



R S Coombs Limited

R S Coombs Dip Arch RIBA Chartered Architect
20 Victoria Road Leigh on Sea Essex SS9 1AU

Office 347619

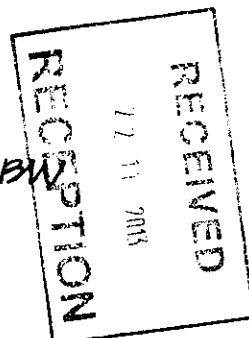
T 01702 473518 F 01702 431797

22 November 2013

Head of Planning and Transportation,
Rochford District Council,
Council Offices, South Street, Rochford, Essex. SS4 1BW
for Mr M. Stranks

Dear Sir,

Proposed Mixed Use Extension and Alterations
St Mary the Virgin Church Churchend Foulness Island
Application refs: 13/00620/FUL + 13/00621/LBC



I refer to ECC's Historic Buildings and Conservation advice from Mr Carpenter and my discussions about it with you both. Basically he confirms that he has no major objection to the proposal in principal. However there were 'reservations about some aspects' relating to the extension specifically:

- 1) the 'amount of "jetty" looks somewhat disturbing in profile'
- 2) the 'quite substantial bargeboards'
- 3) to 'clad the projection in aluminium sheet'

The reasoning for the viewpoints from both sides was debated and the outcome can be summarised in the following revisions to the proposal which I understand are satisfactory to Mr Carpenter:

- 1) to reduce the perceived 'heaviness' visually of the gabled extension the verge projection has been omitted - but more importantly it was thought that a change of material from slate to metal sheet might be beneficial too. This type of roof finish is seen often for churches - in this instance it is felt also an appropriate contrast to express the modern intervention as promulgated throughout the D+AS.
- 2) the 'Norfolk' barge board profile is omitted - and replaced by a more usual depth of fascia, still clad in aluminium but articulated to form a stepped-back profile to the metal sheet roofing and so help to reduce its impact visually.
- 3) Mr Carpenter was reassured that the cladding panel layout had been determined to suit traditional metal sheets folded on to the panels abutting with recessed joints as shown on drawing 114/08 - but with the potential for seams to be introduced.

Accordingly, as requested, I enclose the necessary revisions to the application, 2 copies of each:

drawings 114/01B, 02B, 04B, 05B, 06B + 08A (issued 21.11.13)

pages 4, 5, 37, 8 + 16 of the D+AS/Heritage report

for particular revisions to clauses about roof or materials

page 3 of the application form revisions to section 4: materials

2

In addition also, it is understood and accepted that the final selection of materials and their detail will be subject to Condition.

Whilst writing, it is gratifying to record that favourable comment has been received from consultation with:

Natural England,
ECC Place Services Specialist Archaeological Advice, and
English Heritage.

Much of the concern and comment from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation is addressed within my DfAS but I would respond further as follows:

1 Character of the area

I apologise for the error about the Village Shop and Post Office being closed; in several visits to the site - all before '2pm daily' I failed to see any evidence of trading.

2 Numbers of Visitors and Access Conditions

The provision for 130 people is approximately 75% of the current maximum capacity. It results from the concern from ECC's Mr Carpenter to maximise pew retention in the building contingent to the aims of multi functional use.

The applicant has lived on the Island for 16 years, and is very aware of the constraints on access and visitors.

The annex is not for permanent residential occupation.

2 Parking

The figure stated is merely factored by the EPOA standards based on floor area of the use served.

The amount of parking generated by the use of the church prior to its closure and its location relative to the road must have been acceptable then to the DfO. Is it not reasonable to expect this situation to continue to be acceptable?

The Islanders well know what conditions of road usage by the MOD must be respected.

The applicant appreciates that proper management and supervision must be in place for events where a large number of cars are expected.

3 Flood Risk

The proviso noted is understood.

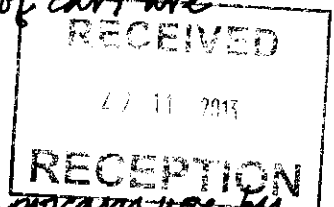
No new permanent residential use is proposed.

The accommodation is solely for occasional temporary use by guests of the Rectory, as for example, might be found in an outbuilding or caravan in the Rectory's grounds.

4 Electricity

5 Sewerage

The applicant is very aware of the need for consents from the DfO. These will be sought after the grant of Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent.



6 Sustainability.

The ecological impacts have been considered.

The proposal has very little impact within the churchyard: only the removal of relatively insignificant self-seeded Sycamore saplings is envisaged, where these are encroaching on the church's north side.

The applicant and I are aware of 3 letters from neighbours: one voicing strong opposition, and concern for access over graves, and one 5 pages long, citing inaccurate/insufficient information and numerous concerns in detail.

I believe the applicant intends to reply directly to each.

However some of the concerns raised I have touched on above and the following deals with generic issues:

Change of Use/Need:

To counter the question of need the present incumbent is enthusiastic in his positive support. It is seen as the very catalyst to resurrect closer community involvement missing since closure of the church and demolition of the Village hall.

Access for building operations/(hidden) graves:

Obviously the applicant is very aware of the legitimate concern for and the absolute requirement to respect and protect all graves during building operations and afterwards.

Other than continuation of the present Heras fenced enclosure to the church itself to define an agreed extent for the Worker access for operatives materials, lightweight plant and incoming services is intend to be restricted to the present 1.5M wide pathway through the churchyard, also fenced off, which should avoid any contact or disturbance to graves.

All possible historic records will be researched and local advice or from distant relatives sought to identify the position of graves whether visible or not.

Scaffolding will be limited to within 1.5M of the church walls.

No heavy lorries or other machinery will enter the churchyards.

New structure / existing wall cracks:

The new masonry floor is to be structured totally independently of the existing church fabric for the very obvious reason.

Shared Kitchen:

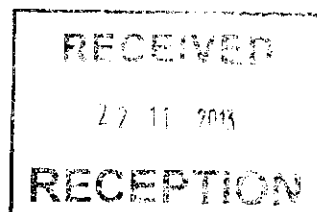
Proposed directly by the applicant, it would seem sensible, given the relative infrequency of use by either the community or Rectory guests not to 'double up' on this provision.

I trust the above is considered a satisfactory response to the issues raised by your Consultees, but of course I will be pleased to respond further or clarify if you so require.

Yours faithfully,

R.S. Coombs Ltd.

copy: Client





ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

3

3 Character of the Area.

- 3.1 The site lies at the northern end of the village of Churchend, where the spinal road from the south forks towards the west and the east.
- 3.2 The church is located close to the north eastern corner of the old churchyard, some 6/10M from the north/east boundaries respectively. It is well set back, some 45M from the entrance gates in the south boundary wall adjacent to the roadway.
- 3.3 A pathway mown in the grassland surrounding the graves in the old churchyard passes a war memorial close to the gates and through a belt of mature ash and sycamore trees between 9-15M tall before it reaches the porch beneath the church tower.
- 3.4 There are several isolated trees further west of the church as well as a significantly dense scrub and tree line along the north boundary, with a ditch close by in the farmland beyond.
- 3.5 The new churchyard occupies the land between the extended western part of the old churchyard and the newly established hedgerow abutting the roadway to the south.
- 3.6 In the immediate locality east of the church is the George and Dragon pub and its former stables converted to the village shop/Post Office - pub sadly now not trading and unoccupied.
- 3.7 Further west of the new churchyard is the former school house now a Heritage Centre; whilst on the other side of the road opposite the church lies the Rectory now without an incumbent but still as a residence. Both buildings are hidden from view by extensive tree screens.
- 3.8 The design of these buildings, both built in the mid 1840s, is typical of that Victorian period: fine gault brick walls with chimneys and elegantly proportioned openings, windows and doors and low-pitched slate roofs, mainly hipped. The pub is roofed similarly over white weatherboard cladding.
- 3.9 Most of the old churchyard is enclosed by a 1M high stock brick wall but 2M high for the part of land in front of the pub. Ponds lined with willow trees flank each side of the spinal road south of the fork in the road.
To the southeast is Old Hall Farm with its outbuildings and barns further south, whilst eastwards are semi-detached and terraced housing.



ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

4

4 Proposal: Use/Amount

- 4.1 Despite a dwindling attendance at church for worship there is a pressing need for a venue for the community to meet socially since the recent demolition of the Parish Hall.
- 4.2 The intention is to adapt the Church to fulfill these dual roles; retaining the majority of the interior as existing, but inserting the extra facilities necessary to function socially within the north aisle minimally plus adjusting the fixed pews to provide flexible seating arrangements appropriate to each role.
- 4.3 In addition within the north aisle, primarily at an upper level, to provide residential accommodation, incidental to the Rectory for use by guests infrequently and occasionally the Rector.
- 4.4 To comply with future LDF spatial standards for a flat of 2 Bedrooms (at some 66M²) and due to the limited width available in the aisle an 8M² extension is proposed at the upper level: this allows a living room some 20M² in area.
- 4.5 To ensure the church's continuing existence this mix of uses and modestly scaled extension and adaptation is both considered appropriate and necessary for viability.

5 Proposal: Layout/Design

- 5.1 The most significant element in the concept concerns the essential compartmentation of the building for the incidental residential use and for the provision of ancillary facilities to support adaptation to social use by the community. For several reasons these disparate functions can be accommodated best within the north aisle as shown:
- 5.2 The existing north doorway makes a suitable and convenient access to the residential use with the potential to be independent of the Church, although via a common internal lobby. This lobby has a key role in the church's adaptation for mixed use: via a door to the Nave it gives access on social occasions to the new WC provision and a Kitchen shared with the residential use.
- 5.3 All four unisex WCs, one to 'disabled' standards and including a shower are located westward of the north doorway. East of the lobby is the Kitchen with a servery to the Nave and including a circular stair compartmented for fire and a secure access to the main residential accommodation above. Adjacent to the east is an Office, with secure access from both Kitchen and the Church (from the passageway beside the organ).



RECEIVED

22 11 2013

RECEPTION

ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

5

- 5.4 Visually the organ infills most of the easternmost bay of the arcade with the vestry behind reached by a short passageway.
- 5.5 The main residential accommodation, comprising a living room two double bedrooms each with en-suite facilities is formed at an upper level within the whole aisle length: even the reduced area due to the organ pipes is sufficient for an en-suite. To satisfy spatial standards the top 1.5M of wall in the central bay is removed to form a reasonable 19m² for the living space cantilevered 1.8M beyond the existing wall face. Being central on the north side and close to the dense belt of trees along this boundary limits the impact visually of the roof extension from the roadside and public realm generally.
- 5.6 The mezzanine level is structured independently of the existing fabric of the Church by a steel beam and post framework and by the main walls for fire/acoustic compartmentation bearing on a concrete raft foundation needing limited excavation; thus avoiding new superimposed loads being taken by the existing walls and foundations.
- 5.7 The steel posts are 'hidden' within the insulative inner lining to the external walls whilst the main separating wall is freestanding beyond the north face of the arcading to maintain articulation of this feature.
- 5.8 The wall in painted fair-faced blockwork defines the modern intervention differently from the plastered existing finish. It features the relocated monument in the bay next to the organ, access to WCs via a glazed door in a two-centred arch with one chamfered order and a similar arch feature above the boarded sliding doors to the kitchen servery.
- 5.9 The mezzanine floor incorporates also the fire and acoustic separation where required.
- 5.10 The full length of the roof structure to the north aisle is maintained visually by clear glazing above the partitions separating the spaces.
- 5.11 Obviously the Chancel and Priests Room will continue to function as previously; the use and location of pulpit, organ, vestry, choir stalls, chancel seats, and font are retained.
- 5.12 For the Church to function properly, for the community, both ecclesiastically and socially in various ways, a major impediment concerns the pews - that most characteristic feature of any church. Traditionally, as here, pews are fixed to a timber floor raised above the nave floor as a small step.



ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

7

6 Proposal: Massing/Scale

- 6.1 Only one element of the proposal has an impact externally; the extension to the north facade, projecting 1.8M beyond the existing wall plane, for adequate living space at the upper level. Given the exposure to severe weather from this direction, the addition of a small lobby (totally glazed for transparency) projecting beyond the north doorway, proposed initially, is omitted now; any perceived benefit being outweighed by its impact visually.
- 6.2 The extension has a gabled roof, echoing the precedence of the Church's distinctive east and west facades. Its roof slope, eaves and ridge levels are determined by the existing.
- 6.3 The cantilevered form of the extension, expressed as a light-weight structure, is considered an appropriate, if dramatic, contrast to the solid masonry character of the Church.
- 6.4 In the context of the north facade and indeed the Church as a whole the proportions of the extension primarily at roof level are respectful in massing and scale.
- 6.5 Internally the 'infilling' of the north aisle is articulated respectfully not to affect detrimentally the dominant character of the arcading to the interior as a whole.

7 Proposal: Appearance

- 7.1 Although the extension is expressed in a contemporary ethos the form and materials relate to the Church in a sympathetic and complementary way.
- 7.2 The roof planes in metal sheet contrast with the existing slate. It is intended to reuse the existing cast iron guttering, painted black.
- 7.3 The soffit of the cantilevered floor is a contextual response to the solid strength epitomised by the stone buttresses. It is to be finished in a Sto silicone render system over EPS insulation in Sto colour ref 37107 (approx BS 4800 ref 00 A 05).
- 7.4 In contrast the lightness of the form above is emphasised visually by frameless - corner bay windows and clerestorey glazing isolating the roof planes from the gable walling.
- 7.5 The latter is timber framed and clad in aluminium sheet - oxidising to a matt light grey complementing the stone colour whilst the panel flatness contrasts with the stone texture.
- 7.6 Glazing frames in aluminium, polyester powder coated to BS 4800 ref 00 A 00 are to be Velfac 200 system for the main windows but simple angle beading for the clerestoreys. Conservation rooflighting by The Rooflighting Company, installed level with the slate finish in the south roof slope to the north aisle, are unlikely to be seen, if then only from a considerable distance.



ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

8

- 7.7 Although the roof to the extension is formed as a gable, the verge is expressed minimally, articulated from the wall plane below by clerestorey glazing and as a stepped-back aluminium pressing, polyester powder coated 00 A 00 to respond to the metal roofing.
- 7.8 External and internal verge soffits each side of the clerestorey glazing are finished in Oak boards to echo the main structure.
- 7.9 Should the provision of paving adjacent to doorways prove to be desirable due to usage it is to match the existing stone apron.
- 7.10 Grass disturbed installing the drainage will be reinstated.

For appearance internally refer to other sections.

8 Proposal: Landscaping

- 8.1 It is intended that the existing character of the old churchyard around the Church remains unchanged.
- 8.2 However more frequent management/maintenance is anticipated. In this context the overgrown nature of self-seeded saplings, especially sycamore, within the belt of trees adjacent to the north boundary will be removed as well as ivy affecting the trunks of more mature trees.

9 Transport Links/Parking

- 9.1 Whilst the remoteness of Churchend and the site has obvious implications for travel, a more major factor which limits any public access onto Foulness Island is the strict security control imposed by the Ministry of Defence.
- 9.2 Access to the site is via the single 'spinal' road from the control gate close to Great Wakering village, some 5 miles away to the south, where there is also a bus stop with a limited service.
- 9.3 The nearest railway station, the terminus at Shoeburyness, is some 7 miles away also to the south.
- 9.4 Obviously the use of a car is fundamental to life on the Island but equally some inhabitants of Churchend may be used to walking to the Church or other social gatherings.
- 9.5 For the residential use 'incidental to the Rectory' a single car parking space is proposed as one of several spaces used informally beside the approach to the Rectory.
- 9.6 There is no possibility of parking within the churchyard, so historically visitors to the Church have parked vehicles partly on the grass verges on both sides but allowing sufficient width not to obstruct the road. It is proposed this practice should prove satisfactory for any new community use of the Church; based on floor area 17 car spaces are required.



ST MARY the VIRGIN FOULNESS

16

- 3.6 Existing fabric repair: Internally
Renew plaster where necessary; investigate masonry background for cause of cracking, mainly above windows and doors, but not evident externally.
Re-level stone slabs around font
- 4 Proposal's Impact on The Heritage Asset: Externally
- 4.1 The introduction of conservation rooflighting in pairs, except at each end bay, centred about the principal mid-bay rafter is considered to impact minimally.
- 4.2 The most significant impact has to be the extension to the north elevation. The gabled projection, centrally on the north aisle, echoes the aisle's slate roof profile exactly from eaves to ridge, but clad in metal sheet to express the modern intervention.
- 4.3 A contrasting metal cladding and rendered soffit to the cantilevered floor are chosen to respond sympathetically and complement the stone colour, whilst expressing the extension in a contemporary way.
- 4.4 Existing fabric repair: Externally
Essential repairs are proposed to ensure the weathertightness of the Church generally involving the overhaul of all roofs, including the renewal of cedar shingles to the spire, lead-camed glazing and stonework, particularly the replacement of dislodged copings, although cosmetic issues of erosion will be left for the future.
Although repaired temporarily recently, it is intended to renew the valley gutters in thick zinc pressings. These would be supported on a treated timber substrate to falls with a single central joint designed for expansion and with welded outlets through the parapet at each end.

RECEIVED

22 11 2013

RECEPTION