

**WITNESS STATEMENT**

(Criminal Justice Act 1967 s.9; Magistrates’ Courts Act 1980, ss.5A (3)(a) and 5B; Magistrates’ Courts Rules 1981 r.70)

Statement of **XXXX XXXXXX, BA (Hons), PG Dip Cons**

Age: **Over 18** (if over insert ‘over 18’)

Occupation: **XXXXXX Officer, XXXXXX Council**

This statement (consisting of 3 pages) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have willfully stated anything in it, which I know to be false, or do not believe to be true.

Signature

Date

I am the above named person, and I am employed as a XXXXXX Officer with XXXXXX Council XXXXXX Service, a post I have held for the past XX years. I have a BA (Hons) in XXXXXX and XXXXXX in XXXXXX. I am a qualified XXXXXX Officer, and am an affiliate member of Institute of Historic Building Conservation.

The purpose of the statement is to ensure that the Court considers the impacts that metal theft, in particular the theft of lead has on historic buildings in general, and the XXXXXX Church of XXXXXX (a Grade II Listed Building).

The XXXXXX Church of XXXXXX in XXXXXX is a Grade II listed building (Ref. No: XXXXXX), having been first listed on XX XXXX XXXX.

Its List Entry Description reads:

*XXXXXX church. 1873-5 and 1913-14 by Edmund Kirby. Buff sandstone; grey slate roofs. Continuous aisled nave and sanctuary, liturgical orientation reversed. EXTERIOR: the west front is symmetrical; projecting nave-width porch has pair of boarded doors with statue of St Werburgh on column between; a pair of lancets in recessed arch to each side of statue. The porch is gabled, and with gabled parapet to each side-wall. The gabled west end of the nave has triple lancets, flanked by flat gabled buttresses. A lancet in west end of each aisle; loop in nave gable; cross finial. The aisles have buttresses between paired lancets; cross-gabled wings. 15 clerestory*

Continuation of Statement of: **XXXX XXXXXX**

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*lancets to each side of nave and sanctuary; Apsidal east end with 5 lancets; ambulatory. INTERIOR: has alternating round and octagonal columns with rich foliar capitals; boarded wagon roof with trusses having stop-chamfered ties and octagonal posts; arched sanctuary truss with timber tracery.*

The Church has been the recipient of a blue plaque from the XXXXXX Society, commemorating the work of its Architect, Edmund Kirby and his association with the Diocese of XXXXXX.

Lead sheet has a long and esteemed history, being one of the oldest and most durable roofing materials. Lead was in use by 3,000BC and it was used in Roman times to form water pipes and baths. In the Medieval period lead was used for roofing, cisterns, tanks and gutters. Lead is a soft, malleable and reusable metal which can be shaped with hand tools without the risk of fracture. The main use of lead in local historic buildings is for roofs, flashings, down pipes, gutters and rainwater heads. Properly specified and detailed it can last for 150 to 200 years.

The theft of lead from historic buildings creates a number of problems:

- (1) There is the cost of replacement and associated repairs which can be considerable, requiring the skills and expertise of specialist contractors.
- (2) In removing the lead sheet, or flashings, the sub-strate is often damaged.
- (3) The surrounding roofing materials to the flashing (such as tiles and slates) are also damaged during the theft.
- (4) Guttering and down pipes are often broken or cracked during the process of removing the lead.
- (5) The theft of a lead roof can cause major damage to the fabric of a listed building.

Maintaining roofs, clearing valleys and gutters is an essential part of conserving heritage assets such as listed buildings, and vital to keeping them in good order. If damage goes unnoticed for any period of time the resulting water ingress can cause serious problems to the building. Even over the course of one or two days after the removal of the lead, the damage that can be caused by water penetration can be very serious, ruining ceilings, decorations and flooring. Equipment underneath can be destroyed by water ingress. If flashings are removed but the theft is not immediately apparent then roof valleys and abutments can leak for weeks or months. This longer timescale of water ingress can create conditions for wet rot and dry rot, which have the potential to affect the structural stability of the building, which again can be very expensive to repair.

In cases where lead sheet has been removed, the sub-strate also has to be repaired and any underlay replaced. (Lead sheet requires a smooth sub-strate to allow for thermal movement). To re-fix flashings several courses of slates/tiles have to be lifted, the flashing laid and the tiles re-fixed. Even if the slates were not damaged during the theft of lead, it is possible that disturbing them in order to relay the lead could cause them to split requiring them to be replaced, which in turn is another cost.

In the case of XXXXXX Church a length of approximately 25 metres of lead flashing has been removed from the south side of the Church. On Thursday 24 June at 11 AM I captured some images of the Church using a Canon Ixus 9501S digital camera. I produce these images as Exhibit MS1 (showing the intact flashing on the north side of the aisle); Exhibit MS2 (the length of removed flashing indicated by an arrow), and Exhibit MS3 (sections of damaged flashing left behind a downpipe).

Fortunately, damage to surrounding roof slates appears slight from visual inspection, however closer examination is required to determine whether the existing slates would withstand re-laying.

The very fact that lead flashing has been installed at this point indicates the vulnerability of this point of the structure, joining the aisles to the main body of the church. Water will no longer be diverted down the slope of the roof, but enter the building, risking damage to the good quality timber boarded ceilings internally, as well as damaging the plaster work and potential water staining to the sandstone columns.

The disruption and expense caused to the Church will far outweigh the cost received from the sale of the stolen lead. It is estimated that the cost to engage specialist contractors to replace and repair the stolen lead flashing may be a factor in the region of 10 – 15 times greater than the value of the lead itself (£800 - £1,200).

An increasing issue is that the principal companies who provide buildings insurance for Churches are starting to restrict the number of times they will pay out for claims relating to lead theft. This is obviously a concern as most parishes do not have the reserves to pay for this type of work themselves, meaning that the damage could go unrepaired for greater lengths of time whilst funds are raised.

It is also becoming a problem that Churches are understandably reluctant to continue to use lead, given that theft is often reoccurring, preferring lead substitutes which have a significantly shorter life span, (maybe only a tenth of that of lead) and differs visually. The continued theft of lead therefore has much longer repercussions, potentially meaning inferior materials are used, reducing the buildings future resilience to decay as well as altering the visual appearance, which many have striven hard to protect.

I am willing to attend court and to give evidence if so required.

Signature:

Date:

Witnessed by:

**Exhibit MS1.**



**Exhibit MS1. XXXXXX Church, XXXXXX. Showing intact flashing on North Aisle**

**Exhibit MS2**



**Exhibit MS2. XXXXXX Church, XXXXXX. Length of lead flashing removed from the south aisle (indicated by arrow)**



**Exhibit MS3**



**Exhibit MS3. XXXXXX Church, XXXXXX. Damaged lead flashing left behind downpipe.**

Name:

Job title:

Address:

Email:

Telephone: