

YORK



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST

**RIPON CATHEDRAL
RIPON
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**REPORT ON A
PROGRAMME OF
BUILDING RECORDING**



**1999 FIELD REPORT
NUMBER 92**

6031

**SOUTH EAST CORNER OF CHOIR
RIPON CATHEDRAL,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

NYCC HER	
SNY	778
ENY	494
CNY	1905
Parish	6031
Rec'd	23/10/01

A REPORT ON BUILDING RECORDING

CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	2
	Brief and methodology	
2.	ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS	3
3.	SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION	4
4.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	5

List of Illustrations (in separate roll)

Figure 1.	South east corner roof elevations
Figure 2.	South east corner south elevation
Figure 3.	South east corner east elevation
Figure 4.	South east corner buttress faces

1. INTRODUCTION

Brief and methodology

A programme of photogrammetric enhancement and building recording was undertaken in advance of repair work to the external face of south east corner the Choir of Ripon Cathedral, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 314 711). J. M. McComish for York Archaeological Trust, on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Ripon Cathedral carried out the work in October 1999. The completed drawings are stored at Ripon Cathedral. This report was prepared by J. M. McComish and edited by D. A. Brinklow.

Permatrace plots at a scale of 1:20 of the area to be recorded were supplied to York Archaeological Trust by Robert Lambie on behalf of the Dean and Chapter of Ripon Cathedral. These consisted of the south east corner south elevation, south east corner east elevation, south east corner buttress faces and south east corner roof elevations. Three photocopies of each plot were made; one of which was enhanced on site. The information was then transferred onto the two remaining photocopies of each plot.

The checking was done from scaffolding erected as part of the restoration programme. In the case of the south east corner south elevation the uppermost 8.00m of the wall was recorded, on the south east corner east elevation the uppermost 10.00m was recorded, and for the south east corner buttress faces the uppermost 5.50m was recorded. The remainder of these walls was inaccessible from the planked walkways on the scaffolding. The recording involved checking the accuracy of the drawings, adding any surface detail which had not been recorded and noting any features of archaeological interest. In addition the stone and mortar types were noted.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS

2.1 Stonework

The walling recorded consisted of limestone and sandstone ashlar blocks. The sandstone was of varying texture from fine to coarse grained and ranged in colour from yellow to grey-buff. The sandstone blocks were mainly located on the buttress faces and in the tracery of the window on the east elevation, but were also found throughout the recorded area. Modern replacement blocks of medium grained grey sandstone were located throughout the recorded area, with particular concentrations on the aisle-gable coping and the upper most portions of the roof of the octagonal stair turret and the buttress gables. Magnesian limestone occurred throughout the recorded area most notably on the roof of the octagonal stair turret, the buttress gables, and over much of the south east corner south elevation. In general the limestone was more severely eroded than the sandstone.

Occasional pieces of tile were built into the south and east elevations of the south-east corner, these were always adjacent to limestone blocks within the walling.

2.2 Tooling

Surface tooling was visible on all the elevations recorded, but it was confined to the sandstone blocks. Two different types of tooling were seen. One consisted of narrowly spaced parallel draughts of grooves up to 2mm across and 1mm deep, which usually ran diagonal to the bedding plane of the block. In a few cases the tooling lines were vertical and a few examples had diagonal tooling with some horizontal tooling at the edges of the block. The second type of tooling consisted of rows of parallel grooves roughly 50mm long, 2mm wide and 1mm deep with a more 'pecked' appearance. These grooves were diagonal to the face of the bedding plane. It is impossible to tell from the marks whether an axe or a chisel had been used to generate either type of tooling.

No banker masons marks or setting-out lines were seen during the recording.

2.3 Mortar types

A total of seven mortar types were located on the site. The only medieval mortar seen (numbered mortar 2 on the drawings) consisted of a fine grained lime mortar with no inclusions. This mortar was usually present in association with the limestone portions of the walling, but occasionally was adjacent to sandstone blocks. On the whole this mortar was well preserved, but in places it had decayed leaving void joints.

All the remaining mortars recorded were clearly of modern (i.e. Victorian or later) date. The most extensive one recorded (Mortar 1 on the drawings) was a hard pink-grey fine-grained mortar with no inclusions. Mortar 1 pre-dated mortars 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. The

mortar was clearly modern, as it was associated with a number of replacement blocks throughout the recorded area. Mortar 1 had been used to re-point the walling.

Mortar 4 was mid grey fine-grained mortar with occasional inclusions of grit. Mortar 5 was hard dark-mid grey fine-grained mortar with frequent fine to medium grained grit inclusions. Mortar 6 was hard, pale-mid grey fine-grained mortar, with occasional inclusions of grit and fine black particles, possibly soot. Mortar 6 had been used as a surface coating over areas of severe decay, usually on limestone blocks. In some cases the presence of the surface coating seemed to have increased the erosion of the immediately adjacent limestone. It was not possible to tell how mortars 4, 5 and 6 related to one another stratigraphically, as they butted against one another, but they were all later than mortar 4.

Mortar 3 was a hard pink-grey fine-grained mortar with no inclusions, which was associated with a group of modern replacement stones on the south elevation.

Mortar 7 was a dark grey concrete based mortar with moderate fine grit inclusions which covered the aisle roof and lipped up against the adjacent wall faces.

3. SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION

Most of the walling recorded dated from between 1286 and 1296, when Archbishop John Romanus rebuilt the eastern three bays of the church. The walls of this date contain a mixture of sandstone and limestone ashlar, both bonded with medieval mortar and clearly original. Hallett (1901) states that the 1286-1296 building campaign was the first time both stone types were used together. While the limestone recorded was all of a similar type, there was considerable variation in the colour and grain-size of the sandstone used. This could mean either that several quarries provided stone for the rebuilding, or that earlier sandstone blocks from a variety of quarries had been re-used. The latter explanation may account for the differing tooling types seen.

Mortar 1, which infilled most of the joints recorded together with the bulk of the modern replacement blocks, is probably the result of large scale restoration work by Giles Gilbert Scott between 1866 and 1871. This work saw the total replacement of the three finials within the recorded area, which were probably severely eroded given the poor condition of the limestone used in the pinnacle and buttress roofs. The severely eroded blocks in the coping of the aisle roof gable and on the buttress gables and faces were also replaced. The replacement blocks were all of sandstone.

Mortars 3-6 also clearly represent modern repair work consisting of re-pointing and occasional new blocks of masonry. This work, though clearly modern, cannot be closely dated.

4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Forster, B., Robson, B. and Deadman, F., 1993. *Ripon Cathedral: Its History and Architecture*

Hallett, C.W.C., 1901. *The Cathedral Church of Ripon*

Pevsner, N. and Metcalf, P., 1985. *The Cathedrals of England*