

Background

In 2014, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the church building. The church's design in the early 1960's was unusual, although it reflected a style of architecture of that period. Over the last fifty years, the reputation of the building has grown; architects and students from the UK abroad arrange to visit. Over fifty years, there has been deterioration in the fabric of the building and other changes have been made. Two work programmes have been initiated, as detailed below.

St Bride's is a Category A listed building (a building of significant national or international interest). The authority for listing rests with Historic Scotland, which also monitors any building work and repairs carried out, in order to ensure the integrity of the building.

Minor works programme

This programme has already started and is expected to be completed over the next 2 months. Toilet facilities have been upgraded; an accessible toilet with baby changer has been installed. The emergency exit door has been reinstalled under the pulpit. The evacuation area outside will be repaired.

There are two major outstanding elements of the minor programme.

External doors

At the piazza entrance, the external doors will be replaced. The first set of internal doors will be repaired and the second vestibule and piety stall will be removed, bringing back the original design. This will allow the installation of a wheelchair ramp at the back of the church that meets building standards. A new open plan piety stall will be built in the pass-keeper area.

Removal of glass partition

The second element involves taking down the glass partitions between the lady altar and the nave and altar. If Historic Scotland approves, new seating will be installed in the lady chapel similar to the pews in the main church. The pews will have a closed end for safety, because there are three steps down into the nave (where the glass partitions are currently located). Infrared heating will be installed under the concrete parapet above this area.

Parishioners, particularly those who use this seating area, may have an opinion on this change. The glass enclosure is not an effective sound barrier. At the Thursday Coffee Morning on 5 March, when we discussed the proposals, there was widespread support for removing the glass partitions.

Major works programme

The major works programme principally involves strengthening the roof support and sealing the roof to stop water penetration. This will be an extensive repair. The roof is supported by the walls at the back and front (altar wall) of the church. The wall supports will need to be strengthened. Then the major steel struts along the length of the roof will be repaired and strengthened. Once that is complete, work can start repairing supporting woodwork and the roof itself. This will involve some replacement of glass to improve natural light. Gutters and downpipes will need repaired or replaced. There will also be major repairs needed to brickwork and mortar. This should resolve the problems with leakages.

The amount of work involved in the major works programme is extensive.

It will involve closure of the site, the removal of seating, and erection of external scaffolding with a waterproof cover over the roof to protect the interior and to provide a weatherproof external working area. Internal scaffolding will support a working platform just below the underside of the roof. This work programme is likely to start in autumn this year.

It will be necessary to close the church for over twelve months to allow the work to proceed. The parish will need to consider options for conducting services over the period of closure. We can make more extensive use of the pastoral centre but that is unlikely to be able to accommodate Sabbath services, weddings, funerals, and sacramental services such as first communion and confirmation when the size of the congregation is large.

Finances

The minor works programme is fully funded. The major works programme is costed at £2 million. We already have secured a "landfill" grant from Viridor-Credits and the Diocese is pursuing a number of other grants and tax reliefs which we hope will, in total, cover a major part of the cost.

Managing the project

The projects are controlled by the Diocesan Estate Manager who looks after all work in the diocese affecting churches and other buildings (which are Diocesan property). The actual work will be undertaken by specialist contractors and needs to comply with the requirements of Historic Scotland in terms of design and building standards.

Further communications

This is the first specific written communication we have produced. We will provide further updates as information becomes available. We will also provide further drawings and pictures showing what is involved on the notice boards in the lady chapel.

Parish Liaison

John Hastings is liaising with the Diocesan Estate Manager to ensure communications in both directions. If you have any questions about the project, you can speak to John, Father Ness or Deacon John.

Your views and opinions

We are keen to hear as soon as possible from parishioners with views on the re-constructions, particularly if you have views on the glass partitions. These are likely to be taken down very soon, unless there is a good reason presented to retain them.