Supporting Statement / Heritage Statement

Repairing
of The Western Street Wall,
The Vicarage,
29 Church Street, St. Neots

For The Ely Diocesan Board of Finance

Listed
Building Consent Application

February 2025
Rev. A

1. Introduction

The St Neots Vicarage is a modern parsonage house built within the grounds of the Old Vicarage on the site of the former Hall Place.

The proposals relates to the repair works of the 19th century boundary wall 'B' fronting church street.

Background

The Ely Diocese were contacted by Mr Davis, the owner of 29a Church Street at the end of 2021 raising concerns relating to the condition of the Southern boundary wall.

The Diocese and the Design Partnership have discussed the proposed works for the demolition of wall 'A' and repair works to wall 'B' with The District Council to clarify the status of the walls. This was confirmed by Louise Brown on the 16th of March 2022 via email. A subsequent meeting was held on site on September 2022.

A planning application ref:11966717 was submitted and approved for the demolition and rebuilding of the boundary wall 'A' adjoining 29a church street.

2. The Site and Heritage Assets

The Vicarage is located to the east of St Mary's Church and is hidden from Church Street by a red brick wall which originally formed the boundary of the Old Hall. The wall, piers and gate are listed (Grade II - List UID: 1127960).

The Coach House in the corner of the site is also Grade II Listed (List UID: 1127961) and adjoins both the above walls.

St Mary's Church is Grade 1 listed (List Entry Number: 1128002).

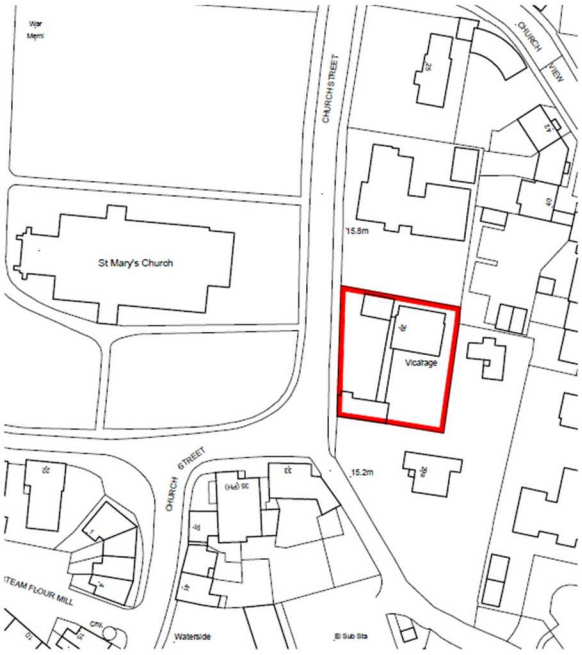

Fig.1 – Location Plan

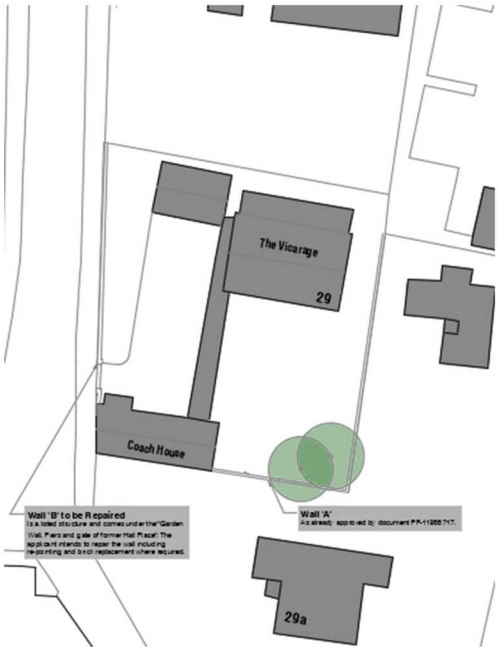

Fig. 2 – The Site

The proposed repair works relate to "Wall B" as identified in figure 2 above. The wall forms the western boundary of the Vicarage and abuts the Coach House.

The ground level of the vicarage frontage is higher than that on the street side of the wall.



Photo 1. – West side of Wall “B”, proposed for repairing.



Photo 2. – East side of Wall ‘B’, proposed for repairing.



Photo 3. – East side of Wall ‘B’, proposed for repairing.



Photo 3. – Coach House (listed Grade II – significantly re-built).



Photo 4. – Coach House – west gable.

3. Justification

General Overview of the Wall

This is to be read in conjunction with submitted drawings EDBF-992-P05 & P06 for existing site layout, plan, elevations and wall sections.

Generally the condition of the wall is mixed. Structurally the wall appears sound and there is no evidence of leaning and only minor cracking in a couple of areas. Of note the stone block within the pier supporting the arch has cracked, however the proposed work will not affect this as indicated in Photo 7.

Due to the age of the wall it has undergone years of freezing and thawing cycles which have contributed to the slow dilapidation of the wall which is noticeable in Photo's 5 & 6 where there are a number of spalled bricks and mortar that has perished over time. Additionally previous attempts at repair works using hard cement mortars have exacerbated the damage, leading to further spalling of the bricks as indicated in Photo 6.

Therefore the wall has been reviewed primarily to look at the extent of re-pointing required in traditional methods and any spalled bricks that are damaged to an extent that they need to be removed and replaced with the existing brick flipped in place if it is sound or a new brick to match the existing. These works are required to increase the longevity of the heritage asset and prevent structural defects occurring in the near future.

On closer inspection the western side of the wall which is fronting the public realm contains the most amount of aging damage and requires the majority of the repair work. To the eastern side of the wall there is one area where bricks have spalled as identified in Photo 8; other than that generally this side of the wall is sound and no other repair works are required.

As the extent of the works is difficult to apportion the areas requiring work have been indicated on drawing EDBF-992-P06 including the method of works required in alignment with the photographs below.



Photo 5. Western Elevation - Shows an area of spalled bricks due to weathering, freezing and thawing cycles indicating spalled bricks and crumbling mortar.



Photo 6. Western Elevation - Shows an area of inappropriate previous repairs using hard cement mortar leading to of deterioration of mortar causing the bricks to spall and mortar to crumble.



Photo 7. Western Elevation – An area of weathered coping brickwork through freeze and thaw cycles. NOTE: Crack in pier keystone indicates structural movement in this area over time, this is not included within the proposed works but will be highlighted to the client for their further investigation.



Photo 8. Eastern Elevation – Small area of spalled brickwork on east side of wall requiring repair works.



Photo 9. Eastern Wall – Generally condition of the majority of the eastern side of the wall is sound, therefore not requiring repair works other than the area identified in Photo 8. Generally bricks are sound and free from cracking, mortar is not crumbling, and coping is in good condition.



Photo 10. Western Wall – Upper half of the wall is generally sound with no cracking of bricks or crumbling mortar. The coping is also generally in good condition therefore no works are to be required. To the lower half of the wall there is efflorescence and staining occurring, this could be a number of reasons but primarily the walls proximity to the road is the main contributing factor. This area shows the most damage in terms of spalled brickwork and repointing.

4. Impact on Heritage Assets

The wall is visible from the public domain. It will be repointed in lime-based mortar to match the existing, and any missing/ damaged bricks that need to be replaced will either be undertaken with existing sound bricks or new handmade brickwork to match the existing. The existing coping detail will also be retained as existing, therefore the appearance of this wall will be largely unaltered and the repair works identified are mainly to increase the walls longevity.

The proposals will have no adverse impact on adjacent heritage assets.