

St Andrew's Chapel, Boxley, Kent

National Grid Reference TQ 75490 58236



Figure 1: Excavations in progress, July 2019. This shows test pit 3 being excavated by SPAB volunteers. View looking east.

A report on recent archaeological investigations

Site status: Grade II listed building (National Heritage List reference 1185580)

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Figure 2: Site location plans. Ordnance Survey data, Crown Copyright 2019. All rights reserved. Licence number 100051221.

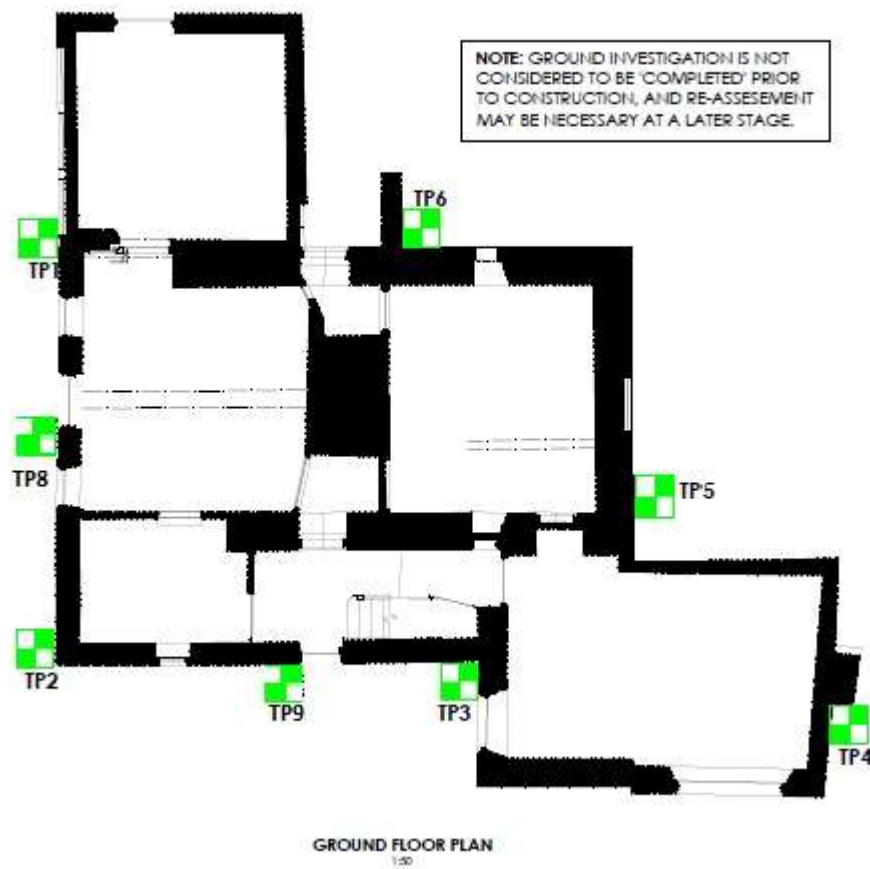


Figure 3: Test pit locations – not to scale.

1 Introduction

1.1 Boxley Abbey

The Cistercian abbey of Boxley was founded in 1143 or 1146 by William of Ypres. It was a daughter house of Clairvaux (Robinson 1998, 73-4), and thus took its filiation directly from France rather than any of the English houses of the order. Boxley was closed in 1538 as part of Henry VIII's Dissolution of the Monasteries. Parts of the cloister were converted into a mansion house, but the church was ruined to prevent re-occupation should the Catholic faith mount a successful revival after the king's demise. No such reversion occurred despite Queen Mary's efforts, and Boxley has remained in private, secular hands throughout the rest of its history since the middle of the 16th century.

The Cistercians favoured a harsher, more ascetic life than the earlier monastic orders, believing in the virtue of a life of austerity, prayer and manual labour. They sought seclusion, away from the concourse of society. Wherever possible their abbeys were founded in the countryside away from towns, ideally in wild and remote areas. This allowed them to carry out major land improvement projects. Their communities could be very large (for example Rievaulx and Fountains Abbeys in North Yorkshire), and included lay brethren: they provided back-up to the monks, and acted as ploughmen, dairymen, shepherds, carpenters, and masons. The Cistercians' skills as farmers eventually made the Order one of the most rich and influential. They were especially successful in the rural north of England where they concentrated on sheep farming. Despite the effects of the Dissolution (and later changes), Boxley retains exceptional survival of its monastic complex. In many other cases little is known other than the layouts of the church and cloisters, but at Boxley elements of both survive within a virtually intact walled Inner Precinct. This also includes the Hospitium, one of England's most remarkable medieval survivals – thought originally to have been a hostel for visitors to the Abbey, and used subsequently as a barn. The monastic fabric is almost intact despite the later changes.

Unsurprisingly, Boxley Abbey enjoys a high degree of statutory protection for its archaeology, history and architecture. The entirety of the Inner Precinct (including the perimeter walls as well as the core remains of the abbey itself) is a Scheduled Monument (National Heritage List number 1012264), designated under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 to protect the site's archaeological resource. This includes the Hospitium, which (unusually for a building) is specifically included within the Schedule while also being a Grade I listed building (NHL No 1086229). Boxley Abbey House is also listed at Grade II* (NHL No 1086228); it retains fabric and features from the monastic cloister. A terrace of six cottages extending westward from the north side of the gatehouse in the west side of the Inner Precinct wall is Grade II listed (NHL No 1336236); the gatehouse itself is a component of the Scheduled Monument.

1.2 St Andrew's Chapel

St Andrew's Chapel is a small detached building some 275m to the south-west of the Abbey's Inner Gatehouse. It therefore stands within an area which would have formed part of an Outer Precinct: it is not clear how (or whether) this was formally defined, ie by walls, earth banks, or mere hedgerows and field boundaries. There is little obvious reason to doubt its original connection to the Abbey, however, and it may have been a separate chapel for pilgrims and visitors to the Abbey. The building sits within a roughly triangular curtilage extending to c 195m², with a perimeter of c 2140m. The Chapel was designated as a Grade II* listed building on 20 October 1952. This places it in the top 7% of the c 400,000 listed buildings in England. The list description is provided at Appendix 1.

The Chapel lost its monastic function at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. It soon seems to have been converted for domestic accommodation, being extended to the west, south and east; a floor was also inserted within the former chapel. Part of the building was used as a post office from the late 19th century, and a small extension at the north-west corner was part of this. The property seems to have followed with the descent of the Abbey, but was sold privately approximately 50 years ago. The new owner continued to maintain the grounds, but unfortunately the building was left unoccupied and gradually drifted towards dereliction. Fortunately the roof remains in place and the property is reasonably secure and watertight, but there is cause for concern over its structural soundness in several areas. The Chapel is on Historic England's *Heritage at Risk* register, where its status is noted as

Condition: Poor

Occupancy / Use: Vacant/not in use

Priority: C - Slow decay; no solution agreed

The building is likely to remain on the register until its conservation and refurbishment have been completed, and its future use secured.

1.3 Location and land form

Boxley Abbey is located on a south-facing slope of the North Downs, between the M2 and M20 motorways to the north of Maidstone. The River Medway meanders north towards Rochester c 1km to the south-west of the Abbey, while the Pilgrim's Way runs north-west to south-east along the brow of the sloping ground c 1.4km to the north. A Roman road runs down the hill from north to south c 600m west of the Abbey (c 325m from the Chapel), just inside (east of) the modern A429 trunk road.

Topographically, the Inner Precinct of the Abbey slopes down from north to south, from a highest point of a little over 35m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) to a low of just under 25m aOD at its south-west corner. The Chapel sits within a roughly triangular area of fairly flay ground, at c 22m aOD. This area was very heavily overgrown throughout the period covered by the investigations reported on here, which precluded any attempt to evaluate the area around the Chapel itself. Historic maps (including older Ordnance Survey editions) show several outbuildings within the curtilage, mainly to the north and north-west of the Chapel. No building remains are recognisable at the moment, but their positions might be more apparent when extensive clearance of the site is possible.

The bedrock geology at the Chapel (and Boxley Abbey) comprises the Gault Formation - Mudstone. This sedimentary material formed approximately 101 to 113 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period, in a local environment dominated by shallow seas. No superficial (drift) geology is recorded at the Chapel or Abbey, although a small area of Head deposits (Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel) is documented immediately to the west of the former. These deposits formed up to 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period, in a local environment dominated by subaerial slopes.¹

1.4 Background to the project

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings has purchased the Chapel, with the intention of carrying out an exemplary programme of conservation and refurbishment in order to bring the building back into viable and sustainable use. As a part of this, SPAB commissioned Graham Keevill to carry out preliminary archaeological investigations at the site. The work has included examination of the surviving built fabric, and the excavation of trial pits. The former has not yet benefitted from significant opening up of the structure to examine currently hidden features. The latter comprised

¹ Source: British Geological Survey, <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>

the excavation of nine small pits in locations around the building which were of interest both for archaeological and engineering reasons. The investigations therefore explored the common interest in the structure from two distinct disciplines which nevertheless had common purposes: to enhance our understanding of the building, and to facilitate its preservation for the future.

1.5 Previous archaeological work

The site of Boxley Abbey was the subject of limited archaeological investigations in the late 19th century, and again in the early 1970s (Tester 1973). The Chapel does not appear to have been the subject of any previous archaeological investigation. No such work is recorded on the Kent Historic Environment Record.

1.6 Archaeological work during 2019

The work commissioned by SPAB during 2019 comprised a visual assessment of the standing building and the excavation of nine small test pits around the external perimeter of the building. Assessment of the standing fabric was carried out during a series of site visits from March to July 2019, and was largely restricted to visual examination of the building. No opening up for archaeological purposes was carried out, and only very limited amounts for other reasons. Graham Keevill carried out all of this assessment, but with the benefit of considerable input from others such as Matthew Slocombe (SPAB) and Debbie Goacher (Kent Archaeological Society). The test pits were excavated from 11 to 13 July 2019 during a SPAB working party at the Abbey. The excavations were directed by Graham Keevill assisted by Cathy Keevill and Jacob Scott, with SPAB volunteers carrying out the bulk of the digging.



Figure 4: General location photographs of TP1 (left) and TP2.



Figure 5: General location photographs for TP3 (top left), TP4 (top right), TP 5 (middle left), TP6 (middle right) and TP7 (left).

2 Description of the results

2.1 The trial pits

The nine test pits were all of small size, with most being around 0.6m square. Some were extended to examine features of interest either archaeologically or for the project's structural engineer. Eight of the nine were against the external walls of the building. These were sited to examine areas which were important for stratigraphic analysis of the Chapel's development (phasing), while being equally important for assessing structural issues such as masonry deflection/movement and water ingress. One test pit (TP7) was located away from the building, close to the gate into the property off Boarley Lane: this pit assessed a potential route for mains services into the site, but it was also thought that it might encounter evidence of former outbuildings or even a monastic-period Outer Precinct wall. The excavations were all carried out by hand, except that modern concrete drain channels and pits were cut out mechanically when necessary (ie in TPs 1, 4, 5 and 6). The following paragraphs briefly describe the stratigraphy (layers, features etc) found in each pit. The context numbers used to record each unit of stratigraphy are shown in **bold** type for clarity.² Only contexts/numbers which are directly relevant to the narrative are included here: a full list of all contexts is included at Appendix 2. Brief interpretative comments are included in the following paragraphs where appropriate, but the significance of the results is considered in Section 3 of the report.

2.1.1 Test pit 1

This excavation was located on the west end of the Chapel, at the junction between the north-west corner of the building and a small single-storey extension added in the late 19th century. The pit was up to 0.75m long north-south (but this included a modern brick and concrete drain pit, which was only partly broken out), 0.5m wide, and 0.4m deep (excluding the drain pit).

The west wall of the Chapel appears to be an early post-medieval (ie post-monastic) extension. It, and the conjoining south wall, largely consist of massive blocks of ashlar masonry, well coursed but surprisingly thin. The wall was recorded as context **1**, and the bottom course continued below ground for only 0.14m. Oddly, it also extended northwards for 0.2m beyond the north-west corner of the moulded plinth at the base of the wall. It is not clear whether this represented the start of a lost extension, a former connection to a boundary wall, or merely the coincidental result of laying a block that was simply a little too long for its purpose. No evidence of contemporary masonry was seen continuing to the north. Given that the later extension had minimal footings, any such masonry should have survived here. The absence therefore suggests that no such extension had existed. The bottom of the ashlar block was partly obscured by the modern drain pit (**4**), but sufficient of this was broken out to show that the block did not appear to have any further masonry (whether ashlar or otherwise) beneath it. The wall therefore seemed to have been 'founded' in a layer of mid- to dark grey-brown silty clay (**6**), containing some stone and brick rubble in its lower part. This had certainly been cut by the shallow brick rubble footing (**3**) for the Victorian extension; it seems likely that wall **1** had also cut **6**, but this could not be proved conclusively because of the drain pit (**4**). It was clear, however, that there was soil underneath the bottom course of the ashlar, and a trowel could be pressed in here to the full length of its blade (ie 100mm).

² The numbers were assigned pit by pit using the sequence in which these were dug. This means that the numbers 'jump' somewhat from pit to pit.



Figure 6: TP 1 with the base course of wall **1** showing soil (probably layer **6**) extending under it.

2.1.2 Test pit 2

TP2 was excavated on the south-west corner of the Chapel, where some structural movement was evident. Most of the pit lay against the south wall, and the part wrapping round the west end was largely left unexcavated because a Victorian/modern downspout catch-pit and drain were found here (**24**, **25**). Removal of these was unnecessary archaeologically, while the condition of the masonry here gave some cause for concern as well. The southern portion of the pit was up to 1.4m long (east-west – it was shorter initially but was extended to expose more of the masonry described below), 0.65m wide, and 0.4m deep.

Here the south-west corner of the post-monastic extension was recorded as structure **20**. The lowest visible course of the ashlar masonry continued for 100mm below ground, where an offset course of ashlar (**21**) was found. This extended 60mm beyond the wall face at the east end of the pit, where at least two blocks were present, but the corner block (0.5m long) had been moved outwards to a width of 140mm at the corner. The block also slanted downwards to the corner, consistent with the movement evident in the wall masonry above. Substantial roots (probably of ivy) were evident penetrating the masonry here, and no doubt this contributed to the degree of movement seen. This would also have been facilitated by the apparent absence of foundations under most of the masonry – only two quite small and isolated stones (**22**) were present between the east end of the corner block and the next one to its east. As in pit 1, there appeared to be nothing but soil under the rest of offset **21**. The presence of two Victorian/modern iron pipes (**27**, gas, at shallow depth; and **28**, probably water, at the base of the pit) running roughly parallel with the south wall precluded deeper

excavations, and the nature of the footings could not be investigated further because of this. It seemed clear, however, that the standing building had poor foundations at this point.



Figure 7: TP 2 looking north, with extensive movement in wall **20** and foundation **21** clearly visible. Note the isolated stones (**22**) under the middle of **21**, and the various modern services.

2.1.3 Test pit 3

This pit was positioned at the junction between the east end of the south wall with the west side of the 'priest's lodging' (see Appendix 1). If the latter was part of the medieval phase, and the former was a post-monastic extension (as per current thinking), the south wall and its foundations should butt up to the wall of the lodging. In fact close observation of the standing fabric suggests that this is not so: the two walls appear quite clearly to be bonded in, and should thus be contemporary. From an archaeological perspective, the relationship between the foundations (if any) under the two walls was crucial. The location was also important to understand how this side of the Chapel operated from a structural perspective. TP3 was 0.9m long east-west, 0.8m wide, and 0.6m deep.

The two standing walls (**29** for the west wall of the lodging, **30** for the south wall of the Chapel) continued below ground for a single additional course each, of identical depths at 150mm. There was nothing here to contradict the impression that the two walls were fully bonded. Unlike pits 1 and 2, however, both wall appeared to have good foundations below them – although these were not necessarily contemporary, for reasons described below. The foundation under wall **29** comprised large, rough blocks of ragstone (**33**). These showed no sign of the careful dressing and tooling evident in the ashlar above. Two courses were visible, the upper one consisting of thin stones: the lower one was not investigated further. Perhaps significantly, there was no direct contact between wall **29** and foundation **33**, at least on the plane of the wall: there was a distinct 30mm wedge of

brown silty clay on top of the foundation, and the wall rested on this. It is possible that this represented some movement in the footing and that it was in contact with the wall further back into the masonry, but it is perhaps more suggestive of a constructional break between the laying of the foundations and the building of the wall above. The question of how long or significant this break might have been is discussed in Section 4.



Figure 8: Walls **30** and **29** (to the right) with their respective foundations. Note the clear gap between wall and footing in each case.

Exactly the same relationship was noted for the Chapel extension's south wall (**30**) and its ragstone foundation (**34**): if anything the soil-filled gap between them was more distinct. A sondage was dug at the west end of the test pit to examine the foundation. At least two courses were present, with a thinner (130mm) upper and a deeper (c 300mm) lower one. The latter was not necessarily the bottom course but a further one beneath it could not be found despite some probing. The nature of this 'footing' is open to some doubt, as no evidence for a foundation trench was evident in the silty clay subsoil (**32**) to its south (this also appeared to abut **33** to the east). Some possible implications of this will be discussed in Section 4.

A void was noted running along the south section of the test pit at an oblique angle just below the ground surface. A small hole was noted in wall **29** at the end of this. Both features probably relate to a modern (but removed) service such as a pipe similar to those found in TP2.

2.1.4 Test pit 4

Pit 4 was situated on the south side of the external chimney stack in the east gable of the timber-framed block on the east side of the priest's lodging. The condition of the fabric, existence or

otherwise of foundations, and damp penetration are a matter of concern in this location. It is also of interest archaeologically because of the position of the timber-framed block in the overall building phasing, the possibility that there had been a further bay to the east at some point in time, and for the relationship of the chimney to the rest of the building frame. The pit was 1.14m long east-west, up to 0.68m wide, and was excavated to a depth of only 0.2m to obviate the risk of undermining the poor-quality foundations of the inner frame.

As in several other pits, part of an external concrete perimeter drain (37) had to be cut out for the excavation to proceed. A further edging of concrete (36) inside (ie west of) this was left in situ, however, because it provided support to a thin layer of masonry rubble (35) resting on a layer of small cobbles in clay (42). Only the rubble appeared to be a footing for the in situ base plate of the timber frame. This proved to be a re-used piece, with a good-quality bead moulding suggestive of an original position around a door or window. This ran up to the south side of the brick chimney stack (38), whereas the cobbles and clay continued under the stack (which therefore seemed to be built directly off this layer). The chimney is made from late post-medieval (perhaps early 19th-century) bricks, so it is likely that it had been inserted into the timber frame rather than the latter having been built around the brickwork.



Figure 9: TP4 looking north-west, showing the bead-moulded re-used timber at the base of the framed extension, its poor-quality footings (supported by a remnant of the concrete drain), and the brick chimney stack. The layer of cobbles can just be seen under the stack.

A distinctive mid-yellow/brown slightly silty clay (41) occupied the area east of concrete 36 and south of the chimney stack. The relationship between this and the cobbles (42) could not be established because of concrete 36, but they were in the same horizontal plane. Layer 41 appeared

to be cut away to the east of the stack, and subsoil **40** above it was also present at the base of the pit here, continuing down for an unknown depth.

2.1.5 Test pit 5

The intention had been to excavate PP5 in the angle between the east wall of the Chapel and the north wall of the adjacent timber-framed block. One of the external concrete drain channels ran along the base of the latter, however, and as with TP4 the obviously poor state of the foundations (if indeed there are any) under the framed section necessitated a change of plan. The pit was therefore moved slightly to the north, and was dug alongside the drain channel instead of through it. The pit was 0.65m long east-west, 0.62m wide, and up to 1.04m deep.



Figure 10: TP5 looking north-west with the in situ and disturbed Gault Formation at the base of the pit, overlain by the offset masonry. Note the massive piece of quarry stone on the left edge.

The bottom 0.44m of the pit was filled with a pale grey to brown marly clay (**47**), gritty but devoid of rubble inclusions. A similar layer was found at the base of TPs 6 and 7 (see below). In all three cases it was identified as a natural/geological deposit, ie the Gault Formation. Three sherds of red

calcareous semi-stoneware with splashed green-glazed spots on the base were found at the base of the pit. These date from the decades to either side of the Dissolution of the Monasteries: they are therefore significant in terms of the historic origin of the Chapel and its use in the early post-medieval period. This is particularly so because the massive masonry wall (44) of the Chapel's east end wall was founded at the very base of the pit, ie well into layer 47. The lower 0.42m of the masonry must be regarded as foundations, probably trench-built as a foundation cut further out from the wall could not be seen. The lower part of the pit had to be narrowed due to the restricted space for excavation, however, and it is possible that the edge of the foundation cut lay outside the lower edge of the pit. This would make sense of the pot sherds from its base, and the slightly mottled character of layer 47 (which could be redeposited rather than undisturbed natural). Further credence is given to this suggestion by the fact that a hard/firm yellow-brown mudstone and clay layer (48) was found in a small sondage dug at the very base of the pit. The limitations of the sondage must be accepted, but this certainly seemed to be undisturbed natural ground onto which the masonry had been founded.

The masonry (44) continued up for a further 0.4m, at which point an 80mm offset was present. The wall above this was recorded as context 43. The stonework beneath the offset comprised massive ashlar blocks in contrast to the semi-coursed rubble of the lower part. This seemed to be consistent with the suggestion that the lower part of 44 was built as the wall's foundation, with the upper part (including the offset) standing above the late medieval ground level.

The ashlar part of wall 44 was abutted by a 0.5m-thick layer of mid to dark grey-brown silty clay (46) with finds of later post-medieval date (18th century). Much of this was undiagnostic red earthenware and glass bottle bases, identified on site and retained there. A complete tea pot body (missing its handle, spout and lid) was kept for further research, however, and is described below. The layer also contained stone rubble, including one very large piece which occupied much of the south-west corner of the pit. It could not be removed because it extended well beyond the section, under the concrete drain. Taking it out would have collapsed the edge of the pit and could have undermined the drain (and, potentially the timber-framed wall to the south).

2.1.6 Test pit 6

This excavation was located on the north wall of the Chapel, at its junction with a small porch added on the east side of the late 19th-century extension off the north-west corner of the building. The main aim was to examine the depth of the Chapel's foundations (this being one of the original late medieval walls), while also assessing the nature and depth of the porch footings. As in several other pits, part of the external concrete drain (51) had to be removed for the pit to be excavated. The excavation was also constrained by the stump and roots of a small clump of self-seeded saplings which had been removed beforehand, but could not be ground out because of safety and stability concerns. The pit was up to 0.66m long east-west, 0.46m wide, and 0.91m deep.

A firm, pale grey to brown marly clay (60) was found at the very bottom of the pit. This appeared to be identical to layers 10 in pit 7 (see below) and 47 in TP5. It is also interpreted as the natural geology, although the limited width of the pit precluded any excavation into it. Significantly, however, the bottom of the north wall (50) terminated directly on the marly clay; the masonry was 0.4m deep, with a 60mm-wide offset at its top. It then continued (49) for 0.5m up to the top of the concrete drain; this section of the masonry had a slight batter, becoming more distinct at ground level, with the standing portion of the Chapel wall then rising vertically off it. Masonry 49 and 50 were abutted by a dark grey-brown silty clay (54); this appeared to occupy the full 0.8m depth of the pit under the concrete drain, but the restricted nature of the excavation made it difficult to be sure of this. Finds (all of 18th/19th-century date and retained on site) were only present in the upper part

of the pit, so it is possible that the lower levels of **54** were actually a different layer. Masonry **50** would certainly make sense as a foundation cut into an earlier soil horizon, so this interpretation is favoured.



Figure 11: TP6 looking south, with the Gault Formation at the base overlain by the north wall of the Chapel. Note the stacked tile footing for the porch, overlaying the offset foundation.

The east wall (**53**) of the small porch built against the Chapel rested on a somewhat unusual footing (**52**). This consisted of a tile layer at its base, resting directly on the offset of **50**. The rest of it was formed from pegged roof tiles stacked on edge in a single layer/course. Wall **53** was built off this.

2.1.7 Test pit 7

This excavation was located just inside the entrance gate on the west side of the property, just off Boarley Lane. The pit was 0.8m square, and generally 0.66m deep. A spade pit in its centre was dug for a further depth of 0.16m. This examined a layer of firm, pale grey-brown marly clay (**10**) found across the entire base of the pit, and continuing well below the base of the sondage (it was probed for c 0.3m with a survey arrow). This appears to be the natural geology, the Gault Formation. The majority of the pit was occupied by a 0.46m-thick mid-grey/brown silty clay (**9**) containing large amounts of rubble (stone, brick, tile etc) as well as pottery, glass and other finds of mid- to late 19th-century date. This was retained on site and has not been analysed further. The topsoil (**8**), here as in most of the pits, was a dark grey-brown silty clay, 0.2m thick in this instance.



Figure 12: TP7 looking north-west, with the Gault Formation very clearly visible across the base of the pit.

2.1.8 Test pit 8

TP8 was sited on the south side of the doorway in the (extended) west end of the Chapel. It was an addition to the original planned number of pits, and sought to confirm the nature of the west wall's foundations given the results from pits 1 and 2. The pit was 0.61m long north-south, 0.52m wide, and 0.3m deep; its north side was against a modern stone-paved path (19) with concrete edging (20) running west from the doorway to what was, presumably, a former (but no longer extant) gate onto Boarley Lane. Unfortunately this pit was not photographed.

The earliest exposed context was a line of medium to large ragstone blocks (17) running north from the south-east corner of the pit. These extended 0.22m west from the west wall of the Chapel, and underlay it – but the stones did not appear to be directly associated with the west wall (15). There was a very definite gap of around 40mm between them, filled with mid- to dark brown silty clay (16). This appeared to be the same as the layer (13) into which 15 (the 60mm offset bottom course of the wall) had been cut. If correct, this means that the stones (17) cannot have been contemporary with the west end of the building (which is believed to be an early post-monastic extension). This will be discussed in Section 4. Offset course 15 comprised a single well-built course of near-ashlar quality stonework, although the standing wall above (14) was of better-quality masonry. The remaining layers were an 80mm-thick silty clay subsoil (12) and the topsoil (11) to the south of the footpath.

2.1.9 Test pit 9

The final pit was another addition to the original scheme, and was excavated on the west side of the doorway in the south aisle wall of Chapel. Its purpose was to expose the base of the wall and check

whether it had any foundations, given that the results of pits 2 and 3 at either end of the wall had been so different. The pit 0.7m long east-west, 0.6m wide, and 0.5m deep.

The findings were similar to those in TP3. A substantial structure of uncoursed ragstone rubble (**56**) was found underlying the aisle wall (**55**), but again separated from it by a distinct 20mm-30mm soil-filled gap (**59**). As the photograph below shows, **55** had a somewhat stepped/sloping appearance, but no sign of a construction cut could be seen in the sections running south from the aisle wall. The mid/dark grey-brown silty clay (**58**) which occupied most of the pit (apart from a thin topsoil, **57**, which ran over the top of **55**) therefore appeared to abut the ragstone structure. The finds from this layer were interesting: they were mostly medieval and early post-medieval, though two sherds of English stoneware belong to the 18th or even the 19th century. The earlier finds were all from the lower part of the pit, however, and might therefore suggest that **55** was of late medieval date. An early post-monastic date is also possible.



Figure 13: TP9 looking north-west, with the ragstone rubble structure (foundation?) underlying the Chapel's aisle wall, but seemingly separate from it.

2.2 Artefacts from the trial pits

Artefacts were recovered from most of the test pits, sometimes in substantial numbers. Some of the material was of little interest or value in terms of researching the site (eg obviously modern window glass, roof tile and undiagnostic slate), while the late 19th/20th-century ceramics were also of limited use. A sample of the latter category was usually reserved for further research (such as the ginger beer bottles described below, where the local context is of some value for historical and social research), while the remaining material was retained on site in case it might have some use subsequently for educational and interpretative purposes. All medieval and post-medieval finds, and

early-mid-19th-century material, was kept and is reported on here. The pottery has been recorded using local, regional and national reference series, in particular the fabric codes used by the Museum of London (MOLAS 2013). The finds are described briefly in the following paragraphs, with a full catalogue in the accompanying table.

There are medieval pottery sherds from test pits 2 and 5. The sherd from TP2 has a partially green-glazed exterior and a light green glazed interior in a white, semi-white and red quartz sand-tempered ware. This is a sherd of Hampshire-Surrey green glazed Border ware (BORDG) which is dated from 1500-1700. The three sherds of the base of a jar or cooking pot from TP5 are of a sandy red ware with limestone or chalk on the exterior and a splashed orange glaze on the exterior. This is a London-type early post-medieval red ware (PMREC) dated from 1480 to 1600. In both cases a pre-Dissolution date is likely for the sherds on ceramic grounds. There are post-medieval pottery sherds including a Cologne/Frechen Bartmann drinking jug or krug sherd from TP9. This sherd has part of the beard of the face and moulded leaf detail around the medallion on the main body of the jug. The fabric and form are dated from 1550-1580 and there is a similar type dated to 1540 in the Victoria and Albert Museum collections. There is also a Staffordshire-type yellow brown combed through design dated from the 18th century from TP9, probably from a higher level in the pit.

A medieval to post-medieval tile kiln was found in 1928 in the grounds of Boxley Abbey Farm (Grove 1958, 216-19). Boxley Abbey was noted for its tile works, and in 1362 sold 5000 flat tiles at 6s 8d and 2000 at 10s the thousand. The works may have produced bricks as well. The medieval tiles from TP3 and TP8 are probably local products. TP9 has medieval tile from the lowest level of the pit. A range of limestone and quartz tempered roof tiles may be a local variant. Medieval floor tile from TP3 and a small triangular floor tile fragment from TP9 both have an olive/dark green glaze with yellow under slip. The floor tile fabric is quartz, iron ore and grog tempered with a light orange colour. Both examples are from the bottom of the trenches up to 0.75 m down. Excavations at Boxley Abbey in the early 1970s exposed similar floor tiles in a number of areas (Tester 1973) such as the warming house fireplace with a deep recess nearby, which was paved with square green and yellow tiles.

A mid-18th century brown-glazed teapot was recovered in TP5. The teapot has seven holes for the former spout and the handle attachment in place but no handle. The body of the teapot is complete but for a hole in the base where a maker's mark might have been. It is a small teapot, 10cm in height and diameter. It has rouletted decoration on the upper part of the pot, beading on the rim, and applied vine leaves and other floral detail around the main body. The teapot is in Staffordshire Black glazed ware (STBL) dated from 1740-1780.

The other post-medieval pottery types are a range of white, brown and light brown stoneware bottles. Many have incised and printed names, in some cases including Maidstone or Sandling as places of origin. J Kingman Maidstone Kent is the most numerous, and all the examples have incised lettering. John Kingman was based at 36 Bower Place, Maidstone, and produced ginger beer. The bottles were sealed with cork.

'R Pea' on one bottle sherd could be Richard Pearce, who was based at 46 Upper Stone Street, Maidstone, and also produced ginger beer. A printed design on a light brown stoneware has W Bodkin which is probably William Bodkin, a producer of home brew at 112 Week Street, Maidstone. The home brew could be beer or ginger beer. It is possible that ginger beer bottles were re-used for other liquids. There was also the presence of a local brewery which was also based at Week Street, Maidstone, and may have been a local distributor.

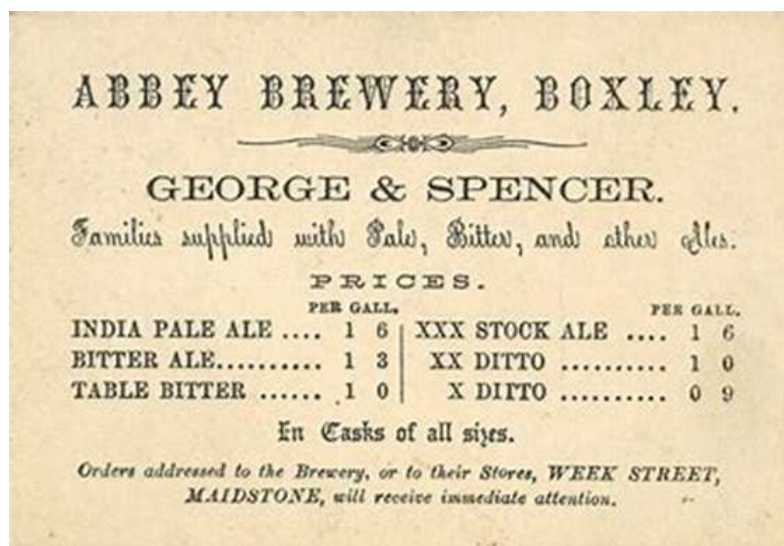


Figure 14: A complete example of a Kingman of Maidstone bottle (not from the Chapel), and an advertisement for a local brewery. While reminiscent of today's trend for 'craft beers', the prices are rather different ...

Material/ form	Fabric	No	Wt	Date	Comment
TP2, cxt 26					
Bowl or mug?	BORDG	1	10	1550-1700	Half glazed light green exterior yellow green light green glazed int body sherd
White glazed bottle rim	ENGs	1	106		Rim and shoulder d9am 2cm
White glazed incised lettering	ENGs	1	77		-STONE probably MAIDSTONE
White glazed	ENGs	1	91		Black printed circular outline
Brown glazed neck bottle		1	66		Glazed effect rim neck shoulder
Brown salt glazed	ENGs	1	26		Incised design R PEA MAIDST(ONE?)
Brown salt glazed		1	40		
Brown salt glazed rough orange peel effect		1	23		Incised J KING MAIDST rim neck shoulder
Brown salt glazed rough orange peel effect		1	17		
Brown salt glazed rough orange peel effect		1	39		
Light brown salt glazed bottle	ENGs	1	127		Incised design J KINGMAN MAIDSTONE KENT on neck and shoulder
Light brown salt glazed bottle		1	19		Shoulder sherd incised J KINGMAN MAIDSTONE KENT
Light brown salt glazed bottle		1	24		Incised ING

Material/ form	Fabric	No	Wt	Date	Comment
Light brown salt glazed bottle		1	54		Incised MAN E KENT (KINGMAN MAIDSTONE KENT)
Metallic brown glaze bottle rims		5	258		
Metallic brown glaze bottle base		1	105		Incised DAN SANDL(LING?) MAIDS(TONE)
Light pink brown stoneware		1	64		Printed circular design W BODK BR
TP3, 32					
Roof tile		3	19		Light orange white quartz/limestone
Roof tile		2	30		Very light orange white quartz/iron ore
Roof tile		1	12		Mod-coarse grog voids fine light orange
Peg tile -roof		2	25		Dark orange-red
Lead? weight		1	9		
tile		1	68		red iron ore limestone
tile		1	54		Stone roof tile? Limestone
Floor tile		1	544	Mid C13-C14?	Slip dark green glaze square tile 90mmx 105mm 30mm thick; grog temper, iron ore quartz
TP5, 46					
Semi whole teapot	STBL	3	484	1740-1780	Profile and two rim pieces rouletted decoration 7 holes for spout and base hole in. 10 cm diameter and 10 cm height. Small teapot black possibly 1750. Staffordshire Blackware type
TP5, 47					
Pot base	PMREC	3	172	1480-1600	Fine sandy with shelly limestone red semi stoneware splashed green glaze spots on base London type early post medieval red calcareous ware
TP8, 13					
Dish rim	PMR	2	200		Brown-dark brown interior glaze thick bead rim creaming pan/bowl diameter 22cm 15%
Roof tile fragments		4	46		3 light orange with rare coarse quartz 1 dark orange sandy
Animal bone		2	419		Large jaw and tooth cattle/horse
TP9, 58					
Bartmann jug sherd	KOLFREC	1	15	1550-1580	Bartmann drinking jug partial bread of face and part of medallion with leaves around light grey stoneware
	STSL	1	1	1660-1730	Yellow glaze with brown slip combed through; early 18 th century

Material/ form	Fabric	No	Wt	Date	Comment
Brown stoneware	ENG5	2	51	1700-1900	English brown glazed stoneware
Roof tile		2	82	medieval	Light orange/yellow peg tile squared off peg hole
Roof tile		4	547	medieval	Dark orange limestone and voids. Double peg holes in tile
Brick		1	15		Orange, soft fragment
Brick		7	299		Red orange soft rubbed? brick
Animal bone	Sheep/ Goat	5	20		Fragments include vertebra
Roof tile		4	166	medieval	From bottom of test pit. Light orange yellow quartz + fine limestone
Floor tile		1	63	Medieval mid C13-C14	From bottom of test pit. Orange fabric limestone and red iron ore. Yellow slip under olive green to yellow glaze -triangular fragment similar to test pit 3 example.

Table 1: Finds catalogue

3 Discussion

All of the test pits were excavated around the exterior of the Chapel and its various extensions. This section therefore focusses largely on that aspect of the archaeological work so far; it includes some consideration of the standing fabric based on the observations made during site visits. The interior is discussed where it seems relevant and necessary to do so, although the small amount of opening up carried out so far (especially under floors) inevitably limits what can be said here. Dating evidence from finds of pottery, tile and other materials recovered from the pits is included in each section below.

3.1 The foundations of the Chapel

The foundations of the Chapel were examined in TP5 (east wall) and TP6 (north wall). While there were some variations in form and depth between the two (as described above), the character of the footings was essentially the same. They comprised well-built coursed masonry using stone of similar nature as the standing fabric – ie generally large, quite well-shaped blocks, if not finished to ashlar quality. Both were set on the firm Gault marl geology, the somewhat greater depth at the east end presumably being due to variations in the surface level of the bedrock.³ The foundations had either been trench-built (ie the masonry was set tight against the edge of a trench which had been dug to the exact width required), or within a wider cut: if the latter is the case, the edge lay outside the confines of the two pits (or at least their lower parts). The presence of three very late medieval pot sherds at the very base of pit 5 provides a strong indication (but not quite proof) that the second

³ There is a small chance that such variations reflect the presence of archaeological features such as ditches belonging to an earlier phase of activity on the site. These would have been all but impossible to recognise in small pits such as these. The absence of any earlier finds (eg of Roman date), however, perhaps suggests that the different reflect do simply reflect variations in the bedrock surface. Only more extensive excavation could prove this either way.

interpretation is correct, and that the foundations were built within a trench wide enough for the builders to work within it but outside the line of the masonry itself.

The exposed masonry changed almost imperceptibly from foundation to standing masonry in each of the two pits. The point at which this transition occurred was not easy to recognise, but was clearer in TP5 than in TP6. In the former, an offset was found only 0.2m below the current ground surface; the wall course above this (which had been concealed/buried by the topsoil and subsoil) was of good quality ashlar masonry – which continued for at least two further courses beneath the offset, to 0.6m below ground. The subsoil (clearly of quite late post-medieval date, probably 18th-century) also covered/abutted these courses. The offset and these course are therefore considered to have been standing, visible masonry when originally built. The apparent date of the subsoil seems to mean that they remained visible for around 200 years after the Dissolution. The rest of the stone masonry was foundation, of inferior (but still good) build quality. The very restricted size of TP6 was compounded by the battered upper masonry of the north wall and the offset under this, so that it was impossible to recognise a similar topsoil/subsoil/foundation relationship here, but the character and depth of the masonry was much the same. The slightly battered upper section of wall **49** may be the same as the upper part of wall **44**, and the rough 'chamfer' visible immediately above ground on the north wall perhaps equates to the offset just below ground in TP5 (the ground levels are slightly different at the two pits).



Figure 15: Evidence for what may have been an offset, now badly damaged, at or just above the current ground level can be seen in TP6. Note the way the bottom of the porch wall is 'sloped' against the wall of the Chapel. Note also the moulded chamfered plinth at a higher level in the wall behind the top of the ranging rod.

The recovery of late medieval pottery from the base of TP5 was among the most important results of all in the test pits. The particular pottery type has a date-range spanning the Dissolution of the Monasteries, but this particular sherd appears to belong to the earlier part of this, and it is therefore regarded as medieval. If, as suggested above, it comes from the base of a wide foundation trench, it confirms the accepted date of the Chapel as a whole. Thus the sherds appear to corroborate the evidence from dendrochronological dating of the Chapel roof to c 1484-5 (Bridge and Tyers 2019), placing the building's construction in the last decades of the Monastic era. In both instances a degree of caution is perhaps worthwhile. The tree-ring evidence is so far restricted to a single dated sample, and as the authors state, 'the dating of a whole phase of construction based on a precise felling date from one timber is not ideal' (ibid). Furthermore, the finely moulded wall plate and beam from which the date derives seems very elaborate and domestic in character, perhaps not fitting comfortably with an ecclesiastical function. This author found an entire hidden ceiling of very similar moulded timbers in the former Prior's Lodging at Christ Church, Oxford, dated from tree rings to 1495 (Miles 2014). As for the test pit evidence, dating a building phase by a few sherds of pottery from one small test pit offers no more confidence. In both cases, however, this is the only direct and firm evidence we have so far – and it fits very well with the historical record.

Looking at the built fabric, the east end retains plentiful evidence for the location, size and form of the building's original east window. Though obscured by ivy outside and render inside, this was clearly a large (full-height) lancet (Figure 16). Externally, this can be seen from brick blocking at the point of the arch and across the centre of the window, with the inserted mullioned windows on the ground and first floors largely fitting within the frame of the lancet. Internally, flaking paint and render above the first-floor inserted window also belies the existence of the lancet's head. This substantial window fits well with the assumed ecclesiastical function of the building (though it would not be wholly out of place in a more domestic environment).

Perhaps the most unusual and complex stratigraphic sequencing occurs at the south-east corner of the Chapel, where the timber-framed section joins the apparently original late medieval building. At low level, the archaeological relationships are clear and seemingly straightforward: the brick infill of the timber-framed extension clearly abuts (and is therefore later than) the moulded chamfered plinth of the Chapel's east wall. Immediately above the plinth, however, the relationship is reversed: the carefully dressed ashlar blocks of the east wall all finish in a clear straight joint, butting up to a brick pier rising off the plinth (Figure 17). At face value, this suggests that the upper masonry of the east wall post-dates the timber framed section. Clearly this is illogical, but it still needs to be explained. The first relevant observations are that the brickwork of the is quite late (probably early 19th century), while it also cuts into the brick panelling in the timber frame to the east. Thus the pier seems to have replaced something earlier. Even so, this does not remove the clear evidence that the ashlar masonry was built against something structural rising from the moulded plinth. Stepping back for a moment, we may note that the 'priest's lodging' to the south of the Chapel is bonded in (and so appears to be contemporary) with its 'south aisle'. The 'aisle' is an addition, probably post-dating the Dissolution. The timber-framed bay to the south-east of the Chapel appears to have been added to the lodging. If these relationships are correct (and they all appear to be), it must logically follow that the timber-framed bays are later than the Chapel itself. This does not preclude the former existence of an earlier building in this area, however, and this might make sense of the unusual relationship at the south-east corner of the Chapel. It is at least possible that a large post rose from the corner of the moulded plinth, and formed the start of an earlier timber-framed structure running to the east, to the south, or both, contemporary with the Chapel. This would make sense of the straight edge in the masonry of the east wall.



Figure 16: The east elevation of the Chapel is still obscured by ivy (now dead), but the arch of the former lancet window can still be discerned through the brick blocking above and below the first-floor window. The absence of such blocking beneath the ground-floor window suggests that its cill is at a similar (perhaps the same) height as the medieval original.



Figure 17: The relationship between the east wall of the Chapel and the brick pier at its junction with the timber framed extension to the east. The left-hand photograph shows the lower part of the pier clearly butting against the moulded plinth of the east end, but the right-hand image shows equally clearly that the fine ashlar blocks of the Chapel abut the brickwork!

3.2 The foundations of the 'south aisle' and west front

Test pits 1-3 and 8-9 examined the foundations (or in some cases apparent lack of them) under the walls of the extended building. These walls are little more than half the width of the late medieval Chapel (see Figure 3), but the west end of the building and the 'south aisle' in particular are built from very high quality ashlar blocks, often of great size, mostly laid in clear and consistent courses. There are a few places where the coursing is less well achieved, and tile has been used to even up some of these discrepancies (especially on the south wall). On the whole, however, the character of the masonry is at least the equal of the walls of the Chapel itself. Indeed many of the finer details are common to them, particularly the moulded chamfered plinth and the stopped downstands of this around doors.

We have not yet been able to excavate any test pits within the building, and thus elucidate the relationship between the Chapel and these western/southern extensions. Given that the details mentioned above are common across two apparently distinct/successive structural phases, the question might be asked: what evidence do we have at the moment to confirm that the west end and 'south aisle' are indeed a later phase rather than co-eval with the Chapel? The main proof comes at first-floor level, where the disjunction between the west wall and the original Chapel is very clear: the north wall reduces to less than half its width where the extensions starts, for example, and the roof structure above changes character completely. Equally tellingly, the fine mouldings in the plates atop the north and south walls of the Chapel both have terminal stops in exactly the same place, short of the west ends of the timbers: it is clear that a further beam would have spanned between them originally, marking the west end of Chapel proper.



Figure 18: Left – the abrupt change from the late medieval wall and roof to the post-Dissolution west extension, evident on the north side of the Chapel. Right – the stopped moulding on the south wall plate, first floor: this would have returned across the original west end of the Chapel.

It is abundantly clear that the west end and the 'south aisle' wall are of one build, fully bonded in together. At ground-floor level, at least, neither has any direct contact with the Chapel. The north end of the west wall does return eastwards to join the truncated north wall of the Chapel, but the actual junction is currently obscured by render internally and the late 19th-century extension on the outside. The junction of the two walls was examined below ground in TP2. Even though excavation was somewhat constricted by modern gas and water pipes, it was clear that the two were bonded in together below ground level, with a simple offset plinth at the base of the walls. This was found at a shallow depth below ground – a consistent detail in TPs 2 and 8. No offset plinth could be seen in TP1, but this might have been due to the modern drains in this location. An offset was absent in TPs 3 and 9 as well. Despite this variability, the foot of the west and south extension walls was found at a consistent level. What lay beneath, however, was not consistent at all.

No foundations of any sort could be found under the west wall in TP1, or at the corner with the south wall in TP2. The latter is especially remarkable because one would usually expect the corner of a building to receive a substantial foundation. The two isolated stones found in TP2 certainly do not qualify for that description. The limited nature of the excavations must always be borne in mind, but the evidence seemed clear enough: much of the west end and south-west corner had been built on bare earth with little to show by way of foundations. The situation was more complicated in Pit 8, where an area of stone rubble was found beneath the wall, but there was a gap between the two which was filled with soil. The same was found in pits 3 and 9, although here the masonry could be exposed more fully than in TP 8. In both cases a substantial rubble stone structure was found under, but separate from, the 'south aisle' wall. These structures did not appear to be mortared, and they were very different in character to the well-made and regular foundations under the north and east walls of the Chapel. What do they represent? They appear to have been intended as foundations, but it is far from clear at the moment how this fits in with the late medieval Chapel or the post-Dissolution extensions. It is conceivable that the footings were for a Monastic-phase structure associated with the Chapel – perhaps the priest's lodging proper (as opposed to the block currently identified as such, but evidently post-medieval). It seems less plausible that they were intended for the 'south aisle' all along. Firstly, there is a clear and consistent gape between footing and wall. A

seasonal break might account for this, but the depth of the gap and amount of accumulated soil suggests something more than this. Equally, why was the foundation not continued for the full length of the south wall if it was built for it? More extensive excavation will be needed in the future to prove the point either way, but at the moment it is suggested (tentatively) that the foundations in pits 3 and 9 (possibly in TP 8 as well) are of the monastic period and belong to a substantial structure – possibly the original priest's lodging. The part of the building currently identified as the lodging appears to be post-monastic, and part of the extension/conversion to secular use of the Chapel as a whole.

3.3 The potential for associated buildings in the vicinity of the Chapel

The densely overgrown condition of the curtilage precluded any attempt at fieldwork on the rest of the property, except for the pit just inside the current gate. This did not locate any structural remains, although the large quantity of finds from the subsoil show that activity was taking place nearby, at least during the Victorian/modern era. Traces of possible wall were noted to the north of the Chapel in places, but it was impossible to determine whether these were structural or simply garden features.

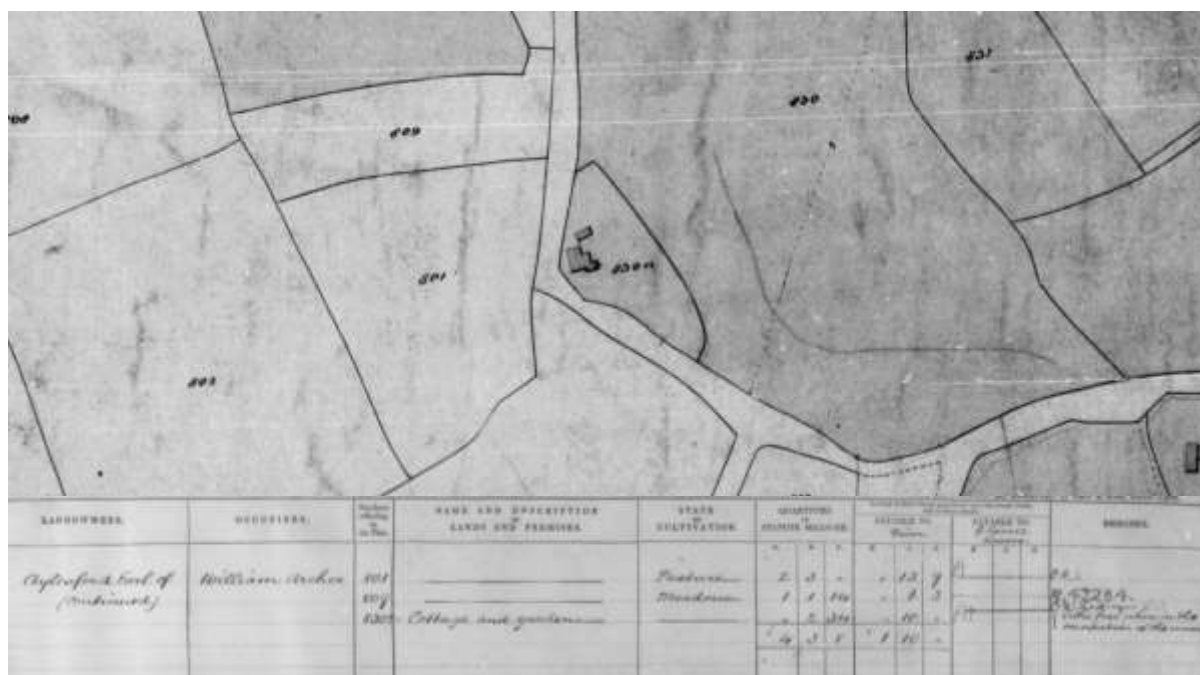


Figure 19: The Tithe Map and Apportionment entry for the Chapel in 1849.

Examination of historic mapping for the site shows that outbuildings of some sort were present from at least the middle of the 19th century. The Tithe Map of 1849, for instance, shows a small building to the north of the Chapel, in a curtilage of exactly the same shape and extent we see today: the Tithe Apportionment, however, simply identifies the site as a 'cottage and garden' owned by the Earl of Aylseford (as was Boxley Abbey itself) and occupied by William Archer (Figure 19).

Ordnance Survey 1:2500 (25-inch) map editions of 1876, 1900 and 1930 also show outbuildings to the north of the Chapel. Their location and size vary quite considerably, and in at least one case the buildings are substantial/extensive enough to have served as a separate cottage – two dwellings at the Chapel are mentioned in some late 19th-century historical documents.⁴

⁴ Information from Debbie Goacher and Susie Whitmore.

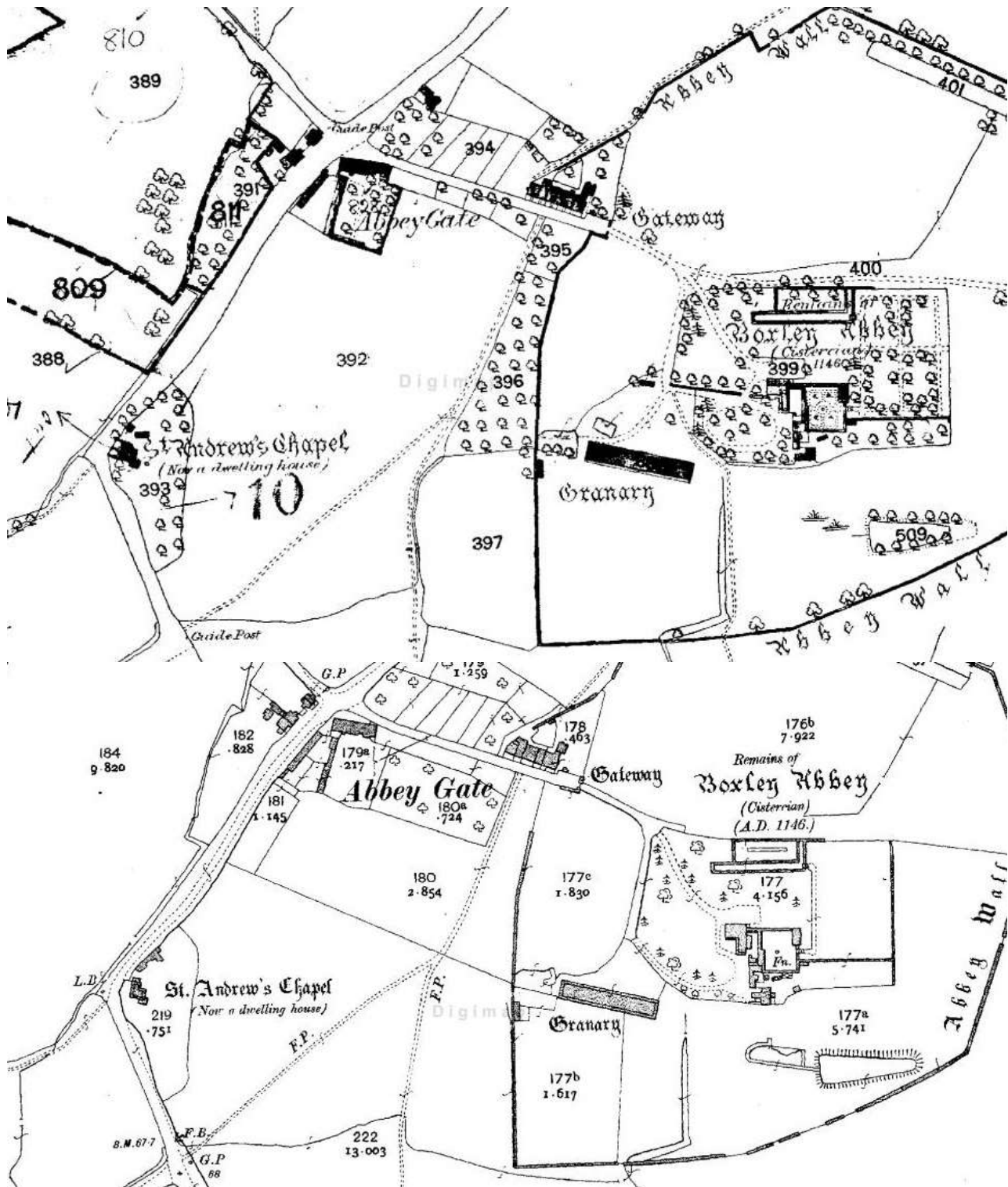


Figure 20: Extracts from the OS editions of 1870 (top) and 1900 (bottom). The earlier map shows one small outbuilding which was present in 1849 (see Figure 19), with a second one on the north-west boundary of the site. By 1900 the earlier one had gone, and the second building had been enlarged very substantially. Was this a second cottage, as mentioned in 1870 and after?

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Appendix 1: National Heritage List description of the Chapel

Grade: II*

List Entry Number: 1185580

Date first listed: 20-Oct-1952

Statutory Address: ST ANDREW'S CHAPEL, BOARLEY LANE

Chapel, with priests "lodging", attached to Boxley Abbey converted to dwelling late C16 or early C17, now house. Probably late C15, with late C16 or early C17 wing. Ragstone with plain tile roof. Wing timber framed with rendered and bricked walls. Chapel, with south aisle running from west end to adjoin a 2-storey "lodging" approx. twice the width of the aisle, joined and running parallel to the east end of the chapel on the south side. Single timber- framed bay same width as "lodging" added to east of it, beyond east end of chapel. Chapel: on moulded stone plinth which descends vertically to ground with broach stops on either side of doors. Aisle roofed as lean-to, with C19 studded half gable at east end, abutting "lodgings". Central brick stack with corniced top. West elevation has large rectangular window with plain chamfered surround containing C19 4-light ovolo-moulded wood mullion window. Below, one small square window either side of door. South elevation has rectangular window with hollow-chamfered stone jambs and cill and head formed from wall-plate of half-gable, containing 2-light ovolo moulded wood mullion window. East window blocked with C19 red bricks, with C19 3-light ovolo-moulded wood mullion window in chamfered brick architrave in upper section and 2-light wood casement with segmental brick head below. North elevation has very small rectangular single light towards east end with plain chamfered stone surround morticed for

iron bars. 3 large putlock holes in line at first floor level. 3 external doors; one to east of centre in north and south elevations with 2-centred arched heads and hollow chamfered stone jambs on moulded bases, and one in centre of west elevation, wider with plain chamfered stone jambs and head. "Lodgings": integral with chapel, plinth of which continues round it. First floor on south elevation jettied out a few inches on concave stone lintel. Roofed parallel to chapel, with bridging ridge at right-angles between them. 3 small rectangular stone windows with chamfered surrounds, one towards apex of west gable, one with iron bars towards south end of west gable on first floor and one in the centre of the first floor to the south elevation. No external door. Wing: 2 storeys on plinth, roof hipped to north and south. Projecting red brick stack on east elevation. South elevation underbuilt in stone with 3-light square-headed Perpendicular stone window with hollow chamfers, hollow spandrels and plain hood mould, said to have come from west end of chapel. No external door. Interior: Door between chapel and "lodging" at east end of south wall of chapel, narrow, with arched stone architrave with hollow chamfer and broach stops. Hagioscope in wall to west of it. Chapel roof ceiled at collar level; rafters of uniform scantling with collars, sous-laces, ashlar pieces and moulded cornice: Moulded tie-beam to east of centre.

Listing NGR: TQ7549058236

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: 173563