



St JOHNS DOWNSHIRE HILL – JUSTIFICATION FOR THE NEED FOR A SECOND BEDROOM

Statement in response to comments received at a meeting with EH and L.B. of Camden held 17 November 2014

Need for a Caretaker

A Caretaker's Flat was an integral part of the thinking behind the alterations and repairs that were developed and completed in the church in 2005. The presence of a caretaker on site was seen to assist in keeping the building sustainable, and more secure.

The Flat is a split level dwelling with one bedroom at higher level, and a small Living / Dining / Kitchen area (some 19 sq.m.) at lower level.

Need for second bedroom:

The application seeks to provide an additional second bedroom for the Flat. The reasons are as follows:

1. A second bedroom opens doors to a wider number of applicants for the post.

At present only a single person, and a married couple who do not have, or who are prepared not to start, a family can apply.

The history of occupancy is as follows and bears this out:

- 2005 to 2010: initially occupied by a single man (Ben Wright) who soon married (Helen) but was not able to start a family so had to move.
- 2010 to 2014: occupied by a married couple (Mark and Ruth Smith) also not able to start a family.
- 2014 to current: occupied by a single man James Lapping who leaves next summer and a replacement is being sought.

A couple (Ross and Emma Mungavin) who the church wanted to take the flat could not presently move in because they have a child. They presently live off site at 2 Parliament Court. They were always clear they required a 2 bed flat to make room for visitors from their home country: Northern Ireland, and now have a child. This couple is the most suitable to live on site to keep the building open during part of each day at least (which requires someone to be 'on duty'), and to do youth work, where space in a sitting room environment is an essential facility.

2. The Flat without a second bedroom means the church has to rent additional accommodation privately and locally – at great expense given the in-affordability of the local area.
3. The Flat discriminates:

- Firstly against people with mobility disabilities: the applicant cannot be immobile due to the split level. And there is no way alternative arrangements can be made on site even though the rest of the building is accessible.
- Secondly against single mothers and single fathers with dependent children

4. The inconvenient use of the Lounge by Pathfinders on a Sunday morning - as the use schedule below shows - needs to be mitigated by the provision of a second bedroom to provide some private space for the occupant(s) at that time of the week.

Group	Age range	Current numbers	Current room used and its area	Comments and issues	Ideal area required	Proposal and conclusion
Creche	0-2	Average numbers are 20 at present. Plus 4-5 helpers are required each week plus visiting parents.	One half of the undercroft: 75 sqm (net of circulation required through the room by others)	Good area, in best location as room is closest to WCs, can be easily reached by parents and does not need attached storage.	50 sqm.	Stay as is - area is close to WCs, can be easily reached by parents, is well sized for activities for 2 'year-olds', and provides some room for growth.
Scramblers	2-4	18 on the register. Plus 2-3 leaders are required each week.	Garden Room: 12 sqm.	No access to toilets is available, room is outside, room is far too small, and has no dedicated storage.	40 sqm. (i.e. typical school classroom standard, with access to storage).	Needs a much bigger room allowing space for children to move about, with attached storage, and WC nearby
Starters	4-7	23 on the register. Plus 2-4 leaders are required each week.	Board Room: 29 sqm.	Area is just about ok at present and has some storage. But location disturbs other activities when access to toilets are required.	50 sqm. (i.e. to a typical school classroom standard)	Stay where is and accept reduced area standard and any disturbance elsewhere when access to WCs are required.
Followers	7-11	33 on the register. Plus 2-3 leaders are required each week.	Other half of the undercroft: 80 sqm.	Area is ok at present, with storage available.	80 sqm. for two groups of up to 20 (i.e. to a typical school classroom standard with some spatial separation).	The group is now too big and needs to be divided into 2 smaller classes, though there is no separate room that allows this.

Pathfinders	11-14	20 on the register. Plus 2-3 leaders are required each week.	Caretaker Flat's Living / Dining Room 19 sqm.	Highly inconvenient but the only solution at present. Room is also too small given its main use, and there is no storage.	25 to 30 sqm. (i.e. typical meeting room standard) anticipating growth with this group from the rising years below.	Has to stay where it is as there is no other solution.
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This use pattern has been assessed already to justify the development of the proposed new meeting room; and other options have also been considered. Five distinct rooms / areas are shown to be used at present for Sunday groups; 2 of which are highly inconvenient (for the 'Scramblers' and 'Pathfinders'). To accommodate the 'Pathfinders', the Lounge of the Caretaker's Flat has to be used.

Two additional meeting rooms / areas would ideally be provided because the ongoing use of the Caretaker's flat for 'Pathfinders' is an imposition that is inconvenient and uncomfortable. But the church accepts this is not possible in a further extension on the site, so must rely on the good will of the Caretaker. It is not envisaged a further group is required as the full age range is now covered. But 'caretaker good will' may not last. So for that reason also, a second bedroom is needed to mitigate these impositions and restrictions, and provide space for the occupant(s) when their lounge is unavailable, and privacy is necessary.

Summary

The Flat as proposed will therefore:

- Help retain the presence of a caretaker on site as a positive contribution to the sustainability and security of the building by enabling the building to be very accessible for and safer with public use
- Allow a wider choice of applicant to apply for the post.
- Will save money to help with the general funding of the operation of the church
- Will reduce discrimination and allow a person in a wheelchair to apply for the post, or a pregnant mother, or a single parent with a child
- Will provide replacement private space for the occupant(s) to mitigate the inconvenience and imposition of the use of their lounge in the Flat for church activities on Sunday mornings.