

**FORMER COLLEGE CHAPEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
DICKENSON ROAD
LONGSIGHT
MANCHESTER**



HERITAGE STATEMENT

October 2020

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides a statement on the former United Methodist Church on Dickenson Road, Longsight. The building is not listed as having special historic or architectural interest, and it is not in a conservation area. It is located on the edge of the Longsight District Centre, and is an undesignated heritage asset, along with the nearby Co-op Printworks on Hamilton Road. The proposal is to undertake works to the building for mixed use, comprising retail, office and residential apartments.

- 1.2 The site is on a prominent corner within Longsight, adjacent to the market, and directly opposite the Medical Centre. It forms the terminating feature of a row of large, two-storey houses, some with polychromatic brick detailing. Formerly a United Methodist Chapel, and then the Church of God of Prophecy, the latest use of the building was as a discount store.
- 1.3 This report describes the heritage context and the asset, with a commentary on its significance, and the potential for heritage impact of the proposals.
- 1.4 This report has been prepared by Rob Burns, an urban designer and specialist in heritage issues, who has 30 years of experience in dealing with historic townscapes and buildings. Formerly employed by English Heritage (now Historic England) as a specialist in urban conservation and regeneration/development, he has worked extensively in the north west.
- 1.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF- 2019) includes advice on heritage matters and what should be taken into account when dealing with the historic environment. Paragraph 189 states that;*In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'.*

2. HERITAGE CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE

- 2.1 Longsight is a suburb of Manchester, located to the south east of the city centre, and is a popular residential area, with a mixed community. The nearest designated heritage asset to the site is St John's Church, now the Quadria Jilania Islamic Centre, which is grade II listed. Opened in 1846, the setting of the church relies on the surrounding grid of residential streets which helps define its context, and the market buildings opposite, as well as the landscaping

set within its grounds. The application site is visually removed from the church, and has no other association, despite its roots as a religious building. To the south-east of the application site is the former CWS Printworks building, now converted into the Longsight Business Park, which was constructed in the 1890's. The printworks, alongside the Val Percy Works, the Daisy Works and the Sarson's Vinegar Works formed part of the industrialisation of this part of Manchester, and attracted new residents. Before the middle of the 19th century, the area has been on the very margins of Manchester, with a rural character (Figure 1), and even by the end of the century there were gaps as part of the newly laid out street grid, including for the site of the application building (Figure 2).



Fig 1. OS map, 1848



Figure 2- OS map, 1894

- 2.2 Within a few years of the publication of the 1894 map, the CWS Printworks had opened (Figures 3 and 4), and this encouraged the development of the streets around the area, as new employees were needed for the increasing number of industrial and manufacturing works which were opening. With a residential population, there was also the requirement to serve the spiritual needs of the local population. Although the church of St John the Apostle and Evangelist had been constructed in 1846, and had the capacity to seat a congregation of 900, this did not account for accommodating the non-conformist, Methodists. Although Methodism had grown as a response to the Reformation and the Acts of Uniformity (1549, 1559 and 1662), disputes within the movement saw the formation of break-away groups, and new Methodist denominations. These included Methodist New Connexion, formed in 1797, Primitive Methodist (1810), and the United Methodist Free Church, which was formed in 1857 by the union of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, which started in Manchester in 1835, and the Wesleyan Reformers. Attempts to heal these divisions included the merging of the Methodist New Connexion with the United Methodist Free Church in 1907, to form the single entity of the United Methodist Church. Full Methodist union was not achieved until 1932 when

all the disparate groups came together as the Methodist Church of Great Britain.



Figure 3- CWS Printworks



Figure 4- CWA

Printworks, Hamilton Road entrance

- 2.3 The United Methodist Church on Dickenson Road was opened in 1907 (Figure 5) and was an early manifestation of the gradual merging of the disparate Methodist groups in Manchester. It was founded by students from the Victoria Park College. Membership of the various Methodist branches peaked at c.840,000 in 1910, and it is from this period that the UM

Chapel on Dickenson Road dates. The associated building facing Hamilton Road, which operated as a Sunday School, appears to have been the first structure on the site, and constructed as an earlier chapel, before the main building.



Figure 5- commemoration stone, UM Church, Dickenson Road

- 2.4 Internally, the church conforms to the characteristic 'auditory plan' which typifies many Methodists chapels. These principles were based on ensuring that the community could both hear and see the preacher, and middle scale and larger churches were fitted with full galleries on three sides, with the fourth side associated with the provision of choir pews and an organ. Frequently, stained glass windows were also a feature, as in the modern example from Ladybarn Methodist Church on Kingswood Road, Fallowfield (Figure 6). A further recurring feature was the rostrum, and organ, the latter often of some architectural merit, and a focal point (Figure 7). At the time of the construction of the church, pews were usually of pitch pine, and laid out in rows, and the box pews which typified Methodist churches in earlier decades, were much rarer at this stage.

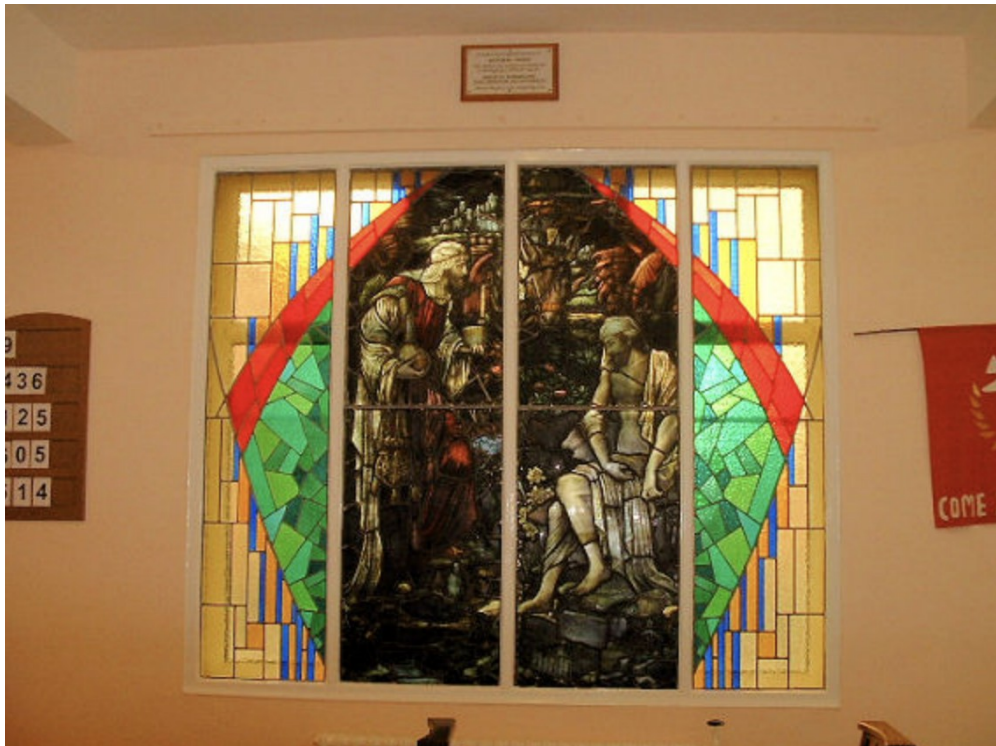


Figure 6-stained glass window, Ladybarn Methodist Church, Fallowfield



Figure 7- one of the best examples of the combined, gallery, rostrum and organ is Bishop Street Methodist Church in Leicester.

- 2.5 There is evidence of these features within the Dickenson Road building. However, a number of the key elements have been stripped out in the past following the end of the buildings religious use, or have been compromised. Figure 8 shows the building at ground floor, looking towards the location of the rostrum and organ.



Figure 8- interior

- 2.6 Whilst the gallery, roof and gothic fenestration are all readily apparent, all the pews have been removed, along with the rostrum and organ. The windows are plain, with no stained glass, and there is no evidence that this was an earlier feature which has been removed. The gallery appears to have been altered at some point in the past, with the northern gallery supported on then sections columns, of a different design and scale to the columns which support the east and west, side, galleries, and the supporting structural beams are also of different detailing (Figures 9 and 10). This may have been as a response to the growing congregation as Methodism became more popular with the local community, and is likely to have been an early adaptation following the opening of the church.



Figure 9- columns and beams to transverse galleries Figure 10- columns/beams to north gallery

- 2.7 On the first floor, the rooms are plain, with little detailing, and are clearly of lower status in the hierarchy of the plan form (Figures 11 and 12).



Figures 11 and 12- first floor rooms

- 2.8 The building, once part of a series of Methodists churches which supported the traditional 'circuit' of lay preachers, has some rarity value due to the demolition of many of these buildings following the reduction in congregation and consequent redundancy. However, there remains other examples in Manchester dating from the turn of the 19th century. Clayton Methodist church dates from 1905, and shares some features with the Dickenson Road example (Figure 13). It is of red brick, with sandstone detailing and although it has a tripartite window with a Gothic arrangement, the building also has a classically styles pediment. To the front is a protruding porch/narthex, which provides depth and articulation to the elevation.



Figure 13- Clayton Methodist Church

- 2.9 In Moston, the Streetfold United Methodist Church is also of red brick, and with gothic detailing, in this case a round headed arched window to the frontage, set within a steep gable, and with corner turrets. The protruding porch is of later date, but it is a shared feature with other Methodist churches (Figure 14).
- 2.10 Manley Park Methodist church opened in 1910, and also in brick, but with terracotta detailing to the gable, turrets and projecting porch/narthex. The design is a transitional architecture, between the gothic and a more Arts and Crafts approach, but shares the common feature of an arched window, without tracery as in the example of Clayton (Figure 15).



Figure 14- Streetfold United Methodist Church, Moston



Figure 15- Manley Park Methodist Church, Whalley Range

- 2.11 The United Methodist Church on Dickenson Road has the same architectural credentials, as the previous examples, but is a more convincing and confident design. With a reticulated tracery window to the front, and a small porch with internalised narthex, the two corner towers provide solidity and robustness to the composition, and the detailing in brick is carried through from the quoined windows to the parapet detailing. The return elevation to Hamilton Road is also of a high quality, with a smaller gothic window, and tapered buttresses (Figure 16).



Figure 16- United Methodist Church, Dickenson Road

- 2.12 The contribution made by the church to the area, is noted in the Manchester edition of Pevsner, which describes it as “This and St John’s Church stand out amongst the otherwise uninspiring buildings of central Longsight. Red brick and red terracotta with fanciful terracotta tracery. A forceful central entrance has battered sides flanked by towers”. (Manchester: Pevsner City Guide, C. Hartwell, 2001).

3 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH- ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

3.1 The church is a residual element of the popularity and ubiquity of the Methodist church within Manchester. It occupies a prominent site adjacent to the market, and is located on a major route, and is a known landmark in the area. The significance of the building is as an echo of the earlier demographics of the area, although its historic context has been severely compromised, and its associational value substantially lost.

3.2 Appraised against the methodology for assessment of cultural significance in *Conservation Principles (English Heritage, now Historic England)*, the following values are identified:

Evidential Value

3.3 The current building dates from the early years of the 20th century, and is a manifestation of the expansion of the city into the surrounding suburbs, as it grew in population and industrial activity. The development of Longsight required not just housing, but also those commercial, civic and religious establishments to support the community. It also illustrates the growing popularity of the Methodist church, having healed divisions between different factions, the College Chapel United Methodist Church became one of the first structures of the union between different Methodist communities. Methodism, with its principles of the value and equality of every person, became an increasingly important denomination to the working class communities, and the building was constructed as the religion started to reach its peak of celebrants. The interior, designed around the auditory principles of the Methodist doctrine, shows the simpler manner in which services were celebrated, by lay preachers following a defined circuit. The redundancy of the building as a church also shows the changes to demographics in the area, and the change in attitudes to religious beliefs.

Historic Value

3.4 The building is of historical interest for its association with the evolution of the area, and the role of the church in society at that time. Its historic value as an undesignated heritage asset relates to the narrative of the development of the expansion of the city and working class communities, as well as the growth of Methodism. The building is a manifestation of these changing social and religious environments.

Aesthetic Value

3.5 The building is an undesignated heritage asset, and has seen adaptations and changes since its construction. It is now redundant and has been stripped of a number of key features which were central to the Methodist liturgy. Nevertheless, its tones provided by the red brick with

terracotta detailing, its gothic style and location on a key landmark corner in the area, provide it with an identity which is still relevant and contributes substantially to the local townscape.

- 3.6 Internally, the building does not appear to be in poor condition, but the arrangement and detailing have been compromised by the previous retail use, which has led to the loss of some of the identifiable features of the building as a Methodist church. In particular, the removal of the rostrum and the pews, leaving a largely empty hall, work against the identity of the structure as a Methodist church. Whilst the gallery does indicate that this was a Methodist church, this is the only remaining feature which differentiates the building from any other denomination.
- 3.7 Whilst the structural shell and architecture of the building clearly identifies it as a religious building, the loss of some of the internal features does not indicate its denomination and identity with Methodism. As with many churches, the full height internal space, and the ability to see the roof structure, are elements of its former use, and an attractive feature which differentiates it from other building typologies. However, these alone do not help to identify its Methodist background, nor does it serve to place the building in this particular religious context. Architecturally, the building responds to the general stylistic principles of religious buildings at that time, and is not Methodist specific. The style was popular with all denominations, and there remain other examples in Manchester. The church here represents a confident architectural hand, and the detailing and conviction of the design is of a higher standard than some of the other examples still remaining. The building also provides a key focal point for the busy junction in Longsight, and has a positive contribution to the townscape.

Communal Value

- 3.8 The communal value of the building is limited, but relates to the recognition of the building as part of a larger social and religious context, which is still legible within the area. It is a landmark, and part of the generally recognized townscape which gives Longsight its particular identity.

4. POLICY AND GUIDELINES CONTEXT

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

- 4.1 The NPPF states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Government sees three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental, and these roles should be regarded as mutually dependent. Economic growth can secure higher social and environmental standards, and well-designed buildings and places can improve the lives of people and communities. The planning system is therefore expected to play an active role in guiding development to sustainable solutions. Policies 184 -202 are related to conserving and enhancing the historic environment. The NPPF describes the historic environment in terms of “*heritage assets*.” It defines the significance of a heritage asset as its value ‘*to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting.*’
- 4.2 Paragraphs 189 and 190 of the NPPF require planning applicants and local planning authorities to assess the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be appropriate to the assets’ importance and no more than sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Local planning authorities should take this assessment into account when the potential impact of proposed development to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset’s conservation and any aspect of the proposal.
- 4.3 Paragraph 191 of the NPPF states that where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of or damage to a heritage asset the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.
- 4.4 Paragraph 192 states that local planning authorities should take account of the desirability of new development sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets; the positive contribution that heritage assets can make to sustainable communities; and the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local distinctiveness.
- 4.5 Paragraph 193 sets out policy principles guiding the consideration of impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be given to the asset’s conservation. Any harm to or loss should require clear or convincing justification.

- 4.6 Paragraph 194 provides a series of tests which should be applied in cases where substantial harm to or total loss of significance will be caused. In the case of development proposals which will lead to substantial harm or loss, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
- 4.7 Paragraph 195 states that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
- 4.8 Paragraph 197 states that the effect of a development on a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the heritage asset.
- 4.9 Policy 202 concerns enabling development and the need for LPAs to assess whether the benefits of this would outweigh planning policies if the future conservation of a heritage asset is secured.

Manchester Local Plan

- 4.15 Policy EN3: Heritage

Throughout the City, the Council will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, including those of the city centre.

New developments must be designed so as to support the Council in preserving, or where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, registered parks and gardens, conservation areas and archaeological remains.

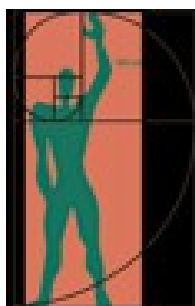
Proposals which enable the re-use of heritage assets will be encouraged where they are considered consistent with the significance of the asset.

5. ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The proposal is for the re-purposing of the building for a mixed use scheme.
- 5.2 The building was formerly a Methodist church, founded by the students of the Victoria Park College as Methodism grew in popularity, but has not served that function since it closed in 1978. Following its closure as a Methodist church, it was used by the evangelical Church of God of Prophecy, but this was relatively short lived, and its previous use was retail. This required the removal and partial re-ordering of the interior at ground floor. Whilst the gallery has been retained, other features which were fundamental to the Methodist liturgy have been lost. Consequently, whilst the building has an identity as a church, the details which differentiate it from other denominations have been compromised. Whilst the building is still recognisably a religious structure, and its former use is identifiable through the design and external detailing, its functional context, and its contribution to the religious diversity of the area has been lost.
- 5.3 The proposal incorporates a glazed extension to the entrance, and further alteration to the interior, in particular to create apartments at first floor level. The gallery feature will appear as a full height space from what was the narthex, preserving the light and open nature of the interior, although this will be at a reduced dimension to the existing, but retaining the footprint of the transverse galleries. At second floor, it is proposed to provide dormers, which will also help to ensure that the central open space remains light and airy.
- 5.4 The proposed porch will be fully glazed, allowing a clear view of the front façade, although the existing porch will be removed as part of the design. Nevertheless, the entrance will be clearly signposted by the new design, and add a contemporary foil to the existing elevation. The window to the north-east turret will be elongated, although the 'ghost' of the original opening will be preserved through the retention of the quoins, so that the original arrangement remains legible. The new arrangement will help to increase accessibility into the building.
- 5.5 The roof dormers will essentially be tucked behind the front turrets, and will not be visible from the front, but that to Hamilton Road will be seen in oblique views. However, it has been designed to merge with the existing roof, and the window arrangement follows the line of the existing fenestration below, so that the rhythm of the elevation is undisturbed. The depth and articulation of the Hamilton Road elevation means that the proposed dormers act as a further architectural layer, rather than an imposition on a flat elevation.
- 5.6 The building currently makes a positive contribution to the area, but its historic context as a Methodist church and elements of significance are currently diluted. Retaining the building in

active use, and adapting both the external elevations and internal space will ensure that its intrinsic value to the area will remain, rather than lost. The current building, whilst attractive, does not retain enough inherent qualities to warrant a formal designation, and it remains a local heritage asset.

- 5.7 The optimum viable use of the building is no longer as a religious building, as the failure of the earlier religious uses testify. Whilst this use may preserve a larger proportion of the interior, there is no indication of any interest in such a use. The main contribution, and significance, of the building is the positive townscape value it still holds. Even with the intervention of the glazed porch, and the loss of the existing porch, this will remain, and the structure will continue to have landmark status.
- 5.8 The original context for the building was lost when the building fell out of religious use, and those elements which identified it as Methodist building were compromised. Its underlying significance relates to the narrative of the Methodist church, and the expansion of Longsight and its community. If the former is no longer relevant through the disuse of the building as a church, the retention of the building as a local landmark represents the best outcome. The current proposals will ensure that the building will still have benefits to the area.



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