

FROME COURT
BARTESTREE
HEREFORDSHIRE
HR1 4DX



TRADITION: ROMAN CATHOLIC

BUILT: 1869-70 (PRESENT SITE)

CONGREGATION ACTIVE
UNTIL: MID 20TH CENTURY

LISTING: GRADE II*

OS GRID REFERENCE:
SO568406

MEDIEVAL CHAPEL MOVED AND
REBUILT STONE BY STONE

LONGWORTH ROMAN CATHOLIC CHAPEL



TRANSPORT

Longworth Chapel stands alongside Bartestree Convent, now converted to flats and called Frome Court.

Hereford station is 5 miles away, bus route 476 serves Bartestree. Parking for chapel visitors is available in the adjacent St Michael's Hospice car park; please do not park in the residents' private parking bays near the chapel.

VISIT US

Access to the exterior at all times. The chapel is normally locked and visitors can obtain the key from the reception at St Michael's Hospice during daylight hours, 7 days a week. The Hospice is 30 metres from the chapel. You may be asked to sign for the key.

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Longworth Chapel, also known as the Roman Catholic Church of St James, is a small but high quality example of the Victorian ideal of a medieval chapel. Reconstructed here in 1869-70 it utilises genuine fourteenth century fabric.

The chapel today stands alongside what used to be the Bartestree Convent, now a residential development called Frome Court. The chapel started its life at Old Longworth, and was the private chapel of the manor house there. Built c.1390 by the Walwyn family, after the Reformation the chapel fell out of use as a religious building, owing in part to the construction of New Longworth Hall in 1788. The chapel was given over to agricultural purposes as a storeroom and a cider press. By 1851 the chapel was owned by Robert Biddulph Philipps, son of Robert Philipps, MP for Hereford 1784-5, an enthusiastic Catholic convert who decided to restore the chapel. On his death in 1864, Biddulph Philipps' will stated that he wished the chapel be moved next to the Convent of Our Lady of Charity and Refuge in Bartestree, which he had built and endowed.

E. W. Pugin, son of leading Gothic Revival architect A.W.N. Pugin, who designed the first phase of the convent, was sacked and Benjamin Bucknall employed to undertake the move and to design the new brick convent chapel. The old chapel was not dismantled until 1869, and re-erection was completed the following year.

The chapel was not reconstructed exactly as it had been at Old Longworth. While Bucknall incorporated elements from the original chapel, including the doors and windows, as well as much of the medieval masonry, there are some differences. The shape of the chapel is probably different, and the roof appears to date from the 15th and 16th centuries. It served as the parish church until the 20th century, when it fell into disuse in 1995.

E. W. Pugin c.1865



ENQUIRE & HIRE

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CHAPEL IS
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MUSIC, EVENTS,
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THE EXTERIOR

The chapel is built from buff and pink sandstone, with ashlar stone dressings. The roof is of slate. The entrance is situated on the north gable of the chapel (which is orientated north-south) facing east. This gable also has a decorated window, which is thought to be medieval. There is a quatrefoil in the arch above the window.

The doorway at the east end is in the Perpendicular style, and the panelled door, which is decorated with studs, possibly dates from the fifteenth century.

The east elevation of the chapel has four matching windows, which were taken from the medieval church. They are not equally spaced, as the result of the chapel of 1869 not being rebuilt to the exact dimensions of the original chapel at Old Longworth. Since the original chapel only had two windows on the north elevation, we can ascertain that these must have been moved when the chapel was rebuilt. Judging by their symmetry, it seems likely that the additional two windows were the corresponding windows from the opposite (south) side of the original chapel.



THE INTERIOR

The roof of the chapel provides evidence of the changes made to the building prior to its disassembly in 1869. The handsome oak roof of the chancel over the altar dates from the fifteenth century; the roof at the north-west end dates from a century later. Since the new chapel was not reconstructed in the same shape as the original chapel it may well have been the case that they used wood salvaged from one of the other buildings in Old Longworth to complete the roof.

Above: a concert by Brickshed.

Left: The altar and reredos.

Right: The (Victorian) south-east window by Hardman & Company of Birmingham.

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY

Following its redundancy as a parish church, over the next few decades Longworth became seriously dilapidated, and was the victim of vandalism, theft and even arson. The chapel was transferred to the HCT in 2001, and a first phase of works to restore the building was completed in 2010, with the help of a grant of £143,000 awarded by Historic England. This involved the full repair of the roof and repointing of the exterior walls to keep it weathertight. HCT and the local committee are actively fundraising for the cost of the remaining restoration work.

The timber screen was part of the family pew at St Peter's Church, Lugwardine, moved to Longworth chapel in 1857. It is now against the West (entrance) wall.

The altar and reredos date from 1869, and are probably the work of E.W Pugin. The saints in the niches are St Francis de Sales, St. Jean Frances de Chantal, St. Teresa, and St. Anne. Phillips set out clear instructions on the design. The fine window over the altar was made by Hardman & Company of Birmingham.



FURTHER READING

'The Roman Catholic Church of St James', English Heritage List Entry 1099878.

John Duncumb, *Collections Toward the History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford*, 'Hundred of Radlow' (Cardiff, 1996), p. 102

Alan Brooks and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Herefordshire* (New Haven, 2012)