

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
UNDERTAKEN AT ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH,
COASTGUARD LANE, FAIRLIGHT, EAST SUSSEX.**

N. G. R. TQ 86003 11926

Project Number 10 / 09

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ABSTRACT.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the replacement of surface water drainage at St. Andrew's Church, Coastguard Lane, Fairlight.

St. Andrew's Church is a mid 19th century structure (consecrated in 1846) built on the footprint of an earlier medieval church. However, a seemingly in-situ grave cover and associated footstone of uncertain date comprised the only features of archaeological interest discovered during the fieldwork.

The monitored groundworks did not impact upon any in-situ human remains. However, a significant number of disarticulated / displaced human bones indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance were recovered.

No new structural or artefactual evidence for the former church known to have once stood on the site was therefore recorded.

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1. This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried - out during the replacement of surface water drainage at St. Andrew's Church, Coastguard Lane, Fairlight, East Sussex (N. G. R. TQ 86003 11926) (figures 1 and 7).
- 1.2. St. Andrew's Church is a mid 19th century structure (consecrated in 1846) built on the site of an earlier medieval church (see Section 3.0.). It is thus believed that any excavation undertaken within the current church cemetery could expose buried funerary remains / monuments and other deposits, cut features, structures and artefacts of archaeological significance.
- 1.3. Given the clear archaeological potential of the project, C. G. Archaeology was commissioned by Peter Pritchett of John D Clarke and Partners (Chartered Architects) to maintain a constant archaeological watching brief on all intrusive groundworks associated with the replacement of surface water drainage at the church.
- 1.4. The archaeological fieldwork was carried – out by Annalie Seaman of C. G. Archaeology from the 1st October to 15th November 2010. The historic cartographic evidence described in Section 6.0. was collated by Philippa Whitehill of C. G. Archaeology on the 13th October 2010.
- 1.5. A faculty authorising the replacement of surface water drainage at St. Andrew's Church was granted by The Consistory Court of the Diocese of Chichester on the 12th August 2010.

2.0. GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

- 2.1. The 1: 50,000 British Geological Survey (Sheet 320 / 321: Hastings and Dungeness) records the 'natural' geology at the church as Wadhurst Clay and Sand in Wadhurst Clay. Between Hastings, Fairlight and Rye the lower levels of the Wadhurst Clay are marked by the presence of the c.10m. – thick Cliff End Sandstone.

3.0. THE CHURCH.

- 3.1. St. Andrew's Church was designed by Thomas Little in the mid 19th century, but is known to have replaced an earlier medieval church at the site.

- 3.2. The former church can be seen on a drawing of c.1797 that now forms part of the 'Sharpe Collection' held by the Sussex Archaeological Society (Figure 3). In the late 18th century this small church apparently devoid of aisles clearly possessed a west tower with heavy buttressing and a pyramidal roof. The 19th century antiquarian Thomas Walker Horsfield also recorded the presence of two lancets on the side of the tower facing away from the sea and believed the nave to be of 12th century origin (Horsfield 1835, 466). "Sir Stephen Glynne (in an undated visit) noted other lancets and thought the plain, pointed chancel arch was 13th century.....However, as it was partly brick, it is likely to have been altered at the very least. There was apparently much brickwork elsewhere.....On the north side of the nave was a gallery" (www.sussexparishchurches.org/content/view/170/34/).

- 3.3. By the early Victorian period the church at Fairlight had simply become too small and dilapidated to serve the local population. Plans for a new church were therefore prepared by Thomas Little and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1845 (Figure 5). The current sandstone structure (consecrated in 1846) has a relatively large chancel for its date and a nave characterized by paired lancets and a steep roof that forms an equilateral triangle. The tall, flat – topped north-west tower has a prominent stair-turret. The church is a Grade II Listed Building.

4.0. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

4.1. The primary objectives of the archaeological watching brief are defined below.

- Determine the character, extent, condition and date of any funerary remains / monuments and other deposits, cut features, structures, artefacts and ecofacts exposed by groundworks associated with the replacement of surface water drainage at the church.
- Ensure that all exposed *in-situ* human remains unavoidably impacted upon by the monitored groundworks are cleaned, recorded and if necessary lifted in accordance with defined professional standards.
- Ensure that all disarticulated human remains impacted upon by the monitored groundworks are lifted in accordance with defined professional standards and presented for re-interment at the church.
- Ensure that all other archaeologically significant deposits, cut features and structures exposed by the monitored works are excavated, sampled, recorded and interpreted to an acceptable standard.
- Ensure that all archaeologically significant discoveries of artefactual and / or ecofactual evidence are recorded and analysed to an acceptable standard.
- Establish the palaeoenvironmental potential of located archaeologically significant deposits and cut features.
- Provide information on which to base future decisions concerning the treatment of any funerary remains / monuments and other archaeologically significant deposits, cut features and structures found during the watching brief.

5.0. INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY.

5.1. Background work.

5.1.1. Relevant historic maps stored at the East Sussex Record Office, Lewes were examined by C. G. Archaeology (see Section 6.0.).

5.2. Fieldwork.

5.2.1. All groundworks associated with the replacement of surface water drainage at the church were carried – out by B. G. Environmental Services Ltd. under the archaeological supervision of C. G. Archaeology. The drainage trenches and manhole marked in black on Figure 7 were excavated manually. However, a mechanical digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used to cut the short length of trench and large soakaway highlighted in red. Even spits were removed from the cuttings until the depths required by the groundworks contractor had been reached.

5.2.2. The c.0.40m. to 0.50m. - wide trenches shown on Figure 7 ranged in depth from c.0.30m. to c.0.90m. The c.2m. – long, c.2m. – wide manhole and c.4m. – long, c.2.20.m. – wide soakaway possessed respective maximum depths below original ground level of c.1.40m. and c.2.20m.

5.2.3. Each archaeological context exposed during the groundworks (see Section 7.0.) was investigated by hand in order to assess its archaeological / palaeoenvironmental character and then documented on an individual Context Record Sheet.

5.2.4. A plan showing the location of the groundworks and the position of a seemingly *in-situ* grave cover and possible footstone exposed within one of the excavated drainage trenches (see Section 7.4.) was prepared at a scale of 1: 200.

- 5.2.5. A significant number of disarticulated and displaced human bones discovered during the watching brief were re-interred within the backfilled drainage trenches with the agreement of Peter Pritchett (John D Clarke and Partners) and the church authorities. It should be noted that these bones were not subject to quantification or specialist osteological analysis.
- 5.2.6. A full digital photographic record of the fieldwork was maintained as appropriate.

6.0. RESULTS OF CARTOGRAPHIC RESEARCH.

6.1. The following historic maps were examined at the East Sussex Record Office, Lewes.

- Map of Sussex by Yeakell and Gardner (from ‘Old Sussex Mapped’: www.envf.port.ac.uk/geo/research/historical/webmap/sussexmap) c.1778 – 1783 (Figure 2)
- Tithe map and apportionment for the parish of Fairlight (E. S. R. O. ref: TD/E 38) c.1839 (Figure 4)
- Ground plan of St. Andrew’s Church, Fairlight by Thomas Little (from www.churchplansonline.org) 1845 (Figure 5)
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1873 (Figure 6)
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1900
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1910
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1928
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1931
- 6” Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1938

6.2. The later 18th century map listed above (Figure 2) locates the former parish church at Fairlight (see Section 3.0.) but fails to provide any structural details. The footprint of this now demolished building (chancel, nave and west tower) can however be seen on the tithe map of c.1839 (Figure 4). The associated tithe apportionment places the church in plot number 430 (i.e. “Church Yard”) and names the ‘occupier’ as Rev. Wm. Pierce. Full details of the apportionment are held within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

6.3. The 1845 ground plan for the ‘new’ church at Fairlight (see Section 3.0.) clearly shows the chancel, nave with north aisle / arcade, south – facing porch and north-west tower (Figure 5). The 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Sheet of 1873 (Figure 6) furthermore confirms that the current building was constructed as envisaged by the architect Thomas Little in much the same

position as its predecessor. No archaeologically significant changes to the church outline or cemetery arrangement are documented on any of the subsequent Ordnance Survey sheets examined by C. G. Archaeology (maps not reproduced here).

7.0. RESULTS OF FIELDWORK.

7.1. The ground located in close proximity to the church had clearly been disturbed by an earlier surface water drainage system installed at the site (i.e. that being replaced by the scheme under consideration here). Readers requiring a description of the archaeologically insignificant layers / deposits of modern backfill associated with this disturbance are referred to the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

7.2. The basic stratigraphic formation of those areas of the cemetery not impacted upon by the earlier drainage system noted above can be summarised as follows.

- **Context 1: Topsoil**

A loose, dark grey – brown sandy clay with a thickness of between c.0.10m. and 0.40m.

- **Context 2: ‘Graveyard soil’**

Interweaving layers / deposits of compact, light orange – brown and dark grey – brown sandy clay with an overall thickness of between c.0.60m. and 0.90m.

- **Context 3 / 4: ‘Natural’ Sand in Wadhurst Clay / solid sandstone**

The basal geology of the site (see Section 2.1.). Only exposed within the monitored manhole and soakaway at a depth below the original ground surface of c.1m. Thickness not ascertained.

7.3. A significant number of disarticulated / displaced human bones, including skull fragments, were recovered from contexts 1, 2 and the layers / deposits of modern backfill associated with the previous surface water drainage system at the site. It should be noted that a high proportion of these bones

(not subject to quantification or specialist osteological analysis) were gleaned from the trenches located to the immediate south of the church.

- 7.4. No *in-situ* human remains were discovered during the groundworks subject to archaeological monitoring. However, the top of a ridged sandstone grave cover and possible footstone were exposed just c.0.10m. below the original ground surface (i.e. within Context 1) in the position shown on Figure 7. These seemingly *in-situ* monumental features were almost certainly associated with an unusually low or perhaps broken headstone (no extant inscription) located c.1m. to the west. Under the supervision of C. G. Archaeology it proved possible to run the new drainage pipe beneath the grave cover, but above the level of any underlying interment.
- 7.5. No other deposits, cut features, structures, artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological significance were discovered during the watching brief.

8.0. CONCLUSIONS.

- 8.1. A seemingly *in-situ* sandstone grave cover and associated footstone of uncertain date comprised the only features of archaeological or palaeoenvironmental interest discovered during the recent watching brief undertaken at St. Andrew's Church, Fairlight (see Section 7.4.).
- 8.2. The monitored groundworks did not impact upon any *in-situ* human remains. However, a significant number of disarticulated / displaced human bones indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance were recovered for re-interment within the backfilled cuttings (see Section 7.3.).
- 8.3. No new structural or artefactual evidence for the former medieval church known to have once stood at the site (see Section 3.0.) was therefore recorded.
- 8.4. Even so, it is believed that the investigative methodology employed by C. G. Archaeology satisfied the primary objectives of the investigation defined in Section 4.0.

9.0. PROJECT ARCHIVE.

- 9.1. It is intended that the full paper and digital written, drawn and photographic records arising from this project will be collated in accordance with *'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage'* (UKICI 1990) and deposited in a suitable local museum or similar repository approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor and East Sussex County Council Archaeologist. The Project Archive does not include any retained artefacts or ecofacts.

10.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

- 10.1. C. G. Archaeology would like to thank Peter Pritchett of John D Clarke and Partners, B. G. Environmental Services Ltd. and the church authorities for their assistance with the project.

11.0. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Horsfield, T. W. 1835. *The history, antiquities and topography of the county of Sussex: Volume I*. Kohler and Coombes (1974 reprint).

Salzman, L. F. (ed.) 1937. 'A history of the county of Sussex Volume 9: Borough of Hastings'. *Victoria County History*.

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET.

Site Code.	SAF 10					
Site identification and address.	St. Andrew's Church, Coastguard Lane, Fairlight					
County, district and / or borough.	East Sussex					
O.S. grid ref.	TQ 86003 11926					
Geology.	Wadhurst Clay and Sand in Wadhurst Clay (Cliff End Sandstone)					
Project number.	10 / 09					
Fieldwork type.	Eval.	Excav.	W.Brief.	Survey.	Other.	
			X			
Site type.	Rural.	Urban.	Other. Churchyard			
Date of fieldwork.	1 st October - 15 th November 2010					
Client.	John D Clarke and Partners.					
Project manager.	Christopher Greatorex					
Project supervisor	Annalie Seaman					
Period summary.	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	B. Age.	I. Age.	R – B.
	A. S.	Med.	P. Med	Other. Grave cover and footstone of uncertain date		
Project Summary.						
<p>An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the replacement of service water drainage at St. Andrew's Church, Fairlight. St. Andrew's Church is a mid 19th century structure (consecrated in 1846) built on the footprint of an earlier medieval church. However, a seemingly <i>in-situ</i> grave cover and associated footstone of uncertain date comprised the only features of archaeological interest discovered during the fieldwork. The monitored groundworks did not impact upon any <i>in-situ</i> human remains. However, a significant number of disarticulated / displaced human bones</p>						

indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance were recovered. No new structural or artefactual evidence for the former church known to have once stood on the site was therefore recorded.

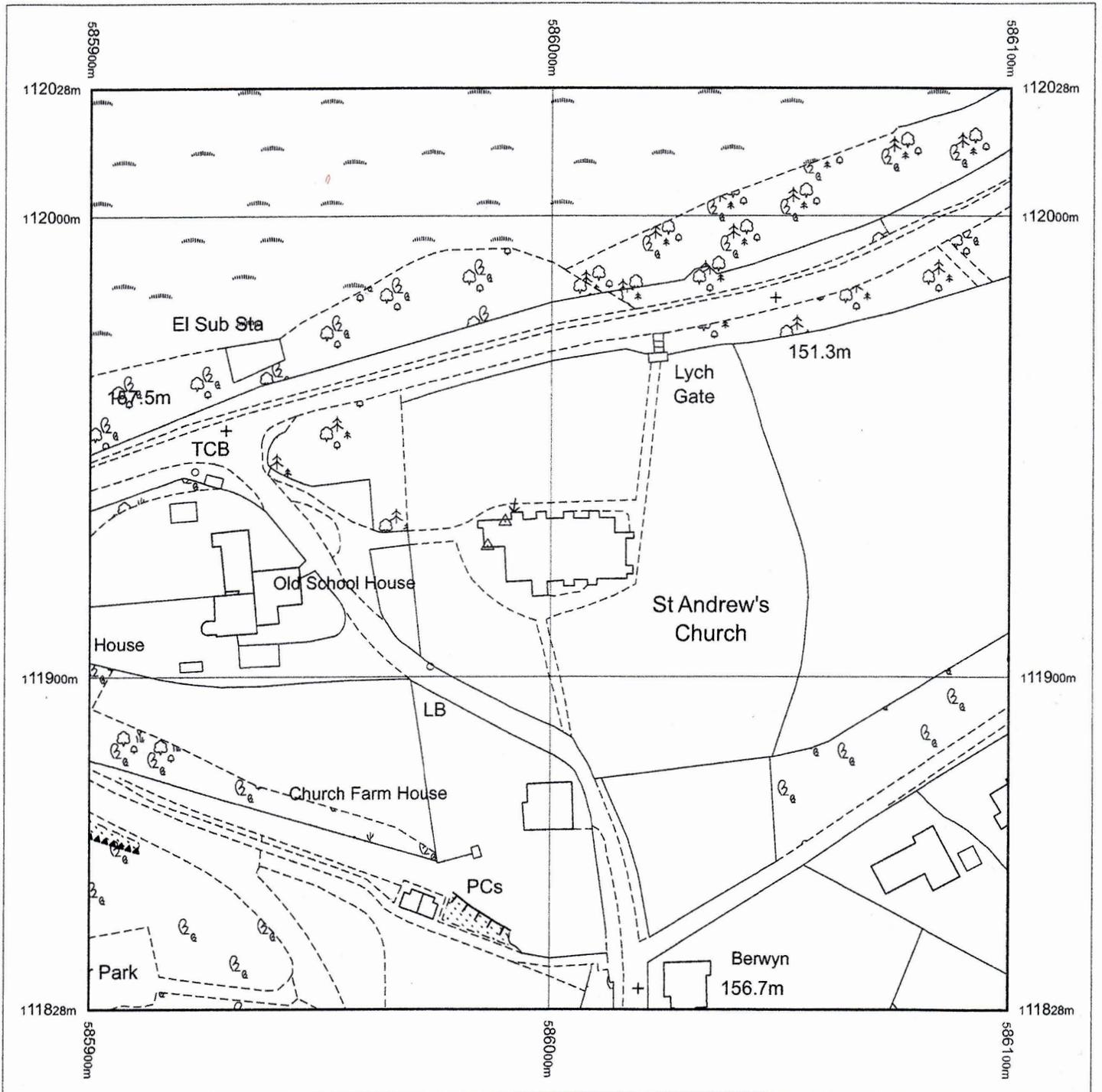


Figure 1: Church location plan
 (Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL100034952)

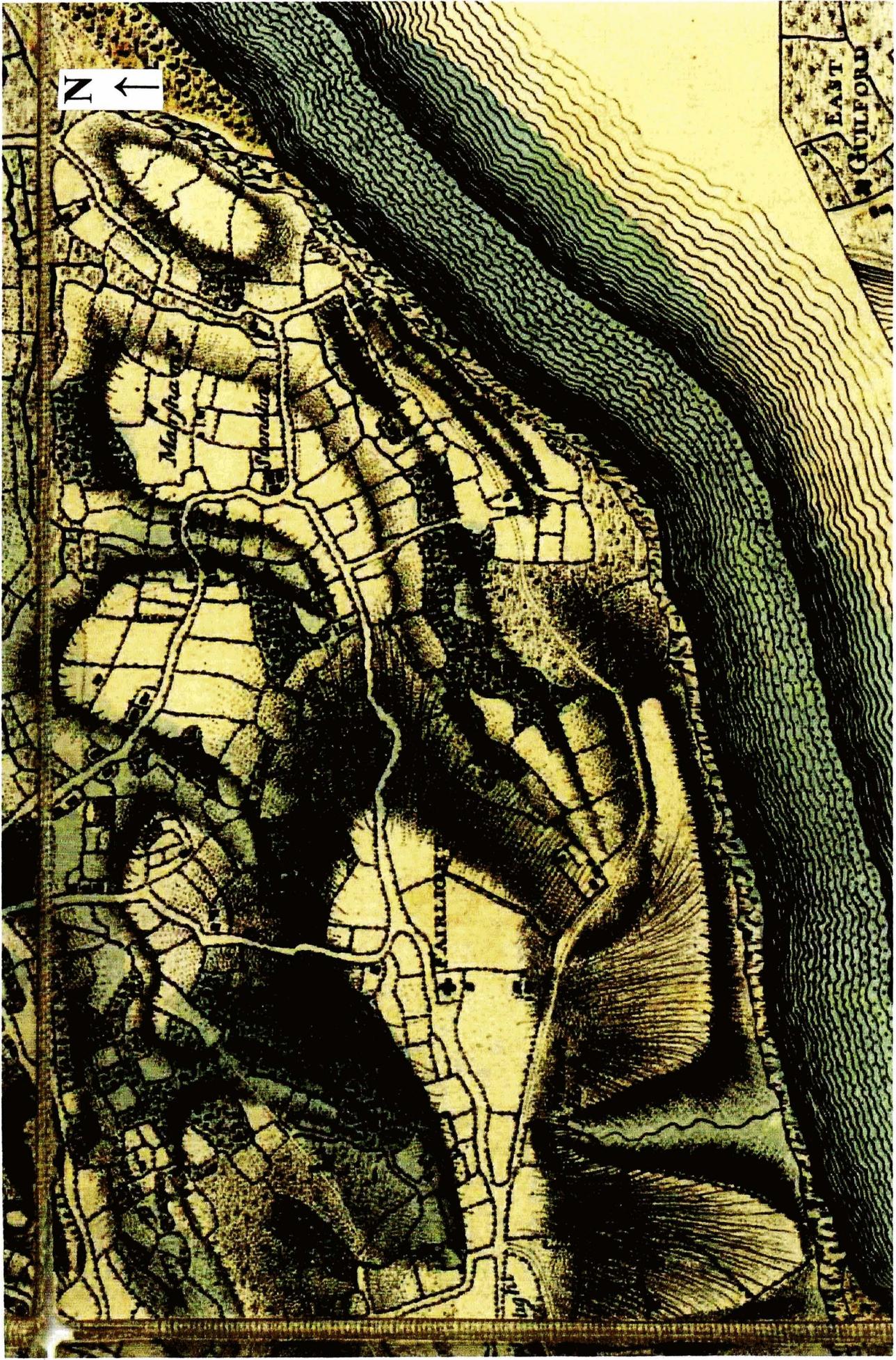


Figure 2: Map of Sussex by Yeakell and Gardner c.1778 - 1783

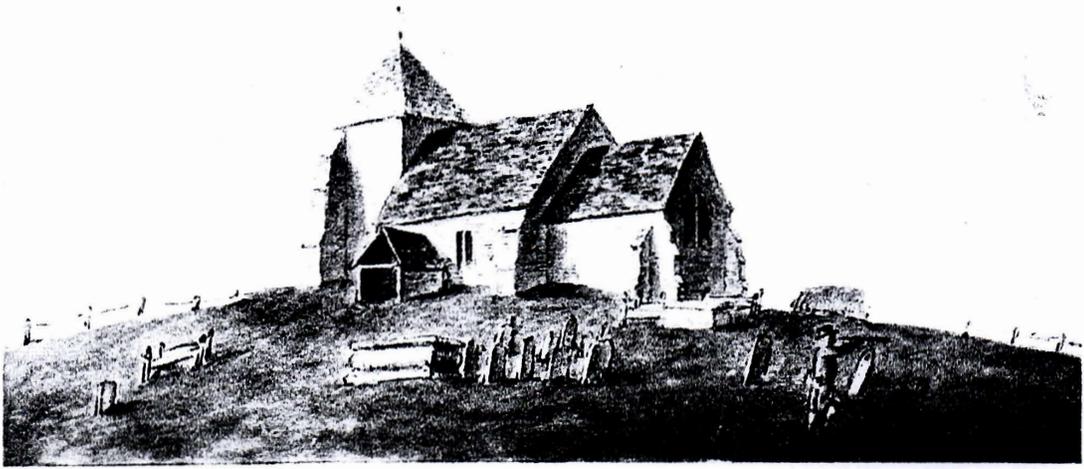


Figure 3: "Fairlight, The Old Church c.1797" (Salzman 1937, 179)
(drawing part of the 'Sharpe Collection' held by the Sussex Archaeological Society)

N ↑



Figure 4: Tithe map for the parish of Fairlight (E. S. R. O. ref: TD/E 38) c.1839

N
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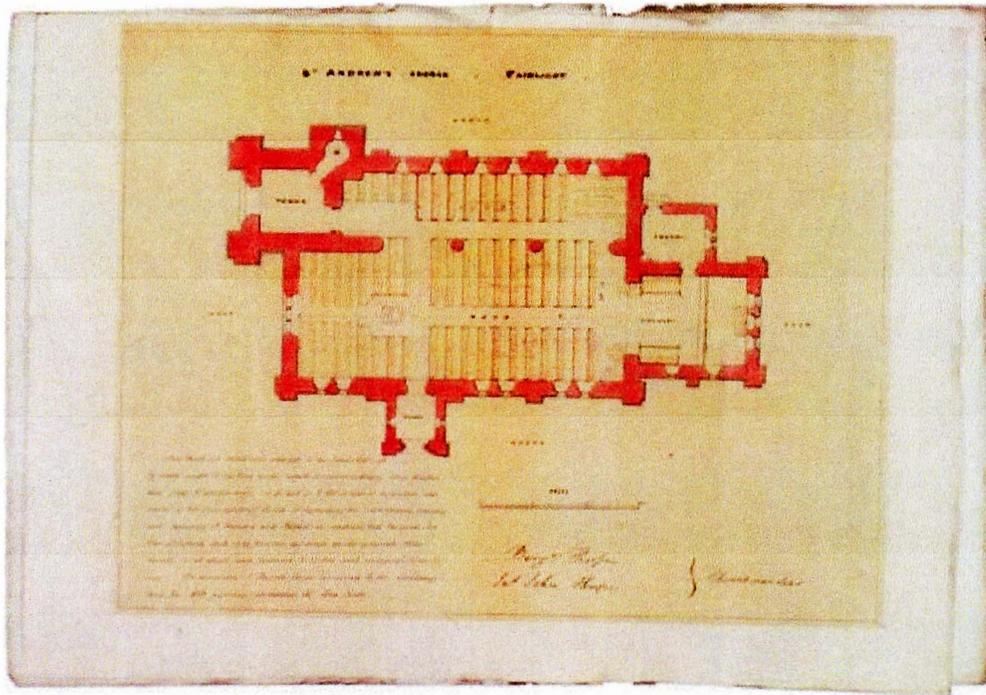
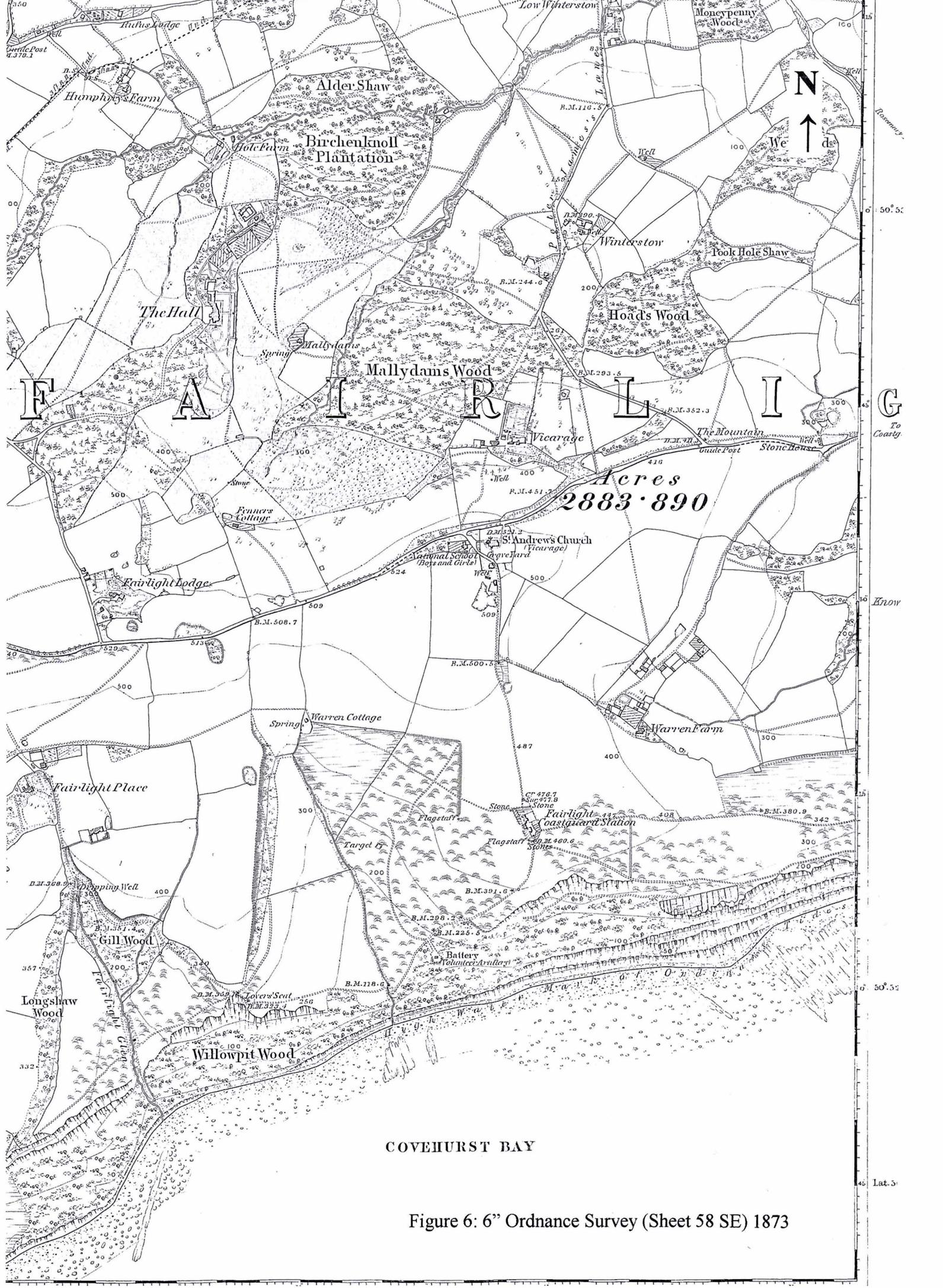


Figure 5: Ground plan of St. Andrew's Church, Fairlight by Thomas Little 1845



F E R R I N G

Acres
2883.890

COVEHURST BAY

Figure 6: 6" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 58 SE) 1873

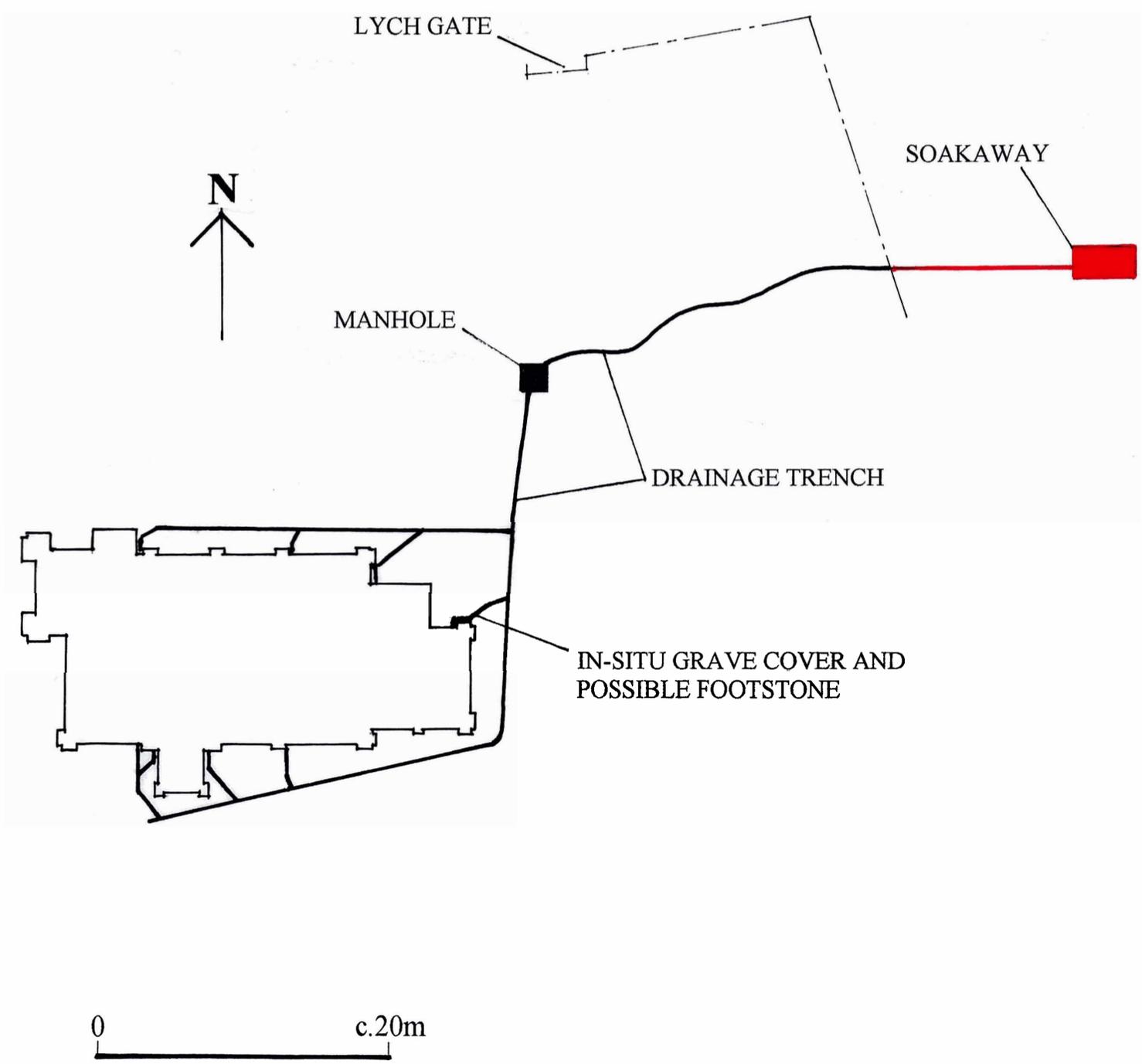


Figure 7: Groundworks location plan