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By email only: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

RE: WAITROSE, RECTORY ROAD, WOKINGHAM - BOUNDARY WALL

It was nice to meet you on 8th May 2024, when I carried out an inspection of a boundary wall in the car park of Waitrose, Wokingham.

Background

The boundary wall, now forming the boundary to the car park of Waitrose, was constructed in relation to the nearby Montague House on Broad St. *Montague House and Attached Garden Walls* are listed on the National Heritage List for England under entry number 1319160 at grade II* and the listing description makes specific reference to the walls as follows:

"The building is set well back from the road and to the rear has original garden walls to the former C18 terraced garden."

We understand that Waitrose are concerned about a section of this wall, which is reported to have a dangerous lean. We were approached by Tim Humphries of First Plan acting on behalf of Waitrose, who have applied to Wokingham Council for the partial demolition of the listed wall based on a report by Hurst Pierce and Malcolm structural engineers (HPM). We understand that the Local Authority have refused the application, on the basis of the significant level of intervention proposed.

Prior to our survey, we were provided with the following:

- 25317 Waitrose Wokingham condition and repair options for walls H1 and H2 RevB, Hurst Pierce and Malcolm, dated Dec 2023
- 25317-01 P2 Walls H1 and H2 Proposed Elevations & Details, Hurst Pierce and Malcolm, dated Dec 2023

Our assessment is carried out in line with recent guidance published by the Institution of Structural Engineers: Guidance note: Assessing historic assets that are proposed to be demolished or partially demolished.

The inspection was a visual inspection from ground level externally to both sides of the wall and focussed on the area of wall identified as "H1" in the HPM report. The inspection was undertaken in order to provide a second opinion on the proposed interventions, by a Conservation Accredited Engineer.

Observations from visual inspection

The section of wall, H1, is constructed from soft red clay bricks laid in Flemish bond, with a stepped capping and rounded coping bricks to the head (where present). The bricks appear to be very soft "garden wall" type bricks with significant amounts of aggregate in the clay matrix and set in lime mortar.

The head of the wall is in poor condition with missing coping bricks, significant vegetation growth and the mortars have deteriorated and washed out, leaving the top of the wall dry. To the south east elevation, the mortar had been previously raked out in preparation for repointing, but not repointed – this may have contributed to the lean. Masonry bees were noted to be nesting in the wall.

A small tree is located to the northwest side of the wall (species unknown)

The wall has been truncated from its original length and left with a free-standing end to the northeast that is not restrained by a buttress or pillar.

The foundations and ground conditions were not visible during our inspection.

Recommendations

My recommendations are summarised as follows:

- The lean to the northeast end of the wall (between the former opening through the wall and the free end is significant, noted in the HPM report to be 1:10 (not measured during our inspection). The end of the wall appears to be now taking support from the concrete post to the adjacent (perpendicular) fence. Intervention is required to stabilise the wall.
- The immediate health and safety risk to the Waitrose customers had been managed by preventing access to the east of the wall by Heras fencing and to the north is naturally excluded by planting. No protections were in place to limit access to the south/west of the wall in the adjacent car park that is out of Waitrose ownership. If not already done, the adjacent owner should be notified in writing of the concerns, with the recommendation that the area immediately adjacent from the wall is excluded from access/parking.
- Whilst the lean on the wall is significant, the wall is Grade II* listed. Therefore an appropriate conservation-led approach must be undertaken to its stabilisation and repair, based on an understanding of the significance of the fabric and conservation principles. Demolition is not considered to be appropriate. Appropriate repair options are as follows:
 - o Construct new brick buttresses on new foundations to the southeast side of the wall within the adjacent property's land to directly resist the lean of the wall, plus a buttress or return on the northeast end of the wall.
 - o Construct new brick reverse-buttresses to the northwest side of the wall (within Waitrose's land in the border to the car park) to act as a counterweight to resist the lean of the wall. Note in this case, we would recommend a tie and pattress plate through the thickness of the wall.
 - o The size, number and locations of the buttresses are subject to calculation, allow 675mm projection for brickwork (3no. brick wide) and 1000mm projection for concrete pad foundation.
 - o From the information provided, there does not appear to be a need to replace the existing brick corbelled foundations of the wall with a full-width concrete underpin.
 - o In both cases, temporary propping (to the contractor's requirements) during construction of the new buttress is required.

- To the remainder of this section of the wall (from the former opening towards Montague House), the lean was marginal and provided the wall is repaired and maintained, no further intervention (e.g. buttressing) is necessary.
- Repairs should be undertaken by an appropriately-experienced conservation contractor utilising a hot-lime mix matched to the existing through analysis.
- It is not known whether the tree is contributing to the lean of the wall, but further arboricultural advice could be sought. We note that the tree may require removal anyway to facilitate repairs.

I trust the above is clear, but please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Limitations

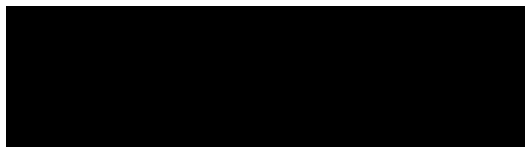
Our Insurers require us to say that it should be stated that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure unless specifically detailed in the report, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect. This report has been carried out to the Client's requirements and no liability is intended or will be accepted from any third party whatsoever.

The limits of liability are restricted to the contents of this report. No opening up or investigation of foundations etc was carried out, the inspection being visual only. No checks on load bearing capabilities have been carried out.

Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any queries or wish to discuss.

Yours sincerely

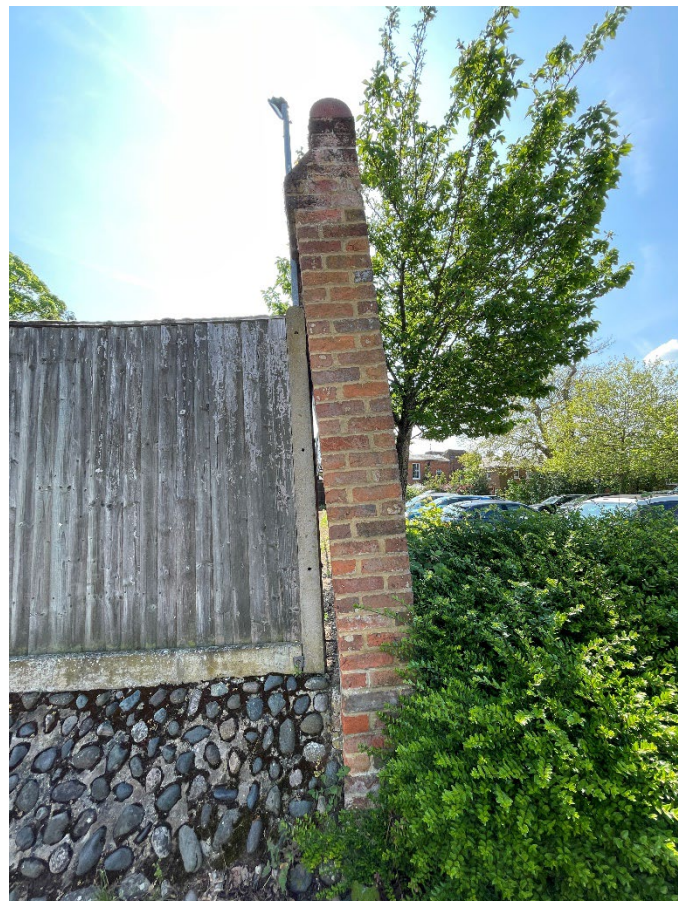
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S.TATTERSALL CEng FICE MStructE
Conservation Accredited Engineer



Photograph 1 – Elevation from north side of wall



Photograph 2 - North east end where wall has been truncated, now leans on concrete post



Photograph 3 – View of wall from southeast – wall starts to lean significantly to RHS of line



Photograph 4 - View of wall from southeast – corner to NE is propped by adjacent fence post



Photograph 5 – Suggested buttress locations (or similar to other side if reverse-buttress used)



Photograph 6 – Suggested buttress locations (or similar to other side if reverse-buttress used)