

Report of St Andrew's Westlands buildings development committee - Summer 2016

1. Our needs

Our present hall was built as temporary wooden church some 77 years ago. It has served well both for its original purpose and - for the last 50 years - as our church hall. Furthermore a recent architect's report (Feb 2015) highlighted that, despite its somewhat shabby appearance, it is currently still in a serviceable condition.

However the cost of repairs that would be needed to maintain our current church hall even just for the next the next decade run to £20,000; with the kind of work that would ensure the building's long term usability estimated at over £200,000. This latter level of investment would significantly smarten up the interior of the hall, and improve its external appearance too. Before considering any investment in our present hall, the buildings development committee has been asked by the P.C.C. to report in more detail on the feasibility of the other options that had been tabled for providing space for the kind of activities which take place within our current hall, and for the future mission of St Andrew's in spreading the good news of Jesus.

Size of hall needed

The following aspirations were agreed as being likely to be needed if the plan was to win P.C.C. & congregational approval. Details of our reasoning for this can be found in Appendix A.

- i) A hall space of somewhere around 120-130 sqm
NB as comparisons the main area of the old hall is 130sqm (with 34sqm extra on the stage); the parish room totals 75sqm.
The committee suggest that before any further investigations were undertaken it would be very important for the P.C.C. to confirm the size of hall that they consider to be appropriate. A large proportion of activities that take place in our hall at present (though not all) could in fact be accommodated in a space of 80-100 sqm. At the other end of the spectrum some may consider that any replacement hall would need to provide the same 164 sqm space as the present hall.
- ii) Sunday morning represents the peak usage for most congregations of our kind of size. To have the space to allow for the doubling of our present number of children in Sunday club would require space for at least 2 separate groups of 12 children (in addition to the group of up to 25 that can be accommodated in the parish room), These 2 spaces could perhaps be provided by partitions in a new church hall. Though logistics would be simpler if these rooms could be provided in addition to the space where after-service refreshments are held; realistically many churches manage without this luxury.
- iii) Any facilities designed to replace the current hall would need to provide a kitchen. If this was significantly smaller than the current hall kitchen (which at 5.8m x 5.6m, is 32.5 sqm) it is hard to see the proposals being welcomed. Perhaps 19 sqm might be the minimum tolerated (NB to help people visualise what this means this is the size of the present St Peter's kitchen which measures 3.3m x 5.8m)
- iv) Additional toilet facilities will also be needed; building regulations for a new hall might well require 6-8 cubicles
- v) Storage space

Other aspirations that have been tabled, though without reaching a consensus on which were essential and which were desirable

- vi) Office space. The present office in St Peter's works satisfactorily for St Andrew's and partnership use at present. However if St Peter's were to close, provision would be needed on St Andrew's site
- vii) A coffee serving area, either as a dedicated cafe space, or in a position that related well to the outside & to the main church entrance
- viii) If resources permit it would be advantageous if any development of the church building included a safer staircase between floors and/or a small lift

2. Sale of hall site

The bulk of the building development committee's time has been spent exploring the different options for replacing our present hall, with a view to providing similar facilities as an integrated part of the church building. Previous reports have envisaged that these replacement facilities could be part-funded by the sale of the old hall site, and we are able to confirm that this looks likely to be possible.

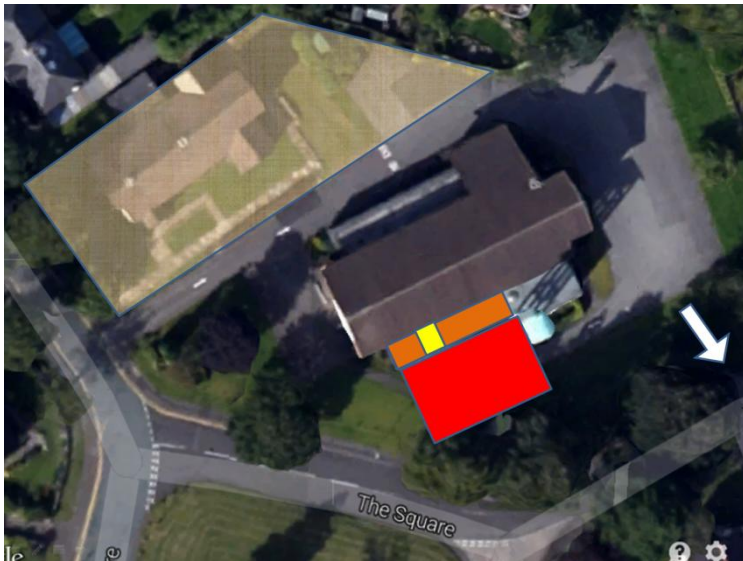
- A meeting with a Newcastle Borough Planning Officer indicated that he saw no objections in principle for the development of all or part of the hall site for residential use.
- We have not yet conducted any formal investigations on the original covenant on our land restricting its use to educational and religious purposes. However the committee's own membership includes considerable expertise in this area: Bob Baker having dealt extensively with this kind of issue in his professional life; and Keith Mayoh, who as the Borough's Chief Planning Officer used to handle covenant consent issues for them too. Furthermore they are both confident that it will not be difficult to over-ride this, being fairly easy to show that there are no longer any good grounds for this restriction. A formal waiver from the Borough council should then be obtainable.
- Lichfield diocese has confirmed that both the site of the present hall, and the car park to the rear, are held on our behalf by the diocesan trust. This means that, providing the Archdeacon and D.A.C. (Diocesan Advisory Committee) are in agreement with our proposals, all of the proceeds from any sale of land would be able to be applied to the provision of replacement facilities. In June 2016 some members of the committee met with the Archdeacon and the Diocesan Church buildings Officer. They both indicated that, should the P.C.C. decide that it would like to sell the hall site to fund replacement facilities, they would be supportive of this.
- The site we would probably envisage selling is shown by the yellow shading on the picture on p3, and is around 540 sqm. (However if we followed either of the less likely schemes included in the appendices as 3.2 or 6.3 this might be somewhat reduced)
- The value of a development site such as this is even more dependent on market conditions at the time of sale than an established property. Bob Baker's analysis suggests that even if the site were only granted permission to build 2 semi-detached houses, we could hope for at least £150,000; and at the other end of the spectrum the proprietor of one large local estate agent gave us a suggested valuation of £300,000 if planning permission was able to be obtained for a group of flats (although there is some scepticism about this higher figure amongst members of the committee)
- As we were aware that there is low grade asbestos in the roof tiles and wall panels we arranged for a local demolition specialist to quote for the costs of clearing the site. This confirmed that the extra costs associated with the asbestos removal would only be of the order of a few thousand pounds, and so not of great significance. The advice we have received has anyway suggested that sites such as these are generally sold uncleared.
- Another option could be to aim to sell off the existing car park for residential development retaining the old hall site for conversion to car parking. For some of the schemes we believe that this would provide a significantly better parking and access. We are hopeful that the planners would be supportive of this, but as this possibility only emerged after our meeting with the Borough Planning Officer, we cannot confirm this.

The committee has not been able to identify a single proposal which a clear majority of its membership believe to be the best course of action. Indeed most members of the committee as individuals remain undecided about which is the best way forward, seeing merits and pitfalls in many of the proposals discussed.

Nonetheless we begin with an option for an external extension (3.1) which is the first choice for more members of the committee than any other proposal; and the remaining members of the committee - though less decided - all see this as one of the better options for the P.C.C. to consider

3. Replacement hall facilities provided by external extension to church

3.1



Note -Blue area round church on photo below is of no significance



- In order to reduce costs this scheme envisages the conversion of the south transept to provide space for kitchen, toilets, and storage. This would probably necessitate the relocation of the most important contents of the memorial chapel to either the front or the rear of the north transept.
- The scheme is dependent on the highways authority's willingness either to remove a large lime tree that they are responsible for on the grass verge or alternatively to allow us to significantly prune its roots and branches. However when Keith Mayoh and Bob Baker met with a member of the Borough Council Planning department, he gave his initial support for this siting.
- From the church's point of view this option also has the merit of it using only land that is neither likely to be able to be used for parking, nor could be sold to a developer. Though unfortunately the ground on this side of the site slopes downwards to both to the south and the east, which adds to the construction costs, the fact that utilities are already present on this side of the building would represents a considerable cost saving in comparison to extensions in other locations

We also considered the feasibility of extensions to the front and rear of the church, though these were fairly rapidly seen to be unworkable. Appendix B contains details of alternative locations. These each present significant problems, but could merit further consideration, especially if it became clear in subsequent discussions with the both planners, and with the highway authorities responsible for the lime tree, that permission for option 3.1 was unlikely to be given.

Costs

Informal advice separately given by two recently retired quantity surveyors gave similar cost indications for schemes 3.1 of around £350,000. Details of the advice are contained in Appendix C

If we are able to sell one or other plots of land as outlined in section 2, this would give a **probable** maximum net cost of £200,000.

Future development possibilities

- If funding permitted, we would also recommend that work be done to improve the main church entrance. One possibility would be for the current internal porch to be replaced with a larger welcoming area, perhaps glazed through to church, and possibly including an enclosed office. (We believe that a small further loss of seating space in the church - though a disadvantage at the a small handful of very big services throughout the year - could be mostly offset by use as an overflow area with sound relay and possibly even TV relay too.)

- Scheme 3.1 has the additional merit of providing most easily for further developments of the building if and when funding and needs permit. A subsequent two storey development to the rear of this new hall could also have the benefit of including a safer staircase and/or lift between the church and parish room.

4. Full refurbishment of present church hall

The 2015 report was accompanied by an architect's survey including costings for a fairly full refurbishment of our present hall, at an estimated total cost of £206,000 (including fees & VAT; It provides larger hall space than an extension could easily provide

- It does not require any sale of land, therefore providing more scope for subsequent expansion of the buildings were the church to experience very significant numerical growth.
- The costs of this option, though currently coming out slightly higher than the net cost of options 3.1-3.3 would be less likely to escalate as the latter are determined by the difference between a building price and a sale value both of which are fairly imprecise. In addition there would be no need to fund any alterations to the car park or site access roads.
- It would provide a significant smartening of our public image, albeit without representing quite as much an improvement in the appearance that we present to our community that a brand new building might be able to
- Though building regulation approval would be required, and possibly planning permission too, neither of these was envisaged to be problematic. Formal approval would not be required from Lichfield diocese.
- Whereas the construction of an extension may necessitate managing without a church hall for up to a year or two, refurbishment work on the old hall might only require a 4-6 month period. If this was scheduled for the summer, most activities could be relocated to the main church building.
- Another option could be to aim to do this work in stages, as funding allows.
- As the roof is so dominant, replacing this will inevitably smarten and alter the appearance of the building significantly, and any scheme could choose from a variety of colours and shades of roofing material. It would be possible for the upgrade of the external panelling to retain the current black and white half timbered appearance. Alternatively a colour could be added as shown in the left picture below. The right hand picture shows what the building could look like if the exterior was instead rendered from top to bottom – we are advised that this would probably be the most cost effective and also reduce future maintenance.



- note that the £206,000 figure includes a new walls inside and out, new windows and a new heating system - although though does not include replacement of the kitchen or toilets, and the present wooden flooring would be refurbished rather than replaced

All of the committee are agreed that a full refurbishment of the old hall is a very viable way forward, and could see very good reasons why the P.C.C. might choose this route. Nonetheless on a personal level it is clear that none of the committee feel able to be enthusiastic enough about this route to identify it as their 1st preference

Sections 5 and 6 outline options that the buildings committee has considered in more detail but are NOT recommending to the P.C.C.

5. Purchase of St Peter's site and buildings, if they were to be offered for sale

In the foreseeable future, the St Peter's buildings are NOT available for sale - and St Andrew's and the partnership very much benefits from their availability for our mission. However the 2015 report to the P.C.C. highlighted the hypothetical possibility that – should some or all of St Peter's buildings be placed on the market - St Andrew's might be wise to have thought in advance about whether we were interested in purchasing them. Furthermore, the 'straw poll' taken at P.C.C. meeting at the end of 2015 gave this the highest number of votes.

The buildings development committee are certainly able to see several attractions in acquiring a ready-made, well-constructed set of buildings that have been maintained in reasonably good condition. The current user group rental fees bring in approx. £18,000 per year income too. However we feel that the following points weigh significantly against this course of action

- Our buildings would then be on 2 sites separated by a public road. In our view a hall on the other side of the road would be unsuitable for after-service refreshments, so this option could only work if the back of the church building were able to be laid out for this purpose. The provision of suitable furnishings for this, and servery fitments of the quality that would be required by the D.A.C. would add considerably to the costs of this option
- Cost of purchase may be very high. Our conversations with planners in regard to St Andrew's hall site indicated their support for redevelopment of community facilities for residential use - which means that the commercial value of St Peter's site would appear to be beyond our reach. We might get a little closer to this figure if both St Andrew's car park and old hall site were sold, but this would leave our only parking on the opposite side of the road for users of the church building.
- Even if the St Peter's site were offered to us for far less than its market value, the building is much bigger than we need, and therefore to retain the entire site as it now is would represent a significantly larger ongoing maintenance burden than we believe is prudent. This could be mitigated somewhat if it were possible to remove some of the buildings and sell part of the land. However even if we were able to do this, significant extra building work would be needed to provide an attractive resulting building.
- Heating costs and maintenance costs considerably higher than new build, and may well in some years exceed the rental income.
- Managing the lettings and the upkeep of the site would also represent too significant a drain on our available volunteers
- Not the modern design we were hoping for

As a result the committee are unanimously of the view that the disadvantages of buying any or all of St Peter's site and/or buildings would far outweigh any initial attractions.

6. Consideration of the option to provide a hall within the current church building

This route has some obvious attractions. Detailed consideration of 3 separate possibilities that were considered are given in appendix D.

However only one member of the committee is in favour of this route, and the majority do not feel able to recommend this option.

7. Broadly staying as we are, for now at least

This has many attractions, as planning any large building project risks diverting a church from its main mission of proclaiming the gospel, and a building funding appeal could jeopardise the continuing generosity needed to fund of our youth & children's worker post

The heading of broadly deciding to 'stay as we are', could be taken to mean several slightly different things

7A Continuing to use the hall, but undertaking only the most pressing essential maintenance

7B Undertaking the short and/or medium term repairs to the old hall highlighted in the 2015 inspection

The cost of this was outlined there at around:

£20,000 incl VAT and fees for just the short term repairs

Or £30,000 incl VAT to address also the medium term repair concerns highlighted

7C Making Cosmetic improvements to the interior of the old hall

These repairs of 7B are almost all external and so would not significantly enhance the interior of the building. If the P.C.C. is also concerned with the impression that is given to hall users, then it will need to consider spending additional sums as follows:

£4,300 incl VAT - would enable the floor could be sanded, recoloured and re-sealed;

Or £10-15,000 incl VAT - might enable some aspects of the dilapidated appearance of the walls and notice boards to be ameliorated, as well as re-finishing the floor as described above

It would also be possible to decide to address *only* the internal cosmetic appearance of the hall. The rationale for this would be that - though a failure to attend to the external repairs highlighted in 7B would almost certainly mean that the hall became unusable after a decade or so - nonetheless the interior of the building would at least present a better appearance to its users in the last few years of its life.

The disadvantages of broadly staying as we are (even if we decide to spend the sums envisaged in both 7B & 7C) are as follows:

- 1) Continuing to present a rather shabby image to our community for the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the majority of the committee believe that the church's mission will become more and more impaired if the building is allowed to deteriorate further.
- 2) Leaving the burden of replacing the hall (or properly refurbishing it) to a future generation.
- 3) Needless to say if option 7A is taken and even less money is spent maintaining the hall, this will exacerbate both of these concerns, and after a few more years the building may deteriorate to a level where refurbishment is even more costly, or maybe not even feasible at all.

8. The way forward

In an ideal world the P.C.C. would identify a single preferred path for further investigation. Failing that it could be possible for 2 paths to be explored further.

If it were decided to investigate the possibility of a church extension as described in section 3 above, this would entail selecting and commissioning an architect for a formal feasibility study to produce an outline design and a clearer estimate of cost, with a view to obtaining outline planning permission both for the new extension and for the disposal of part of the site for residential use.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Detail of how the committee arrived at its conclusions as to what space would be needed

A) The needs of our current ministry

- Church activities:
 - After-church refreshments each week,
 - Glo bible club for 7-11's
 - Messy church (6 times a year)
 - Sunday lunch (averaging maybe 3 times a year)
 - 11-13's Blaze group currently meets in parish room but any expansion may necessitate a move to the hall
 - Monthly afternoon tea club
 - Holiday club week
 - Annual Tear Fund event with cafe and stalls
- Para-church activities:
 - Cubs, Beavers & Guides meeting weekly for an average 1-1½ hours each (Brownies group has just folded)
- (Note also the following current external bookings:
 - Indoor bowling – 2 hours weekly in winter-time
 - Martial arts clubs – 2 clubs each meeting for 1½ hours weekly through the year
 - Most months there are several bookings for children's parties and occasionally other one-off events as well)

The main area of the current hall is 14.5m long x 9m wide = 130 sqm, with an additional 34 sqm being provided adjacent to this in a slightly raised 5.2m x 6.6m 'stage' area. No church or para-church children's group in recent years has been larger than about 20, so though they benefit from the full 130 sqm, at present they probably only need an 80 sqm space. After-service coffee, Messy church and some Sunday lunches would however be significantly constrained by a hall of 80 sqm. Therefore the committee envisages that, whilst the present larger space is still usable, the P.C.C. would be very reluctant to embark on a scheme which did not provide close to our present hall floor area of 130 sqm.

B) Providing for the future

a) The needs of potential new ministries.

In church congregations where there are significant current space limitations, there is every hope that providing new and enlarged facilities will stimulate significant new areas of ministries. However between St Andrew's and St Peter's there have been a wide variety of styles and sizes of spaces available for many years. It is still possible that a new space that is more attractively furnished and /or better situated might stimulate some new ministry. However the building development committee has accepted the view that it would be unwise to expect too much of a boost to our ministry in this regard; or to plan new spaces in the expectation that the current congregation will provide leadership and assistance to staff many significant new projects, simply because of an improvement in our facilities.

b) Providing facilities that might allow for potential for growth in the congregation.

It would be frustrating if in a generation's time- either due to a local or a national upturn - St Andrew's had a significantly larger congregation which wanted more space for ministry, and which felt that a previous generation's rationalisation had left them with inadequate potential for the expansion of their facilities. This would be even more of a problem if St Peter's facilities were no longer available at that point.

At the same time it would also be frustrating if a future St Andrew's congregation of somewhat smaller size felt that a previous generation's over-ambition had left it over-burdened with maintenance responsibilities for facilities which had never really been used for ministry.

c) The building development committee are therefore proposing a middle course to the P.C.C. as follows:

- i) to plan for St Andrew's to have facilities that would still be appropriate if there were, say
 - up to a 20% expansion in the number of adults on a Sunday (an increase in the current usual Sunday attendance of 125 up to 150)
 - twice as many children (i.e. an increase from the current range of 15-25 to 30-50).
- ii) But at the same time to have an idea of how the premises might be further enlarged in the event of more significant growth occurring.

Appendix B: Alternative sitings for an external extension



3.2 The main reason for not including this positioning in the main body of the report is that both the current council planning department's representative and Keith Mayoh point out that it is very close to the neighbouring property to the north of our site. This means that we are far less likely to gain planning approval than for a development to the south of the church building.

The committee did note a few positives of this positioning: this part of the site is (or could easily be made) fairly level; and it could work well if we ended up using the old hall site as our main car park. However if, as is perhaps more likely, the car park to the rear of the site is retained then there would no longer be room for a road to it from the front of the site; and the plot of land occupied by the old hall that we could offer for sale would also need to be somewhat reduced.



3.3 This is one further possibility, which neither impinges on any tree canopies, nor is close to any neighbouring properties. However it should be noted that - for there to be level access between the hall and church, the new building would need to be significantly elevated above the falling ground level towards the rear of the site. As well as having aesthetic implications, this would also further increase costs

Appendix C: Sources for cost estimate for options 3.1

We have reviewed the following informal advice

- 1) From John Gibson, quantity surveyor (retired 2011) and Simon Burgess, Chartered Architectural Technologist (MCIAT) and Associate at Brownhill Hayward Brown Architects John writes *'Had a chat with Simon. Like me he, thinks the foundations and work to damp course could be as much as £100K. A beam and pot floor would be advisable. A structural frame may not be necessary. After consideration using a low specification a budget of £300K should be used. Cost may be higher if a higher internal specification is used. You need to check out the VAT situation. (Some aspects may be at a lower rate say 5%.)'* John

Assuming the worst of 20% VAT throughout, this gives a £360,000 cost

NB Subsequent telecom confirmed that this figure includes fees, and a small amount for a cheapish domestic kitchen & toilets. However it does not include the costs of the new car park access roads or surfaces that would be needed

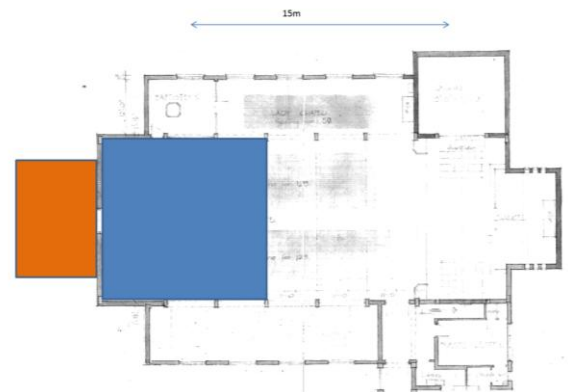
- 2) From Glynn Morrey (a chartered quantity surveyor, retired in 2014 but who still does consultancy valuation work). He visited us mainly to give us his opinion on the feasibility and costings for option 6.3 but also added *'As a comparison, I would expect a new build to be in the region of £325,000.00 including VAT'*

Appendix D. More detailed consideration of the option to provide a hall within the current church building

The possibilities below all have the attraction of not greatly affecting the external appearance of the church. They would still need to be approved by the D.A.C. who – as was shown when Mr Noisy’s room was installed – would be very concerned that the quality of fitments and finishing matched the high quality of the existing church’s interior. However local authority planning approval would only be needed for any external porch that was envisaged NB These options would all require the creation of a completely enclosed, separately heatable space (heating the church whole church being far too expensive for regular midweek use)

6.1 A larger internal hall (Corresponding roughly with option 4 from the document produced in spring 2015)

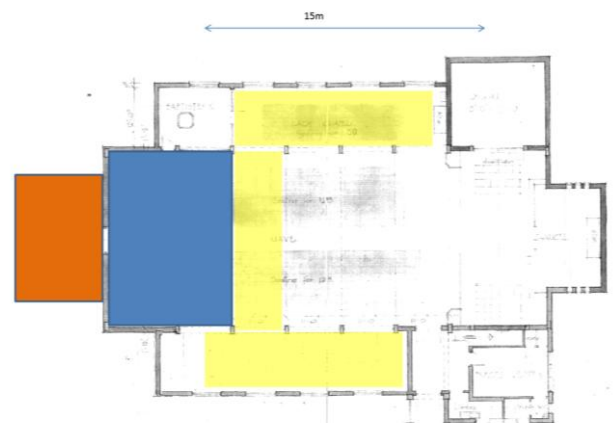
This option envisages the current internal church porch being replaced by an external porch, to allow the conversion of the 3 rear bays of the church (as demarked by the large concrete portal frames) into an enclosed hall. This creates a hall space of 10.5m x 10.35 m =109 sqm, some 83% of the present hall area. Space would also need to be created at the very least for: a kitchen, additional toilets and storage space. This could be achieved in a rather larger external porch than was sketched out in the earlier document and/or in the north or south transept, or conceivably also in a small external extension beyond one of the transepts



It was noted that with this option the seating capacity left in regular church pews would however be significantly reduced. At least 6 of the 15 rows of nave pews would be lost, leaving 160 seats in nave & side aisles (+30 in chancel). To compensate for this the front of this new internal hall could be constructed using glass partitions, providing additional seating perhaps for a further 120 people for large services. However these additional seats would be in a space which could not avoid to some extent feeling like an overflow area. This could be partly mitigated by spending more on glass walls, sliding doors etc. ***There was however broad agreement in the committee that the amount of seating that would be lost in the main body of the church would be too great for us to be able to recommend this option.***

6.2 A smaller internal hall

Option 3 of the same earlier document sketched out a space defined by the 2 rear bays of the church. This could be achieved with only 2 or 3 of the rear pews needing to be removed, and therefore entails only a small loss of seating capacity. (Indeed the removal of the internal porch envisaged would mean that - if this area were used as overflow seating then the total seating capacity of the building for extra large services might even be slightly increased)



The resulting space created is 7m x 10.5m space – which would be sufficient for midweek children’s groups at their current size. However this new enclosed space would not offer sufficient space for our current needs for: refreshments after services, occasional meals or messy church. There would therefore need to be provision for some of the pews forward of the partition to be replaced with flexible seating to enable certain areas to be used as an

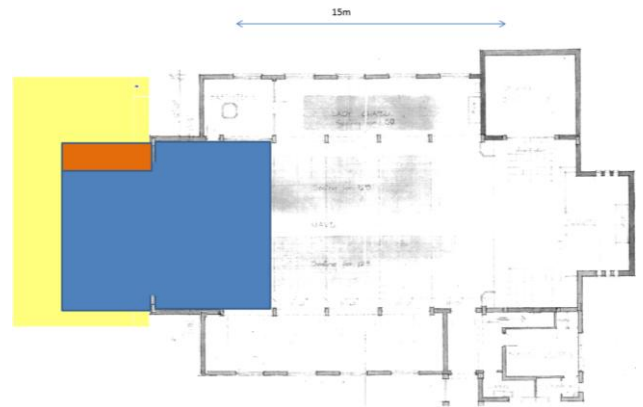
overflow to the hall This could be just forward of the new partition or in the south or north transepts or in some combination of the above- options shown below in yellow.

The majority view among the committee members was however that the P.C.C. was likely to consider the resultant hall space to be insufficient, and the creation of overflow seating in the church was seen to require too much rapid chair moving. Furthermore though the Archdeacon did not rule out diocesan support for this kind of internal hall, nonetheless he personally felt that it compromised the grandeur of the internal space somewhat.

At least one committee member however thinks that the P.C.C. should nonetheless consider this as a cost-effective option that will provide the amount of space that we need for the vast majority of the space's potential uses. And indeed, any necessary building costs up to £200,000 should be able to be funded from the sale of the old hall site

6.3 An internal/external hall

The committee also enquired about the feasibility of creating a hall space part inside the existing church, and partly extending onto the paved area in front of the main entrance. A retired quantity surveyor was met us on site and, after consultation with a structural engineer, was able to confirm that this would be technically possible. Furthermore his budget estimate of £275,000 incl. VAT was also somewhat cheaper than the kind of external extensions previously discussed (3.1, 3.2, and 3.3).



Several potential advantages of this kind of approach were cited:

- 1) Reduces the number of regular seats which are a significant distance way from the leading of the service, while providing fairly good views & feel in overflow
- 2) Enables us to purposely redesign the welcoming area for people when they first come through the door
- 3) Refreshments at end of service in ideal position
- 4) Level access easy to provide as the area in front of the main doors is flat

However at least 2 significant disadvantages were highlighted which inclined us to be very hesitant about this option

1. If the new hall area were needed for a Sunday club group, there would be sound leakage from the church (although extra partitions could be subsequently installed), and setup for this use would also conflict with setup as a welcome area/route
2. The main problem however was felt to be the difficulty in making the main front view of the church look architecturally acceptable, with so much low level flat or shallow-pitched roofing being needed for this approach

The committee therefore do not feel able to recommend this option

6.4 Internal hall with mezzanine

This approach would envisage a similar division of the interior of the church as described in 6.1 above, but with an additional floor added. The hall space could conceivably be placed on the mezzanine – although the kitchen and toilets would then be at a different level. More feasible perhaps would be for the hall to be at the lower level with additional church seating above (this latter option probably requiring not a lift to be installed)

However though this could logically work – the committee are not at all enthusiastic about it. In addition the Archdeacon, though not ruling out options 6.1-6.4, expressed an initial hesitation about the impact on the feel of our main worship space, and a preference for the external extension options.