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**Dunholme St Chad's Church
Archaeological Appraisal**

Report for

Dunholme PCC

By

Naomi Field BA Hons MIFA

**LAS Report 1065
July 2008**

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Mark Bennet -

for information -
not a PPG16 job!

Naam

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Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Dunholme PCC to assess the archaeological impact of replacing the pew platforms in the nave and south aisle.

Brief Description of the Church

St Chad's church is mainly medieval in construction and comprises a tower, nave and chancel with narrow north and south aisles and south porch. The church was heavily restored in 1856 and an organ chamber and vestry were added to the north aisle in 1901 when the chancel was also restored.

The north aisle is 1.93m wide internally and south aisle is only 1.73m wide. Both aisles wrap around the tower indicating they are of a later build than the tower. Although the aisle piers differ slightly in design they are all Early English in style. Those of the north aisle are plain while those of the south aisle are more highly decorated. The south aisle windows are replacements and possible 14-15th century in style. Dunholme is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 and there is every possibility that the remains of earlier church fabric lie beneath the existing building.

Background to the proposals for replacement of the pew platforms

There are four blocks of pews in the church which sit on raised wooden platforms 0.13m above the floor level of the church. Those in the eastern part of the nave are 3.96m x 1.82m in size and lie entirely within the nave. The two in the west part of the nave are larger and measure 5m x 3.20m. They extend into the north and south aisles. These platforms surround the respond and westernmost pier of the north and south aisle arcades. The pews are currently in a poor state of repair – they are also uncomfortable and varnish on the pews has transferred to clothing, causing staining. The raised platforms make access to the pews difficult for people with limited mobility.

Proposals for Change

The proposed replacement of the pews is part of a larger re-ordering process within the church. It is proposed that the pew platforms should be removed and replaced with flagstones, or alternatively a wooden floor flush with the existing floor. The pews would be replaced with chairs, providing greater comfort and flexibility of use.

Site Inspection

A site visit was made on May 8th 2008. Two boards in the south-west platform had been lifted in order to inspect the ground beneath (Fig. 1 and Plates 1-3).

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The void beneath the platform is 0.10m beneath the south aisle floor and 0.25m beneath the existing flagstones of the nave. Stone sleeper walls run along the north and south sides of the platform area and a brick cross wall which supports the pew platform joists that run W-E. (The joists appear to be reused timbers, possibly from the roof but they are not of any great age. Some beetle infestation was noted but the author is not qualified to state if this is current or old.)

The surface exposed beneath the pew platform is undoubtedly the remains of the old nave floor which consisted of a dry friable mortary material. This may have been the base for tiles or flagstones, long removed. Burials are likely to be present. Burial inside churches continued into the 19th century and there was no requirement for bodies to be buried 6' under. There are many excavated examples of shallow burials inside churches. Lincolnshire examples include Rand, Horncastle and Barton on Humber.

Alternative Floor Finishes

Option 1: Wooden floorboards over a concrete foundation to finish flush with the existing floor. The concrete base would have to sit on a layer of hardcore. Reduction of the floor levels encountered beneath the pew platform would be necessary, and would require archaeological excavation of the floor to the required level.

Option 2: Flagstone floor. This would also sit on a hardcore base but the total depth required would possibly be less than that for Option 1, and would result in less archaeological intervention.

Discussion

It is difficult to make any recommendations until a firm scheme is agreed upon. This cannot be done without input from the architect and possibly an engineer. The cost of archaeological investigations would have to be factored into any proposal. A similar scheme is being carried out at Kirton in Lindsey Church where a suspended floor is being created in the cavity and minimal disturbance to the floor deposits has been achieved. However the cavity beneath the current floor level is greater than that at Dunholme. Detailed costing of alternative proposals might help to clarify the most acceptable /viable proposal.

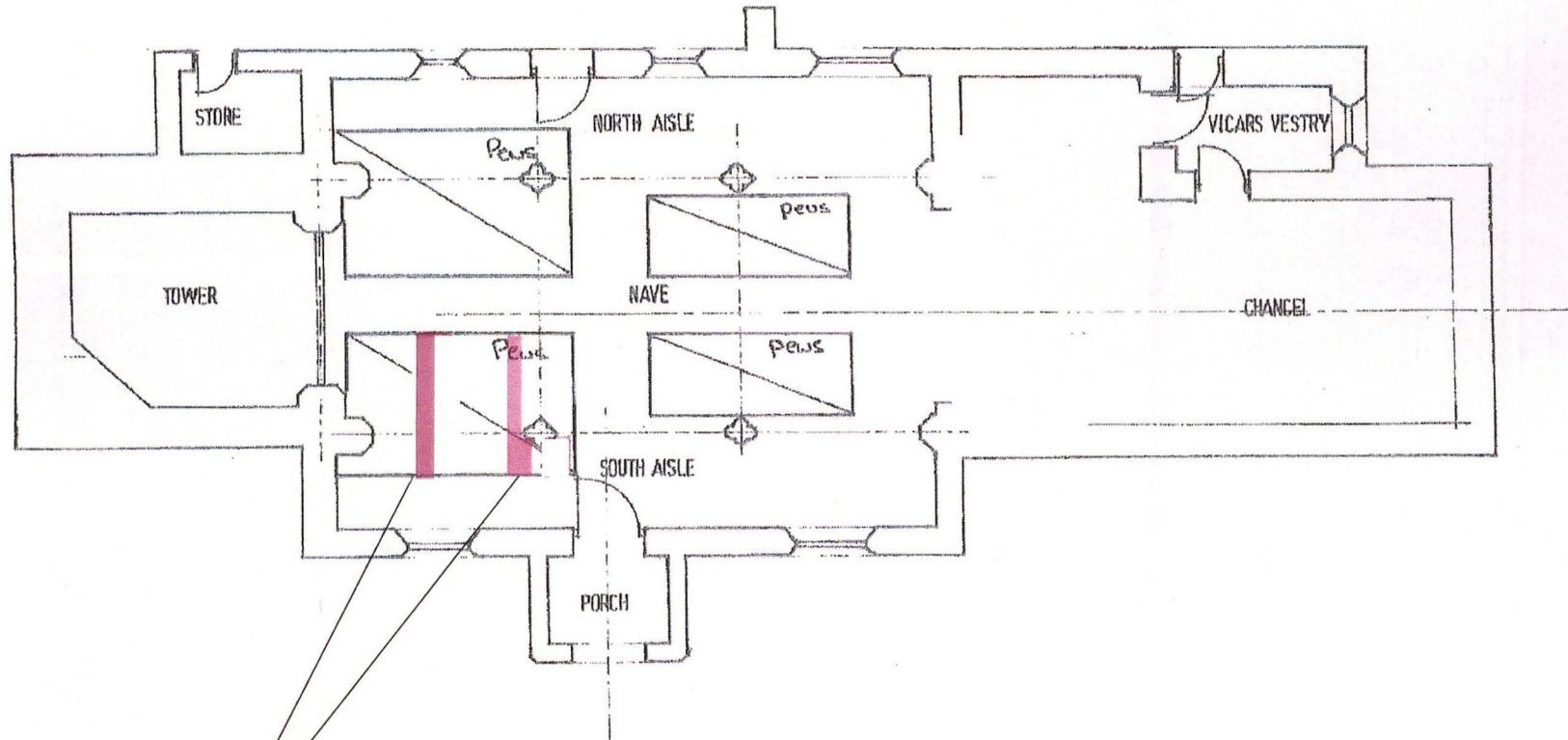
Naomi Field
July 7th 2008

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Neil Kennedy for arranging access.

ST. CHADS PARISH CHURCH, HOLMES LANE, DUNHOLME. BLOCK PLAN

Removal of pew and section of pew to facilitate investigation of ground under pew base



Inspected areas



Dunholme St Chad's
Void beneath south west pew platform in two locations as shown on
Fig. 1 . Scale 0.50m