



Design and Access Statement

Salisbury Guildhall Works

27th May 2026



The Value of Certainty.

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Version Control

Version	Date	Description of revision	Prepared by	Checked by	Authorised by
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Distribution list

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1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement has been prepared on behalf of Salisbury City Council in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for conservation works to Salisbury Guildhall, Market Place, Salisbury, SP1 1JH.

The proposed works comprise of:

- stabilisation of the Banqueting Hall lath and plaster ceiling;
- various structural cracking repairs to masonry walls;
- localised lime plaster repairs;
- associated redecoration and decorative finishes, including redecoration for the Banqueting Hall and Crown Court.

The purpose of the works is to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Salisbury Guildhall, address identified defects, reduce the risk of further deterioration, and support the continued safe use of the building as a civic and public venue.

2. Site Description and Historical Context

Salisbury Guildhall is a Grade II* listed civic building constructed circa 1795, representing a significant example of late Georgian municipal architecture. The building occupies a prominent position within Salisbury Market Place and forms an important part of the city's historic core.

The structure is of traditional solid masonry construction, comprising:

- Loadbearing brick and limestone walls.
- Lime plaster internal finishes.
- Timber floor and roof structures.

The Banqueting Hall is one of the principal spaces within the building and is of high heritage significance. It contains:

- Ornate plaster cornices.
- Decorative ceiling roses.
- Traditional lath and plaster ceiling construction.

The ceiling is understood to have been reconstructed in the late 20th century using traditional materials and techniques, maintaining the historic character of the space.

3. Design Principles

The design approach is conservation led and based on the principle of minimum intervention where required.

The works have been designed in order for:

- Retaining the existing historic fabric wherever practicable;
- Repairing rather than replace defective elements;
- Using materials compatible with the existing building fabric;
- Protecting significant decorative features;
- Avoiding unnecessary alteration to the appearance or character of the building;
- Supporting the continued safe use of the Guildhall.

The proposals do not involve demolition, extension, change of use, or significant alteration to the layout of the building.

4. Ceiling Stabilisation Design

The Banqueting Hall ceiling will be stabilised using a screw and washer pinning system. This method has been selected as it allows loose or delaminated plaster to be mechanically secured back to the supporting timber laths or joists while retaining the majority of the existing ceiling fabric.

Stainless steel screws and plaster repair washers will be installed in a controlled pattern, with final fixing locations confirmed on site following inspection and tap testing. Washers will be set slightly below the finished surface and made good using compatible lime-based plaster.

The visual appearance of the ceiling will be preserved following completion, with fixings concealed beneath lime plaster repairs and breathable decorative finishes.

Decorative plaster features, including cornices, ceiling roses and mouldings, will be retained and protected throughout the works.

5. Structural Crack Repairs

Structural cracking to masonry walls will be repaired using stainless steel helical crack stitching bars set into existing mortar bed joints and bedded in lime-based grout.

The design intent is to restore local structural continuity across identified cracks while avoiding unnecessary rebuilding or removal of historic masonry. Disturbed joints and finishes will be reinstated using compatible lime mortar and lime-based plaster to match the existing fabric.

The repair method has been selected because it is localised, discreet and compatible with traditional masonry construction.

6. Plaster Repairs and Decorative Finishes

Localised plaster repairs will be undertaken where necessary to facilitate the ceiling stabilisation and crack repair works. Damaged or defective plaster will be carefully removed back to sound material and reinstated using compatible lime-based plaster.

Following completion of the repair works, affected areas will be redecorated using breathable, vapour-permeable conservation paint systems suitable for lime plaster surfaces. Impermeable modern paint systems will not be used on lime plastered surfaces.

Where decorative wallpaper, feature panels or enhanced decorative finishes are proposed, these will be limited to designated areas and selected to complement the civic and historic character of the Banqueting Hall. Final colours, wallpapers and decorative finishes will be agreed with Salisbury City Council and, where required, the Local Planning Authority / Conservation Officer prior to implementation.

7. Appearance and Heritage Impact

The external appearance of the building will remain largely unchanged, except where localised external crack repairs are required.

Internally, the works will preserve the character and appearance of the principal spaces. The ceiling stabilisation and crack repairs will be concealed as far as practicable, with disturbed finishes made good to match the surrounding fabric.

The proposed decoration works are intended to enhance the presentation of the principal interior without harming its heritage significance.

The works are considered to result in less than substantial harm, limited to localised disturbance of plaster and masonry finishes necessary to facilitate repair. This harm is outweighed by the heritage benefits of stabilising the ceiling, repairing structural cracking, retaining historic fabric and supporting the continued use of the Guildhall.

8. Access

The proposed works do not alter existing access arrangements to or within Salisbury Guildhall.

No new pedestrian or vehicular access is proposed. Existing public, staff and operational access arrangements will remain unchanged following completion of the works.

During construction, access to working areas may be temporarily restricted for health and safety reasons. This will be managed by the appointed contractor in liaison with Salisbury City Council to minimise disruption to building users and Guildhall operations.

The completed works will not reduce accessibility or alter the existing use of the building.

9. Construction and Protection Measures

Works will be undertaken by specialist contractors experienced in historic building conservation.

Prior to commencement, vulnerable historic features within the working areas will be protected. This will include decorative plasterwork, cornices, ceiling roses, mouldings, joinery, chandeliers, paintings and other significant interior features where applicable.

Where paintings or removable decorative items are present, these will either be temporarily removed by Salisbury City Council or protected in situ, subject to their condition and method of fixing.

Localised opening-up will be limited to the areas necessary to complete the repair works. All disturbed finishes will be reinstated using compatible lime-based materials.

10. Conclusion

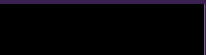
The proposed works have been designed to preserve and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of Salisbury Guildhall.

The design approach is based on repair, retention and minimum intervention. The proposed ceiling stabilisation, masonry crack repairs, lime plaster making good and breathable decorative finishes are appropriate to the building's Grade II* listed status and will help secure the long-term preservation and continued use of the Guildhall.

The proposals do not alter the use, access arrangements, layout or overall character of the building. They represent a proportionate and conservation-led response to identified defects and are considered appropriate for Listed Building Consent.

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