

Earthquake Report 27 February 2011

The 22 February 2011 earthquake has inflicted major damage on Holy Trinity Avonside.

The Chancel and most of the Transepts have collapsed. A portion of the north Transept roof remains up only because of the interior steel scaffolding in place, but it no longer relates to any surrounding structure.

The roof of the Nave remains in place but only because of the interior wooden buttresses, as there has been extensive damage to the walls of the Nave with most of the windows dropping out plus their surrounding wall sections. In effect the Nave has also been written off.

Rubble and debris fill the interior of the Church, and have also dropped on the columbarium and tombstones immediately surrounding the Church. There has been major damage to the tombstones in the immediate vicinity of the Church.

The west gable remains in place, with the Beverley Shaw Bennet windows intact within it. Much of the stained glass window on the northwestern side of the Nave appears to have survived. Regrettably the three fine stained glass windows at the east end of the Church in the Chancel have been destroyed. The hand painted roof beams in the Chancel, arguably the finest feature of the Church, have collapsed along with the rest of the Chancel, but some of them can be seen projecting from the rubble. Perhaps it may be possible to retrieve many of them in a careful and sensitive demolition.

The Vestries at the western end of the Church are intact. This means that the vestments and church silver are available and in use.

The parish hall has suffered major damage with the brickwork dropping out of both sides of the second story, exposing the upstairs apartment block of the Avonside House residents. The bricks have fallen on to the toilet block of the main hall destroying its roof. Major cracks have appeared in the walls of the hall. Neither the hall, nor the offices of the Avonside House Trust are in use because of safety concerns.

Sunday Services are now held in the lounge of Harper Gardens, which is the independent living units section of Fitzgerald house. It can be found to the immediate north of the St Francis hall. It has been inspected by an engineer who has declared it to be safe. The parish has used this space before and has found that it works well as a

liturgical space. The Thursday 10.30 am Eucharist is celebrated in the St Francis hall.

The St Francis hall, has only suffered the loss of its brick chimney, and so remains in use as the parish office.

Hugh Bowron