

BALDOCK ST MARYS CHURCH HALL

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Purpose

The purpose of this statement is to support the application for planning permission and Faculty.

The church hall is an ancillary building but in the curtilage of Church of St Mary, Baldock which is a Listed Building Grade I – see later.

The church hall was constructed circa 1984 and is traditionally constructed with a tiled roof, brickwork and a feature entrance porch together with tall slim windows to the front and left side only.

The church hall is set back from the church and close to the external churchyard wall and is surrounded by gravestones.

The church hall is adjacent to several yew trees and conifers.

The Church of St Mary and the church hall are in a prominent town centre location with associated church yard, gravestones and memorials but with limited vehicle parking.

The church and its spire are visible from open countryside outside of Baldock however, the church hall being located to the rear of the church is not visible from either a distance or close-up. It is only evident within the church grounds.

This statement of significance relates to the church hall only and not to the church itself, as the works required relate to extension and alteration of the church hall only.

The proposed works involve replacement of the existing entrance screen, the provision of an extended single storey toilet block, the provision of solar panels and air source heat pumps, also improved disabled parking and access, as well as high-level rooflights to the church hall, replacement windows (west) and altered foul drainage provision to allow removal of an ineffective macerator unit.

Designation Records for the Heritage Asset

The church hall is a curtilage listed building. The hall is situated within the churchyard and is prominent only from within the churchyard.

The hall itself has limited architectural merit or features although it does provide an essential kitchen and WC facilities for ambulant and disabled users.

Planning History

81/01668/1 – Erection of church hall

12/02460/1 – Erection of single storey disabled WC facility

24/02215/FP – Removal and replacement of existing leaded dormer structures and windows

The current building was constructed circa 1984 and was subject to Planning Consent which was obtained from North Herts District Council and almost certainly the subject of a faculty from the Diocese of St Albans.

There is but little evidence of the negotiations or processes for design considerations which were considered at the time of construction but no doubt because of its location, considerable consultation was carried out.

Archaeological Interest

At the time of construction there must have been archaeological interest in the site and almost certainly archaeological investigations were made prior to and during its construction and possibly some former graves must have been removed or relocated. It may be necessary to carryout additional surveying to facilitate erection of the proposed WC extension and associated drainage provision.

It will almost certainly be necessary to carryout archaeological investigation to obtain a diocese of St Albans Faculty.

Understanding the Form and History of the Heritage Asset

Again, I would reiterate that the church hall is an independent building and although relates to the historic church it is completely independent within the churchyard.

There was no phased development, and the church hall was constructed as one entity.

Assessing the Significance of the Heritage Asset

As detailed above, the church hall is not in itself significant however it does relate to the heritage asset in social terms.

Architectural and Artistic Interest

The church hall is a product of its time but does present relatively pleasant elevations and materials. The building has no particular architectural nor does it contain artistic elements.

An extension was undertaken in 2012 to provide accessible toilet facilities.

The proposed extension echoes the forms and materials of the 2012 WC extension and is therefore in-keeping with the extant aesthetic to ensure vernacular progression.

Achieving net zero and accessibility

Proposals take in account to an approach to meeting the net zero policies of the Church of England and to provide inclusive facilities.

Historic Interest

There is little historic interest in the church hall.

Contribution to the Significance of the Site

The church hall does not contribute to the significance of the site but does provide an important facility for the church and wider community.

Impact of Significance

The church hall was constructed in 1984 and has therefore become part of the churchyard and adjacent to the significant historic asset of the church.

Listing

I set down below the listing for information.

Location

Statutory Address:

CHURCH OF SAINT MARY, CHURCH STREET

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Hertfordshire

District: North Herts District Council

County: Hertfordshire

Parish: Civil Parish

National Grid Reference: TL 24396 33905

Details

838/1/31 CHURCH STREET 08-NOV-49 (Southwest side) CHURCH OF SAINT MARY
(Formerly listed as: HITCHIN STREET CHURCH OF SAINT MARY)

GV I

Revision Number: 2

CHURCH STREET 1. 5255 (South West Side) Church of Saint Mary (Formerly listed under Hitchin Street) TL 2433 NW 1/31 8.11.49. GV 2. C13 east end of chancel, C14 west end. C14 nave, aisles, north and south chapels, west tower and 2 storey south porch with C15 turret. C15 windows and nave clerestory. North porch added 1836. C19 spire. C13 double piscina in chancel, south chapel C14 piscina and double sedilia. C15 north chapel brasses and restored screen to chapels and chancel. Octagonal C13 font. Fine C18 and C19 marble wall tablets including Caldecott memorial with carved figures, 1846 by E H Baily. North aisle window 1881 by C E Kempe. RCHM pp 44-45; VCH PP 69-71. [The Church of Saint {Mary.} Churchyard Wall of Saint {Mary's} and {Yos} {I} to] 13 (odd) form a group.

Pevsner Description

The Buildings of England - Hertfordshire

A roomy church, architecturally in several points the sister of Ashwell, a few miles away. Big broad w tower of the early C14 with Dec windows, and on the embattled parapet a small octagonal lantern crowned by a Herts spike.

The body of the church also embattled, mostly of flint. But the lower part of the chancel is of stone. Here traces can be found of C13 windows and a DOUBLE PISCINA with a C13 shaft.

The s porch is two-storeyed with a turret in the NW angle and an outer doorway of the early C14. The other windows are Perp. The interior is in its appearance almost completely C14: tower arch, arcades of six bays, chancel arcades of two bays, SEDILIA and PISCINA in the s chapel with nodding ogee arches. The piers are quatrefoil with additional thin shafts (without capitals) in the diagonals (just as at Ashwell), typical moulded capitals (on the s side slightly more finely detailed than on the N), and double-chamfered arches.

Good contemporary head corbels for the outer labels. C15 clerestory roofs (on head corbels). The aisles are wide and on the low side. The church is generally board and roomy: a wealthy town church.

FONT. Octagonal, on five shafts; C13

SCREENS. A complete C15 set across aisles and chancel arch, the rood screen, of course, more ornate than the others, but all three relatively elementary in their tracery.

STAINED GLASS. W window 1849, looks as if it might be by Wailes; E window similar; N aisle Simpson Window 1881, a typical early Kempe; S aisle second from E by Clayton & Bell c.1875.

PLATE. Chalice and Paten 1629.

MONUMENTS. C13 Purbeck marble coffin-lid with cross (N Chapel).

Brasses to a woman c.1410; to a man with hunting horn, c. 1420; to a man and woman, later C15, larger figures (N chapel); to a man and woman, shrouded, c.1480, c. 3ft long (N chapel). Georgiana Caldecott 1846, by Baily. She lies on a couch mourned by a kneeling young woman, while and angel in the background of the relief carries her soul up to heaven. Many minor epitaphs (e.g. by Gaffin).

Nature of Proposal

As detailed above the nature of the proposal is to provide enhanced accessible toilet facilities, upgrading of existing windows and doors to more energy efficient units, to improve natural lighting and ventilation and to ensure a sustainable means of power and heating in the future.

Avoiding Harmful Impact

The proposal does not impact the adjacent listed building (church), seeking to improve the facilities for those with access issues and to update mechanical services - to assist in achieving net zero.

Recording

It is not considered unnecessary to formally record the alterations proposed to the church hall, other than to update the church and diocesan archives. The local Planning authority will automatically retain a record of the changes sanctioned for its own records.

Values**Evidential Value**

As detailed above the church hall was constructed in 1984 and its value is evidenced by its use.

Historic Value

The church hall is considered to have little historic value although it is a curtilage building. It has now been in place for some 36 years and will continue to provide an amenity for the church and wider local community.

Aesthetic Value

The building is a product of its time with its architectural style considered to be satisfactory. The use of manmade clay tiles and facing bricks provides an aesthetically appropriate appearance within the setting.

Communal Value

The church hall is not only used by the church and its congregation but is available for hire for use by the community. It is also used as a local food bank service.

Unfortunately, the church and the church hall are not provided with a car park although there is car parking available in the streets externally.

Footpaths cross the churchyard and the building is quite prominent within the churchyard itself.

With the proposed upgrading and improvement, it is hoped that the church hall will continue provide an attractive facility for both the church and community.

Statement of Need

The new toilet extension is proposed to provide facilities for the young and old alike as well as new baby change areas - all located at ground floor level. These additions are ultimately proposed to replace the extant basement located facilities which are currently difficult to access.

Internal alterations, which do not require Planning approval, are intended to improve facilities of the performing arts and entertainment purposes.

The removal and replacement of dormer structures and external windows and doors in combination with solar PV panels and air source heat pump installations are intended to reduce running costs through enhanced energy efficiency.

