St Mary with St Francis and St Faith Alverstoke Parish

Supporting Design, Access & Heritage Statement:

Single Storey Extension to Existing Parish Hall and Construction of New Adjacent Hall Annexe and Associated Facilities

St Mary’s Church Parish Centre, Green Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 2ET

plum architects

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15th October 2024

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This document is written in support of an application submitted to Gosport Borough Council for Planning Permission to alter an existing parish hall and associated facilities by means of extension and a new build annexe hall. The application is made by Plum Architects Ltd on behalf of the parish of St Mary's with St Francis and St Faith's together with the property owners, The Diocese of Portsmouth and is submitted following a previous, successful application to completely demolish and reconstruct the facilities (ref: 19/00435/FULL). This has been implemented through partial construction of certain elements.

1.2 This design statement should be read in conjunction with the following:

- Drg No. PA17-138:01 Plans & elevations as existing
- Drg No. PA24-108:02(C) Plans & elevations as proposed

2.0 Site and Surrounding Area

2.1 The site comprises an existing plot in the centre of Alverstoke, Gosport. It is a level, broadly rectangular piece of land, approximately 2,291m2 in size, under the ownership of the Diocese of Portsmouth via St Mary with St Francis and St Faith Alverstoke Parish and currently houses the current parish centre.

2.2 To the north runs a small, residential cul-de-sac, Avenue Court. Most properties are located to the northern side of this road. A turning head culminates against the site boundary with nos. 12 – 16 facing west and presenting a brick gable, end elevation towards the site with secondary windows concealed behind mature vegetation. No. 17 is the only property backing onto the site. This is a much extended, two storey dwelling, with its gardens positioned to the east and west. A single storey side/rear extension terminates in 'blind' brick wall facing the site. This is the nearest structure to the current community hall.

2.3 To the east runs a quadrangle of two storey, terraced dwellings facing into a central green. These have approximately 11.5m rear gardens facing towards the site separated by a rear access way and a thin strip of mature planting with a flat roofed garage abutting Green Road.

2.4 To the south runs Green Road. At its eastern end it is dominated by the form of St. Mary's Church and its associated grounds.

2.5 Immediately opposite the site is a recently completed, densely grouped, three storey, residential development. A narrow, one-way lane (Little Lane) connects the village shops to Green Road. Beyond this are further detached residential units and finally the substantial Old Lodge hotel complex marks the corner with The Avenue.

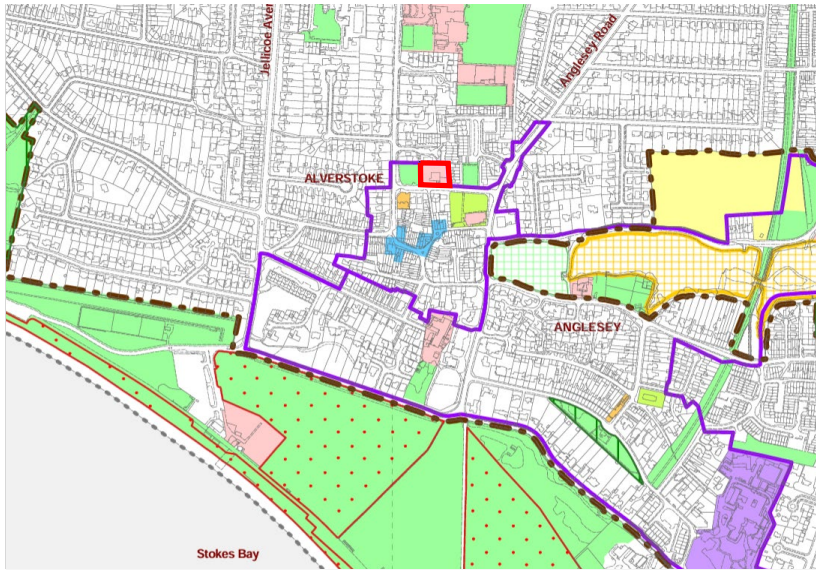
2.6 To the west, is an open patch of grassland denoted as Open Space. Beyond this runs The Avenue, a large, leafy residential road running between Alverstoke village centre and Gosport. It contains large, detached dwellings set in spacious mature grounds.

Aerial Photo (Google)

3.0 Site Analysis and Heritage Assessment

3.1 The application site falls within the established settlement boundary as identified in the Gosport Local Plan 2011-2029 (Adopted October 2015).

3.2 It also sits within the northern extent of the Anglesey and Alverstoke Conservation Area (designated 1975 and extended 2024). It is referenced as the Alverstoke Character Area.



Gosport Local Plan Map Extract

3.3 The area is defined by St Mary's Church. Constructed in 1625, it was then substantially altered and enlarged between 1724 and 1904, including having the roof raised. In its current, primarily 1860s configuration, it is regarded as a fine example of Victorian Gothic and was Grade II listed in May 1953 (ref: 1232651). It sits close to Anglesey Road with a graveyard to the north bordering Green Road. This boundary features substantial trees and a lychgate.

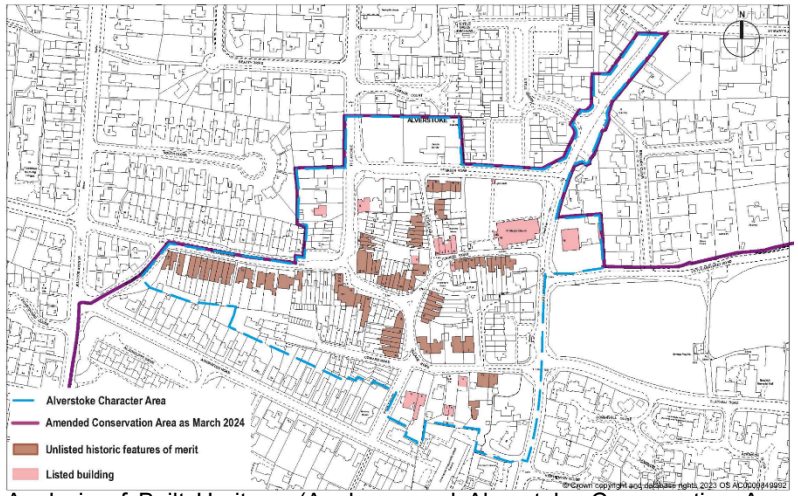
3.4 There are a number of other listed buildings within the dense centre of the village but the only other structure within visual reference of the site is the Old Lodge Hotel on the corner of The Avenue and Green Road (now a private dwelling).

St Mary's Church Grounds and Lychgate (Google)

The Old Lodge Hotel (Google) – now a private residence

3.5 The remaining buildings in the immediate vicinity are generally mid C20 or very recent. Aesthetically, they do not strongly reflect their conservation area location although the materials used on the modern residential development opposite (slate roofs, red brick, stone detailing) are of high quality.

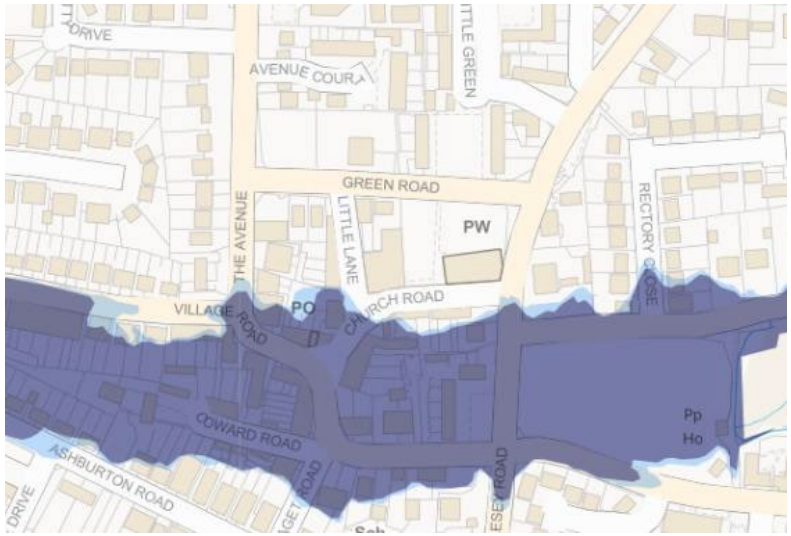
3.6 The western land was formerly a graveyard of St Mary's. This designation was lifted by Act of Parliament on 2nd June 1965 and all restrictions removed enabling use of the ground for the "erection of buildings thereon and to make provision of the use thereof; and for any other purposes". All human remains were re-interred in the municipal graveyard at Anns Hill and a clearance certificate issued.



Analysis of Built Heritage (Anglesey and Alverstoke Conservation Area Appraisal and management Plan)

3.7 There is not a strong building line to the northern side of Green Road as properties tend to be set out perpendicular to the highway around a central green and accessed via footpaths around the perimeter.

3.8 Whilst the site sits close to the end of Haslar Creek it is beyond the identified flood risk zones as detailed on the Environment Agency mapping.



Environment Agency Flood Risk Mapping

4.0 Existing Building

4.1 The current parish centre sits close to the highway with a small gravel car park accessed via a dropped kerb. Most parking is on the highway. Pedestrian access is via a flagstone area to the front. Besides Green Road, the only clear views afforded from within the site are to the west towards the open ground.

4.2 Works have commenced to construct a new, tarmac surfaced car park on land within the application site to the west of the current building. Works to commence the rear (northern) foundation pads for the previously approved scheme were commenced and signed off in 2022 prior to the project then being put on hold.

4.3 The existing structure is a brick built, single storey building approximately 300m2 in footprint. It has been extended and modified over its lifespan as it has struggled to accommodate the needs of the community it serves. The original, shallow-pitched roof structure has almost been lost behind subsequent flat roofed extensions Featureless parapet walls now front the street. A number of outbuildings have also been added around the north and west perimeter to add storage space. To the front, a flat roofed, projecting canopy denotes the main entrance.

4.4 Internally, the building comprises a main hall 9.1 x 12.1m. This has a series of windows and doors which open out to the grounds to the west. Offices and toilets line the principal elevation to the highway along with the rather cramped entrance hall (2.7m wide). A separate small meeting room is located midway along the eastern elevation with a kitchen and store to the rear.

Green Road – South - Elevation (Google)

5.0 Brief

5.1 Works to commence the previously approved scheme were commenced in 2022 following a strong local fundraising campaign. However, it is apparent that in the post-covid age, grant funding has become difficult to obtain, and a period of reconsideration has ensued.

5.2 The main hall was previously dismissed as being too small for its current and future purposes. However, it is now suggested that it could still be usable if it could be increased in length and offer additional storage. A second, larger, community space is still required to enable the centre to adequately cater for all aspects covered by the original exhaustive brief.

5.3 Key to the brief remains the desire to provide a highly sustainable building with exemplary environmental credentials. This is to include a very well-insulated enveloped, the incorporation of on-site renewable energy sources and the encouragement of biodiversity gains.

5.4 As before, the need to form a fully inclusive building is stated. The proposed development will remain a community hub and must reflect all aspects of society.

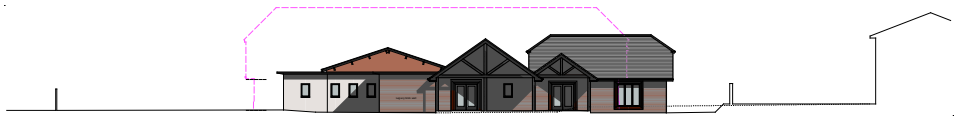
6.0 Proposals

6.1 Layout

The existing main hall is extruded to the rear enabling an internal increase of approximately 3.5m as well as the incorporation of storage areas for chairs, tables, staging etc. The current small meeting room is removed and the remaining internal accommodation reconfigured to give vastly improved sanitary facilities and an office for confidential meetings and parish business. A dedicated Changing Places community facility is added to the southern elevation as part of a new, welcoming entrance porch. To the eastern side, a new element is constructed to provide a second meeting hall with its own storage and ancillary sanitary facilities. The layout is configured so that each hall may be used independently or together to give increased flexibility.

6.2 Architectural Style

The original structure presents a somewhat uninspiring public frontage. By creating a prominent, timber framed, porch, a softer, more welcoming and aesthetically pleasing elevation is created. The small element of flat roofed structure that remains is rendered to conceal the poor-quality brickwork and capped with a projecting parapet to improve definition and conceal a green roof. The new hall is enclosed below a barn-hipped, pitched roof. The two separate entrances are connected in a staggered formation to create a visual hierarchy. All new elements have a steeper roof pitch to enable the use of slate. New walls are finished in a red, handmade bricks. The public façade around the new Changing Places facility is to be finished in matching red brick slips carrying the names of fund raisers. The render, masonry and slate palette is drawn from the materials noted locally in the Anglesey and Alverstoke Conservation Appraisal and are felt to interact sensitively with the setting. New windows and doors are encircled with brick surround features which deliberately reflects some of the Regency and early Victorian styling to be found within the Alverstoke area where such opening were expressed.



Street Context

6.3 Scale and Bulk

The new, steeper roof pitches will result in a ridge line approximately 1m higher than the existing hall roof. However, the composition still falls more than 2m below the originally approved scheme (dotted in purple below).

6.4 Schedule of Areas

New Annexe:	108m2
Existing hall:	271m2
New hall entrance canopy:	14m2
Existing Hall extension:	58m2
Existing hall entrance canopy:	40m2
Changing places:	12m2

6.5 Amenity

No overlooking or shading is created to neighbouring properties. The revised configuration results in a built footprint that sits more than 3.5m further away from dwellings to the north in Avenue Court. The new small hall extends 4.5m further east but this is now a single storey structure with no first floor windows and remains separated from the dwellings beyond by means of a walled walkway, garage block and rear gardens.

Proposals in relation to approved layout

7.0 Sustainability

7.1 Sustainability has always been an important consideration to the design concept. The parish centre committee feel that a building expressly constructed for the community should have exemplar environmental credentials.

7.2 As part of the decision to retain the existing hall it was recognised that this gave a large roof area for the installation of a new solar PV array. As the roofline runs north to south, so the array will face the less impactful east and west elevations. In total 52 panels are proposed offering in excess of a 40kW array. This can effectively run all of the centres electrical loading during the day with the potential for excess to be fed back to the National Grid.

7.3 The electrical generation is to be installed in tandem with an air source heat pump which will provide hot water for underfloor heating to the new hall and all domestic hot water for the toilets and kitchens. The external unit is relatively modest in size and is to be located in the crook of the 'L' on the northern (rear) elevation.

7.4 Within the existing hall, a blown air system will introduce fresh air, tempered via a heat exchanger.

7.5 The changes will require compliance with the June 2022 implementation of Part L2 of the Building Regulations for the new external fabric. New elements will therefore be of significantly better performance than used on the original structure. It is proposed to offer the following element U-values: roof 0.11W/m2K, walls 0.18W/m2K, floors 0.13W/m2K.

7.6 New lighting will be by means of mains voltage, low energy, led units.

8.0 Biodiversity

8.1 In tandem with the sustainability demands, the brief was also evolved from the original application to include improvements to the biodiversity of the site.

8.2 A full biodiversity assessment including baseline metric and an illustration of 10% improvements to comply with current legislation accompanies this submission.

8.3 In order to facilitate the improvements, all of the flat roof elements that remain are to be overlaid with an insulated green roof. Covered in sedum and wildflowers, this offers a new habitat potential across the existing 'dead' area.

8.4 Perimeter planting is also to be augmented with native trees and shrubs.

8.5 New bat and bird boxes are to be incorporated within the new structure as detailed on the ecological assessment.

9.0 Accessibility

9.1 A key criteria for the new building, particularly one that serves the community, is its social responsibility. It has to cater for a diverse range of user groups and must be inclusive to all within the community. This requirement must start from the way the site is approached through the use of individual rooms.

9.2 3 priority parking bays are located within the car park with access via a kerbless paved zone through a stepless threshold front door to a large reception area.

9.3 A space for mobility scooter charging is incorporated under the new entrance canopy.

9.4 A dedicated accessible changing facility is located close to the road and is accessible both from the outside during closed hours and from the inside. In addition, DDA compliant toilets are provided (a dedicated disabled toilet and ambulant disabled cubicles within the male and female toilets).

9.5 Large, covered entrance canopies to both halls will assist parent and toddler visitors to park and unload prams and pushchairs.

9.6 Internally, all door widths are a minimum of 800mm and all circulation spaces include safe refuges for wheelchair users.

9.7 Floor surfacing, contrast colouring to the doors and internal lighting are all designed to enable the building to be as user friendly as possible.

9.8 New light switches, power sockets and appliance controls will be located within the tolerances required by Part M of the Approved Building Regulations.

9.9 Finally, internal manoeuvring room is increased to meet the needs of wheelchair users and generally improve the accessibility of circulation routes.

10.0 Highways

10.1 The present hall has operated with minimal off-road parking since the centre was originally built. Clearly, the hall sits within the centre of an historic village and so space is at a premium. As with St Mary's Church, virtually all visitors presently park in the surrounding road network.

10.2 As part of the previous approval, a transport strategy was agreed and these works are already underway. It includes a tarmac surfaced car park providing 26 full sized spaces (to current GBC standards – 2.5 x 5m with 2.8m bays to the end) and 3 dedicated disabled bays.

10.3 The new facility will also cater for visitors using alternative means of transport. This is aimed specifically at local users who form the core demographic. A sheltered cycle store capable of holding up to 12 cycles is located to the front formal landscaped zone and a covered area adjacent to the main entrance will provide a zone for electric mobility vehicle parking and charging.

10.4 An enclosed bin store is located in the southeastern corner of the site behind new planting. This provides good access for refuse vehicles along Green Road.

10.5 All of the building perimeter is within 45m of the highway or adjacent car park so satisfying fire appliance access requirements.