



DIOCESE OF ST ALBANS

DIOCESAN SCHEME FOR THE INSPECTION OF CHURCHES

ARCHITECT'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Name and Dedication of Church: Layston, St. Bartholomew,

Secretary of the Parochial Church Council: Mr. D. Foskett,

34 Newmarket Road,

Royston,

Herts.

Inspecting Architect: G.W. Barrett,
K.C. White Partnership,

10 Duke Street,

Chelmsford,

Essex, CM1 1HL.

Year in which Inspection is due: 1988

PREFACE

1. The purpose of the Diocesan Scheme for the Inspection of Churches is to ensure that every church in the Diocese is inspected regularly by a qualified architect, who is asked to make a report on the general condition of the fabric and recommendations as to maintenance works required. The Scheme provides that this form should be used, and that a report and recommendations (if any) be entered under each heading. If the space allowed on the form is not enough under any one heading, please continue on the back of the sheet.

2. Within one month from making his inspection, the architect shall send the top (white) copy of his report to the parochial church council, and the yellow and green copies to the Diocesan Secretary, who will pass one to the Archdeacon of the archdeaconry concerned. The fourth (pink) copy is for the architect's own records. The Diocesan Secretary is responsible for keeping a register of buildings within the Scheme, appointed architects, dates of inspections and architects' reports.

3. The basis of the fee for each quinquennial inspection is to be agreed between the parochial church council and the architect *before* the inspection takes place and should have due regard to the current Conditions of Engagement laid down by the R.I.B.A. The architect is required, before making the inspection, to give the parochial church council an approximate estimate of the fee to be charged for the inspection, including the preparation and issue of his report.

4. Useful guidance on this matter may be found in Section 3 of "A Guide to Church Inspection and Repair" published by the Church Information Office, Church House, Dean's Yard, London SW1P 3NZ, which parochial church councils are strongly advised to obtain, since it also contains much other useful information. Serious trouble may develop between quinquennial surveys if minor defects are left unattended. It is strongly recommended that the church wardens should cause a careful inspection of the fabric to be made at least once a year and arrange for immediate attention to such minor matters as displaced slates and leaking pipes. Guidance may be found in the excellent booklet "How to look after your Church" also obtainable from the Church Information Office.

5. The architect's fee for an inspection, together with his reasonable expenses, are to be paid by the parochial church council. When sending his report to the council, the architect is, therefore, to include his account.

6. The report is *not* to be used as a specification of repairs. It should be written as simply as possible. No plans are required nor is an estimate of cost asked for at this stage.

7. Before proceeding with any of the architect's recommendations, the parochial church council should instruct him to prepare a proper specification, which should, if acceptable to the council, then be sent for consideration by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. There is no need to delay this submission until estimates have been obtained.

8. In giving their response, the Advisory Committee will indicate whether a faculty or some less formal authority is required for the work and, if appropriate, a faculty petition form will be sent to the applicant, together with further instructions as to how to proceed. The completed petition and supporting papers should be sent to the Diocesan Registrar, to whom any case of doubt may be referred.

9. The architect is asked to indicate, in the right hand column of each page, the order of priority of recommended works of repair under the following headings:

Category 1: of utmost urgency

Category 2: essential within the next 18 months

Category 3: essential within the quinquennium

Category 4: eventual, i.e. future desirable repairs, renewals, and redecoration

Category 5: items of routine maintenance

Category 6: items requiring specialist advice

10. The inspection of the church is to be visual, and such as can be made from ground level, ladders and any readily accessible roofs, galleries or stagings, and only selected areas are to be examined in detail; parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed, or covered, are not normally to be opened up unless specifically requested. The inspection is to include so far as practicable all features of the building covering all aspects of conservation and repair. The parochial church council shall provide such ladders and attendance as the architect considers necessary in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974.

11. The architect should recommend what is required to complete the effectiveness of the survey, including any uncovering of concealed spaces which is considered prudent. The parochial church council is asked to co-operate in this, subject to the obtaining of any necessary authority.

REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF WORKS CARRIED OUT SINCE LAST INSPECTION (This information should be checked with the parochial church council)

- a. Each slope of the Chancel roof has been stripped and retiled and new eaves gutters have been provided.
- b. Isolated areas of repointing have been carried out and routine maintenance has been undertaken.
- c. A careful repair has been carried out to the memorial to Margaret Constantia Butt.

2. GENERAL CONDITION OF THE FABRIC

- a. The leadwork and tiling to the Tower roof is in poor condition and requires thorough overhaul.
- b. The lead lining to the parapet gutters of the Porch requires careful repair by the lead burning method.
- c. Isolated areas of repointing are required to ensure that water cannot penetrate the fabric of the walls.
- d. Ivy growth should be removed as this is having a destructive effect, especially on the south-east angle of the Tower.
- e. The decaying masonry of the window surrounds could be treated with a shelter coat to reduce the rate of decay.

(6)

3. WALLS, INSIDE AND OUT (including masonry of windows and doors, but excluding tower and/or spire) with notes on foundations, buttresses, stability, dampness, etc.

Category

- a. The rough cast rendering to the north and east walls of the Chancel is in satisfactory condition. There is slight cracking above and below the north east and south east windows and to the south side of the south east window. Also on this window one jamb stone is breaking up. None of this is serious at present, however.
- b. The stone dressings to the windows on the south side of the Chancel are badly worn with the large south west window being particularly badly affected. A number of mortar repairs have been carried out to the clunch stonework and these are now failing. The life of the stonework could be extended if it were to be given a shelter coat of limewash. 2
- c. The dressed stonework to the Porch is generally in poor condition with the surround to the outer opening, the east window, the parapet string course on the east side and the coping in the south-east corner being particularly badly affected. All open joints should be carefully repointed in a lime mortar to prevent the entry of moisture into the structure. Worn stonework could usefully be given a shelter coat of limewash. 2
- d. Some of the stonework has been repaired with a hard cement mortar which is now itself cracking and spalling away. Care must be taken to ensure that any future repointing is carried out in a sympathetic material.
- e. There has been movement in the west wall of the Chancel above the former Chancel Arch but this appears to be of long standing. All cracks should be carefully raked out and repointed to prevent the entry of moisture into the structure. 2
- f. On both north and south walls of the Nave the rendered coping is cracked and breaking up in places and the slate weathering is falling away. These areas should be made good and repointed in lime mortar to prevent moisture entering the walls. 2
- g. On the south wall of the Nave the stonework to the two windows to the east of the Porch is in very poor condition. Making good has been carried out at various times in Roman cement, brickwork and other more modern cements and many of these repairs are now themselves breaking up. Much of the detail of the stonework has been lost but structurally the windows remain sound for the present. Selected repointing should be carried out to eliminate water holding ledges etc and a shelter coat of limewash could be applied to slow down the rate of decay of the stonework. 2
- h. On the north wall of the Nave the dressed stonework is in poor condition particularly the parapet string course which has been partially repaired in brickwork, the stonework to the westernmost window and the upper water tabling to the centre buttress which has also been repaired in brickwork. Here also limited repointing and consolidation of loose masonry is required to prevent further deterioration. 2
- i. On both north and south walls of the Nave both inside and outside ivy growth is becoming a problem. This should be cut off at the root, poisoned and the growth allowed to die before being gently pulled away. 1

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3. WALLS INSIDE AND OUT Continued.....

Category

Inside

- j. The condition of the walls within the Chancel is fair although a high moisture meter reading was found on the north wall.
- k. The stonework to the jambs of the former Chancel Arch is very damp particularly at low level where it is supporting algae growth. The condition may be exacerbated by the discharge from the copper gutter above the west side of the Chancel Arch and further by the hard cement rendered panels on the adjacent east wall of the Nave. The stone is not deteriorating at present although the oak framing to the main doors may well be decaying. The gutter is required to protect the former Chancel Arch, window and doors below but the outlets should be extended to discharge the water further from the wall preferably onto an unpaved area to avoid splashing.
- l. The brown stains on the lower part of the north and south walls of the Chancel are due to the application of emulsion paint over the limewash below.
- m. The inside faces of the north and south walls of the Nave are in fair condition although deterioration is occurring in localised areas. As before the aim should be to prevent the entry of moisture into the wall and all open joints should be repointed and water holding ledges eliminated. Special care is required to the stone surround to the north and south doors and to the clay tile window cill of the westernmost window in the south wall.
- n. In the Porch much of the plaster has either been stripped or has fallen from the walls. The remaining wall surface is firm and no action is recommended.
- o. There is evidence of movement in the brickwork above the outer opening. This is comparatively slight and appears to be of long standing. No action is recommended at the present time.

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Continued.....

8) 4. WINDOWS, GLAZING AND VENTILATION

Category

- a. The glazing is generally in fair condition. In one or two of the windows on the south side the leadwork is buckled but the glazing remains firm.
- b. There is only one opening hopper, in the easternmost window of the south wall of the Chancel which is inoperable. This should be brought back into use in order that the interior of the building may be effectively ventilated.
- c. The saddle bars and standards are rusting and would benefit from cleaning and repainting.

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5. TOWER AND SPIRE, including all walls, internal floors and tower roof

- a. The lead covering to the Spire is in poor condition with a number of holes. Also the iron bands securing the weathervane are bolted through the lead thus reducing its waterproof qualities.
- b. The weathering around the bottom of the Spire against the tiles is poor and from inside large areas of daylight can be seen.
- c. The tiling to the octagonal roof is also in poor condition. Many of the hip tiles have been replaced with concrete tiles and they have been ineffectively placed so that there are gaps between the hips themselves and the adjacent areas of tiling. The triangle in each corner is covered with either zinc or aluminium. The material itself is in satisfactory condition although it has been laid with a back fall which holds water against the inside face where it could seep into the structure.
- d. The parapet gutters are not lined but are formed of concrete trowelled smooth. They are all blocked by broken tiles, silt and other debris and require thorough cleaning and either repair or replacement. The underlying boards seem to be decayed and also require renewal.
- e. The zinc corner chutes are in poor condition and must allow rainwater to discharge down the walls. One has been replaced in pvc and this could be done with the remainder provided a satisfactory joint can be achieved to avoid water running into the core of the wall.
- f. The main east/west beam of the roof structure is in poor condition having been badly decayed in the centre by wet rot and beetle activity. Moreover its bearing on the wall plate at the east end is only slight. The wall plate also is decayed on the back and on the east side has only a minimal bearing on the wall. There is however no obvious sign of movement in the structure.

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5. TOWER AND SPIRE Continued.....

Category

- g. Attention is urgently required to the lead weathering around the base of the Spire and to the tiling to ensure that the structure is kept dry at all times. 1
- h. The masonry to the interior of the Belfry is generally in satisfactory condition although the surround to the Belfry opening on the south side is badly worn. Each of the openings is reasonably well protected by mesh. This needs to be kept in a good state of repair to prevent the Belfry being colonised by birds. It appears that some birds are gaining access already. 5
- i. The timber louvres are in extremely poor condition and those on the north side have been removed and the opening blocked with boarding. All loose material should be removed and the netting replaced as required. 2
- j. The Belfry floor should be cleared of all bird droppings and other dirt to prevent moisture being held against the boarding which will lead to subsequent decay. 2
- k. Bird-proof mesh should be provided over the opening on the spiral staircase. 1
- l. Almost all the timber within the Silence Chamber has been affected by either furniture beetle or death watch beetle although it was not clear whether this remained active. As a precaution all timber surfaces including the floor should be thoroughly cleaned and treated with preservative. All unwanted material particularly timber should be cleared so as to not to encourage beetle activity. 2
- m. On the ground floor the exposed timbers have been affected by furniture beetle although this is less likely to be active now it is exposed to the external air.
- n. To enhance the character of the tower as a dignified ruin it would be an advantage to remove the old timber panelling and the Commandment Boards on north and south sides together with other extraneous timber work. 3
- o. On the south face of the Tower there is considerable ivy growth in the south east corner at high level which appears to be forcing apart the masonry of the buttress and its water tabling. There is further extensive ivy growth at ground level on all three exposed faces of the Tower. As before, this should all be cut off at the root and allowed to die before being gently pulled away from the wall. The roots should either be grubbed out or poisoned. 1
- p. On the west face the stonework to the Belfry opening has been made good with brickwork and roman cement which is now spalling away leaving the window looking very ragged. It appears to be structurally sound however.
- q. The stone surround to the Silence Chamber window is also very worn but structurally sound.
- r. The joints to the stone string course to the plinth require repointing. 3

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5. TOWER AND SPIRE Continued.....

Category

- s. The stonework to the main west window is very worn but still structurally sound.
- t. On the north face of the Tower the mullion to the Belfry opening has disappeared but the arches of the two light window remain intact. Here as before repairs have been carried out using London Cement which is now breaking away.
- u. The plinth string course and the flintwork to the lowest part of the plinth require consolidating and repointing. 3
- v. The east wall of the Tower is in satisfactory condition although two cracks were noted on the north side of the Tower Arch at low level and on the south side higher up. Neither of these appears recent and need not be a matter for concern at present.
- w. There is some evidence of movement around the quoins and water tabling of the buttress on the north east corner but again this does not appear serious.

6. BELLS, BELLFRAME AND CLOCK

Category

- a. The timber bellframe is in fair condition apart from some decay of the top member in the south east corner. It has however been much strengthened in its history.
- b. There are pits for five beels; the treble and fourth were stolen some years ago. The inscriptions on the second, third and fifth are given below:-

2/3 March 20 1633
 Alex Strayng Vicar
 Anth* Garrett
 Fra* Sennocke Chu* War

5 Pack Chapman of London Fecit
 Mr W Seamer Ch: Warden 1776

All bell fittings are in poor condition and the bells are not in ringable condition.

- c. There is no clock.

7. ROOFS; COVERINGS, STRUCTURES AND CEILINGS (Excluding tower)

- a. The clay tiled roof covering to the Chancel is in satisfactory condition.
- b. The corrugated asbestos sheeting to the Porch is adequate.
- c. The lead lined parapet gutters on each side of the Porch are split however and have allowed water to leak into the roof structure over a long period. As a consequence the wall plate and ends of the main central beam are badly decayed. Immediate attention is required to stop these leaks and I would recommend lead burned patches which will probably be little more expensive than the remedy suggested to me and will last much longer.
- d. The inside of the roof to the Chancel is in satisfactory condition.

(12)

7. ROOFS, ETC. (continued)

Category

8. LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR
Date of last test and result None
9. RAINWATER GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES, SOIL AND WASTE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS
(Include date of last clearance of gutters and downpipes)
- The cast iron rainwater pipes on both north and south sides of the Chancel are very rusty and require thorough cleaning and repainting. 1
 - Each of these downpipes is very close to the wall which will prevent the back being repainted. In addition the one on the north side is partially surrounded by mortar. These pipes should be re-fixed on spacing pieces to enable the backs to be repainted in future. 1
 - The cast iron hopper head and downpipe on the east wall of the Porch and the downpipe on the west side are rusty and require repainting. In addition the short section towards the bottom of the pipe on the east side is broken as is the offset at the bottom of the pipe on the west side. Each of these sections should be replaced and the pipes refixed on spacing pieces. 1
 - The concrete ground channels into which these downpipes discharge should be kept clear at all times. 5

10. INTERNAL PARTITIONS, SCREENS, DOORS, PLASTER AND DECORATIVE STATE

Category

- a. The south door to the Chancel binds on its frame and requires easing. 2
- b. The main west doors to the Chancel are in fair condition although they have dropped by virtue of their size and are consequently distorted. In addition some of the panels are split. In view of the very occasional use of these doors no action is recommended apart from treatment to the beetle activity in the sapwood in one or two areas. 2

11. FLOORS AND GALLERIES

- a. The Chancel is paved with quarry tiles which are in fair condition. An area of efflorescence was noted at the west end caused by rising dampness. This should be swept off as a matter of routine maintenance. 5

14

12. FURNITURE AND FITTINGS
(including pews and other seating)

Category

- a. There is an oak pulpit/reading desk which appears to have been made up of material brought from another source. There is some evidence of furniture beetle activity in a board at the base which should be treated with preservative.
- b. The plain oak communion rails are in satisfactory condition.
- c. The communion table is of varnished softwood. All coverings have been removed to reveal a collection of roofing tiles and other paraphernalia below.
- d. The 19th Century stone font is undistinguished apart from being pentagonal. It is in satisfactory condition.
- e. The congregation are seated on beech chairs which are in satisfactory condition. One or two showed evidence of furniture beetle activity but this appeared to be no longer active.
- f. There are no other furnishings of note.

2

13. ORGANS, HARMONIUMS, ETC.

- a. There is no organ nor any other means of making music.

14. MONUMENTS, BRASSES, ETC.

- a. There are a number of fine monuments. The best is the one to the Barckham family on the north wall which appears to date from the late 17th or early 18th Century. This is in poor condition and urgent attention is required if it is not to deteriorate further.
- b. A second fine monument on the north wall is to Pike Crouch who died in 1712 and to other members of his family. It is signed by I Wilton.
- c. On the south wall of the Chancel is a memorial to the Slatholme family which is dated 1665.
- d. Each of the above is deteriorating and requires attention. Some of the lesser monuments are also deteriorating and have lost components and also require attention.
- e. There are two inscribed ledger stones in the floor one of which is becoming worn with the inscription consequently becoming illegible.

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15. HEATING SYSTEM

- (i) Date of last service There is no heating system within the building.
- (ii) Boiler
- (iii) Flue
- (iv) Fuel storage
- (v) Safety
- (vi) Efficiency
- (vii) Insulation

16. ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

(Lighting and power)

Date of last test There is no electrical system within the building

17. EXTERNAL IRON AND WOOD, INCLUDING CONDITION OF PAINTWORK

- a. As has been noted above external metalwork to rainwater goods requires thorough preparation and repainting. 1
- b. All metalwork to windows including those from which glazing has been removed should preferably be cleaned and repainted to preserve it. 1

(16)

18. FIRE PRECAUTIONS

Category

- (i) Number and type and location of fire extinguishers

There are no fire extinguishers within the building.

- (ii) Is there a fire plan?

- (iii) Does the local Fire Prevention Officer know of the fire plan?

- (iv) General

It was noted that matches are kept in the building together with quantities of newspaper and other combustible material. Matches should not be stored in the building and all other combustible material should be removed as far as possible

1/5

Advice should be sought from the Fire Prevention Department on what measures should be taken to ensure the safety of the building in cases of emergency.

6

19. SECURITY:

- (i) Can outside doors be securely locked, and how? The south door to the Chancel may be locked by means of a stout wooden cased rim lock.
- (ii) Can vestry door be locked, and how? There is no Vestry.
- (iii) What is the condition of the vestry safe? There is no safe.
- (iv) General
- * The main doors within the former Chancel Arch are bolted from the interior.

20. SANITARY FACILITIES AND DRAINS

- a. There are no sanitary facilities.

21. CHURCHYARD, INCLUDING BOUNDARY WALLS, FENCES, GATES, PATHS AND TREES

- a. Attention has already been drawn to the extensive ivy growth all round the building. This should be killed off and allowed to die and not allowed to encroach upon the walls again. All other weeds and other shrubs should be kept well cut back from the walls of the building.
- b. The unused part of the churchyard is kept in a manner appropriate to the semi ruined nature of this building.

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22. OTHER MATTERS NOT ALREADY COVERED

Category

23. RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO STEPS TO BE TAKEN FOR THE GENERAL CARE OF THE BUILDING AND ITS CONTENTS

24. NOTES ON GRANTS FROM OUTSIDE SOURCES

Date of Report

Signature of Architect

G. W. Bannister
29 May 1991