

1.3.2.2 Exterior of the Chapel

Approaching the Tabernacle along Woodfield Street, the Chapel presents a striking frontage. The Chapel is constructed from brown rough-faced Pennant stone, with paler cream coloured stone dressings and string courses (described as 'freestone' in the listing text). The Chapel is located on a sloping site, so that the rear (east) of the building is substantially lower than the front (west) end. This was exploited by the architect to allow construction of a Sunday School/Vestry into the lower ground floor. The Tabernacle sits within its own plot of land which is bound on the west and southern sides by a stone built perimeter wall. The wall is thought to be original, though the steel railings and gates are later replacements. The remains of historic cast ironwork survive on three of the gate piers. These are of much higher quality than the railings and are presumed to be the remains of lamp stands.

Designed in a Classical Italianate style, the principal (west) elevation features a pedimented temple front porch of three bays, the central bay being larger than the flanking ones. Four carved medallions in a sunburst pattern decorate the spandrels between the arches below a dentilled cornice. The triangular pediment is supported by a giant order of four pairs of Corinthian columns with matching pilasters behind them, within the tympanum of the pediment is a small roundel window. The roundel window is echoed above the main entrance doors; which features a pair of round headed doors which are enclosed beneath a round arch supported by Corinthian pilasters. The main doors are flanked on either side by a single rounded headed doorway. Small panels of stained glass are fitted above each of the doorways. This arrangement is echoed in the windows of the upper floor which similarly features round headed arches above and Corinthian capitals to either side.

On the south side of the temple front, the spire of the Chapel rises to 160ft and contains a four sided clock below a narrow steeply pointed pinnacle. Tall, narrow, round headed windows are located on the west and south faces of the spire at first floor level. The round headed windows and Corinthian style detailing from the west front is echoed on the upper portion of the spire, though the windows here are louvered.

The north and south elevations are essentially mirror images of one another, with the exception of the tower arrangement on the southern side. Both elevations have large windows arranged on three levels. The largest windows are contained on the uppermost level; these are in an arcade arrangement with four paired windows with timber frames set in arched Bath stone surrounds. A single round headed window is similarly set within a stone surround at the eastern side of each elevation and provides light to the rear staircases. The middle set (ground floor) of windows below are smaller, though they are also timber framed and echo the spacing and detailing of the large windows above. Both the ground and first floor windows contain yellow stained glass which when illuminated by the sun appears bright gold. The ground floor windows on the north elevation have been covered with polycarbonate sheeting – presumably for protection. The lower ground floor windows are of far simpler design, comprising eight over eight timber sashes, with very slender glazing bars. The lower ground floor windows on both sides have been covered with security mesh which detracts slightly from their appearance. The level of the ground immediately adjacent to the Chapel is slightly lower than that of the driveway/carpark area and is accessed via a short flight of steps. Access into the rear of the Chapel is gained via arched doorways on the east end of each of the north and south elevations. These doorways are offset at a level between the lower ground and ground floors, they are accessed by a flight of external stone steps to either elevation.

The rear (east) elevation is not directly accessible due to the adjacent house; this was constructed soon after the Chapel was completed onto land previously shown as belonging to the Chapel. This building, which is constructed out of similar stone to the Chapel and formerly functioned as the Tabernacle Manse. It was sold during the 1960s and now operates as a home for vulnerable women. The rear elevation is far plainer than the others, though it features simple stone string courses which continue those from the other elevations. The central portion of the rear elevation protrudes slightly, above which is visible the chimney stack for the ground floor rooms. This is flanked on either side by paired round headed windows matching the style of those on the upper level of the north and south elevations.

