

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955

CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

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NOTE: This report can be read at three levels of detail:

The SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES give a brief overview and checklist.

The APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS give a fully reasoned report sufficient for most purposes.

The ARCHITECT'S INSPECTION NOTES give a finely detailed record of the inspection observations on which the report is based, for future reference.

PREAMBLE TO THE QUINQUENNIAL REPORT ON THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Churches Measure 1955 and the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991, both of which have statutory force, require each Diocese to establish a scheme for the inspection of every church at least once every five years. Over the years Commissions of General Synod and Working Parties of the Council for the Care of Churches have made recommendations on the establishment of Diocesan Schemes, the selection and terms of appointment of the inspectors, and the scope, form and content of the reports. The current recommendations are contained in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR', Second Edition, 1995, published for the Council for the Care of Churches by Church House Publishing, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ. The following is intended to conform with those recommendations.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

Attention is drawn to the Terms of Appointment of the professional adviser included in Appendix B.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

A thorough inspection of the structural condition and state of repair of the Church has been made, covering all parts visible from ground and floor levels, readily accessible roofs, galleries or stagings, and where applicable from ladders provided by the PCC. Inaccessible and hidden roofs and valleys are excluded, and ceilings have been examined from floor level only unless otherwise stated.

IT IS EMPHASISED THAT THE INSPECTION HAS BEEN PURELY VISUAL, and parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered such as boarded floors, roof spaces or hidden timbers at the wall heads have not been opened up for inspection (unless otherwise stated in the report). Such woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered unexposed or inaccessible have not been inspected and therefore it cannot be reported that any such part of the building is free from defect. It is possible that any concrete used in the construction, alteration or repair of the church between 1923 and 1975 contains High Alumina Cement and/or Calcium Chloride additives. No investigation has been carried out to determine whether these substances are actually present and therefore it cannot be reported that such parts of the building are entirely free of risk in this respect. Where concrete of that period is persistently damp the risk of failure becomes significant and the appropriate investigations should be carried out.

Chimney flues were not inspected, nor were inaccessible flat roofs. Manhole covers were not lifted and none of the services, including the drainage, were tested. Damp meters were not used. Unless otherwise stated the inspection was carried out in dry weather, when it was not possible to ascertain whether the rainwater goods or gullies or surface water drains were watertight.

Recommendations for further investigation are included where suspicions have been aroused during the inspection but problems of access or the need for special equipment or opening-up have prevented full exploration. Where it is suggested that some part of the building be kept under observation this is for the attention of a future professional adviser as well as of the Church Council.

FORM OF THE REPORT

This is a general report only, as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991 and the Diocesan Scheme. It follows, in broad terms, the form recommended in 'A GUIDE TO CHURCH INSPECTION AND REPAIR' 1995 (mentioned above) and the requirements of the current Diocesan Scheme.

This report is the COPYRIGHT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ADVISER and is provided to satisfy the statutory requirement for a quinquennial report ONLY. It is confidential to the Church Council, the Diocesan Authorities and their respective professional advisers. It describes defects observed, is NOT A SPECIFICATION for execution of any work and MUST NOT BE USED FOR OBTAINING BUILDERS' ESTIMATES. An indication of likely repairs costs is included, but it must be understood that the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken, so the figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard.

THE CHURCH COUNCIL IS REMINDED THAT IT MUST NOTIFY THE DIOCESAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND/OR OBTAIN A FACULTY BEFORE PUTTING ANY REPAIR WORK IN HAND. In most cases specifications, schedules and descriptions of the proposed repairs will be required. This report is not a substitute for such documents but it may be cited in support as identifying the need for repairs.

One copy of this Report should be kept with the Church Log Book and Records, for future reference. The Architect will send the requisite number of copies direct to the Diocesan Office.

REPORT ON THE 2007 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION
of the Parish Church of
S A I N T C H A D , B E N S H A M

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Sunderland
Deanery of Gateshead
Historic Buildings Listing: Grade II*
Conservation Area: None
Civil County and District: Tyne & Wear, Gateshead
Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 249 617
Date of Inspection: 20th & 30th July 2007
Date of Report: 11th August 2008

Report by CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch. R.I.B.A.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

Dating from 1902, this is one of the largest and most ambitious churches designed by William Searle Hicks, in which his particular penchant for the late Gothic style (Flamboyant in some areas, full-blown Perpendicular generally) was given full rein. It proved to be a fitting memorial, as Hicks died before it was completed and is commemorated, along with Bishop Westcott who laid the foundation stone, by the stained glass of the east window of the Morning Chapel.

The church is cruciform, consisting of Nave and Chancel with aisles to both, Transepts, and octagonal Tower over the crossing. An Ambulatory under the east window of the Chancel gives access to a small Morning Chapel beyond. The Heating Chamber is sited under the west end of the Nave, taking advantage of the sloping site.

Walls are of buff-coloured sandstone, plastered internally; roofs are covered with green Lake District slates, with timber structures open to the interior.

The church is notable for the quality and elaboration of its contemporary furnishings and fittings, including much carved woodwork, and for some of its stained glass.

In 1990 the west end of the Nave was partitioned off and subdivided vertically and horizontally to create meeting rooms and ancillary accommodation on two levels for community use, to designs by Ian Curry, the then inspecting architect.

A ground plan of the church is included on the buff-coloured sheet following the 'Summary and Priorities' section of this report.

PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS AND RECENT REPAIRS

This is the second time the present writer has reported on this church. As well as that prepared in 1998, previous reports dated 1959 (G.E. Charlewood), 1964, 1975, 1984 and 1990 (all I. Curry) were available on the architect's file for reference in compiling the present one.

These previous reports form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past forty five years and surviving copies should be kept.

Repairs and works carried out since the last inspection have included:

Specialist repair of the stained glass of the North Transept window and of one of the stained glass windows in the Morning Chapel and repair of vandal damage to leaded glazing generally.

Re-finishing of external doors (eliminating graffiti).

Elimination of dry rot outbreak in South Choir Aisle roof and gutter timbers; re-slating of the North and South Choir Aisle roofs with new slates on the north and the best of the existing re-used on the south; re-covering of the Ambulatory roof with stainless steel; re-lining of parapet gutters to the Morning Chapel, South Choir Aisle, North and South Nave Aisles and Organ Chamber roofs; general repairs to rainwater goods, high-level glazing and slating; re-pointing of limited areas of external masonry and re-setting of finial on south-east corner of the Morning Chapel (2004, grant-aided by the English Heritage/Heritage Lottery Fund Joint Grant Scheme for Places of Worship).

Installation of mobile telephone transmission mast (disguised as the flagpole) with associated equipment in the Clock Chamber (2007).

Redecoration of limited areas.

A campaign of clearance and tidying-up of the curtilage was in hand at the time of the inspection, and repair of the clock and re-ropeing of one of the bells were under consideration.

Testing of the electrical testing has been carried out since this quinquennial inspection.

LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

- a) Attention is drawn to the recommendations of the **Preamble** to this report, and to the **General and Technical notes** given in **Appendix `B'**.
- b) The following inaccessible parts were not included in the inspection:-
 - i) Any voids and ducts below floors.
 - ii) Any concealed roof voids, including that between the timber vault of the Crossing and the concrete floor of the Clock Chamber above.
 - iii) Interior of the Organ and inaccessible parts of its chamber.
 - iv) Roofs were examined internally from floor levels and externally from ground levels, accessible flat roofs and gutters, and from the top of the Tower.

c) The Architect's detailed inspection notes are given in the following appendix, with descriptions of various parts of the building where appropriate, and comments on the condition of the fabric. These notes are an important part of the report, and should be read by the Parish (PCC officers, etc.), for the appraisal, recommendations and priorities in this report have been prepared from them. They are not a specification for repairs, and are unsuitable for obtaining builders' estimates. When the PCC is ready to proceed with any part of the recommended repairs, it is advised to contact the professional adviser for recommendations as to the appropriate course of action and ask him to prepare any necessary specifications and schedules.

APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following remarks inevitably concentrate on the defects noted during the inspection but it must be emphasised at the outset that the church is in good condition generally, a very considerable amount of excellent work having been done since the last inspection, particularly in regard to roofs and gutters. This report is intended to help direct the efforts of those responsible towards an orderly programme for the work needed in the foreseeable future.

A) STRUCTURAL CONDITION OF THE FABRIC:

As recorded in the last report, the building has evidently suffered significant structural movement in the past, notably in the vicinity of the Tower (where it is only to be expected due to the differential loadings on the foundations), though there are lesser easings elsewhere as well. All the crackings noted in the present inspection have been recorded previously and appear to be of considerable age - comparison with the 1996 inspection notes confirms that no significant movement has taken place in the intervening period. To keep the weather out and assist in future monitoring it would be worth cutting out and re-pointing the wider cracks and recording the date when this is done. All the crackings should be reviewed again in future inspections, and for this purpose detailed descriptions are given in the appended inspection notes. Briefly, the main ones to watch are the following:

Morning Chapel: Slight easings in the east window, through the westernmost window of the south wall and where this wall meets the ambulatory.

Ambulatory: Slight easings in east wall and the small cross-arches over each end of this passage.

Chancel: Opened joint through sill of third light from south of East window.

Chancel North Aisle: Easings through westernmost window - beside the east end of its lintel and rising through a joint of the parapet above.

Organ Chamber: Slight easings in arch between it and the North Transept.

North Transept: Slight easings, especially in head of external doorway and in jamb of window above.

South Transept: Perhaps the most obvious crackings of all, running up its east wall through the window at high level, and then lesser crackings in the west wall, and down from the mid-point of the sill of the large south window.

Nave: Crack through sill and foot of the mullion of the main west window, and movement through easternmost window of the north clerestory.

North Aisle: Slight easings generally, including those in its west window.

South Aisle: Slight easings generally, including those in tracery and head of its west window and in the arch of the south-west door.

Belfry: Externally, where the corner broaches run in against the main octagon; internally two cracks through concrete floor (visible from underside).

Clock Chamber (below Belfry): Cracks between concrete floor and south & south-west facets; diagonal crackings in west facet internally, rising to centre of panel.

As noted in 1996, the octagonal iron plate at the junction of the tie beams of the Tower roof in the Belfry needs treating and painting to inhibit the rust that has taken hold, and this still applies even though the central post of the roof structure has been replaced with a steel column and an additional steel beam has been run underneath the tie-plate to support the mobile phone transmission mast-cum-flagpole.

The steel beams supporting the roof of the Heating Chamber under the west end of the Nave and on the underside of the Belfry floor seen within the Clock Chamber stage of the Tower could do with painting. Where the concrete of the Belfry floor is spalling along the crack line parallel with the north wall any loose fragments should be brought down for safety and the exposed reinforcement steel painted to slow down the rate of corrosion.

The steel beams supporting the Clock Chamber floor are also rusting noticeably - visible through the hatch into the void above the timber vault of the crossing. However, given the age of the timberwork there is a risk of fixing failure so no-one should enter this void without the vault first being fully supported from below. The beams will therefore have to be left unpainted unless such support is provided for other purposes.

As commented in 1998, it is rather surprising that despite evidence of a damp-proof course in the external walls there are hints of rising damp in the bases of the columns of the arcades and in the stone floor paving. Though not serious enough to warrant any action for the time being - the damage being relatively minor and not developing at an appreciable rate - these indications of dampness should be reviewed again in future inspections.

As suggested in 1998, loading on the ceiling of the upper Meeting Room should be kept to a minimum by periodically clearing out the lumber stored there.

B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

The external walls of the church are of local yellow-grey sandstone, in roughly-tooled ('quarry-dressed') general walling contrasted with smoothly-tooled dressings to the architectural features. In general the stone continues to weather well, with only superficial erosion of general surfaces and occasional slight delamination of thin surface layers. More pronounced erosion is occurring in places, such as the sills and feet of the mullions and jambs of the Nave clerestory windows - though no action is needed for the time being these will need to be kept under observation and reviewed in future inspections.

Stone cleaning was carried out by chemical means shortly before the 1990 quinquennial inspection and some limited re-pointing was carried out to exposed elements such as parapet copings, window hoodmoulds, etc., as part of that contract. Some further limited areas of external masonry were re-pointed in the course of the roof and gutter repair project in 2004, but most of the areas listed in the last report still remain to be done. These include:

Tower: Inside faces of the parapets of the octagonal top stage (not urgent).

Morning Chapel: A couple of open joints in the east gable coping. Also a few open joints in the plinth and below on the east and north elevations.

Ambulatory: East wall open-jointed generally, including continuation into east wall of South Choir Aisle, and particularly above apex of roof of north-east porch.

South Choir Aisle: Open joints in the inside face of the south parapet.

North Choir Aisle: Projecting buttress and the walling behind the rainwater pipe on the north elevation.

Organ Chamber: Inside faces of parapets.

South Aisle of Nave: In and around the heads of the windows in the south elevation; window tracery (internally), south-west corner buttress and the copings of the parapet on the west elevation.

North Aisle of Nave: In and around head of west window, beside its northern springing, and at this level in the west wall of the north-west Porch. Copings of parapet to the westernmost bay of the north elevation and hoodmoulds to the windows on this side.

North Transept: Easternmost joint of north gable parapet needs filling, after removal of the weed growing in it.

In the foreseeable future the masonry of the top of the west gable of the Nave will need re-pointing, as will the south clerestories of the Nave and Chancel, east wall of the South Transept and the octagonal stage of the stair turret rising above parapet level of the North Transept, but the cost of scaffolding to reach these is not yet warranted.

The top section of the finial at the south-east corner of the Morning Chapel, toppled by vandals before the 1996 inspection, was repaired and re-fixed in 2004. The security of all the finials to the Chapel, Chancel and South Transept was checked at the same time.

As commented in 1998, mortar spatters should be cleaned from the east wall of the Morning Chapel - these latter presumably date from when the adjacent housing was built.

C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

Most of the main roofs of the church retain their original green Lake District slating laid to diminishing courses, which is now beginning to show its age. However, as part of the repair campaign of 2004 the poorest roofs - those of the North and South Choir Aisles which had suffered extensive damage from local youths - were stripped and re-slatted. The North Choir Aisle roof was re-covered with new slates whilst the best of the existing from both roofs were re-used on the South Choir Aisle. General repairs were carried out to the other slatted roofs at the same time, and since then the Tower roof has been overhauled following replacement of the flagpole with a mobile telephone transmission aerial. By the time of the current inspection a few isolated slates had slipped from various roofs and some routine minor repairs were necessary but the overall condition is much better than in 1998. Briefly, the condition of the slating on each roof can be summarized as follows:

Tower roof: Fair condition; no attention needed.

Nave Roof: A couple of slates starting to slip; some repairs in the past carried out with blue Welsh instead of green Lake District slates; fair condition overall.

Chancel Roof: Fair condition; no attention needed.

South Transept Roof: One slate slipped out on west slope; some Welsh slate substitutes; general condition fair.

North Transept Roof: One slate out on west slope; one broken slate on east slope previously repaired with adhesive now slipping out and needing replacement; fair condition overall.

Organ Chamber Roof: One Welsh slate used for repairs; fair condition overall.

South Nave Aisle: One slate missing, two or three others possible broken; hints of disruption under the cross-pipe running over the east end; generally fair condition despite extensive patching over the years; including some with the inferior Welsh slates; repairable for the foreseeable future.

North Nave Aisle: Generally fair condition but one slate slipping and others disrupted under the upper length of the cross-pipe at the east end, needing prompt attention. Given this, the slope as a whole is repairable for the foreseeable future.

South Choir Aisle (Over the Sacristy and South Chapel): Re-slatted in 2004 as mentioned above; all in good order.

North Choir Aisle (over the Office): Re-slatted in 2004 as mentioned above; all in good order.

Morning Chapel: One broken slate where north slope abuts ambulatory (may be responsible for leakage seen internally at this point); one broken slate in south slope; overall condition fair.

As commented in the last report, the scale of the roofs being well beyond the scope of volunteers, it would be worth reviving or setting up a replacement for the roof maintenance contract previously held with Matthew Charlton's of Hexham.

The stone ridges appear to be in good order for the most part, but those to the Morning Chapel and to the North Transept need re-pointing and on the north gable of the latter the joints between the watertabling stones need filling at the points where the gable flattens out into the horizontal copings at both sides. On the South Transept roof the southernmost section of the ridge has been dislodged, leaning slightly to the west, and needs securing promptly. The split stone capping where the ridge and hips of the Organ Chamber roof come together has been repaired but the iron finial set into it needs painting to inhibit rust. On the roof of the North-east Porch the hip stones have slipped down, leaving gaps between them and the apex stone built into the ambulatory wall. Re-bedding or at least re-pointing is needed.

The lead cappings to the hips of the Tower roof have been repaired or renewed since the last inspection.

As noted in the last report, some of the abutments of the slated roofs with adjacent walls have lead flashings (and, presumably, soakers laced in with the slates), whilst others have mortar fillets. The latter are the more traditional but less satisfactory means of weatherproofing such junctions, as they are prone to cracking away and allowing water to penetrate. Where this happens, whilst renewal of the mortar is likely to be the cheaper repair method in the short-term, it would be well worth considering introducing lead soakers and flashings at these junctions (as seems to have been past practice elsewhere on the building) as this is likely to be more durable and save money in the long run - provided the flashings are out of reach of thieves. Where the lead is accessible it should be painted with bitumen both to disguise it and reduce its scrap value. At the time of the inspection most of the mortar fillets and lead flashings appeared to be satisfactory but the following minor defects were noted and need remedy if not attended to already:

Fillet where east slope of South Transept roof meets Tower: Cracked and coming away - needs renewal or (preferably) replacement with lead.

Flashing at abutment of north slope of Morning Chapel roof with its east gable: Needs re-pointing for virtually its entire length and substitute material used for bottom section needs replacement with lead in due course.

Flashing at abutment of north slope of Morning Chapel roof with ambulatory wall: Possible leakage at poor junction between lead and felt sections of flashing.

Flashing where roof of North-east Porch meets Choir Aisle wall: Pointing loosening.

At the heads of the Nave North and South Aisle roofs mortar fillets have been formed over the top of the lead apron flashings, possibly to deter lead thieves as they are not necessary for water exclusion. On the North Aisle the fillet is cracking and coming away in places so could do with further patching but this is not urgent.

As part of the 2004 repair project the bituminous felt covering (which evidently replaced the original lead) of the roof over the Ambulatory alongside the east wall of the Chancel was

replaced with stainless steel, and this was used to replace the lead lining of the parapet gutter along its eastern edge as well. All is now in good order.

The Nave and Chancel roofs drain to cast aluminium eaves gutters, installed when the church was scaffolded for stone cleaning prior to the 1990 inspection. These appear to remain in fair condition but the timber corbels on which they rest will need repainting before long and at the time of the inspection the west ends of both gutters to the Chancel needed clearing of soil and vegetation.

The rest of the roofs, including that of the Tower, drain to parapet gutters. At the time of the inspection these too needed clearing out generally (footballs being much in evidence in addition to accumulations of soil, debris and vegetation) as did several of the hopper heads, downpipes and gullies. This clearing and checking operation should be repeated regularly as part of the maintenance contract for slating repairs mentioned above.

Most of the parapet gutters have been re-lined with stainless steel in recent years - that of the North Choir Aisle (over the Office) prior to the 1990 inspection, those to the South Choir Aisle, Morning Chapel, Organ Chamber and both Nave Aisles (including the North-west Porch) in 2004. Their decayed timber bases were replaced with concrete in the course of the repairs. Apart from needing to be kept clear of debris, all these appear to be in good condition.

The parapet gutter of the North-east Porch - which drains into the north gutter of the Morning Chapel - is of such a shallow form that re-lining in stainless steel is not practicable, there being insufficient height for the necessary drips between bays. For this reason it was re-lined with bituminous felt in 2004.

The parapet gutter of the Tower retains its original lead lining and this appears to remain in serviceable condition, as far as can be seen through the duckboards.

The west gutter of the South Transept had its base re-formed with concrete and the lining replaced with bituminous felt at the time the stone-cleaning was done prior to the 1990 inspection. This felt has not been examined from close quarters due to difficulty of access, but should be checked over by the roofing contractor when the routine gutter clearances take place. The lining of the eastern parapet gutter of this Transept could not be seen at the time of the inspection due to the depth of soil and weeds choking it. This alone could be responsible for the leakage reported in this area but the foot of the flashing at the south gable abutment and the detailing where the top gable rises above the horizontal parapet on the south elevation should also be checked from close quarters.

Most of the downpipes were renewed in aluminium at the time of the stone-cleaning project, but the original castellated cast iron hopper heads were retained, being a significant historic feature of the building. All these heads should be re-painted within the next couple of years, including coating their internal surfaces with bitumastic paint to inhibit rust. The aluminium downpipes should be repainted at the same time. That on the east side of the South Transept needs re-fixing where loose, as also do the top of the pipe and associated hopper head on the south side of the Morning Chapel and the top collar of the pipe on the South Choir

Aisle. At the time of the inspection the pipe at the west end of the South Aisle seemed to have been leaking, causing saturation of the walling and dampness visible internally - including water dripping from the light fitting in the heating control cupboard.

The downpipes from the Tower roof, which descend within the Belfry, should be included in the checking and clearing, and will need painting within the next five years.

D) WINDOWS, DOORS AND EXTERNAL JOINERY:

The church displays some impressive stained glass by distinguished artists, including Caroline Townshend, which forms an integral part of the artistic composition of the building. This glass fills the large windows at the four main terminations of the building - Chancel east, Nave west and the two Transept windows - as well as the eastern and two flanking windows at the east end of the Morning Chapel. At the time of the last inspection virtually all had suffered varying degrees of damage over the years but since then a great deal of excellent work has been done by specialist stained glass conservators - particularly that to the east window of the Chancel and north window of the North Transept. The only problems remaining are:

East window of Morning Chapel: Glazing badly buckled with at least some of the panels needing taking out and re-leading and cracked quarries edge-bonding.

East window in south wall of Morning Chapel: Star-cracking of a number of quarries in the lower lights, needing careful conservation repair, not replacement.

West window of the Nave: Bowing of some of the panels of the main lights, which could do with re-leading in the foreseeable future.

Most of the rest of the windows in the building, including the clerestories, have uncoloured glass in a characteristic 'spider-web' pattern of leading. At the time of the last inspection a number of these, down the south side of the building for the most part, had suffered damage by vandals. All have since been repaired, to an excellent standard. A few minor defects remain to be dealt with in due course: Isolated broken quarries in the north clerestory windows of the Chancel and Nave needing replacement; gaps around the glazing of the westernmost window in the south wall of the Morning Chapel, caused by gradual structural settlement, needing sealing.

The windows serving the stairs (westernmost window of the north side of the North Nave Aisle and west window of the South Nave Aisle) have had the glazing of their main lights replaced by large sheets of 'Reamy' glass set directly into the stonework - this presumably dates from the 1990 alterations scheme. This glazing is protected by overglazing but the tracery lights of both windows retain their original leaded glazing, unprotected. In the case of that to the south-west stair this is now quite badly distorted and/or vandalised, and repair and protection are desirable.

The main lights of the Organ Chamber windows appear to be glazed with polycarbonate, now severely discoloured but as these are not seen from the interior this hardly matters. The sheet that appeared loose in 1996 has been re-fixed since.

Rather more unfortunate is the use of 'Vandalite' or 'Meshlite' mesh-reinforced glass fibre sheeting in the west window of the north Nave Aisle (behind the new staircase but also see in

the small Office on the first floor) in particular. As commented in the last report, this should be considered as a temporary expedient only and consideration should be given to replacing it with something more appropriate for a listed building.

Happily, the 'Vandalite' glazing in the windows of the North Choir Aisle (Choir Vestry/Office) has been replaced with large sheets of obscure glass since the last inspection - a distinct improvement although not amounting to reinstatement of the original leaded glazing design.

Since the last inspection several of the windows in the Clock Chamber have had their leaded glazing renewed, to a good standard, leaving only an isolated cracked pane or two in the remaining lights which do not warrant action.

As commented in previous reports, the damage to some of the stained glass windows occurred despite the existence of external protection, although in some this did not extend to the tracery lights and it is not unlikely that most if not all of the vandalism took place before the protection was installed. Nevertheless, it is clear that protection is essential, must be maintained and ideally should be extended to include tracery lights as well. Since 1998 new polycarbonate protection has been provided to the windows of both sides of the Morning Chapel, to the north windows of the Chancel North Aisle and south windows of the South Aisles of Chancel and Nave, to the whole of the North Transept window and also to the tracery lights of the north windows of the Nave North Aisle, all fitted to a good standard. Having said that, the top of the sheet to the western light of the westernmost window in the south wall of the Nave South Aisle has come loose and needs re-fixing. On the older overglazing to the west window of the Nave several clips seem to have failed and need renewal - particularly at the foot of the second light from the north.

The east window of the Morning Chapel has a rather disfiguring galvanised wire guard set right across the face of the mullions and tracery stonework, and now beginning to rust. It would be worth replacing this with a more satisfactory form of protection sooner rather than later, before the rust stains the stonework below. The same applies to the south window of the South Transept, where the galvanised guards are rusting. The replacement protection to this window should be extended to include the tracery lights.

The east window of the Chancel has older polycarbonate overglazing, beginning to discolour with age but otherwise in fair condition except that the small piece filling the top of the southernmost light has popped out of the joint with the main sheet below, and the same seems likely to happen with the corresponding piece at the top of the northernmost light - both need slight adaptation or additional fixings.

The ground floor external doors of the building are all of oak and remain in fair condition, having been re-finished externally since the last inspection. That to the Chancel South Aisle could do with a filler piece where a lock has been removed, and its metalwork needs painting.

The door at the top of the spiral stair giving access to the North Transept roof and thence to the Tower had to be re-made following a break-in in 2004, and this repair was done to a high standard. The door to the Tower itself, from the North Transept roof, remains in fair condition but at the time of the inspection needed lubrication of its hinges and its frame appeared to be slightly loose. The ironwork on both doors needs painting to inhibit rust, as do the handrails on the external steps to that of the Tower.

Apart from the doors there is very little external timber work other than that associated with the Tower. The flagpole at the apex of the Tower roof has been replaced with a convincing replica incorporating the mobile phone transmission aerial, with either the original or a good copy of the weathervane set on top. The external wooden stair giving access to the Tower from the Organ Chamber roof, noted as decaying in 1996, has since been renewed completely - another benefit of the mobile telephone installation agreement. The oak Belfry louvres appear to be in satisfactory condition but the galvanised wire mesh on their inside faces is corroding and there are one or two places where birds could get in - notably on the north-east facet where a housing for part of the clock mechanism has been pulled away (as noted in 1996). The guards need minor adaptation or supplementing for the present but in the longer term it would be better to renew them altogether.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

The original flooring of the church consists of oak block to the pew areas, etc., sandstone paving (with slate inserts) to the passageways and marble to the Sanctuary areas in the Chancel and the Morning Chapel. All are on solid (presumably concrete) bases. Virtually all these finishes remain in place though some areas have been covered with carpet. The woodblock seems to remain in good condition overall, though a loose area just inside the door of the Vestry in the Chancel North Aisle needs re-fixing. In addition, in the North Aisle a couple of the mortice holes left where pews have been removed need re-filling and a section of the edge plate renewed in 2004 could do with blending in a little better.

The sandstone paving remains in serviceable condition generally but is suffering quite severe erosion in certain areas - notably the South Transept - due (presumably) to rising damp. It would be worth filling the worst of the erosion pockets with a soft lime mortar, for safety. One flag is loose in the North Transept and another flag and an insert in the Ambulatory passage; these should be re-set.

The marble paving in the Chancel, especially on the steps up to the altar, is coming loose, with some chipping and cracking. If nothing is done the pieces will be ground to dust or lost and the rate of deterioration will accelerate. Specialist attention is needed and some sections may need filling with carefully matched resins or even new slips of matching marble.

The timber frames of the matwells at the North Transept entrance door and in the North-eastern Porch have decayed due to saturation and it would perhaps be best to remove these recesses altogether, or reduce their depth to suit modern wheelchair-friendly matting materials. That in the south-west stair area is also probably best done away with, as the external door here is rarely used and the flooring between the matwell and the doors needs re-laying where it has been disrupted.

The lower parts of the walls in the Morning Chapel, aisles and transepts are covered with oak dado panelling. This remains in fair condition generally but as commented in 1998 needs careful patching where the pews which were let into it have been removed in the South Transept and Aisle.

The walls generally are plastered and painted, punctuated by the natural sandstone surrounds of the windows, arcades, etc. The church as a whole was re-decorated in 1990 when the community rooms were formed within its western end, and these rooms have been re-decorated on several occasions since, to deal with normal wear and tear. At the time of the inspection these rooms had just been vacated by the community project and some of the decoration was looking rather tired due to intensive use. Within the areas still in church use most of the areas affected by damp penetration through the roofs and gutters have been re-decorated since, once they had dried out. The exception being the west wall of the South Choir Aisle, which still shows water stains and could do with re-decoration in due course. In the Vestry enclosure within the North Choir Aisle some of the redecoration appears to have been a little premature and has been discoloured by residual dampness. Some further minor plaster repair and making good of the decoration is desirable in this area. Elsewhere, all seemed to be

in fair condition at the time of the inspection, except for a few limited areas affected by damp penetration which will need making good in due course.

Perhaps more seriously, as noted in 1996 an area of plaster skimming above the north window of the North Transept appears to be blistering and failing. This may be the result of patching with gypsum-based plaster at some time in the past, as this tends to react in this way when subjected to prolonged wetting. The original lime plaster is better able to withstand dampness and should only be patched with lime-based materials in future. As commented in 1998, some of the stonework of the window surrounds has also been affected by the damp penetration, causing powdering and erosion of the surface, together with efflorescing salts, and could do with brushing down to remove the loose material now that all has dried out. The same applies to the north respond of the archway between the North Aisle and North Transept.

The timber trim around the edge of the floor of the northern stair well needs minor repair where a couple of pieces of moulding have gone missing, but apart from that the flooring, fixtures and fittings in the new rooms appear to remain in reasonable condition.

The internal doors are mostly in good order but those to the Morning Chapel and to the heating control cupboard need easing where they are catching on their frames and, as noted in 1996, there seems to be a general problem with the hinges to the Meeting Room doors installed as part of the 1990 alteration works. These appear to be too weak for the weight of the doors and there seems little option but to replace them with a heavier duty pattern. At the time of the inspection the indicator bolt on the first floor male W.C. was not working.

Within the Belfry, the hinges to the access hatch in the floor need renewal and at the time of the inspection the ceiling panels and covering hatch from the central bell-hole, apparently left out of position by the mobile telephone installation company, had yet to be put back in place. The floors of the Clock Chamber and Belfry needed sweeping down too. It would be worth providing handrails on the ladders/stairs to these chambers.

The iron balustrade at the top of the spiral stair in the North Transept could do with painting to inhibit rust.

The floor of the Organ Chamber needs clearing of debris arising from the repair of its door - damaged by intruders but subsequently repaired to a good standard in 2004.

Liturgical fittings and the furnishings generally seem to remain in good order but the rails to the bookrests are loose or broken on a few of the pews - mostly in the North Aisle - and need careful repair.

F) INSTALLATIONS:

The **electrical** installation is believed to have been renewed as part of the 1990 alterations scheme, all visible wiring being of MICC cable. Since this quinquennial inspection the electrical system is understood to have been tested and several defects identified, mostly concerning the lighting. The fittings in the main body of the church are believed to be reaching the end of their useful life and are difficult to maintain. Some five years ago one of them drooped on its bracket and set fire to the timber wall post on which it is mounted. Fortunately this was spotted and dealt with promptly so serious damage was avoided. At the time of writing consideration is being given to a new lighting arrangement in the Nave/Crossing area.

At the time of the inspection the following defects were noted and should be rectified if they have not been attended to already:

Water heater and water boiler in ground floor Kitchen out of action.

Extract fans serving ground floor Meeting Hall not working.

Extract fan in first floor Gents W.C. still missing - presumably lost or destroyed. Its discharge duct still lacks a proper cowl due to confusion between it and the adjacent vent pipe. (The vent pipe got the cowl and the fan duct was fitted with the open grille terminal intended for the vent, which is not sensitive to rainwater penetration). This terminal will have been letting rain in, which probably accounts for problems with the fan.

Extract fan in Upper Meeting Hall not working properly.

Fluorescent light fittings in Lower Meeting Hall: Three not working.

Fluorescent fittings in Upper Meeting Hall: Two not working and one missing its diffuser. Spotlight on north side of Morning Chapel apparently not working.

Light fitting on underside of Gallery in Ambulatory broken. As it is rather badly sited it may be best removed altogether - it may be redundant already.

Lights just inside access door to Tower from roof and in Clock Chamber apparently not working, unless there is a master switch somewhere.

Light fitting at top of spiral stair in North Transept not working, and second fitting down appears to be overheating - too powerful a bulb inserted?

Light fittings in Heating Chamber lacking lamps and protective glasses - but being refurbished at the time of the inspection.

Ad-hoc wiring to light fittings in Organ Chamber including the storage area beneath as well as within the instrument needing replacement with proper flex or cable for safety.

No report has been received by the writer as to whether or not the **emergency lighting** system is in working order. It should be tested regularly.

The **heating** system was installed in 1990, comprising three Ideal Concord CX gas-fired boilers set up in tandem serving radiators and fan convectors via hot water distribution pipework throughout the building. It is reported to be effective and being serviced annually.

The sump pump in the Boiler House should be checked regularly and, as noted in 1996, the gas supply pipe in the meter room appears to need some additional support.

Whilst the main heating system appears to have been installed with due regard to the aesthetic and historic value of the building the same cannot be said of the bulky and intrusive 'Drugasar' gas heater in the Morning Chapel, which may be redundant and would be best removed in any case, particularly as its flue appears to have been vandalised beyond repair. The hole through the wall occupied by this flue should be filled in with stonework to match the surrounding walling. The gas meter in the Vestry in the Chancel North Aisle which has been taken out since 1996 may well have served this heater only.

Various minor matters regarding the **plumbing installation** needed attention at the time of the inspection: Reinstatement of the waste pipe from the kitchen sink where vandalised externally, and change of the gully top into which it discharges to a back inlet type; reinstatement of overflow pipes from W.C. cisterns on north wall of North Aisle, where snapped off; painting of cast iron soil pipe emerging from foot of North Aisle wall.

The **Organ** bears a label stating that it was rebuilt by Norman and Beard of London and Norwich, but no date or any indication of its provenance. It is tuned regularly by Harrison & Harrison of Durham and is believed to be in good working order though they have warned that in the longer term it needs cleaning (this was last done in the late 1960's/early '70's).

The two **Bells** are inscribed 'St. Chad's Gateshead' and were cast by Taylors of Loughborough, presumably at the time the church was built. The larger has been brought back into use by the efforts of the Diocesan Bells advisor; the smaller needs re-roping. As commented in the last report, the ironwork of the bell frame and fittings needs painting to inhibit the rust that is taking hold.

Although the **clock** faces were refurbished just before the 1990 inspection, in that carried out in 1996 it was noted there seems to be a problem with the metal straps between the components of the outer rims, with several of them broken or missing. This is still clearly the case, and the clock faces are beginning to show signs of rust, so general repair and repainting is needed. The internal plates for the clock face ties should be included. As in 1996, at the time of this inspection the clock mechanism, by H. Blockley of London, was out of action, having been abandoned by the Local Authority who had hitherto maintained it. Since then there has been further disturbance of its components in the course of installing the mobile telephone transmission equipment. A quotation has been obtained for repair and reinstatement of the mechanism, though whether this includes full refurbishment of the clock faces is not known.

There is no record of the **lightning conductor** system having been tested within the last ten years, so this is now due. At the time of the inspection it was noted that the terminal on the north-north-east pinnacle of the central Tower needed replacing. Before long the galvanised capping protecting the lower length of the downtape will need renewal, as it is corroding badly.

At the time of the inspection it was not clear whether or not the **Fire Alarm** system was back in working order (having been out of action in 1996). It should be re-commissioned if this

has not been done already. The **Fire Extinguishers** were reported to be the subject of a regular maintenance agreement.

The **intruder alarm** system is believed to be in working order but the connector box beside the external door in the South Choir Aisle needs re-fixing. It had to be removed for re-plastering of the wall behind in the course of dry rot repairs but requires an alarm installer to re-fix it as the box has to be opened to get at the screws.

G) MONUMENTS:

Since the last inspection the war memorial beside the north wall of the Morning Chapel has been rediscovered in the course of clearance of the undergrowth and has been reinstated at least in part. It is believed to have been included on a list of some kind but does not appear on the statutory list of buildings of architectural or historic interest held by the Local Authority. Within the church there are no significant monuments, only a few small plaques, although of course several of the stained glass windows constitute memorials.

H) CHURCHYARD:

The curtilage of the church is reported to be unconsecrated and does not constitute a burial ground. It is maintained by the P.C.C. Since the last inspection a new family centre building has been erected on the land to the south of the church and this area has not been included in this inspection.

At the time of the inspection volunteers from the church were clearing the vegetation and rubbish from the areas around the church building - particularly the east end, effecting a very considerable improvement. Unfortunately, a plan to erect a simple fence between the east wall of the Morning Chapel and the house to the east to improve security has been thwarted by the Local Authority planning department, who somewhat unreasonably required any new fencing to match the original boundary railings, including the stone walling, rather than simply following the pattern used by the adjacent housing development.

The handrails to the ramped approach to the north-east door of the church need repainting to inhibit rust and one section which had been pulled off the northern boundary wall by vandals needs re-fixing, if this has not been done already.

The boundary walls are in quite poor condition in places, particularly on their inside faces, and need general consolidation and re-pointing together with re-building of collapsed sections. Along the northern boundary it may be sensible to reduce the height of the wall (which no longer has any railings) to compensate for the loss of walling stone. The top of the western pier at the north-east gateway has shifted and needs re-bedding.

Most of the original iron railings and gates on the site boundaries survive but are in an advanced state of corrosion and need repainting urgently to prolong their life.

The paving which has been provided at some time on the past between the northern boundary wall and the North Aisle of the Nave is missing in places and needs reinstatement, or replacement with an alternative material.

SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church is basically sound and very well looked after. A tremendous amount of excellent work had been done since the last inspection, particularly with regard to roofs, gutters and windows. All the major concerns expressed in the last report have been addressed, leaving the building in much better condition than in 1996. However, much still remains to be done, in particular to deal with the two areas of leakage through the roofs (Morning Chapel and South Transept) if not done already, and in following up the recommendations of the electrical test report - especially regarding the lighting in the worship area - together with repair of electrical equipment. The state of the clock faces also gives some cause for concern. The boundary walls and railings need quite extensive repair and repainting.

Most of the recommendations of this report comprise little more than routine maintenance. The following order of priorities sets out, in broad terms, the relative urgency of foreseeable repairs over the next five years. However, it is not a definitive programme of work and items further down the list could be brought forward if desired.

An indication of the range of likely cost, at present-day prices, is shown for each priority category. However, in many cases the scope of repair work is undefined and no measurements have been taken. The figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard. V.A.T. is not included but is likely to be incurred on all repair work. No allowance has been made for inflation or for any professional fees.

I. OF UTMOST URGENCY:

- a) None required.

II. ESSENTIAL within the next SIX MONTHS:

- b) Minor repairs to roof coverings, especially where leakage has been occurring; possible renewal of lining to east gutter of South Transept.
- c) Clearing and checking of all gutters, downpipes and gullies, preferably establishing a maintenance contract with a roofing contractor; minor repairs to rainwater goods.
- d) Implementation of safety recommendations of electrical test report, and any outstanding repairs to water heaters, extract fans, light fittings, etc. Replacement of ad-hoc wiring to lights in Organ Chamber; re-commissioning of alarm system(s).
- e) Minor repair to plumbing installation.

(Range of likely cost: £5,000 - £7,500)

III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- f) Repair of clock mechanism and repair/refurbishment of clock faces.
- g) Minor repairs to external and internal doors; removal/infilling of matwells.
- h) Replacement of bird mesh on inside faces of Belfry louvres.
- i) Removal of redundant gas heater in Chapel.
- j) Repair of boundary walling and re-painting of railings; reinstatement and painting of handrails to wheelchair access ramp; reinstatement of missing paving.

(Range of likely cost: £7,500 - £12,500)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- k) Repainting of rainwater goods and of corbels supporting eaves gutters.
- l) Further repairs to stained glass windows and minor repairs to plain leaded glazing; renewal of failing clips on polycarbonate overglazing; continuation of programme of replacement of rusting wire guards with polycarbonate.
- m) Minor repairs to flooring, including filling eroded joints in paving and stabilising rocking flagstones.
- n) Closer examination and possibly renewal of damp-damaged plaster above north window of North Transept.

(Range of likely cost: £5,000 - £7,500)

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- o) Re-pointing of specified areas of external masonry and filling of structural crackings; removal of mortar spatters from east wall of Chapel.
- p) Painting of rusting ironwork in Belfry, including the bell frame, clock face tie plates, steel plate at junction of roof timbers, rainwater downpipes, etc., and of structural steelwork in the Clock Chamber and the Heating Chamber; removal of loose fragments of concrete from underside of Belfry floor and painting of exposed reinforcing steel.
- q) Replacement of remaining 'Vandalite' glazing.
- r) Specialist repair of marble paving in Chancel; patching of dado panelling where pews have been removed; repair of book rests on pews.
- s) Minor repair and testing of lightning conductor installation.
- t) Re-roping of the smaller bell.

(Range of likely cost: £12,500 - £15,000)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- u) Keeping structural easings, areas of stone erosion and signs of rising damp under review.
- v) Re-pointing of further areas of external masonry, notably west gable of Nave.
- w) Cleaning and overhaul of organ.

CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.Arch., R.I.B.A.
CHARTERED ARCHITECT

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

SAINT CHAD, BENSHAM

UNDER THE INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955 AND
THE CARE OF CHURCHES AND ECCLESIASTICAL JURISDICTION MEASURE 1991

DATE OF REPORT	11TH AUGUST 2008
DIOCESE	DURHAM
ARCHDEACONRY	SUNDERLAND
DEANERY	GATESHEAD

**CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.ARCH., RIBA. CHARTERED ARCHITECT
ECCLESIASTICAL AND HISTORIC BUILDINGS CONSULTANT**

THE CATHEDRAL ARCHITECT'S OFFICE, THE GREAT KITCHEN, THE COLLEGE, DURHAM DH1 3EQ

TELEPHONE/FAX (0191) 384 7010