

Diocese of Durham

**St MARY and St CUTHBERT**  
**CHESTER LE STREET**  
(4)

Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991

**QUINQUENNIAL REPORT**  
on the architect's inspection on

**26 April 2023**

Sunderland Archdeaconry

Chester le Street Deanery

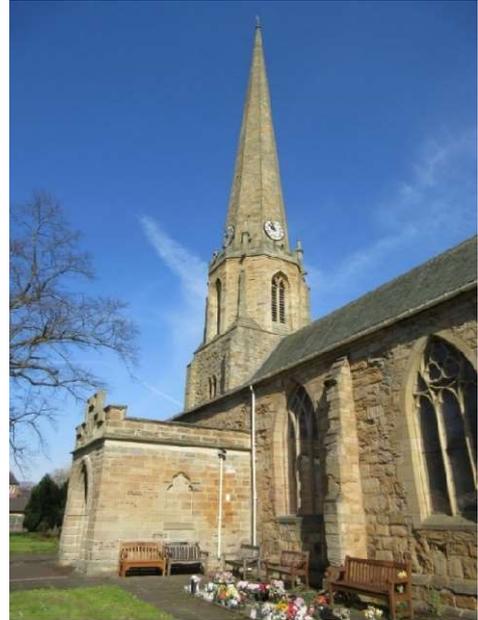
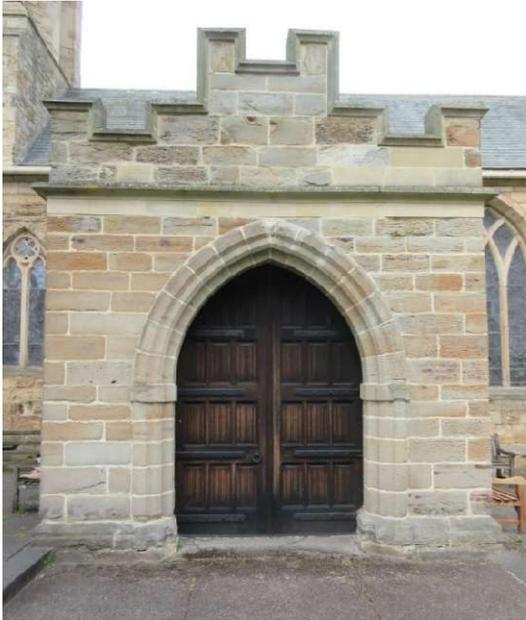
a grade I listed building

not in a conservation area but the churchyard is part of a Scheduled Monument

Incumbent Revd Matt Strand



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1. I have made a thorough general survey of the condition of the church. The inspection was such as could readily be made from ground level and ladders. I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and I am therefore unable to report that any such part is free from defect. The chimney flue was not inspected and none of the services were tested. Damp meters were not used. No access to floor voids, roof space over Vestry, Organ space, top of Spire interior.
2. An Asbestos Survey report October 2013 (covering Church and Parish Centre) says the only asbestos found in Church was gasket material at the boiler flues, needing no action unless the flues are disturbed.

### **Brief description**

3. One of the principal medieval collegiate churches of the diocese, on a Roman fort and ancient ecclesiastical site. Mostly 13C, perhaps incorporating parts of a stone church built about 1056. A tall slender spire of about 1409, one of the very few medieval spires of the region.
4. Nave with Aisles (no clerestories) which clasp the W Tower on which stand an octagonal Belfry and Spire. Chancel with N Organ chamber and Vestry. S Porch used as a Choir Vestry. Disused priest's door at Chancel now barred and recess used as a cupboard.  
Two curiosities – a 14C Anker house or Ankerage formed in the blocked W bay of the N Aisle and extended N at the Dissolution making two storeys N of the N Aisle which gives into a third room over the lower ground floor boiler room. The Anker house has been taken back into full parish control after the winding up of a museum managing body.  
'Lambton Pew' built 1829 by Bonomi for the Earls of Durham, an unused burial vault under a small gallery overlooking the pulpit. Only access by private external stair.  
Blocked arches each side of the Lambton Pew suggest a range of former Chapels.
5. Local sandstone with openings of mixed ages. Main roofs westmorland slate with open timber structures inside. Welsh slates at the smaller Porch and Vestry roofs.  
Most internal walls exposed masonry after general stripping of plaster in the 1862 restoration.
6. General repointing of the S side in about 1970. Spire top rebuilt in 1984.  
Formation of the Ankerage Museum in the mid 1980's included a general restoration, a new softwood upper floor, steel spiral stair and an external escape stair from the inner upper room.

### **Recent structural history**

7. Main works 2004 – 2011:
  - 2008 Major repair of Belfry masonry and Tower parapets including stone replacements and general repointing except the top 6m of the Spire. Clock dials refurbished and the Belfry louvres remade. Outside the S Porch stone renewals and repointing, reslating and relining of widened parapet gutters. Relaying of marble paving at the middle of the Choir. Chancel E wall plaster repair and redecoration. Repair of Lambton Pew external steps.
  - 2010 Organ Chamber reroofed after lead theft, using Westmorland slates at the lower part, lead at the flat upper part.  
New handrail at pulpit steps.
8. From Log Book:
  - 2013 Tower masonry repairs  
Repointing of abutment flashings, repointing of Nave ridge and fillet between Vestry and Chancel  
Woodwormed timbers in boiler room treated or replaced  
Asbestos survey (paragraph 2)  
Cowl fitted to top of chimney with new flaunching
  - 2017 Baptistery glass removed, repaired, refitted.  
New polycarbonate protection at Baptistery and windows all sides.
  - 2018 Four trees removed near S side of Chancel  
Back of sedilia replastered with lime mix  
Organ repairs, new swell box
  - 2021 New sound system  
Pointing at W entry door and E gable, small stone insertion at hood mould over N door.

2022 – 23

Organ tuned  
Lights replaced  
Gutters and gullies cleaned, pipes cleared and painted  
Heating pressurisation unit replaced  
Protection fitted on two lightning conductor tapes after thefts  
Side of Tower repointed  
Electrical test report

### Summary of structural condition

9. Stable, in mainly good condition and very well cared for.

## PART TWO

### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EXTERIOR

#### Roofs

10. Nave, Aisles, Chancel all in diminishing westmorland slate renewed in 1966.

In the 1990's leakage at the much shallower Aisle and Ankerage roofs thought to be caused by slate laps not large enough for the low pitches and perishing of the hessian reinforced underlay normal in the 1960's. In 2001 they were stripped and relaid reusing the slates on more durable underlay. Appears successful though some Aisle ceilings remain water marked (para 82).

The smaller Porch and monopitch Vestry roofs are covered in welsh slates.



11. Chancel slates good. Complete lead cover flashings against the Nave gable.

12. Nave and Aisle slopes not continuous but separated by a low drop where the Nave walls are protected by deep lead apron flashings. Lack of Nave gutters eases maintenance.

13. Nave, Aisles and Ankerage good. Tattered reinforced underlay felt exposed at the eaves. Lead cover flashings at Tower, otherwise mortar fillets at copings, all good.

14. Porch reslated 2008 with new slate and reorganised stainless steel parapet gutters, soakers and cover flashings (except mortar fillets under the gable cap). The gutters have mid sumps with side outlets. Sound.

15. Lambton Pew good including lead valleys. Organ Chamber lower slates good. Upper flat lead not visible.
16. Vestry monopitch slate with a recent wide mortar fillet against the Chancel wall. All appears sound. Five slates on copper clips at top L look sound. No roofing felt seen when the void was examined.

### Rainwater System, Drainage

17. Painted cast iron half round gutters (deep flow at Chancel and Aisles) and pipes well spaced off the walls with shoes over gullies. Mainly sound except:  
Some pipe backs not well painted  
S Aisle gutter joint is rusting over 2<sup>nd</sup> window from E. Under the Tower the gutter is cracked and rusting. Its W pipe top swan neck is broken and rusting. Its bottom joint has opened and the section is loose from the wall.  
Ankerage gutter and pipe beginning to rust. The N Aisle gutter paint is poor.  
Gutters W of the Lambton Pew and at Organ (which is part on a corbel course) paint poor. Their shared pipe bottom fixing is loose, so the bottom length can move.  
Vestry small gutter rusting and may spill R of the door. Pipe sound but paint poor at back (hard to reach)  
N Chancel gutter, some rusting joints, paint poor.



S Aisle W end – gutter and pipe breaks



Organ gutter – paint poor

18. Earthenware dish gullies are mainly clear but in mixed condition. Keep clear and repair where necessary.

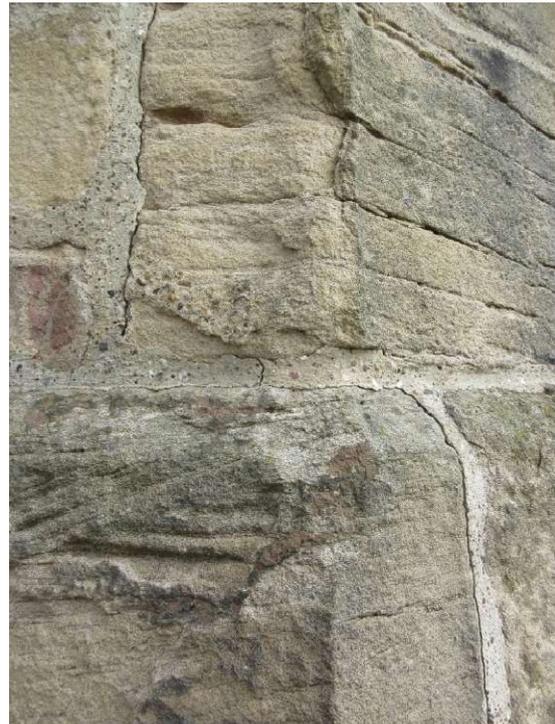
### **Tower, Spire, Bells, Frame, Clock**

19. The Tower and Spire stand on only one thick outer W wall with its spiral stair and very large buttress. Internally they stand on two piers between three arches into Nave and Aisles, braced by arches over the Aisles with large external buttresses. Later infilling of both N arches to form the Ankerage must have stiffened the Tower.
20. The Spire cap appears to have external holding down straps as well as its inner metal tree dating from the 1984 rebuilding of the top.
21. In the bottom of the Spire a clock of no visible date, electrified and maintained by Cumbria Clock Co for the owner the local authority. Four external dials fixed through the Spire shell refurbished at the 2008 masonry repairs. Dials well painted and gilded each with its own LED up spot light bracketed off the parapet. The S minute hand is now bent (storm damage?).



Bent hand at South clock dial

22. The clock stands on two painted steel channels and an I beam. The painted steel ends show some rust. One channel passes all through the stone Spire shell. Its exposed outer end is rusting close to a Spire corner (S of the W face). Slight vertical cracks in mortar joints above and below the exposed steel may show the rust is expanding enough to push the stones apart. However there is similar cracking at two other corners without exposed steel (N of the W face, W of the S face) so the cause is not certain. There embedded steels do not appear on the outer face but may be rusting in the spire thickness.



Corner S of the W face – joints cracked above and below rusting channel end

Cracks at another W corner with no exposed steel

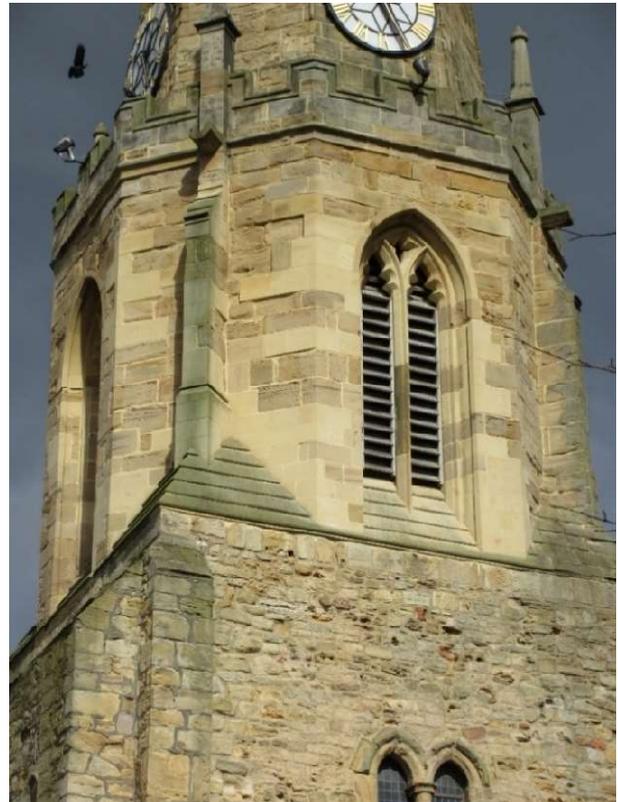


Same channel internally



Rust begun at a clock steel embedded in the spire shell

23. Whether or not the present cracks result from rust expansion it can be expected that any ungalvanized steel built into or through such thin masonry will rust and expand eventually, damaging the Spire. So replacement of these steels with galvanized or stainless steel (by clock maker because the clock will be disturbed?) in say the next three years appears necessary. Responsibility (Local authority?) should be checked.



S side of Belfry and Tower

### External masonry of the square Tower

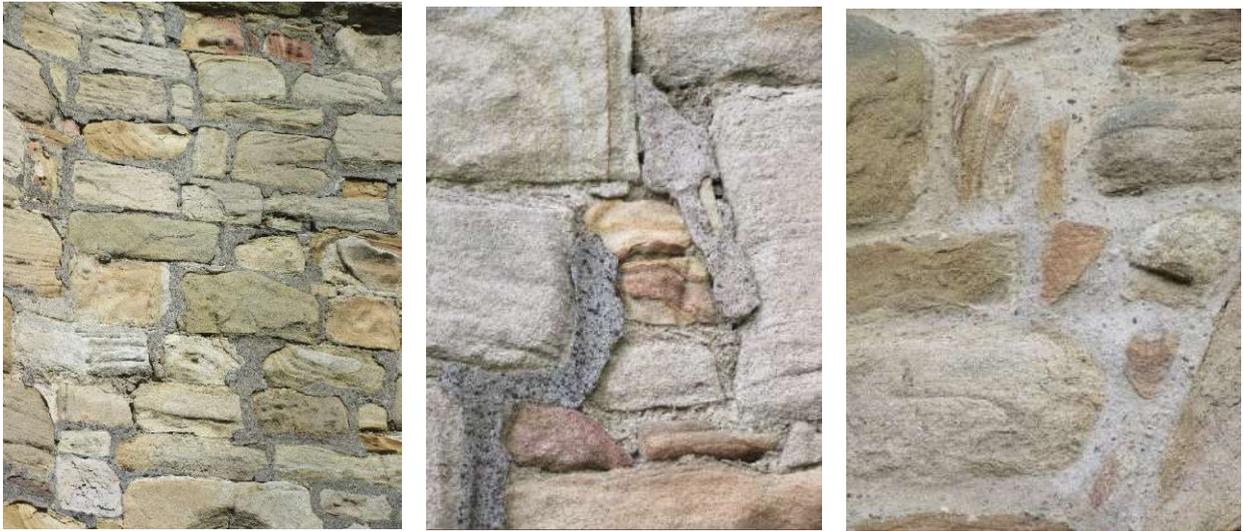
24. E side good.

S pointing and stone good except scattered stones have deep decay pockets which would be better part mortar filled to slow decay.

W wall mainly good but some surface decay behind hard dark pointing which is spread over many stones especially at the top stage and spiral stair turret where the stone and pointing types are mixed with some open joints.

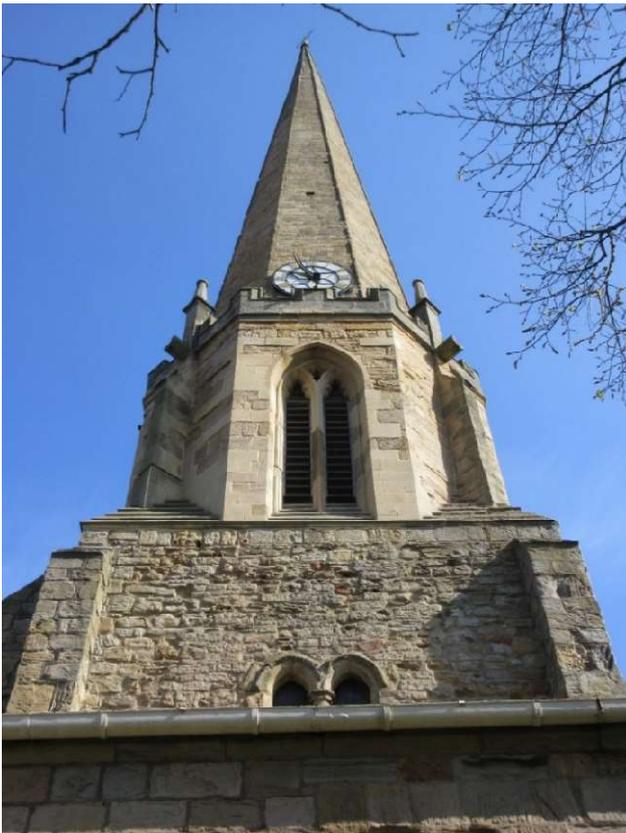
Better recent soft lime mortar over the W door.

N good but minor open joints at E face of the NW buttress where green streaks show the spitter above shoots water down this part of the Tower.



Mixed stone and pointing types W side of Tower – including recent lime pointing over the W door

25. The Tower's sound low parapet and its pinnacles have bronze staples and bracings. Water from the Spire runs in a stone channel with steps and mortar patches in places to four corner spouts which appear to function. The amount of water running off the Spire into the channel may be limited except in storms but minor cracks in the channel must let some water into the Belfry wall thickness. Sealant has been used on the channel in the past but is not in good condition. The timber hatch out to the Tower parapet needs paint.



### External masonry of the octagonal Belfry and Spire

26. E and SE good.

S and SW pointing good. At lower SW Spire and about 50% of Tower stones have some surface honeycomb decay. About 25% of S and SW Belfry is recessed by surface decay with an open joint S of the SW buttress

W, NW, N and NE stone and pointing good

### Spire internal

27. The Spire is a simple octagonal stone cone, whitewashed inside. Many stones have lost their inner surface, driven off by salts during evaporation. The external repointing in 2008 may have stopped or slowed the internal loss but the floor at the bottom of the spire is still covered with stone debris. Not known if it continues after being swept out recently or is historic.



28. Fixed ladders between wooden platforms on beams give nearly complete access but a ladder is lacking to the top lattice of modern stainless or galvanised angles which holds down a rod anchoring the stone cap. Its angle supports are bolted together as a continuous structural connection to the walls, evidently part of the 1984 rebuilding of the spire top. Metalwork bonded to the lightning conductor.

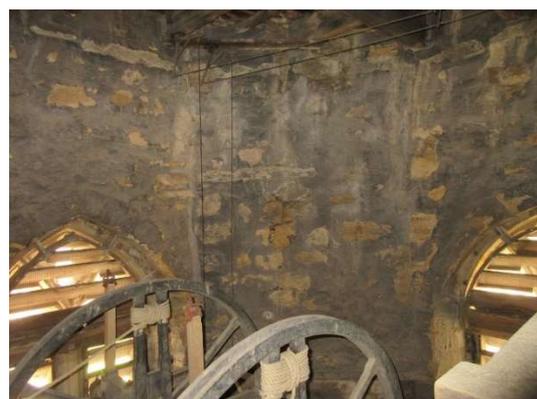
29. The other platforms stand on modern stainless angles. The timbers are of mixed ages and conditions with many gaps in the boards. No apparent structural function. Stone debris sand covers the boards. Vacuuming all platforms would

- limit sand falling onto the bells below
- at future inspections show whether decay of the masonry and woodworm continues



Stainless or galvanised top lattice typical timber platform of mixed boards and beams with sand debris & loose boards

30. Woodworm damage at the top of the upper ladder and in the bearers under the top wooden platform. Not known whether it has been treated and the sand debris makes it impossible to see any active wood dust caused by worm.



Typical Spire wall condition. Some old decay has been whitewashed over, some more recent.

### **Belfry internal**

31. Its timber platform ceiling is water marked but appears sound. Its lead lined floor with edge gutter is hard to see in parts but appears complete.  
Belfry louvres modern timber with stainless steel bird mesh inside.  
The whitewashed walls have some surface damage like the Spire and small amounts of open pointing.
32. Eight bells (six 1883, two 1908) by Taylors of Loughborough in cast iron frames. One of the three 1409 bells is hung as a service bell above the main ring (the other two were cracked and their metal reused in the 1883 set). All in regular use.  
One bell chime is said to be defective.  
Rust started in steel components of the bell frame, needing preparation and repainting.

### **Tower internal**

33. Ringing chamber – painted ceiling boards and two heavy beams. Upper walls painted masonry sound but dirty. Lower walls have modern board panelling. Floor carpet on timber boards. Additional floor stiffening beams were inserted alongside the originals in 1993.



34. The tops of the arches at three external windows have hairline cracks, widest at N where at most it is 2mm and extends into the wall above.
35. Spiral stair – walls emulsioned or oil painted, with patchy decay similar to the Spire. Rope handrail and worn treads.

### **Walls, Buttresses, Chimney**

36. E gable – fair rubble stone with old and new lime pointing. Watertables and some joints above cill level pointed since last. Some stone faces decayed or pocketed. Buttresses fair.
37. Chancel S – squared coursed stone, mainly good but some minor decay above the windows and next to the door. Next to the E window sill a wide open vertical joint with a deep void behind.



38. Nave E gable – fair but deep decay at isolated stones near the peak and holes in the pointing especially low on the S side.



39. S Aisle E good.

S wall and buttresses – larger squared coursed stone, mainly good but about 30% surface or pocket decayed, perhaps promoted by light coloured ancient hard pointing.

The two W bay walls and buttresses are all decayed (either face, pocket or soft bed) with light coloured hard pointing. Decay appears very slow so may be left to continue.



40. At SE a curious small rectangular frame with decayed moulded head and sill and one missing side around a blank panel. May be best removed and infilled to match wall.



S Aisle – decay at buttress E of the Porch



S Aisle – blank frame at SE

41. Porch ashlar good after lime pointing and renewal of a dressed band under a drip course. Honeycombed stone remains in the parapets.  
 Surface shaling of the whole W side suggests it is face bedded.  
 Gable and E good externally apart from loss from soft beds. Modern stepped plain flat copings. The inner gable parapet stones are ancient and eroded, thinning some stones substantially.



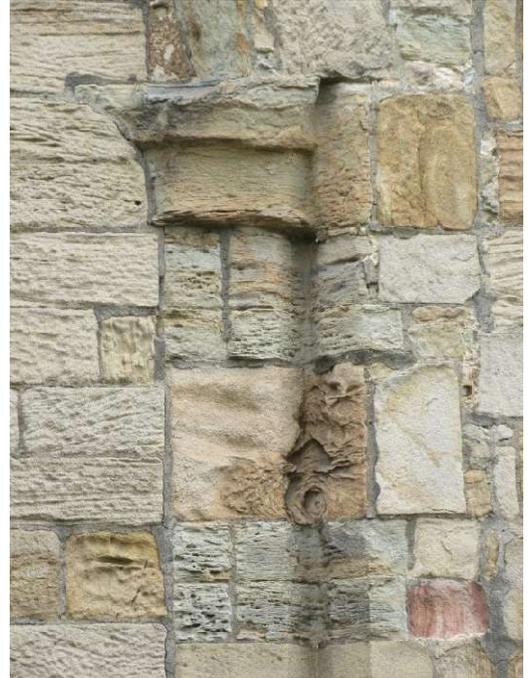
42. S Aisle W gable including its N buttress – many stones including the buttress have slight surface decay behind hard dark pointing. Scattered pocket decay especially close to the top of the gable.



43. Ankerage W, N side – good except a few pocketed stones at upper W side and next to buttress which might be filled with soft lime mortar to slow decay.  
 Where iron fixings have been cut off the N side very minor stone cracks. Pointing good.

44. Chimney above Ankerage – Surface decay in lower stone courses – 3 courses at S side, 2 at N - is now covered with thin cement mortar, unlikely to last.





Blocked arch at E end of N Aisle by the Lambton stair – decayed but no visible change

- 45. N Aisle N wall and buttresses – large squared coursed stones of mixed ages and sizes. Most stones decaying at soft beds or pockets. A few face decayed, perhaps promoted by light coloured hard pointing. At E end an arch infill is good but the arch itself and its respond are deeply decayed but appear unchanged.
- 46. Lambton Pew – 19<sup>th</sup> C ashlar with narrow joints all sound except one watertable joint open and surface decay in three E face stones.
- 47. Organ N wall – mostly the weathered infilling of a former arch. Some stones pocketed or honeycombed but fair overall including the blocking of a former three light window.

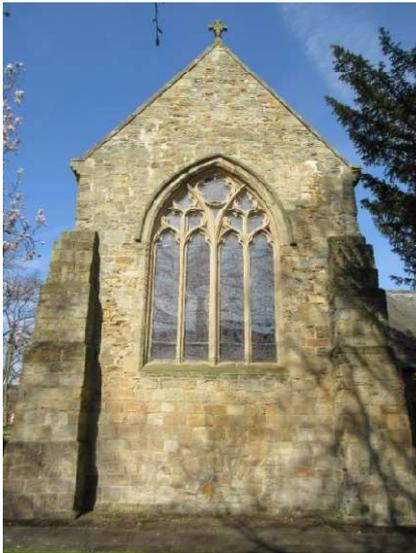


- 48. Vestry W, N, E – Mixed stones. Mostly good but some surface or pocket decay. Pointing good.
- 49. Chancel N wall – stone and pointing fair but about 30% have pocket decay.

## Window and Door Openings

50. E – four light Victorian in an older arch and hoodmould. Window good except open reveal joints.

The older hoodmould and arch are decayed, with some loss of mortar patching from the peak arch stones.

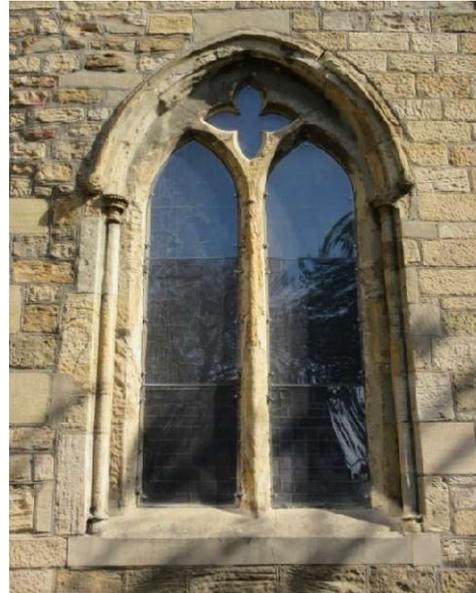


S Chancel



S Chancel E

51. S Chancel E – two light with a square light in Y plate tracery. Plainest hoodmould. Weathered and mortar patched, minor splitting but fair.
52. S Chancel window over priest's door – two light with small roundel. No hoodmould – cut off?. All mortar faced except sill/lintel. Minor mortar losses but fair.
53. S Chancel priest's door - plain chamfered, long and short reveals, mostly mortar faced, about 50% lost.
54. S Chancel W of priest's door – ancient plate tracery, two light and quatrefoil, small hoodmould with graceful label stops, one decayed. Engaged shafts with decorated capitals. One cap and both bases decayed. Widespread modern cement facing, itself about 50% lost.  
Not clear that repair is justified at present. One option would be to replace the hoodmould (except the one good label stop) and arch soon (and perhaps the decayed capital) to protect the remainder.
55. S Chancel W – two light with cusped tracery and quatrefoil, no hoodmould, appears Victorian. Minor losses at sill and many joints. A little weathered but good overall.



S Chancel W

56. S Aisle E end – three light with decorated tracery, no hoodmould, appears Victorian. Pointing good. Some loss of stone under arch.

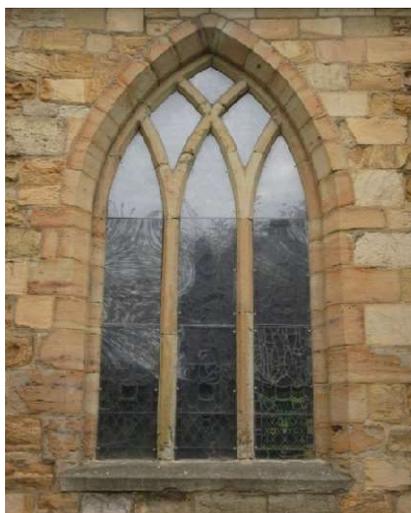
57. S Aisle S side E end – three light plain interlaced Y tracery, no hoodmould. Parts of tracery may be renewals. Loss from some soft beds, some delamination at bottoms of mullions and loss from sill. Well pointed, fair overall but renewals may be needed in say 10 years.



E end of S side S Aisle

58. S Aisle S side 2<sup>nd</sup> from E – three light, decorated tracery, no hoodmould. Good.

59. S Aisle S side 3<sup>rd</sup> from E - three light plain interlaced Y tracery, no hoodmould. Loss from some soft beds, delamination and losses at bottoms of mullions. Sill concreted over. Sound at present but renewals may be needed in say 20 years.



S Aisle S side 3<sup>rd</sup> from E



S Aisle S side W

- 60. Porch door opening – stone arch fair, well pointed.
- 61. S Aisle S side 2<sup>nd</sup> from W – two light, quatrefoil in decorated tracery, no hoodmould. Appears a Victorian restoration in an ancient arch.  
Some delamination started in the Victorian mullion.
- 62. S Aisle S side W - Ancient, two light, quatrefoil in decorated tracery, no hoodmould. Very weathered.  
Replacement mullion with slight delamination at the bottom. No visible change.
- 63. Belfry – four twin louvred openings good after widespread renewals.
- 64. Ringing Chamber – three ancient, two light windows with hoodmoulds and centre shafts. Hood moulds mostly lost, weathered, mortar patched at W but fair overall.
- 65. Tower W window – large three light in hollow moulded surround, tracery part renewed or mortar patched, rest surface decayed.



- 66. Tower W entry door – hoodmould and arch decaying but intact at present.
- 67. Anchorage upper W – A unique five light window with mullion and transom appears to be cut from a single stone. Deeply honeycombed but seems stable. Perhaps protected by a dirty crust.  
A plain projecting slab over the window may be effective weather protection. Oak linings inside.



N Aisle NW

- 68. Boiler door, Ankerage door and small W window – weathered but sound.  
Ankerage – modern two light N window good. N door and stair good.
- 69. N Aisle NW – two light, much mortar repair in two colours at mullion, tracery and two reveal stones. The rest very weathered but stable. Sill decaying and joint open.
- 70. N Door – hoodmould, engaged shafts, weathered. Hoodmould peak renewed since last report.
- 71. Window over N Door – round headed with slightly concave moulded surround, plain square mullion and Y tracery. All arch stones decaying especially two at top deeply. Some mortar patching under arch. One reveal and both cills decaying.
- 72. Mid N window -three light Victorian all good except narrow joints at reveals open.
- 73. N Aisle NE window – square head, three light weathered but fair. Some decay in cill.

74. Lambton Door – good. Lambton window – four light. Very minor mortar patching at one mullion. Good.
75. Organ – blocked three light, tudor heads, cracked mortar facing under the hoodmould and at both mullions. Some decay at W reveals.  
A length of hoodmould has fallen since last report (due to soaking from the gutter?). Replacement would protect and retain the appearance of the blocked window.
76. Vestry N – small two light, round heads cut from single stones. Mullion cracked and heads and all reveals have variety of decay but appear stable. Open joints in small weathered cills.  
Vestry E – similar but sill in one piece.



Vestry N

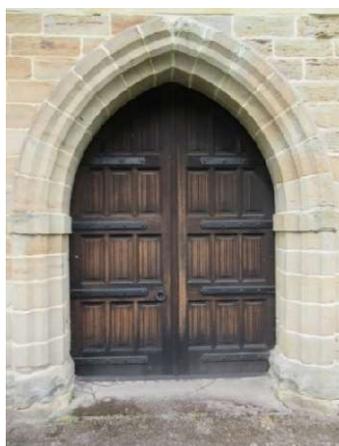


Vestry door and E window

77. Vestry door – Cranked chamfered lintel. Face bedding on a slight skew makes an interesting pattern of decay like tree rings. Decay in most reveals, three with mortar skim part missing.

### External Iron and Wood

78. W entry door – oak boarded, oak frame with ornate iron hinges and handle, good. Iron needs paint soon.  
Boiler – modern oak door in oak frame, weathermould. Good but one louvre part missing. Weathered stain  
Ankerage – plain oak board door in oak frame, weathermould. Good  
Ankerage upper door – modern plain oak board door with cover laths in oak frame with opening glass fanlight louvres. Painted iron railings fair.  
Gas meter - small wooden door and frame under external stair well renewed in oak since last inspection.  
N door – oak boarded in oak frame with painted ornate iron hinges and handle, good but a little rust.  
Vestry – panelled, varnish fair. Not opened.  
Priests – disused pair oak boarded with iron bolt heads and handle. Needs occasional oil treatment.  
Porch – as Priests except panelled oiled oak with multiple fielded panels, sealed to thresh with single batten bedded on mortar.



Bottom of Lambton Crypt door

79. Lambton Pew door – oak frame and boarded door with cover laths. Repaired since last report with added weathermould. Painted railings will need paint soon.  
Crypt – Very wide painted iron door on pintles in a stone rebate. Bottom distorted. Fair but rust begun.  
Needs regular paint including filling at bottom.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERIOR

### Roof timbers

80. In Chancel and Nave Victorian trusses, purlins and rafters. In both Aisles principal rafters propped on corbels on the arcades.

In the Choir Vestry ancient beams are re-used in shallow trusses across with a ridge beam and rafters.

Worm holes may be ancient but any new wood dust on the carpet in early summer should be reported.

No close access but all appear sound.

81. In upper Ankerage principal rafters on the walls. Purlins and rafters exposed between ply linings under the slating battens. All stained. No close access but no visible defect.

### Ceilings

82. Chancel, Nave, Aisles painted softboard between rafters. Good except water marks and a patch of unpainted boards in N Aisle 2<sup>nd</sup> bay from W and minor water marks in S Aisle 2<sup>nd</sup> bay from E, just W of the Porch and over the 2<sup>nd</sup> rafter from W end and in the Baptistery between font and W end.

The marks may remain since the 1990's reslating on new underlay (para 10). Painting would be useful to trace any further leakage.

Choir Vestry painted softboard between rafters, sound.

83. Clergy Vestry ceiling woodchipped plaster with patch at minor damage. No insulation.

In Ankerage lower room exposed floor boards – see para 117.

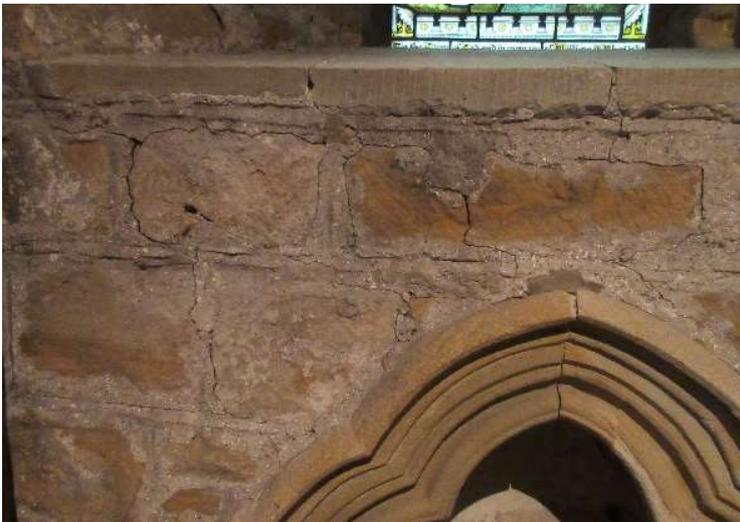
### Chancel Arch, Arcades, Masonry

84. Chancel Arch double chamfered Victorian on huge ornate corbels, good.

85. Both arcades have hoodmoulds facing the Nave, double chamfered arches and round columns without bases, good. The two columns E of the N & S doors are thickened. The N arcade leans outward slightly. Tower W and S Arches good. Very minor salts from rising damp in the columns.

86. Part of the Chancel N wall hidden by large paintings.

87. The Chancel S wall has minor opening of wide lime mortar joints close to the SE corner, in the crown of the E arch over the piscina, in the E window L reveal and cill, no visible change.



88. Remaining walls mixed stone sizes and pointing materials. Fair but some parts dirty and dull due to dark cement pointing. Choir Vestry (former Porch) walls bare ancient masonry mainly hidden by cupboards.

At its arch into Aisle engaged columns are decayed, one to invisibility.

At the Tower entrance a head height patch of the N arch infill is poorly pointed.

At the SW Baptistery the surface about 50% parged over with mortar.

89. Ankerage walls good bare masonry except

- brick reveals at the lower N window
- brick at most of the blocked large S arch (which is all stone on the church side) for the brick boiler flue passing through see 'Heating' below



Choir Vestry

### Doors, Panelling, Screens

90. Chancel screen and canopy over pulpit good, almost complete gothic carved.  
The cresting at the N end of the screen leans back.

91. Parts of the cresting at the Chancel panelling is broken and missing. Detached cresting in the Crypt may match for salvage. If not your architect could suggest an expert wood carver to replace the missing parts.



92. Dado panelling along S Aisle wall may be reused box pews. Good condition except worm holes and a small gap and split in the panelling E of the Porch door where most worm. May have been treated so to be observed for fresh dust (suggesting new emergence) in early summer.

93. Clergy Vestry inner door good oak with applied tracery to match Chancel panelling.  
Inner Choir Vestry door good. W Porch good oak, glazed and panelled.

## Plaster, Decoration

94. None in Church except good painted plaster at E wall of Chancel and recent sound lime plaster at back wall of sedilia.



95. Well painted Victorian inscription and cross over the Chancel Arch.

96. In Clergy Vestry some rising damp in plaster against Chancel and its E wall. Less damp since better maintenance of the rainwater goods and gully outside which must be cleaned at least once a year.



## Glazing, Protection

97. E – four light Johnson memorial 1877. Two heads in the tracery appear medieval. One has lead repairs and there may be other cracks in both. Otherwise good but some dirt.

98. S Chancel E – two light Blunt memorial 1900 Crucifixion good but some dirt.

S Chancel 2<sup>nd</sup> - two light Blunt memorial 1901 Annunciation and Nativity good.

S Chancel 3<sup>rd</sup> - two light Blunt memorial 1901 Peter and Paul over plain quarries, good.

S Chancel W – two light Bowness 1847 good but both bottom panels slightly buckled.

99. E end of S Aisle – three light Fenwick memorial 1863 good but minor cracks and holes, dirt.

100. S Aisle S wall E – three light Cookson memorial 1864 Good Shepherd fair except bowed at disused hopper. One child's face cracked but appears stable. Bottom panel of E light slightly buckled.

S Aisle 2<sup>nd</sup> – three light Story memorial 1853 good

S Aisle 3<sup>rd</sup> – three light Barrett memorial 1922 good, some dirt

S Aisle 4<sup>th</sup> – two light Wood memorial 1861 good

Baptistry – two light Armstrong memorial 1901 good except bottom panels slightly buckled.

101. Tower – three light excellent painting, good condition except the bottom of the centre light bottom panel is buckled perhaps by unsupported weight of glass. Dirty.

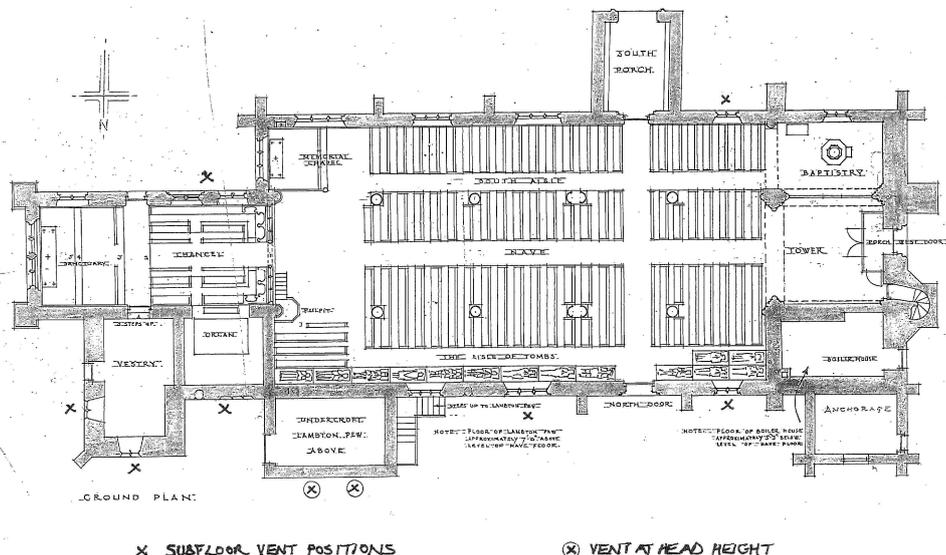
102. N Aisle W – two light good except some loss of paint and St John in the Crucifixion scene is star cracked but seems stable.  
 N Aisle 2<sup>nd</sup> – two light Armstrong memorial 1903 Lamb of God, Light of the World, good  
 N Aisle 3<sup>rd</sup> – three light Wood memorial 1891 Gospels good except in centre panel face of St John star cracked but may be stable.  
 N Aisle 4<sup>th</sup> – three light Pottinger memorial 1866 good except W light has star cracks in robes.



103. Lambton Pew – four light plain green diapers with yellow borders, sound but dirty
104. At Ankerage single leaded glazing sound, some with external bars.
105. Ringing Chamber – three two light windows with rectangular leaded glass in timber subframes with metal framed opening vents. Iron framing rusting.  
 The top of one S light is distorted. Two N panels changed to cast sheet.  
 Remaining glass fair but very draughty at hoppers and one vertically sliding sash.
106. Good recent ventilated polycarbonate protection at all lower windows except
- Lambton Pew clouded mortared polycarbonate
  - Vestry both sides cast glass overglazing
  - Nil at Anker House

**Ventilation and Damp**

107. No room ventilation in glazing except two disused hoppers in the Lambton Pew and one opposite in the E window of the S side of the S Aisle. Two grills head height through the N wall of the Lambton vault.
108. Very limited subfloor ventilation grills through the external walls, well below modern standard especially given the obstruction which three solid walkways seem to cause. Perhaps there are enough openings through the walkways to prevent rot in the floor timbers. See vents marked on plan.



109. Subfloor vents are below paving level and kerbed. Ventilation depends on the small spaces outside the grills being kept clear of debris at all times.

Mud clogging the vent well SW of the S Aisle (from which I lifted a hedgehog) needs to be cleaned out.



110. If the floor under the Organ remains suspended timber, prevention of rot depends on the small rusting grating through the Organ N wall.

111. In the Clergy Vestry rising damp damaged linen which has been moved out. Risk of mould in floor box seats. Two wall mounted dehumidifiers are piped to drain outside. Added room ventilation (simple permanent high level air bricks through opposite walls) may be more effective.

112. In Ankerage sole visible room ventilation is three controllable glass louvres over the upper door.

#### **Floors, Rails, Stair**

113. Sanctuary good plain and decorative marble on solid floors, repaired 2008. Fitted carpet at Sanctuary crossing good. Communion rail traceried oak, mid bridged by a sliding brass rail.

In Choir black and white marble relaid 2008 between oak platforms for the choir stalls. All appears sound.

114. At Nave and Aisles carpet on solid E crossing, two walkways, Baptistry and Tower entry carpet on solid. The N Aisle walkway is concrete. At heating renewal in 2001 cast iron grilles were removed from walkways except at N Aisle where new continuous grill was laid. Other walkways repaired before present carpet laid 2003. Parts of the mid walkway between the N and S doors are hollow beneath the carpet. Reported that several ledger slabs let into the walkways were photographed before covering by carpet.

115. In the Victorian pattern, six blocks of raised suspended softwood board floors under the pews alternate with the solid walkways. Voids about 400mm under the joists.

Such floors need enough ventilation to stop rising damp causing rot, sometimes by air movement right across the building or connections into heating ducts and up into the church.

116. Clergy Vestry fitted carpet mainly on suspended, part solid at W side.

117. At Ankerage ground floor sound sandstone flags, not completely flat but safe enough.

Sound modern steel spiral and handrails.

The first floor over the entry is modern softwood joists and boards on one painted steel beam, all exposed. Appear sound except some light woodworm damage to joists and boards along its S edge.



Ankerage



one of the Chancel paintings

**Reredos, Monuments, Brasses, Furnishings, Organ, Clock**

118. Reredos part painted carved oak with two canopied statues in the corners, good but slight dirt.

A fine long altar, oak framed with painted and gilded carved front panel.

119. Three huge paintings of 1927 not easily visible on the N Chancel wall nor well lit. Perhaps dirty.

120. Wall monuments include

A Chancel marble wall plaque good but some dirt.

Various marbles and one brass in the Aisles, good.

A huge canopied bronze 1<sup>st</sup> war memorial and a very large vicar's board, both good.

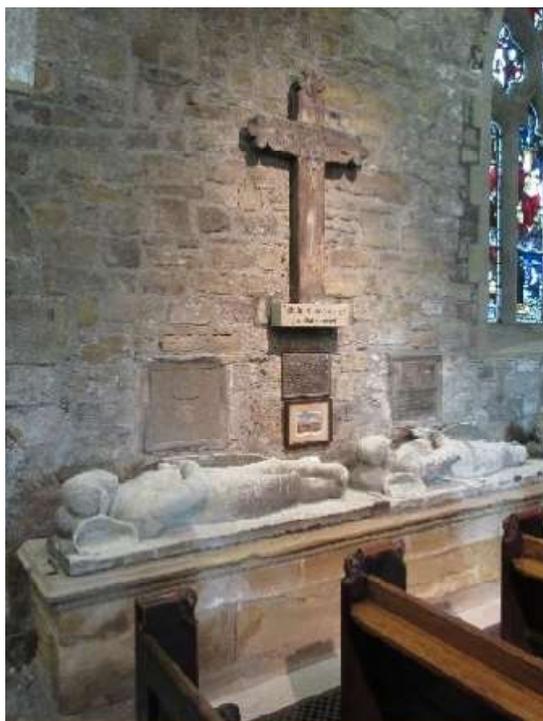
A large field cross of 1916 brought from France.

121. Three large marbles on the front of the Lambton Pew and two smaller recessed into the wall to its L.

The latter are part illegible after losing some surface but seem stable now. If the wall behind and window above are kept in good repair the monuments may not suffer further damp penetration.



122. Numerous stone effigies on a continuous plinth along the N Aisle wall are in mixed condition but appear stable. An effigy and upright ledger stone in the Baptistry.



123. S Aisle Chapel altar. Slightly decorated Victorian pews, fairly comfortable.

124. At SW Baptistery a large ancient stone font with lead lining, plug and a counterbalanced conical open carved cover with working action.
125. A two manual Harrison & Harrison organ. Restored and revoiced by Harrison & Harrison 1948. Some damage when lead was stolen from its roof in 2009. In regular use. Refurbished 2023 including renewal of leather parts by Harrison and Harrison.

### Heating

126. Heating renewed 2001 and said to be effective. Clay terminal on stone chimney.  
Two gas boilers (for alternation) in a semi-basement (pumped sump dry at inspection), steel circuits, radiators and finned tube in the N Aisle walkway.  
Pressure unit replaced since last inspection. A controller with external and internal thermostats.  
One boiler has failed. The other now serves all demand which seems satisfactory.



Brick Chimney where it passes through the Ankerage salts continue to effloresce full height especially at top and now tarry water seeps out at head height

127. In the Anker House the brick flue or casing around a flue liner continues to deteriorate with brick spalling, widespread efflorescence of salts and now apparent leakage of tarry water at head height. Brick fragments and salts are being vacuumed from the carpet and flue indicating damp continues. This suggests either serious leakage of water from above or of flue gas from below not escaping to atmosphere but condensing. In either case heating engineer's advice is needed. The brickwork may need to be opened up to investigate. If a flue liner is complete the terminal on the chimney may need renewal. See item 2.  
The heating engineer may advise whether the boiler failure was caused by or was a cause of flue damage.
128. If the advice is that both one boiler and the flue and its brickwork need renewal this may be instead the time to move away from gas to a low or no carbon alternative. Not easy in such a sensitive church and churchyard but necessary to meet the Church of England's ambitions.
129. Against the Aisle and Choir walls under the pews and under a few Nave pews modern steel low triple panel convectors (one at the end of a pipe loop leaked since last report and simply removed). Older large column radiators at front and back of the Nave pews, in the Tower entry and E end of the N Aisle. Multiple steel pipes behind the high altar.
130. In Clergy Vestry old panel radiators supplemented by wall radiants.  
In Choir Vestry small heating pipe loops under the vestment cupboards and low modern steel triple panel convector radiators will keep the vestments dry.
131. Two loose electric heaters in the Ringing Chamber.
132. At Ankerage only heat is a modest wall hung electric convector in lower room.

## Electrical

133. Three phase intake in boiler room under the Ankerage. Almost completely rewired when new lighting installed 1993. Test report April 2023 says 'Satisfactory' with two minor observations.
134. LED floodlights on spire. In Tower entry four LED down floods.  
In rest of church a large number of mixed high level LEDs and older spots with lenses including uplights on the wooden ceilings.  
Focus on the altar and a light behind its cross in the reredos. Overall unusually good effect.
135. Scattered metal surface 13A sockets. Modern DB in Ringing Chamber.
136. In Ankerage wiring surface sheathed MICC with scattered surface metal 13A sockets and track and spot lighting. Key light switch. Some Ankerage lights not working.  
May be time for general renewal of at least lamps and perhaps the tracks.

## Lightning Conductor

137. On Spire only, which appears sufficient. Connected to tape at N, cable at S over the Aisle slates. The N tape passes into the Spire through a very small vent to bond to the metal tree under the spire cap. Both appear complete. Test points at both, no visible earth covers.
138. Five yearly tests of the earth continuities are recommended and should be kept in the Log Book. See Addendum. A 'Satisfactory' 2021 test showed overall earth of 6.2 ohms.

## Fire Precautions

139. Adequate extinguishers all last serviced June 2022:

W entry	2 kg CO <sub>2</sub>		
Baptistry	6 litre foam	Door to Choir Vestry	6 litre foam
Boiler Room	2 kg CO <sub>2</sub>	Ankerage downstairs	2 litre foam
Clergy Vestry	2 litre foam and 2 kg CO <sub>2</sub>	Ankerage upper escape door	6 litre foam

In case of proposal to change note the insurer EIG advises dry powder extinguishers should remain confined to boiler rooms and kitchens because discharge (including accidental and malicious) in church risks serious damage to organs and delicate surfaces because the powder is corrosive.

140. The small spaces of the Ankerage with very low fire load have comprehensive fire alarms, perhaps as a condition of the museum installation. No known current test report.  
An illuminated escape route sign in the upper room points to the upper door.  
Three smoke detectors under the sloping ceilings and another under the upper floor.  
Break glasses by both external doors. Internal and external alarm bells.

## Water and Sanitary facilities

141. A basin in the Clergy Vestry. Cold tap only, disused.  
A cold only basin in the Ringing Chamber with waste over the Anchorage roof slates.

## Access and use by people with disabilities

142. Good level access (including into the Choir Vestry) as far as the Chancel Step. No spaces for wheelchairs among the general seating. No wc for anyone.  
Three steps down into the Clergy Vestry from the Chancel.  
At Ankerage a small step down at the ground floor entrance door. No access upstairs as was accepted in the 1980's. Note there is no general legal duty to make unreasonable alterations to historic buildings such as this grade I listed church.

## Security

143. Generally insurer's advice is that churches are safest if not locked during the day, provided valuables and matches are locked away. However advice specific to St Mary and St Cuthbert's may differ.
144. Window bars at N Anchorage window.  
Modern mortice deadlocks at W entry, upper Ankerage, Vestry outer doors. Rim deadlock at the lower Ankerage door.  
Good locks at inner Vestry and Choir Vestry doors. Two floor, two wall safes in the Clergy Vestry.

## Churchyard, boundaries, signs, paths, trees

145. Unusually, owned and maintained by the local authority so not reported.

## Archaeology

146. The church and its site are of highest archaeological importance (the site being part of a Roman fort and a Scheduled Monument). The local authority archaeologist should be consulted should significant works be considered (including to the Museum artifacts).  
For example, important advice was given when a wc in church was being considered.

## General comments

147. The building remains sound. The parish is to be commended for the substantial repairs and improvements achieved in recent decades and for the further repairs since the last report.
148. The woodworm (Spire ladder, S Aisle panelling, Ankerage first floor – no treatment recorded in Log Book) should be rechecked for new dust after the next flight season (May) or the present holes filled with wax or the like beforehand to help trace new damage and simple treatment applied to contain it.

## PART THREE

### RECOMMENDATIONS in order of priority

#### For immediate action

Have S side minute hand straightened	21
Establish responsibility for rusting steels under clock	22 – 23
Sweep/vacuum all stone debris from Spire and Tower floors into bags and remove to reveal rate of stone loss and active woodworm	27, 29, 30
Get engineer's advice on the failed boiler and apparent flue fault and if renewals are needed decide their nature	127, 128

#### For completion within 18 months

Renew broken parts of S gutter, of its W pipe & fixings and fixing of pipe between Lambton Pew and Organ	17
Paint gutters and pipes at S Aisle, N Aisle and Ankerage and gutters at Lambton Pew, Organ, Vestry & N Chancel	18
Paint hatch to Tower parapet	25
Prepare and paint Bell frame	32

#### For completion within five years

Replace rusted steels under clock	22 – 23
Grout and point void in wall next to Chancel SE window sill	37
Prepare and paint iron at W entry door and N door and Crypt door	78, 79
Obtain five yearly Periodic Electrical Test Report in 2028	133 and Addendum
Obtain five yearly Lightning Conductor Test Report in 2026	138 and Addendum
Keep Test Reports in the Log Book	

#### Desirable improvements

Paint parts of the Aisle ceilings	82
Refix cresting at N end of Chancel screen and renew cresting on Chancel panelling	90, 91
Add permanent air bricks in Clergy Vestry walls	111

#### Recommendations on Maintenance and Care

At next painting check backs of rainwater pipes are well covered	17
Renew broken gullies and clear them at least once a year	18, 96
In early summer check floors for wood dust under worm holes in Choir Vestry, S Aisle panelling, Spire ladders and Ankerage first floor	30, 80, 92, 117, 148
Every year clear subfloor vents and their wells	109, 115

## **ADDENDUM to the SURVEY REPORT**

### **Required under the Care of Churches and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction Measure 1991**

**PURPOSE OF REPORT** This is a general report only, as is required by the Measure. It is **not** a specification for execution of repairs and must not be used as such. The parish is reminded that it will be necessary to obtain either the Archdeacon's permission or a Faculty if it is intended to make repairs for which an architect's specification should be sought. The PCC minutes must record that an application is being made for permission or faculty and a copy of that minute must accompany the application together with a full specification, drawing where appropriate and an estimate of the cost of the work. In any application for grant aid a full specification is always required.

**LOGBOOK** The parish has a duty under Canon F13(4) to keep a Log Book recording all work carried out on the building. I commend this practice to the PCC. Not only does it help the inspecting architect but it can prove a valuable aid to the parish.

**MAINTENANCE** Continual vigilance to guard against blockages in gutters and the rainwater system as a whole is needed. Every parish must find for itself a reliable procedure to ensure that gutters, ground gutters, gullies and drains are kept clean. It might be:

maintenance under contract by a local builder or handyman or

maintenance by church working party

Whatever system is adopted the problem remains to remember when to organise the work. Gutters and pipes should be checked at least twice a year. If the Log Book is used as a check list of action every year and kept as an up to date record this will itself act as a reminder.

**HEATING INSTALLATION** A proper examination and test should be made by a qualified engineer annually **and a written report obtained for the log book**

**ELECTRICAL** The installation should be tested every five years and immediately if not done within the last five years by a competent electrical engineer, that is a certificate holder of the National Inspection Council of Electrical Installation Contracting (NICEIC) or a member of the Electrical Contractors Association (ECA) and a resistance and earth continuity test should be obtained on all circuits. **The test report should be kept with the Log Book.** The present report is based on a visual inspection of the main switchboard and certain random sections of the wiring without the use of instruments.

To check registration with NICEIC and ECA see [www.electricalsafetyregister.com](http://www.electricalsafetyregister.com)

**LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR** Any lightning conductor should be tested by a competent electrical engineer every five years (in addition to any recommendation in this report) in accordance with the British Standard Code of Practice. Records of the results and condition should be kept with the Log Book. Note that there is no general requirement for a Lightning Conductor.

The British Standard earth resistance is 10 ohms but the insurer EIG regards 15 Ohms as acceptable.

If a test is unsatisfactory the earthing can often be improved but an extended system to meet the BS may not be justified unless specifically required by insurers.

**CHURCH WARDENS' INSPECTION** Although the Measure requires the church to be inspected every five years serious trouble may develop in between these surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is recommended that the wardens should make or have made a careful inspection of the fabric at least once a year and arrange immediate attention to such matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes.

**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** 'One of the striking characteristics of the Gospel narratives is Jesus' concern for people with disabilities but sadly the Church has, in the past, given little attention to their needs. The design of our buildings has often proved a barrier to those who attend church services' (Chairman of the Church Buildings Council). The PCC are reminded that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 places a duty on churches to review all practices and facilities and to take all reasonable steps to avoid discrimination against people with disabilities caused by physical features, bearing in mind the limitations often found in historic buildings

Useful advice and audit sheets are to be found in 'Widening the Eye of the Needle' published by the Church Buildings Council 1999 £10.95.

**INSURANCE** The PCC is advised that insurance cover should be reviewed annually to take account of any rise in the cost of rebuilding.