

Responses to new Pastoral Centre plans July 24th 2009 Version 2 with project team comments on responses

The drawings for option 10 have been exhibited at all Masses at St Peters, St Thomas More and St Stephens and offered to St Gregory. They have been discussed at meetings of some groups using the parish centre (CWL, 10.30 coffee group, youth group, CAFOD lunches) and responses have been received from other groups (children's liturgy, mums and toddlers), and individuals.

Responses have been overwhelmingly positive, with a great deal of excitement from most of those who are regular users of the parish centre. Lift, level access, kitchen, larger and more spaces for meetings and gathering space all attracted approval. Moving the parish offices out of Peterhouse into the new pastoral centre met with approval to create a more quiet and private place for clergy, and also to create a more welcoming and supportive office for parishioners.

Response to the architectural style was mixed with most in favour and the connection to Peterhouse seen as very good. There was some clear dissent on style both ways. Two wanting a more challenging modern building; an opportunity in such an important place to do something very special. A similar number were very unhappy with the modern style and wanted something similar to either the church or Jewry Street; modern did not fit with history or architecture of the area. The west end of and join of the gathering space to church was the most problematic.

Comment from project team:

We have redesigned the connection to the south elevation of the church to reduce the height of and move the roof line of the gathering space away from the church, both to increase light into the church and to ensure that the view from inside the church through the windows is not dominated by a line created by the roof of the gathering space. We are also working on a redesign of the front door area of the gathering space (west elevation) to incorporate a draught lobby and the connection with the small south west door of the church.

We have received two written and two spoken comments voicing strong concerns about whether there is a need for a new parish centre.

The other paper on this section of the website summarising needs and priorities identifies why a new pastoral centre is needed and the options considered before deciding on a new building rather than refurbishing or adding to the old one.

We also received specific ideas and suggestions:

- Kitchen and repository to change positions – kitchen to have serving access to outdoor grounds (this comment made by several different groups who use the kitchen)

We have looked again at the relationship of each room to the other functions of the pastoral centre, including whether to turn the rooms around by 90 degrees so that both have access to the outdoor grounds, and on balance have decided to remain with the current design.

- Door from kitchen into the hall so that parents helping with washing up etc can move quickly back into hall if children need help
Agreed and included
- Archives need a place somewhere although not necessarily the pastoral centre (not the Tower).
Agreed and being worked on separately.
- Adjust the west and north face of roof of cloister to soften the impact
Agreed and included
- Create minibus parking along hedge to south of main drive
Agreed and included
- More car parking as above plus widen former clergy parking area for 6 cars
Agreed and included
- Gathering space to be more rectangular to encourage mixing – might be too narrow and like a corridor
The width of the gathering space is similar to the dimensions of the current link and repository area so will not be corridor-like. Making the gathering space wider will reduce the usable space of the outdoor area to a negligible amount.
- Relationship between gathering space, parish centre and landscaped quadrangle very good and change of shape to gathering space will prevent the whole concept working well (look at the example of St Bede's Basingstoke for good use of outside and inside space).
Agreed and retained
- Build in hearing loop and projector/screen in hall
Agreed and included
- Collapsible stage
Agreed and will be costed – storage will be an issue and we may need to consider storage off site.
- More and more storage
Agreed and we will build in as much as possible.
- Are there enough female toilets
3 female downstairs, 1 accessible downstairs and 1 accessible upstairs. Provides more than the recommended ratio for the hall capacity.
- Security across gathering space when weekday office
We will use the main pastoral centre door at all times, and have the west and south doors to church closed other than for Mass times to ensure that parish staff know who is in the building and in the church.
- Ensure Mass can be heard from gathering space for those parents who have to deal with noisy child.
Agreed and included
- Try to have hall and gathering space together for larger gatherings and celebrations

Tried to do this in previous versions of the design but need to use natural light along the south and west elevations as well as the relationship with the church for most of the major areas, leaving the services located in the centre of the site.

- Childrens liturgy needs – carpeted area, pin board.
Agreed and included – initial concern about no internal staircase was a misinterpretation of the drawings.
- Toddlers group – both carpeted and hard floor (for messy play)
Agreed and included
- Keep west doors open for all Masses
Agreed
- Shorten the gathering space – small door in south face of church doesn't have to exit into the gathering space- and this will help lessen the impact of the west end of the gathering space on the beautiful view of the west end of the church.
We want to ensure that the small door on south face of church leads into the gathering space to increase flow of people into and out of gathering space at peak times and to allow parents to move directly into the gathering space from church during Mass if needed.
Redesign of the lobby area agreed.
- Draught lobby for the gathering space
Agreed and included.

Sustainability

We have received several responses that outline concerns about environment and sustainability issues.

We have been in communication with the parish Justice and Peace group since the new pastoral centre became a realistic prospect. We have received advice from that group, from WinACC representatives, and from other parishioners who work in or have an interest in the energy and sustainability fields.. A parishioner has been invited to attend project meetings to challenge us specifically on sustainable energy issues, and sustainability forms part of our standing agenda. We are building for 100 years and are keen to ensure that our generation's legacy to the parish lasts longer than the previous building and forms part of the rich Catholic heritage in the future. To ensure that we are reaching the best standards that currently exist, we initially considered obtaining a BREAAAM award but on further investigation, including visiting the Emmaus building in Winchester which has a BREAAAM excellent award have reversed that decision. The advice from experts and from the Emmaus charity and their contractors was that while BREAAAM was suitable for a green or brown field site, it was not as helpful for already developed sites and those in conservation areas. We have opted for adopting the BREAAAM standards wherever relevant to a building in a conservation area. The relevant standards include, among others, the local sourcing of materials, using local companies with sustainability credentials, ensuring that the demolition and rebuild maximises reuse of materials, the use of high specification energy efficient and sustainable materials and services, and using natural light and ventilation to reduce energy use. The appointment of consultants and contractors will be based on cost, quality and sustainability records. In addition the parish is applying for grant aid under the CSEP scheme towards

a site wide energy review to ensure that we do not lose any opportunity to introduce changes that would benefit the whole site and with the aim of applying further grant aid towards implementing proposals. As we are in a conservation area and have significant archaeological interest on site, some of the more well known examples of alternative and sustainable energy sources may not be suitable (wind and some types of solar power, biomass boilers and ground source heat pumps) and others may not be economic within a small site, but we will investigate all possibilities from the perspective of energy use and cost over the medium term and ensure that if our approach is by necessity a passive sustainability one, then we will achieve the highest standards in that approach.

Communications

The results of the consultation exercise in 2007 were not well known, and decisions about the other identified options (Jewry Street, the convent and Peterhouse) also need explaining. In addition the costing exercise to compare refurbishment and extension with demolish and rebuild would be useful to share with parishioners. All these give context to the decision to demolish and rebuild.

Please see the separate paper on this website entitled summary of needs and priorities.