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CHURCH building & HERITAGE REVIEW



PROJECT



01 Refurbished sanctuary looking east towards the chancel with the vaulted arches on both sides

02 & 03 Refurbished sanctuary looking west towards the vestibule and stained glass miniature arches below the gallery

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REDEVELOPMENT OF EDINBURGH INVERLEITH ST SERF'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

PROJECT TEAM

Client:
Inverleith St Serf's Parish Church

Architect:
McLaren, Murdoch and Hamilton Architects

Main Contractor:
Murdoch Smith

Structural Consultant:
Robertson Eadie

Mechanical & Electrical Consultant:
Cundall Johnston & Partners

Underfloor Heating:
Jupiter

Union

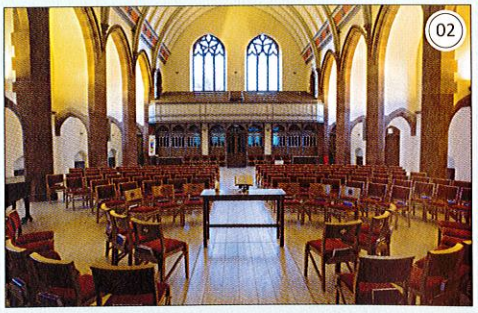
On September 11, 2011 the Edinburgh churches of Inverleith and St Serf's formed a union of congregations – "Edinburgh Inverleith St Serf's Church of Scotland".

The buildings at St Serf's Church were retained for use by the new congregation and the former estate at Inverleith church was put on the open market and sold. A substantial sum was raised by the sale and it was agreed that this money would be used in an ambitious project to upgrade the facilities at the former St Serf's estate and to provide a modern Church Centre for the purposes of outreach within the new parish of Inverleith St Serf's.

The Victorian Church

The St Serf's Church building began life following a meeting of the Kirk Session of its Mother Church, Edinburgh St Cuthbert's Church, on February 28, 1889 which paved the way for a prefabricated "iron church" to be built on a vacant site corner site at Goldenacre to the south of Edinburgh city centre.

As soon as the Iron Church had opened, a decision was taken to build a new stone church without further delay. A competition was held and the winning design – a cruciform church



with two transepts and a tower with high pointed spire, by George Mackie Watson – was commissioned. The foundation stone was laid on July 18, 1900 and the church was dedicated at a service on Saturday October 17, 1903 – with a congregational attendance of over 600! However due to restricted funds the north transept and spire were never constructed.

The Victorian building contains a magnificent wide, high soaring sanctuary, with five wide and high arches on either side and a massive stone arch framing the chancel. On each side there are large imposing windows with intricate stone tracery and the sanctuary is entered by a long vestibule, again with stone arched windows and stained glass miniature arches separating the vestibule from the >

REDEVELOPMENT OF EDINBURGH INVERLEITH ST SERF'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND



PROJECT

sanctuary. The acoustic in the sanctuary has been described as "...the best natural acoustic for orchestral performances in Edinburgh" – retention of the acoustic was of great importance when the refurbishment works were undertaken.

The Old Church Halls

In 1959 a decision was taken to build new church facilities, including a large and small hall, kitchen and toilets. These were built in traditional brick cavity wall construction with a mixture of pitched slated and flat roofs – with no insulation. This accommodation was completed in 1960 and remained in use by the combined church until last year.

The Brief

The church brief was to produce a bright and welcoming Church Centre with maximum flexibility of space, enhanced storage, the eradication of circulation bottlenecks and to produce halls, toilets, meeting rooms, including kitchen facilities to meet facilities to twenty-first century standards in a facility which could be used by the whole of the local community.

04 Clark Road entrance

05 Timber cross design used in new entrance porch ceiling

06 Close up of the quiet meditation area and Celtic Cross

07 New east corridor. The archway in the distance is the only surviving section of the narrow original Victorian corridor linking the sanctuary with the 1960 halls. New toilets are located to the right hand side of the photographs and refurbished rooms to the left

08 Sunlight steams into the new Church Centre into north corridor linking the entrance with the retained 1960s large hall & stage

09 Entrance area looking to admin/box office and new east corridor

Images © McLaren, Murdoch and Hamilton Architects

The sanctuary was to be upgraded with the introduction of new heating, complementing other recent projects to replace seating and refurbish the church's magnificent 1931 Rushworth and Dreaper organ.

The Project

Work commenced on site in July 2015 following the appointment of the long established and family run firm of Murdoch Smith Limited as main contractor. Overseen by a team of local specialist consultants led by chartered architects McLaren, Murdoch and Hamilton the redevelopment project has seen the upgrading of almost every corner of the church estate.

Last summer, the first phase of work saw a state of the art underfloor heating system installed in the sanctuary. The principle concern was to ensure that the character of the Grade B Listed building was not compromised by this installation. This was achieved by employing Jupiter Heating Systems Limited to provide a low profile radiant heating solution using an insulation layer with integrated heating pipes and a specially



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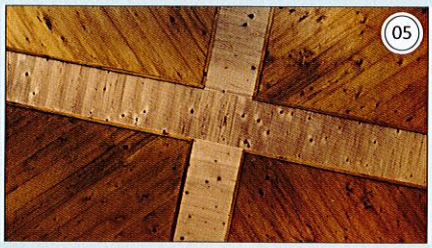

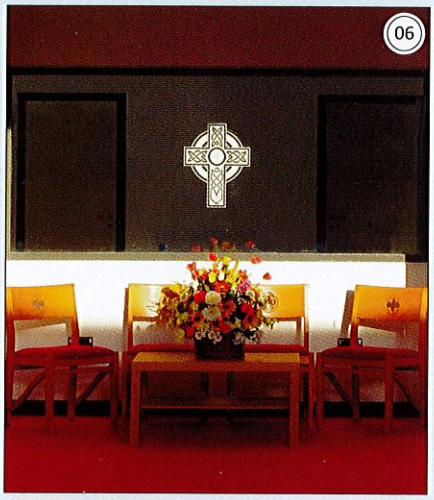











formulated radiant heating ceramic tile finish. This was in turn completed using a "wood effect" ceramic tile finish supplied by Solus Ceramics which almost exactly matched the original colour of the Victorian timber floor (before 100 years of footfalls). The whole installation was laid, floating, directly on top of the existing Victorian floor ensuring that the minimum amount of damage was caused to the existing building fabric. Recent concerts have to all round general relief, confirmed that the acoustic is as good, or better, than the original.

In addition certain elements of fabric removed from the Inverleith Estate were relocated in the Inverleith St Serf's sanctuary. These included six stained glass windows, each window depicting one of the acts of mercy from Matthew 25.35-36, with the appropriate text, the name of the person commemorated and the year in which they died.

10 New "small hall" set up for a charity fund raising afternoon

11 West corridor with glass wall looking onto a new garden area. The design was intentional with a nod towards historic cloisters! The centre section of the glass wall slides open to allow access to the garden for multifunctional use by church groups

Images © McLaren, Murdoch and Hamilton Architects

The second phase of work involved the demolition of the existing 1950's buildings to allow for the new build works – the Church Centre – to progress; the third phase. No easy matter when working with a land locked site with no direct means of access whilst keeping existing spaces such as the large hall and sanctuary fully functional. This was achieved by demolishing the existing Clark Road entrance and utilising this for site access, forming a temporary link corridor to separate the site from the public, and at the same time >

PROJECT



12 The refurbished sanctuary looking east towards the chancel and choir from the gallery

13 Refurbished sanctuary looking north-west towards the north nave arches

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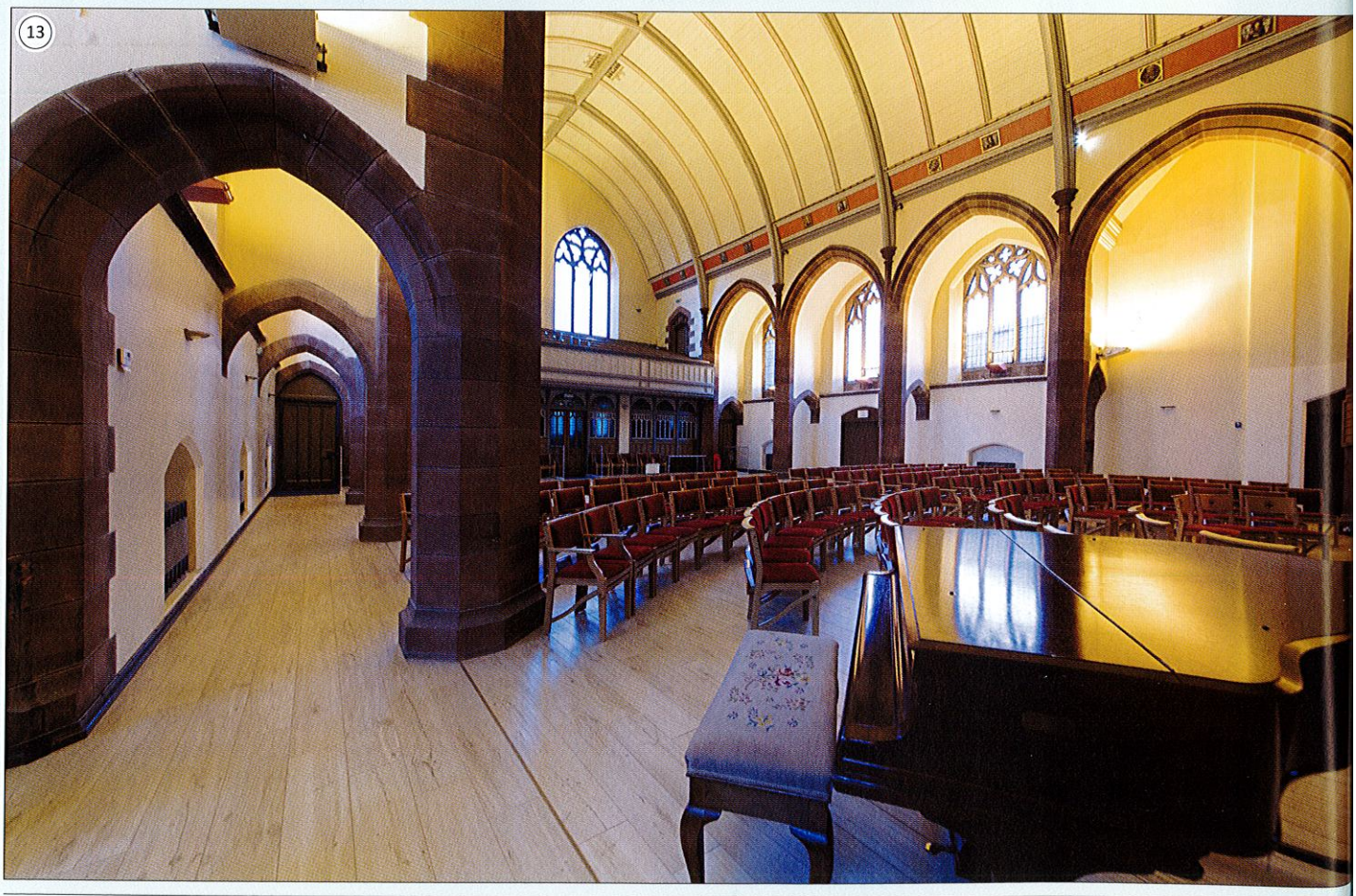
Inverleith St Serf's
Parish Church
280 Ferry Road
Edinburgh
EH5 3NP

developing the site from the rear and working back towards Clark Road.

The design of the new Church Centre is uncompromisingly modern. This was a reaction to the two completely different styles of construction already on site and a conscious attempt to reduce the maintenance required over future years. A central core projects above a flat roof. The core is industrial in character utilising composite metal wall and roof cladding with high level automatic aluminium clearstory windows which illuminate a new hall and the kitchen. The flat roof has a minimum thickness of 170mm of insulation and a modern polymeric roofing finish.

Inverleith St Serf's Church are delighted that their Design Team have more than fulfilled their brief and have provided facilities which are



REDEVELOPMENT OF EDINBURGH INVERLEITH ST SERF'S CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

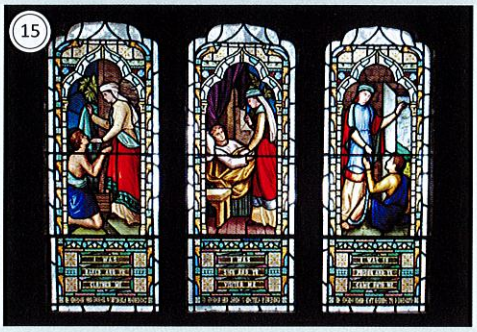
bright, open, welcoming and multi-functional – a new small hall capable of sub-division with 4.3m tall movable acoustic screens, a new multi-function room which can double as a "green room" for concerts and events, a state of the art commercial kitchen capable of providing meals for 150 covers, wide and bright corridors including the west corridor, reminiscent of a cloister, and containing a meditation space where members of the congregation and visitors can rest and admire the sunlight as it plays on the new landscaped garden, upgraded meeting rooms and copious amounts of storage space.

The new Church Centre is accessed from the existing sanctuary through new slappings in the north elevation – only possible due to the fact that the original north transept of the church was not constructed.

New lighting, power, multi-media and information technology services have been provided throughout together with a fully integrated fire alarm system and intruder detection facilities. All the existing aging flat roofs have been upgraded to the same specification as the new flat roof and will now give at least a further 40 years of life. Other areas have received floor insulation and the existing1960s meeting rooms have been fully double glazed, re-plastered, redecorated and refurbished.

The completed scheme now allows the church to increase its community involvement providing for a more open ministry and user friendly facilities that can be used throughout the day, every day. ■





14 The first of three windows depicting text from Matthew 25.35-36 relocated from the former Inverleith church. The windows were an almost exact fit to replace the lower clear glass in the south transept three part windows

15 The second of three windows depicting text from Matthew 25.35-36 relocated from the former Inverleith church.

Images © McLaren, Murdoch and Hamilton Architects

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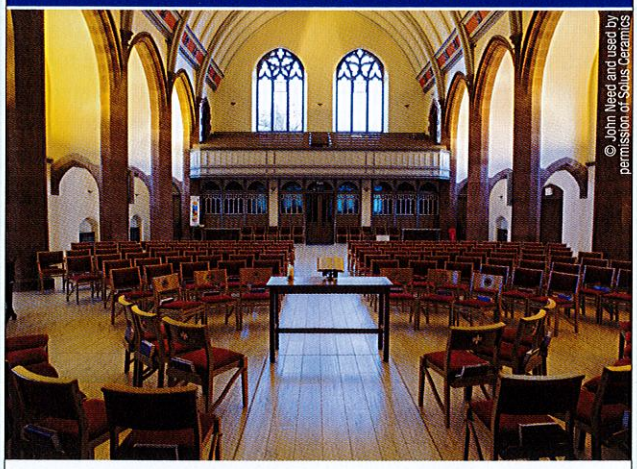

We are proud to have been Main Contractor for the new extension and alterations at Inverleith St Serf's Church

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