



COWAN
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St Nicholas Church, Worth

Concept Design Document

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AABC RIBA 
Chartered Practice

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Contents

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1. | Introduction | 4 |
| 1.1 | Purpose of this Concept Design Document | 4 |
| 1.2 | A brief appraisal of the historical significance and context of St Nicholas Church | 5 |
| 1.3 | The needs to which this application relates | 6 |
| 1.4 | The brief for the proposed works | 7 |
| 2. | Relevant Legislation and Guidance | 8 |
| 2.1 | Ecclesiastical Guidance | 8 |
| 2.2 | Secular Guidance (National) | 9 |
| 2.3 | Secular Guidance (Local) | 10 |
| 3. | Concept Design - Entrance Pathway | 12 |
| 3.1 | Options for Relocating Entrance Pathway | 12 |
| 3.2 | Guiding Principles for New Pathway | 13 |
| 3.3 | Pathway Option 1 | 14 |
| 3.4 | Pathway Option 2 | 15 |
| 3.5 | Pathway Option 3 | 16 |
| 3.6 | Developing Option 3 | 17 |
| 4. | Concept Design Internal Facilities | 18 |
| 4.1 | Options for Introducing New Internal Facilities | 18 |
| 4.2 | The Existing Internal Context | 19 |
| 4.3 | The Proposed Alterations | 20 |
| 4.4 | Considering the Impact on the Interior of the Church | 21 |
| 4.5 | Considering the Impact on the Exterior of the Church | 22 |
| 4.6 | External Detailing | 23 |
| 5. | Concept Design Memorial Garden | 24 |
| 5.1 | The Initial Concept | 24 |
| 6. | Summary | 25 |
| 6.1 | Conclusion | 25 |
| | Appendix I: Statutory List Description (St Nicholas) | 26 |
| | Appendix II: Statutory List Description (Lychgate) | 27 |
| | Appendix III: Statutory List Description (Street House) | 28 |
| | Appendix IV: Arboricultural Inspection and Advice | 29 |
| | Appendix V: Gravel Surface Sample Study | 30 |

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Prepared by: JKC
Date: 27/02/19

Approved by: NM
Date: 27/02/19

1. Introduction

1.1 - Purpose of this Concept Design Document

This document has been prepared for submission for **Informal Faculty Advice** to Chichester Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC), on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of St Nicholas Church, Worth, by their Inspecting Architect Jonathan Cerowski.

The purpose of this document is to set out the following:

- An appraisal of the **historical significance and context** of St Nicholas Church.
- The **specific needs** of the church and its congregation at St Nicholas.
- An explanation of the **aspirations and brief** prepared by the PCC, which were developed into concept design options in collaboration with their Inspecting Architect.
- Relevant **legislation and guidance** which dictated the development of the proposals.
- Concept **design options**.
- A **preferred option**, and the rationale for this choice.
- Conceptual notes regarding the **detailing and materiality** of the preferred option, to be developed following feedback from Chichester DAC and Crawley Borough Council.



Fig 1: Site Location Reference, Google Maps Extract.



Fig 2: East end of St Nicholas, showing apsidal chancel in foreground.

1.2 – A brief appraisal of the historical significance and context of St Nicholas

The intention of this appraisal is to give a high level history of the church and its context for readers unfamiliar with St Nicholas. Specific elements of historical built fabric or context will be discussed in greater detail later in this document where deemed necessary. If the DAC is amenable to the approach proposed in the preferred option of this document, a Statement of Significance would be prepared to support a formal application for Faculty, and this would present the history of the church in a greater level of detail generally, and more specifically where alterations are proposed.

St Nicholas Church is perhaps one of the finest ecclesiastical buildings, and certainly one of the oldest, in the country. It is thought to date from the 11th Century, though some sources speculate that elements of its built fabric precede this date based on comparable churches which are believed to date from the 8th/9th Century.

It is notable for being the only Saxon cruciform church with an apsidal chancel which is complete in plan form. It has a wide high nave, low transepts and a lower chancel. It is constructed of Wealden Sandstone with a red clay tiled roof generally. There is a tower to the north-east (added in 1871 and replacing an earlier timber structure, there is an indication of this in the background of Fig 3, to the right of this page) with a cedar shingled broach spire. A major scheme of restoration and alteration was carried out in 1986 following a fire which destroyed the roof. At this time the floor and seating were replaced internally.

It is something of a mystery why such a large church (for the time) was constructed in an area which was predominantly forested in the 11th Century, however it is known that the forest was reserved for hunting and was granted to William de Warrenne by William the Conqueror in 1065, and so it is believed that St Nicholas served as a place for de Warrenne's visitors to pray in comfort.

The church building has necessarily changed and evolved over the last 1000 years, and it is not the intention of this brief appraisal to detail this evolution where not strictly relevant to the proposals or their immediate context. Generally, the church building has been extended, restored, rebuilt and repaired. Importantly, it has continued in its ecclesiastical use, and is thought to be the longest continually used church building in the country. It is the opinion of the PCC and the Inspecting Architect that this; its evolution and adaptation to allow the church building to continue to provide a place for Christian prayer and worship, has been and remains its most important function.

The context of the church too has evolved, it no longer sits in a forest, with Crawley to its west and the M23 motorway to its east. It does however form the characterful centre of the Worth Conservation Area, and sits in a secluded churchyard surrounded by trees, some of which are important and ancient.

It is listed at Grade I, has a consecrated open churchyard and contains several Commonwealth war and other notable graves. The lychgate is listed separately at Grade II, as is Street House, a single family dwelling to the north of the church and immediate north east of the lychgate. The listing descriptions for St Nicholas, the lychgate and Street House can be found in the appendices of this document.



Fig 3: Print of St Nicholas (with the former tower in the background), by Richard Henry Nibbs from the 'Sussex Churches' series of 1851.



Fig 4: Photograph of access pathway from lychgate to church, taken in Summer 2018.



Fig 5: Photograph of access pathway from lychgate to church, taken in 1955 showing the more generous pathway width in the mid-20th Century (Francis Frith).

1.3 – The needs to which this application relates

Chichester DAC has previously been consulted by the PCC on their current needs in 2018, with a site visit carried out on 22nd March 2018 with the previous Inspecting Architect, Robin Nugent, in attendance. The purpose of that visit is noted in the site visit notes as:

“...to discuss the development of their plans for better access to the church, the possibility of significant tree works or felling, and the provision of a toilet.”

The author of this document was not present at that meeting, though he has read the thorough and detailed notes prepared by the DAC following the meeting, as well as discussing the proposals at length with the PCC. With this in mind, it is thought that it would be useful to return to first principles, the needs of the church congregation and the wider users of the building, rather than starting with a list of proposals for which a justification is post-rationally sought. As set out in the Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018, it is a general duty of the church to have due regard to the role of a church as a local centre of worship and mission, perhaps more notably at St Nicholas than in most instances due to the extended length of time for which it has continually served this purpose.

The PCC seeks to facilitate the continued use of St Nicholas by as wide a range of users as possible within the confines of its historic Grade I built fabric and its beautiful churchyard setting. In order to allow the church to be used by a wide user group the PCC would like to:



Fig 6: Current W.C. facilities, circa 150 metres away along Church Road to the west of St Nicholas, adjacent to the Rectory.

Improve access to the church from the lychgate

The access pathway from the lychgate to the west end of St Nicholas is a straight but sloped pathway, with substantial trees to either side. The trees are a mixture of turkey oaks, limes, and a horse-chestnut. The pathway is surfaced in tarmac, undulates along its circa 35 metre length (with a circa 3.5 metre level change between either end) and has a varied width of between one and a half metres and less than a metre (due to the trees to either side encroaching on the pathway). Beyond the trees there are tombs, graves and memorials, with patches of clear grass interspersed between.

The pathway was resurfaced four years ago in an attempt to improve access along it, though root damage from the trees has had a significant effect on the usability of the pathway since then. The churchwardens have noted that with an elderly congregation, members of the local community have been forced to move to other local churches due to the inaccessibility of the pathway surface for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled members. They also report access issues for funeral pallbearers and wedding parties.

Provide modest modern amenities

St Nicholas sits centrally within its churchyard, it has no hall and no facilities internally, either toilets or an area for refreshment preparation. The church is currently used for services, community meetings, evening functions, and is open to the public generally. Though the PCC do not seek to harm the special quality of the building or propose an extension which might change the character of the building, they would like to provide modest provisions for the current and future users of the building.

The PCC are conscious that whatever provisions are proposed, they should not have an adverse impact on the use of the building for its ecclesiastical functions, nor must any works detract from the special qualities of the church. As with the entrance pathway, they would like any alterations to facilitate the church being made more usable to a wide range of users, including those in wheelchairs.

1.4 – The brief for the proposed works

Following a careful review of the feedback provided by the DAC following their March 2018 meeting at St Nicholas Church, and after several discussions with the PCC and Michael Boag, the Rector of Worth Parish, we agreed the following brief for developing proposals for improving the accessibility and usability of St Nicholas Church:

- **Investigate several options for re-locating the entrance pathway to the church from the lychgate.** These options should assess the possible implications of re-routing the existing pathway – Could it be lengthened to decrease the steepness of the pathway? Could it be repositioned to allow some or all of the avenue of trees to either side of the current pathway to be retained?
- **Prepare a concept design for inserting a W.C. and Kitchenette into the church to improve the usability of the building by a wider range of people and for a greater range of functions.** During the previous DAC visit, a proposal was presented to insert an accessible W.C. into a fine Victorian south porch. Whilst relatively modern, it is the opinion of the Inspecting Architect that this does not warrant its conversion, should a more viable and less damaging option be shown to be available. If a W.C. (or potentially two, to improve the practicality of the church for larger gatherings) were to be inserted, it should be accessible to all. The kitchenette should likewise be designed in such a way as to allow a wide range of users' access to its facilities. If possible, any new intervention should improve accessibility to the interior of the church from the west end entrance, where there is a large internal threshold stone step from the external ground level down into the church. The proposals should not seek to remove or damage historic built fabric where practically avoidable.
- **Assess the surface treatment of the wider pathways of the churchyard.** The immediate proposals are to improve or alter the entrance route to the church, however the other pathways which encompass the church building and run to the former rectory to the south would also benefit from a change to their surface finish. The current tarmac surface has been noted to be a slip hazard in frosty, wet or autumnal conditions, it is cracked in places and drains poorly.
- **Investigate the incorporation of a 'memorial garden' to land to the south-east of the church building.** To the periphery of the churchyard's south-east corner there is a grass field, formerly the kitchen garden of the old rectory, which has been gifted to the church. The PCC would like to investigate its conversion into a memorial garden, with markers or kerbs for local people, planted in an appropriate manner, and with seating for visitors set around the pathway.

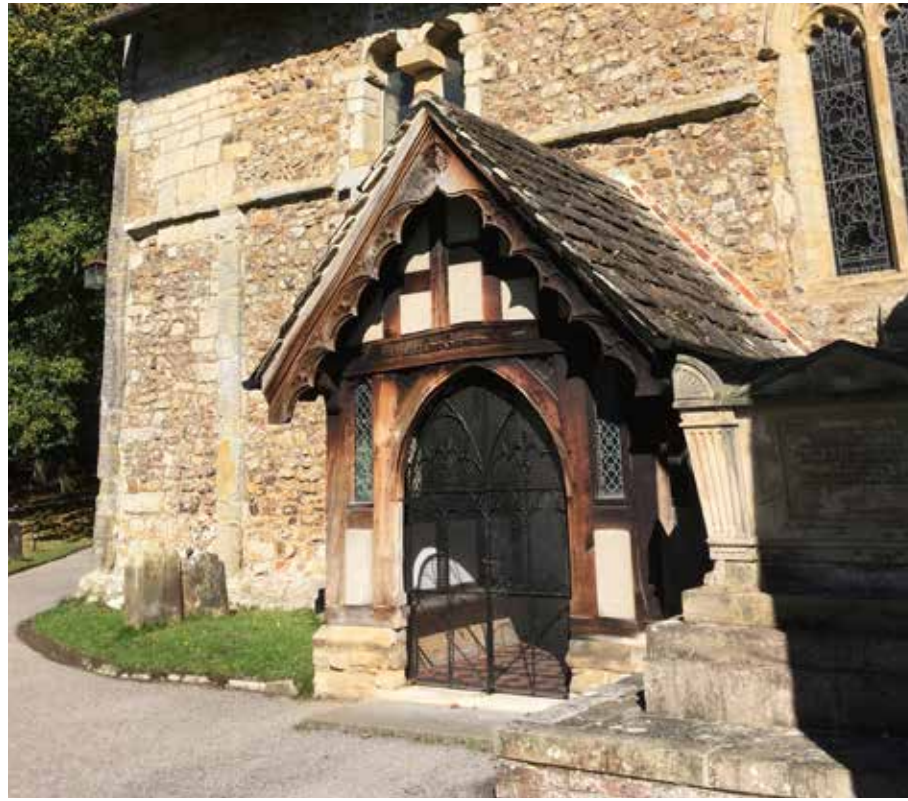


Fig 7: Photograph of Victorian south porch.



Fig 8: Photograph of a section of cracked tarmac pathway around the periphery of the church.



Fig 9: Photograph of the proposed memorial garden area, to the south-east of St Nicholas.

2. Relevant Legislation and Guidance

2.1 – Ecclesiastical Guidance

Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction and Care of Churches Measure 2018

Section 35 states that those involved in the care and conservation of churches under the Measure have a duty to have regard to a church's purpose, which it notes as to be a local centre of **worship** and **mission**. Broken down, **worship** relates to how a congregation meets with God, whilst **mission** relates to outreach and catering to visitors.

In the case of St Nicholas, the brief prepared by the PCC must be viewed in the light of this duty, and in order to facilitate worship and mission, appropriate access and facilities must be available to allow the congregation and visitors to reach the church building, and facilitate its use once it has been reached.

ChurchCare Guidance Note – Summary of Guidance to works to trees

This document notes that works may be carried out to trees under a List A or B application if certain criteria are met. These criteria include consulting with the local authority if tree works are proposed in a Conservation Area or if Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) are in place for any of the trees to which works are proposed. Necessary steps must be taken to protect wildlife. An arboriculturist's advice must be sought where works are proposed to trees. It also notes that any trees listed in the **Gazetteer of Ancient Yews** or the **Ancient Tree Inventory** should be noted in the Statement of Significance, and trees generally should be considered as part of this Statement.

A specialist arboriculturist, Hal Appleyard, has been consulted in relation to proposals at St Nicholas, and his report is referenced later in this document as well as forming an appendix. The Gazetteer of Ancient Yews and the Ancient Tree Inventory were both consulted online, both of which note an ancient yew to the rear of Street House (the adjacent property), which falls outside of the churchyard.

ChurchCare Guidance Note – Guidance to parochial church councils on trees

This document expands on the summary guidance set out in the previous guidance note. It notes that the felling of trees which are not dying and have not become dangerous requires Faculty permission. If options set forth as a result of this concept design document require the felling of trees, a Faculty application would therefore be necessary.

The document advises that secular law applies to churchyard trees, and the Local Planning Authority's (LPA) Local Development Plan (LDP) should be consulted. The LDP may advise on the trees and their role in the local area, as well as their significance, as perceived by the LPA.

Pertinently, the document highlights the importance of discussing what makes the trees special with local people. An explanation of what might make a tree or group of trees important follows, noting that groups of trees planted in the 17th/18th Century may have some symbolic significance, giving the example of a group of 12 trees may symbolically represent the 12 apostles. Anecdotally, locals refer to the trees along the pathway to the church as 'the 12 apostles' (though there are actually 13), however the author of this document could find no reference beyond this anecdote to support this. Several of the trees are much younger than the general group, and so this might not have been the original intent of the tree planting, or it may have been post-rationalised with the addition of several trees at a later point.

The guidance note advises that historic photographs of the church are reviewed, to compare views to the church historically to those now present, to assess the impact of removing the trees.

In section 1.3 of this document, the only available photograph of the avenue of trees is presented for comparison to the existing tree growth from the same viewpoint. However, the trees could be considered one of the latest chapters in a many chaptered history, and though we do not have records of the viewpoint from the lychgate to St Nicholas Church, we do know from the date of the construction of the lychgate that this view must have existed without being obscured by trees, and we do know that the trees relative to the entire history of the building are young. It must be noted though that reverting back to an earlier landscaping form for its own sake is not a sufficient justification for the removal of trees, in the same way as earlier internal form of a church building does not necessarily justify removing a later phase of internal works.

ChurchCare Guidance Note – Improving the Visitor Experience

This guidance note gives further guidance to the Care of Churches Measure's Section 35 'local centre of ... mission'. It describes the general spirit of welcoming those beyond the congregation, and notes that for most visitors the primary reason for visiting is not likely to be architectural or historical interest. The document gives guidance on health and safety – avoid trip hazards and ease access where practicable, make the churchyard welcoming, use best endeavours to allow visitors to feel included.

Some of the guidance in this document could more pertinently be used by the PCC once any access improvements have been implemented, however it does highlight the importance of the accessibility (both literally and figuratively) in helping further mission in a community, and encourage visitors. It has been noted by the PCC that when the trees along the entrance pathway are in bloom, it is difficult to discern the church through them, and coupled with St Nicholas being tucked away from the public thoroughfare, this may discourage visitors.

ChurchCare Guidance Note – Accessibility and Disabled People

This guidance note relates to The Equality Act 2010, which replaced the Disability Discrimination Act, and details the duty 'service providers' (in this case the church) have to provide access for worship and wider activities to as many different users as possible. The Act covers a wider range of users than just those with physical disabilities, though the scope of this document does not extend to addressing the use of St Nicholas by other disabled users, this must be considered by the PCC at another time.

The suggestions include considering access to the church, parts of the interior, use of W.C.s, and churchyards and paths.

ChurchCare Guidance Note – Reordering – Alterations and Extensions

This brief guidance details the typical process of developing alterations to church buildings, of which this concept design document forms a small part. The note recommends consulting with the DAC, thinking critically about the needs of the church, and being precise in what you would like any proposals to achieve, rather than starting from an idea of what those works might be.

2.2 – Secular Guidance (National)

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Whilst Church of England buildings are not subject to Listed Building Consent in the same manner as secular buildings, **Section 16(2)** requires special regard to be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

The Act would typically be used in weighting other elements of planning policy against the impact of proposals on ensuring the preservation of a heritage asset (in this case St Nicholas' church), and therefore this approach should be borne in mind when considering proposals to ecclesiastical buildings within a Conservation Area, as in this instance.

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. In this instance, we hope that this document demonstrates that the conservation and future of St Nicholas' church depends on its continued use, and its continued use depends on the accessibility and usability of the building being upgraded to meet the needs of 21st Century congregation and wider community.

Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use. The proposed works would allow St Nicholas to continue in its optimum viable use, as a church building and community meeting place.

Paragraph 170 states that proposed works should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued sites and landscapes, commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan. The Crawley Local Development Plan is referred to in section 2.3 of this document.

2.3 – Secular Guidance (Local)

Crawley Local Plan 2015-2030

Policy SD1 clarifies the LPA’s presumption in favour of Sustainable Development, in line with the NPPF’s confirmation that this is the purpose of the planning system. It notes the three dimensions of economic, social and environmental roles that development must balance. Particularly relevant to the scheme at St Nicholas is the importance placed on respecting the heritage of the borough, providing a safe environment for residents and visitors (in relation to the current uneven and narrow entrance pathway to the church) and provide for the social needs of the Crawley’s current and future population (in relation to the provision of facilities within the church building, and the addition of a memorial garden to the south-east).

Policy CH13 relates to Crawley’s guidance on Conservation Areas, noting that all development within a Conservation Area should individually and cumulatively result in the preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the area. It references the relevant (in this case Worth’s) Conservation Area Statement, and asks for consideration to be made to respect the elements of the area which particularly make it special, including the landscape value of trees, set against preserving the area’s architectural quality. This document seeks to demonstrate that this is the case in the option proposed.

Policy CH15 describes the LPA’s approach to Listed Buildings, and notes that any change must preserve and enhance the design and character of the building, with due regard to its historic significance. Though Faculty replaces Listed Building Consent in this instance, the policy interestingly notes that the LPA’s approach that demolition can only be acceptable where (a building) cannot be retained in its original form, and when a significant benefit that cannot be facilitated should (the building) be retained, can be demonstrated. If this approach were to be applied to the potential removal of any trees, an argument could be made to offset the negative effects of tree removal with the positive effects of usable access to the heritage asset.

Crawley Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document

Part 4 of the LPA’s Design Guide relates to Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings. In the section detailing Worth Conservation Area it notes:

“Worth Conservation Area was designated by the council in March 1987 when it was recognised that it was important to preserve and enhance the character of the setting of St Nicholas’ Church, which has been described as one of the most perfect specimens of a Saxon building in England.”

This scheme seeks to honour the aims set forth in the LPA’s design guidance.



Fig 10: Worth Conservation Area boundary, with church indicated with arrow head.

2.3 – Secular Guidance (Local) - continued

Worth Conservation Area Statement 2018

The recently adopted Conservation Area Statement for Worth is comprehensive and informative. It particularly makes reference to the sense of place evident within the Conservation Area, and the importance of St Nicholas church as the centre point of the area.

In relation to the proposals set forth in this document it notes particularly the important features of the church internally, and the proposed options have been developed to ensure that any alterations would not negatively affect these features.

It gives a more detailed overview than that presented in this document of the history of the area and the church building in particular. It describes the avenue of trees from the lychgate to the church as the ‘Twelve Apostles’, and notes that they are shown on the Ordnance Survey of 1875. Interestingly, the document includes an etching (undated and uncredited) of the church prior to its ‘restoration’, including the removal of its buttresses, potentially the change of its roof form, and the replacement of the tower. This image is shown in Figure 11 (below), and it appears to show that the avenue of trees was not a key feature at this time. The architectural features of this etching appear to match those of the image shown in Figure 3 of this document on page 5, which is dated 1851.



Fig 11: Undated and uncredited etching, presumed to date from the mid-19th Century.

The Conservation Area Statement notes that:

“The sense of place surrounding the church is tangible, its presence revealed when leaving the wooden path and arriving in the clearing immediately surrounding the church and thus its historical context has been retained”. (page 18)

It is important to understand that conservation is the management of change, and not the preservation of a building and its setting in aspic, nor is it a sufficient rationale to propose reverting the form or setting of a historic building back to an earlier stage of its historic form without sound and justifiable reasoning. However, the notes above demonstrate that the tree avenue is likely to have been a Victorian addition and not part of its historic character for the preceding 800 years of the church’s history. Whilst this does not justify the removal of the trees if this is found to be necessary, the importance of the trees must be carefully balanced against the historical significance of the continual use of the building for ecclesiastical functions, and the potential alternatives of; the loss of usability for the congregation and community, the relocation of graves and memorials to facilitate an alternative pathway route, and the potential for archaeological sensitive assets to areas of undisturbed ground surrounding the trees and pathway.

The Statement also notes that given the historic and architectural importance of the church, any changes would need to be strongly justified, and applicants seeking such changes should prepare a Heritage Impact Assessment for submission to the council’s Development Management team. It does note that ecclesiastical exemption from Listed Building Consent may be sought for ‘certain minor works’ to the church building. It states:

“The key objective of Worth Conservation Area is the retention of the countryside setting of the historic St Nicholas’ Church”. (page 34)

This document seeks to demonstrate that the proposed works would honour this objective.

In relation to trees, the Statement notes that:

“Any loss of the enclosure provided by trees would cause significant harm to the character of the Conservation Area, revealing the Church to make it seem much closer to the urban area, losing its rural setting and concealed nature, which is a key feature of the church’s setting. Therefore, it is vital that the existing tree cover is retained”. (page 36)

In relation to the tree avenue in particular (as there are other trees beyond those twelve, which collectively screen the Church from the urban area), it notes:

“The council is aware that the row of trees known as the ‘twelve apostles’ in the churchyard of St. Nicholas’ are, as a result of root and trunk growth, obscuring access to the path for church users, particularly for people with mobility issues and also pallbearers during funerals. The Crawley Borough Council Arboriculture (sic.) Officer has advised that the trees are near the end of their natural life, and it is possible that the trees may need to be felled in the near future. Given the important heritage contribution made by the tree-lined avenue, particularly in shaping the secluded rural character of the churchyard, should the trees need to be felled, the tree-lined avenue should be reinstated through replacement tree planting of a suitable species”. (page 38)

As set out by the author earlier in this section, though an important landscape feature now the tree lined avenue will not have always been a defining characteristic of the setting of the church, prior to the mid-19th Century. Options for the replacement of the trees (if this is determined to be the most viable option) must be sought, however a ‘suitable species’ might be one which grows to a much smaller size (to prevent the impinging of access due to trunk and root growth in the future) and such a species might be found to have a negative rather than a positive impact on the setting of the church building. Alternative options are explored later in this document, and would be developed in a greater level of detail if found to be viable.

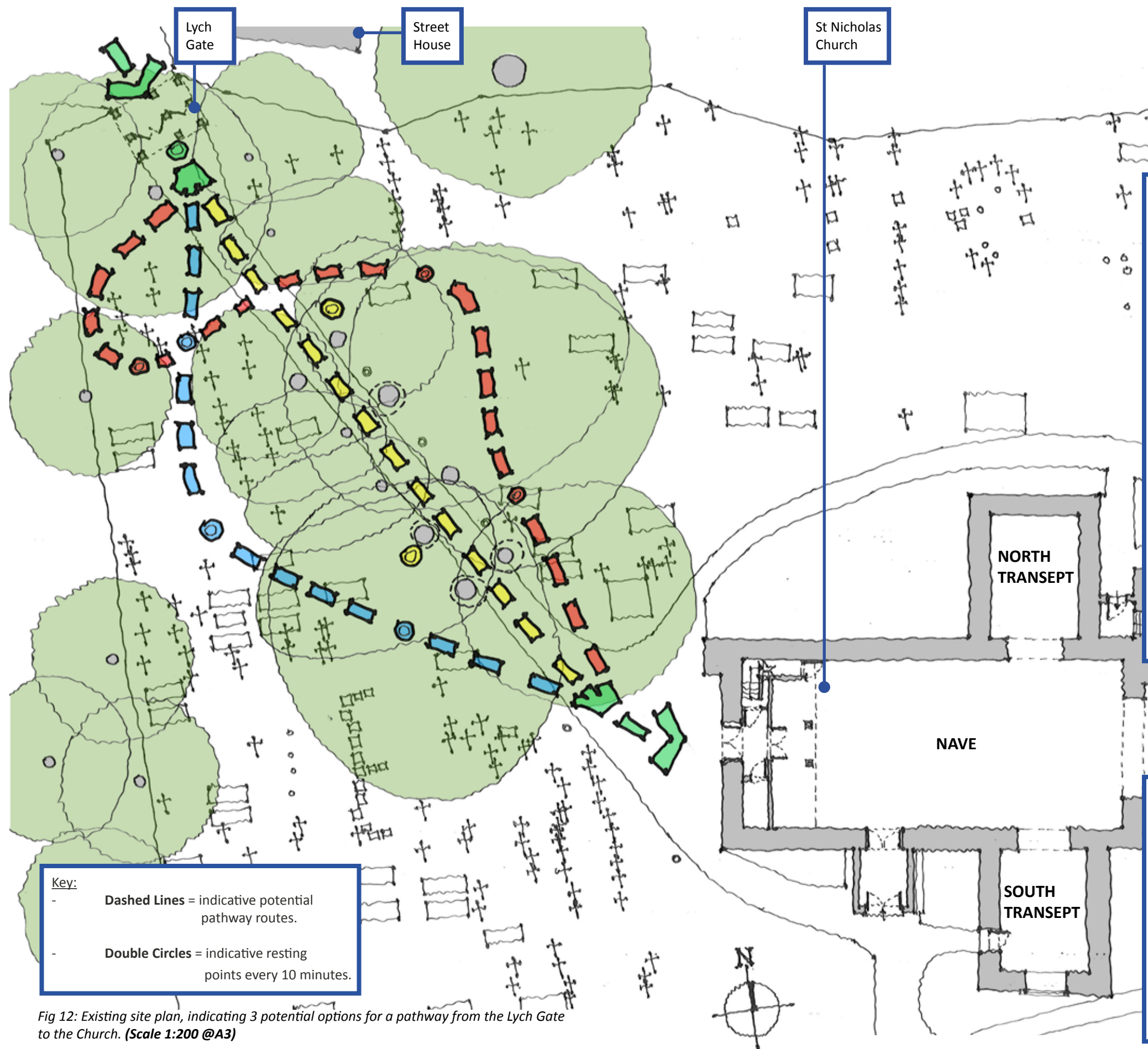


Fig 12: Existing site plan, indicating 3 potential options for a pathway from the Lych Gate to the Church. (Scale 1:200 @A3)

3. Concept Design Entrance Pathway

3.1 - Options for Relocating Entrance Pathway

The primary aim of the works proposed in this document is to ensure the future access and use of St Nicholas Church in Worth. Though this document concerns a range of sensitive amendments and adaptations to the existing building and its context, the most pressing issue is the lack of safe and unobstructed access to the church building from its entrance point at the Lych Gate.

As noted elsewhere, the existing pathway is lined with mature trees which severely impinge on the width of the pathway in places and have caused significant undulations in its surface which preclude its use by a wide range of users.

Though a range of options were discussed by the Inspecting Architect and the P.C.C., they were narrowed to 3 key approaches as presented over the following pages, each with benefits and drawbacks. Figure 12 is intended to illustrate the context of the proposed entrance pathway in as simple a manner as possible, omitting superfluous information whilst including as much information as is deemed necessary by the design team to demonstrate how each option was arrived at.

The three proposed options are:

Option 1 (shown here in red) – This option has the longest pathway, it aims to retain all of the existing trees, however it would involve relocating a good number of graves and memorials.

Option 2 (shown here in blue) – This option has a medium length pathway, it aims to retain all of the existing trees, involves relocating several graves and memorials (though fewer than option 1) and would allow a less convoluted route to the church.

Option 3 (shown here in yellow) – This option would remove the avenue of trees to either side of the existing pathway, which could then be graded, widened, and resurfaced. It would not involve relocating any graves.

3.2 – Guiding Principles for New Pathway

Building Regulations

In developing options for a new pathway, certain assumptions and guiding principles have been used by the design team.

Firstly, every effort has been made to ensure that the pathway, which due to the slope of the site (some 3 metres over a 32.5 metre length, which equates to slightly shallower than a 1 in 10 slope) meets current Building Regulation guidance for access routes towards a building. There are benefits and drawbacks to each of the potential options, as set out in the following pages; one of the options achieves a compliant gradient of pathway for example, but loses the historic access route and would result in several graves requiring relocating.

Generally the Part M guidance which could be achieved for all options include:

- Surfaces should be firm enough to support the weight of a user in a wheelchair and smooth enough to allow them to manoeuvre.
- The width of the pathway should be at least 2000mm, for pedestrian paths with a potential dual flow of people.
- Landings along the length of the pathway should be same length as they are width (2000mm by 2000mm).
- There should be a landing at the head and the foot of the ramp.

There would potentially however, be elements of the pathway which might not be compliant, depending on the option chosen. In each case where an option is unable to comply, this is as a result of some element of the church building or its context, and the rationale for the non-compliance is set out clearly in the associated narrative.

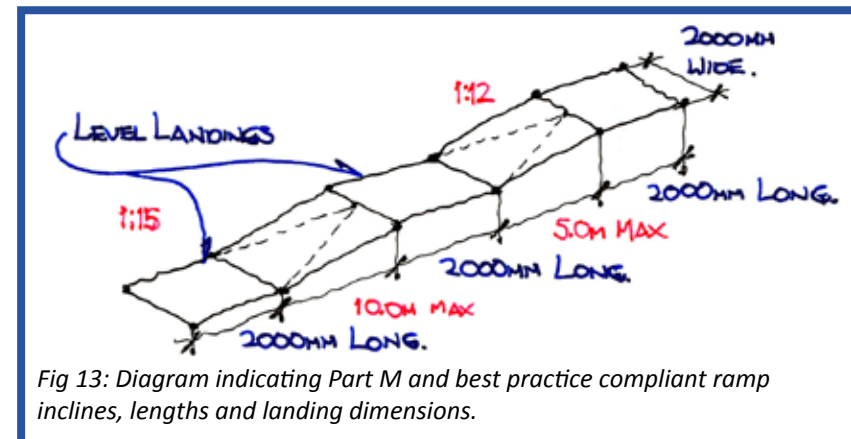


Fig 13: Diagram indicating Part M and best practice compliant ramp inclines, lengths and landing dimensions.

Materiality

The existing pathway is a tarmac surface running up to the surrounding grass of the churchyard. It has been noted by the Churchwardens that in wet weather the surface drains poorly, and during the autumn becomes very slippery once the leaves have fallen. It is also felt by the P.C.C. that it is not aesthetically sympathetic to the church building, and should a new path be permitted, an alternative surface would be proposed. Following discussions of appropriate surface finishes and pathway design, as well as inspections of similar successful church pathway projects in the Diocese, the P.C.C. proposes to replace the pathway with resin bound gravel with some form of hard material edging. The potential colour palette of the gravel is proposed to be a golden colour with darker and lighter flecks to complement the colour of the Wealden Sandstone of the church building.

Example precedent images of this sort of pathway in a church setting are shown below, and a full range of sample gravel biscuits are shown in Appendix V, including the preferred samples in this instance.



Fig 14: Example images of a similar resin bound gravel pathway in a churchyard within the Diocese of Chichester.

Lighting Fixtures

The pathway is currently lit by substantial metal and Perspex 'lantern' style external light fittings, sat on concrete plinths along the edge of the current pathway (see Figure 15).

In replacing the surface of the pathway, it is proposed to remove these fittings and replace them with discreet recessed fittings sunk into the surface of the new pathway. Again, this has been carried out successfully in a project in the Diocese of Chichester, as shown in Figure 16.

The rationale for using this type of light fitting is that it is discreet in daylight (they can be seen upon close inspection in the image to the left hand side of Figure 14, to the edges of the pathway), they cast light across the surface of the pathway without causing light pollution across the churchyard generally, and they are robust enough to be stood on/rolled over/driven over in an emergency. Figures 17 and 18 show two alternative fittings of a similar design, a final choice would be submitted as part of a subsequent Faculty application.



Fig 15: Existing light fitting.



Fig 16: Nordlux Tilos fitting.



Fig 17: Gardenzone Fusion 4 fitting.



Fig 18: X-terior Micro fitting.

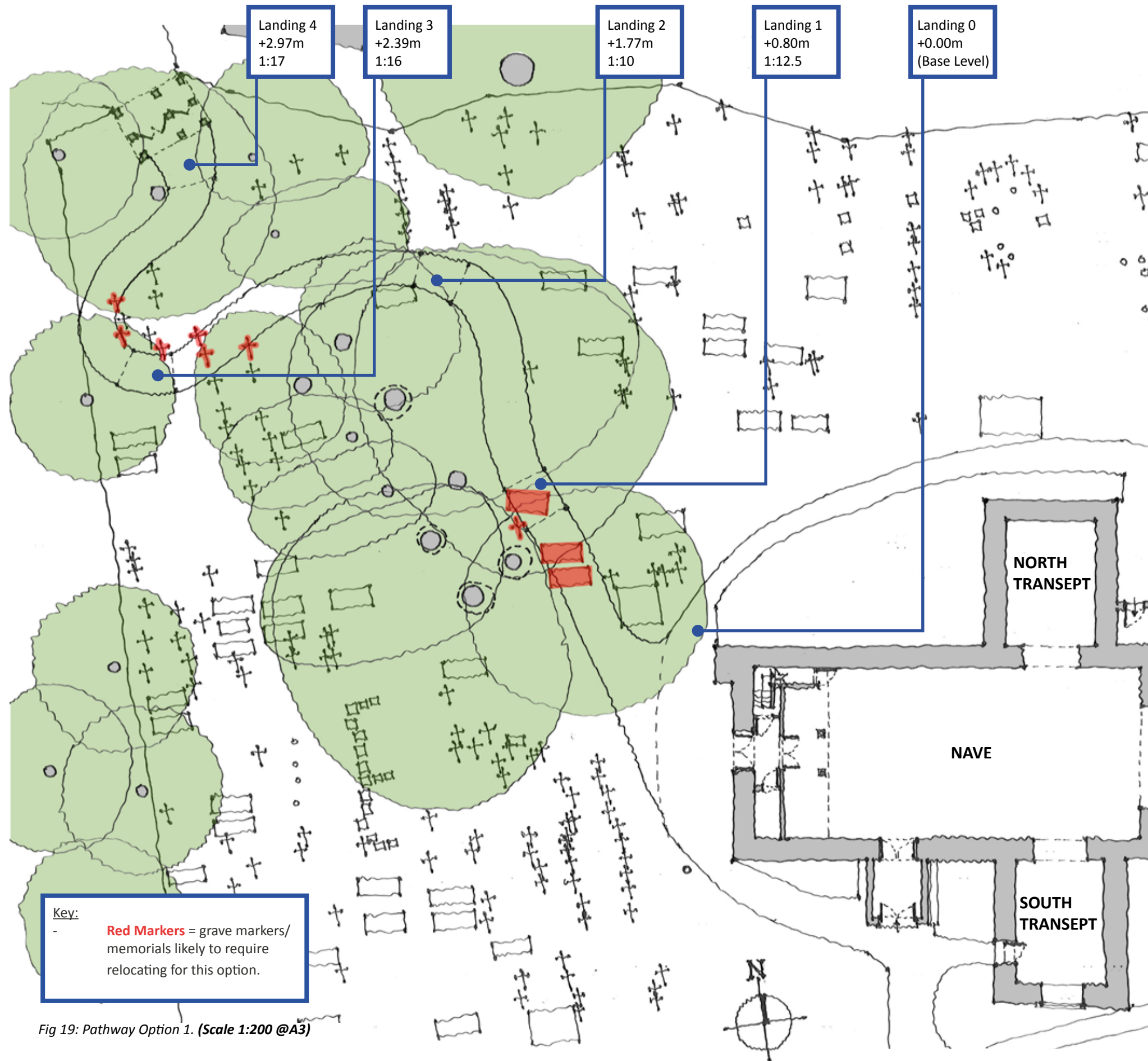


Fig 19: Pathway Option 1. (Scale 1:200 @A3)

3.3 – Pathway Option 1

For Option 1, we aimed to introduce a ramped entrance pathway which adhered as closely as possible (within the physical restrictions and existing level change of the site) to the recommendations of the Part M Approved Document.

The notes to Figure 19 indicate the level change from a datum of zero around the west entrance to the church (up to the dashed line where the pathway slope would begin), with the level change of each landing, and the associated pathway incline ratio up to the landing. The distance between each landing is 10 metres, and the width of the pathway is 2 metres.

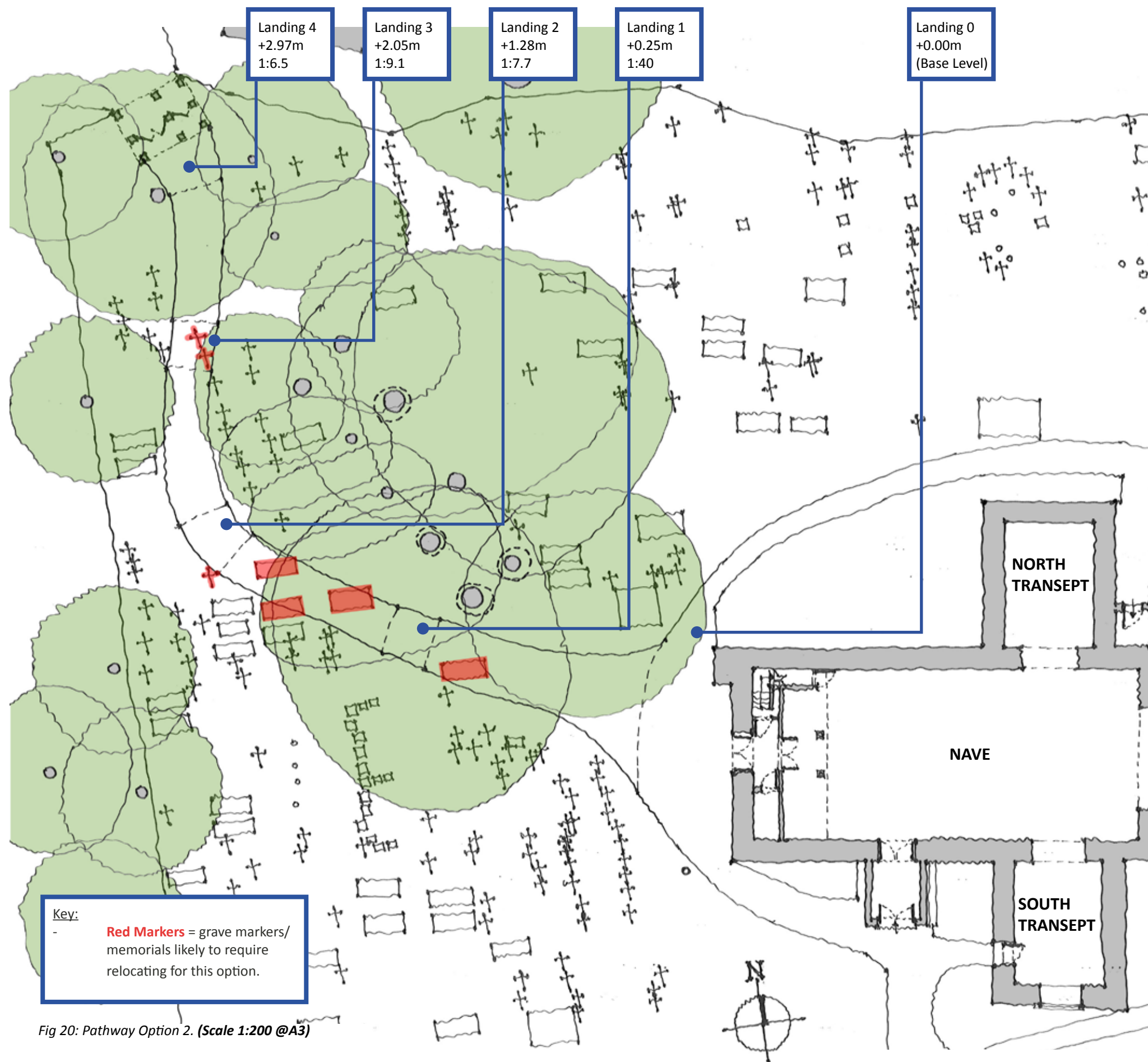
The landings are shown to sit where the current contour lines lie, however the steepness of the more inclined sections could be ameliorated by slightly raising or lowering the adjacent landings to decrease their steepness, grading the ground around them to suit.

Benefits:

- This option is the closest to achieving building regulation compliant gradients between the landings of the pathway of 1:13.5, rather than 1:15.
- It may be possible to retain all of the trees (subject to detailing of pathways around the root zones of the trees – some of which sit very close to the route proposed in this option).
- A somewhat axial entrance route to the west end of the church is retained.
- This option attempts to achieve 'parity of esteem' for all users, by having a single entrance route for both able and disabled users and visitors. A potential sub-option would be to retain the narrow pathway between the trees, though this would have to be quite narrow at the base of the ramp, as well as constructing this new disabled access route. This would however potentially mean that able and disabled visitors would traverse the churchyard by different routes, and/or cause confusion for visitors.

Drawbacks:

- A number of graves would have to be relocated. Those highlighted in red on the option drawing of Figure 19 are those marked on the site survey, though this should be viewed as the minimum – other vaults or unmarked adjacent graves could also be affected by the works.
- The pathway, though shallower than the current entrance path, still does not comply with building regulations.
- The route does not align with the presumed historic route between the lychgate and church. The avenue of trees is presumed to have referenced the location of a pre-existing route, and with the loss of this route the avenue is felt to be somewhat negated.



3.4 – Pathway Option 2

Option 2 considered an alternative route between the lychgate and church, retaining all trees (subject to advice from an arboriculturist regarding creating a pathway sub-base close to the trunks of several trees) whilst creating a less convoluted winding pathway to the church than Option 1.

Unfortunately, this option would also require relocating several graves, and as with Option 1 would not meet current building regulations for the slope of the ramped pathway between landings. Again, the landings shown on the diagram to the left indicate the falls between the current topographical levels of the churchyard, though if this option were progressed it is imagined that the path would sit lower/higher than the surrounding ground level to achieve a more consistent incline to the ramped sections, with the ground graded around it to suit the existing levels of the ground.

The benefits and drawbacks of this option are broadly similar to those of Option 1.

Benefits:

- This option is closer to achieving building regulation compliance than the existing path, with gradients between the landings of the pathway of 1:10.4, rather than 1:15.
- It may be possible to retain all of the trees (subject to detailing of pathways around the root zones of the trees – some of which sit very close to the route proposed in this option).
- A somewhat axial entrance route to the west end of the church is retained.
- This option attempts to achieve 'parity of esteem' for all users, by having a single entrance route for both able and disabled users and visitors.

Drawbacks:

- A number of graves would have to be relocated. Those highlighted in red on the option drawing of Figure 19 are those marked on the site survey, though this should be viewed as the minimum – other vaults or unmarked adjacent graves could also be affected by the works.
- The pathway, though shallower than the current entrance path, still does not comply with building regulations.

Key:
- **Red Markers** = grave markers/
memorials likely to require
relocating for this option.

Fig 20: Pathway Option 2. (Scale 1:200 @A3)

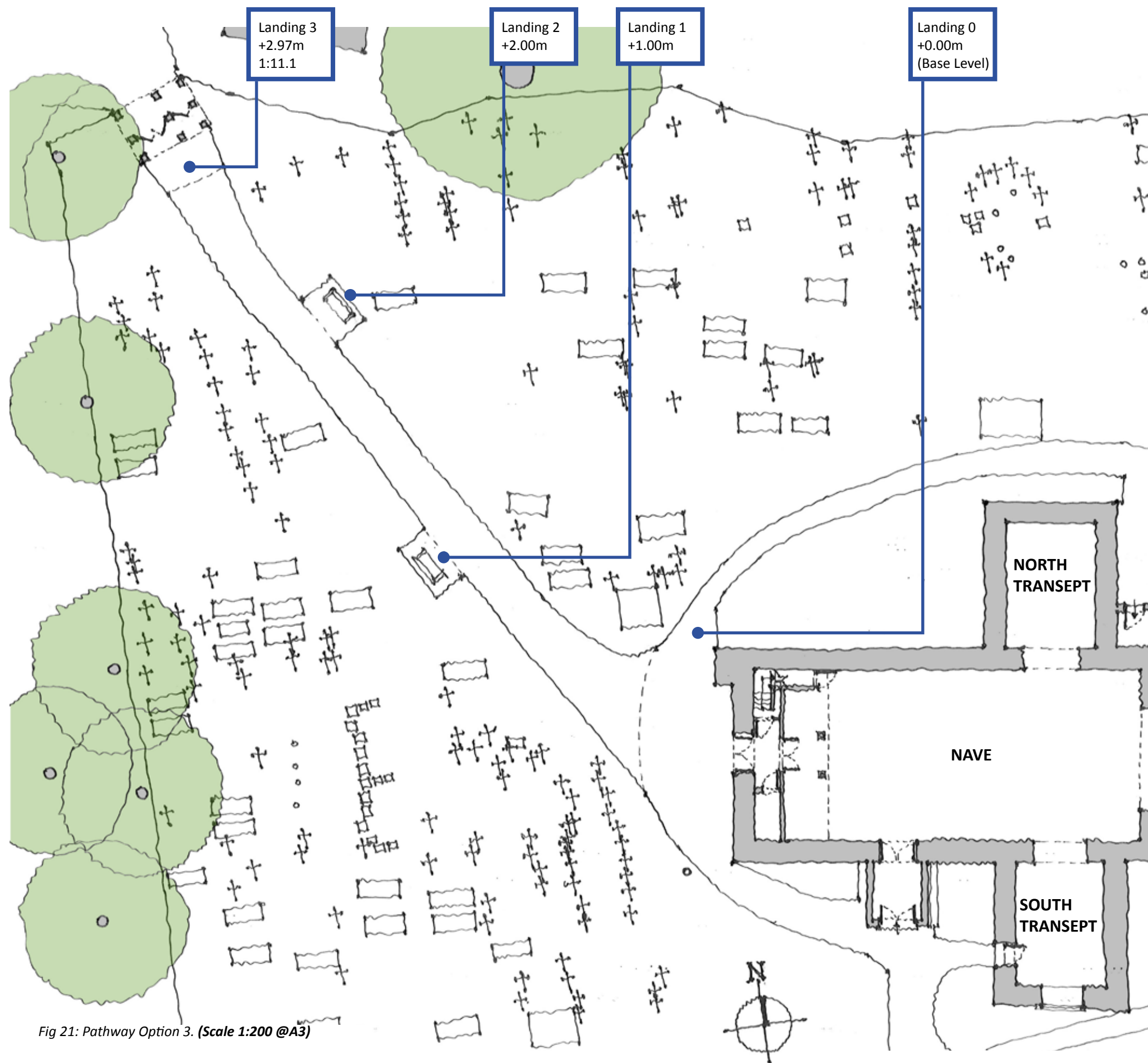


Fig 21: Pathway Option 3. (Scale 1:200 @A3)

3.5 – Pathway Option 3

Option 3 looks at retaining the existing access route, starting at the lychgate and taking the most direct route to the west end of the church. It proposes the removal of the avenue of trees (to be replaced with new trees in a more sensitive location in the proposed Memorial Garden to the south-east of the churchyard). As the starting and ending point of the pathway as well as the level change between the two are set out by the existing site, this option attempts to improve the accessibility of a new pathway by providing resting points along the route rather than landings, which would necessitate increasing the incline of the graded sections of the pathway.

As noted earlier in this report, the Worth Conservation Area Statement acknowledges the need to remove the trees to either side of the pathway to improve the access route to the church as far as practicable. The DAC's previous notes from their 2018 site visit indicate that the removal of the trees may be acceptable, subject to detailed proposals and justification for the proposals, which it is hoped this document provides.

Benefits:

- No graves are envisaged to requiring relocating, unless one were found under the current pathway, though this is considered unlikely due to the ground already having been disturbed and closely bounded by the current avenue of tree routes below ground.
- The historic and direct route from the lychgate to the church would be retained, which it is imagined pre-dates the trees (the lychgate was originally constructed in the 17th Century, the church is much older).
- The existing axial entrance route to the west end of the church is retained.
- This option retains the existing single access route to the church which would be shared by able and disabled users and visitors.
- As secondary benefits of removing the trees, historic views towards the church would be restored, which in combination with the trees which generally surround the churchyard would very much give the impression of a 'church in a forest clearing' as St. Nicholas' was historically understood to be.

Drawbacks:

- The avenue of trees would be removed as part of these proposals, and though they are noted to cause several issue to accessibility to the site, their loss is still a drawback of this option.
- The pathway, though shallower than the current entrance path, still does not comply with building regulations. It is hoped however that by not having landings along the pathway, instead having two to either side at circa 10 metre intervals, the gradient would be 1:11.2, which is better than that proposed in Option 2 where landings are included along the route at 10 metre intervals.



Fig 23: Example metal 'estate' edging strip between grass and resin bound pathway.

3.6 – Developing Option 3

Following an exploration of the three options set out over the previous pages, the author and P.C.C. consulted with Hal Appleyard, Arboriculturist (see Appendix V for further details, and his full report which has been submitted as part of this application for informal advice). The preferred option based on the benefits and drawbacks of each, and Mr Appleyard's review of the existing trees, was decided to be Option 3; replacing the entrance pathway in its existing position and removing the avenue of trees.

This is supported by public consultation carried out in 2014 by the church within the parish which had a good response rate, and seemed to generally suggest that the improvement of the current 'direct path' was well supported, whilst the 'wheelchair friendly path' (by which it is presumed is meant an indirect and shallower pathway) was opposed. The 2014 feedback and the

associated documentation from that consultation forms one of the supplementary documents supporting this application, should the reader wish to interrogate this information further.

Beyond asking the DAC for advice regarding the acceptability of Option 3 prior to the P.C.C. investing in the necessary work to prepare a formal Faculty advice application, this page is intended to give an indicative impression of how this approach might visually impact and/or improve the current route towards the church, as well as suggesting other potential architectural details which might surround the pathway, to gauge the DAC's impression of each. For the sake of clarity of intent, the sketch shown in Figure 22 does not include potential landings alongside the proposed pathway, nor does it show potential benches or planting.

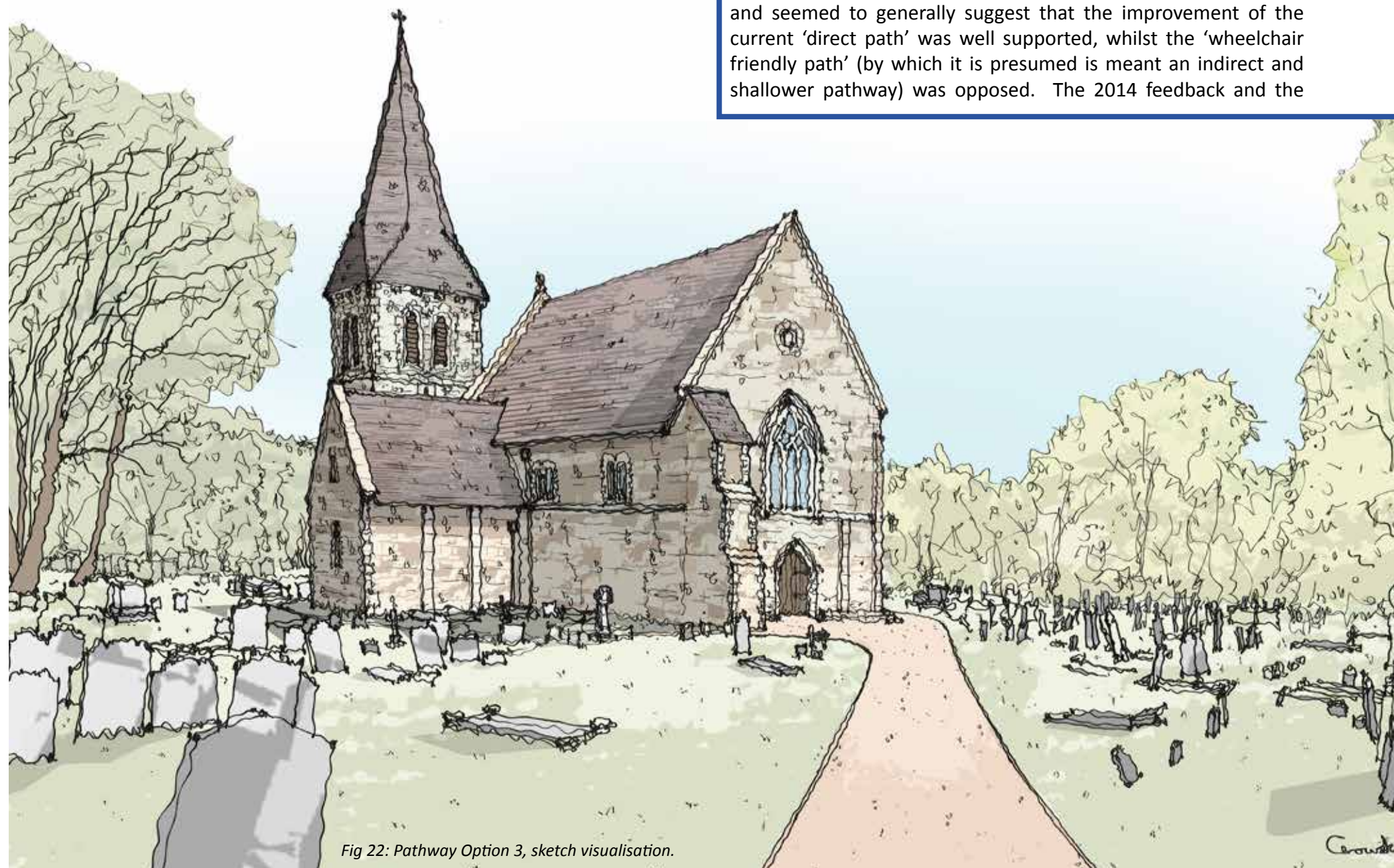


Fig 22: Pathway Option 3, sketch visualisation.



Fig 24: Potential indicative examples of contemporary bench designs, which could be set onto each side landing along the reformed entrance path, to provide opportunities for resting places for visitors. These benches might be formed from the felled trees, should their timber be found to be suitable.

4. Concept Design Internal Facilities

4.1 – Options for Introducing New Internal Facilities

Beyond the works proposed to improve the existing access route to the west end of Worth Church, this document also seeks to propose potential internal alterations providing small scale W.C. and kitchenette facilities, improving the usability of the building for a wider range of functions. As with the pathway alterations, an approach of minimal and reversible intervention is proposed, being mindful not to propose works which might harm the significance of the building.

A previous scheme sought to locate a new W.C. in the South Porch whilst retaining its usability as an emergency egress route. This proposal would involve lining the interior of this Victorian addition, and is felt by the author to potentially harm the legibility of this important element of the building. The continued use of the space as an egress route is also less than satisfactory. This option is proposed as 'Option 2' in figure 25. Option 2 also proposes to add a campaign chest style collapsible kitchenette in the South Transept, where there is currently a range of stored furniture.

An alternative to these options, shown in figure 25 as Option 1 is to rationalise the area to the rear (west) of the nave, which is currently used as informal seating and storage. This area of the church has a relatively modern (1980's) French limestone floor, and joinery which is understood to date from the same period forming a draught lobby/porch and storage for the organ blower, electrical distribution board and sound system.

The intention of Option 1 would be to make better use of this underused area of the building, making reversible alterations to generally more modern elements of built fabric. Option 1 is explored over the following pages, beginning with an analysis of the existing space and its issues and opportunities.

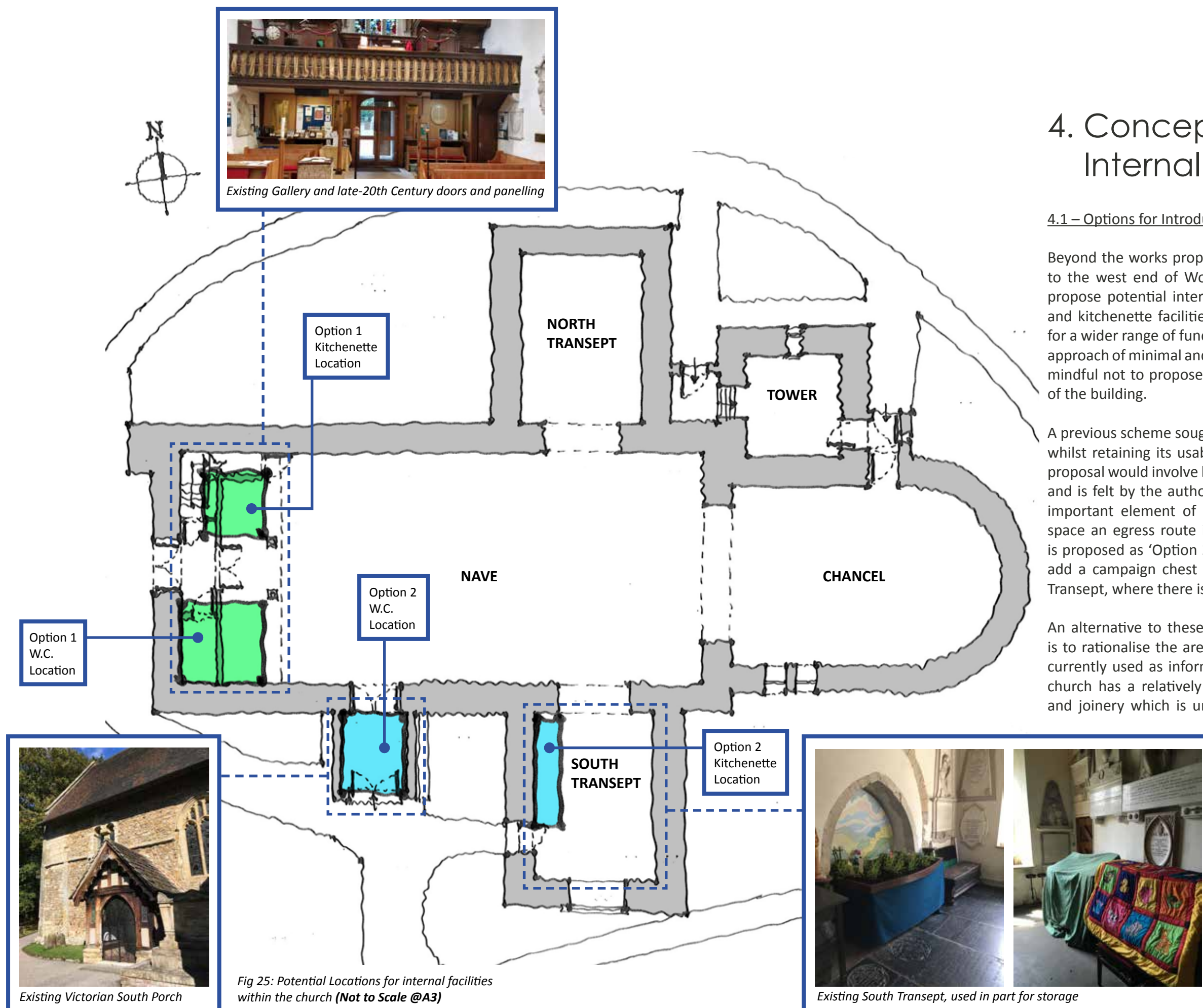
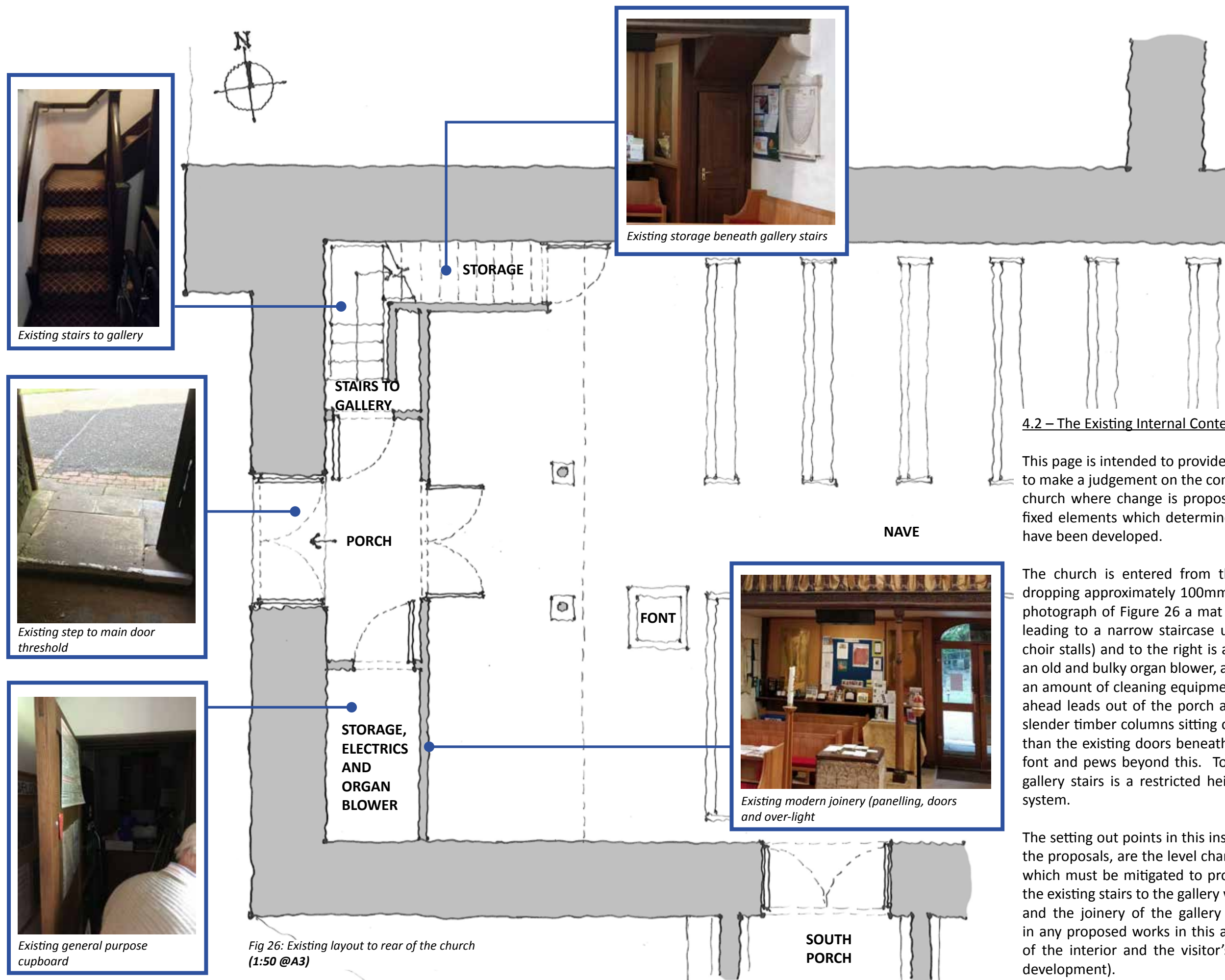


Fig 25: Potential Locations for internal facilities within the church (Not to Scale @A3)

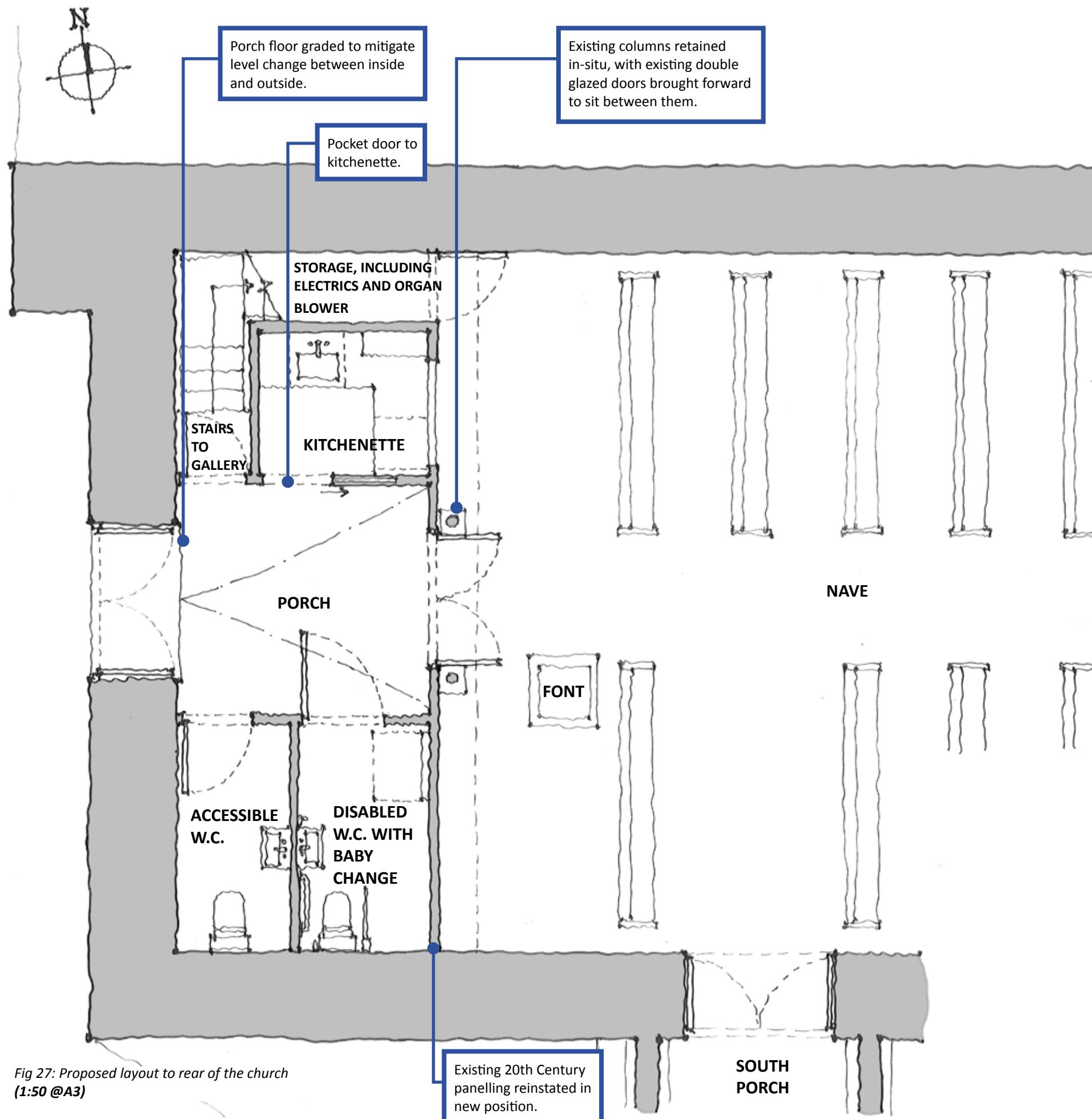


4.2 – The Existing Internal Context

This page is intended to provide the reader with sufficient context to make a judgement on the constraints of the existing area of the church where change is proposed, as well as demonstrating the fixed elements which determine the way in which the proposals have been developed.

The church is entered from the west end, with a stone step dropping approximately 100mm to the internal floor level; in the photograph of Figure 26 a mat well. To the right is a small door leading to a narrow staircase up to the gallery (with organ and choir stalls) and to the right is an over-large cupboard containing an old and bulky organ blower, an electrical distribution board and an amount of cleaning equipment. A set of double doors straight ahead leads out of the porch and into the nave. There are two slender timber columns sitting on stone pediments, slightly wider than the existing doors beneath the edge of the gallery, with the font and pews beyond this. To the right hand side beneath the gallery stairs is a restricted height cupboard housing the sound system.

The setting out points in this instance, which govern the design of the proposals, are the level change from the outside to the inside which must be mitigated to provide access for wheelchair users, the existing stairs to the gallery which must be retained for access, and the joinery of the gallery itself, which must remain visible in any proposed works in this area (as they add to the character of the interior and the visitor's understanding of the building's development).



4.3 – The Proposed Alterations

Based on the setting out points described on the previous page, the proposals are intended to:

- Retain the existing narrow stairs to the gallery.
- Add a small kitchenette with servery hatch, intended for use by a single occupant, for preparing refreshments. There would be some storage for cups/plates (currently carried to the church in boxes when necessary), a sink, a small fridge, and a small servery area. During larger events it is intended that tables could be set up outside of the kitchenette, in the space between it and the closest pews, to augment the servery area.
- Remove the cupboard to the south of the entrance, relocating the organ blower and electrical distribution board to the current storage cupboard under the stairs to the gallery, which would be enlarged to extend behind the kitchenette.
- Grade the floor of the porch to form a ramp between the existing stone door threshold (thought to be a more ancient element of built fabric) and the repositioned, retained double doors from the porch to the nave.
- Construct two new W.C.s to the south side of the area liberated by removing the storage cupboard and under-used area to the rear of the nave.

As far as possible the intention would be to minimally effect the existing built fabric of the church. Where alterations are necessary, they would be designed in such a way as to only impact modern built fabric (particularly the late-20th Century partitions and limestone floor). Areas of more historic fabric, such as the 11th Century walls of the nave around the W.C.s, and the early-17th Century gallery, would be protected and built away from, so that if the works were to be reversed in the future there would be no damage to the historic building.

4.4 – Considering the Impact on the Interior of the Church

As noted previously, the proposals would re-use the existing panelling, double doors and over-light of the good quality 20th Century joinery. The door to the enlarged storage cupboard might be replaced to be taller and therefore more accessible for servicing the organ blower, electrical distribution board and sound system, and a servery hatch would be incorporated into the re-used panelling.

Where the floor is proposed to be ramped from the inside to the outside of the porch, it is felt that sufficient drainage from the kitchenette to the south, (explored further in section 4.5) where a foul drain may run to the nearby former Vicarage, could be formed with sufficient capacity. The existing 20th Century limestone floor would require lifting locally, but could be partially reused in the proposed porch floor (though a more readily cleanable floor surface may be proposed to the W.C.s and Kitchenette in a subsequent Faculty Application). As the floor in this area would be partially raised, the modern floor lifted, and the new internal partitions formed of lightweight timber studs, it is hoped that the works would not involve any deep excavations.

It would however be proposed to employ the services of a suitably qualified Archaeologist to monitor below ground work as it progressed, to ensure that the excavations did not cause harm to any unknown below ground archaeology.

It is felt that the improved access and usability of the proposals would outweigh any potential drawbacks of the loss of less historically sensitive modern fabric above ground.

Furthermore, it is felt that this option presents the most viable way of introducing ramped access and basic modern amenities, without unduly and disproportionately impacting the special character of Worth Church.

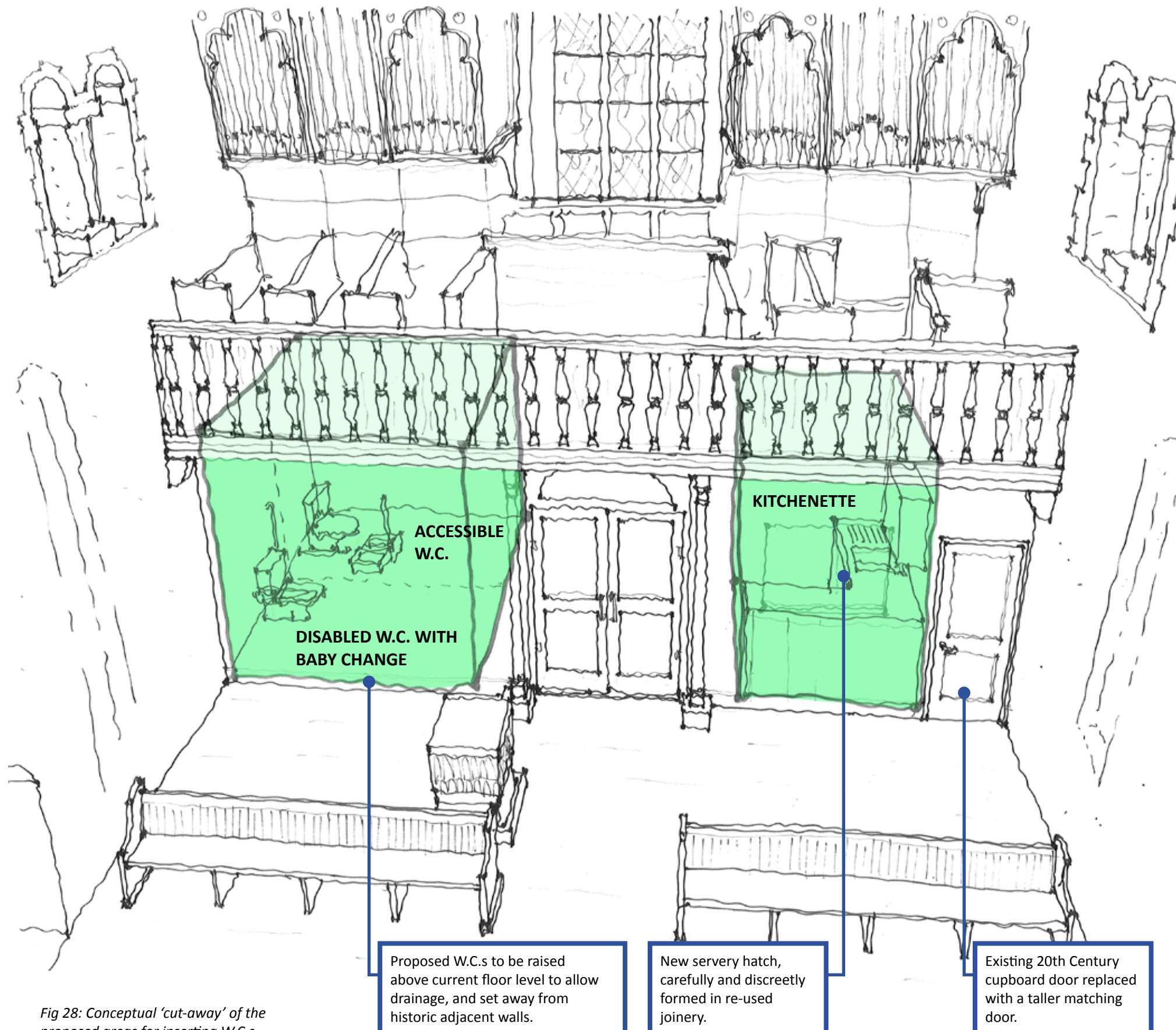


Fig 28: Conceptual 'cut-away' of the proposed areas for inserting W.C.s and Kitchenette.

4.5 – Considering the Impact on the Exterior of the Church

The proposals have been carefully designed to have a minimal impact on the exterior of the church building. The two W.C.s and kitchenette would require adequate drainage, and a connection point has been identified by the P.C.C., to a neighbouring property to the south (this is indicated by the route of the green dashed arrow in Figure 29). The W.C.s would require venting, and after considering several options for the potential location of a soil vent pipe (to cause minimal visual and historic built fabric impact), it is proposed that the most appropriate location would be adjacent to the rainwater downpipe to the west side of the Victorian south porch. This SVP is shown indicatively in green, and explored in more detail overleaf.

It is proposed that a macerator would serve each of the W.C.s and the kitchenette (to prevent all of the facilities being out of use at once should a macerator fail or block), and these would be connected to the external foul drain below ground under the existing south wall of the nave, running the foul drain under the pathway if it was to be replaced, and in the soft adjacent to it if not. It is hoped that by keeping drainage runs below or adjacent to historic pathway routes, the likelihood of discovering below ground archaeological remains would be minimal.

Where the drain passes under the south wall, it is proposed that exploratory opening up and trial pits would be prepared ahead of the works commencing, to discern the most appropriate route to pass under (ideally) or through the footings of the south wall.

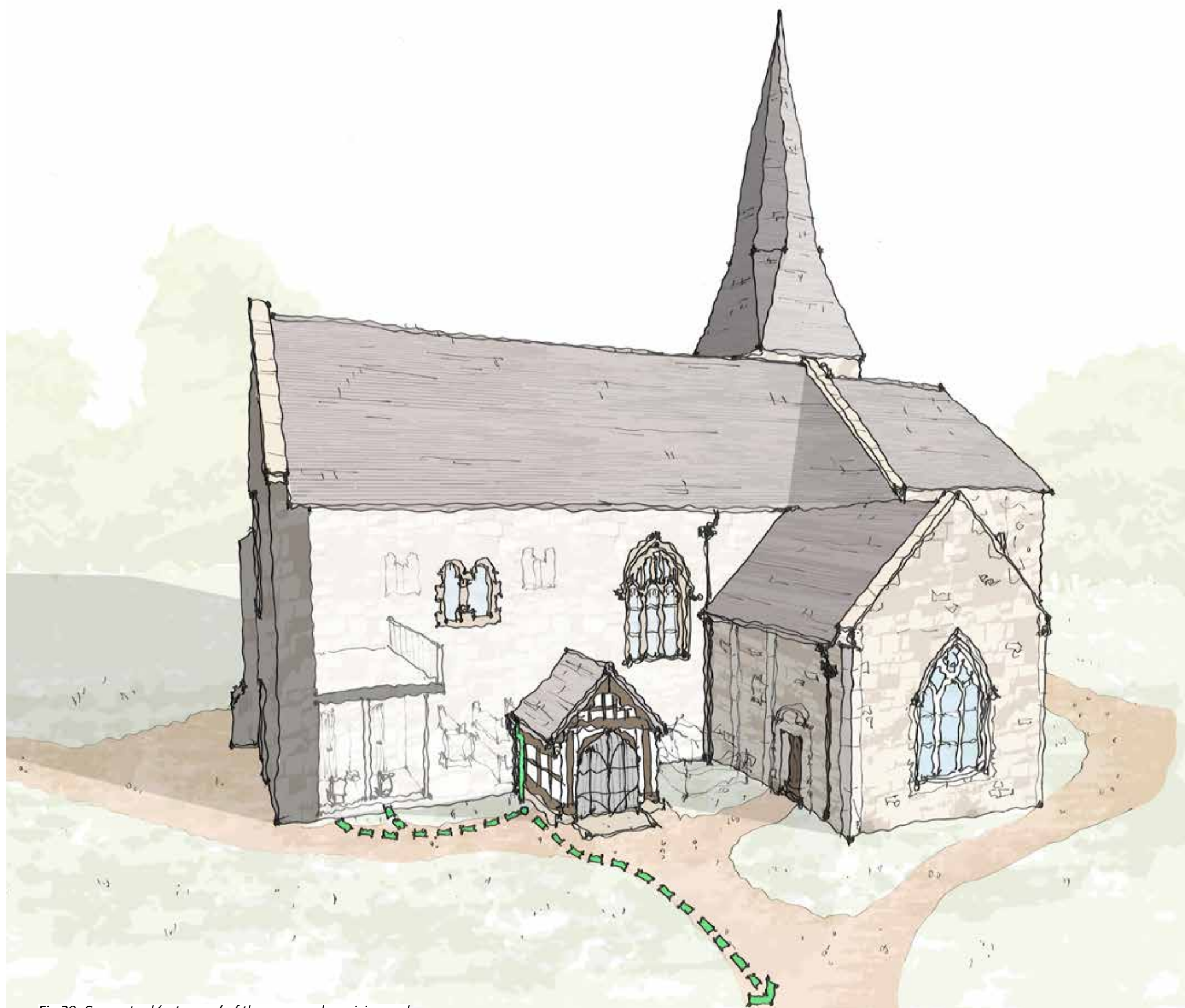


Fig 29: Conceptual 'cut-away' of the proposed servicing and drainage connections of proposed alterations .

4.6 – External Detailing

Figure 29 indicates clearly that the south elevation has a range of cast iron downpipes running down the arrises of the junctions between nave and transept and nave and porch.

In order to ensure that the new soil vent pipe is as discrete as possible, it is proposed that it is fitted adjacent to the existing rainwater gutter of the south porch, as shown as a sketch overlay in Figure 30. The SVP would be cast iron, as shown in Figures 31 and 32, and painted to match the existing adjacent ironwork. The holderbats which support the SVP would be fitted into the bed joints of the nave wall masonry, with stainless steel fixings to prevent damage to the mortar or stonework. This would allow the SVP to be removed and the joints repointed in the future, without damaging the surrounding stone.



Fig 30: Proposed soil vent pipe serving macerator.
Proposed to be discreetly mounted adjacent to existing rainwater downpipe.



Fig 31: Proposed soil vent pipe cowl in cast iron.



Fig 32: Proposed soil pipe cast ironwork and clips.
Holderbats to be fitted into bed joints of masonry pointing to allow the intervention to be reversed in the future if necessary.

5. Concept Design Memorial Garden

5.1 – The Initial Concept

The P.C.C. seeks to form a Memorial Garden to the south-east of the current churchyard, on an un-used area of land. The proposal would consist of a resin bound gravel pathway to match that proposed across the rest of the churchyard, laid out and connected as indicated in Figure 33.

The Memorial Garden would have stone edging piece kerbs to the pathway, onto which it is proposed inscriptions could be engraved.

The area is currently laid to lawns, the garden would introduce planting of an appropriate scale and type, as indicated in the drawing.

In the first instance, the P.C.C. seeks the D.A.C.'s advice and comments on the proposals, to allow them to further develop this proposal, anticipating that it would form a later phase of the works set out in this document.

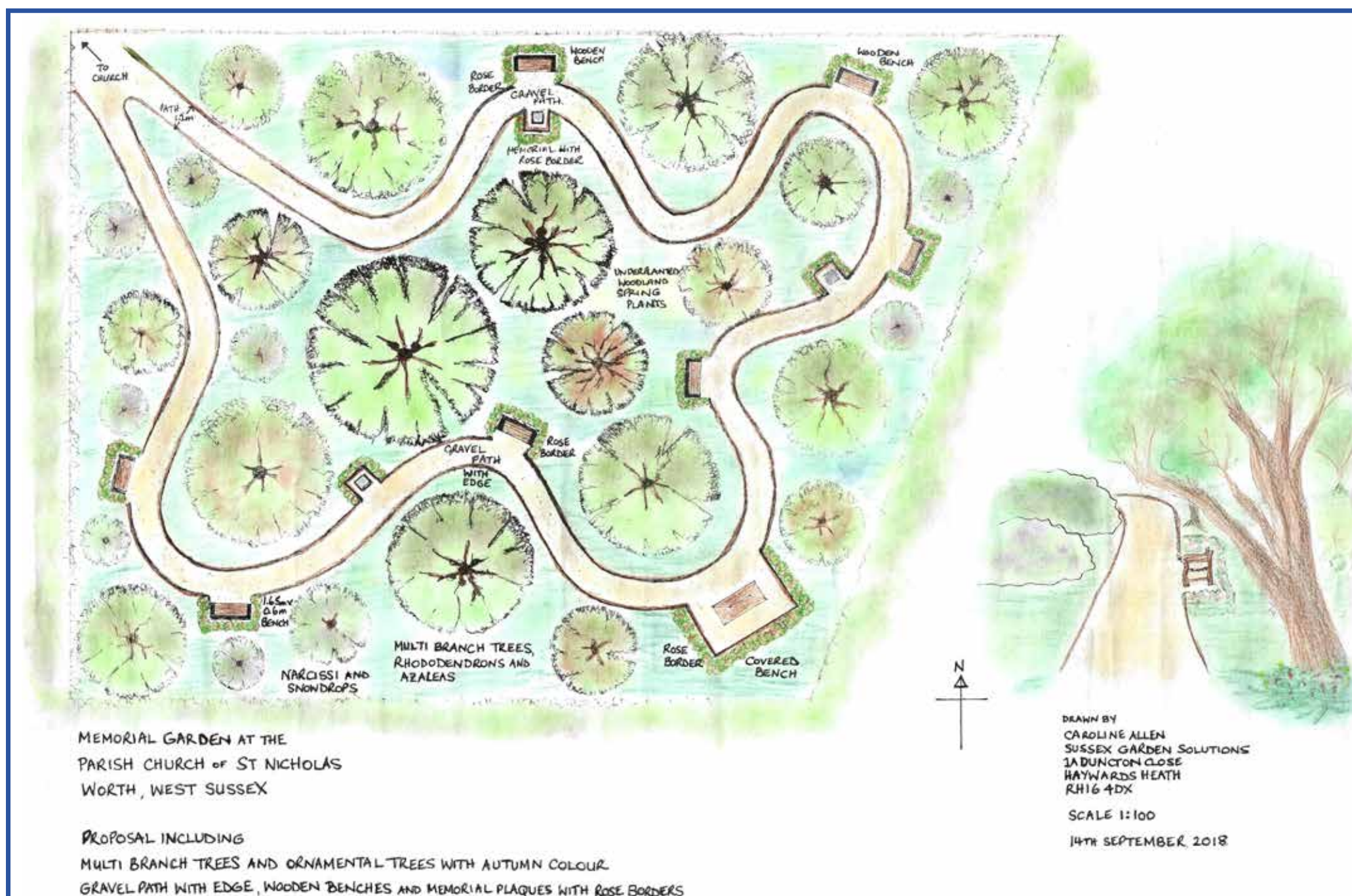


Fig 33: Proposed Memorial Garden design,
prepared by Caroline Allen of Sussex Garden
Solutions

6. Summary

6.1 - Conclusion

It is hoped that this document gives an adequate level of detail for the reader to understand the needs the church faces, the design developed to address them and the impact of the proposals on the historic church building.

The proposals set forth in this document have been developing slowly over several years and iterations, and each element of the scheme has been carefully considered to give what is felt to be the right balance of change and retention of existing built fabric and context.

As noted earlier in this document, it is the assertion of the author that conservation is the management of change. This change should be proportionate and appropriate, and should not be entered in to lightly. Where changes form a part of larger and long term proposals to meet the needs of the church (in this case the accessibility and usability of the churchyard and the church building) it is important to understand the 'whole picture', and this is why the three elements of; access pathway, internal changes, and memorial garden have been set forward for consideration together.

We hope that the DAC finds this document useful, and feels able to give sufficient feedback to enable the P.C.C. to proceed with a Faculty Application, initially for the pathway works.

Appendix I - Statutory List Description

The Parish Church of St Nicholas

Description: Cruciform building with tower to the north of the chancel and south porch. One of the finest Saxon churches in England with the largest Saxon chancel arch in the country and an apsidal east end to the chancel. Tower with broached shingled spire added by Anthony Salvin in 1871. South porch also C19. Pulpit dated 1577.

Listing: Grade I

List Entry Number: 1187114

Appendix II - Statutory List Description

The Lychgate to Churchyard of the Parish Church of St Nicholas

Description: C17, restored, in fact largely renewed, in 1956, as an inscription on the building records. Timber structure consisting of 8 square wooden uprights with one large and one small arch on each of the north and south sides and 2 small arches on each of the east and west sides. Horsham slab roof.

Listing: Grade II

List Entry Number: 1250212

Appendix III - Statutory List Description

Street House

Description: Originally an inn. C17 or earlier timber-framed building with red brick infilling, but most of the ground floor refaced with brick and above wholly weather-boarded. Horsham slab roof. Casement windows. Modern gabled porch and bay window on each side of it on ground floor. Two storeys. Four windows.

Listing: Grade II

List Entry Number: 1187115

Appendix IV - Arboricultural Inspection and Advice

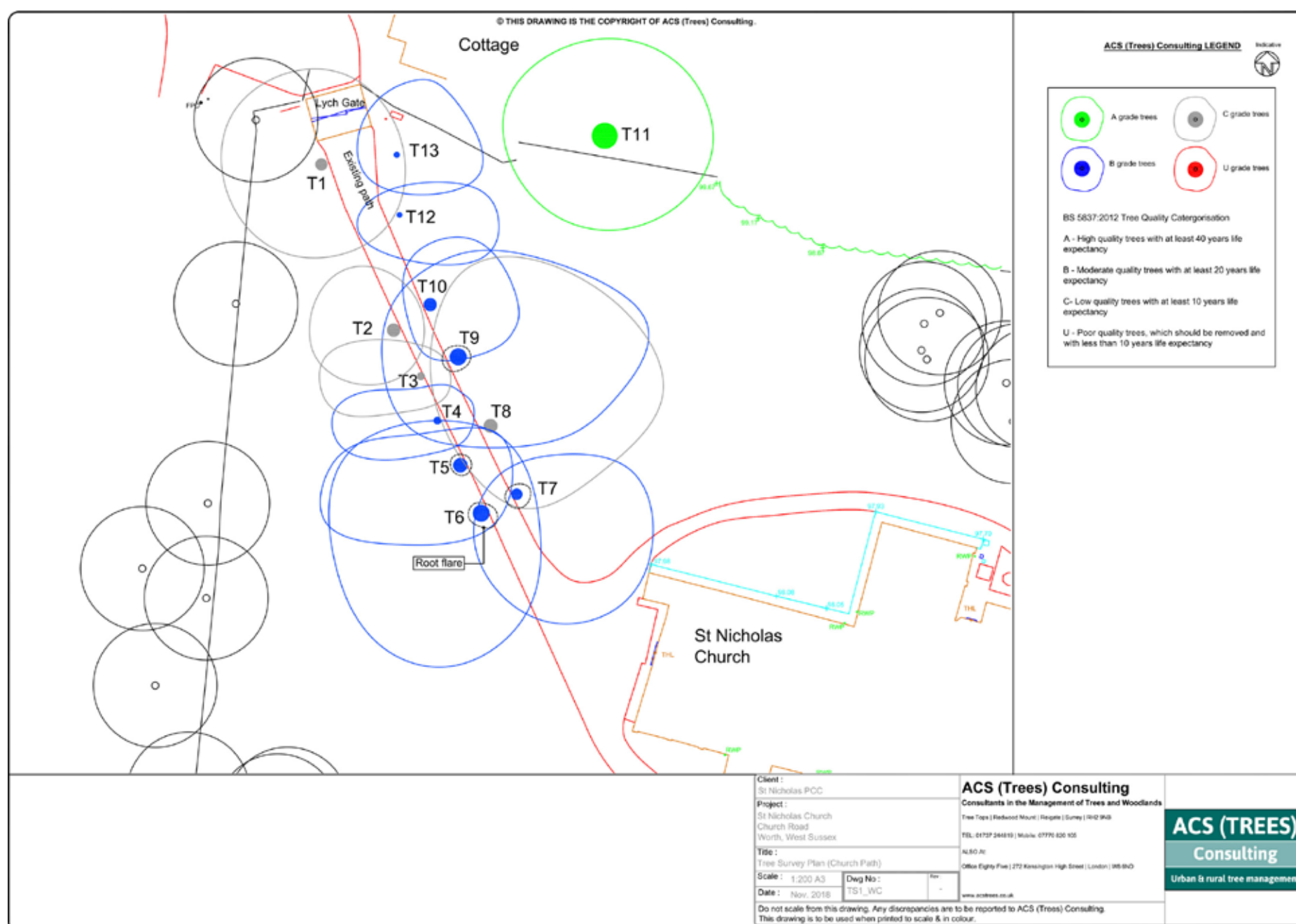
Please see appended (separate) documents prepared by Hal Appleyard of ACS (Trees) Consulting:

- Arboricultural Inspection and Advice (Level 2)

- Tree Survey Plan (Church Path) - please note that this A3 drawing is itself appended to the Arboricultural Inspection and Advice document, and forms part of the same .pdf document when viewed as a digital file. The tree survey plan is shown to the left for reference.

The **conclusions of the report** are:

1. The Church has a duty to reasonably protect the public and other site users from incurring harm whilst using the grounds and premises of the St Nicholas Church and all the associated parts of the premises including the pathway. Currently, the Church is at risk of a significant liability claim for harm arising from clearly identifiable tree-related risks. These risks are to be addressed having had consideration to various land management options.
2. In consideration of the condition of the trees, their maturity and the impacts the many of the trees are having upon the access pathway and the restrictions the trees are causing, it is not unreasonable to remove trees Nos T1 to T13 (excluding T11), to re-surface the pathway and to re-plant new trees in suitable locations within the church grounds, which can provide amenity for the long term.





*Fig **: Sample resin bound gravel samples provided by Clearstone Paving of Hassocks, West Sussex.*



*Fig **: Enlarged sample of preferred sample, 'Brewers Malt'. Whilst its colours do reflect the historic church's stonework, it also has a proportion of darker aggregate to prevent the proposed pathway seeming too stark in its semi-rural setting.*

Appendix V - Gravel Surface Sample Study

As noted in Section 3.2, a resin bound gravel surface is proposed for the new entrance pathway of St Nicholas Church. As part of the P.C.C.s longer term ambitions, they would like to extend this surface treatment to the wider network of pathways surrounding the churchyard, eventually connecting to the proposed Memorial Garden to the South-East corner of the site.

The benefits of using resin bound gravel are their SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage System) compliancy. In effect this means that surface water is able to drain through the pathway, rather than pooling on the surface or running off to the ground to either side.

The drawback of using resin bound gravel are that it requires a sub-base construction which is also SUDS compliant, and this sub-base tends to have a deeper construction build-up when compared to impermeable surfaces such as the current tarmac. Another potential drawback is that this deeper sub-base may require the excavation of the area beneath the existing pathway to a slightly greater depth, with associated risks in potentially uncovering archaeological remains. It is felt however, that due to the pathway appearing to be the historic route between the Lychgate and St Nicholas, and due to the lack of identified grave markers in the immediate vicinity of the pathway, the risk of this appears to be low.

Samples from a local resin bound gravel company are shown in Figure **, and a preferred sample in Figure **. The rationale for proposing this gravel mix is noted below the Figure.