

Church Buildings Council

Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3AZ

Pastoral Measure Report: Staverton, St. Paul

Diocese: Salisbury County: Wiltshire	Dedication: St Paul Parish: Staverton & Hilperton Marsh	Listing: II PM: 2225	NGR: ST 854 608 Conservation Area: No
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Location and setting: This late Georgian Gothick church of stone is located in an ancient churchyard at the northern edge of the old village of Staverton, with “new” Staverton, a mix of Between the Wars housing and newer developments, stretching beyond this to the south with a marina development. Staverton is enclosed between the River Avon and Kennet and Avon Canal running respectively north and south.



The church seen from the south-east

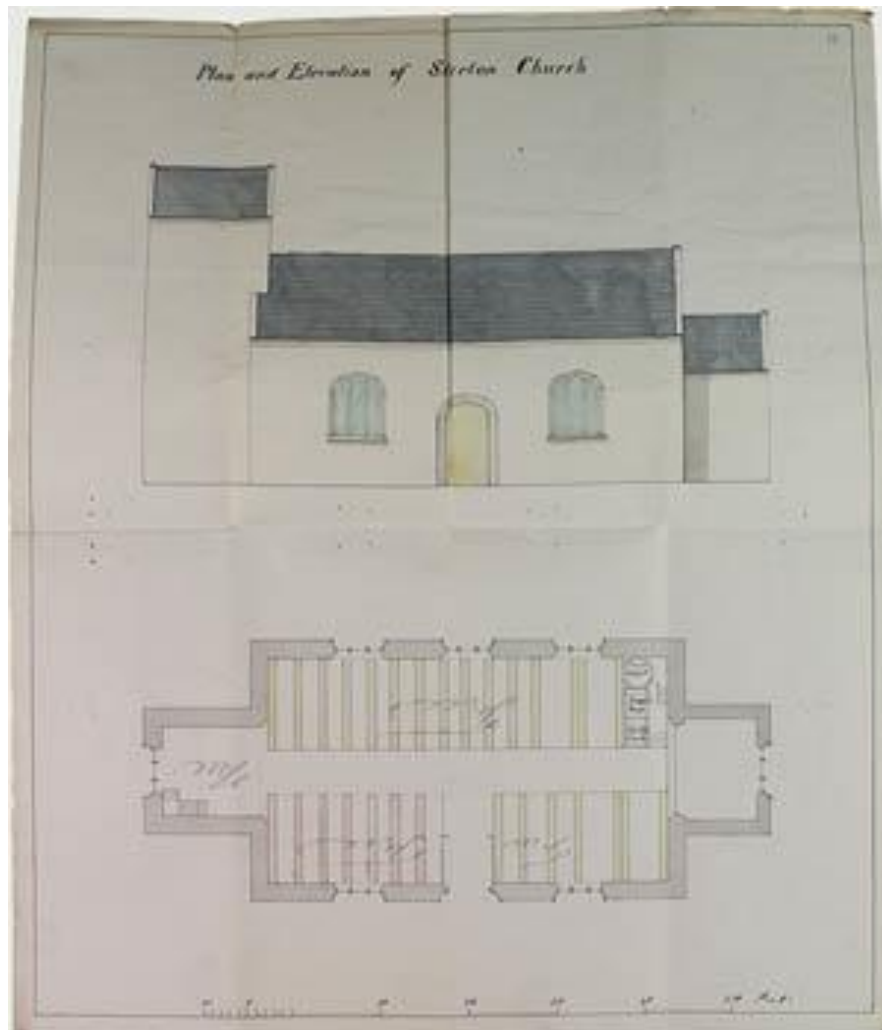
The tower and the tall nave roof give the building some vertical emphasis, and the raised location means that the church can be seen from some distance, a notable landmark seen from the valley of the River Avon to the north and west, but rather sheltered from view by housing to the south. This includes the large Old Vicarage, now a Residential Care Home, and several new housing developments.

There is no car parking, with the exception of a space in front of a private house just off the main road winding through the village, although this is an informal arrangement only. The churchyard is entered through a rather grand wrought iron gate with scrolled overthrow (of 1832) and lamp between stone gabled piers next to the house, which leads via a short path to the church.

A large yew almost blocks your view as the churchyard opens up, the east end before you. The boundaries are of wooden fences to the east and south, modern iron ones elsewhere, allowing for appreciation of the vista over the valley, a lovely spot. There are monuments

from the early 19th century, with a north extension opened in 1906 and an area for cremation burials. The churchyard is still used for burial.

Archaeology and history: Staverton is mentioned in Domesday Book and was a small farming community until the 19th century, grouped around a historic mill and bridge. The Medieval chapel-of-ease (first mention 1535) was “enlarged”, in fact it would appear totally rebuilt, with the help of donations from the ICBS and local families in 1824-6. A Buckler painting of the old church exists. The south porch and north vestry were added in the 1860s. No architect is recorded for either episode.



Plan from Church Plans online, showing the 1826 rebuild

Ground plan: 3-bay nave, south porch, short chancel, north vestry, west tower.

Dimensions: Nave 13m (42ft) long, 8m (26ft) wide.

Building materials: Dressed limestone, Welsh slate roofs.

State of repair: Based on the latest Quinquennial Inspection Report by Slade Smith & Winrow of Bradford-upon-Avon, July 2006. The church is generally in reasonably sound condition, although the windows suffer from rusting ferrements and spalling, and localised repairs to the roof are needed. Otherwise a programme of minor works and maintenance is recommended.

General description: This modest but charming church is designed in a rather naïve Tudor style, and this and the tiny, almost apologetic chancel immediately betrays the late Georgian date. The short two-stage west tower has no string courses or other definition. It has a

shouldered west doorway with plank door, 3-light depressed-arched window over, belfry stage with 2-light pointed louvred windows, shallow saddleback roof with coped verges and cross weather vane. A stain on the south wall shows where the boiler house stood, there are now overhead heaters.



The interior looking east

The other gables also have coped verges with cross finials. The nave is taller than the chancel, and has a 3-light depressed-arched window either side of the south porch, three such windows to the north wall. The chancel has a 3-light depressed Tudor-arched window in the east wall. Small gabled north vestry with paired shouldered lights and corbelled stone stack.

The gabled porch has a moulded pointed outer doorway with hoodmould and cross over, lancets to side. Inside there are stone benches, Depressed-arched doorway with double panelled doors into nave, collar rafter roof. The interior is plain and white-washed, probably concealing Victorian texts, one survives over the east window. The nave has an arched barrel-vaulted ceiling with moulded stone cornice. Plain but attractive pews with squared ends and brass umbrella holders and drip trays. Flagged floors under red carpet. Moulded depressed-arched tower arch and similar arch to sanctuary, the latter flanked by pointed brass Commandment tablets.

Furnishings and fittings: all c 1860 unless otherwise noted.

Altar: Altar table with turned legs, much altered but possibly Jacobean in origin.

Reredos: Curtain.

Pulpit: Hexagonal oak pulpit with steps, plain panels.

Lectern: Brass eagle, given as a World War I Memorial.

Font: Plainly moulded hexagonal limestone font, possibly early 19th-century.

Stained glass: East window with Christ healing, above this the Ascension, flanked by symbols of the Evangelists. Dedicated in memory of Elizabeth Hargreaves died 1887. Quite possibly by Wm Worral & Co (successors to WG Saunders, who had worked with Burges and Holiday).

Monuments: Minor late 19th and 20th-century tablets. Grey marble tablet with pediment on south wall to Jane Smith died 1778 and other family members up to 1856. ICBS board, 1826. Royal Arms against west wall of tower, painted 1801, with damaged and faded canvas in need of conservation.

Bells: There is one small bell of c 1826.

Organ: Two manual pipe organ built by a Mr Gallaway in 1953, installed 1966. Also electronic organ.

Communion plate: A cup of 1577, held in the bank. Brass altar cross given in memory of Howard Purnell, killed on the Somme in 1916.

Registers: From 1673, held in the church safe.

Communion rails: Communion rail of oak with balusters with foliage and vine-carving and open traceried panels. Given 1935.

War memorials: See above.

Bibliography: Pevsner, N, revised by Cherry, B (1975). *The Buildings of England: Wiltshire*. Lavis, P (2002) *History of Staverton*.

Other churches in the area:

Hilperton Marsh St. Mary Magdalen: A licensed place of worship built in 1889 by local people. The chancel was completed in flint but there was a shortage of money to finish it, so a 'flat pack' nave made of corrugated iron was purchased from Harrods of Knightsbridge. At the "Marina" end of the parish. 1 mile south-east.

Hilperton St. Michael & All Angels: Grade II Medieval church. 15th-century, but heavily rebuilt 1852 by T H Wyatt in 14th-century style. Rubble stone, Welsh slate roof with coped verges. West tower, 5-bay nave with south porch, chancel with north vestry and organ chamber. Gabled porch. Three-stage tower has diagonal buttresses and octagonal broach spire. Polygonal 19th-century stair turret with chamfered arrowloops on north side. Inside the nave has arch-braced collar trusses on foliated corbels, double chamfered segmental-pointed tower arch with 1890s wooden screen. Double chamfered chancel arch with wrought iron screen. Chancel has panelled roof with painted ribs and panels. Polygonal wooden pulpit with octagonal tester, given by John Kemp 1894. Royal arms of George III, 1771 over south doorway. 12th-century cylindrical stone font with fine carved arcading. 1890s Flemish or German stained glass in north west nave and south east chancel windows. South east window of nave to Rush family, by Ward and Hughes 1894. Monuments include brass on nave bench end to John Fido, rector died 1723, black and white marble tablet with draped urn to Elizabeth Chapman died 1780. Medieval church door against west end of nave; a fine example with cross braces. Set within large churchyard with monuments from the 18th-century, several listed. 1½ miles south-east.

Whaddon St. Mary: Grade II* Medieval chapel-of-ease. 12th-century, 14th-century, 1770s. Long nave, chancel rebuilt 1879. Rendered rubble stone, dressed limestone, stone slate roof. Nave and rebuilt chancel under one roof, north chapel off chancel, west belcote, south porch. Gabled 19th-century stone porch to south with depressed-arched opening, coped verge with cross finial, fine 12th-century inner doorway with beaded chevrons and crenellations to round arch, restored pilasters with scalloped capitals, tympanum carved with beaded tendrils and palmettes, ledged door with scrolled ornamental hinges and bars, said to be 14th-century.

16th-century mullioned nave windows, blocked 12th-century north doorway with segmental-headed stone lintel on pilasters with impost. West end has 14th-century two-light pointed window with ogees. Corbelled bellcote on west gable has diagonally-set shouldered openings, brattishing to base of short octagonal spire. Inside, 19th-century scissor-rafter nave and chancel roofs. Polychrome tiled floors. Stone newel stairs to former rood loft. Stone reredos below with three trefoil-headed arches on marble shafts. Wide elliptical archway with dropped keystone leading to north chapel; contains collection of Long family memorials: large grey marble classical monument decorated with amphorae, Roman torches, Greek key pattern, to Walter Long died 1807, an important piece by King of Bath; large white marble monument to Katherine Long died 1814 with relief scene representing Job v.26; several 17th- and 18th-century floor tablets to Long family, including one with brass inlay to Henrie(sic), died 1612. Churchyard within brick walls. 1½ miles east.

Assessment of significance: A Late Georgian Gothick church of some architectural significance and landscape value. The furnishings and fittings are integral to the church and of local significance, the stained glass window is of some artistic significance and interest. The Royal Arms could be conserved with advice and possibly grant aid from the Council. The site is of considerable archaeological potential because of the old chapel on the site.

Assessment of sustainability and potential for change: Future use for worship may only be possible if a complementary use is found. The interior offers considerable potential for this in terms of space, although care will be needed to achieve a sympathetic and successful result.

The Council's advice is not binding on the DAC or Chancellor and any changes would be subject to the granting of a faculty.

Compiled 10th May 2010 by the Archaeology Officer of the Church Buildings Council after a visit to the site on 12th April 2010.