

St Laurence's Church Appleton Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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St Laurence Church, Appleton, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In July, August and September 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief and a recording programme at the church of St Laurence, Appleton, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 445 015). The work was commissioned by McBains Cooper on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in advance of the construction of a new extension on the side of the church and installation of a new floor and underfloor heating. The foundation walls of an earlier, smaller church were discovered within the nave. The earlier church had a doorway in the western wall. The church was extended eastwards in the late 12th or early 13th century and some of the contemporary column bases reused the earlier wall as foundation blocks. The western wall, beneath the later blocked arch also had a doorway possibly leading to an earlier tower. Twenty-two earth-cut graves were located within this area. Most were orientated west-east but four were orientated north-south. Some graves in the western end may be contemporary with the early church whereas some of the graves in the eastern end are clearly post-medieval.

Four earth-cut graves and ten brick-lined vaults were present in the north aisle. The earth-cut graves had been truncated by the widening of the aisle in the 17th century or by the 18th- and 19th-century vaults. Five of the vaults were flat-topped. The barrel-vaulting had been removed when the floor was lowered in 1883. Inscriptions from memorial slabs indicated that the individuals in the brick-lined vaults almost certainly all belong to the Sellwood family.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In July, August and September 2002 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Laurence's Church, Appleton, Oxfordshire (NRG SP 441 011) (Figure 1). The work was commissioned by McBains Cooper on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in respect of a planning application for a new extension on the north side of the church and installation of a new floor and underfloor heating within the church.

1.1.1 A project brief was set by Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Oxford.

1.1.2 OA agreed a program of work with Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on Oxfordian Lower Corallian silt at 88 m above OD (BGS 236). The site is situated in the centre of Appleton, adjacent to the manor.

1.3 **Archaeological and historical background**

1.3.1 The village of Appleton is Saxon in origin with the earliest reference dating to the 7th century (VHC Berkshire IV 1927, 336). The origins of the church are obscure although the earliest known part of the church, the nave, dates to the 12th century. The nave is separated from the northern aisle by an arcade of four bays which dates from 1190 to 1200. The pointed arches rest on cylindrical piers with moulded bases. The chancel was probably rebuilt in the 13th century and the plain pointed southern doorway and the priest door is of the same date. Windows were also added during the 13th century. The western tower, the blocked tower arch and several windows were added in the 15th century. The south porch was added in the early 16th century. During the 17th century, the north aisle was rebuilt and the north chapel was also added. The north porch was built in about 1700. In 1883, restoration work involved, amongst other things, the lowering of the floor by nine inches as well as the construction of the chancel arch and the pulpit (VHC Berkshire IV 1927, 339-340).

1.4 **Acknowledgements**

1.4.1 Oxford Archaeology would like to thank Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor and Mike Gotch Esq, McBains Cooper Design Limited for their advice and assistance during the Watching Brief.

2 **PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

2.1 **Aims**

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.
- 2.1.2 To excavate and remove for reburial any articulated human remains surviving above impact level.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 **Methodology**

2.2.1 In the first instance four small test pits measuring 0.5 m square were excavated inside the church to ascertain the nature of the sub-floor deposits. The ground level inside the church was then reduced by 0.4 m. This was carried out by hand in the north aisle and by a mini digger with a toothless bucket in the nave. The barrel-vaulted tombs and flat-topped brick-lined graves were opened and reduced by two courses of bricks to the impact level. The entire floor area was cleaned by hand and recorded at the impact level. The vaults subjected to intervention were recorded before and after opening. Coffin fittings and skeletal remains were recorded on site prior to reburial (see sections 2.2.3 and 2.2.4). The footprint of the extension was excavated using a mini digger with toothless bucket. This was recorded prior to pouring concrete for foundations.

- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All exposed features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the OA Fieldwork Manual (ed D Wilkinson 1992).
- 2.2.3 Coffin fittings were recorded by reference to the published corpus from Christ Church, Spitalfields (Reeve and Adams 1993) then replaced in their original positions. Types which did not appear in the Christ Church corpus were sketched and photographed.
- 2.2.4 The human skeletal remains uncovered were subjected to low-resolution recording which was carried out in situ with a minimum of disturbance to the remains which did not have to be removed. This involved the assessment of age, sex, stature and a full dental inventory. Any pathological lesions observed on the skeletons were also recorded. The pathological record may not represent all the lesions actually present on any one skeleton. Only the lesions seen were recorded.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1.1 The natural subsoil (4) was a dark reddish sandy clay loam with patches of stone and clay. All features, apart from grave 51, in the area of the north aisle and the column bases (57, 58, 59, 60 and 61) were either cut into or overlying natural.

3.2 The nave

Description of the deposits

- 3.2.1 The foundation wall running east-west (54) was the earliest feature in the nave. The surviving foundation was two courses high and comprised sub-rounded limestones laid in an irregular manner. There was no discernable bond. The cut (53) was flush to the wall. The wall had been completely robbed out between the eastern column bases (57, 58 and 59), though the cut (53) was still visible in places.
- 3.2.2 Wall 56 is part of wall 54 and is abutted by the built wall 119. It appears to form the north-western corner of the building. It was constructed of sub-rounded limestone blocks with an average diameter of 0.25 m. Two courses of stones laid in an irregular pattern had survived. Larger stones had been used in the corner of the building to provide additional strength. The protruding south end of the corner wall was possibly slightly truncated by the later earth-cut grave 155.
- 3.2.3 Wall 63 lies 1.8 m to the south of the south-protruding stub of wall 56 and it was of similar build and dimensions, though only one course remained in situ. The relationship between wall 63 and the existing southern external wall was uncertain. Though it seemed that the foundation cut for the external wall truncated wall 63.
- 3.2.4 The trench built wall 119 (in cut 118) abuts the western side of wall 56. It is made of sub-angular limestone blocks with an average diameter of 0.14 m and runs to the north-western corner of the nave. The stones were laid in regular rows between one

and two courses high. The wall runs partially beneath the modern oak screening surrounding the vestry.

- 3.2.5 Wall 121 in cut 120, runs north-south in the western end of the nave, below the blocked tower arch. The wall consisted of sub-angular limestone blocks with an average diameter of 0.15 m. These were placed in an irregular manner and only a single course survived. The wall was in two parts, separated in the middle by a gap measuring 1.0 m. The northern part was more fragmentary. It was 1.30 m long and 0.54 m wide. The width may have been slightly truncated by the later lowering of the floor level. The southern end of the wall was 2.20 m long and 0.75 m wide. The wall pre-dates the construction of the tower in the 15th century.
- 3.2.6 Twenty-two earth cut graves were located within the area of the nave (131, 133, 135, 137, 139, 141, 143, 145, 147, 149, 151, 155, 157, 159, 161, 163, 165, 169, 171, 173, 175 and 177). Most of the graves were intercutting. All were sub-rectangular and the majority were located in a line down the centre of the nave. In general, the fills were a mid greyish brown silty sand with occasional mortar and charcoal flecks.
- 3.2.7 All of the graves were orientated west-east, with the exception of graves 151, 171, 175 and 177 which were orientated north-south. Graves 151 and 171 were situated between the pillar bases 57 and 58. These were possibly cut through the earlier wall (54) since some demolition rubble was present in the top of the fill. Though this grave orientation is unusual, it is not unheard of, especially when burial space in the church interior is becoming scarce. It is perhaps more likely that they were laid along the line of a path or aisle. One of the burials (137), in the north-western part of the nave, is short enough to be that of a child. The other possible child burials (135 and 161) are also located in the western part.
- 3.2.8 As the graves were located below the impact level they were not excavated. It was therefore impossible to ascertain the stratigraphic sequence of the burials. It appears however, that two of the latest burials in this area were grave cuts 147 and 163. These were situated in the eastern part of the nave and were filled by an orange-brown silty sand containing a moderate quantity of mortar, brick and limestone fragments. Disarticulated human bones were also present as well as corroded iron coffin nails and studs used as decorations on wooden coffins. A number of these graves are therefore likely to be post-medieval in date.

3.3 The north aisle

Description of the deposits

- 3.3.1 Four earth-cut graves (66, 68, 90, 178) were cut into the natural. The graves were filled by a dark brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sandstone inclusions (67 and 69) or a mid brown silty sand with similar inclusions (89 and 179). The graves were all orientated west-east. Grave fills 67 and 69 were cut by the construction cut (64) for the northern external wall (14) built in 1612. The construction cut (64) was backfilled with a dark grey sandy clay marbled with a reddish brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sand stone fragments as

inclusions. The burial of a child (50) was contemporary with the construction of the northern wall, or later (the relationship was unclear). The earth-cut graves north of the brick vaults (71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 91, 94, 98 and 108), were overlain by a mortar rich, mid brown clayey sand. This layer was very thin and is likely to be trample from the construction of the northern external wall.

- 3.3.2 Ten brick-lined barrel-vaulted and flat-topped graves cut into the natural were located in the middle of the northern aisle. All were aligned west-east. The earliest in the sequence were vaults 71 (cut 111) and 74 (cut 87). Vault 71 was built up against the cut and contained coffin 126 and skeleton 125. The now decayed coffin had been placed directly on top of the brick base of the vault. Only corroded iron coffin fittings were present. The cut for vault 74 was backfilled by a mid brown clayey sand (88). Vault 74 was filled by a mid brown sandy clay (fill number 129) which obscured any burials. The fill was not disturbed.
- 3.3.3 Vaults 71 and 74 were encroached upon by the later barrel-vaulted brick-lined grave 72 which slightly overlaid vault 74 (to the west) and abutted vault 71 (to the north). The cut (82) to the south of the vault was backfilled with loose rubble (83) consisting of sandstone fragments and broken gravestones. The vault contained coffin 128 and skeleton 127. The coffin had disintegrated so the skeleton was resting on the brick base.
- 3.3.4 The brick-lined flat-topped grave (structure 75) was capped by a large memorial limestone slab (110). A badly worn inscription was present with the dates 1772 and 1786 and a name ending in 'wood'. The vault was filled by rubble (115) containing three coffin grips. The inscription almost certainly commemorates the Sellwood family (see Section 3.3.3 below).
- 3.3.5 Barrel-vaulted brick-lined grave 73 cut vaults 71, 72, 74 and 75. The vault was built up against the cut on the northern side and on the southern side an extra retaining wall (86) was inserted. This was only a single brick thick. The vault contained the now decayed coffin 124 and skeleton 132 which was resting on the brick base.
- 3.3.6 Five brick vaults were present on the western side of the north aisle. Again, the relationships were not entirely clear since most of them were situated side by side. However, the earliest vaults appears to be the brick-lined flat-topped grave (108 and 109) in cut 114 under the present location of the font, and the barrel-vaulted brick-lined grave 91 in cut 95.
- 3.3.7 Vault 91 contained coffin 167 and skeleton 166. The coffin was overlain by a row of limestone roof tiles which was overlain by a loose mid brown sandy clay fill. The cut (95) for the vault cut the fill of the earlier west-east orientated earth cut grave (cut 90, fill 89).
- 3.3.8 Brick-lined vault 94 abuts, or is abutted by vaults 108, 91, and 75. The vault was capped by three large stone slabs. These were possibly recycled grave slabs though no trace of any inscription was found. The vault was filled by the same material as vault 75.

- 3.3.9 The flat topped vault 104 used the existing walls of vaults 109 and 94 to form its northern and eastern extent and is therefore clearly later. The vault contained a triple-shelled wood-lead-wood coffin (106) decorated with metal studs. The coffin was surrounded, and overlain by a rubble fill (105). The construction cut (100) was backfilled by a loose, mid brown sandy silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and mortar. The vault was cut into the earlier earth-cut grave (fill 89). The grave lay partially beneath the modern oak screen surrounding the vestry.
- 3.3.10 The flat-topped brick-lined grave 98 abutted vault 104. The vault was capped with three large broken limestone grave memorial slabs (99). The partially surviving inscription on one of the slabs commemorates Miss Mary Sellwood and Robert Sellwood. The grave lay partially beneath the oak screen surrounding the vestry. This flat-topped brick-lined grave cut the fill of the earlier earth-cut grave (89).
- 3.3.11 A shallow charnel pit (97) abutted vault 98. The pit cut the fill of the earlier earth-cut grave (89) and is partially overlain by the oak screen surrounding the vestry. The pit was filled with disarticulated human bones which are likely to have been disturbed during the construction of the brick vaults in the 18th and 19th centuries.

3.4 The northern extension

Description of deposits

- 3.4.1 The earliest layer encountered was the natural (4) which was a dark reddish sandy clay. Above this soil deposit, there was a very dark greyish brown silty clay loam (3) which was approximately 0.24 m thick. The construction cut (13) for the foundation of the external wall of the north aisle (14) cut contexts 3 and 4. The space between the cut (13) and the wall (14) was filled by a dark brown silty sand containing, limestone fragments and mortar (15). The foundation cut is overlain by a dark brown silty clay (2) which contained a low frequency of limestone fragments and charcoal. Construction cut 11 containing an open brick drain (12) was cut into context 2. The base consisted of a dark reddish silty sand containing brick and mortar fragments. The drain encircled the church.

3.5 Finds

The coffin fittings

- 3.5.1 Grips, grip plates and the surviving coffin plate were recorded on-site by reference to the Christ Church, Spitalfields taxonomies (Reeve and Adams 1993). The results are summarised below.

Table 1: The coffin fittings

| Structure number | Skeleton number | Coffin number | Fill number | Material | Type | Date |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|------------|------|-----------|
| 104 | - | 106 | - | Grip | 2b | 1763-1837 |
| 75 | - | - | 115 | Grip plate | ? | ? |
| 75 | - | - | 115 | Grip | 3b? | 1729-1827 |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----|-----|---|--------------|----|-----------|
| 73 | 123 | 124 | - | Grip plate | ? | ? |
| 73 | 123 | 124 | - | Grip | 2b | 1763-1837 |
| 73 | 123 | 124 | - | Coffin plate | ? | ? |
| 71 | 125 | 126 | - | Grip plate | ? | ? |
| 71 | 125 | 126 | - | Grip | 2b | 1763-1837 |
| 72 | 127 | 128 | - | Grip plate | ? | ? |
| 72 | 127 | 128 | - | Grip | 2b | 1763-1837 |
| 91 | 166 | 167 | - | Grip plate | ? | ? |
| 91 | 166 | 167 | - | Grip | 2b | 1763-1837 |

3.5.2 The grips from coffins 124, 126, 128 and 167 were all type 2b which dates to between 1763 and 1837. The grip plates which were all the same type, had no direct comparable example amongst the Christ Church material. However, the design was found to be similar to type 19 which is dated to 1763.

3.5.3 The coffin plate (coffin 124) is also unparalleled. The basic shape was rectangular with a central embossed shield motif. The coffin plates in the Christ Church taxonomy with the same basic shape all date to the first half of the 19th century with the majority of the plates dating to the 1820s and 1830s. This may therefore imply an early 19th-century date for this burial.

The human skeletal remains

3.5.4 Five inhumation burials underwent low-resolution osteological and palaeopathological analysis on site. Completeness was scored using four categories, namely poor (0 - 25%), fair (26-50%) good (51-75%) and excellent (76-100%). Skeletal preservation was scored using a scale ranging from poor (near complete destruction of the cortical surface) to excellent (cortical surfaces of the bones preserved).

3.5.5 The sex of the individuals was established through visual observations of the sexually diagnostic criteria of the cranium and pelvis. An age estimate was made using the pubic symphysis (Suchey and Brooks 1990) and the auricular surface (Lovejoy *et al* 1985) on the pelvis. The immature individuals were aged by using epiphyseal fusion (Workshop 1980) and dental development (Moorees *et al* 1963; Ubelaker 1989). An estimation of stature was obtained by using the regression formulae devised by Trotter (1970). Pathological lesions were described in full when observed. Dental notation is based on Brothwell (1981, 53) as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|
| / post mortem loss | X ante mortem loss |
| C caries | A abscess |
| NP not present | U unerupted |
| E erupting | - alveolus and tooth absent |

3.5.6 The human skeletal remains comprised three adults and two children. Two of the adults were females and one male. The older child was possibly a male. This is however uncertain since it is not until after puberty that a human skeleton can be sexed accurately. The adult male was over 60 years old at the time of death and the two females were 20-25 years (skeleton 125) and 25-35 years old (skeleton 127) respectively. The older child (166) was aged between 12 and 14 and the younger (50) was 4-5 years old.

- 3.5.7 Few pathological lesions were observed. Skeletons 127 and 166 both had pitting on the surfaces of the orbital roofs. This type of lesion is known as *cribra orbitalia* and is traditionally believed to be caused by anemia. The anemia is likely to have occurred due to the bodies response to an infectious disease. By withholding iron from the pathogens, it would make it less able to reproduce (Roberts and Manchester 1995, 167). The lesions on both individuals were still active at the time of death.
- 3.5.8 The older male individual (skeleton 123) exhibited various degenerative changes. Segments of the spine had fused by the formation of new bone in the region of the lower back. All other vertebral segments also had new bone formation on the edges. The condition would have caused intermittent back ache and stiffness. Both knees were also affected by new bone formation at the margins of the joints. These type of changes represent the natural degeneration of the skeleton with advancing age. The left kneecap (patella) also displayed an *osteochondritis dissecans*. This is caused by a small piece of bone becoming dislodged from the joint surface. In this case, it had also fused back and healed. The cause for this may have been traumatic in origin. The injury was healed and was likely to have happened in his youth.
- 3.5.9 All of the adults had one or more carious lesions on their teeth. Two of the adults (123 and 125) also had periodontal disease. The disease was advanced on the elderly male and slight on the young female. Periodontal disease involves the horizontal reduction of the jaw bone, which causes the teeth to loosen in their dental pockets causing them to fall out. The male also had calculus deposits on the few teeth which had not been lost. Calculus is formed by mineralised plaque (Roberts and Manchester 1995, 55). The older female (127) also had two dental abscesses. All of the dental diseases mentioned are interlinked. For example, a carious lesion may predispose a dental abscess. Similarly, excess calculus deposits may lead to gingivitis which (if untreated) would lead to periodontal disease. Though genetic predisposition and environmental factors plays a part the strongest link between these diseases is poor oral hygiene.

Catalogue of human remains

Skeleton number 50

Completeness: Good

Preservation: Excellent

Age: 4 - 5 years

Sex: Unknown

Pathology: None observed

Skeleton number 123

Completeness: Excellent

Preservation: Excellent

Age: 60+

Sex: Male

Stature: 178.8 ± 3.27 cm

Dental inventory:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | 3 | X | X | X | X | X |
| X | X | C | X | X | C | X | X | X | X | X | X | 4 | C | X | X | X |

Dental Pathology: The surviving mandibular premolar has slight deposits of dental calculus. Small carious lesions are present on the mesial aspect of the left mandibular second premolar and the right canine. A large buccal lesion is also situated on the first left mandibular molar. There is also considerable periodontal disease on both jaws.

Pathology: Considerable degenerative spinal joint disease is present on the lower thoracic and upper lumbar vertebral bodies. Large osteophytes has caused these segments to fuse. Moderate degenerative changes are present on all the other vertebral bodies. Moderate degenerative joint disease is present on both knee joints. An osteochondritis dissecans is present on the left patella.

Skeleton number 125

Completeness: Excellent

Preservation: Excellent

Age: 20-25 years

Sex: Female

Stature: 159.5 ± 3.72 cm

Dental inventory:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 7 | C | C | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | / | / | 3 | / | / | 6 | C | 8 |
| NP | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | / | 2 | X | / | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

Dental Pathology: Slight periodontal disease on both jaws. A medium occlusal carious lesion was present on the right first mandibular molar. Large occlusal caries were present on the right mandibular second premolar and the left second molar.

Pathology: None observed.

Skeleton number: 127

Completeness: Excellent

Preservation: Excellent

Age: 25-35

Sex: Female

Stature: 169 ± 3.72 cm

Dental inventory:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | C | A | 5 | R | 3 | 2 | 1 | / | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| NP | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | / | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | X | 7 | 8 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | A | | |

Dental pathology: Right maxillary second molar had two small carious lesions on the distal and occlusal surfaces of the tooth. Two periapical abscesses were present on the right first maxillary molar and the left mandibular first molar.

Pathology: Bilateral Cribra orbitalia, Type 3 (Stewart-Macadam 1991). Lesions were active at the time of death.

Skeleton number: 166

Completeness: Excellent (Only cranium, proximal left femur and lower thoracic vertebrae visible)

Preservation: Excellent

Age: 12-14

Sex: Male?

Dental inventory:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| U | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | U |
| - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - |

Dental pathology: None present

Pathology: Bilateral Cribra orbitalia, Type 2 (Stewart-Macadam 1991). Lesions were active at the time of death

- 3.5.10 Skeletons 123, 125, 127 and 166 are likely to be related. These inhumations were all from barrel-vaulted graves in the north aisle and had all been originally buried in wooden coffins with the same type of grips and grip plates. The two females also had their right 3rd molar missing. Hypodontia is a genetically inherited trait (Hillson 1996, 114). This would therefore strongly suggest that the two women at least were closely related.
- 3.5.11 More indirect evidence comes from the capping stones (99 and 110) for the brick-lined graves 98 and 75. The surviving inscription on both the stones refers to the Sellwood family. Complete memorial plaques to various members of this family are situated above the north porch and commemorate individuals who died in the 18th and 19th century. This suggests that all the brick-lined barrel vaults in the northern aisle are of the Sellwood family.

3.6 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.6.1 No environmental samples were taken.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The church of St Laurence has undergone several phases of construction. The earliest structural evidence of a church predates the Transitional Norman arches, which divide the nave from the northern aisle. Walls 54, 56 and 63 are all part of the same structure forming the western and northern walls of a smaller, earlier church. The gap between wall 56 and 63 is slightly truncated on the northern side by grave 155 but is clearly a western doorway. The eastern limit of this earliest church is not known but it was evident that wall 54 extended beneath the present-day chancel. The relationship between the southern end of wall 63 and the existing southern external wall was uncertain but it is very likely that this also formed the southern perimeter of this earliest structure. The date of this structure is uncertain since no datable material was uncovered during the course of the investigation. It is, however, earlier than the late 12th century.
- 4.1.2 In the late 12th century or early 13th century the church was extended. The Norman arches were built reusing wall 54 as foundation blocks for the column bases for pillars 57, 58 and 59. Column bases 60 and 61 are part of the same construction as wall

foundations 119 and 121. Wall 121, which runs north-south beneath the blocked 15th-century arch, is also in two parts. The central gap forms a western doorway which may have been the entrance to an earlier tower which may have been rebuilt in the 15th century when the blocked arch was added.

- 4.1.3 The graves within the area of the present-day nave are impossible to date since these were not excavated. It is, however, likely that some are contemporary with the earliest church. Indeed, the burials in the western end of the nave may originally have been outside the earlier church. Over time, as burials became more numerous within the nave and space became scarcer, a west-east orientation for the graves appears to have become less important. Therefore, in order to cause as little disturbance to pre-existing graves as possible, four (151, 171, 175 and 177) were orientated north-south, perhaps along the line of an aisle. This consideration to earlier graves may therefore indicate that grave memorial slabs were present on the church floor marking the location of earlier burials.
- 4.1.4 The northern aisle was widened in the early 17th century (VCH Berkshire 1 1927, 339). No archaeological evidence for the earlier 13th-century northern external wall was found inside the northern aisle. However, the earth-cut graves 66 and 68 had been truncated by the foundation trench (64). The graves were therefore originally located outside the church on the northern side and are likely to date to the medieval period.
- 4.1.5 Ten brick-lined vaults were present in the northern aisle. The brick-lined barrel-vaulted and flat-topped brick-lined graves date to the 18th and the early part of the 19th century. Five of the vaults were flat-topped (75, 93, 99, 104, 109). The deposits of mortar on the uppermost course of bricks indicated that all of these vaults had originally been barrel-vaulted. The capping stones were removed on all of the vaults apart from 109 which was located beneath the font. The brick vaulting was removed when the floor was lowered in 1883.
- 4.1.6 The brick graves are likely to contain members of the same family interred during the 18th and 19th centuries. The broken pieces of memorial slabs and the commemorative plaques above the northern porch strongly suggests that these graves are the final resting place of members of the Sellwood family (see 3.5.10-3.5.11).

4.2 Conclusions

- 4.2.1 The investigation has shown the value of archaeological observation with minimal excavation or removal of deposits for understanding the development of parish church buildings (part of wall 63 was removed for floor make-up).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

| <i>Context</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>Depth</i> | <i>Width</i> | <i>Length</i> | <i>Height</i> | <i>Comments</i> | <i>Finds</i> |
|----------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---|--------------|
| 1 | Topsoil | 0.2 m | | | | Graveyard topsoil | None |
| 2 | Layer | 0.5 m | | | | C17th ground make up | None |
| 3 | Layer | 0.24 m | | | | Old topsoil pre C17th | None |
| 4 | Natural | | | | | Natural | |
| 5 | Floor | | | | | C19th Church floor | |
| 6 | Layer | 0.03 m | | | | Floor Bedding mortar | |
| 7 | Layer | 0.10 m | | | | Floor Make up same as 76 | None |
| 8 | Structure | 0.3 m | 0.2 m | 0.5 m | | C11th-12th wall footing same as 54 | |
| 9 | Cut | 0.3 m | 0.2 m | 0.5 m | | Foundation cut, same as 53 | |
| 10 | Layer | 0.14 m | | | | Disturbed soil | None |
| 11 | Cut | 0.35 m | 0.6 m | | | C19th Cut for Drain | |
| 12 | Structure | | | | | C19th Brick Drain | |
| 13 | Cut | 0.7 m | 0.2 m | | | C17th foundation trench | |
| 14 | Wall | | | | | C17th North Wall Foundation | |
| 15 | Fill | | | | | Fill between wall and cut | None |
| 50 | Skeleton | | | | | E-W burial of a juvenile aged 4-5 years | |
| 51 | Cut | 0.3m | 0.28 m | 0.75 m | | Cut for skeleton 50 | |
| 52 | Fill | 0.3m | 0.28 m | 0.75 m | | Backfill of grave cut 51 | |
| 53 | Cut | | | 8.10 m | | Cut for wall footing 54. Same as 9 | |
| 54 | Structure | 0.8m | 1.0 m | 8.10 m | | Wall footing, same as 8 | |
| 55 | Cut | | 1.12 m | | | Cut for wall footing 56 | |
| 56 | Structure | 0.25m | 1.10 m | 1.45 m | | Wall footing for cut 55 | |
| 57 | Structure | | 0.86 m | 0.86 m | 0.22 m | Column base | |
| 58 | Structure | | 0.68 m | 0.68 m | 0.06 m | Column base | |
| 59 | Structure | | 0.82 m | 0.34 m | 0.08 m | Column base | |
| 60 | Structure | | 0.68 m | 0.68 m | 0.05 m | Column base | |
| 61 | Structure | | | 0.64 m | 0.12 m | Column base | |
| 62 | Cut | 0.27m | 0.87 m | 1.8 m | | Cut for wall 63 | |
| 63 | Structure | | 0.87 m | 1.8 m | 0.24 m | Wall footing in cut 62 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|----|--------------|--|-------------------|--------|--|--|--|
| 64 | Cut | | 0.44 m | 10.0 m | | Cut for the foundations of 14. Same as 13 | |
| 65 | Fill | | 0.44 m | 10.0 m | | Backfill of cut 64. Same as 15 | |
| 66 | Cut | | 0.41 m- 0.28 m | 1.77 m | | E-W orientated grave cut. Filled by 67 | |
| 67 | Fill | | 0.41 m- 0.28 m | 1.77 m | | Backfill of grave cut 66 | |
| 68 | Cut | | 0.32 m | 1.70 m | | W-E orientated grave cut | |
| 69 | Fill | | 0.32 m | 1.70 m | | Backfill of grave cut 68 | |
| 70 | Layer | | 1.65 m | 10.0 m | | Mortar rich layer related to the construction of the northern wall | |
| 71 | Structure | | 0.78 m- 0.54 m | 2.25 m | | Barrel-vaulted brick-lined grave | |
| 72 | Structure | | 0.84 m- 0.75 m | 2.25 m | | Barrel-vaulted brick-lined vault | |
| 73 | Structure | | 0.91 m- 0.71 m | 2.33 m | | Barrel-vaulted brick-lined vault | |
| 74 | Structure | | 0.63 m- 0.75 m | 2.15 m | | Barrel-vaulted brick-lined vault | |
| 75 | Structure | | 0.63 m- 0.8 m | 1.67 m | | Flat-topped brick-lined vault | |
| 76 | Layer | | 1.58 m | 10.0 m | | Floor make up. Same as 7 | |
| 77 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 71 | |
| 78 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 72 | |
| 79 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 73 | |
| 80 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 74 | |
| 81 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 75 | |
| 82 | Cut | | 0.35 m | 2.28 m | | Cut for structure 72 | |
| 83 | Fill | | 0.35 m | 2.28 m | | Backfill of cut 82 | |
| 84 | Cut | | 0.04 m | 2.33 m | | Cut for structure 73 | |
| 85 | Fill | | 0.04 m | 2.33 m | | Backfill of cut 84 | |
| 86 | Structure | | 0.12 m | 1.27 m | | Retaining wall for structure 73 | |
| 87 | Cut | | 0.06 m | 2.15 m | | Cut for structure 74 | |
| 88 | Fill | | 0.06 m | 2.15 m | | Backfill of cut 87 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|-------|-------------------|--------|--------|---|--|
| 89 | Fill | | 0.5 m | 2.04 m | | Fill of grave cut 90 | |
| 90 | Cut | | 0.5 m | 2.04 m | | Grave cut filled by 89 | |
| 91 | Structure | | 0.5 m- 0.7 m | 2.07 m | | Barrel-vaulted brick-lined vault | |
| 92 | Fill | | 0.12 m | 2.13 m | | Back fill of cut for structure 94 | |
| 93 | Structure | | | | | Stone slabs covering for structure 94 | |
| 94 | Structure | | 0.85 m | 2.17 m | | Brick-lined vault | |
| 95 | Cut | | 2.12 m | 0.08 m | | Cut for structure 91 | |
| 96 | Fill | 0.3m | 0.40 m | 0.63 m | | Fill of charnel pit cut 97 | |
| 97 | Cut | 0.3m | 0.40 m | 0.63 m | | Cut for charnel pit | |
| 98 | Structure | 0.29m | 0.56 m | 1.11 m | | Brick-lined vault | |
| 99 | Structure | | 0.62 m | 1.03 m | | Slabs of limestone covering structure 98 | |
| 100 | Cut | | 0.10 m | 0.40 m | | Cut for structure 104 | |
| 101 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 98 | |
| 102 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 94 | |
| 103 | Fill | | 0.10 m | 0.40 m | | Backfill of cut 100 | |
| 104 | Structure | | 0.94 m | 1.76 m | | Brick-lined vault | |
| 105 | Fill | 0.3m | 0.94 m | 1.76 m | | Fill of structure 104 | |
| 106 | Coffin | | 0.59 m- 0.30 m | 1.52 m | | Coffin in structure 104 | |
| 107 | Group number | | | | | Group number for structure 104 | |
| 108 | Structure | | 0.92 m | 1.44 m | 0.19 m | Brick-lined vault | |
| 109 | Structure | | 0.79 m | 1.61 m | 0.79 m | Limestone capping for structure 108 | |
| 110 | Structure | | 0.83 m | 1.84 m | 0.12 m | Lime-stone slab covering for structure 75 | |
| 111 | Cut | | 0.02 m | 2.27 m | | Cut for structure 71 | |
| 112 | Cut | | 0.00 m | 2.07 m | | Cut for structure 91 | |
| 113 | Cut | | 0.00 m | 1.11 m | | Cut for structure 98 | |
| 114 | Cut | | 0.00 m | 1.44 m | | Cut for structure 108 | |
| 115 | Fill | | 0.41 m- 0.45 m | 1.51 m | | Fill of structure 75 | |
| 116 | Group number | | | | | Group number for vault 91 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|--------------|--|--------|--------|--------|--|--|
| 117 | Group number | | | | | Group number for vault 108 | |
| 118 | Cut | | | 3.80 m | | Cut for wall 119 | |
| 119 | Structure | | 0.34 m | 3.80 m | 0.15 m | Stone wall | |
| 120 | Cut | | 0.60 m | 4.3 m | | Cut for wall 121 | |
| 121 | Structure | | 0.60 m | 4.3 m | | Stone wall | |
| 122 | Cut | | | | | Victorian reduction of floor level in the church | |
| 123 | Skeleton | | | | | Fill of coffin 124 in structure 73 | |
| 124 | Coffin | | | | | Coffin fittings in structure 73 | |
| 125 | Skeleton | | | | | Fill of coffin 126 in structure 71 | |
| 126 | Coffin | | | | | Coffin fittings in structure 71 | |
| 127 | Skeleton | | | | | Fill of coffin 128 in structure 72 | |
| 128 | Coffin | | | | | Coffin fittings in structure 72 | |
| 129 | Fill | | 0.55 m | 1.97 m | | Fill of structure 74 | |
| 130 | Fill | | 0.84 m | 2.0 m | | Fill of grave cut 131 | |
| 131 | Cut | | 0.84 m | 2.0 m | | Grave cut filled by 130 | |
| 132 | Fill | | 0.68 m | 2.2 m | | Fill of grave cut 133 | |
| 133 | Cut | | 0.68 m | 2.2 m | | Grave cut filled by 132 | |
| 134 | Fill | | 0.48 m | 1.58 m | | Fill of grave cut 135 | |
| 135 | Cut | | 0.48 m | 1.58 m | | Grave cut filled by 134 | |
| 136 | Fill | | 0.44 m | 1.37 m | | Fill of grave cut 137 | |
| 137 | Cut | | 0.44 m | 1.37 m | | Grave cut filled by 136 | |
| 138 | Fill | | 0.55 m | 2.16 m | | Fill of grave cut 139 | |
| 139 | Cut | | 0.55 m | 2.16 m | | Grave cut filled by 138 | |
| 140 | Fill | | 0.45 m | 1.88 m | | Fill of grave cut 141 | |
| 141 | Cut | | 0.45 m | 1.88 m | | Grave cut filled by 140 | |
| 142 | Fill | | 0.58 m | 1.70 m | | Fill of grave cut 143 | |
| 143 | Cut | | 0.58 m | 1.70 m | | Grave cut filled by 142 | |
| 144 | Fill | | 0.59 m | 0.36 m | | Fill of grave cut 145 | |
| 145 | Cut | | 0.59 m | 0.36 m | | Grave cut filled by 144 | |
| 146 | Fill | | 0.70 m | 1.70 m | | Fill of grave cut 147 | |
| 147 | Cut | | 0.70 m | 1.70 m | | Grave cut filled by 146 | |
| 148 | Fill | | 0.70 m | 2.00 m | | Fill of grave cut 149 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|----------|--|--------|--------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 149 | Cut | | 0.70 m | 2.00 m | | Grave cut filled by 148 | |
| 150 | Fill | | 0.55 m | 1.95 m | | Fill of grave cut 151 | |
| 151 | Cut | | 0.55 m | 1.95 m | | Grave cut filled by 150 | |
| 152 | Fill | | 1.0 m | 1.55 m | | Fill of pit? Cut 153 | |
| 153 | Cut | | 1.0 m | 1.55 m | | Pit? Cut filled by 152 | |
| 154 | Fill | | 0.52 m | 1.90 m | | Fill of grave cut 155 | |
| 155 | Cut | | 0.52 m | 1.90 m | | Grave cut filled by 154 | |
| 156 | Fill | | 0.50 m | 1.78 m | | Fill of grave cut 157 | |
| 157 | Cut | | 0.50 m | 1.78 m | | Grave cut filled by 156 | |
| 158 | Fill | | 0.68 m | 2.26 m | | Fill of grave cut 159 | |
| 159 | Cut | | 0.68 m | 2.26 m | | Grave cut filled by 158 | |
| 160 | Fill | | 0.48 m | 1.50 m | | Fill of grave cut 161 | |
| 161 | Cut | | 0.48 m | 1.50 m | | Grave cut filled by 160 | |
| 162 | Fill | | 0.75 m | 1.01 m | | Fill of grave cut 163 | |
| 163 | Cut | | 0.75 m | 1.01 m | | Grave cut filled by 162 | |
| 164 | Fill | | 0.80 m | 1.70 m | | Fill of grave cut 165 | |
| 165 | Cut | | 0.80 m | 1.70 m | | Grave cut filled by 164 | |
| 166 | Skeleton | | | | | Fill of coffin 167 in structure 91 | |
| 167 | Coffin | | | | | Coffin furniture in structure 91 | |
| 168 | Fill | | 0.60 m | 1.61 m | | Fill of grave cut 169 | |
| 169 | Cut | | 0.60 m | 1.61 m | | Grave cut filled by 168 | |
| 170 | Fill | | 0.73 m | 2.20 m | | Fill of grave cut 171 | |
| 171 | Cut | | 0.73 m | 2.20 m | | Grave cut filled by 170 | |
| 172 | Fill | | 0.61 m | 2.00 m | | Fill of grave cut 173 | |
| 173 | Cut | | 0.61 m | 2.00 m | | Grave cut filled by 172 | |
| 174 | Fill | | 1.42 m | 2.43 m | | Fill of grave cuts 175 and 177 | |
| 175 | Cut | | 1.42 m | 2.43 m | | Grave cut filled by 174 | |
| 176 | Fill | | 0.47 m | 1.88 m | | Fill of structure 91 | |
| 177 | Cut | | 0.50 m | 2.40 m | | Grave cut filled by 174 | |
| 178 | Cut | | 0.27 m | 0.54 m | | Grave cut filled by 179 | |
| 179 | Fill | | 0.27 m | 0.54 m | | Fill of grave cut 178 | |
| 180 | Cut | | 0.11 m | 1.67 m | | Construction cut for structure 75 | |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|------|--|--------|--------|--|---|--|
| 181 | Fill | | 0.11 m | 1.67 m | | Backfill of construction cut for structure 75 | |
|-----|------|--|--------|--------|--|---|--|

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APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**Site name:** St Laurence Church, Appleton, Oxfordshire**Site code:** APPLAU 02**Grid reference:** NGR SP 445 015**Type of watching brief:** Groundwork for construction of new extension and laying of new floor and heating.**Date and duration of project:** August 2002 to September 2002**Area of site:** 115.25 m²**Summary of results:** Within the area of the nave the foundation walls of an earlier, smaller church was discovered. The earlier church had a doorway in the western wall. The church was extended eastwards in the late 12th or early 13th century and some of the contemporary column bases reused the earlier wall as foundation blocks. The western wall, beneath the later blocked arch also had a doorway possibly leading to an earlier tower. Twenty-two earth cut graves were located within this area. Most were orientated west-east but four were orientated north-south. Some graves in the western end may be contemporary with the early church whereas some of the graves in the eastern end are clearly post-medieval.

Within the area of northern aisle, four earth-cut graves and ten brick-lined vaults were present. The earth cut graves were clearly earlier since these had been truncated by the widening of the aisle in the 17th century or by the 18th and 19th century vaults. Five of the vaults were flat-topped. The barrel-vaulting had been removed when the floor was lowered in 1883. Inscriptions from memorial slabs indicated that the individuals in the brick-lined vaults all belong to the Sellwood family.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, under the following accession number: 2002.134.



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Figure 1: Site location.

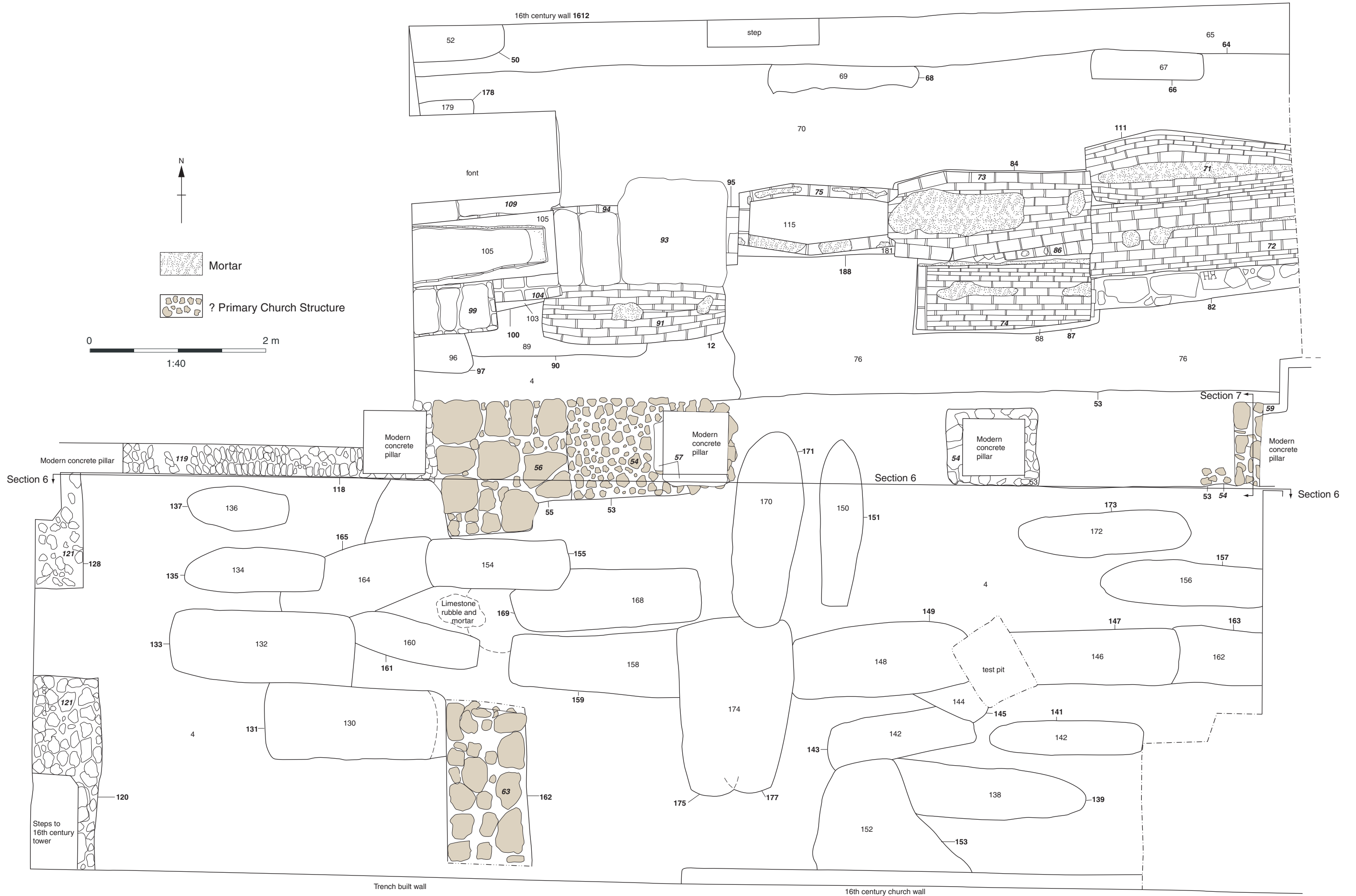


Figure 2: Plan of Church Interior

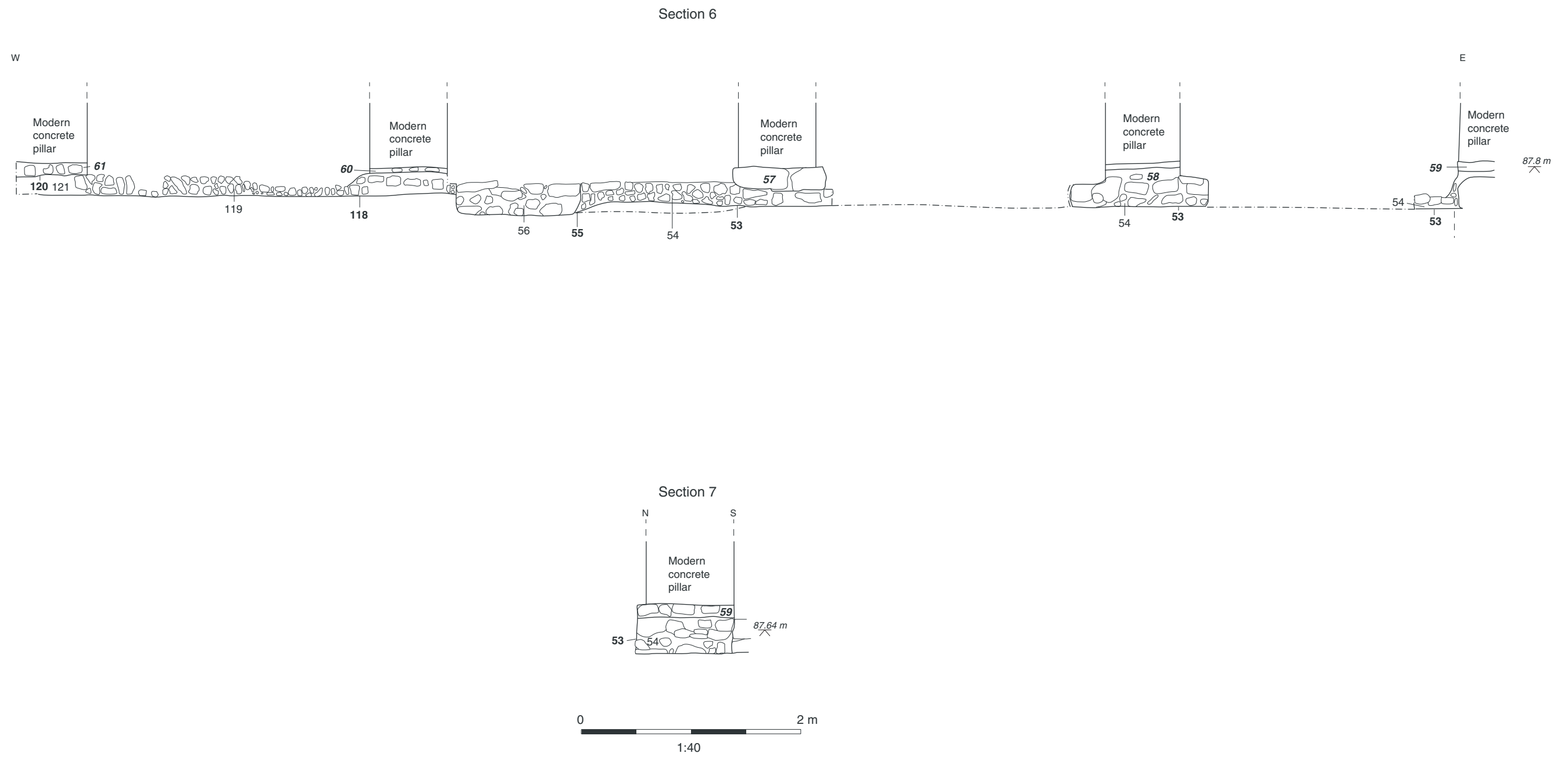


Figure 3: Section 6 and 7



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