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PRATT FOUNDATION

RISING DAMP: CAUSES AND TREATMENT

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The Pratt Foundation/ISS Institute Overseas Fellowship

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this Fellowship was to study at first hand the processes undertaken to accurately diagnose the causes, control and treatment of rising damp, particularly in heritage buildings.

A key component of the study was to investigate the English model of training professionals, artisans and tradespeople involved in conserving and repairing heritage buildings, and investigate strategies for communication between tradespeople and architects, heritage consultants and engineers, in a holistic approach.

In Australia, rising damp and salt attack are well understood by heritage organisations such as Heritage Victoria and the National Trust of Australia, together with conservation architects and heritage advisors. It is recognised that there are skill deficiencies and therein, a major shortage of skilled artisans and tradespeople with the knowledge to properly diagnose, treat and control the problem.

The Fellowship program in England included training courses, site visits and meetings, which were significant in providing information and inspiration.

There is widespread consensus among heritage professionals including architects, heritage consultants, surveyors and conservation officers for the need to adopt a ‘back to basics’ holistic approach to damp diagnosis rather than sales-led ‘solutions’.

The overseas program was purposefully designed to explore the identified skills and knowledge deficiencies and obtain the information necessary to return to Australia equipped with the knowledge and ideas to enable the Fellow to advise, instruct, promote and improve the accurate diagnosis of the cause of rising damp and carry out appropriate treatment.

The information and knowledge obtained will be shared through workshops, conferences, education programs and publications.