

Building update 2017

Questionnaire

When the Christmas church magazine was published we were receiving the questionnaire responses about the redevelopment plans as outlined by the architect, Alex Coppock at his visit on 20 November.



The overall responses were very positive and supportive of the plans, though there were some helpful and insightful comments which the PCC have begun to consider. A few people were not happy with every aspect of the project, but we hope they will understand why we are going ahead. There's a summary of the questionnaire results along with some positive comments received and answers to some common questions in an appendix later in this magazine.

What happens next?

Audio visual

Thanks to a great deal of hard work from our sound team and Fabric committee and to the generosity of Helena Castle in her bequest to the 'Friends of St Matthias', we thank God that we now have an incredible audiovisual system in the church, Larkin Hall and lounge. It's a really positive start to the whole scheme.

We are very grateful particularly to John Gingell who has seen this project through. After 10 years of planning for and hoping to see this happen, John has decided it's time to step down from leading this key ministry. We are also very grateful to Colin Small who has also decided to step down from regular sound desk duties. Colin has steadfastly worked alongside John Gingell and has similarly served the church and school communities faithfully and patiently for many years.

Reports from external agencies

We've now had the reports back from the October 2016 visit by Historic England, the Victorian Society, the Church Buildings Council (CBC) and Torbay local authority. Just before Christmas we received a landmark decision from the

Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) who, after much discussion, agreed with the CBC's assessment that we really do need to remove almost all of the pews and replace with chairs in order to have the flexible and beautiful space we need.

Time line?

The DAC are very influential. Now that we have their support for the main elements of the scheme, we have some confidence to proceed with the final parts of the application. This involves even more detailed work by ourselves and the architect and further costs for heating and lighting specialists and an updated quantity survey.



All this means that the earliest we can submit our faculty application is May 2017. At this point further comments are invited, so we are unlikely to get formal approval until November 2017 at the earliest.

In the meantime, the PCC believe we need to start work on raising funds – we still need over £500,000!

“Grounded in faith... Growing to serve” is the name of the appeal we are launching this Lent for pledges from the church family. Later this year we will appeal to the wider community and also apply to a whole range of grant-making bodies who might support our project.

Thank you for your prayerful support, please persevere in praying.

John and St Matthias PCC

Building update Appendix



Here's a summary of the questionnaire results and some positive comments received and answers to some common questions.

	<i>West end redevelopment</i>	<i>Glaze in chapel</i>	<i>Recover chancel use</i>	<i>Replace pew with chair</i>
Yes...this seems a great idea	102	109	103	92
Yes...but I have these concerns or suggestions	12	4	10	12
Don't mind...I am happy to accept the PCC's decision	8	10	9	11
No...I really wouldn't want this to happen because...	1	0	1	7

Here are some of the positive comments...

- Brilliant 'ASAP'
- flexibility is the key to growth
- when West end doors were open in the summer the entrance was much better.
- the pews are very uncomfortable
- ceilidhs and orchestras will open up the church to the wider community. I like the idea of sitting in a circle of services sometimes. Good idea!
- the doors have to be important to let light into the church and be a window into the beauty inside
- having moved to St Matthias church from a local church that was refurbished about 15 years ago I can identify with this change which really works, we must move on!
- I totally agree with what the architect had to say about making entrance more open and welcoming.
- ref chairs: Brilliant! This seems ideal in accommodating all the needs of the church

...and here are the PCC responses to some of the questions raised:

Who moves the chairs? We already have a whole team of people who come in early to set up and take down chairs and tables for Prayzone and Breakfastzone each time. If these services move into church, the process will be very similar. It is true that there will need to be time between services to do this, and we shall simply have to experiment a little to see how long we need for that – changing service times is one of the costs of growing the kingdom.

What about hymn books and pew bibles? Over time, we envisage that hymn book use will decrease as we move towards using the screen. However we are not in that place yet, and will provide hymn books as people come into worship. Other churches find that the congregation adapts very easily to this system.

Use of the pew bibles is reducing too – partly because we have the bible readings on the notices each week, and partly because many people have the bible on their phone or tablet now. However, we do still want to have some pew bibles available – we want people to be able to look up a passage or verse when in church and they act as a symbol of the importance of the bible to us as a church. We plan to provide between-chair book holders for pew bibles at each end of each row.

Extent of disabled parking spaces and access. The new piazza is planned to be largely car-free but can still be used as a drop-off area. There will be disabled parking spaces along the north wall of the church so that people can use the existing level north porch entrance (with automatic glass doors) for church – and often for the Centre too. The raised piazza also means that the ramp access to the Centre is shorter anyway. We are still considering how best to get better access to the lower ground floor, but there will be a new level path from the footpath (going down to Ilsham Road) to the lower ground entrance.

There will be ramped access to the Francis chapel and so through to the chancel.

Chancel changes. The choir stalls have to remain, but we hope to be able to modify them slightly to make them more comfortable and also to move them back to create a larger central aisle space which would allow chairs to be used too for smaller services.

Extent of kitchenette usage? A kitchenette makes the west end space much more suitable for use during the week. On Sundays we envisage it will be simply used as an overflow from serving coffee in the Larkin Hall – indeed we have needed this facility for some time now. If we do serve breakfast in the church, then we would still need to cook in the main kitchen, thus limiting lingering smells for subsequent worship.

Do we aim to do the whole plan in one go, and will it be good value for money? The aim is to get planning permission for the whole scheme and then for the PCC to decide how to stage the project, depending on finance and also, of course, on what is considered best value for money.