

Haslemere Methodist Church



The front of the premises: The Church stands slightly back from a busy street, just round the corner from Tesco supermarket and opposite a busy garage. It was designed in the late 1960's, looking rather like a cinema of that era, with the foyer and community area at the front and the worship area beyond, away from the street. The frontage was redesigned for the millennium to remove all steps and insert a lift to allow access throughout the premises. Although the present redevelopment project does not extend to the outside of the building, it will have a new coat of paint to match the inside.

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Existing Café – looking towards new kitchen area.

Proposed: to remove the present coffee bar (on the left) and build a kitchen in the area in the far corner. The two small rooms (behind the two doors) to be removed and those areas plus a space which includes the far window will accommodate a fully fitted kitchen, with a servery facing into the room. A new doorway to the fire exit and stairs will be created to the left of the clock. The central portion of the ceiling will be raised to the full height of the windows and the lighting will be changed to create a bright central space, with gentle light around the edge of the space. The carpeting and furniture will be changed so that everything can be mopped or wiped. The far right hand corner will have two settees and low level lighting to create a “snug”, more intimate space, with bookshelves to provide reading and information.

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Café area looking away from the new kitchen: The coffee bar will be removed and this corner will be furnished for greater relaxation, with bookshelves and also a children's toy box. The folding doors will be removed to extend the café space. (Unfortunately, the central pillar cannot be removed.) To comply with fire safety and access regulations, the entrance doors will be moved to a position almost half-way across the right-hand opening, giving views into the café from the foyer. Ceiling, lighting and flooring to be changed as described above.

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The Wesley Room: The ceiling will be raised to the height of the windows and new, more flexible and more efficient lighting introduced. The carpet will be replaced to match the carpet in the worship area, so that this area can become an extension to the worship area for large services, funerals, concerts, etc. Speakers and a monitor will enhance the connectedness of the two spaces. The solid doors on the right (between the Wesley Room and the worship area) will be replaced with glass doors to give a view of the worship area and, when the room is not in use, a view through from the café. Against the wall on the left, between the doors and the far wall, floor to ceiling cupboards will provide storage for the tables and chairs currently stacked to the side of the room, with space above to provide extra storage for the use of both church and user groups.

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The worship area: The carpet will be replaced, as will the other furniture except the chairs. The pulpit will go, as it is no longer used and a large, adjustable, moveable lectern will take its place. The new sanctuary furniture, a new table, lectern, font and flower stand will all be in a light wood to match the chair frames. The dais will be replaced by a much lighter, sectional platform which can be rearranged to suit different occasions. The temporary screen will be replaced by two screens designed for daylight digital projection, one where the present screen is situated, the other on the opposite side of the front wall. To help with the problematic acoustics, the front wall will be covered with sound-absorbent cladding, with extra cladding around the new screens. One possibility is to have an applique design of Christian symbols around the central cross to cover the front wall to disguise the cladding and to create a striking focus for worship.

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The rear of the worship area: As well as the changes outlined above, to complete the covering of hard surfaces demanded by trying to dampen reverberation in this space, the windows will all be covered with translucent, sound absorbing blinds. The wall space behind the organ console, and its opposite equivalent (behind the camera) will have sound absorbent cladding, as will the back wall above to organ sound box (top right). New folding doors on the left will be mostly glass to give a view into the worship area from the Wesley Room and the café. The lighting (at present fluorescent tubes) will be replaced by pendant lights supplemented with wall lights and directed lighting to allow subtlety and ambiance in lighting all or part of the space as the occasion requires.