

# KEYNSHAM CEMETERY



## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Section I

#### **Chapels and Cemetery as built and in setting**

Keynsham Cemetery was designed in April 1877 by an Architect called Boston and its first burial was in April 1878.

It is at Durley Hill Keynsham and is accessed down a steep tarmac drive from the embankment to the A4175 Bath to Bristol Road.

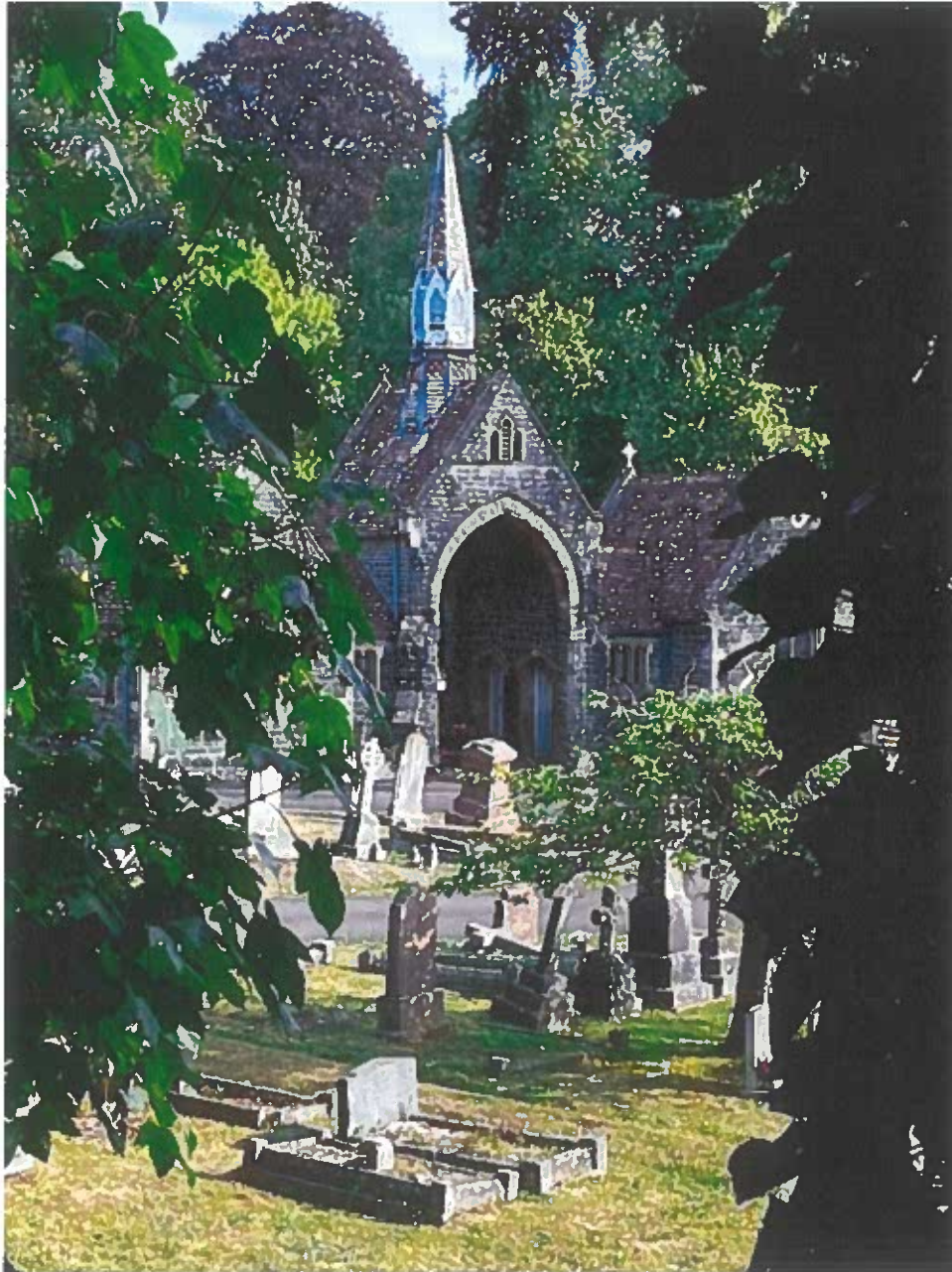
The following photographs show the entrance from the road and steep drive down into the cemetery.





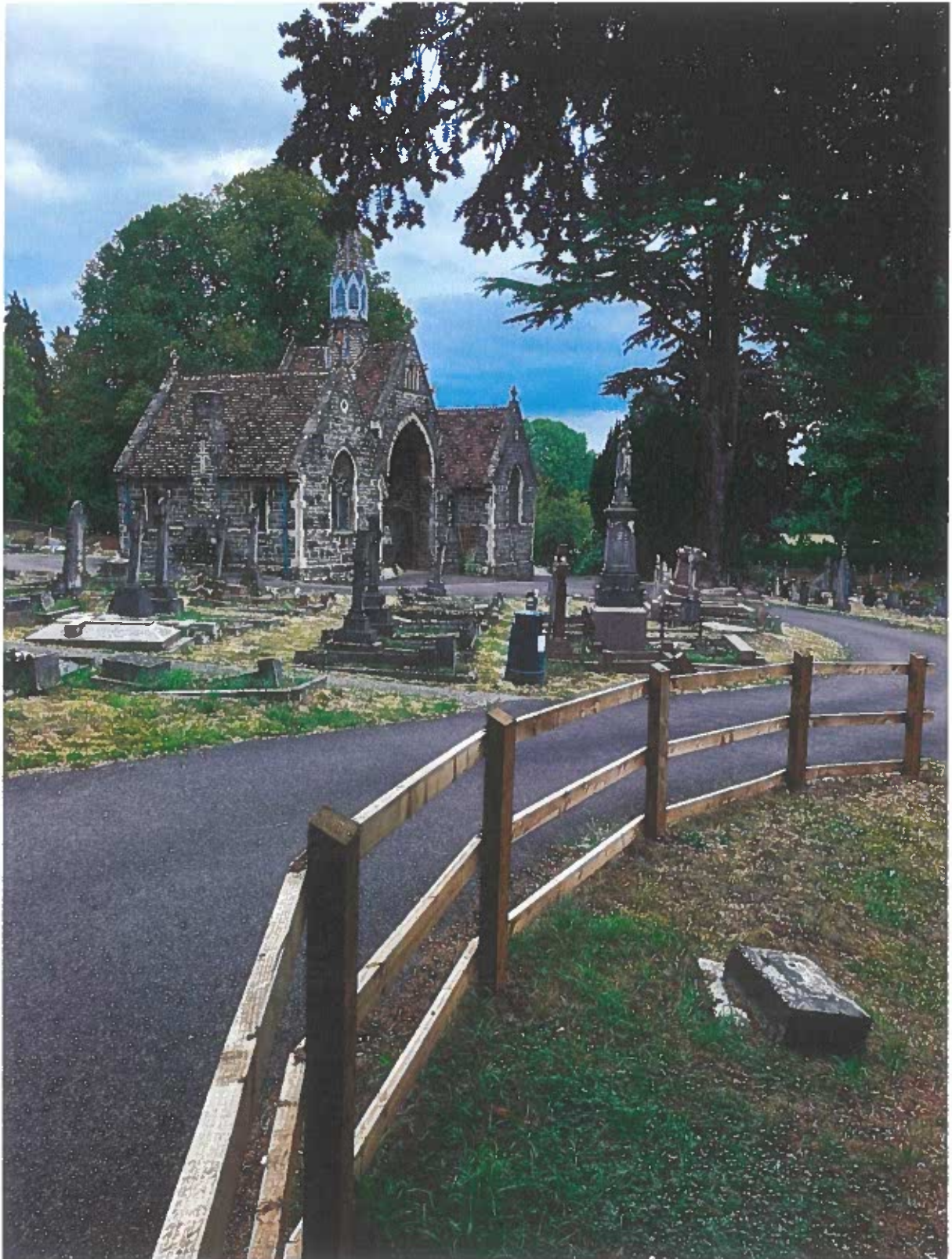


The Chapels are in the centre of the cemetery when you reach the bottom of the drive. The original design wanted to give a dramatic view of the Chapels as you drive down and this view has been retained to this day.

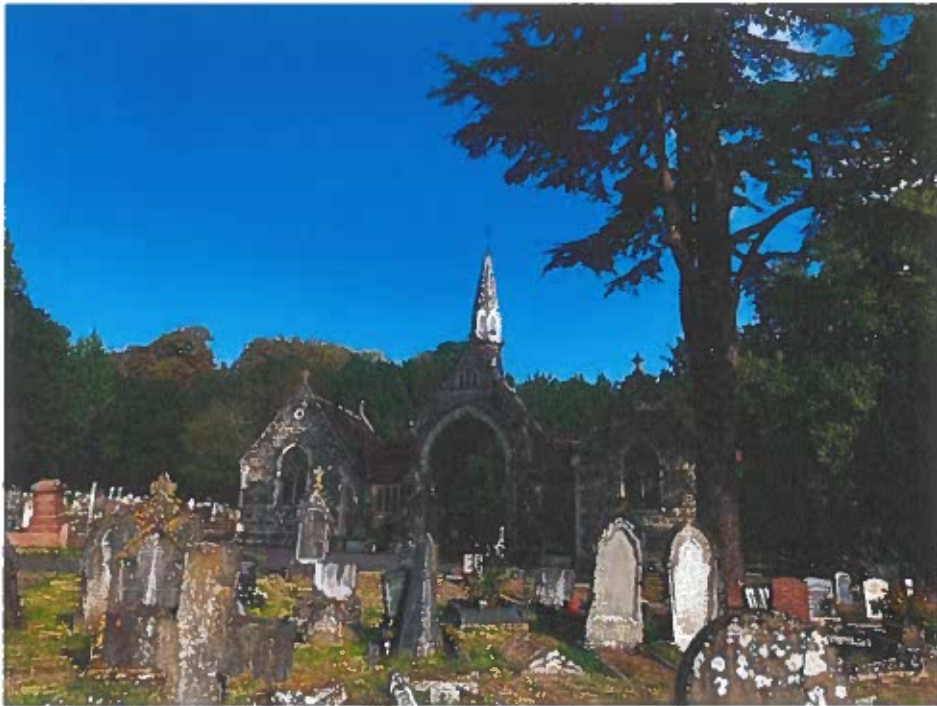




The driveway continues downwards until a sharp curve to the right reveals the Chapels surrounded by tarmac and in the centre of the Cemetery.

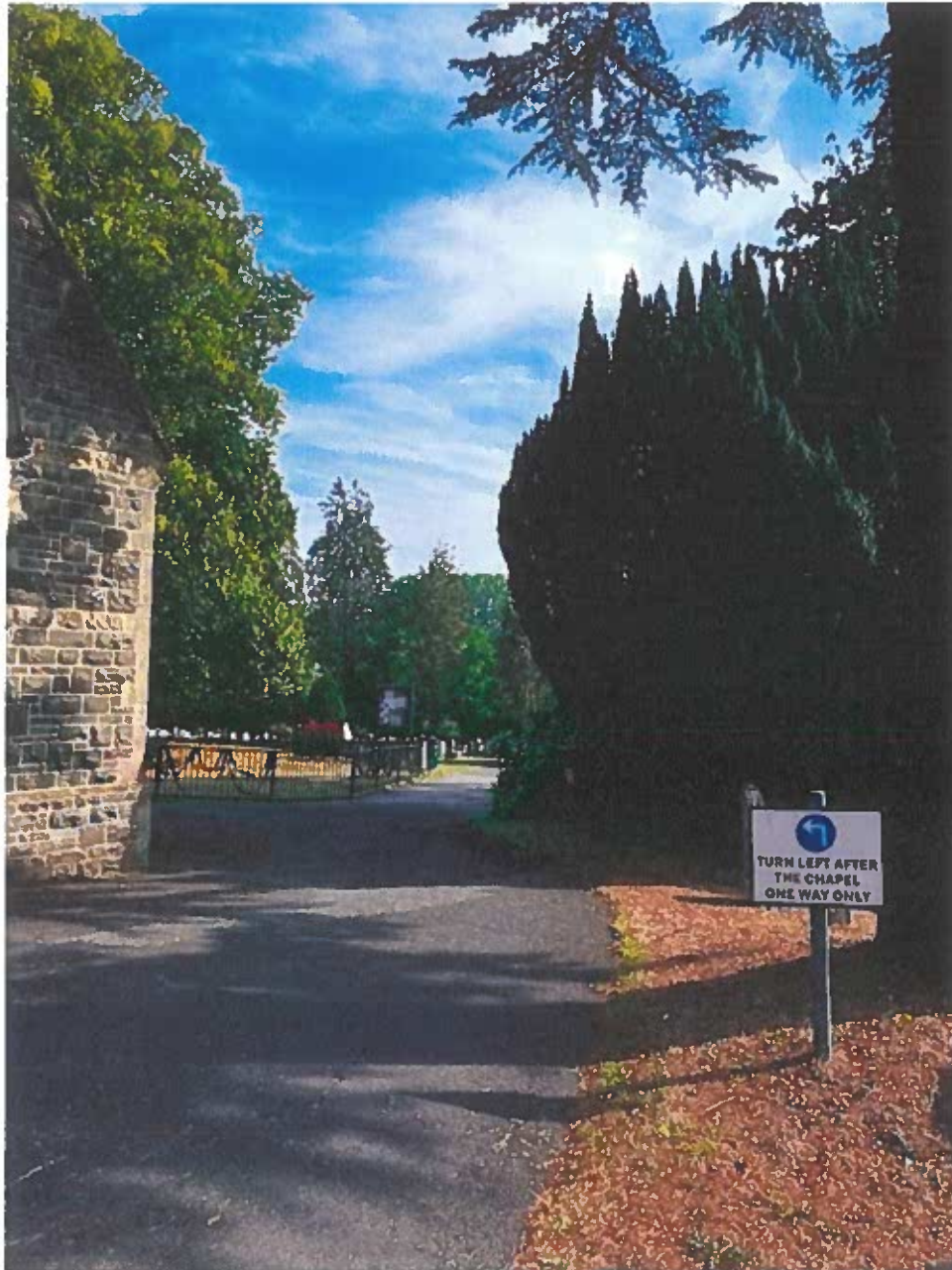






The original surrounding gravel path is now tarmacked but retains a one-way system of entering the cemetery with a hearse proceeding from the steep drive to enter what is in effect a one-way system to travel around both Chapels in an anticlockwise direction and then rejoin the driveway to exit the Cemetery.





There is limited parking around the perimeter of the Chapels for visitors.

A schematic plan made by the Architect of the Chapels, Mr Boston in March 1877 survives in copy form. It confirms that the layout as we see it today is the intended setting of the Chapels with the Cemetery with its original boundary walls still in place.

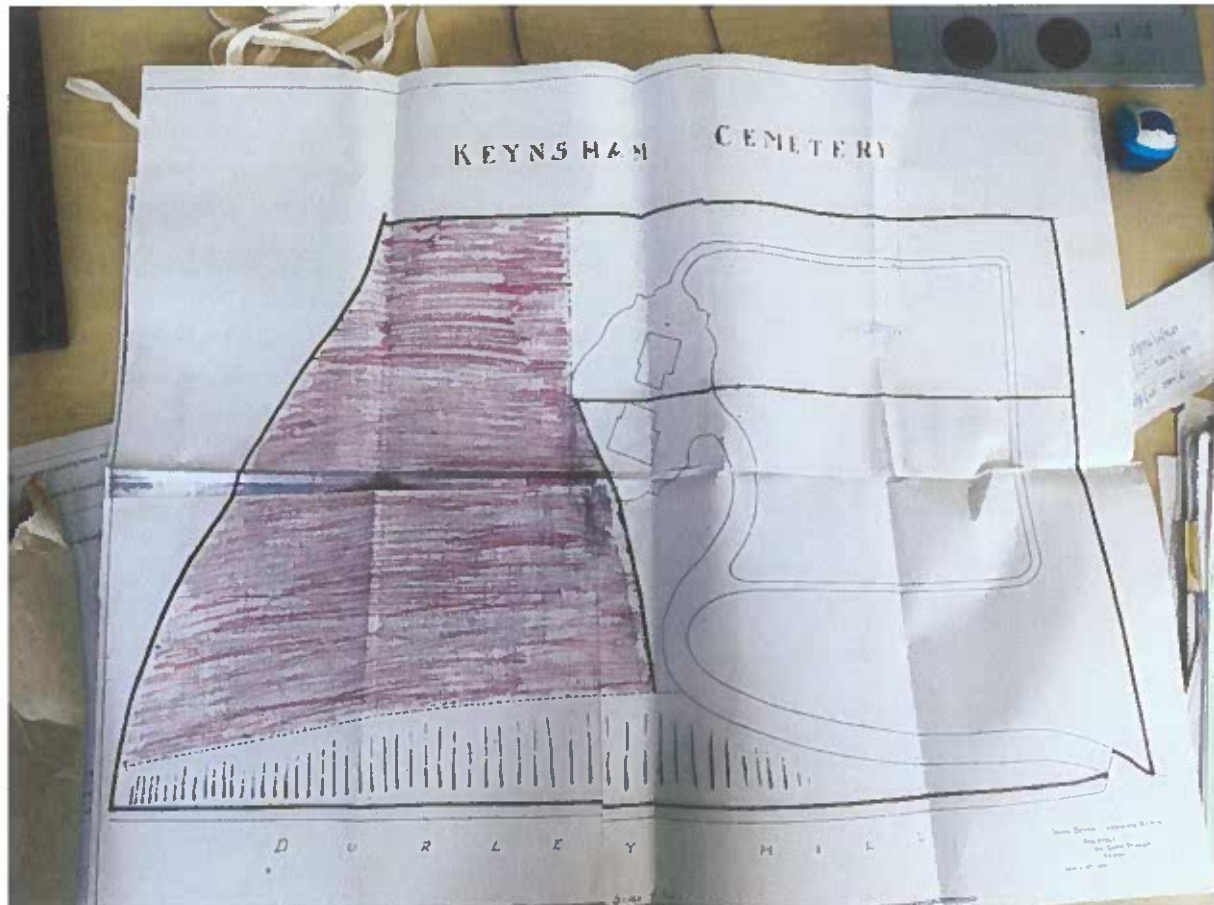
The Plan delineates paths to enable you to walk around the cemetery plots East of the Chapels and between the grave plots. It appears that the original pathways in that area of the cemetery have followed this plan.

The Two Mortuary Chapels were created to hold services for Anglican and Non-Conformist memorial services. The plan of Boston shows the division between consecrated (West) Chapel and non-conformist (East) Chapel. In the 1930's the East Chapel was converted to a storage and maintenance area for cemetery staff, and it has retained that purpose ever since.



The West Chapel remains in use for memorial services for consecrated and non-conformist burials, which are currently are about four a year. It has seating capacity for about 20 people to attend a service.

This is the Boston plan:

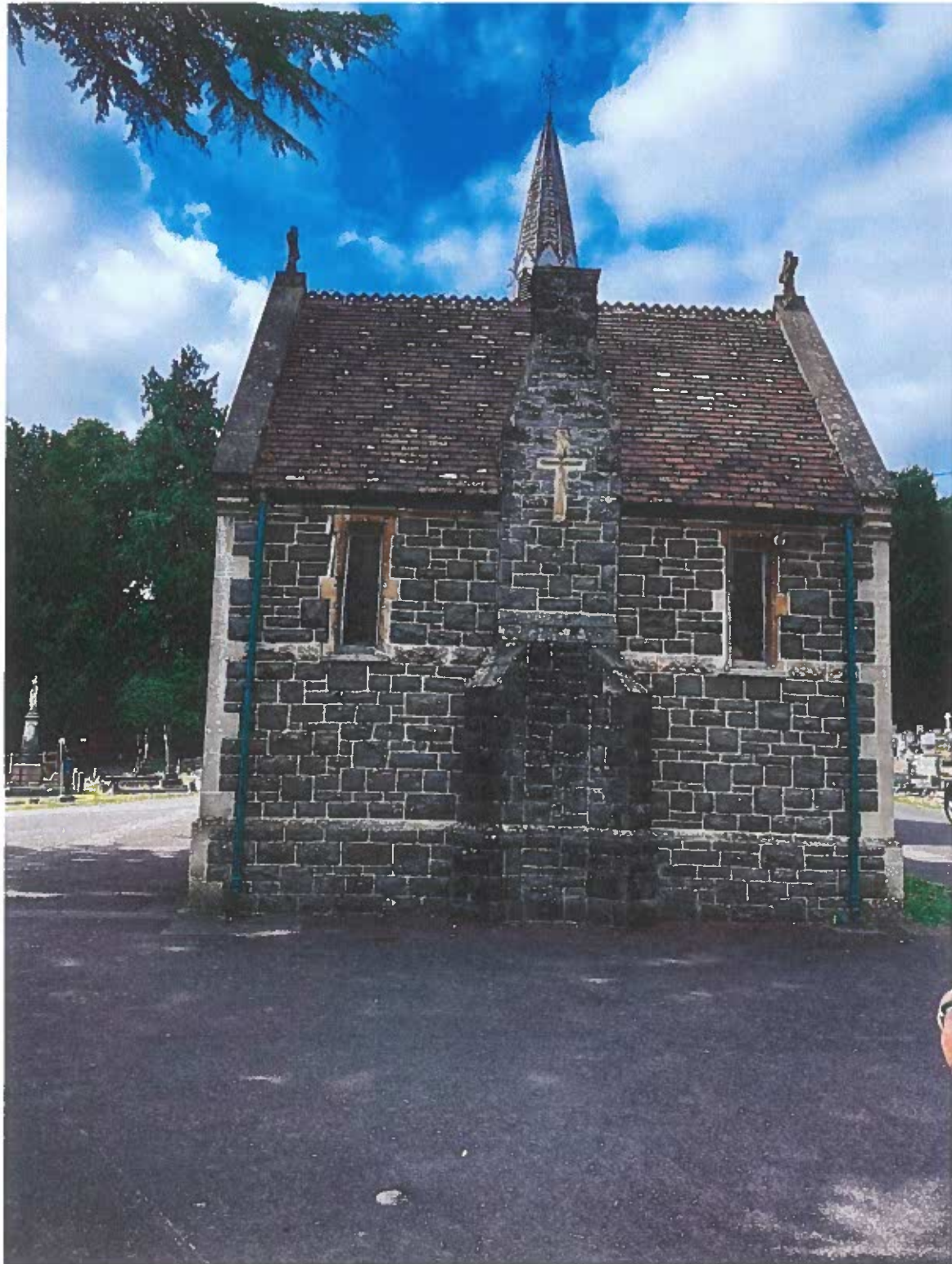


The floor plan of the Chapels has been drawn up by our Quinquennial Architect Harry Whittaker of Bath Conservation Architect and is found on Page 8 of the attached list of documents. A Plan form of each external elevation is found at pages 9-12.

The end elevations both show the external stonework of the chimneys of the fireplaces in each Chapel. Photographs of the exterior are shown on pages 75-77 of the attached list of documents.

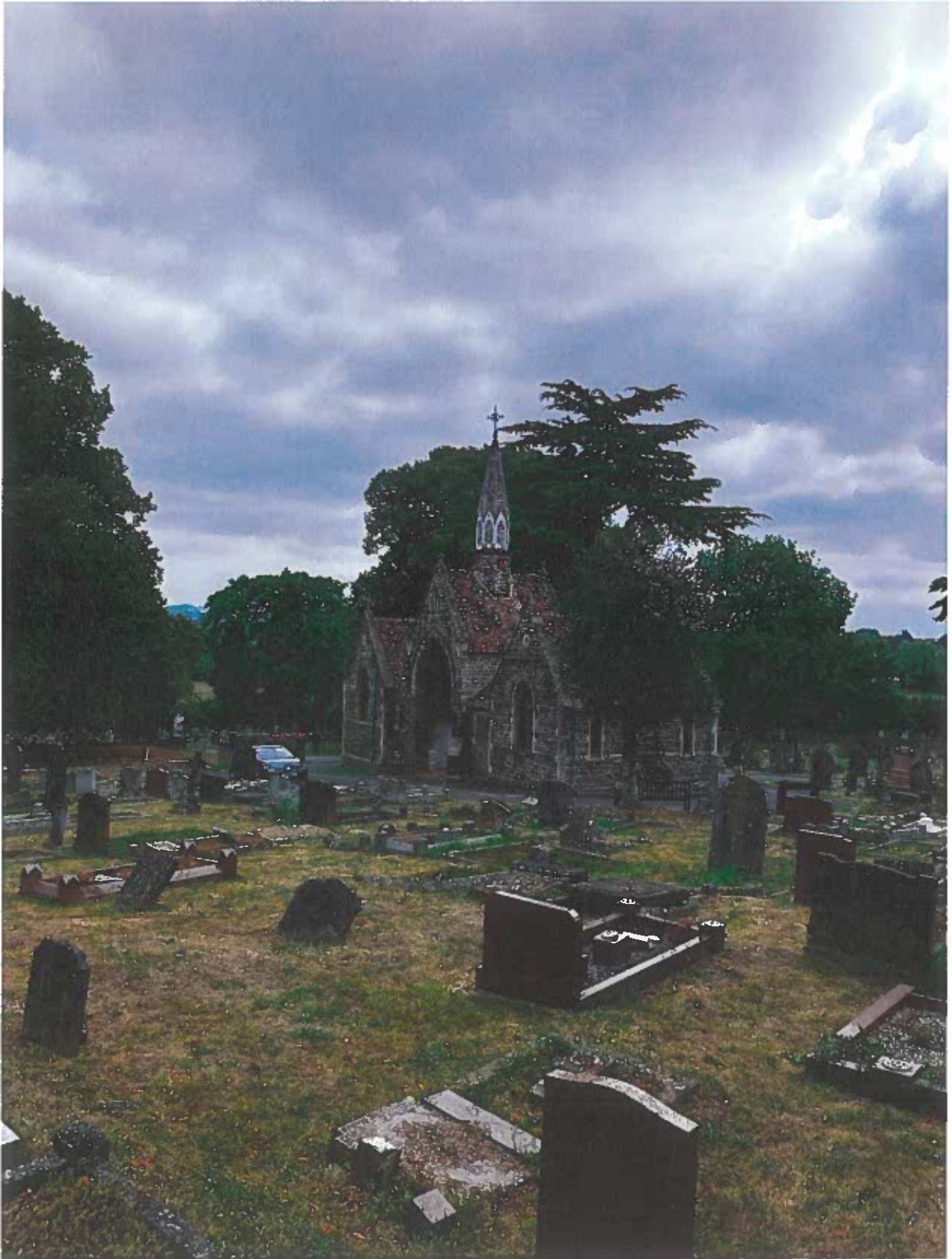
The original design of coursed pennant stone with bath stone dressings under a plain clay tiled roof is retained. There is a timber Spirelet, in tile cladding with iron weathervane.

The plain tile roof has a black diamond pattern overlaying it which remains visible but now faded.



The Chapels are surrounded by burials contained in the original rectangular Victorian Cemetery with boundary walls around it.





### History of Use of the Cemetery and Chapels.

The land was purchased in 1877 for use of a new cemetery as the existing ones in Keynsham were full. The Chapels were constructed, and the first burial took place in April 1878, and the cemetery has served the needs of all of Keynsham from that time. The earliest copy of a burial plan we have was made by an Architect called Bevan in August 1920. It shows the plots which had been already created to the East of the Chapels and Bevan had added new plot numbers West of the Chapels, which were now required as the original 908 plots laid out in 1878 had nearly all been taken.

The Cemetery had an extension purchased in 1918 which began use for burials in the late 1940's and a second extension in 1996, with burials commencing there after 2000.

Here is a schematic plan showing the original cemetery with both its extensions:





The Cemetery is home to over 6000 departed residents of Keynsham. The population of Keynsham is currently 19000. New burial plots are available for another three years but existing plots that are available for further internments in plots already used will continue for at least another 50 years.

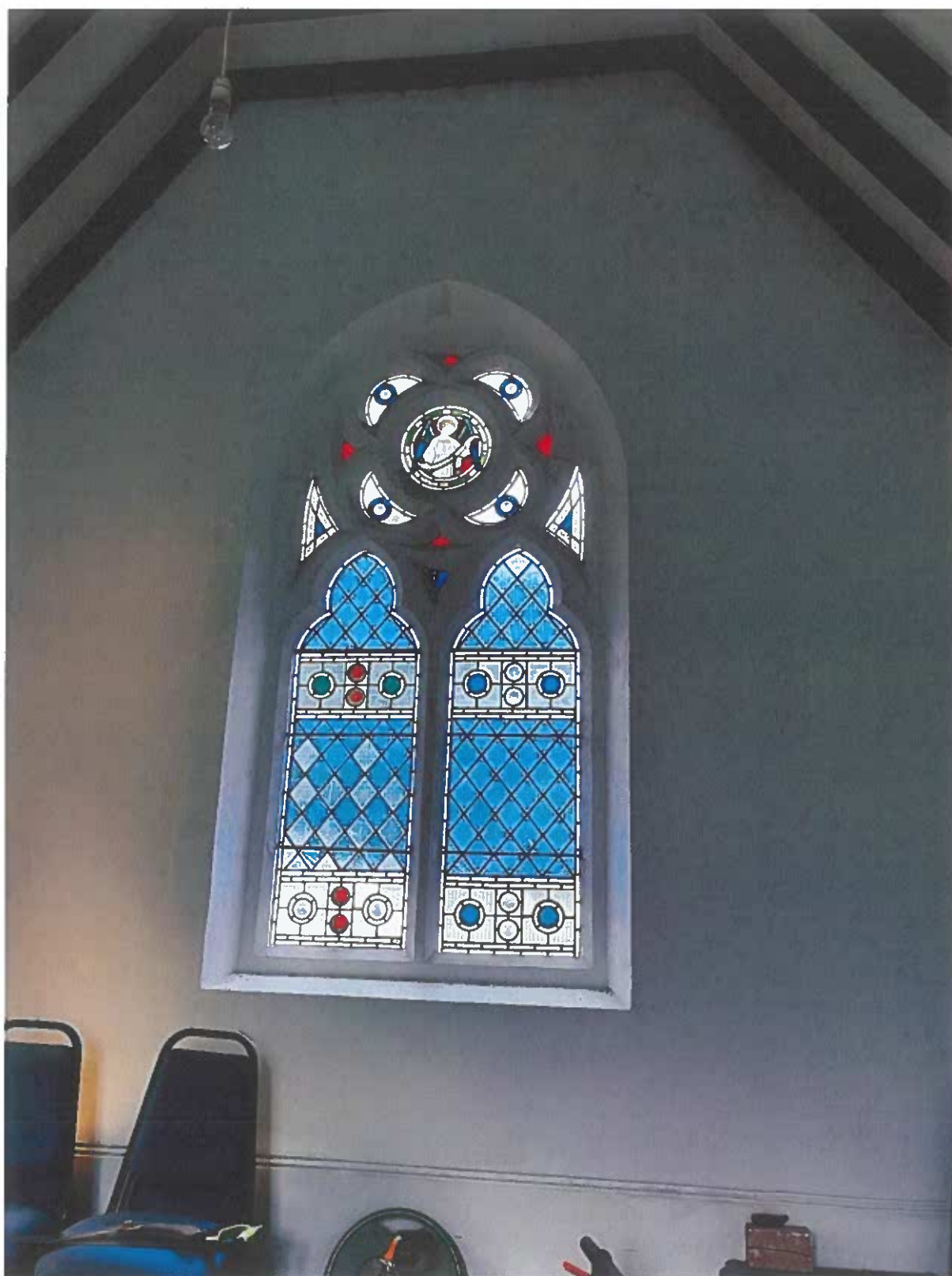
There was a gap in the boundary wall North East of the Chapels opened in the late 1940's, shown on the plan above to permit access to the extension and from that extension into the new second; first used in 2000 for burials.

The evidential benefit of the Chapels and the Cemetery is that it has provided and continues to provide the cemetery environment for residents of Keynsham since 1878 to the present day. It is a tranquil setting with the original cemetery set in the Victorian Parks and Gardens style that is intended to be attractive enough that a visitor can use the pathways as if the area is a public park. The two extensions follow that theme with good space to walk around.

The Cemetery is also an environment for ecology and green space. An ecology survey of June 2021 gave an indication of the diversity in the cemetery. Over 200 species of animals, plants and fungi including 20 different species of Trees, 56 flowering plants and 49 varieties of moth, and five species of Bat.

The Interior of the Chapels are quite plain with a main Chapel area which contains small stained-glass windows fitted when it was constructed and original fireplaces. Both Chapels have lime washed plaster on the walls and electric lighting. The Chapels have height with the wood rafters visible.

Here is a photograph of the interior of the West Chapel showing the colour of the Wall, the ceiling rafters and an example of a Stained-Glass Window.



The West Chapel has a new suspended timber floor constructed 2005 with access hatches to view below ground archaeology that was examined by archaeologists during new external drainage works created because the West Chapel which was suffering from damp. On page 108

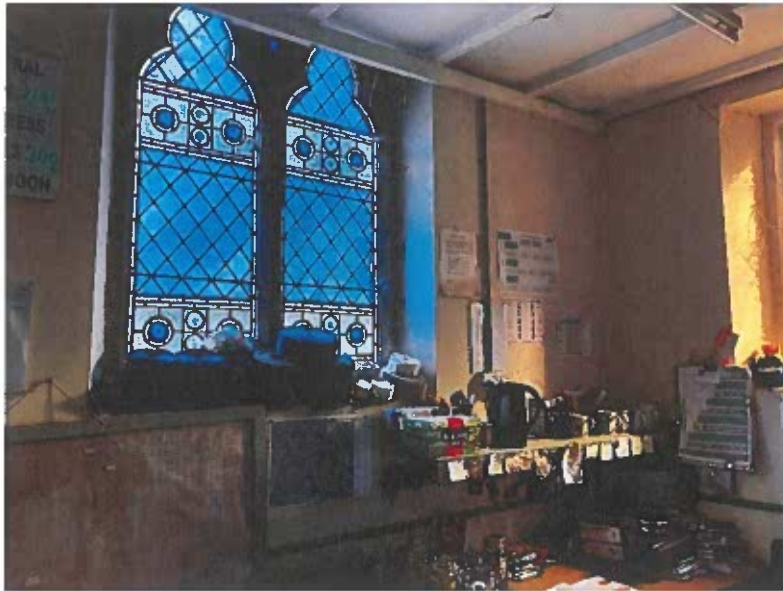


of the attached list of documents are photographs taken below the floor in 2004 by Avon Archaeological Unit.

Here is a picture of the tiles on the new suspended floor following the archaeological investigation showing one of the inspection hatches fitted to permit inspection of the preserved archaeology beneath the floor.



The East Chapel retains its stained-glass windows and the fireplace but has an internal stud wall partition with an office for the grounds staff. It is home to the maintenance and stored equipment for the Cemetery and some five grounds team staff regularly use its facilities. It contains a copy of the burial plot plan and on occasions members of the public sit with a member of the grounds team in their office to discuss a location for a burial.



It is a store and workplace for the Cemetery Grounds Team. Other photographs of the interior of the East Chapel are found in the attached list of documents on pages 22-24.

The East Chapel has two toilets; one accessed from a door on the outside that visitors can use and the other inside the East Chapel for use of cemetery staff only.





Keynsham participates in the BANES Heritage Week in September each year, and the West Chapel is open for residents and visitors to learn about the history of the cemetery and the Roman Archaeology beneath it. Both Chapels are unheated, but space heaters are used to warm the West Chapel for services.



We say that the Mortuary Chapels represent the original Victorian Design and purpose and have a local and regional importance. The West Chapel remains available for memorial services and is used during open days in Heritage week for visitors and residents to learn about the history of the cemetery, the Chapels and the archaeology so far discovered.

The Town Council are committed to keeping the Chapels open and in good condition. The Chapels had been derelict by the late 1990s and the then owner Wansdyke Council wished to demolish them. The Town Council purchased the cemetery to save the Chapels. We secured listing of the Chapels in 2000 as Grade II and that listing records the Chapels as derelict at that time. Extensive restoration occurred in 2003-2008 and the Chapels have returned to full use to the community ever since.

## Archaeology

Beneath the West Chapel (and possibly under the East-see page 58 of the attached list of documents) are the remains of a 3<sup>rd</sup> Century Roman Villa that is reported as being the largest in size so far found in Roman Britain.

Roman Remains were likely to have been found when excavating the Chapels in 1877. The extent of the Villa uncovered then is uncertain, but the Chapels were constructed over part of a North Corridor of the Villa.

Three seasons of excavations in areas of then unused burials plots west of the Chapels in 1922-24 revealed a likely floor plan for the North and part of the West Corridor.

Our Architect has studied the scaled plan of 1920 drawn up by Bevan and overlaid upon it the scaled drawing of the archaeologists of the 1922-24 excavations to show a possible position of the Villa underneath the current cemetery including the Chapels and the surrounding tarmac. This does not include the interpretation of a possible wall line underneath the East Chapel predicted by Avon Archaeological Unit in its 1998 report (Page 58 of attached list of documents).

This plan appears on the last page of Section I of the Statement of Significance.

An artist illustration of the Villa gives an idea of how opulent it might have looked.

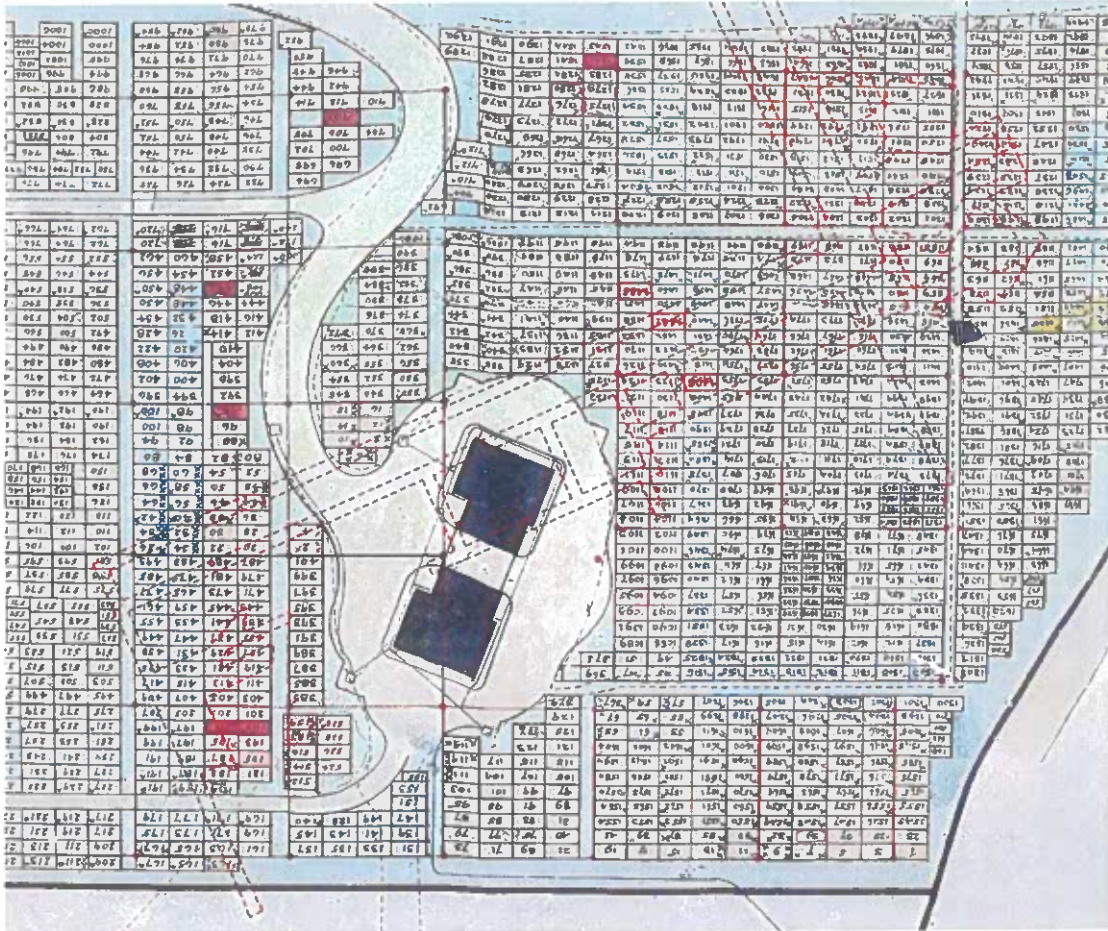




The Artist is a Mr Hodgson and the importance of the existence of the Villa is emphasised by the fact that BANES have this illustration on the front cover of their guidance of treatment of archaeology in the region outside of the City of Bath.

There was a written report published in 1926 of archaeological investigation which remains a seminal work for knowledge of the Villa including photographs of mosaics recovered from the land.

The Archaeology within the Cemetery and especially underneath and immediately surrounding the Chapels is of high importance both Nationally and regionally. Further work by the Association of Roman Archaeology in 2013-15 elsewhere in the cemetery has seen further interpretation of the nature of the Roman Building and whether it was not a Villa but a building that was part of a Temple complex. The Archaeology in the latest extension of the cemetery is zoned A-D with A being of National and International importance and D of little importance. No burials take place in zones A and B and C. The original cemetery and first extension are not zoned for archaeology.





# STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

## Section II

Chapels that have been in continuous use since 1878 will require maintenance. However, the original foundations design, the soil profile and the existence of hard spots in below ground archaeology have contributed to challenging structural problems especially in the East Chapel manifesting itself in cracks in its East Elevation.

The attached documents are 113 pages of reports and repair recommendations to refurbish the Spire (list B works) and introduce a steel fixing in the walls in the East Chapel to minimise structural deflection without using under pinning which would likely destroy below ground archaeology. (Faculty works)

### Faculty Works

Recent monitored deflection and cracking in the East Elevation make it now urgent to seek faculty approval for steel fixing of the structure.

The attached documents record the stepped approach of professional investigation over a decade and analysis of the problem that has led to this faculty application.

Cracking that was visible in the 1990s was repaired under planning permission obtained by Wansdyke District Council. The plans of their work have not been found as they did not retain an external architect for the work but a 1998 archaeological salvage investigation by Avon Archaeological Unit is available and can be found at pages 37-59 of the bundle.

The Unit concluded that there was substantial archaeology below the foundations of the Chapels and four test pits at the corners of the Chapel buildings were photographed and produce in plans in the report. Also, a planning recommendation was made by the Unit shown on page 55 of the attached list of documents:

**“It is advised that all future intrusive engineering works which may be required for Health and Safety reasons, either adjacent to or within the footprint of the Victorian Chapel, should be designed to ensure that archaeological remains underlying the Victorian Chapel are retained in situ if this is feasible. If the need for intrusive structural works overrides the need for archaeological preservation in situ, then all intrusive ground works which can reasonably be expected to destroy buried archaeological remains should be conducted archaeologically (i.e. all shoring/underpinning pits, trenches etc dug by archaeologists), as part of a research orientated excavation project.”**

In 2004 this approach was followed when damp in the West Chapel required a drainage solution recommended by the then Quinquennial Architect George Chedburn of proposed new French drains external to the West Chapel and draining water down past the East Chapel into drains northeast of the Chapel buildings at the edge of the tarmac area.

The Avon Archaeological Unit undertook an extensive archaeological investigation under the West Chapel, and its report is found at the end of the attached documents at pages 87-113.

This report is for background information for this faculty application which relates to the East chapel only and for above groundwork which will not disturb below ground archaeology

or damage or destroy it. The report though illustrates the relationship of the 1998 report recommendations with work involving the West Chapel and therefore why the professionals' analysing structural problems and forming recommendations to address them have focussed on above ground, steel bracing, only and not underpinning at this stage.

In 2014 the then Quinquennial Architect Mr Simon Cartlidge commissioned Mann Engineers to investigate the structural problems in the East Chapel and recommend a solution.

Their 2014 report is at pages 60-63 of the bundle. The report confirmed that there is a possibility of a relationship between the fracture patterns, and the footprint of the Roman Villa remains. To understand the relationship four trial pits were opened and are recorded in the report. The trial pits did not extend below the foundations and did not disturb any archaeological layers found and recorded in 1998.

The report concluded that structural movement was a consequence of differential founding conditions owing to the building cutting across earlier foundations and previously disturbed ground.

There may also be seasonal shrinkage due to soil and root of vegetation issues too.

The report concluded there should be monitoring of the structure (of both Chapels) with tell-tales fitted and any final decision on remedial measures should be informed by those readings. (page 62)

Tell-tales were fitted and monitored. Deflection continued and worsened especially around one of the windows of the East Elevation of the East Chapel

Also in 2022 was our latest quinquennial report by our new Architect Harry Whitaker of Bath Conservation Architects. His report is in the bundle at pages 66-86. He concluded that the West Chapel was showing cracking but may not need attention at this time, but the East Chapel was of a concern, and he advised that Mann Engineers should be commissioned to return to site, to evaluate the tell tales information and make now recommendations for remedial measures.

Mann Engineers visited the Chapels, and their May 2023 report is at pages 25-30 of the attached documents. On page 25 they set out their interpretation of the tell-tale monitoring. While they confirmed the Architect's assessment of the West Chapel monitored cracking was not found to be of concern.

In paragraph 1.3 they concluded that the tell tail measurements did not support movement taken in the ten years since 2014 it was clear from visual observation that the fractures in the south and east walls of the East Chapel "are substantially worse than in 2014." There was a reason identified as to why the tell tales did not record the movements because it was at its most severe towards the head of the elevations where tell tales were not fitted.

The conclusion in paragraph 1.4 of the report is that "the "fractures in the East Chapel are severe and movement is clearly live. Several of the existing fracture lines have opened up more than 5mm since 2014. Movement is most severe in the east elevation where overall movement/distortion around the east window is in the region of 50mm". A photograph of the east window movement observed by Mann Engineers is the bundle at page 20.



In paragraph 1.7 it was concluded that the foundation depths are inadequate, but it is also likely that “the movement issues are being exacerbated by variations in ground bearing resistance owing the level of likely made up/disturbed ground.” (page 26 top)

Also, on page 26 in 1.8 it was noted that the two cedar trees close to the East Chapel had honey fungus and would have to be felled and that would add additional soil moisture differences seasonally but the cedar close to the worst effected corner of the East Chapel was to remain. These trees have been felled but the stumps remain, and it has not improved the deterioration of the cracking in the East Chapel.

Mann Engineers advised that the foundations and the design of the Chapels are unlikely to be able to cope with below ground conditions, including the likely presence of Roman Archaeology, and would require structural intervention to stop the fractures becoming worse and leading eventually to collapse.

Mann Engineers advised that provided the area is not open to the public and remains a work area for cemetery staff, that stitching works without underpinning below ground works could be a practical mid-term solution but not likely to be a permanent cure to the problem.

If the stitching solution fails any future underpinning work would require detailed ground investigation and analysis. The 1998 report of AAU would determine that the investigation would be archaeologist led and supervised even if the structural solution of underpinning would come from the structural engineers. It would be likely that the floor of the East Chapel would need to be lifted too, and the below floor conditions may be like those found in the West Chapel in 2004 i.e. Victorian sleeper walls lying on the surface found in 1877 whether Roman or natural with the floor resting on those walls. Page 108 shows photographs from the 2004 excavation of the West Chapel where examples of those sleeper walls are shown. In that instance the ground upon which they were laid was a tessellated Roman pavement/inside of a room in the Roman Villa. As the AAU consider the missing Bath house complex of the Villa might be found in the region of the East Chapel and drainage channels found by the archaeologists in 1924 close the tarmac area around the East Chapel support that hypothesis.

Therefore because of the complication of an underpinning in the East Chapel the faculty application is restricted to seeking permission of a stitching solution by steel bracing rods advised by Mann Engineers in its May 2023 report.

On page 21 is a photograph taken in August 2025 of the exterior East Window that was photographed by Mann Engineers in May 2023 (Page 28). On page 22 is a photograph of August 2025 of the interior in the same location showing the window has now gaps to the outside and a significant diagonal crack from the window space extending to the south wall in the corner.

The Mann Engineers report of 2023 advise cintec steel bracing is essential to achieve stabilisation or eventually the East Elevation and/or the front South Wall will collapse and fall away from the other Chapel walls.

The Mann Engineer plans set out the locations for the bracing and the drilling points in the Extent of the East Elevation of the East Chapel wall and the front south wall of the East Chapel. Mann Engineers would supervise the work. (pages 29-30).

The Architect has drawn up a specification of works for the cintec installation and the making good external and internal works to the East Chapel and of refurbishment of the Spire and repairs to the roof (commented on below). (Pages 1-7).

Although the Mann Engineers plans show the word preliminary on the plans an inspection by the Engineers will occur within days to confirm that those plans can be considered final so we can secure tenders for costings of those works and the Architect will finalise section 12 of the specification (page 6).

A JCT small building work contract will be used for the works with the contractor who wins the tender supervised by the Architect and for the cintec work, Mann Engineers as well.

These works need a faculty because the drill holes will give an external visual change to the East Chapel which is irreversible, and the insertion of the steel bracing is a new material in the walls which is not a replacement of original construction materials.

Therefore, the Faculty request is to carry out the cintec bracing and ancillary works to make good set out in the schedule of works settled by the Architect and the plans for the location of the bracing advised by Mann Engineers.

#### **List B works including the Spire**

The Schedule of works contains documents also which would be list B works as the Spire needs refurbishment. This would be list B repairs to a listed building. The Quinquennial Architect has prepared existing plans of the building, (pages 8-12) two detail plan repair sheets for the Spire (pages 18 and 19) with the detailed Schedule of Works to restore them. There are over 100 tiles preserved from its last repair in mid-1990's. An example of one of the tiles is photographed on page 14. It should be possible therefore to replace decayed timber which has perished in the original design and reuse or acquire tiles that match any that cannot be reused after being taken off during the repair.

The spire woodwork was painted a light blue when listed in 2000 and examples of the colour are available to match it with the repairs. A 2006 photograph shows the colour and is found on page 13. There are also examples of the same colour found as undercoat on some doors of the East Chapel and it is possible for match the colour exactly to that which would have been present on the woodwork at the time of listing.

List B permission is sought to carry out the repairs to the Spire in accordance with the Architects recommendations using suitable contractors supervised by him. The repairs are specified in his Quin report of May 2022 and in the more detailed Schedule of Works in the attached list.



There are also ancillary list B works of repair to the exterior brickwork of the East Chapel and the roof in general as set in the Schedule.

The other work to the roof is List B work identified in our Quinquennial report by the Architect and included in the Schedule of Works. As the work to the Spire would require scaffolding it would be cost effective to complete the roofing repairs while the scaffolding is in place for the Spire repairs.

### **Other list B works**

On pages 32-34 are photographs of one of the original cemetery boundary walls with a small collapse and two spot repairs where stones have fallen out. The need to repair these is in our Quinquennial report of May 2022 and would be works requiring a List B permission. We request permission for these List B works using suitably qualified stonemasons who will be appointed following a tender process to undertake those repairs.

Finally, we give below two photographs of one of the toilets of the East Chapel. (pages 33-34). These are pictures of the toilet which is accessible from an outside door and can be used by visitors. One of the photographs is a corner of the room opposite the toilet. It is requested to fit a wash basin in that corner which would require a faculty and to replace the toilet which would be List A works.

## STATEMENT OF NEEDS

Without the repairs requested in Section II of the Statement of Significance then the East Chapel will need permanent scaffolding and external bracing to prevent collapse.

The East Chapel could not be available for maintenance of the Cemetery as Health and Safety considerations would mean it was too dangerous for people to work in it.

If the Cemetery cannot be easily maintained and the one-way traffic system impaired there is a risk that the West Chapel will have to close for memorial services and visitor experience on Heritage days. There would be also a problem for accessing the cemetery in a hearse to enable burials unless a complicated reversing up the driveway was attempted

In practice it will mean that the West Chapel will have to close for memorial services as members of the public should not be allowed close to a dangerous structure. and if a traffic solution cannot be formulated to avoid travel around the East Chapel, then burials may not be able to take place.

There is a need to retain the look of the Chapels within the Victorian design for the cemetery so it can be used and appreciated today as it was intended when first opened in 1878.

For the people who are burying a loved one the West Chapel is a place where a memorial service can be held and or a place to congregate before attending at the grave side. The East chapel stores all the equipment apart from the digger for the digging of a grave and the shoring up of its sides and placing planks around the grave side for mourners to stand close to the grave when paying last respects.

The Keynsham history is important to the community and its social well-being. Many of its Victorian buildings were lost in in the 1950s and 1970s with over 61 listed buildings demolished and replaced with modern development. The Chapels represent therefore an important survivor of listed buildings of the Victorian era. The Heritage weekend is well attended and there is interest in the Roman Archaeology as well as the history of the cemetery itself.