

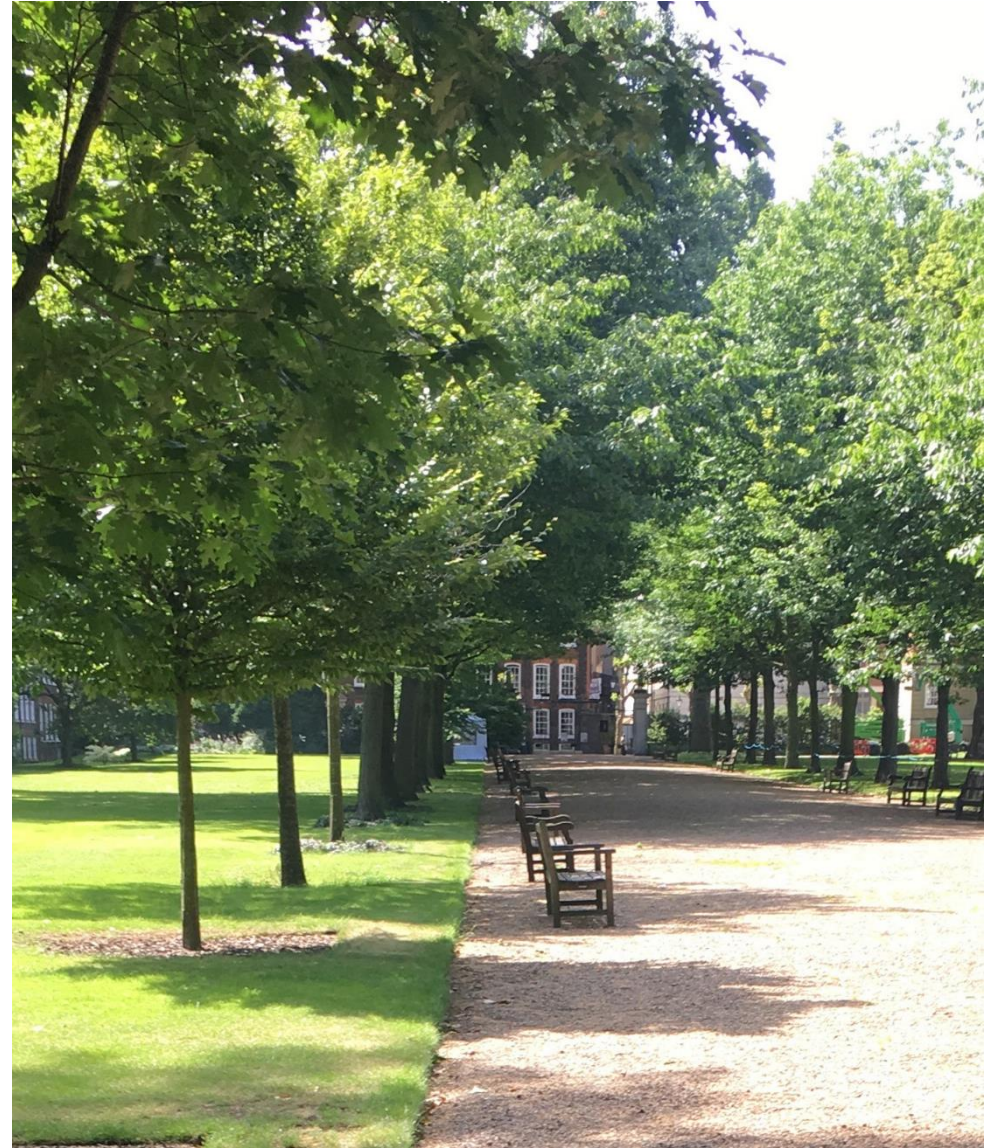
Historic Impact, Planning, Design & Access Statement

GRAY'S INN WALK, LONDON WCI

Adding railings and changing lawn edging pieces

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urban mesh *design ltd*

CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	03
	Purpose and format	
	Other documents	
2.0	Context	03
	Local & site Context	
3.0	Existing	04
	Existing site	
4.0	Planning	05
5.0	Heritage & Proposal Assessment	05-06
6.0	Access	06
7.0	Conclusion	06
8.0	Appendix A	07

I.0 INTRODUCTION

This Planning design and access statement has been prepared by urban mesh design ltd to assist with the consideration and determination of an application for Listed Building Consent, by the 'Applicant', the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn for installing some railings and changing the lawn edging pieces in Gray's Inn Walk, the gardens at Gray's Inn.



Gray's Inn Walk viewed from the South West

2.0 CONTEXT

Local & Site Context

- 2.1 The site lies within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area, in the Holborn area of Camden.
- 2.2 Gray's Inn is bounded by Theobalds Road to the north and High Holborn to the south and Gray's Inn Road to the east.

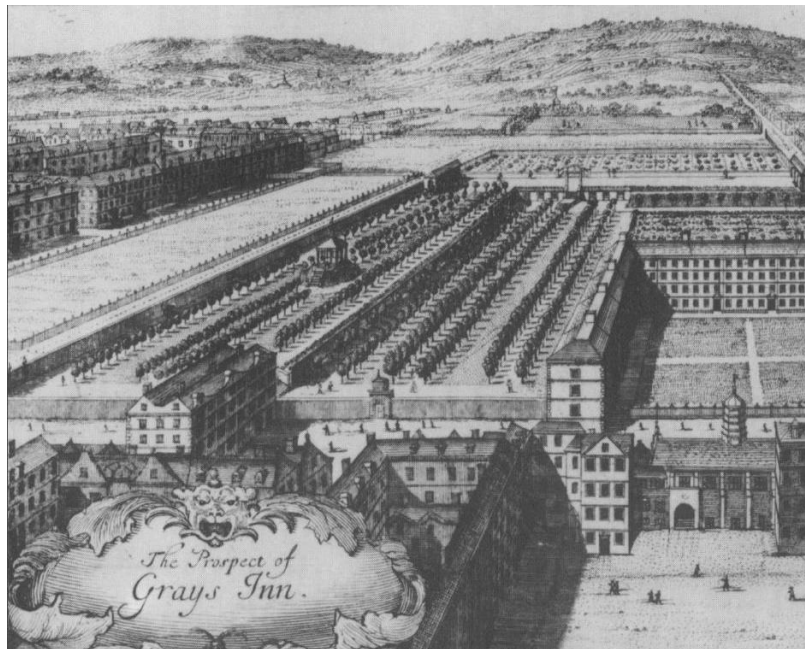
3.0 EXISTING SITE

Gray's Inn Walk

- 3.1 Gray's Inn Gardens, known as 'the walks' are gardens which form part of Gray's Inn, one of the four Inns of Court. The Inns of Court are the professional associations for barristers in England and Wales and they also provide both office, libraries and accommodation.

The first records of Gray's Inn appear in 1388 and today it covers approximately 13 acres. Gray's Inn Walk is the main garden in Gray's Inn, situated on the north side of estate.

The gardens were laid out by Sir Francis Bacon in 1608. The gardens continued to develop between 1755 and 1770 when the layout was simplified by Capability Brown. In 1802 the Verulam Buildings were started followed by the Raymond Buildings in 1825 and these were the last main developments to the gardens. A more detailed history is contained in the listing which is in Appendix A.



Drawing from 1702 of the Walks

4.0 PLANNING & LISTING

The gardens are part of the overall Listing of Gray's Inn - List entry Number: 1000351 and are Grade II*

The gardens are also on Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England managed by Historic England

The full listing is in Appendix A and the following is an extract;

Approaching the Walks from Field Court, a straight path leads from the gates to the north of the gardens, lined by an avenue of plane trees (mature and recently planted). There are lawns on either side of the path with scattered mature trees, mainly plane but including two C18 catalpas. Along the south and south-west boundaries are mixed shrub and herbaceous borders while a path runs along the south side of the garden and curves up a slope before running north along the west side of the gardens. A broad raised terrace runs along the west and north sides, reached by the slope to the south, and by a set of steps up each side; those to the west with planting along the edge and those to the north (part of Bacon's C17 design) with no planting. To the north-east and north-west the boundaries are formed by Verulam Buildings and Raymond Buildings respectively. The lawn extends to the east in the northern half, around the north side of Gray's Inn Square. There are scattered trees (including one of the catalpas) and large shrubberies along the east (in front of Verulam Buildings) and north-east (below the terrace) sides.

A gravel walk runs along the edge of the raised terraces, with a line of mature planes on the side opposite the slope. The lawns on the terraces have scattered trees. The north terrace has a shrubbery along its northern boundary, and herbaceous borders and shrubs in the north-west corner, on either side of the path that leads out of the gardens onto Theobalds Road. The east end of the north terrace is hedged off and contains the nursery and gardeners' sheds. There are views over the gardens to the south and east from the terraces.

5.0 PROPOSAL & HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 There are two parts to the proposals.
- The replacement of the mixed lawn edgings to the paths
 - The installation of park railings to certain areas

5.2 *Lawn Edgings*

At present there is a mix of edgings and in some locations none - drawing 18G PL PRO 02 shows the extents of each type. Many of the edgings have sunk into the ground or been broken.

Lawn edgings are very useful for maintaining lawns as they form a positive edge to the grass areas. In a formal garden such as the walks this clean demarcation is an important feature to the overall aesthetic.

The proposal is to unify the type of edging with a robust reconstituted stone edging.

The edging is made of reconstituted pale-yellow stone which will blend with the gravel paths. The edging has a broader lower section to spread loads applied to them and stop them sinking into the ground. The upper part narrows to a rounded top so the part visible above ground is small in profile and discrete with a round edge to reduce trip hazard.

Along with looking to unify the edgings over the whole gardens to bring a coherent feel, the proposed edgings are more resilient to vehicular traffic.

The tiled edgings will be reused where possible in areas where there will be no vehicular traffic to the east side.

Events are held in the gardens throughout the year and in the process of setting up and dismantling them, lorries come into the gardens and at times drive over the edgings causing damage. Events are important to the Gardens and the Inn of Court. They also continue a fine tradition in the Garden of leisure activities.

Sample of the proposed edging – most of it will be buried in the ground with only 20-50mm projecting



5.3 *Railings*

The main purpose of the railings is to deal with two issues confronting the gardens particularly as they are at times open to the public;

- Potential risk of people injuring themselves by falling down either into the light well of Atkin Building or down the steep slope on the north side of the garden.
- To reduce damage to the lawns by people taking short cuts.

To deal with these issues, the proposal is to introduce a form of fencing.

The type of railings thought to be best suited to the gardens are estate railings which are a traditional form of park railing made of painted black metal. They are visually unobtrusive and blend well with the landscape



Example of Estate style railings

There is also historical precedent for the estate railings in the Walks as can be seen in the drawing below.



Historic drawing of the Walks with Estate style railings

6.0 SCHEDULE OF WORKS

Railings

- Install Estate painted metal railings as shown on drawings

Edgings

- Install new reconstituted stone edgings to the paths as shown on drawings
Tiled edgings to be reused where shown.

7.0 HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 5.1 Sections 1-6 of this document form the initial part of the heritage statement, outlining the location and the proposals.

The proposed edgings are discreet and should blend in and so not affect the quality of the gardens. The proposed railings are more visible, but they are a traditional design which is in keeping with the gardens.

6.0 ACCESS

- 6.1 The proposals will not affect access within the gardens.

7.0 CONCLUSION

The proposals are driven by practical requirements and have sought to use the most appropriate solution to ensure the gardens are enhanced.

8.0 APPENDIX A

The gardens are part of the overall Listing of Gray's Inn - List entry Number: 1000351 and are Grade II*. Here follows the entry on Heritage England's website (21/06/18).

C16 Walks and gardens, laid out under the direction of Francis Bacon, altered C18 onwards.

HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT

In the mid C16 the Inn consisted of a single court and a walled garden area to the north (known as Green Court, then Coney Court). Farmland surrounded these on three sides. A railed walk was laid out in an area of ground known as the Field by 1568 and by the 1580s there were elm trees and a seat there. In the 1580s Green Court, by then known as Coney Court, was levelled and divided into quarters by paths and alleys.

A committee, which included Francis Bacon (1561-1626, Lord Chancellor 1619-21) was set up in 1587 to decide what to do with the Field. In 1590 it was decided to enclose part of the Field with a brick wall. The wall was completed in 1598 and established several distinct areas: Field Court to the south, the Walks in the centre with a terrace walk along the northern end, and the Low Gardens to the north. The work in the Walks was carried out under the direction of Bacon and included levelling, planting, rails and hedges along the edge of the upper walk, and seats. The planting included cherry, birch, groves of elms, ozers for an arbour, eglantine, privet and quickset for hedges (for the edge of the Walks and probably for mazes), standard roses, woodbine, vines, pinks, violets, and primroses.

In 1608-9 a Mount, with a pavilion, was made in the centre of the Upper Walks (the west terrace), as seen in Richard Newcourt's map of 1658, with labyrinths or mazes to its north and south. At the same time large numbers of roses and trees (sycamore, birch, beech and elm) were planted. Between 1609 and 1612 a bowling green was laid in the Low Garden, which was outside the north wall, and a kitchen garden was laid out in the north-east of the gardens (on the ground now below Verulam Buildings). In the 1670s a summerhouse was made on the east end of the Terrace (the north terrace) to match an earlier one at the west end. The bowling green was no longer in use by the 1670s and the ground (the Low Garden) was then used for grazing, digging gravel (until the 1720s), and by the gardeners for growing

vegetables (until 1755). Limes were planted in the Walks in the 1690s and Dutch elms in 1709, around the kitchen garden and along the Terrace Walk. In 1723 the gates and piers at the southern entrance from Field Court were replaced (extant, listed grade II).

The design of the Walks and gardens was simplified between 1755 and 1770 to the designs of a Mr Brown (probably Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, 1716-83). This work included rebuilding the summerhouses, simplifying the old layout (removing the Mount and certain walls, hedges and paths) and incorporating the Low Garden into the Walks (planted 1761). By the late C18 the kitchen garden had been removed and the gardens further simplified. In c 1800 the lime trees were replaced with London planes. The last major change to the Walks was the building of Verulam Buildings (listed grade II) in 1803 and Raymond Buildings (listed grade II) in 1825.

Gray's Inn Walks and the squares are owned by the Benchers of Gray's Inn and the maintenance and any improvements to the Walks are supervised by the Master of the Walks.

DESCRIPTION

LOCATION, AREA, BOUNDARIES, LANDFORM, SETTING Gray's Inn Gardens, South Square and Gray's Inn Square, in total c 4ha, are located to the west of Gray's Inn Road and north of Holborn, within the Holborn district of the London Borough of Camden. The gardens and squares are surrounded by the barristers' chambers and other offices within Gray's Inn. The squares are enclosed by the surrounding buildings and the gardens are enclosed by the surrounding buildings to the west (Raymond Buildings, 1825) and east (Verulam Buildings, 1803-11) and by cast-iron railings to the north (early C19, listed grade II), south (mid C20, listed grade II with the gates), and south-west (early C19, listed grade II). The ground in the squares is level and that in the gardens levelled into terraced walks and lawns.

ENTRANCES AND APPROACHES The main entrance to the gardens is from Field Court to the south, through wrought-iron gates (1823) with gate piers. There are smaller entrances in the north-west corner and at the southern end of Raymond Buildings, on the west side. Field Court is approached from Fulwood Place to the south, through a gate set in a brick wall, and from Gray's Inn Square to the east and Gray's Inn Place to the west. Gray's Inn Square is approached from the south-west by a road leading from South Square and through pedestrian passageways in the north-east and south-west corners. South Square is approached from the north-west by the road that links it to Gray's Inn Square and from the south-west from a road that leads through to Holborn.

GARDENS AND PLEASURE GROUNDS Field Court is paved with setts, paving stones and gravel, with plane trees set within the paving stones and large tubs placed on the gravel. A shrubbery runs along the north side, which borders the gardens.

Approaching the Walks from Field Court, a straight path leads from the gates to the north of the gardens, lined by an avenue of plane trees (mature and recently planted). There are lawns on either side of the path with scattered mature trees, mainly plane but including two C18 catalpas. Along the south and south-west boundaries are mixed shrub and herbaceous borders while a path runs along the south side of the garden and curves up a slope before running north along the west side of the gardens. A broad raised terrace runs along the west and north sides, reached by the slope to the south, and by a set of steps up each side; those to the west with planting along the edge and those to the north (part of Bacon's C17 design) with no planting. To the north-east and north-west the boundaries are formed by Verulam Buildings and Raymond Buildings respectively. The lawn extends to the east in the northern half, around the north side of Gray's Inn Square. There are scattered trees (including one of the catalpas) and large shrubberies along the east (in front of Verulam Buildings) and north-east (below the terrace) sides.

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north-west corner, on either side of the path that leads out of the gardens onto Theobalds Road. The east end of the north terrace is hedged off and contains the nursery and gardeners' sheds. There are views over the gardens to the south and east from the terraces.

Approaching the squares from the passageway from Field Court, Gray's Inn Square lies immediately to the north and South Square to the south, on the other side of Gray's Inn Hall. Gray's Inn Square has a central rectangular-shaped lawn (laid 1930-1) with scattered trees, some mature, and yew trees in each of the corners. The lawn is divided by a path crossing centrally from west to east, with an C18 sundial in the centre (moved here from the north end of Gray's Inn Walks in 1966). The flower beds set on the lawn are planted predominantly with roses and lavender. South Square has a central oval-shaped lawn, with a statue of Francis Bacon (Frederick W Pomeroy 1912) at the east end. On the north side of the square is a large mixed bed (shrubs with perennials and bedding) in front of the Hall (known as the Treasurer's Bed). Both squares have roadways around the lawns which are used for car parking. The arrangement and planting of the squares are essentially C20.