



Method Statement and Scope of Repair

Boundary Wall, 34 Belsize Lane,
London

On behalf of Mr Charlie Green

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V.1



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Introduction

1. This report has been prepared by Jon Lowe Heritage Ltd on behalf of Mr Charlie Green, the new owner of 34 Belsize Lane, London, a private Grade II listed dwelling.
2. The subject of the report is the eastern boundary wall to the property, a tall brick and clinker construction dating from the late 19th century. The wall has visually evident repair, areas of rebuild and repointing, and sections in poor repair. There is extensive ivy growth obscuring some sections of the wall. It fronts a public pavement on the northwest and western side of Belsize Lane, at its junction with Orman Road. Its height largely obscures visibility of the house immediately to its rear.

Background

3. The wall has been identified by Camden Borough Council as a potential threat to public safety. Temporary propping has been installed and a section of pavement cordoned off to minimise risk.
4. The wall has been inspected by Elliot Wood Partnership Ltd (consulting structural and civil engineers) with observations made on its original construction, current condition, and stability. Their report makes a series of recommendations for remedial works.
5. Jon Lowe Heritage Ltd have inspected the wall to review the Elliot Wood recommendations, and to make observations on its materials, any architectural or stylistic detailing and its heritage significance and sensitivity.
6. 34 Belsize Lane was built in 1975/6 to the designs of Georgie Wolton, for herself. It was added to the National Heritage List as a Grade II listed Building in 2023. Its site formed the lower rear part of the former garden to 16 Lynhurst Gardens, a Grade II listed house dating from c.1886. The boundary wall subject to this report was built and served as the original boundary wall to 16 Lynhurst Gardens, but was no longer part of that demise when No.16 was added to the list in 1998.
7. The studio room forming part of the 1975/6 house forms an eastern projection to the single storey dwelling and it abuts the boundary wall. The boundary wall is therefore considered to be listed by virtue of attachment and curtilage to No.34 Belsize Lane.
8. No.34 Belsize Lane, including its boundary wall, are

within the Fitzjohns/Netherhall Conservation Area, forming part of its southeastern boundary. The wall is over one metre high and is subject to planning and listed building consent control.

9. The boundary wall is a feature of townscape merit. It forms only part of a longer, contemporaneous, pavement fronting, boundary wall extending to other property to the west. It is of a composition and design that is typical of the late 19th century and throughout the 19th and early 20th century suburbs of north London. The wall is reasonably attractive in design and execution with its considerable height, and collective length, making a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The wall enables the legibility of the historic plot, despite the introduction of 34 Belsize Lane and other developments that have subsequently been erected in the formerly large gardens.
10. Prior repairs to the wall, including sections where there has been rebuilding, have not been wholly appropriate. Despite loose attempts to match brick and brickwork patterning the quality of work and the introduction of cement pointing to sections has diminished its aesthetic value and may affect its long term conservation. All repairs predate the 2023 listing of 34 Belsize Lane and would not have been subject to listed building control.

Purpose of this report

11. The purpose of this report is to supplement the Elliot Wood report by setting out an appropriate methodology and scope for the repair of the wall, commensurate with its significance and character.
12. The methodology supports a common objective, namely to undertake a long term repair of the wall using appropriate methods and materials, in a manner that preserves its heritage and aesthetic values.

General Principles of Conservation Philosophy

13. The following outline guidelines are generally considered to be good practice when approaching conservation works, and underpin the approach now being taken:
 - ◇ A mindset of minimal intervention is generally considered the most appropriate when working with historic fabric.
 - ◇ Like-for-like repairs should always be carried out and any “foreign” materials introduced, kept to an absolute minimum.

- ◇ New work and repairs should be undertaken in a manner that does not vary the aesthetics of the architecture, but be evident under scrutiny from a specialist.
- ◇ Any necessary material replacements and/or repairs should only be carried out with the assistance of documentary evidence; no speculative works should be undertaken.
- ◇ Craftspeople with appropriate skills and experience with traditional materials should undertake a repair to a building of historical significance.
- ◇ All works undertaken should be extensively documented in both photographic and annotated forms; before, during and after any intervention.

Existing Brickwork

14. The wall employs a mix of materials, with use of London stock brick, soft red facing brick, kiln wasters and clinker. The composition comprises a plinth composed of kiln wasters with irregular coursing, over which sit six courses of red brick above in an approximation of Flemish bond. The top two courses are chamfered, the upper being a header course. Above this the main height of the wall is composed of an upper and lower panel of London stock brick (9 and 10 courses respectively) separated by three courses of red brick, and finished with two stepped course and brick coping. The brick coping is not clearly visible.
15. A large central section of rebuilt wall has omitted the stepped courses in favour of a tile course. This section also neglects strict adherence to the separation of yellow stocks and red facing brick. These poor quality works deviate from the intended design and are not contributory to the aesthetic interest of the wall.
16. The red facing brick is evidently very soft with historic erosion of facings and arises. The erosion, in conjunction with the loss of the original lime mortar. Results in an uneven and irregular surface that will present challenges to repointing.

Existing Form

17. As noted by Elliot Wood, the lower c.1.5m of wall acts as a retaining wall to the higher ground level within the 34 Belsize Lane demise. It is not known whether the wall was built to serve as a retaining wall or whether there has been a build up of earth over the years, perhaps most likely during relandscaping when the original house was built (1975/6) or extended (1980s).
18. The wall's design includes regular vertical piers at approximately 2.5meters intervals. These stand forward of the upper wall face, in line with the plinth.
19. The plinth comprises an outer skin (single brick thick) that is not tied to the wall core behind, leading it to have moved away by up to approximately 100mm. Elliot Wood noted that this movement does not appear to be the result of root action or other lateral push.
20. Elliot Wood note that the base section of the wall (approximately 1.6m high) is out of plumb, leaning towards the road. However, they note the lean is not of structural concern due to the centre of gravity remaining with the middle third of the wall.

Repair Recommendations (Elliot Wood)

21. A series of recommendations have been made by Elliot Wood. These are appropriate and proportionate to the heritage interests of the wall and the objecting of securing its long term conservation as a prominent and attractive townscape feature within the conservation area and the setting of listed buildings.
22. The methodology below supplements and supports the Elliot Wood recommendations, which are:
 - a) Scrape out and replace existing mortar with new lime mortar.
 - b) Repair vertical cracks using Hilti crack stitching.
 - c) Install retro ties to tie the brickwork together, see mark-up below for extent.

- d) Cast mass concrete block on the garden side of the wall to allow for an anchor to be installed through the brickwork into the concrete. Steel plate to be anchored through wall in to mass concrete block.
- e) Existing garden will need excavating to suit pavement level and the brickwork wall should be temporarily propped during concrete pour due to lateral heave pressures.
- f) Ivy should be removed to allow for condition of the wall to be looked at.

Repair Methodology

Mortar

- 23. Careful and sympathetic repointing is of the utmost importance in preserving the general character of brickwork. Existing mortar to be sampled and tested to find the best possible repair mix that will be appropriate in colour, texture and porosity.
- 24. It is anticipated that a hydraulic lime mortar (NHL 3.5) will be most appropriate. Works on site using lime product would not be carried out below 5 degrees or above 30 degrees. Substrate to be dampened down with clean water before mortar application. New works should be protected from premature drying or exposure to sun to ensure appropriate curing.
- 25. Pointing repair styles, to match existing historic finishes. Sample panel to be presented for approval prior to executing full scope of works.
- 26. Inappropriate cement pointing of previous repairs should be removed, the joints raked and prepped for a lime pointing replacement. Due to the softness of the red brick it may be appropriate for careful use cutting discs if it aided removal of cement pointing without further loss or any damage to existing brick. Any mechanical cutting should only be attempted by experienced masons familiar with historic fabric and follow demonstrable trials.

Bricks

- 27. Where possible all existing bricks are to be

reused. All existing bricks are to be kept in-situ where possible. Where brick or brickwork have become loose, or does not adequate bedding on a stable mortar, they shall be carefully put to one side for reuse. Re-laid bricks are to respect the architectural design and zonal use of brick type.

- 28. Adherence to the existing coursing pattern/s should be followed in all repair or where rebuilding is necessary.
- 29. Where replacement bricks are necessary they shall be carefully sourced to ensure they are of an appropriate size, colouration, texture and porosity.

Mechanical fixing/stitching

- 30. Where mechanical fixing is required its installation should follow the manufacturers specification and installation instructions. Joints should be raked out and cleaned. Placement should be sufficiently deep to allow adequate mortar/pointing coverable. There should be avoidance of forming or visually manifesting deeper mortar joints that adjoining joints where possible.
- 31. Some localised 'grouting' may be beneficial to assist with bonding and infilling voids. Care however should be taken that large amounts of grout don't have the negative effect of adding both additional weight and moisture behind the outer skin, causing further bulging and displacement. Because of the voids at the base of the wall a free flowing grout may not be appropriate.
- 32. Installation of a cast mass concrete anchor is to avoid any damage to the wall through appropriate propping and protection. The detail is to avoid visual impact.

Vegetation

- 33. Foliage to be cut back and removal of all branches and stems of plants to reveal the external brickwork faces to all areas. Wall condition to be assessed. Where root action has caused damage to the wall care taken to avoid loss of historic fabric.





Section of rebuilt wall of low quality



Wall has been previously been pinned.



Example of eroded soft red brick, washed joints and low quality cement pointing.