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Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation; Chorlton **Design & Access & Impact Statement**

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View of inside the old chapel

1.0 Introduction & proposal

The Centre is situated on High Lane in Chorlton. It is a popular facility run by the Manchester Centre for Buddhist Meditation offering opportunities for meditation, education and Buddhist practice.

It also hosts meetings, events and residential retreats. Currently, it provides a small residential facility on site for overnight stays. It has a member's library and kitchen facilities together with rooms for Buddhist meditation.

The Centre has been extended in recent years that created modern facilities at the rear of the site. This included ensuite bedroom, kitchen and meeting rooms.

The proposal here is to convert to make better use of part of the old chapel hall, forming a first floor level to offer occasional overnight accommodation with a number of small bedrooms with shared bathroom, a bedroom for disabled or wheelchair persons at ground floor level, a fully DDA compliant lavatory and shower, with additional meeting space and small brew area. There is already a small number of bedrooms on site and these will act as an additional facility.

The Centre already offers residential stays for guests, but hopes to be able to hold approximately 5 - 6 residential weekends along with a couple of full residential weeks each year.

2.0 Parking

Although there is no on-site parking, there are good transport links close by with bus routes and tram stop. There are also opportunities for on-street parking outside the Centre and on some of the surrounding streets, particularly around the nearby park. The Centre has ever received complaints from their neighbours about parking and do not expect the new residential accommodation to affect this.

3.0 New windows

The existing timber front gable windows will be refurbished, incorporating new double-glazed panels.

The existing side lancet windows are single glazed set in timber frames which are in very poor condition. The timber is soft and rotten in places and many have had previous repairs in the past and are unable to be repaired again.

The proposal is to replace these windows (8 No.) with new hardwood frames to the same arrangement, incorporating double glazed units to comply with current Building Regulation standards.

The frames will incorporate some opening lights at ground level, as they do now, to provide ventilation to the meeting spaces.

It is also proposed to refurbish the large gable window.

Appearance viewed from the pavement

We note from the Council's reply to our submission of 12.12.24 that concerns were raised about a potential 'negative impact' of the proposed new floor on the local street scene

We have produced a 'mock-up' of the proposed intermediate floor against the upper two rectangular windows to the left of the white wheel. We used a grey coloured board which is the approximate depth of the proposed floor, which can be seen on the photograph on the right below:-



As existing



Mock-up showing intermediate floor position



View from the 'garden' to the east

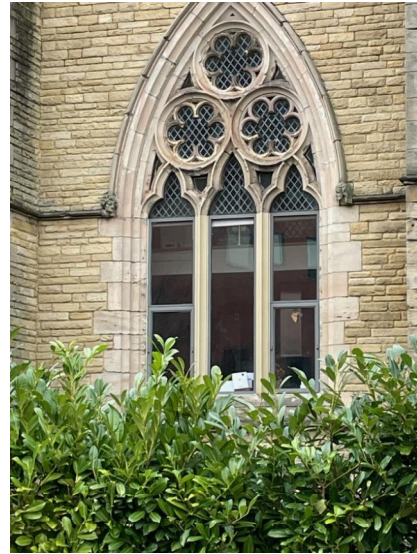


View from the pavement

As illustrated by the photo above to the right, taken from the pavement, making the edge of the floor darker in colour makes the floor very much less obvious from the road which will have a very minor effect on the local street scene.

Precedent

Examples of other buildings where intermediate floors can be seen through windows.



We note that in a similar project permitted at St Maryô Church in Hulme, the mezzanine floor is quite obvious from outside whether it is nearer the glass (1st picture) or further from the window (2nd picture) as the edge of the floor is white, as shown in the photographs above.



Another example is at the Church of St. Thomas, Norbury in Hazel Grove; a Grade 2 listed building. This is how it was designed in the 19th Century, with gallery seating visible through the lancet windows.



Another example of a converted listed chapel in North Wales.



Also, another example can be seen at St George's Church, Hulme, a listed Grade 2 building in Central Manchester.

None of the examples shown here can be perceived as having a 'negative impact of the street scene'

4.0 **Roof lights**

In order to give light and ventilation to the upper floor and bedrooms, new 'conservation' roof lights are proposed to east and west roof slopes, as shown on the proposed elevations (Dwgs. 11 & 12)



Conservation Roof light by Velux GGL MK08

5.0 **New entrance doors**

New solid Oak boarded entrance doors are to replace the current timber doors, which are in poor condition and badly fitting. The new doors are to match in appearance the existing, with the glazed fanlight detail above being retained.

The left hand side doors will be the main access to the accommodation. The right hand pair of doors will be for emergency egress from the new upper floor accommodation.

The left hand doors will open outwards (as a designated means of escape) onto a new ramp.

The main entrance to the Centre itself is as before.



Front elevation as proposed

6.0 Ramp

In order to improve disabled access for wheelchairs, we are propose a gentle sloping ramp with slip-resistant surfacing and a raised kerb, constructed in red smooth-faced brick with buff stone upstands and steps to match the existing masonry as close as possible. The surface of the ramp will be textured buff colour paving.

A powder-coated black metal 50mm round handrail will be installed, as shown on the detail drawing (see Dwg. 14). Also, to the side, new steps will lead up to the entrance with similar handrail.

7.0 Planting

The soft and hard landscaping will be rationalised and enhanced, with additional planting areas and paving.

8.0 Hours of opening

The Centre is open to the public four nights a week and on Saturday mornings for Beginner's Meditation Classes. There are other activities for members mainly in the evening and at weekends.

9.0 Impact of Proposals

We consider the impact of these proposals on this 'non-designated heritage asset' to be minimal. We do not consider that these proposals will have any negative impact on the street scene.

The new side windows will follow the same detail as the current windows and future proposals include replacement of the stone cills, which will enhance the architectural merit of the building.

There will be no other significant visual plications. The character of the building will be maintained and all detailing will be of high quality to enhance this 'heritage asset' for future generations.