

Cawthorne Methodist Church

Design, Access and Heritage Statement



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1 - Project Information

Project Title: Cawthorne Methodist Church

Site Address: Darton Road, Cawthorne, Barnsley, S75 4HR

Client: Cawthorne Methodist Church

Prepared By: Jenny Harrison of Grid and Grain Architects

Date: 27th July 2026

2 - Executive Summary

Brief summary of the proposed development.

The proposed development is to provide improved access to the front of Cawthorne Methodist Church and to improve the internal environment within the Sanctuary by replacing the single glazing with aluminium double glazed units.

The access to the front will be improved with the installation of a fixed ramp and glazed doors to improve views into the church.

3 - Site Location and Context

Cawthorne Methodist Church lies to the Northern Boundary of the Cawthorne Conservation Area, on Darton Road. The church is not a designated heritage asset, but is marked as a local landmark within the Conservation Area Appraisal. This is due to its prominence on Darton Road and its architectural contribution to the Conservation Area.

A key consideration of the site development is the importance of the views past the church to the landscape beyond. As the land drops away to the rear of the church, there are pleasant views over the surrounding countryside. The Eastern elevation of the church fronts onto the footpath that gives way to these views across the countryside. None of the proposals impact on the views past the church.

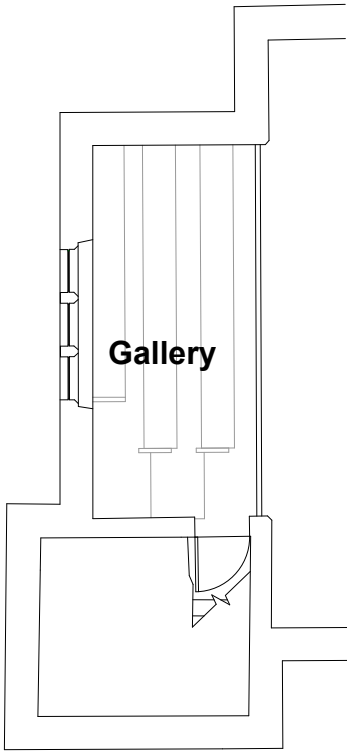
There is a presumption against the replacement of original windows with UPVC within the guidance of the Conservation Area Appraisal. This is due to some poor replacements and additions historically, of which the rear lobby doors of the church are used as an example.



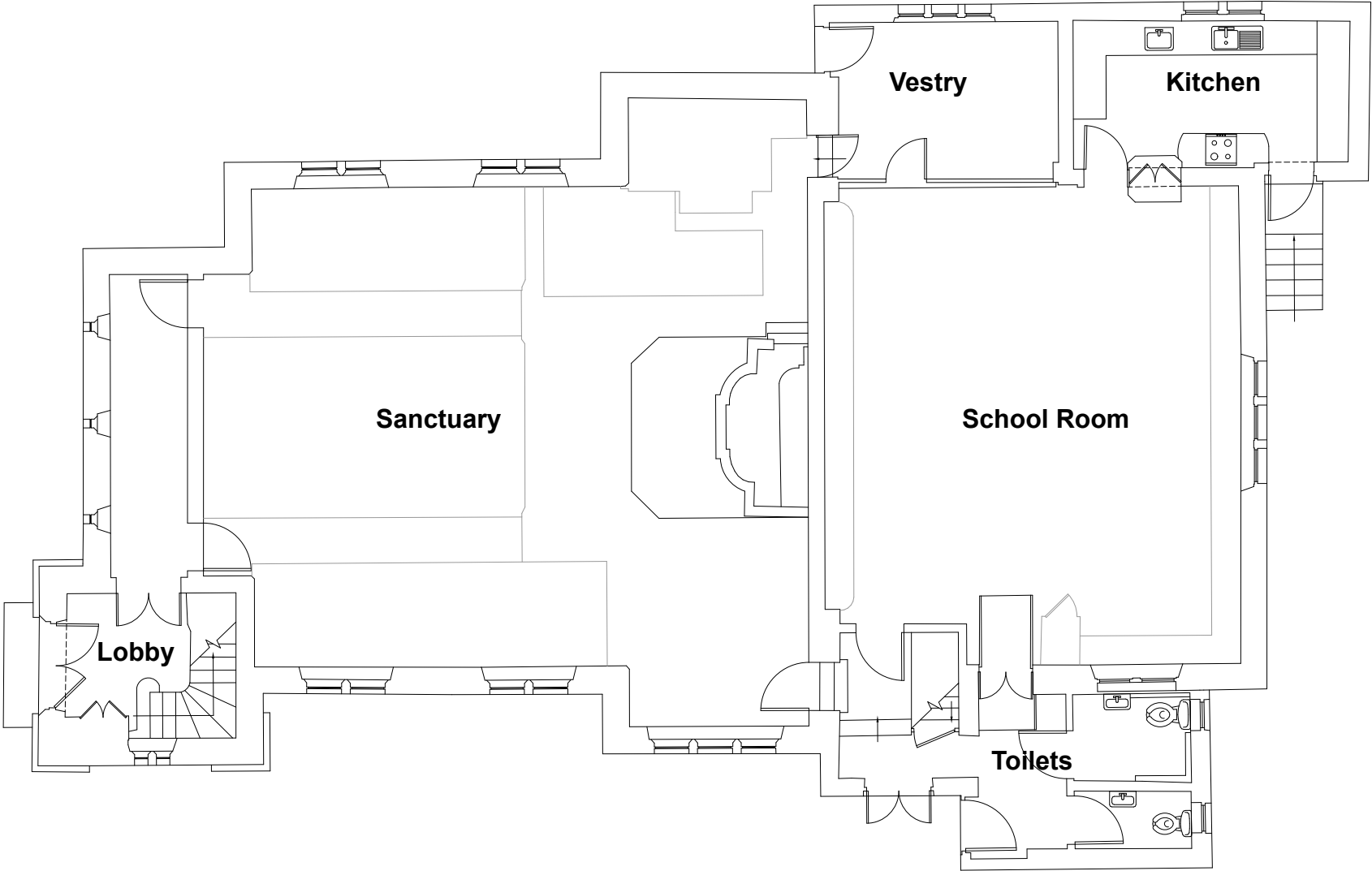
Aerial View of the Church

4 - Existing Plans

The front portion of the church is relatively unchanged from how it was built. Later additions to the schoolroom and toilets are not addressed with this proposal.



Existing First Floor Gallery Plan

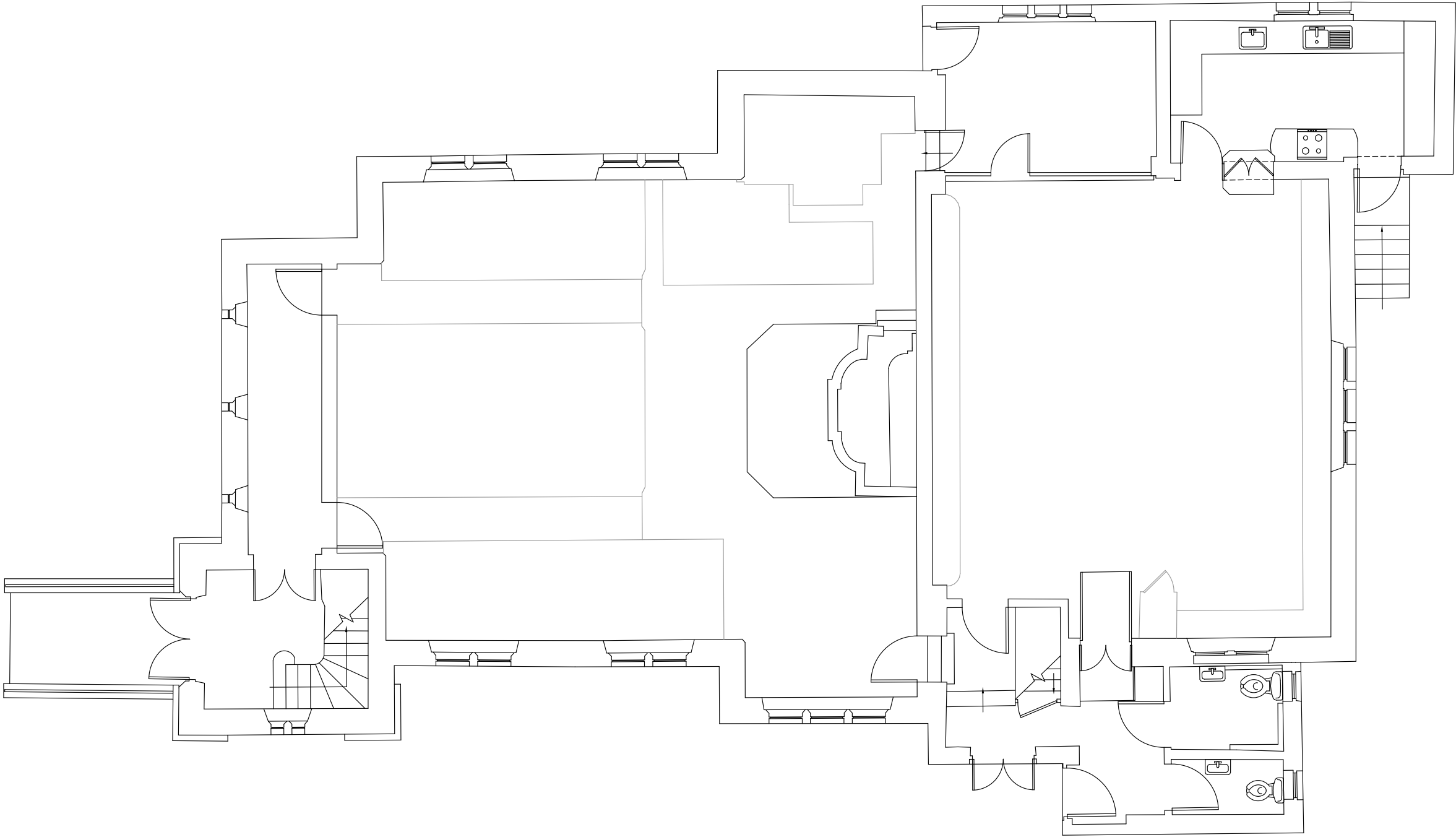


Existing Ground Floor Plan

5 - Proposed Plans

The access to the building is improved through the installation of a new permanent ramp to the front door. The timber double doors will be replaced with double glazed aluminium doors. A push access button internally and externally allows the doors to open remotely and improve access for people with impaired mobility.

Internally, the front lobby will be redecorated and the cupboard removed. The doors will open outwards, which will improve space and circulation within the lobby. The lobby is a double height space, which lends itself well to being lit internally and providing a welcoming reception space for the church.



Proposed Ground Floor Plan

6 - Access and Inclusivity

Access to the church is up 2 steps and through double timber doors.

A temporary ramp is put in place prior to Worship on a Sunday, but otherwise the Sanctuary is not fully accessible.

There is a path to the side of the church leading to the school room at the rear. This is currently uneven and overgrown.

The proposal is to replace the steps with a fixed ramp. This will have low stone walls to the edges with painted metal railings above and stone flags to the surface. Local stone will be sourced to match the building.

The existing pedestrian gate in the boundary wall will be removed to open up the site and make manoeuvring in a wheelchair easier.

The existing overgrowth to the Eastern side of the church will be cleared, to allow new paving and planting beds to be set out. The new path to the side of the church will follow the site gradient and lead to the School Room access doors, joining up with the existing path.

The existing path to the Western side of the church will remain unchanged.

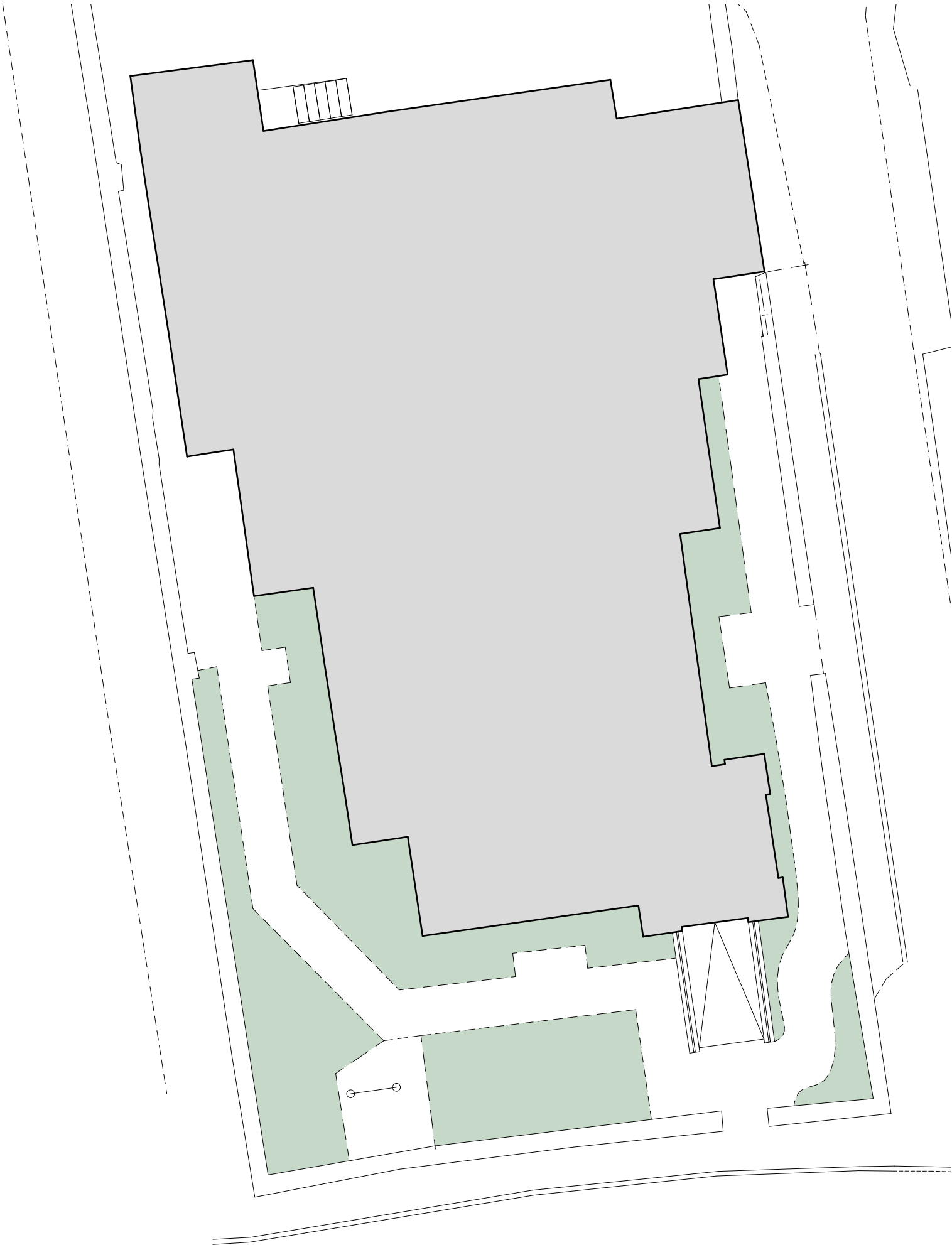
The church has a thriving community and hosts many events in the schoolroom to the rear.

In order to make better use of the building, it would be beneficial to open up the front of the church to appear more welcoming.

The proposal is to remove the existing timber double doors and to replace them with double glazed heritage aluminium doors. Together with the redecoration of the front lobby and some strategic lighting design, this will present a more welcoming frontage to the building.

The existing doors are not original. The proposed doors will have slim aluminium frames, to match the new windows elsewhere in the church. The glazing will be clear, with no glazing bars.

Access will be improved through a push button to allow automatic opening of the doors.



7 - External Changes

The external changes comprise the new access ramp, new double doors to the front lobby and new windows to the Sanctuary.

The proposed materiality is all inkeeping with the church.

The existing windows are a mixture of leaded lights, timber, steel and UPVC.

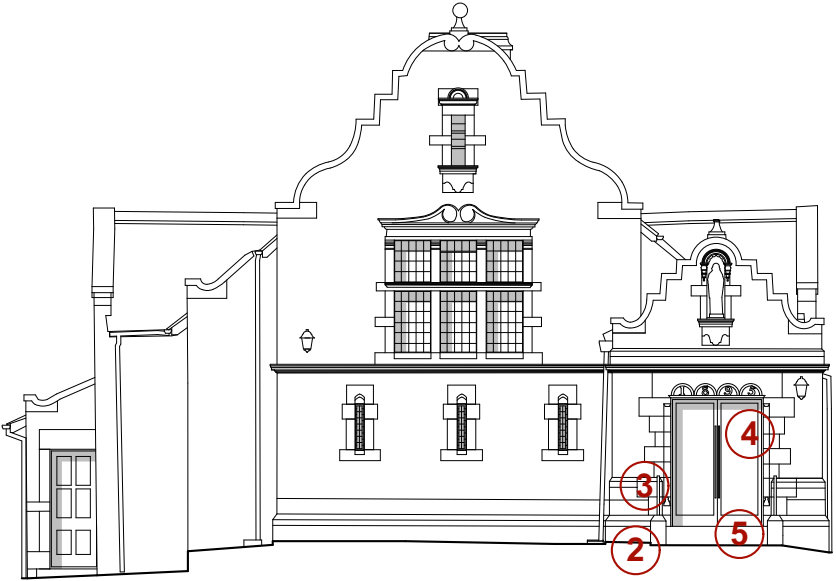
The environmental conditions within the church are not adequate, with the space taking a long time to heat up in winter due to the leaky single glazing.

The proposal is to replace the windows to the side elevations within the Sanctuary with slimline (24mm) heritage aluminium windows. These will be clear glazed, without glazing bars, to maximise the natural light in the church and so as not to detract from the detail of the existing church. Fixed glazing ensures sight lines are kept to a minimum. The windows to be replaced are not original and are in poor condition.

The front window to the 1st floor gallery comprises colourful leaded lights. This window makes a positive contribution to the Conservation Area and will be retained. Timber secondary glazing will be installed behind this window to improve the thermal performance. The secondary glazing will be removable, in order to manage the condensation levels and easily clean the existing window. The window comprises 6 glazed panels, each of which will have a removable secondary glazing unit fixed behind. The units will be fixed glazing in order to minimise the sizes of the timber sections.

The new ramp to the front will have low level stone walls, to match the existing stone used within the church and across the site. The ramp will be paved with natural stone. The railings to the ramp are black painted metal.

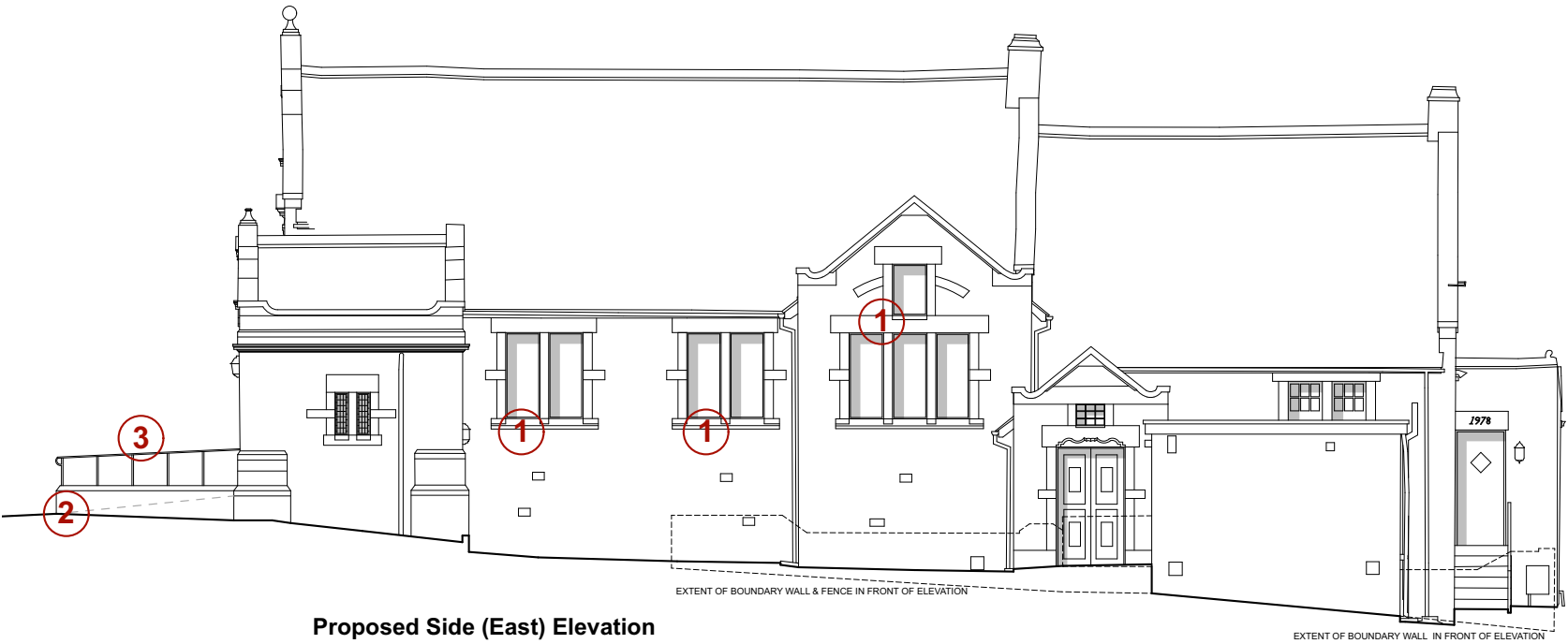
The new windows and double doors are all slimline heritage aluminium double glazed, painted powder coated black.



Proposed Front (South) Elevation

Key:

- 1 Painted powder coated Heritage Slimline double glazed aluminium fixed windows. Black.
- 2 Low level stone wall with coping stone - to match existing church
- 3 Painted metal railings. Black.
- 4 Painted powder coated Heritage Slimline double glazed aluminium doors. Black.
- 5 Ramp to meet door threshold. Paved with natural stone.



Proposed Side (East) Elevation

8 - Heritage and Design Information

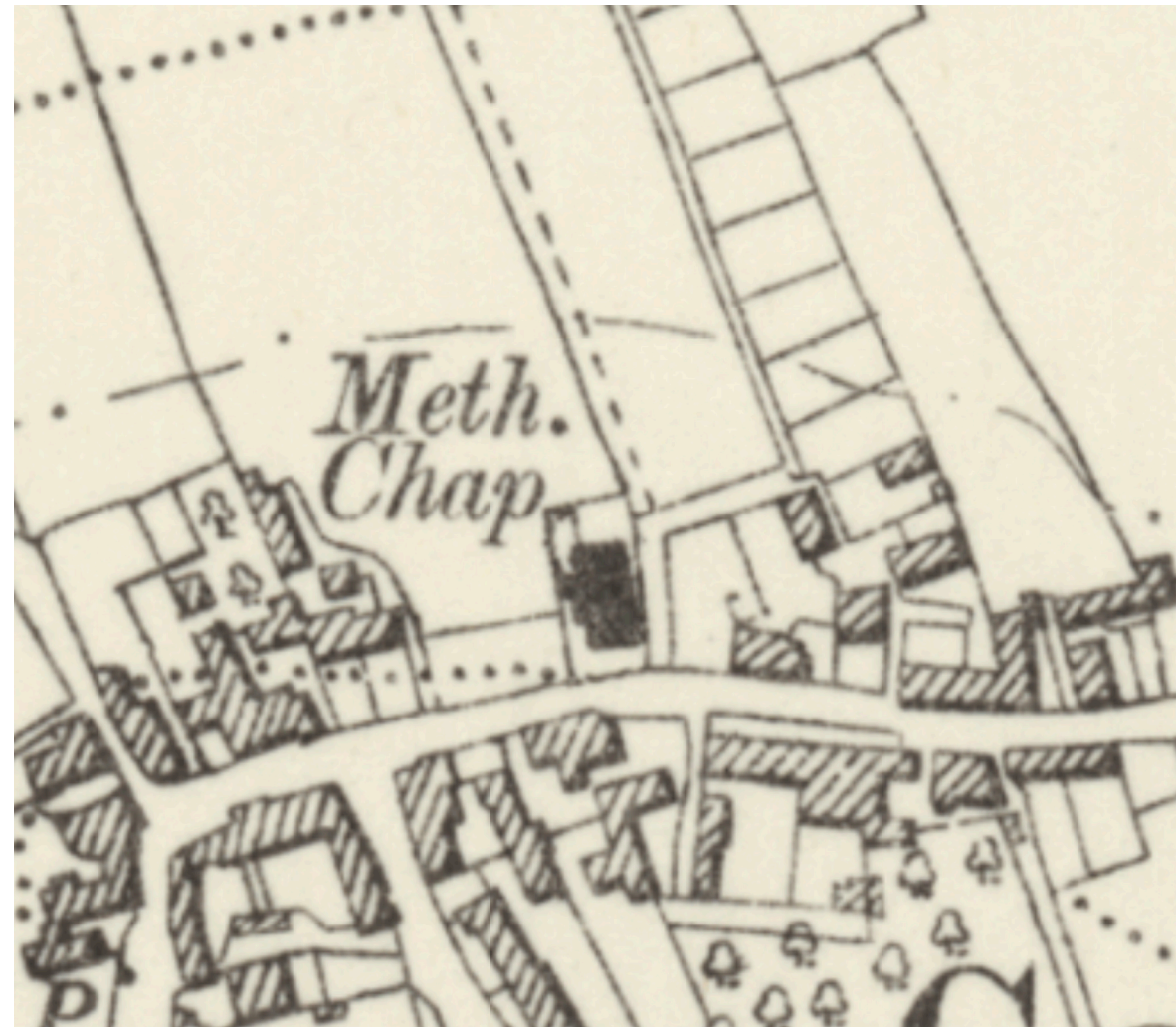
The building comprises a sanctuary to the front, with a school room, Vestry, kitchen and toilets to the rear. The layout of the building is typical of Methodist chapels, which often were attached to a school room due to the Methodist's advocacy of schooling for children who otherwise would not receive any.

The building was constructed in 1895, according to the date stone above the front door. The school room is likely to have been constructed shortly after. There is a later flat roofed extension to the East, which houses the School Room lobby and toilets.

There is evidence that a primitive Methodist Chapel has been in the village since 1848, though the location of this is not known.



1897 OS Map



1923 OS Map

9 - Heritage Impact Assessment

The proposed changes to the building are sought in order to improve accessibility, create a more open and welcoming frontage and improve the thermal performance of the building.

The retention of the front window ensures that the church still positively contributes to the conservation area.

The side windows are less valuable, having already been replaced in areas and not being all the same style and material. The replacement of these windows with heritage aluminium windows will enhance the overall appearance of the building. The windows will all match throughout the Sanctuary.

The church is not listed, so upgrades to the fabric of the building in order to improve the thermal performance are considered to be positive changes. These changes will help the church community to grow and ensure that the building can be well-used by the community. The original fabric of the building is being retained where possible, for example the front stained glass. The proposals are mainly to replace later alterations like the entrance doors and side windows with more thermally efficient units.

Ensuring that the building can be used year-round, can be easily maintained and be efficient to heat will help to keep it occupied and viable as a community space.

Regarding the new ramp to the front, social inclusion is a key heritage consideration. The front access project is the first stage in the church's aspiration to be wholly inclusive and accessible. The building aims to be easy to use and welcoming to all members of the community.