

Design, Access & Heritage Statement

Replacement Boundary Wall

**18 Church Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire, RG4 7AD.**

November 2024

Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Character Assessment.....	4
2.1	Character Assessment Photographs.....	7
3.0	Design & Appearance.....	12
4.0	Planning History.....	14
5.0	Pre Application Advice.....	14
6.0	Conclusion.....	14

1.0 Introduction

This statement has been prepared in support of the application submitted to demolish an existing front boundary wall and construct a replacement at 18 Church Road, Caversham.

The applicants are unduly affected by noise and air pollution from Church Road and seek to improve living conditions. The design of the proposed boundary treatment has been an iterative process, informed by the constraints and opportunities of the site, the needs of the applicant and the national and local policy guidance.

The property itself lies within the St Peters Conservation Area and as such the proposals also seek to provide an enhancement to the street scene and the established character of the local area.



Aerial View



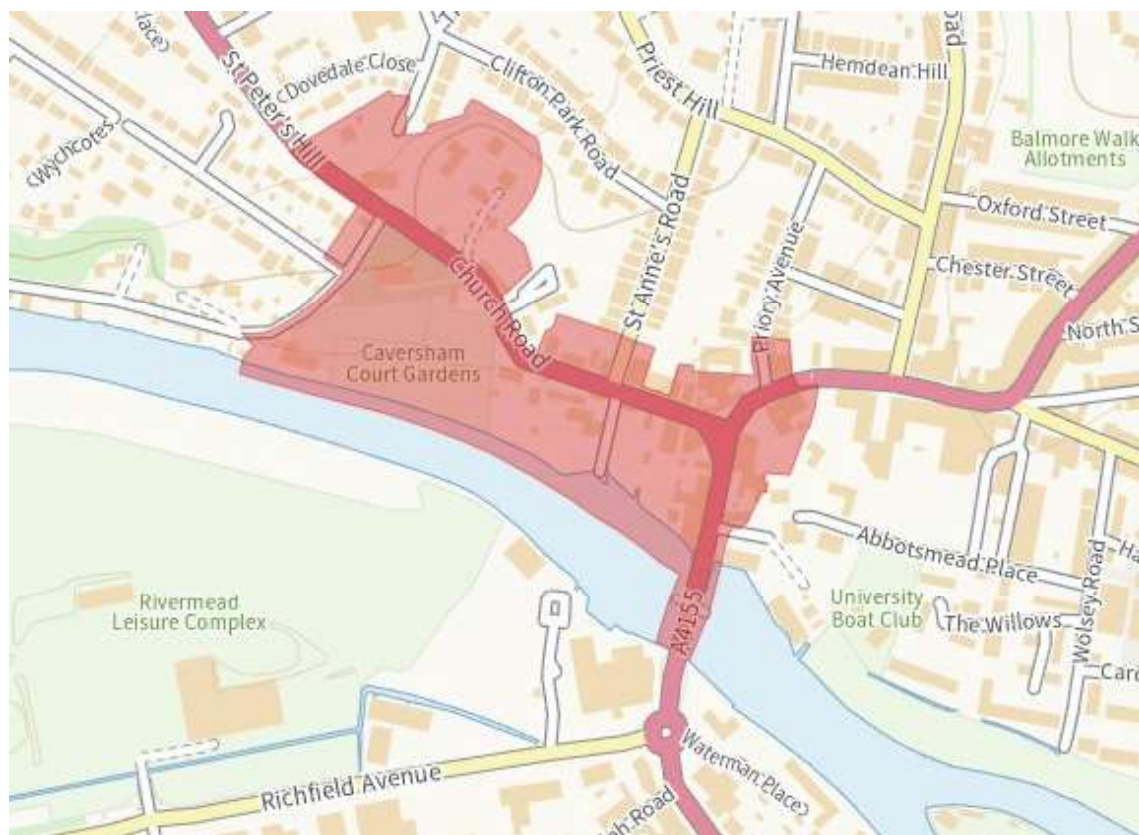
View from Church Road

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	3

2.0 Character Assessment

St Peters Conservation Area, north of the River Thames in Caversham, includes the church of St Peter, founded in the 12th century, and Caversham Court Gardens, a historic riverside garden refurbished in 2009. It also incorporates the medieval core of the original Caversham village, running from the end of Bridge Street, along Church Road and up St Peters Hill. This was the old pilgrim route from Reading Abbey towards Oxford, and linked the agricultural hinterland with the village, the economy of which was based on the River Thames.



Conservation Area Boundary

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	4

2.0 Character Assessment

The key characteristics of the Conservation Area are:

- *St Peters church and its tower, together with Caversham Court, dominate the Conservation Area, both historically and in the present day. Caversham Court is included in the Historic England "Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England".*
- *Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peters and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important. Individual street trees and those in gardens contribute strongly to the area.*
- *Along Church Road the built form of the original bridgehead village is still apparent. A core of listed 16th and 17th century buildings is present in sufficient numbers to make this still legible. The irregular building line along the road, often at or close to the back of the footpath, and its winding character leading up to St Peters Hill, also reflect the historic village. The early village is overlaid with mainly late Victorian and Edwardian 2 buildings constructed over a short time period. There is a consistency of scale and materials between these buildings and the earlier ones. Early red brick and timber framed domestic buildings with plain roof tiles combine with well-detailed later brick buildings with slate roofs to form a coherent whole and an attractive and consistent roofscape.*
- *The use of red brick and flint for boundary walls down St Peters Hill and into Church Road also serves to unify the area.*
- *The vistas and views from Caversham Bridge towards and across the Conservation Area, and also along the Thames Promenade on the south bank of the river, are a unique component. There is an important view of a green escarpment rising from the river, with glimpses of the Church tower, from both the bridge and the south bank. There are also important views of the river and the bridge from Caversham Court Gardens, and glimpsed views of the river from elsewhere in the Conservation Area.*
- *The junction of Church Road and Bridge Street includes some distinguished banks and similar commercial premises. The importance of Bridge Street as the visual corridor linking the village core with the bridge outweighs the poor treatment of some of its buildings, which nevertheless have a consistent scale and style.*

2.0 Character Assessment (continued)

18 Church Road itself is an inter war, two storey dwelling of red brick and black timber with clay tiled roof. There have been numerous additions and alterations over time, some more and others less successful. These include but are not limited to the insertion of PVC windows within timber frames and the construction of a Portland style stone wall with black metal railings to the front elevation. There are two small existing trees on the front boundary and a large tree to the rear which is protected by a TPO.

With reference to the Local Authorities St Peters Conservation Area Character Assessment there are specific sections which relate to the site and Church Road specifically as follows;

1. Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peters and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important. Individual street trees and those in gardens also contribute strongly to the area. (Section 4.5; Map 4; section 7.11).

2. The use of red brick and flint for boundary walls down St Peters Hill and into Church Road also serves to unify the area. (Sections 4.1; 5.1; 5.5; and 7.2).

3. Traffic noise, pollution and traffic queuing from the A4074 down St Peters Hill, Church Road and Bridge Street all have major negative impact, both directly and in prompting inappropriate changes to buildings to mitigate noise and pollution.

4. The loss of original architectural details, particularly front elevation and boundary wall features, is a cumulative and damaging problem.

In accordance with the above character assessment it is clear that the existing Portland stone style boundary wall is inappropriate for it's positioning within Church Road, the materials and detailing are at odds with the established character of the area and are of detriment to the street scene and the wider conservation area.

The existing trees, when paired with the neighbouring hedging are an important feature which contribute to the street scene and provide a softening.

2.1 Character Assessment Photographs



Existing trees to no. 18 & neighbouring hedging.



Hedging opposite no. 18.

1. Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peters and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important. Individual street trees and those in gardens also contribute strongly to the area. (Section 4.5; Map 4; section 7.11).

Existing trees and hedging at no. 18, neighbouring and opposite properties contributing to the local character.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	7

2.1 Character Assessment Photographs (continued)



Neighbouring Property Red Brick Boundary Wall



Neighbouring Property Red Brick Flank Wall

2. The use of red brick and flint for boundary walls down St Peters Hill and into Church Road also serves to unify the area. (Sections 4.1; 5.1; 5.5; and 7.2).

Examples of high walls of red facing brick directly abutting the highway on the South side of Church Road, a strong, consistent feature.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	8

2.1 Character Assessment Photographs (continued)



St Peters Hill Flint Boundary Wall



Neighbouring Properties Red Brick Wall Abutting Highway

2. The use of red brick and flint for boundary walls down St Peters Hill and into Church Road also serves to unify the area. (Sections 4.1; 5.1; 5.5; and 7.2).

Examples of high walls of red facing brick and masonry directly abutting the highway on the South side of Church Road.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	9

2.1 Character Assessment Photographs (continued)



Consistent Heavy Traffic



Consistent Heavy Traffic

3. Traffic noise, pollution and traffic queuing from the A4074 down St Peters Hill, Church Road and Bridge Street all have major negative impact, both directly and in prompting inappropriate changes to buildings to mitigate noise and pollution.

The above photos were taken within minutes of each other and are just a small sample of the heavy vehicles subjecting the residents of no. 18 to excessive noise and air pollution, prompting inappropriate changes such as stone walling and insertion of PVC double glazed windows. Often stopped in heavy traffic idling lorries severely impact the living conditions of residents.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	10

2.1 Character Assessment Photographs (continued)



Existing Boundary Wall To no. 18 (non original)



Existing Boundary Wall To no. 18 (non original)

4. The loss of original architectural details, particularly front elevation and boundary wall features, is a cumulative and damaging problem.

No. 18 has clearly lost it's original boundary treatment which has been replaced by a poorly detailed and out of place stone wall and railings. This addition negatively impacts the Conservation Area by introducing materials not seen in the locality and is a detriment to the street scene.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	11

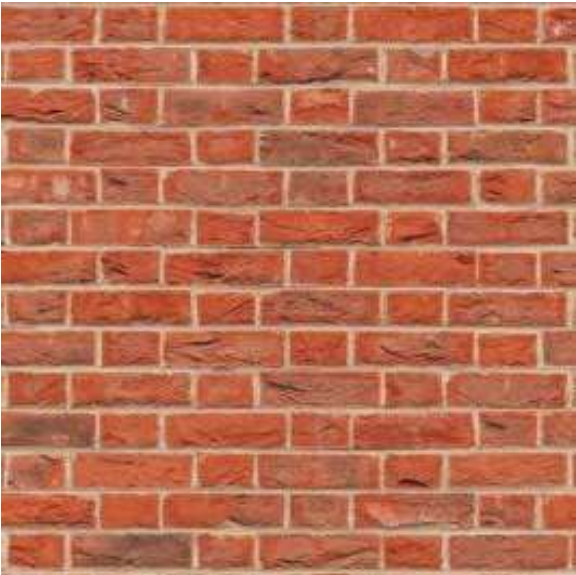
3.0 Design & Appearance

It is proposed to replace the existing stone wall with a more ‘in keeping’ facing brick wall. A blended red stock facing brick to match neighbouring walls, laid in traditional Flemish bond appropriate for the conservation area is proposed. The specific brick and mortar is to be matched, with a sample panel constructed for condition approval.

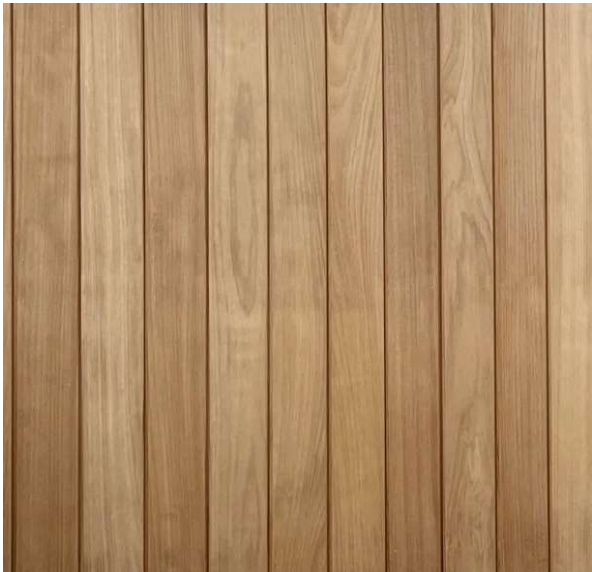
The proposed wall constitutes a modest increase in height to 1800mm tall (5 foot 10 inches), currently the wall stands at 1350mm with extended piers to 1700mm. The proposals represent a step down from the adjoining neighbouring wall of 2275mm and the flank walls of garages and dwellings abutting the highway.

The proposed wall is to be built on the footprint of the existing wall so as to not impact tree roots, all trees and hedging is to remain.

Natural oak gates introduce a natural material softening the boundary and complimenting the existing trees whilst providing a screen to noise and pollution, joinery details to be submitted for condition approval.



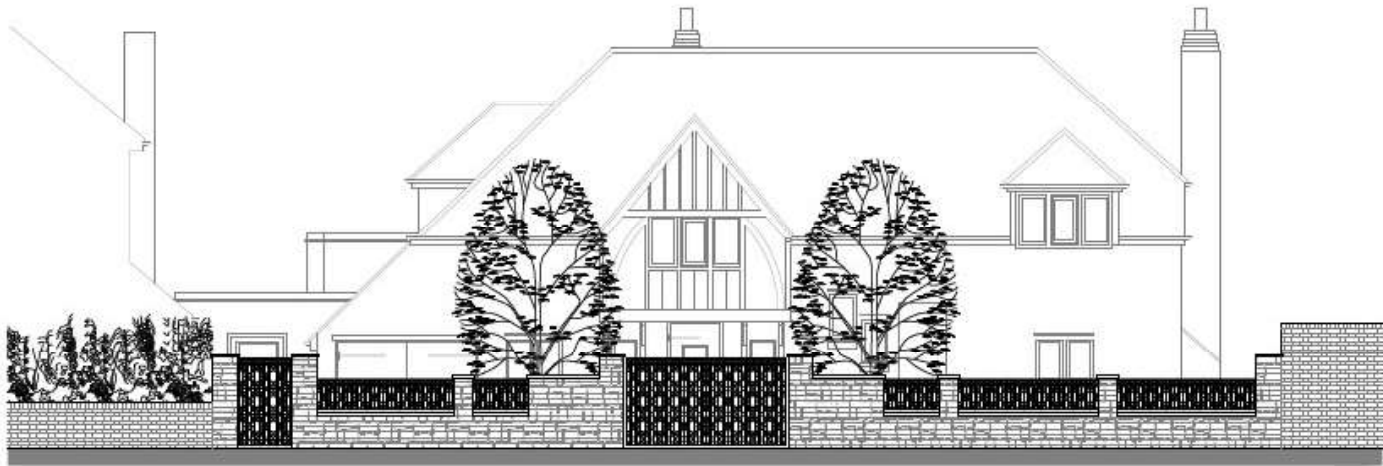
Sample Stock Facing Brick in Flemish bond



Sample Natural Oak to Gates

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

3.0 Design & Appearance



EXISTING STREET SCENE (BOUNDARY ELEVATION)



PROPOSED STREET SCENE (BOUNDARY ELEVATION)

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

4.0 Planning History

Ref: 130314 - Demolition of conservatory, various minor alterations and replacement windows - 23.01.2013 - Approved

The above application included a similar (less sensitive replacement) boundary wall and was approved.

Ref: 220548 - First floor rear and side extensions, single storey rear extension, new front boundary wall and gates, alterations to window fenestration - 11.04.2022 - Withdrawn

The above application was withdrawn due to expectation of undue impact on neighbours, mainly due to a second storey extension abutting the boundary.

5.0 Pre Application Advice

No pre application advice was sought for this application.

6.0 Conclusion

Consisting of a replacement wall with a modest increase in height, the proposed materials and detailing represent a positive addition to the street scene and wider Conservation Area further reinforcing its established character and removing an out of place feature. By providing a screen to noise, pollution and an increase in privacy the proposals provide and improvement in living conditions for the applicants and their family.

By constructing the new wall on existing foundations there is no danger of loss of important trees or hedging.

The form and materials do not detract from the wider Conservation Area or neighbouring amenity and therefore meets the requirements of Section 72(1) of the Act.

For these reasons it is proposed that the alterations meet the criteria of the NPPF and the Local Authority is therefore invited to support this application.

Boundary wall replacement to 18 Church Road, Caversham..

Project No:	283
Date:	Nov 2024
Revision:	/
Page:	14