

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 U T H B E R T , D A R L I N G T O N

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Auckland
Deanery of Darlington
Historic Buildings Listing: Grade I
(some of the churchyard structures are listed Grade II)
Conservation Area: Darlington Town Centre
Civil County and District: Durham, Darlington
Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 291 144
Date of Inspection: 26th July 2007
Date of Report: 7th June 2008

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

BRIEF DESCRIPTION

One of the finest churches in the north of England, and the most complete example of its date and style in the Diocese. Also one of the handful in the north-east with a medieval spire.

The church is cruciform, with Chancel, Nave and Transepts all of equal height radiating from the central Tower whose Belfry rises from their roof ridge level and supports the octagonal spire. The Nave is flanked by aisles. There are two Vestries on the south side of the Chancel (with Organ Blower Chamber under one of them), and an underground heating chamber alongside the North Aisle. Internally, the Chancel is separated from the Crossing by a large stone Pulpitum surmounted by the Organ. The masonry is dressed local sandstone; most of the main roofs have medieval oak structures and, together with those of the aisles, are lead-covered. The Vestries have flat roofs now covered with stainless steel.

The building is almost entirely in the late 12th/early 13th century Early English style. Begun by Bishop Hugh le Puiset around 1190; probably completed by 1250, including the aisles which appear to have been an afterthought. This original (collegiate) church is richly decorated in its eastern parts; quite austere but well-proportioned in the Nave. In the 14th century the aisle roofs were raised and new windows inserted, and the Belfry and spire were added. The Clergy Vestry is basically 15th century; the Choir Vestry added in 1891. The church was extensively but not unsympathetically restored in the 19th century.

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 fourth time the present writer has reported on this church. As well as those prepared in 1990, 1995 and 2002, the 1984/5 quinquennial report by Ronald Sims of York was also available on the architect's file for reference in compiling the present one. Previous inspections are assumed to have been carried out by Ronald Sims or his predecessor George Pace. These previous reports should form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the last forty years, and all surviving copies should be kept.

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

Minor repairs to roof coverings and rainwater downpipes.

Re-pointing of limited areas of external stonework, together with a few stone replacements.

Upgrading of lightning conductor installation (2003 - by Hastwell's).

Reinstatement of bearings to beams supporting clock weights, etc.

Treatment of woodworm in Belfry floor.

Continuation of programme of glazing repairs and protection.

Installation of new sound reinforcement system (2003 - by Atkinson's).

Installation of lighting to reredos.

Introduction of votive candle stand.

Rebuilding of insecure section of 'moat' wall on south side of church (2004).

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) Voids below the suspended timber pew platforms.
 - ii) Interior of the Organ.
 - iii) Roofs, Tower and spire were examined internally from accessible floor levels and externally from ground levels and from the top of the Tower. Access was gained to the Vestry roofs but not those of the North and South Aisles.
 - iv) The Parish Centre, north-west of the Church, has not been included in this inspection.
- 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 fair condition generally, with some good work having been done recently. It is evidently well cared for and 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 discussed in previous reports, the building has a long history of serious structural settlement and distortion, particularly in the supports to the Tower (not helped by the addition of the Belfry and Spire in the 14th century). Major structural reconstruction carried out in the 1860's included complete re-building of the two western piers of the Crossing and, as a separate exercise, the east wall of the Chancel. A certain amount of structural cracking has re-appeared since, but the 19th-century work seems to have been almost entirely successful in stabilising the structure. Checking of the crackings recorded in the last three inspections (i.e. from 1990) shows that there has been no significant movement since, so they should merely be reviewed in future inspections. For this purpose, detailed descriptions are included in the appended inspection notes. Briefly, they comprise:

Cracks in and between the window heads and sills on the north and south walls of the Chancel, and in the Easter Sepulchre recess in the north wall of the Sanctuary.

Vertical tearings in the masonry of the east walls of the North and South Transepts at high level where they meet the walling above the Crossing arches, which also shows signs of distortion and cracking in the South Transept.

Vertical cracks in the south wall of the South Transept running between the under the window heads and sills, and similarly in the south end of its east wall.

Vertical cracks in the north wall of the North Transept running between the under the window heads and sills, and externally above the upper window in its west wall and above and below one of the windows in the lower tier on the east elevation.

Eased joints in the South Transept stair turret and cracking beside door at its foot.

Vertical cracks in the west wall of the Nave, under the windows.

Vertical crack (representing a join between older and newer walling?) above and to the west of the North door in the North Aisle.

Easings in south wall of Choir Vestry and in buttress in north-east corner of Clergy Vestry.

Easings in the Tower parapets.

As recommended in previous reports, should access be provided for other purposes at any time it would be worth filling and pointing the cracks, recording the date when this is done both in the wet mortar and in the Church Log Book, so as to form a base date for future assessment.

The timber roof structures, though substantially reconstructed in the 19th century, embody much of the medieval carpentry. Earlier reports record that they have been treated for furniture and death watch beetle in the relatively recent past. However, in the course of this inspection signs of minor activity were noted in the end rafter of the west slope of the South Transept roof, hard up against the stair turret. This should be investigated further - perhaps by gluing paper (with a removable water-soluble paste) over the flight holes to see if any new ones appear. No signs of trouble were noted anywhere else in the roof structures but for the most part examination from close quarters was not possible.

Despite concerns raised in previous reports, there have been no clear signs of further activity of the old beetle infestation in the substantial medieval timbers in the Clock Chamber at the base of the Spire. As suggested in the 2002 report, it now seems safe to regard the outbreak as dead. What appears to be a current attack on the eastern bearing end of the northern softwood beam of the underside of the Belfry floor, above the access walkway, is understood to be being treated annually with woodworm fluid after attention was drawn to it in the last report.

In the course of routine maintenance early in 2007 the clock engineer drew attention to the poor condition of the bearing end of the timber beam carrying the clock weights. In consequence a steeplejack was engaged, who confirmed the engineer's suspicions and added steel bearing plates to this and to the oak beams carrying the upper platform slightly below it.

B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

Externally and internally, the walls of the church are of sandstone in good quality ashlar masonry. Much appears to be the original medieval work, though evidently restored at various dates since. In general the stonework is weathering well although there are some areas of accelerated erosion where the walling has become saturated by leaking rainwater pipes, gutters or abnormal exposure. In some areas architectural features such as projecting string courses and the caps and bases of nookshafts and blind arcading are crumbling, and past attempts to make these good by mortar facing-up or patching are now also falling away.

Several of the areas where re-pointing and limited stone replacement was recommended in the last report have been dealt with since, as part of a rolling programme of work by a specialist mason, undertaking small contracts annually. This has reduced the backlog of work necessary but more remains to be done, in the following areas:

Bed joint above parapet offset course on south face of South Aisle.

Various patches on the north wall of the North Aisle, including the hoodmould and walling above the north doorway, beneath the sills of the two easternmost windows, above the head of the westernmost window, around the head of the easternmost downpipe, and in the parapet coursing generally.

Sill of lower window on west face of North Transept.

North-west corner turret of the North Transept for most of the height of its west face and at the level of the heads of the lower tier of windows on its north face.

Parts of the west face of the south-west (stair) turret of the South Transept.

Open joints in the plinth courses of the west face of the North Transept and north face of the North Aisle.

Jambs and sills of windows of lower tier on south side of Chancel (above Vestry roofs).

Sills of lower windows in south face of South Transept.

Upper parts of the buttress and adjacent walling where the south walls of the two vestries meet.

Walling beside Heating Chamber steps.

In addition, the pointing of the exterior of the spire is beginning to loosen in places and the need for re-pointing - at least in part - in the foreseeable future should be borne in mind, subject to review in future quinquennial inspections. The internal surfaces continue to show powdering of the stone and loosening of some of the pointing but no action is needed on this for the foreseeable future other than the external re-pointing which is the best way to help the internal surfaces in any case.

Some repair and re-pointing was carried out in 1992/3 on the pinnacles on the north and south corners of the east end of the Chancel, and some pointing appears to have been done on the south face of the upper stage of the south-east turret beneath the pinnacle, but further pointing and possibly some limited stone renewal is likely to be needed on the upper parts of both turrets, together with the east gable of the Chancel generally (including the gable watertablings) down to the level of the springings of the top tier of windows. This should be considered within the next five years or not far beyond.

As recorded in previous inspections, weeds are growing in the joints of the stone cappings to the northern turrets of the North Transept. This is despite periodic removal and it may be that their presence has to be accepted, provided the joints are well filled with mortar. Those growing in the offsets of the north face of the north-east turret of the Chancel, at upper window sill level, should be removed and the open joints filled.

The eroded state of the tracery of the windows in the south wall of the South Aisle - particularly the westernmost - has been mentioned in previous reports and although no action is needed within the next five years these should be reviewed in future inspections.

Previous reports have drawn attention to the accelerated erosion, internally and externally, in the masonry of the upper parts of the west gables of the North and South Aisles,

due to saturation perhaps arising from the awkward double-parapet arrangement here, one running horizontal, the other behind it raking at the angle of the roof. All now seems dry in these areas and on the North Aisle the damaged walling externally has been carefully re-pointed since the last inspection.

As mentioned in previous reports, mortar patchings carried out in the past to the north and south clerestories of the Nave, all three faces of the North Transept, and the west and south faces of the South Transept, are gradually easing off in places, and the original stonework also continues to disintegrate in these areas. Where the general public pass close by the possibility of falling fragments could constitute a perceived hazard and, as recommended in 2002, it would be worth having the areas above the footpaths checked over by a steeplejack within the next twelve months. He should be asked to remove any loose pieces and fill any particularly open joints in sills, etc. In the longer term, the need for general restoration of all these re-faced elevations should be borne in mind. This will involve replacing the eroded string courses, capitals, bases, jambstones and isolated general walling stones with new matching sandstone, similar to the repairs carried out in the relatively recent past on the South Clerestory of the Nave. Unfortunately, despite those repairs some of the badly eroded caps and bases to the shafts flanking the South Clerestory windows remain to be renewed.

Rising damp continues to affect the lower parts of the internal wall faces in the North Aisle and North Transept. Little can be done to alleviate this but the efflorescing salts and powdered stone should be brushed off from time to time.

In addition to that noted in 2002, another of the ball-flower ornaments has fallen off the internal reveal of the easternmost window of the lower tier in the north wall of the Chancel, and others have disappeared from the corresponding window surround on the south wall. They appear to have been simply glued onto the surface of renewed blocks of stone in the course of restoration works in the distant past. Others could come loose, presumably, so the remainder should be checked and re-fixed where necessary. Some of the shaftings to the internal arcading of the Chancel walls show old splittings and should be checked for security at the same time - as recommended in the last report.

The brickwork of the vault and upper walling in the underground Heating Chamber continues to suffer erosion and efflorescence due to damp, much as seen in 2002. Whilst this is not yet a serious problem it should be kept under observation and some pointing of the most deeply eroded joints may become necessary in the foreseeable future.

C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

The main roofs of the church are all steeply-pitched and covered with lead. Much of this leadwork was renewed in the 1950's and, as far as can be assessed by visual inspection from the top of the Tower and from ground levels, remains in fair condition generally, some minor repairs having been carried out since 2002. At the time of this inspection, the only causes for concern were the leakage at the south-west corner of the South Transept, which needs investigation from close quarters, and the apparent looseness of the saddle where the ridge of the Nave roof meets the Tower, which should be checked and secured if necessary.

As commented in previous reports, there is a tendency for the lead sheets on the south side of the building, where temperature changes are most extreme, to creep down the roofs, buckling against the clips or other restraints and occasionally splitting horizontally. The slippage does not seem to have become significantly worse since 2001/2 and all the visible splits have been repaired by lead-burning or patched with self-adhesive flashing materials. These latter may need to be replaced by proper lead-burned repairs over the next five years. In addition, it is likely that more splits could develop over this period so the roofs should be checked over from time to time. Provided the various repairs hold, there seems no cause for concern over the leadwork for the foreseeable future, but it should be kept under observation.

The joints in the watertabling of the east gable of the Chancel and south gable of the South Transept have been filled since 2002.

The three small holes in the lead lining to the roof bounded by the Tower parapets, mentioned in the two previous reports, have been repaired.

The low-pitched lean-to roofs of the aisles also have lead coverings. That on the South Aisle appears to remain in fair condition generally, as far as could be seen from a ladder resting against the parapets. Minor attention is needed where the pointing to the flashing has come loose at the abutment with the transept. Again, at the time of the inspection soil needed clearing from the parapet gutter.

As in 2001, the North Aisle roof was not seen on this occasion, due to difficulty of access. Previous inspections have recorded that the lead sheets lining the gutters have been soldered together close to the outlets at some time in the past, turning them into very long lengths which are liable to split under the forces of thermal expansion and contraction. A couple of such splits have developed and then been repaired in the past, and these repairs seem to be holding for the time being but should be reviewed in future inspections. Distortion in the gutter base alongside the westernmost outlet sump suggests that it has been affected by fungal attack and this should be kept under observation in case it spreads. On the assumption that it is likely to be dormant there seems no need to open up and repair it at this stage but it would be worth considering this as and when any other significant repairs are being carried out on this roof in the future.

The 'flat' roofs over the Vestries have stainless steel coverings dating from 1999, with lead cover flashings around the perimeters. The stainless steel remains in good condition but at the time of the inspection it was noted that the lead flashings had been disturbed by thieves along the southern perimeter of the Clergy Vestry roof and one length on its western side had actually been stolen. Reinstatement is needed if not carried out already. Generally speaking the mortar pointing to the joints where the flashings tuck in remains sound but one or two lengths are missing or loose, particularly where the lead sheets overlap, and need renewing. As commented in the last report, there is a tendency for leaves and soil to accumulate in these parapet gutters and at the time of this inspection a small tree was growing in the outlet from the western gutter of the Clergy Vestry, clearly indicating that routine clearance has been overlooked for some time.

The bottom shoe has dropped off the downpipe from the Choir Vestry roof so needs re-fixing and the upper length of pipe could do with a couple more clips. This downpipe is a mixture of aluminium, cast iron and plastic and has proved quite troublesome over the years so it would be worth renewing it entirely with large-diameter (i.e. 3.5 or 4 inches) cast iron throughout. Some of the fixings of the downpipes on the aisles appear to need renewal, and this may well have been attended to along with other minor work on the pipes which at the time of the inspection was about to be done. All the cast iron downpipes could do with re-painting within the next couple of years, if not done already.

As recommended in previous reports, all the parapet gutters, sumps, outlets, hopper heads, downpipes and gullies should be checked regularly to ensure that they are performing properly; all accumulations of debris and leaves and any blockages of pipes should be cleared promptly. This should include the downpipes on the Tower.

D) WINDOWS AND DOORS:

The church displays a fine range of 19th-century stained glass, including examples by leading artists such as Clayton & Bell, William Wailes, and Atkinson Bros. A detailed report was commissioned in 1992 from Mike Davis of Mimram Stained Glass Studio, and the most urgent recommendations were subsequently put into effect. Some limited further work has been undertaken since, as and when the need has become urgent, but the planned phased programme of re-leading which Mr. Davis recommended has fallen by the wayside for lack of funds. Subject to review, particularly in the light of changing attitudes to re-leading as a general policy, the next phase remains a recommendation for the next five years, with added urgency as the glazing will continue to deteriorate. It should include:

The second window from the west in the south clerestory of the Nave, which is badly buckled and showing signs of separation of glass from lead. This window has survived this long only because the polycarbonate overglazing provided since the last inspection is protecting it from high winds.

The lower window of the east side of the North Transept, where the glazing of the lower panel is quite dramatically buckled but the upper panels may need attention as well.

The panel of the centre window in the lower tier of the east wall of the Chancel, where the buckling on the line of the horizontal arm of the cross of the crucifixion scene has reached the stage where lead and glass are parting company, and possibly also the buckled lower panels of the two flanking windows.

In addition to these windows apparently needing extensive re-leading the west window of the South Aisle needs more limited specialist repair where one of the tracery lights and the red cloak of the figure of Christ the Shepherd in one of the main lights have been damaged - repair should be by edge bonding and plating the existing glass rather than by replacement. Also, the window at lower level in the west wall of the South Transept has a small hole which needs repair.

Several other stained glass windows show slight or moderate bowing and may need attention in the foreseeable future but probably not within the next five years so should merely be reviewed at the next inspection.

Many of the uncoloured windows had been re-glazed prior to 1990 to designs by George Pace or his successor Ronald Sims, replacing the plain diamond-pattern lead- or zinc-calmed glazing which presumably dates from the 19th century. As suggested in the last report, it would be worth considering re-glazing the upper tier of three windows in the east wall of the Chancel as the next phase - perhaps in conjunction with the re-pointing of the upper parts of this elevation already recommended - to eliminate the unfortunate effect of dirt accumulating on

the badly buckled surfaces of this glazing. The single window in the gable above is not as badly distorted but it might be worth including this at the same time to make sensible use of the access scaffolding and complete the set. It has to be said, however, that replacement of this glazing is not a high priority. Cleaning the glass may be worth trying if access is provided for other purposes.

As commented in the last report, it seems there is some fundamental weakness in the relatively new Pace/Sims glazing with some of these windows buckling at an unexpectedly rapid rate. The glazing in the second window from the east in the south clerestory of the Nave, identified as the worst-affected in 2001, seems no worse now than then. However, that in the southernmost of the upper tier of windows in the west wall of the North Transept has deteriorated significantly and should be kept under observation in case action has to be taken within the next five years. The other glazing of this type should be reviewed in future inspections.

The disused and distorted iron vent frame in the westernmost window on the north side of the Chancel may be causing damage to the masonry as it corrodes, and should be removed in any substantial re-glazing of this window - it looks as though the opening vent cannot be closed properly. The corresponding window on the south side of the Chancel was re-glazed in 1999 when its sill was raised to accommodate the re-covering of the Vestry roof. Unfortunately it has suffered impact damage, with several cracked (but not actually holed) panes showing at the time of this inspection. This needs repair and, given the vulnerability of this window to would-be intruders, it should perhaps be protected with steel bars externally, arranged in the medieval manner and incorporating polycarbonate overglazing.

Polycarbonate overglazing had been provided to several of the church windows over the last twenty years, including a few since the last inspection. Some of the older sheeting is now yellowing with age and the alternative of black powder-coated stainless steel wire grilles should be considered carefully, as these may be more appropriate where the stained glass is concerned although not perhaps where the glazing is clear. As commented in the last two reports, it would be worth replacing the rusting wire guards to the Choir Vestry window, as these are now corroding very badly. The wire guards on the three west windows of the Nave have perished to the point of uselessness and need replacing within the next five years, as recommended six years ago - black powder-coated wire guards would be particularly appropriate on this elevation. The guards to the lower tier of windows in the east wall of the Chancel are beginning to rust and, as recommended in 2001, it would be worth painting them to prolong their life. At the same time, it would be worth painting all the other remaining wire guards black to help minimise their rather unfortunate visual impact.

The 'Lexan' protecting the easternmost window of the south wall of the Chancel immediately above the Clergy Vestry was taken off to facilitate the re-covering of the roof in 1999 and its clips were lost. As commented in the last report the substitutes provided are not satisfactory. They are now rusting noticeably and the opportunity should be taken to replace them whenever other polycarbonate sheeting is being installed or re-fixed on the building. It would be worth providing a couple of additional clips to the lower part of the sheet.

The iron lattice frames of the Clergy Vestry windows were overhauled prior to the 2001 inspection and remain in fair condition but need repainting within the next year or so.

The main doors in the west end of the Nave and North and South Aisles are of oak, all re-finished in recent years and remaining in good condition. The external door at the base of the south-west (stair) turret of the South Transept needs minor repair to a split panel and then repainting within the next couple of years. The external door to the Choir Vestry could do with re-finishing before long to protect its bottom weathermould and obliterate the graffiti.

The lock on the door to the Organ Blower Chamber was decidedly temperamental at the time of the inspection and if not already attended to may have to be overhauled or replaced. The wooden hatch to this chamber, underneath the bridge to the Vestry door, has been covered over with steel sheeting since the last inspection, leaving the organ blower with no obvious air supply other than leakage through the building fabric. The external face of the hatch could do with re-painting.

The wooden access door in the spire is likely to need repainting again within the next year and the painting of the iron hinges and fasteners on the shutters to the Belfry louvres recommended in the last two reports still remains to be done.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

The flooring in the main body of the church consists of stone paving to the passageways, South Transept, Crossing, etc., and timber platforms to the pew areas. On cursory examination the latter seem to remain in fair condition, but no boards were lifted to see into the underfloor voids. The only obvious defect noted is springiness in the ramp in the North Aisle passageway, where it rises from the east to allow wheelchair users to access the cross-passage at pew platform level. Probably inadequate construction but should be investigated just in case.

As mentioned in previous reports, the stone paving to the passageways is rather eroded and uneven in places, but as most of it is covered with carpet no action seems necessary.

As commented in the last report, the white tape that has been applied to the edges of the steps in the crossing to warn the partially sighted or unwary is rather unsightly, particularly as it begins to break down and peel off. Consideration should be given to a more permanent and perhaps rather more discreet form of definition, such as a dark brown or brass nosing or edging. This might sensibly be combined with a new carpeting arrangement in this area, as the present scattering of small areas of carpet serves to confuse rather than define the use of space and the lines of the steps.

A ramp to facilitate access for wheelchair users has been provided at the doorway towards the west end of the South Aisle. However, as commented in 2001, it appears to be steeper than recommended, and removal of the front desk from the pew immediately west of the doors has left a dangerous tripping hazard. The whole arrangement should be reconsidered and could perhaps be done away with altogether if the planned re-organisation of the main west entrance proceeds as this should provide a better ramp. This plan for the west entrance should include removal of the present top step at the external doors, provision of an internal landing together with a ramp to overcome the remaining two steps, and enlargement or total replacement of the lobby enclosure to suit.

The floor of the clock chamber remains well swept for the most part and no obvious signs of continuing beetle infestation are visible, but a certain amount of accumulated lumber should be removed from this chamber. Waterproofing of one or other of the upper floors in the Tower to catch occasional rainwater or snow penetration through the spire masonry or the Belfry louvres has been suggested in previous reports, and remains a firm recommendation although there has been no mention of significant leakage. It should be noted that any penetration into the main body of the church could be disproportionately damaging as the organ is immediately beneath.

The cork covering to the walkway from the top of the Transept stair to the Crossing could do with renewal, and the wear on the stone treads of the spiral stair in the South Transept has reached the stage where some action should be taken to ensure safety - it may be that providing a handrail would be the most sensible approach in the first instance.

At the time of the inspection one of the screws was missing from the latch on the door at the head of the stone spiral stairs, and this needed replacing.

The nosings of the steps in the passageway between the two Vestries and the Chancel should be marked in some way - white paint or tape would be more acceptable here than in the Crossing.

As noted in the last two inspections, some of the tiles of the Chancel floor are loose underneath the carpeting and these still await re-fixing. The carpet itself is looking rather threadbare and consideration should be given to renewing it or perhaps re-exposing the tiled floor itself.

The woodblock flooring in the Clergy Vestry may have been put at increased risk of decay by having been overlaid with carpet tiles - this problem has occurred in other churches. It should be kept under observation and when the carpet tiles wear out a breathable material should be used next time.

The walls throughout the main body of the church are of exposed stonework but those of the Choir Vestry are painted stone and the Clergy Vestry has a painted textured coating on plaster. It is just possible (depending on when it was applied) that the texturing material contains asbestos and this possibility should be entered in an asbestos register for the building. The material appears to be in sound and stable condition, and is encapsulated by the overlying paint but if any work involving disturbing it is planned then it should be tested and if found guilty appropriate precautions will have to be taken.

The furnishings, fixtures and fittings throughout the building appear to remain in good order.

At the time of the inspection much of the floor of the semi-basement Organ Blower Chamber under the Choir Vestry was under water to a depth of up to 50mm (2"). This is putting the stored lumber at risk so, as recommended in the last report, all unnecessary materials and objects should be removed. The timber framework of the organ blower and wind chest arrangement is also at risk, and if the water level rises much higher the blower motor itself could be affected, as could what appears to be some form of transformer housing on the floor. There is no obvious provision for drainage from the floor of this chamber, and all ventilation openings appear to have been blocked off, so consideration should be given to providing a sump pump to keep this area free from flood water or (perhaps better) re-siting the organ blower elsewhere.

F) INSTALLATIONS:

As recorded in the last two inspections, the **electrical** installation appears to incorporate circuits of various dates and cable types, some of which appear quite old. Testing was carried out in 1997 and the resulting safety recommendations were implemented shortly afterwards - including re-wiring in the upper stages of the Tower and in the Vestry wing. In addition, the light fittings in the main body of the church were replaced and the external lantern above the north doorway appears to have been refurbished. However, there seems to be some doubt as to whether or not the system has been re-tested since. As re-testing is recommended at five-yearly intervals, it may well now be overdue and should be arranged within the next six months if not done within the last five years.

Despite replacement of the fittings in the Nave the lighting system remains very basic and unworthy of this fine building. Replacement is understood to be under consideration. At the time of the inspection two of the fittings in the South Aisle appeared to be out of action but this might just have been failed lamps.

The **Lightning conductor** installation was comprehensively upgraded in 1993 to bring it in line with the current British Standard. It appears to be in good order generally but the copper doughtape on the north wall of the Chancel is very vulnerable to theft. It appears to have lost a couple of clips so these should be replaced and more should be added to make the tape more difficult to remove.

The **heating** installation is reported to remain in working order and adequate if inefficient. Past reports have suggested that the distribution system of perimeter pipe coils, underfloor pipes, etc., is inadequate to the task of heating such a large building on the intermittent regime usually adopted these days. Upgrading by the addition of radiators may have to be considered along with any alterations arising from the intended access improvements at the west end of the church. The wire grille guarding the fan-assisted flue outlet from the boilers could do with painting to inhibit the rust that has taken hold.

Plumbing appears to be confined to the handbasin in the Clergy Vestry. Its waste pipe, which after vandalism or theft had been reinstated prior to the last inspection, has been taken again. It may be sensible to use (painted) galvanised steel pipe for replacement this time, as being less attractive to thieves or vulnerable to vandals.

The **organ**, built in 1880 by Forster and Andrews of Hull, was substantially modified by Binns, Fitton & Haley in 1939 (the present console dates from this time) and again by Bishop & Son in 1986, at which time its casework was re-modelled. The organ tuners (Harrison & Harrison) have recommended complete rebuilding or replacement together with enlargement of its case to overcome the shortcomings of past alterations, and have suggested a budget cost of £300,000. Other organ specialists have been consulted and the general consensus is that the instrument is on its way out.

Despite concerns expressed in previous reports, the **weathercock** appears to be in good condition.

The ring of eight **bells**, last re-cast in 1937 by Gillett & Johnson of Croydon, is evidently well maintained and appears to remain in very good order.

The **clock** and **carillon** mechanisms appear to remain in good order, but as reported in 1997 and 2002 the latter was out of action at the time of this inspection. It is not clear whether the mechanism has broken down or has simply been switched off. No detailed inspection was made of these items.

As commented in previous inspections, the steel beams carrying the clock mechanism could do with painting to inhibit the rust that has taken hold, and the same goes for the iron plates on the interior of the spire holding the ends of the clock face bolts. Externally, the clock faces show signs of corrosion and also of springing of some of the numerals, so are likely to need repair and re-painting within the next five years.

The painted timber **sundial** at the west end of the South Clerestory was re-painted prior to the last inspection but now needs doing again as its bottom sill or frame member in particular is showing bare wood.

The church appears to be equipped with an appropriate number of **fire extinguishers** of the right types, serviced annually by the Peterlee Fire Company.

The **sound reinforcement system** has been upgraded since the last inspection, to a good standard.

G) MONUMENTS:

As recorded in previous reports, the once-fine medieval effigy of a lady mounted on the south wall of the Transept has evidently suffered much in the past but appears stable and well cared for now.

It is understood that the recommendation of the last two reports that the Anglo-Saxon cross fragments and mass-dial displayed in the Nave be better mounted remains under consideration.

The wide range of good, if unspectacular, wall tablets in the church remain in fair and stable condition.

The ancient stone coffin currently lying in the moat alongside the south wall of the South Transept does not appear to have suffered any further indignity since 2001 and the Diocesan Advisory Committee has recommended that it remain where it is.

H) CHURCHYARD:

The graveyard is closed and has been landscaped by the Local Authority, who maintain it generally but have continued to deny responsibility for repair of the low retaining wall bounding the 'moat' around the church building. As recorded in previous reports, this wall - believed to have been constructed as part of a landscaping scheme under the auspices of the Borough Council in the 1960's - is fundamentally unstable. It is of insufficient thickness to support the depth of soil behind or the copings on top. Some areas have already had to be rebuilt, including a couple of lengths done since the last inspection. Others are showing signs of continuing movement and loss of integrity - notably on the north side of the building. At least some of these are likely to need rebuilding within the next five years. The railings topping this wall were repainted since prior to the 2001 inspection but now need doing again.

At the time of the inspection the railings and copings at the south-west corner of the moat awaited repair and re-setting after having been hit by a vehicle using the parking area. This work is understood to have been completed since.

As commented in previous reports, the concrete surfacing around the church and in the bottom of the 'moat' is cracking away from the building in places and it would be worth filling the resulting gaps alongside the church walls. Vegetation which has established itself in some of these gaps should be killed off.

The stone steps down to the Heating Chamber are rather worn so it would be sensible to provide a handrail for safety. At the top of the steps the flanking walls are open-jointed and slightly dislocated so some re-bedding and pointing is desirable. Leaves and rubbish which accumulate on the grilles and at the bottom of the steps need clearing away regularly. The grille and railings guarding these steps could do with painting to prevent rust.

Following the recommendation of the last report the steelwork of the reinforced concrete 'bridge' across the moat to the Vestry door has been painted and the adjacent steps down into the moat have been re-set.

Most of the headstones have been cleared from the churchyard at some time in the past. The few that remain appear to be in fair and stable condition. The Grade II listed South African War Memorial in the churchyard has not been examined on this occasion.

The gas meter chamber and disused chimney to the north of the church building are cleverly disguised by ivy. From what little can be seen all appears to be in fair condition, much as seen in 2001, but the door to the meter chamber could do with painting and the key provided for the purposes of the inspection did not fit the lock

There is a good selection of mature trees within the churchyard, which will be protected by virtue of lying within the Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area. They should be checked over at least once every five years - the Local Authority may have a suitable specialist on its staff who undertakes this work as a matter of course.

The galvanised railings along the eastern (river) boundary could do with repainting to preserve the galvanising, which is beginning to show in places.

Prior to the last inspection Darlington Borough Council restored the Grade II listed entrance gates and piers on the western boundary of the churchyard as part of a general upgrading of the Market Place. The iron railings provided as part of this excellent project are showing bare galvanising in places and should be repainted to preserve them.

The brick walling forming the boundary around the north-west corner of the churchyard is also listed Grade II. This shows erosion of the faces of some of the bricks and a lot of white efflorescence, together with general loosening of the pointing. Though not warranting action as yet, this walling should be reviewed in future inspections.

At the time of the inspection the church notice boards close to the main entrance gateway were in urgent need of refurbishment and it is understood that they have been replaced since. The display case for notices fixed to the west wall of the Nave has been repaired or replaced since 2001.

SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church remains structurally stable and in fair condition overall. It is evidently well cared for, with a great deal of excellent work having been done since the last inspection.

Major areas for concern remain the state of some of the window glazing, the need for further repairs to external masonry and particularly elimination of any risk to the public from falling fragments and the continuing saga of the 'moat' walls. In addition, there is the need to improve the lighting system, the desire to improve access and, most expensive of all, the prospect of rebuilding or replacing the organ.

Most of the other 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:

None required.

II. ESSENTIAL within the next SIX MONTHS:

- a) Investigation and remedy of leakage through south-west corner of South Transept roof; checking and if necessary securing saddle where Nave ridge meets Tower; reinstatement of stolen length of lead flashing on Vestry roof and re-dressing of other disturbed lengths (if not done already). Checking repairs to leadwork of main roof coverings and replacing temporary repair materials with lead-burned patches.
- b) Clearing and checking of all parapet gutters, outlets, hopper heads, downpipes (including those on the Tower) and gullies (repeat twice-yearly); minor repairs/renewals to downpipes; renewal of loose pointing to flashing where South Aisle roof abuts Transept and to limited lengths around Vestry roofs.
- c) Enter textured wall coating in Clergy Vestry on an asbestos register for the building unless it is known to be asbestos-free.
- d) Testing and checking of electrical installation if not done already.
- e) Securing of vulnerable lightning conductor downtape.

(Range of likely cost: £3,000 - £4,000)

III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- f) Removal of loose fragments of masonry/mortar repairs from exterior walling above public footpaths; checking security of shaftings and ball-flower ornaments in Chancel.
- g) Investigation of apparent weakness in ramped section of floor in North Aisle passageway.
- h) Clearing of lumber from Organ Blower Chamber and provision of sump pump to keep water level down - or re-siting of blower elsewhere.
- i) Reinstatement of waste pipe from Vestry washbasin.

(Range of likely cost: £1,500 - £2,500)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- j) Applying indicator paper to suspected active woodworm site in South Transept roof; periodic checking; treatment if activity is confirmed. Checking recently-treated beam-end in Belfry floor for signs of any further activity.
- k) Re-painting of all cast iron rainwater goods (if not done already), of iron lattices to Clergy Vestry windows, of railings to 'moat' and round Heating Chamber steps, of wire guard to boiler flue outlet, of gas meter chamber door and of boundary railings.
- l) Repair and re-finishing of specified external doors; repainting of sundial.
- m) Re-fixing of loose floor tiles in Chancel; renewal of floor coverings where necessary; provision of permanent edgings to steps in Crossing; marking of steps in Vestry Passage; provision of handrail to stone spiral staircase in South Transept.
- n) Consideration of improved access through west door including provision for disabled, and removal of unsatisfactory ramp from south door.
- o) Display mounting of cross fragments and mass-dial.
- p) Provision of handrail to Heating Chamber steps.

(Range of likely cost: £25,000 - £30,000)

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- q) Continuation of rolling programme of re-pointing and limited stone replacement to specified areas of external masonry, including walls at top of Heating Chamber steps.
- r) Review signs of slippage of lead roofing sheets; keep distortion in North Aisle parapet gutter base under observation.
- s) Continuation of phased programme of window repair and re-leading - including westernmost windows in side walls of Chancel and possibly replacement of zinc-calmed diamond-pattern clear glass in upper tier of east wall; keeping buckled clear glazing to Pace/Sims designs under observation.

(continued....)

- t) Replacement of rusting wire guards to Choir Vestry window and to west windows of Nave (using black powder-coated stainless steel guards for the latter); painting of remaining galvanised wire guards; provision of secure protection to westernmost window in south wall of Chancel (above Choir Vestry roof); improvement of fixings of overglazing to easternmost lower tier window in south wall of Chancel.
- u) Waterproofing of one or other of the upper floors in the Tower.
- v) Consider replacing lighting system, together with any necessary re-wiring generally.
- w) Rebuilding/replacement of organ.
- x) Painting of beams supporting clock, iron plates to clock face bolts, access door in spire, and hinges and fasteners on belfry shutters; repair and repainting of clock faces.
- y) Rebuilding of further sections of retaining wall bounding 'moat'; filling of cracks in concrete surfacing of moat and of gaps between this surfacing and the church walls.
- z) Checking of churchyard trees.

(Range of likely cost: £50,000 - £60,000, plus £300,000 for organ)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- i) Review of structural crackings; filling and pointing if and when access is available.
- ii) Continuation of masonry repair and re-pointing programme, possibly including the exterior of the spire and repairs to eroded window tracery as well as areas where stone has been patched or made up with mortar in the past.
- iii) Repair of brickwork of Heating Chamber vault.
- iv) Re-organisation, reconstruction and re-lining of North Aisle parapet gutter.
- v) Review of buckled window glazing.
- vi) Re-pointing/consolidation of brick wall on north-west corner of site boundary.

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QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

SAINT CUTHBERT, DARLINGTON

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

DATE OF REPORT	7TH JUNE 2008
DIOCESE	DURHAM
ARCHDEACONRY	AUCKLAND
DEANERY	DARLINGTON

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