

From: Rachel Broomfield <rachel.broomfield@spab.org.uk>
Sent: 27 August 2025 20:16
To: Jacqui Carreira-White <jacqui.carreira-white@bathwells.anglican.org>
Cc: Emma Green <Emma@b2architects.com>; Clare Price <clare.price@churchofengland.org>
Subject: Re: St Michael & All Angels Church, East Coker, Yeovil , BA22 9JW, (faculty: 2023-083588), our ref: 205814 and 208567
Importance: High

Re: Improve access, heating , open up interior, servery, accessible WC.

Dear Jacqui

Thank you for re-consulting the SPAB regarding the proposed works to the Grade II* listed church of St Michael & All Angels, East Coker.

We first commented in December 2023. We were generally happy with the proposals and felt the scheme was well justified and we supported Option 1 for the toilet, but we highlighted areas where we felt further information was required.

In June 2024 we commented again but specifically on the revised proposals for the toilet which had changed from Option 1 (external toilet) to a toilet in the base of the tower, taking in part of the vestry, and the car parking provisions. Our principle concern regarding a toilet in the base of the tower was the creation of a new doorway through the historic wall between base of the tower and the north vestry. This would cause harm which we were keen to avoid if possible, therefore we requested further details regarding the age and significance of this wall, which have now been provided. It seems the wall in question is most likely to have been rebuilt c1790 when the tower was reconstructed.

We were consulted again in April and July 2025 as plans had been revised again, so this is a combined response to both of these consultations. We have focused on the documents that were specifically sent to us.

External level changes, north side

These works will require Planning Permission so if you have not already done so, we would recommend a pre-application is undertaken with the local authority as soon as possible and this should include any trenching works for drainage or service connections. Changes to the ground levels and installing steps / ramps/ dais are likely to require the oversight of an archaeologist - even if there are no marked burials in these locations, there is a high probability of finding disarticulated human remains.

What will the surface finish be of the steps, ramp and dais - the plan just refers to stone so would this be Ham stone? The path from the car park looks like it will be tarmac but is this appropriate visually and in terms of drainage - would stone or resin bound gravel

be a more attractive option? Has an Accessibility Adviser been consulted to ensure compliance as far as possible?

North porch

It is proposed to carefully lift the Ham stone floor and re-lay it in order to remove the step up that is just inside the external doors. This is acceptable but it is likely to need archaeological oversight. It is not clear why it is proposed to remove the external timber doors - how old are they, what is their significance and what alternatives have been explored - for example installing automated door openers?

It is proposed to fix the main north door in the open position so details of how this would be done are required. This door is dated in the listing description to the 15th century, so a method that will not cause any damage / stress is required. New automated inner glazed doors are proposed within the porch in front of the north door to create a draft lobby and replace the existing curtains. We would need to see more information regarding the details of the glazed doors, their fixings and the position of the sensors etc before we could comment further.

West end (internal works)

More information regarding the existing and proposed floor, dais, steps, handrails and storage cupboards is required. Would the level changes impact on the existing ledger stone that is set into the floor?

Base of tower (accessible WC)

Although we would prefer not cut a doorway through the base of the tower, we can fully appreciate the advantages of the accessible toilet in this location. Details of the ventilation / extraction for the toilet need to be provided and we would also like to ensure that the window on the north side of the tower (whilst partly within the toilet but partly above the ceiling) is still accessible internally for maintenance if required. We understand that in order to create the new doorway, several monuments will need to be re-located so details of these and where they will no go need to be provided. Any below ground works required for the drainage / service connections are also likely to require archaeological oversight.

Heating

A combination of options are now proposed for the heating which will provide flexibility - electric underfloor heating mats are suggested for the west end, the existing under pew heaters will be retained, two new chandelier heaters will be installed (also at the west end) and a number of electric convector heaters. Full details will need to be provided including details of fixings and cabling runs.

The visualisation provided by Herschel is extremely helpful and we would suggest that this is attached to the faculty as a separate document rather than being an easily missed link within a document - it is very useful to help with all aspect of the scheme internally.

Other

We understand that the parish are currently developing the details of the details of the servery unit, the internal floor finishes, and the proposals for the effigies (with specialist input). It would also be helpful to understand how the pews will be shortened, and what additional chairs and tables will be purchased to ensure that they complement the rest of the church. The DAC should see these prior to a decision being made.

Summary

Whilst we are generally happy in principle, we would like further details of the proposed works to the external levels, the internal floors, the base of the tower, and the north porch before can comment specifically on these aspects.

We hope these comments are helpful to you.

Best wishes,

Rachel

Rachel Broomfield

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Please send all notifications of listed building consent applications, faculty applications or requests for pre-application advice to caserowk@jcnas.org.uk

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