

The former St. Catherines Church and Hall, Neath.

North and West elevations.

- The Church.



The former St. Catherines Church and Hall, Neath.

The view from further up Old Road looking towards the church main entrance and the one-way traffic system.



Buddliah at high levels needs removing. Before major structural damage arises.



The former St. Catherines Church and Hall, Neath.

The south and west elevations of the church and the west elevation of the Hall.

The Hall. Vegetation needs to be removed.



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Repairs will be required to the boundary walls and pointing must be undertaken using a lime-based mortar to a planned maintenance programme, possibly commencing on the East boundary of rubble walling.



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There are a number of slates becoming loose or have already slipped on the main roof surfaces to the chancel as they have to the bell tower. Matching slates will need to be sourced. A few are secured with tingles.

Slipping slates at high level, including to the bell-cote.



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The ground surrounding the church is generally well maintained however there is some wild seeding of vegetation particularly close to the church hall. Repointing of the church boundary walls is something that will increasingly become necessary.



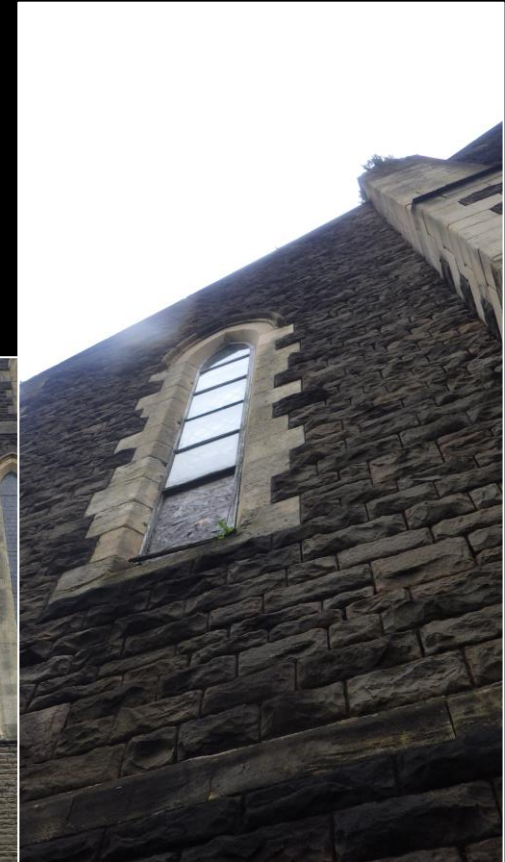
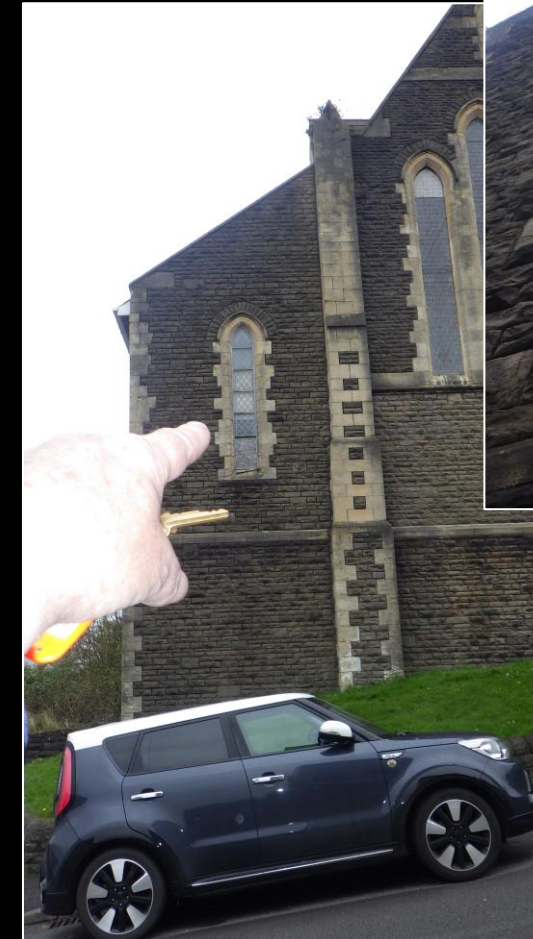
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Close to the abutment with the Hall, vegetation has grown wild on the adjacent banking and needs cutting back. The ivy should be removed in accordance with SPAB guidelines.



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The West elevation. Repairs are necessary to the Lancet windows to the aisle and particularly that nearest the south-aisle where USB sheets have been inserted



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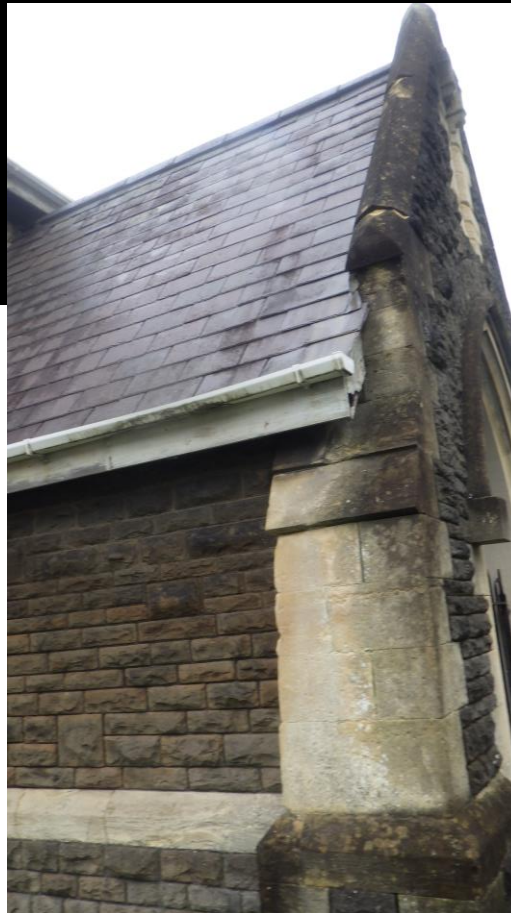
The existing rainwater downpipe on the porch needs to be reinstated. The church of Wales utilised white PVC rainwater gutters and downpiping which today would not be deemed acceptable. Whether listed building and planning consent was obtained in the past for these modifications needs to be clarified. Potentially you could become liable for replacing with cast sections if consent was not obtained and a planning permission not obtained since listing.



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Spalling Bath stone and possibly some mortar patch repairs have been undertaken previously to the Bath stone coping details.

Some states have slipped to the porch and need replacring. The stepped threshold approaches to the church are not wheelchair friendly. The stone slab step at the porch entrance has been topped with concrete many years ago but is now delaminating. Redressing of the stonework carefully by hand bolstering is recommended.



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Weathered stonework requires lime-mortar repointing in localised areas using the Ty Mawr Lime Companies Blaenavon dark mix or similar approved.



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There appears to be a random piece of corrugated fibre cement (possibly asbestos containing) left within the church grounds. This should be double bagged and removed safely with specialist advice obtained.



The south elevation, in part.



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Some of the pillars have moved slightly and are leaning differently. Adjustments would be necessary to view the pillars or their hinge point fixings, in the event that gates are ever reinstated and remounted.



The East elevation wall which it is claimed crack-stitching has occurred. There are some possible locations for this but obvious signs cannot be clarified from ground level. We noted that some of the ashlar stonework and the associated quoin stones have moved due to differential thermal and moisture effects in the past. A crude brown sealant has been used to caulk some of the previously open joints. We have no details of exactly what was undertaken. When we met with Mr Adam Harris of RJ Chartered Surveyors recently, he indicated that the possible reference to underpinning of the wall made, may actually be a reference to a large concrete slab which sits adjacent. We cannot see that this is likely to be associated with an underpinning scheme. The Diocese should be asked if the scheme of this magnitude was undertaken and for the details of the faculty that should have been obtained. We suspect that the local parish or the Representative Body are simply confused about this large slab that might possibly have been placed there for an earlier oil storage tank or a temporary structure such as a store shed. However, without records or excavating we are not able to verify further. The wall does not appear to be structurally unstable in its current format and we would be surprised if a major underpinning exercise had been undertaken to this East elevation wall. Repointing of stonework at high level is required.



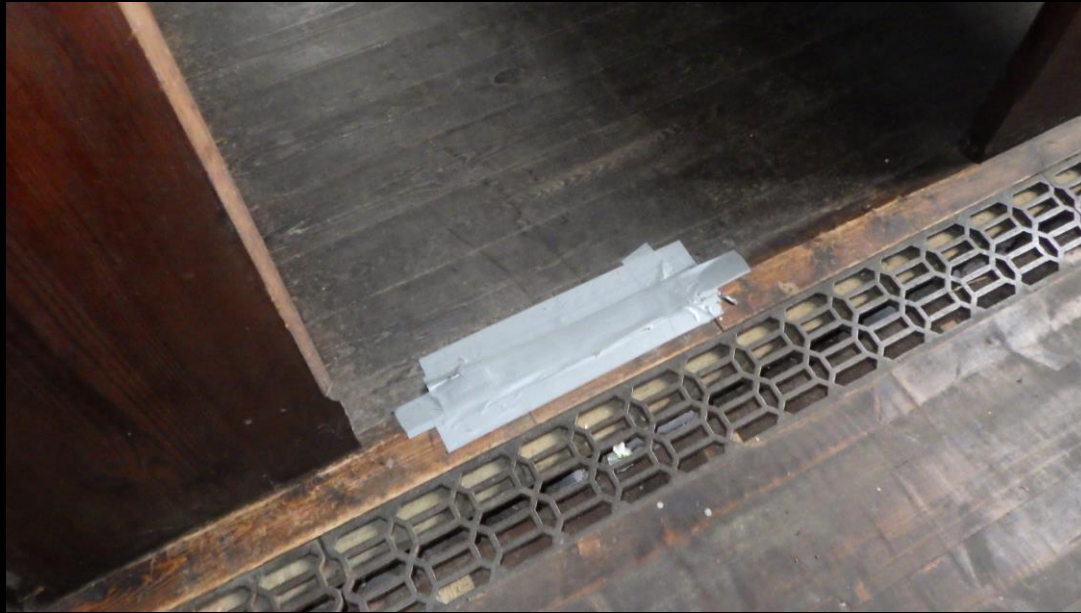
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Significant water penetration is occurring via the Bath stone mullions and the splayed reveals of the East window. Repointing of the stonework externally, removing patch repaired plaster and making good with lime-based mortar, caulking around the windows and addressing the secret gutter/soaker abutments to the high level parapet walls above is required in addition to line mortar repointing externally with a Blaenavon dark mix lime-based mortar.



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Some of the pews internally have been cut out to allow for modifications to the internal layout of the church. Whether a faculty consent was obtained for this is unclear. The pews are mortise and tenoned into the kerb trimmer that runs alongside the aisle floors. Your conversational reference previously to benches is not correct. The pews have been removed by the parish possibly without faculty consent and are now located towards the rear of the Nave and formed as a meeting space.



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Images of the nave and chancel.



Rainwater has been penetrating at the intersection of the barrel vaulting of the Nave, South Aisle and chancel. High level access will be necessary to investigate. Some fungal decay is suspected and will need to be addressed urgently once scaffolding is available.



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Access to the high level clerestory and bell tower was not possible.



Water damage at the valley intersection with the rear gable needs investigating and rectifying.



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Repairs appear to have been made to the chimney and roof valley intersections. These can only be checked properly via scaffold or drones that are not readily suitable for use in the context of an urban location.

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Interior of the church. Repairs have been made to the central aisle and some of the boarded areas on which the pews are mortice and tenoned into timming kerb details.



The pulpit and stepped approach to the chancel.



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Repairs are required to the herringbone pattern quarry tile flooring where cracking has arisen.



The central and North aisles of the church. The timber posts supporting the roof structure appeared quite basic above the stone base plinths, but are detailed in an early art deco influencing style. Although we suspect cost savings were occasioned when the structure was being built the claim is that it was the developing style of the architect who was prominent in ecclesiastical builds in South Wales.



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The chancel and sacristy.



The choir and organ.



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The attractive stained-glass Celtic Studios, West window. Some moisture penetration is arising from high level and again the secret gutter/soakers and wall parapets need to be cleaned and repaired.

The choir seating is very basic and likely to be more recent.



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Amplification systems were incorporated within the church. It is worth checking whether any of these are connected to a hearing aid loop.



There are various distribution boards set around the church including this one within the organ loft.



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The Font has been crudely paint coated and we would recommend that this is removed using suitably benign paint strippers.

Centre: Moisture penetration is passing through some exterior walls. Damp is also due to rising dampness impacts at a lower level.

Below right: the organ and its maker's mark. It is highly likely that asbestos-based products will have been utilised within its blower box and possibly some of its piped and ducted mechanisms.



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A decorative cast-iron radiator to the large bore heating system running within the church.



The West window. Water penetration at high level. This as indicated, due to the parapet and flashing details above.



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Hairline cracking and crazing of wall plaster and paint finishes.



Retained ecclesiastical finishes and fittings exist at present. You should check the inventory to establish whether, this is to be retained.



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Cracking to the briquette, herringbone pattern, quarry tile flooring, due to minor settlement.



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The gates to the South porch require a welder/blacksmith to adjust slightly in order to be able to close effectively. The floor of the South porch is inappropriately covered with riven faced concrete paving slabs.



Below: the lightning conductor from the bell tower.

Rainwater downpipes are relatively undersized for such a large roof and will be prone to blockages. Where the chancel doorway opens on the North elevation there is a Lancet arch shaped loggia projection. This, provides a weathering detail to the door. The Bath stone requires removal of vegetation, repointing where water penetration is arising internally within the open loggia space that provides a secondary stepped access approach to the church.



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Timber staircases to the organ loft and between the vestry and main church respectively.



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The electric meter and main fuses. Some of the consumer units and fused switches will need to be upgraded.



The church safe which has been inserted in to what we suspect is a former fireplace opening. We noted that the safe was labelled with asbestos signage. Its asbestos-based materials should not be disturbed unless it is removed safely by a Licensed specialist.



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Below: The lobby link between the Church and Hall. The radiator is corroding and needs redecorating.



Centre: the fissured pattern vinyl and glass fibre lined ceiling tiles are damaged in many areas and deflecting in others. Replacement is becoming necessary throughout the Hall. We noted that in areas there had previously been a plasterboarded ceiling that is damaged above..

Right: the swing type fire doors fitted to the church hall do not meet modern fire safety standards.



The former St. Catherines Church and Hall, Neath.

The large storeroom at the back of the hall.



There are signs of mould in the far left corner of the storeroom that needs to be washed down and redecorated. The reason for this is rather unclear at present but significant dampness was not noted. This is possibly due to storage of equipment within this position at sometime in the past. It should be monitored however, and interventions made, if required.



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The church hall viewed from the rear. And looking towards the principal entrance.

Whilst the structure of the hall has GRC/Concrete cladding applied externally to the steel frame and timber purlin/sheeting rails supporting the now fibre cement, slate covered roof surface, the inner face of the walling is skimmed and rendered and presumably built of concrete blockwork walling. Steel panelled radiators are typically enclosed in MDF radiator covers to the main hall sections. The radiators the left exposed in secondary areas.



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Below: The hall as viewed from the front looking towards the rear.

Right: the kitchen area where some repairs are required to kitchen cabinets. There is also a small airing cupboard providing presumably hot water for the kitchen facility. An immersion heater is incorporated.



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Within the Gents toilet, there is a pull-down chain to the urinal flush. The Dauntless type cistern should be treated with care and not disturbed as it is possibly containing asbestos-based materials.



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The front elevation of the hall and the date of its dedication. The stone façade to the front is purely an attempt to blend it with that of the church building adjacent.

- The Hall.



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Replacement PVC clad windows have been inserted.



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The vehicle parking space associated with the hall. This is limited and may have a bearing with regards to planning applications for change of use of the hall and adjacent church building.



The front entrance approach to the Hall. As indicated the stonework to the front is purely a decorative façade. Moisture penetration is occurring internally within the Hall boiler room where this abuts the plaster-finished internal skin constructed within the Hall. Some of the applied cladding panels are misaligned and may need resecuring.



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Responsibility for the management and maintenance and liabilities associated with the church boundary wall will inevitably remain with the purchaser of the church and hall. Repointing and repair works will be necessary.

The Hall viewed from the rear, looking down the left side path.



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Perimeter areas of the Hall. There is not a ramped or mounded approach to the main entrance but there is to the rear Lobby.



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The right side path to the hall is crazy paved.
The roof is shallow pitched and has been re-
slated with modern fibre cement slates.



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There is a flat felt roof section over the abutment rear lobby of the Hall and the stepped link into the vestry of the church.

Repairs are required to the bargeboard, fascia and soffit, detailing and within a relatively short time recovering of the flat felt roof is likely to be necessary.



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Ivy vegetation growing on the south elevation wall of the church needs to be removed. There is a concrete tiled roof to the linking stepped area. The lead cover flashings are inset partly into the former church opening. Detailing is poor and vulnerable at this point. Water stained wall plaster was evident internally at the abutment.



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The hall and its right side entrance. Thermal insulation levels are not good and will need to be upgraded as part of any change of use. The detailing of this is important and ideally we would suggest an external wall insulation system is added however these are fraught with challenges particularly at eaves details where there is an insufficient overhang and cold bridging can readily occur. Modifications would be required.



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Hall. The floor needs refinishing.



Kitchen. A replacement door needs to be fitted to the kitchen cupboard. Fire doors installed within the hallway are not to later standards and much will depend on your future remodelling of the whole building as to where changes will need to be made. This will be subject to obtaining planning and building regulation consents for all intended new uses.



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There is a cracked top to the toilet cistern.

There is also a unisex WC.



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The electrical consumer unit within the hall is not to the latest standards and ideally would now be upgraded. Similar comments apply in the Church.

There are drains with air-tight sealed covers running within the Hall building. These were not raised.



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The door is repaired.



Cracked sealed glass unit that needs replacing.



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The boiler room in the Hall. The Ideal Mexico boiler is an older variant. These can be quite durable but are less energy-efficient than a modern boiler. Regular servicing and maintenance is critical to their longevity.

Centre and right: rainwater penetration through the sandstone façade to the front elevation of the Hall is damaging the plaster within the boiler room. There may also be some bridging of the damp proof course, evident.



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Kitchen areas are in need of upgrading.



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A variety of fittings and linings are provided to the Hall. Many will now need to be upgraded further.



The former St. Catherines Church and Hall, Neath.

Above the ceiling tiled area within the entrance areas we noted an older plaster boarded ceiling that is damaged. Levels of thermal insulation will need upgrading.



The concrete apron to the entrance approach and parking area. A variety of cold water stop tap duct is set within this. The apron is undulating and has settled slightly.



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Panic latches are fitted to the fire escape within the rear Lobby and staircase link between the Church and Hall.

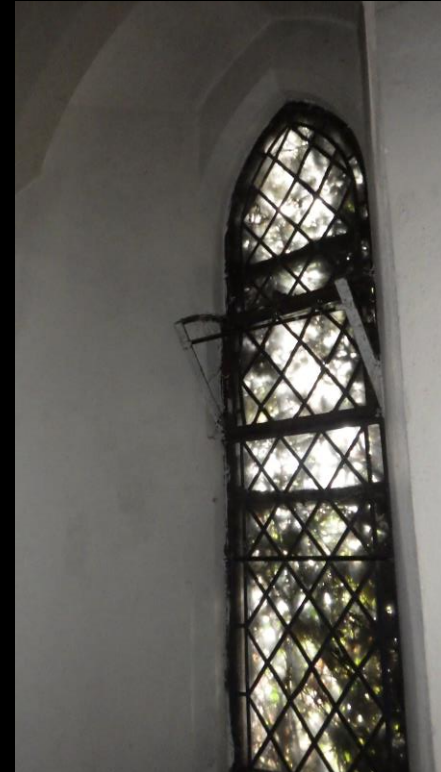


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The cleaner 'ssink and wash hand basin within the vestry area.



One of the Lancet windows is smothered with ivy vegetation. Top hung inward opening, vents will require easing and adjusting.



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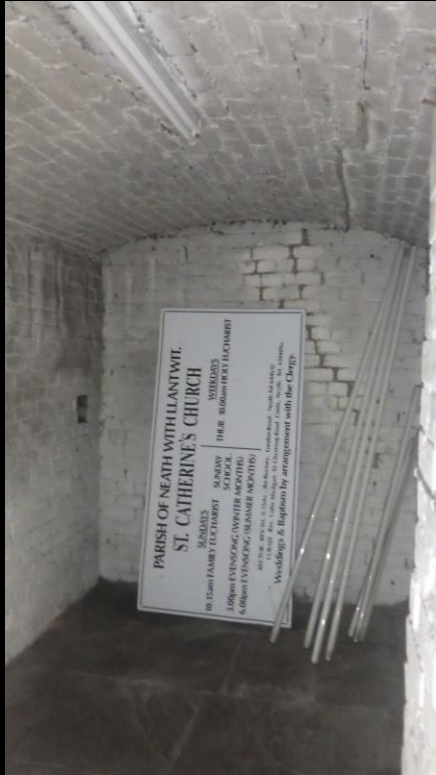
Garden area to the rear.



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The Church Boiler house.

Pipes need insulating. The Gas boilers inspecting and servicing. Many gas fitters would recommend replacing. We suggest give the limited long term likely use that you enquire as to the availability of parts as replacement is unlikely to be cost viable.



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Ivy overgrown doorway that needs opening.



At the staircase link the lead flashing cuts across a former door head. This is far from ideal.



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