



Ref: 261039/RJH

1 June 2026

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For the attention of Mr D Poole

Dear Mr Poole

Historic Wall Condition Appraisal – Gateway Adjacent to 207 Boreham Road, Warminster

Following our recent visit to look at the gateway in the wall to the south side of the land you are proposing to develop where this is adjacent to 207 Boreham Road, Warminster, Wiltshire I give out initial thoughts on its condition and possible repair and consolidation. An electronic copy of this initial appraisal has also been sent to you by e-mail.

The wall is effectively upright and overall in a fair condition for its apparent age and form of construction, which from the road side is approximately 2.74 m high over the west end (left looking from the road) and 3.36 m over the east side, but where on the field side the ground is about 0.65 – 0.75 m higher. From ground level to the shoulder of the opening the wall is 0.48 m thick, which to that point is approximately 2.2 m and which produces a slenderness ratio of 4.58, which is well inside Eurocode 6 ratio of 12. Above the shoulder of the arch the wall reduces in thickness to 0.38 m.

The main fabric to the road side face of the wall is a local high silicate chert sandstone type of material laid as random rubble or roughly squared blocks in lime mortar that has been much pointed with modern cement type mortar, which shows much sign of general surface erosion, but largely stable. The field side of the wall, where visible above high nettles, is largely of brickwork that is laid as a form of English garden wall bond, with a great deal of erosion of the mortar joints as well as brick faces, mostly due to historic frost spalling of similar.

The mass of the brickwork employed in the wall, including the east quoining to the gateway is a handmade brick of a size suggesting a dating, for this area, to the early – mid 19th C, where this is has a textured face and of a red / brown colour, that has weathered on the sheltered rear face almost to a red / purple. In comparison the bricks used to dress the west side of the opening are of larger format and appear to be an extruded or wirecut type of an orangey / red colour, which could suggest a date to the second quarter of the 20th C. The use of this latter brick would also suggest when the original opening in the wall, as indicated by the remnant cambered brick arch over, it was enlarged to its present configuration.

At present the gateway is spanned over a single piece of oak as a lintel, where this is only about 90 mm thick and is suffering from decay at the bearing ends as well general age related loss of strength. A further problem is a result of the un-even loading that is applied to the lintel by a

combination of factors such as the manner in which the wall height diminishes over the east side and the retention of the cambered brick arch, which together introduces a point load in an almost central position.

There are various options as to how the top of the gateway opening and the associated section of the wall can be handled, but in any case, this will involve its removal and racking back of the structure on each side to ensure its stability and enable proper reconstruction to take place. The rebuild of the upper part can be handled in several ways, which will depend to some extent on the appearance that is sought to be achieved as well as any constraints that may be considered by Wiltshire planning conservation staff. These could include:

- a Rebuild the head of the wall as it is employing a combination of reinforced stone / brickwork over a new green oak lintel. In doing so we would suggest cutting back the raised section so that the downward sweep of the upper coping finishes just to the east of the opening as that will reduce any eccentric loading across the lintel. However, that will mean the head of the wall over gateway could look rather thin.
- b Form a new cambered rowlock (brick on end) arch over the gateway and extend the raised head of the wall to accommodate it and finish with the down curve at a suitably visually strong position at least 1.0 m to the west of the opening. This would give the impression of a slightly larger opening and with the altered position of the raised head would present more of a landmark feature for those people approaching it from the new development to the north. It would also replicate the appearance of the head over the garden door in this wall a little further to the east.
- c A combination of A, with a flat headed opening with a timber lintel and an extended raised wall head over it as option B.
- d Cut the raised section of the wall head to finish to the east as in A and then raise the quoining on each side of the opening and finish at the present lower wall level with the new coping taken over the top as a weathering. The upper part could be left open or infilled or bridged over with a decorative wrought iron or similar arch, again as a landscape / landmark feature.

However, if you planners and / or designers for the wider site have any suggestion then we can most probably work with those.

In consolidating this opening there will be a need for some general stabilisation work to the road side stone face, extending a minimum of 2.0 m on either side, by carefully raking out and repointing this in an appropriately coloured and textured lime mortar to match that of the original fabric. On the rear face of the wall, from what could be seen through the overgrowing vegetation, there is a need for a comprehensive raking out and repointing of the brickwork, as well as cutting out and replacement of excessively eroded or defective bricks with new matching coloured, textured and sized bricks.

At the same time as any stabilisation and repointing of the main wall fabric, the top of the wall will require new coping stones along the same length, if not the whole wall. The original cappings are in natural stone, of a bath type, set flush to the back face where they are about 130 mm thick and then taper down to a front overhang of about 25 mm and a thickness of about 40 mm. These are all very severely eroded, with little or no taper and open joints between them so that water has easy access in to the head of the wall and which is likely to be resulting in further disruption and stabilisation of the fabric. As a result new copings should be installed as part of any remedial work to the gateway and adjacent wall.

At present there is a timber vertical pale gate set across the opening, although with the remains of close boarding to the outer face and which is hung on simple wrought iron strap hinges, possibly of mid – late 19th C date from a pair of pintles set in the brickwork on the west side. If a gate is needed to be retained, possibly for periodic closure if a right of way is not to be created, then the hinge pin can be left in situ for that purpose. However, if a gate is no longer required then we

would recommend they are removed and the brickwork restored to remove a risk of people being 'snagged' on the projections.

I hope you will find the above useful in terms of an initial summary of the general condition of the opening and the potential options of how the upper part can be treated. If you could let me have your thoughts about the top treatment to the gateway, we will take the specification preparation forward with that incorporated.

Is there any particular treatment or landscaping undertaken on the field side of the wall that will require any ancillary work to be undertaken? In that respect I am envisaging potentially the whole level taken down to pavement level or the new path graded to accommodate the level difference. If it is the latter would the ground on each side be battered and perhaps grassed or planted or would there be low retaining walls needing foundations and abutment to the back of this wall. If so we can allow for such possibility in the spec we produce.

In the specification we are preparing we assume that the restoration extends approximately 2.0 m on each side of the opening on both the front and back, but should be able to be used for general consolidation and conservation of the wall in more general terms.

I will await your observations on the above.

Yours faithfully

R J Hill MRICS, MCIfA

