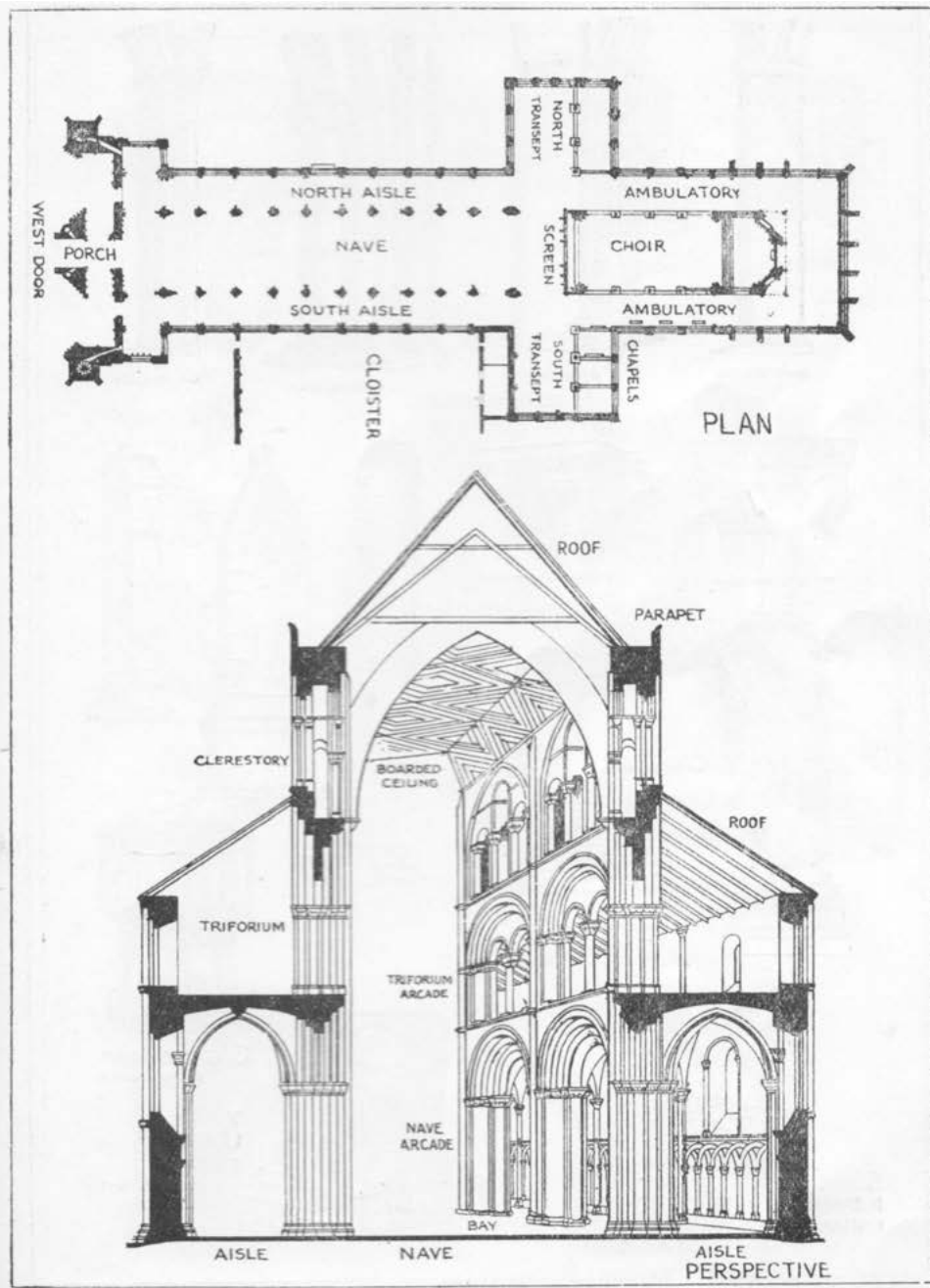


# Style Guide



## PARTS OF A CHURCH

A church is the building people worshipped in. There are different types of churches - e.g. cathedrals and chapels. Churches are usually **CRUCIFORM** (cross-shaped).

You go in at the west end through the west door. You can walk up the **NAVE** - the central walkway. (It comes from the Latin 'navis' meaning 'ship').

To the side of you may be two **AISLES** - side walkways (Merton's first church didn't have aisles, but its re-built church did).

There will be lots of pillars holding the roof up. These pillars are usually in three layers, like a cake. The bottom pillars form **ARCADES**.

Next up is the **TRIFORIUM** (try-for-ee-um). Above the triforium is the **CLERESTORY** (clear-story). This was a layer of windows and made the church a lot lighter.

Walk up the nave, and admire the lovely stained glass and wall paintings (churches were very colourful) - and the tiles on the floor, some of which were highly decorated. You'll get to a screen which separates the nave from the bit where all the priest stuff happens - the **CHOIR** and the **PRESBYTERY** (prez-bit-ery).

The focal point of the choir is the high altar. This commemorates Jesus' Last Supper, and is the focal point in the Mass service.

The church could have a central tower, and the part under it, just between the nave and choir, is called the central crossing. To its sides are **TRANSEPTS**, north and south. These have small side chapels in, with altars to the Virgin Mary or to other saints.

You might be able to get right round the back of the choir, to the very east end of the church, going along the **AMBULATORY** (like 'ambulance', it's from the Latin for 'to walk'). In Merton's later church, there was a chapel to the Virgin Mary at the east end - the Lady Chapel.

The church was based on sections called bays - these were the bits between two columns. They were all geometrically worked out, and could be based on ratios such as the Golden Section or  $1:\sqrt{2}$ . But that's another story...

We started building Merton Priory in 1117. Most of our buildings were wooden to start with. We replaced them with stone.



## NORMAN (c.1066-1200)

Norman or Romanesque buildings had round arches. These aren't that strong, thick - so walls had to be really heavy and windows weren't very big. Our Norman church was massive and rather dark!



SOUTHWELL  
MINSTER

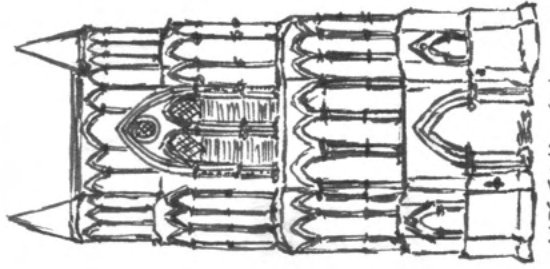
Over the next few centuries, we replaced stone buildings with new stone buildings, and made our convent bigger. Our building phases roughly fall into what historians call:

- Norman
- Early English
- Decorated
- Perpendicular



## Early English (c.1170-1300)

In the 1160s, people had the bright idea to use a pointed arch instead. This is stronger and meant we could build higher buildings and have more windows - and bigger ones!

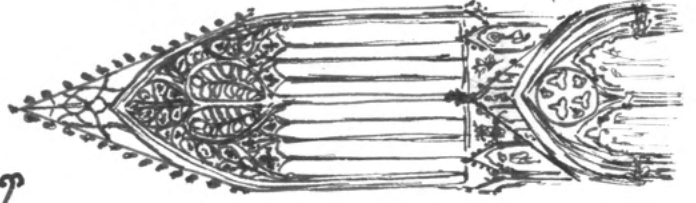


WEST WALTON  
BELL TOWER

## Decorated

(c.1272-1350)

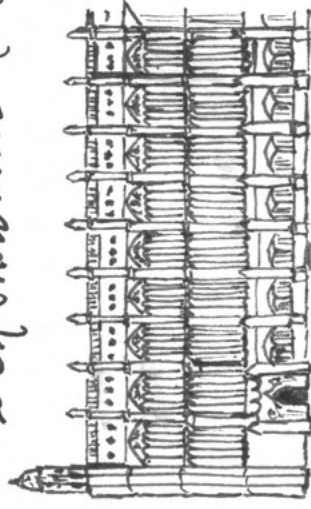
You can see why they called this style 'decorated'! The fashion was for lots of window, and lots of ornament and patterns inspired by nature.



THE WEST WINDOW  
OF  
YORK MINSTER

Because people wanted windows, they invented new buttresses to hold the building up.

## Perpendicular (c.1300-1540)

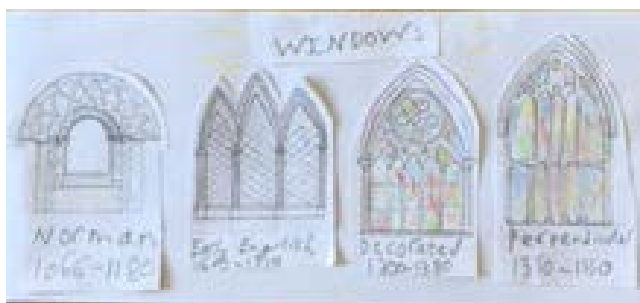
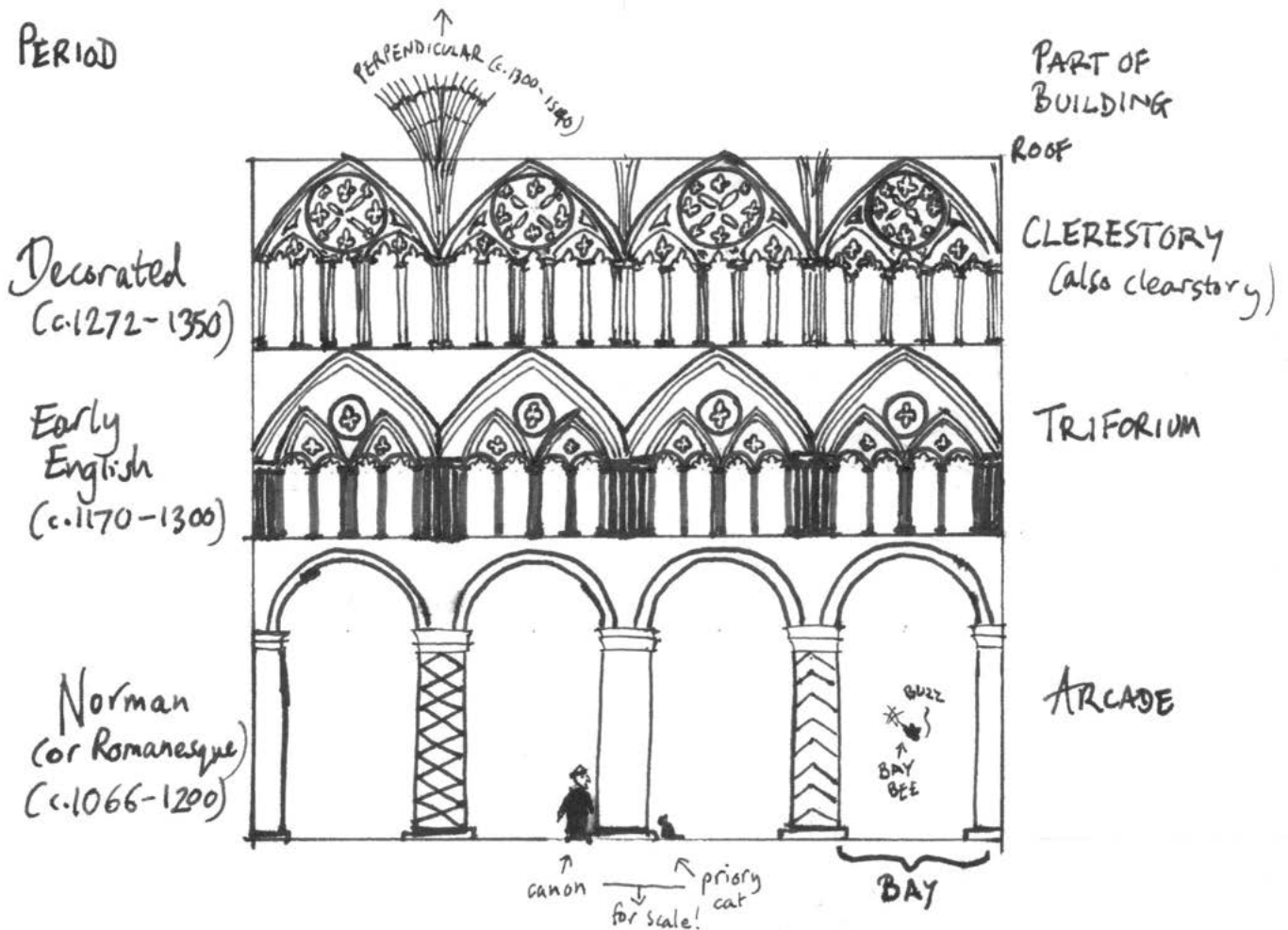


KING'S  
COLLEGE  
CHAPEL

Historians call this perpendicular because it emphasises the relationship between horizontal and vertical. By now, we'd worked out how to make huge windows, and we used thin bits of stone between glass, and elegant buttresses to hold everything up.

## PERIODS OF ARCHITECTURE

Here's a drawing to show you some of the different arches medieval builders used in the different periods of the Middle Ages. Merton was a mish-mash of different styles. The nave was largely Early English, but the presbytery and Lady Chapel were built in the fourteenth century. So if you were a canon in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, you'd look down the church and see things from two hundred and a hundred years before. The other buildings around the **CLOISTER** (we call this the **CLAUSTRAL COMPLEX** - that just means all of the buildings of the cloister) were quite grand, and mainly from the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Early English). Other buildings in the precinct would have been more domestic (looking more like normal houses or barns - made mainly out of wood).



Windows grew in size and complexity. The stone in between the window panes is called **TRACERY**. This picture, by Alexander the Novice (aged 13) shows the different periods of tracery.

The glass was painted or stained with pictures from the Bible or of important people of the time.

You might come across other architectural terms (words to do with buildings) in your research, so here are a few:

**vaulting:** the arching in a (vaulted) stone roof  
**curvilinear:** a long word for Decorated tracery  
**rectilinear:** a long word for Perpendicular tracery  
**boss:** a carved piece of stone in the middle of a roof vault

**apse:** a semi-circular bit at the end of the choir or transept. Merton's church and chapter house both became apsidal.  
**capital:** the carved head (Latin = caput) of a column or pillar.