

St George the Martyr Church, Shirley, Croydon

Future accommodation needs and development potential – an initial exploration of scope for development on their site, in order to assist the Church in assessing their priorities in relation to their work as a fellowship and in the community, to lead to the formulation of a brief and the commissioning of a professional development feasibility study.

The following numbered items relate to a Development Discussion Diagram (dated Aug. 2017). The diagram is not a design drawing or intended to be seen as a site layout or to show specific room shapes and sizes. It is simply to aid discussion in the formulation of a brief and to stimulate thought as to what the church needs and what scope there might be for development of the site.

1. The Church needs a new Hall. The existing timber hall is beyond repair. The objective is to build a new hall before demolishing the existing timber building. The 'obvious' place for a new hall would seem to be on the land between the church and the existing hall. In this location consideration can be given to physically linking it to the church and creating a range of facilities under one roof. Even though the new hall could be part of a new 'Church Centre' it could (if funds are limited) initially be built as a stand-alone building, but designed to be connected as part of a later phase of site development.
2. As part of the overview of the future use of the church, both for worship and wider fellowship and community use, consideration could be given to re-ordering its layout, in terms of furniture. With the use of chairs, rather than pews, there could be a number of alternative arrangements. This is a matter for the Church to consider.
3. If the church is re-ordered and the existing dais becomes free, this could be enclosed to form a separate room, perhaps for a creche during worship services and for other use at other times. As it would become an internal room, the introduction of mechanical ventilation would need to be addressed. If a room is formed at ground floor level in this location there could be scope to form a similar sized room above it, at first floor level. The provision of a new stair (Building Regulation compliant), and a simple lift would need to be considered in this eventuality.
4. If the church is re-ordered, or even if it stays as it is, there could be scope to extend the building to the north. The Church needs to consider the benefit that this might provide.

5. A further, albeit small, area for potential extension could be created in the north-east corner of the church. Although limited in size, this extra room could benefit from both external and church access. The external access (with the room locked on the church side) could make it useable for private bookings. The room could also have access into a secure garden (14) ideal for a children's playgroup or as a tranquil area for meeting or relaxing.
6. Thought could also be given to extending the north-west corner of the church, adjacent to the vestry, if thought useful and viable. A small link corridor could be created and rooflights added to the vestry to compensate for loss of windows to this room.
7. The provision of other new meeting rooms is to be considered. Their location and configuration will be part of a more details design study once the Church have determined how many are needed and what are their occupation requirements?
8. The provision of a church office is to be considered as part of the development brief; again its location, size etc. will be part of the design development process.
9. Toilet provision will need to be assessed as part of the overall accommodation provision. Some rooms, if forming stand-alone accommodation (e.g. room 5) would benefit from their own toilet facility.
10. A new kitchen will be required. This will need detailed consideration in terms of the type and size of facility to be provided. The location of the kitchen will also be a key part of the design in relation to the areas that it will serve.
11. A spacious and comfortable lounge/entrance area is a feature of many modern church centres and needs careful consideration in the briefing and design stages.
12. The realignment of the vehicle access road which runs from the road to the vicarage should be reviewed. It may be beneficial to move it away from the face of the church building, but not too close to the southern site boundary, where it might cause a nuisance to neighbouring residential property. Drop-off and parking bays for less physically abled, weddings and funerals will need to be part of any new layout.
13. A new 'memorial cloister' or covered area should be included as part of the new site development.
14. A secluded and secure garden could be useful for playgroup use and church members alike.
15. When the existing timber hall has been demolished a tranquil prayer garden and external space for other uses can be developed.
16. Future consideration should be given to the western end of the site (with the possible removal of the scout hut), particularly if alternative access to the site becomes possible.