

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**St Michael The Archangel, Warfield,
Bracknell, Berkshire**

Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Site Code: WCB13/105

(SU 8800 7220)

St Michael The Archangel, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief For the Parochial Church Council

by Genni Elliott

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WCB 13/105

January 2014

Summary

Site name: St Michael The Archangel, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8800 7220

Site activity: Building recording and archaeological watching brief

Date and duration of project: 16th May - 12th August 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site code: WCB 13/105

Summary of results: The layout of the church had been little altered since it was restored by the architect George Street in the 1870s. The flooring consisted of red and buff coloured tiles laid in a diamond checkerboard pattern with seating to be arranged on suspended timber flooring. Beneath the flooring were a number of crypts and two inhumations.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an approved local museum in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 15.01.14 Steve Preston✓ 13.01.14
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St Michael The Archangel, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire Building Recording and Archaeological Watching Brief

by Genni Elliott

Report 13/105

Introduction

This report documents the results of a building recording and archaeological watching brief at the Church of St Michael The Archangel, Warfield, Bracknell, Berkshire (NGR SU 8800 7220) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ralph Allen of Allen Associates Architects Limited, The Hall, Priory Road, Sunningdale, Ascot, SL5 9RQ on behalf of the Parochial Church Council.

A faculty has been sought from the Diocese to replace parts of the existing floors. The consent is subject to a condition which requires a building recording prior to alteration of the floors and a watching brief on all groundworks. This report documents the results of the archaeological work. The fieldwork was undertaken by Genni Elliott and Andy Taylor between 16th May and 12th August 2013 and the site code is WCB 13/105.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum and a copy sent to the National Monuments Record in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The church is located in the village of Warfield, to the north of Bracknell, on the south side of Church Lane (Figs 1 and 2). The churchyard is generally flat, at an approximate height of 61m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology as shown on the geological map (BGS 1981) is London Clay.

Historical Background

The church is grade II* listed and is described as:

‘Formerly known as: Church of St Michael and All Angels, and Parish Room to South of Churchyard. Parish church. C13, of which the north aisle remains. North chapel added mid C14. Nave and transept rebuilt mid C15. Tower may have been added at this date. Partly restored in 1872 by GE Street.

‘MATERIALS: Dark brown conglomerate with freestone dressings. Stone coped plinth and bottom course, moulded string at sill level, stone cornice and plain parapet to chancel and north chapel, remainder with plain walls and projecting eaves. Coped gabled roof of different heights with mixture of plain and old clay tiles with crested ridges.

‘PLAN: tower attached on south-west. Nave with north aisle, north chapel, south transept and south porch, chancel.

‘EXTERIOR: Tower has 3 stages with diagonal buttresses at western corners, stair turret on south-east, embattled parapet and low, octagonal, shingled spire. The west doorway has moulded jambs and 2-centred arch under square head with foliated spandrels. Over this is window of 4 cinquefoiled lights with vertical tracery and 2-centred head. Each side of bell chamber, and in west

face of middle stage, is window of 2 trefoiled lights. On south-east corner is full height stair turret with small lancets, one above other at wide intervals. North aisle has north front. 3 windows. Easternmost window late C15 with 3 cinquefoiled lights with vertical tracery under 3-centred head. On either side of this window are fragments of 2 blocked C13 lancets. Second window is C15 with 2 cinquefoiled lights with small pierced spandrel under 2 centred head with moulded label. Third window is small C13 lancet. Between first and second window is early C13 doorway with ogee head under square lintel with foiled spandrels. At east end is curved projection of roof stair. At west end is large C16 window of 5 cinquefoiled lights with vertical tracery in plain square head. North chapel has north front. 3 windows between 2 stage buttresses. 2 outer windows are C14 with 2 cinquefoiled lights with quatrefoiled spandrels. Centre window is C19 copy. The east window is late C15 and has 3 cinquefoiled lights with interlacing tracery. Nave, south front, has 2 windows, easternmost C15 with 2 cinquefoiled lights. Other window is late C15 with 3 cinquefoiled lights under plain, square head. Between these windows late C15 doorway, with moulded jambs and 4-centred arch under square head. Gabled porch is C19. South transept has 2-light east window and 3-light south window, both C19, and of C15 style. Chancel has C14 east window of 5 cinquefoiled lights with flamboyant tracery in 2-centred head. North window and 4 south windows are C14, of 2-lights with cinquefoiled heads and pierced spandrels. Window to south-west has transom and 2 lower lights with cinquefoiled subheads.

‘INTERIOR: fine C15 nave roof of 5-bays, with chamfered arch braced collars, moulded clasped purlins and large moulded tie beams. Plain arched windbraces. Aisle roof similar. Nave arcade has 5-bays and 2-centred arches supported by octagonal columns with moulded bases and capitals. Barrel roof to chancel. Chancel arcade is of 3-bays with piers, responds and arches continuously moulded. Between east respond of arcade and north-east window large C14 recess with vaulted soffit of which only part remains. West of C19 stone screen, behind altar, C14 piscina, 3 sedilia divided by moulded mullions with pinnaced buttresses and cinquefoiled ogee arches with carved spandrels, foliated crockets and finials. To south of chancel arch is squint cutting into splay of south-west window of chancel. On north side is second squint cut straight through wall and giving view of north-east corner of chancel. In north wall of north chapel are 3 fine C14 shallow, arched recesses, apices of arches with trefoiled spandrels and foliated crockets and finials. East end of north wall of aisle has rood stair that leads to rood loft, reconstructed in C15. Parts of original rood loft are incorporated into C15 screen to north Chapel has 4-bays with doorway in centre.

‘MONUMENTS: on south wall of chancel is small Renaissance monument to Thomas Williamson d.1611. Above inscription are kneeling figures of himself and his wife with their children in background. In south-east corner of north chapel is small early C17 wall monument without inscription or date with kneeling effigies of man and his wife and children. On opposite side is similar monument, also without inscription, and with figures of a man and 2 women kneeling.

‘STAINED GLASS: some pieces of late C14 glass in tracery of east window of chancel representing principal events of our Lord's life. In lights of C19 south window of south transept is some restored C15 glass consisting of 6 figures.’

Cartographic sources

The earliest map showing the Church in moderate detail is that by John Rocque dating from 1761 (Fig. 3), in which the church is labelled and has two buildings located to the south, presumably the rectory and vicarage as later. No detail as to the shape of the floor plan of the church can be seen. The Warfield enclosure map dating to 1817 (Fig. 4) shows the church to be of the same floor plan as it currently is. It is not detailed enough to show intricate details of the church but it is possible to identify the West Tower, North Aisle, Nave, South Transept, Chancel and North Chapel. Buttresses and a turret can be identified on the corners of the West Tower, Chancel, and North Chapel.

The First Edition of the Ordnance Survey in 1872 (Fig. 5) shows the site in detail, but the church has not changed since the enclosure map.

The plan of the church produced by Street and dated 1877 (not illustrated) shows the layout of the interior of the church much as it is today. It would appear however that the South Transept and/or porch was rebuilt as they seem smaller on the 1912 Ordnance Survey (not illustrated) than on the earlier maps. New screens were also to be built between the Nave and Chancel, the Chancel and North Chapel and across the eastern end of the Chancel. A lectern is indicated at the north end of the step between the Chancel and Nave.

Methodology

The building survey was carried out in accordance with guidelines set out by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (RCHM 1996) and English Heritage (EH 2006). The survey comprised a photographic survey, a plan of the building and a description of the floor paying attention to the materials and method of construction. The building has been recorded photographically both digitally and on 35mm format using colour print and black and white media which are catalogued (Appendix 1).

Description

The church is built of a gravel conglomerate with stone quoins at the corners and a red tile roof (Pls. 1-2). The main entrance to the church is through the West Tower, which is a single square room with a spiral staircase giving access to the roof built into the south-east corner of the wall. Beyond the West Tower is the Nave which has a door in the south wall. The font is located to the west of the south door and the pulpit in the south-east corner. The South Transept is located off of the south-east corner of the Nave and access to the Chancel is up a step at the east end. A row of octagonal columns separates the Nave from the North Aisle, which also has a door in the north wall. At the east end and up a step is access to the North Chapel. The North Chapel and Chancel are divided by a stone screen.

The interior layout and decoration of the church is predominantly that of G.E. Street's restoration in the 1870s, though older aspects of the architecture survive and more modern additions are apparent in the form of a lobby between the West Tower and Nave and a Dais at the east end of the Nave and North Aisle. In recent times the floor was covered in a combination of carpet tiles and vinyl floor tiles and the north (Devil's) door had been obstructed by rows of pews (Fig. 6). Street's design of the church interior can be split into two distinct areas; that

incorporating the West Tower, Nave, North Aisle and South Transept (the more public area) and that of the Chancel and North Chapel (the more private area).

The more public area consisted of a combination of solid flooring and slightly raised suspended timber flooring (Pl. 3) which had been re-laid recently (2006) and extended to obstruct the north door. The timber flooring was arranged in three rows (Fig. 7); along the whole of the north wall, at the east end of the central area and along the south wall which extended into the South Transept (Pl. 4). The flooring around the timber was a combination of red ceramic and buff limestone tiles arranged in a diamond checkerboard pattern. Four red ceramic floor tiles measuring 101mm x 101mm were used to create one larger diamond, for every one limestone tile, which measured 220mm x 220mm. A linear walkway was denoted by the use of rectangular limestone blocks measuring 697mm by 225mm running from the West Tower to the Chancel (Pl. 3). Three gravestones were incorporated into the solid flooring in the north aisle (Pl. 5); two laid east-west and one laid north-south. A further gravestone was located at the north entrance (Pl. 6), also laid north-south. The font was located just to the west of the south doorway raised up on two steps.

Between the Nave and the Chancel is a single step up which incorporates the thickness of the former east wall of the Nave. This step denotes the change between the flooring of the more public area and the flooring of the Chancel and North Chapel. A wooden rood screen and step denote the boundary between the North Aisle and North Chapel. The step was constructed of five rows of limestone and ceramic tiles laid in the following arrangement from west to east (Pl. 7):

- a row of limestone blocks with a chamfered edge (one of which was found to be replaced by an imitation concrete scree over bricks), presumably indicative of the location of the lectern seen on the original plan
- red and black ceramic tiles laid in a geometric pattern
- a row of limestone blocks
- red and black ceramic tiles laid in a different geometric pattern
- a row of limestone blocks

Upon demolition the limestone blocks were found to have a rebate for the ceramic tiles to be laid onto.

A stone screen dividing the Nave and Chancel was built on the last row of limestone blocks (Pl. 8). Beyond the screen the flooring became more ornate with ceramic floor tiles of red, black, cream and green laid out in various geometric patterns with a further step up within the Chancel focusing the eye on the altar (Pl. 9). Central within the larger geometric squares were decorated floor tiles – copies of medieval encaustic floor tiles including

the Wessex Lion. Similar flooring was found within the North Chapel, but with some gravestones incorporated into the design.

Within the Chancel a few older floor tiles were apparent, which may have influenced Street's design. In the south-west corner were a few rows of black and white limestone tiles laid in a checkerboard pattern and around the western column dividing the Chancel from the North Chapel were a few medieval encaustic tiles.

The pulpit is located at the south end of the step, at the junction of the Nave and South Transept and accessed via a small spiral staircase (Pl. 10).

Removal of the flooring within the Nave, North Aisle and South Transept enabled the construction of the flooring to be seen. The suspended timber floors were laid over small brick walls constructed using frogged bricks measuring 220mm x 105mm x 68mm bonded in lime mortar (Pl. 11). A mixture of rubble and concrete scree was beneath these floors. Each of the central line of pillars stood on a square limestone block, 0.22m thick. Beneath this it appeared that the pillars had been underpinned with a mixture of concrete scree and post-medieval ceramic peg tile (Pl. 12). Above the brick walling, the solid floors were laid on a bed of scree, 0.14m thick which in turn was above a layer of lime mortar, 0.12m thick (Pl. 11). Beneath the south doorway was a circular brick drain for the font (Pl. 13; Fig. 7).

With the removal of the flooring constructed by Street a number of crypts were found (Fig. 8), each constructed of red brick in lime mortar with a vaulted roof. These were all dug into a brown, sandy silt buried soil layer and found:

- A pair of crypts in the southwest corner of the Nave (Pl. 14)
- A single crypt in the northwest corner of the North Aisle
- A single crypt at the south central side of the North Aisle
- A single crypt in the centre of the Nave
- A single crypt beneath the former step between the Nave and Chancel (Pl. 15)
- A large crypt in the South Transept

It was not possible to see into the majority of the crypts but the one in the South Transept was filled with lead coffins, at least four wide and stacked at least two deep. It was partially filled with water and was at least 1.30m deep. In the south wall was a blocked 'chute' presumably used to lower the coffins into the crypt.

A sondage into a loose area of buried soil on the south side of the Nave between the south door and the South Transept revealed two east-west aligned coffins – one child-sized lead coffin (Pl. 16) and the west end of a

wooden coffin. Immediately to the west of the wooden coffin were five curved layers of clay and lime mortar. These were not further investigated as they were not going to be disturbed by renovations to the church.

A small trench within the graveyard, immediately to the south of the Nave, revealed 0.18m of topsoil above more than 0.27m of disturbed soil containing post-medieval ceramic building material.

Conclusion

The layout of the church had been little altered since it was restored by the architect George Street in the 1870s. The role of the flooring was to sub-divide the church and focus the eye whilst keeping the Nave and North Aisle open. The flooring within the Nave and South Transept was a combination of wooden suspended flooring and solid ceramic and limestone tiles laid in a geometric pattern. Within the Chancel and North Chapel the flooring was more ornate, incorporating red, black, cream and green ceramic tiles as well as copies of medieval encaustic tiles. The flooring overlaid a number of brick crypts containing lead coffins, the largest of which was located within the South Transept. Two inhumations were found within the Nave, one in a wooden coffin and a child within a lead coffin. A trench dug within the graveyard revealed only topsoil and buried soil.

References

BGS, 1981, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 269, Drift Edition, Keyworth
EH, 2006, *Understanding Historic Buildings*, English Heritage, London
NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
RCHME, 1996, *Recording Historic Buildings: a descriptive specification*, 3rd edn, Roy Comm Hist Monuments (England), London

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Catalogue

A .Colour prints

No.	Description	
1	SE 2x1m	General view south transept
2	S 2x1m	General view south transept
3	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
4	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
5	S 2x1m	General view south transept
6	W 2x1m	General view of nave
7	E 2x1m	General view of nave
8	NE -	General view of north aisle
9	W 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
10	SW 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
11	NW 1x1m, 1x2m, 1x0.5m	Wooden suspended floor removed
12	W 1x1m 1x0.5m	Base of column
13	E 1x2m 1x0.5m	Section through aisle
14	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Showing slab by door
15	S 1x1m 1x2m	Along dais area
16	S 1x1m 1x0.5m	To pulpit of juxtaposition with step
17	S 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
18	W 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
19	S 2x1m 1x0.5m	Lead coffin
20	E 2x1m 1x0.5m	Wooden coffin
21	NW 2x1m 1x0.5m	Trial trench through soil
22	N 2x1m	Gravestone at north door
23	E 2x1m	Crypt at east end of nave
24	S 2x1m	Well by south door
25	E 2x1m	Crypt in nave
26	W 2x1m	Crypt in north aisle
27	E 1x0.5m	2x crypts in nave under font
28	E 1x0.5m	Crypt in north aisle
29	NW -	View of outside of church
30	NE -	View of outside of church
31	W -	View of outside of church
32	SW -	View of outside of church
33	S -	View of outside of church
34	SE -	Chancel floor
35	SE -	Pulpit
36	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Trench detail
37	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	Along trench
38	E 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench
39	S 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench

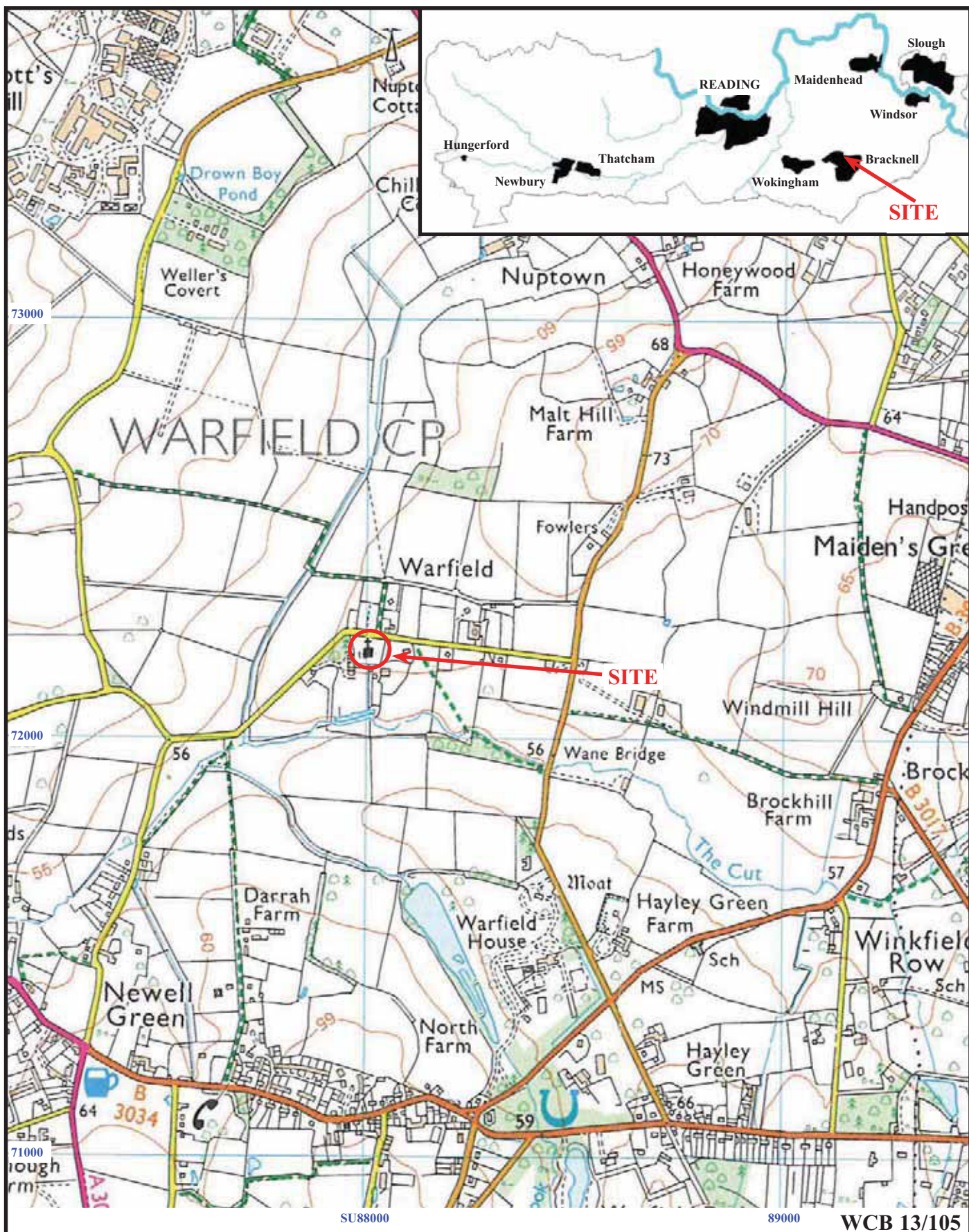
B. Colour Slides

No.	Description	
1	SE 2x1m	General view south transept
2	S 2x1m	General view south transept
3	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
4	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
5	S 2x1m	General view south transept
6	W 2x1m	General view of nave
7	E 2x1m	General view of nave
8	NE -	General view of north aisle
9	W 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
10	SW 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
11	NW 1x1m, 1x2m, 1x0.5m	Wooden suspended floor removed
12	W 1x1m 1x0.5m	Base of column
13	E 1x2m 1x0.5m	Section through aisle
14	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Showing slab by door
15	S 1x1m 1x2m	Along dais area
16	S 1x1m 1x0.5m	To pulpit of juxtaposition with step
17	S 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
18	W 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
19	S 2x1m 1x0.5m	Lead coffin
20	E 2x1m 1x0.5m	Wooden coffin
21	NW 2x1m 1x0.5m	Trial trench through soil
22	N 2x1m	Gravestone at north door

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	
23	E 2x1m	Crypt at east end of nave
24	S 2x1m	Well by south door
25	E 2x1m	Crypt in nave
26	W 2x1m	Crypt in north aisle
27	E 1x0.5m	2x crypts in nave under font
28	E 1x0.5m	Crypt in north aisle
29	NW -	View of outside of church
30	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Trench detail
31	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	Along trench
32	E 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench
33	S 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench

C. Monochrome Images

<i>No.</i>	<i>Description</i>	
1	SE 2x1m	General view south transept
2	S 2x1m	General view south transept
3	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
4	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	General view dais and step
5	S 2x1m	General view south transept
6	W 2x1m	General view of nave
7	E 2x1m	General view of nave
8	NE -	General view of north aisle
9	W 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
10	SW 1x1m 1x2m	Wooden suspended floor removed
11	NW 1x1m, 1x2m, 1x0.5m	Wooden suspended floor removed
12	W 1x1m 1x0.5m	Base of column
13	E 1x2m 1x0.5m	Section through aisle
14	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Showing slab by door
15	S 1x1m 1x2m	Along dais area
16	S 1x1m 1x0.5m	To pulpit of juxtaposition with step
17	S 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
18	W 2x1m	Opening to crypt south transept
19	S 2x1m 1x0.5m	Lead coffin
20	E 2x1m 1x0.5m	Wooden coffin
21	NW 2x1m 1x0.5m	Trial trench through soil
22	N 2x1m	Gravestone at north door
23	E 2x1m	Crypt at east end of nave
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27	E 1x0.5m	2x crypts in nave under font
28	E 1x0.5m	Crypt in north aisle
29	NW -	View of outside of church
30	N 1x1m 1x0.5m	Trench detail
31	E 1x1m 1x0.5m	Along trench
32	E 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench
33	S 1x0.5m 1x0.3m	Small trench



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 Figure 1. Location of site within Warfield and Berkshire.

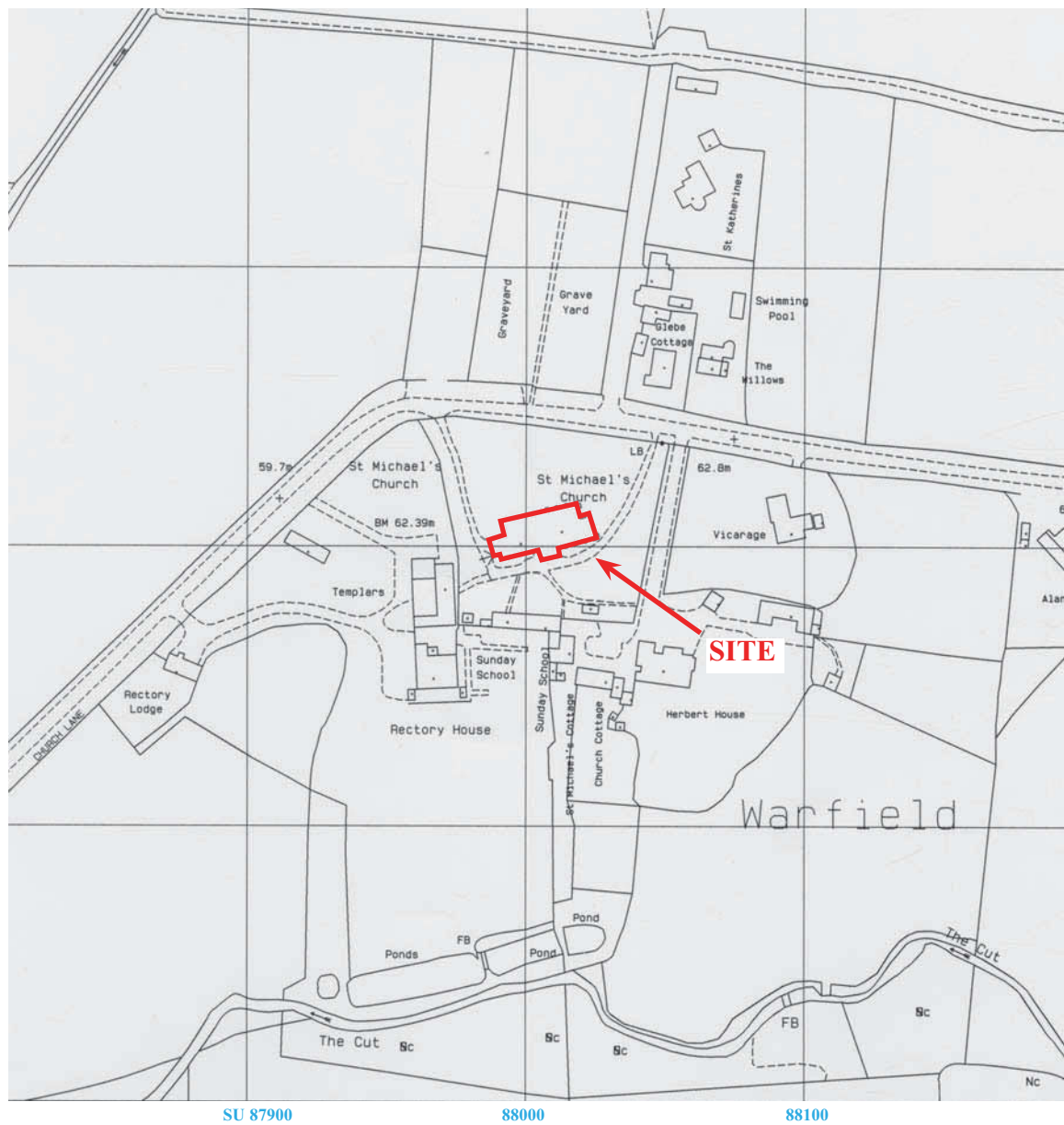
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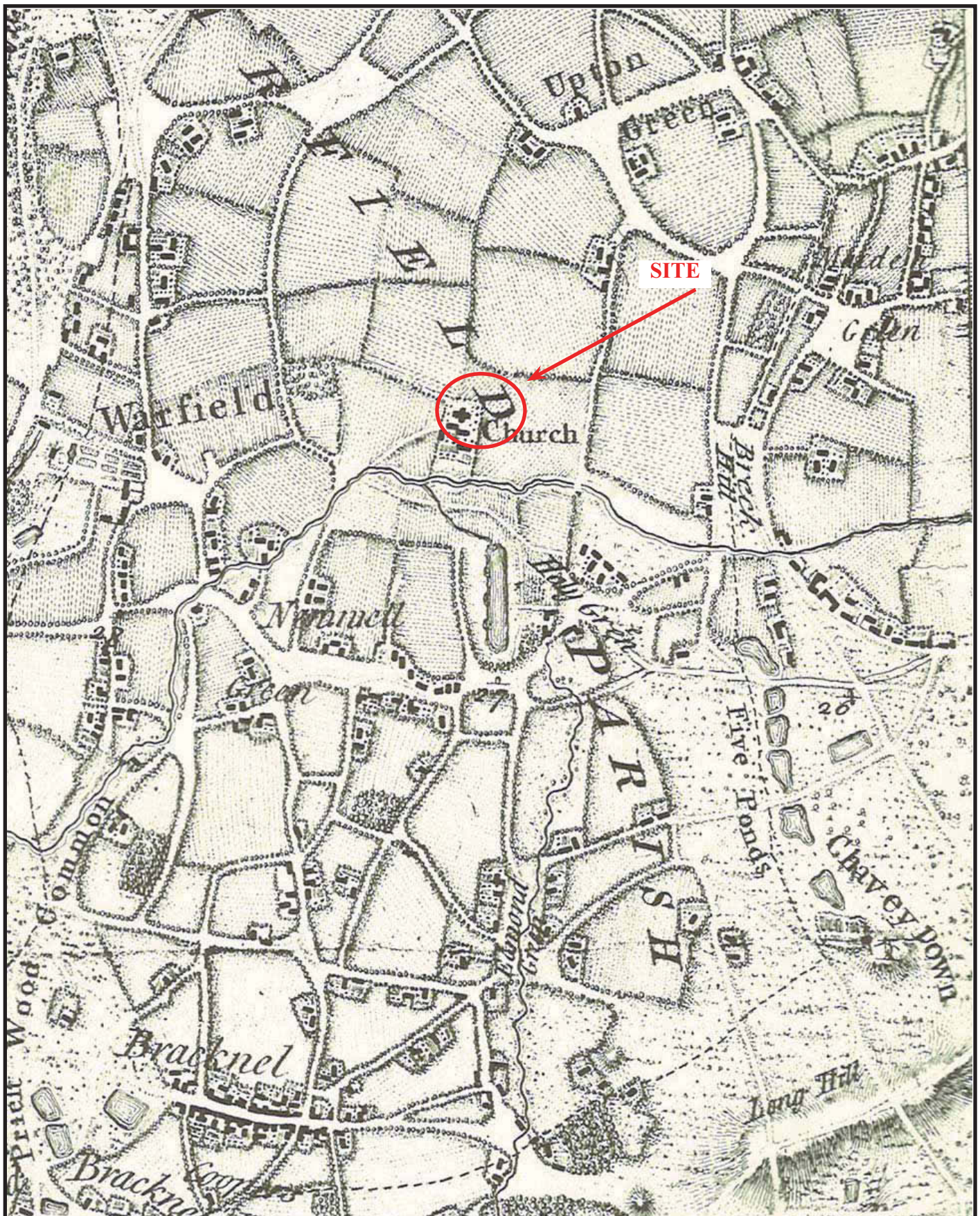
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 Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Church Lane.

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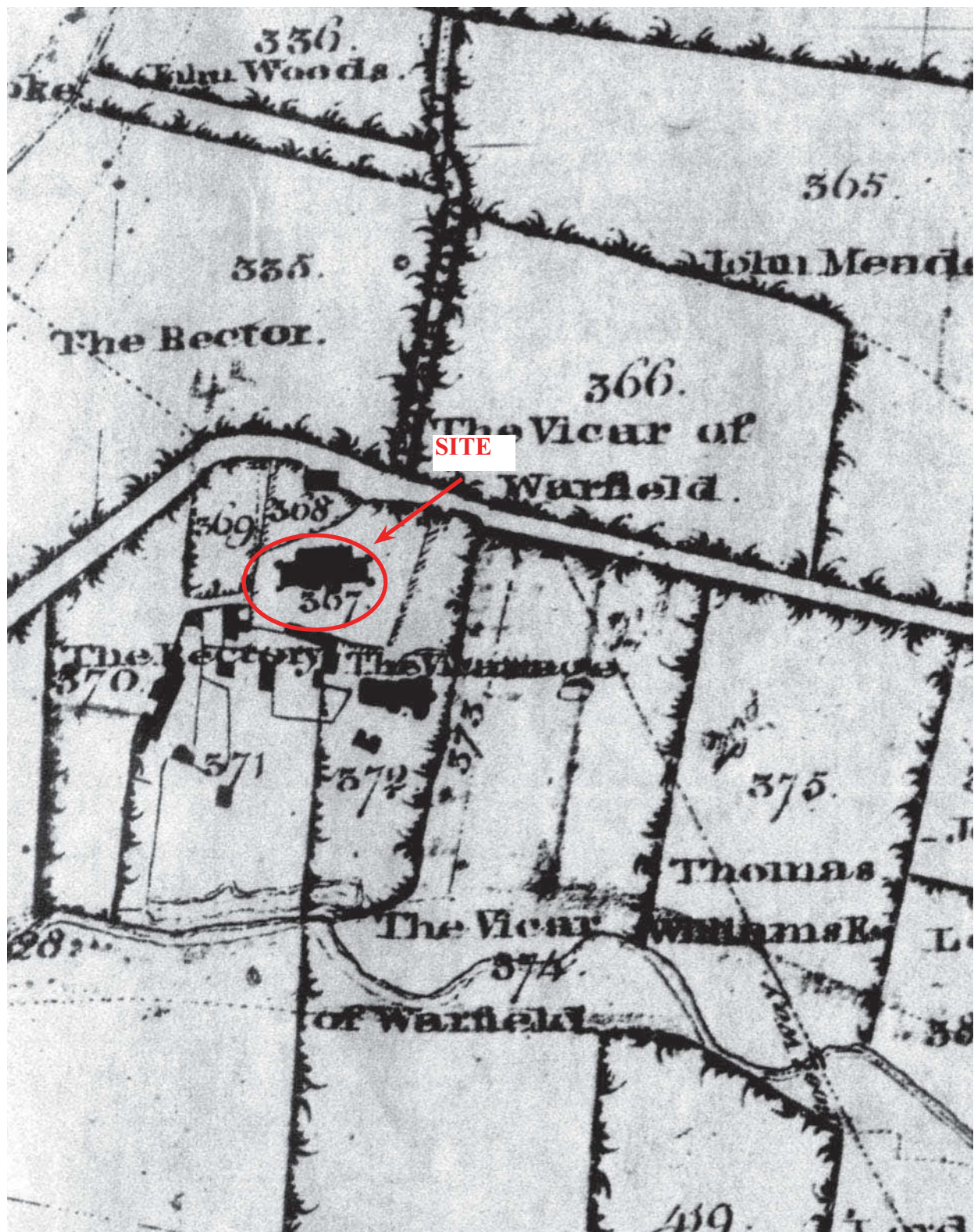
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Figure 3. Rocque's map of Berkshire, 1761.

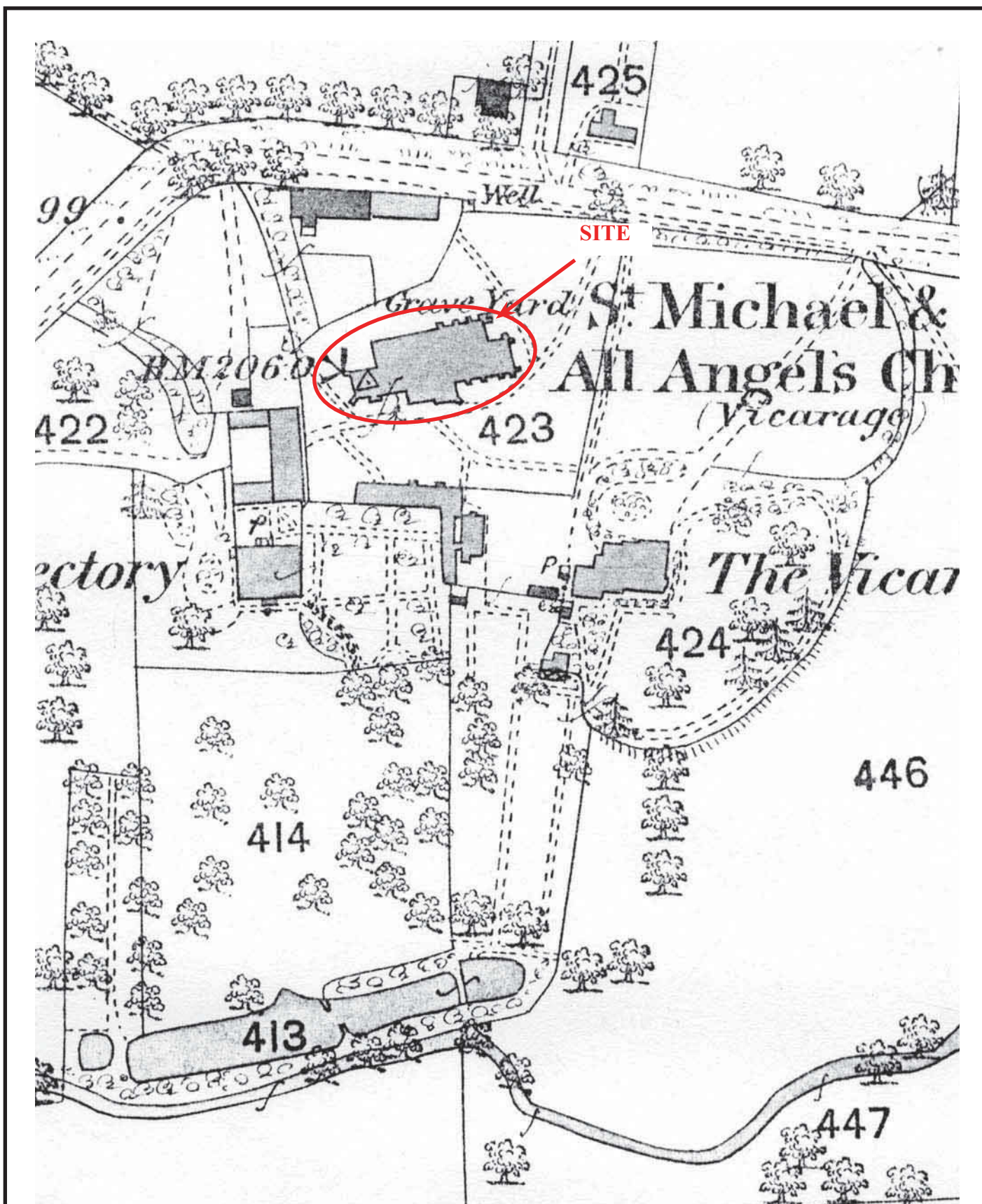


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Figure 4. Warfield Enclosure Map, 1817.

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WCB 13/105



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Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief
Figure 5. First Edition Ordnance Survey, 1872

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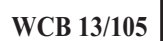




Plate 1. South elevation of the Church, looking North West.



Plate 2. North and East elevations of the Church, looking South West.



Plate 3. Flooring in the Nave, looking East, Scales: 2x 1m.



Plate 4. South Transept, looking South, Scales: 2x 1m.

WCB 13/105

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Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief
Plates 1 - 4.

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Plate 5. Flooring in the North Aisle, looking West,
Scales: 2x 1m.



Plate 6. Grave stone at the North door, looking North,
Scales: 2x 1m.



Plate 7. Detail of step, looking North,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 8. View to Chancel, looking East,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

WCB 13/105



Plate 9. Chancel floor, looking South East.



Plate 10. Pulpit, looking South East.



Plate 11. Floor make-up, looking East,
Scales: 2m and 0.5m.



Plate 12. Detail of column base, looking West,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

WCB 13/105

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Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief
Plates 9 - 12.

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Plate 13. Drain for the font, looking South, Scales: 2x 1m.



Plate 14. Two crypts, looking East,
Scales: 2x 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 15. Crypt, looking East.



Plate 16. Lead coffin, looking South,
Scales: 2x 1m and 0.5m.

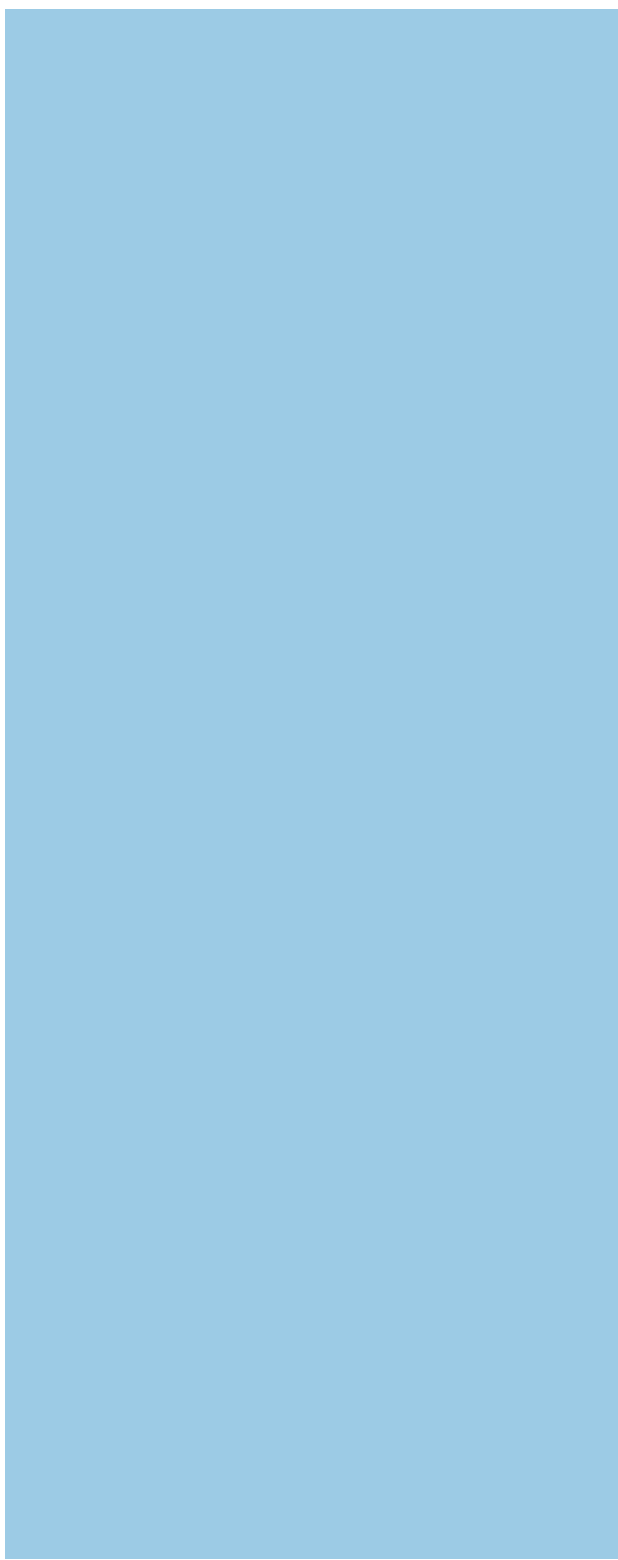
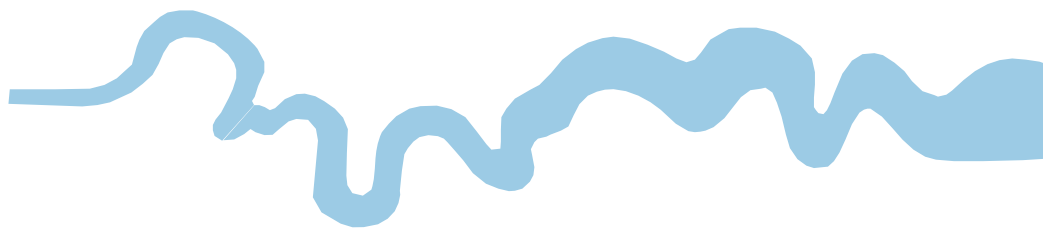
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Plates 13 - 16.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC
↓	↓



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