



BEFORE



AFTER



kke architects

Four Oaks Methodist Church

Four Oaks

The Grade II Listed Four Oaks Methodist Church is situated in a prominent position at the junction of Four Oaks Road and Lichfield Road opposite Four Oaks train station. Designed by Crouch and Butler in an Arts & Crafts style, the original building was completed in 1909. Community facilities were extended in 1969, with various internal alterations made over the years. Following a quinquennial inspection it was identified that, not only were there maintenance issues to address, but some areas were no longer fit for current and future needs. These refurbishment and extension works were completed in July 2018, funded by donations and grant money.

Demolition of the 1969 additions and a dilapidated scout hut were undertaken to make way for an extension to the north of the church, thereby having the least impact on the view from the main road junction, which is relatively unchanged.

By unpicking the piecemeal historic alterations the internal layout of the building now respects the original plan and purpose of some of the spaces, whilst making the building fit for the future.

The extension provides a much-needed accessible route in to the building, presented by a new entrance, signposted by a lighted cross-shaped window in a contemporary stone facade acting as a beacon in the community. The entrance area is welcoming, with the office on-hand to help any newcomers. The narrow 'rabbit run' corridor, internal office and other alterations that made wayfinding within the building difficult have been stripped out. Instead a wide circulation, with lightwell dormers borrowed from the original large hall to let daylight penetrate the centre of the building, clearly leads people between the different areas. A bespoke stained glass window, decorated with a rainbow and dove, shines the message of peace and new life through the building.

There are now a range of flexible meeting spaces for community uses, including: uniform group activities; choir rehearsals; exercise classes; prayer meetings; toddler groups; luncheon clubs; parties; and presentation evenings.

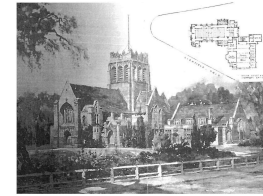
The original large hall is fully refurbished, with radiant panel heating & LED lighting. The small hall, once cold, dark and noisy from reverberation, has insulated walls & a raised ceiling with rooflights, as well as suitable acoustic treatments, heating & lighting solutions to withstand the sports hall type uses that will take place.

Rooms 1 & 2, constructed from glulam timber arches giving a light and uplifting space overlooking the garden, can be used as one space or divided to give a more intimate meeting room. The form takes cues from the gothic arches within the section of the original building, interfacing with the low sill of the north window of the chancel, allowing the extension to maximise the space by abutting this wall.

All rooms have audio visual links between them and the nave of the church.

Upgraded WCs and baby changing facilities are provided, with storage improved throughout the building, integrated within the group rooms, and better utilising 'loft' space.

Natural stone is used for public-facing facades, to meet conservation requirements to respect the original building, whilst alternate elevations are treated with blue 'bleb' brick that contrasts, but is a similar aesthetic to the hung tiles used elsewhere.



Sketch c.1909



Large hall c.1912

