

Hillsborough

Trinity

.... the church by the park



Vision Group - Building for the future

Now we have had the first round of thinking about the future, we are going to focus on the details of the future, building on our initial ideas, and turning them into concrete plans to move forward. We said we would set out our plans after about six months of thinking and talking, and so this paper is presented to the Vision Group, and to the whole congregation, to help us take that next crucial step from ideas to plans.

This paper sets out the details of some of the ideas, so that you can see what is being thought through. The Vision Group will be meeting in late January and we want everyone in the church to see the thinking and be able to offer their own ideas into the group. So please speak to one of the Vision Group about your ideas.

There were some key areas where the Vision Group wanted to set out with greater clarity:

Witness in Hillsborough. We will continue to follow through on the ideas for our witness in the community in other discussions and plans, and Yannie and Ian and others are already involved in moving this forward, meeting with other groups and thinking of new ideas.

Partnership with Karens. We have had an initial meeting with our fellow-Christians in the Karen congregation, about their long-term partnership with us in this building, and they are thinking what that might mean for them.

Lay worker post. We have had meetings to confirm the future of the lay worker post, and to guarantee its future support, and these will be put into formal place in early January.

Community groups. We have already had a few tentative enquiries about the use of our buildings by other groups, and we will continue to work on that over the coming year or two, but now we need to focus on the details of the building improvements and the management of our money.

The paper is in two sections, following on from the Vision Group's initial thinking, and it focuses on two of the four Vision Group areas:

- **What do we want to do with the building?**
- **How are we going to be financially self-sustaining?**

Feedback from Welcome Audit

I have been enormously encouraged by the positive feedback from members who have responded to the "Welcome Church Audit" that I recently asked you to think about. We've had quite a few responses, and all the ideas will be included in the thinking of the Vision Group in January.

In the meantime, I think those of you who responded will hopefully see some or all of what you said reflected in this paper.

Thank you for your contributions.

The buildings

We agreed that we would ask an architect, at no cost, to come and have a look at the building in a new way, in particular to consider the list of priorities that the Vision Group has listed. We asked him to think about how we could have a new entrance from the pavement level on Middlewood Road, a lift to all floors for disabled access, a new modern toilet block, and a re-modelled church which would still keep the wonderful look and feel of the church space, and also be more flexible for other events, so that we can generate more income to support our work at Trinity. We want to see what this would cost us, so that we can have a reasonable plan for our Development Fund.

Chris Cooney, the Managing Director of Axis Architecture which has a lot of experience in adapting church buildings, has had an initial look, and agreed that the ideas we have are sensible and can be done. He has done rough sketches for a new entrance on Middlewood Road, and advised that the new toilet block at the Lennox Road entry is no problem at all, nor is the re-ordering of the church floor and heating pipes so that we can have a much more flexible seated area in church. We will be working out the details of what this will be like over the coming months.

We have made a start already by committing £2,600 from the Development Fund and the gifts at the Open Day, to renovate the two upstairs rooms, because we knew we would have to do these, and the Sunday School were keen to have somewhere to have their sessions that was more cosy. This includes re-plastering where the walls were damaged, re-glazing the windows where there are all sorts of different frosted panes, putting a new carpet in, and decorating. The first use of these rooms will be for the Sunday School on Sundays, but others will want to use these rooms as well.

We have also been given a grant of £10,000 by the Methodist Circuit, so that we can make a start on our larger plans in the spring, by opening up the Lennox Road pedestrian entrance to make it suitable for cars and minibuses for people with mobility needs. We will be able to come into the yard and use the vehicle lift safely, so that users can come easily into the church hall. We will also put up a nice new notice-board at this end so that people know we are here! That will mean we can get on with developing our activities while we are planning and going forward with our wider plans.

We will do more work on making our entrance more attractive inside. Yannie and I have already re-vamped the notice-board at the main entrance, and we will be asking all groups to improve the look and feel of all the notice boards in the church.

We will be having a general clear-out in the new year, so that we can feel liberated from the clutter of generations!

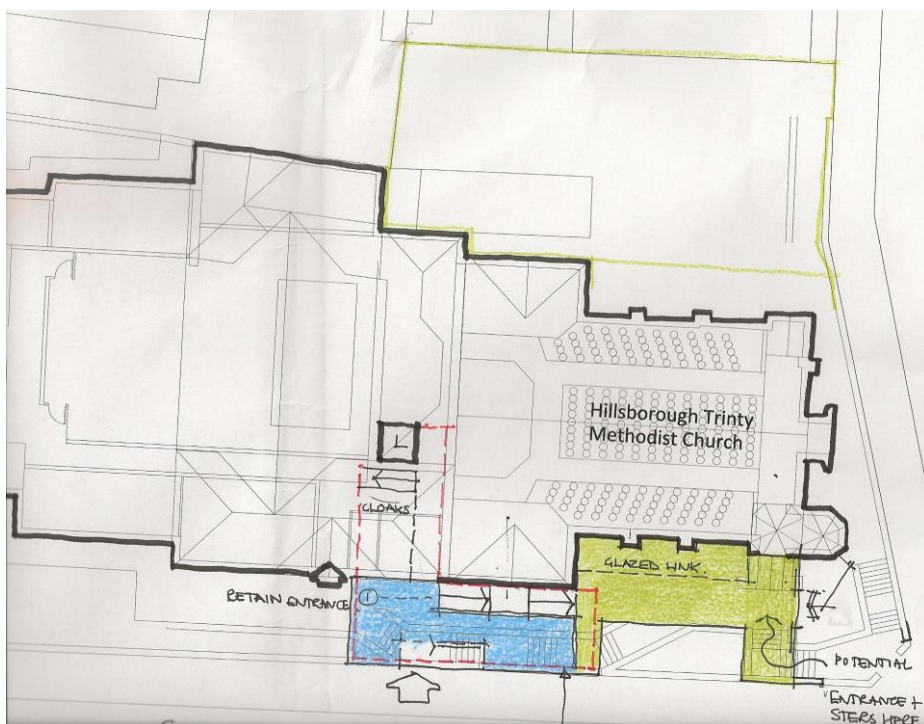
Middlewood Road entrance and lift


A lot of thought has gone into how we can make the building work better on all its levels, and three issues stand out:

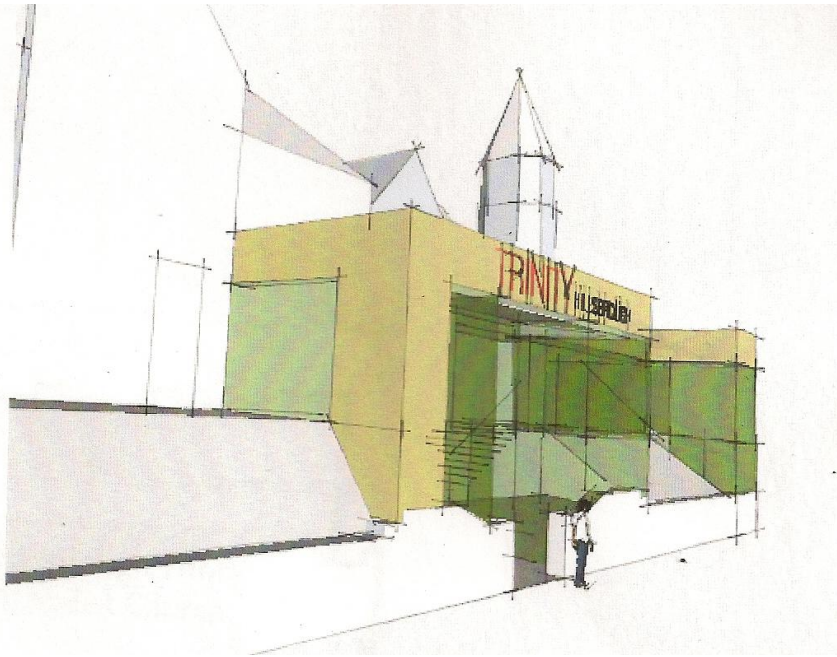
1. How can we make the entrance to the church more direct for people at street level, and more welcoming, and easy to see into, so that they can see that we are open, welcoming and have interesting things for them to come to, not up a winding set of steps, into a dark entrance, which they cannot see from the pavement?
2. How can we get good access into the building from the front, when everything is behind forbidding walls?
3. How can we help everyone to use all the floors when there are steps into the church and stairs all over inside the church and for upstairs?

So we asked the architect to work out how we could create a new glazed main entrance directly from Middlewood Road. This would be at pavement level, and cut through the high ground where the old front steps were that were blocked in, and then have nice steps up, inside the glazed entrance, up to a gallery level alongside the main side wall of the church, and into the church under where the tower is. We could also then go through into the cellar, where we could have a cloakroom and a lift which would enable people with mobility needs to go up to the church level or further up to the re-furnished rooms we have upstairs.

Here is a plan of the layout of the possible new glazed entrance, and on the next page is a sketch of what it might look like. These are very early sketches, to give us an idea of what would be possible, and to help us think through in the Vision Group what we want to do.



Middlewood Road is at the bottom of the plan. The big arrow  shows the proposed entrance at street level, into an entrance lobby at street level, shaded blue on the plan. In the blue area are some steps, inside the glazed lobby. (They are marked with two more arrows on the sketch.) These steps would be the main entrance, taking you up to a level to the “glazed walk” marked in green on the sketch. There you could have an exhibition, or coffee for events, and walk along to enter the main church under the tower. There is also the possibility on the right of improving the steps on the corner to enter the glazed lobby from that end too.



Once you are into the pavement level lobby, you would be able to walk straight through a cloakroom and enter a lift, if you had mobility needs. The lift we are planning is not a massively expensive thing that holds lots of people. It would only hold one person in a wheel chair and one person pushing. Or two people for whom the stairs were too much.

This would make an enormous difference to the welcome and approach to the church and make it much more inviting and flexible. The lift will serve all activities that need it. Here is a sketch of what the new glazed entrance might look like. A lot of it is blocked in as the detail is not worked out, for example the areas that look like ramps, are just there as a marker to show that there is a bank there to be dealt with. We will probably keep the wall along where it is already.

Other things being considered

We don't have a sketch for the other things we want to do, yet, because we know roughly what they would entail, and we can get the details sorted once we have a clear view of the priorities. But here are the things on the list in a rough order of priorities:

- A new toilet block and improved lobby and entrance at the Lennox Road entrance, with modern toilets and washbasins with baby-changing facilities and hot-air dryers, and a warm and friendly feel, in a position that they are easily used by people in the hall and the church.
- Re-design the layout of the church, with a level floor, a level and lower sanctuary, comfortable chairs that we can move around rather than the existing pews, carpet across the church area, modern sound system;
- Move the back wall of church forward, creating a larger lobby-space and having a glass screen into the church space;
- Improved access from Lennox Road with a drive-in for disabled vehicles and an access directly through the cloakroom for the church, and a re-modelled yard; (This is being tackled in the Spring with the grant we have got for the access at that entrance.)
- Create a prayer space, possibly in the church, and convert the Beginners room into a cosy lounge;
- Improved upstairs rooms, with kitchenette, toilet, and level floor. (We have made a start on this with the room improvements upstairs now underway);
- Automatic valves on the heating zones, to improve the efficiency and ease of use of the heating system;
- A utility room for flower arranging and cleaners with a butler sink;
- New modern, attractive notice-boards at the front of the building, or even moving screens in the new entrance;
- Decorate the premises in a more contemporary style;
- Deal with the noise levels in the hall, possibly with acoustic tiles or a suspended ceiling, or even a mezzanine floor for additional rooms.

Next steps

Now we are asking for some outline costings so that we know how much of this we will be able to afford. In the next couple of months we will have these estimates and the Vision Group will sit down and work through clear proposals. These proposals will all be brought to the Church Council for consideration and then to the Church Meeting.

We are sending a leaflet out to choirs and orchestras in Sheffield, to ask if any of them would like to make the re-vamped Trinity their new home. There is no 'music venue' in the north of the city, and this is something which would be an asset to the city, a meeting place in Hillsborough and provide us with revenue to support our on-going costs, as well as bringing great music into our community. This is not fixed or agreed yet; we are inviting orchestras and choirs to come and see us, look at the new plans and talk through their needs.

We have decided to re-enable the old building fund as a Development Fund, to enable us to make this happen. We are planning to put the proceeds of the sale of the former caretaker's house into the Development Fund, and some other small savings, together with £100,000 from the Joseph Ward investments. This will start the Development Fund off at about £220,000. With a basis like that we will be able to go to grant bodies such as Joseph Rank and the Lottery and others to increase this to over £300,000, which is what we will need to do much of this work. But it will be a huge step forward to bring Trinity into the life of the community, and make it a more modern and approachable place.

Cutting our cloth

At the same time as planning these improvements from capital and grant money, we have to work on balancing our budget on a regular basis. We are going to keep the lay worker post, and we want to do the developments, but that also means we have got to stop spending more each year on regular living costs and building alterations. At the moment we spend about £25,000 more each year than we earn. We can change this over three years and the Finance Committee recently worked through new proposals to solve this over that three year period. We will keep the Development Fund separate and do new work out of that, so that we can have a regular 'household' account that we can manage each year without going into deficit.

I meant it when I said that everyone has a part to play, either in helping to raise a bit more funds, or in saving a bit of money. The Finance Committee approved these recommendations in a new budget plan for the next three years, and this new budget will get us to break even at the end of those three years. (We have a small surplus funds account that is going to cover our losses over those three years, but then it will run out.) If we manage to hold to this budget, we will hopefully move over the next two or three years slowly into the black. ***We must work hard to make this happen, and everyone has some part to play in this.*** Unless we can make this happen we will slide slowly into decline and not be able to support the new future that we seek to make happen. But if we can balance our budget, and I am sure we can, we will have a great future.

Finance decisions.

In order for the church to get a firm hold on the annual spending, we have to cut our cloth for our regular spending according to the regular income we have. Then we can do the developments out of the Development Fund. So the Finance Committee has approved the following actions, with my help where necessary:

1. We will not agree any new expenditures, or purchases, unless they are urgent, necessary, or take our work forward in our agreed direction, or are in existing budgets for use, and the expenditure is agreed by the Church Council.
2. We will not commission any expenditure on the building (except agreed necessary repairs) until we have agreed it in Church Council.
3. We will not spend money on any items from the quinquennial review if they are either "advisory" or if they can be put into the new building programme under the Development Fund. We will be ruthless in deciding whether we need to spend such money at all at the moment.
4. We will not agree any further building works to the existing building until we have the Development Fund operational, with a budget for new works, or get a grant for them, and we will decide on new works out of the Development Fund, not out of Revenue.
5. We will not approve any further grants to any organisations, internal or external, without full Church Council approval, and it is unlikely that we will agree any donations or grants until we can afford them, or unless we ourselves get a grant in to cover such a decision.
6. Where we do pay grants to users of the premises (not the Advice Centre), we will advise them that in the current financial situation we find it necessary to reduce their grant by a small amount (£100 each year) over the next three years. Ian Lucraft will be able to work with them to help them to find some other funding to support their activities in most cases.
7. We will ask all existing groups to suggest how they might contribute to the maintenance of the building and services that they use.
8. We will ask each member of the congregation, as part of our overall recovery plan, to each increase their personal offertory by £1 per week.

An exciting future

All this makes for a really exciting future for Trinity.

It is all achievable.

We each have our part to play.

Please read this and share your thoughts with members of the Vision Group so that they have heard your views when they meet in January.

Best wishes to you for Christmas and the New Year.

Ian Lucraft