

Submission of Rob Yule

My name is Robert Yule, commonly known as Rob. I am a retired Presbyterian minister. I have done postgraduate study in theology and am a published author. I have been a university chaplain, a minister of three Presbyterian churches, and was Presbyterian Moderator from 2000-2002. I have attended All Saints since my retirement in 2010.

I support All Saints' application for a resource consent for the proposed modification of its church building to make a new entrance through the existing baptistery. The proposal entails a small modification of the existing historic structure, in return for a splendid new entrance foyer that will greatly enhance the church's usefulness and beauty.

The proposal has three major benefits:

1. The existing baptistery is an out-of-the-way room that is hardly ever used – used mainly, I understand, as a storeroom and a crèche. Moving the baptistery from there into the sanctuary will greatly increase its visibility and prominence. This will above all enhance its theological symbolism signifying baptism as the entry point to the church. All who enter the church will see the relocated baptistery at the beginning of the nave, giving it the architectural prominence that its theological meaning deserves.
2. The sweeping new entrance foyer greatly increases the accessibility and sense of community for those who visit or use the church facilities. It is a vast improvement on the existing church entrances, which are high impossible to negotiate with a coffin in funeral services, and very inconvenient for other public occasions such as weddings. The new entrance will serve multiple purposes:
 - it makes the church interior visible from the street,
 - it provides cover from the elements,
 - it gives vastly improved access for special occasions, such as weddings and funerals,
 - it unifies the church's facilities and provides much improved access to the church office, administration and other parts of the site, and
 - it provides a welcoming space suitable for coffee, conviviality and conversation.
3. Far from destroying the historic character of the church, this proposal will ensure that the historic building is preserved into the future as the heart of a living community. Next to the Regent, All Saints is the second largest meeting place in central Palmerston North. Its interior is a large, uncluttered meeting space with rich historical and architectural value. Nothing in this proposal diminishes this in any way. On the contrary, the new entrance foyer will enhance its usefulness as the gathering place of a living community. What better way to preserve such a splendid historical structure?