Diocese of Durham

St NICHOLAS DUNSTON

(281)

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT

on the architect's inspection on

11 May 2023

Sunderland Archdeaconry

Gateshead West Deanery

an unlisted building

not in a conservation area

Incumbent Revd David Atkinson

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PART ONE

1. I have made a thorough general survey of the condition of the church and grounds. The inspection was such as could readily be made from ground level and ladders. I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and I am therefore unable to report that any such part is free from defect. The chimney flue was not inspected and none of the services were tested. Damp meters were not used.

2. Asbestos was removed from the Boiler room. No material seen is likely to contain asbestos.
   However this report is an Assessment rather than a Management Survey under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2012. The PCC may wish to see the guidance on the Church Buildings Council ('ChurchCare') website.
   If a further management or demolition survey is required in future and not previously done, a specialist surveyor should be approached.

Brief Description

3. Church (with attached vicarage) built 1964-6, designed by Newcombe and Newcombe of Newcastle. An island site in the middle of Dunston, next to a separate Hall. A steel frame clad in brick, roofed in westmorland slate with flat copper on small offshoots. Comprehensive drawings were included in the very detailed 2002 report, not repeated here.

4. A traditional plan with modern section and materials. Broad barrel ceilings with downlights unify the interior. A hall Nave with W gallery over a large entrance Narthex. Chancel with shallow Sanctuary recess similar to Nave but narrower and lower with the E wall slightly cranked on plan.
   A Lady Chapel and Baptistery in a N Transept. S Transept partitioned for a Choir Vestry, stair and large upper Clergy Vestry, now combined with a parish Office. Passage to the linked Vicarage.

5. Good daylight from multiple narrow windows, full height at the private S side, high level only at the public N side. Small single low level N lights for extra light.

6. A large basement under the N Transept divided into Boiler room and oil tank room.
   A disused chimney built into a fin-like brick bell turret pierced by a cross shape.

7. Open site with tarmac paths and parking and low brick boundary walls. An enclosed planted Garden of Remembrance at SE between Church and Hall.

Recent structural history

8. Main work 1997-2002 Rewiring, relighting, new emergency lighting and fire alarm, sound installation
Interior redecorated

2002-07: Pew repairs, new lamps in church, upper Vestry refurbished as Office

2011 new fire door fitted at Choir Vestry, emergency light at Organ loft replaced
2012 basin replaced at Narthex wc, redecorated inside and out
2012 part of a lead valley replaced, roof slates refixed, deterrent paint applied to copper flat roofs
2013 drains under carpark and Church unblocked
2014 asbestos removed from Boiler room, new boiler and flue
2015 ceiling over Clergy Vestry insulated
2016 New floor finishes in Narthex and wcs
Church sound system modified
Periodic Electrical System test
Nave uplight lamps replaced and fittings cleaned
2018 – 2023
Water heater on upper Vestry wall replaced
Pews repaired and fixings replaced
New Aisle carpet
New Notice board
New Sound system
Defibrillator added outside main entrance
Three windows reglazed with Laminated glass

Summary of structural condition

9. The building is well built and maintained and stable.

10. Cracks in the Chancel N wall and movement of the Chancel floor paving reported investigated in the 1980's and found to be due to red shale on site (which tends to expand with time when damp) when it was decided no action was necessary.

PART TWO

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

Roofs

11. Roofs slightly diminishing grey Westmorland slates with concrete ridge tiles – where many joints are open. All slates appear sound but a few are uneven. The slate verges project slightly over timber bargeboards. Timber fascias and wide soffits overhang the eaves and gables.

12. Lead valleys at the N and S Transepts appear sound.

13. Lead flashings and invisible lead back gutter where Tower intersects roof.
    Stepped lead flashings where Chancel roof abuts Nave wall.
    Sound except one piece of flashing at the top N side is loose from the brick joints.


loose flashing unchanged since 2018

14. Small flat roofs at NW (open Porch) and SW (wc off Narthex) abut the brick walls. Copper with capped battens, covered with non-setting deterrent and disguise paint.
    Pitched capping on Tower similar copper but unpainted. All appear sound.

Rainwater System, Drainage

15. Deepflow half round cast iron gutters on brackets on fascias. 4" round cast iron pipes to swan neck shoes over gullies. Paint good except poor over Choir Vestry door.

16. Green streaked bricks at N end of Tower and rust from top pipe joint shows that pipe is or has been blocked.

17. Small pipes from the Tower top gutters turn into the brickwork and out again into its back gutter. Holes through the bricks inside the cut out cross allow access to the internal rainwater pipe.

18. Around the Porch roof a small white painted channel gutter, rusting by the outlet. Plastic gutter at wc.

19. Small cast iron downpipes at both. The whole wc pipe is cracked lengthways, rusted and leaking, perhaps into the brickwork. Replacement now needed.

Split pipe in corner of W wc

20. Some gullies are blocked. Cast iron covers on manholes on drains which appear to pass around from SW to N. Glazed earthenware drain in a deep brick manhole with good flow at right angle bends.

Walls, Buttresses, Chimney

21. Facing brick cavity walls on a brick plinth and damp proof course.
At Nave a sandstone drip course matches the lintels and cills. The brick and bucket handle pointing are generally sound though a very few joints are part open at the W side of the Tower.

Cracked brickwork under N Chancel windows

22. Two signs of minor past movement are:
- a narrow vertical crack L of the outer Vestry door down from the first Vestry window cill level through bricks and joints and
- a vertical crack under the N Chancel middle cill, narrowing downward, suggesting past slight heave (para 10) or spread to the E.

Tower, Bell

23. More than half the N Transept W wall is thickened and built up as a brick blade Tower facing the main road. Pierced by a tall slot and arms making a cross shape. Lead weatherings on exposed tops of bricks in the cross. An access hatch to the Tower interior high in the Chapel wall was not opened.

24. The Tower incorporates a flue, now disused, and stub chimney ending just above the Tower capping. The former small bell has been replaced by small speakers under the eaves.

Window and Door Openings

25. Good quality narrow artificial stone lintels and throated cills and surrounds all in good condition, including Entry door surround and a round window in the W gable.
Elsewhere single windows and some larger assemblies of windows.
Open joints at most cills should be carefully pointed in moderate strength lime mortar to prolong their life.

External Iron and Wood

26. Galvanised cross on E end of ridge. Galvanised steel windows and round steel posts at the Entry canopy. Painted timber roof bargeboards and eave soffits. At both W Nave corners timber covers are missing from the soffit ends, exposing minor rot at the bottoms of the bargeboards.
Otherwise paint good but flaking increases at remaining bargeboard joints.

Bargeboards at NE

Minor decay of bargeboard where swept timber cover missing at NW Nave

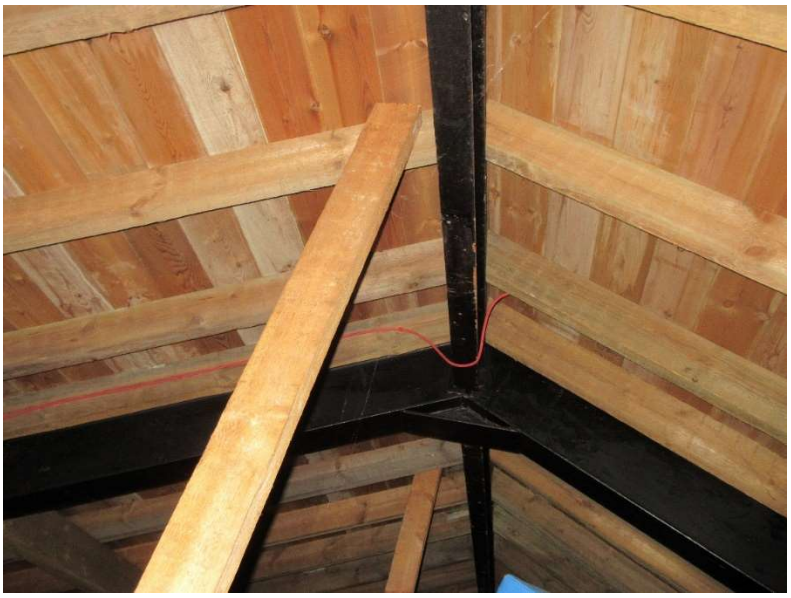
27. Paint poor outside S Chancel and upper Vestry windows

28. The Entry and Vestry outer doors are well stained panelled oak with bronze ring handles at the Entry. At less protected Vestry new stain needed soon.
A sound hardwood handrail in the SE garden needs restaining.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

Roof timbers

29. Over Clergy Vestry visible timber purlins and rafters on steel frames and ridge. Remainder of building concealed but likely to be similar. No sign of defect.



Clergy Vestry roof

Ceilings

30. In Church small flush mineral tiles fixed as a shallow vault across the whole Nave, Chancel and N Transept. Painted white and sound though some lines of joints are open perhaps due to seasonal movement of the frame above. The Transept 'vaults' intersect the Nave at curved cover beads. A vertical tiled bulkhead links the Nave and lower Chancel vaults. No ready access and unlikely to be insulated.

31. The tiles are pierced for many recessed downlights and fissured to prevent unpleasant echo except plain over the organ to reflect sound.

32. The Narthex, wc, Choir and Clergy Vestry ceilings are sound painted flat plaster. Minor cracks at Clergy Vestry.
The accessible void over the Clergy Vestry has stored material and insulation quilt between ceiling joists and under a plywood deck.

Partitions, Doors, Panelling, Screens

33. Partitions are painted plaster on brick or studwork upstairs, all sound.

34. Between Narthex and Nave simple small oak framed glazed panels in wall.

35. At W and S of Nave pairs of well made double acting glazed oak doors with floor springs. Clear glass at W, obscure at S. Good brass push/pulls. Projecting tenons show the timber has shrunk and draughts pass wide gaps all around.
    A draught brush has been fitted at the meeting edges of the W doors but it is so stiff and wide that the doors do not close fully. If draughts are troublesome it may be possible to find suitable seals for all edges.

36. The room doors are painted flush ply with moulded painted architraves.
    A closer on the Clergy Vestry door does not overcome the latch spring.
    At the Choir Vestry and wcs door closers and brass pulls only.

Plaster, Decoration

37. All plaster and paint is good except at Narthex plaster broken for new sockets and spur through wall for added defibrillator.

Ventilation, Glazing, Protection

38. The steel framed windows are mainly fixed but some opening casements with three position catches for trickle ventilation. All single glazed clear float except reeded obscure at the low N Nave lights and cast at the S Transept passage and wc. No protection.
    Eventual replacement with double glazing in thermally broken frames would save energy.

39. Two bottom hung at the Chancel (painted shut), two at the N Transept (one painted shut), four at the S side of the Nave.
    Four inaccessible high level pivots on the Nave N side and two on the Nave S side without a visible pole.

40. Very small hoppers in the W wc (painted shut). Hopper at the wc lobby opens and is small enough to be left open as a trickle vent if necessary. Both Narthex opening lights screwed shut.

41. Two side opening casements in Clergy Vestry. Five fixed shut on stair, passage and Vestry wc, four in Choir Vestry (of which three are screwed shut for security).

Floors, Rails, Gallery, Stairs

42. All floors are solid concrete including the Organ Gallery, stair and the first floor in the S Transept which rests on a deep downstand beam in the Choir Vestry.

43. A varnished oak dais at the Altar. Good sandstone flags in the Chancel (one step above Nave) and Sanctuary (one step above Choir).

44. Hardwood strip finish in Nave and Chapel all sound. Red carpet runner from W doors to the Altar. In the middle of the N Transept a fixed blue carpet over the blocks.

45. Fitted ribbed carpet and inset clean-off mat in the Narthex are sound.
Painted concrete at Organ Stair and Gallery.

46. Good non slip vinyl sheet in the wcs. In Choir Vestry loose carpets on lino or composition floor.
Good fitted carpet in the Clergy Vestry, passage and stair.

47. Good deep chamfered oak skirts throughout except vinyl in the Vestries and wcs.

48. Plain rigid oak communion rail. Its heavy long lift out mid section is kept in the Transept.

49. Good oak rail at Stair. The Gallery front rail is Festival of Britain metal and oak, a little flexible but sound.

Reredos, Furnishings, Organ

50. Behind the Altar a reredos is suggested by exposed brick full height with vertical texture given by projecting alternate half brick fins.

51. The Altar is a robust thick artstone slab with painted sides on a single battered brick pier.
Two assorted chairs and prayer desks in the Chancel.

52. Matching plain oak Pulpit and Lectern each side of the Chancel step.

53. Well made American oak pews and matching Choir benches which are raised on oak platforms at the back of the Nave.

54. The font between Nave and Transept is a deep lead bowl in an inverted brick cone with plain oak lid.
In the Transept an oak table Chapel Altar with carved front tracery and Laudian frontal, an oak eagle lectern and upholstered chairs.

55. The pipe Organ on the Gallery adapted from a Harrison & Harrison with side frames and case of 1896, moved and installed in 1965 with new pipes and a light oak case. It fits the Gallery well but hides the round W window. Excess drying out prevented by bucket of water in the case. Used weekly.

Heating

56. A large basement Boiler room with gullies in the concrete floor and at the bottom of the external steps which run clear. Nearly dry at inspection.
Water runs continually into the corner gully from a small pipe at basement floor level which may drain ground water from under the Nave.

57. Central heating – reported effective - by a large kerosene boiler fed from tanks in a second basement chamber with galvanised external access hatch not entered. A fusible link to cut off the supply.
A large metal balanced flue terminates just above outside ground level, protected by steel palings. The flue is becoming overgrown by a sapling inside the palings.

Balanced flue in 2018

becoming overgrown in 2023

58. High level copper circuit pipes in the Boiler room are uninsulated so some waste of heat, though that heat may help to keep the Boiler room dry. Adding sectional foam lagging would improve economy and could be easily removed if new damp appears in the Boiler room.

Unlagged heating pipes in boiler room

59. A single pumped central heating circuit with lagged feed and expansion tank over the Clergy Vestry. The high water volume in the large pipes and column radiators is slow to heat but the heating is said to be effective.

60. Numerous column radiators in Church, Narthex and Gallery on circuits buried in the solid floors. Two large radiators in the Clergy Vestry and one in the Choir Vestry, supplemented by an electric heater in the Clergy Vestry. Wall electric heater in Passage. No heating in wcs, or wc lobby.

61. Frostat in Boiler room. No visible room thermostat. The simple 7 day one period timer in the Transept said to be adequate. Said to be most effective when the timer is set anticipating cold weather so a modern optimiser control might improve the heating.

Electrical

62. Three phase underground supply with main distribution board in Choir Vestry. The church was mostly or fully rewired in 2001. A sticker at the DB says the last system test and report was in September 2016, next due Sept 2021.
Test report of 2016 not available (best kept with Log Book) though tests for the Hall were available.
So a five yearly test appears overdue – see Addendum.

63. The Church lighting mixes multiple recessed downlights with wall uplights mainly lighting the ceiling. Single low pendant over the font. Multiple spots on tracks each side of the Crossing, Chancel and Sanctuary. The overall lighting is a good balance of general and emphasis on significant parts and furnishings. Emergency lighting.

64. A scene-setting light programmer in the Nave has sophisticated switch gear in the Choir Vestry. Programmes include slow dimming of the uplights which is very effective. Good emphasis on the Altar, Pulpit and Lectern.

65. While the lighting is good the church lamps especially the high lamps in the vaulted ceiling are not long lasting and are expensive to change due to access costs. Change to longer lasting LEDs may be justified.

66. The uplight glasses need an annual wipe clean when cool.

67. In Narthex and wc round low energy ceiling lights and spots on track.
In Boiler room good light and metal clad switches and sockets on conduit.
Under the Porch canopy three lights and a small flood with PIR detector which does not seem to work.

68. Recessed plastic twin 13A sockets.
Renewed sound system including microphone at reading desk. Digital bells.

Lightning Conductor

69. None appears necessary.

Fire Precautions

70. Extinguishers all last serviced November 2022:

Narthex	6 litre foam
Organ Gallery	6 litre foam and 2 kg CO_2
Choir Vestry	2 kg CO_2
Clergy Vestry	2 kg CO_2
Boiler room	6 kg powder

71. In case of proposal to change note that the insurer EIG advises dry powder extinguishers should be confined to boiler rooms and kitchens because discharge (including accidental and malicious) in church risks serious damage to organs and delicate surfaces due to the powder being corrosive.

72. A fire hose in the Passage but no record of testing or assessment of present need.

73. A comprehensive fire alarm system with panel in Choir Vestry includes break glasses and sounders in the Clergy Vestry, Passage, Narthex and Boiler room. Detector in the Nave with sounders and flashing signals at the Gallery. Heat detector in the Boiler room.

Water and Sanitary facilities

74. At the entrance wc a basin, cold tap and hot water from a wall instantaneous heater with indicator switch.

75. A small basin at the Passage wc and a stainless sink and drainer in the Clergy Vestry are both connected to a recent wall storage water heater in the Clergy Vestry with indicator switch. Turned off at the inspection.

Access and use by people with disabilities

76. Good access by gently sloping paths from the parking spaces and pavements to one low step (with added small ramp) up to a low thresh at the entrance doors. Doors wide enough for independent use in a chair. Ideally the step might be removed by raising the path.

77. The pair of Nave doors are narrow and on strong floor springs without stand opens making independent chair use impossible. This is acceptable if the doors are always manned or held open on the cabin hooks.

78. The Nave is level to the Chancel step. No clear space for chair users to sit with other worshippers.

79. No access to the wcs, Clergy Vestry or Gallery for chair users and poor for the infirm. Good handrails at the stairs but due to tight spaces further improvement of access to the upper levels is not practical.
The wcs being narrow, improvement to wheelchair standard would involve demolition and rebuilding the wc off the Narthex which would not be difficult.

The wc off the Narthex – not difficult to rebuild wider for wheelchair use

Security

80. Mortice deadlocks and shootbolts at the entrance doors, Choir Vestry outside door and office.
Security screws at the casement stays but nonetheless the windows remain the weak part if intrusion is determined.
Two large floor safes in a Clergy Vestry cupboard.

Grounds, boundaries, signs, paths

81. Small grounds mainly facing Ellison Rd to the N where raised beds are contained in low random sandstone walls. The beds are grassed with humped centre planting and a conifer all well maintained.

82. Around the Church small lawns with rose beds level with tarmac paths and edged with loose random stone. Paths continuous with a tarmac car park for Church and Hall next to a war memorial.
A brick dwarf wall along School Avenue is fair with plants in a few open joints, worth pointing now to prevent decay.

83. At SW a narrow bank with shrubs is enclosed with steel railings (rust beginning) and the vicarage fence.
At SE a small enclosed garden between Church and Hall, enclosed by high steel palings and gate (more rust) and the vicarage fence.
Beds (becoming overgrown), flag paving and on the Chancel wall plaques for Far East Prisoners of War.

Typical rust at SE gate and railings

Plants in open joints and a failing brick at School Avenue boundary

84. A good recent sign on the N gable.

Archaeology

85. The local authority archaeologist confirms that the church and site are not of archaeological importance.

General comments

86. The church is an attractive design, well built and maintained.

PART THREE

RECOMMENDATIONS in order of priority

For immediate action

For completion within 18 months

For completion within five years

Desirable improvements

Recommendations on Maintenance and Care

ADDENDUM to the SURVEY REPORT
Required under the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

PURPOSE OF REPORT This is a general report only, as is required by the Measure. It is **not** a specification for execution of repairs and must not be used as such. The parish is reminded that it will be necessary to obtain either the Archdeacon's permission or a Faculty if it is intended to make repairs for which an architect's specification should be sought. The PCC minutes must record that an application is being made for permission or faculty and a copy of that minute must accompany the application together with a full specification, drawing where appropriate and an estimate of the cost of the work. In any application for grant aid a full specification is always required.

LOGBOOK The parish has a duty under Canon F13(4) to keep a Log Book recording all work carried out on the building. I commend this practice to the PCC. Not only does it help the inspecting architect but it can prove a valuable aid to the parish.

MAINTENANCE Continual vigilance to guard against blockages in gutters and the rainwater system as a whole is needed. Every parish must find for itself a reliable procedure to ensure that gutters, ground gutters, gullies and drains are kept clean. It might be:
maintenance under contract by a local builder or handyman or
maintenance by church working party
Whatever system is adopted the problem remains to remember when to organise the work. Gutters and pipes should be checked at least twice a year. If the Log Book is used as a check list of action every year and kept as an up to date record this will itself act as a reminder.

HEATING INSTALLATION A proper examination and test should be made by a qualified engineer annually **and a written report obtained for the log book**

ELECTRICAL The installation should be tested every five years and immediately if not done within the last five years by a competent electrical engineer, that is a certificate holder of the National Inspection Council of Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC), a member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) or of the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers (NAPIT) and a resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. **The test report should be kept with the Log Book**. The present report is based on a visual inspection of the main switchboard and certain random sections of the wiring without the use of instruments.
To check registration with NICEIC and ECA see www.electricalsafetyregister.com

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR Any lightning conductor should be tested by a competent electrical engineer every five years (in addition to any recommendation in this report) in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice. Records of the results and condition should be kept with the Log Book. Note that there is no general requirement for a Lightning Conductor.

CHURCH WARDENS' INSPECTION Although the Measure requires the church to be inspected every five years serious trouble may develop in between these surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is recommended that the wardens should make or have made a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year and arrange immediate attention to such matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes.

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES 'One of the striking characteristics of the Gospel narratives is Jesus' concern for people with disabilities but sadly the Church has, in the past, given little attention to their needs. The design of our buildings has often proved a barrier to those who attend church services' (Chairman of the Church Buildings Council). The PCC are reminded that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on churches to review all practices and facilities and to take all reasonable steps to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities caused by physical features, bearing in mind the limitations often found in historic buildings
Useful advice and audit sheets are to be found in 'Widening the Eye of the Needle' published by the Church Buildings Council 1999 £10.95.

INSURANCE The PCC is advised that insurance cover should be reviewed annually to take account of any rise in the cost of rebuilding.