


<p>Grants Determination (Cabinet) Sub-Committee Report</p> <p>3 July 2019</p>	
<p>Report of: Ann Sutcliffe, Interim Corporate Director of Place</p>	<p>Classification: Unrestricted</p>
<p>Formal Offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church</p>	

Lead Member	Councillor Rachel Blake, Deputy Mayor for Regeneration and Air Quality
Originating Officer(s)	Michael Ritchie – Place Shaping Team Leader
Wards affected	Bow East
Key Decision?	Yes
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Community Plan Theme	A Great Place to Live

Executive Summary

This report relates to a formal offer of a London Borough of Tower Hamlets Historic Buildings Grant of £30,000 to St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church (also known as Bow Church), 230 Bow Road, London E3 3AH, for the second and final phase of repair works, which include improvements to surface drainage, repairs to rainwater goods and the removal of pollutant encrustation to the external stonework of the aisles and chancel.

Following the issue of and informal offer of a grant, as agreed by Grants Determination Sub-Committee on 27 September 2018, the Council is now in a position to make a formal offer of grant and enter into a grant agreement contract with the church as it has met all the required conditions. The Historic Buildings Grant contributes to partnership funding for a larger National Lottery Heritage Fund (NHLF) grant. Without the Council's Historic Buildings Grant, the church will have a shortfall in funds which could threaten the project.

The building is listed Grade II* and is located within the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The building is on the Historic England Heritage at Risk Register and the completion of the repair works will enable it to be removed from this.

Recommendations:

The Grants Determination Sub-Committee is recommended to:

1. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to issue a formal offer of grant to St Mary's and Hold Trinity, Bow to a maximum of £30,000 as a contribution to vital repair works to improve surface drainage, repair rainwater goods and remove pollutant encrustation to the external stonework of the aisles and chancel.
2. Authorise the Corporate Director Place to enter into the grant agreement and any such other agreements required to affect the grant and the use of the grant as details in paragraph 1.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 St. Mary's Church is a landmark building in a highly visible location on the Bow Road on the eastern edge of the borough. There has been a place of worship in this location since the fourteenth century, when Bow was a hamlet outside London, and is one of the last remaining medieval buildings in the borough. The Church in this location has survived in spite of the development and modernisation around it and therefore contributes to a sense of place and continuity.
- 1.2 The works will improve the external appearance of the Grade II* listed place of worship and is an opportunity to enhance the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. The Church is already an important community asset, currently used for religious services, volunteer activity and the Bow Foodbank. The intention is to extend local community engagement and use the building for further community purposes.
- 1.3 The Historic Building Grant would make up a shortfall in funding for the project, the majority of which is made by the National Lottery. The Historic Building Grant will contribute towards the cost of Phase II of the Church's repair project to alleviate problems relating mainly to water ingress and damp, resulting in deteriorating external appearance and the risk of loss of important historical features.
- 1.4 Phase I repair works to the west tower were completed in July 2018, to which the Council contributed £20,000. The Church, however, will remain on the Historic England's Heritage at Risk register until the full repair work is completed. Phase II will focus on improvements to surface drainage, repairs to rainwater goods, the removal of pollutant encrustation to the external stonework of the aisles and chancel, as well as access improvements

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The Historic Building Grant would form an essential contribution towards National Lottery partnership funding for the cost of Phase II repair works. Without the Council's grant, the church would have a shortfall in funding for the project, which would therefore be at risk of not going ahead. Without these works, the Grade II* building would continue to suffer from damp and water ingress, leading to a further deterioration in the condition of the historic fabric. Without the repair work, aspirations to develop community services for a wider audience may not be realised. Historic England would also continue to retain the listed building on its Heritage at Risk register.

3. DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Council operates a Historic Building Grant scheme to assist owners and occupiers of listed buildings and buildings within conservation areas in meeting their responsibilities for the care and maintenance of the irreplaceable cultural asset which these buildings represent. The provision of this type of grant is in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and section 57 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 3.2 The annual Historic Building Grant allocation is £26,250. Grant funds that have not been awarded have been rolled over from previous years forming a total of £52,500 in 2019/20. This does not include the monies already allocated to Oxford House (£95,902) and recently released to St. Mary's Phase I (£20,000). If £30,000 is allocated to St. Mary's Phase II, this would leave £22,500 of funds available. An expression of interest has been received from the New Testament Church of God (NTCG, former Holy Trinity) on Morgan Street in Bow, but an application has not yet been made.
- 3.3 With over 50 conservation areas and approximately 2000 listed buildings (with over 30 buildings and 5 conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk register), demand for grant-aided assistance in meeting the costs of buildings repair is high. Priority is given to buildings and conservation areas on the Heritage at Risk register.
- 3.4 The building fabric of St. Mary's Church shows its development from its origin as a chapel in 1311 and its extension to a church, with tower and chancel, in 1495, to major restorations in Victorian times and again following extensive damage during the Blitz. It was during this latter restoration that the church gained the clock-tower and cupola, becoming an iconic landmark in the borough. St. Mary's Church is a demonstration of change over time- with

additions, alterations and rebuilding over 700 years – its persistent survival over this length of time, even through bomb damage during the Second World War, is remarkable.

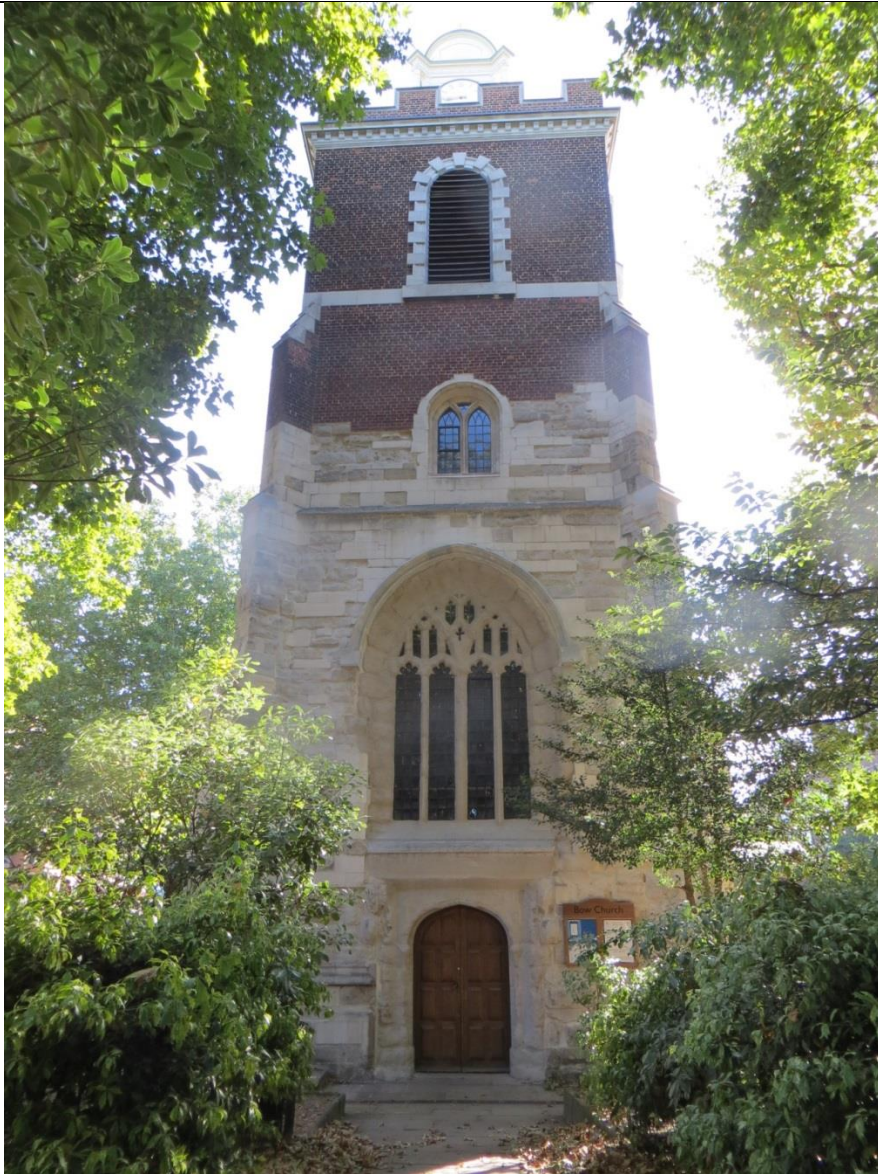


Fig. 1: The west tower and main entrance of St Mary and Holy Trinity Church, following Phase I of works

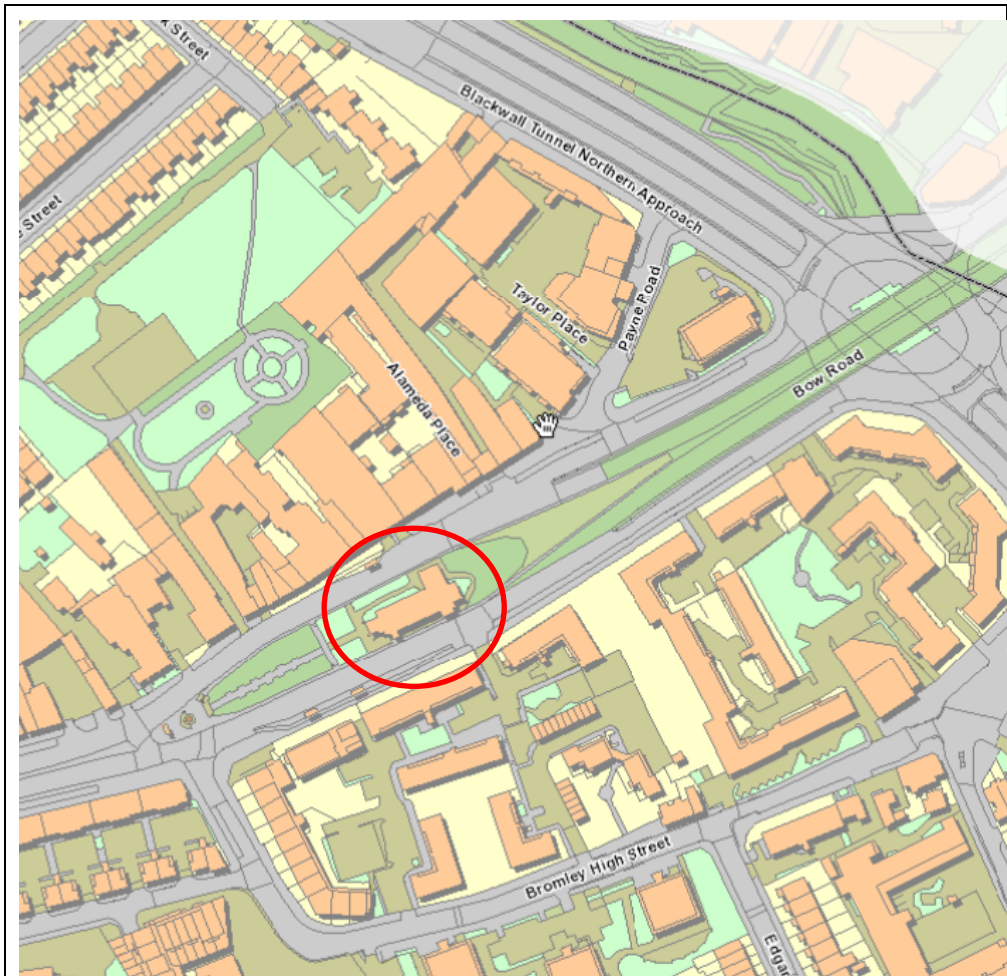


Fig. 2: Location of St Mary and Holy Trinity Church in the east of the borough

- 3.5 St. Mary's Church is a nationally important building, being listed Grade II*; less than 6% of England's buildings are listed at this level. It is also located within the Fairfield Road Conservation Area. It was placed on Historic England's Register of Heritage at Risk in 2015, where it was stated that *'the church suffers from extensive dampness, stone decay and leaking roofs.'* The extent of the works was such that the NLHF proposed the works were split into two phases. Phase I of repairs to the west tower of the church were carried out in 2017-2018, mainly funded by the NLHF but also supported by a Historic Building Grant from the Council. Phase II of repairs will complete the repairs to the aisles and chancel as well as providing for churchyard and access improvements.
- 3.6 By alleviating damp and water ingress problems, thereby reducing maintenance problems, and improving access, the project will reduce ongoing future maintenance costs. The drier, more accessible building will be more attractive for community uses, thus improving its economic and social sustainability. The church already hosts a wide range of community activities,

such as concerts, plays, fairs and is home to the Bow Foodbank, and the repair work will enable the development of an enhanced range of community activities, serving a broader audience. As one of the borough's last surviving mediaeval buildings and a landmark at one of the main entrances to the borough, St. Mary's is a powerful contributor to the sense of place and continuity of the area. The iconic building is integral to the social and cultural fabric of the whole East End. Completion of the Phase II of the project will ensure that it can be removed from the Heritage at Risk register and represents a major step towards restoring the building to the community, as the centre of the hamlet of Bow.

- 3.7 The overall cost of the project, including development stage costs, professional fees, construction of accessible toilets, heritage-related activity and interpretation is £325,000. The cost of the capital repair works of Phase II, including fees, is £277,811. The Church has been offered a majority sum towards the cost of the project by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, through their '*Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme*'. This will contribute £166,686 toward the capital works, and £45,822 of VAT will be reclaimed. The church will contribute £7,000 of its own reserves; £10,000 from the Diocese and approximately £8,000 from donations. This brings a total of £247,508 and leaves a shortfall of £40,000. It is proposed to allocate £30,000 from the Council's Historic Building Grants fund to the church to contribute toward this shortfall. A further £10,000 is expected pending applications to the National Churches Trust, Garfield Weston, Allchurches Trust and local fundraising – or the Parochial Church Council.
- 3.8 The Historic Buildings Grant would contribute towards repairs of the rainwater goods of the aisle and transept and drainage at ground level. Pollutant encrustation and inappropriate cement mortar will be removed from the exterior walls, which will encourage evaporation of moisture trapped in the stonework. These works will reduce water ingress, shed water from the building, enable the building to 'breathe', prevent further deterioration of the historic fabric and contribute an improvement of the external appearance of the building. The type of work proposed meets the criteria of the Council's Historic Buildings Grant scheme and offers significant benefits for the residents in and visitors to the borough when complete. It will enhance the appearance of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and allow the building to be removed from the Heritage at Risk register. Some elements of the project such as the churchyard and access improvements are not eligible for a Historic Buildings Grant, but are a subsidiary benefit from the overall scheme.
- 3.9 An informal offer of grant in principle was agreed by the Grants Determination Sub-Committee on 27 September 2018 and a letter of comfort was sent to the church on 16 October 2018 (Appendix 1).

- 3.10 As a condition of the Historic Buildings Grant application, the award of a formal grant offer is based on the provision of a professional specification of the proposed works, three alternative detailed quotations and clear drawings of the proposed works. These documents have been provided by the church, have been checked and found to be in order by the Heritage at Risk Projects Officer on 10 January 2019. As the grant conditions have been met, it is proposed that the issue of a formal offer of grant be approved by the Grants Determination Sub-Committee meeting on 3 July 2019. If approved, a grant agreement contract between the Council and the church will be prepared and signed.
- 3.11 The National Lottery Heritage Fund has given permission to start. Unfortunately there have been delays with gaining permission from TfL highways, so work is not due to start on site until July 2019.
- 3.12 Payment of the grant is conditional on the inspection, by the Conservation Officer or Heritage at Risk Projects Officer, of the work contained within the application to ensure it has been carried out satisfactorily to a good conservation standard. An annotated photographic report will be prepared and kept on file. The relevant budget holder will request a purchase order from the Financial Accounts Payments Section to be sent to Oxford House. Oxford House will submit an invoice and the Finance Accounts Payments Section will arrange payment.
- 3.13 The grant will be conditional upon the building participating in London Open House of five years to ensure the best possible value for the council.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed works would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of a highly valued community asset, contributing to the setting of the Fairfield Road Conservation Area and neighbouring listed buildings.
- 4.2 The building currently provides a wide range of community activities, such as concerts, plays, fairs and is home to the Bow Foodbank. The work will see the building become a greater focal point for a larger number of residents, as well as visitors to the borough.
- 4.3 The project thus contributes to the theme 'A Great Place to Live' in the Community Plan to build One Tower Hamlets.

5. OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

Best Value

- 5.2 The delivery of this project ensures the Council meets its commitment set out in the Council's Conservation Strategy. The partnership funding would contribute to securing a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. The restoration of this listed cultural asset part funded through the grant will benefit the whole community and is considered to offer excellent value for money. The grant will be conditional on the building participating in London Open House for five years to ensure the best possible value for the council.

Environmental

- 5.3 In line with other beneficiaries of grants from the Council, St. Mary and Holy Trinity Church will be encouraged to consider taking appropriate steps to minimise negative impact on the environment when taking up the opportunities offered within the programme and on an ongoing basis. The proposed access improvements will allow for on-going future maintenance work.

Risk management

- 5.4 The Council has not committed itself to a payment of a grant at this stage. Payment of the grant cannot be made until the work is completed to the full satisfaction of the Council and the works do not come under budget. There is a risk that if the Church does not receive adequate partnership funding then the NLHF may withdraw their grant offer, the repair work may not proceed and the benefits described in this report would not be delivered.

Crime reduction

- 5.5 Beyond the repair works, the overall scheme with churchyard improvements should help to promote positive neighbourhood engagement by encouraging visitors and users to St. Mary's Church and reduce anti-social behaviour.

Safeguarding

- 5.6 There are no safeguarding implications.

6. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 The Grants Determination Sub-Committee, at its meeting on 27th September 2018, approved the issuing of a letter of comfort confirming that the Council would be willing to award funding of £30,000, payable as a Historic Buildings Grant, to St Mary and Holy Trinity Church as a contribution towards the cost of repairs and restoration works to the church. This letter was required to enable the Church to meet the requirements of its National Lottery Heritage Fund agreement. Following the provision of satisfactory documentation to the Council (see paragraph 3.10), this further report seeks approval to now issue

a formal offer of grant to the Church.

6.2 This is the second phase of the repairs programme. The Council previously awarded a Historic Buildings Grant of £20,000 towards the £283,000 cost of the initial works which mainly related to the West Tower.

6.3 The total works costs for the second phase are estimated at £278,000. These exclude non-works related fees and non-repair works which are financed from a separate National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. At the time of submitting the application to the Council for Historic Buildings Grant, £238,000 of financing had been raised, leaving a shortfall of £40,000. Bids have been made to various charitable organisations which it is anticipated will secure a further £10,000 of grant funding (see paragraph 3.7). Assuming these bids are successful, with the approval of the Historic Buildings Grant, funding will have now been secured for the full project cost as shown in the table below (figures rounded to the nearest £1,000).

	£
Works Costs – Including associated capital fees	278,000
<u>Approved Funding</u>	
National Lottery Heritage Fund – Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme	167,000
VAT Recovery	46,000
Diocese Contribution	10,000
Donations	8,000
Reserves	7,000
	<hr/> 238,000
<u>Balance to be met from</u>	
LBTH Historic Building Grant	30,000
Funding requests to other charitable institutions (Confirmation awaited)	10,000

6.4 The proposed grant allocation will utilise £30,000 of the uncommitted resources of £52,500 that have been earmarked to finance Historic Buildings Grants. No funding should be released until all necessary grant conditions have been made and the supporting documentation verified. The Council's contribution is capped at £30,000 meaning that the risk of any increase in costs or shortfall in funding rests with the Church. If the cost of the scheme decreases, the Historic Buildings Grant will be reduced accordingly.

7. COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to make this grant if it so wishes.
- 7.2 The Council made an informal offer of a grant previously. This was because the organisation needed an indication of the Council's intent in order to access substantial funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The organisation has now fulfilled the grant application criteria and therefore a formal offer may be made.
- 7.3 The grant terms provide for the control and the monitoring of the use of the grant funds. This will ensure that the Council achieves Best Value in line with the law. Also, a quotation process for the works was undertaken and evaluated in accordance with pre-advertised conditions. This also demonstrates that the cost of the works represents Best Value
- 7.4 The particular application does not give rise to any specific equalities issues under the law. The grant scheme itself is also subject to the Council's equalities monitoring process and is therefore assessed regularly to ensure that any equalities issues are dealt with appropriately.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- Grants Determination Sub-Committee report 'Informal offer of Historic Buildings Grant to St. Mary and Hold Trinity Church', dated 27 September 2018
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Appendices

- Appendix 1: Letter of comfort, dated 16 October 2018

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- List any background documents not already in the public domain including officer contact information.
- These must be sent to Democratic Services with the report
- State NONE if none.

Officer contact details for documents:

Or state N/A