

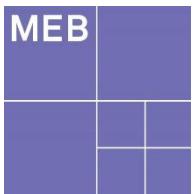
# **St John's Church, St John's Road, Harpenden**



## **Proposed Parish Centre**

## **Feasibility Report**

June 2017 – August 2107 rev B.



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  - The church's needs
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## Introduction

St Johns Church Harpenden instructed MEB Design in March 2017 to carry out an architectural feasibility study on a replacement building for its church hall

This document records the process that took place to see how and if the needs of the church for a new hall could be met.

The reasons for the replacement building, together with the accommodation required in the new building were identified in the church's comprehensive briefing documents, comprising of the "St Johns Parish Centre Design Brief", and Appendices A to G describing the building user requirements.

The process involved a review of the brief, familiarisation with the site, identifying all sensible high level options and evaluating them, before selecting and drawing up in more detail the option (or combination) that showed the most promise.

The resulting proposal was then tested through consultations with the church community, the DAC and the local planning authority before being costed.

The conclusion is that a replacement hall in principle at the size required is feasible at the levels of cost suggested in the church's briefing document.

## **Background**

St John's Church is located within the conservation area of Harpenden, although the church itself is unlisted. The church dates from the 1908, and was designed by FC Eden, and replaced an earlier church which burnt down in 1905. It was extended in mid-20th century, with the construction of the Lady Chapel, designed by Stephen Dykes Bower. More recently an entrance lobby has been added to the west elevation, which has been locally credited with an award.

A detached building on the site, dating from the 1970's (and subsequently extended) accommodates the parish office, kitchen, meeting room and a hall. It is proposed to replace this building as it no longer meets the church's accommodation needs. Further the building fabric is deteriorating to the extent that repair is uneconomic

MEB design, have, with the church undertaken a series of exercises to determine the optimum form of the replacement building and level of accommodation for the site. We present this narrative herewith, with the preferred option

We describe the evaluation of alternatives and development of the design and the process to arrive at a shortlisted pair of designs to form the basis of a pre-application submission to the St Albans City and District council, in advance of a formal planning application.

Details of materials and details, will generally be sympathetic to the existing church and its extensions, although these will be developed subsequent to the dialogue within the pre-application process on building scale and envelope.



**Site Location Plan at 1:1250**

0 10m 30m 50m 100m  
SCALE

# **The Church's needs**

Refer to accompanying document, "Parish Centre Design Brief"

## **The church's accommodation needs in summary**

- Connection between the parish centre and the church
- A concourse and café area to provide a social hub
- Reception and parish office
- Meeting Rooms (rationalised to 2no.)
- Activity room, for messy activities
- Hall capable of seating 150 people
- Kitchen
- ICT rich space (now merged into the concourse/café)
- Toilet provision for adults, the disabled and children
- Storage
- External spaces to be of quality and 'designed'
- Residential space (not required)

## **The church's needs of the building**

The new Parish centre should ---

- Be welcoming
- Be accessible to all users, and enable "free flow" between church and the parish centre
- Be efficient environmentally
- Be secure, visible, and to provide protection all users, to be inclusive

## **The design of the building**

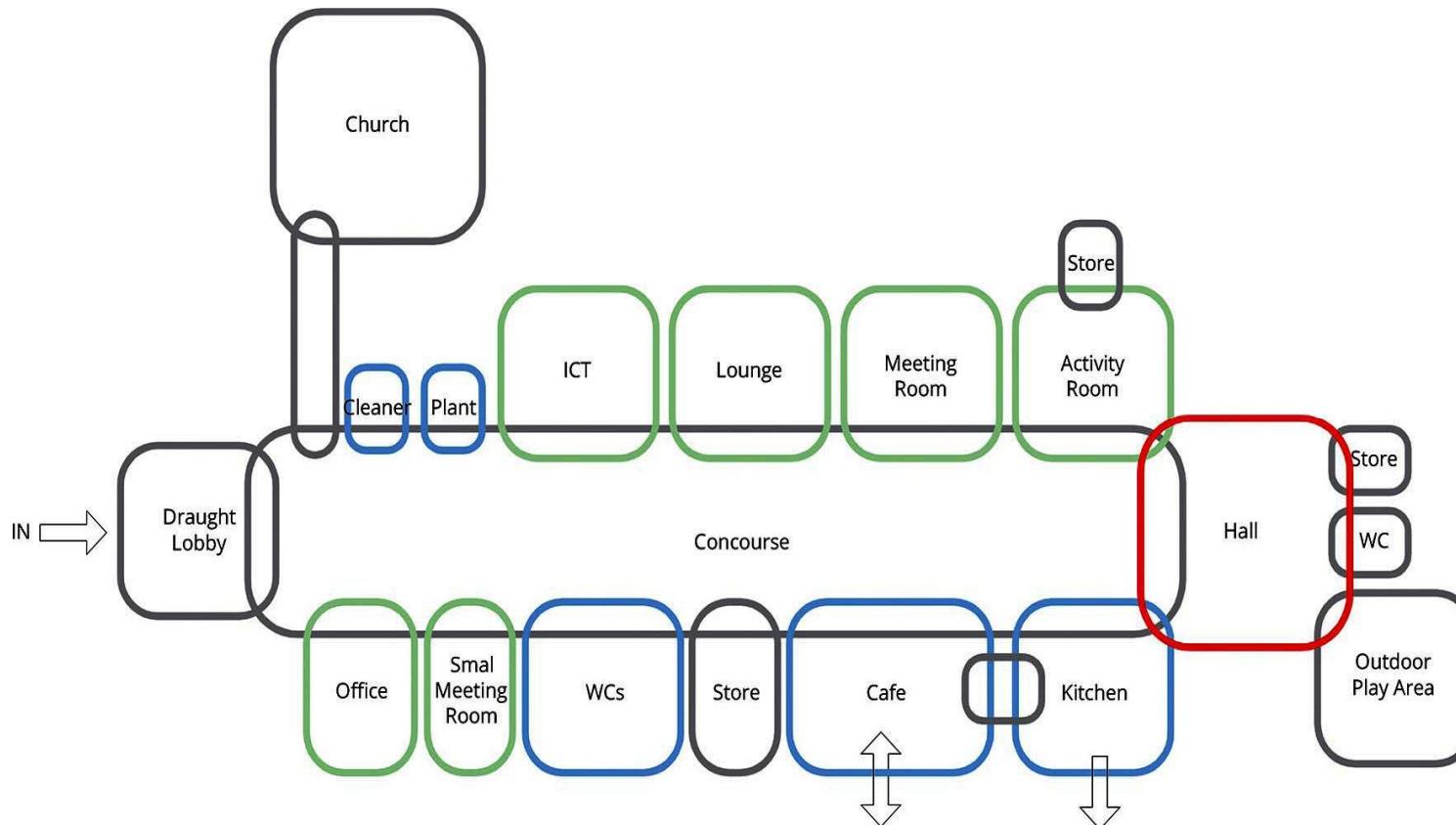
The new building will ---

- Be constructed of materials sympathetic to the existing church
  - brick
  - metal roof, similar to Lady chapel roof

- windows to be sympathetic
- all materials to be durable, robust, low maintenance and easily cleaned
- Be sympathetic too and not dominate the existing church
- Building will enclose and identify external areas, external areas will be of sufficient size and shape to benefit the building

## Bubble Diagram

Indicating relationships and interdependencies of new and existing areas



**Key adjacencies required are ---**

Existing Church to/from new concourse  
New concourse to/from all spaces  
Hall to/from kitchen  
Hall to/from activity room

## **Site Constraints**

- The church is located in Harpenden Conservation area, the church's visibility – giving rise to it being a local landmark (from the common) is to be respected
- The church is not listed,
- The parish centre site is bounded by the following, which can restrict or have an effect on the development
  - the church
  - the vicarage and its garden
  - the garden of remembrance
  - mature trees with t.p.o's to the eastern site boundary
  - adjacent properties, site boundaries and site levels
  - footprint of existing building, which is to be demolished
- The following measures are to be adopted in response to these constraints
  - connection(s) to church not too compromise integrity of church, or its architecture (see below), and be as least invasive as possible.
  - form and shape of the new building to give a positive edge or boundary to the vicarage garden
  - encroachment onto the garden of rest by the new building to be limited
  - Arboricultural advice will be sought in respect of tree and root protection. Noted that the existing building does extend appreciably into the root protection areas
  - neighbouring properties generally are oriented away from the site, it is not anticipated the Parish Hall development will adversely affect the neighbouring property's views, nor will they overlook the Parish Centre site.

## **Development of the scheme**

High level options 1-8 Indicating a sequential series of options development of alternative plan forms as follows, at the same time, exploring the additionally various configurations of connection to the church.

1. detached building, as existing.
2. linked building at rear of site, with some development within the church
3. ditto, with possible extension to west front of church
4. ditto, but with all development within new building,
5. ditto, but with accommodation on two levels, and with increased connection to church
6. ditto, but with an extended concourse
7. ditto, but with further extended concourse and accommodation on one level
8. ditto, but on two levels

The following diagrams illustrate this range of options including a summary of pros and cons, and following, include configurations of the connection with the church.



## High Level Option 1

2 storey, current location,  
no connection to church

### Advantages

- Little/no impact on vicarage garden
- slightly increased external areas

### Disadvantages

- No connection to church
- Proximity to front of site and access – very distant (as at present)
- Lift access necessary to first floor
- Little visual presence of the building – virtually invisible from street



## High Level Option 2

Café in church, mezzanine above. Single storey building with connection to church.  
(refer to entrance arrangement following)

### Advantages

- Location of café and meeting room utilises underused space in church, especially during week
- Compact single storey form
- Greatest external area, with least effect on trees
- Connection into church

### Disadvantages

- Café remote from kitchen
- Splitting of the week day accommodation
- Possible effect on site lines within church
- Impact on Vicarage garden greater than option 1

## High Level Option 2 (continued)

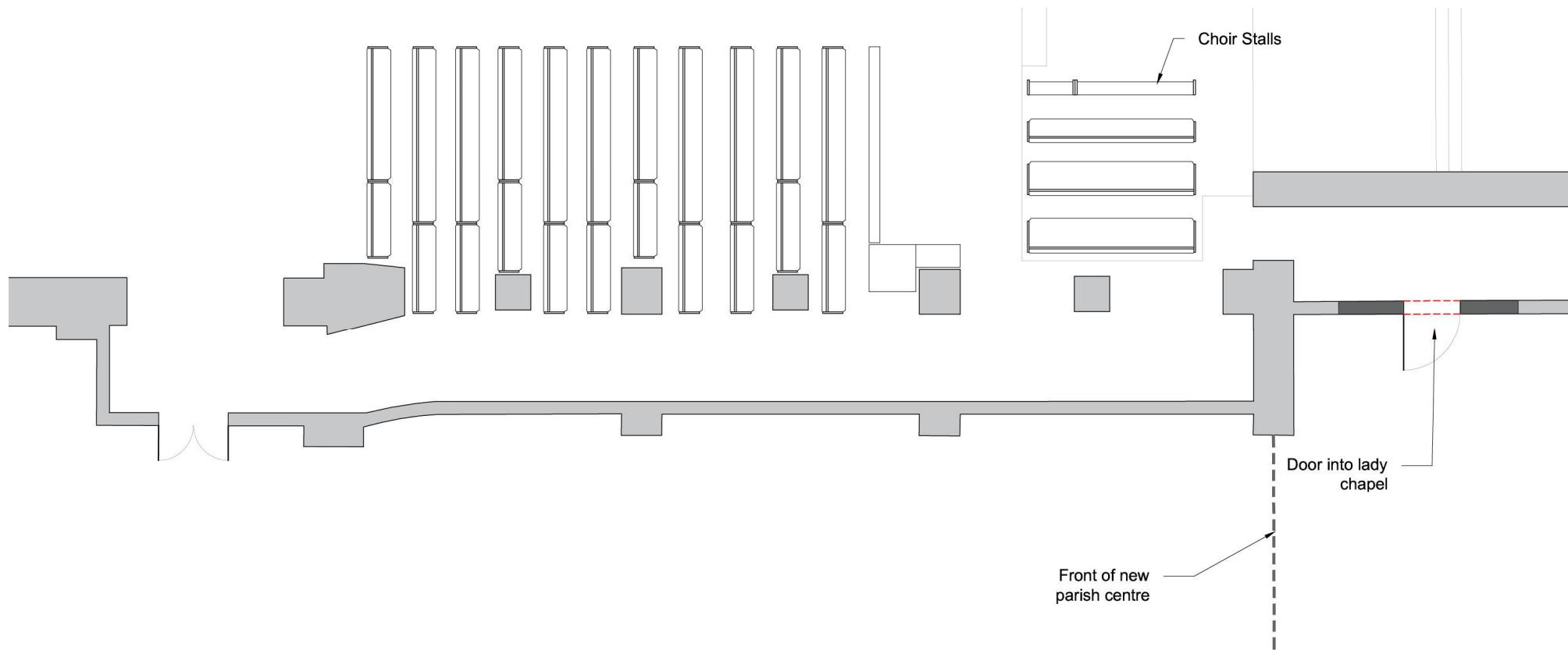
### Connection to Church

#### Advantages

- Minimal intervention to existing building
- Access to chapel possible without going through church

#### Disadvantages

- Long external access to new concourse





## High Level Option 3

As option 2, but also building over Lady Chapel, no mezzanine in church

### Advantages

- Location of café utilises underused space in church, especially during week
- Compact single storey form to hall/extension
- Greatest external area, with least effect on trees
- Connection into church

### Disadvantages

- Café remote from kitchen
- Splitting of the week day accommodation
- Building over lady chapel difficult and controversial
- Impact on Vicarage garden greater than before
- Effect on site lines within church through east window



## High Level Option 4

Part 2 storey, connection to church at lady aisle location

### Advantages

- Generous concourse
- Direct connection to lady chapel
- Geometric shape suits site and internal layout
- Additional external areas with access direct from hall etc.
- Little/no impact on vicarage garden
- Connection into church

### Disadvantages

- WC location not ideal
- Loss of daylight to chapel



## High Level Option 5

Part 2 storey, connection to church behind pulpit  
(refer entrance arrangement following)

### Advantages

- Generous concourse
- Improved connection to church
- WC location improved
- Little/no impact on vicarage garden
- Enlarged/additional external areas with access direct from hall etc.
- Improved connection into church

### Disadvantages

- Some earthworks and retaining walls to vicarage bank
- 2 storey section could be visually awkward from vicarage

## High Level Option 5 (continued)

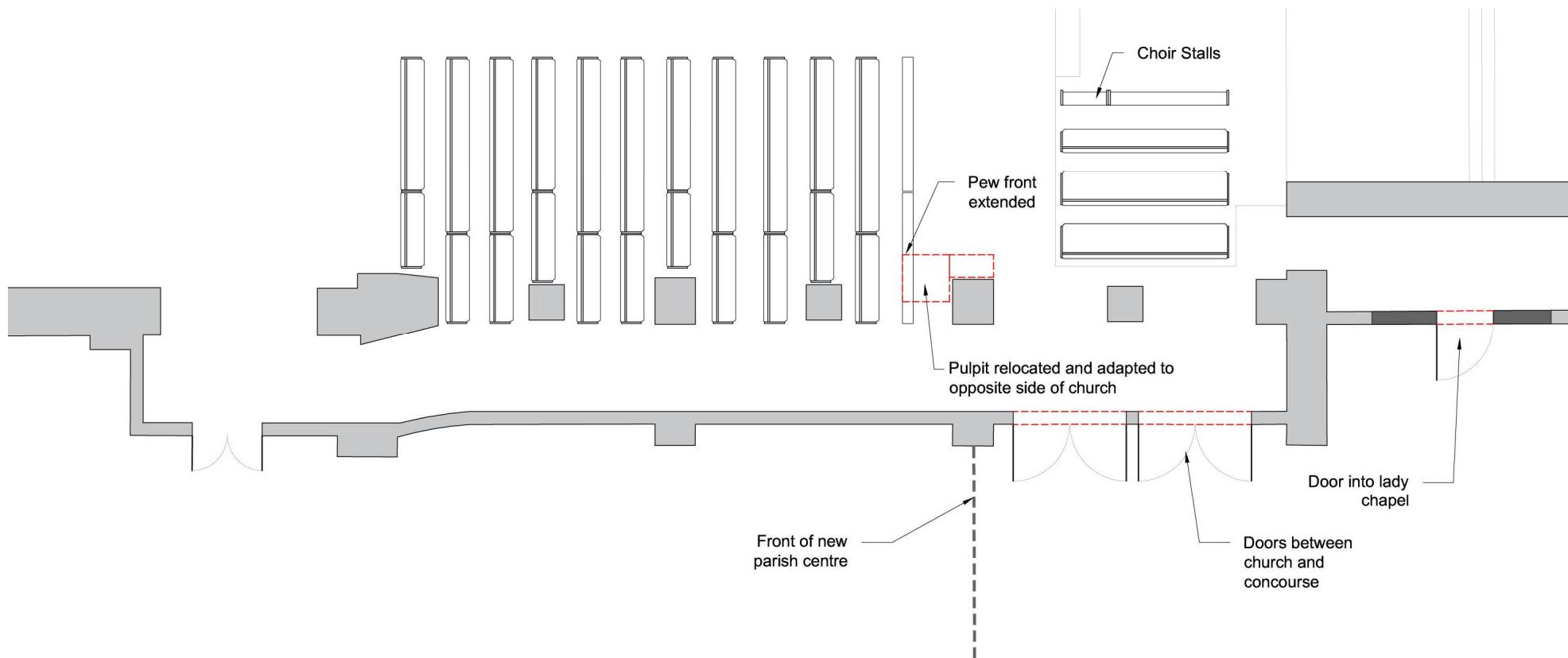
### Connection to Church

#### Advantages

- Visibility into church
- Introduce daylight into church
- Access to chapel possible without going through church
- Internal access from church to new concourse

#### Disadvantages

- 





## High Level Option 6

As option 5, part 2 storey but with connection into church further up the drive  
(refer entrance arrangement following)

### Advantages

- Improved Direct connection to church and lady chapel
- WC location improved
- Little/no impact on vicarage garden
- Additional external areas with access direct from hall etc.
- Connection into church

### Disadvantages

- Concourse length becoming excessive/uneconomic
- Impact on Vicarage garden
- Significant earthworks and retaining wall needed to vicarage bank
- Impact on vicarage structure
- WC location
- Significant earthworks and retaining wall needed to vicarage bank

## High Level Option 6 (continued)

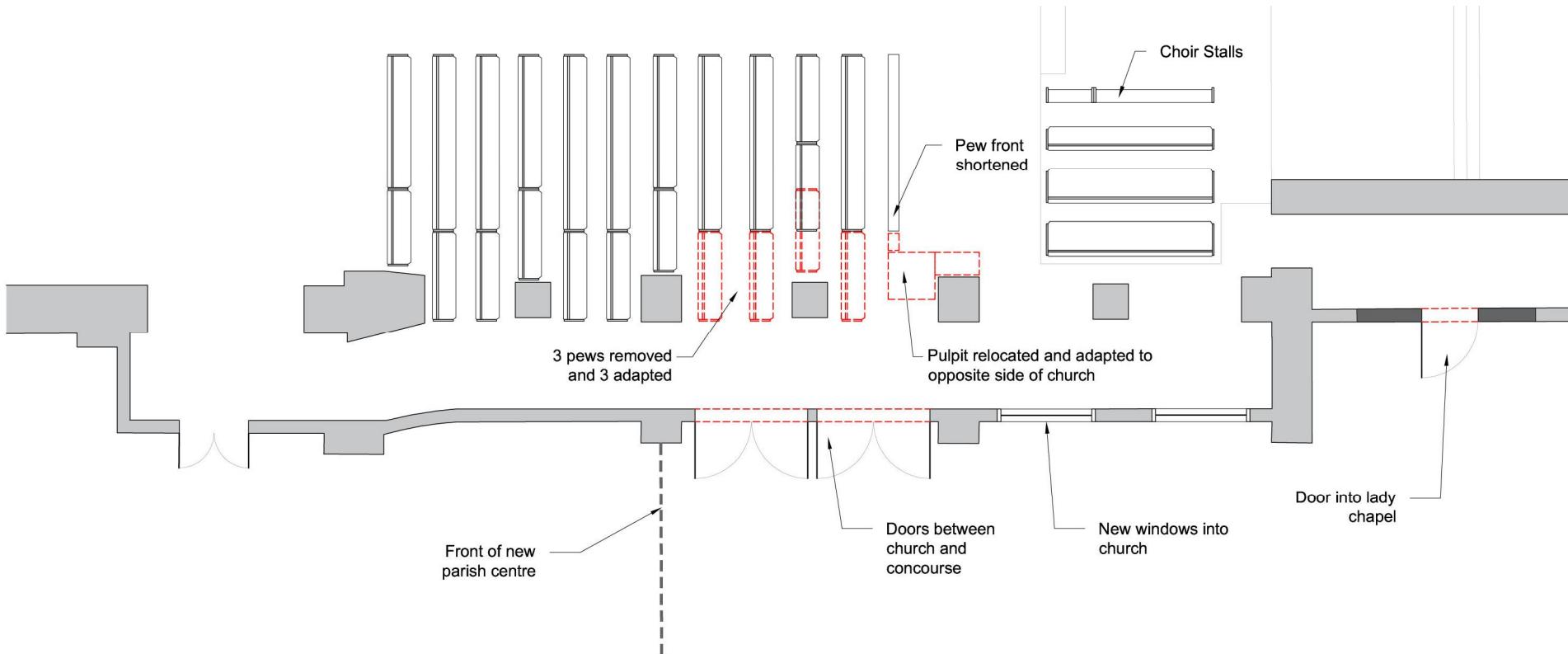
### Connection to Church

#### Advantages

- Visibility into church further improved
- Introduce daylight into church
- Access to chapel possible without going through church
- Internal access from church to new concourse further improved

#### Disadvantages

- Possible need to remove pews to give circulation area





## High Level Option 7

Single storey option with connection into church further forward than option 6 (refer entrance arrangement following)

### Advantages

- Further improved direct connection to church and lady chapel
- Single storey
- Additional external areas with access direct from hall etc.
- Connection into church

### Disadvantages

- Concourse length becoming excessive/uneconomic
- Lift access necessary to first floor
- Impact on vicarage garden
- Significant impact on vicarage structure, possible need to underpin
- WC location
- Significant earthworks and retaining wall needed to vicarage bank

## High Level Option 7 (continued)

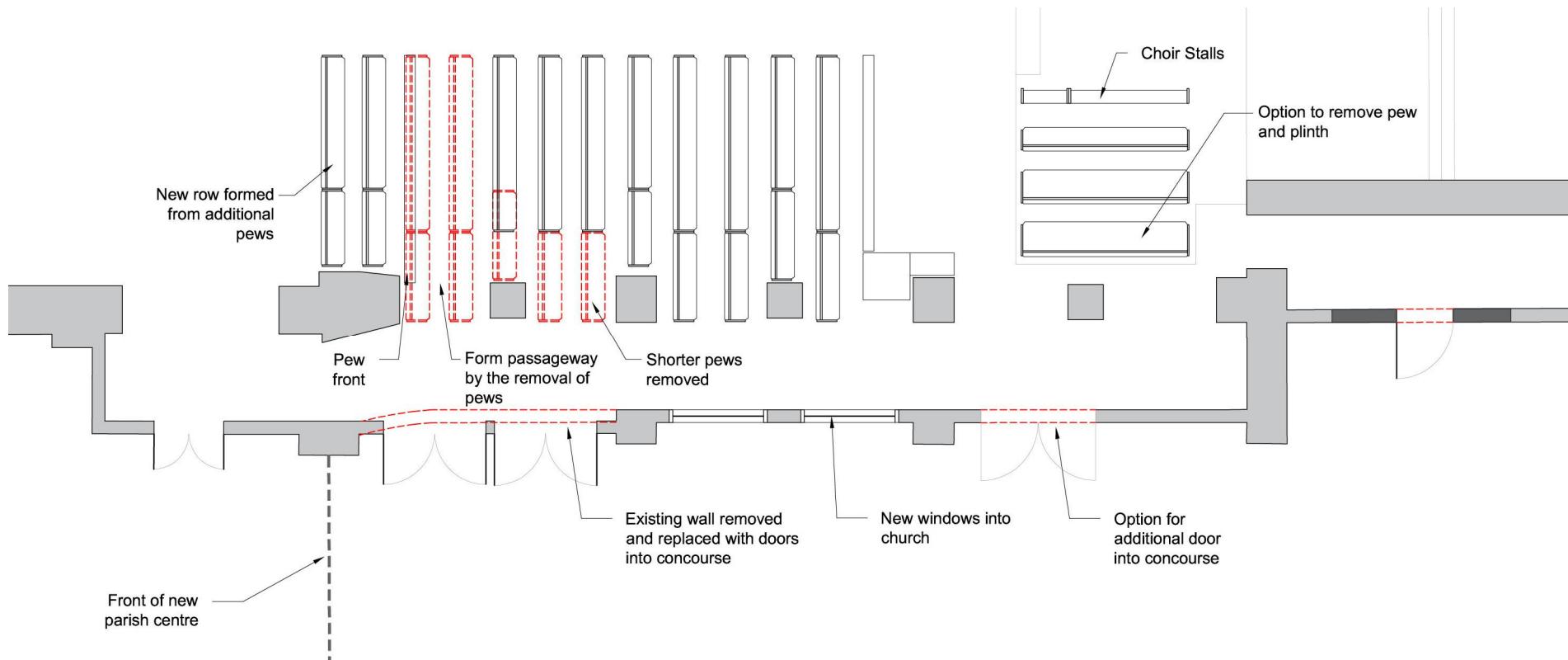
### Connection to Church

#### Advantages

- Still further incremental improvements to visibility, flexibility of use and access between church and new facilities

#### Disadvantages

- Detrimental effect to vicarage foundations
- Possible need to remove pews





## High Level Option 8

2 storey option with connection into church further forward than option 7  
(refer entrance arrangement following)

### Advantages

- Further improved maximum possible connection to church and lady chapel
- Further additional external areas with access direct from hall etc.

### Disadvantages

- Concourse length becoming excessive/uneconomic
- Greater impact on Vicarage garden than before
- Significant Impact on vicarage structure
- Impact of two storey element adjacent to vicarage, on amenity of vicarage
- Significant earthwork and retaining wall needed to vicarage bank

## High Level Option 8 (continued)

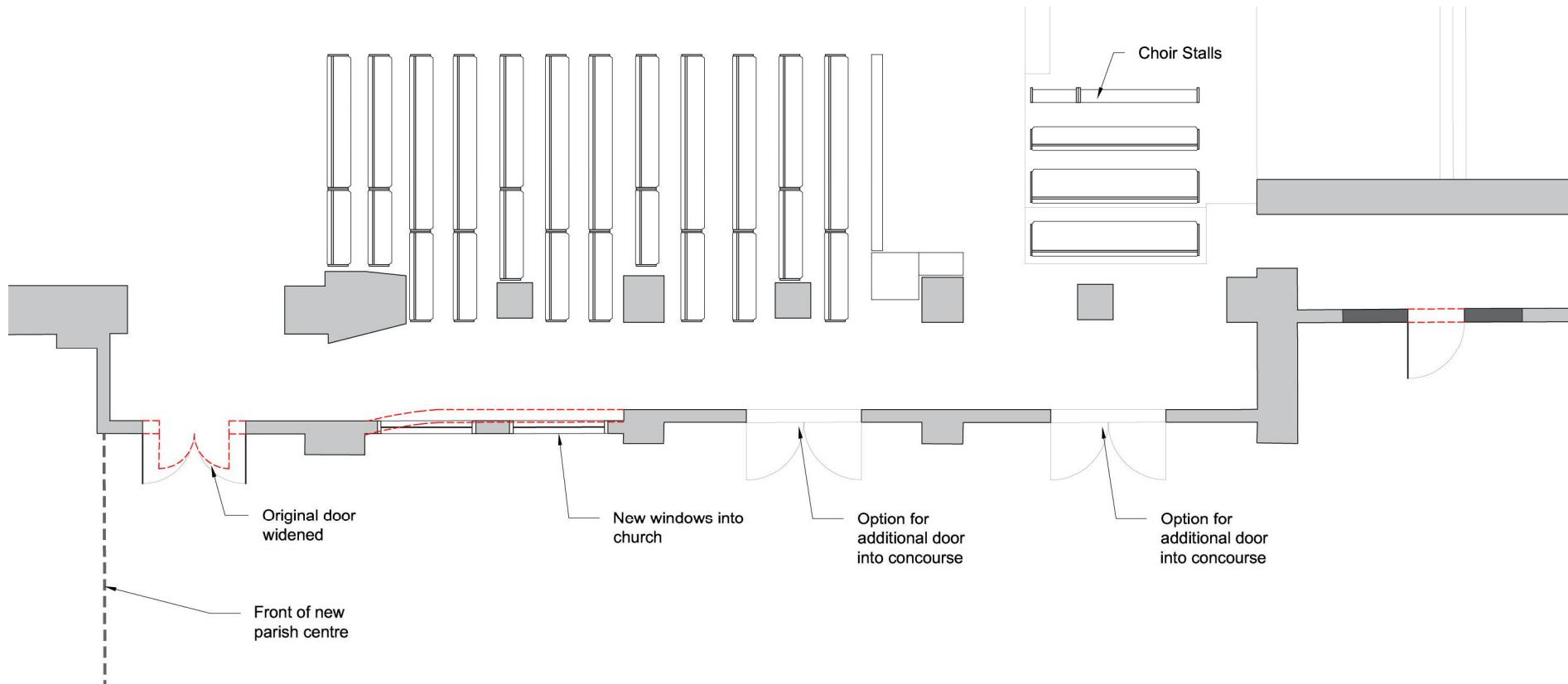
### Connection to Church

#### Advantages

- Maximum incremental improvements to visibility, flexibility of use and access between church and new facilities

#### Disadvantages

- Maximum detrimental effect to vicarage foundations to whole width of vicarage
- Impact on planning and form of hall development



## **Shortlisted options**

**A** Part two storey with connection to church as option 5

**B** Single storey with connection to church as option 5

### **Analysis of previous options 1 to 8**

- Connection to church shown in options 2, 6, and 7 is insufficient for church's needs
- Mezzanine floor (option 2) within the existing church volume, or building over the chapel, anticipated to be problematical from a practical, and conservation viewpoint, also visibility compromised in church, therefore not developed
- Option 1 does not offer any advantage and retains disadvantages of current arrangements
- Options 2 and 3 detrimentally affect existing church
- Options 6, 7, 8 adversely impact on the vicarage and there would be significant earthworks and retaining walls in respect to the Vicarage bank
- Two storey options beneficial, because of the reduced foot print of the building, with larger areas of 'external space' associated with ground floor rooms – hall, activity etc.
- Options. 5, 6 and 7 impact on vicarage
- Two storey section of building (option A) further away from site entrance and church to reduce visual impact
- Single storey option (option B) impinges to greater extent on root protection areas (which could be an issue with planning authority) and external areas, including vicarage garden

These shortlisted options have been subsequently costed, and further referred to the DAC.

Additionally a pre-application submission based upon the two-storey short listed option A, was made to the St Albans City and District council. It was assumed that the two storey option might be a more onerous application.

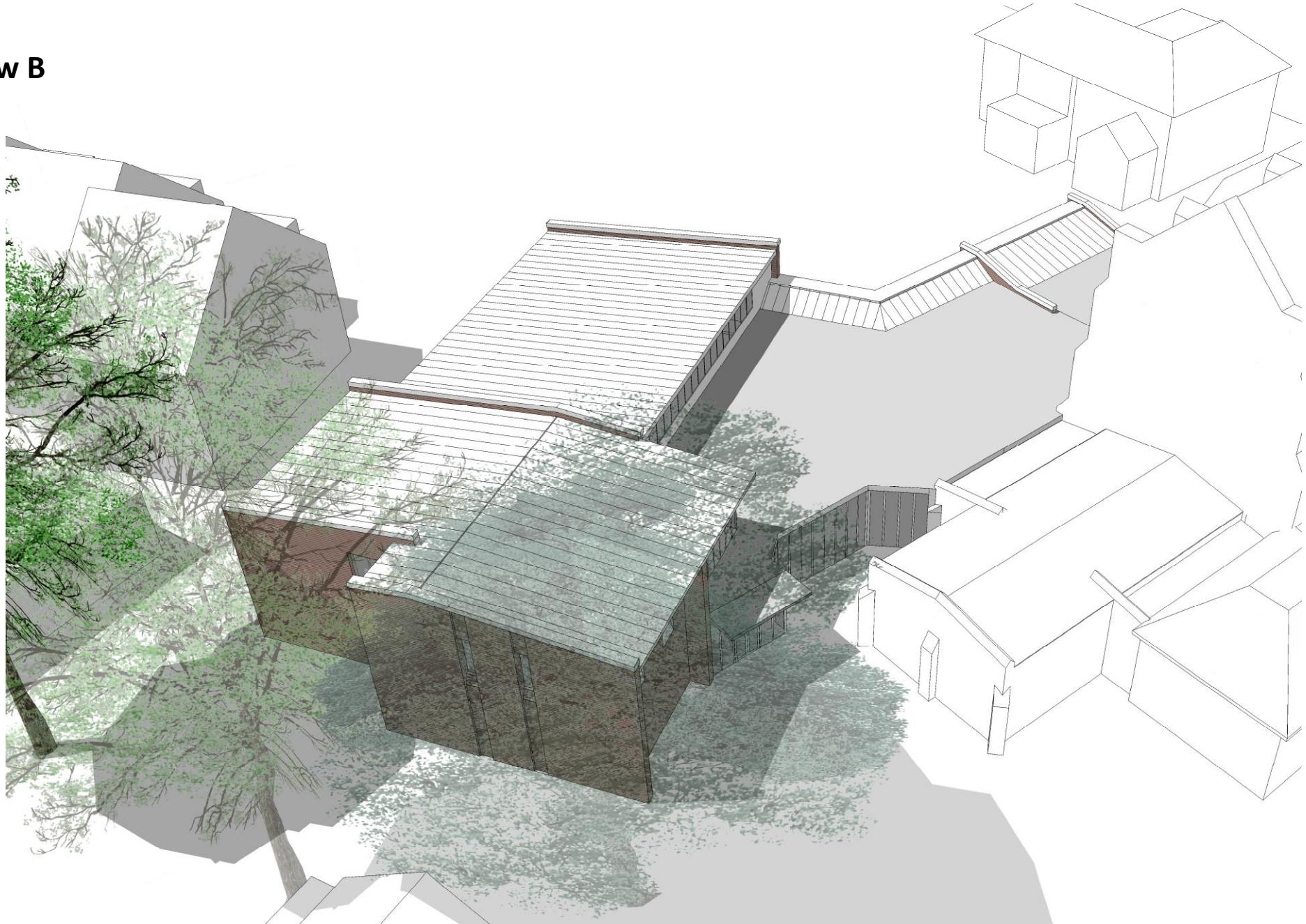
## Shortlisted Option A



**View A**



## View B



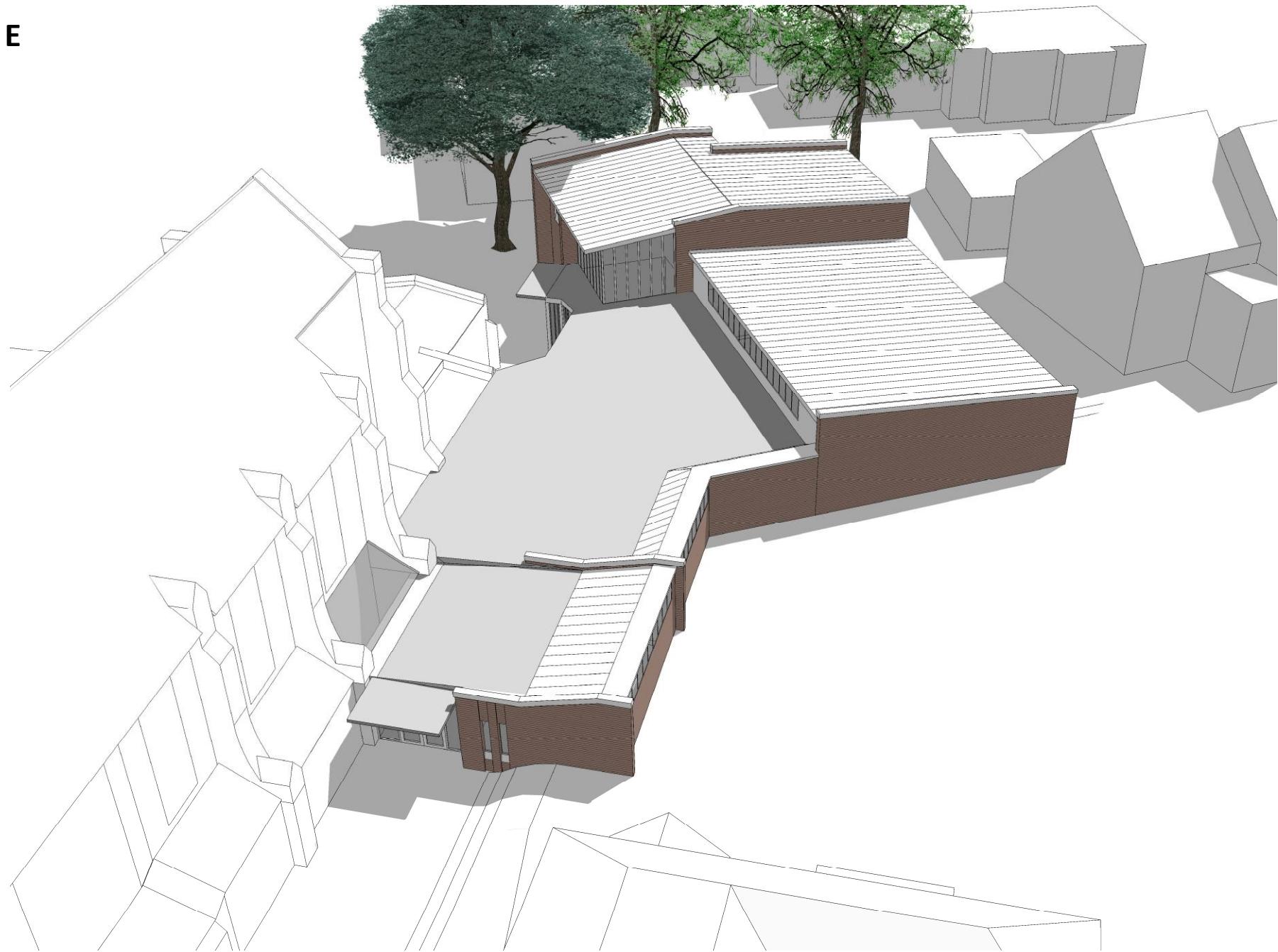
## View C



## View D



## View E



## Shortlisted Option B



# Conclusions and discussion

## Development Costs

Gardiner and Theobald have arranged for the calculation of an order of cost for each of options A and B. A detailed breakdown has been prepared.

These breakdowns assume one phase of work for each option. As there would be difficulty to demarcate a phasing line, and additionally the access for, and practicalities of building a 2nd phase could give rise to a disproportionately high disruption for users of the first phase. We have not, therefore considered this further at this stage.

### OPTION A

two storey, 610sq.m.

Estimated construction cost	£1,375,515
Estimated fees	£169,500
Total	£1,545,015

### OPTION B

single storey, 550sq.m.

Estimated construction cost	£1,206,149
Estimated fees	£169,500
Total	£1,375,649

Some comments in respect of these costs :---

- They do not include any costs for works to the fabric of the existing church, other than the formations of openings etc..
- They do not include costs for any possible phasing, as above.
- They do not include costs of fixtures and fittings, or furniture
- VAT is anticipated to be 0%, for the new construction cost, of the self-contained building, however it is advised to obtain early VAT advice to clarify this
- There is an allowance for inflation in the costs, but the future cannot be predicted, and it is advised that the allowance be reviewed periodically
- No allowance has been made for miscellaneous charges such as Community Infrastructure levy, Section 106 costs, services infrastructure upgrades etc.

## **Statutory Consultations**

### **The DAC**

The DAC visited the church on July 7th 2017, and reviewed the proposals. They acknowledged the various needs of the church, in refocussing to be outward facing towards the community, and in wishing to offer more comprehensive and flexible facilities than those that were possible with the existing hall building. Additionally, the location and approach to the new building, and the connections between it and the church – and the new visibility thus created was discussed. All in the context of the range of alternatives explored to arrive at the current design.

The DAC has commended that the design as it stands be developed, there being no apparent concerns or doubts raised within its report. Whilst not strictly necessary as the church is not listed, the DAC would welcome a statement of significance

### **The Local Planning Authority.**

A pre-application Submission was made to St Albans City and district council, in July to discuss the selected option and how planning policies would impact the proposed development. A meeting was subsequently held on site. A formal report has been received, and this is appended to this document. The following is a summary of the salient issues of the report and the on-site meeting---

- The church is confirmed to be locally listed and in a conservation area. There is therefore a prejudice against demolition, but the demolition of the hall has no material impact on the local listing or the conservation area.
- However the proposals were generally well received both with the contrasting approach taken, the siting - away from the Vicarage, and the identifiable separation of new building to the existing church.
- The link with the church and the proposed levels and sections will need to be well explained in due course.
- The impact of development on the trees will be a material matter in a conservation area. The proposal to remove and possibly replace trees better suited to the site levels and layout, and also the protection and safeguarding of retained trees during construction works will require significant consideration within any full planning application.
- A requirement that parking provision shall not exceed 1 space per 9sq.m. of building is not an issue, however, it is necessary to consider how the church will manage the effect of a parking shortfall on the site, and to submit a statement describing conclusions and proposals.
- The Planning Officer also encouraged the church to discuss the proposals with the wider community and document the responses.
- Potential overlooking of neighbouring properties is avoided by the lower site level on the church site, the elevated level of the housing, and additionally the orientation of the houses.

## Risk Register

This register identifies known risks, at this stage, to the commencement and completion of the project, all as noted in the above conclusions. Different risks can become manifest at various times, as these are identified, then mitigation measures can be put in place.

description of risk	high	medium	low	potential consequence and/or mitigation
Conservation area issues				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposals designed to have minimal impact and visibility from street</li> <li>• Protected trees are retained</li> </ul>
Adjoining owners				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design has ensured adjoining owners not overlooked, and design not likely to elicit objections</li> <li>• Church should initiate consultation with neighbours, to inform them of the church's needs and intentions, and ideally enter into a dialogue of mutual concerns. Such communications ideally leading to support for the proposals.</li> </ul>
Planning issues				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pre-application submission made and meeting held to elicit any likely issues</li> <li>• Full application will need consideration of parking and traffic consequences</li> <li>• Tree survey and Arboricultural strategies to be developed prior to application – design has generally sought to make new building less detrimental to existing trees than the existing building</li> <li>• The planning application will need to clearly argue the need for the new development and floor space and</li> </ul>
DAC issues				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting and dialogue initiated with DAC at early stages</li> <li>• Principals of development presented, and general understanding, with appropriate feedback incorporated at early stages</li> <li>• Interface between church and new building to be developed and visualised</li> <li>• Necessary to negotiate land ownership exchange where vicarage garden is built upon and boundary rationalised</li> </ul>
Church and Stakeholder issues				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User groups have been consulted and dialogue established during design development</li> <li>• Parish consultation to commence</li> <li>• Design development to continuously monitor design against the user expectations</li> <li>• A need to proceed because of the inability of the existing building to meet current and projected needs</li> </ul>
Costs and funding				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation of cost plan to give clarity of target for fundraising</li> <li>• Consideration given to phasing, but project does not easily or economically lend itself</li> <li>• Detail design to be mindful of any space saving and other refinements that might be possible</li> <li>• Appointment of a quantity surveyor to be considered to assist in monitoring and advising during course of design development and construction.</li> </ul>

## **Appendix**

**A      Pre-application submission – undated response ref PRE/2017/0148 from St Albans City and District Council.**

**See accompanying document**

**B      DAC -- Formal response to meeting held on 5th July, dated 20th July**

**VISIT TO THE CHURCH OF HARPENDEN, ST JOHN: 5 JULY 2017****Purpose of Visit:*****Church Hall***

1. The Committee was represented by Dr Christopher Green, the Ven Jonathan Smith, Archdeacon of St Albans, Pam Ward and Emma Critchley (DAC Secretary) with Iain Blythe (Diocesan Estates & Trusts Administrator). They were met at the church by David Christian and Matthew Barter (Gardiner & Theobald), members of the Fabric Committee, and joined by the Reverend Canon Nicholas Anderson (Vicar) and the Reverend James Brown (Curate). Mark Eddison (Project Architect) also attended. Refreshments were offered.
2. The unlisted church within a Conservation Area was built in 1908 to a design by F C Eden of Eden & Hodgson, and has since been extensively altered internally, especially at its east end by Stephen Dykes Bower. The large and tall nave has side ambulatories and leads eastwards to a nave sanctuary. The east wall, with windows above, is pierced at its lower level by two grilled openings which lead to a low and much more personal chancel chapel facing west and which is where the work of Dykes Bower is most in evidence. More recent work to the west end included the creation of an impressive entrance porch under the west window.
3. The parish were considering upgrading their existing church hall building, and were now 2 years into the project. Considerable consultation had taken place with the congregation, and users of the hall, both church-affiliated groups and external users. Following the DAC site meeting held in September 2016 (AC/16/29) the parish had proceeded with a competitive tendering process for the appointment of an architect to carry out a feasibility study. Mark Eddison (MEB Design) had been appointed and now presented the results of the study.

***Parish Centre – the brief***

4. The parish MAP was refocusing the church as an outward-facing church and the project was seen as a catalyst for change in expanding involvement with the local community. A draft design brief had been approved by the PCC which proposed more flexible facilities for the centre and favoured a community-focussed design that involved improved access, a catering-standard kitchen, addressed the needs of the various user groups, and provided sustainability and durability of design. One of the user groups was the Daylight Club which worked with users with mental and physical disabilities and the Club had specific interest and experience in assisting the parish in the design concept. In addition to the Daylight Club, other users included a playgroup, Dance Company and the Light Operatic Society. The parish was therefore interested in developing the new centre as a performance space, amongst other uses for meetings, events and community activities. The design brief clarified the centre's requirements in more detail.

***Feasibility study – where to connect into the church; footprint and location of new building***

5. The architect had looked at a range of options, from a building completely separate from the church to a building attached along the whole (liturgical) south side of the church. It had been concluded that the best degree of attachment would be to create a hall that extended forward from the current site half way along the driveway, with a connection into the south-east corner of the main church and a second door further east into the Lady Chapel corridor. This solution took into account the following:

- Building further along the driveway towards the west end of the church would adversely affect the setting and dominance of the church building and the grouping of the detached houses along the St John's Road frontage
  - Building closer to the Vicarage could compromise the foundations and stability of that building
  - Extending the hall forward to the proposed line would allow a more obvious point of entry and welcome
  - Those entering the hall would have a view into the church and sense of connection with the place of worship
  - An entrance foyer and café area could be created with access directly into the church and Lady Chapel corridor and into the hall
  - The south-east corner of the church was part of the narrow south ambulatory, separated from the choir by columns and visually screened by the pulpit. Entering the church here would provide a view across the choir to the organ, but would not be obtrusive from the church. At the east end of the ambulatory the Blessed Sacrament was reserved, but it would be appropriate to move the reserved Sacrament, probably to the Lady Chapel.
6. Options for the footprint and mass of the proposed building were based on a single-storey or a partly two-storey layout. The accommodation to be provided would require a large building and the architect suggested going to two storeys towards the back of the building would break up the mass of the design, whilst also keeping further away from the boundaries of the restricted site. Changes in ground level, protected trees on the adjacent vicarage site, the proximity of the vicarage building and the Garden of Remembrance at the other side of the site were all limiting factors. Access to the Garden of Remembrance for maintenance would be retained around the north side of the church. The main hall accommodation would lie at 45° to the church, providing visual interest and fitting well into the site.
7. The scheme architect proposed a mainly glazed wall to the north-east of the entrance foyer/café area. This would lighten the link between the church and the new building and would provide a view over the Garden of Remembrance at the east end of the church. It was proposed that the main hall roofs would be low pitched, probably using zinc to match the present Lady Chapel roof. Roof lights would be included in the foyer. Rainwater drainage would be planned to meet large capacity needs and would be in addition to the drainage ring installed around the church in the past 20 years.

### **Next Steps**

8. The Advisory Officer's advice at the previous site visit was reinforced: although with an unlisted building, Statements of Need and Significance were not strictly required (and similar content would be included in the Design and Access Statement) a summary of need and significance was helpful to the DAC and others. Details were at <http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/guidance-advice/statements-of-significance-need>
9. The project architect was hoping to arrange a pre-application meeting with the St Albans District Council planning team in the next couple of weeks.
10. The scheme would involve the addition of small areas of parsonage garden land to the present hall site and the parish would forward a site plan to Iain Blythe so that he could seek the Diocesan Surveyor's advice before putting the matter to the diocesan Property Committee. A tree survey was available and would also be forwarded to Iain.

### **Recommendations**

The visiting members of the DAC invite the Committee to:

- (i) Endorse the advice given in its name.
- (ii) Encourage the parish to proceed in developing its plans.

Emma Critchley  
7 July 2017



**PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL**  
Tracy Harvey – Head of Planning & Building Control

**Our Ref:** PRE/2017/0148  
**Please ask for:** Sarah Smith  
**Extension:**  
**E-mail:** Sarah.Smith@stalbans.gov.uk  
**Date:**

Des Hill  
MEB Design  
30 St John's Lane  
London  
EC1M 4MB

Via email: [dhill@mebdesign.co.uk](mailto:dhill@mebdesign.co.uk)

Dear Mr Hill

**Request for Pre Application Advice**

**Site Address:** St John The Baptist Church, St Johns Road, Harpenden, AL5 1DJ

**Proposal:** New parish centre consisting of multipurpose hall, offices, meeting facilities, and ancillary accommodation

Thank you for your request for pre-application advice received by the Council with appropriate details and fee dated 27<sup>th</sup> June 2017. Our response is based on the following plans and information:

- Pre application report
- Tree Survey submitted 24<sup>th</sup> July 2017

**The principle of an extension to the church is acceptable. Details of the design of the extension and its siting need to be worked up further. It is considered that the provision of a two storey element is acceptable however care will need to be taken to ensure that the proposal does not result in unacceptable levels of overlooking and has an acceptable impact on trees.**

**Background**

St John the Baptist Church is a locally listed building in Harpenden Conservation Area, adjacent to trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order.

In our meeting you asked for clarification as to when the building became locally listed as you asked the Council about this historically and were told it was not. I have checked our published list of locally listed buildings in Harpenden, which was published in 1999 and the church is on the list. For clarification a locally listed

building is not the same designation as a statutorily Listed Building, which is listed by Historic England.

### **Summary of Key Issues:**

#### **Impact upon the character and appearance of the area, including the Conservation Area, the Locally Listed Building and trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order**

Within a conservation area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out guidance relating to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. It notes that local authorities should take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

When considering the impact of proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, such as a conservation area, the NPPF notes that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. With regards to non-designated heritage assets, such as locally listed buildings, the NPPF guides that local authorities should make a balanced judgement, having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Any application will need to be accompanied by a Heritage Assessment which assesses the impact of the proposal upon the designated heritage assets that is the Conservation Area and the Locally Listed Building.

It is understood that the new extension would replace the existing church hall, which is used by a variety of community groups as well as the church and has reached the end of its lifespan, and needs replacing. Having analysed the uses of the existing building and the facilities needed it is considered that you need 80-90% more floor area than currently provided. Whist there are no objections to the replacement of the church hall any replacement building needs to pay special regard to its relationship with the existing church building and needs to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

The sketches provided show the development of the scheme and the preferred option is for a building that links into the rear portion of the church with a part single, part two storey element predominantly, but not exclusively, in the same location as the existing church hall. The submitted elevations indicate an extension with a modern design which steps up using the existing change in ground levels. The plans show the use of glazing, brick walls and a zinc roofing.

It is my opinion that an appropriate design solution of the proposed extension is to provide a building of a modern design, which is clearly an extension and is not attempting to be a pastiche of the existing church building. I would encourage the

use of glazing to provide a visual separation between the church building and the form of the new extension, glass being a light weight structure that will provide some visual separation between the two buildings and reduce the mass of the extension. Care will need to be taken with the design and appearance of the first floor element of the proposal to ensure that it does not appear dominating against the existing church and remains as a subordinate extension. The land levels in this part of the site rise, and the plans submitted indicate that the existing ground levels would be used; therefore the proposed extension could be quite high

The extension is set back into the site and it is likely that it would not be prominent in views into the site from the Conservation Area, or in views within the Conservation Area. However the provision of the first floor element is a new addition. I would suggest that an application should be accompanied by street scenes demonstrating what would be visible from St Johns Road.

The Tree Survey was submitted after our pre application meeting. The Tree Officer advises that there are a number of existing mature trees on the site protected under Conservation Area legislation and TPO 1241 applies to the trees on the eastern boundary. Existing trees are mentioned in the list of site constraints and it is stated that Arboricultural advice will be sought in respect of tree and root protection. Whilst it is accepted that the existing building does extend into root protection areas, most of the considered options impact on RPAs outside the existing building footprint.

8 options are put forward and a preferred Option A. Although there is much overlap between the existing building and proposed option A, the process of replacement through demolition to construction has the potential to harm retained trees unless precautions are built in and properly supervised on the ground.

There is no supporting information re: the relative impact of the different options on existing trees and no arboricultural evidence to support the preferred option A which requires the removal of at least 3 mature trees and includes new encroachment into the RPA and canopy of a mature tree not protected by TPO 1241 to the north.

The perspective drawings indicate that the new building would be set into rising ground to the southwest. Contours on GIS suggest a general gradient of around 1:10 to 1:15 in this direction, which would have a bearing on site conditions for the existing trees including subsequent landscape detailing in this area of the site.

A site survey including levels, existing trees and an arboricultural impact assessment would be required to allow proper assessment of the proposals. You are advised to seek advice from an Arboricultural consultant. Arboricultural consultants approved by the Arboricultural Association can be found via their website address <http://www.trees.org.uk/find-a-professional/Find-A-Professional>

### **Car Parking provision and impact upon highway safety**

The site currently benefits from limited parking, in our meeting you said there were approximately 4/5 spaces, but these were mostly tandem spaces. You should be aware that the Councils Parking Standards require a maximum of 1 space per

9sqm., please see this link: [https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/parking\\_tcm15-2109.pdf](https://www.stalbans.gov.uk/Images/parking_tcm15-2109.pdf)

There is already a shortfall of parking spaces at the site and an increase in floor space would exacerbate this shortfall. Whilst this is not ideal people normally access community facilities such as this in a variety of ways and serve the local population. Any application should be accompanied by a statement setting out how the church will try to address the parking shortfall and encourage users to attend the building by means other than the car.

Hertfordshire County Council offer a pre application advice service on highway matters that you may wish to take up: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx>

### **Impact upon the amenities of local residents**

There are residential properties surrounding the site and care will need to be taken to ensure that the replacement hall does not have a harmful effect upon the amenities of local residents. It appears that the single storey element of the building can be provided without causing harm. However I am mindful that there are level changes so care will need to be taken to ensure that the height of the building on the boundaries together with its siting does not result in a dominating or overbearing impact. The current plans show it to be set off the boundaries and this is welcomed.

The first floor element will need to be carefully designed to ensure its height and mass is not overbearing upon the occupiers of 3 Emily Court and 1 Loire Mews and that any views are into the church grounds, and not the private amenity spaces of the adjacent properties.

<b>Document(s) Required</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Application Form(s)	Form number 4 on the Council website. Completed ownership certificate and combined agricultural land declaration.
Fee <a href="https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/welsh_application_fees.pdf">https://ecab.planningportal.co.uk/uploads/welsh_application_fees.pdf</a>	<b>Erection of buildings</b> (not dwellings, agricultural, glasshouses, plant nor machinery) Increase No £190 of floor increase space in gross floor space or no more than 40m <sup>2</sup>  Increase More £380 of floor than

	<p>space 40m<sup>2</sup> but no more than 75m<sup>2</sup></p> <p>Increase of floor space More than 75m<sup>2</sup> £380 for each 75m<sup>2</sup> or part thereof, to a maximum of £287,500</p>
Drawings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Site Location Plan (1:1250)</li> <li>- Existing and Proposed Block Plans (1:200 or 1:500) showing any site boundaries and neighbouring dwellings including extensions and indication of one or two storey, car parking and access arrangements</li> <li>- Existing and Proposed Elevations (1:50 or 1:100)</li> <li>- Existing &amp; Proposed Floor Plans (1:50 or 1:100)</li> <li>- Proposed Roof Plan (1:50 or 1:100)</li> <li>- Survey showing levels</li> <li>- Site section</li> <li>- Arboricultural Implications Assessment and Method Statement with Tree Protection Plan may be required depending on the new location selected for the proposed storage building.</li> </ul>
Supporting documents	<p>Heritage Assessment Arboricultural report Parking statement Design and Access Statement If over 1000sqm of gross floor space then a Drainage Strategy will be needed.</p>

### **Disclaimer**

The advice given in this document responds to the information and proposals submitted to us and based on our knowledge of the site. This advice is offered in good faith and it neither conveys planning permission nor binds the Local Planning Authority to any decision on future planning applications. Any future application will

be subject to public consultation and may ultimately be decided by a relevant Council Committee.

This pre-application advice note will be considered by the Council as a material consideration in the determination of the future planning related applications, subject to the proviso that circumstances and information may change or come to light that could alter the position.

It should also be noted that little or no weight will be given to the content of the advice on schemes which are submitted more than 1 year after the date of this advice.

Yours faithfully,



**Tracy Harvey**  
**Head of Planning & Building Control**

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Document Reviewed By:	Sarah Ashton

### **Key Policy Issues & Constraints**

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Planning Practice Guidance

Paragraph 024: Design: How Should Buildings and the Spaces Between Them Be Considered?

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/>

St Albans District Local Plan Review 1994

Policy 39: Parking Standards, general requirements

Policy 67: Public meeting rooms and facilities

Policy 69: General Design and Layout

Policy 74: Landscaping and Tree Preservation

Policy 85: Development in Conservation Areas

Revised Parking Policies and Standards January 2002.

Harpden Conservation Area Character Statement

<http://www.stalbans.gov.uk/planning/Planningpolicy/currentadoptedlocalplan.aspx>