

# St Mary's Church Aldworth West Berkshire



## Archaeological Watching Brief Report



April 2013

**Client: St Mary's Parochial  
Church Council**

Issue No: 1  
NGR: SU 554 793





Client Name: St Mary's Parochial Church Council  
 Client Ref No:  
 Document Title: St Mary's Church, Aldworth, West Berkshire  
 Document Type: Watching Brief Report  
 Issue/Version Number: 1  
 Grid Reference: SU 554 793  
 OA Job Number:  
 Site Code: ALMARY12  
 Invoice Code: ALMARYWB  
 Receiving Museum: Berkshire County Museum  
 Museum Accession No:  
 Event No:

Issue	Prepared by	Checked by	Approved by	Signature
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Document File Location \\Samba-1\smallworks\PROJECTS\Berkshire BR\Reading RD\10625 St Mary's Church, Aldworth  
 Graphics File Location Servergo:/oaupubs1\_AtoH\*ALMARY 12\*ALMARYWB\*st Mary's Church Aldworth, West Berkshire\*GS\*04.04.13  
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**St Mary's Church,  
Aldworth, West Berkshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief Report*

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## Summary

*Between October 2012 and March 2013, Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Mary's Church, Aldsworth, West Berkshire (SU 554 793). The work was carried out on behalf of the Parochial Church Council during the construction of a new kitchen and cloakroom attached on the north side of the church, and associated works for a service trench, soakaway pit and a septic tank.*

*The watching brief observed a number of burials adjacent to the north wall of the nave. Dates could not be assigned to the burials, except for one which contained 18th/19th century coffin fittings. A fallen headstone, probably relating to this burial, was recovered from below the present day turf line.*

*Excavations for the associated works showed that the southern and south-west edges of the churchyard had not been utilised for burials. Deep deposits of soil, including construction debris and colluvium, were observed overlying the natural chalk.*

*No evidence relating to any of the earlier phases of the church's construction was encountered.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 Planning Approval was granted by West Berkshire District Council in 2009 for an extension to the existing church structure to accommodate a kitchen and cloakroom at St Mary's Church, Aldworth, West Berkshire (NGR: SU 554 793) (Planning Reference 09/00302/FUL).
- 1.1.2 As part of the granting of Planning Approval a condition requiring that a programme of archaeological work be undertaken during the period of groundworks was attached.
- 1.1.3 OA produced a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) showing how it would meet these requirements (OA 2009).

### 1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Aldworth is located adjacent to the B4009 approximately halfway between Goring and Newbury (Fig. 1). The village is sited on one of the highest parts of the South Downs close to the Ridgeway. The church of St Mary is situated approximately 200 m south-west of the present day village centre.
- 1.2.2 The church itself is sited in roughly the centre of a triangular churchyard which lies on a gentle south facing slope at a mean height of approximately 153 m AOD. The churchyard is bounded by a public highway to the east, a public footpath to the north and a farm access road to the south-west. The underlying geology is Cretaceous Upper Chalk (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no. 268, 1971).
- 1.2.3 The proposed new building will butt up to the north wall of the church and will utilise an existing doorway.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 Aldworth was recorded in the Domesday Book as Elleorde, an Old English name meaning Old Enclosure or Old Farm. By the the 12th century it was known as Aldewurda (Nash Ford 2011). It is unclear if a church was already in existence on the site during Domesday.
- 1.3.2 The oldest part of the standing church is the lower part of the tower, which is in a style known as "Transitional Norman" and may date to around 1200 . This probably belonged to a small aisle-less church consisting only of chancel, nave and the tower (Page and Ditchfield 1924). Early in the 14th century the chancel was rebuilt on a larger scale, the north and south walls being brought out to the line of those of the nave. In about 1330 the south aisle was added (*ibid.*).
- 1.3.3 The rebuilding of the chancel probably dates to around 1315, when the high altar was re-dedicated by commission from the Bishop of Salisbury, at the instance of Sir Philip de la Beche and other inhabitants (Page and Ditchfield 1924).
- 1.3.4 During the 13th century the church itself came within the manor of the Norman family of De la Beche, whose successive generations commissioned the nine stone effigies know as the "Aldworth Giants". These commemorate five generations of the family during the period 1300-1350(Nash Ford 2011; Page and Ditchfield 1924).
- 1.3.5 From the 14th century until the present day little appears to have been done to the church. From 1845 onwards the building has, at intervals, undergone many





restorations, such as the rebuilding of the east wall of the chancel and the addition of the vestry and the south porch (Page and Ditchfield 1924).

1.3.6 Between 1991 and 1992 the church was re-roofed.

*Previous archaeological work*

1.3.7 In November 2006 Oxford Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief in advance of construction of new surface drains around the north and west walls of the church (OA 2006). The watching brief revealed a number of graves on the north side of church and a pathway on the west side of church.

## 2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 The general aims of the watching brief were to:

- preserve by record any archaeological deposits, structures or features encountered during the course of any ground intrusions;
- seek to establish the extent, nature and date of any archaeological deposits, structures or features encountered within the scope of the ground intrusion;
- secure the analysis, conservation and long-term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site;
- disseminate results through the production of a unpublished client (grey literature) report.

2.1.2 Specific aims of the watching brief were:

- To determine the presence or otherwise of any surviving remains of the earlier church.
- To determine the extent to which human remains survive in the affected areas, and to generally observe the presence of burial vaults and graves.
- To signal, before work continued, the discovery of an archaeological find for which further action was required.

### 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The watching brief observed all groundworks that had the potential to affect or reveal archaeological deposits. This included the excavation of the foundation trench and the reduction of the ground level within the proposed build, landscaping of the area around the new build, service trenching and excavation of a soakaway and a septic tank (Fig. 2).

2.2.2 The excavations were undertaken using a combination of a mini digger fitted with a toothless bucket and by hand.

2.2.3 All excavation, lifting of inhumations and recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Fieldwork Manual* (OAU 1992). Archaeological features and deposits were issued with unique context numbers. A plan of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:20 and any recorded sections were drawn at 1:20. A photographic record consisting of black and white negative and colour digital photographs was maintained.

2.2.4 Any articulated skeletons to be disturbed during the works were recorded, exhumed and examined by an osteoarchaeologist. This material together with any disturbed, or disarticulated human skeletal material was reserved for later re-burial in a communal internment located in the north-west corner of the churchyard.

2.2.5 Where coffins, coffin fittings and memorials were encountered they were recorded with reference to accepted standards (Mytum 2000; Reeve and Adams 1993).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Presentation of the results

- 3.1.1 Approximately two months prior to the start of the construction two test pits were dug adjacent to the church in order to finalise the architect's designs. These will not be described separately but will be referred to within the body of the text.
- 3.1.2 The main works were undertaken in three main phases and include the excavation of the buildings foundations, the excavation of the service trench and the excavation for the installation of the septic tank.
- 3.1.3 Each of the three phases will be described separately followed by an overall discussion and conclusion.

### 3.2 Soils and ground conditions

- 3.2.1 The majority of the excavations took place within a mixture of disturbed and redeposited soils. The underlying solid natural was encountered where the depth of excavation exceeded 1.2m. Groundwater was not encountered in any of the excavations.

### 3.3 Description of archaeological deposits

#### *The new building*

- 3.3.1 The excavation for the base of the building measured approximately 6.75m by 4.5m and was dug to a maximum depth of 1.75m (Fig. 3). A foundation trench approximately 1.55m deep was dug along the line of the new walls and the ground level reduced by 1.25m within the footprint of the new building in order to match the existing floor level within the church. The northern edge was landscaped to form a gentle slope from the present day churchyard to the terrace alongside the new building.
- 3.3.2 Exposed within the base of the foundation trench and along the northern half of the excavation area was a layer of compact natural chalk with occasional flint nodules (24). This deposit could be seen to be in excess of 0.4m in depth within the section (Fig. 4, Section 3).
- 3.3.3 Directly above the chalk was a thick (0.8m – 1m deep) layer of light grey clayey silt mixed with chalk lumps and flecks (10 and 22). This context produced occasional fragments of stone together with mortar flecking and both abraded and angular fragments of clay roof tile. Also recovered from this deposit were numerous fragments of disarticulated human remains.
- 3.3.4 Along the southern edge of the site this deposit had been cut by a 0.7m deep foundation trench for the north wall of the nave (11 and 23) (Fig. 4, Sections 1, 2 and 3). The foundations of the north wall had been trench built within this, using a mixture of hard chalk lumps and flints.
- 3.3.5 Elsewhere within the footprint of the new building layer 24 had been cut by a sequence of intercutting graves. The earliest of these were (35), (47), and (59). Grave cut 35 measured approximately 1.75m by 0.6m, had been excavated to a depth of 1.7m below the current ground level and contained the supine skeleton of an adult male (36). (Full details of the inhumations can be found in Appendix B.) Cut 47 was 0.65m wide, 1.3m deep and contained the skeleton of a robust adult male (48).

- 3.3.6 Cut 59 measured 1.9m long, 0.7m wide and was in excess of 1.5m deep. This was greater than the depth of impact and the inhumation was not exposed.
- 3.3.7 Cutting the backfill (46) of Grave 47 and the backfill (58) of Grave 59 were two burials, (38 and 44). Only the western end of 38 was excavated and could be seen to contain the skeleton of a probable adult male, while grave cut 44 measured 1.7m long by 0.65m wide and had been excavated to a depth of 1.6m. Only the eastern part of the skeleton (45) was exposed, the remainder being below the depth of impact.
- 3.3.8 Cut into the backfill 34 of grave 35 was a later burial (31) measuring approximately 1.8m by 0.6m and which contained the truncated skeleton of a young adult male (33). Clipping the south-east corner of grave 59 was a 1.9m by 0.7m grave cut (50). Only part of the inhumation (51) was exposed within the foundation trench.
- 3.3.9 Cutting southern edge of 50 was a 1.8m long, 0.65m wide by 1m deep grave cut (53) containing the supine skeleton (54) of a mature adult female.
- 3.3.10 The backfills of graves 31, 35 and 44 were cut by a 2m long by 0.7m wide burial (56). This contained the supine skeleton of an adult female (57). Also observed within the burial was the outline of a coffin defined by a number of coffin nails together with the heavily corroded remains of two sets of black enameled grips and grip plates at the head and foot ends of the coffin, the wooden elements of the coffin itself having decomposed.
- 3.3.11 The grip plates appeared to be similar to those identified as Type 33 within the Christ Church Spitalfields coffin fittings catalogue and date to the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Reeve and Adams 1993). This type of grip plate depicts a composite of popular 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century motifs, including a crown surrounded by pillars, skulls, cherubim holding trumpets, foliage and flowers. The crown symbolises the crown of Jesus, immortality, righteousness and glory of eternal life; the trumpeting cherubim, God's glory and victory over death, or alternatively the Day of Judgement; and the skulls and columns, death and mortality. The flowers refer to complex ideas about life death and re-birth. The grips themselves were plain and were possibly the same as Christchurch, Spitalfields Type 2a, which is a simple curved design, also popular in the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 3.3.12 A gravestone, which had fallen face down and had been subsequently covered by turf, was recovered above the eastern end of burial 56, and may be associated with it. The inscription had been badly weathered and could only be partially deciphered. It read:

*"Within this Earthly*

*..... lies*

*A(?)..... ..alk... Blolsom*

*.....y .lown*

*Before .....*

*.....*

*....."*

- 3.3.13 The gravestone is currently being stored on site.
- 3.3.14 Burial 56 had in turn been disturbed by the later burial (29) containing the skeleton of a young adult female (30).
- 3.3.15 Burial 41 of a probable adult female (42) was partially exposed in the north-east corner of the new building footprint.

- 3.3.16 Sealing all the grave cuts and the churchyard soil was the present day layer of topsoil and turf (25).
- 3.3.17 A later brick pathway/ drainage gully had been constructed alongside the north wall of the nave. A bedding layer of pale yellow-brown clayey silt 0.5m deep (21) had been laid directly above the churchyard soil and a 0.5m wide pathway of plain red brick pavers (20) laid above that (Fig. 4, section 2).

#### *The Service Trench*

- 3.3.18 This was excavated from the north-west corner of the new building to the new septic tank in the north-west corner of the churchyard. It measured 1m deep by 0.4m wide and was excavated for a total length of 42m.
- 3.3.19 The initial 18.5m ran directly west before turning towards the north-west for the remainder of the length (Fig. 2). A soakaway pit measuring approximately 1.5m by 1.5m by 1.5m was dug adjacent to the turn.
- 3.3.20 The stratigraphy observed was similar throughout the majority its length (Fig. 4, Section 4). At the base of the soakaway excavation the weathered top of the natural chalk (24) was encountered. This was overlaid by a continuation of the churchyard soil 22 measuring up to 1.2m in depth which was sealed by the topsoil and turf (25).
- 3.3.21 No individual grave cuts could be discerned within the churchyard soil. However, the incidence of disarticulated bones decreased markedly as the trench proceeded westwards and suggests that this area has been disturbed to a lesser degree by burial activity.
- 3.3.22 The depth of the churchyard soil 22 reduced as the trench continued northwards eventually tapering off as the trench ran parallel to the farm track, Townsend Road.

#### *The Septic Tank Excavation*

- 3.3.23 At the northern end of the service trench a pit measuring 3m square and 3.5m deep was excavated in order to contain a septic tank.
- 3.3.24 The natural chalk 24 was encountered at a depth of 1.1m below the current ground level (Fig. 4, Section 5). This was overlaid by a 0.4m deep layer (61) of yellow-brown mixed silty clay and blocky chalk fragments. Above layer 61 was a 0.4m deep deposit of light yellow-brown sandy silt clay (60). Both these deposits were very clean and produced no evidence of activity and are the probable result of weathering and colluvial activity respectively.
- 3.3.25 Above layer 60 was a 0.2m deep continuation of the present day topsoil and turf 25.
- 3.3.26 Subsequent to the excavation of this pit a smaller excavation measuring 1.5m x 1.5m and 1.5m deep was dug approximately 2m to the east for the re-interment of the human remains recovered during the course of the groundworks. The stratigraphy observed was identical to that recorded within Section 5 and it was not recorded separately.

### **3.4 Articulated human skeletal remains summary (see Appendix B)**

- 3.4.1 A total of 10 skeletons were examined, of which the majority were incomplete as a result of truncation by later burial activity.
- 3.4.2 Skeletons ranged in age from young adult to older adult. Of the skeletons whose sex could be determined males and females were equally represented.

- 3.4.3 Among the pathological conditions observed were dental disease, joint disease and evidence of iron deficiency in two of the female skeletons. Minor trauma, in the form of periostitis was also observed in one individual and another individual had sustained a fracture to their right hip.

## 4 DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Interpretation

#### *The new building*

- 4.1.1 Layers 10 and 22 represent a typical churchyard soil formed of disturbed soil that has been mixed by successive intercutting burials. A large quantity of disarticulated human bone was recovered from both these contexts and also within the backfills of the graves and suggests that burials have taken place over a long period of time, during which successive burials have disturbed and truncated earlier ones. Other than the headstone and coffin fittings recovered from Burial 57 no dating evidence was recovered from these burials. Fragments of brick, tile and stone of probable 19th century date were recovered from both layers 10 and 22, but it is likely that this was deposited during the post-medieval renovation work noted within the historical background (section 1.3).
- 4.1.2 The coffin remains recovered from Burial 57 are consistent with 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century funerary practice. These were in very poor condition and the coffin itself and other fittings had not survived. A typical 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century coffin was of the flat lidded single-break type, upholstered with velvet or baize and secured and decorated with studs and punched metal *depositum* plates and grips and grip plates. Grips and grip plates, once solely functional, were by this time increasingly elaborate and the St Mary's example is no exception. Depending on their size, coffins had between four and ten grips. Pairs of grips and grip plates were attached along the long axis of the coffin. Frequently, as seen at St Mary's, another pair was attached to the head and foot ends of the coffin. In most cases the grips and grip plates on a coffin matched one another in the style and type of metal used.
- 4.1.3 The brick-built pathway/water gully 20 is also probably associated with the post-medieval renovation.
- 4.1.4 Other than the activity mentioned above no evidence for any earlier phases of the church's construction was observed during this period of the works.

#### *The service trench*

- 4.1.5 The depth of the trench at approximately 1m was to be insufficient to impact on any further burials, which appeared to be below this level.
- 4.1.6 The frequency of disarticulated remains recovered declined as the trench moved westwards, which together with the appearance of an undisturbed layer of colluvium, 60, along the western edge of the churchyard suggests that the area adjacent to Townsend Road has not been impacted upon.

#### *The septic tank*

- 4.1.7 Similar observations to those made in the service trench as it ran along the southern edge of the churchyard were made with the exception that the depth of excavation was such that the colluvium could be seen to directly over lie the natural formations.



## 4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The watching brief has shown that the ground immediately to the north of the church has been heavily disturbed and mixed by a substantial number of burials, many of which cut earlier burials. As a result, most of the human remains were heavily truncated and incomplete. Although both a coffin plate and headstone were recovered from one of the graves their condition was such that it was impossible to determine a more precise date other than 18<sup>th</sup>/19th century, as suggested by style. No other dating evidence was observed in association with the other burials.
- 4.2.2 No evidence for any of the earlier phases of the church's construction was observed during the course of the watching brief. This may be due to the limited scope of the excavations although it is more likely that the later additions to the church have completely obscured or destroyed the earlier building.
- 4.2.3 During the excavation of the service trench to the immediate north-west of the church, no evidence for any further grave cuts could be determined. However, the mixed nature of the churchyard soil (22) would have made their identification difficult.
- 4.2.4 The remainder of the trenching and the excavation of the pit for the septic tank exposed both colluvium and natural chalk at the base of the trench. Within these excavations no evidence for any grave cuts or disarticulated remains was observed which may suggest the north-west corner of the churchyard has not yet been utilised for burial.



**APPENDIX A. CONTEXT INVENTORY**

Context	Type	Depth	Width	Comments	Findings	Date
10	Layer	> 0.15m	-	Churchyard soil	Bone, tile	-
11	Cut	> 0.15m	-	Construction cut for north wall of nave	-	-
20	Path	0.07m	0.6m	Brick pathway/ rain gully alongside north wall of the nave	Brick	C19th
21	Layer	0.15m	-	Layer of made ground supporting path 20	Brick, stone	C19th
22	Layer	0.8m - 1m	-	Churchyard soil (same as 10)	Brick, tile, stone, disartic. bone	-
23	Cut	0.4m	-	Construction cut for north wall of nave, same as 11	-	-
24	Layer	> 0.4m	-	Natural chalk	-	-
25	Layer	0.3m	-	Present day topsoil and turf	Brick, tile	C19th/ C20th
Context numbers 26 and 27 were not used						
28	Fill	0.7m	0.6m	Backfill of grave cut (29)	Disartic bone	-
29	Cut	0.7m	0.6m	Grave cut	-	-
30	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial, Young adult female	-	-
31	Fill	0.8m	0.6m	Backfill of grave cut (32)	Disartic bone	-
32	Cut	0.8m	0.6m	Grave cut	-	-
33	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of a young adult male	-	-
34	Fill	0.8m	0.55m	Backfill of grave cut (35)	Disartic bone	-
35	Cut	0.8m	0.55m	Grave cut	-	-
36	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial, older adult male	-	-
37	Fill	0.65m	0.55m	Backfill of grave cut (38)	Disartic bone	-
38	Cut	0.65m	0.55m	Grave cut	-	-
39	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of a young adult male	-	-





Context	Type	Depth	Width	Comments	Findings	Date
40	Fill	0.6m	0.55m	Backfill of grave cut (41)	Disartic bone	-
41	Cut	0.6m	0.55m	Grave cut	-	-
42	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an older adult, probably female	-	-
43	Fill	1.6m	0.65m	Backfill of grave cut (44)	Disartic bone	-
44	Cut	1.6m	0.65m	Grave cut	-	-
45	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an adult	-	-
46	Fill	1.1m	0.55m	Backfill of grave cut (47)	Disartic bone	-
47	Cut	1.1m	0.55m	Grave cut	-	-
48	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an adult	-	-
49	Fill	0.9m	0.65m	Backfill of grave cut (50)	Disartic bone	-
50	Cut	0.9m	0.65m	Grave cut	-	-
51	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an adult	-	-
52	Fill	0.4m	0.6m	Backfill of grave cut (53)	Disartic bone	-
53	Cut	0.4m	0.6m	Shallow grave cut	-	-
54	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an adult female	-	-
55	Fill	0.8m	0.65m	Backfill of grave cut (56)	Disartic bone	C19th
56	Cut	0.8m	0.65m	Grave cut	-	C19th
57	Skeleton	-	-	Articulated burial of an older adult female. Presence of coffin fittings noted	Coffin handles, plate and nails	C18th/19th
58	Fill	> 1m	0.6m	Backfill of grave cut (59)	Disartic bone	-
59	Cut	> 1m	0.6m	Grave cut	-	-
60	Layer	0.4m	-	Colluvium	-	-
61	Layer	> 0.4m	-	Weathering layer at top of the natural chalk	-	-

## APPENDIX B. ARTICULATED HUMAN SKELETAL REMAINS

*By Helen Webb*

### **Methodology**

Osteological recording was undertaken on site by a qualified osteoarchaeologist. Bones were rapidly scanned to estimate the age and sex of each skeleton and, where possible, to estimate stature. Pathological lesions that were observed during the rapid analysis were also noted. All recording was undertaken in accordance with standard guidelines (Brickley and McKinley 2004).

### **Results**

A summary of the osteological data recorded on site is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Summary of osteological data

<b>Skeleton no.</b>	<b>Completeness (%)</b>	<b>Condition grade (McKinley 2004)</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Stature (bone measured)</b>	<b>Observations/ pathology</b>
30	76-100%	1	Young – prime adult (20-33 yrs)	F	/	Slight dental calculus; Cribra orbitalia; Schmorl's nodes (LV)
33	76-100%	1	Young adult (18-25 yrs)	M	/	Severely malaligned + unerupted L maxillary canine
36	51-75%	1	Older adult (>45 yrs)	M	/	Severe dental calculus, periodontal disease, caries + periapical cavities; Unusual dental wear pattern with notches in R mandibular molars; OA at L hip + L shoulder
39	26-50%	1	Adult unspec. (>18 yrs)	?M	1.79 m (L humerus)	Agnesis of M3s; Slight dental calculus; Schmorl's nodes (TV, LV); Marginal osteophytes (TV bodies)
42	26-50%	1	?Older adult (>45 yrs)	?F	/	Heavy dental calculus, severe caries, periodontal disease + periapical cavities; Cribra orbitalia; Marginal osteophytes (TV + LV bodies)
45	<25%	1	Adult unspec. (>18 yrs)	?	/	

48	26-50%	1	Adult unspec. (>18 yrs)	M	/	Slight dental calculus, severe caries + periapical cavity; Ectocranial porosity (? inflammation)
51	<25%	1	Adult unspec. (>18 yrs)	?	/	Healed periostitis on L tibia
54	76-100%	1	Mature adult (36-45 yrs)	F	/	Slight osteophytes at R acetabulum; Marginal osteophytes (LV bodies)
57	76-100%	1	?Older adult (>45 yrs)	?F	1.60 m (L femur)	Healed R femoral neck fracture with secondary OA

Key: M = male; F = female; ?M = probable male; OA = osteoarthritis; CV = cervical vertebra; LV = lumbar vertebra; SV = sacral vertebra.

A total of 10 articulated skeletons were excavated during the watching brief. Levels of completeness varied, with two skeletons less than 25% complete, three at 26-50% complete, one skeleton 51-75% complete and four skeletons 76-100% complete. In terms of the surface condition of the bones, all skeletons were well preserved. All were scored as Grade 1, according to McKinley's (2004, 16) erosion grading system, meaning that bone surfaces generally exhibited only slight, patchy surface erosion.

All 10 skeletons were adult and of these, six could be assigned to a more specific age category. A range of ages was observed, from young adult (18-25 years), through to older adult (>45 years). Four skeletons could not be assigned to a more specific age category due to the absence of diagnostic skeletal elements.

Sex was estimated for eight of the 10 skeletons, and even numbers of males (skeletons 33, 36, 39 and 48) and females (Skeletons 30, 42, 54 and 57) were observed.

Pathology was noted in all but one of the skeletons. Dental disease was fairly common, with calculus deposits observed in five skeletons (30, 36, 39, 42 and 48), and severe periodontal disease, caries and periapical cavities (possibly abscesses) in three skeletons (36, 42 and 48).

Developmental anomalies in the dentitions of two skeletons were also observed. Skeleton 33, a young adult male, exhibited an impacted canine in the left maxilla, and adult male 39 exhibited probable agenesis of all four third molars. It was also noted that Skeleton 36 (older adult male) exhibited extremely heavy and uneven dental attrition, with the crowns of the mandibular incisors and molars almost completely worn away. The right mandibular molars exhibited discrete notches, worn into the occlusal surfaces of the teeth, possibly indicative of a habitual/occupational activity involving the teeth as a third hand.

Non-dental pathologies were also observed in the assemblage. Porous lesions in the roof of the orbits (eye sockets), known as cribra orbitalia, were noted in female skeletons 30 and 42. This condition is thought to result from iron deficiency anaemia (Stuart-Macadam 1991, 101-113).

Healed periostitis was noted on the left tibia of Skeleton 51. Periostitis is a non-specific reaction to inflammation/infection of the very thin sheath that covers the outer surface of bones, and appears as thin layers of new, finely porous or striated bone. Trauma, soft tissue infection, haemorrhage and neoplastic disease may all lead to periostitis (Aufderheide and Rodríguez-



Martín 1998, 172). Given the location in this individual (the tibia, or shin bone), it seems probable that minor trauma was the cause.

In Skeleton 48 (adult male), the ectocranial (outer) surface of the skull was porous, with an 'orange peel' type appearance. It is possible that this refers to non-specific inflammation or infection of the scalp.

Lesions pertaining to spinal joint disease were noted in five skeletons (30, 39, 42 and 54). In Skeletons 39, 42 and 54, vertebral osteophytosis was observed. Nodules of new bone (osteophytes) can form around the margins of the vertebral bodies, and may cause stiffness and intermittent aching in the affected region of the spine (Roberts and Manchester 1995, 107). Osteophytosis is an extremely common pathological condition, both spinal and extra-spinal, and is associated with increasing age (Rogers and Waldron 1995, 20). In all three cases of spinal osteophytosis observed, the thoracic and/or lumbar regions of the spine were affected.

Skeletons 30 (young-prime adult female) and 39 (adult male) exhibited Schmorl's nodes in the vertebral bodies of the lumbar and thoracic spine. Schmorl's nodes appear on dry bone as depressions on the superior or inferior surface of the vertebral body, and are caused by intervertebral disc herniation into the vertebral body. They are extremely common in both modern and archaeological populations and although associated with degenerative disease, they have been linked to activity and trauma, especially in adolescence (Jurmain 1999).

Evidence for non-spinal joint disease was noted in three skeletons (36, 54 and 57). In mature adult female 54, osteophytes were present at the right hip joint, and in older adult male 36, the left shoulder and hip joints exhibited lesions consistent with osteoarthritis (marginal osteophytes *and* porosity). Osteoarthritis is the most common joint disease in both past and modern populations, and is often associated with increasing age, although activity, injury and genetic predisposition may also play a part in the development of the disease (Rogers and Waldron 1995, 33).

Osteoarthritis was also noted in the right hip joint of older adult female 57, but in this case, it seems likely to have been a secondary complication to trauma - this skeleton also exhibited a healed fracture of the right femoral neck. The amount of healing indicates that the injury had occurred a long time before death. A direct blow to the hip (e.g. falling onto the hip) may have been the cause of such an injury (Galloway 1999, 174). It is also worth noting that the left leg bones in this individual were of equal size and robusticity to the right leg bones. This suggests that use of the injured leg was not restricted, once the fracture had healed. Often in cases of severe trauma, use of the affected limb is restricted and as a result, the muscles, and subsequently the bones, atrophy (wither).



## APPENDIX C. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

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## APPENDIX D. SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

**Site name:** St Mary's Church, Aldworth, West Berkshire

**Site code:** ALMARY12

**Grid reference:** SU 554 793

**Type:** Watching brief on the machine and hand excavation of a new building foundations and associated services.

**Date and duration:** October 2012 to March 2013, 8 site visits

**Area of site:** c. 240 m<sup>2</sup>

**Summary of results:** The watching brief revealed evidence for a number of inhumations alongside the north wall of the church together with probable evidence for the extent of the burials within the present churchyard.

No evidence for any of the earlier phases of the church's construction was observed.

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Berkshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number:





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Figure 1: Site location





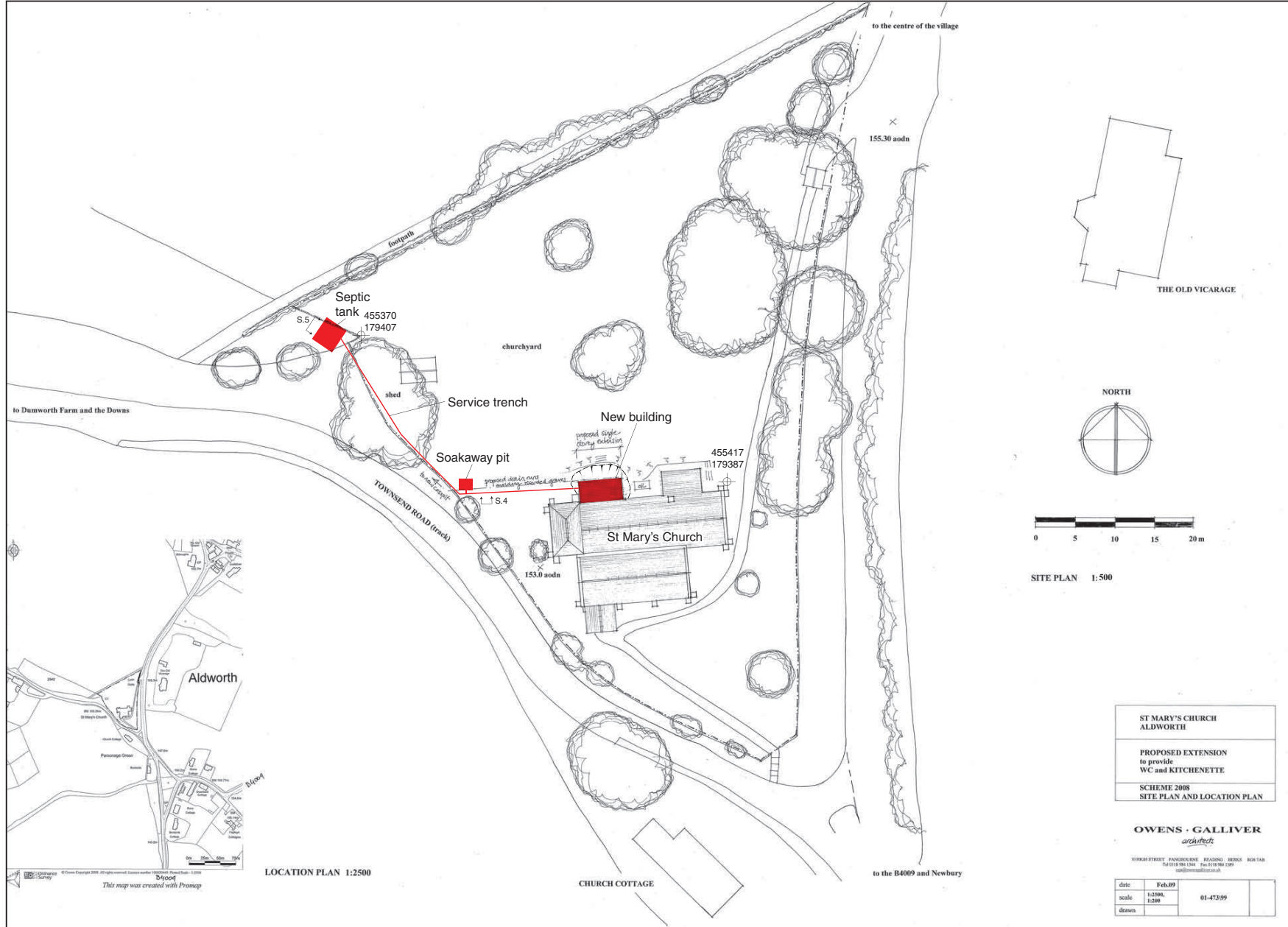


Figure 2: Overall site plan (adapted from: location plan provided by Owens Galliver Architects)



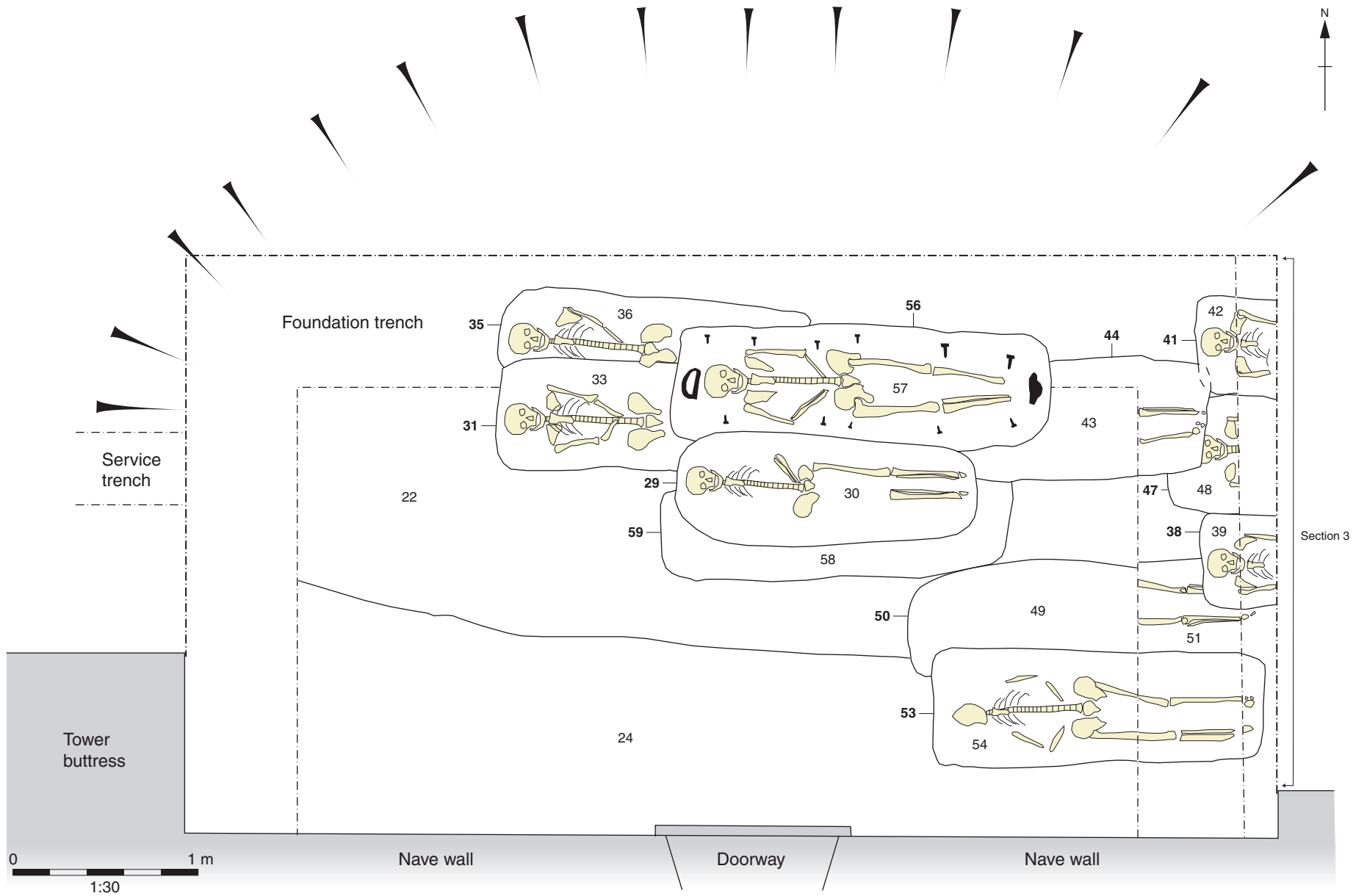


Figure 3: Plan of new building showing burials



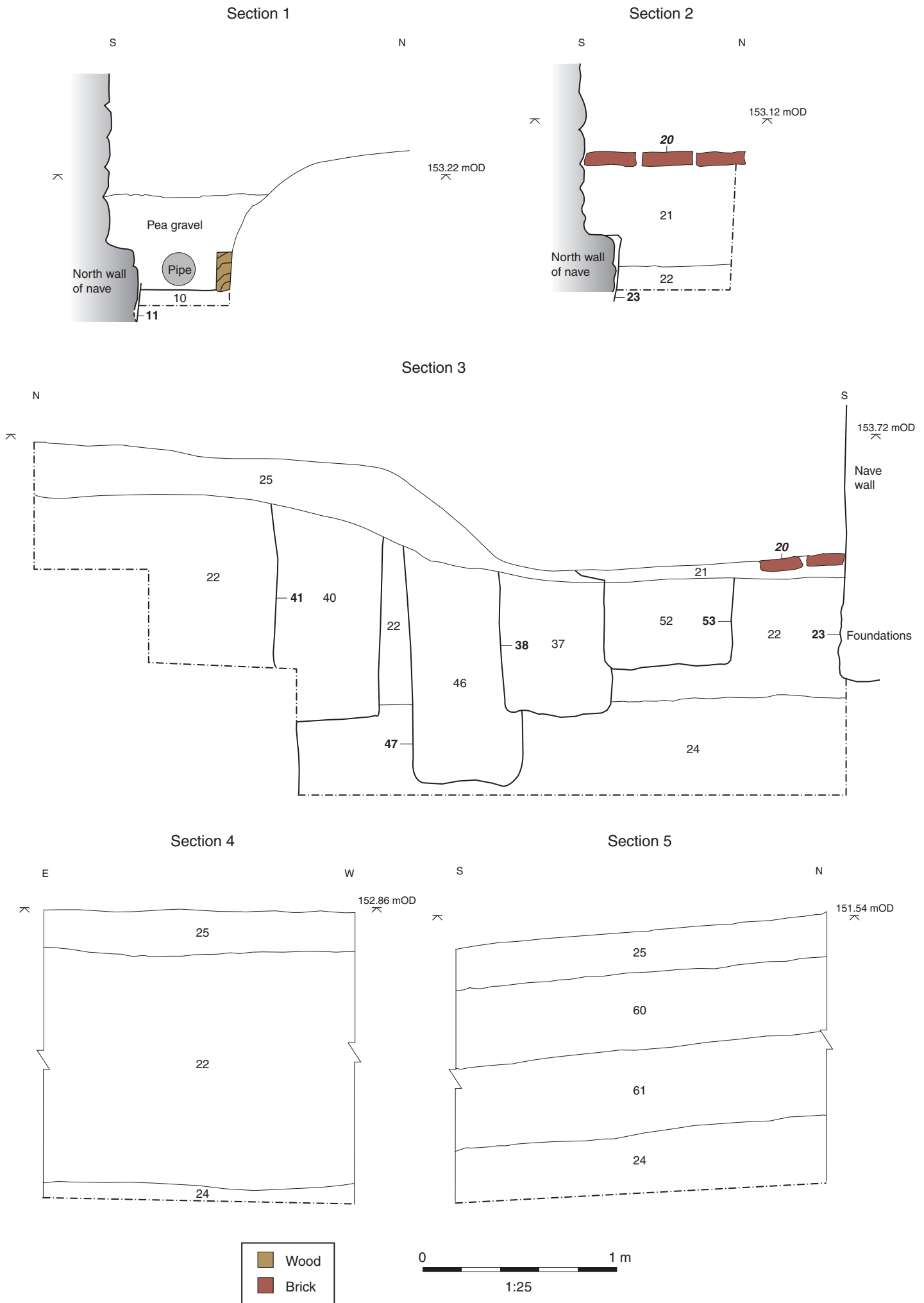


Figure 4: Sections







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