

IN THE CONSISTORY COURT AT LINCOLN

In the matter of St Botolph, Boston

Judgment

1. This Petition dated 8/9/17 is an application to install new internal glass porches to the north and south entrances of this Grade 1 listed church. St Botolph's is described as a 'spectacular parish church' by Historic England ('HE') in their letter 20/9/18 and is of outstanding quality both externally and with its magnificent interior. A consensus seems to have been reached about the proposals for the south porch, but in respect of the north porch there has been a change in the proposal which is not supported by HE.
2. The Statement of Significance/Need dated July 2017 explains how both north and south entrances are in constant use with drafts created which creates discomfort for users, and is also detrimental to the fabric of the building. The doors face each other and must create a through draft when both are open at the same time. The Environmental Assessment and Monitoring Report by Toby Curteis dated April 2016 identifies at para 5.1 the 'environmental instability' that is caused to the fabric of the building at the west end of the nave attributable to the external air leakage. This leakage is both in summer when the doors are open, and also in winter when the doors are generally kept shut to visitor traffic but when opened, produces a similar effect drawing in cold air. Mr Curteis explains that swift changes in internal relative humidity caused by the interaction of these 2 doors and the movement of air caused by their use, will have an effect on salt efflorescence on the stone work and 'the process of deterioration is likely to be rapid'. This is evidence that the fabric of this fine church, particularly at the west end, is being adversely affected by the operation of these 2 doors. The Petitioners seek to address this problem by these proposals by enclosing the internal areas around the doors. The need for such measures in principle is not challenged. I note the letter from HE dated 6/6/17 which states that the insertion of new internal lobbies/porches for the north and south doors can be justified by the improved environmental performance both for the fabric of the building and for the people using it. In their letter dated 4/9/17 they state that the circumstances set out in Mr Curteis's report are 'exceptional' and they

can support in principle works at both doorways. However, how these new internal lobbies/porches are to be achieved are subject to dispute.

The south porch treatment

3. South porches in mediaeval churches were an important part of the historic mission of the building. The relationship between the churchyard and the south porch was important as many ceremonies took place in the south porch, such as weddings, laying a coffin in, or where significant contracts were agreed and people's consciences were bound. The south porch at St Botolph's is particularly impressive with 2 storeys with parvise above it. It is deeply moulded with thin moulded shaft reveals and above a cusped moulded arch. Photographs of the doorway at p 10 onwards of the July 2017 revision of the Statement of Significance.
4. The PCC considered 3 treatments of the south porch:
 - (i) Installing an internal lobby
 - (ii) Installing an internal screen to the south porch
 - (iii) Glass doors to the internal south porch reveal
5. Option (iii) was the preferred option having minimal effect on the fabric and being reversible. There were similar glass doors used at St James's, Louth which had proved successful (see photos p 13 SoS July 2017). This option would not sub-divide the inside of the porch and when shut the existing mediaeval doors could be viewed. When the door was open people could view the inside of the church through the glass doors. There was a 'bat issue' that had to be considered further before this option could be finalised.
6. By their pre-application advice letter dated 4/9/17 HE supported Option (iii) preferring the doors to be full length with no fixed glazed upper panel above them. It was acknowledged that full height doors may be difficult to achieve but asked that it be considered. They also suggested that the new glazed doors should be fitted directly in front of the existing external mediaeval door thus enclosing most of the porch behind the glazed doors when shut: this would assist with the 'bat issue'.
7. Ms McEvedy, the architect, responded on 15/11/17 with reasons why the glass doors should be set in the position suggested by HE. Those reasons are (i) the glass doors would be subject to vandalism (ii) they would have an adverse effect on the archway (iii) there would be 'dead' area in front of the glass doors where rubbish would collect (iv) the doors would sub-divide the space within the porch. Additionally, Natural England's ('NE') bat adviser advised that the porch was more important to the bats than the church and thus setting the doors close to the existing wooden external doors would be detrimental to bats. The bat activity beyond the glass doors at the inner reveal is much less than the bat activity in the porch, so NE were content with glazed doors set back by the inner reveal. Thus, Ms McEvedy proposed that the least harmful option was for the glass doors be installed to the south entrance inner door reveal. This was the

recommendation of the DAC in their advice dated 8/9/17. They supported these south porch proposals.

8. The PCC changed architects through this process and the current south porch design by 'Soul Architects' dated July 18 I have assumed reflects the same proposal that was recommended to me by the DAC in January 2018. I note there is a fixed glazed panel above the glazed doors. I am satisfied that this is the best option and that without the fixed panel the glazed doors would be extremely large and heavy to move. The doors are to be set in the inner door reveal.
9. The proposals for the south porch are therefore justified and I will grant a faculty for those works subject to certain conditions which I will set out at the end of this judgement.

The north porch treatment

10. The original proposal by Ms McEvedy set out in the design drawings 11/7/17 used oak for double doors and panels and had a Georgian quality. This would have been a great improvement on the existing unsightly handrails and ramps. However, the DAC expressed reservations about the design: whilst not objecting to the design they considered that this was a wasted opportunity to match the 21st century wood work and glass design treatment of the adjacent service area of the shop which was immediately adjacent to the west of the doorway. The email dated 3/1/18 from the DAC secretary expresses this in terms of a 'slightly more contemporary' design possibly 'echoing the design of the shop and office next to which it will be built'. In the DAC advice the proviso entered was that the designs of the north porch should be 'simple in nature and in keeping with the adjacent visitor centre'. In photographs the adjacent wooden treatment of the shop is in vertical strips with a light wood.
11. The HE pre-application advice dated 4/9/17 supported the proposed design.
12. The proposed design was simplified in response to the DAC's comments and the Vicar set out her support for the progress of the project with this design, a private donor being involved who had seen the design and with others was keen for matters to proceed. Ms McEvedy on 18/1/18 explains that the design reflected traditional joinery of the church such as the pews, the Cotton Chapel, the pulpit and the choir stalls as well as the timbers of the roof. Whilst a 'modernist' approach would be suitable for the shop because of the large areas of clear glass but, she submitted, that is not suitable for the porch with its high degree of wear and tear.
13. In 2018 the PCC changed architects and Soul Architects have now submitted a new proposal dated July 2018 for the north porch which reflects the concerns expressed by the DAC. The new design blends in with the existing woodwork and design of the shop/servery area. The PCC resolution supports this new proposal (15/10/18) and the Vicar explains her support for the new proposals in her letter dated 25/9/18. She explains that the original design would have been

appropriate if it had been a standalone project, but this work must be judged not just by the fine woodwork elsewhere in the church that Ms McEvedy sets out in her response 18/1/18, but also by reference to what is immediately adjacent to it, namely the shop/servery area. She considers that the doorway area is part of the service structure of the building and thus a continuation of the same design from the shop/servery area is entirely consistent.

14. I ordered that the new designs be re-advertised: no objections were received.
15. HE were re-consulted about the new design and by their letter dated 20/9/18 they object to the new proposal as an inappropriate treatment of the doorway area. They state that the timber panels to the doorway create a solid appearance which are eye catching and distracting to the architectural detailing of the doorway. Their fundamental objection is that the porch should refer back to the architecture around the porch rather than to the service construction of the shop/servery area. They are also concerned about the width of the south elevation which encompasses a cupboard and urge that should be omitted.
16. The PCC response explains that the area of the proposed cupboard is already used for storage and if there is no cupboard the space will continue to be filled with items: it is better to have this hidden by the continuing wooden panelling extending to include the cupboard and continuing towards the shop/servery area.
17. The DAC support the new proposals indicating that this was what they had hoped would have been encompassed by the original plans.

Determination.

18. I am satisfied that the new proposals for the north porchway are appropriate and justified. I accept the advice that I have been given by the DAC. They meet the need that the Petitioners have plainly established, whilst at the same time maintaining a design that is in keeping with the church. The modern glass/wood treatment of the shop servery area is successful in the north west corner of the church. It is immediately adjacent to any new wooden internal design for the north doorway. I consider that it is less jarring for there to be a continuity of design in this corner of the church. It is more appropriate for the wooden design of the internal north doorway to echo that to which it is immediately adjacent, rather than echoing the woodwork elsewhere in the church (however splendid that woodwork is). This is a service area in the north western corner of the church: I consider that any internal treatment of the north entrance must principally refer to the successful modern design of the adjacent servery whilst not detracting from the architectural detailing around the north doorway. This is achieved by the proposed design. A faculty is therefore granted for it.

Conditions

19. The conditions for the works are as follows:

- (i) The contractors work to the specific advice of Natural England as set out in letter dated 12/10/17 in respect of the south porch and their general advice contained in that letter and 27/5/16 in respect of the north porch works
- (ii) Funds for the works are held by the PCC or pledged thereto before works commence
- (iii) The requirements of the insurers set out in their letter dated 19/10/17 are met
- (iv) The works to the north and south porches are those set out in the drawings of Soul Architects dated July 2018
- (v) if during any excavation work in either doorway disarticulated human remains are uncovered and it is necessary to move the same, they may be removed and reinterred elsewhere with consecrated ground of this church, under the supervision of a priest.

The Reverend and Worshipful Chancellor His Honour Judge Mark Bishop

4th February 2019