Method Statement –
Protection of Retained Plaster

This method statement covers the protection and maintenance of retained historic plaster during localised lime plaster repairs to traditional lath and plaster and lime plaster applied directly to masonry.

The objective is to retain as much sound existing fabric as practicable and prevent damage to adjacent areas during the works.

Prior to works commencing, repair areas shall be inspected and photographed. The extent of defective, loose or detached plaster shall be established and marked out.

Sound plaster, existing laths, decorative features and adjacent finishes shall be retained wherever practicable. Any unexpected or particularly fragile fabric encountered during opening-up shall be reported before further removal takes place.

Retained plaster and adjacent finishes shall be protected from impact, vibration, moisture, dust, lime splashes and other contamination. Suitable temporary protection, including breathable sheeting, boards or other appropriate coverings, shall be installed before works commence. Protection shall be securely fixed without damaging the existing fabric.

Particular care shall be taken at fragile plaster edges, corners, mouldings and other vulnerable features. Only suitable adhesive tapes shall be applied directly to historic plaster or decorative finishes.

Defective plaster shall be removed locally and carefully. Hand tools and hand saws shall be used as much as practicable. In areas where a neat and controlled joint is required, or where the use of conventional hand tools could introduce excessive impact or vibration to retained plaster, a multi-tool with an appropriate blade may be used. This will be operated carefully and for the minimum duration necessary to form the repair boundary. The use of the multi-tool will be controlled to avoid unnecessary disturbance to retained fabric. The repair area shall not be enlarged simply to create a regular or convenient boundary. For lath and plaster, sound existing laths shall be retained wherever possible and protected from damage during removal and preparation.

New Lime Plaster and Curing

New lime plaster shall be applied carefully to avoid impact or excessive pressure on retained plaster. The junction between new and existing plaster shall be kept to the minimum area necessary and formed without disturbing the retained edges. During curing, the repair shall be protected from rapid drying, direct heat, frost, strong draughts and excessive moisture. Temporary protection shall not prevent appropriate ventilation and drying of the wall. Retained plaster shall be visually monitored throughout the works. Any new cracking, movement, detachment or damage shall be reported and works in the affected area stopped until the condition has been assessed.

On completion, protection shall be removed carefully and the new repair and surrounding retained fabric inspected for damage, staining or contamination.

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Sound historic plaster and lath shall be retained wherever practicable, with hand tools used wherever possible and controlled use of a multi-tool where this provides a more precise repair joint and reduces the risk of excessive vibration or impact to retained fabric.