

HERITAGE STATEMENT



United Reformed Church, Clitheroe

August 2012

Table of Contents

1. Contextual Analysis
 - Historic Context
 - Physical Context
 - Architectural Context
 - Construction & Materials Context
 - Interiors Context
 - Exterior Spaces Context
2. Involvement
3. Policy & Planning Statement
4. Conservation Area Design Guidance
5. Statement of Significance

Appendices

- Existing Floor Plans
- Existing Elevations



CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Historic Context

The United Reformed Church in Clitheroe was constructed and consecrated in 1863. The original building initially consisted of the main body of the church which fronts Castle Gate. There were two later additions to the main structure - the Memorial Hall constructed in 1926 to the rear overlooking Lowergate, and the remodelling of the Strang Stee elevation and courtyard during the late 1960's and early 1970's.

The maps/plans which follow record the development of the site on which the church now stands, along with the development of the surrounding urban fabric of the town centre:

1847 Map



Historic records indicate that the Congregationalist Church originally worshipped in the Old Chapel on Wellgate in 1815. In 1863 it relocated to its current site on Castle Gate. The map above and on the next page indicates the town and URC building site prior to construction of the current building. Although not clear, there is some indication of a 'market square' centred around the castle grounds entrance. The land to the rear of the site fronting Lower Gate also appears open/rural.

1890 Map



By 1890 the current church building has been constructed, with further development in front of the church to start 'enclosing' the previous open space. Note the newly constructed buildings to the rear of the church fronting Lower Gate, which is now the car park. These buildings - either still present or now demolished, are important in determining the current obscure boundary positions.

1912 Map



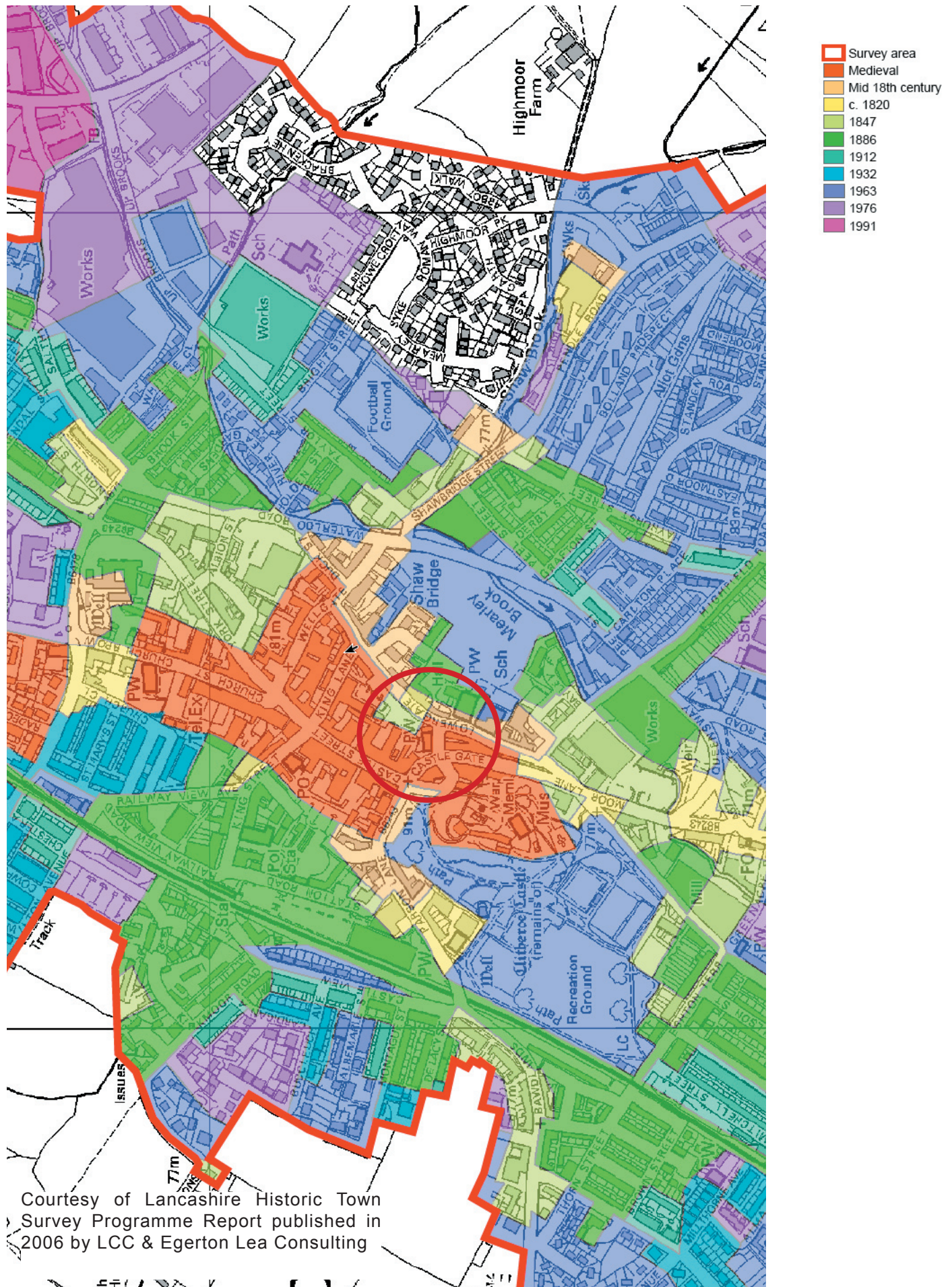
This map appears to indicate the church with its early extensions to the rear of the building. Further enclosure has now occurred to the front of the building along Castle Gate to create more of the street pattern which is evident today. The buildings to the rear are still in existence, although there still appears to be definitive boundary positions.

1933 Map

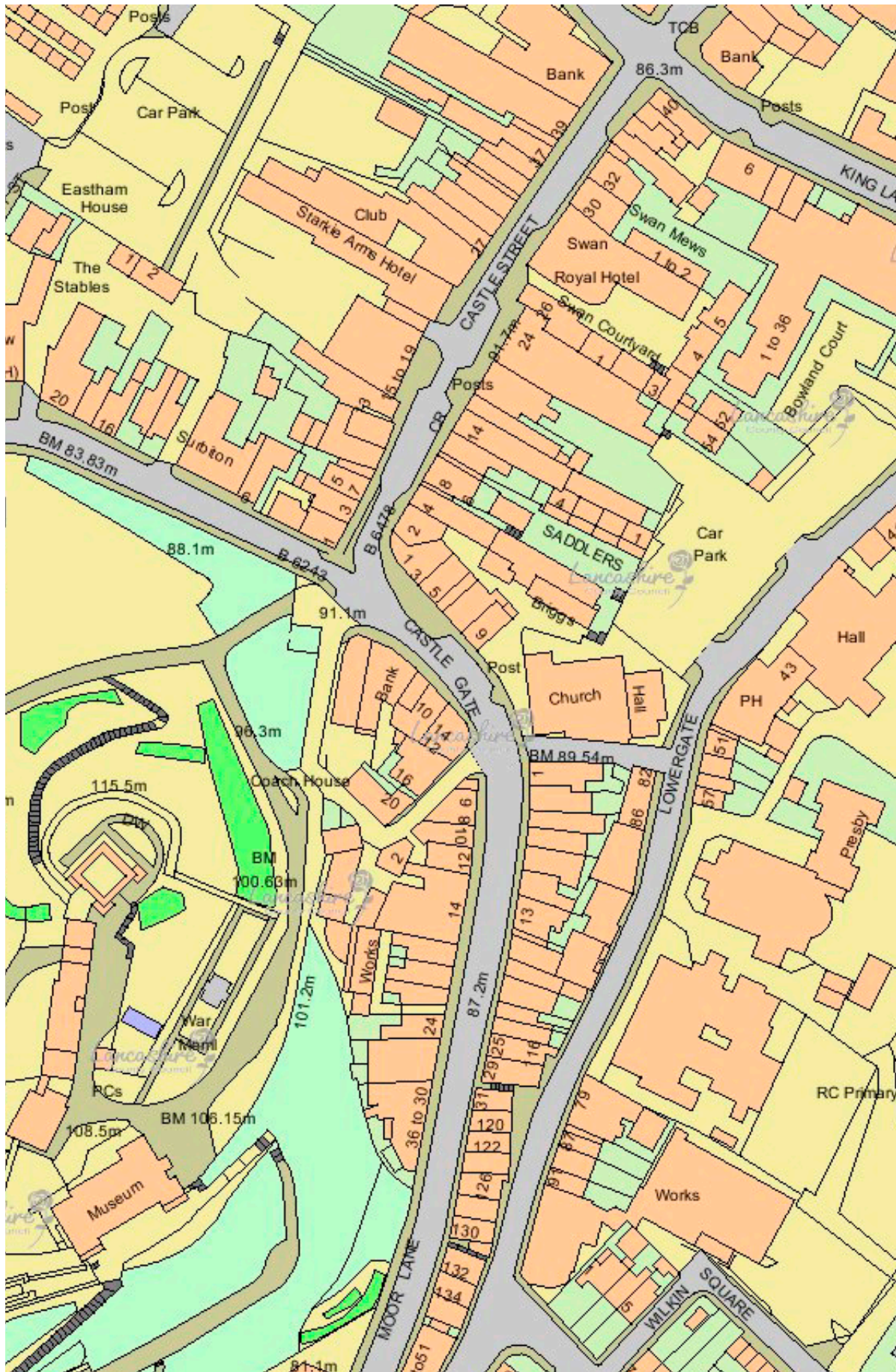


This map of 1933 does not indicate very much change from the previous map of the same century. It does appear to indicate a small recess to the rear of the church, where evidence of a gated entrance is still in existence.

Historical Urban Development



2008 Map



Physical Context

The church complex sits on an irregular shaped plot on an east-west axis along its main worship space and dominant facades, which front Castle Gate and Lowergate respectively. There is a narrow, steeply sloping, cobbled road to the south elevation - known as Strang Stee. The northern elevation has a pathway and steps which provide pedestrian access from Castle Gate to the Lowergate car park.

The main church was constructed off the existing natural rock base which allowed the original development of the castle and surrounding town. Within this urban context, the church building and its irregular boundaries are a product of the natural topography of the site and historical mediaeval context. The building is therefore arranged over a number of levels offering access to those levels from various points around the site.



Contextual views



Aerial View of Site in Context (application site in red)

Architectural Context

The main church building is constructed structurally as a single volume built into the slope of the site but offering two separate floor levels. The upper floor provides the main worship space and is accessed from Castle Gate through two single storey entrance lobbies. The lower floor, accessed from Strang Stee, provides the main church hall accommodation, along with a smaller room (currently used as part of the Dance School) and a small meter/store room. The northern entrance lobby also provides the original stairwell accommodation which links the worship space with the main hall. Within the main worship space there is also a balcony with raked seating to the west elevation also accessed off this original stairwell. The east elevation contains a choir balcony, organ loft and sundry storage space accessed from an additional internal stair to the southeast corner of the space. It is also understood that a small accommodation stair linking with the lower floor was also located here, but has been subsequently boarded over. Under the organ and choir loft are the original meeting and minister's rooms. These are currently undergoing conversion to form kitchen facilities and chair storage.

The Memorial Hall sits to the east end of the original building. It is arranged over two floors and links through with the original building at both levels - be it with the worship space via a ramp due to level differences. The building has its own self-contained stairwell located to the south of the building off the original courtyard to Strang Stee. There is also a small accommodation door to the north elevation. The ground floor accommodation consists of a main hall, with some smaller ancillary accommodation and is used by the Dace School. The upper floor has one large open space with a smaller annex room.

The extension created in the 1970's infills the original open courtyard facing Strang Stee and utilises the existing stone boundary walls. An accommodation 'tower' to the western end of the courtyard provides a church office, toilets and kitchen facilities over three floors linked by a new staircase. The remaining areas are enclosed to create landing areas to the upper floor and a large entrance lobby to the lower floor accessed off Strang Stee.



Contextual views

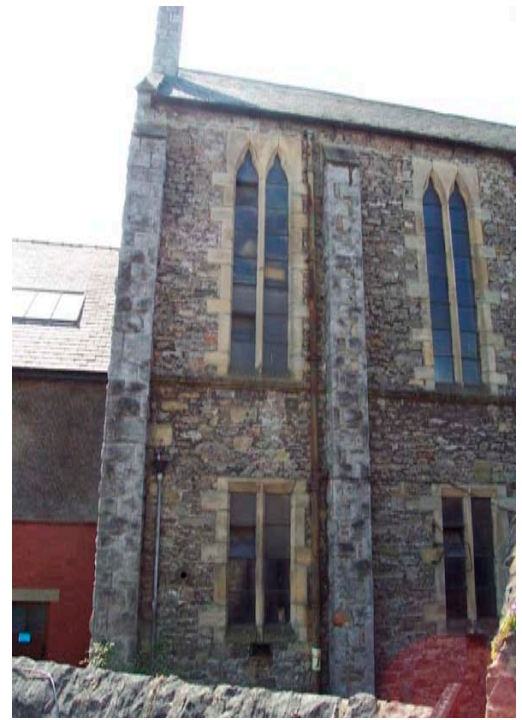
Construction & Materials Context

The main church building is constructed of limestone with sandstone detailing under a Welsh Blue slate roof. The building is traditional in its elevational treatment, in a neo-Gothic style, consistent with its age of construction. The limestone walls are pitched faced coursed limestone with sandstone capped feature buttressing and plinth detailing to all elevations. The feature west elevation is ornamented with ashlar sandstone coping verge details and decorative finials to accentuate the buttressing. The remaining elevations are less decorative by comparison.

The window openings to the original church are of a double lancet design with decorative stone tracery and tre- or quatre-foil detailing - particularly to the west elevation. Ashlar sandstone cills, reveals and heads are evident to all the window surrounds with decorative moulding detailing. All the original glazing appears to have been replaced with a more modern obscured type and is bedded directly into the rebated stone but the timing of this work is unclear. The detailing to the doors matches the arched design of the windows, with decorative sandstone mouldings. In contrast, the east elevation contains a decorative rose window which retains the original stained glass detailing, but is mostly concealed internally by the organ pipes.

The Memorial Hall is constructed in an 'Accrington' red brick base with a roughcast cement render to the upper level. It also has a Welsh Blue slate roof with timber fascias, soffits and bargeboards. The window openings are a utilitarian rectangular design with stone heads and cills, as are the doors. The 1970's extension clads the 'tower' feature in welsh blue slate hanging to match the monopitch roof over the courtyard. The remaining infill walls and roofs are either a single glazed patent glazing system or lead flat roofs.

The majority of the roofs are drained via circular black painted cast iron downpipes. The main church utilises lead clad stone gutters to drain water from the roof to the south elevation, whilst the remaining roofs employ cast iron ogee profile gutters supported either on metal brackets or fascias boards the stone stairwell. The large areas of flat roof to the south elevation are covered with and employ lead box or concealed gutters contained within the boundary of the site.



Contextual views

Interiors Context

Internally, the fairly decorative exterior of the main church is contrasted by the relative simplicity of the interior. The main worship space has a pitched ceiling with exposed timber trusses and purlins on simple stone corbels. The majority of the remaining rooms have flat ceilings. Simple coving, skirting or picture rail details are also evident in the principle areas.

Most of the original joinery details to the various buildings appear to be still evident including original stained or painted doors, architraves and ironmongery. In some of the principle rooms dado level painted timber panelling is also found, or in other rooms timber skirtings. The stained timber balcony railings (with some modern additions) and panelling are also still insitu to the main worship space as are the box pews to the these areas. The original pews to the main worship area have been recently removed as part of a renovation project.

Existing timber floors are evident throughout much of the building, with some having floor coverings over. The 1970's remodelling enclosed the original courtyard and therefore has a brick paver finish for the majority of the area and tarracotta tiling to the toilet and kitchen areas.

Exterior Spaces Context

The exterior of the church has contrasting areas determined by the level of use. The west facing frontage to Castlegate has a tarmac surface to the vehicular/pedestrian area with a concrete disabled ramp to the north lobby entrance doors. A small grassed area is formed between this and the south lobby entrance which still has the original stone steps and walls. There is a dwarf wall to the boundary of coursed limestone. The northern and western boundaries are mostly concrete slab paving finishes with either limestone or brick retaining/boundary walls as dictated by the level changes. The elevation to Strang Stee is the original limestone boundary wall which now forms the external walls of the 1970's extension.



Contextual views



INVOLVEMENT

Initially discussions have been held between the church, their window contractors and the local planning authority at Ribble Valley Borough Council.

Comments have been received from Mr Gareth Fort as pre-planning advice officer, some of which are reiterated within the following sections relating to planning policy. He makes reference to a number of key policies within the National Planning Policy Framework -

Paragraph 14 - presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Paragraph 17 - the 12 core planning principles.

Paragraph 127 - the significance of a heritage asset.

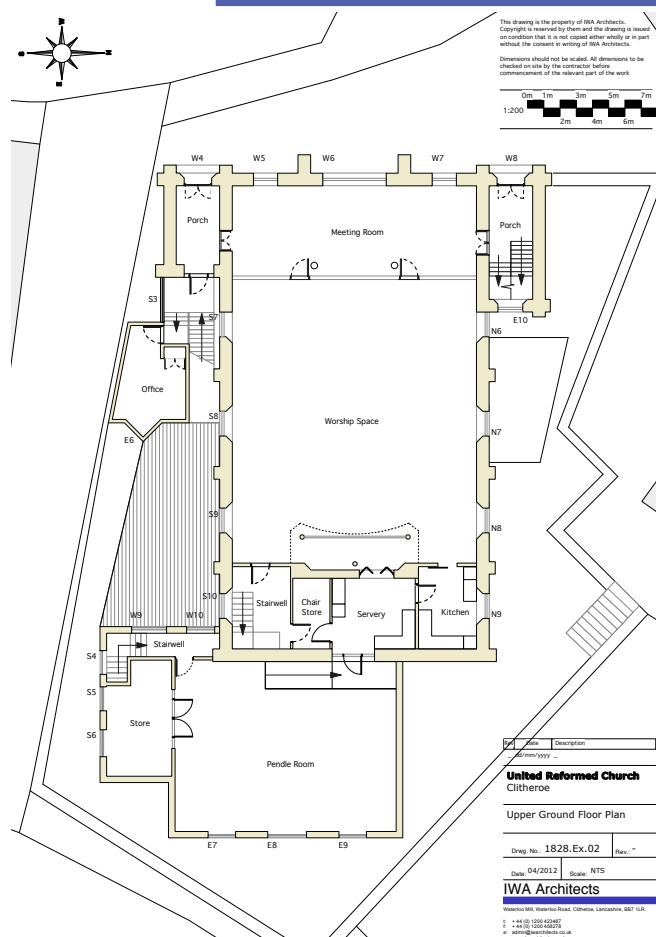
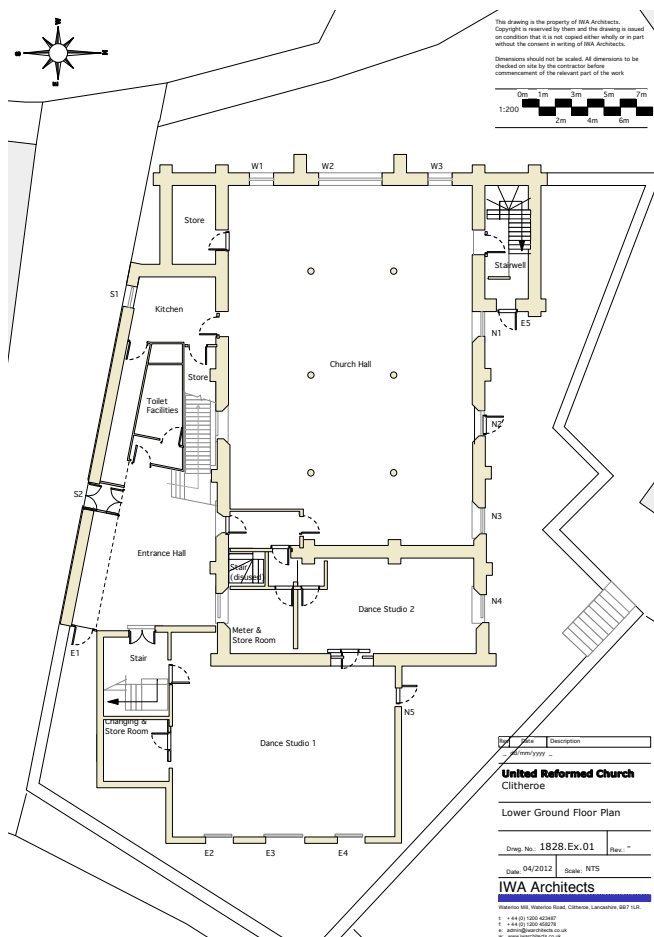
Paragraph 132 - assessment of the proposals.

Paragraphs 133 and 134 - weighing up harm against the public benefits.

The church sits within the Clitheroe Town Centre Conservation Area, and as such is governed by the guidance and requirements of national policies, local policies and specific management guidance documents. The Clitheroe Conservation Area Appraisal (Ribble Valley Borough Council, 2005), makes the following general statement regarding the ecclesiastical buildings in the Conservation Area -

"The conservation area is notable for the number of religious buildings including an Anglican and Catholic church and several non-conformist chapels, some of which, like The Emporium, are no longer in religious use. Earlier religious buildings such as the Independent Chapel (1815) on Shaw Bridge Street or the former Roman Catholic Church (1899) on Lowergate have a simple plan form and round arched windows. Religious buildings from the late 19th century have a 'gothic' appearance with pointed arched window and door openings, and a strong vertical emphasis." (pp17).

Left: Existing Lower Ground Floor
Below: Existing Upper Ground Floor



POLICY & PLANNING STATEMENT

Although this building is not specifically mentioned in the Conservation Area Appraisal, nor is it deemed unique enough for statutory listing. The Conservation Management Plan lists the building as a 'Building of Townscape Merit' in the Townscape Appraisal Map. Under such reference, the following guidance is given -

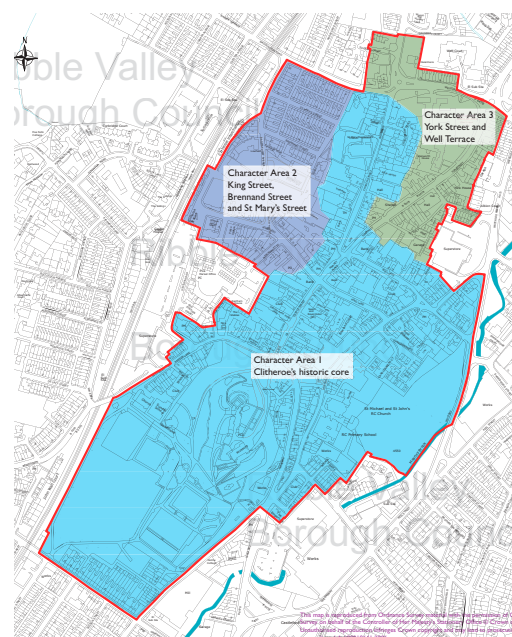
"Buildings of Townscape Merit"

The appraisal for Clitheroe identified a number of unlisted buildings which it is considered make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the conservation area, and these are marked on the Townscape Appraisal map that accompanies the appraisal.

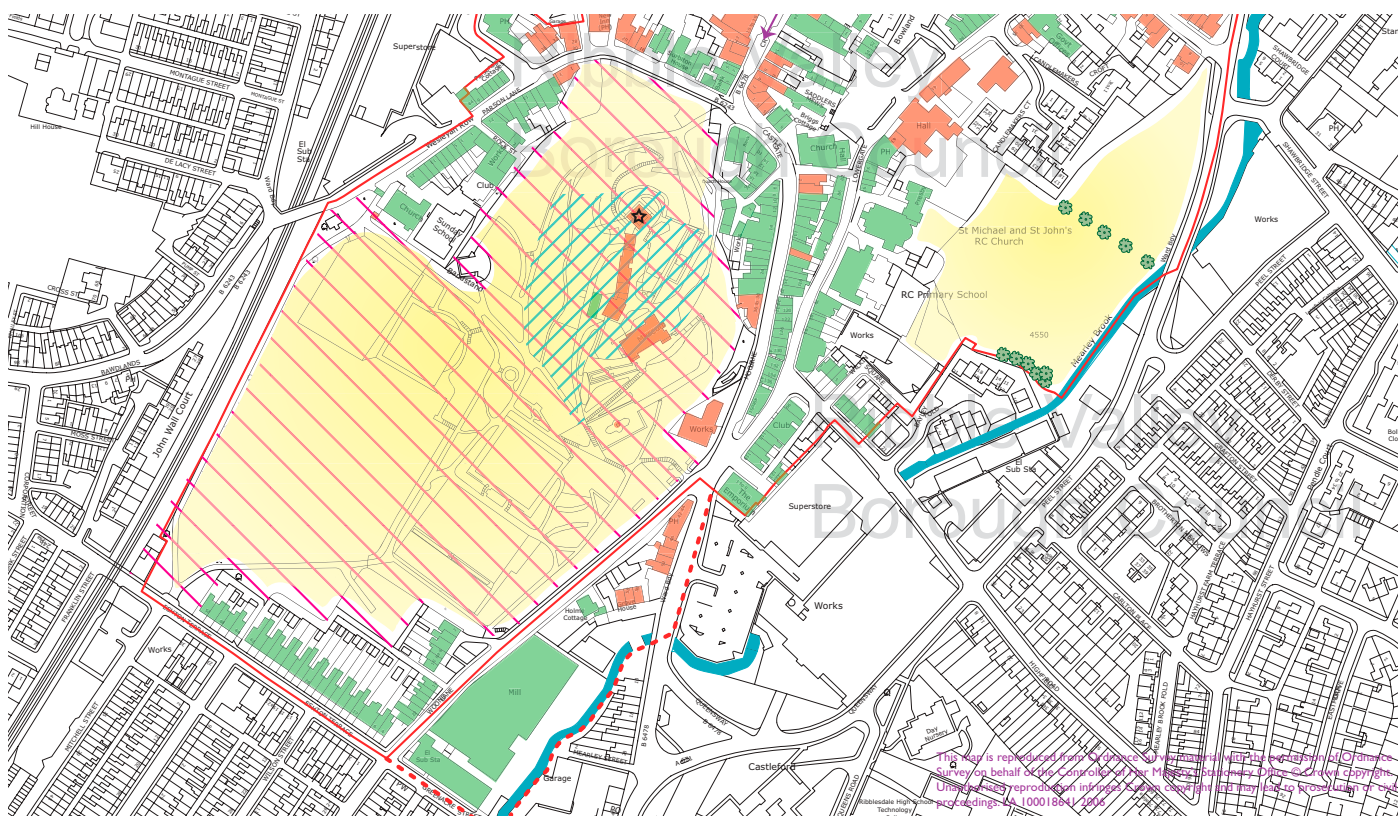
There is a general presumption in favour of retaining all Buildings of Townscape Merit, as set out in the Local Plan policy ENV18 and in PPG15. The Council will also consider very carefully all applications to alter or extend such buildings.

Buildings within a conservation area greater than 115 cubic metres are automatically protected from demolition as "Conservation Area Consent" is required from the Council before any building can be removed. For Buildings of Townscape Merit, any application for demolition will need to be accompanied by a reasoned justification (similar to that required for a listed building) stating why the building should be demolished. The Council will expect the applicant to demonstrate that:

- The building is beyond economic repair
- The building has been offered on the open market
- If vacant, alternative uses have been sought" (pp13).



Above: Character Area Map
Below: Townscape Appraisal Map



- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Conservation area boundary | Listed Buildings | Significant open spaces | Important trees |
| Proposed extension to conservation area boundary | Buildings of Townscape Merit | Important tree groups | Important views |
| Registered Parks and Gardens | Scheduled Monument | Focal buildings | |



POLICY & PLANNING STATEMENT contd.

The Local Plan itself sets out the requirements for any changes to buildings which sit within a Conservation Area. The following extracts are key directions for any amendments to buildings such as the application site:

POLICY ENV16

Within conservation areas development will be strictly controlled to ensure that it reflects the character of the area in terms of scale, size, design and materials.

...The desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area will also be a material consideration in deciding development proposals outside the designated area which would affect its setting or views into or out of the area.

...Conservation areas are designated under section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas)Act 1990. They are areas of special architectural or historic interest. The character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance.

...The designation reflects not only the value of individual buildings but also their collective contribution to the overall character of the area as a whole. Trees and open spaces also contribute to this.

POLICY ENV17

Applications for planning permission within or affecting conservation areas will be required to be accompanied by sufficient additional information in the form of sketch elevations of the proposed buildings, means of access and (where appropriate) landscaping of the site.

...In the majority of cases, these details will be considered necessary for the Borough Council to assess the impact of a proposal on the conservation area. Applicants are advised to enquire, at an early stage as to the Council's requirements in respect of each application for development. Outline planning applications will not normally be considered acceptable.

POLICY ENV18

There will be a presumption in favour of the retention of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Consent to demolish any building in a conservation area will not be granted unless a suitable detailed planning application for the re-use of the site has been approved and a contract let for the carrying out of the works of redevelopment.

...This policy is intended to ensure that unlisted buildings which are important to the character of the conservation areas are not lost through demolition, or unsympathetically altered or repaired. This is a reflection that whilst a number of buildings in conservation areas do not have any individual qualities to render them listable they do, in many cases contribute to the overall attractiveness. This policy allows the continued protection of the built environment.

CONSERVATION AREA DESIGN GUIDANCE

Within the Clitheroe Conservation Area Management Guidance (Ribbles Valley Borough Council 2005), specific design guidance is given in relation to the specific elements of the building. This guidance is crucial in assessing the correct approach and proposals for works to repair or replace building elements of structures within the Conservation Area -

“Windows: Sliding sash and side-hung casements are the two principal window types. As a rule, windows in historic buildings should be repaired, or if beyond repair should be replaced ‘like for like’. It is important that the design, scale and proportion of new windows should be sympathetic to the character of the building.

Glazing bars in old buildings are invariably moulded and slender. Over time, the thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes and other historic window details varied. Care is therefore needed in the repair and replacement of historic windows to ensure works are ‘honest’ and not historically misleading. Details should be appropriate to the date of the building or to the date when the window aperture was made.

Seventeenth century stone mullion windows were normally glazed with leaded lights in a thin metal frame. If necessary, they should be replaced with a similar design ensuring that the stonework dominates.

Paint is usually the correct finish for timber windows; staining is not a traditional finish and should not normally be used. All old glass is of interest, whether it be stained, painted or etched glass or early plain glass such as crown glass.

Replacement windows: The insertion of factory made standard windows of all kinds, whether in timber, aluminium, galvanised steel or plastic is almost always damaging to the character and appearance of historic buildings. In particular, for reasons of strength the thickness of frame members tends to be greater in plastic or aluminium windows than in traditional timber ones. Modern casements with top-opening or louvred lights or asymmetrically spaced lights are generally unsuitable as replacements for windows in historic buildings.” (pp10).

IWA Architects have sought to provide a solution within the context of this guidance. The proposal is using largely concealed slim metal frames set within the stone rebates with only 11mm showing as a shadow line around the edge. The glass is specified to match the original pattern for the replacement windows. The intention is to improve environmental conditions within the building, reducing the carbon footprint and reducing the running costs. The proposal is also intended to protect the fabric of the building and the stone mullions and surrounds from further damage.

The church has an opportunity to have this work funded through a Lancashire Environmental Improvement grant of approximately 30K. On condition that work can be completed by the end of June 2013. This is a unique opportunity and will benefit the building. It will also safeguard the fabric from further damage and make the building more sustainable by reducing running costs for the benefit of all the Community groups using the building. Refer to the applicants Business Plan for further information on the community uses and intentions.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The United Reformed Church building is not listed and was not deemed unique enough to be separately referenced in the Conservation Area Appraisal. Nonetheless it has been highlighted as a building of merit within the Townscape Appraisal Map, and therefore has a significance as part of the collective urban streetscene within the town centre.

Its geographic location on one of the main gateway routes into and through the town give an importance to its principle entrance elevation which fronts Castle Gate/Moor Lane. This is also expressed architecturally with the majority of its clear architectural language being expressed in this west facing facade. In contrast, the north and south are architecturally secondary elevations - simpler in form and construction. The east elevation is defined by the simple rose window which defines the architectural language on this elevation - contrasting with the rest of the building.

The historic development around the building also emphasises this hierarchy of clarity and importance to each facade - the streetscene views opposite serve to illustrate this fact. Earlier additions to the south elevation have undermined the clarity of this facade, assisted by the narrowness of Strang Stee. The dominant element in this area is now the slate clad tower and courtyard roof, the existing entrance porch and the Institute Extension stair wing. Likewise, the enclosure by surrounding buildings to the north creates limited direct views of the facade, with only oblique views from distance. The addition of the Memorial Hall in the early 20th century served to undermine the clarity of this facade with a building, although of its time, now presents a slightly more domestic scale to the rear of the building through contrasting window proportions and contrasting materials. By contrast, the west elevation has retained the clarity of its architectural scale and composition - the small open space in front of this also serves to enhance the setting of this facade within the overall street scene of moderately domestic scaled buildings which surround it.

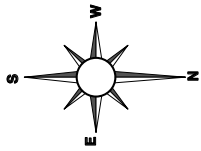
In terms of the window elements themselves, on all elevations these are clear defining elements of the building as a whole - as with many ecclesiastical buildings. In particular, the slenderness of the lights, central mullion and tracery work give a clear verticality to the relevant elevation - in particular on the west elevation. This is accentuated by the yellow sandstone detailing which is used to create these openings and which then contrast with the grey limestone of the main walls. The glazing itself is a secondary element and virtually frameless in order to keep the emphasis on the appearance of the stonework, except for the subtle patterning to the glass itself which has seen periodic replacement historically and now appears slightly more fragmented.

The Clitheroe Conservation Area Management Guidance makes reference to the requirement for repair of such elements where possible and practical. It is apparent from some of the photographs in this report that repair to the windows and stone mullions will not be possible and replacement would also be beneficial to improve the thermal integrity of the building as encouraged under the NPPF. It is therefore acknowledged that the comments made by the planning officer should still be addressed in the context of the particular secondary location of these window elements - *"...(windows) if not repairable should be replaced on a like for like basis. Replacement work should be honest and not historically misleading. Appropriate details should be used. Stone mullion windows should be handled sensitively with the insertion of thin metal frames where necessary,*



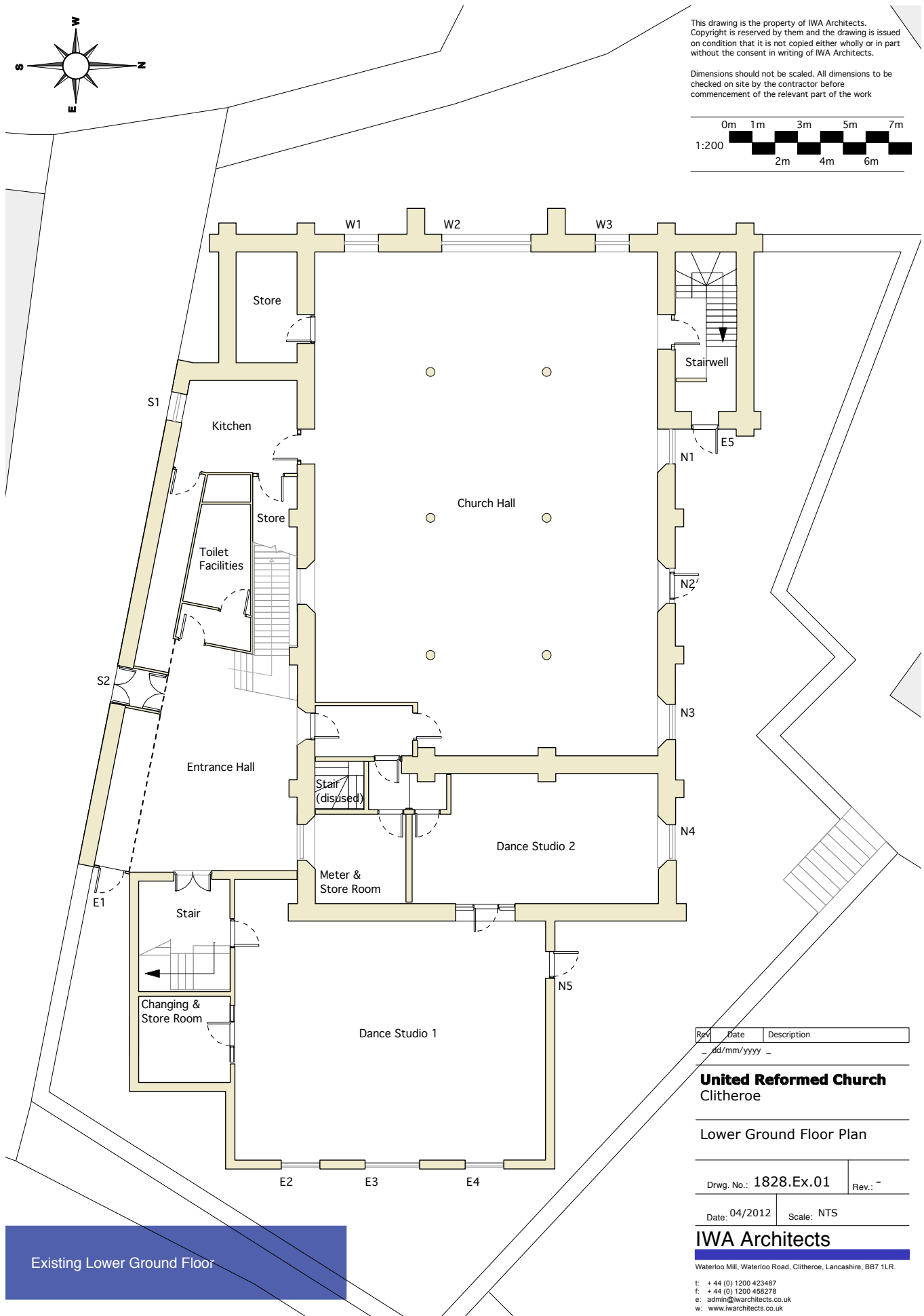
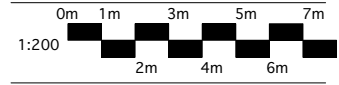
Above: Key Vistas of Building

APPENDIX ONE



This drawing is the property of IWA Architects. Copyright is reserved by them and the drawing is issued on condition that it is not copied either wholly or in part without the consent in writing of IWA Architects.

Dimensions should not be scaled. All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor before commencement of the relevant part of the work



Rev	Date	Description
-	dd/mm/yyyy	-

United Reformed Church
Clitheroe

Lower Ground Floor Plan

Drwg. No.: 1828.Ex.01

Rev.: -

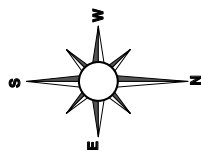
Date: 04/2012

Scale: NTS

IWA Architects

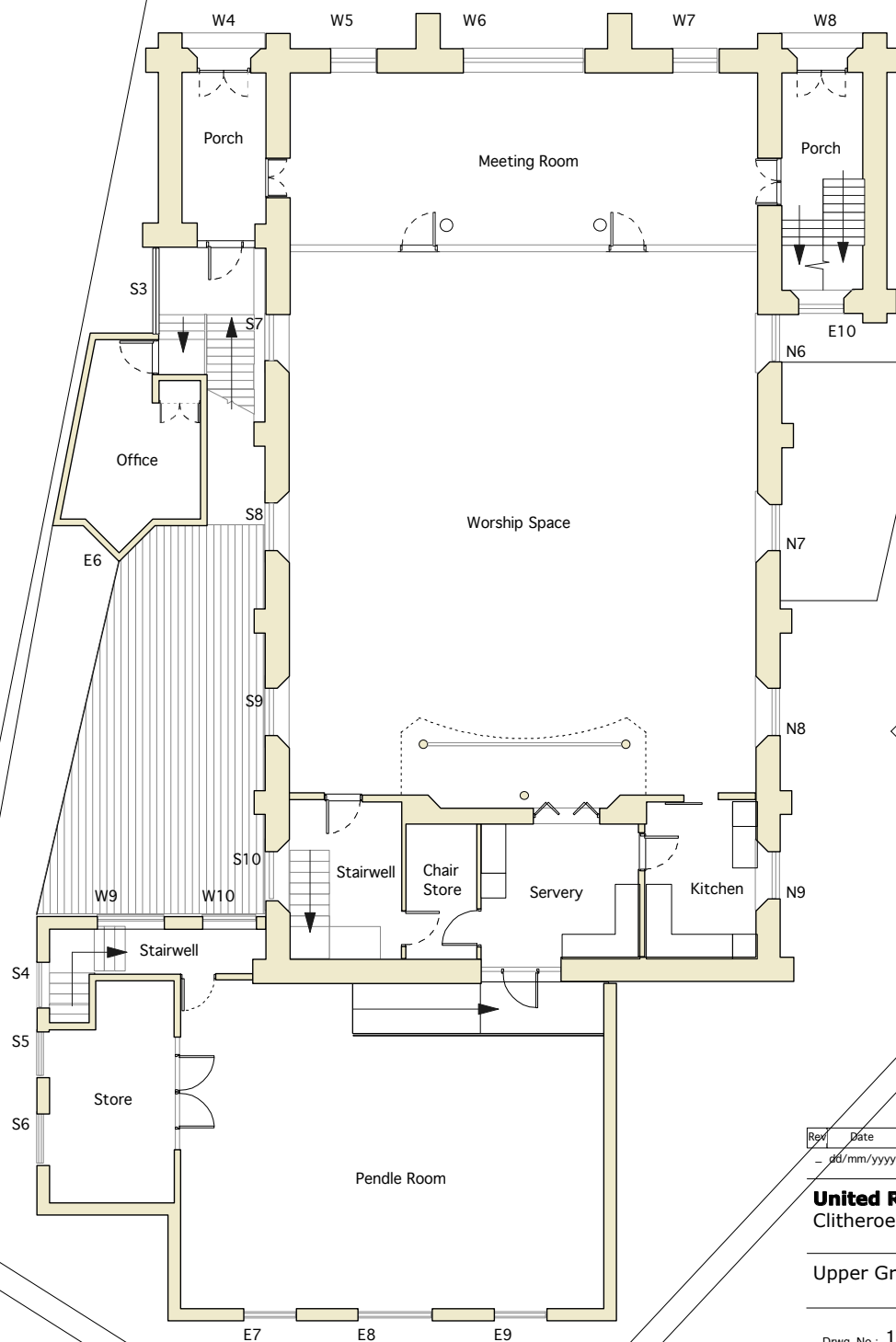
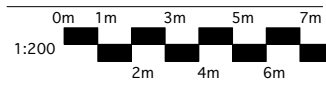
Waterloo Mill, Waterloo Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1LR.

t: +44 (0) 1200 423487
f: +44 (0) 1200 458278
e: admin@iwaarchitects.co.uk
w: www.iwaarchitects.co.uk



This drawing is the property of IWA Architects. Copyright is reserved by them and the drawing is issued on condition that it is not copied either wholly or in part without the consent in writing of IWA Architects.

Dimensions should not be scaled. All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor before commencement of the relevant part of the work



Existing Upper Ground Floor

Rev	Date	Description
-	dd/mm/yyyy	-

United Reformed Church
Clitheroe

Upper Ground Floor Plan

Drwg. No.: 1828.Ex.02

Rev.: -

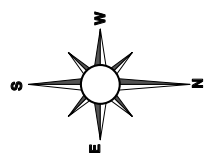
Date: 04/2012

Scale: NTS

IWA Architects

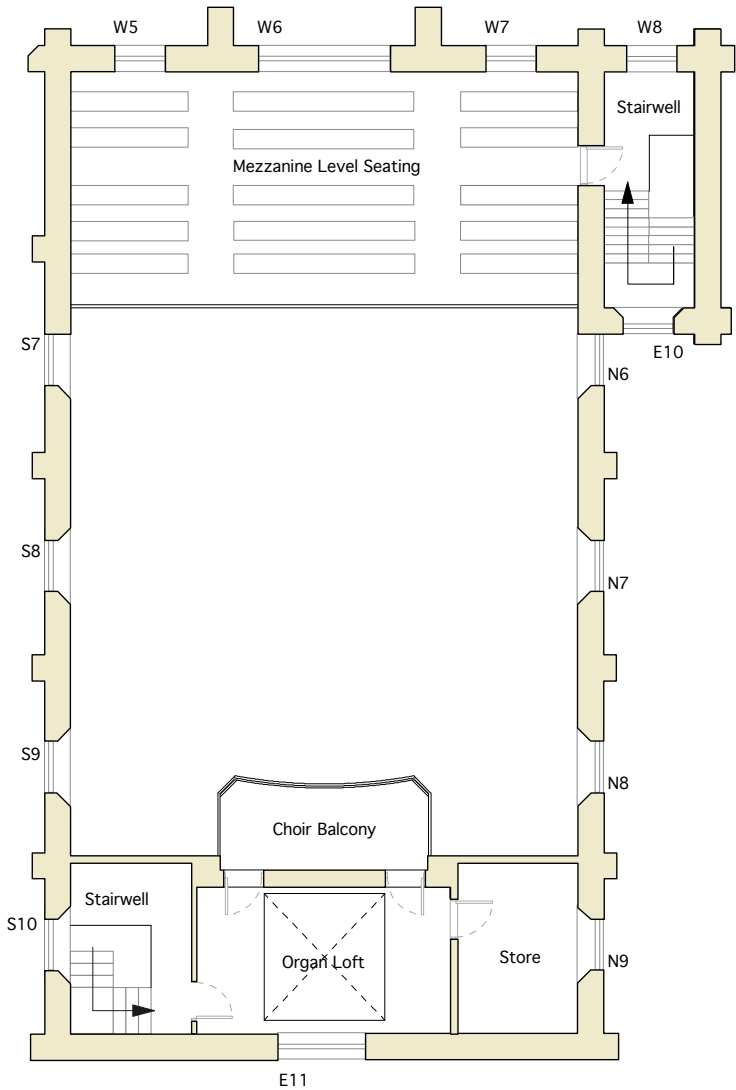
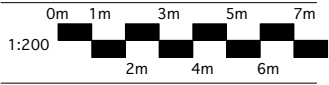
Waterloo Mill, Waterloo Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1LR.

t: + 44 (0) 1200 423487
f: + 44 (0) 1200 458278
e: admin@iwarchitects.co.uk
w: www.iwarchitects.co.uk



This drawing is the property of IWA Architects. Copyright is reserved by them and the drawing is issued on condition that it is not copied either wholly or in part without the consent in writing of IWA Architects.

Dimensions should not be scaled. All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor before commencement of the relevant part of the work



Rev	Date	Description
-	dd/mm/yyyy	-

United Reformed Church
Clitheroe

First Floor Plan

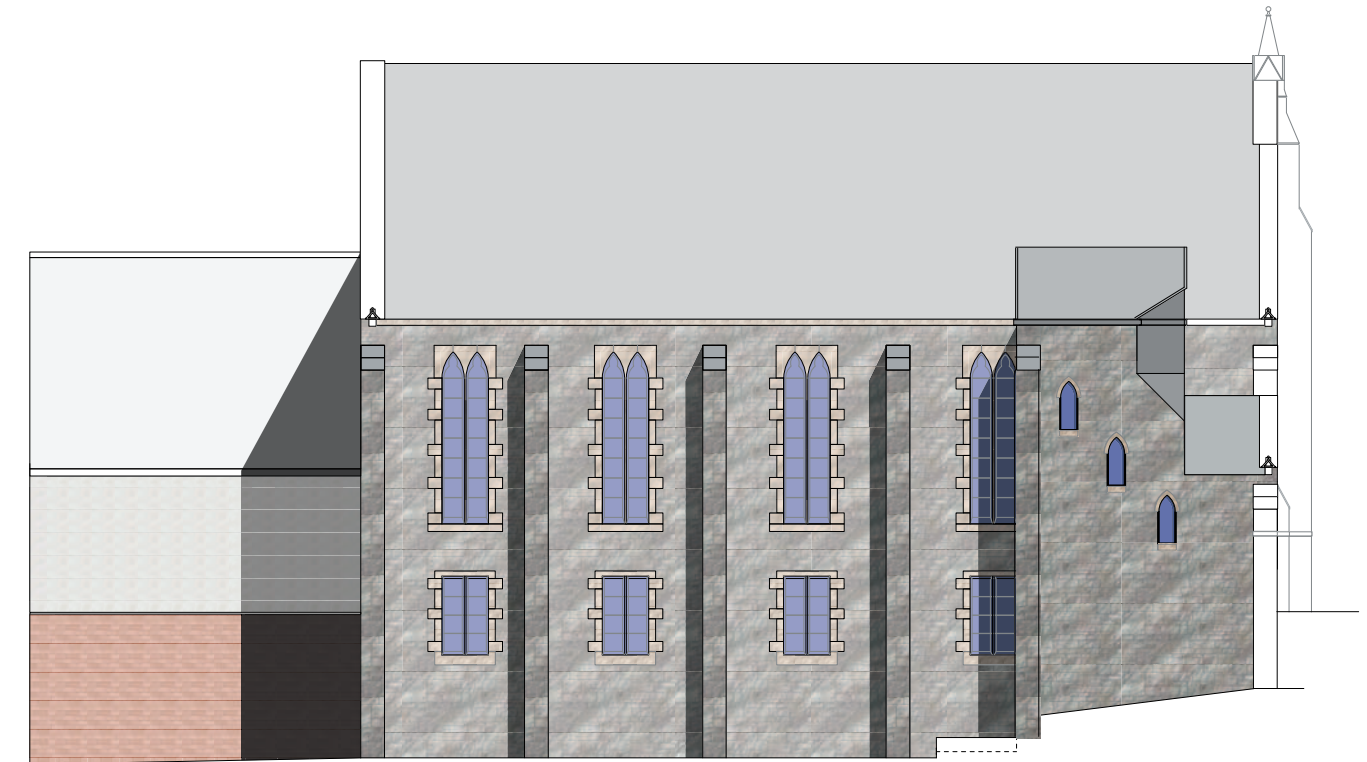
Drwg. No.: 1828.Ex.03	Rev.: -
Date: 04/2012	Scale: NTS

IWA Architects

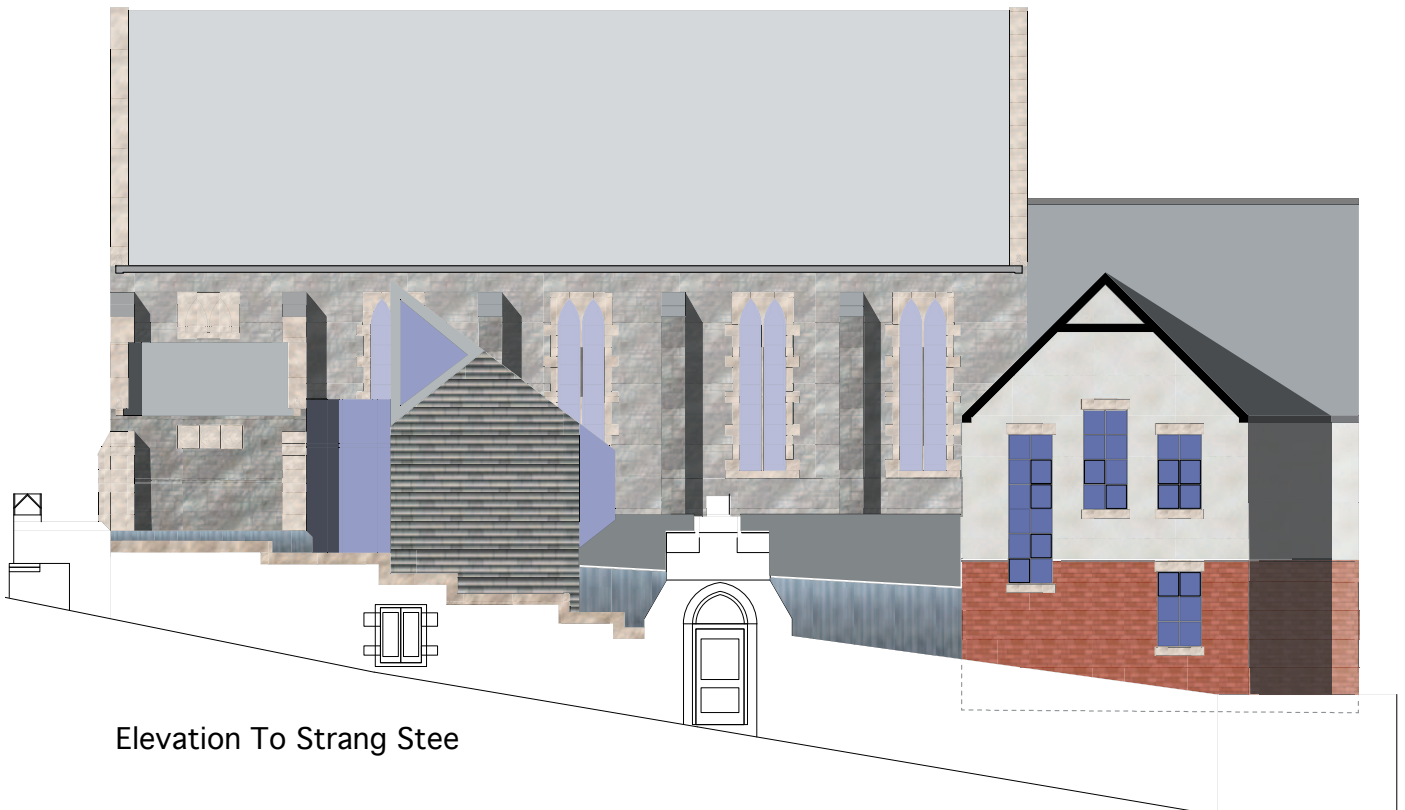
Waterloo Mill, Waterloo Road, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 1LR.
t: + 44 (0) 1200 423487
f: + 44 (0) 1200 458278
e: admin@iwaarchitects.co.uk
w: www.iwaarchitects.co.uk

Existing First Floor

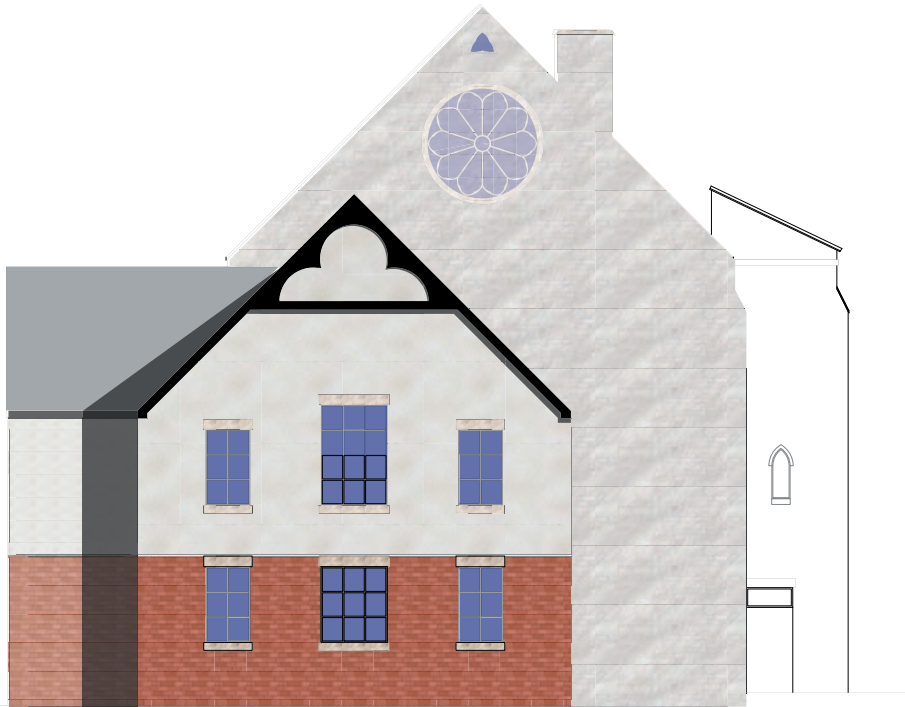
Existing Elevations



Elevation To Briggs Cottage



Elevation To Strang Stee



Elevation To Lower Gate



Elevation To Church Gate

