PN 8529 BOUNDARY WALLS, REPLACEMENT OF SECTION OF BOUNDARY WALL WITH HEDGE, BROOMCROFT HALL, DIDSBURY, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER.

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

Broomcroft Hall Boundary Wall, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2RU

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement is part of a planning application to remove an unstable 4 metre section of boundary wall at Broomcroft Hall and to replace it with a hedge.

1.2 The existing brick boundary wall for Broomcroft Hall runs the length of Ford Lane, from the driveway entrance to Broomcroft Hall down to the Didsbury Sports Ground. It is largely in reasonable condition, aside from a 4-metre section by the entrance to the Sports Ground which has suffered structural movement.

1.3 Broomcroft Hall is a non-designated heritage asset within the St James Conservation Area.

1.4 This statement is to be read in conjunction with the following documents:

1.4.1 Drawing numbers 071AA-8529-A100 (Site Location Plan); 071AA-8529-A102 (Drawing showing area of wall to be removed)

1.4.2 Appendix 1: Emails from Structural Engineer and Tree Consultant and photographs of the existing wall.

2.1 Proposal

2.11 Planning permission is sought to replace a 4-metre section of Broomcroft Hall's brick boundary wall with a hawthorn hedge.

2.2 Detail

2.21 The 4-metre section of wall has suffered structural movement, with cracking in several areas and displacement of bricks at the base of the pier. The University has taken advice from a Structural Engineer who has advised that the movement is progressive, and the wall is unstable and needs rebuilding. Appendix 1, Email 1.

2.22 The damaged wall is adjacent to a pavement on Ford Lane, with a return at the entrance to Didsbury Sports Ground, as shown in Appendix 1, Photos 1 and 2.

2.23 Immediately behind the section of damaged wall is a lime tree, approximately 80 years old. It is likely that the close proximity of the tree to the wall has caused the wall to move and become unstable. The University has been advised by a tree consultant that we cannot rebuild the wall without having significant implications to the health of the tree. Appendix 1, Email 2. It is therefore proposed to remove the wall and to replace it with a hedge in order to retain the tree. Photos 3 and 4 in Appendix 1 show the damaged wall section that we propose to remove.

2.24 It is proposed to plant a hawthorn hedge as this will match the hawthorn hedge which forms the boundary at the other side of the entrance to the Sports Ground. The existing metal gates at the driveway entrance will remain in situ.

3.0 Identifying the Heritage Assets (Source: Manchester City Council website).

3.1 BROOMCROFT HALL, DIDSBURY, UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER

Non designated Heritage Asset.

3.2 DIDSBURY ST JAMES CONSERVATION AREA

Didsbury St James conservation area, nine kilometres south of the city centre, was designated in November 1970.

It is centred on the historical core of Didsbury, at the junction of Wilmslow Road and Stenner Lane, and covers an extensive area. The boundaries include Ford Lane, Didsbury Park and Sandhurst Road to the north, the backs of properties on Parrs Wood Road to the south-east, a ditch draining the Mersey flood plain to the south-west and the River Mersey to the west.

The conservation area also contains examples of more modest houses of this period, such as those in Kingston Road and the Grove, which benefit considerably from their fine wooded setting. The latter were built by the Watts family for their farm managers in the 1870s. Another eminent family, the Simons, lived at Lawnhurst, now Rosecroft School, and later at Broomcroft Hall which was donated to the Victoria University.

4.0 Heritage Impact and Assessment against National Planning Policy Framework

4.1 **195. Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.**

There will be minimal change to the external appearance of Broomcroft Hall's boundary wall, as the damaged section is only 4 metres in length.

Replacing the damaged wall with a hedge allows the 80-year-old lime tree to be retained. The wall and the tree are both important features in the Didsbury St James Conservation Area but if they cannot co-exist, which is the case here, then the University's Tree Policy and Sustainability Strategy set out the importance of protecting and enhancing the environment and preventing and adapting to climate change.

Retaining the tree is therefore in accordance with the University's Sustainability Strategy, as well as the wider city of Manchester's sustainability strategy documents, namely the City's Biodiversity Strategy, All Our Trees - Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy (2020) and GM's Local Nature Recovery Plan.

A hawthorn hedge has been selected to replace the wall as it will match the existing hedge at the other side of the entrance to the Sports Ground, Appendix 1, Photo 5.

The works to remove the damaged wall sections would be carried out under supervision of the tree consultant, to ensure that the works are undertaken with due care and attention to avoid any damage to the tree as far as possible.

4.2 **202. Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.**

Planting the proposed new hedge will allow the lime tree to be retained. This approach ensures that the natural environment is prioritised which will benefit the health and well-being of the local community.

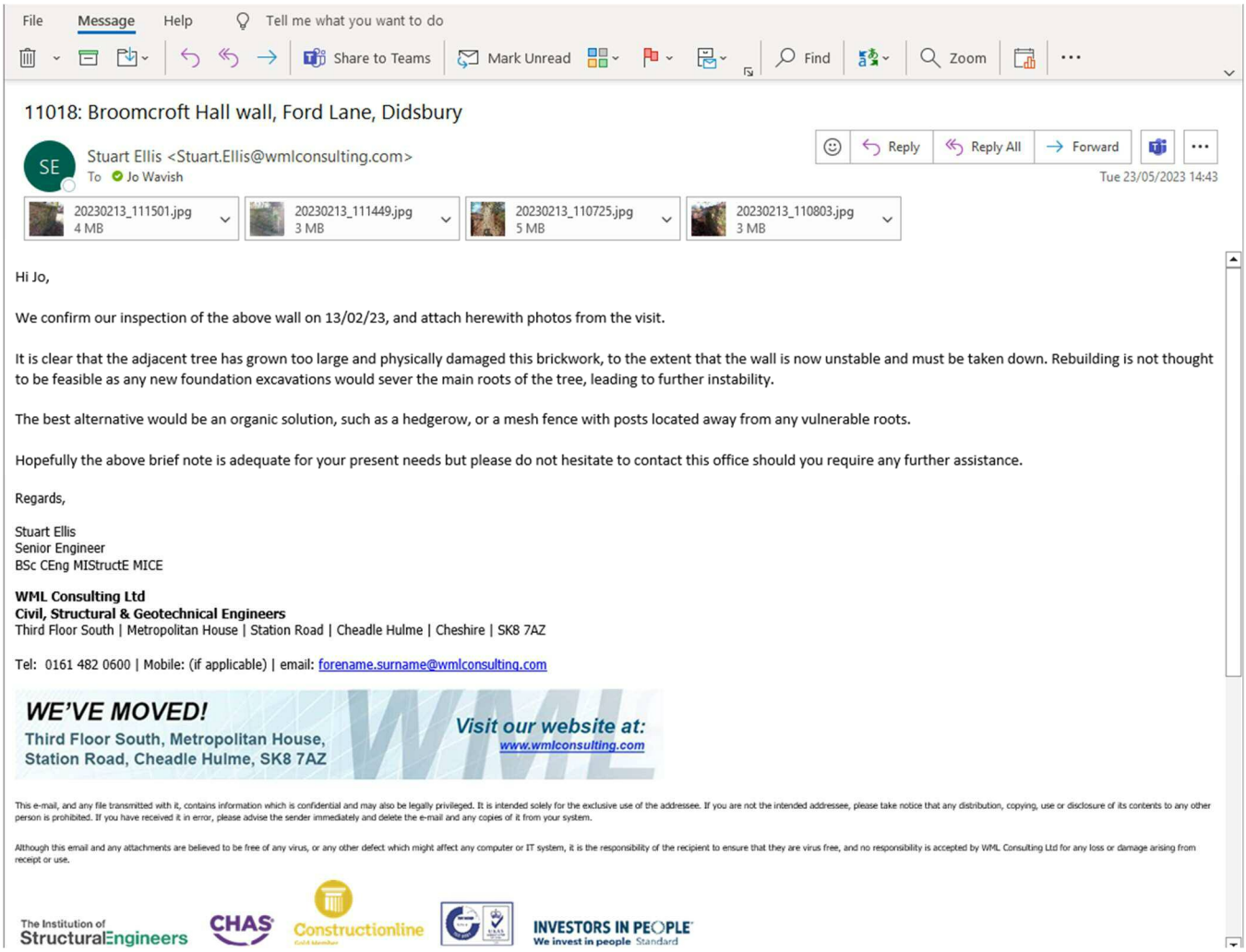
5.0 Design and Access Statement.

5.1 There are no proposals to change the access to the Sports Ground. The new hedge will follow the trajectory of the existing wall and so will effectively replace its function as a boundary demarcation.

Jo Wavish
Projects Group
University of Manchester
09.08.23

Appendix 1.

Emails



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11018: Broomcroft Hall wall, Ford Lane, Didsbury

SE Stuart Ellis <Stuart.Ellis@wmlconsulting.com>
To Jo Wavish

Reply | Reply All | Forward

Tue 23/05/2023 14:43

20230213_111501.jpg 4 MB | 20230213_111449.jpg 3 MB | 20230213_110725.jpg 5 MB | 20230213_110803.jpg 3 MB

Hi Jo,

We confirm our inspection of the above wall on 13/02/23, and attach herewith photos from the visit.

It is clear that the adjacent tree has grown too large and physically damaged this brickwork, to the extent that the wall is now unstable and must be taken down. Rebuilding is not thought to be feasible as any new foundation excavations would sever the main roots of the tree, leading to further instability.

The best alternative would be an organic solution, such as a hedgerow, or a mesh fence with posts located away from any vulnerable roots.

Hopefully the above brief note is adequate for your present needs but please do not hesitate to contact this office should you require any further assistance.

Regards,

Stuart Ellis
Senior Engineer
BSc CEng MIStructE MICE

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Email 1. From Stuart Ellis at WML Consulting

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RE: Ford Lane Lime tree

Gareth Davies <gdavies@Bartlett.com>
To Gary Hill; Jo Wavish

Reply | Reply All | Forward

Fri 21/04/2023 15:15

You replied to this message on 21/06/2023 13:23.

Afternoon Jo,

I have looked at you pictures and would agree that in this instance it does not appear possible to make any realistic repair or rebuild of the wall without having significant implications to the tree. As such I would conclude based on what Gary has mentioned that a decision will have to be made as to what is more important to retain, either the tree or the wall.

Kind Regards

GARETH DAVIES CONSULTANT
Consultant

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From: Gary Hill <ghill@Bartlett.com>
Sent: Thursday, April 20, 2023 10:04 PM
To: Jo Wavish <joanne.wavish@manchester.ac.uk>
Cc: Gareth Davies <gdavies@Bartlett.com>
Subject: Ford Lane Lime tree

Dear Jo,

Apologies for the delay with this, I had to just review the photos with my technician who carried out the work. Please see the attached emails for copies of the photographs taken at the time of the work.

The debris around the base of the tree was removed to close to ground level. This was carried out to a point where the density of the roots, and level of soil and stone amongst the roots made it difficult to go any deeper.

At the point we reached, the clearance revealed a mass of smaller roots that have proliferated in the area between the trunk and the wall. There was also a couple of larger roots that may have caused the direct damage to the wall. The roots/epicormic growth proved very difficult to penetrate and overall it would not be usual for there to be this level of smaller growth around the base of a tree. This may have been made worse by the high organic matter level around the base of the tree. Due to the extent of the roots, I think it would be very difficult to rebuild the wall on existing footprint without extensive cutting of the roots. These roots would have to be cut/removed very close to the base to provide enough room to rebuild. Even if this was done carefully it is highly likely that it would compromise either the health; or, in the worst case the stability of the tree.

Gareth do you have any comments?

Email 2. From Gary Hill and Gareth Davies at Bartlett Tree Experts

Photographs

Photo 1. Damaged wall section along Ford Lane

Photo 2. Return wall section at entrance to Sports Ground

Photo 3. Red outline shows the proposed wall section to be removed

Photo 4. Red outline shows the proposed wall section to be removed

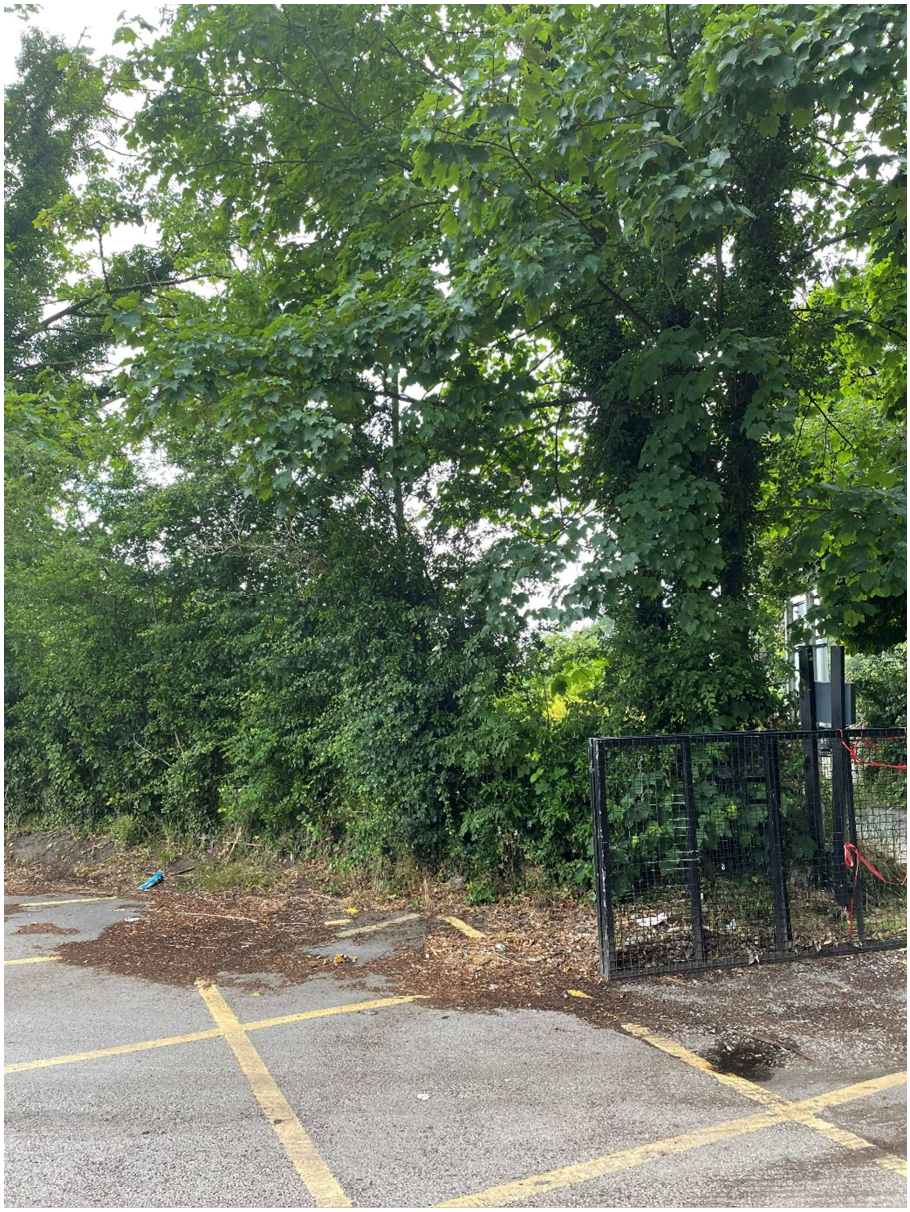

Photo 5. Hawthorn hedge on other side of entrance to Sports Ground