



ACOCKS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH
YARDLEY ROAD
ACOCKS GREEN
BIRMINGHAM B27 6HG

March 2011

Dear Community Member,

UPDATE ON ACOCKS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH COMMUNITY FACILITIES

We recently invited local residents to find out more about proposed changes at Acocks Green Baptist Church to develop good quality local community facilities. There's lots of discussion about this locally, so we wanted to give everyone an update.

We've been working with APEC architects, who have produced some proposals to restore the two nationally listed buildings and redevelop the corner of the site to help the whole site work together well and offer up-to-date facilities.



Conceptual sketch view of corner of redeveloped site
APEC Architects October 2010

It's important to us that we hear the views of the local community, those who currently use the church site, and those who might use it if it were improved, so thank you to everyone who came along or responded. We've had a really helpful range of suggestions, queries, concerns, and encouragements about the project:

What did people say they liked?

"Offers lots of possibilities for the community"

- Bringing an underused asset into better use for the community and church.
- A good vision for what could be achieved across the site as a whole. Can see the benefit of redesigning part of the site to make the whole site work together better.
- What is being done internally is very good, and improves the range and flexibility of rooms and halls on offer for activities, meetings, etc, and brings the upstairs hall back into use. Also opens up and uses the courtyard better.
- Maintaining, and hopefully expanding, a beneficial range of services and support for local people based at the site.
- Making the whole church site more accessible for wheelchairs and buggies
- Some liked the design of the new building and felt it would help make the site more welcoming and inviting. Very impressive overall appearance for the whole site.
- Wish something like this had been around earlier – good facilities for youth groups etc.
- Could also stimulate other benefits to local community – eg social enterprises offering training to local people.

What concerns did people raise?

“Don’t like the design of the new hall”

- Appearance of the new build element of the site – some felt the proposed design for this part of the site does not fit in with surrounding buildings and heritage, and some felt it is not as attractive as the current Glynn Edwards Hall.
- Concern about certain aspects of the proposed design, such as lots of glass on the corner, or the colour and proportions of the new building, and the need to make sure it is in keeping with the surrounding buildings.
- Impact on parking.
- Concern about loss of hall space: some didn’t like the loss of the Glynn Edwards Hall, and queried why there is a need for something new instead of just re-ordering the interior of the buildings. Some recognised the benefit of a rebuilt section, but weren’t keen on the proposed design.

What questions did people ask?

- **Q: Are English Heritage and other planners being involved on the listed buildings aspect?**

A: Yes –Two buildings on the site are nationally listed (the church itself, and the Arthur Moore Hall: we have not been advised by planning or conservation officers that the Glynn Edwards Hall is listed, but we are seeking further clarification following local concerns), and we are keen to see them restored and well used, so we’ve been working with planners from the early stages of this project.

- **Q: Could the proposals work with the existing buildings being restructured internally?**

A: The current buildings on the church site have developed over time and do not always work together as well as they could. The current layout presents some challenges to current users, and also limits what could be achieved if looking at the site as a whole. From detailed appraisal of the site and the needs and aspirations of user groups, we believe that in order to safeguard the future of the listed buildings and provide something that genuinely responds to local needs, the best way forward is to replace the Glynn Edwards Hall.

- **Q: What consideration is being given to addressing parking concerns?**

A: Parking is a long-term local issue, and is something which already affects church members and users as well as local residents. Discussions are underway with Planning Officers to explore how these concerns can best be addressed within the proposals.

- **Q: How do we find out more about how the proposals are developing and how our views are being included?**

A: We will provide regular updates and newsletter articles to keep people informed. You can contact either Stockfield Community Association or the Baptist Church leadership to find out more.

- **Q: What changes are planned for the church building?**

A: The proposed plans seek to preserve the two listed buildings (Arthur Moore Hall and church) as faithfully as possible whilst improving the overall site as a whole. Working within the context of church conservation planning requirements, the members of the church will be considering whether to make any alterations to the interior of the church to improve access and usability.

- **Q: What are you doing ensure that this project is sustainable, and that the local community won’t be priced out from using the facilities?**

A: We want these buildings to be well used and looked after for many years to come, and as part of the development of these proposals, a detailed business plan is being commissioned to ensure that this is possible. Care is being taken in

our planning to ensure that the community facilities will be available to the local community.

- **Q: How will you manage changes in demand, and ensure that current users aren't disrupted too much?**

A: One of the aims of the proposals is to ensure that the site is flexible enough for several activities to happen together, and to accommodate different levels of demand. We will work closely with those groups and organisations currently using the site to ensure that they are not disrupted too much, and will aim to phase any work so that the whole site isn't unavailable all at once.

- **Q: Will this be available only to church members and Stockfield Community Association, or is it available to the wider community?**

A: The vision for this project is to provide facilities which serve the needs of the church and the local community. We hope that many groups, individuals and organisations use the site.



So what next?

We are pleased that there is considerable support for the proposals and encouragement to move forward. We also acknowledge that there are some aspects of the proposals that not everyone likes and we are reviewing the plans and looking at these further. We are concerned to ensure the long-term viability of the whole church site with the two main listed buildings, and feel that some change to the corner is necessary to provide this. We are bringing in business planning support to explore this and ensure we have a robust plan, and further consultation will be undertaken as part of this process.

We think this is an exciting opportunity, and hope you will support and work with us to shape the plans for the local church and community centre.

Thank you for your interest – if you have any further suggestions or queries, please let us know.

Sent on behalf of the Acocks Green Baptist Church and Stockfield Community Association.

March 2011