

**Internal Paint Assessment**  
**at**  
**25 Neal Street, London, WC2H 9PR**



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FOR AND BEHALF OF : Heritage Consulting Chartered Surveyors

**Report Date – REV C 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025**

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## **1 Preface and Brief**

25 Neal Street is divided into two units. There is a shop / retail unit occupying the cellar, ground floor and first floor (No. 25 Neal Street). There is a separate self-contained unit to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (No. 25A Neal Street). This report is focused on the retail unit only, No. 25 Neal Street.

The retail unit was inspected on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 during strip out works to previous tenant shop fittings. This enabled a good inspection of external walls previously concealed by the previous tenant shop fittings.

The internal exposed brickwork walls and barrel-vaulted ceilings to the retail unit are painted white to the cellar and parts of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. There are areas of paint that have been removed to the principal ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail area. The paint where removed, was done so with "grit blasting" which was approved by Camden Council in 2004 (refer to appendix B).

This report aims to assess and provide advice on the age, type and historical context of painted finishes. The report aims to further advise on the feasibility of reinstatement of paint finishes and later removal.

## **2 Historical Context**

### **2.1 Listed Status of the Building**

The building was Historic England Grade II listed in 1972, with the list entry being amended in 1999. List entry number - 1342094

TQ3081SW 798-1/105/353

CAMDEN EARLHAM STREET (north side) Nos.29-41 (odd) and NEAL STREET No 25 The Crafts Centre (Formerly listed as Nos.29-43 (odd) EARLHAM STREET, previously listed as: EARLHAM STREET, Nos.29-43 (Odd))

15/01/73 GV II Includes: Nos.8-26 SHORT'S GARDENS. Warehouse, probably originally a brewery; now a crafts centre. Mid C19. Stock brick; roof not visible. Three storeys. Nineteen bays to Earlham Street, No.43 with splayed corner and return to Neal Street. Shorts Gardens elevation of two storeys. Brick band above ground floor. Segmental headed windows and doorways, those to ground floor on Earlham Street elevation set in segmental headed reveals.

INTERIOR: internal structure comprises brick barrel vaults supported by cast-iron columns.

It is not completely clear on the Historic England mapping whether the Building (25 Neal Street) is listed as it is demarked separately from the remainder of the Crafts Centre building. Historic England clarified this position in email correspondence and confirmed the listed status of the building, together with confirming they would update their records to make the situation clearer.

### **2.2 Historical Notes**

Historic OS mapping evidences that the buildings (including 25 Neal Street) were constructed at some point between 1871 and 1894. The buildings were constructed as warehousing.

It is highly likely the buildings were not painted internally when constructed and would have been exposed masonry.

### 2.3 OS Mapping

#### OS Map Series - London - Middlesex VII.63

Surveyed: 1871, Published: 1874.

Notes: 25 Neal Street not yet constructed



#### OS Map Series - London - London VII.63

Revised: 1894, Published: 1895. Notes: 25 Neal Street demise hatched Red



## 2.4 Modern History

25 Neal Street is divided into two units. There is a shop / retail unit occupying the cellar, ground floor and first floor (No. 25 Neal Street). There is a separate self-contained unit to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor (No. 25A Neal Street).

The internal walls and barrel-vaulted ceiling (to both No. 25 and No. 25A) were painted at some point, probably in the mid-late part of the 20<sup>th</sup> C. The painting being of the period of the mid – late 20<sup>th</sup> C is most likely, given the paint finish is an acrylic type masonry paint, and not a limewash or more historic oil based paint.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor self-contained unit (No. 25A Neal Street) retains a painted finish to the external walls.

### 25 Neal Street



*Photo extract from circa 2010 works to refurbish 25A self-contained unit.*

The cellar area to No. 25 retains a painted finish. The 1st and 2nd floor external walls behind where shop fitting from the previous tenant fit out have been removed also retains a painted finish.



Cellar area to No.25 Neal Street retail unit with painted finish retained.



1<sup>st</sup> floor to No.25 Neal Street former changing room area with retained painted finish.



1<sup>st</sup> floor to No.25 Neal Street former service riser / staff area with retained painted finish.

## **2.5 Listed Building Consent**

Listed Building Consent was granted for paint removal to the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail unit in 2004. Refer to Appendix B. The paint removal has been undertaken around previous tenant fittings that have now been removed.

The Listed Building Consent details a method statement for the paint removal and confirms the removal was undertaken by grit blasting.




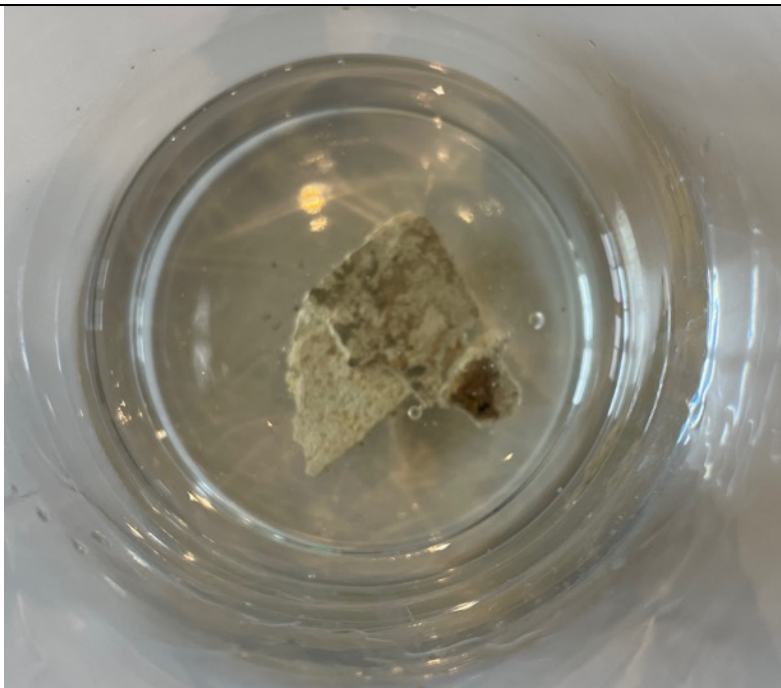
**3.0 Paint Investigations**



**3.1 Paint Composition**

No laboratory tests of retained paint have been undertaken. Site based samples and testing has been carried out only.

The existing retained paint has formed a brittle “crust” over the masonry indicating it is a fairly modern acrylic type paint, and not a historic limewash or oil based paint. Sample areas were removed with a knife and the paint is fairly easy to remove from the substrate using a knife or basic scraper.

Testing confirms there is no Lime content and the paint finishes are dissolvable in an alkaline poultice type paint stripper and a light duty bio degradable solvent stripper.

	<p>Paint removed for sampling with a knife. The paint is brittle and is fairly easily removable with a knife / scraper.</p>
	<p><u>Test 1 - Acid</u></p> <p>The paint samples are not dissolvable in acid and do not contain any lime or limewash.</p>

	<p><u>Test 2 – Alkaline Poultice</u></p> <p>Peelaway or Kling Strip type paint stripper within a “poultice”.</p> <p>The paint samples are dissolvable and soften in an Alkaline Poultice.</p>
	<p><u>Test 3 – Light Duty Solvent Paint Stripper (Bio Degradable)</u></p> <p>Tavek 201 or similar. Note this is a LIGHT duty bio degradable version.</p> <p>The paint samples are dissolvable in light duty solvent stripper.</p>



Further testing of heavier duty solvent strippers was not carried out as light duty bio degradable strippers were found to be adequate.

**3.2 Paint Removal (Grit Blasting)**

The masonry paint finish to the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail area (where not concealed by changing rooms and service risers) has been removed from the masonry. The paint removal was undertaken as part of the previous tenant’s shop fit out works and approved in 2004.

The paint removal has been undertaken poorly and there are lots of remnants of the paint left on the masonry. There is evidence of paint left in strips abutting the windows and evidence of mechanical damage to the masonry. The finish is not cohesive with removal only being undertaken around previous tenant shop fittings.

The mechanical damage to the masonry has occurred due to the approved grit blasting of the paint from the external walls, evidenced by the fairly “rough” removal, pitting and erosion of brick faces and strips of paint being left adjacent damageable items such as window frames.

		<p>Remnants of paint left on masonry from grit blasting.</p>
		<p>“Strips” of paint left adjacent window frames and abrasion and damage notes to brick faces.</p>

## **4 Paint Reinstatement & Removal**

The retail unit external walls and barrel-vaulted ceiling are a mix of painted finishes to the cellar and areas of the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor previously concealed by shop fittings, and exposed brickwork with evidence of poorly removed paint to the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor retail unit.

To areas where paint has been removed (approved in 2004) the approved removal method of grit blasting has caused damage to the masonry. For the avoidance of doubt any future grit / shot blasting or mechanical abrasion to the masonry should not be undertaken as this will cause further damage.

A strategy is provided below to provide a paint finish to previously removed painted areas, but to ensure it is done in such a way that it is reversible and removable at a later date if required without any further damage to brickwork. Furthermore, the paint application has been designed to make the brick substrate visible and to respect the industrial heritage aesthetic of the building.

### **4.1 Water Based Paint Application**

Allow for painting masonry with water based internal trade emulsion paint. The paint is to be provided with a water dilution to a 1 part paint to 4 parts water ratio. As per sample photo overleaf;

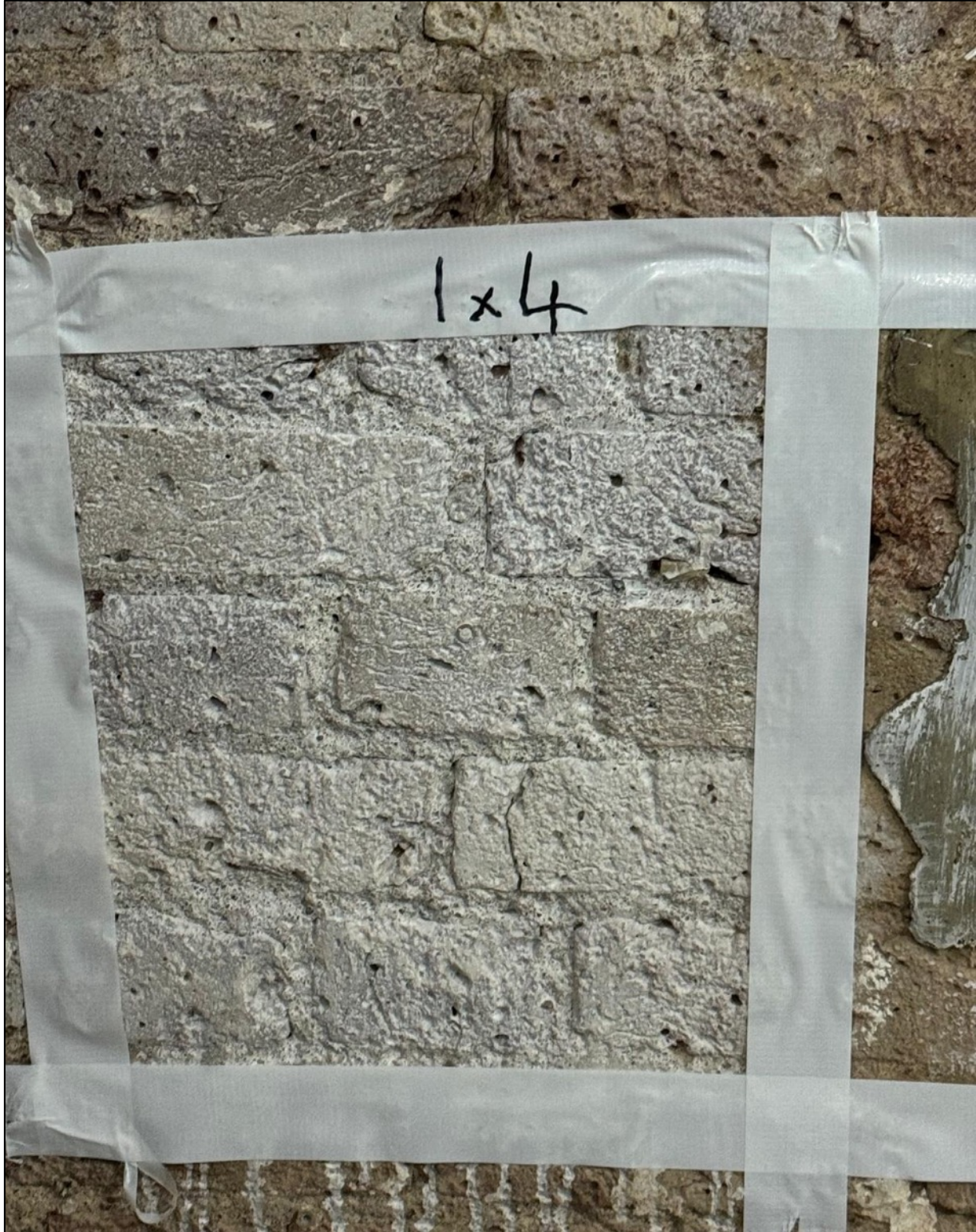
### **4.2 Test Areas**

If required, sample paint areas can be undertaken with the paint applied (2 coats minimum), allowed to thoroughly dry and then be removed. It is suggested a 1m<sup>2</sup> sample should be undertaken in a discreet area.

### **4.3 Heated Steam Removal**

Heated steam removal (TENSID, DOFF, Restorative Techniques machines etc) is an effective tool for removal of paint finishes. The systems produce heated steam which are used in a pressurised jet to soften and remove layers of paint. The systems are very quick and efficient in removing most modern paints and can remove paints without damage to the masonry beneath. Specifically, heated steam removal is very effective in removal of water-based paints as specified in this instance.

**4.4 Water based paint 1:4 dilution sample**



## **5.0 Specification and Methodology**

### **5.1 Test Areas**

<b>A</b>	<b><u>TEST AREAS METHOD AND SPEC</u></b>	
A.1	Allow for photographs and site evidence to be recorded during all phases of works, including timesheets of how long removal of paint takes.	
A.2	Allow to identify and mark out 1m <sup>2</sup> test locations for paint application and removal. Ensure all areas are cleaned down and all contaminants and debris brushed away. Mark area with masking or green tape to “frame” test locations.	
A.3	Allow to paint test location with 2 no. coats of Trade internal emulsion paint (white) as per workmanship and trade clauses. Paint to be a 1:4 dilution with water (1 Paint : 4 Water).	
A.4	Drying and curing times to be strictly observed and only once fully dried and cured should paint be removed.	
A.5	Allow to remove paint using Heated steam removal (TENSID, DOFF, Restorative Techniques machines etc). Ensure Vac attachment is used to clear water and full protection of surfaces allowed for.	