

PP Builders

Zanzibar, Newport

Retained Façade Condition Survey

March 2025



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1. Introduction

Instructions were received from PP Builders to undertake a visual inspection of the rear of the existing façade at Zanzibar. The façade is to be retained and incorporated into the final design of the proposed structure.

This condition report has been undertaken to help ascertain the extent of the repair works required on the rear of the façade prior to the erection of the apartment building behind.

In 2018 a fire caused significant damage to the structure. Despite this, the historic front façade survived and has been retained as part of the redevelopment project to transform the site into 37 apartments. The redevelopment aims to preserve the architectural heritage while providing much-needed housing.

The structure was originally built in 1863 as the Stow Hill Baptist Chapel. In the 1970's it was converted into the nightclub named The Stowaway and gained Grade II listing status in 1980 due to its architectural and historical significance. The nightclub changed names several times over the years including Escapade and Brooklyn Heights before becoming Zanzibar. On June 15, 2018, a fire severely damaged the building. Despite the destruction, the historic front façade survived.

The location of Zanzibar on Stow Hill is shown on plan in the extract in Figure 1 (taken from Google Maps).

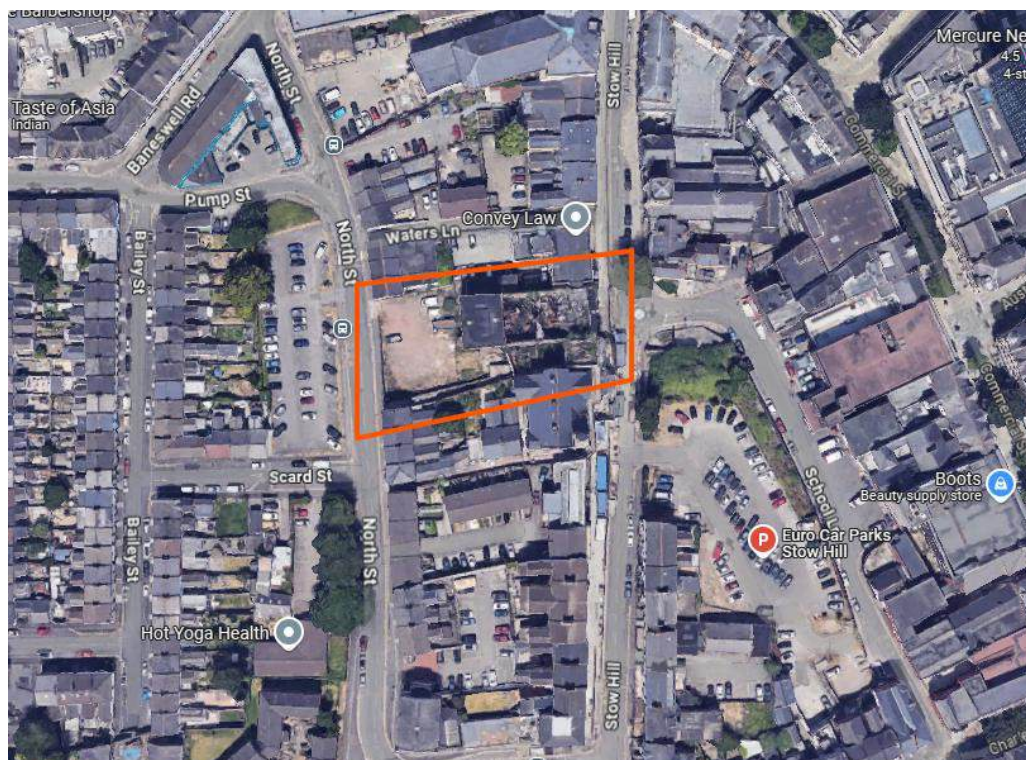


Figure 1 – Location of Zanzibar (from Google Maps)

The building was inspected on 3rd March 2025 using a Mobile Elevating Work Platform (MEWP, otherwise known as a Cherry Picker). The weather was cold and clear. It should be noted that the inspection was visual only and did not involve the removal of any fabric, for this reason it is possible that any unidentified hidden defects may lie unseen beneath the fabric.

The purpose of the inspection was to review the condition of the masonry to the rear of the façade and comment on any repairs that may be required before the proposed structure was built behind, limiting all future access to the façade.

The recommendations for repair of each area are shown in bold italics after each description throughout the report,



Photo 02 – Showing the front elevation of Zanzibar (from Google Maps Aug 2012).

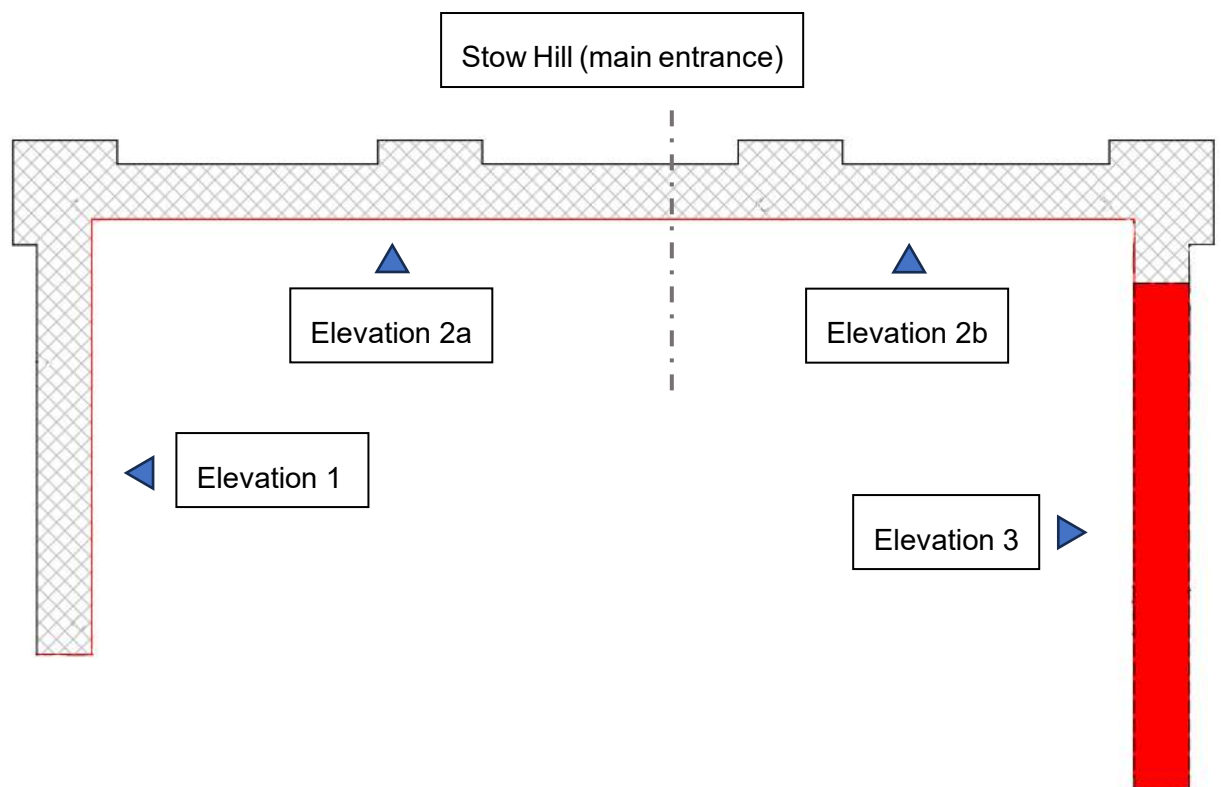


Figure 3 – Key plan of the façade to aid reference throughout report.

Elevation 3 was originally planned to be retained; however, the condition of the wall was such that during the main demolition/clearing of the site the wall was unsafe and was partly removed to ground floor level.

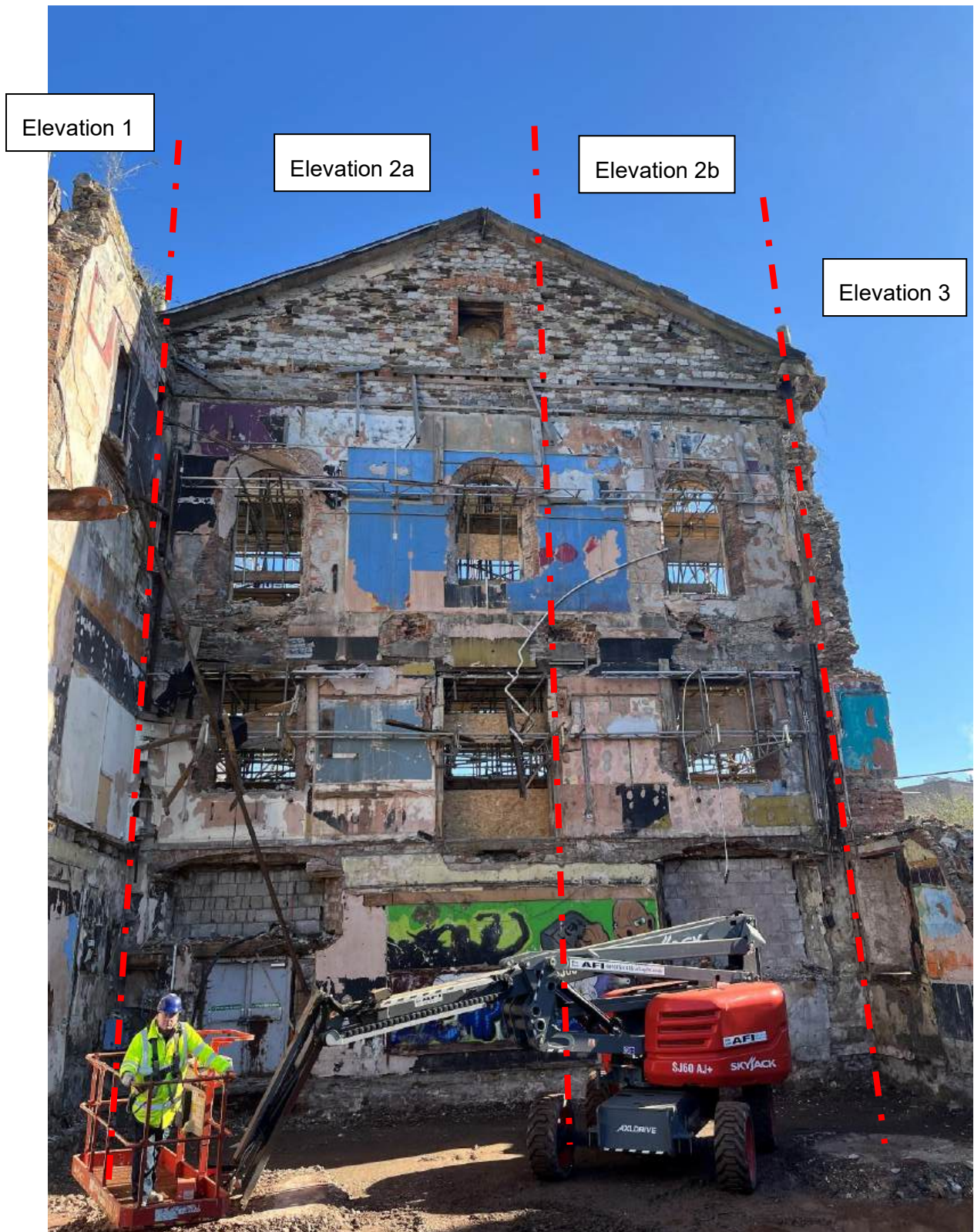


Photo 04 – Showing the façade broken down into the separate elevations discussed in the report.

2. Observations

Elevation 1

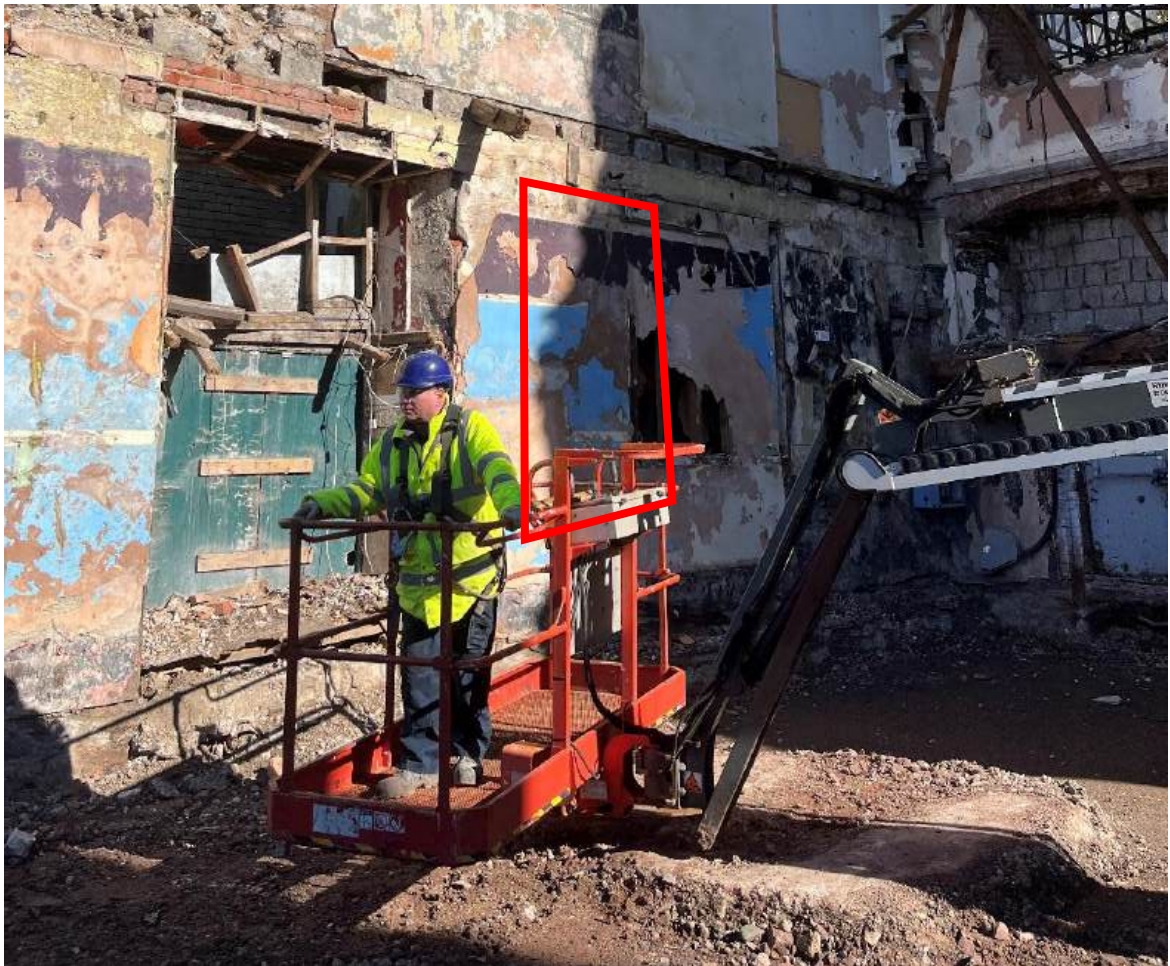


Photo 06 – Showing basement doorway.

An existing doorway / recess has timber studs infill and has been plaster boarded over.

Repair Proposal

Remove plasterboard and timber studs. If there is a timber lintel, check condition and replace like for like if necessary. Block up the opening with matching infill brickwork using lime mortar.



Photo 07 – Showing ground floor level timber floor notches in wall.



Photo 08 – Showing ground floor level timber floor notches in wall.

Photographs 07 and 08 show some of the remaining voids (or pockets) in the façade from the ground floor joists that had been built into the masonry.

Repair Proposal

Remove loose masonry and any remaining timber from within the openings. Clean the openings such that they are free from dust, debris or any loose matter. Infill the voids with fully mortared brickwork.



Photo 10 – Showing render with vegetation behind.

During the survey it was not possible to closely inspect this render.

Repair Proposal

Remove all render and vegetation. Review masonry behind. Re-point all bed joints with lime mortar and make good any loose or missing bricks by infilling with fully lime mortared brickwork as required.



Photo 11 – Showing timber door threshold and stair profile.



Photo 12 – Showing high level fire escape door.

A portion of wall under a high level door has been infilled with brickwork. But the bricks have not been constructed flush and are out of line on the one side. The existing stair stringer can be seen with vegetation growing behind.

Repair Proposal

Remove all render and electrical conduit. Inspect lintel over door, check condition and replace like for like if necessary. Remove timber cill and remaining stair stringer, then infill door opening and any other voids with fully lime mortared brickwork.



Photo 13 – Showing top of the wall with uneven stonework and vegetation growth



Photo 14 – Showing top of the wall with uneven stonework and vegetation growth

The top portion of the wall is very uneven and covered in vegetation. Original timbers that were built into the original façade are missing leaving recesses in the wall. Where new extract vents were added no lintels were installed and the masonry above those openings remains unsupported.

Repair Proposal

Remove rotten timber that has been built into the wall and infill void with new masonry using lime mortar.

Remove render, cables and downpipe.

All vegetation needs to be removed and treated to prevent regrowth.

Remove all loose masonry and replace with new brickwork with lime mortar.

Block up redundant extract vent with infill masonry using lime mortar.

Ensure the new top of wall level is made satisfactory smooth to accept the new roof construction and SFS frame.

Elevation 2a



Photo 15 – Showing underside of fire escape door



Photo 16 – Showing void over door lintels
(four photos stitched together)



Photo 17 – Showing underside of brick arch

The basement fire exit has been partly blocked up over an old timber lintel. The underside of the door appears to have been built off ground. Under the brick arch the existing timber lintel is damaged with only the ends bearing into the walls remaining.

Repair Proposal

Remove door and loose material to the underside of the door threshold.

Remove timber lintel over the door and loose brickwork either side.

Remove the ends of the timber lintels under the arch. The arch may require propping if the ends are being undermined during the removal of the timbers.

Install 2 nr 3800x140x400mm oak lintels (air dried) and brick up tight to the underside of the arch.

Remove any loose masonry to the underside of the arch.

Block up the doorway flush with the inside face of the façade with masonry and lime mortar.

The full thickness of the arch above needs to be fully filled with masonry right up to the underside of the arch for long term stability of the façade.

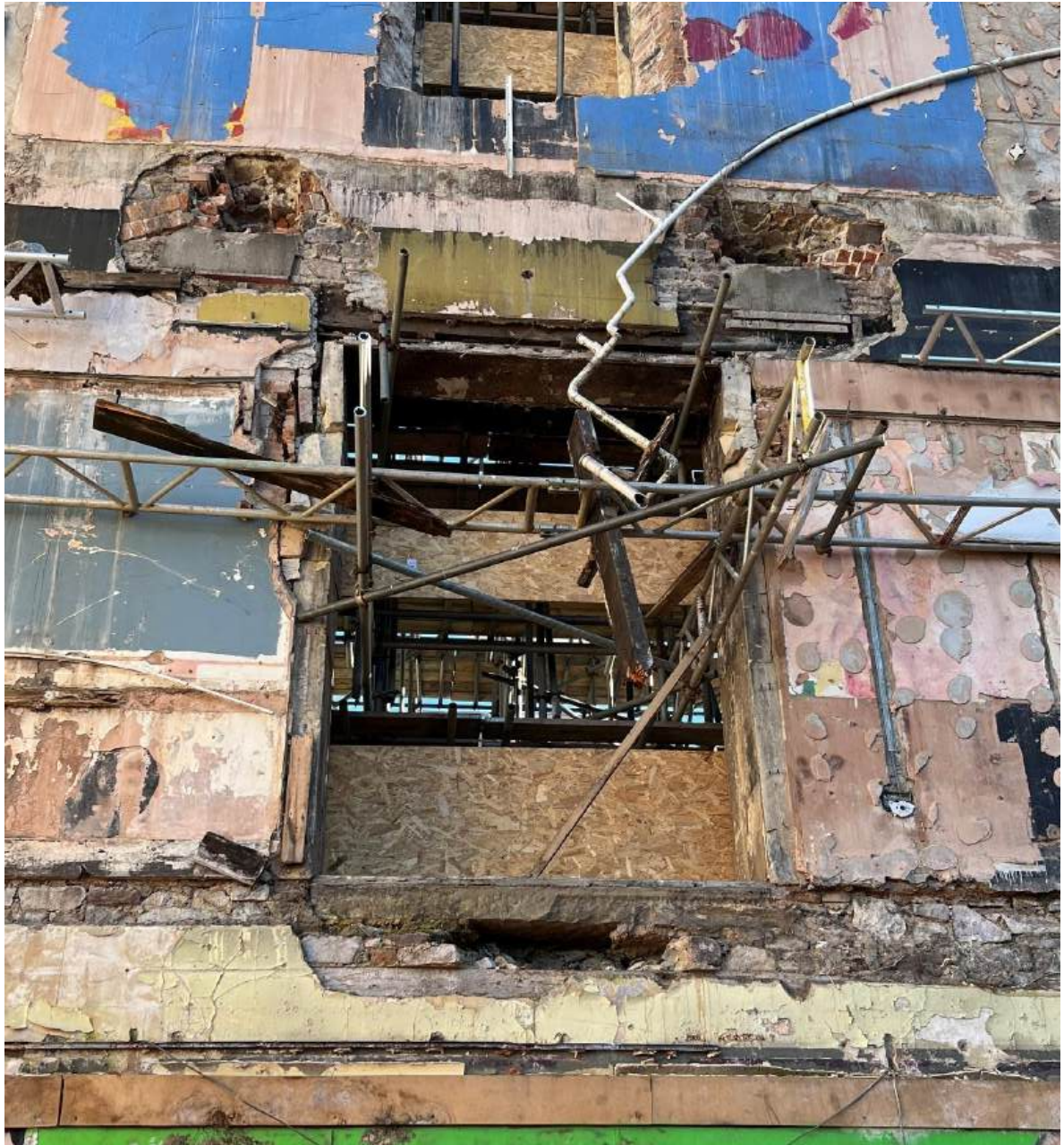


Photo 18 – Showing main entrance doorway



Photo 19 – Showing main entrance doorway

There is stonework missing from under the door threshold stone slab, along with electrical items and timber attached to the façade. There are two large openings in the façade from the installation of the steel frame structure.

Repair Proposal

Remove render and auxiliary items. Review the quality of the masonry, and repair any poor quality masonry areas using lime mortar.

Block up the void under the threshold stone with infill brickwork and lime mortar. Review all mortar joints once render has been removed and re-point accordingly with lime mortar.

Repair all loose masonry in and around the openings and brick up.

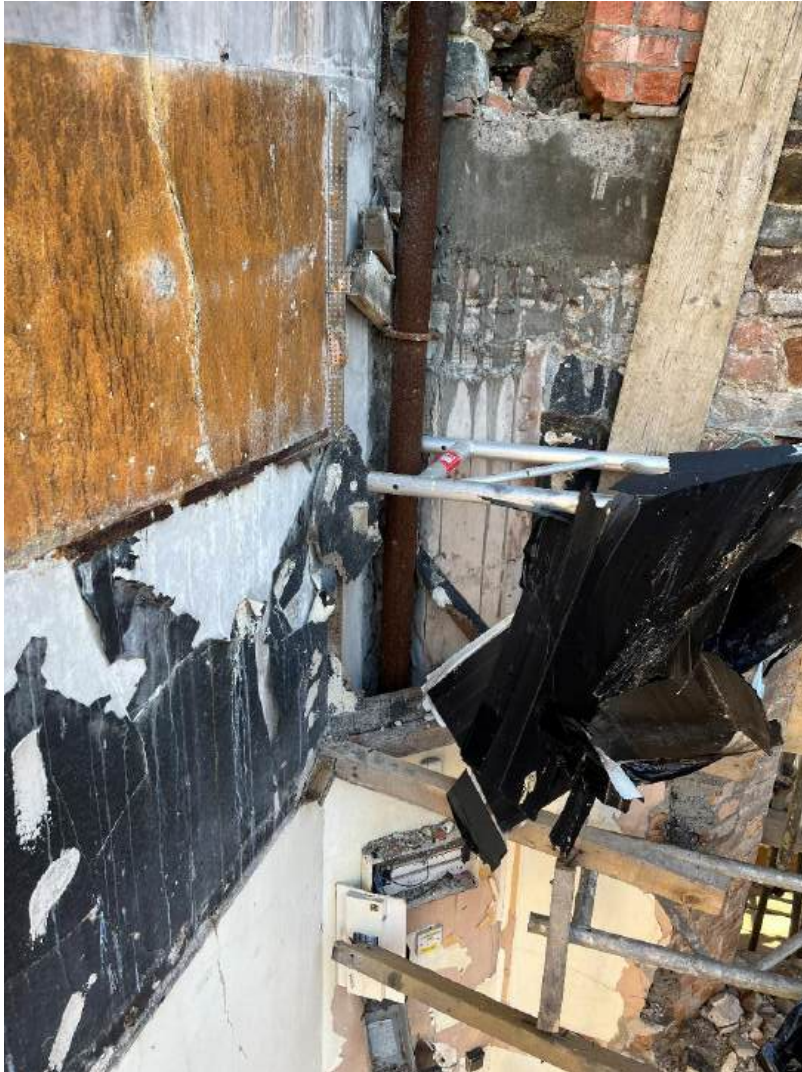


Photo 20 – Showing internal fixtures and façade retention system

The demolition and removal of the collapsed elements of the existing building only involved the removal of debris that was detached from the façade. Therefore, the façade still needs to be stripped of the remaining non-structural elements, drainage pipes and electrical conduits etc. There is debris on the façade retention system that is left over from the removal of this material.

Repair Proposal

Remove cast iron downpipe and electrical equipment.

Remove render.

Take care to avoid damaging the façade retention system while removing the material and make good any remaining holes after removal.



Photo 21 – Showing damaged masonry under the window

When the internal steel frame was originally installed into the wall, large pockets were cut out in the façade and large concrete padstones were cast to sit the steels on. Now that the beams have been removed, they have left large openings in the façade with lots of loose masonry.

Repair Proposal

Remove all loose masonry and render. Review the condition of the masonry behind.

Brick up all openings in the wall to window cill level using lime mortar. (refer to Architects details for level).



Photo 22 – Showing loose masonry around window cill



Photo 23 – Showing loose masonry around window cill

The internal skin around the window cill is higher than the outside skin and may come loose when the internal render is removed. This window cill level is higher than the adjacent window. It therefore might be worth considering removing the higher masonry on this window so they line through with the more consistent lower levels.

Repair Proposal

Remove all loose masonry and render. Review the condition of the masonry behind and make good. Repoint with lime mortar as required.

Refer to architect's details to determine the final level of the internal masonry. Rebuild inner skin to the correct height or re-point with lime mortar if masonry comes loose during works.



Photo 24 – Showing corner of elevation 1 and 2a

Large opening in the masonry from elevation 1 which has been added into the façade without a lintel. The timber that was built into the façade during construction has been removed leaving a horizontal void around the façade. Vegetation can be seen growing behind the render on the wall.

Repair Proposal

Remove all render and vegetation. Review the condition of the masonry behind.

Treat wall to prevent future re-growth of vegetation.

Remove the timber around the opening and brick up the openings using lime mortar.

Brick up the channel in the wall where the timber batten was, using lime mortar.



Photo 25 – Showing missing stonework in the façade

Repair Proposal

Fill all openings in the façade with masonry using lime mortar, ensuring the masonry is packed tight.



Photo 26 – Showing timber lintel over feature opening in façade

There are a few openings in the masonry but generally the condition of the façade is good.

Repair Proposal

Review all mortar beds and repoint as required.

Fill holes in masonry.

Note this lintel is solid and does not require replacement.

Elevation 2b

Photo 27 – Showing ground floor window partly blocked up
(three photos stitched together)

The ground floor window has been blocked up towards the front of the façade. The blockwork does not appear tight to the underside of the lintels, which are timber. Some of the timber lintels have been removed with the ends of the lintels still fixed within the wall.

Services are still attached to the wall and some electrical cables are behind the render.

Repair Proposal

Remove all attached services and render.

Remove timber lintels, including the timber in the supports and infill opening to form proposed access doors. Install new oak lintels over new opening (2nr 3800x140x400mm oak lintels air dried). Infill above new oak lintel to underside of existing arch with masonry using lime mortar.

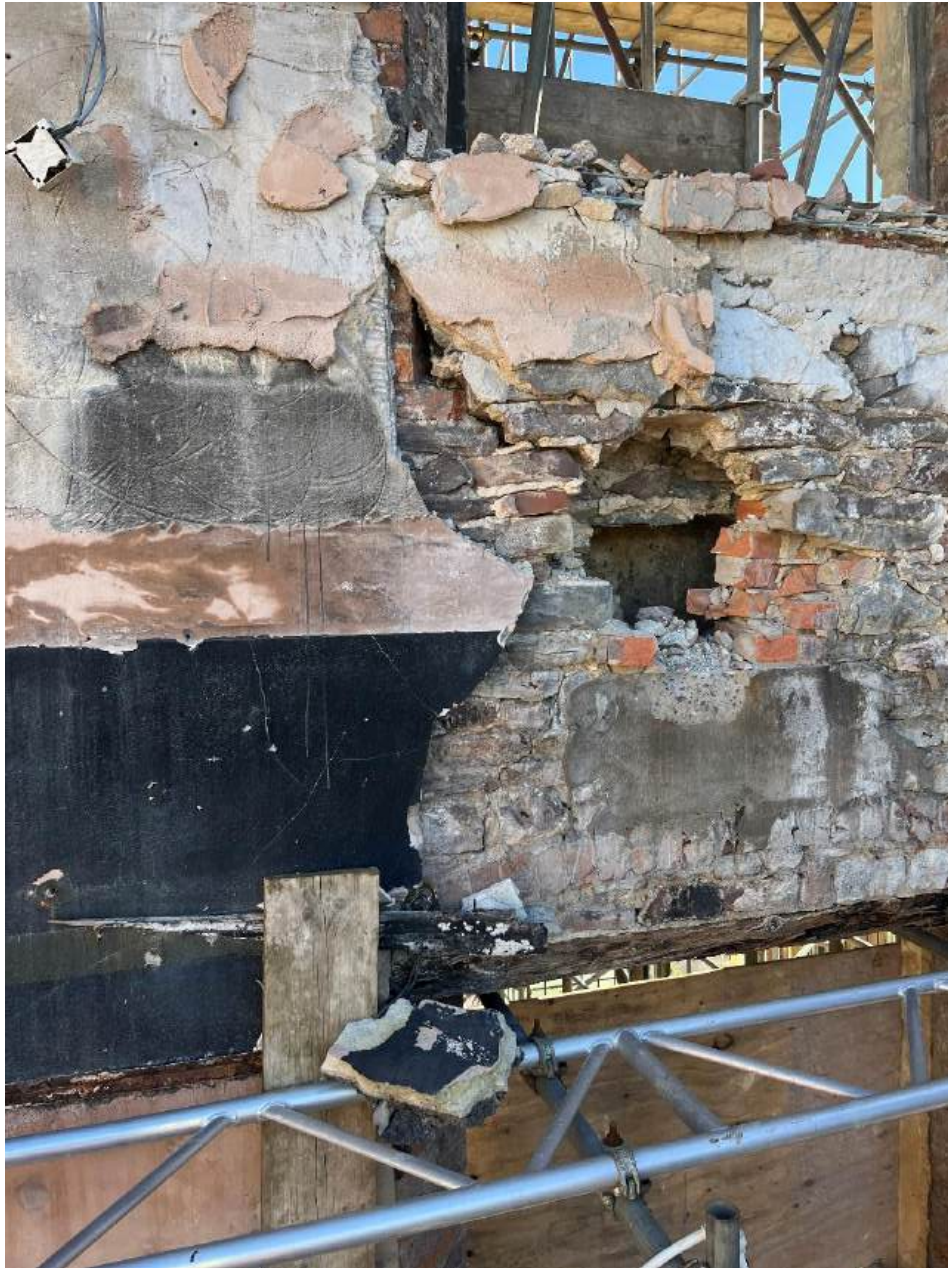


Photo 28 – Showing damaged masonry from steel frame



Photo 29 – Showing damaged masonry from steel frame

Large opening in the masonry from the internal steel frame. It appears that the masonry was damaged during the collapse of the steel frame caused by the fire, or possibly from when steel beam was removed. Either way, the masonry around the beam became dislodged and is coming away from the structure. The render also appears loose. There is a considerable amount of debris on the window cill.

Repair Proposal

Remove all loose masonry and render. Review the condition of the masonry behind.

Brick up all voids in the wall and re-point the masonry using lime mortar. Lintel above to be replaced with 2 nr 2200x140x250mm oak.



Photo 30 – Showing holes from the built-in timber ceiling joists.



Photo 31 – Showing holes from the built-in timber ceiling joists.

There is still timber fixed to the façade and there are openings from the ceiling joists within the façade.

Repair Proposal

Remove all timber and fill all holes with masonry.

Fill all gaps in the masonry using lime mortar.

Review the mortar beds throughout and repoint as required using lime mortar.

Elevation 3



Photo 32 – Showing the remainder of the wall with plant growth

The part remaining wall is uneven and has considerable vegetation growth.

Repair Proposal

Remove all plant growth and treat as necessary.

Due to the large high level stone, we suggest removing all the loose stonework below and rebuilding 300-400mm of the wall in brickwork. Keying the brickwork into the front façade.

Repoint any existing mortar joints if required using lime mortar.

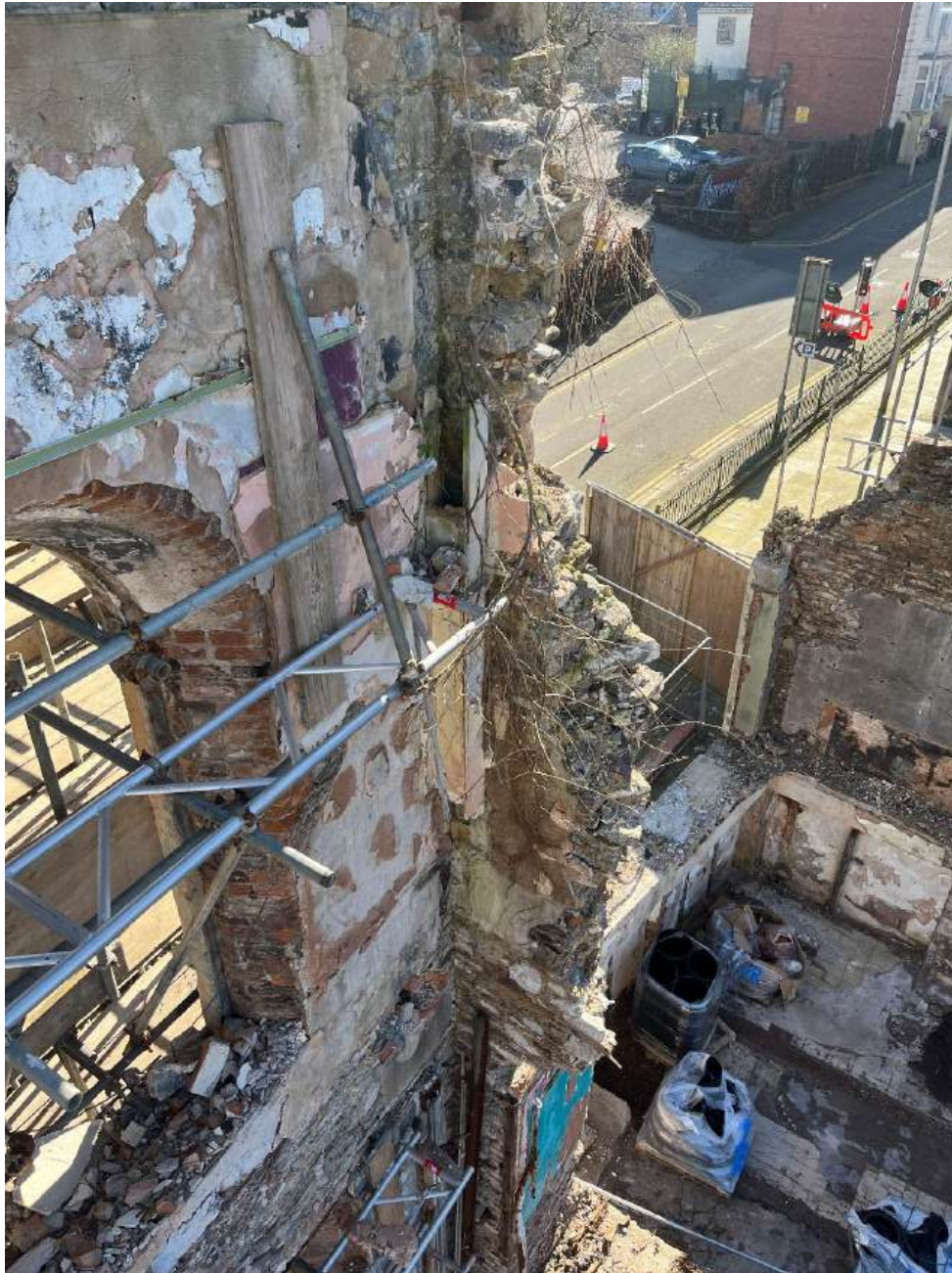


Photo 33 – Showing loose and uneven stonework.

The left-over wall from the gable is uneven and has considerable vegetation growth.

Repair Proposal

Remove all plant growth and treat as necessary.

Removing all the loose stonework below and rebuild 300-400mm of the wall in brickwork.

Keying the brickwork into the front façade. Where the existing stonework protrudes further than new brickwork, the stonework can be used provided it is in good condition, keyed into the existing façade and the bed joints are also in good condition.

Repoint any existing mortar joints if required using lime mortar.

3. Summary

In overall terms, the façade is in reasonable condition. But there is a considerable amount of making good required from damage caused wither by the fire, by the subsequent demolition, or in some cases by poorly completed previous construction work.

The façade has numerous secondary items still attached that need to be removed; mainly, downpipes, electrical items, timbers and steels.

It was noted during the survey that much of the visible original stonework was in good condition. However, the bed joints need a closer inspection and raked out and repointed if the mortar is loose.

It was seen in multiple locations that vegetation was growing behind the render. The render needs removing throughout and walls treated to ensure there is no regrowth. The stonework and bed joints behind the render need cleaning and inspecting once the render has been removed; and will likely required re-pointing.

The installation (and subsequent removal) of the steel frame has caused a lot of damage to the façade which needs repairing. All loose masonry needs to be removed and replaced. All the holes must be infilled by tightly packing with new masonry to ensure the wall is properly supported and monolithic.

All the existing timber within the façade should be removed and all resulting voids bricked up.

The large, partly blocked up windows at the basement level need to be checked to ensure the masonry infill is tight to the underside of the openings. If there are existing timber lintels then they should be replaced. The remaining opening needs to be blocked up flush to the inside face of the façade. Due to the thickness of the wall, this should be undertaken in stages, building up the entire thickness of the wall.

Where the existing stone walls are being repaired and new masonry is being added to prepare the façade for the new structure, coordination with architects and structural engineers is essential to ensure the repairs align with the final design.

4. Further investigations

An onsite investigation is required to assist with the new foundation design for the proposed SFS frame. Trial pits should be undertaken at the inside face of the façade to determine the underside of the wall level, and to double check if foundation is present.

While reviewing the photographs taken during the survey there appears to be a large opening behind the internal skin of stonework. It needs to be determined whether this was caused during the installation of the steel frame and is isolated; or whether it is a standard detail throughout the façade. If it is common throughout it will affect the connection detail of the SFS frame as this will need to ensure both skins are adequately tied together.



Photo 36 – Showing opening in stone façade

5. Repair Specifications

These repairs are to the internal face of the existing façade wall. For this reason, there is a practical reality in relation to the repairs since this area will end up being internal and covered up. Separate stonework repairs will be required to visible side of the elevation and reference should be made to specifications of the specialist stone mason for that side of the wall. Structurally, there is a necessity to bringing the façade back to something resembling a monolithic wall for the future well being of the building. Following this logic, the repairs are listed below:

1. General Re-pointing.

All parts of the wall should be checked for re-pointing requirement by checking to see how solid the existing mortar is. There is no merit in removing what might already be solid mortar, so only areas that currently have little or no mortar, or areas that have loose or flaky mortar require re-pointing. In areas to be re-pointed, all loose mortar to be raked out to a depth of 25mm. New mortar to be placed infilled to 25mm and flush with front face of brickwork. A lime mortar is to be used for all pointing (and all other mortar work). Use **St.Astier NHL5 Hydraulic Lime**.

2. Hole Infilling.

Hole infilling should be undertaken with a matching brick to the original (or as close as possible clay brickwork for compatibility). The mortar used must as per the re-pointing spec above, but the brickwork is to be fully bedded into the mortar. All brickwork infill is to be fully embedded by stitching into the existing stonework or brickwork surround by toothing in the brickwork using traditional masonry methods to ensure the infill is fully bonded into the wall. Ensure fully mortared tight fit around all sides of infill.

3. Very large void infilling below arches

There are some areas of large infill that are also very deep (Photo 27) These should be infilled with brickwork as per the smaller openings. From a practical viewpoint, if there are some large lintels to be removed from some of these openings, by building up the thickness of walls in this manner from the inside out, it will allow the numerous corresponding lintels to be removed sequentially without any need for any temporary works. If there is any confusion with respect to this aspect of the work, please contact the Engineer. Mortar used must be as per item 1 and all brickwork to be collar jointed and fully toothed into surrounding brickwork using traditional methods. Refer to item 4 below with respect to timber lintels.

4. Timber lintels

There are several areas where timber lintels lie within the walls. For conservation reasons, only those lintels that are either rotten with wet rot, or those too damaged by fire must be removed. In order to test, the timbers must be prodded with a sharp implement to test whether the timber is solid or weak and flaking apart. Any unsuitable existing lintels will immediately become apparent. It is envisaged that charred timber lintels will remain fine, subject to this testing. It is also expected that the vast majority of timber lintels will be suitable to remain. Where timber lintels need to be replaced, they must be replaced with a hard wood lintel of equivalent size. All lintels to be pointed (and re-bedded if required) using the same mortar defined in item 1.