
DESIGN STATEMENT

JOB / FILE REF.

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DATE

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SUBJECT

Design Statement for Retrospective Planning Application for Food Pantry

Introduction and Background

This Statement has been prepared by RGP Architects on behalf of Christ Church Ramsbottom, a Methodist / Baptist Local Ecumenical Partnership, to support the installation of Ramsbottom Pantry facility at Christ Church, Great Eaves Road, Ramsbottom, Bury BL0 0PX.

In response to a genuine need Ramsbottom Pantry was set up in October 2020 during COVID lockdown the volunteers asked Christ Church for the use their premises which during lockdown provided a safe place to continue to serve the local community in need.

In March 2021, the church resumed the use of their premises for Sunday services and other weekday activities. Christ Church incorporated The Ramsbottom Pantry which meant Safeguarding and GDPR policies were in place including registered charity status. Now able to claim Gift Aid donations.

To provide space for the Pantry to continue to serve the community, Ramsbottom Rotary donated a storage container and cabin, which were installed by Balfour Beatty free of charge.

During Covid planning permission was waived but today this retrospective application seeks planning permission for these structures installed at the rear of the church building.

The facility provides a much-needed community grocery service which is supporting about 80 families since Spring 2021. Referrals are made by local GPs, schools, social workers, Bury Voluntary Community and Faith Alliance (VCFA). Ramsbottom Pantry is operated entirely by volunteers.

The facility is providing much needed service, in addition to food but a weekly drop-in café, access to a trained Mental Health First Aid and give direction to other agencies, such as VCFA Beacon Service and Christians Against Poverty (CAP). Fortnightly, a surgery is run by Bury Council Floating Support team to help people with social housing issues and council related matters.

The church also offers a 'warm space' for those struggling with their energy bills.

The installation is a result of the generosity of companies and individuals giving material and time to set up the Ramsbottom Pantry.

Use

The installation of two structures comprising, shipping container and cabin.

Shipping Container, unit size 5.9m long 2.5m wide and 2.6m high. The container stores food and houses a fridge and a freezer for perishable produce and frozen food. A timber framed cantilever canopy structure is positioned over the doors to protect the volunteers who have access to the container from inclement weather.

Cabin, unit size 5.9m long, 2.5m wide and 2.7m high. The cabin is fitted with a timber framed canopy structure over an existing parking bay. A sheltered space created for people to be served by the volunteers.

The Pantry is open twice a week, Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 10:00am to 12:00 noon.

Layout

Christ Church is situated off Great Eaves Road, Ramsbottom on a triangular shaped plot with the church frontage facing the road. To the rear of the building is a formally laid out tarmacked car park with 14 bays line marked out set amongst existing mature trees.

The southwest boundary is defined by a 2.4m high Lochrin galvanised metal fence overlooked by a Builders Yard (Complete Driveway Designs Ltd). The opposite eastern boundary overlooks Ramsbottom playing fields which is defined by a low metal post and hooped fence panels including a row of mature trees.

The siting of the two containers are so positioned not to affect the car park layout. The shipping container is sited perpendicular to the southwest boundary, screening in part the unsightly Lochrin fence. The cabin is positioned at a right angle to the metal shipping container alongside the boundary further screening the Lochrin fence. These structures cannot be seen from Great Eaves Road which is screened by the church building and significantly set back from the boundary with the playing fields.

Whilst the cabin timber framed shelter is over a car parking bay, this space remains available for use when the Pantry is not open. The car park is managed by a swing barrier.

Access

The Pantry is approached from Great Eaves Road along the footpath and the car park access to the rear.

Scale

The height of the two structures, in context with the Lochrin fence and eaves height of the rear gable of the church is not out of scale.

Appearance

The shipping container is a metal ribbed structure decorated dark green with a graphic panel on the end panel displaying the promoters support. The structure sits on a concrete modular blocks to level the container with concrete paving flags to the double doors forming a step down to the car park kerb.

The modular flat metal cabin is a decorated structure with the Ramsbottom Pantry graphic logo on the side elevation. The structure is set down within the ground level. The shelter is made up of treated timberwork and sheathed in clear plastic.

Whilst the two units are robust and secure, the church's CCTV installation with notices displayed, monitors the area including lighting that is activated by movement sensors

Landscaping

Soft landscaping has been made good by planting around the base of the shipping container and a slate mulch for a setting on the ground.