

PEWS IN CHURCH BUILDING AND CHURCH HALL

What's going on?

The Parish Council of Summer Hill Church have applied for faculty to gain permission to remove 19 of its 72 pews. This is the procedure all churches in the Anglican Diocese of Sydney go through when they wish to make certain alterations to their buildings and furniture.

Where are the pews now?

They currently sit in the side aisles of the main church building and on the stage in the church hall (next to main church building). Approximately four times a year at large weddings and local school services The pews that are in the side aisle of the church building are moved to the back of the building to increase seating to 400 people. The pews on the stage in the church hall are not used for any purpose.

Why are they not left there permanently?

Approximately 20 years ago the congregation moved the pews to the side aisle to free up a 'foyer' space in the body of the church building. The pews have not been used for regular Sunday worship since that time.

Will these pews be replaced?

Yes, the plan is to sell these 19 long, heavy pews and replace them with more comfortable individual seating.

Why are we replacing them?

Summer Hill Church wants people to be able to hear about Jesus in a way that is comfortable and safe. There is a need for flexibility in our church furniture so the buildings can be more effectively utilised.

Due to the risks involved with moving heavy items (these pews are 4.4m long and weigh 85kg each) they are dangerous and difficult for people to move. With individual seating, one person would be able to set up to accommodate large events. The pews take up a significant amount of space in the church building since they do not stack and present an increased safety hazard.

Why is the move happening now?

Over the last few months the church's Parish Council have been considering how best to use the facilities we have to best support all the groups that meet in the buildings. We have also taken into consideration the safety of our volunteers and staff. The stage space in the hall, which had been used to store some of these pews, now needs to be used on Sunday mornings by Kids Church. There is just no space on the property to store these items indefinitely.

What will happen to these 19 pews?

Our intention is to sell these 19 pews which are our longest, heaviest and more uncomfortable pews. The church intends on maintaining a mix of traditional pews and individual seating as advised by our heritage architect. This plan is in keeping with common heritage values and it is not unusual for churches to update this kind of furnishing.

If you have any other questions, you can contact the church office on (9798 5300) to be given the details of the contact person on Parish Council.