

Report



St Andrew's Arts Centre Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent Summary Heritage Impact Assessment

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Date: June 2026

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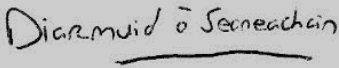
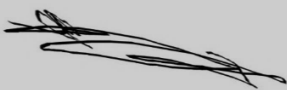
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Quality Assurance

ADAS Contract Code	Document No.	Date Issued
1054132	1054132-01 (01)	26.06.2026
Author	Technical Reviewer	Approved
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Revision History

Revision	Date	Amendment
00	19.06.2026	Draft Issue to Client
01	26.06.2026	Update following Client comments

Non-Technical Summary

This assessment was prepared by ADAS and commissioned by Stuart James Associates, in order to provide relevant information to the Local Planning Authority in order to inform Planning Permission and Listed Building Consent for the proposed development at St Andrew's Arts Centre, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 2BD. St Andrew's Arts Centre is a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE Ref: 1039109) and was constructed in the late 19th century.

The proposals represent a series of modest interventions intended to support the continued viable use and active occupation of St Andrew's Arts Centre.

A number of existing modern interventions currently detract from the significance of the Listed Building, particularly the stage, exposed cabling and existing heating installation. Their removal or replacement will provide clear heritage benefits.

The new insertions, including the Water Closet (WC), storage and refreshment facilities, have been developed as lightweight and sympathetic interventions intended to preserve the primary architectural character and open spatial quality of the former chapel. These works are considered capable of being accommodated without causing unacceptable harm to significance.

Overall, the proposals are considered to result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building, with several aspects delivering positive enhancement through the removal of unsympathetic modern fabric and repair of historic features.

In National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) terms, the less than substantial harm would be clearly outweighed by the public benefits associated with:

- Securing the continued viable use of the heritage asset;
- Improved functionality and accessibility for community and arts use;
- Repair and better maintenance of the building;
- Removal of harmful modern interventions;
- Enhancement of appreciation of the historic interior.

The proposals therefore accord with the statutory duties under Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the heritage objectives of the NPPF and relevant local planning policies.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This summary Heritage Impact Assessment (HIA) has been prepared in support of proposed internal and external alteration works to St Andrew's Arts Centre, Royal Pier Road, Gravesend. The document has been informed by the pre-application advice issued by Gravesham Borough Council under reference PRE20260017 (letter dated 05th June 2026).
- 1.2 The assessment has been prepared in accordance with the principles within Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Historic England guidance including *The Setting of Heritage Assets* and *Statements of Heritage Significance*. It considers the significance of the designated heritage asset and assesses the likely impact of the proposed works upon that significance.

2 Site and Significance

- 2.1 St Andrew's Arts Centre is a Grade II Listed former mission chapel for seamen designed by the architect G.E. Street in 1870–71 (NHLE, 2026). The building is also located within the Riverside Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The significance of the building derives from:
- Its architectural quality as a Victorian ecclesiastical building by G.E. Street;
 - The survival of historic internal volume and plan form;
 - Historic fabric including decorative tiles, internal wall finishes, windows and ceiling structure;
 - Its communal and evidential value as a former seamen's mission chapel and current arts venue;
 - Its contribution to the character and appearance of the Riverside Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The principal significance of the interior lies in the open chapel hall and surviving historic detailing, including the ceiling structure and decorative finishes. Existing modern interventions, including the stage, heating system, cabling and ancillary installations, detract to varying degrees from the historic character and architectural legibility of the building.

3 Proposed Works

- 3.1 Full details of the proposed works are included in the Design and Access Statement, supporting plans and specialist reports. In summary, the proposals comprise:
- Removal of the existing modern stage;
 - Removal and reconfiguration of existing WC and tea point facilities;
 - Installation of a new WC and ancillary storage structures;
 - Installation of a small kitchenette/refreshment servery;
 - Removal of existing heating and installation of a replacement heating system;
 - Removal of redundant cabling;
 - Installation of new lighting and speakers;
 - Repairs to glazing;
 - Repositioning of baptismal font
 - Refurbishment of external doors

4 Assessment of Heritage Impact

Removal of Existing Stage

- 4.1 The existing stage is identified as modern 20th century fabric of limited heritage significance. Its removal will reveal original decorative tiled flooring which exist beneath and improve appreciation of the original chapel space. The removal of this later intervention is therefore considered to result in a heritage benefit and enhancement of significance.

Removal and Reconfiguration of Existing WC and Tea Point

- 4.2 The removal of modern ancillary facilities is considered acceptable in heritage terms. Full details of the design of the reconfiguration of the existing WC and Tea Point, along with proposed servicing arrangements is provided in the Client plans and supporting documents submitted with this application. The reuse of existing openings and service routes will minimise intervention into historic fabric. No new openings in historic walls are anticipated to be required for the removal of the existing WC and Tea Point. Where possible all new proposed pipework will be concealed within existing modern stud walls.
- 4.3 All new pipework proposed is discreetly located, limited in extent (between 1 m and 2m of new drainage pipework only required) and designed to avoid unnecessary loss of historic material.
- 4.4 The proposed servicing arrangements are sympathetic to the historic character of the building and are fully reversible. The impact on significance would be very low and deemed less than substantial.

New WC and Storage Installations

- 4.5 The proposed WC and storage structures within the main hall have the potential to alter how the internal space of the historic church is appreciated. However, the principle of insertion has been supported through pre-application discussions subject to modest scale, high quality detailing and sympathetic materials.
- 4.6 Full details of the design of the proposed new WC and Storage Installations is provided in the Client plans and supporting documents submitted with this application. The WC and storage extensions have been designed in accordance with pre-application advice provided by the Local Authority. The new WC and storage installation has been designed to be the minimum size possible and is located discreetly in the internal space of the former church. They will be constructed of lightweight dark timber panels, which will be read as discreet joinery elements within the wider historic space. As they have been designed to be concealed and carefully integrated, they will help preserve the architectural character of the chapel interior.
- 4.7 Due to their lightweight and potentially reversible nature, the proposals are considered capable of being accommodated without unacceptable harm to significance.

Kitchenette/Refreshment Counter

- 4.8 The introduction of a modest servery to support continued viable use of the building is considered acceptable in principle. As advised by the Conservation Officer, the Kitchenette will be a fixed counter of dark timber panelled joinery, which has been designed to be concealed behind bi-fold doors of dark timber panelling when not in use. A movable counter on castors will also be installed as the serving counter. The movable counter would be rolled up against the fixed counter and locked to it. It will be constructed of the same dark timber panels as the Kitchenette.
- 4.9 The works would introduce a contemporary functional requirement while preserving the visual integrity of the main hall. Full details of the design and materials of the proposed new Kitchenette is provided in the Client plans and supporting documents submitted with this application.
- 4.10 Due to its lightweight and potentially reversible nature, the level of harm introduced by, the proposed Kitchenette to the building is considered on the lower scale and less than substantial.

Heating Replacement

- 4.11 The existing heating installation is identified by the Conservation Officer as harmful to the architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building. Its removal therefore presents a heritage enhancement.
- 4.12 The minimum number of new radiators have been selected for the new proposed heating system (seven radiators). The radiators have been chosen to be in a 'Church Style' (Radiator schedule and representative image provided on drawing SJA3472/PC11b), which will respect the historic character of the internal space. They have also been selected to be as small and discreet as possible to minimize visual impact upon historic fabric and architectural character. They will be installed in locations recommended by the heating specialist within the interior of the Church building.
- 4.13 The radiators have been chosen for their high quality from a company that specialises in church heating. They are visually unobtrusive and will be coloured to blend in with the wall behind them.
- 4.14 The new pipework for the heating system will be a surface mounted conduit which will run low along the base of the walls between each radiator to minimize impact on historic fabric and architectural character. The surface mounted conduits will also take all the electrical cabling required for the renovation.
- 4.15 Full details of the design and materials of the proposed new heating system is provided in the Client plans and supporting documents submitted with this application.
- 4.16 It is considered that the proposals would result in overall enhancement through the removal of visually intrusive existing services.

Removal of Redundant Cabling

- 4.17 The removal of exposed and redundant cabling will improve visual appreciation of the historic interior and remove modern clutter that detracts from significance. The works are considered wholly beneficial in heritage terms.

New Lighting and Speakers

- 4.18 The restrained and minimal approach to the proposed new stage lighting is considered appropriate to the character of the Listed Building. The proposed lighting arrangement retains the existing lighting as far as possible. The new stage lighting proposed is limited to the installation of two 2 m X 6 m long light bars (one on each side of the stage). These will be fixed at a high level to the interior walls of the building by 4 X brackets with 8 X reversible fixings per bar to minimize impacts on the wall fabric and architectural character. The cables for the two light bars extend down the wall in a galvanized surface mounted conduit. This proposed lighting design has been accepted in principle by the Local Authority in pre-application discussions.
- 4.19 The new speakers will not require any interventions to avoid impacts to historic fabric. They will instead be portable speakers that will be kept concealed in the storeroom and brought out when needed. The proposed new stage lighting will be fully reversible to avoid damage to historic fabric.
- 4.20 The potential impact of the new proposed stage lighting upon significance is considered on the lower scale and less than substantial.

Repairs to Glazing

- 4.21 The proposed repairs to the existing glazing are considered beneficial to the building's continued use, condition and performance. The works will be carried out by an experienced specialist contractor in accordance with a method statement that has been submitted for approval as part of the Listed Building Consent Application. The proposed repair works would preserve the significance and support the sustainable occupation of the building.

Repositioning of Baptismal Font

- 4.22 The proposed redevelopment requires the repositioning of the Baptismal Font. The existing Font may be plumbed in, in which case the Font will be removed, and the existing service connection will be sealed off and left *in situ*. The Font will be moved to an open, visually accessible position in the main hall as discussed with the Local Authority. It will not be plumbed in in the new location. The proposed repositioning of the Baptismal Font would preserve the significance and character of the internal space and support the sustainable occupation of the building. The proposal would also be potentially reversible and so the harm resulting from this change would be considered on the lower scale and less than substantial.

Refurbishment and additional security to existing, external doors

- 4.23 In discussions with the Conservation Officer on site, it has been agreed that the existing internal doors to the building will be retained and will require no works. It has also been agreed that the existing external doors (D001 & D002 shown on the supporting drawings and reports provided) require decorative refurbishment and the installation of 5 new lever deadlocks in order to improve building security.
- 4.24 The works will be carried out by an experienced specialist contractor in accordance with a method statement (Document Reference SJA3472/PL/05) that will be submitted for approval as part of the Listed Building Consent Application. The proposed refurbishment works would be undertaken in accordance with Conservation best practice and will:
- Preserve historic fabric wherever possible
 - Retain maximum original timber
 - Retain and conserve original ironmongery
 - Improve security through discreet installation of approved deadlocks
 - Ensure all interventions are reversible where practicable
 - Maintain the historic appearance and significance of the building
- 4.25 The proposed repair works would preserve the significance of the doors and support the sustainable occupation of the building.

5 Overall Assessment of Impact

- 5.1 The proposals represent a series of modest interventions intended to support the continued viable use and active occupation of St Andrew's Arts Centre.
- 5.2 A number of existing modern interventions currently detract from the significance of the listed building, particularly the stage, exposed cabling and existing heating installation. Their removal or replacement will provide clear heritage benefits.
- 5.3 The new insertions, including the WC, storage and refreshment facilities, have been developed as lightweight and sympathetic interventions intended to preserve the primary architectural character and open spatial quality of the former chapel. These works are considered capable of being accommodated without causing unacceptable harm to significance.
- 5.4 Overall, the proposals are considered to result in less than substantial harm, to the significance of the Grade II Listed Building, with several aspects delivering positive enhancement through the removal of unsympathetic modern fabric and repair of historic features.

5.5 In NPPF terms, the level of harm would be clearly outweighed by the public benefits associated with:

- Securing the continued viable use of the heritage asset;
- Improved functionality and accessibility for community and arts use;
- Repair and better maintenance of the building;
- Removal of harmful modern interventions;
- Enhancement of appreciation of the historic interior.

5.6 The proposals therefore accord with the statutory duties under Sections 16, 66 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the heritage objectives of the NPPF and local heritage policies.

6 Conclusions

6.1 The proposals represent a series of modest interventions intended to support the continued viable use and active occupation of St Andrew's Arts Centre.

6.2 The scheme seeks to balance sensitive conservation of the Listed Building with the practical requirements necessary to support its ongoing community and arts function.

6.3 Subject to agreement with the Local Authority of the detailed plans and technical reports submitted to inform the Listed Building Consent application, the proposals are considered acceptable in heritage terms and would preserve the significance of the Grade II Listed Building and the character and appearance of the Riverside Conservation Area.

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7 References

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NHLE (2026) Historic England designated heritage asset datasets for the Site.

NPPF (2024) *National Planning Policy Framework*.

UK Legislation

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.