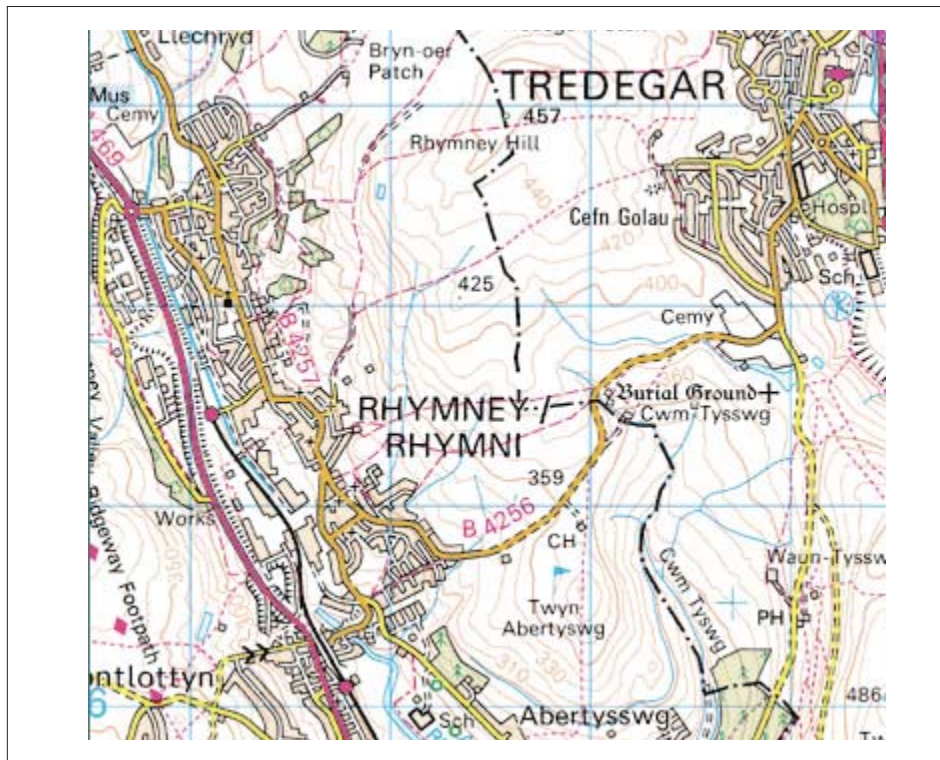


Archaeology Wales

St David's Church, Rhymney

Archaeological Watching Brief



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Report No. 1043

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St David's Church, Rhymney

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

In December 2011, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Caroe and Partners to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a new cess pit at St David's Church, Rhymney. The cess pit was located on the south-east corner of the Church in an area of potential burials. The excavation revealed that despite the proximity to the Church, burials were not present in this part of the graveyard.

1. Introduction

In December 2011, Archaeology Wales was commissioned by Caroe and Partners to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a new cess pit in the graveyard at St David's Church, Rhymney (NGR: SO 112 080 ; fig. 1).

St David's Church is located on the High Street in Rhymney. The building is unique in style, being based on the structure of a coal mine winding house. It is nineteenth century in date and is a Grade II listed building. The excavation of the cess pit trench forms part of a broader programme of restoration and building work at the Church.

The watching brief was carried out by Jerry Bond in heavy snow and rain which caused the trench to flood.

2. Site Location and Description

St David's Church lies in the middle of the town of Rhymney, above the Afon Rhymney on the lower west-facing slopes of Rhymney Hill at approximately 300m AOD. The underlying geology is coal measures sandstone (British Geological Survey 2001).

3. Watching Brief Results

The trench excavated to accommodate the new cess pit was located at the south-eastern corner of the Church. (fig. 2) It measured 8.2m long by 3.9m wide and was excavated to a depth of 3m at the western end and 4.5m at the eastern end (fig. 3). On the western side of the trench was the retaining wall of the existing basement access, while on the northern side was a steel plate apparently associated with the structure of the main Church. The retaining wall comprised rubble masonry with cement mortar and was capped by a single layer of bricks and was probably of twentieth century date (fig. 3 and 4).

The trench was excavated through a thin layer of turf and topsoil that covered the entire trench. On the western side a layer of redeposited topsoil up to 0.5m thick was identified abutting the masonry retaining wall (fig. 3). A water pipe and gas main were revealed within the redeposited topsoil on the eastern side of the trench.

Underlying the topsoil across the entire trench was a thin layer of redeposited red and black clay. This was up to 0.25m thick and appears to have been laid down as a levelling deposit, possibly during the construction of the basement access (fig. 3 and 4).

Below the red and black clay layer was the yellow clay and shattered sandstone natural (fig. 3 and 4). A large drain or sewerage pipe was identified in the base of the trench, lying within the natural clay (fig. 3).

No features of archaeological significance were identified cut into the natural.

4. Conclusion

The watching brief revealed that no graves existed in the part of the graveyard designated for the new cess pit. The site had been disturbed in the relatively recent past, probably associated with the construction of the basement access in the twentieth century.

No other features of archaeological significance were identified.

5. Acknowledgements

Thanks to Jerry Bond for carrying out the watching brief.

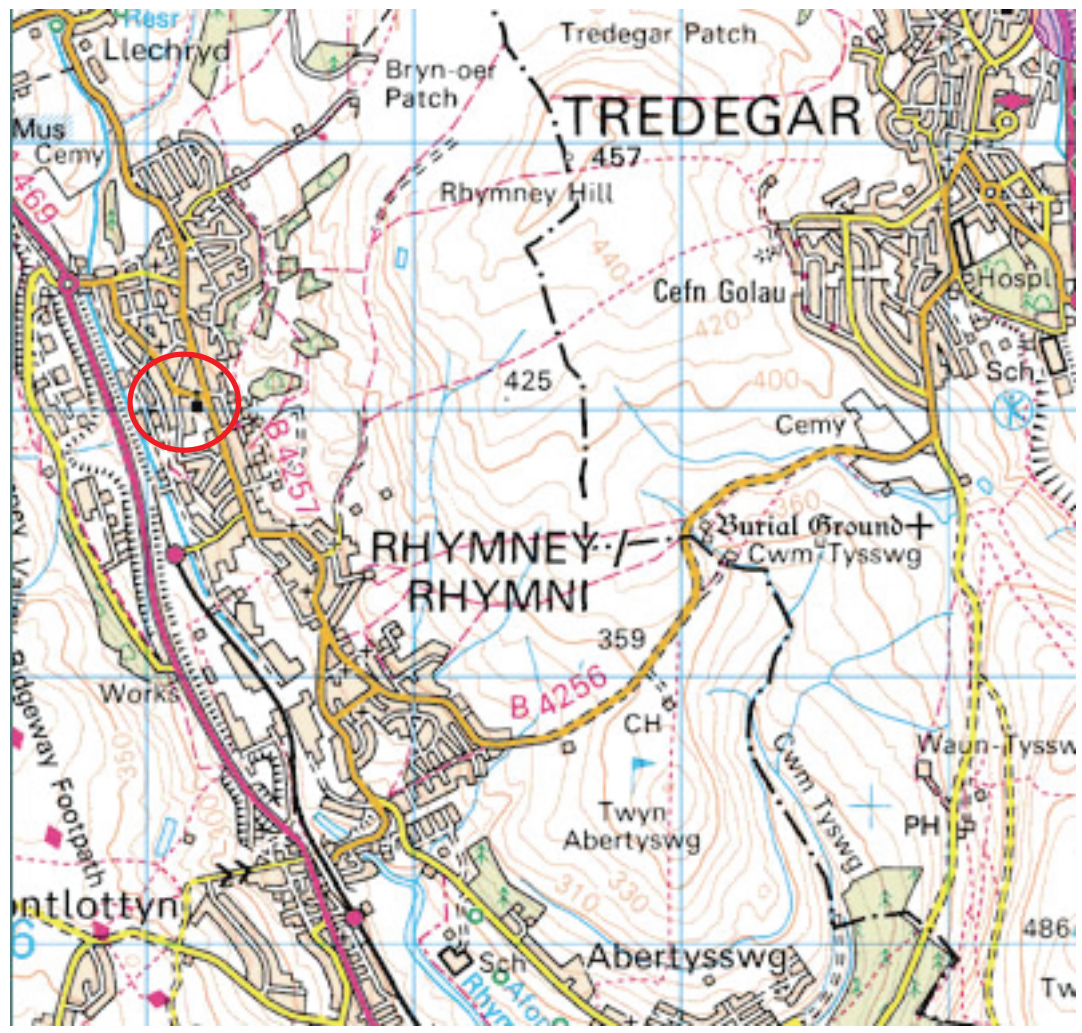


Fig. 1
Location of
site

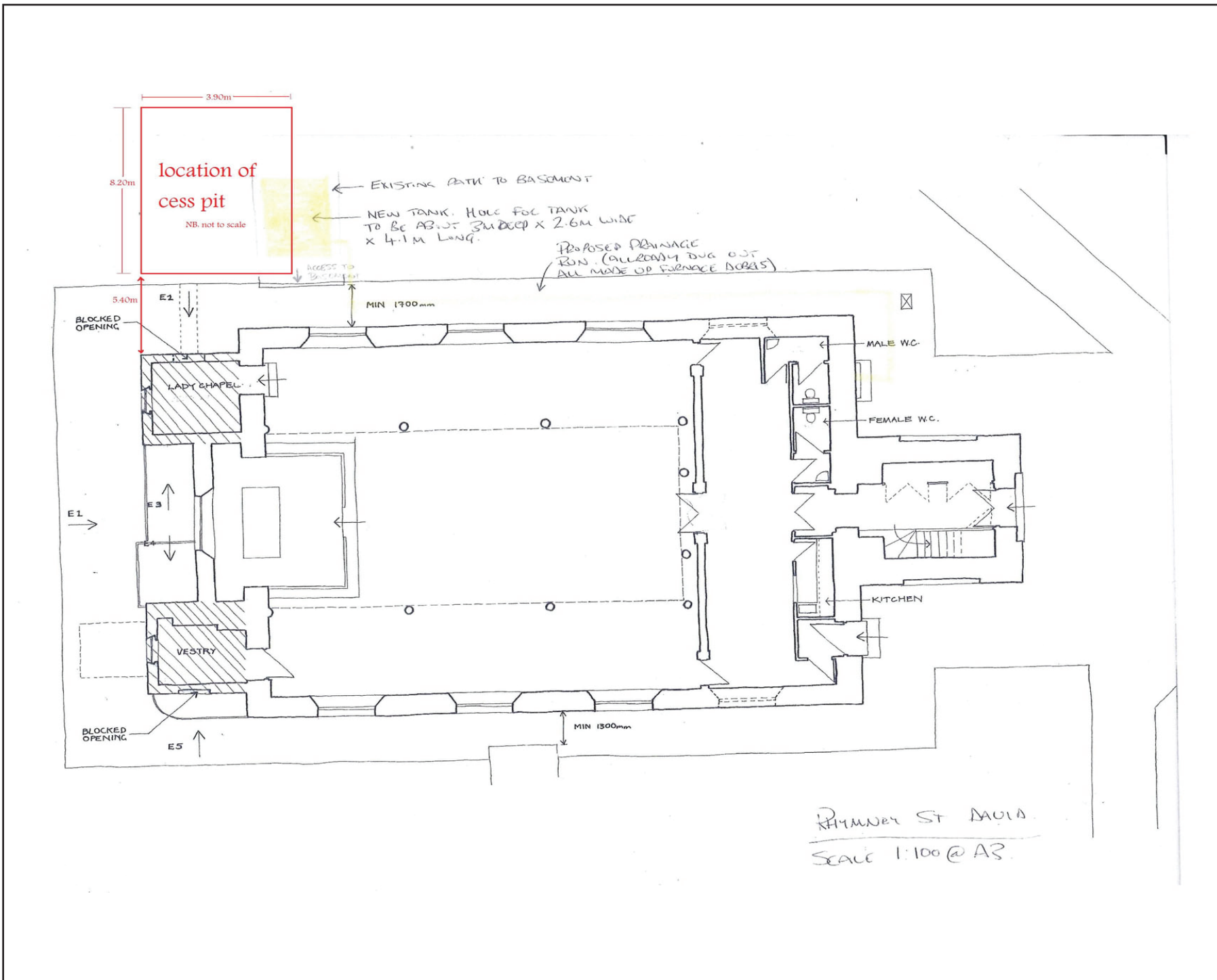


Fig. 2
Location of the
cess pit trench

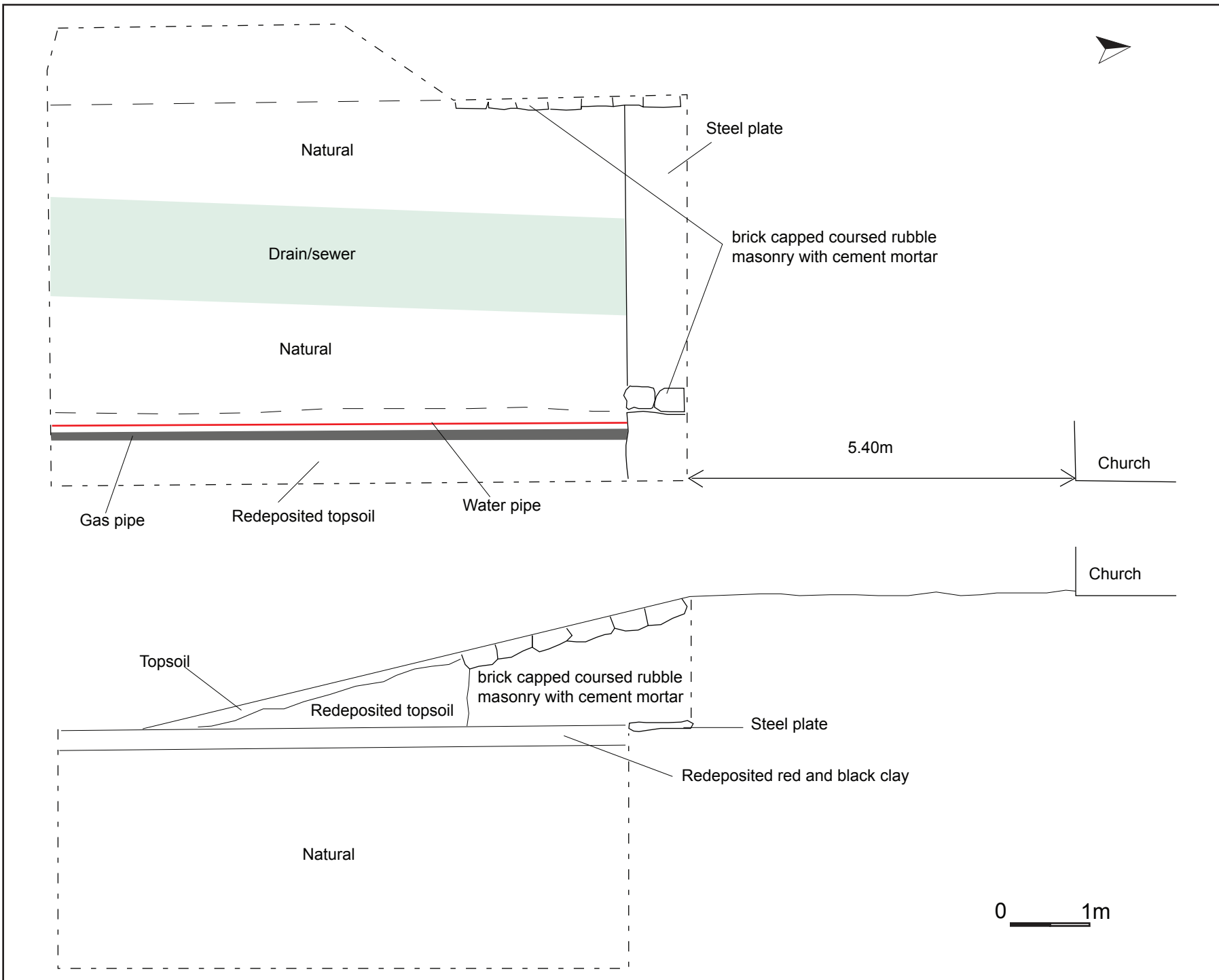


Fig. 3
Plan and E-facing
section through
trench



View across cess pit trench - looking west



South-facing section at the western end of the trench

Fig. 4
Views across the
trench

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