

HERITAGE NETWORK



CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN **Stanstead St Margaret's, Herts.**

HN542

Archaeological Monitoring Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

The Church of St MARY THE VIRGIN Stanstead St Margarets, Herts.

HN542

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of the Vicar and Churchwardens of Stanstead St Margarets

by

David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Report no.317

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The cover photo shows a view of the church from the SE

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson and David Kaye. The report text and illustrations were prepared by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Ian Stewart, Carden & Godfrey, acting on behalf of the Vicar and Churchwardens; the Rev. Anne Donaldson; the staff of Hibbitt & Sons, builders; and Jonathan Smith, Hertfordshire County Council, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Church of St Mary, Stanstead St Margarets		
County:	Herfordshire	District:	East Herts DC
Village/town:	Stanstead St Margarets	Parish:	Stanstead St Margarets
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 3803 1156
Client name and address:	c/o Carden and Godfrey, 33 Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1R 0AU		
Nature of work:	Building restoration	Current land use:	Churchyard
Site Status:	Listed Building	Reason for investigation:	Faculty jurisdiction
Position in planning process:	n/a	Project brief originator:	St Albans Diocese
Size of affected area:	n/a	Size of area investigated:	n/a
Site Code:	HN542	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Building recording, recording of fabric	Archive Recipient:	Hertford Museum
Start of work	5 July 2005	Finish of work	7 October 2005
Related HER Nos:	4368	Periods represented:	Med, Post-med, Modern
Oasis UID	Heritage1-11781	Significant finds:	n/a
Monument types:	Church		
Physical archive:	Photographic negatives and contact sheets		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In response to the requirements of the diocesan faculty for repair and refurbishment works at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Stanstead St Margarets, Herts, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the Vicar and Churchwardens to undertake the archaeological recording of the fabric and the monitoring of the groundworks.

The photographic recording and monitoring of the repairs to the southern elevation of the church has enabled the documentation of a number of features not previously clearly apparent. These include a series of repairs to the flint walling, a building lift indicating that the roof had been raised, a number of putlog holes, and three features which, considered together, may suggest that a porch formerly existed protecting the south door.

No archaeological features were observed in the groundworks for the new drainage.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Carden & Godfrey, Architects, acting on behalf of the Vicar and Churchwardens of Stanstead St Margarets, as part of a programme of archaeological investigation associated with repairs to the south elevation of the church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Hoddesdon Road, Stanstead St Margarets, Herts. The faculty for the work, granted by the Chancellor of the Diocese of St Albans, was granted subject to an archaeological proviso, requested by the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser (DAA). The scope of the required work follows the *Brief for Archaeological Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Reporting* prepared by the DAA (ref. DB 13/4/2005). A full specification for the project is contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design* dated July 2005.

1.2 The site, centred on NGR TL 3803 1156, is located on the west side of the Hoddesdon Road, 200m south of its junction with the B181 Station Road (Figure 1). The church has Norman origins and a number of features of this period survive, including a small window in the south elevation. The church was largely rebuilt c.1316 as part of a small college with a warden and four chaplains. A north aisle and chancel were demolished in the later medieval period. The present repair works involve the repair and repointing of the south elevation of the church and improvements to the rainwater drainage to the same elevation.

1.3 The aim of the present project has been to provide a photographic record of the south elevation before the start of works, and another following the raking out existing mortar; to identify and record any archaeological features and deposits which may be uncovered in the course of groundworks; and to retrieve artefactual and ecofactual elements which will allow the date, character, and significance of the site to be assessed in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), subject to the limitations of reasonable safety and practicality.

1.4 The present report is intended to present the findings of the project, and set them in their archaeological and historical context. The report will be submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and, subject to any requirement for further analysis as per the provisions of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (MAP2) and the deposition of the project archive with the Hertford Museum, will complete the archaeological requirements of the faculty.

2. Fieldwork

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site lies in the valley of the River Lea between the Hoddesdon Road and the New River, on level ground at approximately 35mAOD. The soil is formed of river alluvium of the Fladbury 1 association.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.2 In *The Chapel of St Mary at St Margarets: A Short History*, a pamphlet published by the church and revised in 1992, unattributed reference is made to records that mention a church on the present site as far back as the late 11th century. The Victoria County History and Pevsner agree that the earliest part of the church is the nave and that it is Norman in date. This is largely based on the presence of a small window opening, with monolithic head and an incised billet design on the jambs, located just to the east of the south door.

2.3 In 1316, the lord of the manor of St Margaret, William de Goldington, founded a college consisting of a warden and four chaplains at the church and, in the course of the 14th century, the chancel was added, and chapel and aisle to the north, in Decorated style. The latter were subsequently demolished, and were replaced in the 19th century by two vestries.

2.4 The church was substantially restored between 1807 and 1838 by the Rev Joseph Pratt and further restored between 1901 and 1902 after the death of the Rev Charles Lilley. Historic views of the church include a watercolour by J Buckler dated 1830 (Plate 1), and a postcard postmarked 1906, which shows the outside of the church to have been entirely rendered (Plate 2).

2.5 In the south elevation, the main doorway is likely to be 14th century in origin but has been much restored. The door itself is reputed to be late 16th century in date. Three windows are in early Decorated style, probably dating to between 1330 and 1340, although the western window may be a later insertion. It is not shown on the Buckler watercolour, although the accuracy of Buckler's draughtsmanship is sometimes questionable. To the west of the easternmost window is a small blocked doorway probably a *Priest's Door* to provide access to the chancel.

FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

2.6 A preliminary visit was made to photograph the southern elevation of the church on medium format black & white film, backed up by a digital record (Figure 2). A subsequent visit was made to photograph the southern elevation following the raking out of the existing mortar (Figure 3). A final visit was made to inspect a new drainage trench and soakaway leading from the south-western corner of the church (Figure 4).

2.7 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Design Brief, and with the Heritage Network's approved Project Design dated July 2005.

OBSERVED STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE

2.8 The church is largely built of flint and fieldstones with limestone quoins and dressings. The refurbishment works included the repointing of the entire south elevation, the replacement of weathered and eroded stonework to the windows and buttresses, the repair and replacement of guttering and downpipes, the relaying of the stone gully at the foot of the wall, and the excavation of a new drain and soakaway.

2.9 Following the raking out of the existing mortar and the removal of remaining patches of render, it was apparent that the wall facing had been subject to repairs on a regular basis. The chronology of the repairs was not generally apparent. The following features were noted:

- 1 Building lift running the full length of the building, approximately 0.30m below the eaves, suggesting that the roof has been raised
- 2 Repair, using knapped flint, running along the junction between the SW buttress and the nave
- 3 Building lift
- 4 Repair, using sandstone, limestone and brick
- 5 Putlog
- 6 Void, possibly associated with 7 and 8, possibly indicating location of earlier porch or canopy predating 1830
- 7 Area of repointing using a white lime mortar, possibly associated with 6 and 8
- 8 Void, possibly associated with 6 and 7, possibly indicating location of earlier porch or canopy predating 1830
- 9 Repair, using flint and limestone
- 10 Repair, using flint and limestone
- 11 Repair beneath the western window, using knapped flint and limestone, possibly contemporary with the repair or insertion of the window
- 12 Repair on the eastern side of the western window, using knapped flint, possibly contemporary with the repair or insertion of the window
- 13 Vertical joint, in the upper third of the elevation, at the junction between the nave and chancel
- 14 Putlog
- 15 Repair beneath the middle window, using knapped flint, possibly contemporary with the repair of the window
- 16 Putlog
- 17 Putlog with limestone dressings
- 18 Repair, using knapped flint
- 19 Infill of blocked doorway, using knapped flint
- 20 Infill below doorjambs of blocked doorway, in supposed location of sill
- 21 Putlog with limestone dressings
- 22 Repair lift
- 23 Vertical repair in limestone and brick
- 24 Exposed clunch blocks at base of buttress

DRAINAGE WORKS

2.10 The gully running along the base of the wall was formed of limestone slabs laid to form a channel abutting the base of the wall. The bedding mortar was not removed and the slabs were lifted and relaid in the same positions.

2.11 The western end of the gully was linked into a new drain leading to a new 1m square soakaway located in the churchyard, 6m to the west. The groundworks were supervised but no archaeological features or deposits were observed. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of gravel representing the bedding for an existing pathway, overlying an undifferentiated subsoil 0.70m in depth.

3. Discussion

3.1 The photographic recording and monitoring of the repairs to the southern elevation of the church has enabled the documentation of a number of features not previously clearly apparent. These include a series of repairs to the flint walling, a building lift indicating that the roof had been raised, a number of putlog holes, and three features which, considered together, may suggest that a porch formerly existed protecting the south door.

3.2 The walls would undoubtedly have required regular repair as the wall facing weathered. The dating of such features remains problematic, although two significant phases of repair are documented, between 1807 and 1838, and between 1901 and 1902. Allocating the observed features to these or other repair phases has not been possible.

3.3 No archaeological features were observed in the groundworks for the new drainage.

Confidence Rating

3.4 During the course of the fieldwork, the conditions were generally acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation.

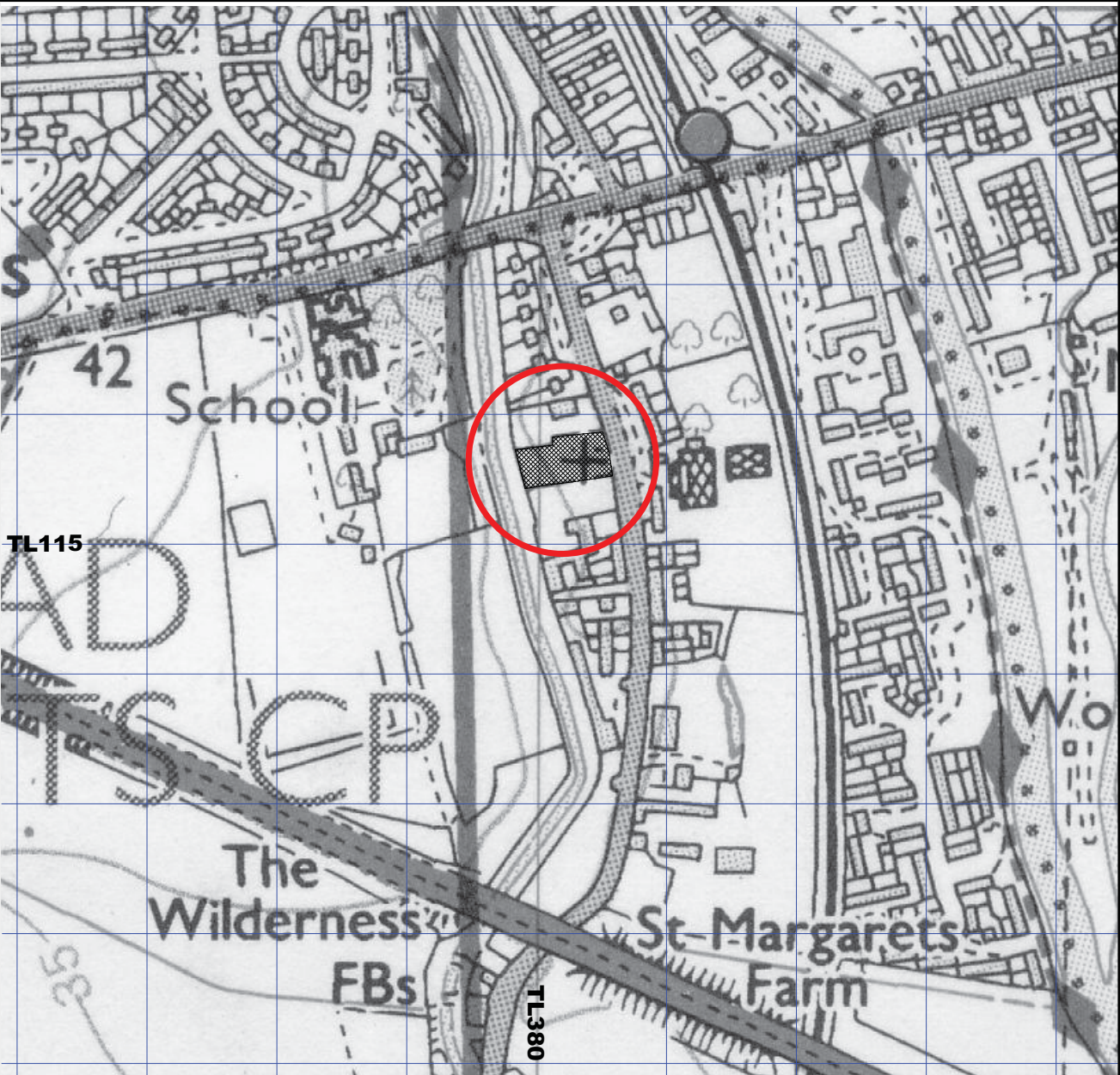
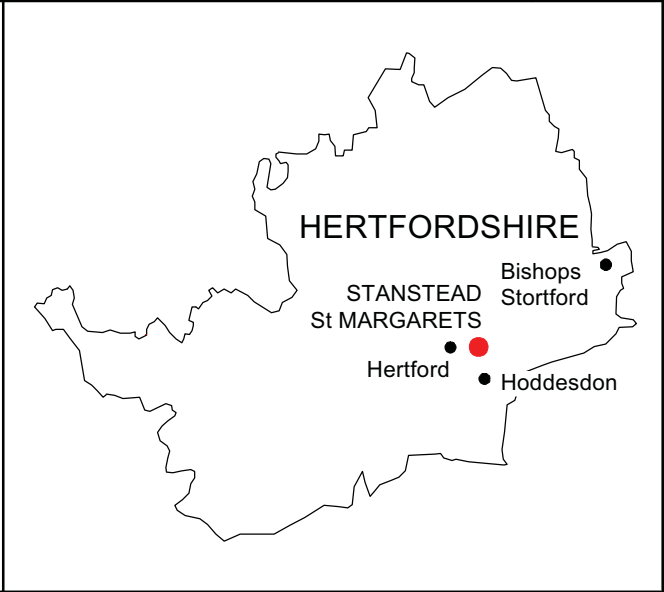
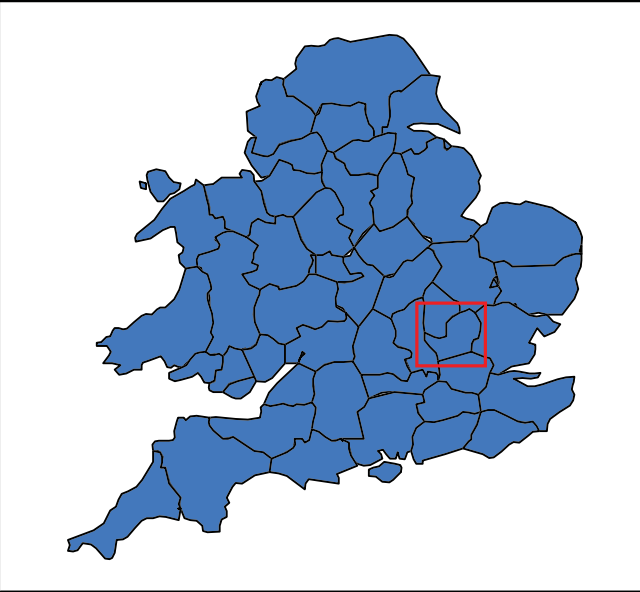
3.5 There are no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the present project which was less than High.

4. Bibliography

- Hillelson, D. 2005, *The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Stanstead St Margarets: Archaeological Project Design*. Heritage Network
- Page, E. 1908, *The Victoria County History: Hertfordshire*. London
- Pevsner, N. 2002, *The Buildings of England: Hertfordshire* (2nd edition). Yale
- Simmonds, P. 1992, *The Chapel of St Mary at St Margaret's: A short history*. Privately printed

5. Illustrations & Plates

- Figure 1 Site location
- Figure 2 Southern elevation prior to repairs
- Figure 3 Observed structural evidence
- Figure 4 Location of soakaway
- Plate 1 Watercolour of St Mary's Church from the SE, 1830
- Plate 2 View of St Mary's Church from the SW, c.1906

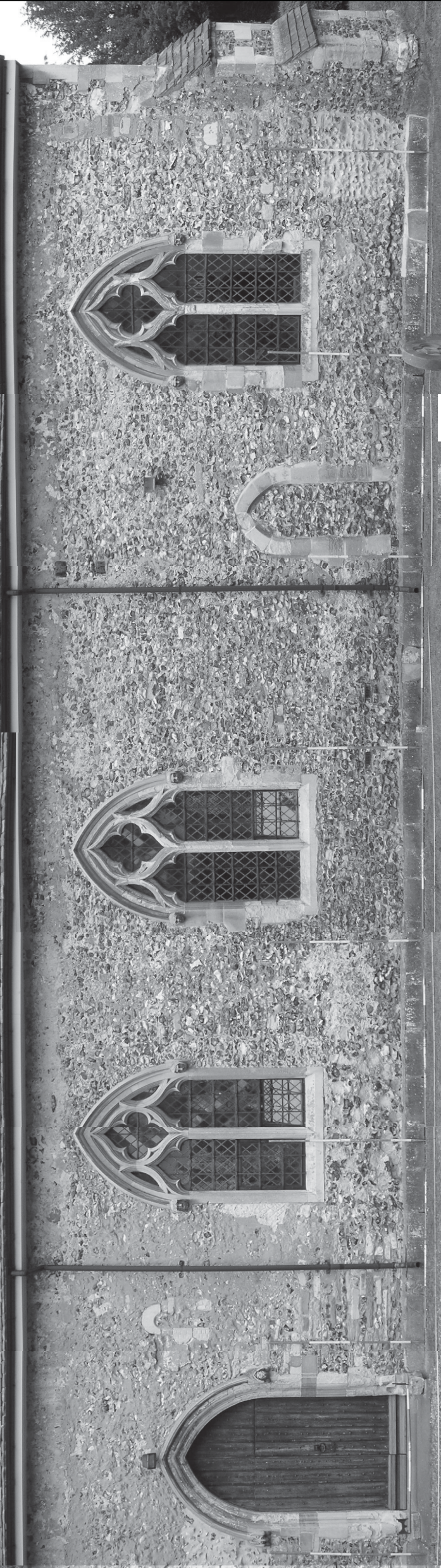
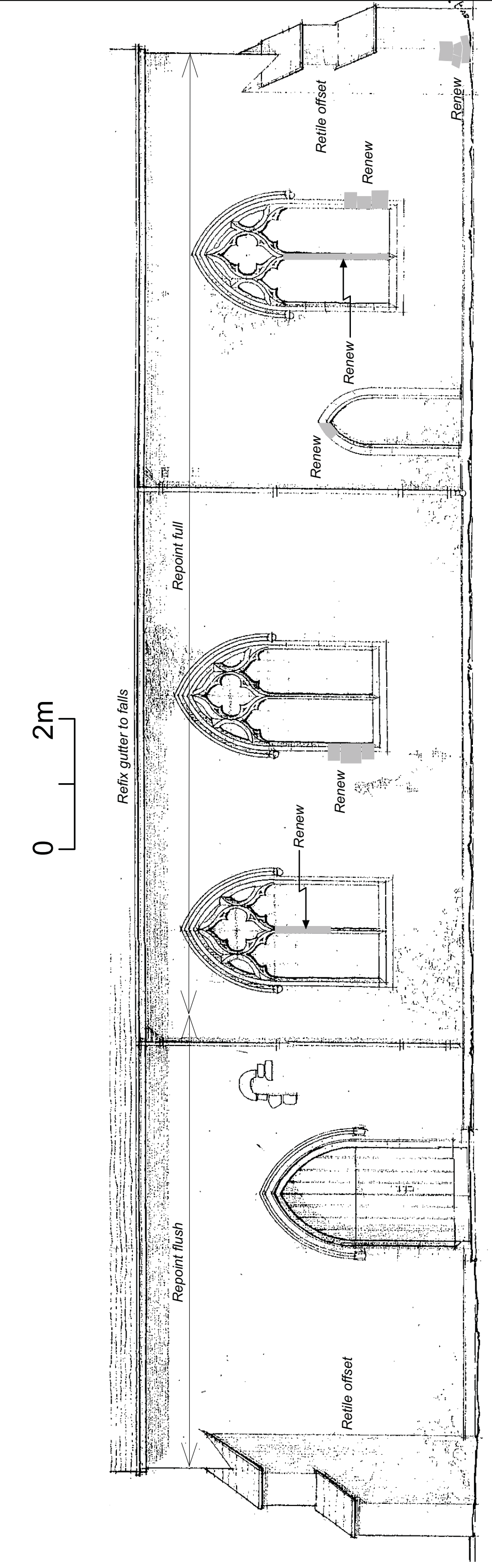


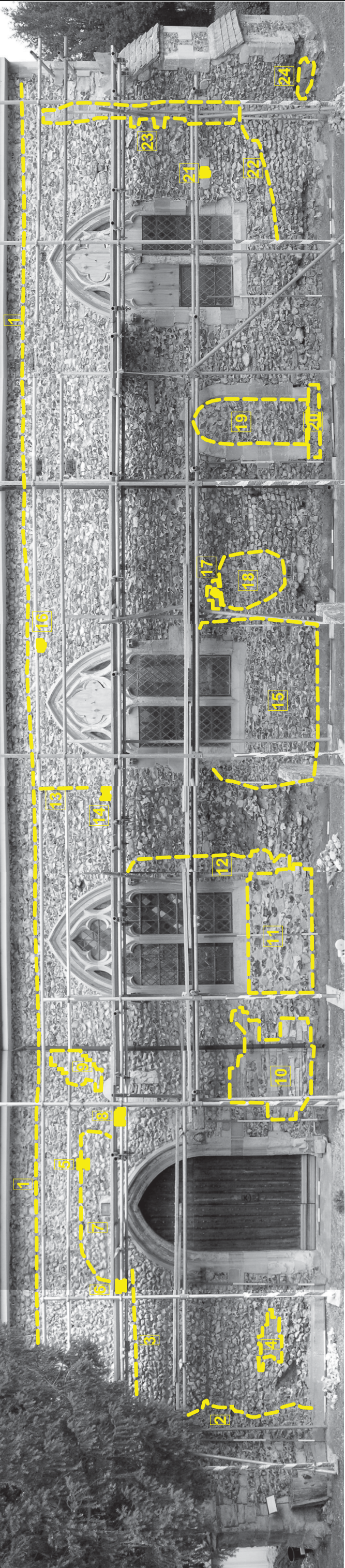
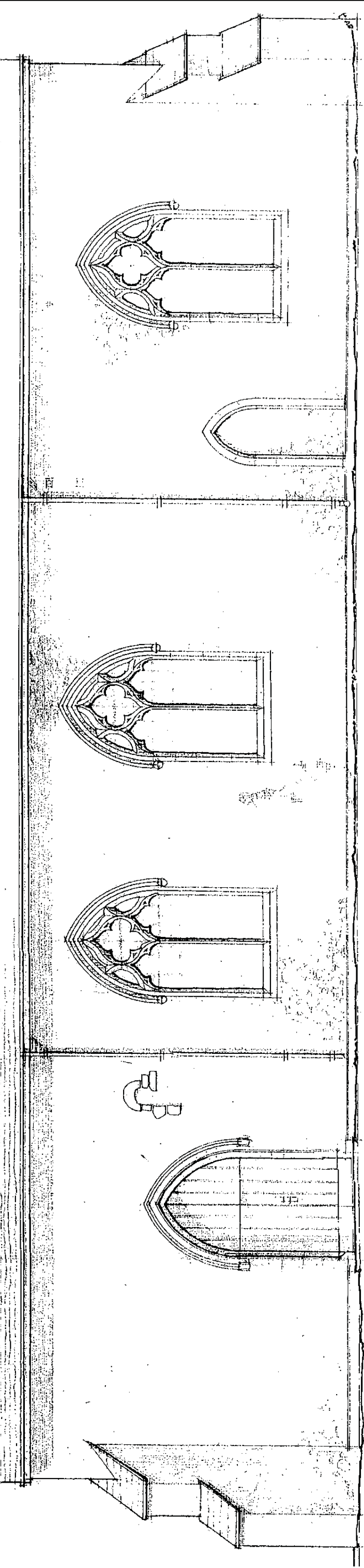
Site Location

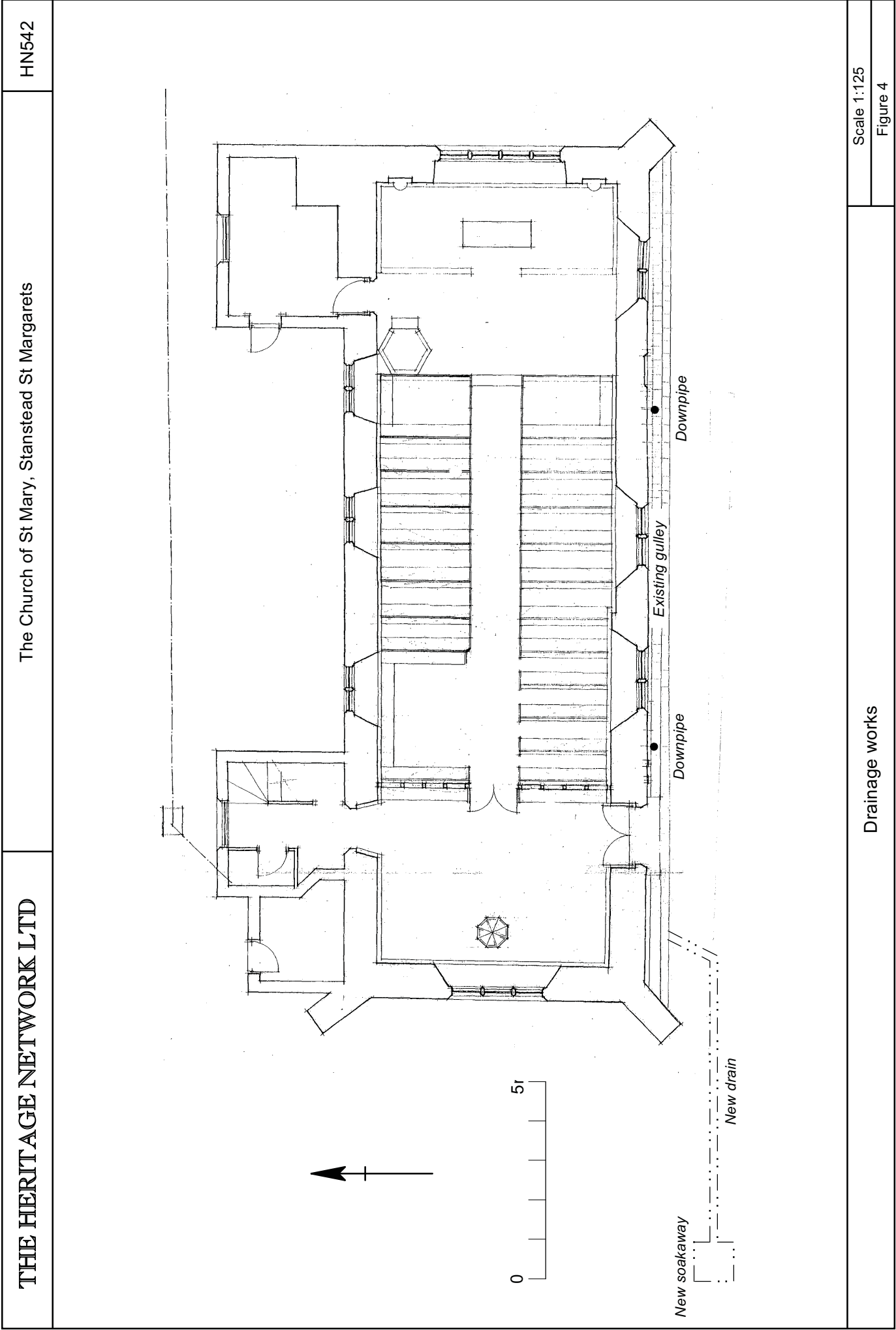
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Figure 1

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	The Church of St Mary, Stanstead St Margarets	HN542
		
		
Southern elevation prior to repairs, and proposed repairs <i>(drawn elevation courtesy of Carden and Godfrey, Architects)</i>		Figure 2

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD	The Church of St Mary, Stanstead St Margarets	HN542
		
		
<p>Observed Structural Evidence</p> <p><i>(drawn elevation courtesy of Carden and Godfrey, Architects)</i></p>		
Figure 3		



Drainage works

Scale 1:125

Figure 4



Plate 1: Watercolour of St Mary's Church from the SE by J Buckler, 1830

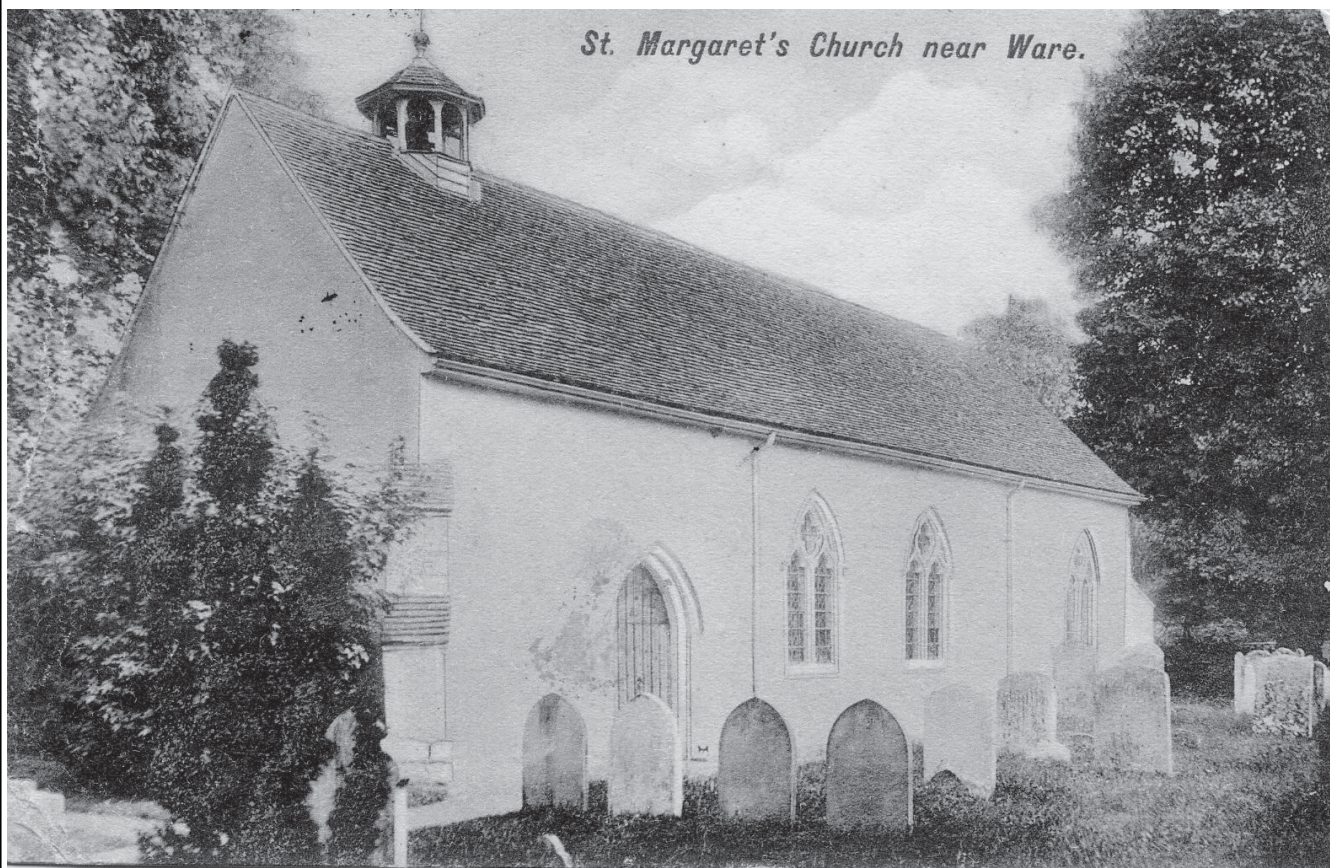


Plate 2: View of St Mary's Church from the SW, c.1906

Appendix

Black and white photographic logs



Frame 1: Elevation 1



Frame 2: Elevation 2



Frame 3: Elevation 3



Frame 4: Elevation 4



Frame 5: Elevation 5



Frame 6: Elevation 6



Frame 7: Elevation 7



Frame 8: Elevation 8



Frame 9: West end



Frame 10: West end



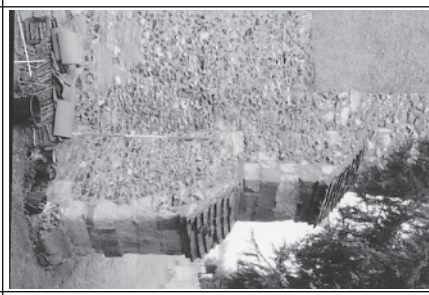
Frame 11: West end



Frame 12: SW buttress



Frame 13: SW buttress



Frame 14: SW buttress



Frame 15: S elevation



Frame 1: Elevation 1



Frame 2: Elevation 2



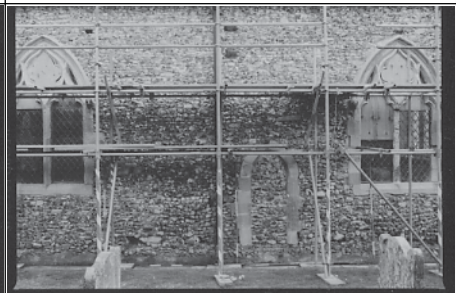
Frame 3: Elevation 3



Frame 4: Elevation 4



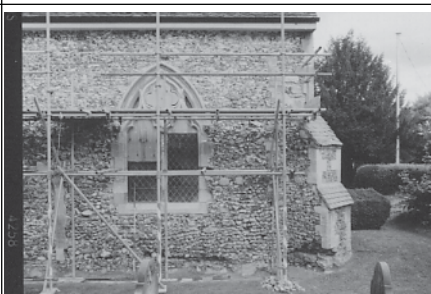
Frame 5: Elevation 5



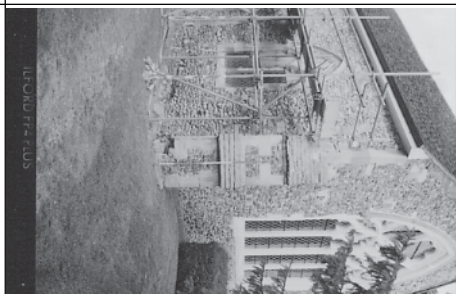
Frame 6: Elevation 6



Frame 7: Elevation 7



Frame 8: Elevation 8



Frame 9: SE buttress



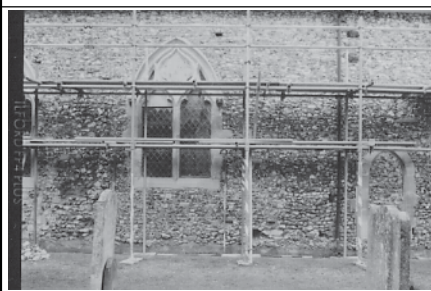
Frame 10: Elevation 8



Frame 11: Elevation 7



Frame 12: Elevation 6



Frame 13: Elevation 5



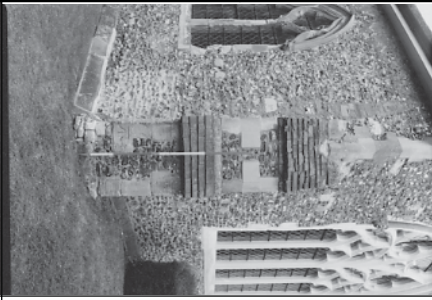
Frame 14: Elevation 4



Frame 15: Elevation 3



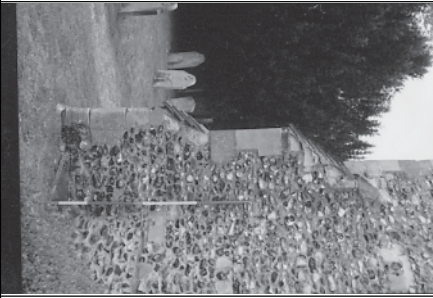
Frame 1: S elevation from SE



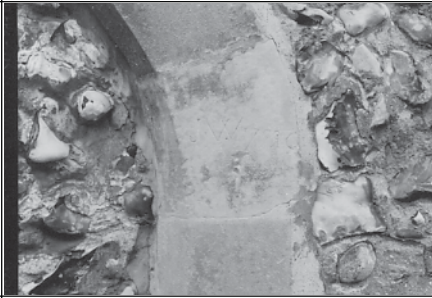
Frame 2: SE buttress



Frame 3: SE buttress



Frame 4: SE buttress



Frame 5: Graffito on jamb of priest's door



Frame 6: Putlog 21



Frame 7: General view from SE



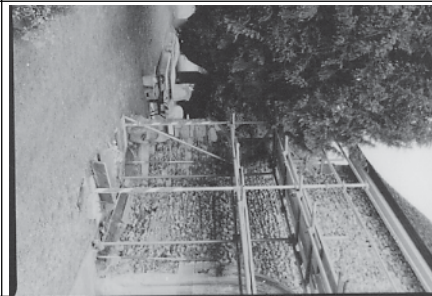
Frame 8: General view from SE



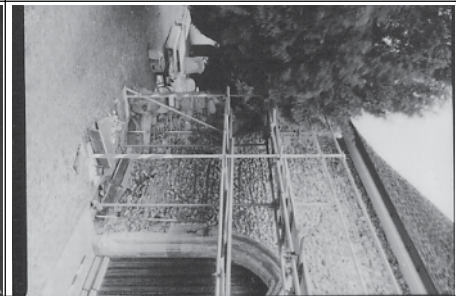
Frame 9: Elevation 2



Frame 10: Elevation 1



Frame 11: S Elevation E end



Frame 12: S Elevation E end



Frame 13: S Elevation E end

