

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

Castle Eden, St James



27th June 2017

OVERVIEW



The Church of St James, Castle Eden, was recently closed for regular public worship due to declining numbers and rising repair costs.

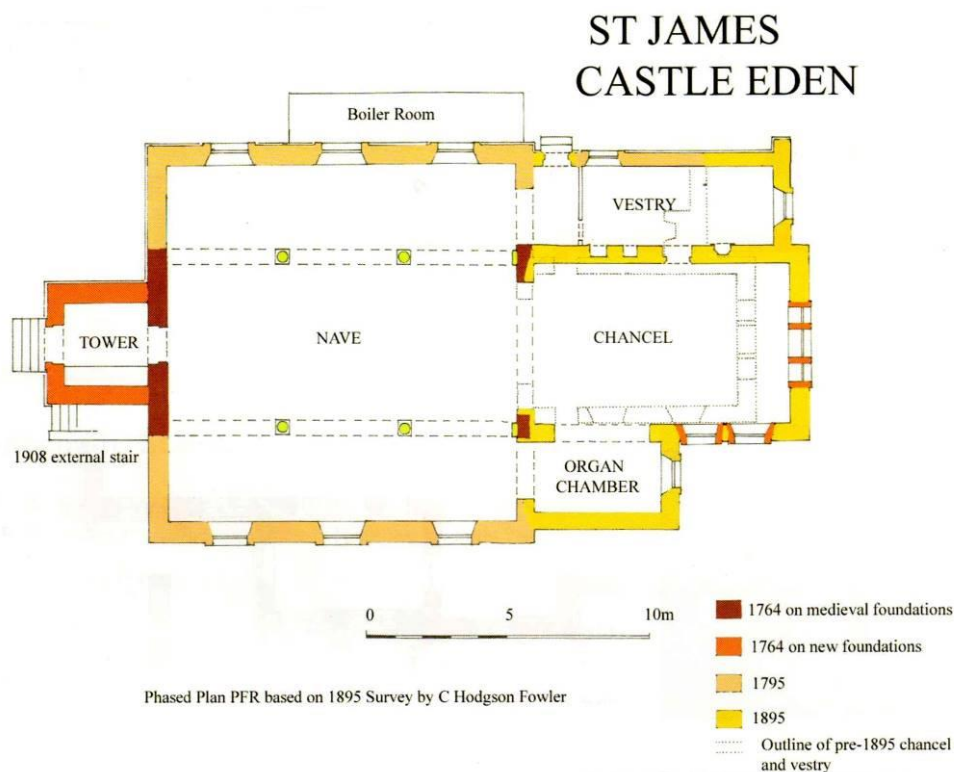
On closure, the building was vested in the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance for care and maintenance and is now in what is referred to as a “use seeking period” where the Diocese and the Church Commissioners work together to settle the future of the building.

The Closed Churches Division of the Church Commissioners oversees the work to secure the future of closed church buildings, working with Dioceses to find suitable alternative uses for such buildings. Staff work to and under the direction of the Church Commissioners' Church Buildings (Uses and Disposals) Committee.



There is a clear presumption in Planning Policy Guidance note NPPF in favour of the preservation of historic buildings and urges local authorities to ‘apply normal development control policies flexibly’ to facilitate their re-use.

LISTING



Plan by Peter Ryder from Historic Churches of County Durham

NZ 4238 CASTLE EDEN THE VILLAGE (East side, off)

10/13 Church of St. James

20/2/67

Grade II

Parish church. Dated 1764 and incorporating medieval masonry in west end and tower; aisles added c.1800; chancel rebuilt and organ chamber added in 1896. Possibly by William Newton for Rowland Burdon I.

Dressed and ashlar limestone with quoins; sandstone window surrounds; green slate roofs. West tower, aisled nave, chancel with north vestry and south organ chamber.

Early Gothick with pointed-arched windows in raised surrounds.

West tower has 3 stepped stages, embattled belfry and octagonal lead-covered spire with weathercock; each stage has pointed openings to front and quatrefoils (some blocked) to returns; C20 external stairs to first floor porch and door.

Single 8-pane windows high in flanking west aisle walls.

3-bay nave has low plinth, 3 similar windows and low-pitched roof with coped gables and shaped kneelers; C19 gabled bellcote near east end of north wall.

2-bay chancel has similar features; Venetian east window with pointed centre light.

Vestry and organ chamber under low-pitched lean-to roofs.



Interior: each aisle has 2 unfluted Corinthian columns on tall bases; C19 wood west gallery. Coved ceiling with exposed tie beams. Semi-circular chancel arch with smaller similar flanking openings; early C20 screen incorporating early C18 carved woodwork with flower and leaf motifs; encaustic-tiled chancel floor and coved, panelled, painted ceiling of 1896.

Fittings: marble wall monument, on north chancel wall, to Rowland Burdon II (died 1838); 2 early, coped grave covers in east wall of organ chamber; brass memorial plaque, on east wall of south aisle, to W.S. Hicks (died 1902 "whose last completed work was the redecoration of this church"); oval marble tablet, in vestry, commemorates the rebuilding of the church in 1764; C18 oval font of marble on baluster shaft at west end of nave. Stained glass: 2 windows of c.1915 by Heaton, Butler and Bayne of London; memorial window of 1949 to Rowland Burdon (1857-1948) by L.C. Evetts.

Listing NGR: NZ4280638455

**10/12 Churchyard gates,
35 metres west of Church of St. James
Grade II**

Pair of gates, posts and an overthrow with gas lampholder. Late C19 with later repairs. Wrought and cast iron. Gates have bars with alternating pointed and spearhead standards.

Posts, on square bases, have 4 corner bars and taller central bar, all with spear-shaped finials. Overthrow, springing from posts, has simple scrollwork and a central hexagonal lantern with crested base, top vent and sloping panes. Included for group value.

Listing NGR: NZ4276238440

INITIAL CONSULTATION

An initial site visit and informal consultation took place with Judith Miller, Senior Design and Conservation Officer, Design and Conservation Team, Durham County Council.

Subsequent detailed discussions have taken place with DCC planning officer Barry Gavillet, and, subsequently, a formal pre-application made.

The pre-application response dated 05.01.17 ref: PRE28/16/03189 forms the basis of the formal Planning and Listed Building Consent applications.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

HERITAGE STATEMENT

A Heritage Statement (HS) has been produced by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) in support of the application and is available as a separate document to this report.

ECOLOGY REPORT

A bat report has been produced by Ian Bond CEnv MCIEEM, Ecologist, INCA in support of the application and is available as a separate document to this report.

ARBORICULTURAL REPORTS

An Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) and an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) have been prepared by a chartered arboriculturalist in support of the proposed development and are available as separate documents to this report.

PROPOSAL

BUILDING LAYOUT

There are no external extensions and only minimal down-takings are proposed internally.

Internally, the existing building volumes are generally retained. The design creates a central void from north to south; all existing stained glass is retained.

An open-plan, partially double-height living area is created on the ground floor with kitchen and dining at the east end utilising the existing plan layout.

4 bedrooms and a master bathroom are created at first floor level, which is designed to correspond with the existing balcony level. An en-suite bathroom is proposed within the tower at this level.

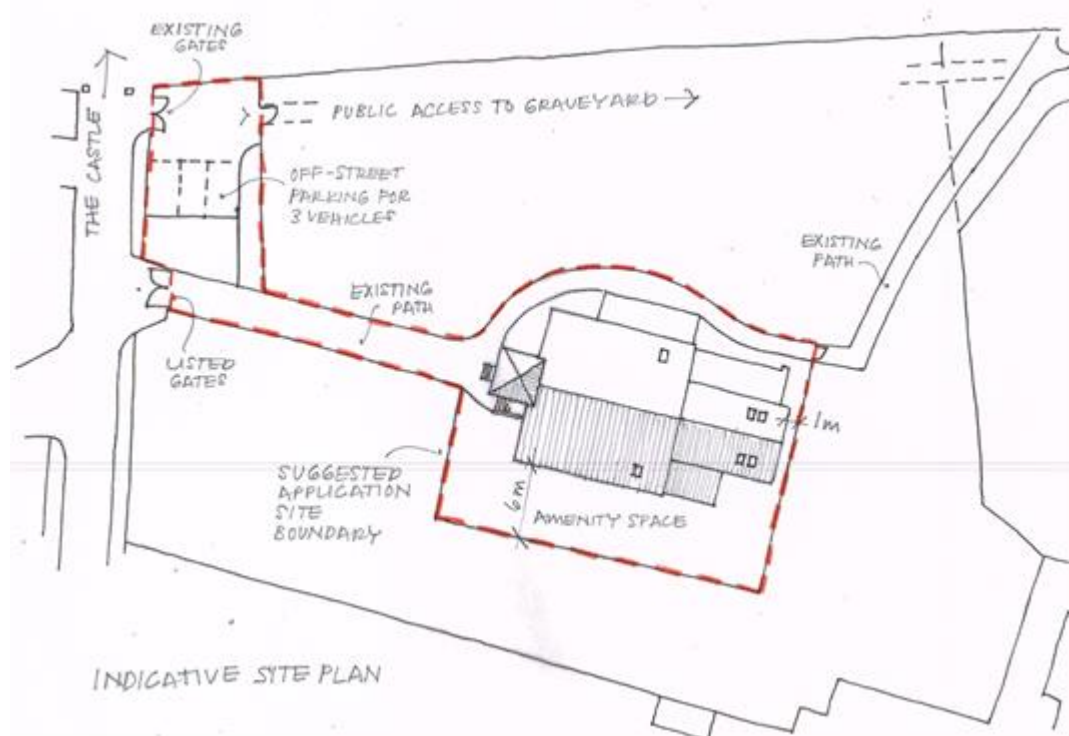
Roof windows are incorporated to provide additional natural light to bedrooms 3 & 4 and the kitchen / dining area.

Full-height frameless glass enclosures are proposed around the existing windows at the junction with the new floor level.

With the exception of the inclusion of the new roof windows, no external alterations are proposed to the building elevations.

HIGHWAYS

The initial proposal for off-street parking, as indicated below, was for in-curtilage bays to the south of the entrance gates and path.



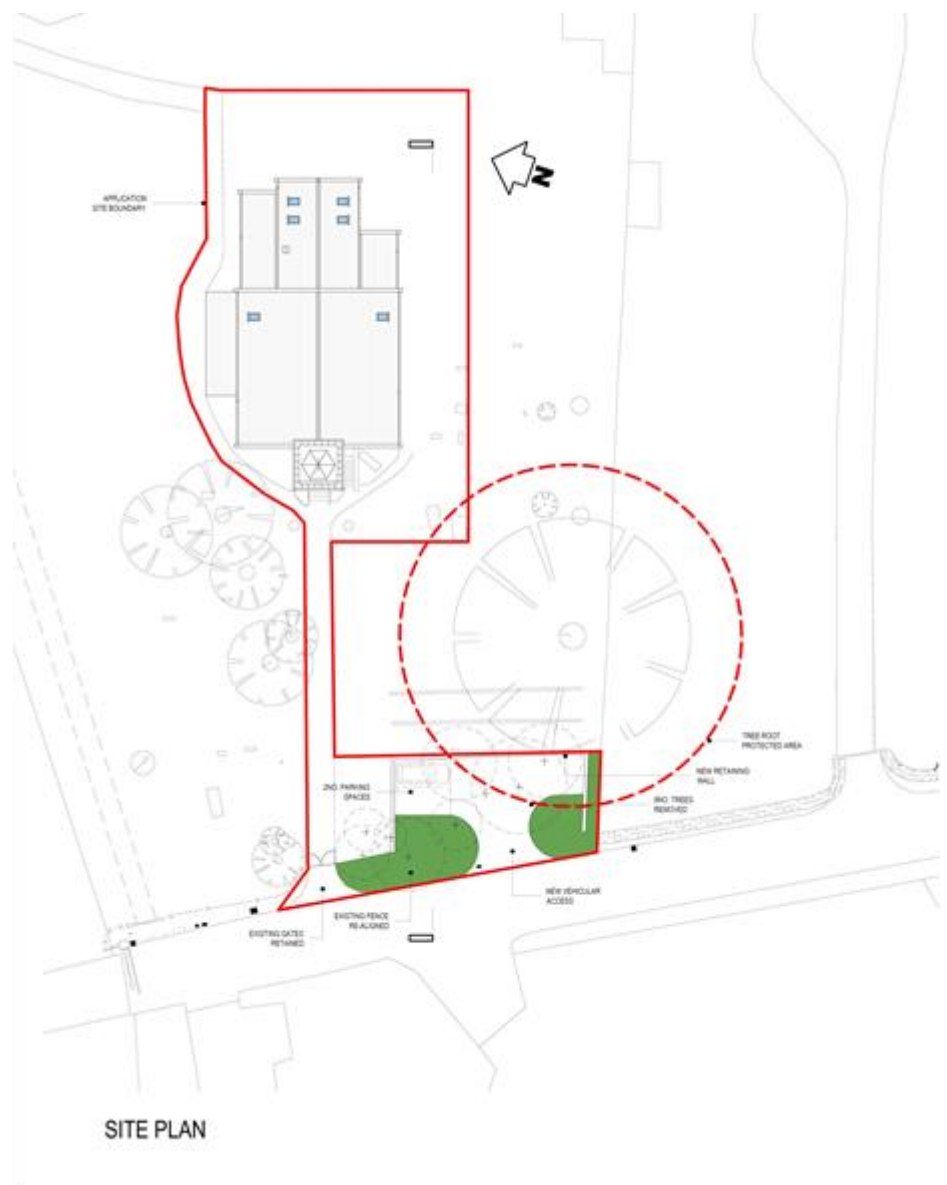
Subsequent pre-app advice provided by DCC stated:

The current proposals indicate the formation of a three-bay parking area to the west of the historic churchyard adjacent to the highway. This is likely to have a significant and obtrusive impact on the street scene and a harmful impact on the setting and interrelationship of the church, the listed church gates, the listed castle gates and the listed lodge and is unlikely to be supported. I understand that there is some highways constraint regarding use of the existing gateway and visibility north from the exit access in any case.

As an alternative, I would suggest that the area of sloping land to the south of the gates be explored as an option, this would involve some excavation and addition of a retaining wall and potentially some tree loss. However, this would minimise the visual impact from the church, would have better visibility along the highway and is less likely to contain unmarked graves. If the applicant could provide a revised parking layout in this location (I would suggest two parallel spaces) this could be discussed further with Highways and Tree Officers.

The option for parking to the north of the access gates has been considered in detail however, the tree root protection area (RPA) of the chestnut tree ref T3B (as noted in the AIA) effectively sterilises this area of the site for in-curtilage parking and turning.

The discounted parking layout, due to the RPA, is indicated below.



Despite the extent of the RPA there is the possibility to provide 2 no. parallel parking bays as suggested in the pre-app advice. This is now incorporated in the submitted plans. It is proposed that the new parking bays will be constructed with a traditional granite sett finish.

ENCLOSURE

The listed gates to the main entrance remain unaltered.

The metal railing front boundary fence to the south will be extended and re-aligned to the rear of the new car parking area.

The remainder of the site will have painted metal 'estate' type railings as indicated below.



ACCESS

Due to the nature of the setting and listed status of the building, all existing access points will be retained.