

Assessing Heritage Value and Determining the Scope for Change in Closing and Closed Anglican Parish Churches

David Baker

Information-gathering processes for the tasks of closing redundant parish churches and finding suitable new uses were devised by the former Advisory Board for Redundant Churches (ABRC) and commended to its successor body, the Statutory Advisory Committee of the Church of England's Church Buildings Council (SAC) in 2008. They comprise two working documents, a Critical Information Summary which underpins an Informed Change Assessment, based upon an underlying set of Criteria for determining heritage value and the scope for change. These help tackle often difficult and sensitive issues by providing systematic expert advice that meets 21st century requirements for administrative transparency and accountability

Introduction

The conservation of historic buildings is now widely recognised as a matter of managing change, whether its agents are natural or human. Gaining an understanding of what is being changed is the essential first step, so the criteria used for assessing what is now termed its 'heritage value' are of interest to readers of a scholarly journal. They illuminate what can be a shadowy interface between academic considerations and the practicalities of continuing usage; the risk of difficulties or damage can be reduced by ensuring one informs the other adequately and at the right time by means of feeding good research into responsive management processes. This paper arises from work undertaken jointly by the present writer as the last Chairman of the ABRC and Dr Jeffrey West as its Secretary and subsequently Senior Advisor to the new SAC.

Context

Some background about the procedural framework may help those not fully acquainted with how church and state manage the ecclesiastical heritage in England. There are two parallel systems: Faculty Jurisdiction, exercised by diocesan Chancellors with the advice of specialist Diocesan Advisory Committees (DAC), allowed the Church of England to claim exemption from the Ancient Monuments Act of 1913; this exemption was carried forward into later 20th century secular historic buildings legislation administered by local planning authorities. Put simply, a church or other religious building used primarily 'for the time being' as a place of worship is exempt from the special secular controls over ancient monuments, listed buildings and conservation areas, though alterations and developments affecting its external appearance do require planning permission. The assumption is that

the Church itself exercises equivalent controls; indeed, their scope is wider, covering all objects within the curtilage of the church and the church itself, whether fixed or movable, and works of repair as distinct from alterations.

Like secular planning authorities, diocesan Chancellors and their advisors are concerned with the special architectural and historic interest of a building and with its beneficial uses. Their primary regard is for the 'mission of the church' whose advancement is usually the driver behind proposals for change. The need for a proposed change has to justify any adverse impacts upon heritage interests; the greater the likely impact, the stronger must be the justification together with the clear absence of alternative and less damaging solutions.

When a church is no longer used for public worship, the exemption falls and full secular listed building controls supervene, in addition to any continuing covenants imposed by the Church over the use and alteration of its buildings. The recent introduction of provisions under Faculty Jurisdiction for the 'extended use' of an open and active church allows parts to be leased without closure of the whole, provided the primary use remains that of a place of worship. Extended use offers opportunities and challenges in managing the ecclesiastical heritage; the processes described here will be relevant to its assessment in the light of growing casework experience.

The diocese initiates the process of deciding whether to make a parish church redundant; the Church Commissioners carry it through, taking into account pastoral, financial and heritage considerations. In practice the reason for redundancy is almost always a combination of the first two, while the third is more prominent in what happens next. That involves one of three outcomes:

- finding a suitable alternative use, by far the most usual and possibly involving freehold disposal;
- preservation by vesting in the Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) for the benefit of the Church and the nation;
- demolition.

Since 1969, 1764 churches have been made redundant, over 340 have been vested in the Trust, and 386 have been demolished. About 25–30 churches are made redundant each year, a rate which has remained relatively steady over the last decade despite frequent

dire predictions of an imminent melt-down. The types of church most vulnerable to redundancy are large Victorian inner-city buildings and isolated medieval rural ones.

The ABRC was an independent group of acknowledged experts in various aspects of historic churches, set up in 1969 to advise the Church Commissioners. As a regulatory adviser it had no *locus* in seeking specific alternative uses for individual buildings, though it did advise the Church Commissioners about the impacts and acceptability of specific proposals brought forward by others. It advised only on heritage merit, its extent and the effect of proposals upon it, deliberately **not** taking into account any associated effects of proposed changes that might be described as compensatory benefits or improvements. Balancing such benefits and impacts was a matter for the Church Commissioners Redundant Churches Committee, effectively representing the owner or developer and potentially having to justify a scheme for consideration by the secular planning authorities. The independence of this limited role did however enable the ABRC to operate as a facilitating interlocutor between the Church, local planning authorities and potential alternative users of closed buildings. The functions of the ABRC passed to a Statutory Committee of the Church Buildings Council in 2008.

During its lifetime, the ABRC's advisory criteria changed in response to evolving conservation practice, but they were never made public. The days when proposed change could simply be rejected as 'unthinkable' or accepted uncritically are past. This is no longer appropriate in a climate of transparency about matters that concern the public interest. That interest is expressed in the statutory listing of historic buildings, the established position of the Church, and the exemption from certain planning controls explained above. The Church receives repair grants from public funds and seeks to engage the wider community in the care of its historic buildings. It gains potential financial returns from the disposal of redundant churches and sites, and has to obtain secular planning consents for alternative uses in closed churches no longer benefiting from the ecclesiastical exemption.

The last decade has seen important advances in conservation philosophy and practice, codified most clearly by English Heritage's *Informed Conservation* (Clark 2001). It was further articulated in English

Heritage's *Conservation Principles* (2008), in terms of which this paper is primarily concerned with evidential, historical and aesthetic values. 'Informed conservation' is a deceptively simple concept, establishing a direct link between understanding what is to be changed and the potential impact of change upon its significance. Though it seems little more than a re-statement of the presumption in favour of preservation incorporated in planning legislation, 'informed conservation' requires a process of evaluation intended to avoid conflicts caused by devising schemes without due regard for their potential impacts. Too many problems still arise either from a failure to understand what will be affected by proposals or from a misrepresentation or misreading of the significance of a heritage asset. A clearly stated procedure is essential because, in the nature of things, proposals for change usually stem from what people want to achieve, focusing attention upon the perceived benefits of the altered state rather than on the disbenefits of what might have to be altered to achieve it.

Information requirements

For all these reasons, it is particularly important that the heritage value of a parish church should be properly assessed and understood at the point of closure when control of that aspect passes from dual but mainly ecclesiastical to predominantly secular agencies. It is equally important that some guidance is given at the outset on the scope of what changes might generally be possible. This will enable those devising specific schemes to develop, assess, and 'inform' the viability of their proposals in terms of heritage value, rather than encounter difficulties caused by omitting it from the equation. The idea is not new: best practice in the work of DACs insists that a scheme proposed by a parish is accompanied by Statements of Significance and Need, and the secular planning system requires similar justifications.

Hitherto, the formal documentation of what is understood about a church being considered for closure has been the statutory Pastoral Measure Report (PMR), compiled centrally for the use of parishes and dioceses at the inception of what can be a long process preceding a decision to close the building and seek an alternative use. The transformation of information requirements over the last decade led the ABRC to align the basis for the advice it had provided

to the Church Commissioners and the CCT since 1969 with 'informed conservation'; in turn this put pressure on the need to make the criteria for assessing significance explicit.

The enduring framework for the information and advice provided by the ABRC has been preserved in the new Dioceses, Pastoral and Mission Measure 2007. This has to cover the historic and archaeological interest and architectural quality of the building, the historic and archaeological interest and aesthetic qualities of its contents, the value of the building to its setting and the surrounding landscape, and its overall importance. In s. 55(5) of the new Measure the understanding of 'church' includes references to

'any curtilage ... churchyard or burial ground or part thereof annexed thereto (and) any contents of such a church or place of worship or any other articles appertaining thereto'.

These definitions relate to all historic periods and sites.

The Church Commissioners seek advice by asking a standard set of questions according to the nature and stage of the case. These include:

- 'early information and advice' on the quality and interest of the building and its contents
- advice on those features or characteristics which should be preserved unaltered, and those where alteration would be acceptable
- whether the church is of such small historic and archaeological interest, or has such little architectural quality, or requires such extensive repair, that its demolition would not be objectionable on any or all of these grounds
- on its suitability for vesting in the CCT immediately or in the last resort should no other suitable use be found.

The shorthand in the terms used in these questions, largely based on legislation originally drafted a quarter of a century ago, requires some expansion:

Historic interest covers associations with known events and individuals; it can also include famous architects and the historic role of the building in its settlement.

Archaeological interest covers the cultural interest of dating, plan form, construction, materials, associated cultural activities, architectural or industrial practices or technologies, burial practices and memorialisation, as obtained from observation, excavation, and chance or recorded finds.

Table 1

Elements →	Church	Contents	Churchyard	Landscape / townscape context	Overall High – Moderate – Low
Aspects ↓					
Statutory and non-statutory designations and material planning considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building statutorily listed - building locally listed or an important unlisted building in a Conservation Area; - building part of / over a Scheduled Ancient Monument - building part of / over an important archaeological site in local SMR / HER, etc - within ambit of Local Development Framework (LDF) policy on the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fixtures and fittings identified in list description or listed by virtue of attachment to a listed building <i>[unfixed items of artistic merit may well be significant but are not included here because faculty jurisdiction would not apply after redundancy]</i> - within ambit of Local Development Framework (LDF) policy on the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - individually listed or scheduled monuments or separate structures; - setting of a listed building or a scheduled / ancient monument; - part of a Conservation Area; part of / over Scheduled Ancient Monument or important archaeological site in local SMR / HER, etc - nature conservation designations : SSSI, SINC, TPO etc - within ambit of Local Development Framework (LDF) policy on the historic environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - part of Conservation Area; located in Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, World Heritage Site; - related to Registered Park / Garden or Registered Battlefield - Nature conservation designations : SSSI, SINC, TPO etc - other relevant non-heritage designations, rural or urban - within ambit of Local Development Framework (LDF) policy on the historic environment 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multiple or grouped values recognised by designations, e.g. listed and scheduled - Listed grade I ('high), II* ('moderate to high') <p>Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Listed grade II; no other designations <p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local List 'low to moderate' - undesignated
Historic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - documented evidence of early origins or associations or monastic origins / episode - direct association with notable historic personage / organisation or community / event - interest of building as example of type or period of church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - personal or genealogical interest of monuments, memorials or furnishings - interest of contents as example of type or period of church furnishing - historical associations of specific memorials, bells, organs, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - churchyard war memorial - interest of monuments and memorials for genealogy or individuals or as example of type or period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct association with notable historic event or industrial / urban development 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - significance for national or wider than local history <p>Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - significance for local history including the development of its settlement <p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - little significance other than as a memorial to those who used the church

<p>Archaeological</p>	<p>Associative interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - early origins or associations or monastic origins / episode - direct association with notable site (e.g castle) - presumption of archaeological interest from historical evidence (e.g. Domesday Book record of a church or priest, documented evidence of ancient, secular or ecclesiastical settlement, sites or monuments) <p>Intrinsic archaeological interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building as a multi-period structure - Human remains: evidence of burials within church <p>Presumption of archaeological interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arising from material evidence (e.g. SMR records, artefacts or furnishings from church) - from evidence for earlier church on same site 	<p>Presumption of archaeological interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arising from material evidence (e.g. SMR records, artefacts or furnishings from church) - evidence of industrial archaeological interest (e.g. historic use of cast iron, association with railways or canals) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - part of / over Scheduled Ancient Monument, ditto important archaeological site in local SMR / HER, etc <p>Presumption of archaeological interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - arising from material evidence (e.g. SMR records, churchyard, or burial ground) - evidence for development of churchyard - human remains - from evidence for earlier church within existing churchyard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - relationship of church and churchyard to existing rural settlement pattern or urban development 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - long multi-period sequence of development and continuity of use, possibly including previous churches or occupation on site - clear single-period construction that is a good example of its time for design and techniques <p>Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development sequence that is short or with significant gaps in continuity of use unlikely to be filled by research <p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lacking development sequence or particular interest as single-period construction
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continued overleaf...

Elements →	Church	Contents	Churchyard	Landscape / townscape context	Overall High – Moderate – Low
Aspects ↓					
Architectural	<p>Architectural history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct association with architectural movement - distinctive or representative example of one or more period(s) of architecture - distinctive example of the work of named architect (including restoration) - architectural contribution of past repairs <p>Spatial qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - spatial qualities of the church building as a building, the articulation of plan and the rhythm of compartments - internal vistas, views through and visual surprises, quality of surfaces, atmosphere, effects of natural lighting, textures, colours, materials etc 	<p>Architectural history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - direct association with architectural movement - distinctive or representative example of one or more period(s) of architecture - distinctive example of the work of named craftsman <p>Artefactual interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distinctive or representative collection of church furnishings, monuments & memorials i.e. importance of ‘ensemble’ - distinctive example(s) of one or more categories of furnishing - distinctive or representative examples of the work of named architect, craftsman, or craft guild or group 	<p>Architectural history</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - planned or architect-designed churchyard - architect- or craftsman-designed monuments - memorials & chapels, Commonwealth war-graves - distinctive or representative collection of monuments & memorials i.e. importance of ‘ensemble’ - Boundary walls & lychgate (nb war memorial gates) <p>Ecological quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Protected species as listed by Countryside Officer - Trees subject to Preservation Orders <p>Spatial qualities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general character and setting of churchyard and curtilage - the size of the churchyard and the placing of the church within it - groups and rows of tombstones and monuments in relation to each other, the church and well-defined boundaries to the churchyard 	<p>Groupings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quality and contribution made by church and churchyard to notable group of buildings - the visual relationship of church, churchyard and their setting, views in and views out <p>Views</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - distant glimpses in landscape and rural settlement context - visual contribution of church and churchyard to street scene and formal urban planning 	<p>High</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - outstanding quality of church, contents, churchyard and context as an ensemble, with coherently consistent or contrasting elements - outstanding quality of some but not all the elements <p>Moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - some quality in more than one element as judged by comparison with similar examples <p>Low</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - little or no distinctive merit in any element - little likelihood of future re-evaluation as ‘new’ heritage on architectural grounds of concept, planning, functionality etc

Setting, originally defined only as the value of its surroundings to the church, now also includes the church's value to the built or rural area where it is located.

Architectural quality covers construction and planning, the aesthetic qualities of appearance, and spatial qualities; those qualities cover proportion, volume, massing, the spatial relationships of elements, architectural verve and enrichment, the use and aesthetic value of surfaces, materials, contents (glass, organ, fixtures and fittings), the overall balance between design and execution of the whole, and the sensitivity of later additions to earlier work.

Criteria for assessing heritage values

The ABRC developed three purpose-designed documents as the basis for its responses to requests for advice, the Critical Information Summary (CIS) and the Informed Change Assessment (ICA), both supported by Criteria for assessing heritage value and the scope for change. Worked examples of the first two are at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively, the CIS by the SAC's Casework Officer, Anne McNair, and the ICA by Dr Jeffrey West. The CIS was the first to be used and the ICA has evolved through several stages under former and existing arrangements; the Criteria were the subject of public consultation by the ABRC in early 2008 (Table 1).

The Criteria are expressed in detail within a grid having columns for 'church – contents – churchyard – landscape / townscape context – overall', and rows for 'designations and material planning considerations – historic – archaeological – architectural'.

Applying these Criteria to a particular church requires broad judgements of quality using categories of 'high / moderate / low'. Guidance from the indicators in the right-hand column of the main table above ensures a more thorough and reflective process than mere box-ticking. A summary table (pp64–66) records the individual judgements, and summarises elements and aspects overall. The bottom right-hand cell contains a single simplified headline judgement; should this prove contentious, the summary table and the Criteria provide a clear audit trail. It goes without saying that this table is invaluable if compiled or properly scrutinized by a group of expert advisers, even if they mainly assess initial judgements by expert

officers; it is potentially dangerous if merely nodded through without detailed expert scrutiny, and potentially misleading if compiled by generalist officers without a direct and sufficient expert input.

In practice, most assessments produce a mix of 'high', 'moderate' and 'low' elements; intermediate categories of 'high – moderate', and 'moderate – low' can be used to reflect uncertainty or differences of opinion (Table 2). The overall assessment is a matter for the judgement of the specialist committee collectively expert in all these aspects. Generally:

- the more 'highs', the more likely it is that the scope for change will be both limited and constrained by the significant qualities of the building;
- the more 'moderate's, the more likely it is that there will be some scope for change without adverse effects on significance;
- the more 'lows', the more likely it is that the scope for change will be relatively unconstrained.

Neither the condition of repair nor its financial implications are taken into account in assessing and advising on heritage value; that is a matter for others in making the final decision about the future of a church.

These assessments equate broadly with statutory designations. The statutory Grades incorporate the terms 'national' and 'local'. The term 'regional' should not be used as a term of overall valuation because it is a geographical label for particular materials or the distribution of an architect's work. In the table below, Grades I, II* and II correlate with the top three of the five-band scale of value from high to low; 'Local' equates with the bottom two bands, Local List and unlisted buildings (Table 3).

Table 3 is a simplified table and outcomes are deliberately qualified as no more than 'likely'. It assumes an expert ability to recognise unlisted buildings of listable quality and under-graded listed buildings. The likelihood of the outcome attached to the measure of significance will always be qualified by the circumstances of the case, the specific qualities of the building and its realistic potential scope for uses. All 'highs' would normally mean preservation as a monument of outstanding heritage values but should not preclude an unusual one-off use that would secure useful life and preservation without significantly adverse impacts. Many 'lows' might indicate potential for demolition, but in some cases there might be special factors such as 'high' fixed contents in an

Table 2

Elements →	Church	Contents	Churchyard	Landscape / townscape context	Overall: High – Moderate – Low
Aspects ↓					
	Statutory and non-statutory designations and material planning considerations				
	Historic interest				
	Archaeological interest / sensitivity				
	Architectural / aesthetic quality				
	Overall				
	High – Moderate – Low				

otherwise undistinguished building, or importance for the street scene of a Conservation Area. Any decision for demolition ought to be preceded by an evaluation of sustainability issues and a clear demonstration of the superior economic and social benefits of the new use proposed for the site. Demolition of a listed building is subject to tests described in government guidance, and these may also apply to unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas.

The Critical Information Summary (CIS) (Appendix 1) (see page 71)

The outcome of the assessment of heritage value using the Criteria discussed above forms part of the Critical Information Summary (CIS). This describes itself as *'a synopsis of heritage and planning information ... intended to assist the Church Commissioners and other ecclesiastical and secular planning authorities in the management of casework ... based on secondary sources and personal observation.'*

It tabulates key information under headings including administrative detail, designations, outline history,

constituent parts, materials / plan form / construction sequence, notable features and fittings, war memorials, bells, historical associations, human remains, condition, planning and amenity issues, churchyard / curtilage / planning considerations, biodiversity, records and references. It concludes with a brief assessment of the visual contribution made by building and site, archaeological potential, and overall heritage significance in local and national contexts.

This is essentially an administrative document, designed to ensure that all relevant factors can be taken into account. Its compilation requires desk-based (internet or library) searches, the earlier Pastoral Measure Report, a visit to investigate and verify information obtained, and the contributions of knowledge and assessment from an expert committee whose membership covers most of the required specialisms.

It also deals with circumstances generally unrelated to heritage values but often of critical importance in securing a suitable use, and mostly related to interests of the local planning authority.

Table 3

Significance as measured against Criteria Value	Likely outcome	Statutory Grade	Statutory meaning PPG15 para 6.38
High	Vesting or equivalent arrangement where the scope for change is low and the potential impact of change is high with little scope for mitigation	I	Exceptional interest
High to Moderate	Vesting in last resort or equivalent if no suitable alternative use &c.	II*	Great historic interest
Moderate	Alternative uses; demolition unlikely to be permitted	II	Special historic interest
Moderate to Low	Alternative uses; demolition more likely if alternative uses genuinely unavailable	Local List	Unlisted in conservation area Local interest
Low	Demolition an option within context of sustainability	Unlisted	Without interest, subject to conservation area status and review for statutory or local list

One is the extent of dilapidation in a church, which is not relevant to determining heritage values, but does affect the economics of re-use, and needs to be stated realistically rather than minimised or exaggerated. Another is a set of access issues, based on physical location of the building in its settlement, strategic access from the highway network, including public transport and tourist routes, local access to the churchyard, across it to the church, and into the church, parking, and reasonable compliance with disability requirements. Another is the church's social and economic context in its settlement and community, and the wider planning context of the Local Development Framework concerning development opportunities and constraints such as location in relation to any flood plain.

The Informed Change Assessment (ICA) (Appendix 2) (see page 76)

The purpose of the ICA is to provide guidance about the scope for change to a redundant church in terms of its potential impact upon the significance of the

building, drawing upon the CIS and the documentation behind it. It is deliberately generalized 'framework' guidance, allowing flexibility to recognise the particularities of a building and its circumstances. Its two-part format is a safeguard against distorting an assessment of significance by an envisaged type of change, and *vice-versa*.

Part 1 is an 'Assessment of Significance and Overall Heritage Value', based on application of the Criteria. It identifies key points under their headings of church, contents, churchyard and context, together with the overall heritage asset value, using categories of low, moderate and high significance.

Part 2 deals with the 'Scope for Change and Potential Impacts on Significance' under headings of churchyard and curtilage, exterior, interior and contents, a slightly different wording reflecting the issue of usability. Its two parts cover 'Notable Constraints' abstracted from Part 1 and the 'Scope for Change, Potential Impacts and Possible Mitigation'. It deals with the flexibility for various types of change afforded by its heritage values. This includes the scope for internal subdivision (horizontal and / or vertical),

for inserting basic facilities, for extensions, and for development in the churchyard (freestanding or attached). It uses three levels of impact:

- **low** is unlikely to affect overall heritage value adversely; its effects on specific aspects of significance can be mitigated by alternative design and / or making a properly curated record
- **moderate** is likely to affect heritage value adversely despite exploiting the potential for mitigation by design
- **high** is likely to affect adversely one or more aspects of significance and overall heritage value; adequate mitigation is not envisaged nor is practicable.

Part 2 has an overall 'Provisional Conclusion' based on two potential extents of change:

- **little or none** when it is likely to result in **moderate** or **high** impacts on one or more specific aspects of significance and overall heritage value
- **some** when impacts are likely to be negligible or **low to moderate**, perhaps because means can be envisaged for reducing or otherwise mitigating them.

The importance of a flexible response to the particularities of a case has been stressed repeatedly. The greatest significance might be in the interior, the contents, or the decorations and fittings of the church; if the exterior and the immediate setting are of lesser significance, there may be scope for alteration or extension to facilitate access or insert an appropriate parallel use to help sustain the interior. In other cases, exceptional exteriors, or the combined values of church and setting as features in the landscape or townscape will constrain external development, while the lesser quality of the interior offers greater flexibility in inserting alternative uses. A major alteration to a building of low value might be less damaging than a minor alteration to one of high value.

Conclusion: mechanistic or sensitive ?

Some of those who have read this far may be recoiling from a process they perceive as cumbersome and mechanistic, unsuitable for wonderful buildings and holy places. Twin dangers in decision-making about change to historic churches are the absolutist approach that considers their qualities place them above discussion, opening the door to decisions that are

arbitrary, unsupported by evidence and potentially inconsistent, and the administrative approach that substitutes arithmetical for historical architectural value, losing sight of the latter in the process.

The processes outlined above are intended to ensure that the significance of a building is properly understood before decisions about change are made. The level of detail and comprehensive approach will ensure the criteria are applied on a case-by-case basis, and there is scope for using more specific evaluative sets for particularly difficult or complex recurring issues such as congregational seating and stained glass. Scrutinising the correlation between levels of quality and designations is important, in case it is necessary to list or upgrade a building in the light of new scholarship, new discoveries and revised perspectives identified during the information-collecting process.

There are many advantages in a criteria-based approach. It provides a reference set of heritage values against which proposals for change can be justified or assessed. It can support a consistent standard of recommendations, taking account of individual qualities and circumstances flexibly without setting precedents that can so easily undermine standards incrementally. It can indicate the suitability or otherwise of broad types of use whose demands and consequent impacts can usually be forecast in general terms, as long as such advice is always subject to the full consideration of a detailed proposal. In commenting on a particular scheme it can also suggest alternative and less impactful ways of achieving the same objective. It can guard against the cherry-picking of exemplars for vesting or equivalent care (selecting one but not another church of equal qualities) or working within a quota for preservation (arbitrarily culling past selections in order to make room for new ones). It can also help manage readily identified classes, such as documented post-medieval churches and documented major post-medieval re-workings of medieval churches, by requiring an expert view of their place within the work of known architects.

Heritage value is a difficult concept to demonstrate dispassionately. Yet, unless proposals for change are assessed against a set of criteria that is informed, cogent, and publicly transparent, it will be impossible to measure the impact of change. The information drawn together in the Critical Information Summary reflects the range of matters across which critical decisions may have to be taken. The Informed Change Assessment reflects the complexity of the task,

the multi-faceted nature of the buildings themselves, and the responsibilities consequently entailed in managing change.

Bibliography

Clark, 2001, *Informed Conservation*, London, 2001

English Heritage, 2008 *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance*, London, 2008

David Baker was a member of the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches from 2001 to 2008 and latterly Chairman. He is a member of the St Albans Diocesan Advisory Committee, the Rochester Cathedral Fabric Committee, and the nominee of the Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies on the Board of Architects Accredited in Building Conservation. He is joint editor of Church Archaeology and joint partner of Historic Environment Conservation.

Appendix 1

STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
on closed and closing churches advising the Church Commissioners
and the Churches Conservation Trust on behalf of the
CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL

CRITICAL INFORMATION SUMMARY



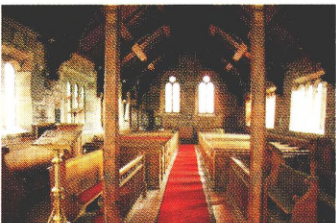
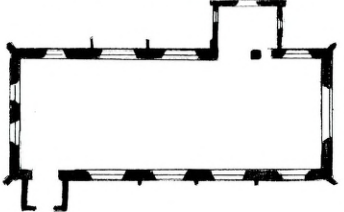

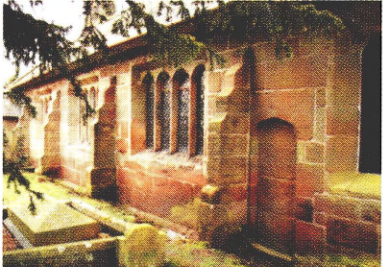
This Critical Information Summary has been issued by the Statutory Advisory Committee to provide a synopsis of heritage and planning information relating to the named church which is subject to procedures under the Pastoral Measure 1983 as amended. The document is intended to assist the Church Commissioners and other ecclesiastical and secular planning authorities in the management of casework, and is issued without prejudice to the process of the 1983 Measure and to the needs of a third party to comply with the requirements of ecclesiastical or secular planning procedures. The information, for which the Committee gives no warranty, was (to the Committee's knowledge and belief) correct as at the date given on the document and is based on secondary sources and personal observation only.

Parish	Harthill	Dedication	All Saints
County	Cheshire	Diocese	Chester

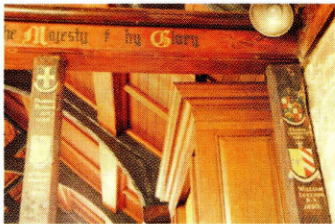
Address Benefice & Archdeaconry	Church Lane, Harthill, Cheshire Bickerton (Holy Trinity), Bickley, Harthill & Burwardsley; Archdeaconry of Chester
Local Authority	Cheshire West & Chester Shadow Authority. Room 51, County Hall, Chester CH1 1SF. Ph: 01244 975998. (Chester City Council Planning Development Control, planning@chester.gov.uk . ph: 01244 402404)
NGR	SJ 500 552
SMR/NMR	SMR 1746/1/1; NMR_NATINV-71084

Date of redundancy	1-Nov-02
Uses approved	

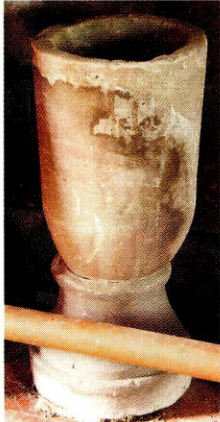
Designations: LB, CA, SAM, SSSI, SINC, TPO etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Church is listed grade II*. • Cross shaft, C11/12 [LBS 405153]; sundial, insc. 1778 [LBS405151] and the Barbour Mausoleum, dated 1885 [LBS 405152] all separately listed grade II. • Situated in the Harthill Conservation Area. • Area situated within a 'Strategic Wildlife Corridor'.
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<p>Outline history of site & building</p> 	<p>Harthill was part of the Norman Baronry of Malpas. First mention of a place of worship was of a chapel in 1280. The original chapel was thought to be timber building (Richards 1973: 180).</p> <p>Harthill is within the estate of Bolesworth Castle, which has been held since 1857. There has probably been a chapel on the site since the C13. The present church was erected in 1607-9, incorporating two medieval carved heads, possibly from an earlier church. The church contained a W musicians', or 'orchestra' gallery (removed 1862-3).</p> <p>The church was refurbished in the early C18, and restored in 1862-3 when the N vestry was added, the bell-cote replaced and the W gallery removed. Repewed 1865. Lychgate built 1909. Interior reordered 1920 when the panelling, choir stalls & pulpit installed. Restored & removal of plaster ceiling, 1986.</p>
<p>Location in townscape or landscape</p>	<p>Built on a low rise on the north-western slope of the Broxton hills. Situated to the N of school and estate buildings on village green.</p>
<p>Building: materials, plan form/constituent parts of building & site</p>  <p>Facing E</p>  <p>Facing W</p>	<p>Materials: Walls of red and buff sandstone. Roof covered with Welsh slates.</p> <p>Plan form/constituent parts: Axial plan with 4-bay nave and 1-bay chancel under single continuous roof, SW porch, NE vestry, bell-cote above W gable. No structural division between nave and chancel. With the exception of the 1862 round-headed W windows of the nave, the church has rectangular mullioned windows with round-headed lights.</p> <p>Externally, there is a blocked doorway to the western end of the N nave wall and a blocked priests door to the S chancel wall. Inside the S end of the W wall, there is a recess indicating the former opening to the W gallery staircase. A C17 screen divides the chancel from the nave.</p>    <p>Left: Blocked door in W end of N wall; Right: blocked priests door S chancel wall.</p> <p>Roof (nave & chancel): double-framed oak hammer beam roof with arched braces & struts above, pendant & braces (carved with strap work & foliage) below hammer beams. Hammerbeams & braces decorated with painted coats of arms & initials.</p> <p>Floors: pews on raised wooden platforms, flagstone floor to baptistery, terracotta tiles to nave central aisle (partially carpeted), black, red & buff tiles to chancel with additional encaustic tiles to sanctuary.</p>

**Notable features & fittings of building
(in chronological order)**

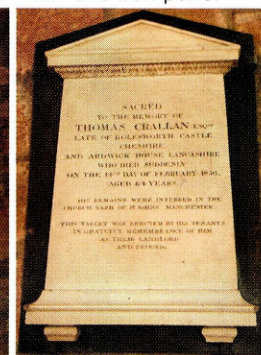


Painted chancel screen



C18/19 mortar?, said to be font

- Medieval corbel heads set into exterior E wall, possibly from a former church (see Additional Information).
- Altar table of 1609, enlarged in 1862.
- Chancel screen, 1609; inscribed with makers' names & date; the arms of the local lords of the manor 1250-1919 and arms of incumbents 1609-1903 were painted on the screen in C19 & C20 [also arms of Sir Marmaduke Drake above S door].
- Early C17 hammer beam roof with carved brackets decorated in C19 & C20 with arms/names of local gentry back to 1072.
- Early C17 wainscot panelling from Sanctuary relocated and re-used as fronts to the nave benches.
- Wainscot to W wall inscribed 'R.B. 1728'.
- Hexagonal oak pulpit, early-mid C18.
- C18 & C19 wall monuments.
- C18 Benefaction boards.
- Benches of 1862 said to re-use material from C18 box pews.



Note: a tall, circular, limestone turned object, said to be a font of Saxon or Anglo-Norman date, is possibly an 18C or 19C mortar.

Stained Glass

- W windows, 2 twin-lts & roundels, Baptism & healing ministry. Lavers, Baraud & Westlake, late 1860s - early 70s.
- E window, 6-lts, 1885-87. Shrigley & Hunt. Designed by Carl Almquist (Shrigley & Hunt c.1938: 6; Waters 2003: 68).
- S nave (3rd bay), 4-lts, c.1896. Shrigley & Hunt (Shrigley & Hunt c.1938: 6).
- N chancel window, Agnus Dei, by Mary Lowndes, 1908.
- S nave, 4-lts, c.1928. Clayton & Bell (Armstrong & Armstrong 2005: 181-182)

(see Additional Information for further details)



S nave, Clayton & Bell, c.1928 (L). N chancel, Mary Lowndes, 1908 (R).

Organ

2-manual organ by Nicholson & Lord of Walsall, 1891 with case of 1920-28.

War memorials

WWII; alabaster ROH in chancel.

Bells

Bell recast 1813. Inscription on bell records original from which it was recast, dated 1247. Bell-frame c.1813.

Other buildings or pieces of land	None
Historical associations: people & events	Families in possession of manor of Malpas, including Brereton (C16) and Drake (C17) families.

Human remains

Evidence of burials within church	Yes - memorials.
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Condition

State of repair QIR, Structural Engr Rpt.	QIR:Apr-94 - The church was generally in good condition and had been very well maintained. Repair of the rainwater goods was required on the S side of the building to reduce dampness in the church.
Building at Risk Register: Local, national	Not on national BARR.

Planning and amenity issues

Local social & amenity profile	Small rural village.
Local plan	<p>Until 1-Apr-09, Harthill falls under the remit of Chester City Council. From this date, this council will combine with the Vale Royal Borough Council and Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council to form the Cheshire West & Chester Shadow Authority.</p> <p>The Chester City Council Local Plan (known as the Chester District Local Plan) was adopted on 12-May-06. All of its policies have been saved for a further three years from that date. The Plan can be viewed by following the links from: http://www.cartogold.co.uk/chester/</p> <p>The Local Plan policies will remain valid until Cheshire West & Chester authority implements their Local Development Framework. Their Draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) can be viewed by following the link in the Dec-08 Local Development Framework Panel minutes at: http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.asp?CId=452&Year=2008 or a direct link to the LDS can be found at: http://cmttpublic.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/Published/C00000452/M00001654/AI00006825/\$LDFPanel041208LDSDraftforapprovalv1.docA.ps.pdf (this information was valid as at 19-Feb-09)</p>
Identified risk of flooding	Environment Agency information suggests that the church does not lie within an area likely to be affected by flooding.
Availability & provision of mains/services/WCs	Electricity.
Archaeological implications of alternative use (church/churchyard/site)	Site is archaeologically sensitive as indicated with the re-use of medieval fabric in the existing building, the C11/C12 churchyard cross and the documented existence of a C13 church. The standing fabric of the C17 church and its contemporary fixtures are of archaeological interest. The wider context found within 2km of the church includes a possible moated site to the S of the churchyard, a C17 farmhouse and a possible DMV.
Human remains considerations	The site was in ecclesiastical use from at least the C13 onwards. There is a possibility of unrecorded burials in addition to recorded ones.

Churchyard, Curtilage and planning

Status of churchyard	Open. Recent burials to W & N of churchyard up to 2006.
General character and setting of churchyard and curtilage	Raised churchyard, sloping downwards to N & E. Laid to grass, densely buried with table tombs & grave markers to S side amongst mature yew tree, Barbour mausoleum to SE, C19-21 graves to N & W sides.
Churchyard monuments, memorials & chapels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C11/C12 or later churchyard cross base & shaft (Grade II [405153]) • 1778 sundial (Grade II [405151]) • 1885+ Barbour family vault (Grade II [405152])
Commonwealth war-graves	Two graves, both located N of chancel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56311 Driver Brereton, Frederick Edward. d.19-Jan-1915. • 1319 Pte Randles, J.E. d.30-Sep-1920.
Boundary walls & lychgate (N.B. war memorial gates)	Coped stone ashlar boundary wall to E, S & W, iron post & rail fence to N. Oak lychgate on stone base with slate roof, built to commemorate the tercentenary, 1909.
Churchyard or adjacent burial ground subject to Open Spaces Act	None known
Use dependent on availability of amenity land (not within churchyard or curtilage)	Matter under discussion
Enabling development required/in place	
Relevant S.106 Agreement	***
Access/egress to site (highways issues)	The church is located on the N side of the village green, which is directly off the main road through the village. There is a farm track to the W of the church.
Parking on/off site, street	Limited street parking available around village green to S of church.

Flora & fauna

Protected species as listed by Countryside Officer	None
Trees subject to Preservation Orders	No TPOs. Mature Yew in churchyard subject to Conservation Area policies.
Records and References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastoral Measure Report: 20-Jun-00 PM:1863 • P10 form: 28-Feb-02 • Inventory: None. • Armstrong, B. and Armstrong, W. 2005. <i>The Arts and Crafts Movement in the North-West of England. A Handbook.</i> • Cheshire West & Chester Shadow Authority (http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/) • Chester City Council Planning (http://www.chester.gov.uk/council_services/planning_and_building_control/planning.aspx) • Environment Agency flood maps (http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/flood/) • Listed Buildings Online (http://lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk/Login.aspx) • Moon, B. 1986. <i>History of All Saints, Harthill.</i> • Richards, R. 1973. <i>Old Cheshire Churches.</i> E. J. Moreton. Didsbury, Manchester. • Shrigley & Hunt. C.1938. <i>Notes on Stained Glass.</i> Shrigley & Hunt. Lancaster & London. • UK National Inventory of War Memorials (http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/) No. 9858 • Waters, W. 2003. <i>Stained Glass from Shrigley & Hunt of Lancaster and London.</i> Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster.

Date compiled	28-Apr-03
Updated	21-Mar-06; 23-Nov-06; 23-Feb-09; 17-Mar-09

Appendix 2

STATUTORY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
on closed and closing churches advising the Church Commissioners
and the Churches Conservation Trust on behalf of the
CHURCH BUILDINGS COUNCIL

INFORMED CHANGE ASSESSMENT

Parish	HARTHILL	Dedication	ALL SAINTS	
Diocese	Chester	County	Cheshire	
Address	Harthill, Cheshire			
LPA	Cheshire West and Chester Shadow Authority [Unitary Authority from 1 April 2009]			
Listing & Designation	- Church Grade II* - Sundial Grade II - Barbour mausoleum Grade II - Churchyard cross Grade II		Conservation Area	Y
Outline	- Church/chapel at Harthill since at least 1280 (chyd. cross of 11/12C or later). - Existing church built 1607-09 (insc. date on SW porch): rectangular plan with projecting buttresses; nave and chancel (divided by dated screen 1609); Refurbished 1782; restored 1862-3 (bell cote 1862; N vestry 1863; re-seated 1865); chancel re-furbished 1920. Restoration 1986. - Nave and chancel under single roof; N vestry, SW porch			

The Committee's advice outlined in this document has been offered to the commissioning body [Church Commissioners or Churches Conservation Trust] and should not be taken to indicate that listed building consent and / or planning permission will be granted for the alterations discussed, nor does the Committee's advice affect the "general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings" or the need for developers "to justify their proposals" and to "show why works which would affect the character of the listed building are desirable or necessary" (PPG 15, paragraphs 3.3 & 3.4).

Part 1: Assessment of Significance and Overall Heritage Value

1. Church

*This assessment is based on the **Criteria for determining heritage values and the scope for change in closed Anglican churches**, issued in May 2008 by the Advisory Board for Redundant Churches after public consultation and adopted by the Statutory Advisory Committee on behalf of the Church Buildings Council.*

In Part 1 of this document **L, M & H** refer to **Low Moderate & High significance**

The full text of the Criteria and a report on the public consultation can be consulted at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/abrc/index.html>

- 1.1 The church is of national interest as a Grade II* listed building. **H**
[For separately listed churchyard monuments see Paragraph 3 below]
- 1.2 The church and site are of national and local interest as a medieval ecclesiastical site and as a relatively unaltered example of 17C church building in Cheshire. **H**
- 1.3 The early 17C roof (extensively restored 1862-3) and the early 17C contents are of national and local interest as an entity. **H**
- 1.4 The church is of historic and archaeological interest in the development of Harthill as a settlement and as an element in the history of the locality. **M**
- 1.5 **Conclusion: High**

2. Contents

- 2.1 The early 17C chancel screen and roof brackets are of national interest as noted fixtures in the Grade II* listed building. **H**
- 2.2 The 17C contents (altar, sanctuary panelling re-used as pew fronts) are of national and local historic interest and aesthetic quality. **H**
- 2.3 The 18C wainscot panelling and pulpit are of national and local historic interest and aesthetic quality. **M**
- 2.4 The 19C rubricated sanctuary inscription and the 19C and 20C heraldic painting on the screen and roof brackets are of local historic interest and aesthetic quality. **M**
- 2.5 The remaining contents are of local historic interest and aesthetic quality. **L-M**
[NOTE: although the 'tub font' at the SW corner of the church is said to be of Anglo-Saxon or Norman date, neither its shape, size, interior depth, nor the fact that it is turned, bears comparison with any securely dated object of either period. While turned stone balusters are a feature Anglo-Saxon architecture, turned fonts are not a recognized feature of either Anglo-Saxon or Norman church furnishing. Rather than a medieval object, it is probable that the font is modern (19C?) and was either designed as a piscina or originated in a secular context (mortar?)]
- 2.6 **Conclusion: Moderate to High**

3. Churchyard

- 3.1 The setting of the Grade II* listed church is of national interest and is located in a Conservation Area. **H**
- 3.2 Documented evidence of a medieval church/chapel at Harthill in 1280 and the re-use of medieval carving in the E wall, point to a site of high archaeological interest and sensitivity. **H**
- 3.3 The churchyard encloses three separately Grade II listed monuments: the Barbour mausoleum, remains of 11/12C (or later) churchyard cross, and an 18C sundial. **M**
- 3.4 The church stands within a densely buried and memorialized churchyard which is raised about 1m above the surrounding ground level and is enclosed by a sandstone perimeter wall that is a notable feature of the immediate setting of the church. **M**
 [A low 19C iron 'kerb' rail and a field fence mark the N churchyard boundary]
- 3.5 The S churchyard wall is broken by a timber-framed lych-gate of 1909. **L**
- 3.6 **Conclusion: Moderate to High**

4. Context (setting, landscape/townscape value)

- 4.1 The church is of national interest as a Grade II* listed building and of local interest in that it is understood to be situated in a Conservation Area. **H**
- 4.2 The church stands on a slight eminence overlooking the Cheshire Plain and is a feature of notable value in the landscape. **M-H**
- 4.3 The church is of considerable value as a feature in its local setting at the centre of the village scene. **M-H**
- 4.4 **Conclusion: Moderate to High**

5 Overall heritage asset value – Moderate to High significance

Part 2: Scope for Change and Potential Impacts on Significance

In the event that a change of use necessitates the alteration or development of the heritage asset represented by site, building, contents, monuments or memorials, developers are required to demonstrate need and provide evidence that options, impacts, and mitigation strategies have been explored in respect of proposals for which consents are sought. Comment on alteration potential of the heritage asset takes account of the significance of its site, building and contents, and is offered without prejudice to the requirements of the affective legislation and current planning policy guidance.

1.1 Notable constraints

- The church is a feature of **M-H** value as a feature in the landscape and a feature of **M-H** value as a feature in the village scene;
- The churchyard is raised above the level of adjacent roads, is enclosed by a stone wall (with lych-gate) of **M** significance;
- The churchyard has a high density of marked burials, as well as three separately listed Grade II monuments which are of **M** significance;
- The proximity of marked burials and listed monuments to the church on the W, S & E sides [to N of the church there is a narrow apron of land which falls sharply to the 19C churchyard extension]
- The churchyard is an ecclesiastical site of **H** archaeological interest and sensitivity
- The S and E side of the churchyard are framed by public roadways, the W and N sides are framed by land in private ownership

1.2 Potential impacts and possible mitigation

a. **Improved access into the church:**

The combined implications of the situation and circumstances of the site suggest that there is **no scope** for providing vehicular access or improved pedestrian access without:

- the potential for **moderate or high physical or visual impacts** on the site and its setting,
- the potential for **moderate or high physical impact** on the archaeology of the site, tombstones and monuments, and on human remains generally.

As full mitigation for the perceived impacts cannot be envisaged, proposals for alteration would need to be fully justified and detail the extent to which options have been explored and the mitigation of impacts has been considered.

b. **Development within the curtilage:**

The combined implications of the situation and circumstances of the site suggest that there is **no scope** for addition to the church, and **little scope** for development within the curtilage without:

- the potential for **high physical and visual impacts** on a Grade II* listed building which is of **H** significance and situated in a Conservation Area. **H**
 - the potential for **high physical and visual impacts** on the setting of the listed building of **H** significance,
 - the potential for **high impacts** on a site of **H** archaeological interest and sensitivity
- In the case of the area of land in the angle between the N vestry and N nave wall, an options assessment for the provision of 'safe' access to the N churchyard and the reduction of impacts on the church interior by the provision of an area of decking over the N apron, boiler house and boiler house stair. The impacts of such a development could be partly mitigated by archaeological evaluation (some disturbance or destruction of the site must be assumed), partly by the use of the existing vestry door and the

provision of a DDA compliant W pathway, and partly by covering of an existing hazard (boiler house works).

- In the case of the W, S & E churchyard, as full mitigation for the perceived impact cannot be envisaged, proposals for alteration would need to be fully justified and detail the extent to which options have been explored and the mitigation of impacts has been considered.

2 Change to the exterior of the church

2.1 Notable constraints

- The church is a Grade II* listed building of **H** significance and is situated in a Conservation Area
- The church is a feature of **M-H** value in its local setting;
- The church is of **M-H** national significance as a relatively unaltered example of early 17C church building in Cheshire

[For constraints relevant to the churchyard, see Paragraph 1 above]

2.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

a. **Addition and alteration to the exterior**

There is **no scope** for addition or alteration of the church without

- the potential for **high physical and visual impact** on the architectural quality of a Grade II* listed building of **H** significance,
- the potential for **high physical impacts** on a site of **H** archaeological interest and sensitivity in respect of material and human remains
- the potential for **high physical and visual impacts** on the setting and principal views of the listed building and its **M-H** value as a feature in the landscape and in the centre of the village scene

As full mitigation for the perceived impacts cannot be envisaged, proposals for alteration would need to be fully justified and detail the extent to which options have been explored and the mitigation of impacts has been considered.

3 Changes to the interior of the church

3.1 Notable constraints

- The church is a Grade II* listed building of **H** significance with an interior and contents of **H** significance as an entity;
- The interior is of **H** national significance as an example of a relatively unaltered example of early 17C church building in Cheshire;
- The early 17C roof structure (extensively replaced in line with the 17C original in 1862-3) is a noted feature of **H** significance;
- The early 18C wainscot panelling is of **M** significance;
- The stained glass is of notable aesthetic quality and local historic interest. **M**
- The sanctuary and chancel (to the E of the screen) are raised above the height of the nave floor.

3.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

a. **Alteration of the interior**

There is **little or no scope** for alteration (including sub-division) of the interior without:

- the potential for **high physical and visual impacts** on the relatively unaltered 17C interior of the Grade II* listed church;
- the potential for **moderate to high physical and visual impacts** on fixtures, fittings and furnishings of historic interest individually and as an entity;
- the potential for **moderate to high physical impact** on the archaeological interest of the church above and below ground level.

- In the case alterations required to meet DDA compliance, the potential physical impact of providing a unified floor level might be mitigated by temporary or permanent ramps,

and by evaluating the relative impacts of lowering the nave pew platforms or introducing a false floor to raise the nave aisle to platform height.

- In the case of potential impacts of alternative use on stained glass, where approved protective measures are considered acceptable, the impact might be mitigated by relocation.

[**Note 1:** the 19C octagonal font, which is not a noted or notable work of art, is subject to bishop's directions under the Pastoral Measure (as revised);

Note 2: it is understood that there is some potential to provide user/visitor facilities off-site in an adjacent property associated with the proposed alternative use. In the event that this option does not become available, the potential for **high physical and visual impacts** on the church building and the below-ground archaeology (including human remains) will be involved in the introduction of main services and drainage, in addition to **high physical and visual impacts** of providing lavatories and a kitchen point in a purpose built structure within the church (e.g. the N vestry or 'baptistry' area): it is not envisaged that the extent of such impacts can be fully mitigated]

4 Change to the contents of the church (including seating)

4.1 Notable contents

- See CIS for complete list of notable contents.
- The early 17C chancel screen and roof brackets are of national interest as noted fixtures in the Grade II* listed building, and key elements of the 17C interior;
- The 17C contents (altar, sanctuary panelling re-used as pew fronts) and 18C wainscot panelling are of national and local historic interest and aesthetic quality;
- The fixtures, fittings and furnishings associated with the 19C restoration (incl. rubricated inscription, sanctuary furnishings, & heraldic painting) are of local historic interest and moderate aesthetic quality (notably, the inscription).

4.2 Scope for change, potential impacts and possible mitigation

While there is **some scope** for the removal of contents, this would not be without:

- potential for **moderate to high impact** on the overall value of the church as an entity, and on the national significance of the early 17C and 18C interior;
- In the case of the 17C nave pew frontals, it is unlikely that the impact of removal could be fully mitigated
- In the case of the 1863 congregational seating (which is said to incorporate 18C timber/panelling and is attached to the 18C wainscot), the seating is not free-standing and is not of national or (notable) local interest. While the retention of the 18C wainscot and the removal of the benches has potential to facilitate alternative use, the impact of the removal of 19C seating might be partly mitigated by the relocation of the benches or the re-use of materials.
- In the case of the 20C choir seating, as it is free standing and not of national or (notable) local interest, the impact of its removal could be mitigated by relocation within the church or elsewhere.

5 Provisional conclusion

The church, which is a Grade II* listed building of moderate to high value as a heritage asset, has little scope for change without moderate to high impacts for which there is little scope for mitigation.

Statutory Advisory Committee, Church House, February 2009

Table 4

FOR OFFICE USE					
Elements →	Church	Contents	Churchyard	Landscape/ town- scape	Overall High – Moderate – Low
Aspects ↓					
Statutory and non- statutory designa- tions/ planning con- siderations	High	High	High	High	High
Historic interest	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Archaeological in- terest/sensitivity	High	High	High	Moderate to High	High
Architectural / aes- thetic quality	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High
Overall High-moderate-low	High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High	Moderate to High