Design and Access Statement

for Partial Demolition and Rebuilding of Leaning part of a Boundary Garden Wall at:
The Little House
20 Alfred Street
Westbury
Wiltshire
BA13 3DY

3992-Design and Access Statement

August 2023

Client : Mr and Mrs Franks

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1.0 Brief & Scope of Work

MLDE were commissioned by Mick and Helen Franks to carry out a structural survey of the north-west boundary garden wall of their property The Little House, 20 Alfred Street, Westbury, Wiltshire, BA13 3DY and thereafter prepare all relevant documents and obtain all necessary approvals for works to the leaning section of the wall.

The wall is situated in Westbury Conservation Area. MLDE have sought advice from Wiltshire Council's Conservation Department and prepared this application in accordance with the guidance received.

2.0 Significance of Listed Building and Setting

The Little House is located in Westbury, a small town on Salisbury Plain, approximately half way between Trowbridge and Warminster. The property is a Grade II Listed Building, listed under Historic England List Entry:1036269, and located within the Westbury Conservation Area. The boundary wall, which is subject of this application, is in part non-traditional construction and appears to have been constructed in multiple stages. The wall retains the Little House rear garden on one side, and on the other is the public footpath, Bitham Lane.

The main property is moderately Significant Grade II Listed Building dated from early C19, with a stucco on brick facade facing the front garden. This front garden is long, with a dwarf wall and railings towards the road. Either side are red clay brick walls, topped with Bath-stone coping. The rear garden retaining wall is not referred to in the listing, however as another clay brick wall with similar design to the front garden walls with public facing, this wall is reasonably important.

Within Westbury Conservation Area, there is a large importance on enhancing the historic character of the townscape. A key part of this is to preserve the character and quality of the local vicinity. Not only are the Listed Buildings to be focused on, but also the important, interesting features such as the scenic paths like Bitham Lane.

3.0 Existing Condition of the Wall

The boundary retaining garden wall between The Little House and Bitham Lane forms the north-west garden boundary of the The Little House. Bitham Lane continues along the length of the whole property. On the opposite side of the path is a hedgerow with a large sycamore, as well as a telegraph pole.

The garden wall is approximately 2.2m high and about 17m in length and consists of the five stepped parts. The three closest to the house are similar, with Bath-stone coping, with the last two having on edge clay brick coping. The whole length of wall is made of two thicknesses, the lower approximately 328mm and the upper is 215mm. This step in height

is topped by tile tilted fillets under the Bath-stone coping sections, or mortar tilted fillets under the on edge clay brick coping.

It is unknown if the wall was constructed in multiple stages, however the wall is all fully toothed into each part. The end of wall furthest from the property does not have a return, though is adjacent to another boundary wall.

The retaining garden wall retains the soil from the garden, which is roughly level. Bitham Lane slopes down away from the property, with a difference of 1.2m between the path level and garden level at the end of the wall. The foundations of the wall are not visible, so the condition is unknown.

Currently the wall leans towards the footpath, with the largest lean being at the unstrained end, approximately 220mm out of plumb. The significant lean extends from this point another 9m. It is believed that the lean is being caused by the retained material overturning the wall. Other defects along the wall are wide open mortar joints, loose and damaged tilted fillets and differential cracking in the masonry.

Taking the advice from Wiltshire Council's Conservation Department, holding measures are being undertaken to partially reduce the height of the wall and it's retained material to a point so that the risk of collapse is lowered. All material is to be removed carefully and stored on-site for reuse during reconstruction of the wall, with shortfall to be made up with like for like and used in retained sections which are not visible.

4.0 Proposed Design

It is here proposed to sequentially deconstruct approximately 7m of the overall wall length, with another partial deconstruction of approximately 1.5m. The 7m will be the last two stepped sections with on edge brick coping, and the 1.4m from the adjacent section to allow for fully toothing in. Foundations are to be built up to create a suitable footing to build back the wall like for like. Mass concrete will be added behind the retaining wall, below ground level, to prevent the wall from overturning in the future. Weep-holes will be added below footpath level to reduce hydrostatic pressures.

5.0 Conclusion and Heritage Statement

The Little House is a Grade II Listed Building located within the Westbury Conservation Area. The majority of the north-west edge retaining boundary wall, which runs alongside Bitham Lane, has a reasonable lean away from The Little House.

The works proposed here would remove and rebuild unsafe sections of the wall and introduce structural strength into the affected area of the wall, aiding future stability of the structure. The works will be carried out in a careful manner in order to preserve as much as possible of the historic fabric and reuse the original materials.

The proposal would therefore, preserve this masonry structure within Westbury Conservation Area and within the curtiledge of a Grade II Listed Building in line with the guidance set in National Planning Policy Framework.

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Appendix A – Photographs

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