

## 21st-Century Church: Better in a New Building or Heritage Building? Epilogue

St Aldates heritage building interior refurbishment was Stage 1 and the new entrance building together with landscaping, Stage 2. Stage 3 will eventually take back the church's coffee shop and to link this back through the new entry building to the church, creating direct access to 4 floors of seminar rooms and offices.

A number of repairs to walls and roof took place at the same time including the installation of nonblocking stormwater baskets to make maintenance easier.

St Alfred's small site has been maxed out with little opportunity to develop further. Limited car parking is available on site and the nearby school provides additional spaces. Growth has been accommodated by having three services each Sunday at present. During the week it is busy, often with several rooms used concurrently.

A maintenance regime is in place and members of the original project team remain actively involved in running the building.

### Conclusion

So how does a thoroughly refurbished heritage building compare with a brand-new building in its service of the church's mission? The answer, I believe, is that both can serve the specific mission calling of each church equally well providing the scheme is designed well and church leaders have the vision to carry out the project thoroughly and to a high standard, respecting the quality of the original.

There is a need to consider both new and heritage buildings as facilities. As such they must facilitate the occupant's purposes. If a heritage church building becomes redundant it will be demolished or changed radically. Better to allow the church to change it radically, keeping the cultural significance of retaining the original user—the church—as its ongoing occupier. Preserving heritage buildings is not core business of the church; its mission is. Nevertheless, a heritage interior can be enriched with colour and lighting; it is the floor that often needs to be changed to achieve flexible use.

St Aldates is considered an exemplary UK church reordering and St Alfred's is highly valued by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, being pictured in many of its communication materials. But let's be clear, the buildings just play a supporting role in the ministry. The church is the people.

Next time: Retail Analogies; The Church in the Street



*Queueing to enter an evening event at St Aldates*

*St Alfred's worship auditorium . Photo Aaron Pocock*

