Form 4A (Rule 6.2)
Public Notice (general form)

In the Consistory Court of the Diocese of St Albans In the parish of Sawbridgeworth
Church of Sawbridgeworth, Great St Mary

NOTICE IS GIVEN that we are applying to the Consistory Court of the diocese for permission to carry out the following:

(Describe the works or other proposals in the same way as in the faculty petition)

The proposal is to open the west door, install a temporary ramp and handrail, lower the choir stage, re-instate the path from the west door through to the Nave, and move the existing furniture around. This will enable fully accessible entrance for all to the church through one door. This is temporary and can be easily fully reversed. It does not impact historical fixtures or fittings of the church.

Copies of the relevant plans and documents may be examined at Parish Office and on a publicly accessible website at https://sawbridgeworthchurch.org.uk

(If changes to a church are proposed, a copy of the petition and of any designs, plans, photographs and other documents that were submitted with it must be displayed in the church or at another place where they may be conveniently inspected by the public. If the petition is submitted through an online system, those documents must also be publicly available for inspection online.)

Petitioners:
(Each petitioner to give name and office held in block capitals)

1. MRS GILLIAN SQUIRE - CHURCHWARDEN
2. REV'D DR SARA BATTS-NEAL - MINISTER
3. MR ANTHONY HEARD - CHURCHWARDEN

Date 08/10/2026

If you wish to object to any of the works or proposals you should send a letter or email stating the grounds of your objection to The Diocesan Registrar at St Albans Diocesan Registry, Winckworth Sherwood LLP, Arbor, 255 Blackfriars Road, LONDON, SE1 9AX or by email to stalbansregistry@wslaw.co.uk, so that your letter reaches the registrar not later than 08 November 2026.

A letter of objection must include your name and address and state whether you live in the parish and/or your name is entered on the church electoral roll of the parish or any other basis on which you have an interest in the matter.

PROPOSAL FOR TEMPORARY REORDERING (PHASE 0)

Choir Vestry, West Door Accessibility & Processional Route

An Inclusive, Sustainable, and Reversible Interim Scheme Aligned with the Long-Term Reimagination Plan

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1. Executive Summary & Core Purpose

This proposal outlines a cost-effective, fully reversible, and sustainable reordering of the choir vestry space and West Door entrance. Designated as Phase 0, this interim scheme reopens the West Door as a unified, step-free processional entrance while the parish awaits long-term structural decisions (including the potential relocation of the historic font).

By reorganising the choir staging, recycling and re-using the removed timber for the project including an accessibility ramp, and rationalising storage, we can reactivate this historic entrance at virtually zero material cost. The proposal protects all mechanical and organ systems, complies with Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) conservation guidelines, and uncovers long-hidden heritage assets.

2. Core Objectives

- **Inclusive Access:** Reopening the West Door creates a single, dignified entrance for wheelchair users, parents with pushchairs, and the entire congregation, eliminating spatial or social exclusion.
- **Restored Liturgical Vista:** Restores the traditional central processional axis. Worshippers entering through the West Door are immediately greeted by an unobstructed view down the medieval nave to the high altar.
- **Interim Progression:** Allows significant benefits whilst detailed master plans of the main re-imagining proposals are finalised, permissions obtained and significant funding and grants raised.
- **Decluttering & Safety:** Rationalises vestry storage to create a functional, safe environment for choir, servers, and flower arrangers while reducing fire hazards.
- **Resource Stewardship:** Reuses 100% of the removed high-quality staging timber to build the ramp, keeping material waste at zero.

3. Technical Overview of Works

3.1 Choir Staging & Central Path

• **Lowering Staging:** The raised choir staging will be lowered to a single step, matching the existing historic step level in the vestry to maintain floor continuity.

• **Exposing the Path:** The staging will be split into two freestanding side units, uncovering the original 1.20m–1.24m wide tiled path leading directly from the West Door into the nave.

• **Uncovering Heritage Assets:** Removing the central staging and curtain exposes the historic Hewytt Monument to public view for the first time in decades.

3.2 Accessibility Ramp & UK Building Regulations

A temporary timber ramp—constructed entirely from salvaged staging wood—will bridge the level change between the West Door threshold and the main floor.

Feature	Regulation Guidance (Doc M / BS 8300-1)	Proposed Interim Scheme
Clear Width	1500mm standard for new builds.	1200mm – 1240mm: Fully compliant as a 'reasonable adjustment' under the Equality Act 2010. Matches the door opening and tiled path without damaging historic woodwork.
Gradient	1:12 (short runs) to 1:15 (medium runs).	1:12 to 1:15: Delivers safe, independent wheelchair and pram access within tower spatial limits.
Landings	Minimum 1500mm clear level rest landings.	1200mm – 1500mm: Top and bottom level landings placed clear of the inward door swing.
Safety	Slip-resistant, 100mm upstands, contrasting edges.	Finished with slip-resistant coating, contrasting visual edges, and 100mm safety upstands on open sides.

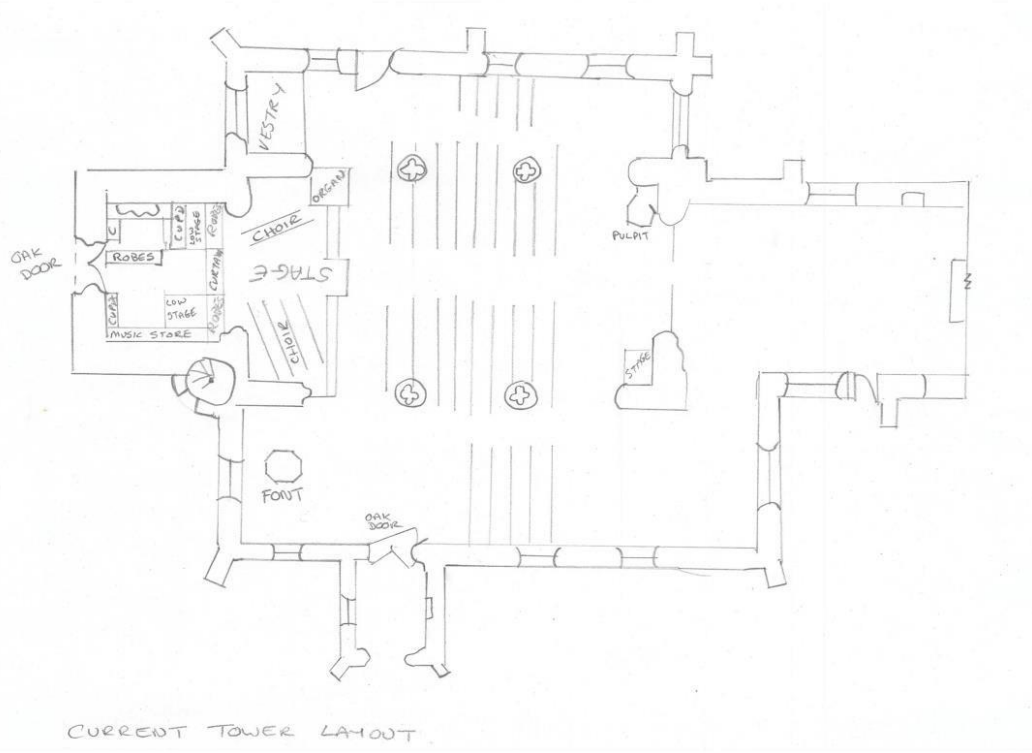
3.3 Storage Rationalisation

• **Music & Robes:** Sheet music consolidates beneath existing pigeonholes and metal filing cabinets. Wardrobes rotate 90 degrees with internal rail modifications; standalone hanging rails are removed. Infrequently used robes move to external storage.

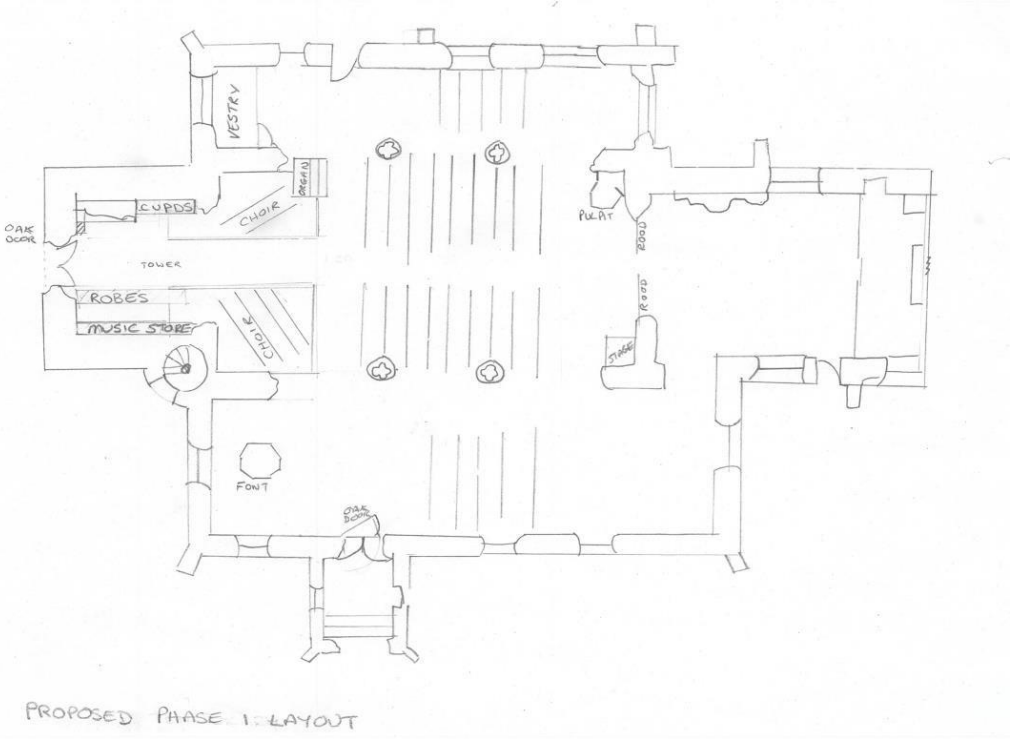
• **Seasonal & Supplies:** Crib items, large flower stands, and seasonal storage move to external storage.

4. Spatial Layouts & Visual Comparison

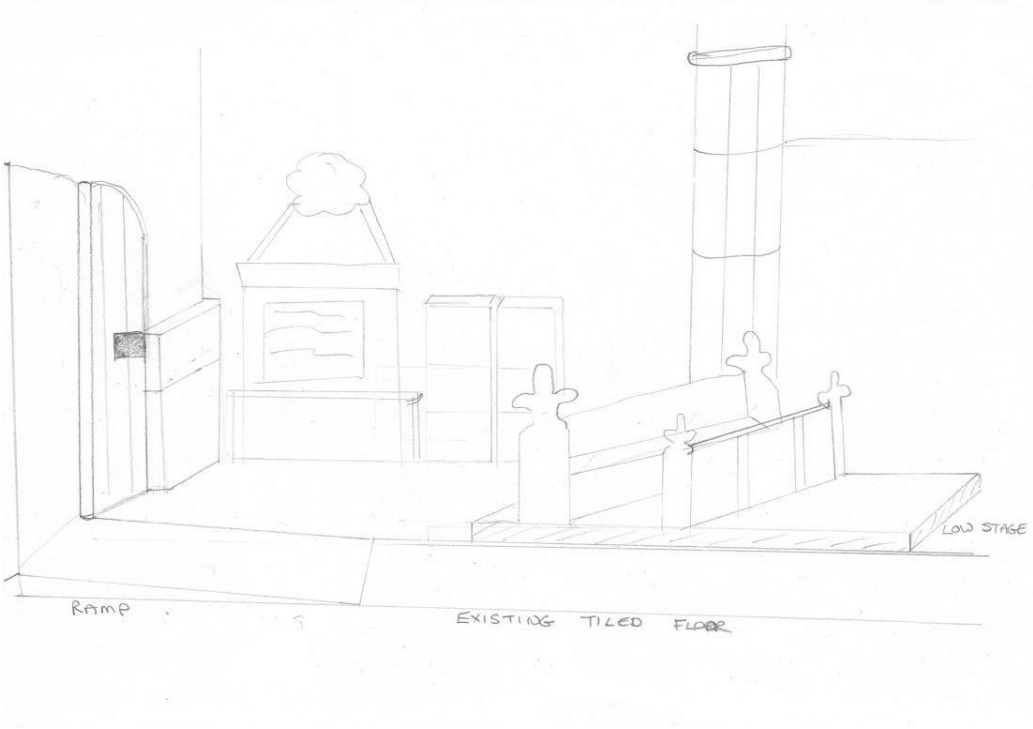
- **Figure 1 (Current Layout):** Shows the solid choir stage blocking the central archway, with heavy curtains, cluttered storage, and the West Door unusable.

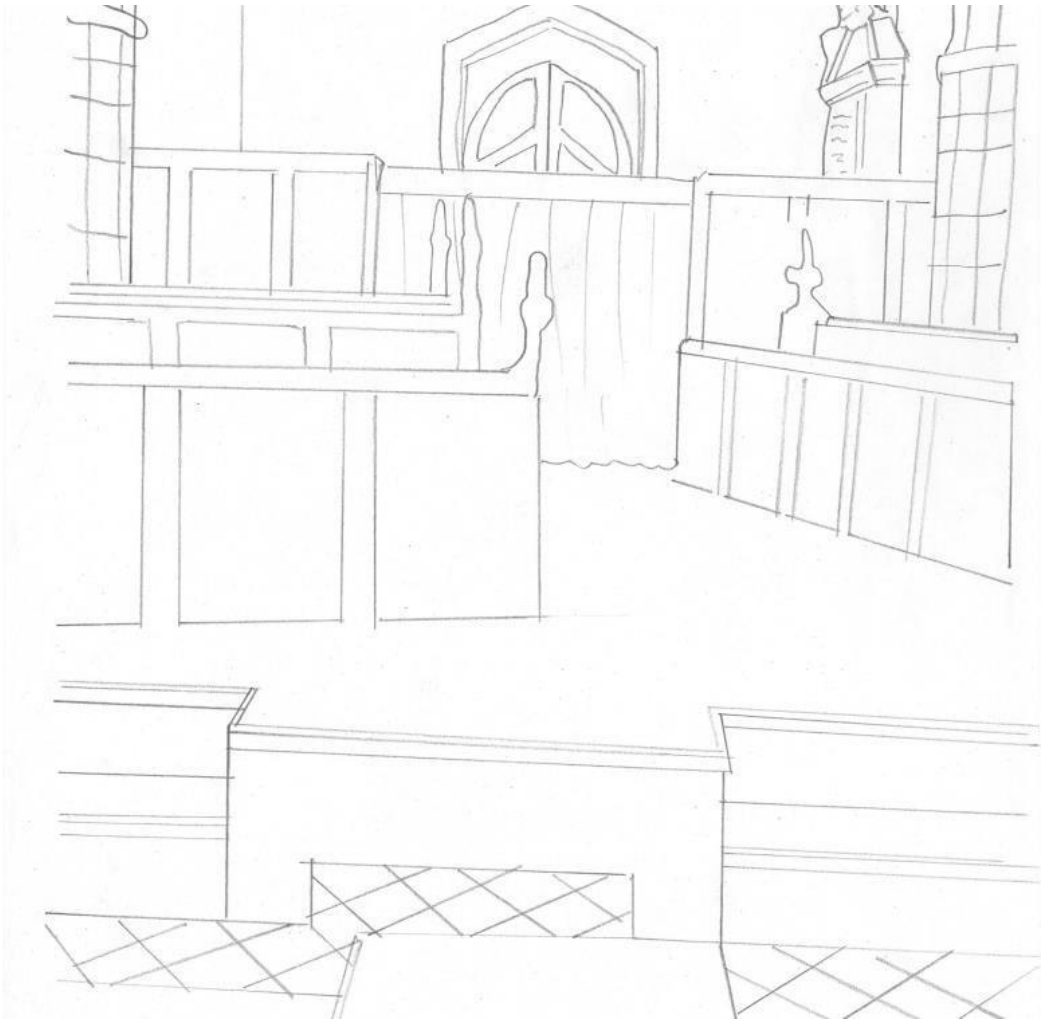


- **Figure 2 (Proposed Interim Layout):** Highlights the split low staging, opened central processional path, rotated wardrobes, and untouched positions for the Font and Organ.



- **Figure 3 (Cross Section):** Demonstrates the smooth transition from the West Door threshold down the timber ramp to the original tiled floor and low choir steps. Please note the handrail is not shown in this diagram.



- **Figures 4 & 5 (Before & After Impressions):** Illustrate the visual transformation from a dark, obstructed storage space into a light-filled, open, and welcoming processional entrance.
- 

- This is a drawing of the current layout

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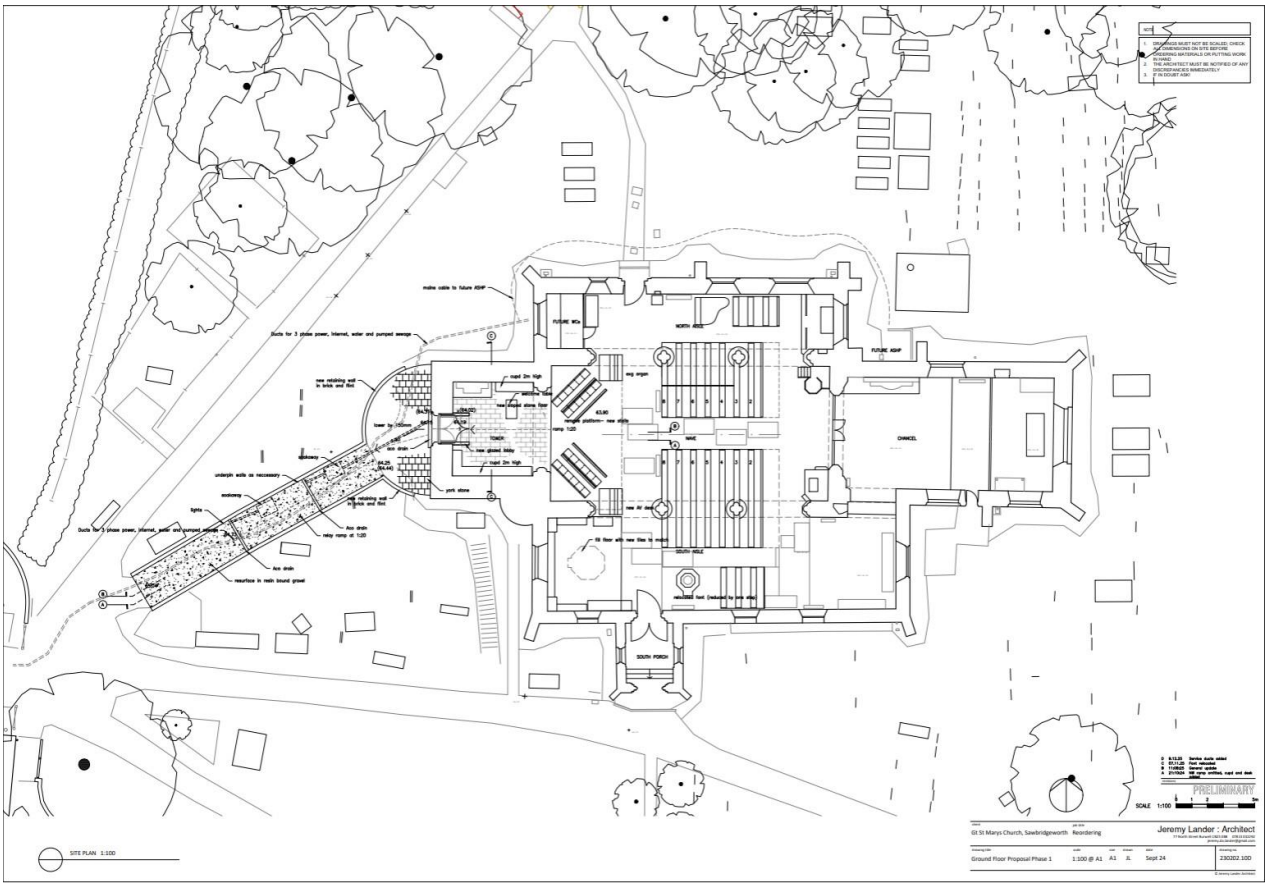
- This is a drawing of the proposed layout

5. Alignment with Long-Term Reimagination (RI) Plan

The Phase 0 scheme acts as a non-obstructive stepping stone toward the long-term plan (prepared by Jeremy Lander, RIBA):



1. Establishes Flow: Introduces the central processional axis and side-seating flow early, allowing the congregation to adapt before major works begin.

2. Zero Wasted Capital: Uses recycled materials and non-permanent fixtures. No work will need costly demolition when future elements (e.g., glazed screen, accessible WCs) are installed. In the event of any additional timber being necessary this will be sustainably sourced.

3. Leaves Complex Decisions Open: Leaves the historic Font in its current position, avoiding delay while formal faculty and Canon Law assessments for font relocation take place.

4. Impact on Re-Imagining: The work proposed is not contingent upon, essential to, nor financially competing with the main Re-Imagining programme and is independently funded.

6. Heritage Impact & Fabric Protection

> **Conservation Principle: No article of historic or artistic interest is removed or disposed of.** *All works are fully reversible.*

- **Zero External or Groundwork Impact:** No excavations or external masonry alterations are required, avoiding any risk to historic burials or archaeology.
- **Freestanding Construction:** Staging and ramp structures are freestanding; no bolts, screws, or fixings will be driven into C13 columns, historic stonework, or original tile floors.
- **Services & Fabric Protection:** Staging height remains sufficient to leave heating pipework, electrical wiring, and organ blower mechanics completely untouched.
- **Mitigation Measures:** A protective, breathable membrane will be laid underneath the ramp to prevent floor friction/moisture. Heavy timber cutting will occur off-site to protect the pipe organ from dust. Symmetrical safety upstands will be painted in a visually contrasting colour.
- **Bat Roost:** The PCC is currently undertaking an ongoing bat survey. It is aware of the care needed. This project is at ground level. In the event of evidence of bat activity, the work will immediately stop and the bat survey team consulted.

7. Delivery, Resourcing & Costs

- **Timing:** Estimated at approximately one week of dedicated labour, ensuring minimal disruption to regular church services.
- **Workforce:** Skilled parish volunteers will execute the joinery and relocation; external specialists will be tendered only if required.
- **Financial Outlay:** Minimal cost to the PCC due to 100% recycled timber usage and volunteer labour.

8. Approvals Sought

1. Parochial Church Council (PCC): Formal approval of the Phase 0 temporary reordering scheme.

2. Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC): Submission of this proposal alongside updated Statements of Need and Significance to the St Albans Diocesan Portal.