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ARCHITECTURE & PLANNING

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Planning, Design and Access Statement

for

**New boundary treatments to include access gate,
brick walls and railings**

At

St Mary's Church Service Yard

**Reading,
RG1 2HX**

Prepared by STL Architecture



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Introduction

This planning, design and access statement has been prepared by STL Architecture LTD on behalf of our client – Reading Central & Abbey Quarter BIDS – for the installation of a new wall and railings fence on the grounds of St. Mary's Service Yard in central Reading.

This statement has been prepared in the context of the Reading Borough Local Plan, adopted on November 2019, and will cover the history and context of the proposal and broadly outlines the necessary information required to provide advice from Reading Borough planning officers. The resulting conclusion is that key materials considerations, including the impact on: character of the area and highway safety, are acceptable and the wider objectives of the relevant local and national planning policy are met.



Figure 1 - Aerial view of Site



Proposal

The proposal seeks to deliver a new wall and railings fence in St. Mary's Service Yard – a paved service area at the rear of a row of terraces located on Broad Street, property of the Council, which is currently being used for parking and refuse collection containers – with the purpose of help the maintenance of the space and protect from on-going problems regarding social problems, making the area a safe environment for the public in general.



Figure 1 – View looking West towards the graveyard from the Church's House



Figure 2 – View looking North East from the corner of 53 St. Mary's Butts- illustrating existing layout and existing access.



Figure 3 – View looking South from service yard to graveyard and St. Mary's Church behind.



Figure 4 – View of remains of existing low brick wall on boundary between service yard and graveyard.



Design and Layout

The new wall is proposed to be sited within the cartilage of the service yard adjacent to the northern boundary of St. Mary's Church. The scheme will not only meet the required purpose but the design has been also thought to have minimal harm to the existing character and to be an enhancement to the conservation area, complementing the historical setting (refer to Heritage Statement for more detail).



Figure 5 – Proposed Layout

The new wall takes as a location reference the existing low brick wall ('Wall A' on plan) and is proposed to be built adjacent to the remains of a former wall (Wall B). It follows the orientation of the existing and former wall, being parallel to the footpath and facing northern side of St. Mary's Church. At some point, the wall changes angle (Wall C) to be perpendicular to the access path of the service yard and to allow the installation of an access gate 5.5m wide. The boundary finishes with a metal railings fence connected to 53 St Mary's Butts building.



Materials and Appearance

As mentioned before, the proposal focuses on respecting and enhance the historical character of the area. For this reason, similar materials and brick bonds from the existing wall were chosen for this scheme.

The existing low brick wall next to the Church House (*Wall A*) is maintained and a new thread of metal railings is installed on its top. Going past the perpendicular existing wall that separates the parking area from the plane tree, a new set of low brick wall (approximately 650mm tall) with Flemish bond is to be installed with metal railings on top – this same design follows the entire boundary until the new access gate. The new access gate will match the railings from the new walls.

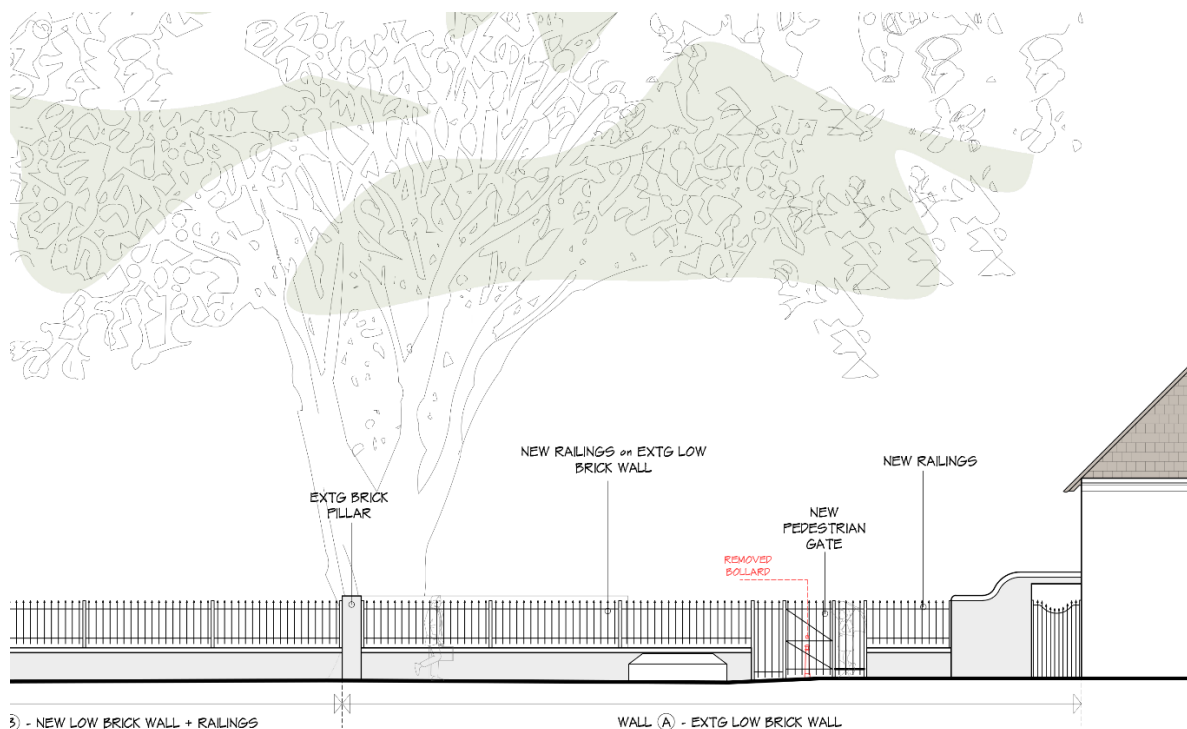


Figure 6 – Elevation from Wall A and part of Wall B

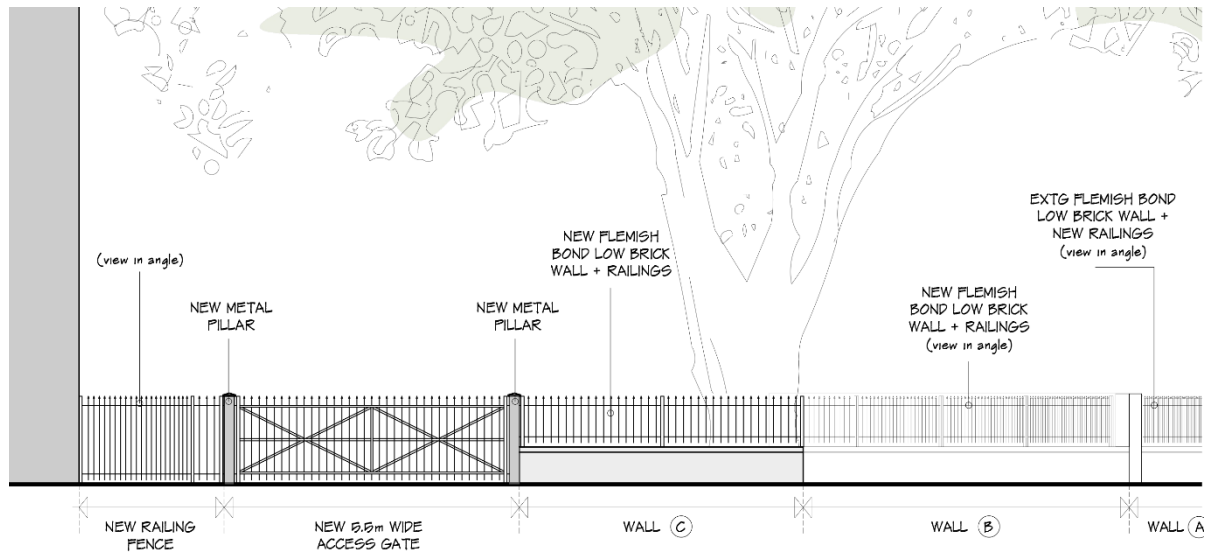


Figure 7 – Elevation showing Wall C and part of Wall B

The railings will be painted black steel and their style is also chosen to match the historical character context.

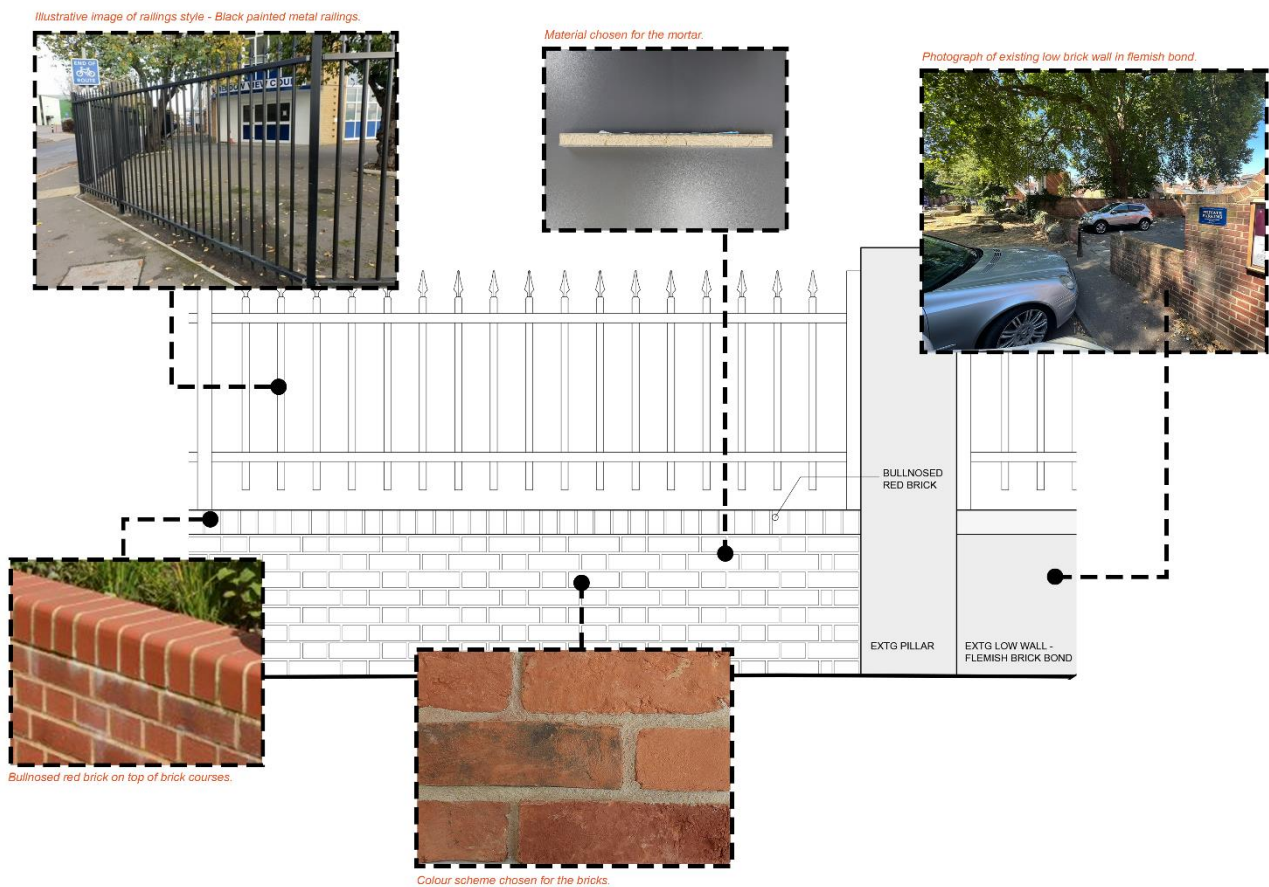


Figure 8 – Picture scheme representing choice of materials and style



Other minor works complement the installation of the new wall. As shown on plans, an area of the service yard where is currently hard standing ground will be treated to receive soft planting and a new line of bollards will be installed on its limits to avoid unwelcome parking on that space. Also, a new pedestrian metal gate is to be installed in the existing wall (*wall A*) for maintenance of parking area access.

Historical Significance

The site of the proposed new wall is located within St Mary's Butts Conservation Area and close to a Grade 1 listed building, St. Mary's Church. Therefore the site carries a big historical relevance and this proposal seeks to respect this aspect. A more complete study of the historical significance and impact can be found in the Heritage Statement attached to this application.

Archaeology

The site is located closely with the Church's cemetery and in an area of big archaeology importance. Therefore, a desk top study was undertaken and an Archaeological Desk-based Assessment is supporting this application.

Trees

This proposal will not result in the loss of any trees apart of a small bush near the wall (shown on plan to be removed). There is a significant London Plane Tree located in the site, however, the proposal will not have a negative impact on it. For more information, please refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment attached to this application.

Conclusion

This statement has sought to demonstrate the proposal is acceptable in principle. Material planning considerations have been assessed and it is concluded the site can be developed as proposed without adverse impacts to the character of the area.