

St Mary's Presbytery
M17, Mulberry St, Manchester M2 6LN

DESIGN, ACCESS & HERITAGE STATEMENT

To support Listed Building Consent Application for Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting



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1: Executive Summary

This Design, Access and Heritage Statement has been compiled by Crosby Granger Architects to support a Planning and Listed Building Consent Application made on behalf of the Parish of St Mary and the Diocese of Salford, for the installation of a basic Fire Alarm system and Emergency Lighting System

The Presbytery fronts onto Mulberry Street, and together with the adjacent attached St Mary's church are important elements in the urban streetscape.

The proposed works are essentially minor in nature and are considered to have no detrimental impact on the heritage significance of the building or its setting.

The scope of this DAHS is proportionate to the nature of the proposals.

2: Background and History of the Presbytery

St Mary's church was completed in 1848 on the site of an earlier church. The attached Presbytery was built in the 1870s to provide accommodation for the parish priest.

The principal elevation of the Presbytery fronts on to Mulberry Street. In common with many of the surrounding streets the neighbouring plots and buildings have been heavily developed, and the church is now flanked on the west by a large and impersonal commercial building, with others across the street.

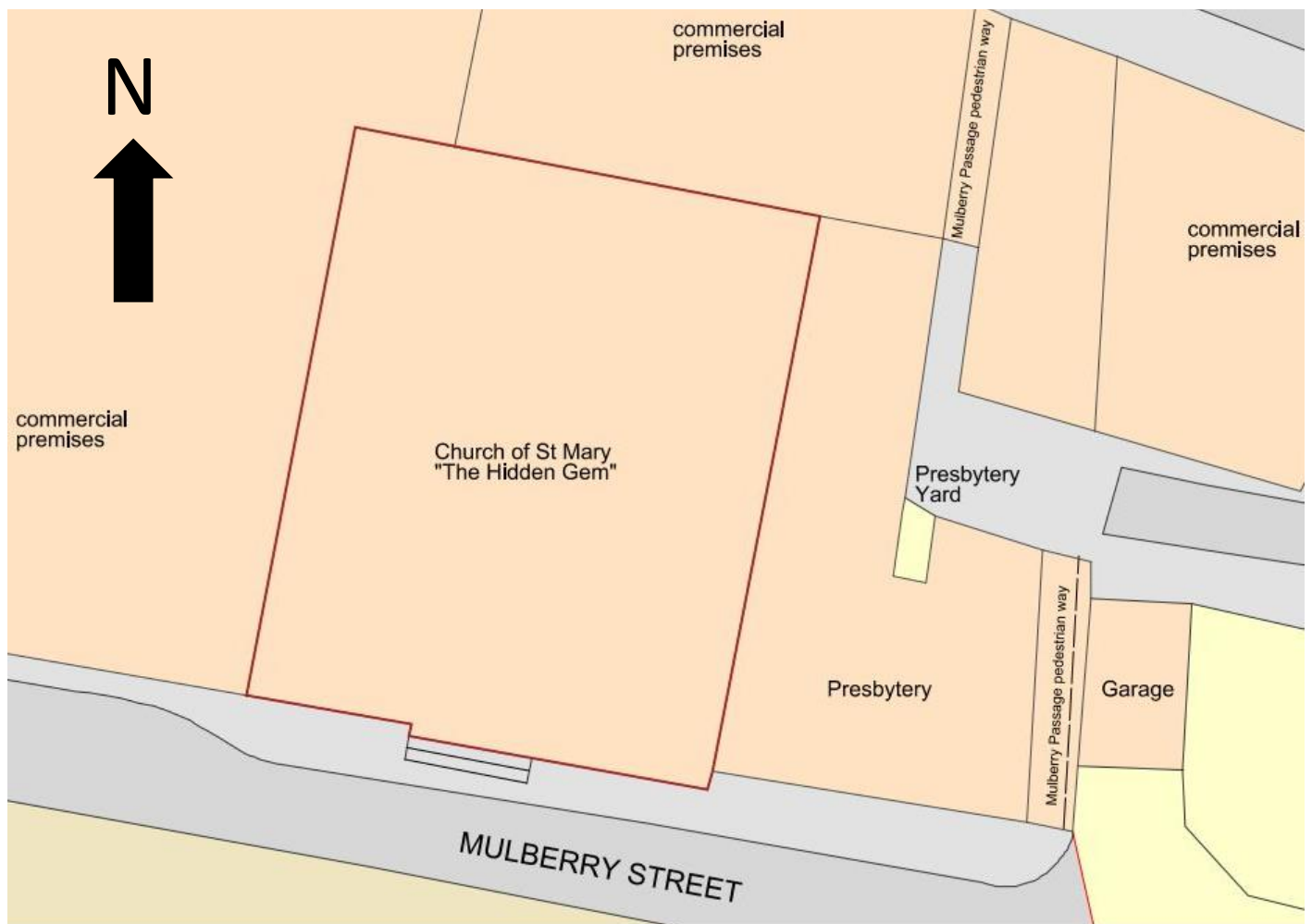


Fig 1: Extract from site plan, showing location & orientation of the Presbytery

3: Presbytery Listing

3.1. Overview

Heritage Category:	Listed Building
Grade:	II
List Entry Number:	1457463
Date first listed:	27-Sep-2018
List Entry Name:	Presbytery of the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary (The Hidden Gem)
Statutory Address 1:	17 Mulberry Street, Manchester, M2 6LN

3.2. Details

Presbytery, 1870s in Venetian Gothic style. The 1960s extension is not of special interest and is excluded from the listing.

MATERIALS: orange brick with sandstone and coloured stone dressings and slate roof.

PLAN: the presbytery is attached to the east side (liturgical south side) of the church with the front elevation facing onto Mulberry Street. It is of three storeys with a basement. A full-height staircase rises through the building, lit by a top lantern, with a doorway off at the first quarter landing level into the oratory in the south aisle of the church. At second-floor level a doorway gives access into the long meeting room inserted above the south aisle of the church.

EXTERIOR: the presbytery is built of orange brick in Flemish bond with yellow and red sandstone and grey stone dressings, and a hipped slate roof. The front elevation is of two bays and three storeys with a basement. It has a high, moulded stone plinth incorporating the round heads of two basement windows, a wide, moulded string band with pennant detail at first-floor level, a plain, narrower band at second-floor level, and an eaves entablature with shaped consoles and bosses. The ground floor has a window to the left and doorway to the right with a single hoodmould rising in an arch over each and terminating to right and left in carved head stops. The window itself is round-headed with two pointed-arch lights with a central, engaged red stone column with foliate capital and stained glass roundel above. There is a foliate-carved impost band and banded red and grey voussoirs with a yellow keystone. The pointed-arch lights have one-over-one pane sashes with etched lower panes. The doorway has flanking, engaged red stone columns with foliate capitals and a shaped stone lintel above which is a plain round-headed overlight with banded red and grey voussoirs and a keystone carved with a relief head. The first floor has an oriel window to the left and a window to the right. The canted oriel window is constructed of yellow sandstone. It has a round-headed window flanked by two smaller, round-headed windows in the returns. The window to the right is round-headed with a pointed-arch hoodmould with carved head stops and banded red and grey voussoirs with a yellow keystone. Both windows have one-over-one pane sashes with leaded-light panes with red glass diamonds. The second floor has two round-headed windows with a central, engaged red stone column with foliate capital to the left and a single round-headed window to the right. There is a moulded hood string with round arches over each of the windows, which have red and grey stone voussoirs and yellow keystones. The windows have one-over-one pane sashes.

The 1960s extension incorporating a covered walkway linking Mulberry Street with Tasle Alley to the rear is not included in the listing.

INTERIOR: the small entrance lobby has an enriched cornice and an elaborately panelled inner door with etched glass to the upper half and a rectangular, richly-coloured stained glass overlight. The public areas and main reception rooms on the ground and first floors have enriched cornices and archways opening off the stair hall have elaborate console brackets. The front, ground-floor room has an enriched hoodmould over the window with a stained glass roundel and central, engaged column separating the two pointed-arch lights, which contain etched glass panels. An open well staircase rises full-height and is lit by a circular top lantern. The closed-string stair has a timber balustrade with a moulded, ramped handrail with decorative, pierced baluster panels set between column balusters and varied, enriched column and square newel posts with ball finials. A round-headed doorway opens off the first quarter landing into the oratory in the church.

A doorway at second-floor level opens into a large room built as a First World War memorial room over the south aisle of the church. The clerestory windows are visible on the west side. Stone corbels support timber trusses with shaped braces and raised tie-beams, with clerestory windows and a fully-glazed pitched roof.

MAPPING NOTE: the large meeting room built over the south aisle of the church forms part of the listing for the presbytery, although its raised position means that it cannot be mapped.



Fig 2: Plaster and joinery details in the stairwell

4. Assessment of Heritage Significance

Because of the minor nature of the proposed work it would be disproportionate to carry out a full assessment of the heritage significance of the Presbytery. A consideration of the principal points is given as follows:

The Presbytery has considerable aesthetic value in the context of its busy urban setting. In conjunction with the church it presents an imposing decorative façade to the street. Windows and doorways are bordered by dressed sandstone, with polychrome voussoirs to the Roman arched windows and doorway. The stone string courses have finely detailed carved motifs, and the elevation is topped with a stone cornice.

The interior of the Presbytery has been degraded over time by piecemeal alterations, but some original features remain, notably ornate plaster covings and joinery in the stairway and hallway.

The Presbytery and the attached church have high communal and historic value, recalling the rapid expansion of the city in the Victorian period and the need to provide for the spiritual and social wellbeing of the expanding population in the first half of the 19th century. The church remains an active place of worship and the Presbytery continues to fulfill its original role by providing domestic accommodation for the Parish Priest.

The church and Presbytery together inject a welcome burst of Victorian grandeur into an otherwise mediocre streetscape dominated by tall commercial buildings. Recent public realm works have opened up views of the church and Presbytery which allow the buildings to be more fully appreciated.

In summary the heritage significance of the Presbytery lies chiefly in its form, architectural details and historic value when seen in the wider context of its urban context.

5. Design Considerations and Assessment of Impact on Heritage Significance

5.1. Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting Proposal

A Fire Risk Assessment of the church and attached Presbytery was carried out in January 2021 by the Diocese of Salford. The FRA identified a number of areas of concern relating to both the use and management of the building, and the physical fabric of the building and its services.

In the event of a fire at the church or Presbytery there is an unusually high risk to life due to the attached and interconnected nature of the church and Presbytery, which is in active use as the principal domestic accommodation of the Parish Priest. The risk associated with the Presbytery is further compounded by the accommodation being spread over five levels from basement to attic, with only one staircase as a means of escape.

The church is developing a phased programme of repairs and improvements to meet the needs of its congregation and the many visitors who come to this popular city centre church. An initial phase of roof repairs has just been completed, and further repair works are intended addressing defects with the Tower, roofs, and rainwater drainage. A future re-ordering scheme is intended to provide a new community space on the ground floor and first floor of the Presbytery, with the Priests accommodation and guest facilities on the upper floors.

In the fullness of time the repairs and development works described above will include works which address the physical deficiencies in the building identified in the FRA, such as inadequate fire stopping between floors and a lack of compartmentation between the church and Presbytery. In the interim it is considered essential to provide a system for fire detection and early warning, principally to protect the domestic accommodation. To this end a basic fire detection and alarm system is proposed, linked across both the church and the Presbytery. A full evacuation policy is indicated for both buildings, e.g. any fire detection will result in the evacuation of both buildings.

The proposed fire alarm system comprises linked control panels, smoke detectors, manual call points, and sounders. Cables will be concealed within elements of structure e.g. floor voids, clipped to surfaces in discreet locations, or channelled into walls where this is unavoidable.

The complimentary emergency lighting scheme is an interim measure intended to provide a minimum level of illumination to the Presbytery to enable safe evacuation in the event of power failure. As the Presbytery functions as both accommodation for visiting clergy and a workspace for parish volunteers there is a need for a higher standard of provision of emergency facilities than in a purely private dwelling. The exact location of fittings and wiring runs will be determined on site by the conservation architect who is overseeing the project. Where possible the emergency lighting and fire alarm cables will be run together to minimise visual intrusion.

The proposed scope of work has been limited to only those fittings which are felt to be most essential to meet the recommendations for improved safety. At subsequent stages of re-ordering or repair the provision of both fire protection and emergency lighting and signage will be reviewed and supplemented, with further LBC applications if necessary.

5.2 Impact on Heritage Significance

The works will be carried out under the supervision of an accredited conservation architect to control quality and minimise impact on the historic fabric. Wherever possible original fabric will remain undisturbed. Where it is necessary to make some changes, such as cutting holes for recessed lights, these are to be justified by the improved appearance of these fittings compared with bulky surface-mounted fittings.

Where cables have to be unavoidably chased into plaster the chases will be formed with care to minimise disruption to fabric, and the resultant damage made good with traditional lime plaster to maintain continuity of materials.

Existing cable routes will be utilised where possible to avoid the need for disrupting the fabric of the building. Where existing equipment is made redundant by the new installation this will be carefully removed to prevent the gradual accretion of surface-mounted equipment

In locations where it is necessary to negotiate existing details such as cornices these will be protected by either dressing the FP200 cable neatly around the feature, or where appropriate by drilling through the plasterwork behind the cornice with a long bit to allow the cable to pass behind the feature, and subsequently making good. Cables will be painted in where appropriate.

Ultimately all of the works will be reversible by removal of the equipment and making good the affected surfaces locally with compatible materials and porous paint finishes.

All of the work will be confined to the interior of the Presbytery.

By careful consideration of the installation details it is considered that the impact of the works on the heritage significance of the Presbytery will be essentially negligible.

6. Conclusions

The proposed works are considered essential to enable the Diocese to comply with relevant legislation and to protect life. They have been carefully considered in the context of the listed building, and have been specified to minimise the loss of historic fabric and minimise significant changes. The works will be carried out under the supervision of an accredited conservation architect to control the quality of the installation work and minimise impact.

In conclusion it is considered that the proposed works will not have a detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the listed building.

7. Sources

Advice has been received from Geraldine O'Farrell, building services consultant at Historic England.

[Presbytery of the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary \(The Hidden Gem\), Non Civil Parish - 1457463 | Historic England](#)
accessed 23/01/2024

The buildings of England: South Lancashire Nikolaus Pevsner. Penguin, 1969