

Dunadd Community Enterprise

Conservation Assessment - Kilmartin Church



North Elevation, Kilmartin Church

Kilmartin Parish Church, Kilmartin Village (excluding Scheduled Monument No 13316 'Kilmartin Churchyard, Crosses, Tombstones and Neil Campbell Tomb' (LB11490)

Category: B

The present church, which stands in the N part of the churchyard and probably occupies the position of the earlier ones, was built in 1834-5 to the designs of J Gordon Davis, the London architect who had been employed at Kilmory Castle (No. 169) and elsewhere in the area.

[Surrounding site: Kilmartin Churchyard, crosses, tombstones, & Neil Campbell Tomb (SM13316)]

Prepared by

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External

The church is an aisled rectangle, 19m from E to W by 12m over all, with a projecting W tower measuring 5.8m by 7m, and is built of coursed rubble with dressings of schist ashlar and yellow sandstone. The openings throughout have four-centred arches with moulded hoods and diamond-ledged window-panes; the four windows in each aisle are single lights, while those of the clerestory are of two lights with quatrefoils in the spandrels. The main roof has overhanging eaves but the aisles have low crenellated parapets and stepped eaves, and the E gable is marked by a sandstone moulding with face-masks at the base and a bracket at the apex, supporting the tall crocketed finial of a stepped parapet. The centre bay of the E front contains a tall three-light Perpendicular window, divided by buttresses from the aisles, which have two-leaf doors and small blind lancets above them. The tower has angle-buttresses in the lower half, and windows like those of the clerestory at first-floor and bell-chamber levels, with ground-floor doors to Wand N. In the S wall there is a large blank panel with scrolled surround, and a moulded course with foliations and angle-masks marks the base of the crenellated parapet. Canmore

Key:

- U – Urgent work to be carried out within the next 12 months
- E – Essential work to be carried out in the next 5 years
- D – Beneficial but can be delayed
- M – Ongoing maintenance

Repairs

U – Urgent work to be carried out within the next 12 months

- Pointing at sandstone mouldings at doors and windows: carefully rake out joints and re-point using sharp sand and St Astier NHL 5 sand/lime 2.5:1 mix by volume, flush.
- At exposed foundation stone work (mainly east elevation), at buttresses, re-point as above.
- Check all rainwater downpipes for cracking, replace with like for like as required.
- All gutters and down pipes at clerestory to be checked for cracking and vegetation growth, particularly on south elevation. Replace with like for like as required.
- Lead roofs to aisles to be checked and repaired with code 8 lead, as existing. Parapet gutter and overflows check for blockages.

E – Essential work to be carried out in the next 5 years

- External surface water drainage to be exposed, traps added at ground level and route to soakaway exposed and repaired as required. Drainage channel to be installed in front of south door in east elevation as west door.
- Cast iron lights, re glazed as required with appropriate glass (thickness & quality). Some windows may need removed and refurbished, by specialists. In particular the east tracery lights and some single lights in the north elevation.



North Elevation, showing decayed window & damaged downpipe



Steps at west

Additional Points

E – Essential work to be carried out in the next 5 years – all of below.

East (Front) Elevation

Remove vegetation at crow steps.

South Elevation

Cast iron fresh air inlets (FAI) to be fully exposed.

Re-point crack in mortar joints at hopper.

Boiler house – decision re demolition/replacement dependent on plant required.

Glazing in tower elevation requires attention.

Bell tower louvres (on all sides) require attention – stabilisation or replacement.

Crack from top parapet, through cornice, vertically on west side of windows, then diagonally below lower double window: There is a flue from the vestry fireplace rising up the tower to a cancelled chimney pot in the parapet.

This is the cause of the crack and may also show on the inner face of the wall in the stair well. While this is a concern the positive is that the cause is known. The Structural Engineer will be able to advise as to a suitable repair method.

Protection to stained glass window to be removed. Good practice installation of ventilated protected glass and repositioning of stained glass panel to be carried out.

West Elevation

Back steps poor.

Overflows from flat roof in cornice to be checked for blockages.

Must be an internal down pipe – nothing visible from outside.

Internal

In the interior the aisles are marked by four-bay arcades with wide arches carried on thin rectangular columns without bases or capitals. The angles are double-chamfered, and the springings of a third chamfered order in the archheads are marked by face-masks copied from medieval models. The arcades originally contained galleries, removed in 1900, which resembled the remaining W gallery, filling the tall plain tower-arch (en.2). This belonged to the family of Malcolm of Poltalloch and its timber front, carried on thin metal columns, has a quatrefoil base-course, narrow panels with cusped triangular heads, and a foliated cornice. The original pulpit, of three-decker design, was set under the E window, and a long communion-table occupied the central passage between the pews, but all of these fittings have been replaced. (Twice) A dais for the communion-table and pulpit has been formed at the E end, enclosed on N and S by timber porches occupying the E bays of the aisles, and the existing timber panelled ceiling also dates from the restoration of 1900. A stone stair gives access to the gallery in the tower, but the upper stages are not accessible. The bell-chamber presumably contains the bell purchased in 1839, while a bell made for the parish minister in 1712 is preserved at Duntrune Castle.

[Main Body of Kirk](#)

[East – Pulpit area](#)

Tracery window comes- see external notes.

Strapping and lining at window opening considerably decayed. Remove and replace any decayed lath, like for like and coat with suitable lime plaster.



Decay at tracery window



Damp at upper part of south wall

[South Aisle](#)

[Upper wall](#)

Entire wall showing signs of moisture penetration. This may be historic or maybe the result of issues at gutter level. It may be necessary to remove the damaged plaster and re-coat as above. If historic and the source of water penetration has been repaired, the wall may dry out and it may be possible to repaint with an appropriate breathable paint.

[West](#)

Water penetration visible at aisle level either side of tower – see lead roof note above.

North

Lower wall

Repair work round cast iron windows at ingoes will be required.



Decayed cast iron window



Possible water ingress (historic)

Stone Arches & Columns

Some re-pointing and repair required to arches using appropriate lime mortar.

Ceiling

Water penetration may be present at south west; this may be historic – no apparent access to roof space.

Tower

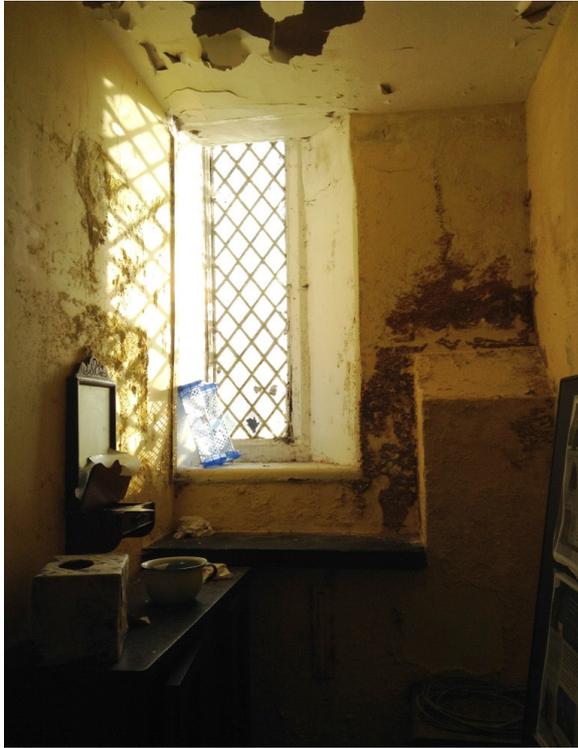
Upper levels

Louvres require bird proof mesh installed on the inside.

Flat lead roof installed in the 1950's to be checked over, gutter and overflows cleared.

Compliant, safe ladder access required.

Cast iron fresh air inlets (FAI) to be fully exposed.



Decay showing considerable efflorescence (salts)



Gallery showing efflorescence at flue

Ground floor

Considerable efflorescence (salts) at vestry fire place/boiler flue. See above.
Rear stair not accessible, but assume south wall affected by efflorescence.

Gallery

South wall and junction with stair wall, considerable efflorescence (salts). Ventilators (FAI's) have been added to attempt to dry the wall out. The source of dampness is likely to be the flue and the resultant cracks in the masonry. When this has been repaired as water proofed (but still ventilated), it is likely that the salts will dry out or at least improve. It may be prudent to remove the plaster, exposing the lath until the external wall has dried out.