



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

Mr Nigel Walter
Archangel Ltd
3 Doctor's Close
Impington
Cambridge
CB24 9ND

Direct Dial: 01223 582716

Our ref: PA00943648

Your ref: 0406

18 February 2019

Dear Mr Walter

Pre-application Advice

ST MARY'S CHURCH, ST MARY'S STREET, ELY

Thank you for contacting us regarding your pre-faculty consultation for reordering the church and extension to the adjacent halls. I visited the church on 31 January 2019 when I was able to assess the impact of the proposals on its significance, accompanied by yourself and Geoffrey Hunter of Ely DAC.

Advice

The Parish Church of St Mary is of stone rubble with ashlar dressing and is mainly 13th century with later work, The church was begun in the early part of the 13th century by Bishop Eustace and has a wide nave of seven bays with slender plain piers and capitals with scalloped ornamentation. The clerestory is 15th century. The fine north doorway is early 13th century, with orders, columns with shaft rings, stiff leaf capitals and a pointed arch with chevron ornamentation. Most likely it was the work of craftsmen from the Cathedral workshop. The chancel has lancet windows on the south side (except the first window from the west end) and perpendicular windows on the north side. The west tower and stone spire is of the 14th century and has angle buttresses with three offsets and corner pinnacles and the spire has tall arched dormer windows at the base and small dormer windows near the top. The church is listed at grade I in recognition of its architectural and historic significance.

The proposals are for comprehensive reordering of the church which would involve improving the functionality of the existing extensions by rearranging the spaces, providing an entrance and a small additional extension; improving accessibility to the church, hall and office by bringing the west doors back into use and inserting a stone floor across the entire nave and aisles; creating the freedom of space sought by the PCC in the main body of the church through the removal of most of the current fixed furnishings and the provision of a portable font, holy table and lectern; subdivision of the east end of the Chancel to create a Vestry and storage space; installation of a West Gallery to provide a creche space at the base of the Tower and improved access for bellringers and renewal of the lighting, heating and audio systems.



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full privacy policy for more information
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/terms/privacy-cookies/>

Historic England advises that, in principle, we are supportive of your objectives to improve accessibility to the church, Hall and Office, provide freedom of space in the main body of the church and improve the functionality of the existing extensions.

Having considered the supporting documentation submitted with your application, including the Statements of Need and Significance and drawings produced by Archangel Architects, we welcome the amendments to the proposals that have been incorporated following discussions with the DAC since the submission of initial proposals in 2017. We consider the case for a West Gallery, accessed by a new timber staircase, has been adequately made and there is evidence that a Gallery existed in that location previously. It would be relatively modest and the design approach adopted would enable it to be used to provide other facilities. We are supportive of the proposed ramp to facilitate access for all, subject to refinements to the detailed design. We also welcome the proposed Ancaster stone flooring which supersedes the wooden flooring initially proposed. We are concerned, however, that the proposed level of the flooring would result in the bases of the columns in the nave being concealed and that ledger stones to the floor monuments would be retained in situ and would therefore not be visible. Following advice from the DAC we welcome the PCC's decision to omit the proposed screening off in the South Chapel and we have no objections to the repositioning of the font to the east end of the south aisle.

We do have some concerns regarding the wholesale removal of the pews and proposed subdivision of the Chancel. The pews form part of the 1876 Franey and Wood restoration and whilst we acknowledge that they are not of the greatest historic importance, we nevertheless are of the view that they form a significant element of the current fixtures and fittings and we would be keen to see the retention of two rows of pews, integrated into the reordering by being placed against the walls or used to divide spaces.

Regarding the reordering of the Chancel, we consider the proposed partial subdivision to form a vestry that would incorporate the piscina and sedilia, together with a storage area might result in a high level of harm that could have a major impact on the significance and appearance of the church, which has yet to be convincingly justified. We therefore encourage the PCC to consider less radical interventions in the Chancel.

You stated in your covering letter that the proposals in their current form retain the overall scope of the project but that you are now intending to deliver the scheme in two phases, with the first phase comprising works to the church itself and the second phase involving works to the halls and link building, which due to funding constraints may not be completed for a number of years.

In conclusion, we are keen to assist you in achieving your aim of providing more useable space and additional facilities within the church and would welcome working



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full privacy policy for more information
<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/terms/privacy-cookies/>



Historic England

EAST OF ENGLAND OFFICE

closely with you and the DAC to address the issues outlined above and safeguard the significance of this grade I listed church for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sheila Stones

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: Sheila.Stones@HistoricEngland.org.uk

cc Geoffrey Hunter, ELY DAC Church Buildings Consultant



24 BROOKLANDS AVENUE, CAMBRIDGE, CB2 8BU

Telephone 01223 582749
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.

We respect your privacy and the use of your information. Please read our full privacy policy for more information

<https://www.historicengland.org.uk/terms/privacy-cookies/>