

St Mary The Virgin Westonzoyland Building Development Plan



Introduction

St Mary The Virgin Westonzoyland is located at the heart of this historic Somerset village and is a grade one listed building. The Battle of Sedgemoor was fought at the village in 1685. The church figured particularly in the aftermath of the battle when it was used as a prison. It is the start of the battlefield trail. The church contains display boards about the battle and has some tourist information. The building, village and church receives many international visitors throughout the year interested in the battle and the Somerset Levels. Visitors are encouraged to sign the visitor's book

Architectural Description

The present structure dates from 1493 and is constructed of Lias walling with Ham stone dressing. On one of the buttresses of the south chapel the initials RB for Richard Bere Abbot of Glastonbury 1493-1524 date the re-building of the church to the late 15th century in the perpendicular style.



South Porch used as the main entrance.

Tower

The tower is 105ft and is the tallest of the three Zoyland Churches. Zoy means Island and Westonzoyland is the western one of three. The others being Othery and Middlezoy, the island of Chedzoy being to the north. The tower was built in four stages with set back buttresses connected on the diagonal across the corner with screens of Somerset tracery to the bell chamber and all below a crown of pierced parapets capped by square and intermediate pinnacles. Inside the tower arch takes the full height of the organ with a fine set of fan vaulted ribs supporting the ringing chamber floor. The tower was restored in the late 1990s.



Bells

Inside the tower there is a decommissioned fine early bell frame thought to date from the time of the construction of the tower in the early sixteenth century. The 6 bells were re-hung below on a new frame and are rung every Sunday morning and Monday evening for practice. Throughout the year other bell ringing groups visit the tower to ring the Westonzoyland peal.

Nave

The nave, south aisle, porch and transept all host battlements whilst the north aisle and nave parapet have a plain parapets. These all have shallow pitched leaded roofs which need replacing. Internally the shallow pitched roof has tie beams and half crucks carried by corbelled stone angels whilst intermediate trusses and the central king posts are lifted by carved timber angels with wings outstretched. This is a very fine roof with a lot of detailed carving. The central pews are very early with carved bench ends. The whole church is very light and airy due to the large isle windows and clerestory glazing with its three lights and four centred arches.



Nave from the west end looking towards the chancel.



One of the carved angels showing some of the detail in the nave roof carving.

Chancel

The chancel has a slated sloping roof and has two light decorated windows on both the north and the south side. The East window is a very large and of clear glass above the high altar. The chancel is enclosed by a rood screen installed in the thirties by W D Caroe and an especially good example of fine carving.



Rood screen and chancel.



West end showing organ and full height of tower arch.

Repairs required to fabric

It is very unfortunate that a church of national historic importance has been allowed to deteriorate and now needs some major restoration.

Roof

The roof has had the lead replaced on the north and south isle. The roof is alarmed. This was the first stage of the roof repairs. The second stage is to repair two serious leaks to Nave roof. The cost so far has been £130,000. We have raised £35,000 ourselves and English Heritage gave £80,000 the rest has come from other grant making bodies for which we are very grateful. We are looking to repair the Nave roof in Autumn of 2012.

Walls

The basic structure of the building is sound; however it requires a substantial amount of work. The outside of the building needs re-pointing and some other stone work repairs at a cost around. The inside walls have a cement render on the lower part of the walls which is forcing the damp up the walls. This has caused the plaster to come off the walls. The cement render and the plaster needs to be removed. The walls will need to dry out naturally before re-pointed inside. The cost of this would be around £140,000.

Heating

The church heating is by electric heaters suspended above the pews. These are ineffective and only warm a person seated underneath them. The church full central heating system has not worked for about forty years and needs replacing. This would assist in keeping an ambient temperature in the building helping its preservation. The best solution for this would be ground heating around would cost around £100,000.

Future development

The Church is on the international tourist trail and has some tourist information boards for the battle. There is a disused RAF air field with a history dating back to the 1926. The airfield was closed in 1969. 542 squadron colours are laid up in the church with a memorial plaque.

Visitors Centre A Charity has been set up to work at providing a visitors centre in the church with more information and displays. The charity web site is. This would help to secure the long term future of the church building and increase the numbers of visitors in the village helping the local economy. Visitor numbers have increased this year 2011 and the church is now having requests

for talks to groups about the battle and the building. The sound system was augmented by the installation of a loop system in 2009 and the a new sound system installed in 2010.

Work to date

To this end the pews have been removed from the South West corner of the church for the new display which is currently being developed November 2011. A model of the Battle of Sedgemoor has been installed kindly donated by the Bridgwater Museum and is currently installed in the north isle.



Battle of Sedgemoor model donated by the Bridgwater Museum

On the south side a sequence of display boards with posters mounted have been installed to take visitors through the Battle of Sedgemoor from the build-up to the aftermath.



Display boards and educational posters in the south west corner.

A Kiosk with a touch screen will be installed as part of this visitor experience and will allow a four-minute video of a representation of the Battle of Sedgemoor to be watched. More exhibits are due to be received from the Bridgwater Blake Museum, to enhance the visitor experience, and these should be in place at the end of 2011. The Visitor Centre is being created by the Zoyland Heritage Fund, a registered charity based here in the Church.



Squadron Colours and memorial plaque in the south isle transept chapel

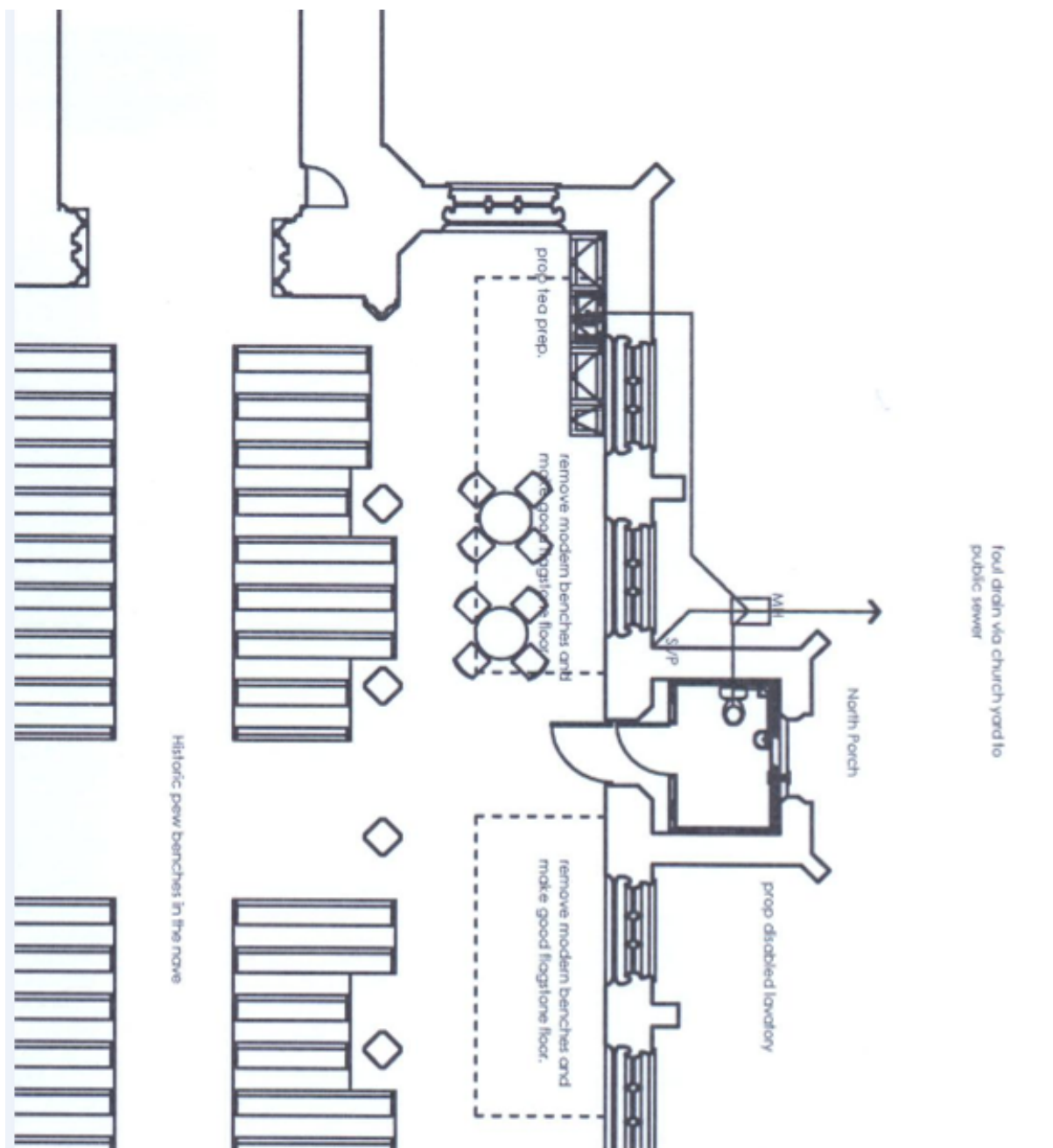
The building is a regular worship centre for the village and is in need of kitchen and toilet facilities, which would also be available for the many tourists for whom there are no facilities of this nature. The area thought to be the best for a kitchenette would be the west end of the north Isle. Another possibility is to build a small extension to north side of the tower to house the kitchen and a disabled toilet. A third possibility would be to build between the vestry and the North Transept along the side of the North Chancel.

There is a great deal of potential for the future development of this church both as a tourist centre and the worship centre of the village which has a population of more than two thousand.



West end of the north isle which would be the area best suited to a kitchenette and refreshment seating area.

Below is a plan of the kitchen area also showing the installation of a disabled toilet in the North Porch which has been unused for many years.

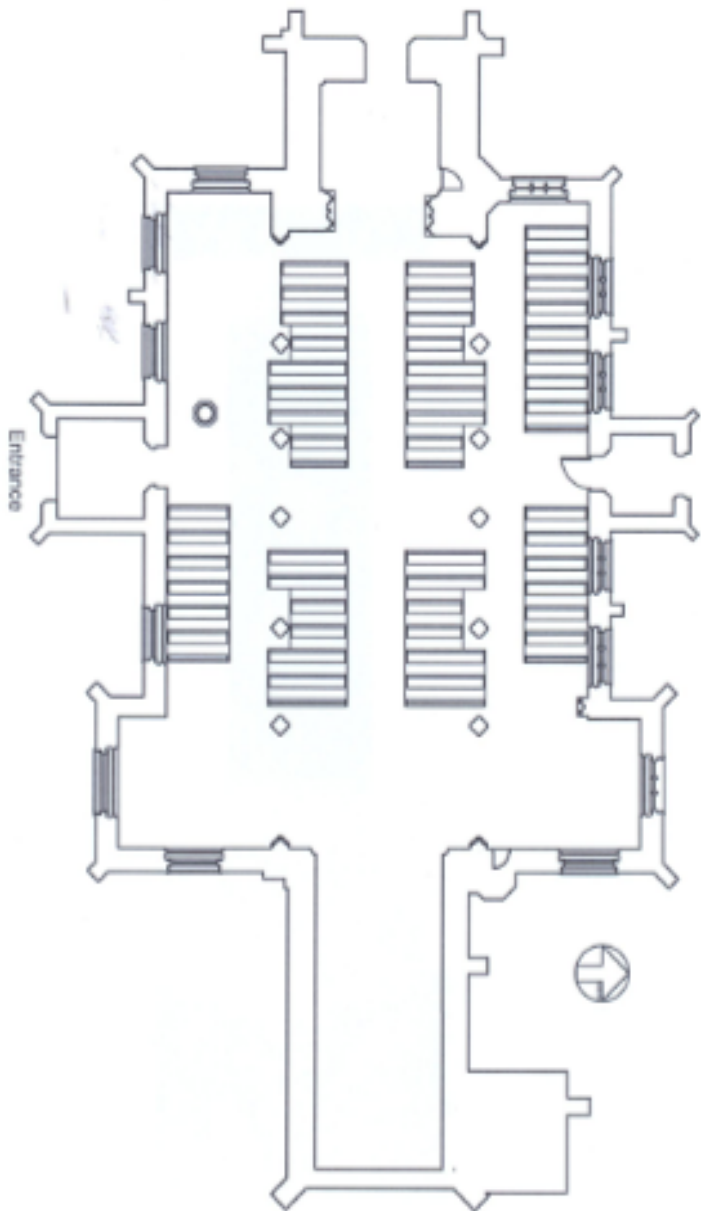


The total cost for the kitchen area and the provision of the disabled toilet is £35,000.

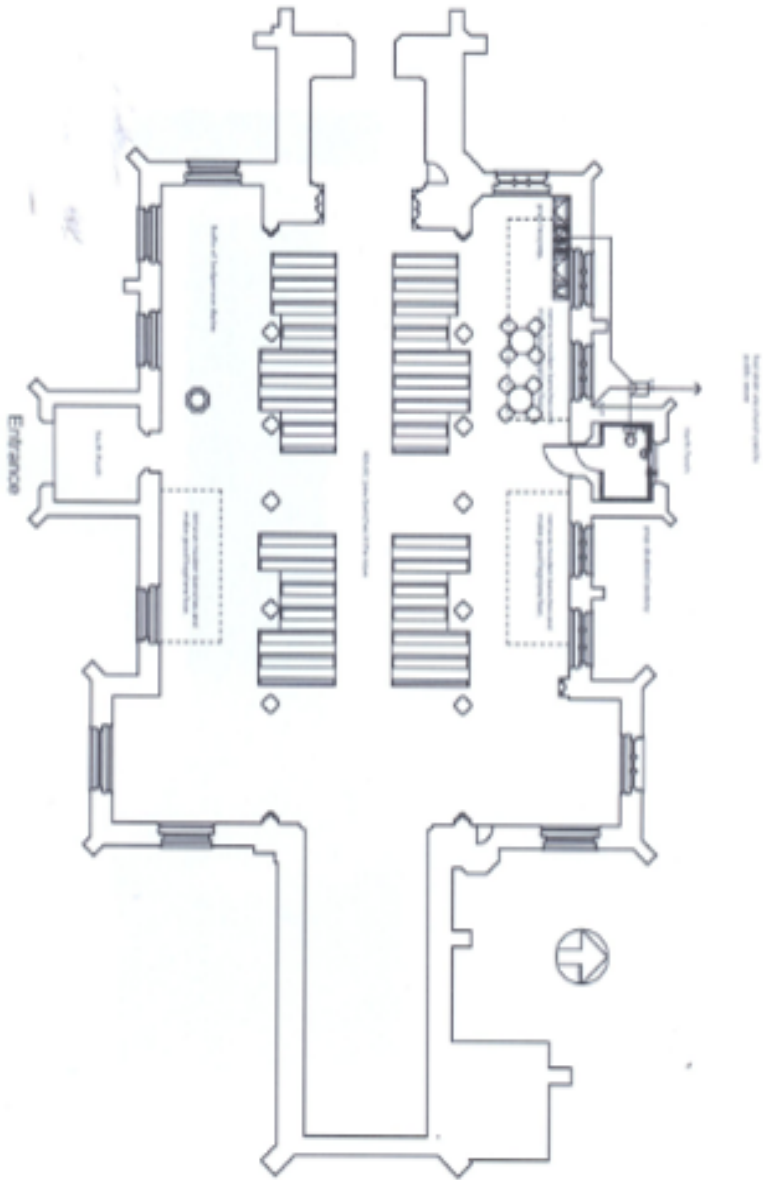
The seating capacity in the pews is currently two hundred. The removal of the pews in the west end of the north isle would result in the loss of a further thirty-five seats in pews. The seating in pews would still be one hundred and eighty five seats. It is planned to provide cafe style seating and chairs in this area to go with the kitchen facility.

The full plan below shows the removal of the pews to the East of the crossing in both the North and South Isles. These pews are also part of the 1936 refit. The pews would be replaced by chairs allowing for much greater flexibility of the space in the church. This would also allow for the chair seating to be moved forward and placed in the north and south transepts closer to the side alters bringing the congregation closer to the alters giving a more intimate area at the smaller services during the week. The cost of removing these pews and raising the floor level would be £30,000. This includes the provision of new chairs. The church currently owns 100 additional chairs so the work can be phased.

There is a great deal of potential for the development of this historic church and we would be very pleased to hear from anyone willing to donate towards the restoration and development of St Mary's Westonzoyland.



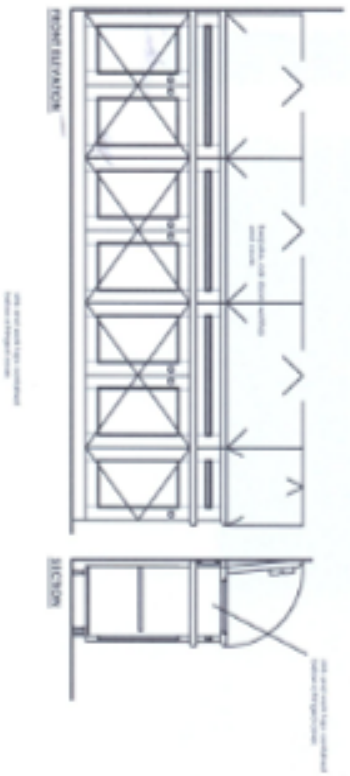
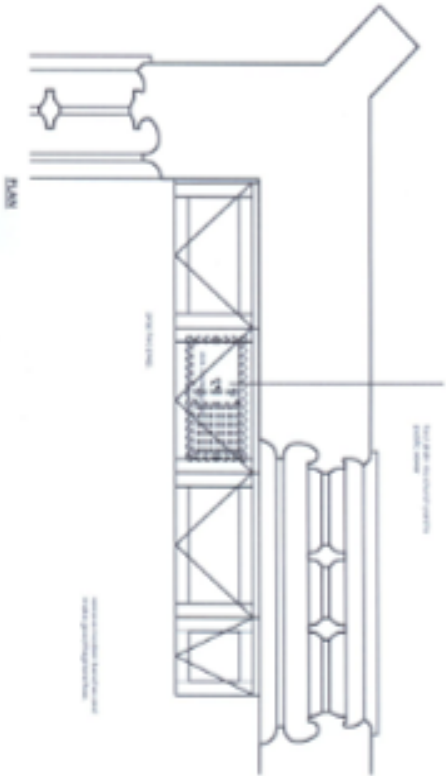
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Proposed disabled lavatory and
 preparation area.
 See drawing for details.



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WESTON ZOYLAND
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 PROPOSED LEAD PREPARATION AREA

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