

1.3.2 Current Facilities

On this page and the following pages, a brief narrative aims to provide a description of the building and its key features and facilities. This will include a description on the Chapel location, the exterior, and all floors of the building. Existing plans of the building can be found in the appendices of this report.

1.3.2.1 Location & Setting

The Tabernacle is prominently located within the former village of Morriston, now a district of Swansea. The Chapel sits within a small plot of land which is bound to the west by Woodfield Street, to the east by the former tabernacle manse and Crown Street to the South. Immediately to the north, the site is abutted by a Wilkinsons supermarket, and to the west the former Tabernacle Manse, now a private house and garden, has been built onto land formerly belonging to the Chapel and encloses its rear elevation.

Woodfield Street is Morriston's main high street and as such is predominantly given over to retail units, with residential estates arranged in a grid-like pattern of streets as one moves away from the high street. A substantial number of individual chapels and churches are located close (i.e. within 500 metres) to the Tabernacle site, most of these are 19th century in date and represent a range of denominations. These include but are not limited to:

- 01 Church of St John, Woodfield Street (Grade II listed);
- 02 St David's, Woodfield Street;
- 03 Libanus English Independent Chapel, Market Street;
- 04 Salvation Army Chapel, Morfydd Street;
- 05 Mission Church, Pentremalwed Road;
- 06 Seion Newydd Baptist Chapel, Clase Road;
- 07 Bethania Welsh Presbyterian Church (originally the Bethania Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel), Woodfield Street;
- 08 Philadelphia Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, Globe Street (converted into offices and residential accommodation).

The number and range of 19th century places of worship located close to the site illustrate the boom of chapel building which took place in industrial communities in South Wales during the 19th century. It would appear that many of these chapels are facing the same issues as at the Tabernacle; falling congregation numbers, declining community involvement and physical decay. Some of the local chapels have been closed or sold, and in one case, the Philadelphia Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel has been redeveloped as office and residential accommodation.

The setting of the Chapel is typically urban and is characterised by hard landscaping, few trees or green spaces and a prevalence of 20th century shop fronts. The Chapel grounds themselves contains a number of small trees and lawned areas, though these are concealed behind the perimeter walls, large areas of trees or open green space increase in number as one moves east and west away from the main high street (Woodfield Street). The Chapel itself is located on a sloping site, with the ground falling away to the east at the rear of the building, along Crown Street.

To the rear of the site, the former Tabernacle Manse, now a women's shelter was constructed shortly after the Chapel was completed. The Manse complements the Chapel through the use of similar materials in its design. However, the later accommodation block constructed to the rear of the building is unsympathetic to the style and setting of the Chapel.

The buildings throughout Morriston are generally domestic in scale, only rising to a maximum of three storeys along Woodfield Street and typically no greater than two storeys in the residential streets. The Tabernacle's tall thin spire and the tower of the nearby Church of St John are visible from several points in the surrounding streetscape. The Tabernacle spire is particularly visible within the streetscape and marks the site as one of Morriston's key landmarks. The only other prominent building of note is the large and formerly grand Danbert House, located on nearby Morfydd Street. This building, which was also built by Daniel Edwards, is Grade II listed and currently lies derelict, though its angular roofline is visible from the Tabernacle site.

Surrounding buildings are constructed of a mixture of red brick and the local grey/brown coloured stone. Render and pebbledash are common surface finishes used on both the retail units and the terraced houses which surround the site, some of which have been painted white. This lends the surroundings a very muted colour palette of greys and browns, though the denser trees to the east and west, as well as the few individual trees on Woodfield Street bring small splashes of colour to the streetscape. For this reason, the Tabernacle by virtue of its height, prominent location and elaborate white stone dressings is a striking and highly visible feature of the area, and it is somewhat at odds with the low quality shop fronts, empty buildings and the 20th century supermarket which bring a sense of dilapidation to Woodfield Street.



Location plan highlighting chapels and churches within a close proximity to the Tabernacle.