

Breamore, Hampshire

Βρομμον

Church of St Mary

Grid refSU 153 188

Church fabric
sculpture
inscription

Date

Nave, tower, S wing, N wing destroyed, traces left, chancel S wall

Fisher

Nave, low central tower, flanking transept chapels or porticus, chancel all complete save for chancel arch and N porticus – period C1

Taylor

Second half of C10

Baldwin Brown.

Mid C10. Inscription on arch heading (*q.v.*) suggests 990-1010.

Clapham.

Plan

Winged church (i.e. not truly transeptal) with a central tower, North and South Tower walls flush with nave walls

Well set out – exterior dimensions in multiples of 27'.

Exterior width across porticus from North to South is 54' – same as distance from exterior face of Nave to West wall of Tower and height of Tower. Interior width of Tower is equal to interior length of Chancel.

Walls

3' thick throughout, including Tower – whole flints, coursed in lower parts – uncoursed above – flat, tile-stoned and some Roman bricks at infrequent intervals – occasionally pieces of green sandstone and ironstone – no early Herring-bone as stated in Victoria County History. Examples of Herring-bone that occur probably later repair work.

Tower

Central. Internal dimensions 20' × 20' 6". External length 27'. Height 54'. Quoins originally and West Quoins continue to ground (as in axial Towers but this Tower definitely central) – large, roughly-dressed slabs showing irregular upright-and-flat arrangement

Originally of two stages on interior, separated 15' above ground by floor, later removed – upper floor originally ringing chamber reached by ladder from South Porticus through narrow Square-head door.

Originally four windows in upper floor – South East one now destroyed – others original round-head, double-splayed with apertures narrowing slightly upwards – no imposts, plastered – now have rectangular stone frames set in outer splays

Present timber superstructure probably replaced by earlier timber belfry.

Tower did not rise above very high nave roof ridge – good attempt to build stable central Tower without thickening of walls (as was usual in axial Towers). Stability obtained by: low height (54'); small, light, timber superstructure.

Quoins to ground

Nave and chancel as high as Tower acted as East and West abutments. Unusually high North and South Porticus acted as North and South abutments. Original East and West arches replaced by wider ones in C15. No traces of original West Arch – Foundations of East Arch 6' 8" wide.

Nave

Aisleless. Exceptionally long (51' × 21')

W wall rebuilt in modern times and diagonal corner buttresses added.

Originally there was a Western adjunct, full width of nave – foundations of its north wall and west doorway from nave (wide west adjunct rare and an Anglo-Saxon feature – other examples at BOARHUNT, Hampshire; DAGLINGWORTH, Gloucestershire and SOUTH ELMHAM, Suffolk).

Upper south-west and south-east quoins visible above modern buttress – slab work in face-alternate arrangement and possibly partly renewals. Four flat pilaster-strips on external walls – two on north, two on south – upper part of west one on north wall destroyed by C15 window – position of south examples corresponds with that of north – 11" wide (usual width of pilasters 6"-8") project 1½" (less than usual) – cut back to wall

Breamore, Hampshire



Quoins similar to Tower quoins – south east quoin more regular than others

Window in East wall – similar to nave – plain, round-head, double-splayed, aperture narrowing slightly upwards, no imposts, plastered so as to reveal no structural detail.

C12 round-head doorway – no indication that this replaced earlier Anglo-Saxon example as lateral porticus normally had no exterior openings. Arch originally 10'8" high × 4'11" wide. Jambs of green sandstone, not through stones. Head of through stones, but not real voussoirs – six different stones cut to shape (but regularly – two long each side, 2 short at top)

surface so that through original plaster they would appear as genuine long-and-short work.

Two Anglo-Saxon windows high up in north wall, one near west end, other east of central – blocked one in south wall part hidden by east wall of C12 porch – large, round-head, double-splayed with openings narrowing slightly upwards

Chancel

Internal dimensions 20' × 14'.
External length 27'.

Now much lower than nave, but originally the same height – roof marks on tower east wall.

North Porticus

Lost – gable marks visible on exterior of north wall – opening blocked in C15, same width as south one.

South Porticus

11' × 8'

Unusual position, projecting from central tower – possibly a stage in development from winged church without tower (cf. WORTH, Sussex) to truly transeptal church. There is no other example of a porticus in Hampshire.

massive imposts, square cut but with cable-moulding along upper and lower edges and ends of impost soffit faces, may have continued along north and south ends but no remains left

Inscription

Cut on arch head to south porticus (rediscovered 1897). Letters 6" tall and filled with red-coloured lime.



HER SWUTELAD̄ SEO GECWYDRÆDNES ÐE

translated by W. J. Andrews as "Here is manifested the Word (or Covenant) to thee". Anglo-Saxon version of Titus I, 3. Professor Napier suggests last word "which" and not "to thee", suggesting that inscription probably continued, possibly over eastern arch and arch to north porticus

Early Anglo-Saxon letters S = **ƿ** and W = **ƿ** (i.e. not **ƿ**) - inscription thus made in transitional period **ƿ**

to S and **ƿ** to **ƿ**. These conditions only occur at the end of the reign of Æpelræd II (978-1016) (cf. coins of Æpelræd at Winchester and coins of Cnut, also at Winchester (1016-35) have S and **ƿ**).

Rood

On external south wall over C12 south door, more than 7' high, badly mutilated - cut back almost to wall and obscured by plaster, on which are paintings. The rood is in the Byzantine tradition.