

Job No. 21 54
Quinquennial
Church of St. James
Hamsterley

DIOCESE OF DURHAM

CHURCH OF ST JAMES

HAMSTERLEY

ARCHDEACONRY OF AUCKLAND

INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE 1955

QUINQUENNIAL REPORT AUGUST 2021



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THE STUDIO

64 HIGH WEST ROAD

CROOK

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1.0 SITE AND LOCATION

The church is located approximately half a mile to the East of the village of Hamsterley, to the south of the unclassified road from Hamsterley to the A68 and Witton-le-Wear.

The church sits at the South-West side of a walled churchyard, which accommodates a significant number of headstones and is surrounded by a belt of trees on all sides. The grounds are grassed with paths surfaced with stone flags or rolled grit.

2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION AND INTRODUCTION

The Church was founded in the late 12th Century as a chapel of ease for St. Andrews, Auckland.

It was originally rectangular on plan; the South transept was added, probably as a chantry chapel and the North transept was a later addition. By the early 14th century the church had assumed its current form. The church was restored in 1883/ 1884 during which process, grave covers from the church were built into the walls.

The building consists of local sandstone solid walling. The internal faces of the walls are rendered. External ground level sits above the internal floor finish, which is causing rising dampness in many walls.

The roof structure is composed of equal pitched softwood trusses, with sw purlins and rafters. Internally trusses are visible below tie level and have been clad in moulded softwood.

Externally the roofs are clad in Teesdale stone slabs. All rainwater goods are traditional cast iron.

There is an open bell-cote on the western gable.

The floors, generally, are a mixture of concrete or sand/ cement and stone paving with carpets to the aisles with timber duck boards between pews.

3.0 SCOPE OF REPORT

This report is based on a visual inspection carried out on 19th August 2021. Externally this inspection was carried out from ground level. Internally flooring materials were not removed and floor and ceiling voids not inspected.

Access was not gained to the roof space, therefore no visual inspection was carried out.

4.0 EXTERNAL SURVEY

4.1 NORTH ELEVATION:

Stonework walling is generally sound, with some evidence of local staining, caused due to roof water overflow. This has been caused by the hopper head being blocked (P1), which requires cleaning.

The foundations from the former boiler house remain.

Roof stone slabs were noted to be uneven, but generally sound. Some areas have heavy moss growth on the surface (P2). All mortar and lead flashings appear sound.

The roof valleys have moss/ vegetation growth, which will prevent efficient operation and should be cleaned.

Cast iron rainwater goods are generally sound, supported on rise and fall brackets throughout. Generally downpipes discharge directly onto ground or into gullies.

The lead apron flashings around the junction to the East end gable appear sound. Horizontal water table joints have been repointed.

The roof eaves overhang detail to the east end of the elevation shows exposed rafter feet with sarking boards above. The exposed eastern end of the sarking board is showing signs of decay due to exposure to the elements.

All windows have been covered with Polycarbonate sheets in order to provide extra protection, all windows appear sound.

The bell tower stonework has been repointed since the last inspection.

Lightning conductor appears intact.

4.2 EAST ELEVATION

All mortar and lead flashings appear sound, with all valleys clear.

Cast iron rainwater goods appear in reasonable condition, generally discharging to lower level adjacent roofs.

Water tabling and kneeler stones appear to be later additions and are in good condition. Water tabling pointing appears to be intact.

The stonework is generally on sound condition.

All windows have been covered with Polycarbonate sheets in order to provide extra protection, all windows appear sound.

Roof valleys have moss/vegetation growth which requires removing for efficient operation.

4.3 SOUTH ELEVATION

The roof appears slightly uneven with some minor distortion, however it appears generally sound.

Several eaves tiles were noted to be broken to eaves course, however this does not appear to be creating any issues relating to water tightness.

All mortar and lead flashings appear sound.

The water tabling to South gable appears sound with repointed horizontal joints.

Rainwater goods discharge into gully and into water butt (P3).

The roof eaves overhang detail to the east end of the elevation shows exposed rafter feet with sarking board above. The exposed eastern end of the sarking board is showing signs of decay due to exposure to the elements.

Stonework is generally sound.

All windows have been covered with Polycarbonate sheets in order to provide extra protection, all windows appear sound.

4.4 THE PORCH

It was noted that there are no gutters to the Porch roof, the tile overhang discharges water directly onto Ground.

The east side of the porch roof one stone roof slab has substantially delaminated and requires replacing (P4).

The west side of the porch roof several stone slabs have fractured and require replacement (P5).

The Western wall contains a small window, with timber frame. Due to no protection, the frame appears to be suffering from minor decay.

4.5 WEST ELEVATION

The roof appears slightly uneven with some minor distortion, however it appears generally sound.

All mortar and lead flashings appear sound with valleys clean.

Roof valleys have moss/vegetation growth which requires removal for efficient operation.

Rainwater goods discharge onto adjacent lower level roofs, all appear reasonably sound.

Stonework was generally noted to be sound.

All windows have been covered with Polycarbonate sheets in order to provide extra protection, all windows appear sound.

5.0 INTERNAL SURVEY

5.1 PORCH

The porch has an arched entrance, concrete floor and rendered stone walls with a decorative timber boarded ceiling lining, following the roof pitch. The entrance is formed by an arched opening, which accommodates a painted steel bar gate. The entrance door to the church is set in an opening with a Romanesque arch and exposed quoin and jamb stones; the door is timber, stained black, hung on wrought iron hooks and bands and bound and studded in wrought iron. There is evidence of a weather strip around the door.

There are minor areas of damp on the external walls, generally above the stone slab benches and low level corners.

Generally no issues were noted within the area.

The concrete floor has some minor random cracks.

5.2 NAVE

The Entrance is screened from the church via pine panelled screens.

The floors are concrete and stone paving which is uneven in some areas with carpeted aisles.

The floor has an inlaid inscribed headstone (noted from last quinquennial) which is now covered by carpeting (P6).

The West gable has evidence of damp, which has subsequently caused the internal finish to crack and blister in places (P7).

Generally the area is in reasonable order, other than some local areas of damp at low level to the external wall, causing blistering and peeling paint.

The roof/ ceiling is subdivided by the lower parts of three trusses, which are clad in heavy decorative pine mouldings. There are joists spanning between the trusses with painted plaster panels between them. There was noted to be evidence of water ingress, with staining to some plaster panels (this may be historical as noted in the previous report), prior to maintenance works being carried out on the water tabling to the West gable (P8).

5.3 THE CROSSING

The roof/ ceiling layout is the same as that within the Nave, with the addition of a transverse beam spanning over the centre.

There is evidence of staining within the eastern most part of the ceiling (above the pulpit), but again this may be historical.

5.4 NORTH TRANSEPT

The roof/ ceiling is similar to the Nave, but is divided transversely across the centre by a asymmetric truss, which is clad in moulded pine (as all of the previous trusses). Again there was noted to be evidence of water ingress, with staining to some plaster panels.

The bays between the truss and walls are spanned by visible joists with painted fibre board panels.

The west wall is rendered and painted (incorporating a carved grave cover), the wall is indicating evidence of damp at low level, with some cracking, blistering and peeling. The organ is located adjacent to this wall (P9).

The North end of the transept is divided by varnished pine panelled screens, with access into the separate Vestry. The Northern gable wall is also indicating evidence of damp at low level, with some cracking, blistering and peeling. There appears to be inherent dampness within the structure to the left and right of the window. This may be due to the North facing orientation.

The North wall contains a three light window under a flat four centred arch over exposed stone reveals. The window incorporates a leaded window, which is in good condition. The East wall incorporates a grave set, memorial stone and single pointed arch window in three bays, which is in good condition.

5.5 SOUTH TRANSEPT

The ceiling within this area is a handed version of the North Transept. Walls are rendered and painted, with exposed stone to window heads and arches.

The East wall contains two lancet windows in round headed stone reveals with leaded panes, these appear to be in good condition. There is a niche under the left hand side and a corbelled decorated stone basin in the SE corner. To the right hand side is a recessed opening, indicating a previous door opening location. At the Northern end of the wall is a grave cover in the wall, with a blocked small door opening. The decoration at low level was showing signs of deterioration (due to damp ingress), with evidence of paint blistering and peeling. Paintwork was noted to be eroding within the jamb of the former door opening to the NE corner.

The South wall has three lancet windows again under round headed splayed stone reveals. The base of the wall has been replastered with a lime render finished in lime wash, with no rising damp evident (as noted within the previous reports).

The West wall incorporates a memorial stone and grave cover. There are two recesses, crudely cut into the wall, approximately 150mm x 150mm of unknown depth, 1.0m above floor level (P10).

There was noted to be one minor vertical crack within the plasterwork to the East & West walls at the abutment of the Crossing. These are not evident externally.

5.6 CHANCEL

The Chancel has a shallow barrel vaulted ceiling in softwood boarding between timber ribs, with carved timber beams supported on carved stone corbels. Centrally to each beam is a post, which supports a ridge beam.

The North wall contains a large vertical niche surmounted by a double ogee arch; the quoin and arch stones to this niche are exposed. The wall contains a carved grave cover.

The previously noted comments regarding cracking to this area are now null and void as repairs and redecoration have been carried out (the previous quinquennial refers).

The East wall contains three lancet windows in deep splayed reveals with stained glass lights, appeared to be in good condition. The high level area of the wall has been redecorated.

The South wall contains a grave stone, with two lancet windows in splayed exposed stone reveals. The leaded window panes appear in good condition, however some evidence of damp was noted within the stone reveals, particularly the arched heads. The previously noted

comments regarding cracking to this area of wall are now null and void as the repairs and redecoration have been carried out.

In the South East corner there is a corbelled carved stone basin with a recess in the wall above and square niche to the wall. Choir stalls are located within this area, separated by a carpeted aisle. There is a stone step to the Alter Dais, guarded by pine rails on wrought iron balusters, the alter is set on a further raised stone plinth; there are four stone steps up to the pulpit.

There were noted to be some minor cracks within the concrete floor, which are of no real concern.

6.0 CHURCHYARD

The churchyard encompasses the church on all sides and is generally grassed, bounded by trees with a significant amount of gravestones. The churchyard is bounded by a stone wall.

6.1 WEST

Bounded by a stone wall, 1400mm high approximately, which lies to the rear of the grass verge of the access road, which also accesses the adjoining farm. There is a small timber gate in the North West corner, which is not correctly secured. There is a small enclosure in the North West corner with stone walls and corrugated sheet roofing. The gates are flanked by Ashlar stone gate pillars, with wrought iron double gates, pillars are built from chamfered blocks of sandstone with truncated pyramidal cappings. There is also a single pedestrian gates.

To the South of the gates the mortared stone becomes a dry stone wall. There is a gap between the RH pillar and the wall indicating movement and the pointing under the coping was noted to be spalling (P11 & P12). There was noted generally to be vegetation growing between the stones.

The South end of the wall contains two areas of eroded stone work.

The pedestrian path from the gate to the porch entrance door is finished in Whinstone chippings.

6.2 SOUTH

The dry stone boundary wall has been locally pointed with mortar in several location. The area generally is grassed in between gravestones/ headstones.

6.3 EAST

The area is generally open with an uneven surface covered in grass. The stone boundary wall incorporates a gate opening at the SE corner with gate posts and wrought iron gate and the remnants of some stone steps accessing the field, which facilitates the public footpath through the churchyard. The steps are in poor repair and require attention for safe use.

The central section of the wall is out of plumb and bulging due to the adjacent tree.

The boundary wall also accommodates a change in level with the adjoining field.

6.4 NORTH

The stone boundary wall is approximately 1000mm high, again with a level difference between the adjoining field.

The area is generally finished in rough grass, between the gravestones/ headstones.

6.5 CHURCHYARD

The Churchyard is generally in good order with headstones dating from approximately 220 years ago to the current time.

Some headstones have been laid horizontally, presumably having become unstable (P13).

A watching brief should be maintained on the stability of all headstones.

7.0 SERVICES

7.1 HEATING SYSTEM

Installed in 1988, consisting of 5No fan assisted electric storage heaters, 2No 3-Bar Quartz ray electric heaters and flat panel heaters attached to the rear of pews. The system is controlled by time clocks and earth leakage switches.

The system appears to be in working order, however we would advise that the system is very inefficient and costly to run.

7.2 ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

Installed in 1988, operates the heating, lighting and power installations (P14).

The mains supply is 415V and all circuits are wired in MICC cable and circuits are protected by MCB's and earth leakage switch.

Exposed cable runs are generally untidy (P15).

No test Certificate has been seen.

It is recommended that the heating and electrical systems be tested and certified by an appropriately qualified person. This report is based solely on a visual inspection of visible components and no instruments have been used or internals or switches/ sockets etc.

7.3 LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR

There is a lightning conductor attached to the Church, running from a terminal in the bell cote down to the NE corner of the cote and the East gable to the earth.

The lightning conductor is of copper strip style which has a plastic cover.

Visual inspection from a distance, appeared to show no apparent issues, however we would recommend that the installation be tested and certified by an appropriately qualified person.

7.4 FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Several fire extinguishers are located inside the Church. These should be checked and certified by specialist installers on a regular basis.

7.5 ORGAN

The organ was originally built by Nelson of Durham and rebuilt in 1985 by H E Prested of Durham. The workings are outside the scope of this report.

8.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDED WORKS

8.1 WORKS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

Clear out all rainwater goods and lead valleys to roof.

8.2 WORKS REQUIRED TO BE ACTIONED WITHIN NEXT 6-18 MONTHS

Replace missing stone roofing slab.

Ensure water butt rainwater collection point discharge is operational

Obtain certification for electrical installation

Obtain certification for fire extinguishers

8.3 WORKS REQUIRED TO BE ACTIONED BEFORE NEXT QUINQUENNIAL

Remove areas of loose/flaking paintwork and repaint with a breathable product

Monitor internal cracking noted in report

Monitor stability of headstones within the Churchyard

9.0 CONCLUSION

This is a summary report only as required by the Inspection of Churches measure.

This report is based upon inspections carried out on August 19th. (mild, overcast with intermittent showers). Inspections were all carried out from Ground Level.

The survey is non-intrusive and of a visual nature only. No comment can be made on timbers or other parts of the building which are concealed.

The property is generally in a good state of repair, ongoing maintenance should be upheld to maintain this condition, in particular maintenance to roofs, gutters and downpipes.

Minor defects identified are expected in a building of this age and construction,

Works indicated and carried out within an orderly maintenance programme will protect the property and maintain the high standard already being achieved.

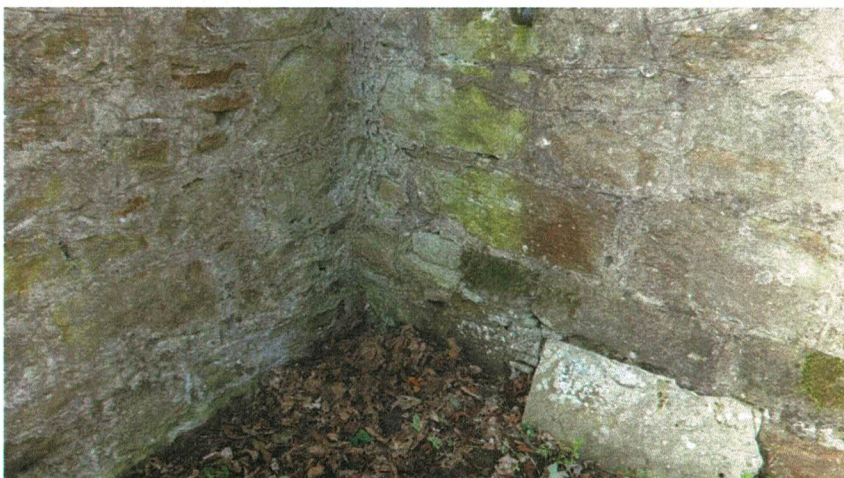
APPENDIX A



Photograph 1



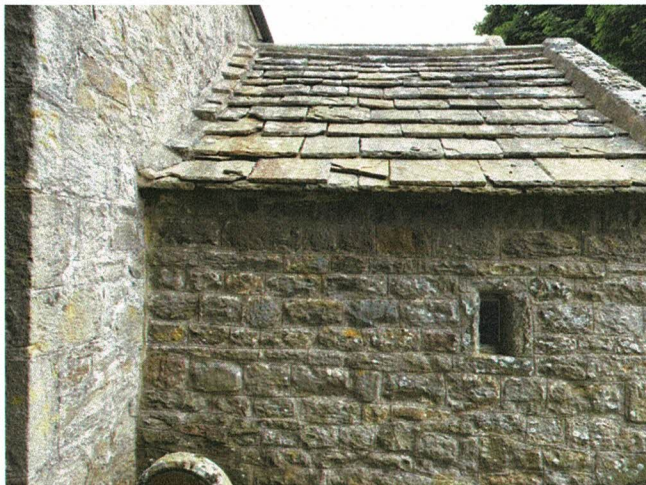
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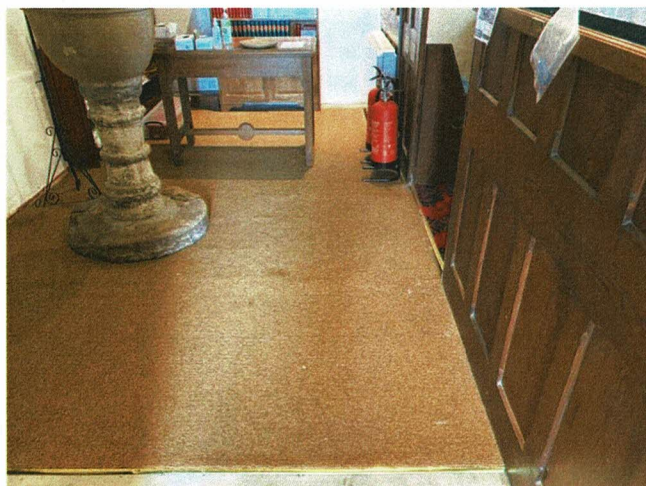
Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5



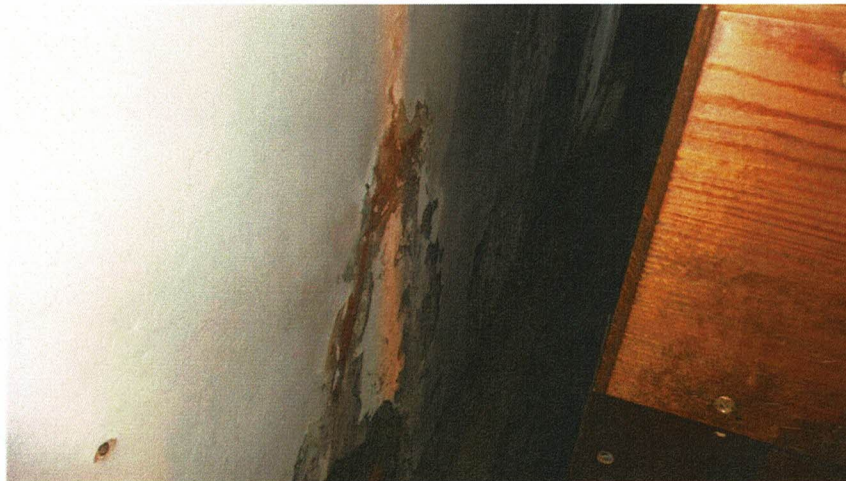
Photograph 6



Photograph 7



Photograph 8



Photograph 9



Photograph 10



Photograph 11



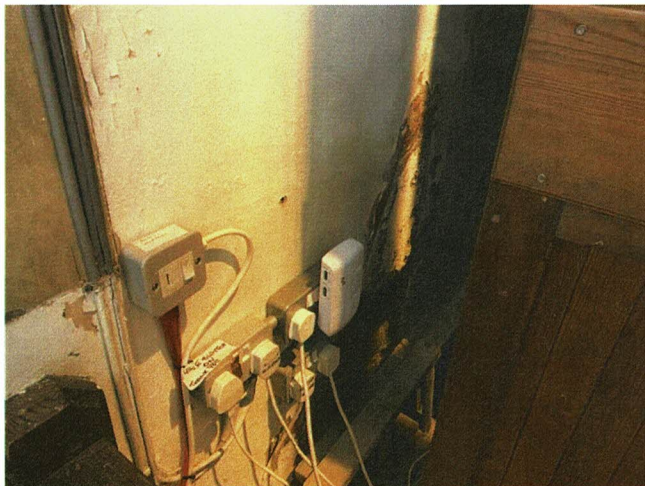
Photograph 12



Photograph 13

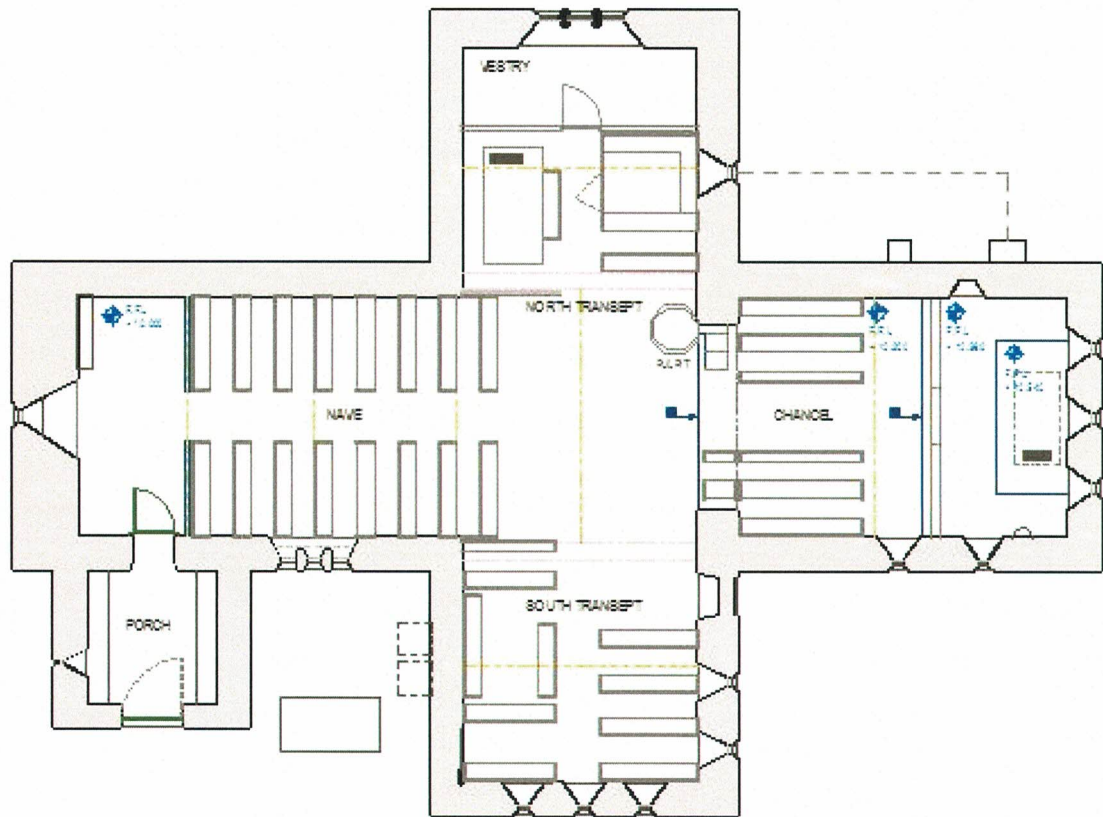


Photograph 14

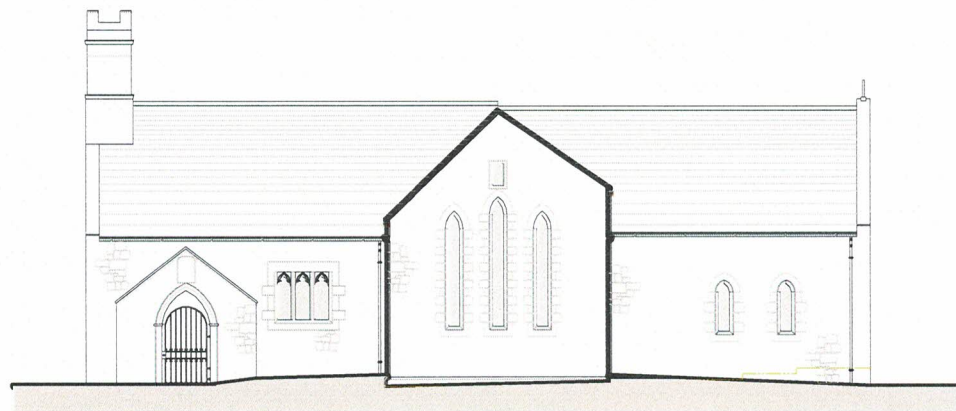


Photograph 15

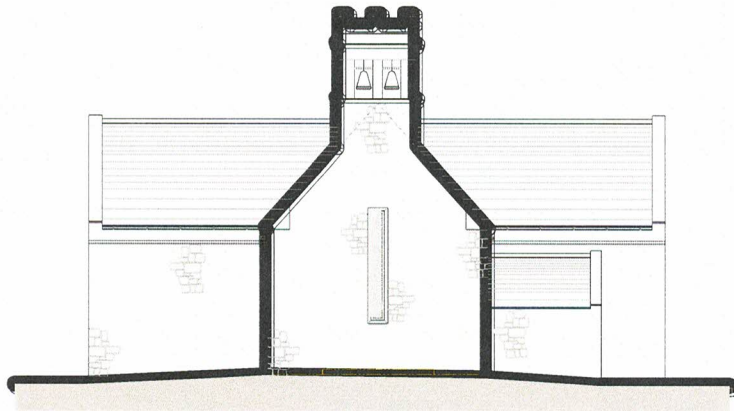
APPENDIX B



GROUND FLOOR PLAN



EAST & SOUTH ELEVATIONS



WEST & NORTH ELEVATIONS