

Mr Michael Taylor BA,  
St Stephen's Restoration & Preservation Trust,  
St Stephen's,  
Pond Street,  
Hampstead,  
London NW3 2PP

16<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Mr Taylor,

**Observations on the Report from Historic England  
on St Stephen's, Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead  
from Bridget Drake-Wilkes 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

1. Historic England were commissioned by you to review the state of the roof at St Stephen's and this they did on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2015, taking the opportunity at the same time to consider the water encountered in the pumps situated below floor level of the crypt.

2. The report from Historic England contains opinions that should be put into perspective. I know nothing about roof nails and will not comment on them further, however Fig. 2 of the HE report is misleading and unhelpful as it suggests a continual steady state of degradation since 2013 whereas observations by you show that is not the case, and that slates began to move in larger numbers in 2015; so the Fig distorts the known truth and gives a misleading impression to the reader.

3. Section 5.3.1 records an opinion that is uninformed; I am not sure what qualification Ms Drake-Wilkes has for coming to that conclusion but it is now recognised, even in Camden's guidance, that old slope surfaces on London Clay with an inclination greater than 7 degrees are liable to be unstable if undercut by excavation at their toe and should be treated with caution. That would be the case here.

4. Section 5.4.1 is equally uninformed; Ms Drake-Wilkes is correct in concluding the water encountered by Teulon is neither that of the Fleet or the Tyburn however there is water everywhere as shown clearly by the geological cross sections attached. The site is below the spring line as demonstrated by the present Ordnance Survey maps and that of 1814. In addition, the Ordnance Survey data base for contours at 2m intervals and data from Lidar show even now that surface water if present would flow towards and presumably across the site.

5. That said the suggestion made in Section 5.4.2 is sensible but an analyses that detects mains water or foul water would not exclude the presence of ground water too.

6. Section 6.1 is quite wrong in a general sense; it should be remembered that the report appears to be considering risk only in terms of vibrations and that Ms Drake-Wilkes was clearly unaware of the matters relating to the site's 114 year history of movement which in every case occurs when engineering work has been underway at the foot of the hill.

7. The Condition Survey recently commissioned by the Royal Free Hospital and undertaken by Sinclair Johnston at the request of Ryan Bunce & Co. charts in extraordinary detail the damage that St Stephen's has sustained over its 100+year history and helps place the report from Historic England into perspective.

8. This report from Historic England should not be taken as a definitive document on either the condition of St Stephen's itself or on the condition of the ground on which it sits.

Yours sincerely



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Emeritus Reader in Engineering Geology  
Imperial College London.  
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**Attached** Fig of Geological Cross section from Hampstead Underground to Royal Free Hospital locating the spring line elevation for the area.

