



**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE  
& NEED**

for

**NEW ACCESSIBLE WC**

at

**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,  
BURNHAM-ON-SEA**

*Revised November 2023*

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE & NEED  
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH,  
BURNHAM-ON-SEA**

**APPLICANTS:**

The Parochial Church Council  
C/o Mr David Carter  
46 St Mary's Road  
Burnham-on-Sea  
TA8 2BA

**AGENT:**

Chedburn Codd  
Glove Factory Studios  
1 Brook Lane  
Holt  
Bradford on Avon  
Wiltshire BA14 6RL

**SITE:**

St Andrew's Church  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea and Highbridge  
Sedgemoor  
Somerset  
TA8 1AW

**PROJECT:**

New accessible WC facilities at the base of the tower. *(NB - Memorial Garden to south of church now omitted and to be submitted as a separate application – Nov 23)*

**THIS APPLICATION:**

This application should be read alongside all drawings and photographs provided.

**DRAWINGS:**

The following drawings are provided as part of the application:

0609/ 002A_Ground Floor Plan and Sections As Existing	
0609/ 040B_Ground Floor Plan As Proposed	
0609/ 042_Accessible WC As Proposed	

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

There is documentary evidence of a church on the site from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the existing building dating from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The church is in the deanery of Axbridge and is part of the 'Coast LMG Restructuring of Ministry' within the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

The exterior of the church is constructed of coursed and squared rubble local stone, set under a lead and slate roof. The mainly perpendicular Nave of the late C14/ early C15 has been much remodelled but the early south porch and c.1315 south chapel retain much of their internal decoration. The late C14 tower with set-back buttresses, battlements and topping stair turret appears contemporary with the tower arch and displays a noticeable 'lean' when compared to the rest of the building. The north aisle is later and now contains a 19<sup>th</sup> century balcony, accessed from both the west end of the church and from the vestry at the east.

However, as Nikolaus Pevsner so aptly puts it, "What the church must be visited for is.....not for it's architecture, but the remains of the Whitehall Altar...". One of the outstanding features of the interior is the pair of angels which are full-sized marble sculptures and collection of marble statues and panels that adorn the walls of the church.

The angels were originally parts of an altar piece commissioned in 1686 by King James II, for the Chapel of Whitehall Palace, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The commission to carve the altarpiece was given to Grinling Gibbons & made in collaboration with his assistant/partner Arnold Quellin: for the sum of £1,875. Whilst the cherubs are thought to be by Grinling Gibbons, the angels are reputed to be by Quellin. After the fire at the Chapel in 1696 – and James had lost the throne – the altarpiece was dismantled and stored in the stables of Hampton Court Palace. Such was its quality and importance that it was moved, by Queen Anne, to Westminster Abbey in 1706, where it was reassembled behind the High Altar until 1820's when the altar piece was dismantled yet again to make way for seating for the coronation of George IV.

Some parts of the altar screen remain at Westminster, but the Bishop of Rochester (a former prebend of Westminster Abbey) and Vicar of Burnham, took possession of four separate sections of the altarpiece, with the idea of installing them as decoration to the interiors of St. Andrew's church. These included the series of central plaques that now form part of the reredos, a wall mounted tablet of angels surrounding the name of God, the crowning triplet of cherubs holding a bible and the two angels that flanked the original altarpiece. The triplet of cherubs now sits above the cill of the central north aisle window while the angels sit on temporary stone pedestals in the back corners of the tower.

## **STATEMENT OF NEED**

St Andrew's is well positioned within the town and on the sea front, with continuous visitors and use of the foot paths in the church grounds. The church provides one of few gathering spaces available to local residents. As well as for worship, the church is used for occasional meetings and concerts.

### New WC Facilities

The church has some existing toilet facilities; however they are located and accessed through the vestry and choir changing room which is not practical during services. The existing route and doorways to the toilet facilities are of narrow widths and there are a series of steps, providing no means of level access. The nearest existing public toilets are on the sea front or to the adjacent public park.

There is a great need for toilet facilities which are in an accessible location to all at any time and during any event or service and also to benefit the use of the existing hospitality facilities and gathering area to the west end of the church which are regularly used. The lack of accessible toilet facilities restricts a welcoming environment for the visitors and families. In addition, older members of the congregation are inhibited by the absence of this facility.

By enhancing the facilities available, the church would be able to accommodate the needs of the congregation and the local community in a relaxed, comfortable and hospitable environment in which to worship, congregate, socialise and enjoy.

## **STATEMENT OF INTENT**

### New WC Facilities

The intention is to provide an accessible WC with level access from within the church in the most suitable location to minimise harm to the fabric and layout of the building, whilst providing much needed practical facilities for those who use the space.

The initial options study (*see Options Appraisal 1 attached*) explored potential locations within the church to decide upon the best general location for the new accessible WC. This was also submitted for consideration by the DAC on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 which resulted in a delegation visit on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023. The conclusion was that the location at the base of the tower at the west end of the church was the preferred option to be developed further. The four alternative options all placed the WC at the east end of the north aisle and involved extensive ramps and services which compromise the space unsatisfactorily.

Subsequent discussions then took place with the PCC at St Andrew's Church and the architect to explore the possible designs for the new facility if located within the tower at the west end of the church (*see Options Appraisal 2 attached*). Designs were also submitted to the DAC for informal advice 4<sup>th</sup> Oct 2023. The DAC favoured the proposal of locating the new WC within the tower to the right hand side of the west door which offers a more symmetrical appearance and places the font in better context. However, there is not quite enough width to provide a fully accessible WC here without encroaching on the reveal of the doorway, which further upsets the symmetry of the church interior. The proposal was refined further to decide upon the most suitable partition design when considering the WC,

the west door, the existing wall monuments, the overall symmetry, and the setting of the font. This has resulted in a symmetrical timber panelled screen that spans across from the north to the south wall of the tower, cranked to optimise circulation space and to allow the large wall monument to remain in situ.

The final design of the proposed structure replaces an existing pair of cupboards on the north and south sides of the tower either side of the west door opening. This doorway is not currently in use although the proposed design forms a symmetrical opening to the inner reveal and will still allow the doors to operate. The proposed painted timber panelled partitions echo the traditional style of the existing enclosures but with a lower overall height to help reduce the visual impact. The central door completes the symmetry and provides a suitable setting for the repositioned font when viewed from the nave.

The font is to be moved forwards to accommodate the structure and allow circulation space around it for baptisms, and will be lowered for easier access by removing the base plinth.

The existing stone and brass wall monuments on the north wall of the tower would be rearranged and refitted to remain visible and clear of the new partition. The existing large stone wall monument on the south side would remain in situ, with the new partition formed in front to still allow visibility. The cupboard created behind would have a ceiling only.

The new enclosure around the accessible WC will form a 1.5m x 2.2m internal space with DDA compliant fittings all in accordance with Building Regulations. The internal walls built against the tower wall will allow ventilation and service runs to protect the fabric of the building. The WC, cleaners cupboard and also the storage to the south side will all have ceilings plus insulation for privacy where required. New extract ventilation will be provided through to boiler room and through the roof. New heating within the WC will be provided along with energy efficient lighting and new power supplies as required. The large existing radiator on the north wall will be replaced with a smaller fitting as shown. There is potential to also provide a secure cleaner's cupboard with low sink and storage as shown.

The existing stone slab flooring will be retained as far as possible. The central featured ledger stone with border in front of the font will be moved eastwards to allow font repositioning with a new soakaway. Any new stone slabs required to be chosen to match existing.

The intention is to route new drainage from the WC and cleaners sink above ground and through north wall of tower, and then sink it below ground. The drainage will be pumped from the north side of the church to the existing foul drain situated to the north side of the vestry. From this location it will run by gravity to the main sewer. The pumping station will also pick up and improve the drainage from the existing kitchen.

The final design has gone through a series of carefully considered revisions to arrive at the current proposal which seeks to balance the needs of the church community with the protection of the historic features and fabric of the church itself.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### Appendix 1:

Listing for Church of St Andrew, Burnham on Sea

### Appendix 2:

Photographs of the existing interior of the church

### Appendix 3:

Accessible WC Options Appraisal 1

### Appendix 4:

Accessible WC Options Appraisal 2

## **APPENDIX 1:**

### Listing Record



IoE number: 433731  
Location: CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, VICTORIA STREET (west side)  
BURNHAM ON SEA AND HIGHBRIDGE, SEDGEMOOR, SOMERSET  
Date listed: 17 February 1949  
Date of last amendment: 17 February 2049  
Grade I

ST34SW BURNHAM-ON-SEA CP VICTORIA STREET (West side)  
8/51 Church of St. Andrew  
17.2.49

ST34SW BURNHAM-ON-SEA CP VICTORIA STREET (West side) 8/51 Church of St. Andrew 17.2.49 GV I Parish Church. C14, C15, C19. Coursed and squared rubble, lead and slate roofs, coped verges with cruciform finials. Nave with a South porch and a South chapel, West tower, North aisle, chancel with a vestry. Mainly Perpendicular. South chapel c1315 with church 'furniture', 2-light South window, each light with a cinquefoiled head, below it 2 cinquefoiled tomb recesses, effigies removed. Also early C14 the South doorway and door, the latter reused on the porch; adjacent the doorway a contemporary stoup with a finial. Late C14 tower with set-back buttresses, battlements, topping stair turret, 2-light bell chamber windows; 4-light West window; contemporary the tower arch with wave mouldings; that to South chapel similar. The nave of late C14/early C15 much remodelled, 3 bays, 3-light windows; 5 bay North aisle all of 1838, galleried, in a Perpendicular style, parapet with battlements. Chancel arch also rebuilt 1838; chancel remodelled 1878; 2-light windows, 3-light East window. Salient interior feature the remains of the Whitehall Altar; commissioned 1686 by James II from Grinling Gibbons and Quellin for the chapel of Whitehall Palace. Removed to Westminster Abbey c1710, and to Burnham c1820; dismembered late C19 to form a reredos; 3 cherubs removed to North aisle, the large flanking angels on pedestals now under the tower. Furniture includes a much remodelled Jacobean pulpit; branch of 1773, C19 pews, choir stalls, font and altar rail; organ of 1885 by Vowles of Bristol. Tablet of 1598 under the tower to Austin Bord; 5 further C19 wall monuments, the most elaborate to Reed family in the nave. Lean- to roof to North aisle; barrel roof to nave; arch-braced roof to chancel. Some remains of medieval glass to South-West window of nave; remainder of stained glass C19. Remains of a pre-reformation altar stone to the South chapel, roused in the C19 as a grave stone. Three painted plaques to the vestry commemorating local charities of the C17/C18. Jacobean communion table, Jacobean chair. C18 painting of Christ to North aisle. (Pevsner, Buildings of England, South and West Somerset, 1958).

**APPENDIX 2:**  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF EXISTING INTERIOR



Image 1 – View of the base of the tower showing the existing cupboard enclosures either side of the unused west door.



Image 2 – View of the Nave, looking towards the tower at the west end and showing the pair of angels on plinths either side of the tower arch

**CHEDBURN • CODD**  
CONSERVATION ARCHITECTS  
*Historic Building Consultants*

St Andrews  
Burnham on Sea

Photographs of existing interior