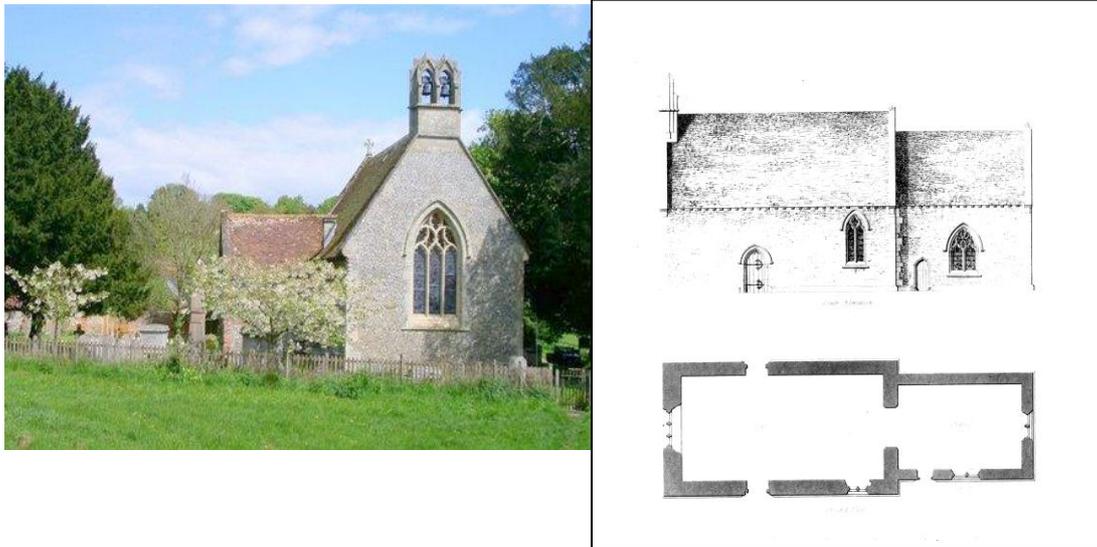


Holy Trinity Church, Penton Mewsey Renovation Statement of Significance

Part I: The church in its rural setting

Holy Trinity Church, Penton Mewsey, is about two and a half miles north west of Andover in the Winchester Diocese. A single parish until 1945, it is now part of Pastrow Benefice comprising five ecclesiastical parishes. The church lies about 100 metres from the main village street largely hidden from view and approached by a private roadway shared with Penton Manor to its south west. Adjacent to the west is a gently sloping meadow from the top of which is a pleasing view of the church and churchyard nestling at its foot against a backdrop of mature trees.



The church is small and of simple nave and chancel design originally built c. 1365-1367 and replacing a church mentioned in Domesday in 1086 but of which no trace remains. The present church may owe its origin to the Stonor family which held the lordship of the manor and advowson from 1365 and were wealthy lawyers and wool merchants. At an undetermined date in the 18th century, probably on the initiative of a self-made village butcher who rose both financially and socially by a good marriage, the original ground plan (see above), in the view of the respected 19^c Winchester architect, Owen Browne Carter and his pupil, G.E. Street, who was to become nationally celebrated, was ruined by the construction of a northern ‘transept’ as a pew for himself and family and dubbed by Carter when surveying the church in 1843, as ‘a monstrous erection in the shape of a gallery or pue [sic] furnished with an open fireplace... with all its noisy appurtenances.’ Enlarged in 1844 for later squires, it is currently used as the vestry and is generously proportioned for that function. The church is situated within the Pentons Conservation Area (revised 2009) and is listed Grade II*.

The walls are entirely of rubble with rough knapped flint of varying quality but with good ashlar quoins. Three recorded pre-Reformation mass dials survive on the SW and NW corner quoins. Much was rebuilt in two 19^c restorations but the west, south and north walls of the nave are thought original. The windows and doors are all in the late decorated curvilinear or flamboyant style, of which the north window of the

chancel, and south and west windows of the nave are original and of considerable quality. The tracery of the remaining replacements has been faithfully copied as have the mouldings of the arch pierced in the north wall of the nave to create the vestry extension. Fragments of the original 14c *grisaille* stained glass survive in the south window, some of which are thought to have been moved from the west window in 1869, when its glazing was replaced by an *Annunciation* by Cox & Son.

Of considerable note is the original stone bellcote and its two original late 14c bells. The whole is one of only eight mediaeval bellcotes to have survived nationally.

The roof is almost undoubtedly largely original despite a fire in 1889. Its original supporting timbers are hidden by a barrel shaped plastered ceiling.

The organ dates from 1907 and is by Hele & Company. Pevsner declared the 18c altar rails 'handsome and of twisted balusters' and the sanctuary chair of similar date 'a good example of an ordinary type.'

Much of the older interior furnishings, paving and monuments disappeared in the 'wretched' (in Carter's view) 1844 restoration, but the 14c octagonal decorated font with ogee panels survives but has been poorly repaired in the past. The deal pulpit, choir stalls and pews all date from the larger scale restoration of 1888 and are serviceable but of no great note, as also the brass lectern of the same date. The pulpit hides an elegant 14c ogee arched piscina with damaged credence shelf. The church possesses a fine early 18c chalice and paten now deposited in the cathedral treasury and to be joined by an exceptional very small bell bearing the date 1555 and almost certainly made by Jan van Eynde of Antwerp. Its iconography, though including the inscription 'Sic nomen domini benedictum' is classical and secular in character. This suggests that it may have been made for domestic use, but following confiscation of the church goods, probably in the early 1550's, it was acquired as a replacement for a lost sacring bell. It is the oldest dated bell in Hampshire and has been authenticated by the Victoria & Albert Museum.

The church registers (now at Hampshire Record Office) survive from 1653 and a churchwardens' book from 1805 which corroborates some of the information given above.

The churchyard is of some interest for a granite obelisk memorial to the Cubitt family of building and civil engineering fame. Sir William Cubitt was M.P. for Andover from 1852-1863 and lived at nearby Penton Lodge. Also included are burials marked by thirteen Portland headstones erected and maintained by the War Graves Commission, commemorating victims of early Royal Flying Corps (later R.A.F.) accidents during and shortly after WWI.

Part II: The significance of the proposal

It is proposed to add toilet and kitchenette facilities to the building by a new build small extension using present churchyard space in the apex of the present 18/19c vestry extension and the adjacent part of the north wall of the nave. Roofing would be provided by a catslide extension of the existing vestry roof. The new accommodation would be accessed by unblocking the original north door to the nave (see Carter's ground plan above). Access to the present vestry would be improved by a full height

wooden screen and double doors fitted within the existing north nave arch. The existing redundant chimney to a long removed nave stove would be taken down.

The photo above, taken looking down the meadow, towards the west end of the church, shows the location of the proposed extension hidden by foliage. It will be much more visible in winter months. The present appearance of the vestry extension and blocked north door is shown in the photograph below. Its three single courses of bricks nearest the wall of the nave show the extent of the first 18c 'monstrous pue' and the adjacent triple brick courses and brick North West corner mark the later 1844 enlargement. There are some indications in the flintwork nearest the nave that the 18c part may have been entered by a separate external door at this point for the exclusive use of the squire and his family. A possible solution for the new walls of the present proposal would be a combination of materials which echoes the 19c brick with some flint infill. To do so would be to follow a typical feature of 18c/19c Hampshire vernacular buildings. Great care will need to be taken to ensure that the new build external walls will be in sympathy with the existing structure in view of its visibility from the rising ground to the west.



The natural lighting to the new proposed extension will also need to be carefully designed and if a window is to be inserted it should preferably have a hardwood frame and mullions.

Subject to further investigation, a water main is believed to run under the existing private roadway to the church, already mentioned and which lies to the south. Excavating trenches in the churchyard to connect to this and also to provide rainwater and foul drainage will require disturbance to the churchyard and burials along the routes chosen. Careful archaeological investigation will be necessary before these are finalised.

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