



# SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL

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## **ALL HALLOWS DEVELOPMENT – PUBLIC MEETINGS AT ALL HALLOWS HALL – JUNE 15-16 2009**

Two meetings took place. Both were co-chaired by the Venerable Michael Ipgrave, Archdeacon of Southwark. Monday's meeting was co-chaired by Cllr David Noakes and Tuesday's meeting was co-chaired by Simon Hughes, MP.

Monday's meeting was attended by about 45 people and Tuesday's by about 40 people, about half of whom had also been present on Monday.

Both meetings were preceded by the opportunity to view the inside of the remains of All Hallows Church.

The meetings were held for the purpose of explaining the Cathedral Chapter's latest development plans for the All Hallows site and to give local residents a chance to comment on the designs.

Each meeting began with the Dean of Southwark, the Very Reverend Colin Slee, outlining the background to the scheme and the reasons why the Chapter wish to develop the site.

### **The Dean's Introduction to All Hallows' consultation evenings.**

*Welcome.*

*I am told that various people have remarked that they would like to hear more from the Cathedral Chapter about the background and purpose of developing the All Hallows site.*

*That is what I am going to address; the design team are here as well to talk about planning or engineering or structures.*

*I think the other introductory remark, which I did not make last night and may have helped a more consultative contribution from residents, is that we are not here to talk about money, we are here to talk about planning and design, that is the purpose of meetings like this regarding planning applications. We are here to listen to any comments you may wish to make about the design.*

**The background** to the Chapter's proposals is very simple.

*All Hallows was bombed, devastatingly, twice, during World War II.*

*After the war, entirely as a short-term provisional action, the surviving north side aisle was bricked up sufficiently to continue in use as a chapel. That is a very important statement, the church has never had any intention of withdrawing from the hallowed use of this site as a place for prayer and ministry in the neighbourhood. It was pointed out to me as a priority by an archdeacon as soon as I arrived here.*

*It was staffed by clergy who were also chaplains to Guy's hospital; I have had really interesting conversations with one of them who still survives.*

*I have never been able to find out why the church, which was huge, was not wholly rebuilt as part of war reparation.*

*It proved impossible to maintain the side aisle as a space for worship when the Health Service provisions for hospital chaplains were changed.*

#### **Dean**

The Very Revd Colin Slee

#### **Canons Residentiary**

Canon Andrew Nunn

Canon Michael Hart

Canon Bruce Saunders

Canon Jane Steen

Canon Robert Titley

#### **Succentor**

The Revd Anna Macham

*I am willing to guess that all these decisions were finance-driven.*

*The entire site is, and always has been, in the control of the Cathedral Chapter (it was called the Cathedral Council until 2000 when all Cathedral Constitutions and Statutes were changed in a new law called the Cathedrals' Measure 1999.). The entire site remains consecrated ground. There is no intention of walking away from the Church's commitment to having a centre for worship here.*

*Last night I was asked why my predecessors never addressed this site properly.*

*Immediately after the war such records as we have, and they are few, indicate it was simply a matter of repair and survival for whatever could be salvaged. I don't know why Harold Frankham didn't. He always seems to me to have had his head screwed on the right way. He has died and there is no asking him. My hunch is that the sheer pressure of repair to the Cathedral Church and the changes on the riverside were enough both to occupy his time completely and distract him from anything more. My immediate predecessor was an historian and a don. Development of anything like this was simply not in his vocabulary.*

***The reasons*** for the Chapter's plans fall in to three categories; pastoral work, financial need, and legal obligations.

*The scheme we are presenting has a worship centre as an integral part, both indoors and outdoors. The Cathedral itself is unable to accommodate everything for the parish that the Chapter and the congregation would like to do. That means two things, first it needs more space and, second, it needs a lot more money. This scheme offers both an income resource and also the development of decent space where we can expand our work.*

*I will give you just six examples:*

*We have long been very conscious that Southwark has one of the highest under-age pregnancy rates, and the associated neo-natal death rate, in Europe, and a very high teenage pregnancy rate, needless to say most of these are to single parents and the Church has a good track record and experience helping young parents. We can draw on best practice.*

*We have recently been able to develop much better pastoral care from the church for the residents of Lucy Brown House, but we also know local authority provision is being reduced yet again, and we are acutely aware that there are many elderly people living at home for whom we would like to make provisions.*

*The Cathedral congregation has a developing youth club that is restricted because Cathedral site has restricted space.*

*There is nowhere suitable and available for mid week services for mothers and toddlers.*

*We have started an Al Anon group on Saturdays to support people with family members who are abusers, but we know we could do much more.*

*The congregation has indicated strongly that they want us to employ a youth chaplain. The Chapter agrees; such a person would be paid and housed entirely at Cathedral expense, like the Succentor is already, so we need more accommodation as well as revenue income. This scheme provides both revenue and accommodation.*

*Then there are issues of the security of this site and the garden. The Chapter has legal responsibility for the site, it is privately owned. I am mad keen about gardens, plants and flowers so I am very aware how much gardens can be appreciated. There is no intention of removing access to this garden for the community, but we plan to recover control. I get sporadic complaints about needles (I have picked up several myself) about puke, wayfarers fighting and frightening people and so on.*

*I know perfectly well how true these complaints are, because we have the same problems in the Cathedral churchyard itself and that is a far more closely monitored public area. Residents have helped maintain the garden for over thirty years, it has not been entirely at residents' expense, the Chapter has paid bills when asked to do so; it has always been a matter of the Chapter's goodwill that the garden is available. Eric Tucker used to bring bills in from time to time; I well recollect when I arrived here the first bill I authorised was to pay George Nicholson for something. The arrangement has been a matter of goodwill, the Chapter has allowed access and use and in exchange some people have worked in the garden, it seems to me entirely to have been a matter of fair exchange. It is not satisfactory, if anything really bad happened, the Chapter may be accountable, that being the case the Chapter needs to exercise greater control and be more satisfied that its responsibilities as owner are fulfilled. I often wonder if our insurers realise what a knife edge we are on.*

*I know the Cathedral Churchyards are hugely appreciated by tens of thousands of people. We maintain those, and provide a training ground for unemployed people learning horticulture at the same time. We think a similar formula can be worked here.*

*It is not surprising that, since 1942, the Chapter's legal responsibilities have changed in other ways.*

*I think it is not widely understood that the Church of England, even though it provides enormous resources and facilities to anyone and everyone who chooses to seek its help all over the country, receives absolutely no government money. In countries like Germany and Scandinavia, the church has a government budget. In France the government funds all conservation and preservation work on historic buildings, including all churches. None of that is available to the Church of England. In other words, everything the Church does it has to fund, even though many who receive its help give nothing to its work.*

*Secondly, people have this extraordinary idea that the Church Commissioners somehow are rich and the Church has millions at its disposal. The Church Commissioners are legally obliged to pay their income to clergy housing and stipends. Even with the resources they have, and even though they are one of the more successful investment institutions, they only manage about twenty per cent of clergy stipends and nearly twenty years ago they withdrew from all clergy housing for Cathedrals.*

*Thirdly, the Church Commissioners have only one obligation towards cathedrals. They must, by ecclesiastical law, pay the stipend of the dean and two canons, they pay a diminishing discretionary grant towards the costs of some essential lay staff. They are prevented from giving cathedrals more support and show every sign of withdrawing the discretionary help, Southwark's has been steadily declining for ten years.*

*So, every single cathedral has to stand on its own feet financially. Southwark's annual turn over is about two million pounds a year. Conservation and restoration work is additional. The present work on the roofs is scheduled to cost about £3.5 million over three years; that is all additional. So, on that basis alone, every Cathedral Chapter is looking for ways it can optimise its resources to create the best possible income streams. Developing this site is about as obvious as it can get.*

*Fourthly, Parliament changed the law regarding charitable foundations a few years ago, making it much tighter. Churches and cathedrals are each charitable institutions in their own right, they hold charitable status and obligations. The law is perfectly clear that the trustees of a charity must make the best financial income that they can from their charity's resources to further the aims and objects of the charity. We try to interpret this as 'optimising' resources, many argue we should actually 'maximise' resources. So, even if the Chapter did have an excess of income over expenditure, or great disposable reserve funds, it would be obliged to develop this site as an income yielding resource. In fact there is no excess, and there are no reserves, so development is very important. It won't yield any revenue income for the first years, but it will create the opportunity for expanded ministry and in due course it will become an income stream.*

*Finally, there is a parallel application for a clergy house on the site. When I came to Southwark I was astonished to discover a parish church cathedral (there are only fourteen) on which none of the staff had responsibility to look after the parish and congregation. I changed that and we created the post of Canon Pastor, more recently we accepted looking after St Hugh's congregation and parish as well. Ecclesiastical law is perfectly clear. Every parish priest must live inside their parish boundary, exceptions are rare and have to have the Bishop's permission and that is not permanent. We have been an exception; that implies that we will find a solution. This scheme will create on the spot housing for a Canon Pastor within the community and so strengthen the availability and knowledge considerably. The old vicarage is sub divided for flats for lay staff, If we were to think of using that we would have to build three more, so that is not a runner.*

*That's the background. There is a combination of legal obligations and constraints on the one hand and financial imperatives on the other. They themselves would form a compelling case for any cathedral chapter. It happens that the opportunity co-incides with a significantly increased congregation wanting to develop a bigger social and parochial work base. So the conjunction of the two aspirations makes this a very good time indeed.*

*AMEN.*

The following is a list of questions put to Colin Slee and the Cathedral team at the MONDAY meeting:

- Who owns All Hallows Vicarage and why can't this be used to house the Canon Pastor?
  - The Cathedral Chapter owns the vicarage. It is used to house members of Cathedral staff who would need to be re-housed if the Canon Pastor was to move into the house.
- How much will it cost to develop the flats?
  - Although the cost of development is not a planning matter the Cathedral team said that the rate of return on the capital expended would be much less than the normal 12-18% considered desirable by commercial developers. The site will be held as a long-term investment and there is no intention of selling the site after development.
- Why don't you convert the existing church into flats instead of building something new?
  - The cost of renovating the building would be prohibitive and the return would be too low to make the scheme viable.
- Why has it taken so long to develop the site? Why have there been no renovations since the recording studio was abandoned?
  - The recording studio had signed a repairing lease but they had not maintained the site properly. There has not been enough money to maintain this site as the Cathedral Chapter would like.
- What will happen to the mural that used to be in the old church?
  - It will be carefully removed and used in the new worship centre. Presently, we believe it is hidden behind a brick wall installed by the recording studio.
- Is it true that this site did not used to be in the Cathedral parish?
  - All Hallows church has always been in the Cathedral parish but the areas surrounding it used not to be. Since 2005 it has been.
- What is lacking in this area in terms of housing? Why are you saying you are addressing a need for housing when there is no such need?
  - Figures produced show that there is a shortfall in all housing types and sizes.
  - Cllr Noakes confirmed this to be the case with 12,000+ people on the housing waiting list.
- There is need for social housing in this area. How will the Cathedral be letting the flats?
  - Flats will be let on a commercial basis as the Cathedral Chapter is legally bound to optimise its income from the site.
- Someone commented that he had brought his children to the gardens since they were babies. It is a lovely place and local residents have done a fantastic job in looking after them. As the rate of return from the development is so low, surely there is no real pressure to develop. Or, why not just knock down the old church, leave the facade, and rebuild a new single storey building instead?
  - Because it would not be viable to develop it in this way.
- What will the Cathedral do to ensure the survival of the garden? Why can't it be handed over to the residents or BOST?
  - The site cannot be handed over as it is consecrated ground. The Dean said it was his duty as Rector to maintain worship on the site.
- One resident read out statement from the Ethical Investment Commission of the Church of England which lists five criteria for investment. He argued that this development does not meet those criteria due to the consequent loss of light to surrounding properties, loss of privacy, and increased noise. The scheme was not sensitive to local opinion. Previous offers of help to mediate by Simon Hughes, MP, had not been taken up by the Cathedral. It was good to see that there has been a meeting at last but the challenge remains for the Cathedral to get together with local residents to find a scheme that satisfies both local concerns, including preserving the garden, and at the same time delivers an income to the Cathedral.
- Will you be cutting one social housing unit in this scheme? Will you re-house George Nicholson, resident at 6 Copperfield Street?
  - There is a need to house a clergyman in the parish. The occupant of 6 Copperfield Street has signed a tenancy that requires him to move out if the property is needed to house a clergyman. 6 Copperfield Street is not a social housing unit.

The Archdeacon of Southwark handed the chairmanship over to Cllr Noakes. Cllr Noakes explained that Simon Hughes was unable to be present tonight but would co-chair the meeting on Tuesday. Cllr Noakes then introduced a presentation by Roger Molyneux, the architect.

During the presentation, concerns were raised over loss of light to adjoining flats and houses. The Cathedral team explained that the development was well within the daylight and sunlight guidelines but residents of Thorold House maintained that the new building will reduce light to their flats.

Roger Molyneux indicated that he was open to suggestions for re-modelling the wall of the development that faces Thorold and Trelawney Houses. There are different ways of cladding the upper part of the building if the aluminium used on the top floor was unpopular.

Following the presentation, the following questions were asked:

- Why is the highest part of the building closest to the flats in Thorold House?
  - The building is no closer to Thorold House than the present church and the building has been carefully designed to fit into a light envelope inside of which the effect on light will be minimal.
- Will the garden be closed during construction?
  - No, it should be possible to build without closing the garden.
- How many metres higher than the church is the new building?
  - About 5 metres higher (approx 16 feet)
- What if you don't get planning permission? Will you sell to a developer?
  - No. The site will not be sold as it is consecrated ground.
- Who is financing the development?
  - That is not a planning issue.
- Not once has the Cathedral engaged with the community and those who care for the garden. There has hardly ever been a clergyman on site.
  - The Dean replied that this was not true.
- How long will the construction take?
  - About 18 months.
- It looks as if you have just decided on the maximum available space to build within and then filled it.
- Why does the Dean say in his annual report that the scheme received a favourable response at the Bankside Residents Forum?
  - After some discussion, The Canon Pastor, Bruce Saunders, explained that the meeting the Dean was referring to was a meeting of the BRF Management Group. Cathy Bowman, who minutes these meetings, confirmed that the scheme had been discussed and that members agreed the present plans were an improvement on previous designs. They had cautiously welcomed this improvement but urged further public consultation.

Cllr Noakes asked for a show of hands on whether or not people supported the scheme.

In favour – 1

Against – 33

Neutral – 8

The Cathedral team did not vote.

The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

## TUESDAY MEETING

Simon Hughes, MP, co-chaired the meeting alongside the Venerable Michael Ipgrave, Archdeacon of Southwark. Mr Hughes was not able to be there for the first part of the meeting but arrived at 8.15pm.

During the initial presentation by the Dean there were a number of interruptions from people who felt that the meeting did not constitute a consultation but was a presentation. The Dean was asked why he had not met with local residents to discuss plans for the site earlier. The Dean said that the purpose of these meetings was to invite comments on the design being proposed. Someone said that they did not wish to comment on the design but to object to the whole scheme.

Mr Hughes joined the meeting and explained his own personal involvement in the scheme in the past including a "fairly public falling out" with the Dean and his subsequent resignation from the Cathedral Council. Nevertheless, he appealed for quiet so that the Dean could complete his presentation. Having done so, the following questions were put to the Cathedral team:

- What consultation has there been since the last planning application was rejected?
  - Many ideas have been incorporated into the latest scheme following Chapter, congregation and project working party discussions together with feedback from the planning officers. People have had the chance to comment in the past four years. All comments by residents received from the last process were considered.
- How long will it take the Cathedral to re-coup its investment in the site?
  - About 15-20 years.
- If it takes so long why bother to develop this site?
  - Because the Chapter has a legal requirement to optimise its resources and this scheme will satisfy this requirement.
- Is the development really going to go ahead?
  - Although it takes 20 years to re-coup the investment, 20 years is a short time in the church's history in Southwark which stretches back 1400 years. The Chapter aims to build for the long-term.
- Do you have the funding to develop the site?
  - Yes, we have methods to raise the money.
- Referring to the comment that Scandinavian, French and German governments pay for maintenance of church buildings, a member of the audience from Sweden pointed out that this is not the case in his country.
  - The Dean acknowledged that this was no longer the case (following changes in the last few years) but it remained so in Denmark and Norway.
- What is the link between teenage pregnancies and this site?
  - Developing the site will provide funds to enable the Cathedral to work actively in support of people affected by teenage pregnancy.
- Why don't the clergy live in Council houses among the people they serve?
  - The Dean said that in his first parish in Norwich, the City Council had housed clergy in council houses on the estates they served. He had asked Southwark Council to do the same when he arrived 15 years ago but they refused.
- Has the management of the garden been costed into the scheme?
  - The Cathedral uses Walworth Garden Farm to maintain its churchyard and would hope to agree a service level agreement with them or a similar provider. This will also be covered by the Section 106 agreement.
- Isn't a four-bedroom house too large for the Canon Pastor?
  - The Canon Pastor's house conforms to the Green Book standard which dictates the size and shape of clergy housing across the country mindful that clergy houses perform both public and private functions and clergy must be treated equally by the Commissioners wherever they serve.

Roger Molyneux presented his scheme for the site and took the following questions:

- If the land is consecrated, how can you build flats on it?
  - Developing the site will generate necessary revenue to fund church activities on the site.
- Can the top floor of the development be removed where the windows look straight across into the flats in Thorold and Trelawney House?
  - We will consider alternative ideas for this part of the development. The requirement for window to window distance in Southwark is 25m. This development more than satisfies this.
- When it is dark or overcast will this make flats in Thorold and Trelawney House even darker?
  - No because light study calculations show that the change in light level caused by this development will not be perceivable by the human eye.
- Will the garden be protected and will the trees be left in place?
  - Yes.
- Will you put in writing that the garden will be available to the community in perpetuity?
  - We intend to keep the garden as a public space as part of the planning application.
- There are 9 flats in the scheme plus a Canon Pastor's house which makes 10. Why then is there no social housing provision?
  - There are nine additional units and therefore social housing will not apply. The Council Planning Officers have confirmed this.
- Why do the Church Commissioners, with all their wealth and assets, want to make a profit at the expense of residents in this area?

- This development is nothing to do with the Church Commissioners. All cathedrals have to stand on their own feet financially. They do not receive Commissioners' money other than that outlined in the Dean's presentation.
- Simon Hughes confirmed that the Commissioners and cathedral were separate entities.
- When will the planning application be submitted?
  - In 2 or 3 months' time. Residents will be notified by the Council during the statutory consultation period.
- Will you consider modifications to the design?
  - Yes.
- Were you made aware of objections to the last planning application?
  - Yes.
- Are you prepared to meet a representative group of local residents to discuss details of the scheme?
  - Yes.
- Something of the tranquillity of the garden will be lost if this scheme goes ahead. How busy will the worship centre be?
  - All events in the worship centre will be under the supervision of Cathedral staff. It is impossible to say how busy the centre will be but it will be available 7 days a week.
- The new building is described as "lower than the existing building at the east end". Does this mean lower than the roof level or lower than the spire?
  - Lower than the spire. The Dean asked if there was affection for the spire? There was a resounding "Yes". The Cathedral team will look into options for retaining it.
- Will you support your planning application with details of the usage of the common spaces?
  - Yes, that will form part of the application.
- Why can't some of the new building be sunk into the ground?
  - It is extremely expensive to build under ground and the scheme would not be viable. There are also issues concerning the water table and possible flooding.
- Will there be parking spaces for residents?
  - No.
- Won't the activities of the worship space bring a lot of traffic to the site?
  - We believe most people will use public transport to reach the site.
- What will the amphitheatre outside the worship space be used for?
  - It will be like The Scoop outside City Hall. Its use will be governed by noise controls.
- There is no logic to developing the site. Why not refurbish the existing building?
  - There is no intention of selling the site and the restoration of the existing building is not viable.
- How long will the construction take?
  - About 18 months.
- Will the Dean agree to meet representatives of the residents to talk through options for the site that could be viable? Last night he said "no". Is there now an opportunity to do so?
  - The Cathedral team are happy to meet a group of residents to discuss alternative plans for the site. Residents agreed to supply a short list of names of those willing to join the group to discuss plans further.

Residents asked for a vote on the plans.

Those who do not want to see ANY development if the site – 1

Those who do not want to see residential development of the site – 19

Those supportive of the present scheme – 2

Those opposed to the present scheme – 25

The Cathedral team did vote.

The meeting closed at 10.05pm.