

# ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, SHERFIELD ON LODDON

## Statement of Significance



### 1 Heritage

#### 1.1 History

1.1.1 A Church building is known to have existed on this site since the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1866 a very extensive restoration was undertaken which included:

- a. Rebuilding of the Chancel.
- b. Rebuilding parts of the North wall and the whole South wall of the Nave.
- c. The construction of a North extension to provide a short North aisle and clergy Vestry.
- d. New Nave roof structure.
- e. Replastering of the Nave walls.
- f. Provision of pine pews.
- g. Provision of a new Font.

In 1872 the Tower was added to the South side of the westerly bay of the Nave. The Tower is constructed of brick faced with flint and dressed stone but the spire itself is timber framed.

Externally the building has clay handmade plain tiles to the roofs except the spire which is clad with oak shingles. External walls are faced with flint with Oolitic Bath limestone quoins, plinth offsets, buttress weathering's and window/door surrounds. All this work apart from the Nave West wall dates from 1866 or 1872. The West wall, however, appears to be of earlier construction with a large timber boarded door and chamfered stone surround above which there is a later window. The origin of the dressed stone to the West wall is unknown but it is not the same as the 19<sup>th</sup> Century work. It is likely that there would have been a quarry within a short distance of the Church. The timber boarded door, once blocked up internally, but now in use following the completion of the church hall extension in 2014, is probably late Medieval.



The Church is listed Grade II.

## 1.2 Significance

1.2.1 Reference to significance will be made in accordance with the categories set out by James Semple Kerr (1996) namely:

Exceptional  
Considerable  
Some  
None  
Negative

1.2.2 No elements of the Church are of **Exceptional** significance.

1.2.3 The lower section of the exterior of the West wall of the Nave i.e. the chamfered stone flint, the stone door surround, the flintwork and the boarded door are considered to be of **Considerable** significance. Please note that the west wall door is now in use and connected to the church hall extension via a glass corridor since the hall's completion in 2014. Please refer to the additional pictures appended to section 1.4, the church hall.



1.2.4 The Victorian external facing and the proportions of the Church and Spire are of **Some** significance.

1.2.5 Internally one or two features including the organ and font are of **Some** significance.



Despite its 14th Century origins, the interior of the Church is a good, uncluttered 19th Century interior with some floral decoration to the plaster walls. The interior has **Some** significance.

There are no fixed elements or features considered to have a **Negative** significance. Some loose items should be removed.

### **1.3 Vulnerability**

1.3.1 Until the summer of 2014, when the church hall extension project was completed, the area of greatest significance, namely the Nave West wall, was not in use as the entrance into the Church and, being around the corner from the present entrance was somewhat neglected. Up to that point, the door, though it remained in situ, was no longer useable as the interior of the door opening had been blocked up. There had been some decay to the stone dressings to the plinth offset and the door surround but being limestone, it was thought that these can be relatively easily conserved, which proved to be the case. With the completion of the church hall extension, the door was conserved, repaired and re-opened, and has now become the main access to and from the church hall.

Recent images showing the west wall door in use, with the glass corridor connecting the church hall to the church building.



1.3.2 Externally the building has always been visually well balanced, and as such, its significance could be adversely affected if major alterations were to be carried out such as forming new openings through walls, obscuring, or blocking up of windows, without the correct approach, thought and planning in place.

1.3.3 Such considerations were one of the main reasons why it took over 5 years to reach consensus, approval and planning permission for the new church hall extension, to ensure that its architectural style, shape, positioning and materials used were in keeping with the church building itself.

1.3.4 The interior, as previously noted, is a good, though not unusual, example of a simple 19<sup>th</sup> Nave which is fully pewed with Victorian fittings in the Chancel and Sanctuary area. It is considered to be important to retain this interior as a whole and to minimise the removal of pews or to construct small enclosures for particular activities within the present interior.

## 1.4 Church Hall

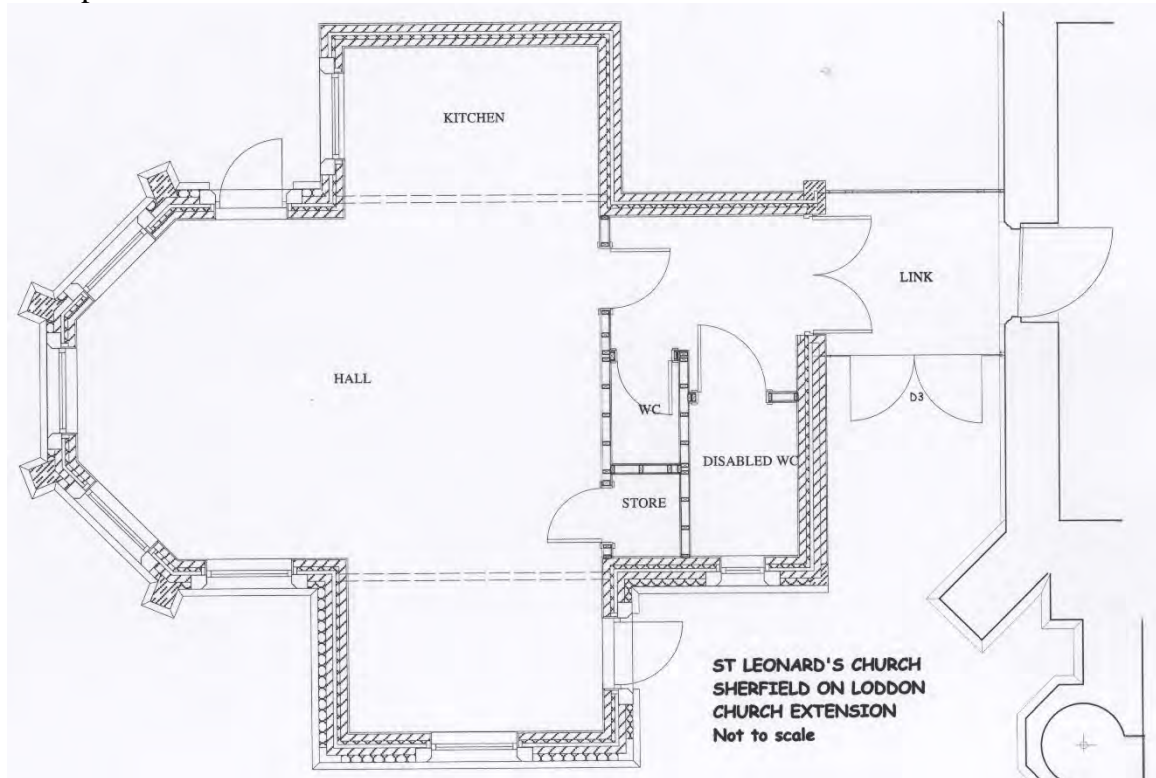
1.4.1 On the 27<sup>th</sup> of July 2014, after completing an extension project that had lasted more than 6 years (from an original long-term goal first recorded at the PCC meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2000), the new Church Hall extension was officially opened by the Rt Revd. Tim Dakin, the then Bishop of Winchester. Following Bishop Tim's visit, the final internal fittings were completed, and the hall was open for use.

1.4.2 The foundations consist of twenty-one 12" piles, installed at a depth between 8 & 11.5 meters, upon which was laid 16 cubic meters of concrete. The hall is of modern construction, walls of insulated white bricks on the inside, adjacent to further foam insulation and outer breeze blocks to which the flint exterior is attached. The roof is of timber construction, overlaid with tiles. A septic tank was installed underground adjacent to the hall to cater for waste.

### 1.4.3 The hall provides for the following facilities:

- a. Main Hall
- b. Kitchen Facilities
- c. WC & disabled WC
- d. Small store for cleaning products
- e. Glass corridor connecting the hall to the west door of the church.

Final plan for the church hall.



As a modern build, the church hall is considered to have no special historic or architectural significance, except that its sympathetic design, appearance, quality of materials and location contribute positively to the church building itself.

However, it could be considered culturally significant, as its ongoing use is to provide a venue to host many of the church social and community programs that are run throughout the year. These include, but are not limited to:

- a. Café Church Service
- b. Warm Place/Open House
- c. Lenny's – our new Memory Cafe initiative
- d. A new creative initiative based on using botanicals as an art form.
- e. Various functions, such as meetings, birthday venues, church suppers etc.

### Looking Ahead

Under consideration by the PCC, as of July 2023, is the provision of a standalone garden shed, to provide much needed additional storage. This requires DAC faculty approval and is work in progress.

## Proposed Garden Shed

Following PCC approval to proceed with the provision of a new wooden garden shed within the church grounds at the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2023, the relevant planning applications have been submitted to both the DAC and local planning authority for approval to provide a standalone garden shed for the purposes of providing much needed additional storage for sundry items held within the church hall.

Once approved, this item is to be placed on the north side of the main church and church hall buildings. This location ensures it is not visible to visitors to the church and is completely masked by the church buildings. This shed has no historic significance in itself and has no impact on the historic or visual significance of the surrounding church buildings.

## Garden Shed

Faculty and planning approval was granted during the spring of 2024. Faculty reference Number was 2023-087942.

The garden shed was erected and installed during the month of August 2024.

As stated above, the shed had no historical or cultural significance and is hidden from normal sight on the north side of the Church Hall, positioned as agreed on the planning drawings approved as part of Faculty and local council planning approval.

Images of the recently installed shed:

