

St Giles Church Stoke Poges Buckinghamshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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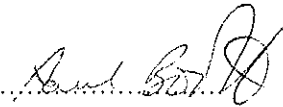
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St Giles Church, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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SUMMARY

In September 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Giles Church, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire (NGR SU 9701 8350). The work was commissioned by St Giles Parochial Church Council in advance of a new vestry extension. The watching brief revealed three unmarked graves and foundation trenches for the late 18th century boundary wall and the 1907 vestry.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In September 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Giles Church, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by St Giles Parochial Church Council in respect of a new extension to the rear of the vestry.

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

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on Boyn Hill terrace river gravel at 45 m above OD. The site is situated to the south of the manor house in the grounds of Stoke Park.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the project from the brief (ODA 2003) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 St Giles Church, Stoke Poges has a Norman core with 13th century extensions and additions of the north tower. The Hastings Chapel on the south side of the chancel was added in 1558. Two later structures have been added to the north side of the church. From the north aisle a corridor leads to a brick built, battlemented, demi-octahedral structure with wings, which linked the church to the manor house. This is probably late 18th century and is known as the Chapter House. A corridor from the chancel leads to the vestry which was added in 1907 (Pevsner 1960).

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 make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 After the safe on the west end of the vestry and a covered area were removed and following removal of the fuel pipes for the old boiler, the site was marked out and the foundation trenches were excavated using a mini excavator fitted with a 0.6 m wide bucket. Just to the north-east of the tower, the ground was found to have been contaminated from leaking fuel for the boiler. This caused the trench sides to collapse and required the base of the trench to be excavated below proposed impact level to remove the contaminated soil. A hole for a new manhole was hand excavated just to the east of the tower. These works were all carried out under archaeological supervision (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film and a general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Foundation Trenches

- 3.1.1 The foundation trenches were 0.6 m wide and excavated to a depth of 1.2 m. They cut into a natural subsoil of yellowish brown sandy clay with flint (1). This was cut by a grave (11) with vertical sides and flat base. The grave measured 1.2 m x 0.4 m x 0.55 m and was filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (12) with flinty gravel and remains of a skeleton in its base (Figs 2 and 3, section 3). The skeleton was removed for reburial. This fill was sealed below a 0.5 m thick layer of mid brown silty sand loam (2), which formed the old graveyard topsoil.
- 3.1.2 Layer (2) had been cut by a vertical sided feature (4) with a flat base, which was the foundation trench for the church boundary wall. It was 0.4 m in depth and was filled by a trench built brick wall (5) bonded with a light yellowish brown mortar, laid on a 0.35 m thick layer of compacted brick fragments and mortar (Figs 2 and 3, section 1). Two graves were observed cutting layer (2) immediately north of the tower. The first grave (13) had near vertical sides rounding to a flat base. It measured 1.5 m x 0.2 m x 0.58 m and was filled by a dark brown silty sand loam (14) and the remains of a skeleton at the base. This had been cut by a later grave (15) with vertical sides and flat base. It measured 1.62 m x 0.1 m x 0.56 m and was filled by a very dark brown silty sand loam (16) with a skeleton in its base (Figs 2 and 3, section 4). Both skeletons were left in-situ.
- 3.1.3 Sealing the graves and against the base of wall (5) was a 0.3 m thick layer of late 19th century ground make up of dark reddish brown silty clay loam (3). This had been cut by the foundation trench (8) for the brick foundation (10) of the 1907 vestry. This was filled by a reddish brown silty clay (9) between the cut (8) and wall (10) (Figs 2 and 3, section 2). A east-west aligned service trench (6) with vertical sides and flat base was also recorded. It was 0.6 m wide and 0.4 m deep and was

filled with a dark grey brown silty sand loam (7) with a 5" ceramic drain from the vestry to brick lined soakaway (Figs 2 and 3, section 1). Along the south side of the east to west foundation trench the edge of the ducting for the heating pipes the vestry was seen cutting through layer (3) (Fig.3, section 4).

Hole for new manhole

- 3.1.4 This measured 0.6 m x 0.5 m x 0.55 m and cut through ground make up layer (3) and into the top of the old graveyard soil (2). No evidence of grave cuts or other archaeological features was observed in the hole (Fig. 2).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief. All human remains were either undisturbed or reinterred in the holes.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

- 3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 The watching brief exposed three unmarked graves of unknown date, and the foundations for the north graveyard boundary wall. This wall is contemporary with the construction of the Chapter House and possibly used material taken from the partial destruction and reduction of size of the manor house in 1790 (Rev. Harris, 1971). The foundations for the new vestry in 1907 were also examined.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Length</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1	Natural				Natural silty clay gravel	
2	Layer	0.5 m			Old graveyard soil	None
3	Layer	0.3 m			19th century make up	None
4	Cut	0.4 m			Foundation trench	
5	Structure				Wall	
6	Cut	0.4 m	0.6 m		Service trench	
7	Fill				Fill of trench	None
8	Cut	0.8 m	0.3 m		Foundation trench	
9	Fill				Fill of trench	None
10	Structure				Wall	
11	Cut	0.55 m	0.4 m	1.2 m	Grave	
12	Fill				Fill of grave	None
13	Cut	0.58 m	0.2 m	1.5 m	Grave	
14	Fill				Fill of grave	None
15	Cut	0.56 m	0.1 m	1.6 m	Grave	
16	Fill				Fill of grave	None

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

1960 by Nikolaus Pevsner *The buildings of England: Buckinghamshire*,

Harris, Rev C.E, 1971 *Thomas Gray Poet 1716-1771 A Guide to His Life and Works*

Harris, Rev C.E, 1971 *A Guide to Stoke Poges Parish Church*

1992, D Wilkinson (ed) OAU Fieldwork manual

Archdeaconry of Buckinghamshire: Deanery of Burnham and Slough *St Giles Church, Stoke Poges Archaeological Recording Specification*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Giles Church, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire

Site code: STPOGC 03

Grid reference: NGR SU 9701 8350

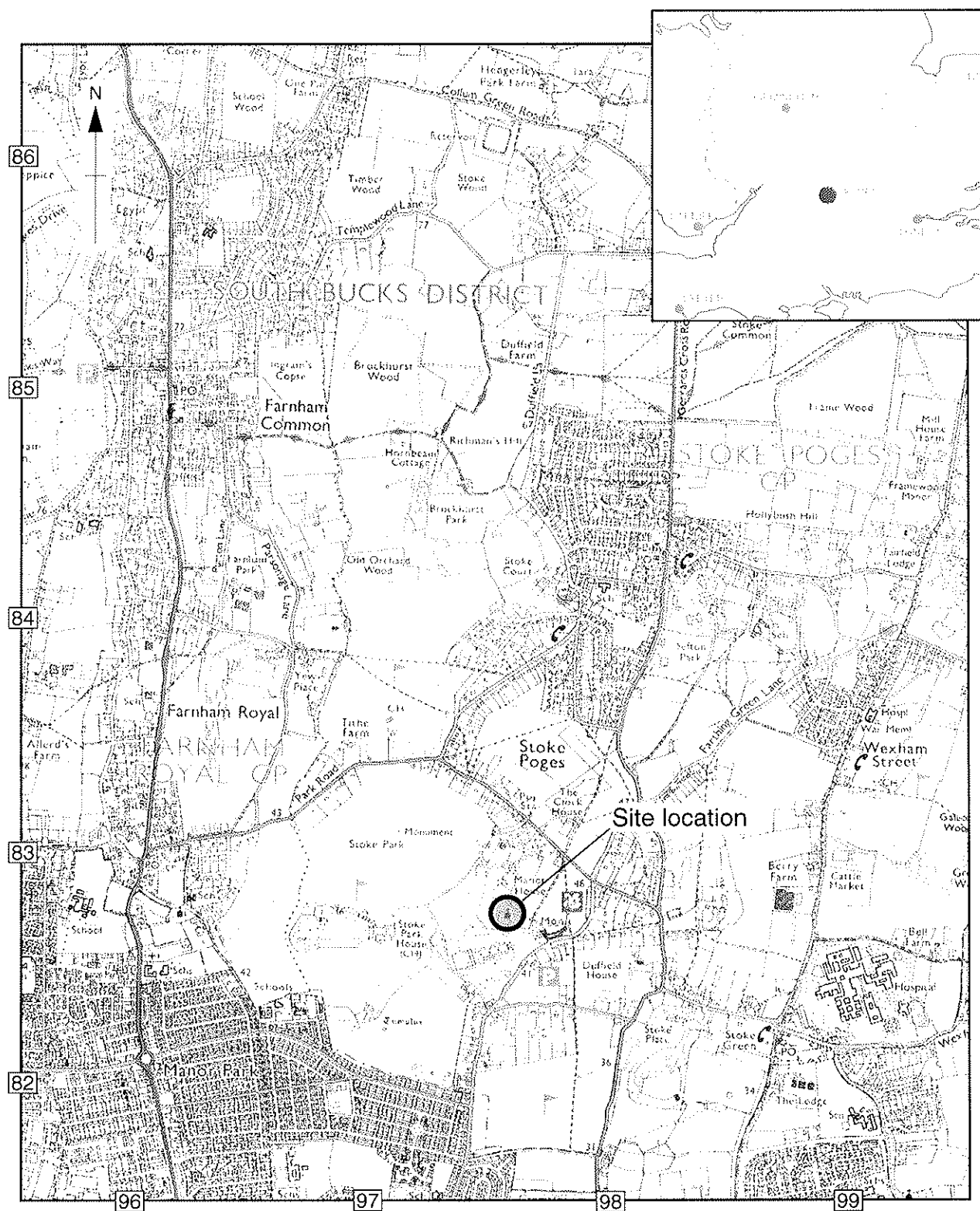
Type of watching brief: Excavation of new foundations of new extension to vestry.

Date and duration of project: Three site visits from the 22/9/2003 to the 24/9/2003.

Area of site: 14 m x 0.8 m

Summary of results: The archaeological watching brief revealed three unmarked graves and foundation trenches for the late 18th century boundary wall and 1907 vestry.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum in due course, under the following accession number: AYBCM 2003.155



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

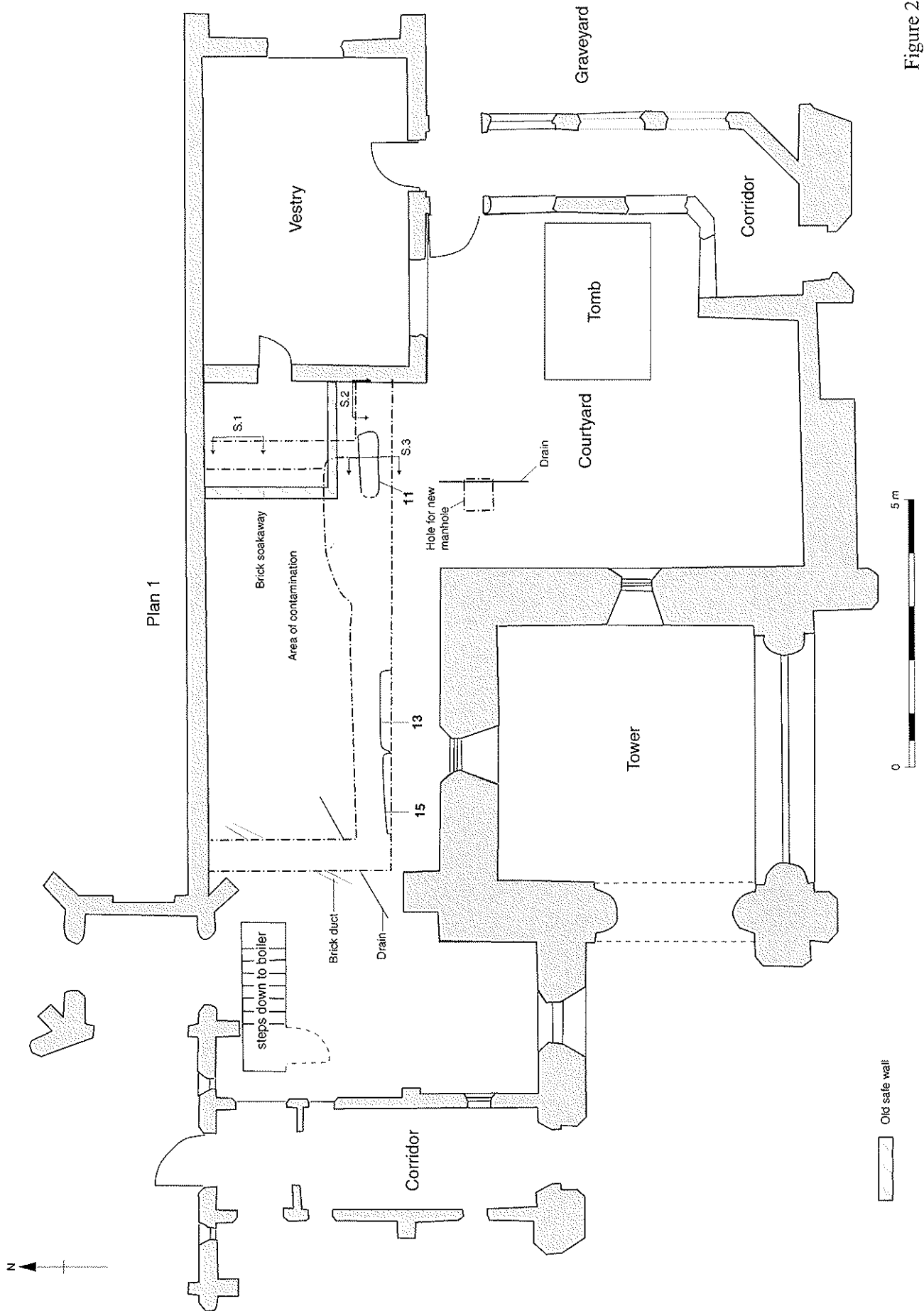
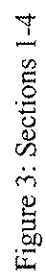
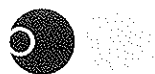


Figure 2: Site plan





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