

Christ established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all.

The Church, although she needs human resources to carry out her mission, is not set up to seek earthly glory, but to proclaim, and this by her own example, humility and self-denial. Christ was sent by the Father "to bring good news to the poor . . . to heal the contrite of heart" (Lk. 4:18), "to seek and to save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

*DOGmatic CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH -
Lumen Gentium Paragraph 8*

The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; it is also the fount from which all her power flows.

*THE CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY -
Sacrosanctum Concilium Paragraph 10*



Church Community & Buildings

We are God's building (1 Cor.3)

A decision document for the Parish
from the Parish Finance Committee and
Parish Council.

*Onslow Catholic Parish
July 2008*

Introduction & Recap

The first consultation booklet described why it is considered that changes in the parish assets should be considered:

- the buildings we have: two churches, one including a small hall, and a presbytery;
- the financial position of the parish, with particular emphasis on the cost of running and maintaining two churches;
- that those who preceded us as parishioners had provided generously for the present and future needs of the parish as they saw them; but
- that it was time for a review of what had been done in light of present need and means available.

It indicated that the needs of the parish as they are now seen are:

- a place of worship that can hold up to 300 people on occasions;
- regular access (3 to 4 times a month) to a room able to hold gatherings of 40-50 people, e.g. CWL, youth groups etc.;
- access as required to a smaller meeting room for children's liturgy, parish meetings etc;
- access to a hall for one-off parish events;
- a presbytery for one priest;
- a parish office.

Choices which could meet those needs, or most of them, using what has been provided for us, were set out.

Recommendations

WE RECOMMEND that the Parish ratifies the Parish Council and the Finance Committee proposal:

- a. that the parish will operate from one site;
- b. that that site will be Everest Street;
- c. that steps required to dispose of the Ngatoto Street site be taken;
- d. that alterations at St Benedict's should be designed to keep expenditure within 60% of the net proceeds from the Ngatoto St site, the rest being kept as an endowment fund for maintenance and any further necessary alteration of parish buildings; and
- e. that the Parish will willingly support the hiring of halls/ facilities for all parish activities that the parish properties cannot accommodate.

The above will be put to the parish at the Parish Annual General Meeting on Sunday 3 August 2008.

Parish Meetings February & March 2008

Two open meetings were held to discuss whether changes would be advisable and, if so, which. Both churches are recognised as having structural and maintenance problems. However, on our assessment, the predominant view of those who took part in the consultation was that the parish ought to be focused on one site.

Each of the existing sites has advantages: size, location, personal attachments. Each has drawbacks as the single site. Two possibilities dropped from consideration: first, amalgamation with another parish was seen as unnecessary and presenting a new round of problems as well as preserving difficulties we presently see; second: disposing of both sites and starting again was seen as far too costly in relation to what we have and involving great difficulty in obtaining another suitable site.

The discussion in the main showed a preference for having one site of the two we now have: Ngatoto Street or Everest Street. There was not total agreement, but these things were apparent:

- most people would prefer to concentrate on one site;
- it would be difficult to get all the wished-for things at either site;
- of the people who attended the meetings, a significant majority prefer to go to St Benedict's for Mass or are indifferent as to which church they attend - a suitable Mass time is more important.

The other side of that coin is that a small minority are committed Mass attenders at St John's. To complete the picture, some in the first group want to keep St John's for reasons of association with it, wherever they go to Mass.

Further Information

Some more information has been obtained since the meetings were held:

- We understand that at least one of the reasons St Benedict's was built was that St John's had become too small to be the one parish church.
- A draftperson's drawings covering the viability of using the Ngatato Street site and an option to increase the meeting space on the Everest Street site were obtained.
- Our understanding is that if we seek to make structural alterations to either church, we will be caught by Building Act requirements in respect of access and toilets for disabled people and modern fire protection requirements.

On the Ngatato Street site:

Drawings showing a church the same size as St Benedict's and a presbytery on the Ngatato Street site are provided on the opposite page. They show in terms of the site area that:

- we could build a presbytery on that site, but it would be smaller than the present presbytery. In terms of accommodation for the Parish Priest that would not be too significant, but there could be a consequence in respect of the location of the parish office;
- we could also build a church on the site which would (area for area) take the number St Benedict's holds. It would not mirror either church;
- the present St John's building would necessarily be lost as would the garage. There would be little, if any, parking space off the road. There would be no hall as we know it now.

Our Conclusions

Our conclusions are:

- that to concentrate on one site would have financial benefits to the parish and parishioners for the foreseeable future. It should also tend to make the parish more one unit than it is now;
- the St John's site has advantages in location and attachment for some parishioners. It could provide room for two necessary buildings: church for 300 and presbytery, but not a hall and probably not an office. Removal of the present St John's building would be required.
- the St Benedict's site provides the advantage of a bigger building and adjacent presbytery, it is an acceptable place to attend Mass for a majority of parishioners;
- it seems at this stage possible that that church building could be altered to provide a more useful foyer which would give space for most church related needs and that access requirements could be met, but there would be no hall as such;
- in both cases some needs (hall-type in particular) would have to be provided off site, probably by hiring as required.

We think that there is an inevitability that the parish will come down to one site. With all its drawbacks, we think St Benedict's is the more sensible choice. It will ensure some achievable continuity (particularly if parts of St John's (physical objects) can be included,) which necessary rebuilding on St John's site will not.

Necessary or advisable changes should not consume all available funds from the sale of the Ngatoto Street site and prudent decision-making should leave the parish with a financial cushion for its reduced property-related needs for a period.

Timeline & Process

We would not expect that a final establishment on one site would be practicable or likely to be achieved in much less than a year. If the one site solution is chosen, we would advocate appointment of a project manager with qualified advisers to carry through the contracting, consents etc arrangements, with links to the Parish Priest, Parish Council and Finance Committee. This is not a job for a standard parish committee.

In line with Diocesan requirements, consultation with the Parish is required before seeking the Archbishop's approval to dispose of the Ngatoto Street site. Therefore we asked the Parish to ratify the recommendations in this booklet at this years Parish AGM to be held on Sunday August 3, 2008.

Existing buildings, including garage at front of property.

Small presbytery at rear of site, church same floor size as St Benedicts covering most of site.

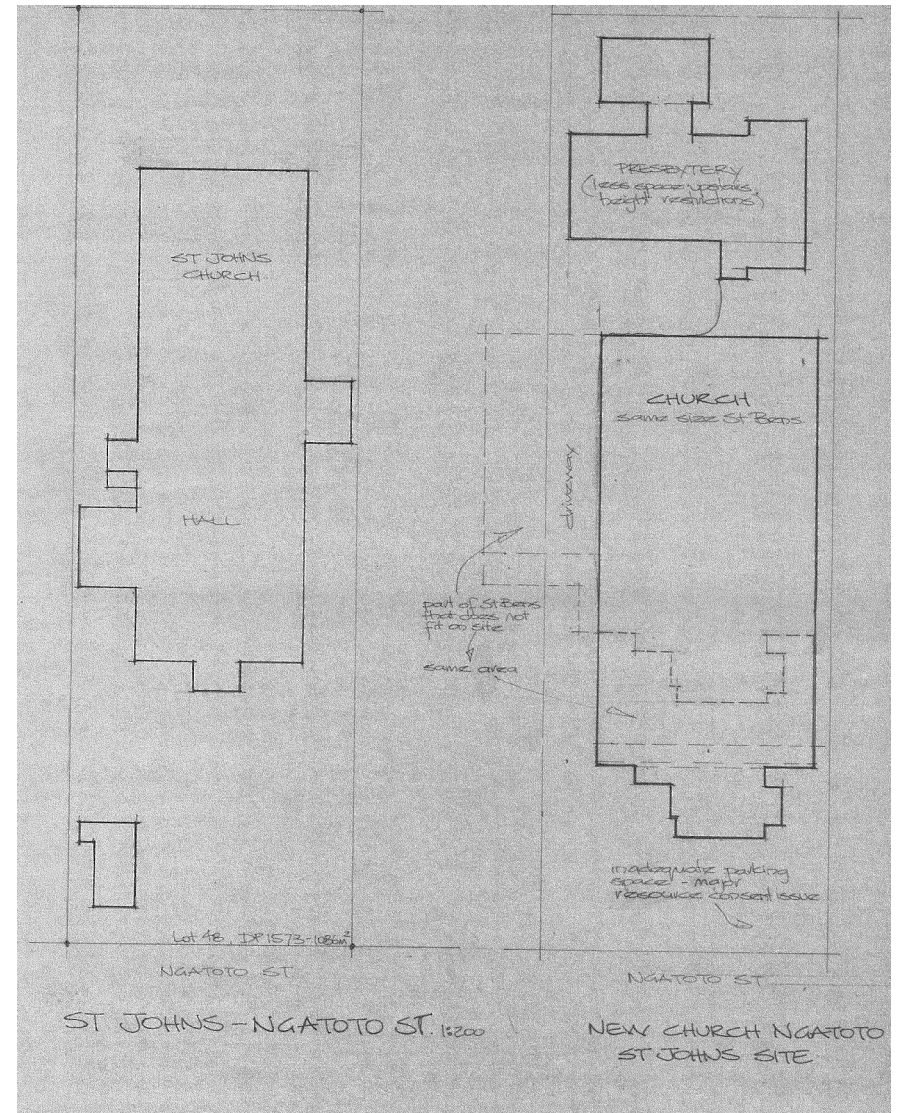


Diagram 1: Ngatoto Street site - showing that the site is too small for a church and presbytery based on current needs.

