



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Historic Building Recording

Minsden Chapel

Whitwell Road

Langley

Hertfordshire

Scheduled Monument 1003543



Quality Check

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Summary

In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Recording of Minsden Chapel, Langley, Hertfordshire as part of a Management Plan for the consolidation of the ruins and the management of associated trees and shrubs to protect the remains. Minsden Chapel, which is both a Scheduled Monument (NHLE Ref: 1003543) and a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE Ref: 1347462), dates from the 14th century and, given the mention of a priest serving Minsden in the Domesday Book, may have replaced an earlier church. Regular Divine Service appears to have ceased by the mid 17th century, but the chapel still played a significant role in the community in the early 18th century, by providing a place of worship for a large congregation of non-Conformists. The last known service was a wedding between Enoch West and Mary Horn on July 11th 1738 when a piece of masonry fell onto the service book being held by the curate. The building has been systematically looted with the font and bells amongst the first losses. Tracery, stained glass windows and building materials were sold at auction or on the market in Hitchin in the 19th century. The chancel arch collapsed as recently as the early 2000s and general decay and vandalism have left the remaining walls extremely vulnerable.

1 Introduction

1.1 In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Recording of Minsden Chapel, Langley, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned on behalf of Hugh Neave, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Kaye 2021), and approved by Jess Tipper of Historic England.

1.2 *Background*

This report forms part of a Management Plan for the consolidation of the ruins of Minsden Chapel and the management of associated trees and shrubs to protect the remains.

1.3 *The Site*

Location

Minsden Chapel is located on the northern edge of a patch of woodland c.1.5km east of Preston and 3.6km west of Stevenage Old Town. It lies within the civil parish of Langley and the administrative district of North Hertfordshire at National Grid Reference TL19820 24580 (Fig. 1).

Description

The woodland within which the ruins are located is roughly triangular and is surrounded by agricultural land (Fig. 2). Minsden Chapel is both a Scheduled Monument (NHLE Ref: 1003543) and a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE Ref: 1347462). It is described as follows:

Ruined chapel. Probably C14, mentioned in 1450, a ruin by end of C17. Flint rubble, plastered externally, with stone dressings. Remains of red brick bellcote at W gable. A small 2-cells church with nave and narrow square ended chancel. Diagonal buttresses at E end of chancel and W end of nave, but set-back corner buttress to E end of nave suggest that the church is of one build. 2 other buttresses to each side of nave. Line of creasing of lower chancel roof on E end of nave. Central doorway and 2 holes for windows on S side of nave. N doorway in same bay but further to W. Much of S wall of nave stands to full height and W wall with put log holes at 3 levels. N wall more fragmentary. Rough opening for chancel arch in E wall. Half-metre high walls of chancel with tall SE angle pier. Line of beam sockets across E face of W wall of nave at eaves height. Inscribed stone floor slab in chancel 'IN MEMORIAM/ REGINALD L



HINE/HISTORIAN/OF HITCHIN/1883-1949/REQUIESCAT IN PACE'. Hine's ashes were scattered here. The church was dedicated to St. Nicholas and served the hamlets of Preston, Langley and Minsden until church rates were levied in this area for St. Mary's Hitchin and the church here fell into ruin. Scheduled Ancient Monument (Herts No.14). (RCHM (1911)137-8: VCH (1912)18: Pevsner (1977)247-8).

In addition, a site visit report by the Field Management Warden in 1982 provides the following description (Historic England file archive - AA040066/FMW):

Earliest mention 1487. Ruined since C18. No parish registers, but Bishop's transcripts exist for 1609-41.

The site stands at the NE end of a coppice on the summit of a gently sloping hill. The ruins cover an area of approx. 25m x 10m and consist of nave and chancel divided by a chancel arch. Walls of flint stand to 6m approx at W end, S aisle, and, parts of the chancel arch, but in most places only to 2.5 – 3m or less. Remains of buttresses are visible and some tile and ashlar stone can be seen in the construction. There is some evidence of modern mortar repairs to the fabric. Interior has been cleared to reveal tomb slab of Reginald Hine – historian of Hitchin 1883-1949. Possible hollow way to N.

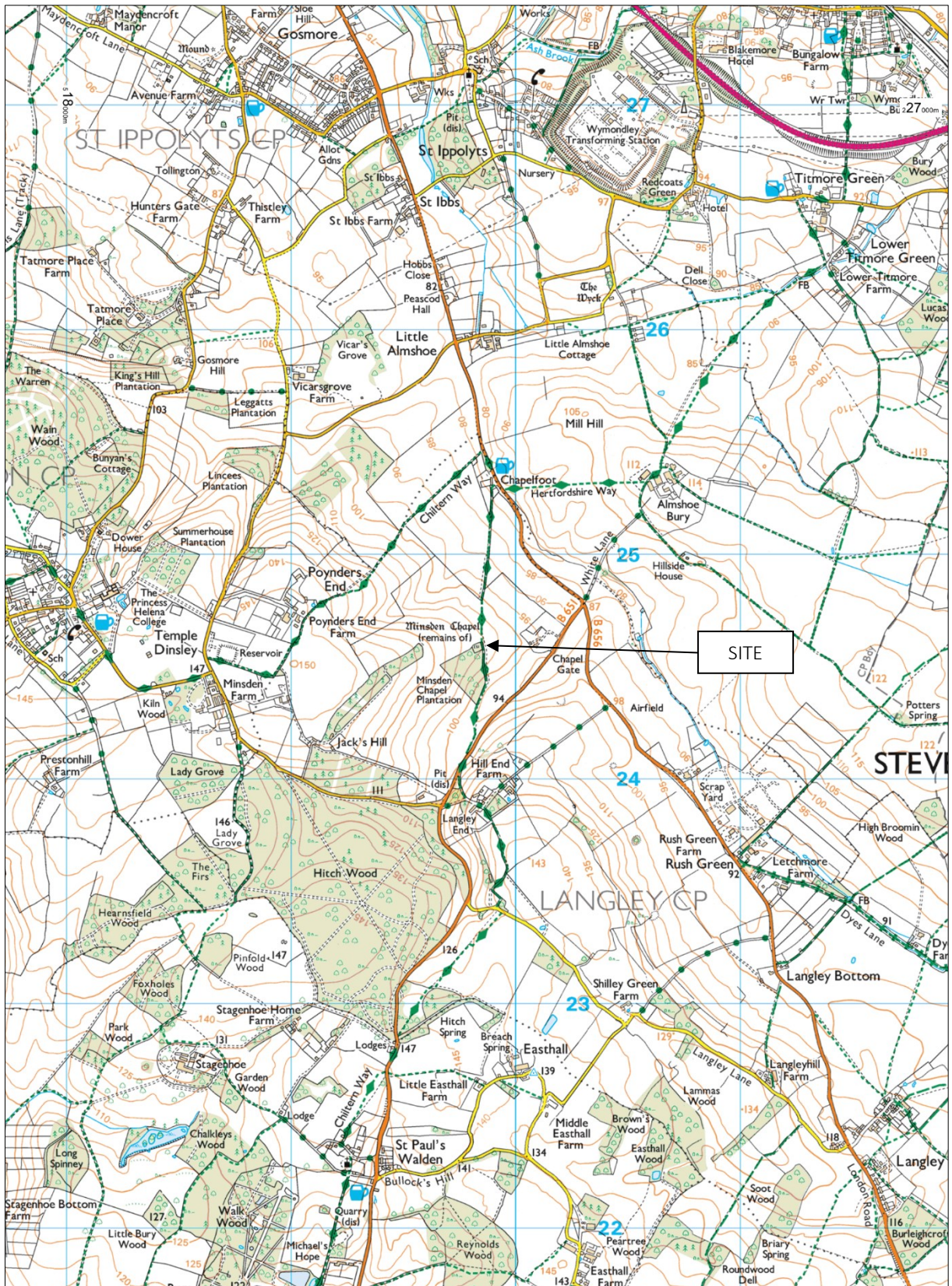


Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 Aims

As described in the Written Scheme of Investigation, the aims of the project were:

- To ensure the archaeological recording of the building prior to remedial works taking place
- To examine the structural history and development of the building in relation to its historical and geographical context
- To provide sufficient information on the historic and architectural significance of the building that will place the findings of the investigations in their local and regional context

2.2 Standards

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The Design Brief
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for the Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (CIfA 2020)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2019)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (HE 2015, EH 2008)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)
- Data Protection Act 2018

2.3 Methods

The work was carried out according to the Written Scheme of Investigation (Section 2), which required:

- A historic building assessment, with recording to Historic England Level 3 (HE 2016).

2.4 Constraints

The building was surrounded by a bank of nettles that also encroached into the chancel, not all of which could be cleared on the day of the survey. Although this impinged on some of the general shots of the chapel, it did not prevent detailed analysis of the building fabric



3 Historical Background

3.1 Minsden Chapel stands in isolated splendour at the northern edge of a small piece of woodland that is surrounded by fields. Although it stands at the top of a hill, the chapel is now well hidden except from the northern approach; from here the trees provide a beautiful, if overly verdant, backdrop to the ruins. It is possible that hilltop always provided an isolated spot as the Historic Environment Records suggest that the pre-medieval landscape was home to at least one and possibly two villas and that the location and subsequent demise of the medieval settlement of Minsden first recorded in the Domesday Book is unclear.

The following section provides a summary of the readily available historical background to the site and its environs. This section has been compiled with information from the Hertfordshire HER (HER ref: 28/21), the Hertfordshire Archives, KDK's own library and reliable internet sources. The HER data is shown in Figure 3 and tabulated in Appendix 3.

3.2 Pre-medieval

Although distinctly isolated, Minsden chapel is set within a landscape that has provided evidence for human activity dating from the prehistoric period onwards. The earliest find is a Paleolithic axe head (HER 463) dating from c.40000-8000BC, and a flint axe (HER 316), a group of Neolithic flint tools (HER 342) and a flint fabricator (HER 387) were discovered to the northeast and southwest of the chapel. A Mesolithic axe is thought to have been discovered close to the chapel itself (HER 2881).

In addition to the industrial activity suggested by the flint tools, Minsden chapel is also surrounded by a number of crop marks thought to be late Neolithic/early Bronze Age ring ditches (HER 2913, 7433, 17087, 17261, 17780 and 17781); a ritual landscape of an earlier spirituality.

Two early-mid Iron Age pits (HER 2854) to the northwest of the chapel may be part of a wider landscape of similar features that include HER 17258 and 18547.

A Roman corridor villa (HER 17260) can be seen as cropmarks to the west of Minsden Chapel. These lie to the north of a scatter of Roman building material (HER 7357) that has been interpreted as being a possible bath house associated with the villa. Another possible villa site is located to the east of the chapel (HER 1094), where a substantial amount of tesserae has been found.

3.3 Medieval (1066-1500)

The manor of Minsden was noted in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as being part of the manor of Hitchin and belonging to King William. It was a 4 hide estate with pasture, woodland and meadow, and a disproportionately high number of 6 slaves to 11 freemen, including a priest (Williams & Martin 2002: 360). The manor was held by Guy de Bovencourt in the 12th century, but was forfeited during the reign of King John and acquired by Hugh de Baliol, the Lord of the Manor of Hitchin whose descendent, John Baliol was crowned King of Scotland in 1292. He lost the kingdom four years later at which time his lands were forfeited and Minsden manor was granted to Robert Kendale (VCH online). However, by 1366 the manor was again held by the King who granted it to his squire, John de Beverle.



Despite the entry in the Domesday Survey and the later details of the manorial holdings, there are no buildings other than the chapel to indicate a settlement at Minsden. Whether this is because the settlement was subsequently deserted or it was a dispersed settlement is unclear (HER 1015). The current evidence suggests that the medieval landscape is likely to have been dominated by the manorial estate of Almshoe Bury. The manor house (HER 1960) was built as an aisled hall house by Simon fitz Adams c.1241, and a deer park (HER 6294) was possibly established at the same time, but certainly by 1358 when it was visited by Queen Isabella. A manorial chapel (HER 4210) was also established but demolished c.1850. By the mid-16th century the manor of Minsden descended with the manor of Almshoe (VCH online).

3.4 **Post-Medieval** - Modern (1500-present)

The manor of Minsden passed through various hands over the centuries, including the Lyttons, who acquired it in 1502, to the Brockets in 1555 to the Reades of Hatfield (c.1615 and then in 1712 to the Dashwoods (Hines 1927:26). A few post-medieval buildings lie within the study area, including a 17th century dovecote (HER 6292), farm buildings dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries (HER 15101, 12776 and 15110). However, the most significant monument within the study area of this period is undoubtedly the 18th century parkland and 20th century gardens designed by Edwin Lutyens and Gertrude Jekyll at Temple Dinsley (HER 7341).

3.5 **Site specific**

It is not known when the chapel, dedicated to St Nicholas, was built. It is first mentioned in a document dated 1450 agreeing the handover of all the lands and tenements held by Robert de Walso (ie from Walsworth – another hamlet in Hitchin) to his son in exchange for victuals and clothing suitable to his station and a horse on which he could ride to church at Minsden. Various wills also mention the chapel, such as that of John Pulter dated 1485 who bequeathed 3s 4d for the repair of the chapel and John Emmyng who left 20d to the chapel in 1524. Unusually, James Cheetham left the chapel 22 quarters of malt in 1523 and John Godfrey gave a bushell of wheat for the high altar in 1544. Margerie Astrye, who had been born in Minsden and later became the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, left Minsden chapel a silver chalice and paten in 1524. The chapel was clearly already in poor repair in the mid-16th century as the bequest in the will of George Burwell is for as long as the chapel stands and if it were to 'go doune' the income were to go to Hitchin church (Hines 1927: 17 & 28).

The chapel served the communities of Minsden, Preston and Langley, and the residents of Preston and Langley petitioned the church commissioners in 1688 regarding the upkeep of the chapel. It stated "That for tyme beyond the memory of man an antient chappell called Minsden Chappell belonging to these two Hamblets, unto which the inhabitants usually resorted on Sundays and holy dayes, to heare Divine Service and Sermons and to receive the Sacraments, have christenen and buried the dead soe often as was occasion". The petition went on to say "That the Chappell hath always been repaired at the proper cost and charges of the inhabitants of the two hamblets", who had raised a considerable sum of money about fourteen years previously in order to repair the building, but the two persons in whose hands the money was placed had died, and the amount was lost (EHAS 1913). Further funds had been raised and a new roof had been built, but the Lord of the Manor, Sir John Reade was against further investment in the chapel, insisting the dues should go to Hitchin church. The petitioners lost their case, after which the chapel could only fall into further decline. It was described in a report to the archdeacon in 1690 as being 'ruinated, stripped, uncovered, decayed and dimolished' (Hines 1927: 29-30). It is unlikely to have been in such a poor state of



repair as in 1700 Joseph Arnold of Langley was accused of removing the chapel font so that he could use it as a sink in his house (*ibid*:32). He was not the only one to plunder the chapel; Jeremiah Godfrey stole 400 pounds of lead, and other reports were made of stone and oak being taken to repair and improve houses in the vicinity. In 1725 the steeple bells were stolen (*ibid*:36).

The chapel appeared to have some sort of revival at the same time nonetheless, in that it was used by a lay preacher, Daniel Skingle, for his weekly sermons to a congregation of some 300 people. However, this was short-lived and both Skingle and the chapel warden, John Heath, were forced to make a public apology for their great offence to the church (*ibid*:33). Although regular services ceased to be held in the chapel, it was a popular venue for weddings until the 1738 when the Bishop of Lincoln ended the practice. Perhaps, this was well timed as it is reported that during the last marriage to take place there, between Enoch West and Mary Horn on July 11th 1738 a piece of masonry fell onto the service book being held by the curate (*ibid*:35)

The subsequent decay can be followed in various documents, illustrations and photographs. A description of the chapel in 1814 states that the nave columns and arch were still standing, as were the east window and one of the side windows and doorway on the southwest side. On the north side, near the nave, was a niche in the wall at the bottom of which was a stone figure. This was gone by the following year. In 1832 pieces of stained glass from Minsden chapel were up for auction in the Sun, and in the 1840s Old Bowstock was known to plunder the chapel of worked stone and sell it on Hitchin market (*ibid*: 37-38).

The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England published the following information in 1910:

(1). Minsden Chapel, ruins, on rising ground about 3 miles S. of Hitchin and ¼ mile W. of the road to Hitchin. The walls are of flint rubble with stone dressings. The chapel, consisting of Chancel and Nave, was probably built in the 14th century, but little or no detail remains by which an exact date can be assigned to it.

Architectural Description—The Chancel (26 ft. by 15 ft.): little remains but the four angles with fragments of the walls 12 to 15 ft. high, and the chancel arch is represented only by a rough opening. The Nave (42 ft. by 21 ft.): the N. wall still stands to a height of about 15 ft.; but the only remains, except the rough openings, of the two N. windows and the N. doorway are a few worked stones in the W. splay, and the spring of the chamfered rear arch of the westernmost window. The S. wall is pierced by two rough openings which represent a doorway and a window; at the E. end of the wall a complete break indicates the position of a second window. The W. wall is nearly intact, and at its apex is a small brick pier. There are traces of square buttresses on the N. and S. walls, and of diagonal buttresses on the W. wall.

Condition—Ruinous; overgrown with ivy.

An article in the 1913 transactions of the East Herts Archaeological Society described the chapel as follows:

The walls are principally composed of flints plastered over, and the remains are plain and solid. There are portions of buttresses at the north, west, and south-west corners, and a few pieces of the original clunch stone can be seen. The thickness of the walls is about 33 inches, but there is no moulded or ornamental work of any description. The south wall contains a doorway and a window opening, but there is no stone work to either. The wall at the west end is perfect, and



the gable end shows the position of the old roof, and is covered with plaster to the height of the original ceiling. The arch between the nave and chancel is in fair condition.

The chancel arch survived until 2001, but had collapsed within the same decade <https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/places/churches-and-places-of-worship-2/minsdn-chapel-hitchin>(Figs. 10-11).

The two earliest depictions of Minsden chapel in the Hertfordshire Archives date from the late 18th/early 19th century (Figs. 4 & 5). Both show the east end of the chapel, but in very different ways. The image in the Oldfield collection (Fig. 4) is very stylised but shows the building in its entirety. Of interest in this image is the west end, where the surviving bellcote is shown to have had a partner on the opposite site of the wall to house the two hanging bells noted in a survey undertaken in 1553 (EHAS 1913). The chancel arch and its dressings are still relatively intact in this drawing, but the tracery in the east window is not depicted.

The sketch drawing in Figure 5 shows only the east wall in any detail although the chancel arch is shown as still standing. The angle of the chancel roof is clear, and some of the tracery can also be seen, but shown in greater detail by Buckler in Figure 6. If accurately portrayed, the window has a 2-centred arch and curvilinear tracery in the Decorated style (c. 1300-1375). The diagonal buttresses are shown as being ashlar, although the east chancel wall is simply rendered. A section of the south chancel wall has collapsed in this illustration and much of the south nave wall has been reduced in height, the quoins on the easternmost nave buttress are still intact.

By 1909 a great deal of damage had occurred and the ruins had become heavily overgrown, but the chancel arch and some of the east window was still standing (Fig. 7). Two photographs taken in 1922 show the deterioration was advanced, but by the chancel arch was still intact in 2001 even if the east window had by then disappeared (Figs. 9 & 10).

3.6 Additional material

Two poems on Minsden Chapel were found during the research for this project. The first, which dates from the early 19th century, was reproduced in the East Herts Transaction of 1913

ON MINSDEN CHAPEL
(a ruin near Hitchin, in Hertfordshire).

No pomp of art, no jewelled shrine,
No tombs of gilded splendour shine
 In Minsden's lone remains,
Nor Parian marble's vivid glow,
Nor mimic works of art that show
 The sculptor's faultless pains.

"Rent is the fence; and loiterers tread
Gay and unthinking on the bed
 Of many a Preston seer;
The truant boy forsakes his sheep
To pluck the azure bells that weep
 Upon his grandsire's bier.

The ivy o'er those mouldering walls



In fair festoons of nature falls
 And mantles on their brow;
 It seems to weep for that lone aisle,
 That broken arch and desert pile,
 In ruin sinking now.

Yet have they seen the steel-knit' mail, The swords, the spears, that ne'er did fail
 Of Salem's chivalry.
 That race is gone-and this their seat
 Now bends the spoiler's shafts to meet,
 As if in sympathy.

That race is gone, but still their name
 Stands blazoned in the scroll of fame,
 It ne'er may wane or fade;
 The deeds of heroes cannot die;
 Though low and cold in dust they lie
 A crown of glory soothes their shade.

But Minsden falls. Yon midday sun
 Ere many an annual course is run
 Will know its place no more.
 'Twill sink in Time's deep gulf away;
 No pilgrim as they pass shall say
 Here Minsden stood of yore.

Yet those stout hearts that rear'd the pile, That fought for Salem's towers, the while
 In honour's fame shall bloom;
 Green was the laurel on their brow
 In the tourney's knightly strife, and now
 It thickens on their tomb.

The second poem was written by Wallis, an usher at Hitchin School in 1750, and is reproduced in *The History of Hitchin* by Reginald Hines (1929:41):

ON THE RUINS OF MINSDEN OR MINZELL CHAPEL'
 The rising sun had chased the shades of night
 And each obscuring mist had fled the light,
 The cooling zephyrs gently as they passed
 Stirred every leaf and bent the tender grass.
 Perfuming odours rose, the warblers sung,
 And with their music all the valleys rung.
 Charmed with the pleasing prospect of the fields,
 To taste the pleasure which their beauty yields,
 To breathe the sweetness of the morning air
 I leave the town and to the plain repair.
 A mouldering structure then appeared in view,
 Around whose top the creeping ivy grew,
 Once a fair church adorned with curious art,
 In crumbling stone now dropping part from part;
 While thorns and briars, interwoven round,
 Vie with its top, and fill the desert ground,



Denying entrance to the curious eye,
To view the graves that underneath them lie.
While thus my thoughts with meditation glow,
And thus my words in mournful accents flow :—
'Is this the place where numerous footsteps trod,
Where living votaries filled the House of God;
Where the full chorus of the sounding choir
Bid one loud strain of prayer and praise aspire?'
How silent now the desolated spot,
Its paths untrodden and its use forgot.
Of noxious reptiles now the haunted scene,
Hung with cold dews, and clad with baleful green
All day the redbreast mournful ditty sings;
With mournful ditties, plaintive echo rings;
And birds (xvi) ill-omened at the day's decline
With boding sounds profane the hallowed shrine;
While mournful shadows stretched along the plains
Move with the wind and scare benighted swains.
Just such is man, when vig'rous youth is fled,
And feeble age has silvered o'er his head;
Downward he sinks, deserted and forlorn,
Of all he meets the pity and the scorn;
None haunt his dwelling save the reptile race,
Who hope his fortune or expect his place;
Yet shall he rise and mount the realms of day,
Where youth immortal shall no more decay

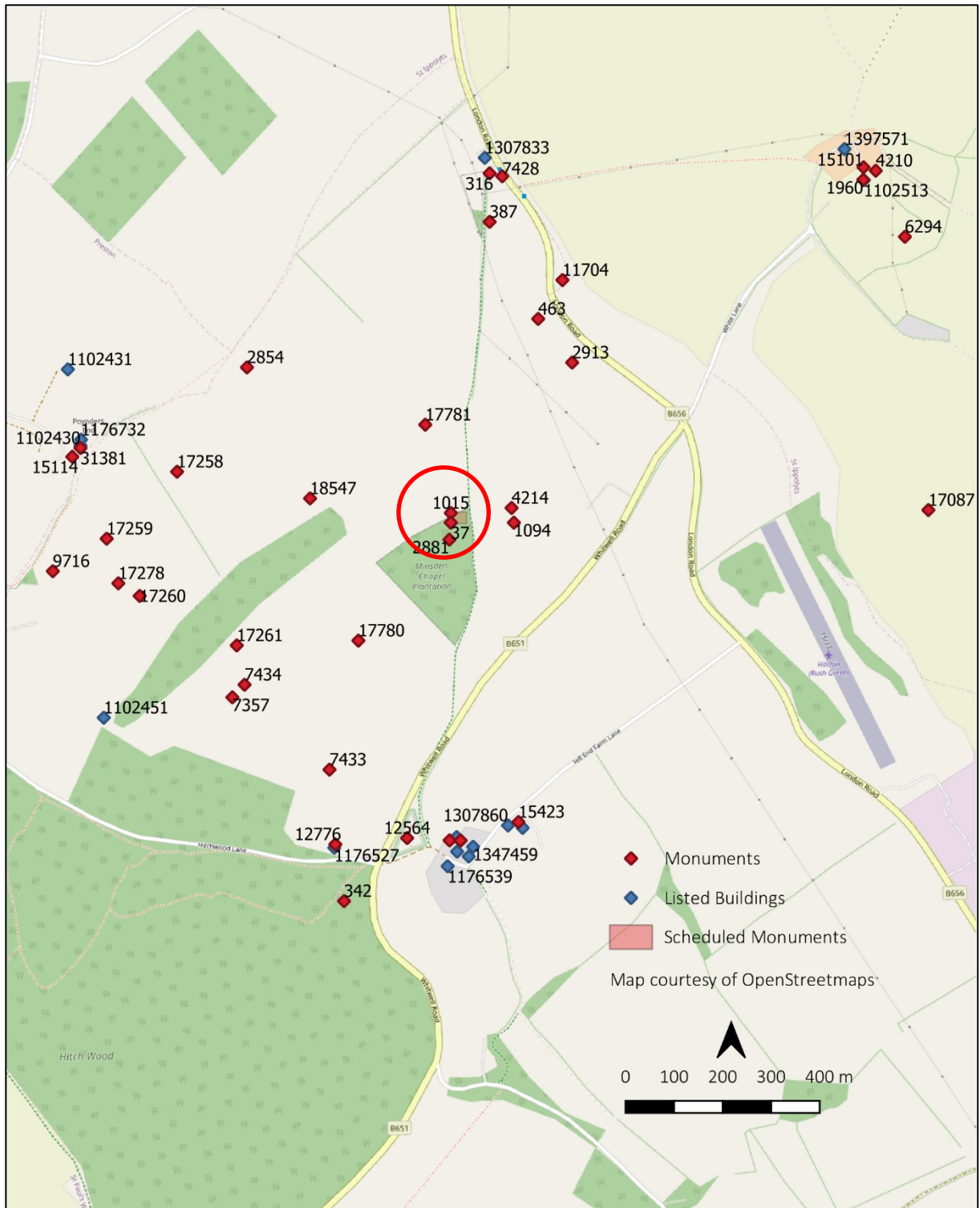


Figure 3: HER data plan with Minsden Chapel encircled (scale 1: 12.500)



Figure 4: View of the chapel from the southeast c.1785-1805 (HALS DE/OF/4/162)



Figure 5: View of the chapel from the southeast c.1773-1854 (HALS DE/X837/1/31)



Figure 6: Early 19th century drawing by Buckler (HALS DZ/119/8/34a)



Figure 7: Chancel arch 1909 (HALS DE/1042/8/75a)



Figure 8: Chancel arch 1922 (HALS DE/1042/8/76b)



Figure 9: View from the northwest 1922 (HALS DE/1042/8/76a)



Figure 10: Chancel arch looking east in 2001 (<https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/places/churches-and-places-of-worship-2/minsdn-chapel-hitchin>)



Figure 11: Chancel arch looking west in 2001 (<https://www.hertsmemories.org.uk/content/herts-history/places/churches-and-places-of-worship-2/minsdn-chapel-hitchin>)



4 Description

4.1 General (Plates 1-14)

Minsden chapel is a simple structure of just a nave and chancel. It is now without a roof or floor, the chancel arch has collapsed and the remains largely buried to form a hillock between the nave and chancel. Most of the dressings and all of the tracery have gone, leaving a skeleton built largely of flint with some fieldstones and clunch, and the occasional use of tile and other stone.

Little survives of the chancel other than three of the four corners and a low section of walling in between. Within the chancel is a memorial slab for Reginald Hines, a local historian who also rented Minsden Chapel for many years and whose ashes were scattered there

The nave has an angled buttresses on both sides of the west elevation, three further buttresses along the south wall and one to the north. The door and window openings in the north and south nave walls have largely been lost, but voussoirs in the south wall survive at the western end, as does a springer in the wall opposite and the base of the door opening to the east of it.



Plate 1: Minsden chapel ruins (courtesy of AerialCam)



The numbers shown in the captions below indicate the photograph numbers shown on Figure 17 (in blue) and Figure 18 (in red).



Plate 2: The approach from the north (24)



Plate 3: The view from the north (23)



Plate 4: View from the northeast (1)



Plate 5: View from the northwest (16)



Plate 6: View from the southeast (2)



Plate 7: View from the southwest (4)



Plate 8: Interior view looking east (29)



Plate 9: Interior view looking west (7)



Plate 10: Interior view looking southwest (8)



Plate 11: View to the southeast (15)



Plate 12: Remains of the chancel arch (5)



Plate 13: Voussoirs in the south wall (18)



Plate 14: Springer in the north wall (17)



4.2 Building material (Plates 15-26)

Minsden Chapel is located within an area lacking good quality building stone, and, like many ecclesiastical buildings in north Hertfordshire, south Cambridgeshire and beyond, has been predominantly built of flint and fieldstones. The quoins are of clunch and Hertfordshire puddingstone and shelly, oolitic limestone, probably from the Barnack quarries have been used to frame some of the putlog holes. Within the walling material is also the very occasional piece of sandstone, probably a locally discovered glacial erratic, and the occasional piece of clunch from the seam quarried at Totternhoe. This was not used for the quoins as it is too friable; the quoins and most of the other clunch noted within the walling is harder and whiter. Whether this has come from the Cambridgeshire quarries, a local quarry pit (a redundant chalk pit opposite the site is testimony to the presence of locally available material) or a spolia from the Roman remains recorded on the HER is uncertain.

Roof tiles have also been used as walling material, to line some of the putlog holes and at the top of the window arch in the south wall between the voussoirs. These are largely isolated pieces, but the base of the buttress to the east of the south window has several courses of tiles. The base of the neighbouring buttress to the east is of floor tiles measuring 13 x 11 x 5cm and 10 x 10 x 5cm. Some roof tile is also present at the back of the buttress and also on the buttress at the east end of the nave. Whereas the tile within the walling is likely to have been spolia, that within the buttress is clearly later repair.

Brick has also been used within the structure; as a repair to the door opening in the north wall, and to construct a belfry in the southeast corner of the nave. The bricks within the door opening are c.13 x 10 x 6cm although some are only 5cm high and others are bullnosed. They are poorly puddled reds, with a few stone inclusions but no spanish and appear to be 18th century. The mortar is hard and cement based, which would suggest that the bricks have been re-used. The bricks used for the belfry could only be studied in detail through the camera lens and photograph. They are also handmade reds, with no apparent inclusions and appear to be c.5cm high. There is a narrow arched opening 4 courses high and roughly 29cm wide more clearly evident from within the church. The bricks are handmade reds and the return wall to the left of the opening is bullnosed. Bricks have also been used in later repairs to the south wall.



Plate 15: Ashlared clunch, SE buttress (30)



Plate 16: Barnack stone, south wall exterior (38)



Plate 17: Barnack, clunch & flint, freestanding section S wall interior (39)



Plate 18: Detail of Barnack stone (40)



Plate 19: Glacial erratic and Hertfordshire puddingstone, free standing section of S wall (67)



Plate 20: Sandstone in the south nave wall (34)



Plate 21: Tiles used in a southern buttress (31)



Plate 22: Floor tiles in southern buttress (32)



Plate 23: Brickwork in northern door opening (48)

Plate 24: Brickwork in northern door opening (49)



Plate 25: Bell cote on west wall (59)

Plate 26: Brick repair work on south wall (66)

4.3 Building Technique

The two most distinctive features of the building work are the well-built putlog holes and the quality of the external walling, where the flints, stones and other material have been uniformly distributed and well coursed. It displays level quality. The heart of the walls, which are up to 75cm thick, are less well made with considerably more mortar present (eg Plate 29).

The walls were plastered, some of which is still evident on the internal west wall of the nave. Whether the exterior of the walls was plastered and painted, as would have been the norm, is uncertain as the clunch quoins do not stand very proud of the walls (Plate 15). Identifying building lifts within the walling was challenging in part because the thicker mortar beds applied at the end of the building seasons are less obvious in a wall of relatively well packed and coursed small flints and fieldstones. A short line of tiles in the external face of the west wall could well indicate the beginning/end of one of building lifts, but the variations in mortar and the closeness with which the wall has to be viewed did not allow any satisfactory conclusions to be drawn.

However, the putlog holes themselves provide a reasonable indication of lifts. Each series of holes is c.2m above the one below and there is roughly 2.5m gap between each hole within the same row. Given the difficulty in drying lime mortar particularly on flint walling, the average building lift would have been c.1m per year.



4.4 Put log holes (Plates 27 -28)

The unusually high survival of good quality putlog holes has allowed a greater insight into the use of various building materials.

The putlog holes on the internal face of the west wall are the most distinctive. Those at lower level have been damaged, but the southern one is intact and has clunch sides and Barnack lintel. This mixture of material to line or frame the hole is typical, as can be seen in the table below. Often the lintel on the external face is different to that on the internal aspect, and it would appear that whatever was easiest to hand was put to use. This would include spolia, such as the large moulded clunch piece in the internal face of the west wall and a similarly moulded piece of puddingstone on the outer face of the same wall.



Plate 27: Moulded clunch lintel on interior of west wall (53)



Plate 28: Moulded puddingstone lintel on exterior of west wall (44)

| <i>West Wall: Interior</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|---------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | Damaged | | | |
| Centre | Damaged | | | |
| South | Barnack | Clunch | Clunch | |
| | | | | |
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | Clunch | | Puddingstone | |
| Centre | Damaged | | | |
| South | Large clunch | | | |
| | | | | |
| Upper level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | Tile | | | |
| Centre | Tile | | | Blocked |
| South | Clunch | | | |

| <i>West Wall: exterior</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | Tile | | | |
| Centre | Damaged | | | |
| South | Damaged | | | |



| <i>West Wall: exterior</i> | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|---------|
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | Puddingstone | | | |
| Centre | Fieldstone | | | |
| South | Damaged | Puddingstone | | Blocked |
| Upper level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| North | No lintel | | | |
| Centre | Tile | | | |
| South | Clunch | | | |

| <i>South Wall: Interior</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Sandstone | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Clunch | | | |
| Centre | Barnack | | | |
| West | Barnack | Puddingstone | Puddingstone | |

| <i>Freestanding section of South Wall: interior</i> | | | | |
|---|---------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Location | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| Middle | Barnack | | Barnack | |
| Upper | Clunch & tile | | | |

| <i>South Wall: exterior</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Flint | Clunch | Clunch | |
| Centre | | | | Arch |
| West | Flint | Clunch | | |
| Upper level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Barnack | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |

| <i>Freestanding section of South Wall: iexterior</i> | | | | |
|--|---------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Location | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| Middle | Barnack | Clunch | Clunch | |
| Upper | | | | |

| <i>North Wall: Interior</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | | | | |



| <i>North Wall: Interior</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |
| | | | | |
| Upper level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Tile | | | |
| Centre | Clunch | | Clunch | |
| West | Tile | | | |

| <i>North Wall: exterior</i> | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------|-----------|-------|
| Lower level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Barnack | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | Flint | Puddingstone | | |
| | | | | |
| Middle level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | Tile | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | Flint | Puddingstone | | |
| | | | | |
| Upper level | Lintel | Right side | Left Side | Notes |
| East | | | | |
| Centre | | | | |
| West | | | | |

4.5 **Buttresses** (Plates 22-23)

Close inspection of the buttresses suggest that they were originally built at the same time as the rest of the chapel but that many if not all were repaired at a later date. Although Buckler’s illustration shows the diagonal buttresses at the eastern end of the chapel as being completely faced with ashlar clunch, the evidence from the southwestern diagonal buttress suggests otherwise. The surviving clunch blocks are on the same plane as the adjacent flints, which would suggest the quoins were ashlar and a section of flintwork was left exposed in the centre, as at St Mary’s Baldock.

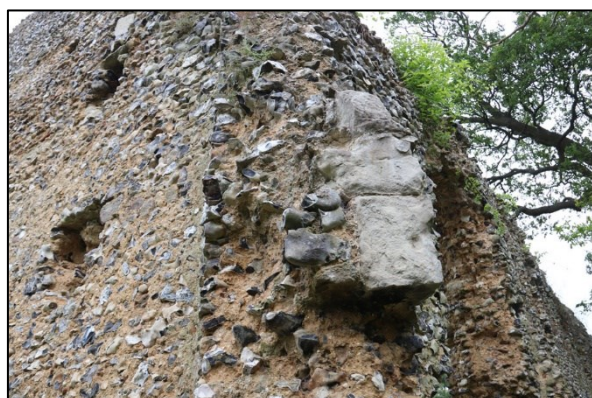


Plate 29: Clunch and flint on southwestern diagonal buttress (22)



Plate 30: Baldock church



Figure 12: West wall details (exterior)



Figure 13: West wall details (interior)



Figure 14: South wall details (interior)



Figure 15: South wall details (exterior)



Figure 16: South wall, chancel end details (interior to left & exterior to right)



Figure 17: North wall details (exterior)



Figure 18: North wall details (interior)



5 Conclusions

There is a void in the documentary evidence regarding the origin of the chapel. All that is known is that a priest served the settlement at Minsden at the time of the Domesday Survey, and that the present chapel came to serve Preston and Langley.

The building survey has shown that the chapel was initially constructed as a single building programme, although the lack of obvious building lifts means that it is difficult to gauge how many years it may have taken. The main building fabric is flint with fieldstones – materials that are still easy to pick in the surrounding fields. Clunch was brought in from Bedfordshire and probably Cambridgeshire, although it is also possible that some was more locally sourced, either quarried in the vicinity of the site or salvaged from other sites, possibly even the Roman villa to the west of the chapel. The Hertfordshire puddingstone is also likely to be spolia as it is a randomly occurring stone but popular with Roman builders and quern producers. Of interest is the Barnack stone, which was heavily utilised in the medieval period as a dressing stone, but only survives here in putlog holes and very occasional walling material. The examples found at Minsden Chapel are more finely grained with fewer shelly inclusions, which raises the question whether this is Blisworth stone, which is petrologically similar but found further south than Barnack and may have been used as a later alternative when the Barnack quarries were running dry. Overall, the building material utilised here is typical of an ecclesiastical building with little patronage or recourse to quality building material; much of it may well have been picked from the fields by the communities that the chapel came to serve. Judging by the early depictions of the chapel, the roof was probably originally thatched and, although it was reported that 400lb of lead was stolen from the chapel in the 19th century, the likelihood of a small rural community being able to afford a lead roof in the 17th century is questionable.

Both documentary and physical evidence testify to later repairs; in 1485 3s4d was bequeathed for its repair and it was re-roofed in the 17th century. Several buttresses were repaired at the base, as was the door opening in the north nave wall. The surviving bellcote is brick built, and is likely to date from the late medieval or early post-medieval period, although the bricks appear from a distance to be 18th century. More recent repairs to the ruins are also evident.

Despite the fact that the font, bells and eventually much of the building material was stolen, and the fact that regular Divine Service appears to have ceased by the mid-17th century, the chapel still played a significant role in the community in the early 18th century, by providing a place of worship for a large congregation of non-Conformists and a romantic venue for weddings until 1738.



6 Acknowledgements

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The fieldwork was carried out by Karin Kaye MCIfA, Florian Weber MA PCIfA and David Kaye, BA ACIfA. The report was written by Karin Kaye, and edited by David Kaye.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

- Brief
- Written Scheme of Investigation
- Report
- Historical & Survey notes
- Architect's survey drawings
- List of photographs
- CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with North Herts Museum (Accession number LAN/MC'21) and the Archaeological Data Service.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Pictorial Sources

Ruins of chapel at Minsden (from A collection of drawings by the Bourne family 1773-1854) **DE/X837/1/31**

Hitchin, Ruins of Minsden Chapel, NE View (from VIEWS OF HERTFORDSHIRE. A COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS by J C BUCKLER (1793 - 1894) DE/Bg/3/61

View of Ruins of Minsden Chapel in colour (from Oldfield Collection nd c.1785-1805) DE/Of/4/162

Photograph: ruins of Minsden Chapel 1902 DE/X1042/8/75b and DE/X1042/8/75a

Photograph: ruins of Minsden Chapel 1922 (From Andrew Whitford Anderson Collection 1893-1931) DE/X1042/8/76b and DE/X1042/8/76a



Appendix 1: Photo survey 22nd June 2021

| Shot | Date | View | Subject |
|------|----------|------|---|
| 1 | 22.06.21 | SE | View into the ruins |
| 2 | 22.06.21 | NW | View into the ruins |
| 3 | 22.06.21 | NW | Southeast corner of the nave |
| 4 | 22.06.21 | NE | Southwest corner of the nave |
| 5 | 22.06.21 | E | West wall |
| 6 | 22.06.21 | SE | Northwest corner of the nave |
| 7 | 22.06.21 | S | North wall east of the doorway |
| 8 | 22.06.21 | S | East end of north nave wall |
| 9 | 22.06.21 | S | North chancel wall |
| 10 | 22.06.21 | W | Southeast corner of chancel |
| 11 | 22.06.21 | N | Southeast corner of chancel |
| 12 | 22.06.21 | N | Corner of chancel & nave |
| 13 | 22.06.21 | N | South nave wall |
| 14 | 22.06.21 | N | South nave wall |
| 15 | 22.06.21 | N | West end of south wall |
| 16 | 22.06.21 | NW | SE diagonal buttress |
| 17 | 22.06.21 | W | South wall |
| 18 | 22.06.21 | E | South wall |
| 19 | 22.06.21 | W | West wall |
| 20 | 22.06.21 | N | West end of north wall |
| 21 | 22.06.21 | N | North wall |
| 22 | 22.06.21 | E | Northeast corner of nave |
| 23 | 22.06.21 | N | Northeast corner of nave |
| 24 | 22.06.21 | SE | Southeast corner of chancel |
| 25 | 22.06.21 | S | Southeast corner of chancel & nave |
| 26 | 22.06.21 | SE | Southeast corner of chancel & nave |
| 27 | 22.06.21 | S | South nave wall |
| 28 | 22.06.21 | S | Window opening in south nave wall |
| 29 | 22.06.21 | E | View to chancel |
| 30 | 22.06.21 | W | Southeast diagonal buttress detail |
| 31 | 22.06.21 | N | Buttress detail |
| 32 | 22.06.21 | N | Buttress detail |
| 33 | 22.06.21 | N | Putlog hole in south wall |
| 34 | 22.06.21 | N | Barnack stone in south wall |
| 35 | 22.06.21 | N | Putlog hole in south chancel wall |
| 36 | 22.06.21 | N | South chancel wall detail |
| 37 | 22.06.21 | N | South chancel wall |
| 38 | 22.06.21 | S | Worked Barnack stone |
| 39 | 22.06.21 | S | Remains of Barnack stone |
| 40 | 22.06.21 | S | Remains of Barnack stone |
| 41 | 22.06.21 | E | Putlog hole with lintel removed in west wall (middle level) |
| 42 | 22.06.21 | E | Putlog hole in west wall (upper level) |
| 43 | 22.06.21 | E | South end of west wall |
| 44 | 22.06.21 | E | Putlog hole in west wall (middle level) |
| 45 | 22.06.21 | E | Putlog hole in west wall (upper level) |
| 46 | 22.06.21 | E | Top of west wall |
| 47 | 22.06.21 | S | Putlog hole east end of south wall (lower level) |
| 48 | 22.06.21 | E | Brick base to door opening |
| 49 | 22.06.21 | NE | Brick base to door opening |



| Shot | Date | View | Subject |
|------|----------|------|--|
| 50 | 22.06.21 | S | Putlog hole in south wall |
| 51 | 22.06.21 | E | Memorial slab |
| 52 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole in west wall (lower level) |
| 53 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole in west wall (above 51) |
| 54 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole in west wall (above 52) |
| 55 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole in west wall (upper level) |
| 56 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole in west wall (middle level) |
| 57 | 22.06.21 | W | Putlog hole with no lintel in west wall (west wall middle level) |
| 58 | 22.06.21 | W | Recess/former putlog hole in west wall (lower level) |
| 59 | 22.06.21 | W | Bellcote |
| 60 | 22.06.21 | S | Putlog hole in south wall (middle level) |
| 61 | 22.06.21 | W | Stonework within window arch in south wall |
| 62 | 22.06.21 | S | Arch detail |
| 63 | 22.06.21 | S | Lower putlog hole in freestanding section of south wall |
| 64 | 22.06.21 | S | Upper putlog hole in freestanding section of south wall |
| 65 | 22.06.21 | S | Clunch & tile putlog hole |
| 66 | 22.06.21 | S | Brick repairs at the top of the freestanding section of south wall |
| 67 | 22.06.21 | S | Detail of stonework in the freestanding section of south wall |

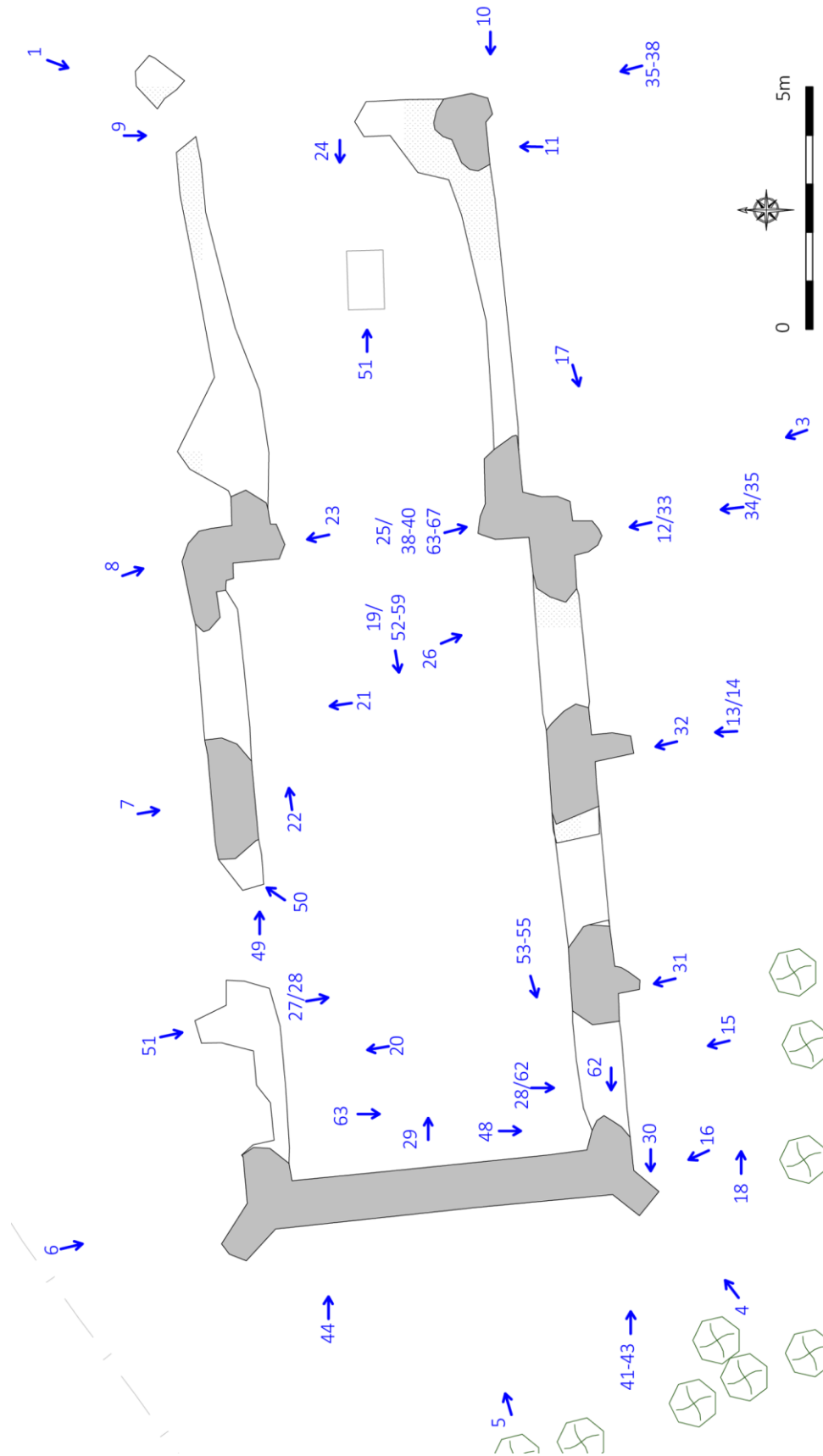


Figure 19: Photo plan 22nd June 2021



Shot 1: View into the ruins



Shot 2: View into the ruins



Shot 3: Southeast corner of the nave



Shot 4: Southwest corner of the nave



Shot 5: West wall



Shot 6: Northwest corner of the nave



Shot 7: North wall east of the doorway



Shot 8: East end of north nave wall



Shot 9: North chancel wall



Shot 10: Southeast corner of chancel



Shot 11: Southeast corner of chancel



Shot 12: Corner of chancel & nave



Shot 13: South nave wall



Shot 14: South nave wall



Shot 15: West end of south wall



Shot 16: SE diagonal buttress



Shot 17: South wall



Shot 18: South wall



Shot 19: West wall



Shot 20: West end of north wall



Shot 21: North wall



Shot 22: Northeast corner of nave



Shot 23: Northeast corner of nave



Shot 24: Southeast corner of chancel



Shot 25: Southeast corner of chancel & nave



Shot 26: Southeast corner of chancel & nave



Shot 27: South nave wall



Shot 28: Window opening in south nave wall



Shot 29: View to chancel



Shot 30: Southeast diagonal buttress detail



Shot 31: Butters detail



Shot 32: Butters detail



Shot 33: Putlog hole in south wall



Shot 34: Barnack stone in south wall



Shot 35: Putlog hole in south chancel wall



Shot 36: South chancel wall detail



Shot 37: South chancel wall



Shot 38: Worked Barnack stone



Shot 39: Remains of Barnack stone



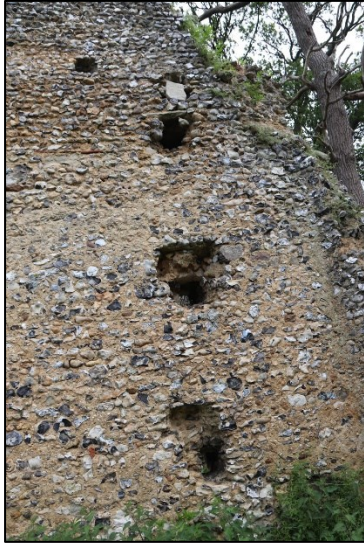
Shot 40: Remains of Barnack stone



Shot 41: Putlog hole with lintel in west wall (middle level)



Shot 42: Putlog hole in west wall (upper level)



Shot 43: South end of west wall



Shot 44: Putlog hole in west wall (middle level)



Shot 45: Putlog hole in west wall (upper level)



Shot 46: Top of west wall



Shot 47: Putlog hole east end of south wall (lower level)



Shot 48: Brick base to door opening



Shot 49: Brick base to door opening



Shot 50: Putlog hole in south wall



Shot 51: Memorial slab



Shot 52: Putlog hole in west wall (lower level)



Shot 53: Putlog hole in west wall (above 51)



Shot 54: Putlog hole in west wall (above 52)



Shot 55: Putlog hole in west wall (upper level)



Shot 56: Putlog hole in west wall (middle level)



Shot 57: Putlog hole with no lintel in west wall (west wall middle level)



Shot 58: Recess/former putlog hole in west wall (lower level)



Shot 59: Bellcote



Shot 60: Putlog hole in south wall (middle level)



Shot 61: Stonework within window arch in south wall



Shot 62: Arch detail



Shot 63: Lower putlog hole in freestanding section of south wall



Shot 64: Upper putlog hole in freestanding section of south wall



Shot 65: Clunch & tile putlog hole



Shot 66: Brick repairs at the top of the freestanding section of south wall



Shot 67: Detail of stonework in the freestanding section of south wall



Appendix 2: Photo Survey 27th June 2021

| Shot | Date | View | Subject |
|------|----------|------|--|
| 1 | 27.06.21 | W | General shot from the east |
| 2 | 27.06.21 | SW | General shot from the northeast |
| 3 | 27.06.21 | S | East end of chancel |
| 4 | 27.06.21 | SW | Nave |
| 5 | 27.06.21 | SW | Chancel arch |
| 6 | 27.06.21 | NW | Northwest corner of the nave |
| 7 | 27.06.21 | W | Nave |
| 8 | 27.06.21 | SW | Southwest corner of the nave |
| 9 | 27.06.21 | W | West wall |
| 10 | 27.06.21 | W | Bellcote |
| 11 | 27.06.21 | SE | South wall of nave |
| 12 | 27.06.21 | NE | North wall of nave & remains of chancel arch |
| 13 | 27.06.21 | NE | North wall of nave |
| 14 | 27.06.21 | N | North wall of nave |
| 15 | 27.06.21 | SE | View into nave |
| 16 | 27.06.21 | SE | View towards the chancel from outside the remains |
| 17 | 27.06.21 | W | Remains of window tracery in north wall & putlog hole in west wall |
| 18 | 27.06.21 | S | Voussoirs in south wall |
| 19 | 27.06.21 | E | View from the west wall |
| 20 | 27.06.21 | W | View from north east end of the chapel |
| 21 | 27.06.21 | W | View from southeast end of the chapel |
| 22 | 27.06.21 | N | Detail of southeast diagonal buttress |
| 23 | 27.06.21 | S | Chapel from the north |
| 24 | 27.06.21 | S | Woods and chapel from the north |

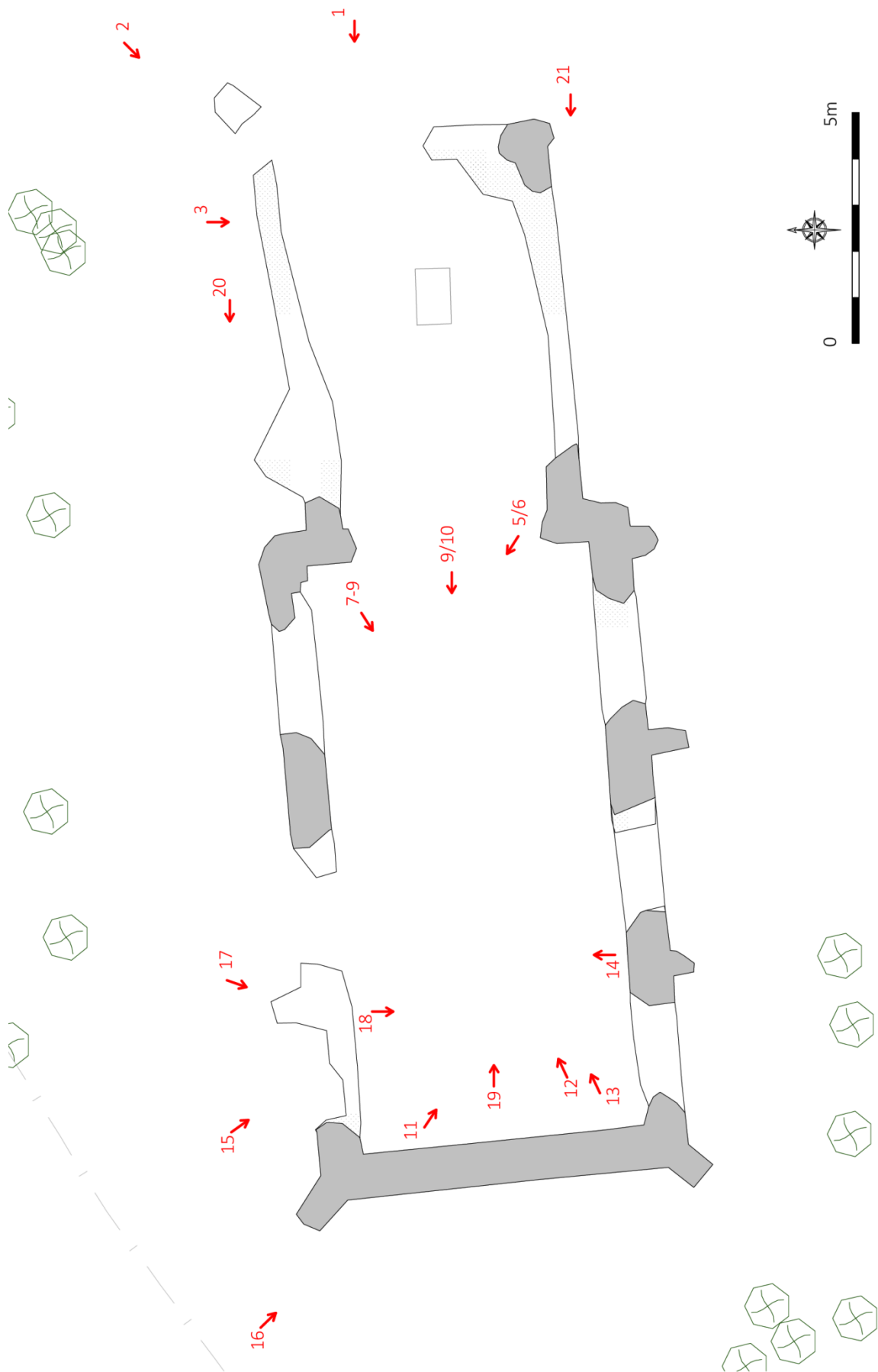


Figure 20: Photo plan 27th June 2021



Shot 1: General shot from the east



Shot 2: General shot from the northeast



Shot 3: East end of chancel



Shot 4: Nave



Shot 5: Chancel arch



Shot 6: Northwest corner of the nave



Shot 7: Nave



Shot 8: Southwest corner of the nave



Shot 9: West wall



Shot 10: Bellcote



Shot 11: South wall of nave



Shot 12: North wall of nave & remains of chancel arch



Shot 13: North wall of nave



Shot 14: North wall of nave



Shot 15: View into nave



Shot 16: View towards the chancel from outside the remains



Shot 17: Remains of window tracery in north wall & putlog hole in west wall



Shot 18: Voussoirs in south wall



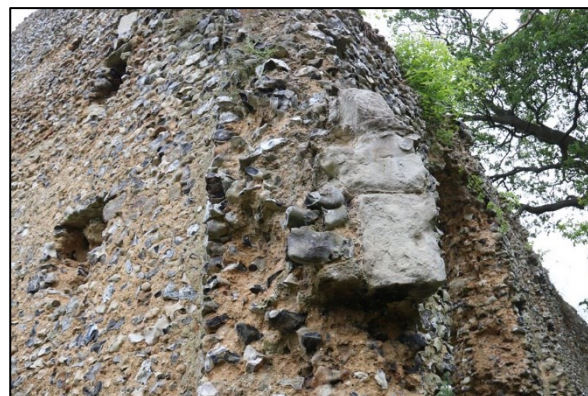
Shot 19: View from the west wall



Shot 20: View from north east end of the chapel



Shot 21: View from southeast end of the chapel



Shot 22: Detail of southeast diagonal buttress



Shot 23: Chapel from the north



Shot 24: Woods and chapel from the north



Appendix 3: Ortho Images



Plate 31: West elevation (exterior)
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)



Plate 32: View to west elevation
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)



Plate 33: Nave view to south
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)



Plate 34: Nave south wall from the south
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)

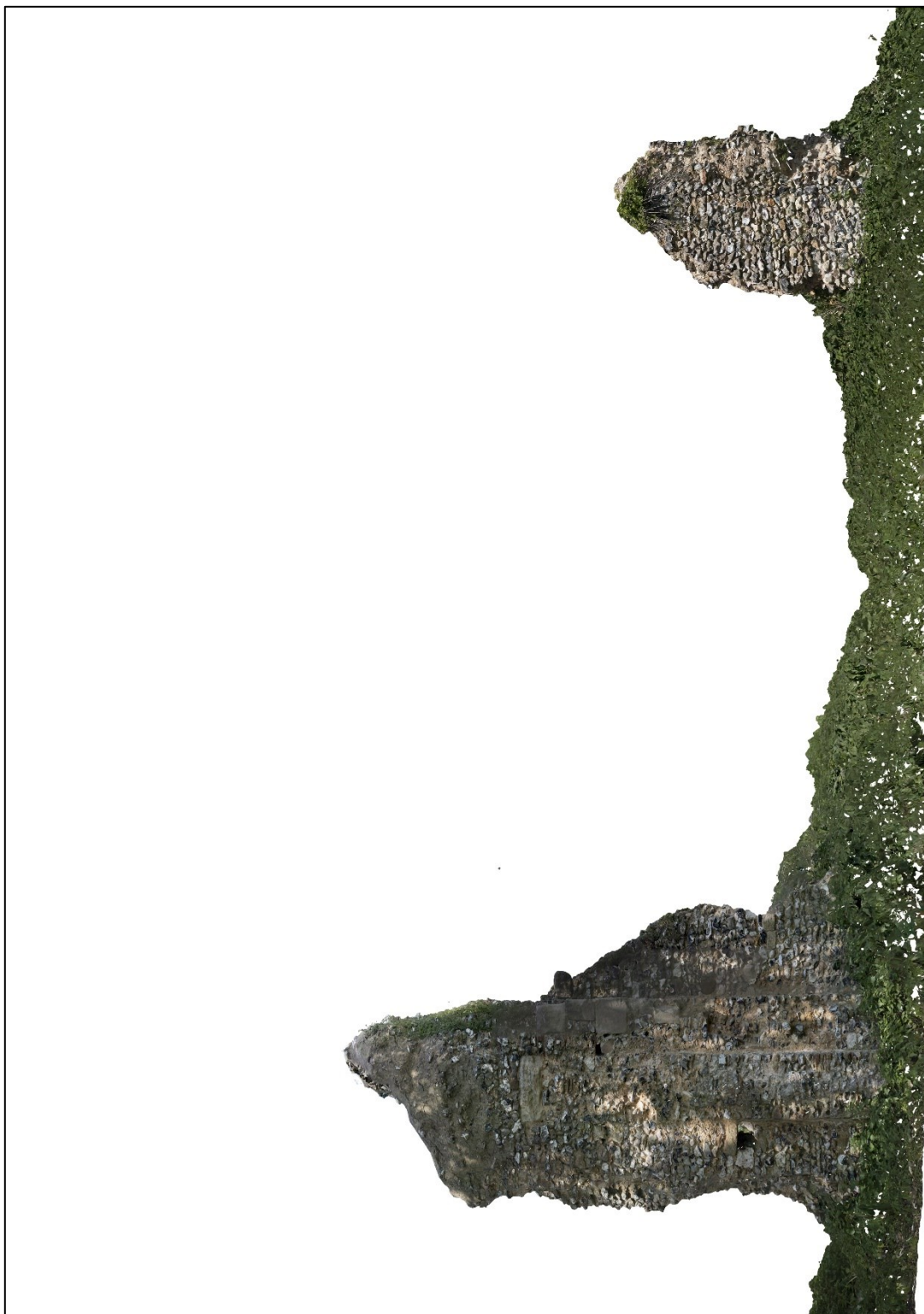


Plate 35: Chancel south wall from the south
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)



Plate 36: Nave north wall from the south
(Courtesy of SumoAerial-Cam)



Appendix 4: HER Data

| HER No. | NGR (TL) | MonType | Type | Description | Proximity to site (m) |
|---------|-------------|---|------|---|-----------------------|
| 2854 | 19400 24900 | RUBBISH PIT | MON | TWO IRON AGE PITS, LANGLEY | 528 |
| 7428 | 19926 25293 | ROAD?; PIPELINE?; DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF DOUBLE DITCHES, IPPOLYTTS | 720 |
| 12564 | 19729 23929 | COMMON LAND; CHALK PIT | MON | HILL END CHALK PIT, LANGLEY END, LANGLEY | 657 |
| 37 | 19819 24579 | BRIDLEWAY; CHAPEL | BLD | REMAINS OF CHAPEL OF ST NICHOLAS, MINSDEN, WHITWELL ROAD, LANGLEY | 0 |
| 4210 | 20695 25305 | CHAPEL | MON | SITE OF POSSIBLE MEDIEVAL CHAPEL, ALMSHOE BURY, IPPOLLITTS | 1136 |
| 2913 | 20070 24910 | ROUND BARROW?; RING DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF A RING DITCH, LANGLEY | 414 |
| 7433 | 19569 24071 | ROUND BARROW?; RING DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF A RING DITCH, JACKS HILL, LANGLEY END | 567 |
| 17087 | 20803 24605 | ROUND BARROW?; CHALK PIT? | MON | SOILMARKS OF POSSIBLE CHALK PITS OR ERODED ROUND BARROWS, EAST OF RUSH GREEN AIRFIELD, IPPOLLITTS | 983 |
| 17261 | 19379 24327 | ROUND BARROW?; DITCH; RING DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF RING DITCH AND OTHER DITCHES, EAST OF MINSDEN FARM, LANGLEY | 508 |
| 17780 | 19629 24336 | ROUND BARROW?; RING DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF A RING DITCH, EAST OF MINSDEN FARM, LANGLEY | 309 |
| 17781 | 19767 24781 | ROUND BARROW?; CHALK PIT?; MACULA | MON | CROPMARK OF A MACULA, POSSIBLY A PLOUGHED-OUT BARROW, LANGLEY | 207 |
| 1960 | 20669 25286 | MANOR HOUSE; AISLED HALL HOUSE | BLD | ALMSHOE BURY, IPPOLLITTS | 1104 |
| 1015 | 19819 24599 | DESERTED SETTLEMENT? | MON | CONJECTURED DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF MINSDEN | 19 |
| 6294 | 20755 25169 | DEER PARK | MON | SITE OF MEDIEVAL DEER PARK, ALMSHOE BURY, IPPOLLITTS | 1105 |
| 31381 | 19056 24734 | TIMBER FRAMED HOUSE; OPEN HALL HOUSE; LOBBY ENTRY HOUSE; FARMHOUSE; DAIRY | BLD | TUDOR HOUSE, POYNDERS END, PRESTON | 779 |



| HER No. | NGR (TL) | MonType | Type | Description | Proximity to site (m) |
|---------|-------------|--|------|--|-----------------------|
| 316 | 19900 25300 | FINDSPOT | FS | NEOLITHIC FLINT AXE, CHAPEL FOOT, IPPOLLITTS | 724 |
| 342 | 19600 23799 | FINDSPOT | FS | NEOLITHIC IMPLEMENTS, HITCH WOOD, NEAR LANGLEY | 811 |
| 387 | 19900 25200 | FINDSPOT | FS | NEOLITHIC FLINT FABRICATOR, CHAPELFOOT, IPPOLLITTS | 625 |
| 463 | 19999 25000 | FINDSPOT | FS | PALAEOLITHIC AXE, WYMONDLEY | 456 |
| 9716 | 19000 24479 | FINDSPOT; HOUSE | MON | SITE OF POST-MEDIEVAL BUILDING, NEAR MINSDEN FARM, LANGLEY | 826 |
| 11704 | 20050 25079 | BUILDING; WELL | MON | SITE OF TRUNCK'S COTTAGES, S OF CHAPELFOOT, LANGLEY | 549 |
| 15101 | 20670 25312 | FARMSTEAD; TIMBER FRAMED BARN | BLD | POST-MEDIEVAL FARM BUILDINGS AT ALMSHOE BURY, WHITE LANE, ST IPPOLLITS | 1121 |
| 12776 | 19581 23917 | FARMSTEAD; AISLED BARN; TIMBER FRAMED BARN | BLD | HITCHWOOD BARN, HITCHWOOD LANE, LANGLEY END | 704 |
| 15114 | 19040 24715 | FARMSTEAD; TIMBER FRAMED BARN; CART SHED | BLD | POYNDERS END FARM, POYNDERS END, PRESTON | 791 |
| 15110 | 19817 23925 | FARMSTEAD; TIMBER FRAMED BARN | BLD | POST-MEDIEVAL BARNS AT LANGLEY END HOUSE, HILL END, LANGLEY | 655 |
| 6292 | 19839 23925 | DOVECOTE; HOUSE | BLD | DOVECOTE, LANGLEY END COTTAGE, LANGLEY END | 655 |
| 7341 | 18399 24900 | ORNAMENTAL GARDEN; LANDSCAPE PARK | LND | TEMPLE DINSLEY, 18TH CENTURY PARK AND 20TH CENTURY GARDENS, PRESTON | 1456 |
| 7357 | 19369 24219 | BATH HOUSE?; FINDSPOT | FS | ROMAN BUILDING MATERIALS, JACK'S HILL, LANGLEY | 577 |
| 17260 | 19179 24429 | VILLA?; BUILDING | MON | CROPMARKS OF BUILDING FOUNDATIONS, EAST OF MINSDEN FARM, LANGLEY | 658 |
| 1094 | 19949 24579 | VILLA?; BUILDING? | MON | SITE OF POSSIBLE ROMAN VILLA, NEAR MINSDEN CHAPEL, LANGLEY | 129 |
| 15423 | 19959 23963 | FARMSTEAD; DAIRY; BARN; FARM LABOURERS COTTAGE | BLD | HILL END FARM, LANGLEY | 632 |



| HER No. | NGR (TL) | MonType | Type | Description | Proximity to site (m) |
|---------|-------------|-----------------------|------|---|-----------------------|
| 17259 | 19111 24546 | ELECTRICITY PYLON | MON | CROPMARKS OF PROBABLE CABLE TRENCH AND PYLON, POYNDERS END, LANGLEY | 709 |
| 7434 | 19394 24245 | LINEAR FEATURE; DITCH | MON | CROPMARK OF LINEAR DITCH, JACK'S HILL, LANGLEY END | 541 |
| 17258 | 19256 24685 | PIT; BOUNDARY DITCH | MON | SOILMARKS OF PITS AND BOUNDARY DITCHES, POYNDERS END, LANGLEY | 573 |
| 17278 | 19134 24454 | PIT; DITCH | MON | CROPMARKS OF PITS AND DITCHES, SOUTH OF POYNDERS END, LANGLEY | 697 |
| 4214 | 19945 24610 | MACULA; CHALK PIT? | MON | SOILMARK OF A MACULA, PROBABLY AN INFILLED CHALK PIT, LANGLEY | 128 |
| 18547 | 19530 24629 | PIT | MON | CROPMARKS OF PITS, WEST OF MINSDEN CHAPEL, LANGLEY | 294 |
| 2881 | 19816 24544 | FINDSPOT | FS | MESOLITHIC TRANCHET AXE, MINSDEN CHAPEL, LANGLEY | 36 |



Appendix 5: OASIS & Site Data

| PROJECT DETAILS | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Project Name & Address | Minsden Chapel, Whitwell Road, Langley, Hertfordshire | Project Site Code | 596/MMC |
| OASIS reference | kdkarcha1-501702 | Event/Accession no | LAN/MC'21 |
| OS reference | TL 19820 24580 | Study area size | 168sq m |
| Project Type | Historic Building Recording | Height (mAOD) | 113m AOD |
| Short Description | <p>In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Recording of Minsden Chapel, Langley, Hertfordshire as part of a Management Plan for the consolidation of the ruins and the management of associated trees and shrubs to protect the upstanding remains. Minsden Chapel, which is both a Scheduled Monument (NHLE Ref: 1003543) and a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE Ref: 1347462), dates from the 14th century and, given the mention of a priest serving Minsden in the Domesday Book, may have replaced an earlier church. Regular Divine Service appears to have ceased by the mid 17th century, but the chapel still played a significant role in the community in the early 18th century, by providing a place of worship for a large congregation of non-Conformists. The last known service was a wedding between Enoch West and Mary Horn on July 11th 1738 when a piece of masonry fell onto the service book being held by the curate. The building was systematically looted with the font and bells amongst the first losses. Tracery, stained glass windows and building materials were sold at auction or on the market in Hitchin in the 19th century. The chancel arch collapsed as recently as the early 2000s and general decay and vandalism have left the remaining walls extremely vulnerable.</p> | | |
| Previous work | No | Site status | SM (NHLE 1003543) Grade II listed (NHLE 1347462) |
| Planning proposal | Consolidation of ruins and tree management | Current land use | Derelict chapel |
| Local Planning Authority | North Herts | Planning application ref. | N/A |
| Monument type | Chapel | Monument period | Medieval |
| Significant finds | N/A | Future work | Yes |
| PROJECT CREATORS | | | |
| Organisation | KDK Archaeology Ltd | | |
| Project Brief originator | Historic England | Project Design originator | KDK Archaeology Ltd |
| Project Manager | Karin Kaye MA MCifA | Director/Supervisor | Karin Kaye MA MCifA |
| Sponsor/funding body | Hugh Neave / Natural England | | |
| PROJECT DATE | | | |
| Start date | 26.04.2021 | End date | 10.07.2021 |
| PROJECT ARCHIVES | | | |
| | Location | Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets) | |
| Physical | North Herts Museum | N/A | |
| Paper | | WSI, Report | |
| Digital | | WSI, Report, photos, fieldwork notes | |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report) | | | |
| Title | Historic Building Recording: Minsden Chapel, Whitwell Road, Langley, Hertfordshire | | |
| Serial title & volume | KDK Archaeology 596/2 | | |
| Author(s) | Karin Kaye MA MCifA | | |
| Page nos | 72 | Date | 2 nd July 2021 |



Appendix 6: Hertfordshire HER Summary Sheet

| | | | | |
|---|---|----------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Site name and address: Minsden Chapel, Whitwell Road, Langley, Hertfordshire | | | | |
| County: | Hertfordshire | District: | North Herts | |
| Village/Town: | Langley | Parish: | Langley | |
| Planning application reference: | N/A | | | |
| Client's name, address, & tel. no: | H. Neave c/o Promar International Alpha Buildings/London Rd, Nantwich CW5 7JW | | | |
| Nature of application: | Consolidation & woodland management | | | |
| Present land use: | Derelict chapel | | | |
| Size of application area: | 168sq m | Size of area investigated: | 168sq m | |
| NGR (to 8 figures): | TL 19820 24580 | Site code: | 596/MMC | |
| Site director: | Karin Kaye MA MCIfA | Organization: | KDK Archaeology Ltd | |
| Type of work: | Historic Building Recording | | | |
| Date of work: | Start: 26.04.2021 | Finish: | 10.07.2021 | |
| Curating museum: | North Herts Museum | | | |
| Related HER nos: | HER 37 | Periods represented: | Medieval | |
| Relevant previous summaries/reports: | | | | |
| <p>Summary of fieldwork results:</p> <p>In June 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd carried out Historic Building Recording of Minsden Chapel, Langley, Hertfordshire as part of a Management Plan for the consolidation of the ruins and the management of associated trees and shrubs to protect the upstanding remains. Minsden Chapel, which is both a Scheduled Monument (NHLE Ref: 1003543) and a Grade II Listed Building (NHLE Ref: 1347462), dates from the 14th century and, given the mention of a priest serving Minsden in the Domesday Book, may have replaced an earlier church. Regular Divine Service appears to have ceased by the mid 17th century, but the chapel still played a significant role in the community in the early 18th century, by providing a place of worship for a large congregation of non-Conformists. The last known service was a wedding between Enoch West and Mary Horn on July 11th 1738 when a piece of masonry fell onto the service book being held by the curate. The building was systematically looted with the font and bells amongst the first losses. Tracery, stained glass windows and building materials were sold at auction or on the market in Hitchin in the 19th century. The chancel arch collapsed as recently as the early 2000s and general decay and vandalism have left the remaining walls extremely vulnerable.</p> | | | | |
| Author: | Karin Kaye MA MCIfA | | Date: | 2nd July 2021 |