

Sarah Williams

From: Emma Brown <Emma.Brown@bathwells.anglican.org>
Sent: 10 January 2023 18:43
To: Sarah Williams
Subject: FW: Church of St Andrew, Cheddar, BS27 3RF (Faculty: 2022-073413), our ref: 178994

Importance: High

Below is SPAB pre-app advice regarding Cheddar. I will also send onto parish and their architect, thanks.

From: Rachel Broomfield <rachel.broomfield@spab.org.uk>
Sent: 09 January 2023 15:07
To: Emma Brown <Emma.Brown@bathwells.anglican.org>
Cc: noreply@facultynotifications.churchofengland.org; Matthew Saunders <ecclesiastical@hbap.org.uk>; Vic Soc James <churches@victoriansociety.org.uk>; Rhiannon Rhys (Rhiannon.Rhys@HistoricEngland.org.uk) <Rhiannon.Rhys@HistoricEngland.org.uk>
Subject: Re: Church of St Andrew, Cheddar, BS27 3RF (Faculty: 2022-073413), our ref: 178994
Importance: High

Re: Reordering including introduction of WC's, servery, potential pew removal to create a hospitality area and new Eco heating system.

Dear Emma

Thank you for consulting the SPAB regarding the proposed works to the Grade I listed church of St Andrew, Cheddar. We apologise for the delay in responding but this was due to the office being closed over the Christmas break.

We note that although the church originally dates from the 14th century, a very significant restoration was undertaken by William Butterfield in 1873. Much of this restoration remains intact hence we have copied the Victorian Society into our response, and we defer to them regarding the significance of the Victorian fixtures and fittings.

Overall, the proposals have been well considered and the information provided is helpful, but the Statement of Significance is lacking in detail, especially in relation to the pews. We would like to see a detailed pew-by-pew study being undertaken so that proper consideration can be given to the potential removal of those in the side aisles. There are other areas where information is also lacking, as detailed below. Sections through the church as proposed, would also be helpful.

Proposals

- **Repairs to the Tower:** as a result of the 2013 and 2020 QI's, significant repairs to the stonework have been identified. It is not possible to comment on this aspect of the proposals as very little details has been provided. However, we would expect replacement stone to be kept to an absolute minimum and would encourage the use of careful repairs and shelter coats wherever possible to consolidate the existing stonework rather than replacing it. The work should be undertaken by experienced stonemasons, and while the scaffolding is in place, the opportunity should be taken to overhaul / repair any damaged leadwork and guttering.
- **Removal of the pews from the north and south aisles:** As noted previously, a more detailed assessment of the pews is required before the impact of these proposals can be properly assessed. The aim is to remove over a third of the total number of pews to create more flexible space.

Removing pews from the aisles has the advantage of retaining the symmetry of the nave and allowing the retention of the Minton floor tiles (from the Butterfield restoration). We note that some pews have already been removed from the south aisle near and within St Nectan's Chapel (in 2014) and that this still does not have permanent consent.

In order to justify the removal of one third of the pews from a Grade I listed church, robust justification is required. We need to understand exactly how church is used now, by whom, frequency etc and how the parish hope to increase this usage if the proposed changes are made – i.e. what could they do if the pews are removed that they cannot do now? We understand that the church is currently in use for 15-16 hours / week – how much is this expected to increase? While we do not necessarily object to the removal of some pews, more information on their importance and significance is needed first, and we would welcome the potential suggestion that some of the removed pews could be turned and placed against the walls in the aisles to provide additional seating (see Statement of Need, section 5). However, we would not support the pews being broken up for their timber and would prefer that they were either found new homes or sold on intact. We are pleased that the medieval pew ends (15th century according to NADFAS) will be retained, but somewhat concerned that they may replace Butterfield work - we would argue that both are significant.

Details of the proposed new seating should be provided, and this should be un-upholstered and follow the CBC's guidance. It will also be important to consider where the chairs (and possibly tables) would be stored when not in use.

- **New low carbon heating system:** We note that this is to be developed by a heating consultant and we would advise the parish undertake this work as soon as possible. We are very pleased to see that this has been given a great deal of consideration, but we have some queries. We certainly agree with the parish that as the church is in use for 15-16 hours / week, there is no justification for underfloor heating. We understand the intention is to install infra red heaters between the columns in the nave and to increase the number of radiators to supplement these when the temperature is low. The existing boiler is noted as being unreliable and unlikely to be able to support additional radiators, but it is not clear if a new boiler is proposed or whether the existing one will be overhauled? This needs to be clarified along with details of the new flues.

We note that ASHP's have been considered but disregarded. We appreciate that the cost is quite high and that it would require changes to existing radiators etc, but it may be a sensible long-term investment given the need to move away from gas / oil fired boilers now (which only have a life of 15-20 years). One reason given is that the units are 'unsightly' but we feel that this option needs to be discussed more widely and should be the subject of a pre-application with the local authority. Many churches are starting to find that ASHP's are acceptable when the details are carefully considered.

Infra red heaters have a high visual impact as they need to be placed approximately 2.4m above the ground. They tend to heat heads and not feet, so the thermal comfort is quite poor. We are concerned that these are being considered as they are relatively cheap to install, although we do not think they are the best option in this church. As the central block of pews is remaining, we would urge the parish to give serious consideration to under pew heating. These are also relatively cheap to install, discrete and very effective.

- **North Porch – the installation of new glazed doors:** The proposals are to install new glazed external doors to replace the existing wooden outer porch doors, but no details of the existing door or their proposed replacements have been provided. A second set of glazed doors within the porch would sit in front of the existing north door, but again no details of this historic door, its threshold, the proposed new door or the impact the works would have are provided. Full details of the works are required including an assessment of the visual impact the changes would have. It should be noted that glazed doors can be very reflective and often make the interior seem darker rather than more welcoming and transparent. The overall aim is to create a draught lobby so details of the draughtproofing (including that proposed for the West Door) and heat curtain will be required.

- **Servery (SW corner of the nave):** This is potentially acceptable but further details are needed including drainage / service connections and the design of the proposed units. We would not support these units being made up from broken up pews. The units should have lids so they resemble storage units when not in use. It is not clear how high they would be and whether there would be an impact on the adjacent window sills or any wall / floor memorials in this area.
- **Two accessible WC's with baby changing (NW corner of nave):** We are supportive of the church introducing an accessible toilet with baby changing facilities, but we do not feel that the justification has been provided at present for two cubicles here which would be quite large at 3m x 3m x 3m. The visual impact of one unit would probably more acceptable. It would be helpful to understand why two toilets are felt to be required. It is stated that the cubicles would sit above the window sills so what exactly would the impact on the windows be – it is important to consider access for cleaning / maintenance etc. Sections would be helpful to understand this relationship. Are there floor / wall monuments in this area that would be impacted? How would the cubicles be ventilated and where would the routes for drainage and connection to the services run? What alternative options have been considered – we gather there were thoughts that the base of the tower may be an option but that this was disregarded due to space constraints – is it possible to see this option drawn to scale along with any others?
- **Storage units:** we have no objection to the introduction of well-made storage units but would not support these being made from broken up pews. It is important to ensure there is enough storage for future as well as current needs, and enough space for chairs and tables.
- **Extended stage:** This would require the removal of the front two pews and alterations to the pulpit steps which may be Victorian (NADFAS describe the pulpit as a 'very fine stone pulpit, c1450'). Further details of these aspects of the proposals will therefore be required. Does the extended stage need to be permanent, or could it be partly demountable depending on what it is required for? We would urge this to be strongly considered to reduce its impact. Are there any floor memorials that would be impacted?
- **New audio-visual equipment:** this may be acceptable, but more details are required particularly regarding the proposed new screen behind the chancel arch. The Statement of Significance talks of various options for the positioning of the projector whose impacts have not yet been evaluated. We would encourage the parish to undertake this work as soon as possible.
- **New lighting scheme:** we are happy to defer to the DAC on this matter.

We hope these comments are helpful to you. We are happy to look at these proposals again when further information requested is available.

Best wishes,
Rachel

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