

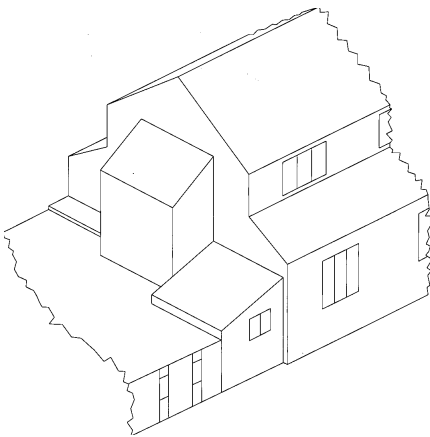


# This is Phase 2

## Part 1

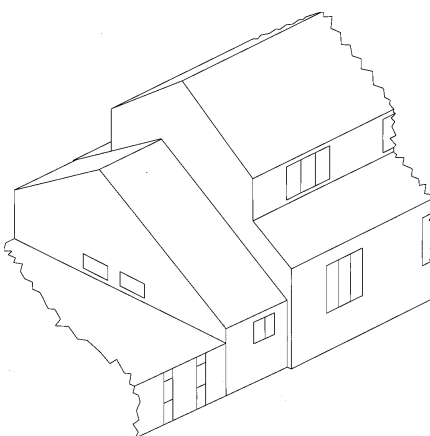
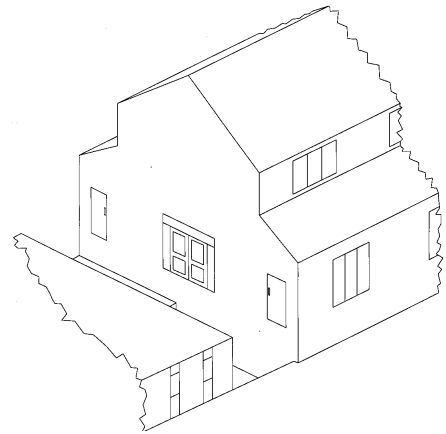


The first part of the work is the section of new building that will replace the current apse and vestries, immediately behind the church. This is the part that will enable the new doors in the church to be connected up to the rear premises. As you will probably know, this area of the church has a variety of different levels. To the left is a sketch showing what this part of the building looks like from the outside; the church on the right and the hall on the left. From this you can see that not only is the inside at different levels, but roof levels are also very different.



The whole of this section is to be demolished down to below cellar level so that we can start from solid ground, and at this stage the building should look like the sketch on the right (the doors will be covered to prevent damage during building). The new

building will include a replacement cellar, with proper waterproofing, a landing and stairs to link the new doors to the hall corridor, a replacement minister's vestry, a replacement for Room 4, and a new chamber to house the organ pipes. All this will be contained within a shell that is designed to be low maintenance and with good insulation properties. The new structure should look something like that below.



Perhaps you are thinking that to spend money knocking something down only to spend more money rebuilding it when the new build has a very similar purpose is extravagant? This is an understandable thought. Modern building regulations are intended to make sure what you build is going to stand up for a long time, and this means firm foundations and good support for all levels of the building. The reason that the part to be rebuilt is currently so haphazard is because it was all built at various different times, mostly when building regulations were not so strict. We cannot be sure what is under the buildings and whether

it can take the extra weight of the changes that need to be made.

Now we hear you say "if we keep within the current buildings then there will be no problem". Unfortunately, it's not that easy. What we would need to do is make a large hole in the back of what was the apse, to link the new doors with the hall. Making the hole will

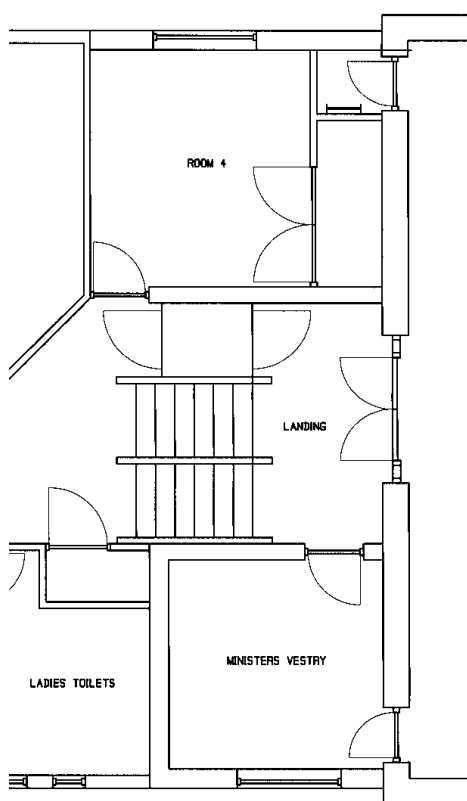
mean that weight of roof and walls over the hole would have to be taken by the side walls of the apse. This increase in 'loading' could be too much for the foundations. The only way to make this work would be to strengthen the foundations, but this is expensive and disruptive to do. In addition, if the existing apse was kept it would be necessary to re-roof it and re-point the brickwork. By the time the cost of all these jobs is added to the work in the cellar, making the organ chamber, and constructing the access to the new doors, it is as economical to start from scratch.

The best way, then, to provide the access is through a new part of the building. The old buildings can be demolished easily and the new building should be quick to go up, providing us with more space, reduced maintenance and lower heating costs – and no worries about whether the building will fall down!

---

## Part 2

As described in Part 1, the new section is to replace the part of the current building that houses the vestries and the former apse area as it was in the old church layout. We still need a minister's vestry, and while we have a choir we need somewhere to store music and for the choir to gather before and after services, so a room available for the choir is also necessary. From this it won't surprise you to learn that the new building has two main rooms: a minister's vestry and a room where the requirements of the choir can be met. As now, the room for the choir is not for their exclusive use. However, the important part about this section is not about these two rooms, as you will see.



The plan on the left looks down on the new area from above, with the church on the right and the hall off the plan to the left; the important bit is the part in the middle. The doors shown to the right of the area marked 'landing' are the new doors into the church. So imagine standing in the church and then walking through the new doors, moving right to left across the plan. As you leave the church you step onto the landing, which is at the same level as the floor in the church. In front of you and to the left are a short flight of shallow stairs which lead you down from the church level to the level of the floor in the rear corridor.

For those unable to manage the stairs, to your right there is a platform lift (shown as the empty box above the stairs with the two quarter circles on the plan). This is not a stair lift, nor is it a full enclosed lift like you get in a hotel. It consists of a platform large enough to take a wheelchair, with half-height sides attached and a half-height door at each end (these are the two quarter circles on the plan). With the platform in the up position the top door is opened (the right-hand one

on the plan) and you move onto the platform, shutting the door behind you. The platform then lowers until it is at the corridor floor level; open the lower door (the left-hand one in the plan) and off you go. There is a similar lift at the rear entrance to Debenhams if you want to see one.

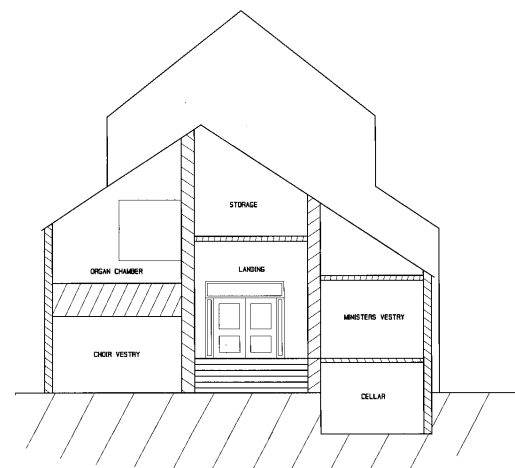
The bottom of the stairs/lift will be about where the telephone is now, and at this point the corridor will be quite wide – over 12' – so there should be plenty of space to circulate and use the lift and stairs easily. Once at the lower level you can see there is a diagonal wall which guides you into the main corridor, which itself is nearly twice as wide as now – more on this in Part 3.

In addition to this new access route you will see the two rooms that are in this area of the building today. The minister's vestry, at the bottom, has a window looking out over the drive, as now, and two doors: one directly into the church and one on to the landing. The floor level will be at the same level as the church so no steps down, removing the potential hazard that we have now. The door to the church is not intended to be used in the normal routine, the door on to the landing being the main access. The space in this room is a little bigger than at present but it is also a 'nice' shape rather than the awkward shape of the current vestry.

At the top of the plan is the new Room 4 which is intended to function as the choir vestry when this is required. The door to this room is at the lower, corridor level, as is the present Room 4 door. The size of this room is slightly smaller, but you may have noticed the area immediately above the landing. This is a walk-in cupboard with double doors opening out into Room 4 which is intended to house the copier and paper, and for the copier to be operated in situ in this cupboard. If you look at the space in Room 4 today you soon realise that the area nearest the door is little more than a corridor since the width of the room is taken up with the copier, paper and the television. With the copier and paper moved to the cupboard, the television housed elsewhere, although the room is smaller, there should actually be more usable space than at present.

At the very top of the plan you will see a little room with a door into the church; this is currently the door at the top of the stairs from Room 4. In the new building there is direct access into the church using the new stairs, so there is no need for the present stairs. This will be used to gain access to the organ chamber, which we will come to below.

The plan on the previous page is helpful to explain the layout of the rooms so far, but it does not give any indication of height levels. On the right you will see a section through the new building – slicing it across its width – looking from the hall towards the road. You will see the outline of the church with the main roof at the top, and the two lower ones either side, lower down. On the left the top of the new building is a continuation of the existing side roof.



In the centre you can see the new double doors into the church. The drop down to the level of the rear premises is shown by the long horizontal line that extends across most of the width. The stairs linking the two levels can be seen (the platform lift is not included on this view which is why the steps appear to go the full width). You can see that the ceiling is quite high over the stairs and landing to reinforce the sense of space. If you can remember back to the previous part, there are two new windows looking out over the flat roof. These windows are in the top of the landing wall, above where the word 'Landing' is on the section. This should help to make it feel light and airy.

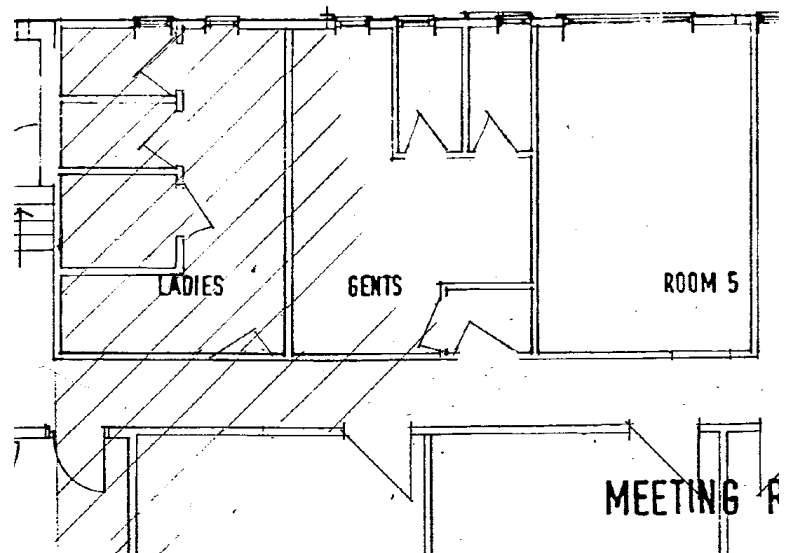
To the right of the landing you will see the minister's vestry at the same level as the top of the stairs with the cellar underneath, as now. The cellar is to be completely re-built and properly waterproofed to make it useful storage space. To the left of the landing is Room 4/Choir Vestry with the floor at the lower level. Above this you can see the space marked 'organ chamber'. This is the space that the organ pipes will occupy, assuming we decide to re-install the pipe organ, with access through the small room mentioned above. If we do not re-install the organ this space can become more storage, in addition to the storage you can see marked in the space over the landing.

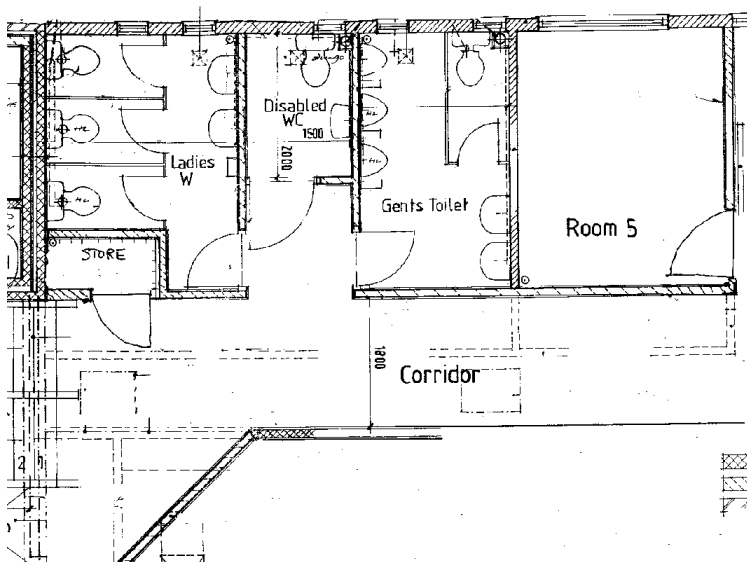
---

### Part 3

In the last two parts we have been looking in more detail at what is being included in the planning for the second phase of work. We started by looking at the new build section that currently contains the vestries. In this part we look at the area which is one of the most important parts for many people – the toilets!

You should all be familiar with the toilets as they are now. The drawing on the right shows things as they are now. The church is to the left with the arrow indicating the stairs up to the minister's vestry, and the hall entrance is to the right. At the top is the outside wall with the drive running along above it, and at the bottom, left to right, are Rooms 4, 3 and 2 (now the small hall). You can see from this the layout of the toilets and Room 5, with the corridor below linking all the rooms together. Note that the built-in cupboards in the rooms are not shown.





The drawing on the left shows how things will change with the proposed Phase 2 work. The main features are the wider corridor and the toilets split into three sections. The corridor is increased to about twice its current width (the dashed lines near the word 'Corridor' show the present width). You should be able to make out the bottom of the new stairs at the left-hand end of the corridor. The wider corridor will be much more inviting, encouraging people to move more

freely up and down it and making the church and the rooms and the hall much more of an integrated space rather than the somewhat 'strung-out' and disjointed arrangement that we have now. The toilets will lead off the corridor between the ladies and gents toilets as they are now, with all the doors opening on to a common vestibule area.

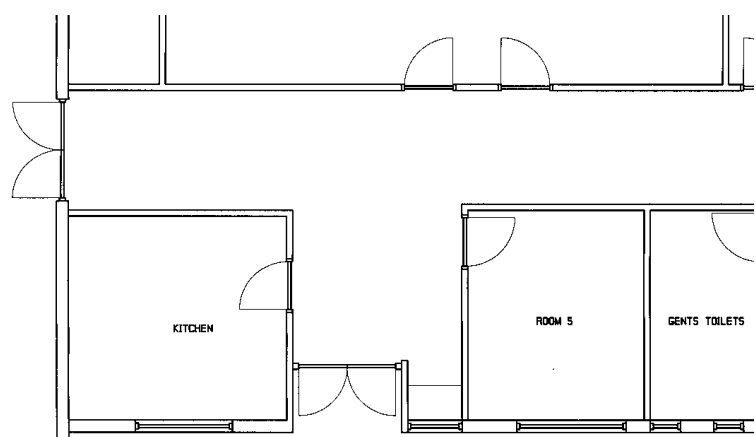
The Ladies is very much as it was before the disabled cubicle was created, but with the baby-changing area removed. There will be three standard-sized cubicles (one fitted with a smaller sized W.C.), two hand basins and a hand dryer, but with the door moved to where the coat hooks are now. The Gents is very different. The facilities currently provided have been under-used for some time, so the opportunity has been taken to use some of the Gents to make the disabled toilet. The facilities in the Gents have been reduced to a single cubicle, but retaining the three urinals and two hand basins. The space liberated from the Gents is used to create an adequate size disabled toilet, which also contains the baby-changing facilities. This can also be used when there is exceptional demand for cubicles for either ladies or gents.

---

## Part 4

In this part we are moving further down the rear premises to look at the entrance area and the kitchen.

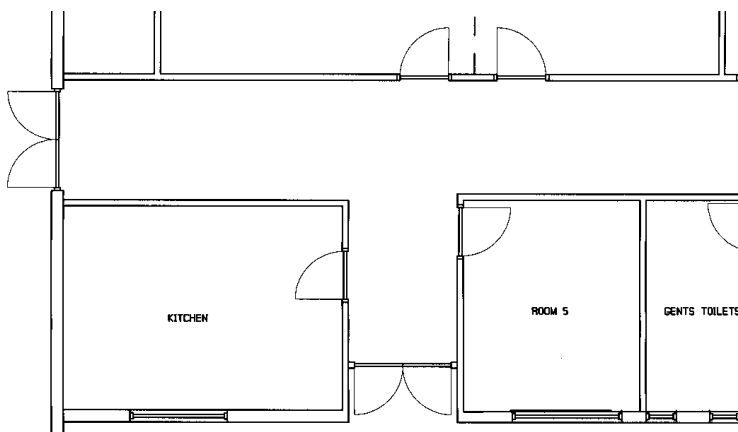
Widening the corridor will make the whole length of it, from the main hall doors to the steps up to the church, about the same width. This should make it equally attractive to travel from the entrance to the church as to go into the main hall. The drawing to the right shows how the various rooms relate to the entrance with the widened corridor.



The kitchen has served us well (pun intended!) for the last 20 odd years, but the appliances do not all work as well as they did and the units are starting to fall apart in places. Much has been said about the facilities in the kitchen and whether they are suitable for the use we put the premises to, but with the present sized room to would be impossible to accommodate all the facilities that would be desirable. As part of Phase 2 we will be looking at what might be possible with the kitchen.

For a moment think about how the space in the entrance is used. You walk in through the doors from outside. On your left is the kitchen wall and on your right is a table with various leaflets and magazines on it. There is a space to walk forward about the same width as the door through which you have just entered. If you look to your right there is a small alcove next to the door with a window and below it a small cupboard on which sits various boxes and other odd items. Continuing forward you come to the corner of the kitchen while to your right is the door to Room 5 and then to your left and right is the main corridor.

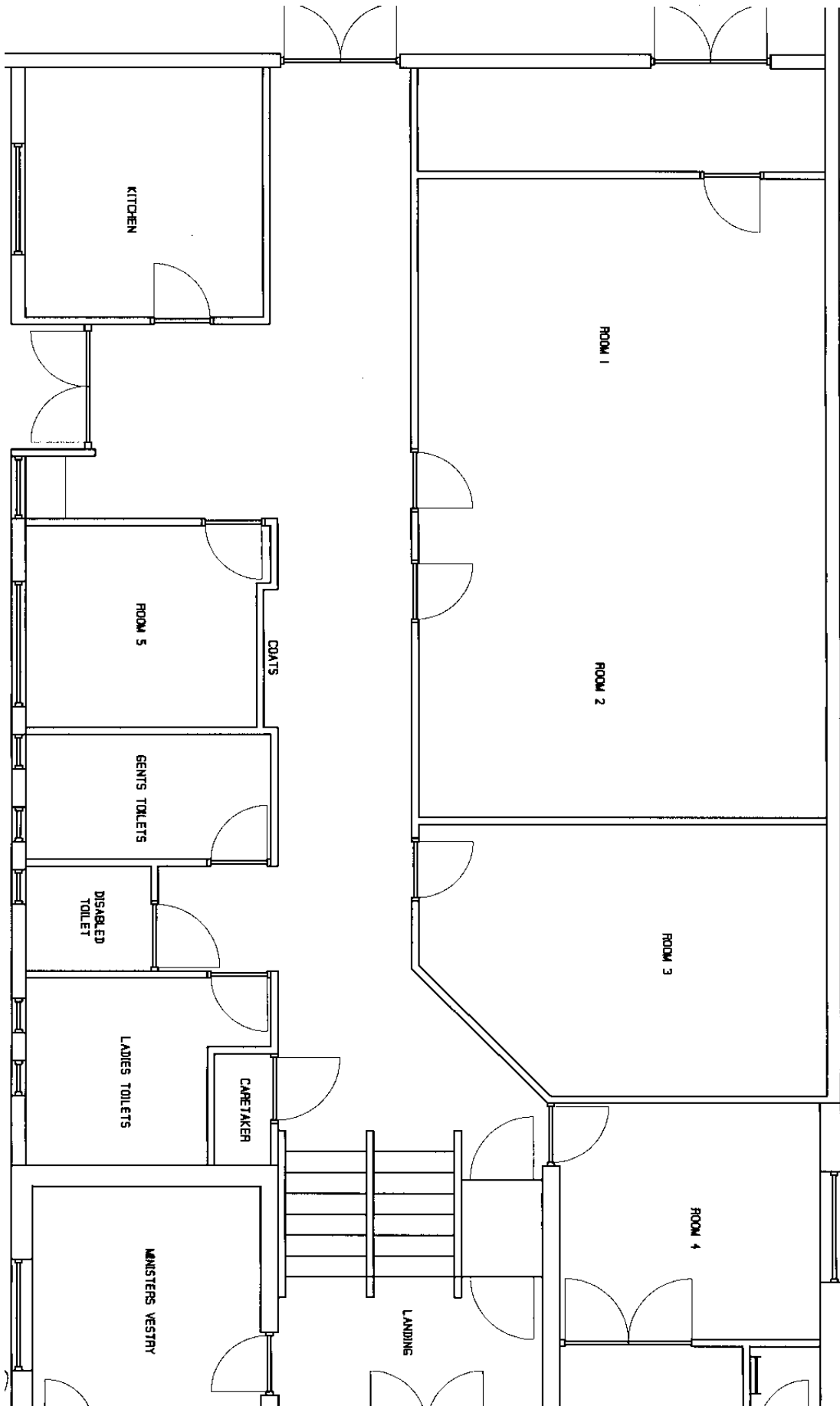
The space occupied by the table and the cupboard restricts the circulating space to the width of the entrance doors. If we remove this space the same circulating area will be available so why not add this space to the kitchen? The plan to the left shows how this would work. The



entrance doors have been moved about 3 feet along towards Gloucester Road, taking out the window and the cupboard. The cupboard houses various care-taking items such as cleaning products and spare bulbs; these would have to be found another home. The contents of the table could be placed in racks on the wall.

This may seem a big change, but we will have to do something with the kitchen walls no matter what else we do. When we make changes as part of Phase 2 we will be required to upgrade the fire protection provided by the building, and for the kitchen this will mean modifying the kitchen walls so that they will resist fire for at least half an hour. This can be done by cladding the outside of the existing kitchen, walls but if we were having to modify the walls it would be almost as easy to rebuild the walls in a different place.

The extra space made available in the kitchen by moving the wall would then allow the room to be re-arranged internally. It would allow us to equip it with things like a washing-up machine, and new cooker(s) with more oven space resulting in easier preparation for our church lunches. The two hatches would remain in the same positions, but would be changed to metal roller shutters to provide the necessary fire resistance. The result would be facilities more suited to our present use without compromising any other space in the building.



## Part 5

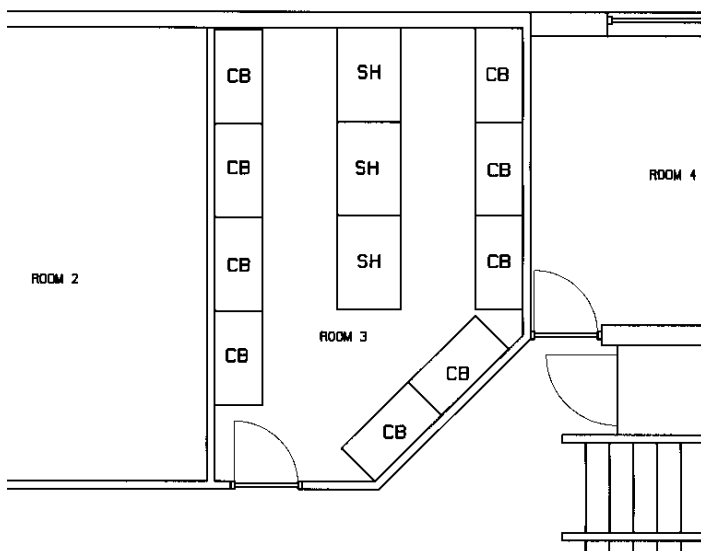
In this part we are looking more generally at how the rooms might be used and storage in them.

On page 7 you will see an overall plan of the rooms between the church and the hall; the church is at the bottom with the landing and steps leading up to it, while the double doors into the hall are at the top, with the entrance from the drive towards the top on the left, next to the kitchen. The small hall is marked as Room 1 and Room 2 indicating that they were, and could be again, two separate rooms. This does not show the larger kitchen as discussed last month, or any of the present fitted cupboards that may remain (these are located along the corridor wall in Room 1/2).

You will see from the plan that we have four separate rooms available in addition to the main hall. Currently Room 3 is used mainly to store items not in use, and Room 4 is rarely used for anything other than for the choir and to house the copier and a few other bits of equipment used only from time to time. This leaves two rooms used with any regularity: the small hall and Room 5.

It is quite some time since the wall between Rooms 1 and 2 was taken down. At the time it was done the Church Council discussed whether we should include a movable partition where the wall was to allow the room to be split again in the future. There have not been any occasions when we have needed to split the rooms again so the decision not to install a divider has been the right one. Now would be a suitable time to revisit this decision as the structural support for a partition is still in situ. If a single room is still the right decision then is it time to do something with the doors to combine the two separate doors into double doors in a single opening?

One of the observations made about our premises, and I suspect about many other church premises, is that we never seem to have enough storage space (or we have too many things to store!) and so 'stuff' tends to get put in odd corners or sometimes is just left lying around. This gives the premises an untidy appearance, things get in the way and/or get damaged, and in some cases create a potentially serious hazard to using the space safely.



In an attempt to address this issue one of the ideas that is being considered is to make the present Room 3 into a semi-permanent storage area. How this might work is shown in the plan on the left. The room is fitted out with cupboards (marked CB) on all walls with open shelving (SH) down the centre. In widening the corridor Room 5 will lose its cupboards to enable the space remaining inside the room to be about



the same. Using Room 3 in this way will provide a replacement for the cupboards removed from Room 5, give us significant extra space, and allow the current contents of Room 3 to be tidied up (storage for the organ will no longer be required). Some of the cupboards from the former Rooms 1 and 2 could also be relocated to Room 3 to provide more space in the small hall. The shelves would allow large items that need to be kept flat to be stored: paper, card, posters, etc.

Doing this would leave us with the same number of rooms that we have now on a permanent basis. Better use of the space may be possible by increasing the size of Room 4 to make it a more useful size (on the plan on the previous page you will see that Room 4 is significantly smaller than Room 3). With only the music storage cupboards, the piano, table and chairs (remember the copier will not be in the room), it could be made a better size by moving the dividing wall between Rooms 3 and 4 a little to the left on the plan above.

We have a number of items that will not easily go into cupboards: the wheelchairs are an example. It may be better use of the space to have the shelves against the wall to leave a central area clear of fixed items where these larger things can be stored. If this was adopted and the quantity of larger items was not excessive, it would also be possible to use the room for small groups on an occasional basis when necessary.

From the above you will see that there are many possibilities and that, unlike many other parts of the scheme, no one proposal is being followed to the exclusion of others. Ultimately the Church Council will have to decide what it feels is best for St Mark's going into the future. If you have strong feelings about any of the above, or alternative thoughts about how the space may be better used, or about any other aspect of Phase 2, then please talk it over with one of us.

---

## **Part 6**

This part concludes our series looking in more detail at what is being included in the planning for the second phase of work. We are finishing with a look at various smaller items. This part refers to the general plan of the rooms, which is on page 7.

### **Caretaker/Property Storage and 'Messy' Sink**

It has long been a desire to create a space for property/caretaker activities. These include storage for mops, brushes and other cleaning items; a 'Belfast' sink to allow floor mops and paint brushes to be cleaned without using the kitchen or the toilet sinks; storage for light bulbs and other maintenance items.

At the bottom of the stairs you will see a cupboard marked 'caretaker' which is hoped will fulfil many of the functions mentioned. It will have a low-level sink with tiled surround and suitable flooring to allow it to be used for various cleaning activities. The rest of the space will be used to store brushes and mops, with shelves for other cleaning and maintenance items. Unfortunately, the space will not be big enough to take the floor polisher so this will either have to stay where it is now or move to the new storage area in the present Room 3.

### **Telephone**

It is church policy to have a public telephone on the premises so this will be retained, but it cannot stay where it is now. There is no obvious place to locate the telephone, but to reduce the possibility of vandalism it is best located in the main corridor. To provide some privacy it should be located away from the main entrance so the most appropriate place would be between the caretaker cupboard and the toilets or on the sloping wall opposite. If it was located opposite, the wall may be shaped to provide a shallow recess next to the Room 3 door. This would allow a sound-absorbing lining to be used to make listening easier, while a person standing at the telephone would still be visible from the corridor to deter vandalism.

### **Coat Hooks**

Currently coat hooks are provided in the two toilets. They are actually used very little and when the toilets were spruced up recently the opportunity was taken to remove more than half of them with no complaints so far. You will see from the plan that it is intended to make provision for coats in a recess in the main corridor along the Room 5 wall.

### **Roof/Cellar Storage**

If the building work goes ahead as proposed we will end up with two areas for storage of items that are used on an occasional basis. The existing cellar has problems with damp and after sustained heavy rain the floor can end up with a few inches of standing water covering it. This space is retained but will be made dry so that it becomes a much more useful space. Access is still too inconvenient for frequent use (a trapdoor in the floor), but at least things can be stored without being ruined by damp.

In addition to the cellar, a new storage area is created above the ceiling over the new steps. This is accessed from the church through the organ chamber so, again, is not for frequent use. Things that may be stored in either of these places include seasonal items such as the Easter cross, Christmas decorations; and items that are currently stored under the apse.

### **Ceilings**

The suspended ceiling that we currently have in the rear premises has been in since the building was constructed over 30 years ago, is getting very tatty, and it is very unlikely that we could find anything to match. Moving walls will mean making changes to the ceilings so something will have to be done to 'make good' the ceilings afterwards. The only practical way to do this is to fit new ceilings to at least the toilets, the widened corridor, and Rooms 3 and 4. If the kitchen was made bigger this would have to be included also and, to avoid a change in the ceiling where the widened corridor joins the entrance area, the whole of the corridor area would need doing, not just the new part. In view of the condition of the ceiling in the small hall it would be nice to be able to renew this as well.

### **Floors**

In the same way that the ceilings are affected by moving walls, something has to be done with the floors. This could be a hard surface as the floors are now, or it could be some hard-wearing carpet tiles to give a more luxurious feel; with carpet tiles it is easy to replace ones that get too dirty to clean properly or get damaged.

## **Walls and Doors**

The areas altered by the scheme would need decorating so it would seem sensible to decorate right through; possibly excluding the main hall. Along with this it may be possible to extend the area of noticeboards further along the corridor.

We would not have enough doors of the right type to re-use the existing ones, and it is unlikely that we could get new doors to match, so it is proposed that all the internal doors are changed. The external doors have also seen better days (have a look at the splits in them some time) so to would make sense to renew these at the same time.

## **Lighting and Electrical**

The revised area of the building would, obviously, require lighting. The building is currently lit internally with fluorescent tubes fitted into raised fittings. These are very efficient but we have a variety of different sizes for which we have to keep spares, and the raised fittings are not the most attractive to look at. With the new ceiling we would have the opportunity to replace the existing lighting with either a large number of 'low-energy' bulbs, like you would use at home, or recessed fluorescent fittings all using the same size of tube.

The new locations for light fittings would require some changes to the wiring. It may be a good time to extend this to include a full re-wire of the lights and sockets. It will be much cheaper to do this with the other work than to do it at some later stage. It would also give us the opportunity to improve the system by introducing additional switches and sockets, even to include network cabling to link computers together and allow internet access.

## **Walk-in Small Hall Cupboard**

In addition to or instead of the possible storage in Room 3, it may be desirable to create another 'walk-in' cupboard at the Room 3 end of the small hall, similar to the one between the small hall and the main hall. This could be used for larger items that will not go into the other cupboards where shelves restrict the maximum size of an item that may be stored. This should allow some of the 'clutter' that seems to accumulate in the small hall to be 'tidied' away. Although it would reduce the size of the room it would make the room a better shape, and most of the space that the cupboard would take up is not usable at the moment because of the 'clutter'!

## **Organ**

The new-build part of the scheme allows a space for the organ pipes to be housed above Room 4 with the sound channelled through the wall above where the choir sit in the church. If it is decided that the pipe organ is to be re-instated, the big pipes that formed the front of the old organ chamber would be mounted up on the wall over the choir with the console (keyboards) between the window near the choir and the platform. To help visualise what this would be like we will be hanging a 'banner' about the size of the pipes on the wall where they would be, so look out for this.

The two alternatives to re-instating the pipe organ are to replace it with an electronic organ or to keep what we have now. There is not the space to go into the pros and cons of all the options here, but we may return to it in a future article.

## **Brick Cladding**

The rear premises are built in two parts. The main hall is a steel-framed structure where large girders support the walls and roof. If you look around the walls inside the main wall you can see the boxing around these on the two walls parallel to the railway line. The rooms are timber framed. The exterior of both sections is covered with steel-reinforced concrete panels, as used to make prefabricated garages, but on a larger scale.

This type of construction is quick to put up and so can be done fairly cheaply but, as with any steel-reinforced structure, if water gets into the reinforcing rods they will start to rust and, over time, this causes the concrete to split. If you look carefully at some of the panels you will see cracks running down the length of them which is a sign that they are starting to deteriorate. This does not mean that the building will fall down next week, but it does show that it will not last forever. The expected life of this type of construction is 30–50 years and we have already passed the 30-year mark. Although action is not urgent, Phase 2 is an opportunity to do something about the problem whilst other disruption is taking place. The solution would be to remove all the exterior cladding and replace it with bricks, which would be expected to last at least 100 years.

There is something else to consider, which is that if the walls are being replaced it is possible to change the locations of doors and windows. “Why would we want to do that?” you ask. If we were to add windows with ‘frosted’ glass down the side of the building facing the flats we may be able to remove some or all of the skylights from the rooms on that side, removing a source of draughts and sometimes drips!

## **Room Names**

We finish off with a couple of items for you to provide the answers to. Rooms 1 and 2 have been combined into a single room and it looks unlikely that they will be split again, and it is felt that turning Room 3 into a storage room is a good idea. This leaves us with three rooms: small hall, Room 4, and Room 5. It would seem sensible to change how we refer to the rooms, so perhaps we could give the three rooms names. We leave you to think about what themes and names might be used.

## **Panelling**

Finally, the original wood panelling from the apse is still in place. This would be removed to allow access from the church to the hall, but it would be nice to be able to reuse it somewhere within the building. Where might be suitable to use this panelling?

---

This completes our look through Phase 2, and we hope it has helped you to understand the many issues involved. Nothing that has been described will definitely happen; it is all subject to a decision from the Church Council. In all this we have what is probably a once in a century opportunity to provide the best facilities that we can to enable the church to carry out its mission to serve the community. Let’s do everything possible to get this right!

**St Mark's 2000** Group of the Finance and Property Committee