

St Mary's Church, The Street, Frittenden, Kent.

Archaeological Watching Brief Summary Report

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF SUMMARY REPORT

COUNTY: Kent	TOWN/PARISH: Frittenden	DATE: 24-27/10/2017
RECORDING BODY: Canterbury Archaeological Trust		Individual(s) Andrew Linklater
SITE NAME: St Mary's Church, The Street, Frittenden CAT SITE CODE: WB SMCF17		Archive Number: 4174 CAT Ref: 2018/136 Plan. Ref: N/A
NGR: TQ 81319 40944 (centred)		ELEVATION: Approx. 44m O.D.
TOPOGRAPHY: The church of St Mary's sits slightly west of centre within its encircling pentagonal graveyard, which if it were not for grounds of Well House, would front the north-western side of The Street. Located towards the southern extent of the present village core, to the north and west the churchyard adjoins with the grounds to Frittenden House, whilst to the east it fronts against the grounds to Frittenden C. E. Primary School. To the west it abuts the grounds to Church Cottage. Its graveyard is generally regarded as being level, though the surrounding landscape beyond, to the east, west and north, falls gradually before it steepens to form a raised plateau overlooking two natural spring fed streams further to the east and west. However, it was the natural topography that was further enhanced to enable the formation of a large elongated lake to the northwest of the church. The works associated with this scheme of improvements were entirely concentrated within the church, focused across four separate areas. Prior to the commencement of this scheme, the church possessed its extent mid nineteenth-century fixed bench pew seating sat over slightly raised timber platforms. These were subdivided across the footprint of the church by a series of stone slab floored walkways predominantly arranged on an east – west alignment.		NATURAL GEOLOGY: (According to the BGS): Bedrock geology: Weald Clay Formation - Limestone. Superficial geology: None recorded.
FORMER USE: Series of slightly raised timber platforms supporting rows of fixed timber bench pew seating. The areas of alteration consisted of two separate areas constituting the southern assemblage of seating of the south aisle and two separate areas of seating straddling the	FUTURE USE: Following the removal of the four separate areas of fixed timber bench pew seating and their slightly raised timber platforms, the area beneath was to be infilled with insulating material and solid limecrete material prior to the laying of new areas of stone flooring to match the existing stone walkways. This scheme would enable a series of	

line of the south aisle arcade at its east and west ends. These two aisle arcade areas of seating both extended into the northern seating of the south aisle and the southern side of the nave.	more open areas to be formed to allow portions of the church to be more flexible in their use.
LAND OWNER: Church of England	TENANT: PCC St Mary's Church, Frittenden
REASON FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING: An archaeological watching brief was maintained during the removal of selected areas of existing raised timber platforms and fixed timber bench pews across four separate areas of the south aisle and the southern side of the nave. These removal works were in advance of the formation of a continuation of level stone flooring across the former bench pew areas to enable more useable floor space to be formed primarily within the south aisle. These archaeological monitoring works were a requirement of the granting of the Faculty permission by the Dean and Chapter of the Canterbury Diocesan following consultation with their appointed archaeological consultant Mr. P Bennett who recommended a scheme of archaeological monitoring associated with the removal of all floor surface. These were an imposed requirement due to the highly sensitive nature of potential below ground finds, feature or deposits relating to the historical structural development of the church and its use.	
EXTENT OF EXCAVATION (Sizes): In total, four separate areas of former timber pew platform floors were removed totalling approximately 41.50m square (Fig. 2; Areas A – D). Of these four areas, Areas A and B consisted of the partial removal of the pew platform floors and the bench seating above, whilst Areas C and D entailed the total removal of the flooring and pews. Following removal of the timber pew flooring it was soon apparent that due to the nature of the construction of the present flooring, consisting of a moderate depth air void beneath formed by supporting timber joists on brick dwarf walls, only limited cleaning/clearance and restrictive inspection of exposed constructional features was required to facilitate the installation of the new level floor surfaces. Listed below are the approximate dimensions that each area of removed flooring covered as illustrated on Fig 2: Area A: Situated straddling the line of the south aisle arcade's western extent, this area consisted of a roughly rectangular area with a smaller conjoined area projecting across the western end of the nave floor. With the larger of the two areas measuring 3.8m (north – south) and 2.4m (east – west), the secondary area measured 1.75m long (east – west) by 1.35m (north – south). Collectively, the two areas covered a total area of 11.50 square, though the position of the western respond to the south aisle arcade reduced this by roughly 1m square. This area consisted of the partial removal of the western end to a larger collection of pews and timber flooring, the remainder of which were to remain insitu. Area B: Positioned across the line of the south aisle arcade's eastern extent, this rectangular area of removed flooring extending from the centre of the south aisle through to the eastern end of the nave. Measuring 5.8m long (north – south) by 1.2m wide (east – west), this area consisted of the partial removal of the eastern end to a larger collection of pews and timber flooring, the remainder of which were to remain insitu.	

Area C: Occupying the southwest corner of the south aisle, this roughly rectangular area of removed pews and timber flooring measured approximately 6m long (east – west) by 2.75m wide (north – south). This area consisted of the total removal of a bank of timber pew benches and their timber flooring.

Area D: Located across the southeast corner of the south aisle, this roughly rectangular area of removed flooring also included a smaller conjoined square area projecting into the south aisle's south-eastern corner. Measuring 4m long (east – west) by 1.8m wide (north – south), the projecting area measured roughly 700mm square to form a total area of approximately 7.70m square. This area consisted of the total removal of a bank of timber pew benches and their timber flooring.

NATURE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION:

Continuous groundworks monitoring was maintained under a scheme of an archaeological watching brief during the removal of all existing raised timber floor surfaces mainly focused across the south aisle, though two separate areas of flooring were also included extending into the southern side of the nave across the line of the south aisle arcade. This methodology enabled observations of structural details relating to the church's historical development, especially associated with its large-scale restoration and reconstruction by the renowned ecclesiastical architect, R. C. Hussey in 1846-8, with the later addition of a north aisle in 1861.

This scheme of observations, focused beneath the former nineteenth-century timber floors of the south aisle and across the line of the south aisle arcade, provided an opportunity to examine the upper extent of any available wall foundations and to assess the extent of the restoration/reconstruction of the medieval church in the nineteenth-century. As part of these examinations, the exposed internal face to the foundations of the east, west and south walls of the south aisle were inspected, as-well-as the foundations beneath the western pier respond of the south aisle arcade. However, observations were possible beneath the remaining raised timber platforms along the line of the south aisle arcade, which provided a view of the upper extant of the arcade's medieval foundation piers.

Whilst actual excavations within the church were limited, observations across the four separate works areas provided valuable information to the understanding of the church's historical development. This information, coupled with archive material supplied by the Frittenden Historical Society, especially a transcript of the works by R. C. Hussey, have enable a slightly clearer understanding of the church's development to be suggested (Fig. 2).

GENERAL SOIL SEQUENCE:

Following the removal of selected portions of the timber flooring beneath the bench pews, four separate areas were made available for inspection. However, due to the depth of the air void encountered beneath each floor area, which was formed when the pews and flooring were installed in the mid nineteenth-century, only limited clearance and cleaning of the exposed surfaces and features was necessary to facilitate the installation of the new floor surfaces. Despite this, evidence of the church's former foundations, mainly associated with its south aisle and aisle arcade were partially exposed and inspected prior to the installation of the new flooring, all of which was form a singular level surface with the stone paved former aisle walkways.

Area A: Extending between the west end of the south aisle and into the west end of the nave, this area of removed flooring straddled the position of the south aisle's western pier respond base. The earliest deposit exposed across this area consisted of the upper extent to a sizeable,

roughly square, masonry foundation extending eastward from the nave's west wall. Measuring roughly 2.2m (east – west) by 2.1m (north – south), the foundation was composed of small – medium irregular pieces of Ragstone rubble bonded with pale creamy grey coarse lime mortar containing small angular flint and Ragstone inclusions throughout. With a roughly level surface approximately 460mm below the former timber floor level, its outer limits were abruptly defined with faced stonework, whilst its northeast and southeast corners were formed of roughly hewn rectangular ashlar Ragstone blocks. Rising from the centre of this foundation's western side, projecting eastwards from the nave wall face, was a further section of raised masonry foundation measuring approximately 1.2m square. Constructed in a similar fashion to that beneath, this section of foundation, the upper surface of which was encountered at a depth of 390mm below the former timber pew floor, clearly formed an integral step in the upper surface to the lower foundation upon which the base of the pier respond would have originally been bonded to.

Examination of the junction between these foundations and the interior face of the nave wall revealed it had been formed as a singular phase of construction with a short visible length of coarse Ragstone rubble foundation extending north – south beneath the nave west wall. Clearly consisting of contemporary foundation phasing construction, examination of a suggested phase plan of the church's development proposes the tower was added to the west end of the nave sometime between the late fifteenth – and early sixteenth-century (AD 1450 and 1520). Following removal of the earlier nave's western end wall, the construction of the present tower appears for a short period to have been built free standing requiring the inclusion of a pair of perpendicular buttresses projecting both north and south from its northeast and southeast corners respectively. Following the tower's completion, the nave's north wall, south aisle's western end wall and the south aisle arcade would have been reconnected to form a single integrated structure.

It is almost certain that the exposed foundation beneath the pier respond and the section of wall foundation adjacent all relate to the construction of the tower; the section of wall foundation being the remnants of the earlier west wall of the medieval south aisle and the eastern face of the tower's southeast buttress. Unfortunately, only limited exposure of the wall foundation due to existing plaster wall covering meant that a direct relationship of this junction could not be fully seen. However, the pier respond base appeared to have been further affected during the rearrangement of the south aisle arcade as part of the nineteenth-century restoration. Whilst it is not included as part of the architect's works narrative, the upper masonry foundation was partially covered by a thin layer of broken red bricks upon which the carved moulded base of the pier respond was positioned. The inclusion of this brick layer clearly suggests that whilst the entire pier respond may not have been repositioned during the restoration, its base almost certainly had been reset.

As part of the formation of the air void beneath the existing timber pew floor it was necessary for the area of pew seating to be reduced to a reasonably level surface approximately 580mm below the present timber floor. This reduction of the ground surface to the north, east and south of the masonry pier foundation caused it to stand proud of its surroundings.

Extending across the reduced ground surface and the upper extent of the masonry pier foundation, all beneath the existing timber pew floor, was a thin layer of coarse pale creamy grey/brown, gritty lime mortar. Suggestively representing a trampled construction horizon associated with either the restoration of the church following the floor's reduction, or the installation of the brick dwarf support walls associated with the formation of the present timber pew floor, the mortar was similar to that used in other walling in the church clearly created as part of the nineteenth-century restoration.

This was subsequently sealed by a series of linear dwarf walls formed of unfrogged red Kentish stock bricks bonded with similar coarse, gritty lime mortar observed sealing the base

of the ground reduced area. Initially forming a series of three east – west aligned parallel lengths of walling, one each along the north and south sides of the pew floor area and one through the centre all to provide end and mid support to a series of perpendicular aligned timber joist aligned north – south.

Consisting of only three brick courses tall (240mm) and one brick length wide (220mm), each section of dwarf walling was constructed with a regular series of through-holes to enable the movement of air beneath the timber floor. However, this simple dwarf wall arrangement immediately adjacent the pier responds southern side, where a further succession of shorter brick dwarf walls with through-holes were inserted, together forming a series of smaller roughly rectangular compartments. Some of these dwarf wall lengths were noted as extending across the upper surface of the masonry pier respond foundation as single brick courses, all of which were installed to provide support to an arrangement of square Yorkstone slabs possibly associated with the position of a heating stove. Between each brick dwarf wall, sealing the upper surface of the possible construction trampled mortar surface was a roughly 60mm thick deposit of mid – dark greyish brown loose sandy, gritty soil and dust containing numerous small pieces of discarded Ragstone chippings, broken lime mortar lumps and occasional broken ceramic roof tile fragments. This also included other more recent discarded material such as small timber off-cuts and clippings from electrical cables, presumably associated with the later installation of modern services? This contrasted with the remainder of the pew floor area, which was floored in softwood floorboards across which the pew benches were jointed.

One such piece of discarded timber from beneath the present floor was noted as being inscribed in pencil with ‘D. HOOKER 1982 LAID THIS FLOOR IN OCTOBER. CARPENTER/JOINER OF FRITTENDEN’. Clearly a local man proud of his achievement?

Area B: Like Area A, this area also extended between the eastern end of the south aisle and the western end of the nave, straddling the line of the south aisle arcade. Forming the eastern extent of a bank of pews within a defined roughly rectangular group of bench pews, all positioned over a timber floor with an air void beneath. In total this area only formed a narrow strip along the pew banks eastern end, with the remainder being retained.

As with Area A, the entire area beneath this pew bank had been reduced to enable the formation of an air void beneath the newly installed timber pew platform floor. Extending to a depth of approximately 580mm below the present timber pew floor, this near level reduced surface was sealed by a thin layer of coarse pale creamy grey/brown, gritty lime mortar, possibly associated with the restoration of the church in the mid nineteenth-century, or the formation of a series of brick dwarf walls to support the timber floor joist. Either way, the composition of the mortar surface was like that utilised in walling clearly associated with those of the restoration and dateable to the mid nineteenth-century.

Aligned east – west along both the north and south sides of the entire reduced area with a north – south aligned return along the area’s eastern end were a series of brick dwarf walls to provide support to the ends of a sequence of perpendicular timber floor joist. Their centres being supported by two further parallel brick dwarf walls equidistant apart and aligned east – west through the centre of the air void. All the walls were formed of unfrosted red Kentish stock bricks bonded with a mortar like that noted covering the upper surface to the reduced area. Each wall consisted of three courses tall (240mm), and whilst the two central walls were one brick length wide (220mm), it is assumed the three outer walls were the same, but these were partially obscured by adjacent Yorkstone floor slabs forming the surrounding aisle walkways. As already noted in Area A, each of the supporting brick dwarf walls were constructed with a series of regularly spaced through-holes to aid in the circulation of air beneath the timber flooring. Sealing the thin mortar layer across the reduced surface was a roughly 60mm thick deposit of mid – dark greyish brown loose sandy, gritty soil and dust

containing numerous small pieces of discarded Ragstone chippings, broken lime mortar lumps and occasional broken ceramic roof tiles. This also included other more recent discarded material such as small timber off-cuts and clippings from electrical cables, presumably associated with the later installation of modern services?

Each brick dwarf wall provided either end or central support to a series of north – south aligned timber joist, across which a nailed floor of softwood boarding was laid. The pew benches were subsequently jointed into the upper surface of the timber floor.

Area C: Situated across the entire southwest corner of the south aisle, the removal of a small rectangular bank of pews with their timber support floor enable a rectangular area measuring approximately 6.2m long (east – west) by 3.8m wide (north – south) to be available for inspection. As with all the other areas inspected during this scheme of monitoring, this area had been subjected to its footprint being reduced to a depth of approximately 580mm below the present timber floor surface as part of the nineteenth-century improvements. Forming a near level surface across the entire area, as with Areas A and B, its upper surface was sealed by a thin layer of coarse pale creamy grey/brown, gritty lime mortar possibly associated with the restoration of the church or the installation of the brick dwarf walls to support the joists to the timber floor.

Extending along the area's northern side, on an east – west alignment, and across the eastern end on a north – south alignment, are two dwarf support walls formed of unfrogged Kentish red bricks bonded with mortar like that sealing the upper surface of the reduced area. Each wall segment consisting of only three brick courses tall (240mm) and is assumed their widths would correspond with those already encountered in Areas A and B and thus would be one brick length wide (220mm), however, the northern side to the north dwarf wall and the eastern side to the east dwarf wall were obscured by a series of square Yorkstone floor slabs forming the paved walkways to the south aisle. Aligned east – west through the centre of the exposed area was a further brick dwarf wall of similar construction to the north and east brick dwarf walls. As already noted in Area A and B, each of the supporting brick dwarf walls were constructed with a series of regularly spaced through-holes to aid in the circulation of air beneath the timber flooring. Clearly inserted to provide support to the centres of the perpendicular timber joist of the pew floor, it too was constructed with regular through-holes in its construction to allow air to pass beneath the two below floor areas formed by its insertion.

Sealing the thin mortar layer across the reduced surface was a roughly 60mm thick deposit of mid – dark greyish brown loose sandy, gritty soil and dust containing numerous small pieces of discarded Ragstone chippings, broken lime mortar lumps and occasional broken ceramic roof tiles. This also included other more recent discarded material such as small timber off-cuts and clippings from electrical cables, presumably associated with the later installation of modern services?

These dwarf walls contrasted with the supporting dwarf brick walling formed against the inner face to the south aisle's south wall, which consisted of three courses of a single skin of similar bricks bonded with the same lime mortar as noted elsewhere. Unlike the dwarf brick wall along the north side of the area, there was no need for the regular series of through-holes for ventilation, but instead a pair of rough square openings were formed through the thickness of the south aisle's south wall and a vented opening created within the aisle wall's exterior face. A similar opening was also noted extending through the lower portion of the south aisle's west wall, but here there was no brick dwarf wall along the wall's interior face, instead the wall possessed a stepped foundation along its exposed base projecting roughly 100mm from the main wall face. Either side of all three opening, which were clearly to enable fresh air to pass beneath the timber floors through the width of aisle's outer walls, was a lining of

red brickwork and bonding mortar similar to that used in the dwarf walling, and clearly indication they are of a similar phase of construction.

Sealing the thin spread of mortar across the reduced surface was a roughly 60mm thick deposit of mid – dark greyish brown loose sandy, gritty soil and dust containing numerous small – medium pieces of discarded Ragstone chippings, broken lime mortar lumps and occasional broken ceramic roof tiles. This also included other more recent discarded material such as small timber off-cuts and clippings from electrical cables, presumably associated with the later installation of modern services?

Whilst the two sections of dwarf brick walling along the north side of the area and the base of the aisle south wall were clearly intended to provide end support to the perpendicular joists, the central brick wall and the masonry off-set foundation along the base of the west wall and the brick wall at the area's eastern end provided support to the joist's centres. Across the joist, a timber boarded floor was nailed, and the pew benches jointed into its upper surface with sections of jointed wainscot panelling along the lower extent of the internal face of the aisle's south and west wall. Because of the panelling, following its removal, the lower roughly 1.3m portion of the wall was found not to have been plastered, but instead the coarse rubble face to the wall was exposed. Examination the exposed wall facing revealed it was formed of crudely coursed unworked small – medium pieces of Ragstone rubble bonded with a similar coarse lime mortar to that observed in the brick dwarf walling sealing the reduced ground level beneath each pew platform. This clearly shows that these sections are of a similar phase of construction as the air voids, and timber pew flooring, all of which is noted as occurring under a single extensive campaign in the mid nineteenth-century.

Area D: Situated towards the southeast corner of the south aisle, the removal of a small rectangular bank of pews, and their timber support floor, enable a roughly rectangular area measuring approximately 4m long (east – west) by 1.75m wide (north – south) to be available for inspection. Whilst the eastern end of the pew area finished roughly 1m from the interior face of the south aisle's east wall, a small square area of flooring projected into the corner of the aisle was also removed exposing the junction between the aisle's east and south walls.

The earliest deposit exposed across this area consisted of the upper extent to a small – moderate sized portion of masonry foundation extending across most of the small projecting part of the removed floor area. Covering an area of approximately 740mm square, the foundation was composed of small – medium irregular pieces of Ragstone rubble bonded with coarse gritty pale creamy grey lime mortar containing small angular flint and Ragstone inclusions throughout. With a roughly level upper surface approximately 320mm below the former timber floor level, it's outer limits were abruptly defined by a ragged edge of cut-back masonry suggesting it had been cut into, possibly during the formation of the reduced floor area as part of the nineteenth-century restoration.

Examination of the junction between this foundation and the interior face of the south aisle's east wall revealed it predated the aisle wall, which appeared to have utilised the earlier masonry as a foundation and had been bonded to its upper surface. Along the foundation's southern extent, the present south wall of the south aisle appears to have extended below the present reduced floor surface suggesting either the earlier foundation had been partially removed, or that that this represented the southern extent of the foundation? Examination of a suggested phase plan of the church shows this earlier foundation may represent the foundations to a projecting buttress extending southwards from the earlier medieval south aisle's southeast corner? If correct, this would suggest the foundation would date to the Early English period (AD1180 – 1280), however, it is known that the construction of the south chapel would have affected the eastern end wall to this earlier south aisle. If so, the foundation may relate to the reconstruction of the buttress in the Early Decorated period (AD

1280 – 1330) when the formation of an opening through the aisle's east wall may have necessitated the need to rebuild the buttress?

As with all the other areas inspected during this scheme of monitoring, this area had been subjected to its footprint being reduced to a depth of approximately 580mm below the present timber floor surface as part of the nineteenth-century improvements. Creating a near level surface across a majority of the area's footprint, as with Areas A, B and C, its upper surface was sealed by a thin layer of coarse gritty pale creamy grey/brown lime mortar possibly associated with the restoration of the church or the installation of the brick dwarf walls to support the joists to the present timber floor.

Due to the reduced width of this area, a red brick dwarf wall was constructed east – west along the area's northern edge with a short north – south length along its western end as well as forming the east and north sides of the projecting spur area. Formed of unfrogged Kentish red bricks bonded with mortar, similar to that sealing the upper surface of the reduced area, each wall segment consisting of only three brick courses tall (240mm) and is assumed their widths would correspond with those already encountered in Areas A, B and C thus would be one brick length wide (220mm). However, the northern side to the northern dwarf wall and the western side of the west end dwarf wall and those of the spur projecting area were obscured by a series of square Yorkstone floor slabs forming the paved walkways to the south aisle.

As already noted in Area A, B and C, each of the supporting brick dwarf walls were constructed with a series of regularly spaced through-holes to aid in the circulation of air beneath the timber flooring. However, unlike the other previously inspected floor areas, no evidence of central supporting walls was observed suggesting that due to the reduced width of this area, none were required.

However, the dwarf brick walls were in contrast with the supporting dwarf brick walling formed against the inner face to the south aisle's south wall. Here, three courses of a single skin of similar bricks bonded with the same lime mortar as noted elsewhere. As with the similar wall along the base of the aisle wall in Area C, there was no need for the regular series of through-holes for ventilation, but instead a pair of rough square openings were formed through the thickness of the south aisle's south wall and a vented opening created within the aisle wall's exterior face. Either side of both opening, which were clearly to enable fresh air to pass beneath the timber floors through the width of aisle's outer walls, was a lining of red brickwork and bonding mortar similar to that used in the dwarf walling, clearly indication they are of a similar phase of construction.

Sealing the thin mortar layer across the reduced surface was a roughly 60mm thick deposit of mid – dark greyish brown loose sandy, gritty soil and dust containing numerous small pieces of discarded Ragstone chippings, broken lime mortar lumps and occasional broken ceramic roof tiles. This also included other more recent discarded material such as small timber off-cuts and clippings from electrical cables, presumably associated with the later installation of modern services?

Whilst the sections of dwarf brick walling along the north side of the area and the base of the aisle south wall were clearly intended to provide end support to the perpendicular joists, these were covered with a nailed timber boarded floor into which the pew benches were jointed into its upper surface. As part of the pew seating installation, sections of wainscot panelling were attached to the internal face of the aisle's south and east walls. Removal of this panelling as part of the present alterations revealed a continuation of the internal plaster face to the aisle's walls. Inspection of its surface revealed a small inscription incised into the surface of the plaster prior to it setting. Written in a florid 'copper-plate' script, it appears to be a semi-insulting text saying *'Ask Inggles who is Gouty Billy'* and probably relates to

jocular play between the workmen engaged in the restoration of the church in the mid nineteenth-century, there is the possibility of it relating to an earlier parody linked with the former prime minister William Pitt (the younger), who was known to have suffered with gout. Unfortunately, these earlier events occurred over forty years previous to the restoration of the church and seem unlikely?

FINDS AND NOTES:

Throughout the entire monitoring process, only limited moveable finds of archaeological interest were encountered. However, the worth of the archaeological monitoring process was invaluable to understanding certain localised structural modifications to the present church, which it is known was heavily reconstructed during the mid – late nineteenth-century. Whilst a reasonably comprehensive series of notes survive by the architect, who instigated the work, it was with some apprehension as to if any portions of the medieval fabric had survived. It was not until areas beneath the nineteenth-century flooring were available for inspection that a detailed inspection of wall bases, which were previously concealed within the air void beneath the present timber flooring, the full extent of the restoration/rebuild could be better understood. It was from these observations, a small selection of pre-restoration church images, coupled with the architects notes, that a suggestive development phase plan of the current church was achievable.

By looking at the plan of the present church in conjunction with the images and architects notes in relation to other known church developments it was possible to speculate that Frittenden church almost certainly started as a simple small – moderate two celled church of the early Norman period. Whilst very little of this structure survives above ground today, evidence of earlier ‘Norman’ windows were referenced by the architect in the nave north wall during alteration. It is possible that portions of this earlier ‘Norman’ nave walling may survive at the western end of the nave’s north wall, but this is covered in later plaster finishes, concealing the wall fabric from view. Whether any portion of its foundations survive below the present floor levels is uncertain at this time, however, evidence of the earlier Norman nave’s south wall foundation should have been located in Areas A and B of this reflooring scheme. Unfortunately, the limited nature of excavation associated with this scheme meant that inspection to greater depths below the reduced surfaces of each area was impractical. Instead, evidence of the foundations associated with the addition of a new south aisle onto the side of the earlier ‘Norman’ nave was encountered. Added in the Early English period (AD 1180 – 1280), this aisle was only narrow and, due to the underlying geology, required a series of large mass masonry foundation bases to be installed beneath each of the pier bases of the south aisle arcade, including its west pier respond and possibly beneath its eastern pier respond. Whilst no evidence of its eastern respond base was encountered within the scope of Area B, its existence, and survival, may have been at a greater depth available during this scheme. At the western end of the arcade, a massive foundation mass was encountered, as was observed looking under the existing timber flooring beneath the two arcade pier bases. As with that recorded at the western end of the arcade, two large, roughly rectangular foundation masses were noted standing slightly proud of the surrounding reduced ground surface beneath the surviving pew flooring. It is possible the formation of these foundation masses would have either incorporated sections of the foundation to the earlier nave’s south wall or that they required the total removal of the earlier foundation?

A similar scenario of total, or partial, foundation removal may also have occurred to the south wall of the earlier south aisle during the rebuilding of the aisle on a larger scale in the nineteenth-century? This is suggested by the lack of evidence of its foundation along the northern side of Area C, where judging by the architects notes and surviving pre-alteration illustrations, the line of the southern wall should have fell along the northern edge of Area C as should also be the foundations to the earlier porch’s western side wall. As with the earlier

‘Norman’ nave wall it is possible these foundations were either extensively removed, or still survive at a depth greater than that achieved during this scheme of monitoring.

Utilising earlier documentary and image material, it is known that the pre-restoration church possessed both a south aisle (AD 1180 – 1220), a south chapel (AD 1280 – 1330) and that a perpendicular tower (AD 1450 – 1520) was added to the west end of the nave. It is these identifying alterations to the church, all of which are common changes to medieval Kentish churches, that caused the earlier phases of its fabric to be largely removed, or replaced, with other period additions.

However, it was during the restoration of the church in the mid nineteenth-century that the south aisle and south chapel were largely demolished and rebuilt on a larger scale, with the chancel demolished and largely reconstructed on its original footprint, though with slight adjustments to its north wall and the arcade into the south chapel. Of these earlier medieval works, only the tower survives anything like when first constructed, though this may have been redressed and its upper portion restored? As part of these restoration works, a new vestry was added projecting northwards from the west end of the nave’s north wall, whilst a later scheme of building works in 1861 saw the creation of the north aisle and the installation of a two-bay north aisle arcade. However, despite the drastic removal of its earlier historic fabric, there is the suggestion that fragments of earlier masonry fabric may still survive beneath later wall coverings. There is also the suggestion that the nave roof may also be a pre-restoration survival, possibly being of sixteenth-century date?

FUTURE POTENTIAL OF AREA:

This site lies in an area of archaeological potential being within the footprint of St Mary’s Church, Frittenden. Dating from at least the early medieval period, its documented history can be traced to before the Domesday Book of c1086, suggesting the site of an Anglo-Saxon church and settlement. Whilst no evidence of this early church survives in the existing fabric, there is every possibility that portions of its archaeological survival will be present beneath the footprint of the present church. Despite this lack of direct evidence for a standing church structure, it is almost certain to have possessed a church following the Norman conquest and it is this that evidence of the structure has been noted and can be suggested. As with almost all medieval churches across Kent, their later proportions can be utilised to infer the dimensions and implied footprint of a reconstructed structure. To this end, A similar inference can be made at Frittenden to show the proportions of a moderate sized footprint to an early Norman church upon which an almost standard chronology of period changes can be attached. The establishment of a south aisle roughly one-hundred years later and a south chapel fifty or so years later are all alterations seen through medieval churches. A lack of improvements throughout most of the fourteenth-century is a common problem caused by the decimation of the population by the Black Death, whilst the re-establishment of church construction projects of the fifteenth-century largely saw the addition, or replacement, of towers on the western end of earlier naves.

At Frittenden, all these alterations are present, though this only highlights the major construction schemes and fails to show the lesser alterations such as internal fixture replacements and the replacement and enlargement of windows and doors. It is worth noting that whilst the medieval architect and builder would happily utilise earlier foundations and their alignment in later construction schemes, they were also confident at removing them if they were regarded as ‘in the way’ or insufficient for the new cause. It is very possible that these such events would have occurred at Frittenden as it evolved through the medieval and later periods, each causing an accumulation of part and full foundation lines beneath the present church footprint, each telling their storey of enlargement and contraction reflecting the growth and demise of the worshipping population. Each phase of alteration would have possessed their respective floor surfaces, many of which will interweave with adjoining

archaeological deposits. As is common in churches, the instalment of burials within the various portions of the church, depending on your achieved life position, will have a detrimental effect on the below ground archaeological deposits, floors and foundations. As the English church passed from Catholic through to Protestantism, internal burial for the lay population was regarded as more acceptable and the interior of a church would rapidly fill with both simple single 'earth-cut' graves through to elaborate subterranean burial chambers for entire families.

Sadly, at Frittenden all the above ground history of the church was largely swept away during an ambitious scheme of restoration, which rapidly turned into a major programme of reconstruction, which saw nearly all the earlier wall fabric being reduce to foundation level and its reconstruction leaving the west tower as the only pre-restoration feature still standing above floor level. However, the architect was very sympathetic to creating a new church that in essence can be misinterpreted as a typical Kentish medieval church, just possessing the crisp finish not seen with a building possessing several centuries of history.

It is interesting to note that whilst Frittenden church was largely reconstructed, firstly with a north vestry, and later with a north aisle, there is strong evidence that the present nave floor could be a survival from its historical development? Consisting of an oak 'barrel-vaulted' and recessed panelled roof, there is strong evidence to suggest that this was largely unaffected by the restoration and it remains the original late medieval – early post medieval structure supported on new corbels inserted in the restoration.

It is due to this exceptional chequered structural and social development that the archaeological potential of the church and its encompassing graveyard should be regarded as being extremely high. Because of this any further small-scale groundwork within either the church or churchyard should be covered by a scheme of archaeological monitoring through a watching brief at the least, whilst larger improvement projects, including removal/reordering of fixtures and fittings should require a full scheme archaeological/historical building recording to occur prior to their commencement.

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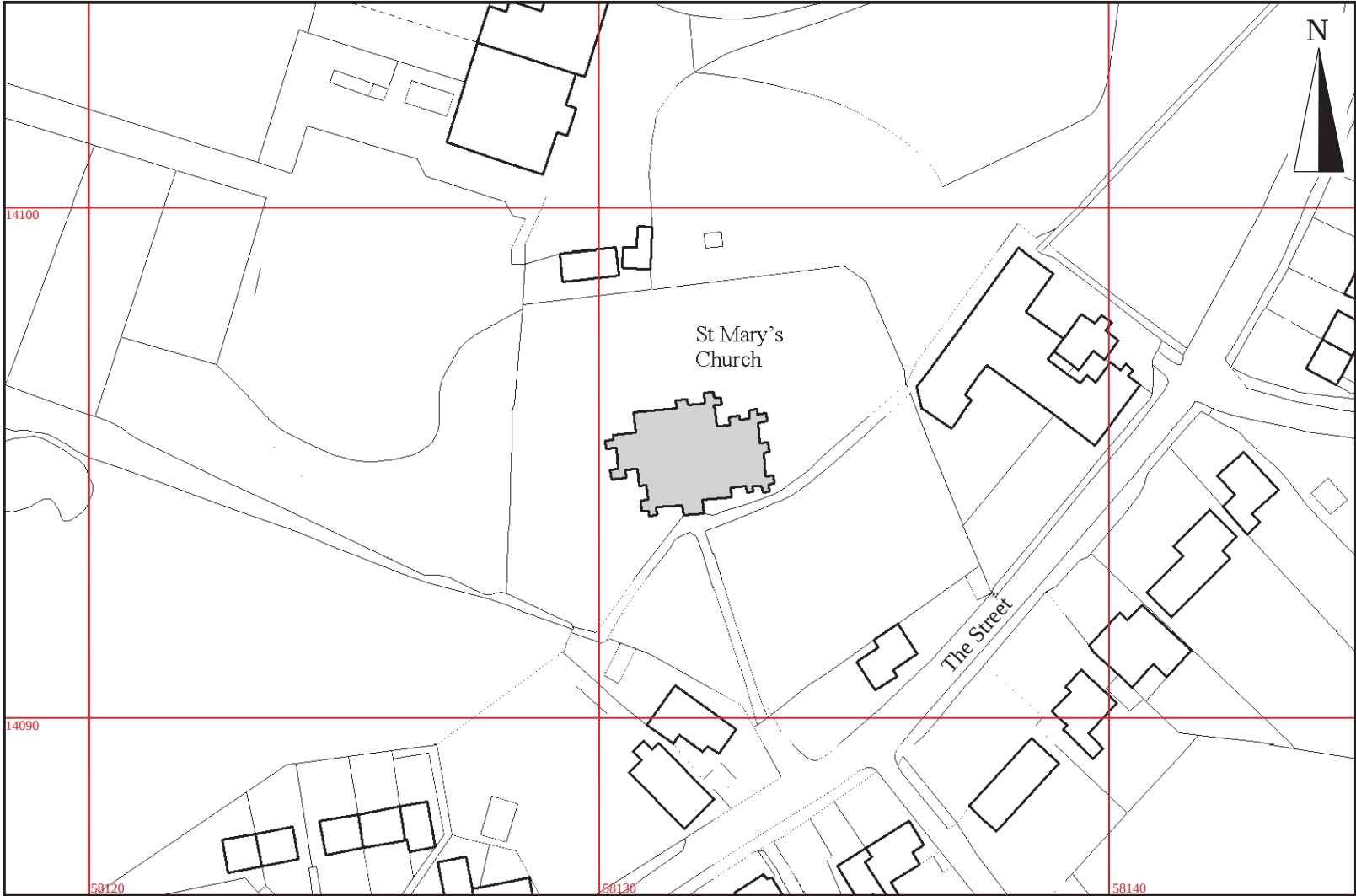


Figure 1. Extract from the modern Ordnance Survey map showing the position of St Mary's Church, Frittenden in relation to the existing surrounding rural landscape.

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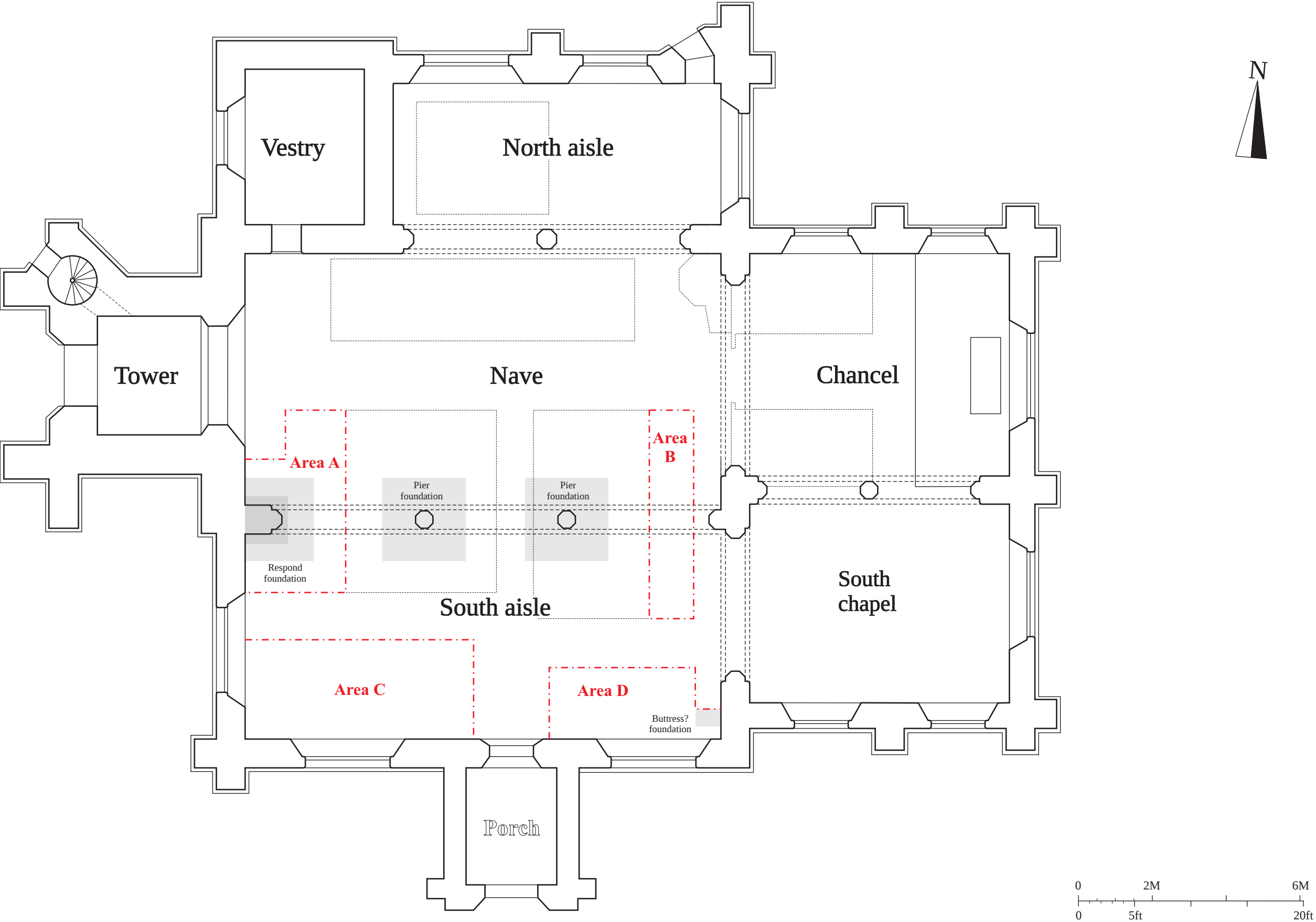


Figure 2. Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing the areas of pews and timber flooring (Areas A - D) removed and archaeologically inspected.

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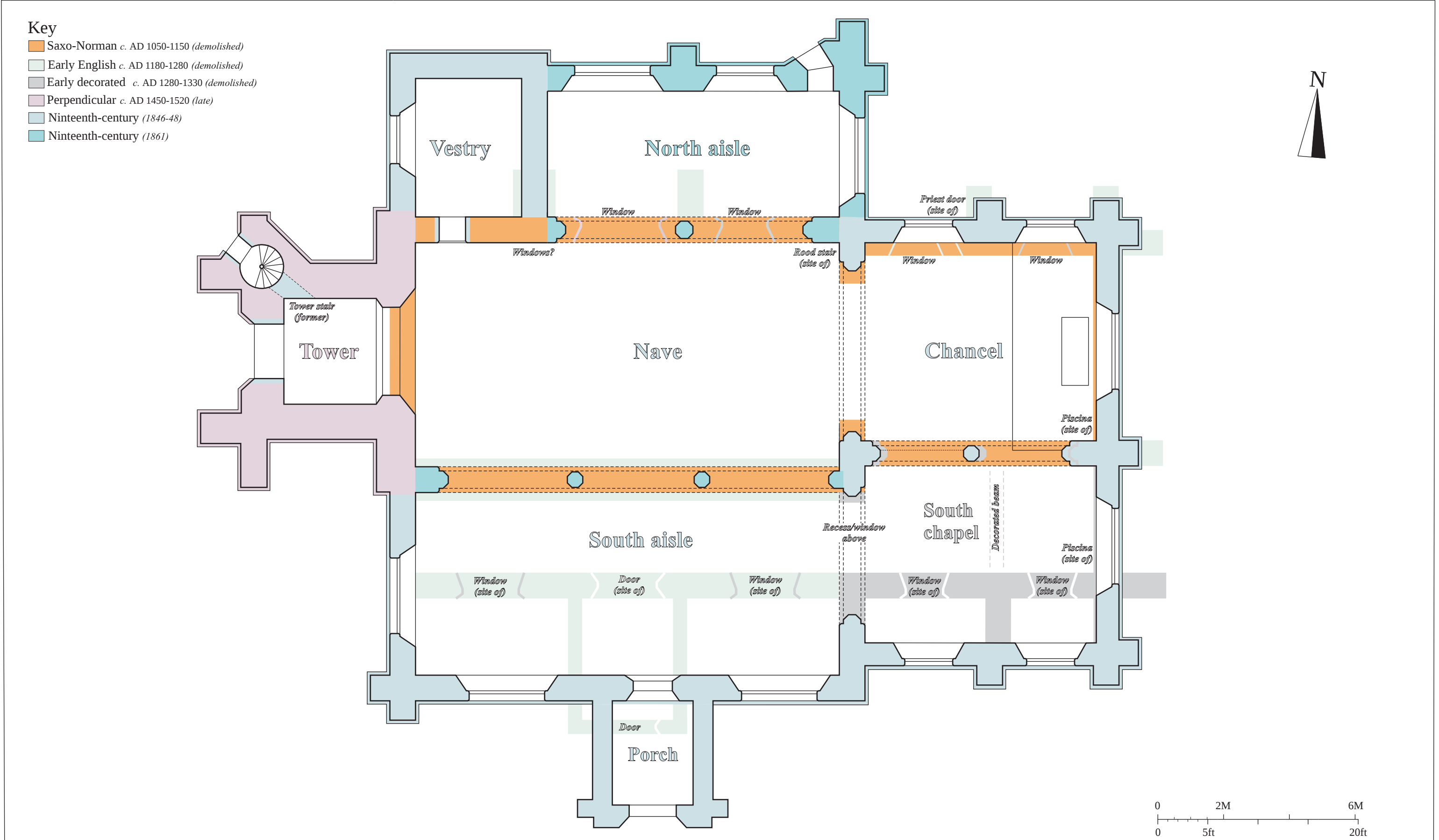
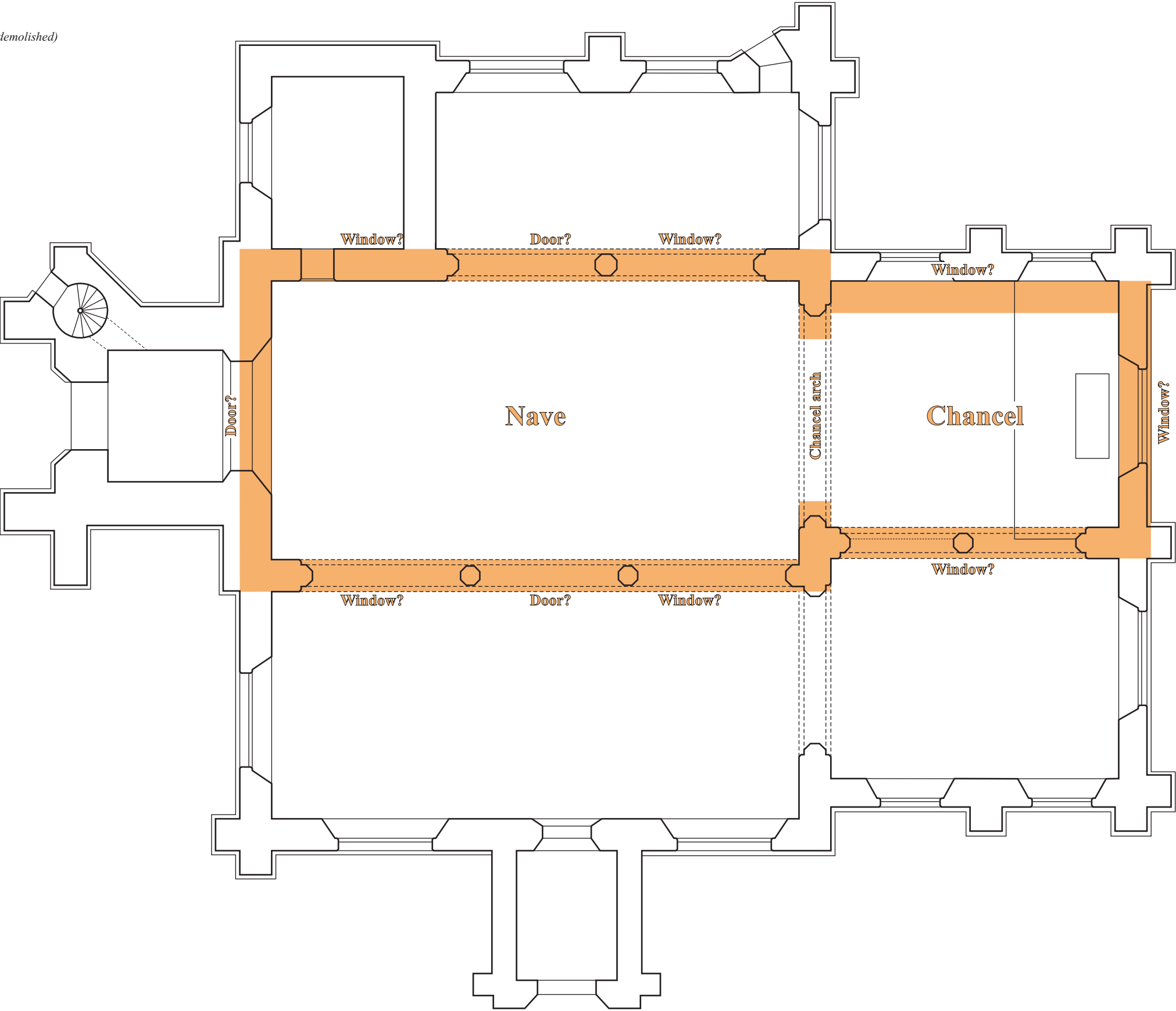


Figure 3. Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing suggested main phases of its development achieved by pre-restoration illustrations and architect's (R.C. Hussey) working text of 1849.

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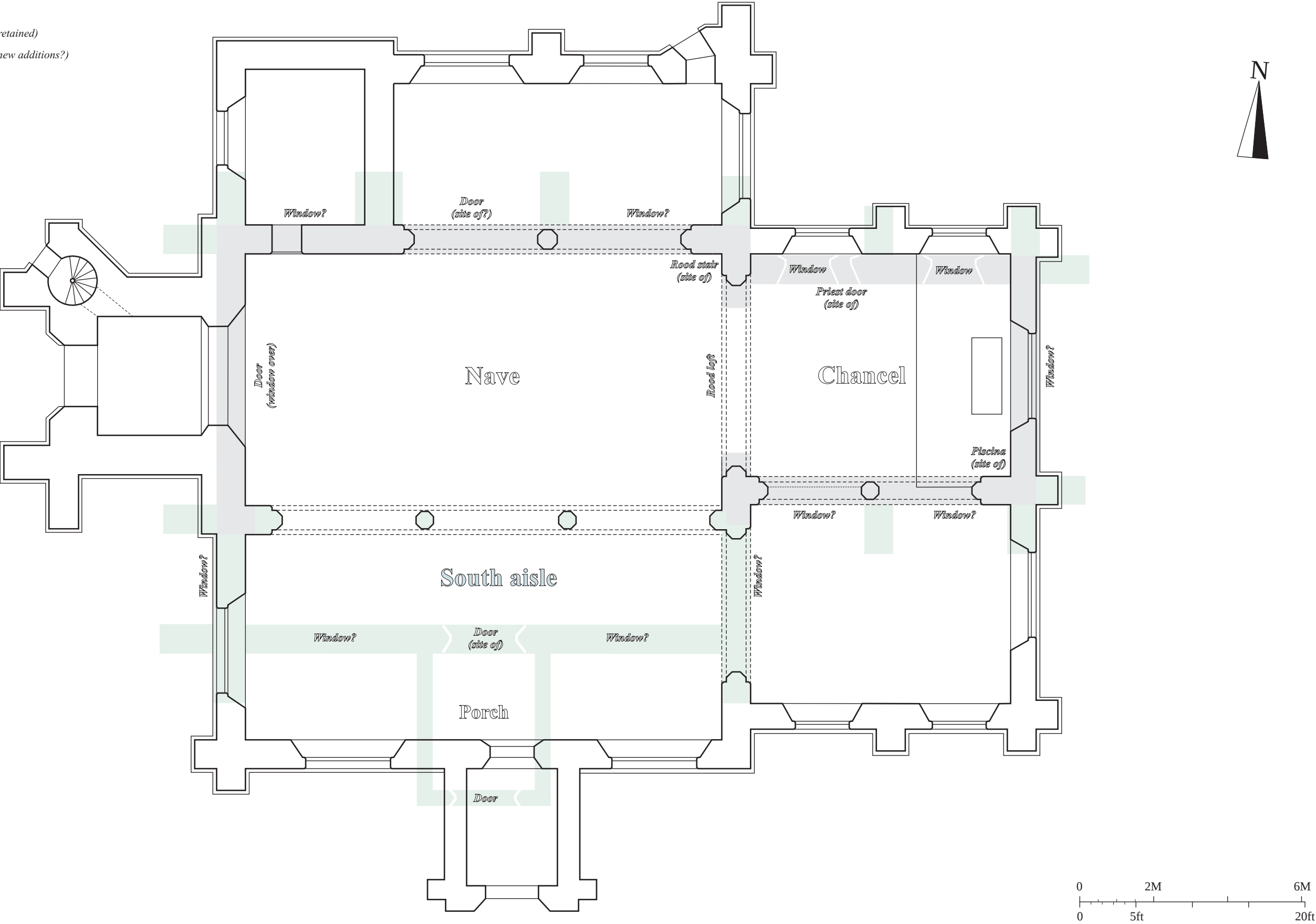
Key
Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (demolished)



Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing suggested footprint of the Saxo-Norman church overlain by the present church.

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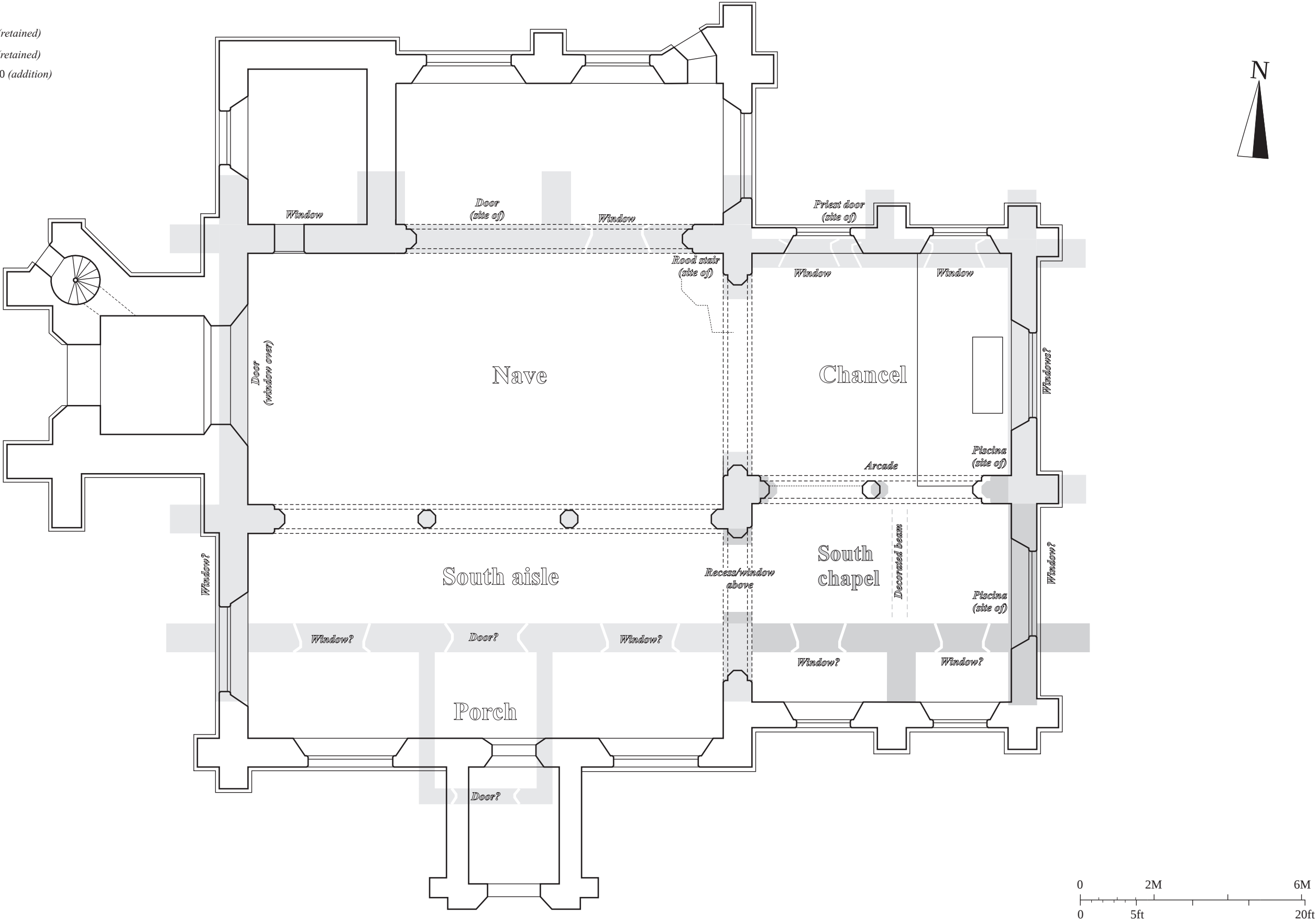
- Key
- Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (*retained*)
 - Early English c. AD 1180-1280 (*new additions?*)



Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing suggested Early English additions to the earlier Saxo-Norman church.

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- Key
- Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (*retained*)
 - Early English c. AD 1180-1280 (*retained*)
 - Early decorated c. AD 1280-1330 (*addition*)

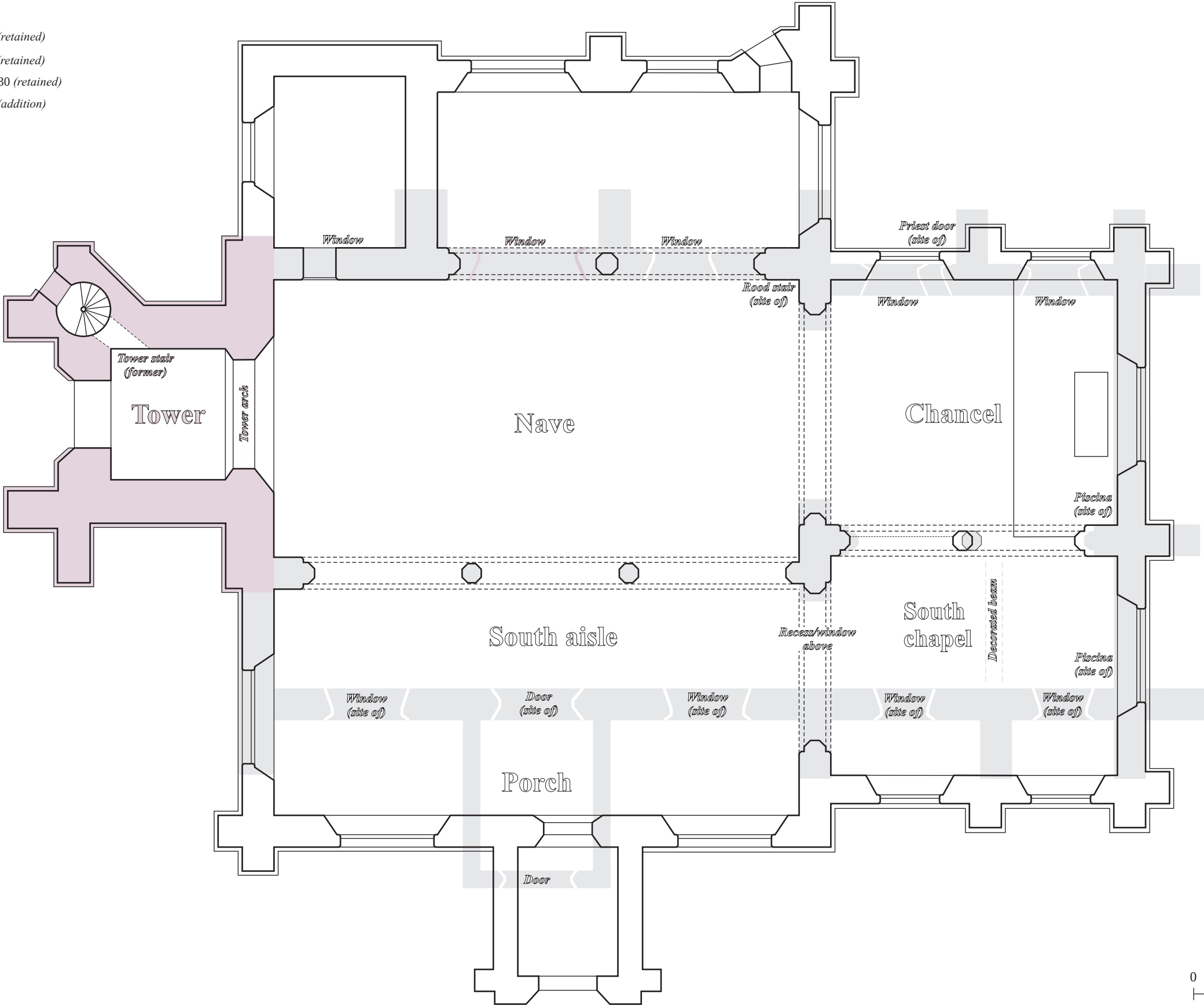


Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing suggested Early Decorated period South Chapel addition onto the earlier chancel's south side.

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Key

- Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (retained)
- Early English c. AD 1180-1280 (retained)
- Early decorated c. AD 1280-1330 (retained)
- Perpendicular c. AD 1450-1520 (addition)

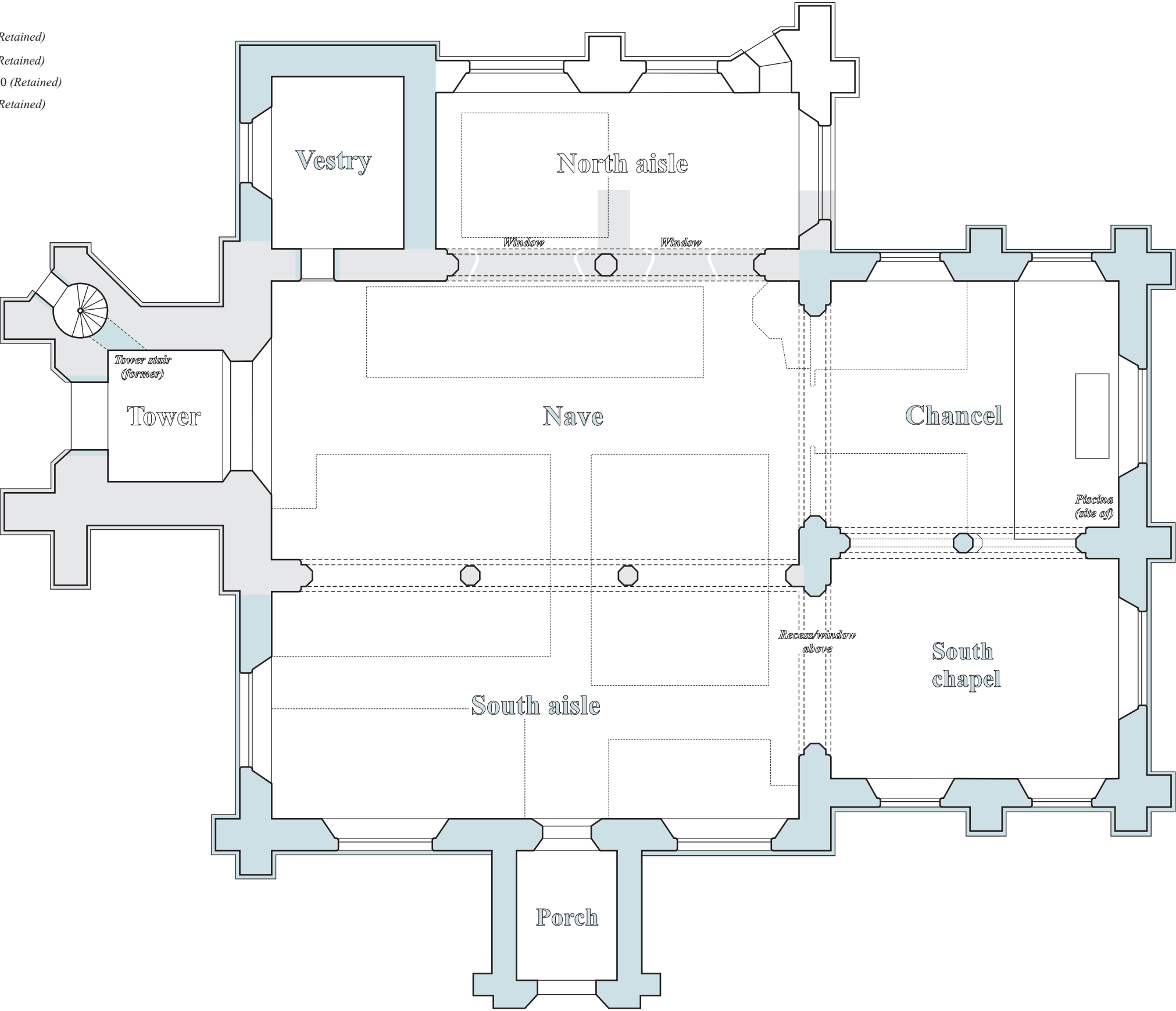


Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing suggested Perpendicular west tower onto the west end of the earlier nave.

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Key

- Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (*Retained*)
- Early English c. AD 1180-1280 (*Retained*)
- Early decorated c. AD 1280-1330 (*Retained*)
- Perpendicular c. AD 1450-1520 (*Retained*)
- Nineteenth-century (*1846-48*)

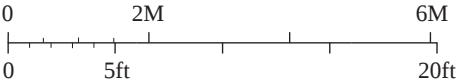
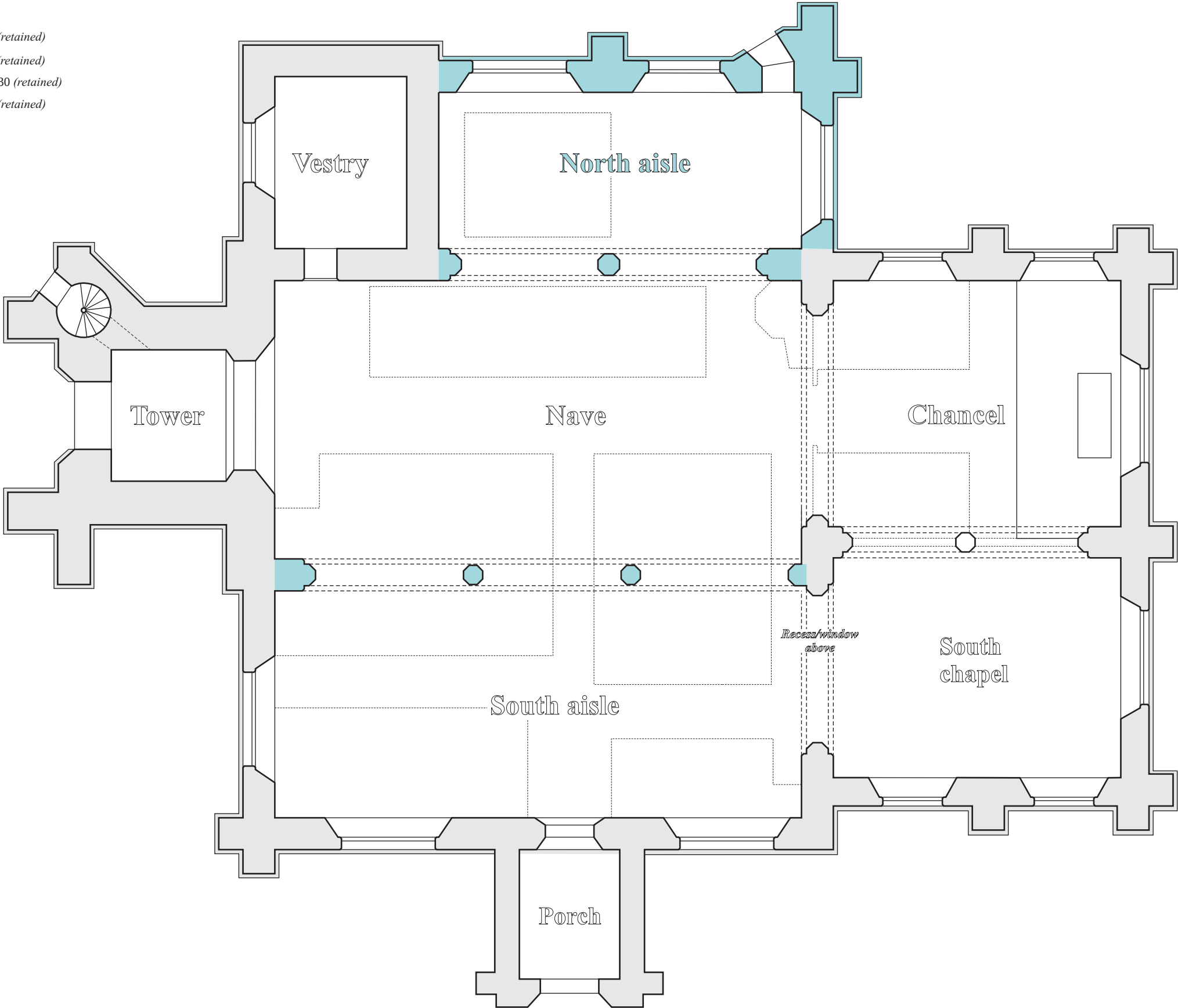


Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing its footprint following its near complete reconstruction and additions of 1846-49.

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Key

- Saxo-Norman c. AD 1050-1150 (retained)
- Early English c. AD 1180-1280 (retained)
- Early decorated c. AD 1280-1330 (retained)
- Perpendicular c. AD 1450-1520 (retained)
- Nineteenth-century (1846-48)
- Nineteenth-century (1861)



Plan of St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing later nineteenth-century (1861) addition of a north aisle and alterations to the south aisle arcade to form its current plan.



Plate 1. View of St Mary's Church, Frittenden from the south.



Plate 2. General view of the interior of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking west along the centre of the nave towards the tower arch.



Plate 3. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking south across Area A prior to removing the pews and timber flooring.



Plate 4. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking northwest across Area B prior to removing the pews and timber flooring.



Plate 5. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking southwest across Area C prior to removing the pews and timber flooring.



Plate 6. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking southeast across Area D prior to removing the pews and timber flooring.



Plate 7. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking across Area A following the removal of the pews and timber flooring revealing the masonry foundation to the pier respond beneath (*note: brick dwarf walls to support timber pew floor*).



Plate 8. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking across Area A following the removal of the pews and timber flooring revealing the brick dwarf walls supporting the stone slab floor overlying the masonry foundation to the pier respond (*note: excessive brick support walls possibly to support internal stove?*).



Plate 9. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden in Area A showing the upper extent to the masonry foundation to the pier respond (*note: layer of broken bricks beneath the moulded pier respond base*).



Plate 10. Interior view of St Mary's Church, Frittenden in Area A showing the upper extent to the masonry foundation to the pier respond following the removal of the brick dwarf walls (*note: hewn ashlar stone blocks forming the outer extent to the foundation*).



Plate 11. Interior view of Area B in St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing brick dwarf walls to support timber pew floor and recent rubble infill.



Plate 12. Interior view of Area C in St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing brick dwarf walls to support timber pew floor and recent rubble infill.



Plate 13. Interior view of Area C in St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking west showing the air vent opening through the base of the south aisle's west wall.

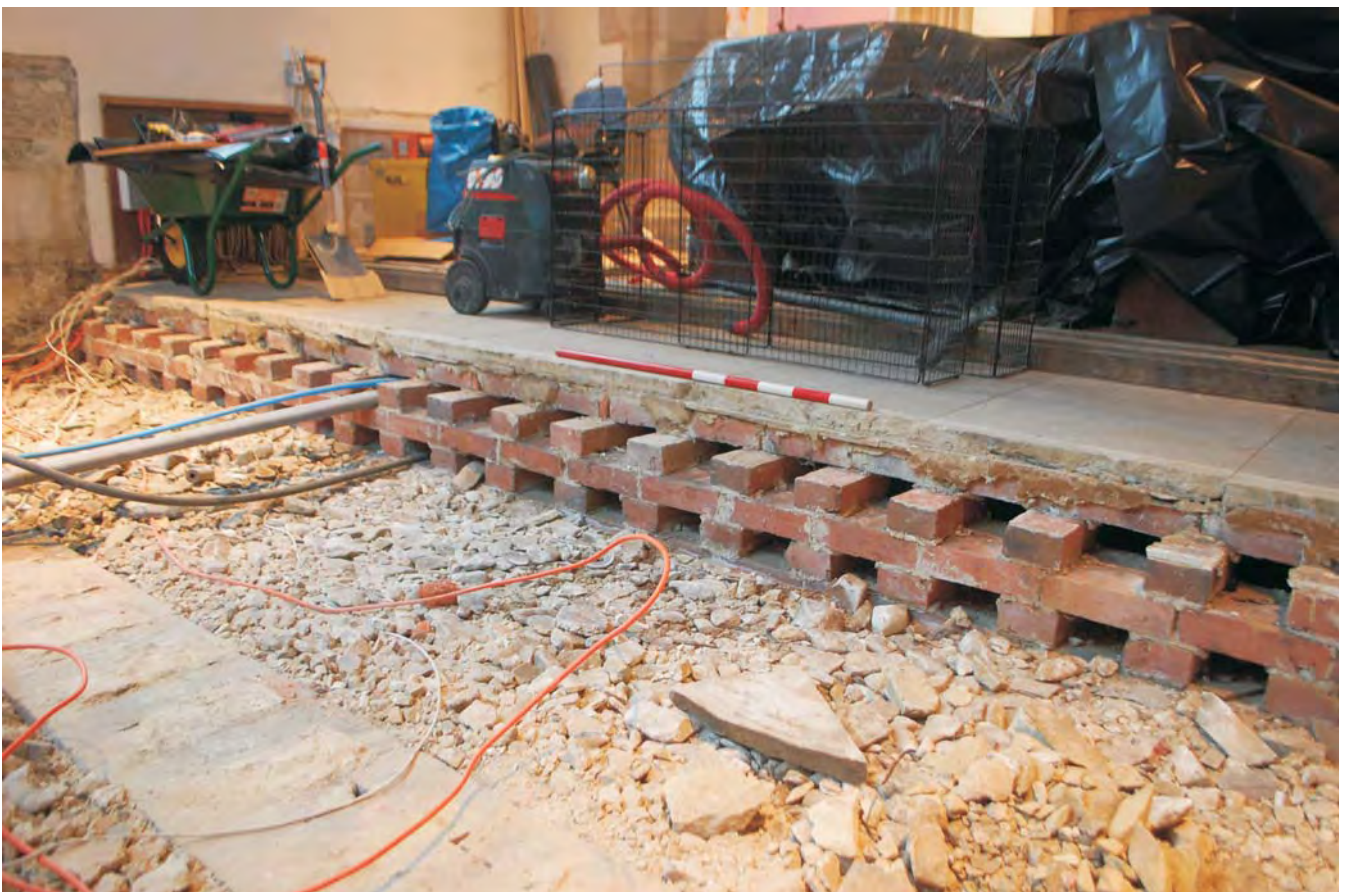


Plate 14. Interior view of Area C in St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking northwest showing through holes in the brick dwarf walls supporting the timber pew floors to aid in ventilation.



Plate 15. Interior view of Area D in St Mary's Church, Frittenden looking east showing brick dwarf walls to support timber pew floor and recent rubble infill (*note: small projecting spur area beside the radiator*).



Plate 16. Detail view of the projecting part of Area D in St Mary's Church, Frittenden showing the masonry foundation to a possible earlier buttress within the small projecting area.



Plate 17. Image of a small timber off-cut discarded beneath the pew floor with inscription.



Plate 18. Image of concealed inscription incised into plaster face of the south aisle's south wall.