

4th Floor, Rex House, 4-12 Regent Street, London SW1Y 4PE

Phone 020 7228 8522

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584373512

Sean Conrad BSc. (Hons.) MSc. MCIOB MRICS (Director)

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Steven Nugent BSc (Hons) MRICS (Director) 07596 322971

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) 07762 661003

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

Doc. Ref: SJA3472a/doc/P04 RevA

Date: August 2026

METHOD STATEMENT

SJA3472_St Andrew's Arts Centre, Royal Pier Road Gravesend DA12 2BD **Internal refurbishment and redecoration**

High-Level Maintenance of Black Fabric Acoustic Panels

1. Scope of Works

This method statement covers the safe inspection, cleaning and general maintenance of the proposed black, fabric-covered acoustic panels installed at high level within the main hall of the Grade II listed St Andrews church building.



*2025 Internal photograph of St Andrews' Arts Centre,
depicting the vaulted, timber-lined, expressed-rib ceiling*

The panels are arranged as follows:

- Centrally suspended panels
 - Sixteen rows, each consisting of two acoustic panels positioned side by side, are suspended centrally within the arched ceiling vault.
 - The panels are centred along the ceiling ridge and are suspended approximately 650 mm below the ridge height, at approximately 7.5 m above finished floor level.
- Surface-fixed panels
 - A second arrangement consists of seven lots of two panels to each side of the vaulted ceiling, giving 14 panels per side / 28 panels in total.
 - These panels are surface-fixed to the sides of the vaulted ceiling at approximately 6.2 m above finished floor level.

These are described and detailed on the SJA Ltd architectural drawings SJA3472a/PL72, PL106, PL107 and PL108.

The intended maintenance works are limited to non-invasive cleaning, visual inspection and minor maintenance that does not alter the existing installation or fabric. No drilling, cutting, fixing into the historic building fabric, removal of panels, alteration of suspension systems or other intrusive works are included within this method statement unless separately authorised.

2. Objectives

The objective of the maintenance is to:

- Remove accumulated dust and loose surface contamination from the acoustic panel fabric.
- Maintain the visual appearance and acoustic performance of the panels.
- Inspect the visible condition of the fabric, panel edges, fixings and suspension arrangements.
- Identify any damage, staining, deterioration or defects requiring specialist attention.
- Complete the work without damage to the listed building, vaulted ceiling, historic finishes or existing acoustic installation.
- Carry out the work with minimum disruption to users of the community hall.

3. Listed Building Considerations

The building is Grade II listed and any maintenance shall therefore be undertaken on the basis that the existing historic fabric and finishes are to be protected at all times.

The maintenance contractor shall:

- Avoid contact between access equipment and the historic ceiling, arches, walls, decorative finishes or other building fabric.
- Not drill, screw, bond, clamp or otherwise attach temporary equipment to historic fabric.
- Not use the acoustic panels, their suspension wires, ceiling fixings or existing building features as handholds, footholds or anchorage points unless specifically designed and certified for that purpose.
- Not remove, reposition or modify any panel without prior approval.
- Protect floors and vulnerable finishes from access equipment and maintenance operations.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 2

- Use non-aggressive cleaning methods appropriate to the acoustic fabric.
- Immediately stop work if previously unidentified historic finishes, fragile materials, concealed fixings or damage are encountered.
- Refer any suspected damage to the building fabric to the Client / Conservation Adviser before proceeding.

Any requirement to disturb the existing fabric, alter fixings or remove panels shall be treated as a separate operation requiring appropriate approval.

4. Responsibilities

It will be the responsibility of the Gravesham Borough Council to monitor and coordinate maintenance of the acoustic panels once installed.

The maintenance Contractor shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that this method statement and associated risk assessment are briefed to all operatives.
- Confirming that operatives are competent and appropriately trained for the equipment being used.
- Inspecting the work area before commencement.
- Ensuring suitable access equipment is selected and used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- Establishing and maintaining the exclusion zone.
- Confirming that the panels and their fixings are visually suitable for the proposed cleaning operation.
- Stopping work if unsafe conditions or unforeseen defects are identified.

All operatives shall:

- Follow the approved method statement and risk assessment.
- Use the required PPE.
- Report defects, damage or unsafe conditions immediately.
- Not undertake work outside their competence or the scope of this method statement.

5. Access Arrangements

The principal risk associated with the work is working at height.

The access method shall be determined following a site inspection and shall take account of the height, geometry of the Gothic vaulted ceiling, floor condition, available working space, panel locations and requirements for protecting the listed building. A suitable mobile elevated work platform (MEWP), or other appropriately designed and inspected access system, shall be used where reasonably practicable.

The selected equipment shall:

- Provide sufficient working height to safely reach the panels without overreaching.
- Be suitable for the internal floor surface and available operating area.
- Be capable of operating within the building without contacting the vaulted ceiling or other historic fabric.
- Have current inspection/examination certification.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 3

- Be operated only by appropriately trained and authorised personnel.
- Be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Where a MEWP is used, the operator shall remain within the designated working platform and shall not climb on guardrails or use improvised means to gain additional height. The access equipment shall never be positioned so that it can strike the suspended panels, their suspension arrangements or the vaulted ceiling. If the geometry of the building prevents safe access by MEWP, the work shall stop and an alternative access arrangement shall be designed and approved before proceeding.

6. Pre-Start Inspection

Before work commences, inspect and record:

- General condition of the hall and floor.
- Location and condition of the acoustic panels.
- Visible condition of panel fabric and edges.
- Visible condition of suspension wires/rods, brackets and fixings.
- Any obvious staining, tears, delamination, loose fabric or deformation.
- Condition of adjacent ceiling and historic finishes.
- Proposed access equipment route and working position.
- Any obstructions, lighting, furniture or other hazards.
- Existing signs of damage that could be incorrectly attributed to the maintenance operation.

Where appropriate, photographs shall be taken before beginning maintenance work, particularly of any pre-existing damage.

No cleaning shall commence until it has been confirmed that the panels are suitable for the proposed maintenance process.

7. Materials and Equipment

Subject to confirmation from the acoustic panel manufacturer, the following equipment may be used:

- Suitable MEWP / access equipment.
- Low-suction, clean vacuum cleaner fitted with a suitable soft brush attachment.
- Soft, clean, non-abrasive brushes where required.
- Clean microfibre cloths for suitable adjacent surfaces.
- Protective floor coverings.
- Warning signs and barriers.
- Temporary exclusion-zone equipment.
- Suitable task lighting where required.
- PPE appropriate to the task.

Any vacuum cleaner shall be fitted with a clean, soft-bristle upholstery/acoustic-fabric attachment. The vacuum shall be operated at the lowest effective suction level to prevent damage to the fabric, stitching, edges or acoustic facing.

Compressed air, high-pressure air, steam cleaning, aggressive brushing, abrasive pads and chemical cleaning products shall not be used unless specifically approved by the panel manufacturer.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 4

8. Personal Protective Equipment

As a minimum, operatives shall wear:

- Safety footwear.
- Suitable work clothing.
- Safety helmet where required by the access equipment / site risk assessment.
- Eye protection where there is a foreseeable risk of dust or debris.
- Suitable gloves where required for handling equipment or protection from contamination.
- Any additional PPE identified by the site-specific risk assessment.

Where a MEWP is used, the requirements for harnesses/lanyards shall be determined by the MEWP type, manufacturer's instructions and applicable site risk assessment.

9. Preparation of the Work Area

Before accessing the panels:

1. The hall shall be taken out of normal public use for the duration of the high-level works.
2. Furniture and movable equipment shall be removed from the working area where practicable.
3. Remaining items shall be adequately protected.
4. Suitable floor protection shall be installed beneath the work area where required.
5. A clearly defined exclusion zone shall be established around the access equipment.
6. Warning signs shall be displayed.
7. Unauthorised persons shall be prevented from entering the exclusion zone.
8. Emergency routes and exits shall remain unobstructed.
9. The access equipment shall be positioned on a suitable, level and adequately load-bearing surface.

No maintenance shall be undertaken above members of the public or other persons.

10. Method of Work

- 10.1 Initial visual inspection

From the access platform, each panel shall be visually inspected before cleaning.

The operative shall look for:

- Tears or punctures in the fabric.
- Loose or detached fabric.
- Staining or water marks.
- Loose or damaged edges.
- Deformation or sagging.
- Damage to panel faces.
- Loose fixings or brackets.
- Damaged or displaced suspension components.
- Evidence of water ingress or other building defects.

Any significant defect shall be photographed and reported.

The operative shall not attempt to repair or manipulate damaged panels unless specifically authorised.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 5

- **10.2 Dust removal**

Cleaning shall proceed from the highest accessible panel areas downward, using a controlled and gentle vacuuming process. The soft-brush vacuum attachment shall be held lightly against or immediately adjacent to the fabric surface, depending upon the manufacturer's recommendations and the observed condition of the fabric.

The operative shall:

- Test the cleaning method on a small, inconspicuous area.
- Confirm that the fabric is not being pulled, snagged, marked or otherwise damaged.
- Use the lowest effective suction.
- Work in consistent overlapping passes.
- Avoid excessive pressure against the fabric.
- Avoid snagging the brush on panel edges, seams, fixings or suspension components.
- Stop immediately if fabric fibres, colour or surface finish appear to be affected.

Particular care shall be taken at panel edges and corners.

- **10.3 Centrally suspended panels**

The 16 pairs of centrally suspended panels shall be accessed individually from a suitable access platform. The access platform shall be positioned so that the operative can work in front of the panel without leaning outside the guardrails or applying force to the panel. The panels shall not be pushed, pulled, swung or used for support. The suspension system shall be visually inspected only. No attempt shall be made to adjust suspension wires, brackets or fixing points as part of routine cleaning.

- **10.4 Surface-fixed panels**

The surface-fixed panels at approximately 6.2 m above floor level shall be cleaned using the same low-suction, soft-brush method. The access platform shall be positioned parallel to the panel installation where practicable, maintaining sufficient clearance to prevent accidental contact between the platform and the vaulted ceiling. No pressure shall be applied to the panels or their fixings.

- **10.5 Staining**

Routine vacuum cleaning shall not be expected to remove ingrained staining. Operatives shall not apply water, detergents, solvents, stain removers or other chemicals to the acoustic fabric unless the material manufacturer has confirmed the product and method as suitable. Any significant staining shall be photographed and reported for consideration of specialist cleaning or panel replacement.

11. Working at Height Controls

The work shall comply with the principles of the Work at Height Regulations 2005.

The following controls shall apply:

- Work at height shall be properly planned and supervised.
- Suitable access equipment shall be selected following assessment of the task.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 6

- Operatives shall be trained and competent.
- Equipment shall be inspected before use.
- The access equipment shall remain within its rated operating parameters.
- Operatives shall remain within the protected working platform.
- No ladders, steps, boxes or other improvised platforms shall be placed within the MEWP.
- Operatives shall not overreach.
- The MEWP shall not be moved while the platform is elevated unless specifically permitted by the equipment manufacturer's instructions and the planned operating method.
- Tools shall be secured against falling where appropriate.
- A suitable exclusion zone shall be maintained below the work area.
- Weather conditions are not normally expected to affect internal work; however, any water ingress, condensation or other environmental condition that could affect safe working shall be addressed before commencement.

12. Protection of the Listed Building

Particular care shall be taken because of the historic nature of the building.

Access equipment shall not:

- Rest against walls, columns, arches or the vaulted ceiling.
- Contact historic plaster, stone, timber, decorative finishes or other sensitive surfaces.
- Be manoeuvred through restricted areas without a suitable banksman where there is a risk of collision.

Where equipment must pass near vulnerable features, a competent banksman shall guide its movement. Any protective material used against vulnerable surfaces shall be non-abrasive and shall not be fixed to the historic fabric.

13. Falling Objects and Exclusion Zone

The work involves overhead maintenance and therefore presents a potential falling-object hazard. Controls shall include:

- Establishing an exclusion zone below the work position.
- Preventing access by members of the public.
- Keeping loose materials to a minimum.
- Securing tools and equipment where appropriate.
- Not placing loose items on MEWP guardrails.
- Carrying out a final check of the work area before removing the exclusion zone.

No person shall work or pass beneath the active work area.

14. Electrical and Other Building Services

Prior to positioning access equipment, the work area shall be checked for:

- Light fittings.
- Electrical installations.
- Fire detection equipment.
- Speakers.
- Suspended services.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 7

- Other building services or obstructions.

The access platform shall be kept clear of electrical installations and other services. Any electrical equipment required for the works shall be suitable for the environment and subject to the contractor's inspection and testing arrangements.

15. Fire Safety

The community hall shall remain compliant with its existing fire arrangements throughout the works.

- Fire exits shall remain accessible.
- Fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment shall not be obstructed.
- No hot works are anticipated.
- No smoking or naked flames shall be permitted within the work area.
- Any temporary isolation of fire detection or other safety systems shall require prior authorisation and appropriate compensatory measures.

16. Housekeeping and Waste

The work area shall be kept clean and orderly.

At the end of each work period:

- Vacuum equipment and tools shall be removed.
- Dust and debris shall be collected.
- Floor protection shall be cleaned or removed as appropriate.
- No cleaning materials shall be left in the hall.
- Access routes and emergency exits shall be cleared.
- The hall shall be visually checked before being returned to normal use.

Waste shall be disposed of in accordance with the Contractor's waste-management procedures.

17. Completion Inspection

Following completion, the Supervisor shall inspect:

- All accessible panel surfaces.
- Panel edges and corners.
- Visible suspension components.
- Surface fixings where visible.
- Adjacent historic finishes.
- Floor and surrounding areas.

Photographs shall be taken where appropriate. Any defects identified during the work shall be recorded and reported to the client. The panels shall not be signed off as structurally secure solely on the basis of this cleaning operation; any concern regarding their fixing or suspension shall be referred to a suitably competent person for assessment.

18. Emergency Arrangements

In the event of:

- Panel movement or detachment,
- Failure of a fixing or suspension component,
- Damage to historic fabric,

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 8

- Damage to access equipment,
- Injury or ill health,
- Loss of power or equipment failure, or
- Any other unsafe condition,

work shall stop immediately, the area made safe and the Supervisor informed.

If a panel or component becomes unstable, operatives shall not attempt to hold, support or manually recover it unless this can be done safely within the capabilities of the planned emergency arrangements.

Any damaged or unstable installation shall be isolated from public access pending assessment by a suitably competent person.

A rescue procedure appropriate to the selected MEWP/access system shall be established before work commences.

19. Environmental Considerations

The cleaning process shall be selected to minimise:

- Dust generation.
- Noise.
- Waste.
- Use of chemicals.
- Potential contamination of historic finishes.

No chemical cleaning products shall be introduced without confirmation of their compatibility with the acoustic fabric and the listed building.

The hall shall be adequately ventilated where practicable, taking account of the building's existing ventilation arrangements.

20. Quality Control

The Supervisor shall ensure that:

- The correct cleaning method is used.
- No excessive suction or pressure is applied.
- The fabric is not damaged during cleaning.
- Panels are not moved or disturbed.
- Existing fixings and suspension components are not altered.
- Any defects are recorded.
- The completed installation is visually acceptable to the Client.

Where the panel manufacturer's maintenance instructions differ from this method statement, the manufacturer's requirements shall take precedence, subject to the requirements of the Client and listed-building controls.

21. Stop-Work Criteria

Work shall stop immediately if:

- The panel fabric begins to pull, tear or delaminate.
- A panel moves unexpectedly.
- A suspension wire, bracket or fixing appears damaged or loose.
- Historic plaster, stonework, timber or decorative finishes are damaged.
- The access equipment becomes unstable or develops a fault.
- An unauthorised person enters the exclusion zone.
- The proposed cleaning method causes staining, colour change or other deterioration.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 9

- Previously unidentified hazardous material or building defect is discovered.
- Safe access to any panel cannot be maintained.

Work shall only recommence following assessment and approval by the responsible Supervisor / Client as appropriate.

22. Long-term maintenance

- 22.1 Maintenance frequency
 - Visually inspect fixings once-yearly.
 - Visually inspect acoustic baffles once-yearly and clean as required based on dust/debris buildup, staining or other noticeable defect.
- 22.2 Replacement procedure
 - Panels can be removed individually, so replacement of individual baffles and/or fixings can be carried out on an as-needed basis.
- 22.3 Expected lifespan
 - The panels are located at high level within the vaulted ceiling of the centre and are not expected to be affected by the everyday wear and tear typical of a public space. Once installed, the panels are considered to be a permanent fixture, with a 30-year life expectancy.

23. Records

The following records shall be retained:

- Site-specific risk assessment.
- MEWP/access equipment inspection records.
- Operative training/competence records where applicable.
- Pre-works photographs.
- Completion photographs where required.
- Record of defects identified.
- Record of any areas not cleaned or requiring specialist treatment.
- Confirmation of completion.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 10

APPENDIX A – SUMMARY OF PANEL INSTALLATION

Panel arrangement	Quantity	Approximate height	Location
Centrally suspended	16 lots × 2 panels = 32 panels	7.5 m above floor	Centred along ridge within Gothic vaulted ceiling
Surface-fixed	7 lots × 2 panels each side = 28 panels	6.2 m above floor	Centred along ridge within Gothic vaulted ceiling. Sides of vaulted ceiling
Total	60 panels		Main Hall

Note: Quantities shall be verified during the pre-start inspection before the works commence.

APPENDIX B – KEY RISKS TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE RISK ASSESSMENT

The associated risk assessment should specifically consider:

- Working at height.
- Falls from height.
- Falling objects.
- MEWP operation and entrapment/crushing risks.
- Collision with the vaulted ceiling or historic fabric.
- Damage to Grade II listed building fabric.
- Damage to acoustic panels.
- Manual handling of equipment.
- Dust exposure.
- Electrical services.
- Public interface and exclusion zones.
- Emergency/rescue arrangements.
- Fire and emergency evacuation.
- Floor loading and suitability for access equipment.
- Restricted access and manoeuvring within the historic building.
- Any site-specific hazards identified during the pre-start survey.

Stuart James Associates

planning and development consultants

Company Number 7327582 Registered in England & Wales

VAT Number 135 6259 09. Regulated by RICS

Chris Ogle MEng (Managing Director) Mobile 07762 661003

Shelley Lafferty BA Hons, Dip Arch, RIBA, MSc AEES (Director) 07802 347777

Thomas Barker MEng, CEng, MICE (Director) 07584 373512

info@stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

www.stuartjamesassociates.co.uk

SJA3472a/doc/P04/A

Page 11