FEBRUARY 2024

**ST MICHAEL & ALL ANGELS, CORNWOOD**

**PROPOSED REPAIR TO THE BENJAMIN BURRELL WALL MEMORIAL**

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Churchwarden

Mrs Marilyn Sharp BEM

Santon

Sparkwell

Plymouth

Devon

PL7 5DQ

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

PARISH Cornwood

CHURCH DEDICATION: St Michael & All Angels

BENEFICE Cornwood

DIOCESE Exeter

ARCHDEACONRY: Plymouth

DEANERY: Ivybridge

ADDRESS Cornwood Churchtown

GRID REF SX 60431 59365

LOCAL AUTHORITY South Hams District

LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY Dartmoor National Park

COUNTY Devon

STATUTORY LISTING OF CHURCH Grade I

STATUTORY DESIGNATION OF STRUCTURES AND OBJECTS IN CHURCHYARD

Three C18 chest tombs

CONSERVATION AREA N/A

SCHEDULED MONUMENTS N/A

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS Some trees may be protected

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

**THE CHURCH IN ITS RURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**SETTING OF THE CHURCH**

Cornwood is on the southern edge of the Dartmoor National Park area below the high ground of the open moor. The church of St Michael & All Angels is built on a low ridge overlooking the original village and its tower is visible from the surrounding countryside.

The church stands beside a quiet lane that leaves the village heading south into open countryside towards the hamlet of Corntown. To the south of the church, also standing on the high ground, is Churchtown, a small group of cottages which includes the old church house. This was formerly separated from the main village of Cornwood but the area is now occupied by 20th Century buildings. To the west of the church, open fields fall away into the river valley, rising on the other side towards Lutton.

The original churchyard surrounds the building and slopes towards the south. It was extended southwards in the early 20th Century, forming a long narrow plot as far as the Victorian vicarage. There are some large mature trees in the churchyard which frame nearby views of the church and from the distance set it in the wider landscape.

**THE CHURCHYARD**

There are numerous churchyard monuments, mainly headstones, most of which are in slate. Some of the earlier graves are on the north side of the church. According to the listing description, there are two 18th Century granite chest tombs north of the church and one immediately to the south east, all listed grade II. The church guide gives a date of 1639 to the last of these, by the lychgate, and 1655 to a similar tomb about 25 yards to the south west. In addition to these chest tombs, the graves within the original churchyard date from 1721 to the late C19.

The boundaries are generally of granite masonry. The main entrance is through the lychgate, built in 1878, to the south east of the church, consisting of oak framing on a granite base with a cedar shingle roof finish and a flight of granite steps up from the road. There are also churchyard gates from the adjoining field on the west and on the eastern boundary of the lower churchyard.

Most of the churchyard areas are grassed. There are two large mature yew trees in the north east corner of the churchyard, a large mature sycamore south west of the church and other trees in the hedge banks. The grassed areas are mown regularly and vegetation on the walls and tree growth are cut back. The churchyard has no special wildlife interest but because of the mature trees and adjoining pasture it is a good habitat for a number of species. Bats have been observed in the church.

**SOCIAL HISTORY**

The Domesday Survey recorded three manors in what is now the parish of Cornwood, Blatchford, Fardel and Cornwood (now Delamore), where large houses stand today. The village grew up in the early Middle Ages and by the early C13 a church stood at its centre on the present site and served both Cornwood and nearby Lutton, as well as outlying farmsteads and two further manors at Slade and Cholwich Town. The population was employed in agriculture and mining on Dartmoor.

Cornwood continued to be an agricultural parish, although the china clay industry brought greater prosperity from the latter part of the C19. The railway also arrived at this time and changes, typical of this period occurred, including the building of the village school, and a Congregational chapel and a Chapel of Ease in Lutton. Nowadays increasing numbers of inhabitants commute to Plymouth and the nearby town of Ivybridge. Some aspects of traditional village life have declined, shops have closed, as has the chapel. Throughout this time, the role of church in the community has undergone the sort of changes that have occurred in villages nationally.

The life of the village seems to have been fairly uneventful but there are stories concerning local individuals, such as Henry Smith, the Vicar during the Civil War, who climbed from the garret window of the vicarage to escape from Cromwell’s men but was later caught and imprisoned in Exeter gaol. In the 1730s, Waltham Savery of Slade was convicted by the Consistory Court of brawling with Sir John Rogers of Blatchford in the church and subsequently cut down the hat pegs in the church used by the Rogers family.

**THE CHURCH BUILDING IN GENERAL**

The church of Cornwood was mentioned in the first Diocesan Register of 1257. The oldest parts of the church, the west tower and the east end of the chancel, are thought to be C13. The low tower and north east stair turret are lit by small lancet windows. On the south wall of the chancel are a piscina and triple Sedilia. The church was enlarged to contain ‘three altars’ and re-dedicated in 1336.

The main body of the church is C15. It comprises nave, chancel, chancel chapels, north and south aisles, north and south transepts, south porch and north door. The walling is of granite with granite freestone dressings, the roofs slated and the tower rendered. On the north wall is a rood-loft stair turret. The 5-bay arcade between nave and aisles has slender granite piers. The ceiled wagon roofs have carved oak bosses. The windows of the aisles and transepts are perpendicular.

The finely carved wooden pulpit is Jacobean. The principal monuments are Cole (1596) and Savery (1696) in the south (Slade) chapel and Bellmaine (1627) on the south wall of the chancel. Five of the bells in the tower are dated 1770. The sixth bell was hung in 1835.

The vestry was built on the north east corner of the church in the C19. The chancel was restored in 1867. The roof was renewed with oak panelling and a new reredos installed. In 1875 the restoration of the nave and aisles was undertaken. The work included renewing the pews and replacing window tracery. The stained glass dates from the C19. The organ was installed in 1876. The octagonal granite font is of C19 date. The clock was installed in the tower in 1892.

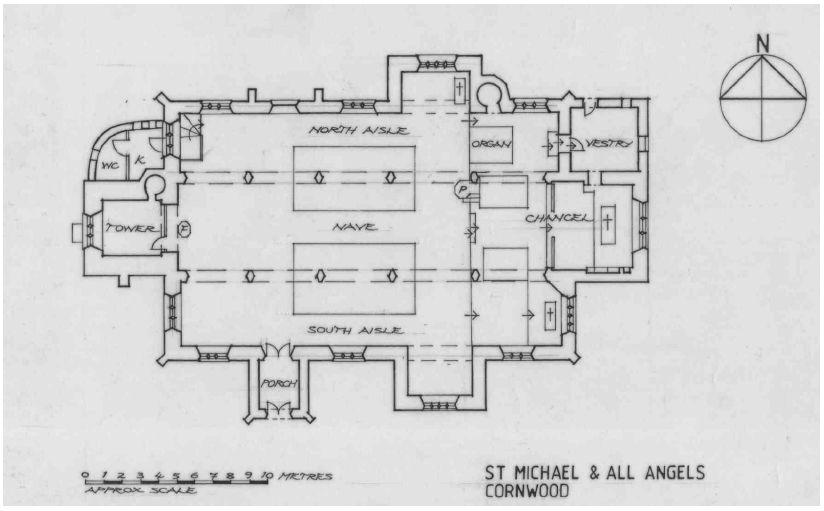
In 1984 a small extension was built on the north west corner of the church to accommodate a flower room and toilet. The pews were removed from the west end of the church to create a Fellowship Area.



Church from south



Church interior



Church plan

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHURCH BUILDING AND CONTENTS**

The grade I listing of the church is an indication of its overall significance. In one sense, it is unremarkable, being neither particularly unusual historically or of architectural magnificence, but it embodies characteristics of the typical Dartmoor church, such as its plan form with west tower, aisles of equal height to the nave, continuous roof over nave and chancel, construction in granite and slate and plastered wagon roofs. Also representative is its history of change and adaptation from the early medieval to a largely C15 structure with a predominantly C19 interior. It also has individual features of historical, architectural and artistic significance.

Historically, the oldest parts of the building are the most interesting, those being the low, unbuttressed west tower, with its small belfry openings, taller stair turret and lancet windows, and the east end of the chancel, piscina, Sedilia and remains of lancet windows.

Of the C15 work, the perpendicular windows, granite arcades and ceiled wagon roofs to the nave, aisles and transepts are good examples and are of architectural interest. The granite ashlar porch with its diagonal buttresses, 3-centred arch doorway and hood mould is an attractive piece of architecture. The rood stair turret on the north side of the building, now adapted and used as a boiler flue, is an historically interesting record of that phase of the building.

The C16 stone altar in the south aisle chapel, with strapwork and shields in the panels is of historical and architectural value.

The carved octagonal oak pulpit is an attractive example of Jacobean work.

There are several good wall monuments to local families, which are of both artistic value and historical significance. These include Robert Bellmaine and his wife 1627, John Savery 1696, Thomas Vivian 1793, Sir John and Dame Mary Rogers 1757, and Philip and Joan Cole late C16/early C17.

Much of the interior work and furnishings are C19 and include some good quality work, although perhaps most notable for its craftsmanship. The restoration of the chancel in 1867 by Lord Blatchford includes a reredos, arcading round the walls and altar rails, all in alabaster and marble. The wooden chancel ceiling with moulded and carved elements also belongs to this phase.

In 1875, the carved oak choir stalls were installed and the eagle lectern was given. The pine bench pews, also introduced at this time, are of a typical, fairly plain Victorian type, probably mass produced and not of particular significance.

The pipe organ was installed in 2012 and was given by Weston Mill Church as it was being demolished.

The stained glass is C19, not known to be by named artists but typical of its period and contributing to the character of the building.

The heating system was installed in the C19 and is a Perkins pressurised hot water system, with iron pipes and heating coils. The original coke fired boiler was replaced by an oil burning boiler some years ago and a number of leaking coils removed, so, while the system is of some historical value and believed to be a fairly rare survival, it is not a complete system.

The wrought iron porch gates, made in 1912 by a local blacksmith are an attractive example of the blacksmith’s art.

**SIGNIFICANCE FOR MISSION**

Few changes have been made to the building since the late C19, other than work at the west end in 1984. As a place of worship, therefore it functions much as it did in Victorian times, which imposes certain restrictions. Regular services, both traditional and modern, are conducted and other activities take place, as described in the statement of need. In particular, there is a strong link with the village school.

**THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AREA AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSAL**

**SIGNIFICANCE OF AFFECTED AREA**

The Burrell Memorial is situated on the North wall of the nave. The monument is a simple arched, inscription tablet and commemorates Captain Benjamin Burrell, who died in 1715, and was in the army of Charles 1st and 3 members of his family.



**IMPACTS AND MITIGATION**

The repair of the Burrell Memorial will have no impact on the surrounding area.

**SOURCES CONSULTED**

Cherry B. & Pevsner N., The Buildings of England: Devon, Penguin (1989).

The Book of Cornwood and Lutton, Devon Books/ Halsgrove (1997).

Church Guide,

Pode J. D., Cornwood Notes

Listing Description.

Dartmoor National Park website.

Heritage Gateway website.

Magic website