

St Benedicts Church, Ardwick

Heritage Statement

July 2026

1.0 Introduction – Purpose and Authorship

This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Levrant to accompany an application for Listed Building Consent for internal works at the Grade II* listed St Benedicts Church, Ardwick (**Figure 1**).

It is proposed to put the building back into use as a church following 20+ years of it being an indoor climbing centre. Manchester Vineyard propose to establish a long-term, sustainable base for their community to enable regular worship, community programmes, and wider public use, while supporting the ongoing stewardship and active reuse of the listed building for the benefit of the local community.

This Heritage Statement is the result of a process which synthesises relevant evidence sourced from documentary research, site analysis, building surveying, and professional judgment. The documentary research was based upon primary and secondary sources, including maps, archival drawings, historic newspapers, and historic images.

Surveying of the Site was conducted in February 2026 by visual inspection.

This statement was prepared by:

- Kirsten McKnight [BA(Hons), MA, MSc, IHBC] – Associate Director

1.1 Location and Designations

Location

The Site is located on the corner of Bennett Street and St Benedicts Avenue in Ardwick, approximately 3km south-east of Manchester City Centre (**Figure 2**).

Heritage Designations

St Benedicts Church is a Grade II* listed building (**Figure 2**). The list description for the building is in **Appendix I**.

It is not located within a conservation area.

1.2 Overview of Legislation, Planning Policy and Guidance

This document was prepared in consideration of the following:

National Legislation and Policy

- Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 66
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) N.B. Last updated February 2025.
 - The relevant paragraphs are: 135, 139, 207, 212, 213, 214, and 215

National Guidance

- National Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) (2024)
- Conservation principles, policies and guidance for the sustainable management of the historic environment, English Heritage, April 2008
- Good Practice Advice in Planning, Historic England (GPAs):
 - Planning Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets (December 2017)
- Advice Notes, Historic England (HEANs)
 - Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets (October 2019)

Relevant Regional and Local Policy and Guidance

- Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone (PfE) (2024)
 - Policy JP-P2 addresses 'Heritage'
- Manchester's Core Strategy (2012)
 - Policy CC9 (Design and Heritage), Policy EN3 (Heritage), Policy EN2
- Unitary Development Plan
 - Development Control Policy 19.1



Figure 1: The Site as existing.

(Source: Google)

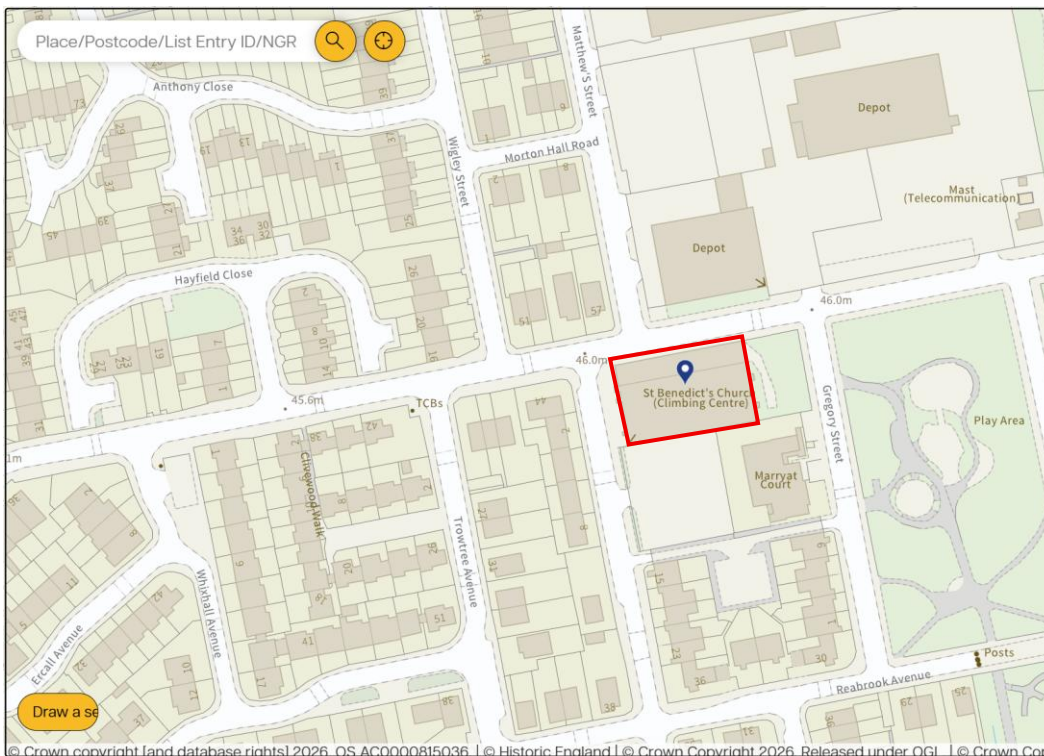


Figure 2: Location of the Church identified by the blue pin/ red outline.

(Source: Historic England).

2.0 History and Development

2.1 Brief Historical Background of the Immediate Context and the Site

Ardwick and Gorton evolved from rural townships into dense manufacturing hubs during the Industrial Revolution. The historic industrial suburb south-east of Manchester city centre, was densely populated with rows of terrace housing which sat cheek-by-jowl with large industrial sites (Figure 3).

St Benedict's was commissioned and paid for by the Bennett family, timber merchants, who took a very great interest in both its ritual and its architectural form. The Diocesan Church Building Society had asked the Bennett's in 1876 to donate a plot of land for a new church and John Marsland Bennett responded by offering to build and equip the church at his own expense.

The area was subject to mass slum clearance programmes from the 1960s-1980s (Figure 4) which had a direct impact on the population numbers in the area, and in turn the congregation numbers of the church; it also eradicated the historic setting of the church.

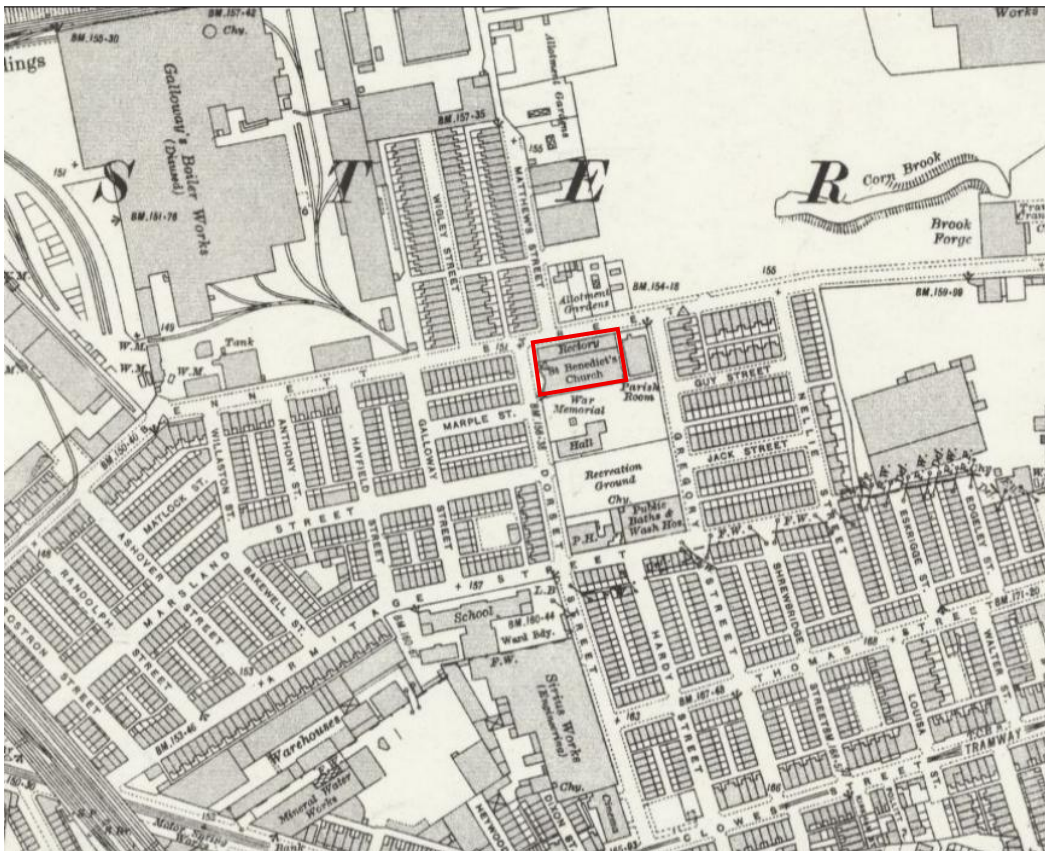


Figure 3: Ordnance Survey map of 1935 Compare with Figure 2 above to see the changes to the surrounding townscape/ urban grain as a result of mass slum clearances.

(Source: National Library of Scotland).



Figure 4: Image of the Site c. 1965 after a programme of slum clearance. The former church hall building to the right (south) of the building has subsequently been demolished and this area is now surface car parking.

(Source: Manchester Libraries GB127.m69942).

3.0 Site Survey

3.1 The building

St Benedict's was built in 1880 to the designs by J.S. Crowther. The plan of the building comprises a six-bay aisled nave, narthex, north-west tower, three bay chancel and side chapels. The walls are of exposed red brick in header bond with orange brick dressings, sandstone tracery and slate roofs. It is adjoined by a Sunday School, parsonage and vestry range on the north side. The church is highly visible within the local area due to its prominent tower.

Hyde described the building:

It is a great brick basilica, virtually unadorned, with a long domestic range stretching along Bennett Street and entirely at one with it. Only high above does it blossom into a huge clerestory, a veritable glass cage with superb geometric windows and a great rose to the west. A tall unbuttressed campanile rises sheer from the pavement at the north-west corner. The interior is brick too, but laid in an English bond instead of the headers that mark the whole of the outside. The few mouldings are executed in specials, with stone only used in the piers, in the windows and in some corbels and shaft-rings. The plan is a perfect rectangle without even buttresses or porches to break its clean footprint. Crowther has adjusted his proportions, making the aisles relatively narrow and dark and the nave very wide and triumphantly lit. There is a magnificent double hammerbeam roof, but again it is all size and structure - no decoration. P 46-47 Hyde, Matthew, J.S. Crowther in Manchester, Ancient Monuments Society Transactions Vol. 46 (2002)

Alterations were made to the church in the c.1960s, particularly to the Chancel area, where the configuration of the chancel steps, chancel wall and raised altar were replaced with an elaborate baldacchino and forward looking altar. The original 3-sided chancel steps and decorative chancel wall with roll-top copings and decorative railings were replaced with straight steps and unadorned walls with concrete copings (see **Figures 5 and 6**).

The Church was made redundant in c.2002 and was converted into an indoor climbing centre in c.2004. The 2003 planning and listed building consent application was for the “*conversion of redundant church to an indoor climbing centre including café and shop on the mezzanine level, including erection of climbing walls and formation of car park within 4x4m high security lighting columns and 2.4m high street railings and gates*”.

The interventions made focused on:

- A new surface car park being laid out to the south side of the building and level access being provided at the South Entrance without the need to alter the doorway. This made the Nave floor level accessible to all.
- The Chancel being converted by the insertion of a mezzanine structure with a coffee shop on the new upper floor. Beneath the mezzanine a Bouldering Wall structure for climbing practice was installed which lined and obscured the existing Chancel walls.
- The Nave being converted by the insertion of the main climbing wall structures. These were built from steel frames in front of the arcading. Views of the clerestory windows and sections of the arcading were still possible but inevitably compromised. The view of the oculus window in the west wall was also diminished.
- The present vestry spaces being converted to create male/female toilets and changing facilities with some locker/storage space.

Figures 5 - 9 illustrate the former interior arrangement of the Church prior to being made redundant, including the changes to the chancel. **Figures 10 - 16** illustrate the scheme for the conversion of the Church to an indoor climbing centre and how it appears today.

The greatest intervention to the internal space of the church has been the installation of the mezzanine structure to the chancel which restricts movement to the south and north chancel aisles. Whilst the north aisle is still open, allowing access into the northern range of the building, the southern side of the aisle has been partitioned to segregate the space. The climbing wall structures located within the main body of the nave are located hard up against the columns to the aisles which was done in an attempt to allow for the spatial arrangement of the Church to be understood and appreciated.

As part of the conversion of the Church to an indoor climbing centre, the organ, font, Baldachino, pulpit and alter table were all removed.

The north range of rooms, which were for the Sunday School, Presbytery and Vestry, still largely retain the historic plan form, fixtures and fittings. Later additions include fire doors and the installation of WC/ kitchen facilities etc.



Figure 5: Original arrangement of the Chancel c.1917.

(Source: Images of England: Ardwick)



Figure 6: Image of the reconfigured Chancel c.2002.
(Source: M. Hyde J S Crowther in Manchester).



Figure 7: Interior of the Church in 1969 – west end.

(Source: Manchester Central Library GB127.m70237)



Figure 8: Interior of the Church in 1969 – reconfigured chancel.

Source: Manchester Central Library GB127.m70236)



Figure 9: Interior of the Church in 1969 – north aisle.
(Source: Manchester Central Library GB127.m70240)

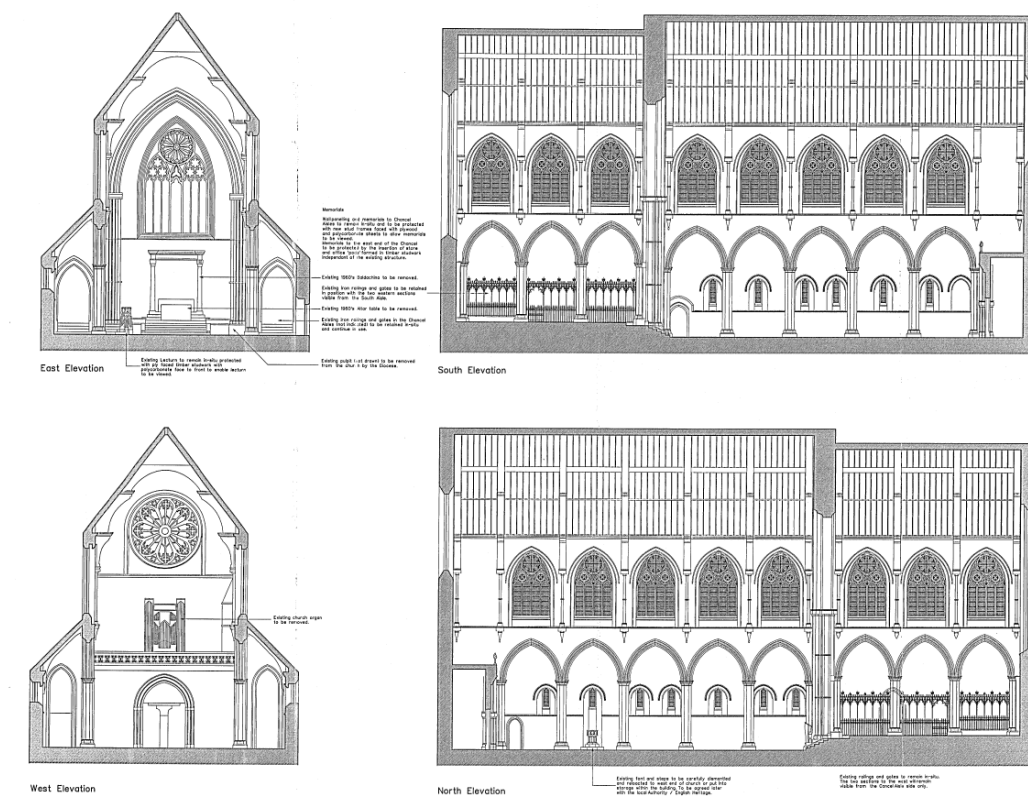


Figure 10: Existing sections of the Church in 2003 prior to conversion for indoor climbing centre.
(Source: Buttress via Planning Portal)

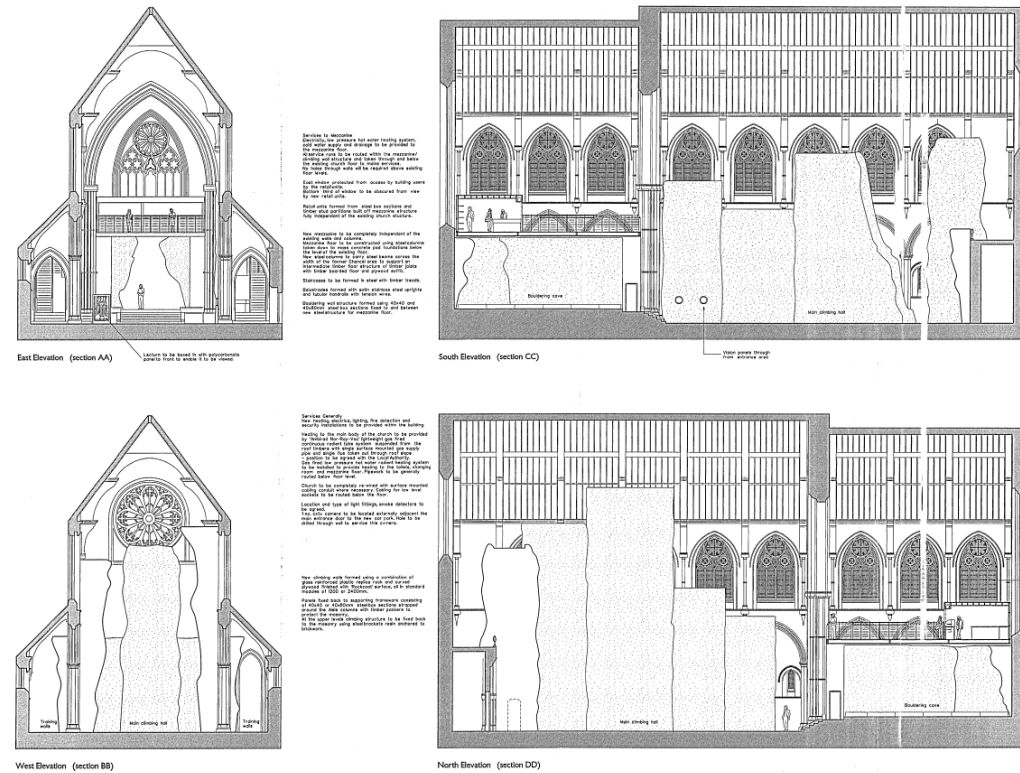
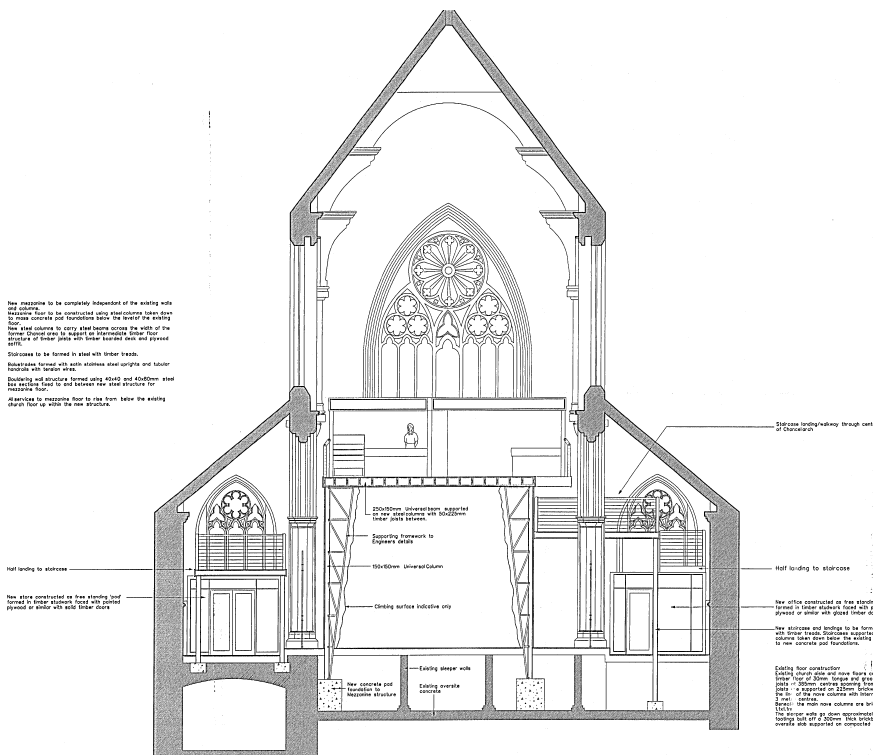


Figure 11: Proposed sections of the Church in 2003 prior to conversion to indoor climbing centre.

(Source: Buttress via Planning Portal)

Figure 12: Detailed proposed section of the Church in 2003 prior to conversion to indoor climbing centre.

(Source: Buttress via Planning Portal)



Figures 13-16: Photos of the Church as existing (Feb.2026) illustrating the former climbing centre structures as built.

Top left – the mezzanine structure within the south chancel aisle.

Top right – the nave looking west illustrating the climbing

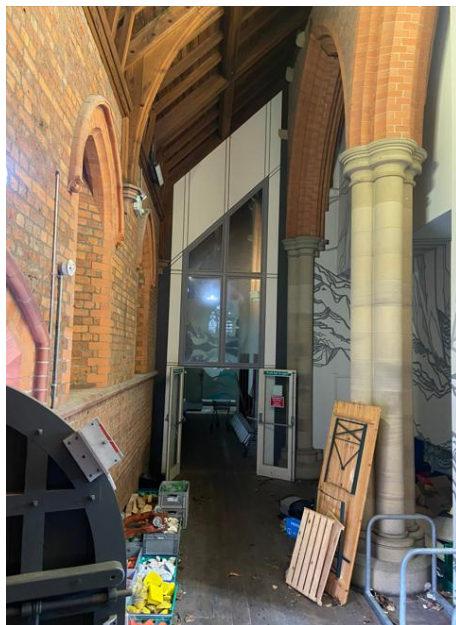


walls that shroud the arcade
and west end

Bottom left – the nave looking
east towards the former
chancel depicting the
mezannine structure,
bouldering walls and platform
that covers the chancel steps

Bottom right – the
partitioning of the south aisle

(Source: Levrant)



4.0 Significance Appraisal

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of the Significance Appraisal is to use recognised criteria to assess the heritage significance and interest of the Site.

The Appraisal accords with the requirements of the NPPF and uses Historic England's methodology outlined in the 2019 document, "Statements of Heritage Significance." Historic England's "Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance," published in 2008, has also been utilised as part of the following assessment.

The special architectural and historic interest of the St Benedict's Church is recognised by its Grade II* listed designation; however, it is necessary to assess the component parts of the interior in order to provide a baseline from which to assess the potential impact of the proposals.

- **High significance** relates to those parts or elements of the Site deemed to be of particularly special interest. These components are *fundamental* to the understanding of the building and its architectural design concept and play a major role in reflecting its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.
- **Medium heritage significance** relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of some interest. They will make a modest contribution to the understanding of buildings design concept and play a minor role in reflecting their historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.
- **Low significance** relates to those components of the Site deemed to be of more modest interest. They provide a relatively *minor contribution* to the understanding of the architectural design concept and a modest role in revealing its historic, artistic/architectural or archaeological interest.
- **No significance/Detrimental** features and elements that do not contain any special interest. These can *detract from the significance* of the building and maybe evidence of modern or ad-hoc refurbishments, or poor craftsmanship.

4.2 Statement of Significance

St Benedict's Church is of **high architectural significance** for the following reasons:

- The building is designed by the **renowned architect J.S. Crowther** and is considered to be one of his finest architectural achievements.
- The **architectural quality** of the building is confidently expressed through the impressive scale of the building and its dominance within the wider townscape.
- The surviving **internal plan form** which expresses a soaring central nave in contrast to dark narrow aisles. The integral arrangement of the parochial functions to the north side provides an unusually unified complex.
- Associated with the surviving plan form are the distinct **spatial qualities** of the different spaces within the building, which despite the current climbing wall structures, are still perceptible. The interior of the building is largely unadorned allowing features such as the double hammer beam roof, the quatrefoil columns, and the giant rose window to express the sheer volumes within the building.

- Surviving **original fixtures and fittings**, such as the lectern, internal doors and staircases (particularly to the north wing), the entrance doors to the west, the memorials/ plaques to the nave/ chancel nave walls, decorative screens within the chancel, alongside surviving stained glass windows, all contribute to the high architectural and artistic significance of the building. It is noted that the chancel steps and chancel wall are later additions and are of less significance.

St Benedict's Church is of **high historic significance** for the following reasons:

- The building is a product of the unprecedented expansion of Manchester's suburbs in the mid-to-late 19th Century **reflecting the historically important period** of industrialisation, growth, and social movement within English cities at this time.
- The building reflects the **boom in Catholicism and church building** during the mid-to-late 19th Century in England.
- The building is **associated with the Victorian patronage** and philanthropy of John Marsland Bennett who also had an influence on the building's design.

All the structures, fixtures and fittings associated with the c.2003 proposals to convert the building into a climbing centre are of **no heritage significance**. These include:

- The climbing wall structures in the nave
- The bouldering walls in the chancel
- The mezzanine structure in the chancel
- WC facilities

5.0 Impact Assessment

5.1 Proposals

The current proposals include:

- Removal of all the climbing wall structures to the nave
- Removal of the bouldering walls to the chancel
- Removal of the access stair to the mezzanine from the south chancel aisle
- Removal of the platform over the chancel steps
- Reinstate use of the west end entrance doors
- Make good the nave floor
- Insert partition to the east end of the nave
- Insert new door opening to the north aisle
- Install new platform lift to the south side of the chancel steps
- Level floor to the chancel south aisle
- Insert partition to the south chancel aisle steps
- Insert partition in the chancel
- Install kitchenette in chancel north aisle
- Install children's toilet

Please refer to the DAS and application drawings by BTP Architects for full details.

5.2 Methodology

The fundamental Planning requirement outlined in Section 66 of the 1990 Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2024) states that development affecting listed buildings should result in demonstrably positive 'heritage benefits', by avoiding or minimising 'harm' to the fabric, character, appearance and experience of the designated heritage asset.

The required tests as outlined in NPPF require that the level of "harm" is identified and weighted against the relative significance of the heritage asset in question. The significance appraisal above has identified those aspects of architectural and historic interest within the Grade II* Listed building and is intended to provide a clear evidence base on which the heritage impact can be understood.

Therefore, measuring the heritage impact of the proposals is essentially an evaluation of change to the fabric, character, and appearance of the identified heritage asset, balanced against its relative significance. Please refer to **Appendix II** for relative significance / values, and the criteria for assessing the magnitude of change and significance of impact used in this Heritage Statement.

This impact assessment will address the potential for direct impacts on the internal historic fabric of the listed building and its spatial qualities.

The effects are rated as: Major, Moderate, Minor, Negligible or Neutral, and can be direct or indirect, adverse or beneficial.

The assessment follows the recommended approach to evaluating heritage impact derived by ICOMOS (2011).

5.3 Assessment

The proposals for St Benedict's Church present a rare opportunity to put the Grade II* listed building back into the use for which it was originally intended.

Manchester Vineyard intends to establish St Benedict's once again as a place of worship, welcome and community life. The building will accommodate regular worship alongside meetings, training, pastoral support, children's activities, social-action work and community gatherings. The active use of the building will provide the investment required to maintain the building for the long term.

Following the church's closure, its conversion into a climbing centre provided an imaginative new use and played an important role in saving the building from vacancy and decline. Inevitably, however, the scale and density of the climbing structures transformed the interior and the way it was accessed and used. Climbing walls, bouldering structures, platforms, stairs and associated enclosures divided the nave and chancel, concealed significant features and prevented the original volume of the church from being fully understood or appreciated.

The removal of the climbing structures, and proposed use of the nave and aisles for worship space, will reinstate the principal interior space and restore views through the nave, aisles and chancel. At the west end, the removal of later coverings and the recommissioning of the western entrance will restore the visual relationship between the narthex, the entrance and the gallery above. Within the chancel and side chapels, the removal of redundant platforms, stairs and partitions will bring surviving panelling, memorials, screens and architectural details back into view allowing them to be understood and appreciated.

The proposed internal arrangement has been developed around the existing grain and hierarchy of the spaces within the building; the nave will become the principal worship and meeting hall, allowing its scale and architectural drama to be appreciated and understood as it was originally intended. The area beneath the existing chancel mezzanine will provide a more intimate fellowship and meeting room. Between these spaces, a central welcome area will form the heart of the church, connecting the southern level entrance, nave, chancel and clergy house and providing a clear place of arrival, gathering and orientation.

New partitions will be limited in height and positioned so that views above and through the principal interior remain open. Their design will acknowledge the traditional materials and character of the church while remaining identifiable as contemporary additions. New construction will be freestanding, lightly fixed and fully reversible. Historic components affected by the works will be carefully recorded, protected and reused or stored, while conservation repairs will be undertaken once the removal of the climbing structures allows the condition of the original, historic fabric to be fully assessed.

Inclusive access into and around the building is fundamental to the proposals; the existing level entrance from the southern parking area will provide the principal everyday entrance. A carefully formed opening through the north aisle wall will create a direct, level connection to the clergy house and its accessible facilities. A discreet glazed

platform lift beside the chancel steps, together with the regularisation of floor levels at the east end, will provide access to the principal public areas of the nave, chancel and side aisles. The historic west doors will also be recommissioned, restoring their architectural and ceremonial importance.

The renewed use must also meet contemporary expectations for the safety and wellbeing of children, families and vulnerable users. Dedicated and appropriately supervised children's accommodation will be created within existing spaces, including a controlled room for infants and preschool children, facilities for school-age children and young adults, and a supervised children's toilet close to the principal activity areas. The layout will support clear supervision, controlled access and appropriate separation between age groups, while improvements to welfare facilities, ventilation and circulation will allow the building to operate safely and effectively.

These practical requirements have been integrated into the historic building sensitively having been informed by the heritage interest of the historic fabric and spaces. By accommodating inclusive access, safeguarding, welfare and modern operational needs, through measured and carefully detailed interventions, the proposals will allow St Benedict's to serve present and future generations without detrimentally affecting the special interest of the building as a Grade II* listed structure.

Table 1: Impact Assessment

Building Element	Proposal	Impact / Mitigation
The Nave/ arcade/ columns	Removal of all the climbing wall structures to the nave	Moderate beneficial The removal of the climbing walls will reveal the original spatial qualities of the nave and aisles as well as enabling the architectural features of the arcade and roof to be fully appreciated once again.
Chancel/ below existing mezzanine structure	Removal of the bouldering walls to the chancel	Minor beneficial Although the mezzanine structure will remain, the removal of the bouldering walls will reduce the visual clutter of the chancel area.
Chancel/ mezzanine structure	Removal of the access stair to the mezzanine from the south chancel aisle	Minor beneficial Although the mezzanine structure will remain, the removal of the access stair to the south side will reduce the visual clutter and reinstate in part the spatial qualities of the chancel south aisle.
Chancel steps	Removal of the existing platform over the chancel steps	Moderate beneficial

		Removal of the platform will allow for the historic plan form of the building to be understood and appreciated.
Western entrance doors	Reinstate use of the west end entrance doors	Minor-to-moderate beneficial Restoring the ability to enter the building from the original western entrance, into the nave, will allow for the scale and drama of the space and architecture to be experienced once again.
Nave	Insert partition to the east end of the nave Freestanding partition 3000mm high with oak cornice and rail. 2 pairs of glazed oak doors and matching single leaf glazed doors to the aisles. Structural posts to provide rigidity will utilise existing concrete pads of the removed climbing walls. Clamp band fixings to 2 nave columns will provide lateral restraint.	Negligible adverse The proposed partitioning allows worship and associated activities to take place within the main body of the church without interruption/ distraction from people entering/existing the building/ using the additional spaces within the chancel area. The partitions have been designed to be read as a contemporary addition and will allow for views above and beyond which will allow for the appreciation and understanding of the heritage interest of the building. The proposals are fully reversible and will not result in any direct impact on historic fabric.
North Aisle Wall	Insert new door opening to the north aisle to provide direct and level access from entrance area/ nave into the children/ young adults area inc toilet facilities	Minor adverse New opening will allow for level access through the building. The existing wall is to be propped/ needed to allow for careful dismantling of brickwork and insertion of new lintels. Bricks not used for formation of new reveals will be stored on site. A new doorway rationalises access into the building from the south through to the rooms on the north side without the need to partition the north aisle which would disrupt the spatial qualities of the main body of the church.
Chancel steps	Install new platform lift to the south side of the chancel steps. Section approx. 1000mm wide of the low wall at the top of the nave/ chancel steps (south side) is to	Minor Adverse Removal of this small section of low wall is required to ensure the two principal floor

	be carefully removed to provide a level access point from the platform lift. Platform lift is to be of stainless steel with glass sides to minimise visual impact.	levels within the worship space are fully accessible using the proposed platform lift. The option of a ramp was discounted due to the required size this would need to be and resultant intrusion on the space.
Floor to Chancel south and north aisles	Level floor to the chancel south and north aisles	Negligible Adverse The floor levels and coverings across the Chancel area vary and are altered. A new floor will sit over the top to rationalise the levels and ensure accessibility across the space.
Chancel south aisle	Insert partition to the chancel south aisle steps. The partition is to be fixed to the rear (east) side of the arch so the decorative screen can be retained in its original position. The paired gates to the screen are to be retrieved from storage and refixed in their original position. The gates will be secured in the closed position in front of the new partition to infill the archway at the top of the steps.	Negligible-to-minor adverse The partition will allow for the creation of a controlled space for preschool children addressing requirements for safeguarding and the potential for noise transfer between the different use areas. Partition will be reversible.
Chancel	Insert partition in the chancel at the head of the chancel steps in line with the underside of the existing mezzanine structure. The partition will incorporate an oak cornice and rail at 3000mm high reflecting the detail at the head of the freestanding partition to the Nave. The partition is to include two pairs of glazed oak doors.	Negligible-to-minor adverse The proposed partition utilises the existing mezzanine structure to create a functional space within the former Chancel area.
Chancel north aisle	Install kitchenette in chancel north aisle. Stud partitioning and a plasterboard ceiling will allow basic facilities for serving refreshments directly to the adjacent meeting room space via the existing gates in the central section of the Parclose screen and through the new door inserted into the existing partition. Original wall panelling will retained in situ but will be boxed in on the east wall to protect it. Mechanical ventilation will be taken through the east wall in a 100mm diameter	Negligible-to-minor adverse The proposals provide rudimentary facilities in order to support the wider reuse of the building as a place of worship. Intervention to historic fabric is minimal and reversible.

	core drilled duct and terminated with a black cast iron conservation style vent grille fixed to the external brickwork.	
Parochial room to north-west corner/ existing accessible toilet	The existing accessible toilet and baby changing facility and adjacent lift enclosure are to be refurbished/ redecorated. The corner office room adjacent is to be converted into a supervised Children's Toilet facility. The exiting windows of the room are covered externally with signage panels. It is proposed to dry line the north and west walls with a freestanding stud frame to the height just above the existing window heads and then capped off back to the existing walls to avoid intervention with the ceiling cornice. The cap will have openings to allow for ventilation. Preformed cubicles will be fitted with all drainage/ waste pipework concealed. Mechanical ventilation is to taken through the west wall via a 100mm diameter core drilled duct which will terminate in a black cast iron conservation style grille to the external brickwork.	Negligible -to- minor adverse The location for the WC facilities has been chosen due to the proximity to existing drainage and water services, minimising intervention to historic fabric. Works are fully reversible.

6.0 Summary and Conclusions

Significance and Heritage Impact

It is a fundamental requirement of the NPPF (2024) that planning proposals contribute to the achievement of “*sustainable development*” (**Paragraph 8**). In order to meet this key planning objective, it is essential that the proposals for the site deliver a long-term, viable use for the Listed Building, whilst avoiding any unmitigated negative impacts. This requires a clear and proportionate evaluation of the significance and impact on the identified heritage asset as has been outlined in this Heritage Statement.

The Heritage Impact Assessment has demonstrated that the proposals will result in varying degrees of adverse and beneficial direct impacts on the fabric and character of the Grade II* listed building. The most important consideration would be whether the impact of the proposed works would *seriously affect* a key element of the building’s special architectural or historic interest, (such as an original or highly significant building component). As stipulated within the Planning Practice Guidance (July 2019), It is the degree of ‘harm’ to the asset’s significance, rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed.

In this case the proposed changes/additions are required to ensure the building allows for level access and modern worship practices; this has resulted in the approach to introduce limited interventions (partitioning/ new doorway/ WC facilities), which has been identified to result in some demonstrable harm to the historic fabric and spatial qualities of the building.

The overall degree of harm has been identified at the lower end of *less than substantial harm*, taking into account the existing condition of the building as a former climbing centre and the restoration in part of the principal nave/ aisle spaces of the building thereby providing some counterbalance to the identified harm of the wider proposals. The key design objective has been to secure a long-term, viable use for the building whilst maintaining its fundamental integrity as a Grade II* listed asset.

Planning Policy Balance

The **Planning 1990 (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act** and the **National Planning Policy Framework, 2024**, set out the Government’s planning legislation and policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The relevant local planning policies contained within the Manchester Core Strategy (2012) and PfE (2024) have also been considered.

The NPPF establishes a clear hierarchy of significance for heritage assets, derived from their designated status. The fundamental objective is to avoid compromising designated heritage assets, such that any potential ‘harm’ from a development must be balanced against the potential advantages of the public benefits that may outweigh any harm, which has been identified within this report to amount to the lower end of *less than substantial*, thereby engaging the relevant tests contained in **para.215**.

It will be clear the level of harm identified within this report will need to be appropriately balanced against the clear and demonstrable heritage and public benefits of the scheme as required by **para 215 of the NPPF (2024)**. Fundamentally, it is considered that the proposals to convert the building back to its original use present a substantial heritage benefit which outweighs the low levels of harm identified.

Policy EN3 (Heritage) states that MCC will encourage development that complements and takes advantage of the distinct historic and heritage features of its districts and neighbourhoods, where possible, enhancing the historic environment, the character, setting and accessibility of areas and buildings of acknowledged importance.

It will be clear that the proposals for St Benedicts are a unique opportunity to bring a high status listed building back into active religious use, enhancing the overall understanding and appreciation of the historic environment and accessibility to this important landmark.

The proposals will clearly make a positive contribution to the vitality of this part of Manchester and make a positive contribution to the areas developing character and distinctiveness.

Appendix I – List Description

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1207939

Date first listed: 03-Oct-1974

Date of most recent amendment: 06-Jun-1994

List Entry Name: Anglican Church of St Benedict

Statutory Address 1: ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST BENEDICT, BENNETT STREET

Location

Statutory Address: ANGLICAN CHURCH OF ST BENEDICT, BENNETT STREET

District: Manchester (Metropolitan Authority)

Parish: Non Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: SJ 86558 96989

Details

MANCHESTER

698-1/5/479 BENNETT STREET 03-OCT-74 ARDWICK (South side) Anglican Church of St Benedict (Formerly listed as: BENNETT STREET ARDWICK ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST BENEDICT)

II*

Church incorporating clergy house and Sunday School rooms, now parish rooms. 1880, by JS Crowther. Red brick in header bond with orange brick dressings and stone tracery, slate roofs. Early English style. Tall nave with low aisle to south side, tall north-west tower and low 2-storey clergy house on north side. Tall chancel with low transepts. The buttressed west front has a 2-centred arched west doorway with 3 orders of moulding including shafts, containing 2 cusped doorways and traceried tympanum, a multifoil each side, a band of tall blank arcading with shafts, and a large rose window. The tower to the left, square, buttressed up to eaves level and with 3 stages above that, has a 2-light window at ground floor, a small lancet to each of the next 3 stages, and a belfry stage with tourelle pinnacles, louvred 2-light windows, a machicolated pierced parapet and steep pyramidal roof. The 6-bay south side has pilaster strips and large 2-centred arched 4-light windows with geometrical tracery to the nave, small lancets to the aisle; the chancel has windows like those of the nave and coupled gabled transepts below, and a very large 7-light east window with rich geometrical tracery. The clergy house on the north side, 2 low storeys and 11 bays, with coupled gables at

both ends, has segmental-pointed windows to ground floor, arched windows to 1st floor, and 4 gabled dormers in the roof, with finials.

INTERIOR: stone quatrefoil piers support brick arcades and tall clerestory. Elaborate hammerbeam and arch-braced roofs to nave and chancel. Chancel raised above height of nave and approached by wide flight of 6 steps (somewhat altered in C20). Baldacchino of c1960, but original iron parclose screens. Stained glass east window of c.1885. Brick chancel wall with integral stone lectern supported by life-size sculpture of angel. This is c.1900 by W Cecil Hardisty and EF Long. Pulpit of 1907. Vestry furnishings include cupboards and wardrobes designed by Crowther. Stained glass includes aisle windows by TF Curtis, Ward and Hughes and others probably mostly by Ward and Hughes. Stained glass also in the large west rose window.

This soaring church was cleverly integrated with the brick terraces which formerly surrounded it by the 2-storey clergy house and rooms attached to its north flank.

The ensemble is the most original of JS Crowther's church designs.

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Appendix II – Heritage Impact Assessment Criteria (developed from ICOMOS Guidance)

Table 2 Criteria for defining the effect and degree of direct and indirect heritage impact		
Definition of magnitude and nature of heritage impact.	Direct heritage impacts (physical alteration or change to the site's character)	Indirect heritage impact (visual change to the experience or setting of the site and its context).
Major adverse Impact. <i>Substantial harm of this nature, which results in total loss of significance or fundamentally affects the significance of defined heritage assets, should normally be avoided.</i>	Development resulting in demolition of a significant historic fabric component which results in total loss of significance, or fundamental compromises the setting of a designated heritage asset.	Substantially harmful change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development severely erodes the heritage interest of the identified heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values and thus results in total loss of significance.
Moderate Adverse Impact. <i>Less-than-substantial harm will need to be demonstrably mitigated and justified by clear public benefits.</i>	Development resulting in extensive harmful alterations (but not total demolition) of a designated heritage asset or its setting.	Less than substantial harm to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Minor Adverse Impact. <i>The negative impact on the setting or overall character will need to be clearly balanced by appropriate mitigation.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a designated heritage asset which result in minor compromise of its fabric or erosion of its character.	Minor compromise to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development erodes to a minor extent the heritage interest of the assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate those values.
Negligible adverse impact. <i>This does not mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference would not diminish the value of the heritage assets' significant physical fabric, their settings or significance to any appreciable degree.</i>	Development resulting in negligible direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of a minor, original fabric component, but avoids diminishing its character and its special architectural or historic interest.	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change would alter, but not diminish, the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area to any appreciable degree.
Neutral Impact. <i>This does not necessarily mean that there will be no physical or visual change, rather that the resultant difference will be imperceptible or appropriately balanced.</i>	Development which comprises an imperceptible physical impact resulting in no apparent change or achieved by removing a component of no heritage value which detracts from the special interest of the building fabric.	Imperceptible change to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. A neutral impact occurs when the development does not affect the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Negligible beneficial impact.	Development resulting in a negligible beneficial direct impact on a designated heritage asset which results in the removal of	Negligible perceptible change to the character of a designated heritage asset, or the experience and understanding of its special interest. The degree of change

<i>The resultant difference will be imperceptible but have a positive impact on the understanding or appreciation of the heritage asset.</i>	a minor non-original fabric component which detracts from the character and its special architectural or historic interest.	would imperceptibly enhance the intrinsic values of the identified heritage assets, or the experience and appreciation of the buildings or the designated area.
Minor Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a demonstrable improvement to the overall character or setting of a heritage asset.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset which deliver a minor beneficial physical impact or enhancement of the site's special interest.	Minor enhancement to the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset, or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets. Where the development enhances to a minor extent the values of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Moderate Beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in a considerable improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset with clear beneficial enhancement of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in alterations to a built heritage asset resulting in moderate beneficial physical impact, or an enhancement of the site's character.	Evident improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Moderate enhancement to the setting of the built heritage asset. Where the development will enhance to a clearly discernible extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.
Major beneficial Impact. <i>The proposed change would result in substantial improvement to the overall character and appreciation of a heritage asset, revealing and/or enhancing important characteristics of its heritage interest.</i>	Development resulting in restoration or alterations to a designated heritage asset which comprises substantial restoration of its fabric and historic character and an enhancement of its cultural heritage interest.	Substantial improvement of the fabric and character of a designated heritage asset (or the setting of the identified designated heritage assets) resulting in a significant enhancement of its cultural heritage interest. Substantial restoration or enhancement of the setting of the built heritage asset where the development will enhance to a fundamental extent the heritage interest of the heritage assets in the view, or the ability to appreciate its significance.