Design and Access Statement

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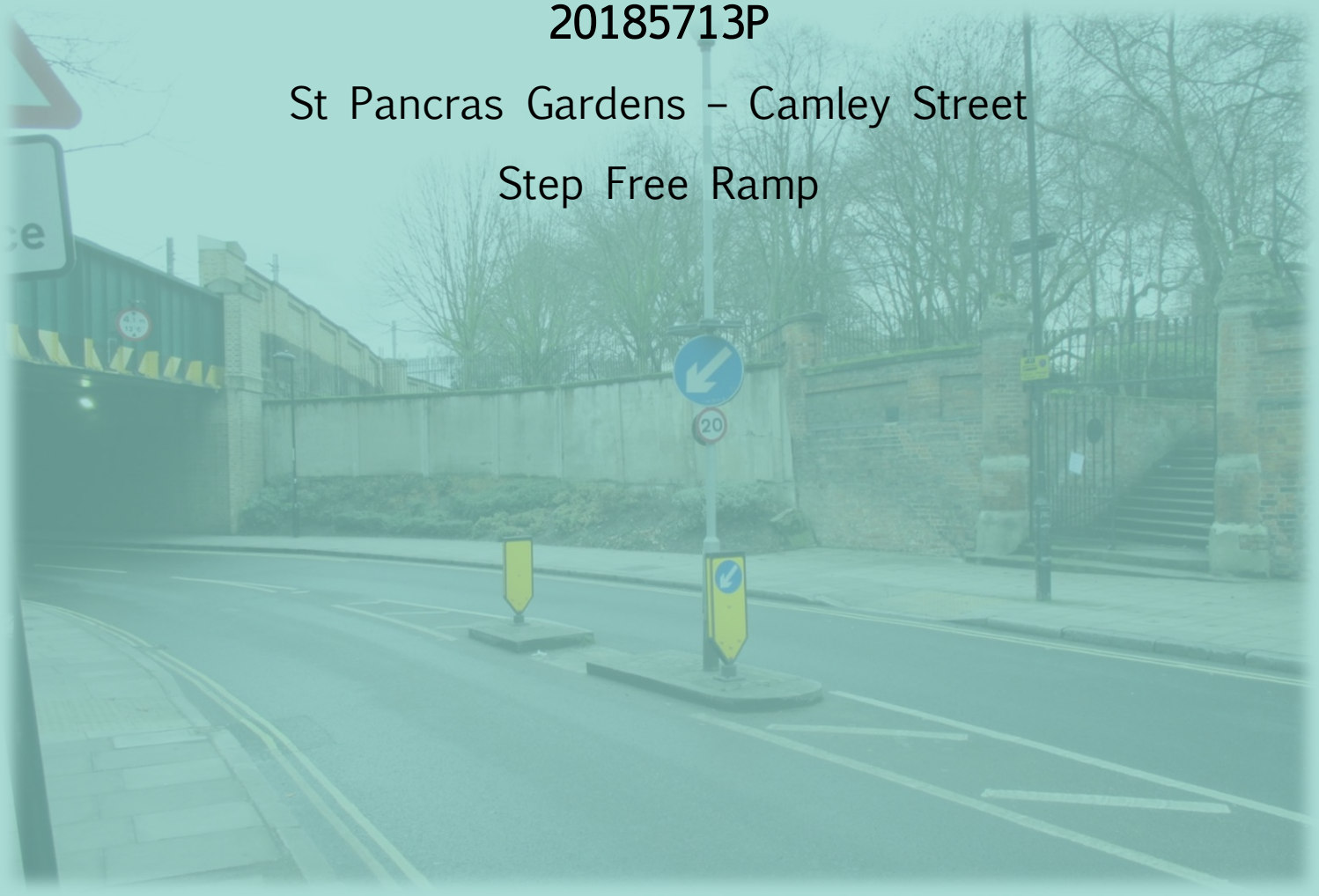
St Pancras Gardens – Camley Street

Step Free Ramp



Engineering Services & Green Space

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Camden

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1. Description of the existing site

St Pancras Gardens is located between Somers Town and the Kings Cross development area, and between St Pancras Station and St Pancras Hospital. It lies within the Kings Cross Conservation Area and surrounds one of the oldest places of Christian worship, St Pancras Old Church, which is a grade II* listed building. Being a former burial ground (dating back to C11th) it contains a range of monuments and tombs, and preserves a grand park atmosphere. The gardens were opened to the public in 1891. The gardens were restored in recent years by the London Borough of Camden, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. The existing entrance at Camley Street features a brick wall and piers with a total of 11 steps up into the Gardens.

2. The proposed development

Camden's Green Space team is keen to improve accessibility into St Pancras Gardens. The 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 (see enclosed photos 1-5 and Figure 1).

The north side of the gardens, linking to Camley Street is expected to receive higher footfall demand following the installation of the new Camley Street pedestrian / cycle bridge, which links Camley Street to the *Coal Drops*, part of the Argent LLP Kings Cross Development Area. Additionally further north on Camley Street, large-scale housing developments and area regeneration is proposed, potentially comprising of 3000 new homes (expected completion 2020 onwards). These both are anticipated to generate an increase in footfall into and through St Pancras Gardens, for which it is essential that we provide a suitable passage for all.

Photo 1 – Entrance to St. Pancras Gardens from Camley Street (February 2016)

Photo 2 – Supports to the retaining concrete wall installed in August 2016

Photo 3 – General view of the interested area of work

Photo 4 – Close view of the area of work

Photo 5 – Existing brick retaining wall

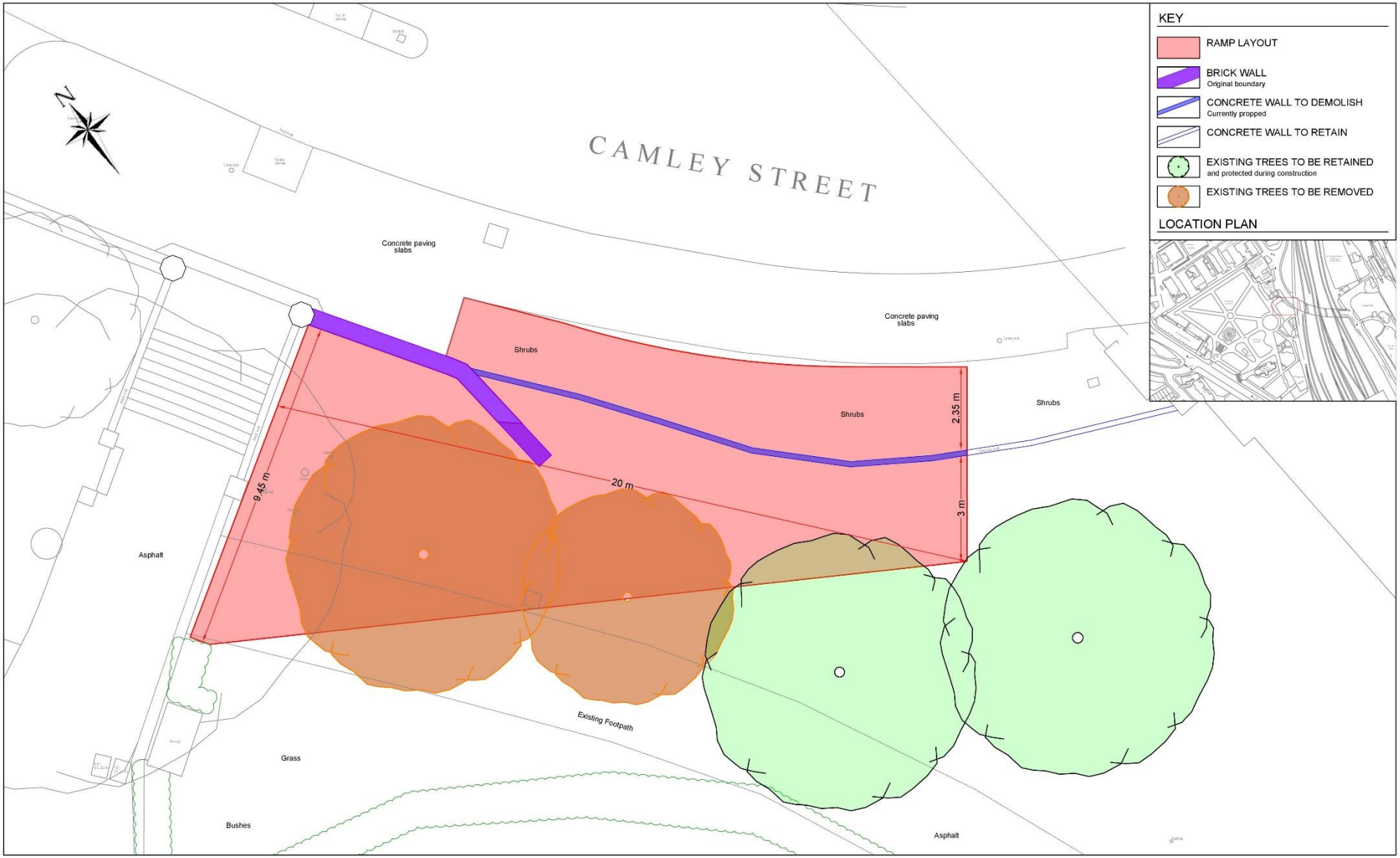

Figure 1 - Existing Plan and Excavation Area

3. Design of proposed development

Construction works will involve demolishing the concrete wall and cutting through the brick boundary wall. Excavation to a depth of 4 metres in the gardens is required to accommodate the foundation of the ramp. This will require the removal of two lime trees as indicated on the plans in figure 1 (an Arboricultural Impact Assessment has been submitted as part of the planning application which addresses this aspect). A concrete ramp with brick cladding will be built. 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 (see design plan in figure 11).

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 (see ramp and site levels in figure 12). 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 in diagonal orientation. This restricts the 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 with the exposed surface cladded with bricks.

The width of the ramp is 2.5 m and the total length is about 33 m. It covers an overall area of 100 m^2 including the walls (26 m^2 in the planter area and 74 m^2 within the Gardens). The level of the ramp raises from footway level in Camley Street to +1.86 m inside the park. The height of the walls is also variable between 100 mm upstand to 2.8 m above the surface of the lower landing.

The planter area adjacent to the entrance of St. Pancras Gardens from Camley Street will be reduced. The western 14.5 m stretch of land will be removed, leaving the remaining 5 m next to the yellow railway wall unchanged. The ground level behind the brick wall next to the staircase will also be reduced and levelled. The ground level will slope from the ramp towards the park keeping the existing profile.

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 2) 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 4 and 5) and the existing coping stones will be cleaned.

Figure 2 - Country Blend

Figure 3 - Existing brick wall

Figure 4 - White twice weathered coping stone

Figure 5 - White once weathered coping stone

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.

Figure 6 - Existing park furniture

Figure 7 - Example flat infill bar railings

Figure 8 - Example of surfacing colour

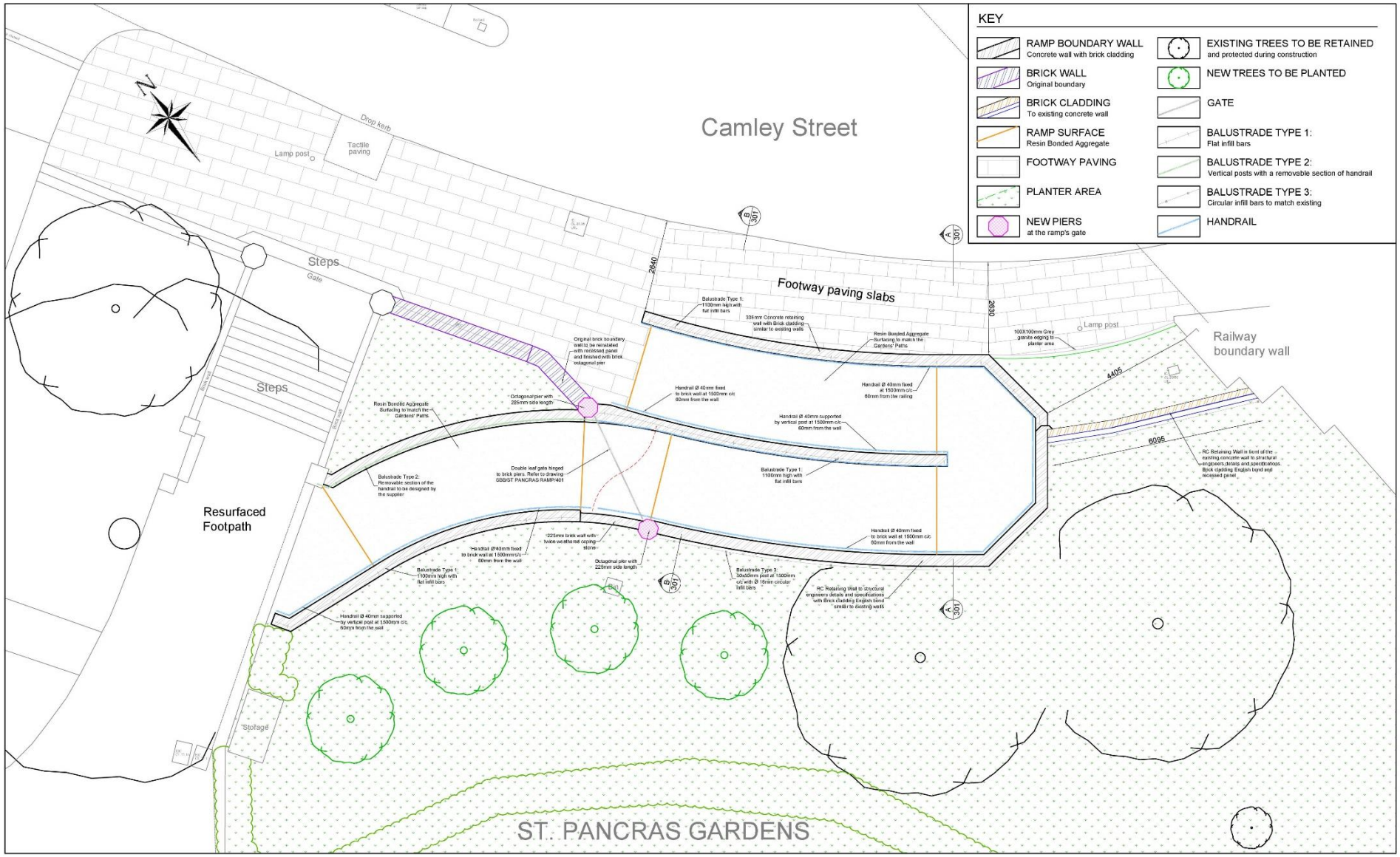

Figure 9 - Proposed Ramp Plan

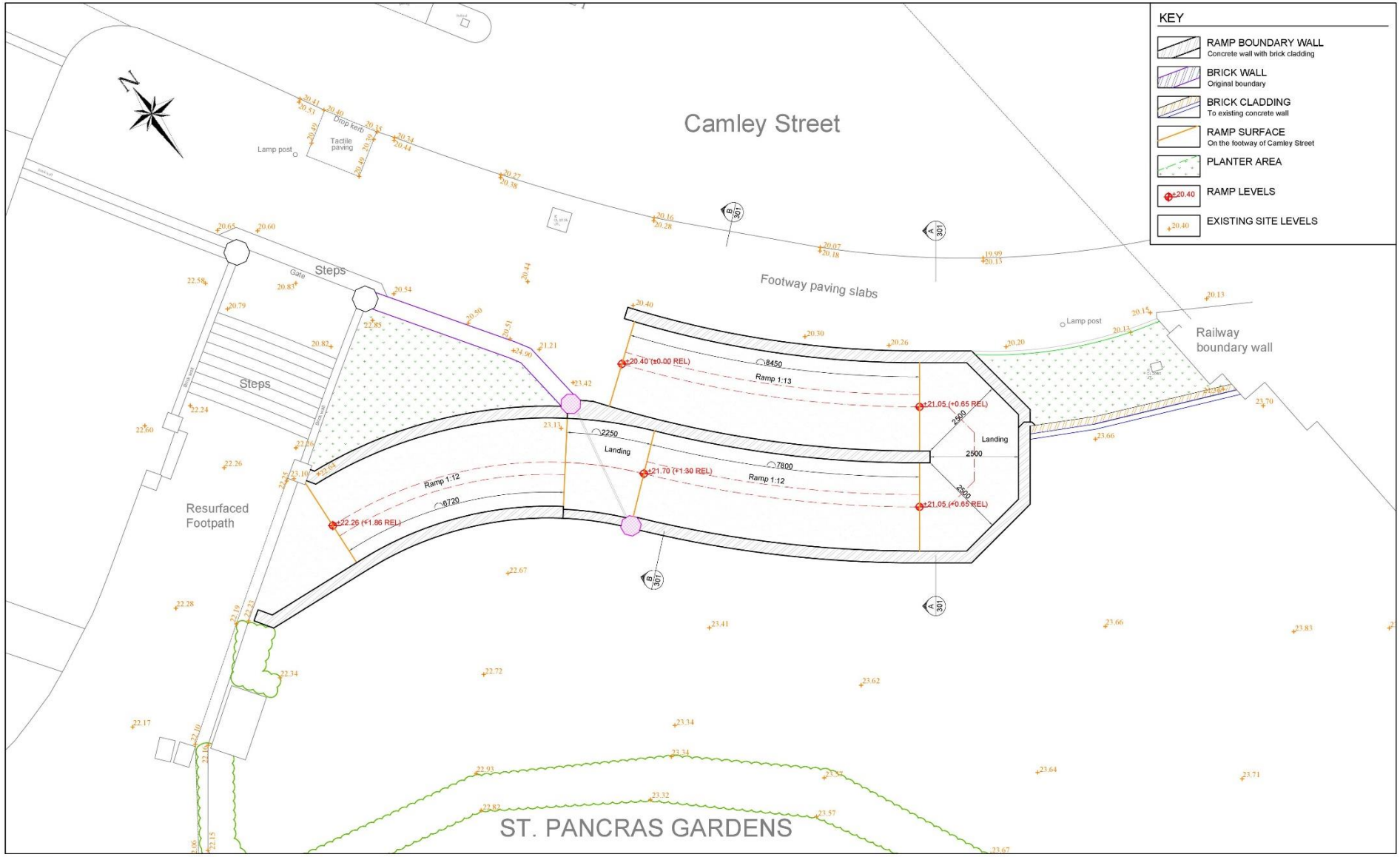

Figure 10 - Ramp and Site Levels

4. Design and access considerations

The aim of creating a ramp at the Camley Street entrance into St Pancras Gardens is to improve access into the gardens in particular for disabled visitors and those with pushchairs. The ramp is 2.5 metres wide which provided adequate space for families, groups and wheelchairs to pass each other. Handrails will be installed on both sides of the ramp that extend 300mm past the start/end of the ramp. The handrail will be continuous throughout the ramp apart from a small section of discontinuation at the top landing of the ramp where it will be installed onto the gate. The handrail will be constructed of materials to avoid it becoming too hot/cold to touch. The ramp surface will be made of resin bonded aggregate to prevent slipping, in a mix of soft bronze and black stone to match the colour of the surfacing to be used on the pathways.

The ramp does not inhibit vehicle drop off or accessible parking which can both continue using existing arrangements outside the Coroner's court for a drop off point and accessible parking is available on Granary Street.

There is signage on the Somers Town footbridge which starts further along Camley Street signposting pedestrians in the direction of St Pancras Gardens. Park signage is also fixed to the existing Camley Street entrance of the Gardens. There is no additional signage planned, however we have made recommendations to our Highways section to include some wayfinding signage on Camley Street just past the railway bridge and by the ramp. This will be considered as part of an overall wayfinding strategy in the Camley Street Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Design and local/heritage considerations

The design of the ramp has taken into consideration a number of local factors. The Gardens is a former burial ground and the church is a place of worship. Surrounding the gardens is St Pancras Coroner's Court and Mortuary, and St Pancras Hospital which has an entrance into the gardens. The design has considered these stakeholders and users of the facilities to ensure sensitivity in designing the appearance of the ramp. This as well as the heritage setting of the gardens has heavily influenced the materials chosen for the ramp, matching as closely as possible to the existing façade. The ramp has been located away from the 19thC Camley Street entrance removing only the modern concrete wall. We have ensured that the ramp follows the line of the existing wall. The impact on the heritage view inside the gardens is low, as the ramp cannot be seen inside the gardens. Details of the ramp design have been affected by archaeological constraints associated with the site being a former burial ground. There are limitations on the location that excavations can be carried out due to the potential to uncover human remains. A trial pit investigation was carried out in June 2018 in the area of covering the ramp design. This was conducted under an archaeological watching brief and no significant remains were discovered. Therefore the archaeological impact of the proposal is low. Community safety issues has been considered by including lighting and ensuring visibility is maintained.