

ST PETER'S CHURCH, ROWLEY,
EAST YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In September 2006, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by L A Hall (Hull) Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (a watching brief) during groundworks associated with improvements to the existing drainage system at St Peter's Church, Rowley, East Yorkshire (NGR SE97623265).

The groundworks were very limited in extent, and comprised the excavation of a small test pit and the clearing out and replacement of an existing French drain along the north side of the north aisle. No significant archaeological deposits were uncovered. However, two underground water storage tanks were identified to the north of the church. These are likely to date from the mid 19th century, and they may be associated with restorations made to the church in 1852; their construction would have caused massive disturbance to any burials within this area. These underground water tanks are relatively common, and examples have been recorded elsewhere in domestic, agricultural and ecclesiastical contexts. They were used to store rainwater gathered through guttering and downpipes to ensure a constant supply for day-to-day use.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In September 2006, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by L A Hall (Hull) Ltd to undertake a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (a watching brief) during groundworks associated with improvements to the existing drainage system at St Peter's Church, Rowley, East Yorkshire (NGR SE97623265) (see figure 1). Although the watching brief was not made a condition of the Diocesan faculty granted on 31st May 2006, the project architects, Ferrey and Mennim of York, suggested that the watching brief be carried out in case archaeological deposits were encountered.

2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 St Peter's Church is located c.1km to the south-west of Little Weighton in East Yorkshire (NGR SE97623265). The village of Rowley is now depopulated, and so the church lies in an isolated open position, close to the former rectory, now Rowley Manor Hotel. The road from Little Weighton to Riplingham was diverted away from the church and the rectory by the rector in 1788; it now arcs around to the south (Allison 1979, 142).

3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The watching brief was carried out in accordance with recently published guidance relating to archaeological work on churches and in churchyards (ADCA 2004; Church of England/English Heritage 2005), and also took account of general advice produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1999) in relation to watching briefs. However, no specific EDAS methods statement or specification was produced for this project.
- 3.2 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the excavations associated with the creation of a new French drain along the north side of the north aisle, and a further drain running north-west through the churchyard towards an underground water storage tank, to recover any information relating to any archaeological features or deposits which might be uncovered or disturbed. These drainage works were being undertaken as part of a larger restoration scheme on the church, which included the repair and re-slating of the roofs on the north side of the church (i.e. organ chamber, north aisle and chancel), the replacement of various rainwater goods, and other repairs and repointing to the masonry.
- 3.3 A site visit was made on the 10th September 2006. This showed that there was already a drain in place along the north side of the church and so, although it was replaced and renewed, there was no need for any additional excavation in this area. It was also noted that there was a second underground water tank to the south of that previously noted, which was already connected to a functioning drain running north-west from the church. A small hand-dug test pit was excavated to check the alignment of this drain, but there was no need for any further intrusive works.
- 3.4 Following standard archaeological procedures, each discrete stratigraphic entity (e.g. a cut, fill or layer) was assigned an individual context number and detailed information was recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. Only two archaeological contexts were recorded in the test pit; these are described in the following text as three digit numbers (e.g. 005) (see also Appendix 1). In-house recording and quality control procedures ensured that all recorded information was cross-referenced as appropriate. The positions of all excavations and the two underground water

storage tanks were marked on a general site plan at 1:100 scale. A photographic record was maintained using 35mm colour prints.

- 3.5 With the agreement of the PCC, the project archive, comprising written and photographic elements, has been deposited with the East Riding of Yorkshire Museum Service (site code SPR 06; accession number 2007/002). No artefacts were uncovered by the watching brief.

4 OUTLINE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 As noted by the Listed Building description (see Appendix 2), St Peter's Church is a complex structure with a long history of development. In summary, the church comprises a three stage unbuttressed west tower, a 3 bay aisled nave with south porch, and a 2 bay chancel with a south chapel and north vestry, the latter also housing the organ chamber.
- 4.2 A church and priest are recorded at Rowley in the 1086 Domesday Survey, and a parson is mentioned in c.1150 (Allison 1979, 151). However, there is apparently no evidence for the associated settlement and, like others in the area (Riplingham, Hunsley and Risby), it was probably depopulated over a considerable time. Previous studies have speculated that the church was built here to be located midway between the settlements of Little Weigton and Riplingham and, if there ever was any associated settlement, it appears to have gone by the early 17th century; whilst there are extensive baptism and other records from Little Weighton and Riplingham for this period, none appear for Rowley (Anon. c.1995). It has been suggested that the inhabitants of the village made up the 20 families who accompanied the rector, Ezekiel Rogers, to Massachusetts in 1638, where he founded a township of the same name, but only four have been identified as coming from Rowley, and they are not necessarily from Rowley township (Allison 1979, 149). The existing rectory was built in 1710 by the Reverend William Hildyard, with subsequent extensions in 1809 and 1921, and Rowley formed the most valuable living in the East Riding during the 18th and 19th centuries (Pevsner & Neave 1995, 662-663).
- 4.3 The earliest surviving part of the church is probably the early 13th century transitional south arcade, with the north arcade being later 13th century. The south doorway is also 13th century in date, but it was altered during the 18th century when the porch was built. The lower part of the tower with its lancets is probably early 13th century in date but the upper parts are from the 15th century, and the chancel was rebuilt in the 14th century. Elsewhere the external appearance of the church is largely Perpendicular; it is suggested that when the organ chamber was created on the north side of the chancel in 1913, a "Tudor" window was discovered in the north wall. Documentary references include an 1536 bequest made "to the building of the church", the chancel was recorded as being in decay in 1600, and in the 1630s it was alleged that Ezekiel Rogers had built a gallery for strangers attending the church. The south chapel was built in 1730 by Ellerker Bradshaw to act as a mausoleum for the Ellerker family of Risby. The roof of the nave, aisles and chancel were then restored in 1852. It is also possible that the walls of the aisles were rebuilt and the two light windows under square heads inserted at the same time. The cement render which had covered much of the exterior since the mid 19th century was removed in 1984 whilst the current works form part of an ongoing scheme of repair which commenced in 1998 (Anon c.1995; Pevsner & Neave 1995, 662; Allison 1974, 153).

5 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 5.1 As noted above, the below-ground excavations were limited to the digging of a small test pit to the north of the north aisle (see figure 2). The pit was 0.90m square and was excavated to depth of 0.90m below the existing ground level. Beneath the 0.20m depth of black silt loam topsoil (001), a compacted mid brown silty clay (002) was exposed, containing frequent inclusions of angular chalk pieces up to 0.15m across. The clay (002) continued beyond the bottom of the test pit, becoming more chalky towards the base. No artefacts were identified.
- 5.2 As noted above, two underground water storage tanks were identified to the north of the church. A stone slab covering the mouth of the southern water tank is located 5.60m to the north of the north aisle (see figure 2). When the slab was raised, a circular opening 0.50m in diameter with inclined sides was exposed. The tank had a bell-shaped section, with a maximum diameter of c.2.20m and a depth of c.3.30m; there was c.0.50m of water in the base at the time of survey. The sides of the tank were largely rendered, but where this had fallen away the tank could be seen to be built of red handmade bricks (average dimensions ? by 120mm by 100mm) set with a lime mortar. Two inlets were noted towards the upper part of the tank's south-east and south-west sides, both connected via drains to down pipes on the north aisle's north wall. An overflow outlet was positioned at a high level on the south-west side, whilst a lead pipe rises from the south side to serve a pump fixed to the north aisle's north wall. This pump is housed in a rotting wooden case (see plate 3).
- 5.3 A galvanised lid covering the mouth of the northern water tank is located 9.10m to the north of the north aisle, to the north of the previous chamber (see plate 1). When the lid was raised, a 0.50m square opening built of modern machine-made brick was exposed, clearly a later addition to the original 0.52m diameter opening which had inclined sides. This tank also had a bell-shaped section, with a maximum diameter of c.2.60m and a depth of c.3.80m; there was c.0.50m of water in the base at the time of survey. The sides of the tank were largely rendered, but where this had fallen away the tank could be seen to be built of red handmade bricks (average dimensions ? by 120mm by 100mm) set with a lime mortar. Restricted access to the interior made it difficult to locate inlets or outlets but it is likely that a lead pipe rising up the north side of the interior once served a pump in this area, possibly located to the north of the adjacent churchyard wall.
- 5.4 The existing trench containing the French drain along the whole of the base of the north aisle was cleaned out to a depth of 0.30m, with an average width of between 0.30m and 0.50m. This work revealed no deposits of archaeological interest, although a slightly projecting plinth was exposed at the base of the north aisle. Towards its west end, the plinth was interrupted by a 0.90m wide brick blocking, corresponding with a similarly-sized blocking beneath the two-light window above (see plate 2). The blocking appeared to fill a former opening, presumably a doorway, beneath the window , whilst a straight joint rises up the west side of the window to the level of the eaves. This joint, and the appearance of the other masonry surrounding the window, suggests that it is a later insertion here.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The watching brief at St Peter's Church uncovered no significant archaeological deposits. The two underground water tanks to the north of the church are unlikely to be much earlier than the mid 19th century, and they may have been constructed at the same time as the restoration in 1852, although why two are built so close together remains unexplained; their construction would also have caused massive

disturbance to any burials within this area. These structures are relatively common, and examples have been recorded in domestic, agricultural and other ecclesiastical contexts (Richardson 2005, 243-244; Dennison 2006; Dennison & Richardson 2006, Dennison & Dennett 2006). They were used to store rainwater gathered through guttering and downpipes to ensure a constant supply for domestic or day-to-day use; such “softwater” supplies are often referred to in 19th century farm sale catalogues.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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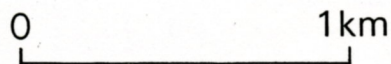
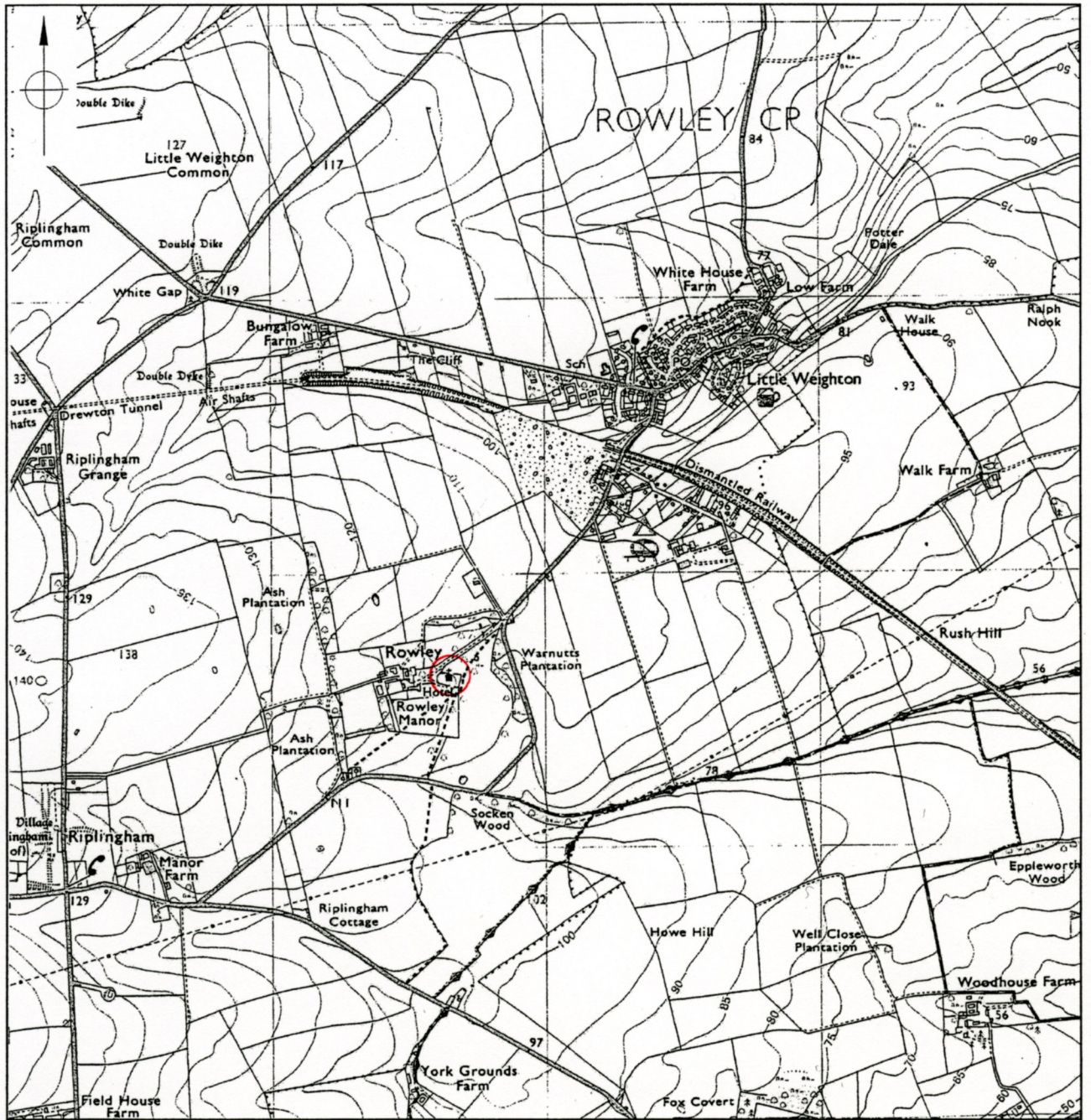
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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 The archaeological watching brief at St Peter’s Church was commissioned and funded by the main site contractor, L A Hall (Hull) Ltd. EDAS would like to thank Steve Copeman of L A Hall (Hull) Ltd, the church architect Andrew Boyce of Ferrey and Mennim, and Colin Beal of Beal Construction for their co-operation in carrying out the work.

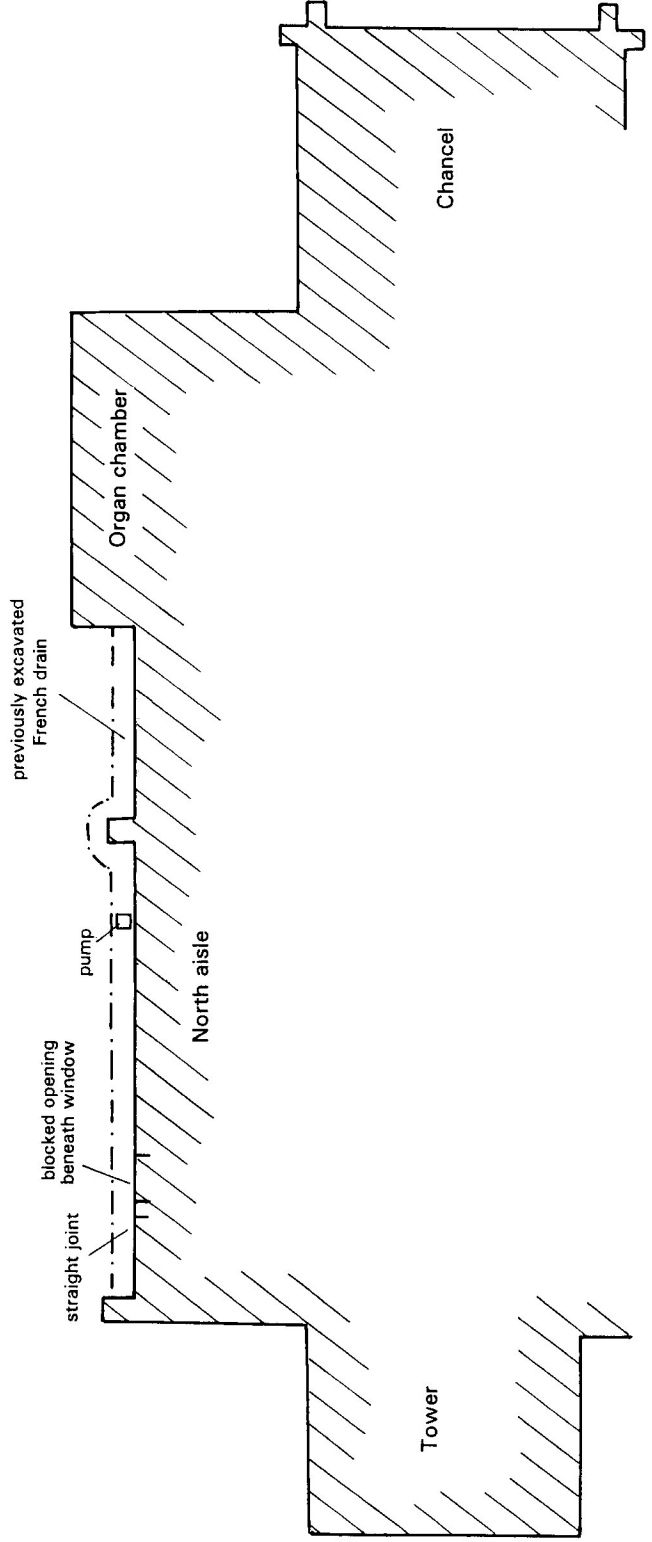
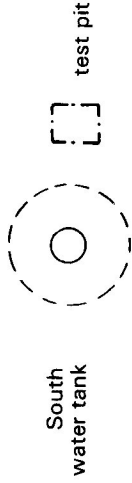
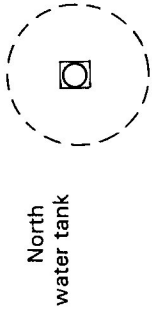
8.2 The site recording was undertaken by Shaun Richardson, and he produced the fieldwork records. Ed Dennison produced the final report and drawings, and the responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies remains with him.



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PROJECT	
ST PETER'S CHURCH, ROWLEY	
TITLE	
GENERAL LOCATION	
SCALE	DATE
AS SHOWN	JAN 2007
EDAS	FIGURE
	1

PROJECT	ST PETER'S CHURCH, ROWLEY		
TITLE	WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS		
SCALE	AS SHOWN	DATE	JAN 2007
	EDAS	FIGURE	2



Based on a plan provided by Ferrey and Mennim



Plate 1: Openings of both underground water storage tanks, looking S.

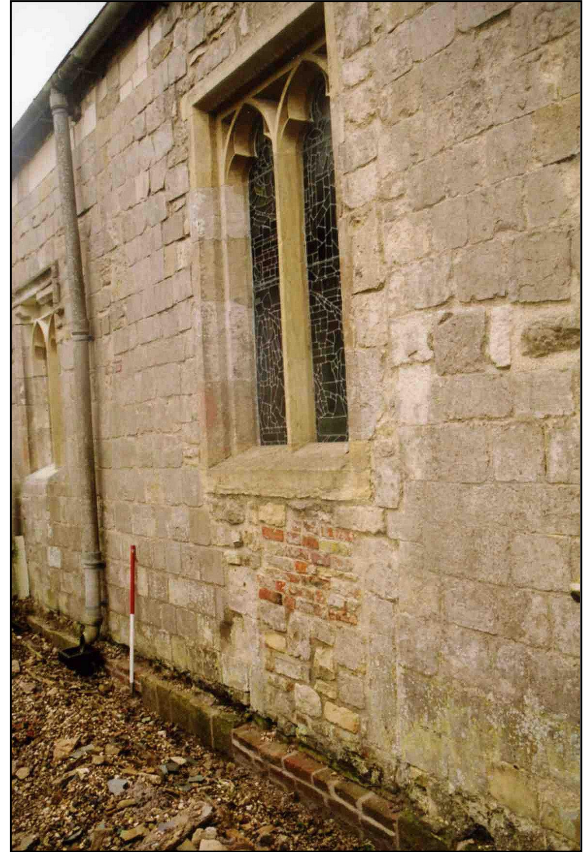


Plate 2: West end of north aisle, showing blocked opening beneath window, looking SE.



Plate 3: Central part of north aisle showing old pump and cleaned out French drain, looking SE.

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

- 001 Compacted black silt loam topsoil and turf, 0.20m thick.
- 002 Compact mid brown silty clay with frequent angular pieces..

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2: LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Location : CHURCH OF ST PETER, ROWLEY, EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE, EAST YORKSHIRE
IoE number : 164732
Date listed : 07 FEBRUARY 1968
Date of last amendment : 07 FEBRUARY 1968
Grade : II* GV

SE93SE
6/90

ROWLEY

Rowley

Church of St Peter

Church. C12 origins, late 12 south aisle, early C13 west tower and north aisle, C14 chancel, tower raised in C15, south chancel chapel of 1730, C19 north vestry. Coursed squared rubble, with considerable brick patching, brick to porch, slate roofs. 3-stage west tower, 3-bay aisled nave with south porch, 2-bay chancel with south chapel and north vestry. West tower: lancet to second stage, 2-light pointed belfry opening with Perpendicular tracery, crenellated parapet with corner finials. 2-light pointed west window with Perpendicular tracery. Nave: two 2-light square-headed windows with Perpendicular tracery. Deeply moulded C13 pointed south door under hoodmould with face stops. Pointed openings to C19 south porch. Coped gable with cross finial to nave. North wall: buttresses with offsets. Three 2-light square-headed windows with Perpendicular tracery: hoodmould to centre window. Blocked north door. South chapel: 2-light square-headed window with Perpendicular tracery to south. Chancel: buttresses with offsets. 2-light square-headed window with cusped ogee tracery. 3-light pointed east window with Perpendicular tracery. Raised coped gable with cross finial. C19 three-light pointed window with Perpendicular tracery to north chapel. Interior: pointed tower arch on plain imposts. Late C12 south arcade: 3 pointed double-chamfered arches on polygonal abaci, capitals with leaf-carving, cylindrical piers, and water-holding bases. Early C13 north arcade: 3 double-chamfered pointed arches on polygonal abaci with nailhead on cylindrical piers with water-holding bases. C19 pointed double-chamfered chancel arch on column corbels. Round arch, with keystone and sunk foliage panels to soffit, into south chapel: the walls of which are lined with marble funerary tablets to Ellerker family. Round-headed piscina with continuous broad chamfer to chancel to south wall. Early C13 font: tapering square base the sides ornamented with blank arcading (pointed arches) on central cylindrical column flanked by 4 corner colonettes with annuli.

Source: Images of England website (www.imagesofengland.org.uk)