

Heritage Impact Assessment: St Mary's Church, Cleator

1. Introduction

This section supplements the planning document with a heritage impact assessment focused on the setting of St Mary's Church, Cleator. The church is a Grade II listed building of significant architectural and cultural value.

2. Significance of St Mary's Church

- **Architectural Value:** Designed by Edward Welby Pugin in 1872, the church is a fine example of Gothic Revival architecture.
- **Historic Value:** Built to serve the Irish immigrant community during the iron ore boom, it reflects the social and industrial history of Cleator.
- **Cultural Value:** The Lourdes-style grotto, constructed in 1927, adds spiritual and communal importance, symbolizing resilience during the Great Depression.
- **Community Role:** The church remains a focal point for worship, pilgrimage, and local identity.

3. Heritage Setting Considerations

- **Visual Prominence:** The church's spire and stonework dominate the local townscape, contributing to Cleator's historic character.
- **Associative Value:** The grotto and pilgrimage tradition enhance the church's spiritual and cultural significance.
- **Contextual Importance:** The church is inseparable from the industrial heritage of Cleator Moor and its mining community.

4. Potential Impacts

- **Positive Impacts:**
 - Conservation and interpretation can strengthen local identity and tourism.
 - Maintaining sightlines preserves the historic character of the area.
- **Negative Impacts:**
 - Inappropriate development could undermine the church's visual dominance.
 - Loss of surrounding historic fabric risks eroding contextual value.

5. Mitigation and Recommendations

- **Protect Key Sightlines:** Ensure new development respects the church's prominence. The layout protect its sightlines by virtue that is set back from the road and allows its dominance exist
- **The use of sandstone of sandstone pays homage to the identity of the church**

6. Conclusion

St Mary's Church, Cleator, is a landmark of architectural, cultural, and spiritual significance. Protecting its setting is essential to preserving the heritage character of Cleator and ensuring that future development reinforces rather than diminishes its historic value.