

HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE OLD CHURCH OF ST STEPHEN FYLINGDALES NORTH YORKSHIRE

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This Heritage Statement accompanies the Listed Building Consent application for internal plaster repairs proposed to the east end of the Old Church of St Stephen, Fylingdales, North Yorkshire.

Sections of this statement are also included in the Design and Access Statement accompanying the application.

1.0 LISTING DESCRIPTION

Old St Stephen's church is listed grade I.

Listing Description

IoE Number: 327705

Location: CHURCH OF ST STEPHEN, CHURCH LAND (east side)
FYLINGDALES, SCARBOROUGH, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Date listed: 06 October 1969

Date of last amendment: 06 October 1969

Grade I

FYLINGDALES CHURCH LANE NZ 9405 16/52 (east side) 6.10.69 – Church of St Stephen I Former Parish Church. 1821 rebuilding on medieval site. Course herringbone-tooled sandstone with ashlar dressings. Purple slate roof. Single-cell preaching box with small sanctuary; South porch and north vestry are early additions. Gothick style. Open-pedimented porch has segment-arched entrance with rusticated voussoirs. Sundial above has dates 1736, 1864 and 1919 with various initials. Wood side benches; and wide 6-panel double door with interlaced fanlight; keystone largely concealed by barrel vault of porch. 5-bay nave has pointed-arched windows, with glazing bars and interlaced heads, in architraves with impost. All rest on cill band except for shorter window above door. Small square-headed door in south chancel wall; east window similar and flanked by big stepped diagonal buttresses. North nave wall has 3 short windows, similar to that above door, lighting the gallery. West windows similar to east. Vestry has 15-pane fixed light with 2 opening panes. OSBM on south-east corner of nave. West bell-cupola had only its damaged wood frame remaining at time of survey. Interior; Complete late Georgian fittings. Panelled gallery, around north and west sides, rests on Roman Doric columns. Lateral south pulpit has sounding board and stairs with turned balusters and ramped handrail. Complete box pews, including one named for the Farsyde family with coat of arms. Various memorial tablets to the Farsyde family. Small early C18 font with low, cornical open cover.



2.0 THE CHURCH IN ITS ENVIRONMENT

The old Church of St Stephen stands to the northwest of Robin Hoods Bay, on the north edge of Fylingthorpe. In a fantastic and exposed position, the church overlooks the bay and North Sea beyond.

The church was built in 1821 on a site used for worship since 11th century. No illustrations of the earlier church are known but a description reported in a Council for the Care of Church report (18th July 1987) *'The chancel had heavy buttresses and a parapet with a lead roof and the nave had low walls with five small found-headed windows on the south side, square-headed windows on the north and a roof of stone slabs and pantiles; at the west was a stunted square tower. A gallery was reached by steps outside the west end.'*

Although completed in 1821 the church was replaced after a relatively short period with the construction of a new church in 1870, built closer to the centre of Fylingthorpe. This church is also named St Stephen.

Old St Stephen's served as a mortuary chapel for many years until, in 1917 a phase of repairs were carried out and it once again used for regular services. Further repairs were carried out in 1943. In 1984 both new and Old St Stephen's churches were damaged by storms resulting in the decision to vest Old St Stephen's in the Redundant Churches Fund (later to become The Churches Conservation Trust). Vesting completed in 1986.

2.1 Churchyard

Sited high above Robin hood's Bay the church is surrounded by a steeply sloping churchyard, down from north to south. The churchyard is filled with many headstones, many of which are older than the present church, some recording the burials of seafaring people in many parts of the world. An extension to the southern part of the churchyard was opened in 1870.

The churchyard is bounded on the north, east and west sides by dry-stone walls. To the south a stone retaining wall and wire fence marks the boundary with the adjacent field.

On the south side of the church a stone path crosses the churchyard, connecting east and west boundaries. Just south of the east gateway there is a small stone stable with pantile roof built for the rector's horse.

2.2 Church

The church plan consists of nave, chancel, vestry and south porch. From the listing it is understood the original plan consisted of nave and chancel, with vestry and south porch being early additions. An upper gallery is located at the west end of the nave and extends along the north side. While the altar is in the east end chancel, the three decker pulpit is positioned half way along the nave on the south side. The box pews face both east and west, towards the pulpit.

The church is built of dressed square sandstone blocks and slate roof. Tooling to the ashlar is herringbone, sometimes incorporating a margin, characteristic of late Georgian buildings in the areas.

The nave is a rectangular space lit by five pointed arch timber windows on the south side and tree point arched windows above the gallery on the north side. There is a similar window in the west wall although the top of this is blind, obscured by the gallery. The space is very simple. The plastered walls and ceiling have no mouldings, plinths or cornices. At the east end a simple round-headed arch leads through to the chancel. In the southwest corner of the nave an enclosed area houses a collection of 19th century Maiden's garlands.

The chancel is lit by a single east window of the same type and style as those in the nave. As the nave, the walls and ceiling are flat plastered with no cornice or mouldings. A door on the north side of the chancel leads to the vestry while a door on the south side gives direct external access.

The interior of the church remains largely untouched with many of its fittings surviving from 1821, including the gallery and box pews.

The church is stepped into the slope of the churchyard and as a result, the ground level on the north side is higher than internal floor levels (by approximately 1m). On the north side of the church a retaining wall provides a gap between external ground levels and the north wall. At the east end of the church the external ground level appears to abut the chancel.

3.0 PROPOSALS

3.1 As with many of the churches cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust, local areas of repair have been carried out sensitively using appropriate methods and materials. Sadly some repairs, likely carried out before vesting, have not been carried out as successfully.

The interior of the church is plastered with stone floor and raised timber pew platforms. As with all buildings of this period the plaster finish would have been a lime and sand mix, limewashed. Over time areas of this plaster have failed due to age or water damage. Unfortunately, some repairs have been carried out with either cement or gypsum based render/plaster. While lime plaster is permeable allowing moisture through, cement and gypsum are not.

In the chancel the walls, floor, furniture and fittings are all showing signs of damage resulting from trapped moisture and high humidity levels.

3.2 Outline of work

Along with re-plastering a number of small items of repair will be carried out with the aim of reducing moisture levels and improving the environmental conditions in the church. These include:

- checking and adjusting all rainwater gutters, downpipes and gullies, to ensure rainwater is taken away from the building effectively and efficiently;
- re-pointing open joints in walls and paving with lime mortar, to prevent water ingress;
- improve ventilation in the church;
- keep bottom of walls free from soil build up and vegetation to maintain air circulation.

3.3 Fixtures and fittings

In the chancel, two commandment boards are mounted on the east wall and a hatchment to the Farsyde family, on the north wall. All three are suffering as a result of the environmental conditions. During the proposed work these boards and hatchment will be undergoing conservation by an Accredited Conservator.

3.4 Lime plastering

Plaster will be applied in traditional 3-coat work incorporating horse hair.

Materials:

Hydraulic Lime: is to be high quality naturally fully hydraulic lime from an approved source. Lime should be feebly hydraulic (NHL2).

Sand: medium and sharp coarse grey sand mix.

Hair: to be clean, dry, carded horsehair from: Lawrence Long Ltd, Tel. 0844 6607081, or Arnold and Gould Ltd, Tel. 01787 280 343, or alternative approved source.

Water: to be clean and uncontaminated.

Mixes:

Plaster to masonry to be three coat work. Final coat to have a wooden float traditional finish. Some dubbing out or galleting may be necessary where wall surfaces are uneven.

Background: 3:1 scratch coat, (sand:NHL2 lime) incorporating hair,

Float coat: 3:1, sand: NHL2 (with hair),

Top coat to be 2:1 Finishing coat, finer grain sand; lime (without hair).

Allow 0.5kg hair per 100ltrs plaster volume.

**4.0 SUMMARY**

The application for Listed Building Consent is for the removal of faulty or inappropriate areas of plaster in the Chancel. Once access is available a detailed inspection will be carried out to identify areas of plaster to be removed and replaced. With the plaster removed the masonry below will be left exposed to dry before a new lime plaster finish is applied.

The purpose of these proposals are to remove areas of loose or inappropriate plaster in the chancel, that are detrimental to the building and fittings, and replace with more appropriate plaster finish.

For photographs please refer to the Design and Access Statement, appendix B.