

Method Statement for Lath and Plaster Ceiling Repair

Project Title: Church Ceiling Lath and Plaster Repair

Location: St Mary's Church, 12 Castle St, Reading RG1 7RD

Date: 02.01.2026

1. Scope of Work

The work involves repairing the ceiling lath and plaster in the church, specifically addressing visible cracks in the plaster while maintaining the structural integrity of the original plaster. The cracks shall be filled with a fine lime plaster finish, and any loose plaster shall be resecured using stainless steel screws and washers.

2. Materials

- **Lime Plaster:** Suitable fine lime plaster (appropriate for historic buildings)
- **Stainless Steel Screws:** 30mm long, corrosion-resistant
- **Washers:** Stainless steel, to support the plaster
- **Plastering Tools:** Trowels, Hawk, Float, Plastering Brushes, etc.
- **Cleaning Materials:** Brushes, dust sheets, water, cleaning rags

3. Preparation of the Work Area

1. **Accessing the Ceiling:**
 - Set up appropriate scaffolding or ladders to access the ceiling safely.
 - Ensure the area is well-lit and stable for workers.
2. **Protecting Surrounding Areas:**
 - Use dust sheets or protective covers to shield floors and furniture from plaster debris.
 - Remove any loose items or valuables from the workspace to avoid damage.
3. **Cleaning the Surface:**
 - Gently remove any loose or crumbling plaster around the cracks.
 - Use a soft brush to clean the laths and any other visible dirt or debris.
 - Inspect the laths for stability and soundness.

4. Inspection and Assessment

- **Cracks:** Carefully examine the cracks in the ceiling, noting their size and direction.
- **Plaster Condition:** Ensure the plaster is generally in good condition and that there are no signs of further deterioration.
- **Laths:** Confirm that the original laths are in sound condition and do not require repair or replacement.

5. Repair Process

5.1 Crack Repair

1. **Preparing the Cracks:**

- For each visible crack, use a hand tool (DO NOT widen the crack) , ensuring a good bond for the new plaster.
- Clean the crack of dust and debris using a soft brush.
- 2. Filling the Crack:**
 - Mix the lime plaster to a fine, workable consistency.
 - Using a trowel, apply the lime plaster to fill the crack, ensuring it is level with the surrounding surface.
 - Smooth the finish to blend with the original ceiling plaster.
 - Allow the plaster to set slightly before finishing with a float to achieve a fine, uniform texture.

5.2 Re-securing Loose Plaster

- 1. Identifying Loose Areas:**
 - Inspect the ceiling for areas where plaster is loose or detached from the laths.
- 2. Pinning Back Plaster:**
 - Using stainless steel screws and washers, gently pin back any loose plaster to the original laths.
 - Ensure that the screws are inserted at an angle that avoids further damage to the plaster and laths.
 - Ensure the washers are placed beneath the plaster to provide an even distribution of pressure.
- 3. Filling the Gaps:**
 - Once the loose plaster is secured, fill the gaps and any imperfections with lime plaster.
 - Smooth out the finish to create a seamless surface with the original plaster.

5.3 Finishing and Curing

- 1. Smoothing and Polishing:**
 - Once the plaster has dried to a suitable consistency, smooth the surface using a float and/or sponge to achieve a fine finish.
- 2. Curing:**
 - Allow the repaired sections to dry naturally. Do not rush the drying process by applying excessive heat or force drying.
 - Keep the area free from excessive traffic or disturbance during the curing period.
 - After curing, gently clean the ceiling to remove any excess dust from the plaster repair.

6. Health and Safety

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):**
 - All personnel should wear appropriate PPE, including dust masks, gloves, eye protection, and sturdy footwear.
- **Lifting and Handling:**
 - Ensure proper lifting techniques when handling scaffolding or ladders.
 - If scaffolding is used, ensure it is set up in accordance with safety guidelines and is stable.
- **Dust Control:**

- Use dust sheets and ensure proper ventilation during the repair process to minimize plaster dust inhalation.

7. Quality Control

- **Inspection:**
 - Prior to finishing the repairs, the work will be inspected by a supervisor to ensure the plaster has adhered properly and the cracks are filled without further expansion.
- **Finishing:**
 - The final finish should be smooth, consistent, and blend seamlessly with the original ceiling as close as possible.

8. Completion

- Once all repairs have been completed, and the plaster has fully cured, remove any protective sheeting, and clean the work area.
 - Perform a final inspection to ensure the work meets the required standards.
 - Ensure the church is left clean, with no dust or debris left in the space.
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