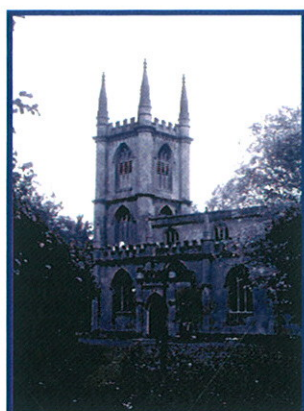


St Lawrence's Church Hungerford West Berkshire



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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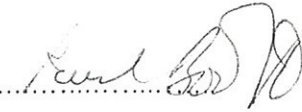
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Prepared by: James Mumford
Position: Supervisor
Date: 9th October 2003

Checked by: Jon Hiller
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 9th October 2003

Approved by: Paul Booth
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: 22nd October 2003

Signed.....



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Oxford Archaeology

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Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford OX2 0ES
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk
w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk

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St Lawrence's Church, Hungerford, West Berkshire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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Cover Plate: View of the church from the south east.

SUMMARY

In September and October 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Lawrence Church, Hungerford, West Berkshire (NGR SU 33 68). The work was commissioned by Roger Pope Associates in respect of test pits around the east end of the church to observe the foundations. The watching brief revealed foundations of the earlier 12th century church and two unmarked graves, as well as the extent of the 19th century foundations.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In September and October 2003 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at St Lawrence's Church, Hungerford, West Berkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Roger Pope Associates in respect of the excavation of four test pits around the east end of the church to observe the foundations.

1.1.2 The OA work was carried out in line with the terms of an archaeological recording specifications, which was set by Julian Munby, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on alluvium at 100 m above OD. The site is situated on the south side of the river Dun on the valley floor to the west of Hungerford town centre.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the Archaeological Recording Specification by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for the project and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 St Lawrence's Church was built in 1816 by Pinch of Bath. The fabric is of Bath stone with aisles and an apsed chancel. There is a tower at the west end. The original St Lawrence's Church was probably built in the early 12th century. It stood until the early 19th century, but by 1811 was in poor repair. Although the tower was then rebuilt, much of the main body of the church collapsed in 1814 leading to its complete demolition and the construction of the existing church.

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 The four test pits were excavated by hand by the contractors down the side of the foundations to the base of the footings. In the case of Test Pit 2 a grave was encountered and excavation ceased at that level. On completion the test pits were then recorded archaeologically (Fig. 2).
- 2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 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 general photographic record of the work was also made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (Wilkinson 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

Test Pit 1

- 3.1.1 This test pit measured 0.9 m x 0.8 m x 1.2 m deep and was against the north wall of the north aisle. It cut into the old graveyard soil (1) of light brown silty clay loam, which had been cut by an unmarked grave (17). This was only partly exposed and measured 0.9 m x 0.18 m x 0.88 m and contained a fill of mid brown silty clay loam (18) and the remains of a skeleton at the base, which was left in-situ. Also observed was the foundation cut (2) for the church wall (4). The foundations were of rough sandstone blocks forming a wide base with smaller rough hewn sandstone blocks laid on top. These were all bonded with a light yellowish brown silty clay. Between the cut (2) and foundation wall (4) was a backfill of light brown silty clay (19). Sealing this was the topsoil (7) of very dark grey brown silty sand loam, which had been cut by a 0.5 m wide flint cobble path (6) around the outside of the church (Figs 3 and 4, section 4).

Test Pit 2

- 3.1.2 This test pit was on the south side of the apse and measured 1.8 m x 1 m x 0.75 m deep. It cut into the old graveyard soil (1), which had been cut by a unmarked grave (8) measuring 1 m x 0.4 m x 0.2 m and was filled by a grey brown silty clay (9) and the remains of a skeleton at the base. The grave lay alongside the lower four courses of a east-west align flint wall (10) bonded with clay. This wall appeared to be trench built, but no sign of a cut was observed within the test pit. The wall (10) is thought to be the remains of the south wall of the 12th century chancel and had been cut by the foundation trench (2) of the present 19th century church. Overlying the wall was a 0.2 - 0.3 m offset of worked sandstone slabs (11) with brick coursing on top at ground level. This was laid on a backfill of light brown silty sand (12) with building debris (Figs 3 and 4, section 2) and related to the 19th building.

Test Pit 3

- 3.1.3 This test pit was on the north-east side of the apse and measured 1.5 m x 0.5 m x 1.3 m deep. This cut into a series of 0.2 - 3 m thick layers of mid brown and yellowish brown silty clay loam (15). These were thought to be construction and floor make up layers to the earlier church and were not observed in any of the other test pits. They had been cut by foundation trench (2) for the present church and contained foundations of the apse wall (4). The trench had been backfilled by a disturbed soil of mid brown and yellowish brown silty clay loam (16) and lenses of dark grey brown topsoil. Cutting into the top of this fill and into layer (15) was a service trench (13) measuring 0.5 m x 0.5 m x 0.3 m, which was filled by a very dark grey brown silty sand (14) and contained a 6" drain pipe. Sealing this was topsoil (7) and set into this and against the wall was a concrete drain. The natural geology was uncovered at 1.4 m below ground level in the base of this test pit (Figs 3 and 4, section 3).

Test Pit 4

- 3.1.4 This test pit was excavated against the south wall next to the south-east corner of the church. It was just west of the south-east corner buttress and measured 1.1 m x 1 m x 1.25 m deep against the foundations. It cut into the old graveyard soil (1), which had been cut by foundation trench (2). This contained the foundations (4), of the buttress, consisting of large sandstone blocks with a clay bond, together with the wall footings of smaller rough cut sandstone blocks laid in even courses. Filling the foundation trench was a dark brown silty clay loam (3). Sealing this was 0.2 m thick clay lining (5) against the wall and a brick built French drain. There were sealed below the flint cobble path (6) as seen in the north side in Test Pit 1, but with a skim of concrete and topsoil (7) (Figs 3 and 4, section 1).

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 four test pits revealed two unmarked graves of unknown date. One of these (8) lay against the remains of a flint stone wall (10), which is thought to be the south wall of the chancel of the 12th century church. In Test Pit 3, instead of disturbed graveyard soil as in the other test pits, a series of layers of material perhaps representing construction and floor make-up was observed, though it should be noted that the deposits were not dated. The evidence appears to show that the apse of the 19th century church lies within the outline of the east end of the old church. The test pits showed that the foundations of the 19th century church were built within a wide trench cut about 1.4 m deep onto the natural geology and cut over the earlier foundations.

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	Layer	1 m			Old grave yard soil	
2	Cut	1 m	0.5 m		Foundation trench	
3	Fill				Fill of 2	
4	Structure				19th century foundations	
5	Layer	0.2 m			Clay lining	
6	Layer	0.18 m	0.5 m		Flint path	
7	Layer	0.12 m			Topsoil	
8	Cut	0.2 m	0.4 m	1.1 m	Grave	
9	Fill				Fill of grave	
10	Structure	0.36 m	0.42 m	1.2 m	Flint Wall	
11	Structure	0.1 m	0.28 m	1.7 m	19th off set	
12	Fill				Fill of 2	
13	Cut	0.36 m	0.52 m	0.5 m	Service trench	
14	Fill				Fill of trench	
15	Layer	0.7 m			Make up layers	
16	Fill				Fill of 2	
17	Cut	0.9 m	0.18 m	0.9 m	Grave	
18	Fill				Fill of grave	
19	Fill				Fill of 2	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Wilkinson D (Ed), 1992; *OAU Fieldwork Manual*

2003 *Berkshire Archdeaconry: Newbury Deanery St Lawrence 's Church, Hungerford*
Archaeological Recording Specification

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: St Lawrence's Church, Hungerford, West Berkshire

Site code: HUSLC 03

Grid reference: NGR SU 334 687

Type of watching brief: Recording of four test pits around east end of church.

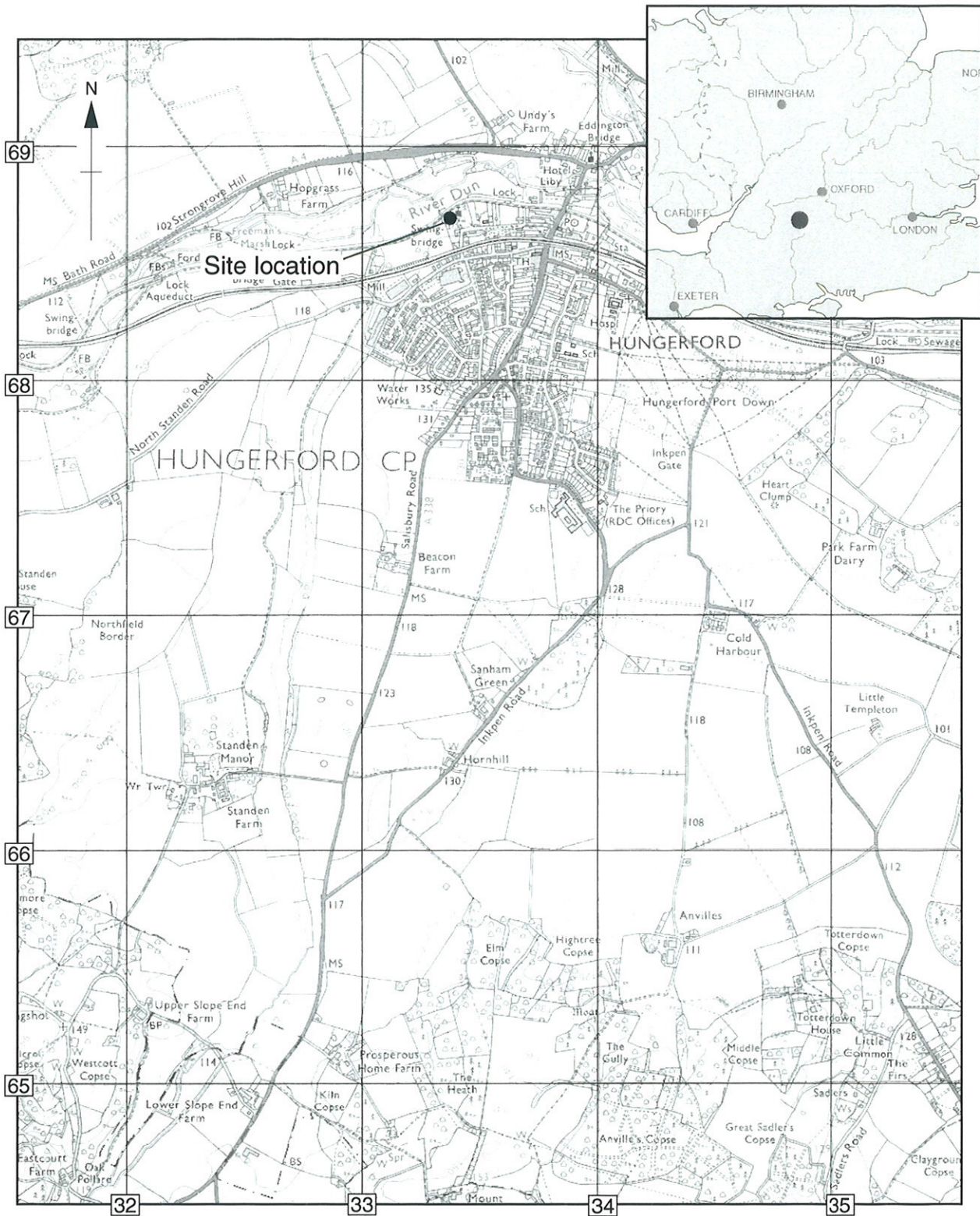
Date and duration of project: Two visits on 29/9/03 and 6/10/03.

Area of site: Two test pits were approximately 1 m x 1 m and the others 1.8 m x 1 m and 1.5 m x 0.5 m.

Summary of results: The test pits revealed foundations of the earlier church and two unmarked graves, as well as the extent of the 19th century foundations.

Location of archive: The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with West Berks Heritage Service, The Wharf,

Newbury, Berks, RG14 5AS in due course, under the following accession number: NEBYM
2003.18



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Figure 1: Site location

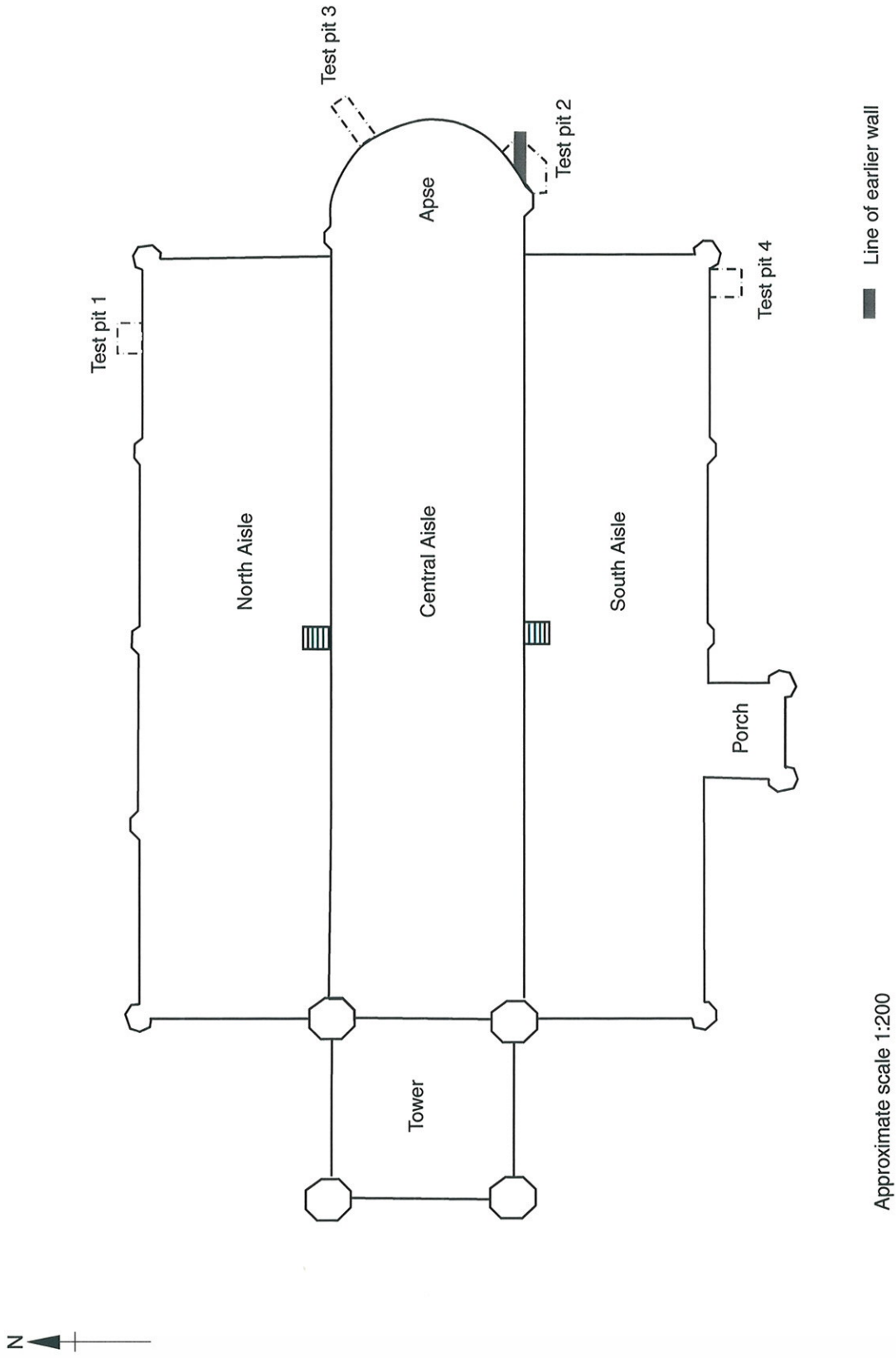


Figure 2: Site plan of church showing location of Test pits

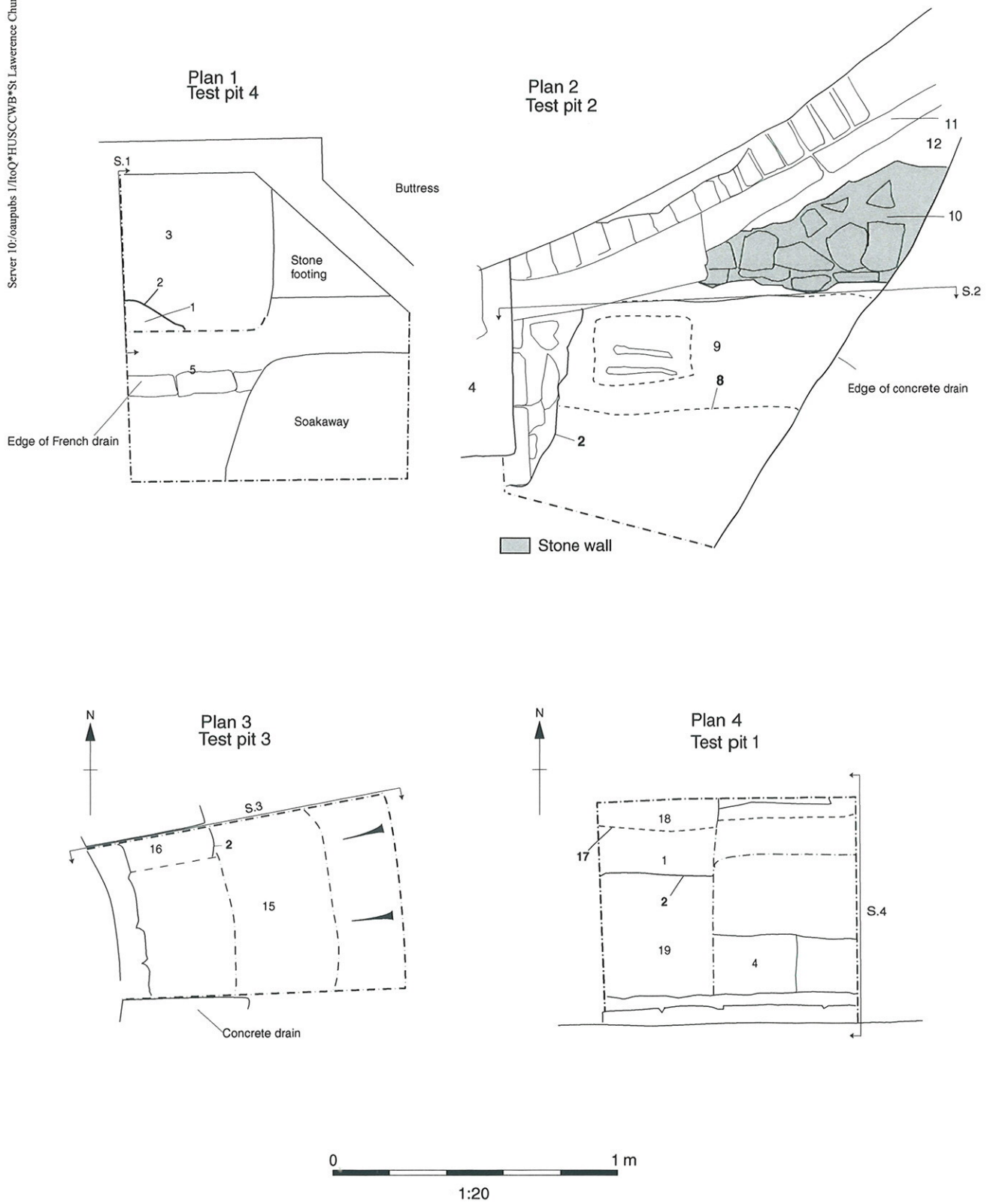


Figure 3: Plans of Test pits 1-4

