

**Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex**

**(NGR: TQ 30350 24520)**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Commissioned by The Nicholas Rowe Practice  
on behalf of Cuckfield Parochial Church Council**



**Project No. 3620  
Report No. 2009003**

**Prepared by Amy Williamson**

**January 2009**

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## ABSTRACT

*In October and November 2008 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, UCL) carried out an archaeological watching brief during works associated with the creation of a new doorway within the parish church of Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR: TQ 30350 24520). The section of wall into which the new doorway was inserted comprised the north wall of the North Chapel, which was added to the church in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, although it is not clear how much original fabric is preserved in this area. The work revealed the existence of an earlier door aperture within the wall which may have been inserted in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in relation to the conversion of the adjacent part of the church to the clergy vestry. The opening was subsequently infilled, possibly owing to the collapse of part of the doorway arch. A few pieces of dressed stone were found within the infill material. Most of this material is probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, comprising waste material associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations to the church; however some pieces do not appear quite so fresh and may represent earlier material removed during 19<sup>th</sup> century modifications.*

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In October and November 2008 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Centre for Applied Archaeology, UCL) carried out an archaeological watching brief during works associated with the creation of a new doorway within the parish church of Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex (NGR: TQ 30350 24520; Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Nicholas Rowe of The Nicholas Rowe Practice on behalf of his client the Cuckfield Parochial Church Council.
- 1.2 The project involved the creation of a doorway between the North Chapel and the Sergison Chapel (vestry) (see Figs 2 & 3), to enable the Sergison Chapel to be subdivided into a self-contained vestry on the east side and provide a vestibule allowing separate through-passage between the North Chapel and the exterior on the west side.
- 1.3 Previous investigative work was carried out on this part of the wall in 2001 (Martin and Martin 2001) in order to ascertain the nature of the fabric through which the opening was to be formed. This involved visual inspection and limited removal of plasterwork.

## **2.0 SCOPE & METHODOLOGY**

- 2.1 The work was covered by grant of faculty, not being subject to an archaeological planning condition. It was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Archaeology South-East, dated October 2008 and approved by Ms. Vivienne Coad, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor. The work also adhered to the relevant *Standards and Guidance* of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and English Heritage's guidance document *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* 2006.
- 2.2 The site was visited at each stage of work in October and November 2008. A full description of the exposed fabric was compiled in addition to the production of an elevation drawing and full photographic record. The photographic record was made using traditional 35mm black and white, and colour slide photography in addition to digital photography. The digital photography is reproduced as plates to illustrate the report and a full catalogue of the photography is included in the archive.

## **3.0 LOCATION**

- 3.1 The church of Holy Trinity stands within a large churchyard at the south-west end of the village of Cuckfield. It is located at the end of Church Platt which leads in an easterly direction from the B2036 Cuckfield to Balcombe road.

#### **4.0 HISTORIC BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The church is listed at Grade I as being of special architectural or historic interest (for full list description see Appendix 1). The church originated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century but has been substantially rebuilt and enlarged. In c. 1250 the south aisle and arcade were built and there was some alteration of the chancel and west tower. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the nave was lengthened by one bay to the east and the north aisle, North and South Chapels and chancel were added (Images of England website). In the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century the Sergison Chapel was added to the north side of the church (Salzman 1940, 161). The church underwent major restoration in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by Bodley but also incorporates work by C. E. Kempe (Nairn & Pevsner 2003, 477); notably the painting to the church ceiling (the ceiling itself is 15<sup>th</sup> century), and four of the stained glass windows. Other 19<sup>th</sup> century works included the renovation of the Sergison Chapel in 1888 for use as the clergy vestry (Holy Trinity information leaflet).
- 4.2 A plan of 1908 produced by W. O. Miller (Fig. 4) shows the Sergison chapel following its conversion for use as the vestry. It depicts a partition located between the extant doorway, and the location of the new door opening, separating the vestry (to the east) from a small vestibule (to the west). This arrangement continues to be reflected on a plan of the church published in the 1940 Victoria County History (Salzman 1940, 161; Fig. 5), which also shows the phasing of the component parts of the church.

#### **5.0 DESCRIPTION OF EXPOSED WALL FABRIC**

- 5.1 The new opening is located within the north wall of the North Chapel immediately adjacent to the west of the existing doorway into the Sergison Chapel (vestry) (Fig. 3). The wall surfaces in this area walling have previously been described in some detail as part of a preliminary investigation into the nature of the wall fabric (Martin and Martin 2001).
- 5.2 The Tudor-arched form of the extant doorway between the North Chapel and Sergison Chapel suggests that it was inserted at the time that the latter was added to the church in the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century. It is framed by masonry on its north face although now contains a modern door. At a distance of 1.6m to the west of this doorway, the south wall face steps out by c. 80mm and gradually batters inwards as it rises to ultimately lie flush with the remainder of the wall face above. Both sides of the wall are finished with a rough cement-based plaster with several areas of repair and patching evident, particularly on the south (Plate 1).
- 5.3 Some time prior to the commencement of work, a small area of the wall surface on the north side had been removed during electrical works, revealing the presence of a brick arch within the wall fabric (Plates 2 and 3).



- 5.4 As part of the works associated with the creation of the new doorway, the plasterwork on each face of the wall was carefully removed to the proposed extent of the new doorway, revealing an earlier door aperture with a crudely formed segmented arched head (Plates 4-8). The aperture is two brick-lengths in depth and measures 1.07m wide by 2.05m high (Fig. 6), the easternmost jamb abutting the stone jamb of the extant doorway. It is constructed in orange-red brickwork, the bricks being slightly creasy and measuring on average 225mm x 110mm x 65mm (8¾" x 4¼" x 2½"). They are bonded in a hard cement mortar. Each jamb contains several timber bearers; although the uppermost bearer of the west jamb has rotted away and is now represented by a void in the brickwork. The brickwork appears 19<sup>th</sup> century in date.
- 5.5 On the north face of the wall, part of the surrounding wall fabric was also exposed, revealing it to be formed by a separate skin of similar slightly creased orange-red brickwork bonded in a cement-based mortar, the bricks here measuring 215-230mm x 100mm x 65mm (8½-9" x 4" x 2½").
- 5.6 The form and dimensions of the aperture leave no doubt that it was intended as a doorway. It is not absolutely clear as to why it was later infilled, although it may be that the arch had begun to fail, as some of the brickwork of the inner section is missing, perhaps having fallen away. The material infilling the doorway consisted largely of sandstone rubble set in generous amounts of a relatively crumbly cementitious mortar. The larger pieces of stone were located predominantly towards the base of the opening, while smaller, looser rubble was located at the upper level. The majority of the stone is un-worked, although included a small assortment of dressed pieces. The largest of these measures 400mm x 350mm x 340mm and has a wide hollow with a fillet to one side and a roll-moulding to the other (Plate 9). It was noticed by Mr. Peter Newson that this piece is similar in profile to the interior face of the vestry window jambs. The Victoria County History (Salzman 1940, 161) records that both these windows are modern. A smaller piece of masonry measuring 300mm x 220mm x 200mm appears to represent the curve of part of an arch, perhaps for a doorway or window, and has a chamfer to one face (Plate 10), while two other pieces appear to be part of the outer face of a window, having a broad chamfer (Plates 11 and 12), similar examples being visible elsewhere on the church. Other pieces are difficult to identify, but are illustrated (Plates 13-17).
- 5.7 In addition to the dressed stone, the infill material also contained a small, shaped wooden block with the name 'G TIDEY' stamped upon it several times, a few tiny fragments of thin, clear glass (no more than 10mm in diameter and c. 0.5-1mm thick), and several brick fragments, of similar fabric to those of the arch, one of which is stamped 'SOUT'. This no doubt identifies it as having been made by the Southwater brick company, which was established in 1890 and which therefore provides the earliest date for the infilling of the opening.

## **6.0 INTERPRETATION AND SIGNIFICANCE**

- 6.1 The opening revealed during the recent works was clearly originally intended as a doorway inserted alongside the extant doorway of 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century form. Given that the brickwork of the opening appears to be of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and that it is known that the Sergison Chapel was gifted to the church in 1888 when it was renovated as the clergy vestry; it is tempting to link the insertion of the opening with this phase of work. It is intriguing that a doorway should have been inserted directly adjacent to the extant one, unless it was created to serve a similar function to that which is intended by the recent opening-up of the wall, which is to allow the vestry to be used as a self-contained room, and to provide a separate vestibule giving through-passage from the North Chapel to the exterior.
- 6.2 The brick marked 'SOUT' suggests that the infilling took place subsequent to 1890 which is the date at which the Southwater brickworks was established, but prior to 1908 by which time it is no longer shown on the plan of the church of that date (Fig. 4). Unless the opening was constructed earlier in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that the use of the doorway was relatively short-lived. Given that the arch appears to show signs of failure, it is possible that the opening was rapidly infilled to prevent the collapse of the wall above. The masonry rubble included within the infill material most likely represents waste material arising from the successive 19<sup>th</sup> century modifications to the church. Most of this material is probably 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, although some pieces do not appear quite so fresh and may represent earlier material removed during 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations.

## **7.0 SOURCES CONSULTED**

Martin, D. and Martin, B. 2001 *A Report on the Investigative Archaeological Work carried out to the Wall between the North Chapel and Sergison Chapel, Holy Trinity Church, Cuckfield*. Archaeology South-East Unpublished Report.

Nairn, I. and Pevsner, N. 2003 *The Buildings of England: Sussex*. Yale University Press, London.

Parish Church of Holy Trinity, Cuckfield information leaflet.

Salzman, L. F. (ed.) 1940 *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 7: The rape of Lewes*. Victoria County History.

## **Internet Sources**

Images of England website

<http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk/Details/default.aspx?pid=2&id=302923>

Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> January 2009

## Appendix 1 Building List Description

Source: Images of England website

IoE Number: 302923

Location: PARISH CHURCH OF HOLY TRINITY, CHURCH STREET  
CUCKFIELD, MID SUSSEX, WEST SUSSEX

Photographer: Peter Karry ARPS

Date Photographed: 08 August 2003

Date listed: 10 September 1951

Date of last amendment: 10 September 1951

Grade I

TQ 3024 SWCUCKFIELDCHURCH STREET8/12Parish Church of  
Holy10.9.51TrinityGVI

TQ 3024 SW CUCKFIELD CHURCH STREET 8/12 Parish Church of Holy 10.9.51 Trinity GV I Parish Church. Built on foundations of C12 church. c1250. South aisle and arcade built and some alteration of chancel and west tower up to bell chamber. 1330-40, lengthening of the nave by 1 bay to east, additions of north aisle of 4 bays and enlargement of chancel with North and South chapels to match width of nave aisles and raising of clerestory above nave. Bell chamber of West tower probably added 1330-40. c1460 chancel and nave given new roof and ceiling and chapel and aisle walls heightened. Late C16 or early C17 Sergison chapel added. Restored mid C19 and few of the windows retain ancient masonry. Built of Sussex sandstone rubble on plinth. Roofs covered with Horsham stone slabs. Shingled spire to west tower, comprises chancel with North and South chapels and Sergison chapel to North vestry, 4 bay nave with North and South aisles, North and South porches (very unusual) and west tower with spire. Chancel: C13 and C14. C14 arcades on North and South of 2 bays with hexagonal pillars with responds to match, mainly moulded capitals and bases and 2 centred arches. 2 blocked doorways East of the arcade. C13 piscina in South wall, with trefoiled head to inner order, carried on shafted jambs with moulded braces and capitals. Cill has remains of basin of 12 foils. Stone shelf behind the capitals. Mid C19 East window of 5 lights and tracery of late C13 character. North Chapel: c1330-40. C14 restored east window of 3 trefoiled lights and vertical tracery in 2 centred head with external hood-mould and hollow-chamfered four centred rear arch. C16 doorway into vestry with depressed Tudor arch. Sergison Chapel: Late C16 or early C17. Walls of rubble with ashlar dressings and chamfered plinth. Doorway with C15 moulded jambs reset and modern Tudor arch and old 4 centred chamfered rear arch. Mid C19 windows. South Chapel: c1330-40. Piscina in square-headed recess with plain round basin. Mid C19 windows. Reredos of c1910 and pavement of white and serpentine marble. Nave: Mid C13 and C14. C14 north arcade of 4 bays with hexagonal pillars. 3 western bays of south arcade are mid C13 and have cylindrical pillars with plain capitals and moulded abaci and bases. Pointed arches of 2 orders with small chamfers and voussoirs. Above the arcades are original C14 clerestory windows (now blocked by aisle roofs on outside), quatrefoils with inner splays and segmental-pointed rere-arch. In south wall, east of main south doorway, is a mutilated holy-water stoup with round-headed niche and another in south porch. North Aisle: Mid C14. Mainly C19 windows

but 3rd window west of doorway is of 3 elliptically headed lights, probably early C16, partially restored. South Aisle: mid C14. Mainly C19 windows. South doorway of 2 chamfered orders and 2 centred head, reset except for outer order of the jambs. West Tower: Mid C13 and mid C14. Sandstone rubble in one unbroken stage up to string-course below bell chamber. Above this of squared rough ashlar with corbel table of trefoiled arches and embattled parapet. At 2 west angles are C15 diagonal buttresses of 3 stages of rough squared ashlar with plain offsets and chamfered plinths. West wall has C19 buttresses and south side a modern stair turret. C14 archway to nave has semi-octagonal responds of small courses with moulded bases and capitals and a pointed head of 2 chamfered orders of small voussoirs. West doorway of 2 chamfered orders with base stops and pointed head. Impost moulding now mainly decayed. Lancet windows. Broached shingled spire. North Porch: C19 except for middle tie- beam which may be C15. Structural timber-framing with carved bargeboards having Tudor rose emblem. Cinquefoil-headed lights and pointed entrance. South Porch: Late C19 except for C15 truss with cambered tie-beam and curved braces. Restored by Kempe who built one of the Lychgates. Base of sandstone, structural timber- framing with cusped heads and quatrefoil motifs, wavy bargeboards. Roofs of Nave and Chancel: Erected by Edward Neville, Lord Bergavenny, c1460. Chancel divided into 3 bays by 2 intermediate tie-beams and the nave into 4 bays with 5 tie-beams, one at each end and 3 between. Tie-beam moulded and embattled and supported by moulded wall posts and curved brackets. Spandrels filled with varying tracery, some with red rose centres. Roofs of trussed rafter and collar-beam type. 5 sided ceilings divided into panels by moulded ribs with bosses at inter-sections, variously carved. Nave has similar bosses. Panels covered by C19 painting and corbels have C19 angels holding shields. Roofs of Chapels and Aisles: Modern boarded soffits. Some corbels and short posts are original. Furnishings: Font probably C13 having round bowl which has been patched and relined with lead, carried on modern shafts. Monumental Brasses: (1) Gerald Borell d. 1509, Archdeacon of Chichester and Vicar of Cuckfield. Inscription with shield. South wall of South chapel. (2) Milicent, wife of John Michel (d. 1524). Inscription north wall of north aisle. (3) Standing effigy of bearded man in Elizabethan armour, Henry Bowyer. Mouth scroll bearing words 'O Prais (Sic) the Lord'. (4) Henry Bowyer and Elizabeth his wife d. 1589. On a panel flanked by Ionic shafts of black marble and alabaster, with a moulded shaft and entablature, the effigies of a man in Elizabethan armour and his wife kneeling at a Prayer Desk with 3 sons and 3 daughters. North wall of south chapel. Mural Monuments and Tablets: Many, including Ninian Burrell (d. 1629) in south chapel, a kneeling effigy in recess with curtains held open by standing angels; Charles Sergison Commissioner of the Navy (d. 1732) on north side of sanctuary, a sarcophagus with seated figure of truth holding a plaque carved with his portrait, also supported by a cherub by Thomas Adey; wall tablet to Mary Ann Sergison (d. 1804) on north wall of north aisle, a Neo-Classical nymph mourning against an urn by Westmacott; also Sir Walter Headley (d. 1675), Percy Burrell d. 1807 by J Bacon and Francis Warden d. 1785. (See V C H Sussex, Vol VII (pp 160-163) Pevsner, Buildings of England, Sussex (pp 477 and 478).



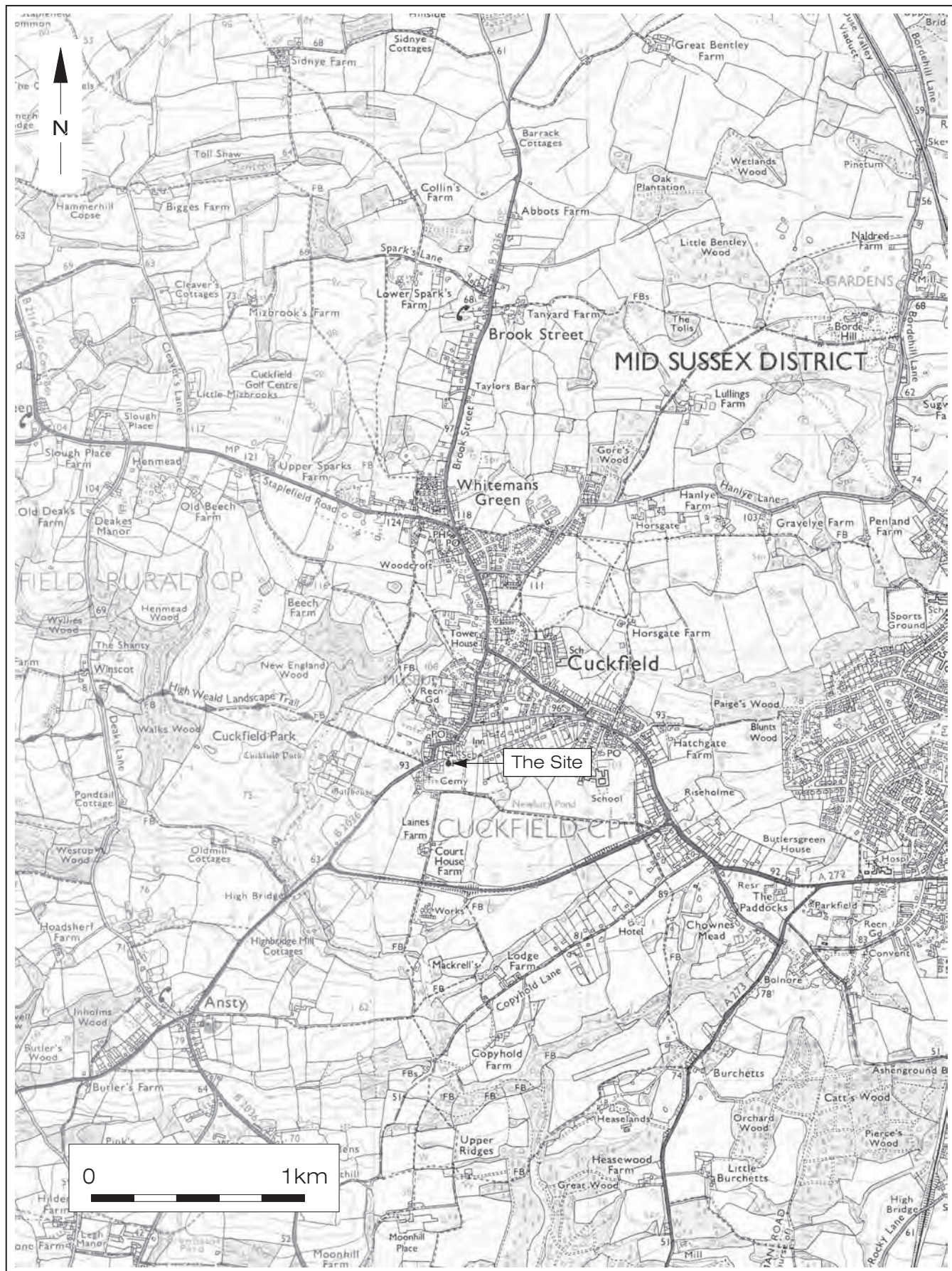
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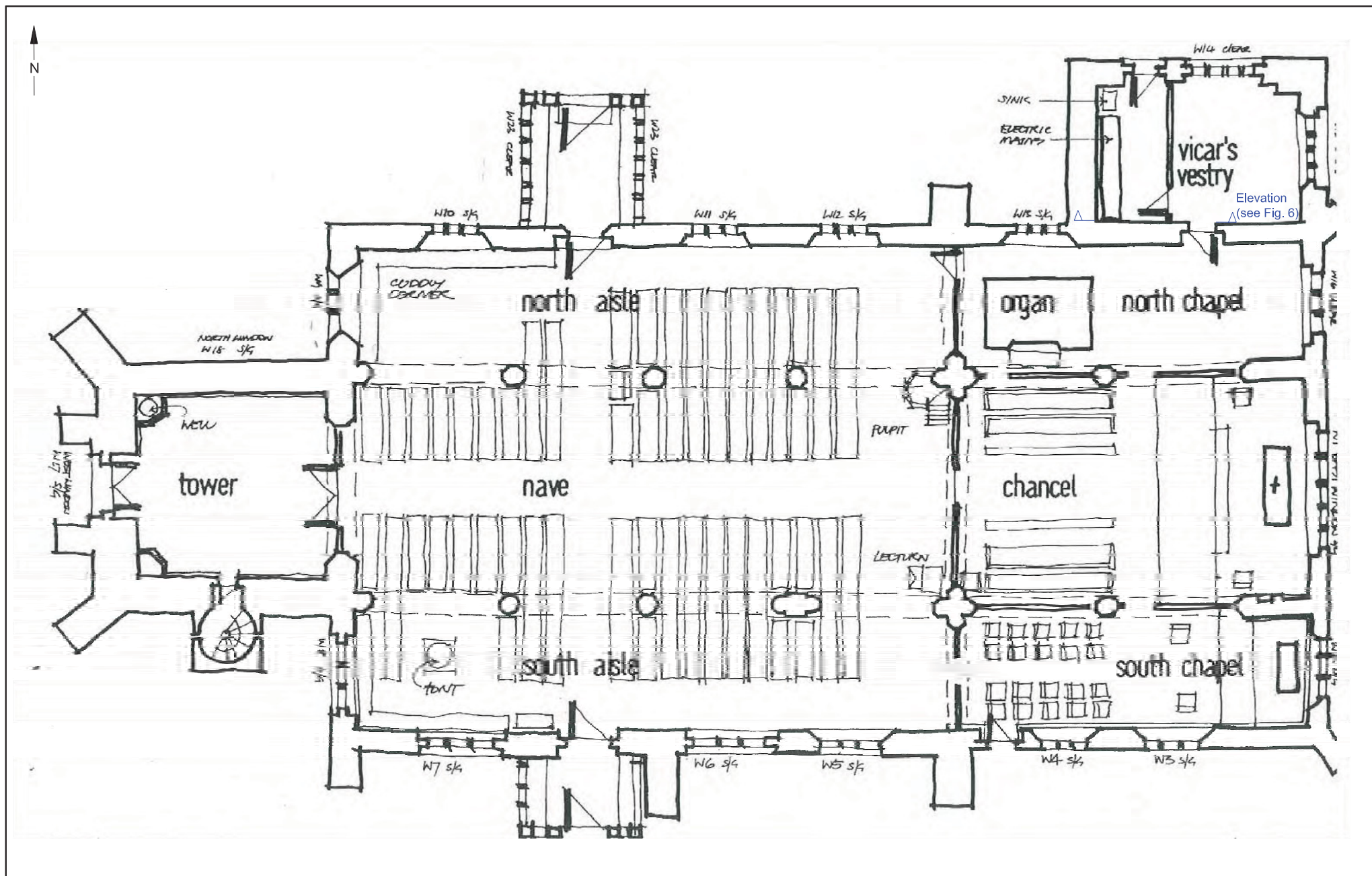
Drawn by AW:

Site location plan

Fig. 1

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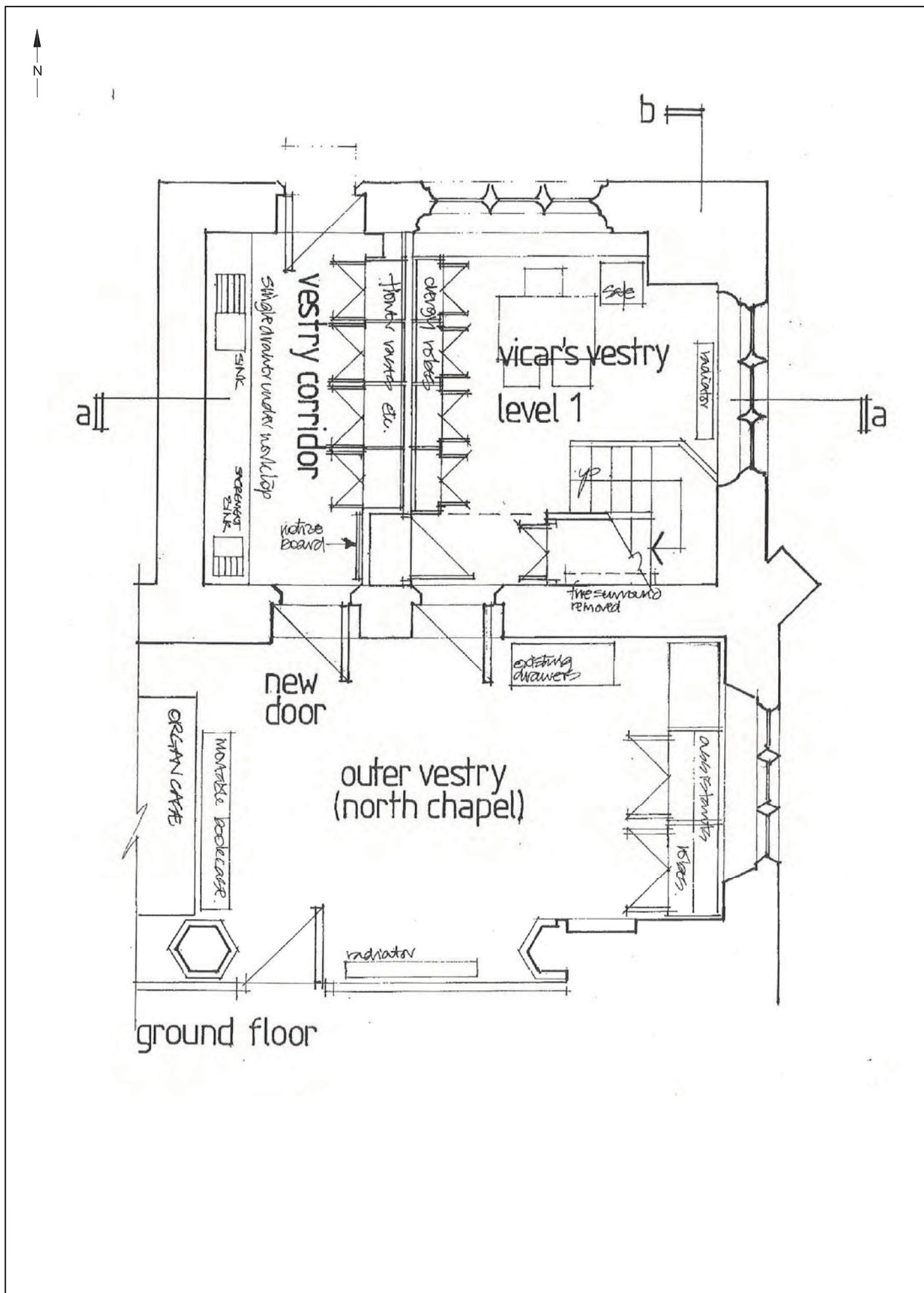
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Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex

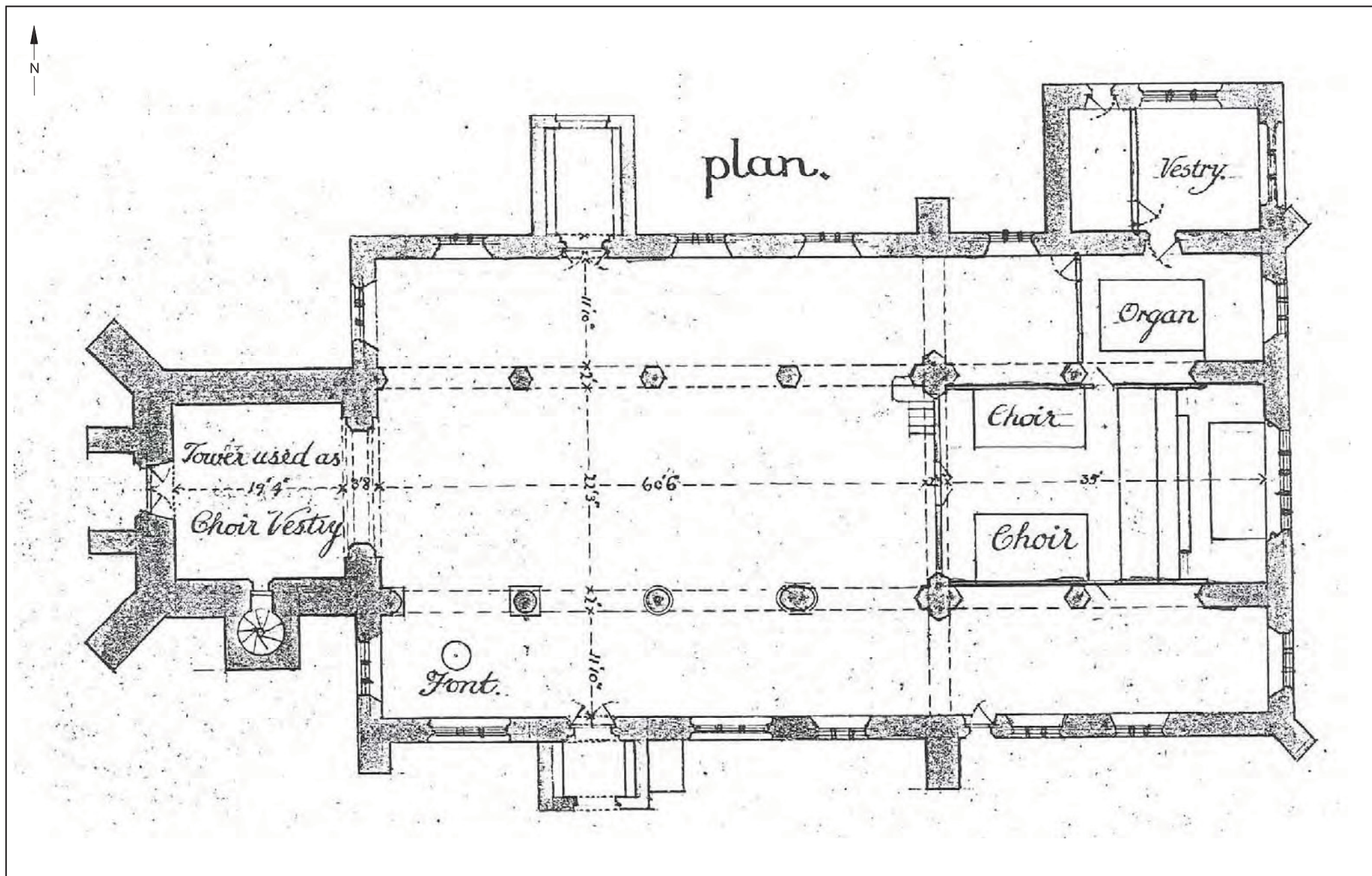
Existing plan of the church (not to scale)

Fig. 2



© Archaeology South-East		Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex	Fig. 3
Project Ref: 3620	Jan 2009	Plan showing proposed alterations (scale 1:75)	
Report Ref: 2009003	Drawn by: AW		





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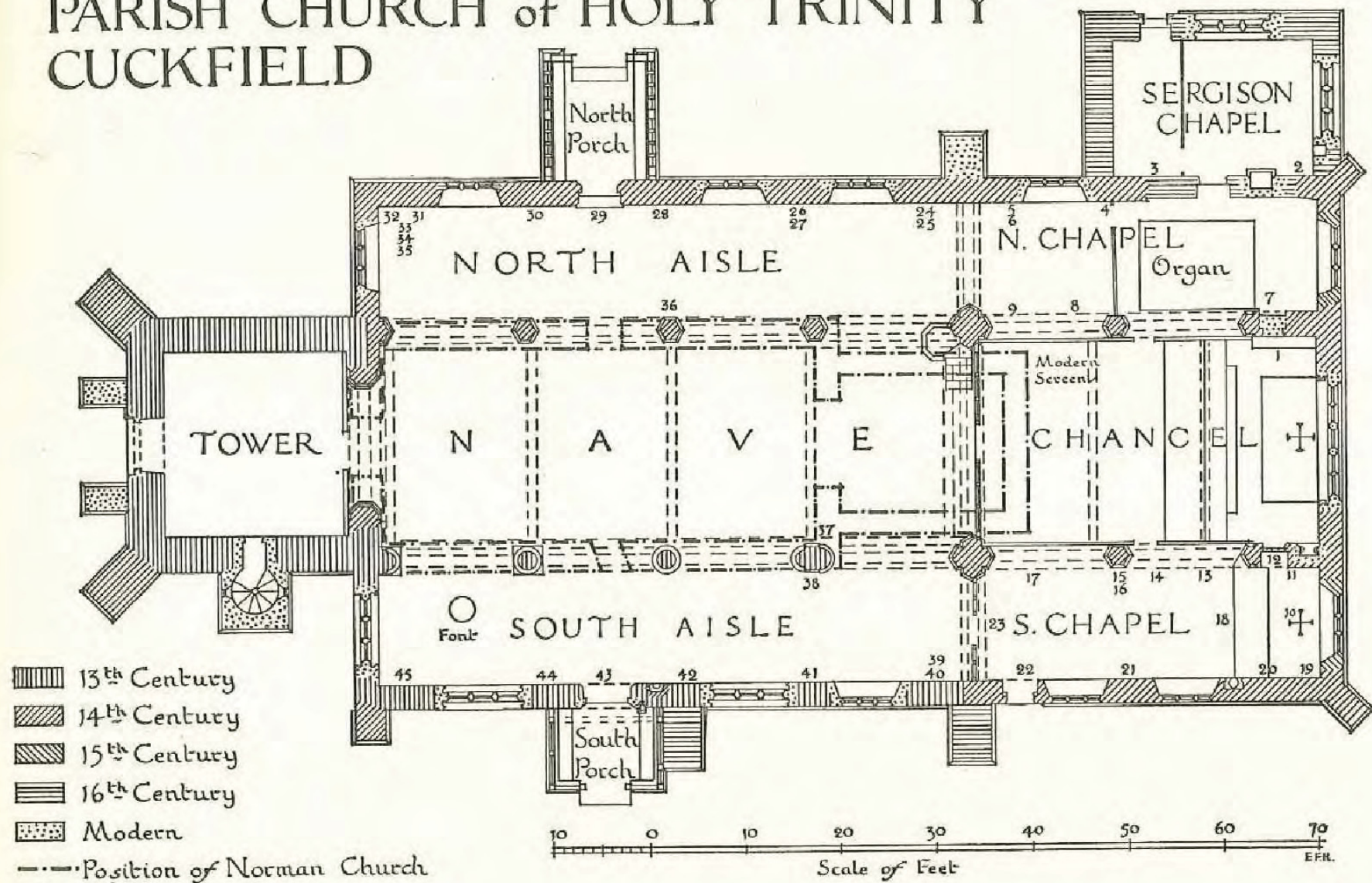
Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex

1908 plan of the church by W. O. Miller (not to scale)

Fig. 4



# PARISH CHURCH of HOLY TRINITY CUCKFIELD



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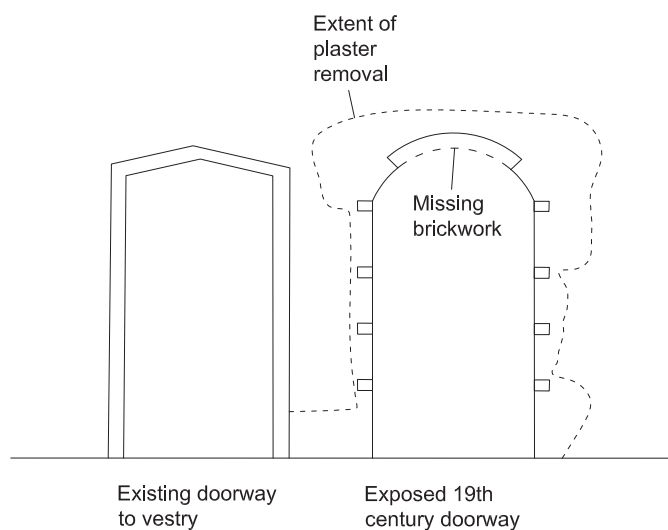
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Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex

1940 plan of the church (not to scale)

Fig. 5



North Elevation



© Archaeology South-East		Holy Trinity, Cuckfield, West Sussex	Fig. 6
Project Ref: 3620	Jan 2009	North elevation of exposed doorway (scale 1:50)	
Report Ref: 2009003	Drawn by: AW		



Plate 1

South face of the wall prior to the commencement of work, taken from the south



Plate 2

North face of the wall prior to the commencement of work, showing hole introduced during electrical works, taken from the north



Plate 3

Brickwork arch revealed during electrical works, taken from the north

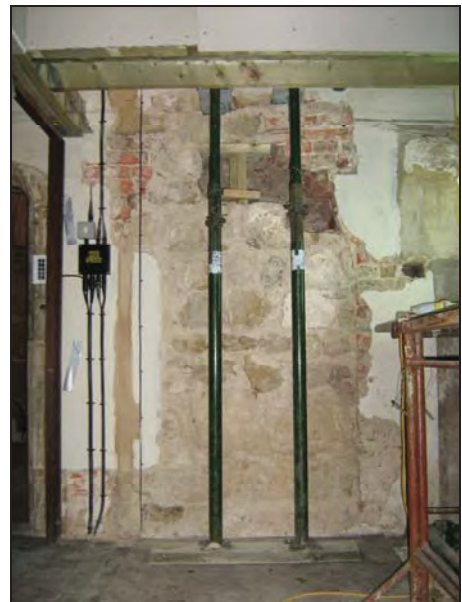


Plate 4

North face of the wall during removal of plaster, showing brickwork opening and infill material, taken from the north





Plate 5

South face of the wall during removal of plaster, showing brickwork arch and infill material, taken from the south



Plate 6

South face of the wall during removal of plaster, showing brickwork arch and infill material, taken from the south



Plate 7

Photograph taken during the removal of infill material, taken from the north



Plate 8

Photograph taken during the removal of infill material, taken from the north-west



Plate 9

Dressed stone found within infill. Profile matches that of the vestry window jambs.



Plate 10

Dressed stone found within infill. Possibly part of a doorway or window.



Plate 11

Dressed stone found within infill. Possibly part of a window opening.



Plate 12

Dressed stone found within infill. Possibly part of a window opening.



Plate 13

Dressed stone found within infill.



Plate 14

Dressed stone found within infill (same as previous).



Plate 15

Dressed stone found within infill.



Plate 16

Dressed stone found within infill.

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