

Trevor J. Francis

Building Survey of: The former St Catherine's Church, Melyncryddan, Neath, Neath Port Talbot.



April 2023.

Clients: Mr. and Mrs. Richard Canning.

Date of Survey Inspection: A series of visits were made to inspect the church between December 2022 and April 2023. This, as Mr and Mrs Canning were also exploring various other Chapels and Churches in the locality, before subsequently reverting to this building.

Inspected by: Trevor J. Francis, MSc. MRICS, MCIOB, MCABE, Dip. Architectural Conservation (Bristol). RICS Registered Valuer; CIOB Certified Conservation Specialist (Building Surveying Practitioner).

Weather Conditions at the time of Inspection: A period of wet wintry and spring weather that has exacerbated penetrating dampness issues within many traditionally built structures.

Terms and Conditions of Engagement:

This report is undertaken in accordance with our standard terms and conditions of engagement, as outlined in our quotation and in broad accordance with the R.I.C.S. Terms and Conditions of Engagement for Building Surveyors for Church Surveys.

Limitations of this Survey

The building was surveyed principally from the ground level externally, and internally via the various floor levels, although a 3.4 metre surveyors' ladder was used to inspect selected lower level areas. Triple and double extension ladders were not used as to examine the upper parts of the building safely, scaffolding would be necessary. There is no access into the bell tower/spire or clerestory without appropriate access equipment

No access was gained to the internal surfaces of the roof-space within the Nave (due to its height and the absence of a safe access point) although we did inspect the roof surfaces externally using binoculars and digital photography and some were enlarged using computer screens. Some of the valley gutters at the rear and to the chimneystack of the boiler house towers could not be viewed fully or a subterranean room adjacent to the boiler house that was smothered in ivy.

The inspection was purely visual and non-destructive in nature. No enclosed spaces, boarded floors, inaccessible roof spaces, hidden timbers, cavities or joints have been opened for inspection, nor have any floor finishes been lifted, or any fittings moved unless explicitly stated. Mains services were inspected visually but were not tested and are currently isolated.

This report is of a general nature, typical of that required for ecclesiastical quinquennials but without costings or priorities as future use changes as these are not yet fully defined. The investigation does not obviate the need for further specialist inspection reports where appropriate, including the following areas:

- Electrical installations.
- Heating installations.
- Water supplies.
- Surface water and foul drainage.

- Lightning conductor – The lightning conductor fitted should be tested by a specialist. Downleads exist to both sides of the church,
- Fire precautions/means of escape measures, but these will need improving considerably depending on specific future uses and plan layout.
- Asbestos based materials.
- The Organ.

This survey is a summary report, as is typically required for the inspection of Chapels and Churches; it is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of minor defects or a detailed building/structural survey. Neither is it a specification or schedule for the execution of work, and any costs (if given) represent very approximate estimates only. It is strongly advised that the implementation of these recommendations is carried out under the guidance and control of a qualified ecclesiastical Architect or Chartered Surveyor with training and experience of the repair and conservation of ecclesiastical and historic buildings. Contractors, selected, must be knowledgeable, competent and experienced in conservation and traditional repair methods.

1.0 Preliminary Items

1.1 Location

The former church is located in an elevated position at the junction of Old Road and School Road, Melincryddan. This is an area of Neath that developed rapidly in the latter decades of the nineteenth century as a result of then burgeoning metal manufacturers (copper, tinsplate and iron) as well as coal mining and heavy manufacturing industries that took advantage of road, rail and canal links to support transportation via the docks at Briton Ferry and Swansea.

It has extensive views over the neighbouring hills and towards Neath abbey, Skewen and ultimately parts of Swansea.

1.2 Orientation

Although the church was not set out on a traditional formal north-south and east-west axis, for the purpose of this report, this configuration is used to describe the elevations. The South and West elevations are those most exposed to the driving wind and rain that typically blows in off the Bristol Channel coastline and up the floor of the Neath estuary and Neath valley.

Swansea and its outer environs (including Neath and Port Talbot) have the dubious privilege of claiming to be possibly the wettest urban locality within the UK. The Building Research Establishment (BRE) define the area as being '*very, very, severely exposed to driving wind and rain*'. Implications arising from climate change are only making this worse with probably 5 of the 10 wettest rainfall incidents ever being recorded over the past decade. At the time of inspecting these premises, we had experienced another winter of relatively heavy rainfall, moderate temperate climatic conditions and particularly high levels of relative humidity. This, within a decade during which many weather records have been broken. Signs of water penetration were noted internally within the former church and in places within the modern Hall which was added in the 1980's.

1.3 Accommodation

1.3.1 The Church

Lower Ground Floor – Boiler room. Vestry.

Ground Floor – Entrance Porch (North), Nave, Chancel, raised pulpit, Organ chamber.

First Floor – Belfry and clerestory that cannot be accessed.

Externally - The main Church entrance is approached via pedestrian gates leading in off the highway on Old Road and with a vehicle access on School Road that is in front of the Hall. This allocated parking provision is modest and it would be worth exploring with the Town Planners just how highway impacts can be addressed as part of your proposed changes of use. This would be needed to have been considered when applying for a future change of use. As discussed on the 2/5/23 your suggestion of an 'in and out' arrangement would need to be considered in the light of the listed Building, its setting and the impact of this at the junction of Old Road and school Road.

Please note: all references made to the front, side and rear used within this report are given as if viewing the Church looking towards the main doors on the North Porch and the Chancel entrance. This report must be read closely in conjunction with the associated photographic plates and captions as a single integrated entity.

1.3.2 The Hall

Ground Floor: Entrance corridor; Boiler Room; Ladies and Gent's toilets; Unisex toilet facility; Kitchen; Hall; Storerooms.

1.3.3 Rear entrance porch link (with stairwell leading up to the church vestry)

This has a flat roof to one area and a pitched concrete tiled roof to the staircase shaft. The walls of this are render finished with a mix of PVC doors and rendered and skim plastered cavity walling. Damp stains were evident internally at the abutment with the south wall of the church. The floor has concrete steps.

1.4 Architectural Form, Detailing and basic Construction – the church.

- 1.4.1. The church building is constructed predominantly of square-edged rock faced, Blue-Pennant sand-stone masonry walling bedded and pointed generally using a black coloured, lime/ash mortar. The contrasting stonework, of ashlar detailed Bath stone is set in a stone-dust coloured Bath stone, lime mortar mix. Bath stone is utilised to the coping details of the parapet walls, quoins, coping details and weathering's as well as door and window surrounds. Other areas are primarily of Blue Pennant square edged, sneck-faced stonework and rubblestone. The timber framed bell-cote spire is clad with natural slate and timber framing that has arts and crafts details; whereas, much of the rest of the exterior has retains neo- gothic revival influences.
- 1.4.2 Roof surfaces are covered predominantly with what we believe are Welsh slates, together with Staffordshire-blue clay ridge tiles. Fascia and barge-boards have where

arising been covered with modern PVC fascia boards by church authorities. Parapet walls are provided to the gable end details. The Bath-stone has been repaired using cement or Bath stone mix to some wall coping details but again starting to decay where they abut the Pennant sandstone masonry.

- 1.4.3 Windows are either of coloured glass, lead lights (some containing diamond quarries); feature stained glass windows; or have steel framed sashes and casements set into lancet arch ashlar stone surrounds and mullions.
- 1.4.4 The parapet detail to the Nave, Chancel and Porch areas require repair, cleaning and removal of vegetation that includes buddleia plants having self-seeded in high level masonry.
- 1.4.5 Rainwater down-pipes and gutters are inappropriate, and utilise undersized white uPVC sections some of which now require attention as they are missing or damaged. It is conceivable that if these were added after listing that the local authority could request reinstatement of larger diameter cast-iron or cast aluminium sections.
- 1.4.6 Windows to the Church where stained-glass windows arise, are in most instances covered with steel wire guards. A few damaged diamond quarry sections need replacing and hoppers eased.
- 1.4.7 Internally, most wall surfaces are plaster finished and paint coated but some of the originally applied lime putty plaster finishing coat has since been gypsum skim plaster repaired where debonding or cracked and all is today coated with impermeable vinyl paint finishes. Ceilings within the publicly accessible parts of the church are clad with stained timbers that form barrel and double barrel vault details.
- 1.4.8 Ground floors are predominantly of suspended timber construction but with some solid bearing floor slabs covered with clay quarry briquettes. to the front and rear of the Nave and Chancel laid herring-bone pattern. Repair/replacement has been made previously to the stained timber boarded central aisle and some areas beneath church pews.
- 1.4.9 Space heating is primarily via the old Concorde gas boiler located in the brick built, barrel vaulted Church basement boiler house that feeds a mix of large and small diameter, steel heating pipes and cast-iron radiators fed by an old Concorde gas boiler. The Hall has an Ideal Mexico gas boiler located within the Hall boiler house and pressed steel panel radiators that are fed by smaller bore pipework. There is also an electric immersion heater providing top-up hot water to the Kitchen.

1.5 Architectural, Archaeological or Historical status

The building is listed Grade II* as being of 'special architectural or historical significance' by Cadw/Welsh Government. This is a higher classification than most, hence the Local authority and Cadw may be more demanding in their expectations when considering change of use applications. The hall is a relatively modern prefabricated steel framed, concrete clad structure. It is however a real hybrid with squared and dressed stone to the front and a shallow pitched fibre cement slate roof-covering. To the side and rear it has lightweight exposed aggregate concrete/GRC panels hung onto the steel frame. It is likely to be argued that this 1983 structure is within the curtilage of the listed church building and your suggestion of possibly asking for this to be considered on separate merits is worth exploring. It's challenge is the modern stairwell connection.

List Description - St Catherine's Church

A Grade II* Listed Building

Coordinates

Latitude: 51.652 / 51°39'7"N; Longitude: -3.8104 / 3°48'37"W. OS Eastings: 274848; OS Northings: 196355.
OS Grid: SS748963. Mapcode National: GBR H2.748F. Mapcode Global: VH4K5.WQYX.

Entry Name: St Catherine's Church. **Listing Date:** 5 January 1989

Last Amended: 8 August 2018. **Grade:** II*

Source: Cadw **ID:** 11816

Building Class: Religious, Ritual and Funerary

Also known as: St Catherine's Church, Neath
St.Catherine's Church, Old Road

ID on this website: 300011816

Location: Prominently situated on the corner of School Road with Old Road.

County: Neath Port Talbot

Town: Neath

Community: Neath (Castell-nedd)

Community: Neath

Built-Up Area: Neath

Traditional County: Glamorgan

History

Church, built 1888-91 to designs of J. Coates Carter, in collaboration with D. M. Davies of Neath. Foundation stone in west wall records that 'this memorial stone was laid by Miss Place of Neath on a site given by Edward Evans esq. of Eaglesbush Neath March 1889'.

Exterior

Tall aisled hall church in austere early gothic style on a sloping site. Bull nosed snecked masonry, ashlar dressings, including irregular stressed quoins, continuous sill and impost bands, plain corbels and plinth. Steep slate roofs, canted over aisles. Raking gable parapets with cross finials. Tall slate-hung fleche with timber louvred band on ridge is the only external differentiation of nave and chancel.

Seven bay S aisle stops short of E end. Gabled and buttressed porch to left, with moulded pointed arched entrance with iron gates, and niche in gable apex above. Ovolo moulding to inner doorway. Similar detail to shallow porch at right end of aisle. 5 lancet windows between these porches, with hoodmoulds, impost and sill bands. Single lancets to W and E end of aisle. Similar detail to 8 bay N aisle, and taller lancets to gabled vestry at E end. Twin circular flues to chimney.

West end of nave has stepped 4 light lancet window with sill band clasped between stepped buttresses, and surmounted by lancet vent at apex; impost and sill band.

Tripartite stepped lancets to E end, with mullioned 2 light windows incorporated under low transom. Lancet vent at apex. Two tall lancets to S wall of chancel.

Interior

Lofty interior with 7-bay timber arcade; angle-braced posts on high stone bases. Second tier of similar arcading in blind clerestory, which houses extremely rare ventilation system comprising arched wooden shutters operated by rope and pulley system. Rendered panels between the shutters. Trefoiled profile to boarded wagon roof with King strut tie beams in upper tier.

Contemporary fittings include fine pulpit in banded granite, low stone chancel screen with iron traceried rail, and traceried reredos, its panels divided by tall finials. Bench pews are also contemporary.

Stained glass window in south aisle, Celtic Studios, 1970; E window by Heaton, Butler and Baine, 1911.

Reasons for Listing

Listed at grade II as a fine, early example of the work of Coates Carter, and notable particularly for the quality of its interior, with its distinctive timber arcade and roof structure, incorporating extremely unusual timber ventilation shutters. The church also retains many original fittings.*

1.6 The church building is also described within the National Monuments Record (Coflein database) of the Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments (Wales).

St Catherine's church is located on the west side of Old Road at its junction with School Road. The church was built in 1888-91 to designs of architect J.Coates Carter in collaboration with D.M.Davies of Neath. It is constructed of rock-faced local sandstone with Bath stone dressings and bands. It is an economical church of lofty proportions, a tall aisled hall church, with lancets, aisled nave and chancel differentiated only by a fleche, and a gabled porch on the south-west. Inside, timber arcades on moulded stone bases, angle braces. Similar arcading to blind clerestorey, brackets to spring of roof. Cusped profile to boarded roof with King strut tie beams to apex. Fittings include contemporary reredos, pulpit, table font and pews. The pulpit is unusual, of mauve, black and mottled grey marbles. Stained glass includes works by Heaton, Butler & Bayne (1911) and Celtic Studios (1970).

Sources: Extracts from Cadw Listing description; and J. Newman, Buildings of Wales: Glamorgan (1995), p.458.

Repairs undertaken since the last Inspection/Current overview of condition

The inspecting surveyor was not provided by Church representatives with a copy of the last quinquennial report. We suspect one has not been submitted for a number of years since the building was declared redundant as a place of worship but can see that the church was in not unreasonable condition before its closure. A recently prepared asbestos register had however been left in the building.

Proposed interior modifications would presumably have been undertaken under the ecclesiastical exemption process operated by the Church in Wales but this needs checking against specific interventions made. Parishes occasionally make unauthorised changes.

Work completed in the past two decades includes:

- Some updating of electrical circuitry;
- Re-flooring areas of the Nave beneath the pews and to aisles;
- Repositioning some pews as bench seating.
- Some repairs to roof surfaces.
- General maintenance.
- Possible crack stitching around the east window. As per our email of 25/4/2022, we recommend you enquire further of both the Parish and Diocesan Office, if at all possible.
- Production of an Asbestos Register.
- Possible repairs to the boiler chimney flaunching.

Unfortunately, rainwater ingress and the Church's closure have furthered decay evident within the buildings' as minimal repair and maintenance work has been completed in recent years.

Internally, use of cement mortar, gypsum-based plaster and modern paints have been utilised when undertaking repairs and alterations in the latter decades of the twentieth century. These are in many places accentuating the impact of salt-damage arising as a consequence of penetrating dampness and limits (breathable) vapour-open/diffusion solutions.

Rainwater down-pipes and gutters that are of PVC sections, appear undersized and in places damaged or missing. Repairs are required to some and all need cleaning. Parapet coping, soaker and secret gutters require attention as well as some slate roof replacement.

As well as the major and specific repairs identified herein, the following routine maintenance operations should normally have been dealt with on a regular basis and appropriate records kept in a maintenance logbook; but the building's closure has resulted in only minimal works that have included monitoring of stonework. The recently obtained Asbestos Register, flags areas where asbestos is known. This should be inspected before undertaking any building work and you must make sure that the Representative Body of the Church in Wales pass this onto you, in order that known asbestos fibres are not released or disturbed. Any other areas subsequently found should be suitably analysed and the Register updated.

Other items now necessary include:

(i) Servicing and updating of electrical appliances, mains and portable services.

(ii) Cleaning gulley-pot's and surface water drains.

Testing and servicing gas boilers and the heating systems.

(iv) Maintenance or replacement of fire extinguishers, upgrading emergency lighting in the hall, adding detectors etc.

Specific defects suspected or known to the Sales Agent and Church should be reported to the inspecting surveyor, prior to inspection.

2.0. Description of Construction and Condition.

2.1 EXTERIOR

2.1.1 This description must be read with the detailed annotations and photographic schedule as a single entity. Today, the building is in poor repair, despite having been updated we suspect approximately around the time the hall was built in the 1980's.

2.1. 2 'Change of Use' under the Town and Country Planning Acts and Use Class Orders, will have to be obtained in order for the building to have a suitable and sustainable future alternative use that will meet the needs of an increased range of users, if it is to have any real ultimate viable market value. This, to ensure the building (once converted) can address the needs expectations of current and future generations and allow and at least partially support its ongoing repair and updating. Listed Building Consent and Building Regulation approvals will also be required for material alterations, large scale repairs and all material changes.

2.1.3 The Church: Whilst most of the slate roof coverings do not appear to be in an unreasonable state (as we suspect the roof has been stripped and recovered at some time in more later decades), there are a number of cracked, chipped and slipped slates that need reinstating to the Nave, Chancel, Bell-cote spire and North Porch. We suspect that a recent repair has been undertaken around the chimney that rises from the subterranean boiler house on the south facing elevation but have limited angles to view this from nearby ground levels.. This needs to be checked to ensure defects that will include dampness and decay are not continuing and that the timber decay and damage evident at wall plate level in the Nave/chancel abutment is addressed properly. Lead cover flashings, soakers/secret gutters, valleys and parapet copings will presumably require repairs but the extent will only be fully verifiable once safe scaffold access or a MEWP is available.

2.1.4 The roof structure to the Nave and Chancel/Organ loft are supported by barrel vaulted presumably with a modified timber hammer beam style roof structure forming the innovative vented clerestory, that we could not access. Further investigation will need safe access to check carefully, especially where timbers are built into or abutting masonry. Slight discolouration can be seen to the soffits of some ceiling boards presumably where slates have slipped or rainwater has penetrated in the past.

2.1.5 Penetrating dampness that is contributing to the ongoing damage visible internally and externally will presumably have caused some decay of timber members; hence further invasive investigations will be necessary, and repairs should be anticipated.

2.1.6 Replacement, PVC rainwater gutters and downpipes fitted, are undersized for a building of this scale and will struggle to discharge the volume of water that frequently occurs during periods of exceptionally heavy rain patterns as experienced over the past decade, are generating. Some are damaged, have displaced fixings whereas others need cleaning. Upgrading with larger sections is recommended, but at the least, immediate repair work is required.

2.1.7 The Pennant sandstone walling is starting to approach a stage where some large but localised areas of re-pointing works are becoming necessary such as areas to the tops of the gable end walls. Limestone ashlar (Bath stone) to upper-levels, quoins and those close to the base are in places starting to decay. Repair might include use of replacement and cast reconstituted stone (coloured reinforced concrete), dentil stone repairs, and plastic stone repairs, as well as cutting and tooling back of some sections. When scaffolding is available, any loose sugaring sandstone should be lightly brushed down with a stifle bristle-headed broom to prevent it falling subsequently.

2.1.8 Cracking and opening of perp joints and resulting penetrating dampness, are factors impacting around parapet all head copings and associated concealed timbers if and where localised movement has arisen.

2.1.9 Decorative stone crosses and ridge capping formed of Bath stone to the West and East gables. should be checked (off scaffolding) to ensure they remains fully secure. Erosion of the Bath stone coping stones to the tops of the parapet walls at their exposed face and mortar joints is starting to arise and there is blowing occurring of subsequently made, plastic stone repairs, due to frost damage and weathering. Repairs are required.

2.1.10 Scarfing and repair/replacements will be necessary to the bases of some external timber doors, decaying ends of painted timber fascia boards locally as well as the lightweight 50 x 25 mm timber frame that is supporting Perspex guards that protect some leaded light windows on the West Elevation. The North Porch gates need adjusting.

2.1.11 Exterior church paths are resurfaced with tarmac and in good order. The concrete paths and paving to the Hall require localised adjustments/refacing in time. We assume that Churchyard boundaries are part of the conveyance. Periodic planned maintenance repairs and repairs and pointing is necessary to boundary walls. The originally fitted railings was presumably lost during the Second World War effort. The concrete and crazy paved paths to the Hall require cleaning of vegetation and detritus, as well as localised repairs and to the forecourt, ideally resurfacing.

2.1.12 The Hall

2.1.13 This modern building was officially opened on the 29th July 1983. It is a partly prefabricated steel-framed structure but with solid internal skim plaster finished walls presumably with concrete block used to the inner wall face. It has a steel and timber roof structure with timber purlin/sheeting rails and rafters, fibre cement slate roof coverings and decorative concrete/GRC cladding panels hung onto the walls externally. The West elevation is however faced with Bath stone clad reconstituted, prefabricated panels and insitu Pennant sandstone walling planted against the front face of the industrialised system building. We noted that the steel frame is starting to rust where a few of the panels are cracked and repairs need to be made. Some of the lower panels are kicking outwards slightly towards the base plinth that is also of a thin concrete/GRC cast finished.

Inspection of the steel frame and timber rails will need checking and priming locally. The base plates need inspecting for corrosion but suitably maintained and repaired there is no reason this structure should not have a viable long life. Thermal improvements and possibly overcladding may be required for a change of use.

The roof although a little shallow pitched is covered with blue/black fibre cement slates and is at present in good order. It has a vapour permeable underlay fitted. Levels of thermal insulation are very limited and the vinyl faced 25 mm thick fibreglass tiles that are set into a sloping suspended ceiling afford very limited thermal benefit. We recommend that the original plasterboard ceiling (that is damaged) and the sloping suspended ceiling are both taken down and a new thermally insulated ceiling with a flat soffit is fitted at a lower level to reduce the effective heated volume of the Hall. Internal or external insulation to walls and floors, as long as cold bridges are mitigated could potentially create a viable envelope for alternative domestic uses, subject to consents.

2.1.14 Level access is not available to ground floor facilities within the Church as a series of individual and pairs of steps (part of the original architectural design) arise. Some temporary but removable ramps may be required to attain inclusive access use arrangements. The Hall has a ramp to the rear porch and a Unisex toilet.

2.2 Building Services

2.2.1 These will require further enhancement and adjustment to suit new uses. Older gas boilers are installed. and connect onto a heating system and distribution pipework of pressed steel panel and cast-iron radiators, as well as some underfloor pipework that needs lagging with pipe insulation. Further work will be necessary to suit alternative uses of the building, as well as to upgrade the existing, as it has not run for a number of years. Checking these is critical to ensure the systems remain serviceable and potentially, functional. Further future repairs will be inevitable in addition to regular standard maintenance regimes.

2.2.2 The incoming mains supply electric cable splits into phases at the Hall, Church and Organ Chamber, presumably as a sub-distribution board. The mains is currently isolated.. Although much of the wiring has been replaced in the past 40 years modifications will be required. There are also some older Bakelite switches retained and these will need to be checked. Obviously, modification of wiring circuitry will be necessary to meet any potential change of use. The wiring needs inspection and testing by a NICEIC approved electrical contractor. The consumer units it is recommended for upgrading to 18th edition standards. You must at the least budget for some upgrading and alteration works if you proceed to purchase, even though much is relatively modern. An EICR (Electrical Inspection Condition Report) and electrical test certificates should be obtained together with recommendations and quotations for further improvements and alterations.

2.2.3 The emergency lighting system will need maintenance repair/upgrading in the Hall and a new system is likely to be required for the church when is in secular use. The extent will depend on the use and associated fire risk assessment and strategy.

2.2.4 Fire extinguishers fitted, will need servicing or replacing.

2.2.5 Drains: Rainwater downpipes set within and around the perimeter of the church Hall building typically discharge into inspection chambers via a mix of clay and PVC pipework. Drains require cleaning. The clay yard gulley pots around the church need cleaning and desilting. The inspection chamber cover to the drain at the front of the Hall was raised. The cover is dented and we recommend a more robust vehicle traversing cover is fitted. There is another cover and chamber in the South side path of the Hall. This was lifted and we recommend that the drains are washed through. An air-tight sealed cover within the Hallway of the Hall was not raised as it is screw fixed. Future checking is recommended.

2.2.6 Sanitary Facilities: Those in the Hall are a little basic and in need of some localised repairs/replacements. You should budget for this as necessary. Within the Church is a hand-basin and cleaners/flower arranging sink. These are old appliances that might simply discharge into the ground externally. The plumbing in the church is of some age.

2.2.7 Lead Plumbing: The domestic water supply in South Wales is acidic in nature and can dissolve lead pipework. This is considered a Health and Safety Hazard and this type of pipework should be replaced where ever found, such as in the church. The property appears to have an incoming means water supply from the public footpath on the south-west boundary adjacent to the main entrance of the hall where two stop tap ducts are situated. The Hall will have fairly modern incoming mains. The church however may have a mix of water supply

pipework and some upgrading, including replacing cold/feed and expansion tanks is likely.. Internally in small areas we noted signs of copper and steel plumbing in the boiler house. Separate metering arrangements will need to be implemented.

2.2.8 Gas: Mains gas is available and serves the two gas boilers that are of considerable age. Although energy inefficient if parts can be sourced, they can remain serviceable if in the hands of an experienced Gas Safe accredited fitter. In time replacement or alternative modes of heating will need consideration. Thermally upgrading is necessary before any attempt is made towards installing electric heat pump technologies. The Gas boilers will need testing and servicing before any attempt to use.

2.2.9 Lightning Protection: Specialist electricians can maintain and update the conductors as necessary. Upgrading to meet modern European standards will be costly and many parish churches such as this, could not typically afford it. Down straps were noted on the front and rear elevations.

2.2.10 Kitchen Equipment and other appliances: Not inspected. Gas safe and PAT accredited testing will be required for any that are to be retained.

2.3 Interior

2.3.1 The Church

2.3.1.1 As was stated, most ceilings within the Church are clad with stain coated, pitch-pine timber (T and G) boards that are typically vee-jointed. Regular inspection of these is critical to ensure that decay does not lead to significant fungal attack and loss of fabric or woodworm beetle infestation. One must accept that some repairs and replacements will be necessary. There has as indicated above, been a leak in the Nave/Chancel vestry intersection that requires checking very carefully to ensure Dry rot is not active and that the leak has since been addressed.

2.3.1.2 Floors are covered with a range of different fitted finishes and whilst most areas appear serviceable at present, repairs are required to the briquette, herringbone pattern, quarry tiled floors where these have settled. The timber sub-floor to much of the Nave and the concrete subfloor to the Hall could not be inspected as they were covered with carpet; they will need to be checked and possibly repaired as found necessary. It is possible that the Hall has a suspended concrete floor of beam and block or prestressed concrete planks.

2.3.1.3 We noticed signs of woodworm infestation in a number of locations within the building including to plywood sheeting and framing around the Organ. Concealed subfloor and roof voids are likely to be much more impacted than areas that can be readily viewed. Further investigation will be necessary when floor and roof coverings and boards are raised and localised environmental treatments applied.

2.3.1.4 Vestry (lower level)

Ceiling: Stained V-jointed boarding. Hanging areas for gowns and robes.

Walls: The church safe is set within a former fireplace opening. The locking mechanisms of the safe needs checking. We understand that there is asbestos concealed within this area. Please refer to the Church asbestos register for details.

Services: Electrical consumer and distribution boards, meter and main switch are mounted on the wall. These control church wiring. Upgrading is recommended using steel encased 18th Edition IET compliant boards.

Joinery: Lancet window with inward opening hopper glazed with lead comes. Overhauling, easing and adjusting as well as removal of ivy externally is necessary.

Sanitaryware: There is an old vitreous china wash handbasin and cleaners/flower sink.

2.3.1.5 Organ Loft (Upper Level)

Walls. These are paint coated but numerous organ pipes are secured to the wall surfaces. Window openings are also partially covered by the organ pipework. There are asbestos risks associated with the burr veneer finished pipe organ and its mechanisms.

Sound amplification systems are placed within the stairwell area of the adjoining organ chamber with modern speakers.

There is a bell pull for the bell mechanism that is set within the belfry. A galvanised steel cold water tank presumably serves as the feed and expansion system for the church heating system.

A lancet arch shape head with pitch pine door opens to knave side aisle. An additional consumer unit is set over the head of the door that leads into the main Church.

Ceiling: Covered with stained, pine timber boards.

Walls: Paint coated and plaster finished.

2.3.1.6 Nave and Chancel (Ground Floor)

Ceilings: A boarded double barrel vaulted ceiling extends through the Nave, with a single vaulted ceiling to the Chancel and Choir.

Floors: Covered with herringbone patterned clay briquette style quarry tiles to the front of the Nave and Choir but with boarded timber floors to the pew seat areas and aisles. Cast-iron heating pipes and ducts and replacement pine timber boards are set within the timber floors. Repairs have been undertaken to floorboards with considerable areas of replacement boards having been refitted. Pews are set into mortices cut into timber kerbs that separate the aisles from the seated area. Where modifications have been made to the pew seating and flooring, repositioned pews are now secured with timber batten brackets towards the rear of the church. It would be far better

if all of the former pews had been reconfigured as freestanding benches, as this would greatly simplified any risk of challenges arising with modifying the fixed pew furniture for alternative but essential new uses of the building to retain its overall sustainability. Listed Building Consent will be required to rearrange and increase flexibility within this large space, which otherwise will have very limited alternate use.

Threaded 25mm diameter steel pipework feeds a number of radiators that are set within the pew seated area.

Towards the rear west wall, sections of floor have been repaired and pews have been modified to form a seated area for meetings and small discussions.

At the rear, where the herringbone quarry tile flooring continues, there are signs of where there has been minor settlement and cracking of the tiled flooring.

Some pews have been removed and repositioned at the rear of the Church.

2.3.1.7 Structure: The Church has large timber columns supported by Forest of Dean sandstone plinths. These rise up to a clerestory gallery area. Modern, metal-halide lighting is fitted to illuminate the church. There is algae staining in places where the roof has leaked at various times and mould has occurred to the barrel vaulting which is all of dark stained timbers. Further inspection and repair of the water damage and fungal decay will be required.

2.3.1.8 The Church contains a number of 1960's commissioned Celtic Studios fine stained glass windows whilst other windows are of diamond pattern Lancet quarries.

Artificial lighting is provided via the metal-halide lighting.

Some space heating is via large diameter 3/4 inch pipework.

Within the Chancel the north wall is suffering from moisture penetration and cracking of wall plaster.

Pews to the side aisle are partly removed.

Brique tiles are cracked at the back of the Church.

A large stone font is set near the North porch entrance. A feature you will need to establish clearly as to whether it is to be retained. Paint crudely applied needs to be removed with a sensitive paint stripper that will not damage the concealed stonework of its tub.

Pitch pine doors lead through into the North Porch. Joinery has stop chamfer moulded details.

Significant delamination of paint and gypsum-based plaster coatings exists (as a result of water staining on the splayed returns to the west window mullions). Diamond quarries are inset into older rusting galvanised steel window frames.

2.3.1.9 Chancel: Towards the front of the church two steps lead up to the choir area that is located

within the chancel. The solid bearing floor is now covered with a red fitted woolen carpet that is at step nosing's is worn. Very modest choir stalls, presumably of a much later date than those in the Nave, are fitted.

The Church is wired with microphone systems and possibly has a hearing aid loop installed..

Heating distribution pipework 50mm in diameter is also present. Some large decorative cast iron radiators remain and although attractive will need to be pressure tested for leaking joints.

There is an Oak carved reredos to the Altar and stained-glass windows to the East window, above.

Chancel steps are sloping at the altar, presumably having settled beneath the fitted carpet. The altar area floor is part covered with carpet but we note red and black quarry tiles below.

Moisture penetration exists at high level to the East window wall plaster. This presumably due to leaks from the parapet upstand/coping and lead flashing/soaker details.

Cracking and crazing exist to some plaster finished surfaces, where quite possibly more recent repairs have been made.

Within the church a few memorials remain as well as Boys Brigade signage.

In part of the south aisle, a flower arranging or meeting space has been created and is formed of stained softwood screening with router moulded joinery details, indicating this was presumably added in the late 1970s/1980s.

Pendant lights that drop from ceiling are relatively lengthy.

Currently, an old freestanding piano, presumably to be left, remains within the Church.

Cracks exist in herringbone pattern quarry tiles to area in and around the Nave/Chancel steps.

Cracking of wall plaster is evident around the secondary entrance on the north elevation in the Chancel where the exposed bath-stone roof projection is leaking. The secondary door that was fitted previously by an old Church rim-lock set within a decorative timber case is now fsecured by a Chubb mortice dead-lock and night latch.

2.3.10 Pulpit

Polished marble pulpit with steps and handrail.

Small brass bible reading lantern secured to the inside of the pulpit with attached lamp.

The main Church lectern having been removed.

Small North Loggia doorway

Accessed via a few steps. Walls are of sandstone with a Bath-stone hood. Efflorescent salt exists to lime plastering. The stained oak door and frame set within a Lancet shaped opening. Cast door ironmongery is fitted.

2.3.2 Church Hall

Ground Floor: The Hall interior is accessed via a pair of PVC framed double glazed doors at the front and another pair with panic latch on the rear side elevation.. The clerestory light over the door frame has a smashed, sealed double glazed window unit. Georgian wire-cast glass is fitted to the entrance doors.

2.3.2.1 Entrance Hallway

Ceiling: This has been lowered in height and is nowadays Artex texture coated. At the time of the initial construction of the Hall, asbestos fibres may well be found to have been contained within the ceiling although it is quite possible the ceiling was added later. Sampling and testing is recommended if the asbestos register does not identify it already. You should be provided with this via the Church in Wales.

Walls: Paint coated, and plaster surfaced presumably applied onto concrete blockwork partitions.

Floor: Covered with vinyl tiles, that are now damaged.

Services: There are two pressed steel panel radiators installed, both covered with decorative MDF radiator covers. The radiators are of older pressed steel panel section, presumably dating from the original build in 1983. Emergency lighting is provided. Fluorescent strip lighting is provided within the entrance corridor. On the right side, there is a boiler cupboard.

Joinery: Skirting boards are paint coated. This appears to be a coved skirting, possibly of vinyl skirting strip, when first fitted.

2.3.2.2 Hall Boiler Room

Ceiling: Fitted with a suspended ceiling.

Walls: Paint coated, and plaster surfaced. Capillary or rising damp exists at low level to the front, presumably penetrating via the stone-faced wall cladding applied to the front. Investigation and repair is required.

Floor: Covered with damaged vinyl tiles. These we understand contain asbestos fibres.

Services: A Stelrad Ideal Mexico freestanding gas fired central heating boiler with 22mm and 25mm diameter copper pipework feeding 15mm copper pipework to radiators etc. as well as a central heating programmer and time clock are fitted. The gas meter is set on the floor with the gas service rising internally.

2.3.2.3 Gents' Toilet

Accessed via a repaired former flush ply old fire door that has satin anodised aluminium handles.

Ceiling: The suspended ceiling is damaged and water stained.

Walls: Paint coated and plaster surfaced blockwork.

Floor: Vinyl tile covered.

Services: MDF covers to radiators. Fluorescent strip light.

Joinery: Again, older, non-longer compliant, fire doors lead through into the area adjacent to the Hallway. Lightweight door closers that are not suited to fire doors are installed.

Sanitaryware: The pedestal handbasin has been changed and is no longer matching. Two urinal bowls are fixed and the splurge pipe is fed via a pull-chain 'Dauntless-type' high level cistern to flush. The cistern should be checked by a specialist as it could possibly contain asbestos fibres. The separate cubicle housing the WC has a not matching pink coloured cistern and white WC pan.

2.3.2.4 Kitchen

The hollow-core door installed is not fire resisting. Non-compliant, Georgian wire-cast glass is fitted.

Kitchen fitments: Melamine work surfaces. Wall and base cupboards are of two types that do not match. They have some damaged and missing doors. A double-drainer, stainless steel single bowl sink is set within the worktop.

Ceiling: Suspended, lay-in grid.

Walls: Paint coated and plaster finished. A serving hatch links with the main hall. This is not fire resisting.

Floor: Partially covered with cushion-vinyl floor coverings beneath which older vinyl tile floor coverings exist (all as described to the Boiler room).

Services: A hot water cylinder is set within a linen shelved airing cupboard. A wrap-around jacket is fitted to the cylinder. The Carbon-dioxide fire extinguisher was last serviced in 2013.

2.3.2.5 Main Hall

Ceiling: Covered with fissure-patterned suspended ceiling tile finishes that follow the pitch of the roof. Fibreglass-type ceiling tiles that have a limited amount of thermal insulation are set within a grid.

Walls: Painted and plastered on blockwork.

Services: Pipework boxed-in in timber skirting duct. Fluorescent strip lighting.

Joinery: Small windows are set within the south elevation walling with top hung windows to the North elevation. MDF radiator covers are fitted. The Pine, 'T and G' boarded Redwood floor is in need of sanding/stripping and refinishing. Various blockboard cabinets. Doors require repair.

2.3.2.6 Storage Areas to the rear of the Hall, presumably having been used as a Furniture and Equipment Store

Accessed via sliding doors set on tracks and which have painted plywood panels.

Walls: Lined with hardboard separating separating one of the stores. This is not fire resisting. Plywood boarding has been applied to the lower sections where we suspect impact damage has occurred previously.

Rear section accessed via a flush-ply hollow-core doors with shelving area and storage. Some 50mm x 50mm square section racking and MDF shelving.

Ceiling: Damaged, vinyl-faced fibreglass ceiling tiles. Mould in extreme left side corner. This is due to cold bridging.

Walls: Paint coated and plaster surfaced.

Floor: Covered with wood strip flooring.

Services: The pressed steel panel radiator does not have a radiator cover. This, an older panel radiator. Fluorescent strip-lighting is installed.

Joinery: Solid-core, older pattern fire doors that are no longer compliant.

2.4 Side/Rear Entrance Lobby and Stairs connecting to the Vestry

This modern structure of rendered cavity walling has a flat felt covered roof to the Rear Lobby and a pitched concrete tiled roof to the modern staircase connection. The flat roof has deteriorating green mineral finished welting edge details and before long, its flat roof will need to be recovered.

Ceiling: of suspended, (now damaged) inverted Tee section drop in grid. The plywood roof deck is not thermally insulated. Suspended ceiling tiles of fibreglass form pre-bonded to the vinyl finish.

Walls: Paint coated and plaster surfaced. Plaster patch repair work is required where damp exists

at the top of the stairs. Water damage exists on the stairwell. Patch repairs are evident. We noted moisture bridging to this section which is abutting the vestry. This is a vulnerable detail at its intersection with Church. Moisture has penetrated the roof previously and Gypsum sulphate crystal and water stains exist on wall plaster that remains damp in some places, but not others.

Floor: Concrete steps lead up to vestry. A mop-stick handrail is installed.

Services: Emergency lighting is installed. Rusting double panel steel radiator mounted to wall. Fluorescent strip-light.

Joinery: PVC window with galvanised steel wire guard. A pair of PVC framed part glazed/part panelled doors with panic latch. PVC door to rear yard area.

2.5 Staircase

Ceiling: Suspended ceiling with fluorescent strip light mounted.

Walls: A lancet-shaped archway leads up and through into the ground floor of the church. Abutting walls have been patch repaired using Gypsum plaster that is not moisture tolerant. There is a mixture of old and new construction evident at the intersection.

Floor: The concrete floor landing and stairs leads onto a timber boarded floor that is covered with hardboard sheeting, overlying the suspended timber floor of the vestry.

2.6 Boiler House

This has paint coated common brick walls and vaulting. Slight signs of stepped diagonal movement cracking were noted due to long term settlement.

The exterior steps require the removal of vegetation and detritus from the overgrown banking. Another subterranean void could not be accessed as the door was smothered with thick Ivy strands and there was no key for the lock. This needs opening and inspecting.

All Ivy growth on the church needs removing in accord with SPAB guidance

2.7 The Organ

The large pipe organ fitted is an attractive period feature with some grain veneered panels. Obviously, the organ was not tested or used. Potentially, it appears worth retaining at least as a decorative feature (even if not functional) however, the blower box and mechanism will contain asbestos fibres. Please refer to the Church in Wales asbestos register.

2.8 Memorial plaques and contents

The church retains a number of commemorative plaques, memorials, timber notices and a few ecclesiastical features. The interior remains however relatively plain. We suspect the church

may wish to remove some fittings or ensure that others are not disposed of within the antique or similar decorative trades. Some objects and contents have already been removed.

3.0 Other items

3.1 Asbestos

Many properties when first constructed contained asbestos materials. We noted such materials, and the Asbestos register draws attention to others. Please refer before occupying. Whilst asbestos if found is not normally a risk, if it is left undisturbed; any work to this material (for example, drilling, sawing, sanding, breaking or removal) can pose a serious hazard to health. You should take specialist advice before undertaking any work to any materials or use of apparatus that could, potentially, contain asbestos products. If removed, it should be disposed of, in accordance with current regulations. This can only be identified by a specialist NATLAS accredited laboratory, working in conjunction with a Licensed, Asbestos Removal Contractor. The existing organ will have asbestos within its mechanism. As indicated, you should enquire and be provided with the recently updated Asbestos register for the building.

3.2 Timber and Damp Treatments

Within a property of this type and age there will inevitably be many buried or concealed timbers susceptible to timber decay. Wet rot, dry rot and insect attack will impact a property of this period, particularly one in disrepair. Buried timber joists, plates and lintels are especially vulnerable where they are in contact with wet/damp masonry walls. Further investigations will be necessary from scaffolding (particularly at high level) but the full extent will only become visible and identifiable once repairs are in progress. All potential sources must be addressed as far as is practicable within the context of an ecclesiastical structure such as this. Effective repairs, ventilation and maintenance are essential.

3.3 Woodworm

Woodworm is discernible within some of the internal timberwork. A timber treatment company should be asked to investigate and quote for essential, necessary work but we recommend this is on a localised basis with as benign as possible treatments utilised.

3.4 Penetrating and Rising Dampness

Significant moisture meter readings were identified within the ground floors and parts of the upper areas. Penetrating, falling and rising dampness in a property of this type, age and location is almost inevitable. The church was built with a slate and asphalt damp course, as can be evidenced on the North Elevation. Remedial damp-proof courses are often of limited effectiveness when installed retrospectively within properties of this form and it is not likely to be possible to lower all exterior paths and stepped areas. It is likely that some dampness issues will remain within the building even after repair and alteration; hence modifications and new

timbers, should wherever practicable be set away or isolated from the exterior fabric of the old church building.

Within a property of this type and age there will inevitably be many buried or concealed timbers that are susceptible to timber decay. Wet rot, dry rot and insect attack will affect a property of this period, particularly if it should fall into disrepair. Buried timber joists, plates and lintels are vulnerable where they are in contact with wet masonry walls. Further investigations are required and localised precautionary timber treatments should be applied. Where fungal decay is currently active it must be dealt with promptly. It is essential you investigate where there has been a serious leak and also access the Clerestory and bell spire.

3.5 Condensation

Signs of condensation and cold bridging was noted in a number of areas, especially to the rear of the Hall and parts of the Church. Mould growth should be suitably treated and removed.

3.6 Lead rich paint and varnish

This like almost all traditional buildings contains many surface areas where lead rich paint will need to be removed or prepared and recoated; all in accord with the 'Lead at Work' regulations. Corroding steel sections need to be repaired, treated and all metalwork redecorated.

3.7 Vegetation

This must be killed and removed wherever found growing on the external façade. Failure to do so will cause serious future damage to the masonry. At present vegetation is also growing close to and adjacent to the surface of paths and causing slip and trip hazards for building users. Ivy needs cutting back and allowed to die before attempting to pull off carefully.

3.8 Accessibility for all (Users)

Although the site is steeply sloping the ground floor of the Church and Hall are relatively flat but some modifications to the former will need to be made to ensure that it is accessible to wheelchair users or those who rely considerably on the use of walking aids. There are steps to the front entrance doors that may need thought given, as to how to make the site more accessible. The Vestry and Organ loft have stairs.

3.9 Legal Matters

We recommend that your Solicitor is asked to ascertain items raised within the report and advise you accordingly on the legal interpretation together with the covenants of the Church of Wales. Clarification as to maintenance responsibilities will be necessary. You will we presume be responsible for all wall boundaries. That on the East is the one requiring earlier attention but vegetation and repointing is required generally.

3.10 Coal Mining and Environmental matters

The property is within an area where there have been past coal mining activities. Whilst deep mining subsidence does not appear to have impacted we recommend that you obtain a combined Coal Authority and Radon Report carefully considering the comments and addressing if necessary when refurbishing and altering the structure. Signs of localised settlement and differential thermal and moisture related movements was noted, as well as suspected thrust from the arch shaped openings, and roof trusses. Some minor, localised crack stitching may be required when wall plaster and render is removed.

3.11 Ecology

Whilst we did not identify signs of protected species such as 'Bats', we are not qualified to investigate and report on this. Equally, there was very limited opportunity to inspect high level areas. We could not access the ridge gabled roof area where vents are set on the West and east walls wall to allow for a more detailed inspection. Given the proximity to trees and watercourses it would be prudent to obtain a Report from a suitably qualified Ecologist in the spring or early summer, prior to the carrying out of any repairs, as it is illegal and a criminal offence to disturb or kill protected species and statutory consents will be delayed if a report is not available. Planners typically require ecology reports when reviewing planning applications and these are normally **only obtainable between May 1st and early September**, due to bat hibernation cycles.

3.12 Building Regulations and Town and Country Planning Matters

As a listed Grade II* Church/Assembly building, there would need to be town planning, listed building and building regulation applications made, for all material changes of use or material alterations that affect the structure, fabric and use. To continue the existing use as a 'Place of worship/congregation' is unlikely to cause major concerns and challenges, but any alternative use (and particularly increased use of commercial-based facilities) would need to consider seeking formal advice and the making of a range of applications to the Authorities. Alterations to the building structure that are not purely of a direct repair and maintenance nature will require Building Regulation applications to be submitted.

The Church has only limited on-site parking at present in front of the Hall and the corner site and listing limits opportunities to create much more. One would need to check whether the currently designated car parking spaces actually received planning consent via the local authority as the Church in Wales cannot grant consent for external alterations (as opposed to repairs) to their buildings, despite the Faculty process that they have ecclesiastical exemption powers to administer.

Change of use to a mixed one, whilst retaining the external fabric might, if a very low-key activity, not incur too many planning challenges; however, this can only be verified when the the application for Planning Permission, is made as a formal submission. Listed Building Consent will be necessary. It would however be worthwhile discussing matters with Neath Port Talbot Council and Cadw if possible as we would hope they would be highly supportive of.

5.14 Contents and Fittings

The Chapel retains pitch pine pews and oak choir stalls to the ground floor. Re-ordering of the interior is necessary to the ground floor to generate a sustainable future for the building. The case will need to be made clearly in a Statement of Significance and Justification.

5.15 Fire Protection

The church building is not fitted with automatic fire detection systems, alarms or emergency lighting. These would normally be required as part of any alternative use of the building for purposes such as commercial concerts, community hall, offices, etc. Consideration should be given as part of a new 'Fire Risk assessment and strategy' and Building regulation submissions for proposed changes of use. The fire extinguishers have not been serviced regularly and this must now be addressed as a priority or they will need to be discarded. Fluorescent or illuminated fire safety exit signs should be installed, together with the upgrading of partition walls and doors, removal of any glass that is not fire-protected and the fitting of self-closing fire doors between compartments. Fire doors in the Hall are not to the modern standards required today.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This is a substantial redundant church that is listed (but which hopefully affords some flexibility when making alterations), but as you appreciate, it is statutorily protected at Grade II* which is quite a significant rating for the locality.

Set in a former industrial working community with views overlooking neighbouring hills, the salt marsh and Neath River, it is within an area where tourism and leisure activities are not especially strong, albeit the authority encourage tourism and leisure generally, it has to be viewed in the context of recent Welsh Government proposals for guesthouses, holiday lets and Air B n B'.

The sale includes only a reasonable portion of garden amenity areas although there is also the former child's play area at the rear of the Hall.

Access for builders' plant and the storage of materials, skips and waste material arising during building operations, will be a little challenging when proposing and undertaking major repairs on the North and East elevations particularly.

We have not seen sight of all specific restrictive covenants applicable to the conveyance of the church from the Church in Wales Representative Body, or what items they wish to remove from either the fabric or fittings. Presuming your proposed use will be of a mixed residential/commercial artistic application, suspect their covenants will be achievable.

There do not appear to be any 'Gardens of remembrance' cremation scattered remains on the site or burials but you must verify.

You should obtain competitive quotes for all necessary work you cannot undertake yourselves but suggest that much of the work necessary will need to be undertaken by yourselves possibly with the help of family and friends, if available. This to create the possibility of making a financial return and retain viability (at least in the short term).

The following list of repairs is not intended to be fully comprehensive and should be read in conjunction with the main body of the report and the directly associated annotated photographic slides:

Externally

- Localised repointing of wall elevations and boundaries using lime based mortars.
- Repairs, and re-caulking of leadlight windows of all forms, as well as the currently damaged quarries, easing hoppers, etc.
- Cleaning, pointing and enhancement of parapet walls including those to the tower.
- Removal of wild sown and spreading vegetation.

The Church

- Obtain listed building consent for change of use and for all alterations, remodelling proposed.
- Consider enhancing vehicle parking where practicable and permitted.
- Replace slipping slates.
- Reset flashing details as found necessary to parapet wall and exterior wall abutments. Clear vegetation from parapet and point up as required.
- Undertake exterior redecoration and minor carpentry repairs.
- Reinstall rainwater gutters and consider in the future replacing the gutters with more substantial sections, subject to listed building consent.
- Localised repointing of stonework using traditional lime-based mortars to both sandstone and limestone areas.
- Identify if possible, via the legal searches, the extent of any crack stitching repairs undertaken to the East elevation. We presume that this is only to the areas around the window jambs where evidence of thermal and moisture movement has arisen. We have at present discounted the under-pinning comment made as per our email and discussion as there is no obvious sign of very significant cracking to warrant it.
- Consider if there is a need for any inclusive access ramps associated with your proposed future use of the church.
- Replace broken glass quarries and panes to windows. Caulk lead comes and seal around windows as necessary with lime mortar and putty/silicone as necessary.

Interior

- Clean the interior washing down before redecorating throughout after addressing moisture damaged and defective wall plaster.
- Reconfiguration of the layouts and functions (subject to obtaining listed building consent).
- Investigate decay at high level adjacent to the boiler house chimney and the valley abutment

between the Nave and Chancel wall-plate areas.

- Access the upper-level clerestory and other concealed areas elsewhere for further inspection and repair.
- Complete internal redecoration.
- Minor repairs to floors.
- Inspect and test mechanical and electrical services and upgrading as appropriate and deemed necessary.
- Remove existing horrendous paintwork from the font.
- Localised plaster patch repairs.
 - Subterranean boiler room: Consider obtaining quotes for parts for the Concord gas-fired central heating boiler. As indicated, parts may be difficult to source and it would be worthwhile attempting to find a gas-fitter with the skills and knowledge together with the skills to repair rather than recommend replacement of the boiler which will be an expensive operation.
 - Vestry organ chamber address or encapsulated Asbestos.

Church Hall

- Obtain planning and listed building consent for future intended changes of use
- Address dampness penetration.
- Serviced and repair the existing ideal Mexico gas-fired balance flue boiler and heating system. Ensuring that replacement parts are available to avoid having to replace the installation.
- Add effective roof and wall insulation together with false ceilings.
- Consider exterior wall insulation to the existing GRC/concrete exposed aggregate cladding panels and upgrade thermal efficiency generally.
- Examine the steel stanchions and recoat/repair as necessary.
- Encapsulate asbestos wherever existing. Please refer to the church in Wales asbestos register but was obtained in recent times.
- Subdivide the church hall to suit your proposed new applications.
- Update Mechanical and Electrical services as deemed necessary.
- Rear Lobby and link steps to church - consider enhancing the lead flashing abutment detailing and possibly removing gypsum plaster within the immediate locality of the old church building where capillary moisture will probably otherwise always cause issues.
- Refit parts of the interior for new applications.

Grounds

- Supply and fit new inspection chamber cover.
- Clear vegetation from paths banking etc.
- Explore possibility of additional alternative vehicle parking.

Explore in conjunction with the Neath Port Talbot County Borough planners the potential for enhancing vehicle car parking on the combined site and consider the possibilities of separating the church hall from that of the listing as necessary. These two objectives unless carefully proposed are contradictory of each other.

To summarise, this is a large and reasonably attractive premises for its purchase cost but is not

without its challenges. Suitably and sensitively repaired/upgraded it could have a sustainable future, providing a range of appropriate uses can be found and Town Planning and Listed Building consents obtained and Building Regulation demands met. Conversion of the Church Hall will generate its own separate challenges that will entail thermally upgrading the fabric and enhancing ventilation to meet changing Building Regulatory demands.

If we can provide further design or technical assistance in the future, please do not hesitate to contact. We would be pleased to meet with representatives from either the Church or NPTCBC authorities at a mutually convenient meeting, in the day or evening; to discuss further, as we take no pleasure in seeing buildings of this type, that are part of the belief, values, culture and architectural heritage, of Wales, challenged and viable new uses should be supported.

Trevor Francis

Please refer to the Annotated Photographic Plates for more detail.