

Church: Holt, St Andrew's
Interviewee: C2 – Glyn Purland
Date: Thursday, 2 July 2015

1. NW: Glyn, thank you very much for agreeing to be interviewed for this project.
2. C2: You're very welcome.
3. NW: Could I start just by asking how long you've been connected with the church?
4. C2: Ten years...
5. NW: Ten years.
6. C2: ...between nine and ten years.
7. NW: Did you come to Holt, did you retire here, or did you...?
8. C2: Yes, I retired here, although this is my home territory. I was born in Sherringham, my wife's from Cromer, we've lived all over the place, but came home, as it were eleven years ago, and joined the congregation here ten years ago.
9. NW: And your specific professional area of expertise?
10. C2: Most of my career was in the health service as a manager, involved in major projects.
11. NW: Building projects?
12. C2: Sometimes capital building projects, for example the Queen's Medical Centre project in Nottingham, sometimes organisation development projects, for example the work I did with the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary, sometimes rolling out major service delivery projects. When I left the NHS I worked with Macmillan Cancer Support, the cancer charity, for several years and was involved in rolling out national service improvement projects. So all my life has been to do with projects, long term multi-year projects of different kinds.
13. NW: So would you describe yourself as a project manager or...?
14. C2: Yeah, well I've carried different titles, chief executive, heads of this, that and the other, but I've always deemed my work to be around the notion of projects, a piece of work having a beginning, a middle and an end, and it resulting in an improvement.
15. NW: So a very valuable set of skills for a church to have, I think.
16. C2: Well I guess so. Although when I arrived, and I became churchwarden right at the beginning of this building extension project that we're talking about now... I wasn't recruited as churchwarden in order to fulfil this project, but the timings coincided well. So my four year period as churchwarden saw me involved wholly from beginning to end with this building project.
17. NW: Thank you. To you personally, what do you think is the most important aspect of the building; I'm thinking of the building as it was, the main part of the building as it were.
18. C2: Yeah. Well it's essentially a place of worship, it's a place where the people of God in this parish gather, meet together, socialise together, give praise and worship to

God together. That's its prime function. But of course within a community like Holt, Holt's not a big town, it's 4,000 population, a market town originally, with lots of additions. So in addition to being a meeting place and a place of worship for the people of God, I mean it's the focus of the community in lots of different ways. There are just two church buildings in Holt: this one, the Church of England parish church, and the Methodist church which is at the other end of the High Street. So those two places in a sense hold the community. And lots of things happen here, lots of cultural activities were happening before the extension was built: concerts, exhibitions, meetings, hustings...

19. NW: So would the hustings have taken place within the church?
20. C2: Yeah, yeah. In the recent General Election all the local political candidates gathered in the church building, and we had an interesting, lively evening with them. So yes. So it carries those two functions: primarily it's a place of worship and a place of meeting for the people of God, but it's also a focal point for the community.
21. NW: Thank you. You have obviously been through a process of getting permission for what is a change to the church, albeit linked to it...
22. C2: Yeah
23. NW: How would you describe that process; has it been a good process... a frustrating process...?
24. C2: Yeah, I think it's... I haven't found it overpowering. It's complex, and I suppose it helps that I'm used to dealing with complex projects and complex people [laughs] within those processes. The history of this particular project is quite interesting. I don't know how much Howard... where Howard started the story of this building. But from my perspective, as soon as I became churchwarden, I asked some questions about a building extension proposal which was already developed, not fully developed, but partially developed. There were plans, architects had been involved, local architects, not our church architect. It was a completely different kind of scheme...
25. NW: This was the addition to the south aisle...?
26. C2: Yes, the so-called 'lean-to project'. That project had received nods of approval at diocesan level and from English Heritage, but it quickly became apparent to me when just asking questions about the project as it then was, that I knew nothing about, that locally there was a lot of discontent about it, people were not happy about it, either about the look of it, or the scale of it.
27. NW: Because it was too big?
28. C2: Too small.
29. NW: Too small; so not enough benefit for...
30. C2: Correct, for the needs that had been identified in the Statement of Need[s] that had already been worked out by the time I entered the arena. So yeah, there were concerns about the scale of it being too small, there were major concerns within the congregation, even within the project group that had been put together to

steer the project, there were concerns about the fact that it was a lean-to literally abutting onto the south aisle, with effect on the general appearance from the south, and more particularly an impact on the stained glass windows on the south; it would have cut a lot of the light from the south windows. But nonetheless the scheme had been developed over a period of time, money had been spent on architect's fees, time had been invested in gaining nods of approval but no formal approvals from some of the key stakeholders like English Heritage and the DAC. So the first few months of my involvement was actually spent in gently but firmly dismantling this project as it were, as it then stood.

31. NW: That's quite a brave position to take...
32. C2: Yes.
33. NW: ...particularly coming into the community relatively recently.
34. C2: I had been in the congregation for a while, but I hadn't been... I'd been in the congregation probably four years; I mean I was known, but not prominent. So yes, that was difficult, because clearly one or two people were wedded to it. And then you had to explain... and a certain amount of progress had been made in it. So my first involvement was actually really seeing through, and acting on, what I was being told, it wasn't a personal opinion I had that I hated this scheme and it had to go. I was hearing. I suppose in a sense I was new and had arrived and was asking questions. So my first few months were spent, as I said, going backwards, stopping, or gently putting a pillow over a scheme.
35. NW: At that stage... because I understand that the ability to purchase the plot of land on...
36. C2: Yes.
37. NW: ...which the new building now sits came along later. Was that on the horizon at that stage or not?
38. C2: Not really, no. This was the remarkable period, while in a sense we were going through the pain of dismantling the scheme prior to this one... There had been many other schemes by the way, and I think, my personal view is that English Heritage and the DAC that had seen over the years, over many years, various ideas and schemes for St Andrew's, Holt, thought 'Well this lean-to scheme, it's OK, let's just let it go. Let's give Holt finally... Holt needs something, let's let it go.' I don't think there was ever any great enthusiasm anywhere, but it was, quotes, "better than nothing".
39. NW: And are you familiar with any of the details of the other schemes; I wasn't aware of those...
40. C2: Oh yeah.
41. NW: ...where they were trying to have things.
42. C2: The scheme that was stopped?
43. NW: No the...
44. C2: Oh the previous scheme, oh yeah. Again, way before my time, and indeed some of the schemes beyond, a bit before Howard Stoker's time, in Stephen Gregory,

his predecessor's, time. The major schemes of mimicking the current building with big extensions in the churchyard out to the north, because that was seen as the only real option where there was land that we owned; we didn't own land, we needed land, this side. So there had been a number of schemes, none of them had got that far. But what that demonstrates is that there had been a need expressed for a long time, decades, and a lot of time had been spent, stopping and starting, not constantly over decades, but stopping and starting various schemes had appeared. And my sense is that people like the DAC and English Heritage had seen the modest lean-to scheme as something they could probably approve. But it wasn't what this building deserved, in my view and others, and it wasn't what the service that we wanted to develop needed. And therefore it was gently but firmly stopped. While that was happening the remarkable events that encouraged us to develop something larger and more radical I suppose,, in terms of architecture and design, happened. First of all it became apparent that Greshams School who owned the land where the extension now sits would be prepared to sell us a piece of land. That didn't just happen; we have two or three members of our congregation who have strong connections with Greshams. So feelers were put out: 'Do you think Greshams might be prepared...' and yes they were prepared to sell us, at a very modest price, the land to develop something on this side, on the south side of the church. A £100,000 legacy appeared out of the blue, with no strings attached: sign number two. We could lift our eyes to something slightly better. Sign number three: our church architect, Ruth Blackman, who hadn't been involved in the scheme that was stopped, because she hadn't had time to be involved, time miraculously became available. She supported the view that we must not go forward with the so-called lean-to scheme, that we must do something, quotes, "better and bigger". So there's the [third] sign that God was prompting us to do something for his greater glory. And the fourth sign was more complicated, but from a meeting, well discussions between myself and individual key players, like the DAC and English Heritage and Local Authority conservation planners, it became apparent that they were prepared to consider something slightly more radical, something slightly more modern, something slightly grander. And a new rapport between the church, the church architect, and the outside bodies was born, on site, together, all together for the first time actually, all the key players together on site for the first time, talking about what might be possible with this little piece of land that we might be able to get from Greshams.

45. NW: When was that, roughly?

46. C2: Well, I can tell you exactly. This is the last report that I did for the Annual Church Meeting in April 2014, and I included the timeline [searches]... September 2009. So there were four signs that, without being super-spiritual about it, some of us felt God is wanting us to do something, and is wanting this group of people who happen to be in St Andrews at this particular point in time to do it. So Ruth, in April 2010, she started doodling, and these are Ruth's early doodles; you might be interested.

47. NW: Yes.
48. C2: You see, I've kept them. Most of the files, the hard copy files, in fact pretty well all of them are now in the church somewhere up in the roof. But I've got most of the files on the computer, and I kept some of these key documents back. These were her early doodles...
49. NW: So at this stage we've got the form of the roof that you've ended up with...
50. C2: Yes.
51. NW: ... which was not uncontroversial, was it?
52. C2: No.
53. NW: So you've got a door out to the south side...
54. C2: That was a door out into the churchyard, which didn't happen... not into the churchyard, into the Greshams car park, which didn't happen. But the form on this side, with the brickwork, the three windows remain, the curved roof, curving to the east, rising to the east, yep, that was the concept, and on the side that we're sitting in now, glass.
55. NW: It's very similar, different in a few details, but very similar in its...
56. C2: Yes.
57. NW: ...execution.
58. C2: Yes. This is very early 2010. And then of course the form of the glass wall... I remember Howard saying, as we started doodling the roof, that I want a wall of glass. It's pretty hard to have just a wall of glass, you need a [laughs] frame. So the progression then happened, but this was the key, the moment as it were, when the overall shape, and the concept of the building, was put onto paper. And we had some reason to believe that even though we were talking now about a contemporary building extension to a medieval church, that if we were careful, and kept our channels of communication wide open, that we would be able to get the approvals that we needed. And so we progressed that form of design.
59. NW: In terms of that September 2009 meeting from which the rest of the project flowed really, am I right that English Heritage was there, and the Local Authority conservation officer...
60. C2: Yes, that's right, the conservation planner.
61. NW: ...presumably some folk from the DAC?
62. C2: Yes, there were the DAC, the DAC... two or three representatives of the DAC, including the chairman.
63. NW: But none of the other amenity societies...
64. C2: No.
65. NW: ...such as the Victorian Society?
66. C2: No, the Victorian Society is a story all on its own, which I can tell you about later, if time per[mits]. Well do you want me to...
67. NW: Please, yes.
68. C2: Well, the Victorian Society were not on the list of consultees.

69. NW: Whose list is that?
70. C2: The list that we were given by the DAC; lots of people were, but they weren't, because there's nothing Victorian in the church. But after the plans had gone to the DAC, and had been approved by the DAC, the late thought by the DAC [was] that we should run them past the Victorian Society. Meanwhile we're now at a fairly late stage in the project; we were at the stage where we were just about, well we were waiting for the faculty certificate to be issued.
71. NW: So had you been to tender by then?
72. C2: Yes, oh yes. We were sweating on the faculty; we had let a contract in expectation of the faculty; lots of things were happening in parallel. Actually, the overall timeline was quite brisk; I don't know whether you would agree, but...
73. NW: As church project go, yes, I definitely would agree.
74. C2: It's fairly brisk, anyway, given that we had the early period when we were stopping one scheme and starting another one.
75. NW: So from your timeline, the PCC agreed to let the building contract in April 2012, and you got your faculty in May 2012, so was it in this period that the Victorian Society were being...?
76. C2: Yes, they were being consulted, and we heard nothing at all, and then out of the blue they lodged a formal objection. Just before the faculty was issued.
77. NW: And what was the impact of that objection?
78. C2: Well, given that all of the other bodies had either been supportive or neutral, and all their concerns had been dealt with by the registrar, the diocesan registrar, who was *extremely* helpful, and a key player, and particularly at this late stage, and given that the contract was due to start, as you can see, a week after the faculty...
79. NW: Right, yes.
80. C2: ...that we were sweating, rather, for the faculty. I went to the registrar, who I had got to know a little by this time, to ask him how we should deal, how he was going to deal [laughs] with the objections from the Victorian Society. And he and I sat in his office and he rang, and he talked to the Victorian Society, we had a three-way conversation with the Victorian Society. He explained the stage we'd reached, asked them questions again about why they were concerned. Their concerns were genuine, but there were no Victorian artefacts or pews or anything specific for them to say, 'these must be retained, or blah, blah, blah'; their concerns were general: they didn't like the scheme.
81. NW: And am I right that they didn't like the form...
82. C2: Correct.
83. NW: ...the modern form of the roof?
84. C2: Correct, correct. They didn't like the shape of the scheme, they thought it detracted from the medieval architecture, so it was a general comment that anyone could have made, whether their concern, whether their *raison d'être* was victoriana or not. So we had a very long and very detailed conversation, the three of us, in the diocesan registrar's office, and he persuaded them, not to withdraw

their objection, but not to pursue it, so it was noted. And the next day the registrar issued the faculty, and the next week the builders started on site. So that could have been difficult; it could have cost us time, it could have cost us money if we'd had to delay the start of the contract. But all the way through these stages just before construction I was in regular contact with the registrar, particularly on how we should handle the letting of the contract. Because the tendering process itself had also not been easy, in the sense that we had struggled to get a tender price within a budget that we were comfortable with. £500,000 was the maximum the PCC were comfortable with. Well the tenders came in way above that. We met with two, the two lowest tenderers, both of whom were tens of thousands of pounds higher than half a million, and went through cost reduction exercises, so all that was happening as well, while the consultation was going on with the external bodies, the hard numbers game was being played with two lowest tenderers, and we adjusted one... we managed to get the lowest tender down to £499,999.99 recurring, a figure that the PCC at this meeting, whenever it was, yeah, let the contract. Though we didn't have half a million pounds at this stage, but we had reason to believe that we could pay bills of that order of magnitude. And it's classic project management stuff I suppose, isn't it? – keeping lots of balls in the air, and lots of plates spinning, and occasionally one or two look like they're dropping or look like they're spinning out of control. As long as most of them are under control most of the time, the project continues, and so the project was continued.

85. NW: One of the things that I am struck by just from experience elsewhere is that, whereas you came to this project with a career's worth of project management experience, most churches don't have anything resembling that, and it's very difficult for them to see how to get from beginning to end; it just seems so complex, you know which bit should come first...
86. C2: Yeah.
87. NW: Because the way in which it sounds as if it happened, I think probably couldn't have happened without your faith in the basic way in which these processes work, such that you could take a risk at a particular time.
88. C2: Yes, I think that's right. Yes there was a lot of prayer going on. The other thing that we did early on... The previous scheme that was stopped had been developed by a committee, with a chair, separate from the PCC, though obviously related to it. So there was a structure in place, and it became apparent that communications within this committee, and between this committee and other parts of the church, were not good. So one of the things I did early on... well we gently put... we thanked and blessed the original committee on its way, and did not form a new committee. The steering committee was the PCC; the project group was the Standing Committee of the PCC; so we had no communication problems, because it was owned, and I was never called project manager, because there was connotations in that of one person being in charge of it, and that wasn't appropriate given the nature of the previous scheme, where one person had been

seen to be driving it. So my job was to serve the project group, to serve the Steering Committee. So the structure was deliberately pared down and simplified, and unified with the structures that already existed. And that worked perfectly well.

89. NW: Was there any difficulty in that transition from... Because if somebody has become identified with a project that stops, it can be quite difficult relationally.
90. C2: Well, yeah, it was difficult, particularly difficult between the person who had led the original scheme and myself, for no good reason, for no particular reason that I can think of, but yes, it got personal for a while.
91. NW: And are they still within the church?
92. C2: Yes.
93. NW: Good.
94. C2: Yes.
95. NW: We've talked about the Victorian Society episode; presumably there were other amenity societies involved, SPAB for example?
96. C2: Yes, SPAB were involved. I mean I don't have all the comments from all of the organisations to hand but, yeah, SPAB were involved, but they were... No I'm not going to try and remember what they said, I can't remember. I'm not even sure I have their... I may have, even all the files are now on the disk...
97. NW: Don't worry, that's fine. But I suppose from what you were saying the Victorian Society were apart in a separate category...
98. C2: Yes, they were...
99. NW: ...in terms of...
100. C2: They were.
101. NW: ...objecting to the scheme?
102. C2: Yes, they lodged a formal objection to the scheme. Nobody else lodged a formal objection.
103. NW: Presumably anticipating a consistory court then...
104. C2: Yes.
105. NW: ...which is the normal way that...
106. C2: Well yes, that's right, and that would have been awful, given the stage we'd reached. [Looking in file] I wonder, have I got something in here? A summary of... I don't know whether I have, to be honest. Oh yes we had some interesting... I've got archaeology here, I'm looking at the 'a's on the files. We had to go through some... I mean what's that all about? We had to spend a lot of money, for architects from the County Council, from Norfolk County Council, to come and dig major trenches...
107. NW: Or archaeologists?
108. C2: Yes.
109. NW: Yes.

110. C2: Yes, to find a few scraps of pottery. I mean we had to do that, there wasn't a choice. And I can imagine that in some sensitive sites that would be, I suppose, that would be understandable. What am I looking for? No I don't think I have...
111. NW: Not to worry, it's fine. From your experience of the Victorian Society, as the most prominent example of them, what do you think they saw as being at stake in the building, in the project?
112. C2: Well, the integrity of the medieval church standing in its medieval churchyard.
113. NW: So for them, an extension, at least an extension of this form, would compromise or destroy that integrity, compromise it at least.
114. C2: Yes, that's right. When you're extending a medieval building, you've got two choices, haven't you? Basically you either try and mimic medieval architecture, or you don't, and if you don't then the sky's the limit, but sensitivity rules. And this is where Ruth [Blackman] earned her corn, because Ruth's time became available, which was a miracle. She supported the idea that we do something other than the lean-to scheme, which was helpful, and she was trusted and respected locally, she knew St Andrew's church, and we knew she loved it as much as us, and would not hurt it in any way, shape or form.
115. NW: So she had authority and credibility?
116. C2: Correct, correct. And creativity. Now for Ruth this is a major scheme; her life is mainly spent quinquennial-ing, keeping churches in decent repair; she's done one or two very minor modifications, but this to her was a big scheme. But from the way she talked about it – did Howard show you this [the project book]?
117. NW: Howard in fact he gave me a copy of it.
118. C2: Oh wonderful. Because you'll see the way she talked about, the way she explained her design. And that form of words came out of the conversations that we'd had with her in the very early days. So everything she said, and everything she then drew, and the CAD drawings and everything else, led us to a) understand what she had in mind, and b) to support it. And overall this building was not in any way to detract from the medieval church but to add to it with particular... in practical terms and also in visual terms. Because the views from the south, if you look from the south, well that view is stunning, isn't it?
119. NW: Yes.
120. C2: I mean it is, stunning. But not all the bodies that would [give] advice necessarily agreed with that, but they understood, apart from the Victorian Society who said 'No, we don't like like it'.
121. NW: So apart from the Victorian Society, they may have disagreed, but not strongly enough to wish to...
122. C2: Correct, correct.
123. NW: And the attachment to this being a new building in a modern idiom, so I suppose there's obviously the sweeping roof...
124. C2: Yes, the rising roof.

125. NW: Yes, where did that come from, that conviction that it ought to be a modern building?
126. C2: Well I think it came partly from looking back at some of the drawings that had been undertaken many years ago, the idea for example of building to the north, almost a mini St Andrews, and that, compared with the doodlings that Ruth was beginning to develop, led us very quickly to support the new rather than the old. And the fact that the building was to incorporate modern and traditional elements, I mean the bricks are hand made bricks, gault bricks, there's lots of wood, there's lots of stone, so there was continuity in the materials, but contemporary in some others. The roof is zinc, the glass and the structural elements are powder coated aluminium. But overall, the blend of design and materials, and the positioning of the extension on *this* side of the church, giving a particular view of the whole, what is now a whole not a church and an extension, I think was grabbed hold of very, very early by the whole PCC and then by the congregation. Very quickly people liked it, they just liked it.
127. NW: Good.
128. C2: It was a soft... the curve is a soft form. It reveals the church, because of the rise of the roof the south elevation of the church is revealed, as it were, as your eye travels.
129. NW: As you walk around it, different parts are revealed in different ways I guess...
130. C2: Yes, and the other thing that's revealed of course is the bonus for building on this side of the church with a link corridor, the bonus is the courtyard, which is...
131. NW: Yes, which is delightful, beautiful.
132. C2: ...both beautiful and very, very useful. And the view of the south elevation of the church is a view that was never seen before. Not only do we have a courtyard, but the view from this meeting room that we're in now and from the courtyard of the church is completely new. Particularly in the dark, with the lights on in the south aisle, the effect through the stained glass is quite special. So there were lots of good things to talk about; and we didn't talk about modern or contemporary, we just talked about the building. I should add at this point one thing that we didn't pay enough attention to was the acoustics in this room that we're now in. There's a flag there for people who like high-roofed... I mean our choirmaster thinks it's fantastic, his choir practices in here sound wonderful, but we are now two years on from the opening of the building, needing to address the acoustics in this high...
133. NW: Because it's too echoey...?
134. C2: Yes. It's OK one person talking to an assembled room, but we use the room a lot for small table discussions, cafeteria style, and some people do struggle with the sound. There are a lot of hard surfaces in here.
135. NW: So some acoustic panels fixed to the walls...?
136. C2: Yeah, we are literally waiting as we speak for an acoustic engineer's report. So you could argue we got carried away with the architecture, and we didn't... I mean the

ceiling panels are acoustic, but there are no other soft surfaces in here. But nonetheless, I digress slightly... [laughs]

137. NW: It's fascinating, thank you. Turning to your reflections on the process, what do you think you've learned from doing a project within a church setting as opposed to your previous healthcare experience? And have any of your ideas changed?

138. C2: Yeah, I was very careful... As I say, I didn't become churchwarden in order to lead this project; I became churchwarden, and then the project emerged as it were. And people didn't generally, my colleagues, didn't know my background, particularly. I was put here, I mean people believe now, 'Cometh the moment, cometh the man', people say.

139. NW: Well, you were certainly a very good fit for...

140. C2: I think it probably was part of God's plan that I did need to be here. But the reason I say that is that I was very cautious not to be seen to be *the* lead figure, or *the* project manager.

141. NW: So that's a difference with your previous experience?

142. C2: No, well I was going to say I have always worked collaboratively, and have always enjoyed that, and have always felt it's the most effective way of working in projects of whatever kind, to work collaboratively. But nonetheless, even in the collaborative working group, one person tends to be acknowledged as the person who's coordinating or something, and they're usually called the lead, or manager, or something, and I was determined that shouldn't happen. And I think I probably exaggerated that. I maintained that attitude of servant rather than master all the way through, but it is a fact that I was spinning all the plates, including the fundraising – not fundraising, but ensuring the fundraising, and finance-gathering activities were in sync with everything else that was happening – so yes it all was becoming centred on me. It wasn't structured to do that; I've explained that the structures need to be as they were. It was crucial therefore that I was churchwarden, that I had already had in a sense some status within the church as an organisation. Through that, and that was what I clung to, even to the point of extending my duration as churchwarden to a fourth year; normally here you're churchwarden for three years. I said I was happy to stay on a fourth year, because the project wasn't quite complete, and I didn't want to complete it from a position other than churchwarden. So I think that what I'm saying in a very convoluted way is that I think I probably exaggerated... I don't regret the way I behaved through this at all, but I was slightly surprised by how willing people were, apart from one person [laughs], to give me, and to acknowledge in a sense the authority.

143. NW: Yes, to allow you to lead.

144. C2: Yeah, I think that's right. I was surprised by that, I think.

145. NW: And in terms of the process, any points from the process?

146. C2: Well, somebody asked me once what the lessons were from the project, and I think I just said 'early and continuous consultation and communication with the key players, locally and nationally'. I don't think there were any surprises, apart from the Victorian Society, I wasn't surprised by any of it. But a) the fact that you

needed to consult with the... I was annoyed by the archaeology, because for the simple reason that there was no particular reason to believe that this site held any archaeological interest, there wasn't – point 1. Point 2: we spend a lot of money, I mean tens of thousands of pounds, point 2. And point 3: we saw archaeologists standing around all day while people dug just to see something come up. Now we negotiated like mad the price of the archaeology, to ensure that we only paid for archaeologists when they were necessary on site, but nonetheless I still think we got very little. I don't think anybody gained anything, not even the archaeologists, from that. If there's a way of tightening up the framework within which archaeologists are required, I'm not sure. So I was annoyed by that, but apart from that, I think...

147. NW: Where did the requirement come from – from the DAC or from planning?

148. C2: Local authority, yeah, yeah.

149. NW: As a condition on your [planning] approval.

150. C2: Yeah, it was. Local conservation... But I think in terms of the local planners, English Heritage, who always appeared to be the lead external player and who initially we had a difficult relationship with, but that softened. But the others, SPAB etc. I wasn't surprised by any of the comments they made, and as I say none of them were so strong in their comments that the scheme was prejudiced. Other than that, keeping all the other things... I mean I was used to dealing with technical people, quantity surveyors, contractors... We did another interesting thing, that Ruth hadn't done before. Ruth, as I said a couple of times, time became available, but her time was still of the essence, and so she was very happy and wanted to be involved in the concept and the design and the shape, but she wasn't in a position to produce detailed specifications and to act as the project architect; I'm not sure that would have been her strength anyway. So she graciously agreed, for the first time in her working career, to work alongside a sort of technical...

151. NW: An executive architect as it were?

152. C2: Yes, yeah. Which is easy to say, but finding the right person. Again, appointing the team was something I was used to doing, and was happy to do it and I took advice from various sources to find the right people. So Colin Williams was appointed, and he played the major part...

153. NW: Who was Colin Williams?

154. C2: Colin Williams, he's what you would call the executive architect, although he didn't have an architectural qualification. But he had all sorts of... he runs a firm called WCK Architectural Services. He had worked at Cromer Local Authority, so he knew people and processes on that side; he's a detailed man, he wrote all the details for the specifications and managed the architectural... well, he acted as project architect. And he and Ruth worked... what was novel about that for Ruth was that she'd never worked in that type of relationship before, and it worked extremely well for both parties. Did it cost a little bit more? Well Ruth's hourly rates were extremely generous. Costs therefore of appointing and servicing a team;

structural engineers, big, Plandescil, experts, but quite high cost, quantity surveyor from Norwich, modest costs, electrical engineer...

155. NW: Was there a bill of quantities?

156. C2: No.

157. NW: So it was budget predictions...

158. C2: Yeah, yeah. But nonetheless there were quite a lot of costs. One of my... I was quite nervous, I confess, about not just defining but explaining some of these add-on costs. The building cost, I think I said, we let the contract based on a budget of half a million [pounds]. The contractor, a local contractor, Fisher Bullen, built the building extremely well, and relations between the builders and us were brilliant from day one. Relations between us and the contractor in settling the final account were extremely difficult, extremely difficult.

159. NW: So, lots of claims for extras?

160. C2: Yeah, yeah, huge, huge number. Hours and hours and hours spent in the year following construction. It's on here, it's on the time[line], building work finished April [2013], final account finished March 2014, a year of extremely difficult arguing, not negotiating, arguing. And it became clear that once the builders left site and the suits arrived from Fisher Bullen that their plan had been to try and reinstate as much as possible from their original tender price. But we conceded some extras quite easily, because we actually reinstated some of the items that we had taken out during the cost reduction exercise; little things, but nonetheless, things like skylights in the link.

161. NW: Well worth having...

162. C2: Yeah.

163. NW: ...well done.

164. C2: Exactly right. So we ended up with a final account figure of £565[,000]. And that figure became... if you ask people who are remotely interested in these things how much the building cost, they would say 'Oh, half a million, wasn't it?' Good value, which it was, is. But the total project costs, which I put on my final report, this is my final report to the Annual Church Meeting, and I carefully explained all the costs. Yeah? Look at them, look at them.

165. NW: Yes, yes, yes, lots.

166. C2: [Laughs] There they all are. Total costs, yeah. And isn't God good? Total building project costs: £716[,000]; total amount in bucket, £719[,000].

167. NW: Yes, fantastic.

168. C2: Job done!

169. NW: Well done.

170. C2: We ended up with about £5k over, which we're now going to spend on the acoustics. But some of those costs... yeah. The dilemma I suppose I had was at what point in the whole process to disclose widely... obviously these costs were being monitored by the project group run by the PCC, because I was reporting every other month to the PCC, written reports, and letting the contracts, all these

different functions, were all approved. But nonetheless, deciding when to disclose the total cost, I decided to wait until we finished, and then explain, in this document. And at the annual meeting, were there lots of people saying 'Well, you said half a million, but it's actually £700,000, no there weren't really, because we'd explained what the costs were. One or two people said to me afterwards, you know, and again I chose not to disclose the individual costs for each individual element, but just to explain these are the kind of... these are the functions that cost money other than the building, and then to put the totals in.

171. NW: Hmm, yes.

172. C2: So I didn't want to open myself up to arguments about how much did you pay for the quantity surveyor.

173. NW: 'Oh you paid £500 too much for a...'

174. C2: Yeah. Or 'I know someone who could have done it for nothing'. And therefore the cost debate did not get out of hand, but arguably because [laughs] we raised the money, it might have got out of hand if we hadn't raised the money.

175. NW: Did you say that when you actually let the contract, how much money did you have?

176. C2: We had, err, about £350[,000].

177. NW: Right. But with an idea of where the rest was coming from?

178. C2: Oh yeah.

179. NW: Which was... what were the missing bits then?

180. C2: Well, the external grants, we made assumptions about external grants. And we had contingency plans against not raising the money, which might have included loans, we were talking about loans, we were talking about cashing in some investments that we'd got, all sorts of things. And every time that was raised, I said bravely, 'It will not be necessary. It will not be necessary. God wants this to happen; it will happen.'

181. NW: But again it's a mixture of...

182. C2: Yes, exactly.

183. NW: ...faith, but also experience...

184. C2: Exactly.

185. NW: ...which is very valuable for a project such as this. Not common, I suggest.

186. C2: Well, I'm surprised you say that, because I would have thought that most congregations these days that have some... a professional man or woman or two.

187. NW: Yes, but many of those don't have experience of building projects. The building side of it is... obviously there are lots of churches that do, but it's not the rule.

188. C2: No, I guess not. Well it's a while since I've done one. As I explained to you, I've done lots of different kinds of project, I haven't done a building project since probably 15, 20 years. But the language and the world, and the way trades and professions interact quickly came back to me. [Laughs]

189. NW: Would you change anything if you were to do it again, in terms of the approach?

190. C2: Uhm. I think, and this is a matter of detail, this is from my notes again of lessons learnt, because of the hassle we had with the building [contract]. Up until the letting of the contract, no; during the construction, no; but in that final year of arguing about the money, my mind was taken back to two things: one, the cost saving exercise, and my note says that 'we should have ensured more fully detailed written communications between the quantity surveyor, the builder and the job architect' – that's this chap Colin – 'to avoid potential misunderstandings and disagreements at later stages in the project'.
191. NW: So that presumably fed into... with insufficient, with not enough of it written down, that fed into...
192. C2: Not enough detail.
193. NW: ...arguments...
194. C2: It gave the builder ammunition to come back and say 'Well, this was in your cost saving list, but you've reinstated it'. We should have, I think... I know it's difficult to record every detail, but I think we probably should have done more. The form of construction contract, I'm not sure whether we should have used a different form of contract.
195. NW: What form of contract was it?
196. C2: Uhm, it was the standard...
197. NW: JCT...?
198. C2: Yes.
199. NW: ...Intermediate?
200. C2: Intermediate, yes it was. Why do I say that? Well the contract overran significantly, the contract was let in April, and they were due to be finished before Christmas, and they didn't finish until the Spring of the following year. That was mainly due to weather. But they claimed extension times in chunks, and we had no choice but to let them go. Now that cost them a lot of money, and I'm sure that was part of their attitude later. I'm sure that the builders lost money on this contract; I'm not sure it mattered particularly to them because it was a prestigious project, and they wanted it. So they certainly didn't make any money on it, and [that was] partly because the contract overran by four months. But we were not able to make any claims against that; the form of contract was quite wishy washy really, it didn't give us many teeth, unless we could demonstrate negligence or something else. But for a half a million pound project, would you... you probably wouldn't normally use any other kind of contract, would you? Because it's not a major... it's a big house, really, these days.
201. NW: Yes.
202. C2: So again, maybe I'm being tough on us, on myself on that. And the other recording issue is the variations to the contract. There were over a hundred variations to the contract, some cost us money, some didn't, but again every variation to contract was then hauled out in the final negotiations and pored over again. And quite a lot of argument took place along the lines of, Mr Builder says,

'You issued... you told us to do that, but there was no official variation to the contract. But we did it'. And Colin Williams would huff and puff and sigh, and say 'For goodness sake!'. And we were talking pennies. Yes, I did take Simon, the on site manager, and we did look at that and I did say 'Could you just...', and he said 'Yeah...'. I think, in my experience, I think we faced an extremely sharp...

203. NW: At least the suits were sharp.

204. C2: Yes, super sharp, verging on the unethical, I have to say. I mean it got extremely, extremely difficult. But whether we could have, with hindsight, reduced the scope for the argument by a different form of contract, or better communications on the cost saving. The QS claimed that he had told the project manager, sorry the project architect everything, every aspect of the cost reduction exercise, and it became apparent that either he hadn't, or the project architect had misunderstood what was said, and that gave the builder again a loophole to go through. So whether we could have been tighter on all of that very technical detail, I'm not sure. But overall, I think it was OK; most people in the church just sat back and watched it...

205. NW: Yes.

206. C2: ...watched it happen. They got fed up with fundraising.

207. NW: Right.

208. C2: We raised a lot of money from the congregation, through different forms.

209. NW: Roughly what proportion of the total?

210. C2: Err, well. £240[,000] out of £7[00,000].

211. NW: So a third.

212. C2: We did it in two major stages. Early on, as soon as the excitement about what it was going to look like was at its height, we organised a pledge weekend, and that generated I think about £80,000. And so we progressed. And then we organised... we did then have a fundraising group which plugged into the project group. And within that group there were people who were prepared to write external grant requests, who had experience of doing that, they'd done it before successfully. And we had people who were organising what we called a fundraising programme of activities, a modest income, but it kept the money coming in.

213. NW: In terms of... there are lots of questions of detail that you are very aware of, but in terms of the completed product is what people enjoy, and that's what endures really isn't it?

214. C2: Yes.

215. NW: From what I understand it has been very well received in the town.

216. C2: Yes, it has, apart from this issue of... Oh yes, very well received, and from people from the town too. Because I mentioned before that occasionally the church is a concert venue, particularly during the Holt Festival, and at other times too, right through the year, well now it's... It was a decent concert venue before, but it had no... it didn't even have a toilet that anyone could go to; now it has bar facilities,

changing facilities, rehearsal facilities, toilet facilities, it's now a really, really nice concert venue, so we're using it increasingly for that, which generates an income. Yes, that's the other thing that I was going to say. I suppose because I have been here before, I was nervous about the revenue consequences of the scheme. I mean our church, while I was churchwarden, our overall – ignoring the fundraising for this – our overall financial arrangements were OK, but while I was churchwarden we had failed to pay our parish share in full, and we had ended at least three of the four years that I was in churchwarden post with a small deficit on our operating budget. So I was quite nervous, and there was growing clamour, that we should pay the parish share, not just from the diocese but from inside the congregation, never mind about building fancy new buildings, pay your parish share, which I had a lot of sympathy with. So I was quite nervous about the impact financially of the new building. It would cost money to run it, and potentially it had income generation appeal, but... So as churchwarden I was already a member of the church's overall finance committee, nothing to do with this, looking at budgeting. So when I stopped becoming churchwarden I stayed on the finance committee and a year ago I became chair of the finance committee, and that was driven by my... a) by my curiosity about what the impact financially of this building would be, but b) my determination to ensure that in a year or two's time people weren't saying our deficit's growing because of that new building.

217. NW: And what is the outcome?

218. C2: Well, the outcome is that we *have* paid our parish share in the last two years, and we ended last year in surplus on the operating budget.

219. NW: Very good...

220. C2: Yes. There's nothing magical, it means that we're now taking... We've got a new treasurer, God sent us a new treasurer who's used to managing finances rather than just writing the statement of accounts. The finance committee has been refreshed in membership, and we're meeting now more regularly, and we know what's happening; nothing magical, just...

221. NW: But presumably not being shy about charging for...

222. C2: Correct.

223. NW: ...use of the facilities?

224. C2: Absolutely right. So now we've got a sharper finance committee, and we've got a new group called an asset management group, which is doing just that, managing our assets, which I started, but in which I'm no longer involved. So it looks like we're through the two year... I mean we're now two years in, so I think next year I will be able to relax and probably step down from the finance committee, and [laughs] job finally done. So there's a sort of a hinterland of the project which I was quite nervous about, not just paying – I always knew God would produce the capital funding. There were moments of course; there was a horrendous moment with VAT, which is worth a sentence or two. Well of course all our financial planning for the project had been on the basis that we wouldn't pay VAT; it's a listed building, an extension to a listed building, we would pay VAT on fees etc,

but not on the building cost; all our planning was on that basis. And again it's that wretched year 2012, just as we were letting the contract, the April 2012 Budget, the Chancellor changed the rules, didn't he? Suddenly it looked like we were going to be paying the VAT on the building, on a half a million pound project. Panic! Well not panic! So that was interesting. I went to see our MP Norman Lamb, who was helpful. He wrote to the Treasury; I mean lots of people were doing this all over the country, of course at that point the Church of England nationally were involved. I rang the lady at Church House in London, who was the Church of England lead negotiator.

225. NW: Anne [Sloman]...

226. C2: No, that's not right is it...?

227. NW: ...or Janet Gough?

228. C2: Janet Gough, Janet Gough, yeah. I explained our position, and she said 'Yes, I'm getting lots of calls like that'. The upshot was I think, that as a result of her work, there was a transition period agreed for schemes that had reached an advanced stage at the time of the Budget announcement.

229. NW: So that gave you security.

230. C2: We crept in under that. The definition of 'advanced stage' was interesting. Had the application for the faculty been put in? Well, we'd written a letter. Anyway we made it just; that could have been horrendous, so that was an interesting aside. But overall financially I didn't ever worry about the capital coming in, but I did worry about the revenue, given that the church's finances were already looking, not in crisis, but not good, not as good as they should have been.

231. NW: Yes...

232. C2: This congregation should be paying its parish share, and it should be generating a small surplus every year really shouldn't it? And it is now.

233. NW: Looking at the experience as a whole, as a summary, is there anything that you would change – magic bullet – if you could change anything about the process of changing a historic building? Is there anything that would make it better, that you would nominate?

234. C2: I think it would have been helpful to have had a more active link person at DAC level.

235. NW: So for example somebody specifically that you would talk to?

236. C2: Somebody more than a secretary. When talking about... well in other words, I suppose why I say that is how did the Victorian Society slip under the net? Somebody made a mistake in not putting them on the original list of people we should have consulted. So I think somebody at DAC level who could have coordinated, or at least signposted us to any likely problems with the external bodies. Because they're the unknown quantities, aren't they?

237. NW: Hmm, and therefore a project risk.

238. C2: They're uncontrollable. You know I can't control them, they're all completely independent free agents, but the DAC are dealing with them all the while, and they

would know who would be likely to be making problems. [Laughs] But we had good relationships with the chair, the deputy chair, and the secretary as far as it went, but the secretary was the secretary, and she shuffled the papers and got us on the agenda for meetings etc. But I think it's fine tuning; overall it was OK, but I think that might have been helpful. I don't deny the legitimate interest of any of the people concerned, apart from the [laughs] archaeologists. The Local Authority, yes I think that worked well. Why did it work well? It worked well because we never dealt with him alone, we dealt with him in company with English Heritage.

239. NW: And obviously with a project like this they would take their lead from English Heritage.

240. C2: So whenever we met, we met them together. No, that's all I can think of. Yeah, I suppose I still feel slightly for a scheme of this... for a half a million pound project, the amount of fees we paid, which in themselves were actually all good deals, because I made sure they were, but if you add them all up, it's quite a lot. You'd never pay that on a... But this is a public building.

241. NW: Yes.

242. C2: You have to appoint a team, a technical team, and get the best deal you can, but the comparison therefore with a private dwelling is probably completely invidious, isn't it? But whether there's a way of actually producing a technical team to support a charity, which is what we are, the church is a charity, this church is an independent charity, without paying commercial rates to a technical team, I don't know.

243. NW: Good, thank you. I think we'll leave it there.

244. C2: OK [laughs].

245. NW: Thank you very much indeed.

246. C2: You're very welcome.