

Diocese of Durham

**ST JOHN'S
SHILDON**

Ch No 184

Incumbent – Revd. Rupert Kalus

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

**ARCHITECT'S REPORT
June 2011**

**John A.G. Niven
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1.0 PREMISES IDENTIFICATION

Church: St. John's, SHILDON
Deanery: Auckland
Diocese: Durham
Date of Inspection: 2nd June 2011
Weather: Sunny and warm

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

St. John's is situated in the central area of the town adjacent to the main street but lying slightly behind a group of buildings which stand to the corner of the church site. The church stands within a large church yard which is crossed by a number of public foot paths on the north side. The land to the south is occupied by the former vicarage, and vicarage car park which is now privately owned, as are the former halls lying immediately to the east. About 7 years ago the Local Authority carried out a major urban improvement scheme to the centre of the town, near to the church and included the provision of a one-way access drive to the west door which has created a second vehicle opening in the west boundary wall.

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

The building consists of a nave and a chancel of equal width and 2 side aisles also of equal width, which have been added to the nave and have independent pitched roofs, with a large square tower with a short slated spire, to the west end of the nave. The east ends of the aisles are occupied by the clergy vestry and organ on the south and choir vestry on the north.

Prior to the quinquennial before last a suite of meeting rooms had been inserted at the west end on two floors including 1st floor hall, kitchen and toilets, and at ground floor a narthex, church office, servery and chapel. There is also a disabled person's toilet situated adjacent to the west door.

4.0 REPAIR WORKS OR NEW WORKS SINCE LAST INSPECTION (January 2001)

2006

December South porch doors repaired and new lock fitted to inner door.

2007

July Hot water heaters replaced to 1st floor toilets

October Lightning conductor repaired

2008

February South porch roof covering repaired

April Tower clock repaired (Cumbrian Clock Co)

October North and South lead valleys repaired (Mike Hardy)

2009

March Pressurised air heating system repaired (H.L.A.)

December Roof repairs to north side and tower (Pulfords Roofing, Bishop Auckland - £3392.50)

2010

January	Roof repairs to porch and south side (Pulfords Roofing, Bishop Auckland - £3,431.00)
	Intruder Alarm replaced (Auckland Security System - £330 + VAT)
August	First floor section of intruder alarm updated (ABS - £146.88)
October	Bond of Lightning Conductor replaced (Stone Technical Services - £434.75)
November	Weather vane temporarily removed and stored by (Stone Technical Services - £916.50)

2011

January	Audio visual equipment introduced (camera, projector, screen, laptop - £1329.00 + VAT)
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5.0 SUMMARY OF GENERAL CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

The buildings are generally in reasonable condition with the majority of items requiring attention of a routine or minor nature. The introduction of the new rooms at the west end has led to the increased use of the premises and this helps ensure the continued upkeep of the building.

In relation to the setting of the building, the adjacent former vicarage and hall are now privately owned and this has required the fencing off of the associated open space which was previously part of the curtilage of the church building. It is presumed that rights of access for maintenance etc., have been retained by the Parish.

6.0 DETAILED CONDITION OF BUILDINGS

EXTERNAL FABRIC

6.1 General Structure

The building structure is basically sound with no obvious structural cracks except for a slight settlement crack to line of South Chancel window and to the cill level blocks to the east gable windows. The load bearing stonework is generally in good condition except for superficial erosion in some areas as described below and some algae growth on the lower levels, particularly around the base of the tower and on the north side which is shaded by adjacent trees.

6.2 External Wall Surfaces

The external masonry consists of squared, coursed, pitch-faced sandstone with dressed ashlar quoins and surrounds to door and window openings. Generally the stonework is in good condition except for limited areas of surface erosion and defective pointing as itemised below.

6.2.1 North Elevations

This side is generally sound with no obvious faults except for a small hole above choir vestry door at location of external light with an old pipe projecting from the right-hand jamb of the adjacent window. The jamb stone surrounds to the belfry openings are slightly open or lean in places and a number of the stone parapet corbels are eroded with minor damage to bases of buttresses to tower.

The footing to the left-hand corner buttress to the aisle is exposed and slightly undermined.

Sections of the outer wall have been previously water cleaned of graffiti by the Local Authority.

6.2.2 South Elevations

South Aisle – cement rich pointing loose or lean to some buttresses. There are also a few slightly eroded stones to the south faces of the buttresses.

Nave – slightly raised pointing to section above porch.

Tower – some slightly open or lean vertical joints to the upper section and outer corners, with two slightly eroded stones at and below the parapet and some lean pointing below string course to stair tower and to the lower area of the left corner buttress.

Chancel - The section has raised cement rich pointing which is beginning to break off, particularly at the upper area.

6.2.3 East Elevations

South Aisle - 3 eroded stones to left hand buttress and one immediately above.

Chancel/Nave - The corner quoin under the right kneeler is slightly eroded.
- Eroded left hand kneeler has been cement rendered.
- Vegetation is growing from a joint in the north side gable coping
- The left-hand coping shows evidence of slipping slightly as the bedding is slightly cracked.

North Aisle – slight erosion to one coping stone and intermediate block on the right side. The joints to the latter are also lean.

Tower – slightly open or lean joints particularly above window openings.

6.2.4 West Elevations

The dressed stonework to the window openings to the nave has some face erosion. Two blocks under the parapet to the tower are badly eroded. Damaged or eroded stonework to the first level openings and to the west doorway were replaced in 2005/06.

There are open or lean vertical joints to the ashlar stonework to the top section of the tower and a number of the upper part of the joints to the coping are open.

There is one laminated jamb stone to the south porch window and are eroded plinth stone under.

There is an open joint to the right side of the N. aisle gable.

6.3 Roof Coverings

These are of natural blue Welsh slate throughout. The aisle roofs are underfelted but the nave roof is unfelted. The coverings are in generally reasonable condition but the main roofs are prone to wind damage suggesting that some areas may be suffering from nail-sickness and areas to the north and south aisles have had to be stripped and relaid during the quinquennium.

The lead lined valley gutters have been patch repaired following leaks to both the north and south gutters. It is reported that these repairs appear to have been successful but damp is still evident to the wall positions underneath.

6.3.1 North Elevation

Nave - generally sound except for a few slipped and cracked slates.

North Aisle - This slope appears to be sound except for some loose slates at the eaves to the west end. The majority of the vertical slate joints have moss growth due to the presence of trees to this side.

South Aisle - This slope is generally sound except for one slipped slate and a number of replacement slates

North Porch – This slope is sound

North Valley Gutter – 4No steps and 1 No midbay to the east end and 4 No steps at the west side of the lead valley have been repaired with bitumen or flashband during the quinquennium.

6.3.2 South Elevation

Nave – The covering appears to be complete but many slates are laminating and two large areas at the west end and a number of individual slates have been renewed.

There are one or two chipped slates at the east end and one slipped slate at the west end adjacent to the tower.

There is an open joint to be ridge at the east end.

South Aisle – The slope appears to be sound except for an opening to the right verge.

The joints to the ridge are also slightly cracked or open in places.

North Aisle - This slope is generally sound with no missing or damaged slates but it is a little uneven at eaves level.

Tower - There are a number of slipped or missing slates at the mitred corners of the spire.

South Porch – This slope is sound

Lead Valley gutter – all the steps and the central joint have been coated or covered with bitumen or flashband during the quinquennium.

6.3.3 Ridge Tiles

North Aisle

These are made of artificial stone in a roll-topped design. They are complete but the cement bedding is uneven and the joints are slightly open in places.

Nave

This consists of angular natural stone and is basically sound. 3 pairs of ridge vents have been incorporated. The east end section of about 2m has moved towards the north side but it appears from the cement bedding that it may have been this way for some time.

The bedding mortar is missing or loose in a number of places.

South Aisle

The ridge is of the same type as the north aisle and appears to be sound on the north side although this is heavily mossed over, but has some small areas of missing mortar bedding on the south side.

6.4 Rainwater Disposal System

The gutters and most of the down pipes are of cast iron and are in reasonable condition. Black UPVC down pipes have been fitted on the south side. The surface water drainage appears to be operating satisfactorily except to N.E. gully outlet which is blocked and other gullies have leaf blockage. There are wide lead valley gutters between the nave and both aisles which appear sound but have subject to flashband repair to the joints. One panel above the clergy vestry was patch repaired in 2006 and this appears to be holding. Leaf guards have been fitted to some gutters.

North Side - Valley Gutter

Large bays max 10' x 5' some undulation and soft under boarding in places (edge of 4th bay from west) but it appears to be sound enough at present, there is a patch repair at the west end and all the steps have been repaired.

South Side - Valley Gutter

This is similar to the north side and appears to be in sound condition. The small hole which led to the dry rot outbreak has been filled but not lead burned. A patch repair has been completed to the 3rd bay from the east in 2006. The eaves gutters, and hopper heads at the west end have some vegetation debris.

There is water splashing under the hoppers to the south and north porches and under the north eaves gutter to the north-west corner of the nave.

The gully outlets were generally covered with leaves and the one to the east end of the north aisle appears to be blocked.

There is vegetation in the eaves gutter to the east end of the north side of the chancel.

6.5 External Windows & Doors

All windows are leaded with galvanised wire guards on the north side which have been renewed during the previous quinquennial before last and more recently to the stained or more vulnerable windows on the other sides. The external doors are of ledged and braced deal construction and are in reasonable condition. The one on the public north side attracts graffiti and has been previously cleaned by the Council which has removed the paint finish. The former north porch door has been bricked up.

Glazing to the two small windows under the north face of the clock is damaged.

6.6 External Metalwork, Woodwork & Paintwork

This is limited to rainwater goods which are in reasonable condition except for cast iron eaves gutters which require re-decoration. External doors are in fair condition except where subject to graffiti. The previous metal cage to the basement boiler-house has been replaced by ground level galvanised steel plates. This is beginning to rust.

There are a series of small metal brackets fitted around the east gable windows which appear to be redundant and which are staining the stonework.

The timber louvres to the heating unit chamber are sound but require re-decoration.

The north vestry door is undecorated.

6.7 Tower, Spire, Bells & Frames

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

Access is by spiral stone staircase which has a rendered and painted surface. There are 8 bells ranging in weight from 5 to 16 cwt. The ringing chamber is tidy but the bells are no longer rung on a regular basis. The clock mechanism is also housed at this level and appears to be in good working order (the clock is by J. Smith & Sons, Derby and was converted to automatic electric winding in 1981 by Potts of Leeds). The clock mechanism is serviced by the Cumbria Clock Co.. There is woodworm in the timber around the access to the bell chamber and the wood surround to the spire access door is partially rotten and the door is also rotten at the bottom edge.

A chiming installation was installed in 1974 and is still operational.

The surface and pointing to the internal stonework to the bell chamber is loose in places and subject to dusting. The former boiler chimney remains and is not capped. The Chamber is beginning to collect dirt including bird dropping.

The weather vane to which the lightning conductor terminal was attached has been temporarily removed as it was found to be in poor condition and insecure.

There are a number of cracked or slightly lean joints to the coping.

The lower sections of all four mitred slated hips to the spire have been patched repaired using 'flashband'.

There is an amount of slate debris lying in the north-east corner of the parapet.

The tower roof is drained by pairs of lead lined stone water spouts on each side. These appear to be in good condition.

INTERNAL FABRIC

6.8 Roof Structure

This consists of a series of open and tied timber trusses to both the aisles and nave. The whole

structure appears to be sound. (Note: The south leg of the 2nd from east truss in the chancel was replaced following the dry rot outbreak in 1984).

6.9.1 **Internal Partitions**

These are limited to the clergy vestry which is of oak panelling and is in good condition, and the new plasterboard partitions forming the new meeting rooms which are generally sound.

6.9.2 **Internal Ceilings**

These occur primarily to the nave roof which is plastered and is sound and to the new west rooms which are generally sound but cracked and patch repaired to the central section. The first floor kitchen has a recent tiled suspended ceiling.

There is a loose ceiling board to N.W. corner of 1st floor of tower over toilets.

6.9.3 **Internal Walls**

These are plastered throughout and are generally sound with areas previously effected by rising or penetrating dampness around the west end and in the chancel/choir vestry having been patch repaired previously with the outer walls to the kitchen and servery dry-lined. There is a tendency for a build up of dampness to the switch gear cupboard which is insufficiently ventilated.

There is a small section of perished plaster in the south-east corner of the 1st floor hall between the corner and the adjacent roof truss.

The plaster is perished to areas in the flower room.

6.9.4 **Internal Doors**

These are limited to the entrance porches and vestry where they are of similar construction to the external doors and to the tower where they are part of a modern oak screen with a padded finish. The frame to the choir vestry door was renewed in 1993. The doors to the new rooms are either solid ash framed or ash veneered plywood to ground floor and first floor.

All doors are in good condition.

6.10 **Internal Decoration**

This consists primarily of painted plasterwork and is generally in good condition having largely been renewed in April 2000, except where affected by penetrating dampness in various areas including the DPT and flower room.

The paint is peeling to the upper part of the choir vestry now occupied by the hot air heater and on the south wall of the hall and the upper part of the flower room.

There is damp staining to the north side of the chancel and previous water staining to the north side of north arcade and to the north and south sides of the south arcade to right of organ.

6.11 Floors & Balconies

The floor of the nave and aisles are of pitch pine blocks which are generally in good condition. The area within the new rooms was sanded and varnished and the remainder of the nave area has been done more recently. The floor of the sanctuary is finished in 2' x 2' square concrete quarries, and has been carpeted over since the quinquennial before last. Floor covering to 1st floor area is creeping and therefore ridged in places.

6.12 Glazing & Ventilation

The glazing throughout is of leaded lights with four on the north side, two on the south side and those of the east window stained. There are few hopper vents in the main church which do not open, but those now in the meeting area do open or have been supplemented by mechanical ventilators. In addition the pressurised heating to the main church provides fresh air when in use. The building is therefore adequately ventilated.

The external windows to the staircase and landing have been recently secondary glazed with polycarbonate to reduce draughts.

6.13 FIXTURES & FITTINGS

6.13.1 Furniture & Fittings

The majority of the furnishings, including the pews and choir stalls, are of pine, the alter rails and high altar of oak, all are in good condition. The altar candle sticks and cross are made of pewter.

6.13.2 Organ and/or other musical instruments

This is 3 manual, 28 stop electro-pneumatic instrument now maintained and tuned twice a year by Brian Brighton, Durham. The instrument was comprehensively overhauled prior to 1995 by J.W. Walker, Suffolk but in recent years has required a number of adjustments.

There is an organ humidifier which is no longer used. There are two upright pianos sited within the building.

6.14 Monuments and/or peculiar features

There are a number of brass wall plaques in good condition.

There are also a number of large and attractive wall hangings and tapestries, including a cross on the west wall and a Baptistery Set on the walls adjacent to the font.

SERVICES

6.15 Heating System

(Date of last service: Not Known)

This consists of a Niche Mistrale direct gas fired pressurised hot air blower which was re-sited in a chamber above the choir vestry in 1992. Additional silencers were added at this time. The heating to the new rooms is by a condensing gas fired wet boiler which was installed during the quinquennium, with natural and fan assisted convectors, with independent electric convector heaters in the smaller rooms.

6.16 **Electrical System**

(Date of last service: December 2006)

This consists of a 3 phase installation with MICC cable current circulation to lights and power outlets. The lighting to the church is halogen floodlighting and to the new areas in low energy lighting. The installation was inspected on 01st December 2006 and found to be good/satisfactory (Auckland Electrical and Security Limited).

6.17 **Lightning Conductor**

(Date of last test: December 2006)

This consists of a single copper strap connected to the tower weather vane. This installation no longer conforms to the current British Standard which requires at east 2 down tapes and 'all round' protection to accommodate flash-over.

The existing down-tape has been repaired where the tape passes over the parapet.

6.18 **Fire Precautions and Fire Safety**

(Date of last test of extinguishers: May 2011)

There are 3 No Co2, 2 No dry powder and 3 No 2 gal water extinguishers located in appropriate locations through the building all last checked and serviced in May 2011.

The extinguishers located in the tower (1 Coz and 1 water do not appear to have been serviced since May 2005).

There is an automatic fire alarm installation to the meeting rooms and emergency lighting to the main exits.

The church have prepared a Fire Safety Plan.

6.19 **Sanitary Facilities**

There is an accessible (disabled person's) toilet at ground floor and male and female toilets at first floor, a servery adjacent to the narthex and a catering standard kitchen at 1st floor level. All are maintained in reasonably good condition.

The first floor kitchen is regularly used and complies with current Food Hygiene Standards.

The drop down support rail in the DPT is sticking.

6.20 **Security Situation**

The main tower entrance and choir vestry is bolted from the inside and the south entrance has a security rim lock.

Fire and Intruder Alarm installed 1995, serviced/checked annually.

6.21 **External Areas**

These consist of essentially private areas to the east and south sides, with the church yard on the west and north open to the public and maintained by the local authority.

The original Vicarage and attached Glebe Cottage and adjacent former hall and now privately owned and are separated from the church area by a security fence.

The remainder of the church owned land on the south side is being maintained as a vegetable and flower garden with the former vicarage garage due to be converted to a external store.

6.22 **Disabled Persons**

Access

There is level access to the main west door and throughout the ground floor. There is no lift access to the first floor but the church have a policy of moving activities to the ground floor when wheelchair users are to be present. There are wheelchair users spaces adjacent to the central walkway.

Sound

There is a sound reinforcement system in use with an induction loop facility.

Sight

Lighting levels are considered adequate throughout the building.

6.23 **Areas not Inspected**

(This may not be an exhaustive list)

Under floor voids (where present).

Organ Pipe-work.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 ITEMS REQUIRING ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY

Electrical Installation

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

Lightning Conductor

To be tested in accordance with the requirements of British Standard 6651. Any defects or sub-standard elements to be repaired or replaced and/or reported to the Inspecting Architect and copy of The Test Certificate placed in the Log Book.

Rainwater Disposal

Clear all eaves gutters and hopper heads of vegetation and check that down-pipes and that all ground drainage gullies are clear particularly on the north side of building.

External Masonry

Remove and kill roots of vegetation growing from joint in the east gable.

Sanitary Accommodation

Repair or replace drop down rail in Disabled Persons Toilet.

7.2 ITEMS TO BE ATTENDED TO WITHIN THE NEXT 12 – 24 MONTHS

External Wall Surfaces – Repair or make good minor defects as follows: -

Fill small hole above choir vestry door and fill hole made by old pipe to adjacent window jamb

Re-point open upper joints to coping stones of tower and replace defective mortar pointing to lead flashing to internal face to parapet.

Roof Coverings

Replace any slipped slates to north and south sides of nave.

Arrange for council to prune tree overhanging the north aisle.

Replace/re-fix slipped slates to spire and replace missing soakers to hips.

Re-point open joints to coping stones to east and west gables.

External Windows

Repair broken glazing to window to tower under north clock face. .

External Woodwork

Replace rotten timber to external door frame to spire and replace or repair door.

Redecorate or stain external vestry door on north side.

Clean and make good rusty areas to metal covers to old basement steps.

Redecorate with preservative stain timber louvres to heating chamber.

Internal Walls

Provide permanent high and low level ventilation in door to switchgear cupboard to help control dampness.

Re-plaster perished plaster to south-east corner of first floor hall and flower room using lime plaster.

External Metalwork

Clean down and re-decorate cast iron rainwater goods, including inside surface of eaves gutters.

Internal Woodwork

Check for active woodworm to timber around/adjacent access to bell chamber and treat/repair as required.

Internal Ceilings

Re-fix loose ceiling board to NW corner of 1st floor of tower.

7.3 ITEMS TO BE ATTENDED TO WITHIN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

External Wall Surfaces - Repair, replace or re-point defective stonework as follows:

North Elevation

Joints to stone surrounds to belfry openings and minor damage to buttress bases to tower and left-hand buttress to aisle.

South Elevation

Remove loose or defective cement rich pointing to buttresses and replace with a recommended lime sand mix.

Tower

Open or lean joints to upper sections, including above window openings and below string course to stair tower.

Replace or retool blocks under the parapet.

Re-point open or lean joints to upper third of west face.

West Elevation

Repoint open joint to right side of N. Aisle gable.

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

External Walling - Replace or retool eroded stonework to the following areas: -

South Aisle - Left-hand buttress

East Gable of Nave – Left-hand kneeler

Internal Areas – Redecorate water stained areas to chancel and north and south arcades.

Ridge Tiles – replace to the original position the previously slipped section of tiles at the east end of the nave.

External Metalwork – Remove redundant metal wall brackets fixed on east gable and make good to wall.

7.5 **ITEMS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

Ridge Tiles

Check condition of bedding and pointing to north and south aisle (particularly south side) and the nave and renew or repair as required.

Internal Ceilings

Check security of cracked original lathe and plaster ceiling and repair or reinforce if necessary.

Fire Extinguishers

Service or remove extinguishers located in bell ringing chamber.

Roof Coverings

Monitor drying out of positions of former leaks to north and south valley gutters and investigate and action any apparent recurrence of water ingress.

Note: if any fault is confirmed as relating to the lead linings these may have to be renewed.

8.0 ESTIMATION OF COST OF REPAIRS AND OTHER WORKS

Notes:

To assist the Parish, the Diocese and potential funders, including English Heritage, the following approximation of costs is provided as a guide for budgeting purposes.

The costs are based on typical costs for the work described currently at the date of the report i.e. no allowance is made for any special arrangements which may be required or for the effect of inflation.

An allowance is made for Architects and any other relevant fees where these may be payable and for VAT.

Where work might be expected to be carried out by unskilled or voluntary labour, no allowance has been made except for materials.

8.1 Items requiring immediate attention

£1,000.00 (excludes any work found to be necessary from inspections)

8.2 Items to be attended within the next 12 – 24 months

£3,500.00

8.3 Items to be attended within the next 5 years

£7,500.00

8.4 Items which are desirable

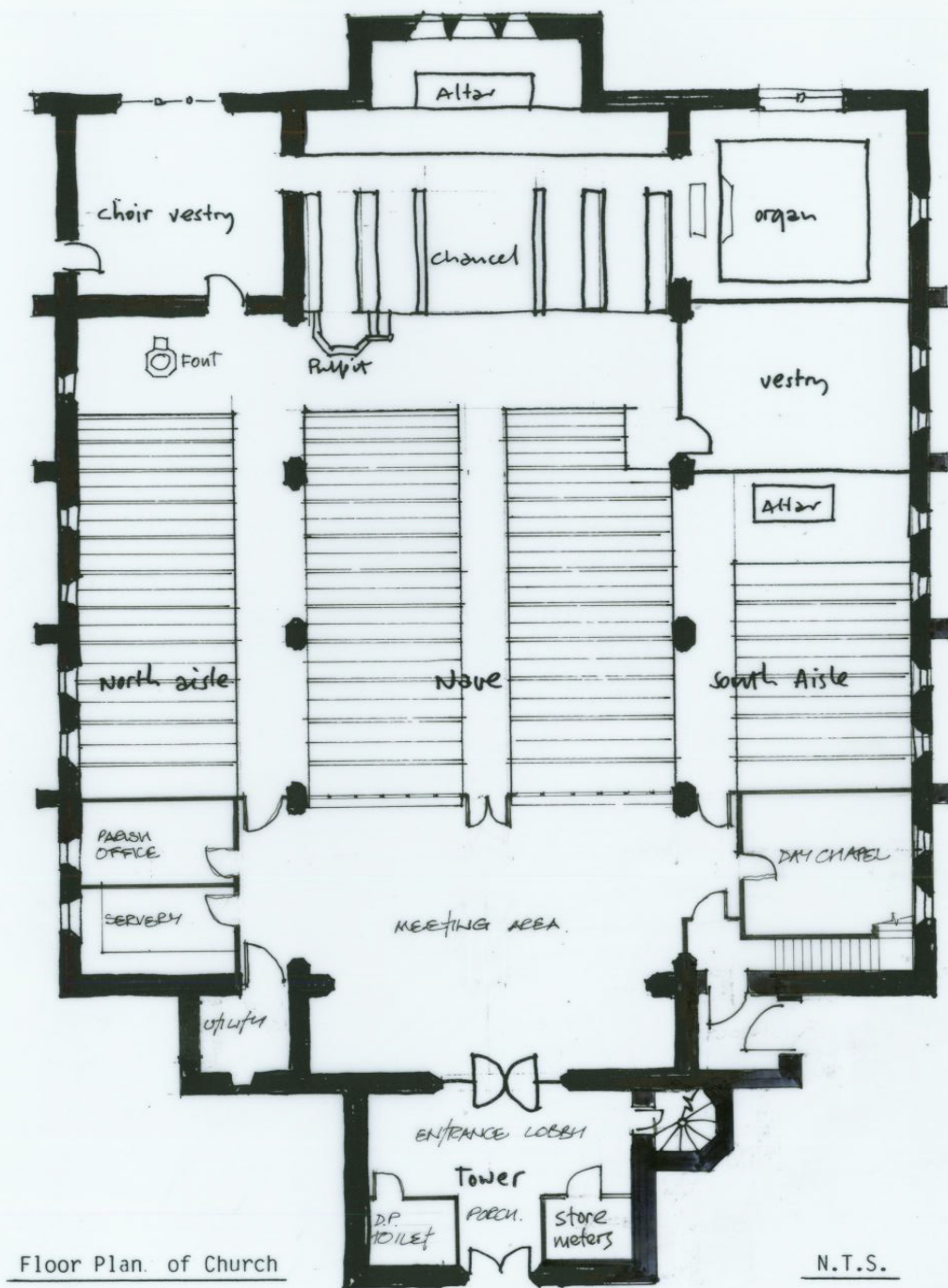
£2,000.00

8.5 Items for Further Investigation

£1,000.00 (excludes any work found to be necessary)

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6th July 2011



Floor Plan. of Church

N.T.S.

Ground Floor Plan

SHILDON, ST. JOHN'S