

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

OFFICER DELGATED REPORT

APPLICATION REFERENCE:	PL/2026/03844
APPLICATION TYPE:	Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)
SITE ADDRESS:	The Guildhall, Market Place, Salisbury, SP1 1JH
DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:	Stabilisation and conservation repair of the existing lath and plaster ceiling within the Banqueting Hall, together with repairs to structural cracking within masonry walls throughout the building. Works may include the localised removal of plaster finishes to facilitate repairs, with associated internal redecoration upon completion where required, including redecoration of the Banqueting Hall and Crown.
RECOMMENDATION:	Approve with Conditions

SITE DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

The Guildhall is a prominent civic building that is sited within the Market Square. It is the home of Salisbury City Council, hosting offices and a series of other spaces. The TIC is located in the basement, accessed from the rear (Fish Row). The Guildhall has an important ceremonial role, and is now used for all manner of civic and private events. The former court rooms are open to the public, as are a run of the former cells.

The Guildhall is listed at Grade II* and the list entry, for means of identification purposes only, provides the following description:

'The Guildhall SU 1430 SW 1/299 SU 1429 NW 3/299 SU 1429 NE 4/299 28.2.52. II 2. Designed by Sir Robert Taylor and built with some alterations by William Pilkington in 1788-95. Principally of 1 storey over basement. Part in centre of 2 storeys. A symmetrical front of white brick on projecting ashlar stone base, with stone string at springing of main window arches. Wide stone cornice with enriched soffit and stone blocking course. Hipped slate roof. The main front now consists of a central block with a slight projection and a hexastyle Doric stone portico with triglyph frieze and moulded cornice, standing on a wide stone landing, approached by 4 steps across whole width and return at each end. Large central 6-panel double door under portico in surround of moulded stone architrave and cornice, with City Arms in panel over cornice. 3 arched 1st floor windows in main wall over portico with stone architrave surrounds and radiating voussoirs. The central block is flanked by a very tall arched window at each side, set in an arched recess with a surround of projecting and vermiculated bonded stone work, voussoir arch with tall ashlar keystone, very large scale. The portico was originally placed centrally on the West end of the building. It was removed later and rebuilt on the north side. Its original position now filled by a projecting section with one window to the north and 3 to the west, of similar general design but simpler cornice. The front to Queen Street is similar but with a large central bow of 3 windows. Front to Butcher's Row generally similar. Fine reception room on east side, whole length of the east front, with original decoration, restrained plasterwork. The centre*

of building is the staircase hall with a glazed round lantern, divided from entrance hall by a screen of Tuscan columns. In the hall a reset Elizabethan fireplace’.

Opposite the principal elevation is the grade II listed war memorial which sits within an area of the Market Square known as Guildhall Square.

The building and Market Square are at the heart of the City of Salisbury conservation area.

PROPOSALS

The proposals are for the repair and securing of the existing lath and plaster ceiling and associated structural repairs to the masonry fabric.

The wider scope of works (and not requiring consent) also includes redecoration proposals for various rooms.

Taken from the Design and Access statement (Currie&Brown dated 27/5/2026), the proposals are:

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

Justification for the proposals

Banqueting Hall ceiling

The application is prompted by a partial collapse of the Banqueting Hall ceiling in 2018-19. From Currie&Brown’s structural investigation of the Banqueting Hall ceiling (pg 7):

*‘Following partial collapse of the banquet [stet] ceiling sometime around 2018-19 , **a historic survey**¹ was undertaken of the ceiling construction and its integrity coupled with temporary interventional restraint to the underside of the ceiling comprising ply timber and fibreglass netting secured by timber battens.’*

And

‘Overall, the ceiling remains in good condition, retaining its decorative plasterwork detailing, particularly dentiled cornices, with no evidence of widespread cracking. Two localised areas of plaster key loss were noted; these were first identified during the 2019 survey. The remedial works undertaken at that time’

¹ Report by Sandberg LLP for Rodney Melville and dated 27 August 2019

The following is from the heritage impact assessment (4.2):

'The Banqueting Hall ceiling is of traditional lath and plaster construction, understood to have been reconstructed in the late 20th century using materials and techniques consistent with historic practice. Despite this relatively recent reconstruction, the ceiling now exhibits signs of deterioration associated with systems.

Investigations have identified the following key defects:

Loss of plaster key: *The primary mechanism of deterioration is the failure of the plaster key that secures the plaster to the timber laths above. This has resulted in areas of delamination between the plaster and its supporting substrate.*

Localised sagging and deflection: *In areas where the key has weakened or failed, sections of the ceiling exhibit slight sagging, indicating a loss of structural integrity within the plaster layer.*

Previous localised failure: *A partial ceiling failure occurred circa 2018 where deterioration is more advanced. 2019, demonstrating that the system is capable of localised collapse where deterioration is more advanced.*

Temporary restraint measures: *Following the previous failure, temporary interventions were installed, including plywood boarding and fibreglass netting fixed to the underside of the ceiling. While these measures have reduced immediate risk, they are not considered a suitable long term solution and detract from the architectural integrity of the space.*

Distributed deterioration: *The deterioration is not isolated to a single area but occurs across multiple zones of the ceiling. This indicates that the ceiling is no longer functioning as a unified structural system and requires a coordinated stabilisation approach.*

Although current inspections indicate that the ceiling is broadly stable, it is considered to be approaching the end of its serviceable life. Without intervention, there is a foreseeable risk of further localised failures, which could result in loss of historic fabric and potential safety hazards within a publicly accessible space.'

Structural Cracking to masonry walls

The following is from the heritage impact assessment (4.3):

'A programme of structural investigation has identified cracking within masonry walls across several areas of the building, including the Crown Court, Oak Court, basement, and roof void.

The principal characteristics of the various cracking found within the Guildhall are as follows:

A primary crack line extends vertically through multiple storeys of the building, indicating structural masonry cracking rather than superficial plaster defects.

Crack widths vary across the building, with some areas exhibiting moderate to severe cracking (up to approximately 35mm in isolated locations), suggesting historic and progressive movement.

The alignment and continuity of cracking indicate long term differential movement within the building, likely influenced by a combination of ground conditions, historic settlement, and thermal affects.

In certain areas, such as Oak Court, movement to structural openings (including door frames) has been observed, further evidencing movement within the masonry.

Despite the presence of these defects, there is no evidence of imminent structural failure. The cracking is considered to be historic or slow progressive in nature. However, without intervention, there is potential for continued movement, further opening of cracks, and associated deterioration of masonry and finishes.'

THE PROPOSALS

Banqueting Hall lath and plaster ceiling repair and stabilisation

From the D&A statement (4):

'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.'

Repairs to structural cracking to masonry walls

Currie&Brown have provided a separate report on structural cracks (dated 23/1/2026). From the report:

'The inspection comprised of a visual examination of the basement Portico, Crown Court, Oak Court, Grand Jury Room, basement and the roof void above the Banqueting Hall.

Several significant cracks were identified, the most notable of which form a continuous vertical crack line internal masonry wall extending from high level within the Crown Court which then extends through Oak Court. Additional cracking was observed within the basement progressing vertically through a staircase and then on opposing sides of the wall in Crown Court.....

The primary crack line through the Crown Court progressive and Oak Court is assessed as being the result of long term, structural movement rather than an acute or recent failure’.

Vertical crack in the roofspace



The location of the cracks are identified on page 14 of the report.

From the D&A statement (5):

‘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’.

Plaster repairs and decoration of the Banqueting Hall ceiling

‘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’.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDANCE

Legislation

From the point of view of the historic environment the main statutory tests are set out within the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 16 requires that **special regard** be given to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

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.

National Policy and Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) August 2026 sets out government policy, including in respect of the historic environment.

Chapter 20 - *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, recognises heritage assets as an irreplaceable resource. Heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance, with harm avoided unless there is a clear and convincing justification. Decision-makers are required to apply a balanced approach, giving substantial weight to the conservation of heritage assets and weighing any harm to significance against the public benefits of the proposal.

Chapter 5 of the NPPF sets out policies for *Meeting the challenge of climate change* and gives substantial weight to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings and/or drawing energy from district heat networks, renewable and low carbon sources (including through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels where these do not already benefit from permitted development rights).

National Planning Practice Guidance provides guidance on interpreting the NPPF.

Historic England's *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* (2008) provides policy and guidance for the "sustainable management of the historic environment". Additional guidance on the application of policies set out in the NPPF is contained within their publications:

- Historic Environment *Good Practice Planning Advice Note 2 – Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment* (2015)
- Historic Environment *Good Practice Planning Advice Note 3 – The Setting of Heritage Assets 2nd edition* (2017)
- Historic England *Advice Note 2 – Making changes to Heritage Assets* (2025)
- Historic England *Advice Note 18 – Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency* (2026)
- *Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading* (2017)

Wiltshire Core Strategy:

Whilst not directly relevant to listed building consent applications, the below policies give an indication of the Council's approach to development affecting heritage assets:

- Core Policy 58 'Ensuring the conservation of the historic environment' requires that "designated heritage assets and their settings will be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner appropriate to their significance."

ISSUES

Impact upon the preservation of the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural and/or historic interest.

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Historic England (28/7/2026)

Their response does not comment on the proposed repair techniques but questions whether the reason for the failure of the plaster comparatively soon after its reinstatement in the late 1980s/early 1990s is properly understood to ensure that the same situation does not arise in the next 40 years etc.

Officer response: we were not initially provided with Sandberg's report, undertaken in 2019 at the behest of Rodney Melville Associates. This is nowt uploaded as supporting documentation.

REPRESENTATIONS

In accordance with the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended) the application for listed building consent was publicised by way of:

- A site notice displayed near the site;
- An advertisement placed in the local press.

These methods were used to inform interested parties and to allow a statutory consultation period of **21 days** for representations to be submitted.

Below is a summary of the representations received during the consultation period. In accordance with the provisions of the *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990*, only matters relevant to the consideration of the building's special architectural or historic interest have been taken into account in the assessment of this Listed Building Consent application.

No consultation comments were received.

ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In accordance with Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, special regard has been given to the significance of the listed building, including its architectural and historic interest, and the desirability of preserving both the building and its setting. Relevant policies within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), particularly Section 20: *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, have also been

taken into account. These policies require that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset must be clearly justified and weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

In order to be acceptable, the application needs to be assessed against the following criteria:

Information considered/submitted

Policy HE5 of the NPPF requires applicants to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including the contribution made by their setting, and to identify the likely effects of the development on that significance. Sufficient information should be provided to enable a clear understanding of the significance of the heritage asset and its setting, and the impact of the proposal upon it.

Decision-makers must be satisfied that assessments accurately reflect the effects on heritage assets caused by development proposals. In this case, the application is supported by a Heritage Impact Statement (Currie&Brown dated 24/3/2026). It is considered sufficient in respect of the current proposals.

Assessment of significance:

According to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), significance is defined as:

“The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.”

Historic England further categorises significance into four key values:

- *Evidential* – the potential of the asset to yield evidence about past human activity.
- *Historic* – the ways in which the asset illustrates aspects of history.
- *Aesthetic* – the sensory and design qualities of the asset.
- *Communal* – the meanings and associations attached to the asset by people.

In this case the significance of the building, in so far as it relates to the current application, lies largely with

- Its siting in a prominent location within the Market Square at the heart of Salisbury;
- That it is the foremost civic building for the city;
- Its architecture, being a fine late eighteenth century public building designed by Sir Robert Taylor;
- That it houses a number of rooms which are of considerable importance, including the former court rooms (Oak and Crown); former cells, and the grand Banqueting Hall.
- In respect of the Banqueting Hall, the bay window, the large timber sash windows with fine glazing bars, ceiling with decorative ceiling roses and cornices, splendid chandeliers and fireplace, all make a strong positive contribution to the grand character and interest of the room.

In respect of the Banqueting Hall, the applicant's heritage statement notes that the ceiling is lathe and plaster with a decorative cornice and ceiling roses. The ceiling, however, is not historic (it is not clear whether the cornice and ceiling roses are historic, however, they are not part of the proposals). The ceiling contributes to the interest of the room in view of the fact that it is a traditional lath and plaster ceiling with the character of such a ceiling.



01 Overview of the Banquet Hall.



02 Detailed roses and cornice detailing.

Impact of proposals on the significance and setting of the building/structure:

Understanding the impact of proposed works on a listed building requires a careful and proportionate assessment of how those changes affect the asset's heritage significance and its setting. This includes both the physical alterations to the building itself and any changes to its spatial or visual relationship with surrounding structures or spaces.

The significance of a heritage asset is not static; it is shaped by its architectural, historic, and communal values, and by how these are experienced in context. Therefore, any intervention must be considered in light of the asset's identified significance, with attention given to both potential harm and benefits. Benefits may include repairs that support the long-term conservation of the building, improved energy performance, or enhanced public access and understanding.

This assessment is grounded in the statutory duty under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving the building and its features of special interest. It is also informed by national policy, particularly policies HE4-9 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and relevant local heritage policies and guidance.

Impact of the proposals on the significance of the building

The repairs to the cracks are required to ensure the longevity of the structure and are therefore in accordance with best practice in respect of timely and necessary repairs. The proposed approach is well-established and respectful of the historic fabric. A lime mortar and lime plaster is proposed for any 'concealing' repairs.

The existing ceiling of the Banqueting Hall is not historic but contributes to the significance of the building in so far as it is a traditional treatment appropriate for historic buildings. The proposals are for localised repairs. The approach chosen (a washer system) is a well-established approach and ensures the maximum retention of fabric.

Repairs to the ceiling will be made with a traditional haired lime plaster and the ceiling will be decorated with a breathable paint.

The redecoration works do not require consent.

Impact on Ecology

While Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 do not explicitly reference protected species, Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to consider potential impacts on protected species when determining applications. This responsibility arises from broader environmental legislation and national planning policy, and must be taken into account where relevant.

		Y / N / NA
(a)	Does the site or proposed development possess/impact on any of the features where protected species are likely to be present (assessed against Natural England's standing advice) and where species are likely to be found?	N
(b)	If yes, has a protected species survey been submitted?	
(c)	If yes, does the survey show a detailed consideration of ecological impacts, wildlife mitigation and the creation, restoration and enhancement of wildlife corridors to preserve and enhance biodiversity in accordance with the standing advice?	

CONCLUSION

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that the LPA shall pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The NPPF confirms that when considering the potential impact of a development proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). It makes clear that any harm to a designated heritage asset will be a matter of considerable importance and weight which requires clear and convincing justification. HE6 paragraph 2 says that *'development proposals which would have a positive effect on a designated heritage asset should be supported'*.

In this case the proposals will have no effect on the significance of the heritage asset. On this basis no specific justification is required however it is considered the works will assist in securing the future use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation. The requirements of current conservation legislation, policy or guidance are considered to be met and the application is recommended for approval.

In respect of the conservation area, Section 72 of the Act requires works to preserve or enhance the conservation area. In view of the fact that the works are internal, the proposals are considered to preserve the character of the conservation area and are therefore considered acceptable.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Listed Building Consent be GRANTED, subject to the following conditions:

Standard 3 years

Approved plans

Final plan of B room ceiling showing location of screws and washers

Specification for lime plaster for B room ceiling

Final report into extent/location of helical tie system (post works)

Paint specification

Architectural features to be protected during course of works (ie cornice and ceiling rose etc)