SJA consultants

SJA3472 St Andrews Art Centre Heritage, Design and Access Statement
Internal works and external door refurbishment

St Andrews Art Centre
Royal Pier Road,
Gravesend
DA12 2BD

Ref. SJA3472/doc/P01 June 2026

Rev 1, Aug 2026

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Appendix A – History of St Andrews' Art Centre

Front cover image taken from Historic England's Listed Building website

1. INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access statement has been prepared in support of the Listed Building Consent (LBC) application submitted by Stuart James Associates Ltd, acting as agents for the client, for proposed internal works to the Grade II Listed St Andrews' Art Centre building, DA12 2BD. It sets out the design rationale and access considerations underpinning the proposed works, in line with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023), and Gravesham Borough Council's Local Plan policies.

Funding is being pursued for a general refurbishment of the buildings' interior, along with upgraded internal layouts, in support of the buildings' current function as a community asset. It is not proposed to change the external envelope of the building – with the exception of refurbishment works to the 2no. existing, external doors -, the footprint or size of the building, and no change is proposed to the buildings' current function.

This statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and documents, submitted with this application:

Archaeological statement
ADAS Heritage Impact Assessment
Flood Risk Assessment
Method Statements

Location plan & context photographs

Existing site plan

Existing ground floor plan
Existing roof plan
Existing front elevation
Existing rear elevation
Existing side (east) elevation
Existing side (west) elevation
Existing Section A

Proposed ground floor plan
Proposed ground floor plan @ 1:50
Proposed roof plan
Proposed front elevation
Proposed rear elevation
Proposed side (east) elevation
Proposed side (west) elevation
Proposed Section A

Existing door schedule
Existing window schedule
Proposed door schedule

Demolition plan

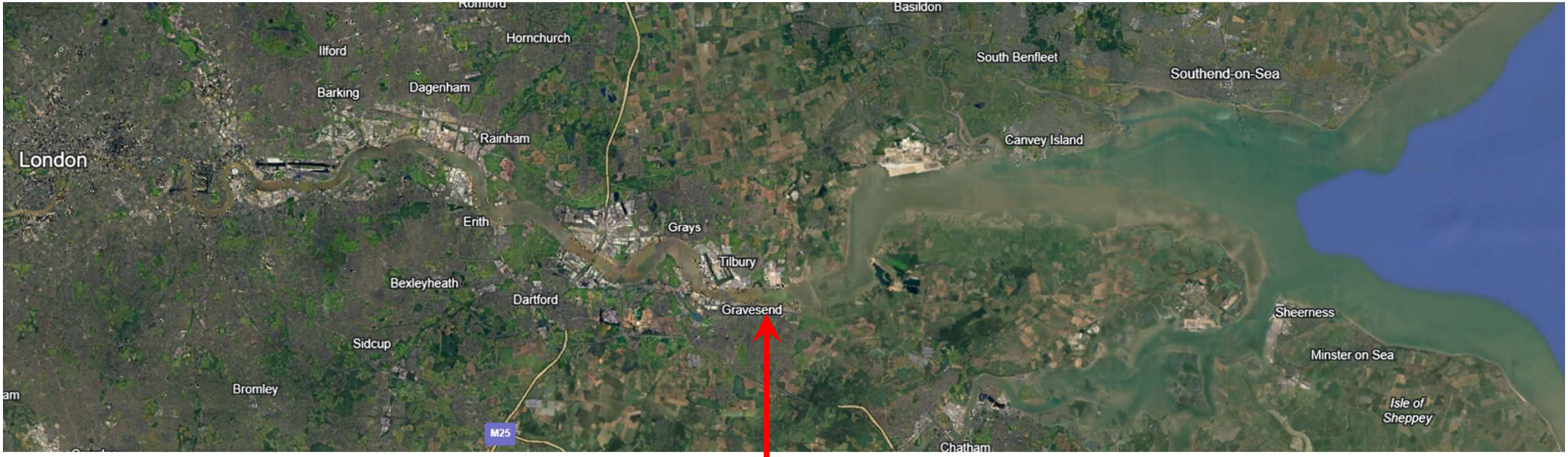
Existing reflected ceiling plan
Proposed reflected ceiling plan

Existing internal elevations 1 and 3
Existing internal elevation 2
Existing internal elevation 4
Existing internal elevations 5 to 12
Existing internal elevations 13 to 16

Proposed internal elevation 1
Proposed internal elevation 2
Proposed internal elevation 3
Proposed internal elevation 4
Proposed internal elevations 5 to 12
Proposed internal elevations 13 to 16

2. LOCATION

a) Context

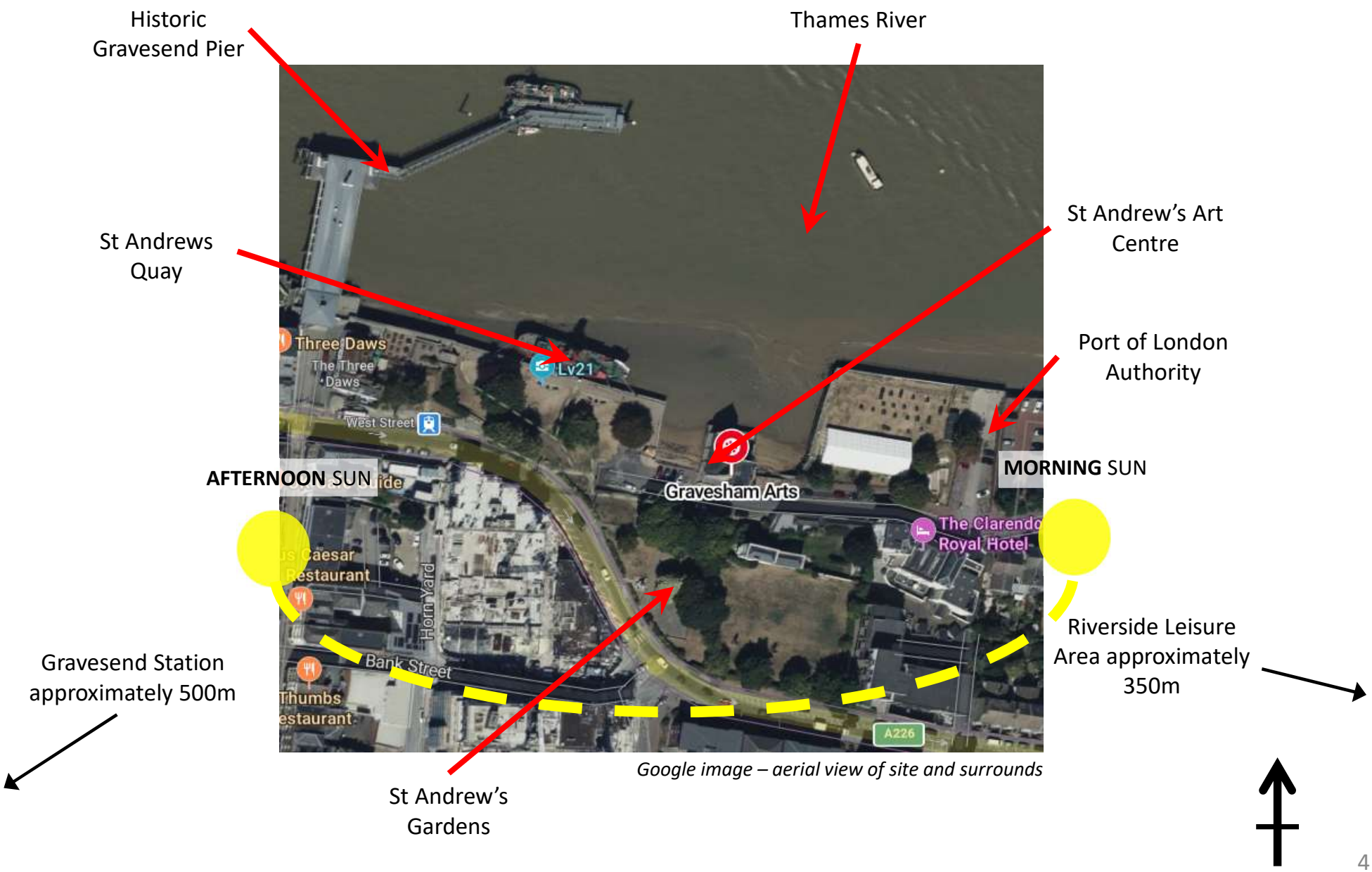


St Andrew's

Google Earth image – aerial map showing general location

Google Earth image – aerial view of St Andrew's church and the adjoining Mission Building to the east

b) Site Analysis



Google image – aerial view of site and surrounds

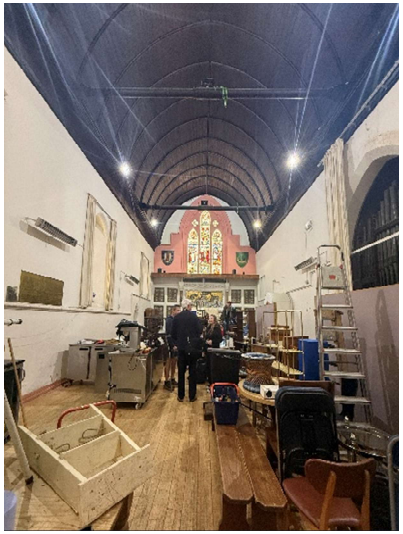
c) Context Photographs

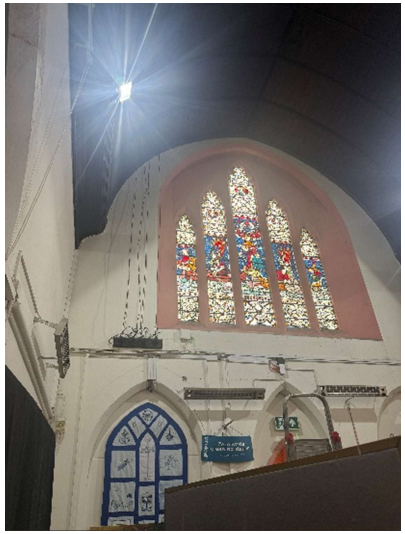
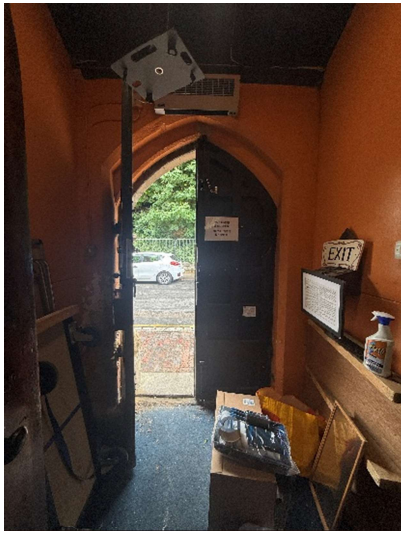
d) Existing building

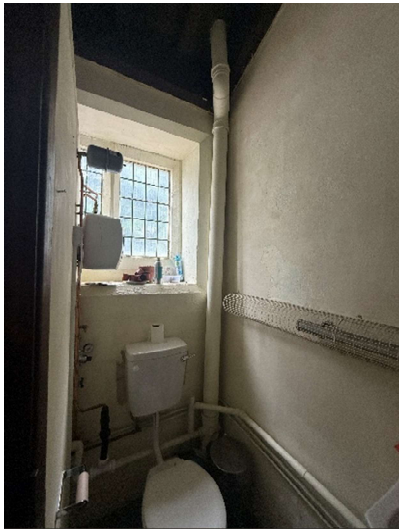
The property is located in Gravesham Borough Council and is in the Riverside Conservation Area. St Andrews is a Grade II listed building under UID: 1039109. Historic England's official list entry notes the building as follows:

> *'ROYAL PIER ROAD (north side) St Andrew's Arts Centre (Formerly listed as St Andrew's Waterside Chapel): GV II 1870-71; G.E Street architect. Built originally as a mission chapel for seamen and known as St Andrew's Waterside Chapel. Rectangular plan. Gothic style. Built of ragstone with Bath stone dressings. Slate roof. Former carthex at west with lean-to roof behind a parapet; central doorway with segmental Gothic arch; a flat-arched three-light window to each side of door. Under the west gable are five stepped lancets; a large stone bellcote rises from the apex of the gable. Three lancet windows in side elevation. At east end there is a three-light plate traceried window. Inside vaulted roof lined with pine boarding with moulded ribs; coved cornice; stained glass windows. The former mission chapel has been converted to an Arts Centre.'*

A potted history (copy attached as Appendix A to this report) of the building is fixed to one of the internal walls and confirms that the building was purchased by Gravesend Borough Council in 1975 and has been leased to the Gravesham Arts Council since 1976. Redecoration and the erection of the stage at the rear of the building dates from this time. The building is currently used for meetings, rehearsals, exhibitions and presentations, and is available for private hire.





SJA site photographs 2025 – internal views

a) Planning history

St Andrews Gardens, opposite the site, has been the subject of numerous applications including tree works, erection of a statue and various applications for development.
St Andrews Quay, to the rear of the site, has been the subject of applications relating to permanent mooring of vessels and their use as heritage/museum venues.
Application numbers 20080696 and 20120931, for redevelopment in the Heritage Quarter, do not include St Andrews Art Centre but are directly adjacent.
20211253 and 20211252 for the Mission House Conversion from dwelling to office – Permitted.

St Andrews applications:

PRE20260017 Internal and external alterations. Observations sent 05/06/2026

20251118 & 20251118 Application for Listed Building Consent; Proposed internal reconfiguration of services area, new external doors and installation of new stage. Application returned.

PRE20250159 Redevelopment to provide an improved accessibility to the building, with improved entrance door, functional accessible WC, additional WC and internal lobby with automated door. Observations sent 02/10/2025

20210997 Application for the approval of condition 3 attached to Listed Building Consent reference no 20181030 relating to rebuilding of facing brick wall. Application withdrawn

20181058 Consultation on application for a marine licence. Observations Sent 02.11.2018

20181030 Application for Listed Building Consent for the repair of river wall at north west corner. Permitted

b) Relevant planning legislation

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014), including Saved Policies in the Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994
Gravesham Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), Development Briefs and Riverside Conservation Area Appraisal
Gravesend Riverside Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)
Management Plan – Gravesend Town Centre Conservation Areas (2009)
Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

c) Planning constraints

A search of the relevant areas indicates that the following planning overlays potentially relate to this site:

i. Area of Archaeological potential.
ii. Agricultural Land Classification.
iii. To note: nearby roads Crooked Lane and The Terrace are in an Air Quality Management area.
iv. Site is directly on the border of the Thames River management zone: Urban Boundary - Gravesend, Northfleet And Ebbsfleet. Thames Estuary and Marshes Ramsar Buffer Zone
v. Built up area.
vi. Site lies within the Riverside, Gravesend Conservation Area
vii. Online flood mapping data indicates that the site is at high risk from rivers and sea flooding but at low risk from surface water flooding.
viii. Both St Andrews and the adjoining Mission building are listed.
ix. Local Resilience Forum.
x. Local Authority District.
xi. Local Planning Authority (Gravesham Borough).
xii. Region.
xiii. There is a scheduled monument just to the east of the site.
xiv. Site lies within the Gravesend Town Centre - Policy CS05 (opportunity area).
xv. Section 106 Agreement (West St Bath St Royal Pier Rd & Queen St (Heritage Quarter)

These have been considered, and the relevant guidance addressed in the planning design development of this project.

a) Inspiration

- The existing church space has inherent beauty and Architectural value: inspiration will be taken from the existing building itself.
- Similar installation types in non-standard spaces may inform the design.
- Innovation and current technological advancements will be tested and their suitability for incorporation into the historic building fabric will help to guide design development.

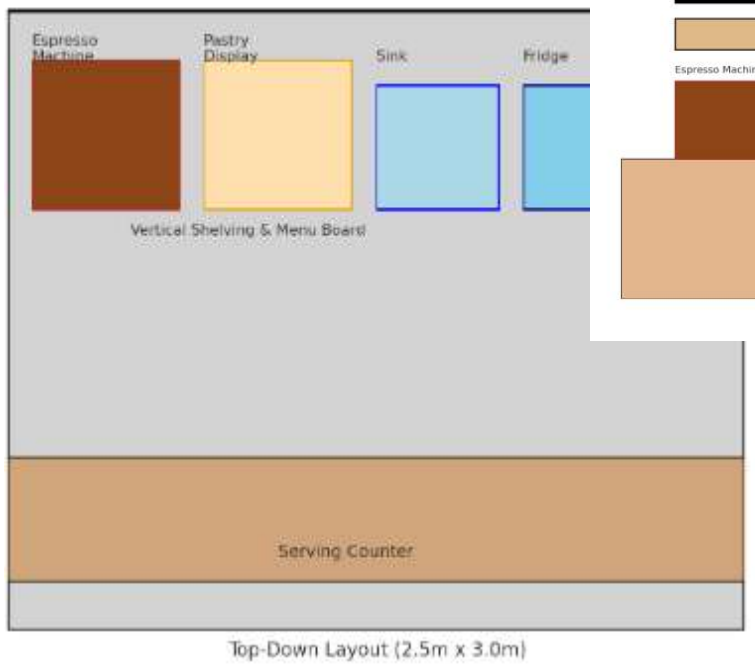
b) Design principles

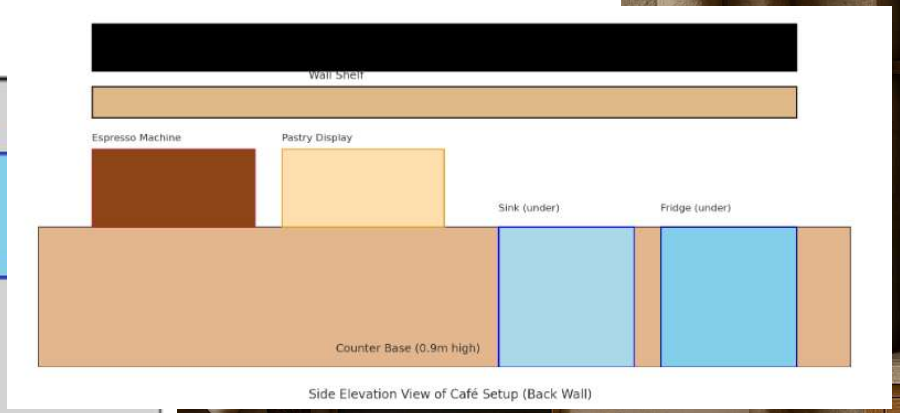
- Respect the architectural and historic significance of the listed building.
- Remove intrusive later features with no heritage value.
- Enhance the buildings' functional suitability for ongoing arts and community use.
- Ensure materials and detailing are sympathetic and of high quality.

Example church kitchen conversion images, sourced through Google

4. DESIGN

- Color Palette: Oak brown, linen beige, matte charcoal
- Textures: Wood grain, brushed metal, natural stone
- Keep visual weight low (floating shelves, narrow legs on furniture).
- Hardwood panelling to extended areas and built-in joinery in keeping with traditional church aesthetic
- Galvanised steel conduit, surface-fixed to be fully reversible
- Making good all to match the existing finishes
- Stainless steel splashbacks, where noted
- Free standing kitchenette, not fixed to structure





AI-generated example images of possible colour palettes, joinery and materials

a) Use

The building was adapted for use as an Arts Centre in the late 20th century and now functions as a community cultural venue. No change of use is proposed with this application.

b) Amount

This proposal does not include an increase in the height of any part of the existing building, nor does it propose an increase in floor area or volume. No change in overall volume, scale, function or massing is proposed with this application.

c) Design

The application proposes:

- **Toilets:** refurbishment of existing toilet facilities to modern standards, with the introduction of an additional cubicle to meet current user demand.
- **Stage:** removal of the non-original stage structure to restore the open character of the nave and increase flexibility for performances and community events. It is understood that there maybe notable architectural features underneath the existing stage, and these will be documented and advised to the planning department. it is the intention to retain any original features and floor tiles.
- **External door refurbishment:** refurbishment of the 2no. external, Oak doors, including installation of discreet locking systems to improve building security.
- **Storage**: enlargement of the storage room to support flexible use of the Main Hall space.
- **Entry**: new floor finishes, including entry mat.
- **Kitchenette**: installation of a fixed kitchen counter against the proposed new partition wall (no fixing into historic building fabric) and the bespoke construction of a rolling service counter, the two together providing much improved facilities in support of the varying uses of the building. Finishes to be hardwood panelling with a stainless steel splashback applied to the partition wall above the fixed counter only.
- **Services:** removal of redundant fittings and associated cabling, conduit and pipework. Replacement with surface-mounted, galvanized steel conduit as minimally designed as possible to suit the new installation. Restrained new lighting to the stage area and replacement of the heating system with radiators specially design for church settings.

d) Access

The application proposes:

- A new entrance door to improve accessibility by providing a safe, well-functioning threshold into the building.

- Removal of the constricted side lobby and its' replacement with a secure side door and ramped access.
- Internal works to the toilets, including the provision of an extra cubicle, which will support inclusive access and usability by a wider range of visitors.
- An enlarged entry lobby with automatic opening, fire rated doors.
- No change to the existing function or occupancy of the building, meaning that no additional strain will be place on the existing vehicular and pedestrian access provisions.

e) Amenity

The proposal is for internal works to the building only, with no change to the building envelope or surrounds proposed – overshadowing, overlooking, light and noise will not be affected by this proposal. Internally, the amenity of the Art Centre building will be greatly enhanced by the proposed internal refurbishment and redecoration works.

f) Landscaping

The proposal does not include any changes to the existing landscape.

g) Neighbourhood character

The only external change to the existing building envelope proposed with this application is the replacement of the 2no. existing, external doors – one located centrally to the front elevation, one located on the side elevation behind the adjoining Mission House building. Both replacement doors will be bespoke, to fit within the existing arched door openings, and will be of a highquality finish in keeping with the simple Gothic Revival architectural style of the host building. This will retain the architectural and heritage characteristics of the St Andrews' building, thereby maintaining and enhancing the local neighbourhood character and the Royal Pier Road streetscene.

5.1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared in support of an application for Listed Building Consent for internal refurbishment and repair works at St Andrew's Arts Centre, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, and should be read in conjunction with the supporting Impact Assessment prepared in-conjunction by heritage specialists RSK ADAS Ltd and submitted with this application.

The building is included on the National Heritage List for England as a Grade II Listed Building (List Entry No. 1039109) and is recognised for its special architectural and historic interest as a former church building. The building now functions as a community arts and performance venue and continues to serve an important role within the local community. The proposed works have been developed to improve the building's functionality, accessibility, security, sustainability and long-term viability whilst preserving its significance as a designated heritage asset. The proposals have been designed to minimise intervention to historic fabric and to ensure that any impact upon the special architectural and historic interest of the building is either neutral or beneficial.

5.2. Site and Heritage Significance

St Andrew's Arts Centre occupies a prominent location on Royal Pier Road within Gravesend. Originally constructed as a church, the building retains many features associated with its ecclesiastical origins, including the principal nave space, stained glass windows, historic joinery, external oak doors and other surviving architectural details.

The significance of the building derives principally from:

a) Its architectural value as a well-preserved Victorian church building.
b) The survival of historic fabric and detailing associated with its original ecclesiastical function.
c) Its contribution to the historic townscape of Gravesend.
d) Its communal value as a long-established place of worship and, subsequently, as an arts and community venue.

The principal significance is concentrated within the main nave space, stained glass windows, original joinery, historic floor finishes and surviving architectural features.

5.3. Description of Proposed Works

The proposals comprise the following elements:

5.3.1 Toilet Refurbishment

Refurbishment of the existing toilet facilities to modern standards, including:

a) Replacement of outdated fixtures and fittings.
b) Improvement of accessibility and usability.
c) Introduction of an additional WC within the main hall space to meet current user demand.

Works will be undertaken within existing ancillary accommodation and are not anticipated to affect significant historic fabric.
The proposed partitions forming the additional WC and associated storage accommodation will be constructed as free-standing hardwood partitions. They will be designed and installed so that they do not require fixing into significant historic fabric, including masonry reveals, historic ceiling ribs or other architecturally significant elements. The partitions will therefore be capable of removal in the future without substantive alteration or damage to the historic fabric of the listed building.

5.3.2 Removal of Existing Stage Structure

Removal of the existing stage structure located within the nave.
The stage is understood to be a later, non-original insertion and does not contribute positively to the significance of the listed building.
Its removal will:

a) Restore greater appreciation of the original volume and openness of the nave.
b) Improve flexibility of use for performances, exhibitions and community events.
c) Allow investigation of any historic features concealed beneath the structure.

It is recognised that potentially significant architectural features and historic floor finishes may survive beneath the existing stage. These will be carefully exposed, documented and assessed during the works. Any discoveries will be reported to the Local Planning Authority's Conservation Officer and retained in situ wherever feasible.
The intention is to preserve and protect any original floor finishes, including historic tiles, and any other significant features uncovered during removal works.

5.3.3 Refurbishment of External Oak Doors

Refurbishment and repair of two external oak entrance doors, including:

a) Cleaning and repair of timber elements.
b) Localised replacement of decayed sections where necessary on a like-for-like basis.
c) Decoration and protection as appropriate.
d) Installation of discreet locking mechanisms to improve security.

The proposed security improvements have been designed to minimise visual impact and avoid harm to historic fabric.

5.3.4 Enlargement of Existing Storage Room

Extension and reconfiguration of the existing storage accommodation to improve operational flexibility and support the varied use of the Main Hall space.

For both the additional WC partitioning and the storage room extension partitioning, the design will be of a panelled hardwood appearance as requested in the latest pre-application advice response.

The proposed hardwood partitions will be genuinely free-standing and reversible. They will not require fixing into significant historic fabric, including masonry reveals, ceiling ribs or other surviving historic architectural features. The partition system will instead be supported independently, allowing it to be removed or altered in the future without substantive damage to the historic fabric or permanent change to the significant architectural character of the building.

The works will be confined to areas of lesser significance and designed and scaled to minimise impact upon the historic plan form and character of the building. The free-standing nature of the partitions will further ensure that the intervention remains visually and physically subordinate to the historic interior.

5.3.5 Finishes

It is proposed to remove the existing carpet in the entry lobby to expose the original timber finish, which will be sensitively refurbished; an entry mat is to be installed. New tiled finishes to the existing and additional WC floors and walls to 1.8m high are proposed, as well as a metal splashback to the proposed new kitchen counter against the new WC partition.

The works are intended to improve hygiene, durability, safety and accessibility while respecting the character of the building.

5.3.6 Kitchenette

Installation of a free-standing kitchen counter unit with a mobile rolling service counter, also in a panelled hardwood appearance, will provide enhanced facilities for community, arts and event use whilst remaining reversible and visually subordinate to the historic interior. The counter will include a panelled hardwood security shutter system to which the rolling counter can be locked during periods of disuse.

5.3.7 Building Services Upgrades

Removal of redundant services is proposed, along with installation of replacement services comprising:

a) Surface-mounted galvanised steel conduit routed in a simple and unobtrusive manner.
b) Retention of existing light fittings and the inclusion of wall-mounted stage lighting.

The service design has been developed to minimise visual clutter and reduce the cumulative impact of historic service alterations.

Replacement of the existing heating installation with radiators specifically designed for church and heritage environments will:

a) Improve thermal comfort.
b) Increase energy efficiency.
c) Reduce maintenance requirements.

The selected radiators will be sympathetic in appearance and positioned to minimise visual impact on the historic interior.

5.3.8 Stained Glass Repairs

Repair and conservation of stained-glass windows by an appropriately qualified specialist conservator. Works will include:

a) Repair of damaged glazing.
b) Stabilisation of leadwork where necessary.
c) Conservation of historic glass.
d) Localised repairs using matching materials and traditional techniques.

The proposals represent essential conservation works that will secure the long-term preservation of these important heritage features.

5.4. Assessment of Heritage Impact

The proposals have been assessed against the significance of the listed building.
The majority of the works comprise repair, refurbishment, conservation and upgrading of existing facilities. These interventions are considered necessary to ensure the continued viable use of the building as an arts and community facility.

Particular care has been taken in the design of the proposed WC and storage partitions. Although the partitions will have a panelled hardwood appearance, they are intended to be free-standing and fully reversible. They will not require fixing into significant historic fabric such as masonry reveals, ceiling ribs or other surviving historic architectural features. Their independent construction and ability to be removed without substantive damage to the building's historic fabric means that the intervention will have a minimal physical impact and will not result in the loss or permanent alteration of significant historic fabric.

The removal of the later stage structure is considered to provide a heritage benefit through the reinstatement of a clearer appreciation of the original spatial qualities of the nave. Furthermore, the works will allow investigation and potential conservation of concealed historic fabric. The refurbishment of the external doors, stained glass repairs and removal of redundant services will all contribute positively to the preservation and enhancement of the building's historic character. The installation of upgraded services, heating and kitchen facilities has been designed to be proportionate, largely reversible and visually restrained.

Overall, the proposals will result in no harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and, in several respects, will deliver heritage benefits through repair, conservation and enhancement of the historic fabric. The proposed WC and storage partitions have specifically been designed to ensure that their physical intervention is limited, reversible and does not compromise significant historic fabric.

6. CONCLUSION

SJA Ltd have worked closely with the client and with the Gravesham Borough Councils' Planning and Conservation departments to develop a scheme that supports and enhances the community functioning of the St Andrews' Art Centre building, while retaining its architectural and heritage significance within the Gravesend neighbourhood.

The proposed works represent modest, carefully considered interventions that will:

- Improve the appearance, security, usability and accessibility of the internal spaces of the building;
- Remove intrusive, non-historic elements of the existing building fabric, and
- Provide high-quality, sympathetic design in keeping with the original listed building fabric and with the established neighbourhood characteristic.

The heritage value of the building, inside and out, has been at the forefront of the ongoing design development and it is our belief that all of the works can be carried out without detriment to the original heritage building fabric: thus, this proposal seeks to maintain and enhance the current amenity, aesthetic and functionality of the St Andrews' Art Centre and the wider Royal Pier Road streetscene, while supporting and sustaining the long-term community role of the Arts Centre in the Gravesham Borough.

HISTORY OF ST ANDREWS ARTS CENTRE.

The building first started as a church in 1871, was closed in 1970 and purchased by the Gravesend Borough Council in 1975 and leased to Gravesham Arts Council in 1976 to be opened as an Arts Centre.

CHURCH HISTORY:-

In the early 1860's the stretch of the river off Gravesend was filled with vessels of all shapes and sizes including emigrant ships anchored off-shore. The Vicar of Holy Trinity Church(now demolished) the Revd. C.R.C. Robinson looked upon this community as a parish without a church. He ministered to them and took books and other comforts and also carried out many baptisms - over 500 are recorded as being performed on the emigrant ships.

As the missionary work increased, it became necessary to have a shore-based headquarters and the building next door which was a public house (The Spread Eagle) was taken over and used. Part of the building was later used by General Gordon as a school.

About 1868, Canon Robinson wrote to a London church newspaper, putting forward a suggestion that some bereaved family might consider building a mission hall in memory of a loved one rather than a costly marble memorial. The letter was read by Miss Beaufort, daughter of Rear Admiral Francis Beaufort, KCB (late Hydrographer to the Navy). She visited Canon Robinson and offered to provide a church if the foundations of the building were brought up to road level. The offer was eagerly accepted and over £1000.00 was collected including a generous donation from Charles Dickens. Following the successful completion of the foundation, the design and erection of the church was placed in the hands of the great architect Sir G.E. Street.

On St Andrew's Day (1871) the church was consecrated by the Right Revd. Bishop Claughton, "To the Glory of God and in memory of Rear Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, KCB." Among the congregation were Miss Beaufort, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland, Lord and Lady Nelson and Admiral and Lady Inglefield.

An unusual feature of the church was that due to the limitations of the site it had to be built from North to South rather than the usual East to West.

The ceiling of pitch pine is constructed to represent an up-turned boat with two cross beams representing the thwarts(seats). A special feature is the raised sanctuary and steps (now underneath the stage). Rare Italian tiles are set in panels on each side of the 'reredos' - a breath-taking piece of rare "gold-backed" Italian mosaic in the form of a picture of Our Lord stilling the Tempest. Miss Beaufort had this erected by Italian craftsmen as a memorial to the work of the Revd. J. Scarth, assistant priest to Canon Robinson. It was copied from one of his own paintings.

Above the 'reredos' is a window of three lights, in memory of Lady Sophia M.B. Palmer (elder daughter of Sir Francis Beaufort.

On the West wall are three windows and a brass tablet in memory of the crews of the "Erebus" and "Terror" of the ill-fated Arctic Expedition under the famous Sir John Franklin placed there by Lady Franklin.

The other magnificient window of five lights over the entrance depicts the miracle of the onehundred and fifty three fishes and it is interesting to note that when the church was first opened, it was bulit to seat one hundred and fify three people. (Now due to fire regulations the building can only seat one hundred people).

All the windows are from the studio of renowned Clayton and Bell and were covered in during the war years and for some time afterwards. Thanks to a generous donation from Gravesham Borough Council and Kent County Council, they are now protected by shatter-proof plastic.

Above this window is the bell tower, in which hangs a chime of four bells, a gift of Admiral Sir E. Inglefield. It was custom for these bells to be rung when immigrant ships were sailing.

For a number of years the tower had a distinct lean towards the river and in 1948 was considered unsafe and pulled down. It was re-erected and re-dedicated on the 13th November 1949 by the Right Rev. Bishop E.W. Sara, DD. with the Mayor of Gravesend, Alderman P.E. Lines, JP. reading one of the lessons.

During the floods of 1953 the sanctuary floor, the steps and the decorations were badly damaged, but repairs were speedily effected with the aid of funds from the Commonwealth Churches. In 1965 and 1966 further work was needed on the building and then in 1967 it had to be closed for repairs due to dry rot and woodworm. Again in July 1970 it was necessary to close due to dampness. In 1971 the Diocese of Rochester proposed its final closure, but this was strongly opposed. It was estimated that some £10,000.00 was needed for repairs and this money was not available. Following a draft Pastoral Scheme to implement closure, the Diocesan Board had either to find another use for the building or the Church Commissioners would have to decide whether to preserve or demolish.

ARTS CENTRE HISTORY

In 1975 the building was purchased by Gravesend Borough Council and after considerable work including decoration and stage erection, was leased to Gravesend Arts Council and in 1976 was opened by the then Mayor of Gravesend(the late Councillor L. Hardy) as St Andrews Arts Centre.

It is used by member organisations of the Gravesend Arts Council for meetings, rehearsals, music-dance-drama presentations and exhibitions. It is also available for private hire.

On the 2nd March 1978 a plaque to commemorate the sinking of the emigrant sailing ship "Loch Ard" near Port Campbell, Victoria, Australia at the end of May 1878 by The Hon. John F. Rossiter, Agent-General for Victoria. Amongst those present at this commemoration were desendants of one family(Mitchell) who were lost and another family of one person(Eva Carmichael) who was saved. A similar plaque stands on the spot near to where the "Loch Ard" was wrecked. This ship was one of the last sailingh ships to leave from Gravesend.

During the visit of HRH Princess Michael of Kent to open the St George's Centre in Gravesend in July 1983, she was invited to visit St Andrews and was very interested in its history and preservation. On her departure she was presented with a framed print of the building.

In September 1983 the building was listed as a Building of Special Architecural and Historic Interest.

Another Royal visitor to the Centre on the 16th July 1998 was HRH Prince Charles to see an exhibition by Gravesham Borough Council on the development and future plans for the borough and to meet with local representatives of The Princes Trust.

The above notes have been compiled from a Souvenir History booklet on St Andrews Waterside Church compiled by Selwyn Gummer in 1965, the local history pamphlet produced by E.C. Gunkel (Gravesend Public Library) and Gravesham Arts Council records.

SLB/July 2001.

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