HALESTONE

ST ANSELM HALL

Monday, *14* September 2026

Prepared For MCC

St Anselm Half, Manchester

Lime Plaster, Lath and Timber Condition Assessment

Introduction

A site condition audit was undertaken at St Anselm Hall, Manchester, covering numerous rooms and areas throughout the building. The audit identified 67 individual items/areas requiring consideration, ranging from localised plaster repairs through to areas where full wall or ceiling replacement is recommended.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the apparent condition and stability of the existing plaster finishes, including areas of traditional lath and plaster construction, and to provide recommendations regarding areas that may require repair, localised replacement or further investigation.

The inspection also identified a number of areas where the condition of underlying timber may have implications for the plaster and, potentially, the structural integrity of the building. These areas will require further opening-up and inspection by a suitably qualified Structural Engineer before final remedial works are determined.

Limitations of Inspection

It should be noted that the inspection was undertaken primarily as a visual and non-destructive condition assessment. In a number of areas, existing wall finishes were covered by wallpaper or other decorative finishes. This restricted the ability to visually inspect the plaster **surface** and prevented a full assessment of the condition of the plaster and its connection to the underlying lath.

Where wallpaper was present, the areas were nevertheless assessed as far as reasonably practicable by carrying out gentle percussion/tap testing and limited hand-pressure testing to establish whether there was evidence of movement, debonding or instability beneath the existing finish.

These tests have assisted in forming the recommendations contained within the audit; however, they cannot provide the same level of certainty as physical opening-up and inspection of the plaster, laths and underlying timber.

Consequently, areas which appeared satisfactory under tapping or light pressure should not be considered to have been fully verified where the construction remained concealed.

Where works proceed, the **contractor** should remain alert to previously concealed defects becoming apparent following removal of wallpaper, existing plaster or other finishes. The extent of any repair area may therefore require adjustment once the substrate has been exposed.

Assessment / method

- Visual inspection of accessible areas.
- Review of the existing plaster finishes and visible defects.
- Gentle percussion/tap testing to identify hollow or detached areas.
- Limited hand-pressure testing to assess local movement or loss of bond.
- Assessment of visible cracking, bulging, deterioration and previous repairs.
- Consideration of the apparent construction, including areas believed to comprise lath and plaster or partitions.
- Identification of areas requiring further opening-up or structural assessment.

The pressure testing undertaken should be regarded as an indication of condition rather than a definitive structural test.

For example, several areas within the audit were identified as being “poor under pressure” and have consequently been recommended for replacement. This includes a number of lath-and-plaster areas identified within the residential rooms, where areas were assessed as poor under pressure.

Lime Plaster and Lath

The existing lime plaster and lath construction should generally be approached on a repair-and-retain basis where the existing material remains adequately bonded and stable.

The audit has identified a mixture of conditions. Some areas have been found to be in good condition, whilst other areas exhibit movement, poor resistance under pressure, hollow conditions, previous over-skimming or evidence of debonding.

Where plaster remains stable and adequately attached to sound laths, wholesale removal should not be assumed to be necessary.

Conversely, where testing has identified significant movement, poor resistance under pressure, extensive debonding or failure of the existing plaster keys, replacement should be considered.

Areas of Previous Over-Plastering

Some areas appear to have been previously over-skimmed or over-plastered. Item 9, for example, identifies an approximately 10m^2 area which appears to have been over-skimmed and where the existing mortar is considered likely to be cementitious. Replacement of this area has therefore been recommended.

Similarly, the basement area identified as Item 66 appears to have been over-plastered with a potentially non-breathable mortar and has been recommended for consideration of replacement.

Where traditional lime construction is present, consideration should be given to the compatibility and breathability of replacement materials. Existing cementitious or otherwise incompatible coatings should be assessed during opening-up before determining the final specification.

Timber Condition and Structural Repairs

A number of areas require additional investigation of the underlying timber.

The condition of concealed timber cannot be established reliably through plaster finishes alone. Where timber forms part of the supporting structure, localised opening-up should be undertaken to establish its condition, particularly where there is evidence of moisture damage, decay, rot, movement or deterioration.

The inspection should establish:

- The extent of any timber rot or decay.
- Whether the deterioration is active or historic.
- The amount of remaining sound timber.
- Any loss of structural section.
- The condition of timber connections and bearing points.
- Whether splice repairs are feasible.
- Whether strengthening or replacement is required.
- Whether a suitable timber treatment is appropriate.
- The source of any moisture affecting the timber.

Structural Engineer Input

Due to the presence of potentially deteriorated structural timber in certain areas, it is recommended that a Structural Engineer is engaged to inspect the relevant areas once suitable opening-up has been undertaken.

This is particularly important where timber members may be supporting masonry, floors, ceilings or other building elements.

Item 38 of the audit identifies a timber lintel as being in a dangerous condition and recommends that it is supported as soon as possible, with Structural Engineer input required for temporary propping and permanent structural works.

Item 42 also identifies an area where all timbers will require inspection, demonstrating that the plaster condition cannot be considered independently of the underlying timber

construction. These areas should be treated as requiring further structural assessment rather than simply plaster replacement.

Timber Splice Repairs and Treatment

Following exposure and inspection of affected timber members, the Structural Engineer should determine whether the existing timber can be retained through localised splice repairs, strengthening or other suitable structural intervention.

Where sufficient sound timber remains, a splice repair may provide an appropriate means of retaining the existing structural member. The extent, dimensions, fixing arrangement and structural adequacy of any splice repair should be determined by the Structural Engineer based upon the condition of the individual member and its structural requirements.

Where the timber has suffered extensive decay or loss of section and is no longer capable of safely performing its structural function, replacement or more extensive strengthening may be required.

A suitable timber treatment may be appropriate where specified following the inspection. Treatment should not, however, be regarded as a substitute for structural repair where timber has suffered significant loss of section or structural capacity.

Ceiling Areas

Ceilings should be treated with particular care due to the potential consequences of detached plaster.

The audit identifies several ceiling areas requiring further action. For example, Item 1 1 identified slight movement under pressure and visible evidence of debonding around the edges, resulting in a recommendation that at least 50% of the ceiling be replaced before the remaining area is assessed for bonding to the laths.

Item 54 similarly identifies a ceiling with multiple fractures and poor resistance under pressure, with full replacement recommended.

Where ceiling plaster is found to be loose, significantly debonded or unstable, suitable precautions and temporary support should be considered before removal or further investigation.

The findings should be read in conjunction with the individual 67 audit items and associated drawings.

It is important to recognise that the presence of wallpaper and other finishes restricted the visual inspection in some areas. Nevertheless, gentle tapping/percussion and limited hand-pressure testing were undertaken to assist in assessing the apparent stability of the underlying construction. These tests provide useful indications of

condition but cannot confirm the condition of concealed laths, plaster keys or structural timbers.

Accordingly, where works are undertaken, targeted opening-up should form part of the initial process, particularly in areas identified as poor under pressure or where structural timber is suspected to be defective.

The most significant structural concerns should be referred to a Structural Engineer, particularly the timber lintel identified in Item 38, which requires prompt support and structural assessment, and the areas identified in Item 42 where all timbers require inspection.

The overall approach should be to retain and repair sound historic fabric wherever practicable, while replacing areas that are demonstrably unstable, excessively deteriorated or no longer capable of providing a suitable substrate. The final extent of replacement should be confirmed following opening-up and, where relevant, structural assessment.

Where timber decay is identified, the repair strategy should consider splice repairs, strengthening or replacement, together with appropriate timber treatment where required. The cause of deterioration, particularly any source of moisture, should be addressed as part of the remedial works.



ITEM 1

Assigned To North Wall - Communal Room G.003

This area is as the drawing and in a poor condition



ITEM 2

Assigned To North Wall

This *area* is as the drawing



ITEM 1 1

Assigned To Ceiling

Slight movement under pressure you can see at the edges that some of the plaster has debonded we would advise at least 50% of the ceiling is replaced and then determine with a visual inspection if the other half is fully bonded to the laths.



ITEM 1 2

Assigned To Ceiling

Slight movement under pressure you can you can see that it has debonded at the edges of where the old plaster has been removed



ITEM 13

Assigned To Ceiling

Pressure seems fine although there is dust coming through the old fixing holes suggesting replacement should be considered as the drawing.



ITEM 14

Assigned To South Wall - Balance

As the drawing



ITEM 15

Assigned To East Wall

As the drawing.



ITEM 21

Assigned To West Wall - Meeting

The portion is in good condition and the replacement area should be as the drawing.



ITEM 27

Assigned To South Wall

As the drawing but as above will need to be extended as the full area is in *a* poor condition, the full wall should be considered for replacement.



ITEM 35

Assigned To North Wall

As the drawing



ITEM 36

Assigned To North Wall

As the drawing



ITEM 37

Assigned To Ceiling

The ceiling to the room is poor in some areas under pressure



ITEM 38

Assigned To Balance 1.021

The timber lintel is in a dangerous condition and should be supported. A structural engineer will be required for temporary propping and structural works to stabilise the area, 2m2 plaster will be required once the repairs have been completed



ITEM 39

A closer picture of the timber lintel



ITEM 43

Assigned To West Wall

1 m2 should be considered for replacement



ITEM 41

Assigned To West Wall

Some areas are showing poor condition, the full wall should be considered for replacement



ITEM 42

Assigned To East Wall

All timbers in this area will need to be inspected



ITEM 52

Assigned To South Wall

As mentioned above the area on the drawing will need to be extended



ITEM 53

Assigned To West Wall

Partition springing with pressure full replacement should be considered



ITEM 54

Assigned To Ceiling

Ceiling has many and fractures is poor pressure full replacement as the drawing suggests



ITEM 58

Assigned To 1.024

The full area should be replaced as the drawing suggests



ITEM 59

Assigned To North Wall

The repair area will need to be extended as the drawing suggests



ITEM 60

Assigned To Ceiling 1.024

We would advise replacing the full ceiling and not the patch area as the drawing suggests

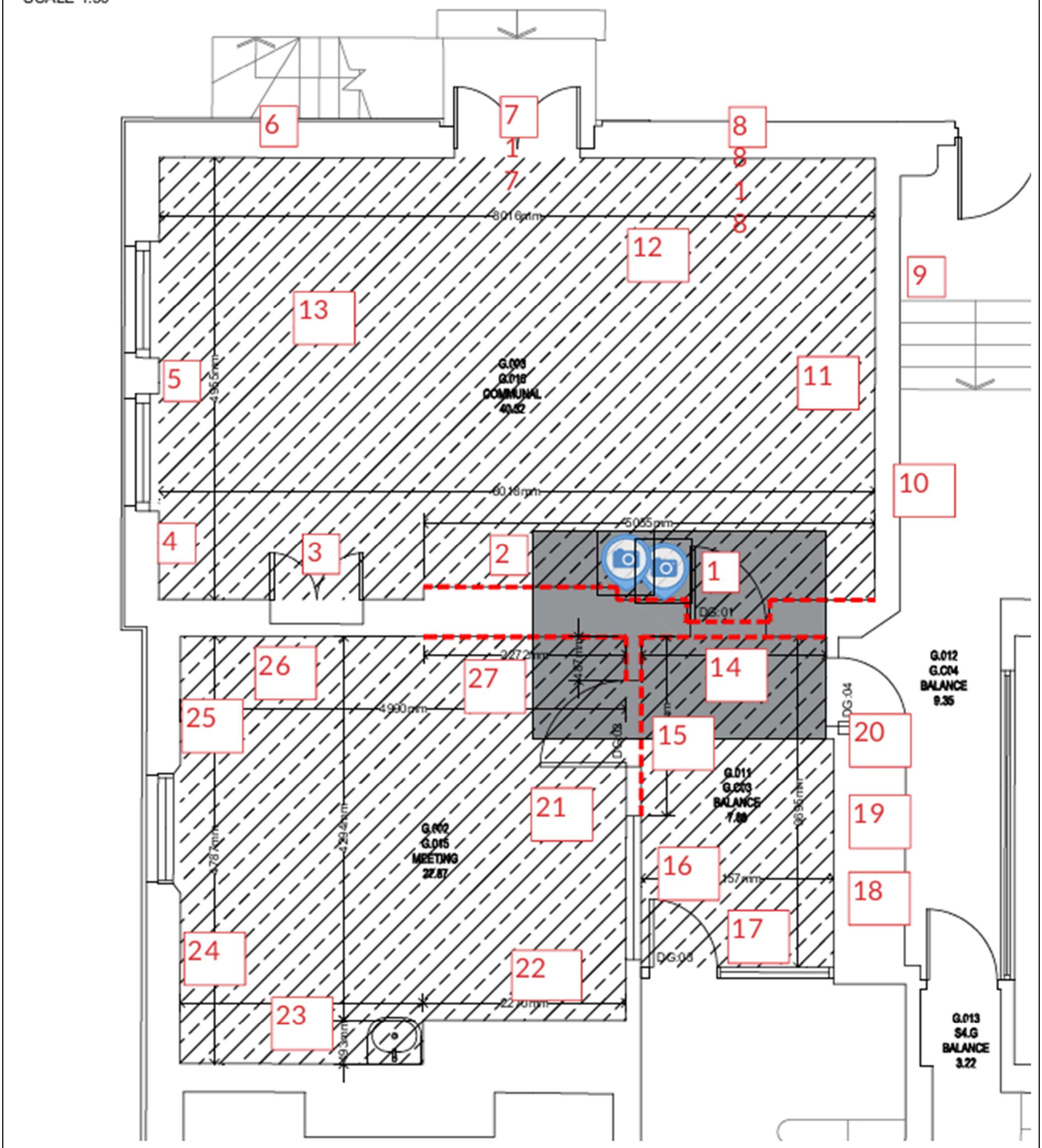


ITEM 67

Assigned To East Wall

Full area for replacement as the drawing

GROUND FLOOR ARRANGEMENT PLAN
ENLARGED SECTION
SCALE 1:50



FIRST FLOOR ARRANGEMENT PLAN
ENLARGED SECTION
SCALE 1:50

