

# Fire Damage Restoration

## Case Study: Expert response allows church to fulfil commitments following fire.

The Roman Catholic Church of St Mary and St John in Erdington is a relatively modern brick building, with a vaulted wooden ceiling approximately 11 metres in height and also contains elaborate artworks in the main altar. A candle was left burning overnight in a tall wooden candlestick holder which had silk flowers around the base and a fire broke out after the fabric set alight.

### Problem

Throughout the night the carpet had smoldered and caused heavy carbon contamination to the building pillar adjacent to the fire. The entire church had been affected by smoke residues from the ceiling to the floor, leaving smoke stains to all surfaces throughout the building, thermal damage to the plaster and a heavy odour of smoke immediately present when entering the church. With a wedding booked at the church just two days later, time was of the essence to find a solution.



### Solution

Polygon were called to decontaminate the church and responded quickly. Due to the pressures of the church's diary, Polygon created a solution that would allow the large wedding to proceed, whilst also allowing for other commitments such as morning mass, funerals and weekday weddings to continue.



The bespoke solution consisted of two days mitigation work, followed by ten days of work for the main decontamination process.

The church had sustained carbon staining and heavy smoke odour. The main archway was located close to the seat of the fire and consequently had been damaged. The Polygon technicians decontaminated this as a priority and then painted the entire arch to ensure that it was acceptable for the wedding the next day. The carpets required thorough decontamination to remove the substantial smoke odour. This was achieved by using a hot water extraction machine and deodorising solutions. As carbon particulate was settling within the building daily, filtered air movers were also installed.

The mitigation exercise was a success and the wedding was able to go ahead. The following week the main decontamination process began throughout the church including all artefacts and figures. The organ also required a thorough decontamination, which involved eradicating loose carbon settlement, and removing the doors to allow access to the internal compartments of the organ.

## Case Study: Expert response allows church to fulfil commitments following fire.

Due to the high ceilings, a mobile elevated working platform was required. The wooden ceiling and walls were vacuumed with filtered vacuum machines to remove any remaining carbon settlement. Four air scrubbers and two air manager machines ran continually to filter both particulate from the air and also assist with odour control by producing safe levels of ozone at the source.

Throughout the whole process, accommodating the church's commitments was a priority. Each time there was an event, the Polygon technicians cleared up their equipment and once the event was over, equipment was mobilised and work resumed.

Following the decontamination process, the church was thoroughly deodorised to ensure any remaining residual smoke odours were eliminated. This was achieved through the use of fogging machines and deodorising chemicals. Polygon technicians then replastered the damaged column and decorated the church from ceiling to floor.



### Benefits

- Polygon's technicians were on site quickly, allowing for the wedding to go ahead two days later
- Polygon was flexible throughout the process, allowing the church to fulfil all commitments in the church diary
- Successful restoration minimised replacement costs
- A guarantee that the building and its contents will be free from all incident related contaminants such as smoke and soot.

The priest of the church, Father Joyce commented, *“Everything was exceptional; all aspects of the work and the care that was given was exceptionally high. Nothing was any trouble and I am most grateful for the speed that the work was done.”*