

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, BISHOPSTONE, EAST SUSSEX:
PLANNING APPLICATION FOR EXTENSION TO NORTH AISLE
DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT**



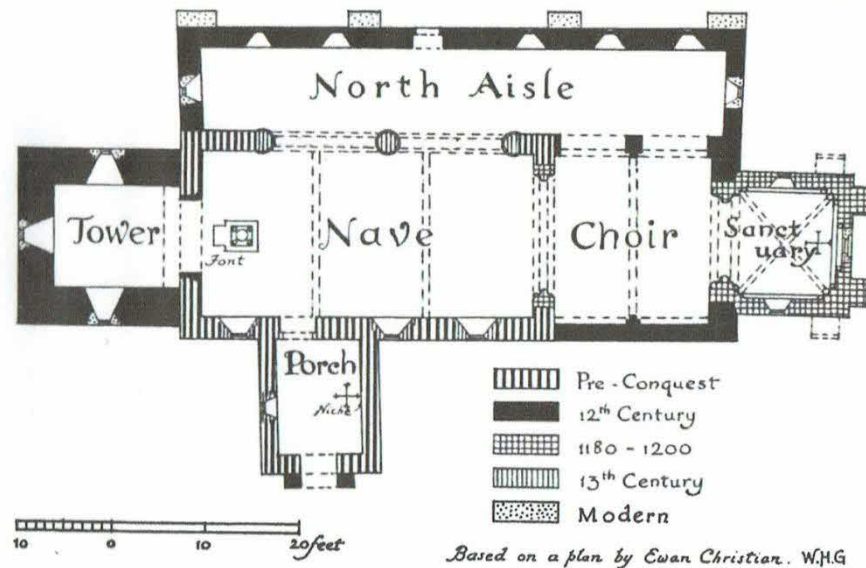
St Andrew's Church from the south

1.0 The Church

- 1.1 A full description of the church building and its history is included in the Heritage Statement which is part of this application: the description here is a summary.
- 1.2 The church consists of a nave with a north aisle, a choir or chancel which is the continuation eastwards of the nave, and a small sanctuary at the east end, a west tower, and a south porch. At the west end of the north aisle is a modern underground boiler room. The church is built of flint with stone dressings; roofs are double pitched and covered in clay plain tiles; the tower roof is pyramidal and shingled.
- 1.3 The nave and south porch or porticus are pre-conquest in date, with the choir, the north aisle and tower being added in the 12th C. The small square sanctuary, lower and narrower than the choir, was the last of the Norman building, and is thought to date to around 1175
- 1.4 Little work subsequently took place until a major restoration of the church in 1849, at which the sanctuary acquired its present form with a ribbed vault of timber and plaster. The east wall was reformed, the lower choir windows were blocked and those

above received pointed heads. New windows were placed in the tower and south side of the nave. More work took place in 1860, and in 1884 works were carried out which included refurnishing the church. Further repairs were carried out between 1952 and 1954 by WH and WE Godfrey. The east quoins of the south porticus were renewed in 1984, and the repair works of 2006-7 revealed the early windows in the north nave, chancel and south porticus.

PARISH CHURCH of ST ANDREW BISHOPSTONE



2.0 Design

- 2.1 The need for a wc and tea point in the church are amply demonstrated in the Statement of Need which is included in this application. The proposed location followed a feasibility study to consider whether there was any other location within the church or churchyard for the facilities, and which concluded that an extension to the north aisle provided a practical solution and caused least harm to significance. The design of the extension to provide a wc and vestry has been carefully considered to minimise impact on the historic fabric and effect on views of the church.
- 2.2 The proposed extension is on the site of the underground boiler room. Its footprint is broadly the same, and as this area has already been extensively excavated to form the boiler room and its access stairs this location will have minimal archaeological potential. The modern chimney that serves the boiler room and has been built up against the west wall of the aisle will be demolished to expose the aisle wall, which will be repaired as necessary in this location.
- 2.3 The design simply extends the north wall of the aisle westwards, in flint and with stone dressings, and returns to the tower wall a short distance back from the tower quoining. The roof follows the line of the north aisle roof, and maintains the existing eaves detail, but does not extend continuously up to meet the tower north wall: instead the roof becomes double-pitched, with the section next to the tower north wall

descending to below the first tower offset and with a lead valley gutter between the two. This minimises the height of the extension and leaves more of the tower wall visible, and allows the remains of the upper part of the historic nave wall quoining to be seen.

- 2.4 The greatest impact of the proposal on historic fabric is on the north aisle west wall, where it is proposed to form a doorway through to the extension. While the origins of this wall are meant to be 12th C, it is known that the west window is of 19th C date, and an archaeological study of the external flintwork by Chris Butler Archaeological Services has concluded that the external facing flintwork is also substantially modern; internally the wall steps in considerably just above the window level, suggesting that there has been remodelling here too. While the core of the wall may still be of 12th C date, it is claimed that most of the exterior is modern. It is proposed that the existing 19th C west window stonework and glass will be reused in the west wall of the new extension. Where appropriate to do so the original west wall of the aisle will be left exposed and unplastered.
- 2.5 Against the tower the tower wall will also be left exposed and unplastered where appropriate. The existing tower ground floor north window is also 19th C, but this too will be left exposed and visible in the vestry area.
- 2.6 The effect of the extension on the views of the church is important. An assessment of the immediate views has been made, and it is confirmed that the extension would not be seen from the east or the south except at the west end of the churchyard. While visible from the west, the proposed elevation is sympathetic to the existing elevation, a factor which encouraged the form of the new building. From the north the elevation is a simple continuation of the north aisle north elevation, maintaining the small windows used elsewhere on that elevation.
- 2.7 The appearance of the extended church in the more distant landscape has been considered. Long views which are important and which will show the extension are mainly from the north. The most distant view is from the road south from Norton, and from here it appears that the view has purposely been left tree-less to provide views of the church tower. The change to the appearance is modest, and from a distance barely visible.



Long view from north, with photomontage on the right showing the extension

- 2.8 After the long distance view the church is almost invisible until it reappears at the bottom of the hill opposite the Old Post Office; as with the long distance view the roof simply covers part of the tower wall in an unexceptional way.



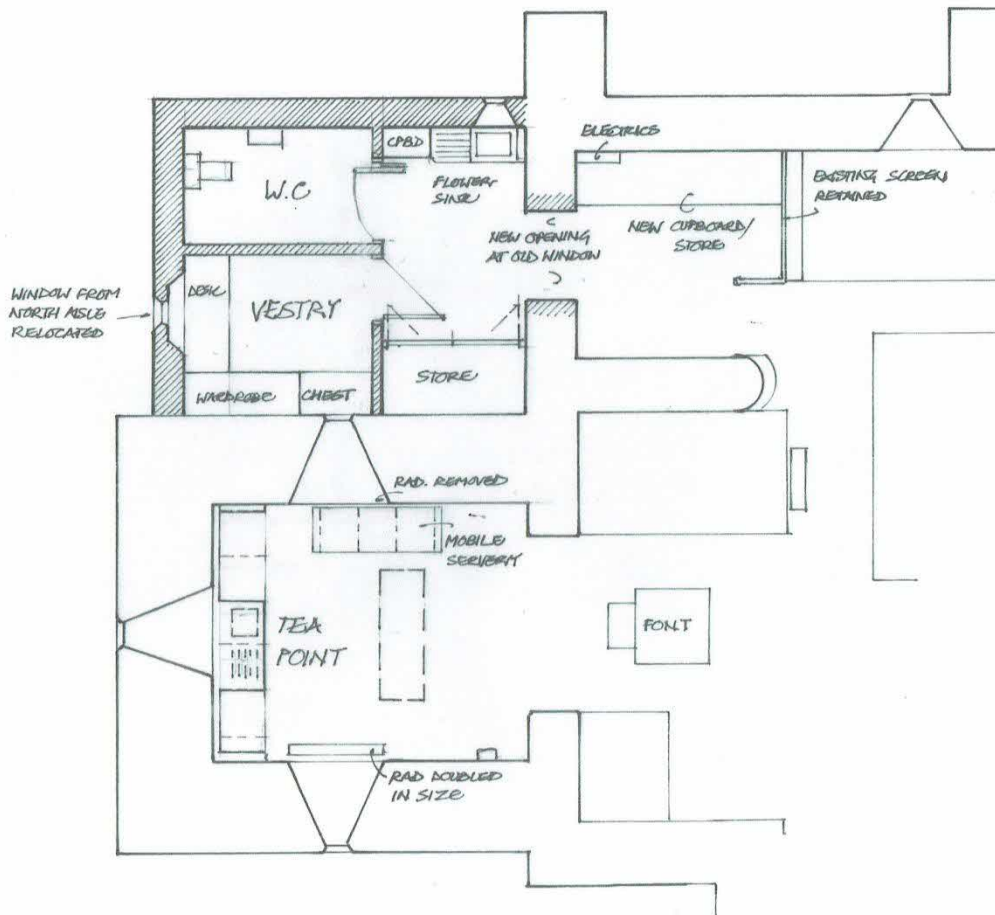
Top: view from north of Green at present, and, below, with the extension

- 2.9 Heading west along the track off Bishopstone Road the church is barely visible, obscured by the trees and hedge which separates the churchyard from the Green.



Left: west view of the church at present; right, photomontage with extension

2.10 The final photomontage above shows the next important view, from immediately west of the church. The proposed extension simply extends the north aisle roof further west, but giving it a downward pitch near the tower to enable the nave quoins and the tower first stage window to be seen, and forming a new west wall in similar fashion to the existing west wall.



Plan of west end of church showing proposed tea point and wc extension

3.0 Access

3.1 St Andrew’s Church is approached via a level footpath from the lych gate to the east side of the churchyard. A car parking space for disabled visitors is located close to the churchyard. Access into the church is level via the south porch. Within the church access is impeded by raised pew platforms, which make access for wheelchairs beyond the cross aisle difficult except in the centre aisle. At present the church has no proper refreshment facilities, and has no lavatory of any sort; facilities are available in the village hall close by, but there is a flight of steps down from the churchyard to the hall, and as this is not a church hall there is no guarantee of availability.

3.2 The proposal is to construct an accessible wc in an extension at the west end of the north aisle, accessed through the old small vestry which at present occupies the west

end of the aisle. This is good level access, and it is close to the refreshment facilities it is intended to provide in the base of the tower.

- 3.3 External locations for these facilities have been considered, but south and west of the church the ground slopes and any path would be long and difficult and the usefulness of the facilities for the disabled would be questionable. The proposed location is clearly the best and most accessible related to the church building.

