# Heritage Impact Assessment

**20185713P**

St Pancras Gardens – Camley Street

Step Free Ramp

Engineering Services & Green Space

April 2019

Camden

# Contents

# 1. Introduction

1.1. The heritage impact assessment examines the final design proposals submitted as part of the planning application for the St Pancras Gardens Camley Street access ramp.

1.2. This assessment is an addendum to the full St Pancras Garden Heritage Statement 30th April 2016 in which the historical setting and significance of heritage assets has been described.

1.3. The proposal has been discussed informally at various stages since 2016 with Alan Wito Senior Conservation Planner, and since submitting the planning application, discussed formally with Planning officers Obote Hope (Planning Officer), Anna Foreshew (Conservation Planner) and Rose Todd (Senior Conservation Planner).

# 2. Summary of proposals

2.1. The aim of the proposal is to improve accessibility into St Pancras Gardens. This links in with strategic plans for the Camley Street area which is undergoing significant housing development and is anticipated to increase footfall in the area. Following the installation of the Somers Town footbridge, there is now direct link from Camley Street to the Argent LLP Kings Cross Development Area. The creation of ramp access into St Pancras Gardens will provide an alternative greener route with level access from Camley Street through to St Pancras Station, Somers Town and Euston.

2.2. The rear entrance from Camley Street offers no step free access, therefore visitors with disabilities or those with pushchairs need to take a long detour to use the Pancras Road entrance. The proposal aims to create ramp access to the area of land on the south of the entrance from Camley Street, adjacent to the brick and concrete retaining walls. The existing concrete retaining wall is falling down. The intention is to remove this wall and excavate this area to create step free access into the gardens. The brick wall is starting to show signs of wear and will need repairing in the future. The proposal involves cutting through this diagonal brick wall to shorten it and finish the end with a brick pier. The removal of two lime trees will also be necessary to facilitate the installation of the ramp.

# 3. Historic Research of the land

3.1. A detailed desktop study of historical records has been carried out (see appendix 1). There is a limited amount of evidence regarding this area other than Ordinance Survey maps and photographs and no records have been found on the planning department database.

3.2. The area of concern is shown in appendix 2.

3.3. OS Maps from 1870 show that this area was not part of the original burial ground.

3.4. In the 1960s the red brick boundary wall was partially demolished leaving the section in figure 3 (below) and a large building is erected.

3.5. Photographs taken in 1990 show that the building is still in this location but in 1997, the building has been demolished and the concrete wall is shown in its place. Therefore the concrete retaining wall is a modern wall erected during the1990s.

3.6. It is likely that the lime trees in this area were planted at the same time as these have been identified as semi mature trees. Two of these trees will require removal to facilitate the ramp works but in heritage terms are not significant as they are not part of the original layout of the gardens.

# 4. Design of proposed development

4.1. Construction works will involve demolishing the concrete wall and cutting through the brick boundary wall. Excavation to a depth of 4 metres is required to accommodate the foundation of the ramp. This will require the removal of two lime trees as indicated on the plans in appendix 2 (an Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application which addresses this aspect). A concrete ramp will be formed that will be brick clad. The original brick boundary wall will be shortened and the end rebuilt to include a pier, recessed panel and original bricks used throughout where possible (design plans in appendix 2).

4.2. **Design Detail** - The proposed ramp access creates a route running from the footway in Camley Street to the footpath inside the St. Pancras Gardens. The difference in the level between these 2 points is 1.86m. A ramp with 3 no. flights and 2 no. landings is proposed. The ramp has a width of 2.5m and the first flight is completely within the area of the planter on the footway, therefore maintaining the existing width of the footway. The first two flights have a curved shape that follows the direction of the existing concrete retaining wall and highway layout. The first landing is semi octagonal in shape to soften the edges of the ramp and acknowledges the heritage aspect of the existing Camley Street entrance which is finished with two octagonal piers. The last two flights are within the boundaries of St. Pancras Gardens and the last flight converges towards the existing footpath. A gate is to be installed at the upper landing following a similar line to the original boundary wall, therefore diagonal in orientation. This restricts access to the gardens when it is closed. The gate will be supported by two piers of octagonal shape similar to those on the existing Camley Street entrance. The section of concrete retaining wall, adjacent to the yellow Network Rail wall (not affected by the ramp), will also be strengthened as part of the scheme, with the exposed surface cladded with bricks.

4.3. The width of the ramp is 2.5 m and the total length is 33 m. It covers an overall area of 100 m2 including the walls (26 $m^2$ in the planter area and 74 $m^2$ within the Gardens). The height of the walls is also variable between 100 mm upstand to 2.8 m above the surface of the lower landing.

4.4. The architecture of the ramp will be similar to the adjacent original brick boundary wall ensuring the heritage of the Gardens is respected and resembled as closely as possible. The brick cladding is made of Country Blend bricks (figure 1) and the dimension of the bricks is imperial 9 x 4¼ x 2¾” (230 x 110 x 68mm). The brick bonding is English Bond. As per the existing brick wall, a layer of white coping stones will be installed on top of the brick cladding (figure 3 and 4). The existing coping stones will be cleaned.

*Figure 1 - Country Blend*

*Figure 2 - Existing brick wall*

*Figure 3 - White twice weathered coping stone*

*Figure 4 – White once weathered coping stone*

4.5. The railing will be 1100mm above the ramp surface. The panels are made with 8mm flat infill bars and 10mm thick post. This provides a lighter appearance compared to the traditional 16mm circular or square infill bars. Black painted or powder coated flat infill bars perfectly match most of the furniture already inside the gardens (benches, bins, etc.). The existing hard surfacing in the gardens is made of black asphalt. Due to severe cracking from tree roots, the pathways are due to be resurfaced in a flexible rubber/stone mix material. The ramp surface will be made of resin bonded aggregate in a mix of soft bronze and black stone to match the colour of the surfacing to be used on the pathways.

*Figure 5 - Existing park furniture*

*Figure 6 - Example flat infill bar railings*

*Figure 7 - Example of surfacing colour*

## 5. Assessment of impact and mitigation

This assessment has detailed the benefits of the proposal as improved accessibility into St Pancras Gardens in particular for wheelchair users and visitors with pushchairs. There is no level access to St Pancras Old Church and Gardens therefore this ramp will be widening access to a listed heritage asset. The proposals to create a ramped access from Camley Street into St Pancras Gardens have a low-moderate impact on the gardens, for the following reasons:

5.1. Most of the area affected has only recently been incorporated within the park and did not form part of the burial grounds as demonstrated by the historical research of the land.

5.2. The proposed works minimise harm to the 19th century Camley Street entrance gate, by locating the proposed excavations and alterations away from it, removing only the modern concrete retaining wall and part of the red brick boundary wall. This has already been partially removed in the 1960s and is in need of repair, therefore this presents an opportunity to preserve the heritage value of the site.

5.3. Two recently planted trees will need to be removed to enable excavations for reduction in levels; these do not form part of the original layout of the gardens so the impact on the heritage significance of the park is low.

5.4. The proposed materials ensure the ramp blends in with the existing façade by not having an overly modern appearance and at the same time, it does not detract from the original 19th Century entrance. The design has been sensitively detailed with the semi octagonal shape of the lower landing which is reminiscent of the octagonal shaped piers. The coping, brick work and brick bond will closely match the existing. The railings, surfacing and gates have been chosen to match existing park furniture and proposed surfacing.

5.5. The ramp from Camley Street will be mostly shielded from view from within the gardens therefore has minimal impact on this viewpoint.

5.6. The view of the gardens from Camley Street is not an important view in terms of the setting of the church and gardens. There is currently no view into the gardens from Camley Street as it is hidden behind the concrete wall. The ramp will enhance the view of the outside façade of the Gardens as the concrete wall, which is currently propped up with unsightly steel acrow props, will be removed. The works will involve slightly reducing the level at the rear which will increase the visibility of the Gardens thereby enhancing this viewpoint.

5.7. The ramp has been designed sympathetically to the heritage value of the site in the design detail and choice of materials. The ramp aims to preserve and enhance the heritage value of the site.

## 6. Conclusion

6.1. It is considered that the proposed ramp has been sensibly designed, proportioned and respects the setting, character and appearance of the listed assets in St Pancras Gardens.

6.2. The ramp design is sympathetic and in keeping with the original historic features of the Gardens as far as possible.

6.3. The proposals are considered to positively contribute to the accessibility of the site and preserve or enhance the character, appearance and setting.

## 7. References

[1] "*St Pancras burial ground: Excavations for St Pancras International*, the London terminus of High *Speed 1*", 2002-3 by P. A. Emery, K. Wooldridge.

[2] https://osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

[3] https://maps.nls.uk/

[4] https://www.old-maps.co.uk

[5] "*Change at King's Cross from 1800 to the present*", 1990 by M. Hunter, R. Thorne, G. Biddle.

# Appendix 1: HISTORIC RESEARCH OF LAND

Desk-based research has been carried out to define nature of land specified below, and if there are human remains buried in this location.

- Location: St. Pancras Gardens, Camley St. entrance

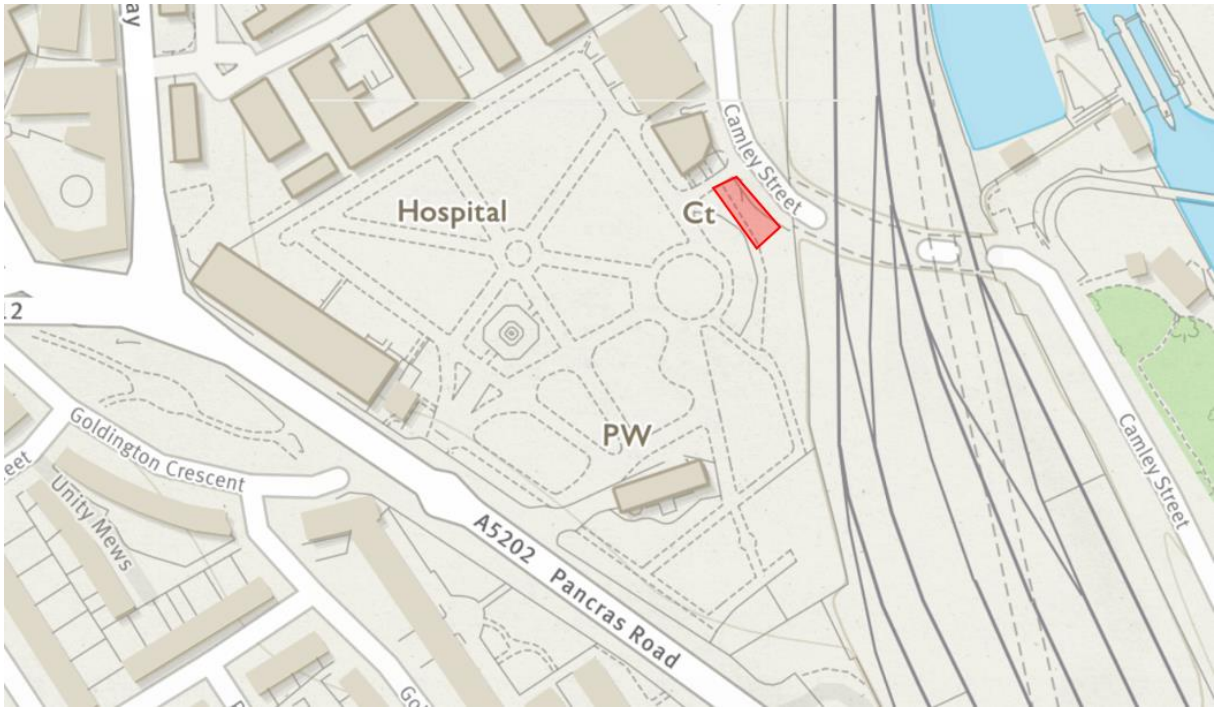


*Figure 8 - Source: osmaps.ordnancesurvey.co.uk*

Books and websites have been consulted, but the specific area of interest was not covered. Archaeological survey carried out at South-Eastern burial ground extension (denominated as "Third Ground" in the book by Emery [1]) shows that coffins were found between 5m and 7m below existing ground level in that area.

- **OS Map Search:**

**1870**: The land highlighted in red above was not part of burial ground, as the red-brick diagonal wall delimited the boundary towards the railway.

**1895**: The first structures were recorded outside wall along Cambridge Street (nowadays Camley Street).

**1914**: Further increase of the number of structures.

**1951**: There are no changes from previous OS map.

**1960**: Part of boundary wall was demolished, leaving only the section that is still standing today. Land mostly used to locate a bigger building. This building is visible in an aerial photo of King's Cross dated 1990 (figure 13).

**1990-97**: No information was found.

**1997**: Building from 1990 photo no longer present. Current concrete wall on Camley Street built.

- Surveyed: 1870, Published: 1876

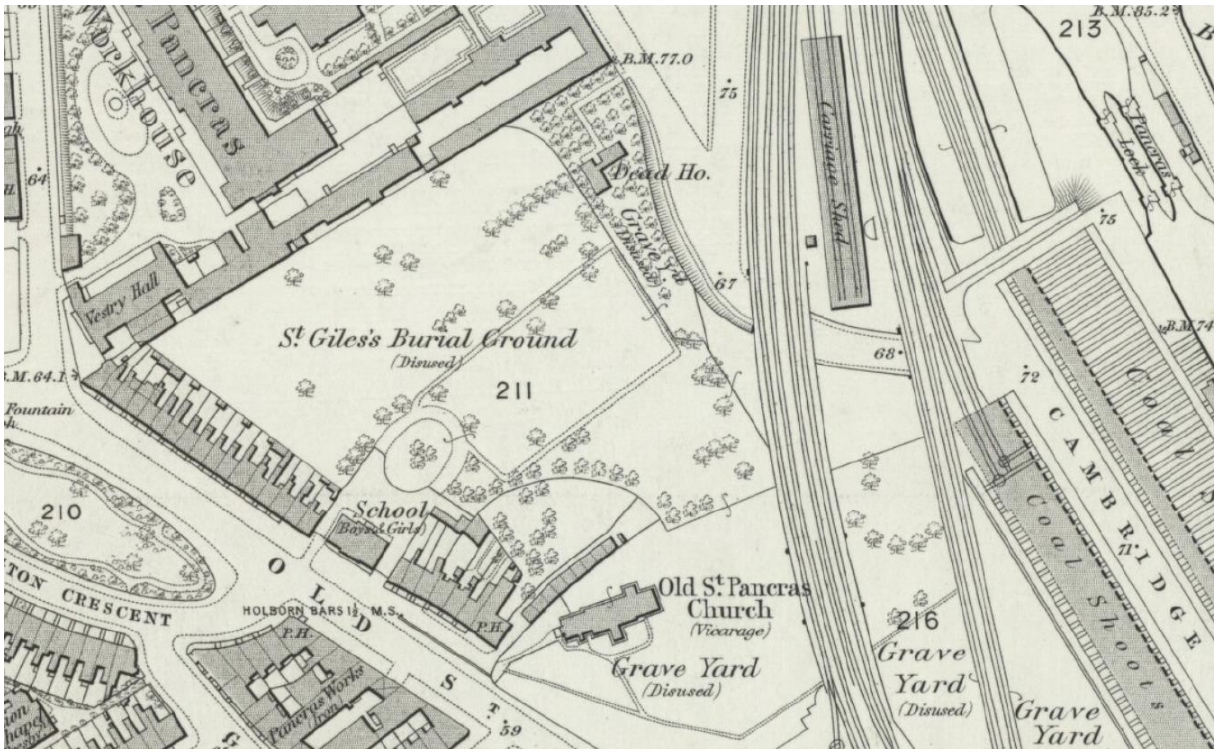


*Figure 9 - Source: maps.nls.uk*

- Publication date: 1895


*Figure 10 - Source: maps.nls.uk*

- Revised: 1914, Published: 1916

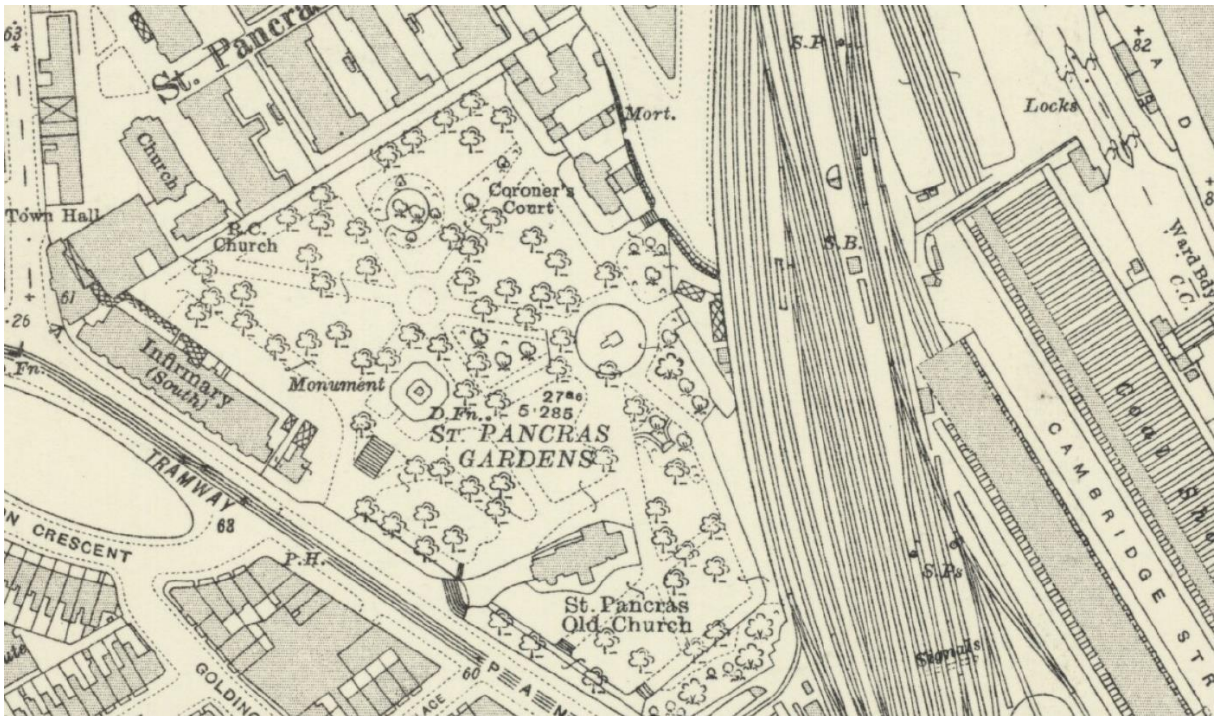


*Figure 11 - Source: maps.nls.uk*

- Surveyed: 1951 to 1952, Published: 1954

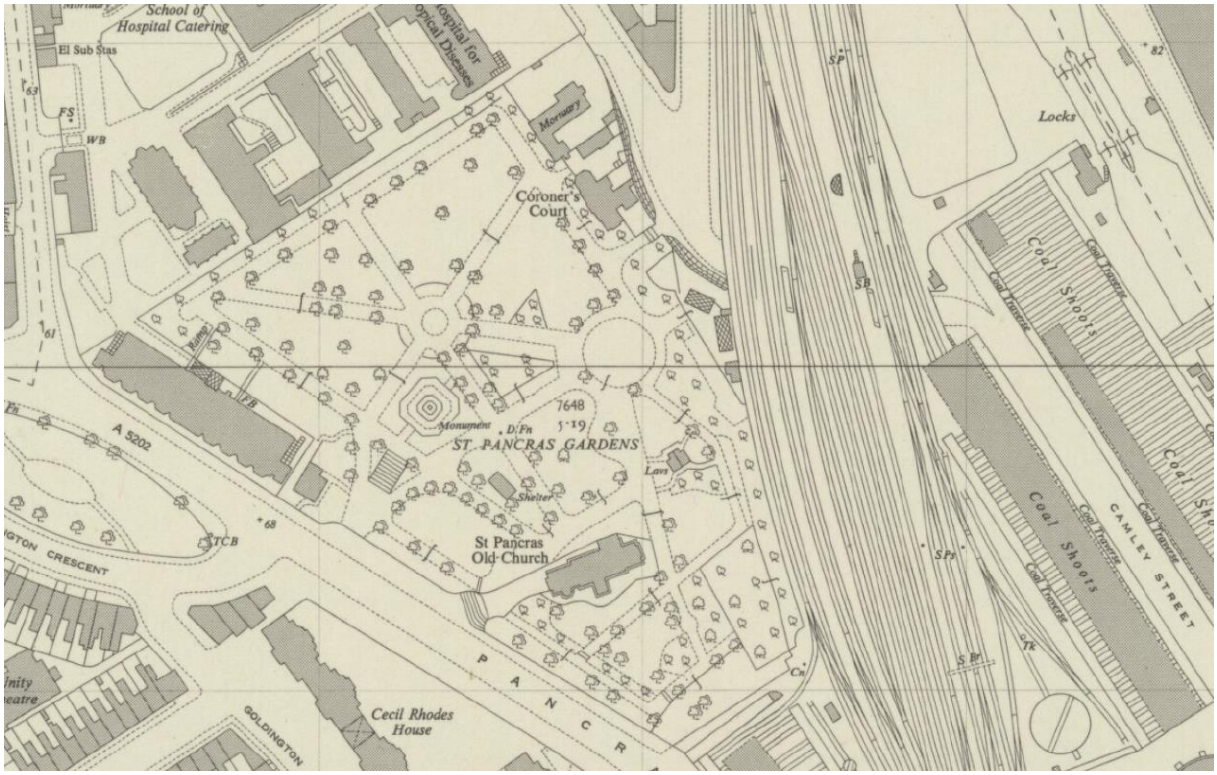


*Figure 12 - Source: maps.nls.uk*

- 1960-1962

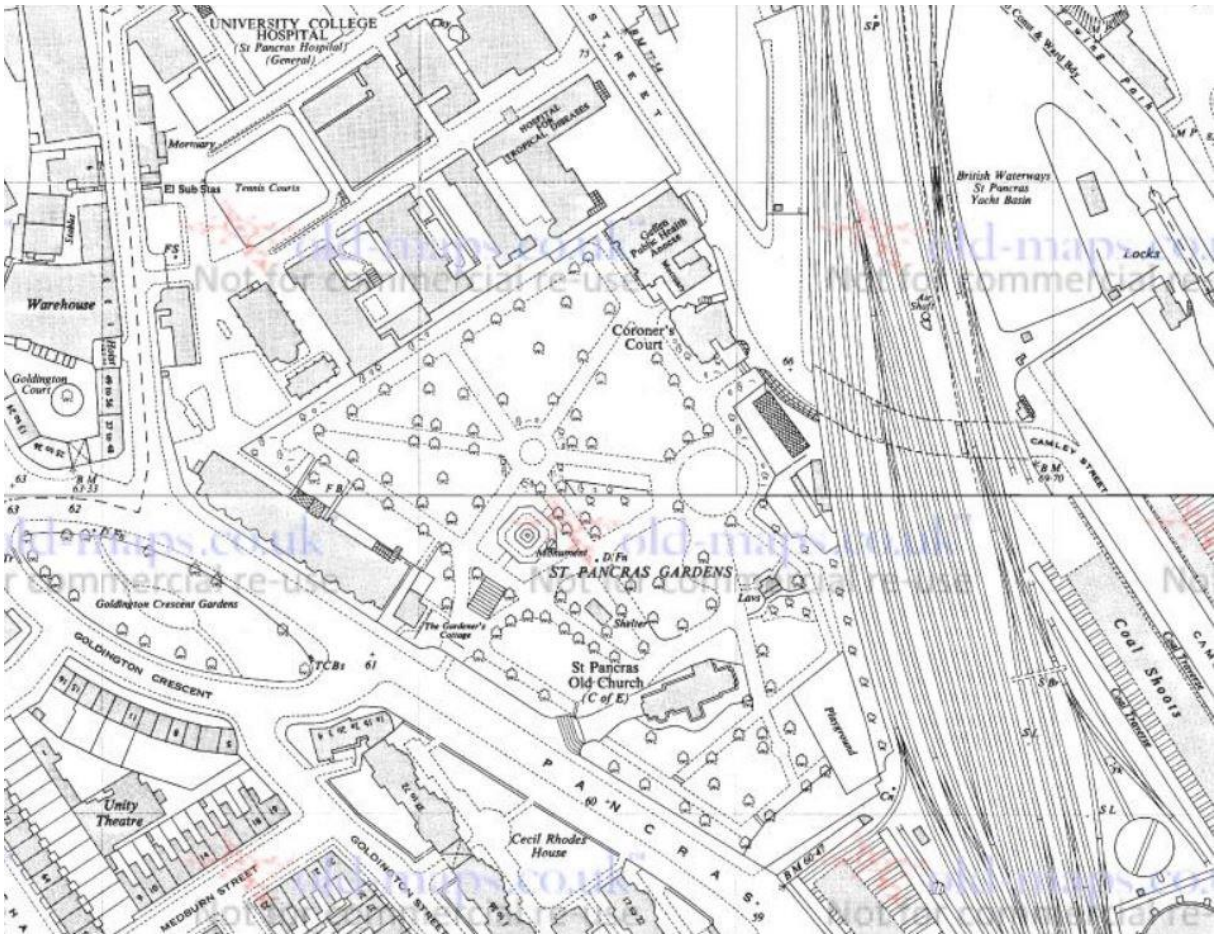


*Figure 13 - Source: www.old-maps.co.uk*

*Photo 1 - Aerial photo of King's Cross in 1990 [5]*

- 1997

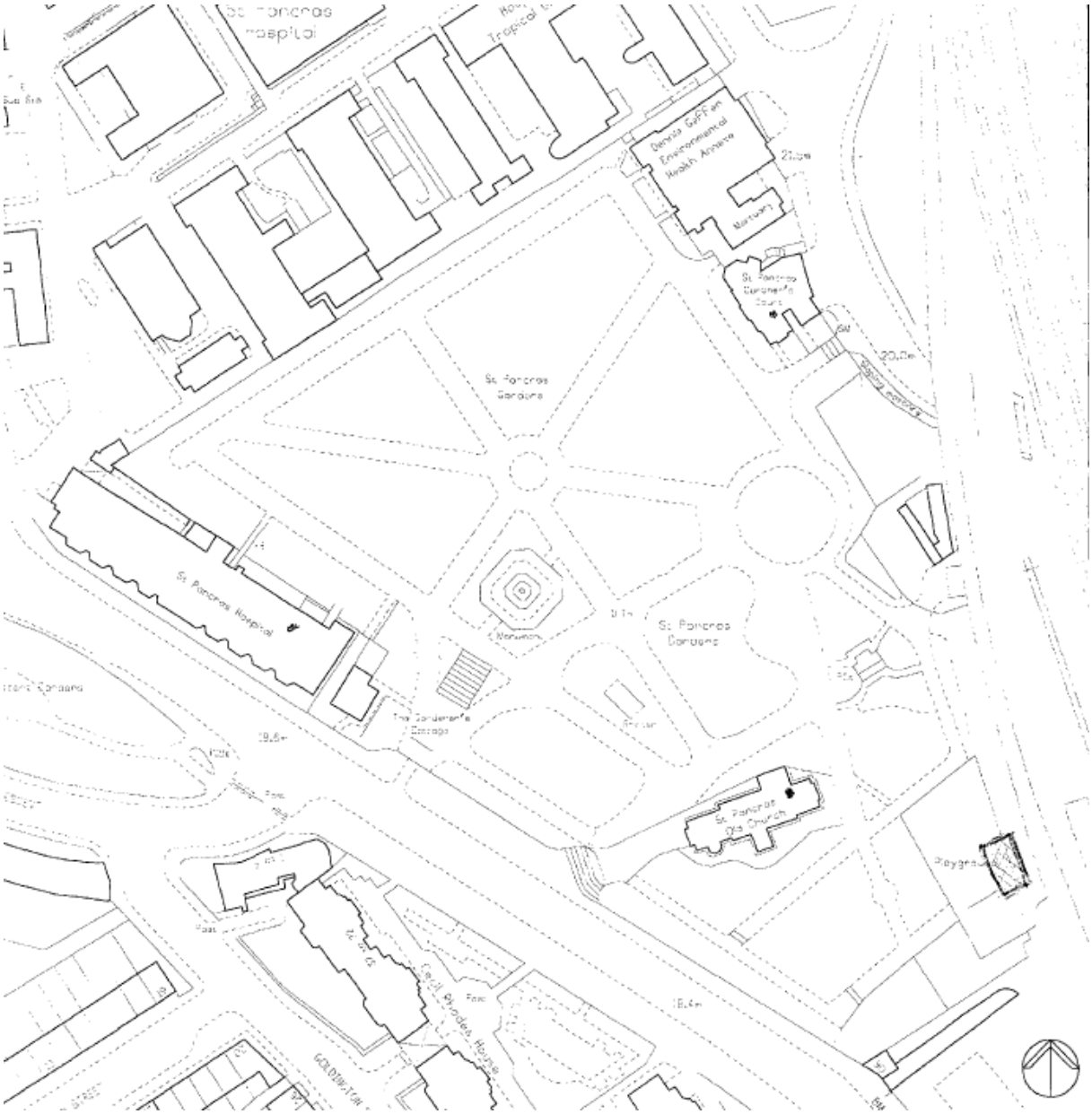


*Figure 14 - Source: planningrecords.camden.gov.uk*

# Appendix 2: Existing photographs, site plan and proposed design

*Photo 2 – Entrance to St. Pancras Gardens from Camley Street. (February 2016)*

*Photo 3 - Exiting Concrete retaining wall built between 1990 and 1997 (February 2016)*

*Photo 4 - Section left of the original brick boundary wall (February 2016)*

*Photo 5 - Panoramic photo of the concrete wall currently supported since August 2016 (March 2019)*

*Photo 6 - Continuity of the original brick boundary wall below ground level at the TP2 (July 2017)*

*Photo 7 - 3m deep TP2 and original brick boundary wall (July 2017)*

*Photo 8 - 1m deep TP3 within the original boundary of the Gardens (July 2017)*


*Photo 9 - 3m deep TP1 (July 2017)*

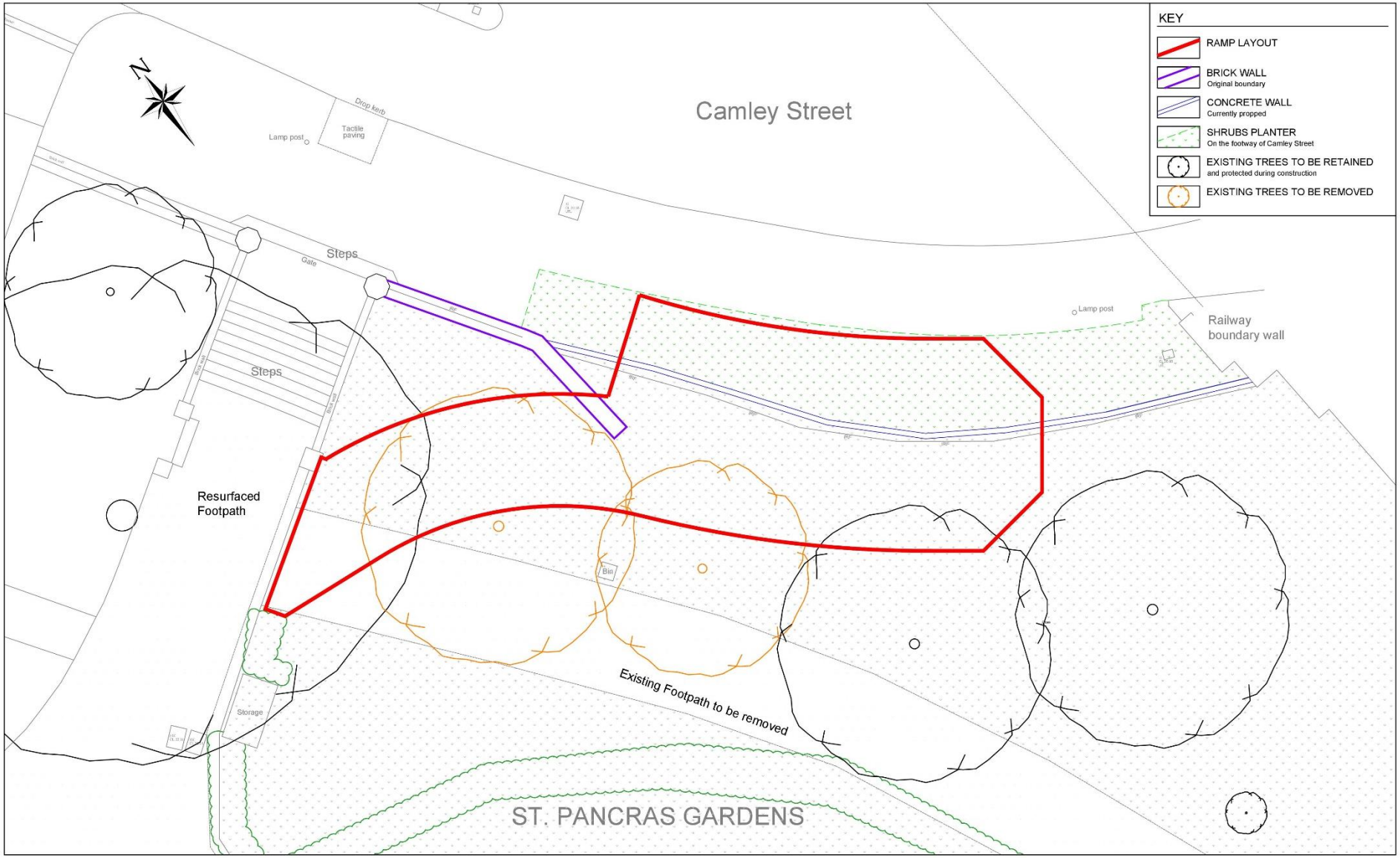


*Figure 15 - Existing Site Plan and Ramp Layout*

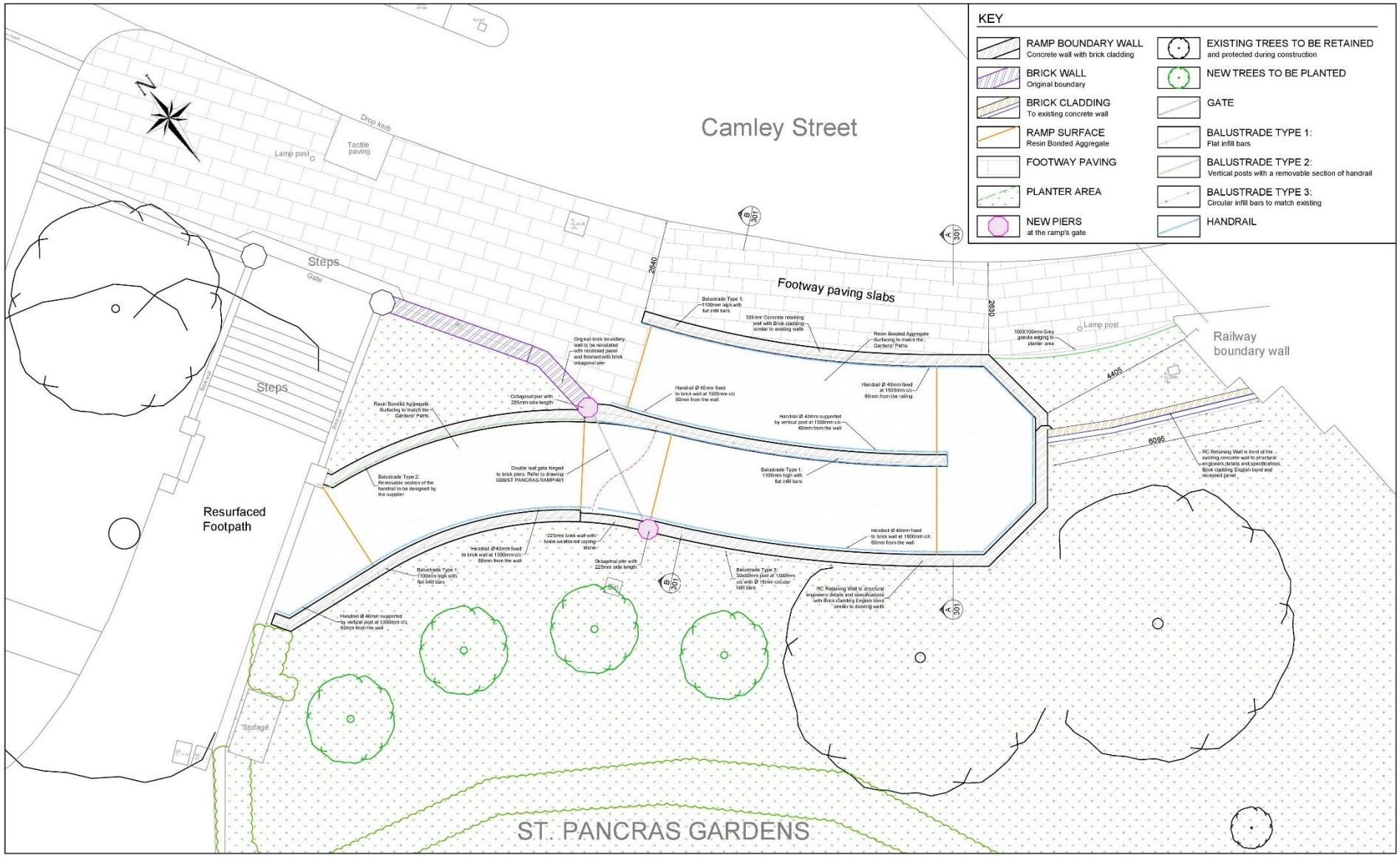


*Figure 16 - Proposed Ramp Plan*

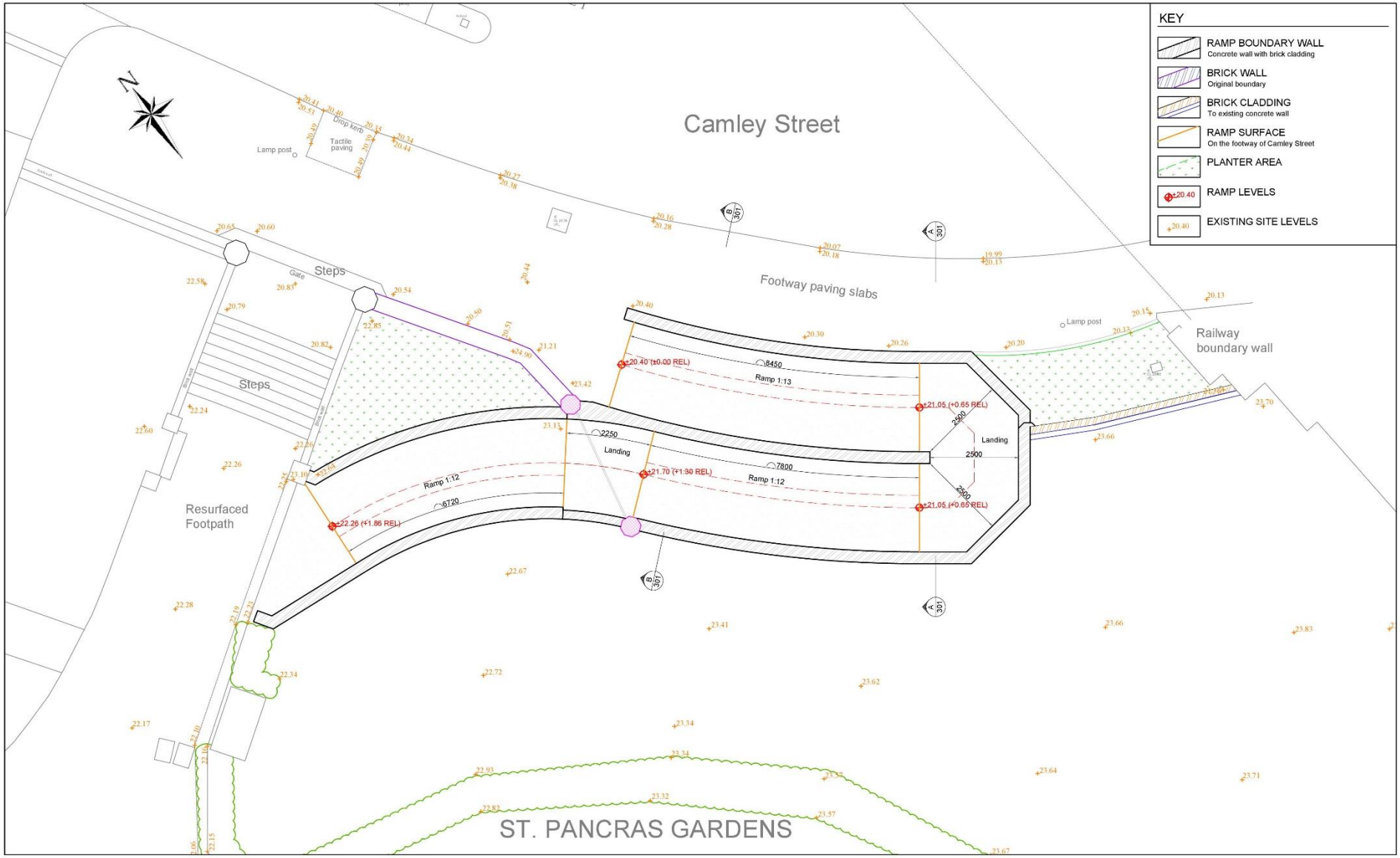


*Figure 17 - Ramp and Site Levels*