

**Closed church of South Hylton St Mary: Statement of Significance and Needs**  
**Faculty Petition OFS Application Ref: 2025-116783**

**Removal of contents.**

**SCHEDULE OF WORKS OR PROPOSALS:**

Confirmatory faculty requested in respect of contents already removed from the closed church of South Hylton St Mary to other churches in the Diocese:

- The removal of church plate and other contents from church safe (items 1 - 16 on the attached schedule) to the church of Pennywell St Thomas (Parish of Sunderland Saint Mary, Saint Thomas and Saint Oswald.)
- The removal of other church altar brass items and wardens' wands (items 17 -18 on the attached schedule) to the church of Pennywell St Thomas (Parish of Sunderland Saint Mary, Saint Thomas and Saint Oswald.)
- The removal of a wooden legilium (item 19 on the attached schedule) to the church of Willington St Stephen.

**Statement of Significance and Needs:**

Due to reasons of pastoral redundancy the church of South Hylton St Mary was closed for regular public worship on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019, through a scheme made by the Church Commissioners on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2019, under the provisions of the Mission and Pastoral Measure 2011. Upon closure, the building and its contents were vested in the Durham Diocesan Board of Finance and the closed churchyard was retained to the incumbent of the (unified) Benefice of St Mary, St Thomas and St Oswald. Since closure, the DDBF and Church Commissioners have put the property through three rounds of marketing, with the intention of securing an appropriate and sustainable new use for the former church. A proposal is currently being pursued and developed that might see the property being put to community and educational use.

In addition to the need to find appropriate new homes for many of the church's contents, it is a requirement of the insurer of the closed building that all contents, including church plate, items of value and moveable (combustible) items, are appropriately removed from the church. Until Bishop's Directions can take effect it is noted that faculty jurisdiction applies to the contents of the closed church, as does listed building consent where changes to any fixtures and fittings might be proposed. This faculty petition seeks to ensure some of the church artefacts and contents which hold local significance are secured into other churches within the Diocese. Reference is made to CBC report (PM 2456). The items to be removed are either not mentioned or are assessed by the CBC as having 'low' or 'low-to-medium' significance.

**St Thomas' Church Pennywell:** All the church plate from the safe has been removed to the parish church safe at St Thomas', to ensure safe keeping. (Items 1-16 of the schedule). All of low significance, except 1823 chalice dedicated to Capt. Thos. James Maling (who established the original chapel of ease), assessed *as low to medium* significance. The Parish is currently putting together a faculty petition to formally receive the church plate. Other altar brass items and two churchwarden's wands have also been transferred to St Thomas' (refer to item 17 of the schedule).

**St Stephen's Church Willington:** The wooden folding legilium (item 18 of the schedule) has been requested and taken for continued use at St Stephen's church. A separate faculty petition has been submitted for receiving it into the church.



## The Closed Church:

The closed church of St Mary's (Titles: TY573831 & TY573832) is grade II listed (1390829) but does not lie within a designated conservation area. The 2018 CBC report (PM 2456) describes the church:



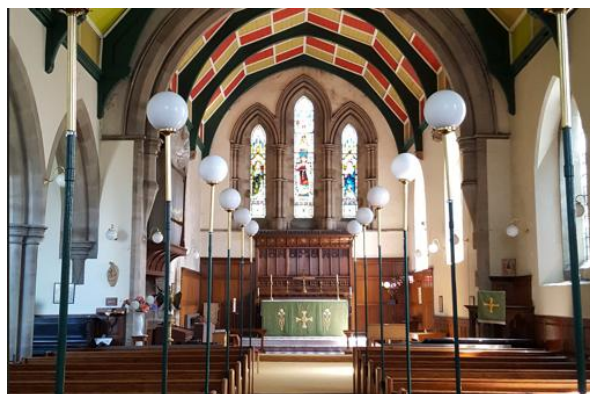
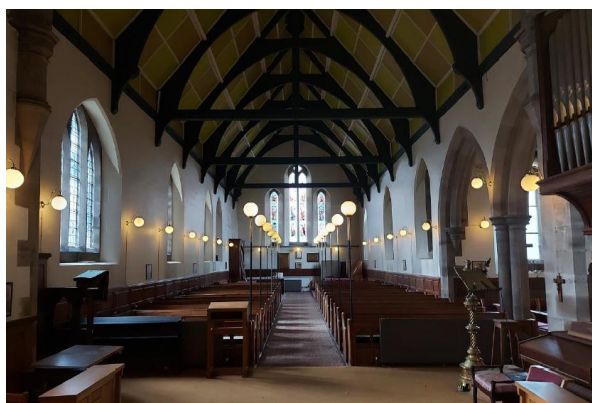
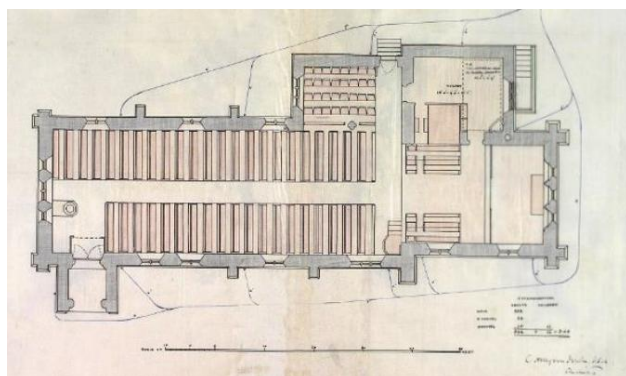
**Church Description** (CBC Report PM [2456](#)): “Parish church by Charles Hodgson Fowler, 1879-80, on the site of a chapel of ease of 1817 founded by Admiral Maling and destroyed by fire in 1878. Porch on S side of nave replaced by tower and spire in 1930 by G E Charlewood; tower door in cast aluminium by Ronald Sims, 1970. Stained glass by Veronica Whall, Eadie Reid and Leonard Evetts. Of moderate significance overall.”

**Historic England gII listing:** ([1390829](#)); “The plan is simple... Nevertheless this is a well preserved early example of the architect's work, with some particularly fine Arts and Crafts style stained glass and very few alterations. It is a well preserved and good example of the Victorian Gothic Revival style.”

## The church site plan:



Plan signed by Charles Hodgson Fowler c1878-80; from Lambeth Palace Collection (ICBS08348):



The church building is currently undergoing structural monitoring due to signs of ongoing movement. Successfully putting the former church to a community and educational use (as has been proposed) cannot be guaranteed and will require working with stakeholders to investigate and potentially undertake works to secure the property and its structure. There is therefore a need to secure the contents of the closed church as the DDBF and Commissioners work towards securing the future of the property.