
Project	Coldham Cottage and the Roman Catholic Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Joseph, Lawshall
Client	St Edmunds Catholic Church, Bury St Edmunds
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1. The Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Joseph, otherwise known as Coldham Cottage is the oldest continuing Roman Catholic church in Suffolk. It is part of the Diocese of East Anglia within the Catholic parish of Bury St Edmunds. In 1998 it was designated as a Grade II Listed Building.

2. The purpose of this application is to enable the diocese to create fully wheelchair accessible WC, a gardeners store and a garage for the ride on mower.

The proposal does not affect the church or the cottage.

The proposal is to extend the existing shed to provide the above accommodation, using the same materials as the existing.

3. Listing description

A former mission house, built in the early-C18 by Elizabeth Rookwood Gage (1684-1759) of Coldham Hall, remodelled and extended in 1870 as a Roman Catholic mission church and presbytery by Sir Edward Rokewode Gage (1812-1872) of Hengrave Hall.

Reasons for Designation

Coldham Cottage, a former mission house built in the early-C18 by Elizabeth Rookwood Gage (1684-1759) of Coldham Hall, remodelled and extended in 1870 as a Roman Catholic parish church and presbytery by Sir Edward Rokewode Gage (1812-1872) of Hengrave Hall, is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

A good example of an early-C18 timber-framed house which survives sufficiently intact, with its original lobby entry plan, although now altered, still legible, with good quality C18 and C19 internal fixtures and fittings of note;

Architecturally understated, the church is a rare example of a rural Catholic church that remains little altered externally and internally.

Historic interest:

Financed by Elizabeth Rookwood Gage of Coldham Hall, a wealthy Roman Catholic recusant, it is a rare example of a privately-funded mission house;

The church and cottage as a whole are a rare example of continued Catholic use for over three centuries.

Group value:

Forms a strong functional and historic group with Coldham Hall (Grade I) along with its Catholic chapel of 1794 (Grade II*) and the former Catholic chapel at Barfords (Grade II). The group stands testament to the will and faith of the Rookwood family who not only maintained their Catholic faith during the penal years but also played a major role in the history, development and emancipation of Roman Catholicism in Suffolk.

History

The history of the Catholic mission in the Lawshall area is closely associated with the wealthy Rookwood (or Rokewood) family who, having held the manor of nearby Stanningfield since 1359 and Coldham Hall since 1388, occupying a house close to Stanningfield church, remained staunchly Roman Catholic at the Reformation. In 1574, Robert Rookwood (died 1600) built Coldham Hall (Grade I, NHLE 1229768) and equipped it with a secret chapel in the attic along with a priest hole above the entrance porch. The Jesuit John Gerard used Coldham Hall as a base for his ministries in East Anglia between 1589 and 1591. In 1597, he was imprisoned and tortured at the Tower of London, but managed to escape.

In 1606, Ambrose Rookwood (born around 1578), second of four sons born to Robert Rookwood and his second wife Dorothy Drury, was executed for his role in the Gunpowder Plot (he provided gunpowder and horses). Also executed for treason was Henry Garnett (1555-1606), superior of the English Jesuits, while his nephew, Thomas Garnett SJ (1575-1608), the Rookwood's chaplain, was arrested and subsequently deported to Flanders after no evidence was found to convict him. However, after returning to England in September 1607, he was arrested and executed in June 1608 after refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance to King James I. At the end of the turbulent C17, the great-grandson of Ambrose Rookwood, also called Ambrose (1664-1696), was executed for his involvement in the Barclay Conspiracy to assassinate King William III (commonly known as William of Orange).

By the late-C16 or early C17, the attic chapel at Coldham Hall had been superseded by a new chapel located some 0.5 miles to the south-east of the Hall. It was built around the core of a C15 or early-C16 house (Grade II, NHLE 1278803) known as Barfords, then in agricultural use.

In 1759, the Rookwoods were linked with another recusant Catholic family, the Gage's of Hengrave Hall, when Sir Thomas Gage (1719-1796) inherited the Coldham Hall estate from his mother Elizabeth Rookwood Gage (1684-1759), the only surviving child of Thomas Rookwood (1658-1726) and his first wife, Tamworth Martin (died 1684). Elizabeth had followed family tradition by maintaining a Jesuit chaplain at Coldham, and in 1755 Elizabeth's second son, Father John Gage SJ (1720-1791), returned to Bury St Edmunds to establish a mission which, funded from a manor settled on him by his mother in 1735, would become the present day parish of St Edmund King and Martyr.

One of the ramifications of this new mission was that a large number of Stanningfield communicants started to attend Mass in Bury. In an attempt to rectify the decline in the local congregation, a new chapel

(Grade II*, NHLE 1229769) was built five metres to the east of Coldham Hall in 1794, three years after the Catholic Relief Act of 1791.

In 1869, the Sir Edward Rokewode Gage (1812-1872), second son of Sir Thomas Gage and the then owner of the Coldham Hall estate, including the chapel, sold it to Richard Holt-Lomax, whose family held it until 1893. Mass for the small congregation was subsequently said again at Barfords until a permanent arrangement could be made. An article published in the Bury Free Press on 3 September 1870 informs us that this was undertaken by Sir Edward himself who repurchased Coldham Cottage, a timber-framed cottage built by his mother in the early C18 as a mission house, which was subsequently remodelled and extended as a mission church with an adjoining presbytery. To create the church the northern bay of the cottage, which accommodated a kitchen and bedroom, was incorporated into the new extension with the removal of the floor and north gable wall. The seats from the chapel at the Hall were also transferred here. At the same time a small, wooden, schoolroom for around 30 children was built immediately to the north of the church. The work was undertaken by Mr Pate of Lawshall.

When the will of Sir Edward's wife, Lady (Irish peerage) Henrietta Rokewode Gage (1818-1887) of Hengrave Hall was published in the Illustrated London News on 2 April 1887, it was stipulated that 'every person becoming entitled in possession to the said estate is requested to pay £80 per annum towards maintenance of the Roman Catholic priest at Lawshall'. The priest's house, copyhold of the manor of Lawshall, was bequeathed to the Right Hon Valentine Augustus, Earl of Kenmare, and Basil Thomas Fitzherbert. However, without the support of a wealthy local family, the mission and school struggled, and the pages of the Catholic periodical The Tablet contained frequent appeals for support from the mission priest, the Rev Augustine Alfred Wilkinson.

The school survived until 1949, and the building was demolished in the late C20, with the benches from the school replacing those originally brought from the chapel at Coldham Hall.

Since 2002 there has been no resident priest, with the church being served from St Edmund King and Martyr in Bury St Edmunds.

Details

A former mission house, built in the early-C18 by Elizabeth Rookwood Gage (1684-1759) of Coldham Hall, remodelled and extended in 1870 as a Roman Catholic mission church and presbytery by Sir Edward Rokewode Gage (1812-1872) of Hengrave Hall.

MATERIALS: the church and presbytery have cement and sand rendered timber frames with brick stacks and pantile roofs under a continuous ridge.

PLAN: the composition is roughly T-shaped, aligned north-north-east to south-south-west, with the church at the north end and the presbytery at the south end. A late-C19 crosswing at the rear houses the church's sacristy and the presbytery's kitchen and dining room. The late-C18

house was probably of a lobby entry plan with a central stack prior to its northern bay (up to the present church porch) being remodelled and incorporated into the church in 1870.

CHURCH

The following description for the church assumes conventional liturgical orientation i.e. as if the altar is located at the 'east' end.

EXTERIOR: of a single-storey, the south side of the church is of four bays with a gabled porch with curved bargeboards projecting from the second bay from the left-hand side. It has a pointed doorway with double plank and batten doors, above which is a small statue of the Virgin Mary holding the baby Jesus standing on a corbelled plinth. The apex of the gable contains a date stone inscribed '1870'. The main church doorway within the porch is pointed with double plank doors with fillets applied with square-headed nails. All the other bays have two-light pointed windows with Y tracery. The west end has a large, three-light pointed window and on the north side there are two two-light pointed windows, all with Y tracery.

INTERIOR: the interior of the church comprises a single, aisleless volume with plastered walls scored to imitate ashlar. The roof over the southern half, created from the earlier house, is vaulted and plastered while that to the 1870 addition is scissor-braced with wrought-iron ties. At the east end there is a tall, pointed recess containing a crucifix and tabernacle. The forward altar is of C20 date, incorporating older, re-set, carved wheatsheaves and grapes. On the south side of the sanctuary, at the east end, there is a small brass memorial tablet to Sir Edward Rokewood Gage, died 1872. Above this, and possibly dating from the same time, is a stained glass window depicting St Peter and St Paul. The remaining windows have pale pink, yellow and blue tinted glass in diamond and rectangular-shaped quarries. A four-panelled door at the eastern end of the north side leads through to a small sacristy in the C19 rear crosswing. The nave seating consists of plain benches which possibly came from the school which formerly stood to the immediate north of the church before it was demolished in the late C20. The pew frontals, incorporating hexagonal patterns, appear to be the former communion rails. The Stations of the Cross are framed C19 prints. Light fittings include a brass corona hanging from the centre of the nave. There are two war memorials; one commemorating local people who fought, and another at the west end of the church which remembers those who died.

PRESBYTERY

The following description for the presbytery uses traditional compass points.

EXTERIOR: the presbytery is of two storeys plus attic in two unequal bays, the left-hand bay being wider. It has an off-centre right gabled porch with a plain tile roof, containing a recessed half-glazed door of late-C19 date. All the windows are timber-framed replacements of C20 date, with the ground floor having a four-light casement with side and top-

hung openings to the left-hand bay and a three-light casement with side-hung openings subdivided by horizontal glazing bars to the right-hand bay. On the first floor there is a shallower and narrower four-light casement with side and top-hung openings to the left-hand bay and a two-light casement with a horizontal glazing bar and a top-hung opening to the right-hand bay.

The right-hand return has a central external lateral stack with a C20 brick flue rising through the apex of the gable. To its right-hand side there is a fixed-light casement to the ground floor and two-light casements with side and top-hung openings to the upper floors.

At the rear, the left-hand bay has a C20 lean-to with a pantile roof and an off-centre right doorway flanked by three-light windows with stilted segmental heads. The right-hand bay has two-light casements with square-pane glazing to the ground and first floors (the first-floor window being shallower) and a flat-roofed dormer with a three-light casement to the attic. To the right again, there is a gabled crosswing with a brick ridge stack. On its left-hand return there is a two-light casement with square-pane glazing to the left-hand side and a two-light casement with a top-hung opening to the right. Its right-hand return has an off-centre left doorway (to the presbytery kitchen) flanked by a single-light window with horizontal glazing bars to its left-hand side and two, small, fixed-light windows to its right-hand side. The north wall is blind. INTERIOR: on the ground floor, the right-hand side room has an exposed wall plate to the south gable end along with an axial ceiling beam with curved step stops supported by a chamfered wall post; the beam extends across the late-C19 passage hallway (it being painted in this area). The room also has a C18 lugged fire surround and a late-C19 four-panel door. The right-hand side room has a late-C19 four-panel door along with unchamfered axial and transverse ceiling beams, possibly later replacements, and a cross-axial brick hearth with a timber bressumer. To the left-hand side of the hearth a deep cupboard with four-panel door with HL hinges may represent the lobby to the original lobby-entry house. The dining room in the rear crosswing has a plain wooden fire surround on the east wall flanked by a recessed cupboard with a four-panel door to the right and a plank and batten kitchen door to the left, all of probable late-C19 date. At the east end of the passage hallway there is a six-panel rear door with large HL hinges, probably of C18 date. The kitchen and lean-to addition retain no historic fixtures and fittings of note.

At the eastern end of the passage hallway, on its south side, a late-C19 winder staircase with a late-C19 plank and batten door at the bottom gives access to the first floor. Exposed timber framing in both the stairwell and the right-hand side first-floor room, which is accessed through a late-C19 plank and batten door, includes jowled wall posts, a wall plate and a tie beam. The left-hand side room is accessed through a C20 plain boarded door and has a C18 lugged fireplace surround with an early-C19 cast-iron grate. To the left-hand side of the fireplace is a deep cupboard with a late-C19 four-panel door.

The attic is accessed by a C20 closed string staircase with square section balusters. It too has wide floor boards along with unusual axial bridging

beams with the chamfers facing upwards, possibly suggesting that the beams are reset.

The roof has coupled rafters and continues over the adjoining church beneath its vaulted ceiling.

4. The proposed work, will not affect any aspect of this listed building.