

New climbing centre plans at town's church given approval

A CLIMBING centre will bring a Carmarthen church back into use for the first time in almost two decades.

Planning permission has been given for St David's Church to be used as a dedicated climbing attraction - the first of its kind in the town.

Carmarthenshire Council approved the plans and it means the church will be open to the public once again.

Pembrokeshire-based firm Overhang Tenby Climbing Centre is behind the scheme.

IAN LEWIS

Reporter

ian.lewis@walesonline.co.uk

A cafe will also form part of the project along with parking plus two disabled spaces and bicycle storage.

A mezzanine level is also part of the plans.

The church in Picton Terrace, which is a grade two listed building, has been closed since 2003 after a storm saw its roof partially cave in and subsequent repair costs spiral for the then-owners, Church In Wales.

Plans for a climbing centre were first drawn up three years ago by Overhang Tenby and talks held with former owner Aaron Hill, a North Wales property developer who bought it from Church in Wales for just £1.

A crowdfunding bid to raise £30,000 towards the project was set up by Tenby Overhang Climbing Centre owners John and Helena Williams, but plans did not come to fruition and in January last year Mr Hill sold the church, walking away from his dream of turning

it into a private home for himself.

The new church owner, John Trowbridge, from Burry Port, then read about the previous plans by Overhang Tenby for a climbing centre and con-

tacted Mr and Mrs Williams to see if they were still interested in opening at the church.

Mr Trowbridge said back in January that the venture "could be one of the tallest climbing walls

in Wales if it all goes ahead."

Mr and Mrs Williams have since been hard at work in recent months cleaning up the church and doing repairs.

The couple posted a

photo of the church on Facebook to announce the granting of planning permission.

The Journal contacted them for comment but they had not replied at the time of going to press.



St David's Church in Carmarthen, which is going to be turned into a climbing centre.

Picture: Robert Mele