

## **Church refurbishment project**

# **Update to PCC on Refurbishment Feasibility Study**

Prepared by the Refurbishment Working Party on behalf of Blockley PCC and approved by the Standing Committee 27 November 2019

[www.blockleychurch.org.uk](http://www.blockleychurch.org.uk)

## **Background**

It is well over a year since consultations with nine groups were carried out (Vicar and youth worker, Wardens and deputies, Children, Choir, Bellringers, Cleaning volunteers, Coffee providers, Flower arrangers and a Funeral director). In addition, thirty five individual church-goers sent in completed questionnaires. The outcome was the Architect's Brief approved by the PCC on 28 November 2018.

The key requirements identified were:

- Making the church more welcoming for all, especially children and families
- Making it more inclusive physically and spiritually
- Providing a space for personal prayer
- Improving the visitor experience
- Providing a toilet and baby change
- Completion of decoration of the nave
- Improving the lighting and heating and a permanent fix to the boiler house roof
- Providing permanent projection facilities
- Maximising existing assets e.g. the room at the base of the tower and the beautiful South porch

In April 2019, after assessing five firms of architects, Acanthus Clews, was appointed. They have considerable experience of work on ancient churches in the area including re-ordering projects such as the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kirtlington. They won a RIBA South Conservation Award in 2017 for Warwick Hall at St. John the Baptist Church, Burford. Their task for us is to meet the requirements of the brief whilst preserving and, if possible, enhancing the wonderful medieval architecture. Improvements to the lighting, getting rid of clutter with better storage and consolidating the numerous additions to the church in recent times will go towards this. They are currently contracted on a fixed price to produce a 'Feasibility/options study for the reordering'. They have issued a draft version of this so that the church can provide feedback prior to a full study being produced which would be used as the basis for a consultation with the wider community and statutory bodies.

So far in discussions in the Standing Committee and the PCC, a preferred layout (from three options) has been selected and subsequently a considerable number of changes

suggested to the architect. The result is the drawing 'Option 5 Rev B'. Underlying all the key requirements is a need for flexible space that can be used for a variety of purposes at different times. This indicates that the seating should be moveable and easily reconfigured for different layouts. However, further discussion has raised a number of important questions about where children should be during services and also suggestions regarding possible kitchen serving arrangements.

The Refurbishment Working Party was asked to convene to discuss the concerns that had been raised. At that meeting on November 18th, it was felt to be essential that a way forward should be sought that would be acceptable to the whole of the PCC.

Once the PCC has agreed a proposed scheme that can go forward to consultation, we would then be in a position to invite comments from the DAC and get feedback from church groups and the congregation. In addition to general questions, it will be important to ascertain from all those who took part in the original consultation whether their initial requirements would be met by the proposed scheme and, if not, what changes should be incorporated.

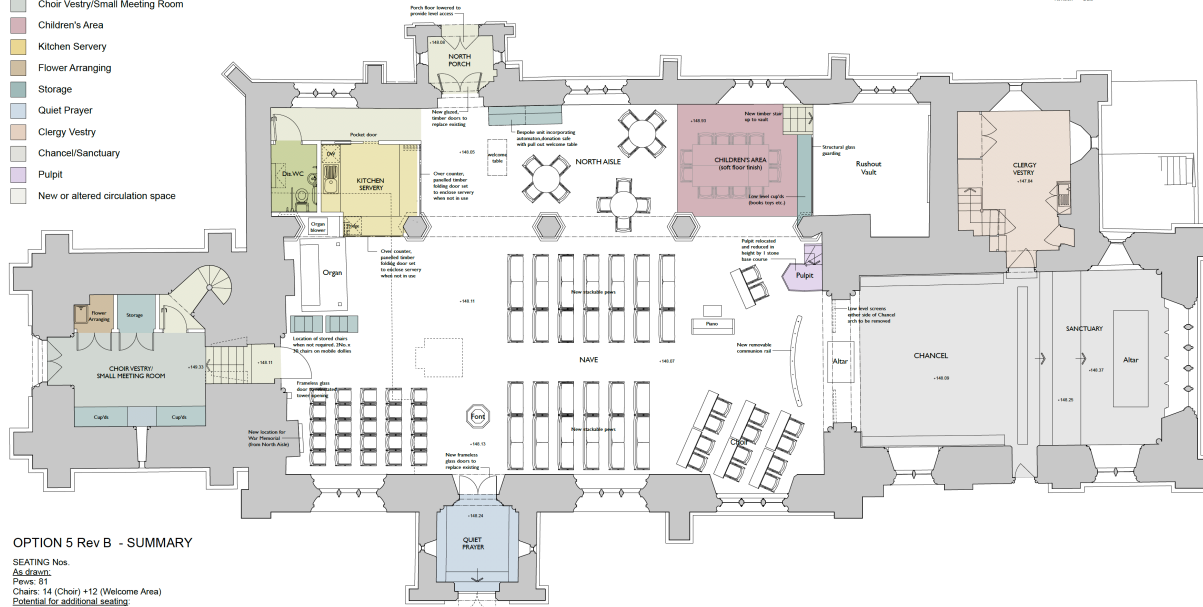
Comments from the consultations would then be considered by the PCC and subsequently discussed with the architect. All this would be before the wider consultation.

# ST PETER & ST PAUL BLOCKLEY UPDATE TO PCC ON REFURBISHMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY

## Option 5 Rev B

### KEY

- Wheelchair accessible WC & baby changing
- Choir Vestry/Small Meeting Room
- Children's Area
- Kitchen Servery
- Flower Arranging
- Storage
- Quiet Prayer
- Clergy Vestry
- Chancel/Sanctuary
- Pulpit
- New or altered circulation space



DO NOT SCALE THIS DRAWING USE DIMENSIONS ONLY  
VERIFY ALL DIMENSIONS ON SITE BEFORE COMMENCING ANY WORK  
ON THIS DRAWING  
BEFORE THE ARCHITECT BEGINS ANY WORK CHECKS IF THIS  
DRAWING IS USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSES  
ISSUE STATUS: FOR INFORMATION  
Revision: 0001

### OPTION 5 Rev B - SUMMARY

SEATING Nos.  
As drawn:  
Pews: 81  
Chairs: 14 (Choir) +12 (Welcome Area)  
Potential for additional seating:  
Chairs: 51  
**Max. Total Seating** (exc. Choir): 176

#### WEST TOWER

Infilled doorway from Nave opened up and gothic arch repaired. Rear Norman arch repaired. Passage through Tower wall widened to suit width of reinstated door opening. Fixed stair installed within passage. West Tower partitioned to create Choir Vestry/Small Meeting Room - incorporating Flower Arranging facilities and general storage.

#### NORTH AISLE

Wheelchair accessible WC and new Kitchen Servery built at west end of North Aisle. Servery can be fully enclosed using sliding/folding screens over counters. War memorial relocated to buttress at SW corner of Nave. All fixed pews removed from North Aisle. Bespoke unit located adjacent to entrance, incorporating automation, donations safe, book storage and pullout/welcome table.

Children's Area relocated to east end of aisle (adjacent to Rushout Vault) and to have soft floor finish. Area between Children's Area and entrance to be used for flexible seating/tables. Location for chair storage shown beside organ. Internal entrance doors to North Porch replaced with fully glazed and timber framed doors, hung to open outwards. Fourth floor lowered to create level access.

#### NAVE - West End

Timber pew platform at west end removed and replaced with new stone floor brought level with rest of Nave. Area created by removal of existing choir vestry to be used for additional, flexible seating or welcome area. Font repositioned on axis with North & South Porches.

#### NAVE - East End

Pulpit relocated to north side of chancel arch. Fixed choir stalls replaced with 2 person movable stalls located on south side of Nave. To create more space for communion, the low level chancel arch screens are removed allowing the Nave Altar to be located further eastward. Removable communion rail installed.

#### SOUTH PORCH

To be restored for use as an area for quiet prayer. To be accessed from Nave via new frameless glass doors. Roof to be insulated and doors draught proofed. New lighting installed.

#### GENERAL

New heating system throughout. Lighting system extended and improved.

CLIENT  
Incumbent & Church Wardens

PROJECT  
Refurbishing  
St Peter & St Paul's Church, Blockley

TITLE  
Option 5RevB  
Proposed Plan

SCALE  
1:100@A3, 1:50@A1

DATE  
06.08.19

DRAWN  
DS

CHECKED  
DS

19-025 005B

PROJECT NUMBER  
67 Highways Road  
Barnham - Ainstable  
GU24 0BE  
Tel: 01206 703000  
Fax: 01206 703001  
www.acanthusclewscreech.co.uk



In meeting with most of the objectives in the Architect's Brief, this scheme provides:

- Very flexible options for different layouts and uses. This project is once in a generation and needs to cater for different styles and patterns of worship and other uses of the church.
- Maximising the use of currently under-used spaces - North West and North East corners, South porch and base of tower.
- More seating which has good sight lines

Issues that have been raised so far with this scheme:

**Children's area**

The labelling of the North East corner 'Children's area' implies that this is where children would be during all services. It is suggested that the label be removed from the drawing and that narrative explains how three possible areas for children could be used at different times.

1. The North East corner for when it is desired that children are involved as much as possible for part or all of the service.
2. The South West corner where they would still be in the main church but less distracting to the congregation.
3. In the tower room where there would be good sound isolation but there could be a vision and sound relay of the service. (The same relay could also be fed to the bell ringing chamber to meet one of the requirements of the bell ringers).

Either 1 or 2 could be the area that children use during the week (children coming in with their parents during the day or after school).

It has been suggested that storage of children's toys, craft stuff etc could be in cupboards on wheels which could also be used as screening for the area they are in. This would not work in the tower room, though, because of the steps through the arch.

The narrative would explain that the same areas would be available for meetings (1 and 2 only when the church was not open to the public). They should, therefore, have separate heating zones. 1 and 2 would both meet the requirement for an accessible meeting area.

Should the choir wish to sing sometimes from the back of church, the NW corner could be used for this.

An option considered by the PCC was to extend the floor of the Rushout tomb Westwards as far as the first pillar and enclose the whole area with glass screens. The drawbacks though, apart from the large cost, was the risk of damage to the monuments if that area were in regular use as well as the visual intrusion of the screens. One of the earlier drawings had the South West corner surrounded by foldable screens for the same

purpose. This would provide some sound isolation but, without a ceiling, would be far from perfect, be potentially unsightly and increase project costs. The tower room would seem to be a better option where sound isolation is needed unless the number of children expanded greatly. In which case, a construction in the NW corner could be done at a later date.

### **Kitchen servery**

A second serving hatch on the East wall of the kitchen was added for occasions when large numbers of people would be present - e.g. interval of a concert. Despite the access to the North door being less obstructed by the removal of heating pipes and pews, there was still concern that congestion by the hatch could block access to the door. As that hatch is very wide, it is suggested that it be shortened at the North end so that access to the door and toilet is less likely to be an issue. This would also have the benefit of allowing the fitting of a wall cupboard in the NE corner of the kitchen.

The other issue with the second serving hatch is that the outside of it is an ideal place for notice boards. Folding hatches as shown in the drawing would prevent this use. An alternative would be a lift-up outward opening hatch. This would allow notice boards to be fitted to it and also give more servery width.

### **Other issues**

We can expect other issues to come up during the course of further consultation and there may well be cost constraints which limit how much can be done in one go. Provided we do not go into more detailed design (other than the heating for which we are awaiting an initial design) until we are pretty sure what we want, there should be no impact on Architect's fees.

### **Conclusion**

We are still at an early stage where nothing is yet fixed. The next phase - consultation with the church groups and congregation is, however, very important as it is not an exercise that we want to go through more than once. Before this next consultation takes place, the PCC needs to agree and formally approve the content of that consultation. As such, it is essential that the PCC takes time now to debate and then reach a unanimous decision regarding the acceptability of the scheme that is proposed.

Once the PCC have an agreed scheme to take forward, the architect will be asked to amend the drawing and a document and presentation will be prepared by the Working Party to aid the consultation.

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