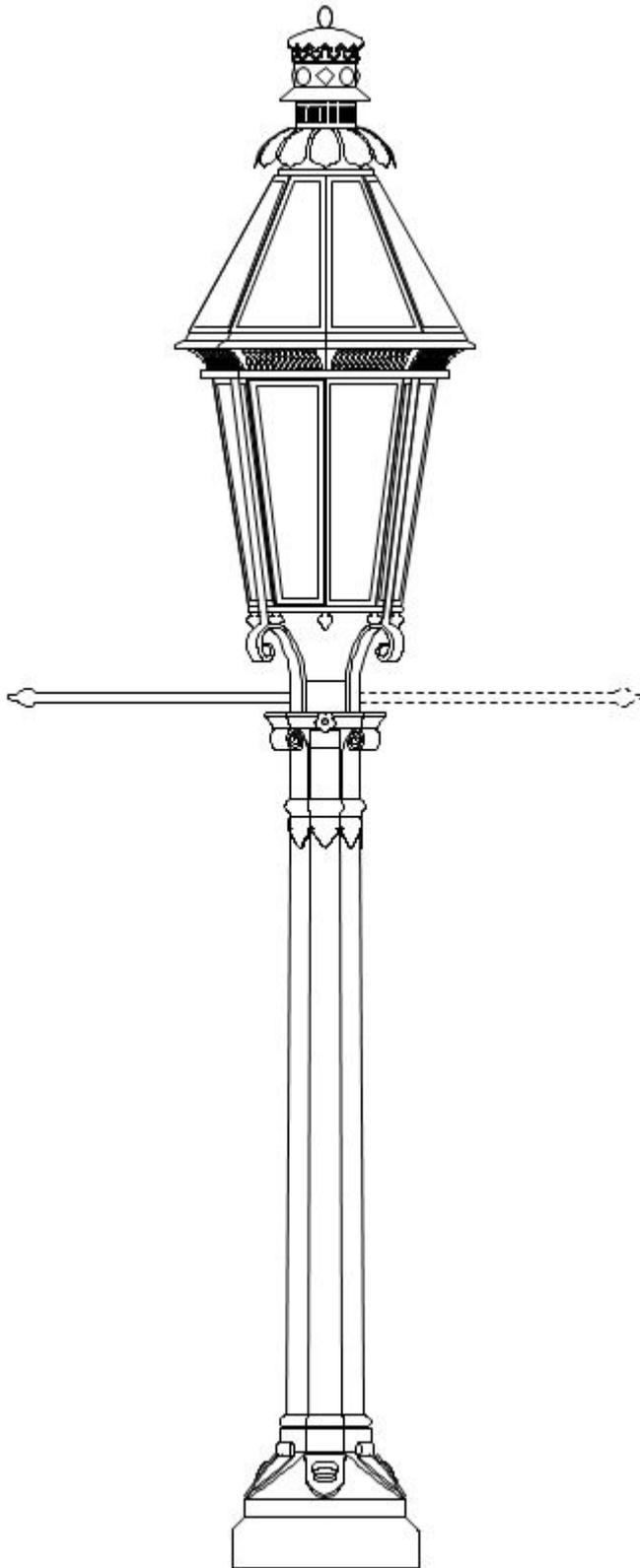


Conservation Report: Gas Lamps at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden



The eight Grade II listed gas lights at St Paul's were probably installed between 1878 and 1882 (they are dated around 1870 in the listing statement). At this period the western area of the churchyard was being modified under a faculty in 1877. This involved lowering the ground level and building the excavated area that forms a trench around the churchyard and a basement area to the surrounding properties. The low walls and paved centre aisles may date from this time and the design included stone piers with gas-lights raised on top. Each light is formed of a mixture of cast and wrought iron components around a tapered tube that forms the standard and surrounds the gas-pipe. At the top of this tube is a simple frame into which the glazed lantern-head is dropped over. Each standard would have had two arms but only one remains.

The lantern-head is octagonal and has a row of ventilation slots at top and bottom. There is a hinged door with a small metal latch to access the clock and gas mantle. At the top of the roof is a flue and over this is a coronet, commemorating the patron, the Duke of Bedford. Coronets also appear on the shield plates affixed to the standard's base.

The gas lights are in moderate condition and the clocks are maintained by British gas generally however each shows some ravages of neglect. Many have loose or missing

glazing which in some cases have led to the remedy of temporary disconnection as the flame blows out. I have noted that all miss at least one arm, one lacks its coronet and many lack the decorative plates that were pinned to the metal base.

Each standard is secured to the top of a narrow stone pier. On two of the lamp-standards this connection has become sufficiently unstable for the need for metal strapping to secure the standard

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down. In one instance there are signs that the metal strapping is no longer secure. Some sections of the stone plinth have also broken away, possibly due to expansion of the metal components and this damage may have provided the original cause for the strapping.

Two of the gas lamps have a metal covering where the roof-glass was installed. It is unclear whether this was a lazy repair or whether it was design to mask the upward glare from these lights.

Notably one gas-lamp was damaged in an explosion in the winter of 2019/20. This was caused when a vehicle snagged on a cable around a standard facing the west front. Approximately half of the lantern still exists and all of the standard although it too is cracked and probably slightly deformed. Interestingly the ventilation trims look as if they are twentieth century replacements as they are rows of drilled holes rather than the slots of the other lanterns.

There are also two other gas lights which are hung on wrought-iron brackets over the church-yard entrances to the north and south. These are not listed and do not share the distinctive design of the lamps on standards in the gardens but the brackets are fine and the lanterns have unusual corner embellishments. These too require some straightening and re-glazing. For this latter reason one has been temporarily disconnected.

Proposed repairs

The damaged standard will be carefully restored. It is in reasonable alignment but fixed on features such as the wrought iron scrolls carrying the lantern and the lantern cage will be taken off and straightened or replaced. The internal gas pipe will be investigated for damage and repaired as required. A new lantern will be fabricated using existing lanterns as a model for each of the components.

The remaining seven lanterns and the two over-arch lamps will be stripped down and missing features replaced.

Moulds for segments such as finials, roses, shields and base details and coronets will be formed from castings taken from the better preserved lanterns and standards and re-fixed in place using the same dowel to lug details as existing.

The numerous missing glass-panes will be replaced though some that are loose will be re-secured, joints will be sealed and the lanterns thoroughly cleaned. Hinges to the opening lights will be carefully eased.

A team from British Gas who service the lights will then connect new gas mantels; ensure the lamps are safe; reconnect the lanterns that were previously disconnected, upgrade the timer-clocks and ensure that the lamps are operating safely.

Two of the standards are secured to their stone base by old strap-repairs. These will be investigated as in a couple of cases the straps have sheared. Another lantern shows too much movement on its stone seating. In each case these will be reviewed with dowel repairs to the bath-stone seating and new anchorage details once the bases can be viewed from beneath.

Paint finish

A paint analysis by Catherine Hassall has been prepared. The proposal is that the lanterns will be primed and painted in a dark grey to replicate the low-gloss carbon-black (and white lead) finish of

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the first couple of decoration-schemes. This would be modified in that we propose to gild the coronets with parts picked out in dark red.

Listing Statement for Gas lamps

8 LAMPSTANDARDS ON DWARF STONE WALLS IN ST PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, BEDFORD STREET WC2;
Grade II listed.

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.

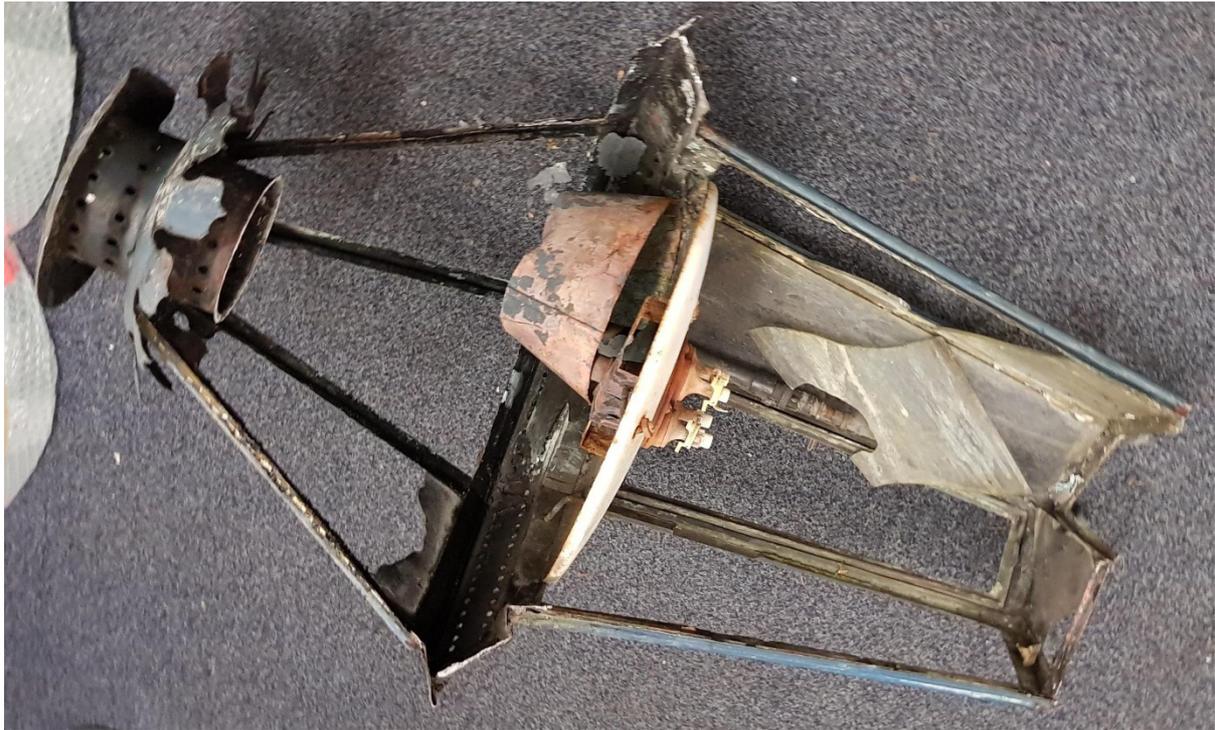
Listing Statement for St Paul's Church

CHURCH OF ST PAUL COVENT GARDEN, BEDFORD STREET
WC2
Grade I listed

Parish church. 1631-38 by Inigo Jones, damaged by fire in 1795 and restored by Thomas Hardwick, brick facings and alterations in 1870s by Henry Clutton. Red brick and stone, slate roof, "The handsomest barn in England". Plain rectangular hall with no internal subdivision. Monumental east portico to the Piazza with deeply overhanging bracketed eaves to the pedimental gable end, carried on 2 square outer piers and 2 inner giant Tuscan columns with marked entasis, within a large architraved false doorway with cornice on consoles (originally the plan was for a west altar). The side elevations have architraved round headed windows, the west front brick faced with central doorway and flanking vestry wings, deep eaved gable. Inside these is a Doric columned west organ gallery and ceiling with large richly ornamented panels; altar with flanking colonnades, the columns, formerly part of side galleries removed by Butterfield in 1872; finely carved early C.19 pulpit etc.



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Damaged lantern – note slightly different, possibly cruder, interior details than to the other fittings



Damaged standard



Gas lantern over passage (not listed)