

St Matthew's Church Langford Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Cover Plate: View of church form the south-east.

SUMMARY

In June and July 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Matthews Church, Langford, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 2480 0255). The work was commissioned by David Range, Churchwarden on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in advance of installation of a new heating system. The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features due to the limited depth of excavation.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In June and July 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Matthews Church, Langford, Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by David Range, Churchwarden on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in advance of installation of new heating system.

1.1.2 A Project Brief was set by Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Oxford, in response to the archaeological condition contained within the faculty granted for the works.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies within the upper Thames valley on 3rd Wolvercote Terrace river gravel at 76 m above OD. The site is situated to the south-east of the village centre.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The church dates to the Saxon period and has some of the most important Saxon remains in Oxfordshire. The central tower of the church dates to this period with the main body of the church dating to the 13th century. The chancel had been rebuilt on a grand scale in. The 13th century south porch incorporates two pieces of Saxon sculpture. There were then later additions from the 14th to 16th century, involving a number of windows, unknown rebuild to the chancel and in 1574 two flying buttresses on the north wall. The church was restored twice in the 19th century, by Richard Pace in 1829 and Ewan Christian in 1864 (Pevsner, 1974 *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire*).

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 A mechanical mini excavator cut the trench across the graveyard while the pipe trenches in the church were excavated by hand. The oil storage tank was installed on a concrete pad set in the topsoil by the west gate of the graveyard (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Trench in graveyard

- 3.1.1 This was carried by a mini excavator; the trench being 0.40 m wide and 0.45 m in depth. It cut into a graveyard soil of light brown silty sand loam with fragments of limestone and stone roof tile. There were no signs of burials observed cutting this layer. This was sealed below a 0.10 m thick layer of very dark grey brown silty sand loam (Fig. 2) topsoil.

Church heating pipes

- 3.1.2 The trenches through the church floor were from 0.30 m - 45 m wide and no more than 0.30 m in depth. They cut into a floor make up of dark reddish brown silty sand with gravel. This had previously been cut by the 19th century ducting for the old heating system, Sealing this was a layer sand and gravel in the chancel and gray mortar in the base of the tower, which bedded the stone floor tiles (Fig. 2).

3.2 Finds

- 3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

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 installation had a limited impact on the site with the maximum depth no more than 0.45 m below the surface. The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features in-side the church and only cut into the top of the floor make up, which had probably already been disturbed in the 19th century during the installation of the old heating ducts. The trench through the graveyard was not deep enough to disturb any burials, but along the north side of the church it was noted that a large amount of stone tile fragments were present which probably relates to various building works carried out on the church.

APPENDICES**APPENDIX 1 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES**

Pevsner, N and Sherwood, J 1974 *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire*

Wilkinson, D (ed) 1992 *OA Fieldwork Manual*

APPENDIX 2 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Matthews Church, Langford, Oxfordshire

Site code: LANGSM 03

Grid reference: NGR SP 2480 0255

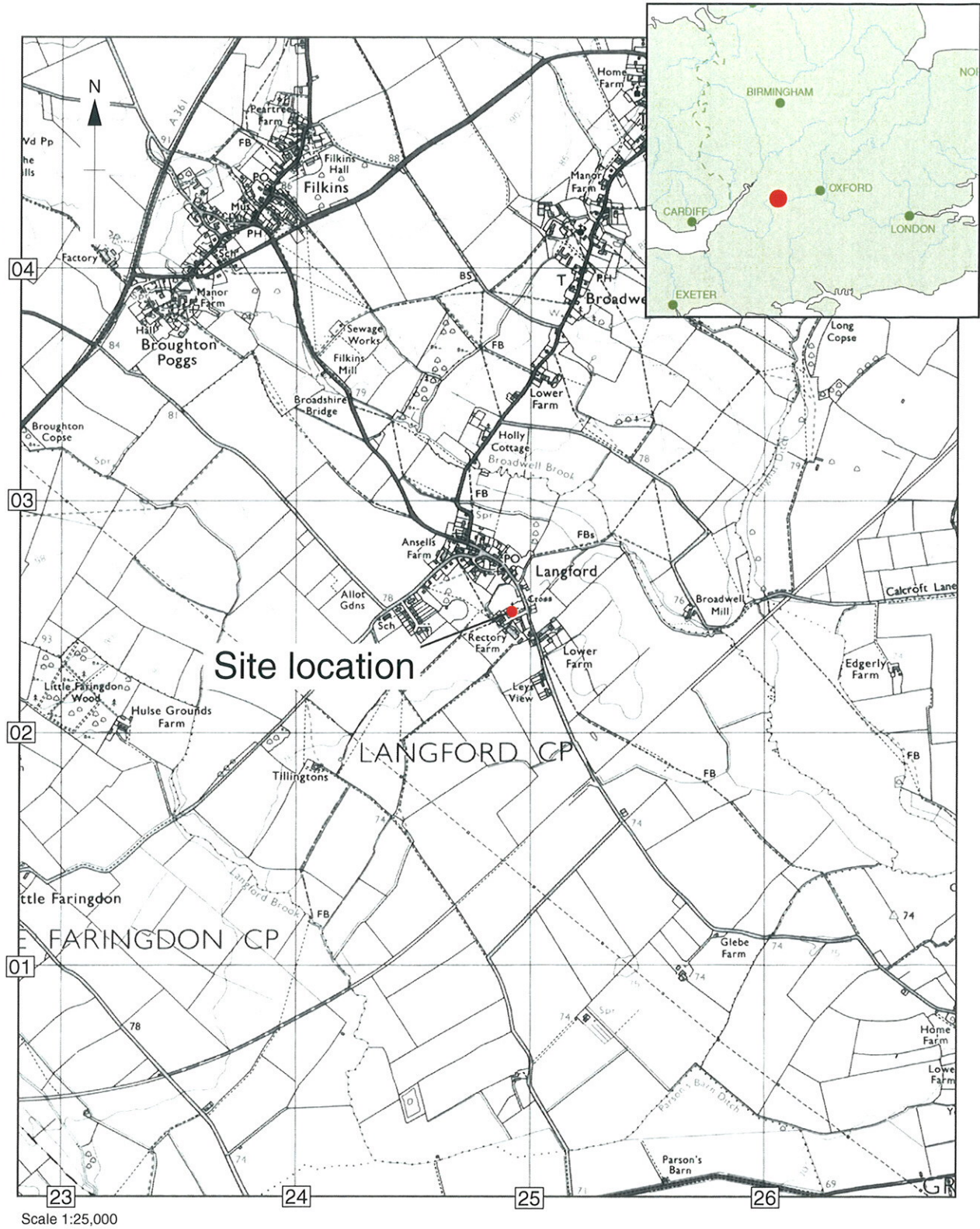
Type of watching brief: Work installing new heating system.

Date and duration of project: Two site visits on 26/6/2003 and 4/7/2003.

Area of site:

Summary of results: The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological features due to limited depth of excavation.

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: OXCMS 2003.86



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

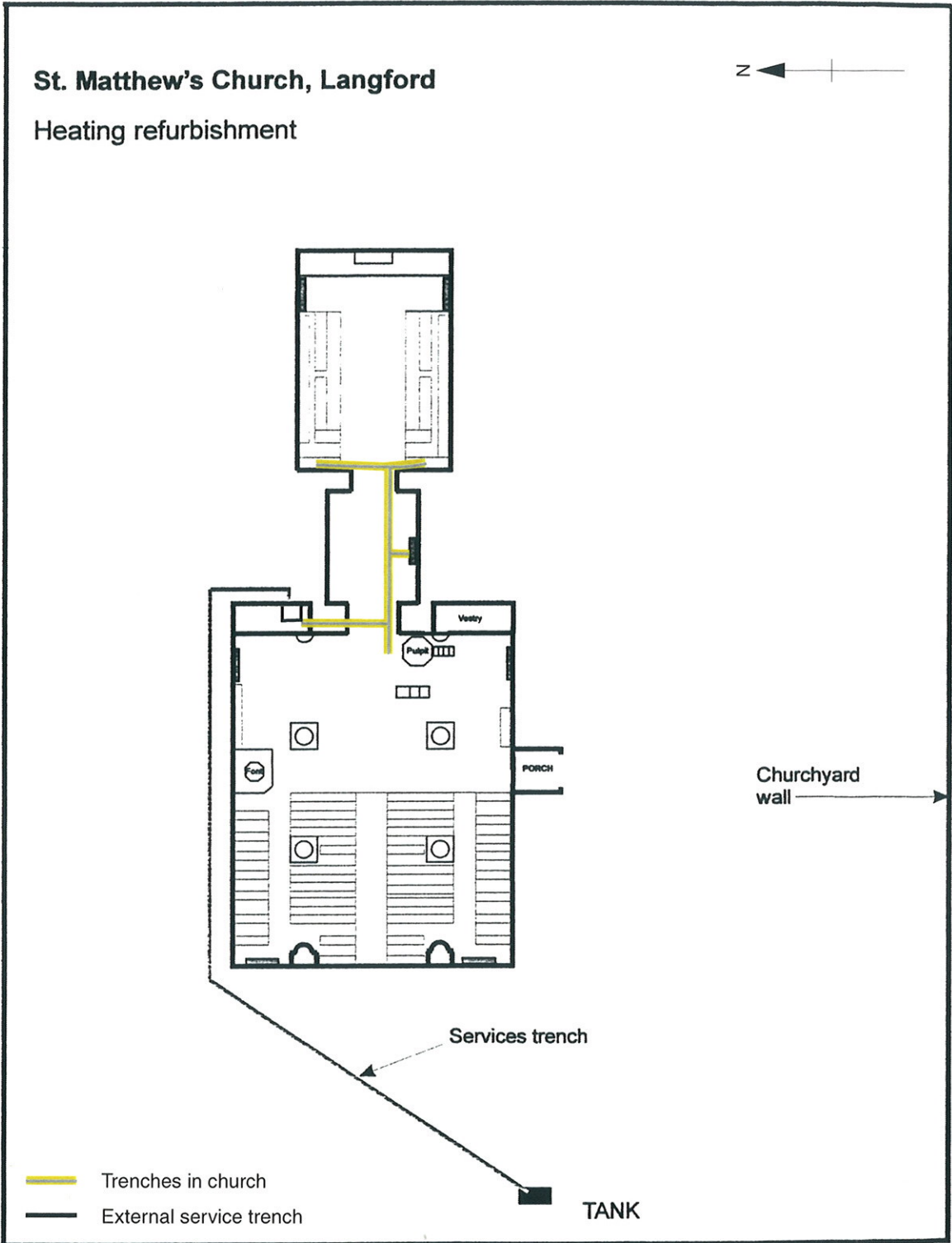


Figure 2: Trench location



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