

Closed church of Witton Park St Paul: Statement of Significance and Needs

Faculty Petition OFS Application Ref: 2024-095665

Removal of contents.

SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:

- 1. Items proposed to be taken by the Witton Park Community Association to Witton Park Village Hall, 20 Main Street, Witton Park, DL14 0DX:**
 - i. Church lectern;
 - ii. Great War Roll of Honour – *people of the village* – (south wall).
 - iii. Second World War Role of Honour - *people of the village* - (south wall)
 - iv. Roland Boys Bradford VC MC - small memorial brass plaque in relief with wooden pattress;
 - v. Witton Park Mothers' Union Banner (north wall):
 - vi. Vicars' Name Board (north wall):
 - vii. Additional (school?) Banner - (south wall):
 - viii. Two small wooden occasional tables, both dedicated as WWII memorials: (O.S. Billy Nall – HMS Pelican d. 22/4/1940 & Trooper L Clark d. 13/07/1943). [These to be held by the WPCA until such time as it might be possible to have them returned to relatives of the fallen.]
 - ix. Modern internal notice (pin) board with small brass plaque: "In memory of William R and Christiana Wilson."
- 2. Items proposed to be taken to Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre (Ecumenical Partnership), Bishop Auckland, DL14 6PD:**
 - x. Church Banner – *Honour and Sacrifice* (north wall) by Jane Crawford, Daisy Arts.
- 3. Items to go elsewhere:**
 - xi. Woven Tapestry (west wall) by Trish Moses – A 'loan item' to be returned to Trish Moses & family.
 - xii. Framed embroidered copy Da Vinci Last Supper (by Mary Duggan?). To be taken and held initially by the WPCA at the Village Hall to be either returned to Mary Duggan or gifted to the Methodist Church in Witton Park.
 - xiii. Church plate items to be stored at Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham, DH1 3RY.

Statement of Significance:

The church of Witton Park St Paul was closed for worship 1st February 2021 through a scheme made by the Church Commissioners under the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. A pastoral (disposal) scheme provides that the closed church and the whole unconsecrated churchyard land is to be appropriated for residential use. Planning permission [[DM/22/02035/FPA](#)] has been secured for this proposed change of use.

After marketing and public consultation, the Church Commissioners and Durham DBF seek to complete on the sale of the church to a buyer who promises to sensitively put the church to its agreed new use. This petition seeks to ensure church artefacts and contents which hold local and regional significance have their future secured and are found an appropriate new home prior to the disposal of the closed church. The items to be removed are described by the CBC report (PM 2500) as having low or low-to-medium significance, albeit the war memorials and name boards holding local and regional significance.

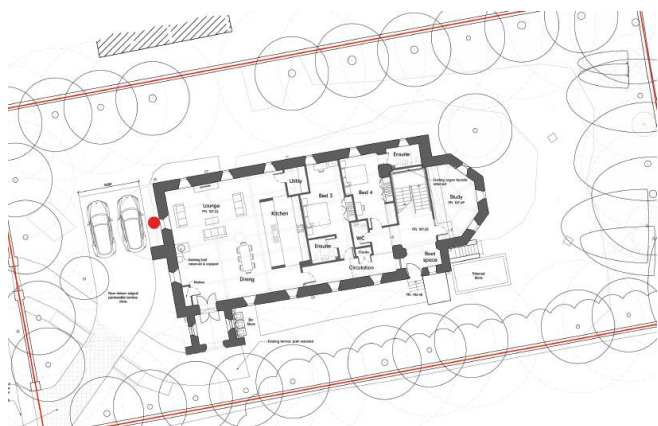
The Closed Church:

The closed church of St Paul's (Title numbers DU383118 & DU383119) is unlisted and does not lie within a designated conservation area. The 2018 CBC report (PM 2500 - attached) describes the church:



Church Description (CBC Report PM 2500): "Parish (created from Escomb). Present church designed by Ross and Lamb of Darlington and built 1877... of low to moderate significance overall. The church is a good example of the Gothic Revival in its mature stage, here applying the Early English style, by a competent local practice; the church has modest landscape value but good picturesque value as seen from the street and the playing fields; the building has some visual interest, especially on the (sole) approach from the W side; it is built to a good standard of craftsmanship. The interior of the church has modest visual interest; a few items of furnishings are of particular aesthetic appeal, especially the apse windows, the organ and the bishop's throne – Low to Medium significance..."

The Disposal Scheme for residential use:



With the Church Commissioners, Durham DBF has taken the professional advice of agents in seeking an appropriate and alternative new use for the building. Prior to making the scheme for disposal for residential use, the property has been publicly marketed and undergone public consultations through the planning process and through the Mission and Pastoral Measure. There is support in the village and parish for the new residential use and, in preparation for this, some of the contents of the closed church including the organ have already been removed under the provisions of faculty and List B.

1. Wooden Lectern



CBC Report:

“At the E end of the nave, N side: a lectern of traditional form with a bookrest on a wedge-shaped box showing two pierced fleurons embellished with crosses fleury to the nave, rising from a square-section chamfered shaft on a cruciform base with shaped angle supports; stained deal, 1877.”

The lectern is requested for continued use by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall.

2. Great War Roll of Honour – people of the village – (south wall):

3. Second World War Role of Honour - people of the village - (south wall):



CBC Report:

1. “Parish war memorial to the fallen of the First World War; calligraphic list of names with illuminated capitals, on paper and mounted in an oak frame with shelf in front and calvary cross above; unveiled 1921, with Princess Marie Louise and the Bishop of Durham in attendance (UKNIWM 71368). NB does not include the Bradford brothers (see below).
2. “A parish war memorial to the fallen of the Second World War; calligraphic list of names with illuminated capitals, on paper and mounted in an oak frame with shelf in front and calvary cross above; unveiled 1948 (UKNIWM 10390).”

The CBC Report states:

“Remembrance Sunday would be a key moment in the church year given the number of local men who died in the two world wars. The community has honoured two brothers from the village who both won the Victoria Cross in the First World War, installing a stained glass window, a commissioned artwork displayed in the nave and a memorial garden, statue and VC badges 75m N. These projects established good links with Armed Forces and regional organisations.”

“The war memorials have communal value for the whole community – Low to Medium significance... unless the new use [following closure] is a public one, the war memorials would need to be relocated;” The Witton Park Community Association request their continued display in the Village Hall.

4. **Roland Boys Bradford VC MC** - small memorial brass plaque in relief with wooden pattress;

CBC Report: "On the N wall of the nave: a small cast metal plaque depicting Brigadier General Roland Boys Bradford, VC MC on the battlefield, by PB. – Low Significance"



The church west rose window is dedicated to Brigadier General Roland Boys Bradford and includes the badge of the DLI. The CBC report explains: *"The village is notable for having produced the only brothers to have been awarded the Victoria Cross in the First World War. They were born at Carrwood House, opposite the church, and were sons of the colliery manager George Bradford. Brigadier General Roland Boys Bradford VC MC was awarded the VC for his action on 1 October 1916 during an attack on the German trenches at Eaucourt l'Abbaye, part of the Somme offensive. Soon after, he became the youngest Brigadier General in the British Army but was killed at the Battle of Cambrai in November 1917. Lieutenant Commander George Nicholson Bradford won his VC leading a storming party during the Zeebrugge Raid on 22-23 April 1918."*

The Plaque is requested for continued display by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall.

5. **Witton Park Mothers' Union Banner (north wall):**



CBC Report: "On the N wall of the nave: a Mothers' Union banner, embroidery and applique work on damask, mounted on hardwood poles with brass cross finials."

"Low – Medium Significance"

The Banner is requested for continued display by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall.

6. Vicars' Name Board (Mouseman with carved mouse)



CBC Report: "On the N wall of the nave: a vicars' board listing the incumbents down to 1998; oak, c2000, by Robert Thompson's Craftsmen Ltd (ie the studio of Robert 'Mouseman' Thompson of Kilburn), with their familiar carved mouse on the top rail."

"Low – Medium Significance"

The Board is requested for continued display by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall. It is intended to complete the names on the board up to the time of closure of the church in February 2021.

7. Additional (Sunday School) Banner - (south wall):



CBC Report: "On the S wall of the nave: a Sunday School banner with the Spiritus Gladius on a shield; applique work, mounted on ebonised poles with brass cross finials."

"Low Significance"

The Banner is requested for continued display by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall.

8. **Two small oak tables, both dedicated as WWII memorials:** (O.S. Billy Nall – HMS Pelican d. 22/4/1940 & Trooper L Clark d. 13/07/1943). [These to be held by the WPCA until such time as it might be possible to have them returned to relatives of the fallen.]



CBC Report: "Two small wooden occasional tables, both dedicated as WWII memorials: (O.S. Billy Nall – HMS Pelican d. 22/4/1940 & Trooper L Clark d. 13/07/1943).



The two tables to be kept by the WPCA at the Village Hall until such time as it might be possible to have them returned to relatives of those commemorated.

9. **Internal notice (pin) board - small brass plaque: "In memory of William R and Christiana Wilson."**



Requested for continued display by the Witton Park Community Association at the Witton Park Village Hall.

10. Daisy Arts Church Banner – Honour and Sacrifice (north wall) by Jane Crawford, Daisy Arts.

“On the N wall of the nave: a hanging entitled Honour & Sacrifice depicting Brigadier General Roland Boys Bradford, VC MC; printed and painted fabric, c2018, by Jane Crawford and Janet Geoghan of Daisy Arts, mounted on ebonised poles with brass cross finials.”



Spiritual Arts Project: an arts commission

The image of 'Abide with Me' and its commission evokes themes such as faith, mortality, loyalty, class and sacrifice and raises questions about the role of the Church and Christianity during times of conflict and people's relationship with God in a time when he couldn't be 'on both sides'. It is believed that during the First World War the nation saw a shift in how God and Christ were viewed with a greater emphasis on the image of a suffering Christ who shared in a nation's suffering in place of God on high who looked after those that followed him.

Art Commission – The brief: Artist to run workshops in schools/college that will help to inform the creation of **new artworks** inspired by these themes and notions and the contribution and experience of the Bradford Family and the people of Witton Park in the First World War, whilst referencing the principles of spiritual art.

St. Paul's Church: CHURCH BANNER

HONOUR & SACRIFICE
 Rays: the light of God – love and protection
 Soldier: seeking strength – faith and duty

Artist: Jane Crawford, Daisy Arts
Textile Artist: Janet Geoghegan, Daisy Arts

"The concept for this piece developed through time spent at QE College in Darlington and Barnard Castle School. The colours were chosen after viewing a student's mood board. The rays of light are an interpretation of a young man's thoughts of God's light shining though the darkness. The idea of painting directly onto the piece was a choice made after seeing a student wet painting directly onto fabric, allowing her colours to bleed."

LOTTERY FUNDED

Requested to be returned to Jane Crawford, Daisy Arts, based at Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre (Ecumenical Partnership), Bishop Auckland, DL14 6PD.

11. Woven Tapestry (west wall) by Trish Moses – A 'loan item' to be returned to Trish Moses & family.



CBC Report: “On the W wall of the nave: a tapestry hanging depicting a river baptism?, with calvary in the background, by Tricia Hudson Moses, c1995..”

“Low - Medium Significance”

The Banner is requested to be returned to Trish Moses and Family.

12. Framed embroidered copy Da Vinci Last Supper (by Mary Duggan?).



To be taken and held initially by the WPCA at the Village Hall to be either returned to Mary Duggan or gifted to the Methodist Church in Witton Park.

13. Church plate items to be stored at Cuthbert House, Stonebridge, Durham, DH1 3RY.



Items to be stored until requested by other churches.

Memorials and banner on Church South Wall:



Name Board and Banners on Church North Wall



West Wall of church:



February 2024
Dan Spraggon
Church Buildings Support Officer
Durham Diocese