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PLASTERING WITH NON-HYDRAULIC LIME

Before commencing plastering ensure that all-loose dust and debris has been well brushed off and the background is clean. All loose pointing should be raked out and re-pointed.

Thoroughly wet the background to control the suction i.e. to ensure that the water is not drawn out of the wet plaster into the dry masonry too rapidly.

If the background has excessive hollows or unacceptable unevenness, dubbing out coats may be needed. Maximum build up of lime plaster is 10mm per coat.

Once dubbing out coats have stiffened give them a good scratch key in preparation for the next coat.

Apply the first backing coat evenly over the masonry at a maximum of 10mm thickness; do not over work with the trowel. If a "flat and even surface" is required lightly drag a straight rule or plasterers featheredge over the surface to remove the high points. If a vernacular style is preferred just lay evenly over the surface following the contours of the wall.

Disclaimer

Although we have taken great care to ensure that this information and advice is correct, we respectfully suggest that you take further advice to take into account site specific conditions. Therefore, we cannot accept any responsibility for any loss or damage in carrying out work using these guidelines.

For a “flat and even surface” this first backing coat will form the surface for the levelling or floating coat. Therefore once this coat has stiffened it should be scratch keyed.

For a “flat and even surface” a second coat is applied to the first coat once the first coat has hardened to such a degree that a slight indentation can be made by pressing with your thumb (The time this takes will depend on atmospheric conditions i.e. temperature, humidity etc.). If the first/scratch coat has gone very dry this must be well damped down before applying the second or floating coat. This floating coat is ruled off in good plastering practice, level and true. Once this has set or hardened sufficiently the plaster should be vigorously scoured or compacted with a wooden float. This process should be completed at least twice to further flatten and compact the plaster as it shrinks on drying. Further scouring should be used if continued shrinkage cracks appear. This process is **very important** if shrinkage cracks are to be avoided.

Once scouring has been carried out, the surface should be keyed for the finishing coat by brushing with a stiff churn brush or with a devil float.

For the more vernacular or rustic finish, the second coat becomes the finish coat. The plaster used will be the same as the backing coat, with or without added hair. This coat is laid evenly over the backing coat, following the contours of the wall. Once this coat has stiffened the plaster is scoured with a wooden float in a similar fashion to the rubbing up of outside render. Because of the unevenness of rough walling small self-made wooden floats may be needed to follow the lines of the wall. If a flatter texture is desired the plaster can be lightly trowelled over with a steel trowel.

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For finishing on “flat and even” work a third coat is applied, once again the previous coat is wetted down and the finish coat is applied in 2 or 3 thin coat sand once stiff enough is scoured to fill any misses or gauls. This coat can be left with fine float finish or trowelled smooth with a steel trowel.

The above points are for a general approach to lime plastering and it must be remembered that the best style of plastering on an historic structure would be to follow the evidence of any remaining plasterwork left on the building in good enough condition to give a true representation of earlier work.

EXAMPLES OF LIMEPLASTER MIXES:

Coat	Thickness	Mix	Hair
First coat (also called Pricking up coat or render coat)	Max 10mm	3 sand: 1 Cor Castle Lime putty or 2.5 sand: 1 Cor Castle lime putty	Yes: evenly spread through mix at 1mm centres on a cut edge.
Second coat / (also called Floating coat or screeding coat)	8-10mm	As above	Yes: as above or sometimes less depending on application
Finishing (Setting coat)	3mm approx.	3 silica sand: 1Cor Castle lime putty to 1 silica sand : 1 Cor Castle lime putty depending on application.	No in general although some 17 th Century and earlier work has been found to contain hair.

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