

Design & Access Statement

Hornsey Parish Church, Cranley Gardens, London N10 3AH



Introductory Statement from Revd Bruce Batstone

Hornsey Parish Church is delighted to be submitting a planning application which has WELCOME and OPENNESS at its heart.

Our church building is probably the single most important tool for our mission as a parish church, modelling what we as Christians believe about hospitality and acceptance, and represents our desire to reach out without judgement.

Whilst our building serves us well in achieving this, we have identified ways that its design and layout limits our ambitions, and this application represent a building project that we hope will rectify some of these challenges. For a number of years we have been seeking to fulfil a vision to achieve these aims, under the title of HPC 60/60 which was launched in 2019 to celebrate the church building's 60th anniversary, looking forward to being the parish church at the heart of the community of Hornsey for at least another 60.

During the pandemic especially, we spent a lot of time finessing our welcome, openness and accessibility, and this project represents the lessons learnt and the dreams and hopes that have formed within our church to achieve our missional goals.

Cranley Gardens, Park Street & Queens Wood

Hornsey Parish Church is within a residential area bounded by Cranley Gardens at the South, where there are large semi-detached family-houses, and the terraced properties of Park Road to the East and the terraces and flats that form the housing of the Rookfield Conservation Area to the North. The Hall shields the church from Park Street which is a busy road with small shops at ground floor level.

It is clear that when Cranley Gardens and Park Street were originally set out the building-line was pulled back to create a vista of spacious streets and front gardens though this stops at the point where a short shopping arcade of Park Road begins and leads into Priory Road and forms a terminal to the descent of Muswell Hill.

The area started to be developed around 1900 when the Ecclesiastical Commissioners gave land at the corner of Park Road as the site for the new St George's church though this was actually built on Priory Road before the present church was built here.

In the previous century there had been extensive battles between the locals and the Church Commissioners over how the land around Church Bottom Wood could be developed. This led in time to the Highgate Woods Preservation Act and the later renaming of Queen's Wood to recall Victoria's Diamond Jubilee.

The Imperial Property Investment Company bought some of the farmland adjacent to the woods from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and built the first houses in Cranley Gardens and Onslow Gardens in the 1890s. Lack of interest from potential homebuyers prompted the company to sell plots to other builders, who soon began work on Woodland Rise and Woodland Gardens.

Hornsey Parish Church

The current building was designed by architect Randall Morris in 1959. It replaced an earlier St George's Church from 1907, on the site now occupied by Hornsey Fire Station which was partly destroyed during WWII. The parish was united with the parish of St. Mary's, Hornsey, in 1981 and became known as Hornsey Parish Church. The late medieval tower of St Mary's Hornsey is all that remains of the old church of St Mary's.

The building is simple and on the one hand traditional as a linear arched layout of nave and chancel although oriented to the north and also a pragmatic 1950s layout with small rooms and Lady chapel and a memorial chapel shoe-horned in along the sides. The main space is well-lit and strongly articulated by the bold parabolic arches whose form is repeated in the windows and entrance door.

The simple materials are scaled back and almost domestic with the use of brick and low-pitched roofs of concrete pantiles and slender fairfaced concrete lining to the window reveals and projecting horizontals of the flat-roof eave-planes. The windows all have their coloured-glass but eschew any narrative or ecclesiastical theme and the pastel colours in a parabolic design make the space airy and light.

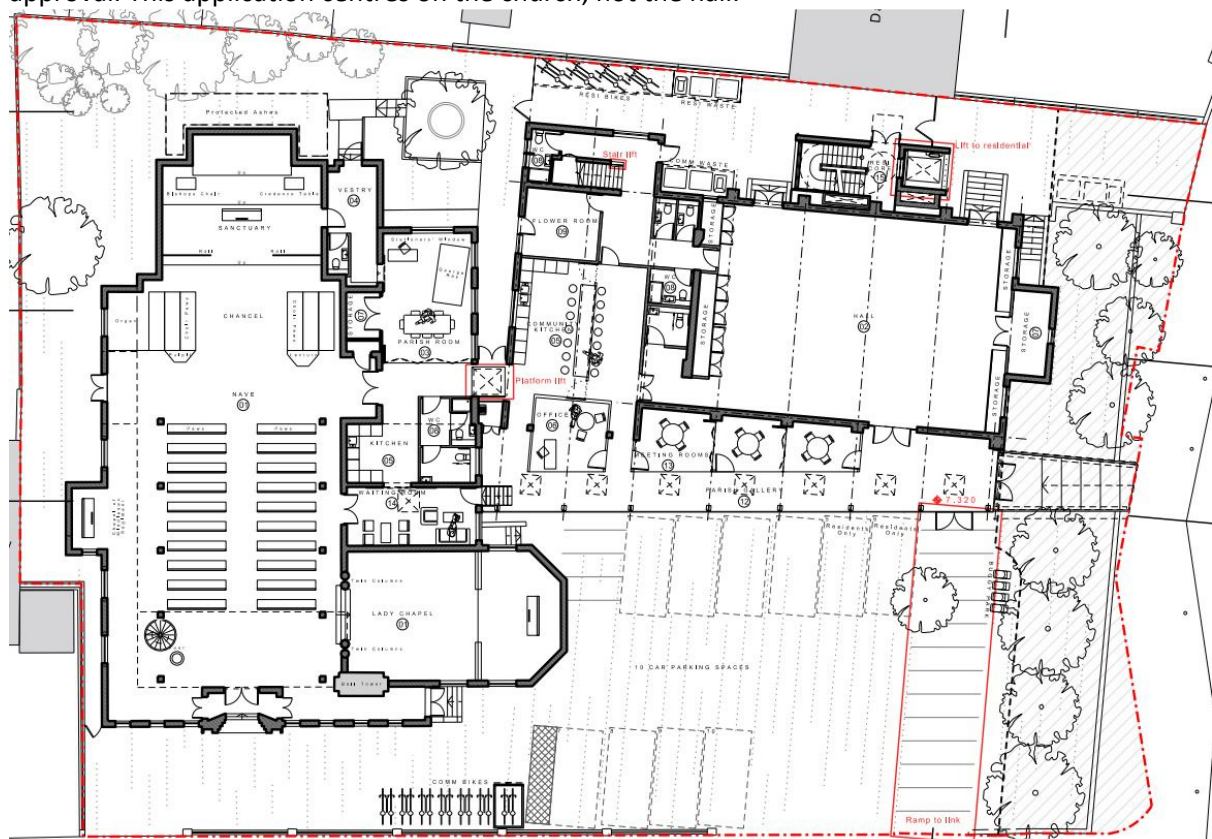
An important monument from the old church is a large alabaster floor slab to George Rey of c1599. Other stone and brass monuments to former rectors and others are arranged around the church. These await a permanent home which is part of the purpose in this application. There is also a perpendicular font of c1500. This was broken into pieces during wartime bombing but delicately reassembled for use once again.

The rest of the site contains a large church hall which has one section as a tall arts-and-crafts style block with a tall-pitched roof housing a dance studio (Gabrielle Rowley) at the first-floor level and a collection of flat-roofed single-storey spaces that form the Hall and its other amenities. Around the rear and sides of the church are narrow strips of garden and along the frontage to Cranley gardens is a tarmac space providing parking for the church and hall.

The church is not listed, though of some architectural merit and is subject to Faculty Jurisdiction under the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991. (2015 and as amended from 1 July 2022).

Previous Planning Scheme

The genesis of this application was the recent planning consent of (HGY2020/2419 dated 24-11-2020 by Wimshurst Pelleriti). This complex and visionary scheme was dependent on enlarging the present church hall with additional storeys containing flats and linking up to the church. It became clear soon afterwards that the church was unlikely to implement the full scheme for various reasons, but from taking advice and realising that even to implement small elements, such as a door from the church into the gardens would compel them to pay the considerable CIL fee as a pre-condition (*bearing in mind the housing and hall developments that were not required but had generated the CIL fee*) it was essential to separate any development around the church from the previous permission. For this reason this application repeats and develops elements around the church first raised in this approval. This application centres on the church, not the hall.



Above: Plan of previous scheme. Red-line is the site boundary. Cranley Gardens is to the bottom.

The previously approved scheme put forward certain changes to the church building as follows:

- A door on the west side of the church nave leading into the gardens
- Bike racks alongside Cranley Gardens

- A new vestry extension at the north-east corner
- Internal rearrangements of kitchen and loss of vestry to improve WC provision
- A glazed link from the hall to the church
- A new gallery space with stair access

For clarity, of these the first two elements are repeated in this application but in a slightly different format. The other elements are not in this application though internal changes and a vestry extension may be the subject of a future application.

Design Issues

The church has several objectives not all of which require planning permission, and with the intention that these will be phased alterations.

To improve the ease of level access at the entrance, provide more appropriately for wheelchairs within the church seating areas, offer level access route to the gardens and to produce accessible toilet facilities.

To enhance the Cranley Gardens elevation to a more welcoming approach within more-landscaped church grounds rather than the present tarmac drive and carpark space.

To give easier access to, and to enhance the narrow strip of garden-space at the back and side of the church for better communal use and to enlarge and give focus to the existing memorial area given to the laying of ashes behind the chancel.

To enhance the interior layout, house various historical artifacts and improve energy efficiency through better wall insulation.



Above left- View to chancel; right- view across nave

Below left – Hall and parking area; right church front



Below left - tarmac area and wall in front of entrance

Below right - Main entrance & step, doors shown open



Below left - garden west side (new door to centre)



Below right – memorial garden for ashes



Note: The creation of a small extension for the vestry is not part of this application but will be a logical result of reordering the WCs for an accessible WC as part of a later scheme.

Architectural Proposals

South Exterior on Cranley Gardens: Opening to existing wall with piers and railings along Cranley Gardens at the width of the front door. Inside the wall is a small area of paving and planting containing new signage on one side and casual areas to stand on the other. Permeable brick-pavers on a shallow ramp lead to the existing doorway with gentle raising of the tarmac on either side. At the existing door the stone step is cutaway to meet the ramped approach. Existing arch and timber doors are retained. Either side and short two-person timber benches and planting beds. Internally the wooden doors are replaced by new automatic sliding glass-doors. It is intended to place new bike racks by the church as before but no longer beside this entrance, and not as part of this application.

The width of the remaining driveway has been considered to accommodate the approach of a hearse or wedding limousine and it is assumed that a fire-engine would manage sufficiently even if it drove over paved or planted areas.

Nave Interior: Existing oak pews are cut back in places to accommodate wheelchair seating. To the west wall of the nave the wall is lined in plasterboard and insulation creating a thickness for memorial stones to be inset and displayed. A window here is removed and replaced by a two-leaf inward-opening oak door accommodated within the same lintel height and width. The door has small glazed panels utilising the leaded-light detailing of the windows, parabolic arch of the window and arches and the oak-board panelling found in the other main doors. Heating pipes are re-positioned within the floor and door-mat.

New metal handrail to steps into the Lady chapel. This is of a simple round section which is generally easier for handling than more decorative sections.

West Gardens Exterior: New oak doors (described above) with new paved level-approach and drainage. Timber bespoke-pergola screens with reference to the parabolic motif. These divide the strip into smaller gardens.

North Gardens Exterior: Low curved retaining wall to form sitting space. New and existing concrete paving laid to diagonals and paving within the sitting space where there would be a stone with a memorial passage inscribed and two two-person timber benches arranged. The rest of the gardens will be landscaped and planted to suit based on the existing levels and the curved retaining wall. This gives greater space for ashes to be laid and memorial tablets etc but it is felt that creating a space to stop and linger rather than a paved short-cut gives greater dignity to a visit for this purpose.

Lighting: There is some external lighting proposed in this scheme. There would be two wall-lights on motion sensors to give light to the narrow passageway alongside the church.

The rest is more decorative: firstly some uplighters onto the brick-and-tiles archway of the entrance and in connection with this the brickwork would be cleaned and the light at the apex of the archway would be strengthened. Secondly it is proposed to place floodlights to shine on the top of the bell-tower and on the newly refurbished bell in the stone archway.



Morley Black PIR Wall-lantern IP44 proposed for the side passageway.

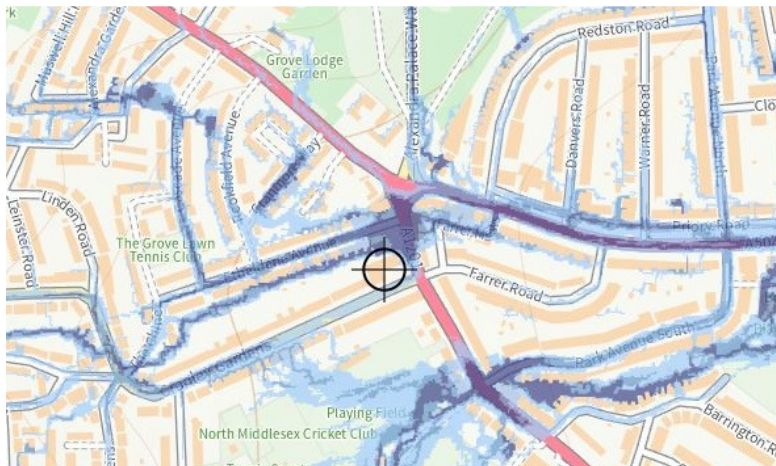
Access, Flooding etc

Access has been considered throughout this scheme and while the proposals do not handle every issue raised by the building's layout, the steps around the chancel, for instance, are related to a traditional concepts around a priest ascending to approach God, they take measures to improve the equality of access.

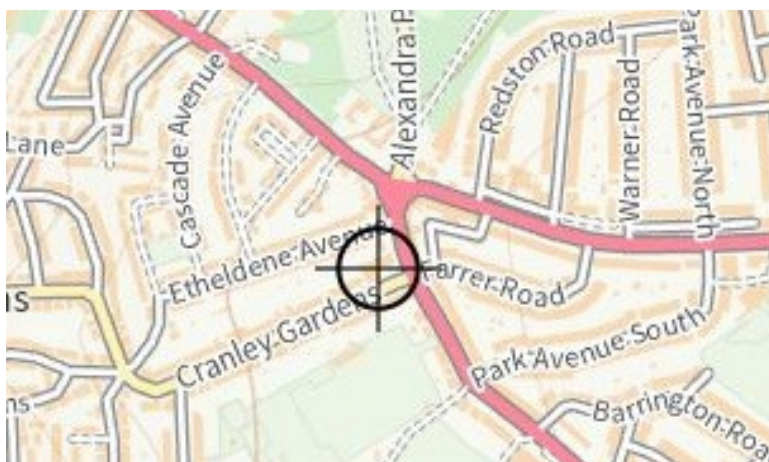
- Cutting back the step at the entrance and raising a gradual ramped approach.
- Automatic opening glass doors (inner) to make the access easier and independent. The outer doors are generally left open during open-hours.
- Handrail by the stepped entrance into the Lady Chapel. (This is over a basement space)

- Pews shortened to allow wheel-chair seating within the main congregational area at alternative locations to give some flexibility and choice.
- Diminishing the priority of the motor car. The original tarmac approach has more to do with vehicle delivery than pedestrian arrival. While the former is still accommodated, and this is valuable for weddings and funerals, the new wall-gap and stands for bicycles reinforce the priority of the footway, and seats and planting make this area an attractive place to linger.
- Conversely the path around the memorial ashes has been deliberately lengthened so that it arrives at a prayerful space to sit rather than the short-cut between other spaces. It is hoped that this area might become better appreciated if given space and importance.

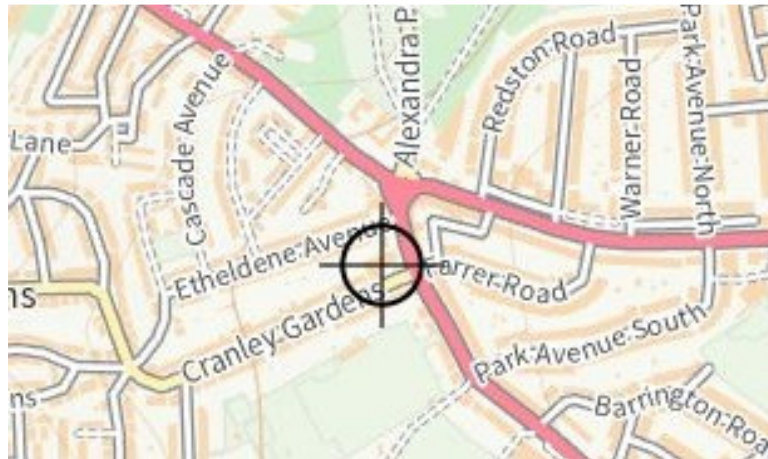
Flooding: The site area is termed Land within flood zone 1 and has a low probability of flooding from rivers and the sea. Most developments that are less than 1 hectare (ha) in flood zone 1 do not need a flood risk assessment (FRA) as part of the planning application and this area is 0.22 ha. It is of interest however that there nearby areas of Etheldene Avenue and Park Road where there is some risk of flooding. The fact that the Church is not residential also diminishes any risk. No basement works etc are being proposed in this application. Below are maps from the Environment Agency.



Map of projected flood risk from surface water. The church site is beneath the target symbol. The area above right of the target has an increased risk in terms of water depth and flood velocity.



Map of projected flood-risk from Reservoirs (none shown). The church site is beneath the target symbol.



Map of projected flood-risk from Rivers/streams (none shown). The church site is beneath the target symbol.

Modelled views of Proposals



Modelled view of the rear of the church from above showing the area for the Memorial Garden



Above: Modelled view of the new side door in the west garden. Trellis screens add enclosure.
Below: Modelled view of the new Entrance arrangement



Paul Jackson is an accredited Conservation Architect on the RIBA and AABC registers. He is a member of the *Institute of Historic Building Conservation* and also the *Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association*. He is a Quinquennial Inspector in the London and Southwark Dioceses, and formally approved in Southwark to handle Grade I and II* listed churches. He is a member of the Wood Street and Monken Hadley Conservation Advisory Committee in Barnet.

