

St Ambrose Memorial Church

State Heritage Register No. 01853

Address - 58 Myrtle St (Cnr. Wamboin St), Gilgandra, NSW, 2827

Statement of Heritage Impact for Underpinning and Reinstatement of Flooring



St Ambrose Memorial Church from the southeast.

Prepared by:
Michael Scott, heritage architect,
29 Rowbotham St, Rangeville Qld 4350
Ph: 0407 113 249

Prepared for:
St Ambrose Memorial Anglican Church (SAMAC), Building Committee

Date – 8 Oct 2024

Issue – A

1.1 Site Description

St Ambrose Memorial Anglican Church is within the township of Gilgandra, in rural NSW, as shown in images below:



Figure 1: Location of St Ambrose Memorial Church within the township of Gilgandra. (Source: Nearmaps)



Figure 2: Aerial photograph showing NSWHR heritage boundary of St Ambrose Memorial Church. (Source: Google Maps)



Figure 3: Real property lots. (Source: Gilgandra Council). Note: NSWHR heritage boundary includes 2 Lots 226, DP 6192 & DP 927471

Heritage item

St Ambrose is a brick and terra cotta tile Anglican church, built in 1922 to the designs of Louis R. Williams of Melbourne. Continued ground movement resulting from alternative periods of drought and flooding has seen the reactive black soil cause movement in the building, with serious damage to the Chapel arch and large cracking to the walls and buttresses. As a result, the church is no longer considered safe for use and requires immediate repair.

The church site is relatively flat with a slight fall to the southeast corner. The ground is turfed with some mature trees and other minor landscaping elements. Immediately to the west of the church is Feetham House, the former Bush Brothers school house, which is not included in the State Heritage Boundary, but is listed on the Gilgandra LEP Heritage Inventory. Vehicular access is from Wamboin Street to a gravel carpark to the north of the church and Feetham House. The site is not fenced.

The church is a fine example of the Interwar Gothic style of architecture with picturesque, asymmetrical massing, influenced by the English Arts and Crafts movement and is a landmark within Gilgandra.

Heritage listings

Listing type	Item Name and document details	Listing number
Local heritage item	Church of St Ambrose Gilgandra LEP	I30
State Heritage Register	St Ambrose Memorial Church	SHR No. 01853

St Ambrose Memorial Church is also listed by the National Trust of NSW and is on the NSW War Memorial Register.

The proposed work area

Existing fencing encloses the property along both side boundaries (north and west boundaries).

Temporary fencing will be erected around the church and the parking area to its north to contain lay-down areas, space for the underpinning equipment, workers parking and to allow access to the exterior and interior of the church to do the work. The fencing will follow the existing boundary lines to the south (Myrtle St) and the east (Wamboin St) to provide a safe work area for the underpinning works.

1.1 Site summary history

The construction of St Ambrose Memorial Church in 1922 is unique in the history of Australia. Funding for the new church was borne out of a patriotic desire of the Anglican congregation of Bournemouth in England to reward a deserving colonial congregation for their WWI war effort. Chosen for the impact of the snowballing Coo-ee March (that saw not only 100s of men enlist in the war, but also the instigation of this form of recruitment drive) the congregation of Gilgandra was given £1,200 to build a memorial church. This church was to celebrate the end of the War to End All Wars and the collaboration of the dominions with England.

The 1903 church previously constructed on the site, the Church of the Resurrection, was replaced by a grander church designed by Louis R. Williams of Melbourne. Williams is considered to be one of Australia's foremost ecclesiastical architects. Two of the church's stained-glass windows were produced by Christian Waller.

An in-depth history of the site is in the Conservation Management Plan (CMP) attached to the heritage application this SOHI is associated with.

Of relevance to this proposal for underpinning, Geotechnical soil testing was unknown in the 1920s and the architect designed footings were shallow and insufficient for the highly reactive soil of this site. The following archival photographs show the shallow reinforced concrete footings constructed in the 1920s:

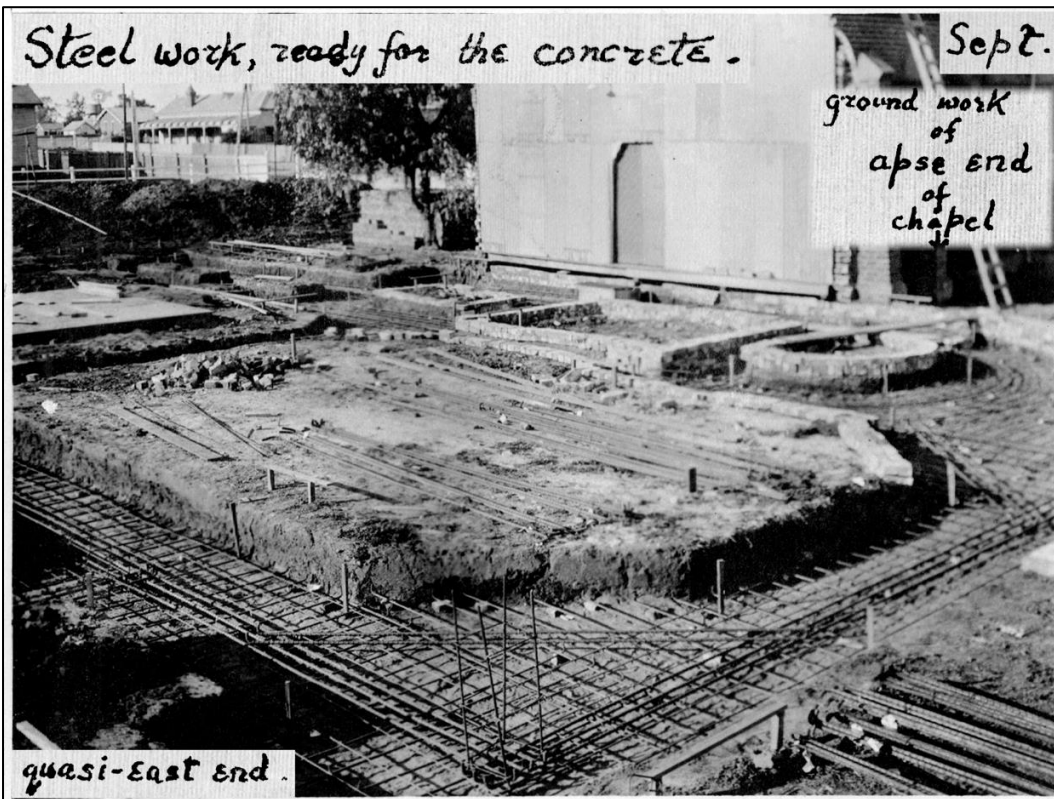


Figure 4: St Ambrose archival photographs showing the shallow, reinforced concrete footings constructed in the 1920s (Source: St Ambrose archives)



Figure 5: Shallow, reinforced concrete footings constructed in the 1920s (Source: St Ambrose archives)

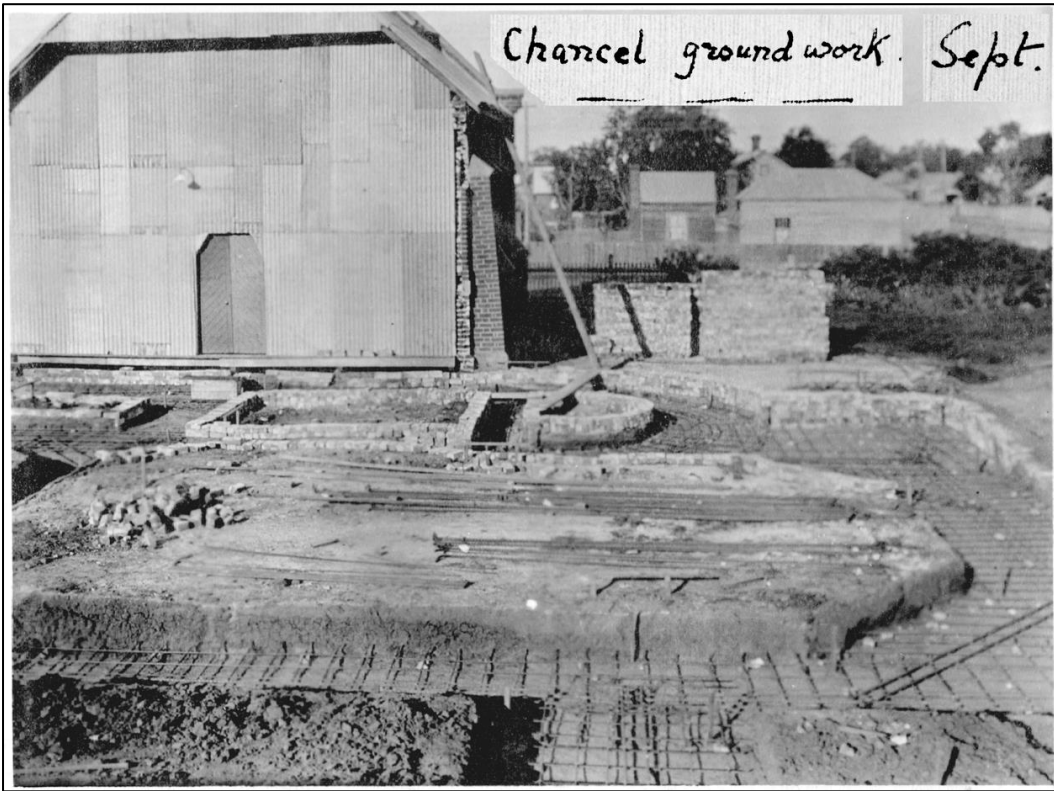


Figure 6: Shallow, reinforced concrete footings constructed in the 1920s (Source: St Ambrose archives)



Figure 7: Shallow, reinforced concrete footings constructed in the 1920s (Source: St Ambrose archives)



Figure 8: Northern Entry/ Narthex as originally built. The church was never extended beyond the chamferboard clad, temporary timber framed wall to this end of the church. (Source: St Ambrose archives)

1.3 Physical analysis

Plans, Elevations and Sections

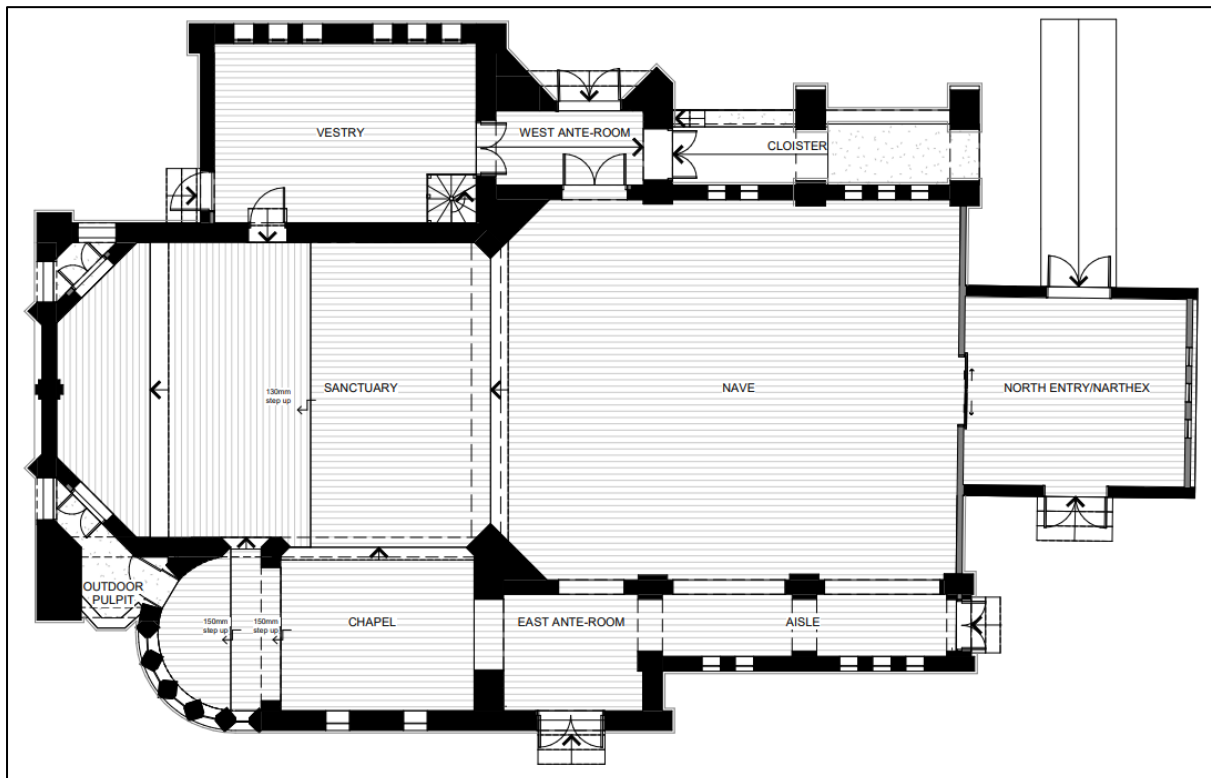


Figure 9: Floor Plan. North to right of image. (Source: JDA)



Figure 10: Long Section, looking towards East. (Source: JDA)



Figure 11: Crosssection, showing main arch between Nave and Sanctuary. (Source: JDA)



Figures 12 & 13: North Elevation (Left) and South Elevation (Right). (Source: JDA)

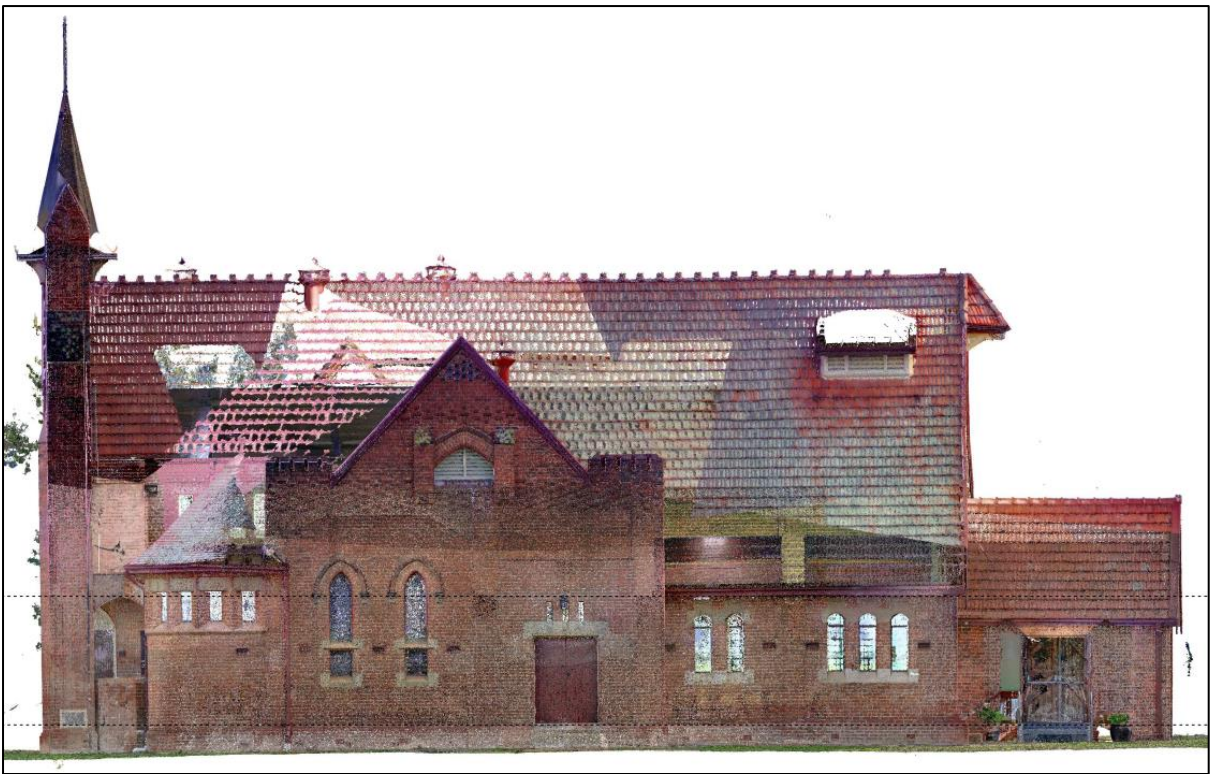


Figure 14: East Elevation. (Source: JDA)



Figure 15: West Elevation. (Source: JDA)

Note: A full set of measured drawings is attached to the heritage application associated with this SOHI.

Evidence of cracking to brickwork



Figures 16 & 17: Substantial cracking to eastern wall of church. (Source: Michael Scott, Feb 23)



Figures 18 & 19: Substantial cracking to western and southern walls of church. (Source: Michael Scott)

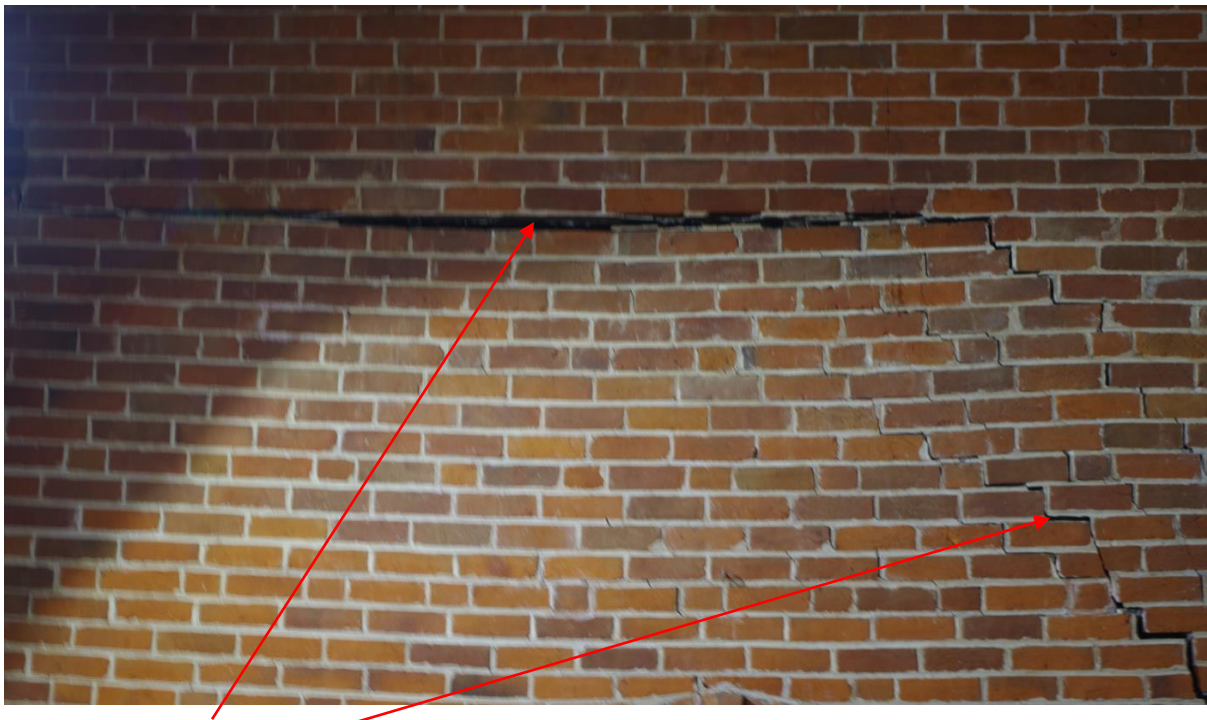


Figure 20: Substantial cracking to internal brick wall above Chapel arch. (Source: Michael Scott, Feb 23)

In addition to the photographed areas shown above, the buttresses to each side of the main arch between the Nave and Sanctuary are cracked as the arch has spread and damaged the buttresses supporting it. The main arch is shown above in the measured drawings – Figure

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2.1 Statement of significance

The heritage values of St Ambrose Memorial Church are embodied in the following NSW state heritage criteria.

Criteria	Statement
<p>Criterion A</p> <p>Historical significance</p> <p>An item that is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW's cultural or natural history.</p>	<p><i>St. Ambrose Church commemorates the town of Gilgandra's unique place in Australia's WW1 history, as the place where Australia's first and largest 'snow baling' recruitment march began. The Church was constructed using locally raised funds and a substantial peace and thanks-giving donation from the parishioners of St. Ambrose Church, Bourmemouth, England. The donation was awarded to Gilgandra (over other towns in the British dominions) due to the town's remarkable war service record, which included the 1915 Coo-ee March. Today St. Ambrose Church is a focal point for commemoration of the Coo-ee March. The annual memorial service for the Coo-ees is held in the Church on the last day of the October Coo-ee Festival.</i></p> <p><i>St. Ambrose Church is historically important at a local level, as the Anglican parish church of Gilgandra and the surrounding district since 1922. The site has hosted Anglican services since 1903.</i></p>
<p>Criterion B</p> <p>Historical association</p> <p>An item that has strong or special association with the life or works of a person or group of persons, of importance in NSW's cultural or natural history.</p>	<p><i>St. Ambrose Church was designed by prominent Melbourne architect Louis Reginald Williams (1890-1980). Williams is considered to be one of Australia's foremost ecclesiastical architects and a key practitioner of the Inter War Gothic architectural style.</i></p> <p><i>St. Ambrose Church is of local significance for its association with the work of the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd (otherwise known as the Bush Brothers). The Bush Brothers supervised worship at the Church from its dedication in 1922 until the last Bush Brother left Gilgandra in 1963.</i></p>
<p>Criterion C</p> <p>Aesthetic significance</p> <p>An item that is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW.</p>	<p><i>St. Ambrose Church is fine example of a relatively early church designed by Louis Williams. The Church exhibits a number of characteristics of Williams' style:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>- Numbers of small windows grouped dramatically under long concrete lintels;</i> <i>- The use of flattened segmental arches;</i> <i>- Imposing gabled roofs broken into irregular shapes at the extremities;</i> <i>- Honesty of fabric, i.e. brick is always seen to be brick, concrete is always seen to be concrete (not represented as fake stone). Timber structural members are more solid than strictly necessary;</i> <i>- Avoidance of complete symmetry; and</i> <i>- The main elevation of the chancel (in the case of St. Ambrose, the south facade of the church) having windows placed at a height which allows the congregation to focus on the rituals of worship without the distraction of too much light in the sanctuary.</i>

<p>Criterion D</p> <p>Social significance</p> <p>An item that has a strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.</p>	<p><i>St. Ambrose Church is important to the Gilgandra community's sense of place. The history of the Church has become inextricably bound to the history of 1915 Coo-ee March, and as such the Church contributes to the Gilgandra community's sense of identity, as the place where Australia's first and largest 'snow balling' recruitment march began. The Church is also important to the local community as memorial to all those who served in the Great War of 1914-1918.</i></p> <p><i>St. Ambrose Church has a strong association with the Gilgandra district's local Anglicans. The Church has been a place of Anglican worship since 1922.</i></p>
<p>Criterion F</p> <p>Rare assessment</p> <p>An item that possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of NSW's cultural or natural history.</p>	<p><i>The substantial peace and thanks-giving donation given to Gilgandra for the construction of St. Ambrose Church appears to be unique within NSW and Australia.</i></p>
<p>Criterion G</p> <p>Representative assessment</p> <p>An item that is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of NSW's cultural/natural places or environments.</p>	<p><i>St. Ambrose Church with its: asymmetrical massing; face brickwork; steeply pitched roof; bellcote; rose/circular window; buttresses; crenellations; pointed arches; use of exposed timber roof trusses over large spans; traditional load-bearing masonry walls and reinforced concrete construction (concealed from view) demonstrates the principal characteristics of the Inter-War Gothic style of architecture (c1915- c.1940).</i></p>

Elements of Significance from the CMP

Generally

The following diagrams indicate the levels of significance for the spaces and elements within the church.

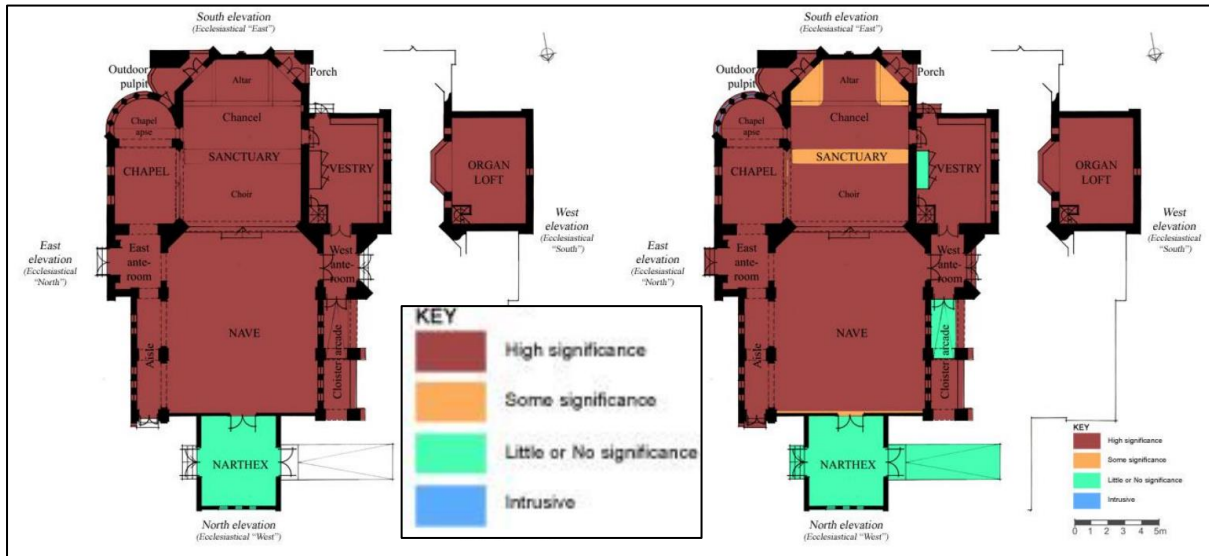









Figure 21 (left): Levels of significance for SPACES within church.
 Figure 22 (right): Levels of significance for ELEMENTS within church

Elements of High Significance

PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Outdoor pulpit and porches	High significance	
	Original steps to west anteroom	High significance	
	Tablet	High significance	

PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Relocated foundation stone of the Church of the Resurrection	High significance	
	Internal spatiality of nave, chancel, chapel, anterooms; with high ceilings, exposed timber trusses and linings, large arched openings, east aisle and raised sanctuary.	High significance	
	Facebrick walls	High significance	
	Timber floorboards and steps	High significance	
	Organ loft stairwell	High significance	
	Organ loft stair	High significance	




PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Original storage cupboard	High significance	
	Original shelf	High significance	
	Baptismal font from the Church of the Resurrection	High significance	
	Cross and candle sticks	High significance	
	Concrete mitre and shield	High significance	

Elements of Some Significance

PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Evidence of extension to altar steps	Some significance	
	Later extension of sanctuary into choir area	Some significance	
	Parcose screen	Some significance	This 1995 screen is somewhat based on the original Church of the Resurrection rood screen which was relocated to this location during the construction of the new church.
	Timber clad north wall	Some significance	
	Bishop's chair	Some significance	
	Kneeling rail	Some significance	

Elements of Little or No Significance

PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Carpark area to rear of site	No significance	
	Form and footprint of later narthex	No significance	
	Later ramp to narthex	No significance	
	Later ramp to west anteroom (original steps retained)	No significance	
	Later speakers	No significance	
	Modern services	No significance	

PHOTOGRAPH	ELEMENT	SIGNIFICANCE	COMMENT
	Later carpet	No significance	
	Later cupboard	No significance	
	Safe	No significance	
	Stained glass window to narthex wall	No significance	The provenance of this window is currently unknown and the significance may change with further research.

3.1 The Proposal

As the brick church has moved and continues to move enough to cause substantial cracking to the brick walls, to the extent that the church is not considered safe to occupy, immediate repairs are clearly required.

Before the brick walls can be repaired, the building needs to be stabilised, to minimise future movement and potentially, catastrophic damage. Our structural engineer, Bligh Tanner (BT) advised that underpinning is essential, so four soil boreholes were drilled – one near each corner of the church, by local Engineers - Barnson, to provide geotechnical information to inform the underpinning design by BT. The highly reactive soil the church is founded on is so deep, that concrete underpinning piers were designed to be 450mm diameter and 6.8m deep in some locations.

Once underpinning has been completed, the reinstatement of flooring and other early works items as noted in this report will be done. These reinstatement works following underpinning are included in this proposal, so State Heritage can assess, approve and condition these works, reassured that impacts will be mitigated, but only the underpinning works are the subject of current grant funding. Following underpinning and reinstatement works, future stages of work can be scoped, priced, funded and undertaken – repairs to brickwork, roof framing and roof tiling. These future works are not included in the heritage application associated with this SOHI.

Underpinning Design

A full set of structural engineering underpinning drawings is attached to the heritage application associated with this SOHI. The following engineering drawings provide a summary.

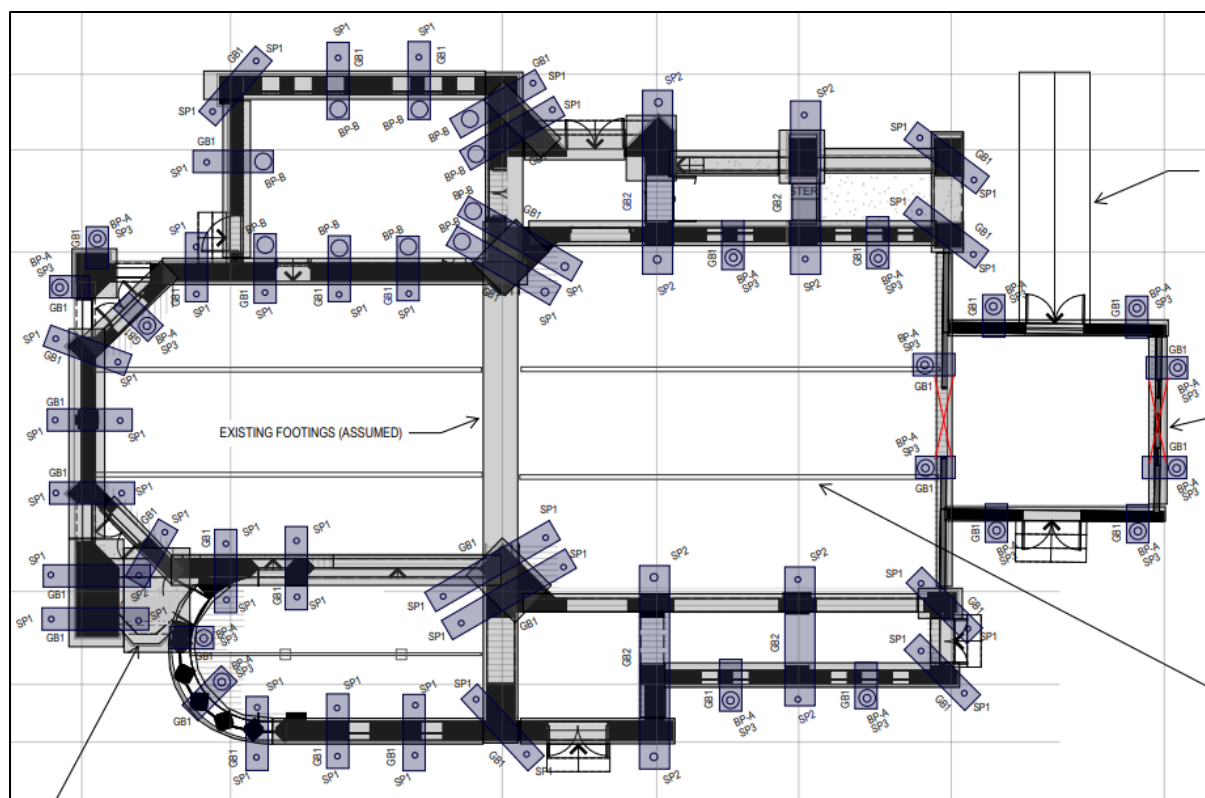


Figure 23: Foundation Plan showing piers (circles) and ground beams (rectangles) to support existing footings. (Source BT)

As the soil supporting St Ambrose is so highly reactive, 84 piers, up to 9m deep and 51 ground beams are required to adequately support this fragile and heavy brick building, as shown above. The structural engineer and preferred underpinning contractor Monteverde have met on site and confirmed the design shown above. Monteverde are very experienced underpinning contractors, with heritage experience, which gives us confidence the works can be successfully completed, with minimal ongoing movement to the church, once the work is completed.

The piers are a combination of screw piles and bored concrete piers, with screw piles used for preference, as they are cleaner and more economical than concrete. Bored concrete piers have been shown inside the Vestry, as there is not enough headroom to drill the screw piles into the ground in this location.

The external piers can be drilled without impact on the building, but to drill the internal piers the existing timber floors need to be removed and reinstated after the underpinning has been done. As well as the timber floors some other elements also have to be removed and later reinstated, as shown in the early works drawings below:

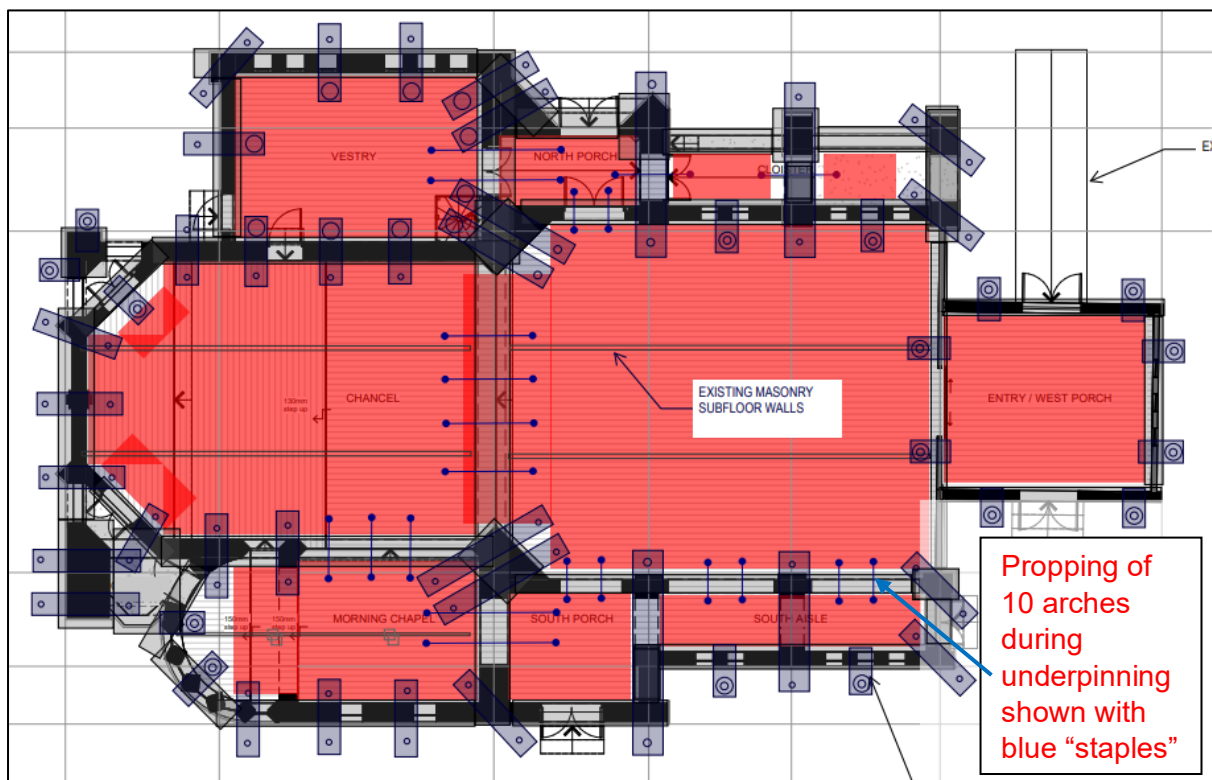


Figure 24: Early works plan - Existing floors to be removed to allow drilling of piers to interior of church. Note: North is to the right of this image. (Source: BT)

All these floors are timber, with the exception of the Cloister concrete floor, to the west of the Nave. Additional items for removal and later re-instatement, are shown below:

Remove timber spiral staircase to Loft above. Spiral stair is enclosed with timber v. jointed panels. Stair and enclosure to be stored on site, for re-erection when floors are re-instated

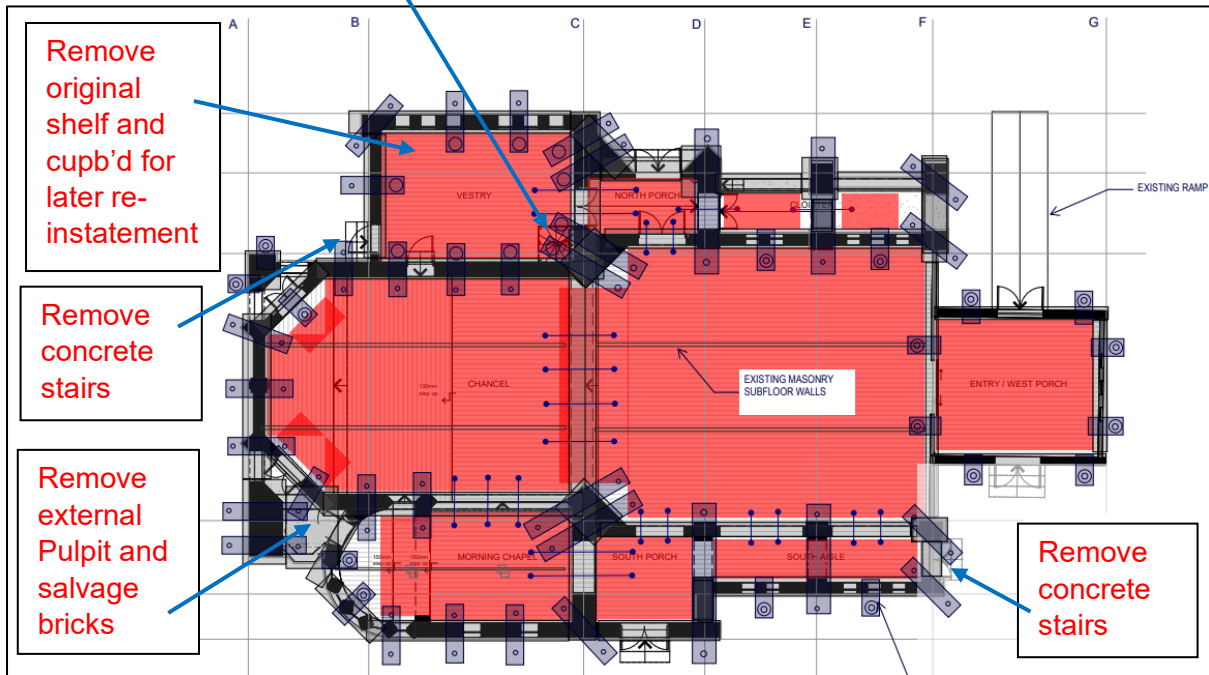


Figure 25: Additional items for removal (Source: BT and MS)

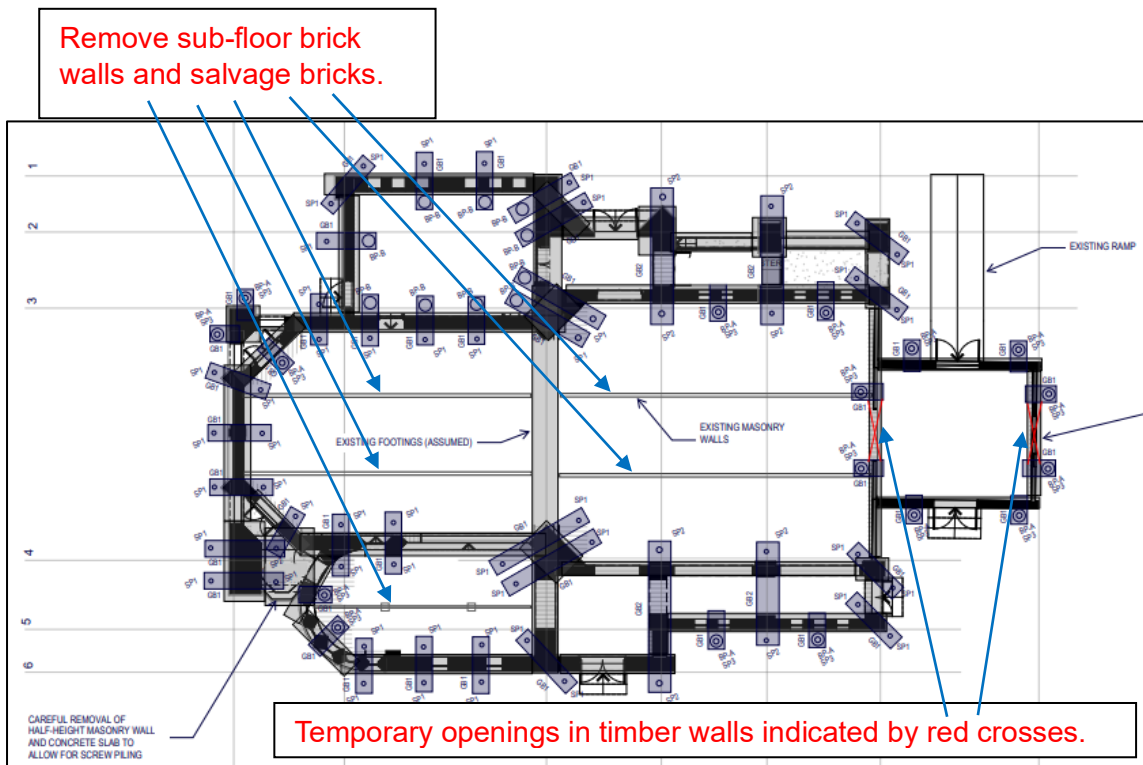


Figure 26: Additional items for removal. (Source: BT and MS)



Figure 27: Temporary openings in two northern timber framed and clad walls. (Source: BT and MS)

To allow internal access for smallest possible drilling rig, remove northern windows and internal sliding doors for re-instatement after underpinning finished. Stabilise temporary openings with new head and jambs to achieve 2.7m clear opening height and width, centred around existing windows. Joinery and cladding to be reinstated after underpinning to match existing.

Apron Slab Around Church

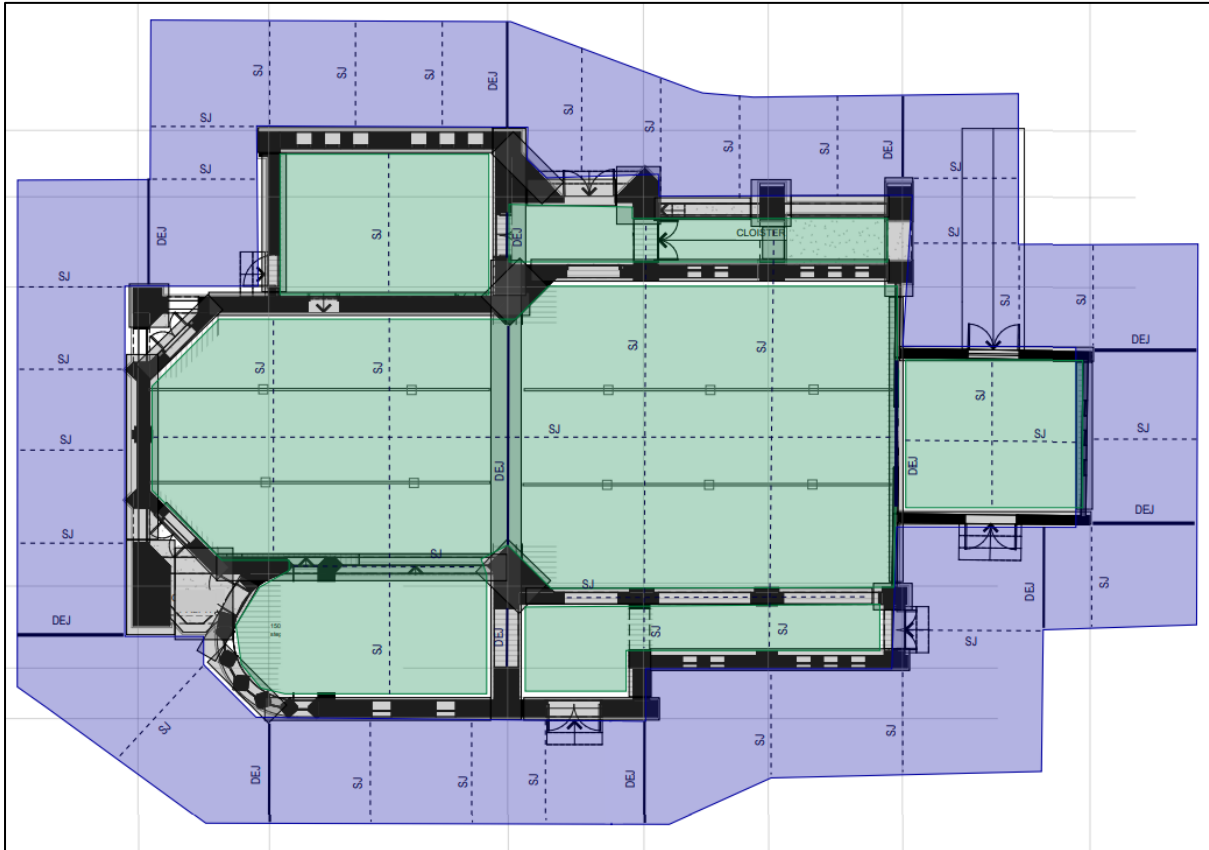


Figure 28: Apron slab around the exterior of the church (purple) is to be constructed to shed rain water and minimise future movement of the church.

The apron slab around the exterior of the church, is to be 100mm thick and 3m wide, cast on a taped polythene membrane with sawn joints and dowelled expansion joints as shown above. The reinstated timber floor is to be supported on galvanised SHS stumps with adjustable tops with or without a 75mm thick jointed slab cast on a taped polythene membrane (green in the plan above), above the concrete footings of the stumps. The cost/benefit assessment of the internal slab is still being decided by the project team. It is requested that the heritage application associated with this SOHI be approved with both options open, as a decision will be based on ensuring future movement of the church will be kept to a minimum.

Photos of Early Works items to be removed and reinstated after underpinning:



Figure 29: Concrete stairs to be removed, northern end of East Aisle. Note: conc. stairs outside Vestry are similar.



Figure 30: External brick pulpit to be removed and concrete floor behind.



Figure 31: Spiral stair in Vestry to Loft above, enclosed within timber v.j. boards.

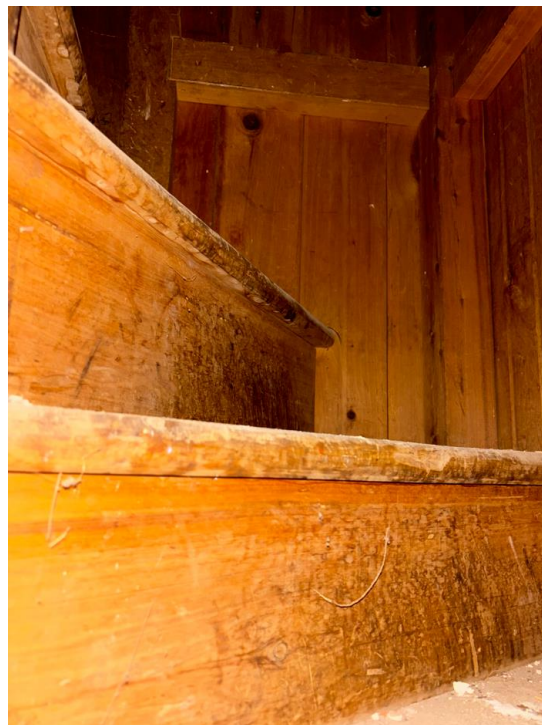


Figure 32: Detail of spiral stair inside timber Stair enclosure.

Temporary Works during Underpinning

The following temporary works drawings show the propping of the church superstructure to minimise the chance of damage to the church during the underpinning:

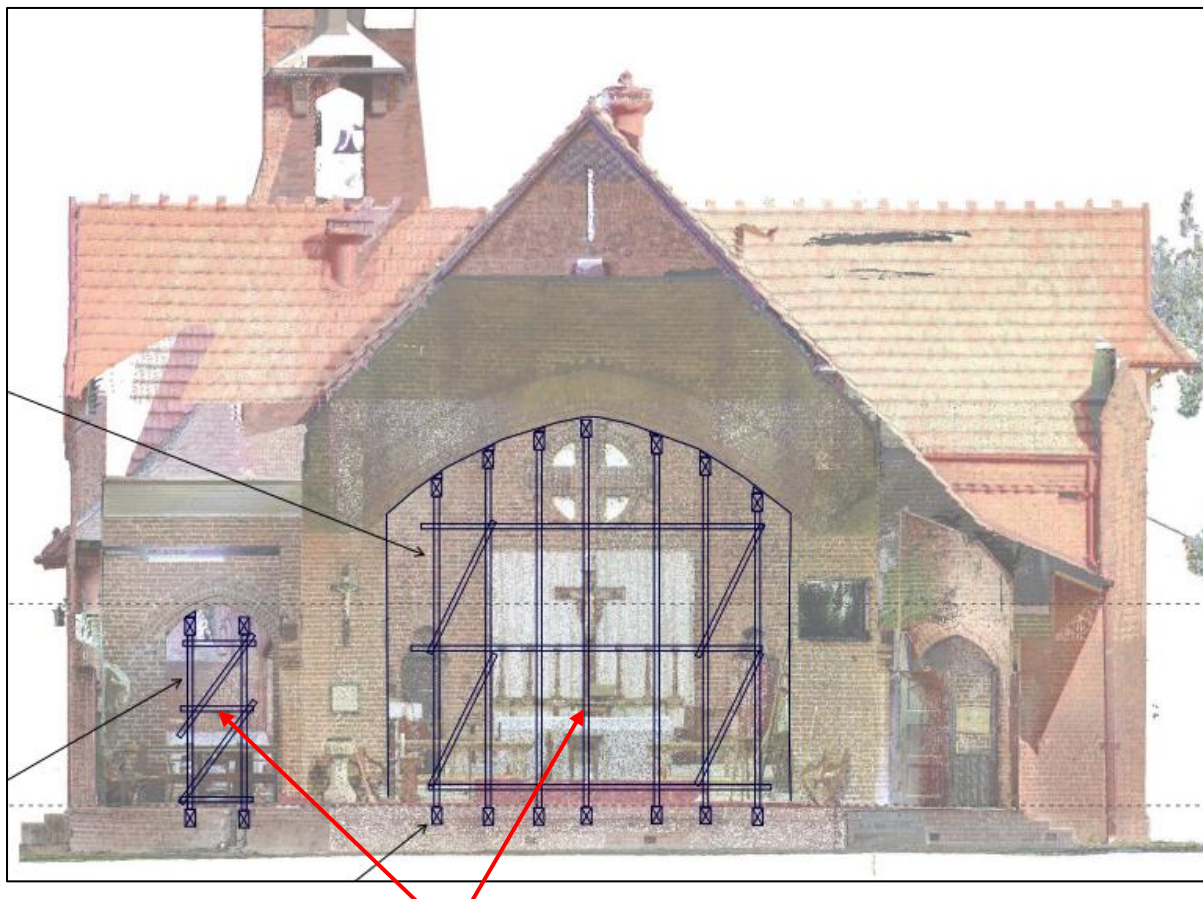


Figure 33: Temporary works – Indicative arch propping to support church superstructure while underpinning is constructed. (Source: BT)

See Figure ... for 10 brick arches within the church to be propped, while underpinning is being done. Our structural engineer has calculated loads for this propping to allow a local steel scaffolding contractor to quote for this work. The propping will need further discussion between the structural engineer and the scaffolding contractor to ensure the props are built to achieve suitable bearing capacity, including on the soil. The structural engineer has also noted that timber wedging at top of scaffolding is required to fit the supports tightly to the brickwork. The scaffolding will need to be erected, moved and disassembled progressively as the underpinning progresses, to ensure the church superstructure remains intact and undamaged by the underpinning.

4.1 Matters for consideration

Fabric and spatial arrangements

The proposed underpinning will involve no alterations or additions to the existing church – the extent of work encompasses substantial supports to the existing footings to cope with the deep and highly reactive soils the church is founded on. The intent is that after stabilising the existing church the underpinning work, below the surface of the surrounding ground and

under the floors of the church, will not be visible to future users of the church. There will be no impacts on existing spatial arrangements of the church or surrounds.

The proposed external underpinning piers can be drilled without impact on the building, but to drill the internal piers the existing timber flooring and floor framing needs to be removed and reinstated after the underpinning has been done. As well as the timber floors of High Significance, some other elements must also be removed and reinstated, as noted below:

- Concrete floor to the Cloister – original of High Significance and later concrete entrance ramp of No Significance
- Two short external concrete stairs – of High Significance
- External Pulpit, including concrete floor – of High Significance
- Machinery access openings through Narthex northern wall and through timber clad northern wall of church – of No Significance and Some Significance respectively
- Existing carpet to approx. 75% of floor area – of No Significance
- Spiral staircase with timber enclosure in the Vestry – of High Significance
- Original shelf and cupboard in the Vestry – of High Significance

To discuss the dot points above:

- The existing flooring of the church is Cypress tongue & groove pine, which is old and brittle. The advice from our carpenter/ builder is that it is effectively impossible to remove with breaking it up. Fortunately, this type of timber flooring is still commercially available and after the underpinning is complete it is proposed to be reinstated with existing details of clear finish, simple skirtings and steps. New flooring to be date stamped.
- Floor framing is proposed to be salvaged, de-nailed and stored on site to be reinstated after the underpinning works. The existing floor bearers are supported on dwarf brick walls, and these are to be removed, with bricks salvaged for later brickwork repairs
- The concrete floor to the Cloister has a simple wood float finish which will be replicated. The ramp to the West Ante-room has been superseded by the access ramp to the Narthex, so will not be reinstated. The steps to the West Ante-room will be reinstated to match existing
- The two short external concrete stairs to Vestry and East Aisle will be replicated
- The External Pulpit will have its bricks salvaged and reused to re-construct the brick walls around the Pulpit and the concrete slab behind the brick walls will be replicated
- The Anglican congregation is likely to replace existing carpeted areas with new carpet
- The spiral staircase with timber enclosure in the Vestry will be carefully removed and stored on site. It will be reinstated in its existing form and details
- The original shelf and cupboard in the Vestry will also be reinstated in their existing positions

These changes to the fabric of the place will be relatively minor and essential to maintaining an ongoing Anglican use for the church. The biggest change will be the replacement of the existing flooring with the same timber species and appearance, which will have no visual impact on the existing church interior and will have little or no impact on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

Some fittings and fixtures of the church will be protected from minor impacts from the underpinning machinery during the works, with layers of corflute or similar, appropriate to the location of the item and risk of impact. Some of these items, such as the Foundation Stones and Concrete Mitre and Shield mentioned above in this report, are of High Significance and will be appropriately protected.

Setting, views and vistas

As the external envelope of the existing church is not being changed by this proposal, other than the new apron slab around the church, there is almost no change to the external appearance of the church, with correspondingly little change to setting, views and vistas as described by the CMP.

The proposed new 3m wide apron slab will have a minor impact on the appearance of the church where external walls meet the gravel covered and turfed ground of the surrounding site. It is proposed to finish this slab in exposed aggregate, which will be similar to the 1.5m wide gravel apron currently around the church and more appropriate to a landscape element rather than a building element. The new concrete apron, with its modern finish will not be visually confused with the 1920s church and will be visually sympathetic with the face brick church, complying with Burra Charter principles.

Landscape

Other than the discussion above regarding a 3m wide change to the gravel covered and turfed surrounds of the church, the impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Use

As the works to the church are to maintain the current Anglican use of the church, use will not be changed by this proposal. The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Demolition

Partial demolition of the church and reinstatement of these elements has been discussed in this report and under the heading "Fabric and spatial arrangements" above. These works will not have a major detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

Curtilage

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Moveable heritage

The Early Works for this proposed underpinning, involve removing all moveable elements from the church to storage on site, while the works occur and their reinstatement when appropriate afterwards, so the Anglican congregation can continue to use this building. Some of these items have Heritage Significance as noted in this report. There will be no heritage impacts.

Aboriginal cultural heritage

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Historical archaeology

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Natural Heritage

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Conservation areas

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Cumulative impacts

This proposal for essential underpinning and reinstatement of flooring is very simple from a conservation point of view and will have no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item. Future works will also be essential repairs with no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

The impacts do not apply to this specific heritage value.

Assessment against Policies from the CMP

Policy 1 <i>The Burra Charter</i>	The conservation and management of St Ambrose Memorial Church, including its site and setting, should be undertaken in accordance with the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i> and its associated Guidelines and Practice Notes.
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The Burra Charter outlines a process of good conservation practice, starting with understanding the Heritage Place and making conservation and management decisions based on that understanding. The Charter also advocates a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary, but as little as possible. A CMP has been prepared for the church which has informed the underpinning proposal. The proposal has been guided by the Burra Charter process.

As noted in the report above, this proposal for underpinning and reinstatement of flooring is very simple, from a conservation point of view and will have no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

The biggest change is the replacement of the existing flooring. like-for-like. The new flooring will be date stamped to distinguish it from the older timber flooring which is likely to be original or a patched floor with some original flooring. There will be no visual difference between the existing flooring and the proposed flooring. This change to the significant fabric of the church is to best Burra Charter practice.

Policy 2 NSW Heritage Act 1977	Any works associated with the conservation and management of St Ambrose Memorial Church, including its site and setting, is to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the <i>NSW Heritage Act 1977</i> .
Policy 3 GSC Planning Scheme	Any works associated with the conservation and management of St Ambrose Memorial Church, including its site and setting, is to be undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the <i>Gilgandra Local Environment Plan</i> .

This SOHI is associated with a s60 Heritage Application to NSW State Heritage, a Development Application and Construction Certificate application to Gilgandra Shire Council, so these policies have been met.

Policy 4 Keeping records	<p>Any new material coming to light relevant to the history of the St Ambrose Memorial Church should be catalogued and held in the church archives.</p> <p>Any approved demolition of significant fabric should be preceded by a complete archival recording in accordance with NSW Heritage guidelines.</p> <p>Any demolition / removal / replacement work should be well documented by photos of original fabric revealed and a record held on file.</p>
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The existing flooring and church interior has been carefully photographed and measured to record the existing condition of the church, so the new work can match the existing. As noted in the report above, this proposal for underpinning and reinstatement of flooring is very simple, from a conservation point of view and will have no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

As the SAMAC Building Committee is very stretched to win grants or fund raise to do the necessary repair work to the church, this SOHI is asking NSW Heritage to accept “Before and After” photographs of the flooring and church interior, showing no visual change, rather than a “complete archival recording in accordance with NSW Heritage guidelines”, as the cost implications of the later are considerable and of little if any benefit to the conservation process.

Policy 5 Qualified personnel – professional advice	<p>Any works that may impact on the heritage values of St Ambrose Memorial Church should be undertaken with the guidance of a heritage architect/consultant.</p> <p>The design of contemporary elements should also be undertaken by a person of appropriate professional heritage experience to ensure the <i>Burra Charter</i> principles are followed.</p> <p>A list of contacts of professionals experienced in heritage buildings should be made available to all decision-makers and updated annually.</p>
Policy 6 Qualified personnel – contractors and tradespeople	<p>Work undertaken involving significant fabric should be done by persons with relevant training and experience.</p> <p>A list of contacts of tradespeople experienced in heritage buildings should be made available to all decision-makers and updated annually.</p>

Michael Scott, heritage architect with 40 years’ experience is the primary consultant. Natalie List, with decades of heritage experience prepared the CMP, Barnson engineers, very experienced local geotechnical engineers have been involved, BT, structural engineers, with considerable heritage experience and Monteverde, preferred underpinning contractors, with many decades of experience, including with heritage buildings complete the underpinning project team. Floor removal and reinstatement has been quoted by JK Contracting & Civil with many decades of experience in the local area and Dubbo Scaffolding, a reputable local firm, has quoted on supply, install and adjustment of propping for the church arches, which provides the contractors to achieve the early and temporary works for this job.

This is an experienced project team – both professionals and contractors, with heritage experience which meets the expectations of these Policies.

Policy 7 Site induction	<p>All contractors and sub-contractors are to be provided with a Site Induction that includes an understanding of the significance of the place, the principles of the <i>Burra Charter</i> and the joint responsibilities of all Parties in protecting the heritage place.</p> <p>Where substantial work is to be done, or where significant fabric is to be impacted, it is recommended that the full CMP be provided to the head contractor.</p> <p>Where the works are relatively minor, or for subcontractors, an induction sheet may be distributed for an introductory understanding of the significance of the heritage place.</p>
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As this work is relatively simple, from a conservation point of view, we are proposing to make sure the floor removal, underpinning and scaffolding contractors are issued and have read the "Induction notes for contractors" contained in Section 10.4 of the CMP.

Policy 8 Urgent conservation	<p>Continue essential stabilisation of the chapel arch, brickwork and any other identified issues raised by structural engineer or heritage architect.</p> <p>Seek professional advice on conservation and stabilisation of the building.</p> <p>Reactivate the use of the building by the church community after conservation works.</p>
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This proposal is in response to this Urgent conservation policy.

Policy 9 Compatible and continued use	<p>Retain the original use of the building.</p> <p>Alternative new compatible uses would require a very considered approach and be based on an understanding of the significance of the place as a church.</p>
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Essential underpinning is required to allow the continued use of this building, by the local Anglican church congregation.

Policy 10 Significant elements	<p>The significance of St Ambrose Memorial Church should be retained and enhanced by ensuring:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the fabric, site and setting, including those elements itemised in the Schedule of Significant Elements are conserved in accordance with the <i>Burra Charter</i>. (In general terms, elements identified as of high significance should be retained and conserved, while elements of lesser significance may, as appropriate, be altered. Elements which are intrusive should be removed and where applicable replaced with more appropriate elements based on research. Refer Schedule of Significance b) That any development or changes to the place needs to be compatible with retaining, and where possible, enhancing the significance of the place.
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This SOHI is informed by the CMP Policies including this one.

<p>Policy 11</p> <p>Materials and methods of repair</p>	<p>Repairs to original fabric are to be localised and kept to the minimum necessary for the integrity of the element. Carefully splice in new sections.</p> <p>All repairs are to be undertaken like-for-like, matching the original materials and detail. If the same material is no longer available (or unsuitable), replace with the most appropriate compatible material.</p> <p>All introduced elements must match the composition, detailing, profile, size, position, finish and fixing method of the damaged or deteriorated element.</p> <p>For masonry and joinery cleaning, only use low pressure water (less than 100psi at the surface being cleaned, neutral detergents, mild brushing with soft brushes.</p> <p>Use traditional soft lime-based mortar and render to ensure the permeability and flexibility of the material in keeping with the preventing future damp issues and cracking due to building movement.</p> <p>Where chemical injection is undertaken as part of any rising damp remediation, ensure fill holes are as unobtrusive as possible.</p> <p>Mortar repairs to existing brickwork are to match the existing strength, colour and texture. Prepare sample mixes for colour matching and strength assessment.</p> <p>Where replacement of a timber element is required, install new element with matching profile and species. Where species is no longer available select a high quality, well-seasoned timber which closely matches the line, grain (number of growth rings) and density of the original timber.</p> <p>Ensure compatibility of metals to prevent corrosion from differential metals and inert catchment.</p> <p>Only previously painted elements may be repainted. No brickwork or concrete elements are to be painted.</p>
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Replacement of the flooring will be done like-for-like as noted in this policy.

5 Summary and recommendations

Summary

As noted in this report, as St Ambrose Memorial Anglican brick Church has moved and continues to move enough to cause substantial cracking to the brick walls, to the extent that the church is not considered safe to occupy, immediate repairs are clearly required. The first urgent repair to be done is underpinning, to stabilise the building, so that other areas of repair can be undertaken, to ensure continuation of Anglican church use.

Once underpinning has been completed, the reinstatement of flooring and other early works items as noted in this report will be done. These reinstatement works following underpinning are included in this proposal, so State Heritage can assess, approve and condition these works, reassured that impacts will be mitigated, but only the underpinning works are the subject of current grant funding.

Following underpinning and reinstatement works, future stages of work can be scoped, priced, funded and undertaken – repairs to brickwork, roof framing and roof tiling. These future works are not included in the heritage application associated with this SOHI.

The Burra Charter outlines a process of good conservation practice, starting with understanding the Heritage Place and making conservation and management decisions based on that understanding. The Charter also advocates a cautious approach of changing as much as necessary, but as little as possible. A CMP has been prepared for the church which has informed the underpinning proposal. The proposal has been guided by the Burra Charter process.

The proposed underpinning, below the surface of the surrounding ground and under the floors of the church, will not be visible to future users of the church.

The proposed external underpinning piers can be drilled without impact on the building, but to drill the internal piers the existing timber flooring and floor framing needs to be removed and reinstated after the underpinning has been done. As well as the timber floors of High Significance, some other elements must also be removed and reinstated, as noted below:

- Concrete floor to the Cloister – original of High Significance and later concrete entrance ramp of No Significance
- Two short external concrete stairs – of High Significance
- External Pulpit, including concrete floor – of High Significance
- Machinery access openings through Narthex northern wall and through timber clad northern wall of church – of No Significance and Some Significance respectively
- Existing carpet to approx. 75% of floor area – of No Significance
- Spiral staircase with timber enclosure in the Vestry – of High Significance
- Original shelf and cupboard in the Vestry – of High Significance

To discuss the dot points above:

- The existing flooring of the church is Cypress tongue & groove pine, which is old and brittle. The advice from our carpenter/ builder is that it is effectively impossible to remove with breaking it up. Fortunately, this type of timber flooring is still commercially available and after the underpinning is complete it is proposed to be reinstated with existing details of clear finish, simple skirtings and steps. New flooring to be date stamped.
- Floor framing is proposed to be salvaged, de-nailed and stored on site to be reinstated after the underpinning works. The existing floor bearers are supported on dwarf brick walls, and these are to be removed, with bricks salvaged for later brickwork repairs
- The concrete floor to the Cloister has a simple wood float finish which will be replicated. The ramp to the West Ante-room has been superseded by the access ramp to the Narthex, so will not be reinstated. The steps to the West Ante-room will be reinstated to match existing
- The two short external concrete stairs to Vestry and East Aisle will be replicated
- The External Pulpit will have its bricks salvaged and reused to re-construct the brick walls around the Pulpit and the concrete slab behind the brick walls will be replicated
- The Anglican congregation is likely to replace existing carpeted areas with new carpet
- The spiral staircase with timber enclosure in the Vestry will be carefully removed and stored on site. It will be reinstated in its existing form and details
- The original shelf and cupboard in the Vestry will also be reinstated in their existing positions

These changes to the fabric of the place will be relatively minor and essential to maintaining an ongoing Anglican use for the church. The biggest change will be the replacement of the existing flooring with the same timber species and appearance, which will have no visual impact on the existing church interior and will have little or no impact on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

Some fittings and fixtures of the church will be protected from minor impacts from the underpinning machinery during the works, with layers of corflute or similar, appropriate to the location of the item and risk of impact. Some of these items, such as the Foundation Stones and Concrete Mitre and Shield mentioned above in this report, are of High Significance and will be appropriately protected.

The proposed new 3m wide apron slab will have a minor impact on the appearance of the church where external walls meet the gravel covered and turfed ground of the surrounding site. It is proposed to finish this slab in exposed aggregate, which will be similar to the 1.5m wide gravel apron currently around the church and more appropriate to a landscape element rather than a building element. The new concrete apron, with its modern finish will not be visually confused with the 1920s church and will be visually sympathetic with the face brick church, complying with Burra Charter principles.

The Early Works for this proposed underpinning, involve removing all moveable elements from the church to storage on site, while the works occur and their reinstatement when appropriate afterwards, so the Anglican congregation can continue to use this building. Some of these items have Heritage Significance as noted in this report. There will be no heritage impacts.

As the essential and urgent underpinning works are the first step to repair St Ambrose Church, so that continuation of Anglican church use can occur, and avoid a potentially catastrophic collapse of the church, this SOHI considers the proposed works will have a positive impact on the heritage significance of the heritage item, due to what is avoided.

Recommendations

Some mitigation including salvaging of building materials and repairing/ replacing building material like-for-like has been noted in the "Summary" above.

The existing flooring and church interior has been carefully photographed and measured to record the existing condition of the church, so the new work can match the existing.

As the SAMAC Building Committee is very stretched to win grants or fund raise to do the necessary repair work to the church, this SOHI is asking NSW Heritage to accept "Before and After" photographs of the flooring and church interior, showing no visual change, rather than a "complete archival recording in accordance with NSW Heritage guidelines", as the cost implications of the later are considerable and of little if any benefit to the conservation process.

This SOHI is associated with a s60 Heritage Application to NSW State Heritage, a Development Application and Construction Certificate application to Gilgandra Shire Council, so the proposed works will be integrated in accordance with the provisions of the NSW Heritage Act 1977 and the provisions of the Gilgandra Local Environment Plan.

A very experienced underpinning and floor reinstatement project team has been put together to maximise the chances of a successful outcome, with no damage to the existing heritage item.

As this work is relatively simple, from a conservation point of view, we are proposing to make sure the floor removal, underpinning and scaffolding contractors are issued and have read the "Induction notes for contractors" contained in Section 10.4 of the CMP.

As SAMAC Building Committee is stretched for funds to do essential works, no interpretation will be done at this stage, but will be recommended at a future stage.

This proposal for essential underpinning and reinstatement of flooring is very simple from a conservation point of view and will have no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item. Future works will also be essential repairs with no detrimental effect on the heritage significance of the heritage item.

The End