

# St Andrew's Church, Hartburn

## Analysis of the Fabric and Archaeological Assessment

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Hartburn parish church stands at the south-east end of the village, on a bluff between the deep valleys of the River Font on north and east, and that of tributary on the south. The building consists of a four-bay aisled nave with a west tower and south porch, and an elongate three-bay chancel that has a marked northward deviation from the central axis of the building.

### The Exterior

The **West Tower** is built of coursed squared stone, and rises in three stages. There is a tall moulded plinth (now badly eroded) and string courses (apparently chamfered above and below) between the stages, with a tall oversailing parapet carried on shaped brackets, which Hodgson (1828, 200) termed ‘a sort of dentile corbules’. There are set-back buttresses at the western angles, those at the southern only rise up to the top of the second stage, those at the northern actually applied to the faces of the slightly-projecting stair turret behind them, which is corbelled out a little above ground level but rises to the parapet. The only light to the stair is a square-headed loop on the north is a short section of walling set diagonally in the angle between the north wall of the tower and the buttress. There are also broad buttresses at the east end of north and south walls, rising to the top of the second stage, and partly encased within the west wall of the nave. An additional buttress-like feature in the angle between the north wall of the tower and the north-east buttress seems to be a well-disguised 19<sup>th</sup>-century flue.

The only external opening to the lower stage of the tower is the west window, which is clearly an insertion. This is of three trefoil-headed lights with trefoiled sub-lights above, within a four-centred arch, the whole head being cut in a single rectangular block of gritstone, a good example of the Northumberland tradition of monolithic traceried window heads (eg Felton, east end of south aisle). The second stage has a single-light openings with distorted semi-circular heads, those on the north and west are now blocked. The belfry has pairs of lancets to north, south and west with chamfered surrounds, divide by octagonal shafts with worn square moulded capitals; it is recorded that the heads of these were renewed in 1843 (Donnelly 24). On the east the tabling of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century (?) steep-pitched nave roof extends up to the base of the parapet.



The tall parapet has a plain square-edged coping, without any embrasures.

The south wall of the **Nave** has three low clerestory windows, each of two square-headed lights with a mullion between, tucked between the south aisle roof and the hollow-chamfered

oversailing course at the base of the parapet, which has a plain flat coping. There is a similar parapet on the north, but no clerestory on this side; the east gable is low-pitched, and has a coping that appears to be of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. The eastern angles of the original aisleless nave are exposed, between the east ends of the aisles and the side walls of the chancel. These display quoining of megalithic type (the individual blocks up to 0.60 or 0.70 m high); on the south some of the quoins have horizontal grooves, as if to facilitate the impression of smaller coursed masonry.

The **South Aisle** (below, seen from south) is constructed of coursed squared stone including some quite large blocks. At the west end of the aisle is quite a small chamfered lancet, with two earlier roof-lines clearly visible above it. The south-west angle of the aisle may have been rebuilt, and includes some elongate blocks that could be re-used grave covers.



The south wall has four pairs of lancets, all entirely of 1843, one to the west of the porch and three to the east; each has a double-chamfered surround and a moulded hood with carved terminals. Below the easternmost the sill of an earlier window is visible; below the next pair to the west is what may be the sill of a rather narrower window. The three windows east of the porch have stepped buttresses, with chamfered plinths, between them; these all look to be of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date; on the wall behind an old chamfered plinth appears, as the ground drops away eastward, in the central bay and continues to the east. The stepped buttress at the east end of the wall is of similar form to the others, but appears medieval.

The south doorway, now inside the south porch, has a two-centred arch of two orders; the inner has a continuous chamfer interrupted only by a moulded impost; the outer order has one large and two small rolls, with hollows between and is carried on jamb shafts with moulded capitals and bases. The most striking feature is a hoodmould of large dog-tooth ornament, continued down the jambs to ground level. The doorway appears to have been set in a shallow projection, now masked by the porch; its outer angles are also ornamented with a vertical row of dogtooth up to the level of the capitals of the doorway. On the inner order of the arch, c 0.30 m below the impost, on the south face of the east jamb, is a small sunk shield-shaped panel; around the corner on the inner (west) face at the same level are two incised crosses and

a third below, of Maltese (expanded arm) type; these and similar crosses incised on the stone slabs of the east bench of the porch have been linked to the Knights Templar (Donnelly 12).

The east end of the wall shows a clear discontinuity between the elongate squared stones of the south-east buttress (and south-east corner of the aisle) and the squarer blocks of the earlier masonry beyond. Just above the head of the buttress is a stone with a moulded edge, possibly part of a medieval grave cover. The lancet window has a trefoiled arch head and a chamfered surround; the old steep roof line above is very clear. To the north of the window is a straight joint with the south-east angle of the original aisleless nave which includes some megalithic quoins up to 0.60 - 0.70 m high, some with later grooves to simulate smaller coursed stone.

The **South Porch** is built of large squared blocks, only roughly-coursed. On the south is a broad roughly-semicircular archway set between two low buttresses; it is of two orders, the chamfers of which die into plain square-section jambs. Within the arch a smaller two-centred arch of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date has been inserted, of a single chamfered order, interrupted by imposts chamfered on their lower angles. The gable above has an oversailing coping, now very worn, and is capped by an unusual multi-faced sundial, perhaps of 18<sup>th</sup>-century date. Each side wall has a small square-headed windows in side walls with chamfers to their heads only; there is some indication, especially on the east, that the south front of the porch may be a later rebuilding.

The lower part of the west wall of the **North Aisle** is concealed by the boiler house built into the angle between the aisle and the north side of the tower; above this only the head of a blocked lancet window is visible. Within the boiler house, the floor of which is sunk c 1.8 m below churchyard level, a chamfered plinth is visible on the wall, well below the level of that on the north wall. There is a straight joint between what would appear to be the west wall of the nave and the aisle wall, only for four courses above the plinth. The masonry on the south of this is relatively small blocks, coursed in with and probably contemporary with the adjacent tower buttress. The north wall of the aisle is divided into four bays, with large stepped buttresses at the ends and between the bays. The walls is of coursed squared stone, with some very large blocks in the lower courses. There is a chamfered plinth, set quite high; towards the east end, as the churchyard slopes away, this is c 1.2 m above the ground; in places there is a rough projecting footing about a metre below the plinth. The first bay, partly concealed by an oil tank, has no visible indication of any opening. There are paired lancets windows of 1843 in the second and third bays; these are rather simpler than the contemporary ones in the south aisle, in having simple chamfered surrounds of one order, without any hoodmoulds. Much of the wall may be a post-medieval rebuild; of the buttresses, only that between the western bays looks convincingly medieval.

The east end of the aisle also seems to have been partly rebuilt at some time; it has a single lancet window with a chamfered surround; the two blocks that make up its head appear of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date; to the south of it is a ragged set-back at the level of the springing of its head, which to the north of the window drops down the wall.

The **Boiler House** is a low rectangular structure with its stone slab roof pent against the west end of the aisle. Externally it has a blocked window in the centre of its west wall, the blocking of which includes an inscribed slab, probably part of an 18<sup>th</sup> century (?) grave stone. Inside the boiler house there is a second bricked-up opening at a lower level (ie beneath the external ground level) beneath this window, and another similar one at the west end of the north wall.

The south wall of the **Chancel** (below) is of squared coursed stone, and is divided by buttresses into three very irregular bays, the short central bay containing the priest's door. The masonry of the long western bay, and perhaps of the central bay as well, includes many almost square or even 'upright' stones, but the east bay has more elongate blocks. Above the heads of the buttresses the whole upper section of the wall is of more-regular masonry (perhaps in two phases), and is topped by a plain square-edged parapet.



At the west end of the western bay is a low-side window with a rather unusual trefoiled head. This is obviously an insertion, set within the blocking of an earlier priest's door; the lower part of the east jamb of which remains visible as an obvious straight joint. The low-side window cuts through quite a heavy string course, which is stepped down beneath the sill of a lancet window further east; in parts the string is chamfered on its lower angle, but in the dropped section below the lancet this angle is left square. The lancet has a chamfered surround; its head is clearly of 19th-century date; Hodgson's 1828 print shows the opening as then having a plain square head.

Although the string course extends around the first buttress, this is all of 19<sup>th</sup>-century squared and tooled stone. Beyond the buttress the string - in this bay entirely square below and chamfered above - steps down again beneath the second lancet; below this is the priest's door, quite small and narrow, with a shouldered head and a chamfered surround. The string ends against the second buttress, set rather skew to the wall and of lesser projection, which seems to be genuine medieval work; it has a chamfered plinth, which to the east drops to a lower level and continues eastward where the dropping ground surface reveals it as a tall two-stepped plinth. A string course appears again beyond the second buttress, at almost the same level, but this one is smaller, and chamfered above and below. Above is the third lancet; the dressings of its western jamb do not course in with the adjacent masonry<sup>1</sup>

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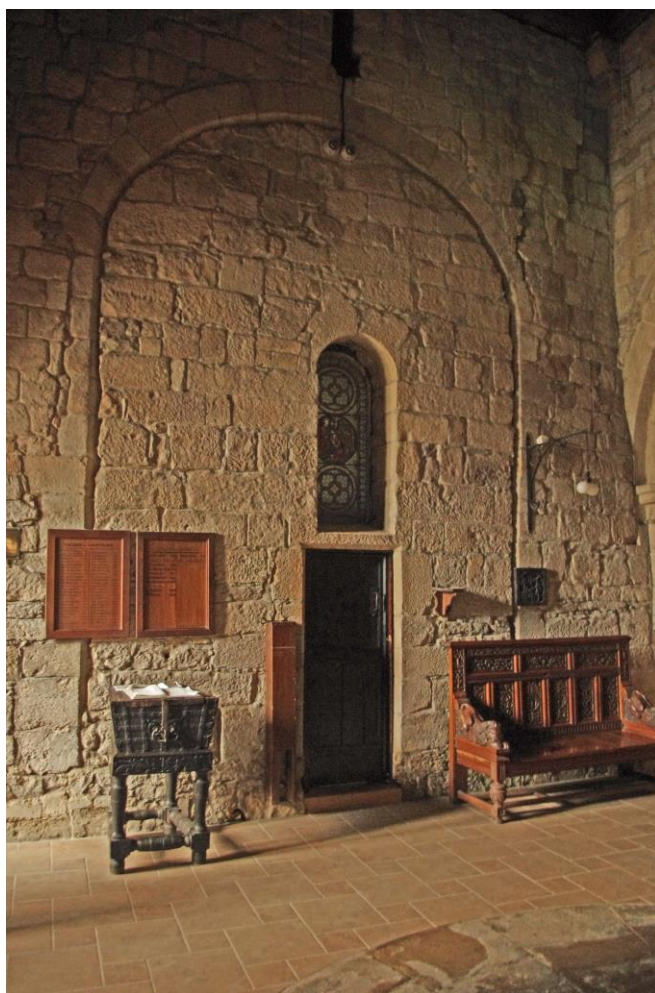
1 This is also the case on the internal face of the wall; has there been an infilled opening to the west?

The east end has pairs of set-back buttresses at each angle, and two smaller buttresses between; the plinth and string are continued round all the buttresses. The upper sections of the smaller buttresses, which rises between the three stepped lancets above the string, are chamfered on their angles, returning to square plan just below their sloping caps, which are set rather higher than those of the angle buttresses. The three lancets have plain chamfered surrounds; the walling above, with its shallow-pitched gable and coping of interlocking slabs, all looks of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. In the centre of the wall the upper part of the plinth is pierced by a small square-headed loop (with a recessed iron grille) opening into a vault (or crypt?) beneath the altar.

The whole north wall of the chancel (including apparently the northern of the north-east angle buttresses) is of 1832, and of coursed neatly-squared stone with a distinctive pecked tooling. Large stepped buttresses divide it into three regular bays; in the eastern bay the lower part of the wall, between the buttresses, is set forward (with big chamfered off-sets matching those on the buttresses) to accommodate the Bradford monument within.

### The Interior

The interior of the main body of the church is bare of plaster, exposing the fabric, which is almost all of coursed squared stone.



At the west end of the nave the **Tower arch** (left) is roughly semicircular, and appears to be of a single chamfered order, without any imposts; its dressings, in particular those of the jambs, looks very much to be insertions in an earlier wall. From measuring the distance between the jambs on the east face of the wall, and that between the side walls of the basement on the west face, it would appear that an inner order may be concealed in the blocking. At its apex the arch appears to cut through the lower part of a blocked doorway<sup>2</sup>; the slightly-pointed head of this is clear, but its jambs less so; in the blocking is a rough square-headed loop. The tower arch itself is blocked by walling comprising quite large blocks, coursed in a slightly irregular manner; set slightly north of centre is a square-headed doorway with a chamfered surround (holding an 18<sup>th</sup>-century two-panel door), with directly above it, with its sill cutting into the doorway lintel, a window with a round-arched head of plain square section, cut into two blocks.

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2 Or perhaps more likely the rear arch of an early window

A row of infilled sockets runs across the blocking of the arch, at the level of the springing of the head of the window; these must relate to a former western gallery.

The wall blocking the tower arch is 1.40 m thick; the doorway has jambs that splay slightly towards the west, but the jambs and arch of the window above are simply cut square with the wall. The walls and east-west barrel vault of the basement of the tower, now the Vestry, are rendered and lined to simulate ashlar; the barrel vault would appear to be flush with the (concealed) inner order of the tower arch. The west window has a roughly semicircular rear arch; its internal recess is continued down to c 0.60 m above the floor. Both of the western angles of the room have sections of wall set diagonally, the northern containing the door to the newel stair and the southern formerly containing a fireplace, now concealed.

The door from the basement to the newel stair has a moulded timber architrave and a door of early-18th century character, of two fielded panels, with old ironwork; there are various sockets for bolts in its jambs. It opens into a short and constricted passage leading to the newel stair; the north wall of the passage is of rough rubble, and clearly secondary, whilst the walls of the newel well are of ashlar, many of the blocks retaining their mason's marks. At the junction of the third and fourth steps of the stair, there is a peculiar projection of rough masonry from the outer wall. Brooke (2000, 145) sees this as evidence of 'a doorway or contrivance to impede access'; he also refers to a 'blocked vertical section of stonework' and a cut-out' in the central newel as relating to this feature. The wall of the stair well above the masonry projection is badly shattered and cracked by structural movements, and the newel is also damaged, but neither of these seem to offer clear evidence of deliberate modification.

There is a small lobby containing the doorway into the second stage of the tower from the stair. Towards the tower this is a square-headed opening with a chamfered surround; towards the stair the rear lintel has a neat segmental-cut out on its rear angle. There is a step-down of c 0.50 m from the doorway to the floor of the stage (which is the top of the basement vault).

The two upper stages of the tower are now thrown internally into a single space; there may have been a floor at the base of the third (belfry) stage but no clear sign of it remains. The east wall, up to around the level of the base of the third stage, is of large squared blocks, in contrast to the rubblier masonry above and in the other three walls. The south wall appears to abut upon this well-squared masonry, which would appear to represent the external face of a pre-tower west wall. At the level of the second stage, the windows on north, west and south have slightly-pointed rear arches, with blocks of diagonally-tooled cut sandstone; those on the north and west are now blocked flush with the internal face of the wall. The internal recess of the southern window goes right down to floor level. On the east there is no sign of the apparent blocked high-level doorway seen from the nave; the small window set within has crudely-formed jambs that splay towards the tower.

In the north-east corner of the tower a later stone flue<sup>3</sup> rises through the two upper stages, with a small opening on the south at second-stage level, blocked with recent brick; there is also a stone-built flue, perhaps older, in the diagonally-opposite south-west corner.

Another square-headed chamfered doorway opens from the third (belfry) stage onto the stair. The belfry openings, on north, west and south, have trefoiled rear arches; on north and west a rough pier of stone has been built up their centres. The east wall at this level appears to be

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3 Which conceals the junction between the east and north walls.

undisturbed coursed stonework. Above the heads of the belfry openings there is marked set-back on all four walls, perhaps marking an earlier parapet level; at this level are three large east-west beams, which appear relatively modern, and carry the two bells. There is a low opening at this level from the newel stair, without any sign of cut dressings; the present low-pitched tower roof has its ridge set east-west, and is carried by three cambered ties (one central and one against each wall) with short king-posts carrying the ridge and one level of purlins. A trapdoor now gives access to the roof.

The side walls of the **Nave**, above the arcades, are of coursed squared stone. The relationship between the walls and the arcades is curious, and several points need to be described before any consideration of the architectural detail of the latter.

- (1) On both sides of the nave there is a ragged vertical break between rather better-squared and more regularly coursed masonry on the west, and more irregular fabric on the east. On the south this comes above the central pier, on the north about 1.5 m to the west of the central pier.
- (2) The piers are markedly too slender for the walls above, the wall-faces overhanging the abacus of their capitals by varying amounts; the outer order of each arch has to be stepped in just above the capital. The south wall is 1.02 m thick at its west end and 0.92 m at its east, the north 0.95 m thick at each end.
- (3) At both ends of the north arcade, and at the west end of the south arcade, the inner order of the arches is set several cm off-centre to the capitals of the responds on which it rests.
- (4) The arches of the arcades appear to be inserted in earlier walling, at least in the eastern section of wall on each side. On the inner face of the north wall there is a small patch of rubble infill just above and slightly to the east of the apex of the eastern arch of the arcade, which might conceivably represent the remains of a window pre-dating the arcade
- (5) On the external face of the north wall, c 0.30 m above the tops of the arches, is a horizontal groove/set-back that may mark an earlier roof line of the aisle.
- (6) The western sections of the wall include three re-used blocks, each with an incised saltire cross. Two are to be found on the north face of the north wall, a little above the westernmost pier, and the third on the south face of the south wall, again a little above the westernmost pier.

The arcades are each of four two-centred arches, each of two chamfered orders with a hoodmould chamfered above and below, with stops above the piers in the forms of varying Romanesque-style animal masks, some damaged; all the piers (some of which now lean in a rather disturbing manner) are octagonal and all the responds semicircular shafts carried on moulded corbels, carrying the inner orders only. Piers and responds have fairly simple octagonal and semi-octagonal moulded capitals and the piers moulded octagonal bases; some variation in section may be the result of re-cutting and repair.



At the eastern responds of both arcades the chamfer of the outer order of the arch is continued down the jambs of the respond to a broach stop c 0.30 m above the floor, except in the case of the north-west angle of that of the south arcade (behind the pulpit) which has been crudely cut back.

The central pier of the south arcade has the unusual motif of 'beads or blobs' (Pevsner) hanging from each angle of the octagonal abacus over the bell; the eastern pier has a fish (a salmon?) carved in relief on the north side of the bell.

There are three clerestory windows on the south of the nave, all of which have timber internal lintels. The sill of the westernmost is carried down rather further than those of the other two.

The west wall of the **South Aisle**, of squared tooled stone, has a shouldered rear arch to its small lancet window; the earlier roof line above is very clear. On the south the south door has a segmental rear arch and an infilled draw-bar tunnel in the internal east jamb. The internal jambs of the four pairs of 19<sup>th</sup>-century lancets in the wall are crudely cut through the earlier masonry, except in the case of the easternmost where the lower part of the internal west jamb has three cut blocks (one below the present sill) which must relate to the earlier window of which the sill is visible externally. At the extreme east end of the wall is a piscina with a steep, almost stilted trefoiled arch with a filleted roll moulding and a bowl that may have been slightly trimmed back. The east end of the aisle has a lancet window with a very unusual shouldered and shaped rear arch; the lintel has a segmental cut-out with a roll at either end and a central roll with a fillet, all set at right angles to the wall; the sill is stepped. Higher in the wall two earlier roof lines are very clear.



*The nave, looking north-east*

The western bay of the **North Aisle** is occupied by the organ, which completely conceals the internal wall faces. The remaining bays of the north wall show rather more irregular masonry than elsewhere in the church; high in the wall immediately to the east of the organ is quite a large patch of what looks like recent stonework, with dark cement. The two twin lancets have very crude internal surrounds, like those in the south aisle. The east face of the internal 'fin' of masonry between the lights (which extends to the full thickness of the wall) incorporates part of an incised medieval grave slab. Below the western light of this window is a possible ragged break in the masonry, the only possible indication of the north door one would expect in a substantial medieval church like this. East of the window there is a ragged disturbed area high in the wall, just beneath a 19<sup>th</sup>-century roof corbel. The internal west jamb of the second window includes some large squared blocks, and probably survives from an earlier opening. In the eastern part of the wall there are some very large blocks, probably re-used, in the lower courses.

The broad lancet at the east end of the aisle has a shaped rear arch that seems to be a 19<sup>th</sup>-century copy of the corresponding one in the south aisle. At the south-east angle of the aisle is a piscina, set in the northern face of the eastern responds of the arcade. This has a square-headed opening to the aisle, with a chamfer only to its the head, and a smaller opening in the west face of the respond. The bowl is irregular in shape.

The **Chancel** (right) is entered under a broad two-centred arch; the wall above shows some areas of disturbance, and possible traces of a steeply-pitched roof with its eaves at around the level of the tops of the arcade arches. The chamfered inner order of the arch is carried of semi-octagonal responds with moulded capitals quite like those of the arcades; the outer, with a big keeled roll moulding between hollows, has been carried on jamb shafts, all now missing. Towards the nave the whole angle of the southern respond has been hacked back, whilst the northern only retains the base of its shaft; towards the chancel the bases and capitals of the shafts remain, at least in part. On the east face of the wall there is marked set-back in the wall at the level of the respond capitals; the walling



above the arch is of quite rough small masonry, with the lines of two low-pitched roofs, one just trimming the apex of the arch and the second a little below the present roof.

The south wall of the chancel contains a variety of features and changes in fabric type. Over its whole length there are three clear vertical divisions, the medieval masonry, quite large coursed squared stone, up to the level of the heads of the lancet windows, then a series of thinner courses, and finally a metre or so of larger better-squared stone again, below the eaves. The chancel stalls and various wall monuments combine to obscure quite large areas of the wall. At the west end is the low side window, with a segmental rear arch largely cut from one slab; the upper sections of its jambs (and head) are roughly tooled, and are probably later than the smoother lower jambs. The sill is level. The walling above is of coursed almost square blocks, of 12<sup>th</sup>-century character. A metre or so above the rear arch of the low side are a series of infilled sockets, which continue beyond the first of the full-height lancets. This has a trefoiled rear arch, but the ashlar dressings of its head are clearly of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. Its sill cuts down through a string-course (also interrupted by the low-side) which is of roughly semicircular profile, but is much damaged. The sill continues eastward until similarly interrupted by the second full-height lancet, which has the priest's door directly below it. Both jambs of the doorway appear to be insertions; c 15 cm to the west are two chamfered blocks that may indicate an earlier splayed jamb. The internal head of the doorway, which is chamfered, is formed by an ashlar block that looks to be of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. The dressings and shouldered rear arch of the lancet above look wholly medieval, although there is a slight change in the angle of the splayed jambs, suggesting that a window with a slightly narrower external openings has been modified at some time. Immediately to the east of the doorway is a piscina with a roll-moulded trefoiled arch; the sill simply has a narrow drain crossing it, at right angles to the wall, suggesting that a projecting bowl must have been cut away, although no other sign of this is visible. The large block forming the head of the piscina seems to have been truncated at its west end when the doorway was inserted; at its east end is a carved roundel surrounded by spiral panels, now badly weathered.



*Piscinae and sedilia on south of chancel*

Immediately east of the piscina is a ragged vertical break in the fabric, which corresponds with the end of the final short length of string course above. Beyond this are the rather fine triple sedilia, with two-centred arches moulded with a big keeled roll flanked by hollows, with detached circular shafts with square capitals and moulded bases; the projecting sill is chamfered on its lower edge. Above the sedilia is an area of walling of large rectangular blocks that may be some sort of patch or infill; there is a ragged joint between it and the dressings of the western jamb of the easternmost lancet (again with a trefoiled rear arch), which seems contemporary with the easternmost section of wall, which is of well-squared coursed blocks, mostly quite elongate in shape in contrast to the squarer stones of the western section of wall. To the east of the lancet is a piscina with a trefoiled arch moulded with a filleted roll, and a projecting moulded bowl ornamented with a line of nail-head.

The lower part of the east wall of the chancel is obscured by the 19<sup>th</sup>-century ashlar reredos; the three lancets above have shafts to their internal jambs with moulded bases, rings at mid-height, and moulded capitals with nail-head. These appear medieval, but the moulded rear arches they carry, and the wall above, are all 19<sup>th</sup>-century.

The north wall of the chancel is entirely of 1832 and of ashlar; at its east end is a large Gothic recess (in style somewhere between Perpendicular and Georgian Gothick) holding the monument by *Chantrey* to Mary Ann, wife of General Sir Thomas Bradford, d.1830. Apart from another monumental plaque further west the wall is quite featureless.

The Roofs are virtually entirely of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date. The nave roof is of six bays, with tie-beams with short king-posts carrying the ridge, and a strainer beam below set between the faces of the ties; there is one level of purlins, which simply rest on the upper surface of the tie; the ties are supported by 19<sup>th</sup>-century moulded stone corbels. The third tie-beam from the east is said to survive from an older roof. The aisle roofs are each of five full bays with short bays at the ends; the principals have curved feet, springing from 19<sup>th</sup>-century moulded corbels. The seven-bay chancel roof is similar to that of the nave, except that the strainer beam is much more slender.

The only ancient (ie pre-19<sup>th</sup> century) roof appears to be that of the South Porch; this has a single central truss consisting of a cranked tie-beam carrying a king-post to the ridge and raking struts supporting the purlins, without any intervening principal rafters.

## Structural History

The overall character of Hartburn church is that of a 13<sup>th</sup>-century building, but closer examination of the fabric shows that it is complex and includes work of a number of periods, some difficult to date.

### I The Saxon Church

It seems likely that at least the eastern part of the nave is of Anglo-Saxon date; the megalithic eastern quoining visible would be difficult to place any later than the Norman Conquest, although the walls are rather thicker than one might expect with a Saxon church. The dimensions of the original nave are not clear, the earlier masonry appearing to extend further west on the north than it does on the south.<sup>4</sup>

### II. The Western Extension of the Nave.

The date of the western extension of the nave poses a problem. It is clear that the west wall is earlier than the tower, which must be of c 1200, but re-used in the side walls are three voussoirs with incised saltire crosses which can be closely paralleled in the remains of the mid-12th century sanctuary arch at nearby Bolam. Several explanations are possible; the most likely explanation seems to be that the side walls of this part were actually rebuilt when the arcades were inserted<sup>5</sup>. Alternatively the re-used voussoirs might be earlier than those at Bolam (saltire crosses occur on the arch of the Saxon west doorway at Corbridge), or else they might have been included in later patching, rather than the first build of the nave extension.

The only in-situ architectural feature of the extension seems to be the arched opening above the later tower arch, which has previously been seen as a high-level doorway from the tower but may in fact be the rear arch of an early window. Windows set high in gables are found in both Saxon (cf Corbridge) and Norman churches. The arch appears of slightly pointed form (which would point to date of c 1200 or later) but there has been enough structural movement in the tower to distort any arch; it may well have originally been semicircular.

### III. The 12<sup>th</sup> Century

The western part of the south wall of the chancel may also be of 12<sup>th</sup>-century date, to judge from the character of the square or 'upright' blocks in its masonry the heavy string course, and the evidence of a the window above the priest's door having had a narrower external opening widened and remodelled as a lancet.

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4 The plan of a putative Saxon building is shown on a dowsed plan by Bailey, Cambridge and Briggs (1988, 144; framed copy in church) but does not correlate in any way with visible features.

5 This has the difficulty that these sections of wall still seem too thick for the columns that carry them; perhaps the medieval builders simply had implicit faith in their slender piers! It could also mean that east and west ends of the nave are of the same date.

#### **IV. c1200: The Tower**

The tower appears to be of a single build, except perhaps for the parapet; both Donnelly's interpretation of it as a free-standing structure pre-dating the remainder of the church, and Pevsner's assertion that the buttresses are later additions (an error perpetuated by several later writers) can be dismissed. Stylistically it can be dated to c 1200; the tower arch is still semicircular, and the heads of the second-stage windows almost so.

#### **V The Mid-13th Century Remodelling**

Towards the middle of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the church underwent a major remodelling. The aisles were added (possibly replacing earlier ranges of porticus), the arcades being inserted into the earlier walls. The unduly slender octagonal piers must simply be the result of an error, unless for some reason they result from the cutting-down of more substantial ones. The aisles originally had a low external eaves line; their external walls must have been lit either by very small windows (cf Whalton) or possibly lancets set within gablets rising above the eaves line (cf evidence at Ryton)

At around the same time the chancel was extended by a further bay, an alteration very characteristic of the period; the triple sedilia and triplet of lancets in the east end are all very fine.

#### **VI Later Medieval Alterations**

In common with many Northumberland churches, there is little evidence of later medieval work.; the three troubled centuries after c1280 left little mark on the fabric, other than perhaps the addition of the south porch (?late 13th century) and the 15<sup>th</sup>-century west window of the tower. It is possible that other alterations, eg the insertion of new windows, may have been erased by various post-medieval works.

The date of the wall blocking the tower arch remains problematical. Brooke (2000, 143-5) argues that the blocking is a medieval one, to convert the tower into a defensible structure; he also sees the insertion of the masonry restricting the size of the passage at the base of the newel stair as part of the same scheme. However, as Brooke himself points out, the tooling on the doorway into the tower matches that on the 1832 north wall of the chancel; one could argue that similar tooling extends across the whole face of the wall. However, the apparent absence of reference in the church records (which seem to detail so much minor change in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) to such a major exercise as constructing this wall, probably argues in favour of the blocking being earlier, although perhaps carried out as a structural measure to maintain a tower riven by cracks, rather than for defensive reasons.

#### **VII Post-Medieval Changes**

Parish records ( all the following references are taken from Donnelly) provide information on various 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century changes.

1706-7           Repairs to the church roof cost £41. Might this have been the replacement of the 13th-century high-pitched nave roof by a low-pitched one?

1723 Archdeacon Sharp's visitation instructs that 'the window at ye east end of ye South Aisle be taken down low as formerly and glazed. It would be very proper to sash it as is done in ye North aisle. The south window of ye church (next to ye last mentioned) should be glazed throughout, all ye stone work in it being taken away & ye Window made entire.' Is this last a reference the removal of the remains of medieval tracery?

1751 A new sashed window as to be made at 'the most convenient place' in the north wall.

Hodgson's 1832 engraving (1828, 296) shows a square-headed window in the south aisle, and the western of the lancets on the south side of the chancel also provided with a square head at this time.

1755 Various repairs to the vestry - board floor, wainscoting, seats and plastering - together with the repair and enlarging of a vestry window<sup>6</sup>.

### **VIII The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries**

1832 The whole of the north wall of the chancel, which was in poor condition and nine inches out of the perpendicular, was rebuilt.

1835 The vestrymen agreed to build a gallery for a new organ, at the west end of the nave; John Dobson of Newcastle drew up the plans. This gallery is shown on a plan of the church dated 1859 (Northumberland County Record Office, The Kylins, Morpeth, ref EP 151/52) as occupying the west bay of the nave; access as by an L-plan stair set again the southern part of the west wall.

1838 'An apparatus for heating the church' supplied, and converted to a hot water system five years later. This does not seem to have been situated in the present boiler house, which is not shown on the 1859 plan.

1843 The windows were renovated, under the Rev. Hodgson ; the heads of the tower windows were renewed, and the aisle windows converted into paired lancets.

1889-1892 'The Great Repairs'. Under John Cresswell, the architect, the low-pitched roof of the nave was renewed (it was calculated that to return to a high-pitched roof, as was first planned, would place undue strain on the arcades); plaster was removed from the walls; the internal heads of the east windows were restored. A series of relevant papers, with drawings of the planned roof, and a report by WS. Hick (dated May 11 1891) are in the Northumberland Record Office (The Kylins, Morpeth), ref EP 151/53). They include estimates for 'pulling down and rebuilding one face of clerestory walls' and for new oak lintels for the clerestory windows.

1912 The floor was lowered throughout the nave. Notes on the discovery of a medieval stone coffin (presumably one of the two that now stand at the west end of the south

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<sup>6</sup> Brooke (2000, 143-4) suggests that this is the round-arched opening above the doorway into the tower basement. Is there a possibility that the vestry at this stage was attached to the north wall of the chancel, and was demolished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

aisle) just beneath the floor of the north aisle are included with the 1889-1892 papers mentioned above.

1966           An extensive programme of repairs included the re-roofing of chancel, nave and tower, and the removal of 18<sup>th</sup>-century fittings attacked by dry rot in the vestry. Skeletons were found under the tower floor, 'at a level nine inches above the Nave floor; they are reported to have been dated by 'forensic experts from Northumberland County Constabulary' to 966-1166 A.D. This dating sounds suspiciously like a literal interpretation of someone saying 'a century or so on either side of the Norman Conquest'

2011-2012     In association with a major scheme of re-flooring the nave and creation of a new hating chamber outside the west end of the north aisle, archaeological recording was carried out by The Archaeological Practice, and this is the subject of a separate report.

In summary, archaeological recording consisted both of a series of trial trenches, and a watching brief on new service trenches outside the west end of the church, and re-flooring works within. In addition detailed structural recording was carried out in the western parts of the north aisle (where a new opening was made through the west wall) and on the north wall of the nave (made accessible through the builders' scaffolding).

Outside the church, structural remains close to the north-west corner of the north aisle were tentatively interpreted as the remains of a priest's house attached to the aisle; the early walling was cut by the foundation trench for the present north-west buttress, which is seen as a post-medieval rebuild,. A considerable quantity of medieval ceramics, of domestic character, was retrieved.

West of the church tower a paved footpath was uncovered, ascribed a date between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, and then further south a substantial wall with stepped limestone footings which has similarities with Roman work, although no dating evidence as forthcoming. Further south again, near the churchyard gate, remains of a wall of gritstone lying at a greater depth could have been Pre-Roman. Other walling was seen as of post-medieval date.

Inside the church, the bases of the north arcade piers were set on very shallow footings, and may have been reconstructed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the floor level was lowered. Beneath the westernmost pier possible remains of an earlier base at a lower level were recorded. In the north-east corner of the aisle a medieval stone sarcophagus had been packed with disarticulated human remains, perhaps during some phase of 19<sup>th</sup> century restoration.

At the west end of the north aisle evidence was seen for an earlier pre-aisle buttress incorporated in the south end of the wall; an examination of the plinths showed three clear phases, the west end of a mid-12<sup>th</sup> century aisleless nave, the tower of c1200, and then the addition of the aisle in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although other evidence – in particular the lack of any evidence for a steep roof-line such as is seen in the south aisle- suggested the walls of the aisle had been rebuilt, perhaps in the 15th century.

An examination of the north wall of the nave above the arcade suggested that the Pre-Conquest of the eastern section (association with the megalithic eastern quoins) extended as far as a little to the west of the central pier; beyond this the walling seems to have been rebuilt when the arcade was constructed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.



## Archaeological Assessment

This is an important church with clear evidence of a complex structural history spanning at least a thousand years. Both its standing fabric and its underfloor deposits are important.

There appears to be no really adequate record of the structure; Wilson's 1870 survey and Bailey, Cambridge & Briggs (1988, 144) provide reasonable ground plans, but a church of this importance really needs a modern survey, perhaps by EDM. Some form of record of the wall faces is also important, by means of rectified photography or even photogrammetry, to assist in interpreting the complexities of the side walls of the nave with their various changes in fabric type. Similarly there appears to be no adequate detailed written record of the building available; Donnelly's guide book is useful in citing references to local records, but these need to be sifted from his eccentric structural interpretations and preoccupation with the Knights Templar.

The stripping of the church walls of their plaster in 1889-1891 destroyed a potential source of archaeological information; Donnelly (26) records that 'traces of fresco paintings of black geometric figures on tawny ground' were seen, but are no longer visible.

It is difficult to assess the condition of the underfloor deposits within the church; although the present heating pipes are above floor level, there was probably an earlier sub-floor system which will have occasioned some disturbance of underfloor deposit and burials; the fact that the floors were lowered to their assumed medieval level suggests that there will be later medieval and post-medieval burials at a shallow depth beneath them, as proved to be the case within the tower in 1966<sup>7</sup>. There is at least one major vault under the chancel, which can be glimpsed through a small vent in the east end; the dropping away of the external ground level is such as there must be a possibility that this represents a re-use of a medieval crypt; access to it is presumably from the chancel floor. If there is any occasion to open this vault (or in fact to disturb any floor deposits within the church) archaeological monitoring and recording will be required.

Outside the building there appears to be a drain around most of the walls which will have damaged, to some extent, archaeological deposits adjacent to the building.

**Peter F Ryder March 2001/amended January 2016)**

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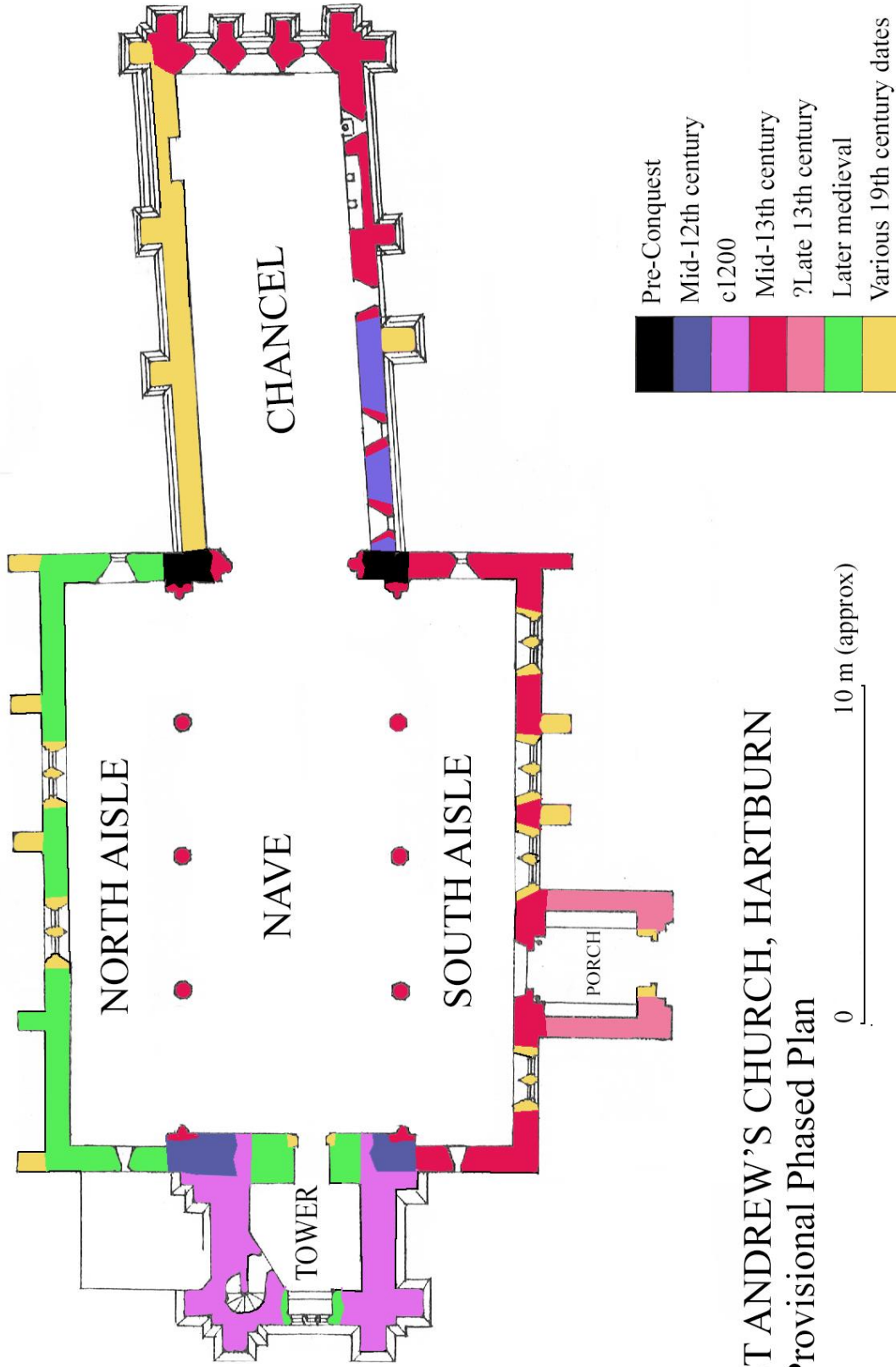
<sup>7</sup> It is probably worth trying to trace any surviving records of the 1966 work and the finding of the skeletons.

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**St Andrew's Church, Hartburn**  
**Colour Photographs to accompany Archaeological Assessment**  
**March 2001 P F Ryder**

1. Tower from SW
2. Base of tower and W end S aisle from SW
3. S view of nave
4. S porch and tower from SE
5. E end of S aisle
6. S side of chancel
7. Chancel from E
8. Chancel from NE
9. E end of N aisle
10. N side of N aisle
11. Tower from N
12. Tower and W end N aisle from NW
13. S door inside S porch
14. General view looking E
15. Nave looking W
16. S arcade looking SW
17. E end of S aisle
18. Chancel looking E
19. Chancel looking W
20. E part of S wall chancel looking SE
21. Sedilia and piscina
22. Interior of upper part tower looking NW
23. Interior of upper part of tower looking S



**ST ANDREW'S CHURCH, HARTBURN**  
 Provisional Phased Plan

From a plan by F R Wilson (1870) amended PFR