

ST GEORGES GARDENS WALL REBUILD

HERITAGE STATEMENT. 20/09/2016

1. INTRODUCTION

During a routine inspection of the walls to St George's Gardens by the Structures Team of Engineering Service, it was found that a section of the North-west boundary wall to the garden was leaning significantly into the garden. The area was immediately made safe by means of Heras fencing around the defective length of wall. Unfortunately this has resulted in the partial closure of a section of walkway in the garden. It is therefore proposed to have the defective section of wall taken down to a few courses below ground level and rebuilt to the original line so that the public can again have unrestricted safe access to this section of the garden.

2. HISTORY

The wall, listed wall grade II, dates from 1713 when the land was acquired for two separate burial grounds; St George the Martyr, Queen Square to the south and St George, Bloomsbury Way to the north.

To the Western extent of the defective section of wall:

In 1822 circa the Henrietta Street Baptist Chapel, which in 1909 became a Working Men's Club then the Regent Institute, was built outside the north wall at the western entrance to the cemetery. In 1944 circa a bomb damaged the chapel beyond repair. Between 1953 and 1986 the northern area became 12 lock-up garages, and thereafter a private car park. Part of the wall was repaired by Richard Griffith Architects in 1996. In 2009, 4 No private townhouses were built on the site each with a basement approximately 3m below ground level.

To the Eastern extent of the defective section of wall:

In 1973 the original Mews houses were demolished and replaced with the dairy building in its current form. Planning permission has recently been granted for the development of residential and office units however the site has since been sold and it is not clear as to the intentions of the new owner.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE STRUCTURE

The wall is a brick structure, with panels 2.81m high between St. George's Garden and the townhouses and Old Dairy site to the North. Above the ground level the wall is one brick, 215mm, thick. The panels are supported by square piers 700x700mm at approximately 5m centres. The ground level falls from west to east in the garden and is mostly level on the north side. The capping to the two panels that require demolishing and rebuilding consists of simple brick on edge whilst the capping to the West consists of York stone slabs.

The lean to the wall is caused by a self-seeded tree grown between the wall and the disused substation in the Old Dairy land. The Agent representing the owner of the Old Dairy has applied to Camden Council to have the tree removed.

4. INVESTIGATION

Stand Consulting Engineers Limited conducted an investigation alongside the wall for the development of the private townhouses in Wakefield Street. A borehole survey carried out in February 2008 found 1.50m of fill over concrete over London clay. Two trial pits were dug on 7th November 2008 against the north side of the wall. The wall steps out 125mm at 1.80m from the top of the wall and it steps out again 60mm at 1.56m from the previous step on the property side.

5. TOWNHOUSE DEVELOPMENT

The development includes a basement about 4.80m below the top of the wall, therefore below the bottom of the listed wall. Stand Consulting Engineers Limited proposed to extend (mass concrete underpinning) the depth of the wall 200mm below the level of the basement excavation. A new reinforced concrete retaining wall was also designed and cast in situ next to the listed wall, since this was not designed to retain the garden's ground when excavating for the basement. A slip membrane has been placed between the brickwork and the reinforced concrete structure to prevent vertical loads on the listed wall.

6. PROPOSAL

The 2 No. brickwork panels and brick pier will be carefully taken down to a level approximately 3 brick courses below the existing garden ground level. This will be verified on site however due to the robust basement construction immediately adjacent to the wall, it is not envisaged that the wall is rotating much below ground level. The tree, wedged between the wall and the old brick substation, will be felled and the stump removed. The bricks will be cleaned of mortar and reused where possible. Any bricks brought to site will be reclaimed red and yellow stocks to match the existing and agreed by Camden Heritage. The new mortar mix will constitute one part lime. The capping is proposed to remain as brick on edge unless instructed otherwise by Camden Heritage. The concrete capping will be concrete to match the existing.