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## 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 2008 QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION**  
**of the Parish Church of**  
**S A I N T   M A R Y   M A G D A L E N E ,   T R I M D O N**

Diocese of Durham  
Archdeaconry of Durham  
Deanery of Durham  
Historic Buildings Listing: Grade II  
Conservation Area: Trimdon Village  
Civil County: Durham  
Ordnance Survey Map Reference: NZ 370 342

**Date of Inspection: 29th October 2008**

**Date of Report: 21st September 2009**

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

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## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION**

This is a relatively small but interesting church of complex history. It comprises Nave and Chancel with what may be some Norman fabric surviving but much altered (and the Chancel probably extended) in the medieval period, a late 19th century North Aisle and arcade (1873 - architects W. & J. Hay of Liverpool), a Porch on the south side of the Nave and Vestry and Boiler House abutting the north side of the Chancel which are of indeterminate but probably 19th century date. The stone bell-cote surmounting the west gable of the Nave is likely to be a late medieval feature.

Walls are a mixture of sandstone and limestone (not untypical in this locality). Roofs are covered with Welsh slate. Internally the timber roof structures are open with plaster ceilings between the rafters and the walls are plastered.

The church stands in an elongated graveyard on a rise in the middle of the village green, suggesting an ancient origin for the site.

An archaeological survey of the building commissioned from Peter Ryder by the Diocese was carried out in 1993 and the plan showing possible phasing of the development of the building is included after 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. Previous reports dated 1973, 1979 and 1983 are known to have been prepared by A. O Lee, but only the 1983, 1988, 1993 and 2001 reports were available on the Architect's file for reference in compiling this one.

These and other previous reports, where they survive, should form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past fifty years and all copies should be kept.

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

Minor repairs to roof coverings, rainwater goods, etc.

Repainting of external ironwork including rainwater goods.

Installation of lightning conductor system (2005).

Stabilisation of unsafe table tomb in churchyard (2005/6), repairs to boundary walls and renewal of churchyard entrance gate and noticeboard.

Erection of stone bench beside entrance porch.

Improvements to entrance including provision of new glazed inner door and renewal of paving within porch and of apron outside it (2006/7).

Construction of refreshment facility at west end of North Aisle, together with paving of floor, removal of existing font and provision of new portable font instead (2006/7).

Testing and checking of electrical installation (2008).

Installation of new stained glass window on the south side of the Chancel.

At the time of writing plans are well advanced for proposed conversion of the Heating Chamber to an accessible W.C. and to extend the Vestry eastward.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

- a) Attention is drawn to the recommendations of the **Preamble** to this report, and to the **General and Technical notes** given in **Appendix 'B'**.
- b) The following inaccessible parts were not included in the inspection:-
  - i) Any voids below the suspended timber pew platforms.
  - ii) Interior of the Organ.
  - iii) Roofs were examined internally from floor levels and externally from ground levels.
- c) The Architect's detailed inspection notes are given in the following appendix, with descriptions of various parts of the building where appropriate, and comments on the condition of the fabric. These notes are an important part of the report, and should be read by the Parish (PCC

officers, etc.), for the appraisal, recommendations and priorities in this report have been prepared from them. They are not a specification for repairs, and are unsuitable for obtaining builders' estimates. When the PCC is ready to proceed with any part of the recommended repairs, it is advised to contact the professional adviser for recommendations as to the appropriate course of action and ask him to prepare any necessary specifications and schedules.

## APPRAISAL AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following remarks inevitably concentrate on the defects noted during the inspection but it must be emphasised at the outset that the church is in good condition generally, with a great deal of excellent work having been carried out since the last inspection. 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 in 2001, the building remains structurally stable, despite the obvious long-term distortions with the Nave and Chancel walls leaning outward and the Chancel arch depressed. The slight cracking in the south-west corner of the Nave recorded in 1993, then obliterated by the redecoration so not seen in 1999, has now re-appeared at the top of the wall. That in the north-east corner above the pulpit which had already re-appeared for the last inspection remains little more than hair-cracking. These, together with the old crackings in the joints of the Chancel arch, should merely be reviewed in future inspections. Similar hair-crackings are evident in virtually all parts of the building, but none appear to be of serious structural significance. The easings in the tracery of the east window of the Chancel do not appear to have moved significantly since 1999 so should merely be re-pointed and then kept under observation.

The openness in the joints of the Nave and Chancel roof trusses - gaps visible between the arch braces where they should meet - remains much as seen in previous inspections and is likely to be the result of long-term shrinkage of the timber rather than structural movement.

### B) WALLS AND MASONRY:

The external walls of the church are of a mixture of sandstone and limestone rubble of varying age and quality. As mentioned in previous reports individual stones or patches of stonework have eroded quite deeply and in places the pointing has weathered well back. None of the areas identified in the last report as needing re-pointing have been attempted, so the following list is virtually unchanged. In some areas limited stone renewal may be necessary at the same time - notably in the upper parts of the south walls of the Nave and Chancel. The areas where re-pointing should be carried out within the next five years include:

South wall of Nave - upper walling above offset, and triangle above west slope of Porch roof.

South wall of Chancel - upper walling above doorway, lower walling below window sill level at west end and entire height of wall from doorway eastward.

East wall of Chancel - open joints at plinth level and in the courses immediately above.

North wall of Chancel - patching needed at ground level and in upper parts of the walling; loose stones behind lower quoin at east end of wall need re-bedding.

East gable of Vestry - open joints at ground level, but only relevant if the planned extension of the Vestry does not proceed.

East gable of Nave and North Aisle, above lower roof slope.

Eastern panel of north wall of Aisle.

North wall of Heating Chamber: Further patching in panel between Heating Chamber door and central buttress, and patching of panel between central and eastern buttresses together with filling of open joints where the buttresses are easing away from the wall. Also re-bedding of loose stone in former hole above door.

West elevation of the Nave: Minor patching on central buttress.

In addition, as reported in previous inspections, what appears to be a hole at the apex of the lean-to west gable of the Aisle needs filling, and mortar fillets between the bases of walls and the adjacent paving, concrete or channels need renewing in places. The open joints in the tracery of the east window could also do with filling.

Areas where the need for re-pointing and limited stone replacement should be borne in mind for the future include the east gable of the Chancel and west wall of the North Aisle.

The erosion of certain stones in the jambs of the outer doorway of the Porch should continue to be reviewed in future inspections.

As commented in the last report, in view of the softness and character of the stone extreme care will have to be taken over the choice of mortar mix and with the detailed technique for all future pointing. The work will have to be entrusted to skilled and experienced masons under the direct control of the architect.

#### C) ROOF COVERINGS AND RAINWATER DISPOSAL:

All the roofs of the church are covered in Welsh slate. The Vestry/Boiler House roof was completely stripped and re-slatted in 1990 but the rest probably date from the 19th century. Minor repairs have been carried out since the last inspection and at the time of this one this older slating appeared to remain generally fair in condition, despite various past repairs of which some are of dubious quality. Routine maintenance is needed in replacing a small number of slipped broken or missing slates - one on the south side of the Nave, three on the north slope of the Chancel and one on the east slope of the Porch roof. Pointing to ridges, leadwork at abutments, etc., all seems in fair condition except that the pointing to the ridge tiles on the Porch is cracking and loosening, but this is much as seen in 1999 so will probably last the next five years. The westernmost ridge tile on the Chancel roof seems to be loose so should be re-bedded, and the iron cross on the apex block of the Chancel gable needs painting.

The cast iron rainwater goods seem to be in good order, having been repainted since the last inspection - with a pleasing change of colour. All seemed clear at the time of the inspection but clearing and checking of gutters, downpipes and any gullies should be carried out twice a year.

D) WINDOWS AND DOORS:

The few stained glass windows in the church appear to remain in fair condition apart from the bowing or buckling in certain lights and the slight damage to the low-light in the south wall of the Chancel mentioned in previous reports. All the windows, including this one, have been fitted with polycarbonate overglazing, and as a result it seems unnecessary to repair the minor damage to the glass itself. The tinted glass in patterned leading filling the other windows in the main body of the church appear to remain in excellent condition. As mentioned in the last report, the iron vent frames in a few of the windows are rusting badly and need thorough treatment and painting to inhibit this, although in the longer term it would be best to do away with them altogether. That in the Vestry window, for instance, could be done away with when this window is re-sited in the proposed extension of the Vestry.

Some of the brass clips holding the polycarbonate overglazing have failed so need replacement.

The external doors on the south side of the church have been re-finished since the last inspection, with their ironwork re-painted. As commented in 2001, the bolt through the masonry which appears to be the fixing for the top hinge of the main entrance door is rusting and causing cracking of the joints in the masonry. Little can or need be done about this other than painting of the exposed ironwork to inhibit the rust as much as possible.

E) FLOORS AND INTERNAL FITTINGS AND FINISHES:

The flooring in the Nave and Aisle consists of raised timber platforms to the pew areas, paving (mostly covered by carpet) to the passageways and a small area of stone paving (replacing the defective tiling seen in 1999) at the west end of the Aisle. In general, although the older paving is noticeably uneven underneath the carpet, all seems in good order. The Chancel floor remains fully carpeted, over the original finish in the Sanctuary and the concrete floor in the main area.

The worn stone paving of the South Porch has been renewed since the last inspection, with new natural York stone paving. This has also been extended out to the apron in front of the Porch. At the same time the pair of plywood-faced inner doors has been replaced with an attractive timber-framed glazed single leaf door, all improving accessibility as well as the appearance.

A refreshment facility has been constructed at the west end of the North Aisle (in conjunction with re-construction and paving of the floor). The font formerly in this area was buried within the table-tomb in the churchyard when that was consolidated, and a portable font provided in its stead.

The internal fittings and furnishings appear to remain in good order throughout. Since the last inspection a simple cupboard has been formed around the electrical equipment in the Porch, but as recommended in previous reports it would be worth providing one round the electrical meters and distribution board on the south wall of the Nave.

The locks on the Vestry door could sensibly be replaced with units having a longer backset so that the keys can be turned without scraping knuckles on the stonework of the door surround.

The interior of the church was redecorated shortly after the 1988 inspection, using limewash throughout with an acrylic primer to help it bond to the emulsion and oil-based paints applied previously. In general this strategy appears to have worked, with the limewash adhering well. Some touching-up has been carried out since the last inspection, leaving all perfectly satisfactory apart from the Vestry, where the decoration is now rather tired but likely to be renewed completely when the proposed extension is built.

The ceiling of the Heating Chamber comprises a fibre-cement board and this should be checked for possible asbestos content before any work is undertaken in this area.

#### F) INSTALLATIONS:

The **electrical** and lighting installation was renewed prior to the 1988 inspection, wired in M.I.C.C. cable throughout and introducing the tungsten-halogen indoor floodlights. As mentioned in previous reports the lack of glare controls on these powerful fittings leaves a problem of excessive glare, and as this is particularly relevant for people with impaired vision consideration should be given to mitigating measures, now that the Disability Discrimination Act is fully in force.

The electrical system as a whole was tested and checked in 2008 and found to be generally satisfactory, requiring only a few relatively minor remedial items to be carried out. These were reported to be in hand at the time of the inspection. The light fitting in the Heating Chamber was not working but this may simply be due to a failed lamp.

The gas-fired Ideal Mexico **heating** boiler described in the last inspection is reported to remain in good working order. This was installed in the 1990's but the distribution pipework and radiators within the church remain from some time before that. As commented in the last report, consideration should be given to improving this distribution system. In particular the pipework should be re-routed where removal of pews has left it as a hazard in otherwise clear

areas of floor, and where it runs obtrusively through the Chancel archway. A change to modern high-output but relatively unobtrusive radiators should also be considered.

The boiler has a flexible stainless steel flue liner connecting it to the original chimney within the Heating Chamber. As commented in the last report, this will become hot when the boiler is on and care should be taken not to let any combustible material rest against it - lumber stored in the Boiler House has built up again since 1999. However, as the boiler is likely to be replaced completely when the plan to convert the Heating Chamber to a W.C. is implemented, there seems no point in modifying the flue at this stage.

The **pipe organ** by Church and Co. was installed, new, in 1982. It is a high quality instrument, remains in regular use and is reported to be in good order.

The single **bell** is signed by R. Watson and dates from 1857. It is reported to have been checked in 2007. Its associated ironwork needs painting to inhibit rust.

The church has been provided with a **lightning conductor** system since the last inspection. This should be tested and checked every ten years.

#### G) MONUMENTS:

There are a couple of brass plaques within the church, both remaining in fair and stable condition.

#### H) CHURCHYARD:

The graveyard is closed but reportedly still maintained (to a good standard) by the Parochial Church Council. It contains a number of ornamental and mature trees, all apparently in healthy condition. The few surviving headstones seem to be stable, and the unstable table tomb has been consolidated - neatly incorporating the redundant font in the supporting infilling.

The boundary walls act to retain the higher ground level within the churchyard except along much of the northern boundary where the wall has succumbed and been replaced by a steep grassed bank. Where the walling remains at the west end of this boundary and on the other sides it has clearly been repaired since the last inspection, leaving it in satisfactory condition overall.

The steps descending the grassy bank to the north of the Vestry could do with a simple handrail, for safety.

As commented in 2001, the concrete paving alongside the south wall of the Nave is quite badly cracked in places but apart from sealing of the cracks no action need be taken.

The wrought iron gate at the western entrance to the churchyard has been renewed since the last inspection.

## SUMMARY AND PRIORITIES

The church is basically sound and very well looked after. A lot of excellent work has been done since the last inspection, particularly the improvements to the entrance and the re-ordering of the west end of the North Aisle.

There are no major matters of immediate concern. The most significant recommendations in terms of expenditure are likely to be the re-pointing and repair of external stonework and possible renewal of the heat distribution system.

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) Minor repairs to roof slating, re-bedding of loose ridge tile, and painting of iron cross at apex of Chancel gable and of ironwork of bell fittings.
- b) Clearing and checking of rainwater gutters, downpipes and any gullies.
- c) Checking of boiler house ceiling boarding for asbestos content.

(Range of likely cost: £250-£500)

### III. ESSENTIAL within the next YEAR:

- d) Renewal of mortar fillets where concrete aprons abut church walls; sealing of cracks in concrete.
- e) Consideration of measures to control glare from light fittings.
- f) Painting of iron vent frames in windows; replacement of failed brass clips on overglazing.

g) Consider provision of handrail to steps down bank north of Vestry.

(Range of likely cost: £500 - £1,500)

IV. NECESSARY within the next TWO YEARS:

- h) Provision of cupboard around electric meters and distribution board in Nave.
- i) Consider replacing locks on Vestry door to increase distance from stone surround.

(Range of likely cost: £250 - £750)

V. NECESSARY within the next FIVE YEARS:

- j) Re-pointing of specified areas of external masonry (including east window tracery), together with limited replacement of eroded stones, filling of voids, etc.
- k) Consider re-routing heating pipework where it forms tripping hazards, or possibly renewal of heating distribution system generally.
- l) Testing and checking of electrical installation (2013).

(Range of likely cost: £5,000 - £10,000)

VI. FUTURE Repairs:

- m) Review of structural easings and distortions and of eroding stonework.
- n) Further re-pointing and repair of external stonework.

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

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# QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the Parish Church of

## SAINT MARY MAGDALENE, TRIMDON

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

<b>DATE OF REPORT</b>	<b>21ST SEPTEMBER 2009</b>
DIOCESE	DURHAM
ARCHDEACONRY	DURHAM
DEANERY	SEDFIELD

**CHRISTOPHER DOWNS, B.ARCH., RIBA. CHARTERED ARCHITECT  
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