork

Notably, decorative plasterwork remains intact across ceilings and cornices, particularly within the boardroom and manager's office. The cupolas feature curved lath and plaster domes, which are of architectural significance and contribute to the building's listed status. Original timber panelling, joinery, and ornamental detailing are also present in select areas, especially within the boardroom and office spaces. These features represent essential elements of the building's heritage fabric and will require careful protection and reinstatement during the proposed works. Cutting and chasing needs to be carried out sympathetically & in consideration of the building's Grade II listed status & the type and age of its & building materials.

We recommend a pre-builder's work inspection with consideration of the embellishments and features & a further inspection post-builders work to establish the extent of any damaged or haddled plaster.

Following the carrying out or completion of the building operations, all making good of existing surfaces shall be carried out using materials and finishes that closely match (like-for-like) the historic materials & finished details used in the existing structure to

ensure the historic character & appearance of the affected building elements are maintained.

The works on Level 07 are to be conducted specifically within the tearoom, cupolas, Level 02 manager's office, and boardroom. These works are included but not limited to the items below.

- Repair & re-instate lime plaster to walls
- Repair & re-instate lime plaster to ceilings and walls on a timber lath base
- Repair & re-instate lime plaster on an expanded metal lath base.
- Repair the embellishments in the boardroom to include the diamond pattern relief to the underside of the beam & any repairs to the sub-dividing beams
- Repairs to walls and ceilings following the removal of any non- original structures or decorations.
- Repair historic & builders work damage within the Cupola & raked ceiling.

Materials

The following materials are proposed, subject to confirmation and acceptance.

- Non-Hydraulic Sand lime mortar, (feeble- premixed with a sharp sand with an addition of animal hair) https://edenhotlimemortar.co.uk/product/hot-lime-mortar/
- Timber laths, machined or riven, subject to confirmation, https://edenhotlimemortar.co.uk/product/timber-lath/
- Animal hair binder https://edenhotlimemortar.co.uk/product/hair-fibres/
- Pure lime finishing plaster.
- Galvanised mild steel BB lathing.
- Lime putty
- Fine casting plaster

METHOD 1, Plaster to brick walls

Existing plasterwork within Level 07/02 – including the tearoom, cupolas, manager's office, and boardroom – comprises historic lime-based plaster, in some areas applied over timber lath and in others directly onto masonry substrates. These finishes are of heritage value and must be managed with care throughout the works.

Protection of Plasterwork

Covering with Hessian: Yes, all exposed or vulnerable areas of original plaster are to be protected using **breathable hessian sheeting**, secured with non-invasive fixings. This will provide a dust and impact barrier while allowing moisture exchange.

Wetting/Misting: Prior to any removal or repair, **light misting** of surrounding plaster will be conducted to reduce dust generation, aid workability, and control shrinkage and cracking during reinstatement. Wetting will also be undertaken between coats to support proper carbonation.

Plaster Removal

Extent of Removal: Only localised areas of plaster are to be removed — strictly limited to zones required to access and install new sprinkler pipework and heads. Removal zones will be mapped and agreed in advance with the heritage consultant.

Tools and Method: All plaster removal will be conducted by hand using non-mechanical tools (e.g., chisels, scrapers, fine saws). No power tools will be used to avoid vibration or overbreak.

Where plaster is applied to lath, efforts will be made to retain the laths intact for re-use where practical.

Removed plaster fragments of significance will be retained on site and reused or sampled if requested.

Plaster Reinstatement

1. Plaster will be reinstated using traditional lime plaster techniques:
2. Surfaces will be brushed down to remove dust and loose material.
3. Walls will be misted to aid adhesion.
4. A **dubbing-out coat** will be applied if necessary and left open to cure.
5. A **scratch coat** (6–10 mm thick depending on sand type) will be applied and scored with a wooden float to open pores.
6. Surfaces will be misted regularly to support carbonation and control drying.
7. A **float coat**, identical in mix to the scratch coat, will follow once the base has stiffened. A devil float will provide a 1–2 mm key.
8. A **finish coat**, no thicker than 2 mm, will be applied and finished using a steel float and sponge. Final misting will ensure even drying.
9. **No forced heat** will be used at any stage.
10. Only **breathable finishes** (limewash or Keim) will be applied upon full curing.

Service Strip-Out and Installation

Existing sprinkler pipework and heads will be removed using hand tools only.

11. Care will be taken to isolate sections cleanly to prevent damage to adjacent finishes.
12. Services will be stripped in short phases, coordinated with the removal of plaster, to ensure openings are minimal and sequential.

13. All fixings will avoid penetrating historic structural members or ornamental elements.
14. Any bracketing or containment systems for the new installation will be sympathetically fixed into structural substrates, not into decorative finishes.

Method 2, Plaster walls/ ceilings on a timber lath base

1. Fix laths to timber bearers using galvanised or copper nails. Leave sufficient gap between 5-7mm to allow the scratch coat to press through and form nibs.
2. Spray to prevent drying.
3. Follow steps 6 to 9 of Method 1.

Method 3, plaster to ceiling on Mesh base.

1. Fix mesh to substrate using galvanised staples or wire twists.
2. Where patching to existing mesh tie in using wire twists and stretch as tightly as possible without distorting.
3. Repeat steps 1-3 of method 2 & 6-9 of Method 1.

Diamond embellishment repair, as figure 7 of SLHA heritage report

1. Until the non-original casing is removed from the beam, we cannot determine the extent of work required, the diamond embellishment may be able to be patched insitu or a reverse mould made from a section.