



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological assessment of
The Chantry Chapel, Buckingham
and its documentary resource



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March 2009

Report 09/27

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**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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NGR SP 6957 3403

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
THE CHANTRY CHAPEL, BUCKINGHAM
AND ITS DOCUMENTARY RESOURCE
FEBRUARY 2009**

REPORT 09/27

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BUCKINGHAM CHANTRY CHAPEL

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Buckingham Chantry Chapel	
Short description	The Chantry Chapel, Buckingham was founded in the 12 th century but later converted into a school building. The building contains an aumbry and piscina from its use as a chapel. Its fabric was renovated in the nineteenth century, resulting in suites of windows which are almost entirely of that period. Earlier, blocked windows can be discerned, as can a configuration of scaffold put-log holes deriving from previous building or renovation works. Records for the building are held by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (Buckinghamshire Record Office), the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record, Swindon. Other than these, the building's history is best set out in a book by Paul Poorman (2001). This assessment adds structural detail to the documentary and historical understanding of the building.	
Project type	Building and documentary records assessment	
Previous work	Dedicated history published by P Poorman	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type And period	Medieval chantry chapel, later used as school building. Listed (Grade II*) and in the care and ownership of The National Trust	
Significant finds	Not applicable	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	Chantry Chapel	
Easting	6957	
Northing	3403	
Area	78 sq m	
Height OD	c. 86m above Ordnance Datum	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	The National Trust (Gary Marshall)	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project Manager	Iain Soden	
Sponsor or funding body	The National Trust	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	January 2009	
End date	February 2009	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical	Not applicable	
Paper	NA	Site records
Digital	NA	Copy of report
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF
THE CHANTRY CHAPEL, BUCKINGHAM
AND ITS DOCUMENTARY RESOURCE
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2009**

ABSTRACT

The Chantry Chapel, Buckingham was founded in the 12th century but later converted into a school building. The building contains an aumbry and piscina from its use as a chapel. Its fabric was renovated in the 19th century, resulting in suites of windows which are almost entirely of that period. Earlier, blocked windows can be discerned, as can a configuration of scaffold put-log holes deriving from previous building or renovation works. Records for the building are held by the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (Buckinghamshire Record Office), the Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record and the National Monuments Record, Swindon. Other than these, the building's history is best set out in a book by Paul Poornan (2001). This assessment adds structural detail to the documentary and historical understanding of the building.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology carried out an archaeological assessment in January 2009 prior to the National Trust carrying out alterations to the interior of the building of the Chantry Chapel, Buckingham (NGR: SP 6957 3403; Fig 1). To accompany this, an assessment of the available documentary resource for the building was carried out and the principal results set out to place the recorded remains into an historical sequence of development and alteration and restoration where this can be reconstructed.

The work was set out in a letter from the National Trust which acted as a brief or scope of works, dated 15 December 2008.

The purpose of the on-site assessment was to:

- Record the building inside and out photographically in digital media and using a high-level mounted camera system interchangeable with Adobe Photoshop.
- Create a drawn plan of the building.
- Provide background documentary information to set the recorded elements of the building into an historical sequence of development, alteration and restoration.
- Set out the scope and whereabouts of principal documents for the building.

2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The main sources regarding the early history of the building are Paul Poornan's book (2001), the Victoria County History (1925), Browne Willis (1755) and various sources from the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS).

In 1289, King Edward I issued a writ to the Sheriff of Buckingham for an 'Inquisition ad quod damnum' for a property in Buckingham that belonged to the Hospital of St Thomas of Acon in London, because the Master had applied for a Crown licence of mortmain to alienate the property. The reply from the Sheriff of Buckingham stated the full history of the property. St John's hospital for the poor and infirm was built by William Frechet, probably in the late twelfth century. Some time later it had fallen into disuse and the Lord of Buckingham's Steward asked for permission to sell it. It was bought by Peter Miller and after his death his brother sold it to Ernald le Ferur. He in turn sold the messuage and the ten acres of land which it comprised to Matthew Stratton, Archdeacon of Buckingham, who restored its original purpose as a hospital. It was Matthew Stratton who eventually granted the hospital to the Master of the house of St Thomas of Acon, London who converted it into a chantry and chapel.

The Victoria County History (1925) states that permission was granted to transfer the property to the Knights Hospitallers in 1289, although Poornan (2001) believes that this licence was never implemented because of continuing connections with the Hospital of Thomas Acon well into the sixteenth century.

The first evidence that the property was being used as a school appears in 1423 when John Barton (senior) of Buckingham received a quarterly rent from the schoolmaster for his lands in Buckingham, although there is no real proof that this is the Royal Latin School.

By the time of Edward IV, the chapel had fallen into ruin and it was rebuilt by Archdeacon Ruding who was Prebendary of Buckingham in 1471. It was dedicated to St John the Baptist and St Thomas of Acon (Thomas à Becket). Browne Willis describes that over the altar, on the boards of the ceiling (now gone), was a depiction of the Holy Lamb bleeding (1755). On each side two angels, or monks, held cups with which to catch the blood. Beneath the lamb, in a charger, lay John the Baptist's head. Ruding's motto *All may God amende* had also been written. This painting seems to have been present until 1688, when some school boys decided to destroy it as a 'relict of Popery'. The rest of the work, as well as the panes of the windows and the back of the master's seat were decorated with crescents and escallops, since they were part of Ruding's coat of arms. Browne Willis indicates that that an alumnus of the school who had seen the mural had drawn it for him and he had retained this drawing in his collection. It is possible that it is

held by the Bodleian Library with the rest of his papers (CBS pers comm).

At dissolution, the chantry was known as St John the Baptist and St Thomas of Acon and also Matthew Stratton's chantry chapel. The incumbent was a hospitaller and chantry priest called Thomas Hawkins, who was probably also the schoolmaster. There is very little information regarding the chantry chapel during this time and it is unknown why it was allowed to survive. Poornan (2001) believes that it was because it was a hospital. Hospital schools were generally ignored by Henry VIII's commissioners and since the headquarters in London had already been dissolved, the school was allowed to remain.

In his history of Buckinghamshire, Browne Willis suggests that in about 1540 Dame Isabel Denton bequeathed four marks yearly for twenty years '*to a priest to teach children in this town, in augmentation of his means of living*'. This statement has been accepted as fact since the eighteenth century, but Poornan (2001) believes that in this case the eminent historian made a mistake and the school Dame Isabel was involved with was situated at Shalston.

In 1776 the parish church collapsed and the school was temporarily relocated to a private house so that services could be held in the chapel. It is said that much of the timber from the collapsed church was used to re-roof the chapel. The six inscribed bench ends are also thought to have originated from the church. At the same time a gallery was constructed around the interior of the building and some time afterwards a floor was laid across the room. This created an upper and lower storey; the upper was used as the school room while the lower was used for storage. This was removed in the mid-nineteenth century and the ground floor was re-laid, probably with the 'wood worked in small pieces laid on concrete' as described in a later insurance policy (CBS: CH34G/E3).

In 1830 Edward Brittin was appointed headmaster of the school. The deed of appointment gives a wealth of information regarding how the school operated in the early nineteenth century, including a brief description of the property itself, '*the property belonging to this charity consists of a dwelling-house and a school-room attached thereto, anciently a chantry with outbuildings, a yard and a garden, the latter containing rather more than 20 poles*'.

In 1857 a circular was produced asking for funds to renovate the chapel, which is reproduced in full in J T Harrison's book (1909). It provided a brief history of the building and its state of repair at the time. A list of urgent repairs included repairing and plastering the windows, to open Archdeacon Ruding's window, to put a new stone head to the doorway, to remove the flat ceiling and reveal the roof timbers, adding to the 'healthiness and ventilation of the building' and to erect a new bell-turret to a design provided by George Gilbert Scott. A plaque of 1879 states that the 'schoolroom was

restored by public subscription'. The restoration included the insertion of three new windows, the bell was re-cast and a new bell-turret was erected.

The chapel remained a school until the functions were transferred to a new site in 1907 (Poornan 2001, 98) although it remained school property for some time. Its historic value was most particularly appreciated when it came under the auspices of the Buckingham Heritage Trust between 1988 and 2008, since when it has housed a second-hand bookshop which makes publicly accessible the ancient interior.

3 DOCUMENTARY RESOURCE

The archives and repositories canvassed for their holdings on the Chantry Chapel were:

- Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record, Aylesbury
- Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies, Aylesbury
- National Monuments Record, Swindon

Buckinghamshire Historic Environment Record

The National Trust's existing HER number for the building is 150235. The HER holds several records pertaining to the building.

HER No	Site Name	Description
240500000	Old Chantry Chapel	Building survey and historical records of medieval hospital, chapel and school, now a community hall: List description of the chantry chapel
240500001	Grounds of Old Chantry Chapel	Human remains found in past groundworks, possibly from medieval cemetery: precincts (of chantry chapel) used as a cemetery - human remains frequently found beneath surface of garden & courtyard of building. NB; burials could otherwise/also be associated with the ancient hospital?
240501000	Old Chantry Chapel	Hospital built in twelfth century with later rebuildings up to the nineteenth century and re-used as chapel and school: of roughly coursed limestone rubble. Probably built as a hospital late 12 th century, from which a fine Norman door in S wall survives. Restored & rebuilt 1471, after becoming dilapidated. Re-roofed 18 th century. Restored, bell turret added by G G Scott, 1875
240502000	Old Chantry Chapel	Historical records of hospital used as a chantry from the thirteenth century and as a school from the sixteenth century to the twentieth century: Dimensions - length 1400 cm height 0550 width 0600, plan form – rectangular; chantry, originally

		part of St John's Hospital? Building granted to house of St Thomas of Acon, London, possibly 1219-68; they made it a chantry, dedicated to St John the Baptist & St Thomas of Acon. Became a Latin grammar school in 1546; ceased to be a school 1907
240503000	Doorway at Old Chantry Chapel	Surviving twelfth century doorway to former hospital at the Old Chantry Chapel; hospital probably built in late C12, from which the fine Norman door in S wall of the present building remains. NB; 'Hospital of St John the Baptist' mentioned only once, in hundred rolls (1279); possible that St John the Baptist's chapel was the hospital's chapel, but this is conjecture
240504000	St John's House, Market Hill	Fifteenth century partly timber-framed house rebuilt as schoolmasters house in seventeenth century

Further sources from the HER include:

Aerial Photograph: Aerofilms, 1970s? Aerofilms oblique AP, taken 1970s? SP69533392.

Aerial Photograph: Mike Farley, 1992, 1992 oblique AP by Mike Farley, SP69443370.

Aerial Photograph: Mike Farley (BCM), 1992, Oblique AP by Mike Farley taken 1992, SP69523388.

A copy of an engraving: The Grammar School c1815, copyright Oxfordshire County Council.

Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

The Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies (CBS) is the repository for historical archives relating to Buckinghamshire. It holds a large amount of information relating to the later history of the school, but nothing prior to the Reformation; this information is likely to be held by the National Archives (CBS pers comm). The National Archives have not been consulted for this survey.

One of the earliest sources relating to the school is the *Report of commissioners to continue inquiries concerning charities 1832-1833*. The Latin School is included in the twenty-seventh volume, printed in 1834. The report states that there were no early documents held by the corporation relating to the Latin School, so far as they could learn, but that it was thought that Isabel Denton was a benefactress to this charity, or a school of the same description, previous to Edward VI's grant in 1552. The only document found by the commission was the deed of appointment of Edward Brittin in 1830 (CBS: **CH34G/E1**), which is copied in full.

The Latin School is included in the charities files at the archives

Buckingham General Charities, CH34G.

There are several sources of information:

CH34/AM1: For names of candidates for admission 1838-1877

CH34G/

E1 and 2: Deeds of appointment to the office of master of the Free School and Lease for 99 years of the Master's house and the Free School and premises, 1830 and 1855. (E1 is the deed of appointment referred to in the Charity Commissioners report.)

The school is described on the dorsos as the free school, formerly called Archdeacon Stratton's, Dame Denton's and King Edward VI's free school.

E1: Bailiff and burgesses of Buckingham, to Edward Britten of Buckingham, in place of Rev. William Eyre, decd. 27 Dec 1830

E2: Trustees of Buckingham charities [named] to Thomas Robert John Laugharne of Whitnash, Warwicks, MA in place of Edward Brittin, decd, 26 Oct 1855

E3: Insurance policy for school and boarding house [found with CH34/E3]
Alliance British and Foreign Life and Fire Insurance Company, from 29 September 1871 to 27 September 1872

£500 One private dwelling house and School House adjoining and communicating, stone and brick built and tiled, situate near the Butchers market, Buckingham and known as St Johns Royal Latin School, occupied by Mt Thomas Cockram, Headmaster.

£500 on a Boarding House near the said Dwelling House and communicating therewith by a covered passage Brick and tiled.

The above mentioned School House is warmed by a stove which is sunk below the ground floor and from which a cast iron pipe is carried along a passage also sunk beneath the floor not within 14 inches of any woodwork, the said passage being built with bricks and covered with an iron grating and the pipe runs into a Brick Chimney. The floor of the said school which has no upper storey is of wood worked in small pieces laid on concrete.

(All also found under **AR45/74**).

In the Parish Records:

PR29/25/48: Royal Latin School regulations as to religious instruction, no date, nineteenth century

PR29/25/49: Board of education scheme for the administration of the Royal Latin School scheme, 1907

PR29/25/50: Variations of the board of education scheme for the Royal Latin School, 1914, 1921, 1923 and 1924

In the Education files:

AR40/69:	Scheme for regulation and administration	1904
	Scheme (five copies)	4 th July 1904
	Scheme, proof (four copies)	1907
	Scheme (seven copies)	15 th October 1907

In the District Council files:

B/BUC 3/1. 20r-174v, 182r-296r: memoranda re appointment of borough officials and the election of MPs. Among the officials whose appointments are recorded are: the schoolmaster of the Free School, 20th August 1684-30 October 1835

B/BUC 3/2: Precedents book [contains memoranda re elections of mayors, bailiffs, MPs etc for certain dates 1662-1767 (names not always given, presumably entered as precedents) including chamberlains 1700, 1727 (f.5r) and the master of the Free School, 1696 (f.7r)]

Also held by CBS are:

AR41/66: Records of the Royal Latin School, Buckingham (most of the bundles are not relevant to the building being surveyed and relate to the school when it transferred to the Chandos Road site. Many do have pertinent documents scattered within them; the scope of this survey did not allow for all to be examined).

- 1 Letter book September 1904-May 1908
- 2 Letter book May 1908-July 1912
- 3 Letter book July 1912- October 1917
- 4 File of official correspondence containing letters from the County Education Committee, the Board of Education and the Charity Commissioners 1904-1907
- 5 General correspondence, with agendas of meetings of school governors, specifications etc (one bundle) 1904-1909
- 6 Ditto and examiner's report on free place scholarship, 1916; printed Board of Education Schemes, 1914-1924; "Mr Small's statement" outlining the history of the school 1907-1924
- 7 Ditto (architect's letters regarding building of new school, 1904; appointment of new headmaster, 1908; resignation of H Small as clerk to the governors, 1912) 1904, 1908-1922
- 8 Ditto (one file; loose items) 1909-16
- 9 Ditto (one bundle) 1912-14
- 10 Ditto (one bundle) 1913-15

- 11 Correspondence and papers concerning the sale to the National Trust of the Old Charity Chapel, Buckingham (copy Board of Education order for sale; printed appeal and subscriptions list (one bundle)) 1909-1912
- 12 Estate agents correspondence concerning the sale of the (old) RLS 1909
- 13 Audited annual statements of accounts etc 1907-1934
- 14 Bank pass books 1922-1932
- 15 Bills and vouchers 1924-1931
- 16 Ditto 1935, 1939-44
- 17 File of letters etc regarding Sunday cash receipts 1937-39
- 18 School class attendance registers 1904-06, 11-12, 13-15, 16-17, 19-21, 23-27
- 19 Entry forms and other papers relating to the award of free place scholarships at RLS 1907-1918
- 20 Reports of the delegates of local examinations regarding RLS pupil
- 21 Application for pupils to attend the Vicar of Buckingham's class 1907-08
- 22 Board of Education reports of inspectors of RLS headmasters reports 1908-30
- 23 "General file" containing mainly printed Board of Education and Bucks Education Committee reports and memoranda (inc proposed scheme for regulation of Dr Cheesman's Charity)
- 24 Sealed draft and copy orders of the Board of Education and the Charity Commissioners 1907-11, 1934
- 25 Miscellaneous, including correspondence regarding recognition of science and art classes, 1906-07; papers on appointment of new headmaster, 1908; duplicate claims for grants, 1908-10; correspondence about unpaid school fees, 1909; papers in County Court Actions for recovery of fees, 1937; prints of RLS 1905
- 26 Board of Education printed syllabuses, regulations, lists, memoranda, statistics, abstracts of accounts etc, 1906-22; Bucks Education Committee reports, 1903-09 and other printed items
- 27 Miscellaneous papers relating to school property including conveyance from Baroness Kinloss and others to the governors of RLS of two acres of land in Chandos Road Buckingham, 1905; agreements, contracts, draft conveyances etc; specification of works for new school buildings, 1905; and miscellaneous specifications and tenders, ratings appeal papers; insurance policies; plans and tracings

The architects plans, the postcard and inventory of contents are all found in **AR41/66/27**. They do not show anything which predates the current layout of the building.

E/MB 29/5-7, AR 11/89 and AR76/89 contain minutes from 1904-1985

D-X82/4: A letter from John Egerton Thorpe at the Royal Latin School to his parents concerning the Christmas holidays, December 1888

D-X532/5: A volume of “collotype” views of Buckingham and neighbourhood, includes St Johns Royal Latin School

Photographs held by Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies:

phBuckingham224: Norman door of the Old Latin School, no date

phBuckingham116: Old Latin School. Norman doorway, c1910

phBuckingham10: St John’s Chapel, former Latin School (with second picture of Manor House twisted Chimney), no date

phBuckingham222: The Old Latin House Restaurant (premises unoccupied at the time this picture was taken);

The National Monuments Record (NMR), Swindon

A full search of the archives and databases was undertaken at the NMR. The following information is held:

- the full statutory list description (listed on 13th October, 1952)
- original investigator’s notes of 1912, plus the published version of these notes in the RCHME inventory for North Buckinghamshire
- seven black and white photographs in the Red Box collection
- a building file (BF086268) relating to The Old Latin House containing a report by the RCHME of 1991 and 14 black and white photographs taken by the RCHME in 1991

The photographs in the Red Box collection are:

Chapel of St John Baptist/Latin School (Ref: Victoria County History A)- View of chapel partially obscured by a tree, no date

Hospital of St John the Baptist (Ref: OS 70 F9/16)- View of Norman doorway, 1970

Hospital of St John the Baptist (Ref: OS 70 F9/15)- View of the chapel looking south (1970)

The Chantry Chapel at Buckingham, showing the Norman doorway (Ref: A F Kersting H4794)- View of Chapel and Master’s house looking east, 1950

Latin School, gallery with bench ends (Ref: BB83/2421)- Postcard of the gallery, 1912

Latin School interior (the piscina appears on the negative) (Ref: BB83/2422)- Postcard of

the interior, 1912

Chapel, afterwards the Royal Latin School, late twelfth century; rebuilt *c*1475 (Ref: BB83/3768)- View of the exterior, looking south, 1912

4 THE BUILDING

The building comprises a single cell, measuring 13.4m x 5.8m (externally where measurements are possible; Fig 2). These measurements were taken at 1.5m above the ground, in order to clear an external plinth and internal oak panelling. The building, which has its long axis aligned approximately north-south, is constructed primarily of uncoursed or roughly coursed limestone rubble. The roof covering is of plain flat red ceramic tile.

Neither the exterior of the north gable nor that of the east wall is accessible, due to their being contiguous with adjacent buildings, or visible only from adjacent roof-valleys, not accessible at the time of recording.

The south gable exterior (Fig 3)

The south gable fronts onto a narrow road, a confined space in which it was not possible to make fully rectifiable images. Consequently, although some attempt to rectify the view has been made, this has not been fully achieved and photographs of this gable show converging verticals. The gable wall surmounts a chamfered plinth which is not present on the long axis. At a height of about 2m above the present ground level is a drip-moulding string course, above which is a tall gothic window with flowing tracery around four ogee-headed lights and a hood-mould. The stonework of the tracery is not medieval although it employs a standard medieval cavetto cross-section in its mullion form. It is likely to be of the nineteenth century. The corners of the gable have buttresses which also extend outwards the chamfer of the wall plinth. Above these the quoins are stressed in ashlar stonework up to eaves level. To the east (right) of the window embrasure, directly adjacent to the buttress-head, is a reused fragment of an architectural fragment, probably a very worn thirteenth-century dog-tooth (Fig 4). Its location suggests that it surmounts a blocked put-log hole. Although the equivalent stone is not of architectural origin, a comparable arrangement lies at exactly the same location adjacent to the other buttress head. Together they do seem to indicate a pair of blocked put-log holes. A bell-cote surmounts the apex of the gable. It is an addition (documents attest of Scott, 1879), while on top of the roof pitch is a stone coping, secondary to the bell-cote.

The west wall exterior (Figs 5 and 6)

Access to this elevation was such that rectified photographic images could be taken for later rectification. Thus Figure 5 is a rectified black and white image of the west wall, printed at a scale of 1:50 to show the wall stone-for stone, while Figure 6 shows the same view in colour with interpretative detail added in relation to changes in build. Such interpretative detail would likely increase if the same approach were taken should the mortar of the wall ever be raked out.

On the long axis of the building, the one wall exterior visible, or indeed accessible, is that facing west. It too is built of uncoursed or roughly-coursed limestone rubble.

At the north end of the wall lie two simple rectangular windows, each of two lights separated by a cavetto-section mullion; one stands above the other. The spandrels in both remain unpierced. Both are relatively modern replacements, of precision-cut Victorian stonework.. The top window has a length of architectural fragment, perhaps as an impromptu partial hood-mould. It comprises a repeating dog-tooth of the thirteenth century.

The extreme north end of the wall, adjacent to the windows, is obscured by ivy, but the merest glimpses of stonework beneath suggest that the quoins are stressed in ashlar.

At the opposite, southern end of the wall is a high level two light gothic window surmounted by a hood-mould and worn, possibly anthropomorphic, label-stops. Just as the south gable window, the flowing tracery of cavetto cross-section is clean, largely unweathered and probably of nineteenth-century construction. The southern jamb, however, together with the hood-mould and label-stops show extreme weathering suggesting that they are original medieval work, possibly thirteenth century. The jamb bears considerable graffiti on its interior.

At about the midpoint of the wall is a very high-level cusped round window formed of precision-cut masonry to create a sexifoil. This, together with two identical windows which lie high in the north wall – and look out onto a roof valley, form a clerestory to the building. However, they are a later nineteenth-century conception.

The single entrance to the building lies at about the midpoint of the south wall (Fig 7). It comprises a high, wide oak door with a simple but fully developed Romanesque arch over, displaying three aspects of the order's decoration:

- A projecting outer string or hood of dog-teeth
- A middle row of chevrons
- An inner row of a simple repeating ogee motif in relief

Jambs and reveals are plain and enclose free-standing column shafts on cushion bases, surmounted by capitals with worn, indistinct (and therefore unclear) foliate decoration, possibly forming simple volutes. Both bases and capitals are fully engaged. On both sides the abacus forms impostes supporting the arch which have foliated chevron decoration (Figs 8 and 9).

The inner reveal and jambs are re-set and renovated. The innermost reveal has a groove in its underside suggesting it once held either glazing or, just conceivably formed part of a key for a tympanum. The chevrons of the central row of decoration are integral to each voussoir. Although they are distinctively inexpert in their carving, they are undamaged where they lie. Individual examples are slightly smaller toward the apex, where the two smallest lie in the position of a key, but cannot otherwise be distinguished. For these reasons it is suggested that the arch is as originally intended and is not a re-build in this position.

There are a number of variations in the wall-face. To the immediate left of the entrance is a blocked rectangular window embrasure (Figs 5, 6 and 10). Above the door and below the cusped round window is a patch of weathered roughly-coursed ashlar, blocking for the lower part of an earlier window (Figs 5 and 6). Two variations in stonework beneath the eaves attest two alterations or restorations, possibly affecting the roof (Figs 5 and 6). At about six feet above the ground a possible masonry lift is suggested by a distinctive arrangement of stonework which is probably built around, and subsequently filled, put-log holes from scaffolding (Figs 5, 6 and 11). This is a similar arrangement to those seen in the road-side gable but here forms a line of four.

Tiny areas of off-white limewash are apparent on a number of stones, suggesting that the exterior was covered in a wash for some of its history. There are four layers discernible on some of these, perhaps suggesting that this covering was present for quite some time.

The interior

The interior is comprised of a single room measuring 11.5m x 5.1m, with a first-floor balcony at the north end and a deep window splay from floor to ceiling at the south end (Figs 12 and 13). The east wall, whose exact thickness is not known, steps in towards the south end. The reason for this is unclear. The floor is parquet woodwork throughout. All of the interior wall surfaces are plastered and painted, except for the arrises of embrasures. This means that no evidence of alteration in the stonework is visible on the inside.

Note the following which was related in the documentary section of this report (above):

The above mentioned School House is warmed by a stove which is sunk below the ground floor and from which a cast iron pipe is carried along a passage also sunk beneath the floor not within 14 inches of any woodwork, the said passage being built with bricks and covered with an iron grating and the pipe runs into a Brick Chimney. The floor of the said school which has no upper storey is of wood worked in small pieces laid on concrete.

This passage for the heating duct is likely to lie beneath the floor, although now redundant.

All around the room from floor to waist height (higher in the window splay) is oak panelling with a bead along the top. The panels are raised and fielded. Not all of it could be viewed since it lies behind free-standing bookcases. Although expertly put together, the panelling scheme has minor blemishes which suggest that it has been dismantled from elsewhere and moved to its present location. The panelling skirts around a thirteenth-century trefoil-headed piscina in the west wall (Fig 14), but incorporates a single-panel door on a 0.6m-deep aumbry in the wall opposite, within the in-stepped portion of the east wall (Fig 15). Adjacent to the entrance doorway the panelling extends up to encompass a large, deep cupboard which coincides exactly with the blocked window embrasure noted in the exterior stonework. Together the two confirm the identity and location of a former window.

Of the extant windows, all but one jamb (as noted on the exterior) are of nineteenth-century work. The view of the interior indicates that the three cusped round windows of the clerestorey, all set within deep embrasures, are nineteenth-century in date and are of a suite (Fig 16).

An oak cornice marks the location of a former suspended ceiling, now lost, at a height of 5.45m above the floor (Fig 16). In the roof there are a total of five trusses creating four

bays (Fig 17). The three middle trusses are of nearly identical layout, comprising king posts. However, the two gable end trusses differ. That on the north gable comprises simple tie and collar beams, but that to the south comprises a canted tie beam with moulded underside while above this is a separate collar supported by spere trusses (Fig 18). Fully within the room and adjacent to this collar, supported across the roof purlins, lies a substantial beam on which a bell-pulley is mounted. In the apex of the roof above are the timber vestiges of a former bell cupola, now lost and roofed over (Fig 18). It is not clear whether the bell pulley relates to the former cupola or the surviving bell-cote of 1879.

In the north gable wall lie two cupboards, all part of the panelling scheme. The middle one could not be accessed. At the east end of the north wall lies a blocked doorway, presumed to have once connected with the house next door, also part of the former Royal Latin School but now a private house.

At the north end of the room in the west wall, the higher of the two northern windows lights a wooden balcony accessed by a simple fixed timber stair (Fig 19). The front rail of the balcony comprises six re-used, seventeenth-century, highly decorative church pew-ends separated by a rail and wavy splat balusters re-used from a former staircase (Fig 20). All are of oak.

The pew ends are decorated with different schemes. The main body of the plank is carved into a cusped ogee head with flowers filling the spandrels, while the upper superstructure bears coats of arms on front and/or rear and acanthus foliage (Fig 21) with Jacobean strapwork and classical volutes surmounted by acanthus flowers with their petals curling back to form stylised fleurs-de-lys. Others bear the dates 1626 (Fig 22) and ANNO 1650 (both N's reversed). Another bears a panel with the words THOMAS GROVE GENT, the letter N of gent(leman) being reversed (Fig 23). On the rear is carved a love-heart with the initials A and G. All the decoration is carved in relief.

Although it is possible that the balcony was assembled for the 1879 restoration, it seems more likely that its mish-mash of architectural elements, all taken out of context and lacking real architectural taste, lends it a date in the first half of the twentieth century.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The building as it stands was extensively restored in the nineteenth century and there is little visible which can be attributed to previous periods without considerable alteration having taken place.

Although originally an altar would have stood before the south window, the floor is entirely modern. It is possible that there are human burials below the floor, which otherwise also probably contains a brick heating duct connecting with the former master's house adjacent. No internal features are discernible due to the plaster covering. The roof too is a medieval and nineteenth-century mix with a (probably) twentieth-century tile covering.

Remains of two blocked, early windows can be discerned in the west wall stonework, one adjacent to the door, another above it. Both can be seen open in nineteenth-century etchings published in Poornan (2001, 72, 76 and 78). The latest of these views is purported to be c1855, so the blockings almost certainly took place as part of the G. G. Scott restoration in the 1870s, when all the windows were restored and new ones added.

Many documents have been located in the three repositories canvassed. Few of them predate the restoration. While some have been fully consulted, a further considerable number (comprising 27 items bundles and boxes) are actually un-catalogued in the Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies and could not be fully sorted for the scope of this report. Further work to more fully appreciate these may be appropriate in concert with works to upgrade the building. Similarly there may be further documents residing in other repositories, particularly The National Archives and the Bodleian Library.

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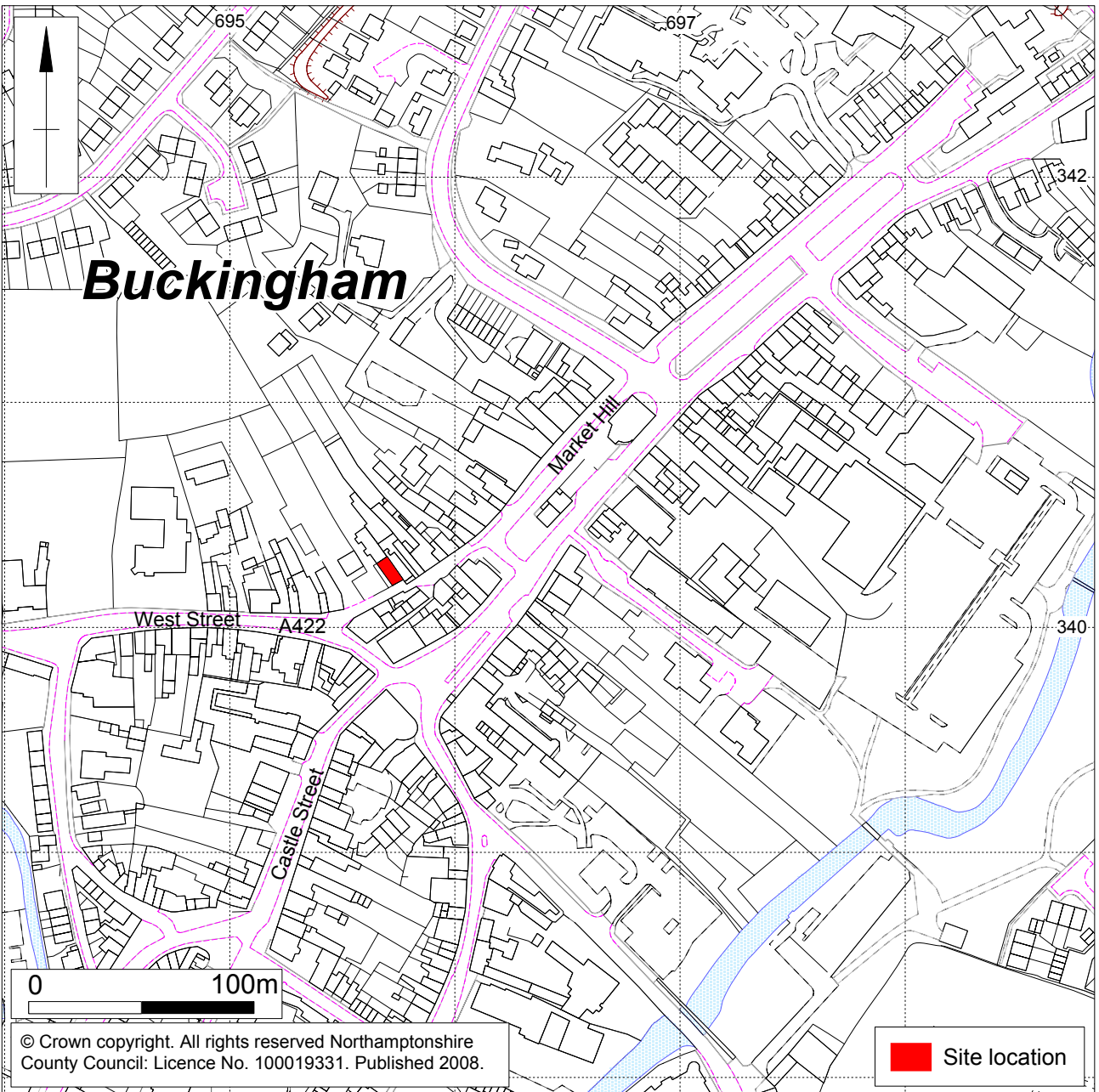
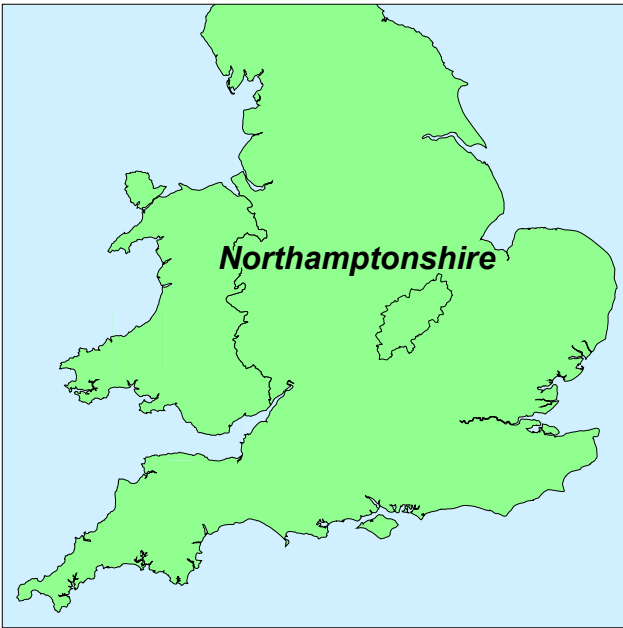
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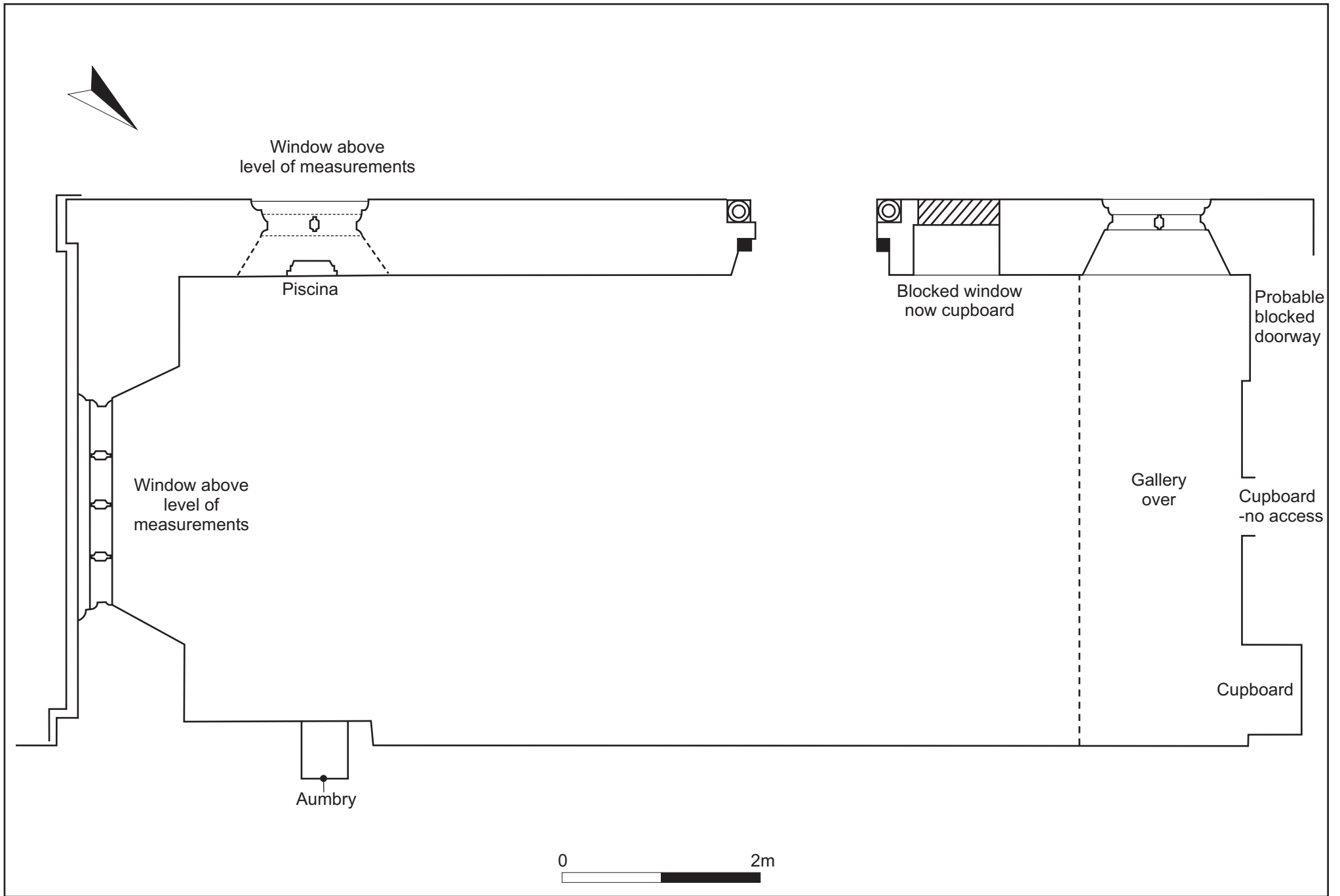
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Site location Fig 1



Plan of chapel Fig 2



Fig 3: Elevation of south gable



Fig 4: Re-used architectural fragment and possible put-log hole



0 2m

Rectified photo-evaluation of the chapel west wall exterior Fig 5



Blocked window

Re-set
Stonework

Putlog
holes

Blocked window

0 2m

Interpretative rectified photo-evaluation of west wall elevation Fig 6



Fig 7: Detail of west entrance



Fig 8: North capital and impost



Fig 9: South capital and impost



Fig 10: Blocked window



Fig 11: Blocked put-log hole



Fig 12: Interior, looking north



Fig 13: Interior, looking south



Fig 14: Piscina



Fig 15: Aumbry



Fig 16: Clerestory window and cornice



Fig 17: Roof interior, looking south



Fig 18: Southernmost truss and former cupola access



Fig 19: Balcony



Fig 20: Re-used pew ends and wavy splat balusters



Fig 21: Pew-end (rear)



Fig 22: Pew-end (front)



Fig 23: Thomas Grove, Gent[leman]