

## **Design & Access Statement (including Heritage Statement) *Conversion of church to form an art and craft centre***

From current use classification of D1 to A1

Church of Cleator Moor, St John the Evangelist, Leconfield Street, Cleator Moor

For Miss Hui Wang



August 2021,

This report should only be used in relation to planning consent.

### **1. Purpose and background**

#### **1.1. Purpose**

- i. This report has been prepared to support the planning application relating to the conversion of the existing St John the Evangelist Church, Cleator Moor, to form an art and craft centre where arts and crafts produced by local artists will be sold.
- ii. This document should be read in conjunction with all submitted drawings, appendices and other relevant information and documents that form part of the planning application.

#### **1.2. Background**

- i. The church is located off Leconfield Road in Cleator Moor, West Cumbria.
- ii. St John's Church was consecrated on 25<sup>th</sup> June 1872, and is Anglo-Norman in style. The building consists of a large and lofty nave, with clerestory windows, with large aisles on both sides, and a tower measuring 68 feet high.
- iii. The Church ceased to be a place of worship on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2017 and has remained redundant since that time.

iv. The meritus architecture includes snecked sandstone blocks with quoins and buttresses with chamfered plinth to chancel. In addition, there is a 3-stage, Romanesque style west tower and nave with aisles and chancel and a number of other intricacies besides. The property is grade II listed.

v. The building was designed by Messrs John Augustus Cory (1819-1887) and Charles John Ferguson (1840-1904) of Carlisle and planned to seat 900 people. The completed church was consecrated in 1872 as recorded by a brass plaque. The church was redecorated in 1899 at the expense of John Stirling (of Montreal mine) when the brick nave arches were covered in concrete. ICBS records also show an approved grant for repairs in 1953-5 under the instruction of architects F G Jackson and C B Martindale. In 1972 a new high altar was introduced and the altar rail repositioned to enlarge the sanctuary and new windows at the E end. Choir stalls were moved to the W end and a Lady Chapel created in the S aisle. A screen was inserted across the base of the tower in 2008.

## **2. Design**

### **2.1. Design**

The proposed design seeks to make use of, and retain, the existing structure as it stands, with no alterations being carried out to existing structural elements.

Whilst the existing windows are of no real architectural significance they are an essential part of the building's character.

The pews within the building are to be repositioned to gain space for the retail use. The proposed internal layout requires that the floor is taken back to the original stone floor with the existing timber raised platforms / staging being removed. This approach allows the building to retain its open form. The pews will remain in the building and will be used should additional seating be needed.

The organ will be removed to make room for the new WC/washroom.

Free standing screens will be used to create 6no. Stalls and to barrier off the pew storage.

The window in the south-west end of the south aisle is currently damaged. As part of the proposed works this window will be restored using same material of West end of North aisle window.

To retain the existing volume and openness the whole building is to be kept full height.

### **2.2. Use**

Currently, the building is redundant, previously used as a place of worship. This application is for change of use to form a retail space where arts and crafts can be sold.

### **2.3. Amount**

The existing building has a gross internal area 380m<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.4. Layout**

The proposed layout is as existing with minor alterations.

### **2.5. Scale**

The proposed building has an external footprint of approximately 540m<sup>2</sup>.

The proposed site has an overall area of 3483m<sup>2</sup>.

### **2.6. Landscaping**

No major landscaping is proposed.

### **2.7. Appearance**

The external fabric is to remain as existing.

The windows are to be as existing – with 1no. Window to the South West elevation being repaired / restored such that the window is returned to its original state. This includes repairs to the frame and glazing.

### **3. Access**

Vehicular access is through stone gate piers to the NE of the church off Leconfield Street, with a tarmac path continuing along the N boundary

There is access from Crossfield Road to the SE which provides access through stone gate piers and modern metal gates.

The pedestrian access will remain available to the public from Leconfield Street to the second world war memorial and to tend plots in the Garden of Remembrance.

Pedestrian access is to the NW of the church into the car park of the adjacent supermarket, down several steps.

Parking in area to W by hall and in supermarket car park to N

### **4. Heritage Statement**

#### **Designation:**

*NY 01 NW CLEATOR MOOR LECONFIELD STREET (South side) Cleator Moor 5/13 Church of St John Evangelist II*

*Parish Church. 1872 by Cory and Ferguson (Carlisle); restored 1900. Snecked sandstone blocks with quoins and buttresses; chamfered plinth to chancel. Graduated slate roofs with chapel outshut to either side of chancel; stone copings and kneelers. Romanesque style; west tower, nave with aisles, chancel. 3-stage tower has paired belfry opening under containing arch with trellis decoration to spandrel; blind recess on either side similarly decorated. Tower stair turret projects on south side at junction with nave; external door. Main door on north side of nave has 4 semicircular orders; 3 outer are decoratively carved, carried between waterleaf capitals on en-delit shafts. Single aisle and clerestory window to each bay of nave; chancel has 3 stepped windows to east end. All windows round-headed under hoodmoulds. Whitewashed brick interior. 4-bay nave arcade of semicircular arches carried between waterleaf capitals on quatrefoil piers. Quadrant vaults to aisles and pointed barrel vault to main vessel, both with transverse arches. Intersecting rib vault to chancel. Polygonal carved wood pulpit to left of chancel arch in nave, matching vicar's stall to right. Carved stone font, on 5 marble shafts, in baptistry to ground floor of tower.*

#### **Further Details:**

The Church of England Heritage Record 607277 provides the following descriptions:

The tall square tower of St John's ensures its presence on approach. The church was built in one phase and Romanesque or Neo-Norman Theme is continued throughout with every arch and window opening having a round-head. Lean-to aisles above the nave with a clerestory above. The 3-stage W tower has in its base a round-headed window on each side and in the upper level paired belfry openings under a containing arch with blind recesses either side. A door on the S side provides access to the belfry. The main door to the church is on the N side of the N aisle, raised by 5 steps, with handrails to either side. The door is positioned within a decorative carved opening of 3 orders with chevron and floral details, and

attached columns with waterleaf columns. It fills a whole bay. The nave is of 4-bays marked by single round-headed windows at aisle and clerestory level, each beneath a hoodmold. Buttresses are positioned between each bay. The lower windows are all protected by rusting grills. The clerestory windows have been replaced with Perspex. The E wall is pierced by 3 round-headed lancets, the central being the tallest, and with a continuous hoodmold over the windows and a sill beneath. The chancel roof is lower and more steeply pitched than the nave.

The interior is huge and lofty, ceiled by a continuous, high, vault-a pointed barrel vault with transverse arches in the nave [Pevsner explains that this was of yellow brick and pink stone but these have been hidden by rendering and painting white]. The combination of clerestory windows and only a little stained glass ensures there is plenty of natural light. The 4-bay nave is articulated by N and S arcades carrying round brick arches on sandstone columns (clusters of 4 with carved acanthus capitals). The original construction was in brick and sandstone and the brick is visible though the render and paint around the arches. The columns, arches, and corbels remain as exposed stone, the rest is painted white. A dog-tooth/chevron-style detail runs continuously at still level beneath the clerestory and round the arcades. Carpet extends up the main aisle with pews either side, fixed on raised wood boarded pew platforms. Other areas of floor are paved in stone flags. Decoratively carved choir stalls have been relocated to the W end, in front of the base of the tower. A round moulded tower arch is screened by a wood partition and curtain at ground level. The space at the base of the tower is ceiled by a domed vault and doubles as a baptistery and vestry. The aisles are ceiled by quadrant vaults. At the W end of the N aisle is a simple tea point. At the E end are 3 steps leading to a door, concealed behind a curtain, which accesses a space to the N side of the chancel (former organ chamber). The S aisle has the organ in the W bay, and a Lady Chapel altar in the E bay. Ribs rest on carved stone corbels. At the E end, 2 steps (with inserted handrails) lead up to the chancel beneath a high round moulded chancel arch. The chancel area is simple since furniture has been moved out and the area has been carpeted. A 2 bay opening to the N side, with a central round pier, is screened at the lower level by a curtain beneath a wood rail. This area was once occupied by the organ and is now used for storage. The curtain continues around to the E wall where it forms a backdrop to the high altar which is raised on another step. The roof is formed differently to the nave, with intersecting ribs, and is painted dark blue with gold text and stars. The walls of the chancel have exposed stone around the base. A small round-arched door in the S wall leads to the former vestries.

Conversion of the church to form an art and craft centre.

The leaded window on the west end of south aisle will be repaired / restored such that the window is returned to its original state. This includes repairs to the frame and glazing.

There is no structural change to the fabric of the building internal and external.

The supported free standing timber stud partitioning wall forming the new WC will tie in between the buttresses and the wall by way of an interference fit. A ceiling will be installed to separate the space from the nave of the church.

The pews will be reposition or removed as required to make the necessary space for the proposed use.

The timber staging / deck that the pews currently sit on will be removed so as not create a trip hazard within the new open space.

The organ was manual, originally by Gray and Davisson in 1877. Rebuilt by Jardine and Co Ltd in 1924 to commemorate the Jubilee of the church in 1922 as recorded by a plaque.

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The main parts of the organ have been dismantled and removed at the time of viewing the property in 2020.

The keyboard – and the actual musical instrument part of the Organ had gone at this time, with the only remaining parts being the wood and steel frame work to support the internal bellows and the external organ pipes.

Due to wood worm being present and as the remaining parts of the organ serving no useful purpose and not practicable to keep, and so the none functional parts of the organ will be removed to create space for the new WC.

Consideration had been given to retaining the facade of the organ and creating partition walls behind the facade to form the new WC. However following discussions with the joinery contractor, the complexity of doing this does not make it a feasible proposal.

The Design intent is to give visitors to the building whilst looking in both directions the impression that it gives at the present time with an open layout.



**Figure 1: Nave looking towards to the base of tower.**





**Figure 2: Nave looking towards to the chancel.**



**Figure 3: Internal detailing to be retained.**



**Figure 4: Bell tower**





**Figure 5: the remains of the organ**