



ST DUBRICIUS CHURCH, PARSONS STREET, PORLOCK, MINEHEAD,
SOMERSET, TA24 8QJ

ST DUBRICIUS - RESPONSE TO HISTORIC ENGLAND

Project Number: 1398

Date: August 2025

Revision: 01 - Further information on the glazed screen

 JONATHAN RHIND·architects

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RESPONSE TO SOLAR PANEL CONCERN

HE have raised a concern with the location of the solar panels where they pass beyond the end of the south Aisle.

We note, though, that the panels extend beyond the end of the south aisle, to a section of the nave south roof-slope that is externally visible and where the panels might appear visually jarring with the ancient appearance of the church. We would question the acceptability of this section of the installation and suggest that your Heritage Advisor makes an on-site assessment of that impact so that its level of harm can be gauged. Unless it can be demonstrated that no visual harm would be caused, we would recommend that those 2 visible solar panels are omitted from the installation.

Response

We appreciate Historic England's concerns regarding the potential visual impact of the solar panels on the south slope of the nave roof. However, This section of the roof is almost entirely screened from external view by a mature, dense evergreen tree, as shown in the annotated drawings and photographs provided. This tree is suspected to be several hundred of years old so could be considered a permanent feature.

Due to its evergreen nature, the tree maintains full foliage year-round, offering consistent and effective screening. As such, any visual harm from the two panels in question would be negligible or entirely mitigated by this tree. The Tree is also subject to a TPO so any works would be subject to ENPA approval. The hiding nature of this tree could be confirmed by ENPA's Planning and Conservation Officers at a site visit.



Proposed South elevation - The trees have been highlighted

PLANNING	JONATHAN RHIND architects	Church of St. Dubricius, Porlock
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	© Not made for construction purposes. All dimensions to be checked on site. Discrepancies to be notified to the architect.	
PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION		Drawn: OL/PT Scale: 1:100 @ A3
Checked: JP Date: JUNE 2025		1398/025



Aerial Image showing the solar panels in yellow and trees in green.



Image of the West Elevation showing the large trees on the right hand side (blocking the area of the south elevation in question)

RESPONSE TO GLAZED SCREEN CONCERN

This planning application is being submitted in parallel to a comprehensive Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) Faculty application. This DAC application sets out a wider package of conservation, repair, and sustainability measures for the church. While many of these works fall outside the scope of planning control, we have provided them below for context and justification for the proposals.

The Faculty application includes:

- Re-shingling the spire
- Structural repairs to the spire and replacement of sarking boards
- Replacement of the lead roof atop the spire
- Re-slating of the porch and south slopes of the nave and chancel
- Renewal of rainwater goods
- External repointing and internal repairs
- Installation of solar panels
- Introduction of an internal infrared heating system (Herschel 'Halo' and under-pew units)
- Installation of a glazed external porch screen
- Low energy Lighting

The PCC have identified an urgent need to replace the existing fossil fuel heating system, which is nearing the end of its serviceable life. Working with the Church of England's Net Zero Carbon target guidelines we have proposed a infrared heating system, this has been selected for its efficiency and minimal visual intrusion. The PCC and DAC have held meetings to discuss the various options and a long wave infrared heating system was preferred. We have approached Herschel's who have designed a scheme which includes overhead 'Halo's and under pew heaters.

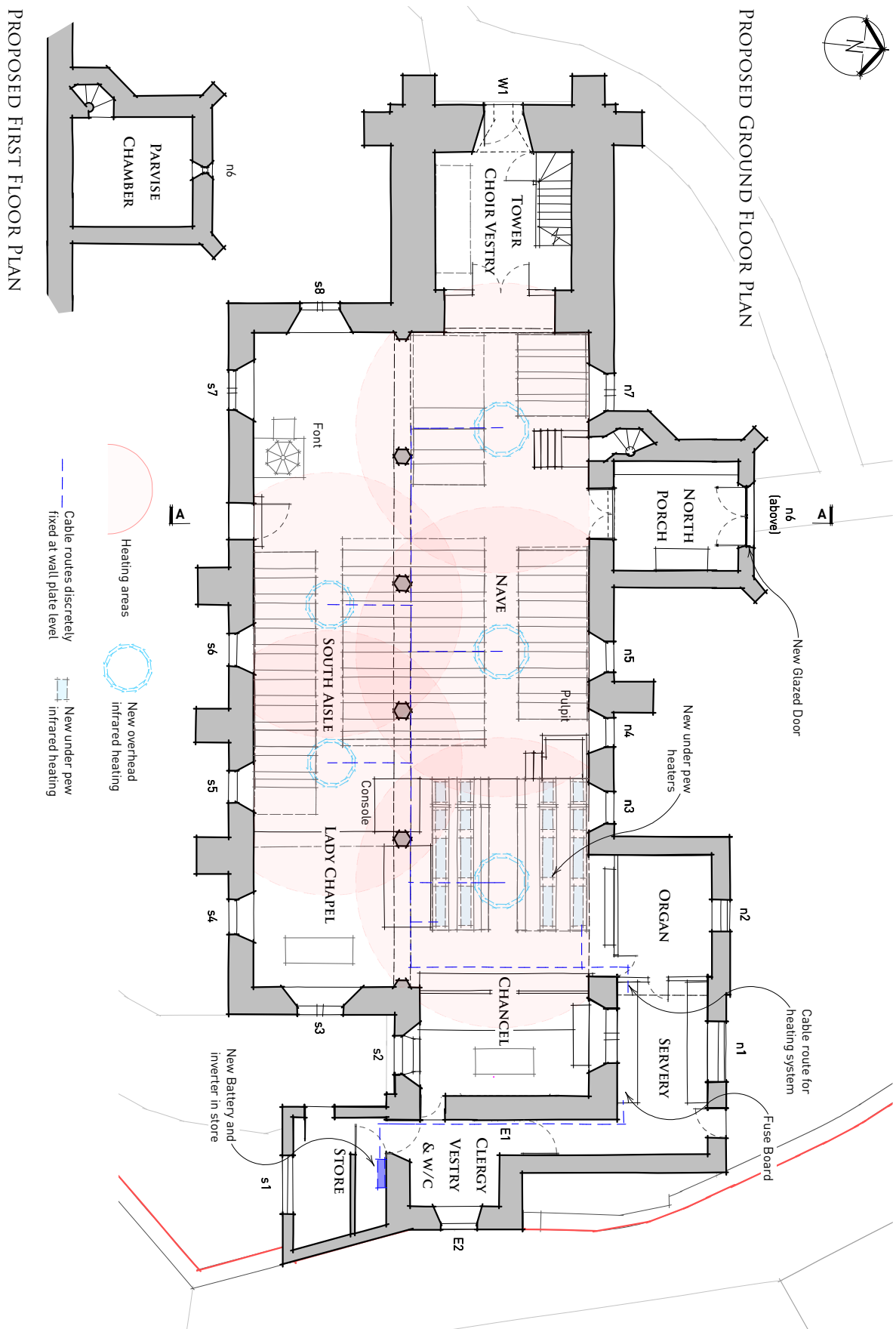


Overhead infrared heating - Halo



Underpew infrared heating

Below is an extract from the faculty application showing the extent of the proposed heating system.



Floor plan showing the proposed heating scheme

The new glazed screen has been carefully designed to support this upgraded heating strategy. In addition to its practical function, the screen will transform the entrance into a more inviting and engaging threshold for worshippers, visitors, and the wider community. The concept of the glass screen is not new to the church, It is known that some form of outer door was in place previously. There are holes in the stone of the entrance arch from the original fixings. The form of those doors is not apparent.

Currently, the PCC faces significant challenges with the main timber doors. They must remain closed for most of the year to prevent excessive heat loss and draughts, which creates a less welcoming first impression. The new glazed doors will allow the main timber doors to remain open, improving visibility, approachability, and connection with passers-by or visitors, while preserving internal comfort and energy efficiency. It also enables the doors to be left open and the internal spaces not being covered in loose vegetation.

The community benefits of this enhancement extends beyond day-to-day use. For example:

- **Funerals:** At present, when the casket is placed in the porch before being brought into the nave, opening the timber doors results in an immediate loss of heat in winter, or an influx of hot air in summer, disrupting the congregation's comfort, and requiring the church to be heated more. The glazed screen would create a sheltered 'airlock', enabling the funerals to be carried out with minimal environmental impact.
- **Coffee Mornings and Community Gatherings:** In winter, such events are rarely held or held in the local pub because the internal temperature is not adequate and the timber doors must remain closed, reducing visibility and deterring newcomers. With the glazed screen in place, visitors would be able to see inside and feel encouraged to join, while the church remains warm and draught-free.

Further justification can be found within the Statement of Need, prepared by the PCC.

In exploring this element of the scheme, the PCC considered several alternatives, including:

- A glazed lobby inside the church
- A glazed lobby within the porch
- The proposed solution; a glass screen fixed within the existing stone arch



Photo of the arch showing the flat portion we intend to fix to. Photo of the inside of the porch highlighting the corbel and decorative ribs.

Each option was assessed for its visual and physical impact on historic fabric. Fixing a glazed structure inside the church would have compromised the internal spatial character and required modification to a series of pews. A glass lobby within the porch would have caused harm to decorative carved features, such as the corbel at the head of the arch as well as the carved ribs on the ceiling.

The proposed solution, fixing the glazed screen to the flat internal face of the stone arch was considered the least harmful. This approach avoids interference with carved timberwork and stone monument and allows reversibility in line with best conservation practice. Fixings will be kept to a minimum and located within mortar beds where possible, this makes the intervention largely reversible except for the small number of fixings within the stone. The glazing will be proposed as Low-Iron Glass, which offers maximum clarity but minimal glare, maintaining clear visibility through the porch.

The idea of a glass screen closing off a porch is not new or uncommon, several churches have these. The proposed scheme has been designed to work sensitively with the existing historic building having as minimal impact as possible.

Precedent Churches:

- St Luke's Church, Crosby (Grade II)
- St Martin's Church, Liskard (Grade II*)
- St John's Church, Tenby
- Saint Faith, Kelshall (Grade II*)

