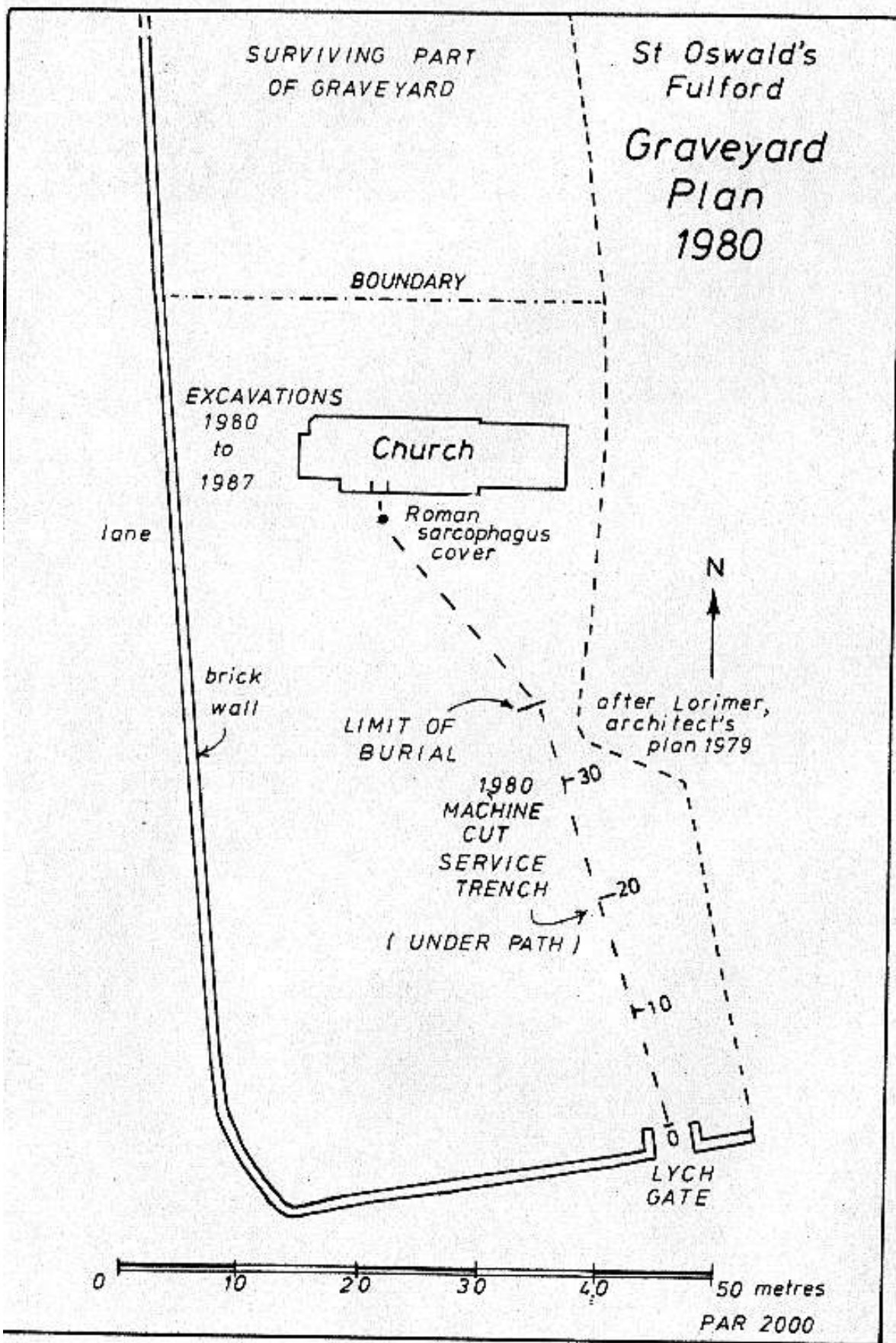


Old St Oswald's Church, Fulford

Archaeology Report – Service Trench Across the Churchyard



THE 1980 SERVICE TRENCH

Introduction

This was a machine trench dug along the path which led from the lych-gate to the south doorway of the church (fig 000). The trench was to house water, gas and telephone services needed for the conversion of the church to a domestic dwelling. It was c 60cm wide, and varied in depth from 50cm to 100cm.

When observations were begun, the trench was partly filled in; there was no time to record all the stratification and features encountered. Such detail as was recovered is catalogued below. A rough plan was made, and ten profiles were made; these form the basis of fig 000. Contexts were numbered from south to north.

To summarise the result of observations, it is suffice to note that in the southern part of the trench, towards the lych-gate, brick footings and layers were recorded of the most recent of the buildings which existed in this area before the churchyard was extended in this direction in 1869 (above, p 000); the area was heavily root-disturbed. No earlier features were noted in this area. At c 37m from the lych-gate, grave-earth and human bones were noted and continued right up to the doorway of the church. The area of burial was that of the original churchyard.

About two metres from the church, the machine struck and displaced the inverted massive lid, orientated W-E, of a Roman sarcophagus; this was presumed to have ben reused as a gravecover for a later burial. The sarchphagus was not found, but it is likely to have come from a number found in the area in the 19th century (p 000).

Detail of stratification and features (fig 000, plan and profiles; the uppermost 3-5cm layer was the concrete of the path)

PROFILES

1m from lych-gate

Contexts

1. 37cm: brick fragments, mortar, small pebbles, in matrix of buff mortary soil; debris from buildings in this area, levelled off as a make-up for concrete path
- X 2. 18cm: buff-orange sandy soil; former ^{upper} subsoil
^
3. 22cm+: laminated buff-brown clayey sandy and brown clay; lower subsoil

4m from lych-gate

4. 40cm: mortary brown soil, small pebbles, tile fragments; debris/make-up as above
5. 15cm: buff-orange sandy soil (more sandy than 2. above); merging into 6
- X 6. 14cm: clayey buff ^{upper} subsoil, merging into 7.
^
7. 20cm+: stiff brown clay; lower subsoil

15m from lych-gate

8. 40cm: mortary brown soil with brick and tile fragments
9. 3cm: dark grey-brown greasy soil, sherd of C19 china at base; ?floor-level of building
10. 6cm: orange gravelly sandy soil; possibly imported to site as make-up for floor
11. 20cm: buff-brown clayey sandy soil
12. 10cm+: more clayey and orange-buff than 11

24m from lych-gate

13. 20cm: mortary plastery soil, pieces of pink plaster;
destruction level of building
14. 14cm: two courses of brick wall, each brick 6.5cm thick,
with 1cm of pale grey-buff mortar
15. 10cm: clayey brown gravel; make-up for 14.
16. 20cm+: clayey brown sandy soil

27m from lych-gate

17. 15cm: mortary plastery soil
18. 30cm: six courses of brick, each under 5cm thick,
with thin mortar
19. 20cm+: buff-brown clayey sandy

28m from lych-gate

20. 20cm: disturbed brown clayey sandy soil, with small
fragments of plaster and tile
21. 35cm+: buff-brown sandy, becoming more clayey

30m from lych-gate

22. 5cm: disturbed brown sandy with a little plaster
23. 60cm: buff-brown sandy soil, occasional pebbles up to
10cm long
24. 50cm+: buff-brown sandy soil, merging downwards into
a stiffer yellow-buff sandy clay, similar to that found
in excavation around the west end of the church

31m from lych-gate

25. 30cm: brick and stone rubble, with much plaster or
stucco, 3cm thick, with pale mauvish surface; some
tile; building debris

26. 10cm: disturbed dark brown organically-rich soil;
some tile and pebbles; ?floor level
27. 3cm: disturbed orange-brown gravel, cf 15. above
28. 20cm+: buff-orange sandy soil

32m from lych-gate

29. 18cm: brick courses, not clearly observed in profile, but
top orientation measurable; bricks appeared to have been set
in a very small trench in brown sandy soil
30. 20cm+: buff-orange sandy soil
31. 60cm+: brown sandy soil, becoming more yellowish clayey at
base, few pebbles

* * *

Here, the trench changed direction, and human bones appeared in the
spoil; the machine appeared to be skimming over the surface of some
articulated burials.

X *Discussion of the ~~southern~~ part of the trench*

The brick wall foundations are probably all of the same 19th-century
date; the three fragments observed include two at right angles (14 and
18) and another (29) on a similar orientation to 18; with their possible
floor layers and make-up, they represent some elements of the buildings
known to have been in this area; the extent to which they match is
discussed on p 000. Archaeologically, the walls should be earlier than
neighbouring gravestones, the oldest of which was of 1872.

The northern end of the trench

The whole area south of the doorway is disturbed grave-earth,
possibly destroying any original threshold; this may have included a
sleeper chamfered stringcourse.

From the south door of the church southwards, the machine trench was only 60cm deep and sloping up to the north; the services are only 25cm below the present surface by the door.

X At 2.8m from the church door, where the trench changed course, was a keeled ^{cover} lid of a sarcophagus, originally orientated west-east, but subsequently displaced to the west. The ^{cover} lid was 2.4m long, and was presumably over a grave of uncertain date; probably in this location that of an important person.

Y The stone ^{cover} lid (see Finds, p 000) is now (2000) displayed on a plinth in the garden.