

<b>Ref:</b>	2020-055791	<b>Church:</b>	Shrewsbury: Holy Cross
<b>Diocese:</b>	Lichfield	<b>Archdeaconry:</b>	Salop
<b>Created By:</b>	Revd Dr Tom Atfield (25/10/2020)	<b>Contact Tel.:</b>	01743245300
<b>Status:</b>	Application in formal consultation		

## Statement of Significance

### **Section 1: The church in its urban / rural environment.**

#### **1.1 Setting of the Church**

Shrewsbury abbey is set in public grounds next to one of the main thoroughfares into Shrewsbury, sited directly opposite the major town coach park. There is a small triangle of heged unconcecrated land to the front used as car parking opening out to the churchyard to the sides and rear.

#### **1.2 The Living Churchyard**

The churchyard is closed, and remains a popular public place, it contains graves and the Wilfred Owen memorial, symetry. remedial improvement work is needed to tackle the encoraching canpoy of tress, which has occulded the open space in the centre of the chuchyard, and self planing saplings and (possibly misspanted) memorial trees grow rampant.

#### **1.3 Social History**

Although once the major powerhouse of the region prior to its dissolution, the current structure is the remaining public side chapel of the monastic foundation, expanded in internal size by Victorian subscription. The Abbey's status foundered in the 19th century, and during the 20th despite the recognition of the need of tourism to sustain the building, it has remained a single-use place of worship for most intents until today with limited tourist footfall during its infrequent and unpredictable opening hours, no recruitment of paid staff, and no culture of attractions and events despite its ample scope as a concert and event venue. The current proposols of the PCC for the future of the Abbey are to radically reverse this trend, making the building generate sufficient income from events, concerts and tourism to support it.

#### **1.4 The church building in general**

The building has had a small kitchenette and toilets fitted within the last decade, but remains largely unimproved aside from questionable door porches being fitted to the south and west doors in the 1980's and early 1990's. It easily seats 500, but shows little organisation of internal space to be welcoming and accessible. A program to fix lighting, clear and clean the internal public space and to make the buliding safe and approachable has been underway in 2020.

#### **1.5 The church building in detail**

A detailed and new measured survey of the church and its grounds is appended.

### **1.6 Contents of the Church**

The 1911 Willam Hill organ is currently being refurbished and is a significant instrument of its type.

### **1.7 Significance for mission**

The Abbey has a mission to its near neighbours, most of whom are elderly and in care settings within walking distance, and is also a parish church for the significantly income deprived Monkmoor estate to its north. It is the county church of shropshire and a member of the Major churches network.

## **Section 2 : The significance of the area affected by the proposal.**

**2.1 Identify the parts of the church and/or churchyard which will be directly or indirectly affected by your proposal.**

Pathway leading to the north doors:

- **Repair of the pathway leading to the north doors** is required.

Pathway leading to the south doors:

- **Repair of the pathway leading to south doors** is required.

Internal space adjacent to south door:

- The current south internal lobby fitted in the late 20th century will be replaced with a glass, accessible **South Internal Lobby**
- The **demolition of the current south internal lobby** is thus necessitated.
- **Installation points for cable runs in to the floor.** This will be done at points to avoid cutting into monuments embedded into the floor. The swing on the south lobby door has also been designed to avoid cutting into an inscribed stone in the floor.

- North Porch
- A **North Porch Lobby** will be created in north porch by placing a glass screen with automatic inward opening glass doors in it set behind the current medieval doors.
- The proposed work in the north porch will necessitate the **repositioning of a floor mounted stone plaque and two wooden boards within the north porch.**
- A **North Porch Inner Screen** will be created by installing a set of glass doors which will replace the current unsuitable and nonhistoric wooden door leading from the main body of the church into the north porch.
- **The floor will need a small channel cut into it to provide installation points for cable runs.** No monuments embedded in the floor will be disturbed.
- **Car park:**
- There will be need to temporarily site a works cabin on the car park.

The works have been revised so that no further removal to historical fabric nor fundamental change in the external aesthetic of the building is necessitated by the proposed works other than the changes documented above.

## **2.2 Set out the significance of these particular parts.**

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**The repair of the pathway leading to the north doors and the repair of the pathway leading to south doors** allows safer approach to the building and improves aesthetic.

The **repositioning of a floor mounted stone plaque and two wooden boards within the north porch** allows for the construction of the **North Porch Lobby**.

A **North Porch Lobby** will preserve the stunning architecture of the original doors and entrance and will allow access and admiration of the vaulted ceiling within, used until recently as a junk store.

A **North Porch Inner Screen** will, in conjunction with the glass doors inside of the north door the creation of a welcome, light and windproof way into the building along the traditional and historical pilgrim route into the abbey, currently inaccessible. Together the **North Porch Lobby** and the **North Porch Inner Screen** will provide heat conservation and reduce draft as well as this encouraging curiosity and access for the space within.

The **demolition of the current south internal lobby** and replacement with a **South Internal Lobby** allows for safe egress from church, as the current south internal lobby is a tunnel with a sharp turn over a lintel.

### **Section 3: Assessment of the impact of the proposals**

#### **3.1 Describe and assess the impact of your proposal on these parts, and on the whole.**

All external medieval doors in the church will be retained under the proposed plans. This project will increase the accessibility and safety of Shrewsbury Abbey by installation of internal doors behind its medieval north door and through replacement of the south internal lobby inside the south door. It will involve external repaving works approaching both doors and at their internal thresholds and the removal of the current south internal lobby from 1979 but will retain all other current fixtures and features.

The work restores the use of a primary entrance to the Abbey via its medieval north doors, which have become inaccessible. The north entrance was the main historical and liturgical entrance into to the Abbey and the terminus of a national pilgrimage route. The medieval doors are sited at the end of outside paving which has fallen into disrepair. The architecturally stunning medieval vaulted entranceway behind the doors has become largely inaccessible for decades due to use as a storage area. The work outlined provides a universally accessible entrance point which allows for better appreciation of the medieval history of entire site. It will inspire wonder and curiosity and creates connection with the mediaeval pilgrim experience. It showcases internal and external medieval architecture at the north entrance and allows for new historically interpretive narrative. It allows for better welcome, tourism and religious experience in a sacred space. Combined with the replacement of the current south internal lobby it will increase the safety and capacity of the site through making two fire-safe and touch-free sensor operated covid-safe points of entry and exit. The demolition and replacement of the current south internal lobby from 1979 removes its visual clutter from the aesthetic of the building and removes a significant trip hazard and barrier to entrance as the current south internal lobby is too small for access by users of modern powered wheelchairs. The project has already gained regional attention as a focal point about the restoration of Shrewsbury Abbey which was until recently on the 'heritage at risk' register and still faces an uncertain future unless substantive work is undertaken.

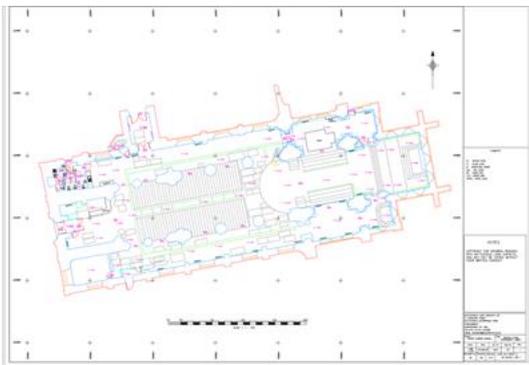
#### **3.2 Explain how you intend, where possible, to mitigate the impact of the proposed works on the significance of the parts affected and the whole.**

All external medieval doors in the church will be retained under the proposed plans. The proposed works are to be recessed into the existing medieval and Victorian architecture, and reduce the visual distraction from the current south internal lobby. Cable runs and electrical wiring where needed will be built into existing runs and features in an unobtrusive way, any connecting sealant will be colour matched for unobtrusiveness, and overall the effect of the proposed new work will undo some of the ponderous and jarring visual effect of what they are replacing.

### Sources consulted

We have consulted local historians for informal advice as well as a former heritage officer to the abbey and have sought the input of the Shrewsbury Access Group in the formulation of the proposals. We have received initial early feedback from Historic England on proposals

### Plan



### Interior



### Exterior

