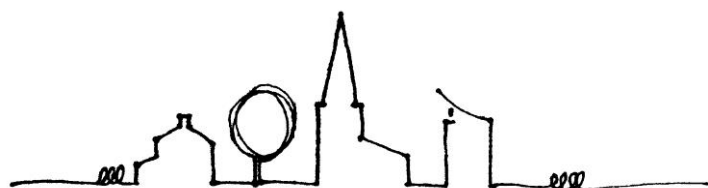


# THORNBURY Baptist Church

## Heritage, Design and Access Statement



Project No 0935  
APRIL 2023 rev A



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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1. Thornbury Baptist Church is a thriving family focused church based in the market town of Thornbury. They meet every Sunday for worship but also run a number of groups throughout the week including;

- Goose club – a before and after school club for Gillingstool School Pupils.
- Mothers and toddlers group twice a week.
- Family Coffee shop – Set up as a soft play for toddlers, three times a week.
- Young adults meeting - youth club.
- Lunch Club – providing warm healthy meals for the elderly.
- And various other community-based clubs throughout the week.

As a church that serves the community it is open every day of the week providing support for its followers and the wider community.

1.2. Thornbury Baptist Church is a food bank distribution centre.

1.3. The church elders are in a position where they can expand the support that they offer to their congregation and community by increasing the number of food bank provisions they offer, and by holding additional prayer and community events.

1.4. This application is in support of the churches growing congregation and community work through the design of.

- Improved access to the front of the church.
- New windows and screen to replace the existing.
- Larger welcome area in the foyer.
- Improved existing toilet facilities.
- Larger kitchen facility.
- Improved access to the garden with sheltered area for buggies.
- New extension to the north to provide additional community facilities.
- In addition, the church is seeking to install PV solar panels to provide renewable energy for the church.

## **2. THE SITE**

2.1. Thornbury Baptist Church is located on Gillingstool opposite the Rock Street Carpark. BS35 2EG. The church is just inside the Thornbury conservation area.

2.2. The front of the church faces on to Gillingstool a busy main road, there is a garden area to the west which was formally a burial ground, the headstones have been mostly removed but the remains are still within the ground. To the north and east is housing for the elderly known as Rockleaze.

2.3. Between the church and Rockleaze is a public footpath with shared access.

2.4. The old chapel is listed with the following description taken from the heritage gateway.

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1312637

Date first listed: 17-Dec-1984

Statutory Address 1: BAPTIST CHURCH, GILLINGSTOOL

THORNBURY GILLINGSTOOL 4/113 ST 6390 Baptist Chapel II  
1828.

Rendered. Pantiled roof, ½-hipped at rear. Gabled front with cornice; tablet reads Baptist/Chapel. Three pointed casement windows. Central door, pointed, in late C19 brick surround. Sources: RCHM Non-Conformist Churches - Chapels (I.) to be published.

Listing NGR: ST6391890015

Note: the roof is double roman.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Baptist Church has been located on this site at Gillingstool since 1789, throughout its history it has been adapted, extended and modernised. The first major extension of the chapel was in 1834.



The old chapel.



The old schoolroom demolished 1988

- 3.2. In 1895 the church was further extended with the addition of a schoolroom to the east of the chapel, which was built in a similar style to the chapel. This in turn was further extended in 1971.
- 3.3. In 1978 additional land was purchased to support the need for a larger premises and to provide sheltered housing known as Rockleaze. Works got underway in 1985 when the original chapel was renovated.
- 3.4. The last service was held in the old chapel in 1988 and work commenced to construct the new Baptist church with a capacity for 350 people together with meeting rooms, kitchen and toilet facilities. These were located on the site of the old schoolrooms. The old chapel was converted into a facility for youth work.
- 3.5. The old chapel today continues to be used as the youth hub on both floors, for the food bank preparation and storage, and also contains toilet facilities and rooms used by the pastoral care team.

**4. PROPOSALS and HERITAGE IMPACT**



4.1. *Existing entrance*

The existing entrance doors and glazing are wooden, with a dark brown stain and single glazed. These are also of their time and environmentally they perform poorly, cold in winter and overheat in summer.

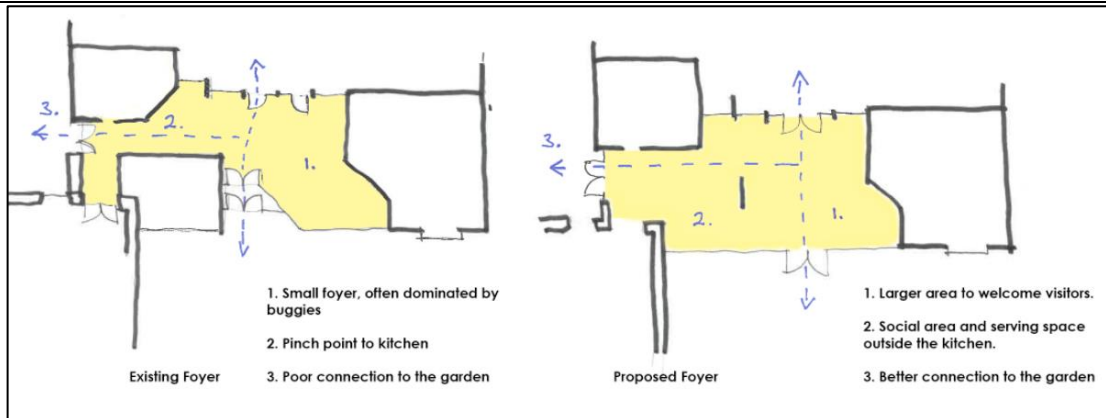
It is proposed to upgrade these with an aluminium composite system that will present a better first impression of the church and provide a more open and welcoming entrance.

The works do not directly affect the listed building but are seen as an improvement to its setting. The stone boundary walls are unaffected by these proposals and will still dominate the street frontage as they currently do.

4.2. The church regularly welcomes around 200 people to their Sunday service with the foyer acting as a meeting space and informal social area, but as it is currently laid out it often become bottle necked especially when there are buggies parked in the foyer. This is particularly an issue during the week when increased numbers of buggies are brought to the toddler groups.

The area outside the kitchen is particularly problematic with people queuing for teas competing against people trying to access the garden.

It is proposed to open the foyer as much as possible, removing the pinch points, creating a dedicated social area out of the main flow and improve the connection to the garden.



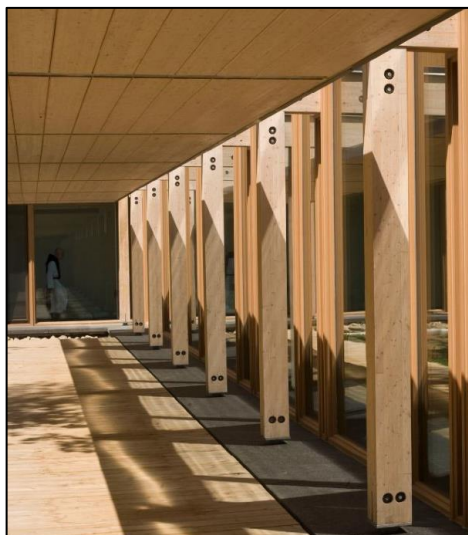
Foyer space diagram

4.3. As part of the opening up of the Foyer it is equally important that the buggies are given somewhere to be stored. While the garden is secure a shelter is needed to keep them dry. It is proposed to erect a colonnade leading up to the rear doors where buggies can be left. The structure is independent and makes no connection to either of the existing buildings.

The detailing picks up on the glulam frame of the auditorium and uses a simple flat roof in single ply membrane and metal flashings. The height of which matches up with the first floor level of the listed building.

The colonnade will have a low impact on the setting of the listed building but this is mitigated by keeping the structure independent so that if desired it can be removed without harm to the building.

The colonnade will also be used as a sheltered area for youth work to take place outside.



Glulam colonnade





*Garden area, north elevation of the old chapel*

The surfacing to the rear of the is bound gravel, it is proposed to regrade the levels so that the entrance complies with DDA requirements improving the access to the garden.

- 4.4. In the northeast corner of the site is a small area of the site that is currently underused and will accommodate the small expansion of the church to provide additional space to accommodate small groups for worship, pastoral care and the community.

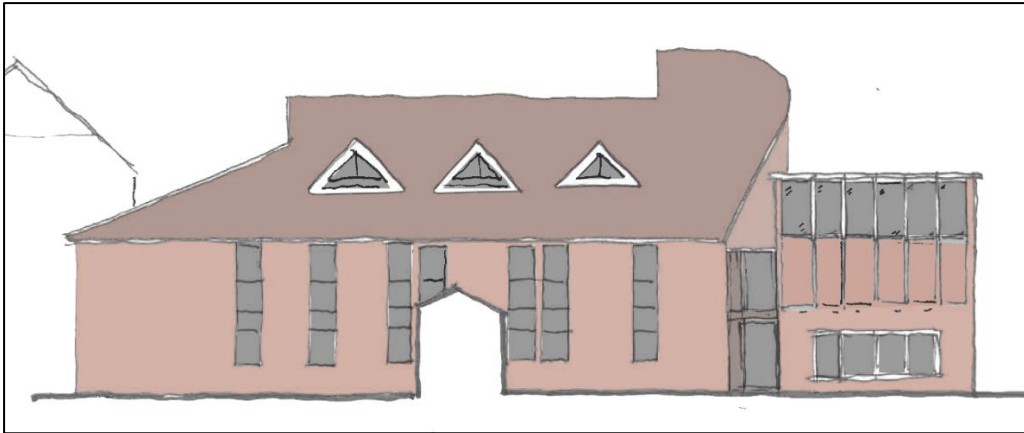
The new extension joins onto the existing auditorium at both ground and lower ground floor. At lower ground floor it becomes an extension of the youth and after school clubs providing additional storage, larger and fully accessible WC as well as the multiuse space which can be assessed directly from the Lounge or from the shared external path.



*Plot on the northeast side of the church.*

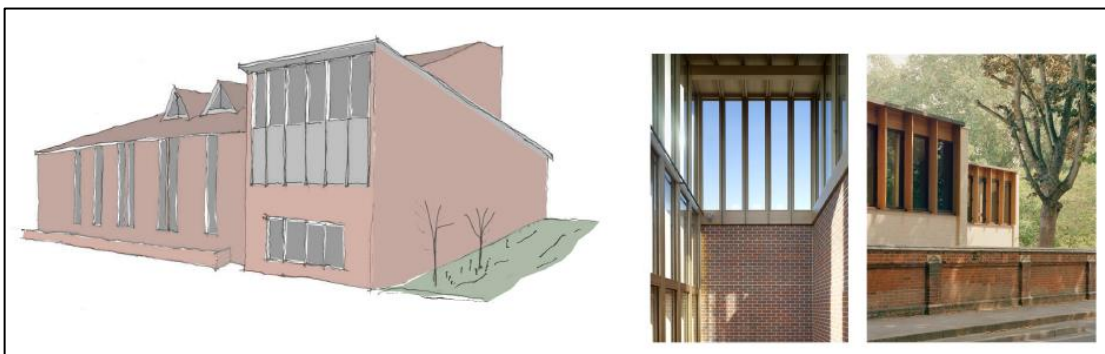
At ground floor level it becomes an extension of the auditorium for small prayer groups accessed from the either the garden or auditorium. Due to its proposed use as a prayer

room it is fitting that the east elevation is celebrated more than the others in line with Christian liturgical worship. To achieve this on a tight site with potential overlooking issues to the east and north and the roof slopes up to the east

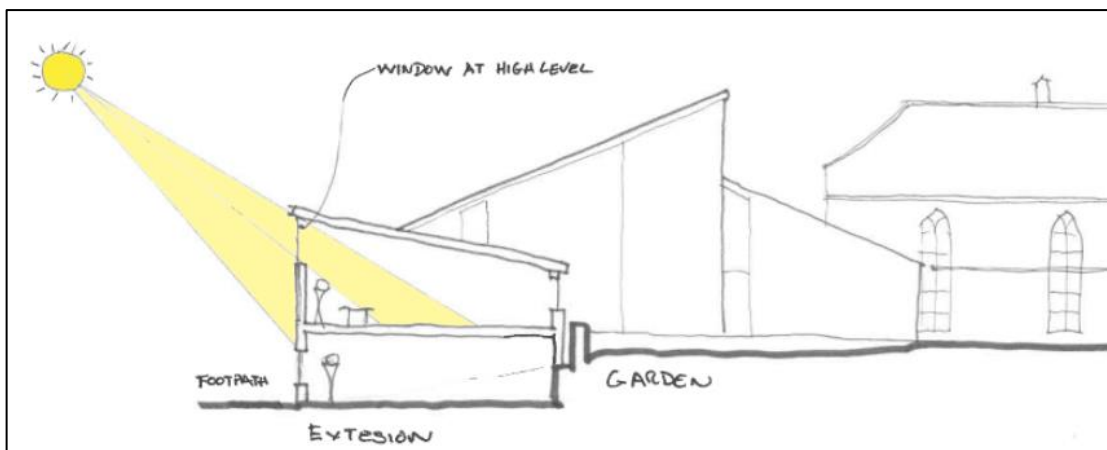


*East elevation of proposed extension – early sketch*

The extension will be faced with a red/brown brick mix to complement the existing building, picking up on timber detailing to the clerestory windows. These windows allow light in but no view out.



*Early sketch of proposed extension and similar case studies*

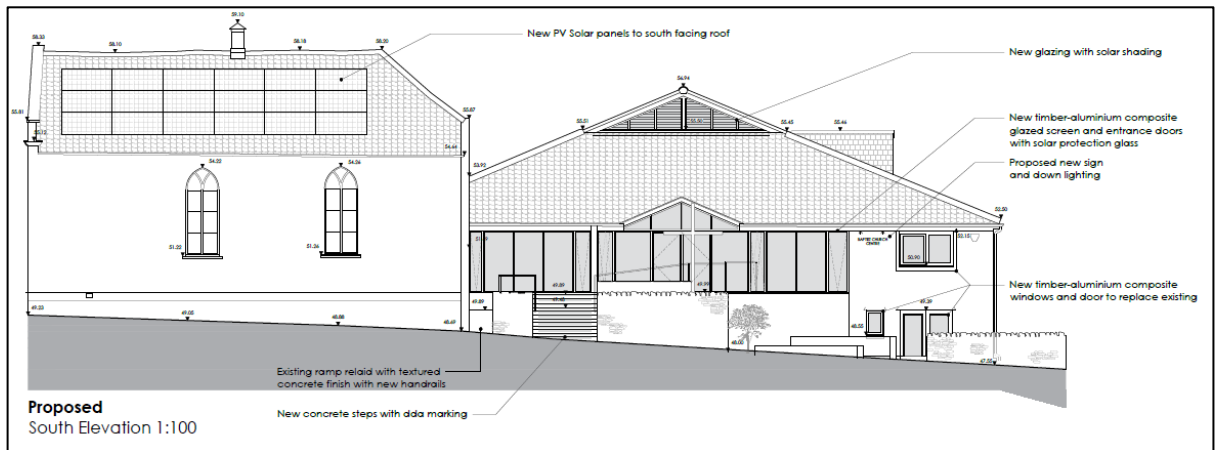


*Section showing sunlight but no overlooking to the east from the ground floor room.*



**5. SUSTAINABILITY**

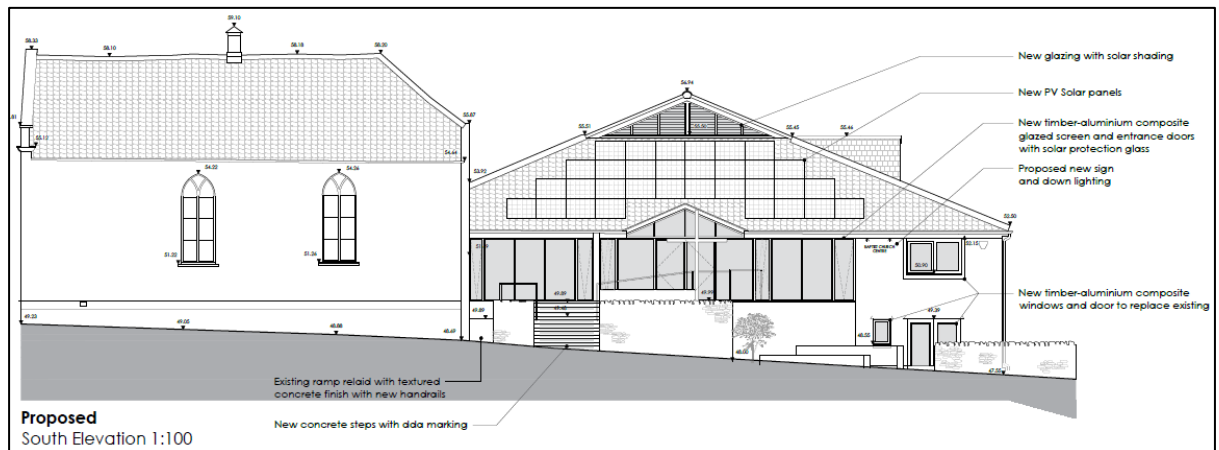
- 5.1. In 2019 South Gloucestershire declared a climate emergency. Meaning that the runaway climate change constitutes an existential threat to human society and life on Earth.
- 5.2. The overall plan for this development will be one of sustainability. The applicants are keen that all aspects of the alterations will consider the impact on the environment as well as the character of the buildings.
- 5.3. PV solar panels are proposed on the south slope of the old chapel, and unusually for a listed building where they are visible, this location offers the least impact due to the height of the chapel. Although the south slope will have an impact on the setting of the old chapel the benefit of providing a renewable source of energy on site would outweigh the potential harm as the installation would be removable and the original tiles of the chapel are no longer present.



PV panels on old chapel

Other options explored were:

- a) The south slope of the main entrance is triangular and would result in an unsatisfactory layout with overlapping PV panels affecting the setting of both buildings. Although more panels could be fitted on this slope up to a third of them would be shaded by the old chapel.



PV panel above main entrance

- b) The west slope of the auditorium was also explored and although a regular grid can be achieved the Elders have been advised by the panel company that it is not a viable option due to its orientation.

5.4. The extension will be timber framed construction, this is a quick, clean, quiet and panellised form of construction. Providing an opportunity to consider a sustainable material with a low or even negative embodied energy, as timber sequesters carbon. In addition, exposing the timber internally creates a sense of calm, which, when combined with a high quality of daylight and sunlight, aids well-being.



Internal sketch of Multi Use Space (set up for prayer)

- 5.5. Insulation within the building will be designed to be continuous, avoiding cold bridging and with fabric standards that improve on the notional building prescribed by Part L2A Building Regulations where possible. This will contribute to overall improvements in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.
- 5.6. Mechanical ventilation with heat recovery is proposed to the extension to provide fresh filtered air into the building whilst retaining most of the energy that has already been used in heating the building. The main rooms will be provided with openable windows so that users have immediate control over fresh air and cooling of the rooms

## **6. ACCESS**

- 6.1. The main entrance into Thornbury Baptist is difficult to negotiate in a wheelchair or to navigate a buggy around. The ramps are narrow, projections and stair nosings causing trip hazards.

The existing entrance is raised above the external ground level by 1.5m, initial studies into providing a compliant DDA ramp would have required to provision of a ramp that

was 30m long plus landings. This is twice as long as the existing ramp and the space in front of the church simply is not big enough to accommodate it.

Therefore it is proposed to modify the existing entrance, upgrading surfaces and handrails making them more accessible, through removing trip hazards and increasing visual contrast to the steps.

A small seating area is also incorporated in the top landing as social space which benefits from the sun. New planting will be incorporated into the existing plant beds with a selection of perennial flowering plants, grasses, wildflower seed and selected shrubs to provide structure.



*Existing steps and surfaces require improvement.*

- 6.2. Access to the extension will be by level external entrance door, or with level access internally from the corresponding floor.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1. The history of Thornbury Baptist Church is one of change and adaption. The proposed works seek to improve the presence of the Baptist church in Thornbury on the street through enhancing the main entrance and elevation through a series of small but key changes to the presentation of the 1988 extension of the church. These alterations are respectful of the listed building and the stone boundary walls that make up the setting of the church.
- 7.2. The small modern extension to the rear of the site is designed using a similar material palette to the existing building but is carried out in a more contemporary style. Although this is an extension its location on the site and its ecclesiastical use justify it being set slightly forward of the building line giving it prominence.
- 7.3. These alterations will allow Thornbury Baptist church to continue in expanding the work that they do for the church and wider community.

8. PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation and main entrance, with partly retained stone boundary walls.



West and east elevations of the old chapel

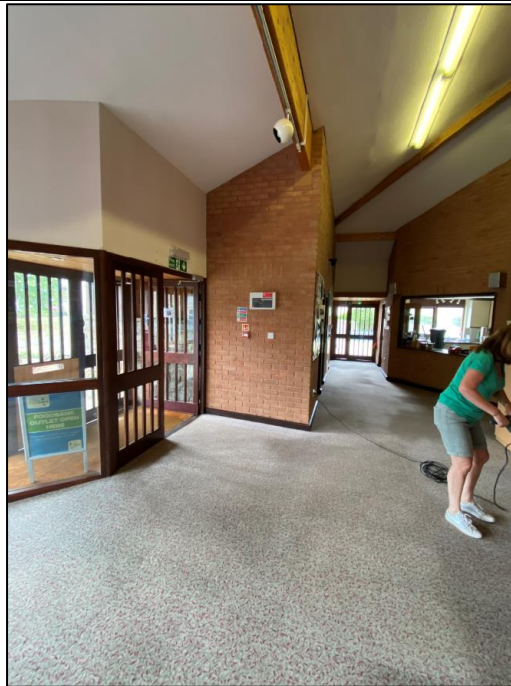


Existing foyer entrance.



Existing doors leading to the auditorium.

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Access leading to the garden.



Auditorium looking south.

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View along the shared path looking north.



North elevation of the auditorium.



View looking east along the rear of the auditorium.