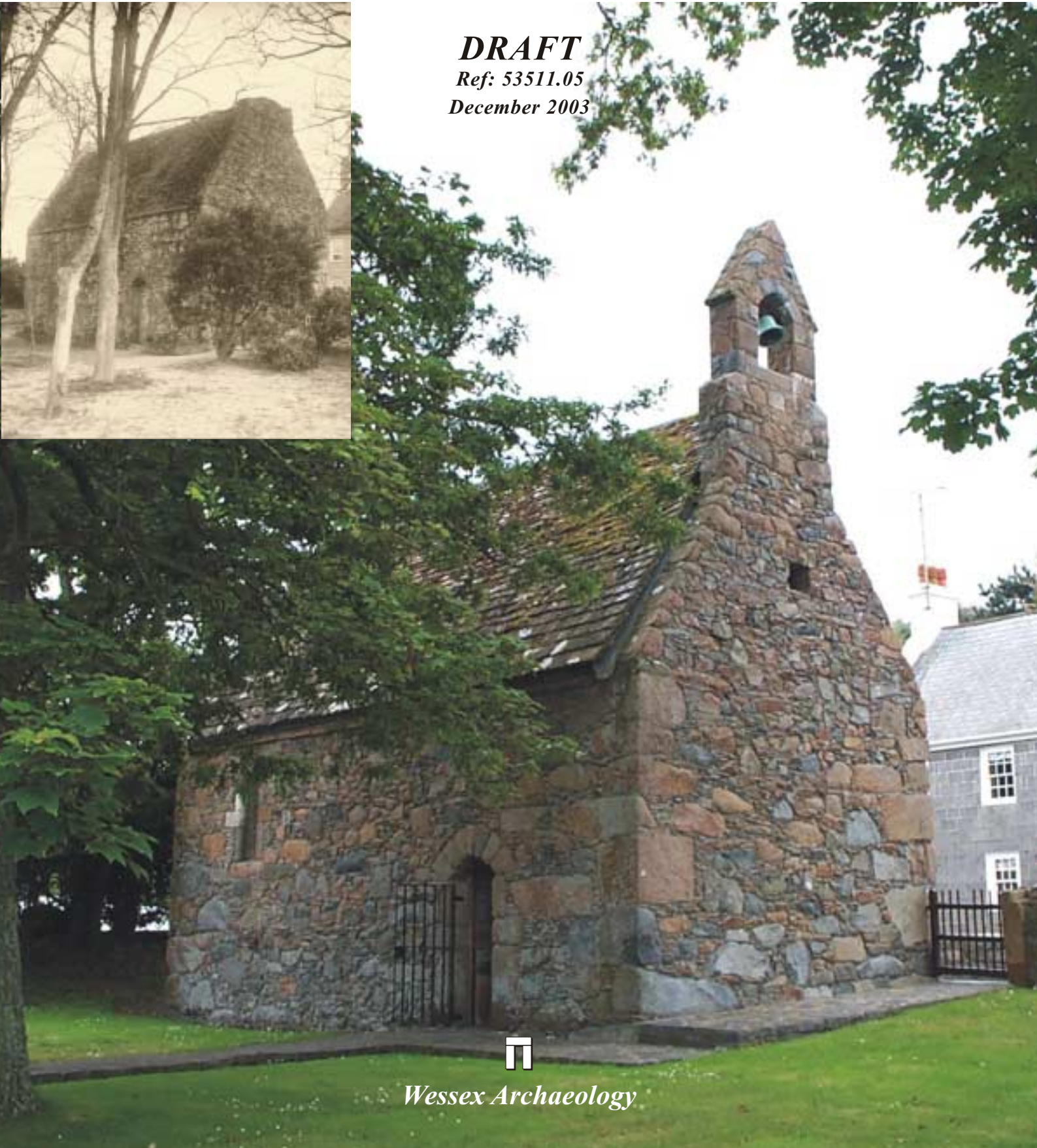


Sainte Apolline's Chapel St. Saviour's, Guernsey

Summary of the Conservation and Management Plan



DRAFT
Ref: 53511.05
December 2003



**Ste Apolline's Chapel,
St Saviour's Parish,
Guernsey**

Summary of the Conservation and Management Plan

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Reference: 53511.05

18th December 2003

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Wessex Archaeology, in partnership with Carden and Godfrey Architects, Dr John Mitchell, AVN Conservation Consultancy and Environmental Design Associates Ltd, were commissioned by the States of Guernsey Heritage Committee to produce a Conservation and Management Plan on Ste Apolline's Chapel in Guernsey.

Conservation is concerned with managing change by reconciling a site's significance with its potential new or continuing uses, and so integrating in a sustainable way economic needs and social, religious and cultural heritage values. This necessarily involves engaging people in constructive dialogue about the public values of a site. In order to achieve these objectives, a site must be understood, and its significance defined and evaluated, and then presented in a comprehensible and accessible form. This forms the foundation of a Conservation and Management Plan, which then goes on to identify how that significance is at risk and establish policies to address the risks. From these policies, management proposals are outlined in order that theory can be turned into practice. This Draft Summary is designed to give an overview of the report and to highlight potential areas for discussion.

Understanding

The Chapel dates from 1392 and is believed to be the only remaining free-standing medieval chantry chapel in Guernsey. The interior of the Chapel was doubtless originally covered with scenes from the scriptures, framed by symbolic decorative motifs. Two scenes from the original wall paintings survive. In the late sixteenth century, the Reformation took hold in Guernsey and the Chapel was eventually turned into a barn or stables.

In 1873, the States bought the Chapel for £120 and it became the first site in the care of the Ancient Monuments Committee. Photographic evidence indicates that a major programme of repair was undertaken at the Chapel in the 1920s, but apart from that and basic maintenance, little other work took place until the 1970s.

In 1971, architects from the Brandt Potter Hare Partnership made proposals for its restoration on behalf of the Guernsey Council of Churches, and this was carried out during the 1970s in phases as money became available. The work included replacement of the roof, the installation of heating under a York stone floor, new interior furnishings, new windows and doors and the restoration of the interior plaster and paintings.

SUMMARY



Sainte Apolline

Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria between AD 248 and 265, described the persecution of Christians in Alexandria in AD 249 in a letter to his friend Fabius, Bishop of Antioch (Davies & Sylvester 1980). Accounts of Apolline's death vary, but Dionysius described how Apolline refused to renounce her Christian faith and was punished by having her teeth beaten out, her jaws broken and was then knocked unconscious by stoning. Finally she was threatened with death by burning at the stake if she did not offer prayers to the Roman gods. Apolline paused as if to comply and then, when released by her persecutors, threw herself onto the fire in an act of martyrdom (Anon 1973, 7-8). She was canonised in AD 300 and her annual feast day is celebrated on February 9th. Ste Apolline has been adopted as the patron saint of dentists, and a fourteenth century Dominican prayer appeals to her against the pain of toothache (*ibid*). She is regularly depicted holding a tooth or a tool of the dental profession, although the stained glass window in Ste Apolline's Chapel (right) shows her bound to a pillar with an angel touching her mouth and holding a tooth.



It was intended that the replacement of the roof covering would address the perceived problem of water ingress, but continuing damp problems were noted within six months of the restoration works being completed. In an attempt to address these problems the ventilation was improved and the edge of the lead gable gutters sealed in 1982 and 1995.

As part of the Conservation Plan process the fabric of the Chapel was inspected, following which minor opening works were carried out in September 2003 to provide information not otherwise available. The inspection confirmed that the walls of the Chapel are structurally sound. Internally, the plaster at low level is in a poor condition up to a height approximately that of the (higher) ground level outside - this is a classic sign of rising damp. The roof was inspected and found to be in a good condition, although the upstands of the lead parapet gutters against the gable walls were poorly detailed; at present it is not thought that much water penetrates here, however. A French drain at the north side of the Chapel was found to have been incorrectly laid and is performing no useful function, while the south side has no drainage at all.

The paintings show no signs of actively deteriorating at present. However, temperature and humidity in the Chapel are uncontrolled, and fluctuate considerably, with humidity levels being consistently high. This environmental instability is potentially damaging to the wall paintings.

Significance

As a single cell chapel of late fourteenth century date Ste Apolline's is a unique survival in the Channel Islands. It is also one of only three chantry chapels surviving in anything like their original form in the Channel Islands. Three comparable chapels survive in Jersey, although they are all dated to the thirteenth century or before. Outside the Channel Islands a number of comparable chapels survive in Normandy, Ireland and southwest England, but all are again of earlier date, making Ste Apolline's a rare example of a late medieval chapel, largely in its original form.

The wall paintings are one of only two schemes of wall paintings known to survive in Guernsey, and bear comparison to the wall paintings of similar date in the Fisherman's Chapel in Jersey. They are of considerable significance at local, regional and European levels.

The Chapel is also significant for several other reasons. For a building of its age, its history is unusually well documented. It is the only chapel/church in the British Isles to be dedicated to Sainte Apolline, the patron saint of dentists. It is Guernsey's first Ancient Monument and the only ecclesiastical building in States ownership, with significance as a local landmark and tourist attraction.

The Chapel survived many years of religious turmoil and three centuries of neglect. Today it serves as a reminder to the firm religious beliefs of those who built it, and continues to fulfil spiritual desires.

The purchase of the Chapel by the States coincided with changing attitudes to the conservation and restoration of historic buildings in Britain and the formation of conservation groups like the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877. Sir Edgar MacCulloch, the instigator of the purchase, led the way in

changing attitudes to historic buildings in Guernsey, and was part of the wider conservation movement gaining momentum in Britain at the time.

Issues and Policies

Character of the Chapel

The character of the Chapel is typified above all by its modest but robustly constructed granite external appearance, and by the wall paintings inside. The need to 'preserve and enhance' the character of the Chapel must be addressed in all decisions about its future. Particular attention must be paid to the retention of historic fabric and the use of traditional materials and techniques during repair works, and to the retention of the garden to the north as a tranquil backdrop.

- Any new work must be of a high standard using materials which are as high in quality as those used in the original construction.
- The style of new elements should be distinct from the Chapel but complementary to it and should relate well to their context.

Environmental monitoring

In order to fully understand the effect of the fluctuating environment within the Chapel on the wall paintings, full monitoring of the environment inside and outside the building envelope for twelve months is necessary. As well as the current data logger, an additional one should be positioned immediately outside the Chapel to monitor temperature, humidity and rainfall. A thermostatic control should be attached to the present heating system and the de-humidifier removed so that monitoring takes place under controlled conditions. Until such a detailed picture of the environment in the Chapel is gained, no remedial works which may affect that environment should be commenced. In addition, a moisture survey should be undertaken to detect dampness on the surface of the walls. This would involve monitoring the moisture levels at specific points in the walls and comparing the results with external environmental data. It is therefore recommended that:

- Environmental monitoring should take place for twelve months prior to remedial works commencing.
- An additional data logger should be installed outside the Chapel in order that direct comparison to environmental conditions inside the building can be carried out.
- A liquid moisture survey should be undertaken over twelve months to determine the extent of moisture penetration through the walls.

Rising Damp

Damp is a continuing problem for the Chapel. The high ground level at the south side of Chapel is likely to be contributing to the problem of rising damp within the building. The Chapel has no eaves gutters or rainwater pipes as typifies a building of this age; rainwater runs off the roof and lead gable gutters onto the walls and ground below. The hard tarmac and stone paving surrounding the Chapel is probably also contributing to the damp problems by preventing natural evaporation of ground

SUMMARY



Ste Apolline's Chapel today showing 1970's bellcote and roof.



moisture and causing splash-back onto the Chapel walls. Unfortunately, the French drain inserted on the north side and part of the east side of the Chapel during the 1970's restoration was laid upside down and is not directing water away from the Chapel as it should do. Drainage on the south side of the Chapel, where the ground level is higher than the interior floor level, is non-existent. The 1970's York stone floor has a cement mortar and damp proof membrane which prevents evaporation and encourages dampness to spread up the adjacent wall plaster. It is recommended that:

- The introduction of eaves gutters is carefully considered with due regard to the appearance of the Chapel.
- The external stone paving is removed from the north and west sides of the Chapel, and the path moved at least 1m away from Chapel walls to help increase ground moisture evaporation and decrease splash-back from the dripping eaves. Bound gravel should be considered instead of stone paving.
- The tarmac pavement at the south side of the Chapel is removed and a drained dry area created here to help increase evaporation of ground moisture and reduce splash-back onto the Chapel walls.

This will potentially conflict with the needs of pedestrians and road users.

- The French drain on the north side is rebuilt so that it functions freely, and it should be extended around to the west side of the Chapel.
- The floor of the Chapel is relaid and pointed in lime mortar with a perimeter channel adjacent to the walls, filled with gravel to allow evaporation.

The introduction of a gravel channel could lead to housekeeping problems. A simple grille over the top would contain the loose stones but this would be too formal and unsightly for the interior of the Chapel.

Work on the floor would provide an opportunity to install a controlled heating system. The current heating system is nearing the end of its useful life and is only marginally controlled.

- NB. An archaeological watching brief should be undertaken during ground works.

Water ingress

Although the present stone roof is in a good condition, the lead gable gutters are poorly detailed and could potentially let in water at their upstands unless regular maintenance is carried out. Driving rain could also be entering through the thin gable walls. Substantial areas of pointing are in a cementitious mortar used in the late 1920s repairs. Some of the pointing is quite shallow and there are occasional small holes. Water ingress into the core of the masonry is likely under these circumstances, and this moisture will become trapped in the wall and tend to migrate to the warmer inner surface where it will evaporate through the plaster.

- It may be appropriate to consider replacing the roof with a traditional stone roof similar to that at the Chapel prior to the 1970s restoration. Before this, a careful assessment of the potential for further leaks, the need for a membrane within the stonework and any risk of internal condensation must be made.

Dissatisfaction with the roof covering centres more on its severe impact on authenticity and the variation of roof and gable pitches than on its function.

- The cementitious mortar should be left for the time being, as, although it is preventing some moisture evaporation, its removal could be damaging to both the masonry and the wall paintings. When the mortar fails it can be more safely removed, but such work will always require the skills of conservation professionals.

Heating and ventilation

The current underfloor heating system is not thermostatically controlled and is merely operated on a time clock; it is also nearing the end of its useful life. The regular heating and cooling causes dramatic fluctuation in humidity levels, and both elements are potentially damaging to the wall paintings. Currently the relative humidity is consistently within a high range not falling below 70%.

- Ideally, background heating with minimal fluctuations in temperature should be the aim. A thermostat or humidistat should be used to control the heating system; a constant level of humidity is vital, and a level of 60% would be ideal.
- Consideration must be given to replacing the heating system, although options are limited to electric heating methods as there is no water or gas supply to the Chapel.
- It is essential that a stable environment for the wall paintings is reached, but it may not be possible to achieve total prevention of damp at source. If, following the year of environmental monitoring, it is decided to increase ventilation, possible solutions could include:

The removal of some panes of glass and their replacement with wire mesh (a Medieval practice).

Increasing ventilation through the doors by drilling larder-style holes at the top and bottom of the opposing doors.

The installation of mechanically operated louvres into the gable vents.

The introduction of a mechanical extractor fan, although this could be noisy and involve unsightly cabling etc.

- Adequate air circulation, without compromising the security of the Chapel or allowing external conditions to affect the internal environment, will be the goal

- The unsightly vents, which were inserted in the east and west gables in the 1980s, should be finished with a stone insert which allows ventilation but is more visually attractive (medieval precedent at other locations)

Internal plaster

The lower part of the wall plaster is deteriorating as a result of rising damp. There is also water staining at a higher level on the gable walls. This may be an historic problem, as water ingress in these areas is considered negligible. The channels, which were cut into the plaster at the south-east and south-west corners in 1995, are preventing moisture from tracking across from the gables to the wall paintings but are visually unpleasant.

- Replacement of internal plaster and other decorative measures should only be carried out when the problem of rising damp has been controlled.
- The present gouge should be reformed as a 6mm channel filled with mastic matching the colour of the wall plaster. Mastic would conceal the channel but still act as a moisture barrier and prevent dampness from tracking across the walls.
- Some discolouration of the plaster due to staining in the historic plaster should be accepted.

Lighting

The present lighting is in part channelled through the historic wall plaster and the proximity of the lamps to the wall paintings is considered damaging due to the heat they emit. A more sympathetic installation, such as freestanding uplighters, is desirable.

Furniture

The existing furniture and altar overpower the simple interior of the Chapel. A smaller altar and less 'finished' furniture might be an improvement, but would need careful consideration as such a change would remove part of the Chapel's history.

Chapel use

The Chapel sees regular use from its congregation and other visitors. In the winter months, the heating is manually switched on during the day to improve the conditions for the congregation. There is often a difficulty in finding the balance between human levels of comfort and what is best for the building and the wall paintings. It is likely that the current system of heating and how it is used is putting the wall paintings at risk. It is recommended that:

- The congregation are involved in the improvement process. They should be made aware that their comfort is an issue that is being addressed, but that without their understanding and assistance the recommendations and policies will be rendered less effective.
- Awareness is raised within the congregation and all visitors to the Chapel of the issues concerning the preservation of the wall paintings and the delicate balance required to provide them with a stable environment. A manual is written explaining the correct use of the Chapel and environmental controls.

- A leaflet is commissioned which clearly outlines to stakeholders the process of conservation management and its aims.

Management Proposals

Routine Maintenance and Annual Inspection

The Chapel and its site must be maintained to prevent future deterioration. This will involve regular routine maintenance and an annual inspection of the condition of the site. Routine maintenance will include environmental monitoring by a conservator, along with aspects such as weekly cleaning of floors and furniture, quarterly removal of cobwebs from the vault, and annual greasing of the bell mechanism.

Once every year a suitably qualified person should report on the condition of the building. The inspection will ideally be carried out when it is raining to check the behaviour of the roof covering and gable gutters. Defects should be recorded photographically and notes should be kept on all areas inspected whether defects are found or not; the previous years' notes should be available for consultation. Items inspected will include – amongst other things - the condition of the roof and gable gutters, the condition of the masonry pointing, the condition of the doors and windows, internally and externally. Mould growth and stains etc on the wall paintings will be recorded, and staining or spalling of the plaster noted. The condition of the boundary walls and grounds in general will also be inspected. The report should identify repairs needed and urgency of those repairs. An annual budget should be available for any urgent repairs found necessary; other repairs should be built into a three or five yearly repair programme. Reporting should follow a consistent format from year to year and ideally will be compiled by the same person every time.

Quinquennial Inspection

Every five years a fully illustrated report on the condition of the building should be produced, ideally this should be carried out by the same suitably qualified person to ensure continuity, and should be carried out in a consistent format.

Repair work

All repair works should be properly specified by appropriate staff. Materials and workmanship should follow best conservation practice. Local building firms will be encouraged to send staff on appropriate courses in conservation techniques, and a short list of approved building firms should be maintained to encourage local firms to develop the appropriate skills and to ensure that they are rewarded for doing so. It is accepted that there is a shortage of appropriate skills at present to deal with Ste Apolline's Chapel, and indeed with all other monuments in Guernsey, and a local training scheme to develop the usefulness of local contractors and local supervisory staff must be seen as the long-term solution. In the short term, it will be necessary to import skills to ensure that the correct standards of workmanship are maintained.

Access and Learning

Regular public access should continue to be provided throughout the year. There is a shortage of contextual information about the Chapel for visitors and this should be addressed through the preparation of a guidebook as proposed by the Historic Sites Manager. Visits to the Chapel by school groups should be promoted, and information packs suitable for students and teachers should be made available. Access for the

disabled is good, although the removal of the chancel step and the reduction in the size of the altar would make the Chapel more accessible.

Appropriate Uses

The only uses for the Chapel at present are as a place of worship and as a tourist attraction. Consideration should be given to other uses which may be suitable, allowing for its small size, spiritual values, and for the vulnerability of the wall paintings. The garden area around the Chapel may also lend itself to local community uses. Discussions should be held with local interest groups to investigate new uses. Any such increased usage would have management implications that would need to be addressed in advance.

Recommendations

To sum up, the following works in priority order are recommended:

PRIORITY 1: Environmental Monitoring and Control

The installation of a thermostat to control the present heating system and maintain a constant low temperature is essential for the preservation of the wall paintings.

Before any other works are undertaken at the Chapel, environmental monitoring should take place for at least a year. Data collected can then be regularly assessed by a conservator. Monitoring the internal environment should continue and an external probe should be added as a control. A liquid moisture survey should also be undertaken.

A guide should also be compiled to inform users of the environmental monitoring and control process.

PRIORITY 2: Ground levels, Drainage, Vents and Lighting

Although no structural repairs are needed, a number of other works that will or are likely to improve the internal environment of the building should be considered. These would ideally be carried out following the twelve months of detailed environmental monitoring. Some of the works defined could have an effect on the wall paintings as a result of humidity levels being reduced/stabilised. Continued monitoring of the environment and regular internal inspections by the conservation contractor must be instituted to closely monitor the condition of the wall paintings.

The ground level is reduced on the south, west and east side of the Chapel to combat rising damp. The path against the west and north wall is moved away from the Chapel walls and laid with a resin-bound gravel. This would require repositioning the gate in the south boundary wall.

The French drain on the north and east sides of the Chapel is rebuilt so that it functions properly, and is extended around to the west side of the Chapel. A new drain in a dry area to the south of the Chapel will need to be connected into this drain.

The spotlights are replaced to prevent further potential damage to the wall paintings.

The appearance of the vents in the east and west gables are improved with a grille made of flat stones.

PRIORITY 3: Floor, South Window, Wall Exterior, Eaves Gutters and Bell

These works should ideally be carried out within 2 years of the initial environmental monitoring period. It is recommended that:

The floor is relaid with lime mortar and a permeable perimeter channel, taking the opportunity to renew the electric underfloor heating. While this work is undertaken the step at the east end (which did not exist in the original Chapel) should be removed.

The south window is replaced by plain leaded glass, with the area below the stone transom incorporating an inward-opening casement.

The hard cementitious pointing of the walls is left until the mortar has deteriorated to the extent that removal is not harmful to the masonry or, through vibration damage, the wall paintings.

If the porosity of the walls can be demonstrated, the introduction of eaves gutters and rainwater pipes is considered.

The bell mechanism is completely derusted and overhauled and the bell rope passage reformed.

PRIORITY 4 Garden furniture, Lay-by, Furniture and altar, Wall plaster, Roof and Landscape and planting

These works are not urgent and may only improve the setting or appearance of the Chapel, as such no time scale is given.

The brown finish of the timber garden furniture and pilgrimage cross is removed and the timber re-treated to a more sympathetic colour and finish. The large stone platforms under the benches are removed.

Ideally, the existing layby should be removed, the wall line reinstated, and alternative parking provided nearby.

A smaller altar is recommended, and consideration should be given to removing the high gloss finish from the existing furniture.

Any repairs to the undecorated wall plaster should wait until all acceptable measures have been taken to reduce the affect of rising damp.

The channels in the wall plaster at the gables are considered visually unpleasant: the present gouge will be reformed and filled with waterproof mastic matching the colour of the wall plaster.

The roof is considered to be generally waterproof with the likely exception of the gable gutters; it is felt that the latter can be kept waterproof by regular maintenance to the mastic at the upstand. Any proposal to reform the roof should be carefully

evaluated against criteria of value for money, the risk of water ingress during and after the works, and authenticity.

The north boundary is reinstated as an earth bank. A taller, unclipped boundary hedgerow containing a variety of species is considered, while other tree and shrub planting is carefully thought out. Removal of the sycamore from the tree group at the east boundary will allow more light into the garden, and the careful reduction in height of these trees will reveal the east gable of the Chapel.



Joshua Gosselin watercolour 1793.



Peter Le Lièvre lithograph c.1850.



Photograph c.1870.



T. Singleton photograph post 1873.



Photograph early 20th century.



Photograph pre 1939.



Photograph c.1953.



Photograph present.



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