

Test Pitting at  
St James Church  
Newton, Wisbech  
Cambridgeshire



**Archaeological  
Evaluation Report**



March 2014

**Client: St James Parochial Council**

OA East Report No: 1601

OASIS No: oxfordarch3-175182

NGR: TF 4399 1470

## **Test Pitting at St James Church, Newton, Wisbech**

*Archaeological Evaluation*

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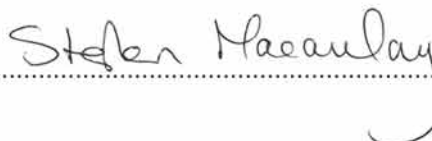
*Report Date: March 2014*

**Report Number:** 1601  
**Site Name:** St. James Church, Newton  
**HER Event No:** ECB 4121  
**Date of Works:** March 2014  
**Client Name:** St James Parochial Council  
**Client Ref:** 16552  
**Planning Ref:** F/YR13/0785/F  
**Grid Ref:** TF 4399 1470  
**Site Code:** NEWSJT14  
**Finance Code:** NEWSJT14  
**Receiving Body:** CCC Stores

**Accession No:**

Prepared by: John Diffey  
Position: Supervisor  
Date: 5/3/2014

Checked by: Stephen Macaulay  
Position: Senior Project Manager  
Date: 19/3/14  
Signed: .....



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### **Summary**

*On the third of March 2014 two 1×1m test pits were dug in an area proposed for the extension of the graveyard at St. James Church, Newton, Wisbech. A few pieces of pottery and ceramic building materials dating to the late medieval / early post-medieval period were found within the top and sub soil but no archaeological features or deposits were encountered.*



## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted at St. James Church, Newton, Wisbech.
- 1.1.2 This archaeological Test Pitting was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Dan McConnell of Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC; Planning Application F/YR13/0785/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by OA East (Macaulay, S. 2014).
- 1.1.3 The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *National Planning Policy Framework* (Department for Communities and Local Government March 2012). The results will enable decisions to be made by CCC, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority, with regard to the treatment of any archaeological remains found.
- 1.1.4 The site archive is currently held by OA East and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site lies on Tidal Flat Deposits of clay and silt (BGS 2012). Described as “Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. Local environment previously dominated by shorelines.” The site lies on a slight slope from 4mOD at the NNE end sloping down to 3.5m at the far SSW of the site.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 HER data lists 7 archaeological sites within 1km of the area under discussion including St James church itself. The church (CHER MCB 14896) which lies within the medieval core of Newton and immediately north of the site, is of 12<sup>th</sup> century construction with C14<sup>th</sup> and C15<sup>th</sup> additions and extensive 19<sup>th</sup> century restorations.
- 1.3.2 Approximately 400m to the south east of the site lies the site of the local rectory, its extensive gardens (CHER 12176) are thought to be pre C19<sup>th</sup> and are shown on the first edition OS map of the area. The rectory grounds are also thought to be the site of The Chapel of St Mary (CHER 04002) recorded as one of the only buildings left standing after a flood in 1400AD. The chapel was rebuilt in 1406AD and used as a chantry college and hospital. The building was last recorded on a map in the late C18<sup>th</sup>.
- 1.3.3 Only 300m to the east of the site running north to south is the course of the continuation of the Roman Bank sea defence (CHER MCB 16155) dated to the thirteenth century AD. The project brief also highlighted the possibility of the stream system directly south of the site as one that may encompass medieval water management structures. Works in the 1970's within this area also found evidence of a medieval saltern (CHER 03969) beneath the sea bank
- 1.3.4 Evidence of earlier activity in the area is less prevalent although a Roman coin hoard dating to the first half of the third century AD was discovered within the newton area in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.



1.3.5 These records suggest the possibility of medieval and post medieval activity within the site area either related to the church and village itself or to the management of water within the region.

#### **1.4 Acknowledgements**

1.4.1 The author would like to thank St James Parochial Council for Commissioning these works.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 The objective of this Test Pitting was to determine as far as reasonably possible the presence/absence, location, nature, extent, date, quality, condition and significance of any surviving archaeological deposits within the development area.

### 2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The Brief required that a programme of test pitting be undertaken in order to characterise the artefact contents of the ploughsoil.
- 2.2.2 The test pits were excavated by hand by the author.
- 2.2.3 The site survey was carried out by the author using hand tapes and a dumpy level.
- 2.2.4 Spoil and exposed surfaces were scanned with a metal detector. All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.
- 2.2.5 All archaeological deposits were recorded using OA East's *pro-forma* sheets. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and colour and monochrome photographs were taken of all relevant deposits.
- 2.2.6 Conditions on site were good although bright sunshine impeded photography.

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The results are subdivided below by individual test pits

### 3.2 Test Pit 1

3.2.1 Test pit 1 was situated 10m south of the northern boundary of the site and central to the sites width. The test pit measured 1×1m and was excavated to a depth of 0.45m to the upper horizon of the natural geology (003) this layer consisted of a light greyish yellow sandy silt. A small 0.3m deep sondage was dug in the corner of test pit 1 to ensure that this layer was consistent through its depth which it proved to be.

3.2.2 Overlying the natural (003) was a layer of subsoil 0.12m thick consisting of a mix of materials from (003) below and (001) above most likely formed through infrequent deep ploughing or pan busting. This layer contained occasional small abraded fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) and a single sherd of pottery.

3.2.3 Overlying the subsoil layer was a 0.3m thick layer of plough soil consisting of a mid greyish brown sandy silt which contained occasional abraded pieces of CBM and a single small abraded sherd of pottery.

3.2.4 Overlying the ploughsoil layer was a 0.05m thick layer of light greyish yellow sand containing frequent small shells of marine molluscs. This layer was limited to an area of approximately 15×17m over the northern half of the site and represents a levelling layer with material derived from excess spoil following the excavation of two recent graves immediately adjacent to the site

### 3.3 Test Pit 2

3.3.1 Test Pit 2 was situated 10m north of the southern boundary of the site and central to the sites width. The test pit measured 1×1m and was excavated to a depth of 0.5m to the upper horizon of the natural geology (003) which is described above.

3.3.2 The natural geology was overlain by 0.12m of subsoil and 0.37m of ploughsoil respectively, both are described above and neither contained any archaeological finds in this test pit.

### 3.4 Finds Summary

3.4.1 The small abraded pieces of CBM from top and subsoil in test pit 1 were too small to be datable but are likely to be pieces of brick from the church construction as similar materials can be seen in the unrendered east end of the church building. A number of similar pieces were also seen in the ploughsoil of the adjacent freshly ploughed field which also contained large pieces of stone of similar type seen in the church building.

3.4.2 The larger fragment of pottery from the subsoil of test pit 1 was identified as a rim sherd from a jug of Bourn D type dating to the late medieval early post-medieval periods c.1450-1550AD (C. Fletcher BA AifA pers. comm.)

3.4.3 The smaller more abraded fragment was identified as a sandy ware rim sherd most likely pre 1500AD but was not closely datable. (C. Fletcher BA AifA pers. comm.)

### 3.5 Environmental Summary

3.5.1 No suitable materials were found for environmental sampling.

## 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The works carried out found very little evidence of archaeological material at the site under investigation. No archaeological features or deposits of any type were found within the two test pits excavated. The fragments of CBM and pottery found in test pit 1 are likely to relate to activity around the church and surrounding village in the late medieval and early post-medieval periods while the lack of any finds in test pit 2 indicate a decline in activity further away from the church and village centre.

### 4.2 Significance

- 4.2.1 The results of this work are of little significance to the understanding of archaeology within the site or the wider area of the village of Newton

### 4.3 Recommendations

- 4.3.1 Recommendations for any future work based upon this report will be made by the County Archaeology Office.

## APPENDIX A. TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS AND CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench 1						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	n/a
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of modern layer of sand overlying topsoil/ploughsoil and subsoil which in turn overly a natural of sandy silt.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.45
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1
					<b>Length (m)</b>	1
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
004	Layer	-	0.05	Modern Spread of Sand	-	-
001	Layer	-	0.3	Topsoil	pottery, CBM	Post Med.
002	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	pottery, CBM	Post Med.
003	Layer	-	0.3+	Natural	-	-
Trench 2						
<b>General description</b>					<b>Orientation</b>	n/a
Trench devoid of archaeology. Consists of topsoil/ploughsoil and subsoil overlying a natural of sandy silt.					<b>Avg. depth (m)</b>	0.5
					<b>Width (m)</b>	1
					<b>Length (m)</b>	1
Contexts						
context no	type	Width (m)	Depth (m)	comment	finds	date
001	Layer	-	0.37	Topsoil	-	-
002	Layer	-	0.12	Subsoil	-	-
003	Layer	-	-	Natural	-	-

## APPENDIX B. BIBLIOGRAPHY

McConnell, D. *Brief For Archaeological Evaluation*. 2014. Unpublished

Macaulay, S. *Specification for Archaeological Test Pit Evaluation*. 2014. Unpublished

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

## APPENDIX C. OASIS REPORT FORM

All fields are required unless they are not applicable.

### Project Details

OASIS Number	oxfordarch3-175182		
Project Name	Test Pitting at St James Church, Newton, Wisbech		
Project Dates (fieldwork) Start	04-03-2014	Finish	04-03-2014
Previous Work (by OA East)	No	Future Work	Unknown

### Project Reference Codes

Site Code	NEW SJT 14	Planning App. No.	F/YR13/0785/F
HER No.	ECB 4121	Related HER/OASIS No.	

### Type of Project/Techniques Used

Prompt	Planning condition
Development Type	Other

### Please select all techniques used:

<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - interpretation	<input type="checkbox"/> Grab-Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Remote Operated Vehicle Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photography - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Gravity-Core	<input type="checkbox"/> Sample Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Annotated Sketch	<input type="checkbox"/> Laser Scanning	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure
<input type="checkbox"/> Augering	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measured Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Trenches
<input type="checkbox"/> Dendrochronological Survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Metal Detectors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Test Pits
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Documentary Search	<input type="checkbox"/> Phosphate Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Topographic Survey
<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Sampling	<input type="checkbox"/> Photogrammetric Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Vibro-core
<input type="checkbox"/> Fieldwalking	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photographic Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual Inspection (Initial Site Visit)
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysical Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Rectified Photography	

### Monument Types/Significant Finds & Their Periods

List feature types using the [NMR Monument Type Thesaurus](#) and significant finds using the [MDA Object type Thesaurus](#) together with their respective periods. If no features/finds were found, please state "none".

Monument	Period	Object	Period
	Select period...	pottery	Medieval 1066 to 1540
	Select period...	pottery	None
	Select period...		Select period...

### Project Location

County	Cambridgeshire	Site Address (including postcode if possible)
District	Wisbech	Chapel Lane, Newton, Wisbech, Cambs, PE13 5EX
Parish	Newton	
HER	Cambridgeshire	
Study Area	630m2	National Grid Reference TF 4399 1470

### Project Originators

Organisation	OA EAST
Project Brief Originator	Dan McConnell
Project Design Originator	Stephen Macaulay
Project Manager	Stephen Macaulay
Supervisor	John Diffey

### Project Archives

Physical Archive	Digital Archive	Paper Archive
Location ...	Location ...	Location ...
Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...	Accession ID ...

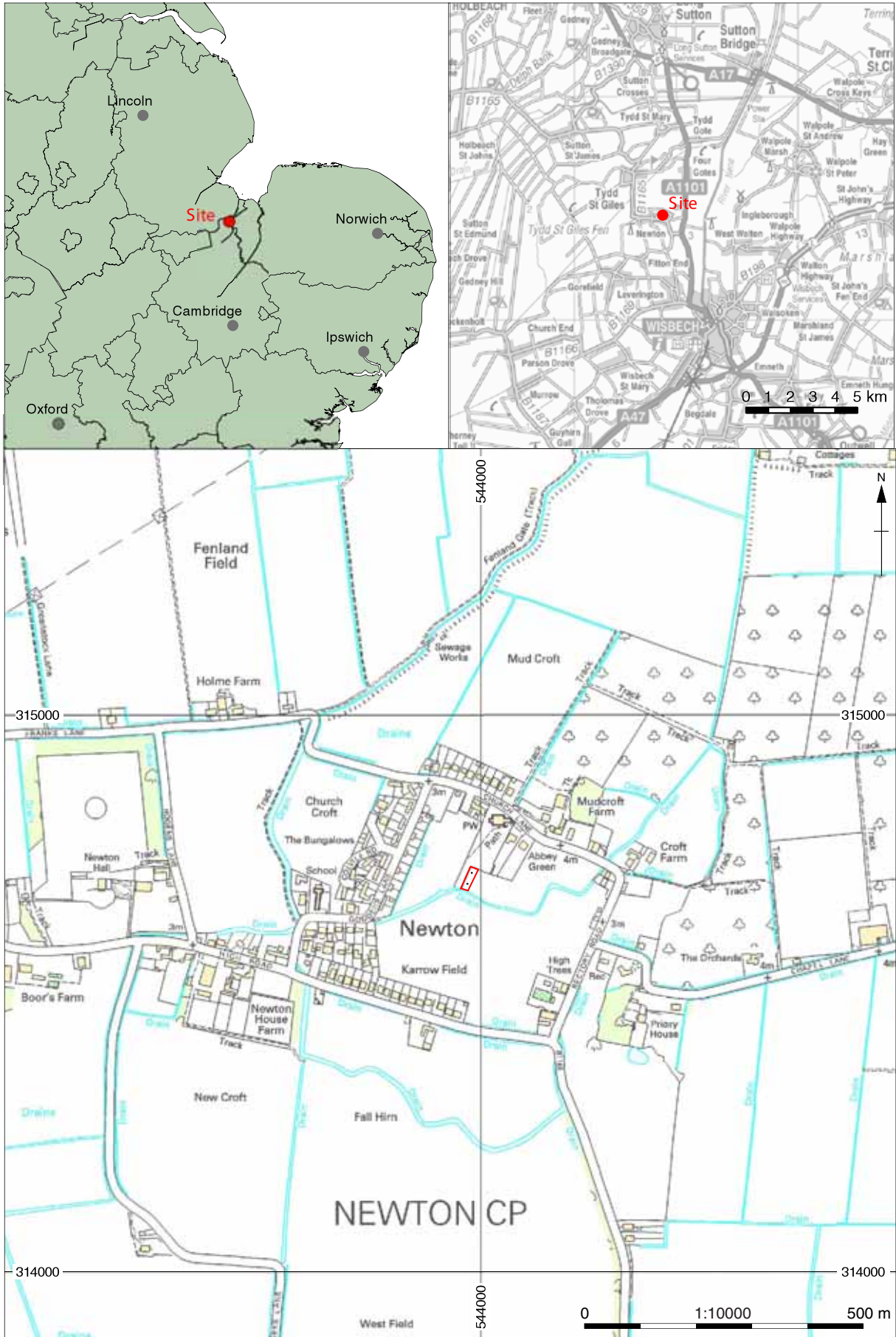
### Archive Contents/Media

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Ceramics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Glass	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Human Bones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Metal	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stratigraphic		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Survey		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Textiles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Bone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked Stone/Lithic	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Digital Media	Paper Media
<input type="checkbox"/> Database	<input type="checkbox"/> Aerial Photos
<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Context Sheet
<input type="checkbox"/> Geophysics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Correspondence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Images	<input type="checkbox"/> Diary
<input type="checkbox"/> Illustrations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drawing
<input type="checkbox"/> Moving Image	<input type="checkbox"/> Manuscript
<input type="checkbox"/> Spreadsheets	<input type="checkbox"/> Map
<input type="checkbox"/> Survey	<input type="checkbox"/> Matrices
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Text	<input type="checkbox"/> Microfilm
<input type="checkbox"/> Virtual Reality	<input type="checkbox"/> Misc.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Research/Notes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Photos
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plans
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sections
	<input type="checkbox"/> Survey

Notes:





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Figure 1: Site location showing archaeological development area (red) and test pit location (black)

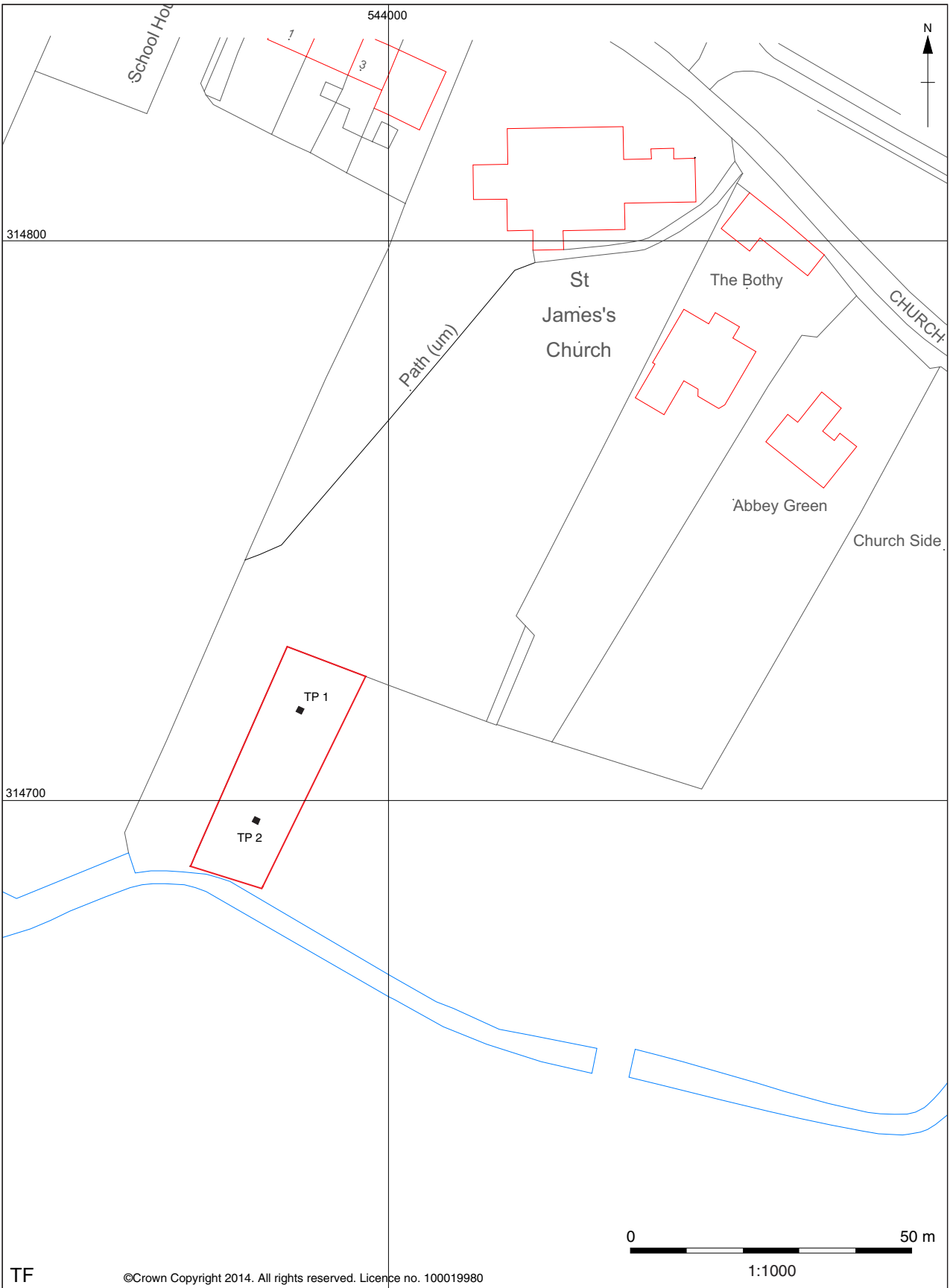


Figure 2: Plan of development area showing location of test pits 1 and 2.



Plate 1 : Site Overview from South



Plate 2: Test Pit 1 from west



Plate 3: Test Pit 2 from west



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