

Cemetery Junction Gates and Archway

Heritage Statement

30 May 2024

1. Introduction

- a. Section 7 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that “no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.”
- b. This Heritage Statement has been prepared to inform **like for like structural and fabric improvement works** to the Cemetery Junction Archway.
- c. The works proposed below are a result of Structural Engineer’s surveys carried out and recent damage to the Archway gates which will cause further stress to the structure of the archway. The works are intended to restore and improve the integrity of the structure, to ensure the safety of all who visit the facility, for a long time to come.
- d. **No changes are proposed to be made to the structure** and the works are intended to keep in observance of the Archway character as a structure of architectural as well as historic interest.

2. Proposal

- a. **The Archway Gates:**
 - i. To collect the cast iron gates and cart away by means of truck mounted hi-ab, to workshop, manufacture new cast iron components to replace missing hinge stile and closing strip, shot blast and prime. Having removed all central flower castings, carry out repairs and repaint in high load black gloss. Return gates to site and re-hang.
- b. **West Façade:**
 - i. To carry out Thermotech super-heated steam clean to all stonework to West façade and internal arch stonework.
 - ii. To cut and dress stone works to ashlar masonry.
 - iii. To rake out and re-point stonework

c. Leaning Pediment:

- i. To dismantle approximately 3 stones in pediment, tie crack, pack voids, refix stones, re point and make good.

d. Ground Floor window:

- i. Manufacture and fix new jambs to match existing Stoke Ground Bath Stone, repoint and make good.

e. Internal Façade; North and South

- i. Remove and replace all stone damaged around gate hinges, repoint and make good with lime mortar.

f. Hoarding during the works.

- i. To provide an alarmed access scaffolding to front façade with timber hoarding around base to 2m high and temporary access gates to cemetery for the duration of the project.

3. Identifying the Heritage Asset

- a. Reading Old Cemetery was set up by a private act of Parliament in 1842 with the first internment in 1843. The Entrance Lodges and Gates were first listed as Grade II in March 1967, and are described in the listing description as:
 - i. *Entrance Lodges and gates to Cemetery (Formerly listed under Cemetery) SU 7373 8/77 22.3.57. II 2. Circa 1840 by William Brown (local architect). (Attributed to Nathaniel Briant however). 2 storeys. Bath stone. Arched entry with moulded architrave and keystone in centre of rectangular block with Doric pilasters with moulded entablature and pediment over. Flanking lodges with entablature and blocking course. Hipped slate roof with flanking chimneys. Each lodge 1 window, glazing bar sashes, with architrave surround. Rear: parapet; recessed centre; sides have shallow pediments to parapets. Contemporary gates, cast iron with a row of roses below spearhead rails. (L.E.N. 1113512).*
- b. The Entrance Lodges are orientated on an approximate north/south alignment with the principal (front) elevation facing west with the rear elevation facing east onto the cemetery. The building comprises two two-storey lodges flanking a central archway.
- c. From a structural point of view, the Entrance Lodges appear to be of brick construction faced with Bath Stone (oolithic limestone). The roof is hipped and is covered in slate with lead-lined gutters behind the parapet. The roof structure generally comprises 3no. timber trusses with metal tie-rods, timber purlins and rafters. The first floors appear to

comprise timber joists spanning between the walls. The ground floors are solid, and it is assumed that they bear directly onto the ground.

- d. Preliminary studies of the British Geological Survey's online 'Geology Viewer' indicate the site geology comprises Taplow Gravel (sand and gravel) superficial deposits overlying a bedrock of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation. The actual ground conditions will need intrusive investigations to confirm this.

4. Assessment of impact and mitigation

- a. The Entrance Lodges lie close to a heavily trafficked junction and are probably susceptible to dynamic effects associated with heavy traffic and decay associated with air pollution / exhaust fumes.
- b. Guidance is given in the Buildings Research Establishment (BRE) Digests 251, 359, and 361, as to the significance of different levels of cracking and the causes of cracks in buildings. This guidance is well-trying but cannot be relied upon in isolation. It is, for instance, possible for masonry to be placed under stress by movement which does not cause immediate cracking but leaves it liable to sudden and unpredictable failure or instability. Similarly, successive crack repairs and re-plastering may conceal the true magnitude of overall movement. It must also be understood there is no fixed point at which a line can be drawn separating damage because of 'normal' building movement and damage caused by ground movement alone.
- c. Most historic buildings do move / distort to some degree during their life, but this movement may not be a problem. It is only when the movement is on-going and progressive and threatens the structural integrity of the building that one should be seriously concerned. The location of the archway is close to a heavily trafficked junction and so is subjected to ongoing movement, or vibration.
- d. Traditional buildings and their materials were built to be 'breathable' - allowing moisture to penetrate the fabric and then evaporate when the conditions were appropriate. The application of non-porous, cement-rich mortars, renders, plasters, and modern impermeable paints to historically 'breathable' surfaces can cause moisture to become trapped, which in turn can cause decay to the underlying material. This decay is not always evident until the mortar / render / plaster / paint has been removed.
- e. The Cemetery Archway and Entrance Lodges have numerous structural and non-structural defects; the majority of which appear to be long-standing issues, which have not been addressed in the recent past. This Listed Building consent is requested to carry out like for like conservation improvement and restoration works.

5. Conclusion

- a. It is intended to carry out works that are sympathetic and in keeping with the original historic features of the Archway. This is commended.
- b. Works will be carried out in several phases with the Western Elevation prioritised as the most pressing. Works to the Eastern Elevation will also be carried out as a second phase of these works.
- c. This also addresses the risk of cracked and loose sections of Bath Stone and subsequent repairs falling onto the public as this is an unacceptable risk.
- d. These works have been discussed with the Council's Conservation officer and we hope as a result, should be approved.

Yvonne Mubanga
Strategic Property Services Manager
Property and Asset Management
Directorate of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

Reading Borough Council
Civic Offices, Bridge Street
Reading, RG1 2LU