CANTERBURY ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST LTD

St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield

Archaeological Watching Brief Summary Report

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SUMMARY WATCHING BRIEF - SITE REPORT SHEET

<table>
<tr><td>COUNTY:
Kent</td><td colspan="2">TOWN/PARISH:
Longfield</td><td>DATE(S):
22/08/20</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">RECORDING BODY:
Canterbury Archaeological Trust</td><td>Individual(s):
A. Linklater</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">SITE NAME:
St Mary’s church, Main Road, Longfield
SITE CODE: WB SMCMRL20</td><td>Archive Number: 2020/108
CAT Ref: 4515
PLAN No: N/A</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">NGR: TQ 60332 69044 (centred)</td><td colspan="2">ELEVATION: Approx. 152m O.D.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">TOPOGRAPHY:

The proposed service instalment trenching and soakaway positions are to be located across the northern and eastern portions of the present churchyard of St Mary’s Church, main Road, Longfield. With a proposed new soakaway positioned to the north of the tower and a second soakaway positioned east of the chancel, a series of new linking drainage trenching extended from the base of the north aisle’s north wall and along the base of the chancel’s north wall, from its junction with the east wall of the north aisle, each drainage trench extended into the encircling churchyard.

The location of the church itself sits slightly south of centre on a level position within its own encircling churchyard, the northern boundary of which fronts the southern side of Main Road. To the east and south are private dwellings set within their own gardens, whilst to the west is a small dead-end road (Langafel Close), which curves around the back of the churchyard to a small cul-de-sac development of detached housing.

The churchyard itself, is generally regarded as being predominantly level with its boundaries largely either edged or fenced where it abuts private gardens. Possessing a small – moderate collection of standing historic grave monuments and headstones, mainly across its north-eastern and south-eastern portions, the remainder is mainly laid to grass with an assortment of small – medium shrubs and medium – large trees.</td><td colspan="2">NATURAL:
(defined by the British Geological Survey)

Bedrock:
Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation, Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation – Chalk.
(approx. 72 – 94 million years ago)

Superficial:
Head – Clay, Silt, Sand and Gravel.
(approx. up to 3 million years ago)</td></tr>
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The routes of the proposed new service trenching commenced close to the base of the church's walls before extending northwards and eastwards where they continued into the positions of two new soakaways.	
FORMER LAND USE: The proposed new service trench alignments connecting to two new soakaway positions located in the northern portion and eastern part of the existing encircling churchyard. All the churchyard was laid to grass and possessed a selection of historic grave markers and headstones.	FUTURE PROPERTY USE: The installation of a series of new drainage alignments extending along the exterior face of certain church walls connecting to two new soakaway positions within parts of the encircling churchyard. Following their installation, the disturbed portion of the churchyard will revert to its former use.
APPLICANT: The P.C.C of St Mary's Church, Longfield through their appointed architect Mr J. Bailey	TENANT: N/A

TYPE OF EXCAVATION:

A continuous archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks associated with the formation of an open service trenches and soakaway positions associated with the installation of new soakaway positions within the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield. All the proposed new groundworks were to be confined to the northern and eastern portions of encircling churchyard with each soakaway being in areas devoid of standing headstones and memorials.

Following trench alignments and soakaway positions approved by the overseeing architect, the proposed service routes would allow the excavation of a series of trench alignments and soakaway construction pits into which the new drainage pipework would be positioned and the installation of two new below ground cellular crate soakaways to be constructed. Following their installation, all disturbed churchyard ground surfaces were reinstated.

All groundworks were excavated using a small sized tracked 360degree excavator type machine utilising a combination of narrow-toothed and wider flat bladed buckets, though portions of the trench's route required hand excavation utilising basic hand tools.

Within the churchyard, all excavations extended through the churchyard's grassed surface and into the upper surface of the underlying deposits. These largely consisted of disturbed graveyard soils sealing the upper surface of the underlying natural Head gravels, which had clearly been peppered with graves extending deeper than the excavation's bases. Along the base of the north aisle's north wall, excavation of a continuation of the drainage trenching extended along the base of the wall exposing the upper extent of the wall's foundation. A similar scheme was also undertaken

towards the junction of the north aisle's eastern wall with the north wall of the chancel. Along both locations, disturbed churchyard soils were identified as abutting the exposed extent of the church's walls,

Throughout the entire monitoring process, only the natural geology disturbed by deeper penetrating graves, and sealed by disturbed graveyard soils, were encountered. Exposure of the upper extent of the north aisle's north wall foundation and that of the north aisle and the chancel junction revealed detail associated with the wall construction enabling suggested dating to be applied to these portions of the church to be dated more precisely.

EXTENT OF EXCAVATION (Sizes):

Following routes predetermined by the overseeing architect, the route for the proposed new service trenches, which amounted to three new alignments (Drainage trench DT 1 – 3) extended from the base of the church's walls to the two new soakaway positions (Soakaway S 1 and S2). Of these new routes, all of which were cut by machine using a 250mm wide toothed bucket, were cut to depths of between 280mm (DT 1, DT 2 and DT3) closest to the church and 550mm (DT 1), 680mm DT 2 and 260mm (DT 3), this variation being due to the gradual fall required away from the base of the church walling.

Drainage Trench DT 1 extended along the base of the north aisle wall from the northeast corner of the later Victorian tower to the western side of the porch before turning 90degrees to the north and then realigned to the before entering the southwest corner of Soakaway 1 (S1). In total, this service trench measured approximately 13m. Drainage trench DT 2 extended continually, with a slight realignment to avoid the projecting chancel buttress, eastwards from the junction of the north aisle's eastern end wall with the north wall of the chancel for a distance of approximately 9m where it entered the centre of the western end of Soakaway 2 (S2). Drainage trench DT 3 extended northwards parallel with the base of the porch's eastern side wall, from adjacent to the junction of the north porch's eastern wall with the north wall of the aisle, for approximately 2.5m. once beyond the northern end of the porch the trench turned north-westwards for a further 3.3m before joining the eastern side of Drainage trench DT 1 where a small inspection chamber was formed.

Both soakaways (S1 and S2) measured roughly 3m long (east – west) by 2m wide (north – south) and were excavated in the underlying churchyard soils to a depth of approximately 800mm below the present grassed churchyard level. Initially anticipated to extend over a smaller area and penetrate to a greater depth, this alteration in their design was to avoid disturbance of existing graves across areas devoid of burial markers. This alternative approach proved beneficial as despite the discovery of a small amount of disarticulated human bone from the disturbed churchyard soils, no intact skeletons were encountered in the depths achieved. Despite this, it was shown through the deeper continuation of the disturbed soils across the base of both soakaway excavations that unmarked graves were present within the footprint of each soakaway positions.

See attached Figs. 1 and 2 for the general site location plan and detailed plan showing the alignment of the proposed new drainage trenches and soakaway positions in

relation to St Mary's Church, Longfield and its position within the surrounding semi-urban landscape.

NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION:

Groundworks monitoring, through a scheme of an archaeological watching brief, was continuously undertaken during the machine excavation of all groundwork in connection with the installation of new below ground level drainage and soakaway positions within both the north and east portions of the present churchyard.

This monitoring methodology enabled the exposure of any underlying archaeological soils, grave positions and church wall foundations to be examined and recorded thoroughly during the excavation of the new drainage trenching and soakaway positions.

This procedure enabled any archaeological finds, features, deposits, graves and foundation positions that may be encountered along the alignment of the new drainage routes, as they traverse the churchyard's northern and eastern areas, and the installation of two new soakaway positions to be systematically identified, exposed and recorded prior to the installation of the new

Though these works were not a condition of formal planning consent, they were a condition of the Diocesan Faculty granting. This was due to the disruptive nature of the proposed groundworks falling within the churchyard boundary of St Mary's Church, Longfield, itself a Grade II* listed building (NMR: 1239125) of local and national importance. The alignment of the proposed new service trenches, extending northwards from the north aisle wall, and eastwards from the junction of the north aisle and the chancel, fell well within an area of archaeological potential as identified by consultation with the Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER), a public accessible database containing known archaeological sites, casual discoveries, listed buildings and other archaeological/historical details, thus it was regarded prudent to have all groundworks monitored under these strict archaeological conditions.

GENERAL SOIL SEQUENCE:

The earliest deposit encountered during the archaeological monitoring of the proposed route of the new mains service installation trenches and the excavation of two soakaway positions consisted of the upper surface to the underlying natural bedrock geology. Consisting of firm mid – pale orange/brown, laminated coarse sandy flint gravel, its limited area exposure across the base of both soakaway positions clearly revealed a continuation of this deposit beneath the north and east portions of the present churchyard. Encountered at depths of approximately 720mm – 800mm below the present grassed churchyard ground surface, these surviving areas across the base of both soakaway excavations clearly indicated where repeated grave positions had not occurred. However, these areas were relatively small in area with the remaining bases of each soakaway being occupied by a heavily mixed pale – mid greyish brown silty sandy flint gravel laden soil forming the infill of numerous intercutting grave positions. Extending below the base of the soakaway construction pit's bases, there typical intercutting nature meant that no singular individual grave cut could be identified. Instead it is assumed the disturbances, which possessed

occasional small fragments of disarticulated human bone throughout, represented the infill of repeated grave excavation.

Sealing the upper surface of the undisturbed underlying natural geology and extending across the grave disturbed areas of each soakaway position, was a typical general disturbed, and heavily rotated, graveyard soil horizon. Representing a general mixed soil horizon up to 660mm thick, this deposit consisted of a firm – loose pale greyish/brown coarse sandy soil and flint gravel containing occasional small fragments of disarticulated human bone and discarded broken red and yellow brick fragments and ceramic roof tile pieces throughout, especially closer towards the church itself. As is typical of this deposit, no singular grave cuts could be discerned due to the nature of the deposit's formation through the repeated excavation, and subsequent infilling of numerous intercutting graves.

Across both soakaway positions, the underlying disturbed graveyard soil deposit was sealed by a moderate 220mm thick deposit of finer pale – mid grey silty sandy soil containing small angular flints throughout. Forming a capping topsoil layer, its grassed upper surface formed the present churchyard ground surface.

It was the upper extent of this general disturbed graveyard soils that were largely encountered along the base of all the new drainage trench alignments. Excavated through the overlying churchyard topsoil, the base of each new drainage trench scoured a shallow linear hollow into the upper surface of the deposit beneath. As previously mentioned, due to the nature of the disturbed graveyard soil, no evidence of singular grave cuts was identified.

Examination of the relationship between the underlying graveyard soils beneath and the limited exposed portions of the church's foundations revealed the disturbed graveyard soil extending up to and abutting the external face of each foundation. This is typical of a well-used churchyard, where burial closer to the footprint of the church building was a preferred option if possible. This repeated action would cause the deposits immediately adjacent to the church's foundations to be heavily disturbed with repeated grave excavation, and infilling, causing the general disturbed graveyard soil to extend up to the foundations immediate outer face.

FINDS AND NOTES:

Throughout the entire archaeological monitoring process, only limited finds, features or deposits of archaeological interest were encountered away from the bases of the church's walls. This was largely due to the limited depth excavations necessary for the installation of the new service drainage trenching and the amendment depths, and areas, associated with the formation of the two new soakaway positions. Despite this, it was observed along all the drainage trenching that the soil deposits beneath the churchyard topsoil consisted of typical heavily disturbed material associated with repeated grave excavation. Though this portion of the churchyard possessed a moderate scattering of surviving burial memorials, this by no means should be used as an indicator to the number of potential burials, a majority of which would have had only a simple timber grave marker at best. This is clearly illustrated in a photograph of St Mary's Church, Longfield prior to its restoration and construction of its western end and tower in c.1889. In this picture, a linear row of elongated

mounds can be clearly seen extending north – south from beyond the original western end of the church. Representing infilled graves arrange in a formal row, none are shown with a marker, and if one was placed following the photograph, none has survived to the present day.

Possible evidence of unmarked burials was suggested in the nature of the disturbance of the underlying soils across the base of both soakaway positions. Whereas, discrete areas of undisturbed natural geology was noted, consisting of a distinctively more compact pale – mid orange/brown coarse sandy gravel, the disturbed soils associated with grave infill was less firm, almost loose, mid grey in colour, and contained more small – medium flint nodules throughout. Extending beyond the base of the soakaway's excavation, these disturbed areas almost certainly represent sequences of intercutting graves, the bases of which fell below the soakaway excavation depths. Indeed, the small number of disarticulated bones recovered during the soakaway excavations mainly came from these disturbed soils. All these bone fragments were collected and subsequently laid across the base of each soakaway excavation in advance of the soakaway's construction, and subsequent backfilling. The single sherd of pottery from towards the base of Soakaway S2 was surprising, but not unexpected given the continued use of the churchyard over a prolonged period. Consisting of a single body sherd of mid – dark grey sand and shell tempered vessel, its fabric possessed a darker core characteristic of 'biscuit' firing. Typical of a period *c.*1450 – 1550AD, this single sherd, despite its relatively 'fresh' unabraded condition is probably a residual piece deposited during the interment of an unmarked grave close to this location.

As the service trenching commenced, or extended, along the base of the church's walls, this provided an opportunity for the upper extent of the wall foundations to be briefly inspected. This examination would allow the constructional methodology, and the stone type usage to be noted, which can frequently be used to clarify period additions through the relationship of different period foundations. The most obvious one of these was encountered along the line of Drainage Trench DT1 where it extended along the base of the wall of the present north wall of the north aisle. Here, a clear separation in constructional techniques was identified illustrating the westward extension of the church in the latter part of the nineteenth century (c.1889). Whilst the foundation to the earlier thirteenth century north aisle, consisting of irregular flint rubble bonded with pale creamy white coarse sandy lime mortar, occupied the western 2.2m length of the exposed foundation, this ended in a large corner stone formed from a roughly hewn stone boulder. The westward extending remainder of the exposed foundation, with a prominent offset step, was formed in machine made yellow stock bricks bonded with hard cement-based mortar. Abutting the western face of the foundation corner boulder, this clearly revealed the abutment of the later extension of the church against the earlier western end of the nave and north aisle, a feature not visible in the standing walling above due to nineteenth century face knapped flint refacing.

A similar foundation abutment was also noted at the junction of the east wall of the north aisle with the north wall of the chancel and the eastern side wall of the north porch with the north wall of the north aisle. With respects to the junction of the aisle with the chancel, here it was noted that the chancel wall foundation was formed of large unknapped irregular flints bonded with a firm – hard, mid – pale creamy

orange/brown coarse gritty lime mortar typical of the early Norman period. Examination of this junction revealed the external face of the earlier chancel foundation stepped towards the north by approximately 700mm before returning on its westward alignment. Clearly forming the projecting northeast corner to the earlier nave, this foundation contrasted with the foundation of the north aisle, which was formed of irregular flint rubble bonded with pale cream whist coarse sandy lime mortar. Closer inspection of the junction revealed the standing masonry of the earlier nave's northwest corner had been removed allowing the southern end of the north aisle's east wall to over sail the earlier foundation before connecting with the masonry of the earlier chancel's north wall. Though complicated in its description, this is not uncommon method of adding a later aisle onto the side of an earlier church, as the formation of an aisle required the removal of the earlier nave's north wall and the construction of an multiple arched arcade between the two. This enabled the reuse of the earlier nave's north wall foundation as a below ground 'sleeper foundation' to the new aisle arcade, whilst the former nave's north east corner removed and replaced with the eastern end wall of the new aisle.

A much more simplified junction was observed with the abutment of the present porch's east and west walls onto the north wall of the north aisle. At both locations, the simple irregular flint foundations to the porch clearly abutted the foundation to the aisle wall. Constructed of similar materials and bonded with not too dissimilar coarse sandy lime mortar, a clear thin seam of compressed dark grey soil was observed to separate the porch foundation from that of the north aisle. Possibly representing a trample horizon, or a brief break in construction, either way a short period of time appears to have occurred between the two schemes of construction.

FUTURE POTENTIAL OF AREA:

The application area lies in an area of archaeological potential relating to past landscapes, as evidenced by its position within the churchyard of St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield. Consisting of the principal focus to the present village it is noted as being '*St. Mary Magdalene's Church; The Church of St. Mary, Longfield, much restored and enlarged in 1889. Contains Norman and Early Decorated features. In normal use. Church of St Mary Magdalene. Thirteenth – fifteenth century restored in 1889 by John Drake when the nave was lengthened, and a north-west tower replaced with existing wooden one. Built of flint with stone dressings. Tiled roof with some remaining courses of stone slabs. Chancel, nave with north aisle and porch and tower at the west end of the aisle. Small Norman window in the west wall. The north aisle is thirteenth century the chancel and nave late thirteenth – fifteenth century. Barrel-vaulted roof. Piscina in south wall and archway in east wall*' (Listed Building: Grade I*: 1239125; KHER: TQ66 NW134). Regarded as being of mid – late medieval construction, it is reported that when areas of internal wall plaster were removed from the chancel in *c.*1999, the exposed wall fabric possessed characteristic 'herring-bone' arrangement of 'split flints' in its construction, a feature not visible externally due to later refacing and render coverings. If identified correctly, this style of masonry construction is distinctive of the early medieval period (*c.*1050 – 1150) and was also used towards the close of the Anglo – Saxon period (*c.*950>) also. Disappointingly, in conjunction with this drainage scheme, interior repairs required the extensive removal of interior wall plaster from the chancel and other smaller areas across the nave and north aisle. These works were not regarded as requiring

archaeological monitoring and the opportunity to reassess the fabric of the walling, which may have revealed further important historical constructional features, was missed and largely covered prior to inspection.

As is typical of the medieval settlement pattern in this part of Kent, the church sits to one side, centrally along the main thoroughfare of the lineated village of Longfield, itself an expanded village of the Northwest Kentish region. Characterised by a series of wide, shallow, parallel valleys formed by long dried ancient spring fed streams eroding the Chalk bedrock exposure of the North Downs, a series of small settlements evolved along the base of these valleys. Linked by a series of linear roads and trackways between the larger towns and cities, the local landscape consisted of an agrarian chalk down land of rolling hills.

Longfield itself appears to have formed in a traditional setting with the site of the Court Lodge situated immediately to the south of the church. Consisting of a collection of typically Kentish farm buildings of barns, hop kilns, cart lodges and stowage structures, the church form an integral part of this collective group. Noted as being *'The site of Longfield Court a late fourteenth, or early fifteenth century court lodge, is now covered by a road. Medieval flintwork was noticed in the 1950s through the dense covering of ivy and creepers though little detail was visible other than Victorian. The house appeared to comprise two attached ranges with gables at the north. In March 1962 the remains were examined during demolition. The walling was of field flints with dressings all of one period "from the late fourteenth century or a little afterwards, and there was no positive evidence that the medieval fabric of the house was other than one build". A fragment of the east wall, with a flint wall at the south east, remained and of the west range only the west wall stood to plate level, the others being already reduced to shoulder level or lower. A number of oak timbers were apparent'* (KHER: TQ66 NW22). Sadly, this structure failed to survive and was demolished towards the late 1960s, but not before a brief record was made and reported (Arch. Cant. Vol. 85, 1970).

However, the construction of the North Kent Main Line Railway in June 1872 linked a number of these smaller settlements, providing a quick route directly into the heart of London. With its own station, initially called Fawkham Station (KHER: TQ66 NW61), this was subsequently rebuilt after a fire c.1900 and renamed Longfield in 1961. Sadly, the main station buildings were demolished in the early 1970s only to be replaced by a small collection of simple concrete structures that survive today.

It was the coming of the railway that saw the growth of Longfield, and the other settlements along its route, into a countryside satellite commuter settlement. Certainly, during the early 1870s, large areas of former Court Lodge farmland immediately to the north of the railway line, west of the Court Lodge and St Mary's Church, were marked for development with roads and building plots marked on the 1st Ed. Maps of the Ordnance Survey. However, these failed to come to full fruition until the early twentieth century suggesting it was regarded as a speculative 'self-build' development. By the mid twentieth century considerable growth in Longfield, as well as Hartley to the south and New Barn to the northeast, with Istead Rise further on, created the rambling collection of intertwined roads and streets seen today.

Further information on the above is provided in the Kent Historic Environment Record (KHER) held and maintained at the County Historic Environment Record held in Invicta House, County Hall, Maidstone ME14 1XX.

Though unlikely to be regarded for further development in the immediate near future, any further small-scale groundworks within the general vicinity should be covered by a scheme of an archaeological watching brief at the least, whilst larger development schemes should be subjected to archaeological prospecting evaluation prior to any development submission.

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PROJECT	DRAWN BY	SCALE(S)
St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield	AL	1:1250
	DATE 26/08/20	LAST REVISION
COMMENTS	CHECKED	
	REF/DRG NO.	

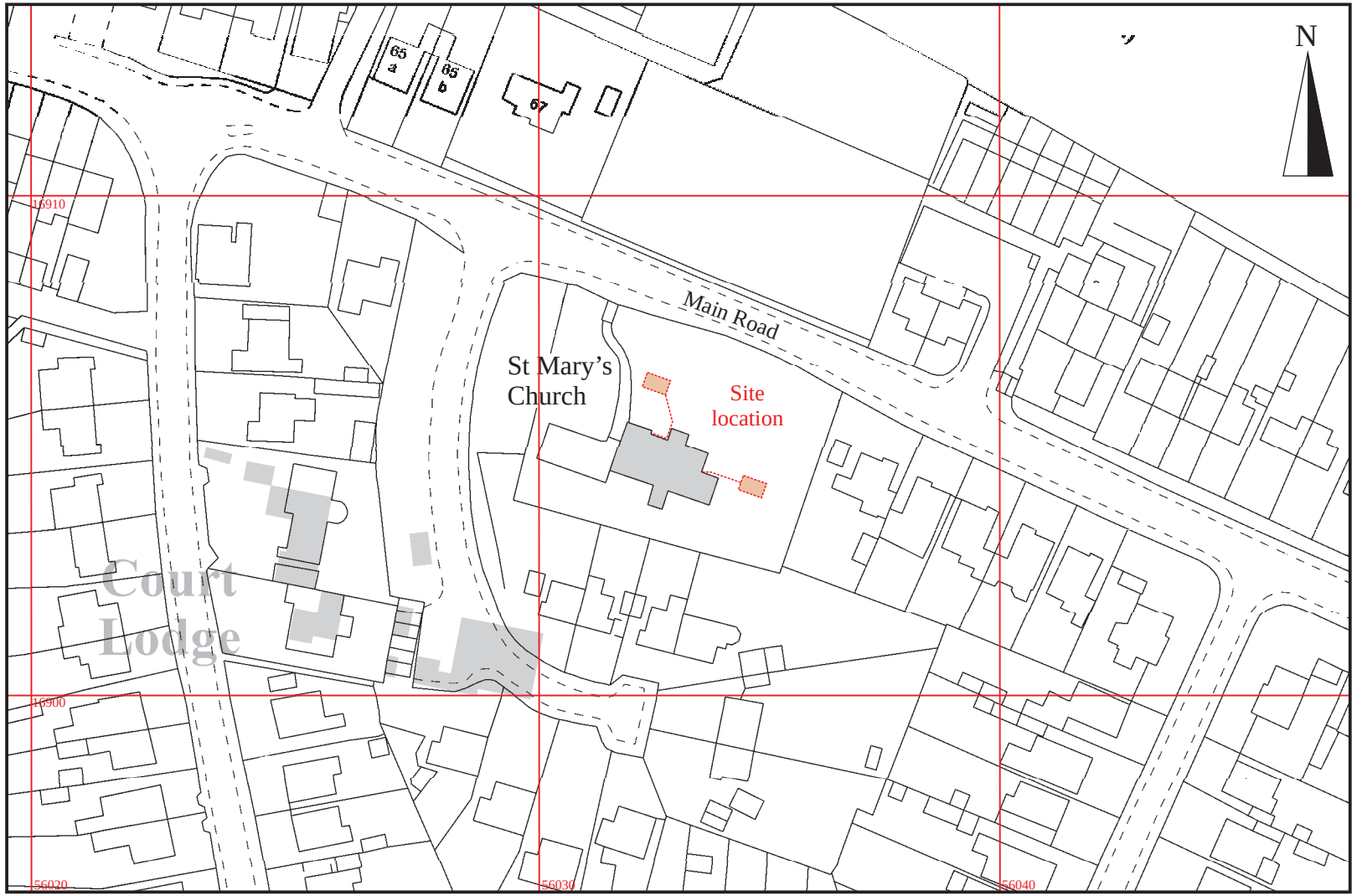

Figure 1. Extract from the modern Ordnance Survey map showing the position of St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield in relation to the surrounding semi-urban landscape and the alignment of the new service trenches and soakaway positions.

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PROJECT	DRAWN BY	SCALE(S)
St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield	AL	1:200
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Disturbed ground associated with deeper burials

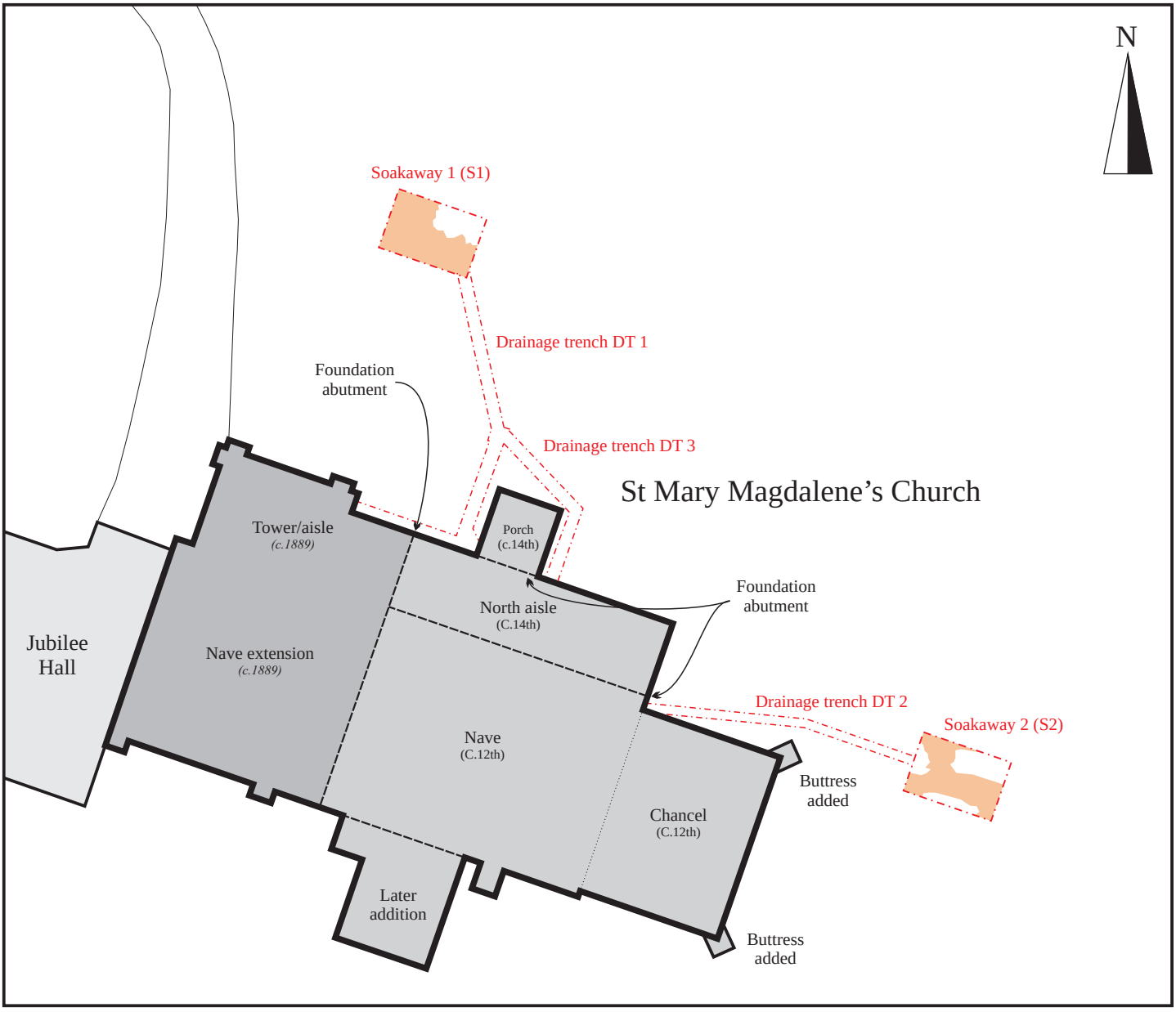

Figure 2. Plan of St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield and its immediate churchyard showing the alignments of new drainage trenching (DT 1-3) and soakaway positions (S1 and S2) in relation to the existing church.

Plate 1. General of the northern side of St Mary's Church, Main Road, Longfield showing the nineteenth century additions (tower, nave and north aisle west end) added onto the earlier medieval nave, north aisle, north porch and chancel.

Plate 2. General view looking southeast across Soakaway position S1 and showing drainage trench DT1 within the chorthern portion of th churchyard.

Plate 3. General view looking east showing soakaway position S2 and drainage trench DT2 in relation to the east end of the chancel.

Plate 4. General view looking southeast showing drainage trench DT 3 in relation to the north porch.

Plate 5. View looking southwest along the line of drainage trench DT1 extending along the base of the north wall of the north aisle showing corner stone to medieval foundation abutted by brick foundation of later west tower and nave extension.

Plate 6. View of the junction between the north aisle's east wall and the chancel's north wall exposed in drainage trench DT2 showing the junction of the two separate medieval period foundations.

Plate 7. View looking west at the western section of soakaway position S1 showing graveyard deposits over natural gravel geology and sealed by topsoil.

Plate 8. View looking south at the southern section of soakaway position S2 showing graveyard deposits over natural gravel geology and sealed by topsoil.