

**ALTERATION WORKS AT  
CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN  
WIDDINGTON, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING**



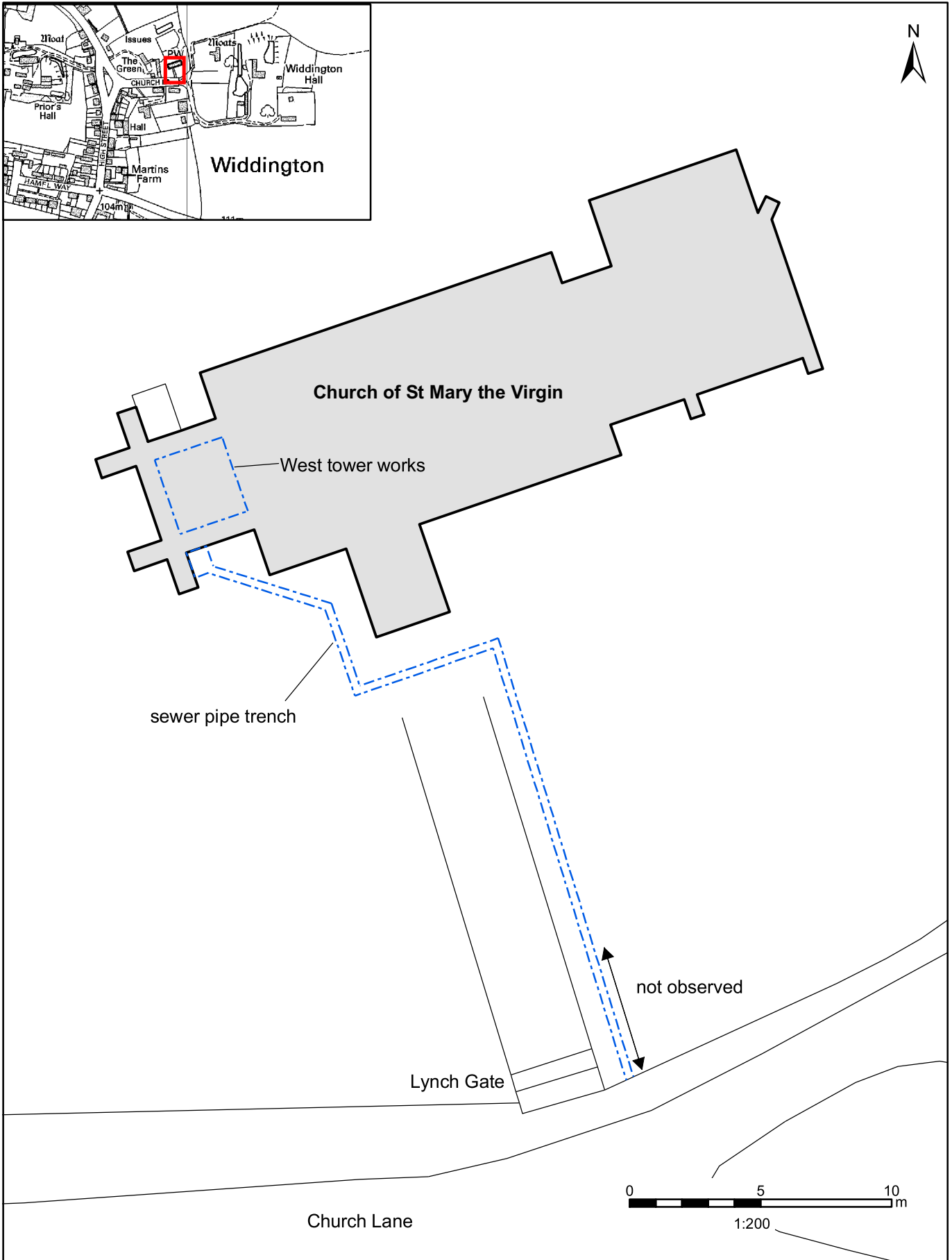
Essex County Council  
Field Archaeology Unit

November 2012



## ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Site name/Address:</b> Church of St Mary the Virgin, Church Lane, Widdington, Essex	
<b>Parish:</b> Widdington	<b>District:</b> Uttlesford
<b>NGR:</b> TL 5397 3177	<b>Site Code:</b> WDWC12
<b>Type of Work:</b> Archaeological monitoring	<b>Site Director/Group:</b> M. Atkinson, ECC Field Archaeology Unit
<b>Dates of Work:</b> 10-16 October 2012	<b>Size of Area Investigated:</b> c.19 sq m
<b>Location of Finds/Curating Museum:</b> Saffron Walden Museum	<b>Funding source:</b> Client
<b>Further Seasons Anticipated?:</b> No	<b>Related HER Nos:</b> 36900
<b>Final Report:</b> EAH summary	<b>Oasis No:</b> 136956
<b>Periods Represented:</b> post-medieval, modern	
<b>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</b>	
<p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken on groundworks for the insertion of toilet and kitchen facilities in the church tower and associated drainage across the churchyard (Fig.1).</p> <p>St Mary's Church is a grade 2* listed building of apparent early12th century origin, but little of the original fabric survives. The nave was rebuilt and the vestry added in the 15th century, while the west tower was rebuilt and the south porch added during extensive restoration in 1872.</p> <p><u>Tower</u> (Plates 1 and 2) The tile floor of the tower was removed and its whole area (c.10 sq m) reduced by c.0.35m. This exposed the top of a substantial brick-sided and heavily-sooted heating duct that curved from a hole low in the NW corner of the tower (presumed to be fed from an exterior boiler house, since replaced) to a central position as it passed through the arch between the tower and nave. The floor of the duct was slate-lined and it was capped with substantial rectangular slabs of stone. This structure was cut into the same uniform rubble and mortar deposit that was excavated across the floor area above. It is almost certainly part of the 1872 rebuild and restoration of the church.</p> <p>The stepped brick footings of the rebuilt tower walls and archway between tower and nave were also partially exposed. A foundation trench for a new partition wall was cut to a depth of 0.6m from the former floor surface. This exposed a brown silty clay deposit containing pebbles of un-established date and nature beneath the rubble and mortar deposit.</p> <p><u>Churchyard</u> (Plates 3 and 4) A sewer trench was excavated between the tower and Church Lane, the majority of it running just east of, and parallel to, the path between the Lynch gate and South Porch. The trench was c.32m long by 0.3m wide and averaged 0.75m depth. No remains of archaeological significance were identified within the chalky yellow brown clay natural deposit that it cut into. A row of headstones lay some 1.45m further east of its main N-S length, and it appears that its route avoided any graves within this part of the churchyard. Brick, stone/flint and mortar rubble was observed in the trench in the vicinity of the Tower, as were its stepped brick foundations - all associated with the 1872 rebuild.</p> <p>No remains predating the late Victorian period were encountered and no finds retrieved.</p>	
<b>Previous Summaries/Reports:</b> none	
<b>Author of Summary:</b> M. Atkinson	<b>Date of Summary:</b> 06/11/ 2012



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Fig.1. Location of archaeological monitoring



Plate 1. Tower floor, showing heating duct and brick foundations (1m scale)



Plate 2. Heating duct detail, looking toward Nave (1m scale)



Plate 3. Sewer trench, looking north (1m scale)



Plate 4. Sewer trench, at base of Tower, looking NW (1m scale)