

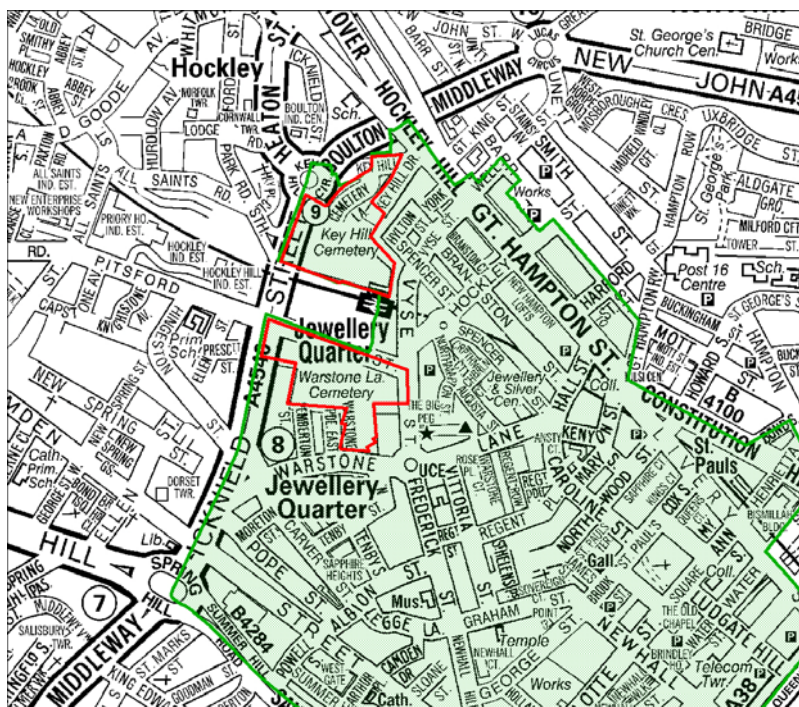
Design Specification The Jewellery Quarter Cemeteries Stage 2 HLF Bid

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Introduction

This Design Specification accompanies the application for Warstone Lane and Key Hill Cemeteries, both located within the Jewellery Quarter Conservation Area, Birmingham.



A to Z Location Plan

GREEN shows
Jewellery Quarter
Conservation Area

RED shows site
boundaries

The Proposals Overview

Warstone Lane Cemetery proposals include:

1. Reinstalling historical boundary railings, stone piers and entrance gates on all road frontages;
2. Resurfacing of pathways;
3. Renovation of catacomb stonework;
4. Installing an attractive safety balustrade along the catacomb terraces
5. Improving the setting of the cemetery lodge through railings removal and resurfacing;
6. creating a new Garden of Memory and Reflection in the form of a paved seating area reinterpreting the footprint of the former chapel, now demolished;
7. Tree management, including planting and removal.



Proposals Overview Plan WL L01

Key Hill Cemetery proposals include:

1. Resurfacing of pathways
2. Improvements to drainage by installation of soakaways
3. Renovation of catacomb stonework;
4. Installing an attractive safety balustrade above the catacombs
5. Tree & vegetation clearance & management



Proposals Overview Plan KH L01

Design Detail - Warstone Lane Cemetery

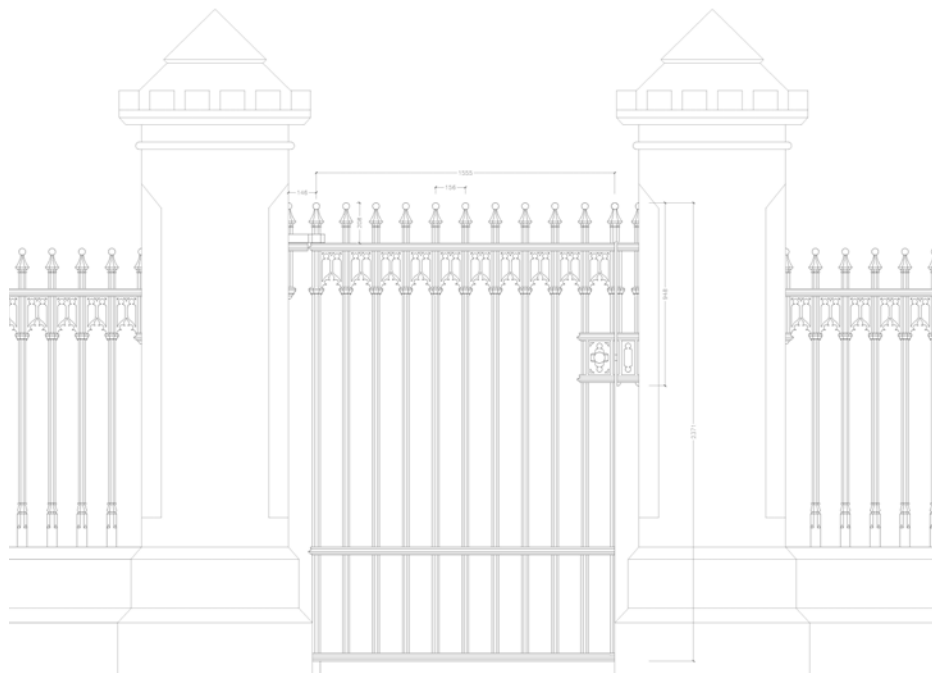
1. Reinstalling historical boundary railings, stone piers and entrance gates on all road frontages.

The former railings were removed in the post World War II period. Study of the historical archive and small extant remnants provide a clear indication of the original intricate design. The proposals include reinstating the historical cast iron design on the main Vyse St thoroughfare, and installing less intricate and hence less costly steel versions on the Icknield St, Pitsford St and Warstone Lane frontages. All stone piers and plinths are included, with existing ones renovated and missing ones installed as new.

Vyse Street Entrance



Photo of Vyse Street entrance showing the absence of piers, railings and gates.

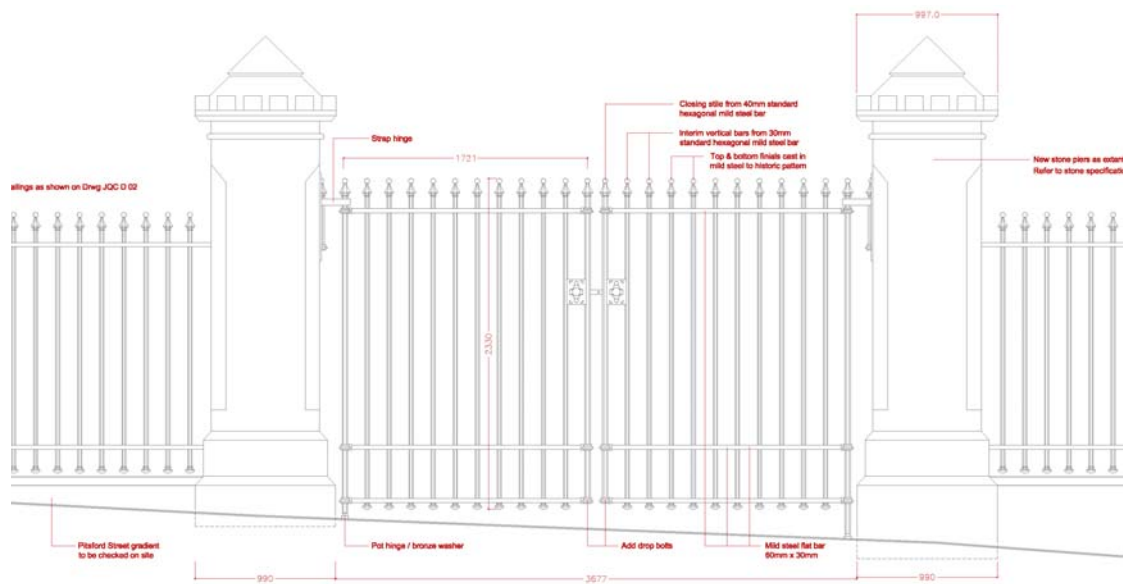


Proposed Vyse Street Pedestrian Gateway with reinstated stone piers, pier caps, upper stone plinths and ornate cast iron gates and railings.

Pitsford Street Entrance



Photo of Pitsford Street entrance showing the extant piers (sliced in half to allow more width!)



Proposed Pitsford Street Vehicle (Maintenance) Gateway with reinstated stone piers, pier caps, upper stone plinths and ornate cast iron gates and railings. Note that the original piers were set 3 yards apart (High church iconography of the Holy Trinity) like those on Icknield Street, however we have set the proposed piers at 12 feet apart (in reference to the Disciples) to allow sufficient width for large maintenance vehicles.

Icknield Street Entrance



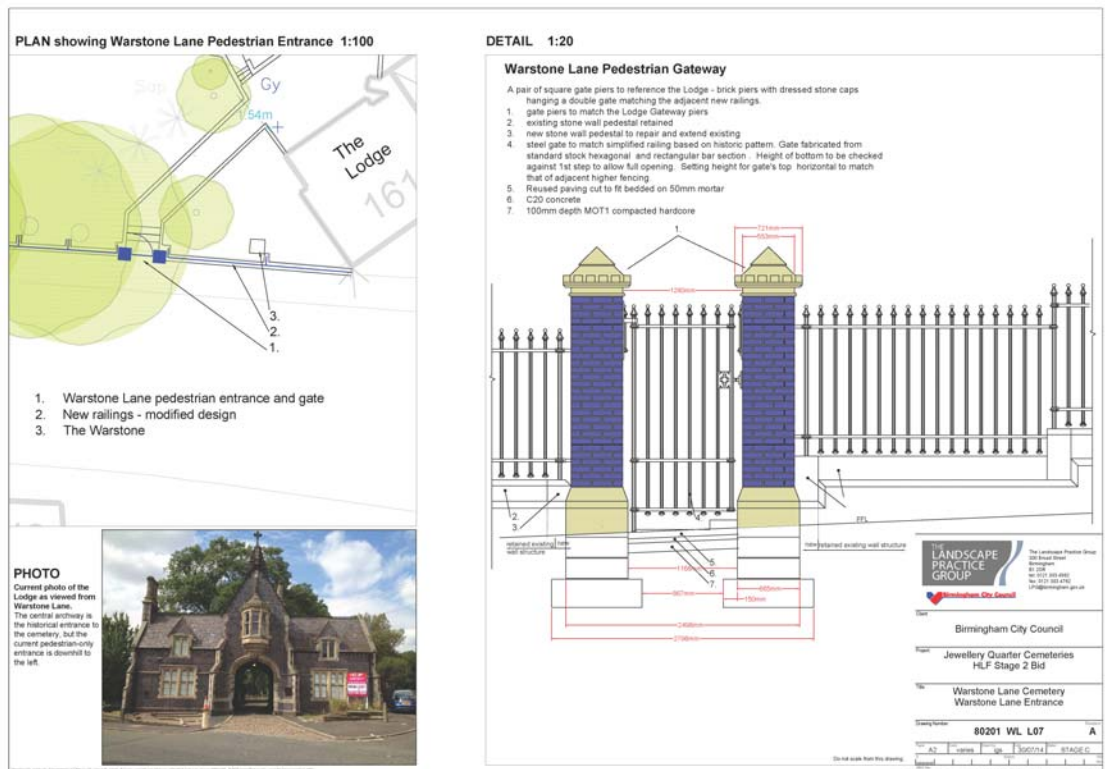
Photo of Icknield Street entrance showing the damaged extant piers that require sympathetic repair.

The proposed gates here will match those on Pitsford Street, though be narrower to fit the 3 yard pier width.

Warstone Lane Entrance



Photo of Warstone Lane Pedestrian Gateway showing the extant stone backstays forming the opening and the steps.



Warstone Lane Pedestrian Gateway Drawing showing reclaimed blue brick piers, stone pier caps, upper stone plinths and steel gates and railings. This entrance is not an original feature, but rather created when the Lodge first became leased out and its rear curtilage area encircled with a low wall and railings. Therefore the design is not to replicate the historical stone pier model, but to match with the Lodge in materials, colour and style. The proposed railings along this boundary are the simplified steel version, which are none the less very detailed and attractive.

2. Resurfacing of pathways;

The existing paths are largely Breedon gravel surfaced, with some tarmac sections. The flat paths require patch repairs. The gravel paths with a gradient have suffered from severe erosion; these are to be rebuilt with a bound macadam layer topped with buff coloured bonded gravel, which will resist erosion. The erosion of the paths over the years has silted up the drainage gulleys – these have already been cleaned out.



Photo of pathway leading down the side of the catacombs showing displaced gravel and silted up drainage channels.

3. Renovation of catacomb stonework;

Works to the catacomb walls are proposed for aesthetic, structural & safety reasons. The works will retain and reinstate original features, remove self set vegetation and repoint. Methods of restoration will be in keeping with the original materials.



Photo from the upper level showing the poor state of repair of the wall, buddleias and the long ago removed crenulation locations.

4. Installing an attractive safety balustrade along the catacomb terraces.



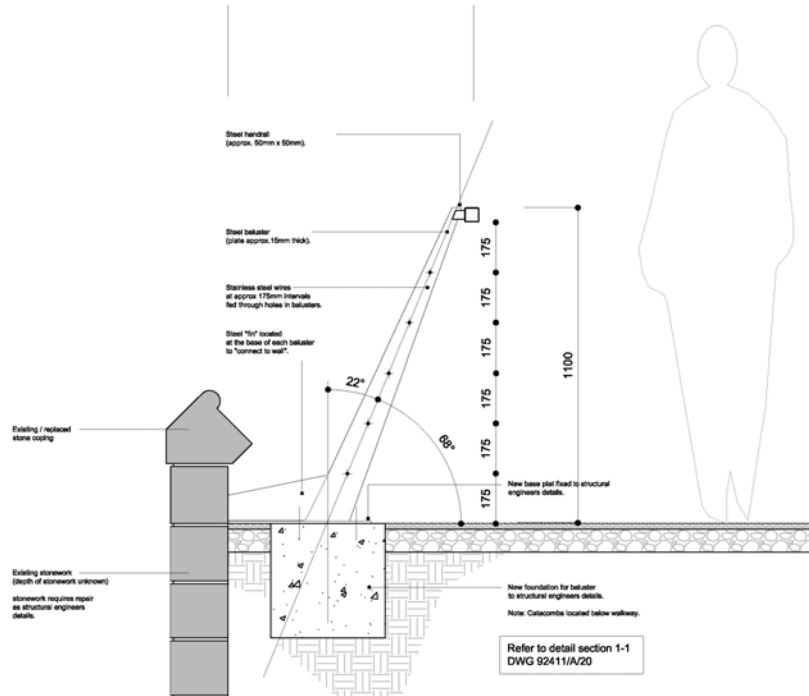
Photo from the middle level showing the height drops and the potential danger they create

The strategy to limit the impact of the new guardrail to the catacombs is to set the rail back from the stone capping and rake the balusters to:

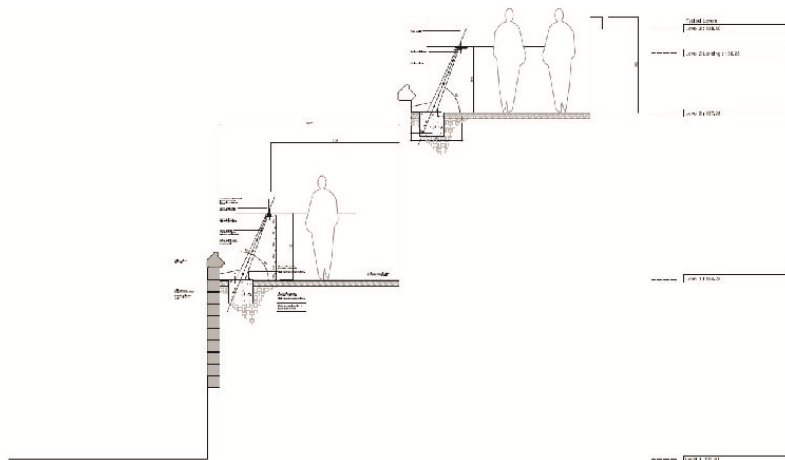
- reduce visual impact, and
- restrict the ability of children to climb the guardrail.

Setting the handrail back does narrow the width available to pedestrians but in general the width is a minimum of 1800mm, enabling 2 to 3 people to pass comfortably.

Section showing the raked baluster set back from the catacomb edge



Section showing the 2 terrace levels of the catacombs



The balusters will be stainless steel flats, wider at their base and tapering to their top and presenting their narrow edge to the catacomb front walls. They will be topped by a continuous steel hand rail and connected by strained stainless steel cables.

5. Improving the setting of the cemetery lodge through railings removal and resurfacing;

The rear of the Lodge (as seen from within the cemetery) has a poor setting. Inappropriate modern simple railings atop a low brick wall encompass the building's curtilage. In former days the Lodge archway formed the main entrance to the cemetery, which is not currently possible. This arrangement also impinges upon the war memorial, funnelling pedestrian through a tight alleyway on to Warstone Lane. It is proposed to remove the wall and railing and resurface the whole area with a combination of Breedon gravel and resin bonded surfacing. The lodge archway will once again be able to be used for pedestrian entry into the cemetery and in particular for marching ceremonies of remembrance, and with an unimpeded, improved view of the war memorial and lodge building from the rear.



Photo showing the cramped area in front of the war memorial and the poor setting of the Lodge archway physically separated from the actual cemetery.



Sketch showing how the removal of the railings and wall will once again focus the drive on the Lodge and lend the area a sense of space and connection with the building.

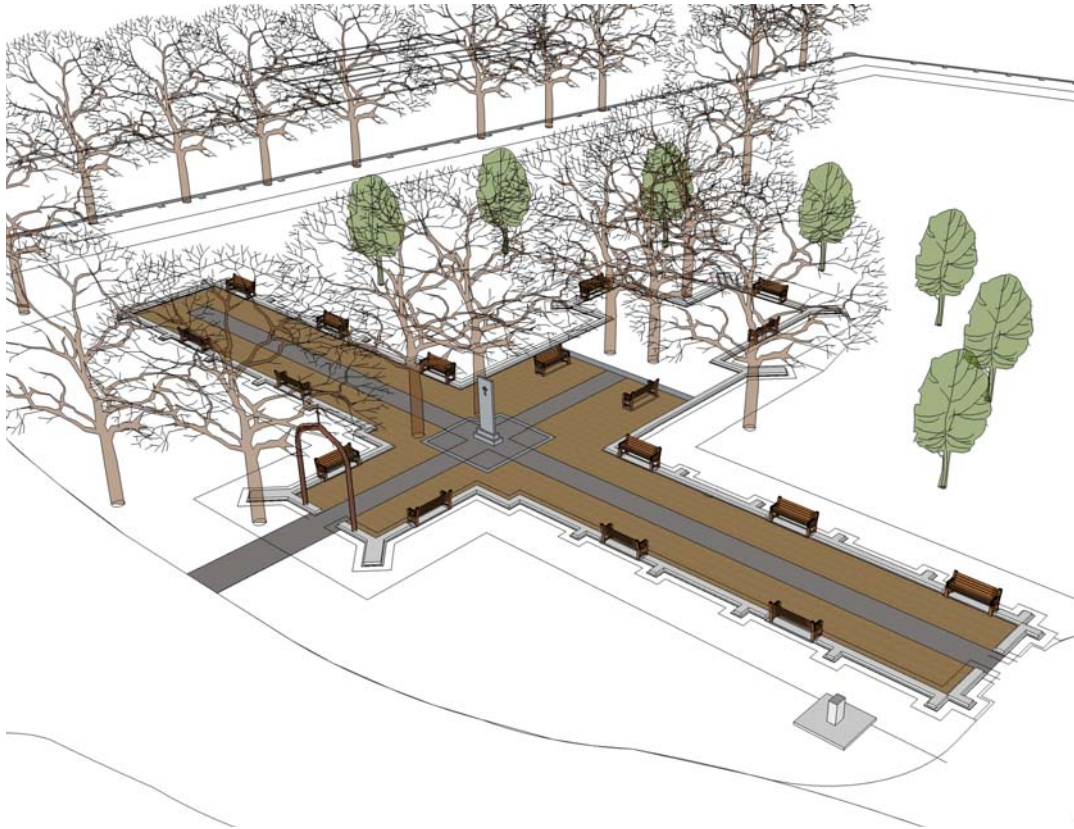
6. Creating a new Garden of Memory and Reflection

There is currently no trace of the former chapel, which was called St. Michael and all Angels, as it was demolished in 1958 after suffering some bomb damage in the war.



Historical artists image of St. Michael and all Angels showing the now demolished church sited above the catacombs. Note the church's main arched portico.

The area is consequently free from burial plots though there are underground catacomb chambers. In more recent years it has become a garden area with lawn, ornamental shrubs, trees and some seating. The proposal involves retracing the outline of the chapel on the ground plane with a low raised stone plinth, areas of paving and showing the rhythm of the windows with seating.



3D image of proposed interpretative footprint showing seating, paved pathways, gravel infill areas, retained trees and new tree planting.

Central to the design is a tall memorial stone on a low stone pedestal, engraved with historical images and descriptions. The former front entrance archway is replicated in size and scale by a new Corten steel arch. The muted natural shade of the steel will not jar with the natural and peaceful surroundings. The arch can also be seen from key locations within the site even from the Icknield Road drive, drawing visitors to the garden and giving them a sense of understanding about the historical heritage and site layout.



3D image of archway and central memorial stone as viewed from the driveway above the catacomb steps

7. Tree management, including planting and removal.

The proposals include for:

1. Protection and retention of existing trees
2. new tree planting to screen unsightly buildings;
3. felling in the central catacomb circle to reimagine the original clear setting;
4. felling of densely planted and self-set specimens near the proposed chapel footprint;
5. felling of any trees with poor structural or physiological condition.

Please see the accompanying Tree Constraints plans.

Tree species for planting

- *Cercis siliquastrum*, Judas Tree
Introduced from the Eastern Mediterranean in the 16th century, this small and highly floriferous tree (some flowers grow directly from the trunk or older branches), with conspicuous seed pods, has long been a favourite in the UK. Its name reflects the legend that it was the tree on which Judas hanged himself. Thus, it has often found a place in graveyards.



Cercis siliquastrum, Judas Tree

- *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata', fastigiated Yew
Loudon, in his *On Laying Out Cemeteries*, recommended the planting of, 'fastigate, conical dark needle-leaved evergreens', in many parts of a cemetery, partly because they did not spread so far and did not leave as much leaf litter as deciduous trees, and partly because, 'the cemeteries of the ancients were characterised by the cypress'. The fastigate yew was found in Ireland in 1780. Since that time, it has thrived in gardens, parks – and churchyards – in Britain, valued for its striking presence and ease of management.



Group of *Taxus baccata* 'Fastigiata' in a churchyard

- *Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii', Camperdown elm

Loudon highly recommended the weeping elm, *Ulmus montana pendula* (now known as *Ulmus glabra* 'Horizontalis') for planting in a cemetery, because of its gracefulness and its weeping habit, which was suitable in association with a monument. This tree has, however, suffered the same fate as so many other elms. The smaller, weeping elm, *Ulmus glabra* 'Camperdownii', the Camperdown elm seem to have survived, perhaps because they rarely reach more than 4 metres high. Thus, they are below the flight of the beetle which is responsible for killing our elms. It is one of the few small, weeping trees, which is striking in habit (rather than just a large 'mushroom' in appearance), and it is worth planting, not only because it becomes a picturesque, tree, but also to remind people what elm leaves and seeds look like. As testament to the relative robustness of this elm, Key Hill Cemetery has a specimen, which is in reasonable health, despite its having been burnt in the recent past.



Ulmus glabra 'Camperdownii'

Design Detail - Key Hill Cemetery

1. Resurfacing of pathways

The existing paths are largely gravel surfaced, with some tarmac sections. The paths above the northern Catacombs have been undermined by self-set trees and years of compaction; these are to be rebuilt with a bound macadam layer topped with buff coloured bonded gravel.



Photo of pathway above the northern Catacombs showing patches of deep potholes possibly caused by the removal of self-set trees.



Photo of main drive leading down towards Icknield St showing ruts beside the cobble drainage strips on either side.

2. Improvements to drainage by installation of soakaways

There are 2 severe areas of ponding on the main paths that require draining to restore visitor access throughout the site. As with the historical drainage gulleys at Warstone Lane, investigations show that the gulleys are not interconnected but rather each drain in to separate small soakaways or perhaps even into the underlying sand bed of the sites. The porosity has obviously suffered over years of leaf sediment and soil and new soakaways are required. They will be located under the path network to avoid burial plots and hand dug to avoid damage to structural tree roots.



Photo of flooded path junction. The drains here require the construction of a new soakaway.

3. Renovation of catacomb stonework;

Works to the catacomb walls are proposed for aesthetic, structural & safety reasons. The works will retain and reinstate original features, remove self-set vegetation and repoint. Methods of restoration will be in keeping with the original materials.



Photo showing how vegetation is undermining part of the catacomb structure. Some critical tree removals had already taken place when this photo was taken.

4. Replace with a more attractive safety balustrade above the catacombs

The balustrade proposal at Key Hill Cemetery is much simpler than at Warstone Lane because:

- It replaces an unattractive non original feature
- the views of the Catacombs are experienced from much closer and therefore the balustrade is often not even seen from below

The new barrier will be of a traditional, metal, 5 bar, 'Estate' railing design and will follow the existing line to help avoid issues of foundations clashing with buried structures, burials and tree roots.



Existing unattractive scaffold bar and metal strap balustrade on the upper level



Photo looking from below

Example of proposed estate railing, solid bar & painted.



5. Tree & vegetation clearance & management

Key Hill's London Planes create a very special ambiance to this cemetery and when the bluebells are out in late Spring the cemetery looks magical.

There is an area of much younger trees that would benefit the site from felling, and these are situated in front of and behind the main war memorial on the upper terrace. Trees here have created an overshadowed area, which would otherwise be an attractive open glade presenting the memorial at its best.

Access

Warstone Lane

Points of access to the Warstone Lane cemetery will change slightly, improving access:

- The corner entrance on Vyse Street, which was made perhaps 20-30 years ago, will be blocked off when the line of the historical railings is reinstated.
- The central Vyse Street entrance will have the step removed to provide a level access to facilitate wheel chairs.
- From Warstone Lane discussions are taking place with the lease holder to reopen the entrance through the Lodge arch; this is a ramped access rather than the existing stepped entrance slightly down the hill.

Generally

Access improvements within Warstone Lane and Key Hill Cemeteries include:

- Pathway resurfacing throughout Warstone Lane
- Pathway resurfacing at Key Hill to particularly poor rutted sections
- Draining of areas of ponding
- New & improved replacement safety balustrades to the catacombs, including handrails to stepped sections