

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S
CHURCH - THE LINK
COMMUNITY HUB

HASLEMERE

ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS
DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

1.0 Introduction

This document has been prepared to support the Planning Application for the alterations and repair, including modest extensions to The Link Building at St Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere.

The purpose of the proposal is to provide amenity facilities for the community and to create a viable, sustainable future for the building. The text in this document should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing package, The Heritage Statement other documents submitted with its application.

2.0 Context

Site Location

The site is located within the town boundary of Haslemere, which is in the administrative control of Waverley Borough Council. The site is only a 9 minute walk from Haslemere's train station. Trains from Haslemere offer direct onwards travel to London (Waterloo).



Figure 2.0 - Map showing the application site in relation to Haslemere (not to scale).

Site Description

The site, where both St Bartholomew's Church and The Link Building are located, covers an area of approximately 0.45 hectares. The church building is located towards the south of the site and surrounded by a churchyard with a public footpath to the south of the church, that links Tanners Lane and Derby Road. The Link Building is located to the north of the site, very close to the north boundary wall.

Both buildings are accessible via Tanners Lane for pedestrians and there is a vehicle gate off Derby Road. The buildings are linked by a flat roof walkway.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair



Figure 2.1 - Google Street View Image showing St Bartholomew's Church (left) and The Link



Figure 2.2- Google Street View Image showing St Bartholomew's Church (left) and The Link



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair



Figure 2.3- Google Street View Image showing St Bartholomew's Church (right) and The Link Building (left), viewed from Derby Road.

Surrounding and local context

The surrounding context is mostly private dwelling houses. These dwelling houses are:

- Predominantly detached and semi-detached dwellings
- Ranging in height from between 2-3 storeys
- Orientated facing to front the road
- Predominately finished with brick
- Predominately finished with either red or brown roof tiles and have Hipped, half-hipped or gabled, pitched roofs



Figure 2.4 - Dwelling to the north of the site, off High Lane.



Figure 2.5 - Dwelling to the north west of the site, off High Lane.



Figure 2.6 - Dwelling to the west of the site, off Derby Road.



Figure 2.7 - Block of dwellings to the east of the site, off Tanners Lane.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

3.0 The Link Building

Description and current use

The Link is a community building in the grounds of St Bartholomew's Church, Haslemere. The building was constructed around 1870 and is Grade II listed for its group value with the church. It was originally St Bartholomew's School, and has been used for a number of educational, community and parish activities since the 1980s. Whilst owned by Haslemere Parochial Church Council (a registered charity) it is available for community use and private functions.

Over the years, there have been many additions and changes to the building (please refer to Heritage Statement), most notably the removal of interior walls to create a single space, albeit obstructed by a large redundant chimney breast in the centre of the main room and the addition of a flat roof toilet extension. The modest entrance is hidden away at the side and it is "linked" to the church by a utilitarian flat roofed walkway.

Whilst providing an amenity for church and community the buildings usefulness is hampered by the obstructions in the main room and also the fact that all facilities (kitchen, WC and storage) are accessed directly from the hall which prevents multiple groups using the building at the same time. The building is not energy efficient and disabled access, using a network of uneven paths across the church yard, is problematic.



Figure 3.1 - The Link Building as viewed from the churchyard - south elevation



St. Bartholomew's
Church - The Link
Community Hub

Alterations and
repair



Figure 3.2 - The Link Building as viewed from Tanners Lane- east elevation



Figure 3.3 - The Link Building as viewed from Derby Road - west elevation



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

4.0 Statement of need and brief

The parish has identified, in discussion with a number of groups that require space for rent, that there are community needs that the existing building is unable to meet. In response to this a feasibility study was carried out to look at the needs of the local community, and utilisation of venues that already exist in Haslemere. This identified a need for more affordable community space within the town.

There is a particular need for small spaces for counselling and other one-to-one meetings, but also for larger spaces for groups to be able to exercise, or enjoy other recreational activities designed to improve mental health (often referred to as Social Prescribing). A common theme is that these organisations also need office space in buildings they use. All these needs resonated with the Parish's desire to have a building that is more functional and accessible to the community.

Contained on three sides by a road and churchyard and to the front by a small car park there are no opportunities to meet these needs through ground floor expansion. However there is considerable space within the roof and by filling in-between the ridges the proposed design would add an upper floor with limited external visual impact. The vision is to create an attractive, multi-user facility within the existing building envelope, with minor extensions to facilitate access.

The building will provide a variety of spaces to meet the needs of the community, young and old, its openness to the community signalled by access to the community hall from the Derby Road end of the building.

Whilst respecting its Grade II status, the building will have a 21st century feel, using good quality materials, fittings and furnishings. Its use of technology will be future proofed as far as is possible, it will be energy efficient, and provide a safe and secure environment for all users.

It will be uncluttered, with excellent storage on each floor of the building and in a redeveloped store in the car park (in the former boy's toilets).

Building requirements to support the vision are:

- Creation of an upper floor built into the roof to include a reception area and meeting rooms/ counselling rooms accessed from this (for meet/greet but also security for volunteer counsellors)
- Accessibility/lift to the main entrance and upper floor, and accessible lavatories
- Entrances, WC, storage and drink preparation facilities that allow two different community groups to use the main hall and upper rooms separately and independently (for confidentiality and safeguarding)
- A kitchen suitable for supporting events in the hall
- Good storage for users
- A community hall
- Improved and visible access from Derby Road
- A shared office/reception that may be used by the parish and other organisations
- Energy efficient (solar panels, underfloor heating, insulation)
- External bicycle and pram storage
- Good quality and durable finishes to create an attractive and welcoming venue for a wide range of community and church activities for all ages.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

5.0 Planning history

Most of the changes in the building happened before 1980's, and were done without planning permission or listed building consent. There are only three planning applications referring to The Link Building, done after the school had already moved to another building. The alterations were done to keep using the building for community uses.

Planning Application WA/1995/0094 - Valid From 27/01/1995
ST BARTHOLOMEWS CHURCH DERBY ROAD, , HASLEMERE,
Application for listed building consent for internal alterations (as amplified by letter of 28/03/95 and plans received 29/03/95).

Planning Application WA/1991/1025 - Valid From 24/07/1991
THE LINK DERBY ROAD, , HASLEMERE,
Installation of roof lights following removal of 2 dormer windows (as amended by plans received 28/08/91).

Planning Application WA/1991/1026 - Valid From 24/07/1991
THE LINK DERBY ROAD, , HASLEMERE,
Application for listed building consent to install roof lights following removal of dormer windows (as amended by plans received 19/08/91).

Pre Application Advice

We have applied for pre planning application and listed building advice in 2022.

PRE/2022/00252 - St Bartholomews Church, Church Hill, Haslemere GU27 IBW

We have received the below comments from the conservation officer, Sophie Piper:

- *No concerns over the principle*
- *Dormer windows – the proposed dormer windows are too prominent on the roof, I would suggest you look at a more traditional style and flat roof.*
- *Proposed single storey extension on north west elevation – I agree that a more contemporary design would be appropriate however the current design needs more finesse.*
- *I suggest you do some test pits to see how far down the brickwork goes. Please note that the site is within an Area of High Archaeological Potential.*
- *Proposed extension on south west elevation – I agree with this design approach. You may struggle to find stonework that matches and therefore you should look at different material/cladding options and try to include the existing extension.*
- *Loss of chimney – I would identify less than substantial due to loss of this element. You need to work through the options to see if it can be retained externally and ensure an appreciation of the existing plan form will be visible internally. If the first floor is not possible with the retention of the chimney stack, then you will need to show that this harm is justified and has been minimised and that the public benefit would outweigh the harm.*
- *Flat roof extension – you will need to ensure that it is designed in such a way that is not visible as a flat roof from below and the solar panels are not visible either*
- *Boundary wall at entrance – if there are health and safety concerns then I think it can be justified that the wall is lowered on one side to match the walls enclosing the church.*



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

The following advice was given by the principal planning officer James Kidger:

- *The primary planning issue is the impact of the proposal on heritage assets. Sophie has indicated she will meet you on site to discuss – be sure to incorporate her recommendations into the final proposal.*
- *The area is designated as of High Archaeological Importance. We would likely consult the County Archaeologist as to whether preliminary archaeological work would be required.*
- *A heritage statement and bat survey should be submitted with the application. Optionally, an archaeological survey could also be included.*
- *Parking standards are set out in our SPD. A brief supporting statement should be submitted to justify the proposed parking provision.*

5.0 Design Approach

Overall description

Our decisions were based on the needs of both the parish and the community, as previously discussed, and also took into consideration the building's significance as outlined in the Heritage Statement. We have carefully reviewed all of the comments received during the pre-application advice and addressed them accordingly.

In any building conservation project, the challenge is to balance change and preservation. Fortunately, in this case, the existing envelope of the building provided sufficient space to meet most of the needs, allowing us to utilise the existing roof space to create a new floor. To achieve this, we only needed to add two roof extensions and replace the existing roof lights, which were inserted in the 1990s, with new dormers. Additionally, we are proposing the installation of roof lights to enhance natural light and ventilation in the new rooms. We have taken into account Sophie Piper's suggestion of making the new dormers as subservient as possible. Therefore, we have opted for flat roofs instead of the pitched roof dormers previously presented during the pre-application stage.

In addition to the roof additions necessary for a first-floor space, we are proposing a small extension to the west that will serve as a visible and inviting entrance leading to an office area. The office space will feature hot desks for user groups to utilise. Our plan is to convert the existing kitchen area, which was originally designed as a classroom and was described as such in the 1904 report (refer to the Heritage Statement). Given its history and layout, we believe the space would be much more practical as an office rather than a kitchen.

During the pre-application advice, we were advised to review the previous extensions, including the one situated to the southeast, and consider cladding it along with the proposed extension. We have taken this suggestion into account, and we are confident that the new proposed elevation will enhance the appearance of the heritage building as a whole. We are proposing to use a brown zinc cladding on the existing south-east 20th century extension, as well as on the roof extension above the link with the church. The zinc material will also be used on the roofs of all new extensions, except for the two dormers. We have proposed the colour brown for the cladding, which will complement the existing colour palette of the stone and roof tiles seamlessly.

Additionally, we are proposing to replace the current asphalt flat roof of the northern small extension with zinc.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

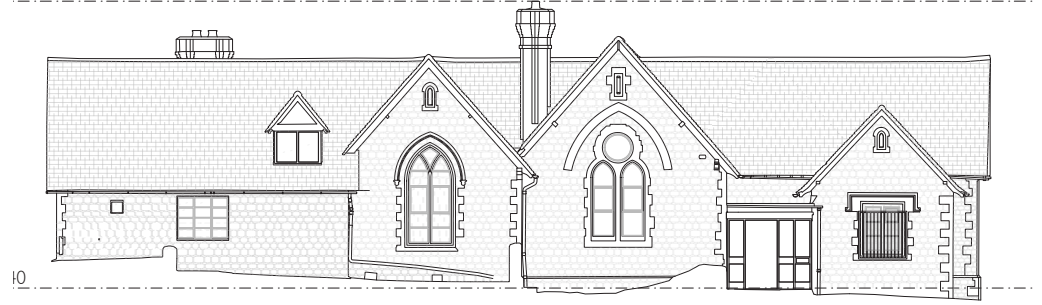


Figure 5.0 - Existing southwest elevation

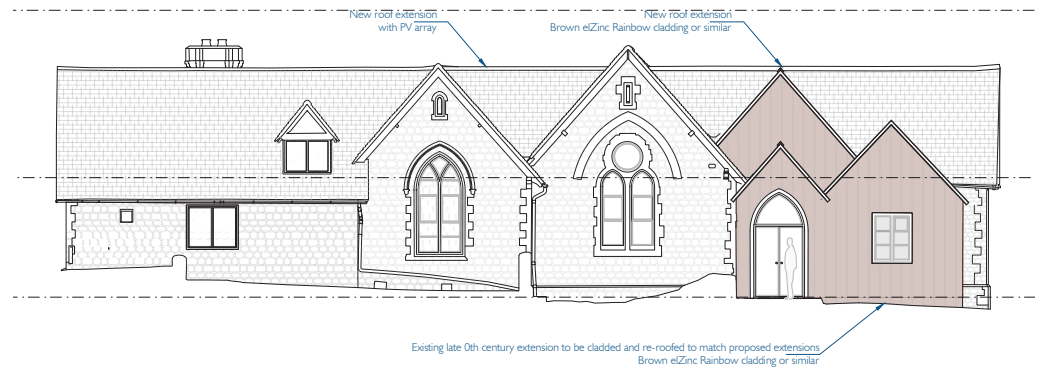


Figure 5.1 - Proposed southwest elevation



Figure 5.2 -Existing Northwest elevation



Figure 5.3-Proposed Northwest elevation



St. Bartholomew's
Church - The Link
Community Hub



Figure 5.4 - Precedent for brown zinc cladding

Alterations and repair



Figure 5.5 - Precedent for new extension



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

Internal alterations

In addition to the new first floor and the conversion of the current kitchen into an office space, several alterations were made to accommodate the building's new uses. The kitchen was relocated to the northeast portion of the building, an area that was historically used for services such as cloakrooms and a previous kitchen. We are proposing to reopen a servery that was closed during the 1995 alterations and remove all internal partitions to create a full catering kitchen. The original door into the main room will also be reopened to provide access to a small meeting room that is much needed for counselling and small meetings.

The current office space will be transformed into toilets that will serve the ground floor and adjoining church. A new staircase, lift, and much-needed storage will be located at the end of the southeast room, leaving the centre of the building to be used as the main hall for larger events.

We are also proposing to demolish the 20th-century chimney. As stated in the Heritage Statement, the original chimney, which was located in the centre of what is currently called room 2, was demolished and replaced with a new one. This replacement chimney has been out of use for decades. It is not prominent on the street scene and the retention of this chimney is problematic on each floor. After consideration, we propose that it is removed entirely.

On the ground floor, the bulk of the chimney breast in the centre of the room prevents the room being used as a single space for large community events. The capacity for lecture type events is significantly reduced as there is not clear line of sight across the room. It is proposed that the chimney breast is removed from the ground floor, to allow an effective use of the space in the large hall. The feasibility study identified such a strong case for additional private meeting rooms that we may consider incorporating movable partitions, which can be utilised as a separate private meeting room when the hall is not in use, providing full flexibility of use.

On the upper floor, the chimney is at the centre of the proposed extension that links the existing roof spaces. Without this proposed extension, the first floor would not be viable. To use the loft space we would need independent access to each room which would make the ground floor unusable as a community room and there would also be universal accessibility issues.

The proposed design provides a reception area with small meeting rooms accessed from this. There is full separation between the users of the upper floor and main hall on the ground floor (the entrances, WC, storage, refreshment areas to each area are separate). Without a roof extension, the first floor would not have enough suitable space for meeting rooms, and the building would only be suitable for use by single user group at any time which will impact on utilisation and the ability for this community building to be self-sustaining. Without the 1st floor roof extension the project becomes impractical.

We have considered retaining the external part of the chimney. However, if the roof extension is built only the chimney crown would be visible externally. In addition, it is planned to install solar panels on the flat roof, which would be more beneficial than retaining a few centimetres of chimney above the roof line.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

Over time, this building has undergone numerous changes to ensure it continued to be used. However, as noted in the 1904 report, the many additions were not always designed to a high standard, and the spaces were not always suitable for the intended use. Retaining the chimney would take up valuable space on the ground floor, but more importantly its retention would prevent the infill roof extension on the first floor that facilitates the conversion of redundant loft space into much needed small meeting rooms.

Keeping a redundant chimney in the centre of the building for the sole purpose of preserving its fabric would not be in keeping with the building's significance. Instead, we propose to retain the beams installed in 1995 along with remains of early internal walls at ceiling height and also marking the locations of both the current and original chimneys on the floor, as a visible reminder of the buildings heritage.

The 1970's chimney is not fully visible from the street and, whilst its removal will slightly alter the appearance of the listed building, it will not have a negative impact on its significance. We believe the positive impact, by creating a vibrant community space will add value to the building and ensure a sustainable viable future for it. Therefore, removing the chimney will not have a negative impact on the listed building, as its significance is not based on its fabric or architectural features, but on its group value with the church and its continuous use throughout the years.

Access

The site access will remain the same as existing, off Tanners Lane for pedestrians only and off Derby Road for vehicles and pedestrians. Pedestrians coming from Tanners Lane will be able to access the building via the new covered passageway that links the building to the church.

For those coming via Derby Road, the access to the building will be through a new extension to the west of the building, with reformed steps and a step lift. The chimney by the main entrance, built in the early 20th century, is of greater visibility/and significance than the one we are proposing to demolish. Therefore, the design of porch and wheelchair access has been minimized in size and scale to lesson any harm. There will be a secondary access directly into the new kitchen off High Lane.



Figure 5.6 - Precedent for step lift



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Alterations and repair

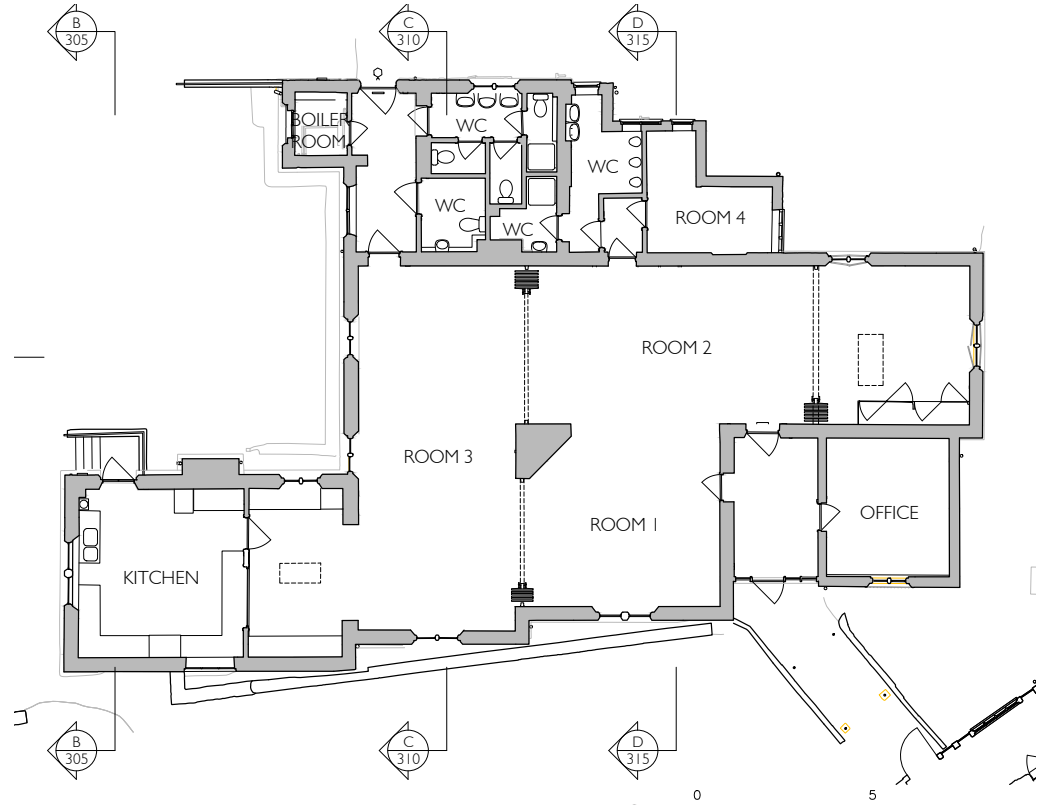


Figure 5.7 - Existing ground floor plan

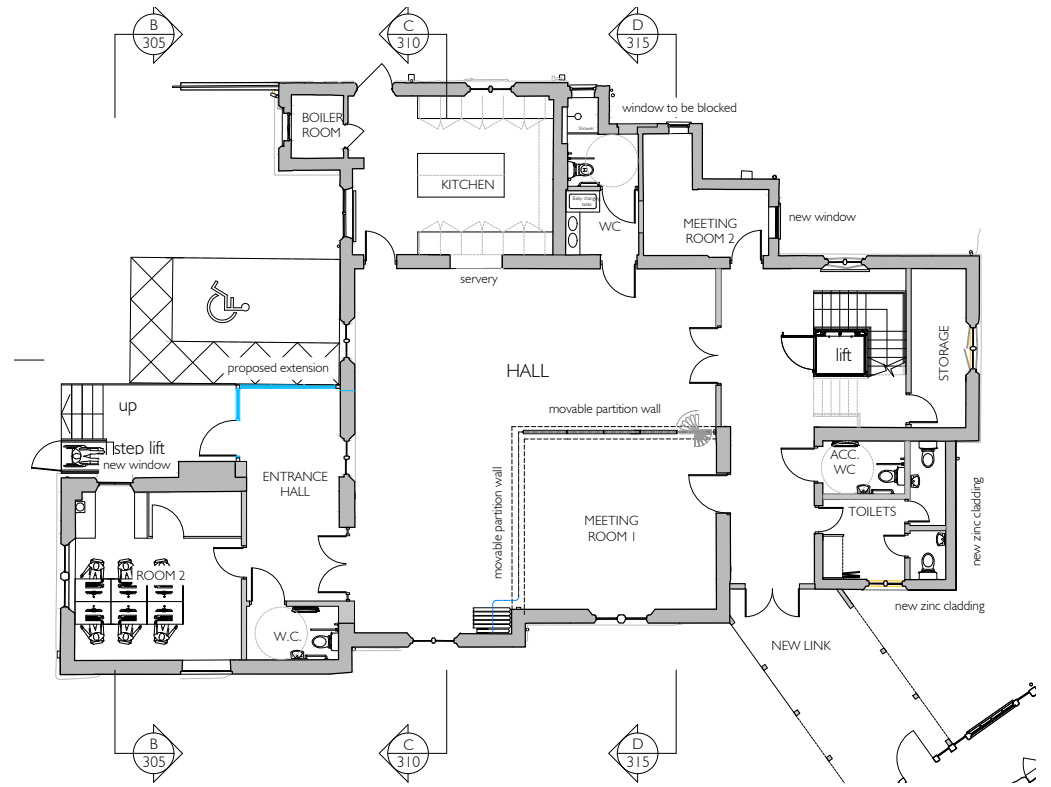


Figure 5.8 - Proposed ground floor plan



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

Parking

There will be 9 parking spaces, the same as there is currently, including a disabled space. We believe that the proposal will not significantly increase the number of vehicular movements in the local area to an unacceptable amount as there is a school close by and given the expected pattern of use for the new first floor.

Therefore, the 9 parking spaces within the site will provide sufficient provision for staff associated with activities. Additionally, there are 9 "2 hour spaces" adjoining the site in Tanners Lane which are available in busier periods during the school day and currently see little use.

There is a public car park in Chestnut Avenue, a 5 minute walk away and cycle parking will be provided. Larger events in the community hall will typically be in evenings and weekends when there is limited, if any, competition for unrestricted spaces in Derby Road.

Furthermore, the bus service which traverses Haslemere runs past the site, with bus stops nearby, the railway station is a short walk away and the site is within walking distance of much of its catchment area.

Site Layout

The proposed site layout remains mostly unchanged. There are no proposed changes to the site access points, boundary treatments, site topography and parking provision.

The boundary wall on Derby Road

The vehicular exit onto Derby Road is currently problematic. The pavement that traffic crosses at the car park exit is the only footway between High Lane lollipop crossing and St Bartholomew's Primary School. At the start and end of the school day, there is significant footfall of parents/carers, often with prams and buggies and primary school aged children who may be walking ahead of carers.

Drivers exiting the carpark have very limited vision. It is proposed that the wall height either side of the gate is reduced to give drivers sight of groups on the pavement approaching the car park exit. On discussion with the Waverley Heritage Officer it was suggested that the height was matched to the adjacent ancient wall that boundaries St Bartholomew's church yard.

The wall is listed, but for its group value with the church. There is evidence of prior alterations in brick, potentially from when the girls toilet block was demolished. The proposal aligns the wall height with the remainder of the boundary wall which is also listed. We believe that the modifications are appropriate given the improved safety for pedestrians.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

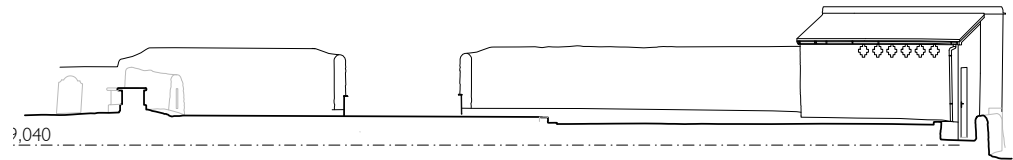


Figure 5.8 - Existing north-west wall

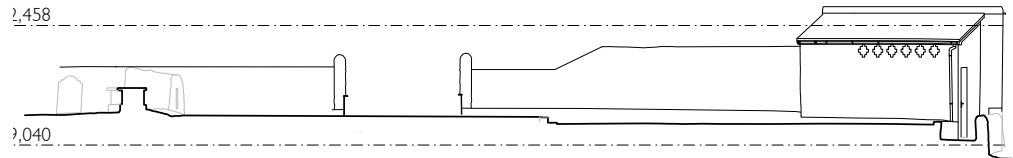


Figure 5.9- Proposed north-west wall

6.0 Sustainability

The proposal has been designed to deliver a scheme that would be energy efficient and promote resource conservation. The proposal would be designed to include sustainable features from the following list to reduce energy demands, improve overall energy efficiency and future proof the building:

- Highly insulated walls, floor and roof
- Double glazed windows
- Energy efficient boiler
- Installation of energy efficient appliances and light fittings
- Installation of low flush toilet and sanitary fittings
- Insulated pipework
- A good air tightness value to minimise the potential for loss of heat energy through air leakage
- Installation of solar panels in the new flat roof
- Provision of Operational and Maintenance manuals to inform the PCC of energy saving design features installed within the proposed building

7.0 Waste Storage

Provision will be made for separate storage of refuse and recycling within the kitchen.

8.0 Landscape & Ecology

Most of the land surrounding the building is covered by tarmac or grass. No trees or bushes will be affected by the proposal. Please refer to the Bat Survey.



St. Bartholomew's Church - The Link Community Hub

Alterations and repair

9.0 Conclusion

This statement details how the proposal seeks to deliver a sustainable and well considered new community space to St Bartholomew's Church, through enhanced community use, provide it with a sustainable future. The proposal has been designed to sit sympathetically within the site without compromising the historic structure and ensures the creation of a sustainably viable future for the church.

We believe the content of this statement provides a good understanding of the extent to which the design has been developed to respect the surrounding context. For the reasons set out below, we feel this proposal should be deemed acceptable:

- The proposal has no impact on the primary views into the site from the east, south and west.
- The proposal aims to establish a sustainable and viable future for the building which in turn will ensure the long term security of the building is ensured.
- The proposal aims to enhance the standard of architecture in the local area whilst positively contributing to the Grade II structure.
- Efforts have been made to lower the carbon footprint of the building throughout its lifetime.
- The proposal creates an appropriate and attractive development which will improve the surrounding setting.

This project is being led by the Parish, who have established a project team. Delivery of the Link Community Hub will be funded in part by the Parish, but significant funding will be required from community funds. The facilities will be available for community and private hire, with fees discounted for users that are not-for-profit.

Rafaela Citron
March 2023