St Monans Auld Kirk

Architectural Report | RIBA Stage 2 | November 2024

OCA

Contents

This document to be read in conjunction with
- Munro Allison Conservation Statement
- Adams Napier Condition Survey
- Athena Solutions Business Plan

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

One of the oldest churches in Scotland, St Monans Auld Kirk is a significant and stunning historic building in Fife's East Neuk. The Category A-listed building is currently owned by the Church of Scotland, however, regular worship in the Kirk ceased in 2022, and the Fife Presbytery plan to sell or lease the Auld Kirk by the end of 2027.

This study was commissioned by Fife Historic Buildings Trust (FHBT) on behalf of St Monans Auld Kirk Enterprise (SMAKE), a group of local community representatives in the village of St Monans in the East Neuk of Fife, who plan to take on ownership of the Auld Kirk. In response to the Church of Scotland's decision to categorise the property for disposal by 2027, SMAKE, in partnership with FHBT, has carried out community consultation and formed a vision for owning and running the Auld Kirk as a community asset.

This study is supported by the Scottish Land Fund, the Architectural Heritage Fund, and Historic Environment Scotland.

1.2 Scope and design team

Using the principle of 'conservation through use', this document sets out an architectural vision for the future of St Monans Auld Kirk; the conservation of this important heritage asset, the preservation of its unique character, and its continued operation as a significant resource at the heart of its local community.

Working in close collaboration with both Fife Historic Buildings Trust and SMAKE, as well as business planning consultants Athena Solutions, we have developed a robust strategy for the future of St Monans Auld Kirk which is inspiring, enterprising, and both environmentally and financially sustainable.

The design team comprises:

OCA Studio with **Munro Allison**
architecture and heritage building consultancy

Narro Associates
structural and civil engineering

Lùths Services
M&E engineering, sustainability consultants

Thomson Gray
cost consultants

1.3 Key objectives

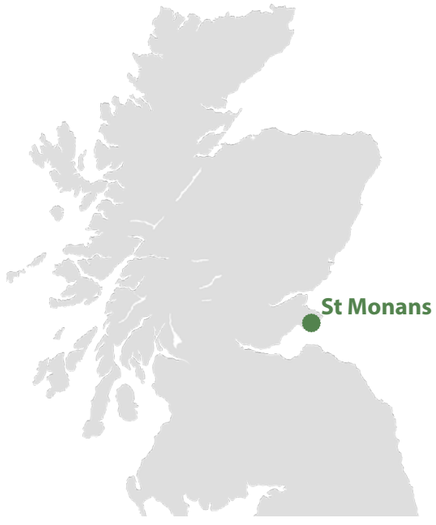
A Project Viability Appraisal carried out by Fife Historic Buildings Trust in 2023 noted SMAKE's overarching aim of acquiring and managing St Monans Auld Kirk for the benefit of the community of St Monans.

Plans for the future of the Auld Kirk include:

- A social hub and cafe serving locals, tourists, and walkers on the Fife Coastal Path
- A space to hire for those of all faiths and none to celebrate important life events
- A space which can continue to hold village celebrations such as the crowning of the St Monans Sea Queen, as well as Christmas, Easter and Harvest worship services
- A performance venue and recording space
- A place to find out about the history of the Auld Kirk and the wider area; to enjoy the beautiful architecture and stunning setting, and a place for contemplation
- A sustainable building, including local materials and constructions, sensitive building fabric upgrades, and the integration of renewable and sustainable technologies

Document issue

- September 2024	Draft for comment
- November 2024	RIBA Stage 2



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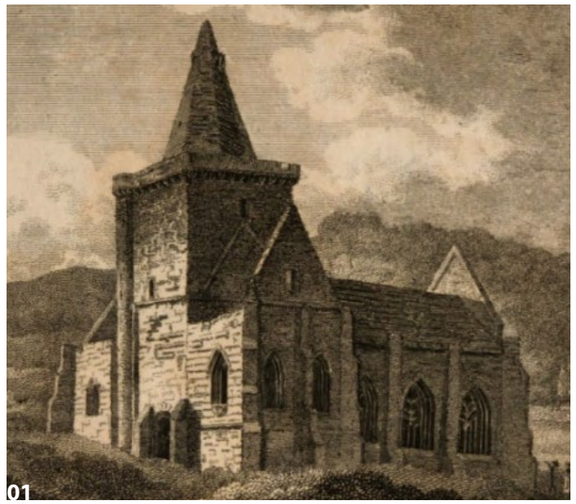
2. Understanding the Site

2.1 Heritage Overview

St Monans Auld Kirk is a landmark medieval building visible from many miles around thanks to its prominent coastal clifftop site. An A- listed building, much of its fabric dates from the 1360s, making it one of the oldest churches in Scotland.

There is evidence that a shrine to St Monan existed on the site prior to King David's II commissioning of the current structure in 1362-70. One medieval scholar attributes King David's interest in the site to a visit to the shrine which brought about his dramatic and miraculous recovery from an arrow wound; another says the commission was owed to his deliverance from a shipwreck in the Forth. Ownership was transferred to the Dominicans in 1471 by King James III. In 1544 the church was burned by English invaders, but restoration followed and it became a parish church in 1649. At this time the transepts were sealed off and only the chancel was used for worship; the pre-reformation altars were removed, the pulpit was on the south wall, and galleries were installed to the east and north.

A major renovation was undertaken by William Burn in 1826-8, restoring the then-roofless transepts and reuniting the building into one space. The internal floor level of the Kirk was significantly lowered; the excavation works were said to have uncovered a number of burials within the north transept. The focal point of worship was moved to the crossing, and Burn also made alterations to the locations of entrances as well as adding small extensions to the north and east of the building. An internal porch, or narthex, was added to the east end of the chancel at a later date.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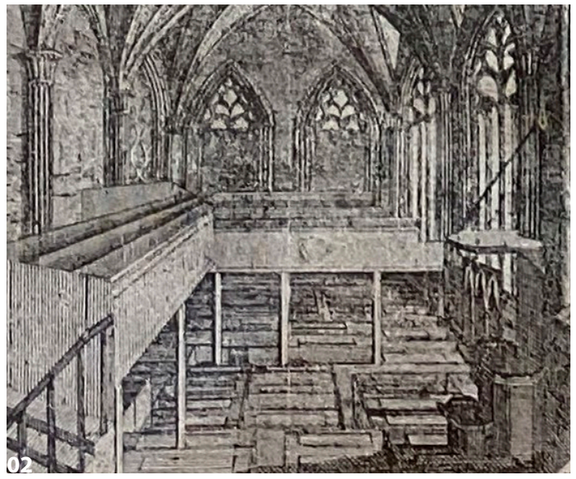
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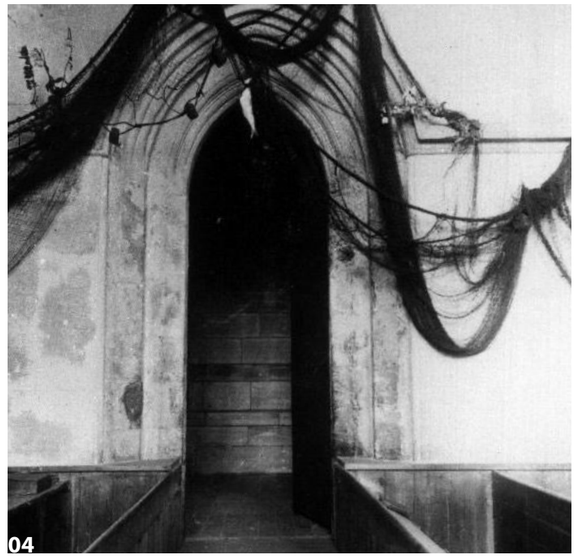
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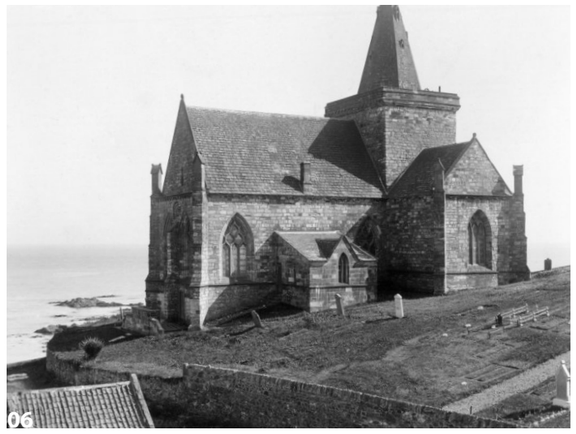
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01: Etching by P. Nasmyth, 1807, showing roofless transepts and former arched entrance to west elevation; **02**: Drawing of chancel, 1802, showing gallery and south pulpit ©HES Canmore
03: Photograph, 1866, showing west window installed in 1820s restoration ©HES Canmore; **04**: North door to chancel, pre-1900, decorated for harvest celebration, with lower floor level ©SCRAN
05: East entrance (created 1820s, infilled 1950s), with internal entrance porch or narthex; **06**: Photograph, 1890s, showing former session room in place of current vestry ©HES Canmore

2.2 Wider context

The Auld Kirk sits just to the south western edge of St Monans, a coastal village of roughly 1,100 inhabitants in Fife's East Neuk. It occupies a prominent position on high ground, with dramatic views out across the Forth estuary. The Kirk is surrounded by a historic burial ground, walled on all sides. To the northern boundary there is a small car park, and to the west lies the new burial ground. A small burn runs along the eastern edge of the site, which is crossed by three small bridges, one of which is suitable for vehicles.

The Auld Kirk was formerly the parish church of St Monans, however, regular worship has now moved to the church hall in the centre of the village. St Monans has a town hall and public library, a primary school, two restaurants, a cafe, and a couple of takeaways. The nearby Bowhouse food hub is a five minute drive away, and holds regular weekend food markets with a range of local traders.

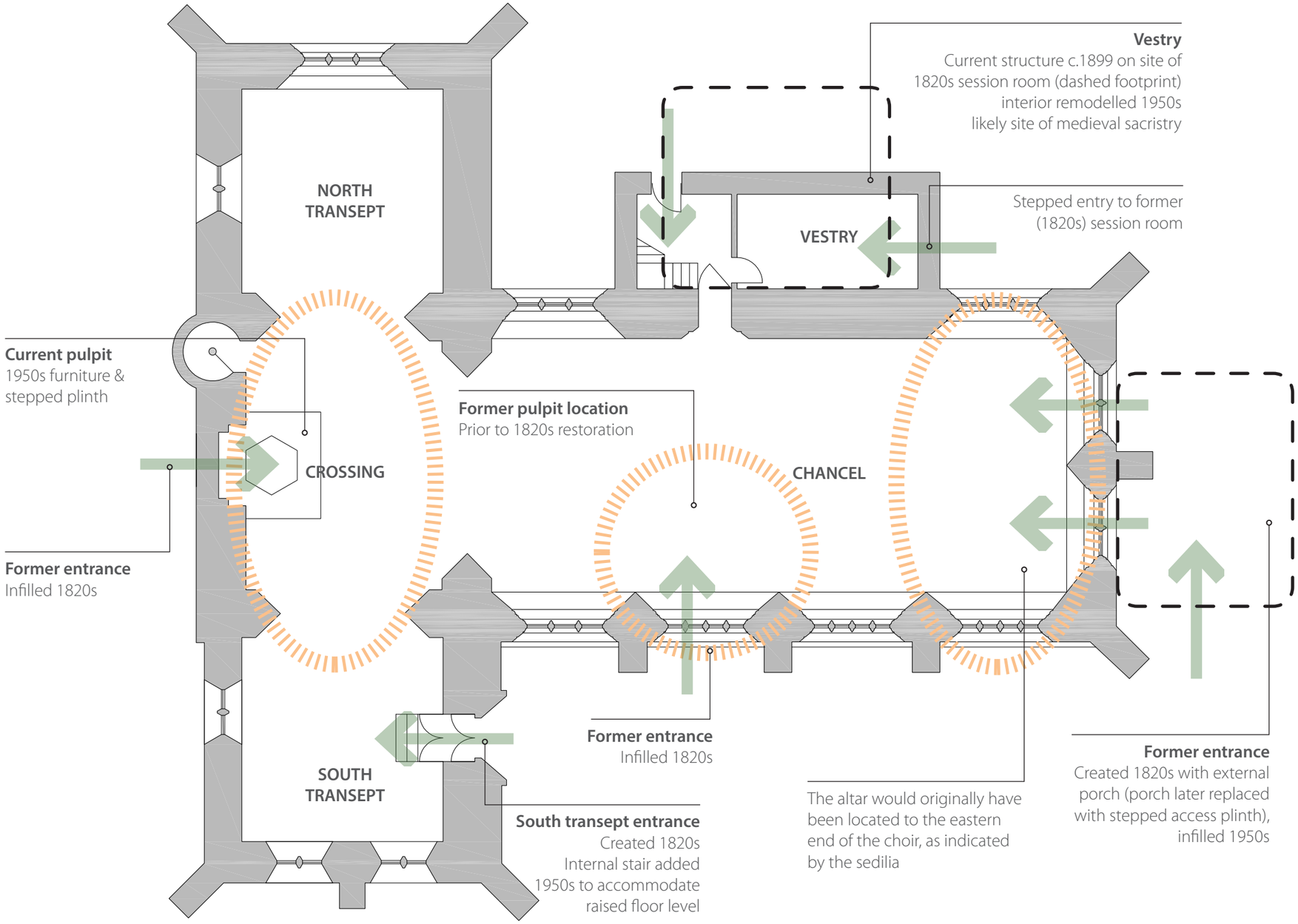
A popular section of the Fife Coastal Path, a walking route between Kincardine and Newburgh, runs along the southern boundary of the site, and the Auld Kirk is a key point of interest on the route.

2.3 Historic development

The built fabric of the Auld Kirk has undergone multiple changes over the centuries to adapt to changes in use and worship practices.

The adjacent plan shows the known locations of entrances and focal spaces that have existed at various points in the building's history. It is likely that the original focus for worship would have been to the eastern end of the building, as is indicated by the **sedilia** (seating for worship leaders usually found to the southern side of the altar) which are visible in the south wall of the **chancel**. There was probably originally intended to be a **nave** constructed to the west to complete the cruciform layout, however, it is unlikely that construction of this was ever carried out.

During the restoration works in the 1820s significant changes were made to the exterior of the Kirk, including infilling existing entrances and creation of new doorways, as well as small extensions to the north and east elevations.



2.4 The Auld Kirk today

Around the turn of the 20th century the session room to the north was replaced with the masonry vestry we see today. The entrance porch to the east has also been removed, with its doors infilled during a programme of further renovations and alterations carried out in the 1950s by Ian G. Lindsay.

The interior of the Kirk was whitewashed in the1950s, when decorative plasterwork from the 19th century restoration was stripped off, and the internal floor level raised. An electric underfloor heating network was installed (now defunct), and quarry tile floor coverings used throughout, with the exception of the dais to the east end of the chancel which is in caithness flagstones salvaged from the earlier floor. The pews and many of the internal furnishings also date from this time. Burn's tall window to the west was reduced in height, making the crossing a much darker space.

During the 2010s the congregation raised money for further repairs, mainly to the window traceries dating from the Burn restoration, with works overseen by conservation architect Steven Newsom.

While the internal finishes and furnishings from the 1950s works have an undoubtable impact on the current internal appearance of the Kirk, the history of the building is still visible through its built fabric. The medieval sedilia is a prominent feature, as are the piscina and aumbries, while the traceried windows bathe the chancel in natural light, although the effect is slightly diminished by the bulky presence of the organ installed at the eastern end in 1995. The model ships to the crossing speak to the area's seafaring past, and one of the heraldic shields visible to the gothic vaulted ceiling to the chancel bears the arms of Sir William Dishington, the master of works during the Kirk's construction almost 700 years ago.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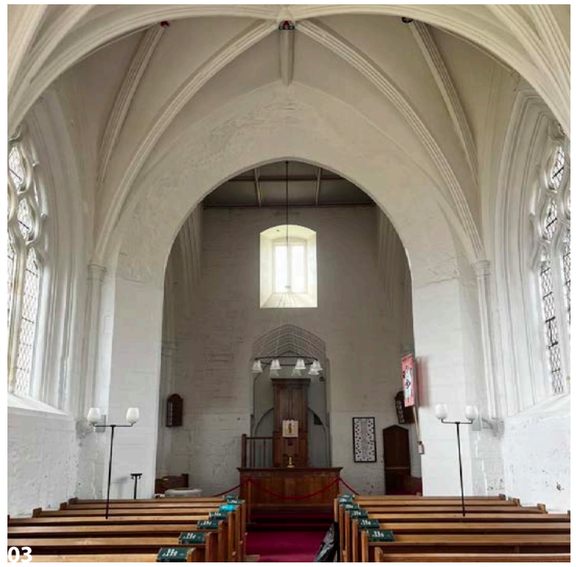
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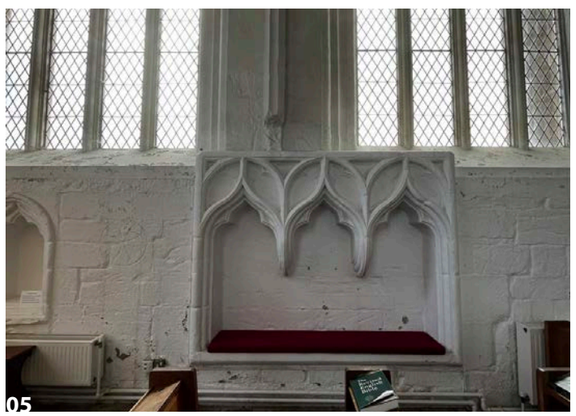
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01: West elevation, with stair tower & infilled masonry to former openings; **02**: Crossing, looking north towards chancel door, with model ship; **03**: Crossing from chancel, with gothic vaults, and pulpit and infilled former arched entrance behind; **04**: Vestry on north elevation; **05**: Sedilia to south wall of chancel; **06**: North transept, with 1950s barrel-vaulted ceiling

3. Design Approach

3.1 Developing the brief

Initial discussions focused on SMAKE's vision for the future of the Auld Kirk, and how the various requirements of the brief could be organised within the existing building.

The overarching aspirations for the future of St Monans Auld Kirk were noted as being:

- bringing the Auld Kirk back into use for the local community
- conserving this important historic building for future generations
- generating income to maintain the property as a self-sufficient resource for community benefit

In order to maximise financial viability and benefit and access for all members of the local community, it was recognised that a wide range of uses should be considered for the Auld Kirk. The varying requirements of the different proposed uses were discussed to identify where overlaps in provision of supporting facilities could be found, in order to increase the efficiency of any auxiliary spaces and service provision.

The proposed uses for St Monans Auld Kirk are:

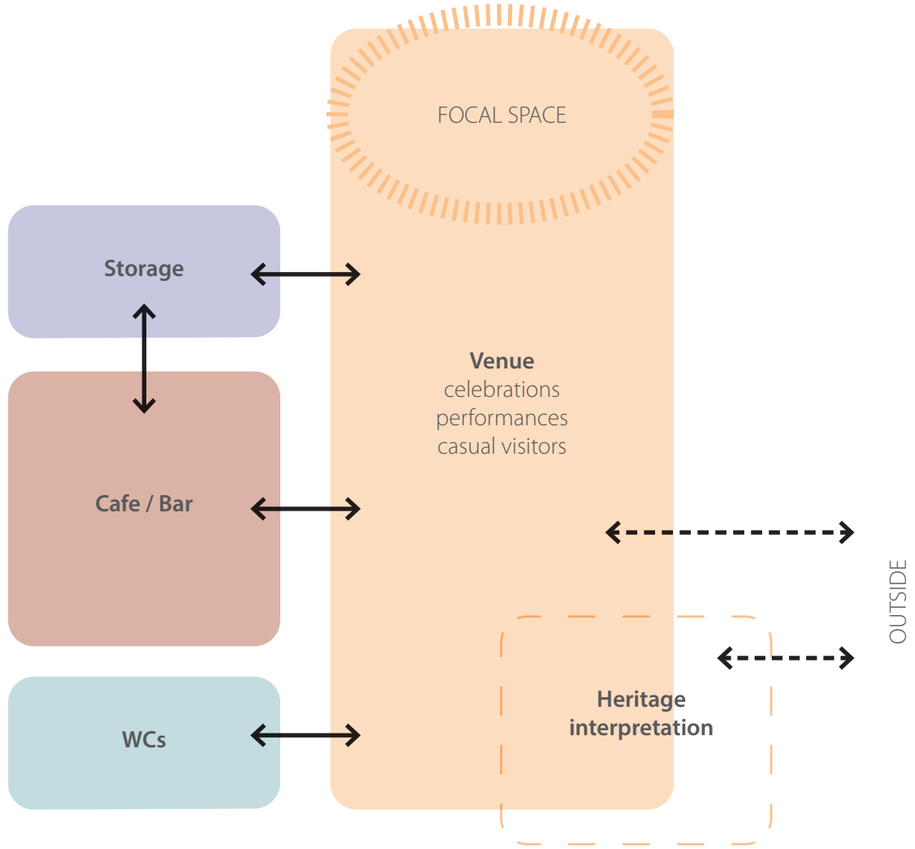
Venue hire for weddings & life events
Primarily focusing on ceremony and post-ceremony drinks / photos, with option for external catering for smaller weddings.
Requirements: Gathering space / focal space / WCs / bar

Hosting concerts & performances / services
Music events, key religious services, talks
Requirements: Gathering space / focal space / WCs / bar / audiovisual system

Community cafe / bar
Serving hot drinks, sandwiches & cakes, with occasional alcohol license for events
Requirements: Seating area / WCs / cafe / bar

Sanctuary / contemplation space
Open to the public
Requirements: Gathering space / quiet

Heritage interpretation
Display of information relating to the history of St Monans Auld Kirk
Requirements: Display space

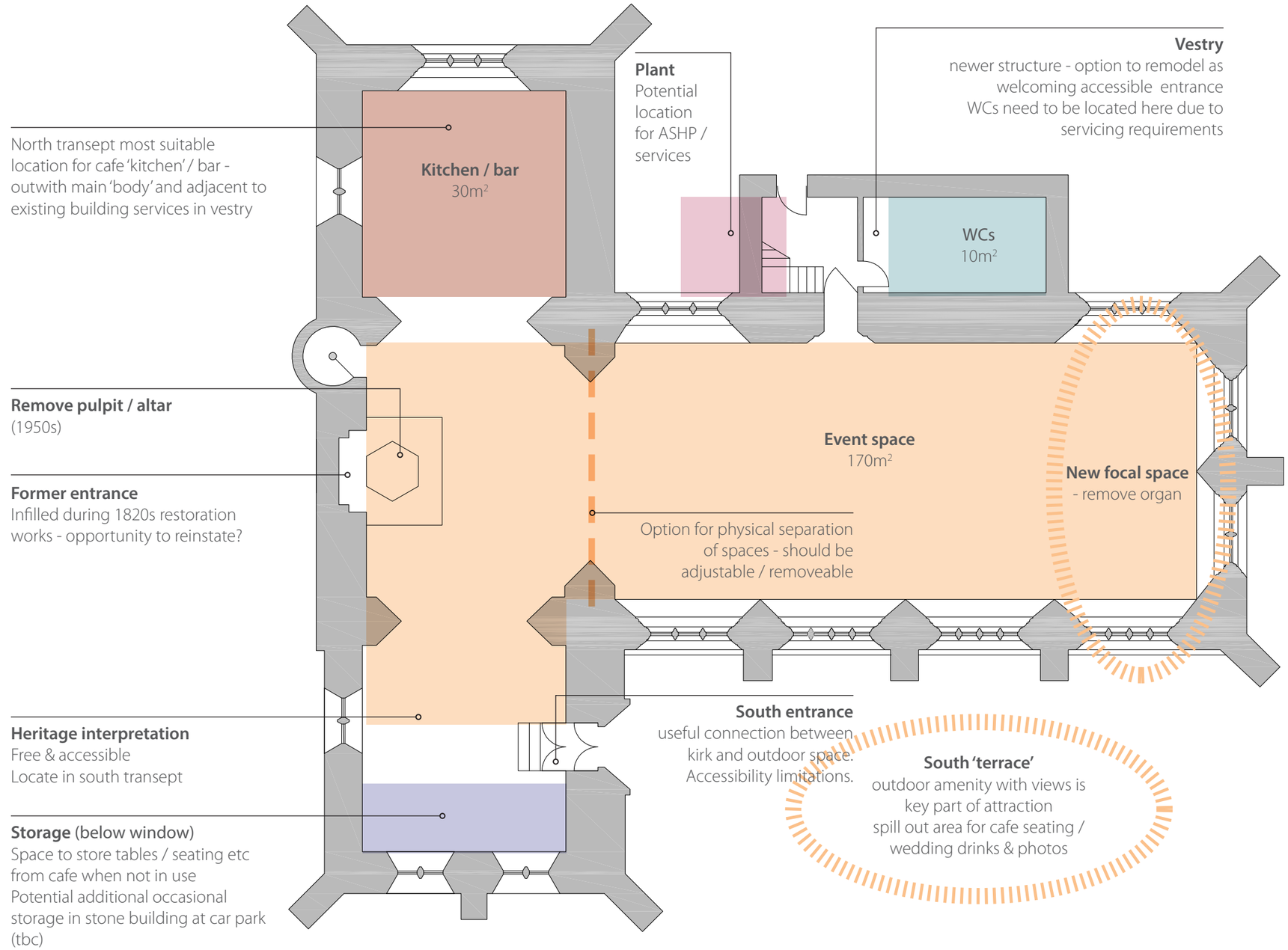


Diagrammatic representation of elements of the brief

3.2 Spatial organisation

Following the initial interrogation of the project brief a use mapping exercise was carried out, in which the various identified requirements were overlaid onto a floor plan of the Kirk. The resulting preferred spatial layout was developed through a consideration of the heritage significance of each area of the kirk and the opportunity and impact of any interventions, as well as access routes and optimal adjacencies.

- Primary 'activity' space
- Kitchen
- WCs
- Storage
- Plant



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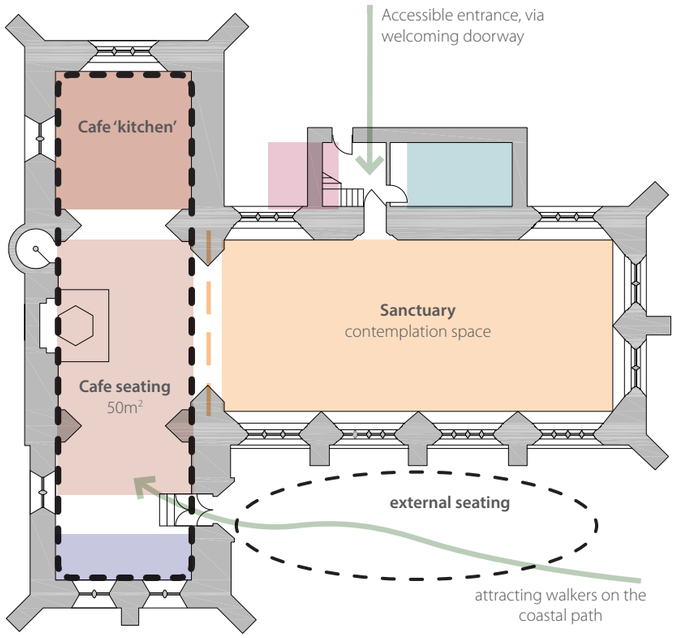
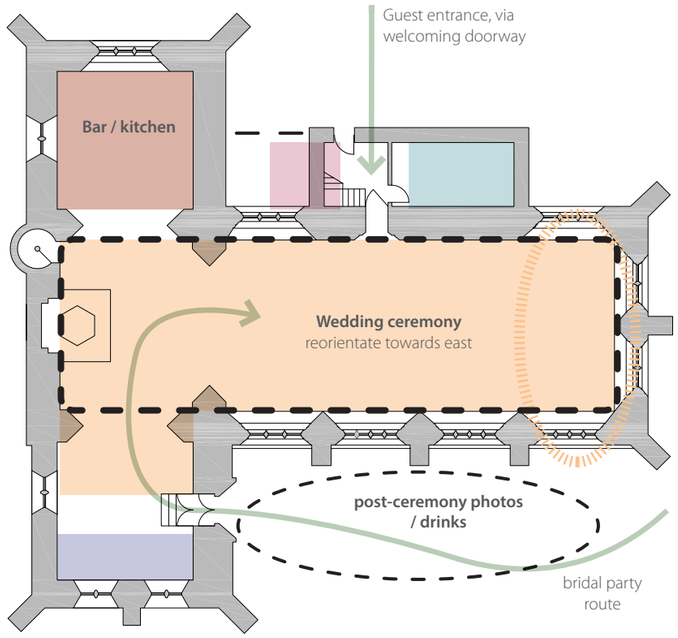
3.3 Operational scenarios



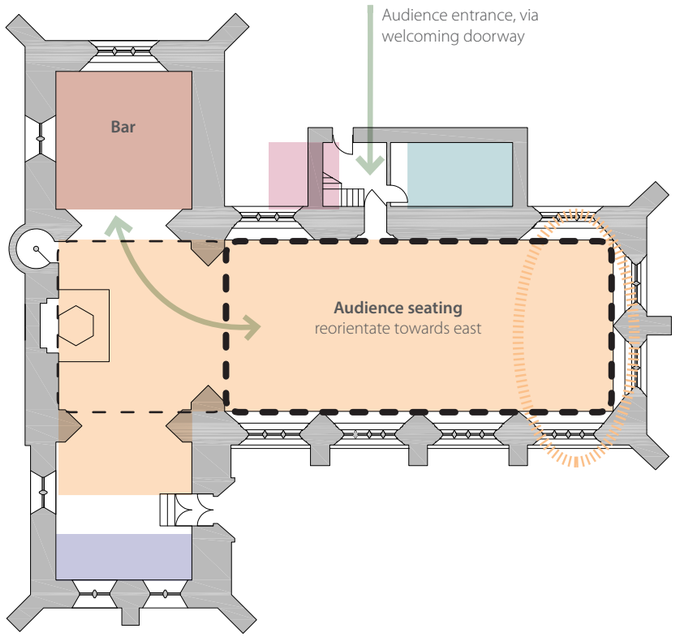
Day-to-day community cafe scenario

- Crossing & transepts host cafe function
- Chancel open as contemplation space
- Heritage interpretation to south transept
- South-facing external seating with estuary views
- Cafe offering hot & cold drinks, sanwiches & cakes



Wedding hire scenario

- Focal point reorientated to east end of chancel
- Post-ceremony drinks outside with estuary views
- Kitchen serves drinks & canapes, plus optional paying bar for guests. Occasional license required.
- Cafe tables stored in transepts, chairs repurposed for guest seating



Concert / performance scenario

- Additional seating / tables in crossing for larger events
- Cafe functions as paying bar for additional income. Occasional or perfoming entertainment license required.
- Unused cafe tables stored in transepts, chairs repurposed for guest seating

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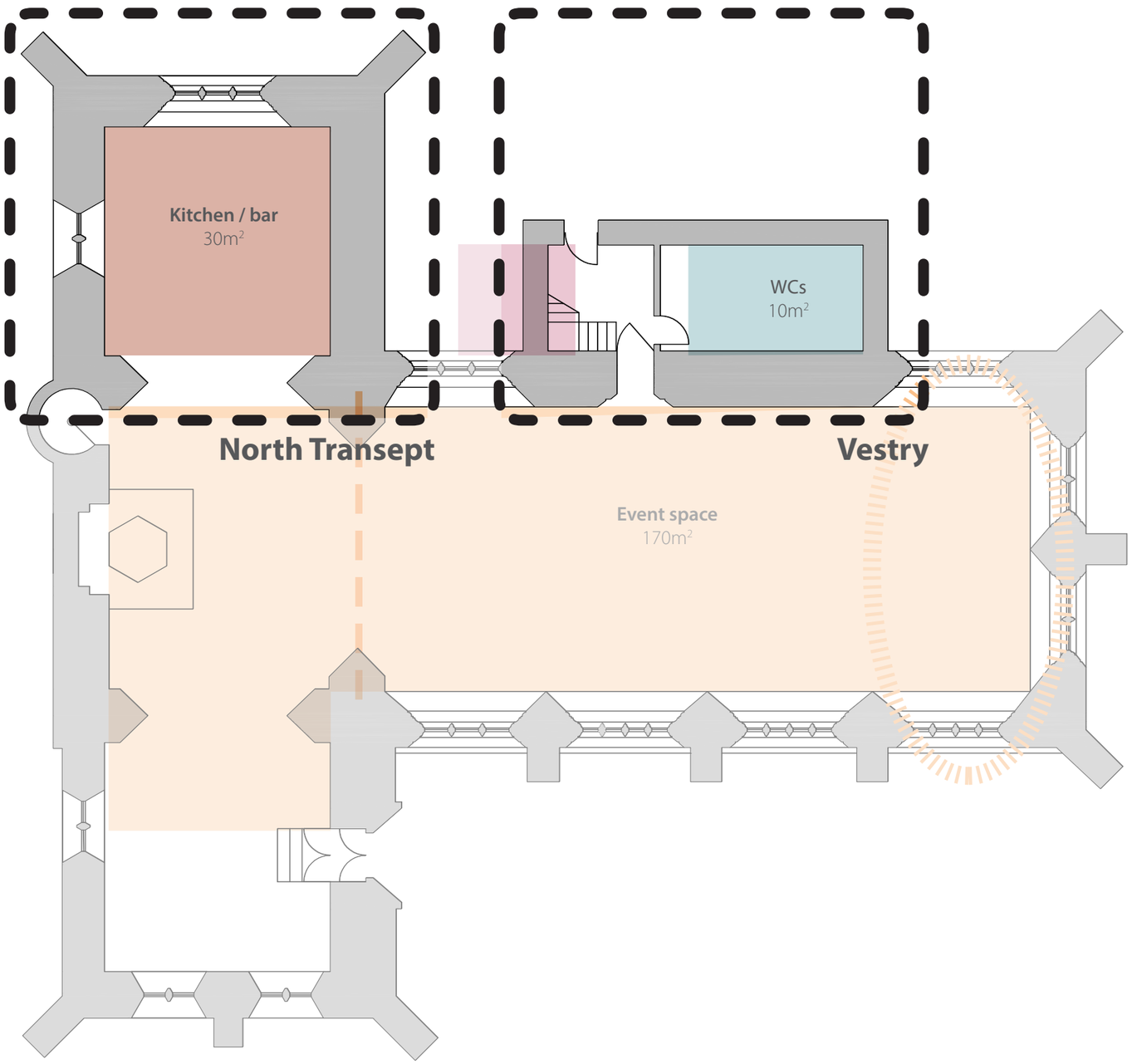
3.4 Areas of design focus

While interventions in the main space of the Kirk will be mainly limited to conservation work and fabric repairs and enhancements, two distinct areas in the proposed spatial layout require further in-depth design analysis.

As a relatively recent addition to the historic Auld Kirk, and with plumbing and drainage connections already installed, the vestry is the most suitable location in which to install new services. However, its limited footprint and pinch-point access prevent the proposed cafe kitchen from being located in this area. The north transept has therefore been identified as the optimal location for the new cafe kitchen, due to its relatively concealed location outwith main sightlines as well as its proximity and ease of access from the main Kirk. A kitchen in this location will require to be carefully designed and sited so as to reduce impact on this historic volume.

- Primary 'activity' space
- Kitchen
- WCs
- Storage
- Plant



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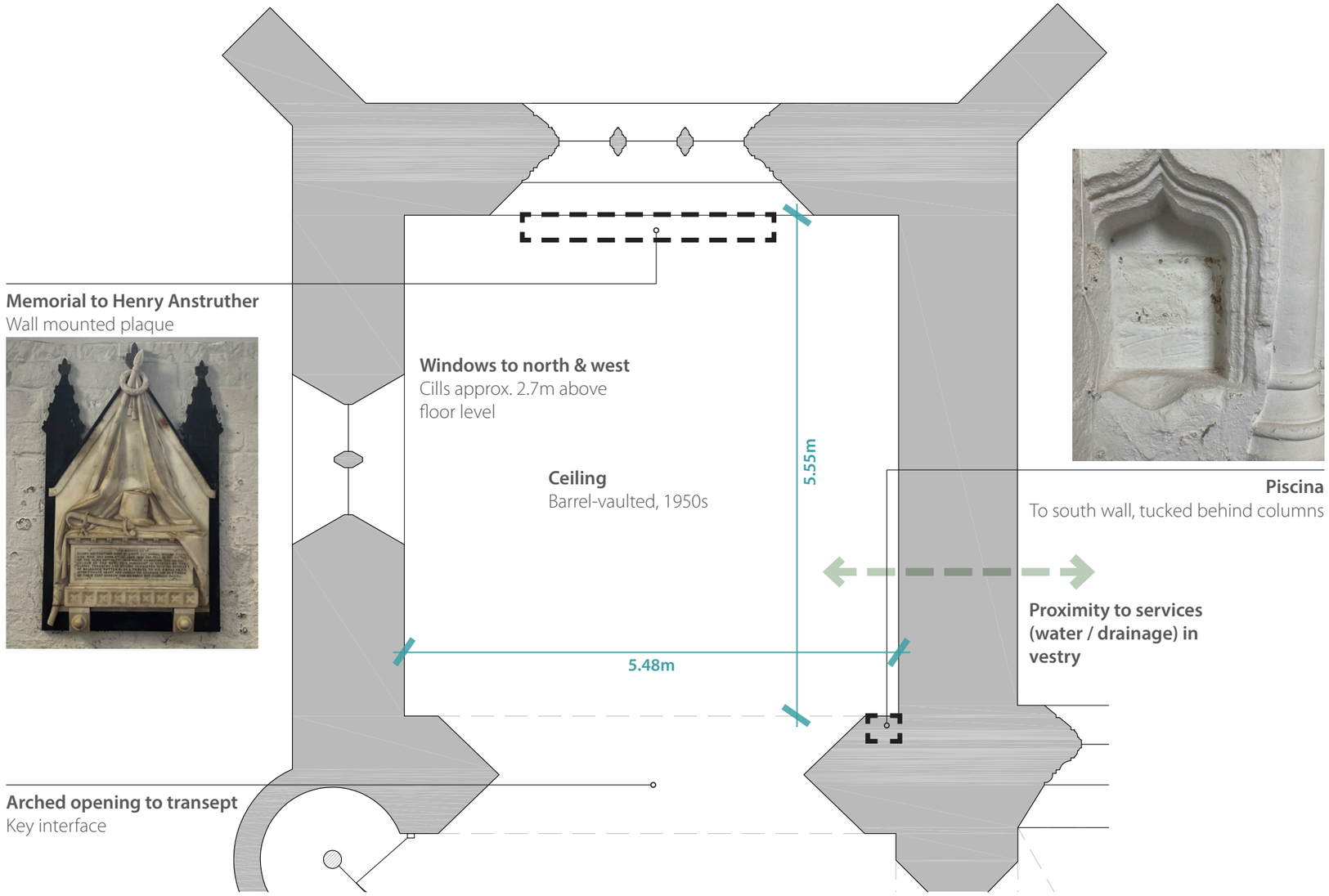
The North Transept

Identified in early discussion as the most suitable location for the new cafe kitchen, the north transept was analysed in terms of its existing arrangement, constraints and opportunities.

The design criteria below were developed as a benchmark for assessing developing designs:

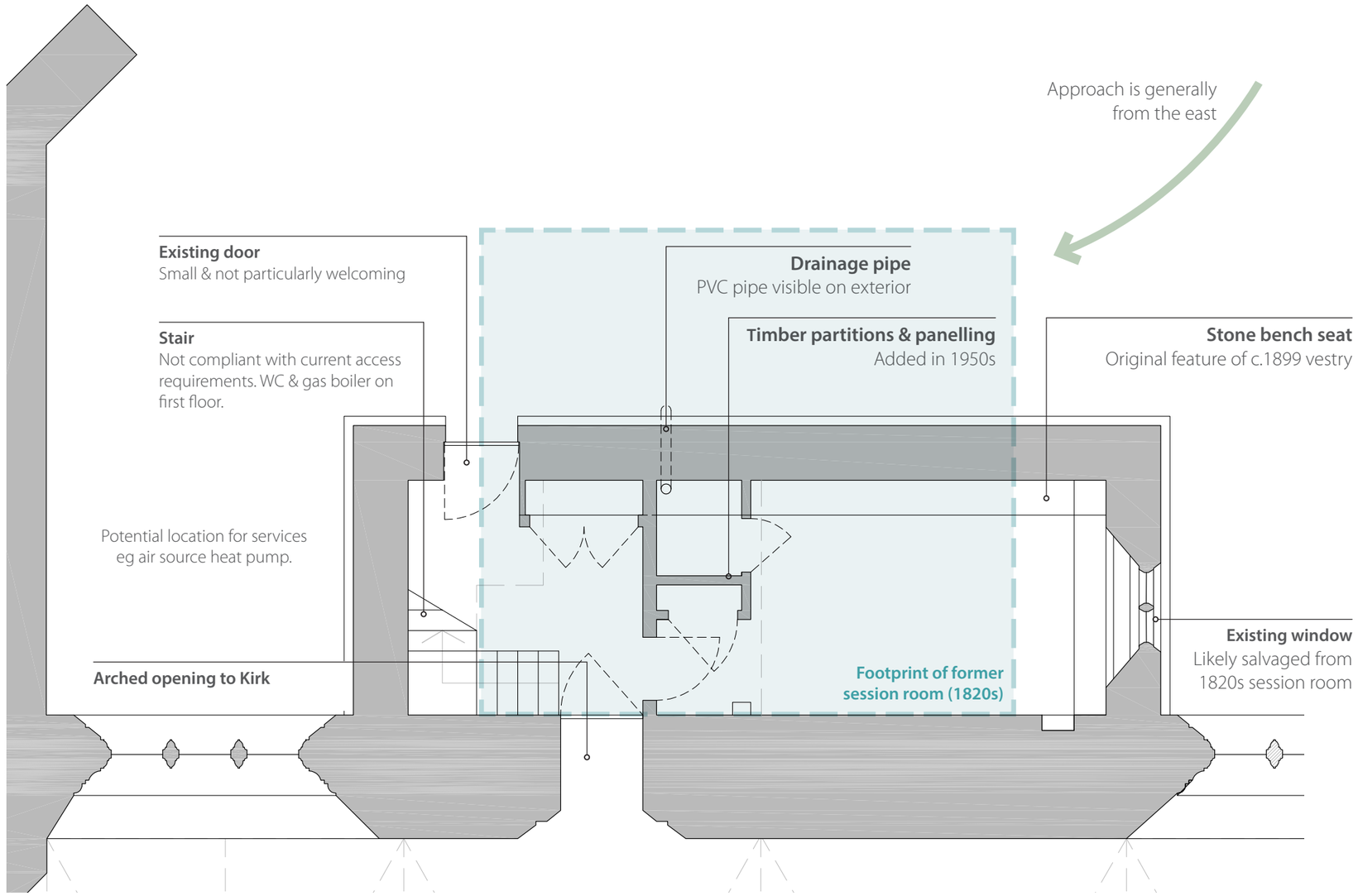
- Cafe / kitchen should be able to be securely closed up when not in use
- North transept should be visible & accessible, and should read as part of 'cruciform' layout, aiding understanding of the development of the Auld Kirk
- New drainage connection will be required running to adjacent vestry - may be able to run in floor construction
- Cafe design should avoid fixings to walls, and should sit below the datum provided by the window cills
- Cafe kitchen should read as a furniture object within the space, maintaining the language of the church as a masonry shell with carefully crafted pieces of internal furniture



The Vestry

As a relatively new addition to the Auld Kirk, the vestry is deemed to be the most suitable location for the required facilities and services to support the proposed programme of activities. It already benefits from drainage and plumbing connections, as well as a level access route into the Kirk.

- The current vestry dates from c.1899, and as such its heritage significance is much lower than that of the Kirk itself. It was remodelled internally during the 1950s renovation works, with later stair and WC additions.
- The space will require to accommodate WCs, space services & plant, as well as general storage for cleaning equipment etc. Some coat storage / lockers may be useful.
- Current entrance feels like a 'back door' - which is what it was designed as! Opportunity to widen & remodel to create a more welcoming & accessible entrance to the Kirk.
- Footprint for former session room (1820s) may provide precedent for extending the footprint of the current vestry, however, this would still require careful negotiation with relevant parties.



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3.5 Research & Precedent

Cafe requirements

OCA Studio and business consultants Athena Solutions met with Sandra Reid of Fare Consulting, a Scottish business consultancy for the food & drink sector, to review the options, requirements and constraints for a cafe kitchen within the Auld Kirk.

Offer & organisation:

- **Cafe** - keep offer simple (hot & cold drinks, sandwiches & cakes). Work with local suppliers. Consider whether cafe will use crockery (washing up requirement) or disposables (storage / waste / expense requirements). Allow for staff to clear tables to avoid messy tray racks. Outdoor seating could operate under 'takeaway' premise?
- **Weddings & events** - Drinks / bar & canapes. Hire in glasses (pass costs on as part of venue hire). Canapes brought in by supplier, not made on site - caterers can also usually provide trestles etc to lay out behind the scenes, or could use cafe tables.
- **Concerts & performances** - keep drinks offer simple - bottled wine decanted to (plastic?) glasses, canned beer, limited selection of soft drinks (canned), potentially gin & tonic etc.

Spatial considerations:

- **Cafe covers** - 50m^2 cafe seating area equates to approx. 26 covers plus additional outdoor seating / takeaway offer
- **Circulation** - minimum 1.2m between counters etc to allow staff to pass
- **Storage** - likely 8-10m^3 required for kitchen items (supplies, crockery, disposables, utensils etc). Ensure that heavier & frequently used items are located in lower-level, easily accessible places.
- **Waste** - separate storage required for recycling (papers / cans / plastics / glass), food waste, and non-recyclable waste. Perhaps the Council-owned building adjacent to the car park could be used to store waste for collection, with space for a day or half day worth of waste storage within the Kirk.

Equipment:

- **Refridgeration** - min. 2no. below-counter fridges (or equivalent), ideally 3-4no.
- **Dishwasher** - 1no. below-counter likely sufficient. Noise levels unlikely to be an issue compared with cafe chatter levels. Not to be used during events.
- **Sinks** - main washing up sink, plus sink at food prep area(s)
- **Hot drink prep** - espresso or bean-to-cup coffee machine? Latter easier to operate for people without experience - depends on operational model. Separate water boiler or boiling water tap for tea.
- **Hot food** - microwave - need to consider odours within larger volume of Kirk, as localised extractors may not be feasible


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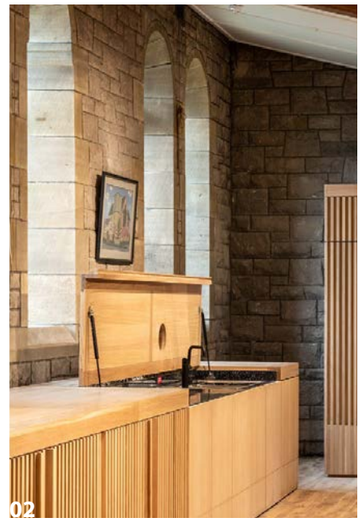
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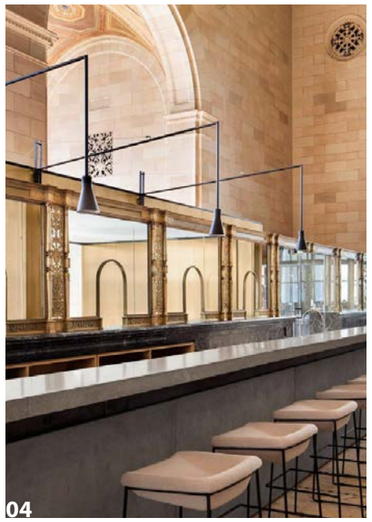
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01-**03**: Bespoke furniture-like cafe units relate to traditional arrangement of church furniture within larger volume (St Jerome in his study by Antonello da Messina; fold-out cafe furniture by Lee Boyd; bed box by OCA Studio)
04-**05**: Modern cafes carefully inserted within historic buildings (cafe bar conversion of a historic former bank by Henri Cleinge; Crypt cafe at Christ Church Spitalfields by Dow Jones)


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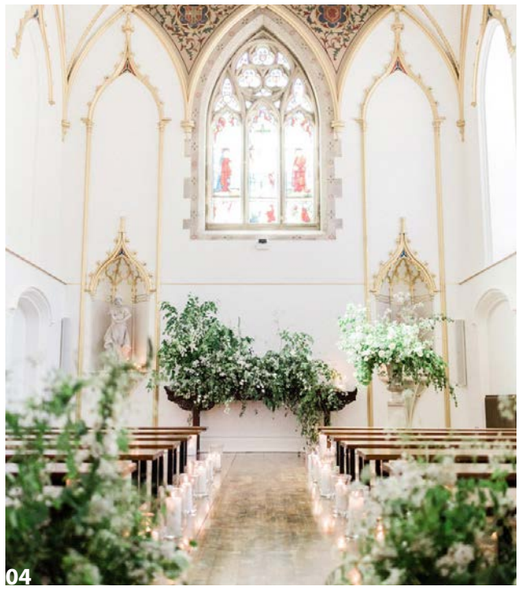
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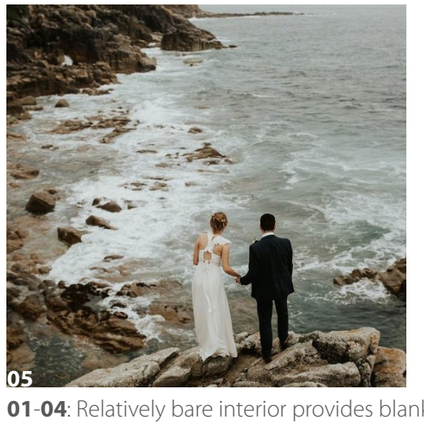
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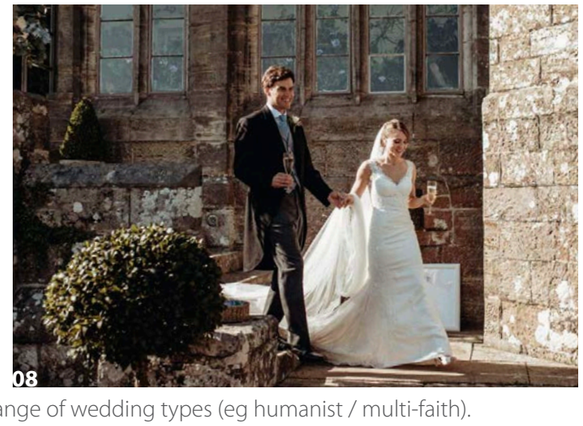
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01-**04**: Relatively bare interior provides blank canvas for personalisation. Omission of overtly ecclesiastical furniture more welcoming for a range of wedding types (eg humanist / multi-faith).
05-**09**: Building, location and setting are a unique draw for St Monans Auld Kirk as a venue. Photograph opportunities at both the Kirk and the adjacent coast. Outdoor space is a valuable asset, as is the potential to use the Kirk itself to host post-ceremony drinks.

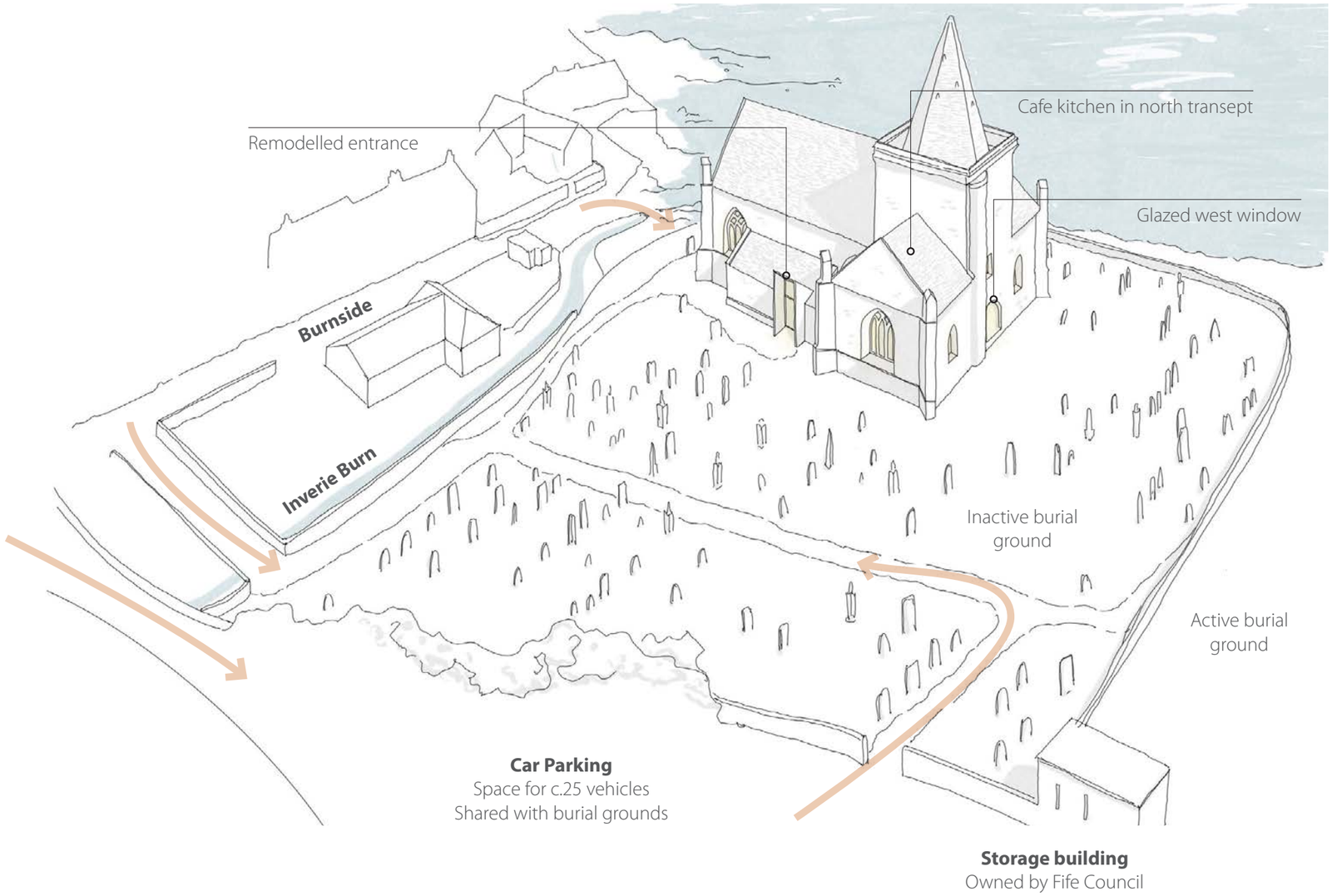
4. Proposals

4.1 Looking to the future

The proposals for the Auld Kirk are designed to have a low visual impact on the main space of the Kirk, while providing the facility and flexibility required to support its ongoing operation. Based on the principle of conservation through use, these proposals will allow this historic building to remain at the heart of the local community as a financially-viable and environmentally-sustainable resource.

A new welcoming and accessible entrance is proposed to the existing vestry, which will be remodelled internally to house new WC facilities and other services. A carefully-crafted furniture piece tucked into the north transept will house a flexible kitchen and bar space, and will be complemented by matching units to hide away tables and chairs when not in use. The former entrance to the west will be reopened with new glazing, connecting the interior of the Kirk to its surroundings and allowing it to benefit from views out to the coast.

Sympathetic building upgrades have also been carefully considered. Removing the 1950s flooring and wall-mounted radiators and installing a new underfloor heating system will help to reduce visual clutter and simplify the internal space, while maintaining an optimal internal temperature for the preservation of the existing historic fabric.



Sustainable technologies
air source heat pumps in recess behind timber screen

New kitchen area
tucked within North Transept

Cafe seating area
moveable tables & chairs

New window
former entrance reopened & glazed, with views out to the coast

Heritage interpretation
information on the history & development of the Auld Kirk

Remodelled entrance
drawing people into the building

Facilities
WCs & baby change

Sanctuary
focus returned to east end; a place for contemplation, ceremonies & performance

Seating
pews retained to front, with more flexible chair seating elsewhere

Storage
low-level bespoke joinery storage units to north & south transepts

South terrace
occasional cafe seating

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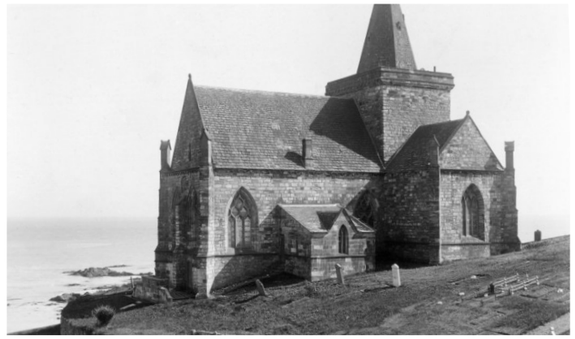
4.2 A welcoming building

North entrance
There are currently two entrances to the Auld Kirk; a small level-access entrance to the vestry to the north, and another stepped entrance to the south transept. Easily overlooked in its current form, it is proposed to remodel the entrance to the vestry to create a wider, more welcoming and accessible entrance that will assist with wayfinding for visitors.

The new entrance structure is envisaged as being clad externally in recycled oxidised copper, tying in with the warm sandstone of the Kirk. A splayed surround to the new glazed entrance door helps to draw people into the building, and is lined in warm Scottish larch.

The form of the proposed intervention references the wall-head dormer of the former session room, rising above the eaves line to provide a visual marker, while the splayed surround and lapped timber evokes the existing archivolts of the south transept door and internal arches, and provide shelter to the doorway. Larch is also a popular timber for boat planking and the linear and splayed hull-like form of the new entrance could be thought of as a subtle reference to the seafaring tradition of the village.



historic photo
c. 1890s, showing former session room in place of current vestry

south transept entrance
added in 1820s, alongside new entrances to east (infilled 1950s)

painting
by Alexander Ignatius Roche, presumed to show the construction of the current vestry ©Fife Cultural Trust

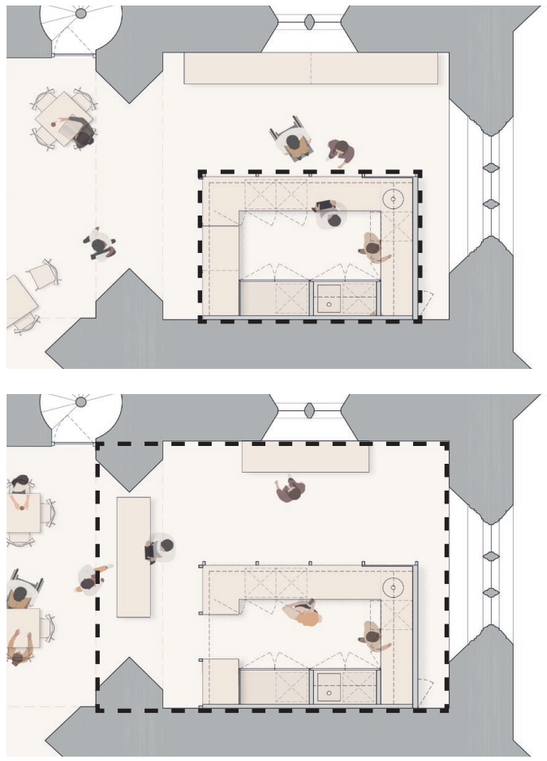
current vestry
constructed c.1899, small functional entrance

proposal
remodelled entrance, more generous, welcoming and accessible.

4.3 Reconfiguring the interior

Cafe kitchen
Interventions within the main volume of the Auld Kirk focus on conserving the existing historic fabric to allow the local community and visitors alike to inhabit and enjoy this unique space. The traditional church consists of a masonry shell with carefully crafted pieces of internal furniture; typically an altar or communion table, pulpit, baptismal font, and pews. Maintaining this language throughout our proposals allows the existing volume of the Kirk to be retained and appreciated, with new bespoke furniture pieces to fulfil the various requirements of the vision for its future. It is vital that these new interventions are flexible - that they work across a range of usage scenarios - that they are of high-quality design and materials, that they are visually coherent, and that they allow sufficient storage, allowing this beautiful space to be experienced without visual clutter.

The new cafe kitchen within the north transept is envisaged as a bespoke furniture piece, similar in scale to both the organ and narthex which have occupied the eastern end of the chancel at various points during the Kirk's history. Flexibility is at the heart of the design, allowing the kitchen to serve a range of different functions in line with the proposed future uses for the building. The contained volume will help to minimise both odour and noise, and provide opportunity for the integration of lighting, extract ventilation, and fire suppression.



operational models
moveable furniture allows the 'kitchen' area to occupy the entire transept if/when required
Top: every day cafe / bar scenario
Bottom: occasional catered event scenario

visualisation
looking northwest from crossing, with cafe kitchen in north transept and former west entrance reopened and glazed

West window
The interior of the Kirk benefits from beautiful natural light from its numerous windows, however, the high level of their cills means that there are no views out to the surrounding landscape from the main volume. It is proposed to reopen and glaze the former entrance to the west wall of the crossing, illuminating this relatively dark area of the interior and providing spectacular views out to the coast.

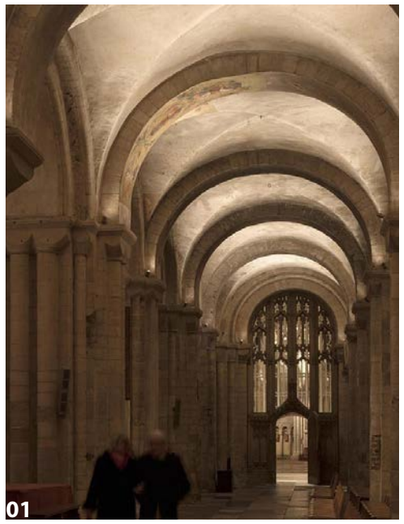
Liturgical furnishings
In line with the aspiration to transform the Auld Kirk into a fully flexible space which is welcoming to people of all faiths and none, it is proposed to remove the majority of the 1950s furnishings*. Some pews will be retained, being reorientated to face the new focus at the eastern end of the chancel, while others may be sold or their timber repurposed in the construction of new high-quality joinery items suitable for the future requirements of the space.

It is acknowledged that the retention of the prominent and bulky 1950s furnishings may provide barriers to those looking to hold a non-Christian life celebration within the Kirk, while their size would certainly place limits on the functionality of the space. However, although the majority of worship services have now moved to the church hall, it is proposed that the Auld Kirk will continue to be used for key celebrations such as those at Easter, Harvest and Christmas, and as such some form of liturgical furnishings will be required. Carefully designed and crafted portable items, such as a folding altar and lecturn, can be stored when not in use, opening the Auld Kirk to people of all faiths or none.

Notes
* Refer to Munro Allison Conservation Statement for further details

Organ
Although parts of the organ date from around 1850, it was not brought to the Auld Kirk until 1995, and therefore does not have a historic connection to the building. Taking up significant space, the organ is rarely used, and its retention would be an imposition on the flexible layout required to make community ownership of the Auld Kirk a viable option. It is therefore proposed that a new home is sought for the organ in collaboration with initiatives such as St Andrews University Sacred Landscapes of Fife.

Lighting
The natural light at St Monans Auld Kirk is a key appeal of the space, particularly at the eastern end of the chancel where the focal space is to be reinstated. A carefully-designed artificial lighting scheme will enhance the space throughout the year, and enable the adjustment of internal light levels to suit a range of different events. The integration of architectural lighting can highlight key features, such as the vaulted ceiling to the chancel and the model ships suspended beneath the arches at the crossing, and ensure that the Auld Kirk is a spectacular place no matter the time of day.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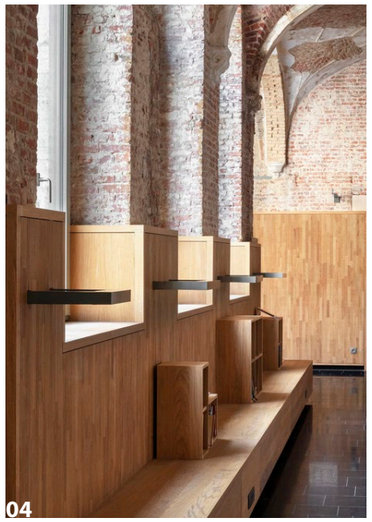
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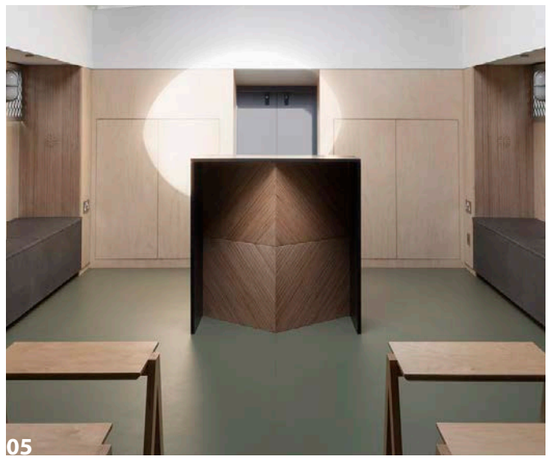
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01-**03**: Architectural lighting can be used to highlight features to great effect (Norwich Cathedral lighting by Lutron; lighting at a former Dominican monastery in Slovenia; Fitzrovia Chapel lighting designed by EQ2)
04-**05**: Moveable modern furnishings and finishes can be used to increase spatial flexibility, clearly identifying as new interventions (contemporary fit-out of a 17th century monastery in Belgium; foldable altar by Denizen Works)

4.4 Phasing

Phase A works
4Q 2025 - 1Q 2026

Urgent fabric repairs & safety improvements, including installation of fire detection & intruder alarm systems

Phase B works
4Q 2027 - 4Q 2028

Full programme of works to existing fabric as Adams Napier condition survey

Implementation of proposals (new heating system, cafe kitchen, new WC facilities, west opening and remodelled north entrance)

As a Category A-listed building, any and all works above those straightforward repairs which do not materially affect the building's character will require Listed Building Consent to be obtained prior to commencement. It is not therefore proposed to divide the works into any additional phases other than those noted above due to the timescales required for achieving the necessary consents, in addition to the requirement for multiple construction periods, additional expense, and risk of abortive work.

An outline programme for subsequent stages of the project can be found in section 6.2 of this document.

4.5 Engagement & feedback

Further to initial community consultation events held in 2023, SMAKE held an engagement event as part of the St Monans Sea Queen Festival in July 2024 in order to garner feedback from the wider community on the developing proposals. The event was available to drop-in throughout the weekend, with presentation boards which explained the vision, the history of the building, design analysis and the proposed interventions. Along with these, members of SMAKE were on hand to answer any questions

Attendees were encouraged to write feedback on post-it notes, and to give an indication of whether they were of a generally positive or negative view of the proposals on a board. There was also an accompanying online survey arranged by Fife Historic Buildings Trust, which was made available via links on SMAKE's social media and QR codes on the presentation boards.

The proposals received generally very positive feedback, with unanimous approval from attendees for the ideas evidenced by the adjacent feedback sheet.

More detailed feedback included the following comments:

"Loved the plans and glad to see multi-use places within"

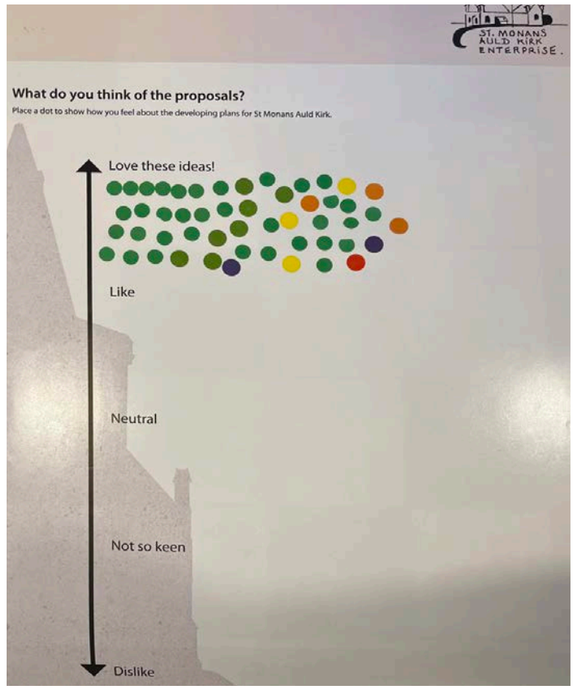
"Light, airy space with modern toilet and kitchen facilities. Love that it can still be used for celebration of life events - marriage, funerals etc"

"More heritage interpretation about St Monans"

"Must stay within the community"

"Changing it so you walk up the aisle and out the big doors would make great photos"

"Great ideas"



Left: SMAKE discuss the proposals with members of the wider community at the St Monans Sea Queen Festival, with consultation boards to illustrate the plans for the Auld Kirk, and opportunities to provide comments & feedback
Right: Feedback from the community obtained at the event

5. Technical & Statutory Requirements

5.1 Civil & structural engineering

Structural and civil engineers Narro Associates have carried out a preliminary structural condition appraisal as part of their Stage 2 report. This identifies areas where repairs are required, and where further investigations may be needed.

5.1.1 **Structural interventions**
An outline structural strategy for the proposals has been drawn up by Narro Associates and is included within their Stage 2 Structural Report. This includes proposals for reopening the former west entrance and alterations to the vestry.

5.1.2 **Drainage**
From a desktop survey of Scottish Water asset plans carried out by Narro Associates, the existing drainage from the vestry appears to flow to the east to a connection with the Scottish Water sewer at the bottom of Burnside. It is anticipated that the new connection can be made locally just north of the vestry, noting that approval will be required from Scottish Water for the discharge of additional wastewater. There is currently no managed surface water drainage to the building, with rainwater shed directly from roof pitches to the ground below. The addition of gutters to roof pitches may assist with reducing moisture to the external walls*, however, this would need to be carefully considered in terms of both visual impact and the feasibility of creating new drainage routes within the historic graveyard setting.

5.2 Building services & energy strategy

M&E engineers Lùths Services have carried out a condition survey of the existing building services and an options appraisal for potential improvements.

The preferred strategy envisages air source heat pumps (ASHPs) located to the west of the current vestry, with a new wet underfloor heating system installed within the Kirk, replacing the 1950s floor coverings and screed. Historic fabric benefits from a stable environment rather than on-demand heating, as fluctuations in temperature will not control damp, may exacerbate condensation, and might subject the fabric - especially roof timbers - to stress resulting from movement. Underfloor heating systems can provide a background level of heating which is beneficial for the conservation of historic fabric, enabling the internal temperature to be maintained at an optimum range of between 8 and 10°C. A sacrificial gap should be left around the internal perimeter to allow moisture to evaporate rather than being drawn into masonry walls†. As an exposed and relatively damp structure, holistic hygrothermal modelling such as WUFI simulation should be carried out for the Kirk during the next stage of works to review moisture pathways and the impact of proposed interventions.

An existing 3-phase electricity supply is already provided to the site with meters located in the vestry, which should be suitable for the proposed loadings including the ASHPs‡. The provision of additional sanitary facilities and kitchen will also increase demands on the mains water supply. Consideration should also be given to enhanced network connectivity, which will be vital for the running of the facility and programme.

5.3 Sustainability and Net Zero

Strategic approach
This study has worked with the statement made in the initial brief that proposals should '*explore opportunities to improve energy efficiency of the building, including renewable energy generation and green technologies*.'

The RIBA's 'Sustainable Outcomes' method is a concise measurable set of eight sustainable outcomes that correspond to key UN Sustainable Development Goals and can be delivered on building projects of all scales. They are clear and measurable targets across the triple bottom line of sustainability – environmental, social, and economic.

- Net zero operational carbon
- Net zero embodied carbon
- Sustainable water cycle
- Sustainable connectivity & transport
- Sustainable land-use & biodiversity
- Good health & wellbeing
- Sustainable communities & social value
- Sustainable life cycle cost

An outcomes-based design approach like this will help resolve gaps between design intent and in-use performance across a range of metrics by reinforcing the feedback loop between briefing and outcomes, leading to a more sustainable built environment.

Sustainability in heritage buildings
Historic Environment Scotland is committed to researching how heritage buildings can be sensitively adapted to reach a range of sustainability targets. Their recent publication 'Guide to Energy Retrofit of Traditional Buildings' considers the various factors in a thermal upgrade and how these might apply to designated and non-designated historic structures. Whilst the series focuses on operational carbon, HES aims to introduce advice on other relevant factors such as embodied carbon and the circular economy.

As a Category A-listed building of significant heritage value, opportunities for carrying out thermal upgrades to the existing fabric are limited. It is proposed to insulate the roof and walls of the late 19th century vestry, and there is opportunity to install insulation above the vaulted ceilings to the main Kirk, using breathable and sustainable materials such as wood fibre and hemp. The 1950s works drawings by Ian Lindsay note the presence of ash insulation beneath the precast concrete floor slabs, which will provide insulation to the proposed underfloor heating system.

The proposed interventions will focus on using locally available, renewable, and recycled / recyclable materials, including timber salvaged from the existing church furnishings which will be reused in the construction of new bespoke furniture pieces.

Notes
* Adams Napier Partnership, *St Monans Auld Kirk Condition Survey*, 2024, item 41
† Historic England, *Heating Historic Places of Worship*, 2024
‡ Luths Services email, 3rd July 2024

5.4 Planning context

Pre-application enquiry
A significant piece of Fife's historic built environment, proposals for the Auld Kirk will require careful discussion with Historic Environment Scotland and the Council Built Heritage team at every stage. We would advise that a pre application enquiry is made to the local authority planning department ahead of an application for planning permission. The planner will then approach the statutory consultees and coordinate a report which summarises any areas of concern and what supporting or supplementary statements need to accompany the full planning application.

Change of use
Pre application consultation with planning should establish to what extent, if any, the proposals are a change of use. It likely that the Kirk is on record as a Class 10 non-residential institution under the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Scotland) Order 1997, a classification which also covers use as a public hall. The sale and consumption of food and drink and use as a concert hall fall under separate use classes (Class 2 and Class 11 respectively), although a precedent has been established for the latter via the multiple examples of concerts which have previously been held within the Kirk.

Listed Building Consent
As a Category A-listed building, any proposals will require listed building consent in addition to planning permission. Members of the design and client teams met with representatives from Fife Council Planning & Built Heritage and Historic Environment Scotland in August 2024 to update them on developing proposals. All consultees were supportive of the proposals, and provided the following comment:

- New entrance to vestry - makes sense, need to justify change and provide additional information for planning application
- Underfloor heating - agreement that this is the best option, may need to consider memorials below the floor however unlikely to be an issue due to significant floor raising in 1950s
- West window - happy with reopening in principle. Statement to be submitted with LBC to outline approach to any unknowns uncovered during downtakings so that this can be added to consent as a condition
- Internal decoration - current paint coating not suitable. Should be removed / replaced with breathable finish - opportunity to investigate traces of historic paintwork. Again submit statement re unknowns with LBC application.
- Furniture / organ - organ significant, but not significant as a part of the Kirk. Propose to remove & rehome - HES have resources / links.

The historic environment
St Monans Auld Kirk lies within the administrative area of Fife Council. Their planning policy is contained within the Local Development Plan (FIFEplan). Of particular relevance to the Auld Kirk within this document is policy 14: Built and Historic Environment, as well as policy 11: Low Carbon Fife.

The FIFEplan supplementary guidance: Making Fife's Places (2018) notes:

"The built environment has been adapted over time to meet changing needs. Protecting the historic environment is not about preventing change but ensuring that changes are appropriate to their location. Sustainable management of the historic environment should be based on an appraisal (of the significance of a building or monument) ... These appraisals will identify key characteristics and establish the degree to which change can take place without detrimentally affecting the character of the place. An appraisal should also identify opportunities for enhancement."

A Heritage Impact Assessment will be required to accompany an application for planning permission. This should meet the requirements of the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019), and the relevant Guidance Notes on Managing Change in the Historic Environment. The Assessment should provide an analysis of the cultural significance of the Auld Kirk, much of which has already been carried out in the Munro Allison Conservation Statement, the requirement for and background to the proposed changes, and an assessment of the likely level of impact of the proposals on the historic environment.

Relevant extracts from the HES Guidance Notes on Managing Change in the Historic Environment are noted below:

"Where the original plan form or a later plan form of special interest survives ... these spaces should normally be retained without subdivision, because of their inherent significance. There may, however, be more scope to make significant interventions within areas of secondary importance."

- Managing Change: Interiors

"Renewable energy systems will often have some visual or physical impact on the building or site they serve. It is important to minimise this impact to maintain the character and significance of the historic asset. It is sometimes difficult to balance the priorities of maximising energy efficiency and protecting a historic building or site's appearance and integrity. This means that each case has to be assessed individually on its own merits."

- Managing Change: Micro-renewables

"The formation of a new opening in a wall needs to be considered in light of the overall composition of the wall and assessed as to whether or not it would be consistent with the existing design. Where the formation of a new opening is found to be consistent with the design of the wall, the minimum historic fabric should be removed and the opening should be detailed to match the existing openings. Where there is no obvious precedent, a clearly modern intervention of high-quality design may be appropriate. Service ducts and vents should be located on secondary elevations"

- Managing Change: External walls

5.5 Building regulations

Resolution of compliance with the Building Regulations is principally a task undertaken during RIBA work stage 4. This note summarises the challenges of reaching compliance likely to be encountered particularly as the project includes elements of 'conversion' of structures of heritage significance.

Conversion
Some elements of the proposed interventions may be determined as being conversions. Early dialogue with Building Control can provide confirmation of this. It is recognised that compliance with all requirements of the Technical Handbook is not reasonably practicable in many conversions of existing buildings, and the Handbook lists areas where a lower level of provision may be sufficient.

Impact on heritage significance
Building Control is expected to take cognisance of alternative means of compliance with certain standards. For example, should there be areas of the standards relating to fire where implementation of conventional fire safety measures would adversely impact the heritage significance of a structure, then alternatives could be considered, such as a fire engineering approach as recommended in HES Technical Advice Notes 11, 14, 22 and 28. In terms of energy performance, Historic Environment Scotland's publication 'Guide to Energy Retrofit of Traditional Buildings' acts as guidance on how to proceed when confronted with a dilemma between considerations of heritage significance and what is 'reasonably practicable'.

Technical standards: section-specific guidance
An initial appraisal has been carried out as part of this study to identify where further consideration needs to be taken to comply with the Building Regulations. This cannot be comprehensive at this design stage and so notes below are a guide only.

Section 2.0: Fire
A Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) is required by law for all non-domestic properties. The risk assessment will cover risks of fire starting and spreading, including risk of harm to people. Assessments then evaluate and aim to eliminate or reduce risks to an acceptable level.

The Auld Kirk does not currently benefit from a fire detection system, and a Category L1 system should therefore be installed throughout as soon as is practicable once ownership of the asset is finalised. Expert advice should be sought regarding the type of detection system most suitable for this large volume, and the system should be carefully designed and installed by suitably qualified and experienced personnel. The selected system may be a wireless, air sampling, or beam detection system rather than the standard ceiling-mounted detectors. The ease of servicing and avoidance of false alarms should be considered as well as the sensitivity of the system when making this decision*.

It is important that emergency exit routes are clearly marked and well lit. The right approach will depend on the building and the room. It can help to refurbish old light fittings or integrate emergency lighting into normal light fixtures†.

Section 3.0: Environment
Sanitary facilities: The number of sanitary facilities should be calculated from the maximum number of persons the building / site is likely to accommodate at any time based on its normal use, however, in this instance the available space for sanitary provision is limited by the existing footprint. This will require negotiation with Building Control, particularly if the proposals are deemed to require a change of use. The heritage significance of the Auld Kirk should be taken into account, and it should be acknowledged that the proposals offer an improvement on the existing condition.

Section 4.0: Safety
This section considers the safety, welfare and convenience of building users. An inclusive environment is one in which everyone, regardless of age, disability, or circumstance, can make use of facilities safely, conveniently and without assistance.

Access routes to the site are steep, and may not be easily navigable by all users - further comment on this is provided in section 5.7. The proposed remodelled entrance to the north elevation will assist with improving access to the building, and the single storey accommodation negates the requirement for accessible transfer between storeys. The existing door openings and stepped access will require negotiation with Building Control. The heritage significance of the existing building should be taken into account in finding suitable compromises.

Section 5.0: Noise
There is unlikely to be any requirement for sound insulating construction, with the exception of the new partition walls to the WCs.

Section 6.0: Energy
Due to the significance of the Auld Kirk opportunities for thermal upgrades to the existing fabric are limited. Interventions could include lining the existing external walls and roof of the vestry internally (both with appropriate vapour permeable materials), and upgrading lighting fixtures to LEDs, as well as the possibility of installing renewable technologies such as the proposed air source heat pump. Due to the constraints posed by its heritage significance upgrades to the main Kirk will have to be discussed with Building Control to determine which standards are reasonably practicable to achieve.

Notes
* Institution of Fire Engineers / Historic England, *Fire Safety for Traditional Church Buildings*, 2017
† Historic Environment Scotland, *Managing Change in the Historic Environment: Fire & Historic Buildings*, 2023

5.6 Archaeology

Given the historical significance of the site and its location within a historic burial ground, an archaeologist should be commissioned to carry out a desktop study as part of the next stage of works. They should then approach the local authority's archaeologist to ascertain whether any scope may be required for further investigation and at what stage in the design development phase that might be. This reporting can be undertaken as part of a pre-planning consultation application.

During any future works the opportunity should be taken to accurately record and analyse built structures and interiors before and during the works to help increase understanding of the property's development (eg recording exposed fabric, paint and mortar analyses & dendro-dating of timbers). Any site works (eg excavations and landscaping works) should also be used as an opportunity to record and report evidence which may aid understanding of the built chronology of the site. This may take the form of an archaeological watching brief, with an archaeologist on site to record, review and report on any findings during the works.

5.7 Active transport, access & parking

A small car park exists at a higher elevation to the north of the site outwith the boundary of the burial ground, which is accessed via a single-vehicle bridge over the burn to the east. There is unlikely to be scope to increase the quantity of parking provision in this location as the area is bounded by agricultural land and the active and inactive burial grounds.

The gravel access paths from the car park to the Kirk are steep, and may prove difficult to navigate for some users. These existing routes through the burial ground are owned and managed by Fife Council and, while upgrades to these will be limited by the topography of the site and the inactive burial ground, potential accessibility improvements such as resurfacing should be considered. Greater potential to create a fully-accessible route to the Kirk may lie in the addition of accessible parking bay(s) at the foot of Burnside, with a new level access route across the burn, although it is acknowledged that difficulties are posed with the existing level change between the shore and the burial ground, and that this would require the cooperation of multiple parties as well as considerable expense.

While many of those attending events will likely arrive by car, the Kirk's location on the Fife Coastal Path and adjacent to the village centre provides opportunities for sustainable and public transport and active travel methods of access. The provision of cycle parking, either at the car park or at the foot of Burnside, would encourage active travel from further afield.

5.8 Surveys & investigatory work

During subsequent stages the following surveys, investigations and reports are likely to be required:

- **Measured survey**
  Comprehensive digital drawings of the existing structure and site levels – generated from data collected by laser measurement / point cloud surveying / drone footage.
- **Heritage impact assessment**
  This should meet the requirements of the Historic Environment Policy for Scotland (2019), and the accompanying Guidance Notes on Managing Change in the Historic Environment. Of particular relevance will be the Guidance Notes on *Setting* (2016), *Accessibility* (2020), and the *Use and Adaptation of Listed Buildings* (2020).
- **Preliminary ecology appraisal**
  There is potential for the presence of protected species such as nesting birds or bats within the existing building. A suitably qualified ecologist should be appointed to carry out a Stage 1 ecology survey, which may identify the need for further specialist input.
- **Masonry survey**
  As identified within the Structural Report, the tracery to the chancel windows should be inspected by a conservator or stone repair specialist to advise on repairs and ongoing maintenance.
- **Flood risk assessment** (TBC)
  SEPA flood maps do not note the Auld Kirk site as being at risk of flooding, however, given the proximity of the sea and the burn to the east it is worth being aware of the potential risks. A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) is unlikely to be required, but this will be confirmed in planning pre-application feedback.
- **Noise Impact Assessment** (TBC)
  A change of use application may require to be accompanied by a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) at planning stage to assess the impact of the proposals on nearby residences. Any requirement for this will be confirmed in planning pre-application feedback.
- **Drainage CCTV / GPR survey**
  A CCTV survey will be required to inspect the location and condition of the existing drainage route. Prior to excavating to carry out any repairs or new connections a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey should be conducted to identify any features within the burial ground.
- **Asbestos survey**
  An asbestos refurbishment and demolition (R&D) survey will require to be carried out to any areas of proposed interventions. Any asbestos detected must be removed by a licensed contractor prior to the start of work.

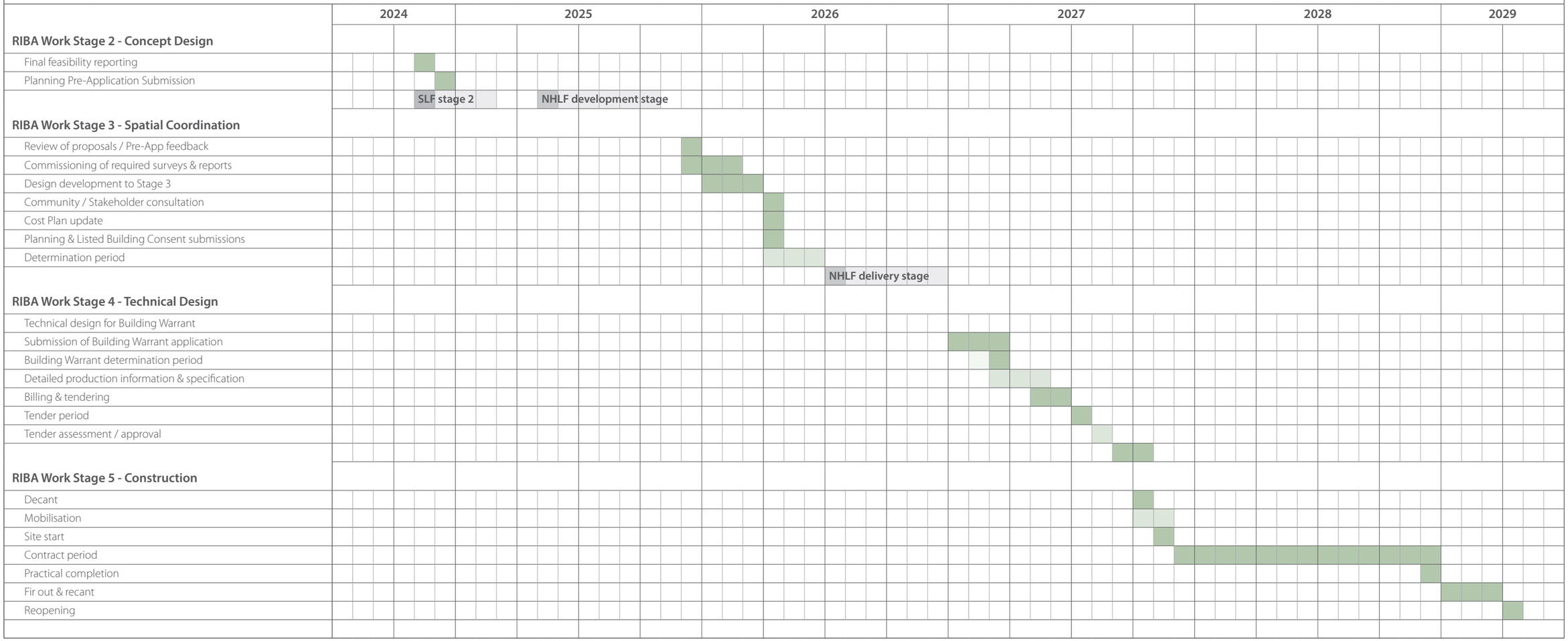
6. Next Steps

6.1 Risks & unknowns

Risk	Description	Action taken to mitigate risk	Further action required
Funding	Project dependent on various funding programmes. Risk that there may be time constraints triggered by funders' deadlines.	Athena Solutions' research and business plan has identified key funding bodies and strategies.	Funding applications to be made.
The existing building	Areas requiring repair work may deteriorate further if works not carried out within appropriate timescales, resulting in further damage and increased cost.	Adams Napier Condition Report identifies and classifies repairs based on their priority. No repairs were classified as immediate, and 4 items were classified as urgent. Narro Associates structural report highlights key structural repairs required.	Works identified as being urgent should be carried out as soon as reasonably practicable once SMAKE ownership is in place. Structural repairs to the tower and south entrance lintel should also be carried out.
Planning & heritage constraints	The Category A listed Kirk is of significant heritage value. Risk that proposed adaptations are deemed unacceptable.	Conservation Statement provides a clear pathway for the maintenance, management, and sustainable reuse of the Auld Kirk. Proposals have been discussed with HES & Fife Council Built Heritage team.	Submit pre application enquiry to the planning department to obtain feedback and commentary. Carry out further consultation on developing proposals to ensure stakeholder backing
Building regulations	Adaption of heritage buildings may not allow for full compliance / accessibility.	Initial review of building regulations strategy to compliance outlined within this report.	Carry out more detailed review of the proposal's compliance with building regulations as part of future design stages. Strategy to be agreed through the building warrant application process..
Fire	Building does not currently have a fire detection & alarm system installed.	Requirement for fire detection system noted within this report.	Fire Risk Assessment to be carried out. Fire detection system to be designed & installed as soon as reasonably practicable once SMAKE ownership is in place.
Services / drainage	Proposals may require additional services provision.	Requirements for subsequent stages outlined within this report.	Commissioning of further surveys in subsequent stages.
Ecology	Potential for the presence of protected species to affect scope and timing of building operations	Need for an ecology survey identified.	Commission a Stage 1 ecology survey to identify any protected species on site and make recommendations for further surveys or actions required.
Asbestos	Identification of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) may have time and cost implications, in addition to occupant health concerns.	Requirements for asbestos survey outlined within this report.	Commission Asbestos R&D survey.
Cost	Overall capital costs exceed funding allocation	QS has prepared outline cost estimation as part of this study.	Regular updates and review of the cost estimate at each work stage and as designs develop. Opportunities for phasing / fundraising.
Personnel	The project will require significant input from SMAKE in order to progress. Any design team will require a client-side project lead to liaise with during subsequent stages	SMAKE are a strong and committed group of 6 individuals with a diverse range of experience. Support provided by Fife Historic Buildings Trust.	
Surrounding site	The surrounding inactive burial ground poses access difficulties for contractors carrying out works. Historic gravestones could be at risk of toppling - could pose liability issue for SMAKE.		Method statements and Construction Phase Plan to address access. Liability for gravestones / injury to persons to be raised with Fife Council. SMAKE to obtain Public Liability Insurance.
Health & safety compliance	Works to comply with CDM (Construction Design & Management Regulations) 2015.	Outline risk register compiled as part of this study.	SMAKE to appoint Principal Designer to review Health & Safety in subsequent work stages.
Vacancy	Without regular use the building is susceptible to increased damp and fabric deterioration, as well as vandalism and break ins.	Building is currently open part of the week during the summer months, staffed by volunteers. Business plan outlines meanwhile uses which can be implemented by SMAKE while proposals are developed & funding is sought.	SMAKE to develop programme of activities and events for implementation once ownership is in place in accordance with phasing strategy and business plan.

6.2 **Programme**

Outline Design Team Project Programme



This programme is indicative only; it should be reviewed and developed at each stage as the project progresses, and should be read in conjunction with the programmatic information contained within the Business Plan.

OCA Studio
Chartered Architects
36 St Marys Street Edinburgh EH1 1SX
admin@ocastudio.co.uk | www.ocastudio.co.uk

OCA