



The Fishergate Baptist Challenge

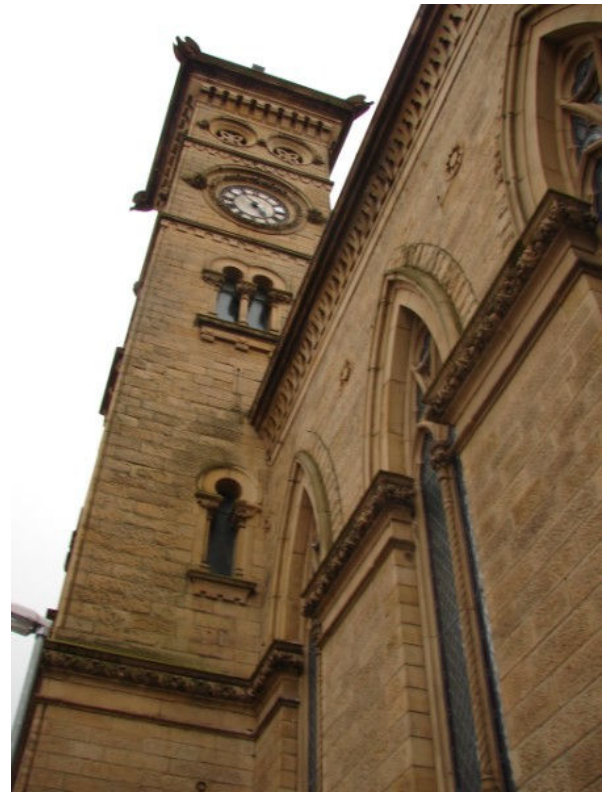
**An open competition for developers and
regeneration practitioners
Spring 2009**



Could your company help us transform this iconic Preston building?

This is a chance for you to put forward a commercially viable scheme for the redevelopment of this Grade 2 Listed building on a prime site in Preston City Centre, two minutes walk from the railway station. Built in 1857 on the design of Preston architect James Hibbert, who was also responsible for the Harris Museum, the church dominates the main shopping street, and its tower can be seen for miles around.

The deacons and members of Fishergate Baptist Church are looking for imaginative schemes which preserve a proportion of the space within the building for the church to continue and develop its work among the people of the city.



The building provides a major development opportunity in the heart of the city centre in Preston only two minutes walk from the main rail station and County Hall. The immediate neighbourhood is scheduled for significant regeneration. Already an adjoining precinct of shops “The Victoria and Albert Buildings” are being restored to their former glory by developers. Plans have been approved for a major hotel development on the site of an adjacent car park, while the Fishergate Shopping Centre immediately opposite has plans for a major expansion in the coming years.

Even at a time of recession the site presents a good opportunity for investment.



Our Challenge Competition

Developers are invited to submit their proposals for the transformation of the building in an open competition. The winner of this competition will be invited to negotiate favourable terms for a long lease, (or possible freehold interest) in return for developing accessible space for church and community use, adapted for Christian ministry in the 21st Century.

We are particularly interested in viable proposals that might have a social housing or social enterprise element, but are also open to proposals involving commercial development for example involving retail units or office space.

The panel responsible for the competition will be appointed by and include representatives of the local church meeting. They will co-opt a number of people with professional expertise to help assess the proposals

Provided the panel agrees that the submitted proposals include at least one scheme which appears acceptable and viable, they will chose a winner, select a runner up and circulate an outline of the proposals to church members and other interested parties.

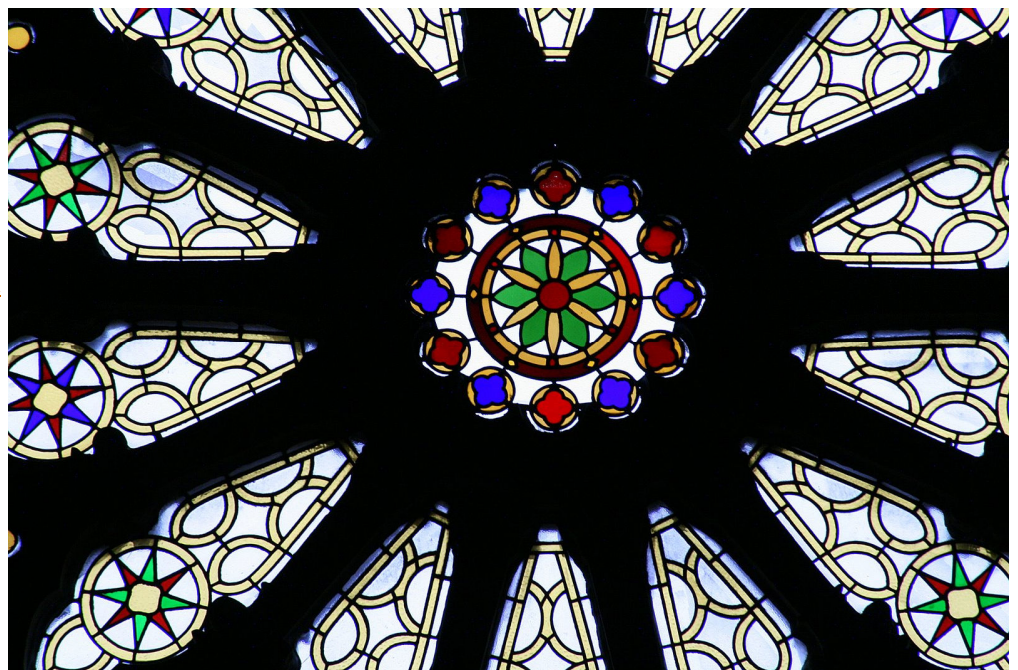
The runner up will be held on a reserve list for a period of up to 12 months in case it is impossible to conclude a deal and proceed to implementation with the competition winner, when they would be contacted and offered the chance to negotiate with the church.

We are seeking initial expressions of interest by April 15th 2009 and final worked up proposals by July 30th 2009.

If you are interested please
contact
Rev. Neil Jones
01772 862470

or by email
on neilandruth@hotmail.com

to arrange a chance to
view the building.



Background

Following a two year period of consultation the Church meeting and deacons of Fishergate Baptist Church have concluded that the local church is unable to sustain its life as a congregation in the building in its existing and deteriorating state for much more than another year. The small ageing congregation does not have the human or financial resources for the upkeep or management of the building or the employment of a full time minister without substantial external investment of capital and development expertise. However we do have a vision for the continuation and development of Christian ministry in the city centre. We believe that a modernised smaller space for worship and ministry within the current site, could be the catalyst for spiritual and congregational growth and a base for community service with a special emphasis on needy and vulnerable people who frequent the city centre.



We are therefore inviting detailed proposals from developers to reshape the interior of the building in ways which will be economically sustainable for the medium to long term, while providing rent free space for the church to meet for worship and social purposes and to provide drop in community facilities. We are seeing such proposals as the basis for a partnership in which the developer will be the lead agent in reshaping the building, and as a payoff will generate a commercial return on their investment. The external investment will be a way of freeing the church from the burden of maintaining and managing the building, in order to concentrate on its core business of Christian mission and ministry in the city centre.



We have established friendly and co-operative relationships with the regeneration and planning sections of Preston City Council and we can point you to officers who are aware of the issues we face and can supply information on the regeneration and planning context.



TERMS OF THE COMPETITION

The final worked up proposals will need to consist of

- Architect's drawings (which will need to be feasible within planning constraints and regulations for a Grade 2 listed building in this location, and demonstrate compliance in terms of access under the Disability Discrimination Legislation)
- A business plan showing the financial viability of the scheme, and the way in which the project will be funded, both in terms of the capital outlay and ongoing sustainability over at least the next two decades..
- The outline of legal terms and conditions specifying the proposed rights and responsibilities of the church and of the developer as a basis for negotiation if the project is to go ahead.

Documents submitted by developers will be treated as commercially confidential and will only be made available to people appointed by the church to judge the competition. None of the documents submitted to the competition will be made available to any potential rival.

Final submissions will need to be submitted by the closing deadline of July 30th 2009 and no submissions will be opened or considered by the panel before that time. . We reserve the right to ask for clarification of detail about proposals before any final decision is made.

Representatives of the church will be available before that time to answer specific questions, or to allow you access to the building by appointment at mutually convenient times.

Please ask us if you would like to see other reports and documents that have emerged from the consultation process



Architectural Brief for Fishergate Baptist Church

We would ask you to come up with some plans and perhaps a model, of how the building can be restructured internally to provide more appropriate space. Your plan will allow the developer a commercial payback and provide the church with an accessible and flexible area able to accommodate meetings of between 50 and 100 people, plus toilets, office and catering facilities. This space will need to be designed with multifunctional use in mind, though there could be scope for incorporating existing or new architectural features and decorations which have Christian symbolic significance.

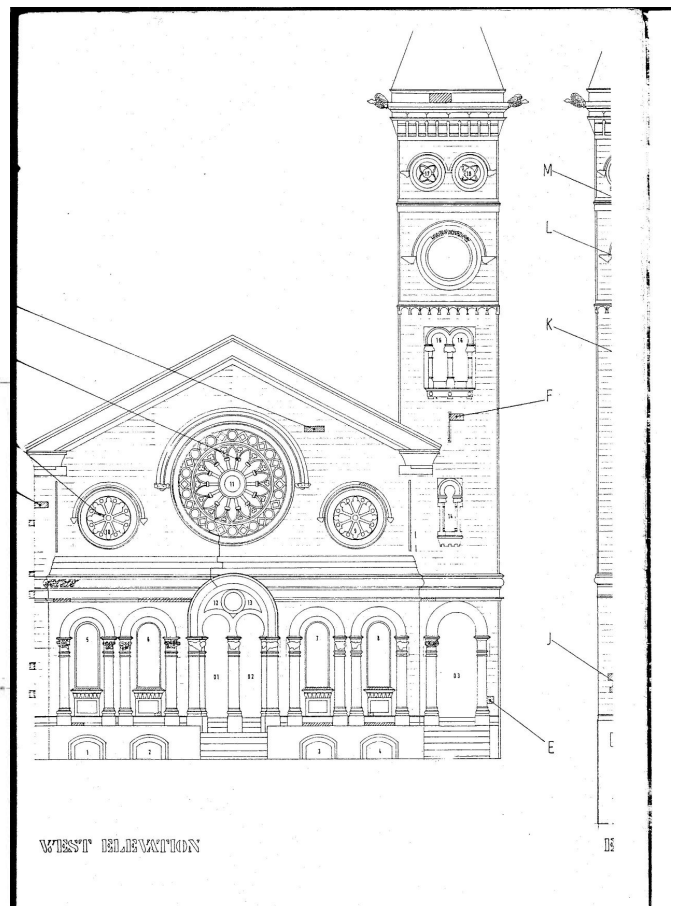
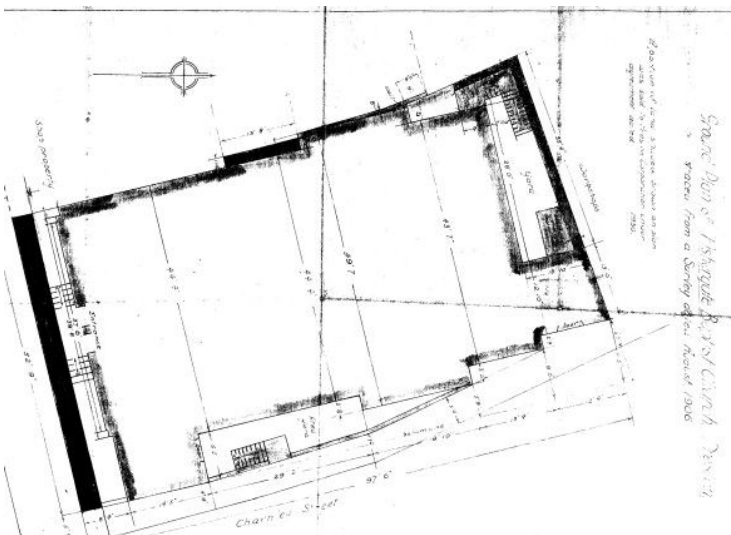
We recognize the building is Grade 2 listed and changes to external structure are likely to be resisted unless they are essential for the viability of the building. Any change of use will also be subject to planning permission. Under ecclesiastical exemption rules internal structural changes will need to be approved through the Baptist Heritage / Listed Buildings committee and should be justified in terms of their contribution to sustaining and developing Christian worship and ministry within the building. Developers may wish to consider whether proposals for maintenance and restoration are eligible for grant support from Heritage funding schemes. We would also encourage you to provide designs which are energy efficient and might include renewable local generation of power.

We can provide a recent surveyor's report detailing the current state of the building and essential repairs needed to make the fabric of the building weatherproof and safe. We can also supply you with copies of some original drawings of the building and opportunities to look around and measure the building.

An essential step is making the building accessible on every level for everyone including wheelchair users. At the moment all entrances involve negotiating flights of steps and internal access between levels is by steep and winding stairways. Widths and clearances are generally inadequate, and toilet provision is not DDA compliant. As a permanent solution the most probable option for a primary accessible entrance, and internal accessibility appears to us to be a lift shaft up the tower with a new main entrance at street level. If this strategy proves impossible or inappropriate to your plans, you should define your alternative strategy(ies) for DDA compliance

It is likely you will want to look at the structural feasibility of dividing the main body of the church into at least two floors or decks with a range of smaller spaces within them.

If you wish to propose a radical development which may involve the partial or total demolition of the existing structure you will need to secure at least in principle agreement with the planning authorities before the panel is likely to consider it favourably.





Business Plan Brief for Fishergate Baptist Church

The business plan will need to set out a credible scenario and time frame for the repairs and structural alterations to the building, and for the ongoing use and maintenance of the property for the ensuing 20-25 years.

It is clear that the developer will need to be the lead agency in this proposal as the church does not have the capacity or skills to manage such a large project, or the finances to buy in more than the most essential professional services (such as legal advice) needed for any scheme.

The plan will need to bear in mind the reality that the church has almost no liquid capital assets to invest in the building either at the present time or for the foreseeable future. The realistic maximum contribution could be to finance the furnishings and equipment of the worship area meeting space.

Nor is it likely that the church would wish to borrow capital which would incur substantial long term debts with interest.

The church is unlikely to have an ongoing income stream of any great substance. One would assume a combination of giving by church members and income from lettings would be enough to cover utility bills and internal maintenance and other running costs of the worship/meeting space only, plus possibly a modest service charge as a contribution towards external maintenance of the whole building.

A business plan which projected a net income stream in favour of the church would obviously be preferred to one which brings no long term financial benefit, or projects long term expenditure, for the church. beyond very basic running costs of the space available for church use

The developer's business plan will need to present credible evidence (in the form of audited accounts and financial statements) that they can lay hold of the investment capital required, and that the projected income streams will allow them to service and repay any debt in a reasonable time scale. The church will wish to satisfy itself that there are minimal risks and few potential liabilities in maintaining its interest in the property.



A business opportunity within two minutes walk of County Hall, The Railway Station and the main shopping centre of Preston





Legal Agreement Brief for Fishergate Baptist Church

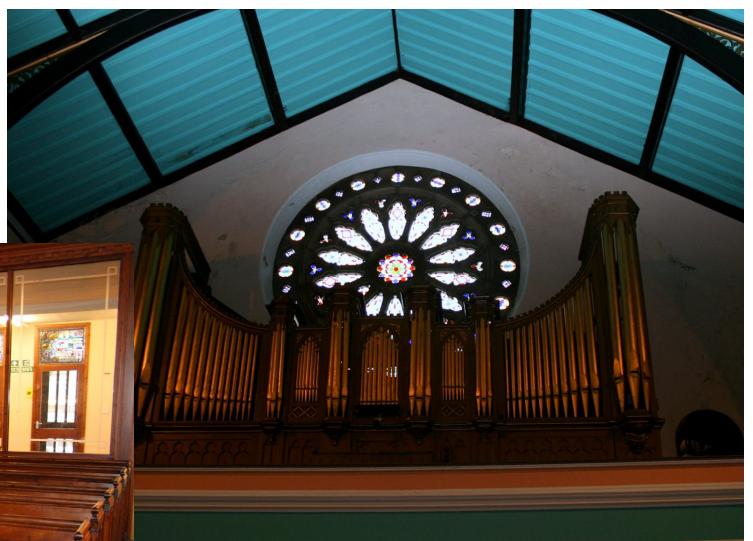
The church is open to negotiate with the competition winner the legal contracts for the development and future use of the building within a range of possible arrangements and financial terms for safeguarding the various parties' interests in the property.

It is likely that the Baptist Trustees will want to secure their rights over the freehold of the building and offering a long term lease for part of the building to the developer rather than the other way round.

It will be the developer's responsibility to check and ensure that their proposals comply with any restrictive covenants, or planning constraints that may apply to the property and to satisfy the church that this is the case in their submission for the competition. The Baptist Trustees will co-operate as well as they are able in seeking this type of information.

The church will not put any additional constraints on developers as to proposed commercial uses of the building. However within the terms of the competition uses which are of obvious social and community value will be looked on with favour, while uses which are in gross conflict with the Christian ethos and values or the church, or which are likely to produce substantial disturbance to the activities in the worship/meeting area will be less likely to receive enthusiastic support.

The nature, responsibilities and liabilities of any existing or specially created company or partnership arrangements will need to be outlined and made transparent in the bid, and will obviously need to be legally scrutinised by the church's solicitors before any contracts are entered into.



**If you are interested please contact
Rev. Neil Jones 01772 862470**

**or by email
on neilandruth@hotmail.com**

