

Folkestone, Holy Trinity

JUDGMENT

INTRODUCTION

1. By this Petition dated 31 October 2012 the Vicar and Churchwardens seek the authorisation of 'The introduction of six new stained glass windows to fill the south windows of the south porch in accordance with a description of the design by Alison Eaton and drawings of the individual windows.' The petition has been duly publicised and attracted no objections.
2. Holy Trinity Folkestone is a Grade II* listed building. It was consecrated in 1868, having been built over the previous two years. Further building was undertaken in the 1880s. There were subsequent additions in 1929 in the form of vestries and a spacious south porch. The church suffered during the Second World War when several bombs fell near it and damaged the roof and some of the windows. There are therefore several windows of later twentieth century design as well as some remaining late Victorian/early twentieth century ones.
3. The south porch is of unusual design, having two doors, east and west, as well as a clear glass timber framed door on its north side, leading into the south aisle of the main church building.
4. The listing description is not included with the Petition but I have downloaded it from English Heritage's website. It records: II* By Ewan Christian: 1866-8, S aisle and transept finished 1882, N aisle, transept and tower completed in 1888. Early 20th-century work by G H Fellowes Prynne: vestries 1913, SW porch 1927-8. MATERIALS: Squared Kentish ragstone rubble with Bath stone dressings with small amounts of red polychrome brick and stone decorative details. Slate roofs.

PLAN: Nave with clerestory, semi-circular apsidal chancel, octagonal crossing tower over the choir, gabled N and S transepts, N and S aisles with transverse gabled bays, NW porch, SW porch and NE vestries.

EXTERIOR: The style of the church is of the 13th century with lancet and plate tracery windows. The principal facade is to the S on to Sandgate Road. This is dominated by the scale of the nave roof, the crossing tower, the series of transverse gables on the aisle and the large gable of the transept. There is a decorative cornice throughout. The clerestory has paired lancet windows placed opposite the valleys of the aisle gables. These gables, divided from one another by buttresses, have two-light windows with a punched round window in the masonry above them. These windows, like those on the transepts and apse, have brick and stone polychrome heads. The buttressed S transept has a door, also with a polychrome head, and three tall, equal-height lancets and, in the gable, an oculus with sexfoil cusping and set in a polychrome frieze and with a polychrome head. Between the springing of the apse windows and the eaves is stone polychrome decoration of grey and cream lozenges which serve to emphasise this part of the building. The crossing tower turns from square to octagonal with the octagonal stage having single-light moulded and shafted openings and a 13th-

century-style cornice below the octagonal slated spirelet. The W end has a pair of two-light windows and a large rose window in the gable. The N transept has a projecting stair turret to allow access to the upper level of the organ chamber. Abutting the N transept is a NE vestry which is flat-roofed and embattled. The SW porch is flat-roofed and has a plain parapet.

INTERIOR: The internal walls are of bare brick. The interior is on a massive scale with a nave of great width. The bare brick walls have polychromatic detail and stone dressings. At the E end of the nave is a very tall crossing arch on corbelled stone shafts with carved capitals. A similar arch leads into the sanctuary space but there are plainer arches into the organ chamber in the N transept and the chapel in the S. The apse windows have shafts with carved capitals between them. The five-bay arcades to the aisles have circular Mansfield sandstone columns on square stone bases with carved capitals of different designs. The tie-beams of the nave roof carry crown-posts and are supported on carved corbels with detached wall-shafts. In the sanctuary the roof has a painted ceiling depicting Christ in Majesty accompanied by saints and angels, with the ribs extending into shafts with carved capitals either side of the windows. The wooden flooring at the E end of the nave was installed in 2009.

PRINCIPAL FIXTURES: The fittings are of excellent quality throughout. The gilded and painted Italianate reredos by Clayton and Bell dates from 1889 and has scenes from the Life of Christ flanked by panels with angels and other figures: the sides of the reredos are hinged. There is a decorative brass sanctuary rail. The pulpit, wall to the chancel and lectern form a unified design in alabaster and marble by Fellowes Prynne. The pulpit was erected as a First World War memorial with a sounding board and panelling added in 1925. It has white marble figures of the British national saints on a base with multi-coloured polished marble shafts and inset marble panels. The lectern has a statue of St John the Evangelist. To the low screen are fine wrought-iron gates and grilles with standing bronze archangels: the gates have copper panels and enamel monograms. A similar wrought-iron screen of 1909 divides the body of the church from the S chapel. The choir stalls have decorative traceried panels and the nave has simple benches with shaped ends. At the W end the nave is decorated with wood panelling with flamboyant blind tracery of 1906 from designs of G H Fellowes Prynne as a backdrop to the contemporary font and font cover. The font of 1907 is made up of polished marbles and stands on a base with multi-coloured marble shafts which in turn stand on a base of dark polished Labrador stone plinth. The cover is richly crocketed and traceried and is of 1909. There is a good collection of stained glass dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The large, nave west window is a fine example of late 19th-century craftsmanship depicting nine choirs of angels giving praise to the Holy Trinity. The S transept E window is probably by Clayton and Bell and records a death in 1887; the S window is by Morris and Co, 1922. The N aisle and chancel windows were blown out in the Second World War and have been replaced with 20th century glass. The N aisle NE window is by J E Nuttgens, the three next to it by F W Cole, of Canterbury Cathedral Glassworks. The sanctuary windows were designed by G E R Smith and H L Pawle of A K Nicholson.

HISTORY: Holy Trinity church was built in phases over a period of about 20 years at a total cost of £13,357 paid by the 3rd and 4th earls of Radnor. It was started as part of the planned expansion of the town, prompted by the increasing popularity of Folkestone as a holiday resort for wealthy visitors. When commenced the church was on the edge of the town and surrounded by fields. It is known that the congregation was considerably enlarged by visitors in the summer months and the expensive fittings reflect the status and prosperity of the congregation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The resulting building is one of the finest works by its architect, Ewan Christian (1814-95), while the vestries of 1913 and the SW porch 1927-8 are by G H Fellowes Prynne who had also embellished the building with fixtures of the highest quality.

The architects: Ewan Christian (1814-95) was a prolific architect whose speciality was church work. He was schooled at Christ's Hospital until 1829 when he was articled to Matthew Habershon. He broadened his education with travel on the continent in 1834 and the following year assisted one of the entrants in the New Palace of Westminster competition with the drawings. He worked in the offices of William Railton in London and then John Brown in Norwich. He commenced practice in 1842 and was appointed architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1851, a post which brought many commissions, especially in the chancels for which the Commissioners were responsible. He gained a reputation for efficiency and bringing jobs in on time and on budget. His work, however, does not generally enjoy a high reputation and much of it is quite routine although his best churches, notably St Mark, Leicester, and Holy Trinity, Folkestone, can stand comparison with the better churches of the C19.

Christian was a Low Churchman as were many of his clients. The churchmanship at Holy Trinity is described as Broad Church and was thus in contrast to that at other churches in Folkestone, notably St Peter's which was the scene of intense ritual controversy in the 1870s. The wide, spacious nave, designed for congregational worship, is in marked contrast to Anglo-Catholic churches of its time. George Halford Fellowes Prynne (1853-1927) emigrated to Canada in 1871 where he became a pupil of Richard Windeyer (c1830-1900) of Toronto from 1872 to 1875 when he returned to England and became an improver in the office of G E Street. He then worked with other architects until setting up in independent practice in 1879. He established a good reputation as a church architect and was diocesan architect for Oxford from 1913. Prynne was a devout Anglo-Catholic and is a slightly surprising choice for work at Holy Trinity but he appears to have enjoyed an association with the church for over twenty years.

SOURCES: Anon, Holy Trinity Folkestone in the Diocese of Canterbury (guidebook, nd). John Newman, *The Buildings of England: North East and East Kent*, 1983, p 325. Roger Homan, *The Victorian Churches of Kent*, 1984, p 57.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION: The church of Holy Trinity, Folkestone, is designated at Grade II* for the following principal reasons: * It is a building of outstanding interest as a church of great architectural quality, built in an assured 13th-century Gothic Revival style. * It is one of the finest works by Ewan Christian, a well-known and prolific Victorian architect. * It is embellished with fixtures, fittings and decorations of very high quality. The only references to the south porch are very short descriptions and there is no suggestion that the porch featured in the rationale behind listing.

5. The Statement of Needs clearly explains the background to the Petition. The PCC has been left the sum of £30,000 by Mrs Betty Taylor 'for the purpose of providing a permanent memorial in the name of my late husband Michael Churton Taylor such a memorial to be approved in writing by my executors.' The PCC decided that this generous legacy offered the opportunity to improve the south porch and would enable the construction of a memorial in the form of stained glass with an appropriate inscription. Mr and Mrs Taylor were married at Holy Trinity Church. Mr Taylor had connections with the Indian sub-continent, having been born in India and having worked as a tea planter in Bangladesh and East Pakistan.

6. There are six windows in the south wall of the porch. They are slim and pointed and currently clear glazed. Four of them have a small opening casement of a pull-down design towards the top, not untypical of institutional buildings of the era. There are eight pairs of glazing panels in each window. The porch, like the rest of the church, is constructed of Kent ragstone and Bath stone of a grey/yellowish hue. The porch contains notice boards and benches (which in the photograph look rather like pews). The ceiling is formed of dark timber.
7. The Statement of Needs says of the proposal: 'In placing the concept into the context of the church, which is a beautiful Victorian listed building (Grade II),' (actually Grade II*, as noted above) 'it should be noted that the original building consisted of the nave, with the side aisles added to meet the growing needs of the town and subsequently the south porch was added to the south aisle. Many of the stained glass windows in the church are Victorian with the exception of the post war stained glass memorial windows on the North aisle, replacing the windows destroyed during the Second World War. Therefore the addition of 21st century glass and design in the porch would reflect the continuous progress of maintaining and improving the whole building. The PCC felt that modern glass would enhance what is a rather uninteresting porch, especially as the light and colour would be enhanced by the sun.'
8. An artist, Alison Eaton, was instructed to submit designs and the PCC chose her six panels representing the six days of Creation. The designs are simple but striking, using a variety of colours themed within each window. A hand appears in the top of Days one, two, five and six representing the creative activity of God. Across the bottom of each of the windows runs a sash or band bearing the words: 'Light from Darkness, Waters from the Firmament, Dry Land and Vegetation, Sun, Moon and Stars, Birds and Fishes, Man and Woman'; in the central two panels, there are the words: 'In Loving Memory Michael Churton Taylor 17th March 1924 31st May 1994'. Elements within the design reflect aspects of Mr Taylor's life, such as tea plants and a representation of the coast, as well as the life of the parish. Evidently the Trustees of the Will, whilst having initially preferred an alternative design, are happy with the Creation one. The PCC unanimously resolved to petition for the replacement windows. Certain other works of improvement were included in the resolution but these are not before me at present.
9. The DAC supports the proposal and has certified that it is not likely to affect the character of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest. Notwithstanding the certificate, on 29 November 2012 I directed that the following bodies should be specially cited: the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Ancient Monuments Society, the Twentieth Century Society and the Local Planning Authority (English Heritage already having been consulted). There were no adverse representations. The Local Planning Authority also indicated that in its view planning permission would not be required for the proposal.

LEGAL PRINCIPLES

10. The Court of Arches has held that in the case of memorials within churches, faculties should only be 'sparingly conceded' and a case of 'exceptionality' should be established in relation

to the character or service of the person commemorated.¹ Such restraint need not apply to additions or adornments to the church and it has been held that it is unnecessary to demonstrate exceptionality.² Unlike 'pure' memorials, such enhancements do not remain the property of those who erected the memorial and their heirs but become part of the church building. Therefore I do not address the issue of whether or not Mr Taylor's life and achievements would have satisfied the test for a 'pure' memorial.

11. Since the church is a listed building, however, I do need to assess the proposal in accordance with the framework of questions recently articulated by the Court of Arches in Duffield, St Alkmund , paragraph 87:

- "1. *Would the proposals, if implemented, result in harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest?*
2. *If the answer to question (1) is 'no', the ordinary presumption in faculty proceedings 'in favour of things as they stand' is applicable, and can be rebutted more or less readily, depending on the particular nature of the proposals (see **Peek v Trower** (1881) 7 PD 21, 26-8, and the review of the case-law by Chancellor Bursell QC in **In re St Mary's White Waltham (No2)** [2010] PTSR 1689 at para 11). Questions 3, 4 and 5 do not arise.*
3. *If the answer to question (1) is 'yes', how serious would the harm be?*
4. *How clear and convincing is the justification for carrying out the proposals?*
5. *Bearing in mind that there is a strong presumption against proposals which will adversely affect the special character of a listed building (see **St Luke, Maidstone** at p.8), will any resulting public benefit (including matters such as liturgical freedom, pastoral well-being, opportunities for mission, and putting the church to viable uses that are consistent with its role as a place of worship and mission) outweigh the harm? In answering question (5), the more serious the harm, the greater will be the level of benefit needed before the proposals should be permitted. This will particularly be the case if the harm is to a building which is listed Grade 1 or 2*, where serious harm should only exceptionally be allowed."*

12. In answer to Question 1, I find that there would be no harm to the significance of the church as a building of special architectural or historic interest. My reasons are as follows. Firstly, as

¹ Dupuis v. Parishioners of Ogbourne St George [1941] P 119 at 121

² Re St Mary, Longstock [2006] 1WLR 259, Winchester Consistory Court

noted above, no significance is ascribed to the porch in the listing description. Secondly, as both the listing description and Statement of Needs make clear, whilst this is a church which has a pleasing unity, it is one which has known some change and development. The south aisle and porch were added to the original structure. Perhaps most importantly, the stained glass in the building is of varied ages and reflects the chequered history of the building. Some of the existing glass serves a memorial function as well as beautifying the church. It therefore seems to me that the current proposal would continue this history of evolution without in any way threatening the features of special interest or the unity of the whole. The plan to make use of the southerly position of the porch by capturing light and refracting it through coloured glass is suitable and entirely compatible with the function of the porch as a welcoming space in which to gather or sit and from which to enter the church. The designs and words are simple and reflect and interpret God's activity as Creator, setting that aspect of the Divine in the local and Taylor family context. The existing windows are of utilitarian design and the current clear glazing and style of lights is nowhere identified as being of any historic or architectural significance. The DAC supports the proposal and there are no objections from heritage bodies or anyone else.

CONCLUSION

13. I therefore propose to grant the faculty as sought, subject to conditions limiting the life of the faculty to twelve months, protective of bats and making provision for insurance arrangements.


Registrar
pp MORAG ELLIS QC

28 March 2013