

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT – WEST PINCHBECK PARISH CHURCH

The Application Site

Site Address: The Parish Church of St Bartholomew,
Six House Bank,
West Pinchbeck,
SPALDING
Lincolnshire PE11 3UD

The development site lies within a small section of the churchyard, which is the setting for a Victorian Grade II Listed Building. Its moderate regional significance is by virtue of its architect, William Butterfield (1814-1900), a Tractarian and prominent figure in the Oxford Movement.

The Nature of the Asset

The churchyard, which is not in a Conservation area, is the setting for a Victorian Grade II listed parish church, St Bartholomew's. Church and churchyard were consecrated on 9th July 1850. The church has a viable congregation.

Associated built heritage includes the adjacent Schoolhouse, now leased to a charitable trust and re-purposed as a village hall. There is also a parsonage, Butterfield House, which is now a private dwelling.

Historical development of the Churchyard can be traced through the Parish registers. The first burial, to the south of the church building, dates to 1852. The earliest interment dates for other sections of the churchyard are as summarised on the accompanying General Site Map.

The main churchyard is almost full and closure is anticipated within a decade. Discrete Cremated Remains areas, established at the south and west of the church building probably between 1970 and 1990, are already full.

The Parochial Church Council has recently been granted a Faculty from the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lincoln, permitting expansion of the Cremated Remains area at the west end of the Church building, to provide fresh capacity for the coming decade.

The Extent of the Asset

The churchyard is an approximately 2.7 acre site bounded to the West by a public highway ('Six House Bank'), to the north by a drain and hedge overlooking farmland; to the east by a copse and an unfenced field and to the south by a driveway with a tall wooden fence and a hedge. The churchyard is unfenced along Six House Bank and therefore permits 24/7 public access.

After the School moved to a larger site in nearby Leaveslake Drove the vacated building was leased to a Charitable Trust on a peppercorn rent, to be managed as a Village Hall. The Parochial Church Council retains the freehold.

The Significance of the Asset

In the 19th Century West Pinchbeck was an isolated rural village served by a poor road network. The Church, the associated Schoolhouse and former Vicarage functioned as a single historical complex that contributed significantly to the social welfare of local residents.

The school positively impacted literacy rates among village children. When it relocated to nearby Leaveslake Drove the original schoolhouse was repurposed as a village hall which continues as a venue for family functions, local clubs and groups, a pop-up pub and a polling station.

The church, hall and vicarage were designed by William Butterfield, a prominent Gothic Revival architect of national significance. His other commissions include All Saints Market Street, London and Keble College, Oxford.

Butterfield was an Oxford Movement architect of national significance though his footprint in Lincolnshire is relatively light. This implies a regional significance for the St Bartholomew's complex.

The Churchyard is the final resting place for generations of West Pinchbeck residents and is widely accessed by the local community. It contains several Commonwealth War Graves.

It is also a site of environmental significance supporting a good variety of British wildflowers on the kerbed graves to the north of the church building. The Parish holds an 'A Rocha' Eco Church Bronze Award, reflecting the positive impact of the churchyard on local biodiversity.

The Proposed Works

Within the Churchyard there are two areas specifically given to the interment of cremated remains, but both are essentially full. The Parochial Church Council wishes to expand one of these areas, to the immediate west of the church building, to provide adequate plots for the coming decade.

To improve public access to the cremated remains area it is proposed to widen and extend an existing churchyard pathway, forming a paved loop surrounding the new interment area. This is intended to create all weather access for families visiting the site.

The widening of the pathway follows current guidelines for disability access, permitting easier use by wheelchair users. The lengthening of the path is to give appropriate access to the expanded area dedicated for new plots.

Relevant Planning History

As consecrated land, the churchyard at St Bartholomew's falls under the jurisdiction of the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lincoln.

On the 23rd of May 2022 the Parochial Church Council received a Faculty from the Consistory Court permitting the proposed Cremated Remains extension to proceed, subject to seeking written confirmation from the Local Authority that no Planning Permission is required.

Having been advised by the Local Authority that laying down fresh hardstanding in the form of a Churchyard path constitutes a change of land usage, the current application for Planning Permission was submitted on 21st December 2022.

This application was deemed 'incomplete' and the missing elements, including a Heritage Impact Assessment, have now been supplied.

The Impact on the Asset

The most significant impact on the asset is to extend its utility to a further generation of local families for the interment and appropriate memorialisation of deceased friends and loved ones.

The area to be developed lies between the west end of the church building and the public highway, as indicated on the General Site Map (attached).

All works (pathways and flat memorial slabs) are to be situated at or below ground level and will have no impact on the appearance of the church building as viewed from the nearest public highway (Figure 5), the churchyard boundaries (Figures 1, 3 and 7) or indeed from the majority of the churchyard (Figures 1, 3, 5 and 7).

The proposed area already contains interments of cremated remains and associated memorial tablets (Figure 14) and the introduction of new interments and memorial slabs will not change its character. No existing memorials will be altered in any way.

Church records indicate that no historic interments are located in the proposed area for new groundworks.

The pathway modifications do not create a new throughfare within the Churchyard and so will not alter the overall pattern of footfall.

The proposed path materials (slabs laid on a pea shingle bed) are in keeping with existing pathways across the site (Figures 9, 10 and 14).

Applications for Demolition

No demolitions are proposed.

Preserve

This development will preserve the usage of the churchyard as a place where human remains can be appropriately interred and memorialised. The site is free draining and it is not anticipated that the proposed measures will impact the church building in any way.

The character of the existing Cremated Remains area will be preserved through the use of similar materials and construction techniques. As the proposed works are at ground level, principal sight lines across the Churchyard and particularly from the public highway will be largely unaffected.

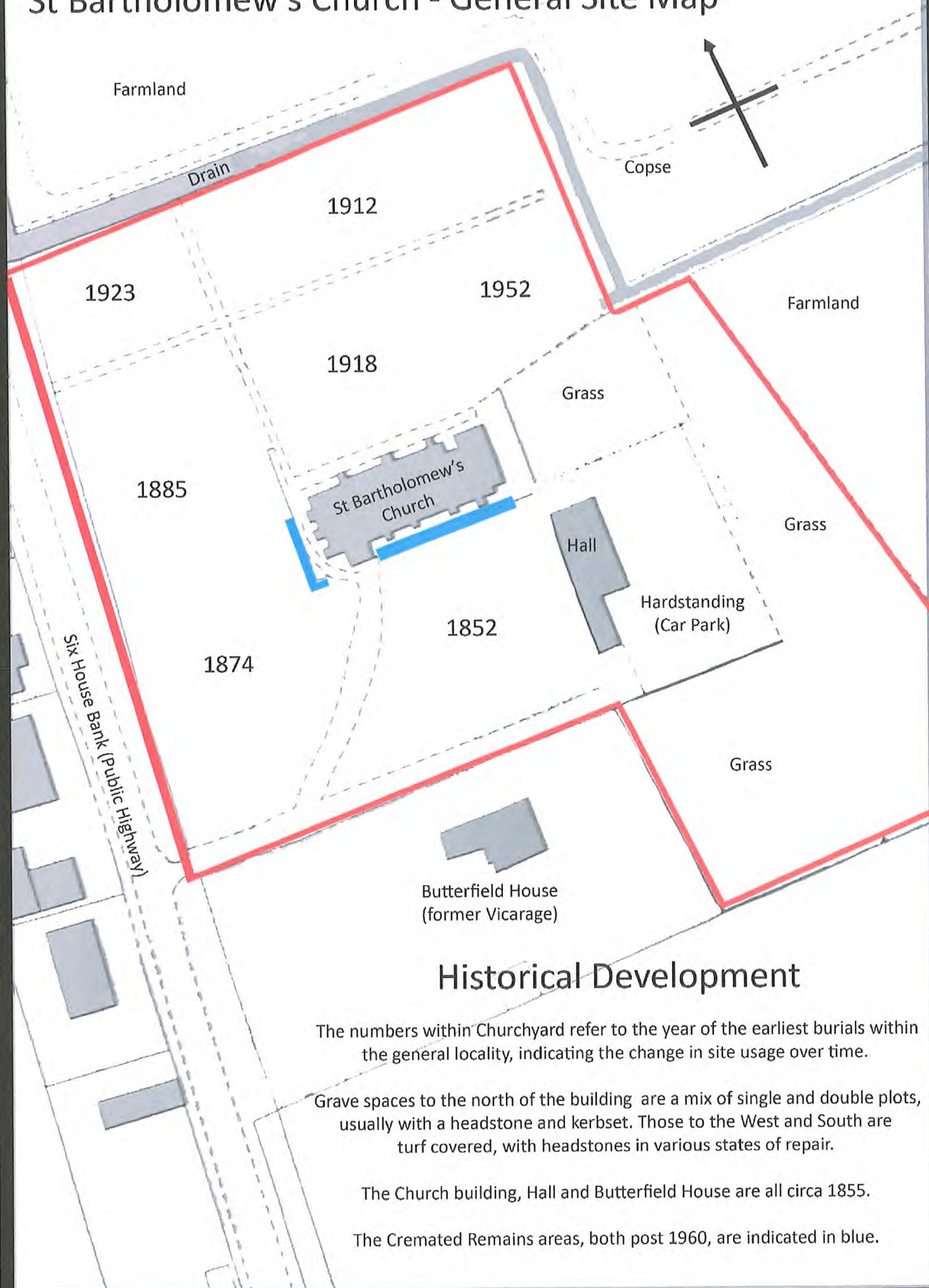
Enhance

The measures proposed will enhance public access, particularly for users of wheelchairs and mobility scooters. While the hardstanding within the churchyard will increase, the proposal is believed to be a proportionate response to an ongoing public need. Drainage is unlikely to be impacted significantly and loss of wildlife habitat (grass monoculture) is negligible.

Mitigate

No further mitigation measures are believed to be necessary.

St Bartholomew's Church - General Site Map



Historical Development

The numbers within Churchyard refer to the year of the earliest burials within the general locality, indicating the change in site usage over time.

Grave spaces to the north of the building are a mix of single and double plots, usually with a headstone and kerbset. Those to the West and South are turf covered, with headstones in various states of repair.

The Church building, Hall and Butterfield House are all circa 1855.

The Cremated Remains areas, both post 1960, are indicated in blue.

CHURCHYARD CHARACTER – NORTH OF THE CHURCH BUILDING



Figure 1: View of Church grounds from the northern boundary.

The position of the western cremated remains area is indicated by the arrow.

While a sight line exists, the cremated remains area is largely hidden by churchyard vegetation.

The monuments and path within the cremated remains area are at ground level making them difficult to see at distances beyond ten metres.

Camera Direction



Figure 2: View of surrounding farmland from the northern boundary.

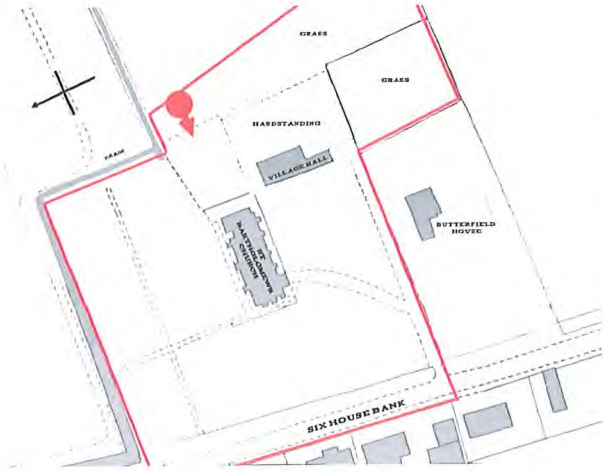
A hedge-line and ditch marks the northern churchyard boundary. The land beyond is actively farmed with no nearby residential properties.

Camera Direction



CHURCHYARD CHARACTER - EAST OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

Camera Direction



Camera Direction

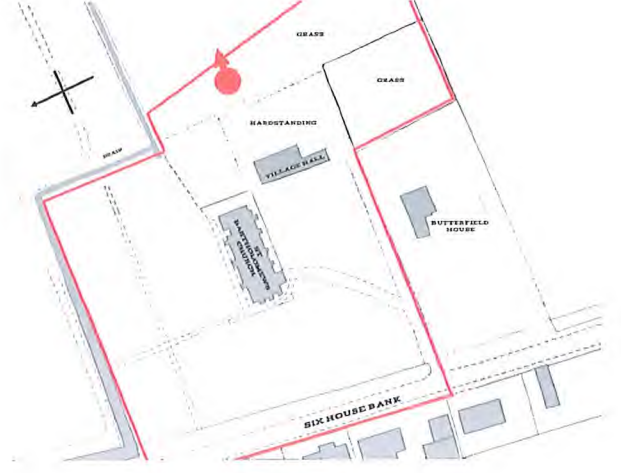


Figure 3: View of Church grounds from the Eastern boundary.

This area is used to store Church Hall equipment including the picnic benches visible in the centre left of the frame.

The wooden enclosure is a service point for caravans, which occasionally pitch on the grassed area in Figure 4 below.

There are no recorded burials here, and no line of sight to the proposed Cremated Remains Area extension.



Figure 4: View from the Churchyard boundary looking East.

The land to the east of the Churchyard is open farmland, with a small copse providing wildlife habitat to the left.

Along the horizon houses and trees mark the course of the nearby River Glen.



CHURCHYARD CHARACTER - WEST OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

Camera Direction

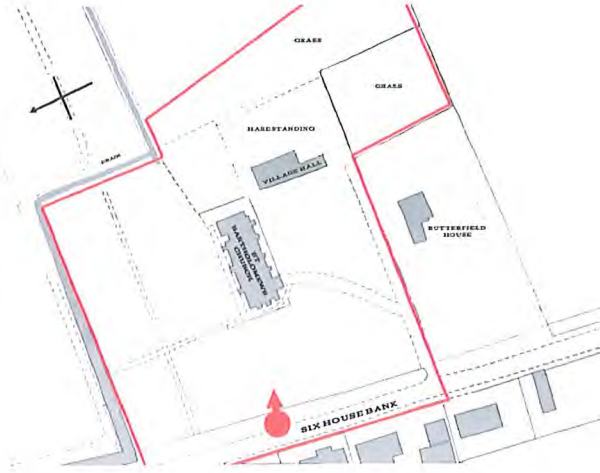


Figure 5: View of Church grounds from the Eastern boundary.

This photograph is taken from the public highway, Six House Bank, looking towards the Church building. The Village Hall (former Schoolhouse) can be seen to the immediate right of the Church building, though at a greater distance.

The western Cremated Remains Area (indicated in red) runs along the foot of a low retaining wall to the immediate west of the Church building.

The pathways and monuments constituting the cremated remains area, being flush with the ground, are not readily visible even from the western church boundary.

Camera Direction

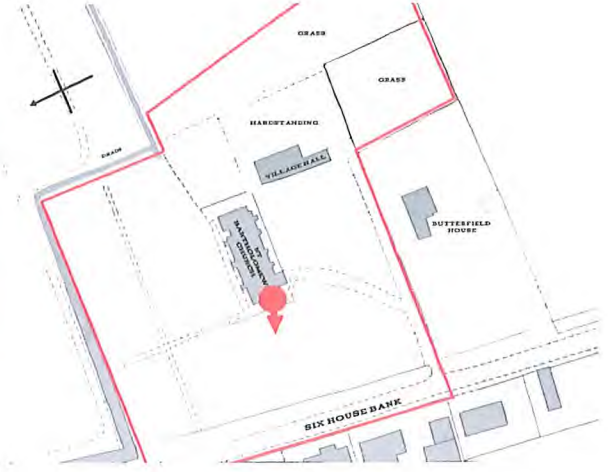


Figure 6: View of Church grounds from the Eastern boundary.

The Eastern boundary of the Churchyard is a public highway – "Six House Bank". Residential buildings line the western boundary of the public highway.

The low retaining wall in the foreground masks the western Cremated Remains Area.

CHURCHYARD CHARACTER – SOUTH OF THE CHURCH BUILDING

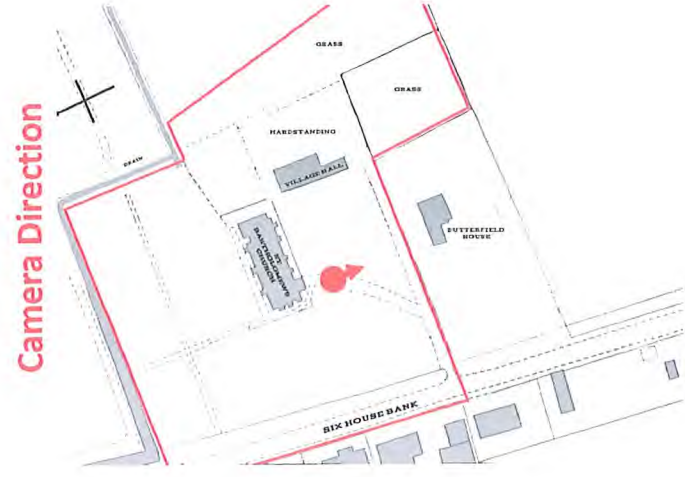
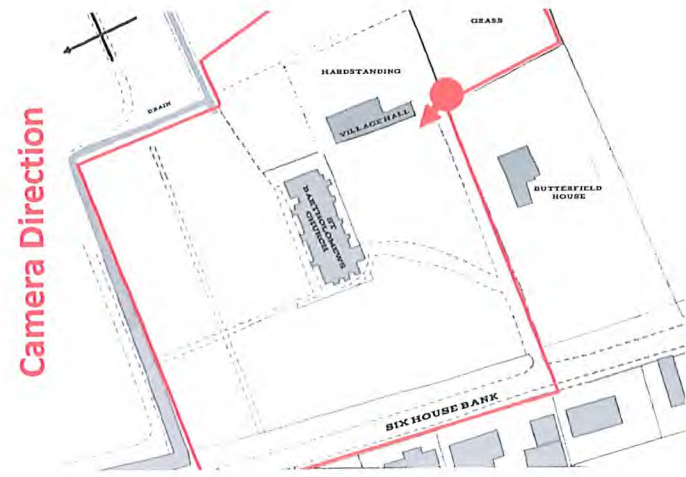


Figure 7: View of the Church building from the eastern Churchyard boundary.



The Church building and, at the right edge of the frame, the end of the former Schoolhouse (now Village Hall).

The arrow indicates the location of the proposed extension to the Cremated Remains area.

Due to the low retaining wall at the west end of the church building, there is no direct line of sight from this part of the Churchyard.

Figure 8: View of Church grounds from the Eastern boundary.



An asphalt driveway runs from left to right along the base of the hedge. Behind the hedge, and now a private residence, stands the former Vicarage, Butterfield House.

This part of the Churchyard contains the earliest recorded graves, dating from 1852.

CHARACTER OF CHURCHYARD PATHWAYS

Figure 9: General view of primary Churchyard paths.

These are of a slabbed construction laid directly into soil, giving good and level access by foot and by mobility scooter or wheelchair.

The majority of Churchyard paths are of this type.

The proposed path for the new Cremated Remains Area employs the same type of slabs with the intention of preserving the character and proportion of the churchyard as a whole.

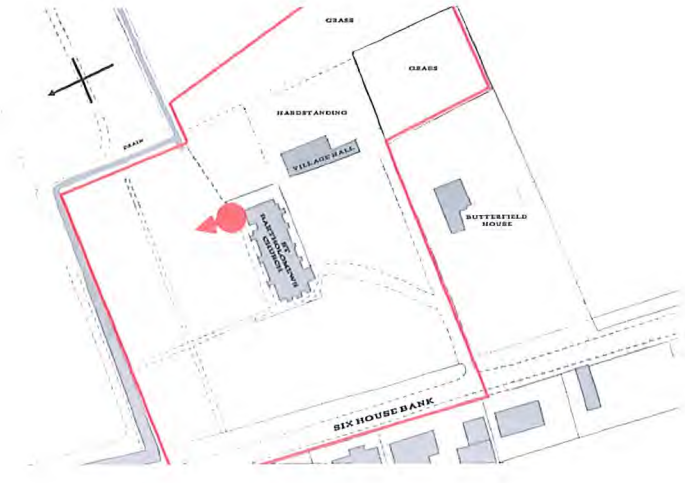
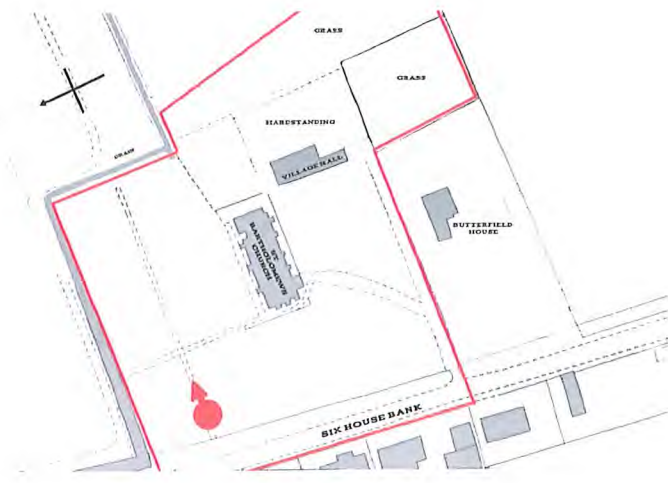


Figure 10: General view of secondary Churchyard paths.

These are narrow (single slab width) and give adequate access by foot, though not by wheelchair whenever the ground is wet.

This has, on occasion, precluded access for some wheelchair users attending churchyard burials.

The Parochial Church Council wishes to avoid this limitation in respect of the western Cremated Remains area, by widening and extending the path to form a looped route to ease wheelchair access.



CHURCHYARD – HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT



Figure 11: Historical photograph: St Bartholomew's Church (1960s).

This photograph, believed to date from the 1960s, predates the construction of the cremated remains areas currently found along the southern and western walls of the Church building.

The character of the church building and the churchyard as a whole has changed only a little over the last six decades.



Figure 12: Modern photograph of St Bartholomew's Church.

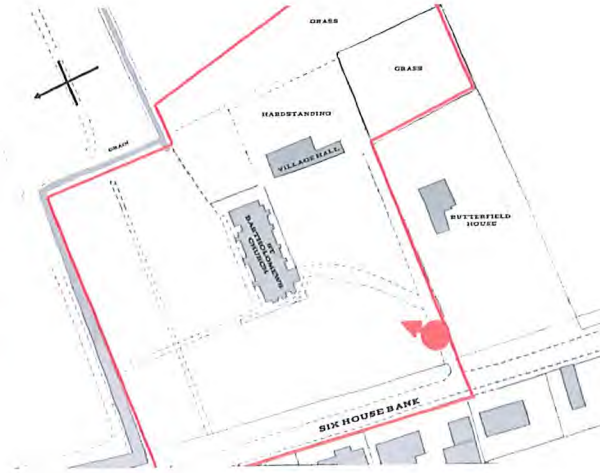
This 2023 photograph postdates the creation of both the Southern and Western Cremated Remains Areas shown in Figures 13 and 14

The churchyard path, linking the carpark drive and the church door, is of asphalt.

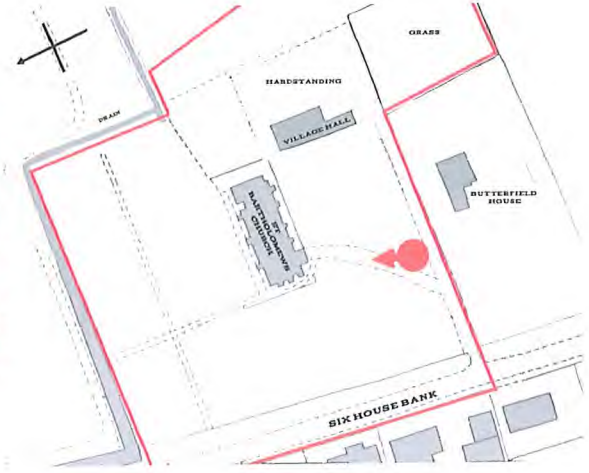
A short asphalt spur extends from the church door around the west end of the building.

All other churchyard pathways are of slabbed construction, laid directly into compacted soil (Figures 9 and 10 below).

Camera Direction



Camera Direction



CHURCHYARD - CURRENT CREMATED REMAINS AREAS



Figure 13: Southern Cremated Remains Area

This is the earliest Cremated Remains area at St Bartholomew's Church.

The low retaining wall running parallel to the path permits two rows of interments - one on either side of the wall.

These are memorialised in a wide variety of monument styles; most are flat tablets but some stand above ground level.



Figure 14: Western Cremated Remains Area

This is the second Cremated Remains area at St Bartholomew's. All memorials in this area are standardised flat stone tablets laid flush with the ground for ease of maintenance.

The planned extension is on the grassed area to the immediate left of the slabbed path. There are no recorded burials in this area.

As part of the proposed scheme, the path is to be widened to better meet the current guidelines for access by wheelchair users.

