



## Pearson Trust Working Group

December 2017



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### Notes of the Pre-Application Stakeholder Consultation Meeting

Date: 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017 OSR 2:00-5:00 pm.

#### 1. Apologies

*Attendees:*

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Dr David Knight         | Senior Church Buildings Officer, Church Buildings Council (CBC)                     |
| The Ven Dr Anne Dawtry  | Archdeacon of Halifax and Warden of Readers (CBC)                                   |
| The Ven Michael Everitt | Archdeacon of Lancaster and Blackburn<br>Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC)          |
| John Tillotson          | Chairman, Blackburn Diocesan Advisory Committee                                     |
| Megan Atkinson          | Conservation Officer, Lancaster City Council (LCC)                                  |
| Joanne Needham          | Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)                              |
| James Darwin            | Senior Caseworker for Northern England, The Georgian Group                          |
| James Hughes            | Victorian Society   |
| Sir Nick Pearson        | Chairman, Pearson Trust and former resident   |
| Sally Sharp             | Trustee, Pearson Trust  |
| Revd Michael Hampson    | Vicar of Gressingham and associate member of the Pearson Trust Working Group (PTWG) |
| Mike Darwell            | Director, John Coward Architects  |
| Jane Paxman             | Chair, PTWG   |
| Alice Helyar            | Secretary, PTWG   |
| Moyra Jacques           | Member, PTWG  |
| David Wiper             | Member, PTWG and Parochial Church Council   |
| Mary McClements         | Churchwarden.   |

*Apologies:*

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Andrew Drummond            | Development Manager, LCC                                    |
| Marie Smallwood            | Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas, Historic England |
| Revd Canon Andrew Holliday | Blackburn DAC   |
| Debbie Robinson            | Member, PTWG  |

#### 2. Introduction to the Project

A vote of thanks to all attendees for coming. A brief overview of the vision of the project given.



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An introduction to the options and alternatives considered by a small working group (the Pearson Trust Working Group (PTWG)), which were narrowed down to;

- a. Footprint;
- b. Footprint Plus; and
- c. No Change.

An introduction to the business model upon which the project would run was also given. Works to the church would include undertaking that identified in the quinquennial report, but these would only be undertaken once the future of the church is secured.

### **3. Questions/comments regarding the Statement of Significance and the Statement of Need documents**

Comments invited on the two documents.

It was felt that the Statement of Need lacked information on how the Church will continue to be used for worship.

It was considered that the pews are unusual; the Statement of Significance attributes Victorian seating as being of high significance. Interesting that the eighteenth century fabric was reused in the re-order and that the central block doesn't imitate the Georgian pews precisely. It is a coherent set of seating and it is easy to distinguish the two sets of seating, which appears to have been done deliberately in the re-ordering. The Statement of Significance does not address why the pews went back in the way that they did; it needs to look at why they were put back in this way.

The Statement of Need must express accurately and clearly the need, such that the Georgian Soc., Victorian Soc. and the SPAB are able to understand the proposals and the extent to which change is to happen. They will also consider the alternatives to the proposals. The Statement of Need must also explain why it is necessary to undertake certain work such as pew removal.

The Statement of Need must therefore articulate why a certain size/space is needed and therefore why a certain number of pews must be removed. Why is the degree of flexibility achieved within that size of space? How that particular building (and configuration) will work? Recommended that a Space Audit is undertaken to justify the need for the works and provide evidence for the Statement of Need, e.g. including disabled access. It should include a discussion on the character of the space and its' special qualities.

A summary of the findings of the Quinquennial Report was given:

- The Nave to be re-roofed;
- The tower roof to be replaced; and
- The masonry of the tower requires significant repair work.



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These works need to be done, without which the building would fall into disrepair. Costs of the repair work provide a sustainable reason for the proposals and for securing the future continued use of the building.

Justification for removal of the Marton Memorial is required in the Statement of Need, i.e. explain why a small meeting space is required. Every effort must be taken to ensure that family, heirs and successors of the Memorial are sought and documentary evidence provided to this effect (advert in a gazette). One attempt has previously been made to find a descendent. One communication from a descendent was received, they were in their 80's.

A summary of the heating strategy was given, including an explanation of the independent working group set up within the village to investigate renewable options.

It was felt that justification for the mezzanine must be very strong due to the fact that it is likely to have a significant impact on users as they enter the church, reducing headroom and creating a darker, enclosed space. Justification for the degree of intervention is required. A decision is needed on how much space is required and how the space will be accommodated within the church.

A summary of the car parking provision and requirements was given. Lack of flexibility for parking at the Old School Room (OSR) is further justification for the proposals to be included in the Statement of Need.

The cost of lift maintenance (for a mezzanine) needs to be included in the annual budget.

The DAC felt that the project is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Whilst they were not keen on options 9 and 10, further work is required to strengthen the Statement of Need to support the other options, using flexibility of space as justification.

The future of the font? It will be kept and placed in an appropriate location. It should be included in the Statement of Significance – early eighteenth century.

A brief discussion held, acknowledging the opinion of Historic England (preferring options 9 and 10). Explanation that these two options do not solve the problem of the church itself, with added expense, more buildings to maintain and archaeological challenges to overcome.

Locating a WC in the base of the tower with excavation is feasible and it will still be structurally sound. Likely to be an expensive option.

An explanation given regarding the proposed lease of the building by the village from the Church of England. A CIO would be formed to manage the church and the OSR. It was emphasised that it must be clear in the lease agreement that the CIO is responsible for the upkeep of the fabric of the building. In addition, it is important that all the required church events are included in the lease. The Vicar's share will still be paid and the PCC would still be operational.



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The future of the organ and future provision for the music in the church? As a piece of organ building it is not considered special and the war memorial issue could be satisfied by attaching the memorial to the wall. It is considered the existing sound system in the church is sufficient and there is also a keyboard.

The Victorian Society has sometimes found that carpeting a church is discordant, however, it will depend on each case.

Comments were requested regarding the Paley and Austin work, especially that undertaken on the windows. It was felt that the mezzanine proposals would have a detrimental impact on the windows and tower, however, it was stressed that the mezzanine would be free standing and not interfere with the fabric of the building.

#### **4. Draw the meeting to a close.**

Process going forwards and comments back from each group in response to the meeting?

The CBC will write a draft report or letter which will go to the committee and they will return with a letter of advice. Take note of the advice seriously as the Chancellor will look at how we respond to the advice of the CBC.

The PTWG to send the meeting notes to the DAC secretary along with the drawings and other information, and request informal advice from the DAC committee.

The PTWG will receive a letter from the Georgian Soc., which will likely take the form of further questions rather than comments at this stage.

The Victorian Soc. and Georgian Soc. will respond following a committee meeting where the proposals and findings of this meeting will be discussed.

A vote of thanks was given to everyone for attending the meeting.