
Christ Church, including churchyard boundary wall

Official list entry

Heritage Category: **Listed Building**

Grade: **II**

List Entry Number: **1489546**

Date first listed: **29-Apr-2024**

List Entry Name: **Christ Church, including churchyard boundary wall**

Statutory Address 1: **Christ Church, Stoke Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 1JQ**

This List entry helps identify the building designated at this address for its special architectural or historic interest.

Unless the List entry states otherwise, it includes both the structure itself and any object or structure fixed to it (whether inside or outside) as well as any object or structure within the curtilage of the building.

For these purposes, to be included within the curtilage of the building, the object or structure must have formed part of the land since before 1st July 1948.

[Understanding list entries \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/understanding-list-entries/)

[Corrections and minor amendments \(https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/\)](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/)

Location

Statutory Address: **Christ Church, Stoke Road, Gosport, Hampshire, PO12 1JQ**

The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: **Hampshire**

District: **Gosport (District Authority)**

Parish: **Non Civil Parish**

National Grid Reference: **SZ6120699756**

Summary

Anglican church. Built in 1862 to 1865 to the design of the architect Henry Woodyer in Decorated Gothic style. A north aisle was added by Woodyer in 1882 and two vestries, a sacristy and a lady chapel by the architect Charles Nicholson in 1925 who also added new furnishings in 1934. A refurbishment was carried out in 2021.

Reasons for Designation

Christ Church, Gosport, built to the design of the architect Henry Woodyer in 1862 to 1865, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

* as a well-detailed and well-crafted Anglican church of 1862-1865 despite being constructed on a modest budget;

* as a design by the important Victorian church architect Henry Woodyer who has numerous listed buildings to his name, with later furnishings by Charles Nicholson, a highly significant Anglican church architect of the earlier C20;

* for the high-quality surviving fixtures and fittings including: a well-crafted font and pulpit, stained-glass windows by Mayer of Munich, a fine High Altar by Charles Nicholson, a gilded and painted C19 reredos triptych, and well-preserved C19 organ;

* Woodyer has been deemed among the earliest mid-Victorian architects to build churches with a single

continuous roof over nave and chancel in the 'hall-church' style, and this example results in a relatively spacious and well-proportioned interior despite being built on a tight urban plot.

History

Christ Church is situated in an area on the edge of the ancient parish of Alverstoke and just outside the old town of Gosport. Gosport is recorded in 1206 as a 'newly built' port town (Oxford Archaeology 2014, 20). That which survives of the medieval grid pattern of streets and tenements is situated in what is now 'Old Gosport' and incorporates the east-west running High Street ('Middle Street' on C18 maps) which is flanked by North Street and South Street, with small cross streets and lanes (such as North Cross Street, South Cross Street and Bemister's Lane) linking the three. By 1417, Gosport was involved in the defensive system of Portsmouth Harbour with a blockhouse (fort) on Blockhouse Point. A ferry service linked the two towns from the C16 onwards and the subsequent development of Gosport was largely driven by its role in defending the western landward and seaward approaches to the harbour and supplying the Royal Navy. From the late C17 onwards, a line of ramparts and artillery bastions, known as the Gosport Lines, were built surrounding the town. Gosport's growth over the following three centuries mirrored that of the navy, as boatyards, rope-making facilities, victualling yards, a prison, hospitals, barracks and naval bases were constructed. It also led to demand for housing in large new residential areas beyond the Gosport Lines. One of the early C19 residential developments, which housed many dockyard workers and soldiers' and sailors' families, later became known as 'Newtown' and is where Christ Church is located. A new rector arrived in Alverstoke in 1845 and oversaw the development of a schoolroom that opened in 1853 but there was also demand for new churches.

Christ Church was built in 1862 to 1865 at a cost of £3000 to the design of the architect Henry Woodyer (1816-1896) and seated 400 people. Woodyer's original plan included a vestry on the north side of the church and a south-west porch but these were omitted due to lack of funds, as well as 'everything [else] not essential to the structure' (Civil 1965, 16). He was also responsible for the rebuilding of St Mary's Church, Alverstoke (Grade II-listed, NHLE 1232651) at about this time. Woodyer was educated at Eton College and Merton College, Oxford, before a brief period working in the office of William Butterfield. He then set up at 4 Adam Street in London's Adelphi, and cultivated a clientele who were largely, like him, devout 'high' Anglicans. Woodyer's output mainly comprised churches and other ecclesiastical buildings, parsonages, schools and country houses. His style has been described as idiosyncratic and original, sometimes rather 'neurotic' for its focus on unimportant details, but at its best 'full of imaginative touches' (Elliot 2004). Among Woodyer's most notable designs are the Church of Holy Innocents, Highnam, Gloucestershire (Grade I-listed, List entry 1340330), Christ Church, Reading (Grade II*-listed, 1113441), and his restoration of All Saint's Church, Wokingham (Grade II*-listed, 1155959). There are numerous listed buildings to his name.

The Bishop of Winchester consecrated Christ Church on 2 June 1865. A north aisle was added in 1882 to provide 228 extra seats at a cost of £2060. Woodyer also designed a two-storey gabled vestry with a hexagonal staircase turret but it was not built. From the late 1880s, stained glass by the firm Franz Mayer of Munich was introduced. This included an east window of 1888 and six windows to the north and south aisles in 1891-1892, commemorating two local families and a church mission. Two vestries and a sacristy were added at the north-east of the church and the south aisle extended to the east with a Lady Chapel in 1925 by the architect Charles Nicholson (1867-1949); all as memorials to the First World War. An organ loft also appears to have been added at this time, and probably the south porch. Five new stained-glass windows were installed in 1925 to 1936, including four by the architect's younger brother Archibald Nicholson. In 1934, Charles Nicholson designed several new furnishings for the church, including a new high altar, choir stalls and a low chancel screen, together with changes to the reredos. Woodyer's altar, screen and panelling were moved to the north aisle, and the chancel screen to the north side of the chancel. Nicholson was an important and prolific architect who designed and built a large number of Anglican parish churches. Initially an articled pupil of the architect J D Sedding, he was closely involved in the revival of post-Reformation High Anglican church furnishings in the early C20. Nicholson was later described as 'the really representative Anglican architect' of the first three decades of the C20 (Anson 1965, 347).

In 1949, further changes were made to Christ Church when new altar rails and a clergy stall were added, whilst sanctuary panelling and sedilia followed in 1959. The church was redecorated in 1972, a new lino floor installed, and a brass cross added to the chancel (later moved to the west wall). The C19 altar triptych paintings were restored in 1995 and returned to their original position behind the high altar. An internal refurbishment was carried out in 2021 when the pews were removed from the nave to be replaced with stackable chairs, a wooden welcome desk and drinks servery installed, carpet fitted (concealing the original floor tiles) and new heating and audio-visual equipment installed. Some pews were retained to the north aisle.

Details

Anglican church. Built in 1862 to 1865 to the design of the architect Henry Woodyer in Decorated Gothic style. A north aisle was added by Woodyer in 1882 and two vestries, a sacristy and a lady chapel by the architect Charles Nicholson in 1925 who also added new furnishings in 1934. A refurbishment was carried out in 2021.

MATERIALS: constructed of quarry-faced squared stone with ashlar dressings and red tiled roofs.

PLAN: positioned on a tight urban plot, the church comprises: a tall clerestoried nave and chancel under one continuous roof flanked by north and south lean-to aisles; a gabled entrance with a bellcote and porch at the west end of the south aisle; and two vestries, an organ loft and sanctuary at the north-east.

EXTERIOR: the church is situated at the corner of Stoke Road and Avenue Road. It is orientated ENE to WSW, aligned with the street grid. (Note: the following description is simplified to the cardinal points; for example, chancel at east rather than ENE). The main south front, facing Stoke Road, has from west to east: an original two-storey gabled south entrance with a later single-storey gabled porch; the south aisle of three-bays beneath the nave clerestory; a lady chapel of two bays; and the chancel. The original south entrance has a pointed bell niche set in the gable, a quatrefoil window to the west wall, and angle buttresses. Fronting it is the later south porch, which has a pointed entrance arch of three orders resting on engaged columns with foliate capitals under a hoodmould with foliated stops. There is a wooden-boarded door with elaborate decorative wrought-iron strap hinges. A blind trefoil is set in a roundel in the gable and there are paired trefoil-headed windows to the east and west walls. The south aisle has paired pointed windows separated by buttresses; each window is of two lights with geometric tracery incorporating a trefoil. A moulded cill course and low plinth is set beneath the windows. The pitched lean-to aisle roof continues over the first bay of the lady chapel, which is lit by three pointed windows under a single hoodmould; each window is of two lights with dagger tracery. The second bay of the lady chapel is blind (without any openings) under a flat roof with a stone parapet but there is a two-light pointed window to the east wall. Above the second bay of the lady chapel is a tall pointed chancel window of two cinque-foiled lights beneath geometric tracery with three quatrefoils under a hoodmould. The nave clerestory is formed of 15 octofoils set in arcades of pointed arches.

The east elevation, facing Avenue Road, is dominated by a large pointed arched east window, which has five cusped lights beneath geometric tracery incorporating trefoils and quatrefoils set under a hoodmould. It is flanked by diagonal buttresses topped by engaged columns supporting moulded kneelers. Set high up in the gable end, above the east window, is a small lancet window. Attached to the east end of the chancel is a single-storey sacristy and vestry added in 1925, which runs parallel with Avenue Road, filling the building plot at this end of the church. It contains three square-headed windows, variously of two or three pointed lights, under a flat roof.

The north aisle is of four bays, comprising: three pointed arch windows and a pointed arched doorway of two moulded orders at the west end. The doorway has a pointed hoodmould set high above it with cusping to the soffit; the space between the doorway and hoodmould contains a small cusped niche. The hoodmould is supported on engaged columns with foliated stops. There is a wooden-boarded door with elaborate decorative wrought-iron strap hinges. The north aisle windows are each of three cinque-foiled lights set beneath elaborate geometric tracery. There is a moulded cill course and low plinth. Above the aisle is the nave clerestory, which has 16 octofoils set in the arcade on this side of the church. Attached to the east end of the north aisle is a two-storey addition of 1925 containing a vestry and organ loft under a flat roof. This has a pointed arched entrance and three square-headed windows to the ground floor and a pointed arched window and lancet window to the loft. The east wall of this extension contains a pointed three-light window with intersecting tracery.

The west elevation of the nave has three huge buttresses beneath two pointed arched windows and a small lancet window in the gable. The windows are of two lights with geometric tracery. There are engaged columns to the kneelers of the gable coping. The west wall of the north aisle has a pointed window of four cusped lights below three quatrefoils to the tracery.

INTERIOR: the south entrance porch leads into the entrance vestibule, which has a polychromatic clay-tiled floor, and then through a further doorway into the west end of the south aisle where there are stained-glass windows by Mayer of Munich that portray the life of Christ. The aisles are separated from the nave by four pointed arches resting on octagonal piers with moulded capitals and bases. The nave has clerestory arcades formed of cusped arches on engaged columns. It is covered by an open timber-trussed and arch-braced roof supported on stone corbels decorated with foliate carving. The original clay-tiled floor is now concealed beneath carpet tiles. A brass cross added in 1972 is fixed against the west wall of the nave beneath stained-glass windows by Mayer depicting the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. The original font, almost certainly by Woodyer, is situated at this end of the church. It comprises an octagonal bowl, carved with pointed arches, the Cross, the Sacred Monogram and quatrefoils, which rests on an octagonal stem enriched with engaged marble columns, an octagonal base and a plinth. The north aisle contains wooden pews and the original wooden pulpit which bears similarities to the font. It has a stem carved with engaged columns which support elaborately carved panels bearing ogee arches, cusping and quatrefoils. The stained-glass to the north aisle depicts the Crucifixion, Last Supper and Good Shepherd. There are iron railings separating the altar as well as further decorative ironwork to the arched arcade openings with the adjacent vestry.

A large chamfered pointed arch separates the nave from the chancel. It has no capitals but an inner order ending in a concave curve; a Woodyer quirk. A stone step leads up into the chancel, which has a metal altar rail, high altar, wooden sedilia and panelling. The 1934 high altar design by Charles Nicholson is an elaborate gilded openwork front decorated with a pattern of vine leaves and grapes and set against a rich red background. It is flanked by tall Renaissance candle holders. Behind the altar is a reredos triptych, thought to date to the C19, which has lost its oak frame. It comprises a central gilded and painted panel showing Christ on the cross, flanked by Mary and St John the Baptist, and side panels of two figures of saints. Above the triptych is the east window by Mayer depicting Christ the Consoler. The chancel roof is of painted wood imitating rib vaulting. Flanking the chancel to the north are the vestries and organ loft. The latter contains a later C19 pipe organ by Hunter and Son originally installed in the Lady Chapel but moved to its current location in 1954. The south Lady Chapel has a small sanctuary entered through a pointed arch where there is an altar and stained-glass by Archibald Nicholson, including a depiction of the risen Christ.

SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: a quarry-faced squared stone boundary wall encloses the small churchyard immediately south of the church. It has a moulded stone coping and square stone piers surmounted by gables carved with

trefoil decoration.

EXCLUSIONS Pursuant to s1 (5A) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act') it is declared that the wooden welcome desk and drinks servery, and the heating and audio-visual equipment added in around 2021 are not of special architectural or historic interest. However, any works to these features which have the potential to affect the character of the listed building as a building of special architectural or historic interest may still require Listed Building Consent (LBC) and this is a matter for the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to determine.

Sources

Books and journals

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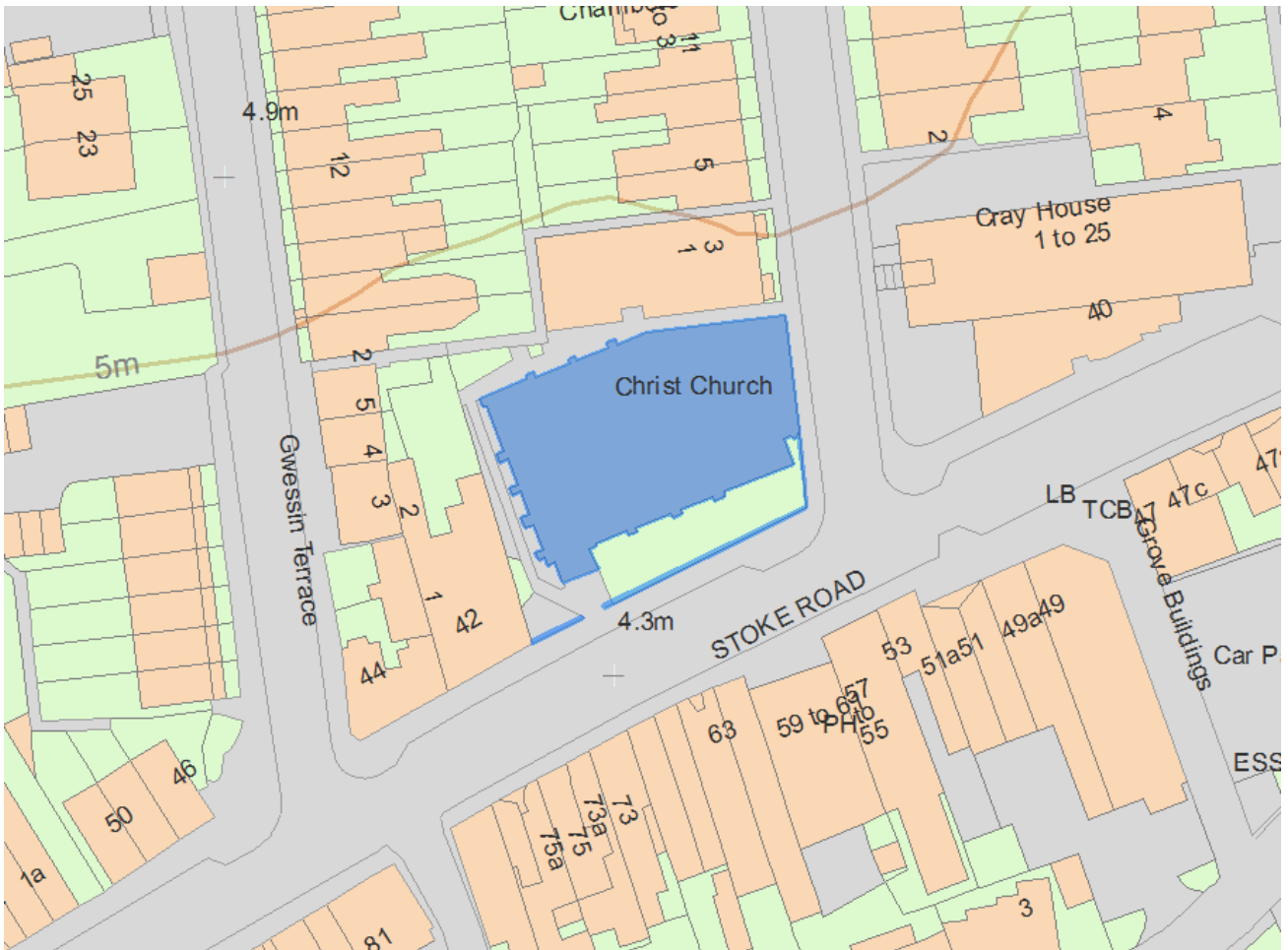
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Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.



Map

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