

Faculty Application 2023-009540

Llangelynnin Old Church, works proposed, December 2023

Introduction

Faculty 2020-005990 authorised works at the Llangelynnin Old Church:

Repairs to the existing fabric as identified in the recent Ezra process. To include external localised repairs to the roof, localised re-pointing, consolidation of existing earth floor, repair of internal lime plaster and redecoration of ferrous elements of windows.

Some of this Ezra work has been completed, notably repairs to two external buttresses which were considered to be the source of interior damp. Work on re-pointing, the floor, internal lime plaster, ceiling torches and the window surrounds remains to be done.

To progress the remaining tasks, the church was inspected again in October 2023 by Elgan Jones of Donald Insall Associates (DIA) and Ned Scharer of The Natural Building Centre.

This inspection showed that the damp to the interior was persisting, particularly to the north wall of the nave, and to the surround of the north chapel window, where the fabric was now extensively damaged by water ingress. Other new matters identified included defective pointing to the east gable, which may be allowing water ingress.

The main problems appear to be related to poor drainage of rainwater away from the north walls of the building.

The site was later visited by Andrew Davidson of Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) and together DIA and GAT recommended some shallow trial excavations on the north side of the building to check for and examine the condition of any existing drainage.

It is now proposed to progress at least some of the tasks previously authorised under Faculty 2020-005990 and at the same time to undertake additional work that forms the subject of this new application, as follows.

Work proposed for Faculty 2023-009540

To be done by GAT:

1. Undertake exploratory trials at selected points along the north side of the church, to establish if any drains have been installed in the past, and determine their condition. This work will be done by GAT, who will undertake and report on the excavation of a series of exploratory pits along the north wall of the nave, the corner between chapel and nave, and along the north wall of the chapel, a maximum of six pits.
2. Conduct a combined 3D scan and photogrammetric survey of the interior of the church, and potentially the exterior also, in order to be able to provide full plans and sections, to inform future work.

To be done by Natural Building Centre

1. To the east elevation gable, repoint the gap between the timber eaves board and the mortar to the underside of the slates to prevent driving rain into the masonry wall.
2. Undertake spot trials (approx. 150x150mm) of sample patches on the north, west and south walls of the nave by carefully remove the flaking and later decorative coatings to establish if there are any wall paintings (in addition to the already exposed wall paintings on the east wall
3. Move a modern memorial plaque on the north face of the nave wall, to the west wall of north chapel.
4. North Transept Window
 - a. Carefully remove the existing plaster reveals to the window to assess the condition of masonry and expose the ends of the timber lintels.
 - b. Undertake investigative works to determine if the timber to the soffit is a lintel or an applied batten. This timber was loose and not secured. If it is found that the timber is a lintel it should be replaced. If it is found that this is a batten, its condition should be checked and if it is not decayed, it could simply be refixed and secured. It would be beneficial to pack the masonry using gallets and mortar whilst the plaster and timber is removed.
 - c. Carefully remove the horizontal ferramenta bars (Including any embedded within the masonry). It is hoped that the fractured stone frame could be pinned rather than replaced however we will need to explore how much of the fabric has fractured away once the bar is removed. The existing vertical ferramenta bar should be retained, cleaned down prepared and redecorated with a rust inhibitor coating and a topcoat. Allow to repoint the fine joints of the masonry window.
5. Partial redecoration (which is already authorised under 2020-005990).
6. Trial: undertake lime-pointing trials allow for a longer-term period of review prior to any wholesale repointing of the church in a future phase.