

METHODIST
VICTORIA
faith
in the
future
CHURCH
BRISTOL



FEBRUARY 2013 BUILDING BULLETIN 2

This is the second issue of the bulletin, designed to keep you up to date with what is happening on the building project, which we hope, once completed, will enable Victoria better to fulfil its vision statement:

Victoria: A Methodist Church which seeks to share the Gospel through encouraging lifelong learning and engaging with and through media and the creative arts.

The bulletin also includes brief details about the architecture of Victoria and its neighbouring buildings.

Building Works – Next Steps

The architects have delivered the feasibility report and the preferred version of the design has been decided upon, which makes considerable use of a courtyard towards the back of the church buildings. It was feared that ground in the courtyard might be rock, or solid concrete, which would have caused difficulties, but test drillings thankfully have found that this is not the case. So the project now proceeds to the detailed design stage, when the preliminary designs will be translated into more detail, making sure that all the parts will fit into the whole and will work properly together. This will include taking specialist advice on aspects such as lighting and sound systems.

Grants and Funding

The estimated cost of the project is about £1.7 million (including VAT, some of which may be recoverable, as Victoria is a listed building). Already raised is about £143,000. Pledges still to be received from members of the congregation amount to about £54,000 and the anticipated Gift Aid amounts to about £15,000. The Bristol and South Gloucestershire Circuit of the Methodist Church has agreed to provide funding of £250,000 for the project, a precursor for seeking funding totalling £250,000 from the district and the connexional tiers of the Methodist Church. We will be seeking money from external grant awarding bodies to fund the balance.

Although the need for substantial amounts of money will arise once building work commences, already we are incurring costs for architects' and engineering consultants' fees, for the investigation of the courtyard and for the survey of the building - a necessary precursor to the preparation of the detailed plans.

Victoria and Its Neighbours

Victoria Methodist Church dates back to 1863. It was designed in the French Gothic Revival style with polychromatic sandstone and limestone ashlar by Foster and Wood (whose other buildings include Foster's Almshouses in Colston Street, the Colston Hall, the



The Victoria Rooms

Royal Colonial Insitute (behind trees)

1, 3 and 5 Whiteladies Road

Victoria Methodist Church

Royal West of England Academy

Beacon House

Embassy House

Grand Hotel and Bristol Grammar School). It was described as “one of our prettiest 19th Century chapels” by C. Crick (Victorian Buildings in Bristol [1975]).

Not only is Victoria a Grade II listed building, it is almost completely surrounded by listed buildings, all built within about forty years of each other. To the north is 1, 3 and 5 Whiteladies Road, three attached houses, now offices, built in 1858 (Grade II).

To the South is the Royal West of England Academy (RWA), built in 1857 (altered 1912) in Italianate style (Grade II*). It is described as “Part of an outstanding group of civic buildings, and a fine example of its type.” On the other side of the RWA is Beacon House, built in 1854 in the Neoclassical style (Grade II); it was formerly the Queen's Hotel. Opposite are the Royal Colonial Institute, possibly built 1876 (Grade II); and the Victoria Rooms, 1839 to 41, built in the French Neoclassical style (Grade II*).

(Source: National Heritage List for England)

So being a listed building, being part of a group of buildings, and also being on a very constricted site, places considerable constraints as to what can be done to the church, particularly the exterior. The lack of space around the church may also make the logistics of some of the building work itself challenging.

A history of Victoria Methodist Church is being prepared as part of the 150th Anniversary celebrations; this is scheduled to appear in the spring.

Building Bulletin 3 should be arriving in May with further progress reports and news.

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*Front Cover: Drawing of Victoria Wesleyan Chapel from Bristol Past and Present [1882]
by J F Nicholls and John Taylor*

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The purpose of Victoria Methodist Church is to respond to God's Love in Christ and to live out that love in God's world.