

Design and Access Statement

Property: Kitchener's Court, Hill Street, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8LA

Surveyor: Adam Langsbury BSc (Hons) MRICS, Chartered Building Surveyor

Date of Inspection: 1st December 2025

Listing Status: Grade II* Listed Building

Overview:

Kitchener's Court is located at the bottom of Hill Street, Trowbridge. The property is designated as Grade II* by English Heritage, signifying its considerable historical and architectural significance, exceeding that of a Grade II Listed Building. All works to the building, whether internal or external, require Listed Building Consent from Wiltshire District Council.

Construction – Generally:

The building constructed over three storeys. External Walls constructed with rendered masonry to the front elevations (east facing) and side (south facing) elevation. The rear (west) and the other side (north) are fairfaced brickwork. To the rear there are two single storey perpendicular Coach House projections and a two storey sloping roof abutment.

1. External Walls

Construction:

The external walls are of traditional solid masonry construction, finished with a hard cement-based render. Decorative architectural mouldings are present, consistent with the building's historic character.

Condition:

- A significant vertical and diagonal crack is observed at the corner junction of the east and south elevations, adjacent to the downpipe. This crack runs through the render and indicates render failure due to thermal stress, trapped water behind the render, erosion of the masonry substrate, corrosion and rusting of the steel corner bead. There is also evidence of crazing and cracking through the remainder of the render.
- Hard cement rendering and steel corner beading is inappropriate for this historic building. The render is rigid and incompatible with historic substrates, showing signs of detachment and stress concentration around steel corner beads.
- Localised damp staining is visible, particularly near rainwater goods, suggesting possible moisture ingress.

- Buddleia plants and other vegetation growing from cornices should be removed.

Recommendations:

- Carefully remove hard cement render and steel corner beads and replace with traditional lime render for breathability and compatibility.
 - Provide lime wash paint in 4 coats applied at weekly intervals to allow each coat to properly carbonate.
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2. Windows

Type and Construction:

Timber-framed sash windows, consistent with the building's period features. Some units appear to have secondary glazing or internal modifications.

Condition:

- Paintwork is generally tired, with flaking and exposed timber in several locations.
- Evidence of minor timber decay at cills and lower rails, likely due to prolonged exposure and inadequate water runoff.
- Putty seals are deteriorated, compromising weatherproofing.

Recommendations:

- Repair and redecorate timber elements using breathable paints.
 - Replace failed putty and consider discreet draught-proofing measures.
 - Ensure compliance with conservation guidelines for any window upgrades.
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3. Window Mullions – Front Elevation

- **Ground Floor Stone Mullions:**
 - Exhibiting advanced deterioration, with visible cracking, spalling, and loss of profile.
 - Likely compromised structurally and aesthetically, requiring **extensive repair or full replacement.**
- **Ground Floor Window Cills:**
 - Exhibiting advanced deterioration, with visible spalling erosion, and loss of profile.

- Left hand side ground floor double stone window cill will require **full replacement** to match like for like to existing.
- **Environmental Stressors:**
 - **Road Traffic Pollution:** Continuous exposure to airborne particulates and exhaust fumes accelerating surface decay and discoloration.
 - **Water Erosion:** Rainwater runoff and splashback from adjacent hardstanding contributing to stone erosion and mortar washout.
 - **Inappropriate Paint Application:** Non-breathable coatings have trapped moisture within the stone, exacerbating freeze-thaw cycles and internal delamination.

Recommended Actions

- **Specialist Stone Repair:**
 - Engage conservation-grade stonemasons to assess and replace mullions using compatible stone and lime mortar.
 - Consider salvaging any sound sections where feasible.
 - **Pollution Mitigation:**
 - Introduce low-level planting or permeable barriers to reduce splashback and particulate accumulation.
 - Explore protective coatings only if breathable and conservation-approved.
 - **Moisture Management:**
 - Strip inappropriate paint layers carefully.
 - Allow stone to dry fully before any remedial works.
 - Repaint only with breathable mineral-based paints if necessary.
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3. Roof

Roof Covering Type

- **Historic Triple Roman Red Clay Tiles**
 - Traditional clay profile with interlocking roll and trough geometry.
 - Contributes to the architectural character and heritage value of the building.
 - Decorative clay ridge tiles with triangular pointed detail.

Observations

- **Material Condition:**

- Tiles are aged and likely **brittle**, with signs of weathering, moss growth, and surface erosion.
- One tile is **missing** and has been **replaced with lead**, introducing visual and material inconsistency.
- **Matching Challenges:**
 - **Like-for-like replacement** is likely to be difficult due to rarity of profile and colour tone.
 - Salvage of sound tiles from less exposed elevations may be feasible.
 - **Custom manufacture** to match original dimensions and finish could be considered, subject to cost and lead time.
- Ridge line shows signs of minor undulation, possibly due to historic settlement or timber movement.

Recommended Actions

- **Specialist Assessment:**
 - Engage a heritage roofer to assess tile integrity and identify salvageable units.
 - Document tile dimensions and clay composition for potential reproduction.
- **Repair Strategy:**
 - Replace missing and damaged tiles with **salvaged or custom-matched clay tiles**.
 - Avoid use of lead or non-matching substitutes in visible areas.
 - Re-bed tiles using breathable mortar and ensure proper water runoff.
- **Conservation Considerations:**
 - Retain as much original material as possible.
 - Justify any replacement with reference to structural safety, weatherproofing, and visual coherence.

Condition:

- Rainwater goods show corrosion, particularly at joints and brackets, with staining on adjacent walls.

Recommendations:

- Refix or replace displaced slates and inspect roof battens for integrity.
- Clean and treat rainwater goods to prevent further corrosion.
- Undertake periodic roof inspections to monitor ridge alignment and slate condition.

4. Rainwater Goods

- **Cast iron gutters and downpipes to the front elevation.**
 - Traditional cast iron rainwater goods.
 - Contributes to the architectural character and heritage value of the building.
 - Gutting supported on gallows bracket style supports.

- **PVCu gutters and downpipes to the rear elevation.**
 - A modern addition.
 - Detracts from the architectural character and heritage value of the building.

Observations

- **Material Condition:**
 - Cast iron gutting – aged and flaking decorations.
 - Rusting rainwater pipes.

Summary

Kitchener's Court presents typical maintenance challenges for a Grade II* Listed building, particularly where modern materials interface with historic fabric. The external walls require careful attention to render compatibility and structural movement. Windows and roof elements show signs of age-related wear but are repairable within conservation parameters.

Next Steps:

- Engage a conservation-accredited contractor for render and window repairs.
 - Liaise with the local conservation officer regarding proposed interventions.
 - Schedule follow-up inspection within 6–12 months to assess remedial effectiveness.
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1970s Photograph



1916 Photograph showing flooding at Kitchener's Court – note there was once a window in the roof space.



1. Kitchener's Court Front Elevation (East Facing)



2. Side Elevation (South Facing)



3. Front and side elevation at abutment with adjoining building (North)



4. Rear elevation



5. Rear Elevation (north)



6. Significant erosion to stone window mullion – front ground floor.



7. Significant erosion to window cill – front left hand side.



8. Decaying modern timber window requires replacement.



9. As above window to be replaced.

Schedule of Repair Works

1. External Walls

- **Remove** existing hard cement render and steel corner beads.
- **Prepare substrate** by carefully cleaning and repairing underlying masonry.
- **Apply traditional lime render** in multiple coats for breathability and compatibility.
- **Finish with lime wash paint** (4 coats, applied at weekly intervals).
- **Address cracks** at east/south corner junction with appropriate masonry stitching or lime mortar repair.
- **Improve rainwater management** around downpipes to reduce damp staining.
- **Penetrating damp** – To south facing gable elevation – cut away concrete and tarmac where it directly abuts the building to form a 150mm wide channel, excavate channel to a depth below that of the internal floor level

2. Windows

- **Strip flaking paint** and prepare timber surfaces.
- **Repair minor timber decay** at cills and lower rails with spliced-in sections of matching timber.
- **Replace failed putty seals** with traditional linseed oil putty.
- **Redecorate** using breathable heritage-grade paints.
- **Introduce discreet draught-proofing** where conservation guidelines permit.

3. Stone Mullions – Front Elevation

- **Engage stonemason** to assess deterioration of ground floor mullions.
- **Repair or replace** mullions using compatible stone and lime mortar.
- **Remove inappropriate paint layers** carefully; allow stone to dry fully before re-treatment.
- **Repaint with breathable mineral-based paints** if required.
- **Introduce pollution mitigation measures** (e.g. low-level planting or permeable barriers).

4. Roof

- **Heritage roofer assessment** of triple Roman clay tiles and ridge tiles.
- **Salvage sound tiles** from less exposed elevations for reuse.
- **Replace missing/damaged tiles** with salvaged or custom-manufactured clay tiles.
- **Avoid non-matching substitutes** (e.g. lead).
- **Re-bed tiles** using breathable mortar.
- **Clean and treat rainwater goods** to prevent further corrosion.

5. Rainwater Goods

- **Front elevation cast iron gutters/downpipes:**
 - Remove rust and flaking paint.
 - Apply rust inhibitor and repaint with heritage-grade coatings.
- **Rear elevation PVCu gutters/downpipes:**
 - Consider replacement with cast iron to restore architectural coherence.
- **Check gables bracket supports** for stability and repair as needed.

6. Replace rotten rear window.

- **Remove the existing decaying window as shown.**
- **Replace with purpose made hardwood opening casement window**
 - Double glazed for thermal efficiency.
 - To the approval of the Conservation Officer.

7. General Preventative Measures

- **Establish cyclical maintenance plan** (6–12 month inspections).
- **Document all interventions** for conservation records.
- **Liaise with Wiltshire Council Conservation Officer** for Listed Building Consent prior to works.
- **Ensure contractors are conservation-accredited** (e.g. members of SPAB or equivalent).

END OF NOTES

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