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Diocese of Durham
Quinquennial Inspection Report
October 2025
St Catherine's Church
New Brancepeth

Inspection of Churches Measure 1955

(Current Version)

Inspected 15th October 2025

Archdeaconry of Auckland

Deanery of Durham

Rev'd Carl Richard Peters

Inspection Architect

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This report has been prepared on the basis of the 'Modern Diocesan Scheme' recommendations for inspecting Parish Churches as published in 1995 by the Council for the Care of Churches 'CCC' in conjunction with the Ecclesiastical Architects and Surveyors Association 'EASA'.

Inspection of Churches measure 1955 (Current Version).

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Recommendations

Where work is recommended a code number is entered in the right hand side page margin to indicate the priority as follows:

- 1 Urgent works requiring immediate attention.
- 2 Work recommended to be carried out during the next 12 months.
- 3 Work recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.
- 4 Work needing consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.
- 5 Work required improving energy efficiency of the structures and services.
- 6 Work required improving disabled access.

1.0 Background and General

- 1.1 The Church of St. Catherine, New Brancepeth, Co. Durham, DH7 7HZ
- 1.2 Ordnance Survey Map reference NZ 2242041477
- 1.3 St. Catherine's Church in New Brancepeth is a former 1910-1912 Mission Hall; dedicated (but not consecrated) on 15th October 1942. The original 1890 Church was destroyed by fire on the 4th July 1942. The only thing salvaged was the bell, which was transferred to the Mission Hall when they chose not to rebuild, but adapt the Mission Hall.
- 1.4 The original Church was built when the Brandon parish grew rapidly with the opening of the coal mines. In 1947 the Church was transferred into the Parish of Ushaw Moor, but after 15 years it was negotiated for St. Catherine's to be returned to the Parish of Brandon.
- 1.5 St Catherine's is a small Anglican Church. The Church has close links to St. John the Evangelist Church, in Meadowfield, and St Luke's Church, in Ushaw Moor.
- 1.6 **General Description of the Church**
- 1.7 The Church is a simple, pitched roof, rectangular building. It sits on a modest rectangular site, adjacent to the main highway through New Brancepeth.
- 1.8 For obvious reasons, the Church is not on a liturgical axis.
- 1.9 The Vestry is a smaller, pitched roof, extension to the northern gable end. Added in 1952/53; originally with a flat roof that was altered in 2014. This was created from the earlier Organ Chamber.
- 1.10 The Organ Chamber is a parapeted, flat roof, extension to the east side. It is reported that this was formerly the main entrance to the Mission Hall.
- 1.11 The toilet is in a lean-to extension on the west side. Added in 1946/47.
- 1.12 The boiler room is a flat roof extension to the west side.
- 1.13 There is a timber shed on the land to the west side/rear of the Church, which is used for storage.
- 1.14 It is reported that the brickwork was cement rendered by F.W. Goodyear in 1952/53. It is thought that this was to unify the appearance of the original building and the later additions. It is this rendering that has contributed to the damp problems the Church has suffered/is suffering. This will be discussed further in the report.
- 1.15 It is reported that the external walls have had a chemical injection damp proof course installed. The Architect has asked the Churchwarden if any

further information is available. Understanding the date of this, and including it within the report, would be useful.

- 1.16 All internal walls are plastered and painted. It is reported that the internal walls have had remedial damp proofing works; "Newton Lath". The Architect has asked the Churchwarden if any further information is available. Understanding the date of this, and including it within the report, would be useful.
- 1.17 The Church is not Listed.
- 1.18 The Church is not in a Conservation Area.
- 1.19 There are no Tree Preservation Orders or Ancient Monuments attached to the Church.

2.0 Scope of Report

- 2.1 This is based on findings of an inspection made from grounded level, with the aid of binoculars where necessary. Parts of the structure which were inaccessible, enclosed, or covered, were not opened; or any loose floor coverings lifted.
- 2.2 No manhole covers were lifted or drains checked.
- 2.3 The following inaccessible parts are not included in this inspection:
 - 1. Roof voids.
 - 2. Roofs, roof structures and ceilings were examined from floor level only.
- 2.4 The weather on the day of inspection was dry, mild and dull.
- 2.5 See appendix 'c' in this report for a fuller description of the report limitations.

3.0 Works Carried Out Since Previous Report

- 3.1 The Church Log confirms that the following works have been undertaken since the last Quinquennial Inspection:

- 3.2 Gas Boiler – Serviced annually. Booked for 24th November 2025.

Electrics – This should be scheduled every 5 years. Testing recorded as December 2023. Next due 2028.

PAT Testing – Annual testing. Testing to be scheduled asap.

Fire Extinguishers – Annual testing. Tested by Safe and Sure Fire Protection Ltd. in March 2025. Next due March 2026.

Organ – Serviced 16th July 2025.

Garden and cleaning tended to on a regular basis.

2022 - Painting and repair of windows.
2023 - Re-painting of shed and front doors.

Boiler repairs.

2024 - Replacement boiler.

Electrical inspection.

Re-rendering and painting of the Organ Chamber external wall; inc. further work as there were problems with the render and type of paint, the Architect has asked the Churchwarden if any further information is available for this work.

2025 - New front gate posts fitted.

Re-painting of Organ Chamber wall (internal), the Architect has asked if any further information is available for this work.

- 3.3 The Churchwardens are commended for their record keeping and organisation. They should ensure that over this next quinquennium a similar log is kept, and an accurate account of the necessary servicing, maintenance and repairs is available.

4.0 General Condition of Church

- 4.1 The Church was pleasant and inviting, and it was clear that the congregation and/or the Churchwardens clean and maintain it regularly; their continued hard work is to be acknowledged and encouraged greatly.

- 4.2 The Church has two Eucharist services a week and hosts weddings, funerals and baptisms as required.

- 4.3 Physically, the Church fabric is generally in good condition. The Churchwardens are clearly doing everything they can to reasonably maintain it.

- 4.4 Particular areas of concern will be discussed in the relevant parts of this report.

External Inspection

5.0 Roof Coverings

- 5.1 The main body of the Church comprises the main entrance lobby, the Nave, the Sanctuary and the kitchen; this is a slate covered, dual pitched roof, with angled, roll top ridges and painted timber fascia/verge boards. Eaves and verges overhang with exposed rafter feet. *photo*

- 5.2 The previous QI reports that in 2020 the roof was re-slatted; with second hand slates on the east side and the best of the reclaimed slates on the west side. It reports that battens and counter battens were introduced; presumably to facilitate the required detail for the installation of a

breather membrane? It is not stated that insulation was introduced; the construction discussed is boarded ceiling, rafters, sarking board, battens and c. battens, slates.

- 5.3 The east side roof slope extends over the main entrance doors to create an entrance canopy.
- 5.4 The Vestry, to the north end, is a lower set, slate covered, dual pitched roof; this abuts the north wall of the main building with lead abutment flashings. Again, this has angled, roll top ridges and painted timber fascia/verge boards. Eaves and verges overhang with exposed rafter feet.
- 5.5 The previous QI reports that prior to 2014, the roofs over the Vestry and porch were flat, in very poor condition and defective. In 2014 these were made pitched roofs, which solved the problem of water ingress.
- 5.6 The bell cote is mounted on the gable end of the Vestry. It is a painted timber structure which matches the fascia/verge boards, and is a mini, slate covered, dual pitched roof.
- 5.7 The back door lobby/toilet is in a lean-to extension to the rear (west), which abuts the main building. This is slate covered. The abutment flashings and cloakings to the north parapet wall are in a mineral felt material; they serve their purpose but aren't aesthetically pleasing. *photo*
- The condition/performance of these should be monitored over the course of this next quinquennium. 3
- 5.8 The Organ is situated in an extension off the main building to the east side. This has a mineral felt, uninsulated, flat roof, that is concealed by parapet walls.
- 5.9 The previous QI reports that this was inspected in 2019; was found to be satisfactory, with max. 10 year lifespan left.
- As we are approaching that time in this next quinquennium, the roof should be inspected and the condition/performance of this should be monitored. The Church Architect should be consulted on any plans to replace this, so improvements can be considered. 3
- 5.10 The boiler room is an extension off the main building to the west side. This has a mineral felt, uninsulated, flat roof. *photo*
- 5.11 The previous QI reports that this was probably coming towards the end of its lifespan but was in a sound condition with no signs of leaking. That is still the case.
- The condition/performance of this should be monitored over the course of this next quinquennium. The Church Architect should be consulted on any plans to replace this, so improvements can be considered. 3

- 5.12 The previous QI reports, that the timber fascias were 'recently' decorated. Whilst the finish of this is still okay, I think further redecoration and/or replacements will be required in the next quinquennium period. Monitor condition. 3
- 5.13 The exposed rafter feet and undersides of the sarking board were reportedly not decorated, and that appears to still be the case. For the preservation of the timbers, these should be decorated as soon as possible. Inspect the woodwork beforehand, make repairs/replacements as necessary, and rub down/clean before decoration. 2
- 5.14 Chimney –
There was a chimney on the rear/west side which extended from the boiler room below. This has been reduced in height and terminated just below the fascia line, with a lead cloaking.
- 6.0 Rainwater Goods and Drainage**
- 6.1 The rainwater goods are grey plastic; gutters are half round and downpipes are to gullies and/or soakaway. The rainwater goods were reportedly replaced in 2020, as part of other roof works.
- 6.2 The performance of the rainwater goods could not be assessed on the day of inspection as it was dry, but there were no obvious signs of defects.
- It is recommended that as a routine item of maintenance the rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes and gullies) should be checked and cleared on a twice-yearly basis, at least. And in wet weather particularly. 2
- 6.3 Some of the gullies are currently congested and should be cleared immediately. *photo* 1
- 6.4 It is reported that most of the surface water is to soakaways (details unknown), but that some, to the rear, might link to the foul drainage network.
- 6.5 There is a foul drain that runs along the rear (west) elevation. This is reportedly connected to 2no. properties up the drainage run. The drain flows to the highway at the north end – eastwards.
- The drain has a history of becoming blocked, so this should be monitored. 3
- 6.6 Water reportedly comes from the main highway to the kitchen, where there is a stop tap.
- 7.0 External Walls**
- 7.1 The previous QI reports that the building is solid brick construction, (340mm thick with external render of approx. 20mm).

- 7.2 Externally, the rendered finish is not in good condition with cracking and blown areas. There is evidence of patch repairs and paint touch-ups.
- The frontage appears tidy on approach and is in the best condition; the decorated finish is reasonable considering the substrate. The reported works to the Organ Chamber facades, in the last quinquennial period, are evident; and the render stops short of ground level, as is advised. *photo*
- The rear is in the worst condition; the extents of the adjacent tree canopy and its shading are probably to blame. Improvements have been made in this past quinquennium period, particularly with the removal of the vegetation/leaf litter against the façade. *photo*
- 7.3 The Churchwardens should continue with their efforts in clearing/maintaining the rear, as enabling more light and air on the façade will assist in alleviating the 'damp' effects on the render. 3
- 7.4 The previous QI report discusses the Churches history of 'damp'.
- It is certain that damp will always be an issue of varying degrees because:
- a) The wall construction is solid; facilitating a direct water ingress route from outside to inside, and for it to rise from the ground.
 - b) The render is not of a breathable specification; any moisture trapped in the brickwork is unable to dry out quickly.
- 7.5 The trapped moisture will account for the evident cracking and blown render across the façade, particularly that at low level.
- 7.6 The previous QI reports, that a chemical injection damp proofing system was installed, which should alleviate the low level damp issues for a period.
- It has been mentioned in previous reports, but the render extending down to the ground is probably exacerbating the damp issues.
- 7.7 The previous QI reports on historic roof failures (materials and construction techniques), which resulted in water ingress. These have all been remediated but could be responsible for some of the external walling defects still evident today.
- 7.8 The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to manage the damp issues. The long-term solution is to hack off the external render and replace with a breathable specific render that stops short of ground level, circa. 150mm, when funds permit. Although this would be a significant investment, it would eradicate the ongoing costs and time associated with maintaining the current state. 4

8.0 Ground Floor Structure

- 8.1 There is no detailed record of the floor structure, so its history/condition is unknown. The previous QI states it "has now solid floors throughout".
- 8.2 The ground level changes around the building and the observation of air bricks in the structure would ordinarily suggest that the ground floor construction is suspended (in some parts at least); but the previous QI statement alludes to the fact that is no longer the case.
- 8.3 There are no recent reports of any concerns and, visually, there is nothing to suggest there are any significant problems.
- 8.4 Rising damp is a long-standing issue, which could have an adverse effect on the ground floor construction; however, without invasive investigation, that cannot be confirmed.

At this stage there is nothing to suggest that further investigation is required. Monitor condition over the next quinquennium. 3

9.0 Exterior Doors

- 9.1 Main Entrance Door – *photo*
Double door on east side. Timber framed with vertical boarding to the external face. Arched opening expressed with exposed brickwork; boarded panel above doors 1no. step up into building.

The doors have been decorated in this quinquennial period; whilst the finish of this is still ok, I think further redecoration will be required in the next quinquennium period. Monitor condition, particularly cills and low-level timbers for rot. 3

- 9.2 Back Door – *photo*
Single door to west side lean-to extension. Timber/ply flush door. Arched opening; timber/ply panel above door 4no. steps up.

External ply face is rotting at the bottom as there is no cill. Door is rarely used and serves its purpose. Consider replacement when funds permit; particularly if this starts to present as a security issue. 3

- 9.3 Boiler House Door – *photo*
Single door to west side boiler house extension. Timber ledged with vertical boarding to the external face.

Door is in a poor state. Probably beyond reasonable repair but arguably, door is rarely used and serves its purpose. Consider replacement when funds permit. 3

10.0 Exterior Windows

- 10.1 Nave/Sanctuary – *photo*
6no. timber windows. 4no. west side 2no. east side.
Frames are rectangular – 4no. panes; 2no. over 2no.
1no. top pane in each window is a tilt inward opening light (if not painted shut).

- Clear, single, glazing in small rectangular quarries with lead comes.
Arched head openings, but arch has solid infill panel.
Creasing tile cills (exterior).
- 10.2 The windows are said to be original. There is evidence of repair and repetitive decoration; but appear in sound condition.
- Externally, some of the low-level timbers/cills have been replaced, which was referenced as a requirement in the previous QI report.
- Some of the glazing quarries have been replaced with larger sections (no lead comes).
- Some quarries are cracked and require repair/replacement when funds permit. 3
- 10.3 The window adjacent to the Pulpit has more significant defects. The lower glass panes are buckling, and the plaster is failing at the window head. These defects suggest movement in the window or surrounding structure, but were referenced in the previous QI report so are not products of a 'new' issue; perhaps remnants of the historic water ingress issues? *photo*
- Monitor movement/condition over this quinquennial period to ensure cause has ceased and discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect. 3
- 10.4 Vestry – *photo*
3no. metal windows north side.
8no. panes; 2no. over 6no.
2no. top panes in each window is a tilt inward opening light (if not painted shut).
Textured, obscure, single, glazing.
Arched openings/frames.
Concrete cills (exterior).
- 10.5 Toilet –
1no. modern timber window west side.
Rectangular opening.
Outward opening light over fixed light (if not painted shut).
Textured, obscure, single, glazing.
- 10.6 The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to maintain the existing windows. The long-term solution, when funds permit, is replacements. An appropriate time for this would be when the external render is replaced. 4
- 11.0 Internal Doors**
- 11.1 Into Nave –
From the entrance porch.
Timber, flush, double doors with planted beads on both sides.

11.2 Others are referenced in the specific room sections.

12.0 Internal Finishes

12.1 Walls –

The walls throughout the Church are generally plastered and painted. There are a number of condition issues with the plaster/paint finish across the Church.

12.2 Blown, blistering, peeling plaster/paint at low level is predominantly being caused by rising 'damp'; moisture within the ground and substructures being absorbed and retained by the walls.

As previously discussed, the previous QI reports a chemical injection damp proofing system was installed, which should alleviate the low-level damp issue for a period.

This issue can only be mitigated unless significant invasive intervention is undertaken.

12.3 Cracking, blown, blistering, peeling plaster/paint at high level is predominantly a consequence of the historic water ingress issues.

There are no reports of ongoing issues after the various remedial roof works.

12.4 Water marks, staining and mould at high level is mostly being caused by construction/environmental condensation (if not the aforementioned historic water ingress).

This mould can be cleaned off. Ventilating the spaces as much as possible will help mitigate the issue. 1

12.5 In summary, most of the wall finish defects can be attributed to trapped moisture within the construction fabric of the Church, or condensation.

12.6 The north gable end wall of the Nave is particularly affected but it is thought this is all related to the above. *photo*

It is recommended that the wall be rubbed down/cleaned and all of the loose plaster/paint removed. That way, in a period of monitoring, any further defects can be more accurately observed. 2

Discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect. 3

12.7 The Organ Chamber is also in a poor state. Again, the cause has likely been remediated with the recent repair/refurbishment works. *photo*

It is recommended that the wall be rubbed down/cleaned and all of the loose plaster/paint removed. That way, in a period of monitoring, any further defects can be more accurately observed. 2

Discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect. 3

It is also recommended that this area be kept as clear as possible to allow air to circulate, and the Church fabric and Organ to aerate.

- 12.8 Ceilings –
The ceilings to the main building are predominantly open; the Nave/Sanctuary has 5no. exposed trusses which support purlins. Every second truss has a timber kneeler. The Sanctuary is defined from the Nave by a fret cut board over the truss, and curtains. *photo*
- 12.9 The ceilings between the trusses are timber boarded and painted; except for the most southerly bay, over the Sanctuary, which has plain (possibly fibre) boarding.
- It is recommended that the PCC/Churchwardens establish that this is not Asbestos – See 24.3. 3
- 12.10 The ceilings look generally okay but would benefit from a rub down/clean; it is understood that this is not easy. 3
- 12.11 There is some staining/water marks on the boards, particularly in second bay, but this could just be condensation. Monitor over the winter/wet period. 2
- 12.12 All other ceilings are plastered/painted and, again, look generally okay. There are some isolated areas of mould which is probably being caused by construction/environmental condensation.
- This mould can be cleaned off. Ventilating the spaces as much as possible will help mitigate the issue. 1
- 12.13 For purpose of record, the ceilings over the porch, kitchen and Vestry are all flat (despite their pitched roofs). The loft spaces above are not accessible.
- 12.14 Floors –
The main entrance lobby is 1no. step up from the outside, then level through with the main body of the Church. The flooring is square terracotta quarry tiles in generally good order. Trapped moisture in the floor would seem to be affecting the tile finish (or they may have been painted?) *photo*
- Their condition should be monitored over the next quinquennium. Lifting the entrance mat periodically would also assist in allowing the floor to airate. 3
- 12.15 The flooring to the main body of the Church is timber parquet, and I would suggest it is the original; it has a varnished finish. The flooring is understandably worn but is, overall, in excellent condition. *photo*

Some areas do have loose or sunken planks which could be repaired; their condition should be monitored to ensure they do not present as a trip hazard.

- 12.16 The Sanctuary is a raised platform above the Nave (2no. steps in total) and is carpeted (fitted in 2016).
- 12.17 The Organ Chamber has an exposed concrete floor.
- 12.18 The kitchen/back door lobby/toilet has vinyl flooring. The back door lobby/toilet is 1no. step down from the kitchen.
- 12.19 The Vestry is carpeted.

13.0 Fittings, Fixtures, Furniture and Moveable Articles

- 13.1 Organ – by F.D. Ward of Middlesbrough. Located on the east side in a small extension from the main building. Timber carcass; stained dark. It is said to be working satisfactorily and is maintained annually. The last service was July 2025 by Harrison & Harrison Ltd. *photo*
- 13.2 Bells – 1no. mounted externally on the north wall. Reportedly from a shipwreck; given by Mr. C. White of Eshwood Street to the original Church and transferred to this Church following the fire.

The bell was moved to its current position as part of the 2014 Vestry reroofing project.
- 13.3 Reredos – reportedly acquired in 1949 for £589 and ten shillings. Made by Wipple and Co. Ltd. (Church furnishers) and designed by Mr. Erridge. Affixed to the south wall. *photo*
- 13.4 Aumbry – in the east wall of the Sanctuary; timber spire above, timber door with curtain, timber shelf below. *photo*
- 13.5 Piscina – arched recess in the opposite (west) wall with marble shelf. *photo*
- 13.6 Altar – timber/ply table; fully clothed.
- 13.7 Sanctuary Rails – carved timber; providing 4no. kneeled prayer positions either side; located 1no. step up from the Nave; no gate. *photo*
- 13.8 Sanctuary miscellaneous – numerous carved timber candle or effigy pedestals, carved timber tables, candles, brasses and religious effigy.
- 13.9 Pulpit – on the west side at Nave level; 2no. steps up. Simple timber example; stained dark; integral book rest with reading light. Timber repairs reported in the previous QI report. *photo*
- 13.10 Font – on the west wall, adjacent to the Pulpit. Freestanding, simple example; hexagonal; timber veneer; brass bowl insert. *photo*
- 13.11 Lectern – simple post support with cross feet and stained dark. *photo*

13.12 Pews – There are no pews. Individual chairs are folding, timber examples, with a crucifix carved into the back. The seating area of the Nave is defined by a further 2no. timber rails, one either side of the aisle. *photo*

13.13 Nave miscellaneous – numerous carved timber candle or effigy pedestals, carved timber tables, bookcases, a storage sideboard, candles, brasses and religious effigy.

13.14 On the north wall of the Nave is a depiction of the original St. Catherine's Church.

13.15 On the east wall of the Nave is 3no. cloth wall hangings. Towards the entrance door, there is a wall hanging ornate brass crucifix, mounted on a timber board. *photo*

14.0 Toilets

14.1 The Church has a toilet facility in a lean-to extension to the main building, on the west side. This comprises a close coupled wc, with push button flush and a wall mounted hand wash basin, with 2no. taps and splash back.

14.2 The walls and ceiling are plastered/painted. The floor covering is vinyl. The door is a simple, timber, ledged and boarded door, that is painted; the door locking bolt is heavily painted and may stick.

14.3 Hot water is provided by an over-sink electric hot water heater. Heating is provided by a wall mounted radiator, piped from the main heating system (but is not a new radiator). Lighting is via a ceiling fixed bulb. All pipework/cabling/conduit is surface fixed.

14.4 Ventilation is provided by a window on the west side; however, the previous report noted the top opening light was inoperable. This was not tested on the day of inspection to confirm. There is no form of mechanical ventilation/extraction.

14.5 There is evidence of surface damp and mould in this lean-to extension, which is likely caused by construction/environmental condensation. Enabling the window to open and/or installing a mechanical extract unit will help ventilate this space and mitigate the issue. *photo*

14.6 The toilet facility is not an accessible toilet and is 1no. step down from the adjacent kitchen.

14.7 Whilst the toilet facility may benefit from a refurbishment when funds permit, it is clean, tidy and perfectly adequate in the meantime. At such a time, it is recommended that the feasibility of making the toilet accessible be investigated. 4

15.0 Kitchen

- 15.1 To the rear of the Nave is a kitchen facility. This was reportedly refurbished in 2015 and is excellently fitted out with base and wall units, sink, fridge and cooker. *photo*
- 15.2 The walls and ceiling are plastered/painted with some areas of wall tiling. The floor covering is vinyl. The door into the kitchen from the Nave is a timber flush door that has been beaded on the Nave side. It is painted white to the kitchen, and 'oak' stained to the Nave.
- 15.3 Hot water is provided by an over-sink electric hot water heater. Heating is provided by a wall mounted radiator, piped from the main heating system. Lighting is via a ceiling pendant. There is a mechanical ventilation extract through the wall to external air. All pipework/cabling/conduit is surface fixed.
- 15.4 The kitchen leads into a lean-to extension to the main building, on the west side. This accommodates the lobby to the back door and the toilet. The door into the lobby from the kitchen is a reclaimed typical 1920s timber door with circular glazed light; painted white. There is a step down into the lobby.
- 16.0 Vestry**
- 16.1 The Vestry is to the north end of the Church. This was reportedly refurbished in 2015 and has been fitted out, to either side, with sliding door 'wardrobes' for storage. Safe located in here.
- 16.2 The walls and ceiling are plastered/painted. The floor covering is carpet. The Vestry can be accessed from the entrance lobby and the kitchen. Both openings are arched, with timber flush doors. Both doors are beaded on the outer sides and are 'oak' stained.
- 16.3 Heating is provided by a wall mounted radiator, piped from the main heating system. Lighting is via ceiling pendants.
- 16.4 The bell is operated from the Vestry. The pull from the bell is in conduit on the external façade and comes through the wall via a vent brick, above the central window. The mechanism could be improved as this could provide a route in for vermin. *photo* 3
- 16.5 There is an area of damp beneath/behind the radiator that has caused the paint/plaster to blister and flake. This is reported in the previous QI and is therefore not a 'new' issue; this was formerly an external wall and could still have retained moisture. More likely, this is rising damp with no un-invasive solution. There is a similar problem in the porch, to the same wall, suggesting there is a consolidated issue. *photo*
- 16.6 The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to maintain the existing situation. The long-term solution, when funds permit, is to hack off the existing plaster and replaster with a damp proofing system. 4

17.0 Heating Installation

- 17.1 A gas fired Baxi boiler; located in the boiler house on the west side, mounted on its north wall. The boiler exhausts through the external wall to external air. Installed in 2024. *photo*
- 17.2 Space heating is provided throughout the Church by white, wall mounted radiators. A digital thermostat is located on the rear wall of the Nave. Most pipework is surface fixed. The previous report noted that new copper distribution pipework and double panel radiators were installed in 2015.
- 17.3 The heating installations should be serviced annually; it was recorded that the next service was scheduled for 24th November 2025. 2
- 17.4 The gas meter is located in the boiler house; the previous report noted that the smart meter was fitted in 2018.
- 18.0 Electrical Installation**
- 18.1 Overhead supply to the apex of the south gable end. Distribution appears to go down the wall and into the ground, and along the east side of the building at eaves level.
- 18.2 The distribution board and electric meter is located in the kitchen; in a high-level cupboard above the wall units. The previous report noted that the smart meter was fitted in 2012. *photo*
- 18.3 The electric installations should be inspected every five years; it was recorded that the last inspection was 13th December 2023 and that the next is due 13th December 2028. 3
- 18.4 PAT testing should be carried out annually; it was reported that this was scheduled for January 2026. 2
- 18.5 There is a defibrillator mounted to the east side external wall, adjacent to the main entrance doors. *photo*
- 18.6 There is no lightening conductor.
- 18.7 There are no visual systems.
- 18.8 There is a basic sound system to the rear of the Church linked to 2no. speakers.
- 18.9 Lighting throughout the Church is varied but generally comprises hanging pendants, strip or directional spot fittings. Although the survey was conducted in daylight, it is thought that the light quality would be satisfactory for the spaces and their use.
- 18.10 There is 1no. external wall light above the main entrance door.
- 19.0 Fire Precautions**
- 19.1 Fire extinguishers comprise:
Main Entrance Porch – 6 litre Foam

Kitchen – 2kg CO₂ and Fire Blanket
Organ – 2kg CO₂

19.2 Fire extinguishers should be tested annually. It was evident that Safe and Sure Fire Protection Ltd. conducted a test in March 2025; the next test is due March 2026. 2

19.3 The Church should have a site-specific Fire Risk Assessment which is reviewed and updated annually (at least); if this is not the case, the PCC should compile one or arrange for a suitably competent person to do so if they are unable. 3

20.0 Accessible Provision

20.1 The Equality Act requires that places of worship comply. It is recommended that the Church commission an Access Audit if they have not already. This will assist the PCC in understanding how accessibility and inclusivity can be improved/facilitated going forward. 6

20.2 There is a step up into the Church at the main entrance, but a steel access ramp is available. There is level access through to the Nave, but there is a step up to the Sanctuary. The toilet facility is not an accessible toilet and is 1no. step down from the adjacent kitchen.

21.0 Security

21.1 There is no security systems installed.

21.2 Whilst the Church is in a well populated and generally well lit, roadside location, the lack of security systems could be inviting to vandals or thieves.

21.3 There is no external lighting to the rear of the Church where access can be obtained. Installing some motion sensed security lights might deter potential vandals or thieves. 3

21.4 When funds permit it would be worth considering a basic security alarm system and/or security cameras. The PCC should also check with the Church insurers that their minimum requirements for security are being satisfied. 4

21.5 Any concerns or events regarding security should be recorded in the Church Log. 3

22.0 Bats

22.1 There are no reports of bats roosting in the Church. An Ecologist should be consulted before any intrusive building and/or roof works are scheduled so that a risk assessment and mitigation strategy can be prepared.

Curtilage

23.0 Churchyard and Environs

23.1 The Church sits on a simple rectangular plot. Since the building was formerly a Mission Hall, there are no burials or memorials.

- 23.2 The east side is adjacent to the main highway through New Brancepeth. The boundary is defined by a well maintained privet hedge; similarly, the grass between the hedge and the building is well maintained.
- 23.3 The main entrance gate is a 2no. leaf metal gate, painted black. It has recently had its posts replaced (2025) and the gate hinges repaired. There is a similar gate towards the southern boundary which gives direct access to the rear of the building. *photo*
- 23.4 At the entrance gate, the tarmac of the footpath, and where it meets the concrete pathway to the Church, is patchy and broken up; there is evidence of some tarmac repair. The condition of this should be monitored as it could present as a trip hazard. *photo*
3
- 23.5 Cracking in the concrete pathway to the Church is to be monitored, as it could present as a trip hazard if the condition worsens. *photo*
3
- 23.6 The northern boundary is defined by a low brick wall and timber outbuildings to the neighbouring property. The facing bricks and pointing are failing. It is likely that this is a Party Wall. It is recommended that the condition be brought to the neighbours' attention, so a plan for repair can be discussed. Repairs should be undertaken before the structural integrity of the wall is compromised. *photo*
3
- 23.7 The western boundary is defined by adhoc field fencing, mostly comprising timber and wire. It would be aesthetically beneficial if it was replaced but, again, this is likely to be a Party Fence; discussion with the adjacent landowner would be required. *photo*
3
- 23.8 There are several mature trees along the western boundary. The Churchwardens are currently undertaking maintenance to them, and some have been removed. They recognise the extents of the tree canopy and its shading have been contributing to the 'damp' on the western side of the Church.
- 23.9 The southern boundary is defined by brick and rendered walls to the neighbouring property. These appear new and/or repaired since the last QI report and are in good order.
- 23.10 The rear of the Church is predominately grassed. The Churchwardens are working hard to clear and keep this area maintained; their efforts are commended. Previously the area was overgrown and built up by leaf litter, which was contributing to the 'damp' on the western side of the Church and blocking surface water drainage.
- 23.11 There is a large timber storage shed to the rear. This (and its base) were reportedly installed in 2019; repainted in 2023.
- 23.12 Boiler House –

Accessed from outside only. Has obviously been cleared and cleaned since the last QI report as it is a pleasant external storage space. Exposed brick walls and concrete slab ceiling.

24.0 Log Book

24.1 The Church Log was available at the time of inspection, and was an excellent, comprehensive record of the Churches affairs. The Churchwardens are commended for their efforts in comprising this.

The Churchwardens should ensure that over the next quinquennium the Church Log is maintained; generally, it should be a chronological account of the Churches servicing, maintenance and repairs. 3

24.2 The Churchwardens/PCC are to ensure they have all the necessary policies and insurances in place, and that documentation is readily available should it be requested/required. 3

24.3 The absence of an asbestos report is noted; the Churchwardens/PCC should commission a survey when funds permit, as this will be required before any significant building works can proceed. 3

25.0 Previous Quinquennial Reports

25.1 David Beaumont – Beaumont Brown Architects LLP – October 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS

URGENT WORKS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION: Category 1

- i) Some of the gullies are currently congested and should be cleared immediately. 6.3
- ii) Internal Walls – 12.4
This mould can be cleaned off. Ventilating the spaces as much as possible will help mitigate the issue.
- iii) Ceilings – 12.12
This mould can be cleaned off. Ventilating the spaces as much as possible will help mitigate the issue.

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 1 would be:
£500 excluding VAT and fees.**

WORK RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING NEXT 12 MONTHS: Category 2

- vii) The exposed rafter feet and undersides of the sarking board were reportedly not decorated, and that appears to still be the case. For the preservation of the timbers, these should be decorated as soon as possible. Inspect the woodwork beforehand, make 5.13

repairs/replacements as necessary, and rub down/clean before decoration.

- | | | |
|-------|--|-------|
| viii) | It is recommended that as a routine item of maintenance the rainwater goods (gutters, downpipes and gullies) should be checked and cleared on a twice-yearly basis, at least. And in wet weather particularly. | 6.2 |
| ix) | Internal Walls – Gable –
It is recommended that the wall be rubbed down/cleaned and all of the loose plaster/paint removed. That way, in a period of monitoring, any further defects can be more accurately observed. | 12.6 |
| x) | Internal Walls – Organ Chamber –
It is recommended that the wall be rubbed down/cleaned and all of the loose plaster/paint removed. That way, in a period of monitoring, any further defects can be more accurately observed. | 12.7 |
| xi) | Ceilings – Nave –
There is some staining/water marks on the boards, particularly in second bay, but this could just be condensation. Monitor over the winter/wet period. | 12.11 |
| xii) | The heating installations should be serviced annually; it was recorded that the next service was scheduled for 24th November 2025. | 17.3 |
| xiii) | PAT testing should be carried out annually; it was reported that this was scheduled for January 2026. | 18.4 |
| xiv) | Fire extinguishers should be tested annually. It was evident that Safe and Sure Fire Protection Ltd. conducted a test in March 2025; the next test is due March 2026. | 19.2 |

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 2 would be:
£7 500 excluding VAT and fees.**

**WORKS RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING THE
NEXT 5 YEARS: Category 3**

- | | | |
|-------|--|------|
| xv) | Rear Extension Abutment Flashings & Cloakings –
The condition/performance of these should be monitored over the course of this next quinquennium. | 5.7 |
| xvi) | Organ Chamber Roof –
As we are approaching that time in this next quinquennium, the roof should be inspected and the condition/performance of this should be monitored. The Church Architect should be consulted on any plans to replace this, so improvements can be considered. | 5.9 |
| xvii) | Boiler House Roof – | 5.11 |

The condition/performance of this should be monitored over the course of this next quinquennium. The Church Architect should be consulted on any plans to replace this, so improvements can be considered.

- xxviii) The previous QI reports that the timber fascias were 'recently' decorated. Whilst the finish of this is still ok, I think further redecoration and/or replacements will be required in the next quinquennium period. Monitor condition.

5.12
- xix) Foul Drain –
The drain has a history of becoming blocked, so this should be monitored.

6.5
- xx) External Walls –
The Churchwardens should continue with their efforts in clearing/maintaining the rear, as enabling more light and air on the facade will assist in alleviating the 'damp' effects on the render.

7.3
- xxi) Ground Floor Structure –
At this stage there is nothing to suggest that further investigation is required. Monitor condition over the next quinquennium.

8.4
- xxii) Main Entrance Doors –
The doors have been decorated in this quinquennial period; whilst the finish of this is still ok, I think further redecoration will be required in the next quinquennium period. Monitor condition, particularly cills and low-level timbers for rot.

9.1
- xxiii) Back Door –
External ply face is rotting at the bottom as there is no cill. Door is rarely used and serves its purpose. Consider replacement when funds permit; particularly if this starts to present as a security issue.

9.2
- xxiv) Boiler House Door –
Door is in a poor state. Probably beyond reasonable repair but arguably, door is rarely used and serves its purpose. Consider replacement when funds permit.

9.3
- xxv) Nave /Sanctuary Windows –
Some quarries are cracked and require repair/replacement when funds permit.

10.2
- xxvi) Window Near Pulpit –
Monitor movement/condition over this quinquennial period to ensure cause has ceased and discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect.

10.3
- xxvii) Internal Walls – Gable –
Discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect.

12.6
- xxviii) Internal Walls – Organ Chamber –
Discuss/consider necessary repairs with the Church Architect.

12.7

xxix)	Ceilings – Sanctuary – It is recommended that the PCC/Churchwardens establish that this is not Asbestos – See 24.3	12.9
xxx)	The ceilings look generally ok but would benefit from a rub down/clean; it is understood that this is not easy.	12.10
xxxi)	Flooring – Lobby – Their condition should be monitored over the next quinquennium. Lifting the entrance mat periodically would also assist in allowing the floor to aerate.	12.14
xxxii)	Flooring – Nave – Some areas do have loose or sunken planks which could be repaired; their condition should be monitored to ensure they do not present as a trip hazard.	12.15
xxxiii)	The bell is operated from the Vestry. The pull from the bell is in conduit on the external façade and comes through the wall via a vent brick, above the central window. The mechanism could be improved as this could provide a route in for vermin.	16.4
xxxiv)	The electric installations should be inspected every five years; it was recorded that the last inspection was 13.12.2023 and that the next is due 13.12.2028.	18.3
xxxv)	The Church should have a site-specific Fire Risk Assessment which is reviewed and updated annually (at least); if this is not the case, the PCC should compile one or arrange for a suitably competent person to do so if they are unable.	19.3
xxxvi)	There is no external lighting to the rear of the Church where access can be obtained. Installing some motion sensor security lights might deter potential vandals or thieves.	21.3
xxxvii)	Any concerns or events regarding security should be recorded in the Church Log.	21.5
xxxviii)	At the entrance gate, the tarmac of the footpath, and where it meets the concrete pathway to the Church, is patchy and broken up; there is evidence of some tarmac repair. The condition of this should be monitored as it could present as a trip hazard.	23.4
xxxix)	Cracking in the concrete pathway to the Church is to be monitored, as it could present as a trip hazard if the condition worsens.	23.5
xL)	The northern boundary is defined by a low brick wall and timber outbuildings to the neighbouring property. The facing bricks and pointing are failing. It is likely that this is a Party Wall. It is recommended that the condition be brought to the neighbours'	23.6

attention, so a plan for repair can be discussed. Repairs should be undertaken before the structural integrity of the wall is compromised.

- | | | |
|--------|--|------|
| xLi) | The western boundary is defined by adhoc field fencing, mostly comprising timber and wire. It would be aesthetically beneficial if it was replaced but, again, this is likely to be a Party Fence; discussion with the adjacent landowner would be required. | 23.7 |
| xLii) | The Churchwardens should ensure that over the next quinquennium the Church Log is maintained; generally, it should be a chronological account of the Churches servicing, maintenance and repairs. | 24.1 |
| xLiii) | The Churchwardens/PCC are to ensure they have all the necessary policies and insurances in place, and that documentation is readily available should it be requested/required. | 24.2 |
| xLiv) | The absence of an asbestos report is noted; the Churchwardens/PCC should commission a survey when funds permit, as this will be required before any significant building works can proceed. | 24.3 |

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 3 would be:
£10 000 excluding VAT and fees.**

WORK TO BE CONSIDERED BEYOND 5 YEARS: Category 4

- | | | |
|---------|---|------|
| xLv) | The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to manage the damp issues. The long-term solution is to hack off the external render and replace with a breathable specific render that stops short of ground level, circa. 150mm, when funds permit. Although this would be a significant investment, it would eradicate the ongoing costs and time associated with maintaining the current state. | 7.8 |
| xLvi) | The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to maintain the existing windows. The long-term solution, when funds permit, is replacements. An appropriate time for this would be when the external render is replaced. | 10.6 |
| xLvii) | Whilst the toilet facility may benefit from a refurbishment when funds permit, it is clean, tidy and perfectly adequate in the meantime. At such a time, it is recommended that the feasibility of making the toilet accessible be investigated. | 14.7 |
| xLviii) | Isolated 'Damp' –
The PCC should continue, as they are doing, to maintain the existing situation. The long-term solution, when funds permit, is to hack off the existing plaster and replaster with a damp proofing system. | 16.6 |
| xLix) | When funds permit it would be worth considering a basic security alarm system and/or security cameras. The PCC should also check with the Church insurers that their minimum requirements for security are being satisfied. | 21.4 |

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 4 would be:
£125 000 excluding VAT and fees.**

WORK RECOMMENDED TO IMPROVE ENERGY EFFICIENCY:

Category 5

None

WORK REQUIRED TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY: Category 6

- L) The Equality Act requires that places of worship comply. It is 20.1 recommended that the Church commission an Access Audit if they have not already. This will assist the PCC in understanding how accessibility and inclusivity can be improved/facilitated going forward.

**Indicative cost for the works in Category 6 would be:
£500 excluding VAT and fees.**

5.1



5.7



5.10



6.3



7.2



7.2



9.1



9.2



9.3



10.1



10.3



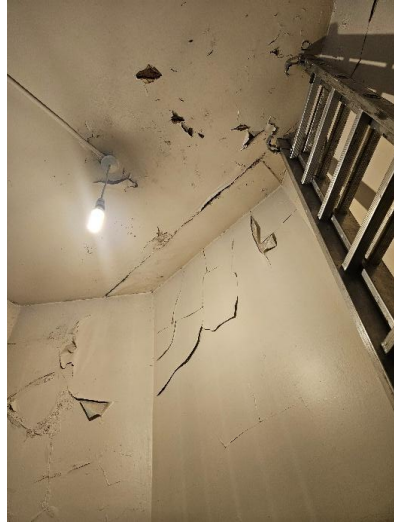
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12.6



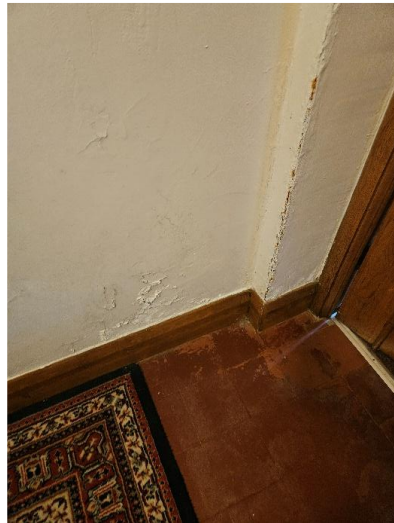
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12.8



12.14



12.15



13.1



13.3



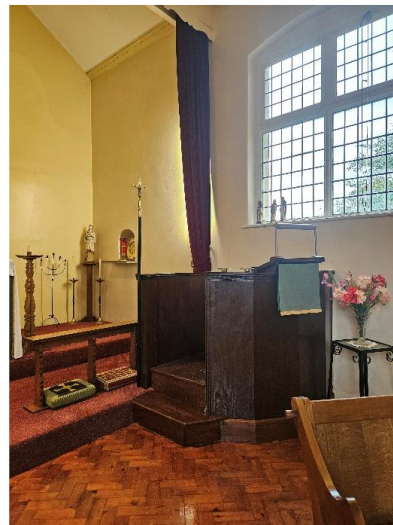
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13.5



13.7
13.9



13.10



13.11
13.12



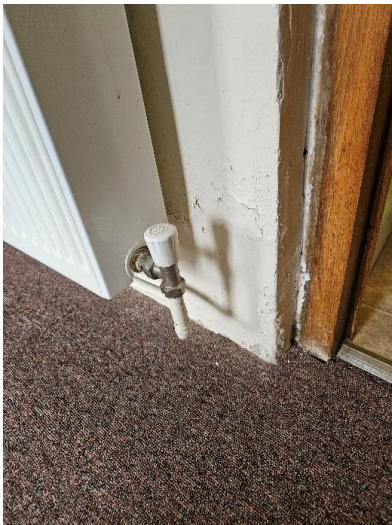
14.5



15.1



16.5



23.3
23.4



23.5



23.6
23.7



a) General

This report is not a specification for the execution of works and must not be used as such. It is a general report as required by the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

The Architect has indicated in it such maintenance items, if any, which may safely be carried out without professional supervision.

Conservation and repair of Churches is a highly specialised subject if work is to be carried out both aesthetically and technically in the best manner, without being wasteful in expenditure. It is, therefore, essential that every care is taken to ensure that no harm is done to the fabric or fittings and when the Parochial Church Council is ready to proceed it should instruct the Architect accordingly, when he will prepare specifications and schedules and arrange for the work to be carried out by an approved Contractor under his direction.

Costs on much of the work on repairing Churches cannot be accurately estimated because the full extent of damage is only revealed as work proceeds, but when the Architect has been instructed to prepare specifications, he can obtain either firm prices or considered approximate estimates, whichever may be appropriate.

The Architect will be glad to help the Parochial Church Council to complete an appeal application to a charitable body if necessary, or to assist in applying for the essential Faculty or Archdeacon's Certification.

b) Priorities

Where work has been specified as being necessary in the preceding pages a code number from 1 to 6, has been inserted in the margin indicating the degree of urgency of the relevant works as follows:

- 1 Urgent works requiring immediate attention.
- 2 Work recommended to be carried out during the next 11 months
- 3 Works recommended to be carried out during the Quinquennial period.
- 4 Work needed consideration beyond the Quinquennial period.
- 5 Work required to improve energy efficiency of the structure and services.
- 6 Work required improving disabled access.

c) Scope of Report

The report is based on the findings of an inspection made from the ground and from other easily accessible points, or from ladders provided by the Parochial Church Council, to comply with the Diocesan Scheme under the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955.

It is emphasised that the inspection has been purely visual and that no enclosed spaces or inaccessible parts, such as boarded floors, roof spaces, or hidden timbers at wall heads have been opened up for inspection. Any part which may require further investigation is referred to in the appropriate section of this report.

d) Cleaning of Gutters etc.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to enter into an annual contract with a local builder for cleaning out the gutters and downpipes twice a year.

e) Pointing and Masonry

Wherever pointing is recommended it is absolutely that the procedure in item (a) of this appendix be adhered to as without proper supervision much harm can be done to the fabric by incorrect use of materials and techniques.

f) Heating Installation

Subject to any comments to the contrary in Section 16.0 of this report, the remarks in this report are based only upon a superficial examination of the general condition of the heating installation, particularly in relation to fire hazards and sightlines.

NB: A proper examination and test should be made of the heating apparatus by a qualified engineer each summer, prior to the start of the heating season and the report of such examination should be kept in the Church log book.

The Parochial Church Council is strongly advised to consider arranging a regular inspection contact.

Wherever practicable, subject to finances, it is recommended that the installation be run at a low setting throughout the week, as distinct from being 'on' during services only, as constant warmth has a beneficial effect on the fabric, fittings and decoration.

g) Electrical Installation

Any electrical installation should be tested every Quinquennium and immediately if not done within the last five years (except as may be otherwise recommended in this report) by a competent electrical engineer or by the supply authority and an insulation resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The engineer's test report should be kept with the Church log book. Where no recent report or certificate of inspection from a competent electrical engineer (one who is on the list of approved contractors issued by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting) is available, the comments in this report are based upon a visual inspection made without instruments of the main switchboard and of sections of wiring selected at random. Electrical installation for lighting and heating, and other electrical circuits, should be installed and maintained in accordance with the current editions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers Rules and the more specific recommendations of the Council for the Care of Churches, contained in the publication "The Lighting of Churches".

h) Lightning Conductors

As a defective conductor may attract lightning, the lightning conductor should be tested every Quinquennium in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice (current edition) by a competent electrical engineer and the record of the test results, conditions and recommendations should be kept with the Church log book.

Conductors on lofty spires and other not readily accessible positions should be closely examined every ten years, particularly the contact between the tape and the vane rod of finial. If the conductor tape is without a test clamp, one should be provided above ground level.

i) Maintenance Between Inspections

Although the measure requires the Church to be inspected by an Architect every five years it should be realised that serious trouble may develop between survey if minor defects such as displaced slates and leaking pipes are left unattended.

j) Fire Insurance

The Parochial Church Council is advised that the fire insurance cover should be periodically reviewed to keep pace with the rising cost of repairs.

At least two Class A fire extinguishers per floor, these should comply with BSEN3 and should be kept in an easily accessible position in the Church, together with an additional extinguisher of the foam or CO₂ (Class B) type where heating apparatus is oil fired, all fire extinguishers should be in a stand or attached to a wall.