



St Peter-in-the-East

A Visitor's Guide



THE HISTORY OF ST PETER-IN-THE-EAST

NORMAN BEGINNINGS

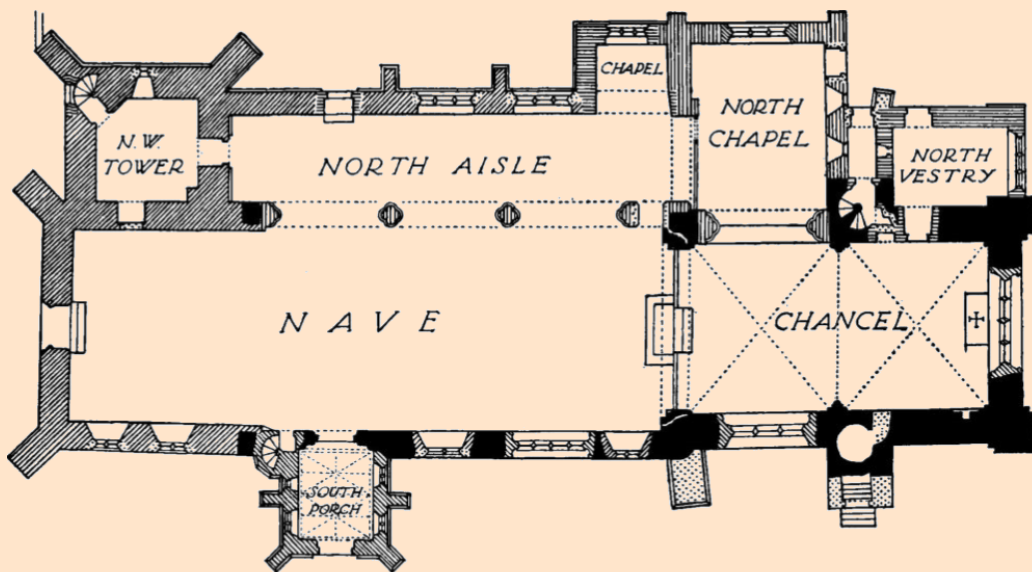
The church of St Peter-in-the-East has existed on this site since the late 10th century. It was recorded in the Domesday Book as “the church of St Peter of Oxenford”, but later renamed to distinguish it from the newer church of St Peter-le-Bailey built near Oxford Castle in the early 12th century.

EARLY EXPANSION

The core of the existing church – the nave, chancel and crypt – was built between 1130 and 1160. It was substantially added to over the next 400 years due to the wealth of the parish. The North Aisle was added in the 13th century and the tower and an extension of the nave to the west were added in the 14th century, when the church started hosting the University’s Lenten sermons. The construction of the South Porch in the 15th century facilitated the preservation of the Norman beakhead and chevron motif over the church’s south entrance. The Vestry and the small chapel to St. Thomas were added at the start of the 16th century.

The PARISH CHURCH of ST. PETER *in the EAST*

SCALE OF FEET



THE LADY CHAPEL

The Lady Chapel (North Chapel on the map) is understood to have been paid for by St Edmund of Abingdon c.1220 during his time as a lecturer at the University and a resident of the adjacent hall that was later named after him. It was used as the student chapel for the Hall until a separate chapel was built on the Hall's grounds in 1682. The stained glass in the Lady Chapel window dates from the 15th century and was a gift from the rector, Vincent Wyking, in 1433.



THE EAST WINDOW

The glass in the top third of the east window was also made in the 15th century and depicts a number of saints; the depiction of the four Evangelists is a mix of 15th and 17th century glass.



THE CHURCH TODAY

EFFECTS OF WAR

The church attracted large congregations in the 19th century, peaking around 1854 when the average attendance was 550 people. However, the First World War and the changing demographics of Oxford city centre had a serious effect on the parish and by 1928 the congregation had significantly declined.

RENOVATION

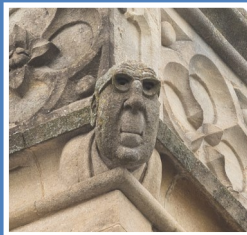
The church was closed as a place of worship in 1965. An agreement was negotiated allowing the now vacant church building to be converted for use as a library by St Edmund Hall. Excavations were carried out in the church during 1967 and 1968 that discovered a great deal of information about the church's history. The building was reopened as the college library in 1970. Many of the building's distinctive architectural features were preserved in the renovation process and the new internal fixtures were arranged to mimic the layout of a traditional church.

GARGOYLES

In recognition of their contribution to keeping the building in use for future generations, some key College figures found themselves immortalised as stone grotesques at the top of the tower! These include Rev. Midgley (the Dean) and Mr Hackney (the Librarian) on the east side, Dr Emden (former Principal) on the south-east corner, and Dr Kelly (Principal, holding a squash racquet) and Mr Alton (the Bursar, below, holding money bags) on the south side.



Mr Reginald Alton



Former Principal Emden



Rev. Midgley and his dog Fred



Former Principal Kelly

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