

St Mary's Church, Cubbington

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION AND RECORDING



EXPERTISE WHERE YOU NEED IT

Archaeology Warwickshire Report No 1740
JUNE 2017



*Working for
Warwickshire*

Project:	St Mary's Church, Cubbington
Commissioned by:	St Mary's Church PCC
Project Report No.	1740
Site Code:	CC15
Planning Reference:	W14/1662
National Grid Reference:	SP 3438 6834
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Date:	June 2017
Report reference:	Coutts, C. M. 2017 <i>St Mary's Church, Cubbington, Warwickshire: Archaeological Observation and Recording</i> , Archaeology Warwickshire Report 1740.

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1	Site location
2	Groundworks observed
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SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological recording was carried out during groundworks for a new extension on the north side of St Mary's Church, Cubbington. A total of 18 graves or part graves were recorded, all of which were probable or definite coffin burials and at least seven of which gave evidence of the name and date of death of the occupant (between 1914 and 1950). All burials were of adults and a number were in stacked family graves. Gravestones that were uncovered or moved during the course of the work were also recorded. No evidence for medieval burials was recorded and it may be that this traditionally 'unpopular' side of the church, adjacent to the north 'devil's door' was not utilised for burials until the later post-medieval period.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning permission has been granted by Warwick District Council (Planning Ref. W14/1662) and a Faculty has been granted by Coventry Diocese (C137/2009) for the construction of an extension on the northern elevation at St Mary's Church, Cubbington. The development site lies within an area of archaeological potential associated with the Grade I building. A condition of planning permission and Faculty therefore required the applicant to secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in conjunction with the development.

- 1.2 A programme of fieldwork, consisting of the archaeological observation of soil stripping, foundation trenches and service trenches, in accordance with a brief prepared by the Country Archaeologist on behalf of Coventry Diocese Advisory Committee, was commissioned from Archaeology Warwickshire and carried out between February 2016 and October 2016. This report presents the results of that work. The project archive will be stored at the Warwickshire Museum under Site Code CC15. All human remains were reinterred in the churchyard, adjacent to the new extension.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The site lies wholly within the parish of Cubbington, in the north-east part of the village. The church and churchyard stands on elevated ground with rising ground to the north of the church. The boundaries for the site are formed by Church Hill to the south-east and Church Lane to the south-west, centred at National Grid Reference SP3438 6834 (Fig 1).

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the area is Mercia Mudstone Group, overlaid by superficial deposits of Baginton Sand and Gravel (British Geological Survey 2017).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cubbington, then *Cubitone* and *Conbintone*, is mentioned in the Domesday survey of 1086 when it had an estimated population of c.90 people. Lewin, Chetelbern and Turbern held it prior to the Conquest, and the Church of Coventry, the Count of Meulan and Roger de Iveri held it after (VCH 1904, 305, 316 and 327). No mention is made of a priest at the time of the survey, suggesting that a church was not in existence at that time.
- 3.2 St Mary's Church is Cubbington's parish church (Warwickshire Historic Environment Record No MWA 2511), is a Grade I Listed building, which lies on the north-east side of the medieval settlement of Cubbington (WA 9508). The churchyard walls and gates are also Listed (Grade II). The construction of the present church was probably started by the Augustinian canons of Kenilworth in the early 12th century and, when finished, consisted of the nave, chancel, south aisle and tower. The church of Saint Mary has a documented chronology of vicars dating from 1346. The church was originally a chapelry of Leek Wootton and was granted to Kenilworth Priory at the priory's foundation by Geoffrey de Clinton in 1122 and must therefore date between 1086 and 1122. By 1331 Cubbington had become a separate parish and was appropriated by (fully granted to) the monastery; a vicarage with house, mortuaries, altarage and small tithes being granted in 1345. The north aisle was added in 1346-50 (Peppitt 2000, 23). The door in the north aisle is referred to as the 'devil's door' being the provision made for the exit of the evil one after being exorcized by Holy Baptism.
- 3.3 The Historic Environment Record (HER) records the site as follows (the entry is largely taken from the original Listed Building description):

Chancel with north and south vestries, clear storied nave with north and south aisles, south porch, and west tower. Earliest part is the south arcade of early 12th century date. Tower of exceptionally massive construction added about the end of the 12th century. Aisles may have been rebuilt during the 13th century, to which period the south doorway belongs, but the windows, insofar as they are original work, belong to the 14th century, when the chancel appears to have been rebuilt and probably lengthened. The chancel was repaired in 1780, and about 1830 considerable repairs were done to the south aisle. Very extensive restoration in 1885, when the north

arcade was completely rebuilt, both aisles extended east to form vestries, and the porch rebuilt. Nave and chancel roofs renewed 1899. Font may be of 12th century date. Cubbington was at first a chapelry of Leek Wootton, and so granted to Kenilworth Priory at its foundation in 1122; it had become a separate parish by 1331.

3.4 Pevsner's entry is as follows:

Red sandstone. Norman W tower with clasping buttresses. The bell-openings on the N side two early C13 lancets. C13 S doorway. Dec chancel with reticulated tracery. Low perp N aisle and small clerestorey. The S arcade is Norman again, and probably earlier than the tower. Short round piers, square, multi-scalloped capitals. Single-step arch in the middle, two later re-cut arches l. and r. The N arcade probably Dec. Octagonal piers and – an oddity – single chamfered arches. The arcade was rebuilt in 1885. In the chancel plain ogee-headed SEDILIA and EASTER SEPULCHRE. Tie-beam roof with collar beams and queen posts. (Pevsner and Wedgwood 1974, 284).

3.5 The restoration of 1885 cost £1000 (Peppitt 2000). The west gallery and high back pews, erected in 1829, were demolished. The belfry was thrown open to the rest of the church and the plaster removed from the walls. The slate roof blocking the clerestorey windows on the south side was removed.

3.6 The churchyard has been enlarged at least three times according to Peppitt (2000, 31), although Ordnance survey maps show three enlargements during the 20th century alone. In the 14th century the area to the south-west of the church contained the vicarage and the land formed the vicarage grounds. A new vicarage was built in 1726 on the same site, or close to it and this is shown on a print of early 19th-century date. The present vicarage was built in 1821, outside of the present churchyard, therefore freeing this land for burials. In 1855 the churchyard was enlarged by encasing a timber yard and surrounding ground, given by the Wise family (ibid), although Peppitt does not indicate where this timber yard was.

3.7 The buildings in the area surrounding the church are of some age, although timber-framed buildings have been demolished in this historic core of the village, since the 19th century.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The main aim of the work was to record any archaeological remains disturbed by the development, to collate the records in an archaeological archive and present the significant aspects of the archive in a report for dissemination.
- 4.2 The secondary aim was to form an understanding of the remains recorded in terms of their character and date, and to place the evidence in its local and regional context.
- 4.3 The objective of the work was a programme of controlled excavation to development formation levels, or the geological natural, whichever the higher.
- 4.4 The work undertaken involved the examination of early map evidence as well as records of archaeological remains in the area and local historical journals and other publications.
- 4.5 One or more experienced archaeologists were made available for each day of ground disturbance when notified by the client in accordance with WSI and planning condition.

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The work was undertaken in two phases, with the first phase taking place between February and March 2016 and the second in October 2016. The human bones excavated were reinterred adjacent to the new extension in April 2017.
- 5.2 The initial groundwork consisted of reduction of the ground within the footprint of the proposed new building, to a depth of 1.00m, before the excavation of the footings (a further 0.60m deep) for the new building started. This initial work cut into the graveyard soil (2) which was up to 0.71m deep and contained fragments of disarticulated human bone, post-medieval pottery and floor tile. This graveyard soil had been cut for the insertion of a modern yellow gas pipe (7; at a depth of 0.65m) which ran parallel to the north wall of the church, along the centre of the proposed new build. No burials were disturbed at this level, however, once the ground was further reduced for the wall footings parts of articulated skeletons began to be exposed. The majority of the burials were recorded in the long foundation trench, running WNW/ESE. The soft conditions of the ground meant that the section sides were prone to collapsing. This necessitated the shoring of the sections to provide safe working conditions. . In the first phase of work articulated remains were exposed in the eastern trench when the foundation trench itself was reduced (skeleton 11, which was immediately below the line of the gas pipe, and adjacent skeleton 19).
- 5.3 In October 2016 ground reduction re-commenced and the section edge set back by a further half metre to allow for a French drain around the building. Once the ground was further reduced for the wall footings parts of coffins and articulated skeletons were exposed. The uppermost skeletons appeared at roughly the same level, with skulls at between 84.20m aod and 84.56m aod, while the surrounding ground level was between 85.62m and 85.78m aod. This suggests that the coffins were buried in graves approximately 5 feet deep, although family graves may have been cut deeper for the primary occupant. The majority of the burials were recorded in the long foundation trench, running WNW/ESE. Any skeleton, part skeleton, or coffin exposed within the footprint was excavated and disarticulated human bone was collected for reburial. The soft conditions of the ground meant that the section sides were prone to collapsing. This necessitated the shoring of the sections to provide safe working conditions.

5.4 All the skeletons and part skeletons excavated were adults and all those with evidence of the occupant's identity were from burials of the first half of the 20th century. In some cases this was from gravestone evidence, in others from the depositum plate on the coffin. Levels taken on the skulls suggest that majority of the coffins were buried at a depth of 5 feet. Skeletons known to have been buried less than 100 years ago were not removed from the churchyard, but were boxed up for reburial.

Table of burials

SK	Description	Coffin evidence	Name/Date
11	Upper thigh to shoulders, extended to removed skull, adult	Fragments of wood, fabric and copper pins	
15	Full skeleton, burial above her husband George Johnson (SK 60) (skull 84.56m aod)	Single break elm coffin, four grips plus six brass coffin lid screws	Laura Johnson, 1942, aged 75, gravestone
19	Adult leg bones	Nails down sides of legs	
34	Left-hand side of adult skeleton in service trench	Metal remnants	
37	Lower legs of adult skeleton in service trench	Coffin grips and wood fragments	
43	Skull and hand bones, rest of coffin remained <i>in situ</i> as below required level, bone in poor condition	None noted	
45	Disarticulated skull, bone in poor condition	None noted	
49	Not excavated, under section – gravestone removed and relocated	presumed	Peppitt, 1915/1930
54	Full skeleton (skull 84.36m aod)	Single break coffin with four grips	
58	Full skeleton	Four Cu alloy grips	Kate Underwood,

		and plate	1940, aged 68
60	Full skeleton (skull 84.44m aod)	Single break elm coffin, four grips	George Johnson, 1940, aged 78
62	Full skeleton, adipose fluid at base of grave	Elm casket, four cast iron grips, two iron rings	Jane Knibb 1918, aged 86
66	Full skeleton, hair present (skull 84.20m aod)	Single break elm coffin with six Cu alloy grips	Elizabeth Moody 1923, aged 53
71	Full skeleton, poor condition, two iron plates (skull 84.34m aod)	Single break elm coffin with six cast iron grips and two cast iron rings	
75	Full skeleton, persistent metopic suture, tooth bridge at back of mandible with gold wire (skull 84.21m aod)	Single break coffin with eight cast iron grips with brass detail	
79	Unexcavated		
82	Full skeleton with coffin plate (skull 84.20m aod)	Single break elm coffin with eight grips, coffin plate on lid	Ann Skelsey 1914, aged 84
86	Full skeleton	Elm coffin with eight Cu alloy grips and plate	David Adkins 1950. Aged 91
88	Skeleton		

5.5 Two lengths of service trench were excavated and observed. The first 0.50m wide drainage trench length ran from the east side of the new building and around the north side of the new building footprint. The majority of the trench cut only into graveyard soil overlain by topsoil. Skeletal remains were exposed in the western part of the trench where the excavation was deepest due to the required fall for the drain (skeletons 34, 37 and 43). The second length of trench was along the line of the path leading to the gate. This trench was 0.40m wide and c.0.63m deep. The lowest layer encountered was a layer of brown sandy loam (30), which was cut into by 50mm. It was overlaid by a layer of 0.50m of mixed brown a red loam (29) which contained

very frequent fragments of red and olive sandstone, 19th-century bricks and roof tile, and was interpreted as demolition rubble from the 1885 remodelling of the church. The rubble was overlain by the tarmac path, which was 90mm thick (24). The line of a service trench alongside the tower had its tarmac cut, but its excavation was not observed.

- 5.6 A number of gravestones were recorded before they were re-located. One of these (memorial 3) belonged to James Long (died 1918, aged 45) and Gunner James Long (died 1920 aged 23). Another (memorial 8) to sisters Rosa Underwood (died 1920 aged 51) and Kate Underwood (died 1940 aged 68), the latter of which was excavated as she was the higher burial. The kerb grave (memorial 51) for the Peppitt family was relocated. Two gravestones fully outside of the excavated area (Hinde, memorial 26, and Powers – memorial 27) were also recorded prior to their relocation. The white marble stepped cross of the Knibb/Johnson family (memorial 28) was also relocated.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 A small amount of medieval material was recovered from the excavations, including a sherd of pottery, a fragment of painted window glass and a number of fragments of medieval floor tile. The latter materials give us insight into the former decoration of the church windows and floors. Later pottery, animal bone fragments etc probably derived from public use of the churchyard for markets etc. The diverse and non-religious use of the churchyard in both the medieval and post-medieval periods is well documented. (ref).
- 6.2 It is likely that the majority, if not all, of the burials recorded were of later post-medieval date. All those with dating evidence were from the first half of the 20th century. All coffins recorded were single break elm coffins, suggesting they were not of 18th-century or earlier date. The lack of medieval burials may be ascribed to the traditional view that the shaded north side of the church was an unfavourable area for burial. Gittings argues that burial on the north side of churches was avoided except in examples of a 'bad death' (Gittings 1999, 150). Some overtly superstitious ways of organising a cemetery may have been highly localised (Sayer 2100, 202), with the tradition associated with a particular church. Recent excavations on the north side of other Warwickshire churches have uncovered burials of medieval date, as well as of later date. Later in the post-medieval period some of the superstitions about burial on the north side of the church may have diminished, particularly as demand for burial space became more acute.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeology Warwickshire would like to thank St Mary's Church PCC for commissioning the work and Heather Temple of Rodney Melville and Partners for liaising. Thanks in particular to the staff of Crofts for their help during groundworks in October.

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APPENDICES

A List of contexts

Context	Description	Comment
1	Very dark grey loam	Topsoil
2	Layer of reddish brown sandy loam	Graveyard layer
3	Sandstone gravestone	James Long, 1918, James Long 1920
4	Tarmac path	Parallel to church
5	Concrete retaining kerb	Retains gravel around church
6	Gravel layer	French drain, 0.50m thick
7	Gas pipe	Modern gas pipe crossing footprint
8	Sandstone gravestone	Rosa and Kate Underwood, 1920/1940
9	Grave cut	
10	Coffin in 9	
11	Skeleton in coffin 10	Lower legs in section
12	Grave fill of 9	
13	Grave cut	Knibb/Johnson family grave
14	Coffin in 13	Single break elm
15	Skeleton in 14	Laura Theresa Johnson 1942
16	Fill of 13	
17	Grave cut	
18	Coffin in 17	
19	Skeleton in 18	
20	Fill of 17	
21	Concrete slabs	Former toilet base
22	North wall of church	
23	Tarmac path	North-west of tower
24	Tarmac path	South-west of church
25	Tarmac surfacing	Outside of the church
26	Sandstone gravestone	George and Elizabeth Hinde, 1846/1826
27	Marble gravestone	Elizabeth Powers, 1908
28	Marble cross memorial	Knibb/Johnson family
29	Mixed layer with brick and stone fragments	Demolition layer form 1885 remodelling
30	Layer of brown sandy loam	Below 29
31	NOT USED	
32	NOT USED	

33	Grave cut	
34	Skeleton in 33	In drain trench, right side below baulk
35	Grave fill of 33	
36	Metal part of coffin	Associated with 34
37	Skeleton	
38	Grave cut for 37	
39	Grave fill of 38	
40	Coffin for 37	
41	Grave cut for 43	
42	Grave fill of 41	
43	Skeleton	Bone in poor condition
44	Greyish yellow sandy silt	Geological natural
45	Skeleton	?disarticulated skull
46	Masonry	Remains of stone wall
47	Area of dark grey silty sandy loam	
48	Grave cut	Not excavated – Peppitt Grave
49	Skeleton	Peppitt – not excavated
50	Grave fill of 48	
51	Sandstone grave kerb with bird bath	George and Mary Peppitt
52	Grave cut	
53	Coffin in 52	Single break elm coffin with 4 handles and coffin plate
54	Skeleton in 53	
55	Grave fill of 52	
56	Grave cut for 58	
57	Coffin in 56	Four cu alloy grips and depositum
58	Skeleton	Kate Underwood, 1940
59	Grave fill of 56	
60	Skeleton	George Johnson, 1940
61	Coffin for 60	Single break elm coffin, four grips
62	Skeleton	Jane Johnson, 1918
63	Coffin for 62	Elm casket with 4 iron grips, 2 iron rings
64	Grave cut	
65	Grave fill of 64	
66	Skeleton in 64	Elizabeth Moody, 1923
67	Coffin for 66	Single break elm coffin with 6 cu alloy grips

68	Grave cut for 71	
69	Fill of 68	
70	Coffin in 68	Single break elm coffin with 6 iron grips and 2 rings, iron plates
71	Skeleton in 70	unknown
72	Grave cut for 75	
73	Grave fill of 72	
74	Coffin in 72	Single break elm coffin with 8 iron grips with brass detail, decayed plate on chest
75	Skeleton in 74	Gold dental bridge
76	Grave cut	unexcavated
77	Grave fill of 76	unexcavated
78	Coffin	unexcavated
79	Skeleton in 78	unexcavated
80	Grave cut for 82	
81	Coffin in 80	Single break coffin with 8 grips
82	Skeleton	Ann Skelsey, 1914, aged 84
83	Grave fill of 80	
84	Grave cut for 86	
85	Coffin	with 8 cu grips and plate
86	Skeleton	David Adkins, 1950, aged 91
87	Grave fill of 84	
88	Skeleton	Adjacent to 82
89	Cut for 88	
90	Fill of 89	

B List of Finds

Context	Type	SF	Number	Comments
2	Pottery		11	<i>Creamware x 4, Westerwald stoneware x 1, Mocha x 2, Midlands Yellow x 1, Black-glazed coarseware x 2, medieval x 1</i>
2	Clay pipe		1	<i>stem</i>
2	Roof tile		2	<i>Hand-made</i>
2	Floor tile		3	<i>1 near complete, no glaze remaining, 1 x fragment, 1 x triangular yellow glazed</i>
2	Animal bone		1	<i>Sheep metatarsal</i>
2	Iron		1	<i>rod</i>
2	Glass		3	<i>Medieval, one painted with red lines</i>
35	Pottery		1	<i>Black-glazed coarseware</i>
36	Iron		1	<i>Part of coffin, including grips</i>
39	Pottery		2	<i>Midlands Yellow and Black-glazed coarseware</i>
39	Floor tile		1	<i>Corner of decorated slipped, medieval floor tile</i>
40	Wood		1	<i>Coffin fragment</i>
53	Iron			<i>Coffin grips</i>
53	Cu alloy		1	<i>Button</i>
U/S	Animal bone*		4	<i>Cattle metacarpal fragment, rib frags</i>
U/S	Bone handle		1	<i>Rectangular sectioned knife handle with corroded blade</i>

**unstratified animal bone discarded*

C Gravestones recorded

Memorial 3

Type Sandstone headstone with pointed top
Dimensions Ht 1.80m W 0.73m Th 70mm
Family commemorated LONG No commemorated 2
Condition Good, lying flat
Inscription

IN
LOVING MEMORY
Of
JAMES LONG
DIED APRIL . 2. 1918.
AGED 45 YEARS

ALSO N^o 249375
GUNNER JAMES WILLIAM LONG R.F.A.
SON OF THE ABOVE
DIED MAY . 6. 1920
AGED 23 YEARS.

IN THE MIDST OF LIFE WE ARE IN DEATH

Memorial 8

Type Sandstone
Dimensions Ht 1.80m W 0.80m Th 160mm
Family commemorated UNDERWOOD No commemorated 2
Condition Good, lying flat (buried)
Inscription Roman, incised with black painted letters

IN
LOVING MEMORY
OF
MY DEAR SISTER
ROSA ANN UNDERWOOD
WHO DIED MAY 29TH 1920
AGED 51 YEARS
"REST IN PEACE"
ALSO OF
KATE GAYDON UNDERWOOD
SISTER OF THE ABOVE
WHO FELL ASLEEP JAN^y 18TH 1940
AGED 68 YEARS
"UNTIL THE DAY DAWNS"

Memorial 26

Type Sandstone
Dimensions Ht 1.80m W 0.80m Th 90mm
Family commemorated Hinde No Commemorated 2
Condition good, laid flat below turf
Inscription

IN

Memory of

GEORGE	ELIZABETH
HINDE	Wife of
Died Nov 15	GEORGE HINDE
1846	Died May 18
AGED 53.	1826
	AGED 31 YEARS

Also of Edmund their son
Aged 11 months

Memorial 27

Type White marble
Dimensions Ht 1.80m W 0.77m Th 80mm
Family commemorated Powers No commemorated 1
Condition good but displaced, decorated with flowers and leaves
Inscription

IN

LOVING MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH POWERS.
WIFE OF JOHN POWERS.
*WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
ON THE 20TH OF JANUARY 1908
AGED 63 YEARS*

"GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN"

J TANDEY

LEAM^N.

Memorial 28

Type White marble, Latin cross, 3-step base
Dimensions Ht 1.56m W 0.66m Th 100mm
Family commemorated Knibb and Johnson No commemorated 3
Condition Good
Inscription IHS on cross

IN
LOVING MEMORY OF
JANE
WIDOW OF JOHN KNIBB
OF BIRMINGHAM
WHO PASSED AWAY
MARCH 18, 1918
AGED 86

NO PARTING YONDER

ALSO
GEORGE JOHNSON
DIED JAN^Y 9TH 1940
AGED 78 YEARS

ALSO
LAURA THERESA
WIFE OF
GEORGE JOHNSON
DIED JAN 24TH 1942
AGED 75 YEARS
DAUGHTER OF JOHN KNIBB

Memorial 51

Type Sandstone kerbed grave with bird bath on corner
Dimensions L 1.80 W 0.76m
Family commemorated Peppitt No commemorated 2
Condition good
Inscription Sandstone kerbing around grave, inscriptions on two of the stones

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
GEORGE PEPPITT
DIED 10TH JUNE 1930
AGED 87 YEARS

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
MARY PEPPITT HIS WIFE
DIED 6TH AUG 1915
AGED 72 YEARS

Coffin plates associated with burials

Skeleton 66

ELIZABETH MOODY

Died
2th APRIL 1923
AGED 53 YEARS

Skeleton 82

ANN SKELSEY
DIED
JUNE 10TH 1914
Aged
84 YEARS

Skeleton 86

DAVID ADKINS
DIED
29TH DEC 1950
AGED 91 YEARS



1. Start of groundworks in March 2016, gas pipe exposed



2. Groundworks October 2016 with shored sections



3. Skeleton 11, below modern gas pipe



4. Legs from skeleton 19



5. Skeletons 15 and 60



6. Skeleton 34



7. Skeleton 54



8. Skeleton 62 with remains of coffin below



9. Skeleton 66 with depositum



10. Remains of skeleton 86, in wooden coffin



11. Coffins 81 and 85, skeleton 88



12. Excavation of coffins



13. Excavation of skeleton 71



14. Memorial 3, Long family



15. Memorial 8, Underwood sisters



16. Memorial 26, Hinde family



17. Memorial 27, Elizabeth Powers



18. Kerbed grave 51, memorial to George Peppitt



19. Kerbed grave 51, memorial to Mary Peppitt



20. Ann Skelsey depositum



21. Coffin grip and depositum, David Adkins

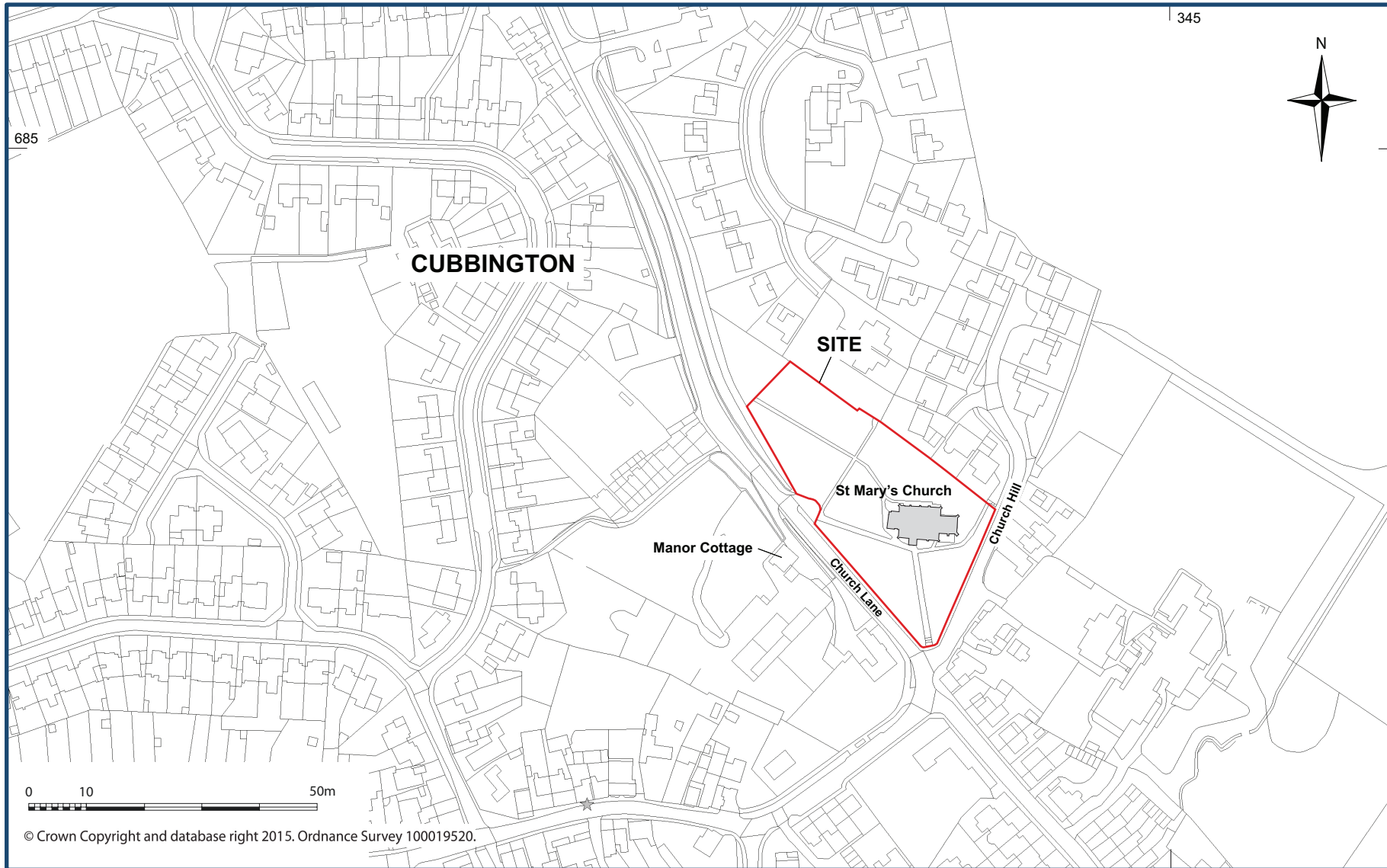


Fig 1:Site location

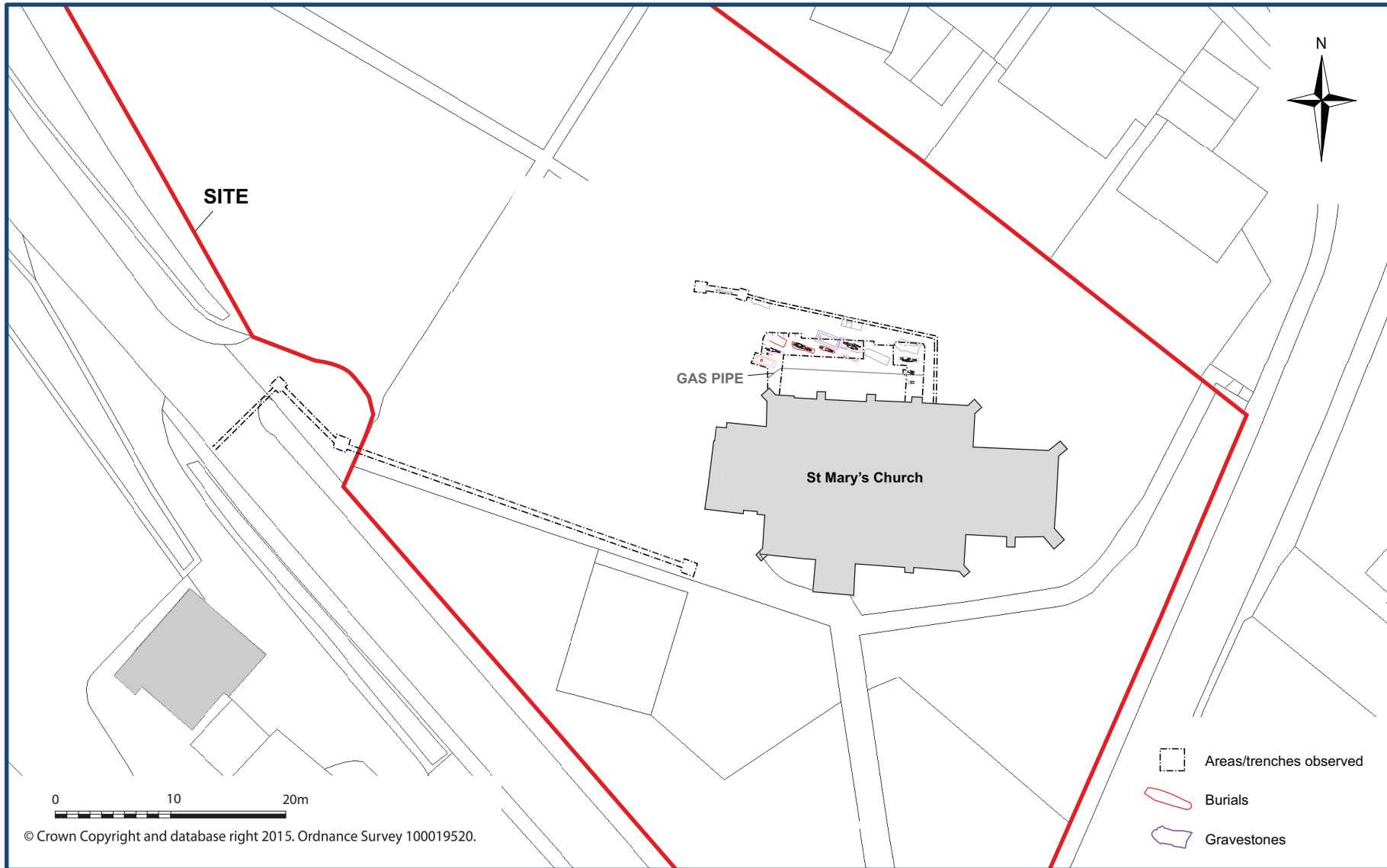


Fig 2: Groundworks observed

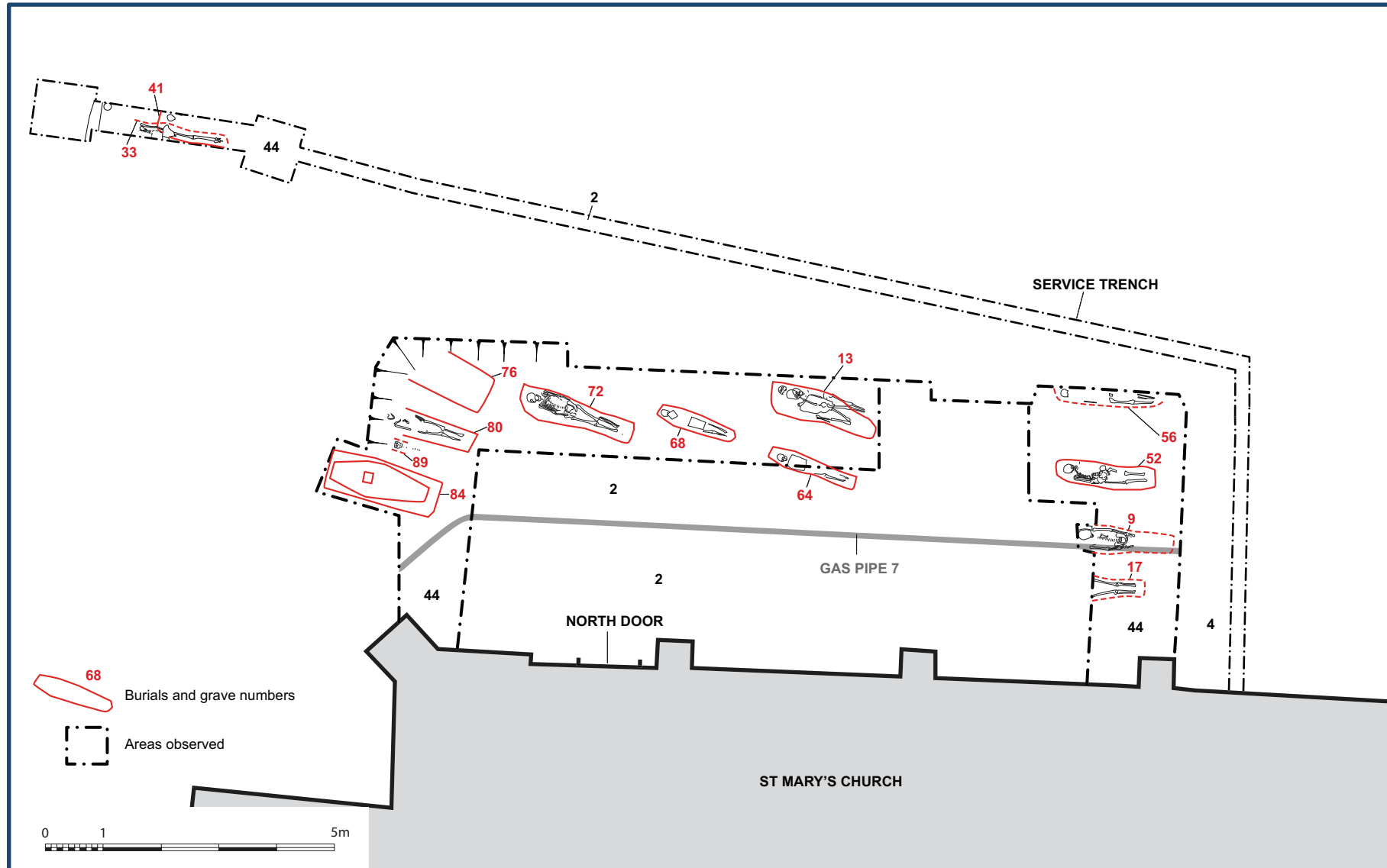


Fig 3: Location of burials

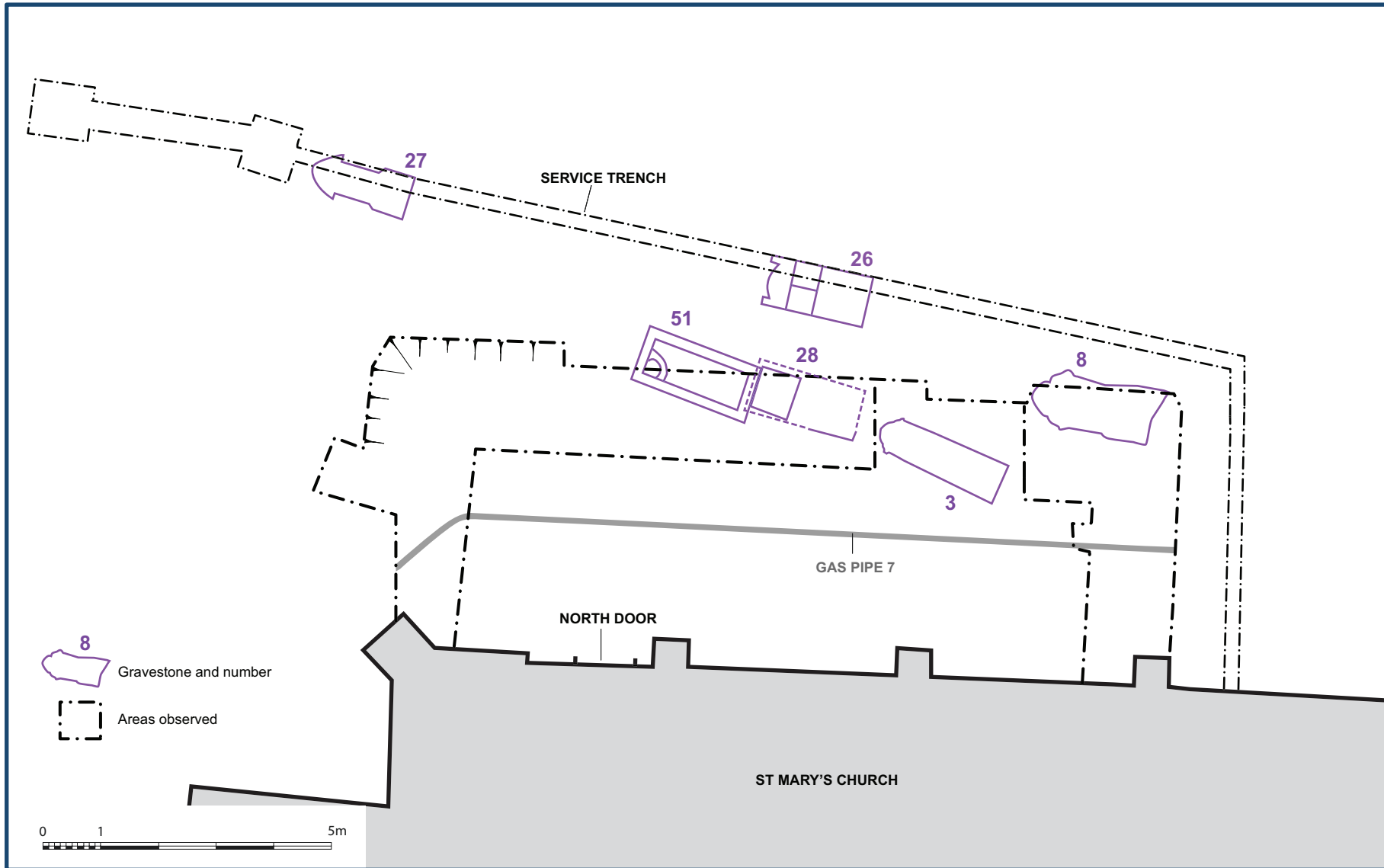


Fig 4: Location of gravestones recorded