

## **The Painted Room, 9 Market Street, Whittlesey**

*Condition and significance assessment: 9th - 13th July 2018*



## Table of Contents

1.	Introduction and summary .....	3
2.	The Building .....	4
3.	Significance of the wall paintings .....	5
4.	Description of the painted room .....	7
5.	Description of the wall paintings.....	7
6.	Technology of the wall paintings .....	12
7.	Condition of the wall paintings .....	15
8.	Threats to the paintings.....	20
9.	Outstanding questions and analysis .....	22
10.	Recommendations and next steps.....	22
11.	References cited .....	23
12.	Appendix A. Graphic Documentation .....	24

Notice: This report is submitted subject to the following conditions.

- 1. This report is furnished only on the condition that it is not used in legal proceedings without the express permission of the author.*
- 2. Neither the author, nor Opus Conservation, hold themselves in any way responsible for any use that may be made of this report, or for any consequences, legal or otherwise, that may arise from its submission.*

## 1. Introduction and summary

This report describes the findings of a condition survey of the recently uncovered wall paintings on the first floor of the grade II listed building, 9 Market Street, Whittlesey. List Entry Number: 1228220. The work was commissioned by Simon Black of Orlando Interior Design on behalf of Peter Grice (the building owner) at the suggestion of the Fenland Conservation Officer Katie McAndrew. The reason for the commission was that during recent renovation works wall paintings of potential historical significance were discovered behind wooden panelling. The room is located on the first floor to the north west corner of the building.

The survey, undertaken by Samuel Whittaker (Opus Conservation), found the paintings to be a rare and significant survival of seventeenth century domestic wall painting on a lime and earthen support. Although the exact dating remains unclear the paintings very likely date to the seventeenth century (c.1650) and are therefore of high local and national significance. The composition is a lower three-quarter band of fictive panelling above which are landscape scenes with figures, animals, trees and buildings.

The condition of the paintings as found is very fragile, with numerous types of deterioration and damage affecting the paintings. This has led to loss of both the paint and plaster layers. The paint layer is flaking and powdery whilst the plaster layers are extensively cracked and delaminated from the stone wall.

If all appropriate caution and protective measures are not taken during the present renovation works to the room and wider building, the stability and survival of the painted plaster is threatened. Given the ongoing renovation of the building the paintings are very susceptible to further damage and deterioration. That the building is not presently sealed (open roof, walls and floors) is a concern, as is damage from accidental and intentional impact, vibration, dust and liquid water.

It is planned for the building to open as a hotel (December 2018) and the painted room to be used as a guest bedroom with en-suite bathroom in the adjacent room to the south. The floor above will also have an en-suite bedroom with kitchen. The floor below will be a commercial space used as a deli.

The building works and plans for the use of the building must accommodate necessary adjustments to ensure the survival of these remarkable and significant paintings. It is likely this will require the following;

- Temporary stabilisation or remedial conservation treatment before and during building works that cause vibration or that impact directly/are in the direct vicinity of the paintings.
- Remedial conservation to preserve the wall paintings and prevent further loss.
- Careful planning of how the painted room and adjacent rooms are used to prevent damage or deterioration of the paintings over the long term. Planning should account for;
  - liquid water dispersal system: drains and piping should be kept as far for the paintings as possible;
  - environmental conditions: bathrooms and kitchens should not create an unsuitable environmental fluctuations in relative humidity and absolute humidity due to direct air exchange. This is because painted earthen materials are susceptible to changes in these conditions;
  - accidental damage from people. Even after conservation the wall paintings are inherently fragile and damage due to occupancy is a threat. The design of the room should minimise the opportunity for impact damage. Concealing the paintings behind a screen, panelling or a stud wall is an option. But this must account for accessibility to intermittently monitor the condition of painting. The impact on the micro-climate of the paintings should also be accessed to ensure concealing the paintings is not creating unsuitable environmental conditions.



## 2. The Building

9 Market Street is a Grade II listed building. The Historic England listing describes the building as follows;

*'House and Shops. Mid-late C17, C19 and C20. Rubblestone, dressed stone with C19 brick. Roof raised C19 (original gable visible in end wall), slate, but original moulded stone eaves cornice retained as band between first and C19 second storey. End stack of stone ashlar on base with splayed upper edge. Three storeys. Third storey of brick added in C19 when roof raised. Three windows. First floor has an original casement opening with hollow moulded surround and mullion. Three other possible original window openings, all now blocked with rubblestone including one with a reset medieval mask. Three C19 or C20 hung sashes. Ground floor remodelled. One late C17 hollow moulded casement to a basement, now obscured. In the side wall, one similar window. Inside not seen.'*<sup>1</sup>

That the paintings are executed directly onto the original stone wall it is the author's opinion that the paintings were created shortly after the original construction of the building.



Figs. 1 - 2. Views of the north and east facade of 9 Market Street.



Figs. 3. General view looking north of the painted room as found. Painting survives on the north and east walls.

1 <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1228220>, accessed 12/07/2018

### 3. Significance of the wall paintings

Text by *Samuel Whittaker, Stephen Rickerby and Lisa Shekede*

The wall paintings of Whittlesey are undoubtedly of very high local significance and indeed national significance. Findings of this type—domestic wall paintings on earthen supports—are increasingly rare. Most have either been lost through destruction or concealed during redecoration and refurbishment, meaning any new find is extremely important, especially one as extensive and refined as this.

This discovery therefore provides the opportunity to save an important and rare example of a threatened cultural resource. That the paintings are both figurative (landscapes, buildings, people and animals) and decorative (fictive panelling) is remarkable. They present a wealth of information regarding 17th century society, art and architecture (costume, tastes, economy etc.). It should be reiterated that these surviving features only confirm and increase their significance. Often domestic wall painting from this period are simple in execution and palette, usually simple decorative patterns in two or three colours. Therefore, the rich palette used and fine detailing highlight their rarity and significance.

There is very little evidence of the lives of ordinary people from the seventeenth century, especially in a rural and vernacular setting, meaning this find is particularly important in the context of English wall painting. The paintings communicate the social and cultural values of the people who commissioned them, usually the owner or occupier of the house. They are significant as they provide depictions of contemporary people and represent the tastes and concerns of the time. The subject matter of the painting suggests the space may have been used to entertain and impress guests, displaying their wealth, education and taste.

Exact dating of paintings of this kind is often very difficult and will require research beyond the scope of the present report. Broadly they range 'between the late sixteenth and the middle of the seventeenth centuries'<sup>2</sup>. Luckily, more precise dating of this painting should be possible due to the distinctive dress of the figures, the buildings, and the fine decoration of the panelling, which all provide vital information. Panelling of this kind is definitely seventeenth century<sup>3</sup>. Both the panelling and dress suggest a dating of c.1650. A late date for paintings of this kind, meaning they represent a rare example from this period (personal communication Stephen Rickerby and Lisa Shekede). The landscape scenes do not appear to be local and are possibly not of the UK either. The buildings suggest a classical influence and could therefore have been influenced by prints or reference a grand tour. The seventeenth century saw a European influence on English art and architecture through individuals such as Inigo Jones (1573-1652) and greater travel to Europe as a result of the Civil War (1642-1651)<sup>4</sup>.

An interesting comparison is a series of stained hangings at Munslow Farm, Shrops, incorporated into panelling, dated to the late 17th century<sup>5</sup>. Although later, these show a trend in interior decoration that the Whittlesey paintings are anticipating. Up to about the mid 17th century, the emphasis is on decorative forms that cover all surfaces. By the end of the century, this is superseded by a taste for decoration that imitates individually framed paintings. The ultimate manifestation of this is overmantel paintings, often incorporated into wooden panelling, which give the impression that the occupant possessed unique artwork. During most of the 17th century, ownership of 'real' paintings was confined to the aristocratic elite, and it was only towards the end of the century that laws were introduced allowing the import of paintings for wider public consumption. Prior to this happening, even the wealthy merchant class had to content themselves with 'imitation' paintings, of which Whittlesey is a good example.

The Munslow hangings are a little similar to the Whittlesey paintings in that they show illusionistic landscape scenes viewed through the 'frame' of surrounding panelling, the difference being that the panelling

2 *Shekede, 1997, p. 21*

3 *Kathryn Davies personal communication*

4 [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/architecture\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/architecture_01.shtml), accessed 16 July 2018

5 *J. Ayers 'Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500-1850, Yale University, 2003, 135-138*

at Munslow is real rather than fictive. The painted panelling at Whittlesey harks back to earlier decorative trends, but the landscape vignettes are definitely looking ahead to a different way of presenting interiors, and the conceit that the owner/occupier actually possessed 'real' paintings. The Munslow paintings also offered some similarities in the way the landscapes are shown, with an emphasis on abundant trees and exuberant vegetation. The Whittlesey paintings are important in being a transition between these trends, of which we have precious few survivals.

Feeding into all this is the Dutch influence, which is likely to be of key importance. Unlike in England, ownership of 'real' paintings in the Netherlands in the 17th century was more widespread, and there was a trend in the 1650s for landscape paintings with fanciful, romantic Italianate themes, filled with ruins in mountainous settings, by artists such as Nicolas Berchem, whose work was widely disseminated in prints. So there are a number of things coming together here: the use of mural painting to give the impression of having a collection of 'real' paintings (which is connected to the inability to achieve this in reality because of the restrictions on importing portable paintings); the Dutch-inspired fashion for fanciful Italianate landscape paintings; and the Dutch connection with the drainage of the Fens.



Fig. 4a The stained hangings of Munslow Farm, Shropshire. Dating from around 1700.



Fig. 4b Paintings from 2 Wardrobe Place, with a similar fictive boarder and landscape scene with figures.



Fig. 4c Paintings from Lincoln College dating to approximately 1630. A similar landscape and palette is found at Whittlesey.



Fig. 5 General view of the Wolsey Closet at Hampton Court Palace showing three-quarter height wooden panelling, above which are landscape format panel paintings. The same compositional elements are found at Whittlesey.



## 4. Description of the painted room

The painted room is located on the first floor at the north west corner of the building with external walls to the north and west. A passage runs down the side of the building to the west. During recent renovation work the room was stripped of wooden panelling, brick and a wattle and daub ceiling to expose the paintings, stone walls, wooden floor and ceiling beneath. The two sides of the room to the north and east are stone masonry, to the south and east are brick walls covered with plasterboard. The ceiling and flooring has also been stripped leaving the wooden elements exposed. Temporary flooring has been put in place to allow access to the room.

## 5. Description of the wall paintings

Wall paintings survive on the west and north walls with the composition continuing from one wall to the other. The entirety of the west wall is covered with painting (4.8m x 2.5 m), a rarity in itself, apart from localised fragmentary losses. Three significant large fragments also survive on the north wall. Two on the edges of a recess to the west of the wall (left fragment approximately 0.55m x 2.20m, right fragment 0.35m x 1.20m) and one to the east of the window (0.55m x 2.20m).

### Fictive panelling

The three-quarter height fictive panelling design is painted with yellow frames and red panels. The border of the panels is decorated with yellow and blue line work. The panels are decorated with white strap-work against cross graining (Rickerby & Shekede pers. comm.). On the north wall the panelling design only continues on the top row, beneath is left plain white.

### Landscape scenes

The top quarter of the composition shows two large landscape scenes on the west wall and fragmentary remains of two figurative scenes on the north wall and one plain white panel (the original painting has been lost and only traces remain).

### The west wall

The paintings depict three-quarter height fictive panelling. Above these are two landscape scenes separated by a white and red border. The left panel shows a hilly rural landscape with trees and a building to the right of the composition. The right panel shows a similar composition however a simple painted male and female figure are depicted in the landscape. They are represented in what appears to be 17th Century dress outside the building. To the bottom of the composition there is a running dog and the remains of the leg of a figure.

### The north wall

The leftmost fragment continues the composition from the west wall with three-quarter height panelling, although only the top row of panelling is painted, below which is painted plain white. Above the fictive panelling is the remains of a lone male figure with distinctive period dress and hat.

The central fragment is again three-quarter panelling above which is a scene showing a male and female couple face on and holding hands against a green landscape. The male figure is holding something in his hand but it could not be deciphered what.

The fragment to the right is decorated with the same design as the other north wall fragments except that the top panel is painted white.



*Figs. 6. General view of the west wall of painted room. This wall has the most extensive surviving paintings. A three-quarter height band of fictive panelling above which are two rural landscape scenes with figures, animals, buildings and trees.*



*Figs. 7-8. General view of the north wall of painted room. Three fragments survive. Two of which show figures in seventeenth century dress. The third panel (to the far right of the image) is badly deteriorated and no detail can be discerned.*





*Figs. 9-13. Detail views of the right landscape scene on the west wall. The middle left and right images show two figures outside what appear to be classically influenced buildings. The lower left images show the remains of a dog and the leg of a man. The lower right, the traces of a mans hat.*





Fig. 14. Detail view of the left landscape scene. The extensive pain loss means little can be made out except the remains of a building and the green landscape.



Figs. 15-16. Detail view of the three-quarter height fictive panelling. The panels are decorated with white strap-work against cross graining suggestive of the mid seventeenth century.





*Figs. 17-18. Detail view of the remains of the fragment to the left of the north wall. Above the continued panelling is the remains of an enigmatic figure in a cloak.*



*Figs. 19-20. Detail view of the remains of the fragment to the right of the north wall. Above the continued panelling is the remains of an enigmatic male and female couple in seventeenth century dress. They appear to be holding hands.*



## 6. Technology of the wall paintings

The paintings are a wonderful example of English domestic earthen wall painting of the period between the mid 16th to mid 17th centuries. The wide range of colours—black, white, red, yellow, green, blue, browns— and what looks to be a rich use of pigments, organic and inorganic, is indicative of a high quality painting that may reflect the high status of the patrons.

### Support- wall

The support for the paintings is a rubble stone masonry wall approximately 0.5m thick. The condition of the external wall appears good as has recently been repointed. Later brickwork and mortar is found next to the paintings on the north wall, a result of alterations to the window. A rotten wooden lintel is also partially behind the painting on the north wall.

### Support- ceiling

The remains of a wattle and daub ceiling are present at the top of the paintings. Indeed the wattle continues into the wall behind the paintings. Discussions with the workmen who uncovered the paintings suggest the wattle and daub ceiling was removed prior to discovery of the paintings.



*Figs. 21-23. Left, view showing the rubblestone wall construction onto which, the painted plaster is applied. Upper right, Detail view of the stone support showing through a loss in the painted plaster. Lower right, remains of a wattle and daub ceiling remain at the top of the wall, interestingly this goes behind the painting suggesting it is earlier than the painting itself.*

## Plaster layers

A light yellowish brown earthen plaster has been used to render the wall and act as a levelling layer prior to the application of a thin white plaster layer. This layer ranges in thickness from approximately 50 - 200 mm. Sparse white aggregates (approx. 1 - 2 mm) and organic inclusions (straw) have been added to modify the properties of the earth for use as a plaster.

A top coat of off-white plaster layer approximately 50 to 100mm thick has been applied over the earthen layer. This has fine inorganic aggregates and a high proportion of animal hair.

## Ground layer

A thin white layer has been applied as a ground. This probably was probably applied over the entire scheme in preparation for painting. This layer was roughly applied and brush marks can be seen through the overlying paint layers.



*Fig. 24. Left, view showing the rubblestone wall construction onto which, the painted plaster is applied. Upper right, Detail view of the stone support showing through a loss in the painted plaster. Lower right, remains of a wattle and daub ceiling remain at the top of the wall, interestingly this goes behind the painting suggesting it is earlier than the painting itself.*



*Fig. 25. Micrograph of the earthen plaster layer showing its colour and texture.*



*Fig. 26. Micrograph of the upper white plaster layer with animal hair. The thin white ground can be seen above this.*



## Paint layers

Visual observation suggest the paintings were executed with an organic binder on dry plaster (known as *secco*) with a rich and wide palette of pigments. A range of reds, greens, blues and browns are represented and it is likely the pigments are a combination of inorganic and organic colorants that have been layered and mixed with obvious skill.



*Figs. 27-28. Right, micrograph showing large dark blue particles mixed in with a matrix of lighter blue.*



*Figs. 29-30. Right, micrograph showing the layering of white over blue over a red ground in the fictive panelling.*



*Figs. 31-32. The greens appear to have been created by mixing blue with a possible organic colorant.*



## 7. Condition of the wall paintings

The survival of the paintings is precarious as they are badly deteriorated and fragile. Further deterioration may occur without careful and appropriate conservation and protection. There is major delamination of the plaster away from the stone wall and also the paint layer is powdery and flaking leading to loss of the paint layers. It appears the two major causes of deterioration are the result of structural stresses (cracking and delamination of the plaster) and unstable environmental conditions/ water infiltration (evidenced by powdering, flaking, stains and drips). The deterioration and damage to the paintings are outlined briefly here.

### The stone masonry and plaster

#### Structural movement

The north and west walls have shifted position and the corner of the room is cracked. This has resulted in loss of painted plaster in the north west corner of the room.

#### Cracks

Fissures in both the plaster and masonry mean the surrounding plaster is unstable. The direction and location of the cracks, vertical originating from the wooden joists at the top of the wall suggest the cracking maybe a result of the load bearing joists. It is also possible structural movement of the wall has resulted cracking. An engineer and/or architectural conservator should be consulted on the stability of the wall and necessary measures.

#### Fracturing

A network of small cracks and loose pieces of plaster means small pieces are almost completely detached from the wall. These are at danger of loss.



*Figs. 33-34. Cracking and fracturing has caused severe damage and loss to the paintings. The cracking is either caused by loading on the walls or structural movement.*

## Delamination

Large areas of the plaster is delaminated away from either the lower plaster or the stone wall itself leaving a void between. These areas sound hollow and move, often feeling spongy, when tapped. This delamination in conjunction with cracking means the plaster is at danger of loss due to movement, vibration and direct contact.



*Figs. 35-37. Examples of where de-lamination is occurring. The plaster has separated from the layer beneath leaving a void beneath.*

## Plaster loss

Areas of painted plaster have been completely lost. There has been extensive loss on the north wall, especially around the recesses and at the top of the wall. The plaster survives extensively on the west wall however there are localised lacunae.



*Fig. 38. Extensive plaster loss has occurred leaving only fragmentary remains of the painting on the north wall.*



## The paint layers

### Powdering

Failure of the binder causing the paint layer to become powdery. This is particularly evident in the white ground layer. This is also the case in areas of the other paint layers, especially the yellow border on the fictive panelling. It appears the powdering may be related to liquid moisture infiltration and/or the presence of a boiler in the south west corner of the room.

### Flaking

Localised phases of paint have delaminated away from the stratigraphy below and are now at danger of loss. These flakes range in size from approximately 2 mm to less than 1mm This is often found in correlation with powdering and blistering. Areas of a coating applied to the fictive panelling are also prone to flaking, these flakes are larger in size (2 mm and larger) and have curled at the edges.



*Figs. 39-40. Left, an area where flaking and powdering are causing paint loss. Right, flaking is ongoing on the north wall where the couple are depicted holding hands.*



*Figs. 41-42. The paint layer appears to have blistered in localised areas. This may be a result of moisture ingress.*



### Blistering

Localised areas where the paint layer has deformed into small (approx 0.5mm) bubbles.

### White haze

To the south west corner of the room the painting is significantly powdery, flaky and blistered. There is also a white haze to the paintings that may be connected to the historic presence of a boiler at that location.

### Paint loss

While a significant portion of the paintings remain a lot has been lost. It appears this may be a result of powdering, flaking and abrasion.



*Fig. 43. The presence of a boiler in front of the paintings may have caused the flaking, powdering and paint loss in this area. The area also has a white haze over it.*



*Fig. 44. Paint loss is widespread and can be attributed to a number of different damage and deterioration mechanisms.*

## Coatings

Inspection with UV radiation suggest areas of the dado has been covered with an organic coating (see *Figs. 45-46*). It is not currently known if this is original or not. The coating appears in places to be connected to flaking. The coating also appears to have discoloured and trapped dust and dirt obscuring the paintings. There is also a white haze in places.

## Dirt and dust

The wall painting are covered in dirt and dust accumulated over the many years they have been covered. It also appears a non-original coatings is imbibing dirt preferentially, darkening the paintings.

## Evidence of water infiltration/ unstable environmental conditions

The presence of runs down the painting, water stains, flaking, powdering and blistering are suggestive of damage and deterioration from water infiltration and unstable environmental conditions.

## Changes to the building

Over the long history of the building architectural changes and the insertion of pipes and drainage has caused damage and loss to the paintings. On the west wall a hole (approximately 300mm in diameter).

## Abrasion and scratches

The surface of the paintings are heavily abraded and scratched.



*Figs. 45-46. It appears that a non-original coating has been partially applied to the fictive panelling. It does not appear to correspond to the composition, is patchily applied and has discoloured and obscured the paint below. It also appears to be contributing to flaking paint. The left image is a normal image whilst the right shows the same area under UV radiation. The coating fluoresces yellowy green.*



## 8. Threats to the paintings

### Immediate

#### Ongoing building works

The greatest clear and present danger to the paintings is the ongoing renovation works. Whilst it is possible for work to continue this must take into account that the wall paintings are the most significant historic material in the building and every measure must be taken to protect them from damage whilst work is ongoing.

The survey identified the following threats to the painting from the present building condition and ongoing building works;

1. **Open roof and walls** - The plaster and paint layers are water sensitive and so a significant threat is from rain water infiltrating through gaps in the roof and damaging the paintings. The roof space and ceiling above the painting should be sealed as soon as possible to prevent this. Earthen wall paintings are also vulnerable to changes in the environment, especially relative humidity (RH) and absolute humidity (AH). Presently there is massive air exchange with the outside meaning the paintings are vulnerable to fluctuations in RH and AH.
2. **De-infestation spraying of the rooms** - the paintings must be covered during this process and the sub-contractor should consult with a wall painting conservator on the works that will be undertaken. Coverings to be designed and installed by a wall painting conservator.
3. **Structural works**
  - a. **Rotten lintel and beam** - The rotten lintel and beam on the north wall of the painted room were to be removed and replaced. This would potentially cause significant damage to the painted plaster. It is recommended that minimal work be done to these elements and only those that are structurally necessary (to be assessed by an engineer). It is recommended any work to the rotten lintel and beam be carried out in conjunction with a wall painting conservator and in agreement with the Conservation Officer.
  - b. North west corner - the large crack in the north west corner should be repaired in consultation with a wall painting conservator
4. **Re-flooring and new ceiling and walls**- negotiation, care and protection of the paintings are required when works to the ceiling floor and walls are undertaken.



*Figs. 47-49. Left, the roof is partially open, the paintings are directly below the opening, a serious cause for concern due to water infiltration. Middle, Guttering also runs along the west wall directly above the painting. Failures to the guttering may cause serious damage to the painting is unmaintained. Right, the rotten lintel behind the painting on the north wall, plans to remove and replace the lintel threaten the survival of the painting.*

## Inappropriate conservation and restoration

Any conservation work to the wall paintings should be undertaken by a qualified wall painting specialist with knowledge and experience of historic earthen materials. The conservation priorities are the stability of the painted plaster and slowing deterioration to the paintings. Restoration, repainting of the paintings is not advised. The wall paintings have been found to be highly sensitive to abrasion and water therefore cleaning of the wall paintings must be undertaken with extreme caution.

## Long term threats

### Unstable/ unsuitable environmental conditions

Wall painting on earthen supports are susceptible to changes in the environment<sup>6</sup>. It is therefore advised to aim to create as stable an environment in the painted room as possible. This may involve hygral and thermal buffering and environmental monitoring to assess how the room functions to changes in temperature RH and absolute humidity.

### Liquid water dispersal system

The drainage system should be designed so that future failures in the system (blocked drains, leaks) do not result in water being directed on the painted walls (internally or externally). Sinks, baths, showers and piping should be kept as far away from the paintings as possible.

### Use of the painted room

The proposal to use the painted room as a bedroom for hotel guests means consideration must be given to the potential impact from guests. This impact may include the following;

- Impact damage from activity in the room
- The walls becoming wet due to spilt water etc.
- Inappropriately installed fixtures such as lights damaging the paintings.

### Use of adjacent room and rooms above and below

Plans to install a kitchen and bathroom in the room directly to the south and directly above the painted room is a concern. The room to the south is connected by an opening and is a potential source of moisture and heat that may deleteriously impact the paintings. Air flow of hot humid air from a shower or sink into the painted room could have potentially have a big impact on the stability of the painting. It is advised to maximise the distance and number of doors between any such features and the paintings.



*Fig. 50. The roof space directly above the painting. The space will be used as another guest bedroom.*



*Fig. 51. The room to the south of the paintings. This space will be a kitchen and bathroom. A potential source of liquid and water vapour that could potentially impact the paintings.*

6 P Jaquin and C Augarde, 2012, p 53



## 9. Outstanding questions and analysis

- Identify whether the coating on the paintings is original or not - this will inform cleaning choices about whether it can be removed or not. FTIR analysis will be undertaken to try and establish this.
- Earthen analysis of the original earthen mortar and new local earth will be undertaken to develop appropriate repair and grout materials.
- Cross section and XRF analysis of paint samples to be undertaken to establish in greater detail the techniques used to create the paintings. This will inform conservation decisions about cleaning and long term protection from solar radiation.
- Undertake further art historical research to greater understand when, why and by whom the paintings were created.

## 10. Recommendations and next steps

Given the present vulnerability of the paintings a wall painting conservator should be consulted regarding all renovation works that may impact the paintings. These are works that involve;

- changes to the room itself or the adjacent rooms on the same floor or the floors above and below;
- changes to the external walls with the paintings on;
- works that produce vibration in the vicinity of the paintings;
- works that produce dust and dirt in the painted room;
- work involving spraying in the room.

To ensure the long term survival of the paintings suitable stabilisation and consolidation treatments should be developed and tested. These should aim to achieve the following;

- Ensure building works do not cause damage or loss to the paintings;
- Remove superficial dust and dirt deposits from the surface of the painting;
- Reattach loose plaster to the underlying layers with compatible injection grouting/ repair plaster materials;
- Stabilise vulnerable edges with compatible repair materials;
- Consolidate flaking and powdering paint layers with compatible consolidants and adhesives as required.

A long term maintenance strategy should be developed. This should include;

- Regular checks to assess the condition of the painting and the surrounding building;
- Environmental monitoring.
- Any cleaning or maintenance to the wall painting to be carried out by a trained wall painting conservator

## 11. References cited

Anon, (2018). [online] Available at: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1228220>, accessed 12/07/2018.

J. Ayers 'Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500-1850, Yale University, 2003, 135-138

Kirkham, A., Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century Secular Wall Paintings in Suffolk. Unpublished Ph.D. The University of East Anglia, Norwich, 2010.

Reader, Francis W. "A Classification of Tudor Domestic Wall-Paintings." *Archaeological Journal* 98, no. 1 (1941): 181-211. doi:10.1080/00665983.1941.10853744.

Tinniswood, A., (2018). [online] Available at: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/architecture\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/architecture_01.shtml), accessed 16 July 2018.

Shekede, L., English domestic wall paintings on earthen supports: materials and deterioration. Unpublished MA dissertation. The Courtauld Institute of Art, London 1997.



## 12. Appendix A. Graphic Documentation



**Condition mapping**

West Wall  
The Painted Room  
9 Market Street, Whittlesey  
User: Samuel Whittaker  
Date of Assessment:  
09th - 13th Jan 2017

**Key**

**Plaster**

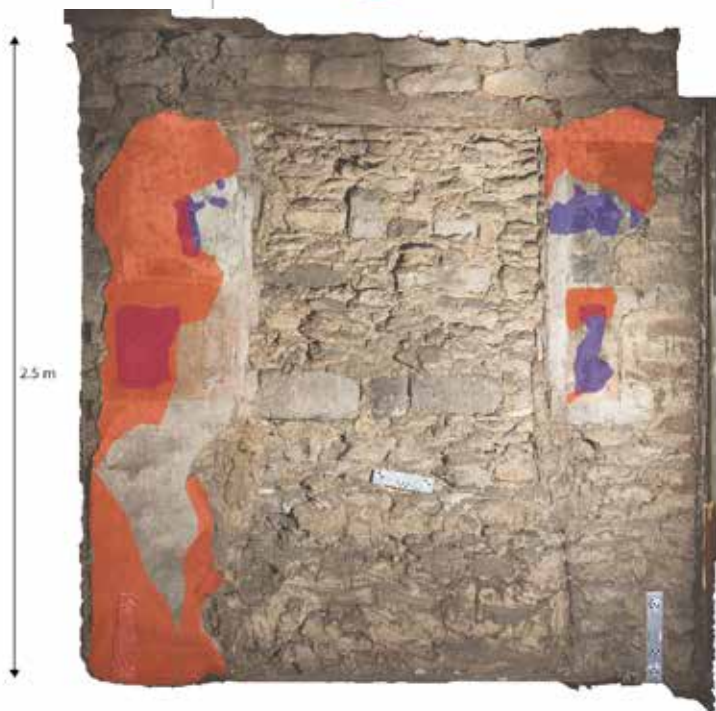
- Unstable Delam. ■
- Cracks
- Displaced cracks

**Paint Layer**

- Flaking ■

**Surface**

- Coating



**Condition mapping**

North Wall  
The Painted Room  
9 Market Street, Whittlesey  
User: Samuel Whittaker  
Date of Assessment:  
09th - 13th Jan 2017

**Key**

**Plaster**

- Unstable Delam. ■
- Cracks
- Displaced cracks

**Paint Layer**

- Flaking ■

**Surface**

- Coating

