

ALL SAINTS GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, CAMDEN

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT IN SUPPORT OF LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION TO RECONFIGURE AND UPGRADE KITCHEN AND WC AREAS

BACKGROUND

Camden Chapel was constructed in 1822-4 to the designs of W and WH Inwood as chapel of ease to serve Lord Camden's continuing development of this part of Camden during the 1820s. Later known as St Stephens, it was dedicated to All Saints in about 1920. In 1948 the church was leased to the Greek Cypriot community in Camden, since when it has been known as All Saints Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

William Inwood (c1771-1843) and his eldest son Henry William (1794-1843) are best known for the three Greek Revival churches that they constructed in Camden..

The Greek-Orthodox Cathedral and parish of All Saint's Camden Town plays a particularly active role in the social, cultural and religious life of one of London's largest ethnic communities. It was one of the first churches to be adapted for the use of the increasing large Greek-Orthodox community in London during the late 1940s. The Anglican Church gave its permission for use of the church for this purpose in December 1947, supported, amongst others, by the then Bishop of London and Sir Winston Churchill. It has flourished since then, fulfilling the needs of a large parish and congregation; well over 2,000 people attend the church on its Easter day service. In addition to serving members of the mainland Greek community, the church played a major role in the adjustment to UK life for Greek-Cypriot community who increased from a population of some 10,000 in the early 1950s to about 250,000 by the turn of the century. There was a particular concentration in the north of the capital, with Camden and adjacent areas becoming community hubs, with dense groups of Cypriots settling there. In 1978 the community obtained the freehold of the church in order to better manage its affairs and carry out its work more effectively. The church performs hundreds of weddings, baptisms funeral and other services for thousands of UK residents of the Greek-Orthodox religion. Apart from the majority of those of Greek and Cypriot descent, there are many who belong to English, Serbian, Russian, Bulgarian, Ethiopian and other ethnic groups. The church is largely autonomous but is within the archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain.

The church comprises a large rectangular nave, with galleries around three sides supported on Ionic columns, an apsed chancel, and a circular vestibule flanked by stairs to the gallery. Twin vestries at the east end are linked by a semicircular screen. There is a shallow brick vaulted crypt below the church..

The church is listed Grade 1 and is of significance as a largely intact example of scholarly Greek Revival architecture, and as the focus of the North London Cypriot community in the post war years.

The church has been little altered since construction. The chancel is now screened by an iconostasis in accordance with Orthodox liturgy. Little is known of repair works; repairs to the church roof were undertaken in 1988 although the specification and extent of work is not certain.

The church is of stock brick, with Bath stone dressings, portico and tower. The stone is said to be Monks Park for columns and Stone Ground for ashlar work.

EXISTING LAYOUTS

The area flat roofed areas to the north and south of the apse have always provided ancillary accommodation, probably choir and priests' vestries. The area to the south of the apse, which is one of the areas included in this application, is currently laid out as a kitchen, male WC and female WC. Access to the WCs is through the kitchen which is unsatisfactory and which prevents wheelchair users from accessing the WCs. Investigations indicate that the roof above this area is of C20 date, and that the internal walls affected by the proposal are not original.

The other area included in this application is the lobby to the southwest stair. There are two areas of the lobby that have already been partitioned off.

PROPOSED LAYOUT

The existing kitchen area is to be stripped out and reconfigured to provide a more practical and useable kitchen, toilet and storage area, which can be reached without having to go through the kitchen.

The storage areas in the west end are converted to male WC, female WC and disabled WC, which will provide easier and more discreet access for the congregation.

Wastes from WCs and basins will be dropped into the vault below and connected to the existing drainage system by a new underground drain along the car park.

ACCESS ISSUES

The proposed works will significantly improve facilities within the church for people with disabilities.