
Subject:	WORKS TO ST JAMES'S CHURCH, DOVER
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet - 4 February 2019
Report of:	Roger Walton, Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Trevor Bartlett, Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Environmental Health
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To alert Cabinet to the present condition of St James's church in Dover; to advise on the work needed to stabilise and conserve the structure; and to seek approval to proceed with this work.

- Recommendation:**
1. To approve a project that undertakes essential works to safeguard the structure in the short to medium-term and introduces railings to protect the structure, the space within the structure and anyone in the vicinity.
 2. To delegate to the Strategic Director (Operations and Commercial), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property Management and Environmental Health, to take all necessary actions to deliver the project, including the awarding of relevant contracts.
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1 Summary

- 1.1 The heritage and tourism value of St James church have been eroded by a combination of limited maintenance and abuse of both the structure and the space within it by a section of the public.
- 1.2 To arrest further deterioration of the building, safeguard the heritage value, and protect the public from the potential of falling objects a project that undertakes essential stabilising works and reintroduces railings is necessary.
- 1.3 The goal of this project is to arrest the deterioration of the fabric, to discourage further anti-social behaviour such as graffiti and inappropriate use of the space, thus allowing time for a long-term solution to emerge that will enhance this important heritage site and contribute to the positive visitor experience within the town.

2 Introduction and Background

- 2.1 St. James' Church dates from the 12th century, although some historians take its antecedents to before the Norman Conquest. In its original form it followed a simple, if unusual, plan, consisting of a nave with curved apse and central tower. The apse was extended to form a rectangular sanctuary at the east end at some point in the 13th or 14th centuries. In the 14th century an extension was added on the south side of the nave, and this was used as the courthouse for the Chancery, Admiralty and Lodemanage Courts of the Cinque Ports. It was last used as a court when the Duke of

Wellington presided over a Court of Lodemanage in 1851. The church was altered in 1783, and another extension to the south side of the nave added in 1825 to accommodate more parishioners. In 1854 the overcrowded churchyard was closed, being replaced by the new cemetery at Copt Hill. In 1862 a new church of St. James was opened on Maison Dieu Road, and this church began to be used by French Protestants. A further restoration of the church took place in 1868 supervised by the architect Talbot Bury. This restoration removed the 1825 extension and replaced the pointed-arched window over the west door with a rose window and two smaller windows that survive today. The church was damaged by a German bomb in 1916, and was hit by a German shell fired from France in 1942. Shelling in 1943 and 1944 did more damage and at the end of the war the church was a ruin. In 1948 it was decided that the church should not be restored, but preserved as a "Tidy Ruin" in memory of the shelling of Dover. In May 1950 a further collapse of the tower took place and the walls were reduced and capped. The church and churchyard were bought by the Dover Borough Council in 1970 and have been used as a public open space since then.

- 2.2 **Heritage Significance** St James Church is covered by two separate heritage designations: the standing remains of the building were listed at grade II in 1949, and the ground on which the remains sit was designated a scheduled monument in 1950. These early designations recognise the historic and architectural value of St James at a national level as a heritage asset. The approved Dover District Heritage Strategy 2013 identifies the ecclesiastical heritage of the district to be of outstanding significance, providing valuable evidence of the introduction and evolution of Christianity in the district. St James Church is particularly notable for its preservation as a ruin and is an eloquent reminder of the impact of WWII on the town of Dover.
- 2.3 The setting of the church has been somewhat degraded in the past but it retains a strong visual relationship with neighbouring historic buildings, including grade II White Horse Inn and Castle Hill House. The attractive aesthetic of the ruin of St James Church contributes both to its value as a heritage asset, and the character of the Dover Castle Conservation Area within which it is located. The church occupies a prominent position, particularly in relation to the new St James development, and its degrading condition is an unwelcome detraction for visitors to the development.
- 2.4 Due to the condition of the upstanding fabric St James Church was included in the Heritage at Risk Register for the first time at the end of 2018. The Register is compiled by Historic England, central government's heritage advisors, with the aim of identifying those high status heritage assets (scheduled monuments, grade I and II* listed buildings, etc.) that are most at risk of loss. Historic England provides advice, guidance and resources to owners including local authorities to assist in finding solutions. Ultimately it is the owner's responsibility to ensure the continued conservation of heritage assets, and in the case of local authorities there is an implied moral obligation to demonstrate appropriate care of historic structures within their care.

- 3 **Summary of Current State of Structure:** The standing fabric is a complex structure resulting from the substantial previous campaigns of repair that accompany the traumatic history of the Church. The surviving structure is generally self-supporting, even where elements are detached from one another. The majority of the structure is considered to be in a fair, if heavily weathered, condition but now requires a programme of targeted conservation followed by regular routine maintenance. The full report of September 2018, undertaken by Purcells, contains much fuller information and has been appended to this report
- 3.1 The structure is locally extremely poor and in places unstable. Local areas are in need of immediate intervention to repair, prop or support the fabric. Of particular concern are: the quoins and returns of the former North Tower; the Tower interior, and adjacent window mullion; the high level ashlar masonry of the West Front; and the quoins and returns of the West Front.
- 3.2 Proper repair will require substantial renewal of stone because, during the various campaigns of adaptation and repair that have gone before, parts of the fabric have become structurally disjointed. This, combined with natural material erosion, establishes parameters that do not readily lend themselves to the generally accepted monument repair methods, such as inserting wall ties, grouting and mortar consolidation. In order to achieve a long-lasting repair, it is likely to be necessary to replace a high proportion of masonry in key locations. The quoins to the North Tower and the North and South returns of the West elevation are in particular need of structural repair.
- 3.3 This report details proposed medium term stabilisation works. A later phase of repair and refurbishment to provide sustainable long term solution will be the subject of a further cabinet report.
- 3.4 The recommendations of the Purcell report of September 2018 are presented in terms of time lines for executing the particular works, split in to four categories: immediate works; works necessary within 12 months; works necessary within 24 months. The focus of this report
- 3.4.1 Purcells have identified works which are **immediately necessary** as being: Install temporary works (scaffold girdle) to the North Tower. The scaffold should be designed giving consideration to the other repairs identified, and should allow for further inspections and works to be undertaken with minimal alterations; Partner central mullion to the Tower window with a new timber prop; Patch repair cementitious cap where failed; Treat vegetative growth to retard further growth; Remove any loose fabric found at this time; Remove build-up of guano at the base of the North Tower and undertake environmental clean.
- 3.4.2 Purcells have also identified that the following works are necessary within 12 months of the date of the report: Clean out & re-point cracks to abutment of West elevation with North and South returns. Monitor for further cracking as a sign of continuing structural movement; Re-point all loose and open joints generally, including deep pointing to voids; Remove all remaining vegetation at high level; Re-bed all loose capping and high-level ashlar masonry to the North Tower and West elevation; Replace existing cementitious capping with new lime flashing or green capping as appropriate (note: green cappings are best installed at the onset of autumn). All work will be subject to obtaining scheduled monument consent and any necessary Planning consents.

- 3.5 The secluded interior of the Monument is utilised for shelter, and unfortunately as a toilet. An environmental clean is required inside the nave area. Within the past few months graffiti, in the form of spray paint, has appeared on the internal walls of the nave. The age and fragile nature of the stonework mean that specialist measures will need to be adopted to prevent damage to the stone whilst removing the graffiti.
- 3.6 In order to safeguard the building fabric from damage resulting from anti-social behaviour and to protect the public from the potential of falling objects in the future. It is proposed to reinstate metal railings. The design of the railings will be based on those shown in historic photographs of the building and include gates, both within the west door opening and to allow access for grounds maintenance on the land adjacent the church. All work will be subject to obtaining scheduled monument consent and any necessary Planning consents.

4 Identification of Options

- 4.1 Do nothing.
- 4.2 Undertake essential repairs only.
- 4.3 Undertake essential repairs and install railings.

5 Evaluation of Options

- 5.1 ***Do nothing:*** this is not recommended. Although overall the structure of the church has been classified as being in fair condition, specific localised repairs have been identified as needing immediate work. Delaying such work is very likely to lead to acceleration in the rate of deterioration and much more significant costs in future years. Further the structure abuts public highways on the west and north elevations and delaying work to stabilise the structure increases the risk of future falls of masonry. This is deemed to be an unacceptable risk.
- 5.2 ***Undertake essential repairs only:*** this is not recommended because, although the detrimental effects of weathering will be arrested damage to the structure and visual amenity by the anti-social actions of people is likely to continue.
- 5.3 ***Undertake essential repairs and install railings:*** this is the recommended option since it not only secures the future of the structure for the medium term, removing the risk of falling masonry in the process, but also creates an enhanced visual amenity that honours both the historic sacred place and the church remains which constitute a designated war memorial.

6 Resource Implications

- 6.1 A sum of £70k is identified in the current MTFP for the purposes of investigating the nature of the issues at St James, identifying measures to address these issues and implementing those measures. In addition it is proposed to use £25k from the public realm works allocation, included in the current MTFP, to fund the erection of the boundary railings.

7 Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer: Accountancy has been consulted and has no further comment to add. (KW 07/01/19)
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make. (HR 7/1/19)
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report does not specifically highlight any equality implications however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15> (KM 04/01/19)
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): None.

8 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Photos of structure and graffiti

Appendix 2 – HAR entry

9 **Background Papers**

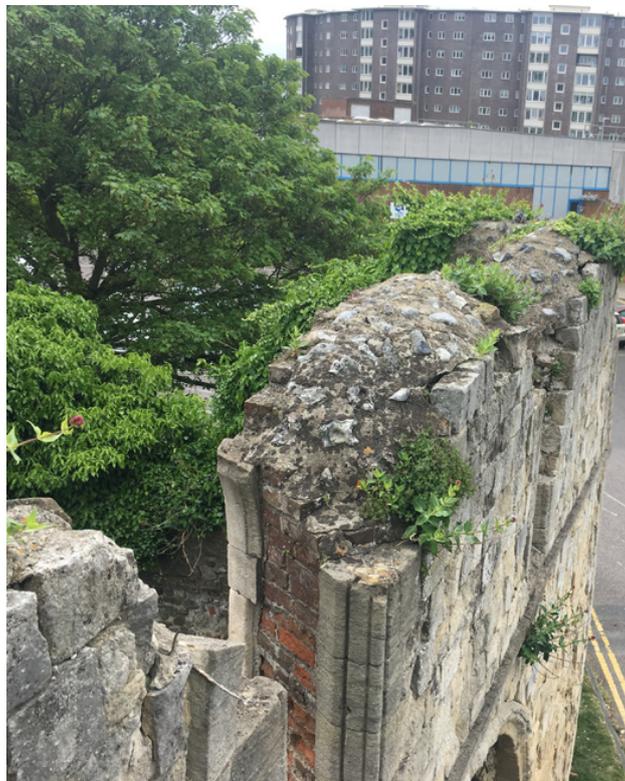
Purcell Report - September 2018

Contact Officer: Martin Leggatt

Appendix 1:



West Elevation: note cracking to right hand side of elevation



Typical view of damage to top of historic walls.



Corroding Ironwork Spalling Masonry

Appendix 2: Historic England Heritage at Risk Entry

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Historic England website. The address bar shows the URL: <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/list-entry/2069351>. The page title is "Ruins of St James' Church, Dover - Dover".

The page layout includes a search bar at the top right, a navigation menu on the right side, and a main content area. The main content area features a title "Ruins of St James' Church, Dover - Dover" and a descriptive paragraph: "Ruins of former church in public park. The church was virtually destroyed in the Second World War. The ruins have been kept as a commemorative monument to the people of Dover. Emergency propping of some elements have been carried out by Dover District Council. A condition report has been published." Below the text is a photograph of the ruins, credited to "© Historic England".

The left sidebar contains a "Search the Register" section with links to "Selection Criteria", "Key to Terms and Abbreviations", "20 Years of Heritage at Risk", "Latest Findings", "What is the HAR Programme?", "Buildings", "Archaeology", "Landscapes", "Conservation Areas", and "Industrial Heritage at Risk".

The right sidebar menu includes "Listing", "Advice", "Advice Finder", "Heritage at Risk", "Your Home", "Technical Guidance", "Planning", "Caring for Heritage", "Constructive Conservation", "Heritage Protection Guide", "Research", "Images & Books", "Services & Skills", and "Get Involved".

A cookie consent banner is visible at the bottom of the page, stating: "We use cookies to give you the best possible experience online. By using this website, you consent to cookies being used in accordance with our Cookie Policy." Below the banner, the "Designated Site Name: St James' Church" is displayed.

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows various application icons and the system clock indicating 17:40 on 10/01/2019.