

St Mary's Hall, London Road
Arundel, West Sussex, BN18 9BA

Design & Access Statement

For alterations to the existing building

Incorporating Appendices of:

- Sustainability Statement

February 2011



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Executive Summary:

This supporting Design and Access Statement has been prepared by St. Ann's Gate Architects, on behalf of the Arundel and Brighton Roman Catholic Diocesan Corporation Ltd. at the direction of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.

St Ann's Gate Architects is a practice with a proven track record in both Historic Building Conservation and sustainable architectural design in sensitive historic settings. The senior staff of the practice have post-graduate qualifications in building conservation and one of the partners, Antony Feltham~King, is the cathedral architect at Arundel, winning Awards from the local Civic Society for the new landscape approach and lighting in the cathedral in 1999. More recently the practice won the regional RIBA Conservation Award for their works at Boxgrove Priory nearby. The experience of the team ensures a strong theoretical background to practical solutions and provides an informed starting point for new design work within an historic context.

This Design and Access statement accompanies a planning application and listed building consent for the alteration to St Mary's Hall, the Cathedral's community hall on London Road very near Arundel Cathedral.

The proposed scheme has been created following a brief from the clients and the cathedral, and refers to guidance from the planning policies relating to the site and building.

The scheme provides a positive enhancement of the existing building and has been designed to restore the qualities of the building present when it was first constructed and used in a manner to ensure that the character and quality of the listed building is maintained.

In summary, the scheme would provide:

- A renewed and improved use for the building with minimal change to the structure
- Extended usable space to better serve the existing facilities offered by the cathedral with fully accessible provision of services.
- Repair and improvement on the mechanical and electrical services throughout the building to bring them up to current regulations.
- A positive enhancement of the building overall as a working facility for the cathedral and the community.

1.0 Introduction:

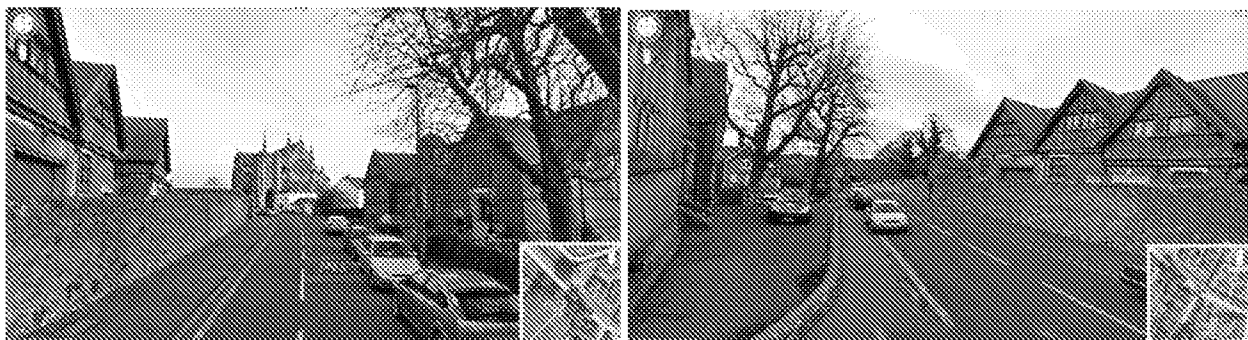
The application deals with alterations to St Mary's Hall, London Road, Arundel.

Location and site description:

St Mary's hall sits on the corner of Pleasant Hill and London Road in Arundel, not far away from the Roman Catholic Cathedral.



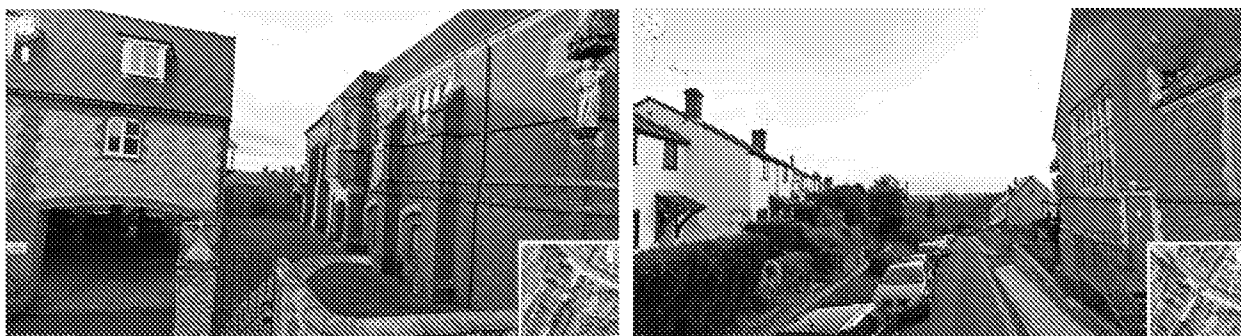
The hall fronts north onto London Road, although not running parallel with it which gives a small wedge shaped area off the back of the wide pavement, currently used as a pull in for parking. This area is enclosed by a low stone wall thought to have been topped with iron railings at one time.



Above Left: London Road looking east, hall on right; Above Right: London Road looking west, hall on left.

The building is set into the slope of the hill which falls away steeply down Pleasant Hill from London Road, resulting in a building which is only one storey high on its north side but two on its south with the pavement on the east side of the building passing across the face of the building about half way up the facade. The west side of the building adjoins the churchyard, although there is no access from the building out this way.

Access into the building is from the north into the upper floor and main hall and south into the lower floor from a small grassed courtyard area, accessed through the boundary wall gate on Mount Pleasant. The levels are connected internally by a single flight of stairs. A fire escape on the east side of the building gives out from the main hall at the upper level to the pavement from some attached metal steps and railings.



Above Left: Grassed courtyard on south side of hall; Above Right: East wall of hall on right, looking south.

Below: View of hall and churchyard to the right (west side of hall)



(Image above and on previous page all taken from Google Maps)

The surrounding area:

St Mary's Hall sits on the north west side of the town of Arundel some way from the centre. On the south side and east side of the building down Mount Pleasant are some terraced houses or more modern construction, but generally the built environment is more sparsely laid out with fewer, larger buildings. The area forms part of the estate previously belonging to the family of the Duke of Norfolk although the site itself now belongs to the Diocese. The area is generally more open sitting at the top of the hill, with views from London Road across the town towards the sea to the south. To the north side of the site, a high wall bounds the edge of the grounds of Arundel Castle and gardens.



Aerial photo of site in plan, identified with red outline and below in 3D, highlighted



General Description and History - Existing Building:

St Mary's Hall was built in 1881, originally as a school building for boys. It was designed by architects Hansom and Son, from Westminster. Symmetrical in form, a central octagonal tower sits above the original entrance door (now closed off) flanked on either side with small flat roofed area and to the outer ends two gables, perpendicular to the main pitched roof running east west over the hall. The high brick elevation on the south side has 6 buttresses and a stone statue on its south east corner. Windows are stone transomed and mullioned with diamond leaded lights.

It houses the following accommodation over the two floors:

Ground Floor - London Road Level:

- Large main hall along south side - 7 bays
- Entrance lobby with accessible wc and access to basement areas
- Servery area
- Kitchenette
- Back of bar area
- Bar and lounge

Lower Ground/Basement Level: This level was originally open to the air, forming a covered external space for the school playground. Sometime in the past this was enclosed and now contains:

- Lobby area
- Male and female wcs at west end. 2 bays
- Lower hall used as a meeting room. 4 bays
- Store at east end

The courtyard area to the south is the remains of what was the original playground for the school, now closely neighboured by the houses build in the late 1980s after the remainder of the playground land was sold off.

Materials:

- The main building is in red brick, with Ham Hill stone dressings and string course.
- The windows are stone mullioned and surrounds, with leaded lights in metal frames.
- The roof is a clay tiled finish, thought to be machine made.

Below: General External view and Internal view of main hall



2.0 Proposed Refurbishment and alteration:

a) THE NEED

The cathedral use the hall as an ancillary building for the congregation as well as it providing a community use for the residents of Arundel. The most notable event to make full use of the Hall is at Corpus Christi, an annual event in June where the cathedrals carpet of flowers draws many hundreds of visitors over a three day period.

The building is regularly inspected as part of the quinquennial inspection of the cathedral by the cathedral architect and apart from a few minor defects on the building, the external fabric is relatively sound. The cathedral have recently undergone a series of maintenance works on the building including works to the roof and guttering and drains. However, it has been noted that the internal condition of the building is suffering and despite some minor areas of redecoration being undertaken, beginning to decline overall. The fixtures and fittings of the building are showing their age and the facilities used by the cathedral to serve the teas and coffees/snacks/Corpus Christi are certainly now considered to be at the end of their serviceable life by the Environmental Health Department.

The services to the building are also in need of updating. Both electrics and plumbing and heating for the building need to be addressed. There is no disabled access between the floors, although there is provision of toilets on both levels, this access issue is no longer satisfactory.

As part of the vital support the building gives to the cathedral congregation and wider community, the Diocese want to upgrade the quality of the building. In doing so, they wish to take the opportunity to make some internal modifications to the arrangement to make a serviceable hall which has a more widely appealing multi-functional capability.

b) Design Approach:

In considering the new buildings the following criteria were felt to be important:

- The overall quality of the building and its listed status
- The existing fabric and retention of its inherent qualities
- The functionality and accessibility of the spaces
- the provision of appropriate services

Of overriding importance was the retention of the existing qualities of the building and working with the spaces dictated by the structure - that said, the design approach taken provides little alteration to the external appearance of the building and main layout on the but proposes some excavation to extend the basement level into the hill under the first floor.

The scheme has been designed taking into account the specific needs of the cathedral and its regular users and a more general approach for improving the capability of the hall to meet requirements that it currently meets in a less than ideal manner.

Main alterations:

- **Additional space:** To address the creation of additional space, the area below the first floor to the north side of the building will be excavated to provide ancillary space for toilet provision, circulation, storage and plant room.
- **Entrances:** Of prime significance in the alterations affecting the external appearance of the building is the reinstatement of some of the original character of the building with respect to its entrances. The central door facing London Road, which has been closed up for some time, is to be re-opened and form the new main entrance to the upper level, with both ramped and new stepped arrangement into the building at the front. At basement level, the existing arched openings, originally open, will be re-opened by removing the brick in-fills to take glazed screens with doors to provide suitable access and egress.
- **Accessibility:** The two levels of the building will be connected with a disabled access platform lift, as well as an improved replacement staircase.
- **Services:** The wiring and plumbing for the whole building will be upgraded to meet current standards and to more suitably address the quality of the building
- **Kitchenette:** The existing kitchenette will be relocated to a more suitable area, and a new servery opening created onto the main hall. An updated facility with more appropriate fittings will be incorporated to better suit the servicing needs.
- **Meeting room:** An opening to mirror the servery opening at the west end of the hall will be made into the existing meeting room on the east end, which will allow more flexibility and spill over from the main hall on larger events.

Structural issues:

A separate structural report from the engineers is supplied as part of this application.

Thermal issues:

The existing building has relatively poor levels of thermal insulation and the proposal will look to improve these wherever possible, within the limits of what is achievable on the existing fabric and without affecting the character of the elements in question.

Summary of Alterations and Design approach:

- The building will remain largely unaltered from the outside, with alterations restoring the entrances and openings on the structure to their original use.
- The additional space created at basement level will provide much needed ancillary space to take services, vertical circulation and storage
- The building will have upgraded services including heating, lighting and kitchenette provision to more adequately cope with the amenity provision

c) Amenity:

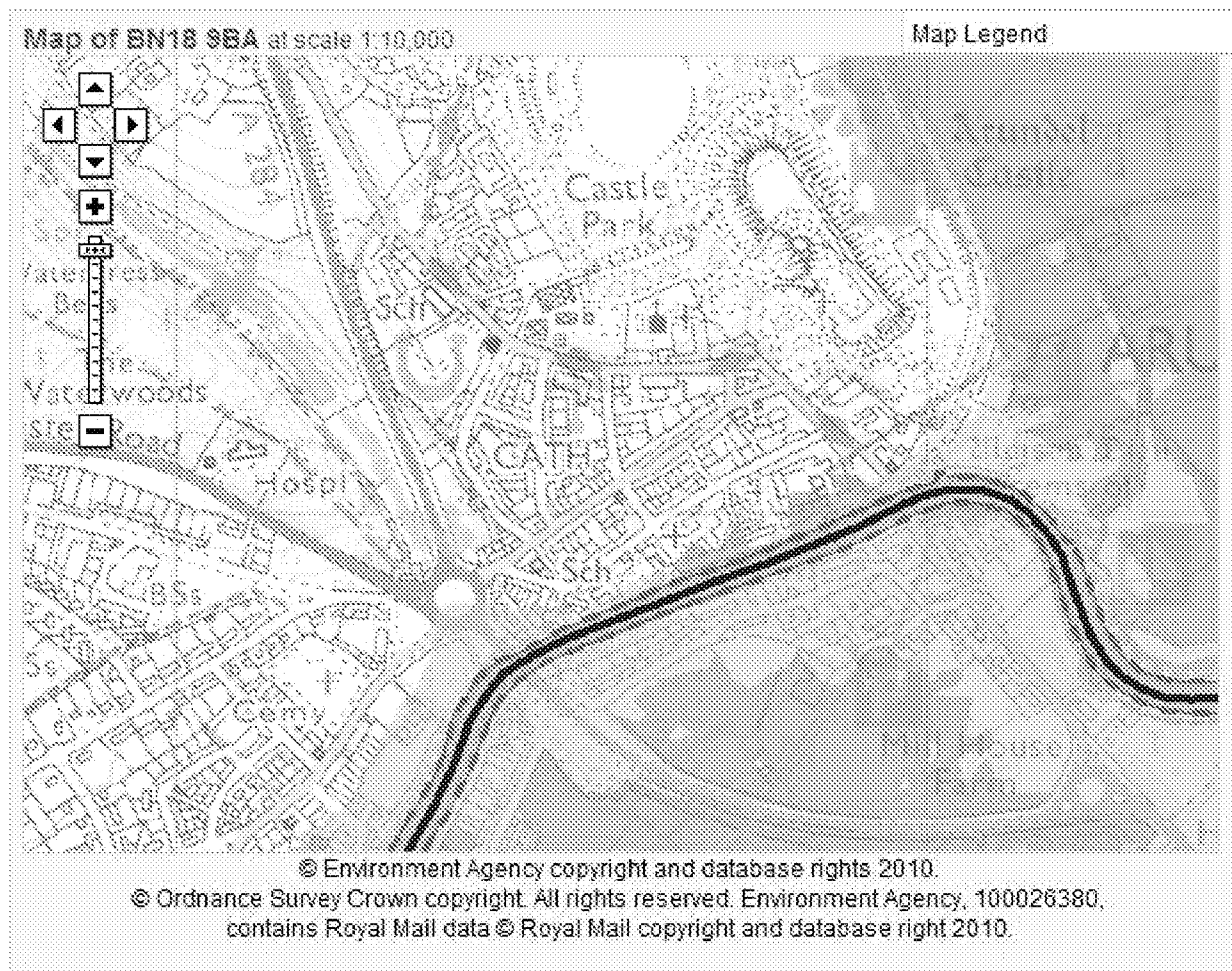
The amenity for the hall will remain as existing with improved external surfaces to both the north and south areas. There is no proposal to enlarge external space, although by excavating under the first floor to extend the basement the building's amenities can be enlarged to allow more room for the existing activities to continue.

d) Refuse:

The provision of bin store area outside the relocated kitchen will continue as existing.

e) Flooding Statement:

The site is set at the top of the hill in Arundel and well outside the area of likely flooding. The map below from the Environment Agency website illustrates the flood risk which is not considered an issue in this instance. (Red spot illustrates position of Hall)



Extract taken from the Environment Agency Website

Given the location of the site and the nature of the works, the application for this work does not include a Flood Risk Assessment.

f) Drainage, Services and Electrics, Lighting, Plumbing and Heating:

Drainage will have improved connections in the building to the existing drainage system which will be checked for defects and barring any necessary repairs, remain unchanged.

The services to the existing building are poor. The scheme proposes to upgrade and refurbish these as part of the new arrangement with a new boiler, heating system and electrics layout for the entire building.

g) Parking and Access

There is limited parking for the building at present to the front pull in area behind the low boundary wall, which encloses an area of tarmac on which two or three cars can park. They access this through an opening in the wall with dropped kerb to the road.

This front area of the building is to be reconfigured, but will not provide any increase in capacity. As it is not intended to change the use of the building and the alterations will purely improve the current facility, this is not considered to be any change from the existing. The low wall defining the space will be removed, but the boundary on this north side will be redefined in bollards to the back of pavement.

The south side of the building will have a widened gate access from the road to provide occasional car access for drop off. The roadside will be amended to provide a widened dropped kerb to allow this. Wheelchair access to the lower floor of the building has always been through this access gate, and this will continue, although there will be a lift access within the building as a more convenient option.

The proposals in this application would make the entire building fully accessible, with an improved entrance and ramped access and a lift connecting the two floors internally. This is considered an important added feature for the provision of amenity space.

h) Trees and hedges:

The proposal has no impact on trees or hedges.

Whilst there are two large trees adjacent to the eastern side boundary of the site, the proposals will not have any impact on them. The excavation works to the basement area involve removal of soil within the footing depth of the existing building. The amendments to the parking area at the front of the site are surface recovering only and will not require any excavation affecting the trees due to the difference in ground levels between the adjoining sites.

i) Pre-application advice:

Pre-application advice was sought from the Highways Department of West Sussex County Council regarding the alterations to the external areas around the building. On the basis of their advice, the insertion of bollards to the front pull in area was included.

J) Planning Statement:

As well as National Planning Policy Guidelines, these additional local guides and policy issues were considered for the design parameters of the works at St Mary's Hall:

Policy GEN1: Sustainability

"...considerations in maintaining the quality of life, including access to social and economic facilities, is widely recognised, as is the protection of the environment."

Policy Gen17: Access for people with disabilities

"...Development involving buildings open to the public and buildings used for employment or education purposes should provide suitable access for people with disabilities, in terms of external and internal layout. Proposals should be consistent with the special architectural or historic character of the property concerned."

Policy Gen 22: Buildings of Structure or Character

This policy prevents alteration which adversely affects the character of a building because:

"...Arun District Council places great importance on the retention of other buildings of character, which form part of its rich built heritage"

Policy Gen 24: Energy and Water Conservation

Improved services with the building will address this through the installation of more efficient heating, lighting and water conservation

Area Policies 1, 2 and 3:

Retaining and enhancing the use of the existing building reused with little alteration to its external appearance, complies with these specific policies and ensures a continuity of character in the area.

Policy DEV10: Alterations and Extension to Listed Buildings:

This policy, like Policy Gen 22, ensures that the alterations to listed buildings is carried out in a sensitive and appropriate manner.

"Alterations and additions to Listed Buildings should be sensitively designed and constructed of appropriate materials to retain or emphasise the qualities of the original building. "

It is felt that the proposed alterations to St Mary's Hall comply with all these policies. They have been considered in detail and are sensitively designed with alterations in appropriate materials. The improvements will ensure the continued life of a well used building with upgraded facilities more suitable for use and in compliance with current regulations.

3.0 Conclusions

- The proposed development would renew and enhance the existing facilities provided at St Mary's Hall.
- The excavation at basement level would provided additional service and ancillary space to incorporate plant, storage and toilets, as well as an improved mobility access between floors with the space for insertion of a platform lift.
- The scheme makes very little material alteration to the existing building's historic visible structure either internally or externally.
- Existing openings in the external walls are to be returned to a more historically correct use, by re-opening the central access door into the building and replacing the bricked in arches with glazed screens/doors.
- The general approach to the development has been to ensure the building retains its character and alterations are in sympathy with the structure. Materials proposed will be either to match or of a standard suiting the application and building quality.

APPENDIX A

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT

The Government policy on Sustainability is set out in PPS1 (Delivering Sustainable Development). The retention of buildings such as St Mary's Hall is considered to comply with the policy and meets the aspirations of these relevant sustainable development policies.

Protection and Enhancement of the Environment

17. The Government is committed to protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and historic environment, in both rural and urban areas. Planning policies should seek to protect and enhance the quality, character and amenity value of the countryside and urban areas as a whole. A high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources. Those with national and international designations should receive the highest level of protection.

18. The condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities. Planning should seek to maintain and improve the local environment and help to mitigate the effects of declining environmental quality through positive policies on issues such as design, conservation and the provision of public space.¹

St Mary's Hall has significant value and worth as existing buildings within the town of Arundel with the historical references it has had and continues to maintain with the community. Its loss would be regrettable and refurbishment complies with not only the overall spirit of environmental but also social sustainability,

The property forms a part of a collection of larger buildings in the Arundel Area. It meets a specific need within the town for a community hall and is a finite resource in the area.

Sustainable construction:

The Diocese and the cathedral have a sensible approach to environmental concerns and are keen to push forward in all appropriate matters for reducing energy consumption. As a practice, St Ann's Gate Architects are committed to the practice of sustainable construction and every effort will be made to ensure the building works will be carried out using appropriately sourced materials where possible.

One important part of the renovation of St Mary's Hall will be the renewal of outdated and inefficient heating, lighting and services within the building. The new installations will not only provide a more suitable heating for the building, it will be of a standard that will minimise the unnecessary consumption of energy.

There are limits to what can be done with an historic structure without having a detrimental impact on the fabric and the decisions surrounding this are always a balanced judgement, but wherever possible, the opportunity to improve the energy performance of the building will be taken with the fabric.

¹ Extract from PPS1 – p.7