

Statement of Significance and Needs for the proposed replacement of windows and door to the Chapter House at St Andrew's Church, Ampthill, to incorporate sliding doors to one aspect

Introduction:

The Chapter House at St Andrew's Church Ampthill was built in the 1970s. The structure is octagonal in shape with three of the sides having floor to ceiling large picture windows. The building has not had any significant improvements carried out since it was built, save for a new kitchen which was fitted about 15 years ago. The current windows are single glazed with non-safety glass. Mainly for safety, but also for heat loss reasons the PCC would like to replace all the windows in the Chapter House, the adjoining office, vestry and kitchen with double glazed units. We would also like to enhance the usage of the Chapter House by having sliding doors to the north elevation. There would have to be a platform of some description to enable users to safely move outside into the churchyard. This would enable an improved flow of people through the Chapter House but would also enhance the experience of users by enabling people to spill out into the churchyard when there are large events at the church. Currently, there is only one entrance and exit to and from the chapter house, which causes congestion when the chapter house is full of people.

It is also proposed that the side door to the Chapter House be made more user friendly for the disabled. We are proposing that it would be possible to open the door automatically from both inside and outside of the Chapter House by the use of push buttons thus enabling wheelchair users easier access to the church and the Chapter House.

The Chapter House is used almost every day by local groups, the local community as well as the church. We are planning an extensive refurbishment of the fixtures, fittings and furniture of the Chapter House to bring it into line with current Health and Safety and regulations and the renewal of the windows and door for legal reasons is the first step along this road.

North Elevation Proposal

The picture below shows the current north elevation to the chapter house. The current window is approximately 3 feet (90cm) from ground level, so we would plan to build a platform in front of the window for people to walk out onto. The exit from the platform, would be steps in front of the platform down into the churchyard.

Siting the sliding doors on the north side of the Chapter House would allow people to move out into a calm and tranquil part of the churchyard, allowing access for able bodied users. The disabled would be able to use the side door to the Chapter House. As this side of the Chapter House faces north very little grows and would be a good use of this area of the churchyard.

We would be proposing a paved terrace finish for non-slip and maintenance reasons. It is thought that the terrace might take the form of a raised platform structurally supported on piers at the outer corners with beams across and back to the outer walls of the Chapter

house, in order to minimise the area of archaeological disturbance and potential excavations required.

Due to the height above ground the edge of the terrace would require guarding.



North elevation of Chapter House

See also the 'Windows and door replacement' document attached with this Faculty.

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