



No.17 Norham Gardens, Oxford

Historic Building Investigation and Recording

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No. 17 Norham Gardens, Oxford

Historic Buildings Investigation and Recording

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Contents

Summary.....	9
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Project Background.....	1
1.2 Aims and Objectives	1
1.3 Location	1
1.4 Methodology	1
2 BACKGROUND HISTORY	3
2.1 General Historical Background	3
2.2 The Development of No. 17 Norham Gardens.....	3
2.3 The Development of the Chapel	5
3 OUTLINE DESCRIPTION	7
3.1 Introduction.....	7
3.2 The Chapel: Exterior	7
3.3 The Chapel: Interior	9
3.4 The 1876 Extension: Exterior	10
3.5 The 1876 Extension: Interior	11
3.6 The 1894 Extension: Exterior	11
3.7 The 1894 Extension: Interior	12
4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	13
APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	15

List of Figures

- Fig. 1 Site location.
- Fig. 2 1769 St Giles Parish Map with the red line being the north boundary of University Parks.
- Fig. 3 1876 Ordnance Survey Town Plan.
- Fig. 4 1939 Ordnance Survey Map.
- Fig. 5 Photo from the late 1950s before the extension of the chancel (source: St Stephen's House).
- Fig. 6 The interior of the Chapel in the late 1950s (source: St Stephen's House).
- Fig. 7 The interior of the chapel in the 1960s after the extension of the chancel (source: St Stephen's House).
- Fig. 8 Part of a 1963 plan by Kenneth Stevens & Associates showing the ground floor.
- Fig. 9 Phased plan of the chapel based on a plan by Wright & Wright Architects.

List of Plates

- Pl. 1 The north elevation of No. 17 Norham Gardens.
- Pl. 2 The south elevation of No. 17 Norham Gardens.
- Pl. 3 The north elevation of the chapel.
- Pl. 4 Kiln stack marks and finger prints on the original chapel bricks.
- Pl. 5 The north elevation of the chapel.
- Pl. 6 Clerestory window above the north porch.
- Pl. 7 Southern end of the east elevation with visible extension.
- Pl. 8 Northern end of the east elevation.
- Pl. 9 Large area of east elevation rebuilt in red brick.
- Pl. 10 Change from original to secondary red brickwork.
- Pl. 11 The south elevation of the east porch abutting an original buttress.
- Pl. 12 Window fitted within a reduced opening.
- Pl. 13 The south elevation of the chapel which dates from the 1961 chancel extension.
- Pl. 14 The west elevation of the chapel.
- Pl. 15 The north elevation of the courtyard wall between the chapel and main house.
- Pl. 16 The south elevation of the courtyard wall between the chapel and main house.
- Pl. 17 The north elevation of the north porch.
- Pl. 18 The east elevation of the north porch.
- Pl. 19 The sacristy built around the east porch.
- Pl. 20 The north elevation of the sacristy.
- Pl. 21 The south elevation of the east porch and sacristy.
- Pl. 22 The north wall of the north porch.
- Pl. 23 Former statue niche with 0.5m scale.
- Pl. 24 The east wall of the north porch.
- Pl. 25 Small keyhole on doorway architrave.
- Pl. 26 Looking south into the nave from the north porch.
- Pl. 27 Holy water stoup beside the doorway.
- Pl. 28 The nave looking north.
- Pl. 29 The nave looking south-east.

- Pl. 30 The nave, chancel and east porch looking east.
- Pl. 31 Cornice within the nave and chancel.
- Pl. 32 Skirting board within the nave and chancel with 0.5m scale.
- Pl. 33 Reduced window opening with recessed shelf in the east wall of the chancel.
- Pl. 34 The chancel looking south.
- Pl. 35 The nave looking south-west.
- Pl. 36 The nave and chancel looking west.
- Pl. 37 Looking east into the east porch from the nave.
- Pl. 38 The north wall of the east porch with holy water stoup and blocked doorway.
- Pl. 39 The north wall of the sacristy.
- Pl. 40 The east wall of the sacristy.
- Pl. 41 Possible candle holder on the east wall of the sacristy.
- Pl. 42 The south wall of the sacristy.
- Pl. 43 Piscina and sink in sacristy.
- Pl. 44 The west wall of the sacristy.
- Pl. 45 Loss of plaster revealing a red brick buttress.
- Pl. 46 The north elevation of the 1876 extension
- Pl. 47 The south elevation of the 1876 and 1894 extensions.
- Pl. 48 The staircase within the 1876 extension.
- Pl. 49 The staircase within the 1876 extension.
- Pl. 50 Detailing of the staircase.
- Pl. 52 Carved newel post cap.
- Pl. 52 Short post with heart shaped motif.
- Pl. 53 Kitchen within the south room on the ground floor.
- Pl. 54 Blocked opening on the west wall of the kitchen.
- Pl. 55 The south room on the first floor.
- Pl. 56 The north elevation of the 1894 extension.
- Pl. 57 The entrance hall looking south.
- Pl. 58 The east wall of the former dining room with ornate fireplace surround.
- Pl. 59 Remains of gas lamp at foot of staircase.
- Pl. 60 Corridor former from former dining room, looking south.
- Pl. 61 Remnant of red tile floor preserved within cupboard.
- Pl. 62 Part of cornice and principal joist from dining room preserved within a bedroom.
- Pl. 63 Bedroom largely contained within a 1963 extension.
- Pl. 64 North-west bedroom on the second floor.
- Pl. 65 South-east bedroom on the first floor.
- Pl. 66 Likely original fireplace surround and register grate.
- Pl. 67 Urn and ribbon detailing to hood of register grate.
- Pl. 68 Likely secondary fireplace surround and register grate.
- Pl. 69 Outline of blocked fireplace.
- Pl. 70 Original or early shelf with clothes hooks.

Summary

Oxford Archaeology was commissioned by St Edmund Hall, Oxford to undertake a programme of Historic Building Investigation and Recording at No. 17 Norham Gardens, Oxford. The detached house was built in 1874 as part of a leasehold development by St John's College and has seen multiple phases of extension and occupation by three successive colleges. It is presently used by St Edmund Hall for student accommodation and it is being redeveloped to provide more capacity, necessitating the demolition of its extensions. This report focuses on the 1926 chapel with the 1876 and 1894 extensions dealt with more briefly.

The chapel was designed by Harold Sydney Rogers for St Stephen's House, an Anglican theological college which occupied No. 17 Norham Gardens between 1919-80. The phasing is more complex than it at first appears, with the original chapel likely being a rectangular structure with a nave and chancel. A closed opening on the east elevation suggests there may have been another part to the original building or an early extension. In either case, it was demolished before 1939, when the north and east porches were in existence. A sacristy was likely added in the 1940s or 50s and the chancel was enlarged in 1961, both suggesting that worship practices may have become more complex.

Despite being converted for secular use in 1980, the chapel retains numerous features which are illustrative of its former use, including a donation box, statue niche, holy water stoups and a piscina. A carving of a crucifix and wreath set in the south wall of the chancel extension may have been relocated from the first building occupied by St Stephen's house when it was demolished in the 1930s.

The 1876 extension originally contained service rooms and a secondary staircase and its construction just two years after the house suggests the service space was considered inadequate. The house ceased being a private residence in 1888, when St Hugh's College took over the lease, and they remodelled the extension to include an ornate staircase and sets of W.C.s and bathrooms. This was likely done at the same time the 1894 extension was added.

The 1894 extension was built to meet the needs of the growing college with an entrance hall, large dining room and twelve bedrooms. It is arguably the most intact of the Victorian buildings, including the original house, with the only major alterations being to the dining room. Most of the rooms have not been divided and many original or early features survive, including mouldings and fireplaces.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA) has been commissioned by St Edmund Hall, Oxford to undertake a programme of Historic Building Investigation and Recording at No. 17 Norham Gardens, Oxford. The detached house dates from 1874 and was built as part of a leasehold housing development by St John's College, Oxford. It has been occupied by three successive colleges since 1888 and seen numerous phases of extension.
- 1.1.2 Together with the neighbouring No. 19 Norham Gardens, No. 17 is presently used by St Edmund Hall for student accommodation and the plan (ref: 22/01842/FUL) is to redevelop them to provide more capacity. This will have a greater effect on No. 17 as it necessitates the demolition of its extensions and chapel.
- 1.1.3 Condition 3 of the Listed Building Consent requires a programme of historic building recording principally focusing on the 1926 chapel. Outline recording was also undertaken on the 1876 and 1894 extensions. The original house and 1963 extension are not included.
- 1.1.4 Nos. 17 and 19 Norham Gardens are located within the North Oxford Victorian Suburb Conservation Area and the latter is Grade II listed.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

- 1.2.1 The principal aims of this report are:
- To investigate and record the parts of the building which will be demolished by the scheme.
 - To make the record publicly accessible through a report and project archive deposited with a public institution.
 - To preserve by record the buildings of the conservation area that will be affected by the works.

1.3 Location

- 1.3.1 No. 17 Norham Gardens is located in North Oxford approximately 1.3 km from the City's central point at Carfax (fig. 1). It is at the eastern end of the road on its south side and is bounded by No. 19 Norham Gardens to the east, University Parks to the south and No. 15 Norham Gardens to the west.

1.4 Methodology

- 1.4.1 Building recording was undertaken at Level 2 as defined by Historic England in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice* (2016).
- 1.4.2 The Historic England guidance document states that Level 2 *'is a descriptive record, made in similar circumstances to Level 1 but when more information is needed. It may be made of a building which is judged not to require a more detailed record, or it may serve to gather data for a wider project. Both the exterior and interior of the building will be seen, described and photographed. The examination of the building will*

produce an analysis of its development and use and the record will include the conclusions reached, but it will not discuss in detail the evidence on which this analysis is based. A plan and sometimes other drawings may be made but the drawn record will normally not be comprehensive and may be tailored to the scope of a wider project.'

- 1.4.3 Building recording was undertaken in the form of an intermittent watching brief between the 18 April and 10 July 2023.
- 1.4.4 The descriptive record was informed by on-site observation and supported by desk-based research using historic maps, photographs and the principal secondary sources.
- 1.4.5 A photographic record consists of general views and specific details and was made using a digital camera with flash where necessary. The initial recording of the chapel was impeded by the amount of items stored within.
- 1.4.6 The drawn record is based on plans produced by Wright & Wright Architects.
- 1.4.7 The façade of No. 17 Norham Gardens is orientated north-north-west but cardinal points are used throughout for simplicity.

2 BACKGROUND HISTORY

2.1 General Historical Background

- 2.1.1 Archaeological evidence for the early development of the area north of Oxford is slight but it appears to have been a suburb beyond the town walls by the 12th century. Between 1123 and 1133, St Giles' Church was founded as a private church by Edwin son of Godegose and was presumably located on his estate (Dodd 2003, 62). It soon became parochial with a vast but sparsely populated parish that encompassed the site of No. 17 Norham Gardens, which was likely agricultural land. By the Hundred Rolls Survey of 1279, the entire road between St Giles' Church and the North Gate was settled.
- 2.1.2 The site was part of a vast area of land to the north of Oxford purchased by St John's College in 1573 and retained for agricultural use until the mid-19th century. One of the earliest depictions comes from the 1769 St Giles Parish Map (fig. 2) and shows the site divided into east-west strip fields cultivated by the University and Messrs Willnot, Tinson and Hains. These were subsequently enclosed and Henry Dixon's 1832 Map¹ shows an open field belonging to St John's College.
- 2.1.3 Some development occurred on the St John's College land in the early 19th century, notably the Beaumont Street scheme, but it was not until they obtained an 1855 Act of Parliament enabling them to make 99-year leases that the way was prepared for the development of North Oxford (VCH IV, 197). Norham Manor was the first of the new residential suburbs and the College began selling leasehold plots in 1860. The distinctive and unified character of the area was ensured by stringent building regulations that required the College's architects to approve all designs.
- 2.1.4 Norham Gardens was the first road to be built and it followed the curve of the newly created University Parks. The architects were William Wilkinson, who was responsible for the overall plan of North Oxford, Charles Buckeridge and Frederick Codd, a pupil of the first. Large detached and semi-detached houses were built in the Gothic Revival style to attract the middle class, with those on the south side designed to take advantage of the park views by placing family rooms to the rear. Frederick Codd was the architect of Nos. 17 and 19 Norham Gardens on plots he bought at auction in 1873.

2.2 The Development of No. 17 Norham Gardens

- 2.2.1 No. 17 Norham Gardens was completed in 1874 and sold to William Wheeler Aldridge, who is described as a gentleman and was later a vicar in Weston-super-Mare. The yellow brick villa sat within one of the most substantial plots and original drawings show it had a rectangular shaped plan with four principal rooms on the first floor.
- 2.2.2 By the time of the 1876 Ordnance Survey Town Plan (fig. 3), the house had been extended to the east, adding a second staircase, almost certainly for servant use, butler's pantry and conservatory. These alterations so soon after construction suggest the service space intended by Frederick Codd was considered inadequate. There is

¹ Picture Oxon POX0082774

also a possible extension to the west adjoining the enclosed yard, containing a knife room and servants' W.C., though this may have been part of the original house.

- 2.2.3 At the time of the 1881 Census, No. 17 was occupied by George Baynes, a colonel in the British Army, his wife Emma and four servants, including a butler. They did not remain long and in 1883 the lease for the 'very desirable Family Mansion' was advertised for sale with the following description:

'Lot 1. – The above Desirable Residence stands in its own handsome grounds of about two-thirds of an acre; is built in the most sustainable manner, and is of pleasing elevation. It is approached by a Carriage Drive, and contains Porch Entrance, Tiled Vestibule, and Entrance Hall, Drawing Room, 20ft by 22ft (with bay), fitted with Carved Stone and Marble Mantle, Tiled Grate and Hearth, and Marble Fender, opening either into Morning Room, 13ft by 14ft, or Dining Room, 16ft by 22ft; Study, 11ft by 13ft, Lavatory and W.C., and Butler's Pantry, opening into Dining Room, all on the ground floor. On the first floor, approached by principal and secondary Staircases, are five principal Bed and Dressing Rooms (one fitted with Bath, with Hot and Cold Water Supply), Linen Closet, W.C. and Housemaid's Closet. On the second floor there are two principal Guest Chambers, and three Servants' Bedrooms, Box Room, and Housemaid's Closet, and Store Closet. In the semibasement there is a Kitchen, 20ft by 17ft, Scullery, Larder, Coal Cellar, Butler's Pantry, China Closet, and Wine Cellar, with Knife-house and Servants' W.C. in enclosed Yard. The other Outbuildings comprise large Tool and Potting House, Fowl Run and House, &c., &c. The Grounds are tastefully laid out in Lawn and Flower Garden, and well stocked with well-matured Shrubs. There is a plentiful supply of choice Wall Fruit in full bearing; and nice strip of Kitchen Garden and a Greenhouse or Conservatory, 25ft by 11ft, approached direct by a flight of steps from the Drawing Room. The Subsoil is gravel, the situation most healthy; the principal rooms facing south command most lovely views of the Parks, the Museum, the Observatory, and the numerous towers, domes and spires of the principal University buildings. It is held by Lease under St John's College, Oxford, for a term of 99 years from 1872, at a ground rent of £24 per annum.

Lot 2. – The substantially-built Stable with two Stalls, two Loose Boxes, and large double-fronted Coach-house, Harness Room, W.C., and Coal Cellar, with Loft, Groom's Sitting Room, and Large Bedroom over the same, situate on the south-west corner of Fyfield Mews, Oxford, now in the occupation of Major General Baynes. It is held by Lease under St John's College, Oxford, for a term of 99 years from 1875, at a ground rent of £3 per annum.'²

- 2.2.4 From this extensive description, it is clear that No. 17 Norham Gardens was a high-status house intended for an upper middle class family. This is shown by the number of rooms, particularly the domestic offices and servant bedrooms, the provision of piped hot water and multiple W.C.s, including one for servants. It was also associated

² *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette*. 'The very desirable Family Mansion, overlooking the Parks...'. 21 Apr 1883, p. 4.

with a stable and coach house located behind Fyfield Road, where a coachman and his family lived, bringing the total number of servants to at least five.

- 2.2.5 The identity of the new occupants is unknown but they were responsible for extending the house again in 1883 to a design by Henry James Tollit, a pupil of William Wilkinson. An inner study was added to the 1876 extension at the front of the house and the pantry was enlarged to the rear.

- 2.2.6 The lease was advertised for sale again in 1888 with the following description:

‘The House contains four Sitting Rooms, Thirteen Bed-rooms and Dressing-rooms, and complete Offices with Greenhouse, Potting Shed and other Outbuildings, large lawn, and productive Kitchen Garden, and will be sold to include Library Bookcase, Blinds, Curtain Rods, and other Tenants’ Fixtures in or about the Premises’.³

- 2.2.7 Following this, No. 17 Norham Gardens ceased being a private residence when the lease was sold to Elizabeth Wordsworth for St Hugh’s College, beginning the long association of Nos. 17 and 19 with women’s higher education. The College had been founded by Wordsworth two years previously to offer a moderately priced alternative to Lady Margaret Hall, of which she was also the president. No. 17 was bought to house daughters of the clergy, who shared bedrooms divided by screens. In 1894, the 1883 extension was demolished and a new four-storey extension was added, providing an entrance hall, large dining room and twelve additional bedrooms.

- 2.2.8 The neighbouring No. 19 Norham Gardens remained a private residence until 1899, when it was left to Wordsworth for the use of Lady Margaret Hall by her friend Norah Jephson, the last of three philanthropic sisters who had lived there. Unlike No. 17, it was not converted for student accommodation but occupied by a member of staff until 1971. A chapel for St Hugh’s College was built on the garden in 1909 and designed by N. W. and G. A. Harrison, with a link added to No. 17 in 1910 and to No. 19 in 1915.

- 2.2.9 St Hugh’s College acquired its present site in 1913, and in 1919, they sold the lease for No. 17 Norham Gardens to Rev. Gilbert Mitchell for the use of St Stephen’s House, an Anglican theological college for Oxford and Cambridge graduates. The college was founded in 1876 by devotees of the Oxford Movement, which advocated a return to the older traditions of the Christian faith, and it remains part of the Anglo-Catholic tradition to the present day.

2.3 The Development of the Chapel

- 2.3.1 St Stephen’s House were likely motivated to build a chapel at No. 17 Norham Gardens by the need to have a suitable space for worship. When they first arrived, it is unclear if they used the former St Hugh’s College chapel at No. 19 or if they converted a room within their own property. The latter is perhaps more likely, as No. 19 was then occupied by Helena Deneke, Bursar and German tutor at Lady Margaret Hall, and the chapel was used by her sister Margaret as a music room for public recitals. This

³ *Oxford Times*. ‘Norham Gardens, Oxford’. 6 Oct 1888, p. 1.

situation would presumably have been unsuitable for the ordained and ordinand all-male community at St Stephen's House, thus requiring a separate venue.

- 2.3.2 Whatever the case, St Stephen's House commissioned Harold Sydney Rogers to design a chapel of the own and it was completed in 1926. Rogers was a local architect who was mainly involved in ecclesiastical work, most notably designing the former St Luke's Church in Cowley (now the Oxfordshire History Centre). It appears he was responsible for few complete buildings, being more often involved in alterations and extensions. Rogers served twenty-two years on the City Council and was elected Sheriff of Oxford for 1935-6 and Mayor for 1937-8.
- 2.3.3 Rogers's original drawings for the chapel have been lost, but it appears to have been a simple rectangular structure containing a nave and chancel. It was built to the west of the original house over the former service yard. The first known depiction is on the 1939 Ordnance Survey Map (fig. 4), after the addition of the north and east porches. The sacristy is yet to be built but there appears to be a wall between the east porch and bay window to the rear of the house. The possible extension containing the knife room and servants' W.C. survives immediately to the east of the chapel.
- 2.3.4 A photograph (fig. 5) that appears to have been taken in the late 1950s or early 1960s shows the south end of the chapel before its extension. The east porch and sacristy are shown and the parapet of the original building is lower than it is at present.
- 2.3.5 Another photograph (fig. 6) from the same period shows the chapel interior before the extension of the chancel, which occupies one bay and is only distinguished from the nave by two concrete steps. Behind the altar, the entire south wall is covered by a reredos depicting the Martyrdom of St Stephen above a dado rail and stylised floral pattern below. This was an oil painting on canvas and the upper part of the image now hangs in the Founder's Chapel at the present St Stephen's House.
- 2.3.6 Two planning applications were approved in the early 1960s for extensions to the chapel. The first dates from January 1961 (planning ref: 61/10513/A_H) and concerns work by local architects Stevens, Flavel and Beard. This appears to relate to the extension of the south end of the chapel as plans from August 1962 (fig. 8) for work to the main house (ref: 63/11748/A_H) show the present chapel footprint. The second application (ref: 64/15180/A_H) dates from May 1964 and is for an extension by Kenneth Stevens & Associates. It is unclear what this relates to but it appears the work did not take place.
- 2.3.7 A photograph of the chapel interior from the 1960s (fig. 7) shows that the extension doubled the size of the chancel to create more space for rituals. It is still divided from the nave by two steps and the reredos has been moved to the new south wall. There is some kind of glass case fitted into one of the eastern windows.
- 2.3.8 St Stephen's House began a formal relationship with the University of Oxford in 1970 and this would eventually lead to it becoming a permanent private hall. Over the next decade, the college outgrew its buildings in Norham Gardens, resulting in the move to their present site in Cowley in 1980. In the same year, No. 17 was taken over by St Edmund Hall for additional student accommodation the chapel was deconsecrated for secular use, most recently being a gym and workshop.

3 OUTLINE DESCRIPTION

3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 No. 17 Norham Gardens is a detached villa with a north facing façade (pls. 1-2). It has three storeys plus attics and is formed of yellow bricks in an English bond with bands of red brick. Further interest comes from the porched entrance, large gables, tall chimney stacks and the stone dressing around the windows. The building has been extended numerous times resulting in a continuous interlinking structure. From east to west it comprises, the 1963 extension, the 1894 extension, the 1876 extension, the original house and the 1926 chapel.

3.2 The Chapel: Exterior

- 3.2.1 The original chapel appears to have been a rectangular building consisting of a nave and chancel. North and east porches were added before 1939, a sacristy was built in the 1940s or 50s and the chancel was extended in 1961 (fig. 9). All the windows are metal framed with rounded heads and rectangular leaded quarries, except those on the north elevation, which have rounded quarries at the apex. Most of the walls have short parapets of two courses of red tile followed by a course of red header bricks.

The Nave and Chancel

- 3.2.2 The main body of the chapel, containing the nave and chancel, is a rectangular structure orientated north-south (pl. 3). It has a slate covered gable roof and is one and a half storeys at the gable ends. The original part of the structure is formed of yellow bricks, with some uneven buff colouring, laid in an English bond. The bricks measure 9 inches long, 4 inches wide and 2 ½ inches high and have a lot of texture with frequent kiln stack marks and finger prints observed (pl. 4).
- 3.2.3 **The north elevation** (pl. 5) is abutted by the north porch and has a five-light clerestory window which increases in size to the centre and is framed by stone dressing, a hood mould and red brick segmental arch (pl. 6). At the apex of the gable, there are three narrow openings to provide ventilation to the roof space.
- 3.2.4 **The east elevation** (pls. 7-8) has six bays divided by simple buttresses topped with red bricks. The northern end of the elevation fronts the courtyard with the original house and sacristy. A large section of the wall and buttress adjacent to the sacristy are made of red bricks measuring 8 ¾ inches long, 4 inches wide and 2 ¾ inches high (pls. 9-10). It looks like a large opening has been closed, which may have led to an unknown part of the original building or an early extension.
- 3.2.5 The sacristy and former east porch abut the middle of the elevation and the latter has an awkward relationship with the buttresses (pl. 11). Beyond this, the two southern bays front the garden and the southernmost bay and buttress are secondary, dating from the 1961 extension of the chancel. They are formed of light yellow bricks with a smooth laminate texture and measure 8 ¾ inches long, 4 ¼ inches wide and 2 ½ inches high. The upper part of the wall is made of the same brick as the original chapel and it is likely they are reused from the demolished south elevation. Only the two southernmost bays have windows: the northern of the two appears to be the upper

part of a hopper window refitted in a reduced opening (pl. 12), while the southern is two-light hopper window with a red brick lintel and with a red tile sill.

3.2.6 **The south elevation** (pl. 13) dates from the 1961 extension and is formed of the same yellow bricks as the southernmost bays of the east and west elevations. In the upper part of the wall, there is a carved limestone panel featuring a crucifix surmounted by a wreath and protected by a hood mould. At the apex of the gable, there are three narrow openings for ventilation.

3.2.7 **The west elevation** (pl. 14) has six bays divided by simple buttresses topped with red bricks. The southernmost bay and buttress date from the 1961 extension. Each bay features a central window with a red brick lintel and a sill formed of red cant bricks, except the northernmost window, which has a sill formed of red tiles. The three southern windows are single light casements and the three northern windows have two-lights with an upper hopper.

The Courtyard Wall

3.2.8 The north wall of the courtyard is positioned between the original house and the chapel (pls. 15-16). It is formed of dull yellow bricks in a stretcher bond with occasional headers, measuring 9 inches long, 4 inches wide and 2 ½ inches high. The bricks match those of the original house in colour and size, and it is possible the wall survives from the structure previously located here or is built from its reused bricks. The upper courses are later additions to raise the height of the wall and add the parapet. There is a doorway with a chamfered stone lintel and a plank door.

The North Porch

3.2.9 The porch (pl. 17) is a one-storey structure that clearly abuts the north facing façade of the original chapel. It is formed of similar bricks laid in an English bond and measuring 9 inches long, 4 inches wide and 2 ½ inches high, but the yellow and buff colours are noticeably brighter.

3.2.10 The entrance on the east elevation has a plank door and is deeply recessed below a rounded red brick (pl. 18). On the north elevation, there are two casement windows with stone dressing, matching the clerestory windows of the nave.

3.2.11 The brickwork above the windows is secondary, suggesting repair or raising the height of the parapet. There is an incomplete band of lighter yellow bricks level with the top of the windows and more of the same bricks are also used at the top of the west elevation.

The Sacristy

3.2.12 The former sacristy is an infill structure between the chapel and original house. It was built around the east porch and has a flat roof (pl. 19).

3.2.13 **The north elevation** (pl. 20) fronts the courtyard and is mainly formed of red brick in an English bond, measuring 8 ½ inches long, 4 inches wide and 2 ½ inches high; they are not the same as the red bricks used in the neighbouring chapel wall. In the upper part of the wall, there is a concrete band and the top five courses are yellow brick, suggesting they were added later with the parapet. There is a doorway in the eastern half of the wall with a concrete lintel and plank door.

3.2.14 **The south elevation** (pl. 21) is formed of the former east porch to the west and sacristy to the south. There is no obvious joint but the brickwork of the former is noticeably redder. All the bricks measure 9 inches long, 4 ¼ inches wide and 2 ½ inches high. The upper parts of the wall are later and possibly relate to adding the parapet or changing its height. The sacristy has a single light casement window with a sill of red cant bricks.

3.3 The Chapel: Interior

3.3.1 The main entrance to the former chapel is via the north porch from Norham Gardens. Most of the walls feature the same ovolo moulded skirting boards, suggesting they were added in one phase once the present footprint of the chapel was achieved.

The North Porch

3.3.2 All the walls feature a skirting board formed of square red tiles and this continues into the archway with the chancel.

3.3.3 **The north wall** (pl. 22) has two two-light casement windows. In the upper part of the wall, between the windows, there is a niche with a half-dome head that was probably intended to hold a statue (pl. 23). Below this, is a painted over donation box with two coin slots and a small keyhole.

3.3.4 **The east wall** (pl. 24) features the main doorway with a plank door framed by a moulded architrave with stops. The door has modern hardware but it is clear when the original handle and lock have been removed. Curiously, there is a small keyhole on the southern side of the architrave (pl. 25).

3.3.5 **The south wall** (pl. 26) has a central square headed archway with torus moulded lintel and jambs with stops. This was likely the original entrance before the north porch was added. On the west side of the archway, there is stone holy water stoup set within a niche with a half-dome head (pl. 27).

The Nave and Chancel

3.3.6 The nave and chancel occupy a rectangular room with one step upwards denoting the change to the latter at the south end. The nave is divided by a modern east-west partition with a gym on the north side and a storeroom on the south, however, this is discounted below and the space described as one. The floor is cement, the walls are plastered and painted white and the ceiling is barrel vaulted with two vents.

3.3.7 **The north wall** (pls. 28) is one bay with the entrance from the porch in the centre and a five-light clerestory window above that increases in size to the central light, which is fixed. The others have opening lower hoppers and all are metal framed with rectangular leaded quarries.

3.3.8 **The east wall** (pl. 29-30) has six bays divided by five pilasters and these are connected to the same on the west wall by the ribs of the barrel-vaulted ceiling. There is a moulded cornice and skirting board that continue around the pilasters (pls. 31-32).

3.3.9 The fourth bay from the north has an inserted opening to the former east porch and the southernmost bays is a later addition, dating from 1961. The only windows are in the two southern bays: the southernmost is a single-light casement and the other appears to be a reused hopper in a reduced opening. There is a recess and shelf below

formed of yellow brick, which appears to have held the glass case shown in an old photograph (fig. 8 and pl. 33).

3.3.10 **The south wall** (pl. 34) is a later addition that dates from 1961. It is coated in pink plaster and retains remnants of the timber frame that held the reredos taken by St Stephen's House on their departure.

3.3.11 **The west wall** (pl. 35-36) is the same as the west wall except that each of the six bays has a central window, with the northern three being single-light casements and the southern three having two-lights with an upper hopper.

The East Porch

3.3.12 The original blocked doorway is visible on the north wall with a stone holy water stoup set within a niche with a half-dome head (pl. 37). There is an inserted doorway on the east wall with a plank door matching the main entrance (pl. 38).

The Sacristy

3.3.13 The sacristy is an awkward space built between the east porch and the original house, incorporating the west side of a bay window.

3.3.14 **The north wall** (pl. 39) is formed of plastered red brick and has a doorway from the courtyard with a concrete lintel and plank door.

3.3.15 **The east wall** (pl. 40) is the former west exterior wall of the main house with the west side of a bay window at its southern end. A set of shelves are built into the wall and there is an iron bracket that appears to be for holding a candle (pl. 41).

3.3.16 **The south wall** (pl. 42) has a casement window and a large porcelain sink with a soap holder. The eastern end of the wall is orientated south-east and features a stone piscina set within a half-dome niche (pl. 43). This was for disposing of holy water and the lead pipe on the exterior drains into the ground.

3.3.17 **The west wall** (pl. 44) is missing areas of plaster, revealing itself and the buttress abutted by the east porch to be made of red brick (pl. 45). This is the same as the exterior wall fronting the courtyard and shows the porch was added after the possible opening was closed.

3.4 The 1876 Extension: Exterior

3.4.1 The 1876 extension abuts the east end of the original house and is abutted on its east end by the 1894 extension (pl. 46). It has a north facing façade and is stepped back from its neighbours, likely intended to express its subservience to the original house. It has four storeys with a pitched slated covered roof and is formed of yellow bricks in an English bond with bands of red brick.

3.4.2 All the windows have chamfered stone lintels and most have stone dressing and shouldered heads. The ground and first floors have four-light sash windows positioned to the west of the elevation, while the second and third floors each have two two-light sash windows, with those on the former stepped at different heights.

3.4.3 The south elevation (pl. 47) fronts the garden and is flush with the original house on the ground floor but slightly stepped back above. All the windows have chamfered

stone lintels and those on the first and second floors have stone dressing and shouldered heads. Each storey has two two-light sash windows except the ground floor which only has one.

3.5 The 1876 Extension: Interior

- 3.5.1 On all floors, the 1876 extension is divided into a staircase to the north and a room to the south. The former is a substantial timber structure which is too ornate to be intended principally for servant use (pls. 48-50). It features two types of newel post, with the main being fluted floor-to-ceiling columns with spandrels and the other having elaborately carved caps (pl. 51). There is also a rounded handrail, plain stick balustrades and moulded panelling. The metal handrail appears to be secondary but it may be original as the timber handrail is quite low. The staircase has ovolo moulded skirting boards interrupted occasionally by posts with heart shaped motifs (pl. 52).
- 3.5.2 Further evidence that the staircase is secondary is that its foot is located within the 1894 extension, meaning the flight from the ground floor cannot be original. In 1876, this was the location of the servants' quarters and the staircase here would not have had such decorative treatment. It is likely that the present staircase was built by St Hugh's College at the time they built the 1894 extension.
- 3.5.3 The south room on the ground floor is a kitchen (pl. 53) and the 1962 plan (fig. 9) shows it was formerly a servery. The only notable feature is a blocked round headed archway on the west wall which previously led to the kitchen (pl. 54). The blocked doorway with the former dining room is not visible from this side.
- 3.5.4 On the upper floors, the south room is divided into a W.C and shower room with the partition between them having older skirting boards on both sides (pl. 55). Original doorways are visible at the eastern end of the north wall and these appear to have been blocked in recent years to insert a second shower room, with the doorway relocated to the western end. The windows on the first floor are set very high in the wall and this was presumably to deter against theft as this room was originally the butler's pantry, where the silverware was kept.

3.6 The 1894 Extension: Exterior

- 3.6.1 The 1894 extension abuts the east end of the 1876 extension and is abutted on its east end by the 1963 extension. It is three storeys with attics and is formed of yellow bricks in an English bond with bands of red brick. The design is based on the original house but there are some unique features, such as moulded stonework and buttresses. The slate covered roof is pitched with gables of different sizes.
- 3.6.2 The north facing façade has an entrance surrounded by a modern porch and two windows to each storey with chamfered stone lintels, shouldered heads, stone dressing and two-light sash windows (pl. 56). The only exception is the eastern ground floor window, which has two-lights divided by a stone transom with yellow stained glass in its upper light and a pointed head.
- 3.6.3 The garden fronting south elevation is the same except that the ground floor is abutted by a single storey flat roofed extension dating from 1963 (pl. 47). It is formed of yellow brick in a stretcher bond and has floor-to-ceiling sash windows.

3.7 The 1894 Extension: Interior

- 3.7.1 The entrance from Norham Gardens leads into a ground floor entrance lobby with an impressive set of original folding doors immediately in view (pl. 57). There are further doorways to the east and west, with the former leading to the 1963 extension and appearing to be an original opening, though it is likely just well done. The room retains original moulded skirting boards, cornice and architraves. At ceiling height, there is a north-south principal joist featuring reeded sides with stops and respected by the cornice. The parquet floor is likely secondary.
- 3.7.2 The folding doors originally opened into a large dining room which has been divided into a store, corridor and part of two bedrooms. They now lead into the store, which retains original moulded skirting boards, cornice and architrave around the doors. On the east wall, is an elaborate timber fireplace surround with fluted pilasters, panelled frieze and denticulated detailing below the mantle shelf (pl. 58). There is an overmantel featuring a mirror framed by ionic columns supporting a cornice and there is an ornate iron ventilation grate above. The north-south principal joist continues from the entrance lobby and the floor is formed of narrow east-west floorboards. The south and west walls are modern partitions inserted to create the corridor.
- 3.7.3 The west door from the entrance lobby leads to the foot of the staircase previously described and, above the doorway, are the remains of a gas lamp (pl. 59). The inserted doorway on the south wall leads to the corridor formed from the original dining room. The north and west walls have original skirting boards and cornice, together with architraves around an original doorway to the kitchen and likely original shelves (pl. 60). The doorway is blocked from the other side to form a narrow cupboard which retains likely original red tiles on the floor (pl. 61). At the eastern end of the corridor, are doorways to two bedrooms which also retain original skirting boards and cornice from the former dining room, together with the principal joist (pl. 62). However, most of these rooms are contained within the 1963 extension (pl. 63).
- 3.7.4 The layout of the upper floors is identical, comprising four rooms accessed from a central corridor (pls. 64-65). All the rooms retain original or early moulded skirting boards, picture rail, cornice and architraves. The west rooms have corner fireplaces, though some have their openings boarded over. There are two designs with the original appearing to be a cast iron grate with urn and ribbon decoration, splayed tiled sides with a brown floral pattern and an 18th century style surround (pls. 66-67). They also have a pull down cast iron panel that seems to be a draught excluder. On the first and second floors, the south-west rooms have likely Edwardian fireplaces with plain cast iron grates, tiled sides with brown metallic glaze and a characteristically deep frieze with art nouveau style motifs (pl. 68). The east rooms have lost their fireplaces but blocked openings are discernible in the centre of the east wall with modern skirting boards over (pl. 69). All the rooms have a moulded shelf beside the door with hooks, which appear to be original or early features (pl. 70).

4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Oxford Archaeology has completed a programme of Historic Building Investigation and Recording at No. 17 Norham Gardens, Oxford. The detached house dates from 1874 and was designed by architect Frederick Codd as part of a leasehold housing scheme for St John's College. It has been occupied by three successive colleges since 1888 and seen numerous phases of extension. Together with the neighbouring No. 19 Norham Gardens, No. 17 is presently used by St Edmund Hall for student accommodation and they are being redeveloped to provide more capacity. This will have a greater effect on No. 17, as it necessitates the demolition of its extensions and chapel.
- 4.1.2 The chapel dates from 1926 and was designed by local architect Harold Sydney Rogers for St Stephen's House, an Anglican theological college that occupied the property between 1919 and 1980. The understated design of the building is typical of the period, with some Arts and Crafts influence in the detailing. There are similarities between the chapel and Rogers's most notable work, the former St Luke's Church in Cowley, which was completed in 1936. Both are of yellow brick with low parapets and have bays divided by simple buttresses on the side elevations.
- 4.1.3 The phasing of the chapel is more complex than it at first appears, with Rogers's original design being a rectangular building containing a nave and chancel. A large section of the east elevation was altered before the addition of the east porch, which abuts a rebuilt buttress. It is not clear what this relates to but it looks like a large opening has been closed, possibly leading to an unknown part of the original building or an early extension. Cartographic evidence shows the north and east porches were extant by 1939 and they visibly abut the original building.
- 4.1.4 The possible extension to the original house, containing the servants' W.C. and knife room, was likely demolished in the 1940s or 50s and the sacristy built soon after. Following this, the last notable phase was the extension of the chancel in 1961. The addition of the sacristy and enlarged chancel may suggest that worship practices became more complex at St Stephen's House between the 1920s and 60s, or that the original building was poorly suited to the community's needs. However, the latter seems unlikely, as they commissioned the chapel and surely approved its design.
- 4.1.5 Despite its long secular use, there are numerous features within the chapel which are indicative of its former purpose, including the statue niche, donation box, holy water stoups and the piscina for disposing of water used sacramentally. On the exterior, there is a carving set in the 1961 chancel extension featuring a crucifix and wreath, with the latter symbolising St Stephen, whose name comes from the Greek *Stéphanos*, meaning wreath or crown. An identical carving appears in a photograph of the original St Stephen's House on Park Road⁴, and it is possible it was recovered when the building was demolished in the 1930s.
- 4.1.6 The 1876 and 1894 extensions were also investigated and the former was found to have been remodelled when the house was converted from a private residence. It appears to have originally contained service rooms and a secondary staircase and

⁴ Picture Oxon POX0111269

these additions just two years after the house was constructed suggest its service space was considered inadequate for its status.

- 4.1.7 St Hugh's College occupied No. 17 from 1888 and they remodelled the 1876 extension, adding a staircase, servery and sets of W.C.s and bathrooms. This appears to have happened at the time the 1894 extension was added as the foot of the new staircase is located within it. Rebuilding the staircase was likely necessary as secondary staircases were typically irregular and narrow. The 1894 extension was built to meet the needs of the growing college, providing an entrance hall, large dining room and twelve bedrooms, allowing for twenty-four more students if they shared in pairs. It is arguably the best intact of the Victorian buildings, including the original house, with the old major alterations being to the dining room.

APPENDIX A BIBLIOGRAPHY

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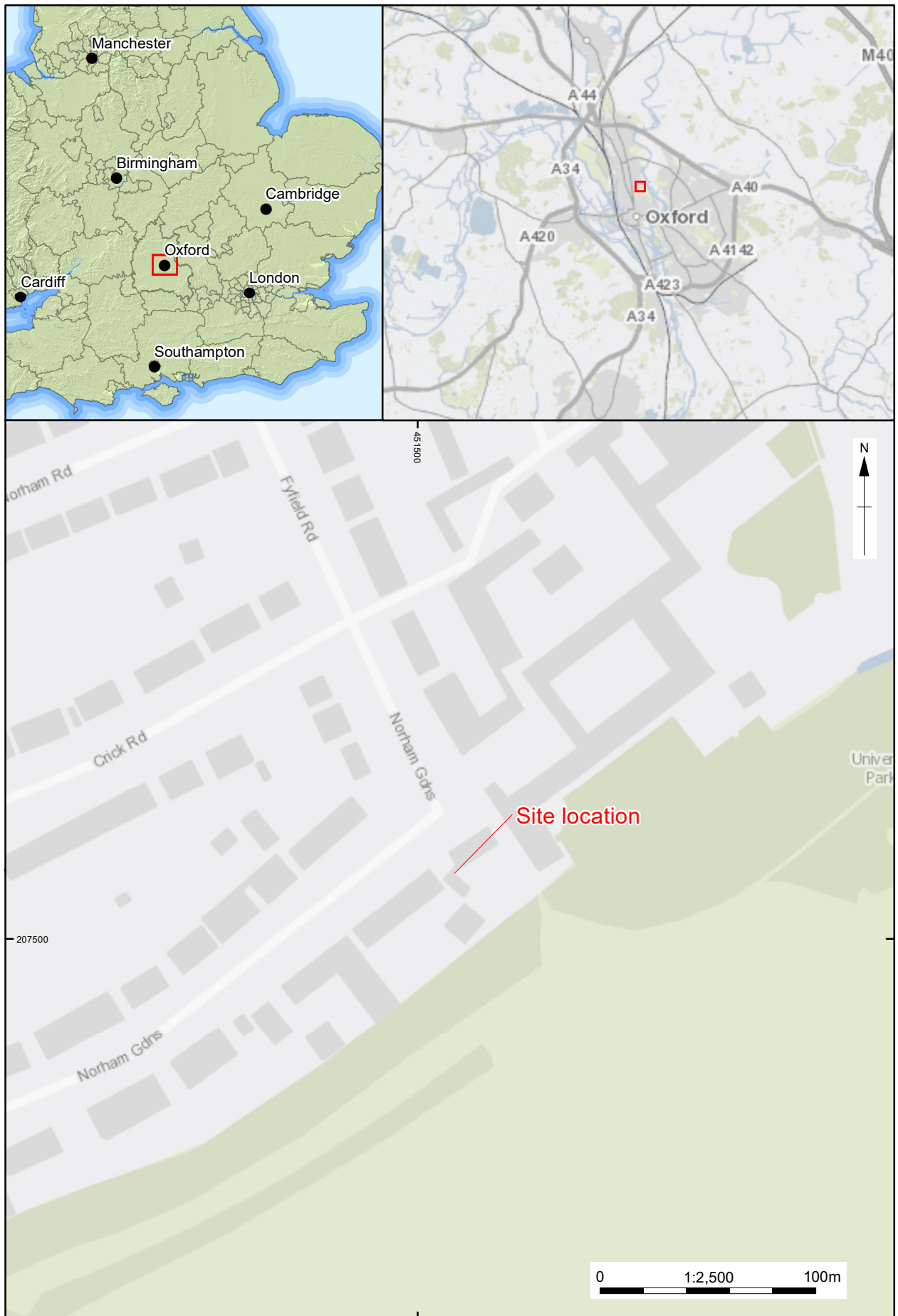


Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: 1769 St Giles Parish Map with the red line being the north boundary of University Parks

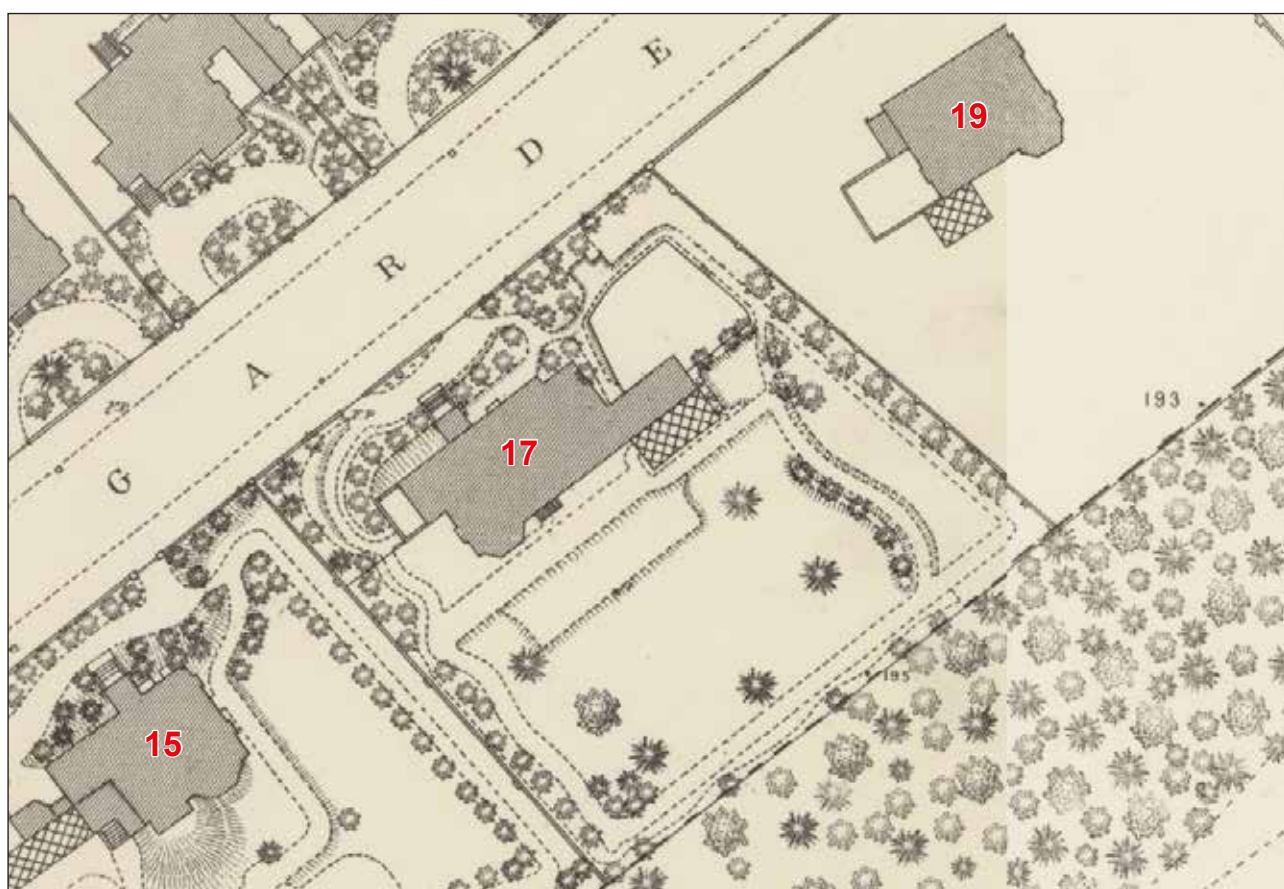


Figure 3: 1876 Ordnance Survey Town Plan



Figure 4: 1939 Ordnance Survey Map



Figure 5: Photo from the late 1950s before the extension of the chancel (source: St Stephen's House)



Figure 6: The interior of the Chapel in the late 1950s (source: St Stephen's House)



Figure 7: The interior of the chapel in the 1960s after the extension of the chancel (source: St Stephen's House)

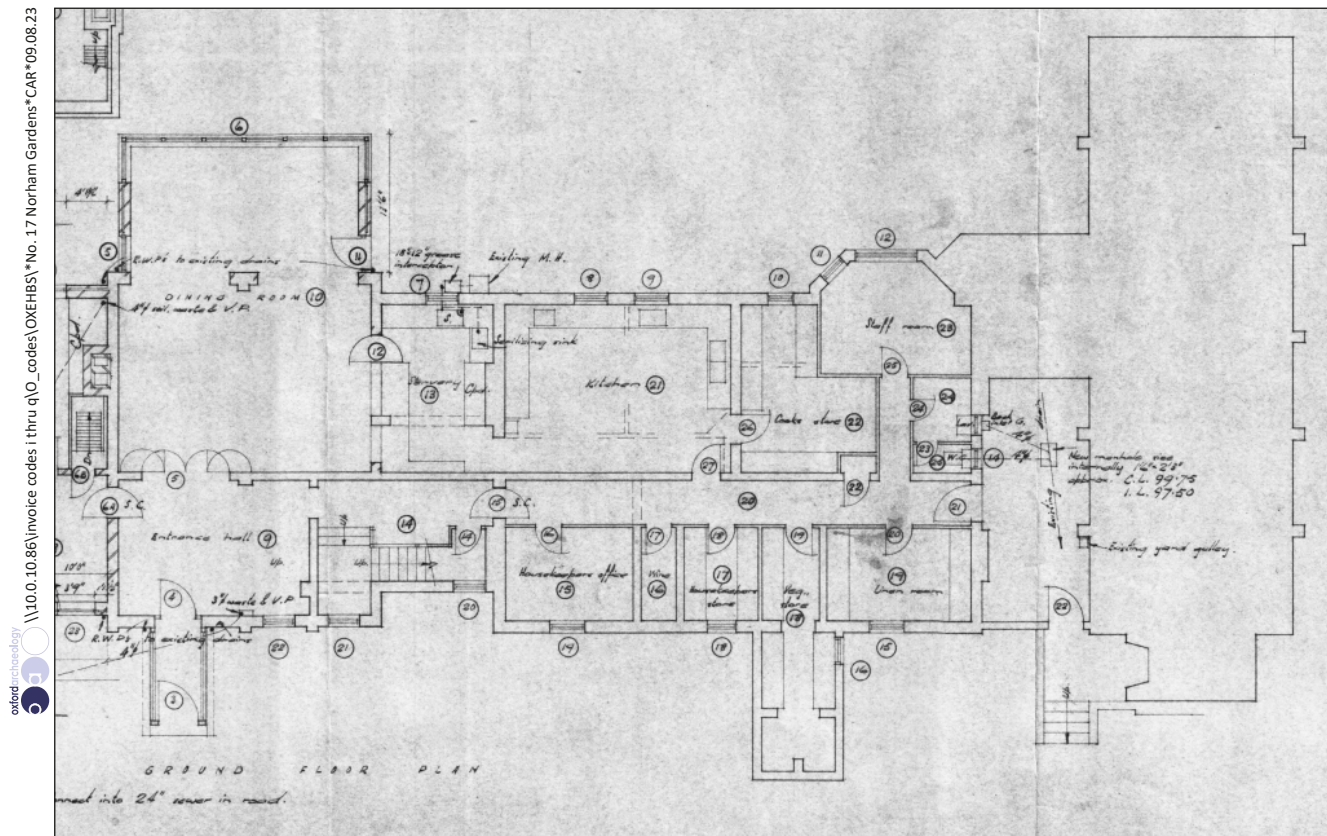


Figure 8: Part of a 1963 plan by Kenneth Stevens & Associates showing the ground floor

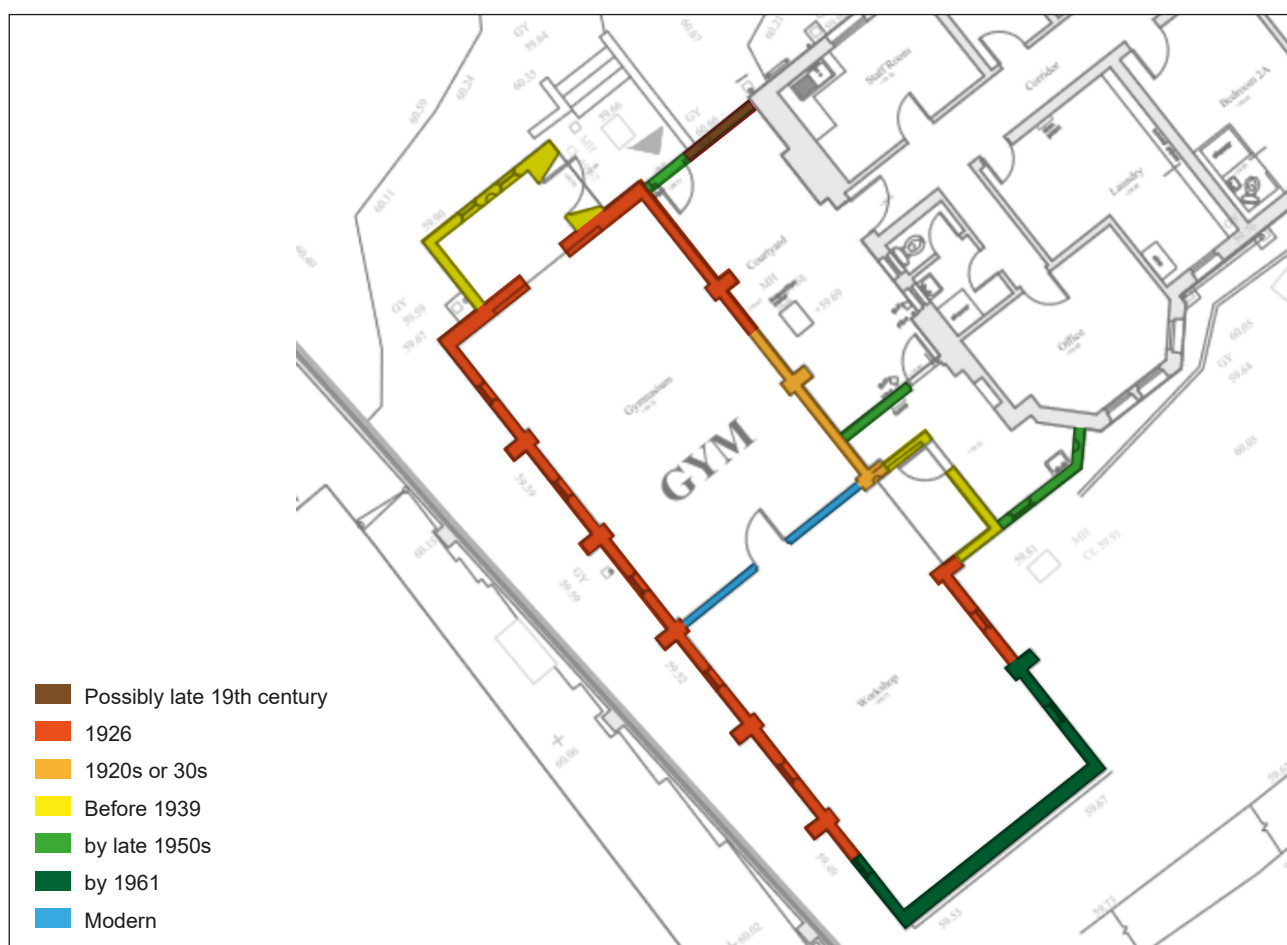


Figure 9: Phased plan of the chapel based on a plan by Wright & Wright Architects



Plate 1: The north elevation of No. 17 Norham Gardens



Plate 2: The south elevation of No. 17 Norham Gardens



Plate 3: The north elevation of the chapel

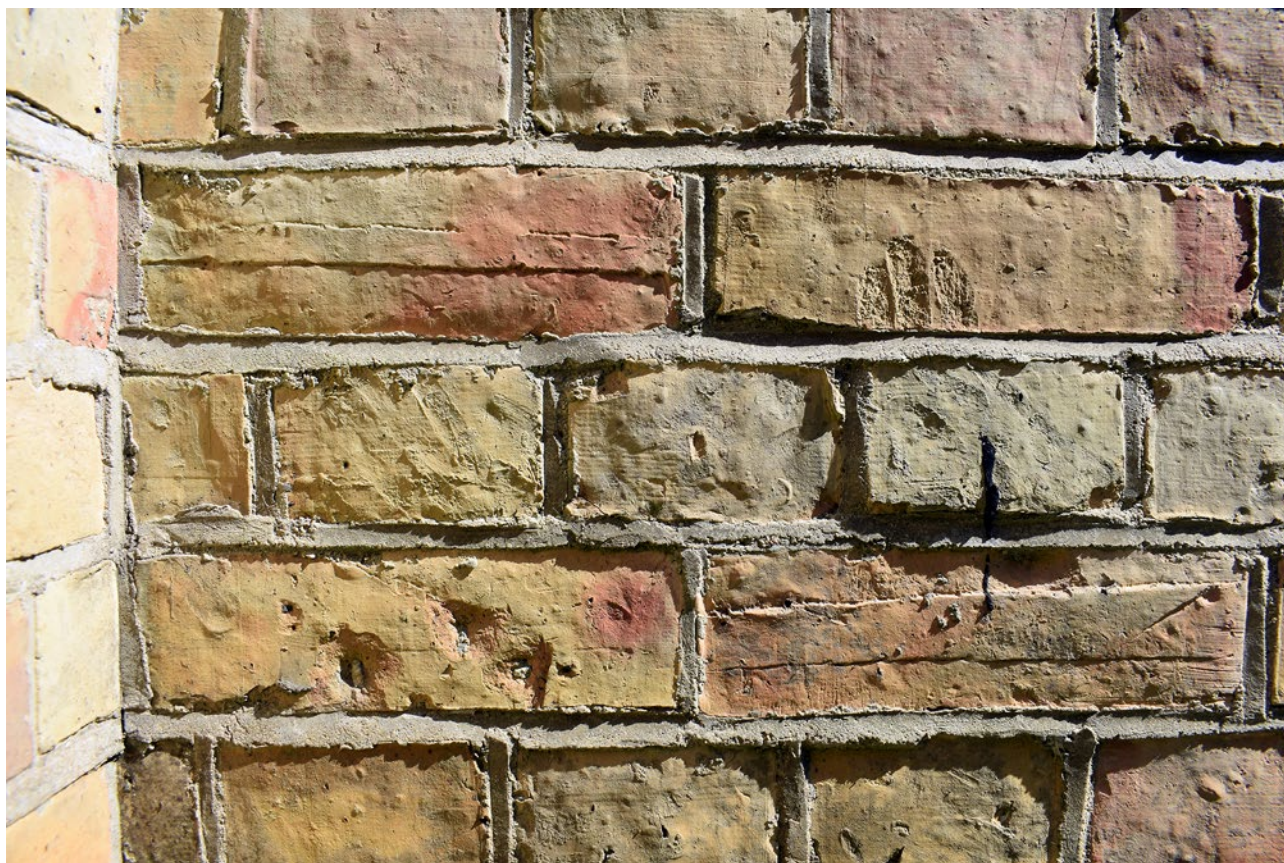


Plate 4: Kiln stack marks and finger prints on the original chapel bricks



Plate 5: The north elevation of the chapel



Plate 6: Clerestory window above the north porch



Plate 7: Southern end of the east elevation with visible extension



Plate 8: Northern end of the east elevation



Plate 9: Large area of east elevation rebuilt in red brick



Plate 10: Change from original to secondary red brickwork



Plate 11: The south elevation of the east porch abutting an original buttress



Plate 12: Window fitted within a reduced opening



Plate 13: The south elevation of the chapel which dates from the 1961 chancel extension



Plate 14: The west elevation of the chapel



Plate 15: The north elevation of the courtyard wall between the chapel and main house

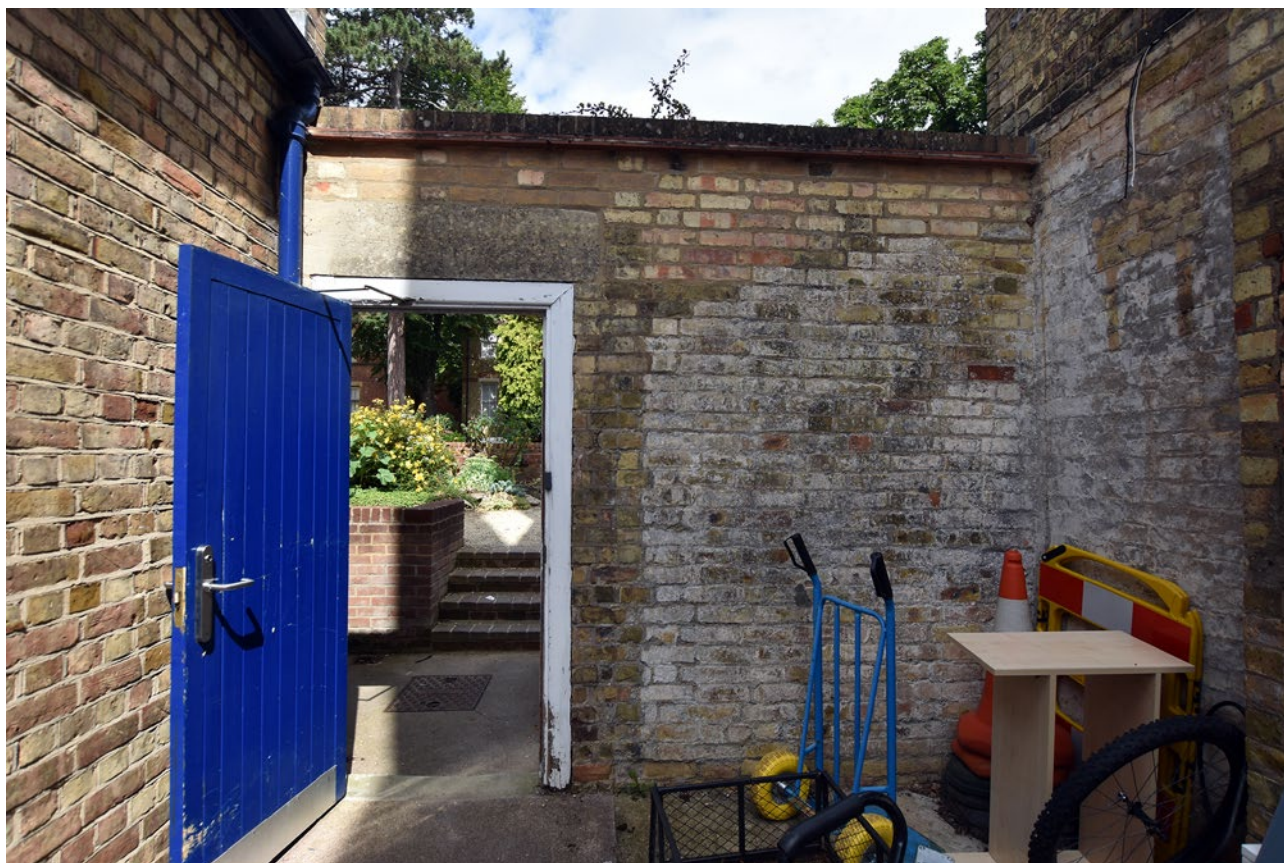


Plate 16: The south elevation of the courtyard wall between the chapel and main house



Plate 17: The north elevation of the north porch



Plate 18: The east elevation of the north porch



Plate 19: The sacristy built around the east porch



Plate 20: The north elevation of the sacristy



Plate 21: The south elevation of the east porch and sacristy

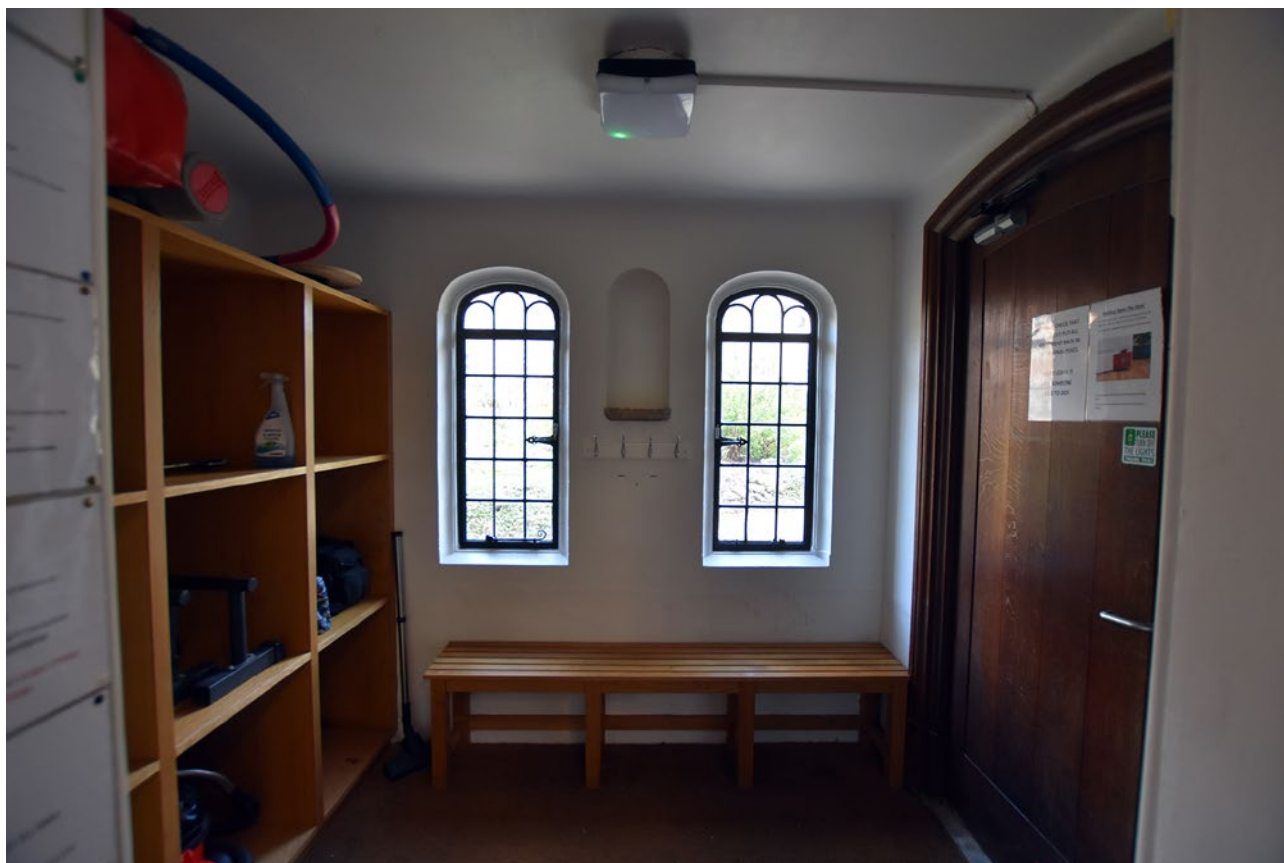


Plate 22: The north wall of the north porch



Plate 23: Former statue niche with 0.5m scale



Plate 24: The east wall of the north porch



Plate 25: Small keyhole on doorway architrave



Plate 26: Looking south into the nave from the north porch



Plate 27: Holy water stoup beside the doorway



Plate 28: The nave looking north



Plate 29: The nave looking south-east



Plate 30: The nave, chancel and east porch looking east



Plate 31: Cornice within the nave and chancel



Plate 32: Skirting board within the nave and chancel with 0.5m scale

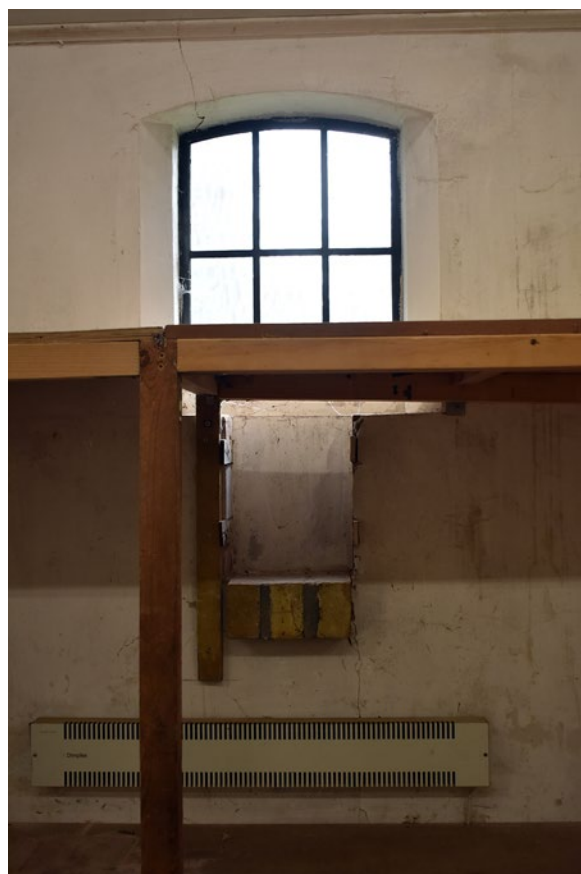


Plate 33: Reduced window opening with recessed shelf in the east wall of the chancel



Plate 34: The chancel looking south



Plate 35: The nave looking south-west



Plate 36: The nave and chancel looking west



Plate 37: Looking east into the east porch from the nave



Plate 38: The north wall of the east porch with holy water stoup and blocked doorway

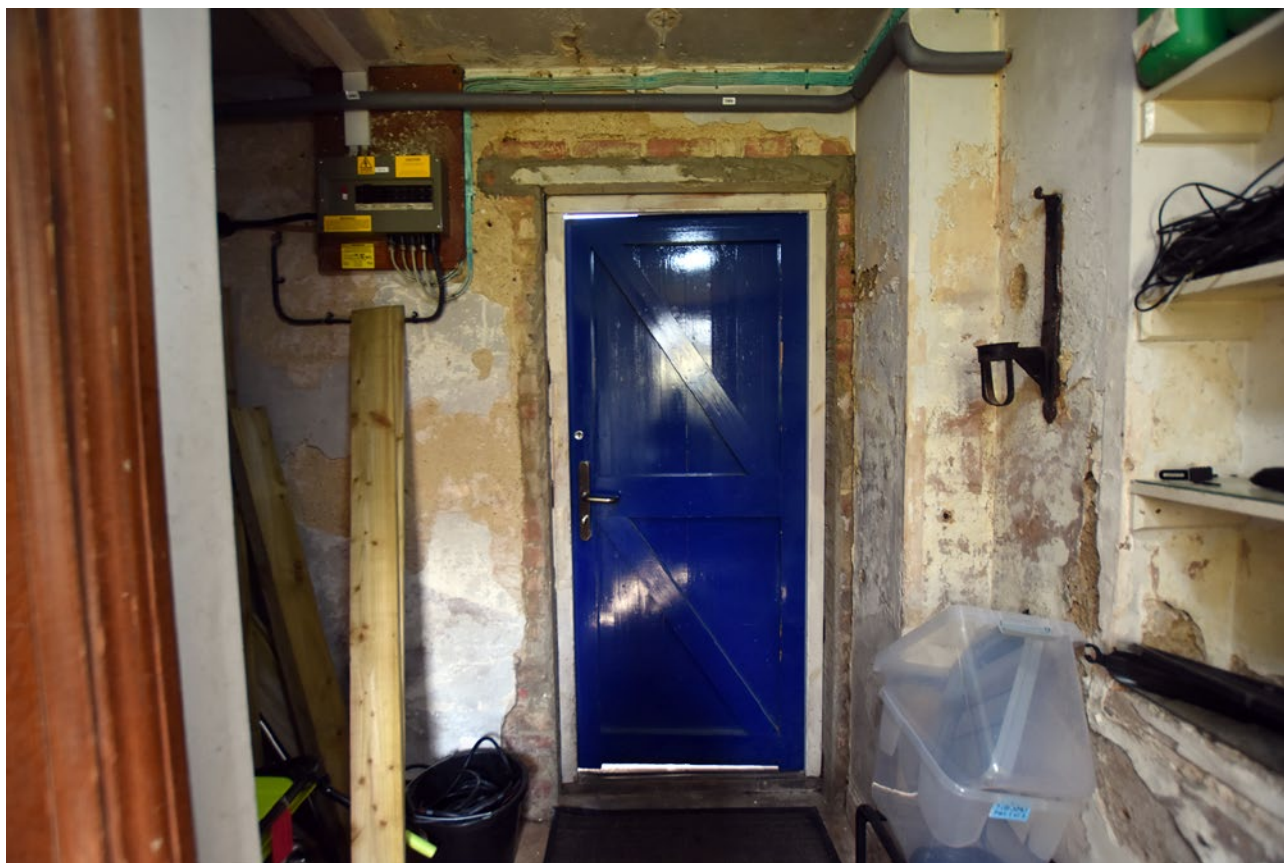


Plate 39: The north wall of the sacristy



Plate 40: The east wall of the sacristy



Plate 41: Possible candle holder on the east wall
of the sacristy



Plate 42: The south wall of the sacristy



Plate 43: Piscina and sink in sacristy



Plate 44: The west wall of the sacristy



Plate 45: Loss of plaster revealing a red brick buttress



Plate 46: The north elevation of the 1876 extension



Plate 47: The south elevation of the 1876 and 1894 extensions



Plate 48: The staircase within the 1876 extension

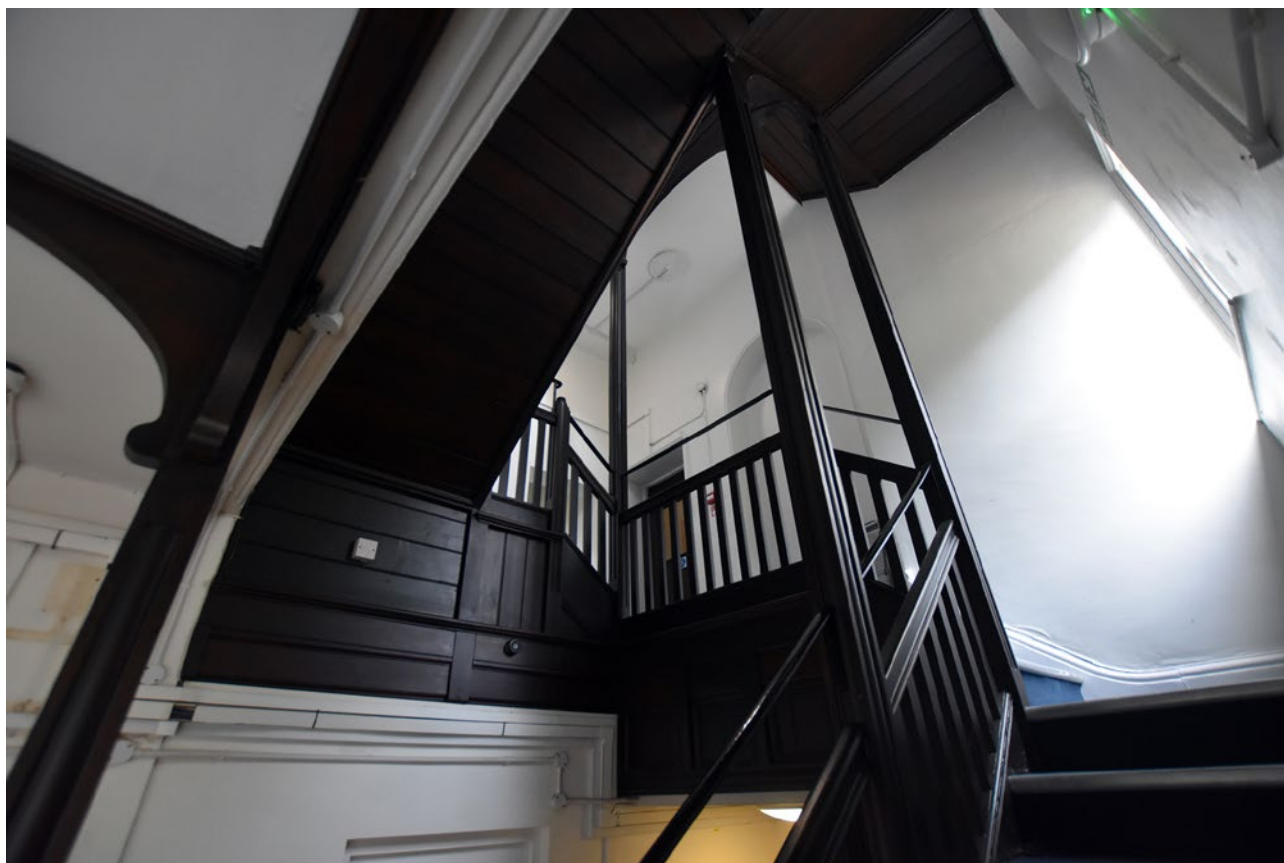


Plate 49: The staircase within the 1876 extension



Plate 50: Detailing of the staircase



Plate 51: Carved newel post cap



Plate 52: Short post with heart shaped motif



Plate 53: Kitchen within the south room on the ground floor



Plate 54: Blocked opening on the west wall of the kitchen



Plate 55: The south room on the first floor



Plate 56: The north elevation of the 1894 extension



Plate 57: The entrance hall looking south



Plate 58: The east wall of the former dining room with ornate fireplace surround



Plate 59: Remains of gas lamp at foot of staircase



Plate 60: Corridor former from former dining room, looking south



Plate 61: Remnant of red tile floor preserved within cupboard



Plate 62: Part of cornice and principal joist from dining room preserved within a bedroom



Plate 63: Bedroom largely contained within a 1963 extension



Plate 64: North-west bedroom on the second floor



Plate 65: South-east bedroom on the first floor



Plate 66: Likely original fireplace surround and register grate



Plate 67: Urn and ribbon detailing to hood of register grate



Plate 68: Likely secondary fireplace surround and register grate



Plate 69: Outline of blocked fireplace



Plate 70: Original or early shelf with clothes hooks



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