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**Brompton Hall
Brompton-by-Sawdon
North Yorkshire
Archaeological Watching Brief**

March 1997
MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

**Brompton Hall
Brompton by Sawdon
North Yorkshire
Archaeological Watching Brief**

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Introduction

In February 1997, MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Building Design and Management, North Yorkshire County Council. The work entailed the laying of a water pipe along land to the south of Brompton Hall School, and running into the churchyard of All Saints Church, Brompton (SE 9425 8220: Fig. 1).

Brompton-by-Sawdon lies in the Vale of Pickering on the A170 Thirsk to Scarborough Road, and the site is situated on the western side of the village.

The pipe trench was located in the landscaped gardens belonging to Brompton Hall School, which rise gradually to the north. The borders are surrounded by trees and the whole area is lawned. To the north-west is a grassy bank with steps built in to it, leading to the higher levels of the garden, to the north-east is the hall itself (Pl. 1). The pipe trench ran north-south along the western side of the grounds and east - west along the south of the grounds before turning north-south through the hedge and into the church yard (Fig. 1).

The site stands on the border of soils of the Aberford, Elmton 2, Landbeach and Wick 1 soil associations on a solid geology of Jurassic limestone and glacio-fluvial drift (Mackney et al. 1983).

All archaeological work has been funded by Building, Design and Management, North Yorkshire County Council.

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Historical Background

The name Brompton itself means an enclosed piece of land overgrown with Gorse in Old English. Brompton has been recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) as Bruntun(e) - Brunton. It changed from Brunton through Birunton, Brumton (1219), Brumpton (1253), until it was finally recorded as Brompton in 1285.

The church of All Saints' and a priest of the church were associated with Berenger de Toni's

lands in 1086 and the advowson descended with the manor to the Vescys. William de Vescy in 1295 granted it to Malton Priory. Fragments of the 12th century church are built in to the present structure.

In addition, the church of All Saints has structural elements in situ dating to the 14th century, these include the Tower, West end of the North Aisle, and the Font. The rest of the church was rebuilt during the 15th century when a vice was added to the earlier tower. The church was extensively restored in 1878, the roofs renewed and a south porch was added in 1895.

Methods

The pipe trench was machine excavated using a Kubota with a untoothed ditching bucket. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m, and measured 0.43m wide and was 180m long.

An archive was maintained throughout the excavation with plans recorded at 1:20 and photographs taken on colour and monochrome plate and colour slide.

Results

Natural bedrock (context 10000) was observed within 0.20m of the ground surface in the extreme northern portion of the pipeline (Pl. 1). Directly above the natural limestone was a friable sandy silt topsoil (context 1001). The depth of deposit was greater in the southern area of the site and natural deposits were not observed in the churchyard itself.

Near to the church tower (the southern most end of the pipeline : Fig. 2) within 0.31m (35.90m A.O.D) of the existing ground surface (36.21m A.O.D) two large limestone blocks were recorded in situ (context 1004 : Fig. 3 : Pl. 2). Covering the limestone blocks was a thin layer of a compacted sandy material with small white flecks and small flecks of occasional charcoal (context 1005). This may have been a bonding material which would suggest that these two limestone blocks may have been the remains of a previous wall. Two other limestone blocks were removed from this area by machine measuring c. 0.75m x 0.31m x 0.42m, they may have also originally been part of this wall.

Immediately to the south of the wall were fragments of limestone amongst a matrix of gravely sand with occasional limestone fragments (context 1006). This may be demolition rubble from the wall or it may be from the backfill of the foundation cut for wall 1004 or the church tower. Wall 1004, however, was on a different alignment to the church and as only a small area was uncovered and recorded any interpretations have to be conjectural.

The foundation courses of the church tower (context 1007) were also observed during the excavation of the southern end of the pipe trench (context 1008 : Pl. 3).

Within the length of the pipeline, in the grounds of Brompton Hall, a number of disarticulated

human remains were observed within 0.35m of the existing ground surface (Fig. 3). The disturbed nature of the remains suggested that the route of the pipeline was along the route of a previous fence line or boundary. Large concrete blocks were observed in sections of the pipe trench (Pl. 4) which may have supported fence posts or foundations for this earlier boundary.

The remains were observed within 5.90m from the existing hedge line (Fig. 4) which marks the boundary of the churchyard as it stands today. This suggested that the churchyard originally may have extended at least a further 6m to the north and at some point (possibly when Brompton Hall was erected) this land was reclaimed and landscaped as part of the gardens for the Hall. The degree of landscaping in the Hall's grounds is evident by the occurrence of natural in the north of the pipe trench and on the land to the east of the pipe trench where the original topography still survives. The shallowness at which human remains were observed may also be addressed to the previous landscaping.

Conclusions

The excavations at Brompton Hall indicated that human remains were present within the southern area of the gardens. Their disturbed nature and the fact that they are within 0.35m of the existing ground surface suggested that the bodies had been disturbed in the past possibly during either landscaping at the site or during the construction of a fenceline. The extent and date of the inhumations is presently unknown due to the limited amount of evidence gained from the Watching Brief.

Bibliography

Mackney D. et al (1983) Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1. Northern England. Soil Survey of England and Wales.

Page W. (1923) A History of Yorkshire, North Riding. Volume 2. Victoria County History.

Smith A.H. (1928) Place Names of the North Riding. Cambridge University Press

APPENDIX 1

Context Listing

Context	Description
1000	cut for water pipe trench
1001	10YR 4/2 sandy silt - topsoil (in grounds of Brompton Hall)
1002	10YR 4/2 sandy silt - topsoil (in churchyard)
1003	10YR 4/1 sandy silt
1004	wall
1005	10YR 4/3 sandy silt with mortar and charcoal flecks
1006	10YR 4/2 silty sand and gravel with occasional limestone fragments
1007	foundation course for Tower
1008	cut for oil pipe trench (churchyard)
1009	10YR 4/1 sandy silt (fill of 1008)
1010	10YR 4/1 silty sand

APPENDIX 2

Archive Listing

1. Plan of wall 1004. Scale 1:20

APPENDIX 3

Photographic Catalogue

1. General view of site. Facing north.
2. General view of site. Facing north.
3. General view of site. Facing south-east.
4. General view of site. Facing south-east.
5. General view of site. Facing south.
6. General view of site. Facing south.
7. View of pipe trench. South facing section. Facing north.
8. View of pipe trench. South facing section. Facing north.
9. View of wall 1004. Facing south-east
10. View of wall 1004. Facing south-east
11. View of footings for Tower. Facing north-east.
12. View of footings for Tower. Facing north-east.
13. View of disturbed dressed stone.
14. View of disturbed dressed stone.

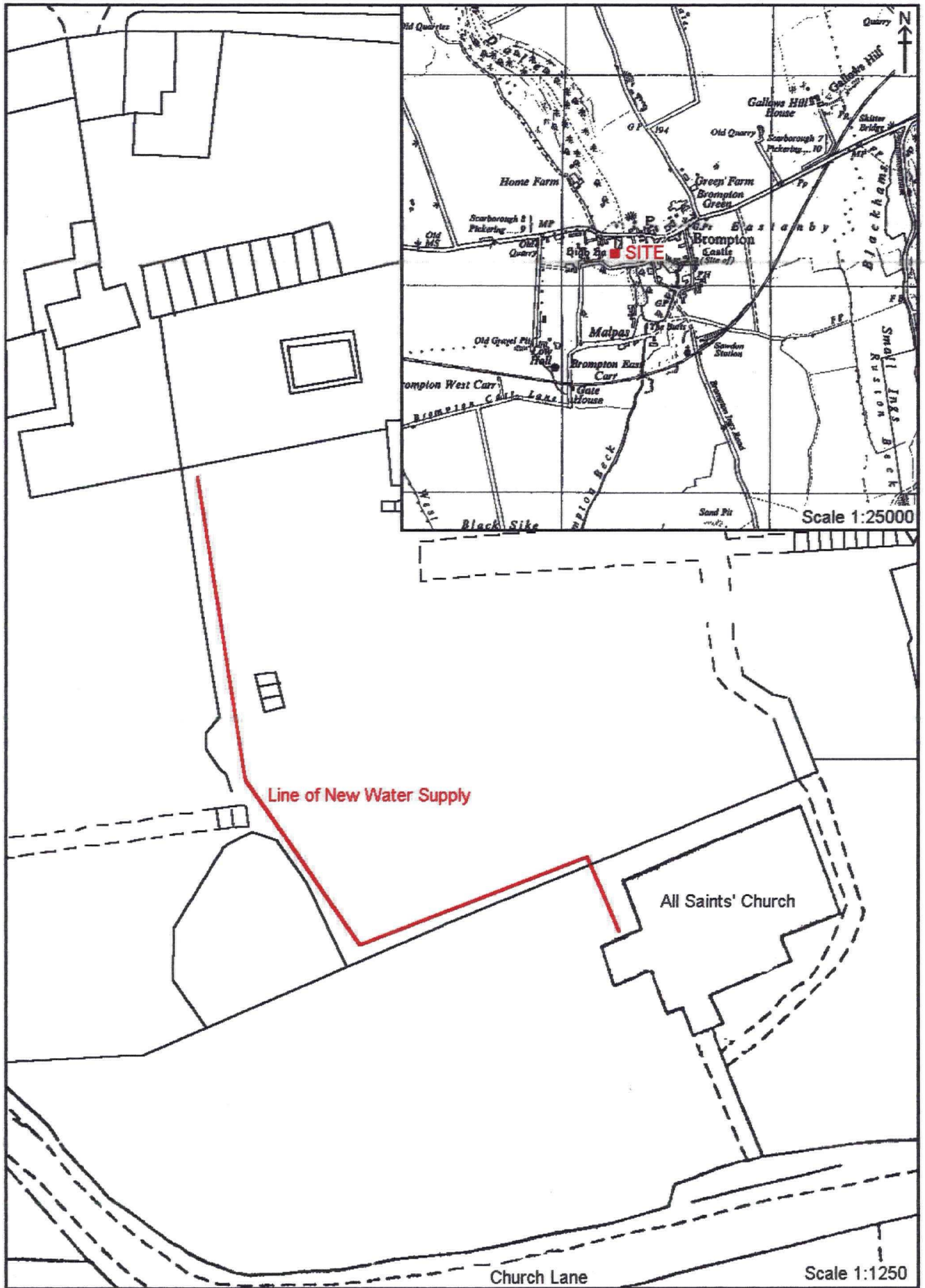


Figure 1. Site Location and Area of Archaeological Watching Brief.

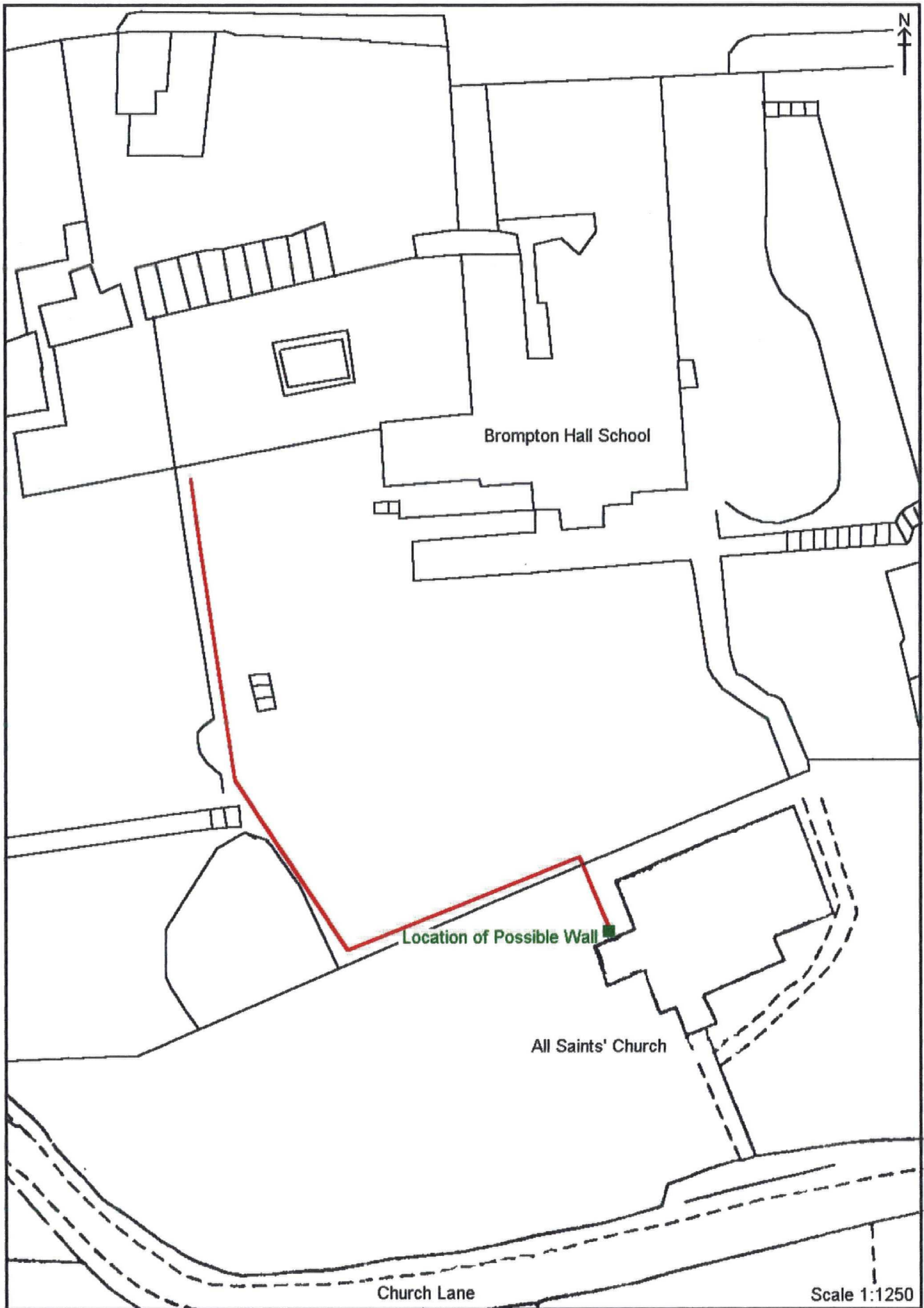


Figure 2. Location of possible wall remains.

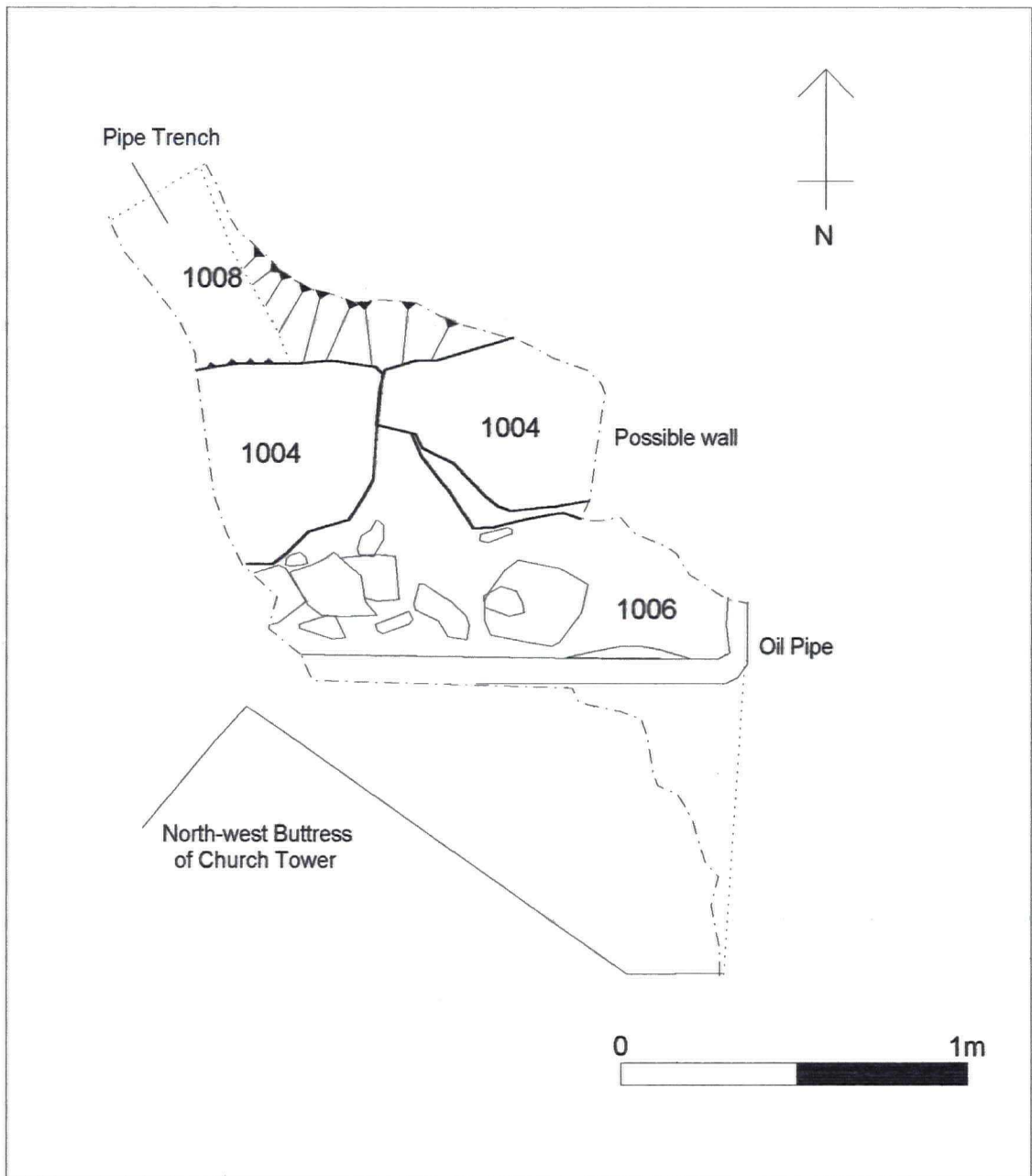


Figure 3. Plan of wall remains.

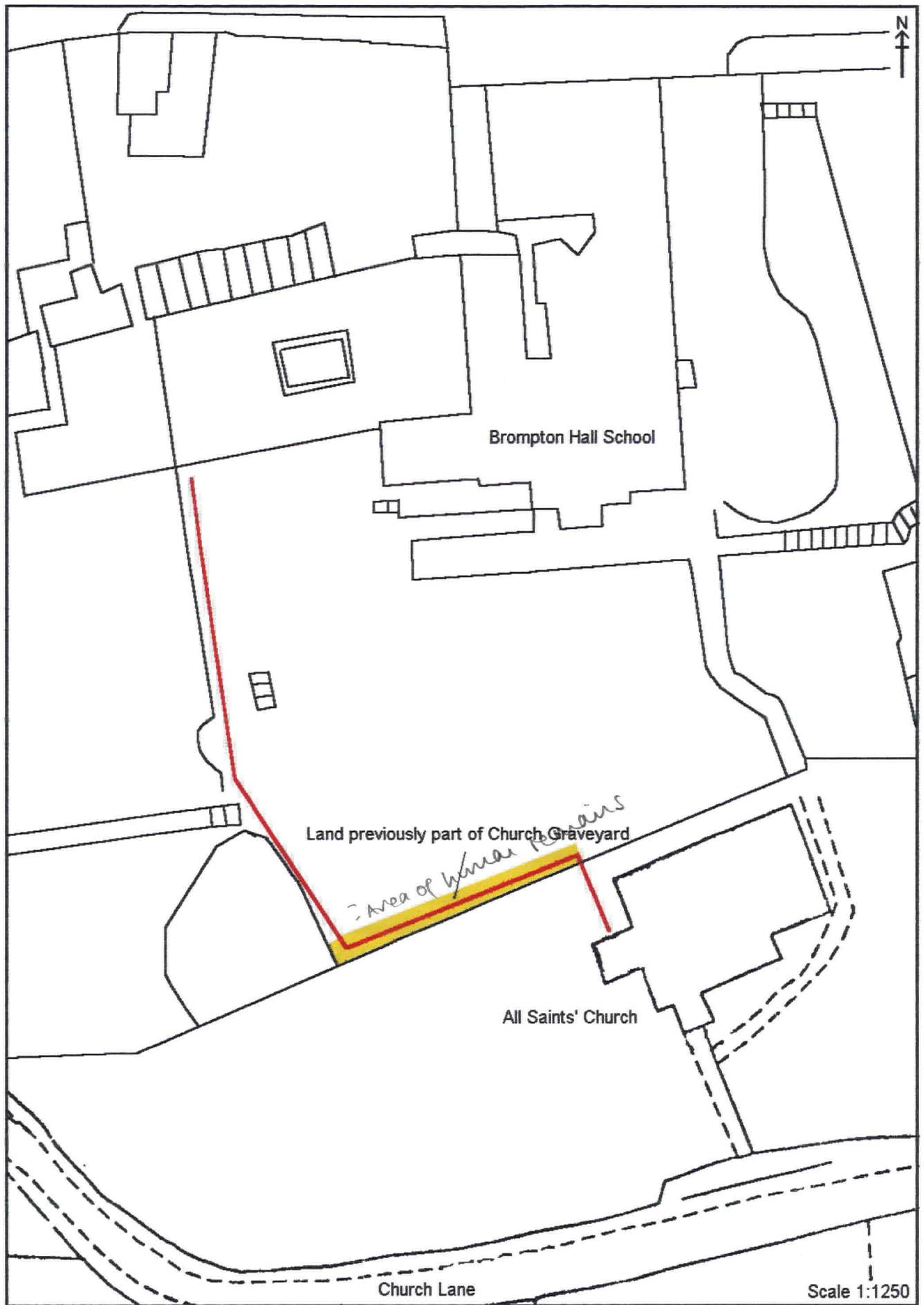


Figure 4. Possible extent of Graveyard.



Plate 1. General view of pipe trench. Facing north.



Plate 2. View of possible wall remains. Facing south-east.



Plate 3. View of foundation course of church tower. Facing north-east.

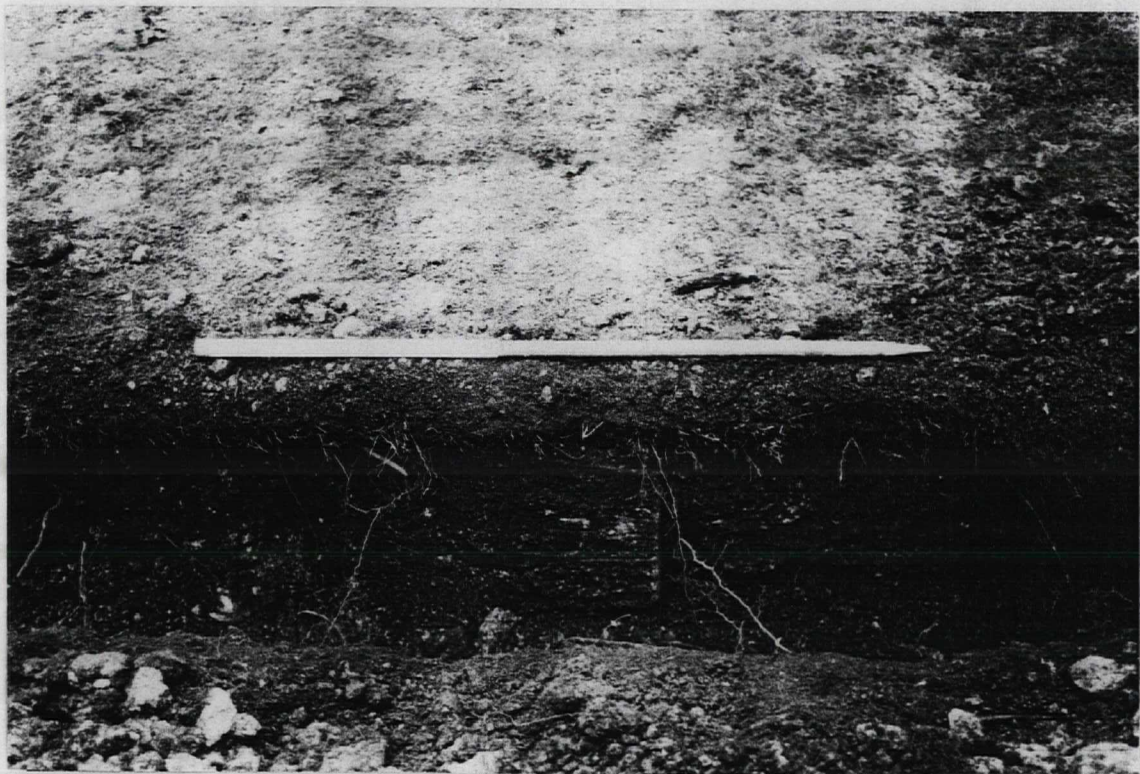


Plate 4. View of concrete blocks in section of pipe trench. Facing north