

Manchester City Council
Church of St James, Didsbury

St James' Church,
Stenner Lane,
Didsbury,
Manchester
M20 2RQ

Heritage Statement

Project Reference: AMP/44657/5

Project Title: St James' Church & Stenner Lane Boundary wall



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On behalf of
Capital Programmes and Procurement
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Heritage Statement is for to demonstrate the requirement for the provision of repair works to identified sections of the boundary and retaining wall on Stenner Lane at St James Church. The works have been identified as essential to prevent further ongoing damage occurring to the wall and to safeguard the public.

2. The Site and Historic Overview

St James, Didsbury, on Stenner Lane, was designated a Grade II* listed building on 25 February 1952, while the Church and Fletcher Moss Park are located in the Conservation Area of St James, Didsbury.

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest. All works should have cognisance to the listed status of the Church and Conservation Area.

Didsbury St James Didsbury is an Ecclesiastical Parish in the county of Lancashire, created in 1727 from chapelry in Manchester, Lancashire Genealogy Ancient Parish.

It is not recorded whether there was a church here in Saxon times, although traces of Saxon workmanship are evident in the stones used in the present tower which was built in 1620, when the 'Wattle and Daub' church was rebuilt.

It is thought that in 1235 Nicholas de Longford, Lord of the Manor of Withington, founded his own chapel in Didsbury by taking over the Saxon chapel.

The oldest written record of the church is that of the Bishop of Lichfield in 1532 giving permission to consecrate the churchyard for the burial of 'such as died from the Pestilence [the Black Death]'.

The 1620 church was dismantled, and a new one was built by Sir Edward Moseley of Hough End House who had become the Lord of the Manor of Withington.

In the eighteenth century, Lady Ann Bland, a daughter of Edward Moseley of Hulme, became Patron. Lady Ann was responsible for the building of St Ann's Church in

Manchester. In 1770 she obtained permission to rebuild the nave and chancel of St James' Church, and today the church is substantially the same as it was in Lady Ann's time.

In 1871 a new chancel was built by Miss Barnes in memory of her father and mother.

In 1885 the church was thoroughly restored, and the old-fashioned, high-backed pews were removed. A large entrance was opened out through the tower to the West Door, and the walls were lined with brick. The Lych Gate dates from 1879; the organ, built by Messrs. Jardine & Co. of Manchester, was installed in 1896. The modern united parish of two churches, St James and Emmanuel, together offering a diverse spectrum of worshipping styles. St James and Emmanuel is home the BBC Radio 4 Daily Service.

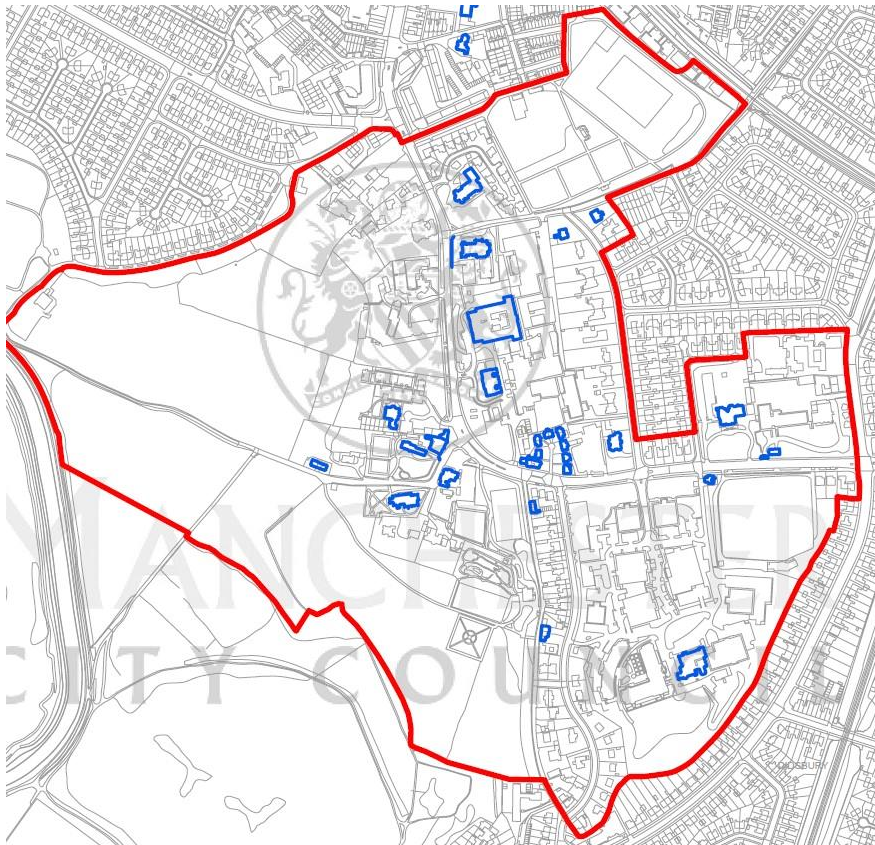


Fig.1 Didsbury, St James Conservation Area

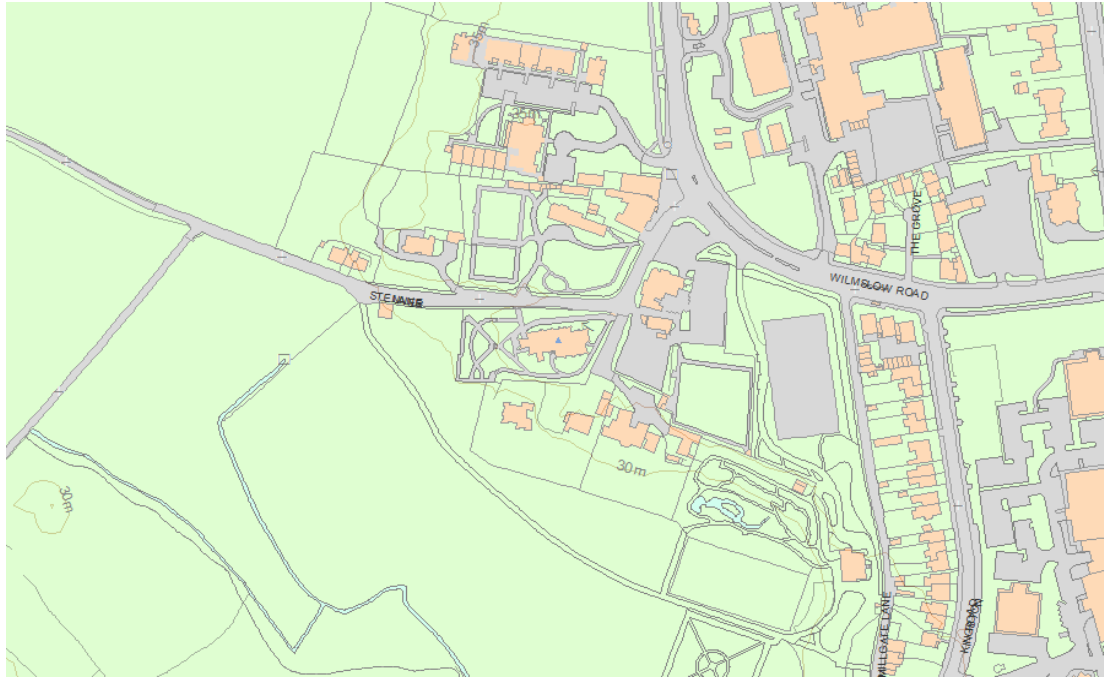


Fig.2 Site Location Plan, Church of St James, Didsbury

3. Listing Details

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1270663

Date first listed: 25-Feb-1952

Statutory Address: CHURCH OF ST JAMES, STENNER LANE

4. Background & Proposed Works

The retaining wall forms the boundary at St James Church and Stenner Lane. St James Church is a Grade II* Listed Building, while the Church and Fletcher Moss Park are in the Conservation Area of St James, Didsbury. All works should have cognisance to the listed status of the Church and Conservation Area.

The stone wall is suffering from gradual deflection and is bowing outwards due to the increased pressure from the earth and tree routes being retained on the Church grounds.

The boundary wall comprises cast iron railings fixed into sandstone copings which are in turn bed on sandstone block retaining wall forming the outer leaf on Stenner Lane and is retaining ground on the Church side to approximately 1050mm height.

The proposals include for carefully dismantling by hand approx.12 metre section of the existing sandstone retaining wall down to pavement level at the affected area on the boundary of Stenner Lane and St James's Church. The wall includes coping stones and existing cast iron railings. Set aside all materials that can be reused during the rebuild including, railings and coping stones. Any stones forming the wall that are either beyond repair or missing should be replaced on a like-for-like basis.

Allow for installing new foundation to structural engineers' specification, taking into consideration the Cedar tree adjacent to the wall. Remove spoil where required and build back up earth as far as required around tree and to Church side of wall. The ground level around the tree should not be changed by adding more soil or removing soil as trees are very sensitive to level changes.

Inserting a root barrier against the exposed face of the soil and roots (a vertical membrane) will help prevent future penetration of the wall structure.

The appointed contractor will allow for repointing a trial patch to an area of approximately 1 metre square on the existing wall. This will be inspected and approved by the conservation officer/planning officer assigned to the project before commencing the rebuild of the parapet wall and undertaking further repair work.

5. Approvals

The church has no responsibility for the boundary wall, however, because the land was not conveyed to Manchester City Council, a faculty is required to be agreed by the Church of England Archdeacons.

This project requires List B approval from the Archdeacon due to it being carried out on the curtilage of the church.

From the 1st January 2016, the new simplified Faculty Jurisdiction Rules come into force. This means that there is a new national list of minor works, known as List A, which can be carried out on your church without a Faculty.

This list replaces all 'De Minimis' or Diocesan led minor works schemes. The List A can be found in Schedule 1, Table 1 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015.

There is also a new national List B of works which can be carried out once the written permission of the Archdeacon has been obtained. Most of these will be repairs and routine maintenance or small works identified in the QI report. The Archdeacon must consult the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) or appropriate DAC officer for advice before giving written permission. The Archdeacon may also set conditions on the way the works are to be carried out. The List B can be found Schedule 1, Table 2 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2015. Any permissions given under this scheme are then lodged with the DAC and the Registry for record keeping purposes.

6. Impact Assessment

As a local authority we have the responsibility to conserve our heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution of life of this and future generations.

In carrying out the repair works, as detailed in the supporting documents, every effort will be made to ensure the materials used to rebuild and repair sections of the wall match the existing in both colour, appearance, and texture to minimise the visual impact the repairs might cause as they will be visible from Stenner Lane and the church grounds.

An experienced heritage contractor will be chosen to undertake the works as they have previous knowledge working on similar projects. They also appreciate the quality of workmanship required and are sympathetic in their approach.

It is requested to allow the proposals to proceed to help benefit the user groups which frequently benefit from the use of this Church as which is a focal point of their community. The works will help safeguard against the demise of the sections of wall and allow the boundary walls to be viewed as they should be from Stenner Lane and church grounds.

Rebuild Boundary Wall – Stenner Lane & St James Church, Didsbury

The Section of wall located at the boundary of Stenner Lane, and St James Church grounds is suffering from gradual deflection and is bowing outwards due to the increased pressure from the earth and tree routes being retained, this section of wall is to be removed and rebuilt back to its original line, existing cast iron railings will be repaired and reinstated and pointing up of all joints to sandstone and copings will also be undertaken to best match the existing.



The bulging section of stone wall on Stenner Lane has been supported by way of installing 4 nr gabion baskets to the pavement. These gabion baskets were installed in November 2022 as a safety measure.



7. Conclusion

The rebuilding and repairing of this boundary wall is considered vital to safeguard the general public and to restore a part of a heritage asset at the Church of St James. Due to the recent movement of the boundary wall the wall has become vulnerable to collapse.

Best efforts will be made to reduce the visual impact that the repair and rebuilding of this boundary and retaining wall will have on key lines of sight or approaches to the area.

The Church is inside Didsbury St James Conservation area, therefore, proposals to reuse the existing sandstone blocks, coping stones and cast iron railings and to best match the existing mortar in appearance should not affect the significance of the local listed asset. The proposals set out in this statement will ensure the repair works will not have any negative affect on the area.