

Blythburgh Priory, Blythburgh

BLB 081

Archaeological Excavation Report

SCCAS Report No. 2012/084

Client: Nick Haward

Author: Stuart Boulter

August/2012

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Author: Stuart Boulter

Illustrators: Linzi Everett and Stuart Boulter

Editor: Rhodri Gardner

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Prepared By: Stuart Boulter
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Approved By: Rhodri Gardner
Position: Acting Contracts Manager
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Signed:

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Summary

Archaeological trenching undertaken by Time Team Archaeologists at Blythburgh Priory in 2009 was followed by two further, largely English Heritage funded, campaigns of investigation in 2010 and 2011. A fourth phase of work, that covered by this report, was carried out by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team in 2012. The 2012 works combined the reopening and reassessment of some of the Time Team trenches along with the excavation of new targeted trenches.

The principal findings were as follows:

- The presence of a cloister to the north of the church was confirmed with the ambulatory floor surface at a lower level to that of the adjacent church. The link between the two was provided by steps down from the north transept and probably the nave.
- A small section of the pre-priory north nave wall had survived under a large Ash tree stump removed as part of the project.
- The opening between the north nave wall and the north west tower drum pier had been blocked while the church was still in use. A similar opening to the south had the vestiges of steps leading up out of the nave.
- A bedding layer for a tile floor was identified in four separate trenches within the pre-priory phase nave. However, the layer post-dated plaster facing on the latest phase of building and was, therefore, not contemporary with, but later than the 11th or 12th century building.
- The south west corner of the south transept was found to be well preserved, but the eastern side had been completely robbed out as had the south east pier of the crossing tower.
- A clasping buttress recorded on the south west corner of the south transept suggested that there was no south cloister. However, it seems likely that a structure of some kind was present immediately to the south of the nave as an opening through the south transept wall immediately south of the tower did not appear to have accommodated a door frame.
- The floor level within the north transept appears to have been truncated and a series of steps constructed from re-used limestone mouldings were inserted, probably during the robbing/quarrying of the priory complex to obtain aggregate for road building.

1. Introduction

The site of the church belonging to Blythburgh Priory lies mostly within the grounds of the house known as The Priory (Fig. 1). Limited standing ruins are visible above ground which became the focus of three phases of archaeological investigation in 2009, 2010 and again in 2011 (detailed in section 2.3).

The present owners (Nick and Susie Haward) have enthusiastically driven the investigations which have variously been resourced by the makers of Channel 4's television programme Time Team (Videotext Communications Ltd.), English Heritage grant aided funding and by the owners themselves.

This report presents the results of targeted excavation work undertaken by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team (hereafter SCCAS/FPT) in April and May of 2012.

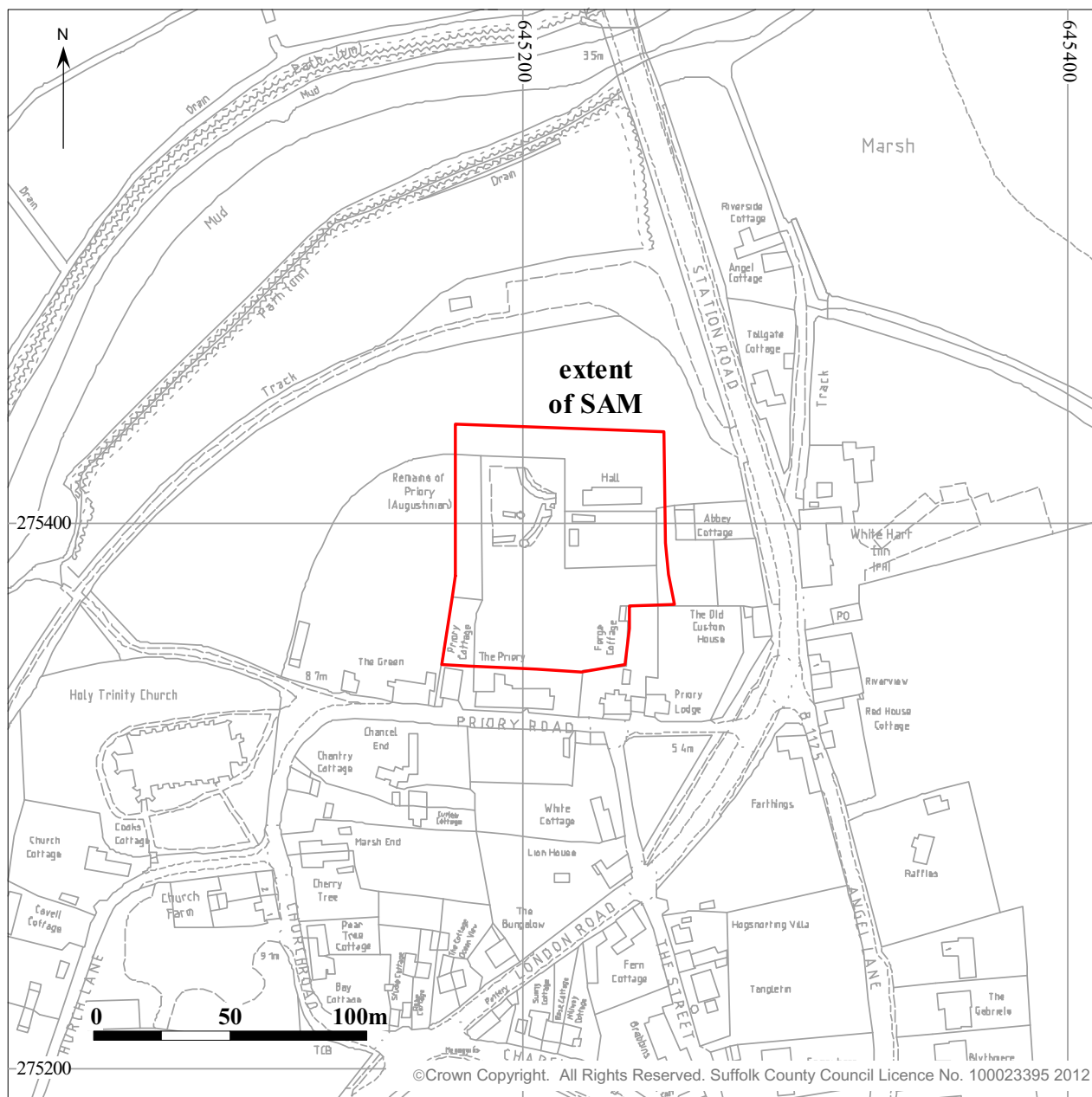
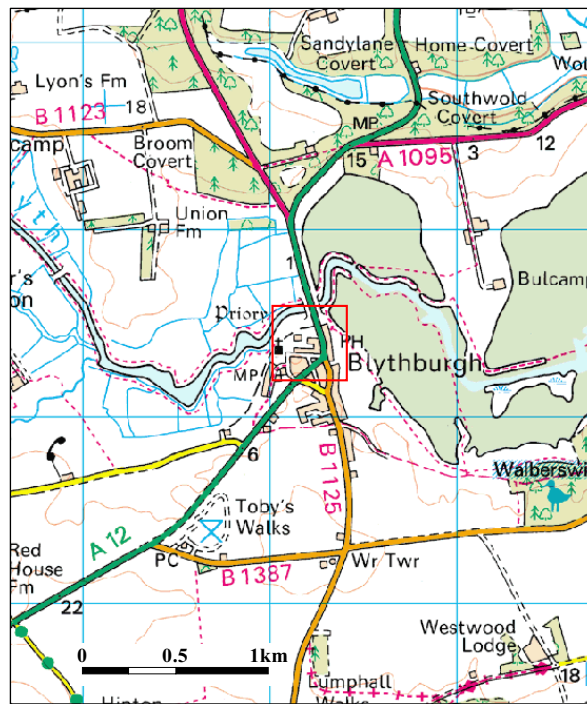
In addition, recommendations for a further series of hand-excavated trenches are detailed which will become formalised in a future bid for Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) and grant aid from English Heritage.

The rationale behind these recommendations is presented, including the specific archaeological questions that they are designed to answer.

2. The Excavation

2.1 Site location

The priory site is effectively located on a rounded promontory of land extending out into the tidal marshes on the south side of the estuary of the River Blyth (centred on TM 4520 7540) (Fig. 1). The A12, the main north south route along the Suffolk coast, runs immediately to the east of the site, and traverses the River Blyth close to a historic crossing point that may even have partially influenced the location of the Priory itself.



2.2 Geology and topography

The natural topographic trend of the site is characterised by a gentle slope down from SSW to NNE between the 10m and 5m contour lines. Localised landscaping/quarrying has altered this profile somewhat, including in the area of the extant ruin.

The underlying drift geology is glaciofluvial sands and gravels and is characterised by deep sandy soils.

2.3 Archaeological and historical background

The known archaeology and historic background of the general area has previously been presented in the grey literature report prepared for Videotext Communications Limited by Wessex Archaeology (Thompson 2009) and it seems unnecessary to repeat the details here.

Part of the priory site, a rather arbitrary rectangular area of some 6,500 square metres, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM SF215) (Fig. 1).

The priory site and the wider area of Blythburgh has been substantively linked to King Anna (the nephew of King Raedwald, himself thought to have been the occupant of the large ship burial at Sutton Hoo). His death in battle in 654 AD was followed by the erection of a shrine that was still being venerated in the 12th century (Thompson 2009 2). A shrine such as this would almost certainly have been located in a church and it is considered possible that the church that later formed part of the larger priory complex was one of the Minsters of King Ælfwald (Thompson 2009 2).

Anglo-Saxon finds have previously been reported from the priory site and even before the recent fieldwork it seemed reasonable to assume that the occupation of the site extended back beyond the date of the earliest of the standing ruins.

By the time of Domesday, the settlement was substantial with an established market and wealthy church. King Henry I granted the church to the Augustinians, with their presence recorded by 1147, continuing to occupy the site until its dissolution in 1537.

More recently, the construction of a turnpike road across the river and associated marsh to the north of the site (now part of the A12), is generally held responsible for the extensive robbing of building fabric from the complex, reducing what would have been a substantial ruin to its present condition.

Prior to the work detailed in this report, three earlier campaigns of fieldwork had been undertaken at the site: the first associated with making of a television programme (Time Team) with the second and third, in 2010 and 2011, under the direction Bob Carr (independent archaeologist formerly of SCCAS) and carried out by employees of the construction company owned by Nick Haward and local volunteers. Funding for the second and third phases of fieldwork was provided by an English Heritage grant.

In addition to hand and mechanically excavated trenches, The Time Team fieldwork included geophysical and landscape survey by GSB prospection and Stuart Ainsworth of English Heritage respectively. The majority of the trenches were concentrated around the standing ruin. However, the geophysical and landscape survey extended further afield, within the wider area of what was considered to be the priory precinct.

To summarise the Time Team investigations, a linear response recorded to the west and north of the ruins was interpreted as possibly representing the *vallum monasteria*, the ditched boundary that would have enclosed the entire monastic complex.

Excavation trenches around the surviving ruins, along with the structural evidence provided by the fabric of the standing walls themselves, indicated that the building had experienced a phased construction. The most obvious evidence suggesting that an earlier building, probably the nave of an 11th or 12th century church, was altered at its eastern end in the 13th century with the addition of a crossing tower and transepts. While not convincingly evidenced by the fieldwork, it was suggested that a medieval wall footing north of the earlier nave was the base of a cloister, more often found on the south side of the church. However, other interpretations, for example it representing a north aisle, could at that stage not be discounted. Walls exposed in trenches south of the tower crossing were thought to relate to a south transept, although this interpretation could not be confirmed within the limited extent of the excavated areas.

The western extent of the nave and the eastern extent of the presbytery were not positively identified in the trenches or non-invasive surveys, although a possible robber trench in the orchard to the east of the extant ruin could define the latter.

The currency of the site was extended back at least as far as the later 7th/8th century by a radiocarbon determination on a burial disturbed by the construction of the 11th/12th century church.

During the summer of 2010, Bob Carr undertook further fabric recording and assessment which led to superficial excavation work in 2011 along with some consolidation/conservation work.

In summary, the results of the 2010 and 2011 works revealed the following information:

- A flint and lime mortar wall was found abutting the western side of the NW drum pier. However, the presence of a large tree stump (Ash) and its associated roots over the top of the wall obscured its westward continuation.
- Superficial excavation around the NE pier base revealed its similar character to the SW and NW piers, although the straight chamfer on the lowest surviving ashlar blocks was absent.
- Superficial excavation immediately north of the NW pier revealed bonded walling that coincided with the expected location of a north transept. In addition, the internal splay for a doorway was revealed immediately north of the NW pier.
- Superficial excavation west of the north transept west wall revealed bonded *in-situ* wall fabric on the line of the expected return of the east to west aligned wall previously exposed by Time Team. A fallen block lying on the corner of the above included a formed arch, in brick, within its fabric.
- Superficial clearance over a number of bonded flint and mortar masses confirmed their *ex-situ* nature. The evidence came principally from the included flint coursing that, if *in-situ*, would have been horizontal, but was observed on variously angled planes.

The results of the 2010 and 2011 campaigns informed the proposed schedule of works (Appendix 1) for the 2012 investigations undertaken by SCCAS/FPT.

3. Methodology

3.1 Fieldwork

A proposed schedule of works for the 2011 investigations was prepared (Appendix 1). In addition, further trenches were added during the fieldwork in direct response to what had already been exposed with a view to answering specific questions as they arose.

SCCAS/FPT archaeologists were commissioned to work in tandem with an additional workforce provided by Nick Haward through his construction company. While all of the trenches were hand excavated, the labour was divided so that the majority of the initial trench opening and stump clearance was undertaken by non-archaeologists with the final clearance of archaeological levels and subsequent recording carried out by SCCAS/FPT archaeologists.

Where possible, turf was removed and stored first, with the subsequent excavation limited to the removal of topsoil/garden layers and demolition rubble. At no point was there any excavation of intact archaeological deposits of medieval or earlier date. Backfilling of trenches was the responsibility of the 'Nick Haward' component of the excavation team and was undertaken after SCCAS/FPT had vacated the site.

The location of the excavated trenches was recorded by a combination of TST (Total Station Survey) and GPS survey, the latter also providing a TBM (temporary benchmark) of 5.89m OD located on a surviving *in-situ* floor tile in vestiges of a contemporary doorway through the east wall of the north transept.

Plans and section drawings were executed on A3-sized plastic drafting film sheets at a scale of 1:20.

All features, both architectural and below ground deposits, and their stratigraphic elements were allocated '*observed phenomena/context*' numbers within a unique continuous sequence under the HER (Heritage Environment Record) code BLB 081 and recorded on SCCAS/FPT '*pro-forma*' record sheets. The sequence was initiated at record number 0201 at the request of Bob Carr in order for numbers 0001 to 0200 to be available retrospectively for the results of the 2010 and 2011 fieldwork. In addition a

site notebook was maintained by the site director that included both evidenced observations and more interpretational material while the fieldwork was in progress.

As only superficial deposits were compromised, no artefactual evidence was retained other than architectural masonry fragments curated on site for future use.

A high resolution digital photographic record was made throughout the project.

3.2 Post-excavation

Site records were checked and entered onto a Microsoft Access 2003 Database (Appendix 2).

Plans and section sheets were scanned (as security copies) and digitised for inclusion in this report and as part of the site archive.

The digital photographs were coded with there details entered onto the SCCAS photographic archive database (HPS 1-99 and HPT 1-93).

A grey literature report (this document) was prepared to include a factual account of the archaeology exposed in the excavated trenches, along with a separate interpretative section and recommendations for further investigations.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

For the purposes of this report, the individual excavated trenches will be described sequentially as numbered during the fieldwork, except where the subsequent expansion of initially separately numbered trenches resulted in their joining as a single entity.

Where the excavated trenches incorporated part, or all, of a previously excavated Time Team trench, the context numbers allocated to features under their allocated HER code (BLB 076) are included as TT BLB 076 0000. With the Time Team nomenclature, the first one or two digits of the context number are the trench number, while the second and third or third and fourth are those allocated to individual features or their stratigraphic elements. Numbers allocated by SCCAS/FPT under HER code BLB 081 are simply presented as a four digit number.

Each trench description will be preceded by a description of its location within the priory building complex and the rationale for its excavation.

The locations of the Time Team trenches excavated in the vicinity of the standing ruins and those excavated by SCCAS/FPT are shown on Figure 2.

4.2 The excavated trenches

Trench 1

Trench location

Trench 1 was located immediately south of the eastern end of the standing wall thought to represent the south wall of the pre-priory church (Fig. 2). The south, external, face of the wall formed the north side of the trench which effectively represented the re-excavation of Time Team Trench 1.

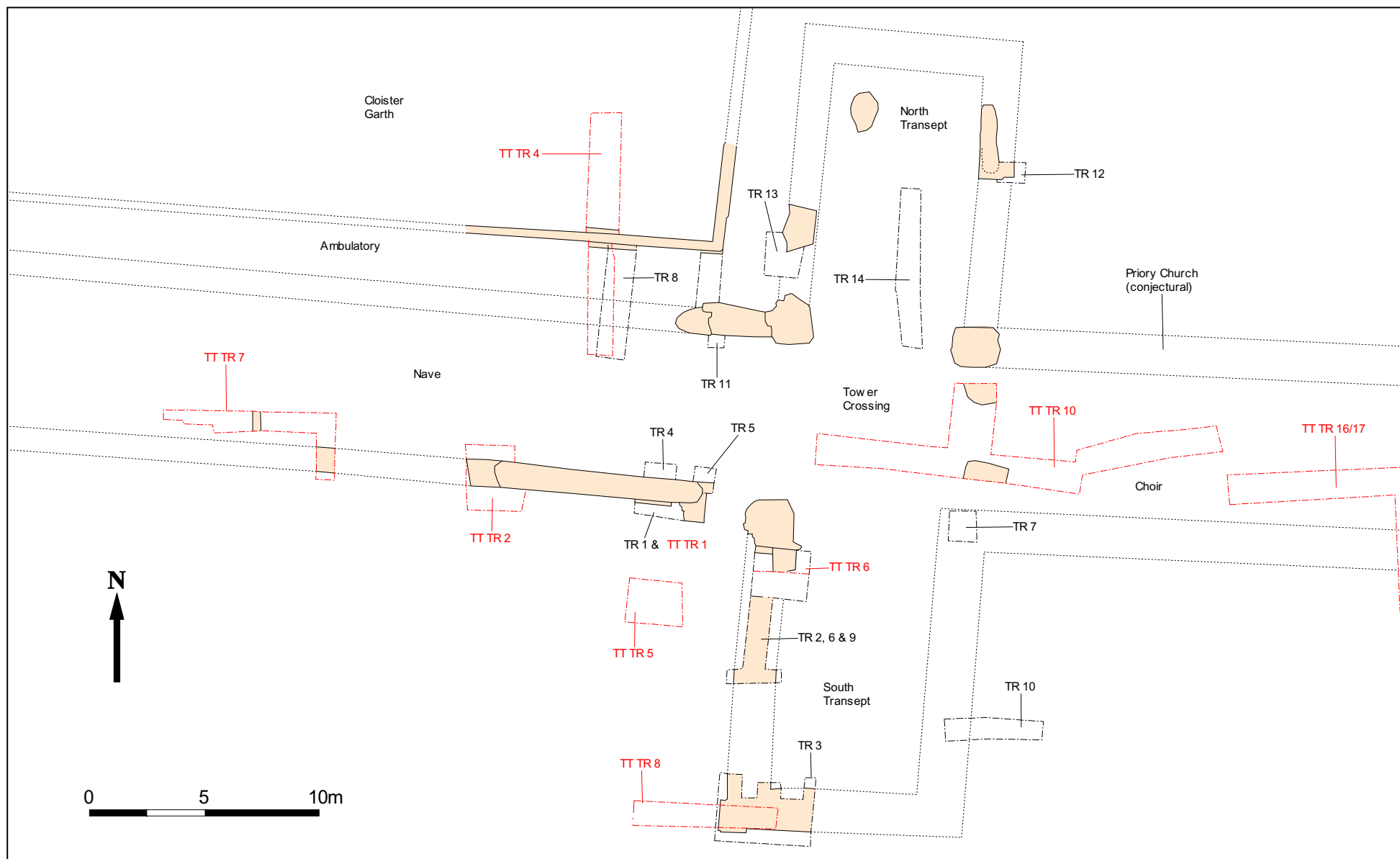


Figure 2. Trench plan (Time Team trenches are red, SCC trenches are black)

Rationale for excavation

The need to re-excavate of Time Team Trench 1 was based on observations made by Bob Carr during 2010 and 2011 which suggested there was a vertical break in the standing wall fabric which appeared to continue down into the area of the previously excavated trench, but was not noted during the 2008 fieldwork.

Description of Trench 1

The plan of Trench 1 is presented as part of Figure 3. The trench measured 0.6m by 2.26m and almost exactly conformed to the previously excavated Time Team Trench.

The backfill of the earlier trench was excavated as 0201 that comprised a loosely compacted mix of loam, lime mortar and flint cobbles.

The main east to west aligned wall in this trench was given the context number 0203 (TT BLB 076 102 and 108), although the following general description can be applied to all of the structure. Measuring 8.6m from east to west with a maximum height of 3m and a thickness of 1.1m, the latter measured at existing ground level, this represents one of the most substantial elements of the surviving above ground structure of the priory complex.

Both the facing and exposed corework was prominently coursed with predominantly sub-rounded flint cobbles of 0.1m - 0.15m (c.90%) set in a coarse lime mortar with frequent gravel-sized inclusions. The remaining material included exotic stone (c.5%), probably glacial erratics, very occasional lava quern fragments and fragments ceramic building material (hereafter CBM) (c.5%), the majority of which appeared to consist of Roman roof tile. One prominent string course of tile was seen in the facing on the south side of the wall that conformed to one of the horizontal lift-lines seen at intervals of approximately 0.5m throughout the wall. These represent seasonal constructional phases achieved during the building of the wall. Two lines of putlock holes were also in evidence, both again conforming horizontally to prominent lift-lines. Localised herringbone pattern was evident in the coursed face. Below ground, the vestiges of a lime mortar render were present, although fragile, which suggests that the facing stones and their included herringbone pattern had not always been exposed when the building was in use. However, this could represent a secondary feature applied later in the protracted use of this building.



Plate 1. Trench 1, detail of wall 0203



Plate 2. Trench 1, truncated base of wall 0203



Plate 3. Trench 1 from the west



Plate 4. Trench 1, detail of footing 0204/0205

Recent consolidation/conservation work included blocking the upper row of putlock holes, the addition of some thin white bricks on the line of and extending the Roman tile string course to the east, the latter in order to shed water away from the wall, and some repointing.

Only part of one architectural opening had survived, the lowermost quoins of the east side of a doorway on the southern, external face of the wall. These appeared to be Barnack-type limestone. There was no evidence for window openings anywhere in the surviving fabric.

Towards the eastern end of the south side of the wall, in the area directly above Trench 1, a curious vertical arrangement involving large flint cobbles (up to 0.5m) and discrete mortared lumps of coursed tile seemed to mark a break in the wall fabric. The lift-lines to the west of the break curved up slightly as they approached it. However, the overall character of the wall was consistent on either side of the break and is still considered by the author to be broadly contemporary.

Below ground, the wall continued down vertically for c.0.4m before stepping out by c.0.15m as a toed footing that continued down by a further 0.15m to its base on natural subsoil, here comprising orange sand with frequent inclusions of large flint pebbles (0208). Interestingly, the previously discussed vertical break in fabric could be seen continuing down through the toed footing where it was visible as a distinct change in colour of the lime mortar matrix.

In the base of the trench, after the total removal of the backfill layer 0201, a light-mid brown mix of sand and mortar with frequent flint cobbles (0202) was recorded. Fill 0202 was clearly seen to be within cut (0207) which followed the edge of the toed footing for the westernmost 1.2m of the trench before curving round and exiting the south side of the trench. This cut may be that identified by Time Team (TT BLB 076 109) as that for the wall footing itself, but is almost certainly a grave excavated up against the wall of the church. A layer, described by Time Team as deliberate backfill material (TT BLB 076 106) sealing the toed footing (TT BLB 076 108) within cut (TT BLB 076 109) and abutting the main wall (TT BLB 076 102) would have been totally removed within the area of the trench, but did not seem to be visible in the western trench-end section.

Another layer (TT BLB 076 103), described as a demolition layer sealing TT BLB 076 109 and 106, was only seen in the side of the trench and appeared continuous with grave fill 0202.

While the main wall fabric continued to the eastern end of the trench, which was effectively defined by the western edge of a 0.8m wide pier-like structure (0206) that extended out from the wall by 0.68m, the toed basal element had been cut away for the easternmost 0.6m by feature (0204). Given that the pier-like structure had clearly been stitched into the main wall, and overly cut feature 0204, the latter was interpreted as a footing trench for the former. Footing 0204 also clearly continued below the base of wall 0203, almost certainly a deliberate underpinning associated with the construction of 0206.

Footing 0204, itself cut by grave 0207, was filled with a mix of variable sized flint cobbles (c.40%), heavy grey clay (c.40%) and brown silty sand and gravel (c.20%). The overlying pier-like structure, possibly associated with an opening into the north end of the later priory phase nave (see Trench 5), was constructed from re-used limestone masonry, mainly Barnack-type, but also Caen-type with some tiles, particularly where the structure was tied into the main wall, and exhibited a flint and mortar core.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 3)	Value m OD
1	Existing ground surface at eastern end of trench	6.76
2	Existing ground surface at western end of trench	6.58
3	Top of west end of toed footing	6.21
4	Top of east end of toed footing	6.30
5	Excavated base of trench (on fill 0202 in grave 0207)	6.05
6	On top of natural subsoil 0208	6.10
7	Deepest point excavated into footing 0204, fill 0205	5.93

Table 1. Trench 1 levels

Trenches 2, 6 and 9

Trench location

Trench 2 represented the re-excavation and southward extension of Time Team Trench 6 located immediately south of and abutting the flat ashlar-faced southern side of the south west drum pier in an area where evidence for the western wall of the south transept could lie (Fig. 2). Trench 6 was also opened over the line of the south transept west wall as was Trench 9 which ended up joining Trenches 2 and 6 together (Figs. 2 and 4).

Rationale for excavation

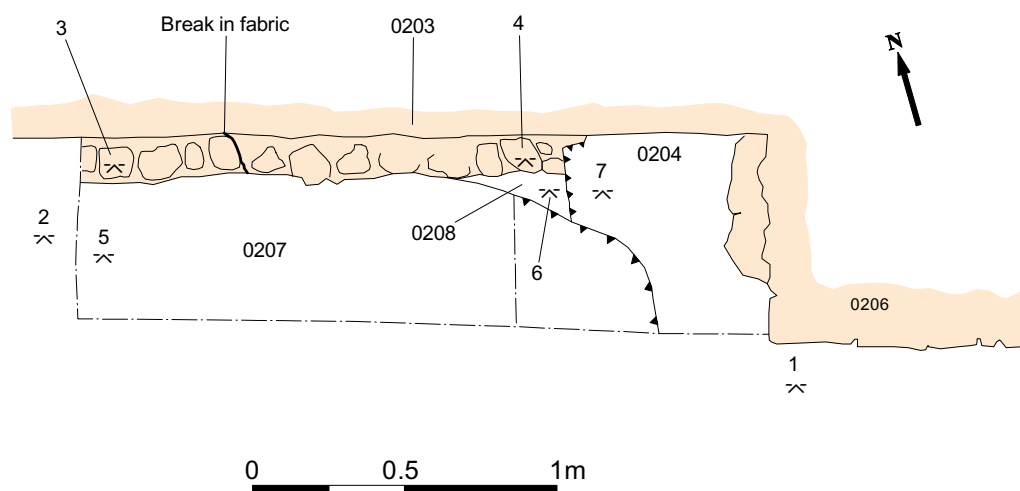
Trench 2 was proposed due to the uncertain results from the earlier excavation (Time Team Trench 6) which revealed a secondary wall (BLB 076 603) that did not fit spatially with the expected position of the south transept west wall.

Trench 6 was added in response to the results of Trench 3, where the south end of the south transept was recorded, with a view to confirming the presence and dimensions of its west wall further to the north. Subsequently, Trench 9 was excavated as a northward extension to Trench 6 in order to find the northern end of the south transept west wall which was absent in Trench 2. The wall continued on within the progressively northward extension of Trench 9 until it became apparent that it would be sensible to simply carry on into Trench 2, effectively making one larger trench.

Description of Trenches 2, 6 and 9

The re-excavated material from Time Team Trench 6 comprised a mixture of loam with mortar and flints with occasional limestone masonry fragments and CBM. Otherwise, the intact upper layer, 0254, excavated in Trenches 2, 6 and 9 comprised c.0.35m of humic topsoil that became slightly siltier towards its base. Layer 0254 was equivalent to TT BLB 076 601 and 602 which, in the SCCAS/FPT trenches did not appear to be two distinct layers that would merit individual numbering. Evidence of burning within layer 0254 in the vicinity of Trench 6 was confirmed by the site owner as the location of a bonfire when clearing the site. This may explain the character of the Time Team geophysical responses in the immediate area (Thompson 2009, fig. 2).

Trench 1



Trenches 2, 6 and 9

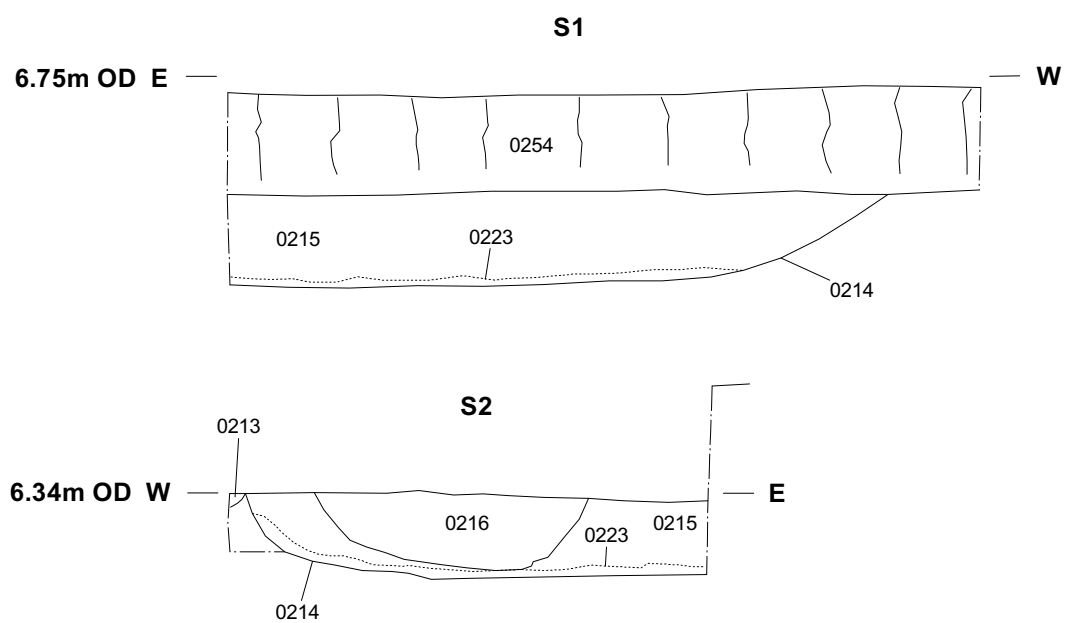


Figure 3. Trench 1, plan and combined Trenches 2, 6 and 9, section drawings

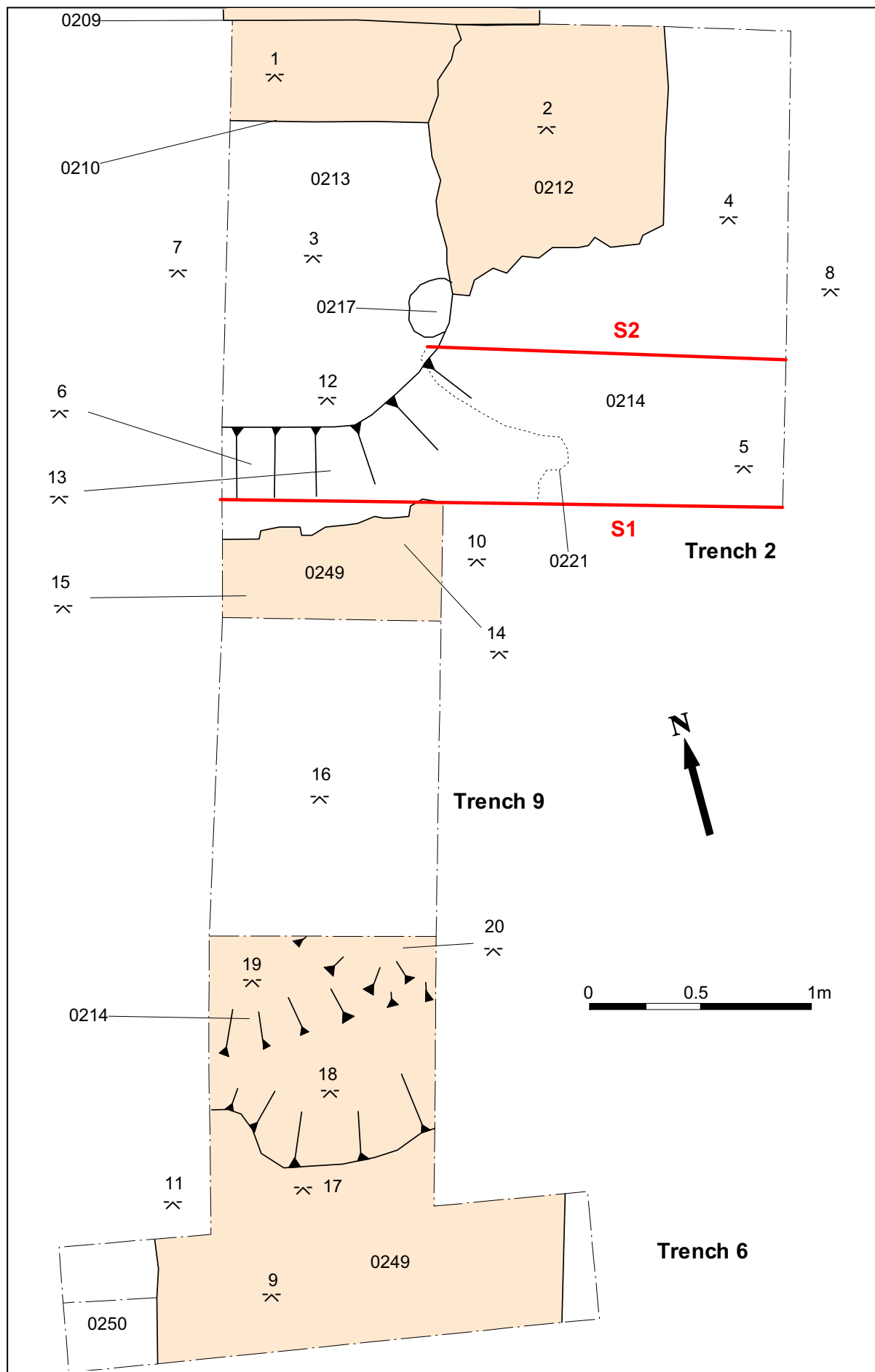


Figure 4. Combined Trenches 2, 6 and 9, plan



Plate 5. Trench 2 taken from the south



Plate 6. Trenches 2, 6 and 9 taken from the south



Plate 7. Wall 0249, detail of north end



Plate 8. Full width of wall 0249 in Trench 6, taken from the north

The stratigraphic sequence observed in the combined trenches was as follows:

An irregular cut (0214, also excavated as 0219/0220) was recorded in the area excavated as Trench 2 with its southern edge running across the southern end of Trench 9. Feature 0214 cut into the upper surface of the surviving component of the west wall of the south transept (0249) to a maximum depth of 0.5m (Fig. 4 and Plates 5, 6 and 7). This feature also appeared to truncate the southern end of a wall stub, 0212 (TT BLB 076 603), before turning to the north, its edge then coinciding with the eastern side of the wall. Two fills were recorded: a darker central area (0216) and a more persistent outer fill (0215) (Fig. 3 S1 and S2). The former comprised dark brown stony mix of sand and mortar, while the outer component, probably comparable with TT BLB 076 604 and 608, comprised an homogenous mix of silty sand with disaggregated lime mortar, chalk flecks and frequent flints. A thin loose layer of lime mortar (0223) was recorded in the base of 0214 in the section excavated in Trench 2.

The removal of a section of 0214 in Trench 2 exposed the underlying deposits which were not considered by the excavator to represent natural subsoil. A possible cut (0221), containing homogenous brown silty sand with charcoal flecks, was visible which suggested that discrete features, possibly graves, were present.

North to south orientated stub of flint and mortar wall 0212 (TT BLB 076 603) abutted the flat ashlar face of the south west tower drum pier, 0209 (TT BLB 076 606), to the east of its centre. It had also been constructed over, and therefore post-dated pier footing 0210/0211 (TT BLB 076 607/609) (Fig. 4 and Plate 5).

The wall extended for a maximum distance of 1.2m from the pier base wall face with its truncation by 0214 running diagonally across from south-west to north-east. The upper surface was encountered immediately below the turf, continuing down for 0.25m, with its base coinciding with the top of the drum pier footing 0210/0211.

The fabric of wall 0212 comprised predominantly of poorly coursed flint pebbles (5 to 10cm in size) with occasional tile fragments set in a hard light grey lime mortar matrix similar to that seen in the secondary, later, component (0267) of the wall recorded in Trench 8 (TT BLB 076 403). There was a considerable difference between the western face of the wall, which was irregular, compared to the straight edged, vertical, flat face

on its eastern side. It was not entirely clear whether this was an applied render or the result of the wall simply being constructed against an existing flat face.

A small circular feature (0217/0218) immediately south west of the southernmost surviving tip of wall 0212 was described as a possible post-hole. However, as this feature remained unexcavated, its interpretation as such must remain in doubt. The post-hole cut through a thin layer of loosely compacted disaggregated orange chalky lime mortar that was similar in character to that in the fabric of wall 0249 seen in Trenches 6 and 9 and also wall 0228 in Trench 3.

Underlying wall 0212 was the solid bonded fabric, 0211 (TT BLB 076 607), of the footing for pier base 0209 (TT BLB 076 606) within cut 0210 (TT BLB 076 609) which ran parallel to and c.0.45m south of the face of the above ground structure (Fig. 4 and Plate 5). The bonded fabric comprised pebble to small cobble-sized flints set in a yellow lime mortar.

Trenches 6 and then 9 were subsequently opened to plot the northward continuation of the wall seen in Trench 3, as it clearly did not appear as far north as Trench 2 (Fig. 4 and Plate 6).

In Trench 6, the full 1.8m width of wall 0249 was exposed, comprising pebble to cobble-sized flints set in a coarse-grained, crag shell-rich, orange coloured lime mortar (Plate 8). The recorded width of the wall was consistent with that seen in Trench 3 to the south. Trench 9 effectively followed the centre-line of wall 0249 to the north, until its abrupt, genuine, end that coincided almost exactly with the southern edge of Trench 2 (Plate 7). The 1.8m wide gap between the northern end of wall 0249 and the ashlar face of the south west tower pier marks the location of a doorway or formal opening into the south transept.

For the majority of Trench 9 the wall had been partially truncated by, but could be seen to continue beneath cut feature 0214 (Plate 6).

To the west of and abutting wall 0249 was an unexcavated deposit/layer (0250) comprising loose flint cobbles and lime mortar lumps within a matrix of sandy loam with some disaggregated lime mortar.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 4)	Value m OD
1	Trench 2; on surface of footing 0210 fill 0211	6.32
2	Trench 2; highest point on wall stub 0212	6.40
3	Trench 2; surface of layer 0213	6.29
4	Trench 2; surface of cut feature 0214 E. of wall stub 0212	6.23
5	Trench 2; SE corner of trench, base of cut feature 0214	6.03
6	Trench 2; SW corner of trench, base of top fill in feature 0214	6.35
7	Trench 2; existing ground surface W. of trench	6.68
8	Trench 2; existing ground surface E. of trench	6.60
9	Trench 6; highest point of wall 0249	6.59
10	Trench 9; existing ground surface N. end of trench	6.68
11	Trench 9; existing ground surface S. end of trench	6.93
12	Trench 2; surface of trench immediately N. of 0214 cut	6.29
13	Trench 9; base of 0214 cut immediately N. of wall 0249	6.01
14	Trench 9; N. end of wall 0249 in base of 0214 cut	6.04
15	Trench 9; N. end of wall 0249 in base of 0214 cut	6.05
16	Trench 9; unexcavated fill of 0214	6.34
17	Trench 9; highest point of wall 0249	6.53
18	Trench 9; top of wall 0249 in base of cut feature 0214	6.33
19	Trench 9; top of wall 0249 in base of cut feature 0214	6.20
20	Trench 9; top of wall 0249 in base of cut feature 0214	6.05

Table 2. Trenches 2, 6 and 9 levels

Trench 3

Trench location

Trench 3 was located approximately 12m to the south of the south west drum pier, incorporating part of Time Team Trench 8 (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Time Team Trench 8 had measured approximately 5m in length, east to west, by 1m wide and was positioned with a view to picking up any continuation of wall TT BLB 076 603 and evidence, if present, for the east side of a south cloister (Thompson 2009 12). While there was no evidence for a south cloister, a wall recorded at the eastern end of the trench (TT BLB 076 804 and 805), which included *in-situ* masonry on its western side, was interpreted as representing the north-west corner of a building with internal flooring. However, the limited extent of the trench and the apparent contradiction

between the results of Time Team Trench 8 with those from another trench located some 2.5m to the south (Time Team Trench 15) and the disparity in the character between wall TT BLB 076 603 in Time Team Trench 6 with walls TT BLB 076 804 and 805 in Time Team Trench 8, prompted further investigation to include the reopening and expansion of the eastern end of the earlier trench.

Description of Trench 3

After an initial expansion of the Time Team trench, then followed by a secondary expansion to the north, Trench 3 measured c.3m from north to south and c.4.2m from east to west, although within this footprint a block totalling approximately 2 square metres on the north side remained unexcavated (Fig. 5).

In effect, the Time Team trench was extended until the edges of the walls recorded as TT BLB 076 804 and 805 were encountered, the whole wall complex then given the new overall context number 0228 (Fig. 5).

The overburden comprised 0.3m to 0.4m of garden topsoil with the re-excavated material indistinguishable from that of the extended area. Two shallow north south orientated linear features (0224 and 0226) were recorded with fills, 0225 and 0227 respectively, comprising garden topsoil continuous with the overlying layer. These were interpreted as modern garden features, possibly planting trenches, that had been excavated to a level that just encroached into the surface of the underlying wall fabric. In addition, a thin layer (0229) of mixed loose, light yellowish brown mortar and rubble was encountered in a discrete area below the topsoil against the south edge of the trenches between the two linear features (Fig. 5).

The previously recorded chamfered plinth continued for only 2cm beyond the southern edge of the earlier trench before turning to the east and then again to the south and to the east again forming a rebated corner of what was clearly a clasping buttress defining the corner of a structure that, from its location, must represent the south west corner of the south transept (Plate 10). Two additional chamfered blocks were recorded towards the eastern end of the trench that delineated the external face of its south wall. All of the tooled blocks comprised Caen-type limestone.

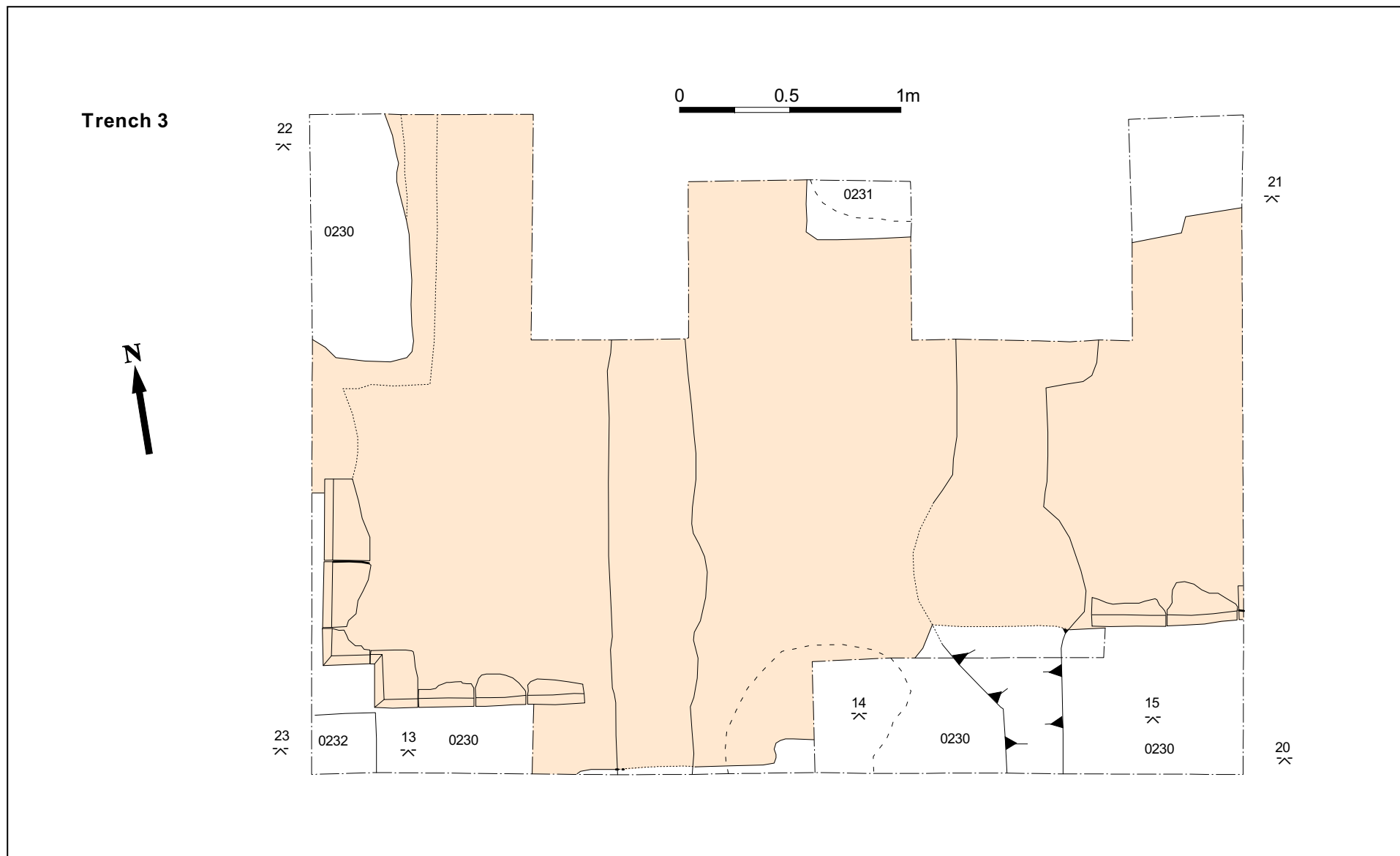


Figure 5. Trench 3, plan



Plate 9. South Transept wall 0228 in Trench 3, taken from the east



Plate 10. South Transept wall 0228 in Trench 3, chamfered plinth from the west

Both the north south and east west aligned wall components measured 1.8m across, clearly representing a substantial structure. The wall fabric itself was consistent with that recorded in Trenches 6 and 9, comprising pebble to cobble-sized flints set in a coarse-grained, crag shell-rich, orange coloured lime mortar (Plates 9, 10 and 11).

External to wall 0228, a layer of fill (0230) was recorded which abutted the chamfered plinth, where present, and lay on top of the wall footing which extended out beyond the plinth itself. The layer comprised homogenous brown silty sandy loam with occasional stones and a localised concentration of disarticulated human bone immediately below fill 0229 close to the southern edge of the trench. In the south west corner of the trench a small regular area of semi-consolidated flints in lime mortar (0232) was encountered. It was unclear what this actually represented as the upper surface of the deposit was at a higher level than the base of the adjacent plinth and would have been exposed above ground level when the building was in use.



Plate 11. South west Internal corner of wall 0228, layer 0231

The internal corner formed by the junction of the west and south components of wall 0228 was also exposed in the excavated area. Removal of topsoil and a localised brown silty sand deposit, similar to 0230 external to the wall, revealed a semi-consolidated layer of flints and tile fragments in a grey lime mortar matrix (Plate 11). Within the limited confines of the trench it was unclear if this layer was structural or a secondary demolition deposit.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 5)	Value m OD
1	Wall 0228, W. side, where chamfered plinth had been robbed	6.61
2	Wall 0228, W. side, surface of corework	6.73
3	Wall 0228, W. side, where chamfered plinth had been robbed	6.60
4	Wall 0228, W. side, surface of corework	6.82
5	Wall 0228 in base of cutting feature 0224/0225	6.60
6	Wall 0228, centre, surface of corework	6.70
7	Wall 0228 in base of cutting feature 0226/0227	6.53
8	Wall 0228, E. side, surface of corework	6.77
9	Wall 0228, N. side, surface of corework	6.65
10	Wall 0228, N. side, surface of corework	6.55
11	Wall 0228, surface of clasping buttress footing	6.57
12	Wall 0228, surface of clasping buttress footing	6.57
13	Upper surface of layer 0230	6.73
14	Upper surface of layer 0230	6.74
15	Upper surface of layer 0230	6.67
16	Wall 0228, S. side, where chamfered plinth had been robbed	6.59
17	Wall 0228, upper surface of chamfered plinth, W. side	6.75
18	Wall 0228, upper surface of chamfered plinth, S. side	6.74
19	Wall 0228, upper surface of chamfered plinth, S. side	6.74
20	Existing ground surface, SE. corner of trench	7.11
21	Existing ground surface, NE. corner of trench	7.09
22	Existing ground surface, NW. corner of trench	7.02
23	Existing ground surface, SW. corner of trench	7.03

Table 3. Trench 3 levels

Trench 4

Trench location

Trench 4 was located against the north side of the standing wall previously described under Trench 1 as context 0203 (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 4 was excavated across the possible break in fabric identified by Bob Carr towards the eastern end of standing wall 0203 (Plate 12). One possible interpretation involved the disruption in the continuity of the fabric marking the original eastern end of the pre-priory nave. If this were the case then a trench at this juncture would have had the potential to pick up the north south orientated east end of the church or, if it had been a two-celled structure, the chancel arch.

Description of Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 1.35m from east to west along the face of the wall, extending out northwards by 0.7m into the body of the nave (Fig. 6). The overburden in Trench 4 comprised c.0.36m of loam topsoil (0255) with unusually frequent inclusions of large flint cobbles.

Topsoil 0255 was found to lie directly on a c.2cm thick layer of cream coloured lime mortar (0256) (Plate 13) that clearly had been introduced as a formal bedding surface for a tile floor, the latter since removed. However, the impressions of the tiles remained, measuring 0.25m by 0.25m (10 inches by 10 inches). Layer 0256 was disrupted in two discrete areas: one small, on the north side of the trench and a more extensive area against the base of the wall that continued on beyond the western end of the trench, the latter possibly an inserted grave (0246).

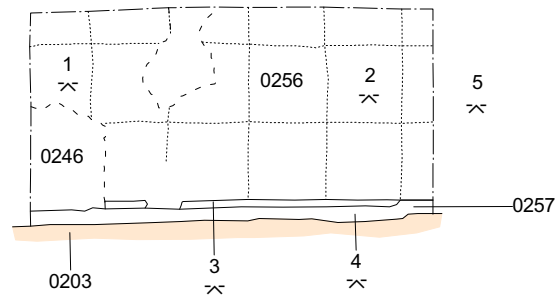
Tile bedding layer 0256 butted up against an applied lime render layer (0257) that survived only intermittently below ground level on the north, internal face of wall 0203.

The presence of the tile floor bedding layer resulted in excavation stopping as the removal of *in-situ* structural deposits was beyond the remit of the permitted works.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 6)	Value m OD
1	Surface of lime mortar bedding floor layer 0256	6.13
2	Surface of lime mortar bedding floor layer 0256	6.10
3	On edge of lime mortar bedding floor layer 0256	6.15
4	On surviving upper limit of lime mortar render 0257	6.43
5	Existing ground surface adjacent to E. edge of trench	6.49

Table 4. Trench 4 levels

Trench 4



Trench 5

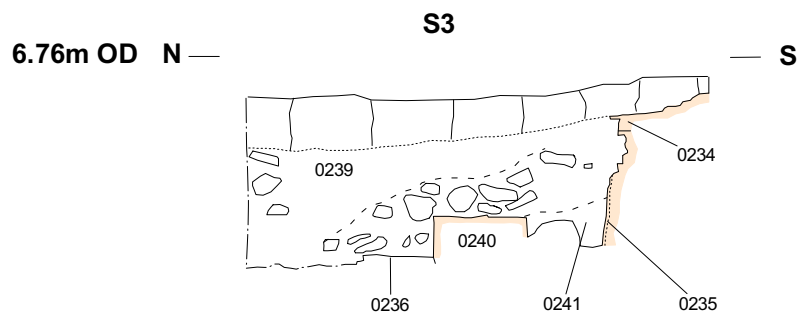
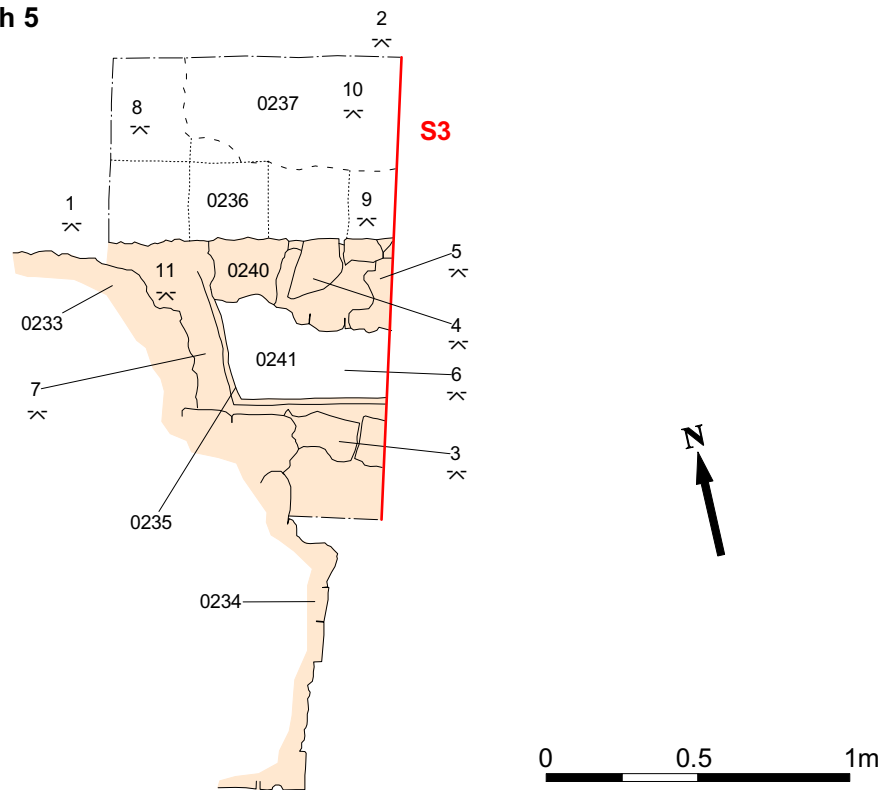


Figure 6. Trenches 4 and 5, plans and Trench 5, section drawing



Plate 12. Wall 0203 above Trench 4



Plate 13. Trench 4 from the north

Trench 5

Trench location

Trench 5 was located east of Trench 4 to incorporate the existing east end of wall 0203 (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 5 was positioned to investigate the relationship between wall 0203 and the later fabric excavated as 0206 in Trench 1, which above ground level could be seen to have a clear junction with the earlier fabric.

Description of Trench 5

The trench measured 1.6m from north to south by 0.9m from east to west (Fig. 6).

The main overburden in Trench 5 within the body of the nave (0239), equivalent to 0255 in Trench 4, comprised 0.15m of humic loam over a browner, sandier loam with a localised tip-line of stones (Fig. 6 S3).

Similarly to Trench 4, a mortar bedding layer (here numbered 0236), that would have accommodated a tile floor, was encountered with the tile impressions measuring the same 0.25m by 0.25m (10 inches by 10 inches) (Figure 6 and Plate 15). A possible grave cut (0237), with an unexcavated fill (0238), comprising orange sand with frequent stones, some cobble-sized, was recorded continuing beyond the northern and eastern edges of the trench.

In Trench 5, the fabric of the main east to west wall, previously described as context number 0203 under Trench 1, was numbered 0233. Much of the eastern end of wall 0233 that was exposed above ground comprised rough corework, with no evidence for any original contemporary architectural feature at that juncture (Plate 14).

However, below ground, within the excavated trench, the situation was more complicated, with evidence for truncation of wall 0233. The truncated end of wall 0233 had been formalised into an angled recess with a flat rear face, the surface of which exhibited an applied lime render (0235) that appeared to continue on the north face of the earlier wall (previously recorded in Trench 4 as 0257) (Fig 6. and Plate 15). The

wall fabric at the rear of the recess (0234) was, on excavation, confirmed as being continuous with fabric 0206 in Trench 1.

Subsequently, the recessed area had been altered with the addition of blocking (0240) which effectively reinstated a wall face continuous with that of 0233 to the west (Fig. 6 and Plate 15). Tile bedding layer 0236 butted up against blocking material 0240 and, therefore, was either broadly contemporary with or post-dated it.

The blocking fabric itself (0240) comprised re-used tooled limestone masonry blocks and flints set in a hardish light coloured lime mortar. Behind blocking 0240, filling the rear of the recess, was a deposit of granular cream/white coloured lime mortar (0241) (Fig. 6 and Plate 15).

Various possible interpretations of the Trench 5 evidence will be discussed later but, in broad terms, the truncated end of the earlier wall was formalised as the western side of a doorway/opening through to the south with steps up out of the nave. These steps were then either modified, or the opening simply blocked (see also Trench 11).

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 6)	Value m OD
1	Existing ground surface W. of trench	6.52
2	Existing ground surface NW. of trench	6.60
3	Set tile on threshold of opening/doorway, part of 0234	6.58
4	Top of stone forming inserted step 0240	6.35
5	Flat mortar surface, bedding for step 0240?	6.23
6	Surface of granular lime mortar fill 0241	6.12
7	Top of inserted fabric, part of 0234	6.47
8	Surface of tile floor bedding layer 0236, W. side of trench	6.11
9	Surface of tile floor bedding layer 0236, E. side of trench	6.11
10	Surface of fill 0238 in cut 0237 through tile bedding layer 0236	6.06
11	Base of possible quoin setting cut into 0233	6.48

Table 5. Trench 5 levels



Plate 14. View of Trench 5 and associated wall 0233 from the north east



Plate 15. Trench 5 from the south

Trench 7

Trench location

Trench 7 was located c.3.5m east of the standing south west tower drum pier and c.3.5m south of the standing north east tower drum pier on what was quite an abrupt north facing slope when compared with the otherwise more gently varying landscape profiles seen on the site (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 7 was positioned to investigate the location where the fourth tower drum pier should have been, but where nothing was visible at the extant ground surface.

Description of Trench 7

The trench measured c.1.4m from north to south by c.1.3m from east to west (Fig. 7). It quickly became clear during excavation that all evidence for a solid bonded structure at the expected location had previously been removed, probably robbed for aggregate.

The trench side sections indicated that the steep landscape profile at this juncture was the result of the, presumably, deliberate accumulation of additional topsoil layers (Fig. 7).

After the removal of the underlying primary topsoil deposit and thin layer of sandy subsoil (given the overall context 0251 along with the overlying secondary topsoil), a small area of the naturally occurring, very stony, orange sand subsoil was encountered on the northern side of the trench with the distinct curving edge of a cutting feature to the south (0252) (Fig. 7 and Plate 16).

The fill, 0253, of feature 0252 was removed in half of the cut within the confines of the excavated trench and found to comprise stratified layers of relatively loosely compacted layers of sand, silty sand with small stones and some disaggregated mortar (Fig. 7 S4). Feature 0252 was found to be c.0.25m deep with vertical sides and a flat bottom. Given the location of this feature and its morphology, there is almost no doubt that it represents the totally robbed out footing cut of the lost south east tower drum pier.

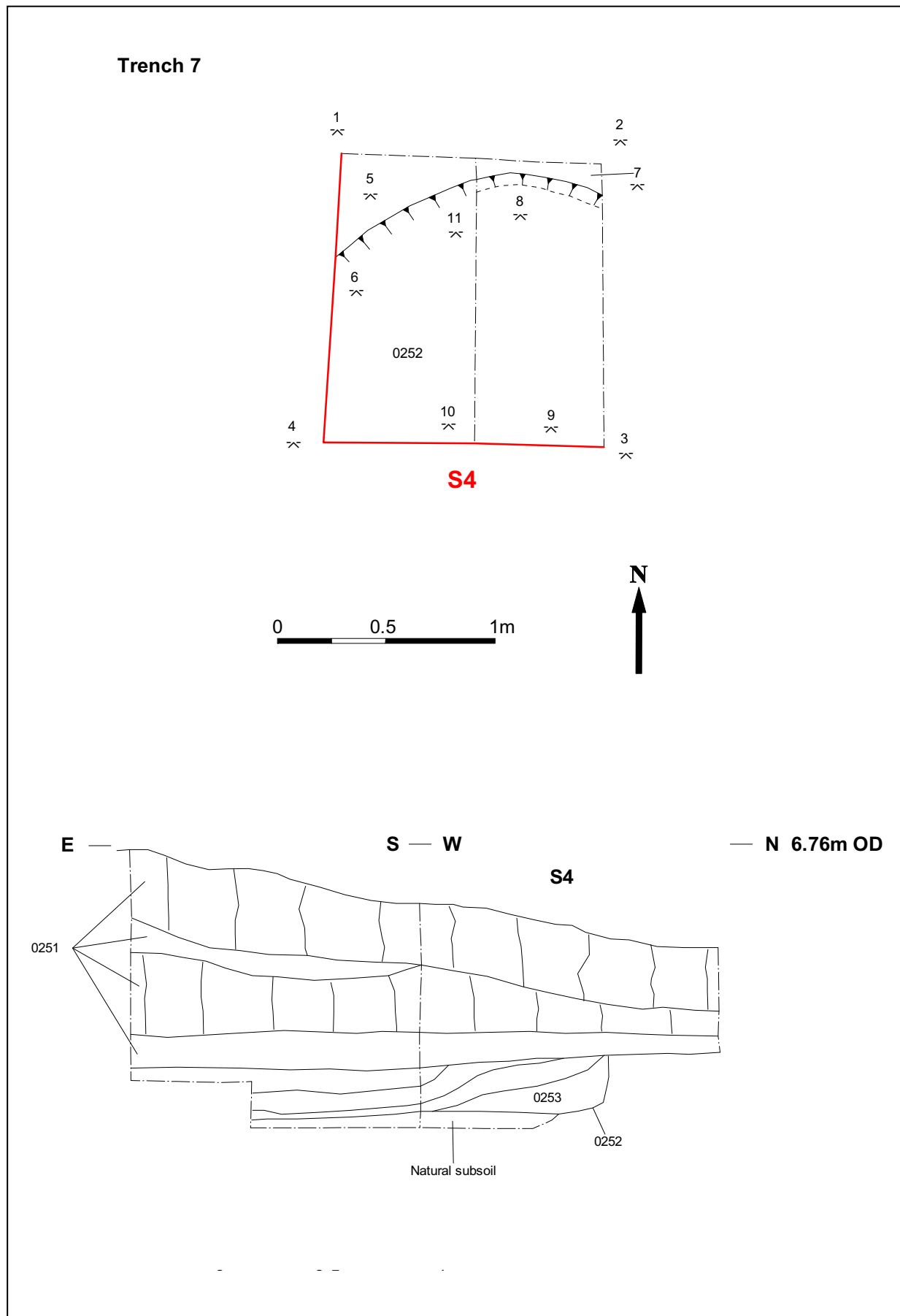


Figure 7. Trench 7, plan and section drawing



Plate 16. Trench 7, cut of 0252 taken from the south

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 7)	Value m OD
1	Existing ground surface NW. of trench	6.27
2	Existing ground surface NE. of trench	6.40
3	Existing ground surface SE. of trench	6.72
4	Existing ground surface SW. of trench	6.52
5	Surface of naturally occurring subsoil NW. corner of trench	5.79
6	Base of feature 0252, W. side of trench	5.46
7	Surface of naturally occurring subsoil NE. corner of trench	5.76
8	Excavated surface of fill 0253 N. side of trench	5.69
9	Excavated surface of fill 0253 S. side of trench	5.44
10	Base of feature 0252, S. side of trench	5.42
11	Base of feature 0252, N. side of trench	6.19

Table 6. Trench 7 levels

Trench 8

Trench location

Trench 8 was located to the west of the surviving stub of the north nave wall and was aligned north to south, stopping at the standing east to west aligned walls (TT BLB 076 403 and 426) (Fig. 2). Topographically, the existing ground surface crossed by the trench was level at its southern end before sloping down markedly to the north (Fig. 9 S5).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 8 was positioned with the aim of re-excavating the component of Time Team Trench 4 to the south of the standing wall in order to re-evaluate their results.

Description of Trench 8

Unfortunately, the exact location of the earlier Time Team trench was difficult to detect on the ground. However, the sides of the deeper slot excavated on the eastern side of the earlier trench were located with its western edge, conforming to the centre line of their trench, becoming the western edge of Trench 8 (Fig. 2). This resulted in the upper level of the recorded south to north section (Fig. 9 S5) representing backfill of the earlier trench, with only the lower component representing undisturbed deposits.

The re-excavated upper backfill from the Time Team trench comprised predominantly of grey/brown loam with clearly defined tips of sandier material (0258), while the undisturbed topsoil (0259) excavated in a 0.5m – 0.6m strip along the eastern edge of the trench comprised homogenous grey/brown humic loam. A concentration of 20th century domestic rubbish encountered on the eastern side of the trench was found to be in a pit (0260), the fill of which (0261) was indistinguishable from the topsoil, apart from the inclusion of the frequent glass bottles, tin cans and ceramics. Where this feature continued down beyond topsoil it was left intact.

For the southernmost 1m of the trench, the removal of 0.4m of topsoil overburden exposed the vestiges of a lime mortar layer (0262), possibly a bedding layer for a tile floor. However, no tile impressions were present and the recorded level was c.0.2m below that of the mortar tile bedding layer in Trenches 4, 5 and 11 and, therefore, cannot be considered to represent the same phase of flooring.

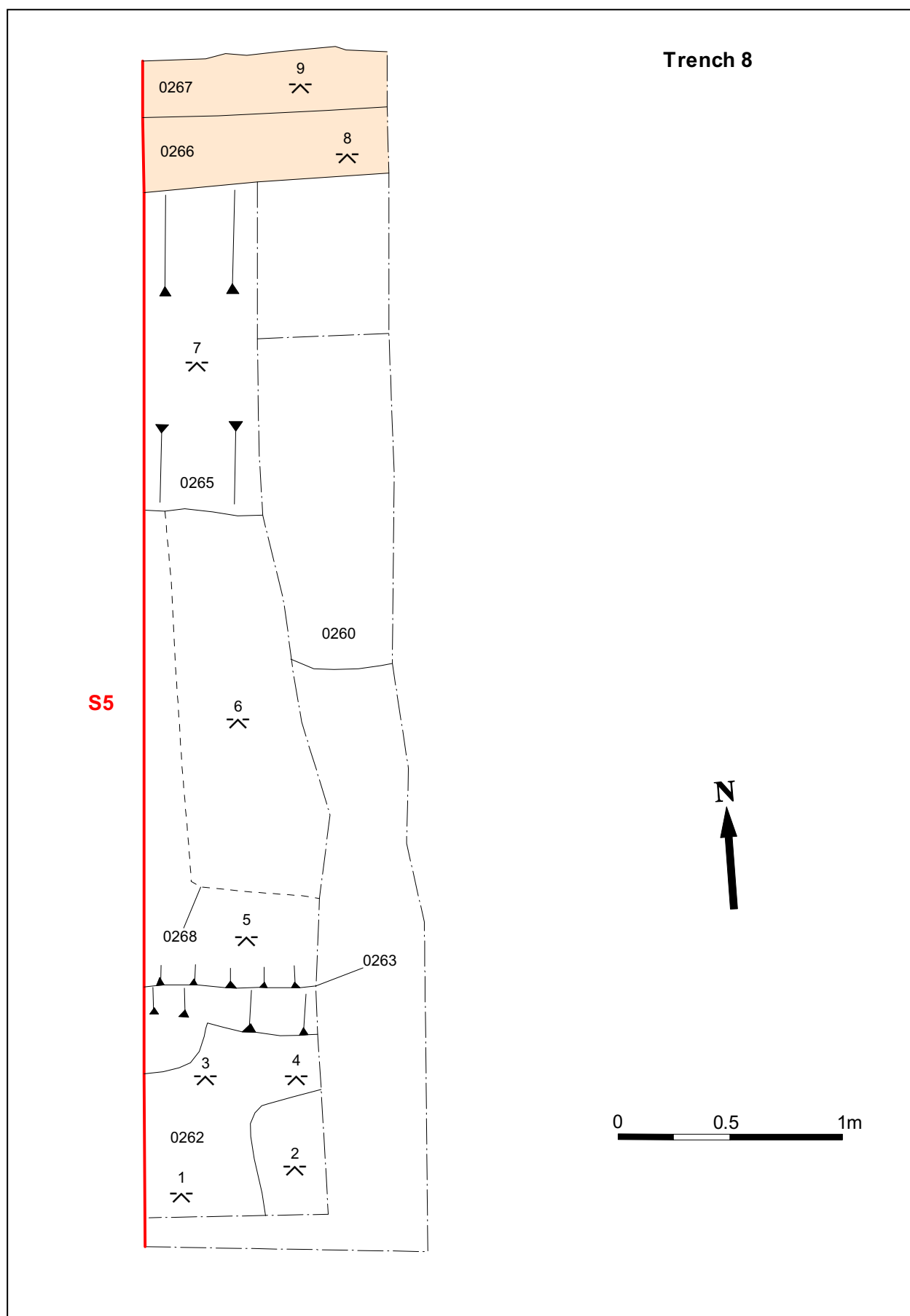


Figure 8. Trench 8, plan

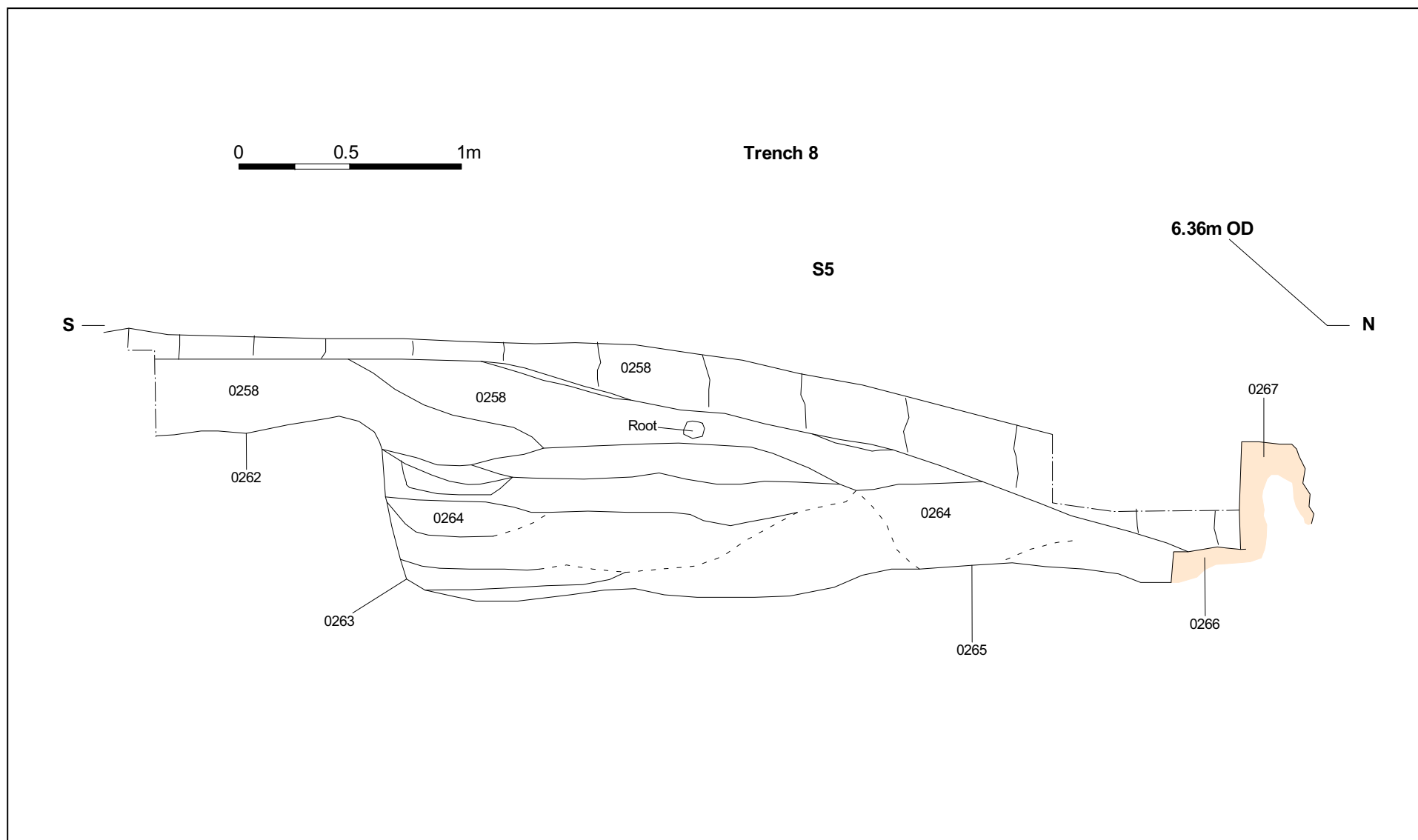


Figure 9. Trench 8, section



Plate 17. Trench 8, east facing section



Plate 18. Trench 8, consolidated layer 0265

Immediately north of layer 0262 was a near vertical, straight east to west aligned, 0.95m deep cut (0263). This feature clearly lined up with the southern edge of the surviving stub of the north nave wall to the east (see Trench 11) and had previously been recorded as TT BLB 076 412. However, removal of the stratified fill, 0264 (equivalent to TT BLB 076 413, 419, 420 and 422), north of the cut, failed to reveal a corresponding edge defining the north side of the feature (Fig. 9 S5) (*contra*. Johnson 2009 11).

Fill 0264 comprised stratified layers of grey, brown and orange silty sand with moderate to frequent inclusions of stones with disaggregated lime mortar. Removal of 0264 revealed a relatively flat junction with the underlying, presumably natural subsoil, at the southern end of the cut, and a hard compacted silty layer (0265) to the north, thought to represent the base for a floor (Fig. 9 S5).

In addition, there was a possible cut for another feature (0268) seen in the base of cut 0262. The cut ran parallel to the trench side before turning to the east (Fig. 8). The fill comprised mid brown silty sand with moderate small to medium sized stones. As this feature remained unexcavated, its function remains unclear.

Layer 0265 butted up against the edge of an east to west aligned wall stub/footing, 0266 (TT BLB 076 426), comprising predominantly of coursed flint pebbles/cobbles set in a relatively coarse-grained lime mortar. A secondary wall, 0267 (TT BLB 076 403), had been built using the earlier wall as a base. Wall 0267, which was only c.0.35m wide as opposed to the 0.8m of the underlying wall 0266, was constructed mainly from coursed pebble-sized flints set in hard grey lime mortar, with occasional red brick fragments. The southern face of the wall had the appearance of a smooth rendered face, although this could have been the result of the wall being constructed against an existing surface. The north face of the wall was rougher with a number of possible buttress-like structures extending out by c.0.5m.

A full interpretation of the deposits encountered in Trench 8 and how they relate to the priory church complex will be presented later in this report (Section 5). However, it is suffice to say that while the interpretation by the Time Team that cut 0263 (TT BLB 076 412) was the robbing trench for the north nave wall was correct, that the absence of a reciprocal north edge suggested that rather than wall in trench construction, the north nave wall had been cut into an existing slope. Indeed, the base of cut 0263,

presumably equating to the base of the robbed wall, was a full 1m lower than the base of the south nave wall recorded in Trench 1. In addition, the presence of a possible floor bedding layer in the area between the north nave wall and wall 0266, albeit at a lower level than the recorded nave floor level, is highly suggestive for the presence of a north cloister, an interpretation subsequently confirmed by the results of Trenches 11 and 12.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 8)	Value m OD
1	Mortar surface 0262 in nave	5.86
2	Mortar surface 0262 in nave	5.92
3	Mortar surface 0262 in nave	5.90
4	Mortar surface 0262 in nave	5.93
5	Surface of feature 0268/0269	5.08
6	Surface of naturally occurring subsoil in base of 0263	5.10
7	Surface of layer 0265	5.20
8	Top of wall/footing 0266	5.26
9	Top of wall 0267	5.81

Table 7. Trench 8 levels

Trench 10

Trench location

Trench 10 was located c.8m directly south of Trench 7 (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 10 was positioned with the aim of locating the eastern wall of the south transept, the west and south walls of which had already been identified in Trenches 2, 3, 6 and 9.

Description of Trench 10

Trench 10 was 4.2m long, from east to west, and 1m wide (Fig. 10 and Plate 20).

Access to the western end of Trench 10 was restricted by the presence of a large tree branch crossing the trench at the point where the eastern transept wall could be expected to be seen had it survived (Plate 20). Two sondages were excavated through the full soil profile (Fig. 10 and Plate 19): that at the western end of the trench revealing naturally occurring orange stony sand at a depth of 1.08m from the existing ground surface. The second revealed a similar deposit of natural subsoil at a level

approximately 0.1m higher than that to the west. In addition, a cut feature (0276), possibly a grave, with an unexcavated fill of orange/brown sand and gravel with pebble to cobble-sized flints, was recorded at this juncture.

The stratigraphic sequence (Fig. 10 S6 and Plate 19) exposed in the side of the trench was comparable to that in Trench 7. A 0.2m layer of humic loam topsoil (0271) overlay 0.28m of mid grey/brown silty sand mottled with orange brown sand with frequent gravel to cobble-sized flint and occasional CBM fragments (0272). In turn, 0272 gave way to a second layer (0273), comprising 0.2m of dark greyish brown sandy silty loam, interpreted as a buried topsoil, which overlay 0.18m (0274) of brown very silty sand with frequent gravel and pebble-sized inclusions, itself overlying 0275, comprising 0.18m of mid orange/brown silty sand with gravel to small cobble-sized inclusions and a basal stringer of disaggregated lime mortar.

There was no evidence of *in-situ* bonded wall fabric at the expected point within the trench and it can only be assumed that, similar to Trench 7, the structure at this juncture had been completely robbed away. However, the 0.1m difference in level between the naturally occurring subsoil in the two excavated sondages could be the result of the deeper, western end being within a robber cut for the wall.

Unfortunately, the tree branch crossing the trench, at the point where the edge of the wall would have been, rendered it inaccessible for excavation.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 10)	Value m OD
1	Existing ground surface, W. end of trench	7.12
2	Surface of naturally occurring subsoil, W. end of trench	5.98
3	Surface of naturally occurring subsoil, centre of trench	6.07
4	Surface of possible grave 0276/0277	6.05
5	Surface of buried topsoil 0273	6.48
6	Surface of demolition layer 0272	6.76
7	Existing ground surface, E. end of trench	7.11

Table 8. Trench 10 levels

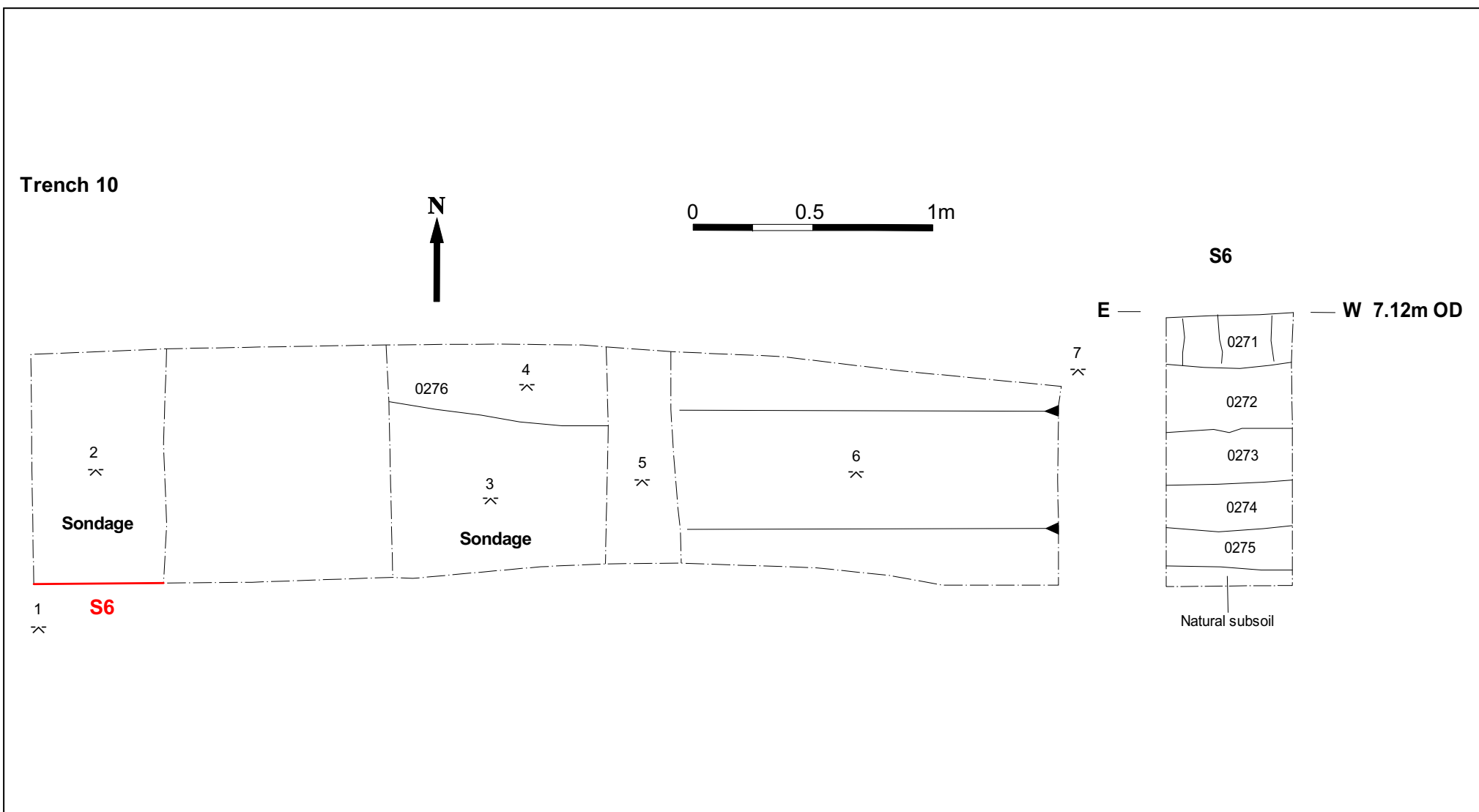


Figure 10. Trench 10, plan and section drawing



Plate 19. Trench 10, representative soil profile



Plate 20. Trench 10, general view from the south east

Trench 11

Trench location

Trench 11 was excavated in two separate sections located either side of the wall stub exposed by the removal of the Ash tree stump immediately to the west of the north west tower drum pier (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 11 was located to record the deposits both external and internal to the newly exposed wall and was positioned to evaluate the junction between two distinctly different phases of fabric: the earliest representing the north nave wall of the pre-priory church (0277) and the second a blocking fabric (0278) inserted in an architectural opening between the north west tower drum pier of the priory church (0279) and the earlier wall (Fig. 11 and Plates 21 and 22).

Description of exposed wall and Trench 11

The large Ash stump had almost completely obscured all of the surviving walling to the west of the north west tower drum base 0279, although minor investigative work had previously been undertaken by Time Team (Trench 14) and Bob Carr, exposing a small area at the junction of the ashlar-faced drum pier and a later abutting fabric (0278).

After removal of the Ash stump by Nick Haward's team, the underlying 3.9m surviving length wall fabric was cleaned and recorded by SCCAS/FPT.

At the western end, the fabric (0277) survived to a height of 0.72m above the existing ground level comprising courses of flints, mostly c.10cm in size, set in coarse-grained lime mortar. Wall 0277 was 1.1m wide, a measurement comparable to that of wall 0203 to the south, with which it may have been contemporary. Its junction with blocking fabric 0278 was irregular with a recessed area, possibly deliberately cut in 0277 on its internal south face that could have accommodated an inserted quoin when the opening was extant (Fig. 11). Another possible quoin socket was recorded on the north side of the wall, in this case exhibiting a smoother internal face which led the excavator to suggest that in this instance it may have been cotemporary with the wall fabric (Fig. 11).

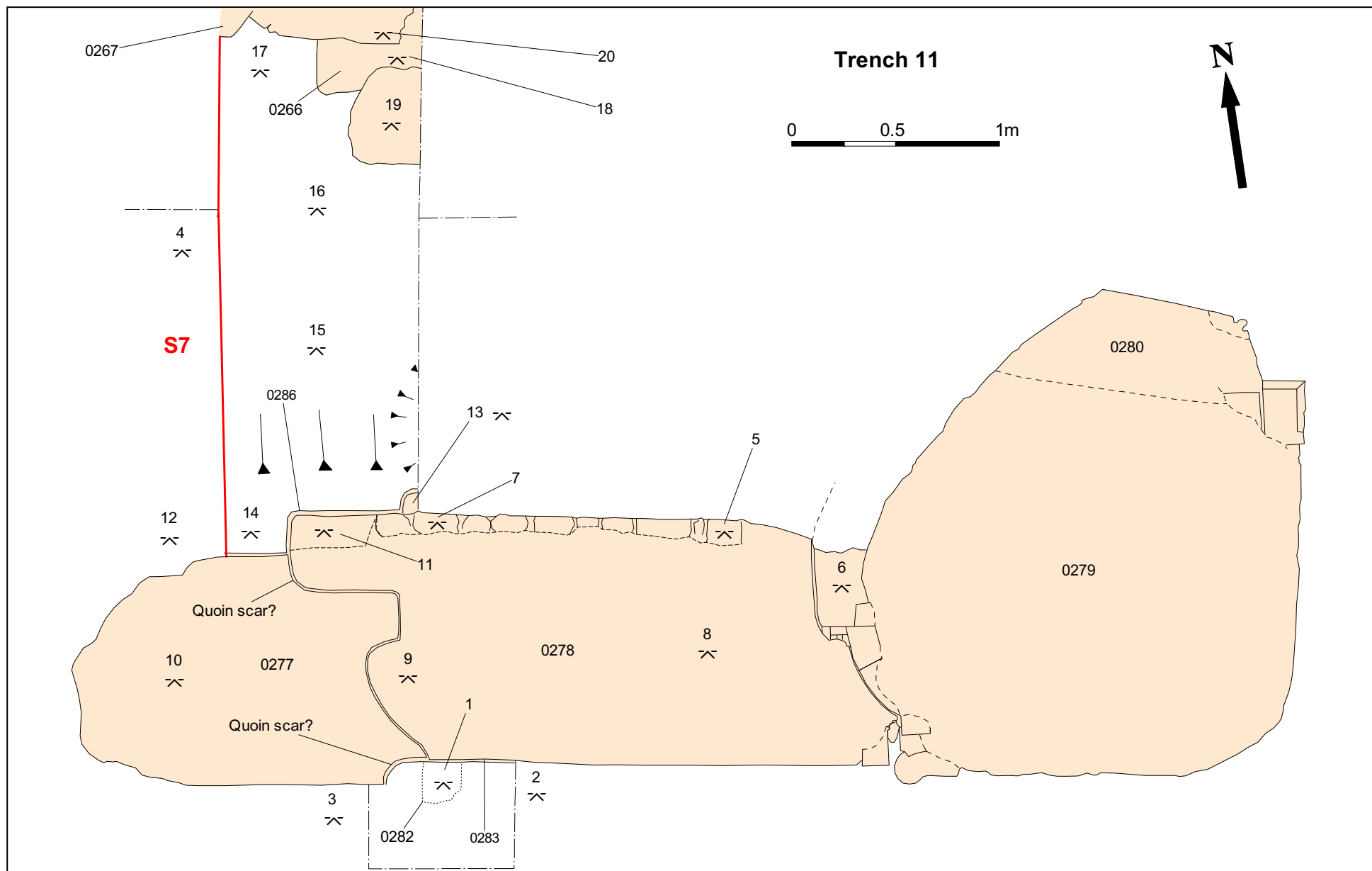




Plate 21. Internal face of newly exposed wall



Plate 22. External face of newly exposed wall

Another observation made at this point involved the spatial/geometrical relationship between the north and south walls of the early nave and the north west and south west tower drum piers: while a projected eastward continuation of the north nave wall 0277 intersected full on with the western face of the north west tower drum pier, that to the south only clipped the northern side of the south west drum pier. Alternative interpretations for this will be discussed later in this report (Section 5).

At the eastern end of the area recorded under Trench 11 was the north west tower drum pier 0279 (TT BLB 076 1404) with enough of the curving ashlar face surviving to indicate that there had originally been a contemporary architectural opening through the north wall at this juncture. The relationship between a doorway/opening immediately north of 0279, with its associated fabric 0280, will be presented with the results of Trench 13.

Spanning and effectively blocking the c.2.2m gap between the early wall 0277 and that of the north west tower drum base 0279 was fabric 0278 (Fig. 11). First seen in a small Time Team Trench 14 (TT BLB 076 1403), where it was interpreted as a fallen block, it was subsequently further exposed by Bob Carr when it became clear that it represented *in-situ* fabric abutting the ashlar facing of the tower drum base.

Wall 0278 was 1.2m wide and survived to a height of 0.75 above the existing ground level. Its internal face was set back 0.1m from that of the earlier wall 0277 to the east, but projected out 0.2m beyond it to the north (Fig. 11). The corework comprised predominantly of roughly coursed flints of 10cm to 20cm set in a matrix of dark cream coloured lime mortar with moderate pebble and frequent chalk inclusions. The external wall face (Plate 22) comprised prominently coursed stones, including flints, sandstone, septaria and occasional brick, of up to 20cm in size that continued eastwards to fill the possible quoin scar in the adjacent, earlier wall fabric 0277. The included brick fragments appeared similar to those seen forming an arch in a fallen block to the north of Trench 11 and to those used in the construction of the standing chapel attached to the extant main house (Appendix 3).

Internally, the coursed facing comprised, as well as flints of up to 20cm size, re-used tooled limestone masonry and pieces of Roman tile, the latter forming a prominent string course (Plate 21).

The component of Trench 11 excavated south of the wall measured 0.7m along the edge of the standing structure and extended 0.5m into the body of the nave (Fig. 11).

The general overburden layer (0281) comprised a mortar-rich silty sand with frequent stones, mainly flints, with occasional limestone and tile fragments. Tree roots, some large, were present throughout and when the mortar bedding layer for the tile floor (0282) was encountered, it was clear that it had suffered major disruption as a result.

Bedding layer 0282 clearly exhibited tile impressions, but their size was difficult to discern due to the fragmented state caused by the tree roots. However, the level at which the layer was encountered was comparable to that seen in Trenches 4 and 5 and must be considered to relate to the same phase of floor within the church.

Vestiges of a lime mortar render/plaster layer (0283) was present on the below ground face of the wall (Plate 23) and was clearly continued over both blocking fabric 0278 and on into the possible quoin scar in the earlier fabric 0277 (Fig. 11). Tile bedding layer 0282 clearly butted up against render/plaster layer 0283, the latter continuing down for approximately 2cm below the floor layer.

The external component of Trench 11 was c.0.95m wide and extending for c.2.5m to the north of the wall face to incorporate the edge of the other east to west aligned walls (0266 and 0267) (Fig. 11 and Plate 24).

Essentially, the stratigraphic sequence within the overburden north of the wall comprised loam topsoil (0284) overlying a heavily rooted deposit of demolition rubble, flints, septaria, limestone fragments and CBM, within a disaggregated sandy mortar matrix (0285) (Fig. 12 S7 and Plate 24). The remaining combined thickness of these layers, after the removal of a significant thickness of material associated with the Ash stump, was approximately 1m for the southernmost 1.8m of the trench, reducing to c.0.5m up against standing wall 0267.

Removal of the combined overburden layers revealed a number of features that confirmed the interpretation proposed for Trench 8 involving the presence of a north cloister with the ambulatory floor at a lower level to that in the nave to the south.



Plate 23. Trench 11, internal component taken from the south



Plate 24. Trench 11, external component (including S7) from the north east

Firstly, the formal face of the external walls, both 0277 and later blocking 0278, were found to continue down for 0.95m below the existing ground surface, equating to some 0.73m below the level of the nave floor bedding layer 0282 on the opposite side of the wall. On that basis, the opening blocked by fabric 0278, must almost certainly have included provision for steps in order to accommodate the transition between the two recorded floor levels in the different elements of the building.

The opening itself would have been approximately 2.2m wide, a measurement consistent with the proposed opening on the opposite side of the nave and that from through the east wall of the south transept.

In addition, an applied lime mortar render/plaster facing (0286), which continued down to the base of the trench, coated both phases of the exposed wall face (Figs. 11 and 12 S7). Towards the base of the trench, where the render/plaster layer had been disrupted by tree roots, there did not seem to be solid walling behind it, but instead, seemed to have been applied to a face, the character of which suggested that it represented naturally occurring subsoil.

Where revealed below ground, blocking wall 0278 stepped out by 0.2m at the point coinciding with the possible quoin scar in earlier wall 0277, and then again by 0.1m, with a single angled chamfer, 0.35m to the east (Fig. 11). All exhibited the continuous applied layer of render/plaster 0286 (Plate 25).

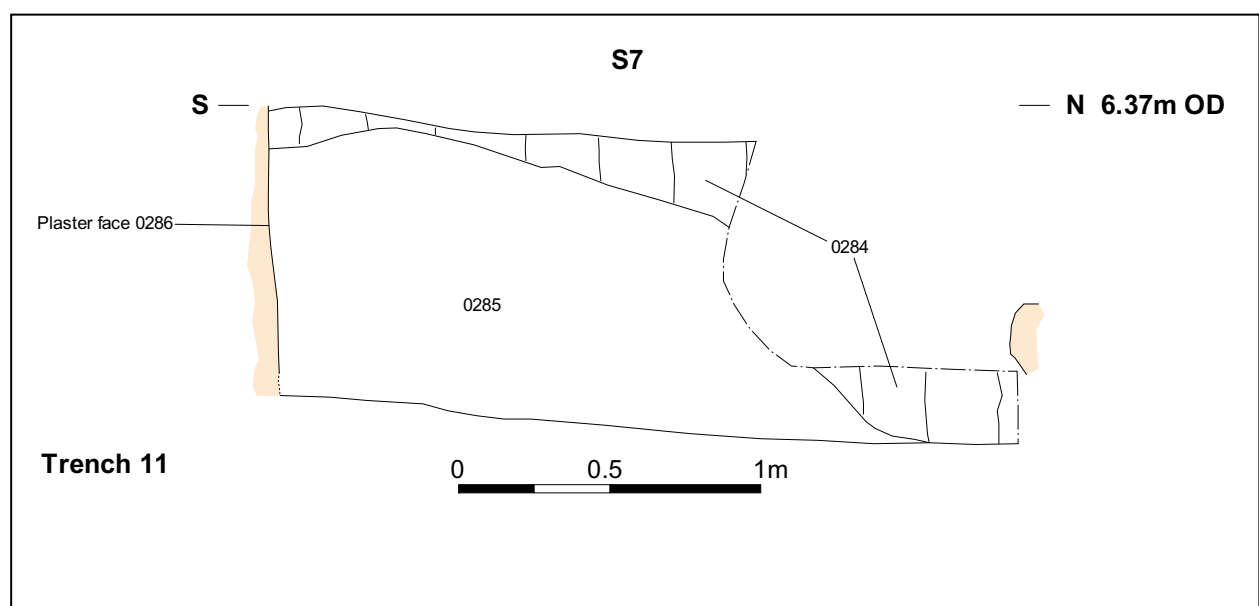


Figure 12. Trench 11, section



Plate 25. Trench 11, plaster/render facing 0286



Plate 26. Trench 11, walls 0266 and 0267, taken from the west

The base of the trench sloped very gently down from south to north at a level consistent with that seen in Trench 8. While clearly not a floor surface or formal bedding layer itself, its general consolidated character suggested that it represented an initial levelling to accommodate a floor above that would then have been compacted during use.

At the northern end of the trench walls 0266 and 0267, both previously described with Trench 8, were encountered. At this juncture, the earlier wall (0266) did not continue right across the trench (Fig. 11 and Plate 26). The end was regular, not appearing to be truncated, with the compacted surface forming the base of the trench continuing into the gap and up to the base of overlying wall 0267. While the evidence is not incontrovertible, it is possible that the break could represent a formal opening or doorway through from the 2m wide ambulatory into the cloister garth.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 11)	Value m OD
1	Mortar floor bedding layer 0282	6.13
2	Existing ground surface E. internal component of Trench 11	6.52
3	Existing ground surface W. internal component of Trench 11	6.44
4	Existing ground surface 1.6m N. of wall 0277	6.23
5	Top of surviving external facing of blocking wall fabric 0278	6.39
6	Top of surviving fabric 0279 on W. side of drum pier	6.47
7	Top of surviving external facing of blocking wall fabric 0278	6.47
8	Highest surviving point of blocking wall fabric 0278	7.24
9	W. end of blocking wall fabric 0278	6.96
10	Highest point of wall fabric 0277	7.04
11	NW. corner of blocking fabric 0278	5.76
12	Existing ground surface immediately N. of wall fabric 0277	6.36
13	Top of chamfered projection of blocking wall fabric 0278	6.17
14	Base of N. component of Trench 11	5.40
15	Base of N. component of Trench 11	5.28
16	Base of N. component of Trench 11	5.25
17	Base of N. component of Trench 11	5.24
18	Top of wall stub 0267	5.30
19	Top of fallen block of coursed masonry	5.84
20	Top of wall stub 0266	5.51

Table 9. Trench 11 levels

Trench 12

Trench location

Trench 12 was positioned at the southern end of a standing section of wall fabric representing part of eastern wall of the north transept (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

The presence of two possibly *in-situ* chamfered limestone blocks and underlying vestiges of a tile floor at the southern end of the standing wall suggested the presence of a contemporary opening in the east wall of the north transept (Fig. 13 and Plates 27 and 28). A pre-excavation meeting with project consultant Bob Carr involved discussing the possibility that the opening through the wall could have represented the entrance from the transept to a chapel to the east. It was suggested that even though the existing ground level adjacent to the standing wall clearly indicated major truncation in the general area of the north transept, a small trench excavated external to the eastern wall at that juncture could provide evidence for a chapel if it had been present.

Description of Trench 12

The excavation of the c.1.2m by 1m trench external to the structure was combined with a general tidying up around the southern end of the standing wall stub (0290) in order to expose its full extent (Fig. 13 and Plates 27 and 28).

The general cleaning around the southern end of the wall stub revealed a regular formal edge suggesting that this was genuine break in the fabric associated with a contemporary opening and not later truncation (Fig. 13 and Plates 27 and 28). In the trench itself, the external face of wall 0290 was exposed along with a 0.2m projecting toed base/footing. As no reciprocal toed feature was visible internally, although its presence at a lower level could not entirely be ruled out, this gave a recorded thickness of the wall, measured from internal to external face, of 1.4m, with an additional 0.2m externally for the toed base/footing. One inconsistency was noted regarding the reliability of the stratigraphic relationship between the chamfered blocks, which clearly lay on top of the floor tiles. Usually, a formally lain tile floor would be inserted after the construction of the walls. However, they could represent a levelling layer for a threshold, since removed, an interpretation which fits the evidence better.

Trench 12

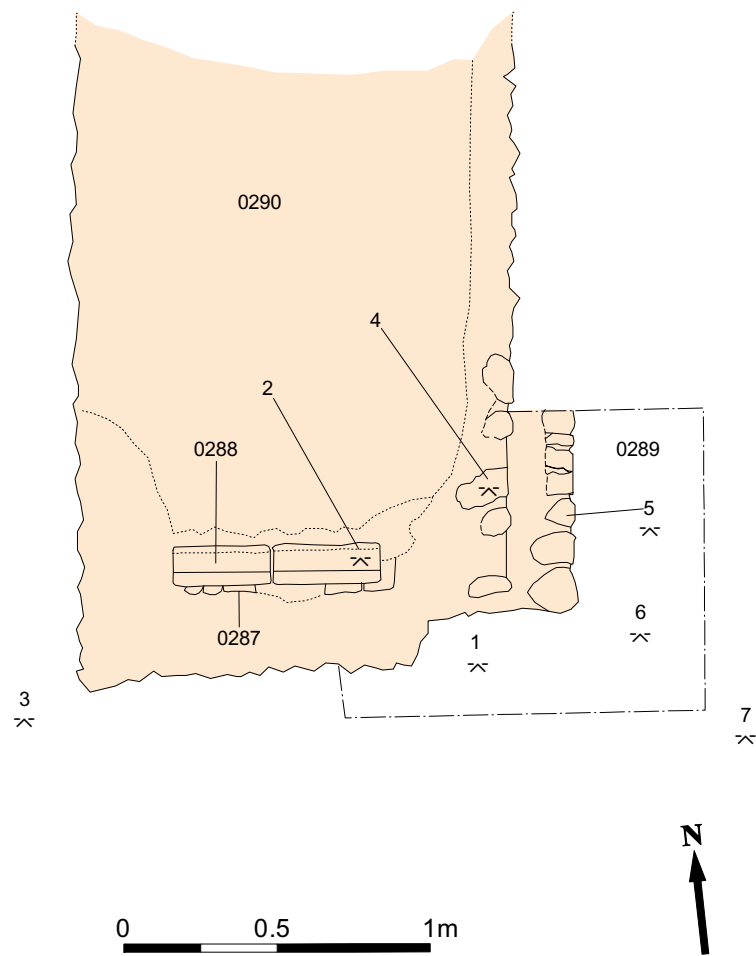


Figure 13. Trench 12, plan



Plate 27. Trench 12, taken from the south east



Plate 28. Trench 12, detail of plinth 0288 and tile floor 0287

The removal of up to c.0.3m of topsoil in the external trench revealed no evidence for a projecting east to west aligned wall that could indicate the presence of a contemporary building/structure to the east of the north transept. The underlying deposit, which remained unexcavated, comprised dirty brown silty sand with moderate inclusions of gravel to pebble-sized stones.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 13)	Value m OD
1	Vestiges of tile floor 0287	5.89
2	Top of chamfered limestone masonry blocks 0288	6.00
3	Existing ground surface SW. of corner of wall 0290	5.88
4	Top of highest surviving external facing of wall 0290	5.70
5	Top of toed solid bonded flint and mortar footing of wall 0290	5.61
6	Base of excavated trench	5.32
7	Existing ground surface immediately SE. Trench 12	5.47

Table 10. Trench 12 levels

Trench 13

Trench location

Trench 13 was positioned immediately north of the north west tower drum pier incorporating the external half of the west wall of the north transept and extending out by c.0.4m to the west (Fig. 2).

Rationale for excavation

Trench 12 was aimed at revealing the character of an opening/doorway through the west wall of the north transept that had been revealed by clearance at ground level during the 2011 phase of fieldwork by Bob Carr and his team. In addition, the results from Trench 8 had indicated the presence of a north cloister with ambulatory at a lower level to the nave and it followed that the opening/doorway into the transept would need to accommodate this change in level, probably by steps.

Description of Trench 13

Trench 13 measured c.1.8m from north to south and c.1.5m from east to west, incorporating the majority of the north side of the formal opening/doorway (Fig. 14 and Plates 29 and 30). Topographically, the area occupied by the trench beyond the line of the north transept west wall sloped down markedly towards the north (Fig. 14 S8).

The overburden comprised a variable thickness of topsoil (0291), 0.2m to 0.5m, overlying a mass of demolition material (0292) comparable to 0285 in Trench 11, although with a hint of stratification. Layer 0292 was 0.9m thick at the southern end of the trench, reducing to only 0.1m at the southern end (Fig. 14 S8). Removal of 0292 revealed a flat base at a similar level to the proposed ambulatory floor in Trenches 8 and 11. At this juncture the flat surface comprised two distinct fill components, brown silty sand (0296), to the north, and orange sand (0297), to the south, with an abrupt interface between them, suggesting that one element represented a cut feature, possibly a grave (Fig. 14 and Plate 29).

While removing the combined overburden layers 0291 and 0292, a number of tooled limestone masonry blocks were encountered that had effectively been stacked against the external face of the transept wall. However, these were not mortared together and, therefore, not *in-situ* and were removed after being photographed.

The newly exposed external face of the north transept wall (0294) exhibited an applied lime mortar plaster/render (0295) which included pieces of roof tile laid flat against the wall within the mortar matrix. The top of what was presumably the tooled footing for wall 0294 projected out by c.0.15m beyond the face of the wall at a similar level to the flat base to the trench.

Removal of the overburden within the opening exposed what were clearly the remains of steps (0293), even though almost all of the formal surfaces had gone leaving just light coloured lime mortar over packed clay. However, small areas of smooth mortar bedding surface, either for tiles or a stone step, survived, as did a small area of faced bricks directly underlying two blocks of tooled limestone masonry. The lower block, possibly truncated to the south, forming a flat surface upon which the larger piece, shaped with a rebate to accommodate a closing door, was set.

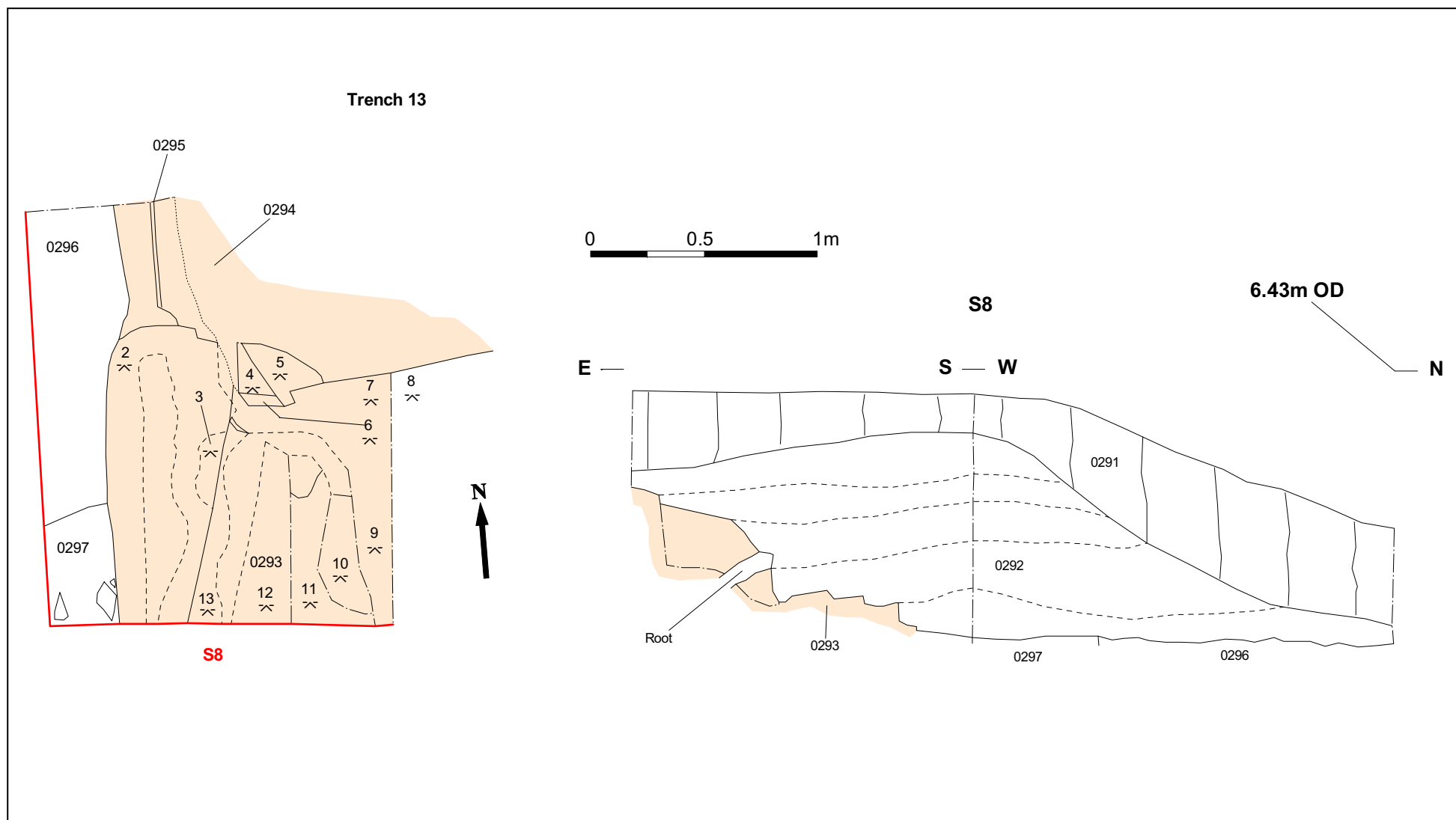


Figure 14. Trench 13, plan and section drawing



Plate 29. Trench 13, taken from the west



Plate 30. Trench 13, east to west component of S8

A closer inspection of the upstanding wall fabric revealed that the flat facing of the internal angled splay on both sides of the opening was present, along with the basal blocks of a moulding. However, the associated wall fabric was different to that of the main body of the transept wall and the fabric of the north west tower drum pier (0279) to the south. Indeed, a vertical break in fabric was clearly visible on the north side of the drum pier where the relatively well coursed main body of the pier (0279) interfaced with the less distinctly coursed material (0280) associated with the doorway (Fig. 11).

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 14)	Value m OD
1	Level line for S8	6.43
2	Lowest level of surviving fabric of steps 0293	5.28
3	Small area of surviving setting for formal step, part of 0293	5.44
4	Top of tooled limestone block below door jamb block	6.05
5	Top of door jamb block	6.41
6	Top of facing bricks	5.81
7	Highest level of surviving fabric of steps 0293	5.98
8	Existing ground level immediately E. of trench	6.32
9	Highest level of surviving fabric of steps 0293	5.92
10	Level on surviving fabric of steps	5.72
11	Level on surviving fabric of steps	5.55
12	Level on surviving fabric of steps	5.43
13	Level on surviving fabric of steps	5.48

Table 11. Trench 13 levels

Trench 14

Trench location

North to south orientated Trench 14 was positioned to run from within the tower crossing then extending northwards into the area of the north transept (Fig. 2). The extant topographic profile at this juncture included a marked slope down towards the north suggesting at least some previous truncation in that area.

Rationale for excavation

Trench 14 was positioned with a view to evaluating the survival of floor surfaces within the tower crossing and north transept and whether there had been a formal change in level between the two building elements. In addition, the trench ran between two fallen blocks of masonry.

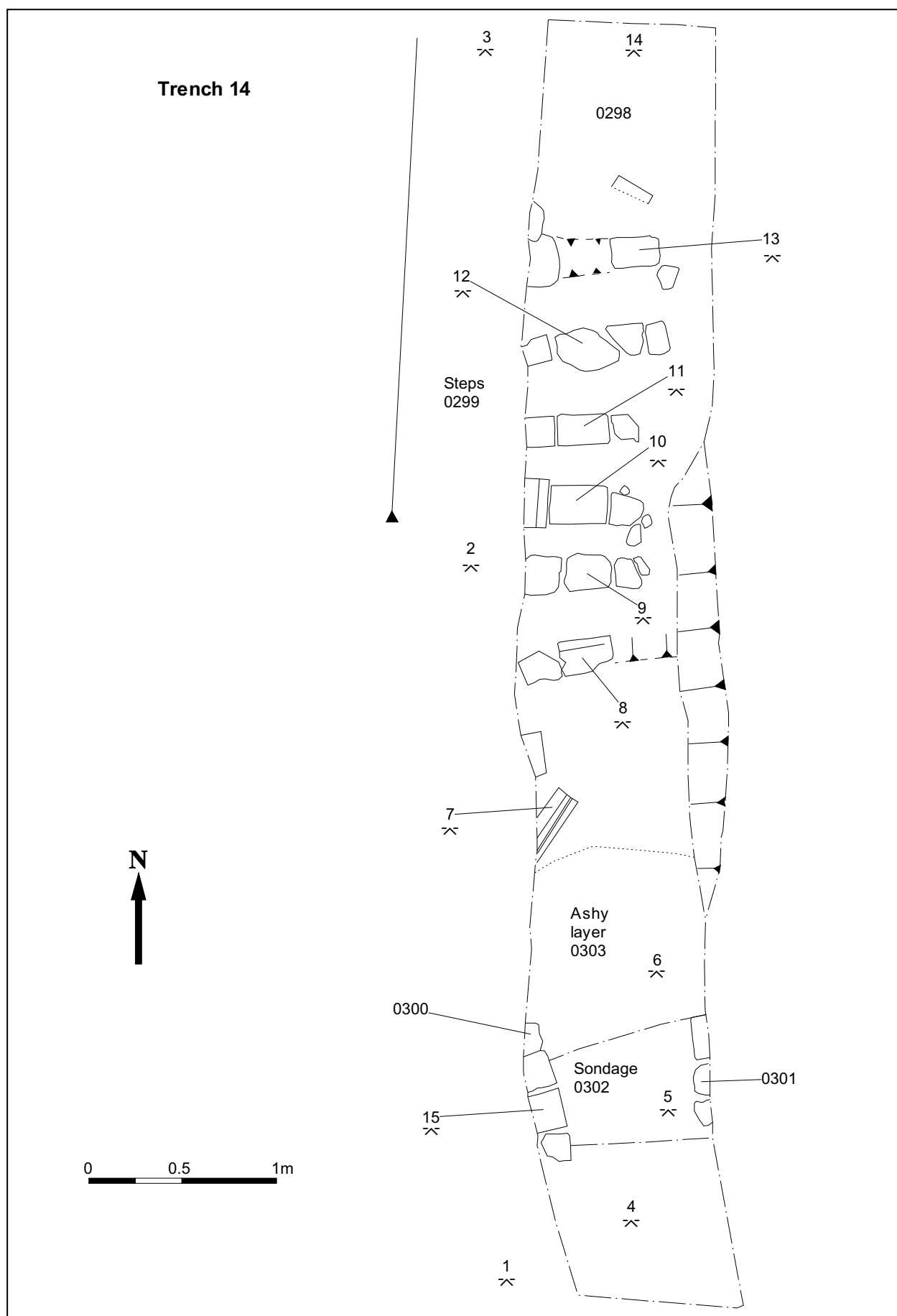


Figure 15. Trench 14, plan



Plate 31. Trench 14, taken from the north east



Plate 32. Trench 14, sondage at south end of trench



Plate 33. Trench 14, masons mark on limestone window tracery moulding

Description of Trench 14

Trench 14 was c.6.85m long and approximately 1m wide (Fig. 15).

A variable thickness of topsoil (0298) was recorded throughout the trench comprising grey brown sandy loam with frequent tree roots and inclusions of flint cobbles and other architectural debris.

Removal of the topsoil over the sloping north end of the trench revealed a series of at least six steps (0299) formed by simply setting reused tooled limestone masonry blocks into the ground surface (Fig. 15). Clearly these were very superficial and had no relation to the medieval priory, although whether they represented a 20th century garden feature, or were related to the earlier wholesale robbing, inserted by the labourers to facilitate access up the slope, is uncertain. One of the blocks, a piece of window tracery, exhibited a masons mark in the form of an X (Plate 33).

Towards the southern end of the trench, the removal of the topsoil revealed a superficial deposit of ashy material (0302), probably the result of a bonfire. At the southern end of

the trench, layer 0302 was removed to reveal a localised rubble layer (0301) and a more formal arrangement of masonry fragments (0300) that may represent another step (Fig. 15 and Plate 32).

Below 0301 a homogenous layer of brown silty sand (0302), with a variable stone content, was encountered. A sondage was excavated into this material to a depth of c.1m below the extant ground surface. The level reached was clearly below where any surviving evidence of floors would have been seen. Layer 0302 was laterally extensive, but did not represent the naturally occurring subsoil that could be expected at that juncture. It seems likely that this material was the backfill of graves excavated within the priory church, or burials external to the earlier church.

Level No.	Location of level (see Fig. 15)	Value m OD
1	Existing ground surface at S. end of trench	6.40
2	Existing ground surface at break of slope	6.22
3	Existing ground surface at N. end of trench	5.36
4	Excavated base of trench, S. end	5.44
5	Base of sondage into deposit 0302	5.27
6	Surface of ashy layer 0303	5.92
7	Top of limestone tracery. Piece with masons mark	5.95
8	Uppermost step, part of 0299	5.80
9	Second step down, part of 0299	5.68
10	Third step down, part of 0299	5.61
11	Fourth step down, part of 0299	5.55
12	Fifth step down, part of 0299	5.52
13	Bottom step, part of 0299	5.48
14	Excavated base of trench, N. end	5.30
15	Top of possible step 0300	6.14

Table 12. Trench 14 levels

5. Archaeological Interpretation

The excavation work covered by this report has significantly added to our understanding of the layout of the priory church complex and its phased construction. In addition, the reopening and expansion of a number of the trenches previously opened by Time Team provided the opportunity to reassess some of their conclusions.

The reopening of Time Team Trench 1 as our own Trench 1, combined with the excavation of new Trenches 4 and 5 (Fig. 2) and a reassessment of the above ground fabric of the adjacent east to west orientated wall, confirmed its previous interpretation as part of a pre-priory building, probably the nave of the church. Key to this interpretation was the general character of the wall fabric: well coursed flints and stones, some lain diagonally, prominent horizontal lift-lines, Barnack-type limestone dressings and the re-use of Roman tiles, all consistent with a construction date in the 11th or 12th centuries.

Particular attention was paid to the possible vertical break in fabric recorded towards the eastern end of the wall that was marked on its southern face by the inclusion of blocks of tiles that had already been mortared together prior to their inclusion in the fabric. In addition, it was noted that the lift-lines, when approaching the fabric break, deviated upwards slightly from the horizontal. This evidence and the similarity of the general character of the wall fabric on either side of the break suggested that this was a broadly contemporary constructional feature rather than a chronologically separate phase.

Until the removal of the large Ash tree stump as part of this phase of work, the northern wall of the nave had only been seen as a limited area of wall fabric visible between the roots of the tree stump and as a robbing trench in Time Team Trench 4 (Fig. 2). When fully exposed, similarities with the south wall were noted, particularly its width and the presence of prominent coursing. However, the lack of surviving diagnostic facing and the fact that the later, priory phase, core fabric also exhibited a degree of coursing makes it difficult to state with certainty that it was part of the 11th or 12th century structure.

The internal width of the nave was 6.3m.

The only evidence for anything structural that pre-dated this phase was a possible footing on a different alignment seen in the base of a wall robbing trench in Trench 8. As excavation of anything other than superficial and demolition deposits was beyond the brief of this project, the feature was left intact and, as a consequence, positive identification and accurate interpretation remained impossible.

Evidence was also recorded to suggest that the earlier building was itself constructed on land that sloped markedly down towards the north. Trench 8, effectively a re-excavation of the southern end of Time Team Trench 4, revealed a vertical cut face on the line of the southern side of the north nave wall but, without a corresponding north side to the feature (*contra*. Thompson 2009 fig. 4 and archive). This was interpreted as the cut face against which the north wall of the building had been constructed or alternatively, given that the material in the side of the cut was 'made ground', where the internal level had been built up against the interior wall face to facilitate a level floor surface in the nave. The northern, down slope, face of the wall would have been exposed to a level of approximately 0.6m below that of the internal face. Additional evidence for this was provided in Trench 11 where the intact plastered external face of the north nave wall continued down to a level approximately 0.7m below that of the adjacent internal floor surface. Also, the base of the bonded wall fabric seen in Trench 1 opened against the south side of the south nave wall, was 0.7m higher than the lowest exposed nave north wall fabric in Trench 11 which, itself, was 0.3m higher than the base of the robbing cut in Trench 8.

These observations also have relevance for one of the other areas of discussion regarding the layout of the priory building complex: the location, either north of or south of the church, for the cloister. While Time Team landscape surveyor (Stuart Ainsworth) favoured the north side, Bob Carr (project consultant) favoured the south. The results from the new fieldwork has proven beyond reasonable doubt that there was a cloister to the north, but has also not entirely ruled out the presence of a second cloister or other buildings to the south. The evidence for the latter will be discussed below.

While the Time Team had exposed the base of what appeared to be a medieval wall underlying a later, possibly garden wall, in a location consistent with a cloister walkway (ambulatory), the levels did not appear to work if, as recorded at the time, the nave north wall robbing trench had a north as well as south side. In addition, Bob Carr put

forward the possibility that the Time Team north nave wall may represent the line of an aisle arcade with the second wall to the north, the exterior wall of the church. However, the recent work found no evidence for an aisle arcade and the north side of the robbing trench clearly did not exist. Furthermore, removal of the demolition rubble north of the north nave wall revealed a flat compacted surface at a similar level in three trenches (8, 11 and 13) that, while not a formal floor itself, was thought to represent the base on which one was laid in what would have been the ambulatory. The recent clearance work has also suggested that buttresses present on the north face of the ambulatory wall were then incorporated into the later wall.

Even with the evidence presented above strongly favouring the presence of a cloister to the north of the church, there was still a disparity between the level of the floor surface seen in the nave and that of the lower level cloister ambulatory. For this configuration of buildings to work there had to be a way of facilitating access between the two separate elements. Given that there was surviving above ground evidence of a doorway immediately north of the north west tower drum pier providing access between the north transept, to the east, and the cloister, to the west, then this was the position to look for steps.

Subsequently, Trench 13 revealed just that. While robbed of the actual steps themselves, the vestiges of the lime mortar settings were present along with the remains of the door splay. There was also evidence at this juncture, which will be discussed later, for the phased construction that would have been necessary in buildings of this size and complexity.

Once the presence of the north cloister was confirmed, the function of a large socket in the fabric of the north west drum pier could be deduced. While probably enlarged by weathering, with material detaching from the top of the socket by gravity alone, it seems likely that it had accommodated a tie beam or possibly a valley rafter forming the junction between the south and eastern arms of the ambulatory. The valley rafter would form the anchoring point for the purlins from both the east and south ambulatory ranges. Its height of c.3.6m above the floor of the ambulatory is entirely consistent with this interpretation.

So far we have dealt with evidence of the earliest surviving above ground structural phase associated with the 11th or 12th century church and its relationship with the priory phase cloister to the north. The remainder of the new trenches were aimed at investigating the later priory structure, effectively the crossing of the central tower, the north and south transepts and the how they were tied in and functioned with the earlier phase nave.

Time Team Trenches 6 and 8 had been aimed at investigating the south transept but due to their restricted size failed to pick up the crucial evidence that was required to characterise the structure (Fig. 2). A wall stub seen in Time Team Trench 6 immediately south of the south west drum pier of the tower had tentatively been identified as the western wall of south transept and was variously described as butting the pier (Thompson 2009 11) and butting and bonded to the pier (Thompson 2009 32). Re-investigation and subsequent expansion of the earlier Trench as Trenches 2, 6 and 9 clearly showed that the wall abutted and, therefore, post-dated the pier. In addition, its position, off-set towards the east side of the pier, would not have let it function as a contemporary western wall of the priory transept, as its above ground junction with the internal face of the drum pier would have conflicted with the basal mouldings. The fabric was similar in character to that of the later wall constructed on the medieval footing of the north cloister recorded in Trench 8.

However, one alternative interpretation involves it representing the base for a threshold in an opening that almost certainly was present at this juncture. While medieval footings usually continue across openings and doorways, this does not seem to be the case here, possibly because the tower and its transepts, although broadly contemporary, were part of a phased construction process. This could explain why a formal base for a threshold would be added at a later date.

The evidence for an opening at this juncture was provided by the c.2.3m gap between the pier base footing and the footing for the west wall of the south transept. Its description as an opening rather than a doorway was based on the fact that there is no evidence of tooled mouldings associated with the flat ashlar face on the south side of the pier. However, while not likely, it is not impossible, that a timber door frame had been set against the wall face, subsequently leaving no evidence for its presence.

An opening rather than a doorway also has implications regarding what lies immediately to the west of the south transept. A doorway could open into another building/structure or to the open air, while an arched opening with no blocking door is not likely to lead directly to the outside. On that basis, it seems likely that if the interpretation as an opening is correct, there was a structure of some description to the west which could be accessed from both the south transept and also from the nave through the stepped opening or doorway recorded there.

Substantial bonded remains of the west and south walls of the south transept were found to survive, but the evidence from the trench on the line of the eastern wall and that over the position of the south east tower drum pier suggested that at this juncture the entire wall and below ground footings had been robbed. Given that a large proportion of the robbed material is purported to have ended up in the roads to the east and north, it is not surprising that this and the north side of the building complex have suffered greater damage than the elements to the south and west.

Expansion of Time Team Trench 8 as our own Trench 3 revealed the south-west corner of the south transept. The wall was substantial, measuring 1.8m across with the overall length of the structure measured as c.12m from the south side of the tower to the exterior of its south wall. A similar 1.8m width was recorded in Trench 6 to the north. Interestingly, the corner exposed in Trench 3 exhibited a chamfered plinth which stepped out around the corner itself, almost certainly representing a variation of a clasping buttress. The presence of the buttress can be considered compelling evidence to suggest that this was an exterior wall and also appears to strengthen the argument against the presence of a south cloister or other building extending that far south of the nave.

However, as alluded to earlier in this section, the presence of an opening westwards through from the south transept and another immediately west of the south-west tower drum pier that provided access by way of a steps down into the nave to the north (see Trench 5), does suggest that there was a building of some description occupying the angle between the south side of the nave and the south transept. The fact that the east side of the opening into the nave is formed by the rounded ashlar face of the drum pier, makes it unlikely there was a doorframe and associated door at this juncture either. In addition, the lack of architectural features such as windows, blocked or otherwise, in the

south wall of the nave could be considered to represent evidence for a building south of the church as part of the 11th or 12th century phase of the complex.

With the measured dimensions of the south transept it is possible to suggest with some accuracy the likely extent of the north transept, as it almost certainly mirrored that to the south (Fig. 2). When looked at on the ground, the surviving component of the east wall of the north transept would not, as suggested by Time Team (Thompson 2009 fig. 10), now represent the northern end of the building which would have extended for another c.3m to the north. The results from Trench 14 combined with the extant topography and the fact that the base of the bonded fabric of the east wall is visible above the existing ground level at its northern end, suggests that there has been considerable truncation of the site at this juncture.

The most complex elements of the surviving structure were those revealed after the removal of the Ash stump and the subsequent excavation of Trench 11 in the area immediately to the west of the north west drum pier. This effectively represented the junction between the pre-priory nave and the later tower.

The Time Team in 2009 and the subsequent work in 2010/11 under by Bob Carr had revealed the curved west side of the north-west drum pier and an abutting wall fabric to the west. Removal of the Ash stump exposed all of the abutting wall and its junction with the surviving vestiges of the pre-priory nave north wall to the west. It became clear that, similarly to the south side of the nave, there had originally an opening at this point, presumably with steps down into the cloister ambulatory to the north. The presence of the curved ashlar face of the drum pier with roll mouldings at its base suggested that there had not been a door frame and door in this gap which had subsequently been formally blocked. Both internally and externally, a layer of lime plaster was recorded which continued over the join between the blocking fabric and the nave north wall, suggesting that this was a priory date alteration with the church continuing to function after the changes. While the presence of steps linking the different levels in the nave and cloister appears to be the most likely scenario, this was not proven during the excavation as the removal of the blocking fabric to expose the relevant area would have been beyond the remit of the project.

Exposure of this area of walling also threw up another inconsistency involving the overall plan of the church. If projected towards the east, the north wall of the nave and the south wall of the nave did not intersect with their adjacent drum piers at the same point: the north wall intersecting with the centre of the north west pier while the south wall projection intersected to the north of the centre of the south west pier (Fig. 2). It seems strange that in a building project of this magnitude and complexity that an otherwise uniform symmetrical plan was not attained. In addition, the blocking fabric abutting the curved face of the north west pier was clearly an afterthought, representing a change to the originally conceived building programme.

One possible interpretation proposed by Bob Carr could explain all of these inconsistencies, but does assume that the stub of wall on the north side of the nave was part of the pre-priory structure. Clearly the construction of the priory church and its associated buildings was a major undertaking with phased work continuing over a number of years, probably decades. It may have originally been intended that the pre-priory nave was only maintained for use as the church during the construction of the tower, transepts and choir. Once their construction was complete, the nave could have been demolished and replaced with new walls which would have aligned correctly with the adjacent tower drum pier bases. If this was meant to be the case, then for whatever reason, the project was not completed as planned and the earlier nave was retained and incorporated into the building complex. This also explains the incongruity between the blocking fabric which obscured mouldings that were originally intended to have been exposed.

There is an alternative interpretation for the differing alignments of the north and south nave walls in relation to their adjacent piers. The above interpretation assumes that the stub of wall recorded in Trench 11 was part of the 11th/12th century nave. This interpretation was considered to be tentative as not enough diagnostic evidence was present to make it entirely certain. Clearly, the south wall of the nave was part of the pre-priory structure, but it is not impossible that the pre-priory north wall was completely removed and replaced on different alignment in conjunction with the construction of the adjacent north cloister. It may still have been intended that the south wall would be replaced, but as in the earlier scenario, plans may have changed.

Indeed, if the south wall of the nave was also part of a standing structure to the south, as is suspected due to its lack of window openings, its removal would have caused major disruption to more than one building. In the great protracted scheme of construction on the site it is easy to see how grandiose designs contemplated at one point would be subject to revision.

However, these interpretations may both be over simplistic. It is unlikely there was a single integrated plan for the priory from the outset, more an organic process involving subsequent or almost continuous phases of construction. The suite of buildings present would have included all of the elements expected in a priory complex, although local considerations, for example topography, could result in minor deviations from a standard layout. Rather than the recorded inconsistencies resulting from one major change in the proposed building programme, it is more likely that the phased construction works occurring over a protracted period of time combined with the vagaries of prevailing architectural fashion and the whims of the incumbent prior would all have made a contribution.

6. Recommendations for further work

While the various phases of fieldwork undertaken at Blythburgh Priory have enhanced our understanding of the site and helped assess both the character and condition of the surviving archaeological deposits, there are still gaps in our knowledge.

The targeted keyhole-type excavations that have been undertaken are useful, but do have their limitations. While each excavation phase has generally resulted in a better understanding of the site, further archaeological conundrums are posed at each stage.

It has been agreed between by all interested parties (including the owner, Nick Haward and John Ette on behalf of English Heritage) that there is scope for further targeted works which would combine further archaeological investigation with landscaping and conservation considerations, the latter aimed at continuing to preserve the monument in a presentable and accessible state.

At this stage the scope of the works, funding sources and the management vehicle through which the project will be run have not been formally arranged. As a result, the

following recommendations are based purely from an archaeological standpoint. Further work, such as conservation and superficial landscaping, are likely to be proposed by other involved parties at a later date. These tasks, particularly the landscaping, could also have an archaeological impact and would be recorded to the same standard as the exclusively archaeological trenches. The list below does not attempt to quantify the number, size or exact location of the proposed trenches. However, these details will be firmed up and included in any future Project Design or grant application.

The proposed archaeological tasks are as follows:

- **Geophysical survey**

It has been suggested by Bob Carr (independent archaeological consultant) that further geophysical work (magnetometer survey) is undertaken, particularly targeted in the area south of the nave in order to deduce the character of any buildings at that juncture. The results may also be used to inform the position of test-trenches in this area.

- **Investigate the area south of the south transept**

The recent excavations identified the formal end of the south transept. However, in Time Team Trench 15 immediately to the south, a wall footing was identified that was thought to represent the continuation of the wall recorded in their Trench 8 to the north. As this is clearly not the case, it is proposed that Time Team Trench 15 is reopened and expanded as necessary in order to deduce the date and character of the previously recorded wall.

- **Investigate the eastern end of the priory church**

The location of the east wall of the priory church has not yet been positively identified. A north to south aligned feature recorded in Time Team Trench 16/17 was originally interpreted as a naturally occurring geological feature. However, when moulded stone was recovered from its basal fill, this interpretation became redundant. Subsequently, the possibility that the feature did in fact represent the robbed out east wall of the priory church was put forward, although its character was described as 'like no other observed on the site' (Thompson 2009 40).

Now that the size of the transepts have been established, it is clear that an east wall at that juncture would not be out of keeping with the overall scale of the church.

It is proposed that part of Time Team Trench 16/17, the area coinciding with the north to south aligned feature, is reopened, with a second trench excavated over the same feature either to the north or south of the first. If possible, further trenches could be positioned to investigate the presence of the north and south walls of the church.

- **Investigate the character and survival of the north cloister**

The recent fieldwork positively identified the presence of a cloister on the north side of the church. It is proposed that targeted trenches are opened in order to assess the character and extent of the surviving structural evidence.

- **Investigate footings previously recorded in the tower crossing**

Time team Trench 10 included what appeared to be two pier bases that were unrelated to those of the priory phase crossing tower. Spatially/geometrically these were more consistent with the 11th/12th century nave, the north and south walls of which exhibited curiously different alignments in relation to the adjacent crossing tower piers. Time Team Trench 10 also included three north to south orientated linear features all interpreted as robbing trenches associated with earlier phases of the church. Clearly this is a crucial with regards to the phased development of the church complex with evidence which could help define the character of the 11th and 12th century structure.

It is proposed the western two thirds of Time Team Trench 10 is reopened and extended to include the stratigraphic relationships, if present, between the two phases of pier base and uncover more evidence of the robbed walls to include their junctions with the north and south walls of the earlier building.

- **Investigate the floor level in the north transept adjacent to the doorway immediately north of the north west drum pier**

The results from the recently excavated Trench 14 positioned to investigate the probable change in floor levels between the crossing tower and the north transept failed to identify any intact surface. The only other evidence for a floor level in the north transept (Trench 12) must be considered to be dubious as the chamfered plinth stratigraphically overlay what appeared to be the vestiges of a tile floor when the latter could really be expected to be abutting the former. On that basis, in order to try and positively identify the floor level in the north transept, a small trench could be opened internal to the doorway already investigated externally in the recently excavated Trench 13.

- **Investigate the floor level in the south transept**

A small trench could be opened within the body of the south transept with a view to identifying the floor level in that element of the building.

Similarly to the methods employed during the recent fieldwork, the work detailed above would be limited to the removal of superficial demolition deposits and robbing material. *In-situ* structural remains and features such as graves will remain intact.

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Blythburgh\BLB 081

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos\HPA-HPZ\HPS and HPT

8. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was carried out by Steve Manthorpe, Simon Picard, with help from Nick Haward and his team of employees, and was directed by Stuart Boulter.

Project management was undertaken by Stuart Boulter.

The Project Director is grateful for interpretative input from Bob Carr (independent archaeological consultant).

The report illustrations were created by Linzi Everett and Stuart Boulter; the report was edited by Rhodri Gardner.

9. Bibliography

Thompson, S., 2009	Blythburgh Priory, Blythburgh, Suffolk; Archaeological Evaluation and Assessment of Results, Wessex Archaeology, Rep. Ref. 68742.01
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Appendix 1. Project Design for 2012 Works

The following Schedule of Works covers the 2012 site work. The italicised elements are those that had Archaeological implications.

1.0 Primary Elements of Investigation

- 1.1 *Carefully excavate into existing tree bank for evidence or covered remains of S/E crossing column.*
- 1.2 *Re-open Time Team trench to the S of the conserved drum column and carry out selected cuts through this substantial wall foundation and carry out assessment as to likely plan to south of standing remains including the re-opening of the dressed plinth work for level survey and layout assessment purposes.*
- 1.3 *Archaeological/Specialist interpretation works associated with the above.*

2.0 Primary Elements of Remains Protection and Further Investigation

- 2.1 *Carefully strip the site to the W of the NW crossing tower along the line of the blocking abutting the uncovered circular facing stones and remove the cut but live ash stump and remove the exposed root system, with the objective of determining the extent of the blocking and evidence of the size and construction of the N nave wall.*
- 2.2 *Site strip around the edges of the low level walling to the N and parallel to the nave and along the line of the abutting wall to determine phasing, extent and likely use and integration into plan.*
- 2.3 Provisional allowance for topsoil clearance and reinstatement for site layout determination purposes in this northern sector of the site.
- 2.4 *Provisional allowance for additional trenches for phasing determination.*
- 2.5 *Archaeological/Specialist interpretation works associated with the above.*

3.0 Site Clearance and Recording

- 3.1 Carry out further tree surgery to buddleia to eliminate root damage and clear the site generally of vegetation prior to site and level survey.

3.2 *Carry out site survey by specialist.*

3.3 Record location and remove and stack stones clearly out of context in prepared area set aside by yew trees for future interest and study.

3.4 *Archaeological/Specialist interpretation works associated with the above.*

4.0 Conservation Works

4.1 Carry out necessary conservation works to exposed elements including reinstallation of dressed stones and associated rough racking over NE crossing column remains.

4.2 Carry out sundry protection work to the exposed fallen masonry.

4.3 Carry out undetermined protection works to the N nave wall.

5.0 Site Treatment

5.1 Clear site of surplus debris.

5.2 Shape and re-landscape as agreed with EH Architect and grass.

5.3 Clear 300mm area around all standing structures to remain exposed and membrane and cover crush lime mortar.

5.4 Provide OS datum.

6.0 Site Information

6.1 Construct lectern and information board for public use and interest.

6.2 Produce Site Guide for public use and interest (100 copies).

7.0 Contingency

7.1 Provide the sum of £5,000.00 for Contingency Works.

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0201	0201	Layer	Trench 1	Re-excavated Time Team Trench 1 spoil comprising mixed loam, mortar, flints and occasional tile.		0202			Modern
0202	0207	Grave (Fill)	Trench 1	Fill adjacent to wall 0203 in Trench 3, continues down into possible grave cut 0207. Comprises mix of silty sand, mortar with frequent pebble-cobble sized stones.				0201	medieval (priory)
0203	0203	Wall	Trench 1, 4, 5	South wall of pre-priory nave. Very well coursed fabric up to 50cm in size, some diagonally lain with re-used Roman tile and exotics. Lift-lines at c.50cm intervals. Has a solid bonded toed footing. Two rows of putlock holes but no window openings. Lime mortar was very coarse grained with frequent gravel inclusions.		0208	0204		medieval (pre-priory)
0204	0204	Footing (Cut)	Trench 1	Cut for footing of wall 0206. Underpins wall 0203 at eastern end of trench.	0203, 0208		0207		medieval (priory)
0205	0204	Footing (Fill)	Trench 1	Fill of 0204. Comprises 30-40% Flint cobbles in a matrix of 30-40% grey stiff clay with some silty sand + lime mortar.		0208	0207	0206	medieval (priory)
0206	0206	Wall	Trench 1	Wall associated with footing 0204 (see also 0234 in Trench 5). Includes re-used limestone mouldings, both Barnack and Caen stone.		0205			medieval (priory)
0207	0207	Grave (Cut)	Trench 1	Probably grave cut filling the majority of the Trench 1. Appears to cut footing 0204/0205.	0204/0205, 0208			0201	medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0208	0208	Layer	Trench 1	Naturally occurring sand subsoil with frequent pebble to cobble-sized flints.			0204, 0207	0203	-
0209	0209	Wall	Trench 2	South west pier of crossing tower. Forms north side of Trench 2.					medieval (priory)
0210	0210	Footing (Cut)	Trench 2	Cut for bonded footing of tower drum pier 0209.				0212	medieval (priory)
0211	0210	Footing (Fill)	Trench 2	Footing in cut 0210. Yellow/cream lime mortar with pebble-cobble sized flints.				0212	medieval (priory)
0212	0212	Wall	Trench 2	Wall stub abutting tower pier 0209. Poorly coursed rounded flint pebbles with occasional tile frags and exotics set in a hard light grey lime mortar. S. end cut by 0214. Possible base for threshold.		0210/0210	0214		medieval (priory)
0213	0213	Layer	Trench 2	Thin layer/spread of disaggregated sandy orange lime mortar on line of south transept west wall, similar to mortar in transept walls to the south. Poss from demolition.			0214		p-med
0214	0214	Feature (Cut)	Trench 2	Irregular cut/robbing feature.	0212, 0221, 0249				p-med
0215	0214	Feature (Fill)	Trench 2	Homogenous mix of silty sand mortar with chalk flecks and flints.				0216	p-med
0216	0214	Feature (Fill)	Trench 2	Darker stonier upper component of 0214.		0215			p-med
0217	0217	Post-hole (Cut)	Trench 2	Possible post-hole. Unexcavated. Adjacent to wall 0212.					p-med

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0218	0217	Post-hole (Fill)	Trench 2	Greyish sandy loam with lime mortar.					p-med
0219	0214	Feature (Cut)	Trench 2	Initially thought to be separate feature cut by 0214, but on excavation was clearly part of 0214.					p-med
0220	0214	Feature (Fill)	Trench 2	Mix of grey/orange mortar/sand with some loamy material towards surface.					p-med
0221	0221	Feature (Cut)	Trench 2	Unexcavated feature seen in base of 0214. Possibly a grave.			0214		medieval
0222	0221	Feature (Fill)	Trench 2	Homogenous brown silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks.			0214		medieval
0223	0214	Feature (Fill)	Trench 2	Basal layer in 0214. Comprises disaggregated lime mortar.				0215	p-med
0224	0224	Slot (Cut)	Trench 3	N-S orientated irregular sided slot, possibly a garden cultivation trench.	0228				p-med
0225	0224	Slot (Fill)	Trench 3	Dark grey/brown loam.		0228			p-med
0226	0226	Slot (Cut)	Trench 3	N-S orientated irregular sided slot, possibly a garden cultivation trench.	0228				p-med
0227	0226	Slot (Fill)	Trench 3	Dark grey/brown loam.		0228			p-med

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0228	0228	Wall	Trench 3	SW corner of south transept wall within Trench 3. Fabric comprises c.10cm diameter rounded and irregular flints set in an orange coloured crag shell rich lime mortar. Includes chamfered Caen limestone plinth forming a clasping buttress around the corner.					medieval (priory)
0229	0229	Layer	Trench 3	Discrete area of disaggregated lime mortar close to S. side of trench including a deposit of disarticulated human bone that was also seen in underlying layer 0230.		0230			p-med
0230	0230	Layer	Trench 3	Layer of soil over and abutting wall 0228. Below topsoil. Comprised homogenous brown silty sandy loam with occ. Stones with concentration of skeletal material in association with 0229.				0229	p-med
0231	0231	Layer	Trench 3	Semi-consolidated deposit of flints and tile fragments in grey lime mortar within internal angle of W and S. walls of south transept. Overlain by localised deposit similar to 0230 at junction with wall.					medieval (priory)
0232	0232	Layer	Trench 3	Discrete area of semi-consolidated lime mortar and flints at quite high level. Higher than adjacent masonry of wall 0228. unction unclear.					medieval?
0233	0203	Wall	Trench 5	Wall 0203 in Trench 5.					medieval (pre-priory)
0234	0206	Wall	Trench 5	Wall 0206 in Trench 5					medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0235	0235	Layer	Trench 5	Layer of light grey/cream coloured lime mortar render/plaster seen in rebated area of Trench 5 prior to addition of step or blocking 0240. Possibly continuous with layer 0257 seen in Trench 4.					medieval (priory)
0236	0236	Layer	Trench 5	Tile floor bedding layer c.2cm thick lime mortar with tile impressions 25cm by 25cm			0237	0239	medieval (priory)
0237	0237	Feature (Cut)	Trench 5	Feature cut through tile bedding layer 0236. Possibly a grave.	0236			0239	medieval (priory)
0238	0237	Feature (Fill)	Trench 5	Unexcavated fill of 0237 comprising orange sand flint pebbles with occasional cobbles.				0239	medieval (priory)
0239	0239	Layer	Trench 5	Fill within body of nave in Trench 5. Upper 0.15m comprised humic loam with the lower 0.3m of brown sandy loam with localised stones.		0236, 0237/0238			p-med
0240	0240	Wall	Trench 5	Either inserted alteration to existing step or blocking of original stepped opening.				0239	medieval (priory)
0241	0241	Layer	Trench 5	Fill behind bonded fabric 0240. Comprised granular cream/white lime mortar.				0239	medieval (priory)
0242	0203	Wall	Trench 4	Wall 0203 in Trench 4. Not used on plan.					medieval (pre-priory)
0243				Not allocated					-

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0244				Not allocated					-
0245				Not allocated					-
0246	0246	Feature (Cut)	Trench 4	Feature cut through tile bedding layer 0256. Possibly a grave.				0255	medieval (priory)
0247	0246	Feature (Fill)	Trench 4	Unexcavated fill of 0246 comprising mix of loam/mortar and flints				0255	medieval (priory)
0248	0248	Layer	Trench 6	Topsoil in Trench 6. Black towards surface. Location of clearance bonfire that may have affected TT geophysics. 0.35m thick.		0249			p-med
0249	0249	Wall	Trench 6 and 9	W. wall of S. transept seen in Trenches 6 and 9. Similar composition to 0228 in Trench 3.			0214	0248	medieval (priory)
0250	0250	Layer	Trench 6	Fill layer external to wall 0249. Comprises loose flint cobbles + mortar lumps in a sandy loam with disaggregated lime mortar.				0248	p-med
0251	0251	Layer	Trench 7	Overall number allocated to overburden in Trench 7. Includes two distinct topsoil horizons and intervening sandier material.		0252/0253			p-med
0252	0252	Footing (Cut)	Trench 7	Curving cut in base of Trench 7. Almost certainly represents the robbed out footing trench for the SE. tower drum pier				0251, 0253	medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0253	0252	Footing (Fill)	Trench 7	Stratified fill of 0252 of light to mid grey/brown loose silty sand with occasional small stones and lime mortar flecks.		0252		0251	p-med
0254			Trench 2, 6, 9	Not allocated					-
0255	0255	Layer	Trench 4	Overburden in Trench 4. Essentially dark grey/brown loam topsoil but included frequent large flint cobbles.		0246/0247, 0256			p-med
0256	0256	Layer	Trench 4	Tile floor bedding layer c.2cm thick lime mortar with tile impressions 25cm by 25cm. Abuts plaster/render 0257.			0246	0255	medieval (priory)
0257	0257	Layer	Trench 4	Lime mortar plaster/render on internal face of wall 0203 in Trench 4. Abutted by 0256. Only survives below existing ground level.				0255	medieval (priory)
0258	0258	Layer	Trench 8	Re-excavated Time Team backfill in Trench 8. Stratified humic loam with sandier and mortar rich components.		0264			Modern
0259	0259	Layer	Trench 8	Undisturbed topsoil on E. side of Trench 8. Homogenous grey/brown humic loam.		0264	0260		p-med
0260	0260	Pit (Cut)	Trench 8	Pit	0259, 0264				Modern
0261	0260	Pit (Fill)	Trench 8	Mainly loam fill of 0260. Includes tin cans, bottles, pottery etc. 20th century.	0259, 0264				Modern

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0262	0262	Layer	Trench 8	Vestiges of tile floor bedding layer in Trench 8. Different level to that in Trenches 4, 5 and 11.				0255, 0256	medieval (priory)
0263	0263	Footing (Cut)	Trench 8	Footing cut for N. wall of nave. Represented by near vertical face to the south, no reciprocal edge to N.		0268		0255, 0256	medieval (pre-priory)
0264	0263	Footing (Fill)	Trench 8	Stratified mixed mortar, sand and rubble.				0255, 0256	medieval (pre-priory)
0265	0265	Layer	Trench 8	Compacted layer of silty sand abuts wall 0266. While not a bedding layer itself, probably associated with ambulatory floor.				0264	medieval (priory)
0266	0266	Wall	Trench 8	N. cloister south ambulatory wall base or bonded footing. Coursed, mainly cobble-sized flints in a yellow lime mortar. Buttressed on N. side.				0267	medieval (priory)
0267	0267	Wall	Trench 8	Narrower wall built on top of 0266 on same alignment. Also re-uses 0266 buttresses. Hard grey lime mortar with pebble to cobble-sized flints and some bricks.		0266			p-med?
0268	0268	Feature (Cut)	Trench 8	L-shaped cut seen in base of 0263. If a genuine feature, may be an earlier footing.				0263/0264	?
0269	0268	Feature (Fill)	Trench 8	Brown silty sand with moderate small to medium-sized stones.				0263/0264	?

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0270	0270	Layer	Trench 10	Upper layer of topsoil, grey/brown sandy loam 0.2m thick.		0271			p-med
0271	0271	Layer	Trench 10	Mid grey/brown silty sand mottled with orangey brown sand with cobbles/gravel and occasional CBM frags 0.28m thick.		0272		0270	p-med
0272	0272	Layer	Trench 10	Second, buried topsoil layer, grey/brown sandy loam 0.2m thick.		0273		0271	p-med
0273	0273	Layer	Trench 10	Mid brown very silty sand and gravel with moderate well sorted stones, 0.18m thick.		0274		0272	p-med
0274	0274	Layer	Trench 10	Mid/light orange/brown silty sand with gravel with moderate mixed stones and cobbles, 0.18m thick.				0273	p-med
0275	0275	Feature (Cut)	Trench 10	Possible grave seen in sondage through stratified layers in Trench 10. Only seen after removal of layer 0274.				0274	medieval
0276	0275	Feature (Fill)	Trench 10	Unexcavated fill of 0275. Mixed brown silty sand and stones.				0274	medieval
0277	0277	Wall	Trench 11	Stub of N. nave wall, possibly pre-priory church. Coursed corework only above ground, plastered below ground so face not seen.					medieval (pre-priory)
0278	0278	Wall	Trench 11	Blocking fabric between nave wall 0277 and NW. drum pier 0279.					medieval (priory)
0279	0279	Wall	Trench 11	NW. drum pier abutted by 0278.					medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0280	0280	Wall	Trench 11	Wall fabric on N. side and of drum pier 0279. Clear vertical junction between it and pier. Associated with doorway from N. transept into N. cloister.					medieval (priory)
0281	0281	Layer	Trench 11	Fill within body of nave in internal component of Trench 11. Disaggregated lime mortar and flints, heavily rooted.		0282			p-med
0282	0282	Layer	Trench 11	Lime mortar tile floor bedding layer in internal component of Trench 11. Heavily disrupted by Ash tree roots.					medieval (priory)
0283	0283	Layer	Trench 11	Layer of lime mortar render/plaster on internal face of wall 0277 and 0278 in Trench 11. Continued over junction between two wall phases 0277 and 0278.					medieval (priory)
0284	0284	Layer	Trench 11	Topsoil in N. component of Trench 11. Dark grey/brown sandy loam with frequent roots.		0285			p-med
0285	0285	Layer	Trench 11	Demolition material in N. component of Trench 11. Disaggregated lime mortar and frequent pebble to large cobble-sized flints.				0284	p-med
0286	0286	Layer	Trench 11	Layer of lime mortar render/plaster on external face of wall 0277 and 0278 in Trench 11. Continued over junction between two wall phases 0277 and 0278.					medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0287	0287	Layer	Trench 12	Vestiges of tile floor? In Trench 12. Curious relationship with overlying plinth if both features are original and in-situ. Would expect tiles to abut plinth!				0288	medieval (priory)
0288	0290	Plinth	Trench 12	Vestiges of single chamfered plinth, possibly marking an opening through wall 0290.		0287			medieval (priory)
0289	0289	Layer	Trench 12	Topsoil in Trench 12 removed external to wall 0290. Brown/grey sandy loam.					p-med
0290	0290	Wall	Trench 12	E. wall of N. transept. Exhibits a toed base externally. Very little facing survives, core poorly coursed.					medieval (priory)
0291	0291	Layer	Trench 13	Topsoil in Trench 13, grey/brown sandy loam.		0292			p-med
0292	0292	Layer	Trench 13	Demolition material in Trench 13. Disaggregated lime mortar and frequent pebble to large cobble-sized flints. Exhibits hint of stratification. Equivalent to 0285 in Trench 11.				0291	p-med
0293	0293	Layer	Trench 13	Overall number allocated to the vestiges of steps in Trench 13. Combination of flat mortar bedding surfaces over a core of stiff clay.					medieval (priory)
0294	0294	Wall	Trench 13	W. wall of N. transept.					medieval (priory)

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0295	0295	Layer	Trench 13	Layer of lime render/plaster on external face of W. wall of N. transept N. of doorway. Includes pieces of roof-tile lain flat against wall face.					medieval (priory)
0296	0296	Layer	Trench 13	Mid brown silty sand, relatively compacted. Flat surface, not formal bedding layer, but represents level immediately above which the cloister walkway (ambulatory would have been.					medieval
0297	0297	Layer	Trench 13	Soft brown sand with occasional tile fragments. Unexcavated fill at same level as 0295 at S. end of trench. Possibly fill in cut feature such as a grave.					medieval
0298	0298	Layer	Trench 14	Topsoil in Trench 14, comprises dark grey/brown sandy loam with common roots and localised evidence of burning.		0299/300, 0303			p-med
0299	0299	Steps	Trench 14	Steps set in soil, seen after removal of 0298. Either garden feature or inserted during quarrying/robbing of site. Made from re-used limestone masonry.					p-med
0300	0299	Steps	Trench 14	Possible continuation and turn of steps 0299.					p-med
0301	0301	Layer	Trench 14	Layer of rubble including large pieces of masonry, not thought to be formal part of 0299 or 0300.					p-med

Appendix 2. BLB 081: Context List and Descriptions

OP NO	CONTEXT	IDENTIFIER	LOCATION	DESCRIPTION	CUTS	OVER	CUTBY	UNDER	MODIDATE
0302	0302	Layer	Trench 14	Fill of sondage excavated through material below topsoil and ash layer 0303. Comprised brown silty sand with occasional stones. Below expected level of any surviving floor surface. Probably grave fill.				0303	medieval
0303	0303	Layer	Trench 14	Discrete ashy layer near S. end of Trench 14. Possibly evidence for garden bonfire.		0302			p-med

Appendix 3. Addendum: The Chapel of St. Mary Magdalene

Introduction

The house known as The Priory, presently owned by Nick Haward, has a single room forming the western end of the building that is known as 'the chapel' (Figure 1). A map in the possession of Nick Haward entitled 'Blythburgh about 1500; A map compiled with the help of contemporary documents' (Figure 2), shows the location of a chapel dedicated to St Mary Magdalene on the site. In order to deduce whether the extant structure is consistent with the chapel shown on the map, three trenches were excavated by Nick Haward's Team and examined in detail by an SCC/FPT archaeologist along with the external fabric of the standing structure.

The results of this examination are presented below.

Results

The building is c.7.5m long, measured from east to west, with a width of c.5.1m. There is a window and doorway in the north wall, two windows in the south wall, with an intervening buttress, and evidence of a blocked window in the west wall (Figure 3). The face of the wall steps out by c.0.1m at a height of c.1.2m above the existing ground surface. Original facing survives over large areas of the wall, comprising predominantly of well coursed flint pebbles, relatively uniform in size (c.10cm). Pieces of brick were also commonly included which, from their character, are similar to those used in the contemporary dressings of the incorporated architectural features.

The three extant windows, one on the north side and two to the south, all exhibit Y-tracery (Plate 2). However, closer inspection suggests that these were originally single-light windows with a simple two-centred arch with the tracery inserted later. All of the jambs, sills and arches of the windows and the north doorway were executed in cut or rubbed bricks of two orders with a single chamfer on each (Plates 1 and 2). Each element also had a simple hood mould with plain angled stops (Plate 2). Generally the bricks were dark red in colour, frequently poorly fired and formed from badly mixed clay, with thicknesses varying between 1³/₄ to 2 inches. In addition to the Y-tracery element of each window, there was also evidence for other alterations and repairs including a whole replacement sill for the north window (Plate 2).

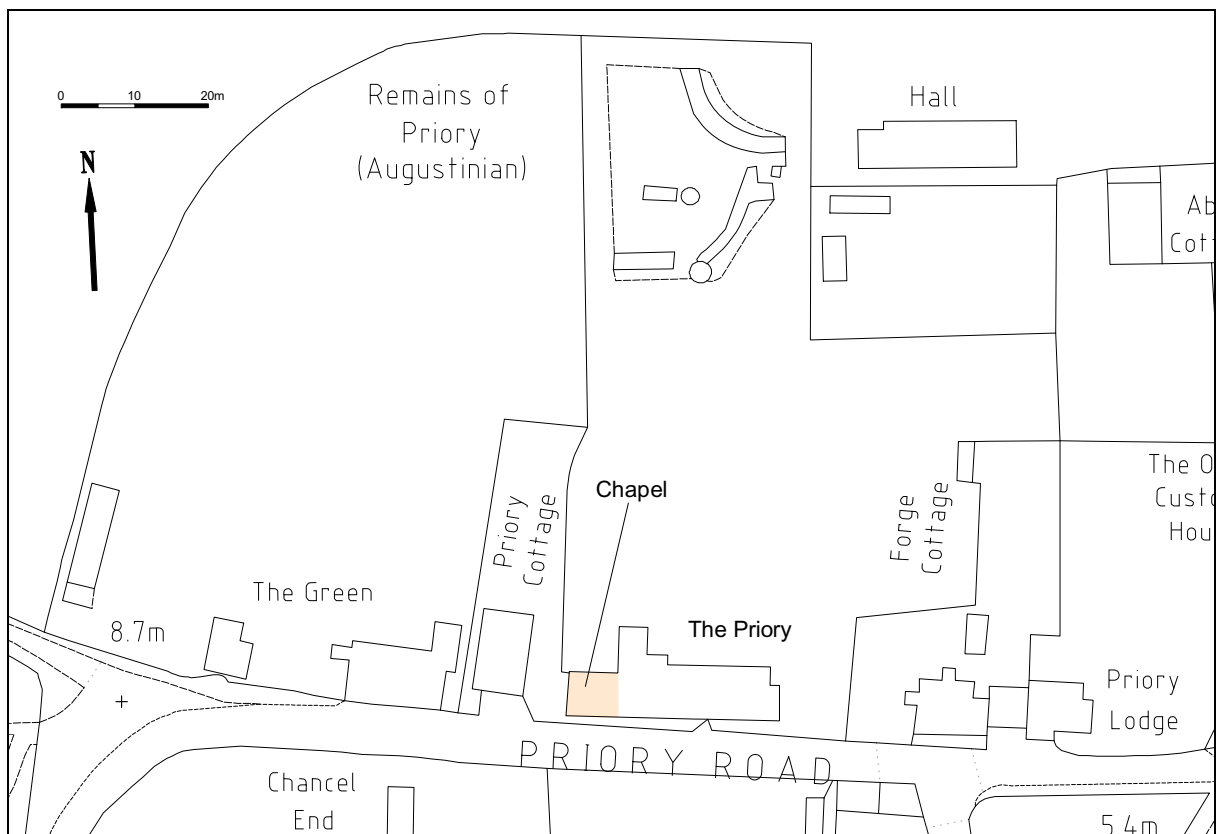


Figure 1. Location of the chapel

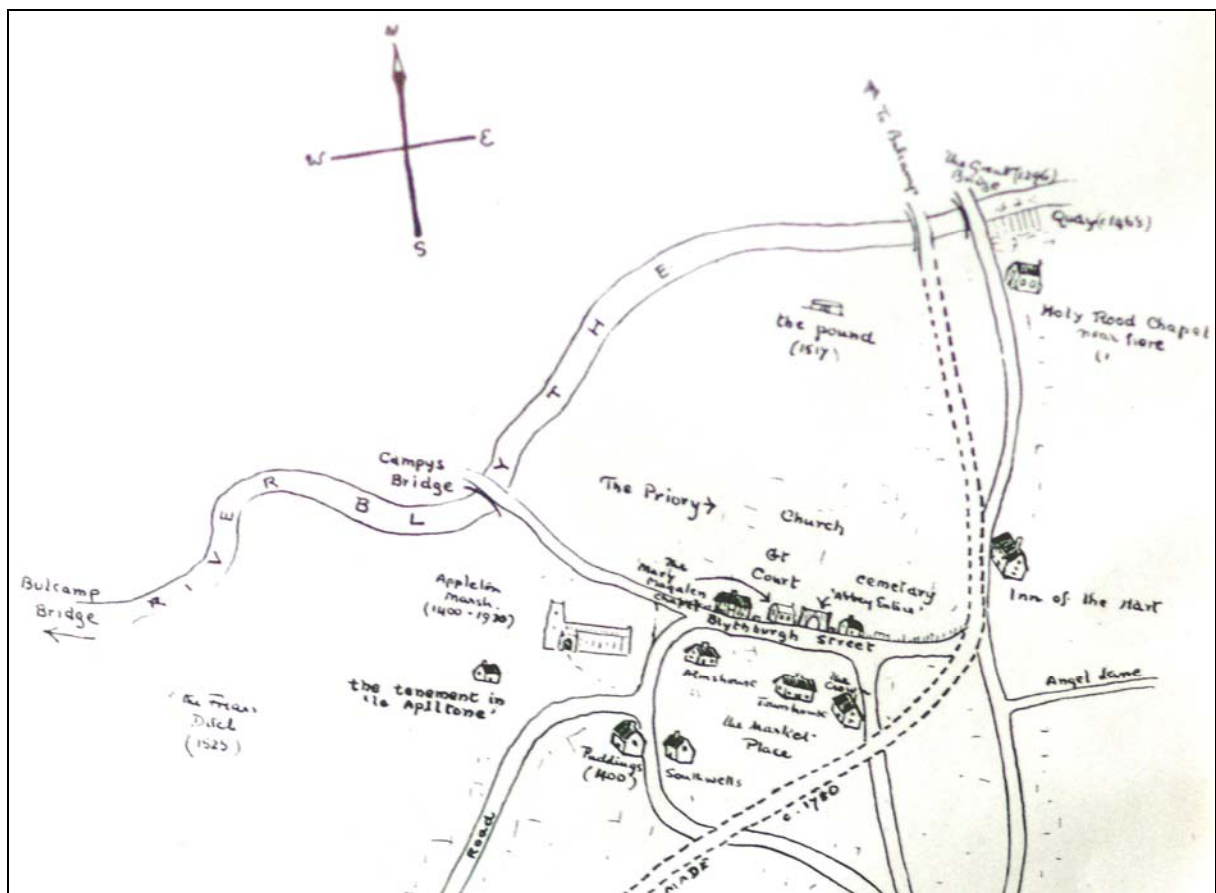


Figure 2. Blythburgh c.1500

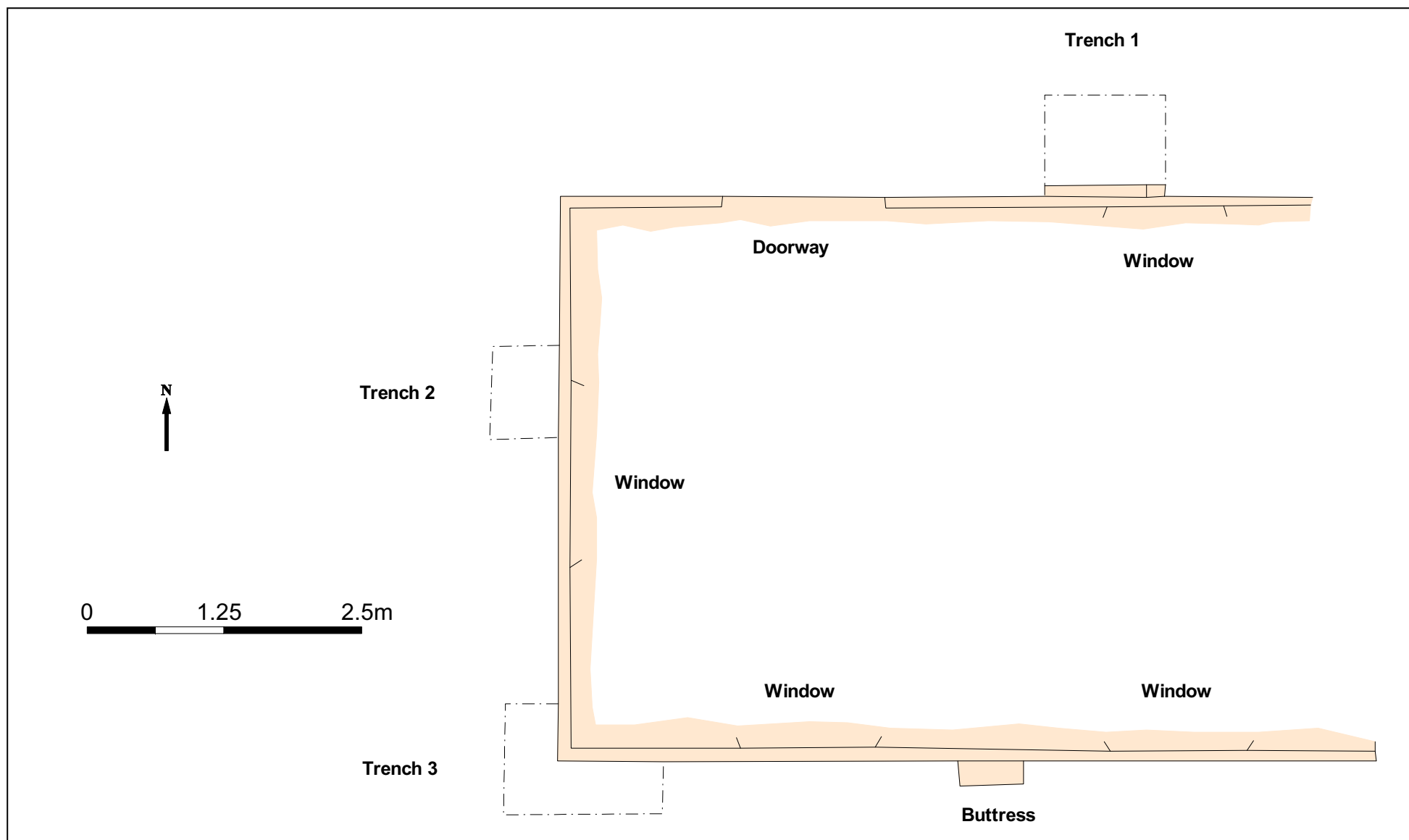


Figure 3. Plan of Chapel



Plate 1. N. side of chapel taken from the NW.



Plate 2. N. window



Plate 3. Blocked W. window



Plate 4. Trench 1



Plate 5. Trench 2



Plate 6. Trench 3

Vestiges of a fourth window were present in the west wall of the building which had subsequently been blocked with brick (Plate 3). While the blocking may not originally have been undertaken for the purposes of inserting a fire-place and chimney, these elements are now present.

Three trenches were excavated against the base of the wall in order to investigate the wall base/footing and the possibility that the extant structure had been built on the site of an earlier building.

Trench 1: Excavated against the north wall (Figure 3), Trench 1 measured 0.9m by 1.10m and was excavated at the junction of two different wall fabrics (Plate 4). The overburden comprised 0.2m of dark grey sticky loam over sticky orange/brown silty sand which continued down beyond the 0.55m excavated depth of the trench and almost certainly represented the naturally occurring subsoil at this location.

An inserted brick-built drain ran along the base of the wall. The bottom of the wall was encountered at 0.42m below the existing ground surface stepping out by 0.1m for the lowermost 0.25m.

The junction between the two different fabrics continued to the base of the wall in line with the western jamb of the window. The fabric directly underneath the window was clearly different to the original wall to the west with less well-defined coursing. This suggests that the original window may have been changed into a doorway, before being partially blocked and reverting back to its original function. Further evidence for this was provided by the observation that the entire sill of this window was a replacement.

Trench 2: Excavated against the centre of the west wall over the junction between two different wall fabrics, Trench 2 measured 0.65m by 0.8m (Figure 3). A similar soil profile was encountered comprising 0.5m of topsoil over sticky brown silty sand subsoil.

Original fabric at the northern end of the trench exhibited a similar depth and toed footing to that seen in Trench 1. The vertical junction between the original fabric to the north and the secondary fabric to the south lined up with the jamb of the blocked west window. A reciprocal joint could be seen below the southern jamb of the blocked window. The explanation for this is unclear, unless, similarly to the north window, the

west window had been opened up as a doorway before reverting back to a window which, at a later date, was blocked. Blocking of this window may have been done in conjunction with the insertion of the fireplace and chimney. However, the difference in character of the fabric of the window blocking and the decoratively corbelled element of the chimney above, which appears later, suggests that the relationship may be more complex.

Both the original fabric and the secondary fabric had been subject to underpinning in redbrick (Plate 5).

Trench 3: Excavated around the south west corner of the building, Trench 3 measured approximately 1m by 1.5m (Figure 3).

The removal of approximately 0.3m of topsoil revealed that the entire corner had been underpinned in redbrick. In addition, the crispness of the edges of the bricks of the above ground wall at this juncture suggested that the entire corner had been rebuilt. The trench was abandoned at this point.

Conclusion

From the observations made on site, it is reasonable to believe that the present building is essentially the medieval chapel of St. Mary Magdalene as shown on the constructed map of c.1500 (Figure 2), although the map was probably drawn with prior knowledge that the standing structure was present. Indeed, the chapel on the map does bear an uncanny resemblance to the extant building.

However, having said that, the overall balance of evidence falls in favour of the building being the chapel.

While there is clearly evidence for a series of alterations and repair to the structure, there is an overriding impression of continuity exhibited by both the wall fabric and its architectural features.

The architectural style, simple two-centred arches with relatively wide single-light windows is not diagnostic, although a date before the late 13th century is highly unlikely.

Medieval brick is relatively rare in Suffolk, but two examples recorded by the author are both from monastic contexts and from sites not far from Blythburgh.

At Dunwich Greyfriars, only c.5.5km from Blythburgh Priory, brick was used in the construction of the main gateway and the one surviving building interpreted as the refectory (Boulter 2009 17, 29 and 33; Plates 34-38 and 50). In this instance a later 14th or early 15th century date was postulated.

The second example was from the old site of Leiston Abbey close to the present Minsmere bird reserve and lying c.9.5km from Blythburgh (Boulter 2008 43). Here the bricks occurred in the Phase II fabric of the chapel which, although not closely datable, was attributed to the later medieval period.

It is clear from these sites that brick was available as a building material in the region during the medieval period, although not that frequently used. While other examples almost certainly exist in buildings not forming part of a monastic complex, it may be significant that in addition to Blythburgh, the two examples encountered by the author have both been monastic sites.

In summary, while none of this evidence can be used to conclusively prove the date or function of the building at Blythburgh, the location shown on the constructed map of c.1500 coincides with the standing structure and its general characteristics are sound.

Bibliography

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
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Appendix 4. BLB 081: Oasis Data Collection Form

OASIS ID: suffolkc1-132054

Project details

Project name BLB 081 Blythburgh Priory

Short description of the project Archaeological trenching undertaken by Time Team Archaeologists at Blythburgh Priory in 2009 was followed by two further, largely English Heritage funded, campaigns of investigation in 2010 and 2011. A fourth phase of work, that covered by this report, was carried out by Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team in 2012. The 2012 works combined the reopening and reassessment of some of the Time Team trenches along with the excavation of new targeted trenches.

Project dates Start: 30-04-2012 End: 16-05-2012

Previous/future work Yes / Yes

Any associated project reference codes 68742 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Scheduled Monument (SM)

Current Land use Other 5 - Garden

Monument type PRIORY Medieval

Significant Finds TILE Medieval

Investigation type "Field observation","Part Excavation"

Prompt Grant application (eg. management plan)

Project location

Country England

Site location SUFFOLK SUFFOLK COASTAL BLYTHBURGH BLB 081
Blythburgh Priory

Study area 1250.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TM 4520 7540 52 1 52 19 16 N 001 35 54 E Point

Height OD / Min: 5.00m Max: 7.00m
Depth

Project creators

Name of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Organisation

Project brief Consultant
originator

Project design R Carr
originator

Project Stuart Boulter
director/manager

Project Stuart Boulter
supervisor

Type of English Heritage
sponsor/funding
body

Name of English Heritage
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive Suffolk County SMR
recipient

Digital Archive ID BLB 081

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"

Digital Media "Database","Images raster / digital
available photography","Spreadsheets","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive Suffolk County SMR
recipient

Paper Archive ID BLB 081

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Correspondence","Drawing","Map","Notebook
available - Excavation',' Research',' General
Notes","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Entered by Stuart Boulter (stuart.boulter@suffolk.gov.uk)

Entered on 10 August 2012

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