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| Delegated Report | | Analysis sheet | | Expiry Date: | | 03/04/2014 | |
| | | N/A / attached | | Consultation Expiry Date: | | 13/03/2014 | |
| Officer | | | | Application Number(s) | | | |
| Victoria Pound | | | | 2014/0999/L | | | |
| Application Address | | | | Drawing Numbers | | | |
| St Stephen's Church Pond Street London NW3 2PP | | | | See decision letter. | | | |
| PO 3/4 | | Area Team Signature | | C&UD | | Authorised Officer Signature | |
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| Proposal(s) | | | | | | | |
| Removal of decayed decorative stonework to north elevation at high level (Retrospective). | | | | | | | |
| Recommendation(s): | | Grant listed building consent. | | | | | |
| Application Type: | | Listed Building Consent | | | | | |
| Conditions or Reasons for Refusal: | | Refer to Draft Decision Notice | | | | | |
| Informatives: | | | | | | | |
| Consultations | | | | | | | |
| Adjoining Occupiers: | | No. notified | 00 | No. of responses | 00 | No. of objections | 00 |
| | | | | No. electronic | 00 | | |
| Summary of consultation responses: | | Press and site notices displayed – no responses received. English Heritage – direct as to the granting of listed building consent, subject to condition. | | | | | |
| CAAC/Local groups* comments: *Please Specify | | N/a – LBC only. | | | | | |

Site Description

Grade I listed church dating from 1869-71 by SS Teulon, in purple Luton brick with stone dressings, bands and sculptures, in a modified early French Gothic style.

The building was vacant for a number of years after ceasing to operate as a church. It is now used as a school, following permission for a change of use being granted in 2002.

Relevant History

Planning permission PEX0000085/R1 and listed building consent LEX0000086/R1, were granted on 13 Sept 2002 for the repair and alteration of the building for school and community use, including the underpinning of the church to provide rooms at crypt level.

Relevant policies

LDF Core Strategy and Development Policies

CS14 Promoting high quality places and conserving our heritage
DP25 Conserving Camden's heritage

Assessment

The building has a great deal of decorative Bath stone statuary at high level, some of which has become friable and decayed. During high winds in October 2013, the large stone cross on the west gable apex was blown down and the arm of a figurative sculpture fell off. A stonemason's condition inspection of the remaining statuary was undertaken shortly afterwards, and it was found that a number of these remaining decorative items were unstable, weak or otherwise structurally unsound. A joint site inspection was also undertaken with Camden and English Heritage, and it was agreed that the unsafe items should be carefully removed as soon as practicable, to prevent further immediate masonry falls.

This application seeks retrospective listed building consent for the removal of a number of the items of statuary, all of which were situated on the building's north elevation:

- Easternmost figure on North Transept gable;
- Cross to the centre of the North Transept gable;
- Cross to the centre of the North Porch gable.

Additional urgent stabilising works and repairs were also undertaken, including the removal of a further part of an already-truncated figure (the westernmost on the North Transept gable) along the line of an open vertical vent (the remaining structure is considered stable and has therefore been left in situ), the repointing in lime of the apex coping stones to the North and South transept gables, and the in situ repair in lime of an open joint within the decorative cross on the South porch gable.

It was clear from the site inspection that the decorative stonework has decayed significantly. The Bath stone used is very soft, and in some cases has been bedded on the vertical or diagonal rather than naturally bedded, which has created open vents allowing water ingress, and the eventual shearing off of parts of the statuary. Some of the statues have open cracks which are allowing moisture into the structure, and historical cementitious repairs and metal strengthening / support measures which have caused further structural integrity problems. Some fixtures were loose to the

touch, and leaning from the vertical. The removal of the immediately dangerous statues as an emergency measure is therefore considered to be justified, as is the repair of some of the remaining items.

A photographic survey of the items in situ was undertaken prior to their removal, and the removed statues are stored safely on site pending consideration of their reinstatement. The statuary is considered to contribute significantly to the building's appearance, character, and special architectural and historic interest, and its permanent removal would therefore be considered harmful to this special interest. However the friable nature of the stone has caused much of the remaining statuary to erode significantly, and many of the figurative statues are not recognisable. Pending the longer-term consideration of the statuary as a whole, it is considered appropriate to attach a condition to this consent which seeks the reinstatement of the removed items. English Heritage has directed as to the granting of listed building consent subject to such a condition.

In summary, the emergency removal of the three statues on the north elevation is considered to be justified under the particular circumstances. The relevant local and national policies and guidance are met, and it is recommended that listed building consent is granted, subject to condition.