

Design and access statement

The addition of an effective, ecologically responsible heating system is a suitable and conscientious response to caring for a historical building in a way that responds to modern concerns about climate change. It does not affect access in any way except that it makes it much easier and safer for users especially the elderly and the very young to use the building safely and comfortably.

Other aspects of the design are covered in the questions section of the application. The over-riding priority however has been to minimise the visual impact of the installation while improving its effectiveness as a venue for a wide variety of meetings and activities.

The challenge of heating so large a space without noticeable infrastructure has not been simple. Some contractors have walked away, and some have had several attempts. We believe the current plan and unique nature of the indoor units will offer effective heating while respecting the historical nature of the building. It helps that the ceiling is comparatively recent and is well insulated.

The fact that the units are air conditioners not just heaters will help reduce humidity and better preserve the structure including the magnificent pipe organ which has been fully refurbished. It is suffering (as is the congregation!) from the rather extreme nature of the existing stoves, the high levels of humidity and extremes of heat and cold in the winter. Currently it's possible to smell your clothes singeing and see your breath at the same time :0)