

CHURCH OF St PETER AND St PAUL, DEDDINGTON, OXON. DESPC94

NGR SP469318

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Oxford Archaeological Unit conducted a watching brief at the Church of St Peter and St Paul, Deddington Oxon, during the excavation of a drainage/service trench along the S side of the Tower.

The present church is of 13th century origin. The Tower was built in the 17th century following a major structural collapse of the W end of the building.

The site was visited on January 11th 1994, when the completed trench was inspected.

RESULTS Fig.1.

The 0.3 m wide trench was dug alongside the W wall of the S aisle, and the S wall of the Tower, leading to a 1.7 m x 2.2 m pit by the churchyard wall W of the Tower. The depth of excavation varied from 0.5 m by the S aisle to 1.2 m in the pit.

The trench and pit were cut through a dark brown loamy topsoil layer (1) averaging 0.15 m deep, and a dark brown silty clay subsoil (2), which was up to 0.70 m deep and contained fragments of worked limestone and tile. At the bottom of the pit the natural geology of cornbrash in a stiff clay matrix was exposed.

Two modern brick built foundations (3) were revealed by the S wall of the Tower. They were oriented N-S and extended below the limit of excavation at this point (0.8 m).

By the SW buttress of the Tower the leg bones of an W-E adult inhumation (5) were partly revealed at the bottom of the trench (1.2 m). No evidence of a grave cut was seen. At this point, in the N side of the trench, a foundation of large unworked limestone blocks were noted (4), the insertion of which had apparently cut away the W half of the burial. This foundation appeared to be that of the buttress itself.

No other archaeological features were identified, but a quantity of scattered human bones were retrieved from the material excavated from the trench and pit. These were put aside for reburial.

Within the W end of the S aisle the present wooden floor was removed in places. This revealed only modern make up layers. No archaeological deposits were uncovered.

## CONCLUSION

The excavation indicated that the ground around the Tower has been very disturbed, either by burials or by the building of the Tower in the 17th century. The truncated grave (5), and the scatter of bone in the vicinity, suggest that the pre 17th century W end of the church did not extend as far as it does today.

The brick footings (3) may have served as supports for a grave slab.

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Church of St. Peters & St. Paul

DESPC 94

