

Clonmines Friary Preliminary Report

*Augustinian Friary, Clonmines, Preliminary
archaeological survey report*

SMR No's: WX045 – 012002
WX045 – 012003
WX045 – 012004
WX045 – 012011

Grid Ref: 684402, 612941 (ITM) – center of
friary precinct

On behalf of the Codd Family

19th December 2014

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Acknowledgements

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We extend our thanks in particular to Mrs. Joan Codd for her kindness and enthusiasm in seeing the sensitive preservation and understanding of the place being extended into the future. Ray and Domini Codd’s hard work in seeing this vision accomplished for their family home is also commendable; their sense of place and desire for their home to be passed onto future generations as a living, working and sensitively managed landscape stands to their credit.

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Abstract

This report provides a preliminary overview of the results of the archaeological survey of the standing structures associated with the Later Medieval Augustinian Friary of St. Nicholas at Clonmines. It presents an overview of the structures, in particular the friary church, and describes the main features of the buildings. The results indicate the construction of the friary complex extended over a number of phases between its foundation and the late 16th century. This survey is only at an initial stage as work is ongoing and has yet to be placed into a wider context, including information on the town and borough, and the wider landscape within which it is situated.



Figure 1. South Elevation, Augustinian Friary, Clonmines, Wexford.

(Photo: A De Volder)

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1. Summary

1.1. Site Specific Information

Site Name: Clonmines Augustinian Friary

Townland: Clonmines

SMR No’s.: WX045 – 012003 (Friary Church), WX045 – 012011 (Gatehouse), WX045 – 012002 (Friary Precinct Wall), WX045 – 012004 (Fortified House)

Grid Ref.: 684402, 612891 (Friary Church), 684385, 612888 (Gatehouse), 684405, 612925 (Friary Precinct Wall), 684340, 612920

County: Wexford

Status: Recorded Monuments (National Monument’s Act 1930).
In private ownership: Joan Codd.



Figure 2. Site Location.

2. Aims and Methodology

The archaeological survey, which forms the basis for this preliminary report, was commissioned by the Codd family and part-funded by Wexford County Council and a grant awarded by The Heritage Council in 2014 (grant number: M0399). The buildings were recorded as part of a study preceding the urgent conservation works required to be done to consolidate and preserve the standing monuments, listed above, at greatest risk from further deterioration, as the result of weathering and erosion, as outlined in the *Preliminary Conservation Management Plan 2015 – 2018* by Chris Southgate and Associates¹. This archaeological study is not only a requirement under the relevant legislation and charters,² but also invaluable in informing the sensitive conservation works that aim to balance the need for on-going heritage management and conservation, at a site that is understood as one of National Significance, which is at the same time the location of a family home and working farm.

The survey aimed to fully record, as far as practicable, the standing monuments associated with the later medieval friary, as well as the gable-end of a fortified house located adjacent to the friary complex precinct wall. At this stage the external elevations of the structures were recorded, along with sets of floor plans. Not all the structures could be fully recorded due to the cover of ivy on some of the buildings (as noted on the elevation drawings) and problems associated with its removal. No scaffolding was erected on any of the buildings, and therefore due to Health and Safety concerns, access to the entire interior central crossing tower of the friary church was also not possible, and floor plans will therefore be completed at a later date.

Further survey is envisaged for 2015, including a full laser scan of the friary complex, and this will enable the survey to be extended and updated, and a full archaeological report delivered in the future on all the buildings located at Clonmines. At this stage therefore, the survey and report are to be regarded as a preliminary study, to be taken into the future as part of the output from a growing team of archaeological and building conservation specialists. The information from this survey will also form the basis for academic publications by the authors, which will further advance our understanding of the town and landscape of Clonmines.

It was decided that the most effective way to accomplish this initial survey and produce the elevations and plans presented in this report, was through an approach that combined traditional on-site drawing/recording and digital methods. It is a combination of more

¹ Unpublished Report: *Preliminary Conservation Management Plan 2015-2018*, prepared by the consultant conservation engineers for the site, Chris Southgate, Southgate Associates. 2014.

² Granada Charter 1985, the I.C.O.M.O.S. Venice and Burra Charters, in addition to the Department of the Environment, Architectural Heritage Protection Guidelines 2004, Valetta European Convention on the Protection of Archaeological Heritage (revised) 1992 and Department of Environment.

traditional measured survey familiar to archaeologists (EDM, tapes, etc.), which also provides control points for working up scaled elevation drawings and plans, with photorectification. This method forms the basis for producing drawings in a commercially available digital drawing software and a CAD package. The advantage offered by this hybrid approach is that it allows for rapid recording and for detailed recording where needed. More importantly it maintains the process of traditional planning and drawing on-site, forcing the archaeologist to interpret and attribute conventions line by line, constantly re-evaluating what is being recorded. The process of drawing is one which carries an immediacy of decision making. This engagement with the material remains on-site needs to be valued for the information it provides which cannot be substituted at a later stage. Digital, or remote recording techniques on their own often involve a process of separation between the image and the interpretation or attribution which occurs later. In effect this means that the chain between recording and interpretation is broken. An additional advantage of the hybrid approach is that the drawings can be easily updated at a later stage as additional information becomes available with on-going research. This a well established method used in historic building surveys.³

The survey was carried out between September and December 2014. The survey team comprised of doctoral candidates Mr. Paul Murphy (NUIG), Mr. Arnaud De Volder (NUIG) and undergraduate student Mr. Paolo Izzo (University of Vienna).

Survey stations were established on-site using a handheld Trimble GPS unit (Geoexplorer GeoXT 2000 series), and laid out using a Nikon Total Station DTM-302. Targets were temporarily affixed to some of the elevations, and readings taken on the points. Vertical and horizontal lines were also established on the structures, with taped measurements being taken to add additional control.

This information and drawings produced on-site were then combined with digital photographs to produce rectified and scaled photographic records of the monuments. The information was combined in a commercial photographic rectification software package, and exported into a CAD drawing program for tracing and preliminary annotation. These scaled CAD drawings can be amended and annotated as the work progresses in the future, and are an important record of the site and monuments as they stand at the date of this publication.

³ E.g.: Andrews, D. P., et al. (2003) ‘Photographic Survey of Mosaic and Tiled Floors – a Methodology’, *New Perspectives to Save Cultural Heritage*, CIPA 19th International Symposium.

Ayala, D., et al. (2003) *Minimum requirement for metric use of non-metric photographic documentation*, University of Bath (report).

Brennan, J. E. O. (2008) ‘The use of rectified photography at the Painted Hall’, *Conservation News*, 87.

Bryan, P., et al. (1999) ‘Digital rectification techniques for architectural and archaeological presentation’, *Photogrammetric Record*, 16 (93).

Clark, C. M., (2001) *Informed Conservation: Understanding Historic Buildings and their Landscapes for Conservation*, London: English Heritage.

The full collection of survey drawings commissioned in 2014 for Clonmines, and completed by the authors, accompanies this preliminary report as an Appendix; the *Clonmines Historic Building Survey Drawings 2014 Appendix*. The sections relevant to the Friary complex discussed below should be referred to as needed, in addition to what is noted in this preliminary report.



3. Introduction

Clonmines is recognized as a particularly fine example of a deserted medieval town, similar to places such as Newtown Jerpoint (Co. Kilkenny) and Rindoon (Co. Roscommon). It contains one of the finest collections of later medieval architectural remains to be found anywhere in Ireland in the context of what was once a medieval town/borough. The current conservation works aim to continue the preservation of these structures for future generations, and reveal more about the important medieval patrimony of County Wexford, and the country as a whole.

The Augustinian friary complex, which is the subject of this report, is part of the standing remains at Clonmines, County Wexford (fig. 2, 3), and is located at the boundary of the medieval town. Clonmines lies at the head of Bannow Bay estuary, at the confluence of the Owenduff and Corock Rivers. The site slopes gently down to the estuary at its eastern edge, and is bounded by the Owenduff River to the north, and another stream to the south. The town is therefore surrounded by marsh and water on three sides (Appendix 1, fig. 3). The total area of the town as postulated (Colfer 2002, 146) is outlined in red (fig. 2) and amounts to approx. 29 acres, though there is the possibility that this area can be extended based on recent fieldwork which is yet to be published.⁴

Current scholarship maintains that the medieval borough of Clonmines was founded around AD 1200 by the Anglo-Norman lord William Marshal (e.g.: Hore 1978, ii, 199 – 68; Colfer 2002, 143-45; Colfer 2004, 38-9, 73-6). There is, however, some evidence to suggest that the location may have already been of importance, possibly the site of an existing settlement, of Hiberno-Scandinavian/Norse origin (Colfer 2002, 30; Murphy 2004).

It is therefore currently accepted that Clonmines was established initially as a chartered settlement,⁵ reflecting the pan-European phenomenon of borough foundation and economic expansion of the 11th to 13th centuries, a process which William Marshal, as lord of Leinster, is thought to have played a key role in advancing in the region, at a pivotal period in Irish and European history (Orpen 2005, 331). William Marshal gained seisin of the land following his accession to the lordship of Leinster, and marriage to Aoife de Clare, after the deaths of Richard

⁴ To put this in context: Wexford town – the area enclosed by the town wall was about 40 – 50 acres (Colfer 2002); Newtown Jerpoint the area of the deserted town is about 50 acres; New Ross – the area enclosed by the town wall was about 90 acres (Colfer 2002;).

⁵ It was claimed by Agatha de Mortimer, Marshal’s grand-daughter, that a “liberty” was granted to the town by William Marshal, its founder (*Cal. Doc. Irl. Calendar of Documents, Relating to Ireland : Preserved in Her Majesty’s Public Record Office, London, 1171-1307* (1875-86), London: Longman ii. No.1330). Historical references to the “town of Clonmines” range from the 13th to the 16th C - see: (Hore 1900-11). The “borough of Clonmines” was in legal existence until the Act of Union.

de Clare (lord of Leinster) and Hervey de Montmorency, who had previously held the Barony of Bargy⁶ (Colfer 2002, 30 ff; Orpen 2005, 141 - 49).

Unfortunately, documentation relating to the history of Clonmines appears to be quite rare, possibly because it was economically detached from the rest of the county at the partition of Leinster between Marshal’s daughters in 1247, following the deaths of his sons without male heirs (Colfer 2004, 38). Marshal’s granddaughter Agatha de Mortimer received the manor of Taghmon and the manor of Clonmines in county Wexford as part of her portion of Kildare. Agatha died in 1306 and her lands with all its tenements were taken into the king’s hands (Hore 1900-11, ii, 222). At Clonmines she held 12 acres of arable land with 8 acres of uncultivated land, plus a mill and 5 carucates held by burgesses of the town, with pleas and perquisites of the hundred court there (ibid).

Clonmines was still referred to as a town in the late 16th century. In the 17th century, the town had a portreeve and burgage lands ‘within and without’ it (Hore 1900-11, ii, 262). However, in 1684, Robert Leigh of Rosegarland describes the site of the town stating:

“Clonmines is a very ancient corporation, but is now quite ruined, there remaining only four or five ruined castles, and an old ruined church called Saint Nicholas, and a monastery also ruined which did formerly belong to the order of Saint Augustine, yet it sends two burgesses to Parliament still, and was governed by a portreeve and burgesses, but the charter and the contents thereof is worn out of memory long since” (Hore 1900-11, ii, 265-7).

“It is confidently reported that this Clonmines was a place of great trade in times past, and a harbour for shipping of indifferent bulk until the sand filled up the ancient passage near the town of Bannow, which was the destruction of both these towns, so that there is now only a narrow passage for boats on the west side of the Island, between it and the lands of Fethard; for on the east side towards the town of Bannow, where the ancient passage was, and ships used to come in, it is now a perfect dry strand and may be walked over from the island to the town” (Hore 1900-11, ii, 266).

From the 1655 Book of Survey and Redistribution of the forfeited estates we find that Clonmines had already become the property of Sir Caesar Colclough. The land at Clonmines and nearby Arklow made up around 92 acres of the Colclough estate, the centre of which was formed by the former Cistercian abbey and much of the lands of Tintern (Jeffery 1979). The development of the estate system in southwest Wexford led to a reorganization of agriculture and the exploitation of natural resources, evidence of which can be seen in the landscape of Clonmines today.

⁶ Clonmines lies in the Barony of Bargy which reverted to the lord of Leinster on his death. De Montmorency’s fief represented the modern baronies of Bargy and Shelburne which he received from the hands of Dermot MacMurrough, and later confirmed by his successor Richard de Clare (Orpen and Regan 1892II. 3070-1)

Until the act of Union the borough of Clonmines returned two MPs to the Irish Parliament (Jeffery 1979, 220). After the Union the borough was disenfranchised and £15,000 compensation was awarded to Charles Loftus, marquis of Ely, and Charles Tottenham, Co. Wicklow, the two members for Clonmines (Jeffery 1979, 221). By 1835 Clonmines was made up of 1,359 acres and was the property of Arthur Annesley, a descendent of the earl of Anglesey (Ibid). Around 1850 Mr. Richard Codd acquired the lands of Clonmines and it is his descendants who remain the sole occupiers today (Hore 1900, ii, 215).

As is evident from the standing remains, and doctoral research currently being undertaken at the location, the town appears to have prospered at various times during its history, and was largely abandoned sometime in the 17th century, slowly becoming the family farm it is today by the 19th century. There is also growing evidence that the foundation of the town may not have been on a “green-field” site, and was possibly even more extensive than was once thought, adding important additional information to the process of Anglo-Norman settlement in SE Leinster during the 12th and 13th centuries. Furthermore, the standing Later-Medieval and Early Modern structural remains at Clonmines can tell us much about the changing economic, social and environmental conditions of the town and the southwest region of Wexford.

4. The Augustinian Friary at Clonmines

The Augustinian Friars along with the Franciscans and Dominicans have been described as the urban orders *par excellence* of the later Middle Ages (Schofield and Vince 2005, 199). In England and much of Western Europe friaries are sometimes understood as the ‘markers of the urban status’ of many medieval settlements (Dyer and Lilley 2011, 83).

It is thought that the Augustinian friars arrived in Ireland from England in the late thirteenth century (Martin 1956, 355). The first surviving contemporary source referring to the friars in Ireland is dated to 1282 and refers to a community in Dublin already in existence (Ó Clabaigh 2012, 18). The antiquarian James Ware thought that the first priory in Ireland was established in Dublin in 1259, but F X Martin in his study on the Augustinian friars argues that this date is probably too early and it is likely that the house was founded later, though before 1282 (Martin 1956, 372-3; Ó Clabaigh 2012, 18-9). It is noteworthy that all of the Augustinian friaries founded in Ireland during the high medieval period, before c. 1341, were associated with towns (Martin 1956; Ó Clabaigh 2012, 15, 18ff). However, many of the late medieval friaries after this period were located in what are currently understood as more rural settings (ibid).

The Augustinian friary established at Clonmines is one of at least 22 founded in Ireland during the later Middle Ages (Martin 1956). Little is known about the history of the friary and detailed

archaeological investigation of the site is only beginning to take place⁷. However, what is clear is that there has been some confusion and uncertainty about the date and nature of the foundation of the friary at Clonmines (Martin 1956, 368f.).

F X Martin (1956, 369) states that the confusion about the foundation of the Augustinian house at Clonmines was ‘created by the fact that there was at one time a Dominican priory at Clonmines’. James Ware (1658, 177-8) records the belief that the Dominicans occupied the friary after the Augustinian friars. However, this appears to be unlikely as the suppression records of 1539 include the declaration that the friary was at that time in the possession of the Augustinians who had occupied Dominican property (Martin 1956, 369). This confusion has been further exacerbated by the fact that Newport. B. White (1943, 365) in his transcription of the extents of Irish monastic possessions inserted the heading ‘Dominican house of Clonmines’ describing the extent recording the property held by the friars at Clonmines (Martin 1956, 369). The original manuscript⁸ simply lists the ‘friars of Clomyne’ following an entry for the ‘Austin Friars of Rosse’ made the previous day (Gairdner and Brodie 1898, 379). Therefore, the conclusion reached by Martin (Martin 1956, 369) is that the Dominicans had vacated the property before it was occupied by the Augustinians, though it is unlikely that this was ‘when the local mines fell into decay’ as this was during the Tudor period after the suppression of the religious houses. If there was a Dominican friary at Clonmines it must therefore have dated to the period before the foundation of the Augustinian house at the start of the 14th century (see below). However, it should be noted that the list which details the foundation dates of Dominican houses established in Ireland before 1300 does not include Clonmines (Ó Clabaigh 2012, 7f.). This list, which is unique ‘among the Irish mendicants’, was reproduced by Ware in 1636, and while being of medieval provenance should be treated with some caution (ibid.). Furthermore, Ó Clabaigh notes that the ‘sources for the early chronology of the Friars Preachers [Dominicans] in Ireland are fragmentary and imprecise’ (ibid., 7).

The Augustinian friary at Clonmines is currently thought to have been founded around 1317, when members of the Kavanagh family were given permission to alienate a parcel of land to the Friars Hermits of St. Augustine to establish the priory of St. Nicholas at Clonmines (Martin 1956, 368-9; Gwynn *et al.* 1970, 297; Ó Clabaigh 2012, 20). This is based on the tradition recorded by Louis Alemand in the *Histoire Monastique d’Ireland* (1690), and a reference found on the Patent Rolls of Edward II (Martin 1956, 368-9). The entry on the Patent Rolls ‘recorded the confirmation of Adare Augustinian friary (1317)’ and ‘found beside it’ was ‘and entry relating to the licence granted to the Kavanaghs’ (ibid., 368). This roll was amongst those tragically destroyed when the Four Courts was burnt in 1922 (ibid.).

⁷ E.g.: Butler (1975; 1978), Byrne (1994-5), Colfer (2002; 2004), Gynn & Hadcock (1970), Hore (1978), Murphy (2004) have carried out historical research and some archaeological work.

⁸ Mss.: SP 65/3 f.1. Date: 1541. Source Archive: The National Archives of the U.K.

According to Ware, Nicholas Fitz Nicholas enlarged and beautified the friary in 1385 (Gwynn *et al.* 1970, 297), and in the same year permission was given to Nicholas Fitz Nicholas to bestow a messuage and garden, which he held of John Sweetman at Clonmines, upon the prior and convent of the friars of St Augustine (Hore 1900-11, 221; Martin 1956, 368-9; Ó Clabaigh 2012, 20). Hore suggests that the friary at Clonmines may also have been enlarged in 1399 (*ibid.*, 224).

The friary at Clonmines is situated on a roughly square flat area, just above sea level, on what could be reclaimed land next to the western shoreline of Bannow Bay estuary, and on the edge of the town (fig.4). This type of location is not unique to the friary at Clonmines as many of the friaries founded in Ireland, and across the British Isles, during the later Middle Ages were constructed at waterside locations near towns, or on the peripheries of the main settlement core. There is evidence for communities of friars in the South East of Ireland occupying reclaimed land, or being involved in the process of land reclamation works. The Augustinian and Franciscan friaries in the town of New Ross⁹ were located in an area between what is now South and Priory Street and the river (the location of the later medieval quay), on land which appears to have been reclaimed before the fourteenth century, outside the area occupied by the densest distribution of property plots to the north and east (Ó Drisceoil 1996).

Ó Drisceoil (2003, 64) notes that this pattern is also repeated in Kilkenny city where the ‘reclamation zone’, which occupied a large part of the walled area of the town, was occupied and engineered by the religious houses.

Significantly, the friary at Clonmines is also located at the eastern end of the main east-west routeway into the town. This route lay on the ‘main road’ between Wexford, Clonmines and New Ross, on what is described as the ‘great road’ between the settlements.¹⁰ The friary may have been connected to the townland of Maudlintown on the opposite bank of Bannow Bay estuary via a causeway called ‘the Friars Bank’ that links the east - west routeway mentioned above (see: [F] fig. 3). The friary complex would have acted as a highly visible marker of the boroughs urban status as people approached the town by land or sea.

In 1539, during the dissolution of the monasteries, Nicholas Wadding, the prior, surrendered the friary, which consisted of a church with a tower, a dormitory, hall, three chambers, a kitchen, cemetery and a close with a small tower (Hore, 1900-11, ii, 230). 10 gardens (from which it received tithes), 4 messuages along with an area called Colyn’s land, worth 2s rent, were also held by the friary at Clonmines, which indicates that it had acted as an important land holder in

⁹ The community of Augustinian friars in the town of New Ross was established before 1320 (Martin 1956, 380; Ó Drisceoil 1996).

¹⁰ ‘...*ad magnum viam que ducit de Clonmen apud Wesfordiam*’ (Chartul. St. Mary’s, Dublin, ii, 156) This reference dating to c. 1233, relating to boundaries of the ‘forest of Taghmon’ in a deforestation charter given by Richard Marshall, earl of Pembroke (Orpen 1934, 56) is the earliest known historical reference to the place of Clonmines and could indicate that it already was of some significance, located as it was on the route of the ‘great road’; a focal point on the network of routeways through the landscape.

the town. Following its dissolution, the friary changed ownership at least 3 times between 1539 and 1548. Eventually, in 1622, Clonmines was declared to have been an appropriation of Tintern Abbey, and in 1626, ‘Sir Anthony Colclough of Tintern was found seized of Clonmines with other lands’ (Hore, 1900-11, ii, 263).

5. Description of the Friary complex

5.1. Friary

The friary complex (dimensions approx. 60m x 60m) forms a major part of the impressive collection of ruined buildings that presently make up the former borough town of Clonmines (fig. 2 & fig. 3). Altogether there are three main elements to the friary complex (fig. 5). The largest of these is the friary church, which includes a chancel and nave separated by a crossing tower, and an aisle to the south of the nave. Except for the north and northwest nave walls which are completely destroyed, the friary church survives to roof height and is crenelated over the east gable end of the chancel, the crossing tower and possibly the south aisle. The friary buildings were enclosed within a precinct wall, of which parts remain standing to the north west of the church, together with a four story corner tower. The third main element of the friary complex is a gatehouse attached to the western end of the south aisle mentioned above.

5.1.1 Nave

The internal dimensions of the nave measure 12.2m E-W by 7.2m N-S. (fig. 6) and consists of three bays (1 – 3, west – east) with unmoulded arches and rectangular piers chamfered at the corners. Some of the chamfered moulding on the piers has evidence of diagonal tooling on the quoins (fig. 35). The building material is a mix of rubble stone masonry (as in the rest of the friary church and complex) and includes granite, sandstone, quartzite and shale. Some of the quoins and mouldings are possibly a creamy yellow Caen or Dundry stone. It is apparent that some of this stone is reused as it has mouldings/chamfers placed to the interior of the arches (figs. 29, 30 & 35) in positions that would not have been visible. The chamfered quoins of the piers finish in simple elongated (pyramid shaped) stops at the base of the piers, which has simple moulding (fig. 28; 37).

A later crossing tower was inserted into the eastern end of the nave. The entire north wall of the nave up to the north-western support of the crossing tower (fig.6) has been demolished. The northwest nave wall has also been destroyed. The west wall of the nave had a large elaborate decorated style window according to the engraving in Grose's *Antiquities* (Grose 1791 vol. 1, pl. 122, 44-5). Quoins of red sandstone survive in what remains of the interior arch of the west window, along with a section of fleuron moulding positioned above them (fig.25).

The west wall is approx. 0.90m - 1.10m thick and it is composed of string-coursed slate spalls and large stones (rubble masonry consisting of granite, conglomerate and sandstone) (fig.26). At the exterior of the west wall (fig.7) there is a gate-house at the south corner, which is only partly tied in. A portion of the exterior west wall was removed to take the support of an arch and vault within the gatehouse (fig. 7 - marked in blue on elevation). This may have weakened the lower section of the west wall which appears to be disturbed (fig.26).

On the south side of the east end of the nave, within the corner of the southeast tower support and southeast arch support of the third bay, is a granite ogee-headed piscina with a damaged carving (in Caen or Dundry stone?) above its centre-point (fig. 28). On the north wall, opposite to the piscina mentioned above, is another possible robbed out piscina (fig. 6). These indicate the locations of two altars which would have stood in front of the chancel screen where the nave terminates.

5.1.2 Aisle

There is an aisle (12.2m E–W by 2.85m N-S) located to the south of the nave. The aisle and nave are separated by the row of piers of the three bays of the nave, consisting of the plank centred pointed arches and simple rectangular piers, as noted above (figs. 29 & 30). The aisle had a pitched roof, the evidence for which is seen in a ridge line on its southern wall (fig. 8) and a row of four large corbels located just below the top of its northern wall. Beneath the row of corbels there is a line of joist holes (fig. 31).

The south aisle has a robbed out piscina and a blocked window towards the east end of the south wall (fig. 6), a partly destroyed east window (with a pointed arch that is plank centred), and an ambry on the north wall (fig. 6). These features indicate the former location of a chapel within the south aisle.

The exterior south elevation (fig. 31 & 8) of the aisle shows a break in the masonry to the west, which indicates a different phase of construction as noted on the plan (fig. 6). The exterior of the east elevation (fig. 9) of the south aisle appears to be tied into the south chancel wall as indicated on the ground plan (fig. 6). There are also two corbels located on the exterior east elevation.

5.1.3 Chancel

The chancel (int. dims. 15.55m E-W; 7.2m N-S) has a destroyed east window (fig. 10 & 32), three damaged three-light ogee-headed windows in the south wall (fig. 11), and a destroyed/robbed out pointed arch window in the north wall (fig. 34 & 12). The south and east elevations of the chancel are supported by a series of arches visible at foundation level which spring from a series of masonry piles below ground level.

The east window has a plank centred pointed arch (ext. dims. 4.19m wide x 6.2m high). It has finely punch dressed granite chamfered quins. On the exterior of the east wall there is granite hood moulding that finishes in badly eroded stops. There are two fragments of finely dressed limestone tracery that remain in situ, indicating that the window had a high quality decorated

style design fashioned by skilled masons familiar with the style of tracery found elsewhere within the British Isles in the 14th century (Leask 1990, 136; Moss 2014, 219).

The south side of the chancel is dominated by three large treble light ogee-headed windows with embrasures (fig. 11). There are relieving arches over the moulding. The ogee shaped heads are cusped with the central light slightly higher than those to the sides. The central mullions have all been robbed out and the ogee heads at the western side are missing. There was a structure attached to the exterior of the south chancel wall as indicated by a ridgeline located between the two eastern most windows (fig. 11). Below the ridgeline and partially below the central south chancel wall window there is a blocked-up doorway (fig. 11). This doorway is also visible on the interior of the south chancel wall adjacent to the sedilia (fig. 33).

There is a robbed out triple sedilia in the south wall (fig.33), which would have had cusped ogee heads similar to the windows in the south wall and the surviving piscina located adjacent to it. The piscina is of dressed granite with rolled and filleted hood moulding.

A single robbed out pointed (possibly plank centred) window exists in the north east wall of the chancel (figs 34 & 12). The window is approx. 2.10m wide with an interior arched embrasure. There is one dressed chamfered window quoin remaining in the exterior of the window (fig. 12).

There is a single socketed corbel located 3.4m from the east corner of the north wall and at a height of approx. 2m from ground level. The location suggests that it may have acted as a support for a mechanism to veil the east end of the chancel (presbytery) during Lent and Passiontide,¹¹ or a hanging pyx above the high altar (figs. 6 & 34 – note position of corbel with horizontal ranging rod resting on top of it). Located 45cm to the west of the corbel there is a construction line visible on the north elevation (fig. 6, 12 & 34). Located 4.82m from the west end of the north wall of the chancel there is a blocked up doorway, which is opposite the blocked doorway on the south of the chancel (figs 6, 12 & 34). The blocked doorway on the north side of the chancel is also visible on the exterior. It is located under a ridgeline that

¹¹ In the Sarum Use of the Latin liturgy, which was commonly used in the East of Ireland outside of those orders that had their own Rites and liturgical practices. The Lenten Veil would be drawn between the presbytery and quire, and also before the altar, from the Saturday before Lent till the Wednesday before Easter. The Veil would be lifted at certain times in the liturgy, such as from the reading of the gospel until the *'orate fratres'* (Rich Jones 2012, 171). We know rather little about the liturgical practices of the Augustinians friars, though due to their origins it is understood that their liturgical practice was largely influenced by that of the Franciscans, and like the Franciscans was an adoption and adaptation of the liturgy of the papal court (Pfaff 2009, 337-41; O Clabaigh 2012, 175). In c. 1290 their liturgical norms were promulgated by the prior general, 'though no examples of liturgical material survive from medieval Ireland' (ibid). Richard Pfaff (2009, 338) notes that when the Augustinian friars first arrived in England in 1249 their liturgical practice 'would have presumably been much like that of the Franciscans, though it is unclear as to how they adapted to local use and custom before their liturgical norms became widely adopted, or to what extent this regulated existing practice. While a high degree of liturgical uniformity was aimed at through the promulgation of each orders own liturgical texts, rubrics and ceremonial, this did not preclude adaptation to local circumstance (O Clabaigh 2012, 169). Only 'two or three Austin service books as used in England seem to have survived', and that the scant evidence of the liturgical practices from the surviving texts of the Augustinian friars in the British Isles leaves at best a picture of 'bland generalisation' that hides vividness and vitality of the liturgy in these houses (ibid. 340ff).

indicates the location of a building attached to the chancel at this point which ran in a northerly direction (fig. 12). There are two joist holes positioned in a line in the centre of the ridgeline that would have supported the pitched roof of the attached structure (fig. 12). A group of four corbels are located next to the blocked door to the east on the exterior, and adjacent to the above-mentioned construction line, and these probably acted as timber supports for the attached structure (maybe suggesting it was “half-timbered”). The buildings at this location to the north of the chancel were part of the east cloister range. Geophysical survey (Byrne 1994-5; De Volder and Murphy, unpublished magnetic gradiometer survey report) and an antiquarian plan of Clonmines by Beranger (c. 1780) confirm the existence of structures consistent with the layout of a cloister.

There is a niche or recess situated in the north interior wall of the chancel 7.3m from the east end wall. It has a plank centred pointed arch and is approx. 1.9m east-west, 30cm deep and 2m high (to the top of the arch). It is located adjacent to the blocked doorway mentioned above, and probably positioned between what was the presbytery and the quire (figs 6 & 12). It is possible that this was used either as an Easter Sepulchre, or as a tomb niche for a patron or ecclesiastical dignitary. Its location, which possibly predates the extension of the chancel to the east, could indicate the location of the previous extent of the sanctuary if it was an Easter Sepulchre.

Another possible blocked doorway is visible on the exterior elevation of the north chancel wall 12m from the north east corner (fig. 12 – insert outlined in blue). Some quoins and voussoirs remain in situ. This doorway may also predate the later extension of the chancel to the east.

A series of corbels run in three lines east–west along the remaining section of the exterior of the north chancel wall from west of the blocked door (approx. 1m). These corbels may have acted as supports for structures associated with the south range of the cloister roof (fig. 12).

Approximately 18.7m from the exterior north east corner of the north chancel wall there is a three light square–headed window with relieving arch above. The red sandstone tracery is ogee-shaped and cusped, with mullions between the lights. There are cusped quatrefoil openings above the lights. The window is now partially blocked (the blocked western lights, which now have loops, light a later inserted stairwell in the crossing tower) (fig. 12). There is a fragment of the wall-walk that remains above the window, behind which there is an exit from the inserted circular stairwell.

5.1.4 Crossing tower

A tower (4.58m north-south x 5.95 east-west) was inserted at the east end of the nave. Evidence for this comes from the fact that the tower supports (piers) are not tied into any of the pre-existing walls of the church (fig. 6). The granite quoins and mouldings of the tower supports

appear more roughly dressed than the dressed stonework of, for example, the arcade of the south aisle.

The tower originally consisted of a high pointed arch on each of the four elevations, over which were two floors and a parapet level, with corner-towers on the northwest and southwest corners. An additional level was inserted later (now the first floor) as a wicker centred barrel vault under the crossing arches. Access to this inserted floor is gained by means of a spiral stair, which was also inserted at the same time as the barrel vault. The entrance to the stair is through a pointed, chamfered, segmented arch, which would possibly indicate a 16th century (or later) century date for the insertion. The stone used for the stair entrance and other mouldings consists of roughly dressed granite (fig. 36). At the inserted floor level plank centring can be observed in the embrasures formed by the earlier pointed arches. There is a square opening (60cm x 60 cm) located approximately in the centre of this inserted floor that probably allowed ropes from the belfry above to hang through to the nave below. There is an intramural passage present in the western wall of the second floor, which exits on the south (fig. 15) and possibly the west (fig. 14 - steps visible on west elevation). There is an opening on the same level on the east of the tower, which may have given access to the chancel roof space above the original arch. On the exterior east elevation of the tower, above the original pointed arch, there are three large joist holes (fig. 13) that would have supported the chancel roof. There are no joist holes visible on the west elevation. There are two-light mullioned ogee-headed windows on each of the elevations of the tower at current third floor level. The window in the south elevation also has a transom and mullions. The dressed stone of the windows is of red sandstone. This level with the ogee-headed windows may have acted as the level where the bells were hung.

5.2 Gatehouse

Attached to the exterior wall of the west end of the south aisle is a gatehouse, giving access to and from the friary precinct, which consists of a small square tower measuring 4.7m east-west by 4.38m north-south (figs. 1, 16, 17 & 18). The gate-tower has three floors (fig 19), the uppermost of which is removed. The upper floors were accessed via a spiral stair that has been robbed out. An inserted wicker centred barrel vault covers most of the main north-south gate passage. The western side of the barrel vault is supported by an inserted section of wall (fig. 6) while the eastern side of the vault is set into the western wall of the church. The lower south and west walls of the gatehouse (approx. 1.9m high) seem to be older than the northern wall and walls of the upper floors. Evidence for this comes from the pointed arch of the western gateway and a doorway located in the western wall, which are both plank centred. The stone coursing in the wall of the lower west and south gatehouse are also string-coursed contrasting with the northern elevation and upper floor coursing which are roughly coursed. The northern wall is not tied into the lower northwest corner of the gatehouse, however, it is tied into the upper floors, which gives further evidence that the latter are associated with a later phase of construction. On the lower west wall of the gatehouse there is evidence that a wall was

attached at this point to the gatehouse which extended further west around the precinct. An antiquarian sketch plan (Beranger, 1780) of the friary complex confirms this and the possibility that in fact this wall immediately to the west of the gatehouse was part of another rectangular structure. The location of the gatehouse and the possible structure just mentioned would indicate that this was the main entrance to the friary precinct and the now vanished western rectangular structure could have acted as guest lodging.

5.3 Precinct tower and wall

Located 22.5m to the northwest of the precinct gatehouse is a section of precinct wall approx. 11m long and 70cm wide, 4.3m high on the western enclosure side (lower ground level) and 3m high on the eastern side (fig. 5). The precinct wall continues northwest, though a section of about 19.5 meters has collapsed. A further 9.5m of the western precinct wall survives at this point and continues to meet the northwest corner tower of the friary complex.

The tower (ext. dims. 4.35m N-S; 4.1m E-W) at the north-west angle of the enclosure is open-backed (int. dims 2.34m E-W; 2.2m N-S) to the east, and has granite quoins. There is a wicker centred barrel-vault over a first floor, which is supported on corbels in the N and S walls (figs. 20, 21, 22, 23 & 24).

Access to the second floor over the vault is through a lintelled doorway (W 0.84m; H 2.1m) from a stair on the east elevation of the precinct wall. It ascends from the south over a doorway which gave access into the precinct at this point as well. A newel stair at the south west angle gives access to the third and fourth floors of the tower, and there is a light in the W, N and E walls, and to the destroyed wall-walk with a look-out platform over the stair-housing at the SW angle. The third floor was supported on corbels in the E and W walls, while at the fourth floor level the joists were inserted directly into the N and S walls. The simple rectangular granite chamfered windows found in each of the precinct tower elevations are similar to the windows found in the upper floors of the precinct gatehouse and possibly suggest they are of a similar phase of construction.

6 Summary of Preliminary Conclusions

At present the conclusion of this survey is that there is evidence for a number of phases of construction visible in the friary church building and the complex as a whole, probably several more than was previously thought. The friary appears to have been continually altered up to the period of the dissolution of the monasteries, and possibly beyond. This building activity speaks of a vibrant community within the friary itself and the town of Clonmines. The friary was located at the heart of the town servicing the spiritual and material needs of the borough. In return patrons helped to finance and construct parts of the impressive ruins we still see today.

The results of this survey indicate that possibly four phases of construction took place during the later Middle Ages. The first phase could be attributed to the period between the foundation of the friary, currently thought to date to 1317 (see p. 11-13 above) and the mid-fourteenth century. However, the date of the first phase of the construction of the building may be earlier, or the stone work may have been taken from an earlier structure, based on evidence such as the diagonal tooling on the quoins in the nave arcade and the re-used stone of mouldings in the nave arcade arches. The surviving decorated style of the red sandstone west window mouldings, as well as the plank centring of the arches in the nave would not contradict a date of construction in the late thirteenth or fourteenth century.

The elongated chamfer stops of the nave piers (fig. 28; 37), and moulding's at their base (fig. 28; 37), are very similar to those found in the nave of Tintern Abbey, County Wexford (fig. 38), to which a date of c. 1300 is attributed, based on comparisons to the architecture at Baltinglass Abbey, County Wicklow (Stalley 1987, 267, fig. 67; Lynch 2010, 18, Pl. 28). These types of simple elongated chamfer stops were common in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (Lynch 2010, 39). This raises the interesting question of whether the similarities observed in the architecture of the nave of the friary church at Clonmines and at Tintern Abbey (County Wexford) are indicative of the building works having been done at the same time, by the same stone masons, or within a few years of each other. The naves in both churches are somewhat austere and plain with unmoulded arches, rectangular piers chamfered at the corners, simple elongated stops, and simple moulding at the bases.

These observations would additionally support the possibility of a date for the first phase of construction of the friary to a period that is earlier than is currently postulated, which is based solely on the first written sources dealing with the grant and alienation of land for the foundation of the Augustinian friary. It is worth noting that scholars such as Galbraith (1934, 221) also caution against confusing the date of the actual foundation of a religious house with the date of their charters. It points to the fact that the site may have been set aside, the community already in existence and building works underway before all the legal documents were drawn up, let alone before later references to endowments, transactions, disputes, etc. occur. It is also a reminder of the somewhat trite adage that ‘absence of evidence is not evidence of absence’. Discussions surrounding the foundation of religious houses and the introduction of the various religious orders and communities often centre around surviving later medieval documentation, the survival of which in Ireland is problematic and scarce ‘adding to the difficulties of research in medieval Irish history’ (Connolly 2002, 11) .

Furthermore, as discussed above (p. 11-13) this earlier phase of building activity could be indicative of a friary that was begun, or occupied, by the Dominican friars before the Augustinians arrived in Clonmines. While the evidence for this is somewhat problematic without further research it is something that should be carefully considered. It was not unusual for sites to be re-occupied, or taken over, by different orders. For example, it is known that the Franciscan friars minor took over the site of the hospital and friary of the Crutched friars (*Fratres Cruciferi*) in New Ross town at some point before 1256 when a general chapter of the Franciscan

Friars Minor was held in the town implying the existence of a friary there by this date (Fitzmaurice and Little 1920, 23-5; Gwynn *et al.* 1970; Ó Drisceoil 1996; Ó Clabaigh 2012, 13).

It would appear therefore, that the first phase of the friary church at Clonmines consisted of a shorter chancel (fig. 6), possibly terminating where the construction line is visible towards the east end of the north wall (fig. 12). This earlier phase also included the west wall of the friary church, and the lower level of the gatehouse into the precinct, with its plank centred arched entrance through the precinct wall on the south side of the complex (fig. 17).

The second phase of building at the friary in Clonmines can be attributed to the late 14th century when the friary appears to have been enlarged, and sources refer to the buildings being improved and embellished (Gwynn and Hadcock 1970, 297), and the community receiving the grant of additional resources at the same time in 1385 (Ó Clabaigh 2012, 20). During this phase the chancel was extended to the east and the south chancel wall and aisle were modified or reconstructed, with more elaborate windows inserted. The large decorated style east window was also constructed at this time. The sedilia and piscina in the south chancel wall would date to this phase as well.

Evidence for a third phase of construction is shown by the insertion of the friary tower, which is not tied into any of the church walls. The tower may have been built in the 15th century as evidenced by the cusped ogee headed window which, on the south elevation, has a cross bar or transom (Leask, 1995). It is possible that at this time the wall-walks and crenellations were added to the friary to match the tower.

The final phase is shown by the insertion of the wicker centred barrel vaults in the church tower beneath the earlier plank centred pointed arches and in the gate-house. The inserted stairway in the tower dates to this phase, giving access to the new room created by the insertion of the barrel vault and those above that had wooden floors. The style of stone dressing, and door way of the inserted stairway in the tower, are consistent with a date range of the 16th to 17th centuries. The precinct corner tower also displays similar features to those outlined above, with its wicker centred barrel vault. There is no evidence from the standing remains that the friary church was converted into a secular dwelling place after the dissolution of the monasteries. The evidence of this phase of construction indicates that the friary and town were still prospering in the 16th or 17th centuries.

What can be said with certainty is that the impressive ruins of the friary church and complex indicate that the community was well endowed at the time of their construction (Ó Clabaigh 2012, 20).

Appendix 1 – Maps

Figure 3. Site map – Friary complex and town

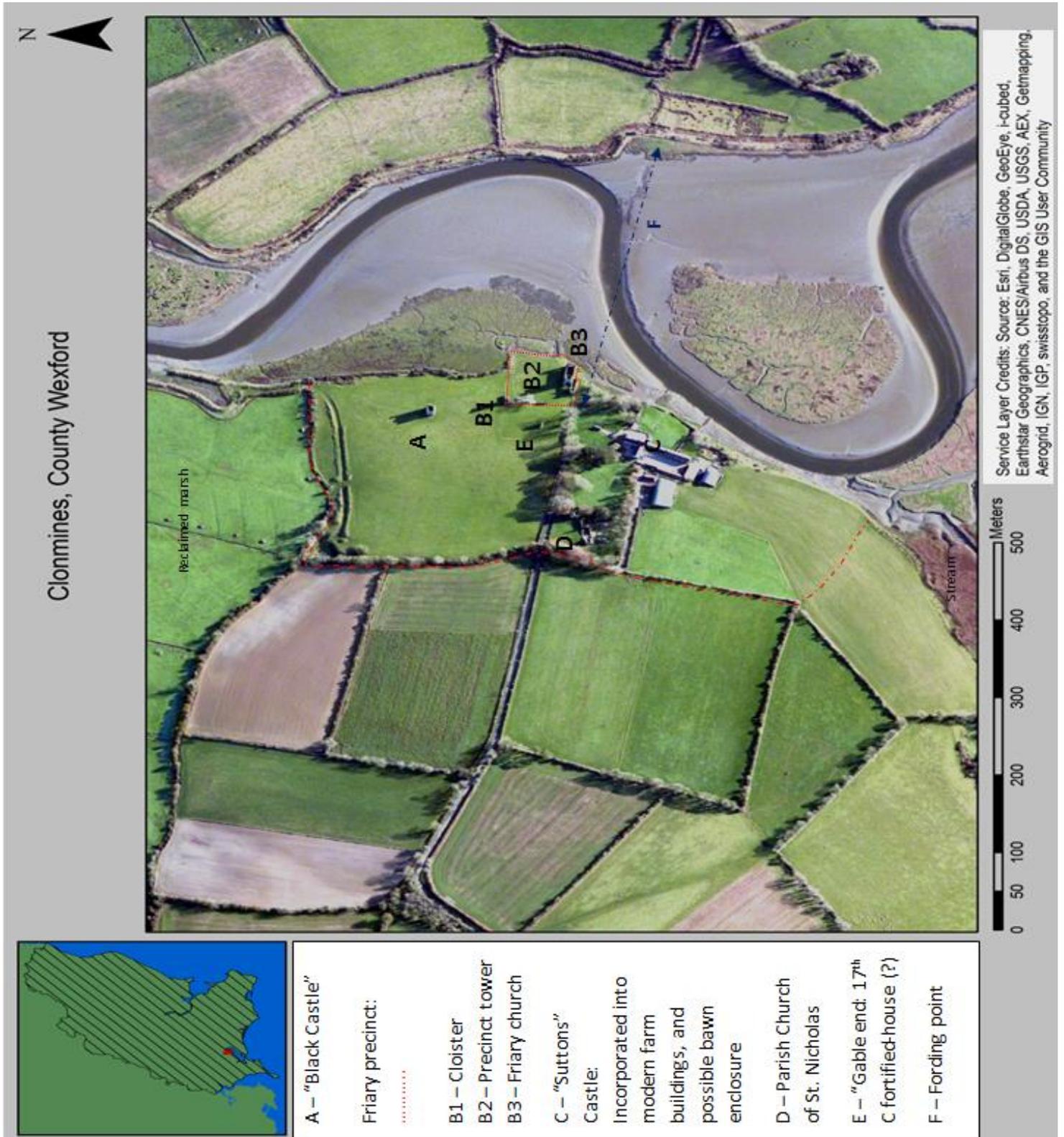
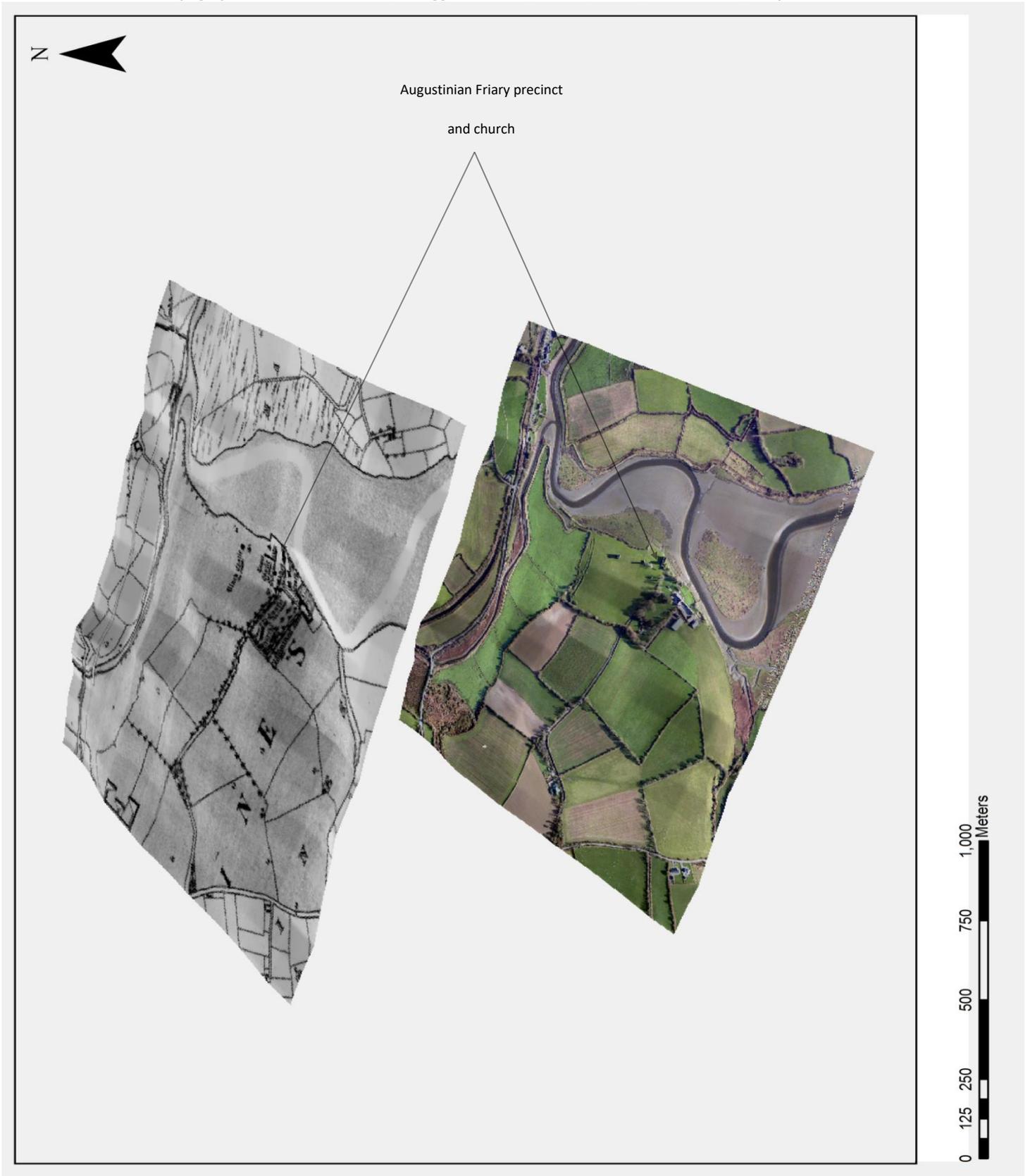


Figure 4. General site topography. Historic mapping (1st Ed. OSi) overlaid on satellite imagery with a topographic model.

Topographic model - SRTM data (Z exaggeration of 2, Az. 315, Alt. 30, and hillshade) – by: A. De Volder.



Appendix 2 - Plans and Elevations



Figure 5. Friary complex site plan

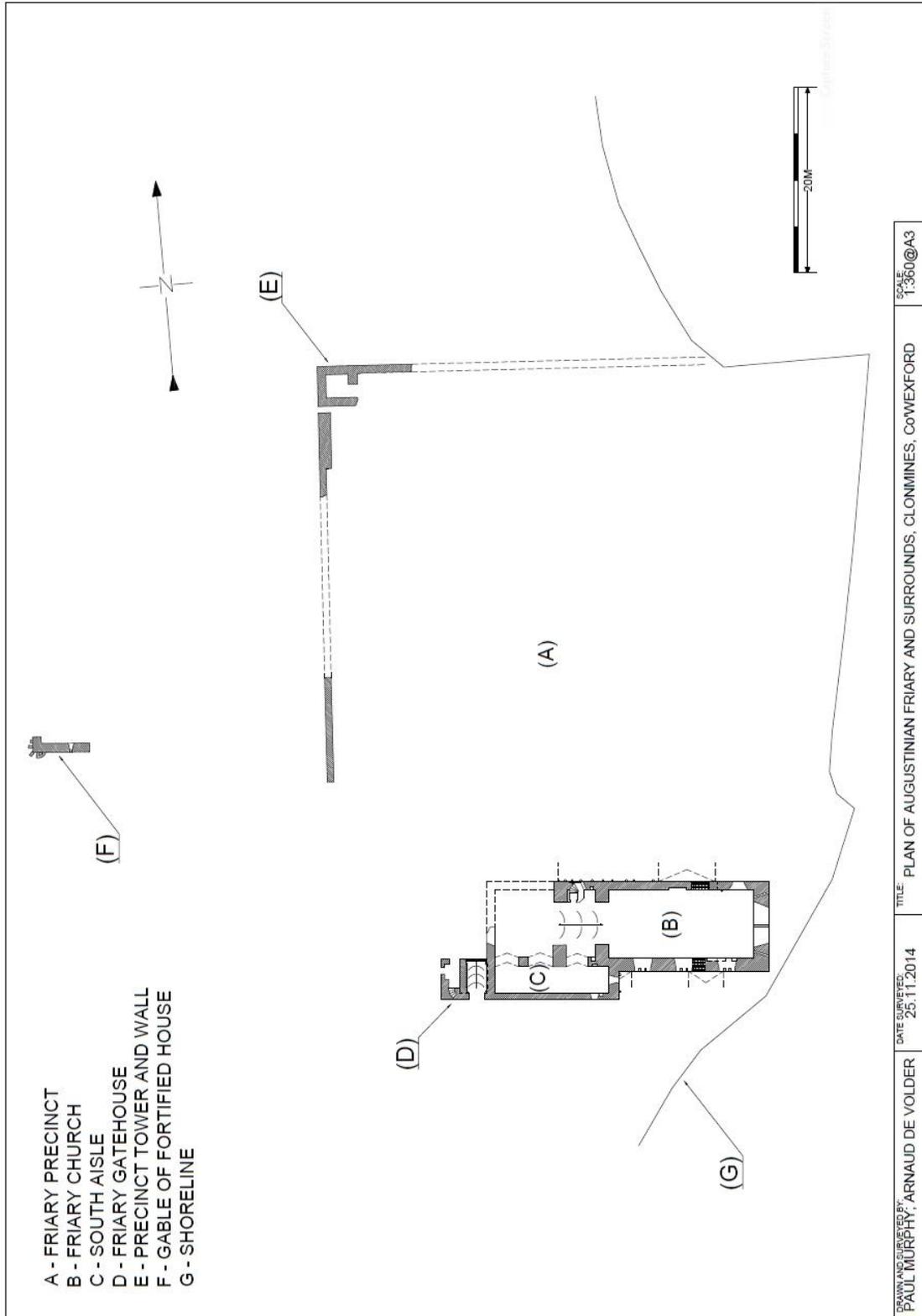


Figure 6. Plan of Friary church and gate-house

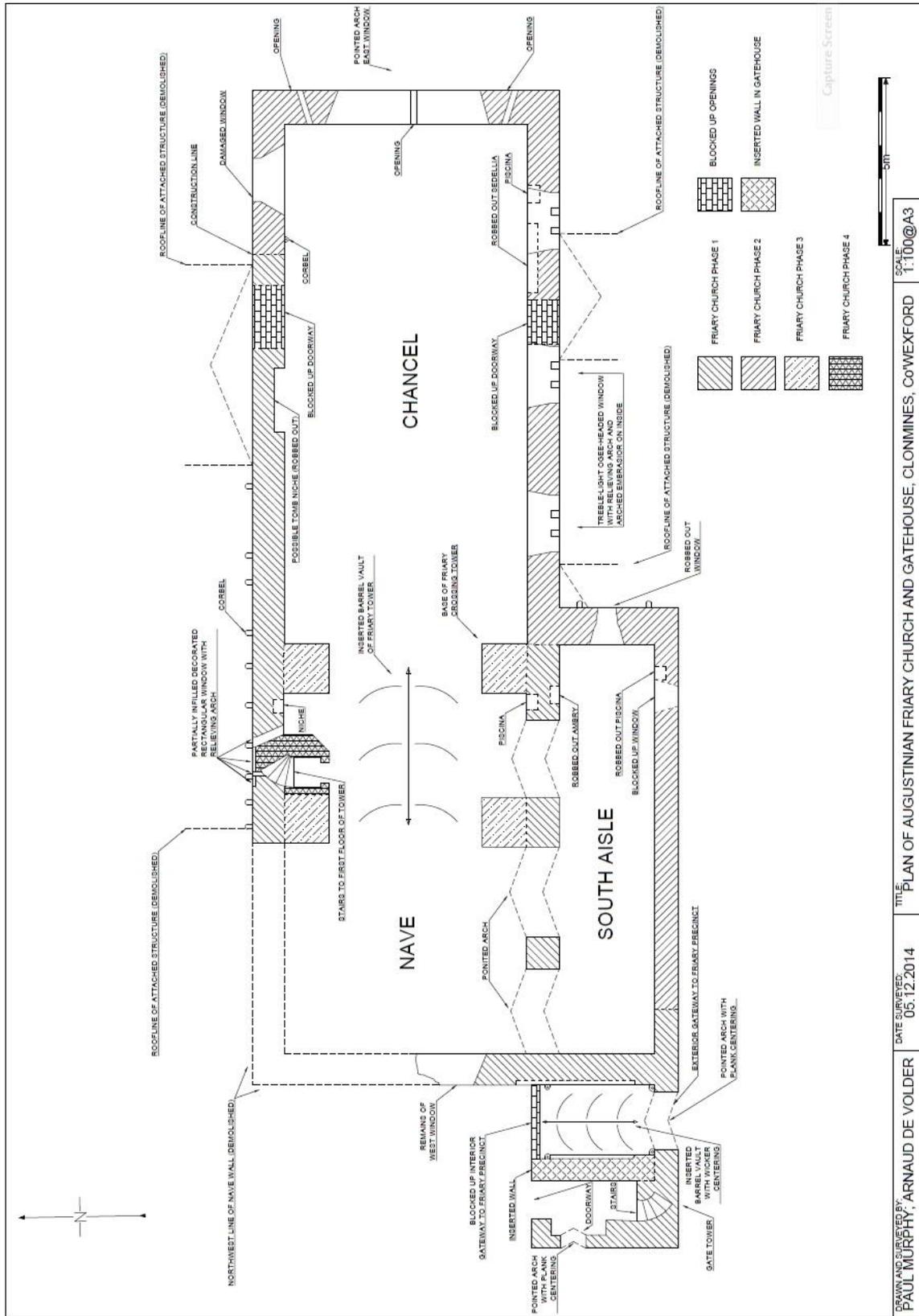


Figure 7. Exterior west elevation

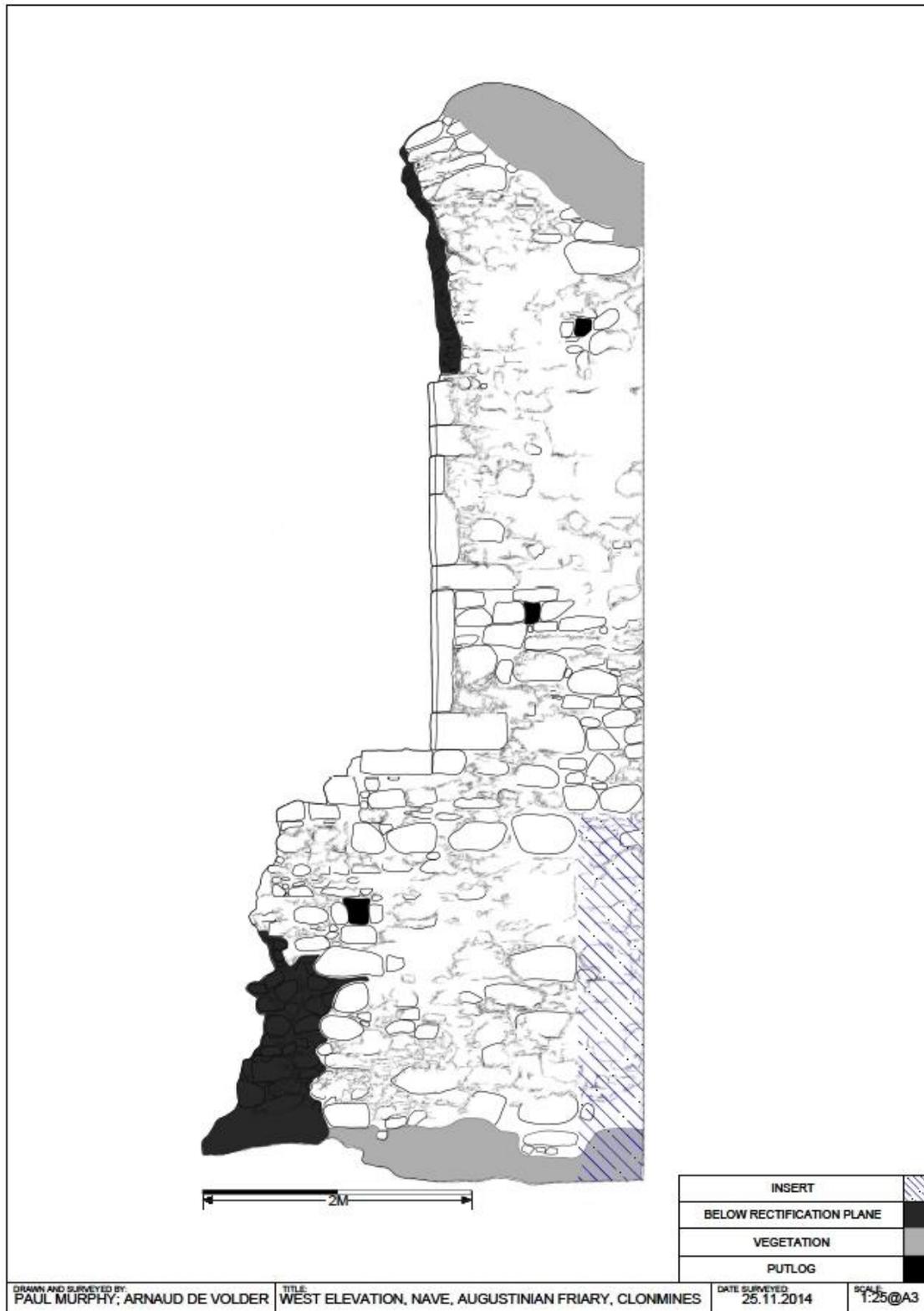


Figure 8. Exterior south elevation





Figure 9. Exterior east aisle

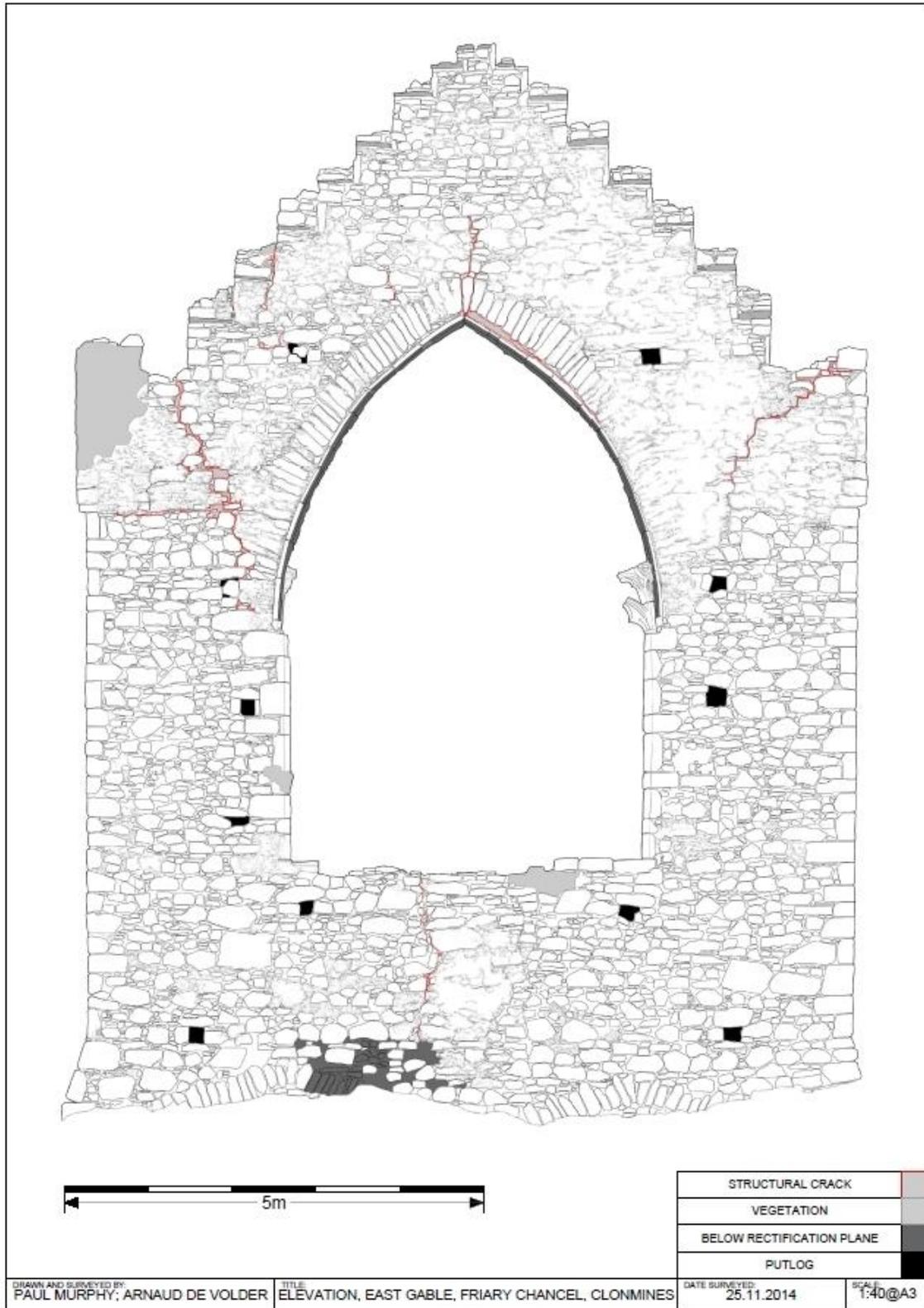


Figure 10. Exterior east chancel elevation

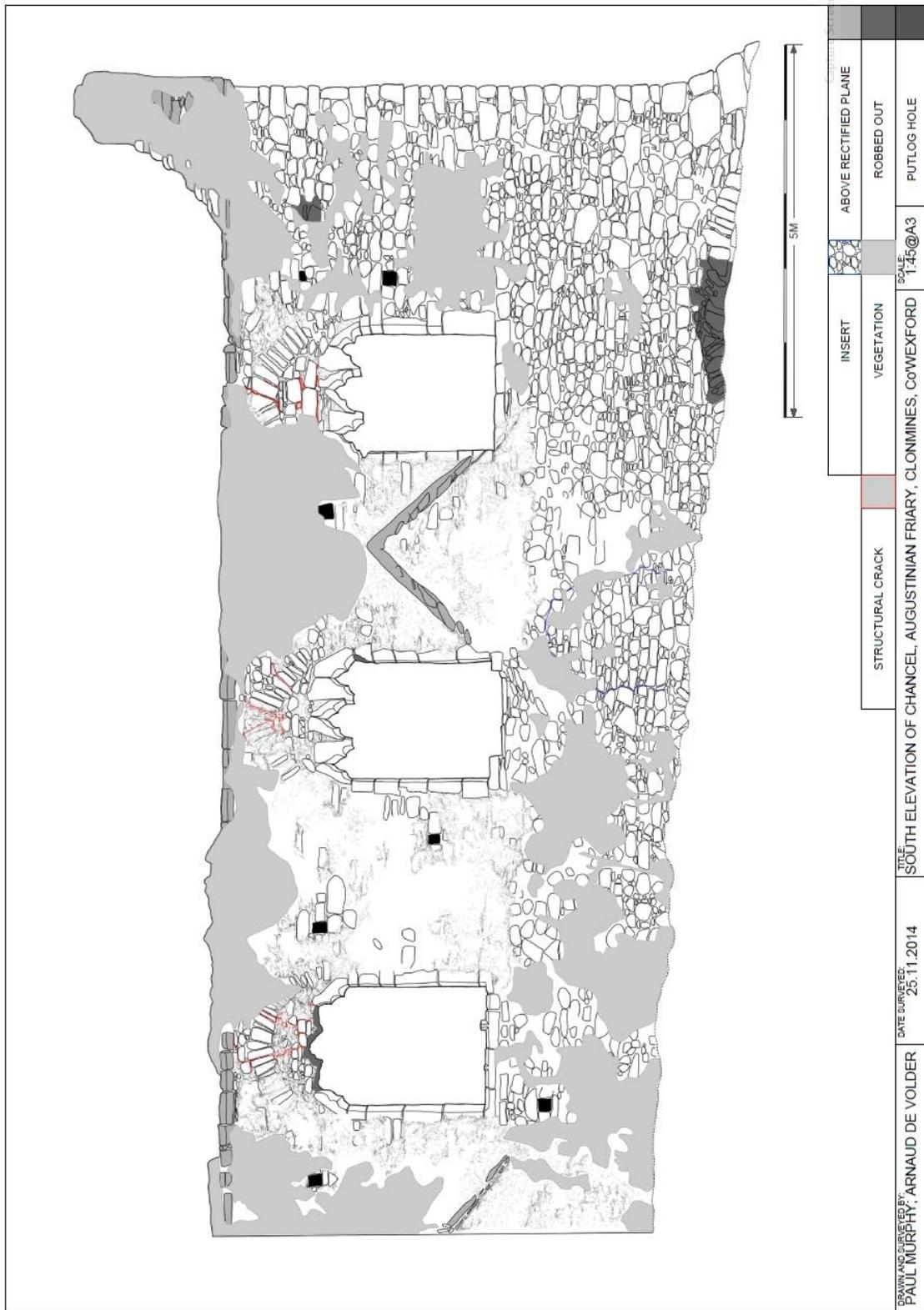


Figure 11. Exterior south elevation

Figure 12. Exterior north elevation

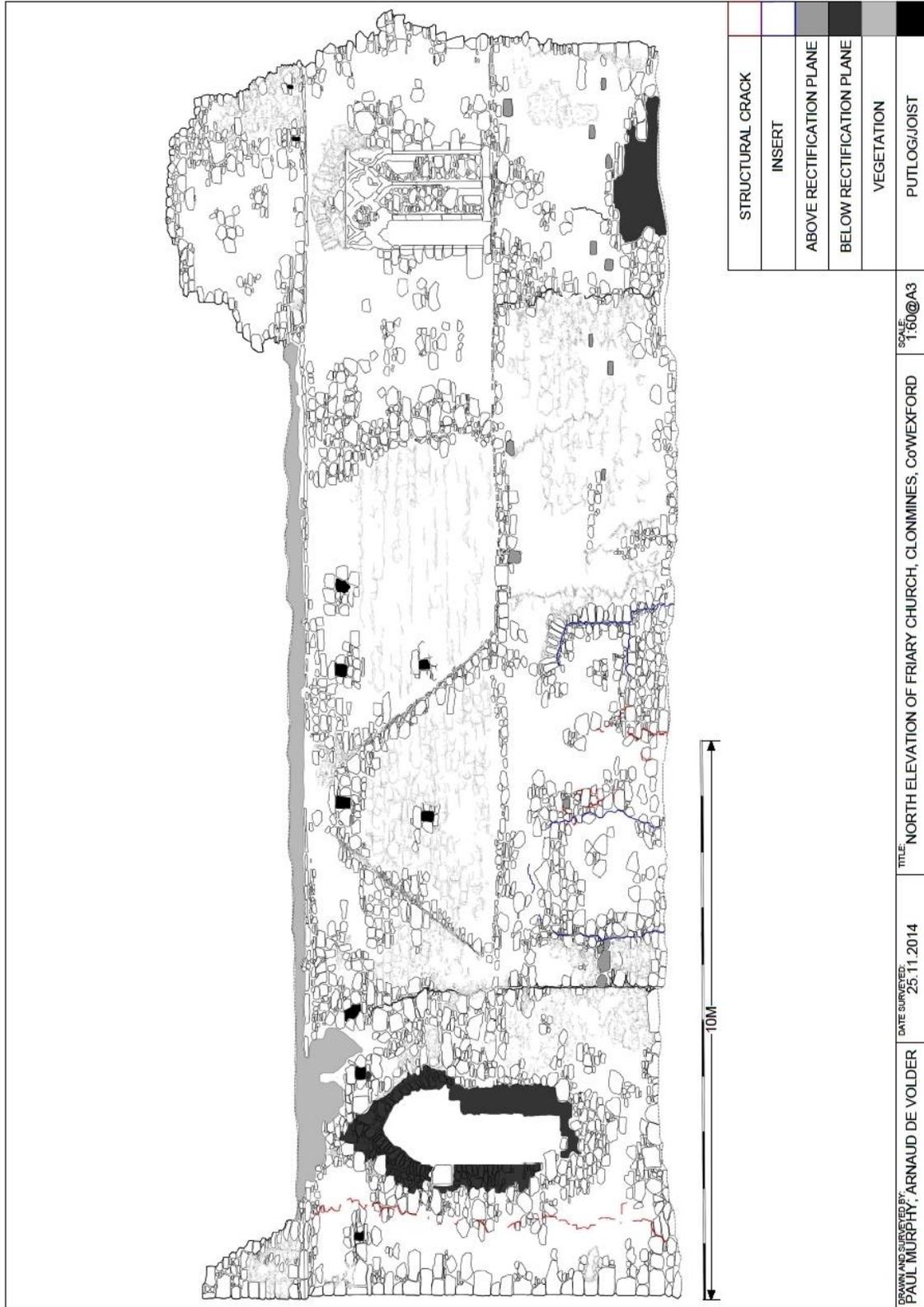


Figure 13. Crossing-tower east elevation

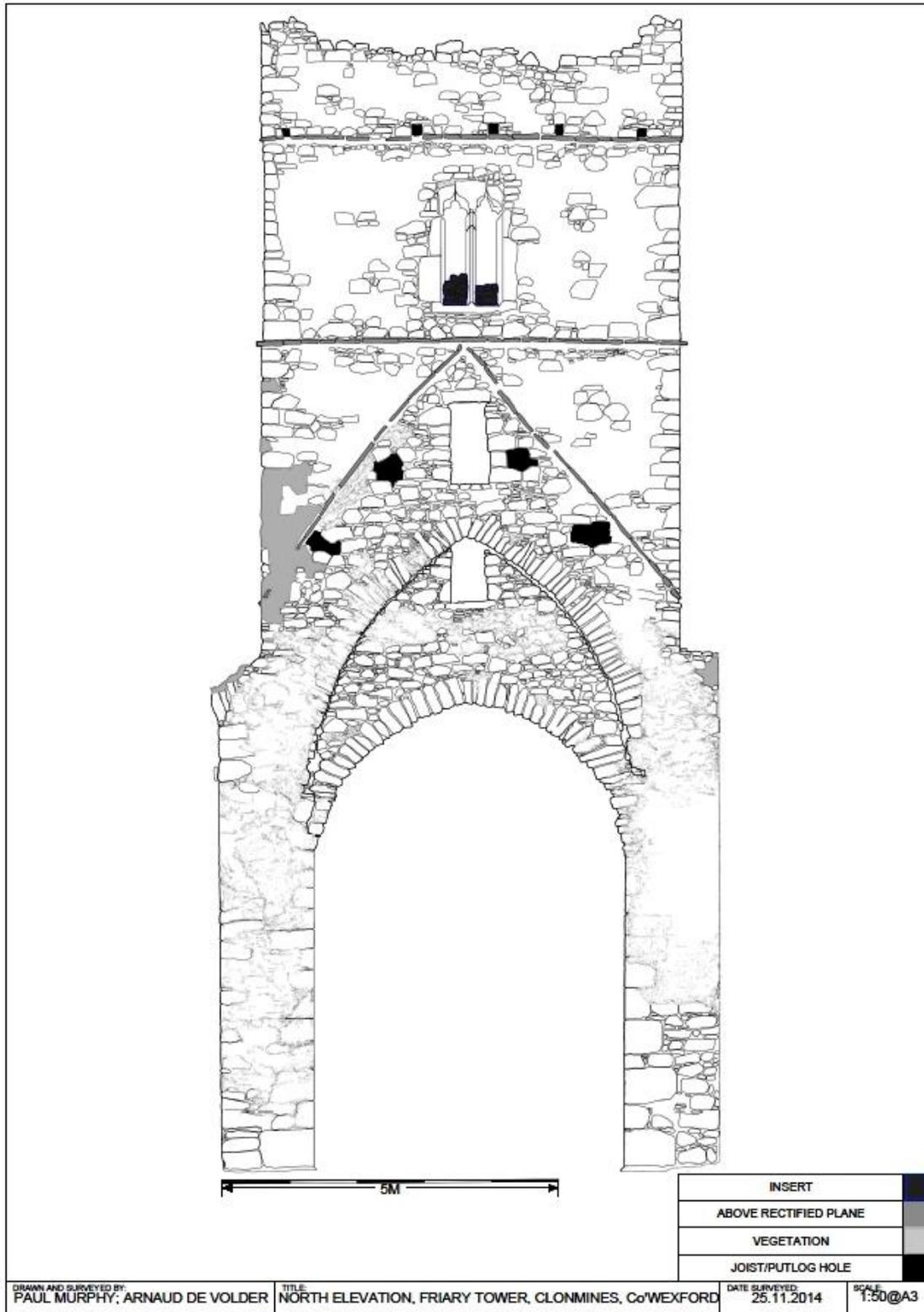
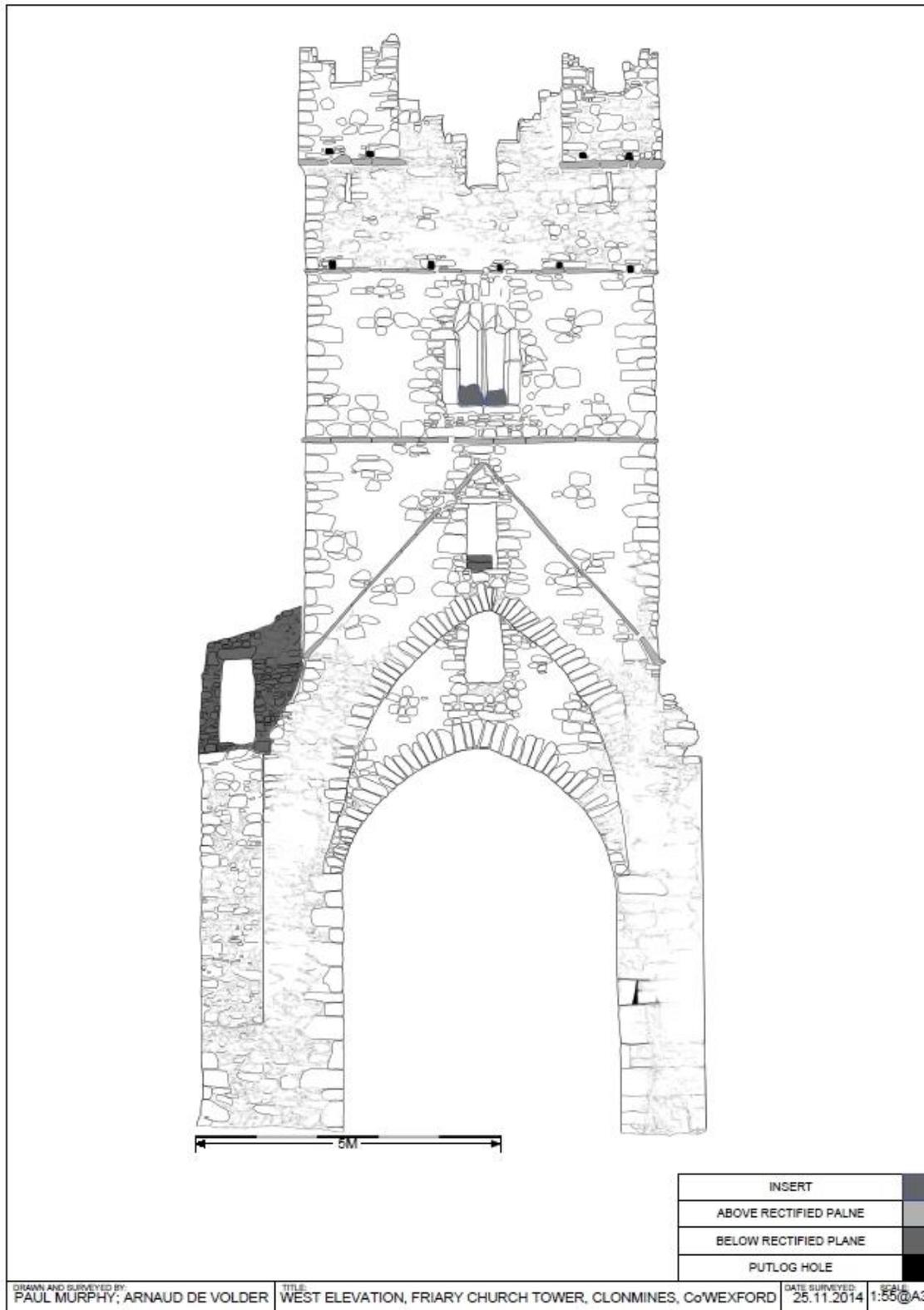


Figure 14. Crossing-tower west elevation



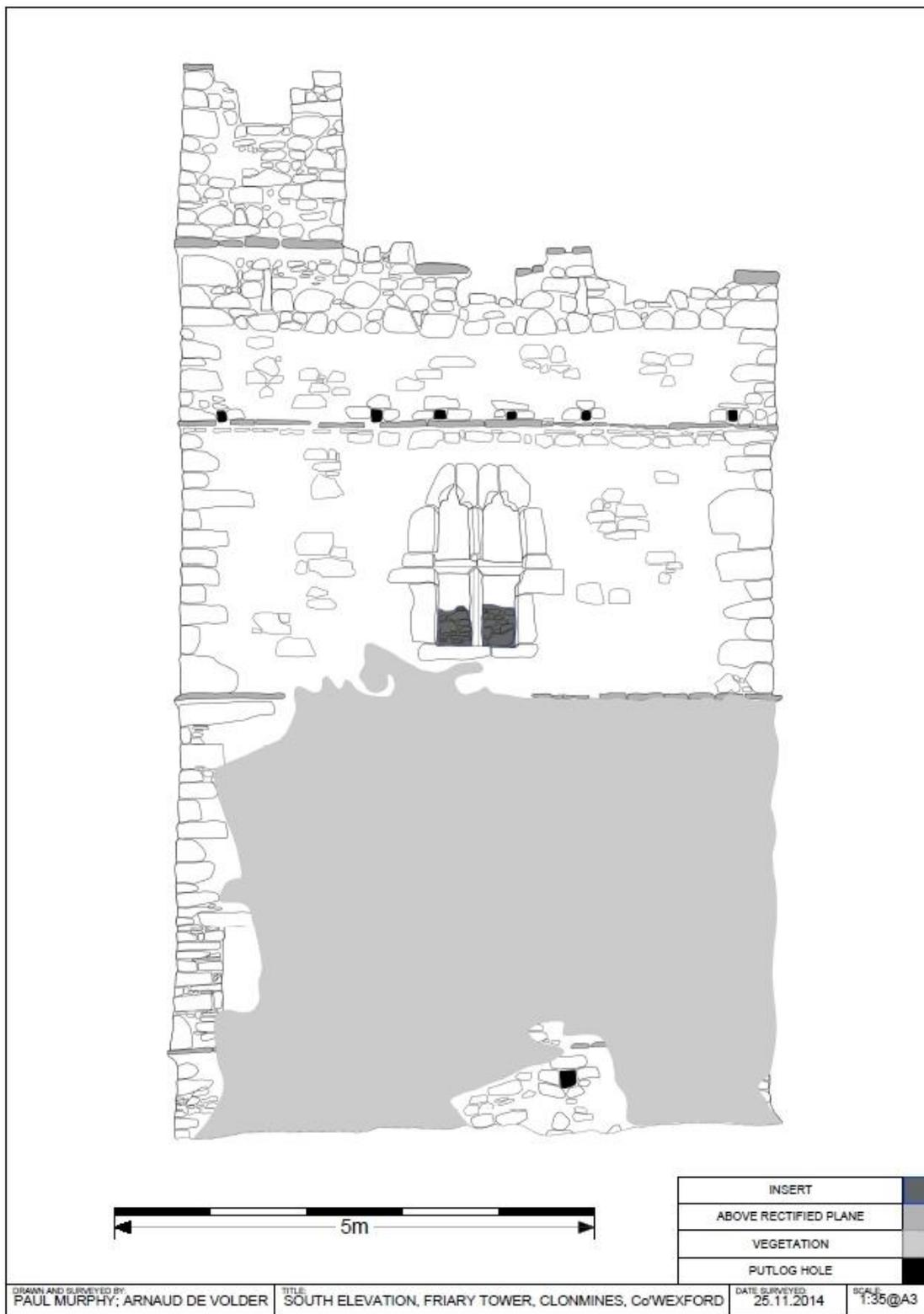


Figure 15. Crossing-tower south elevation

Figure 16. Gate-house west elevation

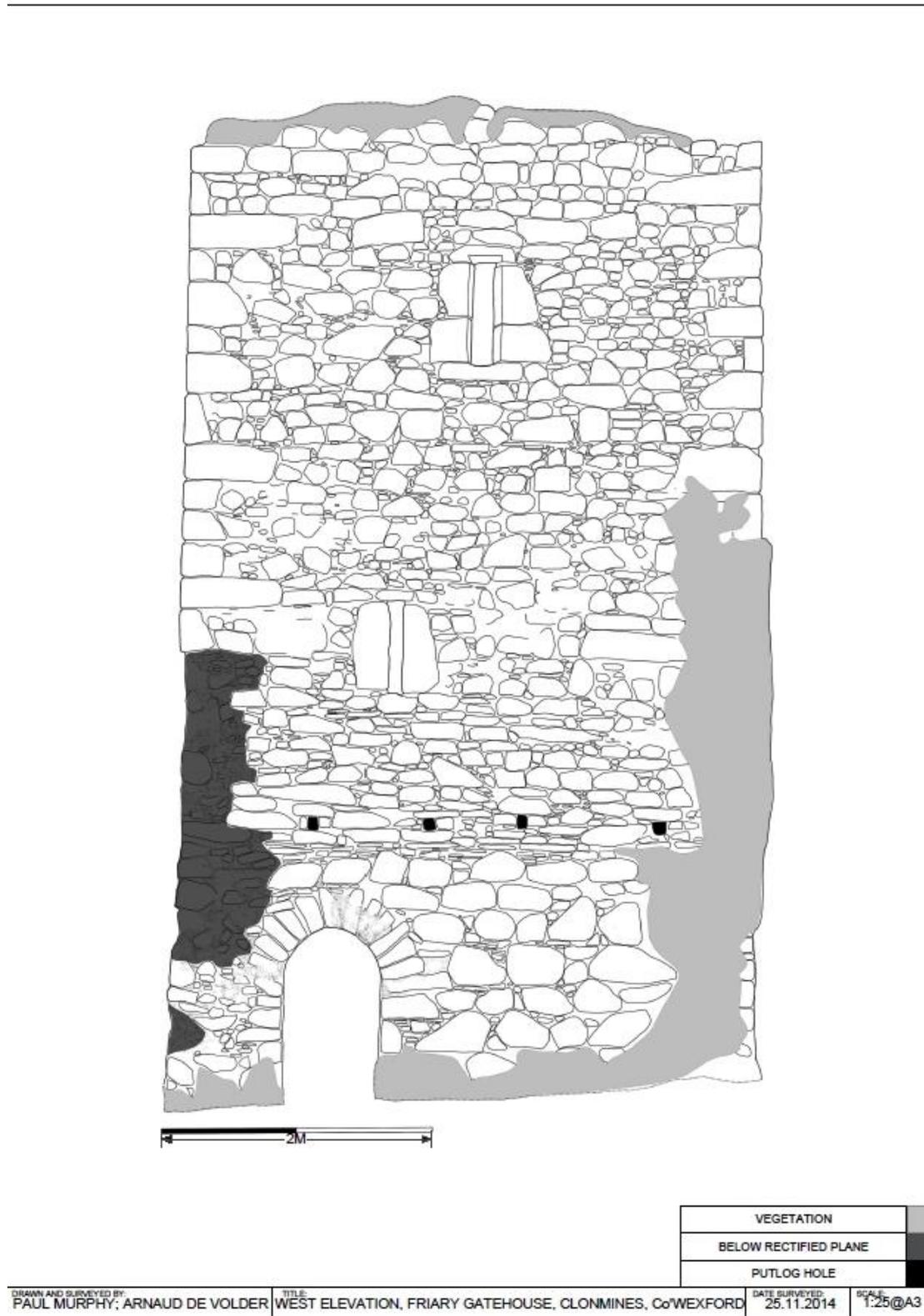


Figure 17. Gate-house south elevation



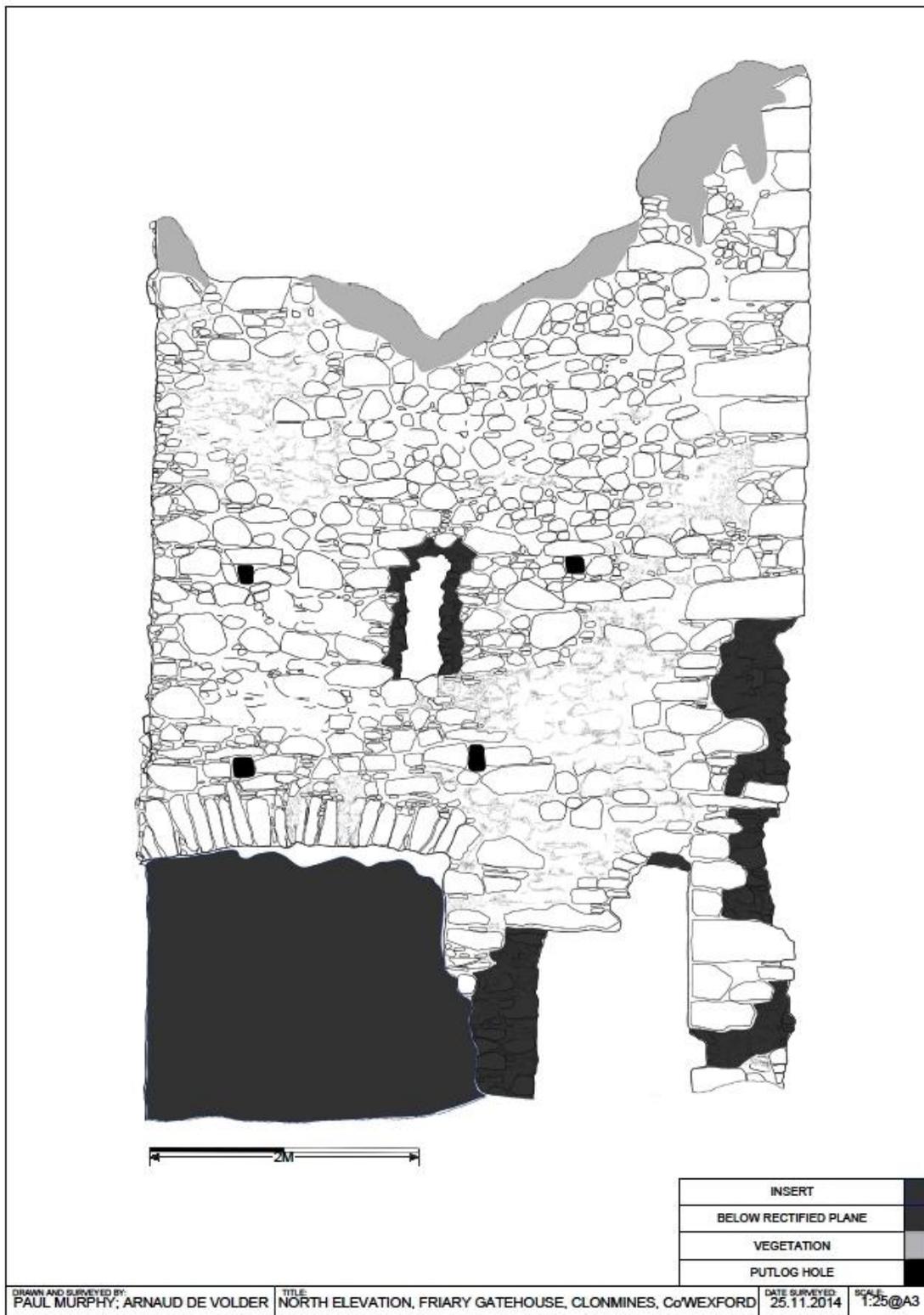


Figure 18. Gate-house north elevation

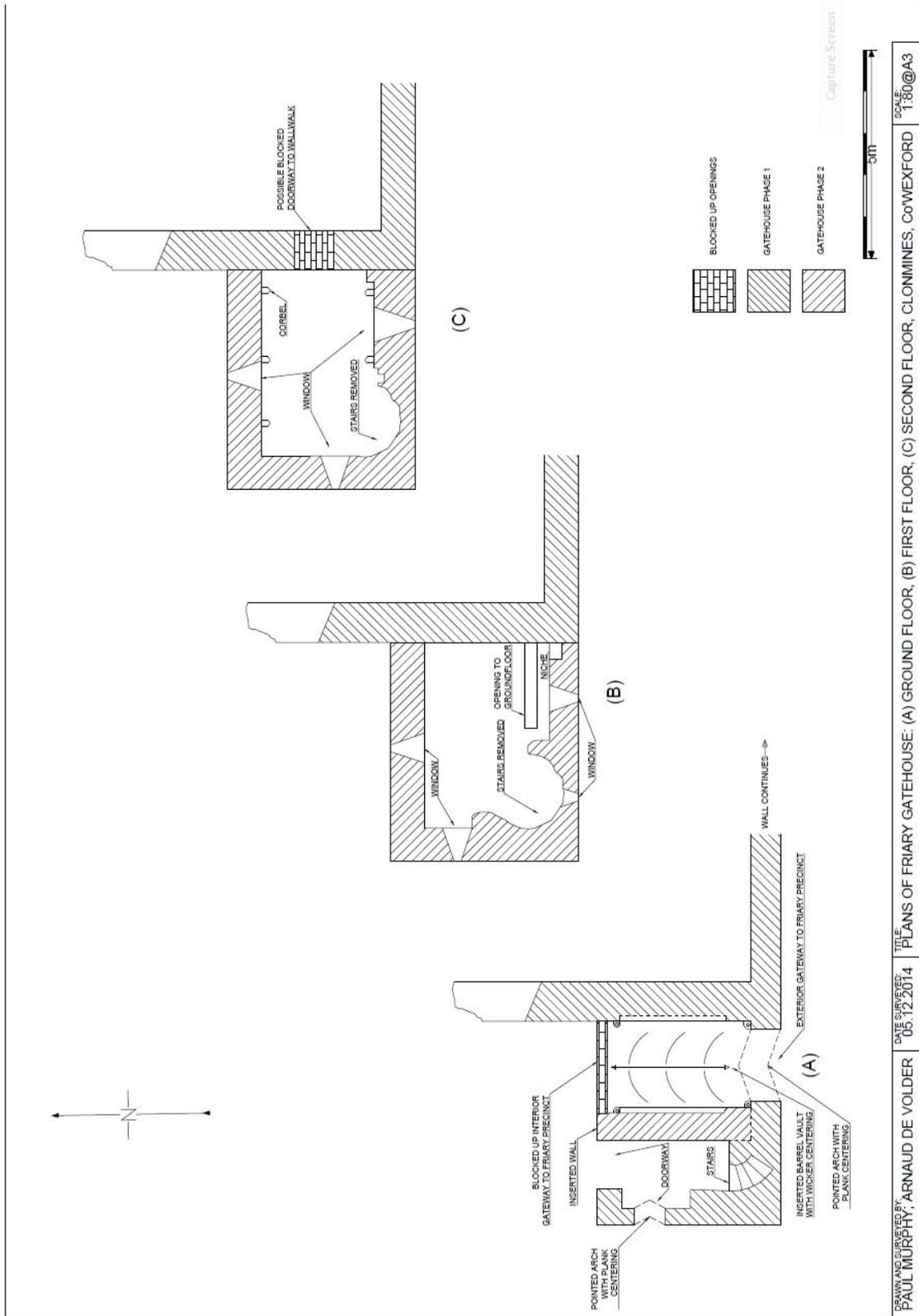


Figure 19. Gate-house plans



Figure 20. Precinct corner tower and wall fragment - west

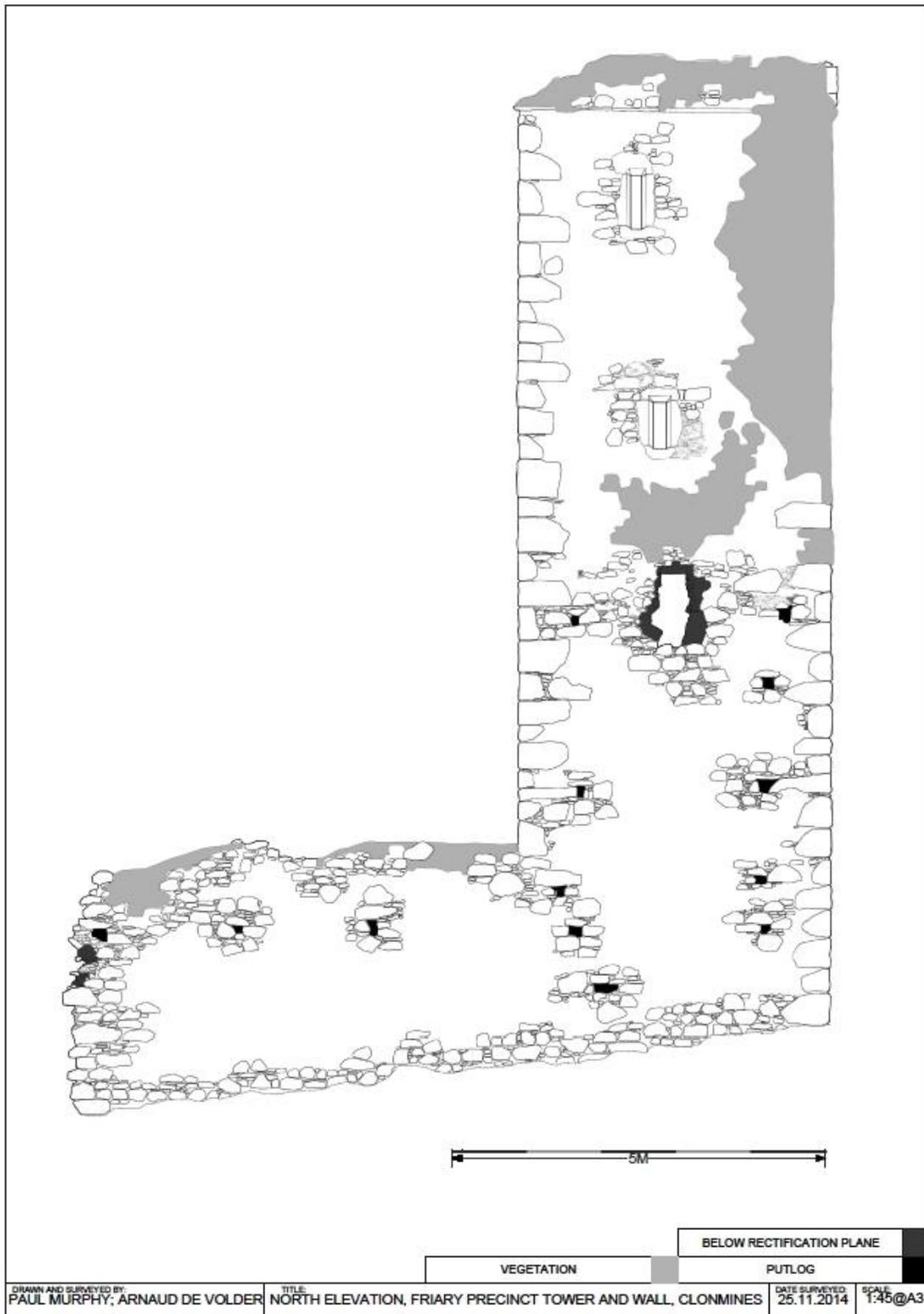


Figure 21. Precinct corner tower and wall fragment - north elevation

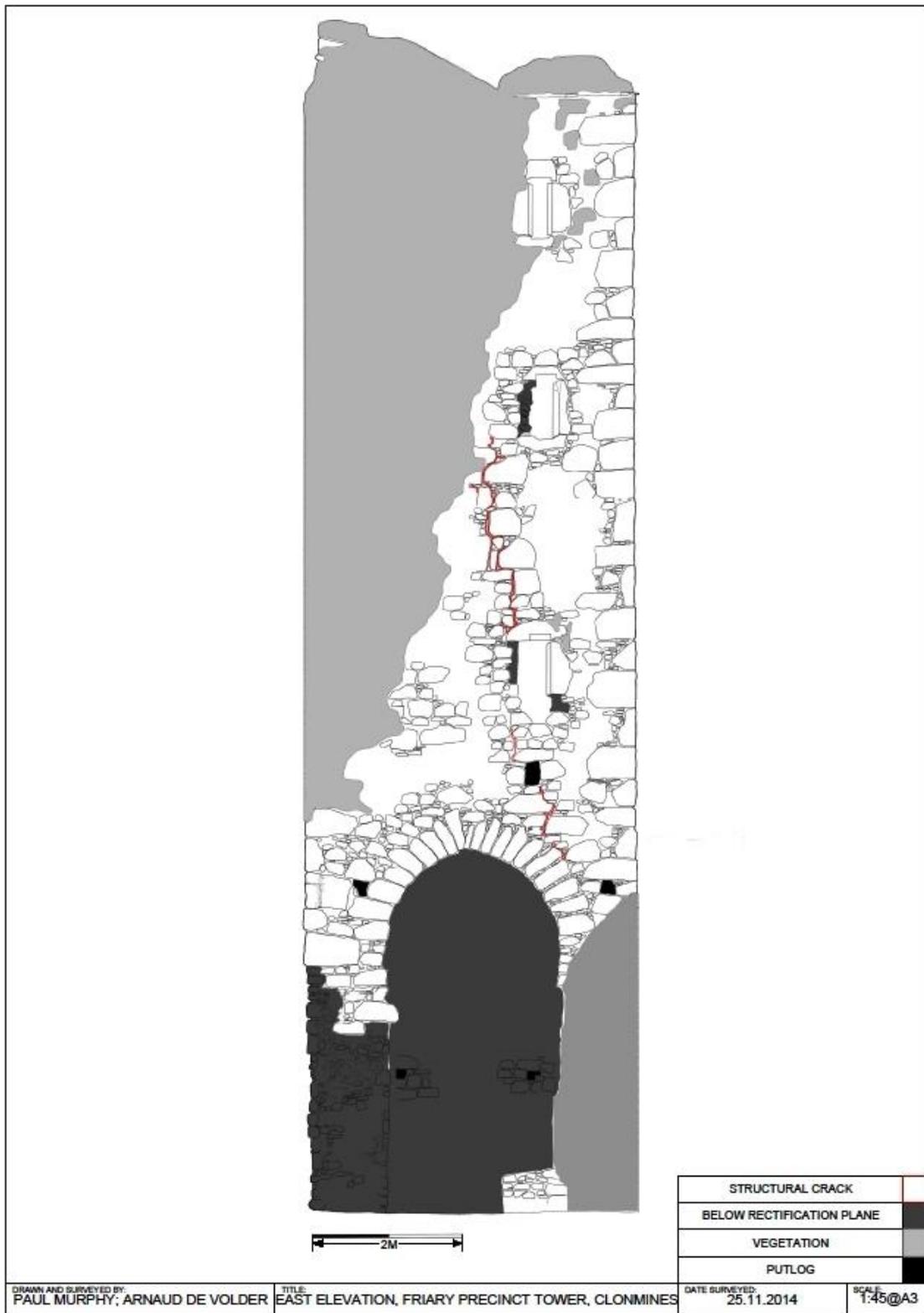


Figure 22. Precinct corner tower east elevation

Figure 23. Precinct corner tower ground and loft

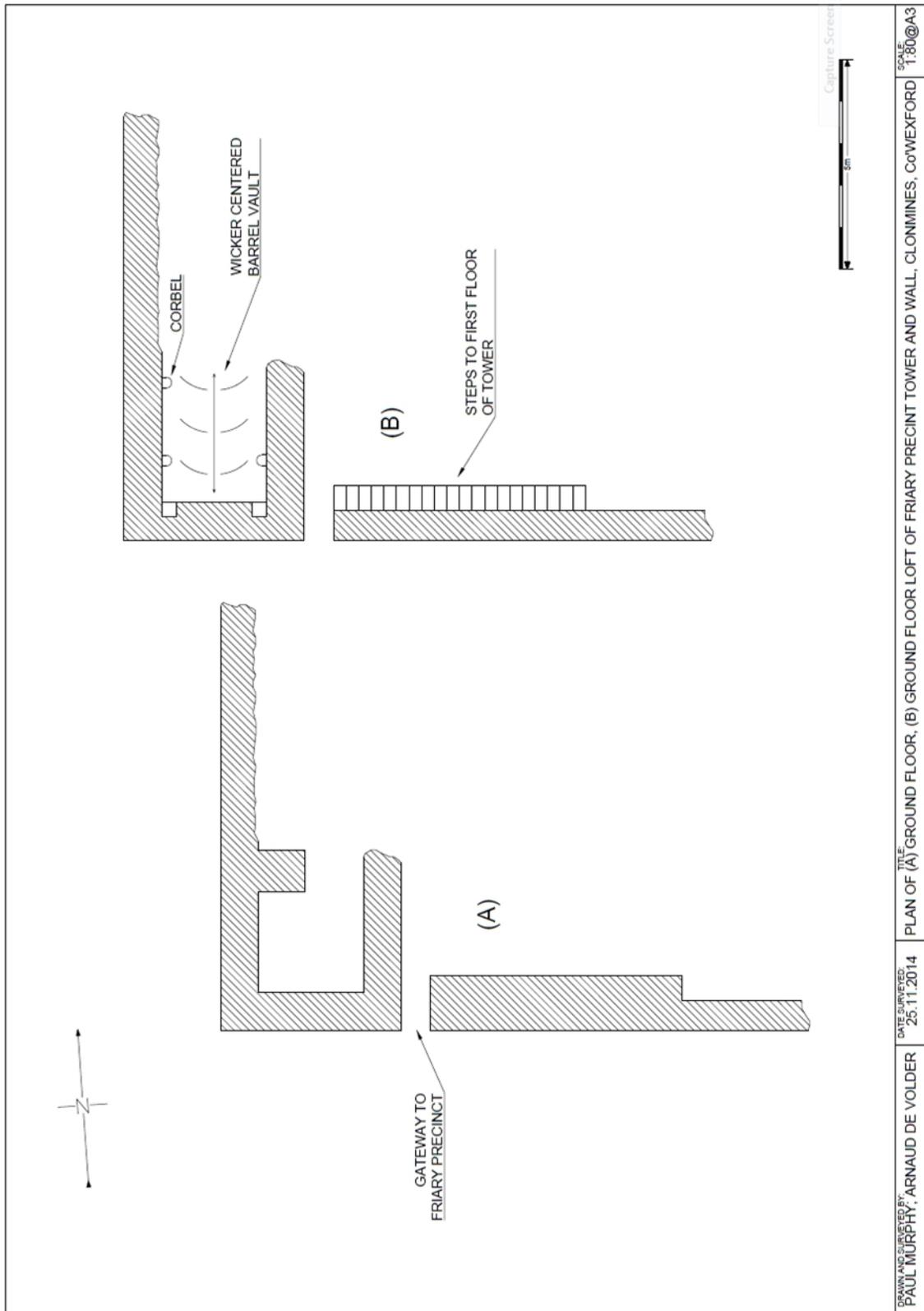
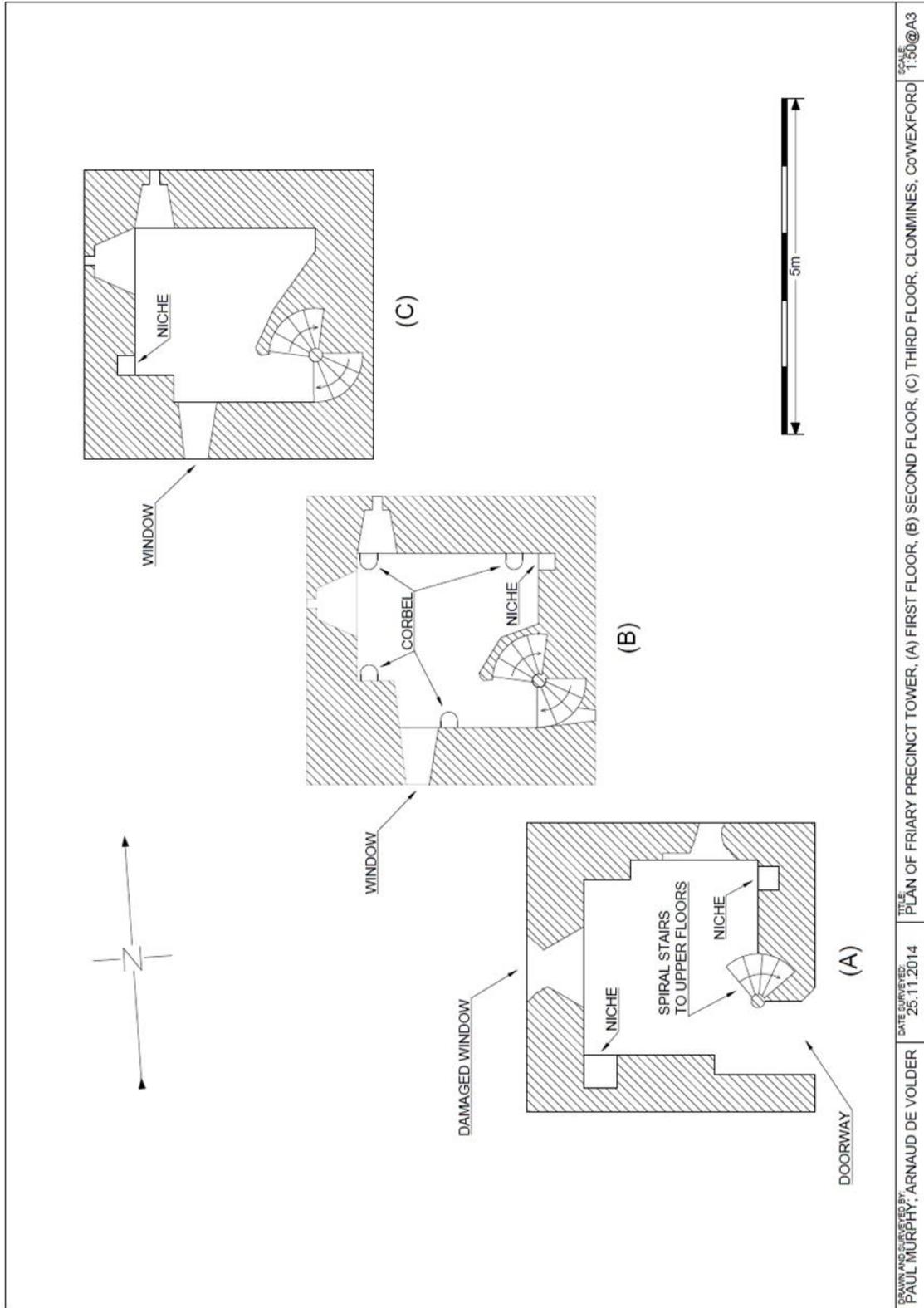


Figure 24. Precinct corner tower floor plans



Appendix 3 - Photographs



Figure 25. West window fragment interior





Figure 26. West elevation of south aisle



Figure 27. Ambry north wall of south aisle



Figure 28. Piscina - East nave arcade pier





Figure 29. West nave arcade - north elevation

Figure 30. East end of nave arcade





Figure 31. South side of friary - aisle and arcade





Figure 32. East window interior





Figure 33. South side of chancel interior





Figure 34. North wall of chancel interior



Figure 35. Diagonal tooling on arcade chamfered quoins





Figure 36. Inserted crossing-tower stair



Figure 37. Elongated chamfer stops and moulding at the base of the nave arcade pier (east end of the third bay)



Figure 38. Comparative elongated chamfer stop moulding of the nave piers at Tintern Abbey (Wexford)



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