

HES Listed Buildings entry 1971

Summary

Category - B

Date Added - 09/06/1971

Local Authority - Scottish Borders

Planning Authority - Scottish Borders

Parish - Ayton

NGR - NT 92794 60953

Coordinates - 392794, 660953

Description

Earlier to mid-12th century; extensively altered and rebuilt late 18th century; now ruinous. Roofless remains of former Ayton Church, set in graveyard, to NE of later Ayton Parish Church. W and E gables and much of S wall missing. Majority of N wall, N aisle and bell tower, and SE burial aisle in place. Originally rectangular-plan, later made T-plan with addition of N aisle. Harl-pointed sandstone rubble (squared and weathered in part); ashlar upper to bell tower; ashlar dressings throughout. Quoins; long and short surrounds to openings (blocked in part). Various burial aisles and enclosures incorporated within remains, including Fordyce family aisle to SE with large, round-arched, traceried window centred in S gable (2 sandstone mullions; single transom; round-arched heads); gravestones within; iron-railed enclosure to side. Overgrown burial aisle to NE (Alexander Skene). Various plaques and gravestones set in walls. Full-width, single storey, lean-to projection adjoining S elevation N aisle.

Statement of Special Interest

No longer in ecclesiastical use. A picturesque, ivy-clad group of ruins, thought to date, in part, from the 12th century, shortly after Ayton was granted to Durham Monastery. Dedicated to St Dionysius, this was originally a chapel attached to Coldingham, as Ayton was not a parish in its own right until after The Reformation. According to Binnie, as the "...first church of any size in Scotland", the building was used for a series of significant meetings between the Scots and the English, such as that which, in 1380, saw the renewal of the

truce between the 2 countries. Much of what remains today is thought to date from the late 18th century when, according to THE STATISTICAL ACCOUNT, several improvements were carried out. These improvements are thought to include the building of the

N aisle, the bell tower and the SE burial aisle. Originally thought to be the S transept, most now agree that this was built specifically as a burial aisle, added to the E end of the S wall. See separate list entries for the surrounding graveyard ('St Dionysius' Church (remains of), Graveyard') and the nearby Ayton Parish Church.

References

Bibliography

STATISTICAL ACCOUNT (1791) p83. Sharp, Greenwood & Fowler's map, 1826 (site marked). NEW STATISTICAL ACCOUNT (completed 1834, published 1845) pp144-145. Ordnance Survey Name Book (1856-1858) Reel 60, Book 3, NMRS. Ordnance Survey map, 1860 (evident). D MacGibbon & T Ross THE ECCLESIASTICAL ARCHITECTURE OF SCOTLAND, Vol 3 (1897) p543. BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB TRANSACTIONS, Vol 13 (1890-91) pp93-95. J Robson THE CHURCHES AND CHURCHYARDS OF BERWICKSHIRE (1896) pp12-14. BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB TRANSACTIONS, Vol 16 (1896-98) pp18-19. BERWICKSHIRE NATURALISTS' CLUB TRANSACTIONS, Vol 21 (1909-11) p241. RCAHMS 6TH REPORT & INVENTORY OF MONUMENTS & CONSTRUCTIONS IN THE COUNTY OF BERWICK (1915) p4. C A Strang BORDERS AND BERWICK: AN ILLUSTRATED ARCHITECTURAL GUIDE (1994) p22. G A C Binnie THE CHURCHES AND GRAVEYARDS OF BERWICKSHIRE (1995) pp24-26. NMRS photographic records.