

Project name:

St Silas Church and Housing.

Location:

Byker, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Description:

St Silas Church, which is Grade II Listed, was built in the heart of the shipbuilding community of Byker on the corner of Clifford Street and Burton Street in 1885/1886.

The Church's future looked unsustainable due to the diminishing congregation when the Parish and Byker Bridge Housing Association (BBHA) decided to collaborate. The Church's objectives were to increase involvement with the surrounding community, make the most of its resources to cut its running costs and create an income. BBHA needed new head offices and land for housing.

The Parish decided to lease a third of the Church to BBHA for their offices. They wanted to create a new Worship area and a Church Hall with new kitchen and toilets. The old Church Hall, which was a late addition to the Church, was demolished to restore the original concept and allow the land between the Church and the Metro line to be redeveloped as housing. Inside the Church a mezzanine floor was inserted in the North Aisle to double the floor area available to BBHA. This was designed to be reversible with minimum impact on the existing structure.

The division between the new Church Hall and the new Worship area is frameless glass to maintain the overall impression of the Nave as one space. The new kitchens and toilets inserted at the West end are as simple as possible so that they do not distract from the splendour of the Nave or attempt to imitate it.

The housing scheme which is made up of 19 bedsits and a Wardens bungalow turns its back on the noisy railway and the road and is arranged around a courtyard looking towards the Church.

This scheme won the Lord Mayors Design Award for Refurbishment & Conservation in 2005, and the RICS Renaissance Award for Community Benefit in 2006. The scheme was also short listed for the National RICS awards in 2006 and received a Special Mention Award at the RIBA Hadrian Awards in 2007.

Client:

Byker Bridge Housing Association

Contract Sum:

£1.8 million

