

ST. LAURENCE'S CHURCH, WINSLOW: TOWARDS A NEW STRUCTURAL SEQUENCE

by David J. Critchley (revised April 2020)

Abstract: The paper proposes a structural sequence for St Laurence's Church, Winslow. It suggests that at the heart of the building is a nave, originally of the 12th century, and that aisles and a west tower were added no later than the early 13th century. The earliest elements in the nave arcade and tower arches date to the early 14th century, and represent a reworking of the original openings. Further reworking of the nave arcade took place later in the same century. The chancel comprises a rectangular chancel of the 13th century, extended in the 14th century. The windows and decorative features such as buttresses date to a variety of periods from the early 13th century to the 16th century. The east window dates to the 1450s, the porch to the 1460s, and the belfry stage to the 1470s.

1. Introduction

St Laurence's Church, Winslow (Fig. 1), is generally regarded as a building of the Decorated period, with Perpendicular additions.¹ Brief summaries inevitably simplify matters, and the reality may be more complicated. The restoration of 1883-9, however, is well-documented and for the most part lies outside the scope of this investigation.²

2. The Nave

The nave, 14.5m by 7.15m (including the nave east wall but excluding the tower east wall), predates the tower and is the earliest identifiable part of the church. Rubble walling which appears to be the original fabric of the nave can be seen in the clearstory to rise to a height of some 7.3m, so the nave may have been a double cube, measuring 48' x 24' x 24' (using the Norman foot of 297.77mm).

Evidence that the nave predates the tower can be seen where the clearstory meets the tower. There is a clear vertical break between the rubble walling of the nave and the tower, indicating

¹ *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Buckinghamshire*, by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, London, 2 vols (1912-13), vol. II pp. 339; *The Buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*, 2nd. ed., by Nicholas Pevsner and Elizabeth Williamson with Geoffrey Brandwood (1994), p. 754.

² There are several views of the church before Oldrid Scott's restoration. J. C. Buckler drew external views from the SW and the SE, and the font, on 9th August 1838. The drawings are in the British Library (Add. Ms. 36359, ff. 105-7), and more finished versions are in the Bodleian Library. *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*, by George Lipscomb, London (1847), vol. 3 p. 548, includes an engraving taken from the SE. The church vestry contains an undated print, taken from the SW, inscribed "Sketched by a Lady," "In Aid of the Winslow Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society," and "Leighton Bros. Lith. 4 Red Lion Square"; as well as an unsigned and undated pen drawing from the SE. *A Window on Winslow*, by Alan Wigley, Winslow (1981), contains a photograph of the interior looking E, which is the only visual record of the late seventeenth or early eighteenth-century chancel panelling. See also Incorporated Church Building Society, File ICBS 02320 Folios 25ff., Lambeth Palace Library, London. There is also extensive archival and printed material related to the restoration. The *Report of the Committee* of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for 1884 laments the proposed destruction of the chancel panelling. The Faculty papers are held in Oxfordshire Archives (Ms. Oxf. dioc. papers c. 750 pp. 620-2). J. Oldrid Scott's own material, comprising 14 drawings and entries in two Ledgers, is held by the RIBA (RIBA 85 1-14). The Incorporated Church Building Society's copies of some of the foregoing are in the parish box in the collection of Historic England. Contemporary reports can be found in *The Builder*, XLVIII, 1885, p. 85. and *The Bucks Herald*, 3 January 1885.

that the two fabrics are of different periods. Close inspection that the nave walling is the earlier of the two fabrics, although there are some signs of attempts by the later builder to bond the two fabrics together (Figs. 2-3).

Further evidence that the nave was originally an independent structure is provided by the positions of the north and south nave doors. These doors do not lie on the centreline of the structure formed by combined tower and nave, but lie west of this point, the north door by some 0.25 m, and the south door by some 0.5 m, leading in both cases to an awkward relationship with the adjacent nave arcade pillar. They do however lie close to a point three quarters of the way westward along the length of the nave on its own, and given that the placing of doors on an east-west line tends to remain constant over time, their position is better explained on the assumption that the tower had not yet been added when the position of the originals of these doors was marked out.

No windows or mouldings survive from this nave, but its proportions, and the need to allow time for other building operations detailed below, suggest that it belongs to twelfth century.

The top two courses of the clearstory are formed of ashlar of soft limestone, quite different to the rubble walling underneath, and are surmounted by a plain parapet (Fig. 15). It is likely that they were added in the late mediaeval period when the nave was being reroofed with the low-pitch roof visible on drawings of the church before the restoration of 1883.

3. The Tower

The tower is built of roughly squared ashlar and rubble. At ground level the tower's north-south dimension matches the width of the nave, probably to enable nave aisles to be embrace the tower on either side, but at the level of the original nave eaves, there are two courses of receding weatherings on the north and south sides (Fig. 4), and from then upwards the tower sides are very slightly battered, until at belfry level the tower is square in plan.

A string course is visible in illustrations of the church before the restoration of 1883, running around the tower at a height of about 10.2 m, but was cut back flush at the restoration. It can still be traced as a course of thin ashlar a little below the clock faces, and was perhaps intended to mark the original belfry stage.

At ground level the tower measures 7.13 x 6.45m. It is possible that the builder was working with a foot of 280 mm., and intended the tower to measure 23' (6.44m) from west to east, with a west wall 7' (1.96m) thick, north and south walls 5' (1.4m) thick, and an east wall 4' (1.12m) thick. Internally the tower measures 12' x 12' (3.36 m x 3.36m). The width of 7.13m matches that of the nave.

The tower's two western buttresses (Figs. 5-6) are not bonded into the fabric of the tower, but at least provide a *terminus ante quem*. They are broader than they are deep, and they rest on a low plinth; at the top of the first stage is a weathering running round all three sides of the buttress; from then on the sides continue vertical but the outer face continues to recede, finally becoming vertical to form the second stage. At the top of the second stage the outer face recedes until it dies into the tower wall. They appear to have been built using the same foot as the tower itself: their lower stages measure 2' 6" x 1' 8" (700mm x 375mm) in plan and are 8' 4" (230mm to 235mm) high, measured from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the weathering.

The style of the buttresses suggests that the tower was built no later than the first half of the thirteenth century.

The present belfry is a later addition: the point at which the two fabrics join can be seen very clearly. Three substantial bequests from the 1470s stand out among the numerous bequests to the bells, which are usually of a few pence or of a bushel or two of grain. William Parkin bequeathed the sum of 20s to the *campanul'* and to the *campana* in his will dated 14th August 1471.³ Donatus Alen bequeathed 6s 8d for the repair of the bells in his will dated 24th November 1471.⁴ Stephen Albyn bequeathed 6s 8d to the maintenance of the bells in his will dated 12th August 1477.⁵ Three bequests totalling £1 13s 4d are not in themselves proof of substantial work on the tower, but a date in the 1470s for the belfry stage would be entirely suitable.

4. The Aisles

The north and south aisles match each other, and run the whole length of the nave, embracing the tower. They are built of roughly squared ashlar and rubble, like the tower. The width of each aisle corresponds to half the width of the nave.

Each aisle has external and internal string courses, which end when they reach the fabric of the tower. Each aisle also has an angle buttress at its western angle and four lateral buttresses, except that two of the south aisle's lateral buttresses were later removed to make way for the porch. The buttresses on both aisles are identical (Fig. 7), though the angle buttresses (Fig. 8) are slightly larger and omit the small roll at the top of the central weathering. There are minor differences in size from one buttress to another, and it has not proved possible to recover standard dimensions. The string course is bonded into the wall, but the lateral buttresses, which are formed of more regular ashlar than the wall is, simply abut the wall.

These buttresses represent a more developed form than the tower buttresses.⁶ The Winslow aisle buttresses have one unusual feature: the receding course or courses, capped by a roll, immediately above the string course. It seems likely that these buttresses, and the string courses, date to the second half of the thirteenth century.

The aisle walls were very clearly heightened at a later date by extra courses consisting of roughly squared ashlar: the join between the two fabrics can be seen quite clearly on the lateral walls (Fig. 9), although it is more difficult to follow on the end walls. The point at which the aisle roofs met the nave walls did not change, and the main effect of the work was to reduce the pitch of the roof. The work must predate the construction of the porch in the 1460s, and so belong to the fourteenth or early fifteenth century.

Given that the tower is square in plan at belfry level, but at ground level widens out into a rectangle whose north-south dimension matches the width of the nave, it is reasonable to assume

³ Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR4

⁴ Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR6

⁵ Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR26V

⁶ Comparison may be made with Haddenham west front (RCHM op. cit., vol. I p. 176), c. 1215; Bledlow chancel (RCHM op. cit., vol. I pp. 52-3), c. 1260; Aylesbury west front; Little Wenham, Suffolk (*Gothic Architecture in England*, by Francis Bond, London (1906), pp. 352, 358); Selby, Yorkshire (Bond, op. cit., p. 86), 1280-1300; Pucklechurch, Gloucestershire (Bond, op. cit., pp. 355); and the Bishop's Palace chapel, Wells (*The English Decorated Style: Gothic Architecture Transformed 1250-1350*, by Jean Bony, Oxford (1979), p. 12, pl. 71), before 1292.

that the intention was that, as part of the same operation, nave aisles should be extended or built *de novo* so as to embrace the tower. In these circumstances, we may ask whether those aisles survive as today's aisles, or whether today's aisles have subsequently replaced them.

The fact that the buttresses are not bonded into the wall suggests that they are a later addition. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assume that today's aisles were built no later than the first half of the thirteenth century, as part of the same operation as the tower, and that the buttresses, if not the string course as well, are later additions.

5. The Nave Arcades

If the tower was accompanied by aisles from the start, then we may suspect that the tower was equipped with lateral openings giving onto the aisles, and that at the same time similar openings were pierced in the nave walls. Whether these openings survive in any form is yet to be determined. With the nave and tower openings in their current form, there are five elements to be considered: the actual openings pierced in the fabric of the tower; the series of square plinths on which the tower piers and nave columns appear to rest; the responds inserted in the tower openings, with their bases and capitals; the nave columns and chancel arch, with their bases and capitals; and the arches of the nave arcade and of the chancel arch.

The openings pierced in the fabric of the tower have no datable features. On the inside and on the outside, their edges are marked by ashlar with a single chamfer. Original stonework is visible inside the tower, and in the case of the northern arch the small stones packed above the arch's voussoirs (Fig. 11) appear to represent packing put in place by the builder to bring the height of the wall up to the point where he could resume the laying of conventional courses, in which case the opening is contemporary with the construction of the wall itself.

The plinths are square-sided, and underlie the tower piers and the nave arcade columns. On the north and south sides of the tower's eastern piers, where there is a stretch of conventional walling between the tower opening and the westernmost aisle opening, the plinth is topped by a single chamfer course (Fig. 10). The plinths dictate the division of the nave into bays, the size of which is likely to have been determined by the existing nave width. Thus the three eastern bays measure $3.60\text{m} \pm 0.03\text{m}$ east-west, corresponding to half the width of the nave, measured north-south. The westernmost nave bay does not fit the pattern, being shorter by some 0.7m: neither do the distances between the plinths of the tower piers match the distances between plinths in the nave. It appears that the builder regarded 1:2 as the proper proportion for a bay, and was able to create three bays to the east with these proportions, but further west was constrained by the tower piers. The dimensions used in laying out the plinths suggest the use of a foot of 285-91mm. Thus the distance north-south between the plinths of the eastern tower piers is 3.47m (the same as the distance from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the respective capitals, namely 12' with a 289mm foot); the distance east-west between the plinths of the eastern and western piers is 1.92m (6' 8" with a 288mm foot); and the distance north-south between the plinths of the western piers is 4.17m (14' 6" with a 288mm foot). The nave arcade plinths measure 800mm square (2' 9" with a 291mm foot).

The responds inserted in the tower openings comprise semi-octagonal columns, with bases and capitals. They support arches of one chamfered order. The bases consist of a chamfer with a roll above, and the capitals consisting of a roll beneath an ogee moulding, with a curved top (Fig. 12).

They appear to be constructed on the basis of a foot of 285-291mm: thus, the vertical distance from the top of the underlying plinth to the bottom of the capitals of the eastern tower arch is 3.48m (12' with a 290mm foot); the vertical distance from the top of the plinth to the bottom of the capitals of the lateral arches is 2.67 m. (9' 3" with a 289mm foot); and the widths of the three main faces on the responds of the tower arches are 190mm (8" with a 285mm foot). The capitals answer well to Bond's description of the typical fourteenth century capital.⁷ The responds therefore appear to be fourteenth century work inserted into the original openings.

The columns of the nave arcades are octagonal in section, and the responds of the nave arcade and the chancel arch semi-octagonal. The columns and responds show numerous traces of the use of a claw chisel, and appear to have been recut in situ. Their bases and capitals are more elaborately moulded than those of the tower arches (Figs. 13-14). The faces of the nave columns measure 210mm across, and are half the height of the column bases, which are 420mm high excluding the plinth. The faces of the east responds of the arcades and of the chancel arch responds, which are clearly intended to be half-size versions of the octagonal piers of the nave arcades, measure 105mm across. These measurements suggest the use of a foot of 280mm, with 210mm representing 9" and 420mm representing 1' 6".

The voussoirs of the nave arcade arches, in two chamfered orders, show no obvious tooling marks, and appear to have been freshly cut. The voussoirs of the chancel arch, however, which also has two chamfered orders, are smaller in size and may have been recut to give the present profile.

Thus, the openings in the tower walls appear to be original openings of the thirteenth century. The plinths appear to be a later introduction: they themselves give no indication of date, but since their measurements match those of the responds of the tower arches, we may hypothesise that they were inserted along with those responds in the fourteenth century. The nave columns and chancel arch appear to have been recut. The date is uncertain, but in stylistic terms they are clearly later than the tower arch responds, and the work is likely to date to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. Bequests dated 1493 and 1506 to provide a new rood loft and a new pulpit may indicate works prompted by the reworking of the chancel arch, and so provide a *terminus ante quem*.⁸

6. The Chancel

The chancel, measuring 12.15m x 7.25m, is built of well-dressed ashlar, butts up onto the nave east wall, and is of the same width as the nave.

There are some indications that it is a composite construction. Thus, during the construction of the vestry in 1889 workmen reported that the chancel wall around the hagioscope then discovered was "formed of rubble-work of a different description to that of any other part of the Church, and which appeared to have formed part of an earlier Chancel than the present one."⁹ Additionally, the buttress in the centre of the south chancel wall appears to mask a join between two different builds. The buttress itself belongs to 1883 and replaces an original low buttress which rose no higher than the second string course. It is located some 1.1m west of the centre of the wall, and

⁷ Bond, op. cit., p. 442.

⁸ *Winslow in 1556: The Survey of the Manor*, by David Noy, Buckinghamshire Archaeological Society, Aylesbury (2013), p. 51.

⁹ *The King's Village in Demesne: Or a Thousand Years of Winslow Life*, by Arthur Clear, Winslow (1894), p. 50.

the original buttress may have been placed off-centre to accommodate the priest's door. Scrutiny of the stone either side of the modern buttress reveals that it masks several discontinuities in the courses of stone (Fig. 15), although higher up the wall the courses run without interruption.

The eastern section of the chancel, measuring 7.25m x 7.25m, appears therefore to be an addition to the western section, which measures 4.9m x 7.25m. The builders of the eastern section may also have heightened the walling of the old chancel at the same time, to judge from the ashlar courses visible on the south side.

It appears therefore that the chancel is later in date than the nave. Possibly, the original chancel was apsidal, with north and south walls set back from the nave walls, and was replaced by a square ended chancel of the same length but slightly wider. If we assign the original chancel to the twelfth century, its replacement to the thirteenth, and the eastward extension to the fourteenth, we may not be far wrong.

7. The Porch

The porch (Fig. 16) is elaborate and stylish. It is single-storey, with angle buttresses and crenellations. The south aspect is largely composed of an open four-centred arch, with moulded jambs, bases and capitals, deeply set in a rectangular frame. Above it is a pediment with an arched niche in the centre, occupied by a modern statue of St Laurence. A prominent moulded string course, with crenellations above, runs at eaves level and up and then down on the gable. On the west and east sides, there is a grotesque face in the centre of the string course, through which the roof drains. The angle buttresses fade into the porch corners a little above the springing of the entrance arch: above the crenellations the corners are capped by tall panelled and crocketed finials, which are turned through 45° so as to echo the alignment of the angle buttresses.

The design of the porch crenellations, with their prominent coping course, is echoed in those of the belfry. There is nothing to suggest that the same master-mason was involved: indeed the belfry has none of the idiosyncrasies of the porch. However, it may be that the builder of the belfry consciously emulated the builder of the porch in this respect in order to maintain a stylistic unity.

Nine wills mention the church porch, and they suggest that the work dates to 1463-71.¹⁰ William Baker bequeathed 20d "to the porch" in his will dated 21st December 1456¹¹ Thomas Perys of Shipton bequeathed 6s 8d "for the repair of the porch when the parishioners wish to do the porch" in his will dated 24th January 1463/4¹² John Davy bequeathed 6s 8d "to the maintenance of the porch" in his will dated 8th September 1464.¹³ William Tomlyns bequeathed 6s 8d "to the repair of the porch" in his will dated 12th September 1464.¹⁴ John Alben bequeathed 6s 8d "for the maintenance of the porch" in his will dated 20th February 1463/4¹⁵ William Nasshe bequeathed 12d "to the repair of the porch" in his will dated 21st March 1467.¹⁶ John Coke of

¹⁰ For a summary of the light cast by wills on St Laurence's in the late mediaeval period, see David Noy, *op. cit.*, pp. 51-3.

¹¹ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR87.

¹² Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR108.

¹³ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR111.

¹⁴ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR112.

¹⁵ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR109.

¹⁶ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR120.

Shipton bequeathed 12d “for the maintenance of the porch” in his will dated 4th April 1467.¹⁷ John Laurence bequeathed 6s 8d “to the repair of the porch” in his will dated 12th September 1467.¹⁸ Thomas Jenken of Shipton bequeathed two bushels of malt to the “repair of the porch” in his will dated 12th November 1470.¹⁹

8. Windows and Doors

Doors and windows were commonly inserted into pre-existing walls, and it may be more convenient to treat them in a separate series. The following summary list starts with the great east window and works clockwise round the church.

Chancel, East Window Four-centred opening, with the inner two curves effectively straight. Five lights, the centre light wider than the others. The mullions run all the way up to the top of the window. Each light terminates in a trefoiled archlet below springing level: the four side lights then each divide into two small trefoiled lights, while the centre light divides into two small trefoiled lights with a second pair above them, giving a total of four small lights. The bases of all the upper lights are trefoiled. In design the window is very similar to the windows at Haddenham, and to the window of Thame north transept, constructed in the 1440s by John Beckeley, probably to a design of Richard Winchcombe.²⁰ John Couper of Shipton bequeathed 6s 8d “to the great work of the window” in his will dated 6th January 1453/4.²¹ This is the only Winslow will to include a bequest for a window, and the wording suggests a significant project depending on multiple contributions. It is likely that he is referring to the largest window in the church, the chancel east window. This would give us a date of c. 1454 for this window.

Chancel South Wall, Eastern Window Two-centred opening. Tracery has been renewed, but appears to be a faithful copy of the original. Two trefoiled engaged sub-arches, with their central lobes terminating in a point. Trefoiled oculus inserted into the space between the lights. Appears to be integral to the wall, given the way in which the courses of ashlar get steadily more out of line with each other as they mount up each side of the window, and then have to get back in line at the apex of the window. Likely to date to the period 1315-60.²²

Chancel South Wall, Priest’s Door Four-centred opening. Likely to date to the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

Chancel South Wall, Western Window Two-centred opening. Four lights with a supertransom running across the apices of the lights. The mullions run up through the supertransom to the outer arch. Blind spaces either side of the mullions below the supertransom. Above the supertransom each light is divided into two half-lights, but only the four centre half-lights have full trefoiled archlets. Similar three- and four-light windows can be found in the nave of Swanbourne. Likely to date to the first half of the fourteenth century.

¹⁷ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR121.

¹⁸ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR120.

¹⁹ Hertfordshire Record Office 2AR1.

²⁰ *The Perpendicular Style: 1330-1485*, by John Harvey, London (1978), pl. 120.

²¹ Hertfordshire Record Office 1AR69.

²² Bond, op. cit., p. 483.

South Aisle, East Window Rectangular opening. Four lights, very similar to the North Aisle North Wall Central Window, except that the shield shaped lights have been omitted, leaving a clear uncusped space. Each light is 380mm wide. Possibly late fifteenth century.

South Aisle South Wall, Eastern Window Two-centred opening. Used as a door in the 1830s, as shown by Buckler's sketches and a pen and ink sketch in the vestry, and it is likely that the mediaeval tracery was destroyed when the window was converted into a door. Tracery copied by Oldrid Scott from corresponding window in the north aisle.

South Aisle South Wall, Central Window Four-light window. The lights have semi-circular cinquefoiled archlets. From the apices of the lights short mullions rise all the way to the top of the window. The lights vary in width from 450mm to 465mm. On the basis of its similarity to the south aisle south wall central window, likely to date to the early or middle fifteenth century.

South Aisle South Wall, Door Two-centred opening. No capitals. Likely to date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

South Aisle South Wall, Western Window Identical in design to the South Aisle South Wall, Central Window. Predates the porch, which overlies one of its jambs, and so likely to date to the early or middle fifteenth century.

South Aisle West Window Two-centred opening. Two trefoiled lights. Central mullion extends up nearly all the way to the apex of the arch, but shortly before reaching it splits, with each half curving back downwards to the point when the mullion separated from the archlets, giving a cusped lobe either side of the mullion. Likely to date to the early fourteenth century.

South (and North) Clerestory Walls, Eastern and Western Windows Two three-light windows on each side, with trefoiled semi-circular archlets at the head of each light. It is clear from the west window on the north side that the clearstory had already been heightened when these windows were inserted. Likely to date to the fifteenth or sixteenth century.

South (and North) Clerestory Walls, Central Window Circular opening on each side, with moulded surround. Cusped with chamfer-cusps rather than soffit-cusps. Set in a larger area of disturbance in the rubble walling, filled up with a randomly laid small stones, suggesting that it is a later insertion into earlier walling. Doubtless each wall originally contained three such windows. Likely to date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

Tower West Wall, Door Two-centred opening. No capitals. Likely to date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

Tower West Wall, Window above Door Two-centred opening. Two lights, with trefoiled ogival archlets. Above the lights is a large vesica with two inverted raindrop daggers to right and left, a small cusped vesica between and above them, and a small uncusped vesica between and below them. The window is heavily recessed, given the thickness of the wall, and the arch is elaborately moulded. Likely to date to the early fourteenth century.

Tower Belfry Stage, Windows Four-centred opening in each of the four walls. Three trefoiled lights. Centre light higher than the two side lights, extending the full height of the window. Likely to date to the late fifteenth century.

North Aisle, West Window Two-centred opening. Two trefoiled lights. Above the lights a rhombus with curved sides and four cusps. Pointed lobes. The print for the British and Foreign Bible Society shows a door inserted at the foot of this window, but with the tracery and central mullion remaining in place. Likely to date to the early fourteenth century.

North Aisle North Wall, Western Window Identical in design to the South Aisle South Wall, Central Window, but with three lights rather than four. On the basis of its similarity to the south aisle south wall central window, likely to date to the early or middle fifteenth century.

North Aisle North Wall, Door Two-centred opening. Interior mouldings obscured by panelling. Exterior moulding a single chamfer, concave at the edges, convex in the centre. Likely to date to the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

North Aisle North Wall, Central Window Rectangular opening. Three lights. The mullions rise all the way up to the lintel. Each light has an ogival archlet. Halfway up each ogee an arm springs off the ogee, and in a mirror image of the remaining curve of the ogee makes its way to the outer corner of the light, thus forming a shield shaped space to one side of the archlet. This window is closely related to the Chancel East Window: the same technique is used to form the bottoms of the small lights in the east window, and the effect in the side window is as if the east window had been cut off horizontally at the apices of the main lights. Each light is 450 mm wide. Possibly late fifteenth century.

North Aisle North Wall, Eastern Window Two-centred opening. Two lights, with trefoiled archlets. Four-cusped vesica above the lights. Likely to date to the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century.

North Aisle East Window (destroyed 1880s) The east window of the north aisle was apparently of the same design as the South Aisle South Wall Central Window, and Oldrid Scott intended to transfer it to the north wall of the vestry in 1883.

Vestry (Memorial Chapel) North Wall, Western Window It appears that it was Oldrid Scott's intention to re-use the North Aisle East Window in this location, but the current window in the north wall of the vestry, although it copies a design seen elsewhere in the church, is of wholly nineteenth century stonework, suggesting that the old window was too decayed for reassembly, and was copied instead.

Vestry (Robing Room) North Wall, Door Two-centred arch. No capitals. Dates to the 1880s.

Vestry (Robing Room) North Wall, Eastern Window Dates to the 1880s.

Vestry (Robing Room) East Window Dates to the 1880s.

Chancel North Window (destroyed 1880s) Sheahan noted the presence of a window in the north wall of the chancel.²³ Nothing is known about it, though it may have been the model either for the window planned for the north wall of the vestry in 1883, or for the window actually installed in that wall in 1889, a two-light version of the western window in the north aisle north wall.

²³ *History and Topography of Buckinghamshire*, by James Joseph Sheahan, London & Pontefract (1862), p. 795.

Chancel North Door (destroyed 1880s) Oldrid Scott reported that there was a door in the north wall of the chancel that led to a long-vanished sacristy.²⁴

9. Conclusion

It is suggested here that the extensions and windows of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries mask a building whose core is older. If we mentally remove these improvements, what remains is formed around a nave of the twelfth century. Externally the walling of this nave is only visible above the aisle roofs: internally, any surfaces that survive are cloaked in plaster. This nave is embraced by a tower and aisles of the thirteenth century. Much of the walling of this work remains visible externally: internally, it can only be seen in the unplastered interior of the tower. Some elements of a thirteenth century chancel survive, and are visible externally in the chancel south wall.

Numerous extensions and additions to the church are visible on the exterior. The chancel was extended eastwards in the fourteenth century; the aisle walls and clearstory walls were extended upwards in the fourteenth or fifteenth century; a porch was added in the 1460s; and a belfry possibly in the 1470s.

In the interior, the openings leading into the aisles and giving access from the nave to the tower and the chancel were subject to repeated reworking and refinement. Original openings are visible in part in the tower; a first reworking, dating to the fourteenth century, has left traces in the form of the responds in the tower arches and of the pier plinths, and possibly in the masonry of the nave columns; while a second and final reworking, dating to the late fourteenth or fifteenth century, is responsible for the present form of the nave columns and arches and the chancel arch.

Doors and windows were improved throughout the period, and one of the windows in the chancel south wall may be the only window contemporary with the wall in which it sits.

The result is a building with a complex history. What the visitor sees first is indeed largely late mediaeval, and remarkably uniform in style, but closer analysis reveals a complex series of operations going as far back as the twelfth century.

David J Critchley

Note dated April 2020 This paper is in draft form. The church is currently inaccessible and the paper will be revised when access becomes possible again.

²⁴ Clear, op. cit., p. 47.

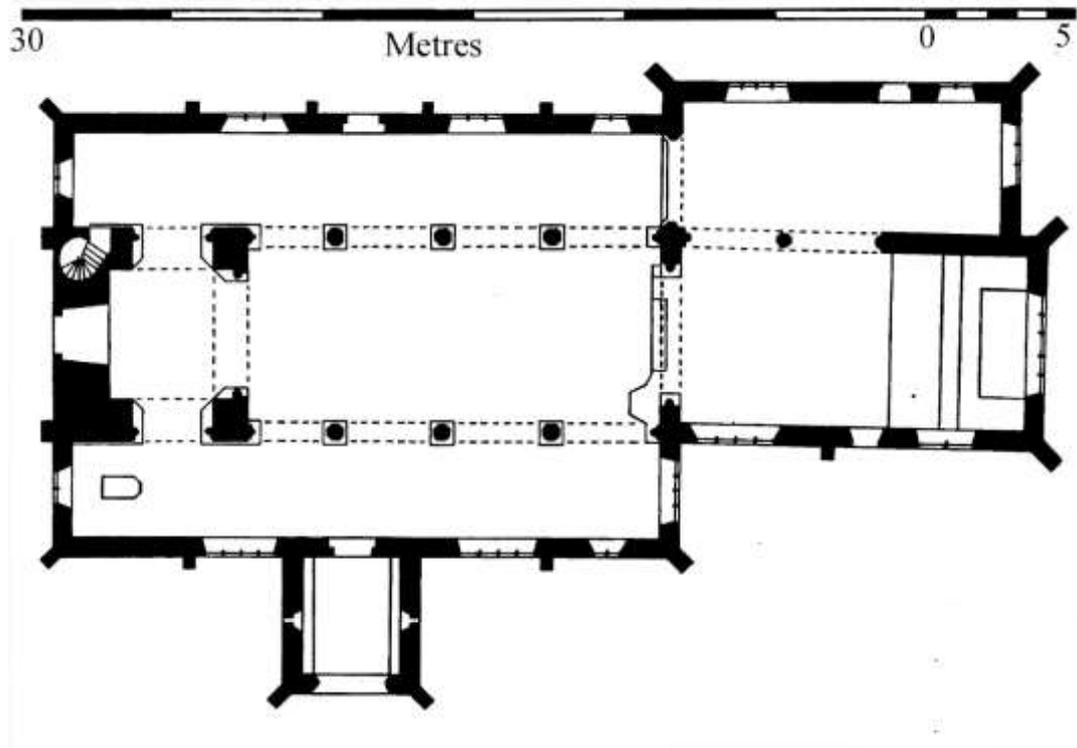


Figure 1: Ground Plan



Figure 2: Join between Clearstory and Tower:
South Side



Figure 3: Join between Clearstory and Tower:
North Side



Figure 4: Nave, South-East Angle, Showing Ashlar Courses and Parapet above Clearstory



Figure 5: Tower, General View from the South-West



Figure 6: Tower Buttresses, from the North-West



Figure 7: North Aisle: Lateral Buttress



Figure 8: North Aisle Angle Buttress



Figure 9: North Aisle Exterior



Figure 10: North-Eastern Tower Pier, North Side



Figure 11: Tower North Arch, from South



Figure 12: Capital and Base of Tower Arch Respond



Figure 13: Capitals of Eastern Nave Bay and Chancel Arch Responds



Figure 14: Base of Western Nave Bay Respond

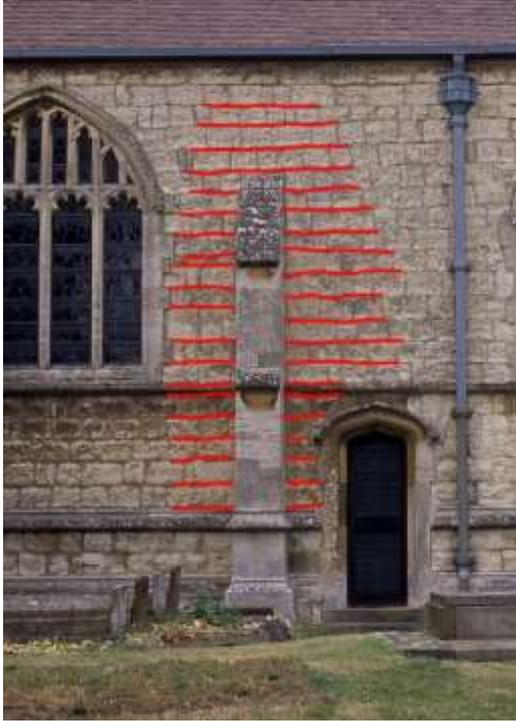


Figure 15: Chancel South Wall, Course Boundaries Highlighted



Figure 16: Porch