



The Reverend Paul Cubitt
The Rectory
10 Oak Wood
Blofield
Norwich
NR13 4QJ

Our ref: CC/19174/SPAB/11

21st March 2011

Dear Mr Cubitt

**Church of St Andrew and St Peter, Blofield
Re-ordering**

We are grateful to you and Mr Norton for consulting the Society about the proposals which will, inevitably, have a major impact on the interior of the church. Our comments are based on the dossier, which includes drawings dated January 2011, the Statement of Significance and Statements of Need for moving the font, a new heating system and the west end development, the Overview of the development of the west and Commentary on the plans and Appendix 1 Architect's Plans and photographs, Appendix 2 Survey and Survey results file.

From the Statement of Significance it is not clear how important the existing west screen is or when it was introduced. It is not referred to either in the listing description or in the latest volume of Pevsner, but it may have a local importance. Unfortunately, it helps to make the west end of the church dark. Reglazing the west windows of the aisles and the north window of the north west window of the north aisle in clear glass would do much to improve the light at this end of the church,

Moving the Font

Moving the font is clearly central to the scheme for re-ordering at the west end. We were interested to read the reasons for moving the font and its plinth and confirm that the Society has no objection to their re-location to the east end of the north aisle. From the photographs of the font included in the dossier and those available on the Norfolk Churches website it is a work of the greatest craftsmanship as well as being of exceptional interest. We note that it would be moved by stone masons who have done this type of work elsewhere in the diocese but we would prefer that conservators were responsible for moving it. If any damage is done during its relocation please may we be re-assured that any repairs or making good are undertaken by specialist stone conservators.

Heating

We assume that nothing requiring major excavations is required. Will all the space be required for the new boiler in the boiler house or might it be possible to adapt part of this area for storage?

West End Development

With regard to the Statement of Need it is not apparent why a comparatively large enclosed kitchen is needed, for the serving of teas and coffees and a men's group supper club. Has consideration been given to a galley style kitchen, of which there are a number of good examples in the diocese with, perhaps, a mobile servery which could be used in the welcome space? The proposals for the use of the gallery extending over the welcome space are, in our view, not as fully formed or compelling as those for the creation of the welcome space itself.

In general, we have no objection to the creation of the "welcome space" – to the introduction of new glazed doors into the nave and screens north and south, and the removal of the battlemented balustrade over the existing doors into the nave. We have concerns about extending the proposed first floor into the aisles and the staircase in the north aisle projecting beyond the westernmost bay.

Welcome Space

The etched figures that adorn the proposed new glazed doors into the nave are shown on page 12 of the dossier as being considerably more than full height and we wonder whether their size will not preclude the desired "visual connection" between those in the Sunday crèche area and the congregation. Etched figures of this size will have to be of the highest artistic quality.

We agree that the replacement of the existing lobby will do much to lighten this end of the church.

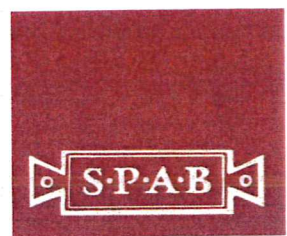
As above, we do not consider that a fully enclosed kitchen of this size is justified by the Statement of Need. If our suggestion for a galley kitchenette, with enclosed surfaces and turn down taps, is pursued more space would become available for storage or, possibly, a second WC.

Are there archaeological implications with regard to supporting the columns of the gallery?

First Floor Level

We are not convinced that extensions into the aisles are justified. These would have a major and, we believe, detrimental impact on the visual aspect of the west end of the building, cutting across the west windows of the aisles horizontally and the ends of the cupboards and WC vertically also. Introducing first floors into the aisles, despite the proposed introduction of light wells, will increase the darkness at the west end of the church.

The elevation on page 15 of the dossier shows how the floor level will have to accommodate the top of the porch doors and arch. As we understand the drawings the gain would be storage on the south side and on the north side a second WC and access to the proposed new gallery. We consider that space could be found for storage elsewhere in the church thus obviating the need for a first floor in the south aisle. For example, well designed cupboards against the north wall of the tower in the vestry, or directly above in the ringing chamber floor or, as we suggest above, in part of the space now designated for a kitchen. It may be that a space audit or similar has been undertaken as part of the proposals but otherwise we suggest such is undertaken.



It seems odd to have a lavatory placed directly above the main entrance to the church – we appreciate that the technical aspect of acoustic separation is very advanced but if there were to be blockages etc this might render the main entrance unpleasant or, at worst, temporarily unusable. Keeping all the drainage at one level would, we suggest, be far easier to manage.

We wonder what alternative locations have been considered for the proposed second lavatory, which is not shown on the plans submitted in November 2010. For example has a semi circular cubicle placed against the north wall of the tower at ground floor level been considered? This would only inhibit the use of the west doors of the tower partly and would have the benefit of uniting the drainage at ground floor level.

Without the first floor projecting into the aisles there might, for example, be a circular stair rising up to the community room adjacent to the west respond of the north arcade.

In passing we note that the view of the west window and its stained glass which would be maintained from the nave and chancel by the use of clear glazing might be compromised if this space were to become an exhibition space.

Tower Room

Details will be required of the junction of the proposed glass screen with the tower arch mouldings and the junctions of the proposed new screen with the moulded stonework elsewhere.

We apologise for the delay in sending these comments to you.

With good wishes

Yours sincerely

Catherine Cullis
Churches and Cathedrals Officer (York, Midlands, South)

Cc by email Mrs Jean Gosling, DAC Secretary
 Mr Terry Norton, Architect
 Mr Nicholas Warns, Joint Committee DAC Nominee
 Mr David Eve, English Heritage
 Mrs Gill Hadlum, Diocesan Registry