

**ST GEORGE'S HALL
ST GEORGE'S ROAD
READING
BERKSHIRE
RG30 2RG**

Written Scheme of Investigation for
Historic Building Recording

Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference: SU 69034 73648

August 2017

Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording of St George's Hall, St George's Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2RG

Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference: SU 69034 73648

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1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited has been commissioned by Archaeology Collective to prepare a Written Scheme of Investigation for historic building recording of St George's Hall, St George's Road, Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2RG (**Figures 1 and 2**). Archaeology Collective were instructed by Francis Construction, on behalf of Stonewater Ltd. St George's Hall is the community hall of St George's Church. The church and hall do not lie in a Conservation Area. St George's Church is a Grade II Listed Building and its citation is described in full in Appendix 1 of this Written Scheme of Investigation. The summary of the listing description states:

'The Church of St George, Tilehurst, Reading designed by Sidney Gambier Parry in 1884 and built in 1885-6; the church was both parish church and garrison church for the nearby Brock Barracks. The community hall to the S of the church is excluded from the listing'.

- 1.2 St George's Hall is not a Listed Building. The Listing description of the Church makes it clear that St George's Hall is not included in the Listing and states:

'The community hall, to the S of the church, is thought to have its origins in the 1880 iron church, though it has been very much altered and extended. It was, at least until 1911, known as the Sunday School. This building is not of special interest and is therefore excluded from the listing'.

- 1.3 Planning permission (App. No. 152301) has been granted by Reading Borough Council for 'Church extension of 88sqm with dedicated parking area, core access road and construction of 12 affordable housing units with associated parking and amenity space' (**Figures 3 and 4**). This will involve the demolition of St George's Hall. An historic building recording condition (15) attached to the planning permission states:

15. A scheme of works, produced in accordance with Level 1 as defined by Historic England in 'Understanding Historic Buildings - A Guide to Good Recording Practice', shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Recording of the hall shall then be carried out in accordance with an approved scheme of works before demolition works commence on the church hall. Reason: to ensure that such material and evidence of significance should be examined during this development and in the interests of protecting the heritage of the borough in accordance with Policy CS33 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment).

- 1.4 This document forms the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the building recording of St George's Hall as required by condition 15. It is in accordance with national planning policy guidance, specifically the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012), and the local authority's policy towards built heritage. It sets out in detail the methodology that will be employed by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 1.5 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

2 THE MITIGATION

- 2.1 The mitigation involves the preservation by record of St George's Hall which is to be demolished. The recording will take the form of a Level 1 record of the building and surrounding area as set out in Historic England (2016) *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*, in advance of demolition.
- 2.2 A topographic plan showing the building to be demolished has been provided and will be used as base plan to add location and direction of photographs (**Figure 2**). A photographic survey will be undertaken of the building. A written report will incorporate the building location plan, a selection of the photographs and a description of the building.
- 2.3 All works will be undertaken in accordance with standards set out in:
- English Heritage (now Historic England) (2005) *The presentation of historic building survey in CAD*
 - ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*
 - Historic England (2016) *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice*
- 2.4 Site perimeter hoarding/fencing and general security is the responsibility of the client or their agent.
- 2.5 Health & Safety procedure and a risk assessment will be undertaken prior to commencement of works.

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 Aims and objectives

- 3.1.1 The aim of the building recording is to provide a record of St George's Hall prior to its demolition. This record is to be broadly in accordance with that defined by Historic England's Level 1. The aim is to provide a better understanding of the building, to compile a lasting record, to analyse the results and to disseminate the results.

3.2 Monitoring procedures

- 3.2.1 The Archaeological Advisor to the Local Planning Authority (hereafter the Curator) will be informed seven days before the commencement of works.
- 3.2.2 Reasonable access, subject to the health and safety requirements at the site, will be granted to representatives of the Local Planning Authority and the client, or their agent, who wish to be satisfied, through site inspections, that the building recording is being conducted to proper professional standards and in accordance with the agreements made.

3.3 Access and safety

- 3.3.1 All relevant health and safety legislation, CDM, COSHH regulations and codes of practice will be respected. The Health and Safety policies of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited will be followed and in accordance with all statutory regulations. The work will conform to existing site policies and procedures. There is a duty of care for the client to provide all information reasonably obtainable on contamination and the location of live services before site works commence.
- 3.3.2 Any site perimeter hoarding, maintenance of gate access and general site security is the responsibility of the client or their agent, unless Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is instructed to the contrary.
- 3.3.3 Accommodation, toilet facilities and full washing facilities for the attendant building recording team will be located within reasonable distance of the building.

3.4 Recording systems

- 3.4.1 A unique-number site code BSGR17 has been assigned to this project by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 3.4.2 The recording systems adopted during the investigations will be fully compatible with those most widely used elsewhere in Berkshire.
- 3.4.3 The site archive will be so organised as to be compatible with the other building recording archives produced in the Local Authority area.
- 3.4.4 A 'site location plan' indicating site north and based on the current Ordnance Survey 1:1250 map (reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO) will be prepared.

3.5 Recording: methods

- 3.5.1 The building will be recorded to Level 1, where issues of health and safety and access allow.
Documentary Research
- 3.5.2 Copies of historic maps will be collated. Maps can provide information on the sequence of buildings and structures on a site. A pragmatic approach will be taken in assessing the level of research necessary. Berkshire Record Office is considered to be a key repository.

Drawn Survey

- 3.5.3 A topographic survey of the building has been provided and will be used as a base outline plan for the location and direction of photographs. All drawings will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Plans used in the report will be printed at a scale of 1:1250.

Photography

- 3.5.4 High quality digital photography will be used to record the building. The setting and main views of the building will be recorded photographically. Evidence of the sequence of construction, elevations, typical and unusual spaces and architectural details will be photographed. Photographs will be taken of the interior of the building if it is easily accessible.
- 3.5.5 The photographic record will be accompanied by a photographic register detailing (as a minimum) location and direction of shot. A photographic scale will be used during the photographic survey.

3.6 Post-recording report

- 3.6.1 A report will be prepared based on the above record, describing the building and presenting the results of the building recording.
- 3.6.2 The report will be illustrated with plans and photographs and will outline the results of the work. The direction of photographs taken will be indicated within the report. There will be a description of the building's architecture and development.
- 3.6.3 The report will have the following contents:

Author and date

Non-technical summary

Site location information (including maps) and descriptions

Introduction

Context of the project

Planning references

Historical background

Aims and objectives

Methods

Building descriptions

Discussion and conclusions

Archive deposition details

Plans

List of photographs

Oasis form

- 3.7 The report will be prepared as soon as possible after completion of the on-site work and will be submitted to the Agent, Client and the Curator. Copies will be lodged in the Berkshire HER and Berkshire Records Office.

3.8 Archive and deposition

- 3.8.1 The project archive will be held temporarily at the offices of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited in Brockley, London under its site code BSGR17 immediately following the building recording. It is anticipated that the archive will be lodged with the Berkshire Record Office in due course.

3.9 Timetable

- 3.9.1 It is anticipated that the on-site building recording will take one day to complete before demolition. The report will be completed within three weeks of the completion of on-site building recording.

3.10 Personnel

- 3.11 It is anticipated that the project will be supervised and monitored by the following staff, under the overall direction of the Project Manager. The site team will consist of a historic building's analyst. Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited reserves the right to change staff at short notice due to sickness, annual leave or other circumstances. In these cases staff of a comparable level will be substituted.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Charlotte Matthews, BA, CMIfA | Project Manager |
| • Kari Bower | Building Recorder |

Appendix 1: Listed Building Description for Church of St George, Tilehurst, Reading

Summary of Building

The Church of St George, Tilehurst, Reading designed by Sidney Gambier Parry in 1884 and built in 1885-6; the church was both parish church and garrison church for the nearby Brock Barracks. The community hall to the S of the church is excluded from the listing.

Reasons for Designation

The Church of St George, Tilehurst, Reading, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- * Architectural interest: for its external massing and austere but effective detailing;
- * Historical interest: as garrison church for the Royal Berkshire Regiment, the building has strong links with the nearby Brock Barracks, the best surviving example of a localisation depot built as a result of Cardwell reforms; St George's is thought to be a rare example of a church associated with the reforms;
- * Internal fittings: the church retains a set of good late-C19 and early-C20 fittings, reflecting its development over that time, including the wrought-iron chancel screen, oak choir stalls, vestry screen and stained glass;
- * Commemorative interest: for the memorials of the Royal Berkshire Regiment which attest to the impact of world events on the community;
- * Group value: with the buildings at Brock Barracks, listed at Grade II.

History

The Church of St George was designed by Sidney Gambier Parry in 1884 and built in 1885-6. The funds came in part from the Royal Berkshire Regiment, whose garrison church it became for a number of years; the church still has links with the Royal Berkshire Regiment's successor, 7 Rifles. The Royal Berkshire Regiment's Depot, Brock Barracks, built in 1877-81, is some 200m to the E of the church.

Contemporary maps illustrate an urban expansion in the region of the barracks from the late C19. This reflects a change in military thinking at that time, introduced by the Liberal Secretary of State for War Edward Cardwell, whose thoroughgoing modernisation of the army between 1870 and 1881 became known as the 'Cardwell reforms'. Having observed chronic under-recruitment in the army, Cardwell, in 1872, initiated the Military Localisation Bill which provided for a redistribution of regiments in Britain and Ireland to depots situated in areas populous enough to sustain a brigade, encouraging the establishment of local connections and assisting recruitment. Thus it was that Brock Barracks was constructed in 1877-81 to house the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

St George's was built both to serve the western expansion of Reading, and to meet the needs of the troops; the new building replaced a temporary iron church erected in 1880. The new church was consecrated in stages, reflecting its gradual expansion: the nave, N aisle, N porch and vestries were consecrated in 1886; the chancel in 1893. In 1936, a S chapel, partial S aisle and S porch, added by George Ridley Phillips, were consecrated. The S aisle of the church was never completed, but major repairs and maintenance work were carried out between 1955 and 1958 by George William Judd.

Sidney Gambier Parry (1859-1948), was the son of Thomas Gambier Parry, an artist and inventor, and the half-brother of the composer Sir Hubert Parry. During his career he undertook both ecclesiastical and domestic work, frequently in his native Gloucestershire: his ecclesiastical works include the Church of All Saints, Winthorpe, Nottinghamshire (1886-8, Grade II), and the Church of St Peter, Badgeworth, Gloucestershire (1888, Grade II), whilst notable church restorations include the Church of St Michael,

Churcham, Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire (1886, Grade I). He collaborated in rebuilding work at St John the Evangelist, Coleford, Gloucestershire, (restored 1885, Grade II) and St Mary, Cowbit, Lincolnshire (restored 1882, Grade I). He designed the altar frontal for Salisbury Cathedral and the alabaster work in the sanctuary of St Mary's Bathwick, Bath. Parry was also commissioned for designs for the roof decoration in the chancel at the Church of St Mary, Bayford, Hertfordshire (1890, Grade II*), and in 1913 built an organ case and loft for St Mary's, Bourne Street, London. His domestic work included Iveson Manor, Ampney St Peter, Gloucestershire (1908, Grade II) and the extension and remodelling of the late C18 or early C19 Pytte House 1-6, Clyst St George, Devon (Grade II).

The community hall, to the S of the church, is thought to have its origins in the 1880 iron church, though it has been very much altered and extended. It was, at least until 1911, known as the Sunday School. This building is not of special interest and is therefore excluded from the listing.

Details

Garrison and parish church designed by Sidney Gambier Parry in 1884 and built in 1885-6. The community hall to the S of the church is not included in the listing.

MATERIALS: local red brick with narrow banding in grey brick, with some stone dressings, and tiled roofs.

PLAN: the church has a nave with a chancel and polygonal apse, a N aisle with vestries, and a N porch to the W. The later southern additions comprise the eastern section of the incomplete S aisle, a S Lady Chapel to the E with a polygonal apse, and a small porch.

EXTERIOR: the S elevation, currently used as the main entrance, is the least satisfactory angle from which to view the church, owing to the fact that the S aisle was never completed. The bays are defined by offset buttresses and the arcade of the incomplete S aisle is expressed within the external brick wall by red and grey brick headers. In the western bay is a plain pointed-arched entrance, whilst the central two bays have graduated triple lancets. The 1936 eastern bay of the S aisle, together with the S chapel and porch, form a distinct composition; the aisle has triple lancets of equal height, with graduated triple lancets to the gabled chapel, and the porch has a flat roof. The W wall of the partial aisle is blind. The remaining area of the intended S aisle is defined by a low brick wall* with ironwork, thought to date from the mid-to-late C20; this is not of special interest. The brickwork to this section has grey banding, and there is grey brick to the window heads; these bays are also defined by offset buttresses. The gabled N porch has a pointed-arched doorway beneath a stone hoodmould, with a recessed vesica above; there is a stone cross to the apex of the gable. The N elevation has pilasters separating the groups of windows; the lancet windows to this elevation are arranged in pairs, with a triplet below a gable to the E. There is an unbroken string course of moulded brick at cill level, and a roll moulding following the window arches. Grey brick banding to this elevation continues around the chancel apse, the apsidal end of the Lady Chapel, and the W elevation. The apse has tall single lancets to each face, here defined by a stone string course and roll moulding. The W end has a group of four stepped lancets with a crowning oculus, beneath three stone hood moulds. The W elevation is further enlivened by stone dressings marking the eaves and apex of the roof. Rising over the E end of the nave is a gabled bellcote, banded with stone. To the N of the apse are the stairs to the cellar, which contains the boiler.

INTERIOR: the four-bay nave has an aisle to the N, the arcade having wide pointed red and grey brick arches which spring from square stone capitals on plain circular shafts of red sandstone. A corresponding arcade to the S frames the windows and doorway in place of the incomplete aisle. The windows of the N aisle have deeply splayed jambs. The lofty nave roof is of hammerbeam construction. The walls of the church are of bare red brick, though this was largely painted white in the 1970s. The church floor is of timber parquet, with encaustic tiles in the chancel and sanctuary. The chancel is demarcated by a tall chancel arch and low stone walls with a Gothic wrought-iron screen, given in 1889; the sanctuary is protected by a timber rail with open trefoil-headed panels. There is a cinquefoil arch to the sedilia, and a trefoil to the piscine. The tall lancets in the apse have deeply splayed jambs, and are linked by a roll moulding. The fine stained glass was erected by members of the congregation in 1896. The carved timber reredos is gilded, with a Crucifixion and saints in niches, and crosses of St George

above. The organ, to the N of the chancel, is circa 1890 by Gray and Davison. The vestries are divided from the N aisle by sliding timber doors with Gothic panelling, given circa 1903. The vestries have barrel ceilings, and original timber cupboards together with other furnishings. The W windows depict 'Faith', 'Hope', 'Charity' and 'Purity', with Christ above in the oculus. Grouped at the W end of the church is a collection of war memorials of the Royal Berkshire Regiment, including those commemorating the South African Campaign of 1899-1902, the Crimean War with Russia of 1854-1856, plaques commemorating individuals, and the Regimental colours. A First World War dedication to those who lost their lives is amongst other memorials on the N wall. Stained glass memorial windows to the N wall depict characters including St Alban, St George, and King Alfred (by A L Moore). The hexagonal Jacobean pulpit, brought from the Church of St Andrew, Sonning, stands on a Victorian base. The oak choir stalls have trefoil tracery to the fronts, and poppyhead finials. The nave originally had chairs rather than pews; these were replaced post 2010. The octagonal sandstone font, carved with Celtic cross medallions, has been moved from its original position at the NW corner of the church, to the centre of the W end.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURE

The community hall* standing to the S of the church is not of special interest.

*Pursuant to s.1(5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('The Act') it is declared that these aforementioned features are not of special architectural or historical interest.

Selected Sources

Books and journals

Douet, J, *British Barracks 1600-1914 - Their Architecture and Role in Society*, (1998), 167-172

Pevsner, N, Bradley, S, Tyack, G, *The Buildings of England: Berkshire*, (2010), 487
Websites

'Parishes: Tilehurst', in *A History of the County of Berkshire: Volume 3*, ed. P H Ditchfield and William Page (London, 1923), pp. 329-336, accessed 30 March 2017 from British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/berks/vol3/pp329-336>

National Grid Reference: SU6904073671



Figure 1: Plan showing Grade II Listed St George's Church (blue) with St George's Hall to the south

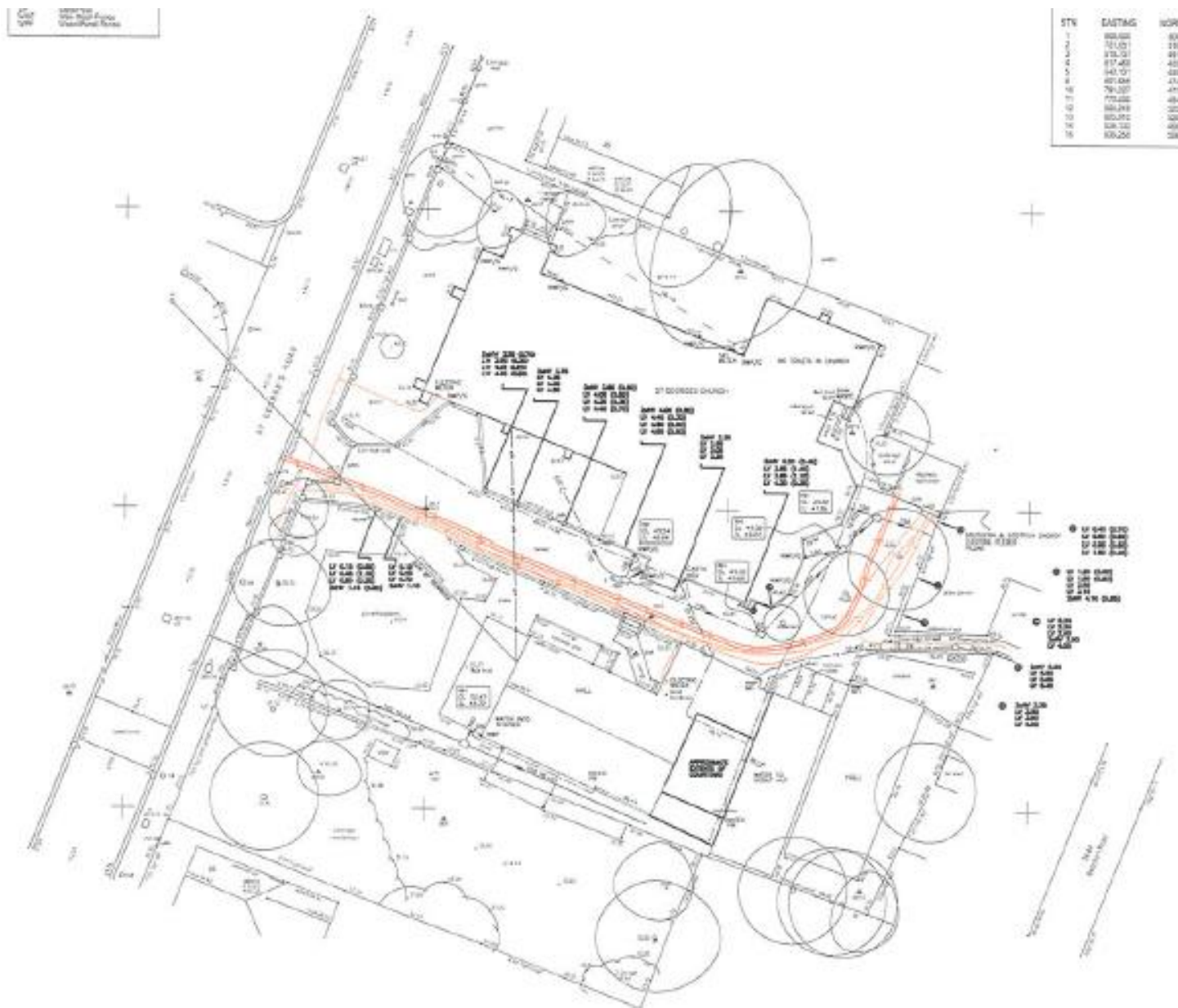


Figure 2: Topographic Survey showing St George's Church and St George's Hall

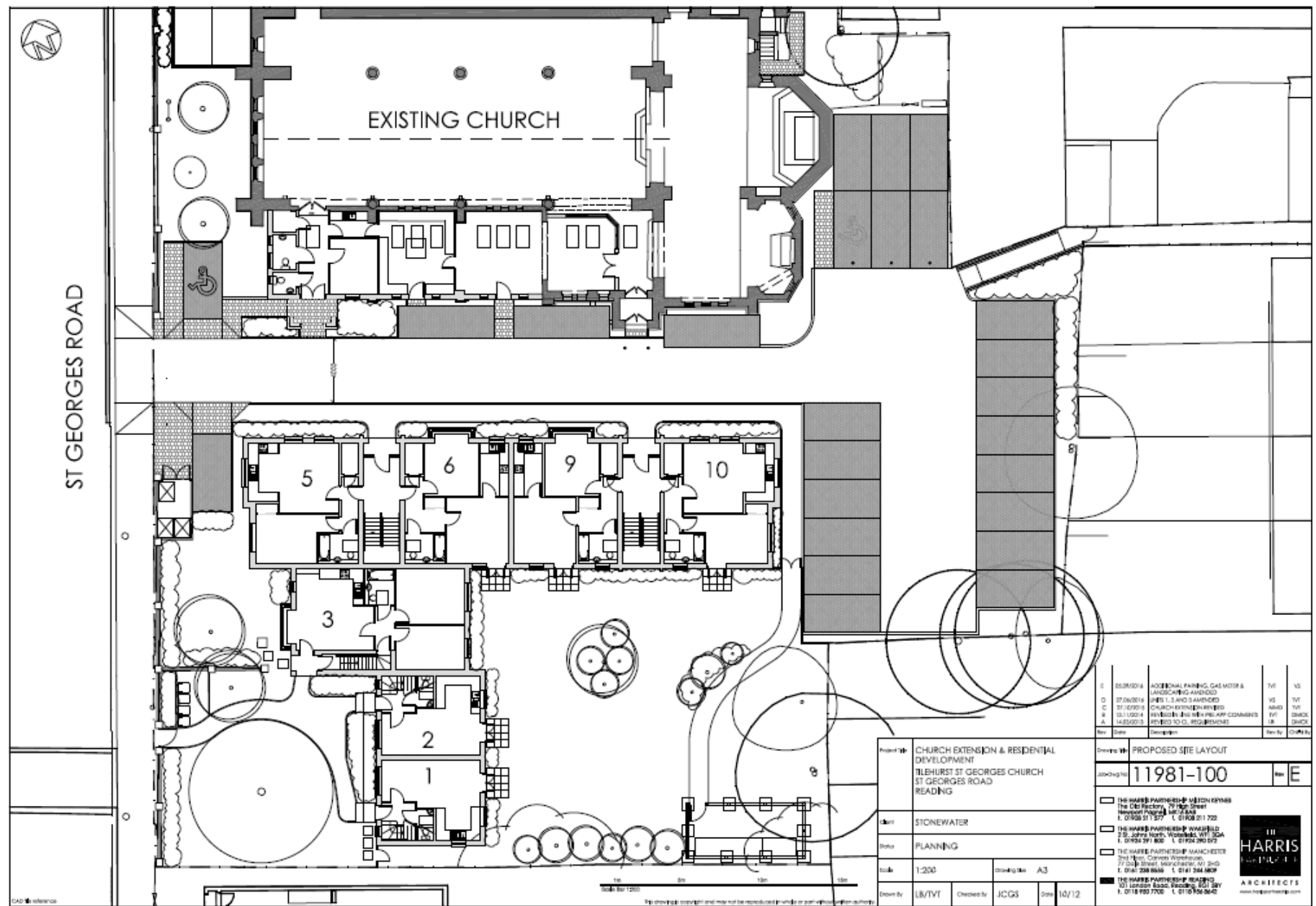


Figure 3: Proposed Site Plan

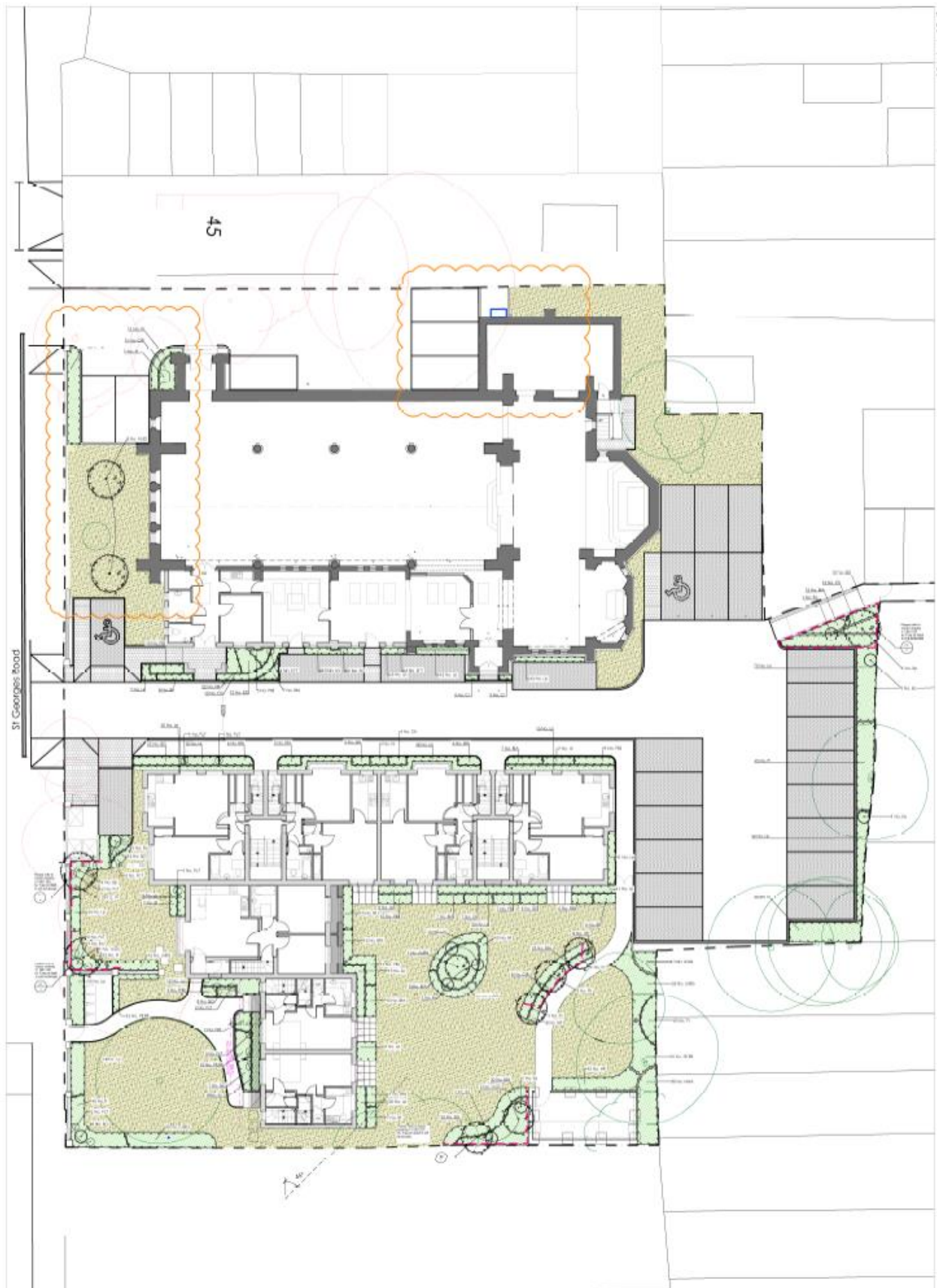


Figure 3: Proposed Landscape Plan