

REFERENCE NUMBER: SPAPC.ERDF 005/2021

Restoration of St Paul's Anglican Pro-Cathedral

TENDER FOR THE RESTORATION OF HISTORICAL TIMBER STRUCTURES INSIDE THE TOWER & SPIRE

CLARIFICATION: 03

12th January 2022

SITE VISIT

A second site visit was held on Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 9.00 am.

The Contracting Organisation explained that the project is EU funded, having specific timeframes. The site is currently within the site boundary occupied by VAV JV, the contractor carrying out the works on the restoration of the tower. An overlap of the restoration works on the tower, and the works described in the tender, and envisaged.

With regards to site logistics, West Street is preferred for deliveries. However, if large pieces of timber are required, deliveries will need to be carried out from Marsamxett Road. Storage on site needs to be discussed with the current contractor.

Once the contract is awarded, a meeting will be held between the Contracting Organisation, the Architect-in-Charge, VAV JV and the successful bidder.

From a historical point of view, the timber structure is original and was constructed simultaneously with the construction of the masonry. It was completed in 1846. For this reason, large pieces of timber would be impossible to remove without damaging the adjacent masonry structure. The intent is to reinforce the structure as much as possible and retain all original parts of the structure. There is currently no environmental monitoring within the tower. The main issues pertain to water ingress, particularly from wind driven rain. Excessive levels of relative humidity, both as a result of ambient conditions as well as infiltrated rainwater, also attribute to the present deterioration.

The bells are currently protected by a timber encasing from the current restoration works. These are out of scope of the tender. The bell ropes/cables will need to be retained. The bells are directly supported on the timber beams to be restored/repared.

Most of the main wooden structural parts were visually graded using the British Standard: BS 4978:2007 (Visual strength grading of softwood – Specification). Part of the grading included the study of the timber drying cracks referred to as fissures. The depth, width and slope of fissures have been recorded and graded. When these fissures are not compromising the timber structure these can be treated just for aesthetic reasons, and the Contracting Organisation is open to discuss on interventions which are not related to the structural integrity of the structure. All interventions will be discussed beforehand with the Contracting Organisation.

The existing scaffolding is supporting the timber structures. The plan is always to start restoration of the timber structure from the uppermost level, working downwards. There is a provision in the tender for scaffolding in case the current works are complete by the time that the timber works commence.

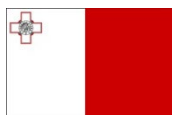
From the visual investigation carried out the timber structure does not seem to have been treated with any surface coating. Yet, there are areas, such as the lower staircase, which were applied with a greyish type of paint. From an ethical and conservation point of view, the introduction of varnishes or any other surface applications is not desired. However, it may be discussed during the works to introduce a protective coating. In the case of the discovery of varnishes on the original timber, these are to be retained and preserved.

In the case of the reconstruction of timber elements which are severely deteriorated, the intent is to reconstruct using traditional carpentry and joinery techniques. In some cases, these repairs/reconstructions may be strengthened further by using adequate adhesives and no corroding fixtures. Safety will be given the first priority. Any wooden parts added should have the same surface finish as the original construction and any timber used should be of the same species. If the latter is not possible then the bidding company should discuss with the Contracting Organisation of an alternative timber choice. New timber is to be certified and/or graded, with a moisture content of less than 20% (including its core). The requested hatch at Level 3 is a design-and-build item.

Where screws and straps have been introduced as previous interventions, the intent is to revert the timber structure to the original structure. The latter will be decided by the project architect/engineer and after confirming that the structure involved has regained its structural integrity. A metal conservator is required to determine the approach for the restoration and preservation of existing metal fixings. Metal fittings are to be cleaned from surface corrosion and treated using both mechanical and chemical treatments. Any new metal fittings to be replaced are to be carried out using non-corroding metal.

A biologist is required for the identification of fungal and insect attack, in order to devise the best method of treatment.

All other tender documents, conditions and requirements, which are not superseded by this clarification, remain in place.



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