

HIGHGATE CEMETERY: OFFICE ALTERATIONS

STATEMENTS TO SUPPORT APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

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PART 1: HERITAGE STATEMENT

General:

The entrance building, comprising an archway into the west cemetery flanked by Anglican and Nonconformist chapels, was constructed in 1838-9 to the designs of Stephen Geary. It was extended to the south in the later 19th century, including the construction of an hydraulic bier which lowered coffins below road level to a tunnel connecting the east cemetery.

It is listed Grade II, Historic England ID 1378877.

The building originally had a rather unscholarly ‘pre-ecclesiological’ church character, enlivened by elaborate pinnacles and a cupola, but these features were removed in the mid 20th century.



The building in its reduced form was altered again in c1989, when the nonconformist chapel was subdivided and converted to administration offices.



The 1989 alterations left the building with the architectural character of the Anglican Chapel intact (enhanced by more recent redecoration in a 19th century manner) and the offices having a more functional aesthetic.

The ground and first floor offices are divided from a double-height space by a glazed timber screen that dates from 1989. Other internal fittings including the door into the offices are of the same date. The office floors are of plain 20th century concrete construction without sophisticated finishes, covered with carpet.



Assessment of Significance:

Grading structure:

Exceptional: Important at national to international levels

Considerable: Important at regional level or higher

Some: Of regional significance for group or other value

Local: Of local value

Negative or intrusive: Features which detract from the value of the site.

The Cemetery as a whole is a highly significant site, assessed at the highest level as having *exceptional* significance.

The chapel buildings individually but taken as a whole - for their architectural contribution to the Cemetery ensemble and for their evidential value in the history of the site - are considered to be at the higher end of *some* significance on this scale. The debasement of the building by removal of decorative elements makes it of less than *considerable* value.

The mid and late 20th century alterations, including the removal of decorative features and the subdivision of the nonconformist chapel are considered to make a *negative* contribution.

The features that are affected by the proposals are all from late 20th century work and are considered to be have a neutral effect on the overall significance of the building

PART 2: DESIGN STATEMENT

Needs:

Requirements have changed since 1989 and the present administrative needs of the Highgate Cemetery Trust are for an open plan office on the ground floor, rather than the divided space they have at present. Glazing the office entrance door is a Health and Safety recommendation.

Proposals:

It is proposed to remove the glazed screen on the ground floor (only) to turn the office accommodation there into a single space. Other alterations are incidental to this:

Summary of proposals:

- Remove glazed screen at ground floor level. Modify support at first floor, and adapt moulding details to terminate principal mullions below ceiling level.
- Form glazed vision panel in fire door providing access to ground floor office.
- Form services duct in solid floor structure

Impact assessment:

We find that the proposed works will have no impact on significant historic fabric from the 19th century. Moreover they will have no detrimental impact on the spatial or architectural characteristics of the building that give it character or significance.

PART 3: ACCESS STATEMENT

The entrance building forms part of the entrance complex to Highgate Cemetery, in active use for burials and as a visitor attraction. The proposed alterations affect only the private office spaces inside, and make no changes to the accessibility of the offices.

None of the work impacts on access issues in the public areas.

FURTHER DOCUMENTATION:

Drawings

968-OF-01: Plan as existing

968-OF-02: Plan as proposed

968-OF-03: Details of screen alterations

968-OF-04: Details of alterations to internal door

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