

Diocese of Durham

**Christchurch
FELLING**

Ch. No.66

Incumbent - Revd. Trevor Davidson

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

ARCHITECT'S REPORT December 2010

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1.0 PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

Church:	Christchurch
Deanery:	Gateshead
Diocese:	Durham
Date of Inspection:	Internal Areas – 30 th April 2010 External Areas – 21 st December 2010
Weather:	30th April - Cool/Dry and overcast 21 st December – Dry and very cold

2.0 PARTICULARS OF SITE (Location, adjacent buildings etc.)

The site, which is rectangular in shape and clearly defined by a natural stone wall boundary, lies within a mixed residential area which is situated between the old main road and the modern by-pass of the town. A 5 storey block of flats which was on the south side has been demolished since the last inspection. To the west and north there are 2 storey sub-urban housing (including the vicarage) and immediately opposite on the east side a light industrial workshop and office. There is a single width tarmaced drive/footpath between the only entrance gate and the south porch.

3.0 PARTICULARS OF PREMISES (General Construction, layout etc.)

The church building stands approximately in the centre of the open grassed churchyard and consists of a high nave with apsidal chancel, north and south aisle, an organ chamber built at right angles on the south side, with an extended lean-to vestry opposite on the north side, a pitched roof south entrance porch with a timber fleche at the west end of the nave roof. The building is constructed throughout of local sandstone with Westmorland slate roofing. The building has been described by Dr Rory O'Donnell, English Heritage Inspector, as 'strong, big boned Early English Style; of 1866 by Austin and Johnson, Architects, Newcastle.

4.0 REPAIR WORKS OR NEW WORKS SINCE LAST INSPECTION (Date if known: November 2010)

The church Log Book was not available at the time of the inspections. Any repairs or renewals are noted in the following sections of the report.

5.0 SUMMARY OF GENERAL CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

As suggested in the last two quinquennial reports, the building gives the appearance of being in a rather poor state of repair perhaps because most of the roof problems are on the approach side and the church yard is rather featureless. However, whilst the roof covering does need attention and there are a number of localised stonework repairs required and the rainwater goods are in need of a comprehensive overhaul, the building, overall is in reasonable condition at present. The major underpinning work at the east end of the church, completed in 1995, appears to have successfully arrested the settlement and the structure is generally sound at present.

Internally the building is visually and physically rather cluttered and in places there are some trip hazards.

6.0 DETAILED CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

EXTERNAL FABRIC

6.1 General Structure

This is basically sound with no significant structural faults other than to the east-most parts of the building around the chancel, vestry and organ chamber which were subject to significant settlement understood to be caused by poor foundations and the shrinkage of underlying clay due to a succession of dry summers prior to 1995 and nearby tree growth.

This part of the building has been under-pinned with new concrete foundations to arrest further movement. The settlement of the organ arch has been repaired with steel pins. Some of the filled joints have opened a little (Organ Chamber gable and organ arch) by approximately 4-6mm as noted on the inspection before last. These situations do not appear to have worsened since the last inspection. It is also worth noting that the building suffered serious structural damage between 1900 and 1904 due to mining subsidence. The North Aisle and Choir Vestry were added at that time

6.2 External Wall Surfaces

These consist of uncoursed square sandstone which is generally sound except for areas of lean, soft or missing pointing with some surface erosion or lamination of individual stones as listed below:-

6.2.1 North Elevations

Chancel

The pointing to the section to the east of the paired windows is slightly lean. Some recent cement rich pointing following structural repair has cracked above and to east side of left-hand paired windows. This does not appear to have worsened since the last inspection.

There appears to be slight movement of the stonework to the redundant chimney.

Vestry

Some open or lean joints with some loose older cement rich pointing. There is also some more recent cement rich pointing where structural movement has taken place.

Clerestory

Small areas of lean pointing, particularly to outer corner buttresses, with isolated individual lean joints.

Aisle

Some small areas of eroded or lean pointing to side faces of buttress. The positions of former heating units vents have been roughly filled with cement rich patches.

6.2.2 South Elevations

Clerestory

Some minor physical damage to stonework from previous fixings (most likely rainwater goods) to extreme east and west ends.

There are a few isolated lean joints with others having been patch pointed with cement rich mortar.

Aisle

Soft or eroded joints/stonework to left of porch roof. A few isolated open joints including to eaves course and string course.

Porch

Left Side - a few open joints above string course with some cement rich pointing below.

Right Side - cement rich pointing but generally sound.

Front - some loose joints on right side - open joints to apex stone and a general degree of surface erosion including to dressed stonework to doorway arch.

Organ Chamber

Some open joints to left hand abutment. Open or lean joints to apex section, particularly to outer edges. Open joints to coping stones. Some soft joints and cement rich re-pointed crack to lower section which has opened slightly under the window, (this does not appear to have worsened since the last inspection) with lamination of individual stones particularly the quoins on the west side.

An historic movement crack under the window had been repointed with hard cement mortar but this has cracked.

Organ Blower Chamber

This is cement rendered with a concrete roof which is cracked along the upper edge.

Chancel

There are open joints to the cornice.

6.2.3 **East Elevations**

Organ Chamber

Some eroded joints to internal corner. Open joints below plinth course.

Apse

This has been unevenly patch pointed with additional more recent cement rich pointing following structural repairs. Some lean or open joints particularly at high level, with a few isolated surface eroded individual stone.

Vestry

Areas of lean pointing particularly to upper areas, cement rich pointing of large structural movement crack at transition to later part of building. This does not appear to have moved further since last inspection. The stonework above the doorway has been repaired in a cement rich mortar and this has cracked with open joints and 25mm gap to the coping above. There is some surface spalling of individual stones.

6.2.4 **West Elevations**

North Aisle

Extensive area of lean pointing to section above doorway with some laminating stonework on left side of door and adjacent face of corner buttress.

West Gable

Lean or eroded joints to both side faces of both buttresses with some laminating stonework. Lean or open joints to gable apex section and to both outer corners and near ground level.

There are two cement rich patches to old heating units vents above plinth course.

South Aisle

Eroded, lean or open joints to buttress and upper levels with some open or loose joints at ground level.

There is a crack through one stone above the string course. This does not appear to have worsened since the last inspection.

Vestry

Previous settlement joints with cement rich mortar. These have not worsened since the last inspection.

General areas of lean or opening mortar joints with individual laminated stones.

6.3 **Roof Coverings**

These consist of diminishing courses of Westmorland slate with some areas of patching and isolated repairs. Generally sound, except as listed below.

6.3.1 **North Elevation**

Chancel

Distorted area of slating adjacent to chancel gable due to settlement of building, but otherwise appears sound. The abutment flashing has been extended using a non-lead material. Bedding to ridge is missing in places.

Vestry

Lower section has a very low pitch with uneven slating and has much debris and moss growth. Lead cover flashings to copings have been extended using a non-lead material.

Nave

Ridge bedding missing towards west end otherwise covering is complete.

Aisle

Generally complete with a few chipped slates.

6.3.2 **South Elevation**

Nave

Covering is generally complete but is patched and uneven particularly towards the gables. There are also signs that the roof has twisted. A few slates have been replaced at eaves level and there are one or two mismatched slates to the slope.

The ridge is sound except for small areas of lean mortar bedding.

There are openings under the lead soakers at the east abutment.

Aisle

Covering to left of porch is in poor condition with loose or damaged and uneven slate with an indication of settlement and twisting of the west gable of the aisle. Covering to right of porch has a number of cracked or loose slates, particularly adjacent to east abutment.

Porch

Left Side - a few slates are loose or broken and there are 2 mismatched slates.

Right Side - complete covering except for 1 broken slate at eaves.

Ridge - bedding missing in places and the north end tile appears to be loose.

Organ

Left Side - some unevenness particularly at ridge where adjoining chancel with 2 broken slates and 2 mismatched slates.

Right Side - 1 broken slate at eaves and 1 loose ridge tile and top slate at the north end.

Chancel

Unevenness and open joints adjacent to gable which equates to the structural movement of the chancel.

Fleche

Appears to be complete.

6.4 Rainwater Disposal System

The rainwater goods are a mixture of cast iron and UPVC are in poor decorative condition with a few missing components as follows:-

1. South Aisle – bottom section of down pipe to left of porch loose
2. South Aisle - poorly taped joint to centre down pipe
3. Gutter to south nave roof at west end has dropped and the down pipe may be loose
4. The gutter brackets are mostly rusted
5. Porch – down pipe to east side loose
6. Gully to down pipe to left of organ chamber covered in vegetation.

Generally, the eaves gutter needs to be cleaned out, joints resealed and gutters redecorated.

The rainwater gullies are covered with vegetation in most situations

The down pipes are set off the wall on timber blocks as the swan neck bends have been omitted when the pipes were renewed..

6.5 External Windows & Doors

Windows

Most are now guarded but others which are not or have only recently been protected have been damaged, particularly to the apse and to the clerestory.

Some of the older metal guards are corroding, particularly towards the bottom edges. The older polycarbonate overglazing is dirt stained. Glazing to window of organ chamber is in poor condition.

Doors

Vestry door - Renewed following break-in in 1995.

South Porch – Oak recently redecorated.

West Door - Unused, blocked on inside where kitchen formed, recently redecorated.

6.6 External Metalwork, Woodwork & Paintwork

Rainwater goods – (also see item 6.4.)

Generally in need of overhaul and redecoration.

Timberwork

To fleche woodwork requires redecoration and /or repair to the base section.

Railings to the former boiler house steps

Some of the railings are missing leaving large gaps.

Window Guards

Painted metal grills are rusty particularly at the lower edges on the north side and severely corroded to the west window.

There is a metal pole fitted across the top of the left hand west window, the use of which is not obvious.

6.7 **Tower, Spire, Bells & Frames**

(Date Bell(s) last serviced: Not known)

The fleche is a slated timber framed construction with painted or stained exposed timber framing and louvres generally in poor condition.

The single bell is used occasionally.

INTERNAL FABRIC

6.8 **Roof Structure**

Nave

6 main timber frames with purlins and rafters all underdrawn with decorated T & G Boarding. They appear sound except for some minor surface bloom on the boarding at the western bay.

Aisles

Lean-to bearers with purlins and struts to pillars with horizontal T & G boarding which appear to be sound. There is some staining caused by previous water ingress particularly in the south-west corner.

Chancel

Arched timber frames underdrawn with decorated T & G boarding purlins and rafters. They appear sound.

6.9.1 **Internal Partitions**

Limited to modern timber stud partitions (plasterboard one side T & G timber boarding to other) forming crèche, also part glazed, and kitchen/toilet area. Appear to be sound.

6.9.2 **Internal Ceilings**

Church

Varnished and decorated (nave and chancel), softwood boarding which appears generally sound except where affected by occasional or previous penetrating rainwater to west end of nave, and west end of south aisle.

New Rooms

Artexed plasterboard in reasonable condition

Vestries

Exposed painted boarding to lower part, which is sound. Lathe and plaster with patching to original vestry. This has been repaired during the Quinquennium.

6.9.3 **Internal Walls**

Church & Old Vestry

Exposed stone, generally sound except for previous structural movement. The painted wall decoration behind the altar in good condition.

Vestry Extension

Smooth plaster – sound, except where affected by penetrating dampness on the north wall.

New Rooms

Papered or painted plasterboard - sound.

6.9.4 **Internal Doors**

Original

Framed varnished timber - sound.

The door chancel to vestry has a 25mm gap with the frame relating to general structural improvement of the chancel.

New Rooms

Hardwood panelled - sound

6.10 **Internal Decoration**

This is limited to plastered surfaces in new rooms where it is in reasonable condition and the vestries where the exposed stonework has been painted.

There is water staining to the painted ceiling of the lower vestry.

6.11 **Floors & Balconies**

Church

Concrete or tiled to walkways and sanctuary, suspended timber to seating areas now carpeted - which appears generally sound, with some cracking of tiling to east side of altar area, and some loose tiling on chancel level.

The nave and aisles have been over-boarded and carpeted.

Vestries

Carpeted, suspended timber - appears sound but with some bounce to the lower level.

Nave Platform

Stained chipboard on timber framework extended to north and south walls during the previous quinquennium.

6.12 **Glazing & Ventilation**

Stained glass to apse and to west window with a number of breakages of the original glass, which has been covered with plain glass. Other windows are plain leaded glass - generally sound with some temporary repaired breakages.

There are hopper ventilators but these are not used except for the vestry extension which is much dryer than previously due to the installation of a new heating system. The building appears adequately ventilated. The windows on the north side aisle and to some clerestory windows have been fitted with polythene covers to reduce down draughts.

6.13 **FIXTURES & FITTINGS**

6.13.1 **Furniture & Fittings**

The sanctuary has been largely cleared of furnishings, except for 2 oak wall pews.

There are loose metal framed chairs in the nave.

There is an oak pulpit and oak readers desk on painted stone bases which are used as locations for sound equipment to each side with a small modern timber altar and lectern and brass lectern.

6.13.2 **Organ and/or other musical instruments**

The organ is a Thomas C. Lewis, 2 manual with 12 playing stops. It has not been used for over 10 years is now unplayable and in need of extensive overhaul if it was to be re-used.

The church has a regular music group who use a range of musical instruments and music systems some of which are kept on the premises.

6.14 **Monuments and/or peculiar features**

There is a large alabaster and slate memorial together with 2 brass plaques War Memorials on the west wall. The font is a fine classical design in Frosterley Marble which has been re-sited to the south side of the nave platform.

SERVICES

6.15 **Heating System**

(Date of last service: Imminent)

This consists of a series of independent balanced flue direct fired gas Temcana Kestrel 55 wall heaters which are all operational.

A portable propane gas blower is employed on occasions to boost the heat in the building, as the fixed gas heaters are not sufficient in very cold weather.

The kitchen office and toilets are heated by a gas fired combination boiler sited in the kitchen (Ideal Classic).

The vestries are heated by a similar type of boiler (Baxi) sited in the lower room which has been renewed during the quinquennium.

6.16 **Electrical System**

(Date of last service: Imminent)

This appears to be a standard installation protected by miniature circuit breakers with MICC and some PVC/PVC wiring distribution. RCBs have been provided for all electrical musical instruments and where power sockets are close to running water. Lighting is generally either metal halide or fluorescent and appears to be in working order.

The system is reported as being in a satisfactory condition but problems associated with accessing distribution wiring and light fittings at high level may have to be addressed.

There are some loose MICC Cables and switches adjacent to the main entrance.

The earthing of the installation has also been upgraded.

6.17 **Lightning Conductor**
(Date of last test: Not Known)

This consists of a single copper downtape which appears complete, but it has been pulled out of the fixing clips close to ground level adjacent to the west door as it has no security cover.

6.18 **Fire Precautions**
(Date of last test of extinguishers; October 2010)

There are 3 water types, situated at the entrance and the vestry with a CO2 type outside the kitchen.

6.19 **Sanitary Facilities**

There are 2 toilets, one generally suitable for disabled persons with a couple of support rails. There is a small kitchen with sink and a utility sink in the vestry.

6.20 **Security Situation**

The building is protected by an electronic intruder alarm.

The south side used to be overlooked by a block of flats, but these have been demolished during the Quinquennium. The Vicarage lies to the north and there is a high wall to the west side, which overall provide a reasonable level of security.

6.21 **Disabled Persons Facilities**

The building has partial ramped access suitable for wheelchair users. Existing entrances have stepped access as follows:-

Access

Main Entrance -	External 2 steps (180 high) Internal steep ramp 130 high x 1.5m long with no level area adjacent to the inner doors.
Vestry Entrance -	2 steps, (210 high) and flight of 5 steps internally between the two vestry rooms. The higher vestry is one step above the nave floor.
West Door (unused)	Five steps

Toilet Facilities

There is a toilet suitable for use by disabled persons but this is not fully equipped to Building Regulation Part M Standards.

Sound and Light

The building has a sound reinforcement system and induction loop facility. The natural and artificial light levels appear to be reasonable but the floodlights do produce some glare.

6.22 **External Areas**

This consists of an open churchyard with a surfaced access/drive to the south entrance a surfaced play area on the west side and rough grassed areas on the north and east. There is one large willow tree on the east boundary which has been cut back previously in an effort to control root growth which it is believed has

caused damage to underground drainage. There are stone boundary walls on all sides, including a relatively high wall on the west side which adjoins residential dwellings. These appear to be in reasonable condition except at the north-east corner which has cracked and moved together with the adjacent section of east wall to the vicarage and has loose coping stones. Original metal railings to the top of some of the walls have been removed.

6.23 **Areas not Inspected**
(This may not be an exhaustive list)

Underfloor voids

Roof voids and ceilings at close quarters

Organ pipework

7.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7.1 **ITEMS REQUIRING ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY**

Electrical Installation

Should be tested for earth continuity and resistance in accordance with the current IEE regulations within 5 years from the previous test. A copy of the test certificate should be placed with the Log Book and any recommendations carried out or reported to the church Architect for further advice.

Person Safety

Remove potential trip hazards from all areas where this may occur or provide adequate warning signs or markings.

External Areas

(i) Re-build loose and leaning section of stone boundary wall to north-east corner, together

with the adjacent section of vicarage wall.

- (ii) Enclose and/or make safe open steps to old boiler house.

7.2 **ITEMS TO BE ATTENDED TO WITHIN THE NEXT 12 to 24 MONTHS**

Roof Coverings

- (i) Check and replace or re-fix all loose or cracked slates listed in section 6.3.
- (ii) Redress lifted lead soakers to east abutment on south side of nave.

Rainwater Disposal

Repair or replace the following items:-

- (i) Broken section of pipe to centre of south aisle
- (ii) Loose bottom section of down pipe to left of porch.
- (iii) Dropped section of eaves gutter to west end of south side of nave.
- (iv) Loose down pipe to east side of porch.
- (v) Clean out and redecorate all eaves gutters, gutter brackets and down-pipes.
- (vi) Remove vegetation from all ground gullies and check that they are free draining.

External Woodwork

Repair or replace and redecorate timber work to fleche

External Metal Grills

- (i) Redecorate rusting metal grills to North and South sides
- (i) Replace corroded grills to West Windows

Disabled Persons Facilities

Complete fit-out of accessible toilet to Part M (Building Regulation) Standard.

7.3. **ITEMS TO BE ATTENDED TO WITHIN THE NEXT 5 – 10 YEARS**

External Wall Surfaces

Undertake comprehensive repair and re-pointing of all defective areas of masonry listed in section 6.2 (this work can be phased if required) using only suitable lime based mortar to match the original mortar. (**Note** this work may qualify for Grant Aid under the English Heritage Repair Scheme).

7.4 **ITEMS WHICH ARE DESIRABLE BUT NOT ESSENTIAL**

Provide suitable ramp access to the main entrance for persons with disabilities, and wheel chair users.
Provide metal security cover for the bottom section of the lighting conductor down tape

7.5 **ITEMS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

Heating

Obtain independent advice on alternative methods for improving the heating of the building

Pipe Organ

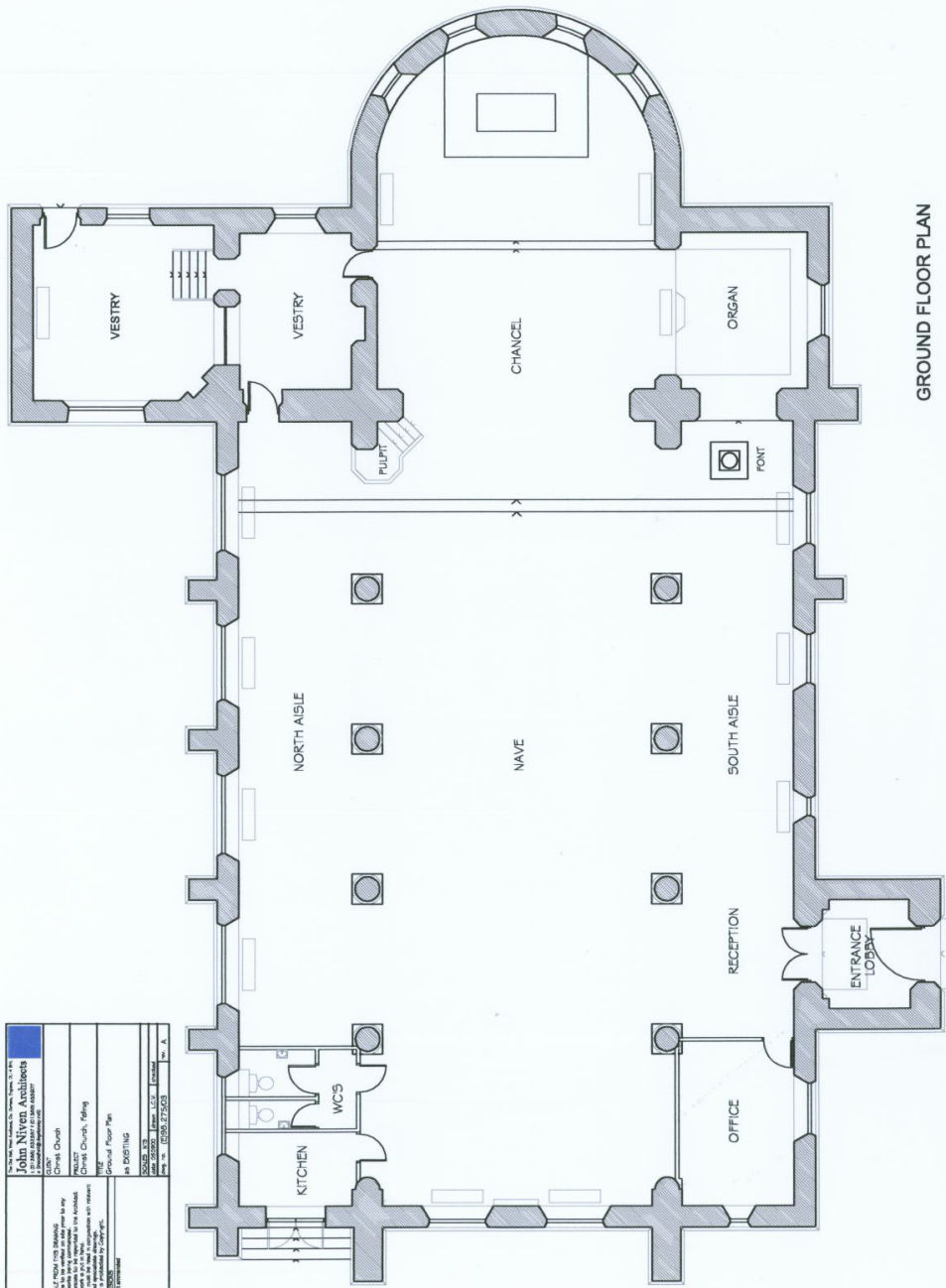
Obtain independent advice on the proper retention insitu or safe storage of the existing instrument or seek approval for its permanent removal and for the alternative use of the area of the organ chamber.

8.0 ESTIMATION OF COST OF REPAIRS AND OTHER WORKS

8.1	Items Requiring Attention Immediately	£2,000.00 - £2,500.00
8.2	Items to be Attended to within the next 12 – 24 Months	£3,000.00 - £5,000.00
8.3	Items to be Attended to within the next 5 years	£15,000.00 - £20,000.00
8.4	Items which are desirable but not essential	£1,000.00
8.5	Items for further investigation	£5,000.00 - £10,000

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Date: 29th December 2010



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

<p>John Niven Architects 100-100 South Beach Blvd Suite 100 Miami Beach, FL 33139 Phone: 305.673.2743 Fax: 305.673.2743 Email: info@johnniven.com</p>	
<p>Client: Church Project: Church, Relling Date: 01/2012 Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"</p>	
<p>Architect: John Niven Architects Project: Church, Relling Date: 01/2012 Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"</p>	
<p>As Existing No. A</p>	