

1 Name and address of site

Shinfield Community Church, Shinfield Reading RG2 9DL

2 History and historical constraints.

The church has been using this site since 1908. It started as Shinfield Baptist Church in the original building which is to remain as part of the new development. The former dormer bungalow was acquired in 1986 and has been used as part of the church. Further links and extensions have been added to the buildings.

The existing buildings are not listed, or locally listed, nor are they Heritage Assets, nor is the site in a Conservation Area, or otherwise constrained.

3 Proposed Development

The title of the proposed development is “Proposed partial demolition of existing church and associated buildings and replacement with new church building, upgrade to existing building together with reorganisation of parking area, landscaping and associated site works.”

4 Assessment of the surrounding area of the development site.



The existing site is surrounded by modest scaled residential properties of two and three storeys. This part of Shinfield is primarily residential. The area is the subject of large-scale expansion – new house building. The planning department will be aware of this.

The existing scale of the surrounding properties is uniformly domestic. Although the proposed modest new building will be larger than the existing ones that are being demolished, the ridge height is within scale of the surrounding properties, but it is to be a different sort of building and the modern church will contribute positively to the area by acting as a punctuation point, a reference, in an otherwise uneventful townscape. Orientation in places relies upon identifiable feature buildings which will be provided by the proposed development.

5 Consultation

Shinfield Community Church is involved in the community, with links to schools and other institutions. Many conversations have been held with the local community, with whom the church has active links. Conversations have been held with the Shinfield Parish Council, neighbours, and other members of the community, all of which have been positive.

The Statement of Need notes, regarding conversations.

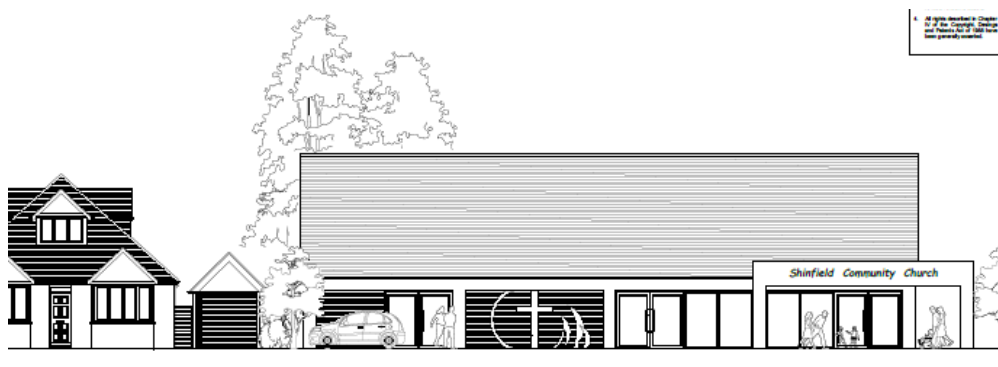
"In conversation with local residents' groups and agencies in the area, to assess local needs and interest, we have established that there is strong support for our scheme and a real desire to see more and better facilities in Shinfield. There is need for more space for activities for young families and the elderly in particular, youth and health projects, advice work and counselling for example. We would seek to offer or work with local organisations to address these needs".

The most immediate neighbour to the north has been approached and is supportive of the proposals.

6 Evaluation of the planning impact of the development on the immediate area.



The existing church is well set back from the road. It is smaller than a domestic house. The large bare gravel carpark forms a blank apron to the ad-hoc buildings comprising the dormer bungalow and attached link buildings. These do not contribute positively to the up-and-coming residential environment of Shinfield. The corner is sad-looking and unkempt. However much landscaping or improvements are made the buildings belie the positive community focused work that is taking place on this site.



The proposed new front elevation shown above, demonstrates that in relation to the adjacent house, that the new church building is in-keeping with the scale of the domestic property, but is different enough to make a mark and have a positive presence.

7 Proposed Site plan



The proposed site plan shows how the new building sits comfortably on the site, acknowledging the adjacent properties, and retaining the open space of the carpark. This space will be softened by trees and shrubs.

It should be noted that the front elevation of the church will contain an artistic sculpture depicting the important elements of the bible story, the cross, the empty tomb, and the flames of pentecost, familiar to many within the British culture.

The new buildings and the site arrangement will have a positive impact on the immediate area.

8 Design Considerations

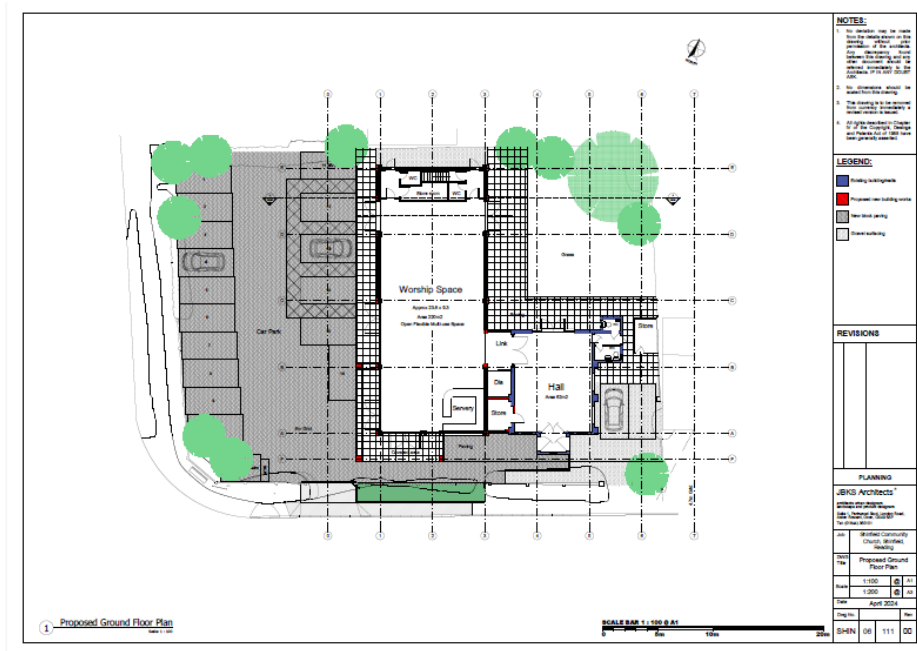
It is a given that the existing buildings require upgrading. They are not fit for purpose. The church has limited funds but are looking to achieve quality, functionality, additional space, and something which will be pleasing to the eye for a long time to come. This is a tall order. The site constraints dictate a rectangular building to replace the garage, the dormer bungalow, and the south link building. Interestingly, although the buildings that are to be replaced only amount to 162m², the new building is only marginally larger in footprint, but it will accommodate 237m². This is because there is much wasted space between the existing buildings and in all the nooks and crannies as the outer walls run in and out. The waste spaces in between have been used.

There is both logic and a financial benefit from the rectangular pitched roofed building, which looks neat and tidy, and well ordered. Its eaves are no higher than that of the adjacent house, which keeps it well in scale.

To avoid the new building looking industrial, the structural posts will be clad in masonry, and plastered and painted, as will be the lintels. There will be warm-coloured face brick panels in between. The gables will be brick-faced. The entrance will be through painted masonry portals, giving a modern feel, as well as providing a distinctive welcoming entrance. One feature on the Fairmead Road gable (the side road to the south), will be a ground to ridge stip of window, covered by louvres, which will add attractive light to the interior, and provide a striking vertical feature, resonating with church architecture of old. The roof material is proposed to be a chick, smart anthracite grey profiled metal roof to provide a contemporary feel to the building, contrasting well with the white painted structural elements, and also the softer brick infills.

The floor plan and the end gable elevation are shown below.

Proposed ground floor plan



by car, by bicycle, and on foot from the surrounding well-connected suburban area of Shinfield.

Access within the site is by level access from all main doors. Disabled car parking spaces will be provided. Wheelchair access will be readily available. Disabled toilet facilities are to be provided.

A total of 18 car parking spaces are to be available.

11 **Summary**

This is an appropriate, attractive, beneficial development proposal. It's motivation is not for profit, but for service to the community, and for the provision of worship facilities for those people in the community who are Christians. It is a modernisation of the buildings on the site, which since 1908 have been used for Christian Church purposes.

Churches do a wonderful work. In addition to being places of Christian worship, they are anchor points for the otherwise elderly and lonely. They are meeting places for young parents through their parent and toddler programmes. They are a support for many people of all ages.

Churches are not a drain on public resources. Many of their activities are volunteer led.

This community church and its proposed new modest buildings will be welcomed and celebrated, and will play an important role in Shinfield as it grows and develops with the fast-expanding population that is planned for in the large scale new house-building programme.

Support is requested for this proposal.

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