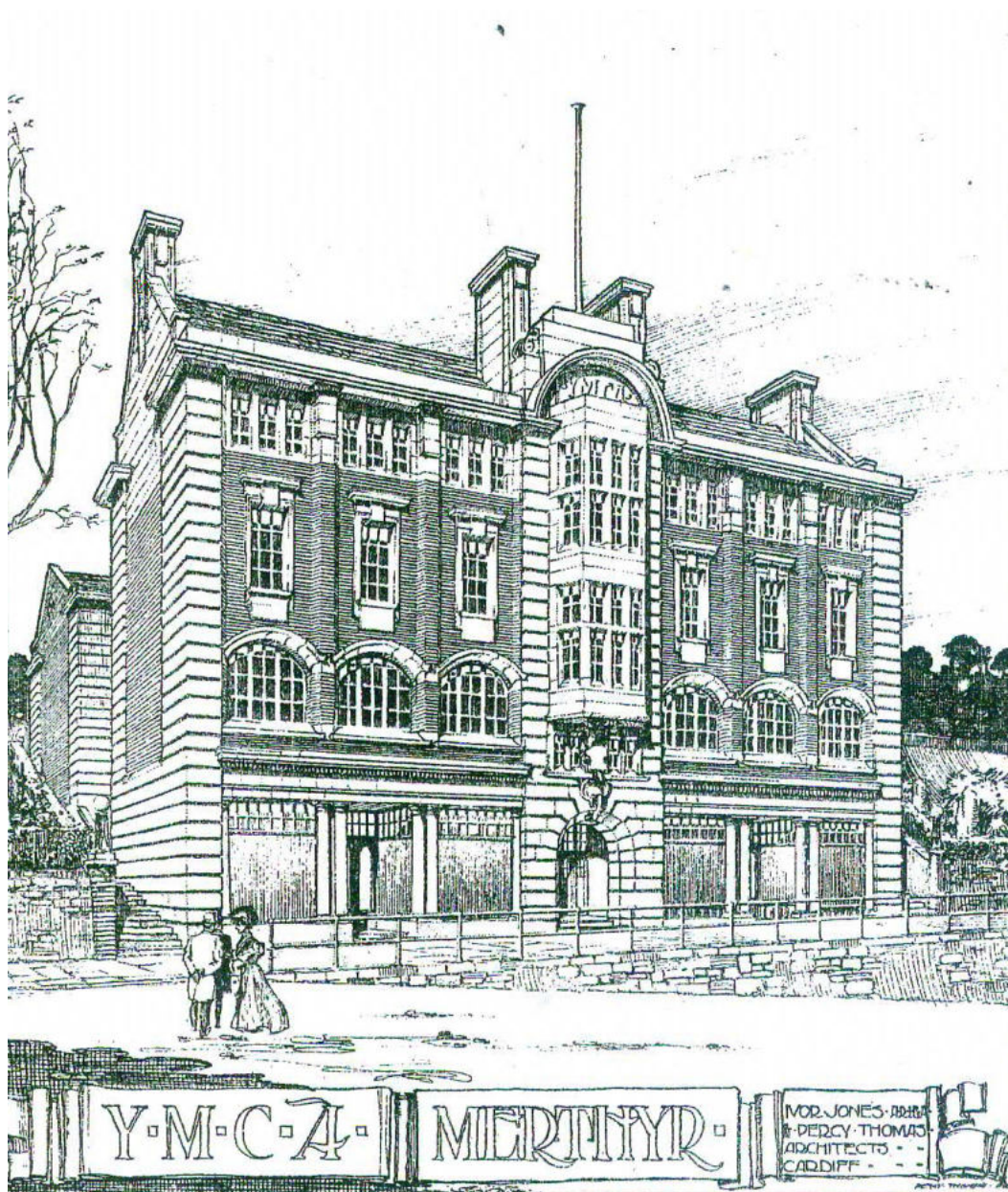




EAST BOUNDARY WALL & ASSOCIATED LANDSCAPING

THE YMCA BUILDING, MERTHYR TYDFIL

Pontmorlais West • Merthyr Tydfil • CF47 8UU

October 2022

Davies Sutton Architects

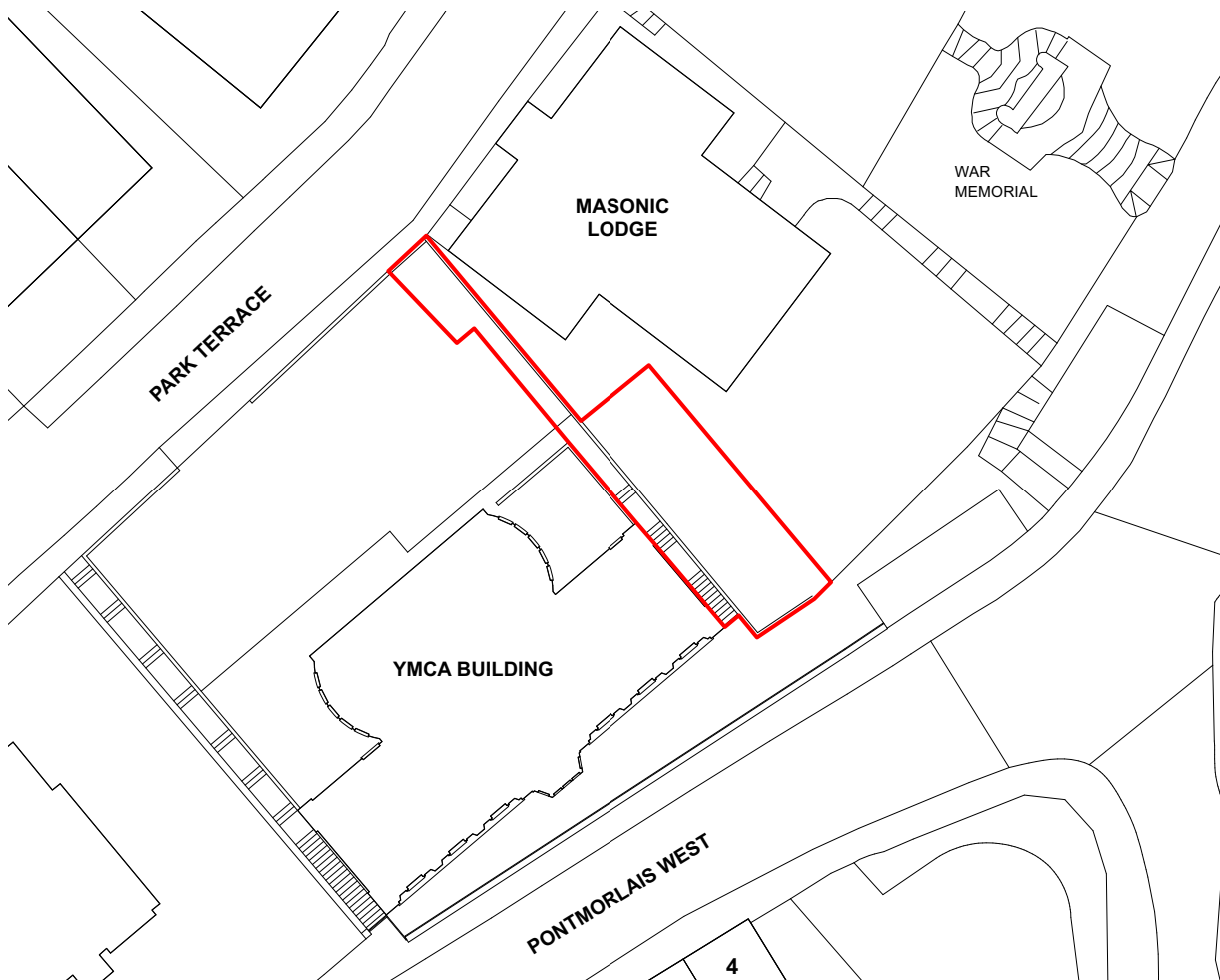
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Planning Consent for the conversion, alteration and extension of this property was received in April 2021 (Planning ref. P/20/0219). During the construction works, the dangerous condition of the boundary (and retaining) wall to the east of the property was discovered: the wall had been constructed in various phases and with no foundation. To enable adjacent essential construction works to continue, the wall was therefore demolished. This document has been produced to accompany an application for Planning Consent for retrospective permission to demolish and replace this wall, including alterations to the adjacent contours and landscaping.



Above: Historic views of the YMCA and adjacent Masonic Lodge, this application incorporating alteration of the soft-landscaped area between them.

Below: Location Plan (not to scale), the focus of this application being highlighted in red.



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1.1 INTRODUCTION

1. **Ownership:** The application site falls within 2 ownerships:
 1. The YMCA and adjacent path is owned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council.
 2. The grounds incorporated within the proposals are owned by the Masonic Lodge.
2. **Listing:** Grade II (YMCA).

1.2 OBJECTIVES

This application has several simultaneous objectives:

1. To replace the existing boundary wall with two new retaining walls ("upper" and "lower") with a landscaped gap between.
2. To re-contour the Masonic Lodge landscape, to reduce the amount of retaining walls required.
3. To re-landscape the site generally, to foster and encourage ecological use (given the adjacent new bat roost).
4. To provide a dedicated Cycle Store, the existing Cycle Store converted to provide a dedicated Bin Store (For the YMCA).

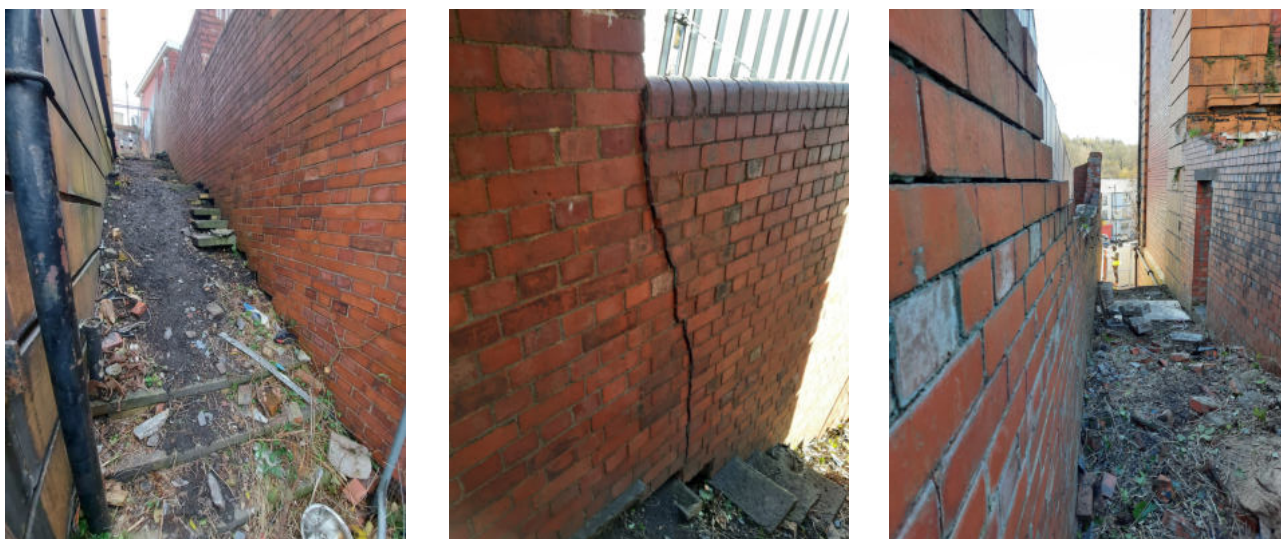
1.3 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE AND ITS CONTEXT

The site is an irregular parcel of land of some 165 sq/m. and divided by an existing brickwork boundary wall. The site slopes gradually down from north to south, the boundary wall retaining the Masonic Lodge site some 3.5m above the floor level of the YMCA. The site is also relatively hidden from Pontmorlais West at the front of the main YMCA Building. The site is bounded to the:

1. North: By a combination of the YMCA's car park and the Masonic Lodge.
2. East: By a combination of the Masonic Lodge and its landscape.
3. South: By a combination of the:
 1. YMCA: a modern path between the boundary wall and the YMCA.
 2. Masonic Lodge: a boundary wall retaining the grounds some 1m above the adjacent footpath.
4. West: By a combination of the YMCA, a recently created bat-roost and landscaping.

The site currently exists as the following:

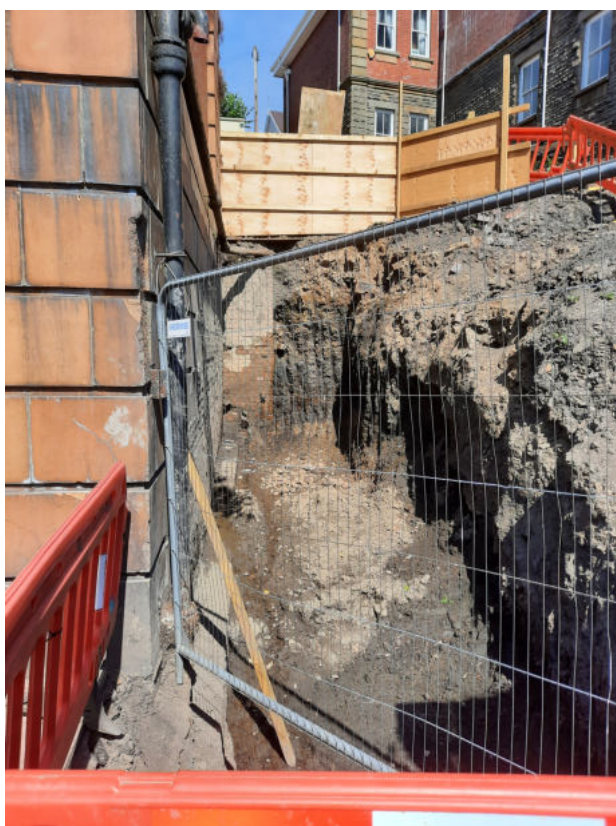
1. Southern portion: an area of exposed bedrock and subsoil with exposed drainage.
2. Northern portion: existing YMCA car park and contractor's compound.



Above: The gap between the YMCA and the east retaining wall, following removal of the rubbish that covered it. This removal confirmed:

- *An earlier path, including stairs with large stone nosings/goings (partially visible in the above).*
- *The retaining wall had simply been built immediately on top of this earlier landscaping, with no foundation.*

Due to the pressure imposed by the retained soil and its inadequate construction, this wall was leaning towards the YMCA and with a prominent crack within it.



Above: Photographs indicating the extent of excavation required, with the Masonic Lodge visible in the background, to provide a safe environment for the construction of the replacement retaining wall.

2.1 NEW RETAINING WALL (UPPER)

The upper boundary wall consists of an existing section with rebuilt wall tops and an additional new section that is perpendicular to the existing portion.

The new wall(s) consist of:

1. Structure: a new structural wall to the structural engineer's specification.
2. Appearance: the structure will be faced using new facing bricks and half-round coping bricks to match the original, using salvaged where possible.
3. Associated soft and hard landscaping between the new wall and the YMCA building, the original contours and levels being reinstated generally.
4. An extension of the existing boundary wall to enable the works on the Masonic Lodge site, and rebuilding of the wall tops generally.

2.2 NEW RETAINING WALL (LOWER)

The lower retaining wall is a new structure to match the existing boundary wall in location and appearance. The new wall consists of:

1. Structure: a new structural wall to the structural engineer's specification.
2. Appearance: the structure will be faced using new facing bricks and half-round coping bricks to match the original, using salvaged where possible. Imperial style railings will sit on the top of the new wall to prevent falling from height.
3. A new "false" brickwork wall to conceal an area of exposed brickwork on the YMCA building that was previously hidden below-ground.
4. Associated soft and hard landscaping between the new wall and the YMCA building, the original contours and levels being reinstated generally.

2.3 CYCLE STORE

The proposed cycle store will be situated within the southern portion of the east boundary, consisting of:

1. 8 semi-vertical cycle stands, attached to the new boundary wall.
2. A new canopy attached to the new boundary wall to protect against weather.
3. Appearance: galvanised steel cycle racks and a polycarbonate canopy.

2.4 BIN STORE

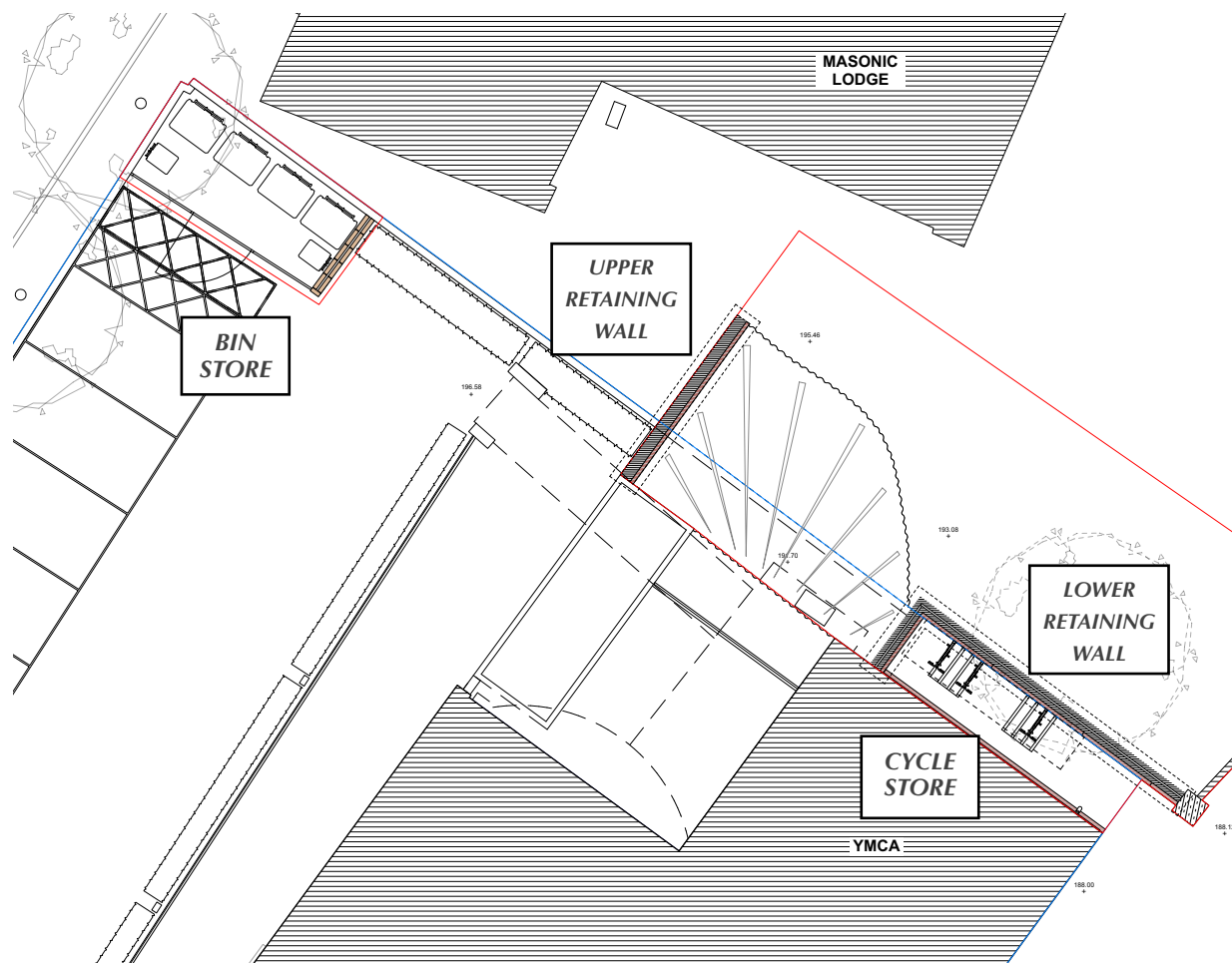
The proposed bin store will be situated within the original cycle store location, consisting of:

1. A combination of waste and recycling bins, the amount and types to be confirmed and supplied by the local authority.

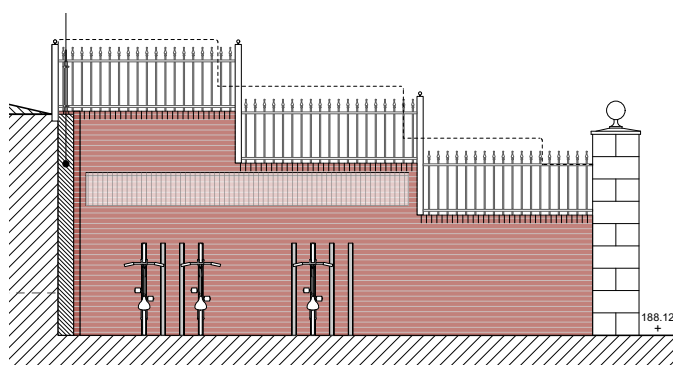
2. A new decorative wall built from salvaged terracotta blocks to conceal the bin store from the south.
3. A new vertical “hit and miss” stained timber fence with a gate to provide access to the bin store from the west.
4. Appearance: the south-eastern gable wall of the bin store will be constructed using salvaged terracotta blocks from the main YMCA building, built off the existing retaining wall to the north-east. A stained “hit and miss” fence with a gate will bound the bin store to the south-west, built off the existing boundary wall to the north-west.

2.4 ECOLOGY

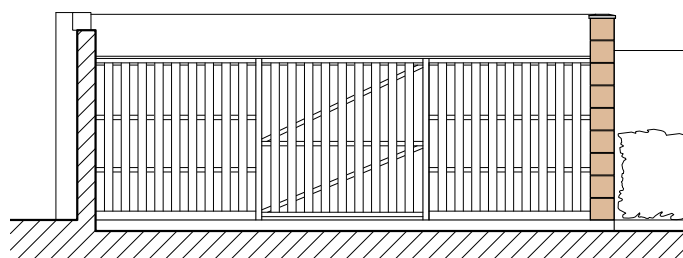
The introduction of soft landscaping and planting along the east boundary to assist commuting and foraging bats. A detailed landscaping plan and planting schedule will be provided by a Landscape Architect.



Above: The proposed east boundary site plan indicating the locations of the new bin store, cycle store and retaining walls (not to scale).



Left: the proposed Lower Retaining Wall, Cycle Store and imperial style railings (not to scale).



Left: the proposed bin store (not to scale).

3.1 ACCESS

1. In addition to making the east boundary safe with new retaining walls and associated landscaping, the proposal will improve the usability of the building generally, including:
 1. **Cycle store:** the new location at the front of the building will provide easier access to the cycle store from the main road and more direct access to the circulation at ground floor level.
 2. **Bin Store:** the addition of an external bin store will enable waste to be controlled and to be disposed of by waste services.
 3. **Gated Access:** to avoid anti-social behaviour, gated access will be provided to the new cycle and bin stores.
2. The alterations to the east boundary has removed a route that historically connected the front of the building to the rear. The reasons for making this connection redundant are:
 1. The area had to be excavated to enable the new below-ground drainage solution to be installed.
 2. Public access to the area that is now occupied by the bat roost structure is not necessary.
 3. Including the new cycle store in this area to facilitate the new external bin store on the car park.
 4. A public connection from the promenade and Pontmorlais West to Park is available via the public footpath and steps to the west boundary of the site.

Contact

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