

All Saints Church Parochial Church Council

All Saints Church, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

APRIL 1999

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Prepared by: Adam Brossler

Date: 23/4/99.

Checked by: *[Signature]*

Date: 23/4/99

Approved by: *R. Williams*
HEAD OF FIELDWORK

Date: 23/4/1999

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Fig. 2 Trench location map, with inset plan of foundation pad

SUMMARY

The Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out a watching brief at All Saints Church, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire on behalf of the Parochial Church Council. The watching brief recorded the presence of a foundation pad that appeared to run under the northern church wall. The date of this feature is uncertain, however, it was assumed to be contemporary with the building of the church.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

In March 1999 the Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook a watching brief at All Saints Church, Soulbury, Buckinghamshire. A planning application was submitted for Church improvement works, which comprised the removal of a layer of concrete that ran around the entire exterior footprint of the church. A trench was then dug in the area where the concrete had been removed. A further three soak-aways, up to 1.50 m in depth, were dug to the south, east and west of the church building. The church is located to the south of the village of Soulbury.

1.2 Geology and topography

The solid geology is glacial sand and gravel (Geological sheet 220) at 115 m above OD. The site has been occupied by the church since the early 14th century.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

The earliest reference to the church occurs in 1231 when John Maunsel presented to the rectory (VCH 1925, 419). The original *Chancel* is thought to be of early 14th-century date, however, it was rebuilt and the north and south aisles were added in the second quarter of the 14th century. In the second half of the 15th century windows were inserted into the south aisle, and a south porch was constructed. Further work was undertaken in the early part of the 16th century. This comprised the rebuilding of the nave arcades, an extension of the north aisle, and the building of the west tower. Subsequent restoration was undertaken in 1863 (RCHME 1913, 266-8).

2 WATCHING BRIEF AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were as follows:

- 2.1 To establish the presence of archaeological remains within the development area, and determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality, date, and depth below ground surface of any such remains.
 - 2.1.1 To establish the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological deposits and features.
 - 2.1.2 If significant archaeological remains were discovered, to determine what further mitigation measures may be required.

2.1.3 To make available the results of the investigation.

3 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork, methodology and recording

The trench around the whole perimeter of the church measured 0.45 m was hand excavated to a depth of 0.15 m below the interior floor level, but not below the footings of the wall.

A total of three trenches, which extended from the trench around the church to the three corresponding soakaways (Fig. 2), were machine excavated. These trenches measured c. 3 m in length, 0.50 m in width and up to 1.50 m in depth, and were excavated with a small mechanical excavator, partly under archaeological supervision.

The three soak-aways were located to the south of the south porch, to the west of the south porch, and to the north-east of the Chancel. These measures c. 1.50 m in length, 1 m in width and up to 1.50 m in depth.

Any features that were encountered were planned, and where excavated their sections were drawn at 1:20. Recording followed the procedure laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

4 RESULTS: GENERAL

4.1 Soils and ground conditions

The soil was a well-drained clayish silt, with a low frequency of gravel and stone inclusions.

4.2 Distribution of Archaeological Deposits

Only one possible archaeological feature was identified, located under the north wall of the church, positioned halfway along the northern aisle. No other archaeologically significant deposits were identified during the watching brief.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Description of the deposits

A small foundation pad was identified in a trench on the north side of the church. It measured c. 1 m length, 0.45 m in width and c. 0.10 m in depth, and consisted of a layer of flint, well-rounded pebbles and rough ironstone, similar to the material used to build the church, bonded with a coarse-sandy-clay matrix. The pad was overlain by the topsoil.

5.2 Finds

No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

6 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

6.1 Reliability of the field investigation

A small number of drains were noted in the lower areas of the trenches, which suggests that a degree of truncation has affected the area, however, the exact level is unknown.

6.2 Overall interpretation

6.2.1 *Summary of the results*

The only archaeological feature noted during the watching brief was the foundation pad, and there was no associated dating evidence. Given its relationship with the church wall and doorway, it is possible to suggest that the feature was possibly a foundation pad for a stone built porch, leading from the northern doorway.

6.2.2

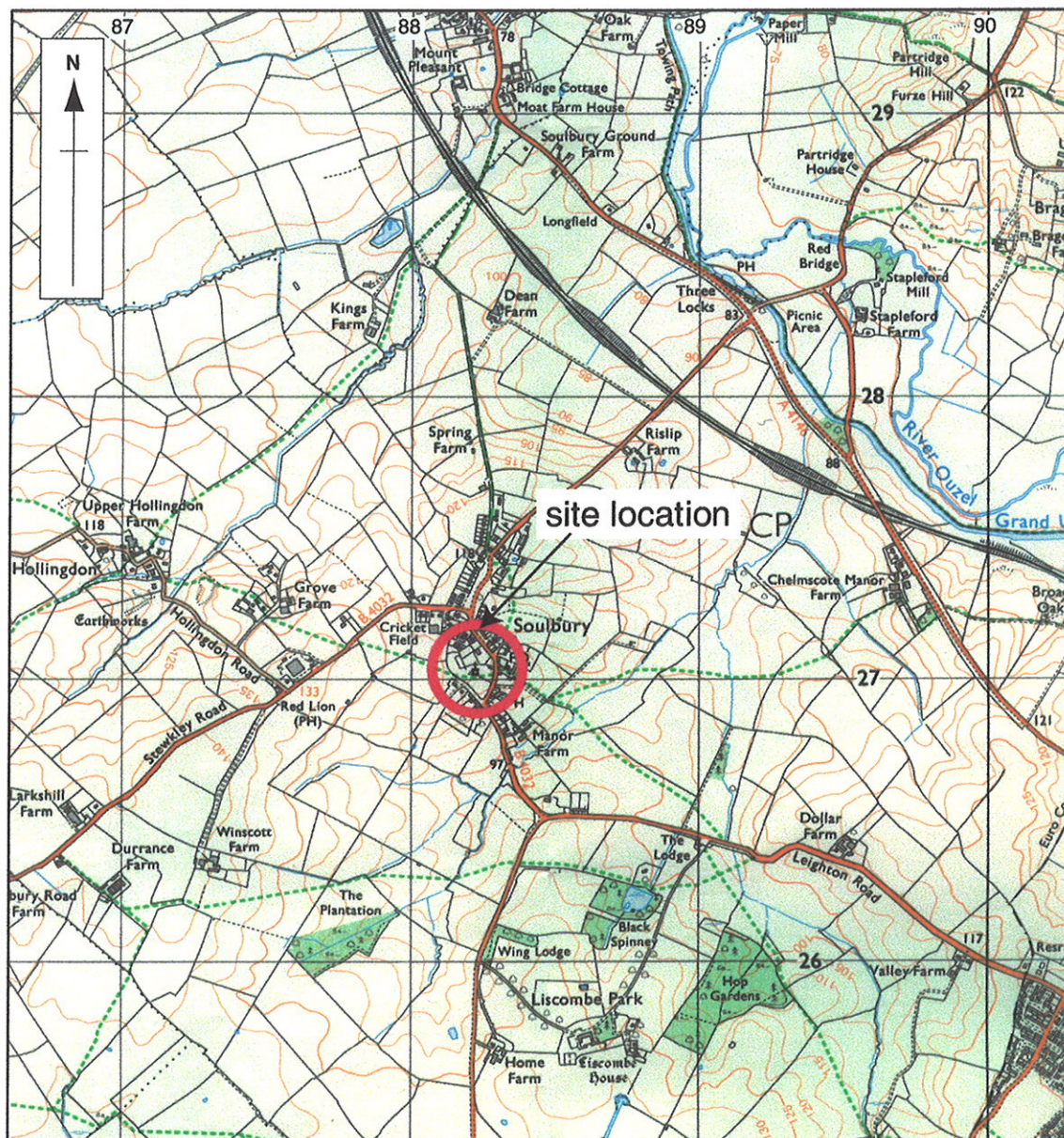
The results of the watching brief produced data of limited archaeological significance.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

RCHME Buckinghamshire Vol. 2 1913

VCH Vol. 3 1925

Wilkinson, D. (ed) 1992 *Oxford Archaeological Unit Field Manual* (First edition, August 1992).



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Figure 1 : site location.

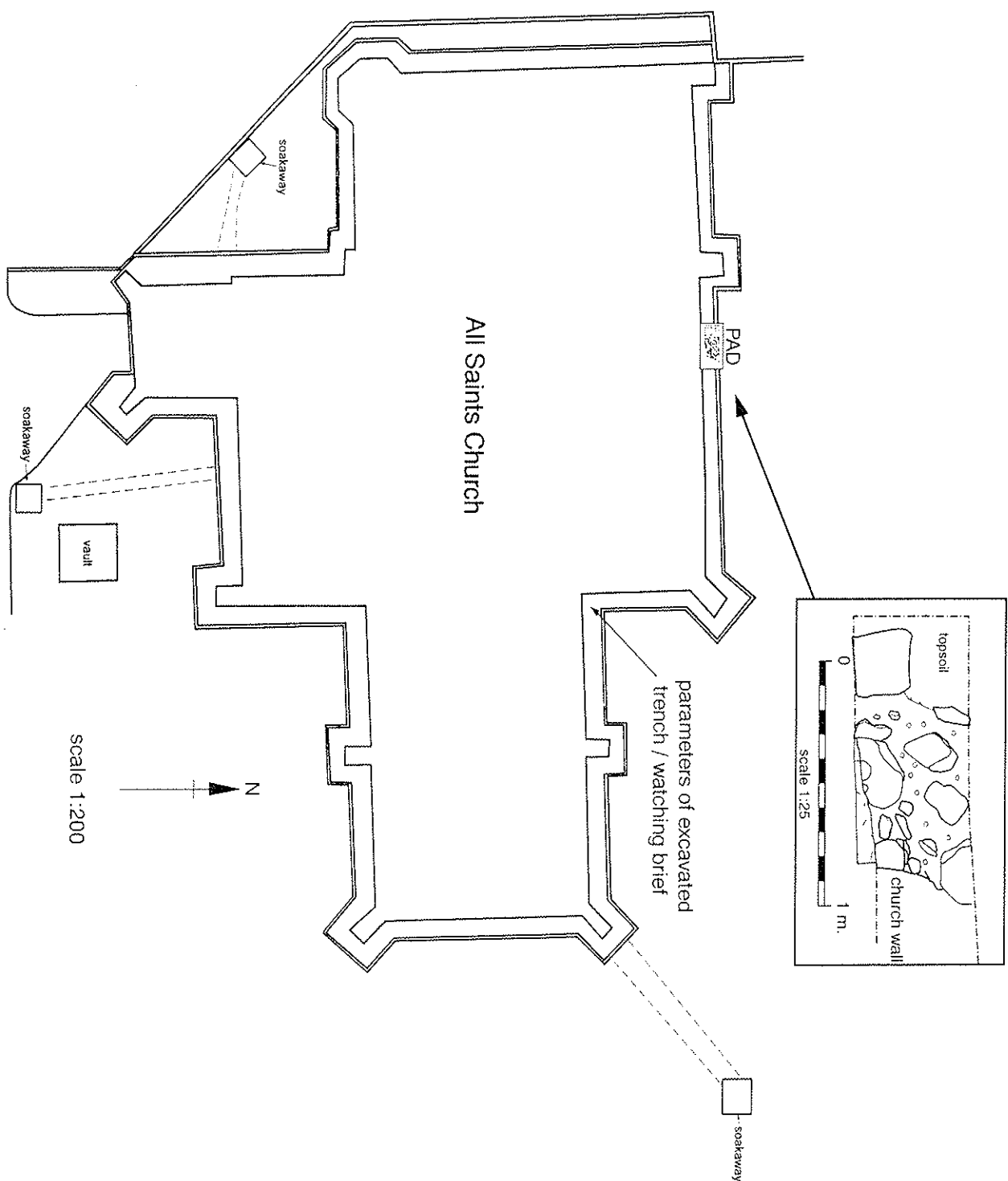


Figure 2 : Plan of the development area.



OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES

Tel: 01865 263800 Fax: 01865 793496

email: postmaster@oau-oxford.demon.co.uk



Director: David Miles B.A., F.S.A., M.I.F.A. Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited.
Private Limited Company Number: 1618597 Registered Charity Number: 285627.
Registered Office: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 0ES