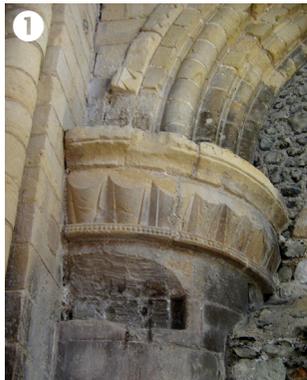


The Ruined Nave of St Mary de Haura

The church of St Mary de Haura (*at the harbour*) was founded around the year 1100, in the Norman town of New Shoreham. Throughout the medieval period, this was one of the largest and most important parish churches in Sussex.

THE NORMAN NAVE

The huge nave, completed around 1130, was used for both religious services and secular activities by the townspeople, who were also responsible for its upkeep.

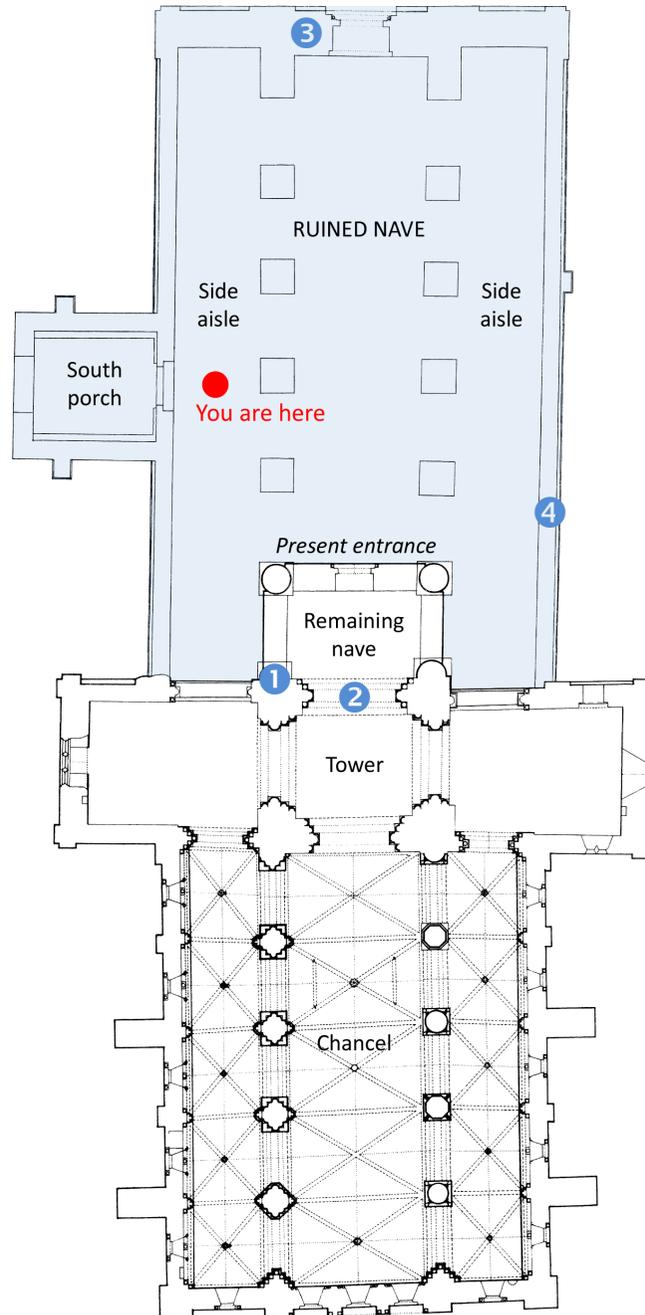


Column and arch inside church

This half of the church was divided by large round columns, and services would be held without seating. The space could hold hundreds of people, and it measured around 30 metres by 20 metres, with two wide side aisles, and later, a large south porch. The nave was made of Caen stone imported from Normandy, and local flint.



High nave arch under tower



RUIN AND COLLAPSE

By the late 1600s, the nave had fallen into disrepair and ruin. Extensive research has been undertaken into the probable cause of the collapse, but the exact reason remains a mystery. Possible explanations include:

Economic – loss of half the town due to encroaching sea, and silting of river and port, forcing people to leave

War – possible use in the English Civil War in the 1640s, perhaps as a stable or ammunition store, or being struck by cannon fire

Weather – the dilapidated nave perhaps further damaged in the Great Storm of 1703, when the stone market house in the town was flattened.



Remaining flint back wall



Side aisle wall in churchyard

You may be able to trace the outline of the nave among the graves and grass in the churchyard, and on the walls of the church behind you.