

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Internal alterations to Chipping Congregational Church

Site	Chipping Congregational Church, Garstang Road, Chipping, Preston PR3 2QH
Application	3/2026/0421
Proposal	Internal staircase, partial first floor, glazed viewing screen and secondary glazing
Applicant	Mr Kevin Kelsall
Heritage status	Grade II listed building within Chipping Conservation Area
Document	Version 1.0 28 July 2026

1. Introduction and purpose

This Design and Access Statement accompanies the application for listed building consent for internal alterations to Chipping Congregational Church. It explains the design principles applied to the works, the way the special architectural and historic interest of the building has informed the proposals, and the approach to access.

The statement should be read with the Heritage Appraisal and Heritage Impact Assessment prepared by Bowland Surveyors Ltd (reference 2026-13, version 3.0), drawing LG/CC/0241, glazed-wall validation drawing LG/CC/0242, the Bowland Surveyors secondary-glazing detail note dated 16 July 2026 and the complementary method statement.

2. Site and heritage context

The church is an active place of worship and community facility situated on Garstang Road within the historic core of Chipping. The building is Grade II listed and lies within Chipping Conservation Area.

The chapel dates from 1838 and is constructed principally in squared watershot sandstone, with a sandstone plinth, quoins and simple round-headed windows containing glazing bars. Its significance derives from its surviving nineteenth-century fabric, restrained Nonconformist architectural character, historical development and continuing communal use.

The Bowland Surveyors assessment records that the building has evolved through successive additions. The present proposal is concentrated internally and does not alter the external elevations, external materials, roof form or setting of the listed building.

3. Need for the works

The congregation has grown and the building is used for community gatherings involving adults and children. Children are presently accommodated within the limited utility and kitchen area in the northern extension. This is not an appropriate long-term arrangement.

The proposal creates additional usable internal floor space without extending the listed building. It enables activities to be better organised while retaining the principal hall and supporting the continued use of the building as a place of worship and community facility.

4. Proposed works

The application comprises:

- a new enclosed internal hardwood staircase;
- a new first-floor structure within part of the main hall;
- an opening with a fixed glazed viewing screen within the modern internal dividing wall; and
- slimline secondary glazing within three existing window openings.

For clarity, the proposed staircase is internal. The validation correspondence describes it as an external staircase, but no external staircase is proposed and the external elevations remain unchanged.

5. Design principles and development of the proposal

The design has been guided by four principles: sustaining the active use of the church; avoiding an external extension; concentrating intervention within the interior and later fabric; and ensuring that new work remains visually legible while being recessive in relation to the historic building.

- The partial first floor provides the required accommodation without enlarging the building.
- The viewing screen is formed in a modern, non-loadbearing, plastered blockwork wall rather than significant historic masonry.
- The glazed screen maintains visual connection with the principal hall and avoids creating an enclosed upper room wholly detached from worship below.
- The secondary glazing is positioned internally within the deep existing reveals, retaining the external windows and avoiding visible external alteration.
- Mechanical fixings and local making-good are limited to the minimum reasonably necessary.

6. Layout, amount and scale

The new floor occupies only part of the main hall, retaining the principal volume and the ability to understand the original space. Its relationship with the existing windows and the retained hall is shown on drawing LG/CC/0241.

The internal staircase is 900 mm wide and is positioned against the internal wall. The glazed viewing screen is approximately 8,000 mm wide and 2,100 mm high, set above a 195 mm plastered upstand. It comprises nine fixed vertical lights and is protected by independent guarding approximately 900 mm high. Its detailed appearance and junctions are shown on drawing LG/CC/0242.

The secondary-glazing frames have a maximum depth of approximately 64 mm. Their slimline proportions and position behind the existing timber frames allow the historic windows to remain the dominant elements.

7. Appearance and materials

The new work uses a restrained palette compatible with the simple interior of the chapel:

- hardwood timber staircase, floor structure, handrails and guarding, with the floor receiving the approved carpeted finish;
- fixed hardwood glazed viewing screen painted RAL 9010 Pure White, with clear safety glazing;
- slimline aluminium balanced vertical-slider secondary glazing finished RAL 9003 Satin White; and
- painted-plaster making-good to match the adjoining modern wall finishes.

The final structural beam, glass composition, fabrication details and fixing sizes will be designed by the relevant specialists. These technical matters will not materially alter the approved dimensions, appearance or conservation approach.

8. Effect on the listed building and conservation area

The design responds directly to the significance identified by Bowland Surveyors. It retains the external stone elevations, historic window assemblies, roof form and setting. The viewing opening affects modern internal blockwork, while the new floor and staircase are introduced as identifiable contemporary additions with controlled and limited connections to existing fabric.

The secondary glazing improves thermal comfort and reduces condensation risk while retaining the existing single-glazed timber windows. Because it is located within the internal reveals, it will not be appreciable as an external alteration.

The proposals therefore preserve the features from which the building's special interest is principally derived. They also support its continued communal use, which is a clear public benefit. The detailed heritage assessment should be relied upon for the full assessment of significance and impact.

9. Access and inclusive use

The works are internal and do not alter the existing approach, entrance, parking arrangements or principal means of access to the church. The established ground-floor worship and community spaces remain available.

The new upper floor provides supplementary accommodation and is reached by the proposed internal staircase. The detailed stair geometry, handrails, guarding, headroom, safety glazing and fire precautions will be resolved through the Building Regulations process. The upper space is intended to support supervised activities associated with the congregation.

Because the proposal does not remove or reduce the existing ground-floor facilities, it does not make access to the building less inclusive. The approach balances the operational needs of the congregation with the constraints and significance of the listed building.

10. Consultation and technical coordination

Bowland Surveyors inspected the building in February 2026 and prepared the submitted heritage assessment and subsequent secondary-glazing details. The validation requirements issued by Ribble Valley Borough Council have informed the additional method statement and wall-opening detail.

The structural support, temporary works, safety-glazing specification, fire precautions and final fabrication details will be coordinated with the structural engineer, specialist contractor and Building Control before construction.

11. Planning and heritage framework

The design has regard to the statutory duty to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and the character or appearance of the conservation area. It also responds to the National Planning Policy Framework, particularly the requirement to give great weight to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

At local level, the relevant framework includes Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement EN5 and Policies DME4 and DMG1. The proposal sustains the building's active community use while avoiding external enlargement and minimising intervention in significant historic fabric.

12. Conclusion

The proposal is a proportionate response to the operational needs of an active place of worship. It creates additional usable space internally, avoids an external extension, retains the building's important external fabric and appearance, and concentrates the principal wall alteration within modern fabric.

The submitted drawings, heritage assessment and methodologies provide the Council with sufficient control over the dimensions, materials, appearance, intervention and making-good. The special interest of the Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of Chipping Conservation Area would be preserved.

Documents referenced

- Drawing LG/CC/0241: existing and proposed plans and sections.
- Drawing LG/CC/0242: glazed viewing screen validation detail.
- Bowland Surveyors Ltd: Heritage Appraisal and Heritage Impact Assessment, reference 2026-13, version 3.0.
- Bowland Surveyors Ltd: Secondary Glazing Detail Note, reference 2026-47, version 1.0, dated 16 July 2026.
- ML Planning Consultancy Ltd: Complementary Method Statement, version 1.0.
- Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy: Key Statement EN5 and Policies DME4 and DMG1.
- National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024 as amended February 2025.