

Design & Access Statement

**56-58 High Street, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire
Grade II Listed Building – List Entry No. 1252688**



Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for repair works at 56-58 High Street, Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire. The building is Grade II listed (List Entry Number 1252688) and forms part of the historic core of the village.

The proposed works arise from accidental vehicular impact damage to a section of external wall and door jamb on the side elevation of the property. The application seeks consent solely for the reinstatement of the damaged fabric using traditional materials and methods. No alteration to the building's form, scale, layout, or historic character is proposed.

Site Context

The property occupies a prominent position along High Street and was historically a single building, later subdivided into two dwellings. It is of traditional construction, utilising natural stone masonry laid in lime mortar, timber structural elements, and painted timber joinery.

Although the affected elevation is not the principal elevation, it remains part of the listed fabric and contributes to the overall integrity of the building. The repair therefore requires an approach consistent with the conservation of listed structures.



Design Approach

The design approach is intentionally conservative and repair-led. The objective is to reinstate the damaged wall so that the building is returned to its pre-impact condition.

No changes are proposed to the size, position, or proportions of the door opening. Existing detailing is retained, including timber lintels. Where replacement is unavoidable, it will be undertaken on a like-for-like basis, matching the original construction in form and material (as close as possible).

Appearance and Materials

Materials have been selected to ensure compatibility with the existing historic fabric. Natural stone will be reused wherever possible and supplemented with carefully selected matching stone where necessary. Stonework will be toothed into the existing wall to ensure visual continuity.

Mortars and finishes will be lime-based, maintaining breathability and allowing the wall to perform as originally intended. Timber elements will be retained where sound, with replacement limited to the damaged vertical post only, formed in hardwood to match existing proportions and appearance.

Access

The proposals do not affect access to the building.

Structure

The proposed extent of reinstatement has been informed by the findings of the structural engineer's report dated February 2026, which confirms that the wall is loadbearing and that the masonry within the affected area has been structurally compromised following vehicular impact. The repair strategy has been developed to address these findings while limiting intervention to the minimum necessary and using materials compatible with the listed building.

Heritage Statement

56–58 High Street, Steeple Ashton
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Significance of the Heritage Asset

The significance of 56–58 High Street lies in its traditional construction, survival of historic fabric, and contribution to the character of Steeple Ashton's historic streetscape. The building exemplifies vernacular architecture through its use of local stone, lime mortar, timber structural elements, and traditional joinery.

The significance of the listed building is embodied not only in its overall appearance but also in the way its materials function together, particularly the breathability and flexibility of lime-based construction.

Nature and Extent of Damage

The building sustained accidental damage when a vehicle struck the external wall at the door jamb on the side elevation. The impact resulted in localized masonry failure and damage to a timber post forming part of the internal door surround. The damage is confined to a small area and has not altered the overall form or layout of the building. However, the integrity and weather resistance of the wall have been compromised, making sensitive repair necessary to prevent further deterioration.



Conservation Philosophy

The proposed works are guided by established conservation principles, including minimal intervention, retention of historic fabric, and the use of compatible materials. The extent of intervention has been limited strictly to what is necessary to reinstate the damaged fabric.

This approach reflects Historic England guidance, which emphasises the importance of understanding how traditional buildings function and ensuring that repairs do not introduce materials or methods that could cause long-term harm.

Impact on Significance

The proposed works will result in no harm to the significance of the listed building. The reinstatement replaces fabric lost through accidental damage and does not introduce new elements or alter the building's character.

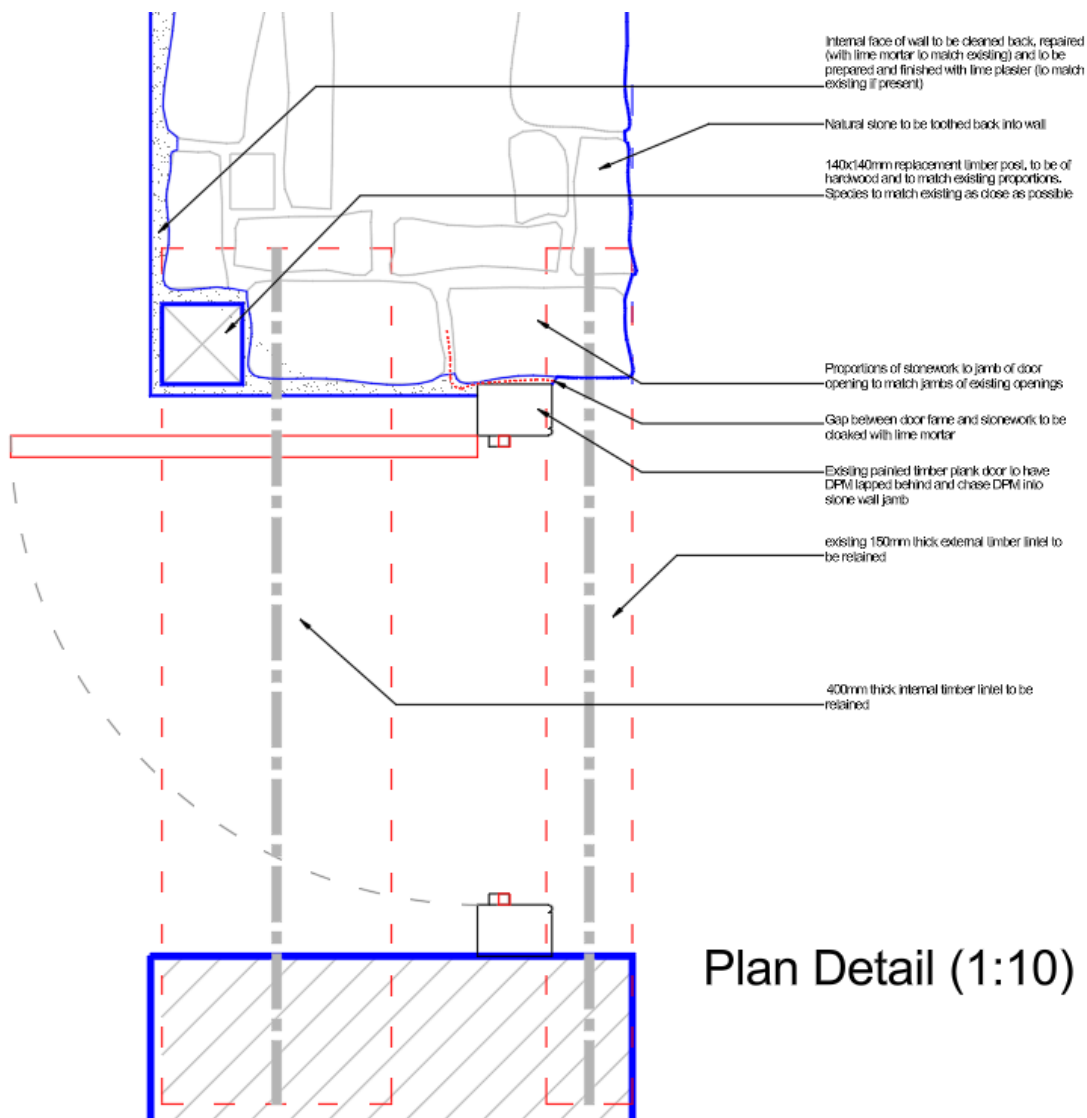
By restoring the wall using appropriate materials and methods, the works will preserve the building's architectural integrity and contribute to its long-term conservation.

Description of the Proposed Works

Damaged and unstable stonework will be carefully dismantled by hand, allowing reusable stone to be salvaged and reinstalled. A replacement timber post measuring 140 × 140 mm will be introduced in hardwood, selected to match the existing timber as closely as practicable in species, grain, and finish.

Existing external and internal timber lintels will be retained and protected throughout the works. Stonework will be rebuilt and toothed into the existing wall to ensure both structural continuity and visual coherence. Mortar joints will be formed using a lime-based mortar matched to the existing in colour, texture, and joint profile.

Internally, the repaired wall will be finished with lime plaster, maintaining breathability and consistency with the historic interior fabric.



Policy Context

The proposal accords with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which supports the conservation of heritage assets through sensitive repair and maintenance. The works are also consistent with Wiltshire Council's local heritage policies, which encourage like-for-like repair using traditional materials.

Response to the Statutory Listing

The proposals have been informed by a detailed review of the statutory listing for Nos.56–60 High Street (List Entry No. 1252688), which recognises the building as a Grade II* heritage asset of particular architectural and historic interest. The listing identifies the importance of the building's early C16 origins, its successive phases of alteration, and the continued legibility of its historic plan form and fabric. This layered evolution has been carefully considered in the development of the proposed works.

The repair works are confined to a small section of external wall and door jamb within the former hall range now forming Nos.56–58 High Street. The location and limited extent of the damage have allowed the proposals to be tightly focused, avoiding any impact on the principal elevations, historic plan form, roof structure, timber framing, or interior features identified within the listing as contributing to the building's exceptional interest.

Alignment of the Proposals with the Building's Historic Fabric

The listing description records the use of a variety of traditional materials across the building, including timber framing with brick infill, rubble stone masonry, lime-based construction, and later phases of stone rebuilding. The proposed reinstatement responds directly to this understanding by employing materials and techniques that reflect the historic construction of the affected elevation, rather than introducing modern or visually intrusive solutions. The use of natural stone, lime mortar, and lime plaster has been specified to ensure physical compatibility with the surrounding historic fabric. The stonework will be toothed into the existing wall to reflect traditional methods of repair and to preserve the visual continuity of the elevation. This approach ensures that the repair does not read as a modern intervention but as a continuation of the building's established fabric.

Scale of Intervention and Sensitivity to Significance

The proposals have been deliberately limited in scope and scale, reflecting the Grade II* status of the building and the sensitivity of its historic fabric. The works do not alter the size, position, or proportions of the existing door opening, and existing timber lintels are retained. Replacement of timber is restricted to the damaged vertical post only, matching the original in size and appearance.

By confining intervention to reinstatement of fabric lost through accidental damage, the proposals preserve the legibility of the building's historic development and avoid any erosion of the elements identified within the listing as contributing to its special interest.

Conclusion

Having regard to the statutory listing and the aspects of significance it identifies, the proposed works are considered to result in no harm to the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. The reinstatement of the damaged wall using traditional materials and methods supports the long-term conservation of the building and is fully consistent with the building's historic character and significance as described in the listing.

Methodology Statement

Reinstatement of External Wall and Door Jamb 56–58 High Street, Steeple Ashton

Methodological Overview

The works will be undertaken by contractors experienced in the repair of historic buildings. The methodology is designed to ensure the protection of historic fabric, the use of compatible materials, and the achievement of a durable repair that respects the building's traditional construction.

Site Preparation and Protection

Prior to commencement, the affected area will be assessed and made safe. Temporary support will be installed where required to maintain stability during dismantling. Adjacent masonry, joinery, and finishes will be protected using breathable coverings to prevent damage.

Dismantling and Salvage

Damaged stonework will be dismantled carefully by hand. Sound stone will be retained and cleaned for reuse. The damaged timber post will be removed with care to avoid disturbance to the retained lintels and surrounding masonry.

Timber Specification and Installation

The replacement timber post will be formed in hardwood, selected to match the existing timber as closely as practicable. The timber will be appropriately seasoned and installed with allowance for natural movement. Fixings will be kept to a minimum and concealed where possible.

Lime Mortar Specification and Application

All masonry will be laid using a lime-based mortar, anticipated to be NHL 2 or NHL 3.5 depending on exposure. The lime will be combined with a well-graded aggregate selected to match the existing mortar in colour and texture.

Mortar will be mixed and applied in accordance with best practice, with joints finished to match the existing historic profile. Newly laid work will be protected during curing to prevent rapid drying, frost damage, or excessive moisture ingress. Cementitious materials will not be used.

Masonry Reinstatement

Stonework will be rebuilt and toothed into the existing wall to avoid straight joints and to ensure structural integration. Particular attention will be paid to matching the proportions and detailing of the existing door jambs, as illustrated on the drawings.

Internal Finishes and Detailing

Internally, the repaired wall will be finished with lime plaster, applied in appropriate coats and allowed to cure naturally. A damp-proof membrane will be lapped behind the existing door frame and chased into the stonework as shown on the drawings. The interface between timber and masonry will be cloaked with lime mortar to provide a breathable seal.

Completion and Aftercare

Upon completion, the works will be inspected to ensure visual and material continuity. All temporary protections will be removed, and the site left clean and secure. Lime-based materials will be allowed to carbonate naturally, with appropriate aftercare during the initial curing period.