

St John the Evangelist

Restoration & Redevelopment



Brief History

St John's was built in the 1870s.

At that time, there was a fast-growing community and a lot of development in and around Norwood because of the Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition which had transferred from Hyde Park to the Palace.

St John's was built to meet some of the spiritual needs of the new and growing population.

The church was designed by the famous Victorian architect, Loughborough Pearson (who also designed Truro Cathedral among other churches).

It was Pearson's vision that people would be drawn into St John's by its magnificence and sheer scale. Once inside the Church, they would fall to their knees in prayer and awesome wonder as they encountered God in the beauty of holiness.

For Pearson, St John's was an experience

Everything at St John's was geared towards stirring the senses and heightening one's experience of God.

The enormity and openness of scale; the sensitive columns, the gothic arches and vaulted ceilings, the statues of saints with gentle expressions and gestures that beckon; the stunning rose and stained-glass windows that draw us into the mystery of God with us; the sacred space and loftiness in which clouds of incense linger and suspend evoking memories of the Old Testament image of God leading his people out of captivity; the acoustics designed to work with and enhance the musical tradition in order to transcend the mundane of daily living.

St John's Today?

St John's sees itself as the spiritual heart of the local community. It recognises that the church belongs to the people and it continues to be a place where every person is welcome and invited to share in the experience of God in the beauty of holiness.

St John's is a lively, sociable, friendly and warm community. In addition to the regular acts of worship, there are numerous other activities

A Sunday School

A Youth Group

An amazing Choir
and Choir Club for the younger members

A weekly Coffee Morning

A Toddler Group

Talks & Lectures

An Annual Open Week and Open Day

Pantomimes & other social events.

2008

The Challenges

1. Reparation & Restoration
2. Provision of adequate facilities
3. Disability Discrimination Act Compliance

Restoration & Redevelopment

A brief walk around the outside and inside of St John's reveals all kinds of structural damage:

- Ground volatility
- Cracks
- Crumbling brick
- Crumbling stones

Measures we have been made so far:

A lot of time and money has been spent on investigative work so that we can understand why we have clay volatility and various other problems; how best to correct these problems and how to avoid their reoccurrence.

We are now, almost ready to proceed with underpinning; pointing; cosmetic reparation and re-facing brickwork.

Before too long, we shall be able to
remove the netting that has
protected us from falling debris!

In conjunction with the restoration and reparation of St John's

We aim to construct new, purposeful facilities that will meet the congregational needs as well as provide facilities that will serve the community

This will involve the demolition of the present Church Hall and Vicarage, which will be replaced by a small residential development and new Community Centre on two-levels, on the south aspect.

Accessibility

St John's was designed at a time when there was little consideration for people with any kind of disability. Today, we would like to rectify this and ensure that every person has easy, comfortable and safe access to every aspect of the Church.

This means introducing ramps, safe stairways, even floorings, appropriate lavatory facilities and any other measure to ensure that every person is valued and wholly included.

Church Hall

Current Uses:

- Church receptions and functions.
- Large Group and small group meetings.
- Children's parties; wedding/baptism receptions.
- Secular adult & youth organisations and clubs
- Pre-School
- Babies & Toddlers

Problems facing the Church Hall

- Light inefficient
- Heat & energy inefficient
- Space inefficient (too small for large groups; too large for small groups)
- Caters for 80 people. (Our congregation is 120 & growing!)
- Storage inefficient
- Kitchen Facilities – inadequate
- Lavatory Facilities – inadequate
- Not DDA (Disability Discriminatory Act) compliant
- The building is crumbling, cracking and in need of serious internal and external repair.

The Need for Re-Development

St John's is a cathedral-type Church with inadequate facilities that fails to meet the needs of the congregation or the local community. The Redevelopment will ensure the continuance of St John's into the next century. Furthermore, it will service more community based activities and so lend itself to social cohesion and regeneration in this area of South Norwood that presently has little provision.