

**DIOCESE OF CHELMSFORD**

**DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE**



**STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE  
AND NEEDS**

**GUIDELINES TO ASSIST PARISHES**

**Revised April 2015**



# **STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE AND NEEDS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** The Faculty Jurisdiction Rules 2013 state that ‘where significant changes to a listed church are proposed’ the applicant for a faculty (usually the parish) should provide the DAC with a Statement of Significance and a Statement of Needs.
- 1.2** The Statement of Significance is defined 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’.
- 1.3** The Statement of Needs is defined as ‘a document which sets out the reasons why it is considered that the needs of the parish cannot be met without making changes to the church building and the reasons why the changes are regarded as necessary to assist the church in its worship and mission’.
- 1.4** The Statement of Significance and the Statement of Needs are two separate documents, one balancing the other.
- 1.5** Although Statements of Significance and Needs are required by the DAC, they will also be of assistance to Historic England, the Church Buildings Council, the national amenity societies, local authority, and other interested parties who may need to be consulted; and also to any charities or other grant-making bodies who might be approached for funding. Decisions may be made by people who are unable to visit the church in person, and all the information they will have will be what is contained in the Statements. It is therefore essential that

they are well researched, and written clearly and concisely in terms that are not emotive or over-dramatic.

- 1.6** This advisory note seeks to assist parishes in preparing these Statements by setting out guidelines and explaining where the necessary information can be found. More detailed guidance, which includes examples of Statements of Significance, has been produced by the Church Buildings Council (2002, revised 2007 & 2013) and can be downloaded from [www.churchcare.co.uk/legal.php](http://www.churchcare.co.uk/legal.php)

## **STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

- 2.1** The Statement of Significance provides information about the church building and explains its historical and architectural importance to its users and the wider community. It should, for the most part, be written in general terms, dealing with the building as a whole, and will serve future applications involving significant changes. It may, however, be necessary to add a section outlining the significance of parts or features of the church that would be affected by a particular proposal.
- 2.2** The Statement of Significance should be in text rather than tabular form, and should be written in a readable style. It is unlikely to be less than one page of A4, nor more than three pages. It should include a ground plan and at least two photographs, normally one of the exterior and one of the interior. More photographs, plans, and other important information can be included if necessary as annexes, particularly to illustrate the part of the church which is to be considered.
- 2.3** The Statement of Significance should summarise the historic development and importance of the building and its setting. It should draw attention to both the

architectural and historical importance of the building and its contents, as well as to significant events and people associated with it.

- 2.4** Appendix A gives a list of possible headings for the Statement of Significance, but the list is not exhaustive and is not intended to be prescriptive.
- 2.5** Principal sources of information are given in Appendix B. Not every church will necessarily be included in all the works listed; these are starting points, which will need to be supplemented by local knowledge and observation. There may be a local historian who could assist with assembling parts of this document. The church's own guidebook, if there is one, may well serve as the basis for the Statement of Significance. Quotations from guidebooks can be helpful. The guidebook must be acknowledged.
- 2.6** The Statement of Significance should include the most recent as well as the most ancient features of the church. Some old guidebooks dismiss Victorian stained glass, or fittings introduced in the twentieth century, as being 'modern' and of no interest. Many high-quality furnishings and fittings have been introduced into churches in the last two hundred years, and may in fact be of more interest than older work.
- 2.7** It should not be assumed, because a particular feature of the church is not mentioned in any of the standard works of reference, that it is not significant. It might have been overlooked, or might not fall within a particular book's criteria for inclusion, or might simply have been omitted for lack of space. The Statement of Significance is an opportunity for the parish to make up for the shortcomings of existing accounts of their church, and to

express pride in what makes the church special for its users and visitors.

- 2.8** Statements of Significance are required in the case of listed buildings, which means by definition that the church is of 'special architectural or historic interest' in national terms. It is important also, however, to draw attention to the significance of the church in local terms as well, and to point out what it can tell the visitor about the history of the community it serves. Monuments, or items such as stained glass or furnishings given as memorials, may be examples of objects that have local significance, but which may well not be mentioned in books that deal only with matters thought to be of national importance.
- 2.9** Less tangible aspects of the church may also be significant and worth mentioning: a well-kept churchyard, or a clean and bright interior with whitewashed walls and clear glass in the windows, or an atmospheric interior with stained glass, dark woodwork, and gleaming brass. The location of the church may also be significant: e.g. in the heart of the village, on a hill-top, a landmark for shipping, on the site of a Roman villa.
- 2.10** The Statement of Significance will need to be updated from time to time to include changes to the building and the introduction of new furnishings and fittings, and to take account the result of new research into the building and its history and any new discoveries such as wall paintings or archaeological remains.

## **STATEMENT OF NEEDS**

- 3.1** The Statement of Needs is a crucial document. Buildings are listed in order to preserve them, and the presumption is that, once listed, they may only be altered if good

reasons are put forward for doing so. The Statement of Needs sets out those reasons.

- 3.2** Unlike the Statement of Significance, the Statement of Needs will be specially written for each faculty application. It is not a general wish-list, nor is it a list of items requiring routine maintenance. All information and data has to be factual and realistic, and future proposals should be supported by constructive arguments related to settlement and/or community changes.
- 3.3** The Statement of Needs may include a wide variety of reasons for wishing to make changes. Over the centuries churches have always been adapted to suit the changing needs of their users, and the present day is no exception. Current concerns include providing better access for the disabled; providing toilet and catering facilities; improving heating and lighting, and providing audiovisual aids; reordering to enable greater flexibility in the conduct of services (e.g. by removing fixed seating, or relocating the font); and the desire to make greater use of the church between services, for meetings, pre-school groups, etc.
- 3.4** Having stated the needs of the parish, it is necessary to explain how the proposed changes will meet those needs and, in particular, to demonstrate that all options have been considered and that the needs could not be met by less intrusive changes. For example, it will be necessary to justify the size of a proposed meeting room (how many people will be using it at any one time, and for what purpose?), and to demonstrate that an extension is needed rather than, say, partitioning off a section of the existing church. If there are other community facilities in the parish, such as a village hall, the creation of an additional facility will have to be justified.

- 3.5** Needs should be quantified wherever possible: size of regular congregation, size of congregation on special occasions (baptisms, weddings, funerals, Easter, Harvest Festival, Remembrance Sunday, Christmas), specific groups needing meeting space (e.g. youth organisations, the elderly, general community purposes, etc.).
- 3.6** The Statement of Needs should specifically justify changes to any individual features of the church mentioned in the Statement of Significance.
- 3.7** The Statement of Needs must be agreed by the Parochial Church Council.

## **POLICY**

When considering faculty applications for significant changes to a listed church, the DAC will not consider those that are not accompanied by Statements of Significance and Needs which follow the guidelines set out in this document.



## **APPENDIX A**

### **CHECKLIST (NOT EXHAUSTIVE) FOR COMPILING STATEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Name of church (dedication) with parish/benefice and diocese  
Address, including postcode  
Six-figure National Grid reference

Listing grade (including any separately listed structures in churchyard) and name of local authority; conservation area if applicable

Archaeological significance of site: Scheduled Monument, Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)?

Location and setting, including churchyard (gravestones and other monuments, lychgate, flora and fauna (Tree Preservation Orders?)); state whether churchyard is closed or open; is it crossed by public rights of way?)

Historic and present use by the congregation and the wider community (e.g. frequency of services, other uses)

Building history (include architects, artists, etc.)

General description of the building as it can be seen today, assessing the significance of the whole and its constituent parts (tower, nave aisles, chancel, porch, vestry, etc); with ground plan, dimensions, and details of building materials

Furnishings and fittings, e.g.

Altar

Reredos

Communion rails

Choir stalls

Rood screen

Pulpit  
Lectern  
Nave seating (benches, pews)  
Font  
Stained glass  
Paintings (including wall paintings)  
Sculpture (free-standing, or part of structure e.g. capitals of columns)  
Monuments, including war memorials  
Bells and bell-frames  
Organ and/or other musical instruments  
Communion and other plate (whether at church or stored elsewhere)  
Flooring (e.g. pammets, encaustic tiles)  
Roof or ceiling (e.g. with carved figures or painted decoration)  
Registers (whether at church or county record office)

Significant events or personalities associated with the church

Date of the compilation of the Statement (and dates of subsequent revisions).

## **APPENDIX B: SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

The Essex Record Office (ERO), Chelmsford ([www.essexcc.gov.uk/ero](http://www.essexcc.gov.uk/ero); online catalogue <http://seax.essexcc.gov.uk>) will contain all the material mentioned below, much of which can also be found in local public libraries. The ERO also houses diocesan and many parish records, including faculties and other documents that record changes to church buildings and their contents since the nineteenth century, and has a good collection of parish histories and church guides. Older church guides may contain information dropped from more recent editions and should be consulted. They may have to be treated with a little caution: they may be dismissive of 'modern' work.

### ***General information on the church building:***

Listed Building description: should be filed with other documents relating to the church, or may be included in the Quinquennial Report; available also from Historic England or online at [www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk). Will provide a basic architectural description of the church and some of its contents; depending on when the building was listed, may only be very brief

Essex Historic Environment Record will also have information about the history of the church building, including photographs: see <http://unlockingessex.essexcc.gov.uk>

Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England): Essex (4 vols, 1916-23). Provides a detailed description of all medieval parish churches and their furnishings and fittings, with a plan given for most churches, and some photographs. Cut-off date 1700, later extended to 1714, so rarely mentions work after that date

*A Guide to Essex Churches*, edited by Christopher Starr (1980). A thematic guide, with historical summaries and chapters on brasses, monuments, hatchments, royal arms, wall paintings, graffiti, bells, and organs

*A Select Guide to Essex Churches and Chapels* by Members of the Friends of Essex Churches (1996). A useful guide to the more significant churches, drawing attention to their important features

*Pevsner Architectural Guides: Essex* (3rd edn, 2007) and *London 5: East* (2005), the latter covering those parts of the Diocese of Chelmsford now in Greater London. The standard work of reference for buildings of architectural interest, of all periods. Includes information on significant furnishings and fittings, but not organs or bells

*Church Carpentry: a study based on Essex examples* by Cecil A. Hewett (1982). For detailed information on timber roofs, porches, spires and belfries, and doors; includes a gazetteer of parishes in Essex

*A History of the County of Essex* (Victoria County History) (1903 to present). An on-going, detailed history of each parish in the county, but far from complete; see [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/Counties/Essex/home](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/Counties/Essex/home)

*Historic Churches: a wasting asset* by Warwick & Kirsty Rodwell (CBA Research Report No 19, 1977) is based on churches in the diocese of Chelmsford and includes a general gazetteer as well as some detailed case studies

*Information on furnishings and fittings:*

NADFAS Church Recorders have compiled inventories of the furnishings and fittings of over 100 churches in the Diocese of Chelmsford. The individual churches have copies of these

inventories, which are also lodged with the Essex Record Office, the National Monuments Record, Swindon, and the Church Buildings Council. See [www.nadfas.org.uk](http://www.nadfas.org.uk)

The DAC has specialist advisers who can be consulted (through the DAC secretary) for information on the following:

- Archaeology
- Bells
- Books and manuscripts
- Brasses
- Churchyard conservation
- Clocks
- Furnishings
- Heating
- Organs
- Silver
- Stained glass
- Trees

See also:

*The Church Chests of Essex* by H.W. Lewer & J.C. Wall (1913)  
*The Church Plate of the County of Essex* by G.M. Benton et al. (1926)  
*Essex Fonts and Font Covers* by W.N. Paul (1986)  
*The Monumental Brasses of Essex* (Monumental Brass Society, 2003)  
United Kingdom National Inventory of War Memorials ([www.ukniwm.org.uk](http://www.ukniwm.org.uk))  
Church Plans Online (<http://www.churchplansonline.org>)

**Useful addresses:**

Church Buildings Council: Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ; Tel No: 020 7898 1863  
<http://www.churchcare.co.uk/churches/church-buildings-council>

Historic England, East of England Region: Brooklands, 24 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BU; Tel No: 01223 582749

<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk>

Historic England, London Region: 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST; Tel No: 0207 9733000

<http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk>

Essex County Council: County Hall, Chelmsford CMI 1QH, Tel No: 0845 743 0430

<http://www.essex.gov.uk>

Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS): Historic England, 1 Waterhouse Square, 138-142 Holborn, London EC1N 2ST; Tel No: 0207 9733000

<http://www.HistoricEngland.org.uk>

Natural England, East of England Region: **Cambridge**

Natural England, Eastbrook, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8DR; Tel No: 0300 060 3787

[http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east\\_of\\_england/](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/east_of_england/)

Ancient Monuments Society: St Ann's Vestry Hall, 2 Church Entry, London EC4V 5HB; Tel No: 0207 2363934

<http://home.btconnect.com/ancientmonuments/>

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) (mainly pre-1700): 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY; Tel No: 0207 377 1644

<http://www.spab.org.uk/>

The Georgian Group (for the period 1700-1837): 6 Fitzroy Square, London W1T 5DX; Tel No: 087 1750 2936

<http://www.georgiangroup.org.uk>

The Victorian Society (for the period 1837-1914): 1 Priory Gardens, London W4 1TT; Tel No: 0208 9941019

<http://www.victoriansociety.org.uk/>

The Twentieth Century Society (1914 onwards): 70 Cowcross Street, London EC1M 6EJ; Tel No: 0207 2503857

<http://www.c20society.org.uk/>

# EXAMPLE

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### ST PETER'S CHURCH, GREAT TOTHAM Diocese of Chelmsford

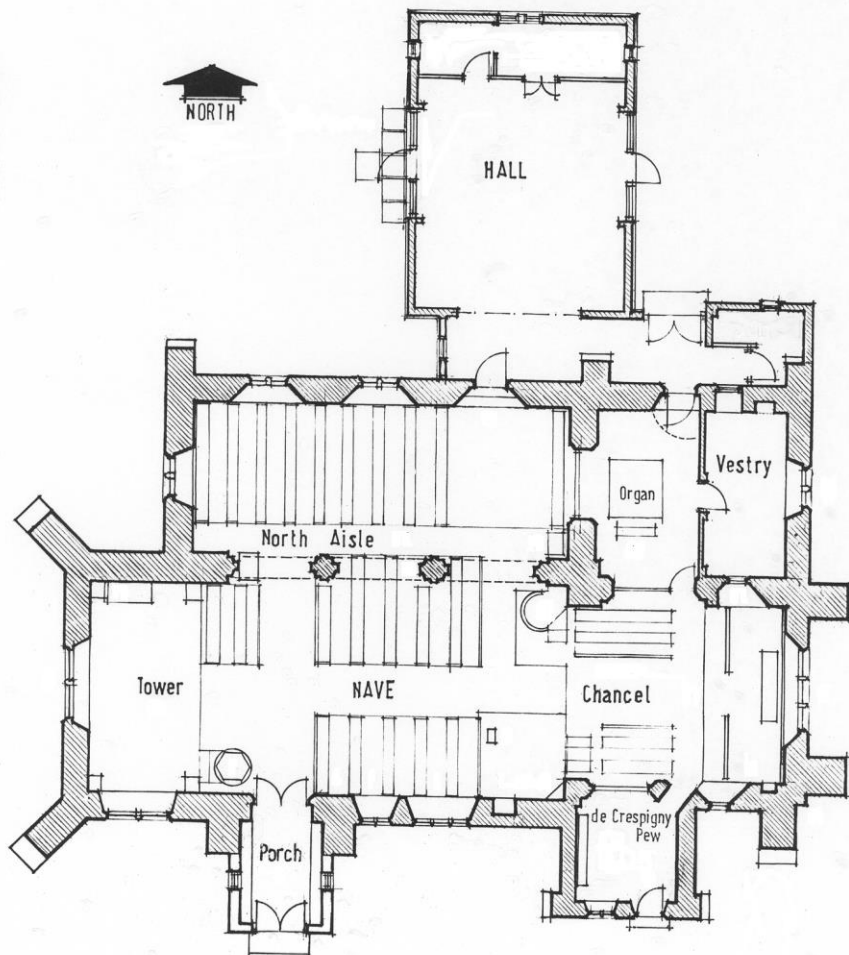
Church Road, Great Totham, Maldon, Essex CM9 8NP  
TL 884 104

Listed Grade II\*



*Exterior of the church from the south-east*

St Peter's is a rural church, surrounded by fields. Its churchyard has long been considered especially attractive – Revd Ernest Geldart, rector of neighbouring Little Braxted, wrote in his diary in 1881 that he 'walked across to Gt Totham to see the wonderful churchyard' – and is well looked after. Partly for this reason it is very popular for weddings. On the south side is a stream, across which is an extension to the churchyard; on the north side is the moat of Great Totham Hall, and on the east the Old Vicarage, both listed Grade II. The churchyard contains five separately listed Grade II monuments (some of cast iron), as well as a wooden grave marker designed by the architect A.H. Mackmurdo to his wife Eliza (died 1941), who both lived in the village. The lychgate was built in 1938.



620/93.

*Plan of the church, from the 1993 Guide*

There has been a church on the site since at least 1186, but the oldest part of the present building dates from the 13th century. The south wall of the nave and the base of the west tower are 14th century, and much of the timberwork of the nave and chancel roofs belongs to the 15th century. Most of the church is built of a typical Essex mix of flint rubble, puddingstone, and freestone. The north aisle was added in 1878-9 to designs by Joseph Clarke, who also carried out a general restoration. This included rebuilding the south porch and much of the tower, which has a timber-framed and shingled belfry and spire. In 1881-5 the organ chamber and vestry were added on the north side of the chancel, as well as a small extension on the south side to accommodate a private pew for the De Crespigny family; this work was designed by Revd Ernest Geldart, who also practised as an architect. On the east wall of the vestry is a niche with a statue of St Peter. The large extension on the north side of the church, comprising a hall with toilet and kitchen facilities, was added in 1990, designed by Carden & Godfrey.





*Interior, looking east*

The church retains the benches and choir stalls introduced during the restoration of 1878-9, which is also the date of the font and pulpit. The chancel was restored and decorated in 1973 by the architect William D. Key in memory of his wife, and the reredos was installed in 1949. There is one brass, 1606, and in the south extension a number of monuments to the De Crespigny family, who moved to the village in the nineteenth century. The east window, designed by Geldart and made by Cox, Sons, Buckley & Co., commemorates the mother of Revd H.T.W. Eyre, the vicar who was responsible for the restoration; she is depicted as the 'virtuous woman' of Proverbs 31. In the north extension is a window by Rowland and Surinder Warboys, 1995. An unusual feature of the church is a large ornate clock at the entrance to the chancel, designed by Geldart and installed in 1884.

The church has a ring of six bells cast by John Warner & Sons in 1878, reusing two pre-Reformation bells. H.T.W. Eyre was a keen campanologist, and ever since there has been a strong tradition of bell-ringing at the church, which is frequently visited by ringers from other churches.

The church is well used. There are three Sunday services and a mid-week 'parent and toddler' service. The extension is used during the week by Rainbows and a Lunch Club, as well as for special events such as the annual Harvest Lunch and children's parties.

*Bibliography:*

- Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), *Essex*, III (1922)  
Bettley, J., *A Guide to the Parish Church of St Peter Great Totham* (1993, rev. 1999)  
Bettley, J. & Pevsner, N., *Essex* (2007)  
Listed Buildings Online ([www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk))  
Faculties etc in Essex Record Office, Chelmsford

Compiled February 2009

This is one of a series of guidelines published by the  
Diocesan Advisory Committee.  
Copies can be downloaded from the Diocesan website: -  
[www.chelmsford.anglican.org/parishes/dac\\_notes](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/parishes/dac_notes)  
**or can be obtained from the**  
DAC Secretary at the address below.

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