

# Case Name: Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs

## Case Number: 1436179

### Background

Historic England has been asked to consider the Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs for listing.

### Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	HE Recommendation
1	1436584	Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs	Listing	Add to List

### Visits

Date	Visit Type
none	No Visit / Data from other sources

### Context

The Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs, which has stood empty since 2004, is under immediate threat of demolition and the planning officer's report on Planning Application 14F/1223 'Former Martyrs Church' Lawrence Road recommends approval of the demolition of the building and the erection of a 4-storey block of students' flats. The application was heard at committee on the 21 October 2015 and was deferred following strong objections from local residents, councillors, The Victorian Society, Merseyside Civic Society and SAVE Britain's Heritage. The application was due to be heard at committee mid-June 2016; however, in view of the strong objections that have been lodged, the owner has been asked to provide further evidence to justify demolition. The case is still live, thus the potential for a Prior Approval Demolition Notice remains. The church has suffered some fire and smoke damage. The church does not stand within a conservation area.

### Assessment

#### CONSULTATION

Consultation reports were sent to the applicant, the owner, the owner's agent, the Historic Environment Record (HER) Officer and the Local Planning Authority. The applicant and the HER Officer responded to say that they did not have anything further to add. No other responses were received.

#### DISCUSSION

Buildings being considered for listing are assessed according to the criteria set out in the Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings (DCMS, March 2010); these state that increased selectivity must be employed for buildings dating after 1840, when numerous buildings of all types survive. Historic England's Listing Selection Guide for Places of Worship (April 2011) outlines relevant considerations for the assessment of Methodist churches for designation. These include architectural quality, survival of fixtures and fittings, and intactness. The guide also states that the 'structural division into a nave, chancel and aisles was irrelevant to Methodist worship, while provision of ancillary spaces for meetings rooms and Sunday schools was of paramount importance'.

From the mid-C19 Methodist churches were usually built in one of two styles – Gothic or Classical. However, during the late C19/early C20 other stylistic influences were gaining favour, including Italianate Baroque and Queen Anne, and the Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs reflects these new design influences. The

building is well designed and maximises its corner location, set between streets of terraced housing and parallel to the main thoroughfare of Lawrence Road. Constructed in red brick with ashlar bands and detailing, the building is handsomely composed and incorporates an imposing asymmetric Italianate Baroque main elevation with a distinctive 3-stage domed lantern tower into its design, and good-quality decorative leaded and Art Nouveau stained-glass with carved stone tracery. The Italianate Baroque-style was fashionable at the turn of the C20 and here it is successfully articulated by the use of stone ashlar bands and the detailing of the tower. Externally the church survives very well, with its original windows and, notwithstanding the removal of the central roof ventilator, there is little evidence of significant alteration.

Internally, available photographs indicate that the church retains its original plan, comprising an entrance vestibule and the Methodist auditory, with a rear entrance, meeting rooms and offices to the rear, and basement schoolrooms. In terms of fixtures and fittings the interior retains original timber panelling, pews, pulpit, organ, organ gallery, and decorative organ case, which all contribute to the special interest of the church. Although there have been some losses, overall the interior of the church survives well with its good quality original fixtures and fittings that reflect its Nonconformist origins.

The Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs compares favourably with other contemporary civic and religious Grade II listed buildings in Liverpool of a similarly eclectic style, such as the Methodist Central Hall (1904-05, National Heritage List for England No. 1072941) and the Andrew Carnegie Library, Green Lane, West Derby (1904, NHLE 1356361), and to other nonconformist churches nationally of a similar date, including the Church of St James, Alnwick (1894, NHLE 1178598), Cowley Street Methodist Church, Oxford (1903-04, NHLE 1047330) and Streatham Methodist Church (1900, NHLE 1064974).

The church has a strong street presence and it forms part of a significant group of High Victorian and Edwardian churches built along Lawrence Street, which includes the Grade II St Dunstan's Church (1886, Aldridge and Deacon, NHLE 1068261), the Roman Catholic Church of St Hugh of Lincoln (1904, Pugin and Pugin, unlisted) and the Grade II\* Church of St Bridget (1872, E A Hefer, NHLE 1068396). The memorial church therefore benefits from a spatial and functional group value with these three other churches which is considered to be part of its special interest.

In recommending the extent of designation we have considered whether powers of exclusion under s.1 (5A) of the 1990 Act are appropriate, and consider that they are, which is made clear in the proposed List entry.

## CONCLUSION

After examining all the records and other relevant information, and having carefully considered the architectural and historic interest in this case, it is considered that the Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs fulfils the criteria for listing and is therefore recommended for listing at Grade II.

## REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs of 1902-03 is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- \* Architectural interest: the church has a well-detailed Italian Baroque exterior with a 3-stage tower and dome, decorative Art Nouveau leaded and stained-glass, and carved stone tracery;
- \* Interior survival: the church retains its original Methodist auditory plan with a range of good-quality fixtures and fittings including timber pews, pulpit, organ gallery and organ;
- \* Group value: the church forms part of a strong group of unlisted, listed GII and GII\* High Victorian and Edwardian churches built along a single thoroughfare.

## Countersigning comments:

Agreed. A church with a strong external composition combined with a good interior, which merits listing at Grade II. MTS 18-07-2016.

## Second Countersigning comments:

Agreed also. This church has a very handsome eclectic exterior which gives it a very strong streetscape presence, and is also very little altered, added to which its internal survival is also good and of some quality. This building therefore fully merits its place on the List.

V. Fiorato, 29th July 2016

**Annex 1****List Entry****List Entry Summary**

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

**Name:** Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs

**List Entry Number:** 1436584

**Location**

Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs, Lawrence Road, Wavertree, Liverpool, L15 1HW

The listed building is shown coloured blue on the attached map. Pursuant to s.1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act'), structures attached to or within the curtilage of the listed building (save those coloured blue on the map) are not to be treated as part of the listed building for the purposes of the Act.

The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Liverpool	Metropolitan Authority	Non Civil Parish

**National Park:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Grade:** II

**Date first listed:**

**Date of most recent amendment:**

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**Legacy System Information**

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

**Legacy System:** Not applicable to this List entry.

**Legacy Number:** Not applicable to this List entry.

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**Asset Groupings**

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

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**List Entry Description****Summary of Building**

United Methodist Church, opened 1903, built in the Edwardian Italianate Baroque-style, and designed by the Liverpool architect Thomas H W Walker. The brick-built N, S and W perimeter walls protecting the basement

light wells, the modern security fencing, and the basement light wells are excluded from the listing although the gate piers are included.

### Reasons for Designation

The Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs of 1902-03 is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

- \* Architectural interest: the church has a well-detailed Italian Baroque exterior with a 3-stage tower and dome, decorative Art Nouveau leaded and stained-glass, and carved stone tracery;
- \* Interior survival: the church retains its original Methodist auditory plan with a range of good-quality fixtures and fittings including timber pews, pulpit, organ gallery and organ;
- \* Group value: the church forms part of a strong group of unlisted, listed GII and GII\* High Victorian and Edwardian churches built along a single thoroughfare.

### History

The Memorial Church of the Protestant Martyrs was built to a design by the Liverpool architect Thomas H W Walker. The foundation stone was laid on 22 November 1902 by the Lord Mayor of Liverpool, the Right Honourable W Watson Rutherford Esq. The church is thought to have opened for worship in 1903, to serve the Methodist community of the burgeoning streets of terraced housing being built in Wavertree at the turn of the C20. The first Pastor was George Wise.

The church is situated in a prominent position towards the W end of Lawrence Road and in close proximity to the Church of St Dunstan's (Aldridge and Deacon, 1886, Grade II), the Church of St Bridget's (E A Heffer, 1872, Grade II\*) and the unlisted Church of St Hugh of Lincoln (Pugin and Pugin, 1904). The church was built for the United Methodist movement and bears comparison with the contemporary work of the City Architect Thomas Shelmerdine, who designed the Carnegie Library, Lister Drive of 1904.

On Wednesday 31 March 1982, the Protestant Reformers' Memorial Church, Liverpool, was constituted as a congregation of the Free Presbyterian Church of Ulster. The church closed in 2004 and it is currently (2016) disused and unoccupied.

### Details

United Methodist Church, opened 1903, built in the Edwardian Italianate Baroque-style, designed by the Liverpool architect Thomas H W Walker.

**MATERIALS:** fair-faced red brick laid in English garden wall-bond; dark-grey brick plinth courses; stone ashlar bands, keystones, columns, voussoirs, pediments and door hood. Roof clad in Welsh slate, with red ridge tiles, together with a copper capped base of a former ventilator and a copper covered dome.

**PLAN:** a rectangular plan, with basement schoolrooms, aligned NW-SE. Situated on a plot of land adjacent to the N side of Lawrence Road, double-fronted with the main entrance facing Salisbury Street and rear entrance facing Alderson Street.

**EXTERIOR:** the asymmetric W (main) elevation has a pediment above a round-arched, 4-panel, leaded, stained-glass W window that is flanked by plain brick plasters. A projecting ground-floor vestibule is lit by four round-arched windows, set between a pedimented porch approached by a flight of stone steps to the N, and to the S by a square-plan tower with an octagonal lantern drum emphasised by ashlar scroll buttresses that alternate between the window openings, surmounted by a copper clad bell-shaped dome. The tower houses the main entrance, which is approached by a flight of stone steps and has a large pair of panelled doors beneath a semi-circular fanlight, which is set within a semi-circular ashlar hood supported on scroll brackets.

The N and S side elevations are built using pier and panel construction with a projecting brick eaves courses. Each side has four wide and one narrow round-arched windows that illuminate the interior of the main body of the church. The windows have leaded stained glass panels set in frames with slender tracery incorporating Ionic columns, and have ashlar cills and aprons. The basement schoolrooms are illuminated by paired windows with flat ashlar lintels. A foundation stone that reads: THIS STONE WAS LAID BY / THE RIGHT HON. THE LORD MAYOR / OF LIVERPOOL. / W. WATSON RUTHERFORD ESQ. / NOVEMBER 22nd 1902. is set in the wall beneath the S window of the tower. An ashlar porch supported by plain columns and approached by stone steps, is set in the re-entrant angle between the main body of the church and the projecting pedimented end bay of the rear entrance range.

The asymmetric E elevation of the rear entrance range has an entrance block with plain corner pilasters and two pairs of doors set in a round brick arch beneath a 6-light, segmental semi-circular fanlight. A colonnade of 4 round-arched windows, below a pedimented gable, lights the stairs and a corridor to the first-floor rooms. The entrance block is flanked to the S by a 2-bay range and to the N by a single-bay range with a canted corner. Each bay has a window to the ground-floor and to the basement.

INTERIOR: the body of the church is filled with three rows of timber pews, the central rows with staggered off-set dividing panels. The N, S, and W walls have panelled wainscoting. The E wall has a recessed organ loft, decorated with a moulded architrave and plain engaged columns to the rear of a panelled choir / organ gallery. The organ is housed on the choir/organ gallery in a panelled organ case that has a fretwork frieze supported on timber posts and ball finials. The organ keyboard is situated in a sunken pit to the front of the timber panelled segmental-plan pulpit, which is accessed by a timber stair with turned balusters. Behind the pulpit is wooden panelling rising to the base of the choir gallery. The plaster ceiling is canted with simple moulded decorative panels set between the bases of four partially exposed roof trusses. Four decorative pendant ceiling roses are situated along the central axis of the ceiling. Photographs of the interior of the various offices, meeting rooms, lobbies, corridors and school rooms have been posted on the internet; they indicate that most of the rooms are relatively un-adorned, that the first-floor office room within the rear entrance block is accessed by a staircase and corridor with a parquet timber flooring, and that the ceilings of the basement schoolrooms are supported on plain round cast-iron pillars.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: three sweeping stairs over the basement light wells, flanked by brick walls terminating in brick gate posts, give access to the two entrances in the W elevation and to a side entrance in the S elevation.

The brick-built N, S and W perimeter walls protecting the basement light wells, the modern security fencing, and the basement light wells are excluded from the listing.

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## **Selected Sources**

### **Books and journals**

Pevsner, N, Pollard, R, *The Buildings of England: Lancashire, Liverpool and the South-West*, (2006), 494

### **Websites**

Lawrence Road Memorial Church, accessed 11th June 2016 from  
<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/LAN/Wavertree/MemorialChurch.shtml>

**Map**

**National Grid Reference:** SJ3770689430



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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1436584\_1.pdf