

Plan:8 Town Planning Ltd

Design and Access Statement with Proportionate Heritage Statement

6-9 Long Street, Middleton, Manchester, M24 6NW

Change of Use from Bank to Church of God



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Prepared By Simon Plowman MA MRTPI

07792784924

simon@plan8townplanning.co.uk

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND COMPANY NO. 06279898

M10 Maxron House, Green Lane, Stockport, SK6 3JQ

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Change of Use from Bank to Church of God

Proposal and Concept

The proposed development involves the change of use of an existing commercial bank building to a place of worship for the Church of God. The building, located at 6-9 Long Street within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, will be converted internally to provide a main service hall, preparation room, office accommodation, and ancillary facilities. No external alterations are proposed to the building envelope.

Design and Access

This section responds to the Design and Access considerations as suggested in best practice guidance.

- **Amount**

The proposal involves the internal reconfiguration of an existing three-storey building with a ground floor area of approximately 257 square metres. The existing building footprint and external envelope will remain unchanged. The conversion will provide accommodation for religious worship with capacity for approximately 257 persons on the ground floor, with ancillary office and meeting spaces on the first floor.

- **Layout**

The proposed layout has been designed to optimise the use of the existing building structure. The ground floor banking hall will be converted to provide:

- Main service hall (capacity 257)
- Service altar area
- Preparation room
- Store rooms
- Disabled WC and standard toilet facilities

- Fire exits to meet current regulations

The first floor will accommodate:

- Main conference room
- Additional meeting rooms and offices
- Staff facilities
- Plant room and storage
- **Scale**

The proposal maintains the existing building scale and massing. The building is three storeys in height and forms part of a continuous commercial frontage along Long Street. The scale is appropriate to its prominent position within the town centre and conservation area.

- **Appearance**

No external alterations are proposed. The existing commercial building will retain its current appearance, ensuring the preservation of the building's contribution to the Long Street streetscape and the character of the conservation area.

- **Access**

The proposal provides accessible facilities including:

- Step-free access to the ground floor worship areas
- Disabled WC facilities
- Clear circulation routes throughout the building
- Appropriate fire escape routes

Heritage Planning Policy Framework and Appraisal

- **National Planning Policy Framework**

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It aims to promote sustainable development with economic, social and environmental roles.

The NPPF advises that planning applications relating to Heritage Assets should consider designation records and other relevant information. The proposal site lies within the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area, as designated by Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

- **Conservation Area Context**

The Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (2008) identifies Long Street as a key thoroughfare within the conservation area. The appraisal notes that Long Street "provides a varied and atmospheric urban mix of the built form with the surrounding spaces" and describes "pleasantly eclectic shop frontages" that contribute to the character of the area.

The building at 6-9 Long Street forms part of this eclectic commercial frontage and contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area through its scale, materials, and architectural form.

- **Assessment of Heritage Impact**

In response to the NPPF requirements, we acknowledge that:

Character and Appearance: The proposed change of use will not alter the external appearance of the building or its contribution to the Long Street streetscape. The building's architectural form, materials, and scale will remain unchanged, preserving its contribution to the "eclectic" character identified in the Conservation Area Appraisal.

Setting of Heritage Assets: The proposal will not cause loss or negative change to views of or towards any listed or locally listed buildings within the conservation area. The change of use is internal only and will not affect the building's relationship with neighbouring heritage assets.

Conservation Area Character: The proposal will not harm the character or views into or out of the Conservation Area. The building will continue to contribute positively to the commercial character of Long Street while providing a community use that aligns with the area's historical function as the cultural and civic heart of Middleton.

- **Heritage Assessment Conclusion**

The Conservation Area Appraisal emphasises the importance of Long Street as part of the "cultural and historic focus" of Middleton. The proposed change from commercial

bank to place of worship represents a continuation of the building's role in serving the community, albeit in a different capacity.

The degree of impact on heritage significance is assessed as resulting in **no harm** to the conservation area, as:

1. No external alterations are proposed
2. The building's contribution to the streetscape is preserved
3. The use change from commercial to community use is compatible with the area's character
4. The internal alterations are reversible and do not affect heritage significance

- **Policy Compliance**

As no harm to heritage assets has been identified, the proposal complies with:

- Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- NPPF paragraphs 189-208 relating to heritage assets
- Local planning policies for conservation areas

- **Public Benefits**

The proposal provides the following public benefits:

- Continued active use of a prominent building within the conservation area
- Provision of community facilities for religious worship
- Economic benefits through building maintenance and community activity
- Social benefits through provision of meeting spaces and community gathering

Conclusion

The proposed change of use from bank to Church of God will preserve the character and appearance of the Middleton Town Centre Conservation Area while providing valuable community facilities. The retention of the existing building envelope ensures no harm to heritage assets, while the new use will ensure the building's continued contribution to the vitality of Long Street.

The scheme accords with heritage planning policy and the NPPF. Our assessment of the site, surrounding area and proposed use change reflects advice within local policies and national guidance. The applicant respectfully requests positive consideration from the Local Planning Authority.
