



The Queen's Hall
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Full Council Meeting 5th November 2020

FC078: To consider the request from the Parochial Church Council to modify the level of the new north path pavers adjacent to the vestry steps, review the options and associated estimated costs identified and resolve how to proceed

Addendum

Since preparation of the above report further information has been obtained from MSDC Conservation Officer, MSDC Building Control, the Parochial Church Council and Hobart Paving.

Information exchanges are summarised as follows:

Hobart Paving

05/11/20 - Further to our meeting this morning I can confirm I believe our price to rebuild The Vestry steps is competitive when you consider what needs to be done.

- Break out and set aside the wrought iron hand rail.
- Disconnect and remove the existing step lights.
- Break out the existing concrete steps and reform with equal treads and risers including for all necessary concrete, formwork, reinforcement and ties.
- Extend the existing strings and refix the step lights allowing also for one additional light.
- Face the tread and risers with paving bricks as used for the main paths.
- Core drill the new paving and underlying structure to allow for refixing the handrail.
- Clear all surplus materials.

I must also point out that the need for this work, in my view, is debatable as each of the existing steps are of unequal heights and there already exists an unlit step down immediately outside the Vestry door. The steps in their current state, despite the unequal risers, are extremely comfortable in use and any fear of trip hazards could be simply overcome by the introduction of a simple illuminated low level bollard which, I believe, Hobart Paving would finance if agreement could be reached on the bollard to be used.

05/11/20 - Further to your email regarding the Church Warden's concern with regard to "partially damaged bricks" and our subsequent site visit this morning I have taken advice from W.T. Lamb Ltd and have been assured by them that these marks are deliberately introduced at random in the face of the bricks during manufacture to create an aged and reclaimed appearance to the bricks and the "damage" is not to the detriment of the long term durability of the bricks. I hope this will serve to reassure both The Council and The Church.

Parochial Church Council

05/11/20 - Thank you for your email hereunder. I raised your concern with our contractor who has responded as follows:

Further to your email regarding the Church Wardens concern with regard to "partially damaged bricks" and our subsequent site visit this morning I have taken advice from W.T. Lamb Ltd and have been assured by them that these marks are deliberately introduced at random in the face of the bricks during manufacture to create an aged and reclaimed appearance to the bricks and the "damage" is not to the detriment of the long term durability of the bricks. I hope this will serve to reassure both The Council and The Church.

Cuckfield Parish Council Report

04/11/20 - At a meeting last night a member raised concern about the state of the bricks near the west door and I have had a look this morning. The original observation was that the bricks were broken but I did not see any evidence of completely broken bricks myself. However, there are a significant number of bricks near the west door that have semi-circular cuts in their surface. I presume that these must have been present when the bricks were laid as the cuts do not extend into neighbouring bricks. Many are quite superficial but some are quite deep and wide. I just thought that I should ensure that you were aware and accepted the use of these partially damaged bricks.

MSDC Building Control:

05/11/20 - Further to our conversation and based on the information provided I can confirm that the works themselves would not have required a Building Regulations application as they do not appear to have made the building worse from the point of view of Approved Document M (access to and use of the building). As the works do not trigger an application, we would not control them and as such would not be in a position to impose other aspects of the Building Regulations. That said the works do not appear to comply with the guidance in approved Document K (see link highlighted hereunder), which sets out the requirements for steps and stairs, as an additional step has now been added at the top of the existing. The requirement for steps is that each step as an even rise and going with a square landing at both the top and bottom of the stair, and the rise of a 'Utility Stair' which this is deemed to be should be 150-190mm. In this instance the square landing would be satisfied by the width of the path if the path were at the level of the top tread of the stair, as it is not at that level the step onto the path would be considered to be a part of the flight of steps and should therefore have a suitable rise (within the dimensions given above) to match. As a follow on to this AD K also requires that the steps have a hand rail extending 300mm beyond the top and bottom of the steps in order to allow a person who is less stable on their feet to safely negotiate the steps, by adding an additional step this would no longer be in place. It is for this reason that the addition does not comply with AD K however I would note that based on the dimensions you have provided the existing stair is equally non-compliant. You raised the option of ensuring the steps are well lit in order to reduce any hazard, as I explained this is not typically a viable solution as the way in which our brains process steps in day to day life relies on muscle memory and the expectation that the next step will be the same as the previous, therefore lighting the steps will not resolve the issue. I hope this helps clarify the situation.

04/11/20 - To answer your question requiring rise and going, within The Building Regulations 2010 Approved Document K, details are provided, please see the attached [link](#), Table 1.1 gives maximum and minimum dimensions, the stair you described I assume would be categorised as a utility stair (a stair used for escape, access for maintenance, or purposes other than as the usual route for moving between levels on a day-to-day basis), please see the definitions at the back of the document under Appendix A.

MSDC Conservation Officer

04/11/20 - In respect of your email I would suggest that altering the profile of the steps will need listed building consent and may also require planning permission, although if the change is minor it may be regarded as *de minimis* in this respect. If you are able to provide drawings I can advise further. I would suggest that the material of the top step should be stone to match existing rather than brick. In terms of the height and depth of the treads this would be a matter for our Building Control team to advise on.

29/10/20 - I suspect that relaying the path would not require any fresh application for planning permission provided the approved dimensions are respected. The amended/new lights may however require planning and/or listed building consent - would it be possible to provide more details please on this aspect of the proposal? Advised placing a bright bulb in the lamp attached to the north-east corner and installing a lamp in the ground at the top of steps.

Cuckfield Parish Council Report

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Date: 5 November 2020