

CAVERSHAM COURT STABLES, COURTYARD WALL

STRUCTURAL REPORT



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1. INTRODUCTION

This structural report has been prepared for the inspection of the courtyard wall to the Caversham Court Stables, Church Road, Reading RG4 7AD. SFK were appointed to inspect the wall following damage to the wall caused by impact from a council refuse vehicle on 27 July 2024. Recommendations are made for appropriate repairs to the wall.

2. DESCRIPTION

The courtyard wall, Fig. 2.1, is part of Caversham Court Stables which is owned by Reading Borough Council. The Stables are Grade II listed and the listing details are reproduced below. The Stables were first listed on 22-Mar-1957.

"Details

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Caversham Court Stables SU 7074 11/263 22.3.57. II GV 2. Mid-late C17 stables of now destroyed Caversham Court. Some alterations. 2 storeys, brick, with string at 1st floor level. Old tile roof. Ground floor has 3 stone mullioned and transomed 2 light windows, right hand part of ground floor thicker. The left hand door has small stone mullioned overlight. Stone label mould over ground floor windows. 1st floor has 5 small C20 casements. Modern extension to left. Cobbled courtyard in front. Large late C19 detached coach house to east. Enclosed to street by flint stepped wall with ashlar and flint gatepiers.

Listing NGR: SU7094874884."

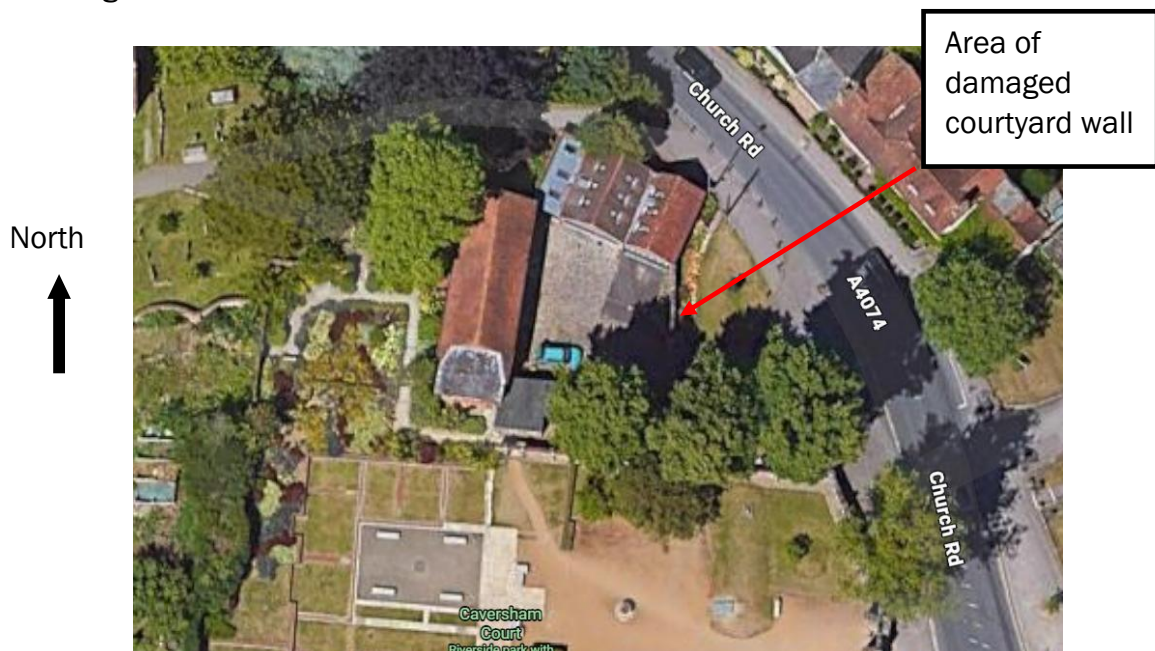


Fig. 2.1 Aerial view showing Caversham Court Stables with courtyard wall highlighted

(© 2025 TomTom, © OpenStreetMap, © Vexcel Imaging)

Elevation photos are shown in Fig. 2.2 to 2.5.



Fig. 2.2 Courtyard Wall, East elevation, north section (damaged)



Fig. 2.3 Courtyard Wall, East elevation, south section (un-damaged)



Fig. 2.4 Courtyard Wall, West elevation, north section (damaged)



Fig. 2.4 Courtyard Wall, West elevation, part south section (undamaged)

The wall divides the courtyard from the street and comprises a north and south section. The north section is approximately 7.2 m long and has three steps in height from approximately 2.3m at the north end to approximately 1.8m at the south end. The south end has a square pier approximately 0.45m by 2.5m in height. The ground level on the east side is around 200mm higher than the west (courtyard) side. Wall width varies from approximately 320mm at ground level to 250mm at the top with a coping 350mm wide. The south section has similar geometry.

The wall is built from flints set in a lime mortar with a stone coping. The pier is stone with flint features and a stone coping.

3. SFK INSPECTION

The inspection was undertaken on 30 October 2025 by Nigel Winterbottom, Associate Structural Engineer at SFK Consulting. The inspection was recorded through photos included in the report and through drawings as provided in Appendix A. The damaged north wall section had been temporarily protected from the weather with Heras fencing and polyethylene tarpaulins. These were removed prior to inspection. The focus of the inspection was to the damaged north wall section, but the south section was briefly inspected, particularly to confirm likely details of the north wall.

From the refuse lorry impact the north section pier and most of the lower-level length of wall collapsed, Fig. 3.1.



Fig. 3.1 North wall section damage from vehicle impact

The materials from the collapse have been cleared up and safely stored at the side of the courtyard, Fig. 3.2. This includes flints, stone copings, pier stones and the pier coping. Most of the materials appeared undamaged and should be able to be reused but full inspection was not possible, and it is not known if any original materials are missing. Flints are stored in wheelie bins.



Fig. 3.2 Storage of materials from damaged wall

The foundations to the wall appear undisturbed with about 300mm height of pier/wall remaining at the lowest point, Fig. 3.3.



Fig. 3.3 Remaining pier and wall at lowest point

The wall varies in width from 320mm at the bottom to 250mm at the top. The wall is flint through its full thickness, but occasional pieces of brick were noted in the centre of the cross section, Fig. 3.4.



Fig. 3.4 Close up of wall construction through width

The top of the wall has a profiled stone coping, Fig. 3.5.



Fig. 3.5 Stone coping cross section

The remaining section of the north wall is stable and near vertical. Locally loose materials have been removed.

The south section of wall (Fig. 3.6) is in generally reasonable condition, but some mortar loss was noted to the east face. The west face was not inspected. There is significant ivy growth to the top and part of the east face.



Fig. 3.6 South section of wall showing general condition of east elevation

3.1 Gate pins

It was noted that the south pier has metal upper and lower gate pins built into the stonework, Fig. 3.7, 3.8. The upper gate pin has some cracking to the stonework around the pin.



Fig. 3.7 South wall pier – upper gate pin



Fig. 3.8 South wall pier – lower gate pin

The bottom of the north pier remains after the vehicle impact, and the lower built-in gate pin also remains, Fig. 3.9. The upper part of the north wall pier collapsed and so the gate pin is not currently in place.



Fig. 3.8 North wall pier – lower gate pin

4. DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

As the wall is listed any repairs are likely to require listed building consent. This should be checked and obtained before commencing any work.

The Heras fencing and tarpaulin should be reinstated to provide protection from the weather until repairs can be carried out.

The wall needs to be rebuilt to match the original geometry, and this is indicated in the Appendix A drawings based on measurements of the wall and also with reference to the south wall.

The wall needs to be rebuilt using the original flint and stone materials as stored in the courtyard. If any stone materials are found to be damaged, they may require local repair or may need to be replaced with matching stone. If any stone items are found to be missing, then these will need to be replaced in matching stone. The flints and

stone need to be set in a lime mortar to match existing. The advice of a conservation architect should be sought for further details of the mortar specification.

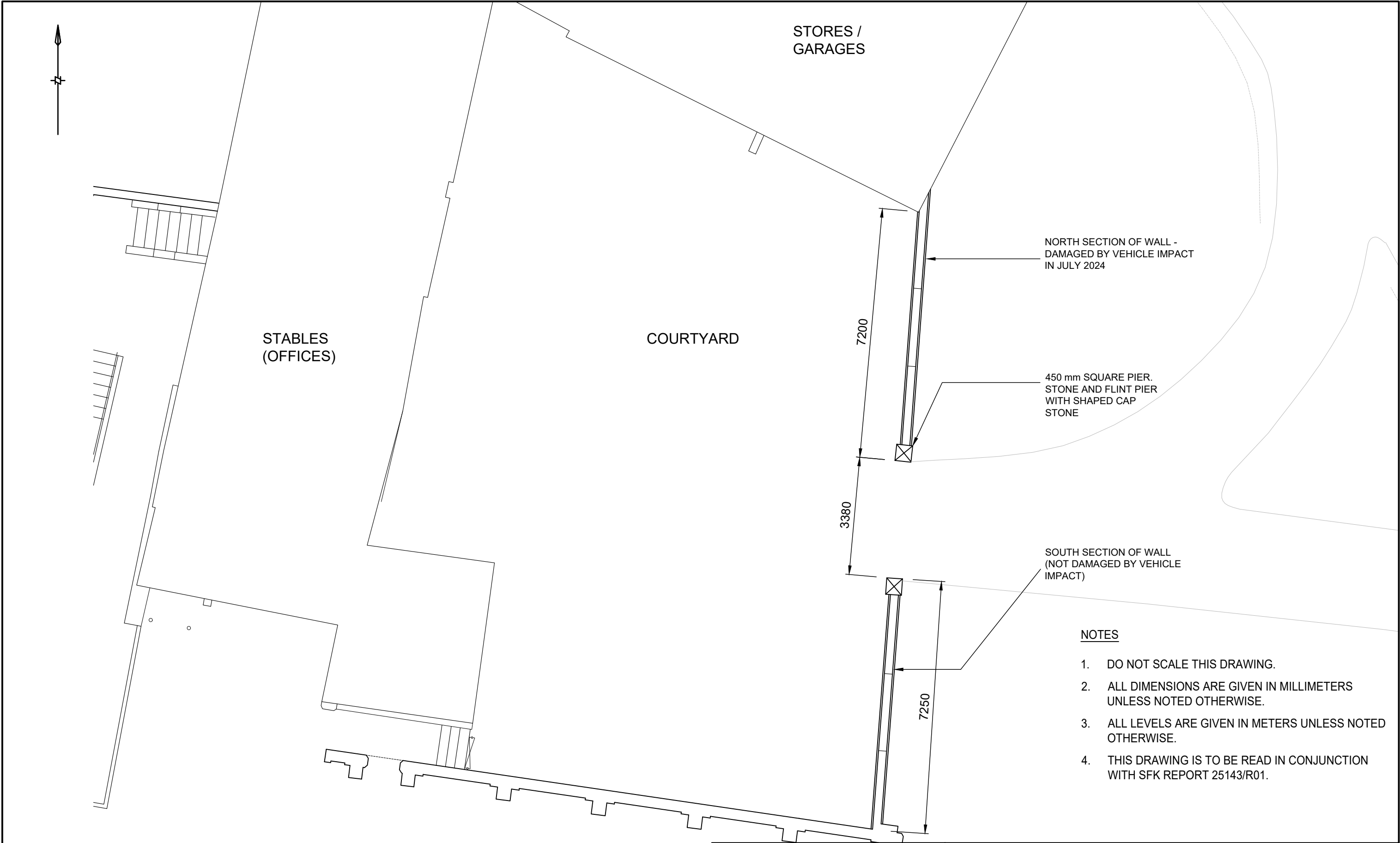
For the south wall the ivy should be carefully removed as it has the potential to damage the wall. The west elevation should be inspected for any defects. The wall should be considered for repointing with a lime-based mortar to match the mortar used for the north wall repairs.

To the south pier there was some cracking around the upper gate pin. This could be because of expansive corrosion of the fixing or the heavy weight of a previous gate acting on the fixing, or a combination of both. To the north pier the upper gate pin should be reinstated as part of the rebuilding of the pier. It is not known if the original pin was salvaged from the rubble, but if so then it can be reused. If not, then a new gate pin to match the south pin would need to be fabricated and installed.

It is understood there are no current proposals to introduce new gates. On this basis no repairs are proposed to the south pier upper hinge stonework. If new gates are proposed in the future, then it is essential that the gate pin fixings are reviewed for their capacity and condition as repairs may be required. Further, as the south pier upper gate pin has some cracking that could indicate the fixing may not have been adequate for the gate weight, then either lighter gates or gates supported by ground wheels may need to be considered.

5. APPENDIX A – SFK DRAWINGS

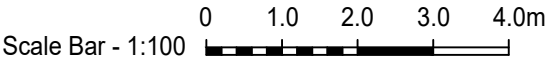
25143.101 P1	Stables Courtyard – Site Plan
25143.102 P2	Stables Courtyard – North Wall as Existing
25143.103 P2	Stables Courtyard – North Wall Repairs
25143.104 P1	Stables Courtyard – North Wall Section A-A



NOTES

- 1. DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING.
- 2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE GIVEN IN MILLIMETERS UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
- 3. ALL LEVELS ARE GIVEN IN METERS UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
- 4. THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SFK REPORT 25143/R01.

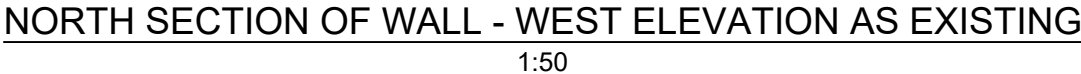
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P1	ML	NW	-	17.11.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE	



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Project Title: CAVERSHAM COURT		Project No: 25143	SFK Ref: 25143.101
Dwg Title: STABLES COURTYARD SITE PLAN		Dwg No: 25143-SFK-01-XX-DR-S-0101	
Drawn: ML	Date: 17.11.25	Scale: 1:100 @A3	Rev: P1

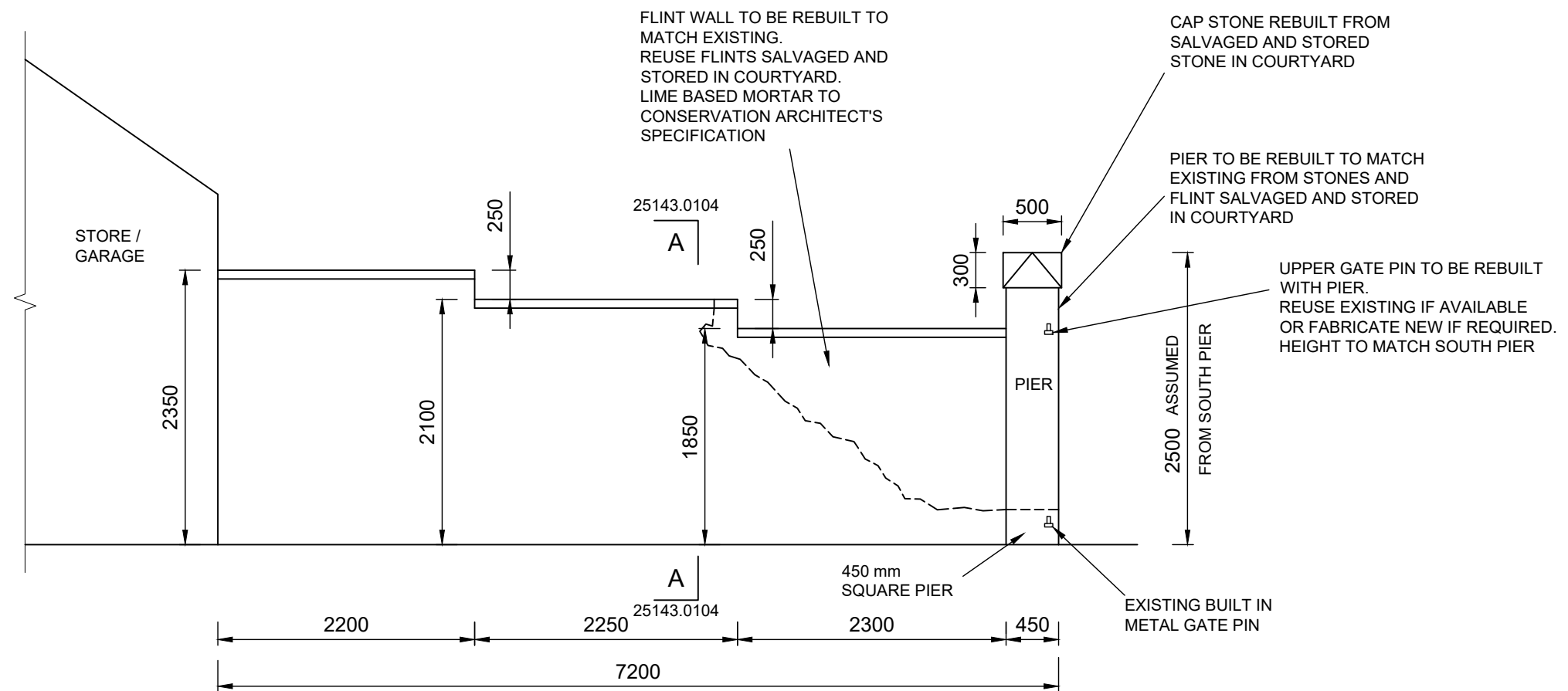


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rev	drawn	chkd	appd	date	description
P1	ML	NW	-	17.11.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE
P2	ML	NW	-	09.12.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE EXISTING GATE PIN ADDED.



Project Title: CAVERSHAM COURT		Project No: 25143	SFK Ref: 25143.0102
Dwg Title: STABLES COURTYARD NORTH WALL AS EXISTING		Dwg No: 25143-SFK-01-ZZ-DR-S-0102	
Drawn: ML	Date: 09.12.25	Scale: 1:50 @A3	Rev: P2



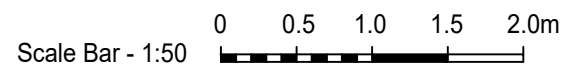
NORTH SECTION OF WALL - WEST ELEVATION PROPOSED REPAIRS

1:50

NOTES

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- ALL LEVELS ARE GIVEN IN METERS UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE.
- THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SFK REPORT 25143/R01.
- IF NEW GATES ARE PROPOSED IN THE FUTURE, ADEQUACY AND CONDITION OF GATE PINS MUST BE ASSESSED BEFORE ADDING NEW GATES.

P2	ML	NW	-	09.12.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE GATE PIN NOTES ADDED.
P1	ML	NW	-	17.11.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE
rev	drawn	chkd	appd	date	description

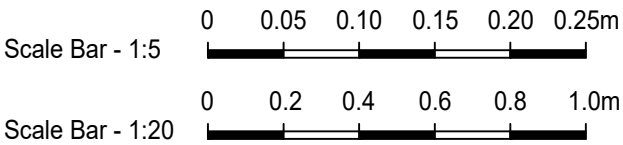


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Project Title: CAVERSHAM COURT		Project No: 25143	SFK Ref: 25143.0103
Dwg Title: STABLES COURTYARD NORTH WALL REPAIRS		Dwg No: 25143-SFK-01-ZZ-DR-S-0103	
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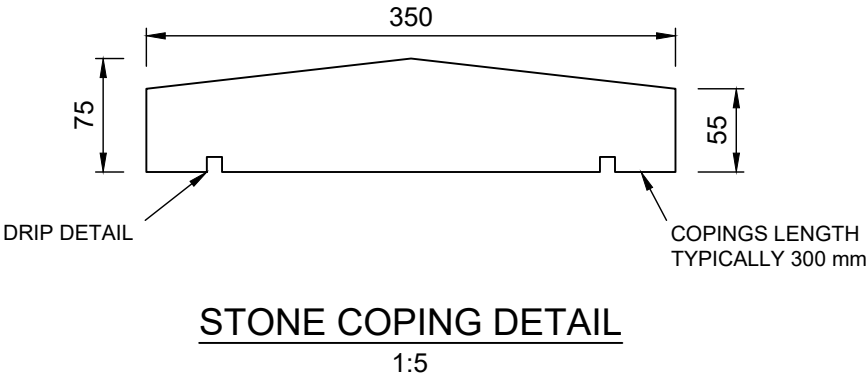
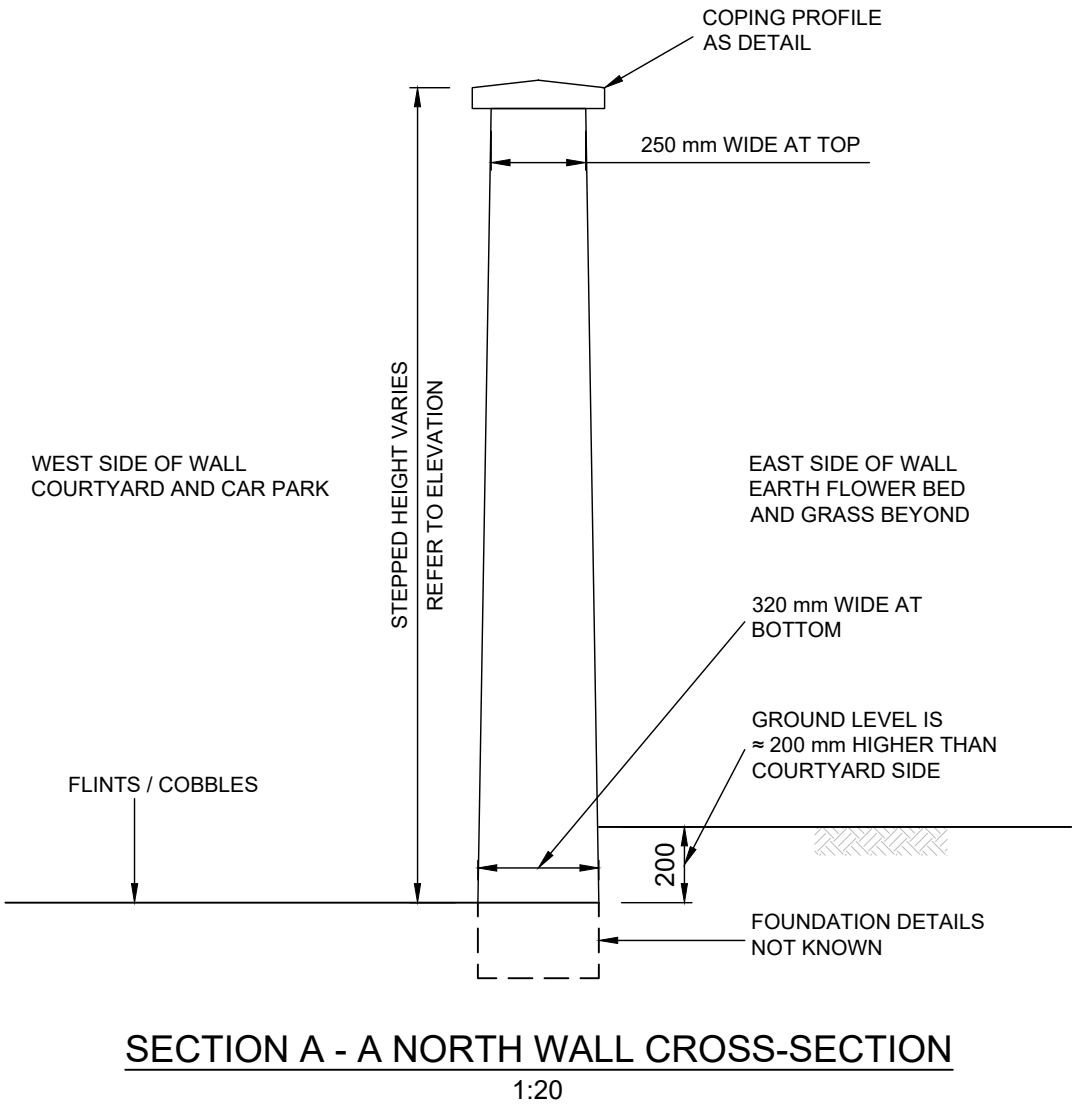
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rev	drawn	chkd	appd	date	description





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Project Title: CAVERSHAM COURT		Project No: 25143	SFK Ref: 25143.0104
Dwg Title: STABLES COURTYARD NORTH WALL SECTION A - A		Dwg No: 25143-SFK-01-ZZ-DR-S-0104	
Drawn: ML	Date: 17.11.25	Scale: AS NOTED @A3	Rev: P1



- NOTES**
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