



Caversham Baptist Church Reading

Planning Application for Proposed External Works and Alterations: Heritage Statement

April 2019

1972
Rev.2



Chiltern Chambers 37 St Peter's Avenue Caversham Reading RG4 7DH

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Introduction

This document is produced at the request of the Planning Authority to supplement the Planning Application for adaptations to the Baptist Church in Caversham which is a Listed building.

Caversham Baptist Church is a Place of Worship and subject to the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 2010

Listing Building consent has been sought under this process and the required Listing Building Application was submitted to The Baptist Union of Great Britain. Attached is the Certificate of Authorisation issued by The Listed Building Advisory Committee of The Baptist Union of Great Britain & The Baptist Union of Wales on 29 March 2019.

We will be happy to send to you PDF copies of the drawings listed in the Certificate if you request it and the drawings submitted are as the scheme authorised in the Certificate.

History of the Site and its Setting

Caversham Baptist Church is a Grade II Listed Building.

The building was designed in 1875 by the renowned Architect Alfred Waterhouse (1830-1905).

Waterhouse has designed several significant schemes and is probably most renowned, nationally, for his work on the Natural History Museum in London.

Locally he was also the Architect for the original Town Council building in the centre of Reading, which was built in 1872. Waterhouse was an Architect designing in the Victorian Gothic Revival style.

The building at Caversham is of substantial scale and in fact is the largest building in Caversham Town Centre. The building is positioned at the bottom of Prospect Street, the entrance is from the south; approaching from the Gosbrook Road, the side access is across the south side of the building through an open car parking area to the east of the building.

The Church also originally owned the Memorial Hall which has since been redeveloped; it is located on the opposite side of Gosbrook Road and positioned almost directly to the south of the Church building.

The building is a distinct landmark in Caversham and of historical significance and very prominent. The building is well used by the Church and the Community in different ways.

Our scheme in Planning terms, is in fact to appropriately improve the access to the main entrance at the south side, make minor modifications and in keeping modifications to the existing east side access and there will also be general refurbishments including like-for-like work to joinery, masonry repairs etc. which are not subject to Planning Consent.



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Details of the Scheme

Our proposal which focuses on work to the south entrance is designed to give proper access into the building in keeping with current Disabled Discrimination Act Regulations and to provide practical benefits.

The proposal is to provide ramped access up to the existing south doors which are retained in tandem with the maintenance of stepped access.

The configuration of the steps and ramps has been carefully configured both to be in keeping with the existing fabric and also minimise disturbance.

For example the door into the south-west tower on its east side is retained, the threshold retained at its lower level and our scheme maintains access into this doorway without changes to the external ground levels, enabling this doorway to be unaffected by the works.

The main south doorway is also retained, although the entrance doors themselves will be replaced as described in the Planning Application.

The reason for this is that the Church wish to introduce a spirit of welcoming openness at the entrance into the Church building itself, which will invite people in to use its facilities.

The materials used in the creation of the work at the south in particular are completely in keeping with the existing building. Bricks will be selected which match, these will be imperial in size and of material to match the original bricks. Natural stone dressings and mouldings will be used as detailed in our application.

A particular detail of interest has been the design of the proposed railings at the front entrance.

We had originally proposed the use of a more traditional style of vertical railings in the Victorian style but having looked at the design of this carefully and in 3 dimensions with the Church, we have now developed the proposal to the simpler design which is part of our Planning Application.

The reason for this decision was to provide the requisite protection at the change of level but also maintain visual openness towards the building frontage.

In this way the design of the new railings has been devised to respect and retain views and the appreciation of the existing fabric.

The pavings in the area will be of natural stone.

Signage

As part of our Planning Application there are essentially details of a signage proposal.

Here the Church is wishing to update the design of their existing signage.

The existing signage on the building is outdated, has not been devised particularly to reflect any character of the building and is felt the need to be renewed.

The Church has devised the designs in this area to be more up to date but still to sit comfortably with the architectural style of the building.

Also in the logo attached to the signage design there is reflection of the actual location of the building, the graphic motif attached alludes to the design of Caversham Bridge and the river.



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Conclusion

Other Details such as the survey records can be seen within our Planning Application documents.

Record photographs are attached to this report as a separate Appendix.

The nature of our Application is to update the Listed Building and to support its regular use into the future by bringing access provision in particular up to current standards.

The design and detailing of the work has been devised carefully to be unobtrusive and to maintain an appreciation of the Waterhouse building from the immediate surrounding Caversham.



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Appendix Record Photograph



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Frontage South Elevation



Frontage South Elevation – Main Entrance Door



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View from South Street



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View from Prospect St-
West Elevation



View from Prospect St-
West Elevation- Rear Entrance



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View from Car Park
East Elevation



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