

Design

Site Assessment and Proposed Use

Proffitts have been working alongside the Rector of Bury and members of the Congregation and Bury Council officers for several years, looking at the proposals to upgrade and improve access and public safety to the grounds around Grade I listed St Mary the Virgin in Bury.

The Rector and Parishioners are keen their Church, churchyard and the Memorial Garden are made more accessible and safer as well as being welcoming and in keeping with a Grade I listed site within a Conservation Area.

Site Heritage

The Church of St Mary the Virgin and surrounding areas are rich in heritage and there are several designations which cover and protect this heritage.

The Church itself is listed at Grade I; first being listed in November 1951 (list entry 1067236). The entry states the church is medieval in origin but rebuilt entirely in C19 by EH Shellard and JS Crowther. It is the principal church in Bury and “is a very fine example of Crowther’s work, displaying his great skill in the design of timberwork and enthusiasm for mosaic floors”.

Within the curtilage of the Churchyard is Bury War Memorial which was listed at Grade II* in April 2017 (list entry 1444845). It was erected in 1924 by William Kirkpatrick Ltd and incorporating 2 bronze plaques by Joseph Hermon Cawthra. It was designed by renowned architect Sir Reginald Blomfield.

Other listed buildings in the immediate vicinity of the church include:

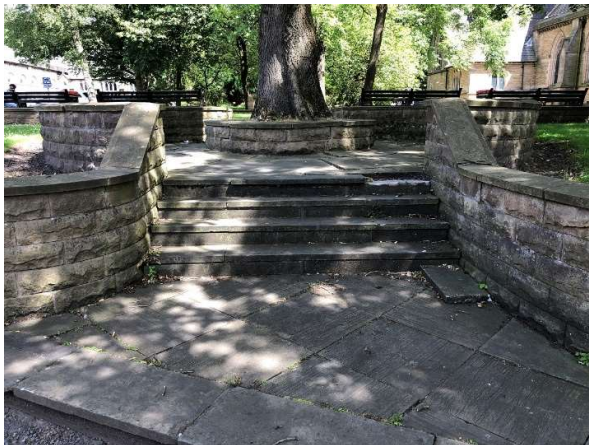
- Statue of Sir Robert Peel, Grade II (list entry 1356807) in the market place
- Union Buildings, Grade II (list entry 131009) on The Rock
- The Two Tubs Inn, Grade II (list entry 1067224) on The Wylde
- Church Rooms, Grade II (list entry 1356838) on The Wylde
- Castle Armoury, Grade II (list entry 1067290) on Castle Street

The Church itself sits within Bury Town Centre Conservation Area which incorporates the historic town centre fabric.

To the west of the Church is the Scheduled medieval moated site known as Bury Castle (list entry 1015128). This area was first listed in January 1976 and amended in January 1997. The area contains the buried remains of a medieval moated manor house, fortified after a licence was granted in 1469 by Edward IV. Bury Castle as it became known belonged to the Pilkington family between 1350-1489, following which it passed to the Stanley family. It fell into decay and the final remains were destroyed during the Civil War. Parts of the site were excavated in 1972 and 1977 which showed substantial parts of the buttressed curtain wall had survived.

Current Conditions

The photographs below give an indication of the poor condition of the trees, churchyard, memorial garden and hard standing immediately around the Church itself.



Proposals

The proposals include the following works:

- to take up the cracked and uneven ledgers from immediately around the church and repair/relay around the boundary walls to prevent them becoming damaged further
- to resurface the informal car parking to the north of the church with a buff coloured material (ideally resin bound gravel if the budget permits) along with associated drainage to prevent puddling and to make it safer to access. This area will become disabled parking for the church and town centre.
- to repair and replace missing and damaged stone flags and copings around the wider churchyard including the walls of the memorial garden.
- to install a new pedestrian link path from The Wylde to the churchyard and memorial garden at 1500mm wide in order to prevent the potential for pedestrian conflict with vehicles and to give disabled access into the memorial garden
- to alter the existing stepped access to the memorial garden from the south, to create a ramped access
- to carry out significant tree works following an in depth arboricultural survey to remove dead, diseased and damaged trees (including those afflicted with ash die back) and carry out replacement planting around the wider site.
- to alter the existing raised circular tree pit at the western entrance to the memorial garden to allow for the existing dying tree to be fully removed and a new tree planted in its place
- replace the concrete flags around the existing sundial with sandstone stone flags, more in keeping with the wider churchyard.
- replace the existing concrete flags and bitmac material around the war memorial with sandstone stone flags
- to install a metal interpretation panel – the exact location of this will be determined but likely to be to the NW corner of the hard standing area around the church.

The overall aim is to improve accessibility and safety around the wider site; replacing unsympathetic surfacing materials (including concrete flags and bitmac) with suitable stone flags; conserving and saving the cracked and damaged ledgers and retaining them in the wider site and carrying out tree works.

The tree works proposed are significant. They are being proposed at this scale to safeguard the wider site; tackling failing trees before they pose a risk to the church itself.

A comprehensive replanting scheme has been proposed which incorporates trees which have historic connections to both churchyards and have been long thought to have spiritual connections. Due to the confines of the space available; smaller cultivars of some species have been chosen; though in other areas, large specimens such as *Quercus ilex* (Holm Oak) have been suggested to replace existing large failing trees such as the ash.

See Proposals for 'Tree Works and Replacement Planting October 2022' for more details.

Accessibility

The earlier photos highlight some of the current, unsafe conditions around the church. Poor accessibility was emphasised in the community consultation; not only into the church itself but around the wider churchyard.

At present, there is no disabled access into the Memorial Garden (access at the two entrance points is stepped) and wheelchair access into the Churchyard from Bury is shared along the narrow vehicular path in the NE corner of the site.

These proposals include two areas of alteration:

1. to remove the two steps into the Memorial Garden from the entrance closest to the Church and regrade this into a ramp. Existing stone flags will be reused to create the ramp.
2. To install a new ramped path from The Wylde into both the Churchyard and Memorial Garden. The ramped path will be 1500mm in width, with stone edgings and a surface of buff/stone coloured resin bound gravel which gives good grip in all weathers and is also porous meaning ice is less likely to form on the surface.

Creation of the above ramped path does result in the loss of a parking space on The Wylde as the end of the ramp terminates in the corner parking space. This space will be secured with a suitable formal steel barrier/fence which at 1000mm high for pedestrian safety. Improvement of the parking within the curtilage of the churchyard will compensate for the loss of one space.