

Waiwhetu church review

The Vision Team is responding to the Cardinal's request to review the church at Waiwhetu. More information about his request can be found on the Parish website www.holyspirit.nz

Based on parishioners' feedback in June we created the "Building Goals" that can be found on the website and in the church foyer. This list of "must, should, could" ideas has shaped our thinking when developing and considering a number of options. It will continue to guide our thoughts as we progress.

Below are the options we considered and our proposal of which ones to continue exploring and which options we do not intend to follow up further at this point.

Preferred Options

There are three options that we plan to investigate further. In the current order of preference, they are:

Acquire a site near school and build

Acquire a site of sufficient size next to or near the school. This would allow us to build a church facility to be used by both the church and school communities. It would encourage a closer relationship between the church and the school. The potential for use of school land for parking on Sundays offers a significant advantage.

The main challenge with this option is finding a piece of land that is suitable, available and affordable. Given we want to be close by there are limited options. It may require patience.

Acquire site next to current church and re-build

Acquiring one of the sites on either side of our current church would allow a larger church design and provide space for things like play equipment. Challenges include loss of opportunity for school connection as well as location limitations on space and parking.

Rebuild on existing site

Using the existing site to demolish and rebuild means no additional land acquisition, but the long narrow nature of the site means limitations on the design. Challenges include loss of opportunity for school connection as well as location limitations on space and parking.

Non-Preferred Options

We intend to stop progress on the options below, for the reasons explained. If the preferred options above are not viable then some of these options may become of interest again.

Church on existing school site

Three ideas were discussed for building a new church on the existing school site: using the field, using the car park or building "up" in a multi storey way.

The first two ideas would result in too much operational impact on the school, especially given anticipated potential roll growth. The building “up” idea would be complex, expensive and would only partially reduce the operational impact on the school.

As a result, we do not intend to progress any further investigation into solely using the existing land at the school to build the church.

Refurbishment of existing church

Refurbishing the existing church would still require substantial effort and cost, but would not create the same space and flexibility of the other options.

This option is considered a potential backup if funding constraints mean that preferred options are not possible. For now though, we do not intend to progress it.

Joint project with Anglicans

Working together with the Anglican parish in Waiwhetu is attractive from an ecumenical values perspective and aligns with synod goals. However, there would be large difficulties to do this in practice. Legally, the ownership and governance of any shared site would be complex to set up, fund and maintain. Operationally, there would be difficulties in sharing the space for Sunday Mass, Easter and Christmas. The Archdiocese has also expressed concerns at such complexities.

Sharing a worship space, but with separate services, would potentially only highlight our differences. We believe that closer ties would be better pursued through things like joint outreach programmes and continuing traditions like the Easter shared services.

Social housing

Social housing is expensive to establish and requires ongoing people and money, due to residents’ often complex support needs. We consider our priority is to establish a central place of worship. If there are opportunities for things like selling surplus land to social housing providers, then that may be a suitable way of supporting this work.

We do not plan to include the building of social housing in our final designs.

Next steps

You can let us know your thoughts on this proposal and the Building Goals by talking with your Vision Group rep after Mass, putting some comments in the feedback box in the foyer, or sending an email to olrvisiongroup@gmail.com. We’ll let you know via the website and newsletter if feedback alters this proposal.

If confirmed, the next steps for the preferred three options will be firstly, site analysis (e.g. council plans and restrictions, car parking requirements); and, secondly, identifying the likely cost of land purchase (for the first two options).

We’ll also start engaging more with the Parish Finance Committee, as some funding will be required in the short term, and we need to understand our ability to fund potential options.

We’ll continue to update you via the newsletter and the website.