

Caversham St Peter

Statement of Significance

July 2018



Prepared by:



Dr Kirsten Claiden Yardley MA (Oxon), MSc (English Local History), DPhil

Natalie Merry MA (Oxon), PG Cert. (Building Conservation)

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1. Executive Summary

Although there has been a place of worship on the site of Caversham St Peter since at least the 11th century, the current church is predominantly Gothic Revival in character due to the two major restoration projects carried out during the Victorian period. The first by Arthur Billing was responsible for the refenestration of the chancel and the installation of pine pews to replace Georgian box pews. The second by Morris & Stallwood was more extensive, including, amongst other works, substantial remodelling of the church to add a south aisle, replace the wooden tower with a much more robust flint tower, and replace the brick and plaster north arcade in limestone. Internally, the Morris & Stallwood work in particular is stark and muscular. Externally their approach was quite different; the treatment of the exterior with its refacing in flint and eclectic use of roof forms and fenestration is softer and seeks to create the impression of a building that has evolved over a long period of time.

Despite the dominant Victorian character of the building, several important medieval features do survive including a Norman window relocated from the chancel, Norman south doorway, elaborately carved angel capitals to the Vanderstegen chapel arcade, and Early English and Perpendicular window tracery.

A number of leading Victorian glass manufacturers produced windows for the church. The quality of this work is variable but Powell's east window in the Vanderstegen Chapel is particularly fine and worthy of note. There is also glass by Sir Ninian Comper who carried out a number of projects from 1917 to 1924 including chancel furniture, the extension of the chancel and the addition of a Lady Chapel at the east end of the south aisle. Caversham is unusual in having followed diocesan policy in commissioning much of this work in memory of parishioners killed during the First World War, rather than following the more conventional approach of commissioning a single, dedicated war memorial.

The steeply rising churchyard acts as a popular pedestrian route avoiding the main road. It's crinkle crankle retaining wall acts as the boundary between the churchyard and the Court, and is a notable, unusual local feature. The setting of the church is of particular importance within the conservation area. From the churchyard, views of Caversham Court and the River Thames beyond are preserved, retaining the historic relationship between these features of the medieval village despite modern infill development to the north.

Overall, the church and its site are of moderate to high significance.

2. Statutory Designations

This text is taken verbatim from the Historic England National Heritage List for England. It was written in March 1957 using the sources available at the time. Oxford Heritage Partnership is not responsible for the contents of this listing or any errors therein. For information on corrections and minor amendments, please see:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/minor-amendments/>.

Name: CHURCH OF ST PETER

List entry Number: 1303560

Grade: II*

Date first listed: 22-Mar-1957

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Details

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Church of St Peter SU 7074 11/265 22.5.57.

II* 2. Church of England. Of various dates from C12, principally C15 and high Victorian.

Pleasant flint built garish church with stone dressings and old tile roof. West tower (1878) of 3 stages with hipped roof screened by high corbelled parapet, by Morris and Stallwood. 4 gables to east (chancel and aisles of equal height, vestry to north slightly set back). Nothing remains of the Norman church except for the south doorway with crude chevron and a reset window now in the Vestry. 5 bay nave with 3 bay chancel (lengthened 1924-25 by Sir Ninian Comper). C15 north aisle with good perpendicular east chapel which has angel busts on capital; square frame 3 light windows. South aisle added 1878 (by Morris and Stallwood) 3 bays with 3 light east window with intersecting glazing. Interior : nave has kingpost and wind brace roof. 1674 Loveday memorial in south aisle. Montague vault in north-east corner. Norman Purbeck marble font.

Listing NGR: SU7088974892

National Grid Reference: SU 70889 74892

Map



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3. Historical Context

There is a long history of settlement in this area of the Thames Valley. At the time of the Norman Conquest, 'Cavesham', had a value of £20. In 1086, when the Domesday Book was compiled, there were 43 households made up of villagers, smallholders and two slaves; a mixture of ploughed land and woodland; and a mill. The lord of the manor was Walter Giffard, son of Walter Giffard, lord of Longueville, one of the known companions of William the Conqueror. The younger Walter Giffard was one of the leading noblemen in late 11th century England, holding extensive properties in Buckinghamshire, and was made earl of Buckingham in 1097. There is no mention of a church in 1086 but it is unlikely that a settlement the size of Caversham would not have had a church. The early Norman font in the north aisle was found buried in the grounds of the Old Rectory and it seems most likely that it would have come from the local church.

The first firm evidence of the church at Caversham occurs c. 1162 when it, and the neighbouring rectory land, were part of the original endowment given to the Abbey of Notley

founded by Walter Giffard, 2nd earl of Buckingham, as a house for Augustinian Canons. In addition to the church, there was also a Shrine of Our Lady of Caversham that is said to have been in existence before 1066 and was a place of pilgrimage in 1106 when Duke Robert of Normandy presented a relic of Christ's Passion to the Shrine on his return from the First Crusade. When the church was given to Notley Abbey, a cell of Canons from the abbey was established in Caversham to care for the shrine and the church. The shrine, along with the chapel of St Anne on Caversham Bridge and the nearby Well of St Anne, became a major pilgrimage site on the medieval route from Reading Abbey to Oxford.

Caversham Church remained in the hands of Notley Abbey until its dissolution in 1538 when the advowson and rectory land were granted to Christ Church College, Oxford. The rectory property was refurbished as a domestic dwelling, known first as the Old Rectory and then Caversham Court. It was developed and enhanced over several centuries including landscaping of the gardens and rebuilding of the house by A W Pugin. The rectory was sold by Christ Church to William Blackall Simonds in 1799 and he became the lay rector of the church. The rectorship was purchased for the parish in 1916 and the chancel passed to parish ownership. In 1933, Caversham Court was sold to Reading Corporation who demolished the house and subsequently opened the gardens to the public. The Court was refurbished in 2009 and includes a number of Grade II listed features.

Meanwhile, the manor of Caversham and the fortified manor house had passed to William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, who died there in 1219. The manor was held by a number of notable figures include Francis Knollys, treasurer to Elizabeth I; William, earl of Craven; and William, earl of Cadogan; and it was used to imprison Charles I during the Civil War. It was rebuilt on several occasions and the current building dates to 1850. In the 1920s, the house was owned by the Oratory School but at the start of the Second World War it was requisitioned by the government and then sold to the BBC for use by their Monitoring Service. It remained in use by the BBC until 2018.

Due to Caversham's location in relation to Reading, there was fierce fighting around Caversham Bridge in 1643. At the time, Reading was being besieged by Parliamentary forces and Royalist forces had marched south from Oxford to attempt to lift the siege. They were unsuccessful and the town fell to the Parliamentarians shortly afterwards. The fighting caused considerable local damage including to the church.

Formerly part of Oxfordshire, Caversham was transferred to Berkshire in 1911 and became part of the county borough of Reading. Today, the medieval core of Caversham is surrounded by a number of listed buildings from the 16th-18th centuries but also by the residential expansion of the 19th and 20th centuries. Due to its location on the River Thames, proximity to Reading and the quality of the Conservation Area, it is now a prime residential area with a population of c. 23,000.

Caversham St Peter

Given the early origins of Caversham St Peter, it is probable that the 11th century church was a two cell building consisting of nave and chancel. In the late 12th century, a north aisle was added and the nave extended, followed by the extension of the chancel and addition of a west tower in the late 13th century. There was then a gap in major building works until the later 15th century when the north aisle was rebuilt and widened although, curiously, the west end of the aisle does not seem to have been widened. The north chapel was added at the same time. When Notley Abbey was dissolved and the advowson passed to Christ Church cathedral, the north chapel was given to Anthony Brigham and subsequently descended via the female line to the Vanderstegen family who renamed it the Vanderstegen chapel. A gallery was added at the west end of the building in 1605. The church was affected by the fighting during 1643 when the north and west sides of the building were damaged by cannon fire. The spire and upper stage of the tower were also damaged to such an extent that the tower was replaced with a wooden structure on the remains of the stone tower base.

The church was rebuilt three times during the 19th century, with the result that the character of the interior, and sections of the exterior, is now largely Victorian. The first rebuilding took place in 1857 when new windows were inserted in the south wall of the chancel; a vestry was added on the north side of the Vanderstegen Chapel; and new pine seating was installed in place of the box pews. Seating capacity as a result of these works was 491, including the 70 children who could be seated in the gallery. Plans for the work were drawn up for the church by the architect Arthur Billing, however, concerned about the risk of damage to their chapel, the Vanderstegen family insisted that their architects - Poulton & Woodman - build the vestry. The plans also show that a wall was built across the north aisle, creating the space that is now the storeroom and flower room. Curiously, the plans show just the small, Norman window in the west wall of the north aisle but a sketch of the church in the 1860s shows both the window and a door.

In 1878, it was felt that the tower was in such a state of disrepair as to be unsafe and there was insufficient capacity for the growing local population. As a result, a south aisle was added to the church, the porch rebuilt and the brick and plaster north arcade replaced. The wooden tower was removed and replaced with the current flint tower and the west gallery removed. The west end of the north aisle was "rebuilt internally and externally"; it is likely that it was during this phase of building works that the door in the west wall of the north aisle was closed up, the window reset in the wall and the roof of the west end of the north aisle altered. An assortment of other works and repairs were carried out around the building including to the floors and roof, and a heating system was installed with stoves at both ends of the church. The work was overseen by Morris and Stallwood with Albert W Dodd being engaged as the builder and Messrs Wheeler Bros as the stonemasons. The restoration and enlargement cost about £3500 and the

church was reopened on 1st October 1879.¹ A smaller building project in 1883 enlarged the vestry to the east with Dodd drawing up the plans and carrying out the building work.

Following the First World War, the congregation requested the addition of a chapel in memory of the men of Caversham who had lost their lives. In 1924, the chancel was extended and a new chapel (the Lady Chapel) built at the east end of the south aisle. The work was carried out by Sir Ninian Comper who had been responsible for installing stalls and screens in the chancel in 1917. Tiles for the roof were supplied by Mr de Pledge of Caversham Court and taken from a barn in the grounds of the Court.

In 1989, four Caversham parishes were created, reducing the population served by Caversham St Peter. Subsequently the parish of St Peter was united with Mapledurham and Caversham St John the Baptist to constitute the parish Caversham, Thameside and Mapledurham. In recent decades, smaller projects have included adding a screen to the south side of the Vanderstegen chapel; glazing the Vanderstegen chapel; relocating the organ to the nave in 2015, which necessitated the removal of some pews; and removing some pews to create areas for the children and alternative forms of worship. Glass doors were installed in the porch in 2013, at the same time the heating and lighting systems were renewed.

There are 151 people on the church electoral roll and average Sunday attendance is 119 adults and 19 children. Larger services at Easter and Christmas can attract up to 310 people. There are around 11 baptisms, 5 weddings and 11 funerals at the church per year. Caversham St Peter has a reputation for liturgical tradition and musical excellence within the English choral tradition.

Parish Timeline

C11th	The early church would have consisted of two cells, nave and chancel
1106	Duke Robert of Normandy presents a relic of Christ's Passion to the pre-conquest shrine of Our Lady of Caversham
1162	First documentary evidence of the church at Caversham in an endowment given to the abbey of Notley by Walter Giffard. A cell of canons was established to care for the shrine and church
Late C12th	Addition of north aisle to the church and extension of the nave
1219	William Marshall dies at Caversham Manor
Late C13th	Extension of the chancel and addition of west tower
Late C15th	Rebuilding and widening of the north aisle along some of its length; addition of the north chapel
1538	Notley Abbey is dissolved and the advowson of the church granted to Christ

¹ An account of the works and the reopening is in the *Reading Mercury*, Saturday October 4th 1879, available through the British Newspaper Archive at the British Library.

Church College, Oxford. The north chapel is given to Anthony Brigham and subsequently descends to the Vanderstegen family

1605 Installation of west end gallery

1643 Fierce fighting around Caversham bridge during the siege of Reading; the church of St Peter is damaged by cannon fire

1798 Christ Church College sell the advowson to William Blackall Simmonds

1857 Restoration by Billing; new windows installed in south wall of the chancel; addition of the vestry by Poulton & Woodman; installation of new pine seating in place of box pews; construction of wall across the west end of the north aisle; installation of pulpit

1878 Morris & Stallwood restoration; addition of south aisle; rebuilding of the porch; replacement of the brick and plaster north arcade; replacement of the wooden tower with current flint tower; removal of west gallery; rebuilding of west end of north aisle; re-flooring; re-roofing; installation of new heating system

1883 Extension of vestry by local builder, Albert Dodd

1911 Caversham transferred to the county of Berkshire and the borough of Reading

1916 Rectorship is purchased for the parish

1917 Installation of choir stalls and chancel screens by Sir Ninian Comper

1924 Chancel extended and Lady Chapel added as a war memorial at east end of south aisle by Sir Ninian Comper

1933 Caversham Court is sold to Reading corporation, the house is demolished and the gardens opened to the public

1942 Installation of Lady Chapel furnishings

1958 Pews removed from the east end of the north aisle and nave

c. 1973 Installation of WC and servery facilities in the base of the tower, including a new wooden screen, incorporating a 17th century panel from the tower gallery

1987 Pipe organ removed from Vanderstegen chapel; chapel carpeted and refitted as a choir vestry; console of new electronic organ moved to nave

1991 New west screen by Martin Heath installed to the Vanderstegen chapel; glazing added to the rear of the screens

2000 Installation of external porch doors

2010 Removal of 4 or 5 pews and laying of red carpet at the west end of the north aisle to create children's area

2013 Glass doors installed to the porch; renewal of heating and lighting systems

2015 Removal of a small number of pews to make space for orientation of new organ console

4. Architects and Craftsmen

4.1 Poulton & Woodman

William Ford Poulton and William Henry Woodman were architects based in Reading and particularly active during the 1850s and 1860s. Their firm Poulton & Woodman carried out religious and public building work across several counties including Berkshire, Worcestershire, Gloucestershire and Dorset. They are noted by Pevsner as having been particular specialists in Non-conformist building work.

4.2 Arthur Billing

Arthur Billing was a member of the Billing family, which included some of the most prominent brickmakers, builders and architects in Reading from the late 18th to the late 19th century.² His brother, John Billing, had a successful practice in Reading where Philip Webb was a pupil from 1849-52. Arthur Billing served his apprenticeship with Benjamin Ferrey from 1845 and subsequently Philip Hardwick. In 1849, he set up his own practice in London, in the 1860s he entered into partnership with A S Newman as Newman and Billing. After Newman died in 1873, Billing was appointed surveyor to St Guy's hospital. Other work by Billing in Berkshire includes the church, school and vicarage at nearby Kidmore End (1860-62) and the restoration of St Lawrence's Church, Reading under the overall direction of Ferrey (1847-8). He was also active outside of the county, particularly in London where he conducted restoration work at Hatcham All Saints, Chelsea St John amongst others.³ He also built new churches at West Kensington and at Fulham.⁴ He was elected as a fellow of RIBA in 1863. Billing retired in 1894 and died in 1896. Although not in the first rank of Gothic revival architects, Billing's work seems to have been well regarded by his contemporaries.

4.2 Morris & Stallwood

Spencer Slingsby Stallwood was born in Buckinghamshire in 1844 and trained with the county surveyor, Charles Carter, before working in architectural practices around the country. He set up in independent practice in Folkestone but returned to Reading in 1875 when he entered in to practice with Joseph Morris. Morris was a prominent architect in Reading and the county surveyor for Berkshire. It was a relatively short lived partnership that ended in 1885. During that time they were particularly active in school building in Reading but they did work with other churches, for example at Upton, Oxfordshire (originally Berkshire) where they were the church architects in 1884.

² Sidney M Gold, *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Reading* (1999).

³ Basil F E Clarke, *Church Builders of the Nineteenth Century - A Study of the Gothic Revival in England* (1938), appendix 1.

⁴ B Cherry and N Pevsner, *Buildings of England: London 3 (North West)*, (1999).

4.3 Sir Ninian Comper⁵

Born in Scotland in 1864, Ninian Comper spent a term drawing at the Ruskin School in Oxford before becoming a volunteer assistant to C.E. Kempe, glass painter and church craftsman, in 1882. At the same time, he continued with his drawing at the South Kensington School of Art. In 1883, he became an apprentice to G.F. Bodley. Bodley worked in the style of the 14th century Decorated Gothic and that same style can be seen in Comper's early work. As his research developed, his work came to be based on principles that saw the altar as the determining focus of church planning and came to be inspired by the English Perpendicular architecture of the 15th century. His work has been described as a radical attempt to restore continuity with the medieval past to the Church of England. In the early 20th century, his work reached maturity with an inclusive approach to architecture that combined decorative and architectural styles rather than seeing the style of the late middle ages as the only valid template for all modern church architecture. The greatest application of this new theory of unity by inclusion is at St Mary's, Wellingborough where English Perpendicular Gothic is combined with a French plan, a classical arcade and Spanish Plateresque rejas of black iron.

Comper was not an expert draughtsman or constructor, always partnering with other architects and draughtsmen to address his technical deficiencies. He brought artistry and originality to the partnerships. John Betjeman thought that Comper was the most daring church planner and delicate colourist of his time. He was unique in the extent to which he studied church art and architecture across Europe in a search for spiritual values for his time. He was also an excellent church craftsman as much as an architect, carrying out brilliant restorations and furnishing schemes. He was associated with the school of embroidery of the Sisters of Bethany, Clerkenwell, leading them to develop the *or nue* technique of embroidery; he experimented with glass painting; and revived the medieval method of making blue glass in clay pots with sand and seaweed. He did not embrace the arts and crafts movement or the aesthetic movement that had influenced Bodley, rather he pursued an independent approach inspired by late medieval precedent from across Europe.

4.4 William Warrington

Born in 1796, William Warrington originally trained as a painter of armorial shields before moving to train with the stained glassmaker Thomas Willement. He established his own firm in 1836 and became one of the earliest glass makers of the English Gothic Revival. In addition to this he wrote a book on the history of stained glass. His windows usually have geometric and foliate backgrounds and pictorial roundels that are comprised of multiple small pieces of glass. From c. 1838 - c. 1842, Warrington was the favoured glass maker of A. W. Pugin until the two men fell out, apparently over Warrington's prices. He did not find favour with the influential Cambridge Camden Society (the Ecclesiological Society) and his business seems to have been

⁵ Based on Anthony Symondson, *Comper, Sir (John) Ninian*, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32522>.

negatively affected from the 1850s as a result. He is best known for his work on Norwich and Peterborough cathedrals.

4.5 James Powell & Sons

Originally a wine merchant, James Powell purchased a glassworks in Whitefriars, London in 1834. Following his death in 1840, his sons established a stained glass division to meet the demands of the rapidly expanding Gothic Revival. The firm was responsible for important developments in the manufacture of antique glass for glass painting. Their windows are known for their beauty and historical authenticity but they also mass produced cheaper glass for borders and backgrounds. During the 19th century some of the leading names in stained glass work either trained at Whitefriars or designed for the firm, including Edward Burne-Jones and Gabriel Rossetti.

4.6 Clayton & Bell

Clayton & Bell was one of the most prolific Victorian stained glass firms. Founded in 1855 by John Clayton with Alfred Bell joining in 1856, they quickly established themselves as one of the pre-eminent manufacturers of their time. They made use of high quality antique glass and introduced efficient production methods. By the mid-1860s, they had over 300 employees and as a result have been criticised for over-production. George Gilbert Scott in particular felt that Bell, whom he had previously employed, had abandoned artistic talent in the face of high pressure and tight timescales. He also disliked their use of trends for antiquated drawing when he considered them capable of better work. However, they remained popular with parish churches who continued to commission work from them and their windows can be seen across England. They are known for their excellent use of colour, the luminosity of their windows and the quality of painted details.

4.7 Percy Charles Haydon Bacon

The son of an Ipswich shoemaker, Percy Bacon and his family moved to London following his father's death. Nothing is known of his training but by 1881 he was describing himself as a stained glass artist and, by 1892, had established a firm *Percy Bacon Brothers* which existed in London until 1933. In its later years, it also operated in Reading where it remained in existence until after the Second World War. The firm was involved in a great deal of collaborative work, employing G F Prynne whilst Bacon carried out work for Powell & Sons. Bacon's work was influenced by 15th century glass and made use of elaborate surface decoration. The windows usually depicted Biblical figures and historical figures of the church and are notable for the use of translucent, off-white glass for the flesh that often has a fawn or greenish hue. The robes meanwhile are usually intensely coloured with etching and flashing creating detailed patterns.

5. Setting and Churchyard



Fig 1: The view down Church Road towards Caversham Bridge. The church is screened by the foliage on the right.

Caversham St Peter is located to the north of the River Thames in a leafy suburban area. To the north and east it is bounded by Church Road, leading to Caversham bridge, a busy route into Reading that is congested at peak times.

To the south it sits above Caversham Court gardens with views across the river to the high-rise buildings of Reading. To the west, a quiet road leads down towards the river. A footpath through the churchyard gives a pleasant route for pedestrians avoiding Church Road. The church is set on the side of a hill and the ground rises steeply in the more overgrown northern section of the churchyard with the churchyard level significantly higher than the north aisle ground level. There is substantial mature planting throughout the churchyard and, combined with the positioning of the church building on the hillside, views of the church are therefore restricted from most elevations, particularly during the summer months. From the north it is screened almost entirely from view with just glimpses of the west end of the roof visible. The east elevation is obscured until you are well within the churchyard. From the east end of Caversham Court gardens, it is possible to look up to the church and see the Lady Chapel and tower but elsewhere in the gardens only the tower is visible above the tree line. The clearest view of the church from outside the churchyard is from the west where the west elevation of the tower is relatively unobscured. **The setting and churchyard are of moderate-high significance.**



Fig 2: Caversham St Peter viewed from the east entrance to the churchyard



Fig 3: Caversham St Peter viewed from the east end of Caversham Court gardens



Fig 4: Caversham St Peter viewed from the west

5.1 Conservation Area

Caversham St Peter, the churchyard and neighbouring Caversham Court are situated within the Caversham St Peter Conservation Area and are an essential part of that area's designation. The Conservation Area was first designated as such in April 1988 and it was appraised in April 2009. A new appraisal is currently underway and a draft of the document from February 2018 provides the following summary of the Key Characteristics of the area:

Summary of Key Characteristics

This section summarises those elements which create the area's character and justify its designation as a Conservation Area (CA), to assist key decisions on its development and enhancement. It provides links *in italics* to later sections of this appraisal, where fuller details can be found. The key characteristics are:

- The heavily-wooded ridge above the Thames providing a green backdrop to the CA is crucial in views into it from across the river, particularly from Caversham Bridge and the Thames Promenade. Some of these assets lie outside the area. There are also important views of the river and the bridge from Caversham Court Gardens, and glimpsed views of the river from elsewhere in the CA. (*Section 2; Map 3; sections 4.2, 4.3, 4.4 and 7.4*)
- On the slopes of this ridge, St Peters Church and its tower, together with Caversham Court, dominate the CA. Caversham Court is included in the Historic England "Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England".
- Tree cover and green spaces, especially around St Peters and in Caversham Court, with specimen trees in the latter, are important. Individual street trees and those in gardens also contribute strongly to the area. (*Section 4.5; Map 4; section 7.11*)
- The form of the original bridgehead village is still apparent: Bridge Street runs north from the bridge to the T-junction with Church Road (to Oxford) and Church St (to Henley). (*Section 4.1*) High traffic volumes attest that this original function endures. (*Section 7.10*)
- The built form reflects that origin. A core of listed 16th and 17th century village buildings creates a two-storey scale. The irregular building line along the road, often at or close to the back of the footpath, and its winding character leading up to St Peters Hill reflect the historic village. (*Sections 4.1 and 5.1*)
- The early village is overlaid with mainly late Victorian and Edwardian buildings, constructed over a short time period. While the commercial buildings raise the predominant scale to three storeys, there is a harmony of scale and materials between these buildings and the earlier ones. (*Section 5.3*) Early red brick and timber framed domestic buildings with plain roof tiles combine with well-detailed later brick buildings with slate roofs (*Map 2*) to form a coherent whole and an attractive and consistent roofscape.
- The use of red brick and flint for boundary walls down St Peters Hill and into Church Road also serves to unify the area. (*Sections 4.1; 5.1; 5.5; and 7.2*)
- This history is reflected in a legacy of Listed Buildings (*See list and description at 5.4.1*) and Buildings of Townscape Interest (*similarly at 5.4.2*), whose character is essential to that of the CA as a whole. (*Map 3*)
- The junction of Church Road and Bridge Street includes some distinguished banks and similar commercial premises (*Sections 5.1 and 7.9*). The importance of Bridge Street as the visual corridor linking the village core with the bridge outweighs the poor treatment of some of its buildings, which nevertheless have a consistent scale and style.
- The CA breaks down into four sub-areas of distinctive character, which provide a context for making decisions on change (*Section 6 and Map 5*).
- Several gap sites detract from the CA. Their redevelopment would be welcome but will need particular care. (*Section 7.8*)
- Improvement of surfaces and rationalisation of street furniture would be of great benefit, as resources permit (*Sections 5.5 and 7.3*)
- The CA's character is at risk through the gradual but cumulative loss of the details which help define it, including built details (*Section 7.1*) and the treatment of the river bank (*Section 7.7*)

The Conservation Area has two distinct character areas and it is proposed that this will be extended to four as a result of the ongoing appraisal. The first of these character areas is Caversham Court and the Church and it is described in the Conservation Area Appraisal document as follows:

“This is the most historic and attractive part of the Conservation Area and the chief justification for its designation. As Church Road runs westward, it curves sharply to the right and then left as it begins to climb the deeply-wooded slope. The high walls and gates of Caversham Court Gardens, in mellow stone and flint, close this view, and the road beyond passes between a group of attractive historic buildings: timber-framed to the north and brick and flint to the south.

Above these walls and gates rise the rich variety of specimen trees in the Gardens, and through them can be seen the church, on a small plateau part way up the slope, nestling among more trees. Through the gates lies the green oasis of the gardens, which appear on the national “Register of Historic Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England”. Their importance is further reflected in the recent award of National Heritage Lottery funding for extensive improvements. Their character is defined by terraces rising up from the river, fine specimen trees, river views, attractive walls and interesting small buildings, and the footprint of Caversham Court which is set out in the paving.”⁶

5.2 Churchyard Listings

5.2.1 Listed Boundary Wall

The retaining crinkle crankle wall to the south side of the churchyard is listed as an individual asset.

Name: RETAINING WALL OF ST PETER'S CHURCHYARD

List entry Number: 1321934

Grade II

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Details

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5128 (South Side) Caversham Retaining wall of St Peter's Churchyard SU 7074 11/448 II 2. C18 or early C19. Red brick high wall retaining churchyard. Interesting design in that the piers are linked by concave sections of wall. 14 bays, with some black brick headers. Mostly 12 to 15 foot high.

Listing NGR: SU7087474868

⁶http://www.readingcivicsociety.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/St-Peters-CA-Appraisal-for-print-amendments-accepted-and-formatting-revised-2-_.pdf



Fig 5: The distinctive south churchyard wall (photo © Nigel Smith)

5.3 Listed tombs

Eleven of the tombs in the churchyard have been listed as a group. They are not located in one geographical area of the churchyard. The original listing was updated to correct the date of item 7) the Stephens family vault.

Name: ELEVEN TOMBS IN ST PETER'S CHURCHYARD

List entry Number: 1113449

Grade: II

Date first listed: 14-Dec-1978

Date of most recent amendment: 07-Mar-1980

Details

In the entry for CHURCH ROAD (south side) 11/265A Caversham Tombs and Monuments in St Peter's Churchyard shall be amended to read CHURCH ROAD (south side) Caversham Eleven tombs in St Peter's Churchyard The description shall be amended to read 1. 1858 Charles Washington Lovegrove and family. Tapering chest-with cross gabled capping. 2. 1813 John Flory Howard. Table tomb with panelled and piers. 3. 1828. Benjamin Lancaster. Table

tomb with panels for inscriptions; retains cast iron arrow head rails and urn corner piers. 4. 1778. Low table tomb. 5. 1802. Tim Van der Stegen. Table tomb. 6. 1765. Margaret Bowd, table tomb. 7. 1802 Stephens family vault. Table tomb with reeded corner piers and hipped chamfered slab. 8. 1802. Elizabeth Lunn. Table tomb in poor condition. Moulded panels and railings, standards with iron capping. 9. 1848. John Lawton, table tomb. 10. 1790s. Benwell Family vault. Table tomb, panelled. Spear, head rails with urn capped standards. 11. C17 table tomb with, chamfered eaves to capping.

CHURCH ROAD 1. 5123 (South Side) Caversham Tombs and Monuments in St Peter's Churchyard SU 7074 11/265A II 2. Irregular layout against side of hill. Numerous head and slab stones. In particular are the following. 1. 1858 Charles Washington Lovegrove and family. Tapering chest with cross gabled capping. 2. 1813 John Flory Howard. Table tomb with panelled end piers. 3. 1828. Benjamin Lancaster. Table tomb with panels for inscriptions; retains cast iron arrow head rails and urn corner piers. 4. 1778. Low table tomb. 5. 1802. Mrs Van der Stegen. Table tomb, panelled. 6. 1765. Margaret Bowd, table tomb. 7. 1811. Stephens Family vault. Table tomb with reeded corner piers and hipped chamfered slab. 8. 1802. Elizabeth Lunn. Table tomb in poor condition. Moulded panels and railings, standards with iron capping. 9. 1848. John Lawton, table tomb. 10. 1790s. Benwell Family vault. Table tomb, panelled. Spear head rails with urn capped standards. 11. C17 table tomb with chamfered eaves to capping.

Listing NGR: SU7088574912

6. Exterior

6.1 North Elevation

The north elevation is the most complex, containing substantial evidence of the early stages of development despite the uniformity of the flint facing and tiled roofing. Reading from east to west, the vestry was built in two stages: the west end in 1857 and the east end in 1883. Behind it to the south rises the pitched clay tile roof of the Vanderstegen chapel. The main section of the north aisle is largely flintwork with reused stones inserted in places. This includes a stone below the second window from the east that has been identified by the *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland* as a Norman chevron voussoir.⁷ Unlike the other walls, it has brick levelling courses, brick quoins at the corners and some brick patch repairs. It is unlikely that these would date from the 15th century rebuilding and widening of the aisle but it is plausible that they may have been added as a result of damage during the siege of Reading in 1643. This section has four square-headed windows dating to the 15th century. A deep drainage ditch separates the north wall from the churchyard. At the west end of the aisle is a low, narrow structure with a lead roof and parapet that superficially resembles a later extension. However, in form it is likely to be the remains of the 12th century north aisle left unaltered during the 15th century works that widened the rest of the aisle to the east. It was substantially restored in 1878 and the flint facing and roof design date to these works. In this portion of the north aisle there is a Victorian lancet window likely echoing the Norman window in the west elevation.

The north elevation is of high significance for its evidential value in illustrating the development of the church building and, in particular, preserving a small section of the original 12th century north aisle.

⁷ <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1037/>.



Fig 6: North elevation viewed from the elevated ground of the northern churchyard



Fig 7: North aisle. The possible Norman stone is just visible below the third window from the west, just above the plinth.

6.2 South Elevation

The south elevation of the church is almost entirely Victorian in character, faced in knapped flint with limestone dressings and clay tile roofs. The tower, porch and south aisle are all the work of Morris & Stallwood as part of a single phase starting in 1878. Unusually, the south aisle does not run the full length of the nave, finishing one bay to the east of the tower. In this bay, the porch joins directly to the nave with a door to the south aisle in its eastern wall. This and the curious door and staircase arrangement to the south side of the tower give the church a distinctive but somewhat eccentric appearance. Perhaps the architect's intention was to suggest that these structures had evolved over centuries when in fact they are of one phase completed in three years of building.



Fig 8: South entrance to the tower and south porch (photo © Nigel Smith)

Comper added the Lady Chapel and the extension of the Chancel in 1924 in a style sympathetic to the earlier 19th century work. All the fenestration to the Lady Chapel was relocated from elsewhere in the building during the 1924 works. The priest door and the lancets flanking it to

the east and west date to 1857 and were relocated from the former south wall of the chancel. The double lancet to the west of these dates from 1878 and was originally the east window of the south aisle as shown in an interior photograph of c. 1910.

This elevation can be viewed from sections of Caversham Court and is the most public area of the churchyard with substantial footfall along the footpath passing to the south.



Fig 9: The south aisle and the Lady Chapel viewed from the south-east

The south elevation is of moderate-high significance for its architectural value, as an example of a workman-like Gothic revival style, and as the only external elevation where the Victorian work is dominant.

6.3 East Elevation

The east elevation is not visible from outside the churchyard but is a dominant view of the church for those approaching the building along the footpath from the east. As with the south elevation, the walls are faced with knapped flint and the dressings are limestone. The east ends of both the Lady Chapel and the chancel are by Comper in 1924 but, as with the south elevation, he reuses some earlier material. In this case, the recycled material is limited to the east window of the Lady Chapel: this is the former chancel east window and is in a delicate and flowing Early English style likely dating to a previous extension of the chancel in the late 13th century. To the north of this is Comper's extended chancel with a simple but large five light east window. In the north and south walls of the chancel, flanking the sanctuary, are two three-light

square-headed windows again by Comper, clearly intended to throw light onto the altar. To the north of the chancel is the Vanderstegen Chapel, the east window of which is original perpendicular work with four lower lights under sub-arches.



Fig 10: The east elevation of the south aisle, chancel and Vanderstegen chapel (photo © Nigel Smith)

To the north of this is the 1883 vestry extension by local builder A. W. Dodd. The striking feature of the vestry is the tall but narrow arch into which is set a door with two-light, cusped tracery window above. The tracery of the window is reminiscent of the arts and crafts style, it is impressive work for a local builder.



Fig 11: The distinctive east entrance to the vestry (photo © Nigel Smith)

The east elevation is of moderate-high significance for its evidential value of the phases of development spanning seven centuries of work.

6.4 West Elevation

The west elevation is dominated by the three stage, flint-faced west tower of 1878-9. This replaced an earlier tower with a timber upper section added following damage to the medieval structure during the Civil War. To the bottom stage of the tower, in the west wall, is a tall, Victorian lancet window. To the upper stage are simple two light louvered openings to the bell floor on each elevation. To the north, the west end of the widened north aisle has a curiously domestic, tile-hung gable the date of which is unclear though it seems likely to have been an attempt to repair damage caused to the north and west elevations during the Civil War. At the west end of the narrow 12th century north aisle is a c. 12th century window roughly relocated, this is likely the Norman window referred to by Billings in his letter to the Incorporated Church Buildings Society of 1856 as being on the south side of the chancel.⁸ He was proposing to restore it in accordance with now lost elevation drawings, possibly relocating it to the north aisle

⁸ ICBS 5002, Lambeth Palace Library.

at that point. However, as a historic sketch dated to c. 1861 (see appendix 2) shows both a window and door in this location, it was presumably altered again during the 1878 works when the west end of the north aisle was rebuilt internally and externally. This is the earliest window in the church. As with the north elevation of this end of the north aisle, the west elevation was remodelled in the Victorian period with the addition of a parapet.



Fig 12: North elevations of the north aisle and flower room, including the reset Norman window

The west elevation has little uniformity of quality, finish or style. **However, the Norman window is of high significance and the elevation as a whole should be considered of moderate significance for its historical value relating to the redevelopment of the church following Civil War damage and in the 19th century.**

7. Interior

Generally, the character of the interior is late Victorian, largely dictated by the fixed, dark-stained pews, plain, white painted, plastered walls, and close rafted, dark stained ceilings. The floors throughout are made up of a mixture of red and black quarry tiles, as is usual for the period, with higher quality encaustic tiles used in more liturgically significant areas of the church. Despite the moderate amount of stained glass, the building is light, accentuating its simple character.

7.1 Vanderstegen Chapel

The Vanderstegen (North) Chapel was constructed in the late 15th century and is original Perpendicular work. The walls are plastered rubble with exposed limestone window tracery, north door dressings and south arcade. The medieval roof consists of three bays and is of oak, with a king post, and simple mouldings to the underside of the arch trusses. The feet of the trusses have a rustic, Gothic bracket although these have been lost from the two westernmost trusses on the north side and the south-east truss. The roof was exposed and repaired in 1907 for aesthetic reasons and to improve the acoustics. A pipe organ was housed in the Vanderstegen Chapel but this was removed in 1987 after which the Chapel was refurbished, work was completed in 1991. As part of this refurbishment, the chapel floor was carpeted and the space fitted out as a choir vestry and meeting room. Beneath the carpet is a solid floor and floor memorials including that to Dorothea Brigham, d. 1630 which is the oldest in the church. The majority of the floor memorials are to members of the Brigham/Vanderstegen families who had privately owned the chapel.



Fig 13: The Vanderstegen Chapel fitted out as a choir vestry

The East window is of four lights with glass by Powell (see 'Glass' below) and the north window is square-headed with three lancet lights, these are both original 15th century windows.

The north door from the chapel to the vestry was installed during the building of Poulton and Woodman's vestry in 1857. It is of Bath stone and Perpendicular in style with a panelled, linen fold door. The door is reached by a flight of five steps - a rise of approximately 1m to the vestry level.

The south arcade between the chapel and the chancel is richly carved with panelled arches and a capital with four angels on the central column. There are traces of paint on the scrolls held by the angels but it is unclear whether this is medieval or Victorian decoration. The south (chancel) face of the arcade is painted with foliate decoration and English text, probably dating to the nineteenth century.



The chapel was screened to the south in 1917 after it was returned to the church by Mr and Mrs A W Carter in memory of their son Donovan Waldegrave Carter, RNAS. The screens are of black stained wood with delicate tracery and an iron grille filling the window openings. The gilded initials 'DWC' are repeated on the transom of the screen. The screen is by Sir Ninian Comper and represents his earliest work in the church. As part of the 1991 work, a new screen was added to the west, made by Martin Heath of Sutton

Courtenay and designed to match the Comper screen. Glazing was added to the rear of the screens to enable the Chapel to act as an enclosed meeting room.

The surviving fabric of the Perpendicular chapel is of high significance both as a family chapel to the Vanderstegen family and for the quality of its decoration, in particular the angel capital. The Comper screen is of moderate significance as a good, functional example of his ecclesiastical work. The remaining fixtures and fittings are modern and do not contribute to the significance of this chapel. They can be regarded as having no significance.

7.2 North aisle

The plain north aisle is of four generous bays each lit by a Perpendicular, square-headed window with three lancet lights. These windows match the north window in the Vanderstegen chapel (see 'Glass' below for further details). The original 12th century aisle was widened down most of its length in the 15th century. The simple square ceiling panels are painted white and conceal the roof construction with the exception of the large, square, oak tie beams. The ceiling was the gift of Mr George Bennett in 1878. Two windows have been added in the gable at the west end of the roof.

The floor consists primarily of diamond set red and black quarry tiles with inset ledgers. From east to west the ledgers are as follows:

- 1) Mrs Bridget Lynch - vault marker
- 2) Joseph (*illegible*) gent.
- 3) Willats. 1786 - vault marker
- 4) *illegible*
- 5) Elizabeth Montagu, aged 8, 1814 and other relatives up to 1850
- 6) Margaret Keatinge

The pews are on raised pew platforms with pine boarding (see 'Pews' for details). At the west end of the north aisle, four or five pews have been removed to make space for the font and a small children's area has been created in this area. Red carpet was laid in this area in 2010. Pews have also been removed from the east end of the north aisle as early as 1958. This area is now used informally, red carpet was also laid here in 2010 and extended in 2015.

The font is located in the westernmost bay of the widened aisle on a concrete tiled floor at the same level as the pew platforms (see 'Font' for details).

The 1856 application to the ICBS for re-seating refers to an existing north aisle gallery seating 12 people but it is unclear when this was removed.

The north aisle is of moderate significance as a reasonably complete example of Perpendicular work.

7.3 North-west corner

A curious feature of Caversham St Peter is the north-west corner. Part of the nave when approached from the south and accessed from a half arch from the north aisle, it is likely to be a fragment of the narrow 12th century north aisle. It has been created through two stages of development. The 15th century rebuilding of the aisle appears to have only widened it for around two-thirds of its length, leaving a narrower section at the west end. Plans for the 1857 rebuilding work show that a wall was inserted across the width of the aisle at the level of the tower arch creating this small corner area in the church and an enclosed space accessed via the tower (see 'Flower room' below).

In the north wall is a single lancet window (see 'Glass' below). The area is dominated by a large Romantic memorial to the Montagu family on the north wall to the west of the window and, on the west wall, a framed copy of the 1876 Salviati working drawing for the mosaic reredos behind the high altar in Chester Cathedral. The drawing was presented by Ernest Ravenscroft on Easter Day in 1908.

Against the west wall are built-in cupboards installed in memory of Cyril Burnside churchwarden 1961-1973, giving what is one of the oldest standing areas of the interior a very 20th century, functional character that is slightly at odds with its historic significance.

Structurally, this area is of moderate-high historical significance but the interior is of limited aesthetic value.

7.4 Nave

The nave is part of the original early Norman church plan, lengthened in the later 12th century but it has been much altered and it is unlikely that any early material remains. Much of the interior work dates to the Morris & Stallwood remodelling of 1878 and the effect is very stark.

The floor level of the nave is lower than that of the churchyard and it is accessed from the porch down two steps. It is of five bays and has an arch-braced king post roof with the skeelings painted white. There is no chancel arch at the east end, instead there is an overlarge final truss with a single moulded arch in oak. A photograph of 1875 shows a Decorated chancel arch which seems must have been removed as part of the 1878 restoration. The same image shows a substantial tie beam at the east end of the roof, indicating the poor structural condition of the roof at the time.



Fig 14: The nave viewed from the chancel

The arcades consist of simple round columns with moulded capitals and plinths. There are two carved ball flowers at the east end and one on the south side at the west end. The plain tower arch dates to the same period and is simply carved with three deep mouldings over the upper section of the arch.



Figs 15 and 16: The north arcade and ball flower carving

There is a single window in the south west corner next to the south door. It is a single large lancet in a generous Victorian surround with the hood carved with simple detailing to match the tower arch. (see 'Glass' and 'Memorials' below).

As in the aisles, the floor is diamond set red and black quarry tiles with inset ledgers down the central aisle and at the west end. At the west end the floor has been poorly repaired with multiple joints that cut across the ledgers. From east to west the ledgers are as follows:

- 1) *Illegible*
- 2) Charles Cartwright 1716 and relative - vault marker
- 3) *Blank*
- 4) William (*illegible*)
- 5) (*illegible - decoration at corners*)
- 6) William Weeden (*further text illegible - memento mori motifs*) - vault marker
- 7) (*illegible*)

The pews are on raised platforms of pine boarding with a central aisle dividing them into two blocks. Two pews and their platform were removed from the east end of each block in 2015. Oak flooring has been laid where they originally stood.

As with the north aisle, the nave is very plain, an effect amplified by the simplicity of the Victorian arcades and the lack of relieving decoration to the tower arch. It is of moderate significance.

7.5 Tower base

The tower was rebuilt in 1878 when the previous structure was found to be in a state of considerable disrepair. The tower has a single lancet west window similar to the west window in the south aisle. However, views of the window are restricted by the kitchen and toilet pod below. This was inserted in the 1970s and is accessed by a flight of four steps to a wooden screen. The screen dates to the 1970s but incorporates a panel from the 17th century tower gallery - this panel is of **high significance due to its evidential value**.

Inside are entirely modern kitchen units and white goods and two toilets on the south side. On the north side, a door gives access to the flower room. A glass panel in the ceiling allows bells to be lowered from the bell chamber for maintenance. **These modern insertions are of no significance. The fabric of the tower itself is of moderate significance. It should be noted that the lower portion of the ground floor walls and the floor of the tower may contain reused stonework from the medieval tower, destroyed during the Civil War - archaeological investigation should take place prior to any intervention in these areas.**

7.6 Flower room

A small, roughly plastered room with a simple boarded ceiling that is accessed from the tower base and currently used for flower arranging and storage. This area was in fact the west end of the north aisle and dates back to the 12th century, although much altered. The current configuration was created in two stages. When the north aisle was widened in the 15th century, the west end was left as a narrower space. The screening off of the west end to create a separate space appears to have taken place in 1857 when a wall was built across the narrow part of the north aisle, level with the tower arch (see Appendix 1). At that time, access seems to have been through a gap from the base of the tower rather than a designed doorway and there is no indication on the plan of the purpose of the space. When the tower was rebuilt in 1878, the gap was closed off and a proper doorway inserted. At this time the area was used as a boiler room, possibly accounting for the raised floor level compared with the nave. It is possible that fragments of the historic heating system remain beneath this floor.

Deeply recessed in the thick west wall is a single, small Norman window. This is not in situ original fabric; it was relocated by Billings from the chancel in 1857.⁹ Sketches post-dating Billings work (see Appendix 2) show that there would have been a west door as well as a window in this wall and that the window was once more reset when the doorway was closed in 1878. **The fabric of this area is of high significance as the oldest standing fabric in the building. However, its current use is not significant. Archaeological investigation should take place prior to any intervention in this area.**



Fig 17: reset Norman window in the flower room

⁹ In 1856, Billings wrote to the ICBS that the walls at the west end of the nave and the north “have no windows of an ancient character” but that on the south side of the Chancel “there is a Norman & Lancet window which [wile?] [be?] Restored as shown on Elevation”.

7.7 South Aisle

The south aisle dates to 1878-9 and shares the simple, muscular character of the nave. Due to the lack of separation between it and the Lady Chapel, it reads much as a large village church in its own right. It is of three bays with open scissor braced trusses to the roof. The ashlar posts of the roof rest on stone brackets which alternate between carved and apparently unfinished. At the centre of each bay is a lancet window in a deep recess with the outer face of the hood carved to match the tower arch. The west window is high in the wall and matches those in the south wall. A west door leads into the south porch. The door is typically Victorian with diagonal cross bracing in pine and simple, decorative ironwork. The door is concealed by a modern curtain, the iron brackets and rail for which appear to be Victorian.

The floor and pew platforms are as in the north aisle but there are no inset ledgers and the pews in this aisle have been built into the wainscoting (see 'Pews' below).

The pulpit is located in the easternmost bay (see 'Pulpit' below).



Fig 18: View from the south aisle into the Lady Chapel

The south aisle is of moderate significance. It is a complete and largely unchanged, competently executed Victorian aisle, however, it does not display the finest qualities of Victorian Gothic revival architecture which are apparent in other local churches of this date.

7.8 Lady Chapel

The Lady Chapel was added in 1924 By Sir Ninian Comper. It is of two bays and has roof trusses to match the south aisle including brackets with no carving. Unlike in the south aisle, the three windows in the south wall do not match because Comper made use of existing material relocated from the chancel. The easternmost is a single lancet similar to those in the south aisle but without a carved hood and with a sedilia by Comper beneath the window reveal. The middle window is a single Romanesque style lancet with the church memorial book in a glass cabinet in the reveal. These two windows date from 1857 and were previously in the south wall of the chancel. The westernmost window is a double lancet matching the single lancets in the south aisle, it is in a broad deep reveal carved to match the decoration elsewhere in the church and was formerly the east window of the south aisle.

The east window is the former east window from the chancel, moved in the 1924 works. It has Early English style intersecting tracery and vibrant Victorian glass (see 'Glass' below).

There is no arch separating the Lady Chapel from the south aisle, just a low oak rail installed in memory of William Francis Wood, rector of Caversham d. 1942. The north side of the rail has a badge of St Peter on its end and the south side of the rail has on its end a badge of the lilies of the Virgin Mary.



Fig 19: View of the Lady Chapel

The floor is of square set concrete tiles matching those used around the font in the north aisle. The door in the south wall is similar to the west door of the south aisle but is narrower and was formerly in the south wall of the chancel. It, like the windows, also dates to 1857.

The sanctuary is oak panelled on the east wall and there is a niche to the south side of the altar with an iron screen that has been used as an aumbry.

The Lady Chapel is of moderate significance as a complete structure by Comper, the evidential value in the reuse of earlier material, and the communal value of the fixtures and fittings from the 20th century.

7.9 Chancel

The chancel is of three bays, extended eastwards by Comper in 1924. The ceiling is panelled with barley twist decoration, gilded crosses and the panels painted green. The south chancel arcade is part of Comper's work and has been sensitively designed to match the north chancel arcade in proportion and Perpendicular style. There is an open doorway in the Perpendicular style connecting the sanctuary of the chancel to the sanctuary of the Lady Chapel and the parish communion is delivered at both altars. The arcade to the Lady Chapel has screens to match those between the chancel and Vanderstegen Chapel but without the modern, full-height glazing.



Fig 20: The chancel

The east window is of five lights and dates to the Comper extension work although he was not responsible for the glass (see 'Glass' below). Stylistically, it is very simple and much of his time. Two windows were introduced by Comper at the east end of the north and south walls to cast light on the sanctuary area. They are clear glazed, three light, square-headed windows with cusped tracery and reveals that extend downwards to provide stone sedilia.

The floor in the main portion of the chancel is red and black quarry tiles set in a diaper pattern with encaustic yellow and black tiles at the centre of some of the large diamonds in the aisle. In the sanctuary, the floor is square set concrete tiles with stone step edgings, these date to the Comper works.

There are two niches in the east wall. The one on the north side was intended as an aumbry and has a blank shield above whilst the one on the south side was used as a piscina.

The chancel is of moderate-high significance containing some high quality work both from the medieval period and by Comper.

7.10 Vestry

The vestry was added in 1857 by the firm of Poulton & Woodman and extended to the east in 1883 by Albert W. Dodd. In the west wall is a two-light decorated window; in the east wall is a door to the churchyard with a two-light window above both set within a tall, narrow arch; the walls are plastered and painted white; the floor is carpeted; the vestry fixtures and fittings are modern and are of no significance. **Overall the vestry interior is of low significance.**

7.11 South porch

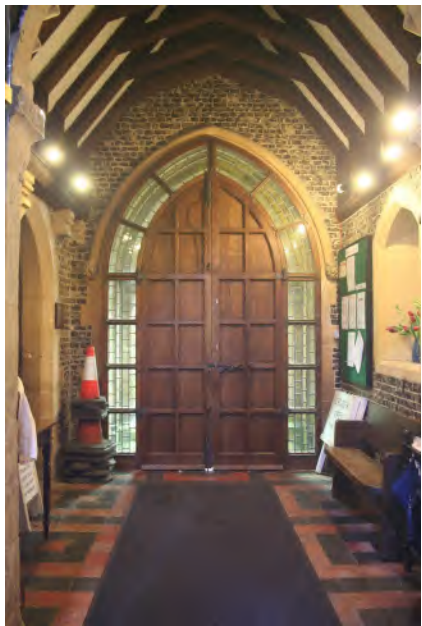
The south porch largely dates to 1878 and is probably the third structure on this footprint, as shown in 18th and 19th century drawings. The internal doorway to the nave is original Norman work, probably 12th century, with obvious Victorian repairs. It has two orders of shafts with the first order having double scallop capitals, saltires on the face of the imposts and a chevron arch. The second order has frontal chevron jambs and arch; there is a superarch of saltire crosses.¹⁰ There is some medieval graffiti, mostly in the form of incised crosses. **This doorway is of high significance.** Glass doors were added in 2013.

¹⁰ This doorway is recorded in the *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland*, <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1037/>.



Figs 21 and 22: Norman south doorway and saltire detailing

The walls are finely dressed with squared black flint and the floor is of square set red and black quarry tiles. There is a single narrow lancet west window set in a deep recess and below it a small oak bench in the Arts and Crafts style; installed in 1952 in memory of Ernest Ravenscroft, a prominent local architect, fellow of RIBA, and diocesan surveyor to the archdeaconry of Berkshire. **The bench is of moderate significance due to its communal and historical value.**



Figs 23 and 24: South porch and detail of the flint work

The external oak doors are in an oak frame with a glazed surround of leaded green glass. It has naturalistic arts and crafts ironwork with leaf details forming the handles and fixing positions. These doors date to 2000 and their installation is commemorated by a brass plaque in the porch.

The porch is of good quality though by no means unique, even in the local area. It is of moderate-low significance.

8. Furniture and Fittings

8.1 Pews

The majority of the pews were added in 1857, when applications were made to the ICBS and the diocese for grant aid towards re-seating and the parish received £110 combined from those authorities. On completion of the work, 412 people could be accommodated including the 70 free seats for local school children in the gallery and 163 free seats elsewhere in the building.¹¹ When the south aisle was added in 1878, it would have been necessary to provide additional seating in this area. However, pews did not form part of the main contract with the builders for that phase of construction and there are no records of substantial payments made to carpentry firms in Morris and Stallwood's final accounts. We therefore consider it likely that although additional, matching seats were provided where necessary, the 1857 pews were retained. They are divided into four blocks: one each in the aisles and two in the nave which extend into the aisles.

The pews themselves are square-ended and of pine set on raised, pine pew platforms. They have simply moulded top rails but otherwise are undecorated. They have brass fittings to hold umbrellas and red upholstered seat cushions. They are simply and economically built. The pews in the south aisle have been built into the wainscoting. The pews in the north block are marked 'free' as are three of those in the northern block of nave pews. The five easternmost pews in the northern block of nave pews have been subdivided at the arcade.

¹¹ The *Reading Mercury* of 7 March 1857 described the pews as "uniform ranges of neat and commodious benches, of a very moderate height".





Figs 25-27: View of the main block of pews and close-ups

A substantial number of pews have been removed from the north aisle to create space at both the east and west ends of the aisle. Pews have also been removed from the east end of the nave blocks. Removal of the pews began in 1958 with the removal of the front pew from the south side of the nave, the book rail and two front pews from the north side of the nave and the three front pews in the north aisle. (Photos of the interior prior to the removal of the pews can be found in Appendix 2)

In the south aisle, one pew has been clumsily extended to fill the gap previously filled by a wall mounted radiator.

The lack of evidence for the architect's involvement in the pew design/commissioning together with their simple, economic design and mid-range materials suggests that they were obtained from a supplier of ecclesiastical furnishings rather than being custom designed and made for this church. Though large numbers of pews remain, removals have been substantial and have altered the character of the seating as a whole. Nonetheless they do make a substantial aesthetic contribution towards the Victorian character of the interior. **We therefore consider that they are of moderate-low significance.**

8.2 Pulpit

The pulpit is located on the south side of the nave set on an octagonal limestone plinth. It is in particularly flamboyant mid-late Victorian style, the limestone plinth inset with red marble

geometric decoration and red marble colonettes. The inscription below the top rail reads 'We preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus the Lord'. It likely dates to the 1857 work by Billing with the *Reading Mercury* reporting that 'a very chaste stone pulpit' had been installed in place of the former 'homely arrangement'.¹² The accounts for the 1878 work refer to 're-fixing' the pulpit and to the stonemasons carrying out the extra work to it, suggesting it was moved while the south aisle was constructed and then set back into place.¹³ The sculptor is unknown.



Fig 28: the pulpit

The pulpit is of moderate significance as a good example of high Victorian ecclesiastical art.

8.3 Font

The font is located at the west end of the north aisle and was discovered in the rectory garden (Caversham Court) in the 1920s. It was installed in the church on a new base as part of the 1924-5 works. The floor surrounding it is concrete tiles on the same level as the pew platforms. It has a modern square stone plinth with a modern octagonal, scalloped shaft. The Norman lead-lined bowl is curiously primitive looking, reminiscent of similar though more flamboyant work at Kilpeck, Herefordshire. It is of either Purbeck marble or Sussex marble with concave pillars at the angles.¹⁴ At some point it has been cut across the bottom, presumably to remove it

¹² *Reading Mercury*, 7th March 1857.

¹³ Berkshire Record Office, D/P162/6/2/33-4.

¹⁴ The 2010 edition of Pevsner's guide to Berkshire suggests it is Purbeck marble, Geoffrey Tyack, Simon Bradley and Nikolaus Pevsner, *Berkshire* (2010), p.479, however, the *Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture*

from its original location. The cover is black stained oak with decorative ironwork, dating from the Comper works of 1924.



Fig 29: The rediscovered font

This unusual font, despite the loss of many of its elements, is of high significance for its historic and communal value.

8.4 Altars

There are two altars in Caversham St Peter. The altar in the Lady Chapel was installed in 1943 in memory of churchwarden Ernest Charles Cooke. **It is of moderate significance for its liturgical and communal value.**

The high altar is black-stained and was installed as part of the Comper restoration and extension of the chancel. Comper originally intended it to have a carved canopy above but it seems unlikely that this was installed. Carved pillars were installed around it, presumably to hold curtains, but these were subsequently removed and are now stored elsewhere in the church. It was given to the church in 1925 in memory of William Dyke by his sister. **It is of high significance as a key component of the Comper works.**

in Britain and Ireland (CRSBI) suggests it is Sussex marble. CRSBI also suggest it may have a later date and not have been a font in origin. <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk/site/1037/>

8.5 Organ

The organ is a Viscount electronic organ installed at the east end of the nave in 2015. It is a three manual instrument with thirty-nine stops. The console is in solid oak, purpose built by Renatus in Bideford, Devon. The speakers are located at high level either side of the Lady Chapel, and at the west end of the nave, with the base speaker at ground level. There are two extra monitor speakers in the chancel roof to give the choir additional support. **It is of low significance.**

8.6 Chancel furniture

The choir seats are a mixture of stalls donated in 1917 by Mr and Mrs A W Carter at the same time as the Vanderstegen chapel screens were installed, and additional stalls dating to the 1924 works. All of the seats are by Comper. The desks in the westernmost bay have linenfold panelling and match the adjacent clergy stall. These are also likely to be by Comper. The desks in the middle bay are a simpler design without the linenfold, they were made by an unknown member of the congregation, c. 1990. **They are of moderate significance as part of Comper's scheme of work to the chancel and also as a war memorial.**



Fig 30: Choir stalls with Comper screen behind and 1663 weathervane visible behind

The Bishop's throne with the keys of St Peter was installed in memory of Margaret Bradfield d. 1995 and John Bradfield d. 1997. **It is of moderate significance as a memorial.**

Near the entrance to the Vanderstegen Chapel is a wrought metal weathervane now on a staff dated 1663 which is generally believed to have come from the gazebo in Caversham Court gardens. **It is of high significance.**

8.7 Aisle furniture

In the carpeted area at the east end of the north aisle is a double clergy stall that is probably part of the 1924 Comper work. **It is of moderate significance as part of this ensemble.**

At the east of the south aisle, against the rail to the Lady Chapel there are two black stained prayer desks. One has Gothick tracery whilst the other is simple and roughly jointed. These were likely stained black to match the 1924 work although they are not of this date. Their origin is unclear although they are not of any great artistic merit. **They are of low significance.**

Brass eagle lectern given by John and Elizabeth Bradshaw, 1890. A fairly standard example of this date, likely obtained from an ecclesiastical furnishings supplier. **It is of moderate-low significance for its value as a memorial.**

8.8 Lady Chapel furniture

The main seating consists of wooden chairs with red vinyl upholstery, probably from the 1970s/1980s. These do not contribute to the appearance of the Lady Chapel. **They are of no significance.**

A variety of loose furniture consisting of:

- 1) Three 18th Century chairs. **Moderate significance**
- 2) An 18th century table at the west end with balusters carved to look like plants. Has been adapted with the addition of casters. **Moderate-high significance**
- 3) A wooden chest with the indistinct remains of a paint inscription. One lock and iron reinforcement at the corners. Possibly used for document storage as it is not secure enough for a parish chest. **Moderate-high significance**
- 4) Two banners - one of St Peter and one for the Mother's Union depicting the Virgin and Child. **Moderate significance**
- 5) Frontal chest. **Low significance**
- 6) A Victorian Glastonbury chair at the west end. **Low significance**
- 7) A double-sided, lectern style prayer desk with a rotating top; possibly the prayer desk referred to as installed at the same time as the altar in memory of Ernest Charles Cooke. **Moderate significance**

9. Monuments and memorials

All the memorials, inside and out, have been catalogued in a document available for download from: <http://www.stpetercaversham.org.uk/brief-history/>.

Unless otherwise stated, the memorials are of moderate significance. In some areas memorials will have been relocated, in particular in the south aisle.

9.1 Vanderstegen Chapel

- 1) SE Corner. Simple marble plaque with a moulded surround. William Taylor d. 1693 and infant, Elizabeth.
- 2) S wall, E end. Neo classical marble plaque with a memento mori motif beneath. Thomas Brigham and his son and grandson, 1663-1742. This commemorates the last of the Brigham line that owned this memorial chapel and is therefore of **high significance for its historical value**.
- 3) N wall, E end. Marble plaque with a neo classical surround and broken pediment. William Barker, d. 1775, wife Ann Barker and daughter Ann Barker, d. 1768. Remains located in vault beneath the monument
- 4) Over north door. Neo classical, white marble plaque topped by family crest. The Vanderstegen family, 1797-1892. This show the descent from the Brighams to the Vanderstegen family whereby they acquired this memorial chapel and is therefore of **high significance for its historical value**.

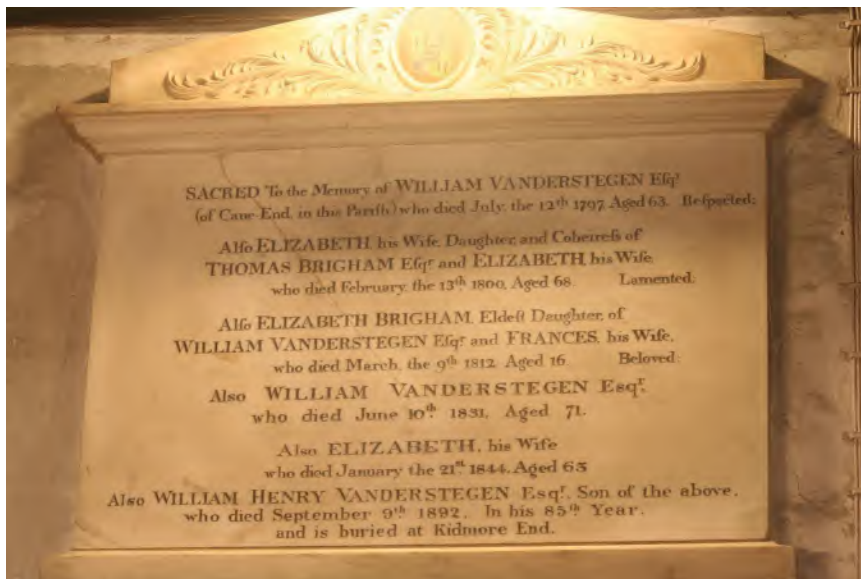


Fig 31: Vanderstegen memorial over the vestry door

Note that there are additional floor memorials to the Brigham family underneath the carpet, including the oldest memorial in the church. The authors of this report were not able to inspect them but they should be treated as of **high significance**.

9.2 North Aisle

From east to west:

- 1) Neo classical plaque with a black background, broken pediment and arms at the foot. Bridget Lynch, d. 1756.
- 2) (beneath 1) Brass plaque. War memorial. Arthur George William Gibbons of the Artists' Rifles. Killed in Action 16th July 1918 and buried at Maillez Mailles.
- 3) (left of 2) Small brass plaque. Barbara Chapman, Akela 3rd Reading (St Peter's) cub scouts, 1921-91.
- 4) Neo classical, sarcophagus shaped plaque topped by an urn with marble arms beneath. Thomas Willats, d. 18th June 1786 and Elizabeth Willats, d. 22nd Feb 1812.
- 5) (beneath 4) Oval marble plaque. Catherine, wife of Rev Thomas Ellis vicar of Reading and daughter of Thomas Willats, d. 21st Feb 1790.
- 6) Primitive neo classical marble plaque topped by pediment with carved coat of arms. William Montagu and family 1843-1873.
- 7) (beneath 6) Small brass plaque. Kenneth Wallace Clark, 1914-1999
- 8) Neo classical plaque with broken pediment. Thomas Powel, d. 26th June 1768
- 9) (beneath 8) Brass plaque. Joyce McFarland Vanderpump 1922-1993 and Richard Vanderpump 1918-2006
- 10) (west wall) Large white marble plaque with a simple black marble background. John Merrick of Reading and family 1757-1764
- 11) (beneath 10) Brass plaque with a black marble surround. George May, d. 1909 and Mary Sophie Georgina, d. 1901.

9.3 North-west corner

Romantic memorial on the north wall depicting an angel in flight over naturalistic swag bearing the inscription. Elizabeth Montagu, d. 1814 and Henry Montagu of Caversham Hill. Refers to the nearby vault which is marked with a ledger in the North Aisle.



Fig 32: Montagu memorial in the north-west corner of the nave

9.4 Nave

From east to west:

- 1) (wall east of south door) White marble plaque with a neoclassical surround and black background. Ann, d. 1832 and Nathaniel Clissold, d. 1834
- 2) (beneath 1) Brass plaque. Robert Parker Radcliffe, Lieutenant General Royal Artillery and churchwarden, d. 1907
- 3) (beneath 2) Brass plaque. Samuel Charles Cooke, headmaster, organist and choirmaster, d. 1908
- 4) (wall west of south door) Brass plaque. Eric Maunder Smith, treasurer and churchwarden, d. 2008
- 5) (below 4) Brass plaque. Dennis Hammond DFC, verger, d. 2002

- 6) (below SW window) Enamelled brass cross with foliate decoration and symbols of the evangelists. Emilia Monck, d. 1869 who paid for the glass
- 7) Bronze clock. William James Eves, d. 1973

9.5 South Aisle

From east to west:

- 1) Limestone rectangular plaque. Alice Olivey of Hemdean House, 1982
- 2) Neo classical plaque with broken pediment, black columns and a black base. Sarah Southby, 1781. Some damage to the stone facing.
- 3) Neo classical topped by painted arms (paint now lost) on a marble scroll and with memento mori motif beneath. Elizabeth Smith, d. 1723
- 4) White marble plaque shaped as a simple gothic pointed arch. John Stevens and family 1833-1867
- 5) (west wall) Elaborate neo classical white marble plaque on a black background topped by a gilded flame. Elizabeth Lawrence, 1747
- 6) (west wall) White marble plaque on a black background, signed by Wheeler. Mary, wife of Capt W H Waterfield of the Bombay Army and sister of Revd Pullen, 1829
- 7) (west wall) Neo classical plaque with broken pediment, black columns and a black background. Refers to remains deposited nearby (but memorial has been relocated into the south aisle). Mary Richards, 1780.

9.6 Lady Chapel

- 1) SE window. Brass plaque. Elizabeth Kennett, d. 1937
- 2) E wall, N side. Square marble plaque with cherubim framing inscription. Frances Beilingham, d. March 1718 and her husband John Forbet, d. 1727. Buried nearby.
- 3) N wall, E end. Oval marble plaque topped by gilded coat of arms. Thomas Loveday and family 1674-1720

9.7 Chancel

- 1) South Wall. White marble plaque on a black base. Thomas Loveday and family, 1720-1763
- 2) SE corner. Brass plaque. William Dyke whose sister gave the altar in his memory.
- 3) NE corner. Brass plaque. Emma Noble of Caversham Hall. A generous benefactress. 1925.
- 4) North Wall. White marble plaque on a black base that matches the Loveday memorial opposite. Revered Benwell, d. 1796. Erected by Penelope, his wife and daughter of Thomas Loveday.
- 5) Vanderstegen Chapel Screen. Brass plaques record the donation of the screen.
- 6) W end, N side. Victorian brass plaque with a foliate border. Records the donation of the east window by the children of Henry John Simonds, d. 26th Jan 1896 in his memory.
- 7) W end, S side. Brass plaque. William Francis Wood, 1942.

8) (below 7) Brass plaque. Harold Hewitson Nash, 1969.

10. War Memorial

The parish war memorial is on the south wall of the Lady Chapel. Oak board with a dentilated pediment and gilded inscription. Beneath is a glazed cabinet containing two memorial books, one to the First World War and one to the Second World War. A simple memorial of no particular artistic merit but of **high communal significance particularly when in conjunction with the war memorial windows and furniture elsewhere in the church.**

11. Glass

11.1 Vanderstegen Chapel

Rich and finely detailed east window by James Powell and Sons, 1897. The four main lights depict angels representing the Nativity, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. The upper lights depict the cross with thorns, heart and nails, peacock and pelican with a dove above. Scrolls above the angels read from left to right:

'Per mysterium sanctae incarnationis'

'Per crucem et Passionem'

'Per gloriosam Resurrectionem'

'Per gloriosam Ascensionem'

Scrolls below the angels read 'Libera Nos Domine Te Rogamus Audi Nos Dona Nobis Pacem Miserere nobis'.

This window is an excellent example of Powell's well-developed Arts and Crafts style, executed in the finest quality of antique glass available at the time. It is of **high significance, chiefly for its aesthetic value.**



Figs 33 and 34: Details of the Vanderstegen chapel east window

The small north window of three lancet lights to the north vestry contains 19th century foliate patterned glass with a blue border, presumably dating to one of the two Victorian restorations of

the church in 1857 and 1878. This glass is not of any particular quality and is of **low significance**.

11.2 North Aisle

In the north wall, four windows of the three lights from east to west 1) - 4). Windows 2) and 4) are of plain glass.

- 1) Memorial window for Henry Caversham Simonds of the Old Rectory in Caversham and Hawkridge House nr Newbury, died in 1918. Glass by Comper. St Thomas, St John the Apostle and St James the Great are depicted with their attributes and with coats of arms above.

- 3) Memorial window to Capt James Haslam and 'his gallant companions of the Caversham church lads' brigade, 1914-18'. Glass by Comper. Depicts St James the Less with the badge of the Church Lads' Brigade above. Comper's mark is visible towards the bottom right of the window.



Fig 35: Memorial window to Henry Caversham Simonds in the north aisle

These windows were intended to form a memorial series filling all the windows in the north aisle with depictions of the apostles by Comper. Individual parishioners were invited to donate the lights, ultimately only those described above were commissioned. The figures and arms are set in plain glass surrounds as is typical of Comper's style at the time. **These windows are of high significance for their communal value as war memorials and for their aesthetic value.**

11.3 North-west corner

A single lancet window opposite the south door depicting the Virgin Mary holding a book and white lilies. A scroll above bears the text 'Ecce Ancilla Domini'. The glass is also by Comper and

stylistically matches the windows in the north aisle. It is an unusually strong depiction of the Virgin Mary, she looks out directly at the viewer with a confident expression very unlike depictions of the saint in Victorian glass. This window is of **moderate significance for its aesthetic value and for this unusual portrayal of the Virgin Mary.**

11.4 Nave

The west window in the tower is just visible above the roof of the toilet and kitchenette module. Glass by Clayton & Bell in 1879. It depicts the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist in the River Jordan. On the banner held by John the Baptist are the words 'Ecce Agnus Dei'. As one expects from Clayton & Bell, the colours are deep and rich but the quality of glass painting is poor and this small window is overcrowded with figures. It is neither particularly innovative in terms of design or material and is therefore considered to be of **moderate-low significance.**

Single large lancet window to the west of the south door. Glass by the firm of Warrington in 1847. Foliate glass with a blue border and two roundels, one depicting Moses encountering God in the burning bush and the other the waters of Babylon. Below the window an enamelled brass memorial to Emilia Monck who had the window installed. This is the oldest stained glass in the church and it is in a knowingly medieval style. Warrington was one of the pioneers of Gothic Revival glass and this window is typical of him. **It is of moderate-high significance as an exemplar of early Gothic Revival glass and as the oldest surviving stained glass in the church.**

11.5 South aisle

The glass in the south aisle shares a theme with the glass in the Lady Chapel, depicting scenes from the life of St Peter. Unlike in the Lady Chapel, all the glass in this area is by Clayton & Bell and dates to 1879.

In the south wall, three large single windows with opening top lights, from east to west 1) - 3). Across all three windows is a dedication 'To the Glory of God and in memory of Thomas Southey Died September 11th 1879'.

- 1) Depicts Peter healing a lame man with the words 'In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk'
- 2) Depicts Peter raising Tabitha from the dead with the words 'Peter turning to the body said Tabitha arise'
- 3) Depicts Peter in Caesarea describing his vision in Joppa to the Centurion Cornelius with the words 'Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons'



Fig 36: St Peter in Caesarea depicted in the south aisle

The west window depicts Peter chained in prison with an angel come to release him with the words 'Cast thy garments about thee and follow me'. The window is 'In memory of Mary widow of John Sivewright Esq. died February 1873 aged 81'

These are a series of memorial windows, those in the south wall all to Thomas Southey, died 1879 and that in the west wall to Mary Sivewright, died 1873. In each of the windows the figurative glass is confined to the central panel and is framed by an architectural canopy and foliate glass above and below. This layout suggests that the figurative panels were chosen from a pattern book and the foliate glass was simply used as filler to make the stained glass fit the window opening. As with the tower west window, the colours are rich and the design busy. **These windows are of moderate significance; their aesthetic value is limited but they have communal value as memorials.**

11.6 Lady Chapel

The east window was originally the east window of the chancel and was relocated as one piece by Comper in 1924. The glass is by the firm of Warrington and dates to c.1850. It was installed in memory of John Stephens, died 1848. Of the three main lights, the left light depicts the garden of Gethsemane and the deposition of Christ; the central light the Ascension, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection; the right light depicts the Pentecost and the Burial of Christ. The three small upper lights depict the Trinity in symbolic form; man and lion; and ox and eagle. Bold and densely populated with small figures set in roundels. The spaces between the roundels are filled by geometric patterns and foliate glass, all of which is set within a heavy, barley twist border. The window makes heavy use of primary colours, particularly red and blue. From the main body of the chapel, the subjects are difficult to read, giving the viewer an impression of vivacious colour rather than drawing attention to the story of the Resurrection depicted therein. **This window is of moderate-high significance.**



Fig 37: East window of the Lady Chapel (formerly in the chancel) by Warrington

In the south wall, three windows from east to west 1) - 3) with windows 1) and 3) showing scenes from the life of Peter, as in the south aisle. Unlike the south aisle they represent three phases of development.

- 1) A single lancet with glass by Percy Haydon Bacon. A rich depiction of St Peter in priestly robes holding a model of the church prior to the Victorian restorations. Above the figure a scroll with the text 'S. Peter A.&M.'. Below the figure a scroll with the dedication 'To the Glory of God and in loving memory of the Knighton family of Caversham House & Hemdean House, 1849-1927'. This window reveal was relocated by Comper from the south wall of the chancel when he built the Lady Chapel; the glass was added following his phase of works. **The window is of high significance for its evidential value of the church prior to the Victorian works and for its aesthetic value.**
- 2) A single romanesque lancet with glass by Warrington, c.1850s, it was probably relocated as one piece from the south wall of the chancel by Comper in 1924. Very bold glass depicting scenes from the life of Peter. From top to bottom: a small roundel with the ear of Malchus and the scimitar with which Peter cut it off; a larger roundel depicting Peter called to follow Christ by the sea of Galilee with the words 'Follow Me'; the keys entrusted to Peter to open the Gates of Heaven; a larger roundel depicting Peter sinking into the sea of Galilee with the words 'Lord save me'; and a small roundel with the cock that crowed when Peter denied that he knew Christ. The background to the window is filled with dense, geometric patterning also in bold, primary colours. Compared to the early Warrington window in the nave, the figures are more naturalistic and less primitive in features and in posture, showing evidence of the development of Warrington's style away from strict copying of medieval forms and towards a more opulent style making use of contemporary materials and technologies. **This window is of moderate-high significance for its evidential value of this evolution.**
- 3) Two lancet windows under one hood with a continuous memorial under both windows 'To the Glory of God and in affectionate remembrance of William and Mary Montagu and their deceased children late of Caversham Hill this window is placed by their only surviving daughter CB July 1879'. This was the former east window of the south aisle added by Morris and Stallwood in 1878. The glass is by Clayton & Bell, 1879 and forms part of the same glazing scheme as the south aisle windows. The left window depicts Jesus telling Peter to feed his sheep after the resurrection with the text 'Jesus saith unto him feed my lambs feed my sheep'. The right window depicts Peter preaching about Jesus Christ on the day of the Pentecost with the words 'God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ'. **This window is of moderate significance.**



Fig 39: St Peter holding a model of the church, glass by Percy Bacon

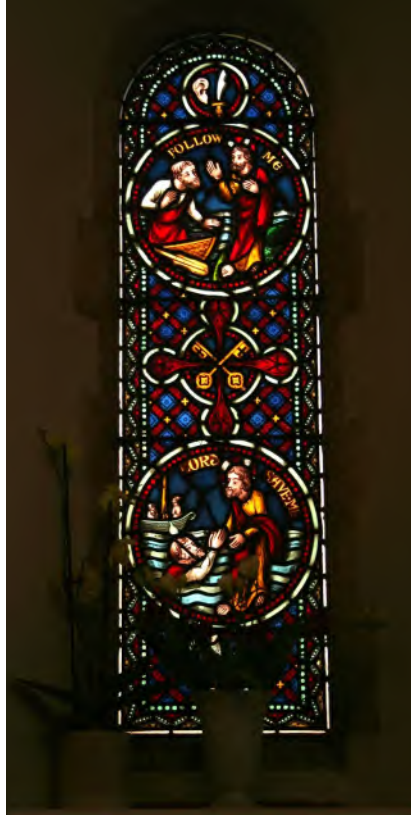


Fig 40: Lancet window by Warrington, formerly in the south wall of the nave



Fig 41: East window of the chancel by Percy Bacon

11.7 Chancel

The east window is of five lights with the glass by Percy Bacon in 1924. It is an extremely busy window depicting the Host of Witnesses surrounding Christ in Majesty. The colouring of the glass is poor and it is universally green in tone, which for reasons unknown is a typical feature of windows by Percy Bacon. At the bottom of the central light is a dedication 'To the Glory of God and in loving memory of James Hawkes Cooper who died on September 17th 1923 this window is given by his widow December 1924'. The glass painting and the detail of the figures is not without some artistic merit but the whole is considerably let down by the poor colour tone. **This window is of moderate significance.**

12. Bells

Caversham St Peter has a ring of 8 bells. The oldest of these is the number 6 bell which was cast by Ellis Knight of Reading in 1637 and has the inscription 'Prayes God'. The number 5 bell was cast in 1660, also by Knights of Reading - either Henry II or Francis Knight. The number 8 bell was cast by Thomas Mears II of London in 1826 and the number 4 bell in 1891 by Mears and Stainbeck of London. The number 4 bell was donated by Frederick George and Elizabeth Saunders. The remaining 4 bells were recast in 1973 by John Taylor & Co of Loughborough.

The tenor has a weight of 400kg and note A, therefore it is a relatively light peal of bells. This makes them an easily manageable ring although the two 17th century bells with their canon-retaining headstocks make the ring as a whole slightly slow turning. Tonally, the ring is bright and reasonably tuneful. All of this makes it a popular training location for visiting ringers and members of the local branch of the Oxford Diocesan Guild. There is strong history of ringing at Caversham from the late 19th century when the tower was well known as a centre of proficient bell ringers, this is largely thanks to the work of Reverend Coleridge, curate of Caversham who was responsible for the augmentation of the ring in 1891.

The bells are of moderate significance for their communal value, in particular their educational value, and their historical value.

There are some items worthy of note in the ringing chamber including marble peal tablets, the 1891 tower clock, the book in which peals were recording until 1934 and an 1874 exercise book in which Thomas Newman, one of the ringers, set out in full each of the 5040 changes of halts "Original" peal of Grandsire Triples.

These items are of moderate-high significance, in particular the 1874 exercise book.

Appendix 1- 1857 plan

Appendix 2 - Historic images



Print of c. 1804 - showing the south elevation prior to the addition of the south aisle with the wooden tower, and brick and plaster porch



Print of unknown date, likely prior to 1857 - Showing west end of the south aisle with the wooden tower, and the brick and plaster porch



Sketch dated to c. 1861 - view from the west end showing the wooden tower, a remodelling of the porch since 1856 (see earlier sketches, Billings also describes a brick and plaster porch in 1856), the sloped roof at the west end of the north aisle, and the doorway in the west end of the north aisle alongside a small window (likely the Norman window).



Date unknown but between 1857 (addition of the pews) and 1878 (addition of the south aisle) - view from the west end, note tie beam and plastered ceiling, also original east window of the chancel now relocated to Lady Chapel.



ST. PETER'S CHURCH, Caversham.

C. Eatwell, Stationer Caversham.
Collier's Series.

Date unknown but between 1878 (addition of south aisle) and 1924 (Comper work to the chancel) - view from the west end, note the removal of the tie beam and plaster ceiling.



Photograph of unattributed date but between 1919 (installation of Comper screens and chancel furniture) and 1924 (construction of Lady Chapel and relocation of east window)



Watercolour of unattributed date but between 1919 (installation of Comper screens and chancel furniture) and 1924 (construction of Lady Chapel and relocation of east window)



Photograph of unattributed date but between 1924 (addition of Lady Chapel and extension of chancel) and 1942 (installation of screens and furniture to Lady Chapel) - note the new east window in the chancel.

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