

St Margaret's Church Little Faringdon Oxfordshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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St Margaret's Church Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CONTENTS

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of work.....	1
1.2 Location, geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	1
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology	2
3 Results	2
3.1 Description of deposits.....	2
3.2 Finds	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions.....	3
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	4
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	4
Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	4

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Site plan and sections

SUMMARY

On June 20th 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Margaret's Church, Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 224 015). The work was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council in advance of the installation of new drainage. The watching brief revealed a layer of graveyard soil overlying natural geology. No significant archaeology or evidence for earlier phases of the church's construction was observed. No burials were disturbed during the course of the work.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of work

- 1.1.1 On June 20th 2008, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Margaret's Church, Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 224 015). The work was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council in respect of a proposal to install new drainage runs along the north and south sides of the church.
- 1.1.2 An archaeological requirement requesting that the trenching be monitored during its excavation was attached to the works by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, Julian Munby (DAA, 2008).
- 1.1.3 OA prepared a Written Scheme of Investigation detailing how it would meet the requirements of the brief (OA, 2008).

1.2 Location, geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The village of Little Faringdon is located approximately 1 km north-east of the town of Lechlade-on-Thames (Fig. 1). The village consists of a ribbon development built either side of a branch road of the A361 Lechlade to Burford Road. St Margaret's Church lies on the south-eastern edge of the village and is bounded to the north-west and north-east by farmland, to the south-west by a public highway and to the south-east by a domestic residence. The church is centrally located within the churchyard on level ground at approximately 82 m above OD. The site occupies an area c0.3 hectares and the underlying geology is Alluvium over clay and Forest Marble of the Kemble beds (Geological Survey of Great Britain, sheet no 235).

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the WSI for the project (OA, 2008) and is reproduced below.
- 1.3.2 St Margaret's Church is a small mostly Norman church with the addition of a modern bellcote on the west end. The chancel still has the original Norman billet corbel-table and round headed lancets of a same date in both side walls. A similar window is visible in the west wall of the nave.

- 1.3.3 The north arcade is of accomplished workmanship and dates to *c*1200, though the round piers are more typical of an earlier date *c*1170. The doorway in the north wall of the aisle (blocked at present) is contemporary in date, *c*1200, as are the lancet windows in the north aisle wall.
- 1.3.4 The south porch and doorway date to the 14th-century, while a blocked arch east of the porch used to lead to a south aisle. This blocked arch now houses a 18th-century window.
- 1.3.5 In the early 16th-century 2 clerestory windows were inserted into the south wall of the nave.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence or absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the excavation of the service trenches and to recover any artefacts from the excavated material. In particular to locate and establish the depth of any burials or vaults.
- 2.1.2 To preserve by record any archaeological features or deposits that may be destroyed or disturbed during the course of the groundworks.
- 2.1.3 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The works consisted of approximately 50 m length of 0.6 m wide, 0.3 m deep trenching and the excavation of 3 soakaway pits each measuring 1 m square and an average of 1.3 m deep.
- 2.2.2 A plan showing the extent and location of the excavations was maintained at a scale of 1:100 (Fig. 2, site plan) and any recorded sections were drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavations and sections were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OA Field Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

- 3.1.1 The stratigraphy exposed was broadly similar within all the excavations and a general description can be applied to all the sections.
- 3.1.2 Within the soakaway pits the underlying natural, a yellow-brown silt clay containing weathered fragments of limestone (2) was encountered at a depth of 0.9 m below the

current ground level (Fig. 2, Sections 1 and 2). This was overlaid by a 0.9 m deep layer of dark grey-brown silt clay loam (1), the present day graveyard soil.

- 3.1.3 The trenching alongside the church was originally specified to be 0.6 m deep, however this was reduced to 0.3 m deep upon discovery that the foundations of the church were very shallow, only extending to 0.3 m below the current ground level. Only layer 1, the current churchyard soil was exposed within the section of the trenching (Fig. 2, Section 3).

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 No other dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental remains**

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

4 **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1.1 Only a limited stratigraphy was observed during the course of the work suggesting that the churchyard has not been extensively disturbed. The depth of excavation was such that no evidence for interments was encountered.

- 4.1.2 No evidence for earlier phases of the church structure were observed.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Layer	0.9 m	Graveyard soil	-	-
2	Layer	> 0.4 m	Natural clay	-	-

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

IFA, 2001 *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

OA, 2008 *St Margaret's Church, Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological watching Brief*

DAA, 2008 *Archaeological Requirements for St Margaret's Church, Little Faringdon*

OAU, 1992 *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson)

Pevsner, N, 1970 *The Buildings of England: Oxfordshire*

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Margaret's Church, Little Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Site code: LIFAMC 08

Grid reference: SP 226 014

Type of watching brief: hand excavation of a new drainage trenching.

Date and duration of project: 20th June 2008, 1 site visit

Area of site: c0.3 hectare

Summary of results: The watching brief revealed a layer of graveyard soil overlying natural deposits. No evidence for earlier church structures or of inhumations was observed.

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.



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Figure 1: Site location

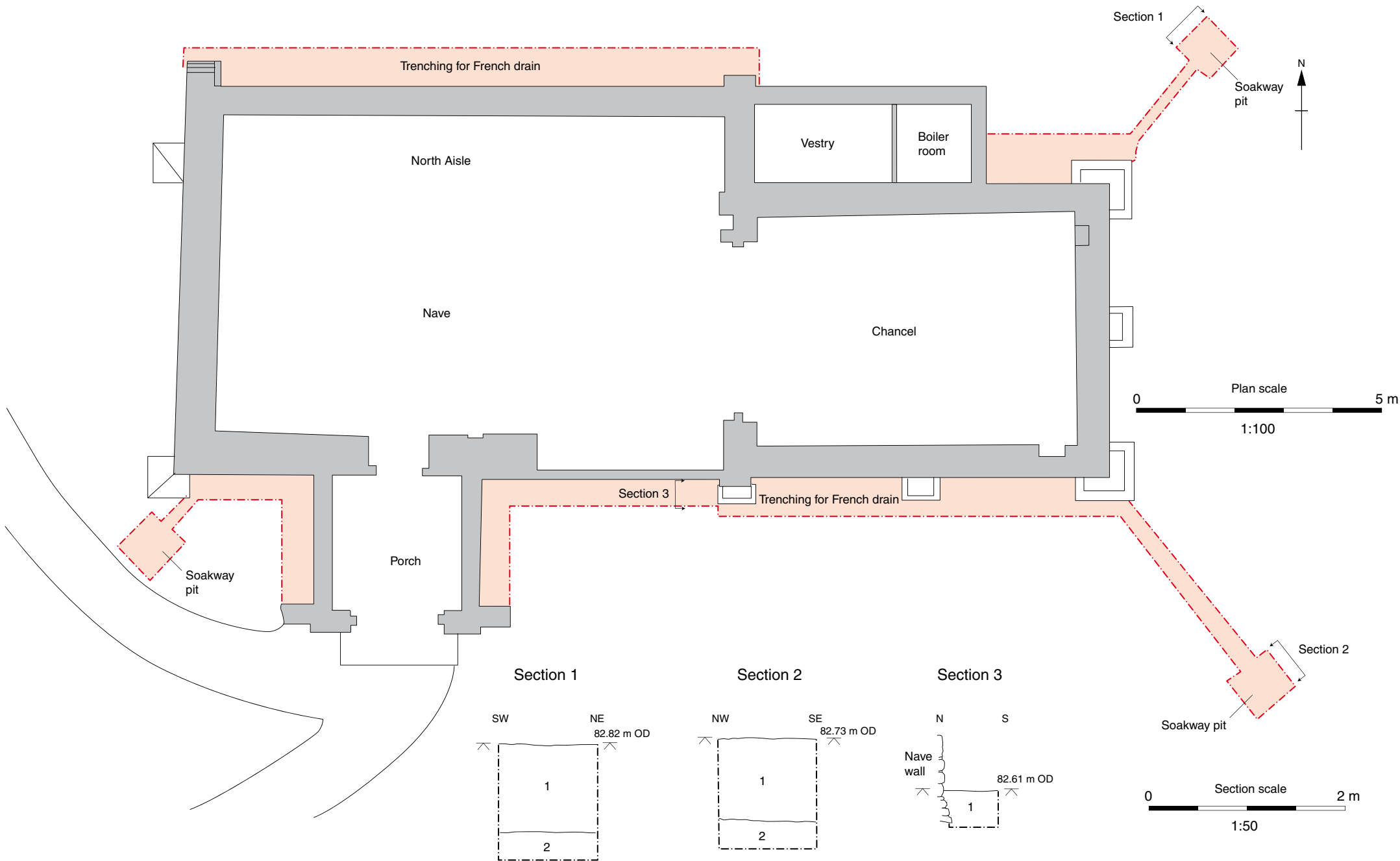


Figure 2: Site plan and sections



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