

Brief for Architects – St Alban’s Church & Hall, Eastbourne.

1 BACKGROUND

Eastbourne is now a seaside suburb of Hutt City. It lies on the eastern side of Wellington’s Harbour, Te Whanganui-a-Tara. The population live in homes that are nestled into the hills around the sea edge and on the flat area around the village and beyond. Eastbourne used to be the holiday destination for Wellington families who arrived by ferry to enjoy the beaches. It is now a sought-after place to live.

Local children attend the large state Muritai Primary School or the smaller primary school attached to San Antonio Catholic Church. The Anglican Wellesley College in Days Bay caters for some local boys but primarily for boys who come from outside Eastbourne.

1.1 **CHARACTERISTICS AND STATISTICS FOR EASTBOURNE & BAYS**

- Population 4665 ¹
- Over 15 years (81%)²
- All young people travel outside Eastbourne for secondary and tertiary education
- Most working age adults work outside Eastbourne, unless working from home
- Residents aged over 65 above national average
- Population generally of a high socio-economic level

1.2 **ISSUES**

Early in 2012, vestry engaged BECA to assess the St Alban’s parish church and hall (*lots 1 and 2 DP 8662, 13 and 14 Ngaio Street Eastbourne*) for earthquake risk. The initial report dated 5 June 2012 indicated there was not an issue with the state of the buildings but more investigative work was needed. The second report dated 16 June 2016 showed that there was indeed a problem and parts of the church were 15% of code with the likelihood of the side walls falling out under code level earthquake shaking. The main part of the hall building was rated 20% seismic capacity. Since 14 August 2016, the church has been closed and apart from the commercial kitchen at one end and the office, toilets and small kitchen at the other, the hall has not been used.

2 PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

The Wellington Diocese and St Alban’s church have developed a series of principles and values which set out the commitments and requirements for building and investing in the development or redevelopment of church properties for worship and mission. These criteria will be instrumental in **evaluation and decision making** on the proposed redevelopment on the Ngaio Street site.

These principles and values are set out in Appendix 1.

3 CONSULTATION

In coming to the decision to re-establish on the Ngaio Street site, the parish, embarked on a thorough consultation process. The process involved a number of phases.

- Blue Skies Day – community consultation at Eastbourne Library, November 2016
- Three facilitated meetings in 2017 involving active church members and the parish
- Visits, meetings and consultation by the St Alban’s Earthquake Team (SEAT)

¹ From 2013 census

² from 2013 census

- The SEAT report to vestry in November 2017.

3.1 WHAT CONSULTATION TOLD US

3.1.1 “Blue Skies Day 2016” approximately 100 people – 50/50 residents and parishioners

This was held in the library and involved a series of posters, a questionnaire and ‘post-its’. 50% indicated they liked the way St Alban’s church looked from the outside and did not want this changed. This was by far the strongest statement from public consultation.

Individual comments identified the important heritage and historical value of the St Alban’s church building to the Eastbourne community. (The church is probably the oldest surviving structure in Eastbourne.)

29% commented on the peacefulness of the church and garden, while 14% indicated they had used church or garden for quiet contemplation.

23% liked the church interior and wanted it retained as far as possible.³

Thirteen participants in total raised a series of separate change needs and ideas, including the need for modernising, providing for future worship needs, making the interior more appealing to families and children, increased interior flexibility and removing pews to provide moveable seating.

There was less community attachment to the hall, which most submissions suggested should be redeveloped as a place with convenient spaces for different activities, with a dual parish and community focus.

3.1.2 Parish Consultation – Three Workshops attended by 45,38,37 parishioners respectively.

The parish, mindful of the changes in direction required of the Anglican Church rather than simply strengthening the buildings as they stood, embarked on a series of consultation workshops. These aimed to explore the relevance of the 100-year-old church and its customs in the 21st century and beyond. The process, carried out over the 2017 year, considered uses and alternative sites and required some heartfelt soul searching as to how St Alban’s would promote the living presence of God’s kingdom in Eastbourne into the future.

During these facilitated workshops, a number of themes were expressed for St Alban’s buildings.

The Church themes were to:

- a) Retain the symbolic landmark of the church in the community.
- b) Be a destination place of worship that draws people in. (The Eastbourne community is strongly positive about the silhouette of St Alban’s steep pitched roof, steeple and porch area as seen from the road and expect it to continue to be visible.)⁴ The expectation is any new build will complement existing architectural integrity, as well as being welcoming and appealing to the eye.

³ Information is not available to separate parishioners from non-parishioners in these statistics.

⁴ This view from the street has traditionally been an important vision for all residents of Eastbourne. The view is now obscured and the space dominated by the large pohutukawa trees. Retaining this view is clearly important to Eastbourne and for it to be retained, urgent and regular work is required to manage the trees.

- c) Continue to provide for regular services (Sunday and mid-week worship), special family events (weddings, funerals).
- d) Provide increased interior flexibility of floor-space for small or large gatherings, largely through removal of pews and introducing movable seating.
- e) Provide increased interior light, particularly through use of glass, new windows and roof design.
- f) Continue as the heart centre for outreach. (Giving strength through worship and contemplation, for people involved in St Alban's community mission activities.)
- g) Provide a place of peace and serenity for all. (Where people, singly or in groups can be inspired and comforted through quiet contemplation.)

Hall themes were to:

- a) Provide flexible spaces and a hub for church related activities (e.g. Kids' Club).
- b) Cater for community activities led by the parish for different age groups – (currently Pop in & Play, Youth Groups, Take a Break).
- c) Provide for community activities and events, one-off (e.g. speakers), ongoing classes (e.g. ballet), or regular activities (e.g. indoor bowls).
- d) Offer pastoral care and hospitality through preparation and storage of meals for people in need in the community.
- e) Expand the ability to host day retreats for St Alban's, the whole Eastbourne faith community or the wider Anglican community - combining use of indoor facilities with easy outdoor access to the garden, beach and bush.
- f) Provide for small local businesses using the commercial kitchen (often as a start-up base).
- g) Include provision for easily accessible storage of furniture and equipment.

4 SUMMARISED THEMES

In summary, overall consultation identified distinct themes for the St Alban's community to:

- a) Shine as a beacon where Christian values emanate into the community.
- b) Provide generous hospitality of spirit.
- c) Make an important contribution to caring for the elderly (who form a large proportion of our community.)
- d) Increase the opportunity for children growing up in Eastbourne to make strong connections with the church and be able to form relationships with groups and individuals.
- e) Offer pastoral care and support to all who need it.
- f) Provide an environment where all comers feel welcomed, cared for and able to make supportive connections and contribute.
- g) Provide a gathering place where community issues can be raised and addressed.

Many alternative sites and options for the future of the church in Eastbourne were explored before there was a consensus to return to the Ngaio Street site.

5 THE DECISION

The St Alban's Earthquake Team (SEAT) commissioned by Vestry to find a way forward presented a report to Vestry in November 2017.

On 25 February 2018, a Special General Meeting of the parish decided:

That the Ngaio Street properties continue to be the home site for St Alban's Parish Ministries and that the recommendations of SEAT contained in the report dated November 2017 ("the Jamieson report") be adopted, namely:

- (a) That the church should be earthquake strengthened and reroofed and the hall be earthquake strengthened, within the existing or similar building footprints and
- (b) That the work should be carried out taking into account the matters set forth in paragraphs 44 to 47 of the Jamieson report, (these are covered in section seven).
- (c) That a group should be established with appropriate expertise to manage the project to the preliminary design stage and obtain costings by 30 July 2018 and
- (d) Once a design and costings are available, to convene a further SGM of the parish.

6 THE CURRENT PICTURE

6.1 CHURCH -WHAT WE HAVE NOW

Exterior

St Alban's church was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and built in 1910 with additions in the 1960's.

The roof was replaced many years ago and the material used (probably asphalt shingles) is now likely to have come to the end of its expected life-span. These have now developed some leaks and sag in places. Recent vestries have provided urgent maintenance, awaiting more extensive work which will provide an opportunity for roof replacement.

Original walls are white painted stucco, new section concrete block. Window frames and sashes are wood. Windows have small panes, some coloured. Memorial window and rose window are stained glass.

Interior

In the church interior, lower walls are painted white, window sills, frames, sashes wooden, ceiling and beams dark wood, floor wood, with aisle, sanctuary and altar area carpeted. The 'feel' of the church interior is subdued and dim. This is added to by the dark colouring of the foyer windows.

Seating is fixed wooden pews with attached long, fold down wooden kneelers. The pews seat approximately 110.

Additional seating is available using chairs and two choir pews when large groups are present especially for celebratory services and large funerals.

Two small vestry areas, south vestry for vicar's use and north vestry which houses church safe and has organ and piano outside. Organ is old and likely to be requiring replacement by a more portable organ in the foreseeable future.

There are glass-panel folding doors between the original church and the foyer, where the tea/coffee making facility is located.

There are currently two gathering spaces, the Church itself and the limited and awkward foyer.

6.2 HALL - WHAT WE HAVE NOW

The main area of St Alban's hall was built in 1927. Initially it comprised a large meeting room, small lounge, toilets and kitchen. The construction is brick with a corrugated iron roof. Five separate renovation, upgrading and earthquake strengthening activities took place between 1952 and 2009. The commercial kitchen was added in 1994. The work in 2009 upgraded the office, provided a further toilet, small kitchen facilities and a versatile foyer, plus doors and wide steps providing indoor-outdoor access from the large meeting room.

The hall currently has three meeting spaces. The large multi-purpose hall, the small 'lounge' and the foyer area.

The commercial kitchen and the office, toilets, foyer and small kitchen facilities remain useable as they are not considered an earthquake risk.

7 THE WAY FORWARD – WHERE TO FROM HERE

7.1 GENERAL

In summary, St Alban's seeks a design proposal which:

- Meets current earthquake requirements for places of public assembly.
- Meets budget requirements.
- Meets Diocesan and Parish principles and values.
- Provides buildings which are innovative, future proofed, allow use of modern technology and are welcoming and functional
- Enables flexibility for evolving use of the church and hall (including combined use), for worship, mission and community purposes now and into the future.
- Meets health and safety standards for all user groups.

7.2 CHURCH

A chart of church requirements contributed by current activity leaders, is attached as Appendix 2A. The key features of the design we seek, (summarised here) will:

- a) Retain the heritage value and architectural integrity of the church building as much as possible, particularly as seen from the road.
- b) Ensure any new build melds with existing architecture and allows for modern usage.⁵
- c) Meet the parish recommendation for use of "the same or similar footprint" (provided the modern usage requirement is met).
- d) Ensure the new roof material and design contributes increased light to the Church.

⁵ The Anglican Church is increasingly operating a "mixed economy" when it comes to worship. The underlying principle is that no one style of worship suits all. Styles of worship vary from quiet and contemplative, formal (with or without hymns), contemporary (relaxed use of liturgy), or more informal. Musical instruments vary from traditional organ (though lack of organists raise questions about its future), to piano, guitar, violins etc. Seating arrangements vary from theatre style to a circle. All the above highlights the need for flexibility. The consistent trend over recent decades reflects the need for increasing flexibility and the use of electronic media.

- e) Consider other suitable ways in which increased light can be introduced into the Church interior- this could include removal of all or part of north wall, addition of new spaces linked to church with flexible wall/folding doors and replacement of some exterior wall with increased glazing.
- f) Allow for flexible, better use of floor space within the church, largely by removal of pews, introduction of flexible seating and suitable storage for such seating.
- g) Consider how better use could be made of areas of the church currently not used to their potential –e.g. area behind organ, area of choir pews, church foyer.
- h) Vestry area (North). Church safe could be relocated. Organ and piano could be relocated into a “music centre” with space for other instruments and musicians.
- i) Vestry (South). Requires space for heating, water for post communion use, improved storage for music, linen and raiments.⁶ Retain outside access.
- j) Within the church foyer, consider whether the existing tea/coffee preparation facilities can be better located in another place. (Location must be able to be easily accessed after worship.) The foyer itself has flower arrangement and some book storage, which could be relocated to enable the foyer to become a usable small group worship or meeting space for adults or Kids Club.
- k) The bell tower above the foyer, requires a significant overhaul and rebuild along with the roof and requires inside continuation of access to bell-ringer rope.
- l) Electronics control cupboard – currently non-existent. Needs to be small accessible space, with easy access to electronic equipment overlooking church body. Convenient seating and small table space for controller.
- m) Consider ways in which the church and hall could be linked so services could be integrated when appropriate. This linkage could be either behind the organ, or through church foyer and could consider a variety of options such as a simple covered walkway, or more usable spaces, or the ability to provide a walkway able to be further developed in the future.
- n) Continue to provide for a hearse /funeral vehicle to have easy access to the church.
- o) Retain the two stained glass windows.
- p) Consider whether changes are possible to reduce church floor levels. (Currently three.)

7.3 HALL

A chart of hall requirements contributed by current activity leaders, is attached as Appendix 2B. The key features of the design we seek (summarised here) will:

- a) Either retain the currently used earthquake ‘safe’ areas in the hall, (commercial kitchen and foyer area with office, toilets and small kitchen) in their current locations, or relocate them with more suitable placement in a new design. This would be subjected to the “good sense and economics” test.
- b) Ensure all spaces within the hall footprint are accessible and flexible, able to be used successfully by groups of any age or activity - small children, young people, families, older adults, people with disabilities and day retreat groups.
- c) Ensure any large hall spaces can be divided into smaller spaces with flexible partitions.

⁶ Consideration of g,h,i and j in 7.2 together, could lead to innovative use of a covered walkway linking church and hall together, with for example organ or music centre relocated to the south side of the sanctuary, and/or the coffee & tea facilities relocated to provide better use of the church foyer.

- d) Provide storage spaces for furniture and equipment for all regular hall users. Rather than cupboards, a storage room is preferred, with the ability to store equipment in large accessible boxes as well as store chairs and folding tables.
- e) Provide outside storage/shed for pre-schoolers' outdoor toys.
- f) Be designed for easy indoor/outdoor flow, which is an especially necessary part of activity programmes for young children and an important aspect of adult day retreats.
- g) Provide for the garden between church and hall to be re-designed as a versatile hub, with small 'private' areas and larger play spaces which will link with the vicarage garden. Provide for safe, fenced children's play area and seating for adult contemplative times.
- h) Reflect the parish recommendation for use of "a similar footprint" by considering creation of new usable areas as part of the redeveloped hall. Options might be in the roof space, an extension into the garden, or by way of a walkway linked with the church. Provision should be made at this time for any addition, although it may be built as a second stage.

7.4 CHURCH/HALL COMBINED OPTION

A more radical option which has been raised involves the demolition of all or most of the hall and the redevelopment of all the spacial, redevelopment and safety requirements given in this Brief within a single structure joined to the church on the northern side, by removal of some or all of the church northern wall. The newly built portion would contain suitable gathering spaces opening into the church with flexible walls/ folding doors (able to provide additional church seating or spaces for independent activities), well designed and located small kitchen, commercial kitchen, toilets, parish office, music centre, electronic control cupboard and heaps of storage. It would provide easy indoor outside access and lead into a redesigned garden providing for safe, multi-purpose use. Perhaps even a sunny outside deck.

This option would provide St Alban's with a 'flexible one-stop shop'. It would of course be within the given budget!

8 ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS IN THE CHOICE OF A SUCCESSFUL DESIGN.

- The Eastbourne and Bays community is a very environmentally conscious area and St Alban's church reflects this. In the past St Alban's has had a special group St Alban's God's Earth (SAGE) which focused on the agenda of Transitional Church – an ecumenical network of local churches aiming to build sustainable local community in the light of the emerging environmental challenge. Although SAGE is no longer active, sensitivity to the environment should be considered in the redevelopment.
- The use of natural materials and provision for native planting are both important.
- Future proofing through e.g. solar heating, the use of up to date technology (visual aids, overheads, screens etc.) accessible to both church and hall should be included.
- Allow for extension of the memorial wall (Garden of Remembrance.)
- Note there is currently a large sewer line running diagonally across lawn between the church and hall.

9 BUDGET

The total budget for all development, staged or built immediately, including contingency sum is \$1.5 million dollars. This includes overall garden design.

APPENDIX 1

FACTORS and PRINCIPLES CONSIDERED in discussing facilities which best meet the worship, ministry and mission priorities of St Alban's.

St Alban's Mission Statement

Providing the Living Presence of God's Kingdom in Eastbourne and the Bays.

St Alban's Parish Goals

Developed to reflect St Alban's Synod Commitment to growing the Kingdom of God:

- be a community which deepens discipleship and encourages mission and outreach to all
- offer worship opportunities to everyone
- strengthen the parish connection to Wellesley College and support its Anglican ethos
- continue the parish's ministry of contemplative prayer, retreat and hospitality.

- **Diocesan requirements of an Anglican Faith Community**
- Worship spaces
- Evangelism disciples who intentionally seek to make new disciples
- Teach groups courses
- Serve social justice and environmental issues
- Care pastoral care
-

Diocesan Values

- we are Episcopally led
- we are a relationship people
- we are one church with local community expression
- we are family
- we make disciples
- we care for the lost, last and least
- we act with integrity, honesty and respect
- we live within our means

Relevant Extracts from Diocesan Building Principles

- *Mission will always drive the decisions on buildings*
 - *Whatever we build or improve should ensure our Missional potential is greater than if we had not embarked on the investment
 - *In particular, in some cases we will need to spend capital in order not to distinguish existing Mission, such as earthquake strengthening of some buildings
 - *We will not invest capital without thinking about the wider context of Mission in the local area, which will include discussion at cluster levels.
 - *Property must not be a drain or cost to our church life and mission

- *Our long-term goal is to have buildings which reach required standards in terms of earthquake and other risks, are well maintained and meet our strategic missional issues.*
 - *We must plan new buildings or acquisitions for the next 50 Years which means they have to be saleable if they cease to be used as mission units.
 - *At any location, we will aspire to the best long-term solution, rather than the expedient.

**Our property should ideally cover its cost, but in any event, should be well-maintained, well used and suitable both from our mission and the wider local community.*

Appendix 2A

Area of church	Current use	Proposed use
Bell tower/steeple	Houses bell	Overhall & rebuild incorporated with roof rebuild. Ring bell from inside
North Vestry	Behind organ/piano Currently houses safe with some storage. Collection counting	Safe could be housed elsewhere.
South Vestry	Has water for post communion use, storage for music and raiments.	Uses as at present. Needs heating. Could be better organised. Retain outside access.
Electronics control cupboard or suitable space.	Does not exist at present.	Requires cupboard with easy access to electronic equipment. View of church body and convenient seating & small table for controller.
Foyer	Tea/coffee station, some storage of books, flower vases & flower arranging equipment, some chair storage. Font	All current uses required but could be better located elsewhere. Foyer could become a usable space for small groups of adults or kids.