

In the matter of St Peter, Addingham

Judgment

1. This is a petition for a faculty for the reordering the west end of the church building. More particularly the Schedule of Works sought, in summary
 - i. the permanent disposal of three pews from the north aisle, temporarily displaced by authority of an Archdeacon's Licence (alluded to in some of the documentation by the unhelpful, inaccurate and inelegant acronym 'TMRO');
 - ii. the adaptation of existing WC to improve accessibility;
 - iii. the placement of existing double inner porch doors with a single-leaf glazed and timber door;
 - iv. the adaptation of panelling around the baptistry to remove 20th-century additions.

Amendment of Schedule of Works

2. Public notice elicited a spread of local views, some in favour and some expressing strong reservations. One person in the latter category elected to become a Party Opponent. This led to a dialogue between him and the petitioners culminating in a so-called compromise which led to him withdrawing his objection.
3. It took a little time to establish the nature and extent of the compromise, and this caused some delay to the determination of the petition. It is now clear that the cost of the Party Opponent's withdrawal (to put it somewhat crudely) was the discontinuance of item iv. in the Schedule of Works. Having established that point, it was necessary for me to consider whether it was appropriate for permission to be granted for the petition to be amended and, if so, whether as a consequence there should be a further round of consultation with the statutory consultees and the DAC, a repeat of the public notice period and/or a referral back to the DAC for further consultation. Ultimately, I came to the view that none of the processes was required in furtherance of the overriding objective and that the petition could be justly determined on the material before me. For the record, it should be noted that although the petitioners have removed the panelling proposal from the current petition, they have put down a marker that the matter is likely to come before the Court for determination on a future occasion.
4. Nothing in this judgment should be seen as implying that any view has been taken by the Court on the future petition, which will be determined on its merits when and if it is made, based on the material before the court at that time. The withdrawal of the Party Opponent led to me vacating the hearing of the matter, which has proceeded 'on the papers', taking into account the views and comments of those who had expressed objections. I have ignored comments regarding the baptistery panels, which are no longer under consideration in consequence of the variation to the Schedule of Works.

The church building

5. St Peter's church is a listed grade I building of medieval origin and is situated within Addingham Conservation Area. The listing statement, to the extent that it relates to the interior, reads as follows.

Interior: Nave has 3-bay Tudor arcade with octagonal piers lacking capitals and 4-centred chamfered arches. Chancel arch is 4-centred on square piers. A further bay to aisle east of chancel arch is similar. Good 5-bay nave roof. King-post trusses with stop-chamfered principals, curved braces to ridge, moulded tie-beams, 2 have carved bosses. Tie-beam supported on stubby wooden corbel with curved brace. Aisle has lean-to roof of 10 bays, straight principals with roll-moulded edges. 2 trencled stop-chamfered purlins. West gallery carried on turned wooden columns. Semi-octagonal baptistry set under gallery retains C18 font of baluster shape. Chancel has C19 3-bay arched-braced hammer-beam boarded roof which retains its original stencil decoration. Several wall monuments to the Cuncliffe family of Farfield Hall (q.v.) the best by Sherwood (Derby) to Eliza Parr, 1809: the crown decorated with mourning figure and draped urn, the apron with swag either side of inscription. Good fragment of a late Saxon cross has two figures set under a circle in which is set a cross carved in relief.

The petitioners' case

6. Since this matter had been listed for a hearing, I have the benefit of evidence supporting the petition which was served in accordance with my directions. This augments and enlarges the documentation usually available, including the Statement of Significance and the Statement of Needs.
7. The petitioners speak of the need to make the church more welcoming to visitors, to attract younger congregations and to improve access, especially for those with mobility difficulties. They refer to the growth of more informal liturgies animated by a music group and a Children and Family Worker. The current door is heavy and hard to open, suggesting that the House of God is impregnable. The automatic door, sensor-operated, will address that problem. The architect is confident that this new formation will not increase the likelihood of draughts or make the church colder. A new door will fit more snugly with its frame and minimise heat loss.

Diocesan Advisory Committee

8. The DAC issued a Notification of Advice back in March recommending the original works which holds good for the revised proposals. The Notification recorded that none of the triggers was present for involving any of the statutory consultees or the CBC. I see no reason to question their professional assessment. The proposals are very minor with minimal impact on the historic fabric.

Supportive and adverse comment

9. I do not propose attributing comments to named individuals but to examine generically the range of views expressed as a consequence of public notice.
10. There is some criticism regarding the extent and quality of consultation and engagement with worshippers. One correspondent would advocate a ballot to introduce more of a democratic backdrop to the decision making. But the substantive criticisms seem to coalesce around the following:

- i. Compromised security from the new doors, particularly the automatic opening features
 - ii. Heat loss and draughts from the removal of the inner doors
 - iii. Practical difficulties regarding the intrusive opening of the WC door
 - iv. That some or all of the works are unnecessary
 - v. That the departure of bellringers will be more obvious and disruptive to worship
11. The supportive comments refer to the benefits in terms of improving access for those with mobility issues and for the movement of prams and wheelchairs. Reference is made to legal requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Reference is also made to the current petition as being the first in a series which, over time, will address the unevenness of the flooring, trip hazards from ramps and the unsightliness of mismatched furniture.

Discussion

12. I am satisfied that there have been no shortcomings in the consultative process such as to invalidate the proceedings. Ballots are highly unusual as a precursor to building works: the PCC is entrusted to make judgments and decisions of this nature.
13. When changes to a listed building (even minor ones) are proposed, the Court will apply the well-known *Duffield* framework. I remind myself of the presumption against change which adversely affects heritage assets. Applying the framework to the facts of this case, I have concluded:
- i. That the harm to the significance of this building will be minimal;
 - ii. That the justification for the minor changes is cogent;
 - iii. That the resultant public benefit will outweigh the harm

Disposal

14. A faculty may pass the seal in respect of the proposals, subject to the amendment removing item (4) from the Schedule of Works. The court fees are to be paid by the parish.
15. The faculty will be subject to the usual conditions:
- (1) that the works are not to commence until the Court fees have been paid;
 - (2) that the works are to be carried out under the direction of Stephanie Stead RIBA, the parish's inspecting architect.