

TAUNTON St George's Rectory



Report on the Quinquennial Survey

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PART ONE

1. Introduction

1.1 This report on the quinquennial survey of the building was carried out on 28 June 2022 on the instructions of Father Tom Dubois.

1.2 The Diocese of Clifton has no formal requirements for the format or scope of Quinquennial Inspections. This report is therefore based on the our standard format but as qualified below.

1.3 I have therefore made a thorough general survey of the building and the garden to the south and west but not the forecourt. My inspection was visual, and such as could readily be made from ground level.

No part of the fabric was opened up for inspection, and the report does not therefore include any part of the building which was covered up, unexposed or inaccessible; and no guarantee can therefore be given of the absence of rot or beetle or of any other defect.

1.4 In describing the building I refer to the entrance front as north even though it is not truly aligned. Note that this varies from the report on the church which assumes it is traditionally orientated.

1.5 The weather was bright and dry for the inspection after a dry period.

DESIGNATIONS

1.6 The presbytery is listed Grade II

1.7 The garden building and south boundary railings are individually mentioned in the list description.

2. Format of the report

2.1 I would normally set out my report by room or by element but in this case the interior is so newly decorated the wording would be repetitive of 'little to report' and not very informative.

2.2 I am therefore dealing with the interior by way of variation, of which there are few, from good condition.

3. Limitations of Survey

3.1 No ladders were raised to any part of the building.

3.2 No below ground drains were tested.

4. Recommendations for Further Surveys

- 4.1 This report recommends that a structural engineer is consulted on remedial action to cracking over the doorway from the presbytery to the sacristy.
- 4.2 I also recommend that when roofers are next on site they are asked to check gutters behind parapets on the north elevation to ensure there are no defects here.

5. Recent Structural History

- 5.1 The building has been comprehensively redecorated internally to a high standard within the last year or so and consequently there is very little to comment on.
It is possible that minor defects such as historic staining has been concealed but there is no suggestion of anything serious other than the cracking noted below.
- 5.2 The utility room roof was recently repaired to resolve a leak.

6. Summary of Structural Condition

- 6.1 The building is in good overall condition as a consequence of careful attention to daily care.
- 6.2 Roofs and associated details appear to be in fair condition but further inspection is recommended.
- 6.3 External masonry of walls is in fair overall condition but with one area of concern and another deserving attention.
- 6.4 The crack in the east gable over the roof to the sacristy passage is long-standing. Repointing is required and this should include investigation of the cause so that stitching may be incorporated if desirable.
- 6.5 Where the modern greenhouse was removed from the garden elevation making good of brickwork and removal of paint is desirable but no more than that.
- 6.6 Windows and doors are newly decorated and, as far as I can judge, in good order.
- 6.7 Rainwater goods also newly decorated and appear sound.
- 6.8 Internally, the building appears in excellent order due to comprehensive recent redecoration. There is some minor cracking in ceilings which is not consequential and more significant movement over the sacristy door which developed in short time and requires investigation.
- 6.9 The garden is neatly kept, though the boundary railings have settled badly and overhaul is required.
- 6.10 The simple garden building is probably an early contribution to the 'estate' and deserves repair.

7. Description and Historical Summary

- 7.1 Built probably 1860/61 shortly after completion of the church to designs by the same architect, Benjamin Bucknall.
- 7.2 The rectory has two-storeys in a late medieval or Tudor style in an L-shaped plan, comprising a five-bay range with a central projecting porch bay and a gabled wing of two bays to the SW end. Attached to the wing are two late C19/early C20 lean-to additions.
- 7.3 Materials are buff-coloured brick under patterned slate roofs. Walls have ashlar dressings and large ridge and gable-end stacks that have diagonally-set chimney pots and buttresses and stone plinth, string course and copings to the gable ends. The windows have stone surrounds and iron casements with twisted iron stays..
- 7.4 The projecting full-height porch has diagonal buttresses; a four-centred arched entrance with a chamfered, flat-arched surround; a statue niche above containing the Madonna and Child; and a mullioned window of two lights to the first floor.
- 7.5 To either side of the porch are a pair of two-light windows with cusped heads and two first-floor gabled dormers of paired lights under drip moulds at first-floor level.
- 7.6 The wing has a three-light mullioned window to its gabled end; a dormer window to the first floor of the NE and SW elevations; and also to the SW elevation is a four-light mullioned and transomed window and late C20 inserted window to the ground floor and four small, square modern lights to the first floor.
- 7.7 The rear, garden elevation has an irregular arrangement of windows, all mullioned and transomed, and of two, three and four lights with two-centred heads in flat-arched, moulded surrounds.
- 7.8 There is also an off-centre doorway with a stone surround and late C19 timber door, and towards the right-hand end is a full-height canted bay which has a window to each floor and a stone shield in the apex of the gable.
- 7.9 There is a C19 garden building and boundary railings with fleur-de-lys heads noted in the list description

PART TWO

Condition of Structure

8. Roofs and High Level Features

- 8.1 The roofs are all artificial slates, presumably installed at the same time as the church. These appear in good order along with ridges and flashings where they can be seen.
- 8.2 There is no reason to suspect flashings behind 'minor' gables are suspect but it would be helpful if roofers commented on their condition when next accessing roofs as well as the two small parapets between gables of the garden elevation.
- 8.3 Chimneys appear to be in sound condition.

9. External Walls

- 9.1 External walls are in a buff brick, which complements stonework on the church, with limestone dressings.
- 9.2 There is some cement repointing but this is not, as yet, causing damage. Overall brick and stone is in good order other than movement in the east gable.
- 9.3 There is long-standing movement in the east gable extending down from the bathroom window. This has been filled more than once and is continuing as recently manifested in cracking over the sacristy passage doorway.
- 9.4 The internal cracking manifested quite suddenly in recent weeks through recent redecorations. This cracking is very clean with no obvious evidence of multiple filling as might be expected unless this was done to exceptionally high standard. There is no recollection that cracking pre-dated the redecoration but in any event the associated cracking externally is long-standing.
- 9.5 The cause of movement is not clear. There are some below ground drains in the vicinity which may be the source of foundation movement. As the extent of cracking is more than might be expected from, say, seasonal movement so I recommend that a structural engineer is consulted.
- 9.6 A modern greenhouse built on the site of an early structure has been demolished in recent years. Pockets left in brickwork should be built up.
- 9.7 There is a small area of filed pointing in the east wall of the utility room which should be made good when other pointing is in progress

10. Doors and Windows

- 10.1 Windows are plain glass fixed direct into stone or into steel sub-frames.
- 10.2 Casements are steel. Although they are superficially well decorated I suspect from evident distortion that the casements will be binding to varying degrees and almost certainly draughty. There is rarely a shortcut to effective overhaul.

10.3 Doors are well decorated and appear in good order.

11. Rainwater Disposal System

11.1 Gutter and rainwater pipes are cast iron. Hoppers are relatively plain and as such they may well be replacements.

On the garden elevation two of the hoppers are served by spouts through elaborated carved stones.

11.2 All are recently decorated and I could see no indication of leaks.

12. Garden

12.1 There is a relatively small garden to the south of the house bounded by iron railings on a plinth wall between brick piers.

12.2 The wall has settled outwards and there is some rusting in railings and failure of stone copings. This is entirely repairable though probably requiring reconstruction on new foundations.

12.3 Paths are concrete and reasonably true and level.

12.4 The south boundary which is a retaining wall to the parish centre path is structurally sound but deserves some repointing in the medium term.

12.5 There is a small summer house against this wall in brickwork under profiled clay tiles. I did not inspect the interior but I could see no structural defects though a small area of brickwork of the south wall needs repointing.

INTERIOR

13. General Observations

13.1 As noted, the interior is so recently decorated and to a high standard, that there is very little to comment on.

13.2 .There is superficial cracking in the north bedroom and in the ground floor room opposite the kitchen. This appears to be simply the result of age rather than anything sinister but this should be reviewed in if cracking increases.

13.3 Shortly after my inspection significant cracking increased in the arch over the sacristy door that was not evident on my first visit.

13.4 Cracking is in the vicinity of long-standing crack in the east gable but it is a mystery why the internal cracking is clean with no sign of previous making good.

13.5 Because the movement is so sudden I recommend that a structural engineer advises on remedial action.

14. Services

14.1 I understand that heating and electrical services are in good order and periodic testing is up to date.

PART THREE

Recommendations in Order of Priority

NOTE: the budget costs are for each item as briefly described, without specification or detailed investigation and are to give a broad indication only of likely costs. Costs exclude contractors' preliminaries, high level scaffolding, professional fees and VAT. The following cost bands 1 to 6 are as our typical reports.

1a	£0 - £500	2b	£5,000 - £10,000	5a	£50,000 - £100,000
1b	£500 - £2,000	3	£10,000 - £30,000	5b	£100,000 - £250,000
2a	£2,000 - £5,000	4	£30,000 - £50,000	6	£250,000

15.	Items for Immediate Attention	Ref.	£
15.1	Consult a structural engineer regarding settlement in the sacristy passage.		
16.	Items for Attention within Eighteen Months		
16.1	Instruct roofers to report on the condition of parapet flashings when next accessing the roof for maintenance.		
17.	Items for Attention within the Quinquennium		
17.1	Repair the garden railings, probably including foundations.		
17.2	Locally repoint small areas of the summer house brickwork.		
17.3	Repoint the south boundary wall to the parish centre path.		



Figs 1, 2 and 3

Cracking in the east gable is long-standing and extends to the interior above the doorway to the sacristy as 2 and 3 following.

I cannot account for this movement and recommend that a structural engineer is appointed to assess this.



Fig 4

Minor cracking grinning through the newly decorated ceiling is 'normal' movement in a new building and does not, as it stands, indicate an underlying weakness in plaster bond but should be investigated further if it develops noticeably.



Fig 5

The pocket from the demolished glass house should be built up in matching brick.

Fig 6

Boundary railings. The infill course of bricks below the coping show movement is long-standing.



Figs 7 and 8

Outward rotation of the railings suggest that foundations have failed.



Fig 9

General view of the summerhouse.

Fig 10

A small area of failed pointing in the north wall of the summerhouse could be repointed when other works are underway, such as the boundary railings, but this is by no means urgent.



Fig 11

The east boundary wall adjacent to the Parish Centre path deserves repointing within the quinquennium and might sensibly be included with repairs to the boundary railings.