

Statement in support of repairs to a boundary wall

External works associated with an application for Listed Buildings Consent to repair a curtilage Listed boundary wall at The Orchard, Huyton

Introduction

Approval was granted for development at the former sports centre site at The Orchard in February 2023 under application 22/00263/FUL. The site shares a boundary with Greenhill, which is a Grade II listed house (list entry no.1215183). As Greenhill is listed, the boundary wall is curtilage listed and is also protected under the listing status.

Greenhill is a mid 19th century, red brick villa. The existing wall is made of random sized pieces of yellow sandstone bonded with lime mortar; to the top of the wall there is a double weathered sandstone coping stone. The wall varies in height from around 1.6m at the site entrance to around 2m at the end of the access road opening up to the development site. The wall continues to the south west corner of the site and runs the full length of the shared boundary between the site and Greenhills. A further stone wall runs along the southern boundary of The Orchard and as a good will gesture to local residents, the applicant has agreed to make repairs along that stretch of wall too.

Large brickwork buttresses have been constructed to the access road section of the development site, which have looked to stabilise the wall, more than likely due to the existing trees on the Greenhills Site. The buttresses appear to be built up against the wall and not keyed into the sandstone. It is unknown when the buttresses were built but it is estimated they have been there for over 20 years. It has been confirmed by adjacent landowners that the wall has had a slight lean in middle part of the access road for at least 30 years.

Apart from one section, where a wagon has knocked one buttress, there is no evidence of movement around the buttresses and so it would appear that the installation of the buttresses have stabilised the wall from the trees and heavy vegetation on the adjacent land. However, the wall has been neglected and heavy vegetation, as well as large trees abutting the wall, have caused sections of the wall to collapse. There are also areas where cement mortar has been used to patch the wall over time, causing further issues. It is therefore the intention of the applicant to repair the wall, using conservation principles, in order that the wall can be safely retained for the future.

The applicant engaged the help of Aura to carry out a survey of the wall to provide a remediation report. Due to heavy vegetation and the adjacent landowner refusing to allow vegetation to be removed, it has not been possible to survey the length of the boundary wall. However, the principle of the schedule of works will remain the same.

This statement has been prepared to describe the proposed works to the boundary wall and includes the proposed methods of repair, where required and proposed finishes.

Photographs of the wall







Survey findings

A survey of the wall was carried out by Aura to provide a remediation report. Seven key areas of the wall were noted as having issues, as summarised below:

1. Approx 2m² of missing stone to replace and suggest approx. 6m² of repointing.
2. Approx 2m² of missing stone to replace and suggest approx. 6m² of repointing.
3. Approx 2m² of missing stone to replace and suggest approx. 6m² of repointing.

4. Approx 10m² of raking out and repointing in lime mortar previously pointed in sand & cement.
5. Approximately 3 linear meters of wall approximately 1.4m high (4.2m²) has fallen down, is loose and unsafe, due to a tree encroaching on the wall. Take down section, clean stone, remove vegetation and point in lime mortar.
6. Approximately 2m² of wall is loose or collapsed due to trees and vegetation behind. Take wall down, cut back vegetation, clean stone, rebuild and point in lime mortar.
7. Due to wagon knocking a buttress off its bed, rebuild buttress and repoint approximately 4m² of wall in lime mortar.

Please refer to the boundary wall plan which indicates the areas of wall as specified above (numbered 1-7).

Scheme of works for the repair of the wall

The design seeks to follow closely the main principles of historic building conservation, including matching existing finishes and materials, using salvage where required, and retaining or reinstating existing features.

As per conservation methods, repair will be limited to what is reasonably necessary to make failing elements sound and capable of continuing to fulfil their intended functions. All repairs will aim to retain as much of the historic fabric as possible. The objective is to repair and refurbish the wall to ensure it is safe and free of risk of further collapse.

At present there is a lot of vegetation that has made it difficult to survey the wall. However, once vegetation is approved to be removed by the adjacent landowner, further examination of remaining areas of the wall will be undertaken. Additional areas of repair will be marked on the plan and follow the same schedule of repairs, as specified.

Mortar removal

Over-aggressive cleaning can cause irreversible damage to the stones surface and discolouration from chemical cleaning agents can be difficult to remove without risking further damage. Once a close assessment by a specialist contractor can be made, the condition of the existing stone will be taken into account before starting works.

As required, existing mortar will be carefully chiselled out by hand.

Dismantling the wall

For sections where the wall has collapsed or is at risk of collapse, it will be taken down using hand tools to remove one stone at a time. Each stone will be carefully cleaned by hand, using hand tools and stacked within the location from where it came.

Rebuilding the wall

A specialist stone mason will rebuild the wall, using the original stone, where feasible, or reclaimed stone to match.

The wall will be pointed using lime mortar in a finish that matches the original, using traditional methods. The work will be kept damp and protected from the weather whilst work is carried out and for a period afterwards to ensure a good finish.

Every effort will be made to match the original lime mortar in content and appearance. Joints will be raked out to three times the depth of the joint, the bed wetted, and the mortar rammed home in three layers; to ensure the new mortar adheres properly.

Pointing patch repairs

Once inspected at close range, any patch repairs required to the pointing will be carried out. The finish will match the existing and work will only be carried out in areas that need essential repair. The mortar will be a lime based mix that matches the existing, as advised by a specialist consultant.

Conclusion

Repair is necessary to retain the heritage value of assets and the boundary wall is in a poor state of repair and in places, it is close to collapse. All new works of making good the existing fabric, will match the original wall with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile, unless specified otherwise in the above schedule, or agreed otherwise in writing by the local planning authority.