# CASE OFFICER'S REPORT

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| **Application Reference:** | PL/2023/05179 |
| **Application Type:** | Listed building consent (Alt/Ext) |
| **Site Inspection:** | |
| **Consultation ends:** | 04 August 2023 |
| **Case officer:** | Helen Garside |

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| **Site Address:** | Emmanuel Baptist Church, Church Street, Trowbridge, BA14 8RZ |
| **Proposal:** | Installation of signage onto stone piers (retrospective application). |
| **Recommendation:** | Approve |

**POLICIES**

Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 also requires the Council to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of designated Conservation Areas.

The NPPF outlines government policy, including its policy in respect of the historic environment (Section 16). English Heritage's "Conservation Principles" provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment".

Core strategy Policy CP58, whilst primarily relevant to planning applications, gives an indication of the Council's aspirations for the historic environment. The policy requires that designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved.

**ISSUES**

Impact upon the preservation of the listed gate piers, their setting and features of special architectural and/or historic interest. Impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings and the conservation area.

**REPRESENTATIONS**

Trowbridge Town Council – no objection.

**ASSESSMENT**

The application relates to the individually listed gate piers, gates and wrought iron overthrow and lantern which are at the street entrance to the passageway between buildings which leads to the former Emmanuel Baptist Church. The proposals seek consent for the retention of signage which has been fixed to the stone gate piers. This features a pair of matching grey sign panels fixed to either pier, with white lettering indicating the premises which occupy the church.

The gate piers are in poor condition and require appropriate conservation repair but this lies outside the remit of the tenants who are making the application for the signage.

The piers have blank panels to the centre column faces and the signs have been designed to fit inside mouldings and fill these areas without impinging on surrounding decorative elements, thereby limiting the visual impact. Fixings are via 4 screws to each panel, which are already in place.

There are conservation benefits which derive from supporting the building in use since its redundancy from the Baptist Church and public benefits also from signposting the charitable organisations which occupy the building and it is acknowledged that there are no other options for such signage, taking into account the particular location of the building.

Whilst some limited harm results from obscuring the stone of the piers and fixing into this, the signs have been discreetly designed and the visual impact is limited and felt to be offset by the benefits which come from supporting the use of the main church building, which is in a hard to access location in the town. The signage is on the commercial edge of the town where signage is a frequent feature and the signs will not appear as an unusual feature and there will be a neutral impact on the conservation area and settings of neighbouring buildings, including the church opposite.

As a result, the proposals are considered to comply with current legislation and policy and are proposed for approval.

**RECOMMENDATION**:
Approve. No conditions are required as the signs are already in place.