

## **Blofield St Andrew and St Peter**

### **Notes of Meeting of DAC Sub-Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 10am at Diocesan House, Easton.**

**Present:** Mr Alan Kefford (Chairman), Mr Hugh Richmond (Vice-Chairman), Mr Iain Walker, Mrs K Weaver, Mrs Jean Gosling (DAC Secretary) and Miss Caroline Rawlings (Assistant DAC Secretary).

The sub-committee examined in detail the revised plans submitted by the parish. The works include the installation of a gallery at the west end, the glazing of the tower arch to create a sound proofed ringing gallery, a mezzanine floor for exhibition space and additional worship area, together with a glazed lower meeting room cum welcoming area and lobby, a refurbished tower room and refurbished kitchen and toilets.

- ① ✓ • The existing 'Georgian' painted screen should remain, although the colour could be changed slightly provided it is kept light. It was felt that this provided a valuable contribution to the history and development of the church. It also has an important relationship with the box pews, although these are from a different phase in the development of the church.
- ② ✓ • The replacement of the existing doors in the centre of the screen with glazed doors was accepted.
- ③ • A glass section between existing painted screen and new gallery was agreed. The balustrades should be timber, and painted to match the existing screen to give uniformity. The depth of the balustrade should extend down so that the floor of the gallery will be hidden. The treatment of the different layers was considered to be crucial, particularly the detailing of the glass linking the screen and gallery.
- ④ • Whilst the majority supported the curved shape of the balcony, there were some reservations on whether the balcony should be straight rather than curved. The projection of the balcony forward from the existing screen was also questioned, and further drawings showing the view of the gallery from the east and in elevation were requested. Details of how the gallery would be supported and how it related to both the columns and piers was requested as none of the drawings showed this level of detail.
- ⑤ • It was felt that the newly formed meeting room, welcoming area and lobby would be extremely dark and that the architect should explore further the possibility of using borrowed light.
- ⑥ • Members were concerned at the way the curve of the new stairs in the north aisle abutted the curved front of the gallery requiring a rectangular landing. This was felt to be awkward. The stair was too close to the column and spoilt the line of the gallery front. It was suggested that the stairs could be redesigned so that they lead straight onto the gallery at a reasonable distance from the column of the arcade. The use of a glass balustrade to the stairs would increase the use of natural light, but the use of a metal rail would bring a new element into the design.

- ⑦ • Lower tower screen. There were discrepancies between the drawings and the discussion at the site meeting. Whilst the meeting recorded that the existing 1920s wooden screen was remaining, the drawings showed it replaced by a glass screen. Clarification was asked for.
- ⑧ • Lower tower room. Members felt that there was very little evidence from the drawings that additional space would be created for children's work. It was also felt that this room would be extremely dark and therefore would be reliant on artificial light.
- ⑨ • Members were supportive of the overall design proposals for the gallery subject to the comments made previously. However they did express concern as to whether the potential costs involved could be justified when weighed against the perceived usage. There was to be no disabled access and it seemed limited use for children. The members felt that the main thrust of the Church's need could probably be achieved without the added expense of the gallery. Recognising that the DAC had an advisory role, it was suggested that the PCC might like to reconsider this aspect of its proposal. Without the gallery a roof could be created over the meeting room/welcome area below with a facility for natural light.
- ⑩ • Questions were raised on how the downstairs meeting room would be used for children's work during services. It was agreed that this is an area that the Archdeacon of Norwich needs to discuss with the incumbent.
- ⑪ • The extension to the vestry was felt to be expensive for very little gain, with no clear indication on how it would be used. It was also noted that this aspect of the application would also require planning permission, as it will alter the external appearance of the church. The thickness of the south wall was questioned, and it was agreed that this should be slimmed down.
- ⑫ • The refurbishment of the kitchen was generally supported, although there were no details on how sound and smells would be dealt with, nor how the gallery floor would relate to the windows, or how much natural light would be retained.
- ⑬ • It was felt that the inner lobby to the toilet was problematic. This was an opportunity to improve the layout to ensure that the church has a fully compliant disabled access toilet.
- ⑭ • The relocation of the War Memorial in the south aisle chapel was supported.
- ⑮ • A revised Statement of Need was requested in respect of the gallery and vestry if these proposals are to proceed. Members were acutely aware that the parish is currently fundraising for a new heating scheme and match funding for a Heritage Lottery/English Heritage grant for urgent repairs. They therefore urged them to consider phasing this work to maintain the impetus of the project, carrying out each element when it becomes affordable.