

whitworth

WALSINGHAM METHODIST CHURCH



Statement of Significance

THE WHITWORTH CO-PARTNERSHIP LLP

Chartered Architects and Surveyors

18 HATTER STREET,
BURY ST.EDMUNDS,
SUFFOLK,
IP33 1NE

Telephone: (01284 760421)

Facsimile: (01284 704734)

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Basic facts

Parish and Address: Walsingham Methodist Church
High Street
Walsingham
Norfolk
NR22 6BY

Local Planning Authority: North Norfolk District Council

County: Norfolk

Listing: Grade II*

Conservation Area: Walsingham Conservation Area

Tree Preservation Orders: N/A

Protected Species: N/A

Other Designations: N/A

Section 1: The Church in its Urban/Rural Environment

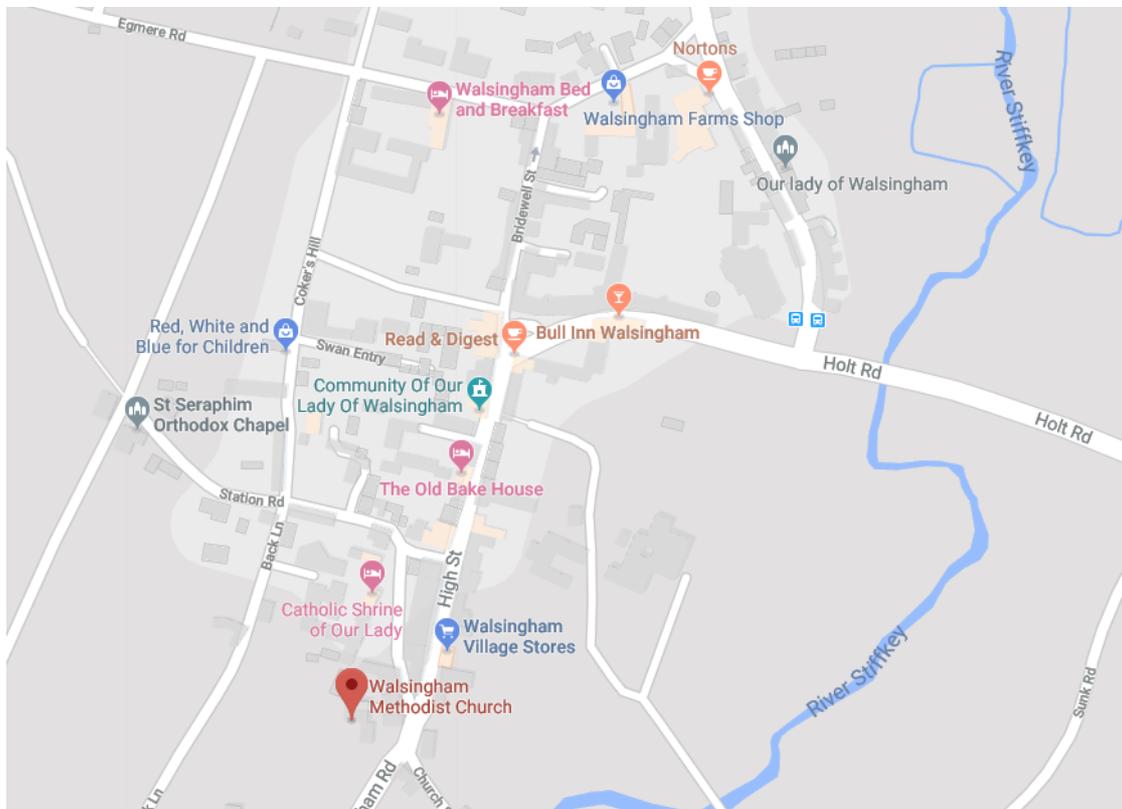
1.1 Built Setting

Location.

The Church is set back to the west from the junction between Friday Market and High Street behind the houses that line the edge of the road. The building is set amongst mainly residential properties. This location is near to the edge of the village. Due to the compact nature of the village it is also in close proximity to the centre.

This is a significant rural historic village with many important religious sites attracting a large number of pilgrims every year. Significant catholic and Anglican sites form the main pilgrim attraction with the Methodist church and orthodox church also present. Pilgrims have visited Walsingham since 1061 and continue in number of up to 10,000 annually.

The Methodist church is located on the site of the former Augustinina priory



Map of Little Walsingham

Land Area.

The area around the Church is restricted by surrounding houses and plots, built up to each boundary. The Church itself is set back from the street front with small gravelled garden area to the front at the right hand side. There is also a tarmacked drive with small area for parking. The drive also provides access and parking for neighbouring properties.



Aerial view of the south section of the Little Walsingham

Listing Description:

1794. Red brick. Hipped black-glazed pantile roof. Yellow brick dentil eaves; 2 storeys. Three windows. Round-headed sashes with glazing bars, with rubbed brick arches. Good central doorway with Tuscan engaged columns supporting entablature with open pediment; fielded-panel reveals and fielded-panel round-headed double door. Wind vane at roof apex.

Building History.

The building was constructed in 1794 and is the earliest example of a Methodist church building in East Anglia that is still in use. The chapel was built following a preaching visit from John Wesley in 1781 who is reputed to have encouraged the newly formed Methodist society to build a preaching house using the traditional style. This is an example of a Georgian style 40/40 preaching house. It forms a significant example of religious architectural heritage in Walsingham.



The gallery has the original benches with an organ that was installed in 1930. The furnishings at ground floor level appear to be of 19th Century in style and do not appear to be the original ground floor furnishings.

The most significant alteration to the building since the installation of the new furnishings at ground level is the introduction of the side extension in the 1970's. This was added to provide toilet and kitchen facilities. An opening has been formed in the north wall of the chapel to provide a door way giving access to the extension to the chapel.

The original heart of the building comprising of the main entrance hall with screen dividing this from the main worship space with gallery over that wraps around the sides of the chapel. The gallery is accessed from staircases to each side of the entrance foyer space. The gallery runs around three sides of the building with an organ located on the gallery over the entrance lobby. The main original part of the building is built from solid masonry construction with a local red brick, with semi-circular arched brick lintels above the window openings. There is a decorative gault brick band at eaves level. The main church roof is finished with black glazed pantiles with lead finished ridges to the hipped roof.



1.2 Social

When first opened the Methodist church formed the main centre for Christian worship in the village. Today the congregation is in decline. It still forms an important part of the religious heritage for the village.

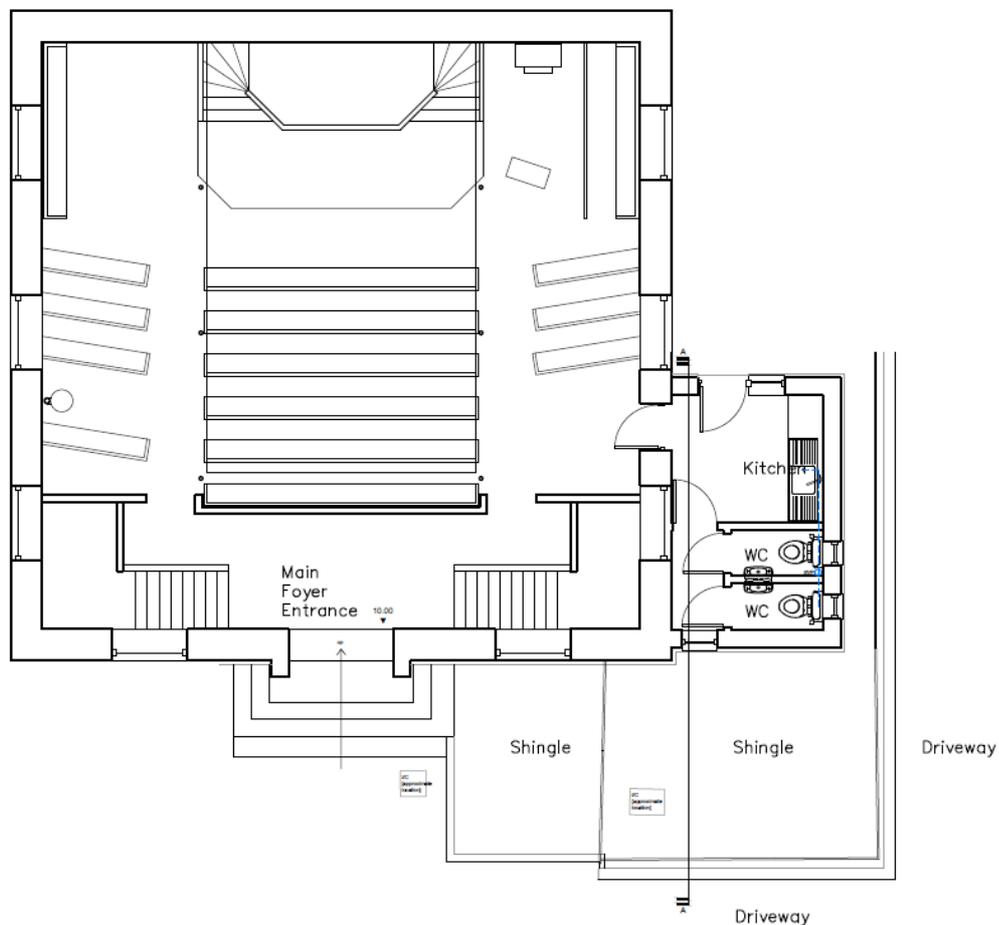
The Church is used by the local community as well as the church members, and is frequently visited by school and other groups. The Methodist church is the only venue to hold a carol service which is supported by the other local churches. The building is also widely used ecumenically and by visiting groups as a place of education.

1.3 The Church need

The church is inaccessible for wheel chair users and difficult to access for the ambulant disabled. The toilet facilities are not suitable for disabled use and do not comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 or part M of the building regulations.

The space within the chapel available for wheel chair access is limited. The only space available for wheel chair users to be located for meetings and services is next to the door to the kitchen. This restricts access to the kitchen and toilet facilities for other building occupants.

These restrictions of access and limitation of the space and toilet facilities restrict the use of the building and effectively discriminate against disabled people. Improvements are required in order to comply with the current regulations.



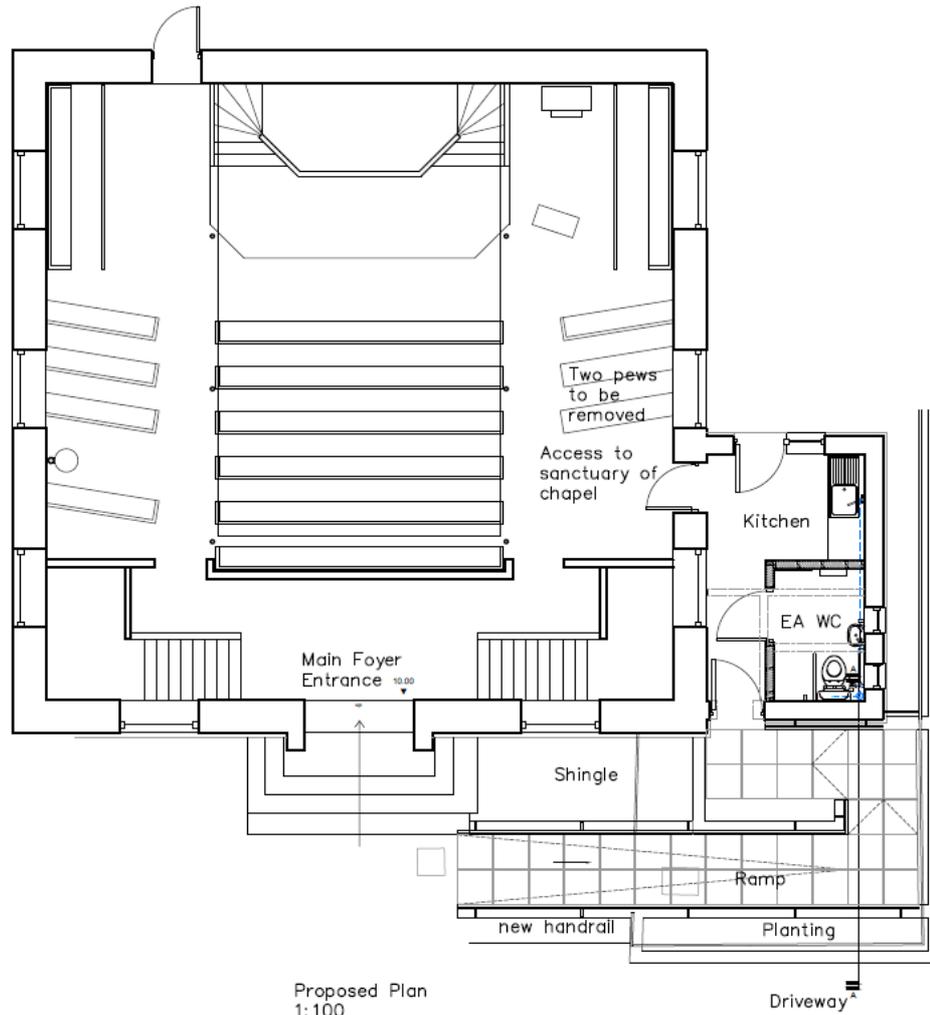
Existing plan

1.4 The Proposals

It is proposed to install a ramp to a new entrance door through the side extension. The ramp will run from the right hand side of the entrance steps up into the new door way.

A reconfiguration of the interior of the extensions will be carried out to replace the two existing toilet cubicles with one new equal access cubicle.

Two pews are to be removed in the chapel to provide space for wheel chair users to locate. It will also provide space for refreshment to be served more easily from the kitchen.



Proposed plan

1.5 Impact of proposals

The Church as previously stated is surrounded on all sides; this limits opportunities for improved access and facilities. We have considered various options. In developing the final design solution we have considered the significance of the building and have attempted to minimise impact on the historic fabric. We have also minimised the visual impact to the original chapel by the proposed new access route which enters through the extension.

Access

The design for the ramp does not impact the front of the historic section of the building in any way, leaving this a fully intact original frontage. It starts at the foot of the stairs and runs up to the right across the front of the 1970's extension, through which an entrance into the building is to be formed. It is proposed that the existing railings are to be retained in their existing location where possible with the sections that have to be moved reused.

A new door way is to be formed in the location of the existing small window to the front elevation of the 1970's extension. The proposed style of the new door as a simple 4 panel door has been selected to be in keeping with the existing joinery to the front elevation of the church. Visually there will be no other alterations to the front elevation.

Facilities

The existing toilet facilities are a pair of toilet cubicles located off a corridor from the kitchen and a part of the 1970's extension. These cubicles are narrow and would be difficult to use by an ambulant disabled person. They are completely inaccessible for wheel chair users. In order to cater for all building users and comply with the current regulations remodelling of the toilet facilities is proposed.

The existing cubicles will be removed and replaced with one new cubicle that will be of sufficient size to comply with part M of the building regulations. This will be a full equal access cubicle with all handrails and sanitary ware required. The amendments required to form the new toilet cubicle will also result in a slightly revised kitchen layout and a wider corridor .

The proposed new toilet cubicle is to be located in the modern section of the building and will not cause any disturbance to the fabric of the original Methodist chapel. The existing drainage and water connections can be used, so no excavations for drainage amendments will be necessary.

The existing doorway from the kitchen into the chapel will be retained for a disabled access route. The door will need to be replaced with detailing amended to maximise the door opening width, this should not require the opening size to be altered.

Space

There is limited space within the chapel for wheel chair users to locate during services or other meetings and limited space for informal gathering after meetings or for serving refreshments. It is therefore proposed that two of the pews to the northern side be removed to open up this area. These pews are thought to be part of a Victorian alteration to the building and are not original furnishing. They are quite simple pews with no significant or unusual feature. The rest of the pews and other fixed furnishings are to be retained.



Two pews to be removed

Our main goal is to improve the quality and use of this Church building so it can continue to be a significant religious site in Walsingham that is accessible by all.

Section 2: The Significance of the area affected by the Proposed

Significance.

In terms of architectural significance we would consider that the impact of the alterations is low. The important aspect, relationship of the spaces and front facade will be retained. The alterations to the side extension are of little significance to the building and its historic value, but greatly improve its functionality.

Impact of Changes.

The proposals will greatly improve access, facilities and space to the church building. This will result in a much more inclusive building that will be accessible by all.

The proposed changes have very little impact on the historic part of the building. The majority of the changes are to the modern extension which is of little heritage value. Removing two pews within the chapel will impact the historic fabric in this part of the building. These are less significant than the pews at gallery level because they are not original to the building. These pews do however form part of the Victorian fixed furnishing scheme to the building. The rest of the pews are to be retained which includes one of the current set of three diagonal pews to the north side. This will help to continue to express the extent and format of the Victorian furnishing scheme. This furnishing scheme is no longer complete anyway as two pews have already been removed to allow the door to the kitchen to be installed.