

St Edmundsbury Hospital, Lucan

Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment



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1 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

This Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment (AHIA) has been prepared to assess the impact of the proposed partial demolition and reconstruction of a section of the southern boundary wall at St. Edmundsbury Hospital, Lucan Road, Dublin.

The works form part of a wider redevelopment of the St. Edmundsbury campus and are specifically required to facilitate road realignment and junction improvement works as requested by the Roads Department of South Dublin County Council.

The assessment relates solely to the affected boundary wall, which forms part of the curtilage of Protected Structures within the St. Edmundsbury complex.

The wider site is a historically significant institutional landscape associated with the development of mental health care in Ireland, with origins as an 18th-century demesne later adapted for therapeutic use.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 BASIS OF ASSESSMENT

The architectural heritage appraisal will describe and evaluate the heritage values of those buildings and features within the application site and its immediate context, which are considered to be of heritage value. The following sources have been consulted to understand the development of the site and the significance of the affected assets:

- South Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028
- Record of Protected Structures (Dublin City Development Plan 2022-2028)
- Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)
- National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH)
- Record of Monuments and Places (RMP)
- Historic area maps

The design team consultants have contributed to this heritage appraisal and impact assessment with respect to the mitigation measures which form part of the design proposals.

STATUTORY PROTECTION

Under the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), the definition of a Protected Structure extends to:

- The structure itself
- Its curtilage
- Attendant grounds and boundary features

The southern boundary wall forms part of the historic curtilage of St. Edmundsbury and associated Protected Structures and is therefore afforded statutory protection.

Accordingly, the removal or alteration of any portion of this wall constitutes works affecting the character of a Protected Structure.

POLICY CONTEXT

The South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2022–2028 requires:

- Retention of historic fabric
- Protection of curtilage structures

- Preservation of historic setting and boundary definition

2.2 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

This AHIA considers impacts arising from the proposed redevelopment works, including potential direct and indirect effects on:

- the material fabric and architectural character of the protected structures;
- the setting, curtilage, and legibility of the historic institutional ensemble; and
- historic boundary treatments and associated features, including the boundary wall affected by the separate road realignment proposal.

Impacts are assessed here as the physical and/or visual effects that the proposed works may reasonably be predicted to have on architectural heritage significance, including potential construction-phase impacts and the long-term operational outcome.

3 THE SITE AND EXISTING BUILDINGS [BASELINE SITUATION]

3.1 OUTLINE DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

Cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the boundary walls associated with the St. Edmundsbury estate, including the southern boundary, were established in the late 18th century and were already in place by the 1772 survey of the Vesey estate. This confirms that the wall forms part of the original demesne layout and is integral to the historic definition of the site.

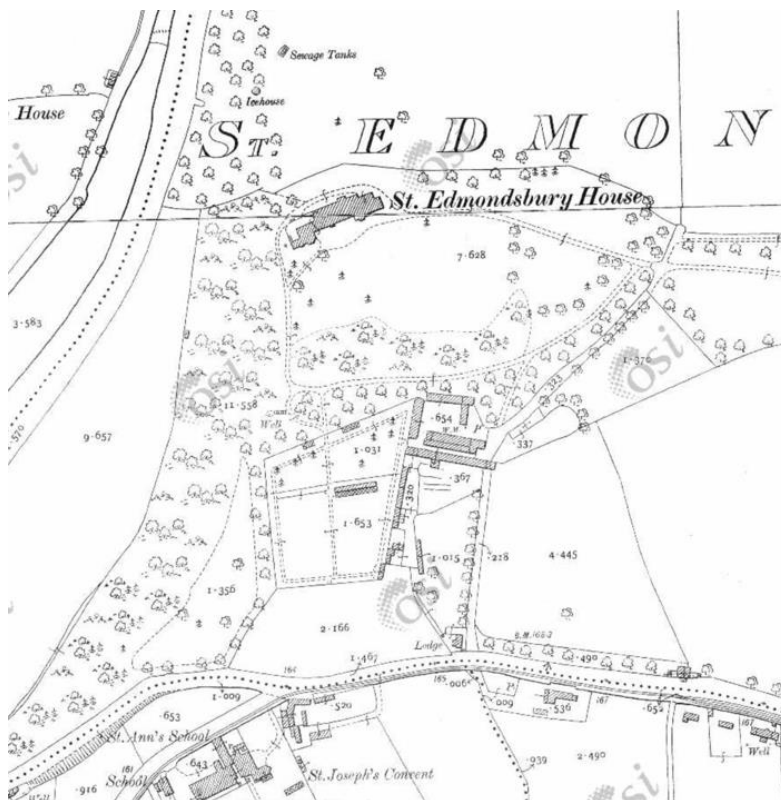


Figure 1: Ordnance Survey 25 inch: Surveyed 1888-1913.



Figure 2 Site Outline

3.2 HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE AND ITS ENVIRONS

Cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the boundary walls associated with the St. Edmundsbury estate, including the southern boundary, were established in the late 18th century and were already in place by the 1772 survey of the Vesey estate.

This confirms that the wall forms part of the original demesne layout and is integral to the historic definition of the site.

3.3 LOCATION AND EXTENT

The southern boundary wall runs along the Lucan Road and defines the primary interface between the public realm and the historic institutional landscape.

The section subject to proposed works comprises approximately **180m**



Figure 3 Line showing the extents of the Southern Boundary Wall along the Lucan Road R835

3.4 CONSTRUCTION AND FORM

The southern boundary wall is of masonry construction; however, close inspection indicates that it is not a uniform or wholly original structure.

The wall exhibits clear evidence of phased construction and later intervention, including:

- Sections of coursed rubble masonry, distinct from more irregular earlier construction
- The use of cementitious materials, particularly in upper sections
- Defined junctions and vertical breaks, suggesting rebuilding in discrete sections
- Apparent construction joints, indicating interfaces between original and later fabric

These characteristics indicate that substantial portions of the wall have been reconstructed or repaired, likely at different stages during the evolution of the site.



Figure 4 Elevation to Lucan Rd. Showing clear distinction in building methods.

3.5 EVIDENCE OF PHASED DEVELOPMENT

A consistent horizontal line visible across sections of the wall suggests that the wall may have originally been constructed at a lower height and subsequently raised.

This is likely to correspond with the transition of the site from a private demesne to an institutional healthcare setting following its acquisition by St. Patrick's Hospital in the late 19th century, when increased enclosure and privacy would have been required.

This interpretation is consistent with the broader historical evolution of the site, which underwent adaptation from a country residence to a therapeutic institutional campus.



Figure 5 Clear distinction in stonework between upper and lower sections indicated by a datum which is consistent along the eastern and western sections of original wall.

3.6 UPPER WALL CONSTRUCTION

The upper portion of the wall appears to be a later intervention, characterised by:

- The use of concrete and cementitious material
- A more uniform and consistent finish across the Lucan Road elevation
- A clear distinction between the lower lime-based masonry and the upper cement-based construction

This suggests that the wall has been raised and/or capped in more recent history, and that this element does not form part of the original historic construction.



Figure 6 Upper section of wall which is consistent in profile along its entirety and shows a clear distinction in materiality between the lower sections suggesting modern addition

While the wall retains elements of historic fabric, it is evident that:

- The structure has undergone substantial alteration and partial reconstruction
- The upper sections are not original – though it is assumed that the line of the wall is largely intact this cannot be confirmed across its entirety
- The wall represents a composite structure of varying dates and materials



Figure 7 Indication of Non-historic Fabric of wall which has been re-built

4 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

4.1 FUNCTIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The wall defines the historic boundary of the St. Edmundsbury estate and establishes a controlled threshold between public roadway and institutional landscape.

4.2 ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The wall, though now significantly altered, is largely representative of traditional boundary construction associated with 18th-century demesne landscapes, utilising local stone and lime-based construction techniques.

4.3 HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The wall forms part of the original estate layout and reflects historic landholding patterns associated with the Vesey and Pery ownership of the site.

4.4 SETTING AND TOWNSCAPE SIGNIFICANCE

The wall contributes significantly to:

- The sense of enclosure of the site
- The visual continuity along Lucan Road
- The legibility of the site as a distinct historic entity

The southern boundary wall is of Moderate significance

This reflects:

- Its role in defining the historic boundary of the site
- Its contribution to setting and enclosure
- The presence of partial historic fabric

However, its significance is moderated by:

- The extent of later reconstruction
- The loss of original fabric in upper sections
- The composite nature of its construction

5 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORKS

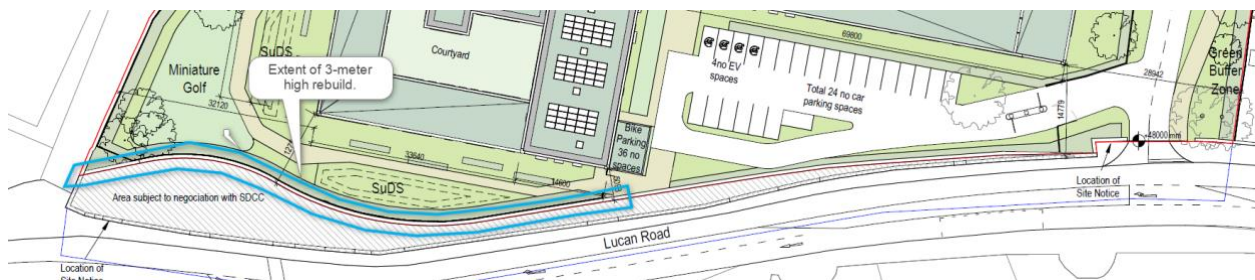


Figure 8 Image indicating Extent of Proposed 3m high Intervention

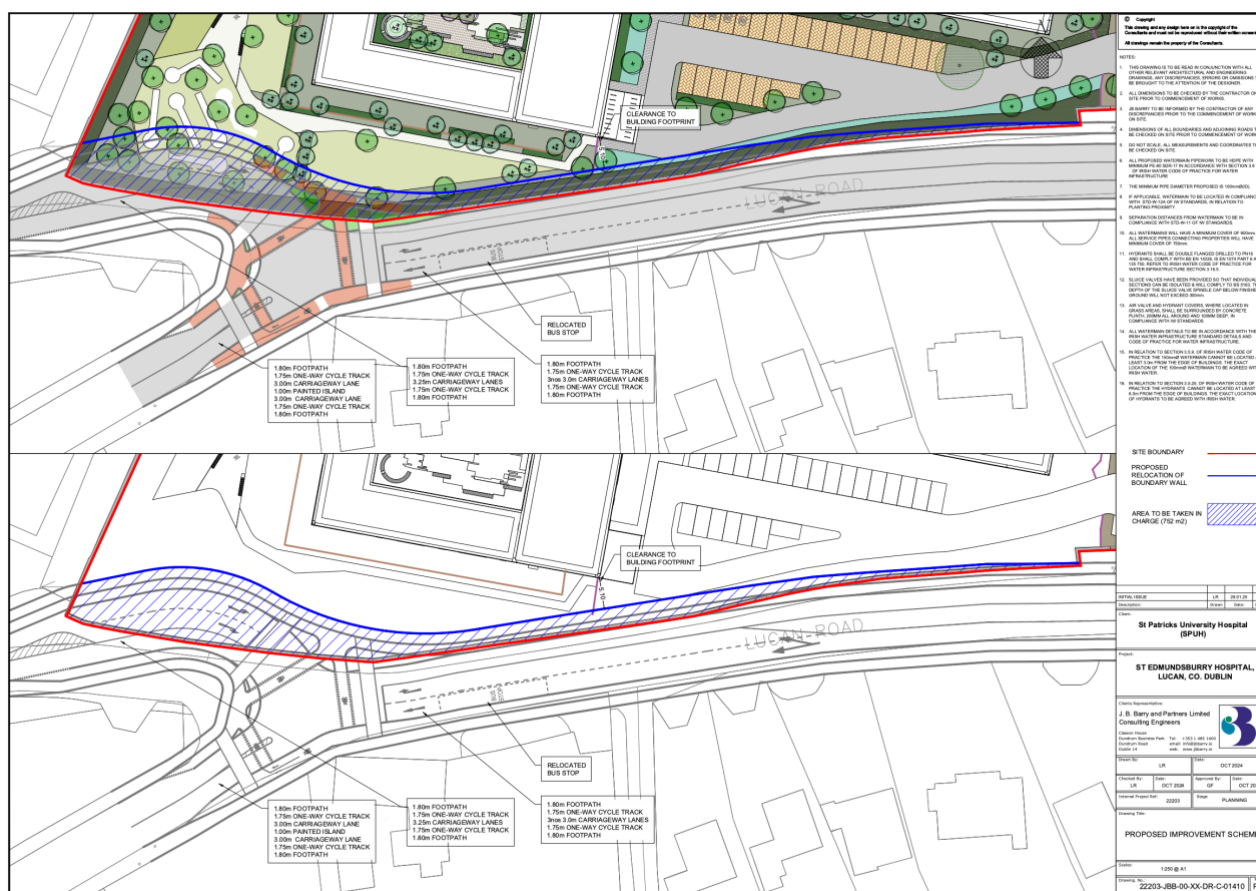


Figure 9 Detail of Road Realignment

The proposed works comprise:

- Partial demolition of a section of the existing southern boundary wall
- Realignment of the wall to accommodate road and junction improvement works
- Reconstruction of the boundary along a revised alignment

In addition to reinstatement, it is proposed that the reconstructed wall will incorporate **enhanced security measures**, including:

- Construction of a **masonry wall to the Lucan Road frontage**, maintaining the visual character of the existing stone boundary
- Construction of a **blockwork wall to the internal (hospital-facing) side**
- An **increase in wall height to approximately 3.0 metres** within the extent of the secure garden area
- A reduction in wall height beyond the garden access gate to relate to surrounding boundary conditions

This approach replaces an earlier design strategy which proposed:

- A **separate internal security fence**, approximately 3.0 metres in height
- Located approximately 2.0 metres inside the existing boundary wall

The revised proposal consolidates enclosure and security into a **single boundary structure**, in response to:

- Reduced available space arising from road realignment
- The need to avoid constriction at the garden and fire tender access point

The intention is to retain the visual character of the existing boundary wall while integrating functional security requirements into a single constructed element.

5.1 JUSTIFICATION FOR REMOVAL AND REALIGNMENT OF BOUNDARY WALL

The proposed removal and realignment of a section of the southern boundary wall arises from infrastructural requirements associated with the proposed road and junction improvement works along the Lucan Road frontage.

This requirement is set out in correspondence issued by South Dublin County Council, specifically within a Letter of Comfort dated 12/02/2025 from Michael McAdam, A/Director of Land Use, Transportation and Planning.

Under Point 4 of this correspondence, it is stated that:

“the partial demolition of the existing stone boundary wall and its reconstruction at a set-back position is required to facilitate the construction of a signalised junction.”

The proposed works to the boundary wall are therefore **not discretionary in nature**, but arise as a direct response to the requirements of the Roads Authority.

The intervention is limited to the extent necessary to accommodate:

- The revised road alignment
- The formation of a signalised junction
- Associated visibility and access requirements

No additional removal of boundary wall is proposed beyond that required to satisfy these infrastructural requirements.

In this context, the proposed intervention is attempting to strike a balance between the protection of architectural heritage and the delivery of necessary public infrastructure. The assessment contained within this report considers the extent to which the required works impact upon the character, setting, and fabric of the boundary wall, and identifies appropriate mitigation measures to reduce that impact where feasible.

6 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

The assessment considers:

- Sensitivity (derived from significance)
- Magnitude of change
- Resulting significance of effect

Element	Impact Type	Description of Impact	Magnitude	Sensitivity	Significance of Effect
Historic Fabric	Direct Physical	Removal of surviving historic masonry	Slight–Moderate	Moderate	Slight–Moderate Adverse
Boundary Alignment	Setting	Realignment of historic boundary	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Adverse
Wall Height	Visual / Spatial	Increase in height to approx. 3.0m	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Adverse
Construction Method	Material / Authenticity	Change to composite wall build-up	Slight–Moderate	Moderate	Slight–Moderate Adverse
Streetscape	Visual	Increased enclosure along Lucan Road	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate Adverse

6.2 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

The proposed development will result in:

- The loss of original historic fabric
- A permanent alteration to the historic boundary alignment
- A change in the visual and spatial relationship between the site and the public road

These impacts are inherently adverse and cannot be fully mitigated.

6.3 HEIGHT AND MASSING

The increase in wall height to approximately 3.0 metres within the secure garden area represents a **material alteration** to the established scale of the boundary.

While boundary walls of varying heights can form part of institutional landscapes, the proposed increase will:

- Alter the proportion and visual weight of the wall along the Lucan Road
- Change the perceived relationship between the site and the public realm
- Potentially increase the sense of enclosure at street level

6.4 CONSTRUCTION TYPOLOGY

The proposed construction, comprising:

- Stone-faced outer leaf
- Blockwork inner leaf

represents a departure from traditional solid masonry construction.

While this approach is functionally driven, it introduces:

- A change in construction methodology
- A reliance on applied visual character, rather than inherent material authenticity

However, given the extent of existing reconstruction and alteration within the wall, this is not considered to give rise to a significant additional impact on historic fabric.

6.5 SECURITY INTEGRATION

The integration of security requirements into the wall structure eliminates the need for a separate internal fence line.

This has the effect of:

- Reducing visual clutter within the site
- Avoiding the creation of a secondary enclosure line

However, it consolidates security expression at the primary boundary, increasing the **visual and physical prominence of the wall**.

7 MITIGATION MEASURES

7.1 RECORDING

- Full photographic and measured survey prior to intervention – See Appendix 01
- Documentation of construction detail and condition

7.2 DISMANTLING STRATEGY

- Careful manual dismantling
- Salvage and cataloguing of all viable stone

7.3 RECONSTRUCTION

- Maximum reuse of original stone
- Matching new stone only where necessary

Reconstruction to reflect:

- Existing height
- Thickness
- General character

7.4 MATERIALS

- Use of lime mortar compatible with existing fabric
- Avoidance of cementitious materials

7.5 DESIGN INTEGRATION

- Maintain visual continuity of boundary
- Avoid engineered suburban detailing
- Ensure the wall remains the dominant boundary feature

7.6 WALL PROPORTION AND ARTICULATION

- The wall shall avoid a monolithic or continuous blank appearance
- Subtle variation in stone selection and laying pattern shall be used to reflect traditional character

7.7 MATERIAL EXPRESSION

- The external face shall be constructed using natural stone with a depth and irregularity consistent with traditional masonry
- The wall shall not read as a thin veneer or applied facing

7.8 WALL HEAD TREATMENT

The wall head shall be carefully detailed to avoid:

- Flat concrete capping
- Standardised engineered finishes

A simple and robust finish consistent with traditional boundary treatments shall be used

7.9 HEIGHT TRANSITION

The transition between the higher wall and reduced height sections shall be:

- Gradual where feasible
- Located in visually appropriate positions (e.g. near gates or breaks)

8 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed works will result in the removal of a section of the existing boundary wall, including both historic and later fabric. Given the evidence of reconstruction and alteration, the proportion of original material affected is considered to be limited.

The principal impact arises from:

- The alteration of the established boundary alignment
- The change in the relationship between the site and the public road
- The modification of the existing streetscape condition

The impact on historic fabric is therefore considered to be less significant than the impact on setting and boundary definition.

9 RESIDUAL IMPACT

Following mitigation, the works will result in:

- Loss of sections of historic and later wall fabric
- Realignment of the historic boundary
- An increase in wall height within defined areas
- A change in construction approach

9.1 RESIDUAL IMPACT:

Moderate Adverse

This arises primarily from:

- Alteration of boundary alignment
- Increased wall height and enclosure
- Changes to the visual relationship between the site and Lucan Road

This impact arises primarily from the change to the historic boundary alignment and setting, rather than from the loss of fabric alone.

10 CONCLUSION

The proposed works will result in the partial demolition and reconstruction of a section of a historically significant boundary wall forming part of the curtilage of Protected Structures at St. Edmundsbury.

The impacts include:

- Loss of late 18th-century fabric
- Alteration of historic boundary alignment
- Change to the established relationship between site and public realm

These impacts are adverse and material.

The works are driven by infrastructural requirements associated with road realignment. While this provides a planning justification, it does not remove the heritage impact.

Subject to:

- Careful dismantling
- High-quality reconstruction
- Maximum reuse of original materials

the impact can be reduced but not eliminated.

On balance, the proposal represents a managed intervention resulting in a moderate adverse impact, which may be considered acceptable only where the infrastructural requirement is demonstrably necessary and proportionate.

11 APPENDIX

APPENDIX 03: CONSERVATION METHOD STATEMENT

11.1 SOUTHERN BOUNDARY WALL – DISMANTLING AND RECONSTRUCTION

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

All works to the southern boundary wall shall:

- Be carried out under the supervision of a **suitably qualified conservation professional**
- Follow best practice in accordance with the *Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2011)*
- Minimise loss of historic fabric
- Retain and reuse existing materials wherever feasible

The works shall proceed on a **minimum intervention basis**, limited strictly to the extent required to facilitate the approved road realignment.

PRE-COMMENCEMENT REQUIREMENTS

Prior to any intervention, the following shall be completed:

A) RECORDED SURVEY

- High-resolution photographic record of the wall along its full extent
- Elevational record of the section to be removed
- Identification of construction phases, joints, and material variations

B) SETTING OUT

- Precise marking of the section of wall to be dismantled
- Agreement of limits of intervention with the design team and conservation advisor

C) PROTECTION MEASURES

- Protection of adjoining retained wall sections
- Installation of temporary supports where required to prevent collapse or movement

11.2 DISMANTLING PROCEDURE

Dismantling shall be carried out **manually and sequentially**, as follows:

- No mechanical demolition shall be permitted for primary dismantling
- Wall shall be dismantled **from top down** in controlled lifts
- Individual stones shall be carefully removed to avoid breakage
- Mortar shall be gently broken away without damaging adjacent units

Particular care shall be taken at:

- Junctions between historic and later fabric
- Areas of weaker lime-bound masonry

11.3 SALVAGE AND STORAGE

All recoverable materials shall be retained for reuse:

Stone shall be:

- Cleaned of loose mortar (without aggressive mechanical cleaning)
- Sorted by size, type, and condition
- Stored on pallets in a secure, dry location
- Original coping or larger stones (if present) shall be **clearly identified and reserved**

A record shall be kept of:

- Quantity of salvaged material
- Proportion suitable for reuse

11.4 RECONSTRUCTION

A) GENERAL APPROACH

The reconstructed wall shall:

- Follow the **approved revised alignment**
- Replicate the **general character, scale, and proportions** of the existing wall
- Avoid over-regularisation or artificial uniformity

B) MASONRY CONSTRUCTION

Salvaged stone shall be used as the **primary facing material**

New stone shall:

- Match existing in geology, colour, and texture
- Be used only where salvaged material is insufficient
- Masonry shall be laid:
 - In a manner reflecting the existing wall character
 - Avoiding overly formal coursing where not historically evident

C) MORTAR SPECIFICATION

Mortar shall be:

- Lime-based and compatible with existing fabric
- Free from cement

Indicative specification:

- Natural Hydraulic Lime (NHL 2 or NHL 3.5 depending on exposure)
- Well-graded sand appropriate to local character

Mortar shall be:

- Slightly recessed or flush finished

- Not ribboned or over-pointed

D) WALL HEAD / CAPPING

The wall head shall:

- Avoid the introduction of overtly modern detailing
- Reflect the existing condition where appropriate

Where reconstruction is required:

- Salvaged coping stones shall be reused where available
- Any new capping shall be visually consistent and not visually dominant

11.5 INTERFACE WITH RETAINED FABRIC

At junctions between new and existing wall:

- Transitions shall be **visually and structurally coherent**
- No abrupt or visually intrusive junctions shall be permitted
- Bonding shall be carefully executed to avoid structural weakness

11.6 QUALITY CONTROL AND SUPERVISION

- Works shall be subject to periodic inspection by the conservation advisor
- Sample panels may be required prior to full reconstruction
- Any deviation from agreed methodology shall be approved in advance

11.7 PROHIBITED WORKS

The following shall not be permitted:

- Use of cement-based mortars
- Machine demolition of masonry (except where explicitly agreed for later fabric only)
- Use of artificial or reconstituted stone
- Overly neat or uniform pointing inconsistent with historic character
- Introduction of suburban or engineered finishes

11.8 COMPLETION

On completion:

- The wall shall read as a **coherent continuation of the existing boundary**
- No visual distinction shall be apparent between retained and reconstructed sections beyond normal material variation

A final photographic record shall be submitted documenting:

- Dismantling
- Reconstruction
- Completed works