

Belsize Park, St Peter's Church: QI Repairs

Statement of Need



1. General Information

St Peter's Church draws its congregation from the parish of Belsize Park and nearby areas. The church services comprise a Parish Eucharist and evening prayer on Sunday; a midweek Eucharist on Thursdays; and daily prayer on four weekdays. The electoral roll currently numbers 80. The typical attendance at the Sunday Eucharist is 20-30; larger numbers attend at Easter and Christmas. The congregation ranges in age from the very young (4 years old and younger) to over 80, though the majority of congregants are in the upper half of the range. In addition to the regular pattern of church services, St Peter's hosts a variety of activities including regular concerts, occasional lectures and talks and third party events such as school gatherings.

The last Quinquennial Inspection report was in November 2014, highlighting urgent highlevel work to roofs and rainwater disposal, as well as masonry repairs.

2. The Need

The church requires safe access for clearing and maintenance of the lead valley gutter between the tower north side and the Nave south slope. This will aid regular inspections, allowing maintenance needs in this area to be addressed promptly, avoiding damage and resulting extensive repairs at a later date.

3. The proposals

The slate louvres on the tower north side will need to be altered to allow for the installation of a small access door and ladder into the valley gutter between the tower and the Nave south slope. The door is in line with the back of the existing slate louvres, and only visible from the ground in a limited number of locations from the west side. The alterations require one large scale slate louvre to be removed. This will be protected and stored in the tower. The louvre is difficult to remove due to its size and weight and therefore unlikely to get lost over time.

4. Reasoning

The existing valley gutter to the Nave requires regular clearing and inspections to ensure it keeps functioning reliably. Due to lack of regular maintenance to this gutter, water was in the past able to

enter the fabric in this location. This has caused localized damage to the internal render, requiring repair.

Currently access is only possible from a ladder at the west gable. This form of access is only feasible for builders, but not deemed safe for a member of the congregation, thus discouraging the necessary ongoing inspection and maintenance.

Like for like fabric repairs, arising from the latest QI Inspection Report are proposed to be undertaken under List B permission from London Diocese. It is therefore deemed a cost effective measure to include the access improvement to the Nave valley gutter. The defective internal plaster underneath the valley gutter is being repaired as part of the QI repairs. The improved maintenance access will therefore safeguard the repairs in this location.

5. Justification

The proposed external alterations are tucked away at high level, partially shielded from view by the Nave roof, and only visible from a very limited number of locations on the ground at the west side. The significance of the external appearance of the church is therefore not affected.

If the access improvements were not carried out, there is a likelihood for the internal appearance of the church to be affected by water ingress, resulting from insufficient maintenance due to access difficulties. This would over time detract from the significance of a fairly well preserved Victorian Church interior.

In our opinion introducing the external maintenance access is not adversely affecting the significance of the building and the integrity of its fabric; it therefore is beneficial.

Thomas Ford and Partners, November 2018