

Neutral Citation Number: [2025] ECC She 7

DIOCESE OF SHEFFIELD

In the Consistory Court

Her Honour Judge Sarah Singleton KC

Chancellor

In the Matter of ST MARY MAGDALENE, WHITGIFT

PETITION TO REPLACE THE NAVE ROOF IN TERNE COATED STAINLESS STEEL

JUDGMENT

1. The works

The petitioners seek permission for the replacement of the slate covered nave roof with one of terne coated stainless-steel. Its excessively shallow pitch has led to severe water ingress and rotting timbers, a problem which is being exacerbated by decaying and vegetation covered flashings. The Petitioners seek permission for the replacement of the nave roof with terne coated stainless steel (TCSS). There is an urgent need to re-roof the nave. Fundraising for the costs of the works is well advanced. These works were considered at the April 2025 meeting of the DAC and recommended for approval.

2. The church

St Mary Magdalene is a Grade I listed church on the south bank of the River Ouse. The first church on this site was established in the 12th century. The oldest parts of the building date from 14th Century. I have read and noted the statement of significance lodged with this petition which highlights a number of fascinating historical and architectural features of the church and the church yard.

It is described as follows in the Heritage Assessment of April 2025 prepared by the church's QI Architect

Parish church. C12 origins, largely demolished in mid C13, rebuilt in early C14. Early C14 arcades, chancel arch; C14 lower section to tower, with C15- C16 upper stages; aisles rebuilt 1582-3. Early C18 rebuilding, including reroofing nave. Restorations of 1898 included reroofing, new chancel. Limestone ashlar to nave and lower stage of tower; upper stages of tower of brick faced in ashlar. Aisles of red brick in English bond, rendered and incised in imitation of ashlar. Random rubble to chancel. Limestone and sandstone ashlar dressings. Slate roofs to nave and aisles, lead roof to chancel. West tower with 4-bay aisled nave and 2-bay chancel. 3-stage tower (the bottom now below ground level): moulded plinth, full-height angle buttresses with offsets, moulded string courses between stages. Tall first stage has blocked C14 pointed west door with 2 wave-moulded orders, pointed 4-light transomed west window with round-arched lights, plain Perpendicular tracery and hoodmould. Second stage has slit light to south, clock face to north dated 1919. Top stage has 4-centred-arched 2-light belfry openings with

cinquefoiled lights and Perpendicular tracery. String course, coped embattled parapet with crocketed angle pinnacles and plain replacement pinnacles to centres of each side. Aisles: diagonal buttresses and buttresses between bays with offsets; pointed double-chamfered north and south doorways, that to north with hoodmould and studded oak door. C19 4-centred-arched 3-light north and south windows with cinquefoiled lights and incised spandrels, hoodmoulds and headstops; original Tudor-arched single-light east windows and narrower single-light west windows with hoodmoulds. Coped embattled parapets, that to north of rendered brick, that to south of ashlar; with central relief panel bearing cross and worn date (illegible at time of resurvey). Chancel: chamfered plinth, angle buttresses; 2 pointed traceried 2-light south windows, single similar north window; pointed traceried 4-light east window with hoodmould and headstops. Interior. Nave arcades of pointed double-chamfered arches on octagonal piers and responds with plain moulded capitals, those to the south aisle responds more elaborate, with the abaci mouldings continued as string courses. Most piers with broach stops to square bases. Tall pointed double-chamfered tower arch with moulded corbels to inner order and outer order dying into jambs. Chamfered segmental-headed doorway to tower spiral staircase with notched newel. Pointed double-chamfered chancel arch on octagonal responds with moulded capitals and abaci continued as string courses. Chancel has C19 pointed chamfered arch to north. Restored C18 5-bay nave roof with corbelled tie beams, king posts and queen struts with trefoiled panels between, 3 of the tie beams with ovolo chamfers and inscriptions (partly obscured by C19 brattished panels), including a possible date of 1727. Ornate foliate ashlar corbels to C19 chancel roof. Monuments. Wall tablets in south aisle: on north side, to James Stovin of 1777 with free standing urn and obelisk base; on south side, a group of 6 late C18 - early C19 tablets to the Stovin family in moulded ashlar surrounds with shaped heads and aprons, carved urn, foliate corbels etc; a large marble tablet to Elizabeth Stovin of 1768 in a moulded ashlar surround with a cartouche above bearing faded painted arms in foliate surround; small tablet to Cornelius Stovin of Whitgift Hall of 1779 with fluted base and cornice; to Thomas Coulman and family of Whitgift Hall, of 1852, with pilastered surround, by Skelton of York. Pedimented wall tablets in north aisle: to John Bell of 1831 by W D Keyworth of Hull; to Robert Bell of 1859. Shaped wall tablets at west end of nave: to Rev William Romley of 1771, with urn above, and apron hung with guttae and floral drop; to Robert Romley of 1812, with urn and flaming lamps above, guttae and floral ornament below; painted wooden board in architrave to Elizabeth Romley and children of 1746. Large closely-inscribed pedimented tablet at east end of nave to Egremont family of c1846 by John Earle of Hull. Graveslabs at east end of north aisle: coffin-shaped slab with incised panel beneath cinquefoiled crocketed ogee arch, probably C14-C15, with later inscription ALLICIA; rectangular slab of c1500 with incised arms and worn Gothic border inscription, perhaps the stone to Alexander and Elizabeth Aungier recorded here in the late C17; C18 slabs to John Simpson of 1733, to Dorkas Margreve of 1739, to William Thompson of 1743 with incised segmental arch. 12-sided font with roll- moulded bowl on shaft with moulded base. Pine bench pews in nave, probably C16 - C17, with ogee-mouldings, and arm rests with roll motifs bearing a variety of carved floral ornament. C19

copies in choir. Carved oak traceried reredos of 1901. Late C19 stained glass east and south windows. Remains of former late C17 wooden frame turret clock at west end of nave. The C12 church at Whitgift was pulled down before 1291, probably in the mid C13 by the Rector of Adlingfleet, John le Franceys, to thwart its appropriation by Selby Abbey. The cemetery and shell of the church were granted to Selby in 1304 and the church subsequently rebuilt. N Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Yorkshire, West Riding, 1959, p 543; W Richardson, Some Useful Consumers of Waste: History in two Marshland Parishes, Adlingfleet and Whitgift, 1981, pp 87-127

3. The Significance of the Church to its Parish and Community

Regular services of worship are now held only monthly. There are however numbers of weddings, funerals and baptisms. The church does not have an incumbent or church warden and the three Petitioners are the Treasurer and Secretary of the PCC and a consultant.

The church is a building which is valued and much used by the community which surrounds it for meetings, events and activities of all kinds.

In 2024 the church was registered as a Champing church (to permit camping in church) and has had numbers of champing bookings accordingly. The Petitioners have received numbers of letters of support for the works including from the parish council, a county councillor for the ward, the warden of an adjoining RSPB site, the president of the local history society, local arts officers and a local primary school.

4. Faculty Process and Consultations

The Petitioners have consulted with the Church Buildings Council who have replied with their conclusion that the use of TCSS to construct the reroof at this church is reasonable.

They have also consulted with the Georgian Society who have confirmed they have no comment to make.

Historic England similarly have confirmed they have no comment.

The Victorian Society, by their reply to the consultation with them, required an assessment of the heritage impact of the proposals. That work was undertaken by Carl Andrews, BA DipArch RIBA AABC IHBC, of Soul Architects Limited, the QI Architect. His clear conclusions explain and justify the use of TCSS over lead or slate tiles. He concludes following a review of the history of previous works to the roof over a long period that its use will: replicate the historic appearance of lead whilst mitigating the risk of theft. Its use will therefore enhance the church's external appearance and protect its historic fabric. It should also contribute to sustainability goals set by the Church of England by reducing the use of fossil fuels to heat the church

The Notice requirements have been completed and elicited no objections.

These being external works to this listed building the Petitioners are aware of the need for planning permission and an application is underway.

5. Bats

A Phase II Bat survey was indicated following the observation of one dropping on the nave floor in March during a preliminary survey. The Phase II survey was carried out by B. J. Collins, Protected Species Surveyors during June and July 2025. They found no evidence of further roosting and therefore the works can proceed without the need for a European Protected Species Licence. They recommend Precautionary procedures necessary in the event that any more bats are observed in the church during the works.

6. Conclusion

These works are well planned and urgently needed. They will protect and preserve the building as a place of historical and architectural interest and as a focal hub for its congregation and community. The question of harm does not arise on the evidence before me and if it did the resulting benefits in every domain of undertaking the works so far outweigh such harm as to render the outcome of the balancing exercise required by the applicable Duffield Questions to resolve resoundingly in favour of these works being permitted.

I therefore direct that a Faculty issue accordingly.

HHJ Sarah Singleton KC

Chancellor of the Diocese of Sheffield

3rd August 2025