

Inspecting Architect's Fabric Report

**Works Undertaken and/or Works in Development Stages
at the Churches within the Richmond Team Ministry**

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St Mary Magdalene

The next Quinquennial Inspection is due later this year. I've suggested it take place in the Autumn, after the various works described below have been completed.

Works in Progress:

1. **South Aisle Roofs and Other High Level Fabric Repairs:** In 2024 a schedule of repairs was drawn up. This was kept in abeyance until the south Arcade works were completed (see next item). I understand that these proposals have now received a Faculty. Quotes were sought in early 2024 and the lowest, from Stone Edge Conservation, was approx. £27,000 + VAT). This will inevitably increase as a year has gone by and more repairs will now be needed, including the replacement of a section of stone cornice which recently broke away.
The work in this project will involve:
 - a) Replace the several dozen slipped, broken and/or missing slates.
 - b) Clear moss and weeds from the parapets and projecting cornice.
 - c) Renew some of the cast-iron rainwater goods.
 - d) Minor leadwork repairs.
 - e) Cut out and replace a broken piece of projecting cornice stone.Instruction is awaited from the Team Ministry to either instruct Stone Edge Conservation or to retender.
2. **Timber Decay to South Arcade:** The issues identified in 2024 are being taken forward with the following now underway:
 - a) The existing decayed beam is now fully supported.
 - b) The structural engineer has provided a design for a new beam which now has Faculty approval.
 - c) Stone Edge Conservation have now been instructed to undertake the work to replace the decayed beam and undertake associated repairs to the surrounding fabric. Their quote is approx. £38,000 + VAT. A start date is awaited.
 - d) A quote for the follow-on reinstatement of timber and plaster finishes has been received by Stone Edge Conservation and the cost is approx. £8,000 + VAT.
 - e) Once all the above works are completed the parish will organise for the redecorations.
4. **Bells:** A project to replace and retune bells is now, I believe, going ahead. I have not been involved in this project other than having been recently informed of it and sent the proposals by Whites of Appleton from the Captain of the Bellringers. I do not know the costs involved or when the works will take place.

Works to Plan For:

1. Ladders on Roofs: Placed on the roofs are aluminium ladders which are not very well secured. Preliminary discussions have been had about removing or somehow securing the ladders as some have blown loose in recent storms.
2. Project to Alter Accessibility to the Vestry Door and Instal Churchyard Railings: I am only vaguely aware of a project to alter the access to the Vestry door to make it more accessible, and instal railings in the churchyard. I not been given any details and can't comment on these possible works.

St Matthias

The next Quinquennial Inspection is due in 2026.

Recent Works Undertaken:

1. South Aisle and Organ Chamber Roofs: In 2024 the South Aisle and Organ Chamber roofs were re-slatted. The opportunity was also taken to undertake fabric repairs to areas to which the scaffolding would allow access. These included minor repairs to other roofs, clean and clerestory window and paint the ferramenta, overhaul and redecorate some rainwater goods, undertake minor stone repairs. The construction cost was approx. £300,000 + VAT.
2. Windows: While undertaking the above project, a window specialist inspected accessible windows (generally sound) but also, kindly, provided an informal assessment of all the church's windows. A more detailed inspection should now be made and any recommended repairs should be undertaken in due course.

Works in Progress:

1. Options Appraisal for Lobby and Entrance: It is hoped to take forward one of the proposals prepared in 2023 for reconfiguring and bringing up to date the tired and dated entrance area. An estimate for the works might be, say, £125,000K.
2. New Entrance Ramp and Steps: The above Options Appraisal also included ideas for new entrance steps and ramp to the West doors.
3. Font and Altar: Designs for a new font prepared in 2023 by D Benson have been taken to a wood carver, who is working with a furniture maker, to develop further. This seems to have stalled.

Works to Plan For:

1. Heating: The heating system, as has been known for several years, is in a poor condition and difficult to repair. It should be replaced. What to do and how to meet the diocese's requirement for Carbon Net Zero by 2030 is not yet resolved.

2. More Roof Re-slating: The recent works to the South Aisle roof allowed for the south Nave roof to be looked at up-close. The Nave roof has similar issues as were found on the South Aisle roof and will need replacing within the next 8-10 years. Due to the size of the roof and need for scaffolding I predict this might cost, say, £400-450K.
3. Vestry Walls: The recent works to the Organ Chamber roof allowed for a close-up inspection of the west elevation of the Vestry. The stone is in a poor condition and repairs and repointing are needed. The stone cross atop the gable was removed as it was unstable. It was measured and recorded and a drawing prepared for a replica. Repair works are likely to cost approx. £70,000 + VAT. This would include repairs to the buckled west rose window which the recent window inspection (mentioned elsewhere) identified, and a new stone cross.

St John the Divine

The 2023 Quinquennial Inspection was undertaken in August 2023.

Recent Works Undertaken:

1. External Repairs: External fabric repairs by Walton Steeplejacks were undertaken in the summer of 2024. This included repairing loose and broken slates, some high level repointing and removal of plant growth from the tower, etc.
2. Window Inspection and Report: The church's windows were inspected by Martin Johnson & Co (York) Ltd and a full report received on the health of the windows which included recommendations along with budget costings.
3. New Hall Floor: Proposals for replacing the Hall floor and low level decorations to the Hall room have been prepared and are now ready for seeking DAC approval/Faculty with the expectation that the work will be undertaken this summer (2025). An estimated budget cost was provided in November 2023 and this was £28,500 + VAT (for just replacing the floor and altering doors to suit). It is now likely to be higher due to inflation and because the work now also includes decorations and increased under-floor ventilation.
4. AV System: The A/V system in the church was upgraded by D M Music Ltd in the summer of 2024.
5. Options Appraisal: An Options Appraisal has been undertaken by Ablett Architects to look at possible alterations and reordering works including:
 - a) Renew and extend the dais and lower by one step.
 - b) Relocate and alter the pulpit.
 - c) Move the cramped kitchen into an enlarged north extension.
 - d) Enlarge the north extensions to create more toilets, a larger kitchen and storage.
 - e) Explore altering the access to the organ console loft as the existing is unsafe.
 - f) Place somewhere suitable the wooden wall plaque formerly in the St John's Studios.
 - g) Create a higher parapet to the front of the gallery.
 Taking forward any or all of the proposals is to be agreed.

Works to Plan For:

1. Roofs: The roof to the Hall and NW Porch is covered with artificial slates to a curious detail. Slates regularly come loose and need constant repairs. The roofs should be recovered with natural slate to a conventional design.
2. External Stonework Repairs: Some minor repairs are necessary to the stonework in a few isolated locations. This work would coincide, and take advantage of, the scaffolding which will be required for the window repairs.
3. Repairs to Stone Floors in the Chancel areas and East end of the Nave: In many areas, the stone floors are beginning to crack and spall and options going forward are:
 - a) Repairs (unlikely to last or blend in).
 - b) Renewal should be considered. A renewal would give the opportunity to consider a new design.
4. Pulpit Restoration: The parish has received a quote for repairing the painted panels to the pulpit. The quote was from conservator Stephen Bellion and the amount for a full restoration was £14,500 + VAT. While this restoration work could be done now, it would be sensible to undertake it as part of a larger project to move and alter the pulpit (see item about the recently undertaken options appraisal).
5. Chancel Reredos and Restoration of Painted Walls: Various discussions have been had about what should be the next stages. A conservator needs to be appointed who would work alongside the inspecting architect to determine the issues, suggest repairs and likely costs. Some names have been put forward.
6. Window Repairs and Restoration: The report from Martin Johnson & Co (York) Ltd included budget costings amounting to approx. £71,000 + VAT and a recommendation that the works be undertaken within the next 10 years. In addition would be access and possible other associated fabric repairs. This will increase due to Inflation and continuing deterioration.
7. Damaged Wall Plaster: The internal wall plaster to the North elevation is beginning to blister and flake between the two easternmost windows. The position corresponds with an outlet and downpipe on the external wall. A blockage of this downpipe, or leaking parapet gutter over, is the likely issue. This should be investigated and rectified.

Ancillary Properties

The Richmond Team Ministry owns various other properties; however I've not been asked to visit or assess any of them and am unaware of any works that have been, or are to, take place at any of them.

Some General Comments

Costings in the Above Report:

Costings, where given, are approximate and exclude VAT. Also excluded are professional fees which would need to be determined for each/any project(s) being taken forward.

CAD Drawings:

All three churches were surveyed (i.e. scanned) by James Brennan Associates in 2023 and the information has been recorded and is stored by them. When CAD drawings are needed, say for any future project, these can be produced from the information being kept electronically by James Brennan. Drawings are then produced by them for a fee.

Meeting Carbon Net Zero:

D Benson has suggested that all three churches have an Energy Assessment undertaken by a suitably qualified M+E consultant. This would assist in:

- a) Helping each parish in planning for being more energy efficient and meeting Carbon Net zero goals.
- b) Consider options for a new heating system for St Matthias (the existing boiler, I understand, is at the end of its life, has required many recent repairs and parts are no longer available for future repairs.
- c) Consider feasibility of solar panels for St John's and/or St Mary's as both have south facing roofs.

Reclaiming VAT:

The Listed Places of Worship scheme has been extended until March 2026, but with provisos and limitations. It is not known if will be renewed after that. It is worth investigating if the current limits of claims up to £25k per parish will restrict projects as there are three churches with a shared office. This will need to be clarified.