



CHURCH OF ST PHILIP AND ST JAMES

OXFORD CENTRE FOR MISSION STUDIES, WOODSTOCK ROAD, OXFORD, OX2 6HR

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

To support an application for Listed Building Consent to increase the height of the glazing of north and south transept screens, to construct a new stair to provide access to the north transept upper floors and to adjust the internal layout of the north side extension and vestry areas to allow its use as a separate annex.



1. Description of the site

The church and site are located approximately a half mile from Oxford City Centre on the east side of the Woodstock Road. The site is a square plot of circa 2000 m² and is bounded by low stone walls. St Philip and St James is located on the north side of the plot. The building faces west to the road. There is a landscaped churchyard on the south side, the focus of which is a mature Sequoia. There are no known burials within the churchyard.

The site is bounded on north and east sides by private gardens belonging to St Antony's College. The area on the north side behind the church is overgrown and neglected. This part of the site is the location for an extension which has an extant planning permission granted in 2015. The extension links into the building by an existing doorway and developing the former vestry area adjoining the north transept. The north side of the building is largely hidden from the public view.

2. Description of the Church of St Philip and St James

2.1 General

St Philip and St James is a church no longer in use for diocesan worship. It is a building of powerful character dating from the mid-19th Century. The architect was George Edmund Street and the construction was funded by public subscription. A detailed timeline of the building's history is included with the Heritage Statement.

St Philip and St James is an example of high Victorian Gothic revival architecture. It is an imposing building which was architecturally controversial for its interpretation of Gothic details when first built. Externally it presents a closed and slightly forbidding appearance with an almost un-welcoming character. The building is remarkable for its tall stone spire, stained glass windows and prominent nave. The building is fortunate in belonging to the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies who use the building to study Christianity, a discipline which draws upon the architecture of the building.

2.2 External

The west and south sides are both seen from the Woodstock Road. They are unchanged from Street's original design. The building has a cruciform plan with a formal public entrance at the west end.



The building is constructed from coursed and roughly squared local limestone with ashlar dressings in Bath Stone. The walls rise from a stepped plinth, have horizontal bands of Red Aberdeen Sandstone and finish at a projecting eaves cornice. The roofs are covered with Marley Westwood cement tiles which replace the original Colley Weston slates. A tower rises above the transept crossing. The tower contains a clock room above which is the bell chamber. A tapered octagonal stone spire rises above the bell chamber to a height of approximately 40 meters.

At the east end of the building is a semi-circular apse. The apse is buttressed, has a conical tiled roof and high level arched windows.

On the north side of St Philip and St James is the daily entrance to OCMS. This aspect of the building is secondary in appearance to the south side. Located here is the original vestry, later adapted as an Advent chapel and now the director's office. Attached to the north transept is the former choir vestry of 1876 which itself has an extension of 1912. Below the vestry is a basement boiler room. The north transept originally contained the organ loft and is close to the site boundary.

The south side looks on to the churchyard. There are two original entrances on the south side. The more prominent is the south porch. The second is into the south transept. Both entrances are currently only occasionally used. The south elevation of the transept has a large rose window above symmetrically arranged lancet windows. Rising from behind the transept roof is a small newel turret and spire. In the space between the south transept and chancel apse a memorial chapel was added in 1921 following the end of the First World War.

2.3 Internal

The nave is characterised by a large timber barrel vault ceiling and is focused towards the chancel. The design intended a clear and open view to the altar from the nave. The altar is located at the far eastern end of the apse with a prominent carved reredos behind.

The nave and chancel have fine carved stonework with groin ribbed and vaulted ceilings. The craftsmanship is of high quality and includes turned Devon granite columns, individually carved column capitals, fine stained glass and wrought ironwork. The font and pulpit are both original.

The building was first adapted by OCMS for use as a study centre in 1983. At this time OCMS were not to know how successful their organisation would become. The initial conversion was economical and with minimal alteration to the building itself. The existing areas of the building were re-designated with the former vestry area adapted to provide a kitchen and two WCs. The nave is used for meetings, prayer and group discussions, the transepts are used by research students and for administrative staff. The bursar's office is in the lower level of the south transept and the director of OCMS uses the original vestry as an office. Teaching is undertaken in various parts of the building as well as a 'conference room' at the west end of the nave.

In 2015 Planning Permission 15/01867/FUL and Listed Building Consent 15/01868/LBC were granted to re-organise the interior of the building and construct an extension on the north side. The permission included for a mezzanine floor in the south transept and the construction

of glazed screens within each transept opening to the choir. This work was commenced in 2016 with the alterations to the south transept.

3. Description of Proposals

3.1 General

The alterations requested with this application relate to the works approved in 2015. They request minor adjustments to the spatial layout within the extension and former vestry areas and to improve the acoustic performance of the building by raising the height of the transept screens.

The proposed alterations will improve both the teaching environment and the support areas. The works are necessary to ensure the historic building will continue in active use. The internal re-organisation will enable the relocation of equipment, copiers, computer terminals and bookcases out of the historic building into a purpose built extension and new archive area. The alterations also provide for a kitchen, student areas and new WCs together with facilities for disabled persons.

In 2020 the Covid-19 Pandemic caused OCMS to reconsider the delivery of its teaching programme. A much greater emphasis is now given to online learning and audio-visual meetings and seminars. This has created a need for greater acoustic control within the building and to reconsider the internal layouts of the north side extension, WCs and service areas.

3.2 North side extension

The north side of the building is largely unseen and hidden from public view. It consists of a garden and path giving access to the daily entrance for OCMS and a little used area behind the apse which has become overgrown and neglected.

The extant permission is for an extension in this area which will link into the church at the existing student entrance. The extension is designed as a separate structure from the historic building with a lightweight glazed abutment where new connects to existing. The extension is intended for flexible use, either as a space for OCMS' teaching remit or as an independent annex for external events.

The extension has a low linear form, is single storey height and is to be built with external walls constructed from natural stone to match the church. The extension is designed to evoke the appearance of a cloister or refectory. The internal, south facing front of the extension has an Oak framed and glazed elevation. This is to allow students to look across to the historic building and to utilize solar gain.



Artistic impression of north side extension

An amendment is requested to the internal layout of the extension. This omits the proposed gallery floor to create a single conference room. The amendment requires no alteration to the form, shape or external character of the extension. The only change is provision of an additional door within the glazed south front as shown on drawing 188/02.

3.3 Former Vestry areas

The 2015 planning permission gave permission to reorganize the interior of the 1876 choir vestry and its 1912 extension to provide a student common room, kitchen and to improve sanitary facilities. No change is proposed to the use of this area, its form or external appearance.

Permission is requested to adjust the internal layout to provide a corridor linking the kitchen with the north side extension. This is to enable the independent use of the extension from activities within the church. It will also allow use of the extension in the evenings or when the main body of the church is closed.

3.4 North and south transept screens

The 2015 planning permission gave permission to construct a mezzanine floor in the south transept and to construct matching glazed screens to both transepts at mezzanine level. A 19th Century illustration from *The Building Magazine* indicates that G. E. Street originally intended matching iron screens at both transepts.

Permission is now requested to extend the two screens to the full height of their respective transept openings. This will improve the acoustic performance of the building. Currently, the sound from a meeting being held in one area of the church will travel throughout the building. The voices from a meeting in one transept can clearly be heard by students studying at the other end of the nave.

The proposal is for the installation of acoustic glass to replace the existing screen glazing and to extend the height of the glazing to the top of the arched openings. OCMS have consulted with acoustic designers, glazing consultants and a structural engineer to ensure the viability of the proposals.

The use of 21.5mm thick toughened low ion glass is proposed as this will contain a sound level of 42 to 46 decibels. A typical meeting room will develop a volume ranging between 30 and 35 decibels.

The weight of the additional glass panels is estimated as 678kg. This can be carried by the existing screen structure and will be secured in position by a concealed steel channel within the head of each screen. A stainless steel handrail is to be fixed across the inner side of each screen at mid-height to provide horizontal stability and to prevent any deflection from the additional weight of the glass.

The high level glass panels will be secured within the arch openings by positioning into a steel channel scribed to the inside profile of each arch. Cover strips will be applied to mask the joints between glass panels and will align with the post positions of the existing screens.

The glass will be cut around the carved capitals at the base of each arch. A minimum 25mm gap will be kept between the stonework and edge of the glass to protect the carved stonework of the capitals from any harm. The gap will be packed with felt to maintain acoustic performance. A shaped metal cover piece will be fabricated to fit around each capital profile and mask the joint as shown on drawing 188/12.

3.5 North transept stair

The 2015 planning permission gave permission to extend the existing spiral stair and create a high level archive storage area in the former organ loft of the north transept.

Permission is requested to replace the existing open tread iron spiral stair dating from 1985 with an enclosed timber stair. The proposed stair has been carefully designed to fit within the spacing of the lancet windows of the transept. The stair is to be enclosed within an Oak and glass screen to reduce the heat loss and acoustic transfer. The glazed screen will match the detail and character of the Oak joinery of the west gallery and conference room.

4. Environmental considerations

Enclosing the openings to each transept will improve the environmental performance of the building as follows:

- Heat loss will be reduced from the mezzanine levels of each transept.
- It will allow the independent control and regulation of spatial heating within each transept.
- The sound and noise transfer within the building is reduced to allow separate meetings to take place simultaneously.
- The acoustic screens will allow greater privacy for discussions and meetings.

5. Design and Access considerations

The following design and access considerations are relevant to the requested alterations:

1. The use of the building, access and entry points will remain unchanged from the permission granted in 2015.
2. The public appearance of the building will not be affected.
3. The internal alterations to the layout of the north side extension will enable greater flexibility in the use of the extension.
4. The internal transept screens will not harm historic fabric.
5. The increased screen height has been designed to have the minimal visual impact and is consistent with the existing screen structures.
6. The screens will improve the acoustic performance of the building by reducing the sound transfer.
7. The screens will improve the energy performance of each transept.
8. The increased screen height will enable removal of the high level curtains obscuring much of the present transept openings.