

Stand United Reformed Church

Stand lane , Radcliffe, Manchester



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Planning Statement

Document Author

This statement has been produced by Iketecure (An RIBA Chartered Practice) on behalf of the Celestial Church of Christ (the Applicant).

1. Introduction

- a. This statement has been written to support the following application:
 - i. Local Authority (LPA): **Bury Council**
 - ii. Applicant: **Celestial Church of Christ**
 - iii. Application Type: **Planning and Listed Building Consent**
 - iv. Property location: **Stand United Reformed Church,
Stand Lane, Chapelfield, Radcliffe,
Whitefield, Manchester M26 1JE**
 - v. Property Type: **Grade II Listed Building Church**
 - vi. Property Use: **Church (F1 - Place of worship)
with burial grounds on three sides**
 - vii. Architectural Style: **Gothic Revival**
 - viii. Built date: **late 19th Century**
 - ix. Area Designation: **Not within a conservation area**
 - x. Flood Risk Zone: **1 (low probability of flooding from rivers
and sea)**

2. Background

- a. This statement has been written by Mr Ike Obanye, BSc (first Class), BA, BArch, MA, PgDip (Cambridge), ARB, RIBA (with over 20 years experience) for and on behalf of Iketecture, a Chartered RIBA Architectural company.
- b. The following documents and guidance has been referred to In preparation of this statement:
 - i. Historic England 2019 Statement of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 12.

- ii. The Heritage Statement produced by Avalon Heritage and submitted as part of the previous application for the same site. May 2021.
 - iii. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) rev. 2021. Chapter 16
 - iv. Historic Environment Guidance 2019 (as amended)
 - v. The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER)
 - vi. The National Heritage List (Historic England).
 - vii. Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Good Practice in Planning 2 Historic England 2015.
 - viii. Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12 2019.
 - ix. The Setting of Heritage Assets, Good Practice in Planning 3 Historic England 2017.
 - x. Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance April Historic England 2008.
 - xi. Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists ClfA 2014, rev 2017.
 - xii. Code of Conduct, ClfA 2014. Rev. 2019.
 - xiii. Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments, Historic England 2017.
- c. The author of this report visited the site on 26 January 2022 to assess the current condition of the church (inspecting the internal and external condition), the surrounding areas (including burial grounds). Its overall significance and impact on the surrounding buildings was observed and an appreciation for the proposed scope of works and potential impact on the heritage asset was assessed. The observations have informed the design of all proposed elements and interventions.

3. Site Context

- a. The existing property is a grade II listed church Building sited within a predominantly residential area consisting of 2-3 storey dwellinghouses (47% of which are social housing).

- b. The church building is located within the Radcliffe West Ward, constituency of Bury South, in the Northwest region of England.
- c. The Church Building is sited on a rectilinear 'island site', bounded by Chapelfield Road (to the north), Stand Lane (to the east), Walker Street (to the south), and a parking area (to the west).
- d. The properties within the immediate vicinity are mainly terraced and semi-detached residential properties (C3 dwellinghouses) not exceeding 2-3 storeys in height, typically built in the late 19th and 20th centuries in various architectural styles and forms, with a variety of extensions and modifications.



Image 01: the existing church building and its site setting.

4. Heritage Significance

- a. Heritage Category
 - i. Grade II Listed Building
 - ii. List Entry number: 135172
 - iii. Date first listed: 10 December 1998
 - iv. Latest Amendment: 23 February 1999

b. List Entry

- i. Coursed sandstone, ashlar details, slate roof. A tall 5-bay nave with slightly lower chancel at the west end; low flanking side aisles and a 4-stage tower with spire at the SE corner. Decorated Gothic style. The main facade faces east and has entrances left and right: shallow projecting gabled porches with double doors. Two 2-light windows between the entrances, and the foundation stone with inscription:
- ii. *This memorial stone of Stand Independent Church was laid by Alexander Anderson BA Pastor/XXV July AD MDCCCLXXXV/Joseph Bentley Esq Treasurer Building Fund/ Walter Allen Esq Secretary/ J P Pritchett Esq of Darlington Architect'.*
- iii. Large 5-light west window; the tower has 2-light windows, a clock and belfry stage, crocketed finials, broach spire with lucarnes. West end: 5-light chancel window; narrow doors with ornate hinges far left and right. The south side windows are in pointed arches to the aisle and have square head to clerestory and chancel; all are blocked. Interior: arcades have octagonal composite columns, foliate capitals and ashlar arches; the fine timber barrel-vaulted roof has brackets carved with figures of angels. East end tiered gallery; nave pews with umbrella stands; ornate wrought iron handrail and carved panelling to pulpit, chancel walls and organ which is by Jardine and Co of Manchester, 1898. Fine stained glass windows including west window (the Sermon on the Mount) over a terracotta panel by Roland Morris, both c1885; 4 north aisle windows and war memorial window by T Curtis of Ward and Hughes, 1895-98 and 1920.

c. Original Architect

- i. Stand united Reformed Church was designed by J.P. Pritchett of Darlington in 1885. He was "an architect of considerable ability" and the son of the architect James Piggot Pritchett of York. He

designed a number of churches. His most notable works include the renovation of the mediaeval St Nicholas Church in Durham which opened in 1858 and was described as "the most beautiful specimen of church architecture in the north of England".

d. Social/Community Value

- i. The church was once the pillar of the immediate community. Its served as a place of worship and memorial ground that celebrated the life of key people within the community. The descendants of which still live within the immediate area.
- ii. Over the years, church attendance and building use experienced a steady decline, which led to the vacancy of the application property and ultimately the decline of its built fabric.
- iii. This planning statement sets out a positive strategy for the restoration and conservation of this heritage asset so that it can be enjoyed for its contribution to the quality of life of the current and future generations, as it once did for the previous generations.

5. Existing Church Building

a. Existing Church Condition

- i. There has been a steady decline in building use over the years, resulting in the deterioration of the church's building fabric, despite various community activities to raise money to keep it open.
- ii. After being abandoned and left vacant, the applicant purchased the property to re-ignite and sustain its use as a place of worship and re-affirm its position as a pillar to the immediate community. This will be achieved by carefully restoring the built fabric, making it fit for religious and community activities through the calendar year.

b. Property Grounds

- i. Sited on a raised rectilinear platform delineated by a rusticated dwarf sandstone wall with stone coping stones on three sides and a red brick wall on one side (western edge).
- ii. The original cast iron railings that would have surrounded the site, fixed to the top of the stone coping stones on the dwarf sandstone wall are no longer present (evidenced by the presence of fixing holes to the top and sides of the perimeter wall).



Image 02: Remnants of previously installed perimeter railings

- iii. The Church building is inset from the edges of the raised platform, with the spaces to the eastern and southern side containing a large number of exposed headstones laid flat to the ground (with heavy vegetation growing in between the headstones), and a graveyard with vertical/upright gravestones located to the western side of the church, with heavily grown vegetation and a flytipping build up.
- iv. There is a set of external stairs (consisting of four steps with metal handrails and railings on either side) up the raised platform on the eastern side of the site (facing Stand lane). There are two additional gated entrances on the northern edge (facing walker street) with a single step up to the raiders platform.



Image 03: The existing burial grounds (photo taken on 8.6.22)

c. Building Fabric

- i. The church building is spread over three floors. The basement level, ground level, and mezzanine level.
- ii. The eastern side of the church is considered to be the main facade consisting of:
 1. Two lateral entrances with shallow gabled porches and double doors that lead into the Narthex and facade tower, located at the end corners of the eastern facade.
 2. Two two-light single glazed windows with cusped tracery beneath hood moulds and central mullions located centrally between the two entrance doors (on either side), directly below the beautifully detailed large five-light stained glass window (single glazed), and directly above the foundation stone which is set into the facade at low level.
- iii. The southern side of the church is considered a side elevation and is punctured with five two-light pointed arch single glazed gothic style windows on ground floor level and a further five rectangular two-light gothic style windows with stone lintels, tracery, and central mullions, on the upper level. This is consistent with the northern facing elevation.
- iv. The external walls consist of rusticated coursed ashlar with articulated horizontal stone banding at each floor level. This is consistent on all four elevations.

- v. Located on the church's south eastern corner, is a four-stage tower with a broached spire (constructed with rusticated coursed ashlars), small dormers (lucarnes), a belfry, and clock tower with the top of the spire defined by crocketed finials.
 - vi. The Church has a slate roof with stone parapets and coping stones.
 - vii. There are four pointed arch windows to the aisle and square headed windows to the clerestory and chancel all with hood moulds, tracery, and central mullions, on the south side of the church.
 - viii. The western, chancel wall contains a beautiful large five light gothic window with reticulated tracery, stained glass and mullions.
 - ix. On either side of the chancel wall there are two narrow entrances housing natural timber plank doors with ornate fittings.
- d. Plan-form: Ground Floor
- i. The plan-form of the main ground floor consists of a five-bay nave with slightly lower chancel at the west end, low flanking side aisles, and a tower at the south-eastern corner.
 - ii. The church can be entered into via the main entrance located at the eastern elevation off Stand Lane and comprises two stone pointed arch doorways that lead into the central narthex via a vestibule/lobby.
 - iii. There is a full height screen consisting of ornate wood panelling with carved tracery to its lower half and large glazed panels to its upper section, that separate the narthex and the nave. The nave can be accessed via the central doorway.
 - iv. Two sets of lateral octagonal pillars with foliate capitals and chamfered plinths provide structural support to an arcade of stone moulded pointed arches that extend up to the level of clerestory, separate the side aisles and nave.
 - v. At the eastern end of the southern aisle the floor opens up for the staircase down to the basement and is currently defined by

modern decorated metal railings. The church has an impressive barrel-vaulted timber roof supported on brackets carved with the figures of angels.

vi. The Heritage Statement produced by Avalon Heritage (May 2021) provides a great description of the existing plan form and states the following:.

1. 'The chancel is raised above the floor level of the nave and is accessed by two wide stone steps above which is a pointed arch.. The west wall of the chancel contains a large, pointed arch window with reticulated tracery and mullions depicting the Sermon on the Mount in stained glass'.
2. 'The north wall of the chancel is occupied by an ornately carved three-stage organ, dated 1898, by Jardine and Co. of Manchester whilst the south wall presents the remains of a carved pew set beneath wooden panelling decorated with arcading and tracery in relief patterning'.
3. 'Access to the room behind the screen at the western end of the northern aisle is via a short flight of steps and through a low door to the side of the organ. The room was formerly used as a cloak room but also contains a lever which was worked up and down to pump up the organ'.

vii. Plan-form: Basement Floor

1. 'The basement is commensurate with the dimensions and orientation of the church's superstructure but has undergone considerable modern intervention. The area beneath the nave comprises a large open space supported on RSJs and cast-iron pillars'.
2. 'The floor is covered with wood effect modern laminate whilst the brick walls have been painted. Lighting is provided by modern neon strip lights and on its west side the open area is subdivided from a former kitchen area.

The area of the basement which is below the chancel comprises a male W.C. with an adjacent female W.C and a boiler room. The W.C.s which are modern features, are entered via a doorway with a brick segmental arch whilst the boiler is also entered by an arched doorway’.

3. ‘The boiler room is divided into two small rooms and the easternmost of these rooms contains a narrow recess/alcove in its north-eastern corner which leads to a brick blocked archway. The flooring in the boiler room is represented by large stone flags and it appears that at some time the walls were limewashed’.
4. ‘The south side of the basement, commensurate with the area of the narthex above, is subdivided into three rooms used for storage. To the front of this area a modern partition wall has created a space also used for storage. However, there are a number of inscribed headstones laid side by side and flat on the ground along the brick wall on the south side of the partitioned area. It is not possible to see whether other headstones occupy the space due to the presence of raised concrete flooring along the northern edge of the space’.
5. ‘On the eastern side of the basement is a lobby which is entered through a large sliding door. A stone staircase leads from the north-eastern corner of the lobby up to the panelled cloakroom on the ground floor. Adjacent to the lobby is the pump mechanism for the organ’.
6. ‘The original walls of the basement are constructed in brick whilst the original floor covering is represented by large stone slabs’.

6. Proposed Works

a. Existing Use

- i. The existing church building was originally used as a place of worship (Christian denomination: Protestant).

b. Proposed Use

- i. The proposed use for the church building will remain as a place of worship (Christian denomination: Celestial Church of Christ) .

c. Community/Public Benefit

- i. The proposed scope of works have been carefully designed to breathe new and sustainable life into this heritage asset whilst respecting and celebrating its heritage value, so that the Church can not only be enjoyed by the applicant (and their immediate congregation/members), but also by the immediate and wider communities that would consistent with its original use, conservation and heritage value.
- ii. Without the proposed works that bring the building back into full operational use, this heritage asset will continue to decay and suffer substantial harm or total loss.

d. Restoration

i. The grounds and area surrounding the church building.

- 1. The removal of the perimeter railing (previously fixed to the top of the dwarf walls along the perimeter of the site), exposed the church to vandalism and neglect. The burial grounds to the rear have been used as a fly tipping site and the area to the front has been left unkempt with broken glass, refuse, being littered amongst overgrown vegetation in between the laid headstones.

2. The proposal comprises clearing all 'fly-tipped' items/refuse dumped and built up within the burial grounds. All existing pebbles (pea gravel) and vegetation growing in between the headstones will be carefully removed.
3. The following steps will be taken to restore the headstones, maintain the burial grounds, and minimise future sprouting or growth of weeds and vegetation:
 - a. All plants will be cut at their base (so they can die away),
 - b. All headstones and their bases will undergo basic cleaning using non-toxic biological cleaning products.
 - c. All weeds will be carefully removed and pebbles carefully raked away.
 - d. Gently compacted crush stones will be laid around the edges of the headstones and borders to the burial grounds.
 - e. A 70gsm permeable weed resistant membrane will be laid in sections (with overlapping joints) to all surfaces in between the headstones and throughout the burial grounds.
 - f. Spread new pea gravel (10-20mm) on top of the membrane with even coverage throughout, to a depth of at least 3cm.

ii. Horizontal headstones and surrounding floor surfaces.

1. The existing headstones within the crypt area on the basement floor level are an important feature of the church's archaeological and historic values.
2. The proposal attempts to arrest any further degradation, preserve their archaeological interests, and celebrate its

historic value and contribution to the overall church setting.

- a. The headstones laid on the floor will be restored and celebrated by the construction of a removable timber structure (floating floor) with reinforced walk on glazing to have protected full view of each headstone without impacting the condition of the headstones. Refurbishment of the floor finishes throughout.
3. The existing ground floor consists of hardwood timber parquet flooring to the aisles and nave. And ceramic victorian tiles cover the floors to both entrance vestibules. Worn out dark blue carpeting cover the remaining areas on the ground floor with areas of exposed concrete.
4. The proposal involves the full restoration of all parquet flooring. The carpet will be replaced with like for like carpet, and all exposed concrete will be cleaned and made good. The tiling seems to still be in good condition and will be cleaned carefully using non-toxic materials.
5. The existing dark blue carpeting within the Narthex and along the Aisles will be replaced with new carpeting (high grade traffic carpeting in the colour blue).

iii. Restoration and refurbishment of internal panelling

1. There is tongue and groove panelling to dado height on the south and north walls of the Aisles on the ground floor.
2. The vertically fixed tongue and grooved timber slatted panelling with top horizontal dado rail, approximately c.1040mm tall, conceals servicing infrastructure (i.e. radiator pipes, electric cables, etc) to the lower section of the external walls to the Narthex, Aisles, and Transept.

3. The proposal consists of making good all panels. No full replacements are currently considered to be required. However, if any panels are in a state of complete disrepair and in need of replacement, the same material (hardwood), finish (linseed based paint/varnish), and design will be used to replace them.

e. Removed structure

- i. The basement has undergone modern alteration (20th and 21st century alteration) over the years and its current condition/treatment is considered to be less significant than the remaining original built fabric. Less modern alterations have been made to the ground floor, which is regarded as more significant than the lower floor.
- ii. This application proposes to restore the basement back to its original plan-form by the removal of the 20th century internal partitions and the restoration and celebration of the headstones located within the crypt area. This will ultimately improve flexibility to use the internal space, providing the added benefit to the public and existing users.
- iii. The existing 21st century sliding door with internal partition is of poor condition and will be replaced with a new fire door and partition of fire rated construction, to provide a safe means of access to the basement areas.
- iv. The proposed works to the basement continues its traditional use as a space for community gatherings, social gathering, meetings, after school clubs, and Sunday schooling.

f. Asbestos removal

- i. The presence of asbestos has been identified within the 20th century partitioning and its safe removal has been proposed.

g. New External Railings

- i. Re-installation of perimeter external railings and fencing to provide security and safety for the church building and its users.
 1. Installation of galvanised steel fencing powder coated to BS EN 13438 in ral colour 9005.
 2. 710mm high railing comprising of rectangular 50 x 50mm posts fixed to the original centers as the original posts set within the stone coping to the dwarf walls (typically set at 1060 centers), with 15mm diameter intermediate pales at 85mm centers, and 50 x 25mm rectangular horizontal bars set at 60mm (from base), 180mm (from bar below), and 350mm from bar below.
 3. The new railings will reflect the (assumed) design of the original fencing that would have likely been constructed in cast iron and painted black. The design of the existing internal railing surrounding the main staircase to the basement floor level, has been used as a reference.
 4. The new steel fencing will be fixed into the pre-existing positions of the previous cast iron fence, with the addition of a new fence installation between the burial grounds and the main church building, providing independent access to the burial grounds for the local community to provide their respects in privacy and independence in the event of an activity taking place within the main church building at the same time.
 5. Re-installation of three galvanised steel gates designed in the same design as the new proposed perimeter railings that both reference the existing internal railing.
- ii. The re-installation of all external railings will restore the original context of the application property, enhancing its setting and overall significance whilst aiding in the maintenance and security of the burial and church grounds.

h. New Internal Railings

- i. New internal railings will be installed to protect and conserve the internal spaces, whilst facilitating the safe operation of the proposed church uses.
- ii. The frameless glass railings will enhance the visual aspect of the main areas to the main church building and allow the spatial integrity of the church to be experienced safely.
- iii. The existing railings around the main stair to the lower basement level will be replaced to match the style of the proposed railings. The proposed railings will be mounted on the existing timber block.
- iv. Floor mounted Frameless Glass balustrade (Model 6020)
 1. 1200 mm (high) x 2000 and/or 5000 mm (long) 18mm thick frameless glass panels.
 2. The Top/surface mounted system (encased in stainless steel shoe), in accordance with BS 6180:2011. Universally anchored at 400mm centers with anchor bolts onto a 30mm hardwood timber block to minimise intrusion of the existing building fabric. The timber block will be bolted into the timber superstructure floor at 400mm centers offset from the glassing mount.

i. New internal Partitions

- i. New non-fire rated internal partitions are only proposed to create male, female, and accessible toilet facilities on the basement floor level.
- ii. New 30min fire rated partitions are proposed to create a meeting room and storage room on the basement floor level.
- iii. These have been indicated on the proposed general arrangement basement floor plan.

j. Facilities

- i. The proposal comprises new separate sanitary and kitchen facilities that will support the activities on the ground and lower floors.
 - 1. A new kitchen will be fitted within the existing kitchen area. The original built fabric in this area will not be altered.
 - 2. New separated toilet facilities will be installed within the indicated toilet areas to provide the much needed amenity to cater for the building's maximum capacity of 94 people (658sqm), comprising:
 - a. Creation of 4 female cubicles (including one accessible cubicle).
 - b. Creation of 2 male cubicles (including one accessible cubicle).

k. External Cleaning

- i. Initially, it was sought to clean the external facades (and potentially repoint with a lime based mortar) of the main church building in an attempt to restore the church's original appearance, as it has been badly stained by environmental factors such as rain, weather, and pollution over the years. However, it was deemed that this would only be a physical act driven by aesthetic considerations. So it is proposed that the external condition of the stonework is to be monitored and recorded over the next 6-9months.

l. Re-Painting

- i. The existing wall surfaces to the walls beyond the crypt in the basement areas have been badly affected by the egress of water. These walls will be cleaned carefully and cleared of all debris and

dust before the application of one coat Classidur Tradition paint (Classidur AF Mat) to a ral 9010.



Image 04: existing water egress damage (in basement area)

- ii. The internal finish to the main church areas on ground and basement floor levels is a painted finish to ral colour 350 80 10, which is an off white/magnolia colour.
- iii. All internal painted areas (on masonry) will be re-painted in a breathable ultra-matt claypaint finish to a ral 9010, with all abutments and open joints to timber surfaces and/or fixtures or other material will be maintained (and not sealed).

m. Restorations of external windows

- i. The restoration of the external windows are not part of this application but existing windows will need some attention in the very near future as the exterior condition of the frames and cills show signs of deterioration.
- ii. There is scope for full restoration of each window with the addition of secondary glazing to aid the Church's internal temperature control and management which will support the sustained use of the building.

7. Restoration Phases

- a. The restoration works will be conducted over the following three phases:
 - i. Works to the ground floor:

1. The works to the ground floor are considered to be the key works to bring the church building back into use by facilitating key events in the religious calendar, daily worship activities, and community activities.
- ii. Works to the basement:
 1. The works to the basement area are considered key works for community activities for the general public and local community. The basement area will also be a vital part to support the functions on the ground floor, as it will accommodate support rooms such as toilets and plant room.
- iii. External ground works:
 1. to secure and maintain the church grounds is vital for making it more inviting.

8. Access

- a. Vehicle access to the application site will remain as existing and is not impacted by the proposal in any way.
- b. New pedestrian gated entrances will be established. Foot access will remain as existing.
- c. The internal alterations will not be visual from the general public but will add significant value for the existing and future occupants of the property.

9. Conclusion

- a. The application church has stood empty for a considerable amount of time, which has led to the noticeable deterioration of the external and internal condition of this heritage asset through lack of maintenance and use. If left unoccupied, deterioration will only worsen over time.
- b. The application property's existing internal plan form is a significant feature of the Grade II listing, its legibility is maintained on ground floor. Alterations to the basement floor level revert back to the original plan form to facilitate christian worship and community enjoyment, whilst

sustaining the overall significance of the application property as the religious centre of its immediate community.

- c. The proposal does not compromise the quality of the immediate area and would not cause harm to the existing amenity or encroach on the privacy of any of the surrounding properties in any way.
- d. The proposal ensures the long-term occupancy and enjoyment of the application property in a manner that compliments and enhances the existing usage and architectural character of the property.
- e. The proposal complies with all relevant local and national legislation and has no material considerations that weigh against it.
- f. Accordingly, we trust that this application will be positively received and determined by the Local Planning Authority.