

Statement of Significance for St Mary's Church, Ely for the Parochial Church Council of the Parish of Ely, Holy Trinity with St Mary

Compiled by Oliver Bone, February 2017, revised October 2018

The parish church of St Mary's, Ely is a grade one listed building dating from about 1200. It has an early 14th century porch, tower and a spire which forms an important landmark in the city. There were extensive restoration works in the 19th century, in 1829 and 1876. Church rooms were built within the churchyard to the south of the church in the twentieth century. The descriptions of the building from the listing entry and the Victoria County History together with a time line are given below together with a selection of illustrations.

The church is set within a churchyard on St Mary's Green, St Mary's Street at the heart of the City of Ely a short distance to the west of the Cathedral and lies within the Ely Conservation Area.¹

This was probably not the first St Mary's church building; documentary evidence points to an earlier church on this site. Reference is made to a *rebuilding* of St Mary's during the bishopric of Eustace (1198 and 1215) and there is a reference in the Liber Eliensis to the parish of St Mary for a specific grant to the convent in 1109.²

People coming to church today normally approach from the north. They come along a paved path, through the north porch and via a notable early 13th century doorway into the nave.³ Here they are welcomed by an airy interior mostly built in the 1200s, with later windows and clerestory. There are simple oak bench pews from the 1870s in the nave on pew platforms, with 19th century tiled floors and Victorian painted ceiling. There are two wooden chests, one an alms chest of circa 1500. The floor is crisscrossed with gridded channels dug out in the 1860s for hot water pipes. At the west end of the nave is a large marble font, a gift of the architect, Frederick Franey, who oversaw the work on the nave and chapel that took place from 1876 to 1878.

Two wide-ranging 19th century restorations provided new roofs, new seating and extensive repairs and rebuilding. The Vestry Minutes of 23.11.1827 show the decision to go ahead

¹ Figure 1 Extract from Speed's map of Ely 1610 showing St Mary's in its five sided churchyard (J)

² Atkinson, T.D. VCH Cambs Vol 4 ed by R.B. Pugh London 1953 p83 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=21893> Bishop's Mun., Ely, Liber M, f.165 (The church of St Mary rebuilt and endowed by Bishop Eustace (1198-1215).

³ Figure 2. North Door St Mary's Church, Ely, 1812

from J S Storer and Jowell Engraver GREIG for the ANTIQUARIAN AND TOPOGRAPHICAL CABINET CONTAINING A SERIES OF ELEGANT VIEWS OF THE MOST INTERESTING OBJECTS OF CURIOSITY IN GREAT BRITAIN LONDON - 1812 JOHN GREIG (fl. 1807-1824) was the chief draughtsman, lithographer, engraver and landscape painter

with repairs resolving “That the interior of that Church is not in a fit and proper state for the celebration of Divine Worship”.⁴ As part of the 1820s building works, a number of interventions were carried out only to be reversed in the 1870s. The early 19th century builders added an additional gallery to the south aisle to provide more seating and a cement render was applied to the exterior walls.⁵ The old ‘much decayed’ pews were removed and new box pews installed. The vestry minutes from the time state that subscribers to the cost of the building works could have their own pews for a sum of £5 (or £10 for two) but those pews that “are not subscribed for, shall be left without doors affixed to them, for the accommodation of such of the Parishioners as may be unable to meet the expense of the Subscription” (*Vestry Minutes Nov 23rd 1827*). The 1829 repair works to the church are marked by a wooden plaque in the Lady Chapel.

By the 1870s the church building was described in the Vestry Minutes of 5th May 1876 as being once again in a “dilapidated and unsatisfactory state” with parts of the church in an “unsafe and dangerous condition”.⁶ This verdict came from reports by both Frederick Franey, (architect brother of the vicar of St Mary’s Rev John Franey) and Ecclesiastical Commissioners’ architect Ewan Christian. The Cambridgeshire Record Office holds an archive relating to the 1870s restoration including architects condition reports, correspondence, drawings, specifications and correspondence, accessed in December 2017 and January 2018. Copies of this material were taken and can be supplied if of interest.

In Franey’s condition report he wrote “The Church internally is seated with unsightly pews and in conjunction with the Galleries in South Aisle and West End destroy the appearance of this well-proportioned church. The original floor level has been lowered to give headroom under the galleries... The cement with which this stonework is coated is so cracked that the damp has penetrated, the whole should be renewed and the stonework restored.” In correspondence from Ewan Christian, prior to work starting, he wrote on 23rd July 1875 about the chancel: “The whole of the floor appears to have been considerably lowered from its original level. The pews are of deal framing sound but very unsightly. The same may be said of the Communion Rail. The Church is an interesting one. It is proposed to repair and restore the whole as soon as practicable... The floors are laid with white bricks somewhat worn but otherwise sound. The step under rail is of wood and the bearers are rotten. The joists under the wood floors of pews are much decayed and will require removal.”⁷ The special vestry meeting of May 1876 to consider building works concluded “that it is desirable that a complete and substantial Restoration of the Parish Church be undertaken.”⁸

⁴ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/8/1 Vestry minutes 1810 - 1842

⁵ See figure 3 Photograph of interior of St Mary’s church prior to 1876.

⁶ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/8/3 Vestry minutes 1866 - 1906

⁷ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/6/4 Estimates, correspondence, vouchers, etc., concerning restoration of church and chancel 1875 - 1883

⁸ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/8/3 Vestry minutes 1866 - 1906

At the Vestry meeting of 19th June 1876 the idea of appropriated pews was debated and rejected. The minutes report: “After a lengthened discussion...[t]hat before any steps be undertaken for the restoration of the Parish Church it be distinctly resolved by the Vestry that the re-seating of the church be upon the principle of the whole of the seats being for ever free and unappropriated.”⁹ There was one Parishioner, Mr Muriel, who had his own ‘faculty pew’ but following correspondence with vicar and churchwardens he was persuaded to surrender this right.¹⁰

There are no indications in the surviving documents of the particular significance of the 1870s pew design apart from this reaction against appropriated pews and a move to a more open bench design. The oak nave pews have simple round-topped bench ends with ‘elbows’ (see figure 4). Unlike the chancel pews¹¹, altar rail¹² and the design of the nave ceiling¹³, there is no indication in the documentation that these are architect-designed. We are researching the 19th century church furnishers’ catalogues discussed by Geoff Brandwood and Trevor Cooper¹⁴ in to see if there is a match with an ‘off the peg’ design. Again in the 1879 account of the restoration work there is no particular reference to architect design: ‘The old pews have been replaced by open oak benches having shaped ends of simple and graceful design, giving a pleasing appearance to the body of the church’ (see full entry in Appendix 4 below)¹⁵. Unlike in some 19th century restorations, such as those carried out by G.G. Scott described by Suzanna Branfoot,¹⁶ there were no surviving medieval pews to base a design upon. We note that in 1953, T.D. Atkinson writing in the Victoria County History for Cambridgeshire (see full entry in Appendix 2 below) describes St Mary’s 1870s seating thus: ‘The fittings are modern and mediocre.’¹⁷

The restoration work of the 1870s was the work of two architects: Ewan Christian for the Church Commissioners in the chancel and Frederick Franey for the rest of the church. Christian (1814–95) was Architect to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners from 1851 to 1895 and completed work on over 2000 projects including the restorations of Southwell Minster and Carlisle Cathedral, and the design of the National Portrait Gallery.¹⁸ There are drawings

⁹ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/8/3 Vestry minutes 1866 - 1906

¹⁰ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/6/4 Estimates, correspondence, vouchers, etc., concerning restoration of church and chancel 1875 - 1883

¹¹ Figure 7 Drawing of seating detail for St Mary’s chancel by Ewan Christian 1877

¹² Figure 8 Drawing of communion rail detail for St Mary’s chancel by Ewan Christian 1877

¹³ Appendix 4 ‘The ceiling of the nave was an ordinary flat plaster surface ceiling. It is now divided into compartments by wood moulded ribs, and the panels have been painted in distemper from designs by the architect, ably carried out Mr. Leach, of Cambridge’.

¹⁴ Brandwood, Geoff and Cooper, Trevor ‘Spoiled for Choice: seating from the catalogue’ p303 – 322 from Cooper, Trevor (Editor) and Brown, Sarah (Editor) Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present, 2011 pub. Ecclesiological Society

¹⁵ Appendix 5 Account of the Restoration of St Mary’s Church published in the Cambridge Independent Press: 26 April 1879 - page7 (retrieved from online digitised version 2017)

¹⁶ Branfoot, Suzanna ‘The Same fashion as the present medieval seats’ p257-266 from Cooper, Trevor (Editor) and Brown, Sarah (Editor) Pews, Benches and Chairs: Church Seating in English Parish Churches from the Fourteenth Century to the Present, 2011 pub. Ecclesiological Society

¹⁷ Appendix 2 Entry in the Victoria County History (Atkinson, T.D. VCH Cambs Vol 4 ed by R.B. Pugh London 1953

¹⁸ Account of the work of Ewan Christian retrieved January 2018

<http://www.victorianweb.org/art/architecture/christian/index.html>

and specifications by Christian for the work on the chancel at St Mary's in the Cambridgeshire Archives (see copies of illustrations below)¹⁹. Frederick Franey was active from the 1860s to 1880s first in partnership with Edmund Elmslie and later with Samuel Wood. Franey's work included design of the cemetery chapels at Haverhill and restoration of St Mary the Virgin Haverhill²⁰, and a minor extension to St Mary East Thurrock. The plan for St Mary the Virgin Haverhill (in the ICBS archive) shows a typical ICBS scheme with sittings crammed into every conceivable space in the standard manner. Franey was presumably commissioned for the work at St Mary's Ely because he was the brother of the Vicar at the time, Rev. John Franey: we have found nothing to suggest that there is anything particularly noteworthy either in Franey or his work in Ely.

The printed account of the Restoration Fund of St Mary's Church Ely (*Statement of Receipts and expenditure of Restoration Fund of St Mary's Ely dated June 1883*) provides some detail of the project.²¹ It shows that total expenditure amounted to £2597 including payment of £2170 to Building Contractor Mr E Brown of London Road, King's Lynn; Architects commission and expenses to Messrs. Franey and Wood of £140 and to F.N. Leech for decoration of Nave ceiling £33. The Statement also acknowledges gifts towards the scheme including the pulpit of carved oak from the Bishop, the Communion Plate from Mr and the Misses Trewby, the Lectern from Miss K Muriel and Miss Harrison, and the font of Polyphant Stone, Candlesticks and Cross from Mr F Franey the Architect.

It is clear that much of the 1870s building work was extensive. An example of this is reported in the 1879 newspaper report: 'The flank wall of the south chapel had to be entirely rebuilt; for convenience, a new external doorway has been inserted.'²²

Vaults are referred to in several written accounts of the church. They are also mentioned on the wall monument at the eastern side of the north aisle which refers to the remains of members of the Waddington family. In the account of the 1876 restoration, T.R. Clark wrote: "A portion of the east end of the north aisle where the organ now stands was raised some 18 inches above the level of the floor over the family vault of the Jenyns, former wealthy residents of the parish." He also described work on the floor: "The passages and the western bays of the nave and aisles were paved with small red and black Staffordshire tiles laid in a diagonal pattern. Most of the monumental floor stones were removed from the nave into the chapel."²³ K.H.V. Smith a clergyman at St Mary's from the 1860s wrote in 1908 about several large family "dormitoria" in the chancel of the Page, Austin and Partheriche families. Smith also referred to brick vaults in the chapel and to the removal of "the

¹⁹ See figures 4-7 from the Cambridgeshire Archives collections

²⁰ Tricker, Roy The History of Haverhill Parish Church, 1994 retrieved January 2018 <http://st-marys-haverhill.btck.co.uk/Historyofourbuildings>

²¹ Cambridgeshire Archives P68/6/8 Statement of restoration fund and list of subscribers 1883

²² Appendix 5 Account of the Restoration of St Mary's Church published in the Cambridge Independent Press: 26 April 1879 - page7 (retrieved from online digitised version 2017)

²³ Clark, T.R. Ely St Mary, an account of the restoration of the church in 1876 (Compiled from notes collected by J.P.F.H.Smith, M.A. late Churchwarden) printed by W. Jefferson & Son Ltd, Ely Cambs, 1940s

Waddington Dormitory, like a Green House with sash windows over the family vault in the north aisle". Smith also wrote about changes in the pews and heating "In the early sixties of the last Century, the pews were all made smaller and turned eastward, the pulpit cut down, and placed outside the chancel arch, and the Church heated with hot water."²⁴

There are four ledger stones for members of the Cropley family at the rear of the nave.

In the early Twentieth Century stained glass windows were added to the church by Kempe (1904 Chancel east window), Powell 1920 and 1921 (chapel and nave) and Nicholson (chancel north wall).²⁵ Then in 1985 church rooms were built. These were extended in 2000 and an office provided. These modern facilities are accessed by a door at the south of the nave opposite the main entrance.

The Churchyard

The churchyard is shown in Speed's map of Ely of 1610 (see figure 1 below). The churchyard was used as a cemetery until the 1850s. A cholera epidemic in 1832 had put great pressure on space at the city centre churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity.²⁶

Today, St Mary's churchyard is an expanse of lawn with trees, a few flower beds and 18th and 19th century headstones arranged around the southern and western boundaries. The church rooms to the south of the medieval building were built with shallow raft foundations in 2000 to avoid disturbance of the churchyard and no *in situ* inhumations were disturbed.

| St Mary's Church, Ely Time-line | | |
|---|---|----------------|
| 1109 | Documentary reference to St Mary's parish (before existing church) | Liber Eliensis |
| 1198-1215 (during bishopric of Eustace) | Rebuilding of St Mary's Church – transitional style, nave of 7 bays, fine north doorway | Liber Eliensis |
| 1300s | Porch, Tower and spire built | |

²⁴ Smith, K.H.V. Ely St Mary's page 231 ... From the Transactions of the Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire Archaeological Society Vol II 1908 p228 – 237

²⁵ Clark, T.R. Ely St Mary, an account of the restoration of the church in 1876 (Compiled from notes collected by J.P.F.H.Smith, M.A. late Churchwarden) printed by W.Jefferson & Son Ltd, Ely Cambs, 1940s

²⁶ Homes, Reg Cholera at Ely: the records of the Board of Health appointed to deal with the epidemic which occurred in the city in the year 1832, The Author, 1964.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| 1380 - 1400 | East window |
| 1400 - 1450 | Clerestory |
| 1450 - 1500 | Aisle windows |
| 1610 | St Mary's church in churchyard drawn on Speed's map of Ely |
| 1766, 1781 | Dates of St Mary's eight bells, all made at St Neots |
| 1816 | Five men buried in churchyard after executions following the Littleport riots |
| 1829 | Thorough repairs, render applied to tower, galleries built on the three sides of the nave, pews faced each other |
| 1832 | Ely cholera epidemic – leading to closure of churchyard and new cemetery at High Barns in 1850s |
| 1876-8 | Extensive restoration by architects Franey and Wood with chancel work by Ewan Christian)– whole church re-roofed, 'chancel rebuilt' repairs to walls, bells rehung, new seating, galleries removed |
| 1920 | War memorial window in nave includes panel showing monks bringing Brithnoth to Ely for burial |
| 1929 | St Mary's benefice united with Holy Trinity under one incumbent (Holy Trinity Church in the cathedral closed 1938) |
| 1941 | 'Lady Chapel' refurnished and known as Trinity Chapel in memory of Holy Trinity Church |
| 1950s | Churchyard headstones moved to boundary |
| 1985 | Church rooms built to south of church with connecting passage, toilets and kitchen. |
| 2000 | Rectangular extension built to church rooms with new office added off the connecting passageway |
| 2012 | Access improvements – ramp and auto door, plus projectors and screens installed |

Illustrations:



Figure 1. Extract from Speed's map of Ely 1610 showing St Mary's in its five sided churchyard (J)

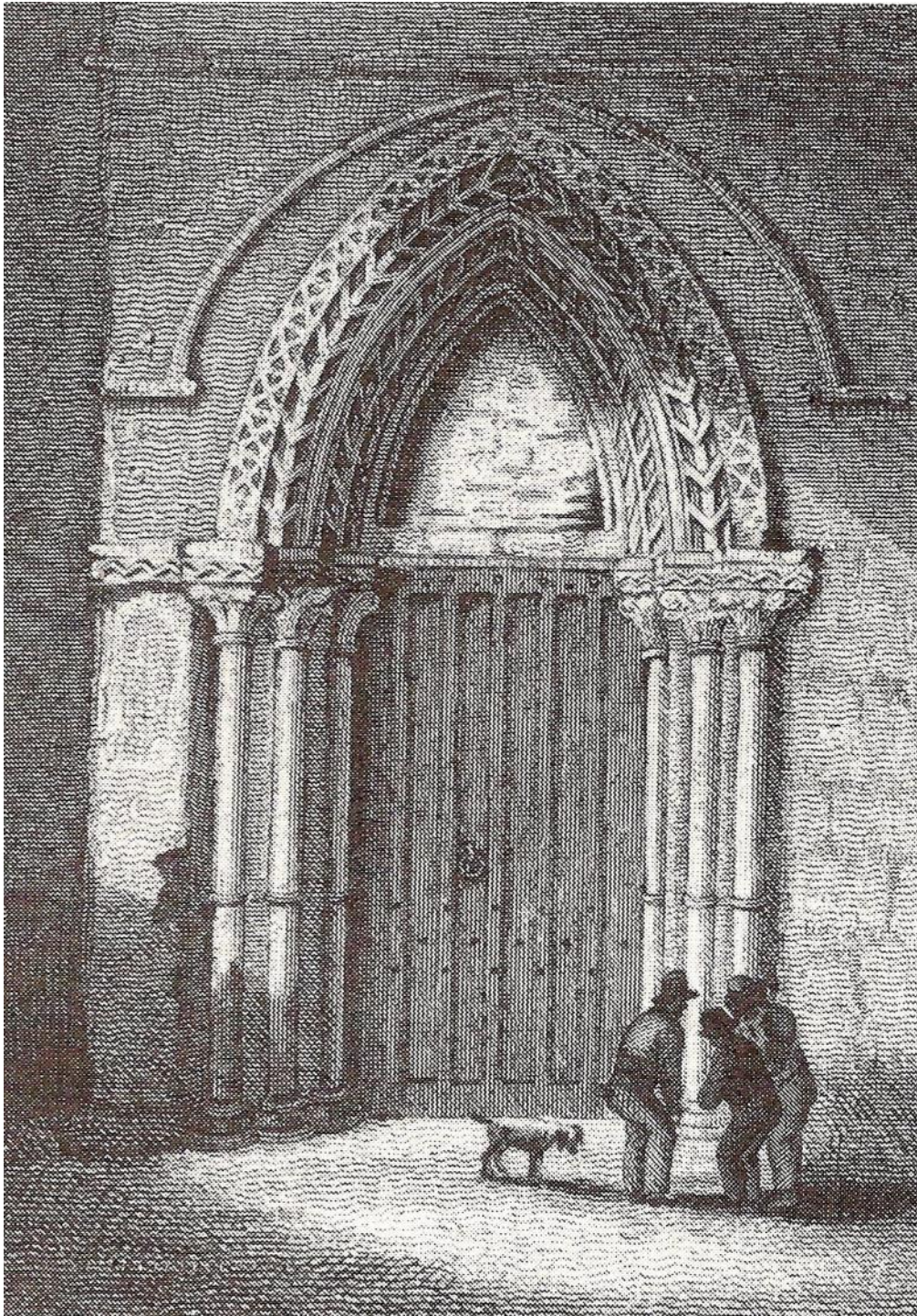


Figure 2. North Door St Mary's Church, Ely, 1812, (note the figures depicted seem very out of scale). from J S Storer and Jowell Engraver GREIG for the ANTIQUARIAN AND TOPOGRAPHICAL CABINET CONTAINING A SERIES OF ELEGANT VIEWS OF THE MOST INTERESTING OBJECTS OF CURIOSITY IN GREAT BRITAIN LONDON - 1812 JOHN GREIG (fl. 1807-1824) was the chief draughtsman, lithographer, engraver and landscape painter



Figure 3 Photograph of interior of St Mary's church prior to 1876.

The view from before the 1876 restoration shows the early 19th gallery visible on the south side, different arrangement of chancel, previous chancel ceiling and other details. There is a channel for hot water pipes exposed in the central aisle. Published in Blakeman, P. *The Book of Ely*. Buckingham: Barracuda 1990



Figure 4 Photograph taken in 2017 of nave pew, St Mary's Church

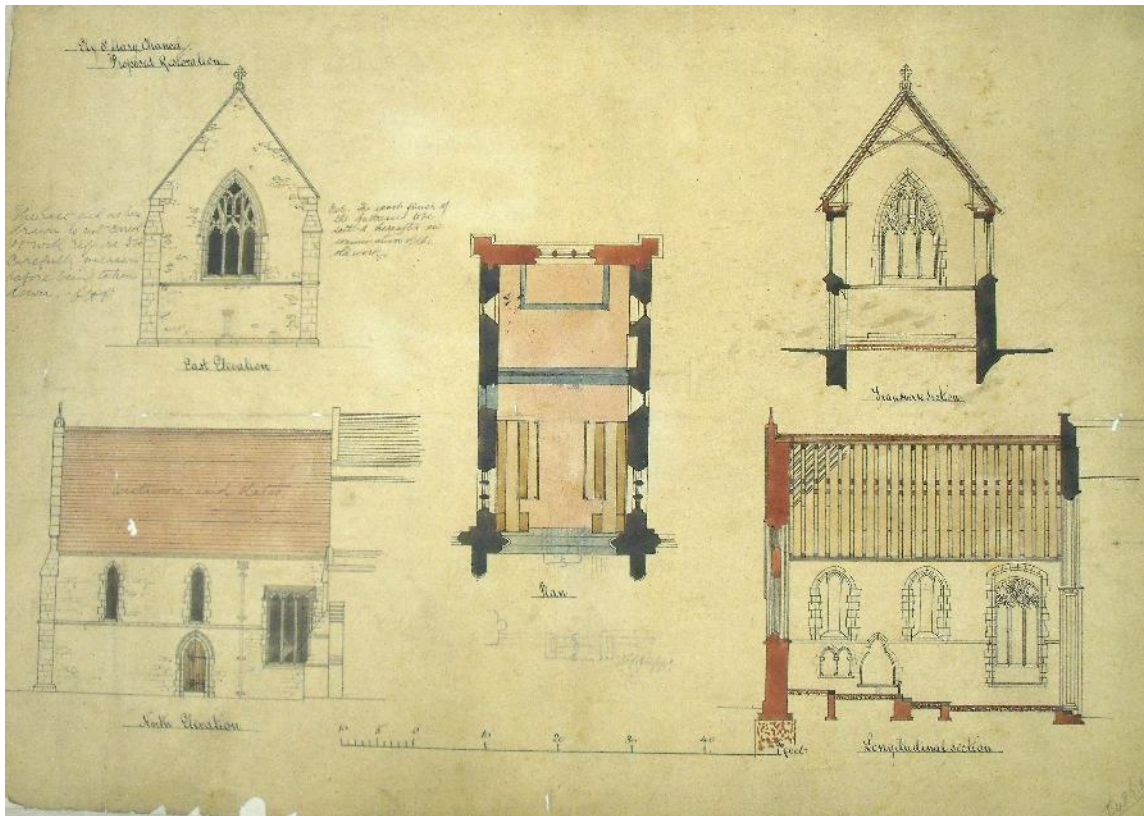


Figure 5 Drawings of proposals for St Mary's chancel by Ewan Christian 1877

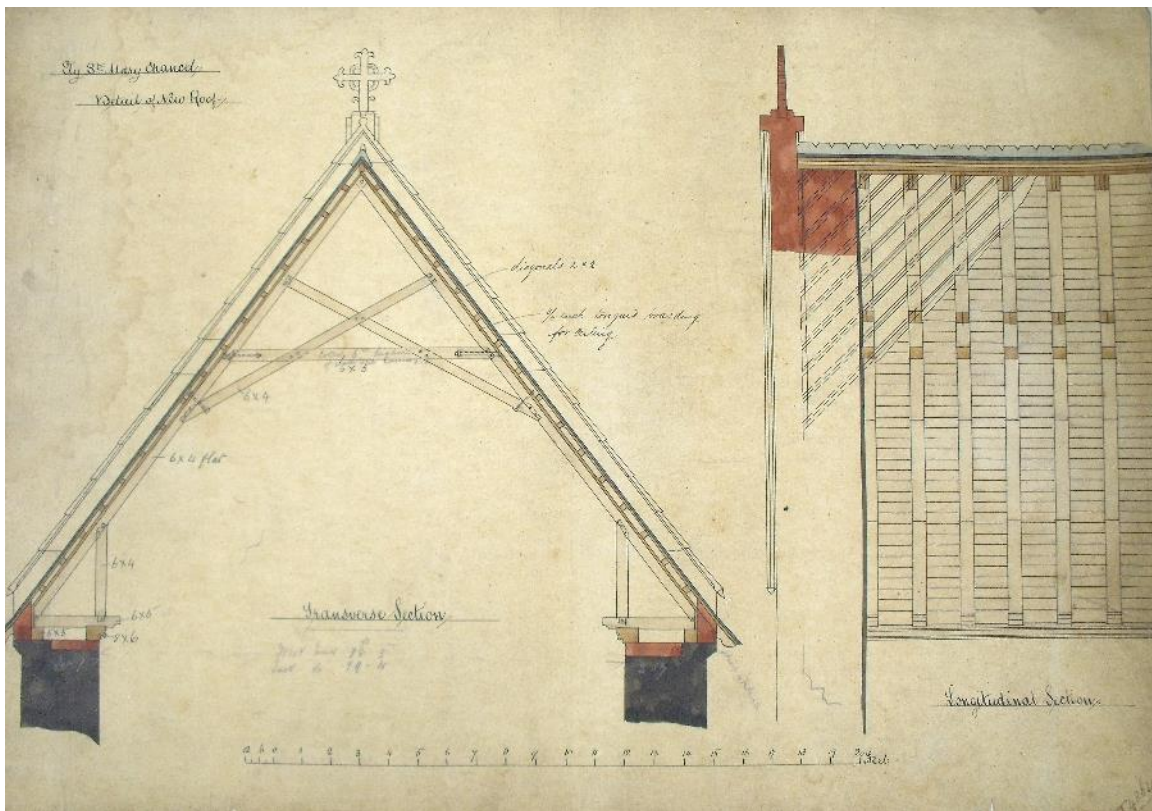


Figure 6 Drawing of roof detail for St Mary's chancel by Ewan Christian 1877

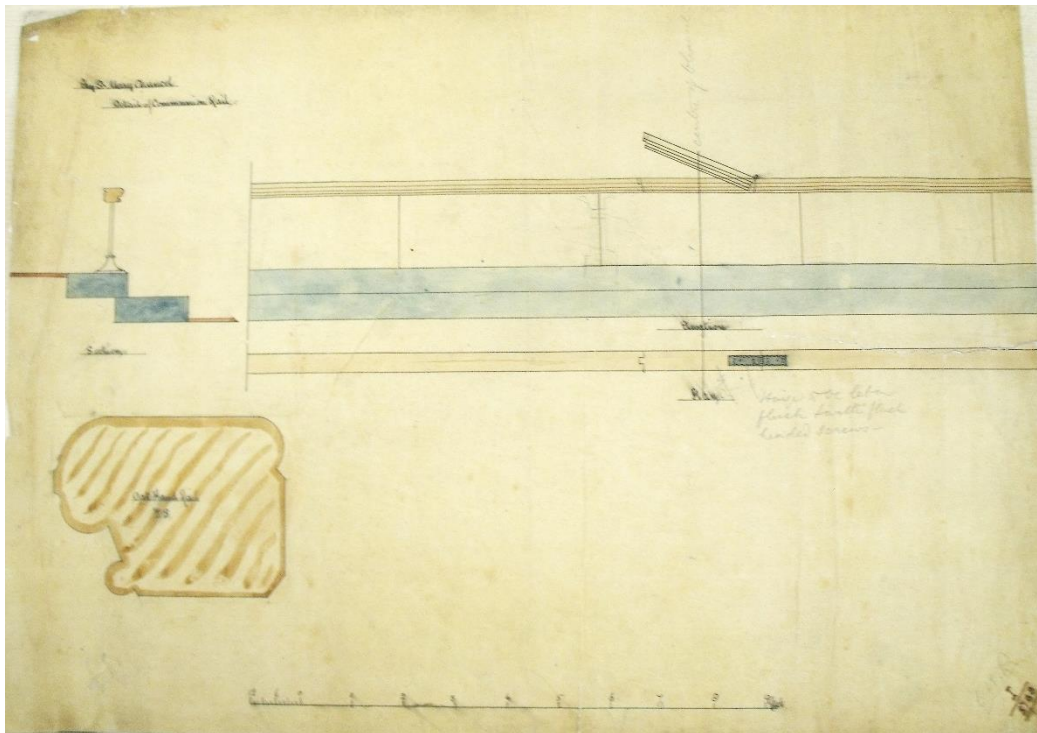


Figure 8 Drawing of communion rail detail for St Mary's chancel by Ewan Christian 1877

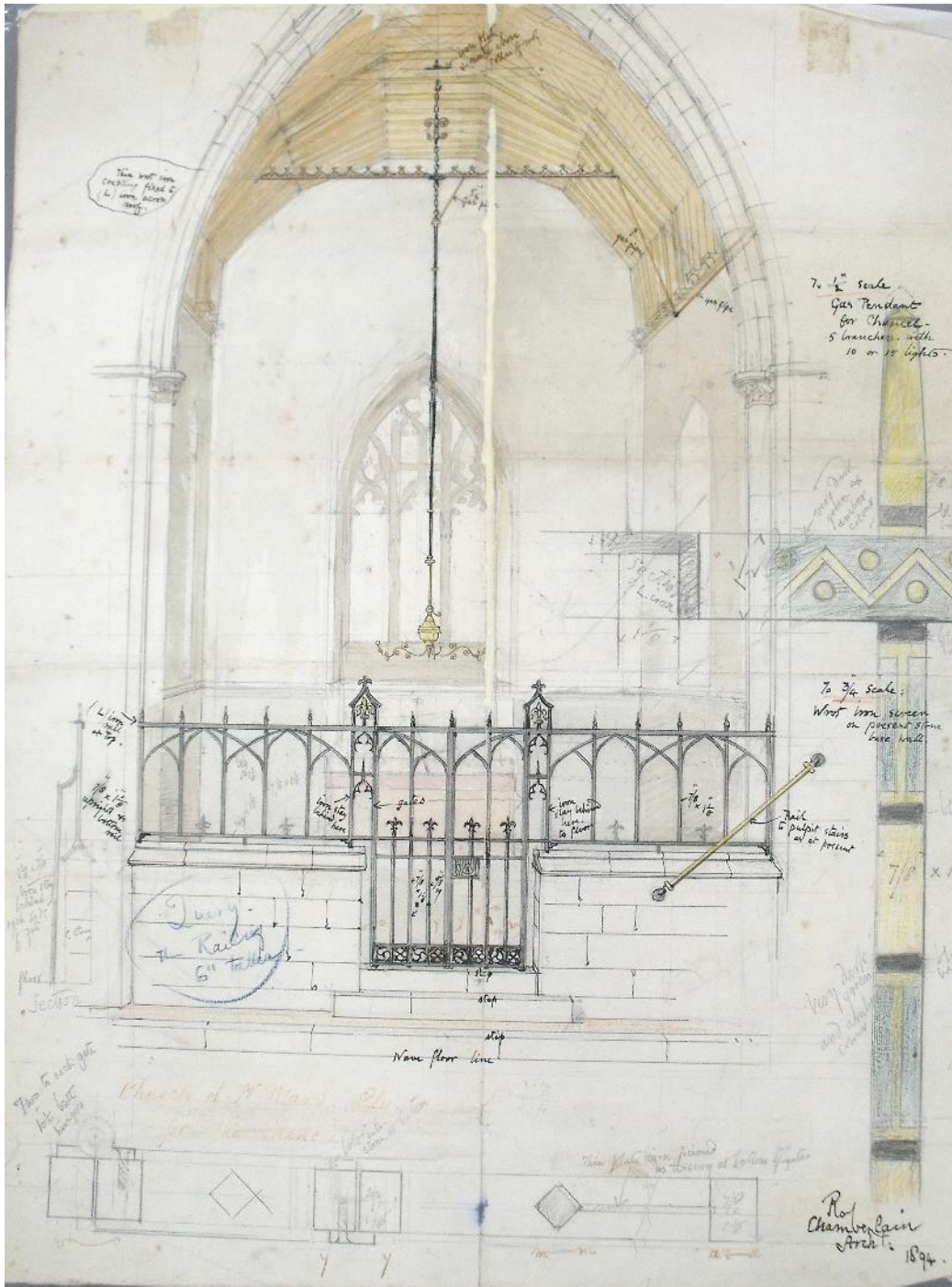


Figure 9 Drawing of 1894 in the Cambridgeshire Archives collection by R Chamberlain Architect for a chancel wall and screen proposal, never realised, for St Mary's Church, Ely.

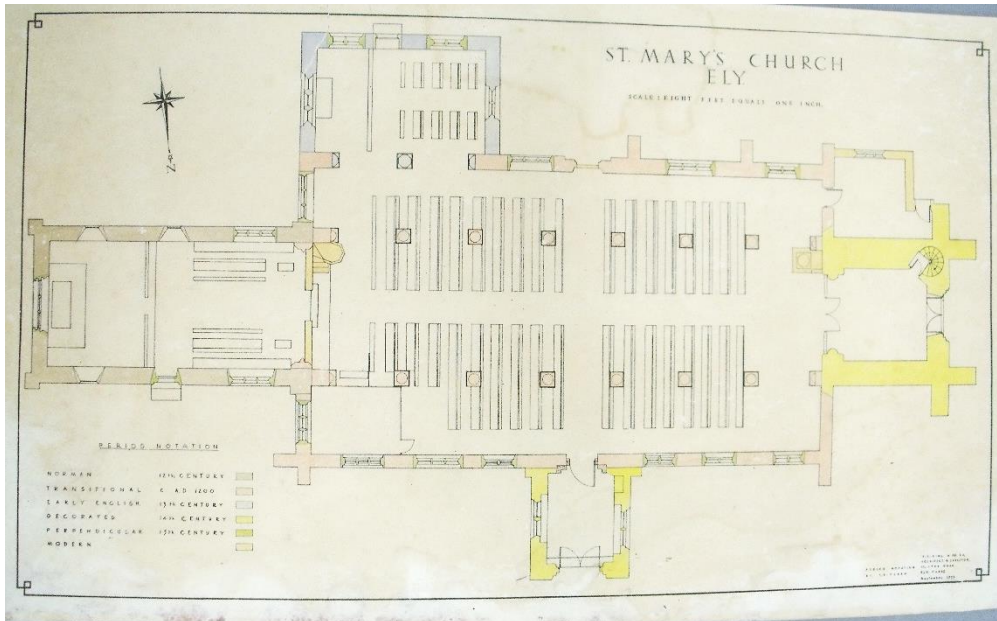


Figure 10 Plan of St Mary's Ely in the Cambridgeshire Archives collection

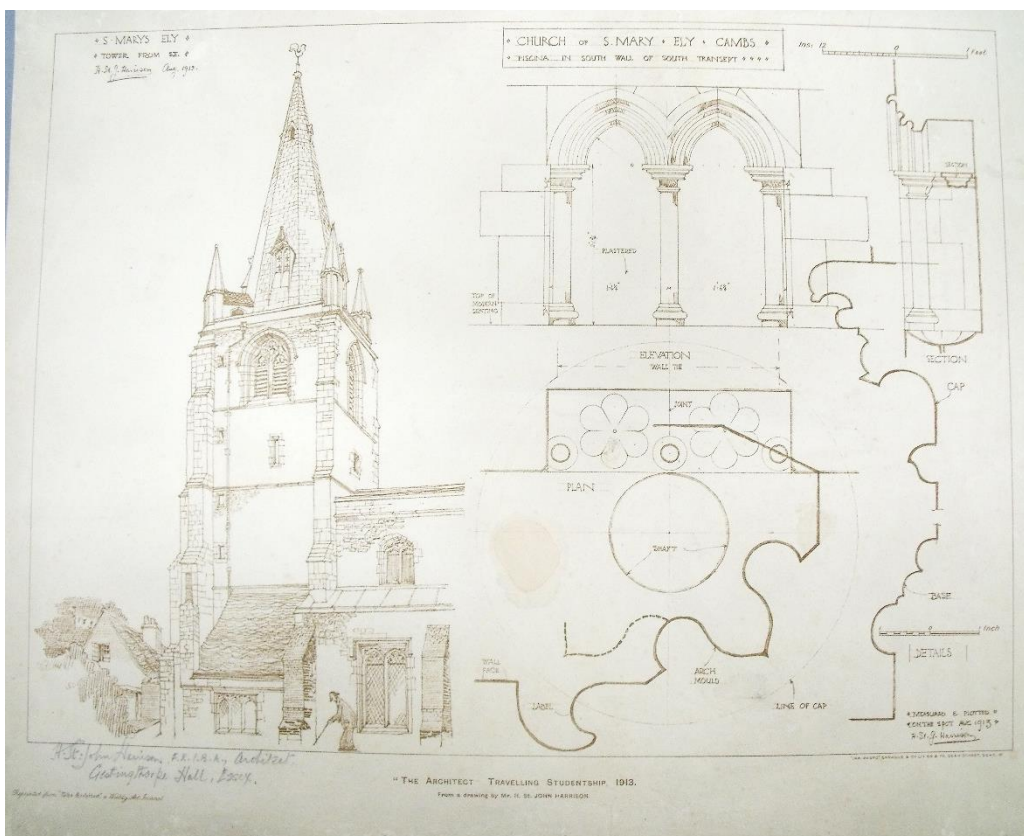


Figure 11 Drawing of St Mary's Tower from the South East by H St J. Harrison Aug 1913 published in the Architect from the Cambridgeshire Archives collection



Figure 12 St Mary's before the 1829 restoration

CLENNELL, Luke, 1781-1840 : ST. MARY'S CHURCH, ELY, 1816

London : W. Clarke, 1816. The mediaeval church of St. Mary, with its fourteenth-century tower.

Engraved by Edward John Roberts (1797-1865) from a drawing by Luke Clennell. Originally produced for the serially published "The Antiquarian Itinerary" (London : 1815-1818).



Figure 13 Ely Horse Fair, c.1845. Published in Blakeman, P. The Book of Ely. Buckingham: Barracuda 1990



Figure 14 Painting of St Mary's church c1858 by Henry Baines (1823 – 1894), (credit: Ely Museum)



Figure 15 Postcard view of St Mary's Church, Ely about 1910 with headstones in churchyard and no trees apparent.



Figure 16 Postcard aerial view 20th century (from Ely Cathedral)

Appendix 1 Listing Entry

St Mary's listing entry (from <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/resultsingle.aspx?uid=1126519>) :

Name: PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY

List entry Number: 1126519

Grade: I

Date first listed: 23-Sep-1950

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

List entry Description

606/2/2 PARISH CHURCH OF ST MARY 23-SEP-50

GVI

Revision Number: 2

Parish Church of St Mary 1. 1082 TL 5379 2/2 23.9.50. {GV} 2. A stone rubble church with ashlar dressing. Mainly C13 with later work. The Church was begun in the early part of the C13 by Bishop Eustace (1198-1215). It has a wide nave of 7 bays (Transitional) with slender plain piers and capitals with scalloped ornamentation. The clerestory is C15. The fine north doorway is early C13, with orders, columns with shaft rings, stiff-leaf capitals and a pointed arch with chevron ornamentation. Most likely it was the work of craftsmen from the Cathedral workshop. The chancel has lancet windows on the south side (except the 1st

window from the west end) and perpendicular windows on the north side. The west tower and stone spire is of the C14. The tower has angle buttresses with 3 offsets and corner pinnacles and the spire has tall arched dormer windows at the base and small dormer windows near the top.

The Parish Church of St Mary forms a group with Nos 13 to 19 (odd), Nos 20 to 30 (consec), Parson's Almshouses, No. 34, 36, 36A, 38, Nos 40 to 60 (even), St. Mary's Street and No. 20 Church Lane.

National Grid Reference: TL 53849 80241

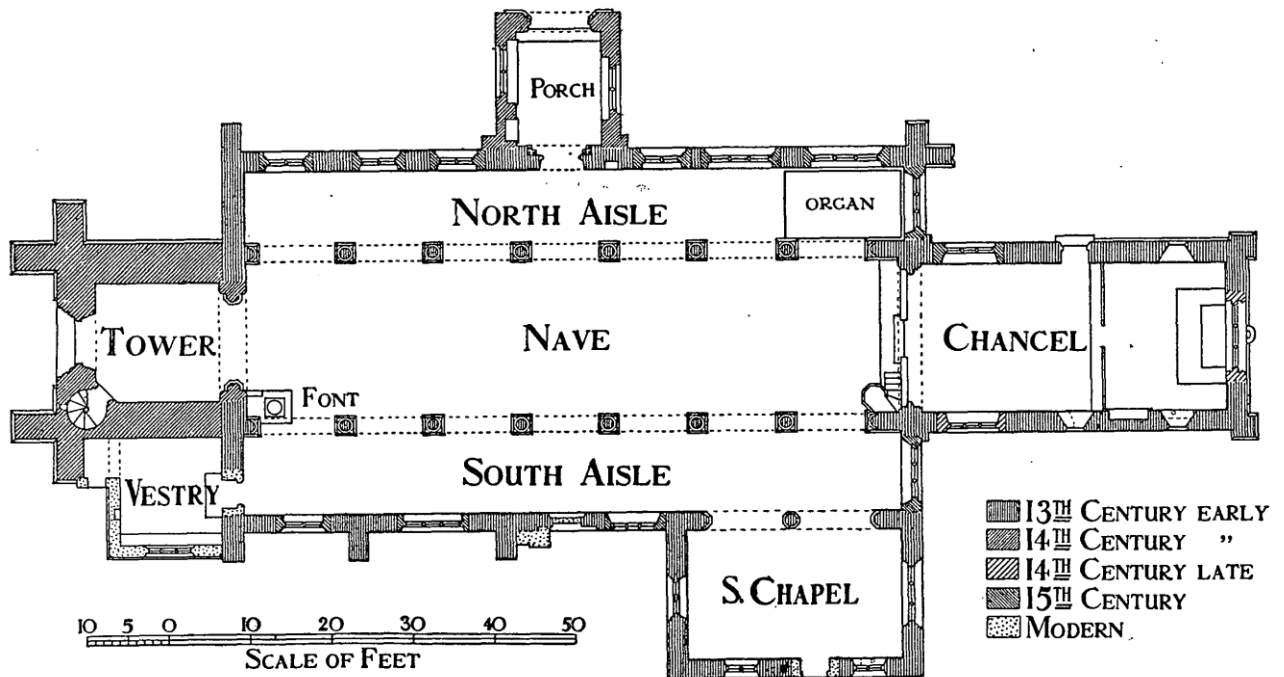
Appendix 2 Entry in the Victoria County History (Atkinson, T.D. VCH Cambs Vol 4 ed by R.B. Pugh London 1953)

The church of ST. MARY consists of chancel, clerestoried nave, aisles, south chapel, north porch, west tower and spire, and vestry. The material is mainly rubble with stone dressings, and the spire is of Barnack stone; the tower and south clerestory are plastered externally. The roofs are covered with slates except those of the south chapel and vestry, which are tiled. The chancel, nave, and aisles were erected at the beginning of the 13th century; a few years later the south chapel was added. The tower and spire date from about 1300 and the porch from the first half of the 14th century. The clerestory belongs to the first half of the 15th century, and towards the end of the same century the aisles were provided with new windows. A drastic 'restoration' was begun in 1877, when the whole church was reroofed. Later, a vestry was erected against the south side of the tower.

The chancel has an east window of three lights with rectilinear tracery, which dates from the end of the 14th century. There are the original clamped angle buttresses round which the string-course extends. In the north and south walls are two plain lancets. There is a doorway in the north wall with a two-centred arch of two orders with a continuous chamfer. The north-west window is a 15th-century insertion with three cinquefoiled lights under a square label. The south-west window, dating from the end of the 14th century, has early rectilinear tracery, which has been renewed on the exterior. The original internal string-course has been cut away at the west end on both sides to accommodate the inserted windows. The lofty chancel arch is twocentred and of two orders with keel-shaped responds having modern foliated caps and bases concealed by the modern floor. There is a much renewed double piscina of the 13th century with a central shaft and turned responds and deeply moulded arches. The sedilia without divisions has an acutely pointed trefoiled arch.

The nave has arcades of seven bays with two-centred arches of two orders having keel-shaped mouldings and a hood-mould; the columns are round with square caps and bases. Two of the caps (those of the eastern responds) have been entirely renewed and one on the south has been partially renewed. The columns rest on rough stone basements. The clerestory windows have two cinquefoil-headed main lights with a quatrefoil above.

Beneath the clerestory is a plain string-course. The parapets are plain and apparently much renewed. The nave opens to the tower by a two-centred arch of two orders with moulded caps and bases to the semi octagonal responds; it is of early-14th-century date.



Plan of St. Mary's Church (c1950 from Victoria County History – organ and pulpit since relocated)

The south aisle has three lateral buttresses with one set-off, the upper parts of which have been repaired with brick, probably in the 16th century. There is a blocked doorway in the south wall with a two-centred arch having zigzag mouldings and caps with stiff foliage; the jamb shafts are missing. In the 15th century a doorway with continuous mouldings, now also blocked, was inserted within the earlier entrance. There are two windows of three lights and one of two, all with cinquefoil heads under a square label. The plain parapet has modern coping. The aisle opens to the chapel by an arcade of two bays with two-centred arches of two orders having moulded caps and bases to the octagonal column and semi-octagonal responds. The chapel has an east window consisting of three plain lancets under a containing arch. In the south wall are two windows of two cinquefoiled lights under a square head. The west window consists of two lights with uncusped heads and a quatrefoil above and is of 13th-century date. There is a plain modern doorway in the south wall. The gables have old coping and broken crosses on the apex. There is a good double piscina similar to that in the chancel but in a more genuine state. There is a plain image bracket in the north-east angle.

The north aisle has an east window of three cinquefoiled lights under a depressed arch. There are two angle-buttresses with one set-off at the north-east and one at the north-west

corner. The fenestration of the north wall consists of two windows of three lights and four of two lights, all cinquefoiled under a square label and much renewed except the second one from the east. The plain parapet has been renewed. The north doorway is particularly notable. It has a two-centred arch of three orders with elaborate dogtooth and other mouldings and banded jamb shafts with stiff foliated caps and moulded bases; some of the mouldings have been repaired in plaster. Inside the doorway is a plain stoup recess. The porch has a two-centred outer arch with a continuous chamfer. In the east and west walls is a two-light window with cinquefoil-headed main lights and rather clumsy tracery of 14th-century date.

The tower has angle buttresses with four set-offs extending to the parapet. The plain west doorway is of three orders with continuous chamfer and a hood-mould. The west window consists of three lights with plain intersecting tracery. The belfry windows are of two trefoil-headed lights with a quatrefoil above and a plain hood-mould. There is a plain parapet with pinnacles at the angles, which are embattled and finished with conical caps. The newel stair is contrived in the south-west angle and is entered by a plain doorway having a continuous chamfer. The octagonal spire has two-light gabled openings at the base on alternate faces and single lights similarly arranged towards the top. On the southwest buttress is a tablet commemorating the burial of five men executed for complicity in the Littleport riots of 1816.

All the roofs are modern.

The fittings are modern and mediocre. In the churchyard is the bowl of an ancient font of Barnack stone, of irregular shape.

The plate consists of a communion cup of silver, 1684, a chalice of silver, 1870, a paten of silver, 1684, a paten of silver, 1873, a flagon of silver, 1878, a cruet of glass with silver mountings, 1878, and an alms-dish of pewter.

The tower contains eight bells, all by Edward Arnold of St. Neots, 1781, except the third, which is dated 1766. The sanctus bell was cast by Joseph Eayre of St. Neots, 1778. The oak bell frame was reconstructed in 1882, but retains some timbers of 17th-century date.

The registers begin in 1670 and are complete except for the entries of baptisms and burials between 1702 and 1773 and of marriages between 1702 and 1763. (fn. 23) The registers of Holy Trinity (see above) date from 1559.

Citation:

T D Atkinson, Ethel M Hampson, E T Long, C A F Meekings, Edward Miller, H B Wells and G M G Woodgate, 'City of Ely: Churches', in *A History of the County of Cambridge and the Isle of Ely: Volume 4, City of Ely; Ely, N. and S. Witchford and Wisbech Hundreds*, ed. R B Pugh

(London, 2002), pp. 82-86 <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/camb/vol4/pp82-86> [accessed 17 December 2014].

Appendix 3 Vestry Minutes relating to 1829 building works

In the St Mary's Vestry Minutes of Nov 23rd 1827 the committee resolves "that the interior of that Church is not in a fit and proper state for the due celebration of Divine Worship. That in order to its being made commodious for the reception of the Parishioners the present pews (the greater part of which are in a decayed Condition) shall be entirely removed & new ones built according to the plan now submitted to our inspection. That the present Sittings being found insufficient for the accommodation of the Persons who are in the habit of attending Divine Service, a Gallery shall be erected on the South Side of the Church according to the same Plan. That the present Gallery shall be altered so as to correspond with the one proposed to be built. That in order to defray the Expense necessary for effecting these alterations a Subscription be immediately opened and the Churchwardens requested to solicit Contributions from the principal Inhabitants in aid of this desired object – That Subscribers of £10. Shall be entitled to two Pews each, Subscribers of £5 be entitled to one each – further that the Subscribers of £10 shall ballot among themselves for the choice of their first Pew; & for the choice of their second Pew they shall ballot in common with the subscribers of £5. That the remaining Pews, which are not subscribed for, shall be left without doors affixed to them, for the accommodation of such of the Parishioners as may be unable to meet the expense of the Subscription..."

Appendix 4 Extract from Vestry Minutes 5th May 1876

"A letter from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which accompanied [?] Christians Report was then read and this letter states (inter alia) that the Ecclesiastical Comm would undertake to put the Chancel of the Church into a thorough state of Repair, if the Parishioners would undertake to repair the nave and body of the Church and the Commissioner would also subscribe a sum of money £ 250 towards the later object as Landowners."

"The chairman then read a long report from Mr F Franey architect as to the dilapidated and unsatisfactory state of the church also a report and estimate of a firm of eminent London Builders who reported parts of the church in an unsafe and dangerous condition."

"An estimate was put in stating the outlay to thoroughly restore the church to be £3000."

"The architects report was read."

"The Plans and drawings were produced examined and criticised."

"It was then moved by the Dean...that it is desirable that a complete and substantial Restoration of the Parish Church be undertaken."

“That the restoration include the thorough repair of the exterior and interior of the fabric of the church, the removal of the galleries and the re-seating of the Church and that Mr F Franey be appointed architect to carry out the works.” Minutes for this date then include a handwritten copy of the “Report of the Committee appointed at the Vestry on the 5th instance of which the following is a copy, was then read to the meeting by the Chairman:”

Appendix 5 Account of the Restoration of St Mary’s Church published in the Cambridge Independent Press: 26 April 1879 - page7 (retrieved from online digitised version 2017)

ELY ST. MARY.

The Church of St. Mary, in Ely, has for a long period been under repair, and the completion of the work was celebrated Wednesday by special services. During the day the bells rang right merrily, and the church was decorated with flags, etc. Many clergy from the neighbourhood were present on the interesting occasion. The morning service was held at 11.30, when the Lord Bishop of the Diocese preached an impressive and eloquent sermon. In the afternoon public tea took place in the Corn Exchange, which some 500 or 600 were present. A few short addresses were delivered, and there was an evening service in the church, which the Very Rev. the Dean of Ely preached. Services in the church are appointed throughout the week, and will continue every evening up to and including next Saturday.

St. Mary's church being an object of interest to the parishioners and lovers of church architecture, we give some account the works which have been carried out in repairing it and restoring it its original form. Under the present vicar, the Rev. J. Franey. The church has from time to time undergone certain repairs and alterations, but no great outlay was made for that purpose till 1829-30, when most of the stucco work and cement covering of the walls was done, and pews and galleries erected. To obtain firm support for these the stone work of the columns was ruthlessly cut away, and the covering of cement when removed from the walls was found to conceal some serious defects. The first work recently undertaken was to examine the foundations, which for the most part were built upon the rock. These were found as sound when first laid, except the eastern part of the north aisle, where human bones were found embedded beneath the walls. The wall of the north aisle, extending from the buttress at the east end of the tower at the west end, was in such ruinous condition to require re-building, the safety of the roof being dependent on this being done. Great care was necessary during the removal of the cement which covered the stone work, to enable the architect to reproduce the cupping or simple tracery of the window heads according to the original design; and this has been done successfully, and moulded string course below the parapet has been also added. The north porch bore evident traces of having been supported by external angle buttresses on each side of the entrance, these have not been rebuilt, but the windows which were bricked have been reopened and glazed, and old worn out stone seats have been neatly re-topped with oak. Making a slight alteration of the level the porch step stone coffin with skeleton therein was immediately beneath it, the step itself forming the only lid. These remains were carefully replaced in their position. On the side of the south isle the stone work has been thoroughly repaired, and an interesting old doorway exposed to view, although is not at present

intended that it shall opened for use. The flank wall of the south chapel had to be entirely rebuilt; for convenience, a new external doorway has been inserted.

The details of the ancient work in the tower and spire are exceptionally fine examples of that style of architecture. For want of funds no repairs have been attempted this part of the church, beyond opening the western arch into the nave, and rebuilding the piers each side of it, which had bulged inwards. We have omitted to state that the clerestory wall has been relieved of its damp looking coating of stucco. The roof of the nave was slated during the repairs done in 1829-30 and was found in good condition. The roofs of the aisles were covered with lead, but so worn that the rafters were entirely decayed from the effects of wind and rain. The rafter had to be replaced, and the roof is now covered with slate, which is considered to be a better covering than the lead now used for that purpose.

The roof eaves of the chancel have been lowered from its original pitch, and the roof covered with Westmorland slates. Before entering upon our notice upon the interior of the church it may be as well to say that the churchyard wall is in a very dilapidated condition, and requires new coping and new gates. On the West side of the churchyard stands what was once the vicarage house, in it there is a good panelled room carved chimney-piece of the Elizabethan period. The new vicarage house, erected in red bricks from the designs of the architect to the church works, is situated on the Cambridge Road, a short distance from the church.

The spacious nave, the original roof of which was removed in 1829-30, consists of seven arches on each side, which were partly blocked up by unsightly galleries, etc. The removal of these brought into our view the handsome tower arch the west-end, and the unique and elegant pillars in the nave. The defective portions of these have been made good with Bath stone, in keeping with the old designs.

These works have completely restored the beauty and historical value of the interior. On carefully removing the whitewash from the internal walls and columns, many signs of ancient mural paintings were discovered. A tracing was taken of a bold diaper pattern with border for figure subjects above, which were plainly visible to the left of the chancel, and of which the vicar, the Rev. J. Franey, has a copy.

The string course above seemed to have been painted on the upper, and chocolate on the lower side. The removal of the flat plaster ceilings of the north and south galleries display at once the decayed state of ancient aisle roofs.

The roof of the south aisle was of the 15th century and elaborately moulded and carved, especially at the east end, where once stood an altar. The spandrils and wall pieces had been cut away to give head room in the gallery and both north and south aisle roofs were so decayed that it was found necessary to construct new ones resembling in design the old roof the north isle. The ceiling of the nave was an ordinary flat plaster surface ceiling. It is

now divided into compartments by wood moulded ribs, and the panels have been painted in distemper from designs by the architect, ably carried out Mr. Leach, of Cambridge. A treatment we do not remember to have seen in any other church during this age of restorations.

The passages and the western bays of the nave and aisles are paved with small square black and red Staffordshire tiles laid to pattern diagonally, and the work has been most carefully executed by the builder.

A lofty but open screen of oak with folding entrance door, has been erected across the tower arch, which serves to shut off space now allotted to the ringers on the ground floor. The peal of eight bells and the Sanctus bell, noted for their silvery tone, are in sound condition.

The old pews have been replaced by open oak benches having shaped ends of simple and graceful design, giving a pleasing appearance to the body of the church.

As stated in "Cole's Parochial Antiquities" a portion of the east end of the north isle is raised some 18 inches above the level of the floor, over the vault of a family the name of Jenyns; this portion of the aisle was claimed by them and afterwards by family of the name of Waddington. A faculty pew belonging to Chantry House, in which they resided, and which is now the residence of Mr. Muriel. The pew has lately been given up as a site on which to place a fine organ built by Messrs. Bishop and Sons, recently purchased for the church from Trinity Church, Paddington. The position of the old pulpit was originally against the fifth pillar of the south nave, but had been removed during the repairs in 1829-30 to the north pillar of the Chancel; the new pulpit, in which we fancied we detected some resemblance to good ancient example at Fen Ditton, has been placed farther back, near the chancel arch on the south side of the church, of oak with traceried panels supported on a moulded stone base, and is the gift of the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, the arms of the Bishop and those of the See are appropriately introduced into the stone base of the new pulpit.

A plain but massive font of Polyphant marble has replaced the small modern one of pillar shape design, which recently stood in the centre passage under the west gallery.

Query: Can this be the font mentioned in "Cole's Antiquities as the gift of Mr. Travel, butler of St. John's College, Cambridge, about 1625. It stood under the pulpit in the south aisle.

The new font is the gift of the architects, Messrs, Franey and Wood.

Gas has been for the first time introduced into the church, and pendants from every alternate arch of the nave have been neatly executed by Mr. Peck, of High Street, Ely, from designs furnished by the architect, In the south chapel, the original dedication of which cannot now be traced, the remains of a double piscina, two elegantly formed windows at the east and west ends, one of which was blocked up but has been opened and repaired. Most of the monumental floor slabs have been removed to this chapel from the body of the church.

The chancel was restored by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and has been completed for some months, it has a substantial new roof and the old pews have been replaced new oak benches for the use of the choir. The ancient sedilia and piscina have been carefully restored. The altar cloth and hangings are the offering of an anonymous donor presented through Mr. Franey, the architect; they are supplied and worked by Messrs. Watts, of Baker Street, London.

A handsome set altar plate has been given to the church by the Misses and Mr. Trewby. The late Canon Selwyn contributed £5 towards the flagon.

The whole of the works have been carried out by Mr. Brown, builder, of Lynn, from the drawings, and under the superintendence of Mr. Franey, of the firm of Franey and Wood, architects, of Spring Gardens, London. .

The entire cost of the works which have been carried out amounts to £2,206. Subscriptions to the amount of £1,941 have been promised. To pay off the deficit and complete the restoration a sum of £400 will be required.