

**INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE  
DURHAM DIOCESAN CHURCH SCHEME**

**CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEW & ST. LUKE,**

**DARLINGTON**

**Deanery of Darlington**

**Archdeaconry of Auckland**

**QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION 2017**

**DATE OF INSPECTION : 31 January 2017**

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**CHURCH OF ST. MATTHEW & ST. LUKE, DARLINGTON**  
**QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT 2017**

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Site Location Plan

Floor Plan

Photographs

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Church lies within its own grounds to the East of the junction of Hazel Avenue with Brinkburn Road, as identified on the attached Ordnance Survey Site Location Plan. The rectangular level plot has a site area of 0.118 hectares.
- 1.2 The Church, constructed in 1936, has a traditional East/West orientation with accommodation consisting of a Nave, Chancel, Organ Chamber, Vestry, Choir Vestry, Office and an Accessible Toilet. There is a basement Boiler Room below the Office accessed via an external staircase on the East elevation. There are two internal entrance porches in the North-West and South-West corners accessible from Brinkburn Road and Hazel Avenue respectively. The latter appears to be used primarily as a storage facility. There is a separate entrance into the Vestry facilities in the North East corner.
- 1.3 The site is enclosed by 1500mm high black painted steel fencing on the Brinkburn Road and Hazel Avenue frontages with gates serving each entrance. The East and South boundaries are marked by 1800mm high close boarded fencing and the North gable wall to 1 Hazel Avenue.
- 1.4 The former Vicarage within its extensive grounds to the South East of the Church, has been remodelled as a children's nursery (Tiny Turners Nursery). The Church Hall is situated on Willow Road and now has an independent management committee. Neither of these facilities are covered by this Report.

## **2 WORKS COMPLETED SINCE THE APRIL 2012 INSPECTION**

2.1 I examined the detailed Log Book record of works undertaken since the 2012 inspection together with records of Church family events and activities. The following are the scheduled items undertaken from May 2012 to date. I have also been involved as Project Architect on various items and related future plans in an advisory capacity.

### **May 2012**

- PAT testing of electrical equipment.
- Decoration of Vestibule and Side doors.

### **October 2012**

- Entrance mat purchased for main door.
- Vestry cupboard removed, room painted and floor tiles lifted.

### **November 2012**

- Carbon Dioxide alarm fitted in Boiler House.
- Service and repair of Boiler.

### **January 2013**

- 4 inch manifold waste and 1.5 inch drain pipe installed in Boiler Room to prevent flooding. Note original condensation line installed incorrectly.

### **February 2013**

- New pressure relief valve fitted to Boiler.

### **April 2013**

- Permission granted for temporary removal of back pews.
- Attempted lead theft from Vestry roof. Remedied.

### **October 2013**

- Blocked drain pipe causing dampness to decoration internally next to Vestry door. Remedied and left to dry out.

### **November 2013**

- Circuit testing of electrical installations with minor repairs to wiring, plugs and other light issues.
- PAT testing.

### **January 2014**

- Remedial works to lightning protection system.
- Plans, quotations, statements of significance and needs submitted to DAC for remodelling of North Porch and creation of Counselling Room and Accessible Toilet, plus modifications to servery and new Kitchenette.

### **February 2014**

- Diocesan award of £500 for water supply to be extended to rear of Church to feed Kitchenette.
- Hedgehog guttering guards installed to prevent leaf blockages.

### **April 2014**

- Fire extinguishers inspected and tested. New one installed in Vestry/Office entrance Porch. Water extinguisher replaced foam one where oil candles in use. New extinguisher repositioned in Boiler Room.

### **March 2014**

- Old Notice Board Stands removed.
- Woodworm ridden dead tree removed outside Vestry and Yew tree pruned.
- New underlay and gravel laid outside Vestry entrance.
- Edging around Church re-gravelled.

### **June 2014**

- Moveable poster board installed on Church railings near bus stop and road crossing to promote Church events.

### **November 2014**

- ADT alarm inspection.

### **December 2014**

- Central heating system serviced.

### **February 2015**

- 7 pews removed.

### **March 2015**

- Repairs to central heating installation and outside sensor fitted.
- PAT testing of electrical equipment.

### **April 2015**

- Entrance door glass replaced and draft excluder fitted.
- New pressure relief valve and thermostat fitted to central heating installation.
- Remodelling of North West entrance Porch completed including overhead storage enclosure made from former pew screening.

### **May 2015**

- Further 2 small and 2 large pews removed, plus 2 umbrella stands.

### **June 2015**

- Annual check and testing of fire extinguishers, alarm system and lightning conductor.

### **August 2015**

- 2 chimney pots and cross from Willow Road Community Centre placed in Sensory Garden on South side of Church.

### **November 2015**

- 2 damaged drainage inspection chamber covers replaced in Garden.

### **February 2016**

- Removal of 2 free standing cast iron radiators at rear of Church and installation of 2 wall mounted convector heaters as replacements.

### **March 2016**

- PAT testing of electrical equipment.

### **April 2016**

- Testing of fire extinguishers.

### **May 2016**

- Removal of 4 pews.
- Bookcase removed to accommodate new heaters
- Installation of Display Cabinet/wall lectum obtained in 2006 from Darlington College.

### **June 2016**

- Shelving installed in Boiler Room to store Christmas/Easter decorations etc.

### **July 2016**

- Removal of cast iron radiators
- Installation of external water tap for Garden use.
- Installation of new whb in Toilet.
- New Kitchenette installed (sink, hand wash basin, cooker , dishwasher, fridge, freezer and storage cupboards.)

### **August 2016**

- Garden woodwork on planters oiled and fences painted. 2 wheelbarrows recycled as planters and placed in Garden.

### **November 2016**

- Installation of new audio system, racking and fitting.
- ADT alarm routine inspection.

### **3 LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY AND REPORT**

- 3.1 This report is based on observations made from ground level. Unless otherwise stated the inspection has been purely visual and no enclosed spaces, inaccessible parts such as roof spaces, or hidden timbers etc. have been opened up for inspection
- 3.2 Particular items not inspected or covered by this report are:-
- a) Floor or roof voids
  - b) Full testing of drainage
  - c) Parts hidden by fixed furniture
  - d) Testing of the heating installation
  - e) Testing of the electrical installation including audio system
  - f) Testing of fire alarms and fire fighting equipment
  - g) Testing of the organ
- 3.3 Items b, d, e, f and g are assumed to be subject to programmed cycles of regular inspection and testing by relevant specialists. Arrangements should be regularly reviewed to match inspection schedules to the age and condition of particular installations.
- 3.4 It should be noted that nothing in the Diocesan Scheme modifies the need to apply for Archdeacon's certificates or faculties where such authorities are necessary, before repair work may be undertaken.
- 3.5 The repair of churches in many aspects is a highly specialised subject. There is then a need to obtain specialist advice with the drawing up of a detailed specification for any work to ensure a technically satisfactory and aesthetically acceptable solution. Economy and permanence of repairs are important considerations.
- 3.6 This report indicates the condition of the buildings at a time of the inspection. It does not purport to be wholly comprehensive or to give definitive solutions for remedial work. It is a report only and should not be utilised as a specification for the execution of repairs and must never be used for such purposes, neither should it be used for obtaining quotations from builders. Professional advice should be obtained to avoid inappropriate solutions which may result in the potential aggravation of defects. Repairs should also maintain the architectural character of details, finishes etc.
- 3.7 This Report is copyright and no copies can be made of the text or photographs without the written permission of the Architect. Neither should original copies be used by outside agencies (e.g. contractors or other construction professionals) without similar approval from the Architect.

#### 4 INSPECTION CONTEXT

- 4.1 I have continued to act in an advisory role since my 2012 Inspection providing designs for proposed internal remodelling/re-ordering works, pursuit of related approvals, funding etc. plus consultation advice on remedial works. My inspection was completed over 3 visits primarily due to adverse weather inhibiting external appraisal. Weather conditions were bright and sunny on my final visit, but followed intermittent periods of heavy rain and showers.
- 4.2 I met Church Wardens on each of my visits when I was provided with the principal Log Book and other record documents.
- 4.3 In Section 8 : Conclusions and Summary defects, where identified, are categorised for action under the following priority headings. These refer back to itemised paragraphs in the Inspection Sections 5, 6 and 7.
- A : Urgent repairs.
  - B : Repairs essential within the next 18 months.
  - C : Repairs essential before the next Quinquennial Inspection.
  - D : Desirable improvements, or items to be regularly maintained.

## **5 INSPECTION OF THE EXTERNAL BUILDING FABRIC**

### **5.1 Roof**

- 5.1.1 The roof is covered by Westmorland slate and was the subject to careful attention to identified defects prior to the 2002 inspection, including localised remedial work to ridge pointing, lead flashing and replacement of isolated broken slates. The poor match of the latter is a minor issue in the context of a well maintained roof, with no apparent evidence of distress. The roof remains sound despite lead thefts to the Vestry/Office roofs in October 2008 and related remedial works.
- 5.1.2 Remedial works were also carried out to the spire and bell tower structure prior to the 2002 inspection. Both remain in a sound condition.
- 5.1.3 Remedial pointing completed to the eaves of all gables prior to the 2007 Inspection remains in very good/ sound condition.
- 5.1.4 The roof voids were not examined as part of this inspection but I note that there remains no record in the Log Book of installation of insulation as recommended in item 7.04 of the 2007 inspection.

### **5.2 Walls**

- 5.2.1 The facing brickwork and pointing remain predominately in a sound condition. The 1998 re-pointing of the plinth elements, particularly on the East, South and West elevations, however remains a source of concern. In this context I note from Log Book records that there was some historic debate between the Diocesan Advisory Committee's recommended specification and that promoted by my predecessor as Inspecting Architect. The specification used appears to be cement rich, is a distinct colour contrast with the existing, and is bucket handle type rather than flush. There is also evidence of some shallow chasing of joints prior to re-pointing. The condition of this pointing and impact on related brickwork has been the subject of discussions between myself and Property Wardens reference appropriate remedial pointing. Preparations are in hand to progress this work utilising a lime mortar. A number of brick faces at low level on the South elevation in particular are beginning to spall. This should be closely monitored and removal of areas of efflorescence carefully wire brushed.

### **5.3 Windows**

- 5.3.1 All windows are metal framed with steel mesh protective grilles, including triple lancet windows to the West and East gables. Frames appear to be in a well-maintained and sound condition following renewal of those noted as insecure in previous inspections.

#### **5.4 External Doors**

- 5.4.1 All external doorsets are in sound condition and very good decorative order, together with related ironmongery. Note new door to Boiler House fitted prior to the 2012 Inspection.

#### **5.5 Rainwater Goods**

- 5.5.1 All rainwater goods were replaced in colour coated cast aluminium as recommended in the 2007 inspection. All new installations are in sound condition with downpipes outletting onto gully grilles to the below ground surface water drainage system. The defective fall in the guttering on the East face of the Vestry was also remedied. A replacement stainless steel channel has also been installed across the middle of the South Aisle as an integral remedial element following the lead theft in October 2008.
- 5.5.2 Gravel filled channels exist at the plinth abutment on the East, South and West elevations as apparent part protection against rising damp impact and as a surface drainage aid. These gravel margins are subject to regular and recent renewal and are being kept clear of vegetation growth, as are all drainage gulleys. There is damage to some clay outlet gulleys. Replacements are being sought.

## **6 INSPECTION OF THE INTERIOR**

### **6.1 Nave and Chancel**

- 6.1.1 The ceiling to the Nave, Chancel and side Aisles are stained tongued and grooved boarding. The main roof is faceted with exposed tie rods. The aisles have mono-pitch ceilings. All are in excellent condition.
- 6.1.2 The walls have facing bricks to dado level with plastered walls above. The columned arcade to the side aisles are facing brick framed with plastered spandrel panels. The interior was re-decorated prior to the last Inspection. All walls are in excellent condition except for a patch in the North Aisle abutting the Choir Vestry related to gutter blockage and rainwater ingress. This is currently drying out prior to preparation and redecoration
- 6.1.3 The timber parquet flooring incorporates removal boarded covers to below floor central heating ducts. There is some unevenness in the level of flooring over the duct to the North aisle, but otherwise the floor is in excellent condition. The central aisle is carpeted. Former carpet at the rear of the Nave has been removed to match removal of pews.
- 6.1.4 Windows are all steel framed with small square mesh glazing. Both main gables have triple lancet windows. Those in the east gable have stained glass incorporating an interpretation of Matthew 24 verse 29.31 and Chapter 4 of Revelations, as confirmed by a plaque on the South wall of the Chancel.
- 6.1.5 The raised Altar dais has a timber panelled dado to the East gable wall. The Chancel has a ceramic tile floor, with the majority carpeted as an integral part of major refurbishment of the Sanctuary/Chancel carried out in 2000.
- 6.1.6 There are timber box pews to Choir and Nave. Seating in the side aisles is provided by chairs. Refurbishment prior to the 2007 Inspection incorporated replacement of elderly wooden chairs by upholstered timber framed chairs, with associated creation of a Lady Chapel area in the East end of the South aisle and a "kiddies corner" at the West end of the same aisle. These spaces are actively used for coffee mornings and other social activities. Further opening up of the West end of the Nave Has been progressed since the last inspection to create a more flexible community facility.
- 6.1.7 A pew has been shortened on the North side of the Nave to accommodate wheelchair users.

- 6.1.8 Principal furnishings include a main altar, smaller altar to the Lady Chapel, a stone font located at the West end of the central aisle, an eagle lectern and carved timber pulpit, candle stands and an aumbry located in the South wall of the Chancel. All are in a lovingly maintained condition.
- 6.1.9 Principal light fittings to the Nave and Chancel are set at high level. The system is recognised as being in need for replacement/upgrading to improve both lighting levels and flexibility of usage and generally uplift the ambience of the Worship Space. Upgrading of lighting is a priority project objective in further enhancement of the Worship Space.
- 6.1.10 Large diameter cast iron pipes provide the central heating distribution system with exposed pipes feeding perimeter column radiators, with radiators attached to aisle arcade columns fed by pipes served by the below floor ducts. Note removal of two freestanding column radiators at the West end of the Nave in July 2016.
- 6.1.11 An audio system (noted as upgraded in 2003) is activated by a control panel located close to the front of the North side of the Nave. Potential upgrading is apparently being considered.
- 6.1.12 The Blakett & Howden pipe organ was not tested, but is reported to have been tuned and serviced in March 2007, and is evidently well maintained. The boudoir grand piano located at the front of the North aisle was tuned at the same time. there are no formal records of tuning etc. since that date.

## **6.2 Choir Vestry**

- 6.2.1 The plastered ceiling and walls have been redecorated and are in very good condition.
- 6.2.2 The carpet tiles have been removed exposing a timber parquet floor. This is in fair condition with some loose carpet.
- 6.2.3 Modifications were made to vestment cupboards in association with the manufacturer and installation of a storage cupboard for altar frontals prior to the last Inspection All are in very good condition.
- 6.2.4 A First Aid box is attached to the Wall.

## **6.3 Disabled Toilet**

- 6.3.1 The toilet is of appropriate size and incorporates required fittings together with a baby-change unit.
- 6.3.2 Plastered walls and ceiling have also been redecorated prior to the 2012 Inspection and are in a very good condition.

- 6.3.3 The gas meter is located at floor level in the corner of the cubicle. Consideration should be given to its enclosure.
- 6.3.4 Hot water is provided by a large over-sink water heater.
- 6.3.5 The vinyl sheet floor is in good condition.
- 6.3.6 The cubicle does now have an emergency alarm call system as required by latest legislation installed prior to the 2012 Inspection.

#### **6.4 Vestry Corridor**

- 6.4.1 Plastered walls and ceiling are all in good condition, as well as internal doorsets following recent redecoration.
- 6.4.2 Foot scrubbing quality entrance carpet is in very good condition. There is a step up into the Office/Vestry affecting disabled link via this route.
- 6.4.3 There is a ceiling hatch access into the roof void above.

#### **6.5 Office/Vestry**

- 6.5.1 Redecorated plastered walls and ceiling in good order.
- 6.5.2 The floor is covered by carpet tiles. These are in good order.
- 6.5.3 There is a built-in cupboard plus two secure cupboards/safes, plus work station/desks. This provides a well-equipped office/vestry facility.

#### **6.6 Accessibility**

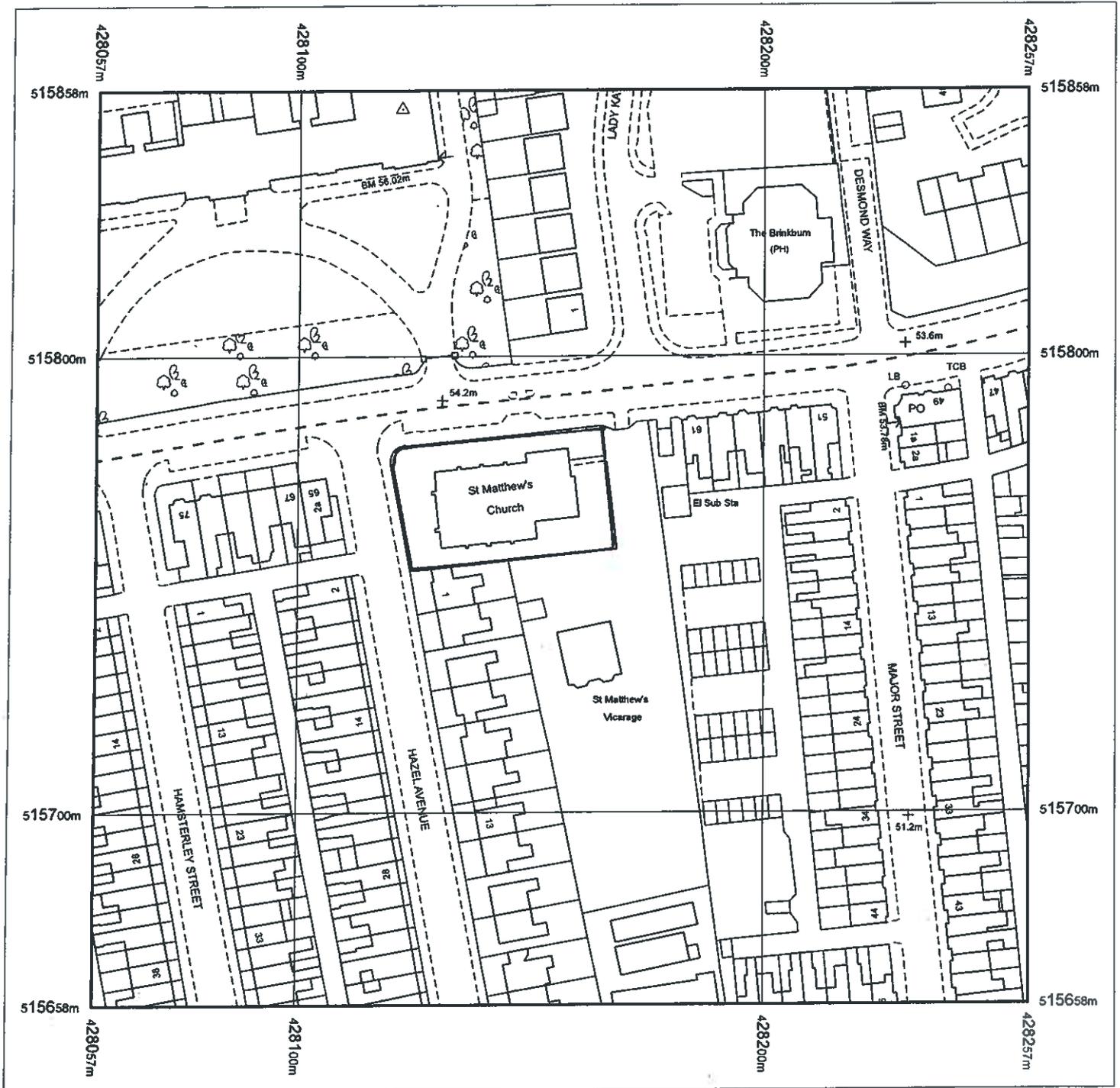
- 6.6.1 Level access is available into and within the premises, noting the step up in level on to the Chancel dais and down into the Office/Lobby. There is however a level floor route between the Nave and Accessible Toilet via the Choir Vestry.

## **7. INSPECTION OF THE EXTERNAL WORKS**

- 7.1 As noted under 1.3 the site is enclosed by steel fencing on the North and West boundaries and close boarded fencing on the other two sides. All are in very good/well-maintained order.
  
- 7.2 The majority of the grounds are grassed particularly on the East and South sides. The Hazel Avenue and Brinkburn Road frontages are a combination of grass, flower beds, shrubs and trees in the North West and North East corners, together with concrete footpaths serving the three entrances. These have been modified as ramps to provide level access. All elements are in a well-maintained condition enhanced by the Memorial Gardens created prior to the 2012 Inspection with its pergola, stepped planters, seating, “bug hotel” and footpaths.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY**

- 8.1 It is evident that the premises continue to be the subject of responsible care and maintenance with the active pursuit of funding for further enhancements including upgrading of the lighting and audio systems to the Worship Space, creation of a new Accessible Toilet and Counselling Room in the South West corner of the Nave plus renewal of areas of flooring. The PCC have been encouraged to pursue additional related funding via the Church Trust and County Durham Foundation.
- 8.2 The more urgent issues identified in the last inspection have predominantly been addressed. There are however some minor residual items that require attention. They are as follows with priority categorisation as identified under 4.4.
- a) Install 200mm Rockwool (or similar) insulation to roof voids per item 5.14 (B).
  - b) Progress remedial re-pointing to plinth brickwork per item 5.2.1 (B).
  - c) Maintain clear gravel margins and replace damaged gulleys per item 5.5.2 (B).
  - d) Progress upgrade of lightning installation to Nave and Chancel per item 6.1.9 (B).
  - e) Progress upgrading of Public Address system per item 6.1.11 (B)
  - f) Progress preparation of damaged wall plaster and decoration in North East corner of North Aisle when completely dried. (B)



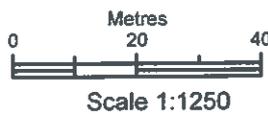
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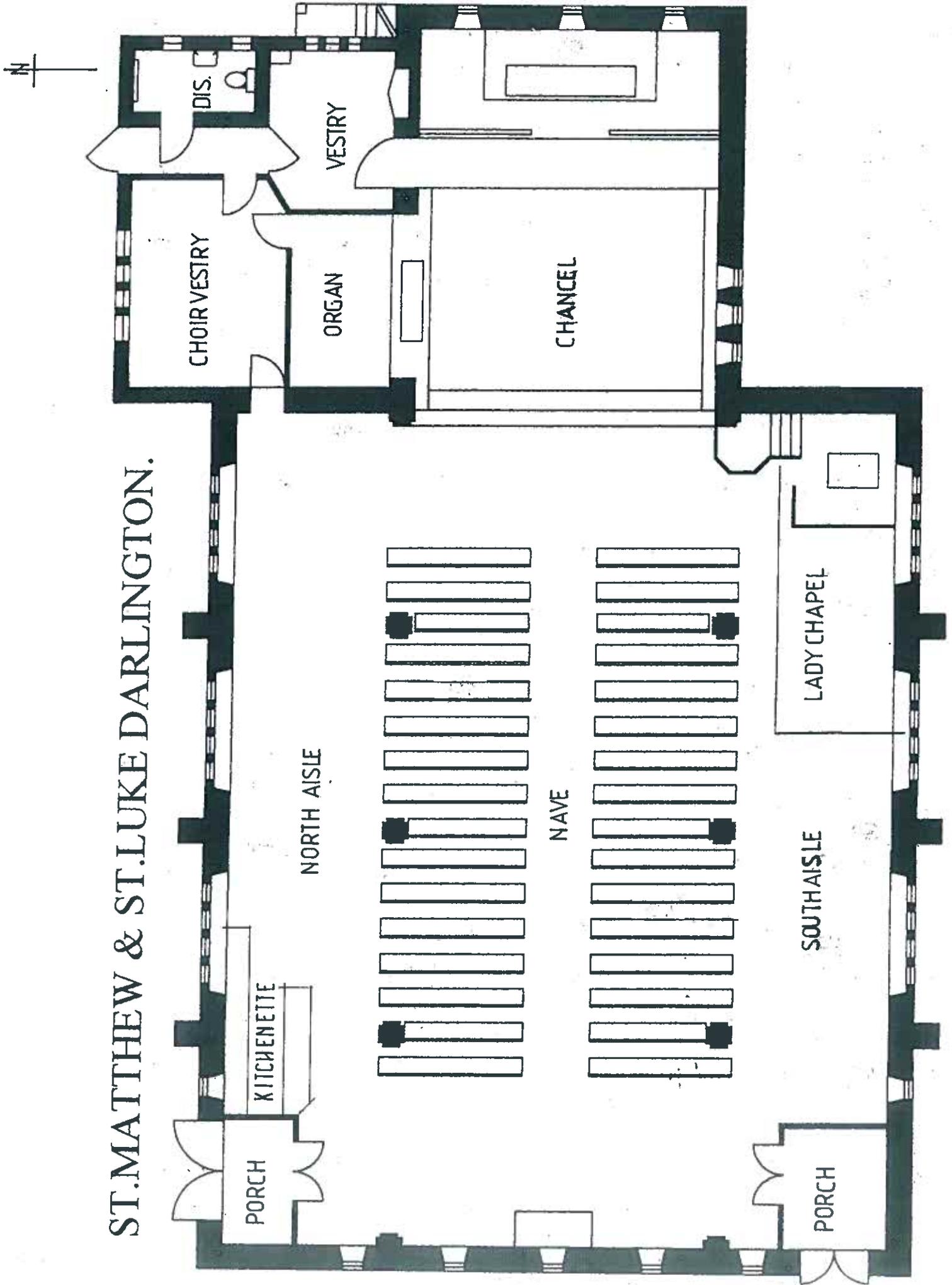
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# ST. MATTHEW & ST. LUKE DARLINGTON.



## **PHOTOGRAPHS :**

- P1. North Elevation
- P2. North Gables to Vestries
- P3. North Elevation from North West with North Porch.
- P4. West Gable from South West corner.
- P5. South elevation.
- P6. Defective cement rich pointing at low level to South elevation with spalling brick faces.
- P7. Detail of cement rich pointing and spalling brick faces. Note gravel channels and clay gulleys.
- P8. View from South East corner,
- P9. East Gable.
- P10. East Elevation of Vestry/Office and Accessible Toilet plus stairs down to Basement Boiler Room.
- P11. East Gable and Bell turret from North East corner.
- P12. Vestry elements from North East corner.
- P13. Memorial Garden from East.
- P14. Memorial Garden with pergola, raised planters and “bug hotel” from East.
- P15. Memorial Garden from West.
- P16. North Aisle looking East.
- P17. Nave looking East.
- P18. South Aisle looking East.
- P19. Chancel.
- P20. Chancel detail.
- P21. Choir Vestry.

P22. North East corner of North Aisle. Note water ingress damage to plaster.

P23. New Kitchenette plus Served.

P24. Remodelled North Porch with glazed doors and storage over.



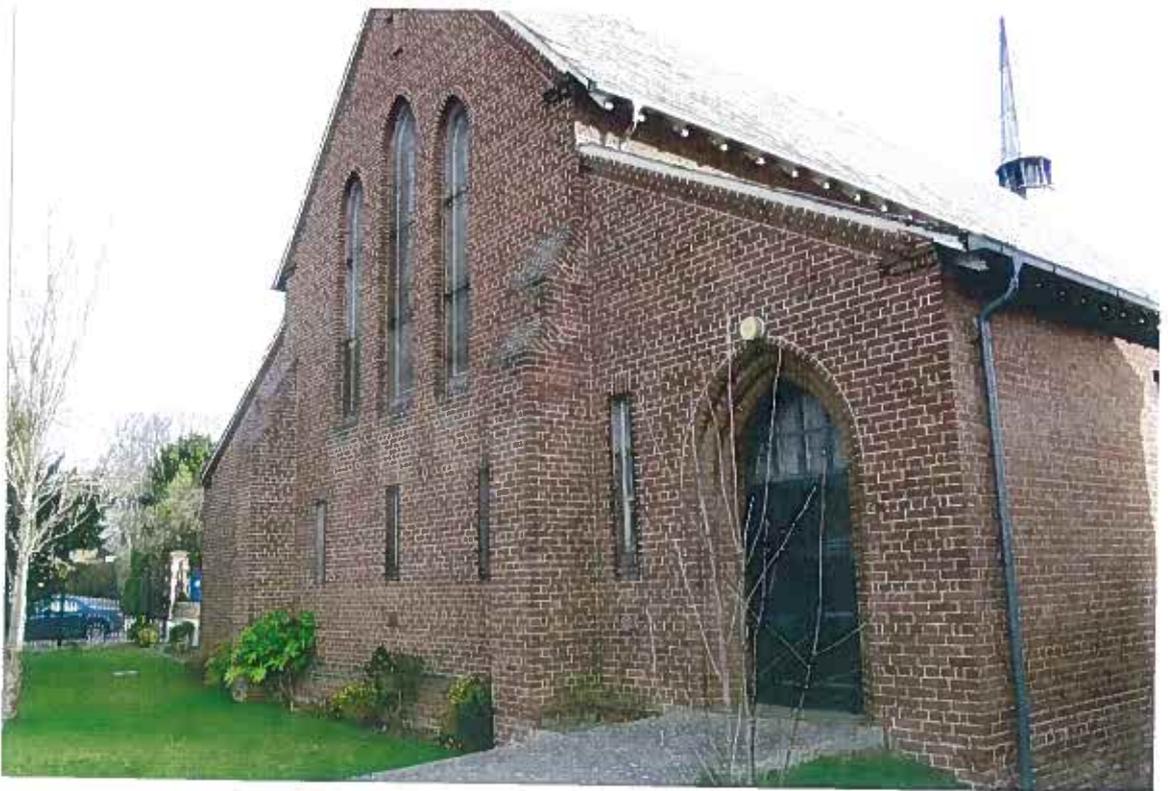
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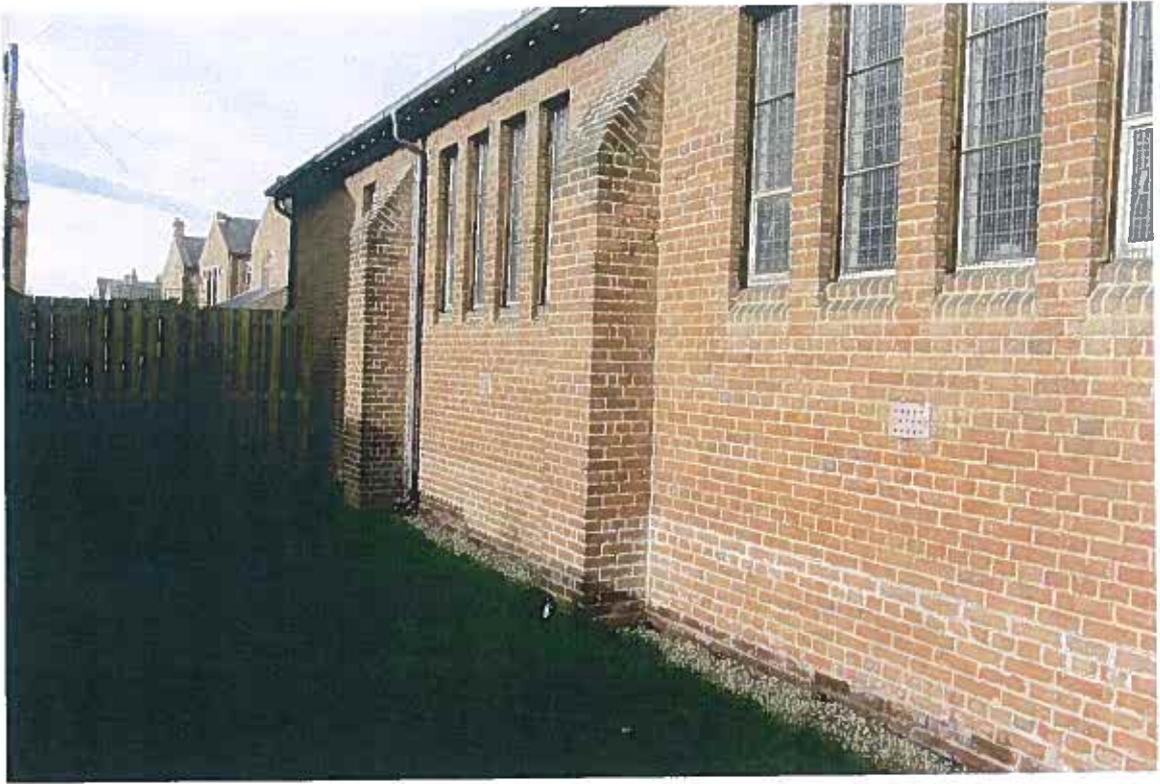
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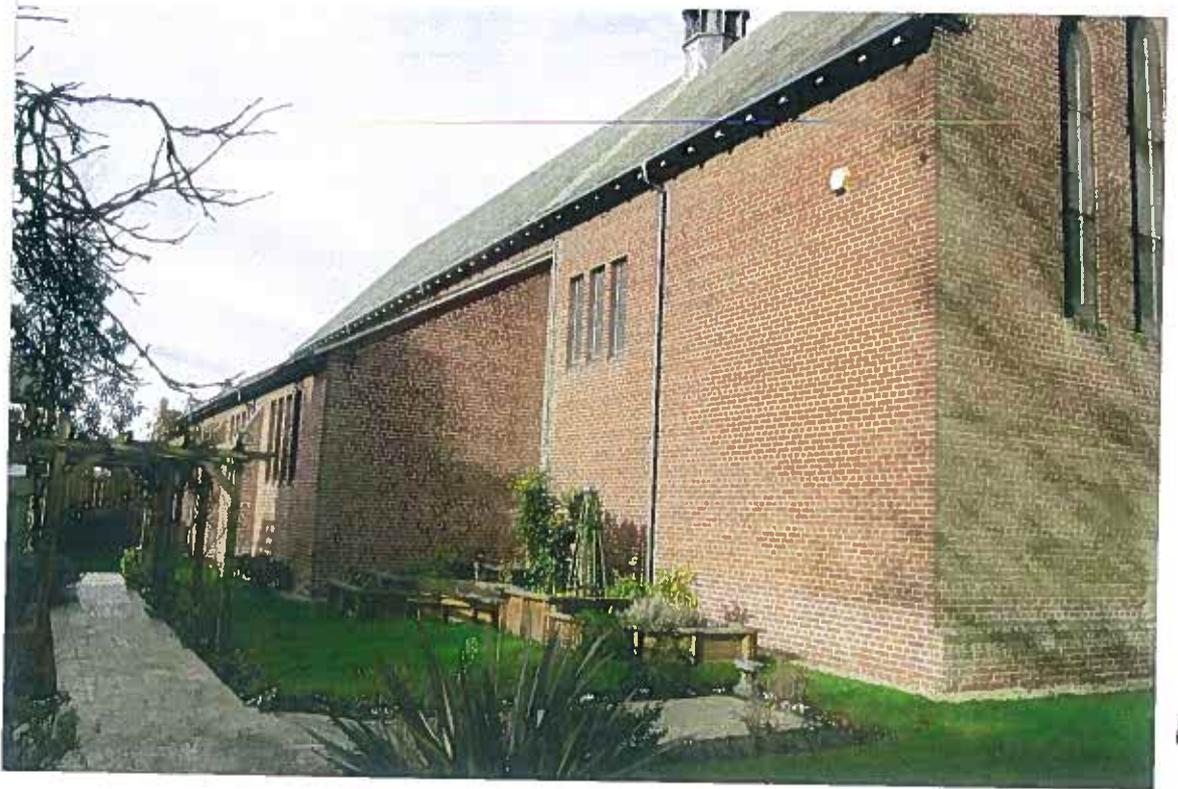
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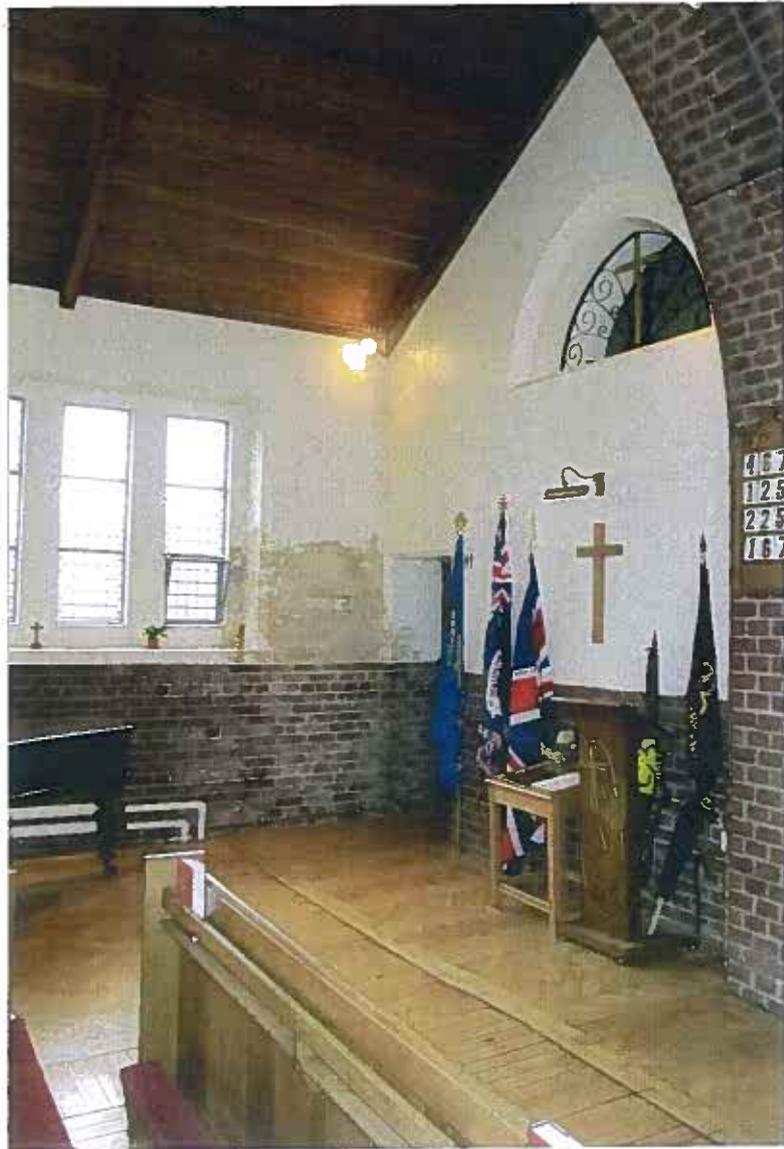
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