

# Statement of Significance

## Basic Facts

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|---|--|
| <b>Parish</b>   | St John's with St Mary's   |
| <b>Dedication</b>   | St Mary  |
| <b>Benefice</b>   | Devizes St John with St Mary   |
| <b>Diocese</b>  | Salisbury  |
| <b>Address</b>  | New Park Street, Devizes SN10 1DS  |
| <b>Grid Ref</b>   | 400557 161585 SU 005 615   |
| <b>Local Planning Authority</b>   | Wiltshire Council  |
| <b>County</b>   | Wiltshire  |
| <b>Statutory Listing of church</b>  | LB_Ref 003A/160 Grade 1 HBR_Ref 022/301  |
| <b>Statutory designation for structures and objects within the churchyard</b> | LB_Ref 003A/160A Grade II HBR_Ref 022/300<br>Gates and Railing at St Mary's Church<br>LB_Ref 003A/160B Grade II HBR_Ref 022/303<br>Main Entrance Gates to St Mary's Church |
| <b>Conservation Area</b>  | Church lies in a Conservation Area   |
| <b>Scheduled Monument</b>   |  |
| <b>Protected Species</b>  |  |
| <b>Tree Preservation Orders</b>   | Group TPO exist. None for individual trees   |
| <b>County Wildlife Site (or SSSI)</b>   | Churchyard is not designated a Local Nature Reserve  |
| <b>Any other designations</b>   |  |

**STANDARD INFORMATION FORM (Form 1A)**

- for completion by parish churches etc., to accompany application to DAC for *Notification of Advice*

**DIOCESE OF SALISBURY**

Church of (dedication): St Mary

In the parish of: St John with St Mary

Approximate date of church: 1120 to 1135

Is the church Listed? Yes

If so, please state whether it is grade I, II\* or II: grade 1

Is the church, churchyard or any adjoining structure wholly or partly scheduled as an ancient monument?

No

Is the church, churchyard or any adjoining structure in a conservation area? Yes

If it is, please state which: Devizes Conservation Area

Is the church, churchyard or any adjoining structure in a national park? No

If it is, please state which: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Is there any evidence that bats use the church, its curtilage or any adjoining structure? Yes

Please give details of any privately owned chapels, aisles or windows:

None

Name of lay rector, if known: Canon Paul Richardson

Is the churchyard or burial ground consecrated? yes

Has it been used for burials? Yes

Is it still used for burials? No

Is the churchyard or burial ground still used for burials? No

If the churchyard or burial ground is no longer used for burials has it been closed by Order in Council?

yes

If it has, please give the date of the Order: 1878

Are there any graves that are identified as war graves by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission?

No

Please list any historic structures, listed tombs, war memorials or significant trees in the churchyard or burial ground: There is what is thought to be a dole table to the south of the church. There are no listed tombs, war memorials or significant trees in the churchyard

Please give the name and address of the architect or surveyor appointed for the church inspection under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955: George Chedburn; Chedburn Codd Conservation Architects; Glove Factor Studios; 1 Brook Lane; Holt; Wiltshire BA14 6RL

Signed/date/position held: [Click here to enter text.](#)

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# 1 The setting of the church

## 1.1 *Devizes town*

The town of Devizes lies in the middle of the county, its name recalling the fact that it was built on the boundary of the Bishop of Salisbury's estates of Potterne (to the south) and Bishops Cannings (to the north-east). The town grew out of the castle, begun in c.1100 and built on the usual plan of a motte and bailey, surrounded by four concentric defensive ditches which have shaped the street pattern of the town centre down to the present - a half-moon plan lying to the east of, and centred on, the castle mound. There are three churches of medieval foundation: St John's stood within the bailey, St Mary's was built to serve the town outside the castle and St James's began as a chapel of Bishop's Cannings to serve the outlying countryside.

## 1.2 *The Setting of the Church*

The Church lies to the North East of the historic centre of this important Market Town.

The Church building is primarily perpendicular in style with its main features to the East (Chancel), South (Porch) and western Tower. The exterior of the main body of the Church is characterised by the large perpendicular windows and the numerous crocketed pinnacles at parapet level which result in an interesting roof-scape.

The irregular shaped Churchyard is surrounded by a number of substantial buildings; primarily the listed Castle Public House to the South, with small group of shops with Offices above to the West. Behind the Shops and Offices is a parking area, which is characteristic of many recent Brown Site developments within the Town Centre. A modern block of residential units runs along the full length of the East boundary. Commercial Road, to the North of the Churchyard is set at a lower level with a rendered stone retaining wall along the boundary of the Churchyard. To the North of Commercial Road there is a 1950s Local Authority's Housing Scheme, mostly single storey.

Visually only brief glimpses are possible of the Church from New Park Street as the Churchyard is very narrow to the gates on each side of the Castle Public House. There is no open view of the Churchyard even from the North due to the lower level of the highway and a number of trees, which include several long term species e.g. Yew. The Churchyard has been raised over the years and the church appears as slightly sunk within the Churchyard. However, the floor level is that of Commercial Road to the north.

The principal feature of the Church is the fine Tower, which can be seen when passing along New Park Street, in either direction. It can be seen more distantly when approaching the Town from the Swindon direction and when approaching the Town Centre from the North West.

The south gates are early 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, with cast-iron double centre gates and single side ones hung from open piers with cross-bars and rosettes. From them a paved path leads to the south porch. The second set of gates, of similar date but smaller, are at the west end of the churchyard. Both gates are separately listed. The churchyard is open, above a low retaining wall, to Commercial Road on the east. It is a pretty space and closed for burials but with a number of marked burials earlier than the mid-19th century. South of the chancel is a late-medieval tomb-chest with shields in quatrefoils round the sides described by the VCH as a dole table. The churchyard is planted with yew and holly trees, with pines in the south-east corner. The largest tree is a fine copper beech to the south of the chancel.

## 1.3 *Impact of the Proposed Development on the Setting*

The internal changes proposed will have no impact on the setting of the church.

# 2 The Living churchyard

## 2.1 *Burials in the Churchyard*

As is noted in the Historic Building Assessment<sup>1</sup>, the churchyard has been subject to constant change with the importation of earth and the gradual reduction in size as building has been permitted within the original churchyard bounds.

The records show that burials in St Mary's Churchyard mainly ceased in 1878 on the opening of the Devizes and Roundway Joint Burial Board Cemetery near Quaker's Walk, with its first interment on 9 October 1878. However a number of internments have been recorded subsequently. These exceptions would seem to have been allowed because of a family link between the person and an existing tomb.

Some names re-occur in the post 1878 list e.g. Brinkworth, Romain, Smith, Leeds, Reynolds, these internments account for a half of the 36 names.

No burial location layout plan has yet been identified. However all burials/ internments since 1907 are away from the northern side of the church.

## **2.2 Earlier work in churchyard**

The chancel<sup>2</sup> was probably originally served by 2 doors, one on the south, the scars of which can easily be seen in the chancel stonework and one on the north. The latter was identified through study of Buckler's watercolour of the church from the north east. The identification of this doorway along with the anecdotal evidence quoted from the Rev. Dr Burgess in 1881 suggests that there may have been a 12th century vestry on this side of the chancel.

Dr Burgess is quoted as saying to the members of the British Archaeological Association in 1879 "I am told by one of my churchwardens that some years since foundations were discovered leading north-east across from the chancel to the buildings adjoining the churchyard, which were considered to be either the site of an old Church or Chapel". It would seem logical to assume that these were found in either the 1839 excavations (4.9.15) or those in 1854 when the current blue brick lined gullies were created, as they extend below the original 12th century ground surface.

The constant changes to the churchyard<sup>3</sup> in the 18th century, the importation and removal of soil and rubble, as well as the effects of the weather, seem to have resulted in a build-up of soil against the walls of the church on the north and east sides. In October 1839 this was dug out and some of the graves were repaired at a cost of £7 10s 7d. This was followed in July the following year by three instances of men being paid to remove more earth from the churchyard.

# **3 Social history**

## **3.1 Early History**

The Churches of St. Mary and St. John, Devizes<sup>4</sup> have an inextricably linked history, as it is reported that they have always been "a single cure under a single Rector, rector ecclesiarum loci, as he was called in 1322". This however did not prevent the two churches from having separate incomes and separate parish officers. There was a move made in 1906 by the Rector, J. G. Watson, to separate the parish of St, Mary but this was not successful.

It has always been presumed that St. John's was originally the castle chapel, and "in very early times the garrison may have been large enough to fill it", and that St. Mary's served the growing civilian settlement in the Old Port. This however seems unlikely, as it is known that there was a large chapel in the castle. It seems probable that both St. John's and St. Mary's were both built as a pair in the period 1120-1135 by Bishop Roger to serve the civilian populations of both parishes.

## **3.2 Recent History**

The congregation of St Mary's has been falling for many years and in 2006 the Parochial Church Council (PCC) applied to have St Mary's declared redundant when the administration of the churches were formally recombined.

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<sup>1</sup> St. Mary the Virgin, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment by Matthew McMurray

<sup>2</sup> St. Mary the Virgin, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment by Matthew McMurray 4.2.5a:

<sup>3</sup> St. Mary the Virgin, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment by Matthew McMurray 4.9.15

<sup>4</sup> St. Mary the Virgin, Devizes. Historic Building Assessment by Matthew McMurray 4.1.1/2

This application was withdrawn in November 2009. Two factors led to this decision: St Mary's was used as the parish church after the fire which badly damaged the interior of St John's and a public consultation had demonstrated local support for a Community Event space and serviced charity accommodation. The PCC set up St Mary's Future Group as a working group to take the community event concept forward.

The first planning application for an external cloister has been refused at planning committee and on appeal. The DAC have advised a step by step approach, hence this application for the necessary internal changes.

A fuller explanation of the background to the present initiative can be seen in the associated Statement of Need.

## **4 The church building in general**

### ***4.1 Building history<sup>5</sup>***

The chancel is 12<sup>th</sup> century and the remainder of the church was rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. There were major restorations in 1854 by Carpenter & Slater, and in 1897-8 and in 1923-4 under Sir Harold Brakspear.

It has sometimes been thought that the first church, from which the chancel survives, was built by Bishop Roger of Sarum (1107-42), but others consider that the style of the church belongs to a later date in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Of the nave of that church nothing now survives, but it may have been rebuilt in the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, as the south wall of the porch retains some 13<sup>th</sup> century work and the inner order of the porch doorway is of this date, the other four orders being reset 12<sup>th</sup> century work. The footings of the east wall of the south aisle are thicker than those of the remainder of the nave aisles, and may also be 13<sup>th</sup> century. There seem to be re-used 12<sup>th</sup> century ashlar blocks in the 14<sup>th</sup> century construction of the aisle walls. The nave, aisles and west tower were rebuilt in their present form at the expense of William Smith who died on 1 June 1436 (as an inscription on the east part of the nave roof records). The Victorian County History (VCH) discerns the progress of the work as having begun with the south aisle followed by the nave arcades and clerestory, then the refurbishment of both aisles with new windows, buttresses and roofs, together with the insertion of new windows into the chancel and the enlargement of the chancel arch, and finally the construction of the west tower.

An exceptional surviving run of churchwardens' accounts provides much information about the 16<sup>th</sup> century changes. In 1550-1 the altars were pulled down, the Ten Commandments and scriptural texts were inscribed on the walls and the organ and rood loft were removed. In 1553-6 the high altar, a side altar and the organ were re-erected and the mural inscriptions were defaced. Two more altars were built in 1558. These restorations were again swept away under Elizabeth - the loft in 1561-2 and the organ and candlesticks in the next year. In 1575-6 the Commandments were re-inscribed.

The south porch was repaired in 1612 and in 1637-8, and in the latter year the communion table was railed in. The next major work, of which documentary evidence survives, was the restoration of the east chancel wall, with replica arcading in the lower part and a new window in the upper, executed in 1852. Wall paintings revealed at this time were becoming invisible by 1878 and have now all but disappeared. In 1854 there was a major restoration by Carpenter & Slater, when the north vestry was also added, and in 1875-6 another restoration included the removal of a west gallery and the lowering and repaving of the chancel floor. In 1897-8 the tower was underpinned, some of its battlements, pinnacles and gargoyles were removed and the chancel was re-roofed. In 1923-4 the nave and tower roofs were repaired under the direction of Harold Brakspear, the builders being F. Rendell & Sons.

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<sup>5</sup> Extracted from Item 9[b] Pastoral Measure Report: Devizes St Mary. Council for the Care of Churches. Wilts ADP 20 July 06

## 5 The church building in detail<sup>6</sup>

### 5.1 Physical dimensions

Ground plan: West tower, nave of five bays with clerestory and aisles, south porch; chancel with small north vestry.

Dimensions: Nave 20m by 6.5m; aisles each 3.5m wide; chancel 9.5m by 5.9m.  
The walls of the tower are 27m above the ground. The pinnacles rise 3.2m above the walls

### 5.2 Building materials:

Walls of local oolitic Bath limestone, mostly with ashlar finish; the roofs are covered with lead, with the exception of the chancel roof, which is covered with stone slates.

### 5.3 General Description:

The church of St Mary, Devizes is an important building that makes an interesting comparison with St John's, the other major medieval church of the town. Whereas both churches have similar chancels, the development of the remainder of the building has been very different: St John's retains a Norman crossing tower and has gradually grown at various periods, but St Mary's apart from its chancel is now essentially **a building of a single period**, on a regular symmetrical plan. Both parts of St Mary's are products of prosperous generations, but the conjunction of the soaring Perpendicular tower, nave and aisles with the low Norman chancel is a dramatic one.

### 5.4 West Tower

The west tower is of three stages divided by stringcourses above a high moulded plinth. At all four corners are prominent diagonal buttresses with a weathering at the midpoint of each stage upon which stands a pinnacle set against the upper part of the buttress. The west doorway has continuous mouldings dying into canted jambs at the base and a moulded hood terminating in large carved heads. The west window is of four cinquefoil-headed lights with a transom and panel tracery. At each side are fine niches with shields on the corbels and crocketed<sup>7</sup> canopies. The lowest stringcourse does not divide the ground stage from the middle stage but runs at the height of the springing of the arch of the west window, rising over it as a hood. The middle stage has small two-light windows in each face. The top stage has two two-light openings in each face. The parapet has battlements, and the buttresses continue up into crocketed pinnacles. Within the parapet is a flat roof with a central lead-clad spike. The stair is housed in an octagonal turret on the south wall near the south-east buttress. It is embraced by the stringcourses and has a small embattled parapet.

### 5.5 The Nave and Aisles

The nave is of five bays with the aisle bays divided by buttresses with two weatherings that lie well below the continuous embattled parapet. The buttresses against the clerestory, on the other hand, become elegant pinnacles set diagonally which rise well above the line of the parapet. At the northeast corner of the nave is an octagonal stair turret which once served the rood screen, and over the middle of the east nave gable is a large niche under a tall pinnacle. It contains a Baroque statue of the Virgin and Child, which very probably goes with the inscription, dated 1624, carved on the back of the niche. On the corbel below the statue are two shields carved with the initials W S for William Smith whose legacy paid for the rebuilding of the nave, aisles and tower after his death in 1436.

The nave and aisles are richly ornamented with carved gargoyles along the stringcourses at the base of the parapets. By contrast, the hoods of all the windows are simply returned without carved stops. The clerestory retains good 18<sup>th</sup> century rainwater-heads and downpipes. The aisle windows have three lights with panel tracery; with similar windows in the east and west walls, and the clerestory windows have three lights with tracery quatrefoils. There is an 18<sup>th</sup> century tablet beside the second window from the east in the south aisle, with marks of the fixings of another beside the easternmost window. At the south-west corner of the aisle parapet is a sundial.

The south wall of the south aisle is not symmetrical with the north wall of the north aisle for, whereas the latter has five bays running in rhythm with the nave arcades, the former has only four bays.

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<sup>6</sup> Source Pastoral Measure Report: Devizes St Mary. Council for the Care of Churches 20 Jul 06

<sup>7</sup> A small, independent, sharply projecting medieval ornament, usually occurring in rows, and decorated with foliage.

The south porch projects from the second bay from the west. Its outer arch is two-centred and consists of re-used Norman zig-zag with a roll moulded innermost order set on shafts which have been cut off not far below the moulded circular caps. The arch is closed by 18<sup>th</sup> century timber and wrought-iron gates with close-set verticals and a moulded top edge capped by fleur-de-lys finials which ramps up at each end. At each side are buttresses in line with the south wall, and above is a two-light window with cusped Y tracery. A stair turret at the western angle with the nave leads to the former first-floor room (the floor for which has been removed) and to the south aisle roof. The parapet is continuous with that of the aisle with very large carved figures projecting at the angles, that at the south-east apparently showing a lady and a dog.

## **5.6 South Door and Porch**

The porch has a stone-flagged floor and stone benches along the sidewalls. In the west wall is a small doorway to the stair turret with a four-centred chamfered arch. The inner doorway has a four-centred arch within a square head, with cusped panels in the spandrels and a casement-moulded surround. The door itself is medieval and has a small wicket. Above it is a broad recess with a cusped three-sided canopy.

The interior of the nave is spacious and lofty, but the general absence of figurative or foliate sculptural detail and of stained glass from all except the east and west windows renders it slightly forbidding, a characteristic reinforced by the dull grey-brown colour of wall plaster and stonework. Perhaps not always so, there are the faint remains of a floral stencil border around the very top of the nave, just beneath the eaves which is probably contemporary with other painted decoration by Carpenter around the chancel and mentioned below.

The passage-ways are paved with stone flags set with a number of ledger slabs, and the pews stand on platforms. The arcades are carried on tall octagonal pillars with moulded octagonal capitals and bases, and the arches have two hollow chamfers. There are a few monuments on the aisle walls. The tower arch is exceedingly lofty and is carried on three attached shafts with a casement moulding and a bowtel<sup>8</sup> between. The tower space is covered by a tierceron<sup>9</sup> star vault with flowers and foliage carved on the bosses and a central circular bell-way. Access to the tower stair is by a small doorway with a pointed chamfered arch closed by an 18<sup>th</sup> -century doorway with four fielded panels. The west door is medieval, of two leaves, with a wooden box lock. The nave roof is carried on big stone corbels carved as the heads of kings, queens and bishops.

There are florets on the wall-plates, and the second bay from the east has a carved and painted inscription seeking prayers in memory of William Smith, d.1 June 1436, with whose legacy the church was rebuilt. The aisle roofs have big foliate bosses. The west bay of the south aisle is discreetly screened with a grained timber screen of c. 1850 to form a choir vestry.

## **5.7 Chancel**

The chancel is of two bays with a pitched roof. The bays are marked by pilaster strips, and the Norman windows, two in each side wall, were replaced when the nave and aisles were rebuilt. In their present form the windows are Perpendicular designs with three equal main lights, a horizontal bar above and panel tracery. Like the aisle windows they have simple returned ends to the hoods, except for the south-east window which has carved heads. The priest's doorway was also inserted or renewed at this time. On the south wall are four 18<sup>th</sup> century tablets, now mostly illegible. The buttresses at the eastern angles clasp the walls, and the east wall seems originally to have been windowless. The present east window was created in 1854 and has nook-shafts, zig-zag round the semi-circular arch, and billet on the hood, an interesting example of Carpenter and Slater, proponents of the Middle Pointed style, working in an earlier style when appropriate. The chamfered sill extends along to the buttresses at each side as a stringcourse. There is also a small round-headed light high in the gable. Below the eastern of the two windows in the north wall is a small vestry with a flat roof concealed by a straight parapet, a two-light window under a label in the north wall and a small doorway in a canted projection at the west end.

The chancel arch is much lower and broader than the tower arch. It has ogee cinquefoil-ended panels running from the floor to the apex on the canted side facing the nave, and it is flanked on the nave side by empty stone niches with corbels set on shafts, vaulting and crocketed canopies which look entirely 19<sup>th</sup> century. Beside the shafts below each niche is a trefoil-headed squint. On the wall

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<sup>8</sup> Bowtel or bowtell, a round or corniced moulding below the abacus in a Tuscan or Roman Doric capital

<sup>9</sup> A major rib in a complex rib vault.

are remains of painted decoration probably belonging to Carpenter's restoration (his obituary in the *Ecclesiologist* in the following year drew particular attention to his use of coloured decoration) consisting of Marian emblems such as the fleur-de-lys. High on the north side is the upper doorway of the rood stair, with a chamfered surround and four-centred arch.

The low Norman chancel consists of two bays divided by a central arch with a fat double roll moulding set on paired shafts with fluted capitals and heads at the angles. Each bay has shafts in the corners carrying further rolls which intersect at the midpoint of the groin vault. On the side walls are remains of intersecting arcading, reproduced on the east wall in 1852 with vertical and horizontal zigzag on the arches carried on seven attached shafts with scalloped capitals all carved with different motifs. Within the spandrels and on the wall between the arches and the stringcourse at sill level of the east window (also inserted in 1852) is a carved scale pattern. The arch of the east window, carried on attached shafts, has a beaded edge. There is a corbel table to the west of the north-west window. The tile pavement laid in 1875 (a gift of Thomas Badger) is mostly of plain green, brown, red black and buff tiles laid in geometrical designs. There is one step at the chancel arch, and at the rails are two further steps.

## 6 Contents of the church<sup>10</sup>

### 6.1 *Furnishings and Fittings*

**Altar:** The altar is a plain oak table with six legs, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Reredos:** No reredos.

**Pulpit:** The pulpit is of oak, hexagonal with open traceried panels, on a plain stone base; late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Lectern:** The lectern is a free-standing brass eagle of stock design, 1904.

**Font:** The font is octagonal, of stone, with spurs at the angles of the base, paired panels against the stem and tracery patterns on the bowl, in 15<sup>th</sup> century style but either 19<sup>th</sup> century or at least much re-cut, positioned next to the entrance in the south aisle. It is mounted on concrete blocks,

**Stained glass:** East window: depicts the Transfiguration, c.1896, probably by Hardman.

West window: The Nativity with The Annunciation below, The Marriage at Cana with the Epiphany below, The Raising of Lazarus with Christ and Mary Magdalene in the Garden below, The Angel and the Marys at the Sepulchre with Christ with Martha & Mary at Bethany below, by Hardman, c.1880.

### 6.2 *Ledger stones*

For more information about the ledger stones and other internal church memorials, please consult the St Mary Devizes Conservation Management Plan (CMP).

### 6.3 *Organ*

The organ is a small two-manual and pedal instrument positioned at the east end of the north aisle; by William Sweetland of Bath, c. 1855 (according to a brass plate set in the fascia between the two keyboards), in a Gothic case of three gabled Hats of 7-9-7 pipes decorated with crocketing, tracery and finials. The specification is as follows:

Great: OD1 8, OD2 8, SDB 8, SD 8, Pr 4, Fl 4, Tw 2 2/3, Fift 2, Ses II, Trumpet 8;

Swell: D Dulc 16, OD 8, SD 8, Pr 4, Fift 2, Cornopean 8, Hautboy 8;

Pedal: OD 16.

The console seems to remain in original condition and the action is still mechanical; this is an instrument of historic interest.

William Sweetland set up in business on his own in the late 1840s and eventually retired in 1902. His first church organ was opened at St Michael's Broad Street, Bath in 1849 and thereafter he made

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<sup>10</sup> Extracted from Item 9[b] Pastoral Measure Report: Devizes St Mary. Council for the Care of Churches. Wilts ADP 20 July 06

instruments for churches and chapels in all parts of the country. The Sweetland organ factory in Bath was built at the back of his house in Cleveland Place West around 1870. His organs were pronounced by W T Best, Sir Walter Parratt and Sir F A Gore Ouseley, Doctor of Music, to be the best in England of their size. Mr. Kendrick Pyne, of Manchester Cathedral, considered Mr. Sweetland to be the finest mechanist in England. Examples of Sweetland's work can still be found in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Herefordshire, Kent, Somerset, Surrey, Warwickshire and Wiltshire. A few instruments remain in Wales, including the small organ at Ewenny Priory Church, previously housed at Wells Cathedral.

## 6.4 Other items

**Communion plate:** The communion plate consists of a set of two cups, two patens on foot and a flagon (the last currently in the Salisbury Treasury), by IK, 1789, given in 1790 after the theft of the previous plate. Also a silver-gilt straining spoon, inscribed 'St Mary's 1804', by Peter, Ann & William Bateman, and a modern EPNS chalice and paten of 1970.

**Registers:** The registers date from 1569; those not in current use are deposited in the Diocesan Record Office, or at Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham. The parish also possesses a remarkable run of early churchwardens' accounts.

Other woodwork:

- Pair of chancel chairs, oak, with arms and turned and ringed legs, c. 1870; good (there are two desks which do not belong).
- The choir stalls are of oak, late-19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Two blackboards painted with the names of the evening canticles, 'hymns', 'psalms' etc.; mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, simple but an interesting survival.
- Royal arms of George III dated 1797, on wooden boards in a frame with lugged corners enclosing rosettes, restored and re-hung over the chancel arch in 1963. · The pews are of oak with plainly chamfered rectangular ends, probably of 1852.
- Bible box, carved with lunettes round the edge, 17<sup>th</sup> century..
- Pair of joined stools, oak, 17<sup>th</sup> century.
- Board recording that the Incorporated Church Building Society gave £30; no date, perhaps 1852.
- Chest of oak bound with iron, with four locks, 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Over the south door is a carved wooden pelican, perhaps from a reredos, 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- Chest, large, plain, of oak, on a plinth, with strap hinges, 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Other metalwork:

- Two small brass mace-rests on the front pew on the north side, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.
- Turret clock installed in 1923.
- Small weathercock on south wall of tower space, gilded metal, late 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Communion rails are a stock design of a brass rail on iron uprights, c. 1875.

War memorials: No war memorials.

Miscellanea:

- Statue of The Virgin and Child in the niche on the east nave gable, carved in stone in Baroque style and probably contemporary with the inscription: RA MOOR16 24 MA 13 which is cut into the lower part of the back of the niche, even if part of the body may be of 15<sup>th</sup> century origin; a figurative religious statue of this date on an Anglican church is of great rarity, and may be compared with the statue of the same subject on the south porch of St Mary the Virgin, Oxford.
- Stone tablet recording the repair and re-leading of the nave roof, repair of parapets and pinnacles, repair and re-leading of the tower roof, with the rebuilding of two pinnacles, and repair of the parapets of the south porch and aisles, carried out for £3,500 under the supervision of Harold Brakspear, builders F Rendell & Sons, 1924.
- Oil painting of The Virgin and Child after the Raphael tondo.

## 7 Significance for mission

The Parochial Church Council (PCC) and congregations of the Parish of Devizes, St John with St Mary have responsibility for the maintenance and use of three parish buildings, St John's Church, St Mary's Church and the Parish Rooms situated alongside St John's Church.

Following a Parish Away Day in October 2008 which developed the parish mission plan, it was decided to address the opportunities and challenges of these buildings together, as part of that plan, rather than simply as individual building projects without any reference to our overall mission strategy.

The Church of England's stated mission is "A Christian presence in every community". Our mission statement, in the parish of Devizes, St John and St Mary, exhibiting that Christian presence in this community, is: "to be a community growing in love, faith and service; reflecting the love and faithfulness of God towards us."

The PCC sees that it can meet a variety of needs within the town of Devizes, the Deanery and beyond, in the way in which these buildings are developed. In particular there is need for a community meeting and gathering space for medium to large size gatherings of 200-250 people. In Nov 2008 the PCC invited Revd Andrew Mottram of Ecclesiastical Property Solutions to come and spend a day to help us consider the way forward in the development of our parish buildings.

The PCC envisages the two Parish Churches continuing to serve the parish and wider needs of the Church in contrasting but complementary ways. One, St Mary's, as a Church which is developed primarily for mixed community use suitable for medium to large gatherings and smaller groups, as well as continuing to be a place of worship for the parish, and the other, St John's, as a Church which is developed primarily as a place of worship both for parish use and for the wider civic role in town and county that it has long fulfilled.

The Parish Rooms have since been enhanced and renovated to provide ancillary facilities for St John's Church with a recent (2013) kitchen providing catering facilities for small to medium group use, together with new toilets and shower unit.

## **8 Significance of area affected by proposals**

### ***8.1 Parts of the church affected***

The proposal is to accomplish a substantial change of use for St. Mary's Church to reflect a plan for community use, yet retaining the chancel as a viable space for worship. A major element of the proposal is to alter as little as possible of the structure and architectural identity of St. Mary's above floor level and thus preserve the clear uncluttered medieval interior for the appreciation of visitors.

There will be a renovation of the nave, requiring the removal of the pews, pew platforms and decaying floor joists, the moving of monument slabs to allow for a modern multi use wooden floor. A new lighting and sound system will be installed. A mixture of radiator and under floor heating will be installed, which together with proper venting will address much of the cause of underlying decay of wood.

The interior of the church will largely be unchanged above floor level. There will be no new partitions, pods or galleries within the building. The new seating will not be fixed to the floor and the tiered element will be moveable.

### ***8.2 Re-siting of the Font to create a Baptistry***

It is proposed to remove the 19C font from its concrete block base and relocate to the area under the tower to create a Baptistry. By locating this at the main west entrance it will form part of the introduction to the Sacred Space of this consecrated building. The font will thus be a focal point on entry and not just a passage point to be passed by.

### ***8.3 Significance of parts affected***

From the criteria suggested in the Guidance notes for the assessment of significance on an international to local significance scale, an overall Low placement position suggests itself. For more detailed assessments please see the St Mary Devizes Conservation Management Plan.

In summary the impacts of the proposed changes are:

- Reposition existing memorial slabs (already repositioned in the 1850's) towards the chancel and walls. This will reduce wear by moving from heavily trafficked areas: Low to Moderate
- Remove all pews, floor boards and supporting sub-floor joists floor in the Nave and aisles and replace with a sprung timber floor to the Nave and side Aisles. Noting that in the 1854 works the earth was cleared out within the church, the vaults were altered and repaired with brickwork in cement: Low
- Install frameless glazed screens under the tower arches to form entrance: Low
- Adapt tower entrance doors to hold these open with frameless glazed doors behind: Low
- Install retractable echo deadening tensile fabric sailcloth's in the nave: Low
- Internal walls: Cleaning the stonework using a non-abrasive cleaning system [eg JOS/TORC]: Low
- Moving of the 1877 font: Low
- Removal of the Pulpit: Low
- Connection of utilities: Low
- Install new lighting system. Low
- Install a new lighting gantry system together with rewiring generally: Low
- Install a new sound/ microphone system together with a continuous induction loop: Low
- Remove central heating pipework, radiators, and install a new under-floor heating system with supplemental radiators served by a new ground source heat pump: Low
- Move the organ from the north east corner to the south west corner of the church: Low
- Re open the doorway<sup>11</sup> in the tower staircase, blocked up in 1877, to allow access to the new lighting control floor: Low
- Sub floor: The current subfloor is inadequately ventilated and has led to wood rot in the structure. A new sub-floor supporting structure with associated heating airflows will ensure longevity to the new structure, Impact Very Low

The wall monuments and hatchments are to be retained in situ. The existing encaustic tiles to the Chancel floor are to remain. The floor area under the tower to remain.

Items that will not affect the fabric include new seating, both raked and individual, to be loose and moveable.

#### **8.4 Mitigation of development**

One of the principles of conservation is to maintain a building for its original intended purpose and this proposal seeks to do this by increasing the number who visit and use St Mary Devizes.

The interior of the church will be largely left unchanged in that the removal of the pews and the laying of a new floor will be the only permanent alterations. Other features relating to seating and lighting are planned to be reversible.

#### **8.5 Impact of the proposals**

The impact of this proposal in concept and use will be high, because a major change is planned: from a potentially redundant place of worship to a place of worship with value and benefit to a wider community.

The physical impact of the proposal on the church surroundings will be extremely low. The axial integrity of the building and the sense of space will be retained, if not enhanced under this proposal.

## **9 Sources used for the Statements of Need and Significance**

Church Building Council Guidance for Parishes: Statement of Significance and Statement of Need Council for the Care of Churches, Pastoral Measure Report Devizes St Mary. Item 9 [b] Wilts ADP 20 July 06 and 29 May 1996

Church Commissioners Letters

RD Trahair 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 RDT/TB/4230, Property Secretary, Diocese of Salisbury

RD Trahair June 2006 RDT/LC/5375

RD Trahair January 2007 RC34/112 and attachments

Paul Lewis 20 June 2007 NB34/112/RA

Rex Andrew November 2009 NB34/112B/RA

<sup>11</sup> Historic Building Assessment 4.4.5 and Appendix Figure 26 and 28

Diocese of Salisbury;

RD Trahair RDT/LC/5375 Property Secretary, Diocese of Salisbury 21 June 2006

Pastoral secretary letter 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006 Ben 363A

Diocesan Advisory Committee Notes on a DAC site visit to Devizes St Mary on 19 October 2009

Parish reports

St. Mary's Church, Devizes, Historic Building Assessment; Matthew McMurray BA (Hons) MA; Historic Buildings Archaeologist.

Appendix of Figures to the above

Summary Report on St Mary's Future Consultation 2009

Marketing Plan for the use of St Mary's Devizes as a Community Event Space 2010

Study on St Mary's Churchyard 2010

Written Scheme of Investigations for Mitigatory Archaeological Works April 2012 ref 3537-2.

Michael Heaton Heritage Consultant

Future Users Seminar- Consolidation of seminar input and StMFG plans 23/08/2012

Sir Thomas Phillipps record of Ledger Stones Wiltshire Record Society, Monumental Inscriptions of Wiltshire 1822

Demaus Building Diagnostics Ltd report , 9<sup>th</sup> April 2013.