

Diocese of Durham

St Thomas Church, Petersfield Road, Sunderland, SR4 9BD

Quinquennial Inspection



1. INSPECTOR

1.1 Clinton Mysleyko BA Architecture (Oxford Brookes), BSc (Hons) Arch Tech (Northumbria)

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Weather: Cold, sunny and dry. Inspection date 10.11.2023.

2. BACKGROUND AND GENERAL

2.1 Church: St Thomas Church, Petersfield Road, Sunderland, SR4 9BD

Wearmouth Deanery

Rev. Katherine Bagnall

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CHURCH

2.2 The church is located in Pennywell, a residential housing estate in the south of Sunderland. A vicarage lies at the corner of Parkhurst and Petersfield Road and the Church is situated to the south.

The garden and allotment are to the south and east.

Built in 1951 to designs by Francis Johnson FRIBA of Bridlington.



The floor area of the church is approx. 410 sqm.

The church is not Listed and isn't in a conservation area.

Large open plan nave and chancel. The former open porch entrance has been enclosed with a new double door.

The west end entrance comprises an entrance lobby with small community shop to the south side, store and a disabled WC to the north side.

A new tower was installed against the eastern most rear buildings of the rear vestry in 1964/5.



Site identified above in red



Site identified above in red

Externally the church walls are constructed from buff rough-faced brick, concrete heads and cills. Cavity wall construction.

The windows are a mainly galvanised metal with Perspex infills.

The roofs are pitched, on steel trusses and covered with single roll clay tiles. The bell tower roof is lead clad.

Walls are plastered internally.

Floors are solid with wood blocks to the nave and Lady Chapel and Chancel, with PVC tiles to the Sanctuary and Ancillary rooms. The meeting room is carpeted. The office area in the mezzanine first floor is carpeted.

There is no graveyard.

GENERAL PHOTOGRAPHS



3. SCOPE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1** A visual inspection of the church was carried out but only undertaken from ground-level. Binoculars were used for roof inspections externally. No loft spaces or areas that were inaccessible, enclosed or covered were not opened or any floor coverings lifted.
- 3.2** The inspection did not involve a structural survey of the Church. If it is apparent that specialist structural advice should be sought; this is identified in the report.
- 3.3** The following inaccessible parts were not included in this inspection:
- a. Any voids below floor.
 - b. All roofs coverings at height.
 - c. Roof structures.
 - d. Drains.
 - e. Gutters, flashings etc that couldn't be seen from the ground.
 - f. The bell tower was locked and inaccessible.
- 3.4** No manhole covers were lifted, or drains checked.
- 3.6** This report describes defects noticed. It is not a written specification or programme of works and should not be used for obtaining quotations from builders / contractors. An indication of likely repairs costs is included, but it must be understood that the scope of repair work is undefined, and no measurements have been taken, so the figures are no more than 'educated guesses' and should not be relied upon beyond the purpose of indicating the likely spending commitment to maintain the property to a high standard.



4. PREVIOUS REPORT, RECENT REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE WORKS

- 4.1 The previous report was prepared by Beaumont-Brown Architects on the 15th March 2017.
- 4.2 The log book was available on-site with works from 2016. Recent quotes / invoices were inside.
- 4.3 Since the last report various services, gutters cleans and roof repairs have taken place.
- 4.4 Annual checking of service installations and maintenance tasks carried out:
 - a. Boiler servicing
 - b. Fire extinguisher serviced
 - c. Roof inspection
 - d. Clearing leaves and debris out of rainwater goods



5. GENERAL CONDITION

ROOF COVERINGS

- 5.1 The main roof is pitched and covered with red single roll clay tiles with wet mortar clay ridge and UPVC dry verge system. The verge system is coming away from tiles and requires re-alignment.



The tiles are in reasonable condition with various slipped or broken tiles being replaced with new over the last few years. There are a couple of tiles currently that have slipped to the rear.

The bell tower roof is covered in lead. A lead sheeting panel has lifted to the east side.

There is a small flat felt roof to the north-east porch entrance, this is in good condition.



GUTTERS AND RAINWATER PIPES

5.2 The gutters and rainwater pipes are white UPVC and are in good condition. These were recently cleaned in September 2023.

EXTERNAL WALLS

- 5.3** The buff rough-faced bricks have structural cracks in various areas. It isn't fully clear why so many have cracked but the previous report noted it was due to *'boot lintel construction, west and east end modifications, minor differential foundation settlement to the alterations, seasonal ground movement and slightly sloping ground'*.

A brick to the west elevation has moved at the head of a crack.



There was no visible cracking internally.

The bricks under the cills to the north elevation have blackened which is most probably a damp penetration issue and they are delaminating.

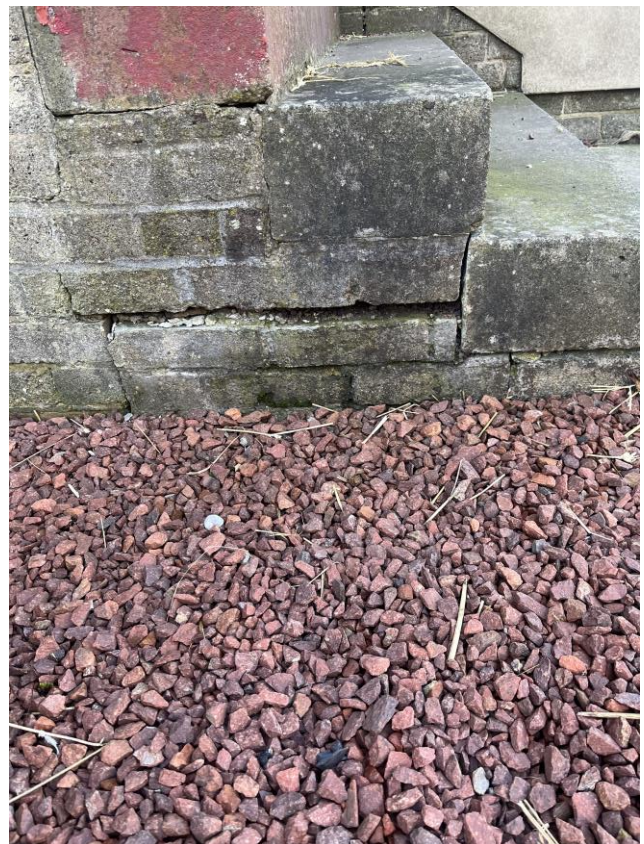


Various hairline cracks are evident in the rendered area to the rear north wall. This is now prone to damp penetration and the render can blow off if water gets in behind and freezes.

WINDOW AND DOOR OPENINGS

- 5.4** The majority of the windows are metal single glazed and the glass has been substituted for clear acrylic sheets. The heat loss through the metal frames and single glazed sheets will be significant. The paint to the windows is in very poor condition. There is no quick fix here and consideration must be given for a full replacement now.

The rear porch door has a broken tile to the step. The same step also has a large mortar bed missing.



CEILINGS

- 5.5 The ceiling appears to be paper faced OSB boards, several boards have the paper coming away. Whilst this probably won't cause any issues visually it is unappealing.



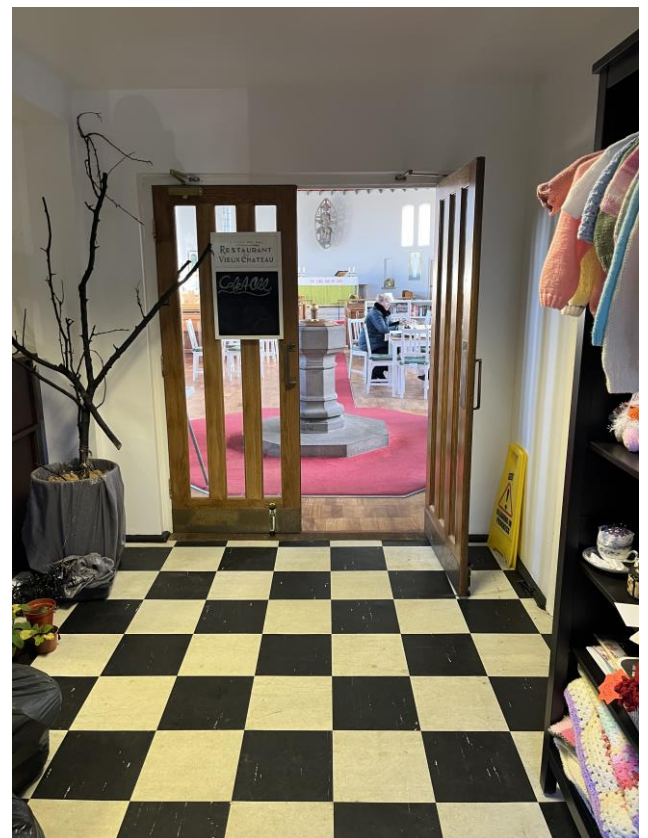
The eastern end of the nave on the south side what looks like damp penetration from probably a slipped tile is evident.



INTERNAL DOORS

- 5.6** The large painted timber double entrance doors open to a small lobby. The doors are in good condition. Internally to the lobby a set of further double doors are situated, these are Georgian wired for fire protection.

The nave to entrance hall is separated by a further set of double timber doors, these doors are clear glazed with toughened glass but are not fire rated.



None of the internal fire doors or frames within the church have the correct fire or smoke seals.

PLASTER / DECORATION

5.7 Internally the lobby area, community shop, wc and stores are all plastered with white painted walls, all in good condition.

The nave and alter walls are plastered and painted white.

The mezzanine ceiling and walls are plastered, several hairline plaster cracks are evident.

The lady chapel which is now being used as the office. The walls are plastered and in fair condition, to the rear there is hardwood timber panelling all in good condition.



The rear storage room is fully lined with timber panelling. The panelling is coming away in various areas. It is a very dated and dark style of wall covering.

Rear lobby to storage area has painted brick. In reasonably good condition.

FLOORS

- 5.8** The floors in the entrance link are black and white chequered vinyl floor tiles. The tiles showed no damage and are in good condition. They didn't appear to be non-slip type and may become slippery when wet which should be monitored.



The Narthex, Nave, chapel and rear store room are solid wood block flooring on a solid concrete floor slab and generally in good condition.

The alter is tiled also and in very good condition.

Several red quarry tiles are cracked to the main west entrance hall.

HEATING

5.9 A single Ideal Imax boiler is located in the mezzanine first floor and the heat is distributed through panel radiators through the church.

The large panel radiators in the nave are hidden by the Pius which will be preventing the heating from being circulated accordingly.



There are six wall mounted infra-red heaters in the lady chapel along with radiators which are hidden by the Pius.

The system is tested annually by Fred Stoddart and no problems have been recently reported. Last serviced 9/03/23.

The Gas meter is situated externally on the north wall in a modern meter cabinet.



ELECTRICAL

5.10 An underground supply to 3 no. single-phase meters. The meters and isolators are in the rear (north-east) corner store room.

The last full electrical inspection and test is not known, as such checks should be made to see if the periodic 5 yearly inspection is now overdue.

The electrical installation should have a Fixed Wiring and Inspection Testing (FWIT) at least every five years by a registered National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) or NAPIT full scope or ECA full competence accredited registered electrician. A resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. The inspection and testing should be carried out in accordance with part 6 of the IEE Regulations, (BS 7671:2008) guidance note no. 3. The engineer's test report should be kept with this report.

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR

- 5.11** One has been installed by BT on the tower as a result of the telecommunication equipment and it is supposed that the maintenance of the conductor falls within O2's remit, but the church will check this out and confirm.

FIRE

- 5.12** Fire safety rules affecting all non-domestic premises came into effect on 01 October 2006 (The Fire Safety Order 2005). Further advice can be obtained from the fire prevention officer and from the PCC's insurers. Under the Fire Regulatory Reform Act the PCC need to appoint a 'responsible person' to carry out a Fire Risk Assessment, which includes clear plans in case of fire (identification of risk, evacuation strategies, safe removal of valuables etc). The PCC should ensure that there is a suitable and sufficient risk assessment in place. Further guidance is available at www.churchcare.co.uk/churches and www.ecclesiastical.com/churchmatters/churchguidance/fireguidance

Fire extinguishers are inspected annually and are in good working order.

Advice from the insurer should also be taken.

ACCESSIBLE PROVISION

- 5.13** The Equality Act 2010 makes it unlawful to discriminate against disabled persons relating to the provision of goods, facilities and services or the management of premises. The Act covers all forms of disability such as sensory, mobility, manual dexterity, hearing, sight and speech impairments and learning difficulties.

There is a stepped approach to the front and rear of the church.

INSURANCE

- 5.14** Insurance cover should be index-linked, so that adequate cover is maintained against inflation of building costs. Contact should be made with the PCC's insurance company to ensure that insurance cover is adequate. When construction works are being planned, it is recommended that the PCC's insurers are notified.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 5.15** Overall responsibility for the health and safety at the church, church hall and any grounds lie with the PCC. This report may identify areas of risk as part of the inspection, but this does not equate to a thorough and complete risk assessment by the PCC of the building and any attached grounds. The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015



The PCC is reminded that construction and maintenance works undertaken may require the appointment of a competent Principal Designer to discharge their legal responsibilities. The role of the Principal Designer is to advise the PCC on their duties in respect of the health and safety aspects of the construction works to include ensuring that a Health and Safety Plan is prepared, impartially advise on the health and safety aspects of the design, advise on the satisfactory resources for health and safety and assist with coordination of the Health and Safety file on completion of the works.

MANAGEMENT OF ASBESTOS IN THE BUILDING

5.16 The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations contain duties for the PCC. The Regulations came into force in May 2004. They require an assessment of the building by the PCC. If the presence of asbestos that has not been encapsulated is suspected a survey by a competent specialist should be carried out, including testing where necessary. The location and condition of asbestos containing materials should be recorded in an asbestos register. Where recommended by the survey report, the asbestos should be removed. An assessment has not been covered by this report. An asbestos register should be available for any Contractors working on the building. Further information is included in the HSE code of practice The Management of Asbestos in Non-Domestic Premises L127 and guidance is available at www.churchcare.co.uk/churches When construction works are being planned at an initial stage an appraisal and investigation into the presence of asbestos should be carried out.

PROTECTED WILDLIFE

5.17 There is no evidence of bats within the building. It is recommended though that a bat risk assessment is carried out if any major roof works are to take place.

MAINTENANCE

5.18 The repairs recommended in the report (except for some minor maintenance items) will be subject to Diocesan Faculty Approval. Inspection every 5 years is recommended, and it should be recognised that serious defects may develop between these surveys if minor defects and maintenance are left unattended. The PCC are strongly advised to enter into a contract with a local competent and experienced builder for the cleaning-out of gutters, valleys, hoppers and downpipes twice a year; towards the end of Autumn (November) and beginning of Spring (April).

Cement based mortars, renders, plasters and products, modern polymer-based emulsion and proprietary sealant systems which prevent breathability of the historic fabric should be avoided. All these systems are now known to have a steady deleterious effect on the materials, environmental conditions and character of historic buildings.



BOUNDARY WALLS AND FENCING

5.19 The northern boundary against the vicarage is a timber 1800mm high fence. All in good condition. A new 2m high black metal fence runs from this timber fence back to the building, all in very good new condition.

The rear (east) and side (south) have a 2m high metal palisade fence to the boundary, all in good condition.

The allotment area to the south is enclosed with the neighbouring timber fences. It's unsure who has the liability of repairs here and should be confirmed due to the length of the boundary as future costs could be significant.

TREES AND SHRUBS

5.20 There are a number of trees within the Church grounds. It's very unlikely any are covered by Tree Protection Orders, but as a precautionary check it would be worth the PCC contacted the local council to confirm.

HARDSTANDING AND PARKING AREAS

5.21 There is a small hardstanding area to the front of the Church (west side). This is tarmacadam and in very good new condition. This leads around the north side creating a footpath with concrete kerbs. All in very good new condition.



6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Urgent works requiring immediate attention

- Various structural cracks evident to the brick external leaf. A separate inspection and advice by a structural engineer to take place. Please contact - BDN, The Old School, Simpson Street, Sunderland, SR4 6DR. Tel; 0191 535 6189 bdnltd.com

*Estimated cost - £500 for structural inspection and report.
Remedial work costs unknown until structural report available.*

- Add fire and smoke seals to doors

Estimated cost - £450

- Refix the couple of tiles currently that have slipped to the rear roof.

Estimated cost - £300

- The bell tower roof is covered in lead. A lead sheeting panel has lifted to the east side.

Estimated cost - £300

- Various hairline cracks are evident in the rendered area to the rear north wall. Needs mortar filling and re-decorating.

Estimated cost - £500

- Obtain electrical test report.

Estimated cost - £250 (not including any repairs)

- Move Pius to increase heat distribution from radiators

Estimated cost - £0



Work recommended to be carried out during the next 12 months

- Either repaint all metal window frames or the preferred solution would be to replace all single clear acrylic sheet glazed metal framed windows with new UPVC clear double glazed toughened windows.

Estimated cost - £10,000 - £20,000 (if all replaced)

- The rear porch door has a broken tile to the step.

Estimated cost - £100

- The same step also has a large mortar bed missing.

Estimated cost - £100

- Eastern end of the nave on the south side has damp penetration to ceiling boards. Board to be inspected and possibly replaced or paper faced covering to board to be replaced.

Estimated cost - £250-£750 depending on if board needs replacing fully.

Work recommended to be carried out within 18 – 24 months

- OSB boards to nave area, several boards have the paper coming away and it requires fixing back.

Estimated cost - £300

Work recommended to be carried out within 5 years

- Several red quarry tiles are cracked to the main west entrance hall, replace.

Estimated cost - £350



7.0 SUSTAINABILITY AND NET ZERO CARBON

On 12 February 2020 General Synod recognised that we are in a climate emergency and committed to an ambitious carbon reduction target of Net Zero by 2030. The culture is changing fast, both outside and within the Church; questions of sustainability should inform all our buildings-related decisions from now on, and this report highlights opportunities for action.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/net-zero-carbon-church>

See also the Practical Path to Net Zero Carbon (PPNZC) document in the appendix, and the Sustainability Countdown to 2030 section below. The Church of England Research and Statistics Team has created an Energy Footprint Tool. This will tell your church what your 'carbon footprint' is, based on the energy you use to heat and light your buildings, and is part of the Online Parish Returns System. You will need to input the data from the most recent year's electricity and gas/oil etc. bills, and the tool will then tell you the amount of carbon produced annually by heating and lighting your church building; it will also offer some helpful tips to reduce your carbon emissions. As you use the tool each year, you will be able to see how your church improves, as you take steps to cut your carbon footprint.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/policy-and-thinking/our-views/environment-and-climate-change/about-our-environment/energy-footprint-tool>

Most dioceses now have a Diocesan Environmental Officer in post, who may be able to offer support, including on questions of ecology and biodiversity, and signpost you to further resources.

<https://www.churchofengland.org/about/environment-and-climate-change/diocesan-environmental-officers-map>

'With the Routemap, we see a future in 2030 where the buildings of the Church will be warm, bright and welcoming, powered by renewable energy and using low or zero carbon technologies for heat and light. Energy consumption for the Church as a whole will have fallen, on-site renewable energy generation will have increased, travel will be by low carbon means and carbon emissions will be less than 10% of those now, offset in verified schemes'.

Over recent years, many of us have become increasingly aware of the climate crisis and the urgent need to reduce our carbon footprint. It is recommended the Church become familiar with the PPNZC and the Energy Footprint Tool, both produced by CCB. These recommendations aim to help churches reduce their energy use and associated carbon emissions.

