

ST. JAMES' MISSION CHURCH AND HALL, EDGWORTH **CHURCHWARDEN'S ANNUAL FABRIC AND** **ORNAMENT REPORT 2020-2021**

GENERAL

As reported in the St Anne's report this has been an unprecedented year and many of the usual items in this report have been deferred as it has been impossible to gain access to our churches but unfortunately as I reported to the last PCC many items cannot be deferred or postponed indefinitely as we have a duty as custodians to keep matters in good order.

We continue to prioritise issues raised by the recent Quinquennial Report that has been issued by the Church Architect together with matters from the Insurance Risk Assessors, following an 'on-line' survey in April. Thankfully this went very well and the only item they were concerned about was in us updating our key list, which has now been done. Issues from the Quinquennial Report are mainly minor and are very much in line with the report from five years ago.

One matter that the Church Architect wanted addressing is the movement of the rear outriggers. As reported previously I have these monitored by "tell-tales" but despite not much movement we may have to look at some substantial rebuilding in these areas. I have costed initial works at c£10,000 however the PCC have instructed that we hold on this work until more funds become available.

I have continued to monitor the Fire Risk Assessment that I carried out recently to ensure this is up to date and various measures have been introduced to put matters in place to make us compliant with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

The condition of St James's continues to cause some concern particularly with regard to the structural integrity of the building in that the building suffers from quite severe settlement. During the last few years we have spent quite a lot of money in repointing various areas and settlement does seem to have stopped but continual monitoring will be required going forward. Furthermore, the building suffers from severe damp problems. We have redecorated areas in the Hall downstairs and in the stair which did have severe damp penetration. Special damp preventative paint has been used in all areas. The damp issues seem to have become worse whilst the building has been locked and unused during lockdowns. There is a lot of efflorescence particularly on the painted bricks in the staircase.

I have carried out various repairs to the Hall due to the occupation by AJ's Pre and After-School.

As mentioned previously, I have held further meetings with the potential developer of the St James site, if only to be more precise on the potential proceeds of the site. (As you will recall we were approached, out of the blue, by a developer who enquired as to whether the site would become available). Earlier reports indicated that the potential value we could realise, keeping the church building, was around £450,000. I have now asked them to provide a figure for the site as a whole and this could possibly realise a figure of an extra £250,000 to £300,000. I must be clear this in no way suggests that we are selling the site but only to allow wider options to be available for future discussions.

EXTERIOR

The stone walls and boundary wall are generally in good order. However, the area around the church still remains of some concern, as this area is very hard to keep tidy and maintain.

In the Quinquennial report the Church Architect pointed out that the wall to the road was nearer to collapse than we first thought. Following meetings with Capita and Council officials the repairs have been completed last year. The works are now complete and I agreed with the contractor to do some levelling of the external areas at no cost to ourselves. The whole cost was in the region of £50,000 and this was paid for fully by the Council.

Main Building

The exterior of the building fabric gives cause for concern apart from the settlement issues mentioned above. The lack of pointing in many areas created problems in the lower hall as the floorboards lifted alarmingly on a regular basis. Hopefully this will improve now that repointing has been completed and we will continue to monitor the damp going forward.

INTERIOR

Internal areas are in fair condition and but we continue to monitor areas as damp is evident in many areas due to the poor pointing of the exterior.

We have provided some extra shelving downstairs which the vicar has kindly organised and this helps to separate church storage and AJ's storage. A recent working party also helped to clear out old unused furnishings.

The hymnbooks, silverware, and altar plates all remain in good condition.

Stephen Hobson

Churchwarden Emeritus

May 2021