

The Broadstairs Society

Grade II Listed Buildings in Broadstairs & St Peter's

St Mary's Chapel, 44 Albion Street, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 1NE

Date of listed: 1974.09.20

List Entry No: 1239199

Date of Building: Early C19 on site of medieval chantry chapel

Date of Photographs: 2026.03.11

Notes: Referred to as both 44 and 46 Albion Street. Now used as a public house but retaining large numbers of second-hand books on display.





Side Elevation



Details

An early C19 former Congregational chapel on or adjoining the site of a medieval chantry chapel and incorporating re-sited elements of the chantry chapel. Altered and extended in the later C19.

Reasons for Designation

St. Mary's Chapel, 44 Albion Street, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons.

* Architectural interest: an 1820s Congregational chapel, altered and extended in the later C19, incorporating from an earlier building on the site an early C17 five-light stone mullioned and transomed window and a re-sited medieval door arch and window arch remaining from the chantry chapel of Our Lady of Bradstowe;

* Historic interest: it preserves, though not 'in situ', the only known above ground remains of the medieval chantry chapel. Congregational worship is reported here as early as 1691. Patrons, including members of the Culmer family and Mary Goodwin were locally significant.

History

In the Middle Ages there was a shrine to Our Lady of Bradstowe and a chantry chapel at the head of the cliffs at Broadstairs. This is documented in 1349 and by 1451 it had a secondary function as a seamount. When the Great Harry (Henri Grace a Dieu), the most powerful warship in Europe was launched in 1514, a feast was thrown by the inhabitants of Broadstairs for the crew after a service at the chapel. The chapel and shrine were the most important structures in Broadstairs in the Middle Ages and the town got its name from the broad stairs leading up to this structure. Lewis's 'History of Thanet' of 1736 mentions that the chapel was situated a little above the gate (The York Gate). Edward Hasted's 'History of Kent' Volume 10, published in 1800, reiterates 'At a small distance above the gate there was anciently a chapel, dedicated, as tradition goes, to the Virgin Mary, under the appellation of Our Lady of Pity; though more usually our Lady of Bradstowe; in this chapel was her image, which was held in such veneration, that the ships as they sailed by this place, used to lower their topsails to salute it.' The shrine was destroyed by a tidal wave a few years after the storm of 1500. The chantry chapel was suppressed by Henry VIII.

Following the Reformation the ruined chapel became the private property of the Culmer family who supported the Puritan cause. St. Mary's Chapel, 44 Albion Street has an inscription in lettering of early C19 serif type on the north-west side reading 'St. Mary's Chapel 1601' which was removed from a porch apex bordering Albion Street in the C20. An inscription which was recorded in 1791 'on the west wall' of the chapel, but no longer exists because of later works, recorded earlier repairs of 1691. It appears that the building was fitted up as a place of worship by Josia Culmer in 1691 and that services were held in association with the Presbyterian or Congregational Meeting in Ramsgate. In 1714 a building was converted into 'two cottages for visiting clergy', probably the adjoining building to the east, 1 Chapel Place, demolished in the 1930s. In 1825-8 the chapel was repaired

and probably mostly rebuilt by Mrs. John Goodwin at a cost of £1,000 which included raising the roof height and inserting a wooden gallery. Services were held assisted by ministers from the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion and others. In 1828 Ireland mentions 'the remains of a small chapel, now a dwelling place and place of worship for persons of the Baptist persuasion'. Tablets of the 1830s recorded in the later C20 by Christopher Stell on the north-east wall of the chapel but subsequently stored below the chapel, including to Mrs. Goodwin and members of the Culmer family, show that middle class Nonconformists were being buried in a vault beneath the chapel at this time.

A circa 1820 engraving, from a drawing of the south-west side by the topographical and landscape artist H. Gastineau (1791-1876), is the earliest known illustration of the building. It shows the south-west end of the chapel with the existing early C17 five-light mullioned and transomed window and the existing stone medieval arch to the top of an entrance immediately to the west. It also shows an adjoining three-storey property to the east (1, Chapel Place, demolished in the 1930s) incorporating a further medieval stone arch with corbel over a later sash window on the first floor. The nonconformist chapel is shown on the 1842 Tithe Map as item 854 and the outline of the building does not reach as far north-east as the present building. A drawing of circa 1860 also shows the south-west side of the chapel with little alteration since the earlier drawing.

In 1871 a new Congregational chapel was built at The Vale and the earlier chapel probably declined as a result. The building appears on the First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1874 labelled St. Mary's Chapel in Gothic Script. In an 1878 Directory St. Mary's Chapel is shown in conjunction with a smithy and the shop is occupied by a greengrocer. In Kelly's Directory of 1887-8 the smithy and greengrocer are still occupying part of the premises but the chapel is now called St. Mary's Chapel Town Mission Hall. It was used by the Baptists as a mission hall until 1899 but still owned by the Congregational church. Probably about this time the south-west wall of the chapel was rebuilt because the multi-pane first floor sash window shown in the circa 1820 and 1860 illustrations was replaced by two casement windows with pointed arches. In 1889, according to a report in the Keebles Newspaper of 27th April 1889 Mr Charles Reeve Architect who was excavating for the drainage of a house on the Crampton Estate recorded finding three or four lancet windows of C12 or C13 date and an internal wooden structural roof beam of the same era, but had to cover them over. The building is shown on the 1896 and 1907 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps with no change in footprint.

In the early C20 the chapel was restored by the Reverend Edwards, the Rector of Broadstairs. In October 1912 the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings remarked that 'the chapel appears to date from the C14 but little remains of the original works but the head of a doorway and a relieving arch on the south side'. In 1924 the building was used briefly by the Plymouth Brethren but in 1926 the building became a parish room for Holy Trinity Church for a few years. The Broadstairs and St. Peter's Gazette of 22nd August 1936 stated that when Holy Trinity Church vacated the building as a parish room a portable rostrum and a gallery were removed. The Isle of Thanet Gazette

of 8th May 1937 stated that remains of a C14 chapel were discovered when a pair of cottages adjoining the present buildings were being pulled down to make way for the extension of a funfair. The Rector and other members of the church council were unable to save two old flint walls running east and west which 'were undoubtedly part of the original chapel of St Mary dating from 1601 which stood on the site before the present Old St Mary's' but they saved a C14 window from the original chapel which was incorporated into the south-east wall of 46 Albion Street, which had to be rebuilt because of the demolition of the adjoining building. On the Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1939 adjoining properties to the south-east are no longer present.

With the approach of the Second World War an air raid shelter was constructed in the cellar underneath the chapel. From the 1950s onwards the former chapel, 44 Albion Street, was in use as a bookshop.

Details

A former chapel currently in use as a shop.

DATE: the chapel, re-modelled at the expense of Mary Goodwin between 1825-28, was altered and extended in the later C19, but the lower part of its south-west wall is early C17 or earlier and it incorporates a re-sited C14 door arch on the south-west side and the south-east side has a re-sited C14 stone window arch, both probably from the chantry chapel of St. Mary Bradstow.

MATERIALS: mainly constructed of coursed flint, knapped on the principal sides, with red or stock brick dressings but the lower part of its south-west wall may be of stone though not visible externally. It has a hipped tiled roof.

PLAN: it consists of a chapel of two bays forming an irregular parallelogram about 34 feet long by 17 feet wide aligned north-east to south-west, interrupted on the southern part of the north-west side by a later three storey house and shop aligned north-east to south-west. The whole is L-shaped with entrance on the north-west.

EXTERIOR: the north-west front of the chapel on Albion Street has an entrance through a wide two-centred arched doorway in a flint boundary wall with steps down to an early C20 half-glazed double door. The northern half only of the chapel is visible on this side with a pointed arched window with intersecting wooden glazing bars. The southern part of the chapel on this side is interrupted by 46 Albion Street, comprising a ground floor shop with accommodation above.

The south-west end of the chapel is faced in knapped flints and has stock brick quoins and window and door architraves. The lower part has a five-light, circa 1600, part Caen stone, part Thanet sandstone, mullioned and transomed window and an adjoining doorcase which has a re-sited C14 stone arch. Above are two post-1860 pointed arched casement windows with wooden intersecting arches. Below the ground floor the top of an arched

opening to the cellar or crypt is visible.

Neither the south-east nor the north-west sides of the chapel are currently visible because of adjoining buildings. However, it is clear from an interior inspection that there are two pointed arched windows on the upper part of the south-east side, one probably a C14 stone arch re-sited after 1937. The north-west side shows no evidence of windows internally

INTERIOR: the lower part of the south-east wall of the chapel is thicker than the remainder, has a corner buttress and the ovolo moulding of the bricked up five-light early C17 mullioned and transomed window is visible. The cellar underneath the chapel on the south side is a 14 feet square early C19 brick cellar, built on chalk bedrock, into which a World War II air raid shelter with concrete roof supported on lengths of tramway rails and brick piers has been inserted. It is possible that there is a further enclosed bricked up cellar to the north.

This list entry was subject to a Minor Amendment on 20/03/2013

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System number: **415857**

Legacy System: **LBS**

Sources

Books and journals

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Hasted, E, History of Kent, (1800)

Other

Croxford, Ben, St. Mary's Chapel, 44-46 Albion Street Broadstairs, May 2012,
Samuel, Martin, St. Mary's Broadstairs, May 2012,