

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CASTLE STREET, HOLT, LL13 9YW



HERITAGE IMPACT / DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

This statement has been prepared to accompany a full planning and listed building application for alterations to the Presbyterian Church, Castle Street, Holt, Wrexham LL13 9YW. The application focuses on a change of use from a place of worship to a retail fitted kitchen / interiors showroom. The most impactful part of this proposal is to remove and repurpose the existing timber bench pews and to level the existing sloping floor.

The building has been identified on Wrexham Council's Buildings at Risk register, having been vacant since the closure of the church as a place of worship.

Location.

The Church is located within Holt conservation area, bounded on three sides by public highways; Castle Street to the East, Chapel Lane to the North and Chapel street to the West. To the south boundary, there is a residential property named 'The Manse'.

Existing Buildings.

The site has three distinct inter-connected buildings, laid out East to West; the main church hall, a church school room and a utility/sanitary block at the rear.

The main church hall is constructed from thick sandstone walls and a steep pitched slated roof with front and rear gable walls to the east and west. The walls have external supporting sandstone buttresses and there is also a sandstone ornamental steeple at the south east corner.

An internal main entrance vestibule has side doors leading to two aisles on either side which give access to rows of timber bench pews running between the flank walls. The pews stand on a timber boarded floor sloped downwards at a pitch of approximately 1 in 45 towards the rear (west) gable. The pews face a timber pulpit constructed centrally in the west gable wall.

Two doors on either side of the pulpit lead directly through the west gable wall to the school room. The school room building is of similar construction to the main church, also constructed of sandstone walls and a steep pitched slated roof but with end gables in a north/south configuration, perpendicular to the main church hall.

The school room is one undivided open space with a portal opening in the south west corner, leading directly to the utility block.

The utility block is a much later addition (c.1960/70) to the main hall and school room. It is constructed from stone effect concrete blockwork facings with a simple flat roof. It comprises of a boiler room, a small kitchen room, wc cubicle with wash basin and a further accessible wc room with wash basin.

Access.

The Church has its main pedestrian entrance to the front elevation, accessed via a wrought iron gate from Castle street.

There is a further ramped (1:20) pedestrian path to a side entrance door provided in the north elevation of the school room which can be accessed from the rear carpark or Chapel lane.

A gravelled vehicle parking area is provided at the rear of the site, this can be accessed directly from Chapel street via an opening in the boundary wall.

Proposals and Impacts on listed building.

The current owners have an existing kitchen showroom and sales business which they plan to re-locate to the Church. Little alteration of the building will be required and the open character of the space and most of the existing fixtures will remain intact including the pulpit which will be retained and undisturbed.

It is planned to use the current school room as a kitchen showroom, together with an interior furnishings and accessories sales showroom within the main church hall.

Other than decoration, the fabric of the school room will not require any further alteration to be re-purposed as a kitchen showroom. The total net useable floor area, when fitted out, will be approximately 55m².

To create a usable showroom space in the main church hall will require the removal of the bench pews and levelling of the existing floor.

It is proposed to re-engineer approximately 75% of the pews into standalone stacked shelving units. These will be used as space dividers to create bespoke sales areas which can be changed and altered to suit a differing range of sales items. A small number of bench pews will also be retained as incidental seating within the sales areas.

The existing timber boarded floor will remain in situ and overlaid with a new stepped timber floor to create two level floor areas. A retail showroom with a total useable floor area of approximately 75m² will be accessed directly from the kitchen showroom and will include ramps for accessibility. A further levelled stock storage area will be created in the eastern half of the main church hall.

These proposals will have minimal impact on the main features of the church and will bring the building back into practical use and provide financial income for its continued maintenance and repair, which should be considered to be a benefit.

Building Alteration, Design and Layout.

There are no external changes proposed to the church building or the surrounding curtilage.

Residential Amenity.

The site is surrounded by residential properties and the opening hours will be restricted to normal retail opening; 09:00 to 17:00 (Monday to Friday), 09:00 to 12:30 (Sat), Sun – closed.

Car Parking.

There is an existing gravelled parking area at the rear of the church, the entrance of which can be accessed directly from Chapel street. This area currently accommodates five car parking spaces.

It is proposed to carry out some minor landscaping to the parking area by reducing the ground level to a small area adjacent and immediately to the north west of the utility block. This will create a further two spaces, this extended parking will have a gravel surface finish to match with the existing.

Trees.

There are no proposals to carry out any ground works which would damage or be within the influencing distance of the apple trees located on either side of the entrance at the rear of the site. There are other ornamental conifers within the curtilage of the site, these will not be affected by these proposals.