



TAKING STOCK

The Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of Historic Places of Worship: Guidelines and Templates

Contents

	Page
Introduction: the context	2
Inspired!	2
Local building audits	3
Heritage Protection Review	3
Statements of Significance	3
Some key questions	4
Appendix 1: Summary report – content guidelines	6
Appendix 2: Site report template	8
Appendix 3: Sample building assessment	11

Introduction: the context

Historic places of worship are one of the most treasured aspects of our historic environment. Many have already been subjected to centuries of change, altering their structure, their internal arrangement and furnishings. Medieval parish churches, for example, were transformed in the course of the 16th and 17th centuries from Pre-Reformation places of Catholic worship to Post-Reformation places of Protestant worship. Even nineteenth and twentieth-century churches and chapels may well have been re-pewed and reordered on several occasions.

In the 21st century further changes are unavoidable. While the 2002 census revealed that a high proportion of English people still identify themselves as belonging to a religious community, other research reveals that fewer regularly attend churches, chapels and synagogues, and that clergy numbers are declining. Furthermore, demographic change means that historic places of worship are often no longer situated in the right place to serve their faith communities, while smaller and ageing congregations find it increasingly difficult to meet all the financial and organisational burdens associated with their maintenance.

Over the last few years all denominations have begun to reassess their present state and future needs, with an emphasis on defining mission and pastoral requirements and resources. Some have concluded that they are 'over-churched', with churches and chapels in the wrong place, or with church buildings poorly adapted to suit the needs of modern congregations. There are now new opportunities for extended and shared use of church buildings, and service of the wider community is a priority for many congregations who worship in historic buildings.

Inspired!

English Heritage is keen to ensure that in a time of change the importance of historic places of worship is properly factored into plans for the future. We recognise that all denominations are hard-pressed responding to their existing responsibilities and we are seeking to build their capacity to include the historic environment in their thinking at local level. We believe the development of a more strategic approach to the management of historic places of worship is essential to their sustainability in use, preferably for the purposes for which they were built, but if necessary, in sympathetic alternative uses. In recent years we have worked with a number of denominations to review their historic building stock, ensuring that there is a better informed understanding of the opportunities and challenges they represent. In several instances we have been able to assist in the recruitment and funding of new places of worship support officers.

These Guidelines, and the templates that accompany them (Appendices 1 and 2), are intended to provide an adaptable blueprint for the conduct of similar area exercises, whether across a whole diocese, within a group of

parishes, or chapels in a circuit. As part of our **Inspired!** Campaign, we are seeking government help to fund new support officer posts, providing much-needed additional help at local level. (See also English Heritage advice on Historic Places of Worship Support Officers).

Local building audits

As part of the Toyne Report review of the Church of England's Diocesan, Pastoral and other related Measures (*A Measure for Measures* www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchcommissioners/pastoral/pastadmin/missionscenarios) the Church Commissioners have convened a group to develop 'Local Building Audits'. This has built on the work done in London and Manchester dioceses. These audits are designed to operate at two levels; diocese (or large area) and benefice or parish (smaller scale area). They will be published on the Commissioner's website in the summer of 2006. Other denominations and faiths should be able to adapt the principles to their own circumstances.

The Guidelines below concentrate on the historical, architectural and archaeological interests of buildings and sites and should fit into the Local Building Audit formats.

Heritage Protection Review

As of May 2006, English Heritage is conducting two pilot schemes with the Church of England (in Taunton and the Lincolnshire Wolds), to test the ability of the new designation system, created under the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Heritage Protection Review, to assist in establishing management agreements within statutory control systems. The sort of assessments described in Appendices 1 and 2 will be useful in brokering Heritage Partnership Agreements.

Statements of Significance

The site assessments of Appendix 2 below can benefit from existing Statements of Significance or help inform their creation. With new funding from Government, English Heritage will be able to work with the denominations concerned to help congregations to write their own Statements of Significance. We propose to 'train trainers' who can then run regular training days and to establish guidance to accessible and more localised sources of information. A trial programme is currently underway in the Church of England diocese of Peterborough. Current denominational guidance on writing Statements of Need and Significance is available on www.churchcare.co.uk and www.methodist.org.uk, as well as on individual diocesan websites. Some Church of England models are available on the www.churchcare.co.uk site.

Some key questions

Why undertake an historical, architectural and archaeological review at all?
The review will improve understanding and thus appreciation of your historic places of worship. It may help unlock unexpected potential and will help you achieve clarity as to their susceptibilities and vulnerabilities in the face of change. It will help you to prioritise your resources and will also ensure that you can communicate in a language that is comprehensible to a wider community of interest.

When should we undertake an historical, archaeological and architectural review of our church buildings?
Sooner rather than later, ensuring that the review's findings are available to inform any decision-making. The buildings review should complement other assessments, not be tacked on as an afterthought once other difficult decisions have been made.

Which buildings should be included in the review – just those that are listed?
Try to be as comprehensive as possible. The designation of historic buildings, sites and landscapes is undergoing reform and Government legislation will soon stream line and change the way 'listing' is undertaken. This is a good opportunity to take a fresh look at your buildings and their sites. Remember that the process of 'spot listing', by which a building can be added to the Statutory Lists, can be initiated at any time by any member of the public. By identifying any unrecognised or under-valued historic buildings of listable quality in your 'stock' you will have a clearer picture of your historic assets.

Who should commission and manage the review?
The project should be commissioned by the appropriate denominational authority, ensuring that there is a sense of 'ownership' of the process and the results. A small project board should be established to produce a project brief, commission the consultant(s) to undertake it, to monitor progress and delivery of the final report. The support and guidance of independent external advisers can be invaluable. A member of the English Heritage regional team might be available for advice, as might the local authority Conservation Officer. A representative of one of the amenity societies could also be invited to join the project board.

Who should undertake the review?
The skills and experience needed are those of the professional architectural historian or archaeologist. Although the English Heritage surveys have been undertaken by national consultants, there may be a local person or unit available. Whoever it is should have an established track record in the assessment of ecclesiastical buildings and sites. As the furnishings and decoration of historic places of worship are often essential to their aesthetic and historical character, and can be adversely affected by re-ordering or altered use, experience and expertise in this area is also essential. Be prepared to pay for independent, objective expertise. Your investment will be rewarded by better informed decision making which will command the respect of your sectoral partners as you develop your wider strategy. With further

funding from Government, English Heritage will be able to financially support well-designed exercises as part of its proposed 'capacity building' programme.

What format should the review adopt?

While a desk-based research stage can provide vital background information, site visits to the buildings are essential and an opportunity to meet members of the congregation who use them is also valuable. Provide your consultant with a formal letter of introduction and circulate all the churches involved with background information about the project.

Our experience suggests that the work should be presented in two parts

- A summary report that addresses general issues and offers conclusions and recommendations*
- A series of individual reports specific to each building.*

Templates and guidelines for these are presented as Appendices 1 and 2 respectively and a sample building assessment forms Appendix 3.

APPENDIX 1

An Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of Church Buildings in the Diocese of Barchester

Summary Report – Content Guidelines

1. The individual assessments of each church in the diocese (see Appendix 2) should be complemented by the Consultant's executive summary of general issues that will inform the evolution of a diocese-wide strategy for the retention in use or disposal of church buildings. Tables and appendices should be employed in order to keep the report concise and focussed.

2. Within the context of an understanding of the history of the diocese, summarised in the introduction, the report should attempt to identify the following:

- Those churches of high historical, archaeological and architectural significance that should be retained in use as places of worship at all costs, with fabric and/or furnishings protected from all but the most modest changes.
- Those churches of high historical, archaeological and architectural significance that could nonetheless tolerate change (e.g. re-ordering or extended or shared use) if carefully and sympathetically managed.
- Those churches of some historical, archaeological and architectural importance that should be retained in use if possible, but with scope for more extensive alteration or adaptation in the interests of securing a sustainable future.
- Those churches whose historical, archaeological and architectural qualities have been overlooked or undervalued and might be proposed for spot-listing.
- Those churches as yet ineligible for statutory designation ('listing'), but of a quality and interest that will warrant their consideration for designation in the future.
- Those churches of little historical, archaeological and architectural value that could be disposed of according to the recognised procedures of the denomination, without detriment to their historic interest.

3. The report might also draw attention to:

- The work of architects of particular local significance.
- Groups of churches sharing patterns of planning or design, patronage or craftsmanship etc that give them additional local significance and interest.

4. Depending on his or her range of expertise, the Consultant might also be in a position to alert the diocese to buildings in need of particular support and advice in terms of structural issues, conservation or design.

APPENDIX 2

An Historical, Architectural and Archaeological Assessment of Church Buildings in the Diocese of Barchester

Site Report Template

1. Location and Legal Status

- 1.1 Church Name (*dedication*)
- 1.2 Church address (*to include post-code*)
- 1.3 National Grid Reference (six figure reference)
- 1.4 Listed Grade according to the Town and Country Planning Act (*append list description, if appropriate*)
- 1.5 Is the Church in a Conservation Area?
- 1.6 Is the church part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument? (*append SAM, if appropriate*)
- 1.7 Does the church stand in a churchyard?
- 1.8 Date of visit(s)
- 1.9 Name of report author
- 1.10 Name of parish priest and/or parish contact(s) made on site
- 1.11 Bibliographic sources

2. The Building, its Setting and its Contents

2.1 A Brief Statement of Importance

In other words, why should this building be treasured and appreciated, which may reflect historical significance nationally or locally, archaeological importance, architectural quality, or interest, importance and completeness of furnishings. If the assessment of the building suggests that it is inappropriately listed, this is the place to make the case for change. If it is not listed and should be, summarise why. If the building is deemed to be of little historical and architectural importance, what follows will be commensurately shorter.

2.2 Historical Background

A summary, which could simply be a list of key dates in the foundation of the parish, building, consecration, alteration or extension of the church, or could

include information on significant historical or literary associations - patrons, people buried in the church or churchyard etc. Who was the church built to serve?

2.3 The Church in its Setting

This section should consider the contribution of the church to the physical character and quality of its surroundings:

- What impact does the rural church have on the character of the village – how has it affected the development of settlement around it, is it the 'heart of the village'. What impact does an urban church have on the streets around it in terms of architectural style and scale? Was it built as part of the residential neighbourhood of which it is part? Does it have landmark value on an eye-catching site?
- What is the archaeological potential of the building and its site? Remember, even if the church is of no great antiquity, there may be centuries of historical data trapped in the soil beneath the church and its churchyard.
- Associated structures and buildings: List the key structures that form a significant part of the complex of which the church is the heart and which affect the setting and importance of the church in its architectural and historical context: this might include attached or adjoining parsonage/presbytery, lychgate, boundary wall, gate piers, church hall, war memorial, etc. Indicate if listed, and append listing description(s), if appropriate.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings

This should include:

- Building materials
- Plan form and principal construction phases (with key dates, attributed or documented). Highlight structural and architectural features of particular interest or quality: the report might mention piscina, sedilia, Easter sepulchre, image niches, rood loft stair, architectural sculpture (decorative or figurative), graffiti, scratch dials, inscriptions etc.
- Name(s) of architect(s), surveyor(s), patron(s)
- Principal furnishings and decorations (the description might include monuments, pews, choir stalls, font, pulpit, screens, galleries, stained glass, stations of the cross, devotional images or sculpture, wall paintings, hatchments, chests, organs, textiles etc). The account should make clear the historical relationships between furnishings and decorations in different media, e.g. where the stained glass, wall paintings and choir stalls are all the work of a single architect/designer, introduced as part of a major reordering.

This is the section of the report in which any corrections or additions to an existing listing description should be flagged up.

2.5 Listed Status

- Is it appropriate?
- Is it too low/too high? (include a recommendation for suggested amendment)

- Should it be added to the list (suggest an appropriate grade according to current criteria)
- Should it be removed from the list? – if so, why?
- Building does not justify listing

3. Managing the Building into the Future

3.1 Condition

- Is the church in poor/fair/good condition?
- Summarise what work has been carried out since the last quinquennial survey
- Summarise what works have not been carried out

3.2 Does the building have those facilities (e.g. kitchen, toilets, meeting space) required by the parish?

3.3 If not, does the parish have any plans to introduce them?

3.4 Potential for Change?

To what extent is the building amenable or vulnerable to change

- As a consequence of remaining in use as a place of worship
- As a consequence of extended or shared use with activities other than regular worship
- As a consequence of being closed as a place of worship and passing into alternative use in the secular planning environment

(This section of the report should seek to highlight the risk to historic fabric represented by these three scenarios and can only address the issue in general terms. The severity of the perceived risk will reflect the fragility and importance of the building and its furnishings and the degree to which it has been altered/re-ordered already)

A General Note on Illustrations

- Digital photographs are preferable. A selection of exterior and interior shots should be taken, with sufficient details of architectural features and furnishings as necessary to support the assessment of the building and its qualities as described in the report.
- Plans are useful, and should be digitally scanned, if available.
- Please indicate copyright of any copied material and secure permission for its inclusion in the report.

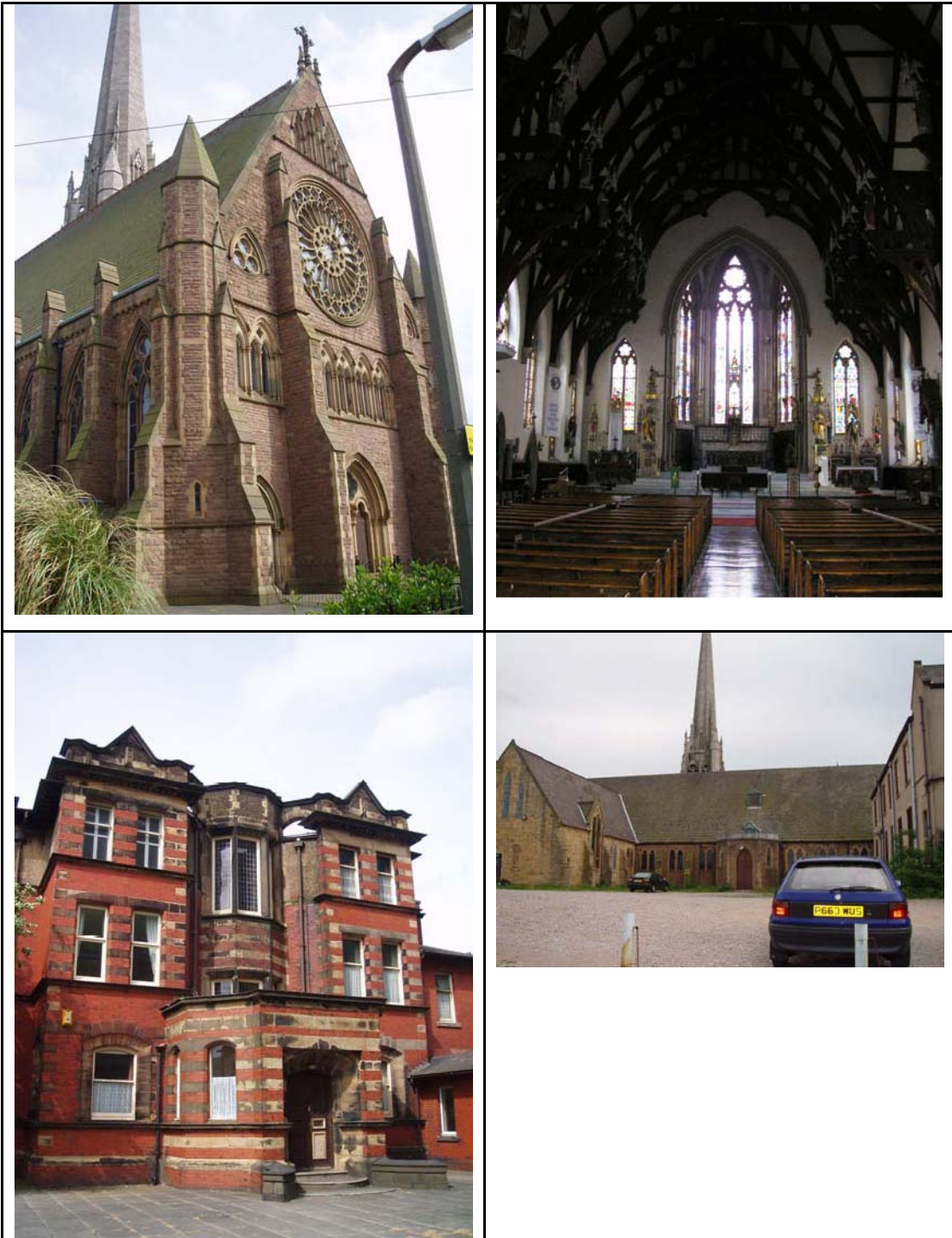
APPENDIX 3

Sample building assessment

The following sample assessment was written as part of an audit of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster by the Architectural History Practice.

St Walburge, Preston

Weston Street, Preston PR2 2QE



Part 1: Core data

- 1.1 Listed Grade – Grade I (list entry below)
- 1.2 Conservation Area – No
- 1.3 Architect – J.A.Hansom
- 1.4 Date(s) – 1850-54, tower c 1857, spire 1867, apse 1872
- 1.5 Date of visit – 25 May 2005
- 1.6 Name of report author – Andrew Derrick
- 1.7 Name of parish priest and/or contact(s) made on site – Rev Deacon Michael Dolan (Talbot Library). Subsequently discussed with Rev Canon John Gibson (parish priest).
- 1.8 Associated Buildings: Presbytery, Talbot Library, parish hall, former convent, former school (now CAFOD offices).
- 1.9 Bibliographic references:
Pevsner, N: *The Buildings of England, North Lancashire* 1969
Howell P and Sutton I: *Faber Guide to Victorian Churches*, 1990
Little, B: *Catholic Churches Since 1623*, 1966
Martin C: *A Glimpse of Heaven* (unpublished transcript for forthcoming EH publication)
Statutory List description
File held at diocesan offices

Part 2: Analysis

2.1 Statement of Importance

Arguably the supreme monument of Lancashire Catholicism, built by J.A.Hansom at a time of resurgent confidence. The 309 ft needle spire is a major city landmark, its white limestone contrasting vividly with the brown sandstone of the church. The wide volume of the nave, with its hammer-beam roof, is a remarkable accomplishment of Victorian carpentry and design. Part of an important complex of historic buildings to the west of the city centre.

2.2 Historical Background

St Walburge was an eighth century English nun who joined St Boniface's mission in Germany. She has passed into German folklore, and the night of May 1 (the date of the transfer of her bodily remains from Heidenheim, where she had died, to Eichstatt) is known as Walpurgisnacht.

The church is in the Maudland district of the city, at the former heart of cotton manufacturing. In 1847 the Jesuits commissioned Joseph Aloysius Hansom (1803-82) to design the church. A building housing a school and temporary

church (now Talbot Library and parish hall) was built first, to Hansom's designs, in 1847-49. The church was built from the pennies of the faithful, and some 8000 people undertook to pay £1 a year. The foundation stone was laid in May 1850 and the building opened on 3 August 1854.

The tower was built in c1857 and the spire added in 1867, both to Hansom's designs. As originally completed the church had a flat east end; the present apse was added in 1872 by S.J. Nicholl of London. There is a red brick former convent building to the east of the Hansom building of 1847-9. In 1894 a new school was built facing onto Weston Street (now CAFOD offices for the NW region). In 1903 a new presbytery was also built on Weston Street, its front elevation facing towards the church, and connected to it by a corridor. This was built to house four priests and two Jesuit brothers. The Jesuits handed over the building to the diocese in 1955 and the church is now served by one diocesan priest. More recently the diocesan archive, the Talbot Library, has been established in Hansom's 1847-49 building. This is a county archive of real value, and is open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

2.3 Setting The church and its associated buildings form a major ecclesiastical complex in the nineteenth century western expansion of Preston. The church now feels somewhat isolated, cut off from the city centre by modern dual carriageways and the railway line. The spire is a major city landmark. The immediate setting of the church is low-rise nineteenth century terraced housing, with some modern, suburban-type development to the north. It is an area of some dereliction, ripe for urban renewal. The University is close by.

2.4 Description of the building and its principal fittings and furnishings The church has always elicited strong responses. Howell and Sutton describe it as 'one of the most extraordinary churches in Britain'. Pevsner was less sure, perhaps disconcerted by its Wagnerian character: 'Nothing prepares you for the shock of the interior', he wrote; the roof for him was 'a bad dream'. Bryan Little was more enthusiastic: 'a building which ranks among Joseph Hansom's best, and whose roof is perhaps the most masterly ever put on any Victorian Church'. Although archaeologically correct in its Gothic detailing, the interior of the church conforms to the Jesuit (and Oratorian) requirement for open, uninterrupted views of the altar and pulpit. Howell describes it as a counter-Reformation church in Gothic form. Less flatteringly, it was described by *The Ecclesiologist*, the magazine of the Cambridge Camden Society and promoter of Tractarian medievalism, as 'this flaunting offspring of the unhappy nuptials of Oratorianism and true Christian ecclesiology' (Quoted in Howell and Sutton).

Perhaps the most significant accolade awarded the church is its being grade I listed in 1950, an astonishingly early recognition of the importance of the building.

For a description of the building, please refer to the list entry, below.

Additional points:

The architect for the apse was S.J.Nicholl, not Nichols as stated in the list entry.

Some statistics: St Walburge's has the tallest parish church spire in England (at 309 feet outstripping that at Louth, which claims to be the tallest, by a full 14 feet). Only the spires of Salisbury (404 feet) and Norwich Anglican (315 feet) Cathedrals are higher. Other volumes are equally impressive: the interior is 165 feet long, 55 feet wide and up to 83 ft high. The roof is supported by 14 hammer beams with full-size timber carvings of saints on the beam ends. The west elevation is dominated by the rose window, 22 feet in diameter. The 7-light east window reaches a height of 33 feet.

The organ is by William Hill of London and was commissioned and built in 1855.

The stained glass windows of the apse are by Hardman.

The chapel of St Joseph was completed in 1877.

The war memorial in the nave is an altar devoted to the memory of the men of the Royal Lancashire Regiment – 'the Pals' – who lost their lives in France. The central feature of this is a medieval Calvary salvaged from a French abbey ruined in the Great War.

2.5 The church and the parish today

Inner city depopulation and the general decline in church attendance have reduced the Sunday congregation from its peak of about 1200 to about 200. Mass is said daily in presbytery, and only in the church on Sundays (and the Saturday evening vigil mass). Apart from the occasional wedding, funeral or concert, the church is otherwise kept locked, a wasted asset. The creation of the Talbot Library in the 1849 Hansom building next door has created a diocesan and county resource of real value.

2.6 Listed status

The church is listed grade I, and has been since 1950, in recognition of its supreme architectural and townscape qualities. The former school (now Talbot Library and parish hall) are listed grade II. The presbytery is an attractive Edwardian free style design of 1903, and is a likely candidate for listing.

Part 3. Issues of maintenance and future development

3.1 Condition of the Building

There have been major programmes of grant aided repair over the last ten years or so, including repairs to the hammer beam roof and external stonework. Up to date information is not available, but it can be anticipated that significant repairs are still needed. The ancillary buildings are generally underused and to varying degrees in need of repair. The area around the buildings has a somewhat sad and neglected air. The organ has not been played for about twenty years.

3.2 Potential for Change

- Extent to which the building amenable or vulnerable to change
 - a) As a consequence of remaining in use: Despite the grade I listing, the internal layout of the building allows for a fair degree of flexibility. It may be possible to remove some of the pine pews, which are not of special interest, to facilitate extended use by the parish or the wider community.
 - b) As a consequence of being closed as a place of worship: In the sad event of closure, the importance of the building is such as to rule out demolition as an acceptable option. Its quality is such as to merit vesting in some form of guardianship, but it is unlikely that small bodies such as the Historic Chapels Trust would be able to take on the maintenance and repair commitments. The future of the building must therefore lie in its continued use as a place of worship, supplemented by other compatible uses. It is possible to conceive of alternative uses for the building; after all Pevsner describes the interior as ‘a secular hall rather than a church’ (see comments below).
- Are there any plans for change?

None known to the author. However, it is clear that St Walburge’s is the biggest conservation challenge in the diocese at present. At present this challenge shows no sign of being addressed in a visionary or strategic way. St Walburge’s is perhaps the supreme monument of Lancashire Catholicism, and its future should be seen in terms of continued use as a place of Catholic worship. However, it is most unlikely that the diocese will be able to achieve this alone. St Walburge’s is a landmark for the City of Preston, and the Church needs to work in partnership with statutory agencies, local institutions and grant-giving bodies towards finding a long-term sustainable future for the building.

This should be seen in the wider context of the master planning of the Maudland area of the city; the current geographical isolation and air of deprivation militate against any sustainable future for St Walburge’s.

Transport links with the city centre need to be improved and a dense, urban fabric created.

It is suggested that as a first stage the Diocese commissions a **Conservation and Management Plan**, which would establish the significance of the different component parts of the complex and explore options for realising the potential of the site while protecting that significance. The plan would need to look at the scope for extending the use of the church, and thus generating the income that is needed to meet the repair bills. It would need to consider the ancillary buildings, which are underused at the moment, but have income generation possibilities. However, it is acknowledged that even if the potential of the site was fully realised, there is likely to be a continued need for external subsidy in the form of grant aid from English Heritage or the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Listing details

Building Name: CHURCH OF ST WALBURGE
LBS number: 392185
Address: WESTON STREET
Grade: I
Parish: PRESTON
Date listed: 12-JUN-1950
District: PRESTON
Date of last amendment :12-JUN-1950
County: LANCASHIRE
NGR: SD 529 298
Postcode: PR2 2QE

Listing text

PRESTON

SD5229 WESTON STREET
941-1/6/288 (East side)
12/06/50 Church of St Walburge

GV I

Roman Catholic church. Begun 1850, opened 1854, tower completed c.1857 and spire added 1867, all by J.A.Hansom; with apse 1872, by Nichols of London. Coursed brown sandstone rubble with lighter-coloured sandstone dressings, slate roof; steeple of white limestone. Nave with short 3-sided apse and very tall south steeple. The nave and apse are in C13 French Gothic style, the steeple of C15 East Midlands type. The nave, a very large single-cell vessel with steeply pitched roof, has the entrance front at the west end: this has corner turrets with pinnacles and 2 large buttresses framing a wide

centre and narrow outer bays, the centre containing coupled trefoil-headed doorways with shafts under a 2-centred arch moulded in 2 orders, the outer bays with cusped 2-centred arched doorways; over the whole, an arcade of nine 2-centred arched 2-light windows with shafts, quatrefoil heads and linked hoodmoulds; a very large wheel window in the centre, and spherical triangles with trefoil tracery in the outer bays; and over the wheel window an arcade of 5 stepped lancet lights. The 13-bay side walls have emphatic buttresses, and tall attenuated 2-centred arched 3-light windows with slender shafts and bar tracery quatrefoils in the heads; the 3-sided full-height apse, in matching and accentuated style, has full-height buttresses terminating in pinnacles, with blind-arcading to the top stages, and very tall attenuated windows with slender shafts and multifoils, with 3 lights in the east end and 2 lights at the sides, all under relieving arches. The tower (to the right of the 7th bay) is square in plan and of 3 tall stages, elevated on an open base of large 2-centred arches, with angle-buttresses terminating in pinnacles and a shaft in the centre of each side adding vertical emphasis, 2 tall slender 2-light belfry windows in each side, with shafts, cruciform tracery, and gablets with pinnacles; and a very tall octagonal spire (reaching 314 feet), the base clasped by pinnacles and small arched flying buttresses, with 2-light lucarnes in the cardinal sides.

INTERIOR: like a medieval hall, with a spectacular hammer-beam roof which has painted statues on the hammer beams, arch bracing and cusped tracery; corbelled canted wall-pulpit on north side, with sounding board, and approached by wall-staircase with 3 arched windows which have cusped tracery; former organ loft in tower with large arched opening and projected gallery; elaborate wooden west gallery (with organ relocated from tower 1877); panelled dado, and windows with geometrical-patterned stained glass (by Maycock); various stained glass memorial windows at east end, by Hardman of Birmingham and Mayer of Munich, including one to Henry Lord Holland.

Listing NGR: SD5295929870