Welcome to the Church Maintenance Workshop For St Albans Parishes

St Andrew’s Church, Bedford 14th April 2018

Introduction

Welcome to the venue and thanks to the Diocese. Thanks also to churchwardens for all their hard work.

Introduction

Format for the day
The SPAB and why we should value
Places of Worship

St Andrew’s Church, Bedford
14th April 2018
What is SPAB?

How many of you have heard of the SPAB?

SPAB was the first National Amenity Society and is also the oldest building conservation charity, older even that the National Trust. It was founded by William Morris in 1877 in response to the work being done to ‘restore’ medieval church buildings. Over 130 years later we are still doing much the same thing – we advise, we educate and we campaign.
The SPAB - ‘The Anti-scrape Society’

Gothic revival/restoration
Stylistic purity versus Authenticity

In C19th a lot of churches were in a poor condition
Desire for new architectural style. Gothic chosen and in particular the Decorated Style and later Early English, as an ideal choice for churches. This resulted in many churches being restored to an arbitrary period, how they might or should have looked.

Between 1840 and 1873 7144 cathedral and parish churches (half of whole in England and Wales) were ‘restored’

Style over authenticity
In particular many churches had their plaster finishes stripped internally, which the SPAB were particularly opposed to, gaining the SPAB the nickname of the ‘anti-scrape society’.

Image on the left how a medieval church should look, lime plastered walls, lime washed walls and lime washed stone, giving a cohesive integrity to the spaces.

Image on the right walls stripped as part of a Victorian restoration. Monuments on a sea of crazy paving.

The exposed stonework is of a quality that was not meant to be exposed, not really coursed or dressed, rough rubble stonework intended to be covered by plaster.
C19th Cartoon from punch:

Medieval craftsmen very proud of his simple column

Years go by weather and erosion take their toll and Victorian Architect turns up and says something like

‘I’ve restored an entire cathedral based on less that that’ and proceeds to rebuild the column and creates…..
Victorian restoration nothing like the original
Complete conjectural restoration
West front of St Albans Cathedral as it is today, apparently a medieval gothic front
West front of St Albans Cathedral
prior to its C19th restoration
Today the SPAB carry out casework (commenting on LBC applications and the equivalents in the ecclesiastical systems); we run training programmes and courses for home owners, professionals, contractors and those either involved with or interested in looking after old buildings.

We publish our own technical guidance and provide technical advice; and we campaign about issues relating to the conservation of the built environment (National Maintenance Week and Stop Stanstead Expansion).
What will I get from this course?

• An appreciation of the importance of historic places of worship.
• The ability to recognise potential problems.
• Information on how to tackle common maintenance tasks.
• Access to specialist professional advice.
• Opportunities to share experiences with other volunteers.

What will I get from a Faith in Maintenance training course?

• An appreciation of the importance of historic places of worship.
• The ability to recognise potential problems.
• Information on how to tackle common maintenance tasks.
• Access to specialist professional advice.
• Opportunities to share experiences with other volunteers.
Support available after the course...

Technical helpline

• FREE advice on ALL your maintenance and repair queries.
• Access to SPAB’s database of professionals, craftspeople and contractors.
• Sources of further information and guidance.
• Even if we don’t know the answer we probably know someone who does!

Call Monday to Fridays from 10am until 12.30am on 0207 456 0916

Is there support available after the course?

Technical Helpline:
• Free advice on ALL your maintenance and repair queries.
• Access to SPAB's database of professionals, craftspeople and contractors.
• Sources of further information and guidance.
• If we don’t know the answer we probably know someone who does!

You can also use the main SPAB Technical Helpline Monday to Friday 9.30am until 12.30pm on 0207 456 0913.
Is there support available after the course?

SPAB Website:
• Technical guidance
• Links
• Downloads

You can access information at www.spab.org.uk.
Why are places of worship important anyway?

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings believes that historic places of worship are important to people from all sections of our society irrespective of creed and class.
Statistics frequently show that historic places of worship are the most numerous, most accessible and the most visited of all historic buildings.

Our historic environment contains a unique and dynamic record of human activity. It has been shaped by people responding to surroundings they inherit, and embodies the aspiration, skills and investment of successive generations.

Summary of Importance

Statistics frequently show that historic places of worship are the most numerous, most accessible and the most visited of all historic buildings.

Their importance to those who worship in them and live near them is unquestionable but they also play a vital role in the wider heritage of this country.

Bottom quote from Historic England Conservation Principles Document, which is particularly relevant to places of worship, some of which have been on their site and have been associated with their community for up to 800-900 years.
LAYOUTS: Development of Parts:

- C12 Nave
- C12 Sanctuary
- C12 Nave
- C13 Chancel
- C13 North Aisle
- C13 South Chapel

Taken from Cox, J C; Ford, C B *Parish Churches* London 1963
see also www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk
C12 Nave
C13 Chancel
C14 North Aisle
C14 South Aisle
C14 Sacristy
C14 North Porch
early C15 Tower
early C15 North Chapel
early C15 South Porch and Chamber
late C15 South Chapel
late C15 South Chantry Chapel
late C15 North Porch and Chamber

taken from Cox, J C; Ford, C B Parish Churches London 1963
see also www.lookingatbuildings.org.uk
1. Romanesque: Norman
   *late C11 and C12*

2. Gothic: Early English: lancet
   *late C12 to mid C13*

3. Gothic: Early English: geometrical
   mid to late C13

4. Gothic: Decorated: reticulated
   first half C14

5. Gothic: Decorated: curvilinear
   first half C14

6. Gothic: Decorated: geometrical-
curvilinear
   first half C14

7. Gothic: Perpendicular:
   second half C14 to early C16

8. Gothic: Perpendicular: curvilinear
   second half C14 to early C16

9. Gothic: Perpendicular:
   second half C14 to early C16

*taken from Cox, J C; Ford, C B
Parish Churches London 1963 p87*
Examples of Places of Worship

**Top left**
Greenstead church – Saxon earliest in Europe

**Top middle**
Peterborough Cathedral west front

**Top right**
St Michael and All Saints, Hales, Essex – Norman church with semi circular apse

**Bottom right**
Perpendicular gothic, Kings College Cambridge
Aspects of Significance – Bricks and mortar

And sometimes it is the stones or bricks and mortar themselves that are important.

Civil war gun shot at Malmsbury Abbey
Herringbone brickwork distinctive of Saxon masonry
Aspects of Significance – Context and Setting

The churchyard can be just as significant; in addition to gravestones, the flora and fauna are of importance as they are often one of the few green spaces in a town.

Caring for Gods Acre – charity courses and training on looking after churchyards.

Rare example of a tomb by C19th architect Pugin

At Ely St Mary you can hardly see the church for the trees! Trees may have Tree Preservation Orders and be very important in their own right. We also need to think about ecology of the churchyard – plants, lichens, insects, birds and mammals.

In St Andrew’s Churchyard in Penrith there are some Viking hogback tombs – so called because they resemble the distinctive hogback houses with their shingled roofs.

In summary we need to think about the setting of our buildings and what exists in their churchyards and gardens when we start to examine what makes them special.
Aspects of Significance – Art and craftsmanship

We also need to think about the objects inside our buildings such as stained glass, altars, monuments, pews. But we should consider the less obvious and perhaps more ephemeral items too – things like books, photographs, vestments and plate etc.
Aspects of Significance – Traces of History

And when we think about those small details we also have to think about the almost unseen evidence that can exist in the surfaces of our buildings where it can be very easily lost.

Churches pews, left used by family in the building trade, right initials of families who used the box pews (now panelling)
Aspects of Significance – Traces of History

Top left:
Traces of paintwork to base of a column.

Top right:
A spelling mistake on a gravestone at Shepshed St Botolph.

Bottom left:
Graffiti - some graffiti is very old and interesting indeed!

Bottom right:
A board for nine men's morris - this is scratched on a pew seat carefully hidden behind a pillar to allow the players to remain unseen by the minister!

It would be very easy to lose or damage such small traces of history if we’re not careful. This is why before we start thinking about maintenance or about repair we should take time to make sure we understand the importance of what we have.