

Design and Access Statement



The gas-lights at St Paul's give valuable interest to the churchyard and, when lit, a wonderful ambience. They were introduced to the churchyard during the alterations by Henry Clutton in the 1870s when there was considerable excavation to form a tall retaining wall and a basement light-well around the perimeter of the church yard. Burials in the churchyard had ceased a little before this but the spur to this was the presumed danger of bodily-fluids from burials in the ground seeping into the surrounding properties. The gardens were high relative to the church and paved approach and Clutton wanted the low wall to act as a retaining wall.

The gas-lights have a number of bespoke elements. Shields around the base bear a ducal coronet and the lamp flues also repeat this. This would have been a direct acknowledgment of the Earl / Duke of Bedford as patron of the church and area around Covent Garden. The Arms of the Bedfords appear over the church gates, on the church gallery and on the Vestry mantelpiece.

In the Winter of 2019 there was an accident involving a maintenance vehicle and some cabling somehow snagged around one of the eight listed working gas-lamps in the church yard of St Paul's Covent Garden. There was a small explosion which damaged one of the lamp standards and destroyed the lantern head.

This project will restore this lamp standard to use drawing on sections of the gas-lantern that survived the accident and in particularly parts from the other seven. In so doing the gas-engineers that service the lamp will have to remove the old gas burners and replace them with a new set.

The other seven gas-lamps have been neglected over time with panes of glass falling out of the lantern-heads and metal fixtures on the post have gone missing. Some of the lamps were in such a state as to require to be disconnected by the gas-board. This project will bring the other lamps into a safe state for relighting and reinstate missing mouldings from new castings formed to restore the damaged lamp-standard.

The gas lamps were set on short plinth-stones. A couple of these standards may have been moved and dislodged by plant growth but it is more likely that freeze-thaw action from rain-water introduced around the socket of the iron into the stone has loosened them. Historic strap fixings have attempted to secure this junction but these have failed leaving the posts less secure and another aspect of this project would be to re-secure them.

Lastly there are two bracket lamps which are also supplied with gas but which are not listed. The opportunity will be taken to repair these and get them working again.

Restoration of metal fixtures.

The castings of volute moulds, shield details, coronet finials on the standards will be taken from new mouldings taken from the great number of surviving identical features and the lugs that would have secured the missing sections are clearly visible where the pieces have vanished.

Decoration Scheme

Catherine Hassall is a leading Historic Architectural-Paintwork Analyst. She carried out two reports on the gas-lights, both included with this report. From this she identified five different paint schemes. The first, though short-lived was in an off-white, possibly as a stone colour to blend with the stone plinths below which Catherine says is not unusual in the period. This was quickly repainted in black and black and dark green appeared many time afterwards – often in conjunction of re-paintings of other metalwork around the churchyard.

Our proposal is to reuse a black (though this will be a matt very-dark grey) and to gild the coronet feature to give it a lift. The Bracket lamps are already in black but would be repainted to match.

Ecclesiastical Exemption

As part of a Grade I Listed Church and on its curtilage I would note that these proposals have been separately submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for approval which has been granted.



Listing Statement

Listed Building Grade: II List Entry Number: 1292075

8 LAMPSTANDARDS ON DWARF STONE WALLS IN ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, BEDFORD STREET WC2
TQ 3080 NW CITY OF WESTMINSTER BEDFORD STREET, WC2

8 Lampstandards on dwarf stone walls in St Paul's Churchyard G.V. II Dwarf stone walls surmounted by lampstandards. c.1870. Cast iron short octagonal standards with foliate caps and octagonal lanterns with Bedford coronet finials, set on octagonal stone bases. Part of Henry Clutton's refurbishment of the church and churchyard for the Bedford Estate.