

**Closed church** of Darlington St John: Schedule and Statement of Significance and Needs

Faculty Petition OFS Application Ref: 2025-122719

Removal and disposal of bells, organ, furniture and fixtures.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS

- i. The removal and disposal of the redundant church bells for recasting and future re-use elsewhere.
- ii. The removal of the Vincent pipe organ for disposal and relocation to a church in Manila, the Philippines.
- iii. The removal, disposal or rehoming of the following fixtures and furniture:
  - a) All fixed nave and aisle pews, chancel stalls and frontals for sale/disposal to a furniture reclamation company.
  - b) The following items of furniture to be relocated to the parish church of Darlington St Herbert:
    - Wooden prayer table
    - Pair of small carved wooden chairs
    - Occasional table (in memory of parishioner Hilda Fanny Deighton).
    - Cushioned stool for the above table.
- iv. The disposal of the wooden sanctuary altar and the disposal or appropriate rehoming of altar frontals.

## Statement of Significance – The Closed Church:

The closed church of St Darlington St John is grade II listed ([1322932](#)) and within the [Parkgate Conservation Area](#). The 2022 CBC report ([PM 2591](#)) assesses the church's significance. (See [Appendix A](#) for photographs.)



**Church Description** (CBC Report [PM 2591](#)): *“Parish church, founded by Darlington, St Cuthbert 1845 as a district church... Built 1847-9 to designs by John Middleton of Darlington; Early English style; consecrated 1853; vestries 1900 by W S Hicks, partly rebuilt and extended to 1960s and 2005 for a kitchen... moderate significance overall.”* **The Parkgate Conservation Area Character Appraisal:** *“Landmark features and important views, including the striking St John’s Church above the double railway bridge reflects the railway development and history of the area.”*

### Historic England grade II Official List Entry 1322932 (extract):

“A well-proportioned church in a severe Early English style. The chancel has clasping buttresses with corner shafts with bell capitals and a moulded wall-plate above a stone band which in turn runs above an Early English-style corbel course. The roof is steeply pitched... At the W end there is a tall five-stage tower with a projecting SE stair turret to the lowest stage. The tower has big set-back buttresses. There are lancet windows in the lowest stages. The penultimate stage has blind arcading and slit windows; the belfry stage has richly moulded belfry windows with shaft rings, recessed below a corbel cornice to the parapet which has a cornice. The visually abrupt termination of tower is due to the fact that the intended broach spire was never built... The [interior] walls are plastered and whitened. The nave is very tall under an extremely steeply pitched roof. The chancel arch takes up almost the full width of the nave and has clustered shafts with bell capitals. Blind trefoils decorate the wall above the chancel arch. The tower arch is very tall.”

### Context: Location and Place

The church occupies prominent position in the east Darlington ward of Bank Top. The tower is highly visible by approach from street level and by road and by rail. Often referred to as *the Railwayman’s Church*, it was a place of worship for C19 railway workers at Bank Top Station and on GNER’s York to Darlington line and the junction to the 1825 Stockton to Darlington railway. St John’s gave relief to the church of St Cuthbert as it served an ever-expanding industrial population. Though ranking high on the Index of Multiple Deprivation this is also once again an area of regeneration, with the growth of Darlington’s Central business district to the north and the rail station redevelopment immediately to the west.

In their ‘Brief History of the church of St John the Evangelist’ local historians Mrs V. Cadd and Mr G. Plummer explain that “Up until the completion of the church the nucleus of the population of the parish was centred east of the River Skerne, but as the railway industry grew so did the population and terraced housing was built East of the railway and around the junction of Neasham and Yarm Roads. In February 1849 Nathaniel



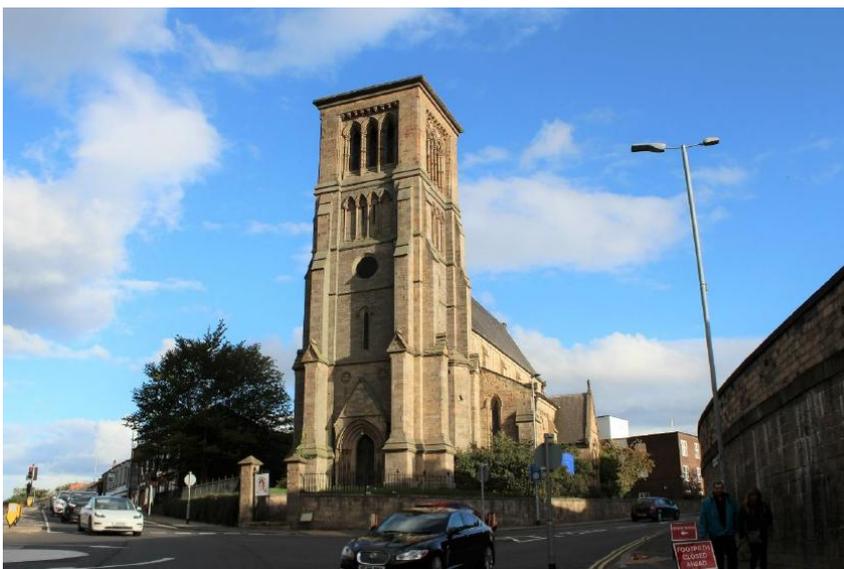
Plews Chairman of the Directors of G.N.E.R. appealed to the Directors and share holders to raise the shortfall for the construction of the church. He stated in his letter: ‘the church was for the accommodation of a poor population and in no small degree fostered by and to a considerable extent created by the Rail Companies.’

The foundation stone was laid in September 1847 by George Hudson M.P., Lord Mayor of York, the English railway financier and the Controller and Chairman of the York, Newcastle and Berwick Railway, who became known as "The Railway King". Mr Hudson joined the GNER, Lord Bishop of Durham and other personages in making donation to finance the build of St John’s, in addition to the monies raised from public subscription. The ceremonial mallet is now held in the Hopetown Museum, Darlington, having been transferred by faculty.



### Closure for Worship

Due to declining congregation numbers and finances and a situation of pastoral redundancy, St John’s church was formally closed for regular public worship on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2023, through a scheme made by the Church Commissioners, under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. Despite closing for worship, the building’s impressive and dignified architectural form continues to dominate Bank Top and retains the pride and affection of the local community and of parishioners whose ministry served it for many years.



### Values

Post-closure, aesthetic and historical value remains in the church building’s bold architectural form, illustrative of an austere and unfrivolous interpretation of the Victorian Early English style, and by specific association with Darlington’s industrial heritage and the historic development and expansion of its railway.



As a landmark, the grade II listed former church continues to provide an integral part of the streetscape, contributing to a sense of place. Significance also continues to be derived from the collective communal values and meanings that are drawn from the site, which stridently asserts its original function as that of an Anglican parish church.

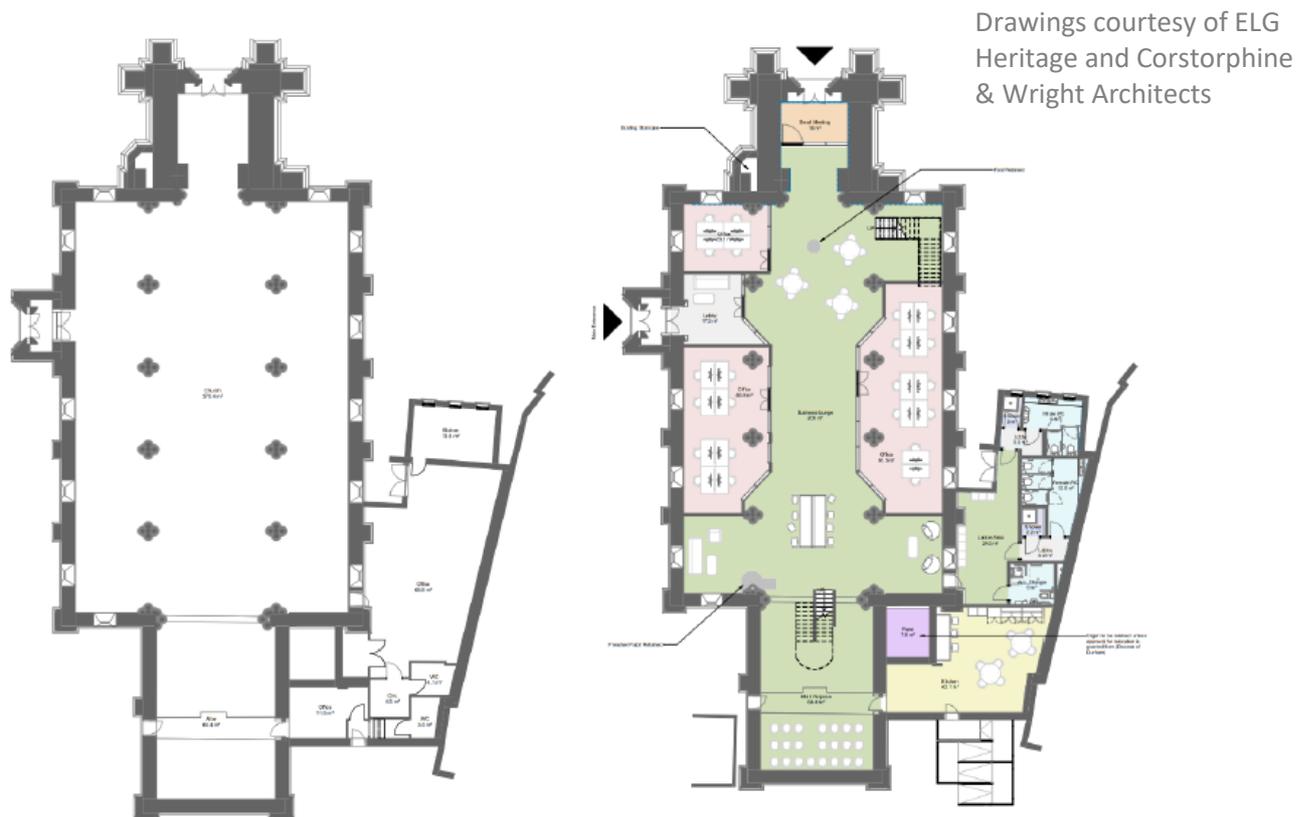


### Context: The Proposed New Use:

Following two periods on the open market, the Diocese and Commissioners have accepted offer of purchase and a business proposal to put the former church to new use as open-plan office accommodation (subject to the outcomes of planning permission, LBC and the Commissioners' public consultation process). Putting the former church to a sustainable office use will inevitably require sensitive alteration of the building, the extent of which will be informed by the requirements of the new use and an assessment of the impact of the proposals upon the building's significance.

### Pre-App Advice:

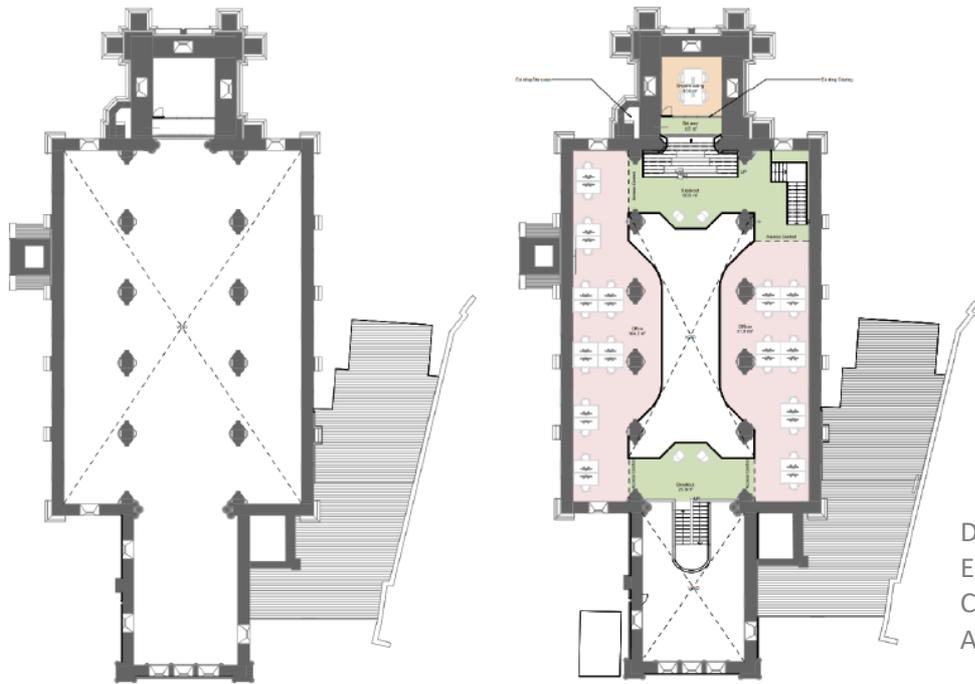
The buyer's architect Corstorphine & Wright and heritage consultant ELG have had positive response from Darlington LPA to pre-application enquiry (25/00053/PREAPP) which, subject to further sequential assessment and supporting statements to be provided in a full plans application and listed building consent submission, states: "the development could be considered acceptable in principle," and that, "a viable use for the now vacant church would be welcomed to ensure long term retention of the listed building."



**Historic England Pre-application Advice** concedes: "It is hard to convert a church interior without noticeably affecting its internal character, but office use is one of the better options due to its flexibility of layout and relatively limited partitioning, say compared to residential use... The proposed scheme has sensitivity in its use of different spaces and light stylistic approach." The applicant is following HE's advice to rethink the staircase and mezzanine across the Chancel which would result in an alteration "contrary to the spatial character of the church... cutting the visual line from nave to chancel." Otherwise the HE Pre-app response had no objection in principle (subject to further submission), quoting 213 and 215 of NPPF, concluding: "The harm caused to the significance of the grade II listed building is less than substantial in degree. The justification... partly found in the need to find a new use for a large vacant listed building."

In relation to liturgical fixture and fittings, the HE pre-app advice is content to "leave this to the faculty process as the best route to decide their future."





Drawings courtesy of  
ELG Heritage and  
Corstorphine & Wright  
Architects



To allow the building to be put to office use, the Commissioners must first undertake a public consultation process and ensure all necessary planning permissions and listed building consents are secured. Disposal of the church organ, peal of eight church bells and nave and chancel fixtures/furniture forms appropriate, practical and necessary preparation for putting the former church to this proposed new use. This is for space-use requirements and in part for access and maintenance purposes. None are suitable for retention but some can be used or accommodated elsewhere. Cessation of the property for use as a place of worship has arguably diminished the heritage values expressed in the original relationship between *design* and *use*. However, the sympathetic approach and open-plan office design aim to retain its ecclesiastical character.

This Statement of Significance and Need supports both Durham DBF's faculty petition for removal of the church bells, the Vincent pipe organ and Nave and Chancel furniture, as well as the buyer's applications in respect of planning permission and listed building consent to put the former church the proposed office use.



**SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:**

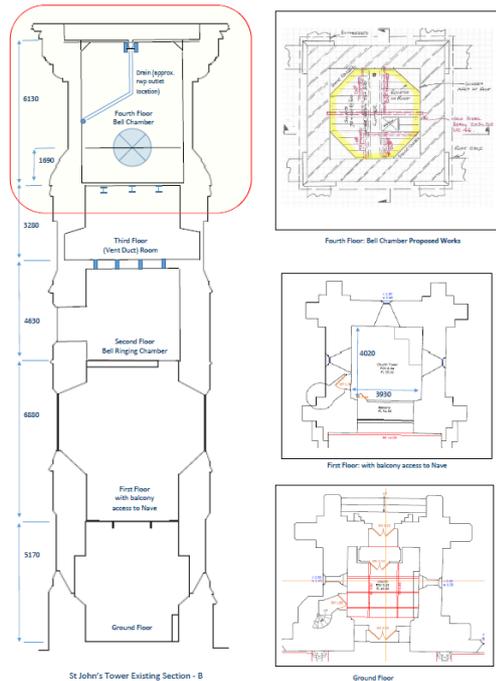
- i. The removal and disposal of the redundant church bells for recasting and future re-use elsewhere.

**Proposal:**

The eight bells to be removed from their headstocks and lowered to the ground for disposal (for sale to the Keltek Trust for re-use of the metal to be made into new bells in the northeast). The bell wheels, fittings and mechanisms would also be removed from the bellframe and disposed of. Following consultation with the Keltek Trust and the Parish of Newcastle St Gabriel, it's proposed the 5th bell (or a corresponding 6 hundred-weight in metal) is to be reserved and donated to the grade II listed church of St Gabriel's, in Heaton.

**Statement of Significance and Needs – Disposal of the Church Bells:**

The bell chamber currently houses a peal of eight bells on a steel bellframe.



## Bells History and Details:

The Durham Diocesan Bell Advisor's 2023 Report ([Appendix B](#)) reads:

*"They were initially installed as a ring of five in a wooden eight bell frame during 1848. These bells were cast by Charles and George Mears of the Whitechapel bell foundry in London:*

*They were on a wooden frame of which only the two main foundation grillage beams remain along the North and South walls. They do not have any loading from the existing frame.*

*Some few years later Charles and George Mears supplied another bell to make it a ring of six. At this time it is believed that this was in 1859 although no documentary proof has yet been located.*

*In 1893 Mears & Stainbank ( new owners of the Whitechapel bell foundry ) added two treble bells and recast the old tenor.*

*It would appear that this eight had become hard to ring and were not tunefully acceptable so a rival firm, Gillett & Johnston of the Croydon foundry, retuned, put on new elm headstocks and rehung the bells in a new steel frame in the December of 1914. Surprisingly you will note that after retuning, which in theory removes bellmetal, some of the bells were actually weighed heavier than they were before. This can be accounted for as there were at this time discrepancies between weights at Mears and Stainbank and Gilletts."*

<b>Bell:</b>	<b>Foundry:</b>	<b>Size:</b>	<b>Note:</b>	<b>Hundredweight:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
1	Mears & Stainbank:	24 ½"	G	3-3-24	1893
2	Mears & Stainbank:	26"	F	4-0-12	1893
3	Charles & George Mears:	27 ½"	E	4-2-25	c 1859
4	Charles & George Mears:	29 ½"	D	4-3-18	1848
5	Charles & George Mears:	31 ½"	C	6-0-02	1848
6	Charles & George Mears:	32 ¾"	B	6-2-13	1848
7	Charles & George Mears:	34 ¼"	A	6-2-18	1848
8 (Tenor)	Mears & Stainbank:	38 ¼"	G	10-0-10	1893

## Inscriptions:

### Bells 1 & 2:

"Laus Deo – Revd Alfred Boot MA, Vicar.  
JNO. T. Teasdale / William Sewell : Churchwarden 1893"

### Bell 8:

As above except "recast 1893"

### Bell 3:

"Presented to this church by  
Nathaniel Pews Esq & Messers R. & W. Thompson  
Incumbent the Rev W.H.O. Stephens, BA  
Churchwardens: Robert Thompson Share Broker/ Richard Child Skinner"

### Bells 4-7:

"C. & G. Mears, Founders, London 1848"

## Diocesan Bell Advisor's Summary of Significance – September 2023:

*"As a ring of bells they do not offer any particular qualities that would make them important. If they were transferred elsewhere it is likely that the tenor would be recast. Currently the seven lightest bells (assuming that the roof has not collapsed) would be ringable."*



Tonal analysis report for: Darlington, St John

Keltek Trust Ref: 22069

Partial frequencies in Hz

Partial	Bell	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Nominal		782	880.5	980	1040	1174	1308	1470.5	1560
Octave Nominal									
Superquint									
Quint									
Tierce									
Prime									
Hum									

Tenor keynote: G -5 cents International Pitch

Estimated accuracy for frequency analysis: +/- 0.5%

Partial ratios

Partial	Bell	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Nominal		DATUM	1.1260	1.2532	1.3299	1.5013	1.6726	1.8804	1.9949
Octave Nominal									
Superquint									
Quint									
Tierce									
Prime									
Hum									

For a perfect True Harmonic tuned bell the Hum is 0.25, Prime 0.5, Tierce 0.6, Quint 0.75 with reference to the Nominal.

Equal Tempered Scale: Errors in cents compared to true-harmonic tuned bells

Partial	Bell	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Nominal		DATUM	5	-9	-6	3	-9	-7	-4
Quint									
Tierce									
Prime									
Hum									

Errors in cents (100 cents = 1 semitone)

Just Intonation Scale: Errors in cents compared to true-harmonic tuned bells

Partial	Bell	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Nominal		DATUM	1	4	-4	1	6	5	-4
Quint									
Tierce									
Prime									
Hum									

Errors in cents (100 cents = 1 semitone)

Comparison with tuning scales - errors in cents

Scale	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Equal Tempered	DATUM	5	-9	-6	3	-9	-7	-4
Just Intonation	DATUM	1	4	-4	1	6	5	-4
Kimberger III	DATUM	12	4	-4	7	0	5	-4

Rings of bells can be tuned to many different scales. Two of the most common are Equal Tempered and Just Intonation.

Details of weights, diameters, notes, founders and dates of casting

	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Weight (cwt)	10-0-10	6-2-18	6-2-13	6-0-2	4-3-18	4-2-25	4-0-12	3-3-24
Weight (kg)	513	338	336	306	249	240	209	201
After tuning (cwt)								
Diameter (in.)	38.5	34.25	32.75	31.5	29.5	27.5	26	24.5
Diameter (mm)	978	870	832	800	749	699	660	622
Note	G -5	A+1	B -14	C -11	D -1	E -14	F# -11	G -9
Founder	Mears & Stainbank	C&G Mears	Mears & Stainbank	Mears & Stainbank				
Date	1893	1848	1848	1848	1848	1848	1893	1893

Scale	Tenor	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Treble
Equal Tempered								
Just Intonation								

Detailed information about the sound of bells including the description of partials, tuning scales and true-harmonic tuning may be found on our web site.



## Assessment of musicality/ timbre of the bells and the proposal's impact on significance

It is recognised that the bells hold local significance to the closed church of St John's and communal value to Bank Top and the wider town of Darlington. However they have been redundant since closure of the church and, due to safety concerns, it is many years more since they have been rung. With the property now proposed to be put to a sustainable and appropriate use of office accommodation, the church bells are not required as part of that use nor appropriate to it and the proposed alterations will remove bell hatches to the tower 1st floor. The bells, bellframe, headstocks, wheels, and working mechanisms would all require restoration and continued ongoing care and maintenance if they were to remain. They also currently combine to severely restrict access for future inspection and proper maintenance of the tower roof and gutter. Overall, as a peal, it's stated that the bells do not hold any particular qualities, nor any notable historical significance in terms of their foundries, dates of casting, inscriptions or dedications.

## Condition

It is noted that, since the Diocesan Bell Advisor reported in 2023, following continued and sustained water ingress through the tower roof, the condition of the bells and their installation have further deteriorated and the headstock to the tenor bell was found to be rotten-through and presenting a high risk of failure in January 2025, the point when the bell was lowered and mechanically fixed onto the bell frame. It is noted that the bells previously have been retuned and, at best, seven of the bells were described in 2023 as "ringable". Durham DBF has been advised that they would need substantially retuning if to serve as part of a new peal. The Tenor bell has been dismantled and cannot be rung and would need wholly recasting.

## Durham DBF works to secure the tower roof to the bell chamber

Since prior to closure for worship in 2023, the unoccupied building has suffered some critical fabric issues including failure of the tower roof gutter, following years of rain water ingress, causing saturation of the four internal tower floors and bellframe. As a consequence of the sustained water ingress the tower floors, hatches, stairs and ladder access were in critical condition, unsafe to use, and the roof at risk of collapse. (Refer to [Appendix C](#)). The headstock to the tenor bell was also found to be rotten and at risk of failure, requiring the tenor bell to be dismantled and fixed in stationary position to the bellframe.



In 2025, with listed building consent and grant of faculty, the Diocese undertook a phased programme of repairs, totalling £75K. Initially, the internal floors of the tower were strengthened, and safe temporary access provided up through the tower and its bellframe, to offer an inspection deck to the tower roof. Structural repairs followed with insertion of a structural steel roof beam, replacement timber roof trimmers, a reformed box gutter and drainage outlet and like-for-like replacement of Victorian lead roof coverings. The work was complex, costly and painstaking due to safety risks, the poor internal environmental conditions and the difficulty of navigating the bellframe and its eight bells, wheels and working mechanisms. Despite the building being closed and in a mothballed condition whilst awaiting being put to a new use, the Diocese decided to look beyond temporary holding repairs, believing the extent of this conservation work would help to ensure the long-term preservation of the tower and the church's fabric for future generations.





**Maintenance Access:**

Despite the repairs, current access up to the underside of the tower roof hatch, for inspection and maintenance purposes remains poor and unsafe. The restricted apertures through the metal bellframe, bells and mechanisms and its suspended floor structure, do not readily allow for installation of improved safe access, e.g. cage ladder, up to roof level.



**Removal:**

Removal of the bells would be undertaken by O&P Bell Maintenance who are fully insured and experienced for undertaking these works. (Method Statement – Appendix D.) The steel roof support UC beam and its splice connections have been designed to accommodate the point load of the largest (tenor) bell and lifting gear. Proposal is for each bell to be dismantled in turn to be lowered to ground level through trapdoors in each of the four tower floors, via a winch clamped to the lower flange of the beam. No structural alteration of tower masonry or other building fabric will be needed to remove the bells and their mechanisms.



**Sale to Keltek Trust and proposed donation to Newcastle St Gabriel's Church, Heaton: Bell Project**



The Parish of Newcastle St Gabriel is undertaking a bells project to introduce twelve bells into the bell tower of the grade II church in Heaton, to form one of the largest peals of bells of any parish church in the dioceses of Newcastle and Durham. It is hoped the church will provide a regional centre for bell ringing and training, with a particular outreach towards students, to keep and grow the tradition and practice of bell-ringing in the northeast. Having sourced eight bells from St Mary's church, Aberavon, Wales, the parish must raise funds for a further four. The entire project is estimated to carry a cost averaging £12.5K per bell. Following agreement with the Keltek Trust and Mr Jim Crowther, Durham Diocese proposes to offer the 5<sup>th</sup> bell from St John's, or a minimum of 6 hundredweight in metal, as a donation to this project. The remainder would be purchased by Keltek Trust and Mr Crowther as acquisitions for re-use in regional church bell projects.

**Sound Recording**

Prior to disposal of the bells from the closed church it is proposed a sound recording of the eight bells is made (a minimum 5 seconds per bell and individual files for each bell). These would be supplied to Keltek Trust to produce a tonal analysis report for the ring and also to be submitted to Durham County Council Archaeology, for the Historic Environment Record. A 2014 YouTube video of a ringing of the St John's bells can be watched at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Muhwfb8ibw>

**Peal boards, hand ringing bells and other sundry items**

It is noted the peal boards of the church and other bell-ringing related contents were removed from the tower ringing chamber (under faculty) to preserve as items of interest and save from further deterioration due to the critical conditions in the tower. These, with a full set of hand ringing bells, are now in the care of Darlington St Cuthbert's church.



## SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:

- ii. The removal of the Vincent organ for disposal and relocation to a church in Manila, the Philippines.

### Proposal:

The methodical dismantling and removal of the R.S. Vincent pipe organ and its relocation to a RC Church in Manila, the Philippines.

### Statement of Significance and Needs – Disposal of the Church Organ

Standard details of the organ are in National Pipe Organ Register: [NPOR | Survey \[N12161\]](#)

The H.S.Vincent organ has a BIOS Historic Organ Grade II\*Certificate. Described by the late Mr Richard Hird (former Diocesan Organs Advisor) as “a ‘grand’ organ: an early example of builder H.S.Vincent's work, built in 1890 when he was aged 29. The organ was restored and slightly modified by H.E.Prested of Durham in 1970, and has been maintained in very good order latterly by Brian Brighton.” (Refer to [Appendix E.](#))



CBC Report: “The most significant items are all of a later vintage. Firstly, the organ, by H S Vincent & Co of Sunderland, was installed c1888. It has a handsome pipe rack style case which displays to the chancel and to the N aisle. It is listed grade II\* in the BIOS historic organ listing scheme.”



Replacing the original 1865 organ by James Nicholson of Newcastle, which had been located in the west gallery, the present organ by H.S. Vincent & Co. of Sunderland was given its opening recital by Philip Armes (organist of Durham Cathedral) on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1890. The Vincent organ is not only an instrument of high quality, its large bulk is tightly recessed into the pit of the north organ chamber. It has been maintained well and kept in good condition but, despite the Diocese arranging for occasional playing during the closure period, the cold and damp environment of the redundant church is causing gradual deterioration and its further retention there will eventually lead to significant mechanical problems, the loss of its rich and bright timbre and the need for retuning, if not major restoration in the long term.

### Office Use Proposal

The organ is to be removed as part of the designed alterations proposed to put the former church to its new use of open-plan office accommodation. Its retention would not be suitable for this particular use-scheme and it also takes up valuable floor space and volume that might otherwise be better used in a successful development. Current proposals are to use this as M&E plant area to serve the building.



Drawings courtesy of ELG Heritage and Corstorphine & Wright Architects

### DOA Report and Recommendations

In his Deputy Diocesan Organs Advisor’s report, provided to the Durham Diocesan Advisory Committee upon closure of the church ([Appendix F](#)), Mr Daniel Cook described a versatile instrument, with a great division which is “bold and sings into the church with clarity.” The organ is “ideal for congregational and choral accompaniment and... the successful performance of much of the mainstream organ literature”. The conclusion and recommendation was “this organ is very well made and is an important survivor of the work of this important local firm. It should be preserved intact at all costs.”

If the organ is left in situ at the point of disposal of the former church, it will face an uncertain future and the likelihood of dismantling for parts.

### Request to relocate to Manila

The organ has been advertised on the IBO’s register of redundant organs available for relocation for over twelve months. Durham DBF has responded to a request from the Revd. Ric Marpa, a Roman Catholic priest in the Philippines who wishes to acquire the organ for relocation and installation into a church in Manila. Revd. Marpa describes himself as an advocate for the use of pipe organ in worship and explains that “with time and dedication we have developed the capacity to rehome pipe organs in the Philippines... While we are a small core team, our technicians are highly capable of fully repairing and restoring historic instruments.” The organ would be offered by Durham DBF as a gift with Revd Marpa paying all associated labour and transport costs. The work team will also be led and coordinated by Mr Martin Renshaw (Pipe up for Organs) who has already successfully removed and relocated a number of Durham organs to new homes abroad. The works will be fully insured and executed by his expert team of experienced organ restorers.



## SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:

- iii. The removal of nave and aisle pews and chancel fixtures and furniture for disposal or rehoming.

### Proposal:

- a) The fixed nave and aisle pews, chancel stalls and frontals to be completely removed and sold to a furniture reclamation company.
- b) The following contents to be removed from the Chancel and relocated to the church of Darlington St Herbert:
  - Wooden prayer table
  - Pair of small carved wooden chairs
  - Occasional table with small brass plaque in memory of parishioner Hilda Fanny Deighton.
  - Cushioned stool for the above table.

### Statement of Significance and Needs – Removal and disposal/relocation of furniture:

CBC Report gives brief summary of the furnishings:

“The church is not richly furnished. Most items are relatively plain. Few are definitively part of the original fit-out, as it appears that the congregational and choir seating may be somewhat later. The altar and font reliably date from the original furnishing. Both have suffered damage.

- a) Removal of pews, chancel stalls and frontals for disposal and sale to a furniture reclamation company.



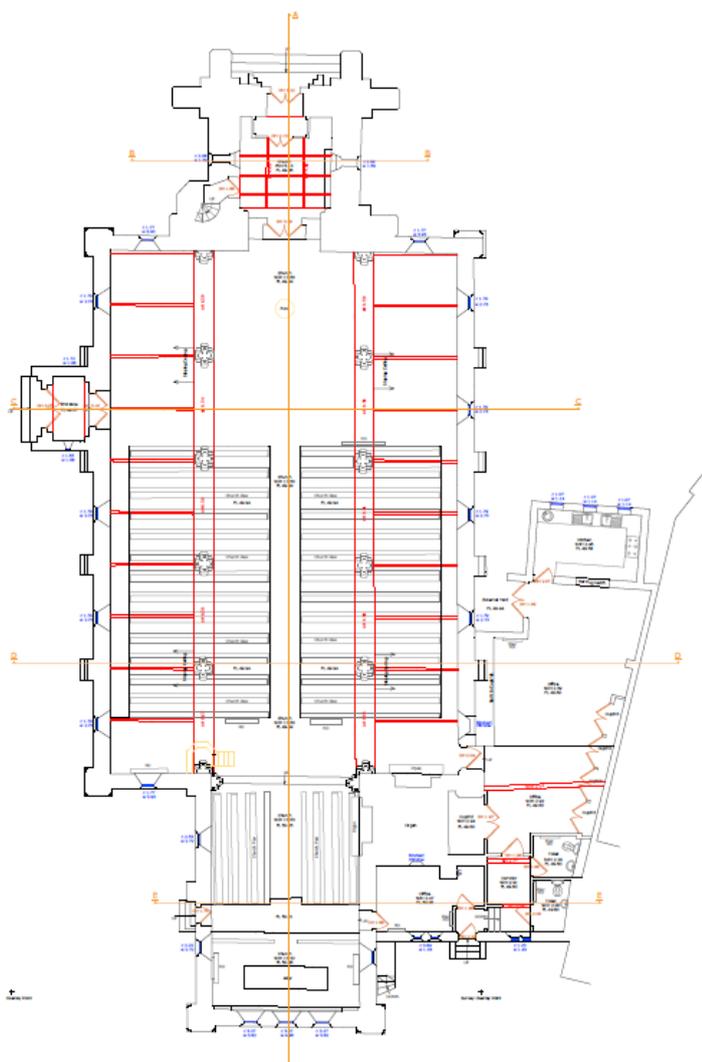
The Chancel stalls and the wall panelling in the church are made of oak. They are of low to moderate significance. There is no proposal to remove the wall panelling in the aisles or chancel.



The Nave pews on each side of the central aisle are long and extend continuously into the north and south aisles. The pews and frontals are fixed and made of pitch pine and stained. They are of low significance.



To accommodate six of the nave columns the existing pews are built and carved to fit around the masonry. Many contain duct holes for the large diameter church heating pipes which pass through and a number of the pews have pipes fitted to the underside of the seats in an early form of pew heating. To accommodate removal and preparation for sale on the commercial market these pews will need substantial work and reducing in length.



The proposed open-plan office use conversion requires removal of all pews, chancel stalls and frontals. However it does not propose removal of the moderate to high significance fixtures, such as the font and the John Priestman stone pulpit. Prior to submitting for listed building consent and planning permission, the buyer sought pre-application advice on the associated alterations and works required to facilitate the change of use.

The LPA pre-app advice states Historic England and amenity society consultation will be required in the full submission, concerning the aspects of internal demolition of part of the building and removal of a number of internal features. However, the pre-app advice concluded: "In principle, a viable use for the now vacant church would be welcomed to ensure long term retention of this historic listed building. The submitted heritage statement does provide some justification for the proposed use as well as the physical alterations."



**b) Chancel contents to be retained within parish and relocated to the church of Darlington St Herbert:**

- a. Wooden prayer table
- b. Pair of small carved wooden chairs



- c. Occasional table with small brass plaque in memory of parishioner Hilda Fanny Deighton.
- d. Cushioned stool for the above table.



Brass plaque inscription:  
"Presented in memory of  
Hilda Fanny Deighton  
By her Husband George Deighton  
A.D. 1954"

These contents are requested by the Parish of Darlington St Herbert & St John to be brought into the parish church of St Herbert's for continued use, under separate faculty. The Parish have made enquiries but the Deighton family (donors of the table) cannot be traced and their whereabouts are now unknown.

These items are of low significance but will enjoy much continued use at St Herbert's and will join other liturgical contents from St John's church, relocated to St Herbert's church under previous faculty (OFS application 2024-095664).



**SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:**

- iv. The disposal of the wooden sanctuary altar and the disposal or rehoming of altar frontals.

**Proposal:**

The altar cannot remain in situ under the proposed new use. Prior to a Commissioners’ pastoral disposal scheme being made and brought into effect, it is proposed to be removed under faculty. Given that there is no request to provide a new home for the altar in another church, it is proposed the altar table is destroyed. The table is made of a simple timber frame. The CBC report states: “The church is not richly furnished. Most items are relatively plain. Few are definitively part of the original fit-out, as it appears that the congregational and choir seating may be somewhat later. The altar and font reliably date from the original furnishing. Both have suffered damage.”



Remaining altar linens and frontals in liturgical colours will be disposed of appropriately if a new home cannot be found. It is noted that two handwoven textile frontals (canvas on frames), both of historic significance, have previously been deposited into the care of the Bowes Museum, under separate faculty.

Dan Spraggon.  
**Church Buildings Support Officer**  
**The Diocese of Durham**

