

New light on the development of Carshalton Church

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A report on archaeological observations made during partial restoration and construction work at All Saints Parish Church

During partial restoration and construction work at the parish church of All Saints, Carshalton between August and December 1989, the writer provided 'watching brief' style archaeological cover by courtesy of the rector and churchwardens at the suggestion of the honorary archaeological consultant to Southwark Diocese, Mr Dennis Turner. This work was conducted during weekends, occasional weekdays and evenings. After an outline of the known documentary and architectural history of the church, a summary is given of the archaeological information obtained from the various areas which were exposed. A final discussion of the development of the church is made using all this evidence. This report supersedes the note in the Surrey Archaeological Society Bulletin 268.

1 Historical development

Note: In the report, the term 'chancel' refers to the medieval chancel, now the Lady Chapel, and the term 'south aisle' relates to the medieval south aisle, now the outer south aisle. The position of the medieval church in relation to the post-1862 ground plan is shown in the inset to figure 1.

Carshalton Church is generally thought to be a 12th and 13th century building, perhaps with some encased older fabric and with a series of re-fenestration phases, possibly from the 13th to the 19th century, when massive alterations were made. The extent of the original church is unknown, but it is possible that this was a simple two-cell building with an aisleless nave and small sanctuary (the area under the tower) to the east. In the early 20th century the local historian Dr A V Peatling considered this simple building possibly Saxon in origin; he recorded flint walling above the south arcade on the south side, saying that 'this agrees with my idea that this is the wall of the pre-Conquest church'. Peatling suggested a Saxon origin to the noted architectural historian and architect Mr P M Johnston, who does not appear to have totally accepted the idea (Peatling nd). Immediately after the Second World War Mr H V Molesworth Roberts continued this research, culminating in his guide book in 1966 (reprinted 1973).

According to Molesworth Roberts's analysis the north aisle, demolished during the Victorian extensions, was probably added in the mid-12th century; the south aisle and the chancel are late 12th or early 13th century additions. The small sanctuary now became axial; it had already been extended upwards and the walls thickened to form the present tower before the chancel was added east of it (a small blocked round-headed window with a deep internal splay survives in the north wall of the ringing chamber). No extensive work apart from re-fenestration appears to have occurred from the later medieval period through to the 19th century, and a suggested analysis of the phasing of the building by 1862 is shown in figure 1, in which the results of recent investigations are summarized. A series of rebuilds took place in 1862, 1891-3, and 1910-13 when the north aisle, nave north and west walls and a substantial part of the chancel north wall were taken down and replaced by the extensive additions which dominate the views from the north and north-west. The 1891-3 and 1910-13 extensions of Sir Arthur and Reginald Blomfield removed the earlier 1862 additions and swept clear the interior. They also replaced windows in the chancel south wall. Only this wall,

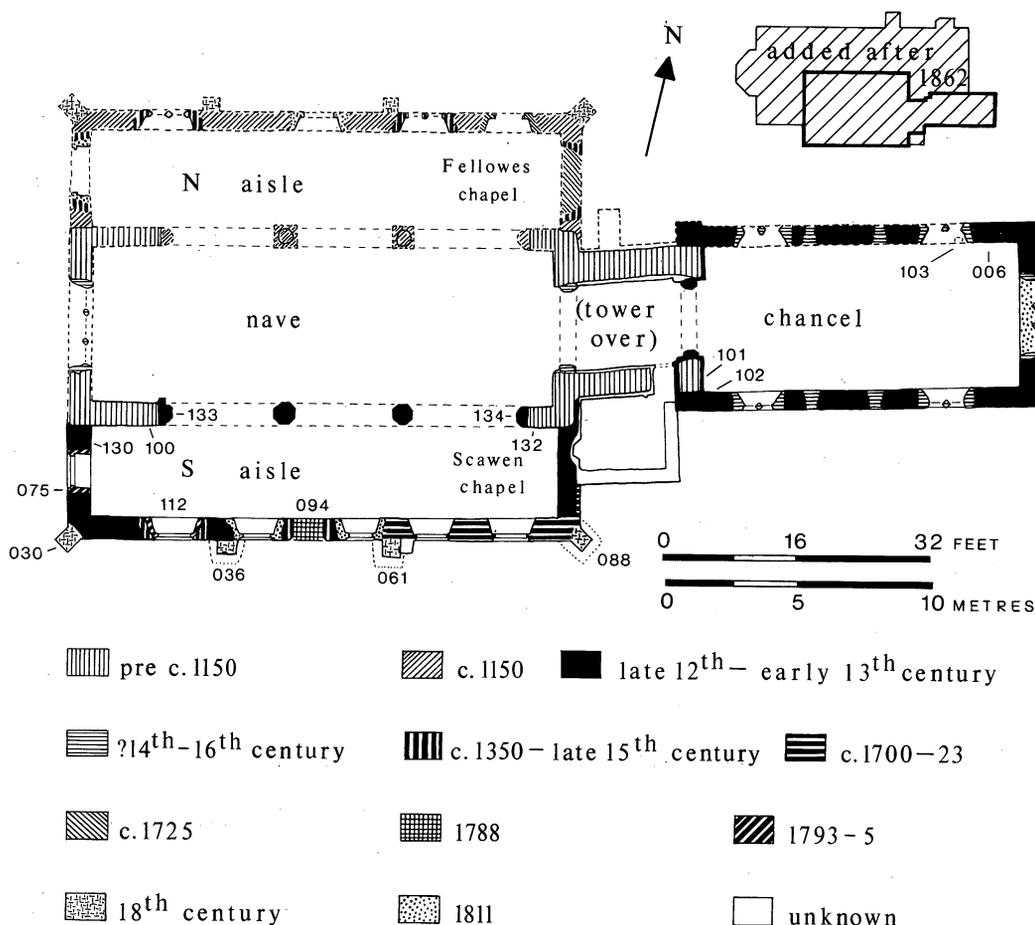


Fig 1 Carshalton Church: Plan of the church before the first Victorian restoration of 1862, showing phasing as suggested by all recent work (from a plan dated 1862). Inset shows the position of the medieval church in relation to the post-1862 ground plan.

with part of the opposite wall (west end), tower, and south arcade and aisle, survive from before the first extensions of 1862.

A review of earlier published and unpublished architectural studies (Peatling nd; Johnston 1918; Molesworth Roberts 1973; Jones 1973; Mrs J Hale, pers comm) and recent non-archaeological research into the fabric of the church would suggest the following re-fenestration sequence. The chancel had single lancets; Johnston (1918) advocated, on unknown evidence, four lancets in each side wall and a triple lancet arrangement in the east wall. The eastern and western lancets were probably replaced by two two-light windows with quatrefoils in their heads with a depressed hoodmould over, as seen in later 18th century and early 19th century prints. However, this picture is confused by further prints of the same period which indicate the continuation of the mullions upwards through the area of the quatrefoils. The present triple-light east window contains the heads of the original lights which presumably replaced Johnston's suggested triple lancet at this time; this re-fenestration according to Johnston dates from the later 14th or early 15th century (Johnston 1918) or even the later 15th century. The middle two lancets along the north and south chancel walls would have been blocked (as still to be seen in the south chancel wall). The original north and south aisle walls (presumably the same date as their respective arcades) probably had late

Norman/transitional single lights or lancets and received an improvement, similar to that in the chancel later in the medieval period, with a two-light window in the western and eastern bays and in both the west and east walls of each aisle. There was probably already existing at this time a doorway from the south side of the church into the middle bay; part of the external eastern jambs can still be seen, blocked up. The corresponding doorway in the north aisle is shown in a drawing dated 1754 where it is protected by a porch (fig 2). All medieval dressed stones are of Reigate stone (Upper Greensand).

In the 18th century the south aisle wall of the church was totally relit (fig 3). Firstly the eastern bay of the aisle became the Scawen family chapel. Dame Mary, wife of Sir William Scawen the lord of the manor, was buried in the church in 1700, but it is difficult to say whether the brick upper storey, with its single stone-dressed window over the medieval eastern bay, and the two similar stone-dressed windows inserted in the wall below, belong to this date or to the period up to or after Sir William's own death in 1722. It is suggested here that the whole of this east bay wall was totally rebuilt re-using materials to accommodate the new windows – it would be hard to insert such large windows without demolishing much of the wall. It is also difficult to say whether the whole upper storey of the south aisle was entirely rebuilt in the same phase (Molesworth Roberts 1973, 5). Peatling suggested that the money raised for 'ye repairing of the south Isle & beautifying the church' (churchwardens' accounts, April 1723, in Peatling nd) was used to extend the upper storey westwards from the Scawen brickwork. This may account for the difference in detail between the two sectors. Alternatively, the Scawens may have undertaken the whole of the work but had a more opulent design for their eastern bay to differentiate it from the 'commoner' part of the aisle (eg by the use of stone dressings for the windows). There is no documentary evidence to help answer these problems, and it can only be said that the improvements had taken place by mid-1725, when attention was turned to the north aisle.

Edward Fellowes, owner of Carshalton House, was given permission to erect a monument to his late brother Sir John (died July 1724) and build a vault for his family and friends and for all owners of Carshalton House, situated under the east bay of the north aisle. In return

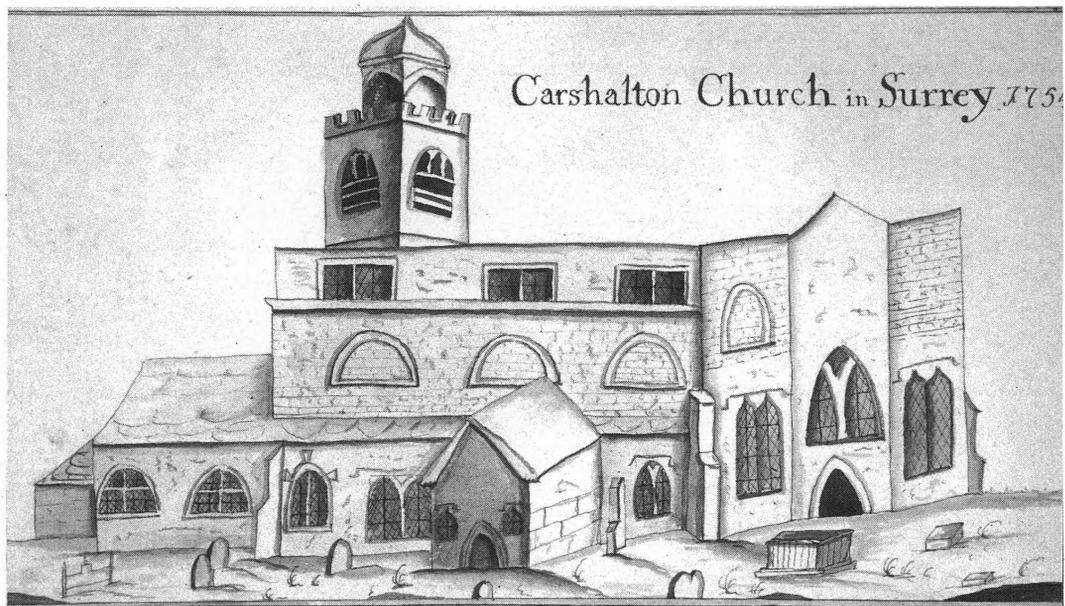


Fig 2 Carshalton Church: drawing made from the north-west, dated 1754. *Courtesy of Heritage Department, Sutton Central Library*

he agreed 'to make the north side of the said church answerable to and in like manner as the south side'. This was completed by 1726 and is shown in the 1754 drawing (fig 2). This view, in its crude but homely fashion, shows the upper storey windows blocked up, and only the lower storey windows open, together with the square panels shown above the upper storey in what was later the parapet. The 1754 artist has actually reversed the situation, as indicated by later views, although the blank arch in the west wall is accurate. It also shows an extensive north porch with a pointed doorway and windows similar in style to the aisle windows.

All these early 18th century modifications were apparently not designed to seat more people within the church. The only gallery then existing extended across the width of the western part of the nave. However by 1787 the vestry proposed 'side galleries be added to that now in front, with seats and backs' to improve the situation (Peatling nd). This was not approved, but new pews were added the following year, leading to the closing of the north and south doors and removal of their interior lobbies and the demolition of the north porch.

In 1793/4 the old gallery was extended eastward and north and south into the aisles, so that it now crossed the entire width of the west end of the church. Payments were made to 'Mr Simms surveyor, George Barnes the Smith, and John Alfrey the Carpenter' in 1794/5 (Peatling nd, churchwardens' accounts). It is suggested that, on this evidence, the small Georgian windows in the west and south walls of the western bays of the south aisle were added then. The west window is not well documented for this period, but the two-light window was blocked and the Georgian one added in the period 1754-99. Interestingly, a print published by Malcolm Somers Place in 1799 (fig 4) shows a large Georgian window in the west bay of the south aisle south wall, similar in dimensions and form to the stone-dressed examples in the east bay of the Scawen Chapel. This is actually not the case today, and implies a drawing error, but it does not rule out the possibility that there had been a larger Georgian window replaced by the present example. The west end of the north aisle, although covered by the gallery, was not altered, as prints from the late 18th and early 19th centuries show; the vestry room – with its documents and meetings – was located in this bay and there was no wish to disturb the light here (Peatling nd, relating the faculty document of 1793). It would appear



Fig 3 Carshalton Church: view of the south wall of the outer south aisle, from the south-west

that the north door in the middle bay was re-opened at about this time, as shown in a view of the church from the north-west of 1807 (*VCH Sy*, 4, 186 opposite).

So far, the medieval wall of the middle bay of the south aisle had remained unpierced since 1788; this is indicated by the print of 1799 (fig 4). The two round-headed Georgian windows now present in this wall belong to the final phase of re-fenestration, probably dating to 1811 when the aisle galleries in the western bays of both aisles were extended eastwards into the middle bays. In addition, access to the south gallery above was provided by 'a stone Stair Case' leading from the churchyard to a door cut high up in the medieval fabric between the two windows, and placed almost directly above the medieval doorway blocked some 25 years before, as shown in figure 3 (Sutton Library SBC LG 6/1/3 faculty document; Peatling nd). As far as is known, the north door in the middle bay was closed again and a window inserted. Doorways were cut high up through the arcade walls to allow 'staircases to pass through' (one survives in the south arcade, partly cut by Thomas Carter's fine monument to Sir George Amyand, moved here in 1891-3). At the same time the vestry was moved from the west end of the north aisle to east of the main altar, and the chancel east window was blocked up.

In the 1862 restoration all the galleries and pews were swept away; the 14th/15th century windows of the chancel were apparently replaced by '4 wretched 2 light windows' according to Blomfield (nd, b, 1-2) to be themselves replaced with two-light, square headed Perpendicular windows by the Blomfields (whose disdainful rhetoric about the originals obviously won the day in this case). At the same time the west end of the nave (originally flush with the west end of both aisles) was demolished and extended west to form two staircase turrets.

In 1891 the radical extensions noted above were begun to the designs of Sir Arthur Blomfield and his nephew Reginald. In their second and longer report they contemptuously refer to the earlier 1862 work as 'thoroughly poor in design, and quite out of keeping with the character of the church' (Blomfield nd, b, 3-4), having previously in the same report (page 1)



Fig 4 Carshalton Church: view from the south-west by Malcolm Somers Place, published 1799. *Courtesy of Heritage Department, Sutton Central Library*

stated that 'the character of the church was destroyed at the end of the last century'. Any further destruction necessary to remove any surviving 'character' was arguably completed by them (see Johnston 1918 for his condemnation), though their attempts to persuade the parish to replace the north and south-east quoins of the old chancel, and to remove the tower 'to make the building convenient for service' (Blomfield nd, a, 2) fortunately failed.

In 1891-3 the north aisle, nave west wall and most of the chancel north wall were demolished, and the medieval nave became the present south aisle. The medieval chancel now lay to the south of the new chancel, and was re-consecrated as the Lady Chapel. Surviving fragments of the blocked east window were incorporated in the present late 19th century window, despite the Blomfields originally considering the remains of this window to be 'of no value' (Blomfield nd, b, 2), and the medieval south aisle was sidelined as an outer south aisle. Monuments were also moved around, notably the Fellowes and Amyand monuments from the east end of the north aisle to the west end of the outer south aisle, where the former ponderously sits on a red brick base which appears to have been built from re-used 18th century bricks, perhaps from the demolished north aisle. The west baptistry was added after 1910, replacing the 1862 extensions. These were apparently by the younger partner, as Sir Arthur had died in 1899, but at the consecration of the new building its architect 'Mr C J Blomfield' was present (local newspaper report, in Peatling nd).

Since then little work on the building has been done. In 1916 the west Georgian window of the south aisle had its grille removed and was finally bricked in (Peatling nd, note of 1916). The roof of the south aisle was restored, and a further brick storey to cover this was added on to the 18th century brickwork in the 1950s. The tower was restored in the last decade. Important changes, however, were the obliteration of the Reigate stone chequer-work blocking of the lancets by knapped flints (between ?1913 and 1962), and the replacement of the chancel quoins in 1962 by Ancaster stone replacements. At about the same time it was contemplated that the blocking of the late 12th/early 13th century lancets could have been removed, but this recommendation (by H V Molesworth-Roberts, made in 1963) was not followed.

2 The archaeological work

2.1 OUTER SOUTH AISLE WALL, THE EXTERIOR

Modern construction work on the exterior of the south aisle was in two parts: firstly the insertion of a drainage system along the south aisle wall (following around the buttresses) and secondly the removal of the rendering on the west wall of the aisle to allow the wall to dry out.

2.1.1 *The drainage trench*

A small trench no more than 0.75m wide was dug by the contractors up against the wall, and approximately 0.5m to 1m deep below the tarmac path and topsoil level. Observation of the trench was made only after it had been cut, and detailed notes and annotated/measured drawings were then made.

A brick 'apron', two courses deep where observed through a grilled opening, had been built up against the medieval south aisle wall. Minor variations in height, number of courses and bond type were mostly found from bay to bay; there was a general slope from east to west. There were also 'constructional' features, such as rows of bricks laid on end built into the apron, which could not be connected with any function other than construction technique; further evidence is needed on these features. Most of the other observed features connected with the apron were minor later additions and are not discussed here. The apron was

found in most places to butt up against the brick-built lower parts of the buttresses, suggesting that it was later than the buttress repairs. It was extensively repaired in its upper parts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The medieval features observed were confined to the buttress foundations. Three buttresses (036, 061 and 088) are externally 18th century in appearance but sit on rough flint, chalk and Reigate stone foundations or 'pads', set in a brown-yellow mortar, which were found to be about a square metre in area and roughly rectangular in plan (fig 1). The 'pad' supported coursed chalk and Reigate stone, forming the base of the medieval buttress itself. At some time in the 18th century the upper parts of the buttresses were rebuilt, the new work often encasing the older fabric and patching it up with brick and Portland stone. The south-west angle buttress (030) was completely of brick, and there was little evidence for a medieval foundation here, although this should not be ruled out. There were no buttresses on the chancel walls.

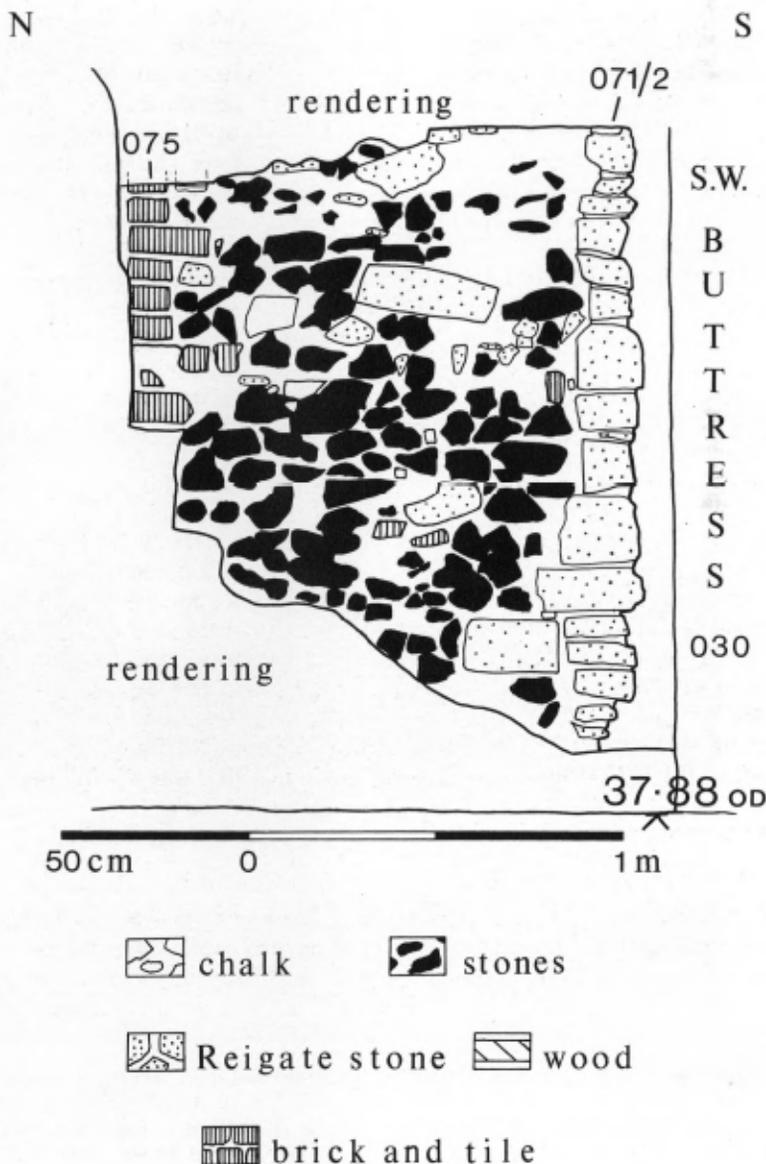


Fig 5 Carshalton Church: outer south aisle exterior, west wall, elevation. Key diagram refers also to figs 7, 8 and 11.

2.1.2 *The west wall (fig 5)*

A section of the west wall of the south aisle was exposed for a short period during October 1989; this lay to the south of the blocked late Georgian window and extended some 1.8m high by 1.35m across. The rendering was very thick in places (25mm and more) and the wall beneath was in a bad state of preservation; the original face was no longer present, and much of the original mortar had decayed for some depth, which made recording of mortar types very difficult and confusing.

The original phase, and still the present core, of the wall seems to have been represented by a flint rubble wall with some chalk and Reigate stone rubble, set in a brown-yellow mortar with flint and small chalk lumps. There appeared to have been no regular coursing of this material. Observation of other parts of this wall revealed that similar flint and mortar construction extends above the section as drawn, and that the jambs of the late medieval window exist above the section exposed (visible above the Fellowes monument). The next phase may have been the addition of Reigate stone block quoins at the south-west corner of the aisle,



Fig 6 Carshalton Church: outer south aisle interior, looking south-west

represented by a white chalk mortar (071) which was found also to run along the top of the exposed section, supporting more Reigate stone which mostly lay hidden under the upper rendering. A green sandy mortar (072) underlies this mortar, but is in a similar position as 071, cementing the Reigate stone quoins into the existing west wall. It is therefore to be considered of the same phase. The date of this quoin phase is not known, but the mortar types suggest that the quoins had been added to the existing building. As noted above, there was no evidence for a medieval buttress here.

All succeeding phases appear to be of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the extensive work on the aisles was commissioned. Of these phases, the earliest would appear to be the insertion of sandy red brick 'jambs' for the now blocked window (075) which are set in a chalk mortar, with many chalk lumps. These bricks

appear to be of the early, rather than of the later, 18th century but it would seem from the documentary evidence cited above that this window was inserted at the end of the 18th century. At some stage the present Portland stone buttress (030) was set deeply into the existing west wall at an angle of approximately 45°, and the original Reigate stone quoins were severely cut back in the process.

As well as a minor brick patching episode, probably dating from the 18th century, there were some repairs to the brick jambs of the window which was finally blocked when the Fellowes monument was moved here after the demolition of the north aisle c1891. The present infill and rendering were added much later, when the original ironwork of the window was removed in 1916 (Peatling nd, note of 1916); the series of iron pins in the wall surface were set then to help secure the rendering on the wall.

2.1.3 Discussion

Observation suggests that the 18th century rebuilding of the buttresses preceded the construction of the brick apron which has always been linked with the reconstruction of the south aisle in the early 18th century. The buttresses are likely to be early 18th century; the presence of an upside-down date '1800' on the east face of the eastern buttress (Peatling nd) has been explained as the date of construction, but this need not be so as the 1754 drawing (fig 2) shows the presence of a similar buttress to that now existing at the south-west corner of the aisle. The use of Portland stone as buttress rebuilding material has recently been linked with stone from the ill-fated mansion of Thomas Scawen (probably under construction from c1725, abandoned ? c1735-40) which may not have been available until c1750 or even later. These points suggest that the apron must be later 18th century at least in date.

2.2 THE SOUTH AISLE, INTERIOR (fig 6)

The documentary evidence for the development of the south aisle has already been summarized. The post-1700 re-fenestration is well documented, but the previous medieval phases are obscure. It was hoped that the removal of plaster on the interior face of the south aisle would permit some understanding of this development. Areas of wall above the dado level were exposed for a period of two weeks before Christmas 1989, and were then covered up. All areas were recorded on drawings and by photographs.

The most important features observed were a blocked archway or doorway in the middle bay, the jambs of a partially blocked window, and part of the original south aisle wall. Miscellaneous areas of the walling were also exposed, revealing some special features as noted below.

2.2.1 *The blocked archway/doorway and associated features* (fig 7)

The blocked archway or doorway (094) in the middle bay was constructed from Reigate stone blocks which, in two cases, were originally linked together with a pin or staple (now lost). The head of the arch was composed of two blocks, the junction of the two lintel stones being at the apex of this arch. Scribe- or setting-out-marks were visible on the faces of these stones. Although the opening was fully blocked, it was possible to see that there was a hollow chamfer on the underside of both blocks, disappearing into the blocking. An off-white mortar with small flint and chalk inclusions was found to have been used around and between the upper jambs of this opening. Further down below the present dado level the Reigate stone block jambs appear slightly disjointed but are otherwise as the stonework above them. This walling is overlain and built into by an internal 'apron' wall below the dado which appears to respect the position of the doorway and runs east and west of it. This apron supports the dado rail and is constructed of rough sandy red bricks, both whole and broken, in a white, gritty mortar. The brickwork used to block the doorway (111) differs from that employed in the apron and is of good quality and better laid.

Above the door lintels is a large wooden beam (106). The area above this beam had evidence of brickwork, and should be connected with area 129 which is a small exposed area of brickwork above the western jambs of the doorway. To the west of 129 was another patch of brickwork (128) which was similar to

a patch set in a corresponding position over the eastern jambs of 094, and is considered to be the jambs of a blocked doorway above the medieval door.

2.2.2 *The west window* (fig 8)

The eastern jambs and segmental rere-arch lintel stones of the western medieval window (112) were uncovered. All are decorated, like the blocked door, with a simple hollow chamfer. The square-headed two-light tracery which existed in the window partly survives, blocked up, with a later Georgian window set in its lower half. The Georgian window (not shown in figure 8) was set in the outer half of the medieval reveal, allowing inspection of the inner faces of the inner jamb reveals. A series of wax rubbings were made of both faces for comparison of the tooling impressions. The head of the window was formed of three blocks; one block formed one half of the window head. Mason's setting out marks were observed on the corner stones of the head of the window. There were no other specific features of note. Mortar samples from the walling around the window were of a gritty off-white compound very similar to those located around the head of the blocked doorway (094) shown in figure 7.

2.2.3 *Miscellaneous areas of exposed walling*

These areas of walling showed a large variation of building materials and arrangements. The small areas exposed, and the distance between them, makes interpretation limited.

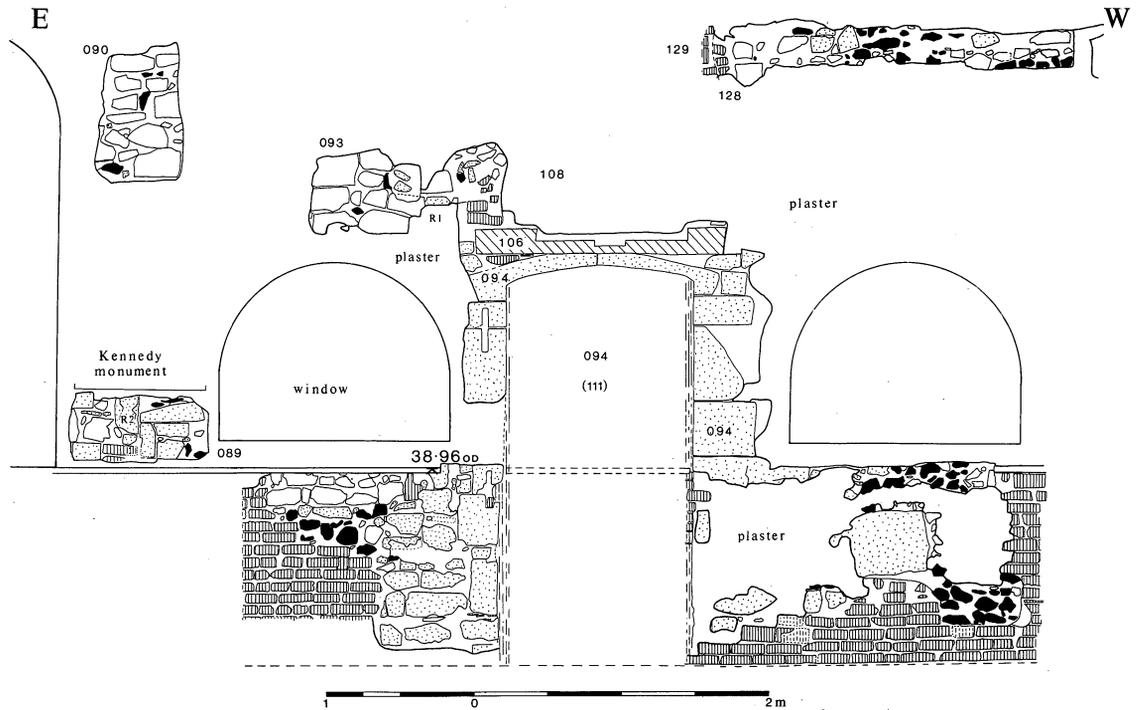


Fig 7 Carshalton Church: outer south aisle interior, south wall, middle bay, elevation. For key diagram see fig 5.

2.2.3 (a) Around the west window (fig 8)

The largest of the exposed areas was above and to the west of the western jambs of the window to the west wall of the aisle. This was only partially recorded above the western window jamb where there was a series of three large chalk blocks (117) and above this an area of roughly coursed flint and chalk fragments. Above this a well-coursed line of flints was observed (119) which did not, however, continue at the eastern end of the area uncovered but may be again picked up in a small area of wall exposed further east. Above this was another area of un-coursed flint, chalk and Reigate stone fragments (122) on which was built brickwork forming the lowest course of the early 18th century extension. To the west of the window a horizontal deep set fragment of elm wood was found and removed from the wall by the contractors and has been preserved; this came from the large hole 123. On the opposite side of the window small patches of wall were exposed of which the most interesting was 114, where a small wooden beam supported three bricks. The bricks and the wood beam appear to be connected as one feature but it is not impossible that they were contemporary with the insertion of the window. Finally, in the south-western corner of the aisle, internal Reigate stone quoins were noted.

2.2.3 (b) Other miscellaneous areas

Further small, disconnected areas of walling were exposed east of the door/arch 094 in the middle bay (fig 7). One (093) lay above the eastern small Georgian window of the middle bay and was connected

to 108. It was a collection of chalk, flint and Reigate stone lumps and blocks, of which one (R1) was moulded (fig 9, A). This was obviously in a reused state and suggested that this part of the wall had been rebuilt.

Two areas lay above (090) and below (089) the monument to a member of the Kennedy family (fig 7). Area 090 was of chalk, Reigate stone and flint rubble walling with no special features save that two of the chalk fragments had been roughly tooled. Area 089 revealed how complicated the analysis of walling can be; in an area 0.9m x 4.5m no less than four mortar or plaster types were recorded. The area was more tightly packed than recorded elsewhere, with worked Reigate stone blocks closely set against each other. Brickwork was noted in the lowest part of the area. The most notable feature was a defaced moulded Reigate stone block (R2) which, from its position and axis in the wall, was evidently not *in situ* and had been altered. The moulding, standing proud of the whole face of the block, was a series of declining curves and recurves which became less sinuous towards the base of the block. Although identification is tentative, it appears to be a late medieval bracket or small corbel (fig 9, B).

Finally, parts of the west and east ends of the south aisle arcade wall were exposed below the dado level, and produced evidence for the earliest surviving building on the site (fig 1). Feature 100 was an area of walling extending eastwards from the west wall of the south aisle, of roughly coursed flint walling set in a white, very gritty mortar (25% small flints). At the eastern end of this wall the Reigate stone walling of the west respond of the south arcade (133) was found to

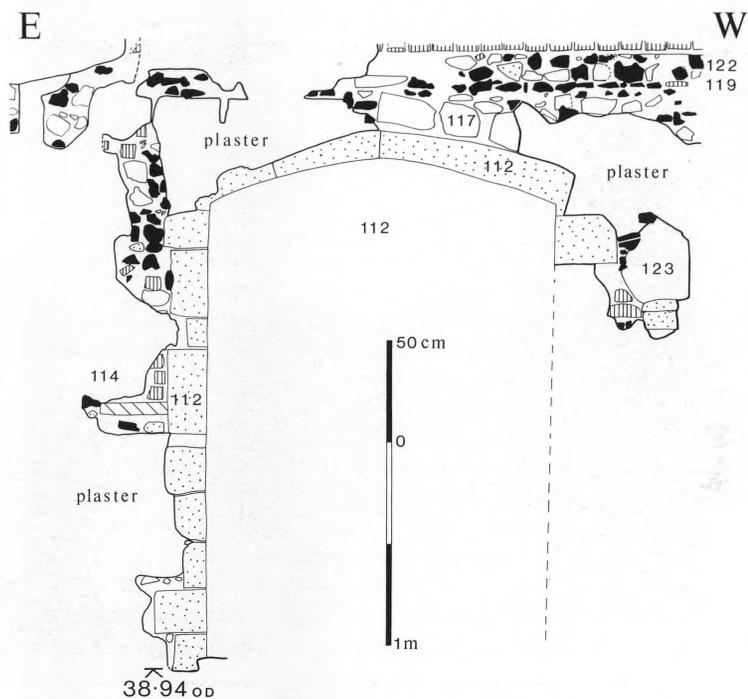


Fig 8 Carshalton Church: outer south aisle interior, south wall, west bay, elevation. For key diagram see fig 5.

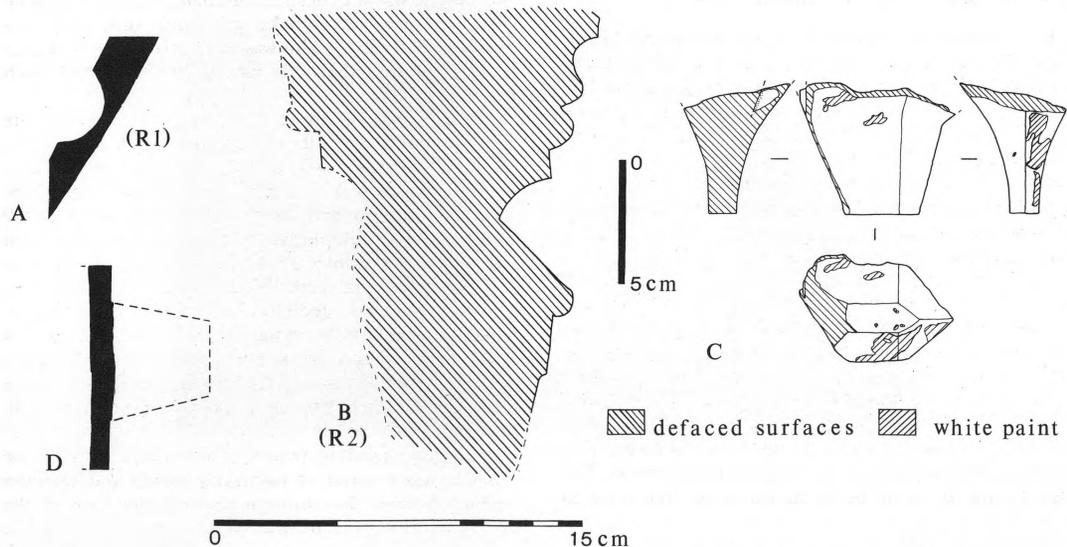


Fig 9 Carshalton Church: moulded stonework. A: from 093; B: from 089; C: fragment from 010; D: string course reconstruction (suggested)

have been built up against it; the Reigate stone blocks were set into a brown-yellow mortar with small chalk lumps, and one block had traces of red paint. The west wall of the south aisle (130) was of flint set into an identical brown-yellow mortar, and it appeared that this wall also butts up to the walling (100). At the east

end of the arcade a similar situation was recorded in a small area; the white gritty mortar walling (132) running eastwards was abutted by the Reigate stone blocks of the east respond of the south arcade (134). These were set into the brown-yellow mortar, here with small chalk flecks.



Fig 10 Carshalton Church: Lady Chapel interior, north wall, looking north

2.2.4 Discussion

A suggested reconstruction of the south aisle during the medieval period can now be made. The original south wall of the nave with its white, gritty mortar (100, 132) was broken through and the present arcade (represented by 133 and 134) was inserted. As the date of this arcade is thought to be late 12th or early 13th century it is probable that lighting was supplied by lancets.

The next building activity saw the upper part of the south aisle wall being rebuilt when new windows and a doorway were inserted. The larger rere-arched windows in the east and west

bays may have replaced the lancets, possibly as early as c1350. The blocked doorway (094) in the middle bay is the most interesting feature of the south aisle, with differing internal and external elevations. Inside there is a segmental arch similar to the rere-arches of the windows, while externally there survives the eastern jamb of a pointed arch (fig 3). Measurements show that both elevations must have been in use at the same time; the eastern internal and external jambs correspond neatly, and the apex of the external pointed arch as roughly reconstructed from the evidence of the jamb is projected to be approximately 0.3m below the apex of the internal elevation. The question arises as to whether the interior and exterior elevations were of differing dates, but the simple solution is a single phase: a pointed doorway set in a rere-arch in the same fashion as window tracery in the rere-arches. This would allow for internal door leaves to shut against the northern face of the exterior elevation. This work could be as early as the late 14th century. The square-headed Perpendicular tracery removed from the windows in the 18th century and that in the north aisle removed by the Blomfields in the late 19th century could also be as early as the late 14th century.

2.3 THE CHANCEL (figs 10, 11)

Work inside the chancel was induced by the removal of the large Purbeck marble tombchest belonging to the Gaynesford family and the Burrish and Shepley mural tablets which were suspended above it. This was a necessary operation to allow the removal of plaster to enable the wall to dry out and to permit restoration and cleaning of the monuments, especially the Gaynesford tombchest.

Drawings were made of the tombchest before removal, and notes were taken during the gradual removal of the Burrish monument.

2.3.1 *The Gaynesford tombchest* (fig 10)

Nicholas Gaynesford, lord of the manor, was a notable minor court official under three kings and managed to preserve his position at court despite a spell in the Tower in 1483. His tomb was apparently erected before his death in 1498; in his will he desired 'to be buried by the High Altar of the church of All Hallows, Carshalton' but the date of his death was not added to his brass (Jones 1970, 16-18; Peatling nd, Gaynesford). Nicholas also left a tenement to the church to pay for masses for his soul, but no money was left to the fabric of the church.

Investigations may suggest that the tomb was not *in situ* or was inaccurately assembled. The wall slab (008) was found to be positioned off-centre by 30mm to the east in relation to the tombchest. The west slab of the tombchest was found to have been replaced at some time, and fragments of the original slab (notably without an indent for a shield as found on the replacement) were found inside the tombchest, resting on modern debris. The top slab of the tombchest (027) was also offset with regard to the walls of the chest itself, extending 14mm more to the west than to the east. It was found to have an elaborate moulding which abruptly terminates at 18mm from the plastered wall at the eastern end. The western end is damaged, but does not appear to have such a contrived termination as the eastern end. The table top before removal was found to slope from south to north.

The base or plinth was found to have once been extensively moulded like the table top slab. After the removal of this plinth it was found that the floor levels had been built up around it, partly burying it. The

chancel floor was not level, but sloped from east to west.

The walls of the tombchest were formed of three Purbeck marble slabs to east, south and west. Those to the east and west were fixed to the south slab (028) by lead ties or staples; that at the western end (which has the replacement wall) was found to be missing and the adjoining staple hole in the south slab was full of a hard grey-black cement or pitch. This same substance had been used to seal the bottom of all three interior faces of the tombchest at some period, probably during the late 19th century work on the church. The three wall slabs sat on three wider slabs, later revealed as part of the buried plinth of the tombchest. As the conservators were anxious to find a solid base on which to rebuild the tombchest, a small excavation was necessary to remove the debris fill of the plinth interior. This debris (not indicated in fig 11) was found to be a fairly mixed collection of decayed mortar and plaster which had fallen from the fourth side of the tombchest, which was formed by the north wall of the chancel. However the western fills inside the tombchest overlay or cut into these layers and included a modern debris layer with modern broken window glass, some mortar lumps (011), and an arrangement of three bricks (021) set in a mortar 022. The bricks, which have shallow frogs, are considered 19th century, and were probably connected with the rebuilding of the north chancel wall. This is essentially 19th century westwards from a point midway through the tombchest and the blocked aumbry (103) incorporated in it. The other layers below this could also date from the 19th century, although finds of modern window glass became less frequent. The lowest layer (018) was a soil

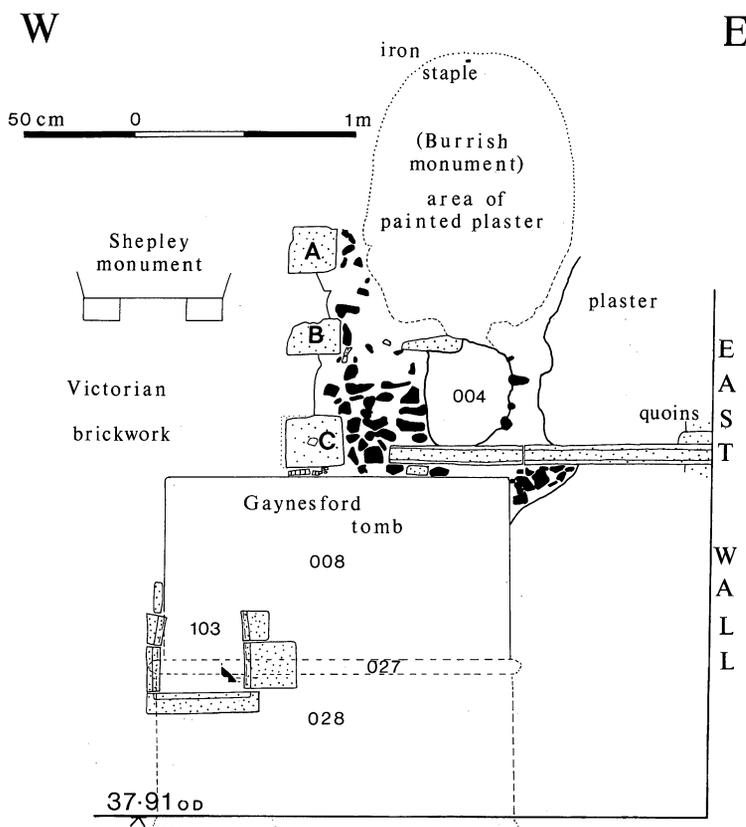


Fig 11 Carshalton Church: Lady Chapel interior, north wall, elevation. For key diagram see fig 5.

deposit excavated to a depth of 0.18m below the top of the plinth walls, but probing suggested that it was at least 0.6m deep. It was a deliberate infill of the tombchest below floor level, but the date is uncertain. Finds from the upper layers included a piece of early medieval shell-tempered pot (from 011) and a slender piece of white painted Reigate stonework, possibly a cusp or sub-cusp fragment from a chancel window demolished in 1862 (fig 9, C). Lead 'came' may have been pressed into the small groove on this fragment, to hold glass panes.

2.3.2 *The Burrish monument* (fig 10)

Dorothy Burrish (died 1685) lived at Stone Court, formerly Gaynesford Place. Her monument is attributed on stylistic grounds to William Stanton (1639-1705) by Rupert Gunnis (Mr Geoffrey Fisher, pers comm). It was found to be of two pieces: the first a corbel comprising the cherub's head which supported the monument at the bottom, and the main cartouche which was secured to the wall at the top by an iron staple. The reverse of the main part was heavily scored with the outlines of the actual design, but only on the left hand side. The corbel was found to have a deep 'tongue' or plug, 0.2m deep, which was set into a

hole 0.6m deep within the north wall, packed around with rubble and oyster shell in mortar (004). A black wash paint was noted as surviving in places on the corbel face.

The wall plaster around and beneath the monument was of two layers. The modern plaster covering the north wall was found to abut, but not pass beneath, any part of the monument. The original medieval plaster underlay the monument but overlay phase I mortar, and had extensive traces of faded red paint. By the time of the placing of the memorial, the painted surface of the medieval plastered wall had been whitewashed over and traces of this whitewash, in a decayed state, were noted on the plastered surface behind the monument. This area was recorded by photography and drawings before the monument was removed.

2.3.3 *The Shepley monument* (fig 10)

The monument is to Michael Shepley (died 1837), whose family owned mills in the north part of Carshalton from the mid- to late 18th century, and is signed by the sculptor Edward Physick (*d* 1810-42). It was removed without observation by the writer. The area behind the monument was found to be built of

19th century yellow stock brick as suspected, proving that the monument had been removed from under the tower to this place during the restoration (Brightling 1888; Mrs J Hale, pers comm).

2.3.4 *The north wall of the chancel* (fig 11)

The removal of the three monuments, and the plaster associated with the wall stretching some 4m from the north-east corner of the chapel, exposed a large area of the wall for inspection.

The north wall is constructed of flint and very occasional Reigate stone fragment walling set in a yellow-brown sandy mortar, which has many small chalk inclusions and incorporates remains of a string course, internal quoins and an aumbry.

The string course is now totally defaced but may have had a trapezoidal profile (fig 9, D). It is formed from at least two Reigate stone blocks. The western block, which terminated at about 1.45m west of the east wall of the chancel, had to be removed during the work. There was no evidence for a similar block to the west of this one, although this was positively looked for. The eastern block is an extensive piece which is in fact a westward extension of a deeper north-east quoin block, one of the Reigate stone quoins of the north-east corner of the chancel. The moulding appears to run across the south face of the quoin. The eastern block has now split (indeed, the whole quoin structure has separated from the chancel east wall by about 20mm and the gap has been plugged by Victorian cement). Traces of plaster, very probably medieval, were found to cover part of the defaced moulding, suggesting that this may have been removed during a medieval refurbishment of the chancel and not as part of a Victorian improvement.

The Reigate stone aumbry (103) was rendered inaccessible by the erection of the Gaynesford tomb, thus obviously pre-dating c1497. The upper jamb had been removed by the Victorians, and there is evidence that they had disturbed the upper west jamb. The aumbry was then blocked, but the rebate moulding for the door is still visible.

2.3.5 *Post-wall alterations and additions*

The only alterations and additions in the medieval period, apart from the erection of the Gaynesford tomb, appear to be the insertion of a window and the defacing of the string course. The Victorian improvements had removed the medieval walling westward from a point almost central to the Gaynesford tomb, but had not destroyed all the eastern jambs of a blocked window. Only three jambs (fig 11, A, B and C) still survived. These were separated from each other by Victorian brickwork to the west, and medieval walling to the east. The surviving jambs were set in a white chalky mortar, easily distinguishable from the brown-yellow mortar of the earlier medieval wall, and all three bore the signs of red paint on their inner, southern faces. Study of the lowest jamb (C) in detail was possible as it was removed during the work on the wall for structural purposes and has been preserved. The angle of the reveal was 105° from the inner face of the wall. The paint noted on the south face was found

to continue on the west (reveal) face. Victorian brickwork was built up to this block, and traces of red paint and plaster were found on the adjacent bricks. Another feature of this jamb was a large iron staple inserted in its south face. To the north of this single Reigate stone block, set within the depth of the wall, no further evidence was found of any *in situ* Reigate stone blocks forming the window embrasure. Investigation showed that the white mortar associated with the jambs was located over much of the vacant hole (ie, on the north side of the jamb), and the wall north of the position of the Reigate stone block was of flint and chalk lumps. This wall is to be considered medieval (it is overlain by the black Victorian cement) and therefore part of the window reveal. The white mortar forming this wall was found to have a plaster rendering on its western face (ie the continuation of the window reveal) thus indicating that the internal part of the window reveal was composed of a rubble wall coated with plaster and painted in a similar fashion to the window jamb. The windows therefore appear to have had Reigate stone jambs only, without any facing stone inside the window reveal which was, instead, of rubble wall construction.

The removed jamb was underlain by a hard black mortar, with wooden wedges. Impressions left in the mortar below the Reigate stone block indicate that the wooden stakes were either banged into wet mortar, or mortar was poured over them. A fragment of medieval tile with green glaze was found in the cavity between the jamb and the top of the back slab of the Gaynesford monument. All this work appears to be Victorian in date (evidence for the movement of the Gaynesford tomb is mentioned above) and thus all evidence which may have shown whether the window pre- or post-dated the monument below it has been destroyed. The window sill is at a reasonable height by medieval standards, and it is not really possible to argue that it is significantly higher due to the presence of the Gaynesford tomb when first constructed. Phase dating must therefore rely on documentary and architectural evidence.

2.3.6 *Post-medieval alterations*

Apart from the movement of the Gaynesford tombchest mentioned above, the post-medieval alterations are mainly to be associated with the Burreish monument, as described in 2.3.2. The upper part of the monument was secured to the wall by an iron staple. This staple was inserted into a mortice created by some fragmentary Reigate stone lumps, the only use of this material in the wall at this height.

The Victorian period saw the virtual destruction of the medieval north wall of the former chancel, except for the eastern 2m, and its rebuilding with brick. This operation was taken as far as the east jambs of the former north-eastern window and probably involved the movement of the Gaynesford tomb.

2.3.7 *Other parts of the chancel* (fig 1)

The south-west corner of the chancel effectively the south wall of the chancel (102) and the east wall of the

tower (101), had plaster removed to a height of 1.5m. The north face of 102 has roughly coursed flint set into a brown-yellow mortar with chalk lumps (as in the north-east corner) which has been cut back to take the late 19th century two-light window. The corner was constructed with Reigate stone quoins, connecting 102 with the east face of wall 101. In this wall was a brick-blocked Reigate stone opening (0.23m x 0.47m) found

to be irregularly formed and sloping from north to south and with a sill at 0.62m above the present floor; its purpose is unknown. The jambs of the double-chamfered east tower arch are also bonded into the brown-yellow mortar with chalk lumps, and are tooled in a similar way to the south-west corner jambs and the jambs of the blocked lancets in the south wall of the chancel.

2.3.8 Discussion

Evidence from the walls of the chancel indicate that this was a new structure and that the chancel was attached to a structure to the west – the ‘sanctuary’ or lower storey of the tower – which was refaced, involving the creation of the rough rectangular opening. This may have been a former exterior east face of the sanctuary.

There is also evidence for the original treatment of the chancel both before and after the insertion of the Gaynesford tomb. The north wall is of one construction phase incorporating two important features: firstly a Reigate stone moulded string course extending about 1.45m west of the east wall of the chancel, and level with the bottom of the lancet windows, and secondly the Reigate stone aumbry, or cupboard.

The fenestration of the former chancel in this period appears to have been of three sub-phases: firstly the original lancets, secondly the two-light windows (now known only from later 18th and early 19th century prints) and thirdly the replacement of these windows after 1891. Although it is not possible to identify them absolutely, the window jambs are likely to be from the north-eastern medieval two-light window, dated to the late 14th and early 15th century by P M Johnston (who actually saw and apparently recorded them). The tooling technique employed here (a smooth exposed surface, with ‘boasting’ on the non-exposed surfaces) does not bear comparison with the interior jambs of the blocked lancet windows (c1200 AD) in the south wall which are still visible. It must be remembered, however, that Blomfield (nd, b, 1-2) alleged that the original medieval chancel windows had been replaced by two-light windows. If this is the case, the 1862 north-east window was positioned further west of the original window, leaving the eastern jambs of the medieval window intact. A comparison of the position of the existing jambs with a plan of the church drawn up after the 1862 restoration had been carried out shows the eastern window jambs sitting over the eastern part of the Gaynesford tomb, whereas the surviving medieval jambs sit centrally to the position of the tomb today. But, remembering that the tomb may have been moved during the 1891 restoration, it is best to compare distances from the east wall of the chancel. From the 1862 plan (assuming that this is accurate) the distance from the east wall to the window reveal edge is approximately 6ft (1.83m), but today it measures 1.73m. It therefore seems likely that the 1862 window was 4 inches (100mm) west of these medieval jambs. The plan suggests that the tombchest has been shifted eastwards since 1862 by a few feet but this is likely to have been wrongly surveyed, as the tomb’s movement must have included movement of the extensive Purbeck marble plinth over which it was centred, and therefore all the debris layers found within it also post-date 1862. The plan is more likely to be inaccurate. With the erection of the tomb by 1497 the aumbry was completely blocked and the floor level was at least 0.2m below the present eastern step level. The wall and window reveals were painted at least in red, but prior to 1685 this painting appears to have been whitewashed over.

At some period, possibly during the 17th or 18th century, the eastern floor of the chancel was raised around the plinth of the Gaynesford tomb, burying it.

3 Final discussion and some conclusions

It is difficult on the available evidence to substantiate fully the early 20th century suggestions by Dr Peatling and Philip M Johnston of the remains of a Saxon (pre-1066) church here.

What the building tells us is that the walls at the eastern and western ends of the south arcade survive from a primary phase. These walls are interpreted as the remains of a nave south wall. The relationship of this nave to the earlier north aisle and arcade will always remain in doubt; either the nave and north aisle were built as one, or part of the nave north wall was taken down to insert the arcade, as with the south arcade half a century or so later. The space under the tower – the sanctuary – is arguably the oldest part of the church. In the phased reconstruction plan (fig 1), which is based on all available evidence, the tower and aisleless nave have been grouped together as representing the structure existing before the construction of the north aisle in the 12th century. The date of this building – pre- or post-1066 – must remain in doubt for the present. Blair (1991, 122-3) suggests a Norman three-cell axial-tower building.

The addition of the north aisle was followed within half a century by the extensive additions of the late 12th and early 13th century, suggested on architectural grounds by Molesworth Roberts (1973) as probably being of one phase. Certainly the mortar type – so clearly different from others found within the church fabric – could be accepted as evidence for a contemporary construction phase for the south aisle and chancel. Investigation shows that the following are all set in the same yellow-brown mortar with white chalk flecks: the east end of the north wall, west end of the south wall, and west wall of the chancel; the south respond of the eastern tower arch; the east and west responds of the south arcade, and the lower parts of the south and west walls in the south aisle. It should be noted that the lower part of the chancel south wall is of Reigate stone rubble construction, unlike the remainder which is of flint rubble construction with occasional Reigate stone and chalk lumps. If Blair (1991, 122-3) is correct, a cell east of the sanctuary or tower was replaced by the present chancel, with a new arch and refacing being effected. In general, the archaeology supports Molesworth Roberts's conclusion.

At this stage the chancel may have been of four bays as defined by the lancets, with a triple lancet in the east wall. Although found only along the north wall, the internal ornamental string course probably continued around the east wall (beneath the sill of the triple lancets) and along the north and south walls westwards for almost 1.5m at a similar height. The remains of an external string course running between the sills of the southern blocked lancets can still be seen from the churchyard. Parallels for a string course running all around the walls of a chancel are widely known, but the writer is not aware of examples which appear to enclose only the eastern end around the altar. The form of the string is unknown. On the north side was an aumbry, on the south the trefoil-headed double piscina uncovered in 1891.

From the mid-12th century, Carshalton had been a living of the Augustinian priory of Merton, and it is interesting to seek comparisons between St Mary's parish church at Merton and Carshalton. The chancels are similarly sized rooms, if a little longer and narrower at Merton (13ft 8in x 44ft 2in (4.15m x 13.47m)) than at Carshalton (17ft 7in x 36ft 7in (5.36m x 11.16m)). The Merton chancel is of four bays emphasised by plain blank arcading enclosing single lancets around the chancel walls, with a simple chamfer, hoodmould or label (the profile being a reasonable parallel for Carshalton's suggested string course) and no string course, capital or impost. The old nave at Merton was 72ft x 21ft (21.96m x 6.40m), as against 52ft 6in x approximately 16-18ft (16m x 4.9 – 5.5m) at Carshalton; but both buildings may have been influenced by older structures and may have been substantially enlarged since (measurements from *VCH Ss*, 4, 67, 185 n 32). One should also note an Early English capital from the priory itself (Johnston 1914, pl III, b) which bears a similarity to the capitals of the south arcade.

At what point the remains of the medieval buttresses along the south aisle enter this phasing is not clear. Any relationship between the buttress foundations and the walling was obscured by 18th century brick walling. One would consider the foundations to be contemporary with the south aisle wall, but the remains of the Reigate stone buttresses may

be linked to a later construction. This may be contemporary with the rebuilding of the south-west corner with Reigate stone quoins at some point, possibly after c1300, and with the addition of larger windows and a south door. No other evidence was observed, however, for this suggested phasing.

At some point in the late medieval period the chancel lighting was improved with the introduction of two-light windows in the north and south walls, while the triple-light window at the east end may date from the end of the 15th century. It is not clear whether the remaining lancets were blocked at this time, although they are shown so on the phase plan (fig 1). In addition some work would have been done on the chancel, probably including the erasing of the string course and the addition of the west chancel arch. A suitable occasion for this re-fenestration would have been the erection of the Gaynesford tombchest before 1498, which is roughly the date of surviving tracery in the three-light east window. In addition Peatling (nd) notes that Thomas Wodeman left 10 shillings 'to the reparation of the church of Cressalton' in 1472.

A more complex sequence of re-fenestration appears to have been followed in the south aisle, and a summary of the development of its south wall may prove helpful:

- 1 South aisle built c1200
- 2 After c1350: upper parts of wall taken down; middle bay doorway and windows added. Buttresses added?
- 3 East Bay: Scawen family rebuilding and ?addition of upper storey in c1700-1722
- 4 Middle Bay: medieval door blocked (brickwork 111) in 1787/8
- 5 West Bay: galleries added, medieval window blocked, Georgian window added in 1793
- 6 Buttresses rebuilt in 18th or early 19th century
- 7 Middle Bay: galleries added, upper doorway added, windows added in 1811
- 8 Middle Bay: upper doorway blocked in the later 19th century

So the church effectively remained until the rebuildings of the mid-19th century (note however the small addition to the south of the tower – with a small fireplace – which could also be 16th century). There have been no major discoveries for this period except that the buttresses precede the apron.

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