

Statements of Significance and Need Guidance for Parishes

Council for the Care of Churches

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STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND NEED: 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, including 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 Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2000 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”. This guidance is 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, normally one of the exterior, one of the interior. 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, and the potential impact of the works. This part will be written specifically for each separate proposal. This section should not include a justification of your proposals, which should be in the Statement of Need.

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 and describe the church, starting at the west end and working systematically round. Then move inside, and again describe the church from the west end to the east. 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. A check-list is provided of the things to look out for. This check-list does not have to be filled in and submitted. A summary of the terms often used in assessing significance is also provided, again for your use only if you find it helpful.

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 and advice: 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, from the local authority (perhaps the Conservation Officer) or from the available literature, which is often far more extensive than one might think.

Useful sources include the “Buildings of England” series, often referred to as “Pevsners”. The Victoria County History may have very little or an enormous amount. There may be a report by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME), now part of English Heritage. The local library, museum and Diocesan and County Record Centres are always worth a visit, and the CCC library and case files may also be useful. If your church is listed, 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. Some churchyards, or parts or objects within them, may have statutory designations, English Heritage and Natural England are the organisations concerned here.

For archaeological information, contact your Diocesan Archaeological Adviser through the DAC. You may find useful information on the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR, now often known as the Historic Environment Record, HER) maintained by your local authority. Contact details for these can be found on the English Heritage web site. The churchyard and church may be of ecological significance, as a home to flora and fauna (not just bats and flowers), your DAC and local authority and the project “Caring for Gods Acre” may be able to help you with this. Such sources should only be used as a guide, as they are sometimes out of date or contain errors. Look at the church and its surroundings with your own eyes, and express yourselves in your own words.

Conservation Management Plans for major churches: Some churches will be so complex and significant in various ways that the parish may wish to consider commissioning a **Conservation Management Plan**. The CCC has produced guidance on how to do this, available from the Churchcare web site or from your DAC.

Optional terminology for defining levels of significance:

- **Exceptional** – important at national to international levels.
- **Considerable** – important at regional level or sometimes higher.
- **Some** - usually of local value only but possibly of regional significance for group or other value (eg a vernacular architectural feature).
- **Local** - of local value.
- **Negative** or **intrusive** features, those which actually detract from the value of a site. For example, a concrete boiler house adjacent to a medieval church.

Optional check list for compiling Statements of Significance			
Village/town: County:	Diocese: Dedication:	Parish: Benefice:	Listing Grade: 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: This will briefly describe the building as it can be seen today, assessing the significance of the whole and of its constituent parts			
Churchyard (monuments, lychgate, flora and fauna etc):			
Archaeological significance of building(s) and site: Scheduled Monument?			
Altar:			
Reredos:			
Pulpit:			
Lectern:			
Font:			
Stained glass:			
Wall paintings:			
Monuments (internal, external):			
Bells and bellframe:			
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*)

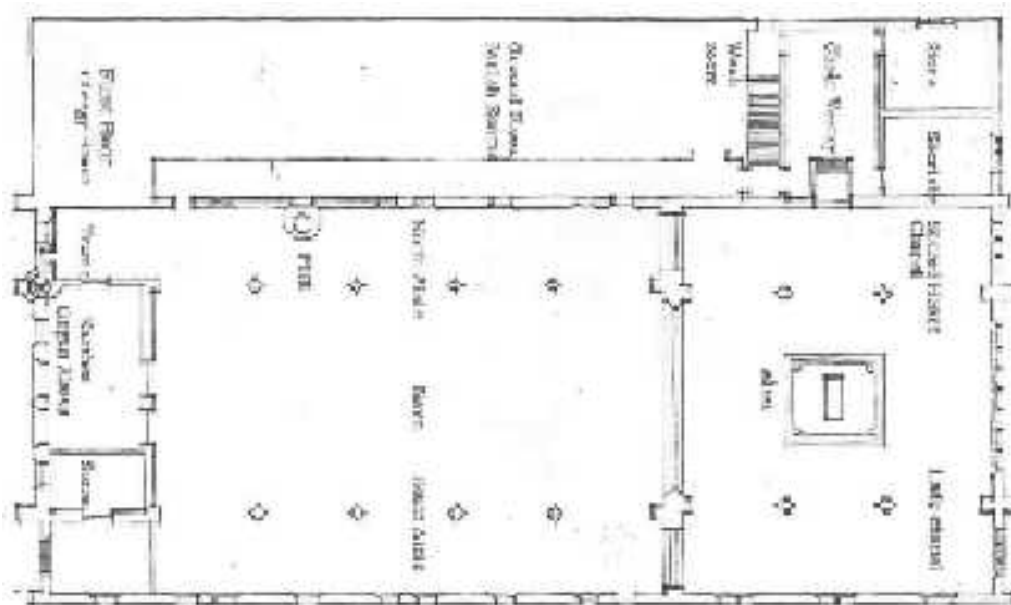
Part I: The church in its urban environment

This is a very large and grandly conceived Victorian Gothic church, in what was in the late 19th 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 19th-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, but does have considerable townscape significance.

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 and of considerable architectural and art historical significance, 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. Although this will have some visual impact, the screen and partitions would be removable, and there should be no archaeological objections to piercing the late 19th-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 Bilbos in Melchester*.
 Listing Description.
 Crowbar, J S (1893). *A biography*.
 RCHME survey of Melchester, 1975.

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 Bassetshire, 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 17th-century in origin, while the drainage and enclosure of the surrounding fields for agriculture have been shown to date back to the 10th 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.

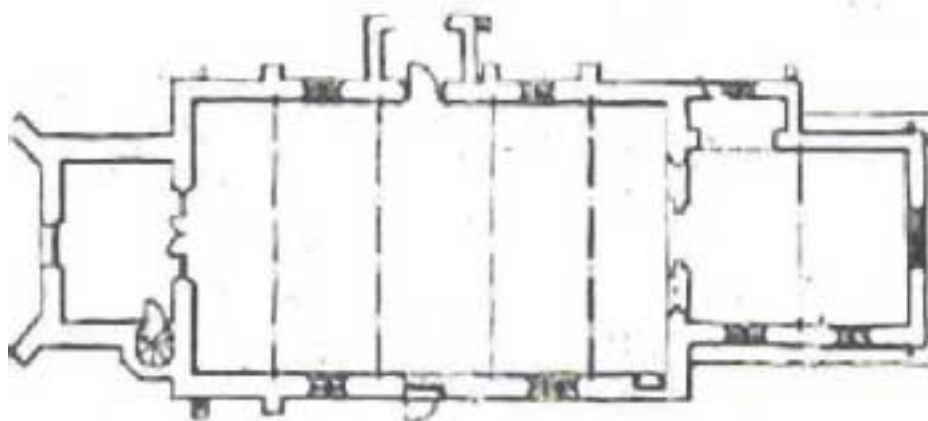
The medieval parish church is of the highest quality and exceptional significance in terms of the architecture, the archaeology of both the building and the site and of its wealth of important furnishings and fittings. It stands roughly centrally on a slight mound within an immaculately kept grassed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

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 14th and early 15th 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 16th and 17th century, while the box pews, bell-frame and tower roof are of the 18th century.



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

One large bell of the 15th century, hung from an iron girder and no longer rung. Norman (12th-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 17th-century strapwork oak cover. There are ledger stones commemorating the Hippey family set into the stone floor, late 17th-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 17th 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 15th-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, including burials. 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 plans).

Bibliography: Pevsner, N (1959) *The Buildings of England: Barsetshire*.
 Tippoff, B (1998) *Roman and Medieval Settlement in North Barsetshire: and (1996) Survey and excavation at Blowell and Loxton, 1996*. In: *Barsetshire Archaeology II*.
 Listing description.
 VCH for Barsetshire, p 245-247

STATEMENT OF NEED:

The faculty jurisdiction rules set out a definition of a Statement of Need:

"Statement of Need" means a document which set 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 reasons why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission.

A Statement of Need should be a document which serves both the parish and those who are involved in the faculty process. It should be a tool for the parish, enabling the PCC (which should endorse and support the document) to focus its vision and agree on what it seeks to achieve. For others, such as the DAC, CCC and English Heritage it serves to provide easily accessible information to help assess the scheme which is being proposed for a faculty. In short, Statements of Significance and Need are the parish's opportunity to explain, justify and rationalise the proposals to all interested parties. Consider that some people will not have the opportunity to visit the church and will need to base opinions on the information you provide in these supporting Statements.

Bearing this in mind, you are strongly encouraged to ensure that the Statements are factual, informative, clear and concise. Try not to be emotive or over-dramatic. The facts of the situation should speak clearly for themselves.

The following note sets out a way of presenting a Statement of Need in order to cover all the relevant information. You may need to adapt this to suit the particular needs of your parish.

Section A. General Information

Your Statement of Need should provide information about the parish, congregation and community and help interested parties understand what activities are already going on within the building (and on other related sites, such as the church hall, if appropriate). The amount of information provided here is suggested as a guide and you may wish to tailor the extent of the detail according to the scale and impact of the needs the parish is facing.

The following questions are a guide to the sort of information that the first section of the Statement could include.

- How many people live in the parish / village / town
- How many people are there on the electoral roll
- How many people attend services on average.
- What services do you regularly hold throughout the week / month? i.e. 8am Communion average of 10 attendees. Monthly family service average of 60 adults and 20 children
- What is the general make up of the congregation? i.e. predominantly elderly / wide variety and growing numbers of pre-school children.
- If there is a Sunday school or crèche give details of what age-groups meet together and what the average attendance is.

- Is the church normally left open during daylight hours?
- What other community facilities are available in the local area?
- Does the parish have a church hall or other buildings? Give details of size, facilities, distance from church and state of repair.
- When was the last Quinquennial Inspection Report? Are there any major outstanding issues that were highlighted in the QIR?
- Explain briefly how the project will be financed. i.e. grants, existing funds, bequest, fundraising.
- Have there been changes in the parish or community that are relevant to how the needs of the parish have changed or which have prompted the proposals now? i.e. A new vicar, introduction of music group, new development in the village bringing new families, worsening situation with church hall, a bequest to spend?

Section B. The need.

The next stage in the Statement is the opportunity to explain what the needs of the parish are now and also in the longer term. You can be quite blunt here; don't elaborate too much – a few bullet points should make your case clearly.

You may find it helpful to divide the needs up into areas such as:

- Facilities
- Space
- Access
- Liturgy
- Other

For example you could say:

Facilities. We need one accessible toilet and the ability to serve refreshments.

Space. We need a meeting room to accommodate up to 25 people sitting and 40 standing.

Access. We need to provide a permanent route into the building which is accessible for wheelchairs.

Liturgy. We need to make arrangements to use a nave altar.

If you have prepared a brief for your architect explaining what you want to achieve then you could include this for reference.

Explain why you consider meeting the need(s) outlined above is now necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission.

Section C. Difficulties in meeting the need.

The next stage is to explain why you cannot achieve what you have set out above without making any changes to the building. It can be helpful to include how you manage to meet those needs at the moment or if you are not able to. Be clear about whether users and activities are aspirational or more definite - you might be able to

demonstrate particular groups that already exist and want to make use of the church, but cannot because of the lack of loo/heating etc.

It may be appropriate to reference your Statement of Significance here also.

For example you could say

Facilities. There is no toilet in the building and if people need to use one they have to use the churchyard or the pub in the village (10 minutes walk). An existing Parent & Baby group would like to meet in the church but cannot because there is no toilet.

Space. The only separate space in the church at the moment is the vestry, which is used for its original purpose. PCC meetings are held at the Vicarage.

Access. There are two steps down from the porch to the church. We have temporary ramps for occasions when wheelchair users attend services. The north door is not frequently used but has level access. The path to the north door is uneven and not suitable for wheelchairs.

Liturgy. The pews in the nave are too far forward to position a nave altar satisfactorily. For family services we use a small table and position it on the chancel step.

Section D. The proposal

The next stage is to explain what it is that you are proposing in order to meet the needs that you set out in section B. Include here what other options you have considered and why they were dismissed. Be honest and don't exaggerate. If there was a viable alternative but the PCC preferred this proposal then say so.

If the project is at an early stage then you can use simple amateur sketches or marked photos to illustrate ideas. Wherever possible include a complete floor plan of the church as this greatly assists people in visualising the layout of the building.

If the project is large and you need multiple rooms / toilets then explain how you envisage the space being used. Explain which rooms will need to be used simultaneously. If it helps, include a chart or timetable of projected weekly use to illustrate what you are expecting.

If the project has a particular element of liturgical reordering it could be helpful to explain your expectations and what you want the result to achieve. The word flexible is often used but does not necessarily demonstrate what you are hoping for. Try and be more specific if you can. Use examples and explain how you would use a flexible space to relate to the needs you set out in Section B.

Section E. Support and practicalities.

Your project may provide a facility for wider users than the church congregation. If so, explain here what research you have undertaken into possible users and explain why you believe the project to be viable. It may be useful, with larger projects to show evidence of a business plan. Evidence of support from users can also be shown here.

Will the project have an impact on the maintenance and upkeep of the church building? If the project is likely to generate income then include this information here.

Section F. Significance and Impact.

The final stage is to explain how the proposals relate to the Statement of Significance and justify the alterations that are to be proposed in the context of your particular building. If you are proposing something that will impact on, change the setting of, or move something that has been highlighted as important in the Statement of Significance, this is the opportunity to explain why you consider this is necessary. Refer back to other options that you considered and explain how you weighed up the benefits against the significance of the object/item in question.

Additional advice for particular types of faculty application / projects.

Section A is generally useful for any type of application and should be included although the level of detail can be altered if you and the DAC think it appropriate. Not all types of faculty application will require a Statement of Need. For example, disposal of a treasure will not usually constitute a significance change to a listed church but nevertheless setting out the case for disposal on paper is a useful exercise and worth undertaking.

Art / Stained Glass

Introduction of a new piece of art or stained glass window is a very different project to a reordering; nevertheless it can still be helpful to set out the thinking behind the project in a similar way. Further information on commissioning new works of art is available on www.churchart.co.uk

Section B. Explain the need or desire for the new piece of work. It is a specific bequest or a memorial?

Section C. Explain whether there will be a devotional aspect, or a practical element such as replacing vandalised glass / something stolen.

Section D. Show here how you put together the brief for the piece. What did you ask of the artist? How did you choose the artist? How did you choose the location for the new piece, what other locations were considered? What other projects / mediums did you consider? What is the theological significance of the design? How does it enhance the mission and worship of the community and building?

Section F. The introduction of a piece of art is likely to need consideration in terms of the impact on the character of the space. With regard to glass, look particularly at the impact of colour, and the potential loss of light.

Telecommunication Installation

If you are proposing a telecommunications aerial then your Statement of Need may focus on financial need in Section C. Section F will be very relevant and should look at impact on the fabric and also possibly pastoral situations.

Disposal of Treasure

If you are putting forward a faculty for the disposal of a treasure then you will need to set out the reasoning carefully and use Section F to look at the significance of the item. Sections B & C may again focus on financial implications if these are relevant. Further information on the sale of treasures is available on www.churchcare.co.uk and

will help you understand the key issues which the DAC and other parties will want to consider.

Building Audit

If you are undertaking a major project you may find it useful to look at advice prepared by the Church Commissioners on Local Building Audits. Further information is available on

www.cofe.anglican.org/about/churchcommissioners/redchurches/whatsnew