

St Dunstan's Church Cranford Park London Borough of Hillingdon



Historic building recording



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Summary

In June 2013 Oxford Archaeology (OA) undertook historic building recording at St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, Hillingdon, Middlesex (NGR: TQ 1016 7818) during the construction of a new vestry.

The recording work was limited in nature and focused on the north wall of the West Tower after the demolition of an adjoining mid 20th-century vestry but before the construction of a new extension. The work formed part of a wider programme of archaeological investigations at the site including a watching brief during ground works.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology (OA), was commissioned by Ian Angus of Carden and Godfrey Architects to undertake test pit excavations, building recording and an archaeological watching brief at St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, Middlesex, as part of the demolition of the existing vestry and construction of a replacement.
- 1.1.2 The work was undertaken in order to meet the requirements of the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser and the Local Planning Archaeologist for the London Borough of Hillingdon. Discussions with Geoffrey Hunter, Head of Care of Churches, Robert Whytehead (Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for London) and Sandy Kidd (Planning Archaeologist for London Borough of Hillingdon) have established the scope of work required; OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) detailing the archaeological works (both below-ground investigations and the current building recording) to implement those requirements (OA, 2012a).
- 1.1.3 All work was to be undertaken in accordance with local and national planning policies (specifically NPPF Section 12 and local policies).
- 1.1.4 The current report just covers the small scale building recording work. Separate OA reports have been produced on the test-pit evaluation (August 2012) and the watching brief (August 2013).

1.2 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.2.1 The following background has been summarised from that previously prepared by OA for the evaluation and watching brief reports. These reports prepared the background with reference to Cherry and Pevsner (1991), St Dunstan's church guides (1938 and undated), the Victoria County History (VCH) volume for Middlesex and listed building (2012) and RCHME (1937) entries.
- 1.2.2 St Dunstan's Church is a Grade II* Listed Building (see Appendix B) and the listed building description describes the church as being probably 13th century with a 15th century tower, an early 18th nave and 20th century vestry. The nave and chancel are separate (both under pitched roofs), with the tower to the west and the modern vestry to the north-west. The listing states that the lower three storeys of the tower are of 15th-century date, constructed in flint and rubble with stepped diagonal buttresses and ashlar



quoins while the red brick belfry level was probably added in 1710 at the same time as the construction of the nave. The flat roofed and rendered vestry which has been demolished in the current project was constructed in the 1950s and was 'not of architectural interest'.

- 1.2.3 In 1895 the church was extensively restored by J L Pearson. The tie-beam roof on the nave was renewed, the gallery was removed, and a vestry was added against the north wall of the tower (Church of St Dunstan 1938). Presumably this late 19th-century vestry was replaced by the one constructed in the 1950s. According to the parish records the tower was rebuilt in 1940.

1.3 Aims and methodology

- 1.3.1 The aim of the project was to preserve for posterity any evidence of the church tower which was exposed by the removal of the 1950s vestry.
- 1.3.2 The building recording purely focused on the section of the tower that was exposed and it was not intended to gain a wider understanding of the development of the church.
- 1.3.3 The recording was undertaken on 24 June 2013 and comprised photographing the exposed wall and making descriptive notes.

1.4 Results

- 1.4.1 Following the removal of the mid 20th-century vestry much of the plaster/render from the vestry remained in-situ covering the north side of the tower at ground floor level. The main feature in the wall was the arched doorway between the tower and vestry while there was also a clear step or shoulder c.1 m above ground at the same height as the brick plinth in the north-west corner of the tower. The render was cement based but not particularly hard and it extended down from ceiling level to ground level. The render had been lost in a number of small patches and this revealed the primary face of the wall behind with flint and some stones mixed in.
- 1.4.2 At the east side of the tower there was a stub of timber at ceiling level which entered the buttress and would clearly have formerly extended immediately in front of the tower because at the west side of the tower there was a corresponding empty socket. This timber was presumably a bearer for the vestry roof or possibly for an earlier lean-to. Towards the top of the render, and immediately beneath the height of the former timber bearer, was a horizontal board which was presumably the rear face of a long cable box
- 1.4.3 At the east side the corner of the buttress had come away to expose the core of the wall and this showed some re-used moulded stone including a fragment from a former arch.
- 1.4.4 The western edge of the area examined was partly obscured by a tall electrical board that could not be moved during the recording. Immediately behind this the plinth of the buttress had been previously truncated and the base reformed with various 19th and 20th-century bricks.
- 1.4.5 Above the flashing and rendered band the primary wall was visible and this area must have been effectively obscured from view (although not directly abutted by the modern fabric) following the construction of the 1950s vestry. The main tower wall was constructed from uncoursed flint but there were a greater number of more substantial stones towards the lower area (just above the modern rendered band) and these seem to



be part of a distinct horizontal feature. Presumably this was just a distinct 'lift' in the tower or a phase of the construction and it also incorporates two clear infilled holes that could have been put-log holes although they are lined secondary brick. Further up the wall other features such as blocked openings are also visible but investigating these was beyond the scope of the current project.

2 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 2.1.1 The current project at St Dunstan's Church has allowed an opportunity to examine some areas of the west tower which have previously been obscured by an adjoining 1950s extension. The areas were recorded prior to being recovered by the new vestry.



APPENDIX A. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

A Brief History of St Dunstan, Cranford Park, undated church guide.

www.saintdunstan.org.uk church website

Cherry, B & Pevsner, N, 1991, *The Buildings of England: London 3, North-West*, 311-2

Church of St Dunstan (Cranford), 1938 *History of the Parish and Church of St Dunstan*, London

Listed Building Entry (2012) <http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-202944-church-of-st-dunstan-hayes>

OA 2012a St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, London Borough of Hillingdon; Written Scheme of Investigation

OA 2012b St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, London Borough of Hillingdon; Archaeological Evaluation, unpublished report.

OA 2013 St Dunstan's Church, Cranford Park, London Borough of Hillingdon; Archaeological Watching Brief Report, unpublished report.



APPENDIX B. LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

CHURCH OF ST DUNSTAN ROSEVILLE ROAD CRANFORD (South side)

List entry Number: 1181190

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 27-May-1949

804/32/377

II* Church, Probably C13 with C15 tower, early C18 nave, mid C20 vestry. Restorations of 1895 by J L Pearson and 1935-6 by Martin Travers.

MATERIALS: Flint and rubble, red brick, tile roofs.

PLAN: Separate nave and chancel, both under pitched roofs. West tower. Vestry addition to north-west.

EXTERIOR: Entrance elevation to the south. Nave in red brick with a pitched tile roof and shallow buttresses. Handsome rusticated south entrance with a double panelled door. Surround has false stone quoins whose decorative tripartite keystone supports a moulded cornice and lunette with a gauged round brick arch. Round headed window in the same style to the east and a pair the same to the nave north elevation. Pebble-dash rendered chancel over flint rubble to the east with pitched tile roof. Blocked lancet, probably C13, with stone surround and double-light square headed window to east. Stepped brick buttresses. East elevation has a triple light C19 traceried window. Chancel north elevation has a blocked door with red brick surround and a flat roofed triple-light roof dormer. 1950s flat-roofed and rendered vestry, which is not of architectural interest, adjoins the tower north elevation. Handsome west tower of four storeys. Three lower storeys are C15 in flint and rubble with stepped diagonal buttresses and ashlar quoins. Belfry level is in red brick and appears contemporary with the nave i.e. 1710. Polygonal stair turret, lit by loopholes, at south-east corner. Clock to north elevation.

INTERIOR: Church internally rendered and painted white. Nave roof is panelled and ribbed with arched braces and tie beams supported on stone corbels. Gilded chancel arch with painted cherub supporters and cartouches part of the C20 restoration by Martin Travers. Flagged floors, some are grave slabs, and Jacobean black and white marble to sanctuary. Medieval wall painting to chancel east wall probably the upper portion of originally larger design. Of two or possibly three phases (early C14 and C15) with stencilled letters including the repetitive use of the capital 'M' surmounted by a crown and a possible sunburst motif. Mid C20 gallery, also by Travers, providing ringing chamber. Stone spiral staircase to the tower. Vestry not of special interest.

FIXTURES & FITTINGS: Font of 1710, a gift from the Berkeley family, of white marble on a black baluster. Peel of six bells the oldest of which is 1380 cast by William Burford of Aldgate and reputedly the oldest in the Diocese. Clock by Gillet & Co, 1886. Baldochino, altar frontal and reredos all 1930s by Travers in wood simulating draped tapestry. Altar rails, statue and plinth of Our Lady (a war memorial) and gallery also by Travers. Sanctuary Lamp by Omar Ramsden (1873-1939) a renowned silversmith of the Arts & Crafts movement. Impressive collection of stained glass including the east window by Kempe, 1895. Curiosities include very early depictions of a bi-plane and tank in a north window as part of a First World War memorial.

MONUMENTS: Remarkable collection of monuments which dominate the interior. These are listed in some detail in Cherry & Pevsner (1991, 312) but include: vast monument in the chancel to Sir Roger Aston and wife of 1611-13. A tripartite monument in a Tudor style with kneeling figures including the children of the deceased. One of the few documented works by the Master Mason to King James I, William Cure II. Moved to the north and restored in the 1930s. Accomplished tomb of Elizabeth Berkeley (died 1635) by Nicholas Stone. Unusual, and beautifully carved in low relief, white marble effigy of the deceased wrapped in a shroud. Also various other tablets and monuments, many of C17 date. Further large early C18 monuments in the nave: On the N wall, William Smythe (died 1720) who was of the



Berkeley family. Monument with a portrait medallion flanked by cherubs, pilasters and with a shell top; S wall two monuments to Pelsant Reeve and his wife (died 1727 and 1729 respectively)

HISTORY: It is likely that a church of early origins existed on the same site as the present building. There are suggestions that there may have been a seventh or eighth century Saxon church here and the Domesday Book of 1086 mentions a priest who served at the church in Cranford prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066. A priest was presented to the living in 1363 by Bishop Roger of Lichfield. A blocked lancet in the chancel is probably C13 suggesting that the chancel may also be of this date. The chancel wall painting has features of both early C14 and C15 date. The majority of the tower excluding the belfry level is of C15 date. There is a small, possibly Tudor, blocked brick north doorway. A fire in the nave led to its rebuilding in brick in 1710 by Elizabeth Dowager Countess of Berkeley. The church has been subject to two restorations: the first in 1895 by J L Pearson; the second of 1935-6 by Martin Travers a craftsmen of some repute who was employed by the then Rector, Maurice Child to restore the interior. Pearson added the east window (by Kempe of 1896) but much of his interior scheme was subsequently removed by Travers who added many of the fixtures and fittings including the gallery and also remodelled the chancel arch adding the cherubs and cartouches. This later restoration uncovered the chancel wall painting. Travers is understood to have considered the restoration of Cranford as his best work. The vestry to the north-west is a 1950s addition, probably replacing a late C19 one. All but one of the pews were removed in the late C20. The chancel ceiling was restored in 2006 and was found to be of medieval date. An attractive lych gate in timber on a brick plinth with a hipped tile roof stands to the south of the church and is probably contemporary with the mid C20 restoration.

The church is located in the former Cranford Park Estate. This was gifted by Henry VIII after the Dissolution to his friend Henry, Lord Windsor. In 1604 the estate was purchased by Sir Roger Aston, minister of James I, but on his death without male heirs, was purchased by the Berkeley family, in 1618, specifically by Elizabeth, Lady Berkeley. The adjacent mansion was demolished in 1939 although the early C18 stables survive to the west of the church.

SOURCES: Cherry, B & Pevsner, N, 1991, *The Buildings of England: London 3, North-West*, p311-2 A Brief History of St Dunstan, Cranford Park, undated church guide. www.saintdunstan.org.uk church website

SUMMARY OF IMPORTANCE: While the exterior of St Dunstan's is relatively modest in design and scale, the interior is of particular interest containing a medieval wall painting of early C14 and C15 date, a variety of quality fixtures and fittings, and an extraordinary collection of monuments from the early C17 onwards. Some of these, such as the two early C17 monuments in the chancel to Sir Roger Aston and Elizabeth Berkeley, are of the very highest quality.



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Figure 1: Site location

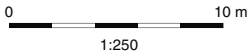
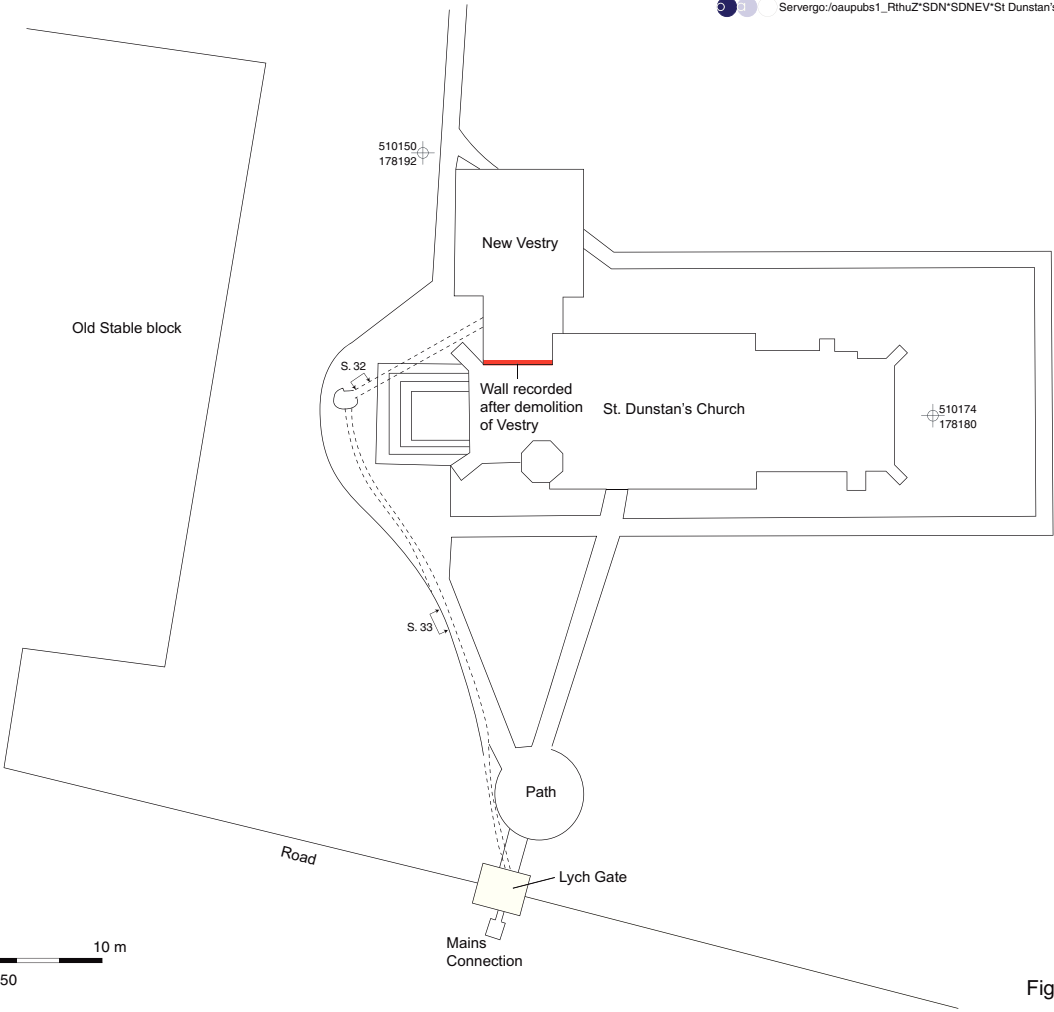


Figure 2: Overall site plan



Plate 1: General view of church from NW after demolition of 1950s vestry



Plate 2: North wall of tower in area of removed vestry



Plate 4: North wall of tower above former vesty



Plate 3: Detail of NW buttress



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