



## Escomb Saxon Church, Escomb

### QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT 2022

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# | 1.0 | General Information

## 1.01 Name of Church and Archdeaconry

Escomb Saxon Church  
Archdeaconry of Auckland

## 1.02 Name and contact of Adviser with qualifications

Chloe Granger, AABC  
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Telephone: 01539 555300

Signed: .....  .....

## 1.03 Form of the Report

The following report has been prepared in line with the recommendations set out in 'A Guide to Church Inspection and Repair' (1995), to comply with the statutory requirement of the Inspection of Churches Measure 1955, and the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991. It is a general report, aimed at offering an overview of condition.

The report offers General Information and a Summary of the building's condition within Section 1.0, and Recommendations for work within Section 2.0.

Following this, Sections 3.0 to 6.0 discuss each area inspected in turn, illustrated with photographs.

This report has been prepared following a *visual inspection* of the church only. All inspections have been made from the ground and safely accessible galleries and roofs. This report should be seen as an overview, and not a detailed survey report. If further inspection or investigations are required they will be outlined within the recommendations for work.

## 1.04 Specific limitations of the report

The inspections have been made from the ground only, except where safely accessible galleries and roofs have made higher level visual inspection possible. Ladders have been used where considered safe, giving access to some gutters, but not all. Internal valley gutters and inaccessible roofs have not been inspected. Ceilings, roof timbers and wall plates have been examined from floor level only. There has been no higher level investigations, nor intrusive inspections carried out; hidden structures, embedded timbers, floor and ceiling voids and areas beyond reasonable sight from the ground have not been subject to inspection and as such, it cannot be reported that areas such as these are free from defects.

## 1.05 Dates of Inspection and previous inspection

Crosby Granger Architects: 7th June 2022  
Previous Inspection: Ian Ness: August 2017



### **1.06 Weather on day of inspection**

Warm & dry

### **1.07 Brief Description of the Building and Listing Grade**

- 1.07.01 The Saxon Church , Saxon Green, Escomb, DURHAM DL14 7SX dates from approximately 675, and is believed to be one of only three complete Saxon churches in Britain. It was essentially derelict before being restored in 1880 by RJ Johnson and again in 1965 by Sir Albert Richardson.

For full details see Listing, Appendix B.

- 1.07.02 Single cell Nave, with Chancel through a tall round circular arch, said to be Roman. Small foot print but in unusually lofty. Externally pitch faced sandstone walls and sandstone dressings beneath steeply pitched natural slate roof. Sandstone bellcote over west gable.

Internally the walls are flush pointed and limewashed. Two areas of early wall painting remain intact.

- 1.07.03 Listed Grade I.  
The church is not in a Conservation Area.

### **1.08 General condition of the Building**

- 1.08.01 Structurally the building is sound, no particular signs of movement other than hairline cracks around windows, which is not unusual. The shell of the building is weathertight. The church is well kept, and between the inspection visit and production of this report it was fully limewashed internally (August 2022).

The building is well cared for by the PCC. The assistant Churchwarden lives nearby and visits the church frequently.

### **1.09 Safety aspects of the Building**

- 1.09.01 None noted



**1.10 Schedule of Works completed since the previous report**

- 1.10.01 2022 - Fire safety inspection
- Portable appliance testing
  - Pipe lagging - water main
  - Fixed wiring Test & Inspection
- 2021 - Tree works
- 2020 - Bench to churchyard
- 2019 - Slate repairs to Chancel, Nave & Porch roofs
- Concrete drain channels removed from around church
  - Repairs to north door
  - Portable appliance testing
- 2018 - Electrical upgrading: porch circuit, new sockets, new lighting flexes
- Fire extinguisher service
- 2017 - Bellcote repairs

**1.11 Work outstanding from the previous report [items listed are those that are still considered necessary]**

- 1.11.01 All items outstanding are included in the following list of works required.

**1.12 Records and Health and Safety file**

- 1.12.01 All relevant documentation and records are very well kept and clearly presented in a log book.



## | 2.0 | Recommendations for Repair/Renovation

*All outstanding works from the last report (as noted above) that are deemed relevant have been included within the recommendations of this report. Please note; all works must be specified, overseen and approved by the inspecting architect or other conservation accredited professional to ensure quality and appropriateness of workmanship. This is not a schedule of works, only identification of where works are required - a full specification and schedule should be drawn up prior to repair works being carried out. The costs displayed are only estimates - proper costs should be obtained from the relevant craftsman before commencing.*

**It is important to note that these recommendations are made as a professional looking at a building and considering its needs for repair. The recommendations have not been catalogued to accommodate church funds - prioritisation according to funds should be a matter of discussion between the architect and PCC, when a plan of action should then be formed.**

Item	Reference	Recommended works	Approx £ excl VAT
<b>PRIORITY A</b>			
<b>Urgent works requiring immediate attention</b>			
1)	3.05.05	All failed mortar pointing, cracks and open joints across all external elevations should be raked out and filled locally with soft lime mortar.	£4000
2)	4.04.05	Monitor all roofs for water ingress, particularly after rough weather.	DIY
3)	4.04.07	Monitor the porch roof for any water ingress and take appropriate action. In the longer-term it would be beneficial to re-roof the Porch.	DIY
4)	4.05.04	It is recommended that internal cracks are filled with lime putty so that progression can be monitored over time.	£800
<b>PRIORITY B</b>			
<b>Work recommended to be carried out during the next 12 months</b>			
1)	4.07.03	Clean off the algae from the Sanctuary step with a mild bleach solution , monitor the area for damp or re-growth.	DIY
2)	4.07.05	Remove the carpet from the Nave, expose the flagstones and sweep clean. A carpet runner could be fitted to the centre aisle - this should be a hessian or jute matting without any form of backing.	DIY £1500
3)	4.09.11	All the windows would benefit from internal vacuum cleaning to remove dust and cobwebs, and careful external cleaning with plain water and a damp cloth.	£250
4)	4.09.12	Cracked glass should be repaired by a skilled conservation glazier experienced in the repair of leaded lights.	£1000
5)	6.04.02	Remove all vegetation from boundary walls annually, and point up any open joints with soft lime mortar. In the longer-term re-point sections fully with lime.	DIY
6)	4.05.09	Specialist conservator to assess and quote for conservation work to the historic wall paintings	£300
7)	6.05.02	Arboriculturalist to survey trees for condition and safety - every five years	£300

<b>PRIORITY C</b>			
<b>Work recommended to be carried out during the next 2 years</b>			
1)	4.09.13	The opening vents to windows should have their cords replaced and be made operational. Open when weather conditions are favourable. There is a general lack of ventilation in the church, and open windows would help the internal environment.	£200
2)	5.09.02	Remove the unsightly heaters from the Porch.	£150
3)	3.02.03	Re-level the grass around the building and continue up to the church walls	£500
4)	3.06.03	North door would benefit from a full rub back and refurbishment. Rake out sprayfoam filler to frame and point up with lime mortar fillet.	£300
5)	3.07.13	To all windows - conservation specialist to assess windows, repoint against leading with lime mortar, de-rust & re-paint ferrements. Mason to rake out and fill all cracks around windows with lime mortar.	£3000
6)	4.05.12	Consideration should be given to introducing some structural tying into the Porch roof structure. This could be an additional low-level purlin to each slope with metal tie rods connecting the two side. The advice of a CARE registered Structural Engineer should be taken.	£5000
7)	3.04.04	Rake out and re-point all open joints at high level on gables and to water-tabling.	£5000
<b>PRIORITY D</b>			
<b>Work recommended to be carried out during the next 5 years</b>			
1)	3.01.06	Re-roof the Porch, both slopes, repairing the sarking board as necessary, fixing new battens, re-laying existing stone slates supplemented by new replacements to match as necessary.	£10000
2)	4.07.06	Lift the floor cobbles and re-lay in lime mortar flush with the surrounding flags to avoid a trip hazard and moisture entrapment.	£500
3)	4.09.10	Remove window sill and re-make on the bench with new leading	£1500
4)	6.03.02	A monumental mason should provide a quotation for repair to the damaged tomb	£400

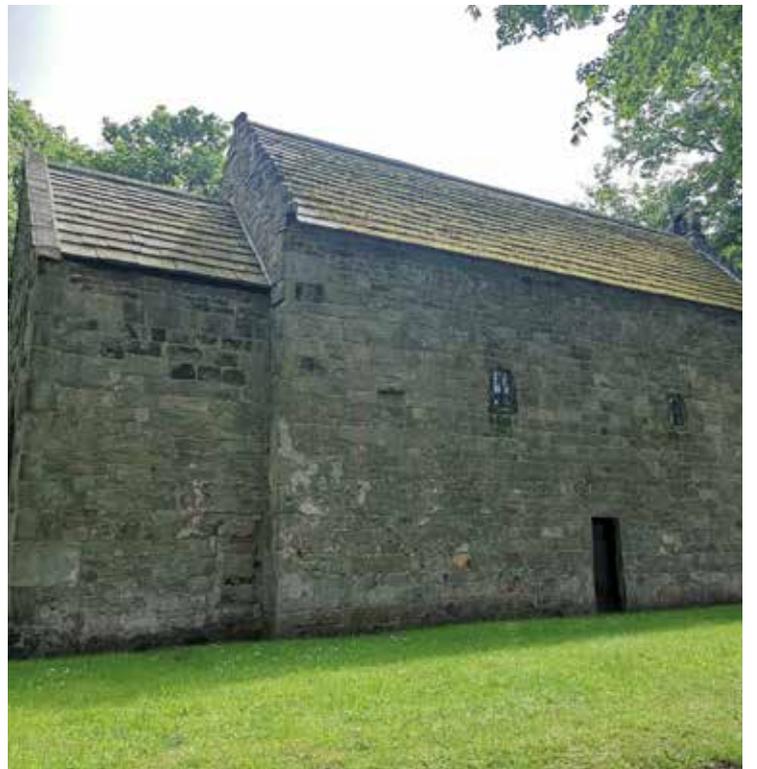
<b>PRIORITY E</b>			
<b>Work recommended to be carried out in the longer term / desirable</b>			
1)	3.05.06	In the longer term a rolling programme of re-pointing should be planned, to remove harmful cement pointing and replace with lime mortar, on an elevation-by-elevation basis	£5000 p.a.
2)	5.09.03	In the longer term consider alternative means of heating the church such as electric blown air, or electric heated mats under any new flooring. However any form of intermittent heating will tend to make condensation in the building worse - a common problem with the intermittent heating of cold buildings. Ventilation provision can counter the problem.	£15000



South roof slopes to Nave, Chancel, and Porch, all with heavy sandstone (flag) slates



North slopes to Chancel and Nave



North slopes to Chancel and Nave

## | 3.0 | External Elements

### 3.01 Roof coverings

- 3.01.01 South nave, several chipped slates and two slates sitting lower than the tails of the course indicating possible slippage or larger slates being used as replacements.

Chips noted only two corners and do not necessarily affect weathering.

Some very wide side joints and some narrow side laps noted. Could possibly allow water ingress during driving rain.

Lead flashings thinning and some evidence of splitting, though appear minor at present.

Ridges well bedded and sound.

Lead to bellcote at ridge is somewhat contrived and would likely benefit from an improved detail to prevent any water seepage.

- 3.01.02 South chancel roof, again with a number of broken slates, one in particular at fifth course below ridge where almost half the visible slates have broken off, others in the corners as elsewhere.

Three slates noted as dropped or slipped, one of which has shifted under a lack of restraint from a tie repair.

This roof has been patched in recent years since the last quinquennial inspection though ideally it would benefit from re-slating.

Ridge appears well bedded and sound.

Leadwork to nave is thinning but still serviceable.

Mortar flaunching to the east water-tabling has been renewed since the last quinquennial inspection though showing signs of minor deterioration.

- 3.01.03 To the north nave roof, moss covers the vast majority of the roof, approximately 95%, leaving only a course below the ridge and an area to the west gable exposed.

Slating appears level and stable.

There is moss growth below the lead flashings to the western gable as noted in the last quinquennial inspection.

Ridge sound and stable.

Leadwork to east gable is thinning, but serviceable.

Lead flashings not wedged or chased into the stonework at the top west gable with the top edge exposed that could potentially allow water to seep in if there is wind driven rain from the east.



Porch west slope: numerous chipped slates, mortar flashing cracking away from gable



Porch east slope: several damaged slates, mortar flashing cracking away from gable. New flashing in good condition

3.01.04 North chancel pitch in fair condition. No broken slates visible although there are two slipped or dislodged slates that may require re-securing. A handful of replacement slates secured by wire.

Notable area of ill-fitting slates and slight dislodgement to the upper west area of the roof pitch.

Ridge is well bedded and sound.

Mortar flaunching to the east water tabling has recently been renewed, though showing signs of minor deterioration.

Leadwork to nave in fair condition.

3.01.05 Porch roof, east pitch. Several chipped slates, two substantially with the top left slate below the ridge corner has broken off and a split slate, third course down, to the right hand side below a tingle has broken at the tail of the course above, splitting the stone in half. Both still in position, sat on the roof with their own self-weight. Several wire replacements. The third course up from the bottom in the centre corner has also broken off.

Patch repairs have been carried out in the last few years to the porch roof, though more broken slates have occurred since then, splits also noted.

Ridge bedded and appears sound.

New lead flashings to the nave, in good condition.

Flaunching to the south gable slightly deteriorated, particularly at the centre.

3.01.06 Recommendation: Re-roof the Porch, both slopes, repairing the sarking board as necessary, fixing new battens, re-laying existing stone slates supplemented by new replacements to match as necessary. **D**

3.01.07 Porch roof, west pitch. Corner broken to a slate third course down, right hand side against the gable, and also half a slate missing to the first course below the ridge in the centre. Several replacement slates held by wire.

Ridge appears sound, although the face flaunching from the top of slates has come away in the centre, though the full bedding appears sound behind.

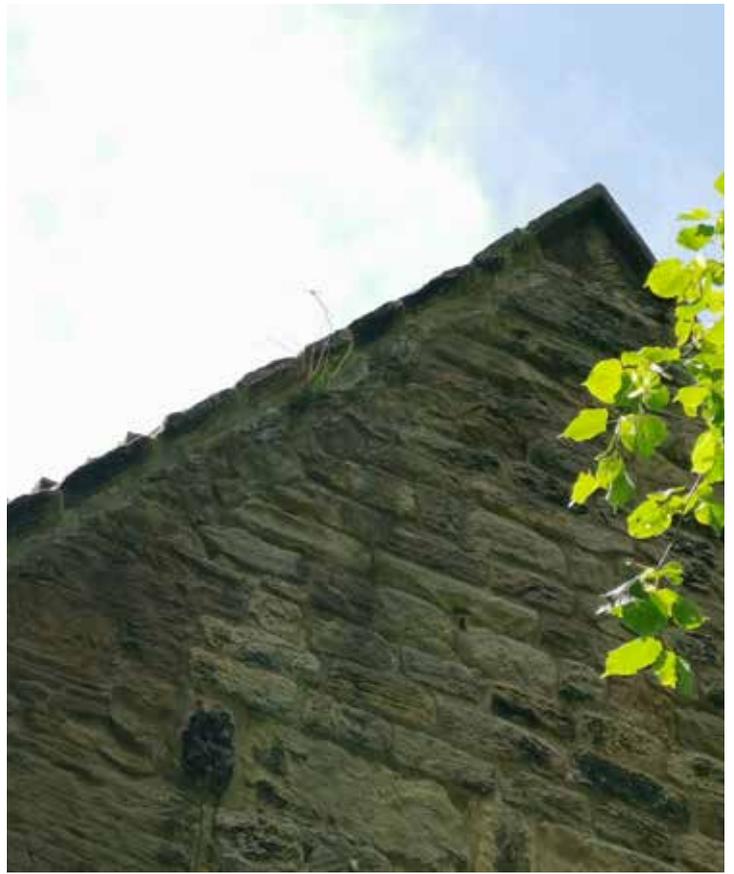
New flashings to nave in good condition.

Flaunching to south gable in reasonable condition.

Recommendation: as 3.01.06.



Conditions at the base of the walls are improving now that concrete channels have been removed.



East gable: vegetation should be removed and open joints pointed



Masonry to the south elevation blackened by historic sulphate deposits, caused by air pollution (coal burning)

### **3.02 & 3.03 Rainwater goods and disposal systems**

3.02.01 There are no rainwater goods. Rain falls from the slates to ground.

Previous concrete channels around the base of the walls have now been removed allowing the ground around the perimeter of the building to dry out. This has hugely helped improve the damp issues internally and it has been noted by the PCC that walls are much drier.

3.02.02 Ground gullies positioned at the north and south east corners of the chancel and at the south west corner of the nave previously used to take water from the concrete channels, now removed, rendering these gullies now superfluous to requirements.

It is assumed the gullies drain away to soakaways so would be prudent to retain in case any future possible re-use is necessary, though at present are redundant.

3.02.03 Recommendation: The small ditch left by the removal of the concrete channels would benefit from grassing over to ensure easy maintenance. To achieve this it would be beneficial to gradually slope the adjacent grassed churchyard into the trench to allow lawnmowers to run into the ditch at the foundation level. C

Currently the earth and ditch is filled with leaves and weeds; it would be much better if it was grassed.

### **3.04 Bellcotes, parapets, chimneys and upstand verges**

3.04.01 The crow-stepped gable to the west is in good condition with flashings well bedded on the roof pitch side and mortar joints generally full and sound, though some wash-out of joints on the roof side of the north pitch.

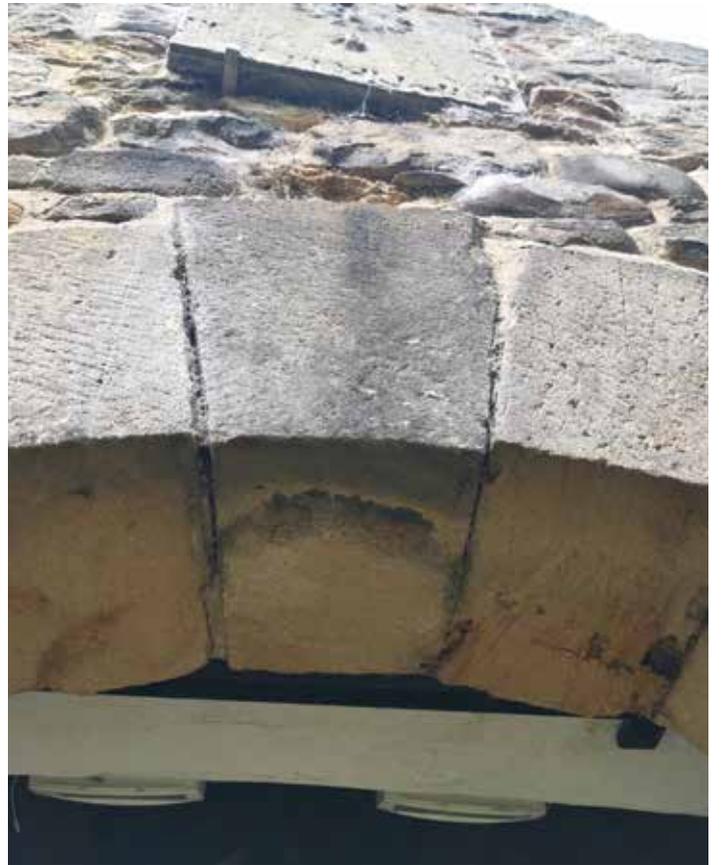
3.04.02 The bellcote over the west gable appears in good sound condition with a stone indent having been carried out to repair the cracked stone as noted in the last Quinquennial Inspection.



Cracks over head of East window and dropped voussoir (to right of centre)



Pockets of erosion to the soft sandstone, isolated but widespread



Slight drop to voussoir of Porch doorway

- 3.04.03 The crow-stepped gable to the east is less satisfactory, with less height meaning in some instances the lead is not dressed into a chase and is just folded over the top, noted on the north pitch, and the bedding joints of the crow-stepped stones themselves are open, indicating a slight movement, particularly noted again on the north pitch.

Missing mortar also notable on the roof pitch side of the south, above the flashings.

Water tabling to the chancel appears fair, though gaps in the mortar joints on the east facing gable have allowed vegetation to take hold, this requires removal and repointing.

- 3.04.04 Recommendation: Rake out and re-point all open joints at high level on gables and to water-tabling.

C

### 3.05 Walling

- 3.05.01 All masonry to the nave and chancel is roughly coursed sandstone with large Saxon quoins to the corners. The masonry to the porch is random rubble with reasonably sized quoins.

- 3.05.02 To the south elevation the masonry to the nave and chancel has blackened by sulphur deposits on the surface and the stonework is showing signs of deterioration, particularly odd vulnerable stones, perhaps poor quality stones or incorrect bedding. Deterioration is isolated, though where present is severe.

- 3.05.03 Type and condition of pointing is variable. To the north the pointing is mostly the original lime bedding mortar that can be seen with some remnants of the original lime render still existing to the north-west corner of the nave and chancel.

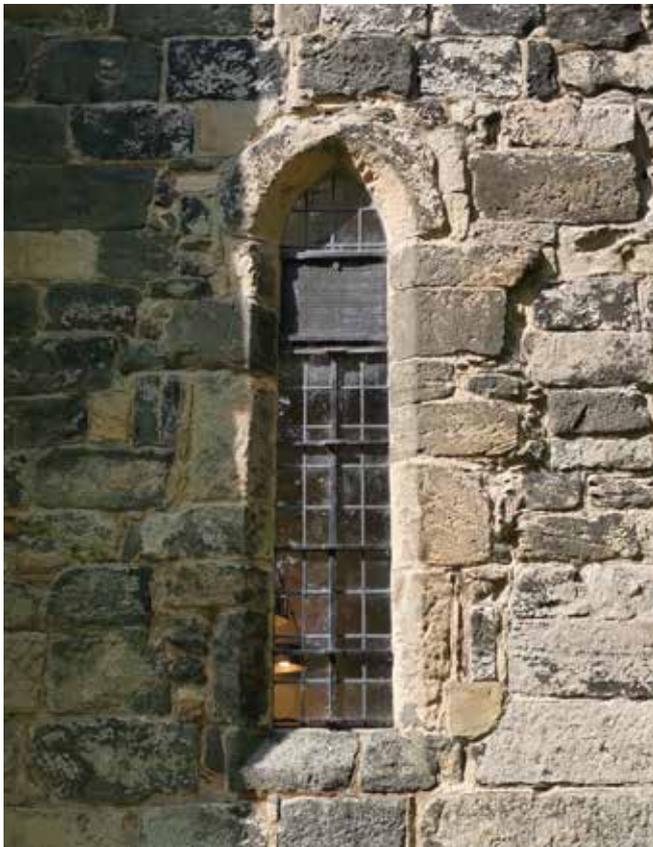
To the west the gable has mostly been repointed in a cementitious mix or very hydraulic lime mix which is causing advanced deterioration of the masonry to this elevation.

The south elevation of the nave and chancel is mixed with some isolated areas of lime pointing remaining, but much has been repointed in this cementitious mix or highly hydraulic lime mix.

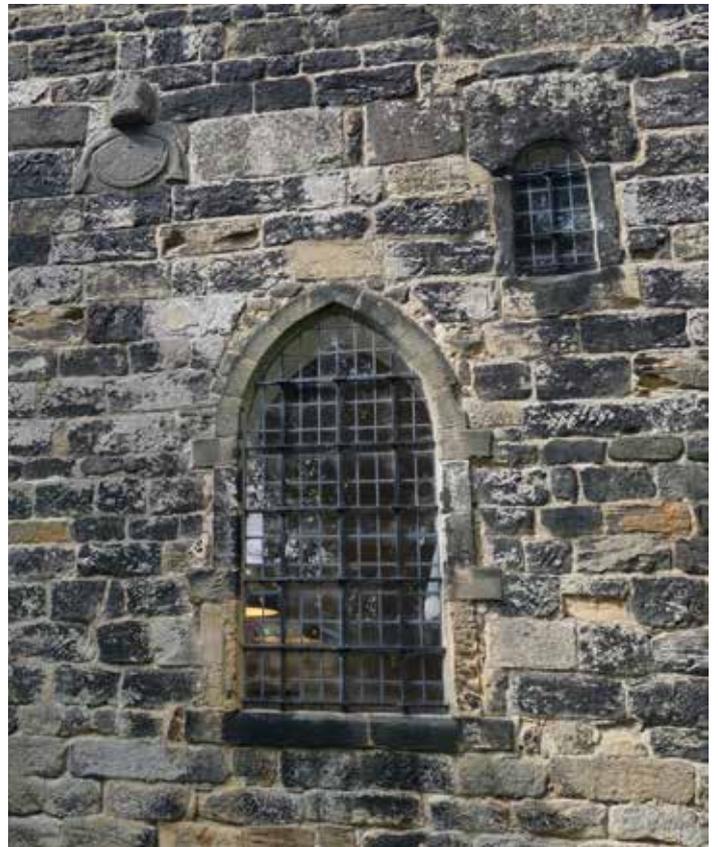
The east gable of the chancel has also been repointed, though the damage to the stone is less apparent than to the west.



Cracking to East window



sI: note erosion of surrounding masonry



sIV (lower) and sIII (above)

3.05.04 Notable issues as follows:

- Crack over principal east window in east gable of chancel through window head.
- Crack to lower section of southern jamb main east window, running down to ground.
- Minor hairline cracking to left hand side of window to south chancel running up to eaves and down to sill, can be traced through more recent repointing to ground. Cracked plinth stone at ground.
- Minor hairline crack over principal west window in the west gable of the nave.
- Hairline crack running through joints at north chancel to the back of the quoins.
- Generally isolated open joints, particularly at low level plinth and at high level on the north elevation.
- Poor pointing to the rubble stonework of porch.
- Hairline cracking below kneelers to porch gable and leaning out of east and west walls of the porch, indicating possible roof spread.
- Cross to porch gable deteriorated and horizontal crack through the seating.
- South gable of porch, hairline cracking through joints vertically to both east and west corners and slight drop to key stone of arch doorway.

3.05.05 Recommendation: In the short-term all failed mortar pointing, cracks and open joints across all elevations should be raked out and filled locally with soft lime mortar. **A**

3.05.06 In the longer term a rolling programme of re-pointing should be planned, to remove harmful cement pointing and replace with lime mortar, on an elevation-by-elevation basis **E**

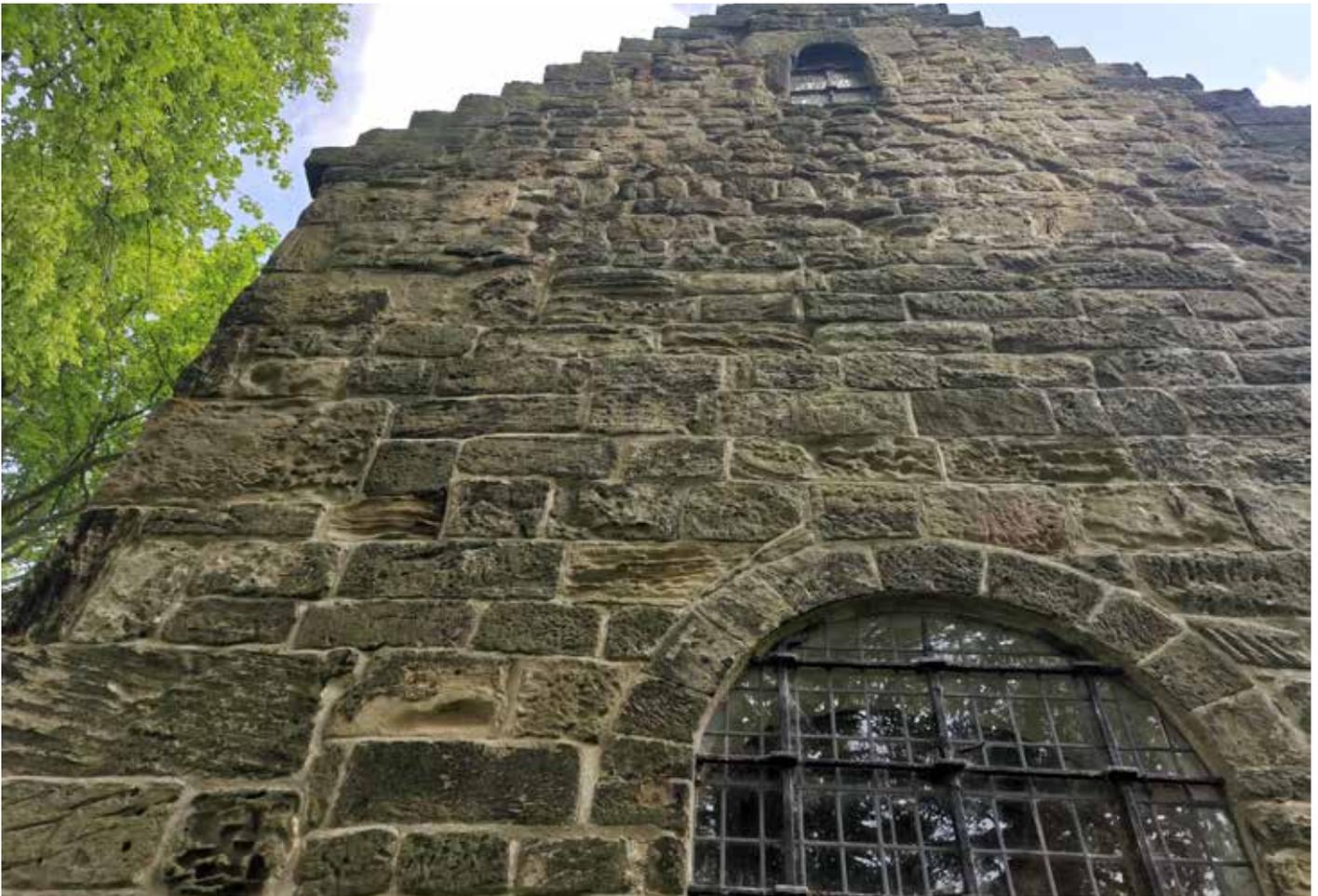
**3.06 Timber porches, doors and canopies**

3.06.01 Former timber outer porch doors have been removed and replaced with painted steel frames with polycarbonate glazing to allow light into porch. They appear to be mild steel, contemporary with the ferramenta to the external windows, showing signs of surface degradation and would benefit from refurbishment.

Polycarbonate now cloudy, would benefit from replacement.

Ironmongery in good order.

3.06.02 Timber door to north nave. Dark stained timber with strap iron hinges. Previously repaired at base to both door leaf and both jambs. Resin to back of repair at left hand jamb visible and potentially causing further deterioration to original timber above and behind.



West window (w) and high level west window (W) above.



North Nave door, showing unusual joggled lintel



Damaged masonry to jamb of south Porch, due to rusting iron stub (3.07.13)

- 3.06.03 Recommendation: North door appears dried out, possibly from the staining. Would benefit from a full rub back and refurbishment. Rake out sprayfoam filler to frame and point up with lime mortar fillet.

### 3.07 Windows and door openings

The window notes below will follow the CVMA numbering system, with E being the principal east window, all windows to the south commencing with sl, sill, sIII, etc. running from east to west and so on.

- 3.07.01 E: Two historic cracks in the sill. Lack of central keystone at head of the window results in central joint at the apex of the arch, right hand upper voussoir dislodged causing dropping of masonry above. Minor cracking to bottom left side of jamb.  
External ferramenta showing signs of rusting, would benefit from rubbing back and repainting. No signs of cracking within the masonry at present.
- 3.07.02 sl: Chancel lancet, large open joint through sill and to right hand seating of jamb, both historic. Crack through head of pointed lancet, also historic. External ferramenta showing signs of rusting, would benefit from redecoration.  
Externally fitted ventilation mesh over opening hopper, secured with timber battens painted black in acceptable condition.  
All masonry to window surround slightly protruding forward from main face of walling, historic.
- 3.07.03 sill: Generally in good condition, one cracked jamb stone to right hand side just below meshed hopper opening, and one heavily weathered jamb stone to left hand side, approximately half way down.  
Ferramenta appears in reasonable condition, no signs of cracking to masonry.  
Mesh covering hopper as S1.
- 3.07.04 sIII: Original Saxon window with monolithic lintel and arched head opening. Slight damage to stone at lintel bearing to left hand side. Ferramenta showing signs of rusting, would benefit from redecoration.
- 3.07.05 sIV: Large pointed arched headed window, all in good condition except to the bottom jamb stones, both heavily weathered, left hand partially replaced. Historic crack through sill. Lower jamb stones likely reused from smaller window.  
Ferramenta showing signs of rusting, would benefit from refurbishment. No signs of ferramenta damaging masonry.
- 3.07.06 sV: Original small round headed window with monolithic lintel. Crack through sill, minor hairline cracking around mortar joint to top of lintel stone, minor damage to arched head of reveal to the lintel stone.  
Historic crack through sill.  
Ferramenta showing signs of rusting, would benefit from refurbishment. No signs of ferramenta damaging masonry.



Blocked north doorway to Chancel: deterioration of masonry, in part due to hard cement pointing



- 3.07.07 sVI: East elevation of the porch, square headed opening with rubble lintel stone, no formal sill. All in fair condition.
- 3.07.08 sVII: West porch, small square headed reveal with rough rubble lintel, upright jamb stones and no formal sill. Heavy mortar repairs to tops of jambs in cementitious mortar. Minor hairline cracking around top of lintel and to right hand side jamb.
- 3.07.09 w. Main west window. Historic crack through sill. Minor hairline crack through joint left hand side of central keystone to the round headed opening. Jamb stones run in with regular masonry coursing, reveal pointed in cementitious mortar.  
Ferramenta showing more severe signs of deterioration, requires rub back and redecoration.
- 3.07.10 W. Original high level window opening, round headed reveal with monolithic lintel. Slight damage to top of left hand jamb stone and weathering to face of lintel and right hand jamb stone. Crack through sill. Ferramenta requires refurbishment.
- 3.07.11 nI: Easterly nave. Original square headed opening with large oversized lintel and oversized sill set towards the right. Weathering deterioration to sill and deterioration to top of lintel in the centre, though both minor. Ferramenta would benefit from refurbishment.
- 3.07.12 nII: Original square headed opening with oversized lintel and short sill stone that appears to have been indented to the left hand side. Sill appears weathered with signs of mortar repair, though likely cementitious. Weathering to lintel on underside. Jambs appear sound. Ferramenta would benefit from refurbishment.
- 3.07.13 Recommendation: To all windows - conservation specialist to repair all broken glass, repoint against leading with lime mortar, re-rust & re-paint ferrementa. Mason to rake out and fill all cracks around windows with lime mortar. **C**
- 3.07.14 DS1. South porch door opening. Later ashlar round headed opening on large quoins and walling masonry to jambs. Opening of joints to keystone and hairline cracking to left hand side at springing point. Deterioration to top of large quoin jamb stone to right hand side springing point, likely due to cementitious pointing. Ferramenta fixings in face of large jamb stones to right and left hand side require removal before more damage is caused to masonry. Stone fully burst away to left hand side jamb exposing the lead plug. **D**



3.07.15 DN1. Blocked up opening to north chancel. Historic opening, now blocked up. Heavy deterioration to masonry units, particularly to fourth and eighth of the infill blocks, as well as to the lintel, top of the left hand side jamb and the top of the lowest right hand jamb. Severe deterioration likely caused from cementitious mortars and lack of overhead protection. Would benefit from careful conservative repair.

3.07.16 DN2. North nave door. Appears to be original with long and short jamb stones and joggled lintel to head. Deterioration to inner face of reveal, would benefit from mortar repair, most notable on western reveal. Face deterioration to bottom left hand jamb. Delamination of lintel to the underside. All deteriorated masonry would benefit from careful conservation.  
Concrete to threshold step over original stonework will be causing deterioration to masonry below.

**D**



The Nave rood structure all appears to be in good condition



Damage to plasterwork, particularly around and within window reveals



The Chancel arch, reputedly Roman, with ancient painted decoration to the intrados

## | 4.0 | Internal Elements

### 4.01 Towers, spires

There is no tower or spire.

### 4.02 Clocks and their enclosures

There is no clock.

### 4.03 Roof and ceiling voids

There are no roof voids. The roofs are fully exposed to the underside of the rafters.

### 4.04 Roof structures and ceilings

4.04.01 The exposed roof structure of the Nave consists of massive sawn oak trusses and purlins. Sarking boards visible over. Dendrochronology dates timbers around 1480 (prev. QI). All appears to be in good condition when inspected from ground level with binoculars.

4.04.02 Chancel has two heavy trusses close to the walls.

4.04.03 Previous QI notes treatment for 'woodworm' in 1985. Given the age of the timbers any beetle infestation is likely to be historic rather than active.

4.04.04 There is some water staining to the underside of the sarking boards to the Chancel, suggesting occasional leaks. Churchwarden reported a leak above the Altar in October 2021. It would appear that the leak is associated with driving rain from a particular direction. Otherwise the exposed structure to trusses, purlins, rafters and soffit boarding appears to be dry and in good condition.

4.04.05 Recommendation: Monitor all roofs for water ingress, particularly after rough weather. Take photos to record any wet patches

**A**

4.04.06 The Porch has pitchpine purlins, rafters, and sarking boards, all planed finish and very accurately constructed. Dark varnish finish. Previous QI notes timber decay (2013) and fruiting bodies, but there is now no sign of active decay and all appears dry. Previous QI notes insecticide and anti-fungal treatments applied in 1970s and 1990s, and there has obviously been concern about the condition of this roof.

4.04.07 Recommendation: Monitor the porch roof for any water ingress and take appropriate action. In the longer-term it would be beneficial to re-roof the Porch.

**A**

### 4.05 Internal structures, balustrading, upper floors, balconies and access stairways.

4.05.01 The Chancel arch is reputedly Roman in origin. It appears stable.



Cracking to head of East window



Cracking to the RHS of the East window - through full thickness of wall. Monitor



Cracking above lintel to Nave main door

- 4.05.02 Minor cracks noted at crown of the East window through the full thickness of the wall, below the East window cill, 1-2mm wide. There is damage to the limewash at low level to both sides of the Chancel arch, notable worse to the north side. The limewash has been lost due to moisture in the masonry drying out to the interior of the church. At the time of inspection the masonry appeared to be largely dry.
- 4.05.03 Slight cracking in the corners of the Chancel suggest slight separation from the Nave - not significant.
- 4.05.04 Recommendation: It is recommended that all internal cracks are filled with lime putty so that progression can be monitored over time. **A**
- 4.05.05 At the Nave west end of the inner Porch lintel there is a crack extending seven courses above the lintel.
- 4.05.06 Below the West window there is a hairline crack to the south.
- 4.05.07 Throughout the Nave at low level there has been some damage to the limewash and decay of the underlying stone due to moisture in the masonry evaporating from the surface. This is most pronounced at the Chancel arch, particularly at the south side to the abutment of the Chancel. More extensively to the south side of the Nave at low level below the windows, and other areas in the lower one or two courses of stonework. There is also extensive damage due to the drying of moisture from the masonry to the south west corner of the Nave and across the west wall at low level, and also some patches of damage to the limewash of the north Nave wall, particularly at the abutment of the Chancel. A lot of this drying appears to be associated with the removal of external concrete channel drains - it would appear that the masonry is now drying out successfully bot to the interior and exterior, and re-decoration should be considered.
- 4.05.08 A similar pattern of damage is visible in the Chancel, especially to the NE corner, across the east end wall, and to the abutment with the Nave. In most places the masonry appears to now be dry.
- 4.05.09 Recommendation: The historic wall painting to the Nave on the north wall at high level would benefit from proper conservation. It appears that the thin render which carries the painting is detaching in places from the wall. A specialist conservator should survey and advise on further work to prevent deterioration of the these important artworks. **B**
- 4.05.10 The Nave and Chancel would benefit from cleaning at high level. It is understood that the Church is planning redecoration in the near future.
- 4.05.11 The Porch walls appear to have spread apart slightly over time, under the thrust of the roof.
- 4.05.12 Recommendation: Consideration should be given to introducing some structural tying into the roof structure. This could be an additional low-level purlin to each slope with metal tie rods connecting the two side. The advice of a CARE registered Structural Engineer should be taken. **C**



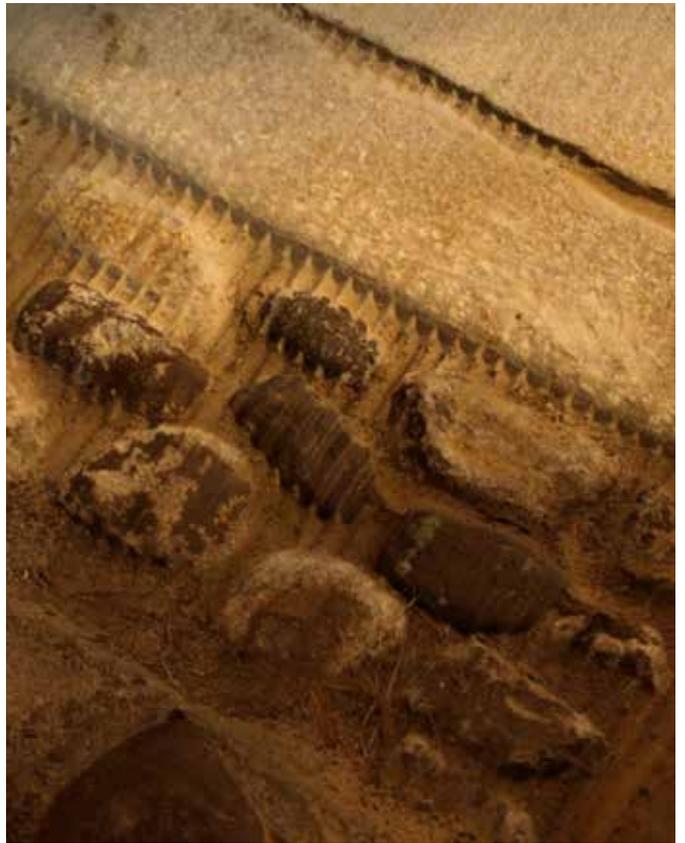
Damp under the Nave carpet, south side



Loss of limewash at low level due to drying of the damp walls. Conditions appear to be improving throughout the church



Loss of limewash at the Chancel arch - dry at time of inspection



Stonework below the carpet is decaying to sand. The impermeable carpet should be removed.

#### **4.06 Partitions, screens, panelling, doors and ironmongery**

- 4.06.01 Porch door: framed and planked oak, in oak frame. Draught sealed with brush strip face fixed at bottom, and perimeter rubber wiping seal.
- 4.06.02 Nave north door: recently refurbished and set into a refurbished frame, as a fire escape door. Door drags on step which prevents it from being opened easily. The gap between door and frame filled with expanding foam, which is not an appropriate material for a heritage building. Decorative hanging in front of the door prevents its use as a fire escape, and should be re-located.
- 4.06.03 Ease the north door to ensure good operation. Dig out the sprayfoam from the frame and replace with lime mortar fillet. **C**

#### **4.07 Ground floor structure, timber platforms and underfloor ventilation**

- 4.07.01 Solid floors throughout the Nave, Chancel and Porch.
- 4.07.02 Evidence of minor water penetration from below to the Chancel floor, allowing the growth of a patch of algae at the base of the Sanctuary step.
- 4.07.03 Recommendation: clean off the algae from the Sanctuary step with a mild bleach solution , monitor the area for damp or re-growth. **B**
- 4.07.04 Sandstone flags to the Chancel have some loss of surface due to delamination - a natural process.
- Flooring to Nave consists of rubber-backed nylon carpet over earlier foam-backed carpet. These impermeable coverings are trapping moisture in the stone flags and causing some areas of accelerated stone decay. This is manifesting as patches of loose sand on the surface of the flags. At the wall-floor junction the carpet is particularly damp, and this has caused corrosion of the MICC cable which provides the power circuit. The fitted carpet extends around the font where it is causing accelerated decay of the plinth stones. To the north west corner of the Nave there is an area of cobblestones set in cement. These are set at higher level than the surrounding flooring.
- 4.07.05 Recommendation: remove the carpet from the Nave, expose the flagstones and sweep clean. A carpet runner could be fitted to the centre aisle - this should be a hessian or jute matting without any form of backing. **B**
- 4.07.06 Recommendation: Lift the cobbles and re-lay in lime mortar flush with the surrounding flags to avoid a trip hazard and moisture entrapment. **D**
- 4.07.07 Porch floor: sandstone flags, in good condition. Steps to Nave should have their white painted edges re-painted when this is worn. **C**



sII: Hopper should be made operational for useful ventilation



External ferrements to all windows would benefit from de-rusting and re-painting

#### **4.08 Internal finishes**

- 4.08.01 The entire church is limewashed internally which is the correct finish for this type of construction. Loss of finish at low level has been noted elsewhere. It is understood that the PCC is actively preparing for re-limewashing the interior. (Carried out August 2022)

#### **4.09 Glazing**

- 4.09.01 Window sI: Small single lancet with top hopper vent with glazed side quadrants. All appears to be in good condition, but missing the operating cords for the vent.
- 4.09.02 Window E: Large semi-circular arch-headed window, plain glazing in orthogonal leading, all generally in good condition, some minor distortion to the upper third of the window possible due to pressure from the displaced voussour in the masonry surround. One cracked quarry to the head of the window, two cracked to lower left, one to lower right. One displaced quarry to lower right - a poor repair. Saddle bars and ties in good condition. No apparent leaks
- 4.09.03 Window sII: Single lancet, hopper vent with glazed quadrant and flyscreen - missing the operating cords. Otherwise in good condition.
- 4.09.04 Window sIII: High level in Chancel, small semi-circular headed window, fixed, all in good condition.
- 4.09.05 Window sIV: Large arch-headed window, fixed glazing, all in good condition.
- 4.09.06 Window sV: Chancel, high level, fixed light, all in good condition.
- 4.09.07 Window W: Fixed glazing, semi-circular head, all in good condition.
- 4.09.08 Window nI: small rectangular window at high level. One broken quarry near top of window, otherwise in good condition.
- 4.09.09 Window nII: similar to nI. Some distortion to leading at the bottom of the window, break to leading at top right, several gaps around quarries.
- 4.09.10 Recommendation: remove window nII and re-make on the bench with new leading **D**
- 4.09.11 Recommendation: All the windows would benefit from internal vacuum cleaning to remove dust and cobwebs, and careful external cleaning with plain water and a damp cloth. **B**
- 4.09.12 Recommendation: Cracked glass should be repaired by a skilled conservation glazier experienced in the repair of leaded lights. **B**



The remaining areas of the early wall painting to the Nave north wall are in need of specialist conservation

4.09.13 Recommendation: The opening vents should have their cords replaced and be made operational, and used when weather conditions are favourable. There is a general lack of ventilation in the church, and open windows would help the internal environment. **C**

**4.10 Fittings, fixtures, furniture and movable articles**

4.10.01 Oak altar, behind which is an ancient stone cross, limewashed.

4.10.02 Oak pews with arms and bookshelves. Oak lectern. Oak cupboards to rear of Nave, would benefit from being moved away from the walls a little. **B**

4.10.03 All the furniture dates from the 1960s refurbishment and is in good condition.

4.10.04 Font, octagonal sandstone, ancient, worn, but in sound condition.

**4.11 Toilets, kitchens, vestries, etc.**

4.11.01 There is no separate Vestry, Kitchen, Toilet or other accommodation.

**4.12 Organs and other instruments**

4.12.01 Single manual pipe organ at west end, by Nigel Church, 1977. Oak case. Blower located under adjacent pew.

**4.13 Monuments, tombs, plaques etc.**

4.13.01 None



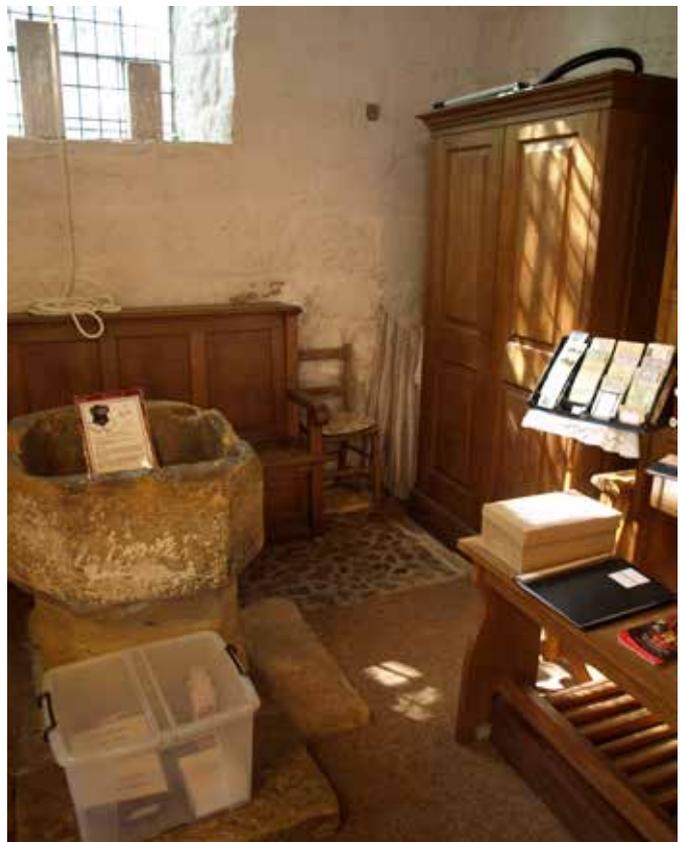
The heaters in the Porch are visually intrusive and their removal is recommended



Fire precautions appear to be adequate for the building, and the extinguishers are serviced regularly



Pendant light fittings are appropriate to the building



Care should be taken to avoid a build up of clutter in what is a relatively small space

## | 5.0 | Services

### 5.01 Services installations generally

5.01.01 All services appear in good order.

### 5.02 Gas installation

None.

### 5.03 Electrical installation

5.03.01 Work was carried out in June 2018 to re-wire much of the main distribution board and associated equipment. This consisted of a new 3ph distribution board with RCD breakers, upgrading of meter tails, alteration to power circuits, renewal of some sockets, provision of some extra sockets, replacement of lighting switches with new dimmers, lighting flexes replaced, provision of filament LED lamps, provision of new switchgear to Porch heaters. Tested & certified, by Dave Kelly, Crook, NAPIT.

5.03.02 Lighting is by simple bespoke circular metal pendant fittings fitted with LED filament bulbs. Six pendants in Nave, two in Chancel, all in good condition.

5.03.03 All previous external floodlight fittings have been removed.

### 5.04 Water system

5.04.01 Mains water rises in the NW corner of the Nave in polyethylene pipe to a wall mounted tap. There is no gully or drain below this tap.

### 5.05 Oil installation

None.

### 5.06 Sound installation

5.06.01 A portable system is used when required.

### 5.07 Lightning conductor

5.07.01 None

### 5.08 Fire precautions

5.08.01 6ltr foam extinguisher and 2kg CO2, serviced April 2022.

Security to the Nave north door could be improved by fitting a mortice deadlock with an internal thumb-turn, but no external hardware. This would allow the door to be used as a fire escape without compromising its security from the outside.



### 5.09 Heating and Ventilation

- 5.09.01 There are electric under pew convector heaters, and electric radiant panels fitted to the backs of the pews. These may have some merit in heating the congregation, but do not benefit the building fabric.  
The warm air blowers located in the Porch are unlikely to be effective at creating a 'warm air curtain' or providing any meaningful heat. They are extremely unsightly.
- 5.09.02 Recommendation: Remove the unsightly heaters from the Porch. **C**
- 5.09.03 Recommendation: In the longer term consider alternative means of heating the church such as electric blown air, or electric heated mats under any new flooring. However any form of intermittent heating will tend to make condensation in the building worse - a common problem with the intermittent heating of cold buildings. Ventilation provision can counter the problem. **E**
- 5.09.04 The PCC will fully understand the problem of trying to provide comfort heating in a building such as the Saxon Church which was never designed to be warmed. Unless some form of constant background heating is provided it is unlikely that the building will ever feel warm - and this would be prohibitively expensive to run. In such a small space a simple wood stove might provide a cost effective high-output radiant heat source suitable for intermittent use, albeit requiring physical effort and a good supply of fuel.

### 5.10 Asbestos

- 5.10.01 Not known if an asbestos survey has been carried out. Given the lack of a wet heating system it is unlikely that asbestos is present. However it is sometimes found in organ blowers.  
Recommendation: have a Management Asbestos Survey carried out and recorded in the Log Book. **C**



Church yard is generally well maintained, but the area just inside the gate would benefit from tidying



Robson Elliot tomb is in need of repair

## | 6.0 | Curtilage

### 6.01 Churchyard

6.01.01 The church yard is walled around, and contains many mature trees, believed to have been planted c.1880. There are no TPOs.

The churchyard is laid mainly to grass, and that near the church is kept cut.

6.01.02 The church and its curtilage are of the highest archaeological importance. The County Archaeologist should be consulted if any works are being considered.

Paths are laid to gravel, and are all generally in good order. Suitable for most ambulant visitors.

The traffic cones just inside the gate are rather unsightly and could be stored elsewhere.

### 6.02 Ruins

6.02.01 There are no ruins.

### 6.03 Monuments, tombs and vaults

6.03.01 The separately listed Robson Elliot tomb has developed some significant open joints. Another tomb has collapsed completely.

6.03.02 Recommendation: A monumental mason should provide a quotation for repair. **D**

### 6.04 Boundaries and gates

6.04.01 The churchyard wall is well constructed in sandstone rubble and is in good condition. However it has been pointed with cement mortar which in the long-term will be detrimental to the stone. Vegetation including ivy is colonising the wall in places.

6.04.02 Recommendation: Remove all vegetation from walls annually, and point up any open joints with soft lime mortar. In the longer-term re-point sections fully with lime. **B**

6.04.03 The gate piers are thought to be C19th, in good condition. The metal gate is in fair condition but would benefit from being de-rusted and re-painted. A more formal method of holding the gate open would be preferable to the pile of stones currently employed. **C**

### 6.05 Trees and shrubs

6.05.01 The trees were surveyed in 2012, after which a number of floodlights were removed from them.

6.05.02 Recommendation: an arboriculturist carries out an inspection at least a five-yearly basis to review condition and take any necessary action. **B**



Vegetation should be cleared annually from walls before it can become established



The grass is well maintained and paths are appropriately surfaced. The overall feeling is of a pleasant green oasis

Self-seeded plants and saplings should be removed annually to prevent them from gaining a foothold.

**6.06 Hard-standing areas**

There is no tarmac or flags. The pathway is compacted slate chippings and serves the site well. The remaining paths are mown grass.

**6.07 Buildings within the curtilage**

Store: masonry built, in fair condition, though the roof appears to be leaking .

**6.08 Notice boards**

6.08.01 A substantial timber construction in good condition, likely to need re-painting in the next 5 years. **D**

**6.09 Works Required to provide Disabled Access and Parking Space**

6.09.01 There is off-road parking available beside the churchyard, and the entrance to the churchyard is accessible.

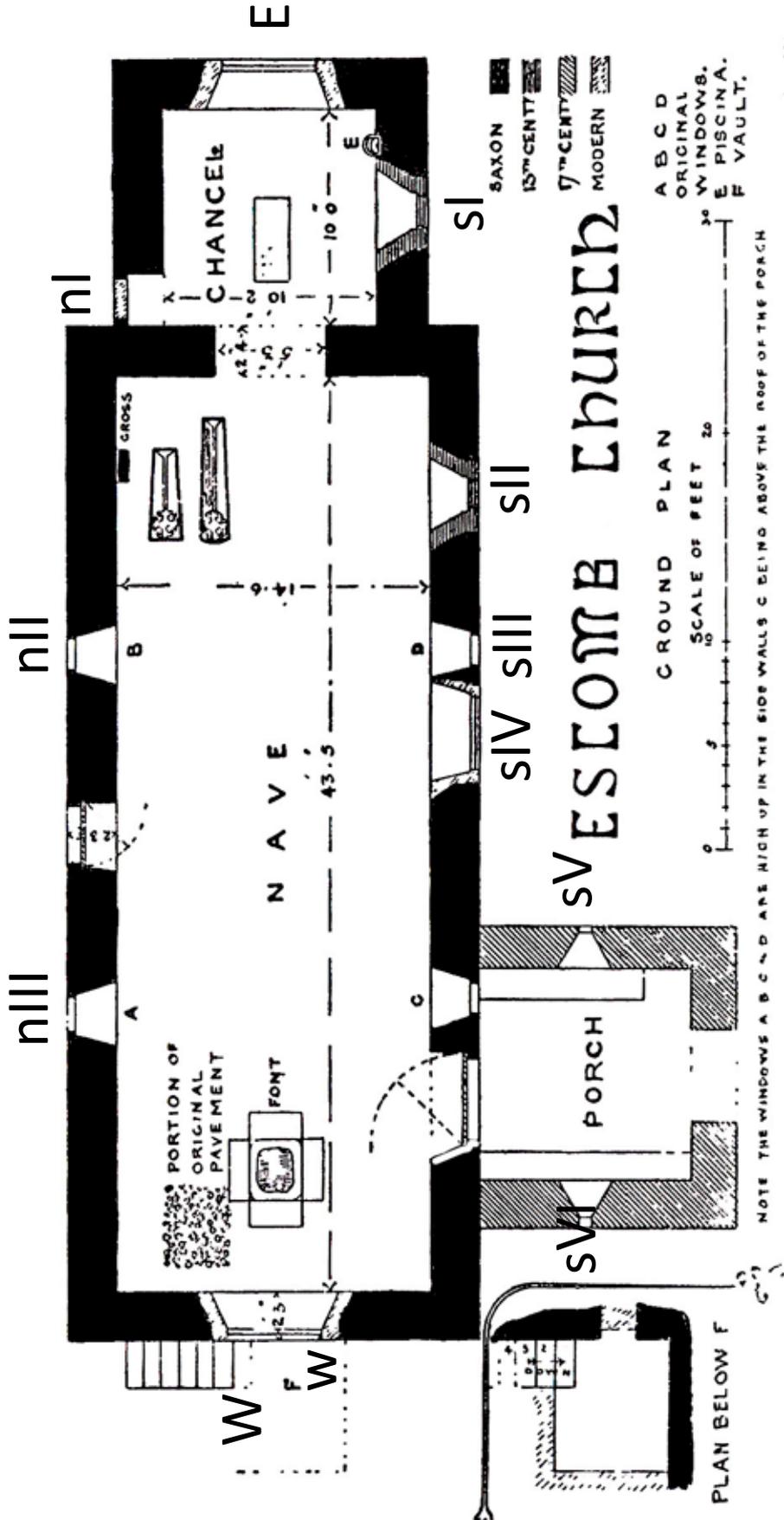
6.09.02 The footpath should be maintained with fine chippings, compacted to ensure the path remains easy to navigate for wheelchair users. **D**

6.09.03 The steps from Porch to Nave present a real barrier to a wheelchair user. A portable ramp could be employed, but this would require the assistance of at least two able-bodied assistants. The north door could provide level access to the Nave, but would require an upgraded external path with a compacted surface. **E**



# Appendix A | Floor Plan

by CC Hodges, 1897





# | Appendix B | Maintenance Plan



# | Appendix C <sup>Listing</sup>

NZ13SE SAXON GREEN, Escomb 634-1/1/135 The Saxon Church 21/04/52

GVI

Parish church. C7 with C14 porch and some C13 and C19 windows. Eaves raised at unknown date. Restored 1875-80 by RJ Johnson and 1965 by Sir Albert Richardson. MATERIALS: irregular courses of squared sandstone, including stones of Roman origin probably from Binchester, with quoins and ashlar dressings. Roof stone slates with stone gable coping to chancel. PLAN: 2-cell plan of chancel and nave with south porch. Archaeological excavation in 1968 revealed sites of west annexe and of north porticus to chancel. EXTERIOR: proportions are high and narrow. All quoins up to raised eaves are of Saxon type, massive stones set with long face to alternate sides. Chamfered surround to C19 round-headed east window and to medieval lancets in chancel and south-east nave, and wide pointed arched C19 window with plain stone surround at centre of south wall. Chancel has re-used Roman gutter stones set vertically above east window, and blocked north door. South nave has 2 small C7 lights set high in wall, with round heads cut in big stone lintels. At lintel level between them a carved stone with round sundial with, around the upper part, a curved serpent-like animal with tassel-like tail hanging at right and pointed head at left. North wall has central door, and 2 narrow rectangular C7 lights set high in wall, with flat jambs, sill and lintel. High up towards east, a re-used Roman inscription LEG VI set upside down. West window round head with irregular voussoirs, and C7 small round-headed window in gable peak. Nave gables have small crow steps. West gable shows roof line of 2-storey porch below top window, and has small stone bellcote with plain arch. Porch has C19 boarded door in keyed round headed arch with voussoirs, plus eroded sundial above, and irregular quoins, skew stones to gable. Nave door in porch has flat stone lintel. INTERIOR whitewashed, with small section of plaster with red paint left exposed in north wall. Roof of tied trusses with diagonal struts, possibly contemporary with raised eaves. High round chancel arch with large voussoirs, the stones said without any evidence to have been brought from Binchester (Vinovium), rests on large uneven imposts and jambs of long and short type. Blocked north chancel door has thin lintel and jamb stones with simple carved tree at right. Early small windows deeply splayed, with grooves for shutters. Shouldered rear arches to lancets. Small medieval grave marker with carved cross set above altar. Bowl piscina in north wall of chancel. Octagonal stone bowl and pedestal font, possibly C12, with marks of lock holes. Section of cobbled flooring at west end said to be original. Porch contains fragments of carved stone, including inhabited vine from a cross shaft, and other objects from site and from excavations, with explanatory panels. (Surtees H C: History of the Parish of Escombe (with photographs of church): Mainsforth: 1922:- 11-26; Journal of the British Archaeological Association: Pocock: Excavations at Escomb Church: London: 1971:- 11-19; Buildings of England: Pevsner: County Durham: Harmondsworth: 1983:- 267-9).

Listing NGR: NZ1892830141



