STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE:

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BERKHAMSTED

Project: Roof Works

November 2023

BATTRAM ASSOCIATES

Chartered Building Surveyors

RICS

Project: Roof Works

Part 1: The church in its urban environment

The historic market town of Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, lies within the Bulbourne valley approximately twenty six miles north-west of London. Whilst the earliest recorded reference to Berkhamsted was in 970, the town was an integral waypoint from London to the Midlands during the post 1760 Industrial Age. Huge population increases continued and from 1850, many large estates surrounding Berkhamsted were sold for housing expansion. The canal trade provided considerable wealth with the town being a centre for boatbuilding. Soon, the railways further expanded the town's connections. In the 1900s, more estate land was sold with the town becoming a commuter town in the second half of the century. Today, Berkhamsted is an affluent town, continuing to be a prime commuter location.

All Saints church stands on the south western side of the valley, a short 5 minute walk from the high street, surrounded by residential roads. The church grounds are partly laid to parking, with a small garden to the east end. The church is built in red brick with an apsidal chancel. Clay tiles cover the expansive roof. Incorporated into the 1905 structure, a fragment of a Norman font was transferred to All Saints and built into the chancel wall.

Designed by architect C.H Rew, the foundation stone was laid in 1905. Mr. F. Harrowell of Tring constructed the main building. The west end was not completed. Original plans included twin towers but for reasons unknown, these were later abandoned. In May 1923, All Saints church was closed, with maintenance costs proving too great. It remained closed until 1938, via funding raised from the local St Peters church. In 1956, the church was consecrated and a thriving church remained for the following years.

Despite being a popular church, in the late 1960s the congregation began to dwindle. In the 1970s, the Methodist church in Berkhamsted required larger premises whilst the hall at All Saints was poised to close due to disrepair. A relationship was formed between both churches and All Saints church was the decided as the location of the new partnership. All Saints was subject to repair, re-modelling and extension under the guide of architect Percy Mark. The church was divided to its current form, significantly the altar was moved to the west end.

The church is listed as Grade II. The Historic England listing notes:

09.05.73 II

1906 by C H and N A Rew. Red brick. Early English style. Large tall nave; aisles, apsidal chancel. West end incomplete originally intended to be longer with 2 towers.

Listing NGR: SP9849107984

The church congregation is made up of a wide variety of ages with many church groups meeting regularly. The church hall provides a venue space for the wider community.

The church is in good condition with no serious structural defects (other than the proposed roof works).

Part II: The significance of the area affected by the proposal

As areas, the significance of the roof and external walls are moderate.

The proposal is to overhaul the roof. Inspections have revealed the fixings holding the tiles in place are severely corroded. The tiles are to be re-used to retain the existing visual appearance. If any new tiles are required, they are to be installed on the northern slope which is less visible due to the incline of Cross Oak Road. As the existing battens will be replaced with those of a similar dimension, so as to retain the original roofline.

There will be an impact upon the external walls by the scaffold fixings. The visual impact will be mitigated by mixing brick dust into the areas to be made good.