

PROJECT



THE RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF ST JUDE'S CHURCH KENSINGTON

by Russell Hanslip and Basil Jradeh
HMDW Architects

In 2010, work began on site at the Grade II* listed St Jude's Church, to transform the building into a suitable space for four separate user groups, across three floors. The project included comprehensive engineering works, excavating more of the undercroft, a new roof covering, external landscaping, and a complete fitout. The primary user, St Paul's Theological College, gains three lecture spaces, offices, a café and reception area, a library, and full amenities.

History

Fourteen years ago, the large Victorian church building near Gloucester Road tube station was looking tired, sad and in need of tender loving care. It was designed by the Godwin brothers, George and Henry, and built between 1867 and 1870 (they also designed St Mary, the Boltons, and St Luke, Redcliffe Gardens). The vicarage was added in 1874 and the tower and spire in 1879. It had an excellent light-infused interior, the previous coloured glass having been blown out of the large windows during the Second World War. The forty-eight roof slopes were difficult to access, and the results of lack of maintenance over many years were evident internally.

The undercroft contained isolated areas of ageing offices, homeless projects, and a nursery; this had only been partially excavated, and was primarily occupied by coal chutes, old plant, debris and rubbish.

In addition to continued worship, a range of other optional uses was considered, including development of the partial crypt, with the possibility of commercial use at the

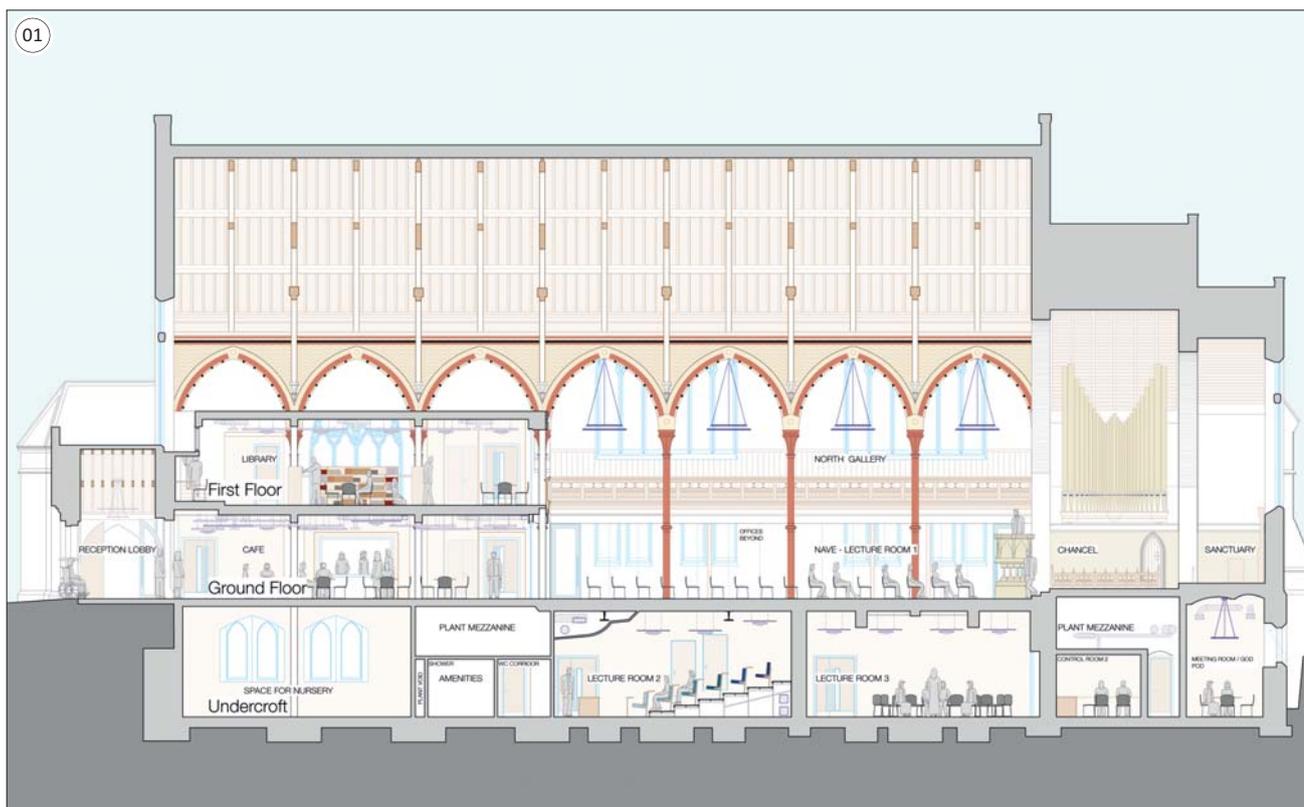


west end. Planning permission was obtained for the physical alterations, and change of use for part of the crypt. Difficulties in raising sufficient funding saw these permissions lapse, the congregation move to St Mary the Boltons, and the building deteriorate further.

Brief

A collaborative effort by the Bishops of London and Chelmsford led to the creation of St Mellitus College, a new kind of theological college, that has developed innovative and new ways of training clergy. Based in West London, East London, and Chelmsford, the college was distributed across various inappropriate buildings, none of which were an ideal centre for the >

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college to operate from. A new location was required, and the Bishop of London persuaded the diocese that the under-used building of St Jude would be an ideal location.

Fortuitously, components of the previously approved scheme fitted remarkably well with the building's new purpose. The drawings were dusted off, a planning application made afresh, and approvals, both secular and ecclesiastical, obtained swiftly.

A large lecture room seating 400, also useable for worship, was required, together with two additional lecture rooms, each seating 60, with break-out spaces. In addition, a café, commercial kitchen, library for 10,000 books, offices, amenities, studios for broadcasting, together with space for an existing nursery school and social outreach base for disadvantaged folk were also needed. Tweaking of the original scheme, including the separation of access, so that each principal use could be self-contained, saw all accommodation being potentially

shoe-horned into the Victorian edifice. However, full excavation of the crypt was needed, part pre-existing, to be dug a further 2.1m, and part a mining exercise, including excavating an area under the forecourt to accommodate a boiler room and new electrical sub-station, the roof of which was to be a disabled car parking area.

The college dean had seen a facility in Kings Cross, designed for short-term usage by any group requiring seminar, meeting, and office space, rented out on a commercial basis, the feel of which matched the aspirations of the college. The area was full of light, bright colours, exposed services, inexpensive finishes, with an informality and lightness of touch which seemed appropriate for students.

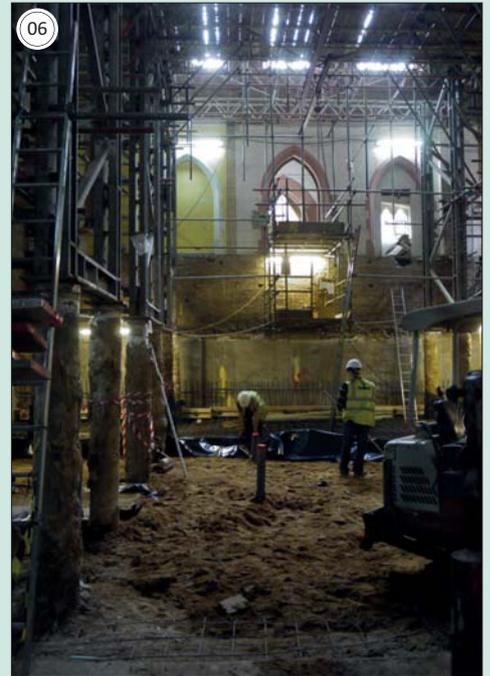
HMDW Architects' task was to tailor a listed building of some significance to this new role and aesthetic considerations. It was decided that the nave should be reduced in size by the removal of the west gallery, to locate the café at

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- 01 Longitudinal sectional drawing of the completed building
- 02 Nave view west, 2010, before work began, towards the narthex and west door – which is now occupied by the cafe, with library above
- 03 The crypt, filled with debris, earth and rubbish, 2010
- 04 Nave view east, 2010
- 05 Nave, 2010 – the underpinning and ground floor structure is visible, as is the newly-excavated basement below.
- 06 The basement, looking up towards the west entrance doors



the west end with the library above, and offices for college staff installed behind frameless glass under the north and south galleries, which would remain above. Copious use of glass was to enable the views of the original



volume of the building to continue to be visible. The chancel was to remain unchanged.

The two smaller lecture rooms were to be located in the crypt, together with their ancillary accommodation of breakout rooms, >



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PROJECT TEAM

Client:
St Paul's Theological
College

Architect:
HMDW Architects
Ltd.

Structural Engineer:
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Mechanical &
Electrical Engineer
Consultant:
Martin Thomas
Associates

Mechanical &
Electrical Contractor:
Munro Building
Services

Quantity Surveyor:
Robert Lombardelli
Partnership

Lighting Designer:
Light Perceptions
Ltd.

Acoustic Consultant:
Sandy Brown
Associates

Contractor:
Mansell
Construction
Services Ltd.

Seating:
Mogo Direct

Glazing:
Schueco UK Ltd.

Acoustic ceiling
panels:
Ecophon

Photography:
Keith Wynn,
Photocraft
Hampstead
& Russell Hanslip,
HMDW Architects
Ltd.



meeting rooms, studios, etc. together with separate facilities for the nursery school and social outreach organisation.

Detailed design

140 HMDW A1 drawings were issued for construction, alongside 90 engineering drawings. These were shared, updated and revised alongside all other technical information on a regular basis via a private filesharing platform, with every member of the design and construction team.

Three dimensional computer models were produced by HMDW, to facilitate the choices of design, finishes, and colours of the café, library, stairwells and main lecture spaces.

These were updated as part of the dialogue with the client, to achieve a desirable interior environment before work had begun on site.

Construction and Completion

It was decided that the three levels could be treated differently. The crypt, largely a new construction, was to be a series of modern spaces, informal yet unified by varying shades of the colour blue throughout.

The ground floor, with new partitions shamelessly modern within the historic interior, was to be largely red. As seen so often in the last fifty years, complex and vibrant brickwork, unaffordable by today's clients, was 'simplified' with a coat of white. In the 'best' cases, >



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Images of St Jude's Church, Brompton supplied by Keith Wynn, Photocraft, Hampstead and Russell Hanslip, HMDW Architects.

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The Jasper was recently supplied to St Jude's Church, Brompton, London as featured in this edition of Church Building & Heritage Review.

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limewash – not so at St Jude’s. Oil based white paint, becoming grey with age, was applied to every brick surface. All interior walls were stripped back to the original fair-faced brickwork finish, with much encouragement from English Heritage. The removal of the dreary and damaged grey came as a revelation to all as the polychromatic brickwork with its terracotta red, warm buff and charcoal black, plus beautiful incised murals depicting the natural world, were once again singing in the sunlight afforded by the huge south and west windows.

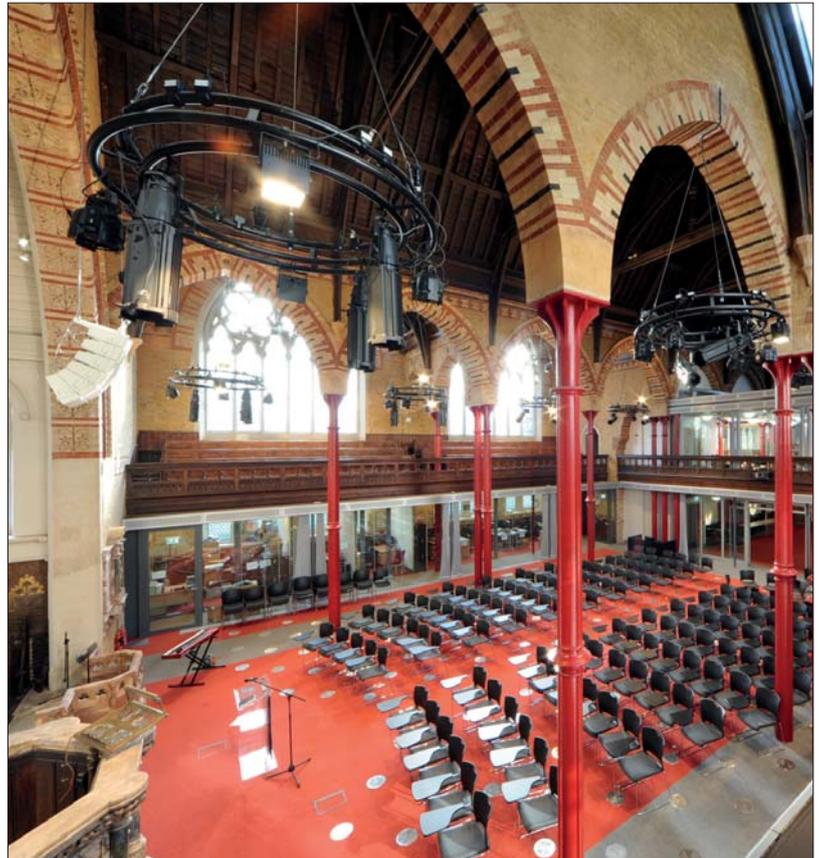
The first floor library, a space for serious study, although overlooking the warm brightness of the former nave, was to be treated in greys, to avoid too many distractions. The levels were to be linked by a glass enclosed lift and new staircases of concrete and brightly coloured floor paint.

Lighting to the main area was purpose-designed, with a series of coronas intended to allow uplights, downlights, theatrical lights, and even speakers to be able to be fitted at any time.

Each of the commercial areas was studied acoustically at an early stage, and elements adjusted in order to moderate reverberation times. Purpose-designed acoustic blinds cover the new glazing around the main lecture room, controlled by electric motors to allow any pitch of blade, or complete opening, according to the specific function required. Smaller spaces have thick acoustically absorbent ceiling panels, often in circular form, to continue a theme that commenced with the coronas and extended into lighting elsewhere.

The glazed screen between nave and café can be folded open, allowing the seating area to be extended to the west end, as well as using the north and south galleries for their original purpose, when large gatherings are required.

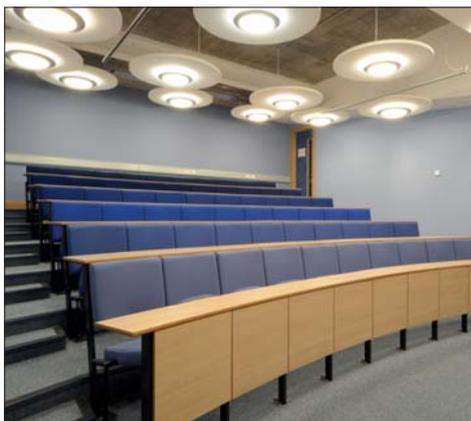
ST JUDE'S CHURCH



Thus, the ground floor can be used for worship or as a flexible space for college use.

Externally, the forty-eight roof slopes were stripped and re-covered in bands of Welsh grey and green slates, to resurrect the vibrancy of the original design. The existing Kentish Ragstone walls have been left unchanged, with minimal impact on the surrounding square.

The result has been applauded by the younger generation, for whom it is largely intended. Some five hundred students are involved in courses at St Jude's already. It is not often that a 140 year old high Victorian gothic church is heard being described by a student as 'funky, I love it', hopefully proving that the brief has been answered successfully. ■



Light Perceptions are delighted to have worked with hmdw architects on the redevelopment of St Jude's Church

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