

Heritage Statement for Gate 9 at Heaton Park

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Proposal to Rebuild Perimeter Wall & Increase Opening Width at Gate 9

Intersection of Bury Old Road and Sheepfoot Lane, Prestwich, Greater Manchester, M25
OGT. National Grid Reference of the approximate centre of the site 382571E, 403239N.

- The length of masonry wall with defects is c.22m, wall height 2.2m. Total length of masonry wall from Gate 9 gatepost pillar from Grand Lodge is c.102m. Alignment of wall is approximately WNW – ESE and is slightly curved with a radius of c.155m. Site is at an elevation of c.89mAOD and is relatively flat a level but surrounding land has an easterly fall towards the River Irk which is approximately 1.3km to the east at an elevation of c.59m.
- The masonry wall forms part of the boundary wall to the historic Heaton Park and connects the pillar to the Grand Lodge wall which is built of stone. Bricks are “handmade” held together with lime mortar and pointed with a more recent cement/grit sand mixture. Masonry footings are corbelled sandstone 960mm below ground level upon soft to firm orangey brown very sandy thinly bedded clay.
- The original boundary wall to Heaton Park was built over 200 years ago between 1807 and 1814. The 1844 Ordnance Survey map shows a footpath skirting the southern periphery of the wall and parkland to the northern side. No trees are shown directly next to or abutting the wall. The 1891 OS map indicates two to three trees to either side. Between 1893 and 1922, OS maps show open ground and/or parkland either side of the wall with either sparsely spaced or no trees. The 1932 map shows open ground to the south of the wall and a wooded area to the north. This wooded area is shown on all subsequent maps up to and including the 1986 map, but is not shown on the next two maps, 1992 and 1999. Subsequent Google Images from 2000 onwards show the area as densely wooded. South of the wall, no significant changes to that area from 1932 to 1999 mapping, but Google Images from 2000 show 4no, deciduous trees. From this we can conclude that the area to the south of the wall has had a path skirting the curved section from at least 1844 and started out with open ground and a few sparsely spaced trees which has remained the same up to the present day. The area to the immediate north of the wall has been open ground with a sparse number of trees from at least 1844 to 1922. A wooded area has existing to the north from at least 1932 up to present day. The tree density of the wood has increased over the years and has not been coppiced or managed which has led to a second generation of trees growing within very close and/or touching proximity to the wall. The 1975 OS map, (and all subsequent maps), shows the existence of an entranceway, i.e., Gate 9, which was not shown on any previous map.

- Heaton Park is listed Grade 2 on the English Heritage Register of Parks. It was owned by the Egerton family until 1902 when it was sold by the 5th Earl of Wilton to Manchester Corporation. The Corporation provided many public amenities, and it quickly became a very popular park. Now owned by Manchester City Council, it was restored at the end of the 20th Century in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund.
- Gate 9 has been used as a vehicular entrance for car parking and large-scale public events such as open-air concerts etc for the last 40 years. Whilst most of the original wall has remained relatively stable, there has been a change in circumstances locally to the wall by the creation of the opening and construction of gate posts. The cracks in the wall adjacent to the gate post pillar are as a direct result of the creation of Gate 9 and the additional forces imposed upon the masonry wall. There is tension between the original wall and the relatively recently constructed gate posts and metal gates.
- The width of the opening is not wide enough to accommodate large modern vehicles and has been damaged on four occasions in the last ten years by vehicles running into the gate post. The width of the access road into the park reduces at this point, adding to the risk of collision. The most recent incident required emergency works to be carried out on the weekend of 18th and 19th June 2022 so that the gates should be re-hung, and the park properly secured. The coping stone to the gate post was dislodged and was in danger of falling so had to be removed into temporary storage. The gate post now needs re-building.
- We can now take this opportunity to improve the access when the damaged post and section of wall are taken down to carry out the re-building works by relocating the post to widen the opening. The road can be widened at the same time and a new larger gate provided matching the style of the original. Relocating the post would also require the road access from Bury Old Road to be enlarged and the pavement kerbs adjusted. The self-seeded trees that have grown up close to the road entrance and wall can be removed at the same time.
- Copings will be reclaimed, and as much original masonry be re-used as is practical. Samples will be taken and lime mortar mix and pointing similar to the existing will be used. Gate post copings currently out of alignment will be centred on the gate.

Prepared by

R.J. Broadbent Arb
Architect/Building Surveyor
Minor Works
Capital Programmes Division
Town Hall Extension
Manchester M60 2JT

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