

THINGS THAT WENT WRONG
By John Meredith 14th October 1995

[N.B. This fact sheet should be read whilst walking round the Minster!]

INTRO: Remark by old codger, visiting the Minster, who had asked how old it was: "Is it that old? Isn't it time you pulled it down and built a new one?"

Frequently heard remark by other visitors: "Isn't it perfect?" The answer is - No!

A. NAVE

1. Not symmetrical, e.g. 2 Western towers different.
2. Nave roof - Westernmost bay quite different from all the rest. This is a relic of the flat roof built after the 1711 fire. which had to have a raised part, or bulge, at the west end to accommodate the top of the great West window.
3. Nave pillars - North and South sides not quite in alignment; South pillars a few inches further west, so chair rows can't match exactly.
4. Tower over crossing not quite square - visible if one looks up at the roof over the crossing.
5. Cable moulding on both sides of some crossing arches, but not on all.
6. Cable moulding on SW window in S. transept faces two different ways – must have been carved by 2 masons.
7. Why is there a small Norman arch in the wall blocking up the big Norman arch in the S. transept?
8. Red colour in stone of pulpitum, especially noticeable since it was cleaned 15 years ago, not due to being made of different stone, but to oxidisation in the 1711 fire.

B. QUIRE.

9. Unlike other churches, decani side is north, cantoris south. This is because the Archbishop's seat is on the south side.
10. Arches
 - a) Dog-tooth decoration on all arches on N. side.
 - b) Nailhead carving on capitals on N but not S side.
 - c) Some bases of pillars different. Again, this suggests different masons at work.
11. 4th Bay from West - change in level in string course over arches on N. side shows where builders starting from W. met building started at E. On S. side, equivalent arch is lower, gap filled by posy.
12. Moulding over triforium arch above candle chapel stepped slightly.
13. Wall over 4th arch on S. side not quite straight.
14. Quire aisles - central rib of vault not straight.

C. SANCTUARY

15. Capitals above sedilia - only one has leaf decoration but fillets on pillars go through capitals instead, on the others.
16. 4 lancet windows unusual - more often an odd number. The even number is because the central roof rib goes down the wall between the windows, giving extra support.
17. Blocked up triforium "windows" open onto roof space; not really windows at all.
18. Walkway round nave at clerestory level not continued round quire and sanctuary.

These little points are not necessarily imperfections, but add in many cases, to the character and interest of the building. They show a different approach to design from that of the present day.