

(2018) ECC Por 1

IN THE CONSISTORY COURT OF THE DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

Re Droxford St Mary: proposed extension

Judgment

Introduction

1. On 23rd November 2017 a faculty was granted authorising the building of an extension to the Church of St Mary and All Saints, Droxford, in the Parish of Droxford, to provide much-needed space for parish facilities.
2. In the note of my decision, dated 22nd November 2017 I recognised that the extension would inevitably cause some harm to the historical and architectural significance of this Grade 1 listed church, but that provided that steps were taken to minimise the impact, any harm would be outweighed by the benefits it would bring.
3. The detailed plans then supporting the proposal had been considered by both the Church Buildings Council and the DAC and each had raised questions about the internal layout and aspects of the external design. I concluded that these issues would require further consideration before construction work commenced.
4. In the light of the comments made by the CBC and DAC, the faculty was granted subject to four principal conditions, namely that:
 - (i) *The final internal and external design and specifications shall be submitted to the Chancellor for consideration before construction work begins.*
 - (ii) *The final designs and specifications shall be provided to the CBC and DAC, and to any other body directed by the Chancellor, for consultation before final determination by the Chancellor.*
 - (iii) *The site shall be subject to a full archaeological survey in accordance with the scheme filed in support of the petition.*
 - (iv) *A Conservation Structural Engineer shall be engaged to advise on the impact of the proposed extension on the archaeology of the site and the link to the existing church building.*
5. The parish wish to be able to commence construction work as soon as possible and have taken steps to address these conditions. They now seek approval for the design and specifications for the extension.
6. The parish have submitted a revised specification and drawings to the DAC and the CBC in accordance with Condition (ii). Each has indicated that the revised documents do not affect the advice and views expressed in earlier correspondence. An issue therefore remains about the detailed plans for the internal design of the extension and aspects of the external design.

Conditions (iii) & (iv)

7. In relation to Conditions (iii) and (iv) the parish have:

- (a) commissioned an archaeological survey in accordance with the scheme provided;
and
- (b) engaged Mr Martin Kirby, an accredited conservation engineer, to oversee the structural design and advise on the detailed plans, including the link to the existing church building; he has provided a working brief setting out his proposed role.

I am satisfied that these steps comply with Conditions (ii) and (iv). In particular, I am satisfied that Mr Kirby is suitably qualified to provide the oversight recommended by the DAC in relation to the design and specification for external and structural works.

- 8. The remaining issue relates to the internal and external design specifications.

Internal and external design specifications.

- 9. The CBC and DAC have expressed reservations about both the internal design and external specification. In relation to the internal design they are concerned that the arrangement of the facilities does not offer efficient use of the available space; the DAC considers that the location of the toilets constrains the location and size of the working spaces (office, meeting room and kitchen) and that the relationship between the kitchen and church may present practical problems. There is also concern about unrestricted public access through the external door of the extension. The CBC is concerned about the lack of flexibility and restricted access to the roof-space storage area.
- 10. The parish have reviewed the plans for the internal layout and have made a modest adjustment to the access to the roof storage space, to address one of the issues raised by the CBC. Otherwise the plans are largely unchanged. The parish have clearly put a great deal of work into the development of the design and consider that the current plans offer the most effective way of providing the facilities required.
- 11. I have carefully examined the proposed internal layout and the concerns raised by the DAC and CBC. The facilities offered would provide the space which is required to enhance the church's ministry and to support a wider range of community activities. The Options Appraisal prepared by the parish (July 2017) examined the possible use of spaces within the existing church building and concluded that the additional space required could not be accommodated without the extension. That conclusion has been accepted in my decision to approve the extension in principle. I have reviewed the Options paper and remain of the view that none of the facilities provided by the extension could realistically be accommodated within the church. While the North Chapel could (and does) provide a meeting space, it is intended for community use and its designation as a meeting room would detract from that. I remain satisfied that the meeting room and office proposed in the extension are necessary. The kitchen and toilets could not be housed in the North Chapel or any other part of the church.
- 12. The space offered by the extension is necessarily constrained by its footprint and I am satisfied that the parish have sought to maximise the use of the space which it will provide. It is certainly possible to envisage a different arrangement of the facilities, as the DAC and CBC have suggested, and the parish should continue to review the layout to ensure that it provides the best use of the space. In particular, the parish

should consider whether the office and meeting room could be located adjacent to each other, with a room divider allowing for greater flexibility. That could be achieved if the kitchen were moved to the south-west corner of the extension, but there may then be disadvantages in the size and lighting of the kitchen. However, these are matters which can be considered further by the parish, with appropriate advice, and should not prevent construction beginning. Provided that the internal layout is consistent with the needs and use of the church it is unlikely to affect the overall architectural and historical significance of the church building.

13. I have reached the conclusion that the proposed arrangement of the facilities in the extension offers an appropriate solution to meeting the needs of the parish. There may be scope for some alterations in the design and the parish should keep the design under review as the work progresses, but given the constraints of the building the options are limited and I am satisfied that the project should proceed on the basis of the current design and specification.
14. The DAC has expressed concern about uncontrolled public access through the external door to the extension and the need for security; I therefore consider that the door should be secured to guard against that risk.
15. As regards the external specification, both the DAC and CBC have raised concerns about the abutment with the church building and the need for stonework and other material to blend with the historic structure. The engagement of a conservation engineer was recommended and the parish have now taken this step. I am satisfied that the matters raised by the DAC and CBC will be properly addressed on the basis of his advice and recommendations.

Conclusion

It follows from the above that I am satisfied that the conditions applied to the faculty have been met and permission is given for the parish to proceed with the project, subject to the following conditions:

1. The internal design of the extension should be reviewed by the parish with its architect prior to internal construction, in the light of the matters raised by the CBC and DAC, to ensure that the arrangement of rooms and facilities makes effective use of the available space.
2. The parish should consult the archdeacon and an architect member of the DAC about any possible changes to the internal design. The parish should take account of any advice given by them, but their agreement is not a pre-condition to proceeding with internal works.
3. The Chancellor should be informed of any changes to the internal design.
4. The specification for external and structural works shall be approved by Mr Kirby, the Conservation Structural Engineer, and he should oversee the works in accordance with his working brief.
5. The external door to the extension should be secured by a codepad or other security device to prevent unregulated access from the churchyard.

If any issues arise in the course of the project on which further guidance is required, I shall be happy to assist.

Philip Waller
Chancellor, 15th June 2018