

Holy Trinity Avonside Church Earthquake Damage Update 26 September 2010

We are aware that there are many people in the wider community who have had past significant contacts with Holy Trinity Avonside, and who would like to be kept informed about what is happening to the Church. This is the first of a series of regular updates that will appear on our website to keep these stakeholders informed about what is happening in the efforts to repair and restore the Church.

September 4 Damage

The first big earthquake knocked out the gable ends on both sides of the Transepts spilling debris inside and outside the Church. Several memorial plates on the north side of the columbarium were destroyed, but it would appear that no tombstones were damaged. The falling debris into the south transept interior destroyed two small pews, and on the north side a wooden lectern was destroyed.

Cracks appeared in the Chancel walls, and inside the organ chamber. Several corbels fell into the Chancel interior from the join point of the Chancel and the Transepts.

A cross fell from the roof destroying some of the tiles on the Chancel roof, and opening up the lead join between the Chancel and the Transepts. Some of the roof tiles erupted at another point on the north side of the roof.

A small crack has appeared within one of east end stained glass windows, and one of the stained glass windows on the north side of the Chancel has been shaken out of its moorings.

After Shock Damage

The after shocks, particularly the ones on Saturday night 25 September, have widened the cracks in the Chancel, and have opened up new ones. Cracking has now appeared in the east walls of the Chancel, and in some places in the Transept walls facing the Nave. These further cracks are of significance to our anticipated restoration efforts to remove the pink paint from the Chancel walls, and to restore the original Benjamin Mountfort Stencilled designs.

Shoring Up Work

The insurance company and the Church Property Trustees have authorised Goldfield Stone stonemasons to remove the loose stonework still hanging from the walls, to remove the debris inside and outside the Church, to cover vulnerable stained glass windows in this area, and to put up tarpaulins to keep rain out. The tile damaged area at the Chancel Transept join will also need to be covered to prevent water damage to the Benjamin Mountfort hand

painted roof beams. It is anticipated that this work will take around a fortnight.

Meanwhile the Church is closed to public access, and Sunday Services are taking place in the hall. This is likely to remain the case for quite some time.

Repair Work

In due course Goldfield Stone will receive the go ahead to completely repair the Transept walls, and the cracks in the Chancel and the organ loft. The insurance company and the Church Property Trustees are taking a deliberate and cautious approach to authorisation of this kind of work, so some delay is anticipated.

Earthquake Strengthening

The insurance company has expressed an interest in making a contribution to earthquake strengthening work on the Church. The Holy Trinity Avonside Heritage Trust is well advanced in its plans to carry out this work, and had already decided to go to a 67% plus strengthening code. It is about to receive the second proposal to achieve this from its seismic engineer Barry Knowles. Our conservation architect will then file a resource consent application to the Council to authorise this work, plus the repairs to the Transept walls, and all the other heritage restoration work that will include reroofing the Church, repairing windows on the south side, removing the pink paint from the Transept walls, and restoring the stencilled designs on the Chancel walls.

The resource consent is essential also in paving the way to approach our three major potential funders. We hope to file these applications as soon as possible as it is anticipated that there will be keen post earthquake competition for access to these funding sources.

Rev Hugh Bowron
Vicar