

## **STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED: CCC GUIDANCE FOR PARISHES**

**Introduction:** Since the coming into force of the Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000, parishes intending to submit a faculty application for significant changes to a listed church should prepare a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Need to accompany the application. It is important to note that these should be two separate documents, one balancing the other. The purpose of this is twofold:

- i) To help the parish to assess in their own words the things which comprise the special significance of their church, be they architectural features, archaeological remains, fine furnishings, a beautiful rural setting or a famous organ and choir, and to contrast and compare this with the perceived needs which are to be fulfilled through the proposal.
- ii) To enable those charged with considering the application, the DAC, Chancellor, and where appropriate the secular authorities and interest groups, to reach their decisions quickly and fairly, equipped with the basic facts, secure in the knowledge that the parish has a clear idea of its chosen direction and the consequences of this.

### **STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Rules define a Statement of Significance as “a document which summarises the historical development of the church and identifies the important features that make major contributions to the character of the church”. The following notes are intended to help parishes to achieve this goal.

**Format:** The Statement of Significance should be in text rather than tabular form, and should be written in a readable style. It should be at least one side of A4 in length but normally not longer than three, and include a ground plan and at least two photographs. More photographs, maps, plans and other important information can be included if necessary as annexes.

The Statement of Significance should consist of two parts:

**Part I: The church in its urban/rural environment** should seek to provide a holistic overview of the significance of the church, which could be re-used to support each faculty application for significant changes. This should be included in the quinquennial inspection report, and regularly reviewed.

**Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal** focuses on the particular part of the church or its curtilage affected by the proposed scheme. This part will be written specifically for each separate proposal.

**How to start:** When describing your church, start from a long way off and appreciate it in its environment. The church might dominate the village or town, or be isolated or tucked away down a path. The churchyard might be

full of monuments and a home to wildlife, or a cramped space apt to fill with rubbish. Move in through the gate, and describe the church, starting at the west end and working systematically round. A check-list is provided of the things to look out for. This does not have to be filled in and submitted, but is for your own use only if you find it helpful. Then move inside, and again describe the church from the west end to the east, going through the check list. When you come to write the Statement of Significance, it is not necessary to list every item. If the fittings are all of one date and modest, this is all you need to say.

The font, pulpit or stained glass might be significant; these can be described in more detail, as will those areas or features directly affected by the proposal, described in Part II of the Statement of Significance. Think about the impact of the proposal not only in terms of the physical impact on the building, churchyard or contents, for example insertions into the fabric, trenches in the churchyard or removal of pews, but also in terms of the visual and aesthetic impact of the proposed changes. The impact of any changes on the use of the church by the congregation and by the wider community should also be taken into consideration.

**Useful sources:** Many parishes may feel that they do not have the expertise to produce such a document. There is however much help available, either from the DAC who may be able to help or to suggest someone who can, from your architect, or from the available literature, which is often far more extensive than one might think. For archaeological information, contact the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) maintained by your local authority, and your Diocesan Archaeological Adviser through the DAC.

Useful sources include the "Buildings of England" series, often referred to as "Pevsner's"; your church is almost certain to be in here. The Victoria County History may have very little or an enormous amount. There will be a Listing description, ask your local planning authority. These are also being made available through the "Images of England" project, on the English Heritage web site. The local library, museum and Diocesan and County Record Centres are always worth a visit. Such sources should only be used as a guide, as they are often out of date or contain errors. Look at the church and its surroundings with your own eyes, and express yourselves in your own words.

## STATEMENTS OF NEED

The Rules define a Statement of Need as “a document which sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of the parish cannot be met without making changes to the church building and the reason why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission”. Again, the notes below are intended to help parishes achieve this goal.

There are two basic points to remember when compiling a Statement of Need, but the Statement itself does not have to follow a strict format under these headings. Again, express yourselves in your own words.

- i) **Current and Future Needs of the Congregation/Parish:** This is where you describe the character of the parish, both in terms of the worshipping congregation and of the wider community, and then go on to describe how the particular alteration in question is desirable and necessary to meet their needs. Try and be specific in giving evidence of needs. Rather than saying simply, “we need a crèche for 50”, explain that a new estate with starter homes has recently been built which has changed the area’s demography, or that new legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act requires the parish to improve access to the church and its facilities.
  
- (ii) **Evidence of Support:** Most applications, whether for permissions or grants, will require evidence that the proposal has support within the congregation and from the local community and any relevant expert bodies. If there is opposition, e.g. to the removal of pews, acknowledge it and state how you are planning to meet the objections, whether by adapting your proposals or by explaining more fully why your proposals cannot sensibly be amended. It is important to demonstrate that you have looked at all the other options, and that the impact of the proposals outlined in the Statement of Significance has been fully taken into account.

<b>Check list for compiling Statements of Significance</b>			
Village/town: County:	Dedication:	Parish:	Listing: Conservation Area? Y/N
Location and setting:			
Historic and present use by the congregation and the wider community:			
Building history (include architects, artists etc):			
Significant events or personalities associated with the church:			
Ground Plan:			
Dimensions:			
Building materials:			
General description:			
Churchyard (monuments, lychgate, flora and fauna etc):			
Archaeological significance:			
Altar(s):			
Reredose(s):			
Pulpit:			
Lectern:			
Font:			
Stained glass:			
Wall paintings:			
Monuments (internal, external):			
Bells:			
Organ:			
Communion plate (where kept?):			
Registers (where kept?):			
Other woodwork:			
Other metalwork:			
Communion rails:			
War memorials:			
Miscellanea:			

## Statement of Significance Example 1 St Oswald, Melchester (Grade II\*)

### Part I: The church in its urban environment

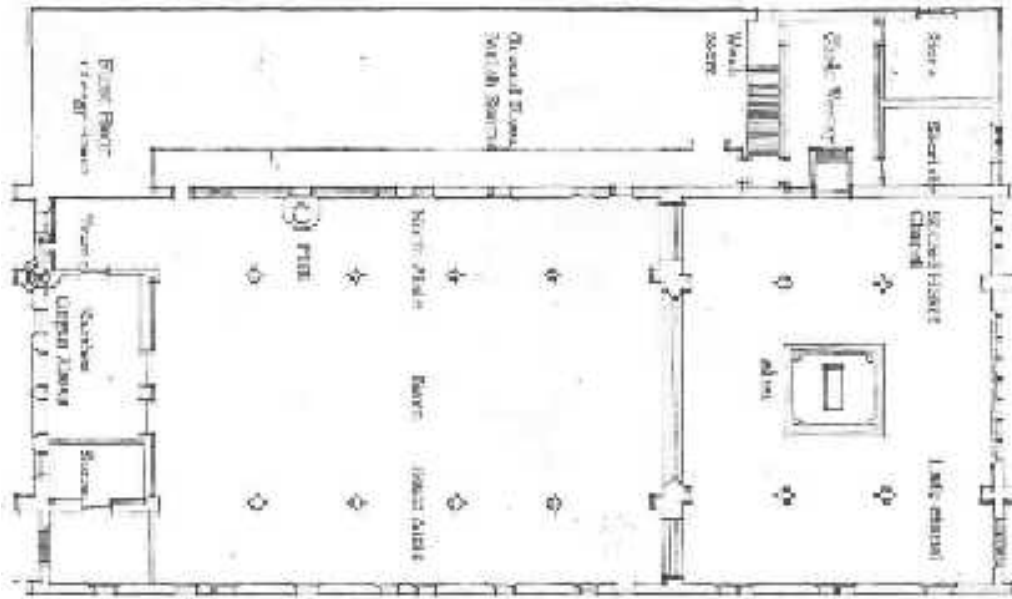
This is a very large and grandly conceived Victorian Gothic church, in what was in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century an extremely modest urban residential area. It is a monument to the prosperity of Melchester at the peak of its industrial development. The church is visible from some distance due to the height of its elaborate tower, and stands at the intersection of what remains of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century terraced housing, 1960's tower blocks, newer housing developments of the 1970's and building sites connected with the current re-development of the area to the south-east. The church stands on Bilbo Street with no curtilage on the north and west sides, and a garden on the south side encompassed by a brick wall to the east and iron railings to the south; no burials. It is not in a Conservation Area.

The church was built in 1880 in the Early English style to designs by J S Crowbar. The benefactor was James Bilbo, a prominent local timber merchant. The church (nave 26m x 10m) consists of a 6-bay aisled nave, narthex, north-west tower, 3-bay chancel and side chapels. Exposed red brick with orange brick dressings, sandstone tracery, slate covered roofs. There is an 11-bay Sunday School, parsonage and vestry range along the north side, which are now used as community and playgroup facilities, and are very popular with the local community, especially young families and the elderly.



*Above left, church seen from the north-west, above right interior looking east*

*Plan of the church adapted from the QIR. (Scale 1:400) North ↑*



The church interior is impressive, retaining its full complement of original Gothic furnishings, except for the pews which have been replaced by chairs. The marble lectern in the form of an angel by Thwaites is particularly fine. The east window with its excellent stained glass by Bristow & Co is the pride of the parish. The huge Beard and Beard organ of 1895 is considered one of the finest in the diocese. The tower houses a ring of eight bells, dated 1879 and by John Tribbles & co of Loughborough. A copy of Raphael's "La Belle", given by Tom Bilbo in 1912, hangs in the south aisle.

## **Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal**

The proposal is to modernise and extend the facilities in the north range of rooms into the north aisle itself. This would involve glazing in the north arcade, inserting partition walls across the aisle and two new doorways through the north aisle wall to give access. The screen and partitions would be removable, and there should be no archaeological objections to piercing the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick wall. The font will have to be relocated to the west end of the nave. No other furniture would have to be removed, as the aisle has stood unused for some time, being rather dark due to the presence of the north range of buildings (see appended photographs and detailed plans).

The proposal will have some visual and spatial impact, but this can be minimised by careful design and the use of quality materials.

**Bibliography:** Pevsner, N (1959). *The Buildings of England: Barsetshire*.  
Bilbo, B (1929). *The history of the Bilbo's in Melchester*.  
Listing Description.  
Crowbar, J S (1893). *An autobiography*.

## **Statement of Need Example 1 St Oswald, Melchester (Grade II\*)**

The parish has experienced many ups and downs during its history, with a boom in population in the inter-war years followed by a long slow decline from the 1960's. This process has now been reversed by the regeneration programme for this part of Melchester, which has already seen some professional people move back into the area in recent years. The congregation waxed and waned somewhat in line with the developments described above, but church life has remained vibrant.

After the closing of the school and reduction in the number of clergy resident in the north range of buildings attached to the church, these rooms were converted to provide creche, coffee and community facilities. These facilities are well-used throughout the week but are now becoming rather shabby, cramped and inappropriate for the range of activities for which they are needed. In particular, disabled access is poor.

The redevelopment of this part of Melchester currently underway is expected to lead to more young families moving into the area, as a good proportion of the redeveloped land has been earmarked for low cost homes. In order to reach out to this expanded community, the parish wish to be able to offer modern, convenient facilities available to churchgoers and the community.

The planned larger creche will provide much-needed facilities for the families in the area, and initial enquiries have shown that there will be no shortage of users. The community is supportive of our efforts, as is the local authority as there is no other such provision in the immediate area. There has been some disquiet amongst the congregation and the older families in the area concerning the relocation of the font, particularly as local hero Roy was baptised here. However, we have reassured these objectors that the old font will be re-set adjacent to the re-opened main west entrance, and given due prominence. We have already commissioned designs for this, which can be inspected.

The archaeological and aesthetic implications of the proposals have been carefully considered in the light of informal advice from the DAC and consideration of the Statement of Significance, and minimised with as little intrusion as possible into the fabric or architectural quality of the church. The glazing and partitions in the north aisle will be reversible and of quality materials. The north aisle has long been unused, and we think this development will be an improvement.

## Statement of Significance Example 2: St David, Loxton (Grade I)

### Part I: The church in its rural environment

Loxton lies in a low-lying rural part of North Barsetshire, between Weare, Blowell and Cryton. The hamlet of Loxton consists of a group of attractive houses and farms clustered around the church at a minor crossroads. Several of the Loxton farmhouses are at least 17<sup>th</sup>-century in origin, while the drainage and enclosure of the surrounding fields for agriculture have been shown to date back to the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Loxton and its church are mentioned in Domesday Book as part of the manor of Blowell, which had belonged to King Harold before the Conquest. The hamlet is in a Conservation Area.

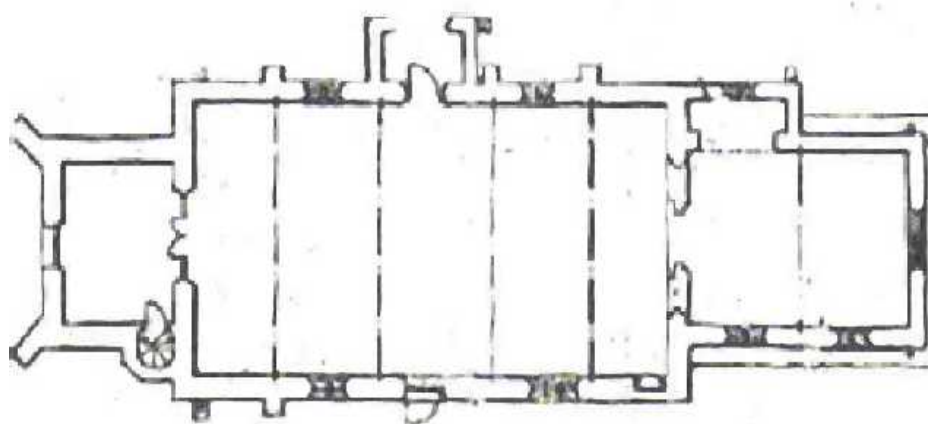
The medieval parish church is of the highest quality in terms of the architecture, the archaeology of both the building and the site and of its wealth of important furnishings and fittings. It stands roughly centrally on a slight mound within an immaculately kept grassed churchyard with many monuments and headstones of interest dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, enclosed by a medieval bank and ditch, with hedgerows and sedges deliberately managed to provide a wildlife habitat.

The church is small (nave 14m x 6.6m), and consists of a 3-bay nave and 2-bay chancel, a west tower, north porch and north-east organ chamber. The walls are of coursed rubble with rough-cast rendering with freestone quoins and dressings. The oak roofs are covered in Cornish slate, with lead over the pyramidal tower roof. The building is dominated visually by the (now leaning!) Perpendicular tower. The architectural details now visible attest a programme of work in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> century. The church was restored during the reign of Mary I, in 1557, when the north porch was added, and the present roof installed. Victorian restoration appears to have been limited to fabric repairs, limited and sensitive rebuilding of the chancel and the addition of the small organ chamber.



*The church seen from the south (left) and the interior looking east (right)*

Much of the furniture including the benches, communion rails and pulpit is of the late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century, while the box pews, bell-frame and tower roof



are of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

*Plan of the church adapted from the QIR (Scale 1:200) North↑*

One large bell of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, hung from an iron girder and no longer rung. Norman (12<sup>th</sup>-century?) tub font with remnants of moulding around the rim. The font stands on an earlier, possibly Saxon tub font, which has been inverted and plastered over. It has a 17<sup>th</sup>-century strapwork oak cover. There are ledger stones commemorating the Hippey family set into the stone floor, late 17<sup>th</sup>-century in date and of high quality and interest. A very fine oak chest stands in the south-east corner on top of one of these, with beautifully carved panels, probably of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Royal Arms of George II, dated 1751. The chancel furniture is Victorian. Marble World War I memorial with soldiers carved in relief. The historic communion plate is kept in a bank safe.

This tiny church is kept in good condition, and there are no serious structural defects. There are no modern facilities within the church and none such are available nearby, as the hamlet has no other public buildings.

## **Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal**

The proposal is to install a kitchenette and biotoilet suitable for disabled access into the ground floor space of the tower, which is at the moment empty and unused. This would clearly involve some penetration of the masonry of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower to bring the water in and out, and a shallow pipe and drain run through the churchyard to the road. This would require an archaeological evaluation and development of a mitigation strategy to reduce the impact to the fabric and underground archaeological remains. The units themselves would be free-standing and removable. There are already double oak doors in the tower arch which enable access to the planned facilities and ensure privacy (see appended photographs and detailed plans).

**Bibliography:** Pevsner, N (1959). *The Buildings of England: Barsetshire.*

Tippoff, B (1998) Roman and Medieval Settlement in North Bassetshire: (1996) Survey and excavation at Blowell and Loxton, 1996. In: Bassetshire Archaeology II. Listing description.

## **Statement of Need Example 2: St David, Loxton (Grade I)**

The church is small and the congregation, drawn from Loxton and three other nearby hamlets, in proportion to it. Nearly half of the regular congregation is of retirement age, but there are also three young families with small children, and we would like to reach out to the other families in the area, particularly by developing the church and churchyard with its rich flora as a venue for school trips.

We feel that modern washroom and toilet facilities, with appropriate disabled access, is now an imperative to achieve this. The only place where this could be discreetly achieved, while simultaneously minimising the impact on this historic Grade I church and site, is the space under the tower, presently a little used store room where the cleaning materials are kept.

We have consulted with English Heritage and the DAC, and within the local community, and carefully considered the Statement of Significance. We feel that the need is proved, and we have attempted to mitigate any detrimental impact by proposing a biotoilet and following the shortest and least damaging path with the water supply, following advice from the Diocesan Archaeologist.