

Wrabness Church

Architectural Description

The Church is a Grade II* Listed Building

Parish church. Mainly C12-C15, restored and extended in C19 and C20. Rubble, mainly cement-rendered, and some red brick in Flemish bond, with limestone dressings, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. Nave early C12, altered in the C15, extended in 1908. Chancel early C14, repaired in 1697. N vestry and S porch 1908.

The Chancel is cement-rendered, of rubble reported by the RCHM to be of septaria, with part of the N wall of exposed brick, rebuilt after a collapse in 1697 reported in the parish register. The E window is C19/early C20. In the N wall is a window, C19/20 except the C14 asymmetric splays and chamfered segmental-pointed rear-arch. In the S wall is a window, C19/20 except the C14 splays and chamfered segmental-pointed rear-arch. Further W is a doorway, C19/20 except the semi-groined rear-arch. The early C14 Chancel-arch is 2-centred, of 2 chamfered orders, the outer continuous, the inner resting on semi-octagonal shafts with moulded capitals. The roof of the Chancel is ceiled in 7 cants, rebuilt after a collapse in 1697, apparently in the original form.

The Nave The main part of the Nave is rendered, with a NE buttress of exposed brick; the W extension of 1908 is of exposed flint rubble. The RCHM reported that the E wall was rebuilt after the collapse of the Chancel in 1697. In the N wall are 2 windows; the eastern is C19/20 except parts of the C15 moulded label with decayed headstops, and possibly the splays and rear-arch, which are plastered; the western is C20. Between them is the early C12 N doorway, with a distorted semi-circular arch of 2 plain orders enclosing a rubble tympanum supported by a segmental arch; the jambs have nook-shafts (originally detached, now infilled behind), with cushion capitals and chamfered abaci continued round the inner order. At the E end of the wall is the late C15 lower doorway to the rood-stair, with hollow-chamfered jambs and 4-centred arch, blocked. In the S wall are 2 windows, C19/20 except the C15 moulded label of the eastern. Between them is the early C15 S doorway, with moulded jambs, 2-centred arch and label; the mouldings are enriched with flowers and 2 shields; the jambs and arch are partly restored. Above it is part of the head of the early C12 doorway, with a plain semi-circular arch and billet-moulded label. Morant reported in 1768 that there was 'formerly a stone tower, with 5 bells; now only 2, in a wooden turret' (P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of Essex*, I, 493). The roof of the original part of the Nave is C15, in 3 bays, of single hammer-beam construction with king-posts. Moulded hammer-beams and wall-pieces support the lower arch-braces, with brackets with foliate spandrels. Hammer-beams and wall-pieces are sawn off obliquely, implying the removal of carved saints or angels. The wallplates, principal rafters, collars and braces are moulded. There are 2 butt-purlins in each pitch, restored. The plain ridge-piece and most of the plain common rafters are renewed. The 3 bays of the western extension are replicas. The C15 font has an octagonal bowl with panelled sides, each carved with an evangelistic symbol or seated saint, all defaced; the underside of the bowl has defaced half-angels at the angles, all but 2 defaced, with rosettes between them; the buttressed stem has defaced figures and a C20 metal supporting structure. On the S wall of the Chancel is a tablet to the Rev. Robert Riche, 1728. Set in the W wall of the S porch is a C13 coffin-lid with foliate cross on a stepped calvary, found under the floor of the Chancel in 1697. RCHM 1.

The Bell Cage is a Grade II Listed Building

Following the collapse of the church tower in the 17th century the bell was moved temporarily to the wooden bell cage in the church yard which remains to this day.

18th century, timber framed, no cladding, in red brick footings, roofed with handmade red clay tiles. Square plan with door to east. Single storey, with pyramidal roof. Frame entirely of hardwood, including some re-used timber, jointed and pegged, with primary straight bracing. One internal tie beam aligned north-south, with king-post. Contains a bell-frame for one bell, aligned north-south constructed of hardwood, all jointed and pegged except the diagonal straight braces, which are lap-jointed and nailed. Bell by J. Warner and Sons, Crescent Foundry, London, 1864. The bell cage was restored in the late 20th century.