

St Mary's Church, Hadleigh, Suffolk

Statement of Need



St Mary's Church, Hadleigh was recognised as one of England's Major Parish Churches in 2016. Its last major restoration and re-ordering took place 150 years ago. The PCC believes that it is now time to renew the building, so that it can meet the needs and challenges of the 21st century.

St Mary's is a major asset for the wider community in Hadleigh and beyond. As a parish church serving an expanding town, it is primarily a place of worship. The church is also used regularly by a broad range of organisations with educational, social, cultural and recreational interests. There is no other building in our locality large enough to accommodate their activities.

St Mary's PCC has recently appointed the Cambridge architects Freeland Rees Roberts to help us to realise our vision for the church's refurbishment. We are confident that they have the expertise to develop the heritage of a significant medieval building for future generations.

- **General Information see Appendix 1**

An overview of the parish and the current use of the building.

St Mary's Church, Hadleigh was constructed in circa 1200, replacing a smaller church to the south of the current building. Over the years the interior has been re-ordered many times and these are well documented in the Hadleigh Archives and Suffolk Record Office. The result of these works has been an ever evolving building in appearance, current architectural styles, and the ecclesiastical and social conventions of the time. The proposed renewal is just one further stage in the continuing development of the church to meet the current needs of the parish and community.

The church building is set in the heart of the community, literally a few metres off the High Street. It is very accessible and a dominant physical presence. The churchyard is the major green space within the town and is used by residents and visitors alike throughout the year. Other open spaces are the river walk area to the west of the River Brett and the Railway Walk area to the south of the town.

The population of Hadleigh has grown by 2,000 in the last three years to over 10,000. Houses are currently being built and government strategy plans are for a further 250 houses to be built in future years. Hadleigh has a strong connection with the armed forces, with a substantial number of personnel living in the town. Three Primary schools and a High school endorse the fact that there are many young families as well as this market town being a popular place to retire to.

- **A chart showing the Current Use of the Building is set out in Appendix 2**

The Church is open from 8am to 5pm (4pm in winter months) every day of the year and is mostly wheelchair accessible with the use of temporary ramps.

A Quinquennial Inspection was carried out in 2011, however the PCC commissioned in 2015 a new inspection to help with planning for the future. This was undertaken by DAC Architect Philip Orchard. The main items in the report noted as requiring attention and estimated costs were work to the Chancel (£2,000), Nave (£91,600), North Aisle (£14,750), South Porch (£5,600), South Aisle (£226,050), Tower (£108,000), Vestry (£20,250). A total of £475,050. In addition when a leadwork investigation report is undertaken on the North Aisle roof it is suspected that it too will require re-leading (£200,000). The wooden floor boards, joists and wall plates across the nave and aisles and chancel have been patched extensively in recent years but continue to show signs of rot. The

replacement of the floor which has become a hazard, and more urgent as time passes, has not been costed, but needs to be factored into the whole project.

Over the past five years, St Mary's has raised £150,000 from donations, bequests and other fundraising activities for repairs and re-ordering and as funds permit we continue a programme of maintenance and address outstanding work from the QI report. The Friends of St Mary's Church Hadleigh are currently funding a project of maintenance and repair work to the windows, including renewing some of the stonework window tracery, extensive rebuilding and re-pointing of surrounding flintwork and brickwork, cleaning and treating some of the rusted iron mesh guarding the windows and re-leading glass as required to a number of the ground floor windows. Further similar work to the clerestory windows is required as soon as possible.

Our Key Needs

- Improved Access - Entrances and Thresholds to West end and South West porch, Floor level.
- Environmental considerations.
- Updated Heating, Power, Lighting and Audio Visual installations.
- Internal Spaces.
 - Toilets
 - Kitchen
 - Storage
 - N & S Chapels and Chancel
 - Vestry
 - Prayer chapel
 - Administration office
 - Committee room
 - Interpretation and information areas
 - Archives and strong room
- Reordering
 - Organ
 - Font
 - West lancet window
- Fabric
 - Roofs
 - Floor
 - Windows
 - Stonework
 - Internal cleaning and redecoration
- Interpretation of our heritage

Proposals

Restoring and opening the original processional west-end doors, and entering into an inner lobby area beneath the tower (currently where the toilets are situated), will provide a welcoming space and offer a magnificent view of this large and spacious church (the fifth largest in Suffolk) with the East window and high altar as the natural focus.

With extensive decay to the present floor a new stone floor is proposed across the whole width of the church from the West end entrance up to the Chancel arch and also the Chancel floor up to the sanctuary steps, with under-floor heating installed, supplemented where necessary with radiator heaters i.e. the North and South chapels, Vestry etc. This could provide a more efficient system with a building increasingly being used for longer hours. The present overhead gas heating system is degrading the lead to the roofs and at the start of the winter 2016 it had to be switched off for ten weeks, with all worship services being held in the Chancel which has some minimal under-pew

heaters. We propose that all new cables and services be housed in appropriate ducts under the floor and removal of the many, old unsightly wires and wiring ducts.

A new lighting design using LED's throughout would not only provide the required illumination for all areas, especially the Nave, which currently has no lighting, but also enhance the architectural features of this stunning building.

The medieval font, moved to its present location in 1872 from the north aisle, is to be moved to a new position in the nave approximately six metres further east of its present position and in line with the columns to the south aisle where it would not interrupt the flow of people in and out of the west entrance and would be a better focus for baptisms surrounded by the people of God.

A North West extension is proposed. It would preserve the internal space of the Nave and aisles, leave intact the medieval and Victorian fabric and maximise the benefits of both the new heating system and the repositioned organ. The committee have considered the location of toilets and kitchen facilities within the main building, however they would reduce usable space in the main body of the church, which we need for the many activities that take place.

Each week some catering (bacon sandwiches etc at cafe church) is carried out in the North west corner of the main building which not only causes odours which permeate the whole building but also create grease and smoke which is not easily extractable due to the buildings design. If cafe church is to be followed by a funeral or wedding then such cooking has to be cancelled. Some degradation of a nearby memorial and to the general decoration has been caused by cooking in this area. By placing it within a new extension all the associated problems could be dealt with. We propose providing a kitchen for buffet style catering as now but also to provide preparation area, refrigeration and warming facilities and washing up facilities for larger functions of up to 200 diners.

The present toilet facilities installed in West tower in 1989 are inadequate for many of the current and expected uses, They are not easily accessible to all and are prone to overflow problems when used to by large numbers.

The Papworth Trust Youth Project (a drop-in project for disabled teenagers) wanted to work together with The Porch Project, to develop integrated youth work in the community but presently our facilities cannot cope with their requirements, or with larger events that we like to host such as "Year of the Sheep" 2016 exhibition with over 1000 passing through the building in one day, and in excess of 600 in the building for a schools christmas event.

The proposed extension would be accessed from a new external entrance and it would be linked to the North aisle through the existing North-West door providing equal access for all and offer the appropriate kitchen and toilet facilities and circulation space for when the church hosts worship and events for up to 400 people. We propose to include an accessible facility for disabled people, and also a changing room and shower/wet room facility, all of which would be a valuable resource for both church functions and for the town. Housing for the heating plant and a large storage area should be included in this extension.

On the first floor of the extension we propose an office for administration. Also groups and committees have asked if we could provide a conference room away from the general hubbub of the many activities taking place in the church.

In consultation with Babergh District Planning Department, the PCC are seeking a suitably fitting design for this extension taking into consideration the setting and the archaeology of this area.

The North aisle has served us well as a hospitality area but is very restrictive due to lack of storage space elsewhere for tables, chairs and screens, etc. The popular Friday morning Café Church caters for over seventy people and servery style catering for exhibitions, concerts, fetes and civic services can be managed using the current kitchen area. Catering which we would like to provide for harvest events, shared lunches, OAP lunches, celebration dinner evenings, deanery marriage preparation day lunches etc, all require preparation space conforming to health and hygiene regulations, commercial size food heating equipment and washing up facilities for both in house catering or for outside caterers. A suitably equipped kitchen is necessary to fulfil our current needs, as well as being able to

offer the building as a venue for wedding receptions, funeral wakes, baptism parties, etc., enabling the church to offer not just worship but also good hospitality.

An essential reason for the building being open every day is to offer a holy, sacred space for prayer and reflection. Because St Mary's has no other buildings, apart from the church, all activities take place within that space. With such a diverse range of activities throughout the week, people wanting a quiet space are often confronted with distractions. A small private prayer chapel is envisaged. Permission for a temporary prayer chapel area in the North Aisle has been granted and we will evaluate whether we desire to make this more permanent.

In the South porch the existing stone floor and side seats which are used as a refuge in inclement weather are to remain. The early sixteenth century oak doors require extensive conservation and refurbishment, and we propose that an inner lobby is constructed to minimise drafts and heat loss.

To provide some additional space within the building we propose a first floor (approx 45sq metres) to be created across the Nave at the West end. A choir vestry, choir gallery and small meeting area could be situated here. This first floor and the extension first floor should be accessible by both a staircase and a lift. Above this nave first floor area, it is proposed, the organ be moved back to its original position on the West wall. The current position restricts its sound filling the church and causes acoustic delays, being due to its position behind a screen and arch columns. The organ, with its valuable Father Smith case is to be fully restored. The acoustic quality will confidently lead worship and as well as being an important resource for concerts and recitals. St Mary's has amazing acoustics and any changes to the building must only enhance this asset. Advice is being sought from the DAC organ adviser regarding organ repositioning , etc. The lancet window high on the west wall needs to be moved to a suitable area incorporated into the architects designs where its medieval glass can be appreciated.

The South chapel would retain its ledger slab floor. This space is currently used for PCC and committee meetings, Mothers' Union, prayer meetings, children's work, daily office, informal communion, youth mentoring and private prayer. A carpet and drapes have already been provided in the chapel. Glazing this area could give some separation from the main building and provide a more usable space. The North and South chapel fifteenth century parclose screens require refurbishment.

The 1859 oak Choir Stalls and 15th century Misericords in the Chancel are to remain where they are but require some conservation work.

The Lady Chapel's ledger slab floor would be retained. It is to be furnished with conserved oak pews retained after their removal from the nave in phase I, and the new altar, chairs and lectern made from the oak pews which would reflect our Victorian heritage.

As a new office is to be created elsewhere, it would release the present North East Vestry space as a separate meeting room and priests' vestry. The beautiful vaulted ceiling creates a striking area in which to hold a range of small gatherings and including a place for studying archive documents. Both lower and upper rooms need to be refurbished, and the leaking roof is to be mended.

St Mary's and the town of Hadleigh have some significant historical events to present, many of which are important in shaping the development of the national church. *See Statement of Significance.* However, none of these events are being shared in the most accessible way. We wish to embrace various ways of telling these events, including touch-screen and other interactive technology and we need this information to be positioned where it is readily accessible on entering the building and at points where it is most relevant. Discussions have taken place with York University Department of Christianity and Culture regarding an Interpretation Project and we have collated evidence of a tangible demand to meet the needs for the public benefit with feedback from stakeholders, tourist and schools and are formulating the project structure and providing information for a submission for a HLF grant as part of our main HLF submission.

The Town Council supports St Mary's in being the central venue for tourist information with volunteer staff, and space must be allocated for this to continue. This features as an important aspect in the town's vision for the future, and we need it positioned near the main entrance.

Our Inspire programme uses the church building to help teach selected aspects of the primary school curriculum in an interactive way: including RE, history, architecture, art and craft. The programme pays a qualified teacher one day a week in term time. It is hoped that this programme can also be offered to the High School.

Car parking is likely to be difficult as the building is used more. The churchwardens are investigating with Hadleigh Town Council and Babergh District Council, regarding the provision of extra car parking outside the boundary of the churchyard.

At present there are four exits from the church all of which have inward-opening, sixteenth century and later, heavy doors which take some force to open. The addition of an extra exit route from the church through the present blocked north west door opening giving access to the extension lobby which will have external opening doors will increase this to five exits.

The newly re-opened West entrance and lobby through new outward-opening doors would speed evacuation of the church in the event of fire. The present ancient inward opening heavy doors to the South West porch would be retained and a new internal lobby with outward opening doors would give easier egress and draught proofing. The inward opening heavy door to the South chapel would remain, and the inward opening north chapel door (with its small lobby removed) will remain. This would leave us with egress improvements to the three main west end exits where the main body of people congregate, and easier egress from the north east door.

Why do we need it and why do we need it now?

To maintain, restore and develop St Mary's Church, so that it is welcoming and accessible to everyone; cherishing and expounding its history and traditions, and facilitating a sustainable church that is alive and active in the community.

The major repairs are now very urgent and many of the needs are interconnected and require to be carried out within the same contract i.e.: The heating system which is reaching the end of its life is causing the deterioration to the roof lead covering so should be removed before replacing the lead and whilst the floor is being replaced underfloor heating could be incorporated.

- It will continue to develop St Mary's church as a centre for local Christian communities to be encouraged, equipped and enabled for worship, mission and ministry, so that it might flourish as a beacon of Christian hope.
- It will enhance the liturgical space and services
- It will help small group work by providing suitable spaces for meetings.
- It will help by attracting new groups and partners to the church and draw them into the life of the church.
- It will help by attracting new activities i.e.: wedding receptions, committee and conference space.
- It will help our financial situation.

The evidence for the need has been gathered and is being acted upon:

We have consulted widely as individuals and as a group with the deanery representatives, Diocesan Advisory Committee representatives, District and Town Council members, Visitors, and through four open meetings attended by 80-100 people including the Parochial Church Council (PCC), church members, youth work representatives, present and potential partnership user groups, stakeholder groups, and the general public of Hadleigh and the surrounding areas. Further such meetings are being planned.

For some years St Mary's has looked at various ways of achieving the needs for today's generation and into the future. The replacement of pews by chairs has greatly enhanced the flexibility of the spaces within the building. We will be preparing a comprehensive Activity Plan to identify all our present and future activities and needs.

In February 2011 a feasibility study of reordering was produced by our DAC architect Philip Orchard of the Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP, with 'Proposed Floor Plans and Sections Sketch Scheme 3'.

In 2014 a PCC sub-committee proposed a phase one of reordering for which a faculty was given for the pews in the nave to be replaced by chairs. Some of the oak pews were refurbished and furniture was made from pews for use in the North Chapel as required by the faculty.

On the 9th July 2015 the PCC commissioned a new committee to take forward the project, delegating responsibility for making strategic decisions, signing off all designs, overall accountancy control and regular reporting to PCC. A treasurer was appointed and a separate bank account opened for the project.

A meeting was held on 13th November 2015 with: James Halsall - Diocesan Advisory Committee, The Ven. Dr David Jenkins - Archdeacon, and representatives of Heritage England, the Church Buildings Council, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, the Victorian Society and the local planning authority Babergh District Council. The meeting set out the plans for the proposed future development of St Mary's and asked for feedback from these interested parties.

The comments from these representatives have been taken into account and the committee will be working with our architect and all the above mentioned interested parties to take forward the identified needs for the renewal of St Mary's as a church for the twenty-first century.

Environmental sustainability.

We are very keen to look at how we can reduce the carbon footprint, contributing to the Church's commitment to reduce to 20% by 2050.

We would specifically like to investigate the type of material to be used for the roof covering of the North & South aisles and the extension, the inclusion of harnessing solar energy, etc., and an energy efficient heating system.

In designing the new extension we wish to limit the impact on energy consumption through the use of low energy lighting and high levels of insulation.

We wish to draw on the expertise of our architectural team: Henry Freeland is accredited in architectural conservation and is a specialist in the adaptation, renovation, repair and conservation of historic buildings and monuments and designing buildings in historic contexts. His team includes architects accredited in sustainable building performance and design, building conservation, and the design, construction and use of low-energy, low-CO₂ emissions buildings.

Afterword

An obvious example of a perceived need for change, and the choice of appropriate solutions, comes from the Victorian period. At that time the congregation required better visibility, some heat in winter, artificial light to read orders of service, and comfortable seating for all – not just the few. The solutions were radical and appropriate: pews, lighting, heating, and the open view down the nave.

St Mary's serves a large and diverse community and, once again, contemporary demands and technological advancements oblige us to find equally appropriate, and if necessary, radical solutions. It is the task of every generation to use the resources they are entrusted with to the glory of God.

Due to its condition today we are presented with the opportunity to consider solutions to make the future church building fit, primarily for worship, but also increasingly as an asset for the community of Hadleigh.