



St Brides Chapel – Phasing & Significance

1. Evidence for phasing within the fabric of the structure comes in part from historical sources and existing interpretations (in particular, Cowley, 2011), and in part from observations made from a series of site visits undertaken on 17th, 22nd and 24th March 2016.
2. A brief visual inspection of the site allowed various broad-brush observations to be made which could help elucidate the complexity of the fabric, but these are insufficiently refined to allow a detailed visual guide of the building's character to be compiled at this stage. Nonetheless, there are sufficient differences evident throughout the building fabric to allow some understanding of the phasing, differences already previously touched upon by Cowley 2011.

Phase 1: 13th-14th century

3. The first mention in documentary sources of a church upon this site is dated 1357, though Cowley suggests that there may have been a church built here as far back as the late 1200s, i.e. founded by Walter the Steward immediately prior to the First Scots Wars of Independence.
4. We can envisage this early church as being rectangular on plan. It is likely that there were at least two doorways in the south elevation, one towards the east end serving the clergy, the other at the west end allowing access by the parishioners. These doorways might equate to openings D1 and D3 (as surviving on the modern structure), or (alternatively) D1 and W2 (a window modified from an earlier doorway). There could, in addition, have been a third doorway located in the west end of the north elevation, opposing the lay entrance in the south elevation and allowing additional access.
5. It is likely, however, that the fabric around each of these openings has been so extensively rebuilt over the intervening centuries that we cannot confidently ascribe an early date to these features. Those architectural features which can be linked to this earliest phase include a pointed arch potentially derived from a lancet-style window but later rebuilt into the wall fabric at the west end of the north elevation, and a carved stone with foliate design (potentially derived from a free-standing cross) incorporated into blocked doorway D2 in the south elevation at ground floor level.
6. These distinctive features are *ex situ*, but surviving fabric which appears to be linked with this early period can be identified. Much of the north elevation (excluding only the NW corner and the area around D4) survives, as well as a substantial portion of the east elevation (excluding the SE corner), although there is evidence that much of the east elevation was rebuilt following a much later collapse (see below). It is also possible that elements of the west elevation remain intact though subsumed beneath later phases (see Phase 2 below). The fabric comprises rough courses of unworked or roughly worked rubble blocks, of a largely uniform and medium size but with occasional large or even massive blocks occurring, particularly amongst the lowermost courses. The stone is largely igneous in origin, with occasional use of local sandstone. Quoins are squared sandstone, and it is likely that the margins were also composed of sandstone: the rybats, sills and lintels still in use upon the site are probably re-used originals, although there is evidence that they have been reworked and chamfered edges added. Another characteristic of this fabric is that the component courses are long and uninterrupted, with occasional use of small stones as pinning.

Phase 2: early 1600s

7. Cowley notes a major refurbishment of the chapel undertaken by the 2nd Marquis of Hamilton during this period and notes that the appearance of slate within the fabric may have commenced at this time (making use of a substantial quantity of roofing slates imported for use at Brodick Castle, and with roofing slates manufactured on the island later in the 1600s).

8. Examination of the fabric shows that in some locations, slate has been incorporated into the fabric routinely, as opposed to comprising isolated fragments perhaps inserted as pinning during later repairs. The widespread use of slate in this fashion. The use of slate is also coupled with more widespread use of squared sandstone blocks laid in regular courses.
9. This fabric is seen at its most distinctive in the west elevation, where it comprises most of the surviving upstanding fabric (excepting only the massive blocks at basal level in the SW corner). Here, it abuts an upstanding earlier wall, which suggests that – rather than being entirely rebuilt – the west elevation has at some point been entirely refaced, subsuming a previous wall into a broader, more robust structure. This may have been undertaken to strengthen the wall as a means of providing extra support for a bell-cote, a feature which is recorded as being present in historic images of the structure. The origin of this earlier wall is ambiguous: it may form part of the earlier structure, but alternatively, it may result from a two-phase rebuilding of the western elevation during this period.
10. Balanced against the potentially late character of the masonry in the west elevation is an apparent tendency towards open jointing. While this may be seen as indicative of the use of clay-bonding or even drystone construction (thus suggesting that the masonry has early origins), it should be noted that other factors may have led to the absence of mortar within the wall face. A combination of weathering (the west side traditionally being the side most exposed to Atlantic storms) and vegetation growth could have led to the breakdown of any existing lime-based mortars and their subsequent loss from within the fabric.
11. This period may also have seen the alteration of doorway W2 into a window, and perhaps the creation of doorway D4 to form an opposing doorway to D1, which was clearly established by this time.
12. The use of slate pinnings can also be seen throughout much of the fabric in the south elevation (interior and exterior) which suggests substantially repair or rebuilding during this period, particularly in the west and central portions. Because the courses are, once again, long and uninterrupted (except where disrupted through the insertion of openings), some confusion with original fabric is possible. However, it is suggested that a more detailed study of the fabric should allow differentiation on the basis of the presence or absence of slate as a regular inclusion within the fabric.

Phase 3: early 1700s

13. Documentary sources indicate that the church was modernised during this period. The extent of the modifications are unknown: seats were installed, but the impact on the upstanding fabric remains uncertain. While it is possible that additional doorways and windows were inserted into the south elevation at this time, it seems more likely that these changes took place later during Phase 4, once the church had fallen out of use.

Phase 4: late 1700s.

14. The church was replaced by a modern structure located within the village of Lamlash in 1773, and it appears to have fallen into disuse at this time. This was followed by a change of use from a place of worship to a mausoleum, used variously by members of the Fullarton (of Kilmichael) family and senior estate workers attached to the Duke of Hamilton's Arran estates. The church appears to have been deliberately modified to allow this transformation: the roof was removed, a cross-wall inserted subdividing the interior into two chambers of unequal size, and – potentially – doors and windows inserted (where they did not exist already) so as to allow access to various plots and lairs. The presence of three lairs can be postulated by the presence of three door/window pairings, the margins of which are each internally consistent in their finish but with slight differences evident between one door/window set and another. The presence of only one cross-wall might suggest that this plan was never pursued to its conclusion.
15. In addition to the changes to the main church building, a small rectangular stone-built

structure, unroofed and faced externally with tooled ashlar sandstone blocks, was built against the east end of the north elevation. While it has been suggested by Cowley that this may represent a former vestry attached to the early church, the absence of a doorway linking 'vestry' and church would argue against this, and suggest instead that this was a custom-built memorial structure.

16. This period also appears to have seen repairs to the NW and SE corners of the church structure, perhaps following failure or perhaps even collapse. Here, distinctive areas of rubble masonry with short courses interspersed by blocks of cherry-cocking shows a distinctive style of construction markedly different from those noted previously and most commonly attributed to the techniques employed in the late 18th or early 19th century. The juxtaposition of this fabric with late 18th century wall-mounted monuments (M16) further strengthens a late 18th/early 19th century date for this work.
17. Alterations to the wallhead may also be linked with period, in particular consolidation of the masonry and the addition of a corniced wall-plate.

Phase 5: mid 1800s

18. Documentary sources note a collapse took place in the east gable wall during this period. It is recorded that the wall was built up using original materials, which implies that the differentiation of old and new fabric in this location may be difficult.

Phase 6: mid 20th century

19. A brick-built grave-digger's hut was built within the footprint of the church, abutting the south elevation. The inclusion of brick within the fabric infilling doorway D4 also suggests that existing repairs required further remedial works at this time.

Significance

20. When discussing significance we are referring to the embodied information within the fabric and its potential to contribute to the historical narrative of the structure – its construction, use and alteration through time. Hence the significance is linked to the retention of fabric with minimal disturbance wherever possible and archaeological recording and intervention when disruption and dismantling are necessary for the overall consolidation of fabric.
21. Phase 1 is considered to be of high significance being the limited survival of primary fabric that could contextualise significant issues surrounding the original form and date of the chapel. Retention of the material *in situ* and with minimal disturbance should be viewed as essential.
22. Phases 2 to 4 are of moderate significance being notable phases in the utilisation and adaptation of the structure. Retention of the material *in situ* and with minimal disturbance should be preferred.
23. Phase 5 and 6 material is considered to be of low significance, alteration to this fabric will not involve the loss of archaeological information embodied in the fabric structure (though the fabric may incorporate architectural pieces from earlier phases).
24. Given the overall significance of the structure, all necessary interventions should be considered within a framework of archaeological mitigation.

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