

**A watching brief
at St Andrew's Church,
Marks Tey, Essex
November-December 2006**

**report prepared by
Howard Brooks and Kate Orr**

**commissioned by
St Andrew's Parochial Church Council**

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NGR: TL 9112 2389



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1 Summary

A watching brief on the lowering of the floor levels exposed a stub of septaria wall line under the present chancel arch. This may mark the position of an earlier east end, or an earlier and narrower chancel arch. Internally, the lowering of the floor showed no internal offset or foundation, but an external offset of approximately 0.2m was exposed on either side of the south doorway (in the porch).

Modern work in the nave and chancel did not generally intrude deep enough to breach a layer of mortar and brick dust found under the hollows of the old floor, but four vaults were exposed in the chancel. These are almost certainly to be associated with four tomb slabs, one to Peter Wright and the others to members of the Bree family, which had recently been stored in the west tower.

A number of objects were found under the old church floorboards. One was a very fine Purbeck marble tomb slab with the indent of a missing brass. Mr. Martin Stuchfield has identified this as the missing slab of Robert de Teye and wife Katherine (dated 1360), whose missing inscription is recorded by Morant (1748, 202). A second was a blank piece of Purbeck marble which may or may not have been a tomb slab. The remainder were a number of pieces of window tracery, mostly derived from the replacement or repair of windows in the 19th century. However, three pieces without glazing grooves may be part of a missing stone rood screen. The de Teye tomb cover is to be reset in the new church floor, and a sample of the tracery pieces will be kept in the church.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 This is the report on a watching brief on works connected with the renewal of the floor of St Andrew's Church, Church Lane Marks Tey, Essex, carried out by the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT) in November and December 2006.
- 2.2 St Andrew's Church is located at NGR TL 9112 2389, and at 35m above seal level.
- 2.3 The archaeological work was commissioned by St Andrew's Parochial Church Council, and was done in accordance with a brief issued by the Diocesan Archaeological Officer of Essex County Council. This report mirrors standards and practices contained in Colchester Borough Council's *Guidelines for the standards and practice of archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester* (CM 2002) and *Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums* (CM 2003), and the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IFA 1999) and *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (IFA 2001). The guidance contained in the documents *Management of archaeological projects* (MAP 2), and *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment* (EAA 3), *Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (EAA 8), and *Standards for field archaeology in the East of England* (EAA 14) was also followed.

3 Archaeological background

- 3.1 This text on the historical architecture of St Andrew's Church (EHER 11734-6) is taken from Rodwell and Rodwell (1977, 120).

"Norman nave with Roman brick dressings; C14 chancel; W tower originally C14, but rebuilt; the upper stage is finished entirely in timber and as such is an uncommon sight; the timber S porch is notable. The 'Norman' nave is essentially undatable and could easily be pre-Conquest (note the walls are 0.82m thick). The N wall of the nave is decoratively banded with puddingstone and rubble and as evidently meant to be visible. External ground level is high, causing dampness in the lower parts of the walls; there is a brick-lined drain all round the church, but this is only moderately effective. A church hall was built on the N side of the nave in 1968, when an opportunity for archaeological investigation was missed. It is possible that the church lies on a Roman site; but essentially its potential is unknown. The graveyard is fairly good; there is a table tomb of 1700. Grading: BBIIIb (listed B)."

4 Aims

The aims of investigation were defined by a brief written by David Andrews (Andrews, undated), and can be summarised as follows: to recover information about earlier occupation of the site, and about the history and development of the church building and churchyard.

5 Results (Figs 1, 2).

5.1 Introduction

To create a new, level base on which to lay the new church floor, the old wooden floors were stripped out and between 0.2m and 0.3m of soil was removed. In general, this was not deep enough to breach a layer of mortar and brick dust found under the old floor (Layer 1 or L1). L1 was found to surround the vaults exposed in the chancel, and it contained a few pieces of animal and human bone, as well as brick fragments. It is assumed that L1 is the result of waste and building debris being filled in around tombs and under the floors when the church was restored in the 1880s. The human bone is presumably from disturbed burials (from inside the church?).

5.2 Earlier church fabric exposed by the building work (Fig 1).

5.2.1 Pre-14th century wall exposed under chancel arch.

A stub of an older wall survived under the south chancel arch. It measured 0.3m deep x 0.5m north-south x 0.27m east-west. This consisted of two very irregular courses lying directly on the underlying earth. Its lower course was septaria, capped by a layer of Roman brick. The upper course was mainly chopped away and was obscured by mortar.

This wall stub clearly marks an earlier wall line. This must be either the original east end of the church, or an earlier and narrower chancel arch. The existing chancel arch is described by Rodwell and Rodwell (1977, 120) as 14th century, so this earlier wall must predate it.

There was no corresponding wall stub under the north chancel arch.

5.2.2 Nave foundations visible in the porch

The present building work has shown that there was no internal offset marking a foundation course. Where exposed in the chancel, the full depth of the wall (ie to the bottom of the wall structure) was 1.4m below the bottom edge of the north-west chancel window. Here, the lowest 0.5m was exposed by the present work, and, within this 0.5m four courses of rubble septaria capped by a 5cm thick timber were visible. The timber is of unknown date, but was presumably put in the last time the chancel was plastered (with the four course of septaria, which were below floor level, left unplastered).

In the nave, the corresponding distance between the bottom edge of the north-east nave window and the bottom of the wall was 1.55m, with 1.20m left intact, and the lower 0.30m (ie under the old floors) showing three irregular courses of septaria.

Externally, the only place where the current work exposed any offset or foundation was in the south porch. Here, an external offset was visible in the outer face of the nave wall on either side of the porch door. On the west side, three courses of septaria were revealed, 0.20m deep, and projecting 0.20m south from the wall face and surviving for a length of 0.40m up to the west porch wall (though presumably continuing beyond this point). On the east side, two courses were exposed, projecting by 0.15m and for a distance of 0.4m (though, again, presumably continuing beyond this point). In both cases the offsets had been cut back slightly, presumably when the porch was constructed in the 16th century (RCHME 1922, 179).

5.1.3 Old windows and rood screen fragments (Fig 2).

Removal of the old pews and church floor exposed hollows under the nave floor into which a number of fragments of window tracery had been placed. In addition to those fragments, a slab of Purbeck marble was found in the north-west corner of the nave, where it had been used to prop up the floor joists.

Window frames, tracery

Fragments of what appeared to be old windows were first seen by KO tucked under the nave floor boards. At the time of a later visit by HB, these had been collected by the contractors and were stored in the car park. There were a large number of fragments, perhaps around fifty. Recognisable window parts included the sides and bottom of an internal window opening, and part of the top of an arch. The fact that they were found under the floorboards makes it fairly clear that they must be the remains of those windows replaced during the 1880s. The Church Plans Online website (<http://www.churchplansonline.org/>) records that the east chancel window (and one other) were replaced at that time. Undoubtedly, these are fragments of the old windows taken out in the 1880s.

A number of these fragments were drawn (Fig 2) and photographed. It is understood that a selection will be retained by the church.

Rood screen fragments

Among the window fragments (above) were recognised three battered pieces of stonework which were more finely carved than the window fragments, and in a green-coloured stone (probably greensand). The lack of a glazing groove shows that these were internal stonework. As there is no record of an elaborate stone tomb surround in the published sources, it is assumed here that these are parts of a missing stone rood screen. The best-surviving fragment was photographed and drawn (Fig 2). It is understood that a number of these fragments will be retained by the church.

5.2 Vaults and tomb slabs exposed by the building work (Fig 1).

Peter Wright and Bree family vaults

Four vaults were exposed in the chancel. All lay east to west, one directly in line with the centre of the east window (F5), and the other three (F1-F3) in a north to south row to the west of a low, 2-course brick wall (F4) which was presumably part of a previous chancel step. On lifting the floor, a slab to the Reverend Peter Wright (died 1839) was found pushed up against the east chancel wall. It is assumed, probably correctly, that the vault by the east window is the Wright vault, and that his slab had been rotated through 90 degrees and pushed against the east wall when the church was restored in the 1880s. The Wright vault had ends built of broken frogged brick and a raised, hard concrete capping.

The other three vaults are almost certainly to be associated with tomb slabs to various of the Bree family. Recently, these three slabs had been stored in the west tower, and they were probably put there in the 1880s. The slabs are to Elisabeth Bree (died 1740), Robert Bree (died 1753), and Hester Bree (died 1761, and presumably Robert's widow). When HB visited, these slabs had been stacked up and were not visible, but it is assumed that the smaller, individual vault (F1, with ends and corbel of Tudor Brick) was Elisabeth Bree's, and the other pair to the north belonged to Robert and Hester Bree (F2, F3, both with brick ends and a mortar capping). None of the vaults were broken into.

These four vaults lay either side of the low brick wall (F4) which marks the former position of the chancel step. There is every reason to believe that, prior to the 1880s, all four tomb covers were visible in the east end, the Reverend Peter Wright's near the altar, and those of the Bree Family in the floor west of the chancel step.

Purbeck marble tomb cover

When the chancel floor was lifted, a very fine Purbeck marble tomb cover was found under a covering of soil, lying parallel and close to the north-west chancel window (Plate 1). A footnote in Morant (1748, 202) to the effect that the de Teye tomb cover was located in the centre of the chancel indicates that it has been moved from its original position, northwards towards the north chancel wall. The date of this move is not known, but could have been as late as the 1880s restoration.

Mr Martin Stuchfield was asked to visit the site and advise. The following report is taken from notes emailed by him to HB.

It is a very fine quality Purbeck marble tomb cover, with an indent for a missing brass. The indent comprising a civilian effigy and wife standing under a double canopy with foot inscription is a 'London A' product dated to c 1360. The only possible candidate recorded in the Essex volume (Lack *et al* 2003) is the brass to Robert de Teye and wife Katherine, dated 1360 (LSW.12). Although these figures are recorded in my publication as half-effigies, further research by Nancy Briggs at the Essex Record Office has confirmed that LSW.12 should be full-length figures. This is a very exciting discovery and one which I intend to write up for the Monumental Brass Society ■ .

We are obliged to Mr Andrew Waters for bringing to our attention the following description of the missing inscription on the tomb cover in a footnote in Morant (1748, 202).

'The pedigree before us does not take notice of two Roberts, father and son, living about this time. One of them dyed 7 Octob. 1360, and was buried in the middle of the chancel here, under a flat stone fairly inlaid with brasses, and this French epitaph [sic] "Robert de Teye & Katerine sa femme gisent icy Dieu de lour Almes eit m'ci qe decederent le vii jours d'Octobr: L'an de Grace Mccclx" (Translation (HB): Robert de Tey and his wife Katherine lie here. May God have mercy on their souls that died 7th October in the Year of our Grace 1360).

It is satisfying to have the reading of the brasses which are now missing. One curious point is the use of the plurals ('lour' and 'decederent'), which must surely imply that they both died on the same date. If so, of what?

Purbeck marble slab

Under the floor boards in the north-west corner of the nave was a flat Purbeck marble slab. This had been used as a foundation stone for rows of bricks-on-edge which in turn supported the nave floor. At some stage, creosote or tar had been painted across the slab (and also up the nave wall).

In form, the slab looks like a tapering tomb slab with one corner broken off, but its smooth upper surface is undecorated. Its measured 1.33m (4 feet 4 inches) long, 0.40m (1 foot 4 inches) wide at one end and 0.31m (1 foot) at the other, with a wider 'shoulder' section of 0.45m (1 foot 6 inches). It was 0.06m thick (2½ inches). The underside was very roughly worked, and was (presumably) never intended to be seen. When contractors lifted the slab, there was no sign of a brick tomb structure underneath. The conclusion is that the slab is not in situ, has probably been moved around the church in recent years, and in its latest position was simply regarded as a convenient support for the nave floor joists.

5.3 Previous arrangement of the east end (Fig 1).

Three different arrangements of the east end were visible in the paint schemes on the chancel wall.

The most recent paint scheme (white walls) showed that the recent chancel step was 3.96m (13 feet) from the inner face of the east wall of the chancel, and its surface was 0.60m (2 feet) above ground level (as exposed here). This is the position of the chancel step as shown on the 1880s church plan (<http://www.churchplansonline.org/>), and that which was still in place until 2006.

However, a slightly older arrangement (indicated by a red-painted chancel wall), showed that the chancel step was previously 2.75m (9 feet) from the east end. This coincides exactly with the line of a low brick wall built of Tudor bricks (F4) which must be the foundation of the chancel step of that period, and also with the layout of the four vaults which were hidden under the recent floors.

6 Finds

by Howard Brooks

6.1 Brick

A brick sample was retained from wall F4. These are Tudor bricks set in lime mortar, and incomplete. Width 100mm, thickness 45mm. Surface of one is rubbed slightly.

6.2 Bone

by Julie Curl, (Norfolk Archaeological Unit).

Layer 1, finds no 2.

A total of 401g of bone was recovered, comprising nine pieces.

There are four fragments of human tibia weighing 233g from an adult with fully fused bones. No pathologies were noted on the human remains.

The remaining 168g are from animal remains, and included a cut equid proximal phalange from a pony-sized animal and a chopped cattle metatarsal that shows canid gnawing at the proximal end. The remaining three fragments are identified as large mammal, probably cattle.



Plate 1 Figures of Robert de Teye and his wife Katherine. Brass indent of AD 1360 on Purbeck marble tomb slab (photo by H Martin Stuchfield)

7 Discussion

This watching brief has been relatively informative. There is no basis on which to challenge the basic architectural sequence given by Rodwell and Rodwell (1977, 120), of a Norman nave, and a 14th-century chancel and tower (the latter rebuilt), but some detail can be added. The wall stub under the south chancel arch may be a fragment of a narrower, pre-14th-century chancel arch, or it may be the east end of the original Norman nave (suggesting the chancel was a new build of the 14th century?).

The nave and chancel walls have no internal offset or foundation at all, but rest on bare earth. However, an external offset or foundation was seen in the porch, and confirmation of its presence elsewhere in the church will have to be left for the future.

An arrangement of the east end predating the restoration of the 1880s (Church Plans Online: web reference below) and dating at least as early as 1740 is now shown by the remains of an older chancel step 0.0m (13 feet) from the east end. The original position of the Bree family tomb slabs (recently stored in the tower) is now known – they were set in the chancel floor to the west of this old chancel step. Peter Wright's vault was later inserted into the raised part of the chancel in 1857.

The flat and undecorated Purbeck marble slab is curious. Although it is shaped like a tomb slab, it is undecorated and its original position is not known. It may conceivably have been moved from its original position in the later 19th century when the other slabs seem to have been removed from their original position (because they were directly under the proposed position of the new chancel step?).

The two most interesting discoveries have been the splendid Purbeck marble tomb cover with the indent of the missing brass of Robert and Katherine de Teye (dated to 1360) whose inscription is recorded by Morant (1748, 202). This was found under a slight soil covering parallel and close to the north-west chancel window. It is not clear whether this was its original position. Full publication of this slab by Martin Stuchfield will be awaited with interest. Finally, the stone fragments which may be part of a missing rood screen add detail to our previous understanding of the pre-Victorian layout of the church. Stone rood screens are rare in Essex (examples are known from St Mary the Virgin Great Bardfield and St Mary the Virgin Stebbing (Rodwell and Rodwell 1977, 95 and 119 respectively). The possible existence of a rood screen at St Andrew's Marks Tey, if accepted from the fragments discovered, would be a valuable addition to this group.

8 Archive deposition

The site records, finds, associated papers and digital archive are currently held by the Colchester Archaeological Trust at 12 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex CO3 3NF. These will be deposited permanently with Colchester Museums under museum accession code COLEM: 2006.148.

9 Acknowledgements

The Trust is grateful to the following for their assistance in the course of the recording work: Richard Morgan (Rector), the Parochial Church Council of St Andrew's Church; Vanessa Clarke and David Andrews, of Essex County Council; and Mr Martin Stuchfield for reporting on the tomb cover. We are particularly indebted to Mr Andrew Waters of St Andrew's PCC for information supplied, and for his interest in the project.

The site work was carried out by the authors.

10 Glossary

canid	dog species
context	specific location of finds
equid	horse species
feature	an identifiable thing like a pit, a wall, a drain, a floor; can contain 'contexts'
layer	distinct or distinguishable deposit of soil
medieval	period from AD 1066 to c AD1500
modern	period from the 19th century onwards to the present
natural	geological deposit undisturbed by human activity
peg-tile	rectangular thin tile with peg-hole(s) used mainly for roofing, first appeared c 1200 and continued to present day, but commonly post-medieval to modern
septaria	local building stone
post-medieval	from c AD 1500 to around the late 18th century

11 References

Andrews, David	undated	Marks Tey, St Andrew. Brief for archaeological work associated with the laying of a new floor throughout the church.
Church Plans Online		http://www.churchplansonline.org/
CM	2002	<i>Guidelines on standards and practices for archaeological fieldwork in the Borough of Colchester</i>
CM	2003	<i>Guidelines on the preparation and transfer of archaeological archives to Colchester Museums</i>
EAA 3	1997	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 1. Resource assessment</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 3 , ed by J Glazebrook
EAA 8	2000	<i>Research and archaeology: a framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 8 , ed by N Brown & J Glazebrook
EAA 14	2003	<i>Standards for field archaeology in the East of England</i> , East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Papers, 14 , ed by D Gurney
IFA	1999	<i>Standard and guidance for an archaeological evaluation</i>
IFA	2001	<i>Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials</i>
Lack, W, Stuchfield, H M, and Whittemore, P	2003	<i>The Monumental brasses of Essex.</i>
MAP 2	1991	<i>Management of archaeological projects</i> , 2nd edition (English Heritage)
Morant, Philip	1748	<i>The history and antiquities of the most ancient town and borough of Colchester</i>
RCHME	1922	Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England, <i>An inventory of the county of Essex, vol 3, north-east Essex</i> , London: HMSO
Rodwell, W, & Rodwell, K	1977	<i>Historic churches – a wasting asset</i> , Council for British Archaeology Research Report, 19

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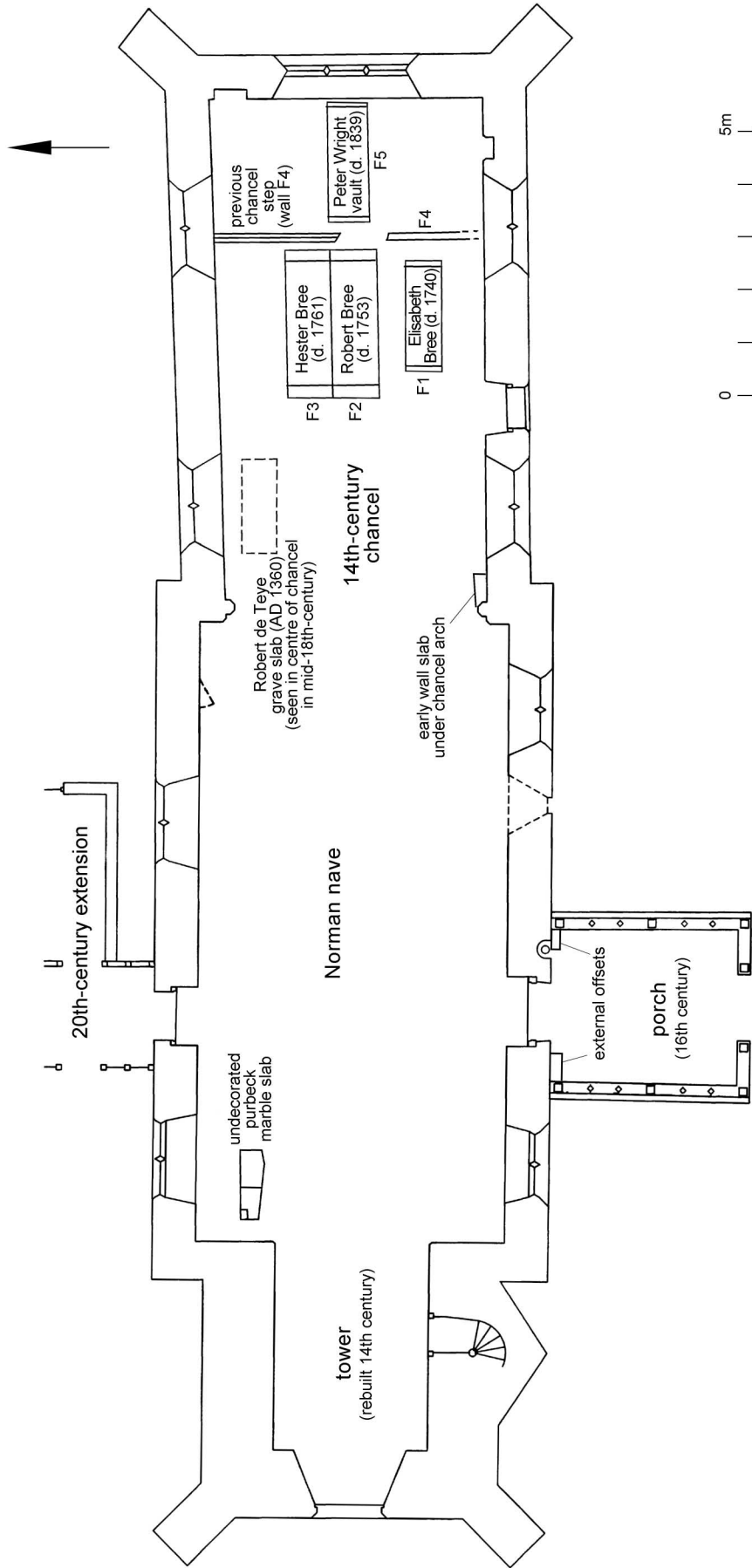


Fig 1 Plan of church, showing principal discoveries.

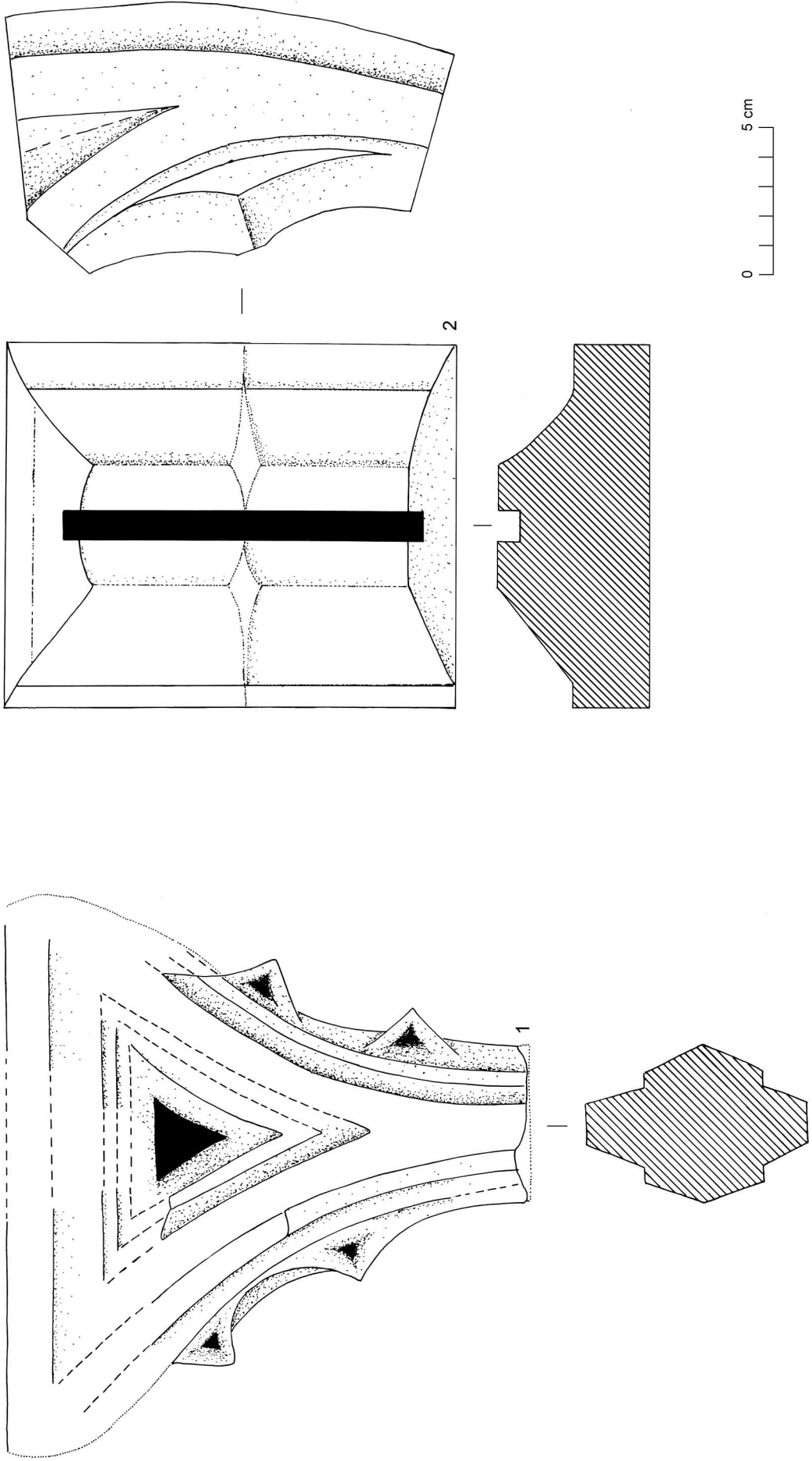


Fig 2 Architectural fragments: 1 - medieval rood screen, 2 - medieval window tracery (replaced in 19th-century).

**Essex Historic Environment Record/
Essex Archaeology and History**

Summary sheet

Site name/address: St Andrew's Church, Church Lane, Marks Tey, Essex	
Parish: Marks Tey	District: Colchester Borough
NGR: TL 9112 2389	Site code: COLEM: 2006.148
Type of work: watching brief	Site director/group: Colchester Archaeological Trust
Date of work: November-December 2006	Size of area investigated: interior of church, approx 110m2
Location of finds/curating museum: Colchester Museums	Funding source: St Andrew's Church PCC
Further work anticipated? No	Related EHER nos: 11734-6
Final report: CAT Report 400	
Periods represented: medieval, post-medieval, modern	
<p>Summary of fieldwork results: <i>A watching brief on the lowering of the floor levels exposed a stub of septaria wall line under the present chancel arch. This may mark the position of an earlier east end, or an earlier and narrower chancel arch. Internally, the lowering of the floor showed no internal offset or foundation, but an external offset of approximately 0.2m was exposed on either side of the south doorway (in the porch). Modern work in the nave and chancel did not generally intrude deep enough to breach a layer of mortar and brick dust found under the hollows of the old floor, but four vaults were exposed in the chancel. These are almost certainly to be associated with four tomb covers, one to Peter Wright and the others to members of the Bree family, which had recently been stored in the west tower. A number of objects were found under the old church floorboards. One was a very fine Purbeck marble tomb cover with the indent of a missing brass. Mr. Martin Stuchfield has identified this as the missing tomb cover of Robert de Teye and wife Katherine (dated 1360), whose inscription is recorded by Morant (1748, 202). A second was a blank piece of Purbeck marble which may or may not have been a tomb cover. The remainder were a number of pieces of window tracery, mostly derived from the replacement or repair of church windows in the 19th century. However, three pieces without glazing grooves may be part of a missing stone rood screen. The de Teye tomb cover is to be reset in the new church floor, and a sample of the tracery pieces will be kept in the church.</i></p>	
Previous summaries/reports: none	
Author of summary: Howard Brooks and Kate Orr	Date of summary: February 2007