DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

FOR A

NORTH EXTENSION

AT

THE PRIORY CHURCH OF
ST MARY THE VIRGIN
SOUTH HAYLING

FOR

THE VICAR AND PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL
PARISH OF SOUTH HAYLING
HAYLING ISLAND

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Contents

1.00	**Introduction**	**1**
1.01	The Church	1
1.02	Proposed Extension	1
2.00	**Context**	**1**
2.01	The Churchyard	1
2.02	Trees	1
2.03	Topography	1
2.04	Setting	2
2.05	Local Community	2
2.06	Planning Policy	2
2.07	Green Issues	2
3.00	**Design Principles**	**2**
3.01	Amount	2
3.02	Layout	2
3.03	Scale	3
3.04	Landscaping	3
3.05	Appearance	3
4.00	**Access Principles**	**4**
4.01	Highway Access	4
4.02	Pedestrian Access	4
4.03	Public Transport Access	4
4.04	Cycle Access	4
4.05	Parking Provision	4
4.06	Sustainability	4
4.07	Emergency Services	4
5.00	**Summary**	**5**
5.01	Creating the Design Solution	5
5.02	Creating the Access Solution	5
6.00	**Photographs**	**6**

1.00 INTRODUCTION

1.01 THE CHURCH

In 1066 William Duke of Normandy granted the manor of Hayling Island to the great Norman Benedictine Abbey of Jumieges. The original priory-cum-parish church at the south of the island was consumed by the sea in 1324-5. The chancel of the present church was probably completed in 1253 and consecrated for the priory's use. Nevertheless the plan for the total surviving church was a single entity and the work continued westward in the C13th. An axial tower was added to the chancel which became the east bay of the parish church and the rectangular plan of the nave and side aisles omitted the more traditional transepts with the east ends of the side aisles becoming chapels. The church in this form remained virtually unaltered for five centuries apart from the major changes to church furnishings resulting from the C16th Reformation. When the priory was dissolved in 1569, the parochial south porch was added. The second half of the C19th saw the greatest period of restoration in which the architects George Edmund Street and Sir Arthur Blomfield were appointed. It was thought that the nave piers and arcade were in danger of collapse and Blomfield brought in the architect Lacy W Ridge to oversee the works in 1892. This resulted in replacement columns in granite but retaining the medieval limestone bases and capitals. Blomfield and Ridge added a vestry on the north side of the chancel in 1894 which replaced an earlier vestry there. With the exception of the removal of the lime render from the nave walls the church has remained largely unaltered from that time.

During 2010 a major internal re-ordering of the church dramatically improved the internal environment resulting in a much wider and more regular use of the building by the church and the wider community. The lack of basic facilities is a serious restriction and must be addressed.

1.02 PROPOSED EXTENSION

With a very simple hall plan and no transepts the church lacks additional rooms usually found in churches of this size. In 1916 the architects Colson and Nisbett produced an unexecuted plan to build a vestry against the north door of the nave. Almost a century later, the need remains and the proposed extension is to be accessed from the north door of the nave.

2.00 CONTEXT

2.01 THE CHURCHYARD

The church has an unusually large churchyard resulting from the additional land of the earlier priory buildings within its curtilage. In the Middle Ages the church accommodated the majority of the burials in Hayling Island. Although St Peter's in North Hayling had burial rights granted in 1485 as late as the C19th the churchyard was segregated to southern and northern areas for their respective dead. The churchyard was additionally extended to the south and at the beginning of this century a large area of farmland was donated to extend the churchyard to the west. There are some fine C18th and C19th tomb-stones and the churchyard is well-managed.

2.02 TREES

The churchyard has a variety of established trees 32 with TPO's. There is a predominance of yew trees. The most significant specimen is on the south side of the church to the south-east of the porch. It is one of the largest and finest in Britain. Its main branches have been supported on wooden props for over 200 years. The tree has a girth of 11m and an overall canopy of 20m. There are seventeen yew trees in the churchyard with TPO's, one of which will be affected by the proposed development.

2.03 TOPOGRAPHY

The site is virtually flat but is approximately 6m above Newlyn Datum and is not at risk of flooding. Indeed the church was located here when the earlier church in the south was swept

into the sea. The land to the north, east and south of the churchyard is developed with housing and a large secondary school to the north-east. The land to the west is open farmland.

2.04 SETTING

The church is a landmark in South Hayling and with linking public footpaths through the churchyard it has regular use. The church is sufficiently isolated not to relate to neighbouring buildings, but the established churchyard densely populated with headstones and the large numbers of yew trees provide an idyllic setting.

2.05 LOCAL COMMUNITY

South Hayling has a population of approximately 15,000. There are many individuals and groups who use the church building but with a Millennium initiative in 2000 the church held a number of meetings with local community groups and business representatives to determine how the church building could better serve the community. Additionally the church explored the possibility of increased use by the neighbouring comprehensive school which enjoys a good working relationship. The requirements for a large flexible space with disabled access, WC's and beverage facilities on one level with good heating and lighting was the universal need highlighted by these meetings. The church proposed to phase the works of re-ordering the church (with under-floor heating, a new stone floor finish and the replacement of pews with chairs) and the construction of a north extension to provide the essential facilities demanded. Phase 1 is completed with phase 2 the subject of this application.

2.06 PLANNING POLICY

Although the church is a significant listed building, there is no restriction in planning policy to prevent the church being extended sensitively.

2.07 GREEN ISSUES

The site has mains water and electricity and the client group are anxious to incorporate sustainable technologies and materials. Regrettably the using of photovoltaic collectors, which are required to face south, are not possible on this Grade II* building. The collection of surface water from roof coverings may be recycled for wc flushing, and for churchyard watering and cleaning. However due to the number of historic burials, excavations in the area around the church are to be minimised and the building will be constructed on a reinforced concrete raft. The new extension will be heavily thermally insulated and the underfloor heating extended from the recently completed church floor.

3.00 DESIGN PRINCIPLES

3.01 AMOUNT

The proposal is for the minimum provision only of a small meeting room and vestry, two wc's (one for disabled) and a very small area for making beverages. The meeting room will also serve as a space for children's activities during services. The extension will be self-contained and no provision for future enlargement is proposed (or possible).

3.02 LAYOUT

The formal layout and historic character of the traditional church preclude a number of possible extensions. The existing vestry at semi-basement level has been converted into a plant room and flower vestry. An extension adjacent to existing external door openings has many advantages and principally the avoidance of the destruction of historic church fabric. The church has two south doors one into the chancel the other through a C13th timber porch, neither would be practical for an extension to be located adjacent. In addition the south side of the church is the thoroughfare for the principle access and is a public footpath. The west entrance is through a pair of doors under a large four-over-four light stained glass window. Although an

extension would be possible in this location with very few graves and no adjacent trees, it would have a major impact on the view of the church from the footpath through the fields and the distant views of the church from the new burial ground. A low roof would be necessary to retain a view of, and daylight through, the west window. The west door is the ceremonial entrance for civic services, weddings and funerals and this would seriously constrict the internal planning and use of the space.

The single door on the north mirrors the regularly used single door on the south with the exception of no porch addition. This is an ideal location for access to an extension as the door is unused, but is of large width. Internally it is well located for access when the body of the church is in use and no internal adaptation is required. The extension is proposed as ancillary to the church and not a stand-alone facility. An extension to the north of the church has less impact on the setting of the church as it is heavily screened by yew trees and this elevation already has a sunken Victorian vestry with a covered passage attached to the chancel.

The low eaves line of the side aisles (which appear to be even lower due to the raised land resulting from burials and many years of decayed leaf mould) would produce a very difficult junction and disturbance of the historic fabric if there were direct attachment of an extension with the masonry walls and the clay tiled roof. A linked, 'detached' extension allows the church to be largely undisturbed while allowing the architecture of the extension to stand alone.

3.03 SCALE

The low eaves line to the nave aisles is a defining edge of the dominant building. An extension in close proximity should respect this human scale. The plain clay tile roof slopes are steeply pitched on the nave and chancel roofs and continue on the side aisles. Choosing traditional materials sympathetic to the church the height of the eaves and the roof slope set a framework for the design. A regular footprint of a square, diamond, octagon or circle would eliminate a ridge and maximise the accommodation in the minimum plan area. The extension should be distinctive, immaculately detailed but subservient to the listed building and the scale must not dominate.

3.04 LANDSCAPING

The existing site is in part ordered by the headstones but its planting is more fluid. The yew trees dominate with large canopies. There are occasional shrubs and flowers left at graves. The expanse of the large churchyard is consumed with natural grasses which are generally managed but occasionally grow to seed. When first constructed the proposed extension will damage this natural order but any new landscaping will only be reinstatement. The building will be markedly recessed to maintain the church floor level and the perimeter will have a gravel margin. The 45 degree banking will be grassed to integrate with the surrounding churchyard. For continuity the footpath recently laid to the south and west entrances will be extended to the external door in the link to the new extension.

The siting of the extension will necessitate the removal of an established yew tree and a number of graves. The appointed tree consultant advises that there is a realistic possibility of moving the tree. Although a precise location has not been agreed, the opening of the new burial ground in virgin farmland provides a close proximity of similar soil on the edge of the old churchyard boundary. Burials where requested will be undisturbed and built above or reinterred and the headstones relocated.

3.05 APPEARANCE

The extension is designed to be subservient to the church but to have an internal and external identity. St Mary's is an old priory church and the image of a chapter house linked to, but not directly abutting, the listed building presented a possible contextual form. The octagonal plan is reflected in the broached spire and the principle columns within the church. It naturally diminishes scale by the imposed perspectives of reduced planes when viewing the walls and glazing. It will not create shadow against the church but will maximise any glancing east and west sun. Careful detailing and skilled workmanship will be necessary as the construction

incorporates dressed natural stone, coursed random stone and clay tiles in diminishing courses. The sight lines of the glass are to be minimised by the use of steel frames and set back under over-sailing exposed laminated rafter feet. The glass lantern in self-cleaning glass and polyester powder-coated steel patent glazing will be capped with a natural ventilation cone having a lead finish. The purpose-made sections of cast iron guttering will align with the eaves of the north aisle roof which over-sail without guttering to a drainage channel around the church perimeter. The construction materials are robust to resist vandalism, but surveillance cameras used in the church will be extended to include the new extension.

The extension makes a positive link with the north aisle. The roof pitches are identical and the plain clay tiles will have clay valley tiles at the junctions of the north aisle and octagonal extension roof. The existing north door will be refurbished and re-used as the entrance to the north room.

4.00 ACCESS PRINCIPLES

4.01 HIGHWAY ACCESS

The closest point for cars is in the lay-bys to the north and south of the lychgate on the west side of Church Road and extending over the length of the east boundary of the churchyard. There is another lay by on the opposite side of the road.

4.02 PEDESTRIAN ACCESS

The main pedestrian access from the highway is through the lychgate on Church Road. The path from the lychgate provides access to the south doors and continues to the pair of doors at the west end. The path has a gentle rise, but is readily accessible by wheelchair users. There are additional gravel path accesses from Church Road adjacent to the north and south boundaries.

4.03 PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS

The details of any public transport for the area are unknown, but the road is on a major bus route with a school opposite, bus stops are close to the church entrance.

4.04 CYCLE ACCESS

Cycle access is encouraged although no cycle shelters are available.

4.05 PARKING PROVISION

There is no off-street parking provision in the churchyard but parking is generally available on the church hall site which is diagonally opposite the lychgate entrance on the east side of Church Road.

4.06 SUSTAINABILITY

The new facilities proposed for the church will extend the use and life of the building. The church is committed to access for all and will endeavour to provide whatever aids and improvements are possible within the limitations of a listed building.

4.07 EMERGENCY SERVICES

General access to the new extension will be through the church. In the event of an emergency for the extension, access will be either through the church or the external door in the link. Emergency vehicles cannot gain access to the churchyard and appliances can only operate from the adjacent highway.

5.00 SUMMARY

5.01 CREATING THE DESIGN SOLUTION

The need for space external to the church is essential for the minimum requirement of providing wc's. The new heating installation required a boiler room and the use of a poorly accessed subterranean vestry has added a demand for a replacement clergy vestry. Children are encouraged to attend services but a space set aside for them for part of the service is common practice. This facility is currently unavailable at St Mary's. The demand for additional space is clear and the existing church does not have adaptable space within its existing footprint. Attaching an extension to a significant listed building requires the testing of many ideas and locations. Although it was determined early in the design process that a regular form would produce the most satisfactory roof an experiment with shapes of buildings concluded that an octagonal plan was the most satisfactory. The proposed use of the building does not necessitate rectangular rooms and arced meeting rooms have distinct advantages. There are historic precedents for attachments to churches. Cloisters are a good example of covered links to ancillary buildings. The proposed scale of the extension lent itself more to the precedent of a linked chapter house than a cloister and this form has been adopted in the submission. The use of materials similar to those in the church will avoid a clash of finishes although the style of building will be distinctly different. The scale is subservient to the church but the design is sympathetic while avoiding being a pastiche.

5.02 CREATING THE ACCESS SOLUTION

The choice for the location of the extension has been dictated by access. It provides good access for those using the church building with no change of level and no disturbance of the historic fabric. It reactivates a church door which has not been used for decades and revisits a proposal made almost a century ago. The route between the north and south doors forms a natural crossing which was highlighted in the Victorian tiled floor. The reordering of the church will has replaced a decayed floor finish but the cross route is retained giving immediate access from the south entrance to the north door into the extension.