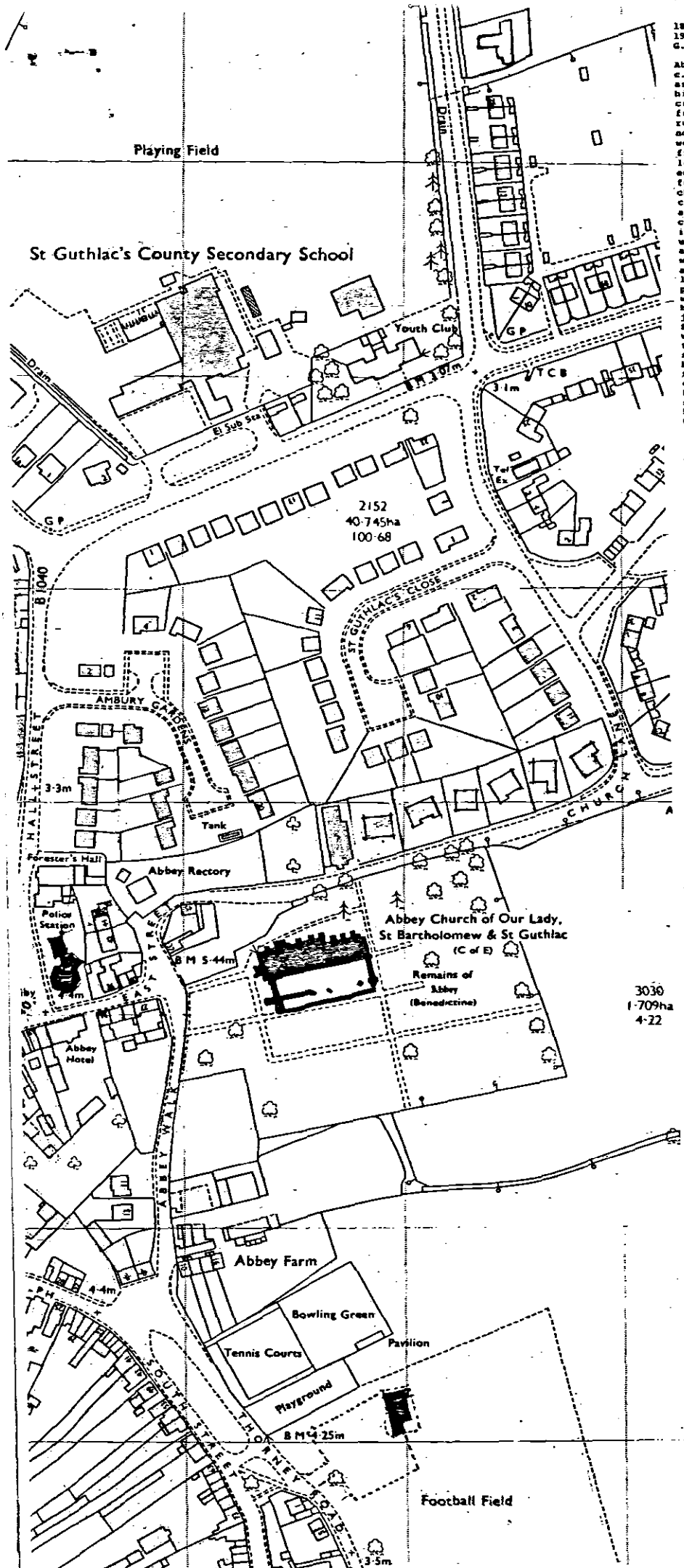


(East Side)

Crowland Abbey

I

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G.V.

Abbey church, now parish church with abbey church ruins. c.1165, c.1260, C14, C15, restored 1743, 1860, 1887-91, C20. Limestone ashlar and rubble, some Purbeck marble dressings. Lead roof hidden behind parapets. Of the original cruciform plan with crossing tower and north west tower, all that remains is: the fragmentary remains of the west end of the south aisle, the ruined nave with intact north aisle with west porch with purvise; north-west tower with spire, and north-west vestry. Fragmentary west front of south aisle of c.1165. Plinth and 4 bays of fragmentary blind arcades flanked by shafts; the shaft to the left was originally one of two which flanked a C12 buttress now embedded in a large C15 buttress. It has small scalloped and foliate capitals and shaft rings. Blind arcade of 5 small chevroned, semi-circular arches with weathered, scalloped capitals. Billeted string course above with another blind arcade above that, with 5 pointed, roll moulded heads with weathered carved capitals. Fragmentary blind arcade above with 3 intersecting, semi-circular headed arches, scalloped capitals and with supporting shafts intact. Very fragmentary blind arcade above that with single roll moulded, semi-circular headed arch with weathered capital. Left hand nook shaft continues above, above. West front of main vessel of nave of c.1260 flanked by large mid C15 multi-stage buttresses with 3 tiers of blind panelled tracery and crowned with tall, rectangular pinnacles with small, ornate flyers. North wall of south buttress with blocked doorway with pointed, moulded head and broad chamfered jambs; this originally led to cell attached to south on site of St. Guthlac's original foundation. Blocked, pointed window above with single mullion. Fragmentary wavey cusped frieze above that, with a similar frieze on the north buttress. C12 nook shafts with shaft rings embedded in north-east corner of south buttress, and south-east corner of north buttress. C13 west front proper with moulded plinth and large central pointed doorway with richly moulded head with fillets, hood mould and head label stops. C19 slender quatrefoiled and filleted trumeau supports 2 smaller pointed arches with fragmentary cusping and hood moulds with stiff leaf decoration and head label stops. Quatrefoil in tympanum contains sculpted scenes from the life of St. Guthlac. Jambs with fragmentary and missing Purbeck marble shafts and crocket capitals. Small empty niche to right with small fragmentary figure to the left of it. To the left of the doorway is a small fragmentary figure. Spandrels of doorway with single canopies on each side, with foliate capitals and ornate gablets. Fragmentary trefoil immediately to the right of the left canopy. Beyond each of these canopies is a single tall blind arch, each with richly moulded trefoil head with moulded, ribbed and crocketed capitals and only the right hand shaft of right arch extant and with shaft rings. Trefoil heads each flanked by small quatrefoils. Under left arch is the fragmentary figure of Synagogua standing on a pedestal decorated with stylised tree and a figure. Right arch contains pedestal carved with an angel. String course above with small sculptural motifs and large billet. Large pointed west window above with richly moulded surround, slender jambs (some no longer intact) with crocket and stiff leaf capitals. Fragmentary tracery in head; fragmentary hood mould and head label stops. Window flanked by tall blind arched panels supported on crocket and stiff leaf capitals and with hood moulds and single head label stops. Each contains 2 tiers of paired niches with standing figures of saints on tall polygonal billeted pedestals, under semi-circular canopies with crocketed gablets and grotesque head and foliate label stops. 2 tiers of niches in spandrels and above the west window. Spandrel niches contain 2 saints on each side under ornate traceried canopies. Originally 10 ornate niches above the window, the lengths staggered according to the line of the spandrels; 2 of the niches to the right are destroyed and are thus minus their figures. Fragmentary moulded eaves above with grotesque head and foliate motifs. North west tower to north flanked by large C15 blind traceried buttresses, that to right with ornate niche, and which are joined by a wall from which projects a 2 storey mid C15 rectangular porch which is said to encase a portion of the C12 west front of the north aisle, of a similar design to that of the south aisle. West doorway with shallow pointed head, continuous moulded surround and elongated hood mould. Above on west, north and south sides are single windows with shallow pointed heads and 3 cusped lights. Porch is crowned by moulded eaves with foliate motifs, parapet and cross finial. Illegible C18 monument on south side. Porch interior with flanking stone benches. Slender responds support the fragmentary blind traceried springers of fan vault no longer extant, and wall ribs. North and south doorways with flattened pointed heads, the former with a plank door, the latter with an iron gateway. Richly moulded C15 west doorway with shallow pointed head, hood mould, slender outer jambs, C12 block capitals and double panel doors. Soffit with blind panel tracery. Tower rises above and behind porch with large pointed west window with 6 ogee headed cusped lights, panel tracery and hood mould. Large pointed south window blocked and with 3 light mullion window inserted. North side with rectangular C18 battlemented vestry with doorway to right with 4 centred head and plank door and 2 three light mullion windows to left. Above, set back, the tower has a section of blind panelling to the right of a large pointed window restored in C19, with 5 cusped, ogee headed lights, transom, panel tracery and hood mould. A similar window to the east. Above, on all 4 sides is a band of blind arcading with rectangular bell stage above containing 2 sets of 3 arches, central arch of each being blind. Clock set on west side. Moulded eaves and parapet above. Squat octagonal ashlar spire with 4 lucarnes, each with a triangular head and 2 triangular headed lights with transom. 4 small rectangular openings at apex and finial with weathervane. North side with line of 3 projecting late C14 north chapels, somewhat remodelled in mid C15, restored 1743 and 1860, with plinth, sill band and regularly placed 2 stage buttresses of 1743 built with stone from the dismantled south aisle. 2 light mullioned window to right with another above. 4 pointed windows beyond each with 4 pointed, cusped lights, panel tracery, hood mould, and on the easternmost window, label stops. East end of north aisle with blocked, pointed opening that originally led to chapel. North side of aisle proper of early C15, with 3 pointed windows each with 4 cusped, ogee headed lights, panel tracery and hood moulds. East

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