



Vietnamese Mural

Job Title:	Vietnamese Mural, Former Maidstone Migrant Centre	VHR:	H2190
		ICS Job Ref:	18577
Client:	Department of Transport & Planning (DTP)	Date:	20 March 2023

1 Background

International Conservation Services (ICS) were approached by the Department of Transport and Planning (DTP) to advise on the feasibility of preserving the Vietnamese mural at the Former Maidstone Migrant Centre. The Vietnamese mural is located on an external double-brick wall of Building B29 and is almost entirely obscured by graffiti.

ICS's scope involved undertaking a site inspection with a structural engineer (engaged by John Holland) to assess the potential for:

- i) Graffiti removal and conservation treatment
- ii) Relocation of the wall within the Former Maidstone Migrant Centre site

ICS were asked to provide a report detailing the mural's condition, and a proposed treatment methodology for its conservation, to be accompanied by an engineer's report discussing the feasibility of relocating the mural wall.

2 Condition

The condition of the Vietnamese mural (4100mm x 2300mm) was assessed on 19th September 2022. The following observations were noted.

- 95% of the mural is obscured by a later graffiti. The unobscured 5% is located underneath the graffiti (towards the base of the wall).
- The paint (graffiti and underlying mural) is cracked and delaminating throughout, particularly at the cement pointing leading to considerable losses.
- The unobscured mural paint is heavily cracked and delaminating. There is likely to be considerable loss to the unobscured mural paint, with the degree of loss unknown due to the overall illegibility of the mural.
- There is surface dirt and biological matter across the surface of the paint (graffiti and underlying mural).

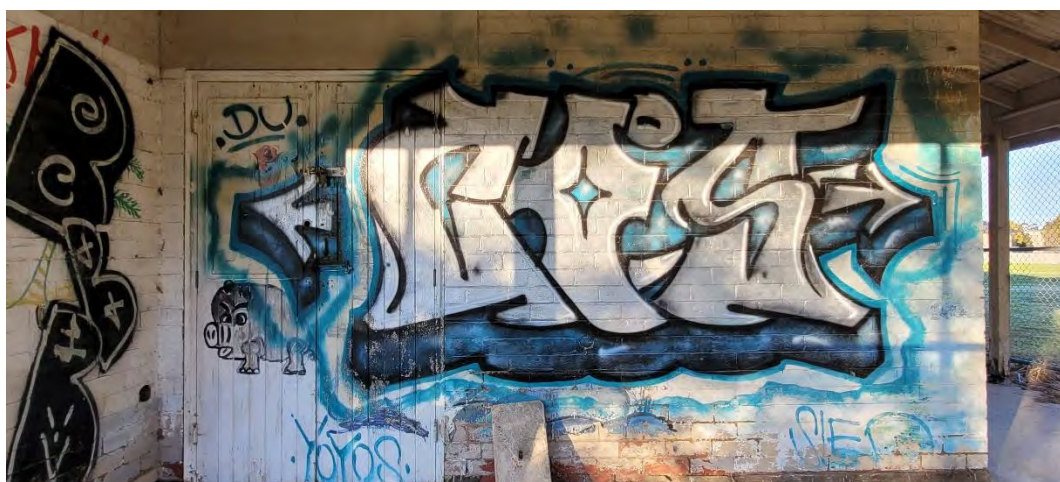


Figure 1: The Vietnamese mural



Figure 2: Detail of cracked and delaminating paint

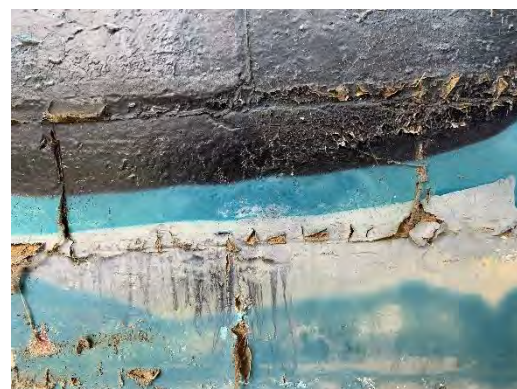


Figure 3: Detail of cracked and delaminating paint at the cement pointing

3 Solubility Testing

During the September site visit, ICS undertook solubility tests on both the graffiti and the underlying mural paint, to determine whether the two layers could be safely separated. The below tables show the solubility of the graffiti and the underlying mural paint by colour, in various solvents.

Graffiti	Black	Blue	Cream	Silver	White
Acetone	S	S	S	S	S
Ethanol	NS	S	NS	SS	NS
Isopropanol	NS	S	NS	NS	NS
2% non-ionic detergent in deionised water	NS	S	NS	NS	NS

Triammonium Citrate	NS	S	NS	NS	NS
White Spirit	NS	S	NS	NS	NS
Legend	S – Soluble	SS – Slightly Soluble		NS – Not Soluble	

Table 1: Solubility testing summary of the graffiti paint

Mural	Black	Blue	Green	Pale Blue	White
Acetone	SS	SS	NS	SS	SS
Ethanol	SS	SS	NS	SS	NS
Isopropanol	NS	SS	NS	NS	NS
Triammonium Citrate	SS	S	NS	NS	S
White Spirit	SS	SS	SS	NS	NS
Legend	S – Soluble	SS – Slightly Soluble		NS – Not Soluble	

Table 2: Solubility testing summary of the mural paint

Testing showed all colours of the graffiti paint were soluble in acetone, while the underlying mural paint was only slightly soluble in acetone, or not at all in the case of the green paint. A 5cm x 5cm graffiti removal test indicated it is possible for a conservator to remove all colours of graffiti paint, without loss to the underlying paint if sufficient care is taken.



Figure 4: Acetone test area outlined in yellow, before graffiti removal



Figure 5: Acetone test area, after graffiti removal

4 Proposed methodology

Evidently, there is great potential for graffiti removal and conservation treatment of the Vietnamese mural, however the approach will depend on whether the mural is to be salvaged and relocated or documented and demolished. The following options should be considered together with advice from the structural engineer regarding the mural's potential for relocation.

Option 1: Mural to be salvaged and relocated

- Controlled graffiti removal with acetone swabs and/or gels as required
- Paint consolidation
- Inpainting
- Application of a protective coating
- Reporting and comprehensive photo-documentation/photogrammetry
- Wall relocation as advised by structural engineer

Option 2: Mural to be documented and demolished

- Controlled graffiti removal with acetone swabs and/or gels as required
- Reporting and comprehensive photo-documentation/photogrammetry

5 Estimate

Our estimates for the options outlined above are as follows.

Option 1		Fee
Project management	\$	
Graffiti removal	\$	
Paint consolidation, inpainting and application of a protective coating	\$	
Reporting and comprehensive photo-documentation/photogrammetry	\$	
Wall relocation supervision	\$	
Total	\$	

Option2		Fee
Project management	\$	
Graffiti removal	\$	
Reporting and comprehensive photo-documentation/photogrammetry	\$	
Total	\$	

6 Authorship and Project Team

A site inspection and solvent testing was undertaken on 19th September by Katie Smith, Senior Conservation Manager, and Kristine Allinson, Conservation Projects Manager, of ICS, who subsequently prepared this report.

This report has been prepared for the client in accordance with the terms and conditions of appointment of International Conservation Services for this project.

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