

Our Ref. 0321/C/TG/sv
29 March 2023

Dear Mr Stobart

EAST HARPTREE St Laurence, Project Newton

As previously discussed, I write to you to provide an account of matters which have arisen during Project Newton which require consideration from the Diocese with regard to consent and a further order from the Chancellor. Many of these relate to technical changes and some are more extensive. I include some text in brackets below for the benefit of readers who may not be familiar with the scope of Project Newton. Initially, an email requesting a further order was sent to Ms Sarah Williams on 26 July 2022 however in instances where it was not practicable to await a response and where urgency was required on site, a pragmatic decision was made to proceed with works with an amended methodology where justifiable.

- 1- **Bells:** *(All six bells were taken down for complete overhaul as part of Project Newton)* Two aspects of the proposed works to the bells have changed slightly. Firstly, following advice from Andrew Nicholson, a small area within the crown of each of the bells had to be machined to allow an even and secure seating of the clapper assemblies following the removal of the cast-in crown staples. Michael Hansford acknowledged the need for this variation and offered his support. Secondly, the gudgeons of bells 3, 4 & 5 had to be increased in diameter for safety reasons. Michael also offered support for this. This work is now complete.
- 2- **Tower roof:** *(Complete re-roofing with structural repairs)* The central gutter, which was proposed to be undertaken in lead, with a central t-pren joint was instead undertaken in a single section of stainless steel. This approach was required in order to achieve the correct falls and steps throughout this roof and the gutter now represents a more long-term solution. This work is now complete.
- 3- **South nave parapet gutter:** This gutter (situated above the Karl Parsons window) leaked and during the course of Project Newton, the scope was increased to include some leadwork and carpentry repair to this gutter. A point ventilator was also added to the central bay as it was found that excessive moisture was building up beneath the gutter and causing decay. All works were undertaken in accordance with LSA guidance and per the details of lead roofing on the tower previously approved by the DAC. This work proceeded in advance of the scaffold strike and is now complete.

- 4- **Archaeology, masonry:** A number of significant pieces of worked masonry were uncovered during excavations / reduced dig for the re-building of the east retaining wall. These include C12 and C17 masonry. Some of these stones were previously built into the low retaining wall by the churchyard entrance however these were poorly presented and therefore difficult to view or interpret and the remainder were uncovered behind the retaining wall. A proposal has been prepared to present the most significant stones within the area of the north aisle which was previously used as a choir vestry. The fragments of early worked stone illustrate the architectural complexity of the earlier Romanesque church which was lost in C13 and C15 and consent is now sought for this display. The proposal is illustrated on 0321.P.015.
- 5- **Archaeology, chancel: (re-plastering)** During the removal of a band of cementitious plaster from the lower extents of the chancel walls, the masonry behind appeared to illustrate various phases of construction and also included some fragments of early limewash. The masonry was recorded by our Project Archaeologist Keith Faxon and seen by County Archaeologist Bob Croft. When the south wall was being re-plastered, two small sections were left unplastered so as to illustrate this early phasing. Bob Croft offered support for this during his visit on 19 August 2022. This work is complete.
- 6- **Archaeology, south porch:** During excavations to provide level access to the south porch, a number of shallow burials were encountered and these were carefully recorded by Keith Faxon. In order to avoid disturbing these burials, the surface finish was changed from resin-bonded gravel to loose aggregate. The reduced thickness of build-up required for loose aggregate allowed the burials to remain intact and undisturbed. The main access route to the south porch is now via stone slabs and the extent of this variation relates to the surrounding area beyond the access route. This work is now complete.
- 7- **North door ironmongery:** Level access was provided to this door as part of Project Newton however the existing ironmongery is not conducive to using this as a secure, practical entrance. Currently the door is secured in the closed position with drop bolts and a wooden bar, only operable from inside. A 'tide mark' on the inside face of the door provides evidence of a previous rimlock and the external key escutcheon remains. The proposed variation, hereby seeking consent, is to reinstate a suitable historic rimlock. No joinery alterations are required to the door and the lock is fully reversible.
- 8- **Dais:** You have informed me that the loose C19 softwood dais which forms part of the Lady Chapel in the north aisle impedes level access through the chancel squint for choir members and has tripped a number of worshippers and choir members in the past. Consent is sought to remove the carpet and dais and set the altar on ground floor level, or to alternatively reduce the dais area to act only as a plinth for the altar. This proposal is illustrated on drawing 0321.P.104.



Our Ref. 0321/C/TG/sv
29 March 2023

Page **3** of **3**

- 9- **North churchyard steps:** Where ramblers currently climb over the low wall which divides the north churchyard from the public footpath, a small set of steps are proposed, and illustrated on drawing 0321.P.103. The location has been chosen with due regard to tree root protection zones and planning consent has been gained ref 22/02755/FUL and is attached. Diocesan consent is now sought.
- 10- **Boiler room:** The existing late C19 boiler room is in a dilapidated condition and the damp internal conditions of the below-ground floor are causing pre-mature failure of the oil-fired boiler. Initially a scheme of holding repairs were proposed as part of Project Newton. These repairs were in addition to the removal of the masonry flue from the north face of the tower, which has been completed. This proposal has now developed into a re-building on a slightly larger footprint. This allows the provision of a suspended floor within the boiler room to provide a much-needed functional storage space. This proposal is illustrated on drawings 0321.P.100-107 and further technical drawings, including structural designs are being prepared. Planning consent has been gained ref 22/02755/FUL. Diocesan consent is now sought.

Please feel free to provide this correspondence to the Diocesan Registrar with a view to it being used to provide context for the variations in scope for Project Newton and the request for a Further Order in relation to the original Faculty obtained in 2020.

Yours sincerely

Tom Griffin RIBA SCA

associate director

benjamin + beauchamp architects limited

enc drawings for Boiler room, Dais, North steps and Masonry Display.

cc