



Caversham Baptist Church Reading

Planning Application for
Proposed External Works and Alterations:

Heritage Statement

May 2018



Chiltern Chambers 37 St Peter's Avenue Caversham Reading RG4 7DH
Tel: 0118 944 9856 Email: enquiries@dlkarchitects.com
Web: www.dlkarchitects.com

Introduction

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

In tandem with our Planning Application clearly there will be a separate Listed Building Application which under the rules of the Ecclesiastical Exemption Scheme will be dealt with by the Church Authorities, which in this case is the Baptist Union based in Didcot Oxfordshire. This will be a separate exercise in the usual way and in tandem.

Work to date : regarding the Listed Building aspects of the scheme, we have already undertaken a significant amount of work with the Baptist Union.

There have been three meetings on the site to discuss the developing scheme and proposals relating to the work at different stages in recent months.

The Church were originally looking at a larger scale scheme for example, which through discussion on budget and also in liaison with the Listed Building Advisors at the Baptist Union, has in fact been discounted now.

The Church have cut back the scope of the proposed work to the Church building to be that described in the current Planning Application.

The details of this scheme proposal have been discussed on site with the Listed Building Advisors from the Baptist Union already.

In addition to this the scheme details which you now have in the Planning Application, have also, prior to being submitting to Reading Borough Council, been submitted formally to a preliminary Listed Buildings hearing at the Baptist Union which we understand were well received. As a result of this exercise the Baptist Union are now awaiting our Full Listed Building Application which we will be submitting to them at an appropriate point in relation to the Planning Application with Reading Borough Council.

To date the Baptist Union Listed Buildings Committee support the scheme, all be it informally.

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 of his time and is probably most renowned for work on the Natural History Museum in London nationally.

More 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 the largest building in fact in Caversham Town Centre.

The building is positioned at the bottom of Prospect Street, the entrance is from the south from the Gosbrook Road side, access is across the south side of the building to an open car parking area to the east of the building.

The Church also originally owned the Memorial Hall which has since been developed but is positioned on the opposite side of Gosbrook Road, 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 to in fact appropriately improve access to the main entrance at the south side, make minor modifications and in keeping to the existing access to the east side and there will also be general refurbishments including like-for-like work to joinery, masonry repairs etc. which are not subject to Planning Consent.

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 on 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 is essentially details of a signage proposal.

Here the Church are 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 have 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.

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.

Appendix
Record Photographs



Main entrance South side



View from car park East side



View from Prospect Street West side