

SHIRLEY PARISH HALL

ST JAMES' ROAD, SHIRLEY, SOUTHAMPTON

PROPOSED EXTERNAL ALTERATIONS

ST JAMES' CHURCH PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

INTRODUCTION

This Planning Statement accompanies a planning application for external alterations to the Shirley Parish Hall, Colebrook Avenue, Shirley, Southampton.

The Statement describes the site and the existing Parish Hall building and details the proposed external alterations to the hall. The Statement also sets out the background to the proposed development.

The application is submitted by the St. James Church Parochial Church Council (PCC).

SITE LOCATION AND EXISTING PARISH HALL

The Shirley Parish Hall is located at the junction of St. James' Road and Colebrook Avenue, Shirley, Southampton. The location is shown on the aerial photo below, with the hall outlined in red.



The existing Parish Hall is a single storey brick building under a pitched slate roof, as shown below.



It runs close to the back edge of the Colebrook Avenue pavement but is set back from St. James' Road behind a forecourt.

The building provides a main hall and a smaller meeting room, giving about 210 square metres of floorspace (GIA), including associated toilets and kitchen.

Internally the building is quite dated and, with its current facilities, does not reflect the character and quality normally expected from a building of this type today.

PLANNING HISTORY

There appear to have been no planning applications relating to the site since the Parish Hall was originally built. Southampton City Council's website shows no planning applications relating to the Parish Hall site since 2000.

Pre-application enquiries were submitted by the PCC to the City Council in 2020 (SCC ref. 20/00401/PREAP1) and 2022 (21/01774/PREAP2). These related to proposals to demolish the existing Parish Hall and redevelop the site with a new two storey hall building. The Council's conclusions for both pre-apps were that the proposals would not be supported in the form as submitted.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The Shirley Parish Hall is one of three buildings available to St James' Church: St James Church itself, the Parish Hall and the Parish office (located on the corner of St James' Road and Church Street).

The Church has been examining the accommodation that these buildings provide, both quantity and quality, in the context of its identified needs for worship, meeting (particularly for children's groups) and administrative space. The clear conclusion has been that additional and better space is needed for the church to operate properly. Other community use of the hall is significant and users find the quality and functioning of the facilities unfit and inadequate for purpose.

A comprehensive review of options for providing this space has been undertaken over recent years. The options examined have been:

- a separate building within the St James' churchyard alongside the main church building. Pre-app enquiries to the City Council concluded that this would be unacceptable due to design issues in relation to the listed church building and the impact on yew trees within the churchyard;
- a separate building in the north-eastern part of the churchyard alongside Bellemoor Road. This option was ruled out in view of inadequate space and impact on trees within the churchyard;
- internal changes to the St. James' Church building, to form a mezzanine floor, either full or partial. These options were not progressed in view of significant concerns relating to design, historical context and useability;
- redevelopment of the Parish Hall site to form a new two storey building. As indicated above, this option received negative pre-app responses from the City Council.

None of the options examined have been found to be acceptable and/or implementable, and therefore none have been pursued. Maximising the potential of the existing Parish Hall is therefore now recognised as the only feasible way of progressing the church's accommodation provision at the present time.

The existing Parish Hall is a well-used building that has served the needs of St. James' Church and the local community well over a long period. It is regularly used by community groups for varied purposes, who value the accommodation but have expressed concerns over its quality and appearance. The facilities

provided have become increasingly dated in terms of their quality and attractiveness, and their flexibility of use. The rooms appear tired and outworn, the building requires frequent and expensive maintenance, whilst the toilet and kitchen facilities are out-of-date and inadequate. The building has a very poor energy efficiency, with single-glazed windows, inadequate roof and wall insulation and a dated heating system. The accommodation provided is also inflexible, particularly for use by several groups at the same time, and no longer properly meets the needs of the Church congregation.

The proposed comprehensive refurbishment and reorganisation of the Parish Hall offers the opportunity to bring the facilities up-to-date and to provide a user-friendly, comfortable and welcoming venue for both church and community use. Reorganisation of the internal floor layout will allow greater flexibility in its use and will go some way towards meeting the church's need for additional meeting spaces.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The St James' Church PCC have decided to pursue an extensive refurbishment, modernisation and reorganisation of the existing Parish Hall building. For the most part these works affect only the interior of the building and will therefore not require planning permission. The proposed works will not alter the footprint of the building, nor its predominant height and scale.

The reorganisation of the accommodation provides an opportunity to increase the flexibility of the hall's accommodation, including the possibility of a small mezzanine floor over part of the building. The mezzanine itself does not require planning permission but would require an extension to the roof at its eastern end and the insertion of windows into the north-facing roofslope. It is also intended that the main entrance is moved from the St. James' Road end of the building to a location facing onto Colebrook Avenue, to improve safety (by moving the entrance away from the busy St. James' Road frontage), circulation and accessibility within the building. These external changes require planning permission.

The proposed development is therefore for external alterations to the existing Parish Hall building, as shown on the submitted drawings and comprising:

- extension to the hall roof at its eastern end, such that the existing hipped end to the roof would be extended to form a gable;

- formation of a new main entrance to the hall on the northern elevation facing Colebrook Avenue, including a canopy over the new door;
- insertion of windows into the north-facing roof slope of the building (towards Colebrook Avenue), comprising a dormer window and conservation rooflights. It should be emphasised that no new windows would be inserted into the south-facing roof slope, towards neighbouring gardens;
- insertion of a window at first floor level into the north-facing elevation of the building. This window would be obscure-glazed and non-opening;
- positioning of an air source heat pump unit on the western/St James' Road elevation of the building.

The proposed refurbishment is also likely to include the installation of solar panels on the south-facing roofslope, to be carried out under permitted development rights.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In 2022, a survey was done with the local community and existing and previous users of the Parish Hall. 135 responses were received. This current proposal reflects the main comments received from this survey - for better kitchen and toilet facilities; more space (especially for smaller groups); a more environmentally friendly building; keeping the feel of the existing building whilst significantly modernising it.

Adjoining residents have been informed of this proposed development and invited to comment. No comments have been received by the PCC to date.

Local Councillors have also been informed of the proposed development.