Parish Church of St. John
Gateshead Fell

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Sunderland
Deanery of Gateshead

Quinquennial Inspection Report
October 2018

Inspecting Architect: H P Massey BA, BArch. (Hons)
Hugh Massey Architects
designhaus
205 Park Road
South Moor
Stanley
Co. Durham

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Church	Parish Church of St. John, Gateshead Fell
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Professional Advisor	Hugh Massey (BA, BArch) Hugh Massey **Architects** *designhaus* 205 Park Road South Moor Stanley Co. Durham DH9 7QE Tel: 01207 280095 Fax: 01207 280531 Email: hugh.massey@hughmasseyarchitects.co.uk
Date of Inspection	June/July 2017 Bright, sunny weather

Contents

A	**Brief Description of the Building**
A1	**Background and General:** The Church occupies an elevated and visible position at the east end of Church Road, Low Fell, close to its junction with the Old Durham Road, which was the original principal route from Durham to Newcastle. The Church stands on land enclosed in 1809, and its existence is owed in part to the benefaction of the Hawks family, who owned large ironworks on the Tyne.
	General Description of Church:
A2	The Church is one of several in the old Diocese of Durham built under the Commissioners Act of 1809. It was designed and built in 1824-5 by John Ions, a builder who worked elsewhere for the architect John Green (hence certain similarities in the use of a rather plain Gothic Revival style). A monument in the church records his death in 1826 at the age of 41.
A3	The building is fairly typical of its date, comprising a rectangular 'preaching box' in the form of an aisleless Nave with flat timber ceiling, originally with galleries around three sides (only that at the west end survives), a Sanctuary projection at the east end and a Tower at the west accommodating the Entrance Porch and gallery stairs in its lower stage, rising through the Clock Chamber and Belfry to support an extremely tall and slender stone spire. The Sanctuary is flanked by a Clergy Vestry to its north and Entrance Vestibule/Store to its south.
A4	A new extension (1999/2000) containing toilets over a heating chamber stands on the site of the previous Boiler House, in the angle between the north wall of the Tower and west end of the Nave. Within the Nave, timber enclosures containing a Choir Vestry (south) and Organ (north) flank a choir area, in what appears to be the result of a major reordering of the interior in the late nineteenth century. The western gallery was extended eastward and two meeting rooms (with Foyer between) formed beneath it in 2001.
A5	Walls are of local honey-coloured sandstone, plastered and painted internally; roofs are covered with dark grey fibre-cement artificial slates (which replaced the original green Westmorland in 1983).
A6	The Church lies within the Sheriff Hill Conservation Area.
A7	There are no Tree Preservation Orders.
A8	There are no Ancient Monuments listed.
B	**Scope of Report**
B1	This report, the first undertaken on this Church by the writer, is based on findings of a number of visits during June and July 2017. The weather was generally good with a dry summer. Viewing was made from ground level and with the aid of binoculars. No ladder inspection was made externally.
B2	A photographic record was made internally and externally of representative views.
B3	The following inaccessible parts were not included in the inspection: i) Voids below the suspended timber ground floors and gallery flooring ii) Roof voids above the Sanctuary and Clergy Vestry iii) Interior of the Organ
B4	Roofs were examined internally from floor levels and externally from ground levels and from the top of the Tower. The spire was examined from Tower parapet level and related floor only.
B5	See Appendix 'A' in this report for a full description of limitations of the inspection.

1.0	**Previous Inspection and Recent Repairs**
1.1	This is the first time the writer has reported on this church. Previous reports form a valuable record of the condition of the building and of the work carried out over the past 60 years and all surviving copies should be kept. The 1991 report gives a helpful summary of the major works carried out since these records began. Previous reports are dated: 1960 (G.E. Charlewood) 1965 (I. Curry) 1970 (I. Curry) 1976 (I. Curry) 1981 (I. Curry) 1986 (I. Curry) 1991 (I. Curry) 1997 (C. Downs) 2005 (C. Downs) 2013 (C. Downs)
2.0	**General Condition of the Church and Recent Repairs**
2.1	The following remarks inevitably concentrate on the defects noted during the inspection, but it must be emphasized at the outset that the Church is in fair condition overall, and this report is intended to help direct the efforts of those responsible towards an orderly programme for the work needed in the foreseeable future.
2.2	Repairs and works in the last two quinquennial periods have included: • Testing of lightning conductor system and fitting of guards over downtapes (2007) • Re-wiring of the electrical installation (except that serving the new accommodation), together with renewal of light fittings (2008) • Removal of pews from Nave, carpeting of same and introduction of loose chairs • Re-leading of lower panel of eastern light of stained-glass window in south wall of Nave • Re-leading of selected panels of the plain glazed windows • Restoration and re-siting of the painted coat of arms The current Inspector has not had the opportunity to view the Church log book to view details of subsequent works/defect repairs (post-2013).
3.0	**General Structure**
3.1	As commented in previous reports, the building has evidently suffered considerable structural movement in the past, possibly the legacy of ancient and undocumented mine workings, and it seems that the Clergy Vestry has had to be rebuilt at some time in its history.
3.2	Between 1986 and 1991 old lines of diagonal cracking (following the lines of weakness created by hidden flues) in the east wall of the Nave became much more pronounced and a simple monitoring system of plastic tell-tales was installed. Unfortunately, before meaningful readings were taken from these, they were painted over in the course of redecoration in 2001 and thus rendered useless. Bearing in mind the remarks of the previous Inspector, I do not have significant concerns regarding the current level of cracking. I have drawn attention in photographs (Appendix B) to external historic cracking, which should continue to be monitored.

3.3	As recorded in previous inspections, various old easings and crackings are evident externally, mostly associated with window openings, but where these have been pointed up in the past there appears to have been only very minor further movement. Open joints in the exterior walling of the Tower were filled in 2002/3, including those through the sills of the Belfry openings, and have not re-opened since.
3.4	One or two other cracks could do with filling in the next five years. I have photographed side moulding cracking to the north elevation nave window.
3.5	All the evidence of structural movement, internal and external, should be reviewed in future inspections.
3.6	Previous reports have recommended that the iron holding-down rod system within the apex of the spire should be painted to inhibit rust (along with any iron supports to the crossbeams at lower levels) and be checked to ensure that it remains fully effective. This recommendation still stands, but so too does the warning against using the ancient access system of platforms and pole ladders, etc.
3.7	Lower down the Tower, the floors above and below the Belfry and in the Clock Chamber need to be cleared of debris and bird droppings to allow full checking for signs of woodworm or decay.
3.8	At least one joist end in the floor above the Belfry has clearly rotted off, as reported previously, and since then the end of a major beam in the north-east comer has decayed, probably as a result of blockage of the parapet gutter outlet above. The existing steel beam supporting the Belfry floor needs painting to inhibit the rust that is taking hold, as recommended in the previous reports. These issues should be attended to as a matter of urgency.
3.9	As previously noted, within the Tower there appears to be no means of preventing water that penetrates the spire or blows in through the Belfry louvres from dripping all the way down through the structure. The exposed position of the Church renders this situation more than usually evident. The effect of the water penetration on timber may be indicated by some coating with preservative, however consistent contact with damp structure is likely to result in degradation.
3.10	Most of the woodworm attacks evident in various parts of the building, especially in the Tower and roof voids, seem to have died out but there are signs of current activity in the boarding of the enclosure to the stairs up to the Clock Chamber, and in the underside boarding of the ventilation duct within the Clock Chamber itself. This needs prompt treatment, along with what may be another active attack in one of the Nave roof timbers. What appears to be an old attack in the joists of the ceiling of the southeast Entrance Lobby should be treated too, as a precaution, but in the light of the failure of the Vestry ceiling this to the Entrance Lobby should not be entrusted with a man's weight without additional support from below, as reported in previously. It is now urgent that a programme of woodworm control/repair is commenced.
3.11	As recommended previously, walkways should be provided in the Nave roof void to afford safe access for future inspections and maintenance work, and it would be worth carrying one through into the Sanctuary roof space as well.
3.12	The loosened bricks in the partition between the roof voids of the Sanctuary and the southeast Entrance Lobby should either be re-set or removed for safety.

4.0	**External Wall Surfaces**
4.1	The external walls are of local, honey-coloured sandstone, the general walling being of large regularly-coursed squared blocks, finely jointed, with quarry-dressed finish as a contrast to the smooth ashlar dressings of the architectural features. As previously reported, the stone appears to be lasting well overall, with only superficial weathering of a general nature.
4.2	As recommended in previous reports, limited repointing is desirable within the Belfry, to the corbelled-out courses which prepare the square Tower to support the octagonal spire.
4.3	Previous reports have commented that certain fractures in the jambs and mullions of the window surrounds suggest the presence of hidden ironwork, causing spalling of the stonework by expanding as it rusts. As recommended in the past two reports, one of the more obvious examples (such as that halfway up the northern jamb of the window in the west face of the ground floor stage of the Tower) should be investigated and, if ironwork is found, consideration should be given to a phased programme of replacement with non-ferrous metal or stainless steel before further damage is done.
4.4	Rusting of some of the iron saddlebars supporting the window glazing has cause minor spalling of the stonework of jambs and mullions, necessitating a certain amount of mortar patching in the past. This should be kept under observation and in any substantial re-glazing non-ferrous saddlebars should be substituted.
4.5	Though the parapets of the west elevation of the Nave to either side of the Tower were attended to prior to the 2005 inspection, the open joints in the string courses immediately under could still do with filling to ensure that these projections serve to protect the walling below. A few open joints in the chimney stack rising up the west wall of the Nave from the Heating Chamber remain to be filled at gable parapet level and these, together with those around the head of the window surround below, could sensibly be filled at the same time. In addition, the southwest corner buttress of the Nave still needs repointing of open joints for much of its height (other than those in the capping, which have been attended to since 2004), and open joints in the southern foot of the east parapet of the Nave, and in the cornice on the east gable of the Sanctuary, need filling. Whilst a mason is on site it would be worth having the open joints up the sides of some of the window surrounds filled as well.
4.6	Rising damp is causing accelerated erosion of the lower walling of the south face of the southeast Entrance Lobby. Whilst there is little that can be done about the cause, the life of the stonework could be prolonged by filling the open perpend joints with a weak lime mortar.
5.0	**Roof Coverings**
5.1	The main roofs of the church were originally covered with green Lake District slates but in 1983 these were replaced completely by dark grey, fibre-cement artificial slates. At the time of the inspection these appeared to remain in good order apart from three breakages in the south slope of the Nave roof close to the western abutment. The problems pointed up on previous inspections at the abutments of the high roofs with their gables have been dealt with, but the mortar filling around the base of the chimney stack on the east gable of the Nave is cracking up and so needs renewal.
5.2	The flat roof over the new extension is waterproofed with high performance bituminous felt, which seems to be in good condition and has been proved to be watertight during a previous blockage. The blockage was cleared prior to the previous inspection but the timber board with holes drilled through it is clearly no substitute for the original outlet grating, and a replacement for that original should be provided. In the meantime, this outlet should be checked regularly to ensure that it remains clear.

5.3	The concrete surfacing within the Tower parapets, surrounding the base of the spire, has a number of cracks in it and these may be admitting water, thus contributing to the erosion of the stonework of the corbelled-out masonry within the Belfry. Weatherproofing the concrete, by applying a paint-on membrane or bituminous felt over it, should be considered. As previously indicated in my initial Tower report of February 2016, I strongly recommend that permanent, secure safety points be installed at this parapet level.
6.0	**Rainwater Disposal System**
6.1	I have included as an Appendix my report on the Tower issues dated February 2016 and reproduce recommendation 1.1 and 2.0: "I would propose the immediate installation of 2 no. additional 25mm diameter, stainless steel pipes with a similar projection of 100-150mm over the eastern face of the Tower. This in addition to clearing the existing pipe and fitting to all outlets an internal ABS balloon guard". "Currently the Tower parapet floor surface is unprotected concrete. It has been proposed that a sealing material be painted on this surface. If this option were to be pursued, I would be anxious that a material with a good specification and guaranteed performance over a period be used; and the current price quoted (£290 +VAT) does not I believe reflect the character of the specification I would propose".
6.2	In general, the cast iron eaves gutters and downpipes appear to remain in serviceable condition, although the high-level gutters have not been examined from close quarters for this report. They have reached the stage when repainting is necessary to inhibit rust, and the gutter joints should be re-sealed as part of the preparation process, as several have clearly been leaking. In the meantime, all the gutters and downpipes will need to be cleared and checked regularly, along with the gullies at the feet of the pipes (several choked gullies were noted during the inspection).
6.3	The easternmost gully on the south side of the Nave is fractured and needs making good, and both it and that on the south side of the Sanctuary projection need replacements for their missing gratings. The shoe on the downcomer about halfway along the north side of the Nave is shattered and should be replaced in preparation for the repainting.
6.4	The open eaves arrangement created by replacement of the original lead-lined cornice gutters with the present cast iron eaves guttering has left a ledge which attracts roosting birds. As noted in the last three inspections, the wire mesh provided to exclude them is failing to do so and needs replacement, possibly by an alternative such as the non-setting paste, spikes or fine steel wire systems.
7.0	**External Windows and Doors**
7.1	As noted in previous reports, only three windows in the church are filled with stained glass: the third from the east on both sides of the Nave and the east window in the Sanctuary. This latter has a depiction of the Transfiguration, dating from 1916, with no obvious signature. It appears to be in fair condition but is known to leak in storm conditions and so may need re-leading in the foreseeable future, as suggested previously. The glass in the window on the north side of the Nave probably dates from just after the First World War but has no date or artist's mark. It appears to be in reasonable condition. That in the window on the south side is a war memorial dating from 1919, although again no maker's signature is apparent. The bottom panel of the eastern of the two lights of this window, recorded in 2004 as badly buckled, has been re-leaded since, to a good standard.
7.2	The west window lighting the entrance area in the base of the Tower has a stained-glass heraldic device in the quatrefoil between the heads of the main lights. Part of this coloured glass is broken and needs repair by a specialist, as previously proposed.

7.3	The remainder of the windows throughout the building have uncoloured or slightly tinted glass in rectangular leading. Despite the occasional cracked quarry, this appears to remain in reasonable condition generally, although in some instances its appearance might be improved by cleaning. Selected panels, generally the lowest in the windows in question, have been re-leaded during previous quinquennial periods, leaving all in good order. Having said that, a holed quarry in the northernmost west-facing window on the Gallery needs replacement. In the Meeting Room there is missing internal pointing to the window.
7.4	All the windows of the church have galvanized wire guards externally, generally set too far out from the glass and therefore obscuring much of the architecture of the stone surrounds and mullions of the windows. In places these have failed to protect the windows from attack by objects pushed through the apertures, and polycarbonate sheeting has been inserted behind to protect the lower panels. A couple of guards are of an older pattern: those over the east window of the Sanctuary and the stained-glass window in the north wall of the Nave, and the rust they are giving off is staining the stonework therefore replacement should be considered sooner rather than later. All this is as reported in 2005 and, as suggested then, the form of protection used on this Church may have to be reconsidered in light of these problems, and whatever type is adopted should be set much closer to the glass so as to minimise its effect on the appearance of the building.
7.5	The timber louvres to the Belfry openings were repaired and they and the timber fillings to the clock face openings in the stage below were treated with preservative as part of the steeplejack's contract in 2002/3. Re-treatment should be carried out whenever steeplejacks are engaged for other work on the Tower, to make best use of access equipment. In the meantime, the glass pane in the small aperture at the centre of the south-facing clock face needs fixing back into position.
7.6	Despite renewal of the guards to the high-level openings in the spire, there are signs that birds are still gaining access to the interior, and further measures may be necessary to prevent this.
7.7	The slate louvres to the northernmost of the two ventilation apertures in the east gable of the Nave appear to have slipped out and it might be best simply to infill both this and its southern counterpart.
7.8	The galvanised steel louvre assembly in the north wall of the Heating Chamber is likely to need repainting within the next five years, as its galvanising is beginning to show.
7.9	The oak access hatch from the spire to the Tower parapet gutter needs easing slightly where it catches on its frame. Its two bolts need attention (the lower one may have to be renewed) and its hinges need oiling. All this is as reported previously.
7.10	The main entrance doors were renewed completely prior to the 2005 inspection, in a reasonably faithful copy of the originals, which were beyond economic repair. Re-finishing of the retained frame and tympanum around and above the doors, to match the change from grained to stained finish on the doors, remains to be completed, and the finish on the doors themselves will need renewal before long.
8.0	**External Metalwork, Woodwork and Paintwork**
8.1	Please refer to item 7.10 re. main entrance doors.

9.0	**Tower, Spire, Bells and Frames**
9.1	The iron access ladder in the Clock Chamber could do with treating and painting, together with the metal balustrade around the opening in the Belfry floor to which it rises. This latter needs repair, as corrosion has caused it to come apart and if things go much further it may need renewing altogether.
9.2	The single bell (reputed to have come from Russia in the nineteenth century) is much older than the Church, bearing the date 1610 and a curious inscription entirely consistent with that period. Its canons have been cut off at some time in the past and it is bolted though its crown to an iron headstock. This and the iron fittings and fixings have been painted following the recommendation of a previous report, but the galvanized steel beams of the support frame still need to be completed.
10.0	**Roof Structure**
10.1	Traditional heavy section timber trusses and purlins and rafters.
11.0	**Internal Partitions**
11.1	Solid masonry partitions to Tower and southern Vestries. Baptistery has timber/glazed partition.
12.0	**Internal Ceilings**
12.1	The walls and ceiling of the Clergy Vestry show mould or mildew spotting due to condensation therefore, as recommended in previous reports, consideration should be given to improved heating/ventilation to combat this. In addition, the affected surfaces should be washed down with a mild biocide (e.g. diluted bleach) to remove the existing staining and discourage recurrence.
13.0	**Internal Walls**
13.1	Plaster repair has been carried out in the southeast Entrance Vestibule, and this area could do with total redecoration, although its present use as a store makes its appearance a low priority. The thermoplastic tiles on its floor are breaking up and need replacement or covering over. They should perhaps be tested for asbestos before being worked on.
13.2	Loose tiling down beside the cooker in the northern Meeting Room needs re-fixing.
13.3	See item 12.1 re. Clergy Vestry walls.
14.0	**Internal Doors**
14.1	Of the internal doors, most seem to be in reasonable condition and the glass in the upper panels of the (original) pair at the west end of the Foyer has been upgraded to safety standard with a self-adhesive film, as recommended in previous reports.
14.2	The doors to the Gallery catch slightly and need something to replace the hazardous projecting screw where the knob or handle should be.
14.3	At the time of the inspection virtually all the internal doors in the new accommodation needed lubrication of hinges, door closers, etc. to eliminate squeaks. All doors should be lubricated on a regular basis.
14.4	The frame of the door to the Heating Chamber seems to have become displaced and so should be eased back into position and re-fixed. This may cure the catching of this door on the flooring.

15.0	**Internal Decoration**
15.1	Rising damp continues to affect the plaster and decoration in the lower stage of the Tower and, as suggested in previous reports, repeated making good is perhaps the cheapest response to this.
15.2	The splayed area of plaster should be cut back and re-skimmed and allowed to thoroughly dry out before redecoration.
16.0	**Floors and Balconies**
16.1	The flooring throughout the building is a mixture of solid construction to entrance areas, passageways, etc., with suspended timber to the pews areas and in the Clergy Vestry. None of the underfloor voids could be inspected but the timber flooring all seems firm underfoot, including that under the new carpeting in the Nave. No defects were noted.
17.0	**Glazing and Ventilation**
17.1	Please refer to item 7.1 for glazing; opening lights no longer operable.
18.0	**Fixtures and Fittings**
18.1	Internal finishes are in fair condition for the most part, the Church having been redecorated in the course of the major alteration schemes implemented between 1997 and 2004.
18.2	Provision of the new organ casework in the northeast corner of the Nave has enhanced the appearance of this area considerably but, when seen from the Gallery, the roof of the Choir Vestry enclosure is noticeably less attractive, and consideration should be given to improving this.
18.3	The missing vertical balusters on the main staircase up to the Gallery have been replaced since the last inspection - not quite matching the originals but near enough, and simply await painting-in.
18.4	**Organ:** This is a Harrison & Harrison instrument brought by them from the redundant church of St. Aidan's, Blackhill, and adapted and installed here in 1999. It is understood to be in frequent use and maintained regularly.
18.5	**Monuments:** As noted in previous reports, there are several wall-mounted monuments and memorials within the church, notably that in memory of John Ions, architect and builder of the Church, who died in 1826 shortly after its construction. The painted Coat of Arms previously above the entrance doors in the west wall of the Foyer has been expertly restored and is now mounted above the eastern doors from the Foyer into the Church. The Rector's board has been moved from the southern Meeting Room into the Foyer. As suggested in previous reports, it would be worth moving the Commandments Board (complete with its elaborate Gothic surround), currently on the east wall behind the organ, to the corresponding panel on the south side of the Sanctuary archway, where it will be visible above the roof of the Choir Vestry enclosure rather than concealed behind the new, larger organ. This board could do with specialist cleaning, as could several of the other wall tablets.
19.0	**Heating Installation**
19.1	The main heating system remains substantially as described in previous reports, comprising a gas-fired Ideal Concord boiler serving cast iron pipework and radiators within the main body of the Church, and a Combi boiler providing heating and hot water in the new west end accommodation.

19.2	The main boiler was re-sited within the rebuilt Heating Chamber and is of considerable age. Both boilers are serviced annually.
19.3	The steel radiators in the toilets need painting to inhibit the rust that is beginning to show.
19.4	Although still intermittent, use of the building is more intense than hitherto, and therefore it may be worth providing thermal insulation over the ceilings, particularly in the main Nave area. Though the fuel saving may be minimal, this could bring a significant improvement in comfort and should be considered as part of any overall appraisal of the heating strategy.
20.0	**Electrical and Lighting Installation**
20.1	Apart from the newer elements associated with the extension and Meeting Rooms, the electrical installation is reported to have been re-wired in 2008, along with replacement and re-wiring of existing light fittings. Routine testing should be undertaken at the proscribed interval.
20.2	The only problem noted in the course of this inspection is that the extract fan in the toilets is not wired up to respond to the light switches in both compartments and does not run on after the light is switched off.
20.3	The old lighting system in the Nave roof void has been brought back into service simply by putting lamps back in the fittings. However, the wiring appears to remain and, as this old lead-covered cable type is known to become potentially dangerous, it should be tested annually.
20.4	As commented in previous reports, several redundant iron lighting brackets remain on the exterior of the building and, assuming there is no intention to bring them back into use, all should be removed to prevent rust staining or splitting of the stonework.
20.5	**Lightning Conductor:** This installation was repaired and comprehensively upgraded to a full Faraday cage system as part of the steeplejack's contract in 2002/3 and re-tested in 2007, at which time the protective cappings were fixed over the lower parts of the downtapes. Re-testing of its earthing was due in 2017.
21.0	**Fire Precautions**
21.1	The church is well provided with firefighting equipment**,** serviced annually.
22.0	**Security**
22.1	No discrete security systems in place.
23.0	**Sanitary Facilities**
23.1	Plumbing and drainage installations, all introduced as part of the extension and alteration projects, appear to be in good order.
24.0	**Disabled Provision and Access**
24.1	Level access and unisex disabled WC provision, although with inward opening door.
25.0	**Bats**
25.1	No evidence of bats.

26.0	**Churchyard**
26.1	The churchyard extends for some distance to the south of the church. It contains a considerable number of headstones, giving it quite a distinctive character. A few are leaning considerably but, as indicated in previous reports, vandals appear to have toppled all those that could be considered dangerous, so no action is needed other than routine checking from time to time that none of the others have become unstable. I remain very concerned regarding the self-sown trees disrupting a number of memorials however. These trees should be removed as a matter of urgency, as they are seriously affecting the future safety of monuments.
26.2	There are numerous trees, none of any great height, and Gateshead Council is understood to check these as necessary, but I remain concerned on the proximity of trees to the north side and suggest that these be removed/regularly pruned.
26.3	The stone boundary walls need quite extensive consolidation and re-pointing within the next five years, and the removal of mature ivy to the boundary to the Church will be required as a matter of urgency ahead of the repointing scheme.
26.4	As noted in previous reports, the monolithic stone piers flanking the pedestrian gateway towards the east end of the north boundary wall have tilted towards each other, rendering the gate unusable. This could only be corrected by lifting and re-setting the piers.
26.5	The northwest entrance to the churchyard is flanked by stone piers and an integral Hearse House, now used as a general store and gas meter chamber. Its flat concrete roof is surrounded by battlemented stone parapets, reflected by the battlemented walling to the west of the gateway. Re-bedding/consolidation and widespread re-pointing is needed to this ensemble, especially to the various structural crackings.
26.6	Weeds/trees growing round the perimeter of the Hearse House roof should be removed and the cracks in which they are growing should be sealed. The door to the Hearse House is in poor condition and is perhaps best renewed. A rusting iron insert in the adjacent gate pier is disrupting the masonry and should be extracted.
26.7	The metal gates at the northern entrances could do with painting within the next two years.
27.0	**Log Book**
27.1	Continue to maintain Log Book.

RECOMMENDATIONS	Price (nett)
URGENT WORKS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION - Category 1	
Repairs to gullies, safety access measures to spire	**£1,500.00**
WORK RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING NEXT 12 MONTHS - Category 2	
Minor repairs to roof slating and to mortar filling around chimney stack	**£2,000.00-£3,500.00**
Checking and, where necessary, clearing of rainwater outlets, gutters, downpipes and gullies (every six months thereafter)	
Treatment of active woodworm in specified locations; clean down and check upper floors in Tower	
Minor attention to internal and external doors (including Tower access hatch) and their hardware; refinishing of main entrance doors, tympanum and frame	
Minor repairs to glazing, including securing loose pane in clock face infilling	
Routine testing and checking of electrical installations (if not carried out already this year), especially lighting circuit serving Nave roof space	
Clean down wall of Clergy Vestry with mould inhibitor; consider improving heating and ventilation	
Repairs and repointing to Churchyard boundary walls and Hearse House	
WORK RECOMMENDED TO BE CARRIED OUT DURING NEXT 5 YEARS - Category 3	
Re-sealing of gutter joints and minor repairs to rainwater goods; repainting of all cast iron gutters and downpipes; provision of new grating to flat roof outlet	**£12,000.00-£15-00.00**
Structural repairs to decayed floor beam and joist in floor above Belfry	
Repainting of Churchyard gates; renewal of Hearse House door	
Replacement of rusting wire window guards	
Waterproofing of Tower parapet gutter and enlargement of its outlet; consider waterproofing Belfry door	
Upgrading of heating installation	**£30,000.00**
WORK TO BE CONSIDERED BEYOND 5 YEARS - Category 4	
Checking and painting of iron holding-down rod system within spire; painting of steel beams supporting bell and Belfry floor; repair and painting of metal balustrade and ladder in Clock Chamber and Belfry	**£15,000.00-£20,000.00**
Repointing of specified limited areas of external and internal masonry and filling of structural cracks; removal of redundant lighting brackets	
Investigation of spalling and splitting of window mullions and jambs	
Renewal of bird guards to cornice ledges, or deployment of an alternative system	
Making good to plasterwork, flooring and decoration to southeast Entrance Lobby; minor making good to internal finishes elsewhere	
Consider cleaning of monuments	
Periodic checking of Churchyard trees and gravestones	
Consider providing safe walkways in Nave and Sanctuary roof voids	
ITEMS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION	
Review of structural crackings	

Hugh Massey **Architects,** Planning and Landscape Consultants
designhaus, 205 Park Road, South Moor, Stanley, Co. Durham, DH9 7QE
T: 01207 280095 F: 01207 280531
Email: central.admin@hughmasseyarchitects.co.uk
Website: www.HughMasseyArchitects.co.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix A - General Information:

This report is not a specification for the execution of works and must not be used as such. It is a general report only 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 or 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 complete an appeal application to a charitable body if necessary, or to assist in applying for the essential Faculty or Archdeacon's Certificate.

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.

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.

Pointing and Masonry:
Wherever pointing is recommended it is absolutely essential 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.

Heating Installation:
Subject to any comments to the contrary in Section 19.0 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 sightliness. The installation and maintenance of any oil-fired equipment should be in accordance with current editions of the British Standards Code of Practice CD 3002 and British Standards BS799.

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 contract.

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 decorations.

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 Roll 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".

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 or finial. If the conductor tape is without a test clamp, one should be provided above ground level.

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 surveys if minor defects such as displaced slates and leaking pipes are left unattended.

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 one fire extinguisher should be kept in an easily accessible position in the Church, together with an additional extinguisher of the foam of CO_2 type where heating apparatus is oil fired.

Appendix B – Photographic Survey:

Tower:
Historic water pattern staining

Narrow gap between parapet and tower spire

Parapet level floor; bird guano

Disused/damaged access ladder within tower spire

Tower parapet floor joists; damp to joist ends

Tower parapet floor; principal beams showing advanced end decay

Insulated ceiling above nave

Meeting room;
spalling plasterwork

Meeting room;
Missing pointing to glazing

Tower;
south elevation

Nave;
south elevation

Nave south elevation;
evidence of bird nesting

Tower, west elevation;
historic crack pointing

Nave;
north elevation

Chancel;
east elevation

East end pathway;
trip hazards

North end pathway;
moss hazard (note proximity of trees)

Northern chancel elevation;
faulty gulley

North elevation;
historic movement cracking

Tower parapet rainwater outlet;
previous issues with blockage

General view of nave, looking west

Detail of organ case

Cracking to west wall of vestry

Vestry south wall window sill showing water staining

North vestry wall showing water staining

Meeting room;
moisture indication to plaster

View from south side of galley

Inadequate guarding to tower stair

Damaged gulley, south elevation

Self-sown trees disrupting grave sites

Woodworm to access floor; nave loft

North elevation nave window; moulding cracking

Damage to left hand side pintle position

Ivy growth ultimately damaging to stone walling

Graveyard in poor maintenance condition

Appendix C – Listing Document:

List Entry Summary
This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

Name: CHURCH OF ST JOHN, GATESHEAD FELL
List entry Number: 1277868

Location
CHURCH OF ST JOHN, GATESHEAD FELL, CHURCH ROAD
The building may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.
County:
District: Gateshead
District Type: Metropolitan Authority
Parish:
National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.
Grade: II
Date first listed: 26-Apr-1950
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details
1. CHURCH ROAD 5099 (south-east side)

NZ 2660 11/10 26.4.50 Church of St John, Gateshead Fell II

2. 1825 by Ions, a builder who worked for John Green but here acted as architect. Ashlar with low pitched Welsh slate roof. West tower with very tall stone spire, a land and sea mark. Simple Gothick preaching box with very short chancel, lancet windows. Tower projects in centre of three-bay west front, and has diagonal buttresses and battlements. Three pairs of cusped lancets with quatrefoil spandrels and hoodmoulds.

Listing NGR: NZ2646660486
Selected Sources
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details
National Grid Reference: NZ 26466 60486

Parish Church of St. John
Gateshead Fell

Diocese of Durham
Archdeaconry of Sunderland
Deanery of Gateshead

Tower Inspection Report
January 2016

Inspecting Architect: H P Massey BA, BArch. (Hons)
Hugh Massey Architects
designhaus
205 Park Road
South Moor
Stanley
Co. Durham

	Interim Tower Inspection Report
Church	Parish Church of St. John, Gateshead Fell
	Diocese of Durham
	Archdeaconry of Sunderland
	Deanery of Gateshead
Professional Advisor	Hugh Massey (BA, BArch) Hugh Massey **Architects** *designhaus* 205 Park Road South Moor Stanley Co. Durham DH9 7QE Tel: 01207 280095 Fax: 01207 280531 Email: hugh.massey@hughmasseyarchitects.co.uk
Date of Inspection	28th January 2016 Cold, bright sunshine

Contents

A	Background / Scope of Report
A1	The purpose of the inspection was to determine the causes of water ingress into the Tower, resulting in water lying in the western entrance porch.
A2	A previous inspection by Bill Clayton (churchwarden) and Steve Bottoms of Modern Builders (emailed dated 7th September 2015) proposed remedial measures consisting of: 1. Fitting 3 no. joist hangers 2. Drilling parapet wall and fitting DVC pipe 3. Sealing of concrete roof
A3	Hugh Massey proposed making this further inspection and producing an illustrated report in an email / letter dated 20th January 2016, and these proposals were accepted.
A4	The 2012 Quinquennial Inspection (14th June 2012 inspection, report date 11th November 2013) points out a number of issues to be considered concerning the Tower. To recap, these areas are as follows: • Open joints (externally) to exterior walling filled 2002-2003 – no detectable movement since, and reflected internally • Warning on safety of ancient access systems of platforms and pole ladders to interior of spire • Debris / bird droppings in belfry and clocks chamber (nominal description since no clocks are fitted) • Signs of wood rot to joist ends to floor above belfry (steel reinforcement proposed) • Belfry floor beam support requires rust treatment • Water penetration into spire interior through belfry

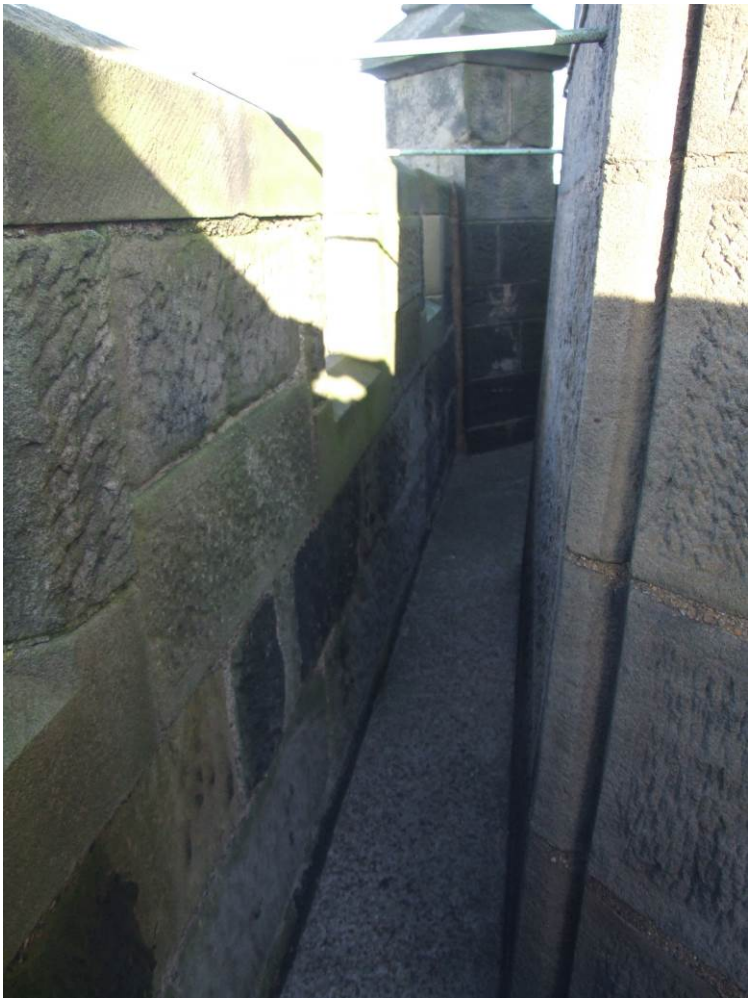
	INSPECTION – 28th January 2016
	I was ably assisted and accompanied by churchwarden Bill Clayton. Taking all the previously itemised issues, there is clearly quite an extensive list of potential repairs to be addressed, when an overall strategy is determined. Meantime, in order of priorities, I would suggest the following measures:
1.0	Existing drainage from tower parapet consists of one projecting pipe c. 25mm diameter, which has been prone to blockage on a number of occasions.
1.1	I would propose the immediate installation of 2 no. additional 25mm diameter, stainless steel pipes with a similar projection of 100-150mm over the eastern face of the Tower. This in addition to clearing the existing pipe and fitting to all outlets an internal ABS balloon guard.
2.0	Currently the Tower parapet floor surface is unprotected concrete. It has been proposed that a sealing material be painted on this surface. If this option were to be pursued, I would be anxious that a material with a good specification and guaranteed performance over a period be used; and the current price quoted (£290 +VAT) does not I believe reflect the character of the specification I would propose.
3.0	This is a very high and visible Tower and the access is very restricted (floor area width less than c. 300mm wide, parapet varying from c. 700mm to 1100mm) and further restricted by non-ferrous (copper?) ties from spire to parapet. Such is the restriction that the Architect was unable to negotiate safe access to the drainage outlet in question.
4.0	I would be very loath to instruct any contractor or individual to undertake further inspection / undertake works without a comprehensive and specific risk assessment, and my view would be that either work would be done by approved steeplejacks with appropriate safety features (harnesses etc.) and / or permanent secure safety points be installed in order that subsequent contractors could utilize same with harnesses etc. Safety in height working needs to be paramount.
5.0	**Internal timber work and steelwork to Tower:** There are 3 upper floors levels:
5.1	The first is approached by the extension of the stone steps, which access the gallery. I have a concern over the height of guarding at the door to the enclosed section, where the vertical rail meets the enclosed stair with poor all round grip. Beyond that there is no handrail to the further length of steps up to the 'clock' level. This 'clock' level incorporates access to the main Church roof space and includes the defunct 'natural' ventilation system. There are signs of water passage on the north face of the wall below this floor.
5.2	The second level is access by a substantial steel ladder with solid steel chequer plate treads and tubular hand rails. This is secure but requires preventative maintenance by rust removal / repainting. Timber floor joists run north-south and there are further supported by a steel beam running approximately east-west, avoiding the brick arch of the 'clock' window. This beam requires preventative maintenance by rust removal / repainting. The second level contains the single bell on a galvanised steel 'I' section frame, with smaller sections built into and bolted into the west and east internal elevations. Fixing bolts are somewhat corroded and the steel headstock is painted rather than galvanised.

	The wheel is showing signs of water ingress and replacement bell ropes have been of lesser dimension and differing material from the sisal (?) original. Access to the next level requires negotiating the underside of the bell frame.
5.3	The parapet level is accessed by a series of timber staircases with handrails in fair condition. The parapet level floor consists of timber joists spanning north-south with 2 main beams supporting these and partially framing the opening to the head of the stairs. Joists in this area have significant indications of moisture ingress and one of the main beams has significant external degradation.
6.0	**Internal timber work and steelwork to Tower: Conclusions:**
6.1	I suggest that, self-evidently, the main causes of wood deterioration in the Tower relate largely to water penetration. Clearly parapet water must be conducted away as effectively as possible. We have a slight conflict between audibility of the bell and, at all other times, water ingress / driving rain through louvres at this very exposed and high location. Ventilation however at the same time will help to dissipate moisture. Ingress of birds, mainly at spire level, also contributes to debris. Current spire bird protection measures are failing and, along with access, require updating.
6.2	I suggest that the proposed installation of 3 no. galvanised joist hangers to floor joists would be very much an interim solution and that deterioration of the main joist end is more significant. Elements to be tackled: *The causes of moisture ingress* - this may be moderated by smaller diameter, nylon mesh over louvred openings, as well as *tackling the run off from tower parapet as a first priority.* *All areas cleared of debris*, preventative woodworm treatment initiated, and an assessment of the residual strength of the principal joist be made by a structural engineer. The former Quinquennial Inspector's suggestion of galvanised 'bolting steel channels' to the side of this beam is my favoured solution rather than a more lightweight solution as currently proposed.

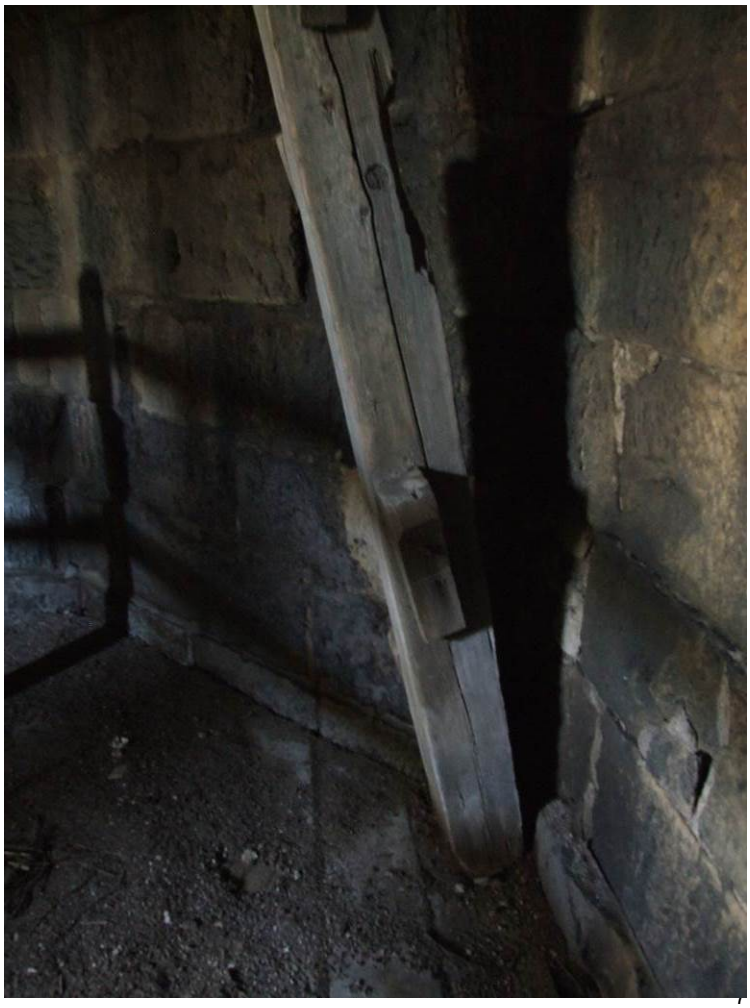
Hugh Massey **Architects,** Planning and Landscape Consultants
designhaus, 205 Park Road, South Moor, Stanley, Co. Durham, DH9 7QE
T: 01207 280095 F: 01207 280531
Email: central.admin@hughmasseyarchitects.co.uk
Website: www.HughMasseyArchitects.co.uk

Transverse steel beam in 'clock' chambers

Steel ladder to bell chamber



Parapet access route, looking north



Spire access ‘ladder’ and debris

Parapet level floor with stairs down

Parapet level floor, main beam, wall junction

Underside of parapet floor

Bird mesh to bell chamber louvres

Bell frame wall support

Surface corrosion to bell headstock

Redundant ventilation system

Underside of first floor lower level, showing water staining to north elevation

External view of tower levels

External view of existing single roof outlet at parapet level

Hugh Massey **Architects,** Planning and Landscape Consultants
designhaus, 205 Park Road, South Moor, Stanley, Co. Durham, DH9 7QE
T: 01207 280095 F: 01207 280531
Email: central.admin@hughmasseyarchitects.co.uk
Website: www.HughMasseyArchitects.co.uk

***Bentley Park Pavilion**, Doncaster:*
Winner, Best Restoration and Conversion, LABC Building Excellence Awards 2015
***West Park**, Goole:*
Finalist, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, Chairman's Awards 2015