Saint Margaret's Church, Hornby.

Roof repair faculty application 2019, incorporating Statement of Need

The roof over the current footprint of Saint Margaret's has been problematic since the current footprint was first established in 1817.

"The huge span of the roof quickly led to trouble. The trusses soon failed and the ceiling had to be supported on larch poles. 'Ten pillars of wood in the Chapel' cost over £60 in 1826-7, while 'Putting up a Middle Row of Pillars' cost another £21 in 1832-3. Such repairs as were carried out in 1838 tided the church over until 1888 when another faculty was obtained. Under the terms of this the church was restored by the distinguished Lancaster architects Austin and Paley." – from the History of Saint Margaret's by local historian Professor Andrew White

The lead roof provided in 1889 has remained in position to the present day, but has not been watertight within living memory (and probably not ever). The overlaps in the lead face towards the prevailing wind instead of facing away from it, and to save expense, the lead was laid too thin and the overlaps are too small. The roof is mostly watertight (not entirely) when rain falls vertically, but leaks appallingly in the south aisle, the south central nave, and (to a lesser extent) the north central nave, when the wind blows. Buckets collect water in aisles and pews – and have done for as long as anyone can remember.

There is a history of failed attempts to improve the 1889 roof. The entire south aisle section was replaced like-for-like with lead in the 1980s, but that has leaked more than any other section of the roof for at least half the years since then, up to the present day.

In late August 2018, following another wet Sunday morning, the vicar and wardens made the decision in principle that the time had come to stop attempting repairs and improvements, and to replace the entire nave roof. At first, the assumption was that this would be in lead, whatever it took, and however long it took, to achieve that.

On the night of Thursday 13 September 2018, virtually all the existing lead was stolen from the only quarter of the 1889 roof that did not habitually leak – the north aisle. Rain fell before the theft was discovered, causing some some internal damage. Thankfully local builders were able to fix a plastic membrane in position during Friday 14 September, and this has now proved completely watertight (better than the rest of the lead roof) through a whole series of significant storms over the last eight months, giving us time to consider properly the project to replace the entire 1889 nave roof.

Having considered all the options, we are clear that we do not want a metal roof, for the following reasons:

- a metal roof has not served us well, either from 1889 or from the 1980s;
- metal roofs are attractive to metal-thieves, risking enormous harm to the building;
    - BBC News reports a church which has had its lead taken seven times;
    - Ecclesiastical Insurance reports that new regulations on metals recycling have reduced the number of thefts of small amounts of lead, but that there has been a huge increase in major 'roof quarrying' operations, where entire lead roofs (like ours) are taken in a single night;
    - significant harm is caused to the building both during and following a theft;
    - stainless steel costs just as much to install, often has a scrap value just as high as lead, and causes more damage than lead during a theft;
- no metal option is affordable;
- the insurance implications of a metal roof are not affordable or desirable (CCTV is offensively visually intrusive, harming the appearance/setting of the building, and actively harming the visual impression of the church building as a place of peace and welcome for all);
- non-metal options are available which are visually indistinguishable from lead from ground level;
- in the case of Saint Margaret's, Hornby, no part of the roof is visible from ground level;
- non-metal options are available with a life-expectancy of 50 years, guaranteed for 20 years, and repairable beyond that.

Having investigated all the options, we have concluded that a metal roof is not affordable, and in any case would actively harm the building for the above reasons.

We have therefore obtained detailed estimates for three different non-metal options. Two of these have been rejected as less desirable, leaving the Dryseal Heritage option, which we very much favour, and for which this faculty application is made. The attached document "Dryseal Heritage Roofing including Church Lead Replacement" is a reproduction of their online information page https://www.hambleside-danelaw.co.uk/dryseal-flat-roofing/dryseal-heritage/

The rejected options were the Firestone rubber-based system, and an estimate from a highly reputable local firm which has worked on local heritage buildings including Thirland Castle, but whose only non-metal option turned out to be old-fashioned felt, with its short life-span and high maintenance requirements.

We understand the importance of preserving the heritage of this historic building; we also understand that the building rightly evolves from century to century; and we have concluded that for this particular building, in this particular location, the the Dryseal Heritage roofing system is the system which best serves and best protects this historic building now and into the future, and we apply for a faculty on this basis.

Michael Hampson (vicar) 7 May 2019