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## **Synopsis**

This study examines the nature of wattle and daub in English building and the techniques required for its conservation. The intent was to combine disparate literature sources so to provide a coherent and comprehensive guide on the craft. Additionally, to assist conservation work in parts of the country devoid of wattle and daub research, a study of one such area, Wiltshire, was undertaken.

It was evident from existing research that significant variation in wattle and daub resulted from a complex interaction of multiple factors such as geology, land use, woodland coverage and species. Documented techniques for conservation were found to be sparse and therefore an attempt was made to broaden them, in some instances by adapting methods established for the conservation of other materials.

Conservation principles were applied, thereby illustrating that wattle and daub need not be stripped if decaying or where structural investigations and repairs are required. An examination of the material characteristics helped explain the behaviour and durability of wattle and daub, including the development of a hypothesis that the lignin in dung may explain its role.

It was established that the craft varied enormously in England, the dominating factors being panel shape and local availability of materials. The research of Wiltshire tradition showed a predominance of hazel withy and oak staves, the latter often crudely nailed to the frame where access during construction was restricted. Daubs were of local soils, chiefly calcareous due to the geology of the county, using hay and hair as the fibre in addition to the commonly specified straw. The case study identified new evidence that is directly applicable to the conservation of the county's timber framed buildings.

This study has been successful in so far as creating a platform that conveys all aspects of the wattle and daub craft, yet much continuing research is warranted, especially in the identification, categorisation and geographic mapping of regional variation. This may be accomplished through an increased interest in the subject that, in turn, may hopefully be stimulated by this work.

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