

St Leonards, Oakley, North Roof - Statement of Significance

The lower part of the north roof of St Leonards dates from work carried out in 1870s to reorder and extend the church buildings footprint. There are no detailed drawings of the roof, but the 1840 plans show was an extension to add a transept to the nave, with a pitched roof with east and west facing slopes. The building footprint was extended in 1870 to add a complete north aisle and to extend for half the length of the chancel, and the present day lower roof replaced the pitched roof from the 1840s incorporating some of the stone work.

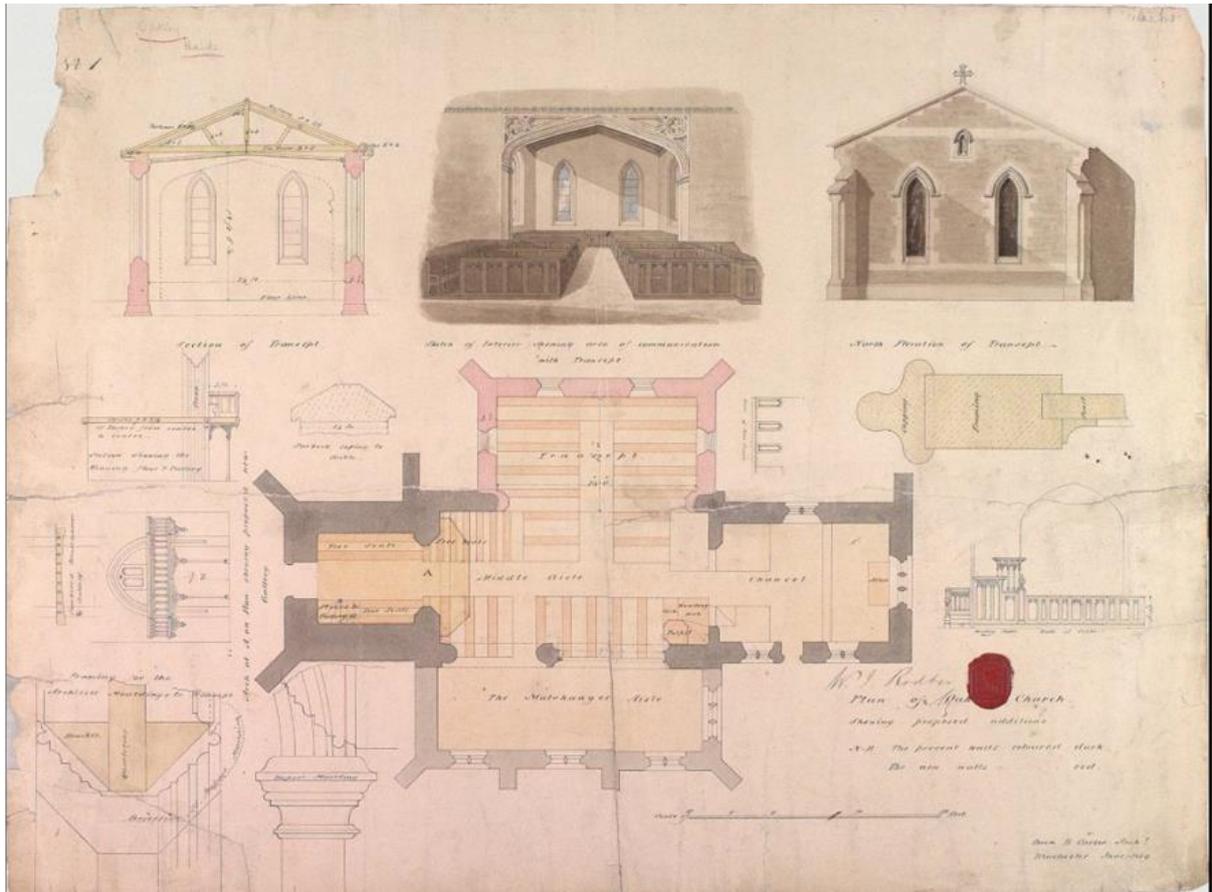


Fig.1 - 1840s Plan¹ showing the addition of transept with a pitched roof to the northern footprint of the church building (North is to the top of the page).

The upper part of the north roof covers the north part of the nave, has a steep slope and is covered with tile. The style, shape and method of fixing the tiles is consistent with an 1870s construction and is reflected in the roof of the old school building opposite which also dates from the 1870s.

The lower roof has a gradient of approximately 10 degrees and is surrounded by stonework parapet. The lower roof was covered with lead sheet, laid on 1 inch thick boards with 2 foot intervals between rolled joints formed around wooden battens. One thing to note is that the width of the roof is around 4 metres and each roll of lead is continuous, whereas usual practice would have been to have a step at around 2 metres to allow for an expansion joint. As a result, there are several places in the lead roof where it had been patched to repair cracks caused by weathering. The lead roof is flashed into a gutter on the north side which drains into two rain hoppers that feed down pipes. The gutter is stepped to flow from the centre to the hoppers.

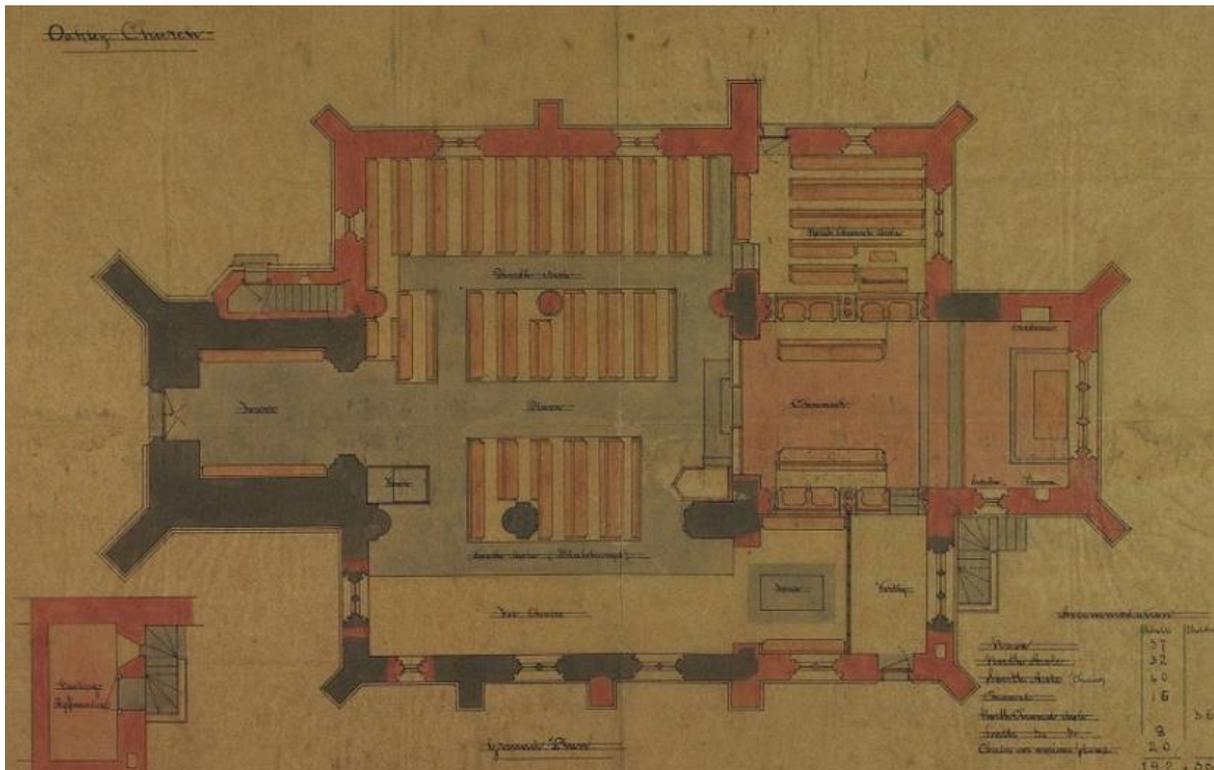


Fig.2 - 1870 Plan of St Leonards church² which shows the creation of the northern aisle and an extension into the north western half of the chancel, extending the 1840s footprint.



Fig.3 – A view of the north roof of St Leonards taken from the tower roof before the lead theft.

The stone work of the parapet around the lower roof looks continuous from below, but at the roof level it becomes clear that the 1840s transepts stone work has been merged with the central part of the 1870s stonework. From the ground level, the view of the lower roof is hidden by the parapet – see Fig.4



Fig.4 – A view of St Leonards Church North roof from the North East, as seen from Rectory road, Oakley. The lower roof is not visible behind the parapet.

In summary, the lead work that was in place before the theft dates from the 1870s and is typical of roll-joined lead roofs found all over the country and its main significance is that it would have been put in place by local craftsmen.

References:

- 1 – Oakley, St Leonard – 1839 – Owen Browne Carter, architect – From the church building councils on-line database – Ref: ICBS02749a
- 2 – Plan of Oakley Church – 1866-1871 – Thomas Henry Wyatt, architect – From the Church Building Councils on-line database – Ref: ICBS0613