



Saint Paul's Cray, Kent

Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Ἁγίου Παύλου

Church of St Paulinus

Possible church fabric

Grid ref TQ 474 691

Date

Round-headed window arch in nave. Part of the later mediæval nave breaks through on the left hand side. Possibly Anglo-Saxon.

A Note on Paulinus

Paulinus (644) was a close contemporary of Augustine and was instrumental in bringing Christianity to the fringes of the former Roman Empire. An early responsibility was to accompany the young Kentish princess Ethelburga to the palace of King Edwin at Yeavering, Northumberland. In due course, Edwin was persuaded to become a Christian and was later baptised by Paulinus in York, at the spot on which the great Minster was to be built. Paulinus became the first Bishop of York, and after his return to Kent, Bishop of Rochester where he died 1350 years ago.

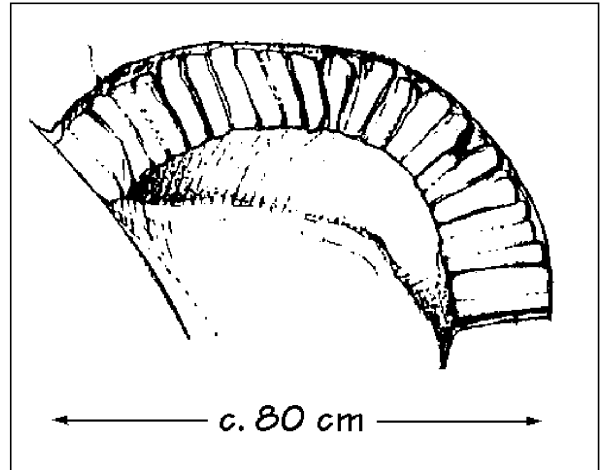
Of the very few churches dedicated to Paulinus, there are two in our area, that at Crayford, and our more modest building in St Paul's Cray (an abbreviated form of St Paulinus' Cray, and nothing to do with St Paul).

Development of the Early Church of St Paulinus Cray

It is not easy to visualise the form of the first church on the site, but we do have information about pre-Conquest churches which give clues as to its possible development in Saxon times.

a) At the outset, it is likely that nothing more than a standing cross would have been erected, as an assembly point for the newly converted. (pagan ceremonies tended to take place in the open air, and villagers would initially have been reluctant to enter a building for acts of worship).

b) The first permanent building would have been erected (on high ground, away from areas at risk from flooding) as a simple timber-framed structure, with a cross incorporated into the west gable. Inside, services would have taken place before an altar, but there would have been no access for the common people who could only observe the priest through an open door or screen. A church was often founded near a manor house on land given to the mission priest by the local thegn. It is likely that in the case of St Paulinus' the local landowner



lived at nearby St Paul's Cray Hill (off Chapman's Lane). The house no longer stands.

c) In due course, newly baptised Christians would no longer have been willing to remain outside and an extension to the west of the earlier chapel (= chancel) would have been built. This extension became the nave. (High in the north wall of the nave at St Paulinus Cray may be seen the remains of a small round-headed window, the arch made from re-used Roman bricks) With the enlargement of the church, the early timber structure would have been replaced with flint and dressed stone, forming the basis of what we see today.

d) Small side chambers were sometimes added to the simple two-cell Saxon buildings until the early 9th Century, these were often used for burials which were not permitted in the main church. One such side chapel (porticus), with its external arch still visible, may be identified to the north side of St Paulinus'. It was later adapted to serve as a vestry.

e) Many Saxon churches were provided with a western porch or narthex. Such porches were often extended vertically as places of refuge and as bell towers.

Later Mediæval Development

f) Aisles were added to the earlier building in about the C12; the north aisle at St Paulinus' would have enclosed the porticus, but appears to have been removed about the C15

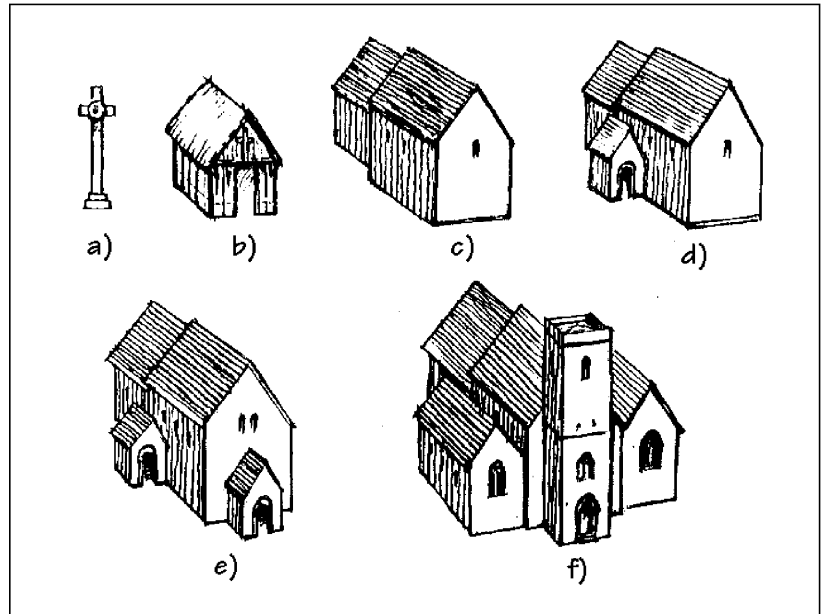
The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance so readily given by the Rev. Arun Thomas, Vicar of

Saint Paul's Cray, Kent

St Mary's with St Paulinus Cray
in arranging access

J Blundell:

St Paulinus Cray: A Preliminary
Survey, 1994:
(ODAS Archives 17.1,
February, 1995)



*Right and far right
Two photographs of St
Paulinus' church at Cray,
showing alleged English
architectural work.*

