

1.3.2.3 Lower Ground Floor

The Vestry occupies the majority of the lower ground floor of the building and is accessed via staircases in each corner of the building, and from external doorways located in the north-east and south-east corners. Access can also be gained through a tunnel from beneath the north-west and south-west external staircases, though access is currently blocked externally by gates for reasons of security.

The Vestry comprises three large rooms shown on plans as the Festri Fawr (main room), the Festri Fach and the former kitchen. A stage has been constructed into the western end of the Festri Fawr; though the exact date of this is unknown, it is presumed to date from around the mid-20th century. The Festri Fawr has been further subdivided in recent years by the insertion of a modern kitchen along the north wall, this does not extend to the full height of the Vestry ceiling. The Festri Fawr is interspersed with cast iron columns supporting the floor of the Main Hall above. Like the columns in the Hall, these are very slender but they lack the ornate capitals employed upstairs. The Festri Fawr is lit by large windows along the north and south walls and retains what appears to be an original internal porch area in the south-east corner of the room. The porch which is of timber construction, features similar Classical detailing seen elsewhere in the building, suggesting that it is an original feature. The Festri Fawr retains many historic features of note, including the timber flooring, columns and doors. Modern services have been installed and this has included some less sympathetic trunking along the walls.

The Festri Fach, is substantially smaller than the main room, and is currently used as a meeting room/gallery space, with large interpretation boards explaining the history of the Tabernacle. It retains two original fireplaces one of which has been covered over, though the other retains in original arched cast iron insert. These match fireplaces seen elsewhere in the building and are original. This room features historic tongue and groove panelling at low level as well as a historic picture rail, a modern suspended ceiling has been inserted which hides the original ceiling.

The former kitchen area, which is located to the rear of the stage, is currently used as storage space, though it retains historic built in cupboards and a quarry tiled floor. The window and door openings which previously opened into the Festri Fawr have been partially blocked and covered over by the stage.

