

## Christleton St James - Correspondence with consultees

Date	Message
<p><b>28/10/2022</b></p> <p>To: Historic England, The Victorian Society, Church Buildings Council</p> <p>From: Katy Purvis</p>	<p>The following consultees have been invited to view the following Application on the Online Faculty System by Katy Purvis: Reference 2022-073625 concerning Christleton: St James (Church Code 609027).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-nwest@HistoricEngland.org.uk</li> <li>• casework@jcnas.org.uk</li> </ul> <p>Dear Consultee</p> <p>FOA Historic England, Victorian Society and Church Buildings Council</p> <p>Christleton St James (Grade 2* / 1876) Church extension for toilets, kitchen, and chair storage.</p> <p>You have been invited under part 4.5 and 4.6 of The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019 to consult on the above Faculty Application. A response to the consultation will be taken into account if it is received within 42 days of the date of this email.</p> <p>The deadline for your response is 09/12/2022</p> <p>Christleton village is recorded in the Domesday Book and it is likely that a church was on the site at this time. In 1093 the patronage of the church was given to the monks of St Werburgh's Abbey, Chester. The church was rebuilt in stone around 1490, and the tower built at this time is still present. The church sustained considerable damage during the Civil War and around 1730 the nave and chancel were repaired. However, during a service in 1873 the roof of the nave partly collapsed. Plans for rebuilding the church were prepared by Butterfield, retaining the 15th-century tower, adding gargoyles to each corner and a short spire to the turret. The rebuilding took place between 1874 and 1878.</p> <p>The proposals include an extension to the NW of the church, to create space for toilets, a kitchen space for hospitality and storage. Additionally there is a desire to improve accessibility and create flexible space for a variety of activities, including a community cafe. This requires removal of the nave pews and replacement them with appropriate movable seating. This seating may be stored in the extension when not in use.</p> <p>The parish have made significant effort in trying to establish whether the pews predate Butterfield's work, or are connected to Butterfield, and the result has so far been inconclusive. The parish are aware that Butterfield intended the pews be replaced but cannot find evidence of if or when that occurred, and if so, whether it was under his supervision, either through his own design or selection from a catalogue, or carried out by others. They have consulted their own records and Cheshire Archives and have attempted to find an</p>

	<p>appropriate expert on Butterfield to assist them. They have concluded so far that if the pews are by Butterfield, they are less significant or interesting than other pews attributed to him elsewhere. They are continuing their research and making contact with architectural historians who may be able to assist them, or direct them to someone who can. They have an informal opinion from Richard Halsey, but do not have permission to share this at present.</p> <p>The parish strongly believe that the missional benefits arising from removal of the pews outweighs any perceived harm to the overall significance of the interior.</p> <p>We would be grateful for your comments on their proposals</p>
<b>01/11/2022</b>  <b>To: Church Buildings Council</b> <b>From: Katy Purvis</b>	<i>Re-send of the above message of 28/10/2022 above</i>
<b>01/11/2022</b>  To: CWAC Conservation Officer From: Katy Purvis	<i>Message as sent to other consultees on 28/10/2022 above.</i>
<b>01/11/2022</b>  To: Katy Purvis From: CWAC Conservation & Design Team	<p>Thank you for contacting the Conservation and Design team.</p> <p>If your query relates to planning permission, or an existing planning application then please contact the Planning team. Details can be found here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/planning-information/contact-planning-and-building.aspx">https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/planning-information/contact-planning-and-building.aspx</a></p> <p>You can find out if your property is listed or within a conservation area by using the Council's interactive map via the link below;</p> <p><a href="https://maps.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/cwac/webmapping">https://maps.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/cwac/webmapping</a></p> <p>Simply click on the + icon, select the information that you require, and click the green Add Selected Layer button. You can then use the search box or cursor to scroll around the map and find the relevant property. Clicking on the property will display the information.</p> <p>Information regarding the Borough's Conservation Areas can be found here;</p>

	<p><a href="https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/conservation-and-design/conservation-areas-and-apprais.aspx">https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/planning-and-building-control/total-environment/conservation-and-design/conservation-areas-and-apprais.aspx</a></p> <p>Alternatively, the Heritage List for England can be used to find information about listed buildings, scheduled monuments, protected wrecks, registered parks and gardens, and battlefields;</p> <p><a href="https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/">https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/</a></p> <p>The team will endeavour to respond to your query within 10 working days.</p>
<p><b>22/11/2022</b></p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Historic Buildings &amp; Places (formerly Ancient Monuments Society)</p>	<p>HBAP would like to defer in this case to the Victorian Society</p>
<p><b>07/12/2022</b></p> <p>To: Katy Purvis From: Historic England</p>	<p><b>Notification under the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Orders 2010</b>  <b>LOCATION: ST JAMES CHURCH, CHRISTLETON</b>  <b>PROPOSED WORK:</b> Church extension for toilets, kitchen, and chair storage.</p> <p>We were notified on 28 October 2022 of the proposed works at the above site. Based on the information submitted we provide the following comments and observation to assist you in determining this application.</p> <p><b>Historic England advice</b>  <b>Significance</b>  Christleton St James is a building which has undergone a number of alterations and some large-scale rebuilding over its long history which reaches back to at least the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The most recent of rebuilding and re-ordering was undertaken in 1874-77 by the renowned Gothic Revival proponent and church architect William Butterfield following a collapse of the nave ceiling.</p> <p>A handsome building constructed of ashlar red stone incorporating an older two stage western tower to which Butterfield added a shingled pyramidal cap. The nave and chancel are of one range with north and south aisles with rectangular windows to either side. Above the aisles a clerestory provides illumination to the internal space.</p> <p>Internally the building is decorated with red and white sandstone. The 5 bay arcades denote the nave and support the upper clerestory levels and wagon roof which springs from ornate corbels and features painted quatrefoils panels. Attention is drawn to the striking west window of 1877 by Gibbs. The space provides two rows of pews to the</p>

	<p>nave with a central passageway, each of the aisles contains a further row of pews each.</p> <p>Pews appear to be relatively simple with little in the way of decoration or embellishment. Whilst an exact date for their installation in the church is unknown their appearance would suggest that they are Victorian and could feasibly be connected to Butterfields interventions. Though some records provided in the supporting documents postulate that they may have been in-situ earlier than this.</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Proposals are to create an extension to the north side of the building in order to provide toilet facilities, an improved kitchen and storage for chairs, as this proposal also seeks to remove all existing pews to create a highly flexible space.</p> <p>We consider that the proposed extension has been designed in a sensitive manner and would not harm the significance of the Grade II* listed building. An appropriate level of archaeological involvement and recording will be required.</p> <p>We are however concerned about the proposed wholesale removal of the pews. Seating is often an aspect of a place of worship which is under pressure when considering change, however, it is often an important element of a buildings architectural composition and contributes greatly to their special character. Any proposals for change need to be based on a realistic expectation of what the congregation is trying to achieve. Generally, we do not encourage wholesale replacement where retention, adaption or reordering is possible.</p> <p>The application is supported by a list of potential uses/events a more flexible church space could be used for to better support its mission. However, it is not clear whether this list of uses are actual events and opportunities which <u>will</u> be carried out or is a speculative list of things which <u>could</u> be done with improved flexibility.</p> <p>We consider the wholesale removal of all pews would have a moderate impact on the buildings overall significance. Their removal would have a dramatic impact on the special character of the churches interior and its appreciation. Our experience has shown also that such interventions can have an impact on the spaces acoustics also, a point worth considering in terms of delivering future services and events. Whilst we are mindful of the need for historic buildings to remain flexible and in a viable use, we do not encourage wholesale replacement of the pews as proposed. We are not convinced that all alternative options have been considered, no discussion is made regarding the retention of pews and repositioning them to the outside edges of the space for example. Or more inventive options, such as the addition of castors or rollers to make the pews movable, retaining the critical mass of seating and overall appearance of the interior but increasing its flexibility dramatically. A method that has been successfully applied elsewhere.</p> <p><b>Policy</b></p> <p>National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These policies state that assets</p>
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	<p>should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF, 189) and that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (NPPF, 199).</p> <p><b>Position</b></p> <p>We are mindful of the pressures facing places of worship to respond to changing demographics and their needs, and we commend the work of the applicant in terms of their public consultation and the setting out of what the space may be used for. However, consider the proposed wholesale removal of pews would have a moderate level of harm on the buildings significance through dramatically impacting on its internal character and appearance, as such we have concerns over this proposal on heritage grounds.</p> <p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p>Further work is required on understanding the history and significance of the pews and their contribution to the overall significance of the building. Also, it should be clarified whether the events cited which require the maximum flexibility are definite and not just speculative. In considering these uses, careful thought must be paid to what is the least impactful on the nationally significant building and not just what is the best use of the space. This careful consideration with a presumption towards retaining a significant proportion of the pews will hopefully improve understanding of how and where alterations can be made either through removal, repositioning or innovative solutions such as castors etc.</p> <p>Please contact me if you wish to discuss these comments. Any unamended application for faculty for this work can be determined without further reference to Historic England, but please consult us again if there are any material changes to the proposals. We would be grateful for a copy of the Diocesan Advisory Committee's advice in due course.</p>
<p><b>27/01/2023</b></p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Church Buildings Council</p>	<p><b>Christleton, St James (Diocese of Chester)</b></p> <p><b>Proposed extension for toilets, kitchen and storage, plus removal of nave pews and creation of meeting room and office.</b></p> <p>Thank you for seeking the Church Buildings Council's advice over the extension and reordering at St James' church. This was considered at the recent meeting of the Council following a site visit by the Ven Dr Anne Dawtry and myself on 30 November 2022. We would like to extend our thanks to the parish for their hospitality and their openness to discussion. The Council's advice is set out below.</p> <p>The parish has strong ambitions to increase its role in the life of the community through worship and mission. The church currently has no toilets, kitchen facilities or subdivided spaces. While there is a hall across the road leased from the parish council, the arrangement is not guaranteed in perpetuity and the physical separation from the church building is not ideal. The Council understands the benefits that providing facilities within the building would bring, and appreciates that the parish is considering complementary uses for the two spaces rather than duplication.</p>

	<p>The Council appreciates the work that has gone in to developing the proposals, and the efforts to engage the community in consultation events. The statement of significance contains excellent local history research, and the relevant list description. It should now be amended to assess the architectural (or artistic/aesthetic), historical, archaeological and social interest of the building, considering which elements are the most important are why. The statement of needs is the parish's vital opportunity to make its case for the proposals. It should be enhanced by adding specific evidence to prove the need: activities already held in the church, the limitations of the current arrangements, the foundations laid for events to grow in the future, and how the proposals would support that growth. Photographs and comments from church users could be added. The table illustrating the future uses of the building already provided is helpful. It is noted that worship activity is only lightly touched on in the documents, and the Council recommends a worship plan is added.</p> <p>The Council supports the design, location and purpose of the extension to the north-west corner of the building. It is clear that options have been considered, and the resulting proposal is sensitive to the historic building. This is a site of high archaeological sensitivity. Building anywhere within the churchyard is likely to have high archaeological impact and encounter human remains; the churchyard is so heavily buried, it would be impossible to avoid this. Furthermore, little is currently known about the predecessor church on the site. The excavation for the extension may unveil remains of an earlier building. The Council defers to the DAC's archaeological adviser on this aspect. The Council welcomes the proposal for an accessible toilet in the extension. However, the drawings show the door opening inwards. This would not meet accessibility requirements; the Council hopes it can be amended.</p> <p>The details of the proposed separation of the Lady Chapel are yet to be decided. Details will need to be provided within the supporting documents, but the Council does not oppose the principle. Placing the glazing next to the current decorative screen of the Lady Chapel may be less invasive to the historic spaces than glazing within the arches of the chancel. However, the relationship between the historic screen and the new insertion, including reflections, should be considered. The Council asks that any new gathering space is accessible to all and asked if ramped access could be created from the south aisle into the Lady Chapel. The Council does not oppose the principle of the dividing the tower base to form an office. The Council is content to defer to the DAC on the design details of this.</p> <p>The pews are thought to be by William Butterfield. Any certainty on the attribution that the parish can find will help to assess their significance. They aesthetically fit well with the rest of the church by his design. A substantial justification would be needed for their removal. The current statement of needs does not evidence adequate justification. Indeed, given the architectural quality of the pews and their integrity with the building design, it is a high bar to attain, and it is currently difficult to see how the parish would provide sufficient justification for full pew</p>
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	<p>removal. It would be straightforward to remove a section of the pews. The Council is aware that the parish has already considered, and rejected, this option, on the basis that it would only fulfil half of their ambitions for the space. The Council suggests this is reconsidered. Removing a section of the pews would be less harmful to the architectural and aesthetic significance of the building. Should the parish make excellent use of the flexibility and find need for further open space, they may then be better placed to evidence a need for additional pew removal in future. The Council recommends this aspect of the proposal is scaled back, and the parish identify the area most usable for flexible space.</p> <p>If the chancellor was minded to grant faculty for partial or full pew removal, the proposed replacement chairs fit with the Council's guidelines. However, the parish has suggested two types of chair which should, for the practicalities of moving, stacking, and aesthetic reasons, be limited to a single chair design. The Council supports the decision to match the colour of the chair to the existing woodwork.</p> <p>The Council encourages the parish in pursuing low-carbon goals, and is pleased to hear of the regular maintenance. The Council has published guidance on <a href="#">The practical path to net zero carbon for churches</a> to offer advice on steps to take to reduce carbon.</p> <p>The Council appreciates that there are detailed aspects of this proposal to be decided, for example the screens dividing the Lady Chapel and proposed office from the nave, and the design of the entrance to the extension. Clarity on the proposals for the relocation of grave markers is also needed. The Council would be pleased to see further development of the proposals.</p> <p>Finally, this is an ambitious proposal driven by a desire to better serve the community and to enhance worship at the church. The Council welcomes the basis for the proposals, and hopes that a success outcome can be achieved. The Council would welcome further consultation once the parish has had time to consider its advice and develop the proposals.</p>
<p><b>01/02/2023</b></p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: Church Buildings Council</p>	<p>Thank you for consulting the Church Buildings Council regarding Christleton, St James. Please find attached, and uploaded to the OFS, the Council's response letter.</p> <p>I am sorry that we couldn't fit this in before the CBC's December meeting and it has therefore been a long wait for this reply.</p>
<p><b>23/02/2023</b></p> <p>To: Caroline Hilton From: The Victorian Society</p>	<p><b>RE: Christleton, St James (Grade II*, William Butterfield, 1874-7); extension and internal reordering</b></p> <p>Our ref: 178365</p> <p>Thank you for consulting the Victorian Society on this proposal. We are very grateful for the opportunity to review the scheme and provide our advice, particularly at this early stage in the development of a possible reordering of what is an exceptionally significant nineteenth-century church building.</p>

	<p>I am very grateful to the parish for hosting me, as well as representatives from the Church Buildings Council, at the site visit that was held at the end of November last year. It was very helpful but also a great pleasure to see the building and to discuss the parish's plans for its future.</p> <p>I presented the proposal to the Society's Northern Buildings Committee at its meeting in December, and the following advice comes out of its discussion. I apologise for the time it has taken to send it to you.</p> <p>Firstly, the Committee wished to emphasise the quality and interest of the building. This is a really fine and important church, the quality of the interior of which is so good that one might reasonably question whether any significant erosion of it could ever be justifiable. This is Butterfield's only Cheshire church, and while the tower – which Butterfield went out of his way to both save and incorporate – might at first glance convey the sense of this as a part medieval building, the church is essentially a holistic, largely intact and very impressive work of one of the foremost ecclesiastical architects of the nineteenth century. And, as is generally the case with historic churches, it is the interior that is especially precious, particularly when the furnishings of are such character and quality as they are here, and when it is designed and experienced holistically. In light of the exceptionally high importance of the building – and the interior particularly – and the intrinsic role and contribution of the furnishings in the core significance of the building, the substantial (let alone wholesale) clearance of bench seating would undoubtedly cause a very serious level of harm.</p> <p>At the site visit the principal driver of the scheme was presented as fulfilling a need for community uses and to enable the building to serve as a village hub for a range of community-based activities and events. As the CBC notes in its own response, liturgy and worship do not really factor in the documentation.</p> <p>As was discussed on site, the presence of a large, well-equipped, recently refurbished and evidently very well loved and used village hall a literal stone's throw from the church's south porch only undermines any case from need for transforming the church interior to serve as a second community centre. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the desire of the parish to provide complementary and not competing uses, and details of those will in due course be absolutely critical. Space audits, activities plans, a business plan and an options appraisal (demonstrating that a range of possible interventions and solutions have been considered) will also be essential documents, if a reordering of the interior is to be pursued. All these documents could of course form part of a much expanded Statement of Needs, which, as the CBC also emphasises, is really key. As it stands the Statement of Needs is not adequate, especially given the highly destructive nature of the depeweing that is envisaged.</p>
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	<p>Predicating any remotely significant interventions on the basis of providing a community facility would require a demonstration of a genuine appetite and need for such a facility. We acknowledge the evident time and energy that the parish has invested in attempting to foster interest in this project locally, and we welcome the fact that well-advertised meetings aimed at gathering together local people in order to discuss this possibility were arranged. However, it is hard not to draw conclusions from the relatively poor attendance at those meetings. If, despite the parish's best efforts, it has been difficult to engage or enthuse the local community in what is proposed, then the case for the scheme is quite significantly undermined.</p> <p>Having said that, the almost total lack of any facilities is clearly problematic, and the parish has a strong case for addressing this. In principle, the provision of lavatory facilities, a more easily accessible servery and some degree of storage is all uncontentious, and the Society is happy to support the parish in attempting to deliver these as part of a sympathetic, responsive scheme.</p> <p>The present proposal envisages largely housing these facilities in an extension that would protrude from the west end of the north aisle. Given the exceptional significance of the church interior, the aspiration to accommodate these facilities in a modestly scaled extension is reasonable enough, and probably acceptable, as is the proposed site. However, we have concerns over the plan form proposed. In particular, its longitudinal form perpendicular to the primary axis of the building, and the way in which its west wall would be contiguous with the west wall of the aisle, appears potentially quite incongruous.</p> <p>Also incongruous is the proposal to panel the south aisle wall with joinery recycled from removed benches. This is a rather peculiar proposal, which, if implemented, would foster a character quite at odds with Butterfield's interior. It is of course unfortunate that a cement render was applied to the south aisle walls (and, as we suggested on site, it would be worth exploring whether this is having any detrimental impact on the fabric of the walls), but in fact it is not all that visually intrusive, and is certainly much less so than panelling would be.</p> <p>There is at present inadequate information to assess the impact of screening off the lady chapel. Clearly, however, this is an intervention that could have major consequences architecturally and spatially. In addition, given the stated aim to prioritise accessibility in any reordering scheme, creating a meeting room in a space that is only accessible from the main body of the church by steps is problematic, to say the least.</p> <p>Clarification is clearly required how the church would be heated: the present system seemed barely adequate on the site visit, in addition to which, the proposed removal of the benches would require the removal or relocation of at least four radiators. Would the present</p>
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	<p>system really be adequate for community uses in the colder months of the year?</p> <p>The proposed mixing of two kinds of chair would be aesthetically disastrous, and the strictly segregated arrangement of them envisaged on the plans would, practically, be difficult to maintain (unless the chairs were not reconfigured at all regularly).</p> <p>In summary, while we are supportive of the introduction of basic facilities here, I'm afraid we do not feel that a remotely compelling case has been made for the scheme as a whole (particularly the removal of the benches), or the very high level of harm that it would cause.</p> <p>No doubt there will be further rounds of consultation, at which time we would be glad to offer further advice.</p>
<p><b>14/06/2023</b></p> <p>To: Church Buildings Council, Historic England, The Victorian Society From: Caroline Hilton</p>	<p><b>Request for Formal Consultation on Material Changes under Part 4.8 of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2019 - Christleton: St James (609027) ref 2022-073625</b></p> <p>Dear DAC</p> <p>The following consultees have been invited to view the following Application on the Online Faculty System by Caroline Hilton: Reference 2022-073625 concerning Christleton: St James (Church Code 609027).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• e-nwest@HistoricEngland.org.uk</li> <li>• casework@jcnas.org.uk</li> </ul> <p>Dear Consultee</p> <p>FOA Historic England, Victorian Society and Church Buildings Council</p> <p>Christleton St James (Grade 2* / 1876) Church extension for toilets, kitchen, and chair storage.</p> <p>You have been invited under part 4.5 and 4.6 of The Faculty Jurisdiction (Amendment) Rules 2019 to further consult on the above Faculty Application. A response to the consultation will be taken into account if it is received within 21 days of the date of this email.</p> <p>The deadline for your response is 5 July 2023</p> <p>The proposals include an extension to the NW of the church, to create space for toilets, a kitchen space for hospitality and storage. Additionally there is a desire to improve accessibility and create flexible space for a variety of activities, including a community cafe. This requires removal of the nave pews and replacement them with appropriate movable seating. This seating may be stored in the extension when not in use.</p> <p>Further to the feedback you provided the parish have submitted the following further documentation (was all uploaded to the faculty application on 13 June 2023):</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exec Summary v2</li> <li>• Statements-of-significance-and-needs May 2023</li> <li>• Supporting Documentation - Church Uses</li> <li>• supporting documentation – design Iterations</li> <li>• supporting documentation - heatingLighting</li> <li>• Supporting Documentation - parishCarbonNetZeroRoutemap</li> <li>• supporting documentation - sampleOfCommunityLetters</li> <li>• supporting documentation - parishCarbonNetZeroRoutemap</li> </ul> <p>We would welcome your further feedback on the proposals</p> <p>Thank you for your help.</p>
<b>14/06/2023</b>  To: CWAC Conservation Officer From: Caroline Hilton	<i>Same message as sent to the other consultees above</i>
<b>15/06/2023</b>  To: Caroline Hilton From: CWAC Conservation & Design	<p>Unfortunately, we can't access WeTransfer files as the Council's IT security doesn't allow it.</p> <p>Is it possible send as attachments at all?</p>
<b>15/06/2024</b>  To: CWAC Conservation & Design From: Caroline Hilton	<p>No problem, please see the documents attached.</p> <p><i>Documentation as sent to consultees on 14/06/2023, email above</i></p>
<b>27/06/2023</b>  To: Caroline Hilton From: Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	<i>The consultee has declined to comment on the case</i>
<b>03/07/2023</b>  To: Caroline Hilton From: Historic England	<p><b>Notification under the Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (England) Orders 2010 LOCATION: CHURCH OF ST JAMES, CHRISTLETON PROPOSED WORK: Church extension for toilets, kitchen, and chair storage.</b></p> <p>We were notified on 14 June 2023 of the proposed works at the above site. Based on the information submitted, we offer the following comments and observations to assist you in the determining of this application.</p>

	<p><b>Historic England advice</b></p> <p><b>Significance</b></p> <p>Christleton St James is a building which has undergone a number of alterations and some large-scale rebuilding over its long history which reaches back to at least the 15th century. The most recent of rebuilding and re-ordering was undertaken in 1874-77 by the renowned Gothic Revival proponent and church architect William Butterfield following a collapse of the nave ceiling.</p> <p>A handsome building constructed of ashlar red stone incorporating an older two stage western tower to which Butterfield added a shingled pyramidal cap. The nave and chancel are of one range with north and south aisles with rectangular windows to either side. Above the aisles a clerestory provides illumination to the internal space.</p> <p>Internally the building is decorated with red and white sandstone. The 5 bay arcades denote the nave and support the upper clerestory levels and wagon roof which springs from ornate corbels and features painted quatrefoils panels. Attention is drawn to the striking west window of 1877 by Gibbs. The space provides two rows of pews to the nave with a central passageway, each of the aisles contains a further row of pews each.</p> <p>Pews appear to be relatively simple with little in the way of decoration or embellishment. Whilst an exact date for their installation in the church is unknown their appearance would suggest that they are Victorian and could feasibly be connected to Butterfields interventions. Though some records provided in the supporting documents suggest that they may pre-date this.</p> <p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>Proposals are to create an extension to the north side of the building in order to provide toilet facilities, an improved kitchen and storage for chairs, as this proposal also seeks to remove all existing pews to create a highly flexible space.</p> <p>We consider that the proposed extension has been designed in a sensitive manner and would not harm the significance of the Grade II* listed building. An appropriate level of archaeological involvement and recording will be required. We maintain our concerns regarding the proposed wholesale removal of the pews. Whilst we appreciate the additional thoughts and narrative provided by the applicant on this element, we remain of the opinion that church seating is a significant element of a churches architectural composition.</p> <p>We still consider the wholesale removal of all pews would have a moderate impact on the buildings overall significance. Their removal would have a dramatic impact on the special character of the churches</p>
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	<p>interior and its appreciation. Our experience has shown also that such interventions can have an impact on the spaces acoustics also, a point worth considering in terms of delivering future services and events.</p> <p><b>Policy</b></p> <p>National policy relating to the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is articulated in section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). These policies state that assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance (NPPF, 189) and that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (NPPF, 199).</p> <p><b>Position</b></p> <p>We are mindful of the pressures facing places of worship to respond to changing demographics and their needs, and we commend the work of the applicant in terms of their public consultation and the setting out of what the space may be used for. However, we consider that the proposed wholesale removal of pews would have a moderate level of harm on the buildings significance through dramatically impacting on its internal character and appearance and maintain our concerns raised previously.</p> <p>We feel further work is required on understanding the history and significance of the pews in their own right, how they contribute to the buildings overall significance, and assessment of the impact their loss would have on said significance. Where the proposal results in harm, this should be reduced as far as practicable and then clear and convincing justification provided for any residual harm.</p> <p>Please contact me if you wish to discuss these comments. Any unamended application for faculty for this work can be determined without further reference to Historic England, but please consult us again if there are any material changes to the proposals. We would be grateful for a copy of the Diocesan Advisory Committee's advice in due course.</p>