

ST ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH

DONHEAD ST ANDREW

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

(revised 28th April 2016)

BACKGROUND

The Parish of Donhead St Andrew

The village of Donhead St Andrew, Wiltshire, lies some 4 miles east of Shaftesbury; it consists of just over 200 houses with approximately 400 residents. The Church of St Andrew is the only church and the only public building in the village; there is no church or village hall. From 1955 until 1979 the ecclesiastical parish was joined with Berwick St John.

In 1982, after an interregnum of 3 years, the Benefice of The Donheads was formed, joining Donhead St Andrew with the Parish of Donhead St Mary with Charlton. This Benefice existed until 2008, when the Benefice of St Bartholomew was established, joining the Donheads with the Parishes of East Knoyle, Semley and Sedgehill. At that time, the previous he Rector of the Donheads moved to another parish in the West Country and the Rectory in Donhead St Andrew was let commercially for 4 years by the Diocese of Salisbury. In 2012 it once again became a clergy house, for the Assistant Curate of the Benefice of St Bartholomew.

The Clergy

The Benefice of St Bartholomew is led by the Rector who lives in the Rectory in Semley; he is assisted in his ministry by retired priests and by lay people in various roles, offering the chalice at Holy Communion and leading non-Eucharistic worship. At present, the Benefice does not have an Assistant Curate. The Benefice employs a part time administrator.

Parish Administration

The Parish is overseen by the Parochial Church Council, chaired by the Rector. Its sub-committees include the Development Committee, the Friends of St Andrew's Church and the Family Service Working Group.

Pattern of Worship

St Andrew's Parish Church offers services on the first four Sundays of every month:

- First Sunday of the month - 8.30 am - said Communion Service using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer

- Second Sunday of the month - 9.30 am - non-Eucharistic Family Service with hymns, readings and a talk, led by a lay team; coffee and chat afterwards
- Third Sunday of the month - 9.45 am - Family Eucharist using Common Worship in a service leaflet with the liturgy on the right-hand page and explanatory text on the left-hand page, with a sung congregational setting by David Thorne and hymns; coffee and chat afterwards
- Fourth Sunday of the month - 11.00 am - Choral Matins using the 1662 Book of Common Prayer with sermon; hymns, psalms with Anglican chants & and pointing and Preces & Responses sung by the congregation
- when there is a fifth Sunday in the month, each church in the Benefice in rotation hosts a Benefice Eucharist.

St Andrew's Church uses the new English Hymnal.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

St Andrew's Church is listed Grade II*.

The First Millennium

There has been a church on the site of Donhead St Andrew Church for at least a thousand years. It is thought that the first church may have been built soon after the founding of Shaftesbury Abbey by King Alfred in about 875 AD, when much of the land in the village was endowed by the King to the Abbey. The only Saxon work known to remain in the church is part of the narrow arch leading from the Chancel to the Vestry; in Saxon times this arch was possibly an entrance into a North Chancel or a side chapel. One small piece of mediaeval glass survives at the very top of the East Window; it depicts the arms of Shaftesbury Abbey.

The Second Millennium

It is evident that the Church underwent generations of alteration and re-building as the needs of worship, the availability of funding and the fashions of the times had their effects over the centuries.

The following text covers some significant features inside the Church, starting at the tower and moving towards the altar.

When the tower was re-built in 1895, fragments of mediaeval carving were incorporated into the inside walls; these include a ferocious-looking head which may be of the Viking period. There are four bells in the tower, one of them of mid-15th century date with an inscription: "Sancta Katerina, ora pro nobis" ("Saint Katherine, pray for us"). The two Nave arcades are

of the 14th century, the North arcade being the later of the two, as shown by the more elaborate bases to the shafts. At the time when the South arcade was built, pews were still not the general convention, the congregation standing or sitting on the rush-strewn floor. An unusual feature, thought to be unique in England, is the face of Christ, supporting the springing of the arch at the west end, with the brow lined with sorrow and the eyes gazing wistfully towards the altar. An attractive feature of the Church is the series of mediaeval carved angels high up on either side of the Nave, some of them shown with musical instruments such as the lute. Just to the north of the Chancel entrance a blocked-up archway hides a flight of stone steps, which in mediaeval times will have led up onto a Rood Screen or Rood Loft reaching across the Chancel entrance; from where choristers would sing a part of the Mass - the Gradual - between the Epistle and the Gospel.

The Chancel was taken down and re-built in 1833. Most of the stained glass windows in it were given by the family of the Reverend William Dansey, Rector from 1820 to 1855.

The following series of photographs and their accompanying commentaries show the Church as it stood in 1804; they help to illustrate the major external changes of the nineteenth century, which are also reflected internally.

1804

The following two photographs are from the collection of paintings of every church in Wiltshire executed by John Buckler to a commission by Sir Richard Colt-Hoare of Stourhead.



Most of what is seen of the Church in this painting is late mediaeval; this view of the south and west elevations show that the Church had a south transept and attached

porch; the porch and tower were battlemented. The windows seen above the porch may have been in a chamber above the south aisle.



The view of the north and east elevations show that the Church has a north aisle rather than a transept. The windows on the north wall of the Chancel had been blocked to avoid window tax. Part of the Rectory can be seen to the right beyond the tower.

The end of the Georgian era and the start of the Victorian era saw major changes, starting with the re-building of the south aisle in around 1826 and finishing with the re-building of the tower in 1895. These changes are described in the following paragraphs.

The Victorian era



1837

The chancel was taken down and re-built in circa 1833. The tower then had eight pinnacles and a clock on the south face. The south transept and attached porch have been replaced with a south aisle and smaller porch. The Nave roof and south aisle parapets both have battlements. The south aisle stretches the length of the Nave.



1850.

The Nave roof has now been lengthened and the Chancel and north aisle parapets both have battlements, whereas the Nave roof does not. The original Church School, built by the Reverend William Dansey, Rector from 1820 to 1855, can be seen in the churchyard to the east of the Church.

1870s

By a Faculty of 1875, the Church underwent its most recent major re-ordering: what was described as “an unsightly gallery” at the west end of the Nave was removed; the pews seats and fittings were said to be “in a state of general decay” and “inconveniently arranged”, and all of the “paving, floors pews, seats and pulpit” were removed and replaced. The then-new pine pews on raised wooden platforms provided a total of 300 seats for a growing population.

1895

The tower was re-built in 1895 without a clock.

1920s

In the 1920s electric light and central heating were installed; apart from conversion from a solid fuel boiler to an oil-fired one, they remain largely unchanged to this today.

1930s

The organ and re-worked choir stalls were moved from the Chancel to the north aisle in the 1930s.

1960s

By the 1960s the tower pinnacles had become unsafe and had to be taken down.

At some stage a door in the north aisle wall was removed.

The Church was listed Grade II* in 1966.

The Third Millennium

To mark the beginning of the third Millennium, a new west window was designed by Andrew Taylor, a Wiltshire designer, and installed in the tower. Its subject is “Pentecost and the Holy Spirit”. It provides a dramatic flash of colour above the unused west door of the Church.

St Andrew's Parish Church in 2012



The 19th century extension of the Nave roof over the chancel is clearly shown by the different stonework between the buttresses on either side of the tall Chancel window.



The brick-built boiler house and flue are seen in the corner between the Vestry and north aisle.

It is partly on the footprint of this boiler-house that the new extension will be built, reaching a further 2.5 metres into the Churchyard.

Additional Information

1. Asbestos has been discovered in the 1920s boiler house and in the heating pipework under the raised wooden platforms on which the pews sit. The areas of asbestos have been professionally inspected. A plan and costing for a specialist company to remove all the asbestos once the church closes for the Development Project has been incorporated into the Project budget and timetable.
2. There has been a mention of the site of an Aumbry in the current Priest's Vestry in correspondence with one of the national bodies with an interest in ancient church buildings. This space is to the right as one enters the Vestry from the Chancel. In its current appearance, a wall safe is cemented into the low-set opening with small curved pieces of carved stone let into the stonework above. Late nineteenth-century drawings of the church show a chimney stack rising above the roof of the Vestry in exactly the position of the so-called 'aumbry'. The provision of a fireplace was presumably to provide some warmth in the Vestry. The chimney stack has now gone but the chimney remains within the Vestry. One of the former Church Wardens recalls that, in his youth, this was an open fireplace into which the wall safe was subsequently placed. No one can throw any light on the pieces of carved stone. It could well be that the pieces are fragments of the mediaeval

church, incorporated, possibly, in the 1870s, into the new and rebuilt fabric of the church. These early fragments can be seen elsewhere, particularly in one of the Tower walls.