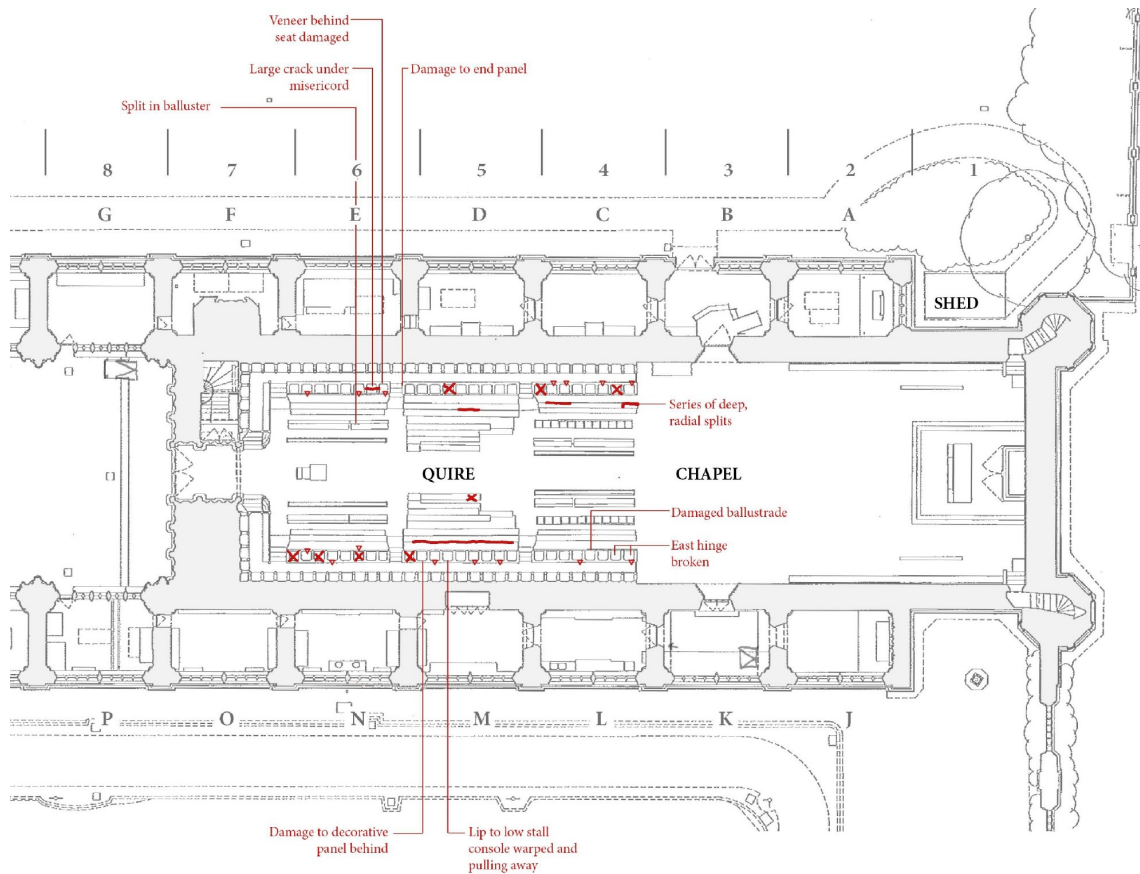


**099 KINGS COLLEGE CHAPEL  
ORGAN SCREEN AND QUIRE JOINERY REPAIRS  
COVERING PAPER TO FACULTY APPLICATION**

This paper supports an application for Faculty under the 2015 RULES, for an initial phase of investigation and conservation works to the Organ Screen and Quire joinery. The context arises from the Quinquennial Inspection Report (QIR) of 2018, which noted a series of defective elements that are in need of careful repair.



*QIR Ground Plan mark-up of the Quire, locating a number of defects. Refer to the Schedule of Work for further details.*

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Very concise history and description.

The Chapel was the major building of the College founded by King Henry VI who laid the first stone in 1446. Its building history, which was marked by long periods of inactivity, reflects a politically turbulent era around the War of the Roses. For this reason, the Chapel went through three phases of construction, under four separate master masons, and was not completed until 1515. Subsequently the college Front Court developed to the South. The ensemble now comprises the C18th classical Gibbs building, the C19th Wilkins building and later C19 screen to Kings Parade, both in a gothic revival stylistic idiom.

The quire stall joinery of Kings College Chapel is arguably one of the most significant assemblages of Jacobean craftsmanship anywhere in Europe and certainly within the UK. The joinery therefore is of the very highest significance. Although every inch of embellished carving is worthy of breath-taking admiration, this carved assemblage seems to form a backdrop to divine worship in the chapel and perhaps does not get the fullest attention that it deserves. The Chapel is a working space and inevitably it is subject to the rigours of such continued use.

Significance of the whole: EXCEPTIONAL

“One of the major monuments of English Medieval architecture. Despite its long building history, the interior of Kings College chapel is a harmonious whole, a supreme achievement of a series of royal masons of the highest calibre” Pevsner: Buildings of England.

## STATEMENT OF NEED

The QIR records quite a number of straightforward but regrettable losses and carved elements that are missing. Some are particularly harmful to the meaning or aesthetic of the joinery.

In some instances there are splits or damage to the joinery caused by natural shakes in the wood, or thermal movement, or just physical impact damage which needs repair. There is also concern over unfixed or loose elements that are vulnerable and therefore should be carefully re-secured. One example for the need for swift action is the fragile sculptural finials on the primary stalls and the Provost's stall handrail. These are superb features, which are in a fragile state and somewhat overlooked by the daily rhythms of Chapel life.

There is a general concern over harms to the decorative finish of the joinery. This can simply be the result of wear and tear, solar damage and the like. Some elements have been attacked by wood boring insects, which has caused significant damage and has become disfiguring at close quarters. Unfortunately, the damaged areas can be very key to fine decorative detail and thus must be the hardest to repair or conserve. Certainly no treatment should be contemplated without the closest consideration of options by specialist conservators and repair trials, which is part of the proposed approach.

At this juncture it is unknown whether there are any kind of structural problems which may lie behind the surface of these elements. This initial phase will assist in the understanding of what lies beneath the supporting structure, or behind the impressively decorative wall panelling.

## SCOPE OF PROPOSED WORKS FOR FACULTY

The proposals are detailed in the accompanying drawings, schedule and methodology. They form an initial package of investigation, trial and repair, which will teach us about the overall structural condition whilst also addressing joinery elements, ironmongery and fixtures which, if un-checked will lead to regrettable losses.

## PROCUREMENT

The selection of a suitable conservator made following a competitive tender from a shortlist of suitable craftspeople, with demonstrated previous experience of similar projects of high sensitivity. All will be required to have ICON and ACR accreditations.