

Update Report on Building Progress : 30 June 2015

Following some years of introspection, and then focusing the design on a buildable and affordable solution, we are delighted to say that we have passed the second round of tenders, contracted with the builder (T & C Williams Ltd of Sheffield) and commenced the work. The work programme of 22 weeks is planned to be completed by November, allowing some leeway on the plan. There will then be furnishing work to be done.



The photo shows the demolition of the old hut, the scale of the land area released, the demolition of the works-side lobby, and the extent of the main church wall where underpinning is required.

The hut was demolished and removed in two days, having had much of its cedar cladding reclaimed before the builders moved in. A drains survey has been undertaken to identify where the assumed runs are.

The old foundations of the hall have been removed and used to provide a base for the extension of the plateau on which the old hut stood. The foundations were then overlaid with some of the excavated ground, extending the future garden surface by a few square metres behind where the new hall will be sited.

The remaining overburden has been re-located on the north slope of the car park, to enable us to create a disabled access walkway through the woods, at some time in the future, with access from the far end of the car park. The overspill car park boundary on the works side has been cleared, enabling us to create a third row of parking once the building work is complete.

The works side stone lobby, which was added some years after the church was re-built following the 1926 destruction by fire, has been demolished. The stone and the arched window have been stored on site for future use in the re-building of the new façade. The foundation stone, commemorating Joseph Sheldon, one of



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the former leaders and benefactors of the church, has also been carefully retained for re-insertion in the new façade.

The ground has been reduced to its planned levels, ready for the excavation of foundations. This reduced level is one of the most fundamental elements of the rebuild, because it will enable the new hall and the existing lower hall and their various services and facilities, to be all on the same level. This will create the sense of a suite of rooms, which can all be used flexibly.



Part of the excavation work was to identify the full extent of the foundations of the existing church, and the requirements for underpinning. The excavations have revealed that there are no deep foundations along the north side of the church wall.

Previous excavations had already identified areas where the link section would require the church to be underpinned. As expected this has now been extended along the length of the transept. The architect, and the surveyors (Arup) are working on the detailed design work for this underpinning last week and this week. This has introduced a delay of up to two weeks in the build programme. This was the element of the build that was always going to require careful examination and while the work will involve the church in a small extra cost, it is all within scope.

Prior to the builders moving on-site, the neighbouring works, Tata Steel, through its environmental officer, discussed with us his finding of Japanese knotweed on a small part of our north-facing slope, leading down to the boundary wall with Tata, but not in any ground affected by the re-building programme. At Tata's expense this is being treated for eradication. Several treatments have already been made over the recent months, and a further treatment made on a slightly wider area this spring, after further consultation with the environmental officer. Tata is paying for this work, and is taking responsibility for the clearance of this invasive plant along the whole of its boundary through the town. We are grateful to them for this assistance. The existence and location of the weed was carefully discussed with the builders and precautions have been taken not to allow the building work to encroach on its area, nor to transfer any contaminated ground.

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The church has been calling in the various grants that have been agreed over the last 2-3 years, and these have been received with grateful thanks. One or two are still in the process of being released. Before the church went ahead it knew it had the funds to deliver the project, with sufficient remaining for reserves for the future. Part of sorting out the funding for the building has been the work on tidying up some of the various small funds that the two churches had, and this will continue after the completion of the building work, to ensure that the church finances are easy to manage and transparent. Regular updates on all the developments have been provided to the church members and discussed at church meetings.



Further fund-raising is on-going, particularly as we had a disappointment that Veolia did not approve our second application, this time for a more restricted proposal focusing on the landscaping of the grounds and the creation of the disabled access woodland walk. But we remain hopeful that we can eventually realize this. We are now fund-raising to finance the equipping of the new kitchen. This will cost about £15,000 and will be essential to the operation of the various activities we plan. We have had an offer from a local charity to consider a grant that will cover a significant proportion of this cost, but we are still working on other funds further away first.

We have consulted with a professional VAT expert in respect of the VAT implications of the work. We had previously considered this in detail and are sure that the work falls within the requirements of the HMRC regulations for a zero-rated construction. Following that consultation, and at the expert's advice, we have now written formally to the Charities Division of HMRC with details of the work and a request for a decision, to ensure that the builders and ourselves are protected. The church has made an allowance in the building funding plan for the possible application of VAT to a small proportion of the works which the HMRC may deem falls under the apportionment rules. We are hopeful, however, that the Revenue will consider the work as a whole and zero-rate the whole work programme.

We have had further consultations with the Building Regulations department and the architect on the interim fire strategy during the building work and the final fire strategy, once the building is completed. The changes requested recently to the plans for the final strategy include the insertion of a fire door in the main front façade. Since this part of the façade is already planned to be an aluminium frame structure, this will not be intrusive, and actually might be to the church's advantage in day-to-day use. Though it will

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have the effect of increasing the through draught in cold weather. A further requirement is the insertion of a smoke resistant screen across the top level of the link building. This will be a glass and frame wall, with double doors held back on automatic closers. This also will create a more usable space for small meetings. The church has already put into place most of the interim requirements and will be finalizing these over the coming days.

Planning is underway for two new projects that will move into the hall once it is finished. The new Christ Church Community Project, created by the church to manage and oversee its developing community outreach, has started planning for a lunch club for older isolated people. We are meeting in July a national charity with experience in embedding lunch clubs in support and social activities for older isolated people and hope that we may be able to create an excellent day service once a week. The church has now been successful in application to two funds, (The Yorkshire Synod of the URC and the Missional Alongside the Poor Fund of the Methodist Church) and is also expecting to receive support from the city council, for the creation of a Social Café. This will be a one day a week service for adults under 65 with isolation and vulnerability needs, and will start once the building is completed. It will be working closely with statutory services and local organizations to create a network of support and development for individuals at risk.



We have asked the builder to cost up for us a potential additional element. When the church decided to remove the originally conceived front door extension on the road-side, it was agreed that an alternative approach would be to replace the wooden front door with a glass door, and then introduce new internal arch-ways through the rear extension of the church, so that the circulation space through to the new hall and church and link would be considerably improved. This was not included in the tender, as we wanted to have a clear base price. We have now asked the builder to cost this work, as it would be far better to do this work while the upheaval of the main building work is underway. We have previously shared these plans with the relevant URC committees, prior to the final work being agreed, but we will submit them again if requested if and when we reach a stage where the church considers they are affordable.

A special service marked the ground breaking, with children cutting the first sods. A dedication service is planned for Sunday 17th January and following the church leadership team meeting this week, invitations will be sent out to various individuals to ask them if they can attend.

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