

Conservation Comments

Application Number: 24/04845/FUL & 24/4846/LBC

Location/Proposal: demolition and replacement of church hall and internal and external alterations to St Andrew's Church, Church Green, Keighley

Consultation Date:

Planning Officer: Kerry Thompson

Conservation Officer: Jon Ackroyd Date: 19/2/2025

The Parish Church dates from 1848, being the work of R D Chantrell, responsible for a number of churches across the north of England. It is Grade II listed and within the Keighley town centre conservation area. The church is an immediately recognisable feature, especially the dominant tower. Externally it has been relatively little altered, although extended with a single storey flat roofed addition on the south-east corner. The adjacent church hall is not intrusive but equally is of little architectural or historic significance.

The interior of the church appears to have had various alterations and modernisations. At one time, galleries ran along the length of the nave, connected to that at the west end. These were removed long since and the front of the west gallery appears to be of 20th century introduction. The ground floor pews have largely been removed and a screen inserted under the gallery. The nave and interior generally have a decorative scheme which is simple but may not be of historic origin.

The church by its nature and architectural design is inward-looking. Although prominent in the townscape, it is not readily transparent and activity within is largely hidden from view. A pragmatic attitude to such a facility is required to ensure it remains fit for purpose and to sustain its intended use. A compromise between maintaining the historic significance and ensuring the building remains in use is necessary, and such an approach is justified to secure the continued use of the building.

The west entrance to the church is the principal entrance although this was not always the case. The south doorway is the original although in a location now not favourable. The west doorway is a later insertion. This is not to be altered but a more permeable fabric is to be created with 2 extensions flanking the tower. These appear symmetrical although one provides a new entrance and the other accommodates a new staircase. The aesthetic

responds to the Gothic of the host building with the ribs of the structure displaying the interlocking tracery found on the church. Although recognising the architectural character of the church, it is evident that the extensions would not be pastiche but are contemporary. They are also regarded as proportionate to the scale of the building.

The material is to be metal, with a matte bronze finish. In due course a sample of this should be secured. It is not clear how the roofs of the extensions would drain and any gutters and fallpipes must be clarified. The material for the roofs is also not clear and must be confirmed. It is assumed the glazing ribs would project forward of the glass but a cross section should be provided at appropriate time.

The existing church hall does not complement the conservation area or the setting of the church. Its demolition is not opposed. The replacement is proportionate and subservient to the church. The appearance is simple and does not compete with the church. Materials are broadly complementary but samples must be provided. No details of rainwater goods or the eaves construction are illustrated and this must be secured before determination as it could have a notable influence on appearance. Windows must be set deep into reveals by at least 125mm.

The south elevation indicates photovoltaic arrays to the roofs of the listed church although no reference to this is provided anyway in supporting documents, and no detail is provided. This must be further justified and properly illustrated to enable proper consideration of the impacts.

Within the church, a number of changes are proposed. The interior has evolved over time, with removal of the aisle galleries, removal of pews and addition of an enclosed kitchen and teaching room over time. The submitted statement identifying significance and sensitivity of various elements is largely concurred with. Structural changes at the west end to connect the new entrance to the body of the church do cause some loss of fabric but this is concluded as proportionate and justified. Changes in the nave including additional enclosures to create storage and individual rooms, new flooring, further rearrangement of the remaining pews, openings to connect to the church hall, repositioning of decorative screens, new lighting and window blinds will all have some impact but have been sympathetically specified. The most impactful interventions will be the new glazed screens and alterations to the gallery.

The gallery is a surviving original feature but only the remains of more comprehensive galleries originally existing. A new revised and level gallery is proposed to afford improved accessibility and functionality. The loss of original fabric does cause a degree of harm. Some remaining box pews have sensitively been incorporated into the new design and the subtle contemporary appearance and form is well related to the form of the nave. The harm is accepted as balanced by benefits to the functionality of the church and both losses and intervention are proportionate when set in the context of the scale and significance of the building.

The proposals can be justified in terms of the benefit of retaining the building in beneficial use and being proportionate to overall significance. The duties of Sections 16 and 72 of the LB&CA Act can be fulfilled in the support of these proposals. Although some additional detail matters require confirmation, policies EN3 and DS3 are satisfied and the proposals accord with section 16 of the NPPF.