Mark Taylor

CHARTERED ARCHITECT

PLANNING STATEMENT

for

ACCESS, HEATING & HALL ROOF

At

CHILCOMPTON ST JOHN'S CHURCH

May 2024

View from north east within existing carpark

SITE LOCATION & SURROUNDINGS

Location plan, OS Licence number AC0000855843

St John's church lies now some distance to the north of the settlement in an isolated location close to Manor Farm; a grade II listed building of mediaeval origin belonging to The Duchy of Cornwall. St John's has mediaeval origins (the tower) but was largely rebuilt in 1839 and the east end again in 1897. It stands at the north end of a large churchyard in which a church hall was built in 1992, attached to the church by a glazed link. The church has a prominent position but low lying and tree screened there are only limited views.

The churchyard is grass covered with few monuments and a handful of trees, mostly around the perimeter but including an ancient Yew close to the west boundary opposite the hall. There is a reasonably large carpark opposite Church Lane, which most visitors use owing to the distance from the community – built up considerably in modern times flanking the Wells Road – between the larger towns of Wells & Radstock.

The church is listed grade II*, and two chest tomb monuments south of the church are listed grade II in their own right (Vagg & Salmon families). The only other listed buildings in the vicinity are the Manor Farm and a cottage some 100m south east, also grade II. A handful of further grade II listed buildings lie further south east in the historic heart of the settlement in a vale below the Wells Road.

PLANNING

The development concerns three elements;

1. Paving part of the churchyard for parking a new vehicular access from the east for wheelchair users,
2. Replacement of the church and hall heating systems with air source heat pumps, and
3. Replacement of the hall concrete roof tiles with interlocking clay tiles.

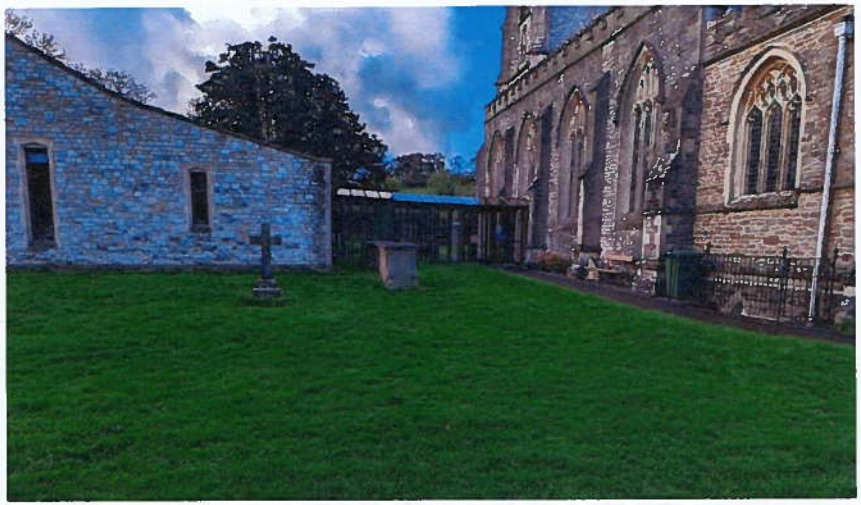
Disabled parking is currently opposite Church Lane from where there is a steep climb up to the churchyard, and further steep climbs up to the church and hall.

View of farm track east of the churchyard & steep climb into church

Land surveying reveals existing slopes are typically 1:20 within the churchyard but the approach is 1:5. This is passable by able bodied but precipitous for those in wheelchairs, who have found themselves propelled uncontrollably into the main road as they negotiate the entrance gates, and there have been nasty falls in the vicinity. Addressing the slopes in the south east corner of the churchyard is unfortunately not straight forward as it would involve lowering the road level, leading to complications with cross falls and rainwater flow and undermining the churchyard boundary walls, including the adjoining boundary to Manor Farm. There is however an alternative route along the east side of the churchyard, along an existing farm track owned by The Duchy of Cornwall from where a vehicle entrance can be made into the churchyard bringing wheelchair users up to the church and hall level. Bringing a vehicle into the churchyard via the south east gate is not practicable; there being very awkward changes of direction and a narrow gateway.

Within the churchyard – past the church – there are few monuments and level ground where a parking area may be easily constructed adjoining existing foot paths and giving ready access to the church and hall.

There are two grade II listed chest tombs in the vicinity and two other standing monuments. These are positioned close to the hall, indeed some alteration was made to accommodate the hall when it was built in 1992. It is not necessary to further alter these monuments.



View of the churchyard immediately south of the church

In the last 12 months heating costs have spiralled four fold, as we all know; arising from the aggressive behaviour of the Russian president toward Ukraine and shenanigans within the Tory government. It seems unlikely the original levels of cost will be recovered and therefore a reassessment has been made of the current heating systems. The hall has been found to inadequate control over its part under floor and part ceiling mounted electrical radiant systems – in fact no control beyond wither on or off. The church has a more efficient gas fired boiler, however climate change has begun to regularly flood the subterranean boiler room, and there are increasing concerns with fossil fuel use. The church wish therefore to replace both hall and church systems with new air source electric heat pumps, supplemented with more direct electric heating in discrete areas.

For the hall the optimum solution is the provision of one large 10kW heat exchanger serving several indoor emitter units positioned along the sections of the hall (sliding partitions allow it to be divided into separately accessed rooms) and a smaller 5kW unit serving the parish office. These outdoor units are proposed to be fitted on concrete pads at the south west corner of the hall, where they are in effect out of sight. Heat distribution will pass through the parish office (located at the west end of the hall) up into the roof space and along the south side to a row of interior emitters.

This Application

For the church it is proposed there be two 25kW heat exchangers located at the west end of the aisles, again effectively out of sight and from where heat distribution will run along existing floor level ducts – the new distribution pipes replacing the existing central

heating pipes and the new internal emitters replacing the existing steel panel radiators along the aisle walls.

As can be seen in the above photograph the existing Forticrete Hardrow concrete roof tiles covering the hall (north east corner pictured adjacent) are badly affected by decay and in several instance fracture. The tiles are brittle and absorbent, making them particularly susceptible to frost damage. It is proposed they are replaced with similarly large format tiles but of fired clay and owing to the low pitch interlocking. They will have the same general appearance as the Forticrete.

View of Planum interlocking clay tile