



# **ST OSWALD'S CE PARISH CHURCH, RAVENSTONEDALE**

Cumbria

## **Archaeological Desk- Based Assessment, Visual Inspection and Watching Brief**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

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## SUMMARY

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IWA Architects and St Oswald's Parochial Church Council requested Oxford Archaeology North to conduct an archaeological building investigation of St Oswald's Parish Church, Ravenstonedale, Cumbria (NY 6220 0840), prior to extensive renovations being carried out at the site. The work comprised a desk-based assessment and visual inspection, and was carried out in July 2004.

The desk based assessment found that the church originally belonged to Watton Priory in Yorkshire, and was maintained by Gilbertine monks, who had a constant presence in the area, and a structure to the north of the church.

The church was rebuilt between 1738-1744 due to extensive disrepair. There are few visible remains of the early church, with the south porch and a corbel with a wolf's head dating from c1200. The chancel arch also dates to the thirteenth century. The details around the porches appear to date to the seventeenth century, as do the belfry windows. The majority of the present church was built in the Georgian period, although it is probable that it was built along similar lines to the original church.

The remains of the Gilbertine establishment were excavated on several occasions, and revealed a multi-phase domestic structure, parts of which underlie the present church.

The proposed renovations will impact upon the fabric and character of the church during renovations to the roof, masonry and interior, and will impact upon potential buried archaeological deposits, including the remains of the Gilbertine establishment to the north of the church, during the excavation of drains around the external walls. It has been outlined in the Project Design that a programme of archaeological work comprising a watching brief be carried out during the renovations. The results of the desk-based assessment and visual inspection allowed areas of particular interest to be identified and also suggested further work that should be undertaken as part of the recording process.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North would like to express its thanks to IWA Architects for commissioning the work, and for their help and assistance during the fieldwork. Further thanks are due to staff of the County Record Offices in Kendal for their assistance and Jo MacIntosh for supplying information from the Cumbria SMR.

The desk-based assessment was carried out by Hannah Gajos and the visual inspection was carried out by Daniel Elsworth. Hannah Gajos and Daniel Elsworth wrote the report. The drawings were produced by Mark Tidmarsh. The report was edited by Alison Plummer in conjunction with Emily Mercer, and Alison Plummer managed the project.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 IWA Architects and St Oswald's Parochial Church Council have been required by English Heritage to conduct an archaeological building investigation of St Oswald's Parish Church, Ravenstonedale, Cumbria (NY 6220 0840), prior to extensive renovations being carried out at the site (*Appendix 1*). In response to this, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were requested to submit a project design for the required work (*Appendix 2*). Following its approval by English Heritage, OA North was commissioned to undertake the work, which was carried out in July 2004.

### 1.2 OBJECTIVES

1.2.1 The desk-based assessment comprised a search of both published and unpublished records held by the Cumbria County Record Office in Kendal (CCRO(Kendal)), and the archives and library held at OA North. The Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), also held at Kendal, was also consulted for information specifically relating to the church, including the Listed Building details.

1.2.2 This report sets out the results of the desk-based assessment and visual inspection in the form of a short document. This outlines the findings and potential of the archaeological remains, followed by an assessment of the impact of the proposed renovation.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 2*) was submitted by OA North, in response to a project brief (*Appendix 1*) issued by IWA Architects, for an archaeological desk-based assessment and visual inspection at St Oswald's Church, Ravenstonedale, Cumbria. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

### 2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 ***Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)***: the Cumbria SMR, held in Kendal, was consulted. This is a list of all archaeological sites in the county maintained by Cumbria County Council. This is the primary source of information for a study of this kind, as it details all of the major sources for any given site and provides information on Listed Buildings.

2.2.2 ***Cumbria County Record Office (Kendal) (CCRO(Kendal))***: the County Record Office in Kendal was visited to consult parish records relating to the church. Several secondary sources were also investigated.

2.2.7 ***Oxford Archaeology North***: OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, most notably the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological and Antiquarian Society* as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.

### 2.3 VISUAL INSPECTION

2.2.1 The visual inspection comprised a rapid examination of the standing fabric of the building intended to identify broad phases of alteration and use and place the results of the desk-based assessment into a physical context. Written records were kept during the visual inspection using OA North *pro forma* record sheets, and sketches and plans were produced where necessary. Photographs of both the building in general and specific features were also taken

2.3.2 Rectified photographs were also taken of the north and south external elevations (Plate 6 for example), parts of which may have to be rebuilt or repaired so that a more accurate record was made prior to the renovation works. It was not possible due to the topography and space to take rectified photographs of other external elevations or the interior walls, although general photographs were taken.



## **2.4 ARCHIVE**

- 2.4.1 A full archive has been prepared to a professional standard in accordance with current United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC 1990) and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the Cumbria County Record Office (Kendal) on completion of the project. Copies of the report will be deposited with the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal.

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## 3. RESULTS

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### 3.1 THE SETTING

- 3.1.1 **Location:** Ravenstonedale is located in the ancient county of Westmorland, now in modern day Cumbria. The village is situated four miles to the south-west of Kirkby Stephen, and eight miles south-east of Orton (Bulmer 1905; Fig 1). The parish of Ravenstonedale comprises one manor and township, although it is separated into four divisions called Town, Bowderdale, Fell-End and Newbiggin Angles (Parson and White 1829).
- 3.1.2 The church is situated on the north side of the main part of Ravenstonedale, adjacent to Scandal Beck, and at approximately 240m OD (Ordnance Survey 1984). The churchyard is spread around the south, west and north sides of the building, although it does not cover the area of the former Gilbertine building, which is situated to the north-east of the church (Fig 2).
- 3.1.2 **Topography:** The village lies at the confluence of two rivulets, on the edge of the Howgill Fells, an area largely dominated by distinctive steep-sided hills with extensive open moorland and steep scree slopes. The area has relatively few settlements and farmsteads within the valleys (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.1.3 **Geology:** The underlying solid geology of the area consists of limestone from the Carboniferous period (Countryside Commission 1998). This is overlain by drift geology of glacial boulder clays, with the resulting soils being from the Eardiston series, which are typical brown earths (Ordnance Survey 1983).

### 3.2 BACKGROUND ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

- 3.2.1 There is no apparent record of a building on the site prior to the medieval period. Ravenstonedale is not recorded in the Domesday book, as Westmorland was not covered by the survey, meaning that the early history of the church is difficult to trace. A few early remains within the fabric of the church demonstrate that it has a medieval origin, but there are no sources that give a date of construction, or provide information about the original building. The south porch entrance appears to have been reinstated within the present church, and dates from c1200 (Pevsner 1967). A springer from an arch or corbel with the carved head of a wolf has also been dated to c1200. Some other masonry from the medieval period has also been recovered, along with a section of an arch with a groove for lead-light (Haverfield 1902). The chancel arch is also clearly thirteenth century (Pevsner 1967). The most substantial remains from this period are located to the north of the church, and make up the remains of a Gilbertine Priory (see *Section 3.3*).
- 3.2.3 While no date is recorded for the founding of the church, the site is probably first mentioned when Torphin, who is believed to have lived during the reign of Henry II (1154-1189), assigned the manor and advowson of the parish, including the vill of Newbiggin, to the Gilbertine Priory of Watton of the

Order of Sempringham in Yorkshire. This charter, granting the manor with 'advowson appendent' to the priory of Watton, is believed to have been lost at York during the English Civil War (Haverfield 1902). In 1251 Henry III also granted to the monks of Watton 'a privilege of free warren in Ravenstonedale' (Irwin and Irwin 1989).

- 3.2.4 The Priory of Watton annexed the parish tithes in 1336, when Gilbert de Wiggeton, the first rector, resigned. However, whilst in the control of the Priory, no tithes appear to have been set for the maintenance of the church, apart from the living of a vicar. It is probable therefore that the monks were undertaking the administrative role of the church, and will have had an establishment here (see *Section 3.3*) (Bulmer 1905). It is certain that this Gilbertine establishment will have been located at the site of the ruins to the north of the church.
- 3.2.5 The crown afforded several rights to the Sempringham monks, including freedom from toll, and sanctuary throughout all their possessions (Nicolson and Burn 1777, 519-20). If any person guilty of a crime punishable by death escaped to Ravenstonedale and succeeded in ringing the holy bell in the tower, he was free from arrest. This privilege was apparently used on several occasions within the area, but was abolished here in the reign of James I (Bulmer 1905).

### 3.3 THE EXCAVATIONS OF THE GILBERTINE PRIORY

- 3.3.1 The earliest references to the site of St Oswald's church at Ravenstonedale relate to the Gilbertine priory, the remains of which are still present to the north of church. The first excavations of this site were carried out in 1928 by Edward Percy Frankland (Plate 2). The ruins comprised the foundations of a tower approximately 1.5m thick, standing to a height of up to 2m, and built of limestone rubble faced with coursed red sandstone. It was thought that this tower had been attached on its south side to the original church building and that the base of the original church wall stood about a metre to the south, possibly leaving room for a staircase within the tower. The interior of the tower was divided into two compartments divided by an east-west wall, with the larger compartment on the south side being further divided by a wall on a north south axis (Frankland 1929).
- 3.3.2 The rectangular block to the east of the tower is on a slightly different alignment to the tower and the church. From the plans of the excavations it appears to predate the tower. There appears to be an original stone flagged floor, which had been raised with clay around the time of the building of the tower. There are partitions within the block, containing a garderobe, and a small doorway on the north wall. The south wall appears to have renovated around the time of the thirteenth century, when a paved walkway was added to the outside (*ibid*).
- 3.3.3 The north block is the same width as the tower, and contains several compartments and a basement. There is also an internal projection, pierced by a shaft, which is possibly a furnace for smelting lead. Close by are two similar

structures to this furnace, although probably of a later date than the one set into the walls. There had obviously been several phases of building around these furnaces, with ash and molten lead deposited being found under and around the internal walls. A western chamber, adjoining the tower, led directly into the basement of the north block, through a small doorway and chamber, which may have also housed the stairs leading up to the tower, and any second floors (*ibid*).

- 3.3.4 Finds from this excavation included ashlar facing fragments, chamfered jambs, ribs, plinth, arch stones and window sills, mostly of red sandstone from Ash Fell. Debris contained cockle, mussel and oyster shells, bone and coal. In the garderobe were green glazed large earthenware vessels. The south wall revealed a brass pen with un-split nib and bone holder and a piece of ornamental metalwork, which would originally have been attached to a baldric, was found by the north wall. Both this and the pen have only been dated to as medieval (*ibid*).
- 3.3.5 It was felt by Frankland that this structure may have been a late medieval house, possibly the cell of the monks of Watton. Existing walls are probably the vaults mentioned by various accounts, most notably Machell in 1681, as the dimensions agree with his estimates. The buildings were arranged with the church forming one side of the courtyard. As the east block is aligned on a different axis, it is probable that this was the earliest phase of building. The tower also appears to be a fairly small version of the usual pele towers of Westmorland. The comparatively thin walls and the fact it is contemporary with the north block suggest that it is not part of the original stone build. It is possible that this tower was still used for the original church and was only demolished in 1738 (*ibid*).
- 3.3.6 A second phase of excavations carried out in 1929 by Frankland consolidated the finding of the previous year. Finds from these excavations included a thirteenth century grave slab with chalice and floriated cross, a 13<sup>th</sup> century lancet head which had been laid on its side as a walling stone, a sedilia capital and a scratch dial. These relics suggest that the chancel of the church was built the same time as the domestic building. However, there are architectural remains corresponding to a secular rather than ecclesiastical building, showing the domestic nature of the ruined building. The cemetery of the church appears to be outside the east block, which is thought to be the earliest building. A possible L shaped building is located to the west of the ruins, towards the beck, also adjoining the courtyard (Frankland 1930)
- 3.3.7 In 1985, a soil resistivity survey of the area was undertaken. However, due to excessively wet weather and the shallow soil in parts of the area, the results were inconclusive (Irwin and Irwin 1989).
- 3.3.8 The ruins of the Gilbertine establishment were cleared of undergrowth to protect them from further decay in 1988-9 (Turnbull and Walsh 1992). Further excavations were carried out during these works and these came to slightly different dating conclusions to that of the Frankland excavations (Plate 3). The first phase was felt to be areas D and E, rather than areas C and K as previously thought. Area H was thought to lie beneath the walls of the present

church. Most of the visible remains today are the result of later phases of building within the eastern range, A and B, and probably represent the second phase of building within the ruins. It is thought that this second phase of building was to change the emphasis of the building from that of a small monastery, to that of a comfortable manor house. The final phases of building probably took place over a period of time, and comprised small changes to the overall building such as the addition of a wing, K, and remodelling of the eastern side of the building, C (*ibid*).

- 3.3.9 A watching brief was carried out in a field to the north of the church and the exposed ruins in 2001. Five walls aligned south-west/north-east or east/west, three linear stone formations (probably walls), various associated and un-associated areas of stone debris, and one gravel path. One of the stretches of wall was dated to the medieval period through associated finds. The others may have been of a similar date, but no evidence was available to confirm this (LUAU 2001).

#### 3.4 HISTORY OF ST OSWALD'S

- 3.4.1 The recorded history of St Oswald's Church essentially belongs to the reformation period, following the dissolution of the Gilbertine order. The present tower has many dressed stones within its masonry, which probably came from the original church or Gilbertine establishment (St Oswald's PCC 2004). Again there are few visible remains from this period within the church. The details around the porches appear to date to the seventeenth century, as do the belfry windows (Pevsner 1967). The keys of the church door have been recovered, and are dated to 1634, and two bells in the tower, although undated, came from the original church (Haverfield 1902).
- 3.4.2 The priory of Watton was confiscated by the crown in 1539 as part of the dissolution of the monasteries, and Henry VIII granted the archbishop of York, Robert Holgate, formerly Bishop of Llandaff, the manor of Ravenstonedale, and the church, for the term of his life. Six years later the bishop sold the manor and church to Lord Thomas Wharton for £935 16s 8d. The parish appeared to be flourishing, as, in 1546, the rectory alone was worth nearly £133. The secular duties of the church as the parish court house were clearly still in force, as the chaplains wages for '*performing divine service and keeping the court*' were £8 (Bulmer 1905; Haverfield 1902).
- 3.4.3 The parish registers of this period are difficult to access, as they are in poor condition. There also appears to be some confusion over the start date of the parish records, although 1577 seems to be the most probable date (Whitehead 1895). The most useful documentary sources about the fabric of the church come from individual accounts. In 1677, George Fothergill wrote an account of the legal proceedings of the parish, and a brief description of the church. '*The whole parish is but one manor of the Lord Wharton, who hath the privilege of keeping Court Leet [a public jurisdiction and responsible for dealing with minor offences and public maintenance] and Court Baron [private jurisdiction and property of the lord of the manor] and probate of will*' (Haverfield 1902). It is probable that at this time, the court proceedings were

still being carried out in the church. Reference is also made to vaults which are thought to have been used as a prison for detaining those condemned by the court. *'There is adjoining to the back side of the church some vaults and ruins of old buildings which (as is said) did belong to the sanctuary'* (*ibid*). This reference suggests that the vaults are located on the outside of the church walls, and so almost certainly relates to the Gilbertine establishment, which appears to have been in ruins by this date.

- 3.4.4 In 1688, Thomas Machell, vicar of Kirkby Thore, in his unpublished History of Westmorland, described the church as *'an old conventional church, with a row of three substantial round pillars, and four arches just in the middle. On the south side of the altar was a piece allotted by dispensation of Bishop Potter for teaching a school'*. This account also relates the connection between the church and the ruined priory: *'on the north side has been a large quadrangle, the inner court being 20 yards square, as yet may be seen by the ruins, and the breadth of rooms about six or seven yards, with vaults underneath them, some of which are not yet visible next to the ruins with ribbed arches, and a door upwards on the outside of the church where they had an entrance'*. Reference is again made to the prison vaults, again suggesting that they are located outside the walls of the church.
- 3.4.5 In Bishop Nicholson's description of the church (1703), it appears that although the general life of the church is continuing as usual, it is clear that the state of general repair of the church was beginning to become a problem. *'Here's a large and handsome church: the quire part the worst, but all repaired (as one continuous pile of building) at the common charge of the parish. The altar has no rails, and stands at a distance from ye east window, having two rows of seats or benches, betwixt it and that for the scholars... They have three good bells and a clock in the tower, besides the saints bell, which hangs near that part of the south isle which is appropriated to the use of a school.'* It is also clear that the justice courts were also still being carried out within the church itself, *'They have a tradition that ye steward and jury of ye manour sate formerly on these benches in judgement (of life and death) upon such malefactors as were arraigned for any capital crime, who were imprison'd in a hollow vault (some part whereof is still to be seen) on the north side of the church.'*
- 3.4.6 A vault was uncovered in 1892 when improvements were being made in the chancel and it was found to contain skulls and other human remains, which were replaced in the vault and cemented over (Collingwood 1923). However, it still remains unclear whether the vault was actually located in the chancel, or is instead located outside, to the north of the church as is suggested in the accounts of Fothergill and Machell. A pipeline was laid through this area to a stoke-hole, and further excavations to replace and relay this pipe close by were carried out, but no vault has come to light (Frankland 1929)
- 3.4.7 ***The Rebuilding of the Church:*** by the mid eighteenth century it had become clear that the church would have to be replaced due to severe dilapidation. In 1732, an estimate was obtained *'of the charge of pulling down, repairing and rebuilding the Old Abby Church and Steeple...in Ravenstonedale...including materials and carriage'*. The estimate totalled £1514 6s 4d (WQ/SR/25/11). In

1733 the minister and churchwardens petitioned the Lord Chancellor to enable them to raise money for the rebuilding of the church, due to the dangerous nature of the church fabric (WQ/SR/36/2). There are no actual building plans for the new church, but it is probable that the new church was built directly over the original building, as the new church was not re-consecrated (Frankland 1929).

3.4.8 The tower was rebuilt in 1738 in the centre of the west end of the church, probably reusing the original masonry below (WD/MG Box 3 1736-44). However, there is some confusion as to the siting of the original tower as opposed to the new tower. The contracts for the building of the tower suggest that the old tower was attached to the church, but was not located at the west end but rather on the north side (Frankland 1929). There is also a tradition that the earlier tower stood apart from the church on the town road side of the path, and rested upon pillars, with the ropes of the bell hanging from the centre. The builders account from September 8 1738 states that part of the church wall was pulled down and re-erected during the rebuilding of the tower, indicating that the present tower was incorporated with the old church (Nicholls 1880).

3.4.9 The rebuilding of the church followed in 1744, with the foundations being taken down to rock (Frankland 1929). There was also an agreement between Robert Mounsey, and John Martin, the builder, for pulling down of the old church and the erection of the present one reusing, as far as possible, the dressed stone from the earlier (Collingwood 1923). The church's roughly cruciform shape is has probably an attempt to remain true to the original design. Similarly, rows of windows within the north and south aisles may also mirror the original church. The interior had a Georgian arrangement with a three-decker pulpit added c1745-50 and box pews (Pevsner 1967).

3.4.10 As the church had been rebuilt so recently, the amount of work carried out in the church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been relatively minimal. Early maps, in particular the Ordnance Survey 25": 1 mile plans of the area were consulted, but these did not show adequate detail and the building evidently took essentially its present form. Several minor alterations and additions were made however (WPR/6 1888-1970):

- 1891 - the organ was erected, the box pews were removed, and the level of the floor was raised 15'' to make it the same height as the chancel.
- 1902 - a stained glass window was inserted to memory of Anthony Metcalfe-Gibson.
- 1909 - a memorial tablet was placed in the church to Rev. Robert Weston Metcalfe.
- 1919 - a war memorial obelisk was erected in the churchyard.
- 1926 - a stained glass window was inserted in memory of Mary Ann Metcalfe-Gibson.

- 1937 - electric lights and an electric organ blower were installed.
- 1960 a wall was added in the churchyard in 1960 (Plate 1).
- 1962 - an electric boiler was installed in lieu of the existing coke fuelled boiler.
- 1970 the rendering was removed from the church to reveal the stonework beneath.



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## 4. VISUAL INSPECTION

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### 4.1 RESULTS

- 4.1.1 **General fabric:** the church is built in courses of roughly dressed blocks with the corners finished with raised ashlar quoins. The roof is slate with stone coping decorated with ball finials. The plan is relatively simple with a tower and chancel at the west and east ends of the nave respectively, and a porch at the west end on both the north and south sides. The north and south elevations each have seven round headed windows with dressed surrounds and keystones (Plate 6), and a further small window in a similar style above each of the porches.
- 4.1.2 **External details:** the north elevation has a porch on the west end with an outer doorway in the same style as the round headed windows (Plate 5). The porch forms a gable, has a rendered plinth and is decorated with ball finials. Internally the porch has a similar doorway and stone benches along the east and west walls. At the east end of the elevation the wall returns towards the vestry and incorporates a small outshut (Plate 6). The tower is situated at the west end and its north elevation has two small, square lancet windows on the first and second floor and a three panel window above. The west elevation is dominated by the tower, which is battlemented and has a string course (Plate 4). It has a large doorway with a broken pediment and fluted keystone decoration. The remainder of the west elevation is made up by the west face of the porch and the south aisle.
- 4.1.3 The south elevation of the tower has a lancet window in the tower and an upper window with stepped lights and a hood mould (presumably re-used). The porch, at the west end, is decorated with finials as per the north elevation. The outer door comprises a re-used four-center arch with a hood mould. Internally the door is round headed with a keystone, as per the windows, and there are stone benches along the east and west walls. The wall returns at the east end to form the chancel. The east elevation has two tall round headed windows in the same style as the rest. There is a small low outshut on the north side with a single doorway providing access to a cellar or boiler room.
- 4.1.4 **Internal details:** the internal arrangement is slightly unusual in that there is a north/south aligned corridor between the two porches at the west end, to the east of a double staircase allowing access to the gallery (Plate 8). The nave comprises a large room with the seats arranged college style and the chancel is accessed through a large chancel arch.
- 4.1.5 The entry corridor is formed by a timber panelled wall along the east side and has a low roof below the gallery. A clock face is attached to the wall in the corridor connecting the entry corridor to the stairs and is inscribed '*This clock was given to this church by John Fothergill of Brownber in the year 1719*'. There are ogee moulded corbels on the south-west side and two loose corbels or arch springers carved with a wolf's head motif lying on the floor, which is flagged. The gallery is accessed via a double flight of dog-leg stone stairs with

baluster turned timber hand rails and beaded posts (Plate 8) supporting a more recent floor within the tower, although elements of this seem original. A small doorway in the south-west corner allows access to the stair tower. The ceiling is more original, although there are many modern repairs, and comprises a flat floor supported by beams sat on stone corbels. A similar ceiling remains in the upper floor of the tower, which houses the bell ropes.

- 4.1.6 The nave has whitewashed walls and a denticulate cornice. The pews are arranged college style and there is a triple pulpit with a sounding board in the center of the north side (Plate 7). There is an organ situated in the north-east corner and a gallery at the west end over the entry corridor. There is a large arch with engaged columns at the east end allowing access to the chancel. The chancel is very small and plain with the plaster scored to imitate ashlar blocks. There is a doorway on the north side allowing access to the small outshut.
- 4.1.7 **Conclusions:** the extensive rebuilding carried out in the mid-eighteenth century has, inevitably, had a large impact on the remaining fabric of the church. There are no major phases of rebuilding evident within it and even those elements that appear to be earlier in style were almost certainly included during the eighteenth century rebuilding.
- 4.1.8 The documentary sources state that the building was levelled to its foundations before rebuilding, and this would suggest that the likelihood of earlier structural elements, other than specifically re-used material, would be unlikely to be present. Nevertheless, it is very likely that material would have been extensively re-used in the construction that is not otherwise visible. The fact that this is specifically stated in the specifications for the rebuilding (see *Section 3.2.15*) and that pieces are apparently visible in the building (see *Section 3.2.14*) make the discovery of further fragments very likely.
- 4.1.9 The relationship between the present, rebuilt, church, the earlier church and tower and the remains of the Gilbertine Monastery are not evident within the remains of the building. The visual inspection was not able to elucidate any of these matters, although there was no obvious evidence for the tower having originally been entirely separate from the nave as has been suggested (Irwin and Irwin 2002).

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## 5. SIGNIFICANCE OF REMAINS

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### 5.1 CRITERIA

- 5.1.1 There are a number of different methodologies used to assess the archaeological significance of sites; in this instance those outlined in Annex 4 of Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (DoE 1990), as used by the Secretary of State when scheduling Ancient Monuments, will be used. The church is considered using each of the following criteria, and the results outlined below.
- 5.1.2 **Period:** the relative modernity of the extant church (eighteenth century) makes it of only limited significance in the region. Nevertheless the associated remains of the Gilbertine monastery, and limited evidence for an earlier church do give additional period significance. Similarly the building itself could perhaps be considered a good example of a building of its period, and as such is of some significance.
- 5.1.3 **Rarity:** the church itself is not particularly rare in the region but is within the context of Ravenstonedale and is therefore of some local importance. The addition of earlier monastic remains make it even more important and arguably of some national significance.
- 5.1.4 **Documentation:** there are few evident documents covering the early part of the church's history, although there are several relating to the monastery. Further analysis of these could increase the understanding of the site as a whole, but they are unlikely to add a great deal to the appreciation of the extant building. This criteria could therefore be said to only add a small amount of significance to the site.
- 5.1.5 **Group Value:** the site has a high group value within a small area on account of the presence of the monastic remains associated with the church, giving it some significance. The church is, however, isolated within the general landscape and has a relatively low significance in that sense.
- 5.1.6 **Survival/Condition:** the church is in good condition, despite the need for repair, and the presence of earlier remains suggests that there is a high potential for further historic fabric to be present on site.
- 5.1.7 **Fragility/Vulnerability:** the building is not at threat from development or other potentially harmful activity. In its present condition it is also not particularly vulnerable, and so is not considered to be of any additional significance on account of these factors.
- 5.1.8 **Diversity:** the presence of an eighteenth century church and a medieval monastery on the same site make it extremely diverse and therefore of considerable local and regional significance.
- 5.1.9 **Potential:** despite, or perhaps as a result of, repeated archaeological work on the site investigating the monastery there is a great deal of potential for further information to be gained. By contrast the standing remains of the church have

not been examined in detail. Although these have arguably less potential this is at present difficult to ascertain, and considerable information could be gained from the fabric. The significance of the church on this account is quite high at both a local and regional level.

## **5.2 SIGNIFICANCE**

5.2.1 While the church building itself is a relatively simple structure essentially of a single phase, the full history of the site is far more complex. The greatest significance of the building itself is perhaps best seen in terms of its architectural and period style. Because of the extensive rebuilding it has a unified architectural style, which has not been extensively modified by recent alterations. If anything, the re-use of a few older window and door surrounds detracts from the general scheme. Historically, however, this would perhaps make it of less significance due to the lack of obvious development, alteration and general use.

5.2.2 The presence of the Gilbertine monastery and the evidence for an earlier church makes the site, rather than the building itself, considerably more interesting. There is considerable potential for the current scheme of renovation to reveal remains of these early building, either within the fabric of the existing church, or buried around and beneath it. Any opportunity to examine these particular facets of the site should therefore be considered of considerable significance in better understand the development of the site as a whole.

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## 6. IMPACT

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### 6.1 PROPOSED WORKS

6.1.1 The proposed renovations to St Oswald's Church combine four separate elements. These include reducing the external ground levels to below the interior floor levels, and excavating drains around the external walls, with an associated soakaway; repairs to the roof including replacing slates and leadwork; masonry repairs including rebuilding areas of the wall where necessary, and resetting areas of masonry; and extensive internal repairs including an overhaul of window opening lights and support bars, renewing window protection in the east window, repairing and redecorating the ceiling, cornices and walls where damage has occurred, repairing the fire door to the roof, the timber flooring and other timber.

### 6.2 POTENTIAL IMPACT

6.2.1 The proposed renovations will impact heavily on the church. The reduction of the ground surface and excavation of drains will impact on potential buried archaeological remains. The excavation of the Gilbertine establishment in 1988-9 show that the original structure underlies the present church. Therefore, the potential for uncovering further foundations must be considered high. There is also the potential of encountering inhumations in the area.

6.2.2 Although the repairs to the roof are not considered to have an unduly large impact upon the church, as it is assumed that similar building materials will be used that are sympathetic to the surroundings, parts of the fabric of the building will be removed, and destroyed.

6.2.3 The masonry repairs will have a major impact on the church, as some walls will be taken down. However, it is again assumed that the walls will be rebuilt using similar materials, and that this and other repairs to the masonry will be carried out in a sympathetic manner to minimise the impact.

6.2.4 The internal works will impact upon the character of the interior of the church as areas will be redecorated, possibly exposing the original masonry. The repairs to the timber flooring may also impact on potential buried remains, as shown by the vault with inhumations found within the church in 1892.

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## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MITIGATION

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### 7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1.1 A programme of archaeological work in the form of a watching brief has already been recommended in the Project Design (*Appendix 2*). The results of the desk-based assessment allow this to be focussed on areas of interest.
- 7.1.2 The excavation of the drainage ditches around the external walls, and during the excavation of the soakaway, in particular along the north side of the building, are of particular interest. There is a high potential that buried archaeological deposits may be encountered. The removal of internal wall coverings, mortar or masonry may expose earlier, re-used fabric and an inspection should be made of any areas affected in this way.
- 7.1.3 Similarly, any areas of the roof structure that are exposed should also be examined in order to identify original or re-used pieces of timber.

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Plate 7: Interior of the nave

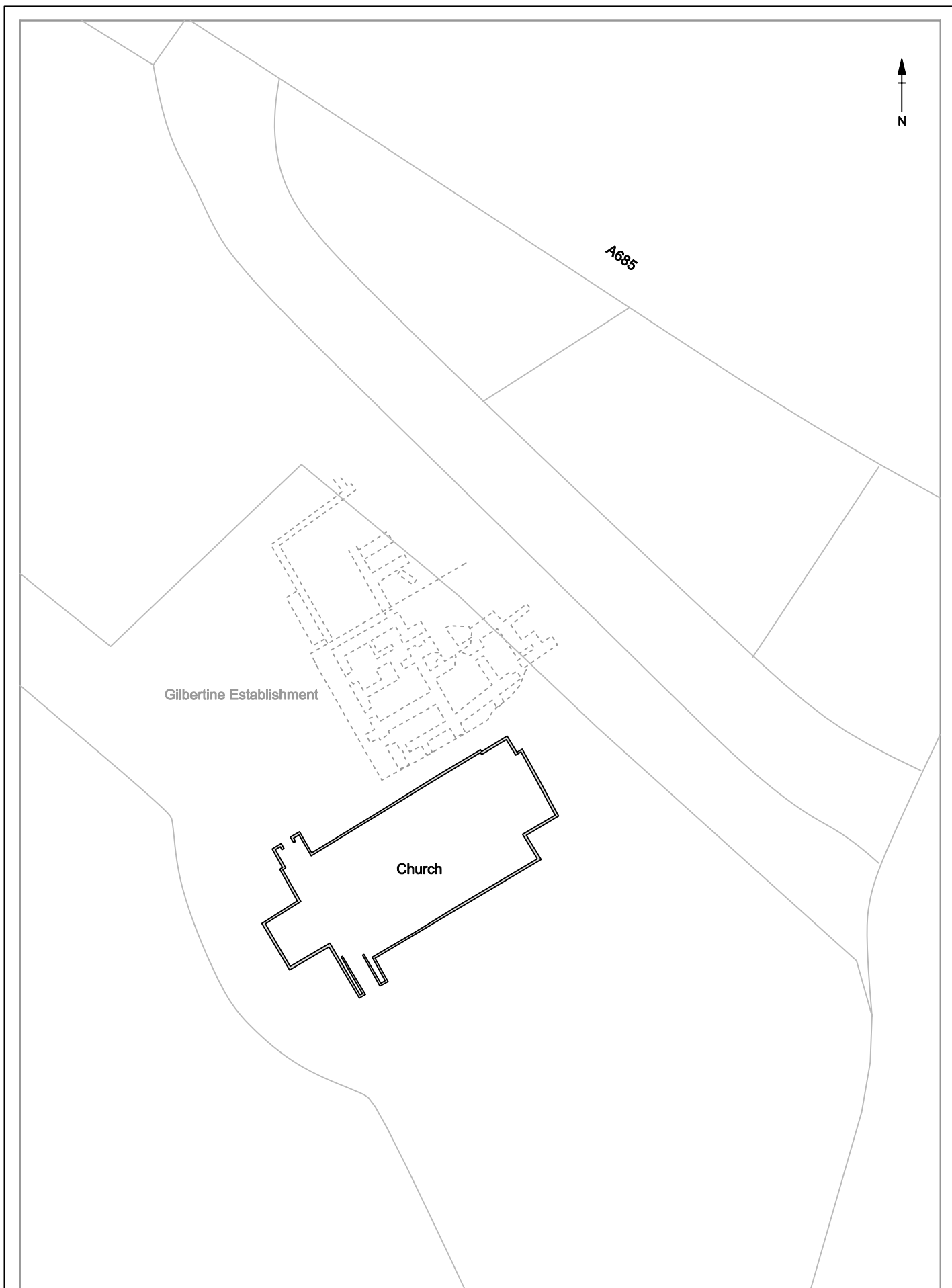
Plate 8: The south side of the stairs in the tower



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:100000  
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Figure 1: Location map



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:50000  
with the permission of the controller of HMSO  
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0 10m  
Scale 1:500



Figure 2: Plan of Church

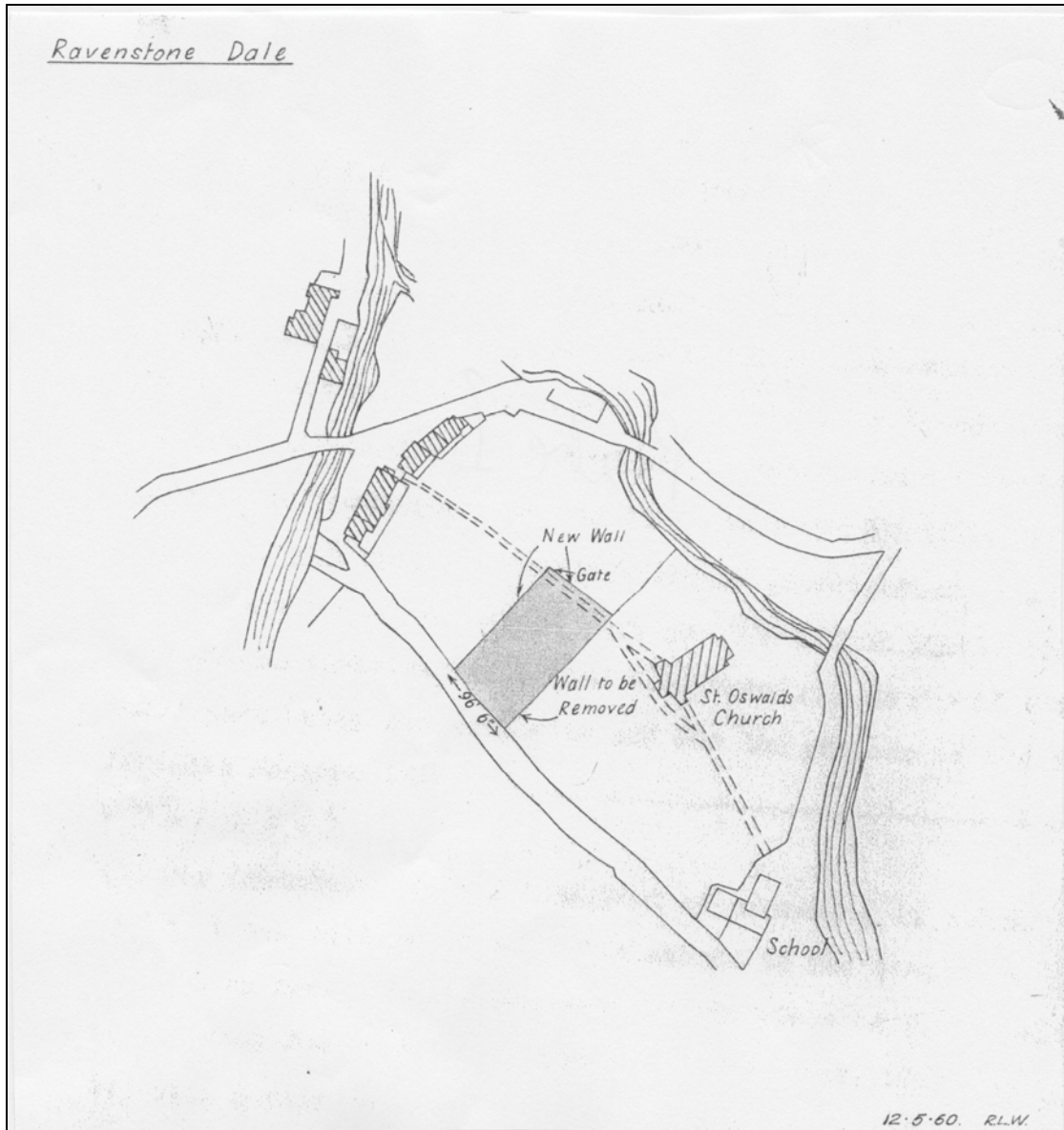


Plate 1: Plan of church and churchyard (after WPR/6 1960)

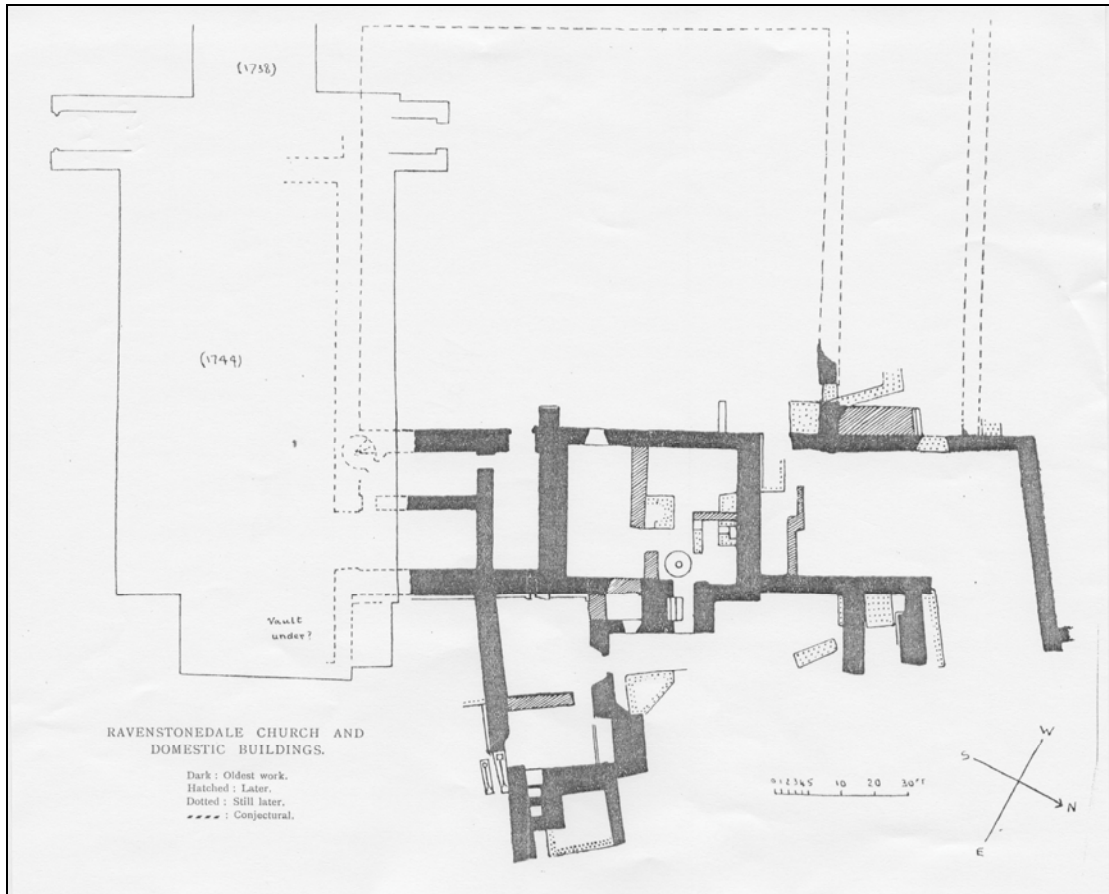


Plate 2: Plan of church and Gilbertine establishment (after Frankland 1929)

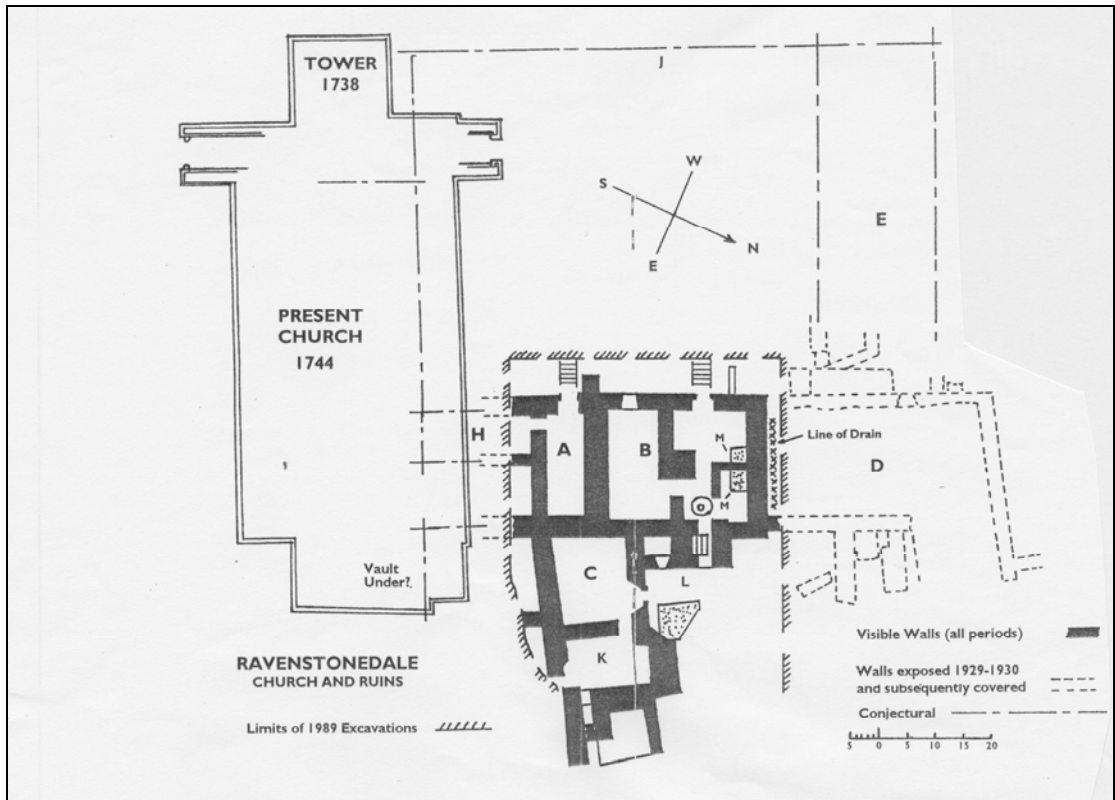


Plate 3: Plan of church and Gilbertine establishment (after Irwin and Irwin 1989)



Plate 4: The tower, looking south-east



Plate 5: The tower and north porch, looking south



Plate 6: Rectified photograph of the north elevation



Plate 7: Interior of the nave





Plate 8: The south side of the stairs in the tower

## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF

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IWA Architects and St. Oswald's Parochial Church Council were required by English Heritage to conduct an archaeological building investigation of St. Oswald's Parish Church, Ravenstonedale, Cumbria (NY 6220 0840), prior to extensive renovations being carried out at the site. In response to this Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were requested to submit a project design for the work (*Appendix 2*). Following its approval by English Heritage, OA North was commissioned to undertake the work, which was carried out in July 2004.

## APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN

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**Oxford  
Archaeology  
North**

**March 2004**

**ST OSWALD'S CE PARISH CHURCH, RAVENSTONEDALE, CUMBRIA**  
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING INVESTIGATION AND WATCHING BRIEF**  
**PROJECT DESIGN**

*Proposals*

*The following project design is offered in response to a request by IWA Architects on behalf of St Oswald's PCC for an archaeological building investigation in advance of proposed building works at St Oswald's CE Parish Church, Ravenstonedale, Cumbria.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design has been compiled for IWA Architects with reference to the requirement for an archaeological building investigation of St Oswald's CE Parish Church. Section 2 states the objectives of the project, Section 3 deals with OA North's methodology. Section 4 addresses other pertinent issues including details of staff to be involved, and project costs are presented in Section 5.
- 1.2 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment and investigation of historic buildings of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Watching briefs and building investigations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. Recent church projects include St Paul's and St Mary's in Preston, St Laurence, Chorley, St Helen's, Waddington and St Conan's Kirk in Argyll.
- 1.3 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, **registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the building investigation are to provide an outline analysis of the church prior to and during building works, which will serve to both preserve by record and inform the project engineers.
- 2.1.1 To achieve the objective outlined above the following listed specific aims are proposed.

### Stage 1:

- (i) to undertake a desk-based assessment and visual inspection of the church;
- (ii) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

### Stage 2:

- (iii) to undertake an archaeological watching brief;
- (iv) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

### 3 METHOD STATEMENT

#### 3.1 Stage 1 - DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material.

3.1.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the data in the CSMR (Kendal), appropriate sections of County histories, early maps (printed and manuscript), and such primary documentation (tithes and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular attention will be paid to field and place names recorded on early cartographic sources relating to estate and parish boundaries, field boundaries, woodlands and routes, as these often provide important evidence of archaeological activity and transformation of the historic landscape. All available published and unpublished documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The County Record Office (Kendal) and relevant local studies library will also be consulted.

3.1.3 **Visual Inspection:** a brief visual inspection of the church will be undertaken to RCHME level I-type survey. This level of survey is purely descriptive and will result in an outline development and use of the building.

3.1.4 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce both black and white contact prints and colour slides. The archive will comprise general shots of the church (both internal and external) and surroundings, and detailed coverage of agricultural features.

3.1.5 **Rectified Photographs:** rectified, medium format photographic coverage, should be taken for the area of masonry repairs. This will ensure that a detailed visual record of the original fabric is maintained.

#### 3.1 Stage 2 - WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving architectural/archaeological features exposed during the reduction to external ground levels. This work will comprise observation and the systematic examination of features exposed during the course of the works, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features identified during observation.

3.2.2 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important features. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to

costing. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential

- 3.2.3 **Burials:** should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed.
- 3.2.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.2.5 OA North generally calculates a 1:0.5 ratio of fieldwork: post-fieldwork (archive, analysis, and report preparation) if the level of archaeology observed is low or 1:1 if the level of archaeology is high.

### 3.3 STAGES 1 AND 2 - REPORT AND ARCHIVE

- 3.3.1 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a further two copies submitted to the County SMR (one paper copy and one digital copy) within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological features. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.3.2 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design.
- 3.3.3 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all

archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the County SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office.

- 3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.
- 3.3.5 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the CCC Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

#### **4 TIMETABLE AND RESOURCES**

- 4.1 The desk-based assessment will take five days to complete; a further one day will be required for the visual inspection.
- 4.2 The duration of the watching brief will depend upon the progress of the contractor.
- 4.3 The final report will follow within eight weeks of completion of the data collection and fieldwork, although a shorter deadline can be negotiated.
- 4.4 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North senior project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 4.5 The desk-based assessment is likely to be undertaken by **Daniel Elsworth MA** (OA North supervisor). Daniel has a great deal of experience in the assessment and analysis of historic buildings throughout the NorthWest.
- 4.6 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be carrying out each specific task, but all elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OA North project supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 4.7 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.