



Planning and Heritage Statement

Two Storey Rear and Side Extension of the Chapel to Provide New Community Hall, Vestry, Kitchen and Toilets including demolition of existing rear extensions with Associated Car Parking and External Alterations.

**Affetside Chapel
Affetside
Bury**

September 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This planning and heritage statement has been prepared by Acer Town Planning on behalf of Affetside Congregational Church in support of a planning application for:

Two Storey Rear and Side Extension of the Chapel to Provide New Community Hall, Vestry, Kitchen and Toilets including demolition of existing rear extensions with associated car parking and external alterations.

- 1.2. The following documents have been submitted as part of the planning application:

- Application Forms
- Existing Elevations – drawing number 21040 - 02
- Proposed Site Plan – drawing number 21040 - 11
- Proposed Plans – drawing number 21040 – 10
- Existing Site Plan (Topographical Survey) – drawing number G1001_TOPO_001 REV
- Existing (Floor Plans) (Topographical Survey) – drawing number G1001_TOPO_001 A
- Planning and Heritage Statement, Acer Town Planning (this document)
- Phase 1 Land Contamination Assessment, Soiltechnics
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Collington Winter Environmental Ltd
- Bat Survey Report, Collington Winter Environmental Ltd

- 1.3. This structure of the remainder of this statement is as follows:

- **Section 2:** provides an overview of the property, surroundings and relevant planning history.
- **Section 3:** describes the proposals.
- **Section 4:** sets out the relevant planning policy for the proposal.
- **Section 5:** assesses the development against the relevant planning policy considerations including a heritage assessment.
- **Section 6:** concludes this statement.

2. SITE DETAILS AND PLANNING HISTORY

- 2.1 This section sets out the site location and characteristics.
- 2.2 Affetside Chapel is situated within Affetside a small hilltop village in the northern part of the Metropolitan Borough of Bury. Affetside village is characterised by linear ribbon development with properties facing onto Watling Street (a Roman Road) as shown in Figure 1. The village developed in the 1700s to satisfy the growing pack-horse traffic both along the Roman Road and east to west between Bolton and Rossendale.¹
- 2.3 The site is located directly opposite bus stops with hourly services to Bury and Bolton.
- 2.4 The Chapel faces onto Watling Street at the southern end of the village as shown in Figure 2.

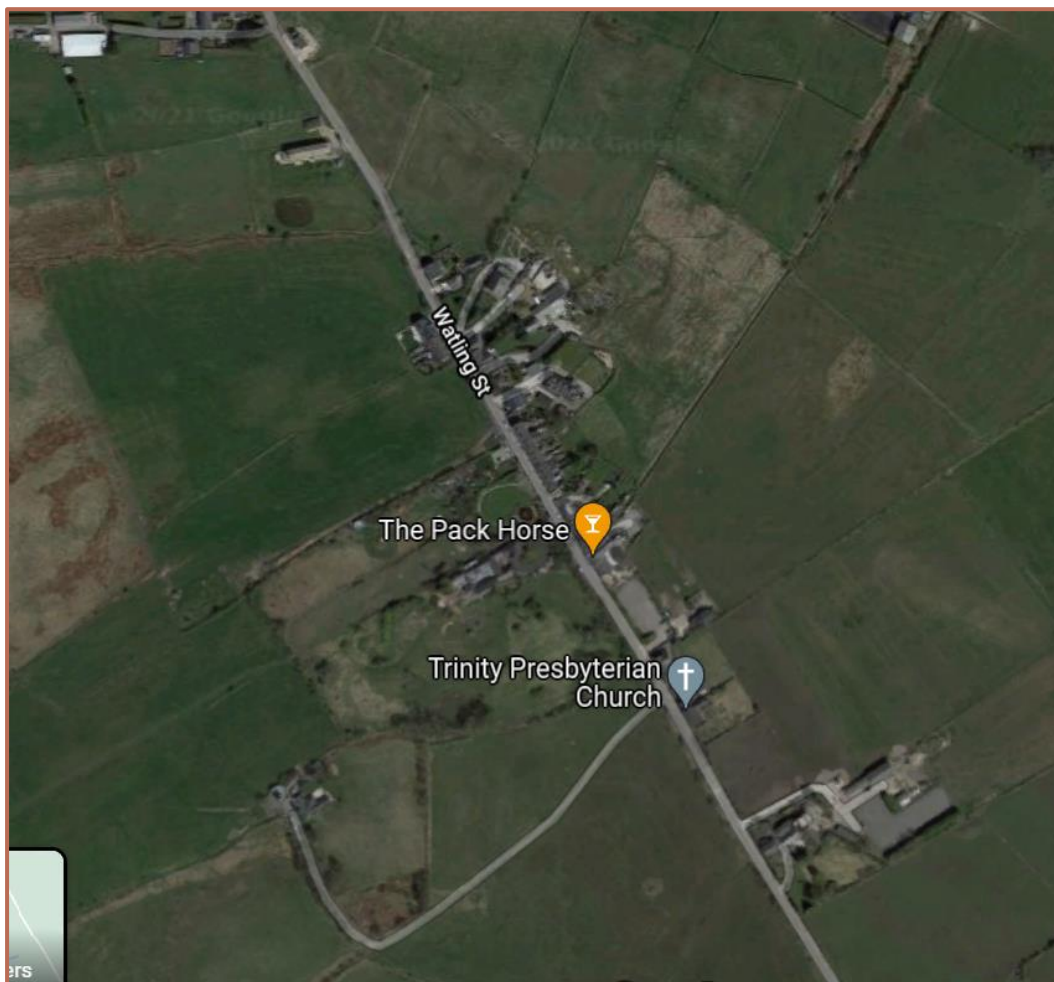


Figure 1: Aerial Image of Affetside Village: Google Maps satellite imagery: Accessed September 2021

¹ Affetside An Historical Survey, James J Francis, March 2019



Figure 2: Aerial Image of Affetside Chapel Site Ownership: Google Maps satellite imagery: Accessed January 2022



Figure 3: Photograph of Affetside Chapel Front Elevation onto Watling Street



Figure 4: Photograph of Rear Elevation of Affetside Chapel



Figure 5: Photograph of Rear Elevation and Northern End of Affetside Chapel



Figure 6: Photograph of Rear Elevation and Northern End of Affetside Chapel



Figure 7: Southern end of the Chapel – the previous roof level and doorway can be clearly seen.



Figure 8: Graveyard and enclosed curtilage to south and rear of the Chapel



Figure 9: Rear Extension of the Chapel

- 2.5 The Chapel comprises a single storey building from local stone with two internal spaces for public worship and social activities. Later extensions to the rear were built from brick and the rear of the original building is finished with render. The roof is slate tiles.
- 2.6 The Chapel graveyard is located immediately to the south of the building, also facing onto Watling Street.
- 2.7 Vehicular access is to the north of the Chapel directly onto Watling Street with hard standing for car parking to the north side and rear of the building. A wooden outbuilding for storage is also situated to the rear of the building.

About the Chapel

- 2.8 Affetside Chapel dates to 1835 and has previously been known variously as Trinity Presbyterian Church and Affetside School.
- 2.9 The first record of the Conveyance of land for the Chapel was dated 7th October 1835, when Messrs Ashworth and Sons, members of the Society of Friends, gave the plot of land to Trustees for use as a School/Meeting Room. It is recorded that miners and stonemasons of the village quarried the stone locally and they and local carpenters, plasterers and painters gave their services free. The simple Meeting Room was opened in 1840, being a single large room with a small vestry to the rear. The miners of the community had quarried the stone on the hillside, the farmers had seen to it that it was brought to the site, and the painters, plasterers and carpenters had given their labour. The only actual cost incurred was £20!
- 2.10 The first burial was that of Wright Turner, aged 15 years, on December 11th 1847.
- 2.11 From the 1830's the formation of the Non-Conformist gatherings would have been coupled with Sunday Schools for the youngsters – in those days teaching them to read and write in order to follow the teachings of the Scriptures. The new Chapel Meeting Room would undoubtedly be used for this purpose on weeknights as well as Sunday afternoons.
- 2.12 The old cottage between the Chapel Row Cottage (Now No's 42, 40 and 38) and the existing Chapel, which had previously been rented for ten pence per week, was unoccupied in 1864 on the death of the then owner Betty Whittle. It was demolished soon after to make way for the Chapel extension and yard.
- 2.13 Following the Education Act of 1870 that decreed that Elementary Schools be set up in areas where school provision was insufficient and a further Act of 1876 establishing the principle that all children should receive elementary education, it was decided

that the Chapel building should be used as a Day School and the first appointment of Headmaster was given to Mr John Wilson, who opened the new Day School on June 7th 1879.

- 2.14 The Committee or Board was made up of James Nuttall, Absalom Ramsden, James Hamer, Peter Scholes and Thomas Hulme. Mr Wilson continued with his dual role of Preacher and Schoolmaster for some years. About 1890 it became clear that the Chapel building was inadequate for a multi-class school so it was decided to build an additional room and at the same time raise the roof level. About 1890 the school was enlarged, £300 being raised by a bazaar.
- 2.15 From the beginning of the Day School, it had been customary to clear all the desks aside on Friday night and prepare seating for the Sunday congregation. This was reversed on Sunday night in readiness for the Monday morning school opening. This procedure continued until 2003 when the school was closed by Bury Council.
- 2.16 The village lost 15 church and school members in the First World War. The chapel congregation raised funds for a memorial and purchased a new organ (Figure 10) which was unveiled in 1920 and is still in use. The graveyard was enlarged in 1922.
- 2.17 Much of the village social life in the early twentieth century centred on the Chapel, including festivals, dances, tea parties, concerts, pantomimes, operas and sports.²

Non-Designated Heritage Asset – Assessment of Significance

- 2.18 The Council consider the Chapel is a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. The reasons for its inclusion on their draft local list are not published.
- 2.19 It is not a building of particular architectural merit or quality to distinguish from other buildings of the same period and there are later significant alterations and extensions including at the rear and northern end of the building and a raised roof as can be seen in Figures 3 -7. The extension to the rear has little heritage value. The chapel does however have an interesting social and cultural history, including a war memorial organ, which is outlined above.
- 2.20 The building is considered to have historical value as a purpose built presbyterian chapel. The original parts of the building have a modest aesthetic value being constructed from local stone. The buildings main significance lies with its social and cultural contribution to the history of village life, worship and education in Affetside.

² Paragraphs 2.7-2.16 adapted from 'Affetside An Historical Survey', James J Francis, March 2019

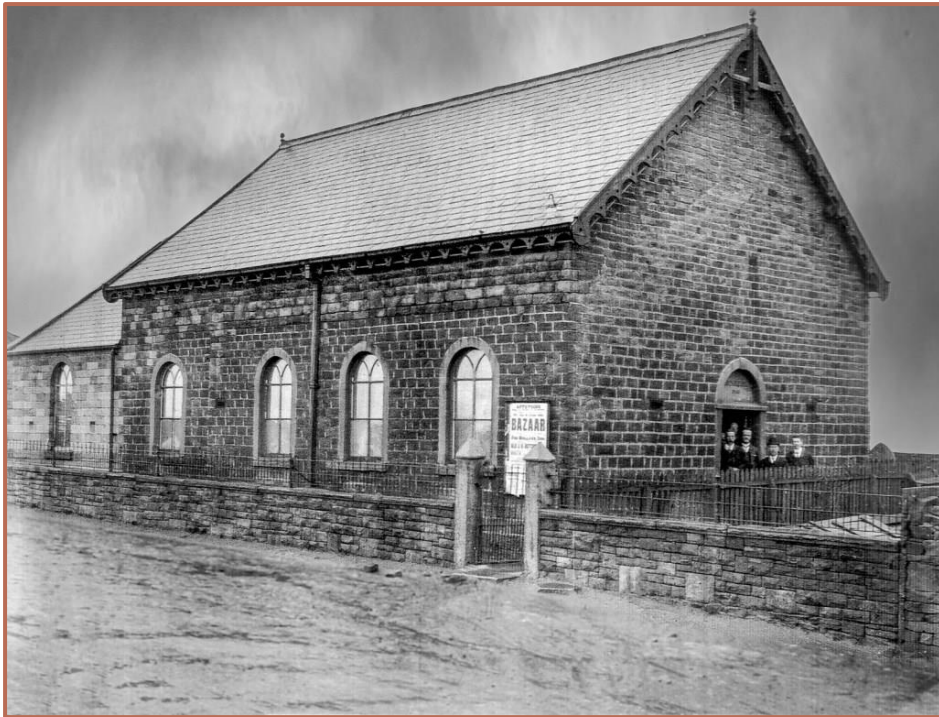


Figure 10: The Chapel circa 1906. The roof has been raised and extension built which places it after 1890. The poster indicates a Bazaar. One was held on 2nd, 3rd & 5th May 1906 to raise funds for the "Reduction of debt provided for the necessary alterations to the School"



Figure 11: The Memorial Organ

Affetside Today

- 2.21 The Chapel has in recent years enjoyed a significant revival and with the introduction of a vibrant and enthusiastic congregation and a Minister that is full of energy, attendances have been on the up.
- 2.22 With the assistance of a dedicated organist, the Chapel Organ, which is of significant importance, as it is one of only a handful of Organs of this type and age remaining in the World, is a joy to hear and there has been a significant increase in numbers of people attending church services who are Organ enthusiasts.
- 2.23 Coffee mornings and afternoon tea sessions have become increasingly popular with walkers and people who frequent the area, albeit the catering facilities within the Chapel are less than desirable and the kitchens need a full refurbishment.
- 2.24 There is a breath of fresh air feeling about the place and the local community have embraced the challenge to support the Chapel and join us on most Sundays, some are even bringing along their children.
- 2.25 Clearly, Affetside Chapel plays a vital role in the local community not only through providing access to worship but through the use of the building for the following:
- Coffee mornings and afternoon tea.
 - Weddings
 - Funerals
 - Various social gatherings
 - Community and Private Meetings

Chapel Condition

- 2.26 The existing Chapel building is in a critical state of disrepair and whilst the roof is holding up, the external walls, being of solid masonry have lost thermal retention capacity, and became porous.
- 2.27 The chapel is constructed of solid masonry walls with no cavity and the impact of years of driving rain and freeze / thaw action on the weakened and deteriorated (with age) external stone face has revealed itself with dampness appearing on the inside of the solid wall, throughout the chapel as shown in Appendix 1.

- 2.28 As part of the current investment, the building has been recently cleaned and treated with a “breathable” sealer coat that will prevent any further degradation of the stone façade.
- 2.29 The Chapel roof is of slate construction over felt on timber battens with no insulation. It is assumed that the roof is a “leaking tap” of energy into the air. Records show that the roof has not been regularly maintained and although the slates seem in relatively good order, there are many that have either slipped or loosened and the fixing pattern does not meet the requirements of current regulations for buildings in such remote areas with high wind loads. The roof needs an entire strip off, insulation needs to be placed and roof timbers checked for “fit for purpose”. It was estimated in 2021 that the cost of this work will be £31K and this has undoubtedly increased.
- 2.30 There are two existing extensions to the main building, one is a means of escape (vestibule) and the other serves as a kitchen. Both extensions are in a very poor state and need re-constructing. The 2021 estimated cost of this was £27K.
- 2.31 The electrical wiring throughout the building has not been replaced for upwards of 45 years. The circuit / distribution board is aged and certain wiring ring mains have been isolated as they are deemed to be unsafe. Constant overload of the system happens when all the heating is on and the estimated 2021 cost of a full re-wire include a new fire alarm system to comply with current fire regulations was 11.6K.
- 2.32 The heating system functions intermittently and the 38 years old boiler is sited in the cellar. The radiators are cast iron and the interconnecting pipework is corroded internally. Removing the radiators and taking off site to be internally cleaned, purging the pipework and re-placing the boiler, whilst adding new radiators to the system was estimated in 2021 to be £18.4K.
- 2.33 The majority of the graveyard headstones are leaning precariously close to collapse and whilst we have discovered a letter (amongst the papers of Geoffrey Bond, the previous caretaker) written to the Chapel from Bury MBC advising that under H & S Law all headstones in the Borough must be securely founded and upright, the chapel has no means to pay for this work. Volunteers have attempted to improve the stability of the some of the headstones, although the Deacons took the view that this work required mechanical means, especially for the large and heavy headstones and as such an outside company was required with adequate insurance to carry out this work. It is quickly coming to the point whereby the Deacons are considering closing the graveyard on the grounds of Health & Safety. The 2021 estimated cost of the work required by Bury MBC was £8,8K.

Need for New Facilities

- 2.34 Since the loss of income from the closure of the local authority school in 2003, the Chapel has struggled to make ends meet and cash reserves have been drawn upon to the point that the Chapel can only support itself for a further year or two.
- 2.35 The Chapel also now finds itself in a position that it cannot fund any further essential major renovation of the building. In its current run-down state, the building is becoming increasingly difficult to attract any interest from people who wish to hold social gatherings, weddings, meetings etc and this is adding to the depletion of cash reserves.
- 2.36 Without a sustainable income, the state of the Chapel will continue to deteriorate and would likely have to close. In these circumstances the Chapel would be put on the open market and it is highly unlikely that it would ever serve as a place of Worship or events centre ever again.
- 2.37 The Chapel has researched possible sustainable income streams that can be operated alongside the main worship use of the building. Their research has indicated that there is strong appetite for a community hall in Affetside. The provision of this would also likely increase the popularity of the Chapel and what it can offer.

Pre-application Consultation

- 2.38 The Chapel undertook pre-application consultation with Bury Council in January 2022 for a form of development that included an extension to the Chapel to provide workspace and community space and 2 separate residential bungalows at the rear of the site as shown in Figure 12.
- 2.39 Formal pre-application feedback from Officers was received in July 2022 and can be summarised as follows:
- 2.40 The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as the extension would more than double the size of the church and the proposed bungalows would not meet any of the NPPF exceptions. As such 'Very Special Circumstances' would be required. The VSC put forward with the pre-application request could comprise a case for extension works to the Chapel but not the separate residential development (as was initially proposed) due to the harm to the openness of the Green Belt and character of the site.



3. PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The proposal is to demolish existing ad hoc extensions to the rear of the Chapel building and a wooden outbuilding in order to accommodate a two-storey rear and side extension to the Chapel incorporating:
- Community hall
 - Kitchen
 - Vestry
 - WCs including disabled provision
 - Disabled access ramp
- 3.2 The proposals also include the internal re-wiring (an urgent necessity) as part of the redecoration and refurbishment of the interior of the Chapel.
- 3.3 Externally, the stonework and general exterior of the main Chapel will be brought up to a suitable weatherproof standard. The extension is proposed to be finished in painted render to match the rear of the existing Chapel building. The roof is proposed to be slate tiles, again to match the existing Chapel roof.
- 3.4 Externally there will be a new formalised car parking area for 18 vehicles, including 1 disabled space and 1 electric vehicle charging space. This will be a newly laid surface in a permeable material replacing part of the existing tarmacked area and a small area of existing grass. Beyond this the existing grass will be retained to the rear wall.
- 3.5 The access onto Watling Street will be widened to improve access and egress to the site.
- 3.6 Otherwise, a bin area is provided located close to the access and concealed by the existing stone wall. A secure cycle store and garden store is proposed at the rear of the car parking area.
- 3.7 There will be a new access ramp into the Church to enable disabled access.

4. PLANNING POLICY

- 4.1 This section sets out and appraises the proposal against the relevant planning policy considerations.

Statutory Duty

- 4.2 Section 66 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires local planning authorities to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.

Development Plan

- 4.3 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the application to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material planning considerations support a different decision being taken.
- 4.4 The statutory development plan for the area comprises:
- Extant Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997)
- 4.5 The saved UDP policies form the framework that planning applications are assessed against. The site is situated within the Green Belt on the Proposals Map.
- 4.6 Due to the age of the UDP the Council has undertaken an assessment to determine consistency between the policies within the UDP and those set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The assessment sets out the basis for determining the degree of weight that should be attached to existing UDP policies and instances where policies in the NPPF should take precedence in the development management process.
- 4.7 When assessing proposals for new development in the Green Belt (UDP Policy OL1/2), the NPPF's definition of what should be considered to be exceptions to inappropriate development should take precedence, therefore this statement does not reference this policy any further. In general, the UDP's policies relating to community facilities are considered to be consistent with the NPPF's aim to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- 4.8 The following policies are considered relevant to the proposal.
- CF1 - Proposals for New and Improved Community Facilities**
- 4.9 Proposals for new and improved community facilities will generally be looked on favourably by the Council.

CF1/1 - Location of New Community Facilities

4.10 Proposals for new and improved community facilities will be considered with regard to the following factors:

- impact on residential amenity and the local environment;
- traffic generation and car parking provision;
- the scale and size of the development;
- where applicable, access to shops and other services;
- if the use is intended to serve a local community, or catchment area, the suitability of the chosen location in relation to that community or catchment area;
- accessibility by public and private transport;
- the needs and requirements of the disabled;

Policy EN1/2 – Townscape and Built Design

4.11 The policy states the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals which do not have an unacceptable adverse effect on the particular character and townscape of the Borough's towns, villages and other settlements.

Policy EN2 – Conservation and Listed Buildings

4.12 The policy states that the Council will seek to preserve the Borough's built heritage through the control of development, especially that affecting Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings and areas of local historical importance.

Material Considerations

National Planning Policy Framework

4.13 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (NPPF) includes the key objective of achieving sustainable development. Paragraph 11 confirms that decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which means where policies most important for determining the application are out-of-date granting permission unless (i) the application of NPPF policies that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the NPPF policies taken as a whole.

- 4.14 NPPF also provides policies on a range of topics and is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.15 The parts most relevant are:
- Section 11 – Making effective use of land
 - Section 12 – Achieving well-designed places
 - Section 13 – Protecting Green Belt Land
 - Section 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment
- 4.16 Paragraph 130 states that planning decisions should ensure that developments will function well and add to the overall quality of the area as well as being visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping. It also requires decisions to create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
- 4.17 Paragraph 147 states that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.
- 4.18 Paragraph 148 directs that when considering any planning application, local planning authorities (LPAs) should ensure that substantial weight is given to any harm to the Green Belt. 'Very special circumstances' will not exist unless the potential harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm resulting from the proposal, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 4.19 Paragraph 149 sets out that LPAs should consider the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this include *c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.*
- 4.20 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF identifies the following criteria in relation to heritage assets:
- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

- 4.21 Paragraph 199 states the following:

...great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

- 4.22 Paragraph 203 says the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Bury Council Draft Local List of Historic Buildings

- 4.23 Bury Council are currently consulting on draft proposals for a local list of historic buildings in the borough. The subject building is identified on the draft local list. The identification of the building on the draft local list does not give the building any greater protect in policy terms although it does provide confirmation that the Council regard the building as being of heritage interest warranting consideration in the determination of a planning application.

Bury Council Development Control Policy Guidance Note 8 – New Buildings and Associated Development in the Green Belt – Adopted 2007

- 4.24 This SPD pre-dates NPPF policy on Green Belts. However, it is understood that Bury Council still use this guidance in relation to the extension of buildings in the Green Belt. Paragraphs 4.25-4.27 relate to extensions and it is stated that residential extensions should be proportionate to the size of the original dwelling, excluding any previous extensions carried out under permitted development rights or with planning permission. In general terms, the Council may allow an extension to be up to a third of the volume of the original dwelling. `
- 4.25 No guidance is provided on extensions to non-residential buildings.

5. PLANNING AND HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out at Section 38 (6) of The Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 5.2 The National Planning Policy Framework is a material consideration in all planning decisions.
- 5.3 The key considerations for determining this application are the principle of the development in the Green Belt, the design and appearance of the proposal and the impact upon the non-designated heritage asset.

Principle of Development (Community Facilities)

- 5.4 The proposed community facilities accord with UDP Policy CF1 which states that proposals for new and improved community facilities will generally be looked on favourably by the Council. UDP Policy CF1/1 sets out the factors that new and improved community facilities will be considered against. The following explains how the proposal accords with each of these factors and satisfies Policy CF1/1.

- impact on residential amenity and the local environment;

The local environment and residential amenity to the nearest neighbours will be improved by the demolition of the unsightly ad hoc extensions and outbuildings and their replacement with a new extension more in keeping with the character of the main building and surrounding area.

- traffic generation and car parking provision;

The proposal includes formalising car parking for the chapel and facilities which will ensure that parking occurs within the site and minimises any impacts on the local highway network.

- the scale and size of the development;

As set out under the Green Belt considerations, the proposed extension is of an appropriate scale and size.

- where applicable, access to shops and other services;

The proposed extension will significantly improve the community facilities available within this rural community. The site is also located close to the other community facility in the village – The Pack Horse public house.

- if the use is intended to serve a local community, or catchment area, the suitability of the chosen location in relation to that community or catchment area;

The proposal will improve the facilities for the existing congregation and rural community.

- accessibility by public and private transport;

There is an hourly bus service to Bury and Bolton (and destinations in between) immediately outside of the Chapel.

- the needs and requirements of the disabled;

The proposed development incorporates an access ramp into the Chapel, disabled WC and car parking space significantly improving the accessibility of the facilities.

Principle of Development (Green Belt)

5.5 The site is located within the Green Belt and it is necessary to consider:

- whether it would be inappropriate development within the Green Belt.
- if the development is inappropriate, whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness and any other harm is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

5.6 Paragraph 145 sets out that there are exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt including (c) the extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.

5.7 NPPF does not define 'disproportionate additions' and there is no policy or definition in the Bury UDP. Bury use guidance allowing for an increase in volume of up to a third for residential extensions but have no such guidance for non-residential buildings. Many other local planning authorities also have local plan policies which quantify an acceptable increase and these generally range between 30 and 50%. Various appeal decisions have concluded that, as well as volume, it is also necessary to consider floorspace, external dimensions, design, scale and massing to determine whether a proposed addition is disproportionate or not.

- 5.8 Table 1 lists the existing cubic capacity of buildings to be retained and demolished at the site and Table 2 shows the proposed net cubic capacity.

	Cubic capacity m ³	Retain/Demolish
Main church hall	723	Retain
Porch	18.4	Retain
Secondary church hall	257	Retain
Small church extension	34	Retain
Rear church extension	154	Demolish
Flat rood extension off church	122	Demolish
Rear church extension cellar	50	Demolish
Side church extension	7	Demolish
Rear extension lean-to	12.4	Demolish.
Total	1,377.8	

Table 1: Existing Cubic Capacity

	Cubic capacity m ³	Retain/New
Main church hall	723	Retain
Porch	18.4	Retain
Secondary church hall	257	Retain
Small church extension	34	Retain
Church hall extension	478	New
Lift enclosure	18	New
Total	1,640.4	

Table 2: Proposed Cubic Capacity

- 5.9 The net volumetric increase of the proposed extension is 262.6 m³ which amounts to a 19% increase above the existing building.
- 5.10 The existing internal floorspace of the buildings is 232.3 sqm and the proposed floorspace is 237 sqm – equating an increase of just 2%.
- 5.11 The footprint of the existing building prior to demolition is 256 sq m and the proposed footprint will be 273 sq m – equating to an increase of just 6.6%.
- 5.12 The proposed extension has been designed to take a minimum new footprint area by being placed in the same location as the existing extensions that will be demolished.

- 5.13 Taking into consideration scale and mass, the proposed scheme projects rearwards from the main church building by 7.55m which is roughly the same as the existing extensions proposed for demolition. The width will also be approximately the same as the total of the existing rear extensions. The proposed height is around 1m more than the existing 2 storey part of the extension, with the main difference being that it is two storey across the full width unlike the existing extensions.
- 5.14 It is considered that in terms of footprint, scale and massing the proposed extension to the building is not disproportionate, viewed as it will be against the backdrop of the main chapel building which is already a larger scale community building compared with other domestic properties in the area. It is also relevant to take account of the nature of the existing ad hoc and ramshackle extensions and outbuilding that will be demolished as there will be a significant improvement in the appearance of the building at the rear.
- 5.15 Overall, it is considered that the proposed extensions are proportionate additions to the existing building and the development can be found to meet the NPPF paragraph 149 (c) exception for buildings in the Green Belt.
- 5.16 Nevertheless, should the Council consider that the extensions are disproportionate, it is considered that there are other material considerations which amount to the 'very special circumstances' required under NPPF paragraph 147.
- 5.17 It is considered that the following benefits amount to the very special circumstances required to outweigh the harm to the Green Belt through inappropriateness and any other harm.

Safeguarding Against the Loss of Existing Place of Worship and Community Facility

- 5.18 The proposed development will ensure the future of Affetside Chapel which has been an active part of the local community since 1835. The Chapel is one of only two community buildings (the other being The Pack Horse public house) serving the village and the wider rural community.
- 5.19 As set out in Section 2 of this report, without major investment, the future of Affetside Chapel is increasingly unstable due to the cost of maintaining and upgrading aged and inadequate facilities to meet modern requirements and remain viable. In its current run-down state, the building is becoming increasingly difficult to attract any interest from people who wish to hold social gatherings, weddings, meetings etc and this is adding to the depletion of cash reserves.

- 5.20 The Chapel now finds itself with limited reserves and is particularly vulnerable should any significant maintenance expenditure become necessary.
- 5.21 Without a sustainable income, the state of the Chapel will continue to deteriorate and would likely have to close. In these circumstances it is likely that the Chapel would be put on the open market and highly unlikely that it would ever serve as a place of Worship or events centre ever again.
- 5.22 The extension to the Chapel will allow improvements and create sustainable income streams that will secure the future of Affetside Chapel in order that it can be maintained as an important community facility and place of worship for the foreseeable future.

Securing the Future of a Non-Designated Heritage Asset

- 5.23 As has been demonstrated in Section 2 and explained above, the current condition of Affetside Chapel is in a critical state of disrepair and the Chapel also now finds itself in a position that it cannot fund any further essential major renovation of the building.
- 5.24 The proposed extension and alterations will ensure that the non-designated heritage asset improved and renovated to a high standard that together with the sustainable income streams that will be created will secure its long-term future.
- 5.25 The heritage assessment below explains that the proposals will halt the decline of the Chapel enabling critical repairs to take place to the main building. The proposals will provide a significant improvement to the condition of the non-designated heritage asset and enhance the external appearance.

Provision of New High-Quality Community Facilities

- 5.26 The proposed extension to the Chapel will provide new a function and social space. In a small rural community such as Affetside, this will provide a significant social and economic benefit.

Impact on the Openness of the Green Belt

- 5.27 The site lies within the main nucleus of the village of Affetside. Affetside, is characterised by ribbon development with occasional properties and buildings set further back from the road.
- 5.28 The proposed extension to the Chapel would be well within the ribbon of development along Watling Street and would have a limited visual impact upon the openness of the Green Belt.

- 5.29 The rear car parking does not extend significantly further than the existing tarmacked area and would be viewed within the existing envelope of the church.
- 5.30 The rest of this planning statement assesses the heritage impact and sets out other technical considerations relating to ecology and ground conditions. It is concluded that the proposed extension accords with relevant local planning policy and relevant parts of the NPPF.
- 5.31 In summary, should there be a need for 'Very Special Circumstances' to be demonstrated, it is considered that the safeguarding against the loss of existing community facilities and a place of worship, the securing and enhancing the future of a non-designated heritage asset, together with the proposed new community facilities, outweigh the harm from inappropriate development and there is no other harm.

Heritage Assessment

- 5.32 The Chapel was erected in 1835 as a purpose built Chapel and is still in use for worship and community uses today.
- 5.33 The building was extensively altered and extended in 1890 including the large rear extension. This part of the building is of little architectural merit and being constructed of brick does not have the same aesthetic value as the main chapel building and is somewhat unsympathetic and incongruous to the original structure.
- 5.34 Overall, the Chapel building's main significance lies with its social and cultural contribution to the history of village life, worship and education in Affetside. Any significance attributed to the extensions to the main building lies in them providing additional space to enable these uses to thrive.
- 5.35 The proposed demolition relates to these later extensions. The replacement extension will provide better quality internal space and an improved external appearance in keeping with the main building.
- 5.36 The materials have been selected to carefully blend in with the main Chapel building including matching slate roof and painted render.
- 5.37 The proposals will halt the decline of the Chapel enabling critical repairs to take place to the main building and provide a significant improvement to the condition of the non-designated heritage asset and enhance the external appearance.

Ecology

- 5.38 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd in December 2022.
- 5.39 The site was found to comprise of modified grassland covered in gravestones and poor semi-neutral grassland, with a church building, wooden shed and a hardstanding carpark on site. It is anticipated that the site provides limited habitats for local flora and fauna. The site was found to have some value for bats, birds, amphibians and terrestrial mammals.
- 5.40 A preliminary roost inspection of the site found the building to provide moderate bat roosting potential. Nocturnal Bat Surveys were undertaken in June 2023 by Collington Winter Environmental Ltd.
- 5.41 A total of one non-breeding summer roost of common pipistrelle bat was identified relating to the slate tile roof of the building. Foraging and commuting behaviour by common pipistrelles was recorded minimally in association to the hardstanding areas and graveyard.
- 5.42 The proposed extension to the current standing building would carry a probability of injuring and/or killing bats and the disturbance/destruction of a known bat roost as a result of the proposed works, without mitigation. As such, Natural England European Protected Species License (EPSL) is required and is to be obtained prior to any works being completed on the building. No works to the building can be completed until the licence has been obtained and the licenced ecologist confirms works can proceed without the presence of the licenced ecologist.
- 5.43 The proposed development is anticipated to disturb a bat roost site and therefore a replacement roost site will need to be provided for the bats utilising the building for roosting and foraging purposes. The Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Mitchell-Jones, 2004) state that avoiding damage or loss of existing roosts with the preferred option in all cases and wherever possible, replacement roost habitat should be on a "like for like" basis to replicate the existing conditions selected by the bats.

Ground Conditions

- 5.44 A Phase 1 Land Contamination Assessment was undertaken by Soiltechnics in January 2023.
- 5.45 The Preliminary Risk Assessment has not identified any potential contaminant linkages which pose an unacceptable risk in the current or proposed development site settings.

Therefore, the site is considered suitable for development without any further investigation works or remedial action taking place. However, the new development will require incorporation of basic radon protection measures and, the measurement of radon gas within retained/refurbished buildings should also be considered.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 This planning and heritage statement has been prepared by Emma Jones MRTPI of Acer Town Planning. It accompanies a planning application for:

Two Storey Rear and Side Extension of the Chapel to Provide New Community Hall, Vestry, Kitchen and Toilets including demolition of existing rear extensions with associated car parking and external alterations.

- 6.2 Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the Development Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise as set out at Section 38 (6) of The Planning Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Section 70 (2) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- 6.3 The proposed development is needed to address the deterioration of the existing Chapel and the urgent requirement to provide a sustainable income to secure the long-term future of an important community facility.
- 6.4 The proposals have been designed to maximise the significant community benefits and minimise the impact upon the harm to the openness of the Green Belt as well as enhancing the appearance of the Chapel which is a non-designated heritage asset.
- 6.5 The proposed extension is a proportionate addition to the existing building and the development can be found to meet the NPPF paragraph 149 (c) exception for buildings in the Green Belt.
- 6.6 However, should the Council consider the extension is disproportionate, the significant benefit of retaining Affetside Chapel, halting the decline of and enhancing a non-designated heritage asset, together with the provision of new community facilities comprise the 'Very Special Circumstances' required by Paragraph 147 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in order for the aspects of the development that are ordinarily inappropriate in a Green Belt to be permitted.

Appendix 1: Chapel Condition Photographs





































