

St Joseph Catholic Church

West Street, Havant, Hampshire PO9 1LP

Proposed Extension to the Church and associated works
Proposed Extension to Church Hall and associated works
Proposed removal of garages and associated works

Planning Statement in Support of Application for Planning Consent

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1. INTRODUCTION

The proposal is to improve the accessibility of the Church and Hall for those with physical impairment.

CHURCH

The Church has a stepped entrance. The limitations of proximity to the public footpath and the heights of the existing arched doors negate the option of providing a ramped entrance using the existing Narthex.

There are no toilet facilities within the Church for parishioners attending Services. Whilst it is possible to walk through the Sacristy corridor to access the Hall toilets, due to steps within this route those toilets are not reachable by persons with walking difficulties or wheelchair users.

A number of options have been explored and the optimum solution being presented for Approval is to construct a new Narthex on the West side of the Church which will provide:

- An accessible entrance
- An accessible toilet
- And improved and more generous Narthex
- A modest kitchen facility for serving teas and refreshments after Services.
- A ‘break-out’ space / ‘cry room’ for use during Services.

HALL

The existing Entrance to the Hall, though not stepped, is not compliant. The entrance door leafs are of insufficient width and due their age and condition cannot be opened by those with physical impairment or using wheelchairs. There is a need for a Part M compliant toilet serving the Hall.

REMOVAL OF GARAGES

The low grade garages set within the car park are now used for storage of items, and mainly those required in the Hall. The garages are unsightly and one is built onto the historic wall bounding the Church garden. Removing the garages will enable two disabled parking bays to be provided in close proximity to the entrances to both the Church and the Hall. To enable the removal of the garages the Hall is to be extended to provide alternative storage.

CAR PARKING

The purpose of the extensions is solely to provide improved and accessible facilities for Church-goers. It does not relate to any increase in numbers attending the Church or the Hall.

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2. THE HISTORIC CHURCHES COMMITTEE

The Church is not Listed, but is considered to be Listable and lies within a Conservation Area. As a Place of Worship, the Church and Hall come under The Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Order 2010 (SI 2010 no 1176). As such matters pertaining to Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Consents are dealt with by the Southern Historic Churches Committee, and an Application has been submitted to them covering both works to the Church and the Hall.

3. THE EXISTING CHURCH

The Church was completed in 1875 to designs in the 14th Century Gothic style by Architect John Crawley, who also designed Portsmouth Cathedral and Sacred Heart, Fareham. It is built in local brick and flint, with stone dressings, corbels, and copings. The pitched roofs are in slate banded in two-tones and with clay tile ridges. The arrangement of the Church follows Pugin's guidance.

Externally the Church is a positive contribution to the Conservation Area. The design is well proportioned and finished in good quality traditional materials with careful detailing. Each individual element is considered to be of neutral significance, though the South Porch facing the road is an important feature within the street scene.

The garden walls bounding the Church are in the main original to the construction, though those to the west and north of the Church have been subject to much alteration and having been raised in a non-matching brick.

4. PROPOSED WORKS TO THE CHURCH

Please refer to the drawings and visuals provided with this application.

As noted in the Introduction the Church is not accessible to those with physical impairment or to wheelchair users, and it has no toilet facilities. The South Porch forms the Narthex and is very restricted in size. There is no space for 'meet and greet' and no area to gather for occasions such as weddings or funerals. At present parishioners need to go to the Hall for these facilities.

The options are severely restricted by the very limited positions in which foul drainage is available to serve toilet facilities, unless pumped drainage is to be considered. The drainage on site exists only along the East boundary beyond the Presbytery and Hall. However the depth of the final manhole does allow drainage to be run in front of the South of the Church to serve a toilet at the South-West corner. Alternatively a new sewer connection could be made into the road to the West of the Church. This does negate any options positioning the toilet North of the Church.

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A number of options have been developed to address these deficiencies. These include:

1. To create a ramped access through the existing South Porch with toilet to one or other side of the existing Narthex. Due to there being a step between the Porch and the Narthex, and the proximity of the Porch to the public highway, this option would require the South Porch stone floor to be lifted and ramped and the external door to be trimmed by some 100mm to accommodate increased levels. The visual impact of an extension directly off the Porch would be of intrusive significance.
2. To create a small extension to the west of the Nave to provide a new toilet access directly off it, and with the accessible entrance formed separately into the nave off the North side.
3. To create a covered link to the Hall from the North of the Church, and to use this link to provide an accessible entrance with access to the Hall toilets.

The optimum solution identified by the Parish is to construct a simple extension along the West side of the Church which will provide a number of functional improvements in the one location ; not only an accessible entrance and toilet, but also create a larger Narthex more capable of being used for gathering before and after services. This will also provide a modest tea/coffee making facility.

This is set back from the front of the Church and behind the South Porch. The increase in floor area is 54 sq. m measured externally of the walls.

The west flank of the Church poses a number of challenges to any extension. The plan-form is articulated with the Nave set out beyond the South Porch and North aisle. There are heavy buttresses protruding to the West and South. The large West window has a relatively low stone cill, yet the Nave windows are set with their heads quite high. These features make a pitched roof solution complex, other than to form a North-South duo pitch with a long valley gutter alongside the Church flank. There is also an original boundary wall running North -South between the Church and the entrance drive.

The proposal is to create a simple contemporary lightweight structure with restrained detailing that will not adversely impact upon the setting of the Church. Viewed from the Street (South) the extension is set back behind the South porch and the south wall and south-west corner are formed in brick and flint to match the Church, and with a stone parapet to match the buttress cappings. The existing garden boundary wall is retained with the extension constructed immediately behind it, and topped in a glazed clerestory of zinc coloured slim-line aluminium curtain wall. The glazed entrance, set on the North side accessed directly off the car park, is set inside the boundaries of the existing brick garden walls. The walls are reduced in height back to their original height by removing the non-matching brickwork raise.

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Internally the existing West wall of the Church and the windows within it are retained exposed to view. The only connections being the glass abutment to the North and the brick and flint abutment to the South. A new arched opening is formed into the Nave with glazed hardwood doors patterned on the existing archways and doors. This new entrance to the Nave is set centrally on the axis of the central aisle.

To simplify the connection to the existing building and retain the existing windows and stonework features unaltered it is proposed to provide a flat roof with lead grey membrane and zinc grey over-sailing eaves. Downpipes will be mainly concealed within the toilet and kitchenette, and in the internal corners.

We believe this approach can provide a high quality contemporary extension worthy of its function as the new Narthex, whilst having no adverse impact upon the setting of the Church.

The extension will be accessed direct from the car park. The entrance via the south Porch will be retained without alteration, and no alterations are proposed to the front elevation of the Church.

5. THE EXISTING HALL

Please refer to the drawings and visuals provided with this application.

The Hall was constructed in the late 1950s and is of no architectural or historical interest. It is of simple duo pitch construction with flat roofs along the West flank. The elevations are rendered and with white windows.

6. PROPOSED WORKS TO THE HALL

As noted in the Introduction the Hall is difficult to access for wheelchair users and has no accessible toilet. Hall storage is via external garages which detract the setting of the Church and hinder the provision of disabled car parking close to the Church entrance.

The proposal is to extend the Hall entrance to replace the garages, provide a covered porch and improved entrance doors. Within the Hall two toilets will be combined and refitted to provide a compliant disabled toilet facility. The design is for a simple flat roofed extension with rendered finish to blend in with the existing building. The new floor area is 42 sq. m measured externally of the walls.

This extension is remote from the Church and so would have no impact upon on its setting. The removal of the garages and repair of the garden wall would have a positive impact.

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7. CAR PARK AND GARAGES

The existing detached garages will be removed entirely and the bases grubbed up. The exposed surface will be renewed in macadam. The markings in the car park will be modified to suit the hall extension and with 2 disabled bays delineated in the area of the removed garages.

There will no overall change to the existing car parking numbers. This calculation includes the loss of the two garage spaces.

8. ACCESSIBILITY

The new Entrances will be fully accessible to wheelchair users and others with physical impairment.

They will be accessed directly off the Church car park, and also accessible from the West Street. The access routes will fall within guidelines for level access without the need for ramps.

The Entrance doors will be of a suitable width and operation. The new Narthex will act as a generous lobby into the Nave. The new Hall entrance will provide a generous lobby to the Hall.

A Part M compliant toilet facility will be provided within the Narthex, and within the Hall two existing toilets will be combined to provide a Part M compliant facility.