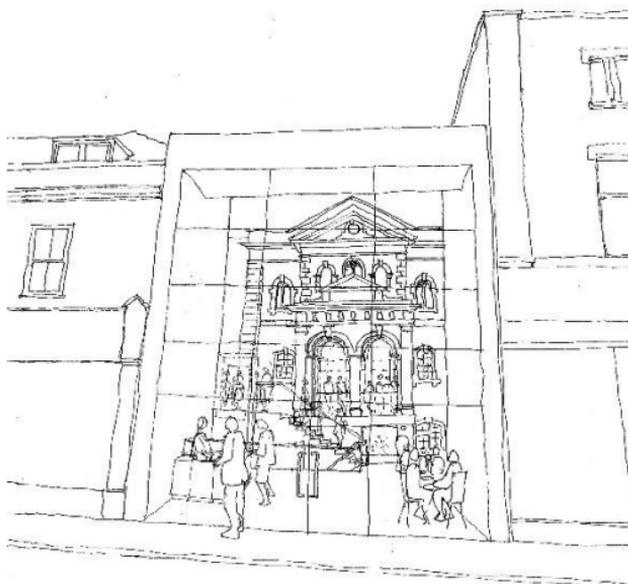
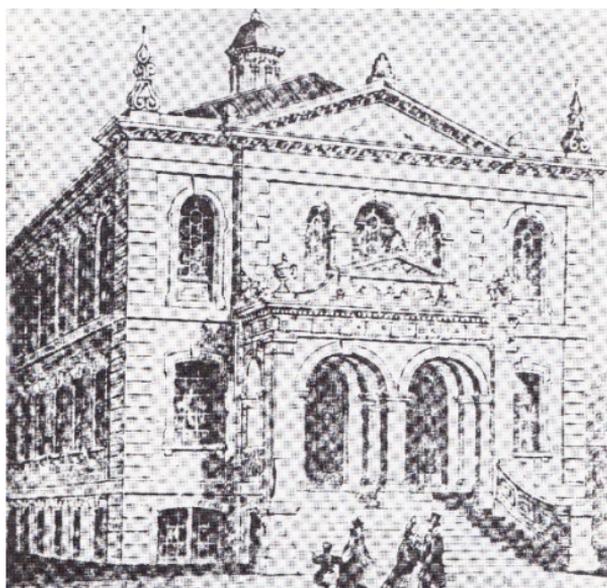


Maidstone United Reformed Church



Building Community in Maidstone



Introduction

There has been a church on this site since 1747 and this building dates from 1865. We have always been a church and congregation that has sought to serve the community. We have provided facilities during the Maidstone Typhoid Epidemic, been a place of recreation during World War 1 and operated as a canteen during World War Two. Today the church supports the Maidstone Night Shelter, The Princess Project, Hi Kent as well as being the base for many other local clubs, classes and societies.

Vision and Strategies

Inside this leaflet, you will find our Vision and Strategies. These are very much based on our commitment to provide an environment that is open to all. Open in terms of welcome and open in terms of access and freedom of movement throughout the building.

Our Project

In April 2014 Maidstone United Reformed Church launched a project to redevelop our premises so that they can continue to support the local community, as they have done for the past 150 years. This means upgrading the facilities to meet 21st century expectations for disabled access, flexibility, comfort and access for all.

The project has three phases:

- Remodelling the entrance providing a lift, community space and a stronger presence on Week Street.
- Improving community facilities by remodelling the existing halls and meeting rooms.

- Socially responsible redevelopment of the Dunning Hall site.

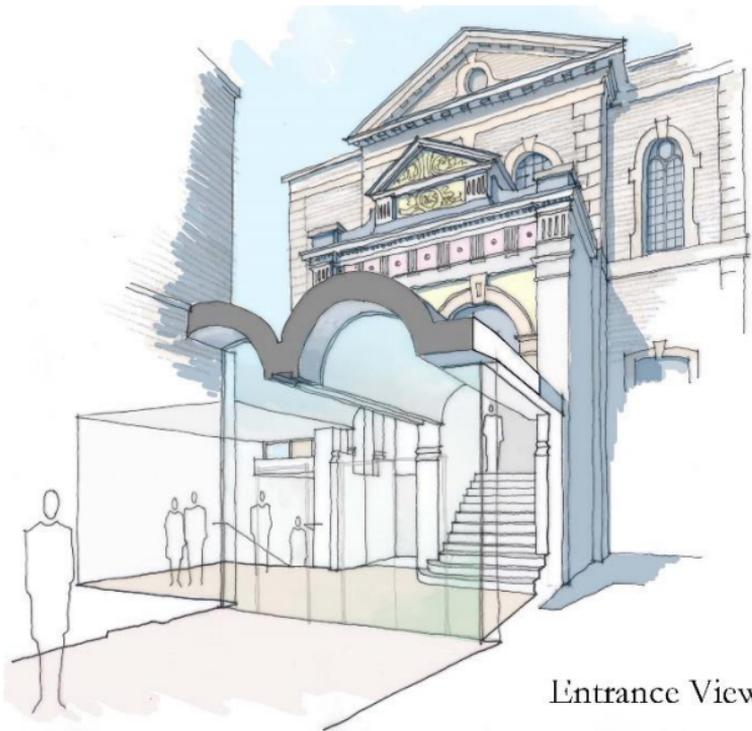
Fund raising and grant applications have been in progress since the start of the project. With the remodelling of the entrance being the first phase. However, two issues became clear as we progressed this phase.

- The exterior fabric of the main building needed attention to stabilise and repair brickwork, windows, flat roofs and guttering.
- The stair lifts, installed in 1994 as part of a redevelopment of the entrance and main hall, were reaching end of life and needed replacing with a lift. Replacing them with similar stair lifts was not considered appropriate.

It was agreed by the church members that we needed to make the building sound for the future and this work was therefore essential. Using our own reserves and with grants from Friends of Kent Churches and the National Churches Trust this work was completed in autumn 2016. There is more to do and plans are in place for further work in 2017/18.

The installation of a lift had been part of phase 1 of our redevelopment project however a study of the options for installing a lift in the existing church entrance showed that this could be done without having a significant impact on the overall design objectives of the new entrance. Our own fund raising for phase 1 has also received support from URC Southern Synod, and we have benefited from a number of bequests. It has now reached a total that is close to the estimated cost of the installation of the lift including the installation of new stairs and

upgrading of the existing entrance vestibule. Final designs are complete and a planning application has been submitted. We are calling this Phase 1a. We would like to see Phase 1a completed by the end of 2017.



Entrance View

Today

We are enthusiastic about what this phase of our project can mean in terms of allowing our building to be a more effective tool in the community life of Maidstone. Today has been our opportunity to share our plans with you as we work to continue the process of integrating the life of the Maidstone United Reformed Church with the community of Maidstone.

Vision and Strategies

Vision:

As a Town Centre Church build a strong and vibrant Christian community in Maidstone.

Strategies:

- Provide a place for Christian worship.
- Provide Christian worship in the Reformed tradition.
- Maintain an environment of Christian love for our members and all who visit our premises.
- Reach out to the community around us and show Christian love and care.
- Build relationships with community groups and charitable organisations.
- Provide an environment for community groups to interact with the church and with each other.
- Make our building accessible and welcoming to all.

