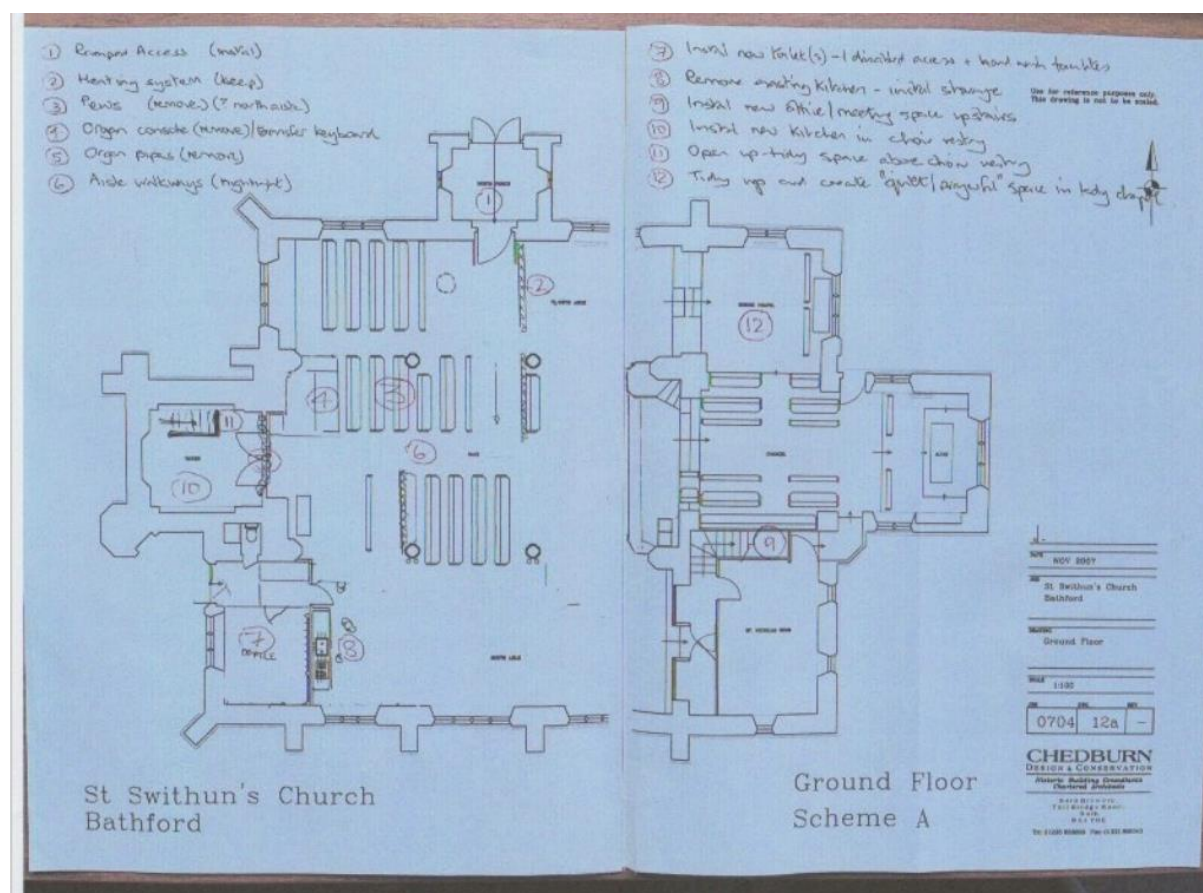


St Swithuns, Bathford



Below are the points as identified within your summer reordering plan as forwarded to the diocese earlier this summer and titled "2024 summer"

1.Ramped access

The stone slabs to the porch are proposed to be lifted and re-laid to deliver a permanent and easy to manage accessible entrance. This action has been delivered across the diocese to great effect and with minimal impact visually. There is an expectation that the work will be controlled by a watching brief or

2.Heating system

The plan as discussed is to keep the current heating system as it delivers the warmth that the busy church requires. I would advise taking regular temperature readings and, if possible, some humidity readings to ensure that the warmth of the heat is not producing excessive condensation. As part of our Net zero commitment-it is useful to know how much money the churches are spending to achieve comfortable temperature. This can then inform any future decisions as to air source heat pumps, installation of large heat storage vessel with options for attaching greener heat sources such as ASHP or even solar once the technology has arrived.

3.Pews

The “pews” or Victorian benches are an issue both with their blackened appearance and their comfort. Some benches have been removed in the past, this has opened the church to be being an easier space for all to access and the further removal of benches would be supported especially considering the degrading waxes or coatings that are now sticky to the touch. A pew removal compliance condition has been formulated to assist the removal of Victorian benches that involves a joinery drawing or images that can then be uploaded onto the HER and be used to recreate the appearance of the church at a point in time. The condition also asks for a full list of other joinery elements extant at the point of removal to ensure that any contextual relationship has been recorded.

4.Organ console

The modern and intrusive appearance of the current organ console together with the.;

5.Organ Pipes and case

Are proposed to be removed or isolated to enable the failed organ pipe and boxing to be removed. This element is quite a statement piece within the church and will require some written work that justifies the removal-the benefit of removing a broken piece of musical history is quite clear and there may be an action to place costs of repair, if repairable against the obvious benefit of re opening the West window and gallery to the benefit of the usable space and increased light from the west window-the gallery is discussed later in this document.



6.Aisle walkways and flooring

The levelling of floors and walkways can be supported if the material is handled in an appropriate manner. Victorian ceramic tiles can be lifted and reset or covered in a modern floor such as timber or more tiles. The drawback of using timber is the percussive sound that can emanate from the processional use of the church if this still happens. The use of carpets in church are generally discouraged. This being said-the undulating and unfriendly steps or widths of aisles can be restrictive and confidence damaging to those members of the congregation that require walking, seated, powered or pushed aids to enable their access into and around the space.

7. Install new toilet facilities

The current single and restricted space that is the churches only toilet facility is counter productive and significantly undersized for the demand. The solution that brings about a larger and more accessible toilet facility within the recent and attractive internal installation that currently houses the church office is very sensible.

The new toilet installation as proposed will require some infrastructure alterations to the drainage and the venting that could be quite straight forward as the extant drainage is near the west vestry/tower door.



8. Remove existing Kitchen

The removal of the kitchen that is sited to the eastern end of the office installation is also very sensible and the question of whether it is simply the internal collapsible kitchen and storage to be removed and retain the large space for the internal toilet facilities is one for your architect and PCC to deliberate upon. I would advise that the retention of the space is sensible as this permits internal storage space for the new improved facilities or modern plant equipment.

9. Install new office

The interior of the church currently enjoys an installation at the eastern end of the north aisle and is a mezzanine construction with glazed upper portion that overlook the entire church barring the chancel. Currently accessed via a spiral stair or winder and is a quiet space. Mobility challenges may need to be included within the design of the new office space if this were to be the selected space for this important church function.

The lower room to this mezzanine being predominantly set aside for child friendly activities or creche is somewhat cluttered with storage devices or the storage devices are filled with items donated, deposited or maybe have no other reason for being other than sentimental reasons-to clear the stored material and to fully explore this space as a potential accessible office space rather than the upper floor may be something that the church has already considered and I would ask that this is fully explained within the statement of needs and significance.

10. Install new kitchen

The kitchen or servery as proposed within the tower base after the removal of the organ other choir vestry /frontal stores will be extremely beneficial to the ongoing missional expansion and community use of the building and delivers the kitchen to the west end of the church where circulation is proposed to be improved and where the services are already located albeit outside of the tower walls.

11. Open west window and tidy organ loft

The west loft behind the organ pipes is an exceptionally valuable space once the organ pipes have been agreed to be removed-the walls are carrying many inscription memorials, some already loose, some suffering from neglect. These will require to be fully assessed and made safe to use this space and the space below as the risk to health is quite high if any of these heavy memorials were to fall. They may be heavy enough to damage or harm the current floor.

Another place where materials have been stored and maybe left without purpose-this should be a priority -to clear the church of contents that have no value or use and are simply stored. Any reordering scheme should include storage of essential items and that those items have a designated space and are placed within that space.

12.Tidy and add seclusion to the lady chapel

The lady chapel could be improved with a wall or visual device that brings forward the opportunity for a secluded place of contemplation, counsel and worship yet is currently restricted to all due to the steps up to the lady chapel from the south aisle and the chancel step.

The option of a glass screen is a difficult request for the church to accept due to the intricacy of the detail attached to the engaged capitals and pilasters that form and carry the arched opening from chancel to lady chapel.

Strategy

The statement of significance is the starting point and you should look to the areas whereby change is requested and explore the significance of each item .This should or could include some early consultation with the Church Building Council especially ofn the subject of the removal of the organ pipes as this may be something that should be explained as to why the instrument cannot be repaired it could be repaired I am of the opinion that it is currently imposing a degree of harm to the church as the instrument blocks out the light and the enjoyment of the west window together with the obstruction to the memorials held within the base of the tower.

Accessibility and ease of use of the space in relation to the benches proposed to be removed and the floor. Ramp step management designs are all deemed to be alterations to existing historic material and will therefore require some assessment as to their significance within the church and the use of the church-both before alteration and the benefit after the alteration. The expectation is that the public benefit of a more accessible, light space should outweigh the harm (change)

The most significant element of the current use of the church is the reason that the church and the greater community exist-the delivery of prayer and worship is significant, and the liturgical use of the space will require to be explained within the statement of significant as this is where the business case for missional expansion and by default-greater flexibility of the space is explained.

Need

Bullet points to draw the list together-then expand the bullet points that other explain the need and justify the need. A brief explanation as to options explored-to ensure that the consultees and statutory bodies are satisfied that all options have been fully explored before settling upon the proposal presented to them is where some faculty applications become entrenched within protracted dialogue.

Phased approach to deliver the complete scheme

The complete alteration should be explored through your architect and PCC. The delivery of the complete project may well require splitting into budget framed projects unless the decision is

made to phase the entire project into one period of alteration and design the scheme to enable continuation of the current use.

I would seek advice from CBC, Historic England and SPAB as to their attachment to such things such as the organ pipes-if this is broken and is taking up space-maybe a faculty application to remove this that will then be the start of the greater project as you go through the design process with your architect and other interested parties.

The organ removed, the upper vestry floor cleared, the repairs and making safe of the memorials and the clearing of the tower base could be hugely beneficial to all concerned. To enable the greater vision to be imagined and explored.

Suggested route

- 1.SOS and SON-begin the documents that start with assessments, justification and benefit
- 2.Architect to begin their surveys and design process whilst the church applies for the organ removal-to include tidying the upper loft and the tower base. Faculty to include ramps to porch and maybe some of the bench removals.
- 3.During the negotiations for the above removals and accessibility engage with consultees within the church for informal advice, formal advice and then full faculty for the reordering.
- 4.The delegation visits could be numerous-before the organ and other items deemed for removal are still in place-then after removal to deliver the beneficial appearance of the light from the west window bathing the church in a light not seen for a century.
- 5.all interested parties can then be introduced to the greater scheme and be able to offer guidance as to materials, finishes and ..carpet /flooring.
- 6.Local authority may be interested with any alteration that could alter the appearance of the exterior of the church-early engagement with them on this is recommended, albeit for minor venting, possibly the ramped access into the south door.

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