

Statement of Significance

All Saints Church, Tattersett.

Section 1: The Church in its Rural Environment

Setting of the Church

All Saints Church, which is a Grade I listed building, is early medieval and located in a very isolated rural part of north Norfolk. Visually it provides an historic link between ancient and modern countryside.



Figure 1 The Church from the Southeast

The church stands on its own, well away from any dwellings and can only be reached by footpath or farm track, with the river Tatt and its ancient water-meadows grazed by cattle and sheep for centuries to the west and south, and modern farmland to the north and east where cereals and sugar-beet are grown with huge

modern machinery. The remains of Coxford Priory are a few hundred yards to the west.

The Living Churchyard

The churchyard surrounds the building with a simple established hedge enclosing it. The farmland surrounding the building is maintained to encourage all sorts of wildlife from deer, owls and red kite down to mice and voles in the grass. The hedges are cut every two years to allow them to fruit and provide food for small birds. With the permanent pasture to the west the church yard helps provide shelter and food for birds, small animals and insects throughout the year.

Social History

The church was originally known as Gatesend Church and from the air there is evidence of a village to the south of the building.

This settlement was most likely abandoned during the Great Plague of the 16th century when All Saints became connected to the next village of Tattersett which lies about a mile to the north. Its proximity to the Coxford Priory ruins might also tell of a close connection to the community. All Saints has a connection to the family that has owned and farmed the surrounding estate for several generations where many gravestones bear witness.



Figure 2 The Approach from the south

Most houses in the two hamlets the church serves are occupied by full-time residents, with only one or two holiday properties, but All Saints remains the sole community building and religious focal point for both Tattersett and Coxford.

The Church Building in General

All Saints has recently been put of the “At Risk” Register by Historic England

All Saints, Tattersett is not a large church but is made up of a C13 nave and chancel with a C15 tower, there being evidence of an earlier tower having collapsed. A porch to the south has a Norman door leading into the west end of the nave. The nave is built with rubble quoins that are in good condition, and the chancel quoins are of small random stone. The tower has a brick battlemented parapet. There have been many alterations during its 800-year history, the last being undertaken in 1907, funded by the Chad family, owners of the surrounding estate.

The Church Building in Detail

All Saints is built with C13 fabric and C13 Perpendicular detail. The tower at the west end is of flint with light tone dressings and south and west lancets and three square-headed belfry windows; the nave is slated roof and the chancel has black glazed pantiles repaired with red pantiles.

The chancel has two 3-light Perpendicular windows, one square headed the other arched, with tracery. On the north side of the nave there is a blocked C13 doorway and one 3-light Perpendicular window.

The chancel has one 2-light Arched Decorated window, one straight headed 2-light Perpendicular window on the south side, with a 3-light Perpendicular window on the east side.

The ridges of the nave and chancel roofs have been lowered as witnessed by markings on the tower and nave gables; these were likely thatched with reed originally.

Internally access to the tower is by a recut round arch with splayed window embrasure with inserted lancet. The C15 font is undecorated. Between the two south windows there is a C15 wall painting of the martyrdom of St Erasmus. The chancel arch jambs are C13 with later Decorated/Perpendicular double hollow chamfered arch. Perpendicular rood stairs are set into the north wall.

The chancel has a chamfered brick sedilia and piscina which would have originally been plastered. There are C17 and C18 ledger slabs of Belgian marble set in the floor.

C19 arched braced roof in the nave with a plastered chancel ceiling. Benches and stalls dated to 1909 restoration.

Contents of the Church

The ten black Belgian marble ledger slabs and the one white marble slab are significant features in the church, along with the plain C13 font that is set upon a stone pediment. The majority of the ledger slabs relate to former owners of the surrounding Pynkney and Broomsthorpe Estates.

Stones also relate to Edward Pepys Esq who died in Dec 1663 aged 46. He was a cousin of Samuel who noted in his diary that he was the only one in the family to marry a handsome woman, together with - Anne Pepys (Edward and Elizabeth's daughter) who died 1655.

Also of interest is - John Walpole of Broomsthorpe Hall (Great Great Uncle of The Rt Hon Sir Robert Walpole 1st Prime Minister of Britain and builder of current Houghton Hall) died in 1654. His daughter Elizabeth married Edward Pepys. They also lived in Broomsthorpe. Broomsthorpe was part of Coxford Priory which was dissolved in 1536 and granted to the Dukes of Norfolk who then sold it to the Walpole family in the early 17th Century. The current Broomsthorpe Hall was built in 1815.



Figure 3 Inside All Saints

The wall painting that was uncovered during the 1907 restoration is of great interest. This depicts the entrails of St Erasmus being winched out whilst three observers stand behind the scene. This is only one of a tiny number of such depictions of this act of martyrdom and a professional report on its condition and conservation recommendations has recently been undertaken.

There is also a commemorative wall plaque to those from the community who fell during the Great War.

Significance for Mission

Due to its isolation the peace and tranquillity of All Saints is almost unmatched in our Norfolk churches and as such the church has a unique significance in its mission. There are no roads nearby, there is no electricity to the building and no running water. The visitors' book is filled with comments highlighting the peaceful silence in the building. This offers an unchallenged opportunity for quiet personal reflection in the unquestionable presence of God in a building that has been established for worship for over eight centuries.

All Saints is the only place of worship serving the communities of Tattersett and nearby Coxford. The church is always open and was never locked throughout the Covid lockdowns thus offering a place for thoughtful reflection where others were prohibited. This place of worship is also appreciated by the whole Benefice; nearby Tatterford recently threw open their gardens to raise £1,000 for Tattersett Church.

The graveyard of All Saints is still the chosen burial spot for the local community thus offering a close and comforting area for bereaved families to visit their relative's graves in quiet remembrance.

Section 2: The Significance of the Area Affected by the Proposal

The Parts of the Church Affected by the Proposal

In short, the church fabric is in poor condition as recognised by Historic England.



Figure 4 One of the Ledger Slabs

The nave and chancel will be affected most by the restoration proposals. Both need re-roofing completely, the tracery on the two south facing windows of the nave need repairing; there is much re-pointing to do, gutters need replacing and concrete gullies at the base of the church should be removed and replaced with shingle drains. All the roof flashings need to be renewed.

Internally, the chancel plaster roof must be removed and re-plastered, renewing lath where necessary. The rood steps want attention, the furniture needs polish. The wall painting is in urgent need of conserving. Four of the marble ledgers are partially covered by pews installed in 1907 and these should be uncovered. The internal walls will be allowed to dry before plaster repairs are carried out and limewash applied.

In the church yard, five table-top graves and other gravestones need restoration.

Significance of These Parts

The repairs to the nave, chancel and porch are vital to the continued stability and weathering, and thus the ability for the future use of the church as a place of worship for the local community.

This is a Grade I listed building of over 800 years of age which is unique and each part of the church makes up the whole. No one part can be restored whilst leaving any other part to deteriorate.

Internally, the wall painting is a unique connection to the distant past as to the message that was imparted to the populace by the clergy and how Fear of God was central to the way of life.

St Erasmus is the patron saint of Crohn's Disease, anxiety and IBS – all modern afflictions and thus remains as relevant now as in the fifteenth century.

Any restoration in the church yard to the gravestones is part of the whole but also respect to the deceased and their part in our past society.



Figure 5 Inside looking West with the Font and Damp Walls

Section 3: Assessment of the Impact of the Proposals

Describe and Assess the Impact of the Proposals.

The greatest aim for these proposals is that the building can survive as a safe place of worship into the twenty-second century. Because of the materials we aim to use and the workmanship we intend to employ, no visual change to the church fabric will be seen save sympathetic restoration.

The tracks leading to the church will be improved from time to time to enable the use of modern farm machinery in adjacent fields, thus allowing vehicular access by visitors of the church, who can also continue to make their way by foot or bicycle, whilst the isolation of All Saints will be maintained. Thus, the church holds its sense of peace and tranquillity whilst its door will remain always open.

There will, however, be a concerted effort to enhance the use of the church as a place of worship in the Benefice and at the heart of the two village communities of Tattersett and Coxford. This will be broadened to encompass its natural surroundings and long history for social interest.