



Historic Environment Consultancy

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Site address	Stand United Reformed Church, Stand Lane, Radcliffe, Manchester
Client	Housesmart Estates Ltd
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background:

- 1.1.1** Avalon Heritage Ltd (AHL) has been commissioned by Housesmart Estates Ltd, on behalf of the Celestial Church of Christ (the applicant) to prepare a Heritage Statement (HS) in relation to a planning and listed building consent application to be submitted to Bury Council (the LPA,) for a programme of external and internal refurbishment and repair works to the Stand United Reformed Church (SURC), Stand Lane, Radcliffe in Greater Manchester (Figure 1). The church is a late 19th century building with an associated burial ground on three sides.

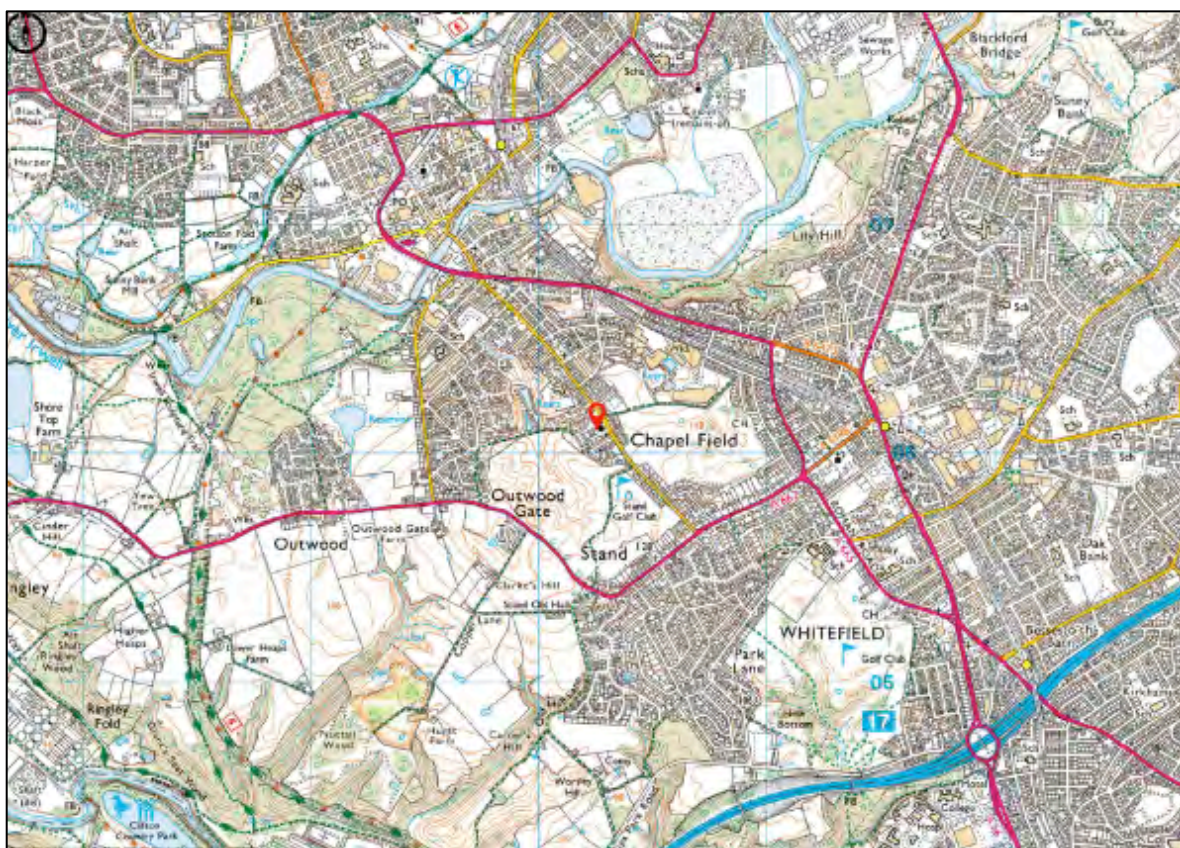


Figure 1. Location map.

- 1.1.2** The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) contains entries for a number of designated and non-designated heritage assets within a 500m radius of the church. The church itself is listed at grade 2 and recorded on the HER but is not located within a conservation area. As a result of the church's designated status there is a requirement for a HS to support the planning and listed building consent applications.
- 1.1.3** The primary aim of this report is to appraise the character and significance of the church and its churchyard so that the LPA/decision maker is appropriately informed when assessing impacts on the significance of listed building from the proposed scheme and when making their planning decision. In addition, it is anticipated that this HS can be used by the applicant/applicant's architect to inform upon the proposed design.

1.1.4 This report has been undertaken with reference to guidance prepared by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and Historic England including:

- Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Good Practice in Planning 2 Historic England 2015.
- Statements of Heritage Significance: Historic England Advice Note 12 2019.
- The Setting of Heritage Assets, Good Practice in Planning 3 Historic England 2017.
- Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance April Historic England 2008.
- Standards and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists CIfA 2014, rev 2017.
- Code of Conduct, CIfA 2014. Rev. 2019.
- Understanding Place Historic Area Assessments, Historic England 2017.

1.1.5 This HS has also been written in accordance with Chapter 16, *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment*, of the NPPF, particularly paragraphs 189 and 190.

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) rev. 2019.
- Planning Practice Guidance 2019.

1.1.6 The following sources have been consulted in the preparation of this report:

- The Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER, 500m search area)
- Online sources including British History Online.
- The National Heritage List (Historic England).

1.1.7 A site visit was undertaken by the author of this report in order to assess the significance and condition of the listed church and this included both external and internal inspections of the building, as well as of the nested setting of the church represented by its associated churchyard. The wider setting of the church was also considered during the visit. Access into private properties was not possible during the course of the site visit.

1.1.8 This report has been written by Helen Martin-Bacon, B.A., M.A., PgDip., MCIfA and affiliate member of the IHBC. She is the Founder and Principal Heritage Consultant at Avalon Heritage Ltd and has thirty years of experience working within the historic environment specialising in the preparation of Heritage Statements and Historic Building Assessments within planning led environments.

2 BASELINE INFORMATION.

2.1 Description of The Stand United Reformed Church – Exterior.

2.1.1 The church is located on Stand Lane, the main road through the built-up area around the church. The church is orientated with its eastern elevation overlooking the road and with its western elevation overlooking residential properties between Walker Street and Chapel Field. The southern elevation

of the church directly overlooks Walker Street and the residential properties lining its southern edge, whilst the northern elevation of the church is delineated by Chapel Field and the residential properties along its northern side.

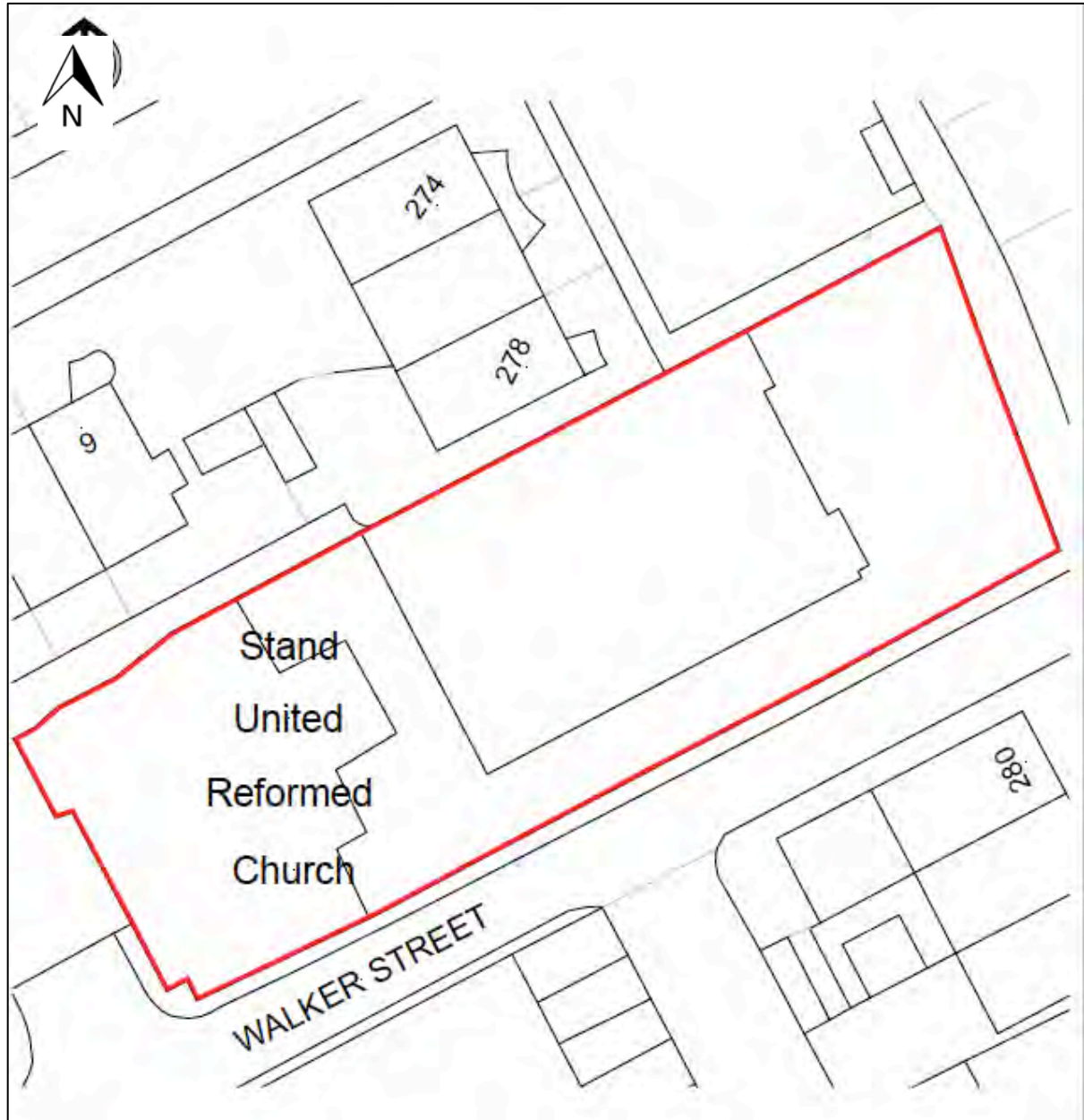


Figure 2. Detail of the Location of the Stand United Reform Church.

- 2.1.2** The character of the area around the church is overwhelmingly residential interspersed with a mix of shops and restaurants. Houses in the area are generally of late 19th and 20th century date and built in various architectural styles and forms.
- 2.1.3** The church itself is sited on a low rectilinear platform which is raised above the surrounding ground level and delineated by a rusticated sandstone wall with stone coping stones on all sides (Plate 1) apart from at the rear where the western edge of the platform is defined by a red brick wall.



Plate 1. East end of the church overlooking the main road.

- 2.1.4** The eastern, western and southern sides of the platform, in the area between the church and the boundary walls, contain a large number of headstones laid flat on the ground and on the western side of the church the raised platform also incorporates a small graveyard with upright headstones (Plate 2).



Plate 2. The cemetery at the west end of the church headstones both standing and laid flat.

- 2.1.5** The Stand United Reformed Church is constructed of rusticated coursed ashlar with a slate roof and in terms of its planform has a five-bay nave with slightly lower chancel at the west end, low flanking side aisles and a tower with spire at the south-eastern corner. It is built in Gothic Revival Style with

architectural features and detailing which are reminiscent of the medieval tradition. The main façade of the church has two lateral entrances with shallow gabled porches and double doors. There are two, two-light windows with cusped tracery beneath hood moulds and central mullions located centrally between the entrances and directly below the perpendicular window with stained glass in the east face of the church. On the lower part of the east wall, beneath the central two light windows is the foundation stone.

- 2.1.6** Adjoining the east wall of the church is a tall four-stage tower with a broached spire, lucarnes (small dormers), a belfry and clock whilst the top of the tower is defined by crocketed finials. On its south side the church contains four, pointed arch windows to the aisle and square headed windows to the clerestory and chancel all with hood moulds, tracery and central mullions. The western, chancel wall contains a large five light gothic window with reticulated tracery, stained glass and mullions (Plate 3). In addition, there are two narrow entrances housing timber plank doors with ornate fittings on either side of the chancel wall. The wall of the northern aisle is similarly punctuated by five, pointed arch windows with hood moulds and tracery whilst the north wall of the clerestory is characterised by square headed windows with tracery and central mullions.



Plate 3. The west end, chancel wall of the church.

2.2 Ground Floor – Interior.

- 2.2.1** Internally the east end of the church is divided into two entrance lobbies flanking a central narthex which is accessed from the lobbies by two stone pointed arch doorways with decorative hood moulds terminating in carved human heads. The narthex is divided from the nave by a full height screen comprising large, glazed panels in its upper half and wooden panelling with carved tracery to its lower half. The screen contains a central door giving direct access to the nave. Along the eastern wall of the narthex is a low settle in panelled wood stretching the whole length of the wall. Above the settle is a memorial plaque commemorating the deaths of members of the church in the Great War (Plate 4).



Plate 4. The narthex with screen to the right and the memorial plaque to the left.

2.2.2 Within the main body of the church the side aisles and nave are separated by two sets of lateral octagonal pillars with chamfered plinths and foliate capitals supporting an arcade of stone moulded pointed arches which extend up to the level of clerestory (Plate 5). The flooring of the aisles and nave is parquet whilst Victorian tiling covers the floors in both entrance lobbies. Elsewhere carpeting covers the floors of the church.



Plate 5. View of the nave, aisles and chancel.

- 2.2.3** 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 (see Plate 5). There is tongue and groove panelling to dado height on the south and north walls of the aisles. At the eastern end of the nave is a tiered gallery with six sets of ornate pews fitted with umbrella stands.
- 2.2.4** The chancel is raised above the floor level of the nave and is access by two wide stone steps above which is a pointed arch defined by a scroll painted with the words *God is a Spirit and they that Worship Him must Worship Him in Spirit and in Truth*. 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 (see Plate 5). Below the window the west wall is lined with a wooden frieze carved in relief with reticulated tracery. Centrally, within the frieze is a terracotta panel by Roland Morris, c. 1885, depicting The Last Supper.
- 2.2.5** The north wall of the chancel is occupied by an ornately carved three-stage organ, dated 1898, by Jardine and Co. of Manchester (Plate 6) whilst the south wall presents the remains of a carved pew set beneath wooden panelling decorated with arcading and tracery in relief patterning.



Plate 6. The church organ.

- 2.2.6** In the west wall of the northern aisle a pointed stone arch has been filled with a carved wooden screen whilst in the west wall of the southern aisle a small, pointed arch doorway, with a hood mould terminating to either side in carved human heads, provides entry into a small vestry where there is an in situ ornate cast iron fireplace (Plate 7).



Plate 7. In situ fireplace in the vestry.

- 2.2.7** 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.

2.3 The Basement.

- 2.3.1** 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. The floor is covered with wood effect modern laminate whilst the brick walls have been painted. Lighting is provided by neon strip lights and on its west side the open area is subdivided from a former kitchen area (plate 8). 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 (Plate 9), are entered via a doorway with a brick segmental arch whilst the boiler is also entered by an arched doorway.
- 2.3.2** 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 archway¹. The flooring in the boiler room is represented by large stone flags and it appears that at some time the walls were limewashed.

¹ The purpose of the alcove and archway in this location are uncertain as the arch is in the base of the main eastern wall of the church and there are no openings in the ceiling of the alcove. It may be a structural arch.



Plate 8. The main room in the basement.



Plate 9. The modern WCs.

- 2.3.3** 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 (Plate 10).
- 2.3.4** 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 (see above, ground floor description). Adjacent to the lobby is the pump mechanism for the organ (Plate 11).
- 2.3.5** In terms of its built fabric the original walls of the basement are constructed in brick whilst the original floor covering is represented by large stone slabs.



Plate 10. Some of the exposed headstones, with concrete flooring to the right of the photograph.



Plate 11. The pump mechanism for the organ.

2.4 The Tower.

- 2.4.1** The full height of the tower could not be accessed during the site visit; however, access was gained to the first floor where there is a weighted mechanism for opening a hatch to the clock room above. The

first floor is reached via a narrow stone spiral staircase whilst access to further stages of the tower is via a wooden step ladder leading from the first floor through a hatch in the ceiling (Plate 12).

- 2.4.2** The clock room is lit by a two-light pointed arch stone window with tracery and a central mullion. From this level the raised gallery at the eastern end of the church is accessed (Plate 13).



Plate 12. The first floor of the tower with weight mechanism and ladder to the upper stages.



Plate 13. The tiered gallery at the east end of the church.

2.5 Historic and Archaeological Context of the Church.

- 2.5.1** The Stand United Reformed Church was built in 1885 by J.P. Pritchett (Junior) of Darlington, a British Architect born in York, the son of architect James Pigott Pritchett Senior (1789 – 1868). In 1854 Pritchett and Sons of York won a competition to design two chapels, a lodge and entrance gates for the new Boston Cemetery in Lincolnshire. Pritchett Junior designed the layout of the grounds and plans for twin chapels and a lodge in the Gothic style. He worked extensively on churches designing over a hundred during his career, in Gothic style, and there are clear similarities in architectural form and layout between the SURC and others designed by him.
- 2.5.2** Cartographic evidence suggests that the SURC as it exists today replaced an earlier non-conformist chapel. The OS Map of 1846 (Figure 3) depicts a building, marked as an *Independent Chapel*, located to the northern side of a rectilinear enclosure adjoining the main road to its east. The dimensions and orientation of the enclosure are commensurate with those of the current raised platform on which the SURC is located, indicating that it represents the original churchyard which housed the chapel of 1846.
- 2.5.3** It is likely, therefore, that the existing churchyard was constructed prior to that of the SURC and that the ground was deliberately raised to receive burials. A number of the headstones laid flat in the churchyard bear dates which are earlier than the construction of the SURC, some of them dating to the 18th century. The Independents, sometimes called Separatists, had puritanical origins and were persecuted in the 16th and 17th centuries for their beliefs although the movement gained strength during the Civil War since Oliver Cromwell was a member. The Independents were one of the original three denominations of Nonconformists and were forerunners of the Congregationalists. It was not until the Act of Toleration in 1689 that such Nonconformist movements, of which there were many, were granted freedom of worship.
- 2.5.4** As a result of the Act thousands of places of worship were registered by Nonconformists, mostly houses and other secular buildings but including large numbers of places that had been purpose built or permanently adapted for religious use (H.E. 2016). The Independent chapel depicted on the OS 1846 was probably 18th century in date and likely conformed to the planform of purpose-built chapels being rectangular, generally entered in one of the long sides and with a high pulpit in the centre of the opposite long wall, where it might be framed by a pair of tall windows. Typically, there would be a central block of benches or box pews facing the pulpit with further seating tiered around the sides of the building (*ibid*).



Figure 3. Extract from the OS Map dated 1846.

2.5.5 Forty years later, the OS Map dated 1886 to 1913 (Figure 4), depicts a different building within the churchyard and this would fit with the date of 1885 for the foundation for the SURC by J.P Pritchett in 1885. The building shown on the 1886 map occupies a larger space within the existing churchyard and this would seem to confirm that the earlier Independent Chapel was demolished to make way for the new Pritchett church. It is possible that the larger church made it necessary to move some of the burials from the churchyard and this may explain the presence of burials in the basement of the church. On the basis of its dimensions, orientation and built fabric the basement of the church appears to be contemporary with SURC rather than with the earlier chapel.



Figure 4. Extract from the OS Map dated 1886 to 1913.

- 2.5.6** On the OS Map dated 1891 (Figure 5) the church is described as a Methodist Chapel with a burial ground marked to the rear of the church. Methodism emerged during the middle part of the 18th century under the leadership of John Wesley. Wesley established a network of preaching houses, and eventually Methodism separated from the Church of England and increased the ranks of the Nonconformists. This resulted in an impressive building programme when more than thirteen hundred new chapels opened in the second half of the 18th century (*ibid*).
- 2.5.7** Methodism was particularly popular in towns and industrial districts and this was certainly the case in the area around the SURC where industrial activity such as bleach works, mills and leather working had been established during the 19th century.
- 2.5.8** It was during the Edwardian period that the Nonconformists were at their largest and most influential. After this time, there was a general decline in numbers and the result was an amalgamation of various denominations. During the first decade of the 20th century the United Methodist Church was created (combining three strands of Methodism) and in 1932 that body joined with the larger Wesleyan and Primitive connections to form the Methodist Church (*ibid*).

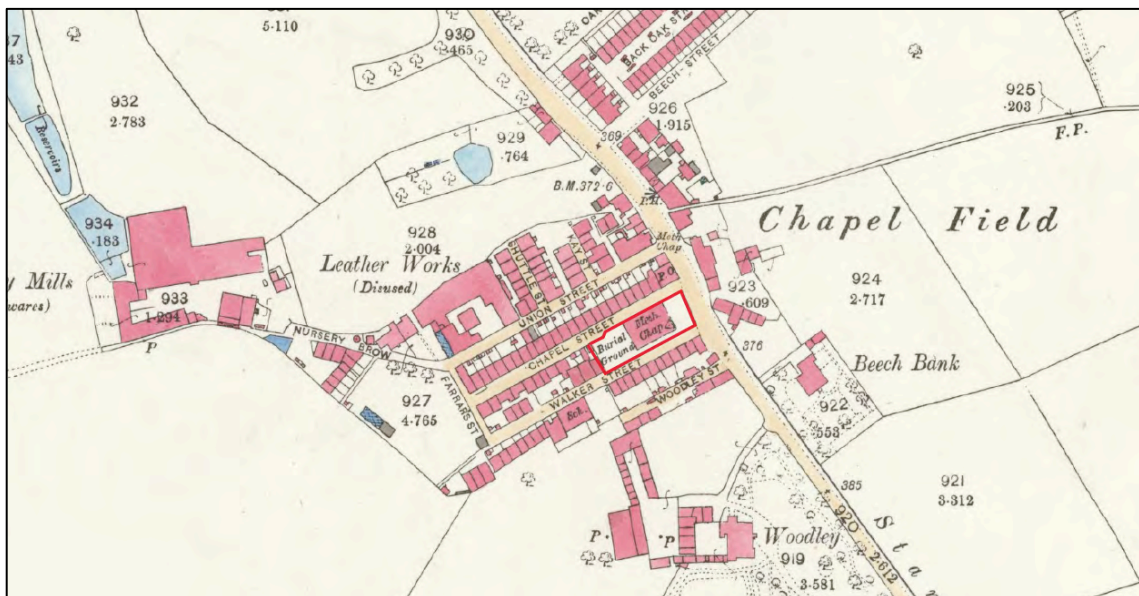


Figure 5. Extract from the OS Map dated 1891.

- 2.5.9** Similarly, in 1972 the United Reformed Church, amalgamating the Presbyterian Church of England and most Congregational churches, was formed. It seems therefore, that at some point the SURC passed from the possession of the Methodist Church into that of the United Reformed Church. However, in 2019 the United Reformed Church, made the decision to sell the SURC and it has since been purchased by the Celestial Church of Christ, an African Church founded by Samuel Bilewu Joseph Oshoffa on 29th September 1947 in Porto Novo, Benin. The Celestial Church wishes to continue the use of the SURC as a place of Christian worship.

3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE.

3.1 NPPF and Historic England Guidance on Assessing Significance.

3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) glossary describes significance as the value of a heritage asset to present and future generations because of its heritage interest. It also states that within a planning context significance may arise from the archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic values of a heritage asset or a combination of those heritage values. The Glossary of the NPPF defines those values as follows:

- archaeological interest refers to a heritage asset holding, or potentially holding, evidence of past human activity.
- architectural and artistic interest are defined as interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art of science or design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.
- historic interest is an interest in past lives and events (including prehistoric). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

3.1.2 NPPF also provides a definition of setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and states that its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of the asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

3.1.3 In its publication *The Setting of Heritage Assets, Good Practice in Planning 3* Historic England also defines setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced but goes on to say that elements of a setting can make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, potentially affecting the ability to appreciate the significance of the asset or having a neutral effect.

3.2 Significance of the Stand United Reformed Church.

3.2.1 The SURC has a significance which arises from a combined archaeological, historic, architectural and artistic interest and as it is listed at grade 2 level is considered to be a building of special interest, warranting every effort to preserve it.

3.2.2 The SURC has considerable archaeological value arising from the preservation of its built fabric, its layout and from the survival of in-situ joinery and fixtures and fittings, including an impressive late 19th century organ. The presence of burials within the churchyard along with their inscribed headstones adds particular value to the archaeological resource of the site given that the in-situ

inhumations have the potential to provide information on the population of Stand from the 18th century through to the 20th. This is similarly the case where possible burials with headstones have been interred within the basement. As large areas of the floors in the basement have been covered with modern flooring it is not known whether other unidentified burials and/or headstones are concealed there in addition to those which are now exposed. Should this be the case, the archaeological value of the church would be enhanced.

3.2.3 Architecturally and artistically the SURC is an impressive example of a Nonconformist church built by a well-known 19th century church architect in the Gothic style. Both externally and internally the craftsmanship is of high quality whilst the survival of carved screens and Gothic style doors adds to the artistic value of the church. Similarly, the presence of in-situ memorial plaques on the interior walls of the church add to the artistic and aesthetic interest of the church's interior.

3.2.4 Historically, the SURC is part of the continuity of Nonconformist worship since at least the 18th century when an earlier Independent Chapel occupied the site. The SURC itself was probably part of a sustained Nonconformist building campaign in the late 19th century which witnessed the creation of numerous chapels and churches in a variety of architectural styles. In crowded urban situations, especially in industrialised areas, Nonconformism, which focussed on the poor and the vulnerable, flourished and it is against this historic and religious background that the SURC should be understood.

3.2.5 In crowded urban situations, Nonconformists were able to make effective use of valuable sites because it wasn't necessarily felt that the chancel should be to the east of the church and this can be seen quite clearly in the orientation of the SURC. In addition, the provision of school and social facilities was a priority and basements, or semi-basement, halls were created for these purposes where space was limited (ibid). This may well have been the purpose of the spacious basement below the SURC.

3.2.6 Overall, therefore, the SURC is a well-preserved example of a Nonconformist church in 19th century Gothic style with an associated graveyard which precedes its construction. It is a landmark building within the streetscape and its spire is visible from various vantage points within Stand.

4 CONSIDERATION OF IMPACTS.

4.1 NPPF and Historic England Guidance.

4.1.1 Paragraphs 189 and 190 of NPPF make it clear that it is for the LPA to judge the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset but that they can take account of evidence that has been provided by the applicant.

4.1.2 Paragraph 189 and 190 of the NPPF states that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance (para. 189).

Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking into account the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise any conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (para. 190).

4.1.3 This has also been expressed in various appeal court judgements:

...the question whether a proposed development affects or would affect the setting of a listed building is very much a matter of planning judgement for the local planning authority².

... the assessment of whether any harm would be caused by the impact of the development on the heritage asset, or its setting is likewise a matter for the decision maker, not the author of the HIA...³

4.1.4 Therefore, the following comments regarding the scheme are intended to aid the LPA in making its planning judgement on the impact of the scheme on the heritage significance of relevant designated and non-designated heritage assets. The comments are also intended to help the applicant's architect make sympathetic and informed decisions when drawing up their proposals and designs.

4.1.5 This section of the report should be read in conjunction with the Design and Access Statement/Planning Statement, which describes how the proposed scheme has responded to the heritage significance of the church, and with the architect's drawings submitted with the application.

4.2 The SURC.

4.2.1 The applicants intend to carry out a phased programme of works to both the exterior and interior of the SURC. Phase 1 of the works will apply to the main interior body of the church; Phase 2 works will be to the exterior of the church and Phase 3 works will be represented by the clearing and maintenance of the churchyard.

4.3 Exterior of the Church.

4.3.1 Externally, the proposal is to clean off the stonework of the church, which is badly stained by weather and pollution. This would include repointing where necessary with lime mortar. Specialist advice would be necessary in order to ensure that there is no damage to the stonework, and details of the method can be supplied as part of the LBC application and secured by condition. Repair and cleaning of the stonework and repointing of the church in lime mortar would restore the church to its original appearance.

4.3.2 It is also proposed that the churchyard will be cleared of weed and litter and that the cemetery on the west side of the church will be similarly cleared and then maintained by members of the Celestial Church. Railings, which once stood on top of the stone perimeter walls as evidenced by the presence

² R (The Friends of Hethel Ltd) v South Norfolk District Council (2011) 1 1216 IJ Sullivan para. 32.

³ Pagham Parish Council v Arun District Council (2019) EWHC 1721 (Admin) Mrs. Justice Andrews para.40.

of empty holes on the wall tops, will be reinstated with appropriate replacements and details of their form and appearance can be supplied as part of the LBC submission and secured by condition.

- 4.3.3** The maintenance of the cemetery, which is currently in an unkempt condition, will improve the appearance of the church's setting and enhance its significance. Similarly, the erection of appropriate style railings will restore the original context of the churchyard.
- 4.3.4** As the doctrine of the Celestial Church requires that there is a clear separation between the dead and the living, it is proposed that a lightweight closed panel fence, with a central gate, is erected along the eastern side of the cemetery. The fence posts will be located in an existing gravel bed between the headstones in order to avoid damage to any in-situ burials.
- 4.3.5** Similarly, because of doctrinal beliefs, the proposals will include the erection of some form of raised decking over the horizontal headstones around the church. In this regard the decking will need to be in a form which will not cause localised damage to headstones where supports are necessary underneath the decking, and it will need to be in materials which will not be at odds with the appearance of the church. This can be discussed in detail with the LPA/Conservation Officer during the determination period and secured by condition.
- 4.3.6** The horizontal headstones are an important aspect of the church's immediate setting, making an important contribution to its archaeological and historic values. Their proposed concealment beneath decking will mean that this will no longer be readily apparent. However, this needs to be considered against the fact that many of the headstones are badly eroded and the inscriptions beginning to disappear. The decking would therefore help to arrest any further degradation of the headstones and would serve to preserve their archaeological and historic interest in situ.
- 4.3.7** Proposed changes to the interior ground floor of the church include refurbishment and repair work overall but also a number of more intrusive works. It is proposed that the existing carved and glazed screen separating the narthex from the nave is altered in order to convert the single door into a double door for the separation of men and women during entrance to the church. In addition, it is proposed that a glass screen is erected in the narthex to channel men and women separately through the double doors. The current timber and glazed screen is a relatively modern feature and of less significance than original fittings and fixtures and the majority of it will be preserved with only localised removal where the second door is fitted. The new door needs to be in keeping with the existing decorative appearance of the screen. The glass screen, which is largely symbolic, will still allow the narthex space as a whole to be appreciated and understood.
- 4.3.8** It is intended that the current railings around the staircase to the basement are replaced with a glass screen and that glass screening is erected at the northern end of the west end of the north aisle to delineate the area for a choir. A glass screen would also be erected at the front of the chancel and in between the chancel arch whilst a glass safety screen would be installed along the front of the tiered gallery. Again, the use of glass screens will still allow the spatial integrity of the church to be

experienced. Details of the form of the glass screens along with the method of fixing them in place can be provided as part of the LBC submission and secured by condition.

- 4.3.9** Currently, the parquet flooring in the nave and aisles is in a poor condition having been previously carpeted and is affected by the results of removing the carpet which has displaced some of the parquet. The upper surface of the parquet has also been stained by carpet glue. It is proposed that the floor will be repaired and restored to its original condition which will be an enhancement of the church's significance.
- 4.3.10** It is proposed that the walls will be painted blue to a metre high and that the capitals of the columns will be picked out in gold. These colours are symbolic within the teachings of the Celestial Church. Although medieval churches were often decorated with colourful motifs and patterns the 19th century Gothic tradition was to build, or restore churches, without decoration in a plain unaffected style. Therefore, this needs to be considered in any assessment of impacts.
- 4.3.11** As previously mentioned, due to the doctrinal requirement of the Celestial Church for separation between the dead, and references to the dead, and the living, especially during worship, it is proposed that the various in-situ memorial plaques on the walls of the church will be boxed in and hidden from view, by means of wall frames around the plaques with doors to the front so that the memorials would be viewable via doors fixed to the front of the frames. The memorials are important aspects of the church's artistic value and their proposed concealment behind the boxes will be at odds with this. However, they can still be viewed upon request and the proposed works are reversible.
- 4.3.12** During services for the Celestial Church there is no requirement for worshippers to be seated and it is necessary for there to be free space so that the congregation can kneel and move freely and this means that traditional pews would pose an obstacle to worship (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Example of a service for the Celestial Church.

- 4.3.13** Unfortunately, the original pews at the SURC, which were described in the listing entry as having umbrella stands, have already been removed, along with the carved pulpit by the applicants who misunderstood the listed status of the church. The loss of the pews and pulpit is regrettable, as they were an important element of the church's significance. However, examples of the type of pews which once existed at the church are still present in the eastern gallery.
- 4.3.14** There are no proposals for alterations to the interior of the tower but there are plans to carry out works in the basement. These will include the creation of a disabled toilet and baby change in one of the existing WCs and the installation of a lady's WC with shower in the existing storeroom adjacent to the WCs. The creation of a shower unit will require the erection of a stud partition wall with door to separate the shower from the existing boiler room.
- 4.3.15** In the current lobby at the base of the staircase up to the ground floor, it is proposed that the existing sliding door is removed and a stud partition wall with a fire door is installed to provide a new protected escape route from the basement. A similar protected escape route will be created in the lobby in the south east of the basement where a flight of steps provides access to an outside door at the back of the church.
- 4.3.16** The current partition wall at the eastern side of the main basement room will be removed and the horizontal headstones behind will be left in-situ and covered with a raised plinth which will be fixed to the floor in locations where it will not impact on any potential burials.
- 4.3.17** The tripartite area at the eastern end of the basement will be decorated and floored and made into a play area for children and this will not involve any material changes to these spaces.
- 4.3.18** The basement has undergone considerable modern alteration already and in its current condition is considered to be of less significance than the church above. The proposals will maintain the status quo and the majority of the basement's built fabric and layout will remain undisturbed. The proposals, will however, continue the traditional use of basements in Nonconformist Churches as a space for social gatherings and Sunday schools.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1** Avalon Heritage is supportive of the overall scheme to bring the Stand United Church back into use. The church has stood empty for some time and is beginning to show signs internally and externally of not being regularly maintained. Continued vacancy will only make this situation worse as time passes. Under the scheme the proposed refurbishments and repair works will contribute to sustaining the significance of the church and this needs to be considered when the LPA/decision maker considers any impacts on the significance of the church from the proposals and when it makes its decision on whether to grant consent.
- 5.1.2** Although some of the proposals, namely the concealment of headstones and memorials, are not ideal in terms of the church's artistic, archaeological and historic interest, the applicant's willingness to bring

the church back into use as a place of Christian worship should be viewed positively. The use of the church as a religious centre will continue the historic tradition of worship on the site and will avoid the sort of remodelling and subdivision which conversion of the church for other uses, such as residential, would entail.

5.1.3 On behalf of the applicant, this HS has fulfilled its role of providing the LPA/decision maker with a sufficient and proportionate level of information for the decision-making process by describing the significance of the church and its churchyard. It has also highlighted factors which should be considered by the LPA/decision maker during their assessment of the potential impacts of the scheme on the significance of the church.

5.1.4 It is anticipated, therefore, that the LPA/decision maker will be able to come to a balanced judgement about the proposed scheme as well as being able to form their view on whether the scheme will constitute no harm, less than substantial harm or substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset discussed in this report, as required by NPPF.

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HERITAGE SERVICES:

- Constraints reports and heritage risk assessments for land acquisition;
- Heritage Impact Assessments;
- Statements of Significance;
- Setting Assessments;
- Listed Building Appraisals;
- Historic Building Survey and Recording;
- Places of worship;
- Historic agricultural buildings;
- Desk-Based Assessments;
- Historic Landscape Survey;
- Analysis of historic and designed gardens.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES:

- Scoping and negotiation with LPAs;
- Preparation of WSIs and mitigation strategies;
- Project Management and set up of archaeological/geophysical surveys;
- Consultancy and advice;
- Co-ordination of fieldwork;
- Procurement.

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