

CEROWSKI
ARCHITECTS

Design, Access and Heritage Statement for

St George's Church, West Grinstead – Proposed Extension to Church Building

10th June 2026

St George's Church,
Rectory Lane,
West Grinstead,
RH13 8LR

Cerowski Architects Ltd
Registered in England
No. 14139963

East Grinstead,
West Sussex

CEROWSKI
ARCHITECTS

Revision	Date	Author	Approval	Purpose
-	10/06/26	JKC	HEC	Draft Planning Issue
A	12/06/26	JKC	HEC	Planning Issue

Contact Information
Jonathan Cerowski
jonathan@cerowski.co.uk
Tel: 07495 980 757

All rights in this work are reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form or by any means (including without limitation by photocopying or placing on a website) without the prior permission in writing of Cerowski Architects Ltd except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. Applications for permission to reproduce any part of this work should be addressed to the author at the email address noted above.

CEROWSKI
ARCHITECTS

St George's Church, West Grinstead – Proposed Extension to Church Building

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this document
1.2 List of drawings
1.3 The brief for the proposed works
1.4 Methodology

2.0 STATEMENTS

2.1 Statement of Need
2.2 Statement of Significance

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Assessing Significance

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Previous schemes and related advice
4.2 Concept design and pre-application advice

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Design statement
5.2 Access statement

6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Criteria for assessment
6.2 Impact assessment for proposed works
6.3 Conclusion

CEROWSKI
ARCHITECTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Purpose of this Document

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been prepared for submission for **Planning Permission** to Horsham District Council (HDC) on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of West Grinstead, by Cerowski Architects.

The purpose of this document is to set out the following:

- To set out the **specific needs** which the proposals have been developed to address, in the form of a **brief**.
- An exploration of the **physical context** and **history** of St George's Church.
- An assessment of the **significance of the heritage asset**, used to inform the proposals.
- An overview of the **design development** and **relevant feedback** which culminated in this application.
- A discussion of the **design** proposed.
- A review of the **access** improvements.
- An assessment of the **impact upon the heritage** of the building as a result of the proposals.

1.2 List of drawings

The following drawings should be read in conjunction with this Design, Access and Heritage Statement:

Drawing Number	Drawing Title
002	Existing Block Plan
011	Existing Ground Floor Plan
012	Existing Roof Plan
021	Existing North Elevation
022	Existing East Elevation
023	Existing South Elevation
024	Existing West Elevation
031	Existing Section A-A
032	Existing Section B-B
033	Existing Section C-C
102	Proposed Block Plan
011	Proposed Ground Floor Plan
012	Proposed Roof Plan
021	Proposed North Elevation
022	Proposed East Elevation
023	Proposed South Elevation
024	Proposed West Elevation
031	Proposed Section A-A
032	Proposed Section B-B
033	Proposed Section C-C
140	Proposed Windows and Doors

1.3 The brief for the proposed works

St George's Church is a Grade I listed Church of England building in West Grinstead, West Sussex. The author of this document, Jonathan Cerowski, is the 'Inspecting Architect' for the church building, a role mandated by the Church of England to provide an advisory role for repairs and alterations to the church building.

The church has physically evolved since its earliest phase of construction (in the 11th Century, though this is explored further in the 'History and Context' portion of this document). In brief, however, the evolution of the building over the last 900 years has been driven primarily by the changing needs of the congregation and wider community which the building has served.

The current needs of the Church (capitalised meaning the people, rather than the physical building) are twofold:

1. To provide **Vestry facilities**, to suit the Priest and Choir, for which the building currently falls short – the area currently used for this is a South Chapel, which is diminished by this shared use, as set out later in this document.

2. To add an **Accessible W.C.** to provide toilet facilities for congregation members – currently there is only a portaloo tucked between the buttresses of the south-east corner, which is inaccessible to wheelchair users, and is detrimental to the setting of the church building.

These needs are explored and expanded upon later in this document.

In essence, however, the brief is driven by a desire to allow the church building to continue to serve its current purpose whilst ensuring that as wide a range of users as possible feel included and seen, through providing physical provisions which demonstrate the Church's commitment to them. In the 21st Century this includes a toilet, and a space which allows privacy for vestments, and storage of liturgical vessels.

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and Church Wardens of St George's are acutely aware of their duties to protect the Grade I listed church building with which they have been entrusted. Ensuring that the historic fabric of the building and its setting are not harmed by any proposals also formed a key part of the brief for the proposed works. A methodology to ensure that this was the case is set out in the following section of this document.

1.4 Methodology

Works to church buildings, particularly highly listed ones, require specialist architectural advice to ensure that any proposals are conducive to the historic and physical context of the built fabric.

As noted in the previous section of this report, Jonathan Cerowski, the Director of Cerowski Architects, acts in the role of Inspecting Architect for St George's Church. The Practice specialises in the conservation, repair and adaptation of historic buildings.

Jonathan is accredited with the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) at SCA (Specialist Conservation Architect) level, as well as with the AABC (the register of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation). He is a full member of EASA (the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association), the professional body for church building Architects.

He sits on the DAC (Diocesan Advisory Committee) for Chichester as an Architectural Advisor. The DAC advises the Consistory Courts of the Church on works to church buildings, and has done, for many centuries. Their consent is known as a 'Faculty'. The Faculty process does not replace Planning Permission, however, it does exempt the church from the need to obtain Listed Building Consent through an 'approved system of control' (ecclesiastical exemption). Jonathan reviews applications from other Inspecting Architects, and has a thorough understanding of best practice approaches to providing facilities such as those proposed in this application in the context of highly listed buildings.

The Church have recently completed a successful scheme of works to the building to:

- Introduce a boarded ceiling to the Nave and South Aisle to create a bat roosting space whilst protecting the historically significant monuments, furniture and brasses to the worship space below. This work was funded by Natural England as a pilot scheme of work through their 'Bats in Churches' programme.

- Replacing the church heating system with a hybrid of pew heaters, overhead electric heaters, and traditional radiators. The scheme was developed together with Tobit Curteis, following a year of environmental monitoring to ascertain the most appropriate approach to heating the church building, and the potential impact on re-introducing a ceiling to the then open raftered spaces.

- Replacing the lighting system with low energy feature lighting, and relighting the retained chandeliers.

- External repairs including re-roofing the Horsham Stone northern porch.

These works were Highly Commended by the Sussex Heritage Trust in their 2023 Awards.

Beyond this general context, the methodology behind the design solution developed at St George's Church is:

- **Limited Intervention** – Ensuring that the proposed extension is limited to only what is necessary to ensure the long-term future of the church building, supporting the continued use of the building by the congregation and community in its optimum viable use.

- **Heritage-Led Design** – Designs for new works have been based upon a thorough understanding of the history of the church building, its phased development, and the relevant significances of its various parts. As far as possible, alterations have been limited to the least significant elements of the built fabric, its curtilage, or context.

- **Legible but Contextual Design** – Where a modern extension is proposed, it has been designed to be clearly legible as distinct from the principal building, by being visually subservient. It should, however, use contextual forms to relate positively to the existing church building, though ensuring in doing so that it does not repeat historical details and become a pastiche of the existing building.

- **High Quality Materials** – St George's Church building has a rich palette of vernacular materials, including Wealden Sandstone (though largely concealed beneath a cementitious render), Horsham Stone roofing, and cedar shingles. Where new interventions are proposed, they should use a high quality material palette, referencing the materials of the church building and the general context of the Conservation Area.

2.0 STATEMENTS

2.1 Statement of Significance

This document sets out a **Statement of Significance** for St George's Church, West Grinstead, followed by a **Statement of Need**. The statements are particularly focussed on the need to provide alternative Vestry facilities and a W.C.

Both Statements have been used to inform the design developed, as set out in subsequent sections of this document.

Executive Summary

St George's is a building of high architectural, archaeological and historical significance, with fabric from every century of the middle ages from the eleventh to the sixteenth. Its architectural development is complicated, but the various elements sit together well, and the church has a delightfully informal interior, with some important medieval brasses and a collection of monuments by some of the finest Georgian sculptors. The late-Georgian pews in the nave, painted with the names of local farms, are also a highly unusual survival. Later furnishings of note include excellent stained glass by C.E. Kempe and Walter Camm. The interior escaped heavy-handed Victorian restoration, although the casing of the exterior with cement render was a regrettable change. The building enjoys an idyllic Wealden setting, within a large churchyard with mature trees.

If the Parish are to pursue the development of an extension, to house a W.C. and Vestry, it should be understood that St George's Church is a highly significant Grade I listed church building. Any change is therefore likely to have an impact upon that significance, and though conservation is the process of managing change to the historic built environment, the impact of change should be carefully considered and set against the public benefit of a potential proposal. The perceived public benefit is set out in the following Statement of Needs portion of this document.

In summary however, the elevations of the church building have been cement rendered and this has diminished the significance of the external materiality of the building (though there are several exposed portions of stonework remaining). The significance of the exterior therefore partially lies in its robust form, as a composition of historic developments squatting into its setting. The southern elevation is characterised by the shallow splayed tower, propped by buttressing. The concept design proposals seek to develop the design of a single storey extension in this location, and on balance this appears to be the most appropriate location for an extension.

As noted by the DAC and Consultees in pre-application discussions, any extension should be deferent to the historic building and self-effacing, and the design attempts to achieve this by matching the width of the existing tower buttresses, with a simple glazed link over an existing relocated Norman doorway to the South Aisle.

The scheme would necessitate extending the footprint of the church building to allow for the new facilities, which could be perceived to be detrimental to the significance of St George's. It would however also allow the legibility and usability of the south-eastern 15th Century Chapel to be improved by removing much of the clutter related to the space being used as a Choir and Rector's Vestry, increasing the significance of this space. It would also allow the existing bright blue Portaloo to the southern elevation of the church to be removed, which would be a heritage benefit for the southern aspect. The proposed glazed link would protect the Norman door's stonework from deterioration and further loss of detail, another benefit to the historic built fabric.

Core Data

- Local planning authority: Horsham District Council
- Diocese: Chichester
- Listed Grade: I (NHLE no.1284797)
- Church Heritage Record: 610219
- Conservation Area: West Grinstead
- Scheduled Ancient Monument: No
- Churchyard: Yes
- Date(s): Medieval, restored 1890
- Date of visit: 24 September 2019
- Name of original report author: Andrew Derrick
- Name/role of parish representative met on site: Neil Jacobson
- Parish website: https://www.westgrinstead.org/
- Other sources:

1. Jenkins, S., England's Thousand Best Churches, 1999, p.702
2. Williamson, E., Hudson, T., Musson, J. and Nairn, I., The Buildings of England, Sussex: West, 2019, p.696-8
3. The Story of St George's Church, West Grinstead Church, various editions, 1960s, later edition by John Scragg, c.1975
4. The Parish Church of St George West Grinstead, Its History and Antiquities (parish guide)
5. Sussex Parish Churches website
6. Eberhard, R., Stained Glass Records website

Brief history and description of the church, contents, churchyard and setting

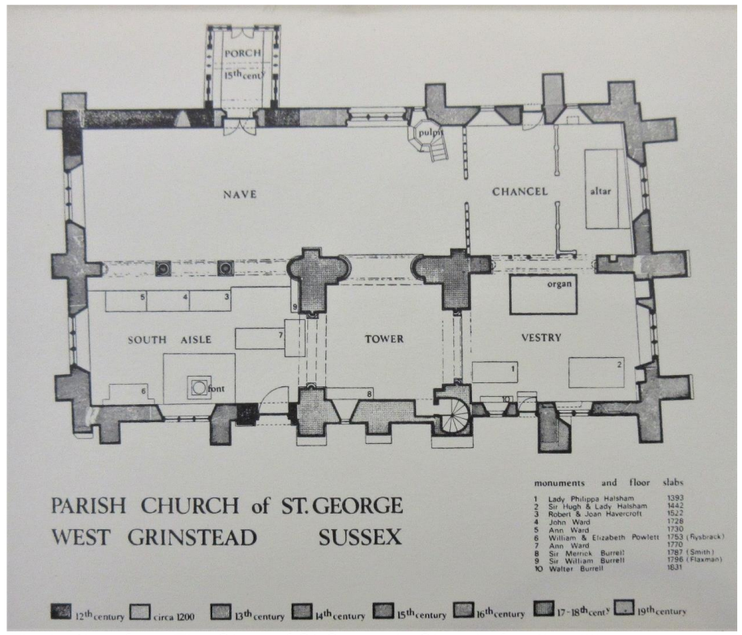


Fig 1: Plan, from The Story of St George's Church, fourth edition

Churchyard and Setting

The church and hamlet occupy an idyllic rural location at the end of a lane, on a gentle slope which falls to the south towards the river Adur, no more than a stream at this point. The ruins of the twelfth century Knepp Castle lie about half a mile to the west. The church lies within a large churchyard, partly cleared and laid to grass, but with a good collection of eighteenth and nineteenth century monuments (and an early twentieth century gravestone by Eric Gill, to Elizabeth and Richard Cowie). The churchyard was extended in the mid-twentieth century. There is a fine mature oak tree to the west, and from the south side there are attractive views over open Wealdland towards the South Downs. From a small car parking area to the north, the approach to the church is paved with large stone slabs.

Brief History



Figure 2: The church in 1787 (BL King's Topographical Collection XLII, 1-99: 44A)

This is an ancient church, its development complex. Put simply, it consists of an eleventh century nave, of uncertain size and form, to which were added (in about 1200) a tower to the southeast and a south aisle (incorporating a reset Norman doorway). A chancel and south chapel followed by the end of the thirteenth century, the chapel becoming a chantry for the Halsham family in the fourteenth century. With the addition of a south porch in the fifteenth century today's plan form was created. However, within this form the fabric presents several archaeological puzzles, described in further detail (but by no means resolved) below.

In the post-Reformation period the leading families were the Carylls (sometime recusant Catholics who nevertheless left their mark on St George's) and (from about 1750) the Burrells of Grinstead Park (demolished), who have several fine Georgian monuments in the church. The late eighteenth century appearance of the church is shown in a watercolour of 1785 in the British Library (figure 2). In 1795 a new peal of six bells were hung in the tower, cast by Thomas Mears of London. There is evidence of various seventeenth and eighteenth century brick repairs, and the church was also reseated and a west gallery added in the Georgian period. In 1890 the church was restored in 1890 by E. P. Warren, under the Revd R.B. Knatchbull-Hugessen (cost £3,500). The casing of the exterior in cement render may date from this time, although the building may already have been (lime) rendered. Warren's restoration included new drainage and heating systems and the reordering of the chancel, with stained by C.E. Kempe. The gallery at the west end was removed and deal pews at this end replaced in oak. The church was further enriched with stained glass and other furnishings in the twentieth century, described below.

Architectural Description

On plan (figure 1) the church consists of a nave and chancel without structural division, south chapel (now also acting as an informal vestry), central south tower, south aisle and north porch. The exterior is largely cement rendered, with Greensand stone and limestone dressings, some areas of exposed masonry and brickwork and roofs clad with Horsham slabs. The flat base of the broach spire is covered with Horsham slabs, while its upper part is shingled. Areas of brick restoration include the plinth side walls of the north porch and some of the buttresses. Inside the walls are plastered and limewashed, and there are the vestiges of a fifteenth century wall painting of St Christopher on the north wall of the nave (with a windmill in the background). The floors are paved with stone slabs and ledger stones, with herringbone woodblocks beneath the seating in the nave.

Unpicking the architectural development of the building is not easy, and not helped by the nineteenth century cement render that cloaks the exterior. However, the herringbone masonry exposed on the north wall of the **nave** suggests an eleventh century date, as does the existence of two small round-headed windows (one above the porch and the blocked head of another set lower to the west of the porch). The Sussex Churches website suggests that this may be the surviving part of a freestanding private chapel or oratory, to the southeast of which was added a **tower** in c.1200. This has three buttresses on the south side and inside has a north arch with a triple-chamfered head and semi-circular responds, one with stiff leaf foliage to the capital. Large corbels over this arch suggest that the tower was physically independent of the chapel or oratory to the north, but the lack of weathering suggests that these features were incorporated in an extended chancel at an early stage, as an afterthought, making the tower base essentially a transept. The base of the tower is also open on the east and west sides, the former to the wide **south aisle** and the latter to the **south chapel**. Both arches have square responds with round shafts for the inner orders of the heads. On the south side of the aisle is a Norman doorway, stylistically dateable to the mid-twelfth century, with a keeled roll-moulding on the head and scallop capitals (the shafts are lost). This is evidently reset, possibly from the south wall of the old 'nave' or chapel. Between this aisle and the present nave is a three-bay arcade, somewhat lighter than the earlier work in the tower base, with circular piers on square bases.

The chancel and south chapel appear to post-date the aisle, and are possibly mid-thirteenth century, although the round-arched south doorway of the chapel is old-fashioned for that date (possibly also reset?). The timber nave roof may be contemporary with this arcade but the aisle and south chapel roofs appear to be later, possibly fourteenth century (the outline of earlier, steeper roofs are visible on both sides of the tower, and were in the eighteenth century, see figure 2). The windows of the aisle and chapel are fourteenth century, both areas having cusped triple east windows (those in the chapel possibly relating to its adaptation to serve as the Halsham chantry). The ogee-headed piscina on the south wall of the chancel also looks fourteenth century. However, the four-centred arch of the opening between the chapel and the chancel looks later, probably sixteenth century, as are the chapel piscina and a curious battlemented recess with remains of painted decoration to the right of the chapel east window. There is no structural division between the nave and the chancel, or any change in the floor level, although a large projecting buttress on the north side of the tower base and the later screen divide the spaces. A small pointed window on the north side (now lighting the pulpit) could be connected with a pre-Reformation rood stair or loft. The chancel ceiling, along with those in the south chapel and under the ringing floor of the tower are boarded, probably in 1890; it is not certain whether the roof structures were renewed at the same time. The roof structures of the nave and south aisle were also previously boarded or plastered, but this was removed at some point (possibly in 1890) and the rafters exposed.

The fifteenth century **north porch** has later (eighteenth century?) brick plinths at the sides. It is otherwise timber framed, with a four-centred arch with traceried spandrels, a niche recess over and cusped bargeboards.

Furnishings

The church is notable for the quality, number and richness of its furnishings. The most notable of these are described here in broadly chronological, with separate mention of the monuments and stained glass.

The Norman **font** lies in the south aisle by the reset Norman door. It is square, with a marble arcaded bowl with tapering sides and a lion's head at each corner. It sits on a later (probably fourteenth century) sandstone base, with cusped niches at the angles. (The oak **font cover** with incised decoration was made in 1953 to commemorate the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II).

There are two fifteenth century **brasses** raised on tomb chests in the south (Halsham) chapel. At the east end of the chapel, close to the piscina and what would have been the altar (and therefore not in its original position) is that to Sir Hugh Halsham (d.1441) and his wife, shown as a knight, with his arms on banners above the canopy rather than on shields, with his wife. Most of the inscription in the marble slab is missing but the date 1421 is still visible and may relate to Sir Hugh's first wife, Jacosa (Culpeper), who died in that year. However, heraldic experts suggest that it is his second wife who is depicted here. The figures are placed under crocketed Gothic canopies, and Sir Hugh's feet rest on a lion, his wife's on small dog. A second smaller brass to the west of the south door is to Sir Hugh's mother Philippa (d.1395), and probably also dates from c.1440. She is under a Gothic canopy and has a small dog by her feet. There are further indents (some with surviving inscriptions) on the floor of the south aisle.

Panelling against the east wall of the south chapel depicts biblical scenes in robust high relief; the style is Renaissance possibly originally a piece of continental furniture, introduced into the church at an unknown date, probably in the nineteenth century.

The **communion rails** are eighteenth century; they have turned balusters and a flat moulded top.

The fine octagonal **pulpit** is also eighteenth century, with a pilastered panel at the back and a moulded and inlaid tester above.

On the south wall of the nave above the arcade, the **Royal Arms** of George IV are painted in grisaille on canvas.

The oak **benches** in the nave date from about 1820. They have moulded tops and are numbered. On the backs they are painted with the names of local farms to which they were assigned, an unusual and charming detail. A seating list in the parish registers of 1823 suggests that at that time the sexes were divided, not in the usual way from side to side, but with men at the front of the church and women at the back. One or two benches have been relocated or removed (one pew back is reset below the reredos). The benches at the west end of the nave are oak copies of 1890 (but wider and without numbers or lettering).

The **communion table, organ, choir stalls, chancel screen** and **pulpit** all belong to the 1890 restoration campaign:

- The communion table is plain, with a panelled front, raised on a stone step.
- Occupying the arch between the chancel and south chapel, the organ was acquired for £165 from a Hull firm, who had built it in 1846 for a local church (there is also a fine domestic chamber organ in the tower area).
- The timber chancel screen belongs to the 1890 reordering but incorporates earlier (seventeenth or eighteenth century) panelling.
- The choir stalls have an elegant buttressed detail.
- The elaborately-carved oak lectern with rotating top bears inscriptions recording that it was given in memory of Dorothea Burrell in 1891.

The oak **reredos** is by Kempe & Co., 1912, and is carved with a representation of the Annunciation. An inscription on the side records that it is a memorial to Reginald Knatchbull Hugessen, rector.

A timber **screen** between the tower base and south chapel bears a brass inscription stating that like the reredos it is a memorial to Reginald Knatchbull Hugessen, rector.

There are five brass **chandeliers** in the nave and chancel, installed in the twentieth century (replacing oil lamps).

There are a number of fine eighteenth century and later **monuments**. The main ones are, in chronological order:

- In the south chapel, a Baroque cartouche to Richard Caryll (d. 1701) and his wife Frances (d.1704), attributed to W. Woodman Senior. The inscription does not attempt to conceal the family's Catholicism, referring to Richard's brother Peter (d.1686), a Benedictine monk, who is also thought to be buried here.
- In the chancel (south side) by the altar, a nicely calligraphed small brass plaque recording the death of baby twins Leonard and Hannah Woodward (d.1710), with skull.
- On the south wall of the chancel, another fine Baroque cartouche, to Thomas Woodward, rector (d. 1752).
- In the south aisle, a large marble monument to William (d.1746) and Elizabeth Powlett (d.1753) by John Michael Rysbrack. They are represented in Roman dress, flanking a large central urn, in front of a grey obelisk backdrop.
- In the tower base, a large monument to Sir Merrik Burrell of West Grinstead Park, MP and Governor of the Bank of England (d.1787). It is by Nathaniel Smith, and shows the bewigged figure of the deceased in profile in a medallion, with drapery over and a grey marble obelisk behind. Jenkins wrote in 1999 that the face had been 'bashed off', but it has since been restored by the Friends of St George's. The monument is based on a design by Louis-François Roubiliac, to whom Smith was apprenticed.
- In the south aisle the severe neoclassical monument to the Sussex historian and antiquary Sir William Burrell (d.1796) and his wife Sophia (d.1802) was relocated from the south chapel in 1891 (brass plate on side). It incorporates a large urn by John Flaxman.
- On the north wall of the chancel is a small tablet to Elizabeth Woodward (d.1797), the wife of John Woodward, rector. It is unsigned, and has been attributed to John Flaxman or a pupil.
- Over the arcade on the north side of the south aisle, oval marble wall tablets to Mary Ward (d.1808, with an urn) and James Ward (?1810). A further Ward monument is mounted on the external wall over the south aisle doorway.
- On the south wall, a white marble monument to Walter Burrell (d.1831) and Charles Wyndham Burrell (d. 1827).
- War memorials: On the north wall of the nave is a nicely-detailed stone and inlaid memorial to the men of St George's and St Michael's who died in the First World War. A smaller stone tablet below records the parish dead of the Second World War.

Stained glass (in chronological order):

- In the west window of the south aisle are some fragments of fourteenth or fifteenth century glass in grisaille, red and yellow.
- The three-light east window of the south chapel depicts the Ascension and is by Clayton & Bell, 1878, in memory of Sir Percy Burrell (d. 1876).
- The east window of the nave is a beautiful design by C. E. Kempe, 1890, in memory of Walter Wyndham Burrell Bt and his son Walter Henry Wyndham Raymond Burrell. It depicts the Crucifixion with attendant figures of the Virgin Mary and St John, with panels below of the Expulsion (left), St George (centre) and St John on Patmos (right).
- The first window from the east on the north side of the nave is to the memory of Annie Katharine Loder (d. 1891) and is another fine design from Kempe's workshop, by Alfred Tombleson. It depicts St Anne teaching the Virgin Mary to read, St George and St Catherine of Siena, under canopies.
- The three-light west window of the nave (1922) is dedicated to Lt Col John Peter Hornung, Lt Col Arthur Housemayne du Boulay and Capt. Francis Spencer Collin, who all died in the First World War. It was designed by Walter Camm and made by Florence, Walter and Robert Camm of Smethwick, and depicts the risen Christ with a kneeling figure of a soldier in the central light and angels, archangels and the four Horsemen of the Apocalypse in the flanking lights. A striking and moving design.
- In the south aisle, south wall, a three-light window depicting St Stephen of Hungary, St Elizabeth of Portugal and St George, 1967, in memory of members of the Hornung family and signed by Carl Edwards of Blackfriars Studios. The three figures are against a background of clear glass.

Bells. The tower was not inspected. Six bells were cast by Thomas Mears in 1795, and recast in 1910. The bell frame dates from the 1660s (Scragg, 5).

CEROWSKI
ARCHITECTS

The Significance of the Church

St George's is listed Grade I, a category enjoyed by only 2.5% of listed buildings. It is a building of **high architectural, archaeological and historical significance**. This lies in the combination of ancient fabric going back to the eleventh century (apparent in the north wall of the nave) with important fabric of every century of the Middle Ages. It occupies delightful landscape setting within a churchyard filled with sycamore, oak and yew. The timber framed north porch is, in the words of The Buildings of England, 'delightful…about the best in Sussex'. The church has a delightfully informal interior, characterised by Simon Jenkins in England's Thousand Best Churches as 'like an old Sussex farmer in a tweed coat'. It is notable for some important medieval brasses and a collection of monuments by some of the finest Georgian sculptors, particularly those to members of the Caryll, Burrell and Powlett families. The late-Georgian pews in the nave, painted with the names of local farms, are a highly unusual survival. Later furnishings of note include excellent stained glass by C.E. Kempe and Walter Camm. The interior escaped heavy-handed Victorian restoration, although the casing of the exterior with cement render is a regrettable change.

The following furnishings are of **high significance**:

- Font
- Halsham brasses in south chapel
- Rysbrack monument to Powlett
- Smith monument to Sir Merrik Burrell
- Chancel east window by Kempe

The following furnishings are of **moderate-high significance**:

- Fragments of medieval glass in the aisle west window
- Medieval brass inscriptions and indents in the south aisle
- Communion rails
- Pulpit
- Late Georgian benches in the nave
- Caryll monument
- Thomas Woodward monument
- William and Sofia Burrell monument
- Elizabeth Woodward monument
- Nave north window by Kempe workshop
- Nave west window by Camm

The following furnishings are of **moderate significance**:

- Reredos
- Communion table
- Choir stalls
- Chancel screen
- Lectern
- War memorials
- All other mural monuments
- Clayton & Bell window in south chapel
- Carl Edwards window in south aisle

The following furnishings are of **low-moderate significance**:

- Brass chandeliers in the nave and chancel
- Benches at the west end of the nave
- Screen between south chapel and tower base
- Font cover

The following furnishings are of **low significance**:

- Timber housing for boiler against western aisle arcade.

Assessment of Impact of Potential Extension

A potential extension to the South of the Tower, may impact the significance of the church building in four ways:

1. Removing Vestry related furnishing, clothing and storage from the South Chapel

This will have a positive impact upon the South Chapel, by removing visual clutter, and allowing the chapel to once again be used for its original function. The Halsham brasses (noted as having high significance, but currently obscured) will be more accessible to visitors without this space being used as a 'back of house' area for services. The moderately significant Clayton & Bell window will also sit in a wall against which is no longer leant racks of choir robes or access ladders, all of which are proposed to be relocated to the new extension's Vestry, along with the Rector's desk and associated materials.

2. Removing the Portaloo from the southern elevation of the South Chapel

The lack of a W.C. in or near to the church has necessitated a long term Portaloo which is tucked between the buttresses of the southern wall of the South Chapel, accessible from an uneven pathway through the churchyard, by a circuitous route from the North Porch. The proposed extension would include an accessible W.C., improving the visual appearance of the South Chapel, but also the usability and ease of access to the W.C. facilities.

3. Extending the built form to the South of the church building

Any extension necessarily will add mass to the built form of the church, however the concept proposals seek to ameliorate this as far as possible by making the extension as small as possible (only containing a single W.C. and a Vestry space), and having a flat roof to further reduce the building's bulk. It is proposed that the flat roof would be stepped to mimic the three buttresses of the southern elevation of the Tower. A glazed link between the existing southern door to the South Aisle and the extension is proposed, allowing views out to the churchyard, and in to the Norman stonework of the door surround.

4. Enclosing the South Aisle south door stonework

The south door to the South Aisle is thought to be a repositioned Norman doorway, and is quite fine in its execution. During the most recent Quinquennial Inspection of the church building it was noted that the stonework of the doorway is deteriorating and requires either repair/consolidation or protection in the medium term. By enclosing the doorway within the glazed link, it would be protected from driving rain and frost.

2.2 Statement of Need

Preamble

This Grade I early mediaeval church stands at the river crossing of a village much diminished since mediaeval times. Although now relatively isolated, it remains a focus for the wider parish community and is supported by an active, regular Sunday congregation (average Sunday attendance 30). Its age, position and architectural significance have hitherto hindered the provision of lavatory facilities, or adequate vesting/storage facilities. Even robes (and robing) for services have to be accommodated in the Lady Chapel, at the cost of the latter's ecclesiastical function (see Simon Jenkins' comments on page 702 of his 'England's Thousand Best Churches').

Changed community (and Church of England) expectations make it increasingly necessary to remedy these deficiencies so that the church may continue to serve its members and numerous visitors, as well as increase its accessibility to the wider community.

Needs of the Parish

A lavatory with disabled access. At present the PCC must rent a portable lavatory outside the church. This is expensive (c.£1,000 p.a.), unsightly, is inaccessible to disabled users and difficult for older members of the congregation. It is particularly inadequate for the larger occasional congregations (c. 150 for Christmas Lessons and Carols), weddings, funerals and baptisms and major community events eg patronal and harvest celebrations. Installation of a proper lavatory will widen the accessibility of the church and enable more community use.

Space for vesting with direct access to the body of the church, so restoring the Lady Chapel for religious use. At present the Lady Chapel also has to serve as vestry and choir library. The space for clergy and members of the choir to change is severely reduced by the organ case, library shelves, tombs and the steps down to the south-east door of the church. The area actually available for robing before and after services (c 10 sq.mt) has to accommodate up to 10 choir members, some of them elderly and unsteady on their feet. There is an appreciable risk of a fall, leaving aside the lack of dignity and amenity involved in the present arrangements. This change would also enable the proper protection and display of the historically important 15th-century Halsham tombs and other artefacts there.

Needs of the Building

Improvements to historic significance and legibility. Rationalising the uses of the South Chapel internally as a religious space, and the removal of the unsightly Portaloo externally would visually improve the church building, respecting the historic use and external form of the building, respectively.

Adapting the building to ensure usability and accessibility for current and future users. The Parish accepts that a large extension (previously explored, and set out in the 'Design Development' portion of this document), containing a wide range of functions is an unacceptable change to their highly significant church building, and that consideration should be given to finding another location within the Parish if extensive facilities were felt to be necessary. There are however fundamental needs of a congregation which are required to ensure the continued usability of a church building (a W.C., accessible to a wide range of users), along with facilities which allow for activities specific to a church building (vesting areas, and storage facilities related to Vestry specific activities).

3.0 SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 Assessing Significance

The NPPF (National Planning Policy Framework) sets out that proposals for the alterations of listed buildings should be considered and based on an understanding of the asset's significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's significance and no more than is necessary to understand the potential impact of the proposal on that significance.

Historic England defines 'significance' as 'the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place'.

We feel that it is important to clearly set out the rationale for proposing changes where we have, based on a considered understanding of the significance of St George's church as it stands, the needs of the congregation (as noted in the brief), and the impact on the significance of the heritage asset in any changes proposed.

The gradual extension and alteration of St George's church remains clearly legible today and it is not the applicants intention to propose any works which might be damaging to the future interpretation of this Heritage asset or to propose a scheme which might be considered over-development or to dominate the existing phases.

It is the applicant's intention that the proposals outlined later in this document will provide appropriate functionality to allow the church to continue to be a useful and usable building for the congregation and wider community, whilst ensuring that historic built fabric and the heritage significance of that fabric is retained.

'Significance', in this context, is determined on the basis of statutory designation (the listing description of the building) and professional judgement (that of Cerowski Architects in assessing the history of the building, with a particular focus on the area where changes are proposed).

Our approach for determining significance builds upon our professional experience and the guidelines contained in two main national documents:

- The DCMS's 'Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings' (2010).
- English Heritage (now Historic England's) 'Conservation Principles' (2008)

The first of these documents states that the special interest of a building is determined based on its Architectural and Historic Interest, assessed through the principles of Age and Rarity, Aesthetic Merits, Selectivity and National Interest. Whilst useful guidance generally, the second document gives four 'Values' which are corroborated in the NPPF, which suggest that the significance of a place can be assessed by identifying its 'aesthetic, evidential, historic and communal values':

- **Aesthetic Value** – relates to the ways in which people derive sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place.
- **Evidential Value** – relates to the potential of a place to yield primary evidence about past human activity.
- **Historic Value** – relates to ways in which the present can be connected through a place to past people, events, and aspects of life.
- **Communal Value** – relates to the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, and whose collective experience or memory it holds.

It is normally desirable to sustain all of the identified heritage values of a place, but, on occasion, what is necessary to sustain some values, will conflict with what is necessary to sustain others. In other instances, the overall needs of the property, to allow it to continue in its optimum viable use (that is, the use which is least likely to cause harm to the significance of the asset – in this case, for St George's to continue to function as a Church of England place of worship), require an understanding of the various values relative to one another.

The grading system used in order to establish and record the significance of the building's elements is defined as follows:

- **High** – parts or elements of special interest that are fundamental to the design concept of the building and/or parts that play a major role in its 'historical timeline': alteration or removal of features of this level will be strongly resisted.
- **Medium** – parts or elements of special interest that are specific to the vocabulary of the building and/or parts that play a considerable role in its 'historical timeline': efforts should be made to retain features on this level, although some degree of flexibility in terms of alteration would be possible.
- **Low** – elements of some or little special architectural or historic interest, but that contribute to the vocabulary of the building as a whole and its 'historical timeline': a greater degree of alteration or removal would be possible than for items of high or medium significance, though a low value does not necessarily mean a feature is expendable.
- **Neutral** – parts or elements which have little or no inherent cultural value but which does not actually detract from the character or appearance of the building or site. Alterations should be possible to these features.
- **Detrimental** – elements or features which actually detract from the character or appearance of the building or site. Efforts should be made to remove these features, potentially allowing the understanding of an aspect of the assets' value to be better understood in the process.

Analysing the Aesthetic Value of St George's Church

Aesthetic Value can be the result of two different circumstances. On the one hand, it may be the result of conscious **design** (for example a Georgian townhouse), alternatively it may be seemingly **fortuitous**, that is, no one 'designed' the building, and instead it evolved into something of aesthetic value through a confluence of circumstances and/or vernacular construction techniques (for example an extended oast house). Due to its age and typology, St George's is a balance of both of these circumstances. The building history clearly demonstrates that the aesthetic value of the church building as it stands is a result of iterative alterations between the 11th Century and the 19th Century. The earlier phases of the church building's extension and alterations are largely fortuitous in their aesthetic value (though there were of course fashions in church construction in different periods, and that is evident here)..

Overall, the aesthetic value of the whole church taken together is considered to be **high**, though the Victorian the external cement render is considered to be **detrimental**.

Analysing the Evidential Value of St George's Church

Evidential value can be derived from either physical remains or genetic lines that have been inherited from the past. The ability to understand or interpret this information (and therefore attribute evidential value) is generally diminished in a proportional manner to the extent of its removal or replacement for a given heritage asset. In the case of St George's church, the evidential value relates to the legibility of the various phases and development of the building's historical development through the physical evidence of the phased development of the church. From a genetic lineage point of view, all historic churches by their nature are connected by their evidential value to the past, through memorials, graves, and in particular at St George's, the Georgian pews which are painted with the names of local farms – as noted a highly unusual survival.

Overall, the evidential value is considered to be **high**.

Analysing the Historic Value of St George's Church

Historic value can either be **illustrative**, meaning that which illustrates an aspect of history – linking past and present people, or **associative**, meaning that the building is associated with someone or something of great importance. Illustrative historic value is somewhat similar to evidential value but may be more overt – for example the periods of wealth or poverty of a farm building may be illustrated through historical development of the building or subdivision, and this can be visually 'read' in the still visible phases of the building. Associative historic value may be drawn from a buildings ability to allow us to understand the context of historically important events or groups of people, though this generally relies on the building somewhat resembling its form and detailing at time of the historically significant association.

The social history of St George's church and its associations and integral connection with the history of West Grinstead falls beyond the scope of this report, though it is in part documented in 'The Story of St George's Church ,West Grinstead' (John Scragg, 1975). The church is illustrative of the waxing and waning of fortunes and tastes in the Parish of West Grinstead over a 900 year period, being extended, reformed, restored, and remodelled. An understanding of the original and earlier alterations to the architectural form of the church (and the related uses of the building) is still possible owing to the level of preservation of the internal materiality which evidences the various construction phases, and the general legibility of the plan form.

Overall, the historic illustrative value is considered to be **medium/high**, as St George's demonstrates the changing form of a fine Sussex Church, and **medium** from an associative historic value viewpoint, for the connections with local farmers and previous rectors.

Analysing the Communal Value of St George's Church

Communal value derives from the meaning of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory. It may be either **commemorative** (for example a war memorial) or **symbolic** (for example the Houses of Parliament – which symbolises wider values).

St George's, as with other churches, has both commemorative and symbolic value.

From a commemorative viewpoint, it has a prominent war memorial on the North wall of the Nave, and the wider churchyard and other internal memorials to prominent families of Sussex. The previously noted 'named' farm pews also commemorate the farming history of the area.

The symbolic value of the church building is as a centre of the Christian community of West Grinstead, certainly for 900 years in its current form.

Overall, the communal value is considered to be **high**.

4.0 DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Previous schemes and related advice

Prior to the current scheme, the Parish have developed a number of proposals for an extension, liaising with Chichester Diocesan Advisory Committee to allow an acceptable solution to be developed which suits the needs of the Parish, whilst not harming the Grade I listed church building. This is set out brief below:

DAC Visit in September 2013

Chichester DAC visited in late 2013, and made the following comments:

- Consideration had been given to placing a W.C. in the South Aisle, but felt this would not be possible without significant damage to the aesthetic balance of the building.

- The location proposed by the Parish (to the South of the building, as an extension) was the most suitable site, but recommended that it should be sited between the buttresses (of the Tower) to the East of the South door (to the South Aisle).

- The committee recommended that a lobby to the South door should be constructed of modern glazing, with a more solid construction to the W.C. area. The lobby should be kept clear of furniture.

Following on from this, the Parish commissioned Creative Heritage Ltd to prepare a concept design in-line with these comments.

First Scheme from January 2014

This scheme proposed:

- A lean-to single storey construction, with a slate roof, and a glazed oak frame, sitting on a brick plinth (see Figure 3 for proposed southern elevation extract).

- It included a lobby space, a urinal in a cubicle, an accessible W.C., and a cupboard for hanging robes, all connected by a glazed extension to the lobby, to the southern wall (see Figure 4 for proposed floorplan extract).

See Figures 3 and 4 for an extract from the principal southern elevation and the ground floor plan of these proposals.

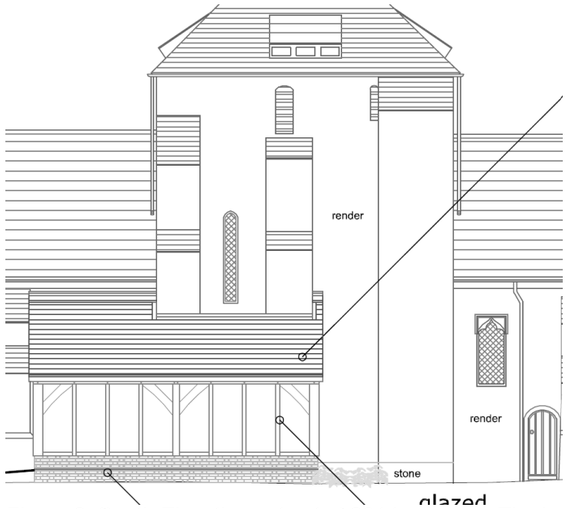


Figure 3: South Elevation extract of 2014 scheme. The lean-to structure would extend across part of the tower, encasing two of the three buttresses.

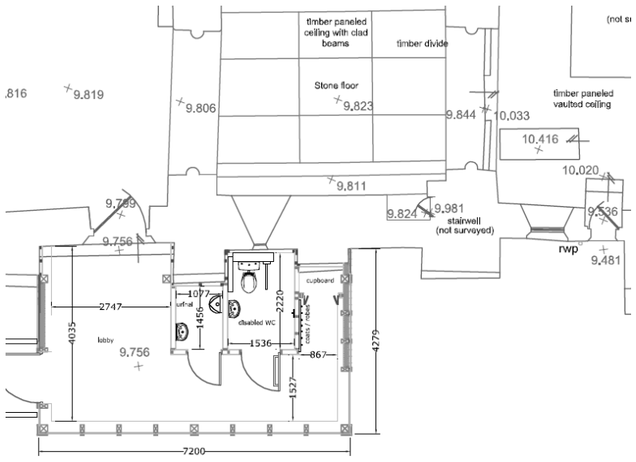


Figure 4: Floorplan extract of 2014 scheme. The extension was proposed to contain an accessible W.C. (between the existing buttresses), with a cubicled urinal to one side and a narrow robe cupboard to the other.

It is understood that these proposals were considered by the Parish, but discounted for several reasons:

- A substantial portion of the floor area of the proposal would be circulation space, adding to the cost of the extension without providing an associated benefit.

- The design was not considered to be sympathetic to the form or materiality of the existing church building.

In early-2015 a new Inspecting Architect, was appointed, who developed several new proposals for an extension.

Second Scheme from April 2015

This scheme proposed:

- A single storey glazed and timber framed extension, with a flat roofed porch over the existing southern door, and a double gabled tiled and weatherboarded extension projecting perpendicularly to the Nave/Chancel and South Aisle/South Chapel gables of the existing built ranges.

- Internally the scheme included several meeting areas, a meeting room, two W.C.s (one accessible) and a parish office.

Figures 5 and 6 give an overview of the nature of these proposals.



Figure 5: South Elevation extract of April 2015 scheme. Due to the wide footprint relative to the Creative Heritage scheme and the gabled roof form, though single storey, the extension sits relatively high against the existing tower.

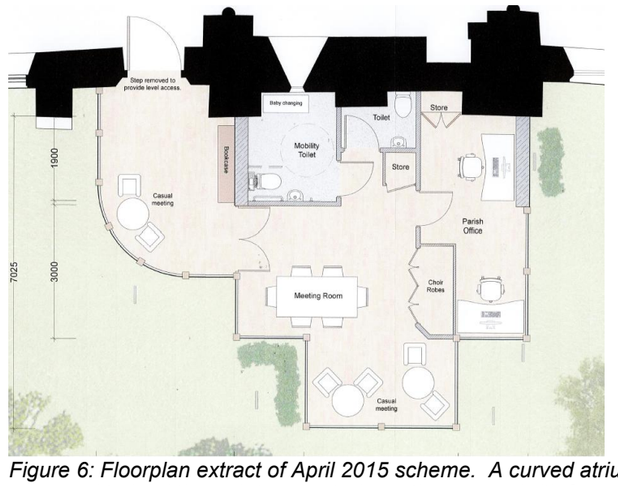


Figure 6: Floorplan extract of April 2015 scheme. A curved atrium is proposed to lead through to a central meeting space (with formal and informal seating) with a pair of W.C.s and a Parish Office leading away from this main space.

These proposals were submitted to Chichester DAC for Informal Faculty Advice, and were considered at their September 2015 meeting.

DAC Informal Faculty Advice in September 2015

Chichester DAC considered the April 2015 scheme, and made the following comments:

- The proposed location of an extension and the need for W.C. facilities continued to be supported, and the committee noted the need for a parish office due to the sale of the nearby Vicarage.
- The committee considered the bulk, scale and massing unacceptable.
- Any extension should be modest and self-effacing.
- The design needed to be scaled down to the minimum requirement, with a smaller footprint.

The Inspecting Architect at the time reviewed these comments, and prepared a revised concept design in December 2015.

Revised Scheme from December 2015

This scheme proposed:

- A two storey brick arched and glazed extension, with mono-pitched Horsham Stone roofing between the glazed sections, and a modern glazed box link connecting the extension to the existing southern door into the South Aisle.
- Internally it contained two W.C.s (one accessible), a meeting room, and a spiral staircase leading to a mezzanine parish office.

Figures 7, 8 and 9 give an overview of the nature of these proposals.



Figure 7: South and West Elevation extract of December 2015 scheme. Brick curved arches are set in from the existing southern buttresses of the tower, with arched glazing to the East and West returns, and a mixture of Horsham Stone and glazing to the southern side. There is a squared off flat roofed link foyer to the western side of the proposed extension.

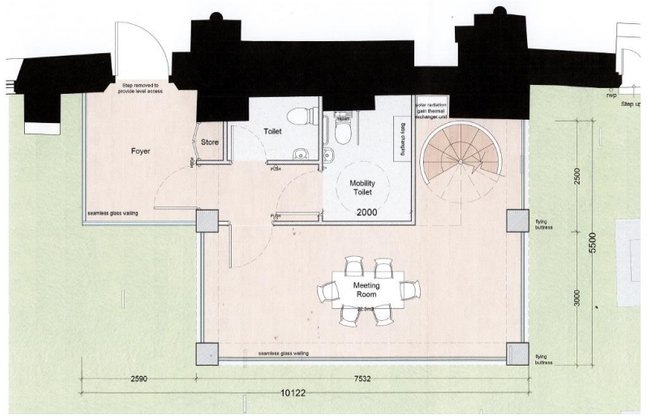


Figure 8: Ground Floorplan extract of December 2015 scheme. This revised floorplan reduced the previous footprint of the extension, though it introduced a mezzanine second floor. The Accessible W.C. would not comply with Building Regulations as the regulations require that there is a 1.5m turning circle for a wheelchair user outside of the W.C.

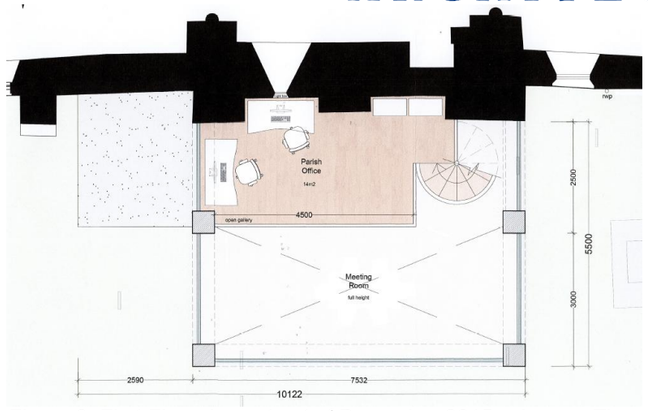


Figure 9: First Floorplan extract of December 2015 scheme. The mezzanine acts as a larger parish office than that previously proposed, accessed by a spiral staircase.

DAC Informal Faculty Advice in March 2016

The revised scheme was submitted to Chichester DAC who considered the December 2015 scheme in March 2016, and made the following comments:

- The proposed extension remains too large and is not subservient to St George's, modest and self-effacing. A preference was expressed for the footprint of the two storey building, but with only a single storey.
- The DAC questioned the need for a parish office, particularly accessed only by stairs.
- The committee also expressed reservations about the visual design of the extension, supporting a contemporary approach, but not the bulk, scale and massing.

A further revised scheme was prepared, though it is not presented here as it also was two storeys, was of a more traditional architectural design, retained access to the first floor only by a staircase, filled in the proposed glazed foyer with furniture (which was previously noted by the DAC as being unacceptable) and also included a non-compliant Accessible W.C.

The P.C.C. did not progress this scheme, and sought to appoint a new Inspecting Architect.

4.2 Concept design and pre-application advice

Concept Design Development

Preamble

The author of this document was appointed as the Inspecting Architect of St George's Church in December 2018. The desire to improve the facilities within the church building as noted earlier in this document were described to me, along with the concerns related to bats roosting in the church.

As noted earlier in this document, funding became available through Natural England to address the bats, and this opportunity was used by the Parish to look holistically at the internal environment of the existing building, and carry out the repairs, revised heating and revised lighting schemes previously discussed.

Some initial concept sketches were developed based on the feedback from the DAC, with a view to providing a sufficient level of design development to ask Historic England, the Local Authority, the CBC and the wider Statutory Consultees for advice at an early stage (as noted in the various Informal Faculty Advice letters from Chichester DAC).

Reviewing the Brief

Previous rounds of advice from Chichester DAC questioned:

- The size of the proposed extension (which was noted to be too large).
- The design of the extension (which it was noted should be contemporary and subservient).
- The need for the facilities proposed (particularly the proposed parish office).

Based upon our experience of previous and currently developing schemes to similar significant listed church buildings in Sussex, we discussed the following with the Parish:

- Introducing a single accessible W.C., as the number of congregation members and visitors was unlikely to warrant the introduction of any more facilities than is necessary.
- Creating a vestry space which had sufficient storage for robes, books, and historic furnishings to be retained which relate to St George's, but which are currently poorly located within the church building proper.
- Creating a truly glazed link porch onto the southern door with no furnishings, allowing views to the Norman exposed stonework (along with protection from inclement weather) and views out across the churchyard to the Adur and beyond.
- Minimising the amount of circulation space internally, and therefore reducing the overall size of the extension as far as possible.

Though Chichester DAC has broadly agreed to the location of a potential extension, and the necessity for a W.C. and Vestry space, the introduction of the required facilities within the existing church building, either through a new intervention (such as a W.C. 'pod'), reordering of part of the building, or a combination of the two, have been considered as set out in the following section of this document. Subject to discussion, this would be expanded upon as the design is developed further following consultee advice.

Potential Locations for Facilities

It is the opinion of the Parish, their Inspecting Architect, and Chichester DAC that the most appropriate way in which to meet the needs of the Church is to extend their building in a proportionate and subservient manner. We have however considered the areas of the existing church building, their current uses, and the capacity for change, in the table overleaf (see submitted Existing Ground Floor Plan for location of each space).

Area of Church Building	Related Notes
North Porch	Access to St George's Church is from a car park and footpath to the North of the church building, with the North Porch acting as the principal and historic entrance to the church building. The porch is, as noted in Pevsner's 'The Buildings of England', "…[a] delightful wooden C15 N porch, about the best in Sussex". Due to the lack of another appropriately located or sized entrance into the building, its historic use as the principal entrance to the church, and the architectural quality of this element, it is felt that the North Porch is not a viable location for change to the building.
Nave	The Nave is the oldest portion of St George's, as noted in the Statement of Significance it dates back to the 11th Century. The pews within are rare Georgian elements, dating to the 1820's, notable for the painted names of local farms to the rear of each. The pews extend for the entire length of the Nave, ending with the pulpit (retaining its reader) and lectern to the eastern end. The walls are plastered, with fragments of wall paintings visible to the northern elevation. St George's is a functioning church, and the pews are a necessary part of this function for seating the congregation, no changes to this space are possible without adversely impacting the usability of the building for its optimum viable use as a place of worship.
Chancel	As with the Nave, the Chancel has no opportunity for change, with timber screens separating the choir stalls from the Nave to one side, and the altar to the other. The walls are lined with panelling (noted in Jenkins' 'England's Thousand Best Churches' as probably Continental woodwork, introduced in the 19th Century).
South Aisle	The South Aisle contains a variety of monuments, wall and floor mounted, a 12th Century Sussex Marble font, along with brasses set into the stonework of the floor. To the West end there is a simple timber kitchenette, though no capacity for modifying or replacing this with a combined kitchenette/W.C. without detrimentally altering the character of this space, which in many ways encapsulates the Character of St George's as a whole, as Jenkins notes 'the interior is a rustic jumble' and this in the South Aisle is part of its charm.
Tower	The base of the tower is used for ringing to the centre, whilst around the periphery are an organ, a medieval chest, upended to fit, and to the South the door giving access to the narrow stone stair to the bells. There is no possibility of altering this space without removing historic features associated with the Church, or preventing the bells from being rung.
South Chapel/Chantry	The South Chapel/Chantry space currently acts as the Vestry for the Vicar and Choir, though it does neither job well, and also plays host to ladders, wheelchairs, cleaning equipment, and other related storage, along with the bulk of the organ, eroding the character of the space as a chapel, and taking away from the artistic and historical significance of the two chest tombs, with handsome inlaid brasses. Whilst it may be possible to somewhat rationalise this space, it clearly ill suited to acting as a storage/vestry, and there is no opportunity for locating a W.C. within it, though even if this was possible, it would be detrimental to the character of this portion of the church.



Fig 10: south chapel, looking south from the altar.

Exterior	Externally, an extension to house a W.C. and Vestry could conceivably be located to one of the four elevations. <u>North Elevation</u> The north elevation is the principal approach to the church for the majority of visitors. Connecting to the eastern end, where the Chancel is located would not be practical from an internal functionality viewpoint, and connecting to the Nave would involve forming an opening in the most historic 11th Century built fabric, and so this has not been investigated further. <u>East Elevation</u> The east elevation of the church is bounded by a popular and historic footpath, and many visitors who approach the church on foot do so along this route, an extension would intersect this approach if located here. Further, there is no existing doorway to this elevation, and buttresses and eastern windows preclude introducing one, even if it could be justified from a viewpoint of the loss of historic built fabric. <u>West Elevation</u> As with the east elevation, the west is characterised by three light mullioned windows and buttresses, precluding the introduction of a doorway for access. <u>South Elevation</u> The south elevation too is of significance, with views across the Adur (see Figure 1) being characterised by the church squatting into its landscape. There is however the potential opportunity for change in this location, as there is an existing southern door from the South Aisle (noted to be c.1150 by Pevsner, but presumably reset when the South Aisle was built). As noted elsewhere the church is clad in a hard cement coating, though in places where interesting and historic stonework was notable it has been spared this treatment, and that includes this southern doorway externally.



Fig 11: The southern door to the South Aisle, externally.

To the east of this sits a fairly blank portion of wall to the Tower, beyond that the jumbled southern wall of the South Chapel, marred somewhat by the boiler flue and access hatch, and particularly by the current W.C. arrangements, an external Portaloo.



Fig 12: The Portaloo and boiler flue/ hatch to the South Chapel.

In summary, it was not felt that it is possible to locate a W.C. within the church building, nor to create a viable Vestry space or rationalise the existing storage. Therefore, an extension appears to be the most appropriate approach to meeting these specific needs of the Church.

The locations for a potential extension are limited, with the most appropriate appearing to be to the southern elevation, reusing an existing doorway into the 'rear' of the church, and utilising a fairly blank portion of the base of the Tower to append the extension to. It would have the benefit of removing a visually detrimental aspect of this elevation (the Portaloo between the buttresses of the South Chapel), though it would by its nature introduce a limited amount of built mass to this side of the church building.

<u>High-Level Concept Design</u>

Based upon this assessment of the most minimal needs of the Church, the capacity of the church building to meet those needs internally and externally, and an understanding of the general significance of the building, along with the specific significance of elements where change may be possible, we developed some high level concept sketches, for discussion, in February 2024

Our design intent is to create a contemporary intervention which is deeply informed by the form and materiality of St George's Church in the area where an extension is proposed.

At high level, our proposals are:

- To create a minimal glazed link 'box' around the relocated Norman south door, with glazing to the West and South. It is proposed that the roof would be solid, as during the recent bat works it was found that the eaves of the South Aisle immediately above the south door were an important entrance point for roosting bats, and therefore a solid roof projecting beyond the glazing line would minimise light spill upwards, whilst also protecting the glazed link from solar gain in the summer.

- Forming a more solid extension to the South of the Tower. The width of the extension would match the width of the two outer buttresses of the tower, with the roof and elevation being stepped slightly outwards, as if extruded from the buttresses. The extruded sections would be rendered with lime render, with a hard metal roofing capping to the sky facing surfaces, with the recessed portions being of brick with inset contemporary windows to the W.C. and Vestry.

- Internally, the glazed link would be kept entirely clear to preserve views to the south door from the exterior, and views across the churchyard from the interior. The extension proper would contain a single accessible W.C. (accessed from the glazed link) and a Vestry space. The vestry space would have an external access door to the East, linking to the existing footpath, and a window to the South. It would contain sufficient space for vestment storage, relocating some of the storage currently housed in the South Chapel, and space centrally for a multi-purpose table, for use by the choir, Vicar, or congregation members for activities necessary for church specific activities.

These notes, and a sketch floorplan and external perspective for this scheme (Figures 13 and 14) were submitted to the DAC, CBC (Church Buildings Council), Historic England and HDC, ahead of a meeting on site to discuss the scheme, which took place on 27th June 2024.

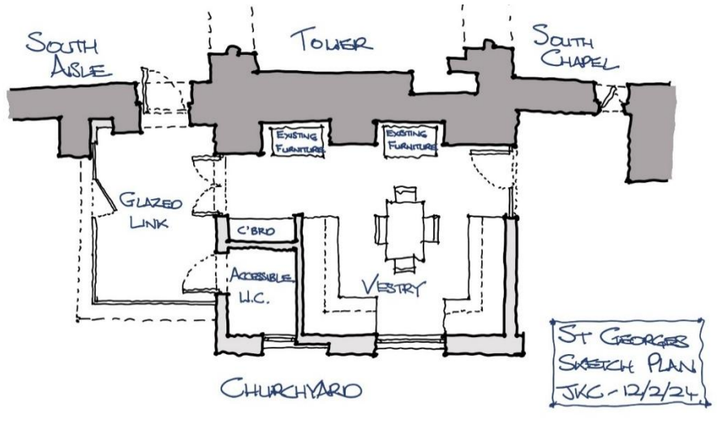


Figure 13: Sketch extension floorplan.



Figure 14: Sketch perspective.

Representatives of HDC, DAC, CBC and Historic England visited as noted above, and provided written feedback, which was used to inform the design of the final submitted proposals.

Pre-Application Feedback

The feedback received from the various consultees was generally positive of the location, size, and content of the proposals.

A process of design development and iteration was then carried out with Historic England in particular, resulting in a more sensitive scheme including the following amendments:

- A smaller footprint, to both the glazed link and the Vestry.
- A simplified set of three symmetrical ‘lancet’ like windows.
- A Horsham stone pitch to the front part of the extension.
- A metal flat roof behind, set out to allow the tower lancet window to remain visible.

The following text is extracted from the summary of the Pre-Application Advice received by the Parish on 14th May 2025:

Following an extensive pre-application process, the overall design has now *been changed to more sympathetically relate the new element to the historical context. The previously flat roof has been reconfigured as a slope covered in Horsham stone, reflecting the pitch of the existing south chapel and alluding to the stone capping of the buttresses. However, in order to avoid obscuring the bulk of the historic buttresses and preserve views of the existing lancet window on the tower, the roof would include a northern lead flat section sitting below it. On account of the elevated position of the church, when viewed from the south the extension’s roof would be perceived as a continuous slope abutting the tower and its Horsham stone covering would sympathetically blend the new element with the historic building. However, we would recommend production of a set of verified views from relevant vantage points to assist in properly assess the impact of the proposal on views of the church from within the conservation area.*

The fenestration on the south elevation of the extension has also been simplified and the amount of glazing reduced by inserting three full-height vertical ‘lancet-like’ windows. These changes have allowed the extension to retain a clear contemporary identity, while referencing and complementing the historic built fabric in the use of contextual materials. The new structure’s distinctive but not overly assertive design introduces a contextual and evocative element within the historic environment.

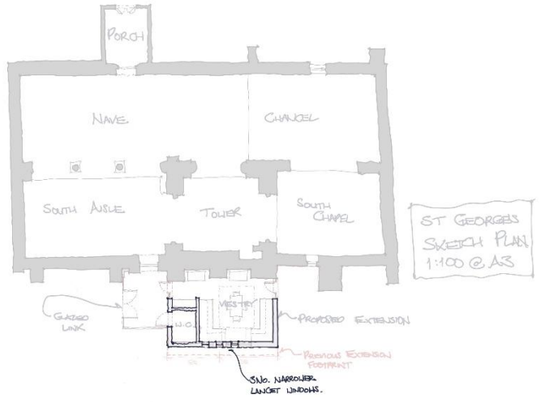


Figure 15: A sketch floorplan overlay, with three slot windows and a reduced extension footprint.



Figure 16: An earlier development sketch of the extension, with a roof enclosing the tower window, and a tiled roof surface.

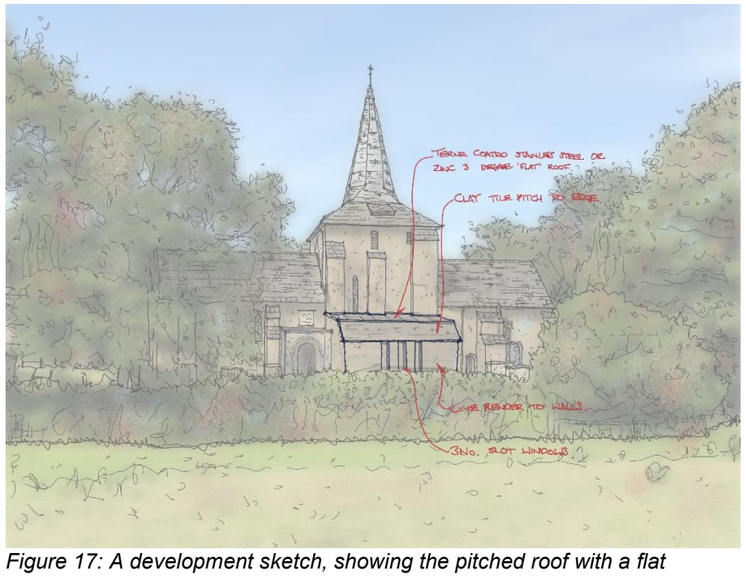


Figure 17: A development sketch, showing the pitched roof with a flat section beyond, set out to allow the tower window to remain visible.



Figure 18: Side elevation exploring the optimum balance of pitched roof to flat roof.

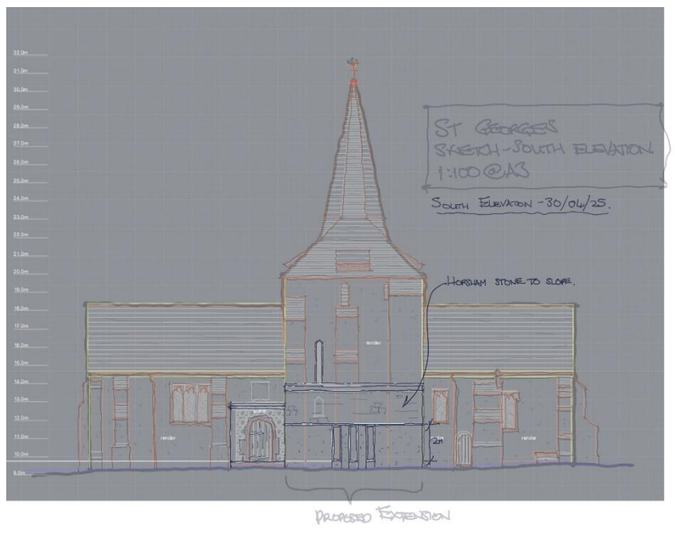


Figure 19: Southern elevation, introducing Horsham stone roof slope, to match the visual appearance of the adjacent roof slopes in landscape views towards the church.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 Design statement

Amendments following Pre-Application Advice

After a thorough review of the comments from the various consultees, the scheme was amended in the following ways:

- The justification for the proposals was interrogated in detail by the PCC and Churchwardens, and the extent and content of the extension was justified in the Statement of Need portion of this document.

- The scale of the extension was slightly reduced, whilst ensuring the elements of the extension remain accessible to all.

- Internal ramps were added to ensure accessibility to the glazed link and accessible W.C internally, and the vestry internally and from the existing external eastern pathway. A small landing and stairs were added to the western side of the glazed link, to ensure that the southern door (and by extension the glazed link) can still be used as an emergency egress route if necessary.

- The windows were revised to a set of three tall and narrow slot windows, referencing sets of three windows to the existing church building, though with modern detailing.

- The roof form was revised to a zinc flat roof (rather than lead, which would be a prominent theft risk), with a Horsham stone pitch to the leading edge of the extension, to appear to visually relate to the existing Horsham stone roof slopes of the main church building.

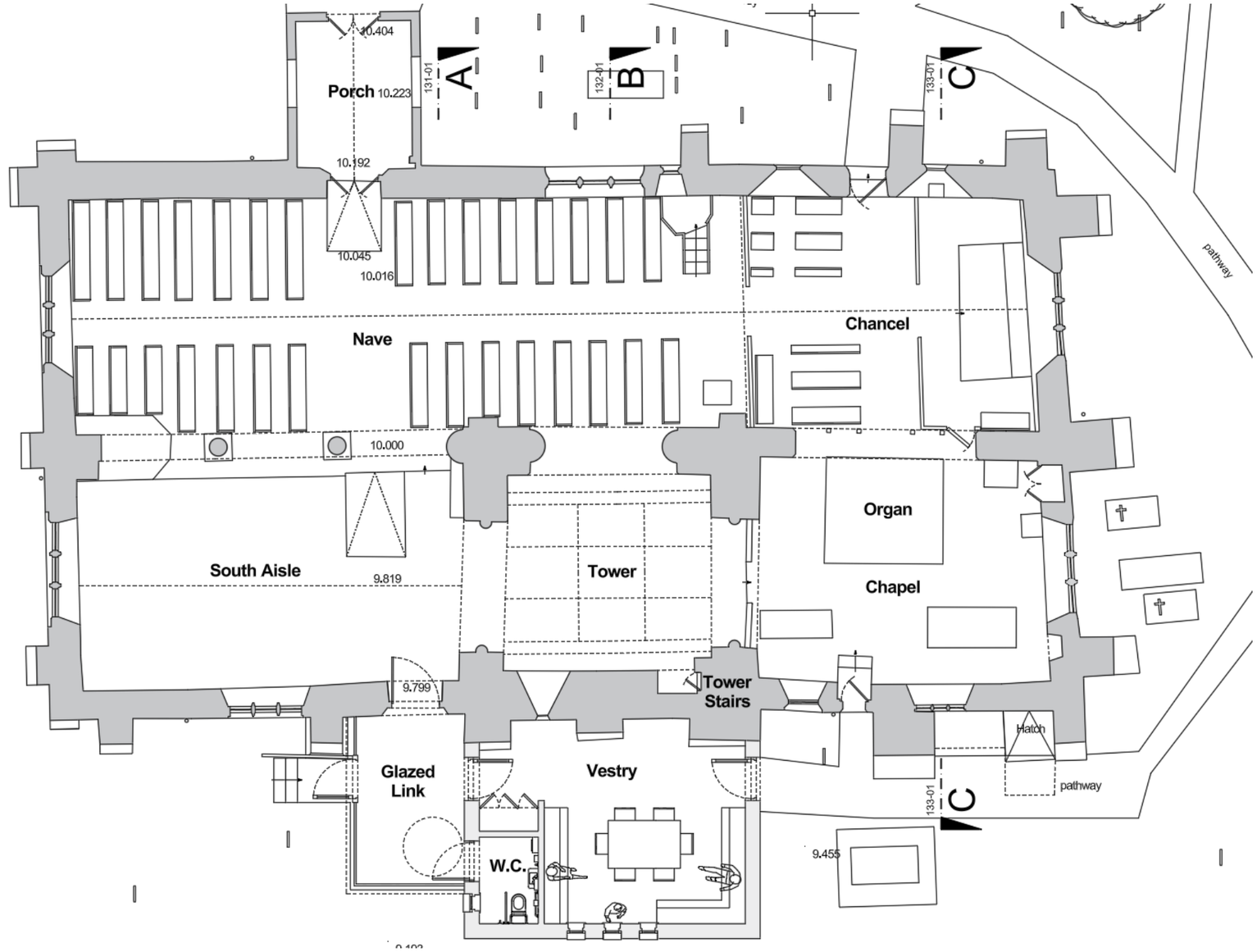
- The external walls were revised to be masonry with a lime render finish, to mirror what is thought to be the historic finish of the walls of the main church, prior to the cementitious coating currently present.

Proposed Design

The proposed extension has been informed entirely by the needs of the congregation, and the historic significance of the existing church building. It has been located on the south side of the Tower, where it would be appended to the least historically significant portion of the existing built fabric. It would be concealed from the principal north facing aspect of the building, from which most visitors approach the church building.

The extension would contain a small Vestry, sufficient in size for use for vesting purposes, allowing the south-eastern Chapel to be cleared of storage and materials related to this function. It would contain an accessible W.C., accessible from the interior of the church. A glazed link is proposed, which is no larger than is necessary to allow it to sit away from the historic stonework of the southern doorway (see Figure 11), and to allow access to the W.C.

Figure 20: Proposed ground floor plan.



The Proposals in their Context

This composite sketch is based upon a photograph taken from a drone, illustrates the annex in its context. The main route towards St George's church is to the North (from the pathway extending to the car park). Landscaping changes would be limited to only what is necessary, regrading the existing south-east pathway and lawn locally around it, to suit a level access into the east door of the extension, and a stair platform to the west to allow emergency egress in this location.

From above, the relationship between the roof and existing adjacent slopes of St George's church can be seen, with Horsham stone of a matching pitch, with zinc flat roof sections where necessary to suit existing historic architectural features adjacent to these areas of roofing. Windows and doors are all proposed to be powder coated aluminium with narrow sight lines, to appear visually subservient and contemporary.

The glazed link clearly articulates the extension from the main church, and will allow the currently exposed south door stonework to remain visible, whilst protecting its friable and eroded surface.

Figure 21: Proposed aerial sketch view.



Long views towards extension

The sketch view below illustrates the long view towards the church and extension from the South, in the most prominent location (where there is a break in the tree line from the southern fields). The extent of zinc roof visible is minimal, with the Horsham stone, rendered walls, and glazed link most noticeable.

The Horsham stone roofing matches that of the extant roofs and buttresses, whilst the rendered walls mirror the existing rendered walls of the church (though using lime rather than cement render). The glazed link allows the exposed stonework of the southern doorway to remain visible.

Figure 22: Long view towards extension, in context.



5.2 Access statement

Inclusive Access Overview

It is a principle of the Church of England that access to all is made as available as possible within the constraints of its listed church buildings. Both the glazed link leading to the accessible W.C., and the proposed ramps internally, would be fully accessible. The new doors into the Vestry would also be sufficiently wide to allow wheelchair users to access the space.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Access

Pedestrian access would remain through the northern porch, but would be augmented by revisions to the south-eastern pathway to allow access to the Vestry without passing through the church.

Vehicular access would remain unchanged, with parking in the northern car park, as currently.

6.0 HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Criteria for assessment

Heritage impact is defined as the potential level of harm or benefit to special architectural or historic interest causes by proposed development. The NPPF stresses that impacts on heritage assets should be avoided and, if it cannot be avoided, it should be minimised or mitigated.

The following sections of the NPPF are directly relevant to the proposal and its assessment of impact:

192. In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of: a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation; b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

200. Local planning authorities should look for opportunities for new development within Conservation Areas and World Heritage Sites, and within the setting of heritage assets, to enhance or better reveal their significance. Proposals that preserve those elements of the setting that make a positive contribution to the asset (or which better reveal its significance) should be treated favourably.

The NPPF does not prescribe a format or title for analyses of heritage significance and/or impact. Therefore, a simple methodology based on the guidance set out in Historic England Advice Note 12 – Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (2019) has been used.

The levels of relative impact used to inform the assessment of significance in this heritage statement are outlined below:

- **Major** – high adverse impact. This does not exclusively equate to substantial harm or total loss, although this will of course represent a major impact to heritage significance.
- **Moderate** – medium adverse impact on heritage significance.
- **Minor** – low adverse impact on heritage significance.
- **Negligible** – preserves character and appearance, none or very limited impact.
- **Beneficial** – enhances character and appearance, social, economic or environmental public benefits.

6.2 Impact assessment for proposed works

The current proposals have taken into account comments made in previous rounds of correspondence and consultation, including the most recent Pre-Application responses from Horsham District Council and Historic England. This is set out in sections 4.2 of this document in detail.

Architecturally this has included reducing the size of the proposed extension and its glazed link, amended the roofing form and materials, and changing the window design and layout.

Whilst St George's is a highly significant church (as explored earlier in this document), the southern Tower wall is the least significant portion in terms of the types of significance noted.

In compliance with local and national policy, the heritage impact assessment for each area of the proposal is set out in the following table:

Area of Assessment	Analysis of Proposals	Level of Impact
Conservation Area of West Grinstead	The wider significance of West Grinstead's Conservation Area in the context of these proposals is principally aesthetic – it is characterised by vernacular building forms and traditional materials. Significance also relates to the existing rural grain of the area, visible from key views in and out of the site, and so has evidential and historic value. • *The proposals use materials primarily Horsham stone and lime render which are synonymous with the West Grinstead Conservation Area, acting as a positive contribution to local character in terms of materiality and form.* • *The extension would not be visible to the principal northern aspect (the approach to the church), nor to much of the footpath to the East, where it would be obscured by the bulk of the main church and vegetation. Where visible (from the southern churchyard and long views across fields to the South towards it) it would be visually subservient and contextual in its design, to the host building.* The proposals therefore have negligible impact upon the significance of the Conservation Area of West Grinstead.	**Negligible**
Churchyard of St George's Church	The churchyard has aesthetic value in its existing pleasing historic appearance from key views into and across the site. It has evidential value as a historic church building which has developed with the changes and growth of West Grinstead and its congregation. It principally however has historic and communal value as it contains historically significant graves and memorials, and more generally the graves of those historically connected to West Grinstead. • *From within the churchyard, the principal view and approach is to the North. This view, as noted, would be unaffected.* • *The existing trees would be retained.* • *The graves (known and unknown) in the area where the extension is proposed would be recorded as necessary through an Archaeological Watching Brief and related monitoring activities, and any potential disturbance would be minimised through setting the base of the extension generally above existing ground level or within the, typically previously disturbed, top 1ft/300mm of soil, due to the fall in the ground level to the South.* • *Though, as noted, there are likely to be graves to the South of the Tower, where the extension is proposed, there are no known graves with particular significance historically or communally, and the vast majority of the known graves are located to the other sides of the church building.* The retention of trees and the existing pathway routes will preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area, and its green and peaceful character. Whilst there are aspects of the churchyard with high significance, as well as aesthetically important views into and out of the churchyard, the extension is proposed to the least significant portion of the churchyard and therefore the impact of the proposals upon the churchyard is considered to be negligible.	**Negligible**
St George's Church	St George's Church has high significance aesthetically, evidentially, historically, and to a lesser extent, communally. The least significant portion of the building is the external render, and the fairly blank wall of the Tower to the South. • The proposals make architectural reference to the distinctive existing forms and materials of the church building, without appearing pastiche through the use of contrived historic detailing such as lancet windows or faux glazing details. • The proposals would, through the inclusion of a Vestry and Accessible W.C. put the existing building into viable use, consistent with its continued used as an active church building. • The proposals would improve accessibility into and around the current church, as well as to the glazed link and extension. • The glazed link and extension are set out to existing constraints (the height and width of the southern stone door surround for the glazed link, and the width of the tower and base of the extant tower lancet window, in the case of the extension). It would therefore be a reversible intervention in the future if necessary. Whilst the entirety of St George's Church is of either medium or high significance, the proposals have been designed to have the lowest possible impact upon the least significant portion of the built fabric. The proposals would provide exceptionally useful public benefits through level access into and around the building, W.C. and Vestry facilities (allowing the Chapel to fully revert to this use, rather than also acting as a Vestry). On balance the impact of the proposals upon the significance of St George's Church is considered to be beneficial.	**Beneficial**

6.3 Conclusion

Whilst the proposals represent a substantial change to the historic St George's church building, the greatest externally since the cement rendering of the 19th Century, the change is not considered to be harmful. This church building has evolved to suit the needs of its congregation for over 900 years, and the needs of the proposals have been agreed to be necessary in previous consultation. Impact is generally negligible or will result in enhancement through high quality design, public benefits, and continued optimum viable use of the church building.

Overall, this document has identified significance, explained the development of a robust and high quality design solution, and assessed the impact of those proposals upon the significance of the heritage asset and its setting. The proposals are considered to be compliant with local and national policy.