

St. Cybi's Church, Holyhead, Anglesey

Recording of the Southern Clerestory Windows



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Project No. G2478

Report No. 1358

Prepared for: Churches Conservation and Development Officer, Diocese of Bangor

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RECORD OF SOUTHERN CLERESTORY WINDOWS, ST. CYBI'S CHURCH, HOLYHEAD

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Introduction

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust (GAT) was asked by the Churches Conservation and Development Officer of the Diocese of Bangor to undertake a photographic survey of the 13th century St Cybi Church, Holyhead, a medieval Grade I Listed Building (GAT PRN 1763 / RCAHMW NPRN 27500) in Holyhead, Anglesey (centred on NGR SH24728262). The survey was to be conducted using a combination of ground and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) photography.

The survey was prompted by a Quinquennial Inspection in May 2016 which identified elements of the external fabric of the building that are in need of recording before their architectural detail is lost. The project design for this work included a broad range of features to be recorded but the time allocated was limited so it was agreed with the Churches Conservation and Development Officer to initially provide a 3-dimensional survey of the complete exterior of the church and a separate one of the chapel, and for the more detailed survey work to concentrate on the clerestory windows.

The Trust is very grateful for all the help received from Sue Booth (Churches Conservation and Development Officer), Stewart Hayter and Chris Medley.

Methodology

Photographic survey was undertaken by Orca Principle in October 2016. The aim was to use an aerial drone to record inaccessible features but as the church is in a built up area, the regulations for use by the Civil Aviation Authority made it difficult to use the drone to its full capacity. The majority of the recording was carried out using a camera on a pole to take numerous overlapping photographs around all accessible sides of the church. It was not possible to access the west side of the tower. The Chapel y Bedd was also recorded in the same way, and in this case it was not possible to photograph the south-western side of the chapel as it is too close to the walls enclosing the church yard. As there is access to the roof of the south aisle the southern clerestory windows were photographed at close proximity. The north clerestory windows were not readily accessible, and were therefore recorded at a low resolution only.

Included in the photographs were ground markers that were surveyed in using a survey quality Global Positioning System (GPS). The photographs were processed using Agisoft Photoscan Professional software to create 3D digital models. These models were geo-located and scaled by inputting the coordinates for the ground markers. The models were then used to out-put 2D orthomosaics of three sides of the church and of the southern clerestory windows. These orthomosaics appear to be single photographs but they are the result of combining many photographs and are rectified and scaled.

The high resolution orthomosaic of the southern clerestory windows was used to trace off detail of the windows to create a conventional drawing annotated to indicate different phases of construction and repair. These drawings have been printed at a scale of 1:20 and presented with the relevant sections of the photomosaic so that drawings and photograph can be compared.

Historical and architectural background

St Cybi's church, Holyhead, is located within a late Roman fort above the harbour. There is evidence of Early Medieval occupation, and a Viking raid in 961 would suggest the presence of a church of some importance. The earliest masonry evidence is provided by worn chevron decorated stones reset in the wall of the south transept. The church as it stands today consists of a 13th century chancel, largely rebuilt in Victorian times, north and south transepts, a nave with north and south aisles, a south porch and west tower. The nave, aisles and crossing date from a comprehensive late medieval rebuilding which is thought to have taken place between c. 1480 and 1520. It has been argued that the church continued in use during the rebuilding programme, and that the north and south transepts were added first, followed by the north aisle, and finally the south aisle and decorated south porch. The west tower was added in the 17th century. The church was restored by W Gilbert Scott in 1877-9, when the chancel was rebuilt, work undertaken to the transepts, and a new roof built over the transepts and crossing.

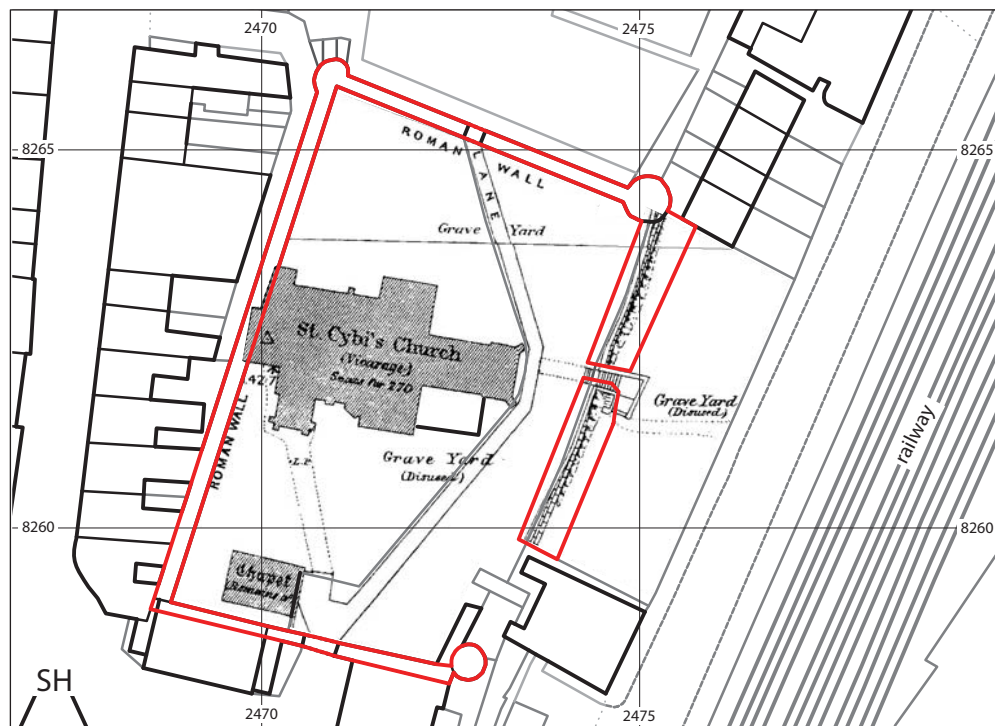
Though the north and south arcades within the nave are certainly different, reflecting the lapse in time between construction, it is difficult to identify clear differences between the north and south clerestory windows because of the numerous repairs undertaken. On both the north and south sides there are four clerestory windows each of two lights above the nave, and two of three lights above the crossing. Those above the crossing date from the restoration by Gilbert Scott. The original medieval windows appear to have consisted of two trefoil headed lights in a square frame, with moulded (or possibly chamfered) jambs, and sunk spandrels. Those on the south side have a moulded label with out-turned stops, whereas this feature is not evident on the north side.

Discussion of southern clerestory windows

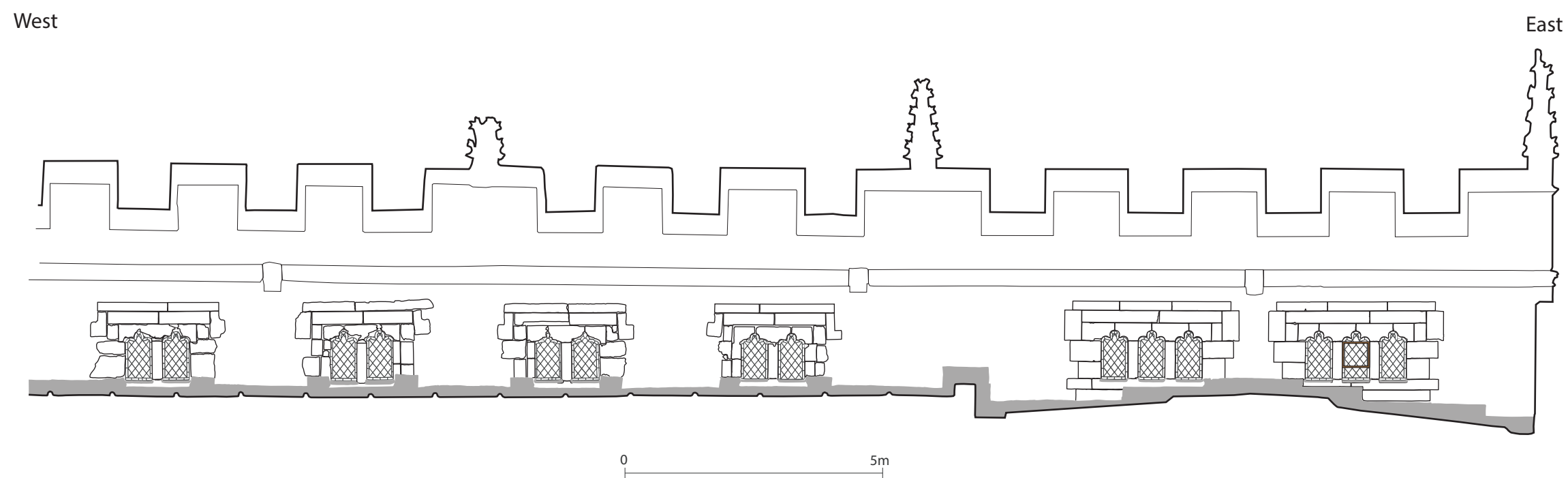
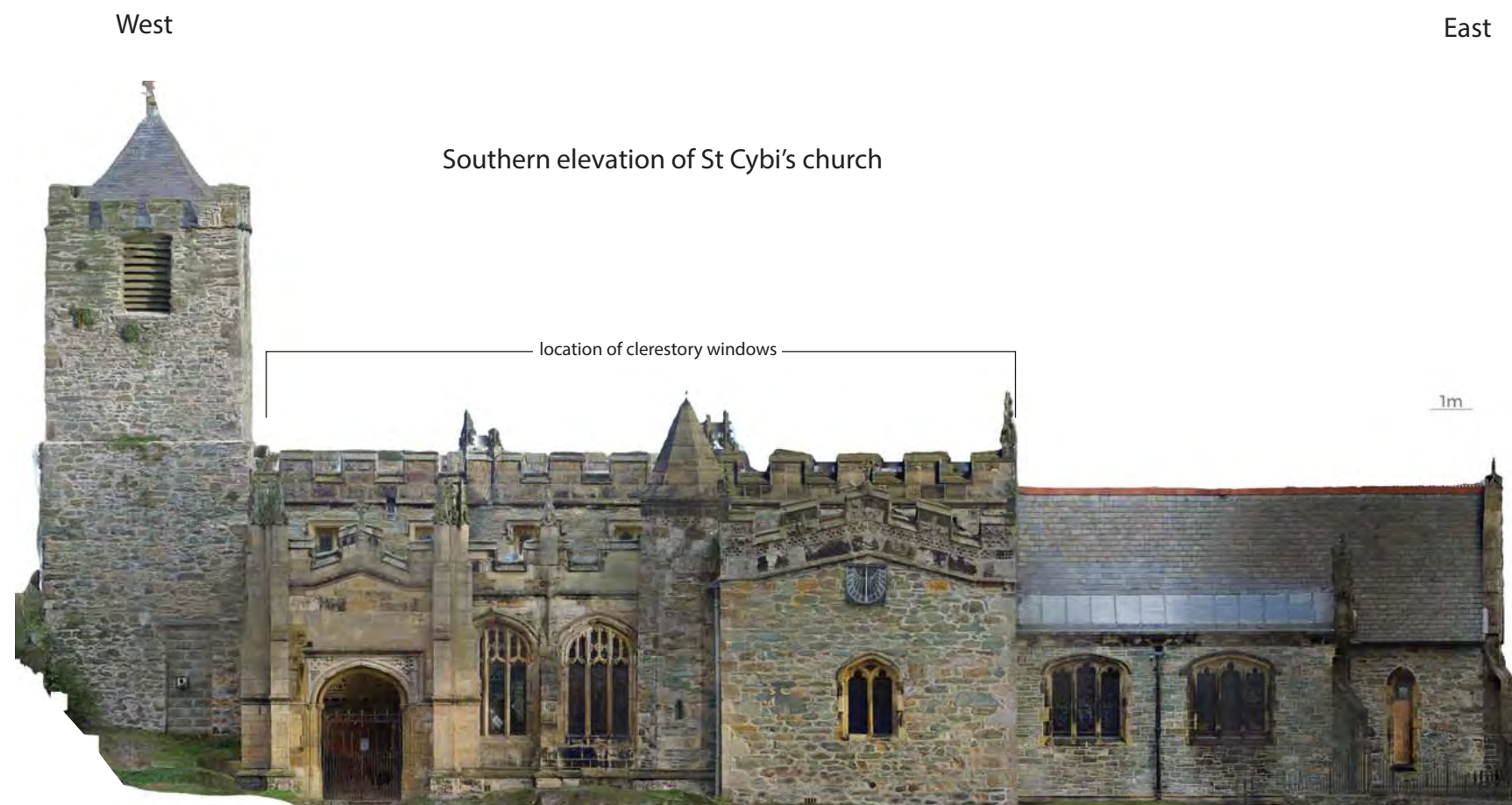
The southern clerestory windows have undergone many phases of repair, much of it during the 20th century. The eastern two windows above the crossing, both with three lights, were inserted by Gilbert Scott during the restoration works of 1877-79 (Hughes 1930, 357). Despite this late date there is some erosion on these windows and one mullion has been replaced. The other windows are originally of late medieval date and although there has been much replacement of stones all the windows are thought to have some surviving elements of the original jambs and labels. The window heads of the three western most windows are so eroded that they could be original with yellow sandstone being used to enable fine carving. The head on the third window from the west is of a different pattern to the other two and may have been partly recut, possibly to take a central bar which reached into the square frame, though vertical tool marks visible on this and not others may suggest a later replacement.

The fourth window from the west is the best preserved, and has probably been renewed. It appears to have been used as the basis for the design copied by Scott. The condition of the stonework in this window and the different colour of the stone suggests that it is not part of Scott's restoration but probably an eighteenth or early 19th century restoration.

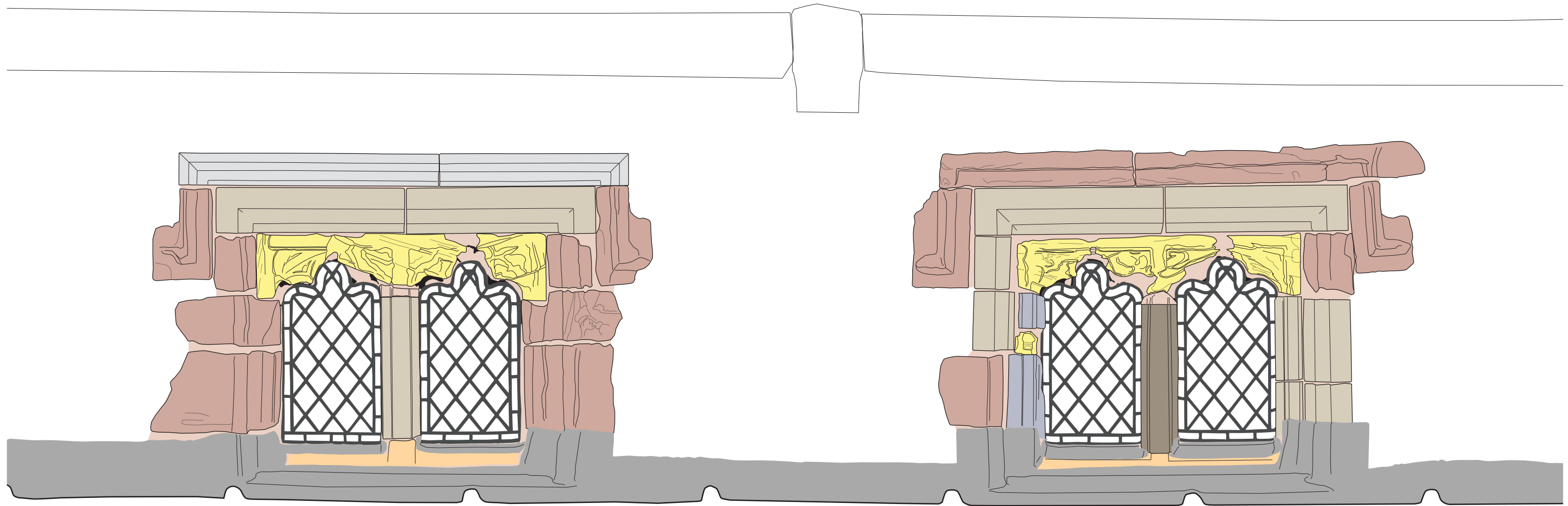
Hughes, H. H., 1930. 'Church of St. Cybi, Holyhead', *Archaeologia Cambrensis* vol LXXXV, part 2, 355-365



Location of St Cybi's church (red lines define scheduled Roman walls)



Positioning and layout of southern clerestory windows



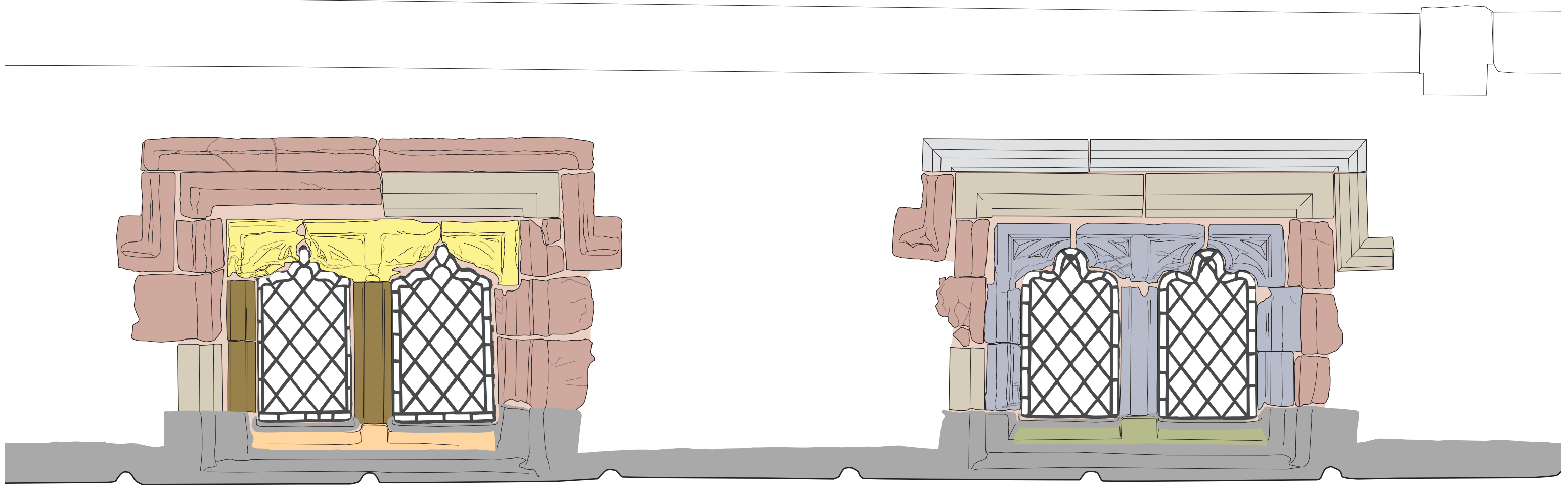
0 1m

Key

- Lead flashing
- Window lead
- Voids
- Mortar
- Phase 1 (original early 16th century masonry)
- Phase 2 (possibly original early 16th century heads)
- Phase 3 (possibly original early 16th century sills)
- Phase 4 (early 19th century or 18th century restoration)
- Phase 5 (restoration by Gilbert Scott 1877-79)
- Phase 6 (20th century restoration)
- Phase 7 (20th century restoration)
- Phase 8 (20th century restoration)
- Phase 9 (20th century restoration)



Detail of southern clerestory windows: first two windows from west



0 1m

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Detail of southern clerestory windows: third and four windows from west



Detail of southern clerestory windows: fifth and sixth windows from west



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