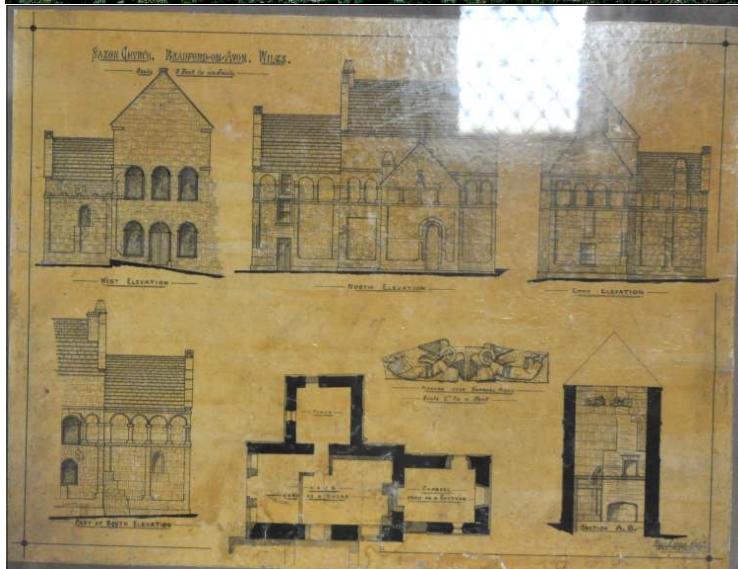


Church of St Laurence, Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire.

All photos these pages are described viewed clockwise from top left.

Comprising chancel, and nave with flanking porches; all complete save for the south porch. The survival of this high status church, which stands on rising ground on the north side of the River Avon, was in great part due to Canon Jones the then vicar of Bradford, who published a paper upon the church in 1856. The chapel lay undiscovered, having been converted, the nave into a school and the chancel into a cottage, along with the insertion of fireplaces and windows. In 1871, due to the energy of the vicar, the chapel was bought from its owners, restored, reconsecrated, invested in Trustees as an Ancient Monument, and opened to the public. The history of the church is well known/documented; the original building was built as a chapel dedicated by St Aldhelm to St Laurence in the early 8th century. There have been suggestions, by Jackson and Fletcher, that the original building stood to the height of the first stringcourse and that the 'upper' part of the walls (containing the blind arcading) was a later addition. There has been some discussion upon the actual date of the present fabric but I feel firmly that (apart from the loss of the south porticus, and the later inserted window/s) the fabric is essentially unaltered. Eric Fernie puts the date of the main fabric as one build and not before the tenth century, and a date around 1000 having been argued on the basis of style, as more likely. The whole fabric is carefully ordered and designed, with its blind arcades forming a run of 4 archways on each wall face. This arcading sits on a stringcourse of square section. The nave has another story set over its arcades and so raising its height over and above that of the chancel. The supports of the blind arcading of the eastern wall of the chancel, as Fernie describes, are composed of flat sets of three tightly packed shafts, setting off this end of the chapel from the blind arcading on the nave and porticus. This effect gives "reeded" shafts.

1. General view of the church from the south-east.
2. Closer view from the south showing site of south porch marked only by two buttresses.
3. 19th century photos of the building, also of the two carved angels which originally belonged to a Crucifixion.
4. A photo of the plan and elevations from the original drawings made in the 19th century when the building was in use as a school and cottage.



Nikon



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5. The north wall of the chancel running out to the left, with the NE quoin of the nave centre picture, and then right foreground the NE (cut back) quoin of the north porticus.
6. Looking west the north porticus is to the right and adjoining the north wall of the nave, the chancel running out to the left.
7. The north wall of the chancel with the NE quoin of the nave to the right.
8. The north wall of the north porticus (viewed from a cramped position!). Note the remains of three reeded shafts standing upon the uppermost stringcourse.



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9. A portion of the north wall of the chancel and its NE quoin left. Note the stepped base which sits on the plinth (but is not set back from it) and from where the reeded quoin springs. Note also to the right the pilaster strip, again with stepped base in a matching style.
10. The north doorway (part restored) of the north porticus and with pilasters strips and matching hood mould.
11. One of the three remaining windows, this is in the west wall of the north porticus (and see picture 21 on page 7). Note how it is not contemporary with the original fabric, having been inserted at some later date. Note how it cuts through the pilaster strip which has been truncated (see red arrow). This window is extremely poorly executed in comparison with the other two, and the glass is not so deeply set back from the surface of the walling. It certainly does not belong to the same date as the other two windows, this window was constructed by workers far less skilled.
12. The chancel viewed from the south east quarter.



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13. The nave interior looking eastwards with the chancel arch centre of picture, and high above the two carved sculptures of angels. These sculptures (for more detailed pictures go to the file entitled "sculpture") are not in their original position, it seems they are remnants belonging to a crucifixion, perhaps springing from just above the chancel arch. The archway leading to the north porticus is partly seen to the very left of the picture.
14. This picture looks westwards to the west wall of the nave and shows the windows inserted during the 19th century restoration. The archway, now with a door fitted, originally gave access to the (now vanished) south porticus.
15. The chancel arch seen to the left in this picture and with the south archway on the right.



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16. This picture is of the archway leading to the north porticus and is seen viewed from within that cell. The hood moulding and most of the arch is heavily rebuilt due to damage caused during the years of use as a school and cottage, but certainly the imposts and jambs are in fair original condition. Despite the right hand pilaster being absent/defaced, that on left hand is extant and is interestingly treated with a reeded effect, as is the original part of the hood-mould sitting upon the right hand impost. The chancel arch hood-moulding is so adorned, and similarly the NE quoin of the chancel and some of the blind arcading to chancel and north porticus. This particular adornment appears to be the one common feature that was applied throughout the building. The blocks of the jambs are through-stones, as are the head, and this is common to the other remaining doorways/archways.
17. Here is the west jamb of the same archway but viewed from within the nave. There is little remaining of its pilasters which have been savagely defaced.



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18. This picture is of the archway which now serves as the south entrance, and studying the surrounding stonework carefully we see there is scant evidence of a hood moulding or pair of pilasters (even allowing for some 19th century replacement stonework above the arch). If these features had been shaved back to the line of the walling then the stonework remaining would be clearly seen since these stones were not surface ornamentation but were a very

substantial part of the build of the archway and were seated deeply into the walling. Therefore we can compare this archway with its northern sister and which exhibits clearly the pilasters and accompanying hood moulds on both faces. Here, the south face, as built, seems devoid of these features. In the same way as at St. Peters, Barton upon Humber, where the east face of the archway in the east wall of the tower does not have, nor did have, the benefit of these features, and yet its west face did. There must be some criterion that demanded, or did not demand, the presence of those features. It probably depended upon the importance, the use, that the particular cell it opened on to was to be put.

19. The window in the south wall of the chancel, compared to the north porticus window the glass is more deeply set being a true double-splay type.

20. A closer view of the chancel archway, seen from the nave. Note in this digitally enhanced photo, the "reeded" effect upon the hood mould, this feature is repeated time and time again on features in this building. Referring to picture 13 (on page 4) we can see how both impostors were extended across the entire width of the nave, almost in the form of a stringcourse.



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21. This is the window cut into the west wall of the north porticus, note the marks left where the existing stonework was sawn/hacked through, and the edge of the sill a very rough job indeed however much a thankless task it may have been to make good the existing stonework. The head of the arch has had new stonework at the time of the insertion of the window, again a pretty poor job. Viewing the picture (11 on page 3) of its exterior it is seen truncating the pilaster strip. I would say this window was tackled at a later date compared to the other two and perhaps using inferior labour.
22. The window in the south face of the chancel, referring to the picture number 19 (page 6) of its exterior face. However, in comparison with the window in picture 21, a far better fist has been made of the interior of this window where the finish of the stonework is very tidy indeed. It seems this window is contemporary with the main fabric (and not a later insertion).



Dimensions.

Archways. Where H1 is the height of the opening: H2 is the height to the underside of the impost:

W is the width between jambs: T is the thickness of the walling at the jambs (or walling at an opening). All dimensions of the building are internal. All dimensions are in metres.

Nave. Length 7.578: width at west wall 4.118: width at east wall 4.072: height to underside tie beam NE corner 8.001

Chancel. L mean 4.051: W mean 3.106: H 5.998

North porticus W (east to west) 2.993: Depth (north to south) 3.22

Chancel arch. H1 2.946: H2 2.033: W at base 1.065: W below impost 1.043

North doorway (external access). H1 2.592: H2 2.02: W 0.87

Archway between N porticus and nave. H1 2.701: H2 1.947: W at base 0.864: W below impost 0.815

South doorway (once the archway giving access to the vanished S porticus) H2 1.954: W 0.859

For a fine line drawing (coloured) of the north aspect of this church before restoration (dated 1869), which included in a paper by Jennifer Alexander, go to the relevant link, found on the 'menu' page, and see page 76 of that paper.

This page updated 12/2015.

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