

HERITAGE STATEMENT

- 1.1. Calverley Park is one of the properties within the Grade 2* Listed long crescent of houses designed by Decimus Burton. As such, it is part of an important and much treasured era in Tunbridge Wells' architectural and social history.



Most of the houses have a gated secondary access onto Prospect Road, the length of which is bounded by a high wall built in local sandstone. The photo shows the existing access to no.14 Calverley Park.

The wall is likely to have been built at the time of the houses in the Park and the gate piers are now leaning. The lean to the one on the right of the photograph is steadily increasing its lean and consent is sought to take it down and rebuild it

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

In 1826, the 870 acreage Calverley Estate was acquired by John Ward J.P., M.P. (1776-1855) who commissioned Decimus Burton *"to erect a number of edifices suitable to the reception of genteel families, and simultaneously with the larger buildings, a number of shops, etc in their immediate neighbourhood, so that residents upon the estate might enjoy the same advantages as those who lived nearer the Springs."*

The houses date from the period 1829/31 based in varying degrees on illustrative plans and elevations that featured in the 1829 legal agreement between John Ward and Messrs Bramah who were the building contractors based in Prospect Road. By 1839 all the Calverley Park villas were complete. Whilst the plots are defined along Calverley Road and Prospect Road on the 1938 Tithe maps, the long wall facing onto Prospect Road is not shown. Even so, one would assume that the wall would have formed part of the design of the development of Calverley Park and built as an integral part of the scheme. The stone came from the quarry in Quarry Road. Unfortunately no original individual plans have been found and it is unlikely that any survive especially as a disastrous fire swept through the Bramah's premises in 1843.

The overriding significance of the Prospect Road wall and the reason for the Grade 2* listing is not the houses on their own but the part the wall plays in defining the rear boundary of the park, a remarkably complete example of late Regency Picturesque town planning. Beyond this the individual buildings are good examples of late Regency/early Victorian design and the work of the prolific architect Decimus Burton, seen at the time as the heir-apparent of John Nash.

3. EXISTING CONDITION OF THE RIGHT HAND GATE PIER



At the top the stone pier leans out 240mm towards the road from the timber gate post

The stone originally carried the entrance gates and the knuckles that carried them are still in place set into to the stone

The right hand pier has a pronounced lean in two directions. Shown here is the lean outwards the road. The lean has shown a steady increase and will in time collapse

Consent was given under TW07/00803 to replace the gates that at the time were hanging from the knuckles on the stone piers. The gates are now electrified and hang from hardwood posts set back behind the stone piers with a piece of fence panel to close the gap between the new timber post and the stone pier



At the base (measured from the top of the plinth), the post is set back 155mm from the stone pier

This shows a lean of 85mm at the top



Gap filled with mortar at the time the new stone was installed.

The photograph shows that the pier has continued to move away from the wall

Present gap approximately 50mm
Wall and pier to be securely tied in together
Method to be agreed on site once pier dismantled

The lean in towards the left hand gate pier is clearly seen from Prospect Road. Both the pier and the wall were repaired using smooth cut stone more than ten years ago and the gap shows that the pier is not bonded to the wall. A small repair was carried out after the new stone repair



Previous repairs carried out to make up gaps using cement mortar

Damage to original stone repaired by cutting a new piece into the original

Stone at base of wall needs to be replaced as it will be damaged when moved

4. PROPOSAL

It is proposed to take down the pier and carefully set the stone aside.

Excavate and install a concrete footing and reinstate the stone pier

The original cast iron knuckles will be retained in the stone

It is likely that some of the stone will break when the pier is being dismantled and will need to be replaced. Stone is no longer available from the original source in Quarry Road and the repairs will be carried out using natural sandstone from the nearest available quarry at West Hoathley, Sussex do not cause any significant harm to the setting of the Listed buildings. At the same time the cement patching of the damaged joints will be repaired and will be re-set using lime mortar.

Unavoidable disturbance to the tarmacadam footway will be repaired

The work will be carried out by an experienced local stonemason who has carried out work in Calverley Park previously.

5. IMPACT ON THE HERITAGE ASSET

The pier will be reinstated in the same spot and to the same dimensions as previously.

The work will safeguard the heritage asset by installing a suitable concrete foundation to steady the considerable weight of the stone pier.

It is considered that the work will be an improvement to the heritage asset.