

COPY LETTER

AO/FAB/51382

The Revd. G. Corbett
The Rectory
Ringsmore
Kingsbridge
Devon.

Dictated on
24th April 1980

2nd May 1980

Dear Sir,

Inspection of Churches Measure
All Hallows, Ringsmore

In accordance with your instructions we have carried out our fifth inspection of this church, (the previous inspection having been carried out in August 1975. Our report is as follows.

1. General

The inspection of the church has been made visually, and such as could be made from ground level, ladders and any readily accessible roofs etc. Only selected areas have been examined in detail. Woodwork and other parts of the structure which are inaccessible, enclosed or covered have not been opened up unless specifically mentioned and we cannot report that such areas are free from defect.

2. History

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As previously reported.

3. Description of the Church

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4. Previous report

a) Repairs completed

Provision of tell tales to the arch of the South window of the Sanctuary referred to in 5a.

Attention to the slipped slate on the South side of the chancel referred to in 5d of previous report.

Refixing of slipped rainwater pipe on the North side of the chancel referred to in 5c of previous report.

Clearing of the most steps and rainwater gullies and concreting the most referred to in 5c of previous report.

Painting the metal bellframe referred to in 5c of previous report.

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Testing the electrical installation referred to in 5k of previous report.

Painting the Priest's door referred to in 5n.

b) Repairs still needed

1. Painting the porch gates.
2. The moat has not been concreted but this no longer appears to be immediately necessary.

5. General Condition of the fabric and Recommendations for Repairs
(Repairs listed in order of priority
a) Structural Condition (at end of each sub-paragraph.)

The glass tell tales fixed over the South sanctuary window after the previous inspection are still intact and there does not appear to be any movement in the structure at this point. There is a much wider and deeper fracture over the South chancel window which was not recorded previously. This has probably been apparent, however, for many years and probably dates from the reconstruction of the roof. The crack has been stopped in at some time and has opened up again. It is difficult to tell if there is any current movement.

There is also a slight fracture in the North-east corner of the Lady Chapel which may have been due to the same cause.

Recommended Repairs

First Priority

Fix glass tell tale over the fracture above the South chancel window. Please seek further advice from us if the glass should crack.

Second and Third Priorities

None.

b) External Walls

The East wall is in excellent condition.

There are brambles and ivy behind headstones in the South-east corner of the South wall and some ivy in the West corner by the tower. The pointing of the plinth on the South chancel wall is rather poor.

At the base of the West wall, a little ivy is taking root behind the oil tank.

The North wall is generally in excellent condition, but ivy is still alive at the top of the North-east buttress.

Recommended Repairs

First Priority

None.

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Continuation Sheet no. 2

Second Priority

1. Remove brambles and ivy and poison the roots.
2. Repoint plinth of South chancel wall.

Third Priority

None.

c) Internal Walls.

The stone-faced walls in the chancel are in good condition apart from the fracture over the South window as noted above. Rendered walls in the remainder of the church are also in good condition except for a damp area on the North wall where a rainwater pipe overflowed recently and a small area on the North vestry wall where the plaster is off-key.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

None.

Second Priority

Repair two small areas of damaged plaster.

Third Priority

None.

d) Roofs (external)

The slated roofs are in very good condition. Only two loose slates were noted.

The leadwork all appeared to be in good condition, but the concealed valley behind the tower is choked with weeds.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

1. Clean out valley behind tower.

Second Priority

1. Replace two loose slates.

Third Priority

None.

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Continuation Sheet no. 3

e) Roofs and ceilings (internal)

Severe death watch beetle has attacked the lower section of roof timbers in the past. This was treated some fifteen years ago and does not appear to have seriously weakened the timber. There is no evidence of current attack but the treatment will now be losing its effect and there will always be a slight risk of further attack.

The tongue and groove boarded ceiling panels are beginning to work loose in places and it is possible that one or two might fall out in time.

Recommended repairsFirst and second Priorities

None.

Third Priority.

1. Tongue and groove boarded ceiling panels may need refixing at some time in the future.

f) Rainwater disposal

The rainwater gutters on the South side are in good order. The gutter over the North side of the chancel has two leaking joints and the gutter to the Lady Chapel is uneven and is beginning to rust. The gutter on the West side of the transept has a broken end which has been patched up. The lead valley gutter arrangement to the East side of the transept is not entirely satisfactory as it collects much debris.

The rainwater pipe on the North-west corner of the transept has been blocked recently but is now cleared. Being a small diameter pipe, this should be checked regularly.

There is one gully on the South side of the chancel which appears to be completely choked inside. Other rainwater pipes are connected directly into drains or discharge over the moat. We were unable to inspect underground drainage or soakaway arrangements.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

None.

Second Priority

1. Repair leaking joints in North chancel gutter.
2. Redecorate rainwater system generally.

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Third Priority

1. Improve valley gutter on East side of transept.
2. Replace gutter on North side of Lady Chapel.

g) Tower

The external stonework is in very good condition. The iron gnomon of the sundial is rusting.

Inside the tower, the stairs to the ringing room are very steep and difficult to negotiate. There is a fracture between the stair turret and the South church wall which has been stopped in at some time externally and there does not appear to be any current movement. The decoration of the door to the church is rather poor.

In the ringing room, there is a fairly new floor to the bell-chamber above which is in good condition. There is some green algae staining on the West and North walls, indicating some dampness and condensation in the room. The slate floor is loose and uneven. The windows on the East and South sides have rusting saddle bars and the leaded glazing is becoming slightly buckled. The timber window boards are rotting from damp penetration. The louvred window on the West side has been boarded up on the inside. The boarding is in fair condition but this window opening could be improved by glazing internally.

In the bell-chamber, there are traces of damp penetration in the lower part of the spire and the top of the walls. The floor is in good condition but there is a certain amount of bird and bat droppings. One or two of the fixings to the ladder from the ringing room appear to be working loose and the trapdoor is rather stiff. The wire guard over the East louvre is broken, allowing birds and bats into the tower. One or two of the louvre slates have fallen out.

There are a few small holes in the spire which are allowing damp penetration and some of the harder cement mortar is now flaking away from the stonework and falling into the gutter. Lead flashings to the parapet gutter are adrift in several places. The lead gutter itself is laid directly on top of the stone walls and is sagging slightly in places, allowing water to pond. This water is probably seeping into the walls through the joints in the leadwork. The lead itself is still in good condition. There are one or two weeds in the parapet stones. The door in the spire is off its hinges and the door and its frame are in need of preservative treatment.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

Refix lead flashings to parapet gutter on the roof.

Second priority

1. Remove rust and decorate gnomon of sundial with bitumastic paint.

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Continuation sheet no. 5

2. Provide a handrail to the stairs from the church to the ringing room.
3. Redecorate door to church.
4. Remove green algae staining in ringing room with solution of domestic bleach or proprietary chemical.
5. Reset slate floor in cement mortar.
6. Remove timber window boards and provide new cills, preferably in slate bedded in cement mortar.
7. Repair wire guard to East bellchamber louver.
8. Clear bellchamber of droppings.
9. Check fixings of ladder and ease trapdoor.
10. Stop in holes in spire.
11. Provide new hinges to door to roof and treat door and frame with creosote.

Third Priority

1. Glaze West window of ringing room, preferably with louveres to provide ventilation.
2. Lift lead guttering on tower roof and form smooth bed for relaying lead with cement mortar.

h) Doors & Windows (including ventilation)

The windows and glazing are generally in very good condition. The West window on the North side is covered with wire which has not been designed to fit the window exactly and the top section has slipped. Some erosion of the mullion in the North transept window is taking place.

There are no opening lights in the windows, but the church seems generally fresh and dry. There are roof ventilators with traps in the ceiling. These are stiff to operate and the cords are broken.

All doors are generally in good condition, but the decoration of the Priest's door and the outer porch door is in need of attention. The South door to the church is binding.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

None.

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Second Priority

1. Replace cords and ease roof ventilators.
2. Redecorate Priest's door and outer porch door.
3. Ease South door.

Third Priority

1. Provide more satisfactory guard to the West window in the North wall.
2. Carry out refacing of stonework in the mullion of the North transept window.

i) Floors

These call for no adverse comment.

j) Fixtures & fittings (fixed furniture, organ, bells etc.)

These are generally in good condition. The Communion rail fixing is rather weak.

The three bells hung for chiming are all in good condition. The steel framework is well painted, but this will need more regular attention on the North side where it is exposed to the louvre opening.

Recommended repairsFirst and second priority

None.

Third Priority

Refix Communion rail securely.

l) Furnishings (loose)

We have no adverse comments.

k) Monuments

These call for no adverse comment.

m) Electrical Installation and Lightning Conductor

The wiring is fairly old but has been tested recently by SWEB. The socket outlet by the South door is damaged and may be unsafe. Lighting is generally in good order.

There is no lightning conductor.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

Replace socket outlet by South door.

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Second Priority

None.

Third Priority

General lighting could be improved.

n) Heating Installation

The Colman oil heaters appear to be in good condition. The oil supply pipe is leaking where it enters the church. There is an overhead gas radiant heater in the chancel supplied by a Propane cylinder.

Recommended repairsFirst Priority

None.

Second Priority

Repair leak in oil line.

Third Priority.

None.

o) Fire Precautions and Security

Two suitable fire extinguishers are provided.

Church doors are generally secure. There is a wall safe in the vestry which is now rather old and may not be entirely proof against modern methods of attack.

Recommended Repairs

None.

p) Churchyard and boundaries

The churchyard is generally kept very neat and tidy. Gravel and concrete paths on the South side are in good condition, but paths on the North side of the church are becoming weed-grown.

Hedge banks are partly overgrown but are in reasonable order. Retaining walls to the churchyard are ivy-covered but, if anything, the ivy is helping to hold the stones together. There is a small section of the retaining wall to the road, close to the car park sign, which appears to be in danger of collapse.

The wooden gates on the North and South side of the church are decaying, but with treatment will last for some years yet. Ironwork over the South gate would benefit from decoration within the quinquennium.

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Continuation sheet no. 8

Recommended RepairsFirst Priority

None.

Second Priority

Treat wooden gates with linseed oil and turpentine and clean and decorate hinges and other metal fittings.

Third Priority

Check and rebuild section of retaining wall as necessary.

6. Summary of Repairs and costs

Generally speaking, this church is in excellent order and is a credit to those who look after it.

We give below a summary of the repairs recommended in Paragraph 5 above and our estimate of the costs involved. It is not possible to give a detailed estimate without preparing a specification and obtaining tenders. The figures given are for your guidance only.

Recommended RepairsFirst Priority (i.e. those requiring immediate attention).

1. Fix glass tell tale over the fracture above the South chancel window. Please seek further advice from us if the glass should crack.
2. Clean out valley behind tower.
3. Refix lead flashings to parapet gutter on the roof.
4. Replace socket outlet by South door.

Approximate cost: £50.

Second Priority (i.e. those which should be completed within the quinquennium).

1. Remove brambles and ivy and poison the roots.
2. Repoint plinth of South chancel wall.
3. Repair two small areas of damaged plaster.
4. Replace two loose slates.
5. Remove rust and decorate gnomon of sundial with bitumastic paint.
6. Provide a handrail to the stairs from the church to the ringing room.
7. Redecorate door to church. (from tower).
8. Remove green algae staining in ringing room with solution of domestic bleach or proprietary chemical.

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Continuation sheet no. 9

9. Reset slate floor of ringing room in cement mortar.
10. Remove timber window boards and provide new cills, preferably in slate bedded in cement mortar.
11. Repair wire guard to East bellchamber louver.
12. Clear bellchamber of droppings.
13. Check fixings of ladder and ease trapdoor.
14. Stop in holes in spire.
15. Provide new hinges to door to roof and treat door and frame with creosote.
16. Replace cords and ease roof ventilators.
17. Redecorate Priest's door and outer porch door.
18. Ease South door.
19. Repair leak in oil line.
20. Treat wooden gates with linseed oil and turpentine and clean and decorate hinges and other metal fittings.
21. Repair leaking joints in North chancel gutter.
22. Redecorate rainwater system generally.

Approximate cost: £500

Third Priority (i.e. repairs and improvements which may be needed at a later date and desirable improvements which may be carried out as funds permit).

1. Tongue and groove boarded ceiling panels may need refixing at some time in the future.
2. Improve valley gutter on East side of transept.
3. Replace gutter on North side of Lady Chapel.
4. Glaze West window of ringing room, preferably with louvers to provide ventilation.
5. Lift lead guttering on Tower roof and form smooth bed for relaying lead with cement mortar.
6. Provide more satisfactory guard to the West window in the North wall.
7. Carry out refacing of stonework in the mullion of the North transept window.
8. Refix Communion rail securely.
9. General lighting could be improved.

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Continuation Sheet No. 10

10. Check and rebuild section of retaining wall as necessary.

No cost is given as this will depend on when the work is done.

We have also assumed that many of the minor items listed can be carried out voluntarily without charge.

7. Maintenance

All electrical installations should be tested at least every five years and a standard N.I.C.E.I.C. report supplied. Any recommended repairs should be put in hand promptly.

All central heating units should be serviced annually.

It is assumed that your organ receives regular tuning and attention to defects by a reputable organ tuner.

Fire extinguishers should be inspected and/or serviced under contract by the manufacturer.

8. Repair work

This report does not contain a detailed specification for repair work. Apart from minor repairs, we strongly recommend that a detailed specification should be prepared and suitably qualified builders invited to tender. We should be happy to give you any further help you may require.

9. Grants

Various grants are available for the repair of historic churches. We should be happy to give you further advice on this subject, if you wish.

10. Approvals

Before any repair or improvement work is put in hand, it must receive Diocesan Sanction. Depending on the nature and urgency of the repairs, this will be either in the form of an Archdeacon's certificate or a Faculty. Before putting any work in hand therefore you should consult your Archdeacon as to the most appropriate course of action and inform the Diocesan Registrar.

11. Insurance

We draw your attention to the need for regular review of the various insurance covers relating to the church and its furnishings etc. Your insurance cover may already be index linked, but if not, the cover provided should be checked annually in the present state of rapid inflation.

12. Circulation

An additional copy of the report is enclosed for your records. Copies are also enclosed for you to forward to the Archdeacon, Rural Dean and the Secretary of the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

Yours faithfully,

G.O.F.7.

Body & Fleury