

Welcome

Welcome to our consultation on proposals to conserve and repair St James' Church, Piccadilly.

We want to hear your views

Our vision is to set the incomparable legacy of acclaimed 17th century architect, Sir Christopher Wren, in the context it deserves while at the same time making the other buildings on site fit for a 21st century Church. As part of this, we are keen to build on the Church's hard-won reputation for being a thoughtful, inclusive, creative community building, open to all.

At this exhibition you can

- 01** Take a look at the information provided which outlines our vision for the future of St James' Church – the Wren Project
- 02** Speak to the team if you have questions
- 03** Let us know your feedback

Our Team



Lucy Winkett,
Rector



Ptolemy Dean,
Architect



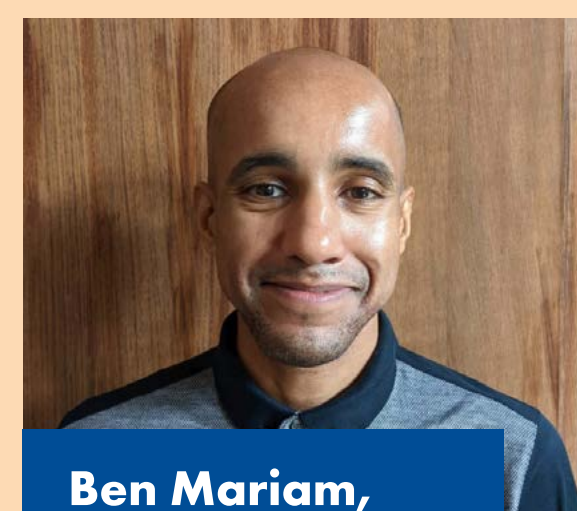
Trevor Lines,
Churchwarden



Deborah Colvin,
Churchwarden



Wilson Wong,
PCC Lay Vice Chair



Ben Mariam,
Honorary Treasurer



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St James's
Church
Piccadilly

Our history

St James' Church has stood here since 1684. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren, who rebuilt London after the Great Fire of 1666, St James' stands as a testament to his skill as an architect and has become the prototype for many urban churches around the world.

Carefully repaired and brought back to life after the bombing of 1940, we have sought to be a steady presence in St James – a creative, engaged and inclusive Church, open to people of all faiths and none.

We are proud of the part our Church has played throughout history. We have long been ministers to London's creatives, from radical women artists Mary Beale and Mary Delany, both buried here, to the Romantic poet William Blake, who was baptised here.

To this day, we act as chaplain to the Royal Academy of Arts, commissioning and encouraging young artists.

St James' Church in numbers



20,000 Church service attendees



30,000 concert tickets



5,000 musicians play here



10,000 people come through the Piccadilly Gates every week



14,130 kW of electricity generated by new solar panels



5,000 counselling clients

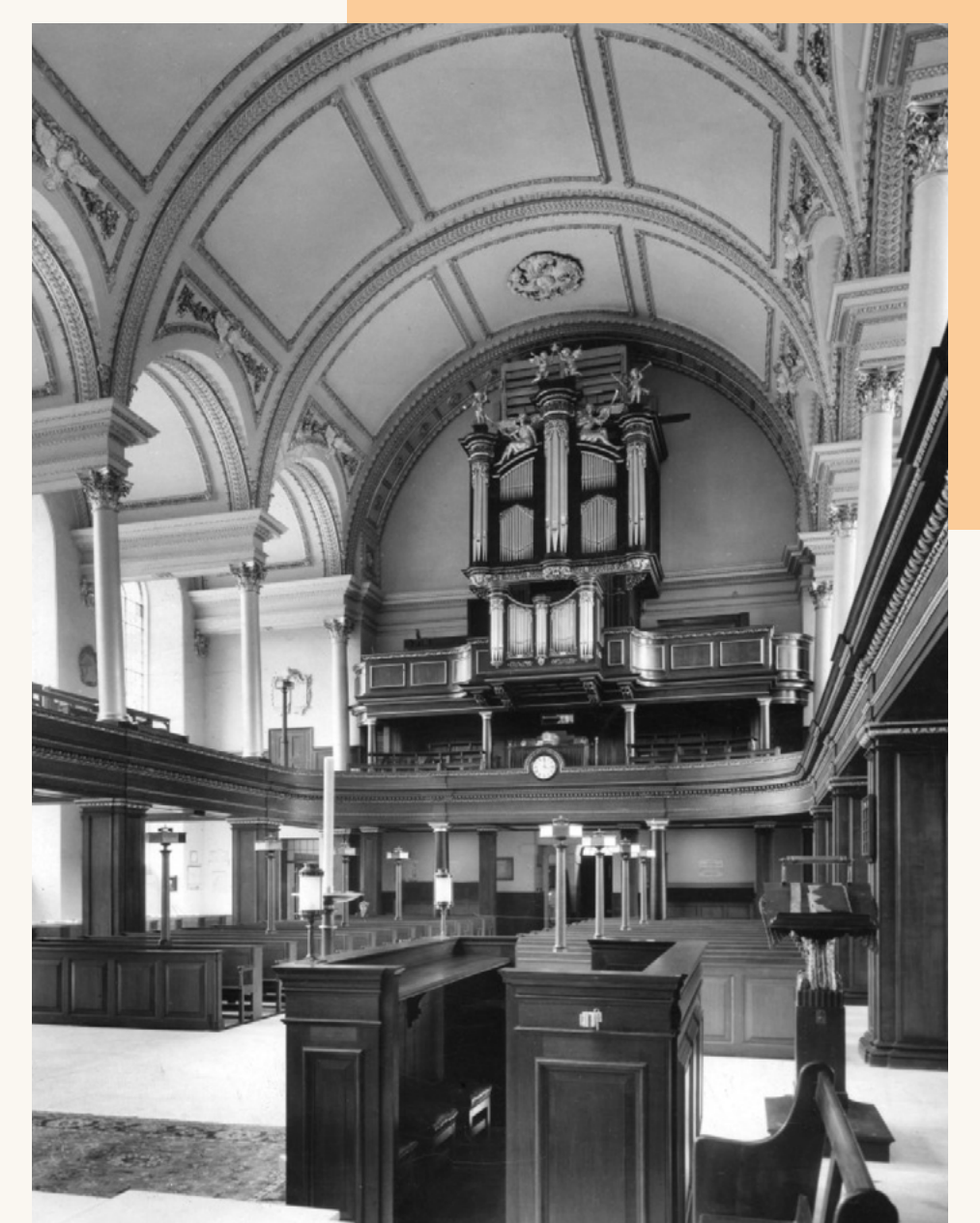


15,000 plates of hot food served to homeless guests



// There is no altar anywhere in England, nor has there been any abroad more handsomely adorned //

John Evelyn,
1684



// I think that it may be found beautiful and convenient //

Sir Christopher Wren, 1708



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St James's
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Piccadilly

Our vision

The Wren Project seeks to address the site as a whole. This includes the Grade I Listed Church, the Jermyn Street building, Rectory on Piccadilly and our two wonderful open spaces – the Paved Church Yard and Green Church Yard.

In the time since our Church reopened, restored after the World War II bombings, our buildings have remained largely unchanged whilst our work has been transformed.

Thousands of people now pass through our site every year – in fact, 10,000 people pass through the newly restored Piccadilly Gates every week. This kind of footfall has an impact, and we want to make sure we are providing the best possible welcome to everyone who visits us and to those who use us day to day.



Conducting sensitive alterations and essential repair and conservation work

will be carried out on the Grade I Listed Wren Church making the site fit for the 21st century and enabling us to build on our hard-won reputation for thoughtful, inclusive, creative community building.



Creating a new pedestrian connection

between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly and between Church Place and the Paved Church Yard knitting us even further into the neighbourhood that we serve.



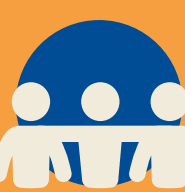
Enhancing the Green Church Yard

through new planting and a pavilion for events, and better connecting the Church with its green setting.



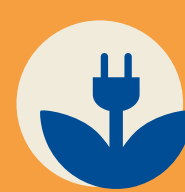
Ensuring that someone using a wheelchair can access all parts of the site

without having to ask for help.



Providing necessary support facilities for our events and outreach,

supporting our efforts as the central community hub for the St James's area.



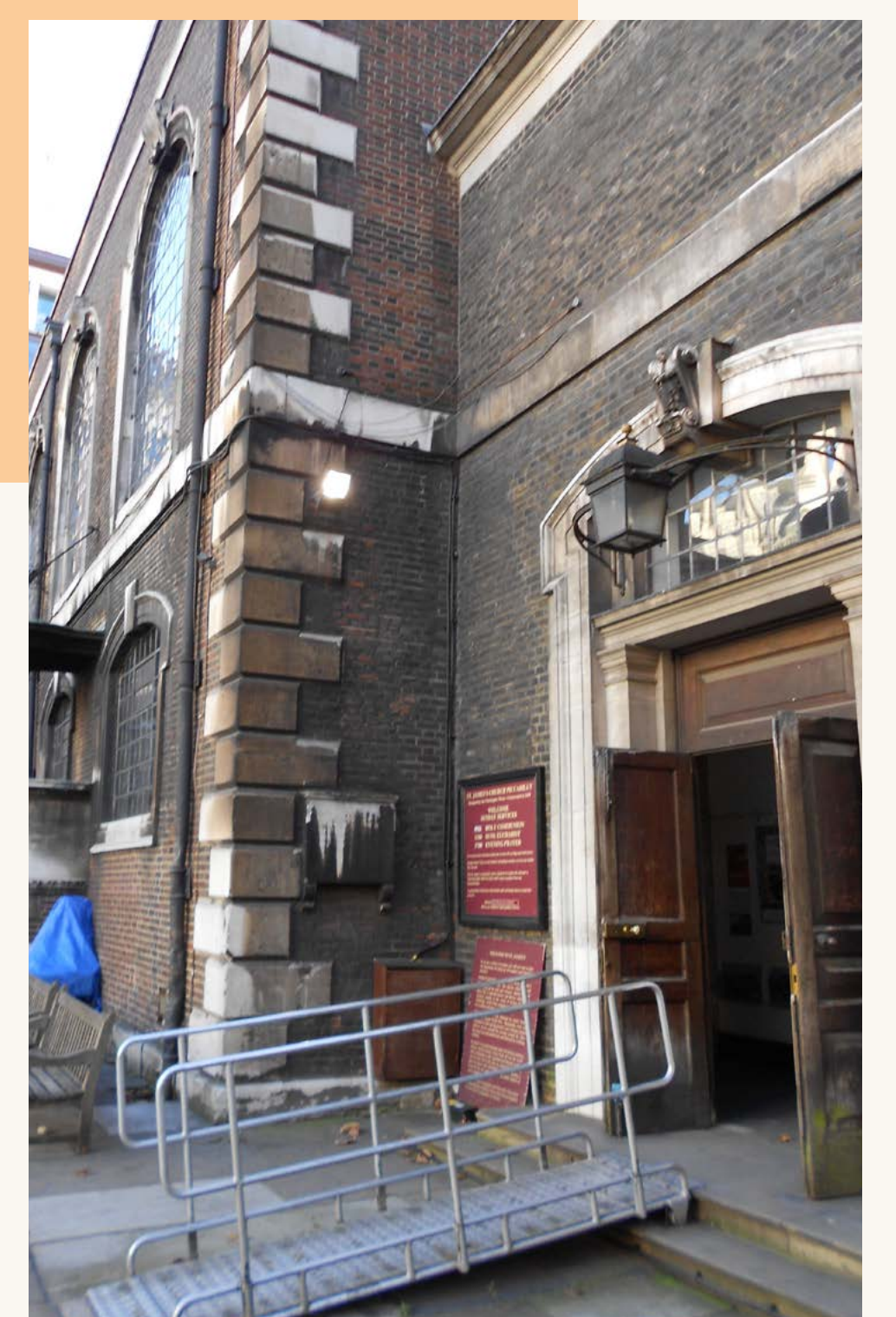
Installing the latest in sustainable energy technology

to make the Church as sustainable and energy efficient as possible.



Diversifying our income-generating offer

to secure our future and ensure we can continue to invest in our community projects.



Images of the church as it is now



St James's
Church
Piccadilly



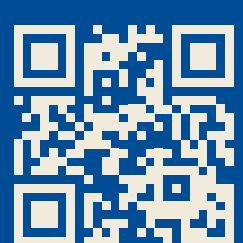
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Our consultation so far

We have been exploring how to repair and re-service the Church since 2012. Over the past ten years, these plans have expanded in scope and have evolved following various meetings with the local community and interested groups.

The last time we consulted on the plans was in 2019. Below are the key points of feedback from that period and how we have addressed them.

Feedback	Our response
Give more information on the previous design options to better understand creative process	Previous design options are described in the design, access and heritage statement submitted as part of the application
Demonstrate the benefits of the removal of the London Plane Tree	The removal of the tree has been reconsidered and it will now be retained
Consider carefully the impacts of extracts and venting on the fabric of the building	An engineer has been engaged to ensure that sufficient allowance is made for extracts and vents
Clean the elevations of the Church	Light cleaning of the building will be included
Justify the Pavilion within the Green Churchyard	A developed design of the pavilion will be included in the application and we have produced a model to show the massing of the Pavilion within its context
Explore alternative options for the alteration of the south stair	The extent of the proposed alterations to the south stair lobby have been reduced
Rationalise the mansard roof form of the Jermyn Street Building (Vestry)	Whilst a mansard is still considered the most sympathetic option, the parapet walls have been adjusted, the window proportions have been improved and finials added



Building better connections through our site

The Church's site is currently closed off from the east and from the south. Our proposals seek to address this by creating new pedestrian routes through the site. This will greatly improve the public connection between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly.

New views will be opened up for the first time and the green setting of the Church will be reinvigorated and secured for the future.

From the south

Pedestrians currently walk through the café or the Church itself from Jermyn Street up to Piccadilly. These cut-throughs attract a huge footfall every day, unfortunately causing damage to the narthex (our lobby area) through 'wear and tear'.

We also feel this is an unworthy entrance to the light and airy interior that Wren created. The West Door, the intended main entrance to the Church, is currently unused.

By providing a new connection between Jermyn Street and Piccadilly that is outside of the Church building itself, via a new archway, we offer a new pedestrian link that will also allow the West Door to be reopened and serve as the main entrance to the Church. This will also create a better connection between the Church and the Green.



From the east

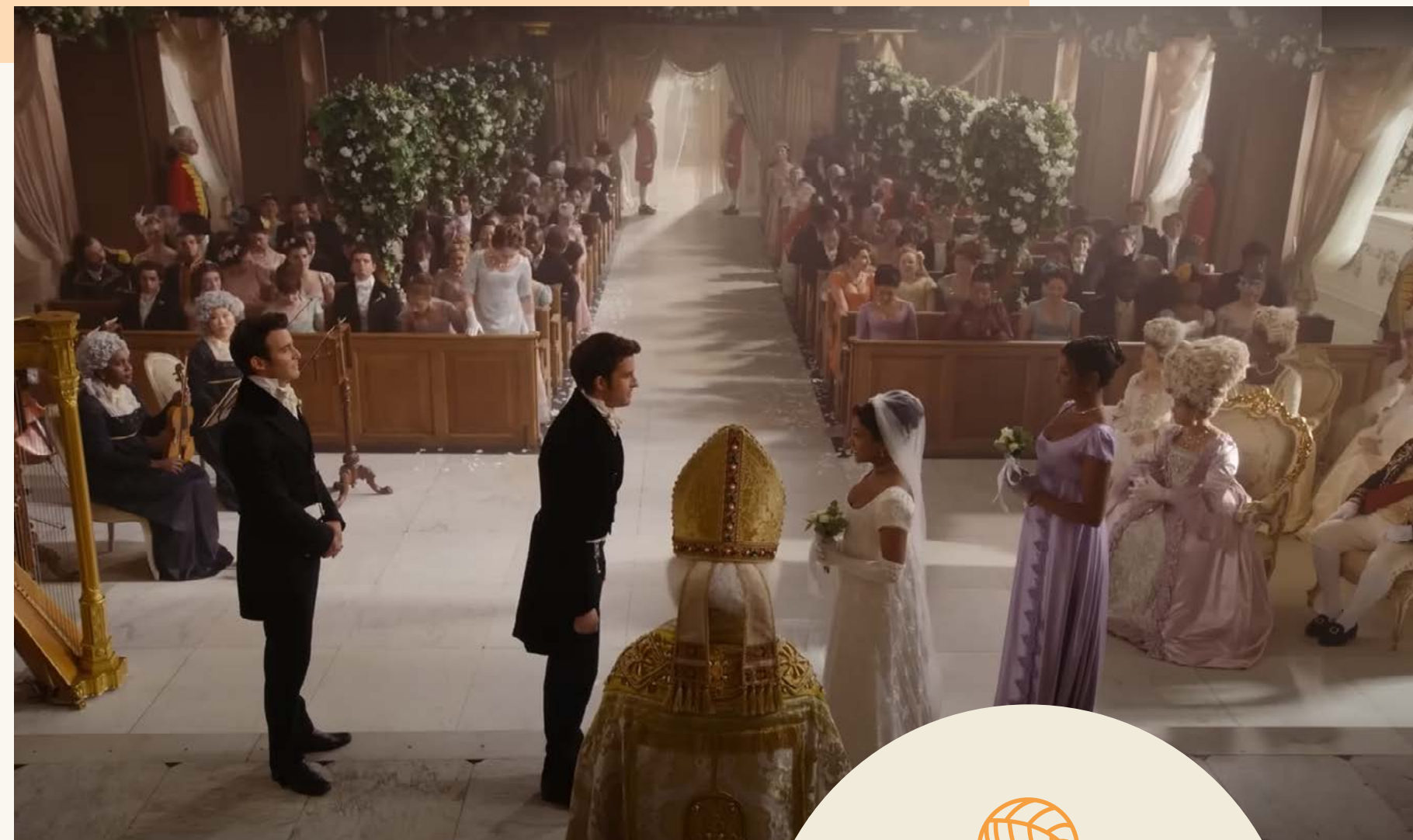
By removing the current vestry link building, added in 1954, between the Rectory and the Church, an elegant new route east-west is proposed, transforming Church Place, which is currently something of a "back alley".

The Southwood Fountain and outdoor pulpit will become more visible, transforming the view from Church Place.



From the west

We will also be opening up the west door, allowing another avenue to enter the church. This was also one of the angles that the popular Netflix television series Bridgerton used when filming in 2021.



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St James's
Church
Piccadilly

Sensitive conservation work to the Church itself

We do not intend to make extensive changes to the Church building itself, which is Grade I Listed with a rich heritage to be proud of.

Some small refurbishments and restoration are proposed including:

Increasing flexibility for events

Currently, the pews, which are fixed to the floor, make the space inflexible for events, and the lack of direct access to the south or north means that fire restrictions keep both audience and congregation numbers lower than they could be.

Re-instating a south door to the Church onto Jermyn Street, and changes to the existing north east door, along with adjustments to the pews, will help ease these issues.

We also hope that sight lines can be improved from the gallery seating, enhancing the experience of congregations and audiences alike.

Repairs and redecoration

Proposals for careful plaster repair and redecoration are included, achievable following the re-roofing of the Church in the early 2000s.

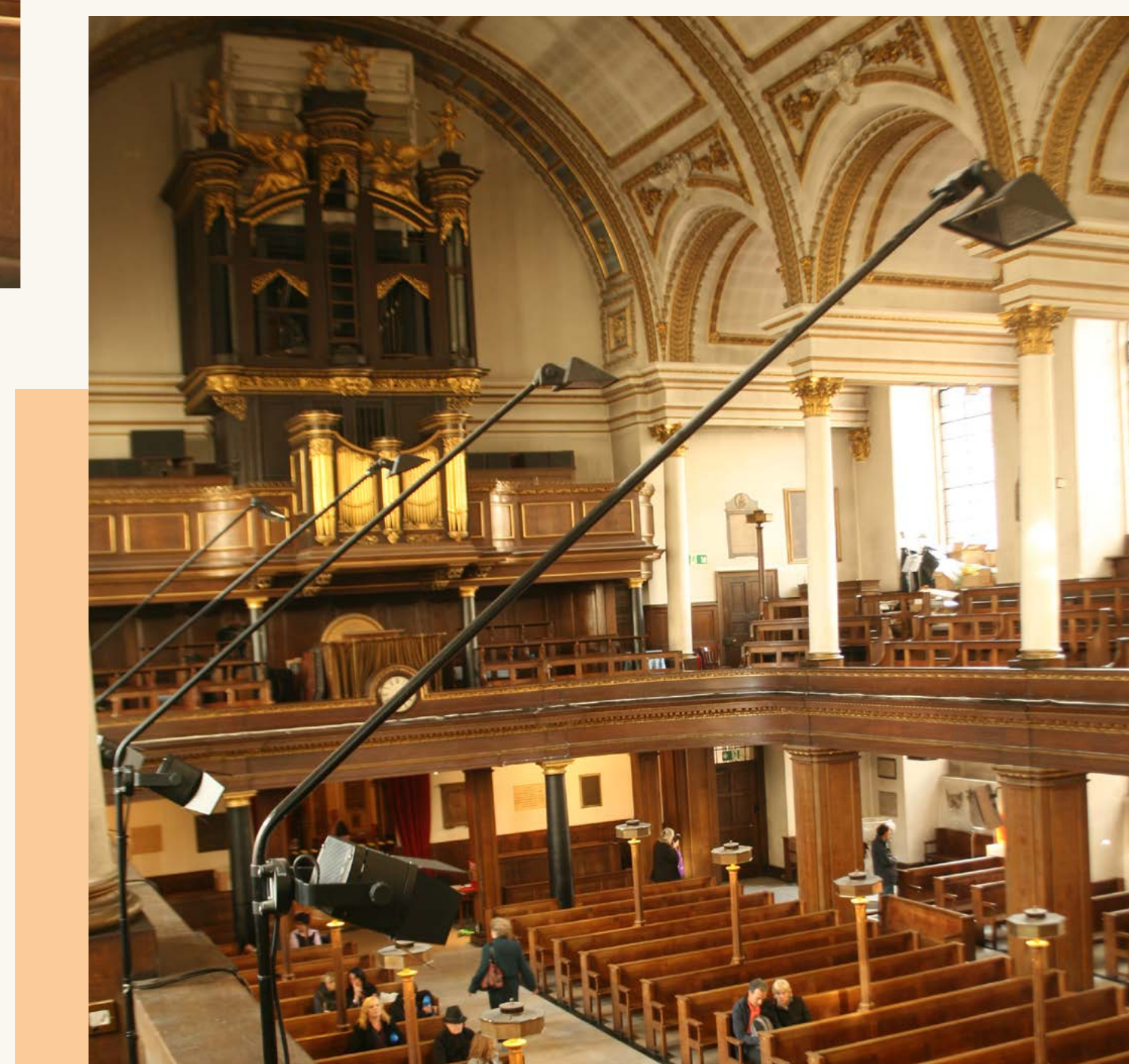
The existing fibreglass spire, added as part of the post war repair project, is badly leaking and is proposed to be renewed.

The existing electrical wiring, increasingly vulnerable to failure, will be renewed along with the lighting which is currently inadequate and increasingly difficult to maintain.

We will also seek to gently clean and repoint the brickwork on the north and west sides of the building with traditional lime mortar, to complete the work already begun on the south and eastern sides.

A new organ

We are providing a new organ but are retaining and repairing the historic Grinling Gibbons case. We will be returning, regilding and reusing the existing face pipes.



Ensuring everyone can access the Church and gardens

We want everyone to be able to access all parts of our Church and gardens, without having to ask for help.

St James's Church is a historic building. As such it is not always easy to get around, especially if you use a wheelchair or have other mobility needs. It is an essential part of our plans that whatever we do must make the site fully accessible, for everyone.

We will do this by:

- Providing level access to the Church via the west door.
- Adding new toilets in the Church, including fully accessible toilets.
- Installing lifts in the Piccadilly building to ensure easy access.
- Developing a new step-free access to our green Church Yard through a gentle slope which allows wheelchair users to access the improved green space the same way as everyone else.



Cutting edge interventions to improve our energy efficiency

As a Church, we have long had a keen focus on the environment and how we can play our part to protect it.

The project's main sustainability objective is to move away from fossil fuels to low carbon air source heat pumps which would reduce carbon emissions by over 75% compared to the existing gas fired boilers. The installation of such pumps in the empty room beneath our spire would allow us to generate all of our heating onsite, without having to dig up our historic Church yard to install a ground source pump.

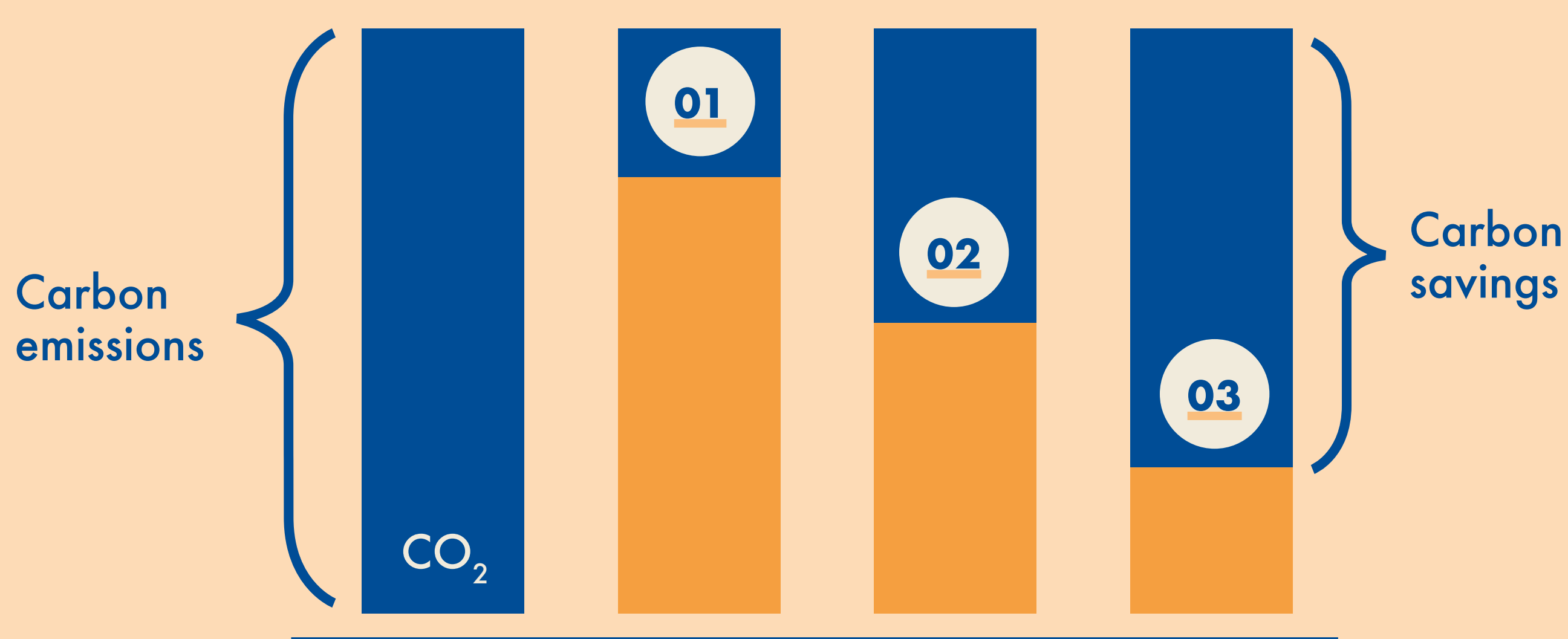
All lighting will now be low energy LED fittings with daylight and occupancy sensors where appropriate to minimise energy use.

For areas where natural ventilation is not possible, mechanical ventilation with heat recovery will be used to provide good levels of air quality, as well as recovering heat and reducing the heating requirements for those spaces.

The project has taken a "fabric first" approach where possible. By improving the insulation of the buildings, we significantly reduce the heat loss through the building fabric. This in turn will mean that less energy is required to heat or cool the buildings. For all new building elements, the proposed fabric specification is based on the London Energy Transformation Initiative specification, which is one of the most ambitious in terms of sustainability performance.

Natural ventilation will be promoted wherever possible to provide good levels of ventilation and thermal comfort.

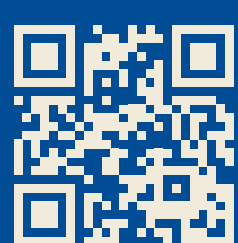
Finally, more Photovoltaic panels (solar panels) will be installed on the Church's south roof. This will provide on average 18,000 kW/hr of electricity per year saving 2.7 tons of carbon each year.



01 **Passive design:** use less energy

02 **Efficient building services:** use energy efficiently

03 **Renewable energy:** use less and zero carbon technologies



Securing our place in the community

It is important to us that we secure our financial future to make sure that we can continue to serve our community for generations to come.

Investing in the community

Our income streams must be appropriate for our values and mission. We want to maximise the benefit to the Church and the community from our income generating activities, so that we provide social value as well as income.

With this ambition in mind, we have opened up discussions with prospective new partners for employment, apprenticeships and training programmes. This way, we can work with our neighbours to provide job opportunities for people who need a second chance in life.

The focus for this activity will be on the ground floor of the Piccadilly Building.



Courtyard space for start-ups

With a more diverse range of income streams, we could free up some space in our courtyard to offer trading space to more start-ups, as an incubator for new businesses.

This has already been happening in the Monday market with “Startisans” – something we want to build on.

New Church offices

The Church offices are cramped, over-crowded and cluttered. It is a daily challenge to provide the support for the already large number of services, events, activities and projects run by the Church for the benefit of the community.

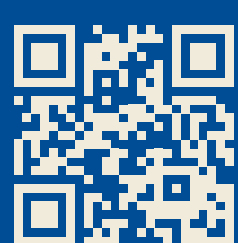
This includes the drop-in counselling project currently located in the north west corner of the garden, well used by local workers and homeless visitors alike.

To provide proper support for existing activity, and to enable growth, the proposals for the Piccadilly Building are that the second and third floors are given over to Church offices, which will include hireable space with Piccadilly frontage.

Better facilities for events

The Church currently holds 90 evening and 140 lunchtime concerts every year, yet facilities are poor for both performers and audiences.

We are therefore proposing to extend the boiler room in the Jermyn Street Building and use this space for new toilets, backstage and storage facilities to improve the experience for our performers and guests. We are also looking into proposals for better lighting and AV facilities.



A green oasis in the heart of London

Planting and managing a publicly accessible garden with trees and shrubs are a key part of our proposals, enriching the beauty, distinctiveness, and biodiversity of this part of the capital.

We have thought about the whole of our site – Church, courtyard, garden, and Rectory – as a “green site”. While honouring the significance of the 1954 landscape design and recognising the historical distinction between the paved churchyard and the green churchyard, we want to enhance the planting across both.

To this end, we intend to plant an elegant and robust selection of plants that significantly enhance the biodiversity of the site and respond well to the woodland edge habitat created by our London Plane trees. A mix of native and non-native pollinators will be used as well as plants known to thrive in St James’s.

We will also be considering the following wildlife ideas to further boost the ecology of the site:

- Establishing specific habitats such as species rich hedgerows, a green wall and tree/scrub planting to encourage birds.
- Designing the plant beds as a “woodland edge garden” to create a plant community and encourage bird nesting.
- Providing bird boxes.
- Deadwood log piles, insect ‘hotels.’

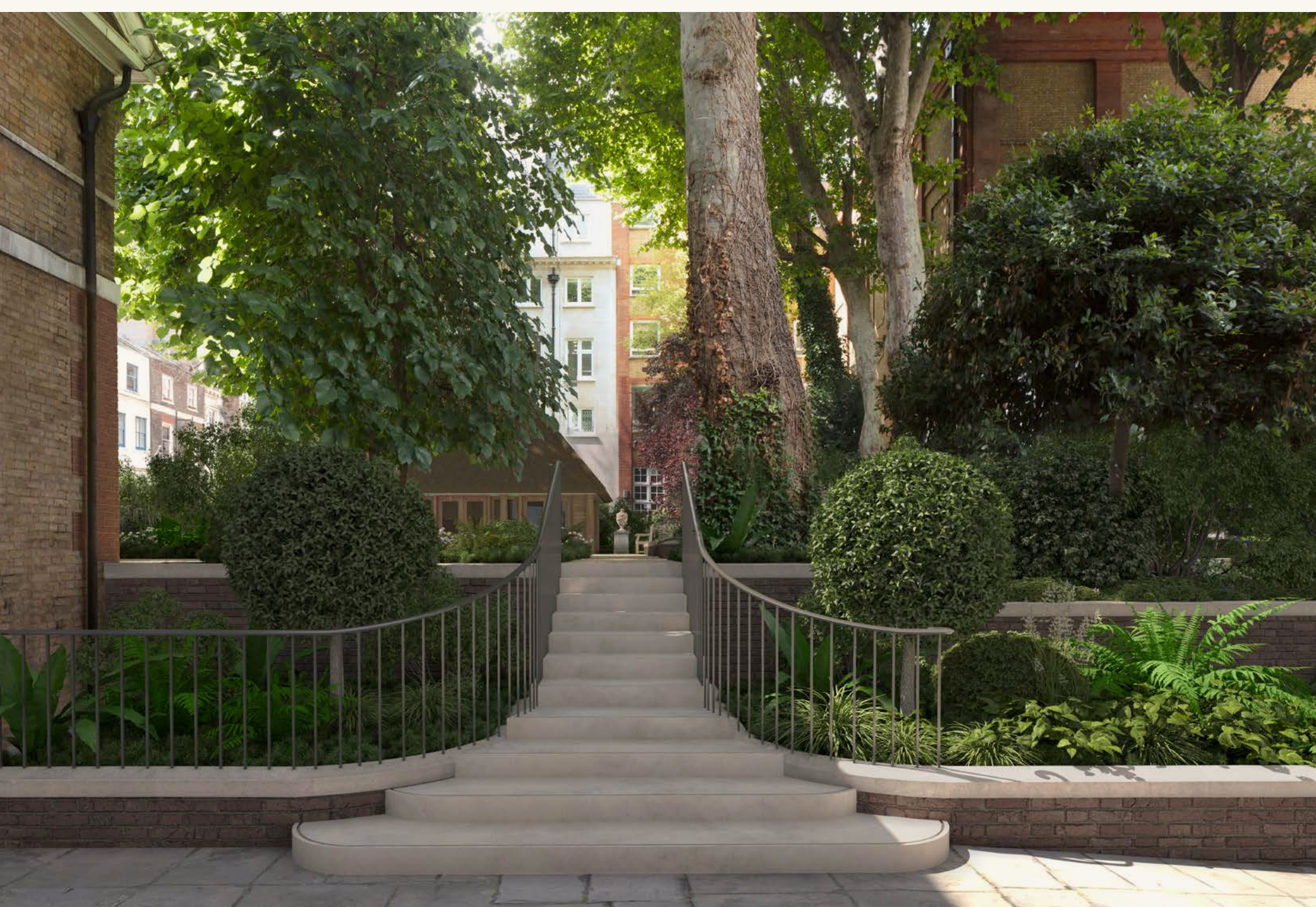
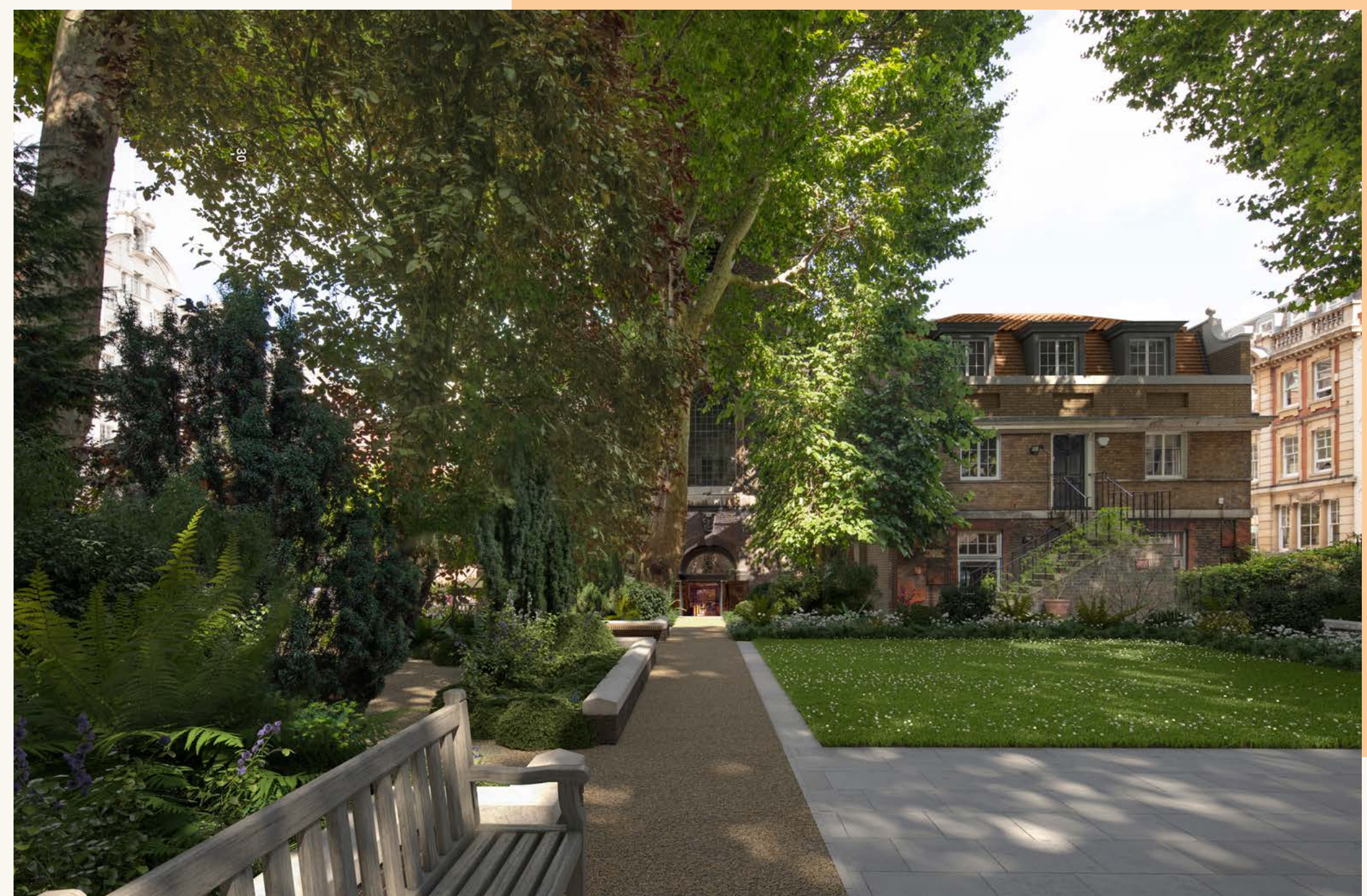


Image shows new pedestrian routes through the site



Thoughtful and beautiful landscape design

Our ambition is to upgrade the landscape design around the Church, making it more welcoming, beautiful, and peaceful for congregants and the wider public.

To accomplish this, we want to reintegrate the Church into its garden setting. By reopening the door in the west tower, we will be able to reconnect the Church and garden through a new access route from the east end altar through the West Door up into the garden.

We are also proposing to add a new thatched pavilion in the Green Church Yard. This would be suitable for providing refreshments during concerts and events in the Church building and would also be open to the public to enjoy.

The Green Church Yard will have spaces to sit, walk and relax, as well as designated points to erect sculptures. Our counselling hut will be retained, set into planting to create restorative and contemplative spaces.

The areas around the Church will be improved with planting to improve views in and out of the building as well providing shaded seating.



Next steps

Thank you for coming to our consultation. Your feedback will help shape our final proposals which we will be submitting to the Local Planning Authority shortly.

You can have your say by:

- Providing your comments and feedback via the survey on our website: sjp.org.uk
- Completing a comment card available today
- Emailing us at: wrenproject@londoncommunications.co.uk
- Phone: **0800 092 0487**

Timeline

**JUNE
22**

Public consultation on our proposals



**Summer
22**

Planning application submitted to City of Westminster and Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) approval applied for



**Autumn
22**

Targeting planning decision



24

Targeting works to start on site



25/26

Targeting works completed



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