

Heritage Impact Assessment

Proposed new Heating System and Solar Panels, St Paul's Church, Norden

1.0 Introduction

The application relates to the proposed alterations to renew the heating system and install renewables at St Paul's Church, Norden. The proposed development is detailed in drawings and technical information prepared by Storah Architecture Ltd and John R Book.

This statement has been prepared by Richard Storah of Storah Architecture.

St Paul's Church, Norden is listed, grade II. As an Anglican Church, under the Ecclesiastical Exemption Order 2010, Listed Building Consent is covered under the Faculty Regulations. Faculty Approval has been granted for the works. Listed Building Consent is not required.

The statement has been prepared to address the heritage aspects of a planning application and meet the requirements of the The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013.

2.0 History & Significance

2.1 Description

The church was built in 1859-61 to designs of George Shaw of Oldham. The church is built in coursed local stone, with ashlar details and dual pitched slate roofs.

Accommodation comprises a South Porch, Nave with central west tower containing WC and baptistry, north aisle with choir vestry, south transept containing vestry, and chancel with choir stalls, organ and sanctuary under continuous roof. The tower has three stages and is accessed externally via a corner circular stair turret, There is a single bell to the bell chamber and a broach spire. The church was listed, grade II in 1985.

The church has pews to the nave and a traditional layout with west baptistry and chancel altar. The north aisle pews have been adapted to booth seating for ancillary uses. There is a servery within the west of the north aisle.

The church sits at a higher level off Edenfield Road within an active graveyard which retains space for burials.

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2.2 Significance

A statement of significance has previously been submitted in respect of the Faculty Application by Ian Short (PCC Secretary and Churchwarden). This is attached as an Appendix.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The Need for the Works

A statement of needs in respect of the Faculty Application has also been prepared by Ian Short. This is attached as an Appendix. The existing heating system is obsolete and inefficient. The boiler is gas fired and conventionally flued via the original chimney, due to its age spare parts are difficult to source. The boiler is considered to be at the end of its serviceable life.

There is a need for a new heating system in the church. There is also the need to improve the efficiency of the system, both for cost savings in the long term and also carbon saving.

3.2 Proposed Works

It is proposed to renew the heating system, providing a new hybrid system of new gas boiler, pipes & radiators, supported by an air source heat pump (ASHP). Dependent on funding this would be augmented by solar panels & battery storage too to offset the cost of running the ASHP.

4.0 The Impacts of the works

The proposals will be visual externally, particularly with the introduction of the solar panels to the south elevation. There are other visual impacts in the installation of the air source heat pump and the installation of a new balanced flue to serve the boiler. The visual harm is offset by the carbon saving and reduced environmental impact in the operation of the church.

Internally it is proposed to remove and replace radiators and heat emitters. This is considered of benefit in allowing improved background heating of the building and is of conservation benefit to the historic fabric.

5.0 Conclusion

The proposals respect the significance of the existing building, its setting, and its historic features. The proposed works enhance the functionality to the existing building. The introduction of new elements, most notably the solar panels, but also the ASHP and boiler flue will have a visual impact. This is offset by the public benefit in reducing the carbon footprint of the church, improvements in its long term viability and social benefit.

Report prepared by

Richard Storah
for Storah Architecture

Storah Architecture Ltd
Job No. 24-050

Statement of Significance

1 The church in its urban/ rural environment

1.1 Setting of the Church

Saint Paul's Church Norden is located on the principal road of the Norden village (Edenfield Road, A680) on the western outskirts of Rochdale. It is set back on a small hill surrounded by a stone wall and its churchyard.

1.2 The Living Churchyard

An ecological survey of St Paul's churchyard in 2019 found 41 species of vascular plants as well as a liverwort, 7 different mosses, 4 types of fern, several lichens (not identified) and 6 species of fungi. Butterflies, hoverflies, beetles, and other insects are common. 15 species of bird have been seen, plus pipistrelle bat, red fox, badger, and roe deer. There is evidence of voles, and field mice.

Our churchyard is a valuable habitat. The mix of mature trees, stone walls and monuments, hedges, grass, and undergrowth provides food and shelter and is relatively undisturbed. Managing the unconsecrated ground as a nature reserve and adjusting our management of the graveyard itself will improve that habitat even further, bringing visitors the calming benefits of spending time with nature to enhance the spiritual tranquillity that we have already.

The church yard is still in use as a burial ground. It contains a war grave.

1.3 Social History

St Paul's is the parish church of Norden. Since 2012 we have been part of the Church of England Benefice of St Paul's Norden, St James' Ashworth and St Michael's Bamford, sharing a vicar and our worship with our two sister churches. It is one of the largest buildings in the village.

The area that is now Norden has a colourful past, though it only started to be known by its modern name around the middle of the 19th Century. What is now our parish was part of 'The wastes of Spotland', and was a remote collection of hamlets: Wolstenholme, Bagslate, Greenbooth and Chadwick. The church was built, with funds raised by local people, to serve the local community, and we still do. Many local people are buried in the churchyard, which is still open.

1.4 The Church Building in general

The church is a grade II listed building. It is not in a conservation area. It is an example of Victorian architecture, in the gothic revival style, with decorative and lancet gothic windows. It was designed by G Shaw in 1860. The church was completed in 1861 and it has been largely unaltered since completion.

1.5 The Church Building in detail

The list description reads: Coursed rubble with slate roof. Nave with central west tower, south-west porch, north aisle, south transept, and chancel under continuous roof. 4-bay nave with plinth, weathered buttresses, corbelled eaves and 2-light traceried openings. The porch has a steep coped gable with kneelers, diagonal buttresses and an arched opening. The 3-stage tower has a corner circular stair turret, diagonal weathered buttresses lancet openings to the bell-stage and a broach spire. The transept which actually forms a vestry off the 2 bay chancel has cusped tracery and a bellcote. The aisle has 2-light cusped openings. Interior: chamfered nave arcade has alternating round and octagonal piers; the roofs are braced A frames. C20 stained glass to east window.

The chancel screen was installed in 1917 but was moved to form a screen for the Choir vestry. Recent alterations include the forming of the west end and lavatory and removing pews from the north aisle to provide a meeting area. A servery was installed in the north aisle in 2019.

The tower has been structurally repaired in 1998 and 2009. The double slate roof has been replaced in Phase I of our renovation plan, a major project that was completed in 2023.

1.6 Contents of the Church

The church is furnished with Victorian pews, and most other fittings are C20.

There are no particular archaeological or artistic elements.

The gas boiler and heating system was installed at least 50 years ago. The building is heated by even older (70-80 year old) cast iron hot water pipes that run along the walls and pews. Mid C20 radiators have been grafted on to these pipes.

The cellar / boiler room has been found to contain asbestos. The Archdeacon has already given his permission for us to remove this, and we have a grant from Rochdale MBC to support this work.

1.7 Significance for Mission

With 78 people on the Electoral Roll and a worshipping Community of 105, St Paul's is an active church. The church building is used for weekly worship, with the main service at 10am every Sunday. We also have a regular monthly Sunday Evensong and weekday services for festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Local schools also visit the church regularly, and 550 children and adults attended special services at Christmas.

Our Parish Hall is heavily used by local youth, art, dance, sport and exercise groups, as well as for our pastoral group social sessions and a monthly worship service aimed at those who are unable or unwilling to come to church on Sundays. We often have to turn down enquiries as we are fully booked.

The Heritage Open Day event in September 2023 held in church involved an exhibition of local arts and crafts, a talk on local history, three concerts and a Songs of Praise service. Attendance was 433 and included many local people who do not normally come to church. This event reinforced our confidence in the potential of the building for engaging the local community.

2 The significance of the area affected by the proposal

2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal

The proposal will affect the entire building, including the cellar / boiler room and the roof.

The Air Source Heat Pump will be discreetly sited behind the north side of the chancel, out of sight of the main church path.

2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts

The entire building would be improved.

3 Assessment of the impact of the proposals

3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.

The Renovation project is broken down as follows:

Phase 1: Repair of the tower and roof (complete)

Phase 2: Replacement of the heating system and removal of the asbestos

Phase 3: Installation of solar panels, batteries and LED lighting – or as part of Phase 2 if affordable

Phase 4: Removal of the pews, improvement of the toilet to modern standards, and complete interior redecoration

Phase 5: Improve the main path

The resulting building will be warm, welcoming and attractive, with a flexible space in the nave and north aisle that can be used for worship, for concerts and for other community activities.

It will also be as close as we can get to carbon neutral, an important factor to us as an Eco-church.

The essential nature of the building will be unaffected, but it will be far more usable by local people beyond Sunday mornings.

3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.

The proposals will be visible externally, particularly with the introduction of the solar panels to the south elevation. There are other visual impacts in the installation of the air source heat pump and the installation of a new balanced flue to serve the boiler.

These visual harms would be mitigated by the height of the roof above the public road and by sensitive siting of the ASHP on the north side of the chancel out of sight of the main church path.

They are offset by the carbon saving and the reduced environmental impact in the operation of the church.

Internally it is proposed to remove and replace radiators and heat emitters with more efficient units. This is considered of benefit in allowing improved background heating of the building and is of conservation benefit to the historic fabric.

Removal of the old heating system will require the removal of the cast iron pipes and old radiators, some of which are attached to pews. The pews will be shortened slightly where required, and may eventually be replaced by chairs.

Statement of Needs

1 General Information

The church building is used for weekly worship, with the main service at 10am every Sunday. We also have a regular monthly Sunday Evensong and weekday services for festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Local schools also visit the church regularly, and 550 children and adults attended special services at Christmas.

St Paul's PCC intends to make the church building much more usable by the local community. We have completed phase 1, repairing the roof, and now we need to move to phase 2, which is to replace the heating system. This is now urgent as the boiler is now at the end of its working life.

2 What is needed?

The heating in church is no longer fit for purpose and needs to be replaced.

The current floor-standing boiler is installed in the current boiler room which is in the cellar below the Vicar's vestry. The current boiler is rated at 96kw, but we've been advised that the efficiency of the boiler will be as low as 40-50% at best. The radiators and cast iron pipes are very inefficient and likely to be full of sludge. We can't afford to run the boiler as background heating, so the fabric of the building takes a long time to warm up, and is prone to damp.

The asbestos needs to be safely removed for health and safety reasons.

3 The proposals

Please see uploaded quotes for details of the options we considered.

We thank the DAC for the advice given in Form 2 2024-094571 which notes "that it is important to recognise and point out that the heating system required for this Church does need to satisfy both the conservation requirements and comfort level requirements, which can only reasonably be provided by a wet system of heating detailed and supplied via a "hybrid" ASHP/boiler plant"

We will therefore install the hybrid system recommended after a tendering process by Mr John Book, Diocesan Heating Advisor.

We would replace the old pipes and radiators with new ones – please see attached plans.

We would install solar panels to the south elevations of both main roofs and batteries to support them – see attached plan.

Our fundraising strategy is to continue to raise as much money ourselves as possible, and seeking grant support from a wide range of bodies including Rochdale MBC, Valencia, Garfield Weston, Heritage Lottery Fund, the Boiler Replacement Hardship Fund. Several of these funding bodies will not consider an application in advance of a Faculty being granted.

4 Why do you need it and why do you need it now?

The current boiler has to be switched on 5 hours before the service starts in order to warm the church. Our gas consumption is unacceptably high (£4529 in 2023).

In 2022 the boiler had to be taken out of service for a few weeks pending an urgent repair to a corroded pipe, and we have recently had incidents when the boiler has failed to light, leaving us with an uncomfortably cold church.

We have been advised by all the experts that we have consulted that the system is broken and needs urgent replacement.

We need to ensure that we have a functioning and reliable system in place before next winter.

The asbestos is an integral part of the old system and needs to be removed at the same time.

5 What is the evidence for the need?

We have spoken to:

- our regular heating engineer, Richard Alexander Brown
- our diocesan architect, Richard Storah
- the diocesan heating adviser, John Book
- the Archdeacon of Rochdale, Ven David Sharples

- Darren McNulty, a heating adviser recommended by Parish Buying Net Zero consultancy
- Various heating contractors, including HeatinGlobal, Christopher Dunphy Ecclesiastical, Brian Slattery Plumbing & Heating and Richard Alexander Brown

All have agreed that the current system is beyond repair and we need a new one.

6 How is the proposal contributing to the need for environmental sustainability?

Simply replacing our inefficient gas boiler will reduce our gas consumption dramatically, and a hybrid system would be even better for the environment. We intend to install solar panels on the south-facing church roof, along with storage batteries, which will reduce our carbon footprint significantly.

7 What other options were considered

We considered a Ground Source Heat Pump, but ruled it out because it is unaffordable.

We considered a pure Air Source Heat Pump system, but ruled it out because we have been advised that it would not be feasible to effectively heat the building to an adequate temperature.

We considered under-pew electric heating, but ruled it out because:

- It does not heat the fabric of the building
- It would prevent us from removing the pews in the future

We considered radiant electric heating but ruled it out because it does not heat the fabric of the building

We considered the Eco-Miser all electric system because by that time we had been advised by DAC that a hybrid system is needed. We were also concerned at the likely running cost.

Church of Saint Paul

Listed on the National Heritage List for England. Search over 400,000 listed places

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>)

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1054802

Date first listed: 12-Feb-1985

List Entry Name: Church of Saint Paul

Statutory Address 1: CHURCH OF SAINT PAUL, EDENFIELD ROAD

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries](#)

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/>)

Corrections and minor amendments

(<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>)

Location

Statutory Address:**CHURCH OF SAINT PAUL, EDENFIELD ROAD**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District:**Rochdale (Metropolitan Authority)**

Parish:**Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference:**SD 85993 14568**

Details

SD 81 SE ROCHDALE EDENFIELD ROAD (north side) 6/52 Church of Saint Paul

II

Church 1860-1. G Shaw. Coursed rubble with slate roof. Nave with central west tower, south-west porch, north aisle, south transept, and chancel under continuous roof. 4-bay nave with plinth, weathered buttresses, corbelled eaves and 2-light traceried openings. The porch has a steep coped gable with kneelers, diagonal buttresses and an arched opening. The 3-stage tower has a corner circular stair turret, diagonal weathered buttresses lancet openings to the bell-stage and a broach spire. The transept which actually forms a vestry off the 2 bay chancel has cusped tracery and a bellcote. The aisle has 2-light cusped openings. Interior: chamfered nave arcade has alternating round and octagonal piers; the roofs are braced A frames. C20 stained glass to east window.

Listing NGR: SD8599314568

Legacy

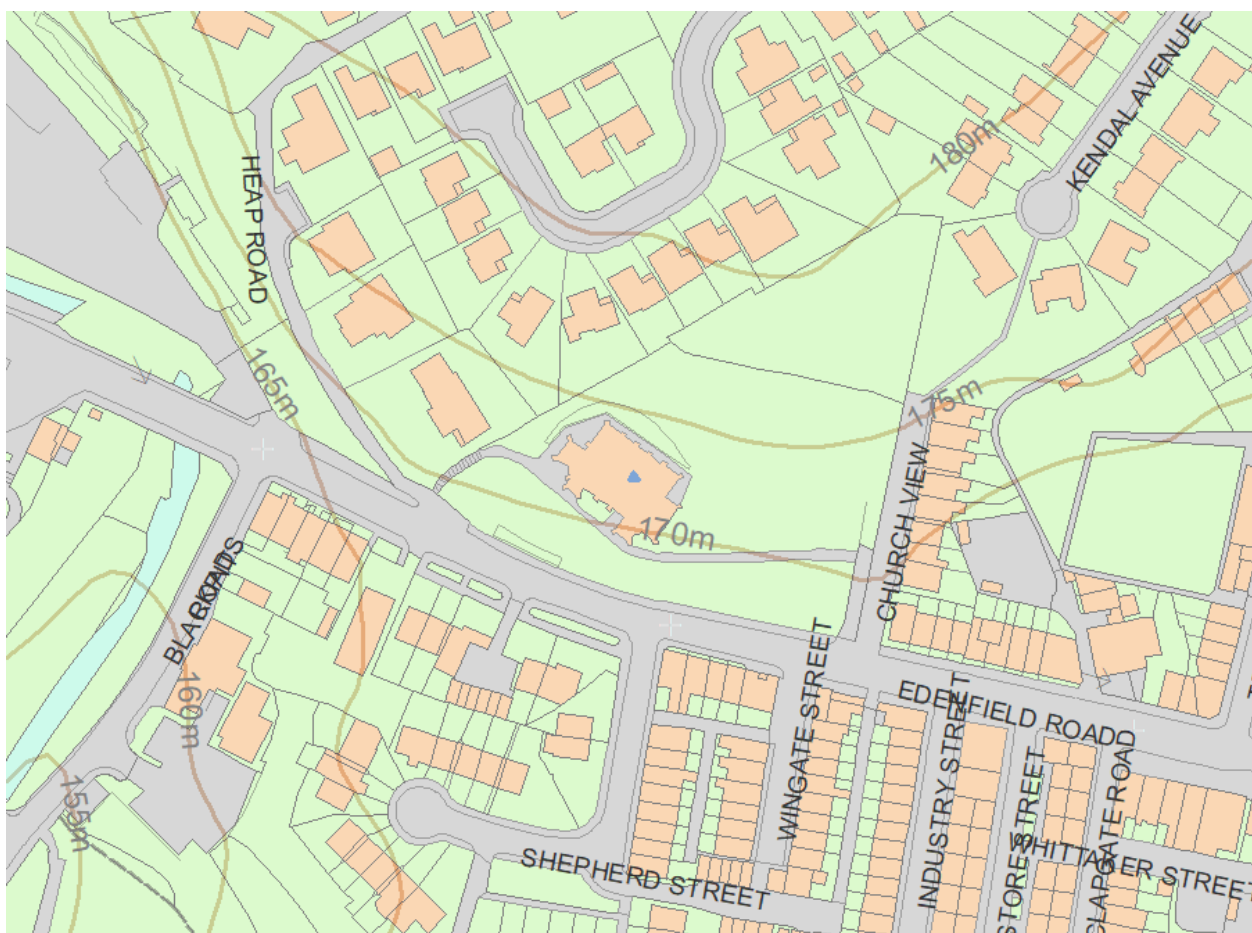
The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number:358880

Legacy System:LBS

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

This map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. This copy shows the entry on 18-Dec-2025 at 16:37:59.

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[Back to top](#)