

**Caversham Baptist Church
Reading**

**Planning Application for
Proposed External Works and Alterations:
Design & Access Statement**

April 2018

1972
Rev.1



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

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Introduction

This Planning Application relates to proposed improvements to the church accessibility and appearance including redesigned signage to the front and side of the building in tandem are internal refurbishments which are not subject to Planning Consent.

The Existing Building

Caversham Baptist Church is an active site with important community facilities. The church host regular weekly services including Sunday School and provide accommodation for a range of community groups including providing food for the homeless on a weekly basis.

The existing building is a Grade II listed building located at the junction of Prospect Street and South Street. The main pedestrian access into the Church is up a series of steps along South Street, through a solid timber door.

There is another daily access from the rear car park. A third door opens onto Prospect Street but is little used currently. This is actually the most prominent door.

Details of the Scheme Design

Overall Design Matters

The nature of the scheme is make improvements to this community hub in the centre of Caversham. To bring the facilities up to date in view of access and provide more open feel at the South entrance.

The entrance to the church is currently unwelcoming with it solid and opaque timber door and the stairs are considered difficult in use.

Improvements are also needed to the ancillary and toilet facilities but these are not subject to Planning Consent being internal alterations.

To this end we propose the following

At the South Front -

- A new ramp and stair consisting of a low brick wall, stone chamfered capping and unobstructive railing.
- New glazed front doors which will be of polished oak with etched glass infills.
- A new notice board.
- New signage above the main entrance in the style of the Church new logo.
- The existing tower door and other external doors will be renewed in polished oak; the design will match the existing painted doors.

At Prospect Street, West side -



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- Relocating the roundabout traffic sign from a post mounted sign to a wall mounted sign, to better accommodate the new ramp at the South
- New signage at tower in the style of the Church new logo.
- To the rear of the building along Prospect Street we propose replacing the existing painted door with a new polished oak door; the design will match the existing painted door
- A new notice board and new signage at high level in the style of the Church new logo.

At East Elevation (Facing the car park)

- A new railing to the existing ramp, design to match the proposed front railings
- The existing side door will be renewed in polished oak door; the design will match the existing painted door.

The remainder of the alterations proposed in the scheme are all internal.

Consideration has been given to the size, scale and design of the ramp, stairs and railing in relations to the existing building and desire of the church to appear more open and accessible

The frontage will be constructed of materials to match the existing building; low brick wall, natural stone chamfered capping and an unobstructive and traditionally styled metal railing to allow maximum visibility of the Church entrance.

The proposal would not reduce on-site parking and the existing 13No of Car parking bays will be maintained.

It is important to stress that the scheme proposed does not represent an increase in activity on the site but rather an improvement to access provision, signage and ancillary facilities provided to accommodate the existing activities more effectively in line with current standards.

Access

Proper access into the building will be provided for ambulant disabled and wheelchair users in accordance with current Building Regulations. The front entrance doors will be wide with a levelled access to ease access and egress from the building.

Listed Building Matters

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



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Listing Building consent will be sought under this process and the required Listing Building Application will be submitted to The Baptist Union of Great Britain.

Church Statement

The Church have also made their own statement which is attached as an appendix to this document

Appendix ONE

Caversham Baptist Church Statement



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Dear sirs,

Re: Planning Application for works to Caversham Baptist Church

I am writing in my capacity as chair of the Caversham Baptist Church Building Redevelopment Committee to explain the reasoning behind the application we are submitting.

Caversham Baptist Church is an active and lively church with 55 members and a regular congregation of around 100 adults. As well as the usual range of church services and Sunday School and other activities for our fellowship, we seek to actively serve the community around us, offering a number of activities that connect with hundreds of people in our local community each year including

- Time4U, a weekly parents/carers & toddlers group
- A weekly “Drop-In” for the less fortunate in partnership with Christian Community Action
- Friday Lunches which offer a weekly 3 course meal and companionship for a range of people from our community.
- An annual Community Fun Day on the May Day bank holiday.

We also have a long history of making our premises available for hire to support other groups within the local community. Current weekly users include a children's theatre school, a pilates group and keep fit classes, and we have a range of other occasional users.

Over the past 5 years we have been working with our architect, Neil Barr of DLK Architects to develop plans to improve the facilities so that we can continue and enhance our service to the community around us. This has included a feasibility study to examine different options for the building and consulting with the Caversham community via a leaflet drop to every home and business in Caversham, an open day and a public survey. Two key elements of feedback from this work was that the frontage of the building is not welcoming and it offers poor accessibility. It is with this feedback in mind that we have developed the plans that we now submit for planning consent.

We are very conscious that Caversham Baptist Church has been a prominent part of the Caversham street scene for over 140 years since it was completed 1874. We wish to ensure that the architectural merit of the building is maintained and indeed enhanced. We are planning only relatively low-key changes to the overall external look of the building, so as not to detract from the original design by Alfred Waterhouse (a notable architect who also designed Reading Town Hall and the Natural History Museum). The plans submitted include:



Showing the heart of Jesus, in the heart of Caversham

- A completely reworked main frontage in high quality materials that are architecturally appropriate to the building. This includes reinstating railings that would have been an original feature of the design but were removed during World War II.
- A ramp within the new frontage to make the front entrance of the building accessible to those with limited mobility or parents with pushchairs. At the bottom of the ramp we propose to create a new access point to the main frontage, aligned with Prospect Street pedestrian crossing point to simplify the access path.
- New, glazed doors and straight through access into the building to improve sight lines into the building to make it more inviting for visitors and newcomers.
- Enhancements to the landscaping around the secondary Prospect Street entrance.
- New external signage reflecting the church's recently refreshed logo

Overall, we believe that this package of improvements, alongside the significant improvements we have planned for the interior of the building will deliver a building that is fit for the 21st century whilst respecting the heritage of the premises. We believe they will enable the church to further develop our work in Caversham to engage with and serve an even wider range of people.

Yours faithfully

Richard Wilson

Treasurer, Trustee and Chair of Building Redevelopment Committee.
Caversham Baptist Church

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