



Parish Building Plans – latest progress, March 2022

Dear Parishioner,

After some months of things standing still, and sometimes moving backwards, I am pleased to share three pieces of news with you that mean that plans are moving forward with hope.

Firstly, on Monday **we exchanged contracts for the sale of the land adjacent to the parish centre** (the land with the hoarding around it); this sale should be completed in about 12 weeks. Until completion, commercial confidentiality means we cannot disclose the figure, but we have taken serious professional advice every step of the way.

Secondly, **we have planning permission to carefully take down the 1950s extension to the parish centre, in preparation for refurbishment and extension.** The programme for this suddenly fell into place over the last fortnight, and will begin on Monday, with scaffolding in place from Saturday. This demolition work will be completed by Easter, and we will then put a new fence between our land and the land that is being sold.

Thirdly, **we are edging nearer to full planning permission for the parish centre refurbishment and church extension.** We have had to make some small adjustments to the plans, due to the Grade Two listing of the church, but hopefully we are now within six to eight weeks of full permission. The latest plan is on the back of this sheet.

All of this is good news. **The more difficult news is that – as we all know – the costs of many things are rising sharply, and this includes building costs. There will undoubtedly be a significant gap between the money raised from the land sale, and the money needed to do everything hoped for, in terms of refurbishing and extending both the parish centre and the church.** We are likely to need to complete the project in stages, perhaps over three to five years.

However, at the moment, with planning permission not yet granted, and with such uncertainty in the world, it is not very wise to try to talk about exact figures or timelines. In May, hopefully, we will have all the information, with a greater degree of certainty, and we will then have an open meeting for ideas to be shared, and priorities agreed.

For now, as ever, please keep it all in your prayers. **All of it is building for the future, helping us to share the Good News of Jesus Christ as a Catholic Parish at the heart of Romford – please keep it all firmly in your prayers**

Fr Dominic

Changes from the Dec 2021 update are minor:

Removal of vestibule (glazed link) between church and community centre.

Shrinking of narthex by just over 1 metre

Shrinking of sacristy by approx. 75cm

These changes were all asked for by the Havering heritage consultant, due to the Grade 2 listed status of our church.

The plans ensure that the proposed extensions have as minimal an impact as possible on the existing building, both practically and visually. They also ensure the community centre remains “subservient” to the church, as a building.

