



# DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Proposed Replacement Parish Centre  
Green Road, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hants., PO12 2ET

Rev A: 13<sup>th</sup> May 2019



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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This document is written in support of a submission made to Gosport Borough Council for planning permission to replace an existing single storey parish centre in Alverstoke with a new building. The application is made by Plum Architects Ltd on behalf of the St Mary with St Francis and St Faith Alverstoke Parish.
- 1.2 Besides this statement the application consists of the following:
  - Drawing No. PA17-138:01 Plans and elevations as existing
  - Drawing No. PA17-138:05(C) Site layout plan as proposed
  - Drawing No. PA17-138:06(C) Plans and elevations as proposed
  - Completed application documentation
- 1.3 The application fee in the sum of £1,848.00 is submitted via the Planning Portal payment system. It is calculated as follows:
  - Gross floor area: 566m<sup>2</sup>
  - 566 divided by 75 = 7.5. Therefore 8 x £462.00
  - Total fee = £3,696.00
  - 50% reduction for community council applicant = £1,848.00
- 1.4 The application is submitted following a lengthy pre-application process involving the Alverstoke Parish Centre Regeneration Project Team (APCRP), Alverstoke community, Gosport Borough Council planning and conservation teams and Hampshire County Council Highways

## 2.0 Site and Surrounding Area

- 2.1 The site comprises two plots in the centre of Alverstoke, Gosport. The first is a level, broadly rectangular piece of land, approximately 1,872m<sup>2</sup> in size, under the ownership of the St Mary with St Francis and St Faith Alverstoke Parish. It contains the current parish centre. The second is a smaller rectangle of land some 722m<sup>2</sup> in size, abutting the western boundary of the parish centre plot under the ownership of the local authority. It is classified as an Open Space.
- 2.2 To the north runs a small, residential cul-de-sac, Avenue Court. Most properties are located to the northern side of this road. A turning head culminates against the site boundary with nos. 12 – 16 facing west and presenting a brick gable, end elevation towards the site with secondary windows concealed behind mature vegetation. No. 17 is the only property backing onto the site. This is a much extended, two storey dwelling, with its gardens positioned to the east and west. A single storey side/rear extension terminates in 'blind' brick wall facing the site. This is the nearest structure to the current community hall.
- 2.3 To the east runs a quadrangle of two storey, terraced dwellings facing into a central green. These have approximately 11.5m rear gardens facing towards the site separated by a rear access way and a thin strip of mature planting.
- 2.4 To the south runs Green Road. At its eastern end it is dominated by the form of St. Mary's Church and its associated grounds.
- 2.5 Immediately opposite the site is a recently completed, densely grouped, three storey, residential development. A narrow, one-way lane (Little Lane) connects the village shops to Green Road. Beyond this are further detached residential units and finally the substantial Old Lodge hotel complex marks the corner with The Avenue.
- 2.6 To the west, is the remainder of the open patch of grassland denoted as Open Space. Beyond this runs The Avenue, a large, leafy residential road running between Alverstoke village centre and Gosport. It contains large, detached dwellings set in spacious mature grounds.



Aerial Photo

### 3.0 Project Background and Brief

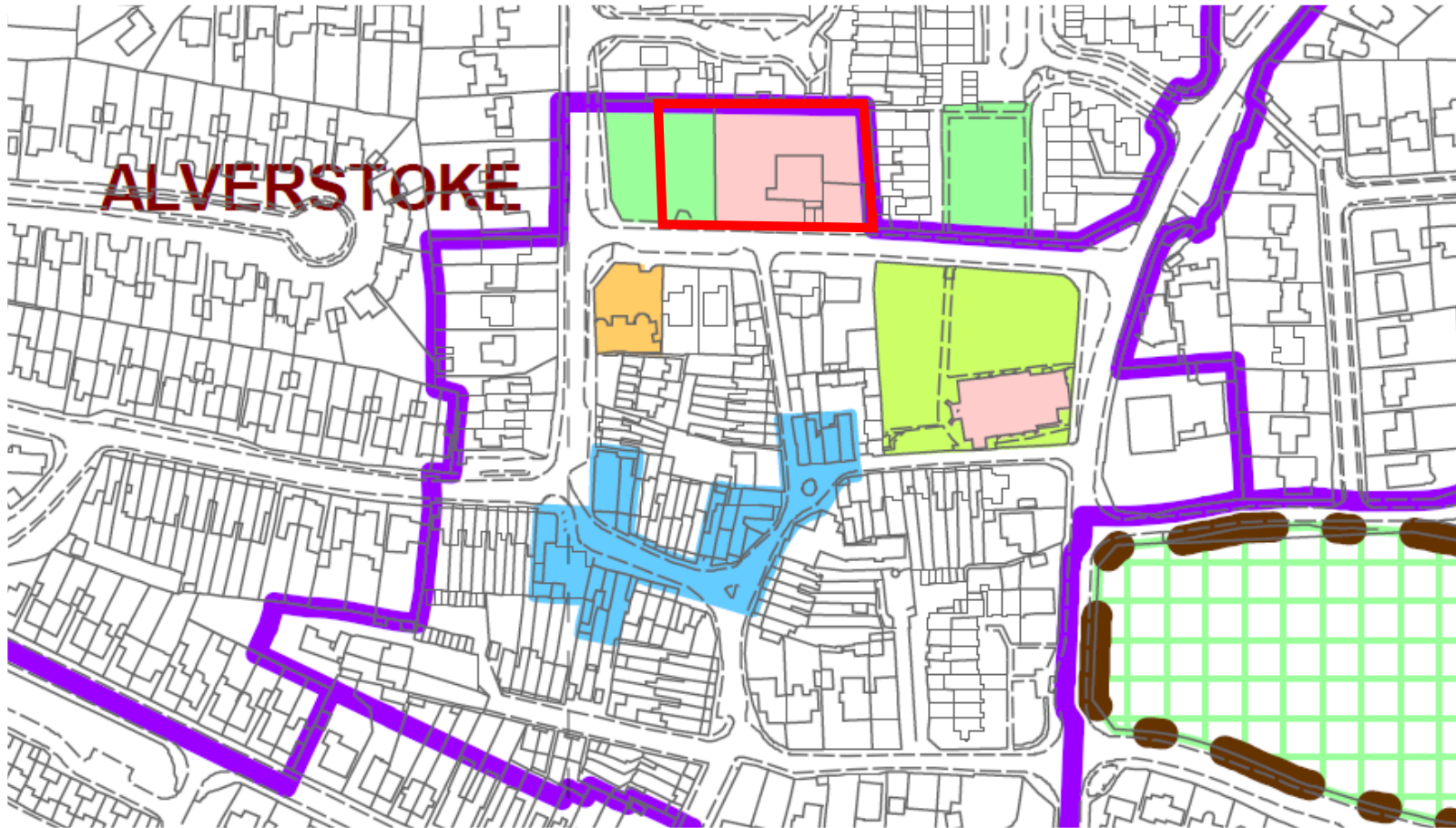
- 3.1 St Mary's Parish Centre, Green Road, Alverstoke was built in 1968 with funds raised by the community. It was initially built to provide meeting rooms and community space for the parishioners of St Mary's Church. Over the past 48 years it has developed into a vital community resource which accommodates a wide range of local community groups, as well as maintaining the necessary space for Parish meetings, business and groups.
- 3.2 The regular users are diverse – ranging from Mothers and Toddlers, through to Youth Groups, model railway enthusiasts, the Women's Institute (three large groups), Zumba classes, Cardiac Rehabilitation classes and Multiple Sclerosis activity and lunches (the only venue in Fareham and Gosport that is adequate for their needs). This is not an exhaustive list, but does emphasise the popularity of the venue, and its importance in the wider community. The Parish Centre is also hired out for parties and private events, where the availability of a kitchen is useful for groups. In short, it has become a vital community hub.
- 3.3 The original facility was intended to be a larger, partly two storey structure as the image below taken from the planning application shows. Although the need was realised back then, this element was never constructed and the building has suffered for space since.



- 3.4 The community need for more usable, inclusive, adaptable space is growing. At present, it is difficult to meet the needs of potential new users, as only one group can be accommodated at any one time. Due to the lack of separated private space the Centre is not fully utilised but is a very busy community hub. The noise from the main hall precludes the use of the hall and smaller lounge at the same time, and some groups sought alternative venues. There is also very little office space to conduct sensitive church and parish business and the administration of the very active Centre.
- 3.5 To commence the evaluation process for the new hall, the project team gathered user requirements from current groups, and it was quickly confirmed that a new building with a second smaller hall and additional recreational space would provide a multiuse community facility that aligns with Local Planning guidelines to help reduce isolation of the community and increase the space for socialising and sporting activities. Disabled users will be afforded good access to all areas as the plan includes a central lift to the first floor and flat surrounding external areas from the public highway and car park. Additionally, the project team identified the need for an accessible changing facility and has included this as one of the Key User Requirements.
- 3.6 The new centre will provide a facility to include groups currently unable to easily access facilities for example the Multiple Sclerosis group who struggle with poor main access and toilets/changing rooms. It will enhance the lives of local residents and an ageing population in line with the Gosport Plan (context para 3.0) to alleviate health deprivation issues by increasing participation in leisure and cultural activities and improve mental and physical well-being. There are no alternative facilities to do this in the expanding population of Alverstoke and the Borough.
- 3.7 The older building no longer meets the need for accessibility. It is also becoming expensive to maintain with struggling services and building infrastructures. There are inadequate heating and hot water systems; regularly blocked drains; poor toilet facilities that do not meet child and access needs; roof leaks; very poor sound/heat insulation and failing electrical infrastructure. Sound proofing is also insufficient and causes under-utilisation and a lack of privacy in the smaller meeting room and office space.
- 3.8 The amount of funds raised will dictate the final scope of the building alongside local planning rules and strive to meet needs outlined by the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029: Community, Cultural and Built Leisure Facilities.
- 3.9 After initially looking at ways of further extending the existing structure it quickly became apparent that this was not a sensible option. The fabric is of poor quality and clearly life expired. The configuration is limiting in terms of the uses now undertaken and fails to meet current statutory requirements for building regulations, health and safety and access for all.
- 3.10 An exhaustive brief for a new parish centre was drawn up over a number of years by the APCRP team. The new facility needed to be relevant to the community, reflect the diverse nature of current and proposed uses and, crucially, sit comfortably within the sensitive setting.

#### 4.0 Site Appraisal and Heritage Assessment.

- 4.1 The site falls within the Alverstoke Conservation Area as it loops around the parish centre and adjacent open space from Green Road. To the west the Open Space provision of the neighbouring ground is clearly defined.



Planning Policy Map



- 4.2 The area is defined by St Mary's Church. Constructed in 1625, it was then substantially altered and enlarged, including having the roof raised, between 1724 and 1904. In its current, primarily 1860s configuration, it is regarded as a fine example of Victorian Gothic and was Grade II listed in May 1953 (ref: 1232651). It sits close to Anglesey Road with a graveyard to the north bordering Green Road. This boundary features a number of substantial trees and a lychgate.

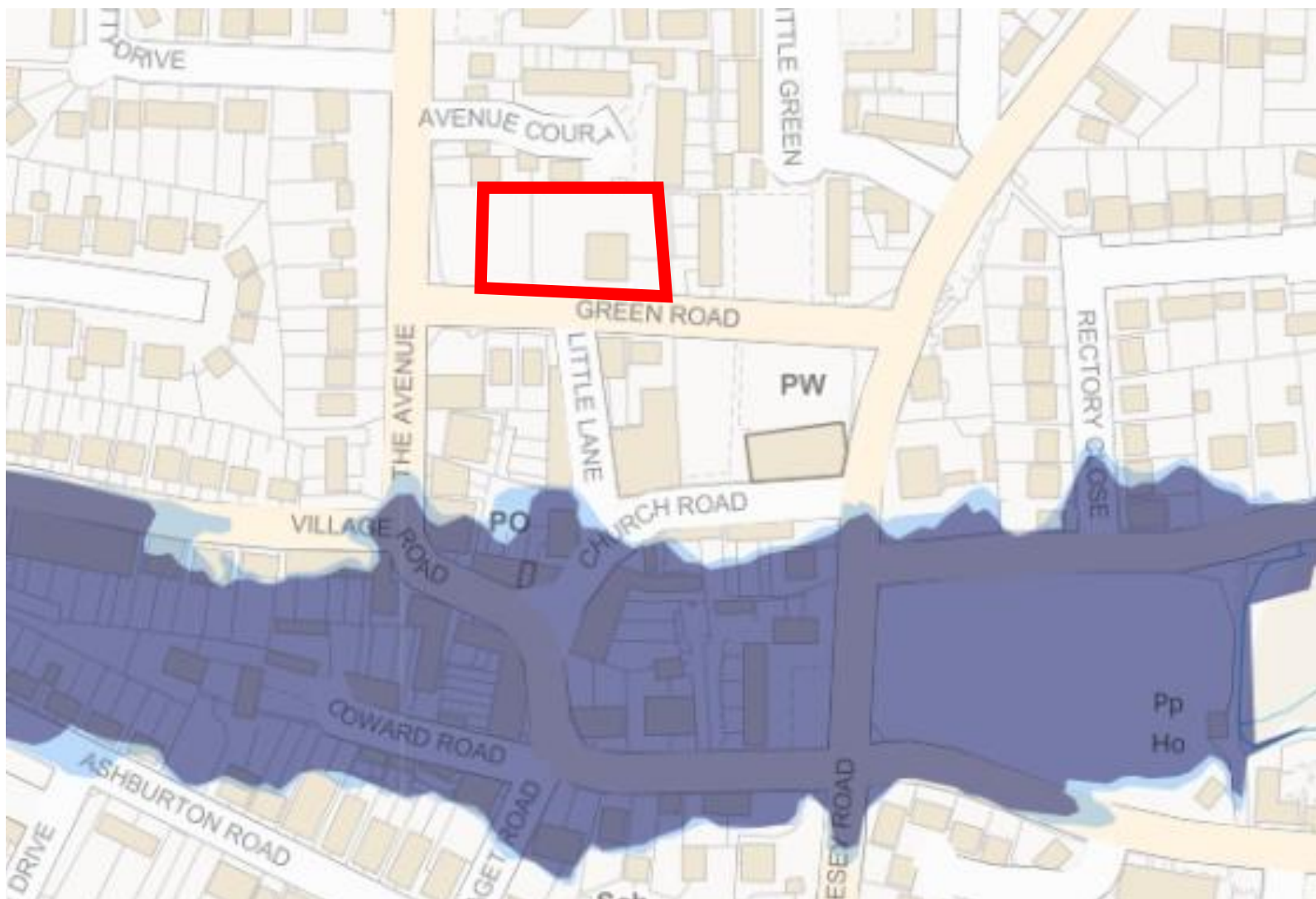


St Mary's Church grounds (Google Streetview)



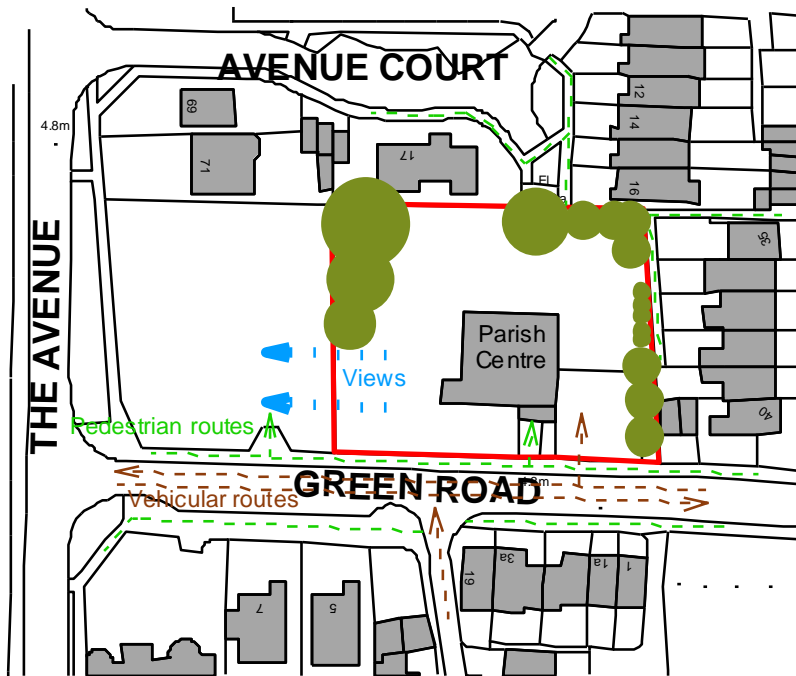
The Old Lodge Hotel (Google Streetview)

- 4.3 There are a number of other listed buildings within the dense centre of the village but the only other structure within visual reference of the site is the Old Lodge Hotel on the corner of The Avenue and Green Road
- 4.4 The remaining buildings in the immediate vicinity are generally mid C20 or very recent. Aesthetically, they do not strongly reflect their conservation area location although the materials used on the modern residential development opposite (slate roofs, red brick, stone detailing) are of high quality.
- 4.5 The proposed site was formerly a graveyard of St Mary's. This designation was lifted by Act of Parliament on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1965 and all restrictions removed enabling use of the ground for "erection of buildings thereon and to make provision of the use thereof; and for any other purposes". All human remains were re-interred in the municipal graveyard at Anns Hill and a clearance certificate issued.
- 4.6 There is not a strong building line to the northern side of Green Road as properties tend to be set out perpendicular to the highway around a central green and accessed via footpaths around the perimeter.
- 4.7 Whilst the site sits close to the end of Haslar Creek it is beyond the identified flood risk zones as detailed on the Environment Agency mapping.



EA Flood Risk Mapping

- 4.8 The current parish centre is located close to the highway with a small gravel car park capable of holding 5 cars accessed via a dropped kerb to the east. Pedestrian access is via a flagstone area in front of the main doors. Besides Green Road, the only clear views afforded from within the site are to the west towards the open ground.



Urban Context Plan

- 4.9 The existing structure is a brick built, single storey building approximately 300m<sup>2</sup> in footprint. As evidenced from its elevations, it has been extended and modified over its lifespan as it has struggled to accommodate the needs of the community it serves. The original, pitched roof structure has almost been lost behind subsequent flat roofed extensions. Featureless parapet walls now front the street. A number of outbuildings have also been added around the north and west perimeter to add storage space. To the front, a flat roofed, projecting canopy denotes the main entrance.
- 4.10 Internally, the building comprises a main hall 9.1 x 12.1m. This has a series of windows and doors which open out to the grounds to the west. Offices and toilets line the principal elevation to the highway along with the rather cramped entrance hall (2.7m wide). A separate meeting room is located midway along the eastern elevation with a kitchen and store to the rear.



View from Green Road

- 4.11 An initial contamination assessment has been completed. Two areas of potential contamination were revealed; asbestos relating to the current structure and soils contamination from the previous graveyard use. The latter was discussed with the Chartered Institute of Archaeologists who stated that research shows that contamination from burial remains (hair, diseases, lead from coffin linings) was miniscule and could be disregarded. As the land was cleared by mechanical excavator following the 1965 Act of Parliament
- 4.12 The existing structure does not have an asbestos register although an asbestos survey was carried out by Environchem on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2018. As expected, traces of crystotile asbestos was found in floor tiles and adhesives and in the boiler flue. A demolition method statement will be undertaken prior to any dismantling of the main fabric.

## 5.0 Planning Policy

5.1 Besides reflecting the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework, specific regional planning policy was guided by reference to the Gosport Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 (adopted October 2015). The following policy criteria have been considered.

### 5.1.1 Policy LP1: Sustainable Development

1. *When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. It will always work proactively with applicants jointly to find solutions which mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the Borough.*
2. *Planning applications that accord with the policies in this Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.*

### 5.1.2 Policy LP10: Design

1. *The Borough Council's overall approach in relation to design is as follows:*
  - a) *planning permission will be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions;*
  - b) *new development should be well-designed to respect the character of the Borough's distinctive built and natural environment including its heritage assets and their setting;*
  - c) *historic assets should be conserved and where possible enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance;*
  - d) *proposals for development must be based on sound supporting evidence.*
2. *Proposals will be permitted within the urban area as defined on the Policies Map, provided that:*
  - Development form*
    - a) *it has a high quality appearance in terms of scale, setting, layout, massing, landscaping, and appearance including details and materials;*
  - Public realm and open space*
    - b) *it provides, or is accessible to, high quality public spaces;*
    - c) *it incorporates measures to protect and enhance biodiversity and landscape features;*
    - d) *it will not significantly prejudice important townscape and landscape features;*
    - e) *it will protect public views of important landscape and townscape features;*
  - Ease of movement*
    - f) *it ensures measures are incorporated that improve accessibility to all users;*
    - g) *it is accessible for pedestrians and cyclists and is well connected to local facilities via links with pedestrian and cycle routes;*
    - h) *it is well connected to public transport routes*
    - i) *it is easy to move through with safe and recognisable routes, intersections and landmarks;*

*Safe and high quality neighbourhoods*

*j) it creates a safe environment where crime and disorder and fear of crime does not undermine quality of life or community cohesion;*

*k) it does not cause harm by reason of:*

*i) loss of light, privacy or outlook;*

*ii) noise, light pollution, vibration, smell, or air pollution; or*

*iii) other adverse impacts;*

*Adaptability*

*l) it minimises its impact on climate change and is resilient and adaptable to its effects;*

*m) it meets nationally described standards for sustainable construction;*

*n) in the case of residential development, it ensures a reasonable proportion of homes are adaptable to meet the changing needs of occupants over a lifetime;*

*o) it takes opportunities to promote flexibility to deal with future social, technological and economic requirements;*

*Comprehensive development*

*p) it makes the most efficient use of the site and does not prevent the comprehensive development of that site and any adjoining land.*

5.1.3 Policy LP12: Designated Heritage Assets: Conservation Areas

*1. The Borough Council will aim to:*

*a) conserve or enhance the character or appearance of existing Conservation Areas;*

*b) produce and update Conservation Area Appraisals; and*

*c) where appropriate, identify additional Conservation Areas.*

*2. Proposals for development in Conservation Areas will be permitted provided that:*

*a) the location, form, scale, massing, density, height, layout, landscaping, use and external appearance conserves or enhances the special historic or architectural interest of the Conservation Area; and*

*b) it conserves or enhances the setting of the Conservation Area and is not detrimental to inward or outward views.*

*3. Proposals for consent to demolish a building in a Conservation Area will be permitted provided it has been demonstrated that:*

*a) the building does not contribute to the character or appearance of the area;*

*b) the building is of no historic or architectural interest or is wholly beyond repair and is not capable of beneficial use; and*

*c) new development proceeds after the loss has occurred within a reasonable and agreed timescale and that the new development is of architectural merit which conserves and enhances the character of the Conservation Area.*

5.1.4 Policy LP22: Accessibility to New Development

*Development proposals that are likely to generate significant levels of travel demand will be permitted, provided that:*

1. *The site is located where convenient public transport services exist or there is a commitment by the developer and public transport providers to deliver such service.*
2. *The site is, or will be made, accessible to pedestrians and cyclists.*
3. *Any new or improved road access and the traffic generated would not have any unacceptable environmental implications nor significantly prejudice the safety, function and capacity of the road network.*
4. *Local and strategic transport improvements will be provided, where necessary, to support the development and mitigate adverse impacts on the safety, function and capacity of the transport network.*
5. *Transport Statements or Transport Assessments are submitted in support of the planning application to evaluate transport impacts, and demonstrate that transport improvements to be provided will meet the needs of the development and mitigate adverse impacts.*
6. *A Travel Plan is provided in support of a planning application where appropriate in relation to the scale and type of development.*

#### 5.1.5 Policy LP23: Layout of Sites and Parking

*Development proposals will be permitted, provided that the layout of the site is designed so that:*

1. *There are safe and convenient routes for pedestrians and cyclists which link with the existing network.*
2. *Existing public rights of way are safeguarded or enhanced where appropriate.*
3. *There is provision for bus access in larger developments with suitably located bus stops.*
4. *Adequate provision is made for an appropriate range of vehicles to access the site, manoeuvre within it, park, load and unload and turn around in a safe and convenient manner.*
5. *Sufficient visibility and lighting is provided for the safe and convenient use of the roads, cycle tracks, paths and parking places.*
6. *Traffic management measures are included, where appropriate, to control the speed of traffic generated by the development, to ensure that the safety and convenience of all highway users including cyclists and pedestrians is maintained or enhanced.*
7. *Provision is made for parking cars, motorcycles, bicycles and where appropriate, goods vehicles and electric cars.*
8. *Access and parking for people with disabilities is provided in accordance with the relevant current standards.*

#### 5.1.6 Policy LP32: Community, Cultural and Built Leisure Facilities

1. *The Borough Council will support the development of new community, cultural and built leisure facilities including those proposed within the Regeneration Areas (LP4-LP7) and other proposed sites (LP9).*
2. *Proposals for community, cultural and built leisure facilities not allocated in this Local Plan which are considered to be a main town centre use will need to accord with the latest Government guidance.*
3. *Planning permission will be granted for community, cultural and built leisure facilities provided that:*
  - a) *they have good pedestrian and cycle access;*
  - b) *there is good access to public transport services, particularly for facilities serving the whole Borough;*

- c) they are well-designed; and*
- d) they have the potential to be used as a multi-use facility.*

5.1.7 Policy LP38: Energy Resources

- 1. The Borough Council will work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of existing buildings.*
- 2. New development will be required to meet at least the relevant national standards for energy use and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. This includes measures set out in the zero carbon hierarchy as follows:
  - a) be designed to maximise energy efficiency and design out the need for energy use by means of the scheme layout and the orientation and design of individual buildings;*
  - b) connect to existing combined heat and power (CHP) and District Heating/Cooling networks or contribute to their future development;*
  - c) use renewable energy technologies to produce required energy on-site; and*
  - d) make use of 'Allowable Solutions' to deal with any remaining CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.**
- 3. Planning permission will be granted for proposals for renewable energy, low carbon and combined heat and power installations provided that:
  - a) There will be no adverse impact to local amenities; and*
  - b) There will be no adverse impact on heritage assets, landscape or biodiversity interests.**

5.2 Additionally, a number of Supplementary Planning Documents have been considered. Of particular relevance are; Design Guidance (adopted February 2014) and Parking (adopted February 2014).



6.0 Proposals

6.1 Site Layout.

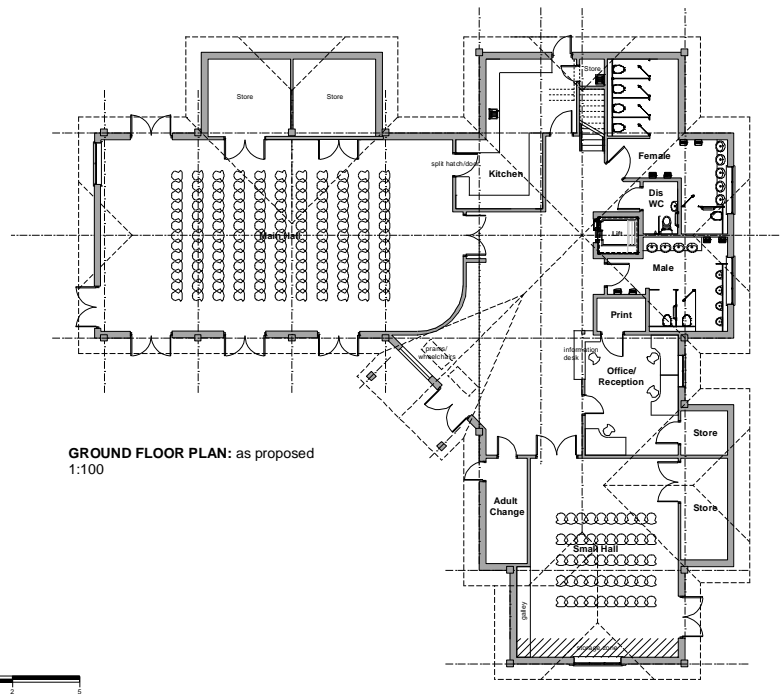
Following a series of pre-application submissions and meetings on site with the Borough's Head of Planning and Regeneration, Conservation Officer, Principal Planning Officer and Senior Development Manager (Transport), a series of key site parameters were developed. These considered the urban grain, adjacent properties, built forms and the nature of the Conservation Area. These rules inform a site constraints plan as detailed in the plan below.



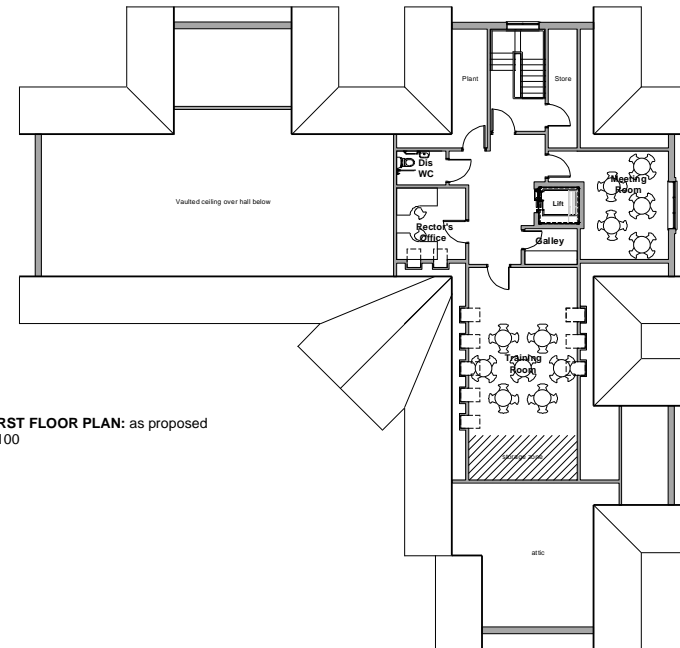
6.2 Whilst it is clear that an increase in building footprint is vital to provide the community facilities so desperately needed, this additional space needs to fit within the site context and not create a discordant or impactful presence. Thus, the proposed structure is set out so that the eastern elevations sits a minimum of 21m from the closest rear face of the buildings beyond. These are further separated by means of a double garage to the front section, a public footpath enclosed behind tall fencing/walling, and a relatively densely planted landscaping zone which it is intended to augment. The facing elevation is designed to have no major openings to this side so noise is contained and houses primarily ancillary service rooms (toilets, stores etc) so no overlooking is created.



- 6.3 The building then takes the footprint of an 'L' warping the built form around the main public entrance further screening the closest residential buildings from noise and overlooking. The space between the building and the northern and eastern boundaries is retained as private gardens.
- 6.4 Parking is repositioned away from the nearest dwellings to a strip on the western side of the site. It is accessed via a new connection onto Green Road and comprises of a central aisle feeding perpendicular bays either side. A gate is formed midway down to lead to an overflow car park on the adjoining council owned ground for peak times. This area will comprise reinforced soft surfacing and be gated off when not in use. A combination of the car park and gardens retains the open character of this part of the Conservation Area.
- 6.5 Pedestrian access from the street is located in a similar position to the present arrangement. It will lead to hard landscaped zone beside the neighbouring garage block at the front and will house seating, bin stores and a covered cycle rack.
- 6.6 **Floor Plans.**  
The floor plans have been developed to encompass all of the required elements of the brief in the most compact building footprint. However, much effort has also been expended creating a relevant form within the Conservation Area. It was felt that a cloister like building was appropriate reflecting both how it is used and its ecclesiastical associations.
- 6.7 The entrance is located in the crook of the 'L' with a welcoming canopy reinforcing the main doors. This leads to a central communal area from which all of the various rooms and circulation routes lead. This is both efficient, easy to navigate and enables all users to be visible from the reception desk so aiding security.
- 6.8 The large hall is located to the north with storage buffering the noise and views to the properties beyond. Service rooms (kitchen, toilets, office) are formed to the northern corner and a small hall is located to the south, again with storage buffering the dwellings to the east.
- 6.9 An accessible changing facility which can be reached both internally and externally (when the building is shut) was a key requirement and is sited adjacent to the entrance. Electric mobility scooter charging points are also located under the expansive eaves along this part of the elevation.
- 6.10 An area of first floor accommodation is concealed within the roof form. This houses smaller meeting rooms together with the Rector's office and plant and further storage.



GROUND FLOOR PLAN: as proposed  
1:100



FIRST FLOOR PLAN: as proposed  
1:100

### 6.11 Architectural Style.

The styling is a direct reaction to the need to minimise the visual forms within the Conservation Area. A simple structure is proposed which can be covered by a portal frame to ensure the scheme remains affordable. The eaves height of 2275mm is considerably lower than the current structure (3220mm). Whilst the ridge height increases as a consequence of the steeper roof pitch, this enables a first floor to be almost completely concealed.

6.12 The eaves feature a deep projection. This serves to balance the large roof and creates a welcoming shelter relevant for a community building. They are articulated by half hipped gable ends and projecting elements over the storage zones which visually break up what could otherwise be a large roof mass into elements more relevant to the historic location.

6.13 The elevations are masonry above a projecting brick plinth reflecting the forms of St Mary's church and giving a visual impression of permanence. Windows are framed in masonry surrounds, again mimicking forms found on the surrounding listed buildings but interpreting them in a more contemporary way.

6.14 The roof is slate with ppc aluminium fascias, gutters and downpipes. Again, the aim is to choose a palette which reflects the scale, colour and forms of the Conservation Area but also which is low/zero maintenance to minimise future running costs.

6.15 A green oak frame over the front entrance softens the forms and creates a welcoming approach.



## 7.0 Impact on Surroundings

- 7.1 Discussions with both Environmental Health and Gosport Borough Council Planning have confirmed that no acoustic survey will be required as the scheme does not propose a change of use.
- 7.2 The scheme has been designed to minimise openings to the north and east elevations so reducing the potential for noise or light disturbance to the closest residential properties. The building entrance is shielded within the crook of the 'L' shaped plan and below a projecting porch for this very reason.
- 7.3 The gardens to the east and north will be formed as private spaces with heavily landscaped borders.
- 7.4 More formal gardens are positioned to the front overlooking the street. Seating and cycle storage will be located in this zone.

## 8.0 Accessibility

- 8.1 A key criteria for the new building is that it must be fully accessible. It has to cater for a diverse range of user groups and must be inclusive to all within the community. This requirement must start from the way the site is approached through the use of individual rooms.
- 8.2 3 priority parking bays are located within the car park with access via a kerbless paved zone through a stepless threshold front door to a large reception area. Internally, all door widths are a minimum of 800mm and all circulation spaces include safe refuges for wheelchair users.
- 8.3 A dedicated accessible changing facility is located externally and DDA compliant toilets provided (a dedicated disabled toilet and ambulant disabled cubicles within the male and female toilets).
- 8.4 Floor surfacing, contrast colouring to the door and stair edges and internal lighting are all designed to enable the building to be as user friendly as possible.
- 8.5 New light switches, power sockets and appliance controls will be located within the tolerances required by Part M of the Approved Building Regulations.
- 8.6 Finally, internal manoeuvring room is increased to meet the needs of wheelchair users and generally improve the accessibility of circulation routes.
- 8.7 These requirements take up a great deal more space than the current facility provides and illustrates clearly why a bigger footprint is so necessary.

## 9.0 Highways

- 9.1 The present hall has operated with minimal off-road parking since the centre was originally built. Clearly, the hall sits within the centre of an historic village and so space is at a premium. As with St Mary's Church, virtually all visitors presently park in the surrounding road network.
- 9.2 In mitigation, a new dedicated car park offering 25 full sized spaces (to current GBC standards – 2.5 x 5m) will be formed to the western side. This includes 3 dedicated disabled bays and enables a net increase of some 20 spaces to be achieved.
- 9.3 In addition, the adjacent council owned green space will be subject to a lease agreement to offer additional parking during peak times. An initial approach has been made and GBC Property Services Section have drawn up a draft legal agreement. This will add a further 27 parking spaces bringing the total off-road provision to 52 (a net increase of 47).
- 9.4 However, as part of the application a detailed survey of the current visitor movements and predicated transport needs has been undertaken (see Appendix B).
- 9.5 The new facility will also cater for visitors using alternative means of transport. This is aimed specifically at local users who form the core demographic. A sheltered cycle store is located to the front formal landscaped zone and a covered area adjacent to the main entrance will provide a zone for electric mobility vehicle parking and charging.