QUINQUENNIAL SURVEY OF FABRIC 2005

ST MARYS CHURCH
COCKERTON
DARLINGTON

NZ 271 154

Archdeaconry of Auckland

INSPECTION NO 8

Date of Inspection: 14 December 2010

Inspecting Architect
Dennis H Jones Dip Arch RIBA

Stringer + Jones
Architects
The Old School
STAINTON, Middlesbrough
TS8 9A

1. BRIEF DESCRIPTION

1.1 The Church is situated to the west of Cockerton Green, which is a conservation area in a district of Darlington.

1.2 The building was built in 1900 (foundation stone on east buttress) and extended at the west end in 1967 to provide a narthex with adjacent offices and toilets, and a staircase to the Gallery. The original entrance now forms the Sacrament Chapel. The building is not listed.

1.3 The external materials are random sandstone with terra-cotta copings, cills and window dressings and a plain tile roof covering. The stone and tile materials have been used in the extension.

2.0 SUMMARY OF WORKS CARRIED OUT SINCE LAST INSPECTION

2.1 The following items of works are recorded as completed since the last inspection;

Alterations to provide toilet to DDA requirements
Installation of radiator covers
Repairs and upgrading of church notice board
Removal of tree at east boundary
Alterations to form escape doorway and ramp

3.0 STRUCTURAL CONDITION

3.1 The building generally remains in a sound condition with no major defects noted. The overall appearance is excellent with only very minor maintenance items requiring attention.

4.0 WALLS

Interior

4.1 The walls internally are finished in plaster with terra-cotta mouldings to Chancel arch and window dressings. All generally sound with only minor defects – an example is the old movement cracking on the south wall of the chancel which could be repaired within the redecoration.

4.2 There remains the sign of rising damp damage to the plaster at the base of the chancel arch on the west side, There is no apparent problem on the exterior, however this items should be kept under observation. *(item on 20.6)*

4.3 The alteration to the stonework, for the new doorway in the old porch, Is very good and the general appearance is excellent. *(item on 20.3)*

Exterior

4.4 The external stonework is very much the same as reported at the last inspection and the same comments apply - *Generally the stonework is in reasonable condition for its age, however the some of the repointing is of a very poor quality with a hand mortar mix, and in some cases over pointed onto the stone. The original mortar remaining in certain areas is of good quality and requires little attention. A programme of replacement should be drawn up in order that the stone is not eroded by the hard mix – this is occurring in some places.*

5.0 TOWER

5.1 The bell-cot previously repaired appears to be sound, although some vegetation is noted on the south watertable. This should be removed as soon as possible before it becomes well established and damages the stonework. There are some open joints in the lower sections of masonry, particular item above lead flashing on north side, which should be taken into account in the programme of repointing mentioned in 4.4. (*Items on 20.5)*

5.2 The leadwork to the roof ventilators is laid above the roof tile rather than as soakers. This may cause a problem later. The comments made in previous reports are still relevant. *The fleche ventilators require a detailed inspection with particular attention to the lead skirts and flashings. .*

6.0 ROOFS, GUTTERS AND CEILINGS

6.1 The roof to the original church is an open structure with the main truss members falling to terracotta corbels. There is some spill-off from the general lighting onto the roof members which improves the overall atmosphere in the church. From floor level there appears to be no major defects. A closer inspection at some time would be advisable.

6.2 The ceilings to the extension are of plaster finish and in good order except for poor decoration.

6.3 As mentioned in previous reports *..The roof covering throughout is of plain red tile and in sound condition. The extension has been well matched and is in a true line with the original. The watertable on the north side of the Nave has some open joints near base with vegetation. This requires early removal (as item 5.1)*

6.4 The gutters are as noted at previous inspections*… in a variety of cast iron patterns and generally appear to be sound. The falls and lines are not perfect but if kept clear and well maintained they should be satisfactory.* At the time of the inspection the gutters appeared free of vegetation and there were no signs of leaks. The guttering to the

extension, on the south side, is most vulnerable due to the close proximity of the overhanging trees and should be checked regularly. *(item on 20.7)*

7.0 RAINWATER DISPOSAL, DRAINAGE AND EXTERNAL DECORATION

7.1 All drains should be checked and cleaned and gully tops made secure – at time of inspection most were clear of leaves except one on the south side of the nave at present overgrow with vegetation. *(item on 20.4)*

7.2 Generally the cast iron gutters and down pipes appear sound and show no signs of defects. However they are in need of redecoration and the internal surface of gutters should be checked and painted with a black bitumastic paint.

8.0 INTERNAL DECORATION

8.1 The internal wall decoration is now showing signs of staining, particularly on the gallery ceiling and it is understood that decoration is proposed in the near future. *(item on 20.6)*

9.0 FLOORS AND GALLERIES

9.1 All floors remain in good condition, timber in the Nave with carpet to central aisle and Chancel.

9.2 The oak faced step at the Chancel arch appears to be in sound condition, however the dampness noted in item 4.2 may cause a problem in the future. This should be kept under observation.

10.0 GLAZING & VENTILATION

10.1 All windows remain in a sound condition. The north side Chancel windows contain opening lights. There is a new stained glass window in the central bay on the north side of the Nave. This is an excellent piece of work.

10.2 Window protection is provided to all windows, generally in good condition painted black, except for one on the chancel south window which is galvanised. All the fixings are into the stone joints and are secure. *(item on 20.5)*

11.0 ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

11.1 The lighting system is by high level fittings and these enhance the character of the interior with an element of up-lighting to the roof structure. At the time of the inspection all fittings were in good working order (see also General Note 21.1)

12.0 HEATING

12.1 The boiler room is generally well organized with some material store in part, but well away from the actual boiler. Only limited storage is recommended. The boiler has been regularly serviced and maintained with the last service recorded at 16/10/10. A fire extinguisher is situated next to the door and service is recorded as 6/97 (see also item 13.1)

12.2 The heating system is a hot water radiator installation and of a good design. Radiator covers have been fitted in recent years.

13.0 FIRE PREVENTION

13.1 There are a number of extinguishers situated around the building. They are placed in the Gallery, at rear of Nave, at the Chancel arch, in the Vestry office and in the Boiler House. There is a CO_2 extinguisher adjacent to the photocopier in the office and in the Gallery there is also a CO_2 extinguisher. Servicing is noted at various dates – 6/97, 2/09 and 6/10 It is recommended that all are service at the same time and particular attention is drawn to the extinguisher in the boiler room which may have been missed in recent years.

13.2 The new escape door now provides the requirement requested in the Fire Officers report.

14.0 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

14.1 The pipe organ has now been removed, and the electric organ situated in the Gallery is in general use.

14.2 The Nave is furnished with chairs and this arrangement enhances the character of the interior.

14.3 The Foyer and Office are furnished with good fittings and the spaces are well organised. The toilets have been amended to provide a single unit to DDA recommendations, and improved kitchen facilities. All are in very good condition.

15.0 CHURCH GROUNDS

15.1 Generally the grounds are well maintained and provide an attractive approach to the Church. Trees recommended for attention in the last report have been removed or trimmed. Landscape treatment is now good with gravel and plants to the north side but to the south, a shaded area there is still undergrowth adjacent to the building and some ivy climbing the wall. *(item on 20.4)*

15.2 The large cherry, near the entrance gates, mentioned in the last report has been removed and this has improved the open aspect of the church.

16.0 BOUNDARY WALLS

16.1 The boundaries are as follows:
East – wall and railings with gates – in good condition
North – wall and outbuildings – possible joint boundary with adjacent owner
West – open to beck with fence beyond
South – stone wall with Cottage at S/E end

All elements are in reasonable condition requiring no immediate attention.

17.0 ENVIRONMENT SITUATION

17.1 The Church stands at the west end of the Green within its own grounds and is not affected by any unsightly buildings on adjacent land. It is noted that public access is available through the grounds and to some extent this could be an advantage to prevent vandalism to the fabric.

18.0 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS

18.1 The following are noted for further investigation and/or monitoring –

i) detailed inspection of leadwork to ventilator fleche (item 5.2)
ii) inspection of nace ceiling at time of redecoration (item 6.1)

19.0 PRIORITY OF ADVISED REPAIRS

19.1 **Of utmost urgency, estimated cost (in-house)**
i) removal of vegetation in water tables (items 5.1)
ii) removal of ivy on south wall of nave (item 15.1)
iii) check and clear all rainwater gullies (item 7.1)

19.2 **Essential within next 6-18 months, estimated cost £3,500/4,000**
i) check and paint cast iron gutters (item 6.5)

ii) redecorate interior walls and ceilings to nave, chancel and gallery (item 8.1)

19.3 **Necessary within the Quinquennium**

i) keep under observation tree branches overhanging vestry roof (item 6.4)

ii) clear undergrowth adjacent to south walling (item 15.1)

19.4 **Ultimately desirable**

i) prepare a programme of repointing (item 4.3)

This report is presented in the form recommended under Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, Diocesan Scheme Revised 1976.

1.0 Brief Description of the Church and grounds

2.0 Summary of works carried out since the last inspection

3.0 Structural condition

4.0 Walls and masonry

5.0 Tower/Spire

6.0 Roofs and Guttering etc

7.0 Rainwater disposal, drainage, external decorations, etc

8.0 Internal Decorations

9.0 Floors and galleries

10.0 Glazing and ventilation

11.0 Electrical system

12.0 Heating system

13.0 Fire prevention

14.0 Furnishing and fittings

15.0 Churchyard and grounds

16.0 Boundary walls, paths, etc

17.0 Environmental situation

18.0 Recommendation for further investigation

19.0 Statement of the order of priority for advised repairs

20.0 Sketches and photographs of Church

21.0 General notes

21.0 GENERAL NOTES

21.1 Any electrical installation should be tested every quinquennium and immediately if not done within the last five years (except as may be recommended in this report), by a competent electrical engineer, and a resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The engineer's test report should be kept with the Church Log Book. This present report is based upon a visual inspection of the main switchboard and of certain sections of the wiring selected at random, without the use of instruments.

21.2 Any lightning conductor should be tested every quinquennium (in addition to any works which may be recommended in this report) in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice, No C.P. 326 1965 by a competent electrical engineer, and the record of the test results and conditions should be kept with the Church Log Book.

21.3 A proper examination and test should be made of the heating apparatus by a qualified engineer, each summer before the heating season begins; the PCC should consider arranging an Inspection Contract with their Insurance Company.

21.4 At least one fire extinguisher of the right type should be provided; there should also be one additional extinguisher of the foam or CO type where the heating apparatus is oil fired. (There are three main types, and it is essential to have the appropriate one in the appropriate place. Advice should be sought from the local authority Fire Prevention Officer.)

21.5 This is a summary report only, as is required by the Inspection of Churches Measure; it is not a specification for the execution of the work and must not be used as such. The architect is willing to assist the PCC in applying for an Archdeacon's certificate or a faculty, as may be required to comply with the regulations.

The PCC is reminded that their minutes must record the fact that the application is being made for a certificate or faculty, and that a copy of the Minutes must accompany the application together with a full specification, drawings where application, and an estimate of the cost of the work. In any application for grant-aid, a full specification is always required.

21.6 The PCC are strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for the cleaning out of gutters and downpipes twice a year.

21.7 Although the Measure required the church to be inspected by an architect every five years, it should be realised that serious trouble may develop in between these surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is strongly recommended that the churchwardens should make, or cause to be made, a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year, and arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes. Guidance may be had from the pamphlet, '**How to Look After your Church**', obtainable from Church House Bookshop, Great Smith Street, London SW1.

21.8 The PCC are reminded that insurance cover should be index-linked, so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. It is of course important to ensure that the basic sum insured is adequate at inception of index-linking, as this will deal only with future inflation. The Ecclesiastical Insurance Office Ltd which covers the majority of churches in this country, will send its regional surveyors without charge to offer guidance as to the appropriate level of assessment in every case.