

**INSPECTION OF CHURCHES MEASURE
DURHAM DIOCESAN CHURCH SCHEME**

**CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS,
GIRSBY, COUNTY DURHAM**

**Parish of Sockburn
Archdeaconry of Auckland**

QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION 2017

DATE OF INSPECTION : 11 October 2017

**Malcolm R Cundick Dip. Arch.(Oxford) RIBA
ADG Architects
6 Pioneer Court
Morton Palms Business Park
DARLINGTON
DL1 4WD**

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS, GIRSBY

QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT 2017

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Church is situated on an elevated site on the edge of Girsby Village overlooking the River Tees, set in a consecrated Churchyard, enclosed by a combination of iron railings and hedgerows. The site is accessed via a narrow lane and grassed gated footpath.
- 1.2 Neighbouring farm buildings abutting this site were previously noted as being in poor and deteriorating condition. They have since been demolished and the site is currently being redeveloped as a residential property, significantly enhancing the approach to the Church and its immediate environment.
- 1.3 The Church was built in the mid 19th Century in a simple rectangular plan form, with entrance Porch in the South West corner. The peak to the West gable has a stone bellcote accommodating 2 bells. The exterior walls are of buff sandstone with some variation in masonry quality. The roof is noted as having been recovered with buff concrete slates during the 1980's, with parapet gutters dressed with mineral faced bituminous felt. The latter have recently been re-lined with lead disguised for security purposes by a "Flashband" cloak.

2 WORK COMPLETED SINCE THE MARCH 2002 REPORT

2.1 A Log Book was again not available for inspection but, from discussions with Church Warden's who met me for the inspection I was advised that the principal works undertaken were;

- a) Lead lining of box gutters to replace the defective felt, but cloaked with "Flasband" for anti-theft security purposes.
- b) Renewed haunching to the East gable copings/water tabling
- c) Ongoing caring maintenance of the Churchyard including removal of ivy and other vegetation growth abutting the North wall in particular.
- d) Continued operation of the dehumidifier to address internal condensation issues.

3 LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY AND REPORT

- 3.1 This report is based on observations made from ground level. Unless otherwise stated the inspection has been purely visual and no enclosed spaces, inaccessible parts such as roof spaces, or hidden timbers etc. have been opened up for inspection.
- 3.2 Particular items not inspected or covered by this report are:-
- a) Floor or roof voids
 - b) Full testing of drainage
 - c) Parts hidden by fixed furniture
 - d) Testing of the heating installation
 - e) Testing of the electrical installation including audio system
 - f) Testing of fire alarms and fire fighting equipment
 - g) Testing of the organ
- 3.3 Items b, d, e, f and g are assumed to be subject to programmed cycles of regular inspection and testing by relevant specialists. Arrangements should be regularly reviewed to match inspection schedules to the age and condition of particular installations.
- 3.4 It should be noted that nothing in the Diocesan Scheme modifies the need to apply for Archdeacon's certificates or Faculties where such authorities are necessary, before repair work may be undertaken.
- 3.5 The repair of churches in many aspects is a highly specialised subject. There is then a need to obtain specialist advice with the drawing up of a detailed specification for any work to ensure a technically satisfactory and aesthetically acceptable solution. Economy and permanence of repairs are important considerations.
- 3.6 This report indicates the condition of the buildings at a time of the inspection. It does not purport to be wholly comprehensive or to give definite solutions for remedial work. It is a report only and should not be utilised as a specification for the execution of repairs and must never be used for such purposes, neither should it be used for obtaining quotations from builders. Professional advice should be obtained to avoid inappropriate solutions which may result in the potential aggravation of defects. Repairs should also maintain the architectural character of details, finishes etc.
- 3.7 The Report is copyright and no copies can be made of the text or photographs without the written permission of the Architect. Neither should original copies be used by outside agencies e.g. contractors or other construction professionals without similar approval from the Architect.

4 INSPECTION CONTEXT

- 4.1 The inspection was carried out on 11 October 2017. I was accompanied by two of the Church Wardens and the Priest In Charge. Weather conditions were windy following a recent mix of sunshine and squally rain showers
- 4.2 Significant action undertaken since the 2002 Inspection had noticeably enhanced the ambience of the interior but there are sadly a number of defects to internal finishes which have appeared since the 2012 Inspection. Some localised movement cracks have also appeared in external stonework.
- 4.3 It is noted that the Church is used for worship once per month and for a number of other special services during the year, but has a small but active congregation. My visit followed the weekend celebration of the Harvest Festival.
- 4.4 In the Conclusions and Summary Section 8 defects, where identified, are categorised for priority action under the following headings with cross reference back to itemised paragraphs in the Inspection Section 5, 6 & 7. Indicative budget costings are also included as required by DAC Inspection guidance.
- A : Urgent repairs.
- B : Repairs essential within the next 18 months.
- C : Repairs essential before the next Quinquennial Inspection.
- D : Desirable improvements or items to be regularly monitored.
- 4.5 It should be noted that the Church and its site are of archaeological significance and that consultation with the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor and the Local Authority Advisor should be undertaken when any significant works are being considered.
- 4.6 The Parochial Church Council should acquaint itself with its responsibilities in complying with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

5 INSPECTION OF THE EXTERNAL BUILDING FABRIC

5.1 East Gable

- 5.1.1 The high level structural tie bar is in apparently sound condition but, as noted previously, would benefit from decoration to maintain its integrity.
- 5.1.2 Stonework and pointing is generally sound but a stepped diagonal crack through stonework joints is now apparent running from the North-East corner kneeler to the adjacent window frame, where an open joint between the stone frame to the window and abutting stonework is now evident.
- 5.1.3 Polycarbonate sheet protection to windows in sound/secure condition.
- 5.1.4 There remain some minor open joints to the stone arch to left hand window.

5.2 South Elevation

- 5.2.1 Roof generally in sound condition including recent renewal of haunching to copings/water tabling as noted under 2.1b.
- 5.2.2 Felt gutter linings to the box gutters have been replaced with lead disguised by a Flashband over layer as noted under 2.1a.
- 5.2.3 A mixture of stone types/quality indicates additional work at some time in the Church's history e.g. the North pier. All are in apparently sound condition.
- 5.2.4 Cast iron guttering to lean-to remains to be fully be secured and adjusted to fall to downpipe.
- 5.2.5 Door to lean-to remains in poor condition and requires replacement or at least re-decoration plus replacement ironmongery.
- 5.2.6 Some crazing remains to render to brick flank wall to lean-to.

5.3 Porch

- 5.3.1 Flashband abutment of porch roof to main roof/south elevation. Temporary repair quality only, but still appears sound except for some lifting of ends.
- 5.3.2 Settlement of Porch apparently stabilised.
- 5.3.3 Broken cap to right hand tie rod.
- 5.3.4 Absence of gully to porch rainwater pipe.

5.4 West Gable

5.4.1 Stonework and pointing in sound condition including buttresses and related haunching.

5.5.2 Gable tie rod sound but still in need of decoration to maintain its integrity.

5.5 North Elevation

5.5.1 Stonework apparently in sound order but inaccessible and partly obscured by adjacent hedge/ vegetation.

5.5.2 Roof remains generally in sound condition where visible..

6 INSPECTION OF THE INTERIOR

- 6.1 The 3 painted main roof trusses and supporting corbels remain in sound condition, enhanced by the post 2002 decoration.
- 6.2 The underdrawn ceiling is in predominantly sound condition and fair decorative order but there is some significant break down/exfoliation of decoration at eaves level on the South elevation in particular with a plaster de-lamination patch coincident with the peak of the Porch roof.
- 6.3 Arched headed windows in the North and South walls incorporate diamond patterned leaded lights. Previous problems of condensation and mould growth to reveals are apparently being successfully addressed by use of a dehumidifier, but there are early signs of renewed deterioration to decoration.
- 6.4 Two arched head windows in the East gable incorporate stained glass. Both are in fair condition. There is however evident development of movement cracks in plaster with diagonal cracks to both window heads and other surface crazing.
- 6.5 Other walls remain generally in sound condition, but there is some stain patching bleeding through the decoration at low level on the West gable wall.
- 6.6 The enclosed varnished pews to the Nave are in a fair/well maintained condition as are the choir pews flanking the altar dais, and the altar rail.
- 6.7 Timber floor boarding to the Nave pews is in fair condition.
- 6.8 The stone flagged floor to the aisle and entrance area is generally in sound condition following some localised repointing prior to the last inspection.
- 6.9 Carpeting to the aisle is in fair condition.
- 6.10 The timber screen enclosure in the North-West corner serving as a Vestry with a desk, records etc. is in good order.
- 6.11 The varnished pulpit is in fair condition enhanced by the addition of an embroidered drape prior to the 2007 inspection.
- 6.12 Remedial pointing to the stone steps to the Altar dais remains sounds.
- 6.13 Tie rods at the ceiling transition point appear to be in a sound condition.
- 6.14 The former severe crack to the left hand junction of the porch with the South walls infilled as part of the redecoration prior to the last Inspection remains sound with no evidence of further movement.
- 6.15 The exposed felt and insulation to the underside of the porch roof appears in sound condition. There remains some deterioration in decoration to the stone arch above the entrance door.
- 6.16 The porch is protected by a steel gate which is in sound condition.

- 6.17 There are a number of wall mounted plaques incorporating biblical text. All are in sound/well maintained condition.
- 6.18 A simple sculptured stone font is accommodated in the entrance area abutting the rear pew. It is in sound condition and accommodates a pleasant flower display.
- 6.19 The new embroidered frontal cloth added to the altar prior to the 2007 inspection remains in very good condition and serves as an enhanced focal point to the Worship Space.
- 6.20 A complete electrical rewire of the lighting and power installations, including 4 new wall mounted radiant heaters was completed prior to the 2007 inspection. All are in working order but not formally tested as part of this inspection.
- 6.21 Fire extinguishers acquired prior to the previous inspection. These are located in the entrance area and are noted as tested in September 2017.
- 6.22 Musical accompaniment is provided via a Hammond electrical organ with sound box. It is apparently in good working order and well maintained.
- 6.23 A dehumidifier remains in regular use to part address condensation conditions.

7.0 INSPECTION OF THE EXTERNAL WORKS

- 7.1 The grounds, gravestones, monuments, hedgerow, trees and fencing continue to be responsibly maintained and are in a tidy/fair condition including the continued challenge of the hedge and undergrowth abutment with the North flank wall with related ivy growth. This is being regularly addressed. The stability of gravestones is also to be the subject of ongoing appraisal.
- 7.2 As noted there has been some progress in addressing the condition of the derelict farm buildings to the North with advanced progress on construction of a new dwelling..
- 7.3 The concrete footpath leading from the entrance gate have developed a number of apparent movement cracks which need to be carefully monitored.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

As noted significant remedial works were undertaken prior to the 2007 inspection significantly enhancing the condition of the interior in particular and this has been supported by continued caring and responsible maintenance. There are however a number of items of fabric deterioration identified by this inspection which need to be addressed, with priority categorisation as identified under paragraph 4.4, with indications of budget costs.

- 8.1 Preparation and decoration of external tie bars to East and West gables : B (5.1.1 and 5.4.2) £60.
- 8.2 Installation of tell-tails to movement joints in East gable wall per item 5.1.2 to monitor any further settlement/deterioration.. A. £80
- 8.3 Monitor efficiency of relining to box guttering per item 5.2.2
- 8.4 Secure and adjust guttering to lean-to : B (5.2.4) £40.
- 8.5 Replacement of door to external lean-to : B (5.2.5) £90.
- 8.6 Make good render to lean-to : B (5.2.6) £40.
- 8.7 Review security of and consider replacement of Flashband abutment of Porch roof : B (5.3.1) £220
- 8.8 Repair plaster to Porch and redecorate : B (6.15) £100.
- 8.9 Carefully scrape off exfoliated internal decoration at eaves level to South flank wall together with renewal of defective plaster. Treat with anti-fungicidal mist coat and allow to fully dry before remedial decoration. B (6.2) £600
- 8.10 Scrape of decoration and plaster to East gable wall to expose movement cracks. Infill and redecorate. B (6.4) £800
- 8.11 Scrape off defective decoration and plaster at low level to West gable wall. Make good plaster to render specification and apply anti-fungicidal mist coat. Allow to dry before redecoration. B (6.5) £400
- 8.12 Continue repairs and maintenance to grounds, footpaths, gravestones, hedgerow and fencing particular hedge/vegetation/ivy growth abutting North elevation : D (7.1)

9.0 PHOTOGRAPHS

1. West Gable with bellcote
2. Entrance Porch from South West. Note cap to tie bar and flashband abutment cloaking.
3. South Porch and lean-to.
4. South Porch gable. Note step at threshold
5. Porch and lean-to from South East. Note broken cap to tie bar, flashband and settlement angle of the lean-to.
6. South Elevation from South East.
7. East Gable. Note tie bar.
8. North corner of East Gable. Note stepped diagonal crack and open joint to stone frame to window.
9. North flank wall from East.
10. North flank wall from South
11. Approach footpath. Noted distorted and cracked condition of concrete
12. Approach footpath looking back to gate.
13. Consecrated Churchyard. Well maintained with watching brief on gravestone stability.
14. Main Entrance door
15. Font
16. Nave looking South East
17. Nave looking North East
18. Vestry corner
19. North East corner of Chancel with Scripture boards.
20. South East corner of Chancel with Choir pews
21. Nave view to Chancel.
22. Chancel detail with stained glass windows.

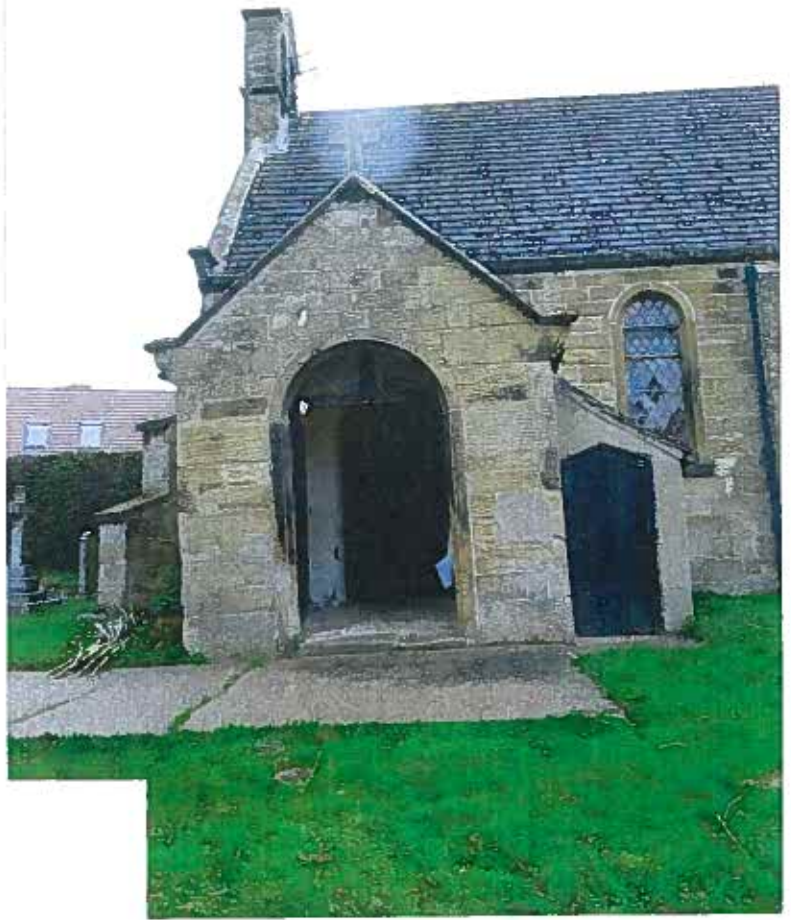
23. Movement cracks to window head coincident with external movement joint per photograph 8.
24. Diagonal crack to South East corner.
25. Exfoliation of decoration on South elevation.
26. Plaster failure coincident with gutter/peak to Porch
27. Nave looking West
28. Bell ropes and ceiling access hatch.



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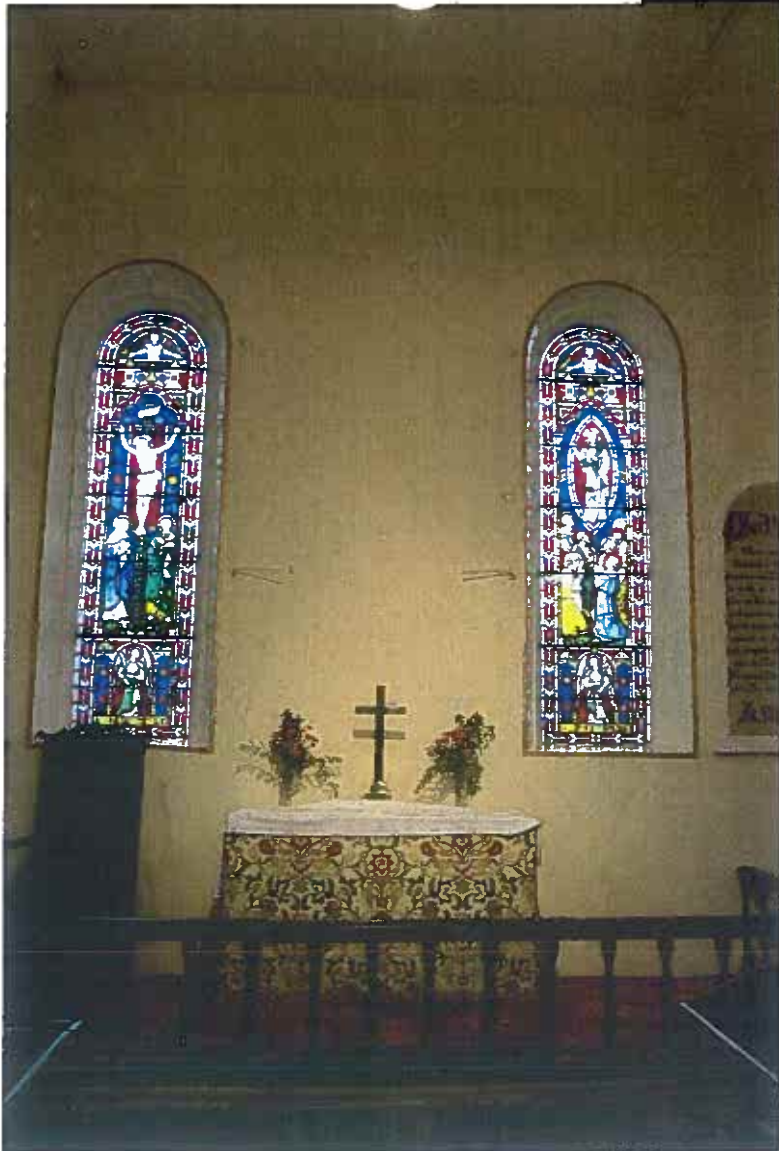
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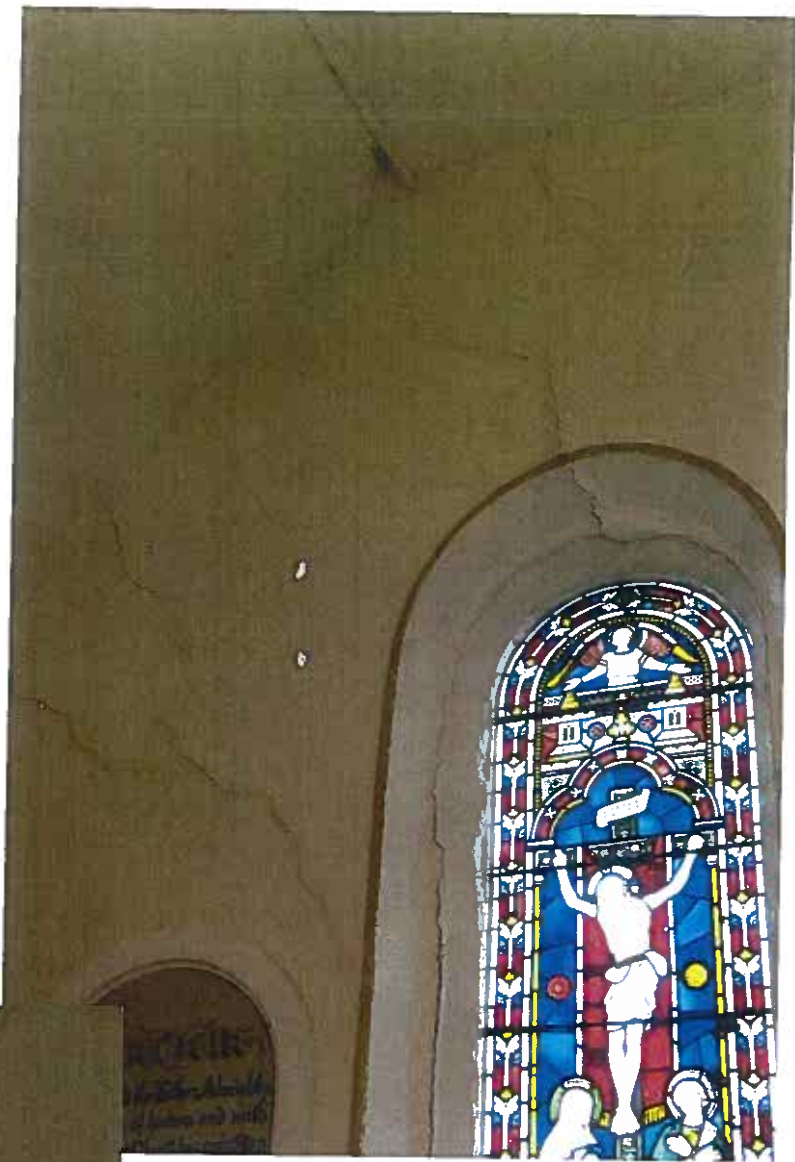
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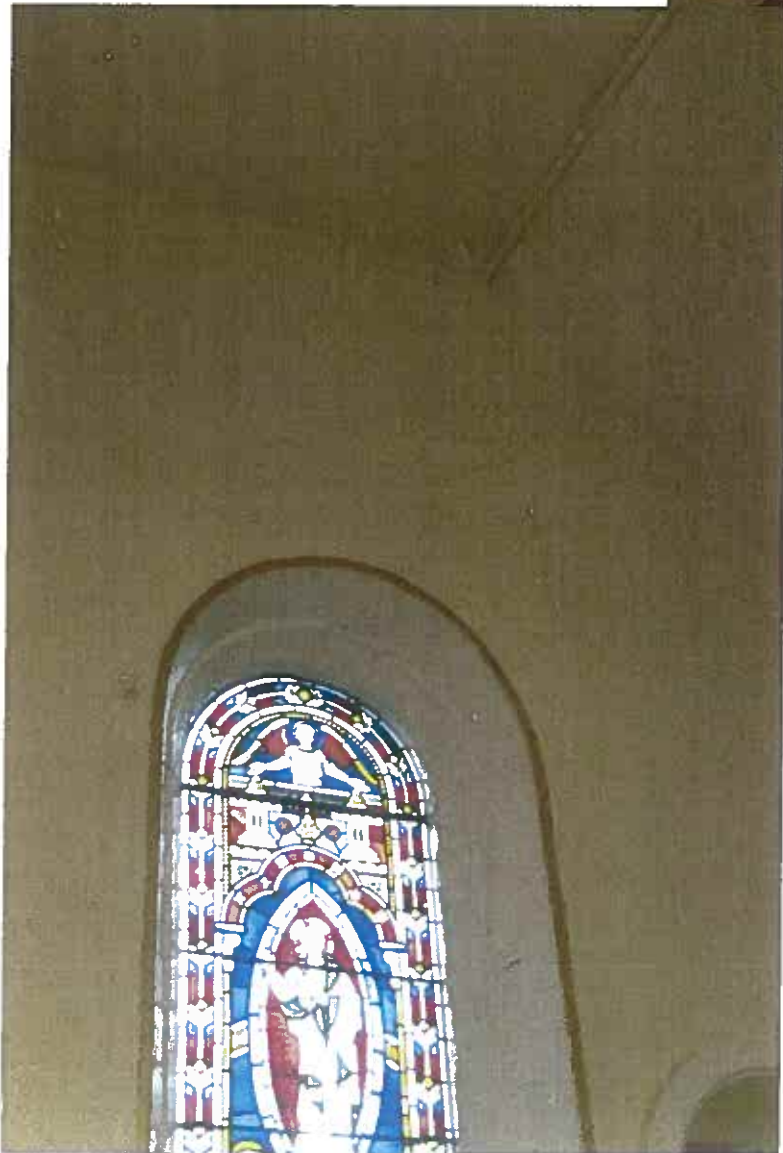
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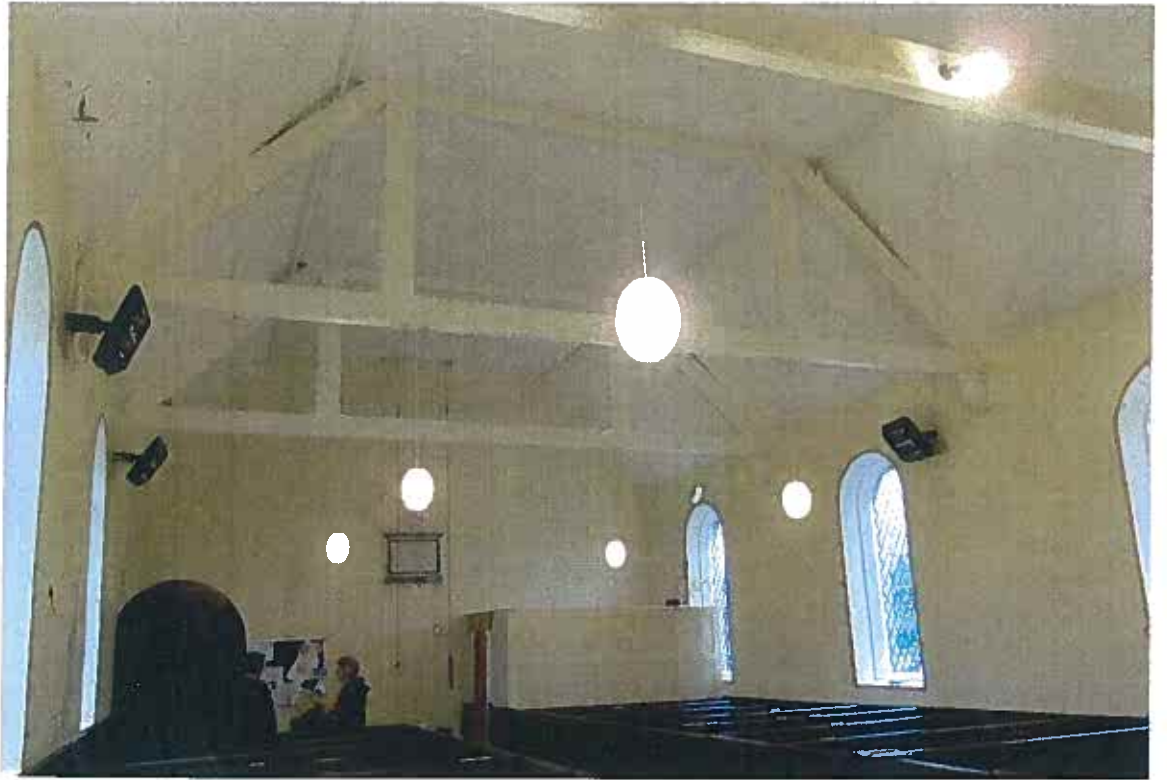
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