

All Saints Church Wokingham Berkshire



Archaeological Evaluation Report



Oxford Archaeology

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Cover Plate: View along north side of church showing evaluation trench to the left of picture.

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out a field evaluation at All Saints Church, Wokingham, Berkshire (NGR SU 8165 6855) on behalf of the Parochial Church Council in respect of a new flight of steps on the edge of the graveyard to the new community hall. The evaluation revealed four graves and a pit or root hole below depth of impact.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In February 2004 OA carried out a field evaluation at All Saints Church, Wokingham, Berkshire (Fig. 1) on behalf of Parochial Church Council in respect of a new flight of steps on the edge of the graveyard to the new community hall, and to a brief set by and agreed with by Julian Munby, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Oxford. The development site is situated at the north side of the church and is approximately 12 m² in area.

1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on clay Lower Bagshot Beds at 66.7 m OD. The site is situated on the east side of Wokingham alongside the A329.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The archaeological background to the evaluation was prepared from the Archaeological Recording Specification of the site of the proposed development (ODAC 2004) and is reproduced below.

1.3.2 All Saints Church was constructed in the 14th century on a site of an earlier church. The tower and clerestory were added in the 15th century. A major restoration programme was carried out in 1864-6 by Henry Woodyer. His work is mainly in the style of the 14th century, but includes a Norman style doorway. The building is Listed grade II*. Thomas Godwin, Bishop of Bath and Wells, was buried in the church in 1590.

2 EVALUATION AIMS

3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of fieldwork

3.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken to determine the extent and condition of burials and other archaeological features and deposits within the area of development.

3.1.2 The evaluation consisted of a trench measuring 3 m x 1 m wide (Fig. 2). The trench was hand excavated to a depth of 0.75 m below the graveyard surface. This depth was the maximum depth of the foundations for the new stairway into the community hall.

3.2 Fieldwork methods and recording

- 3.2.1 The trench was cleaned by hand and the revealed features were sampled to determine their extent and nature. All archaeological features were planned and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, 1992).

3.3 Finds

- 3.3.1 All human skeletal remains and charnel were kept on the site in the church to be reburied at a later date. No other finds were recovered.

3.4 Palaeo-environmental evidence

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

3.5 Presentation of results

- 3.5.1 The evaluation trench measured 3 m x 1 m x 0.75 m and cut into the natural clay with flint pebbles (3). This had been cut by a number of features. These consisted of a sub circular pit (8) with very steep sloping sides, although the base was below the level of the trench. It measured 0.8 m x 0.55 m x 0.32 m and had a fill of mid brown silty clay loam (9) and is thought to be a root hole or the upper part of a charnel pit. This had been cut by a partly exposed rectangular grave (6) measuring 1.08 m x 0.48 m x 0.45 m. It had vertical sides, but the burial was below level of the trench. It was filled by a light brown silty clay loam (7) (Fig. 3).
- 3.5.2 To the west of grave 6 was another partly exposed rectangular grave (12) with vertical sides, measuring 0.78 m x 0.42 m x 0.4 m. The grave was filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (13) although the burial was again beneath the excavation limit. Features 6, 8 and 12 were sealed below a 0.5 m thick layer of cultivated graveyard soil of mid brown silty clay loam (2). This had been cut by two further graves (10) and (4). Both these graves were rectangular with vertical sides and measured 1.5 m x 0.45 m x 0.52 m and 1.1 m x 0.45 m x 0.6 m respectively. They were filled by a dark brown silty clay loam (5 and 11). In both cases the burials were beneath the excavation limit. The stratigraphic sequence was completed by a 0.2 m thick layer of very dark grey brown silty sand loam topsoil (1) (Fig. 3, sections 1 and 2).

4 DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

- 4.1.1 The results from the evaluation revealed a number of burials, which were placed very close together and possibly in rows running from north to south. The burials are buried at a depth of below 0.75 m below ground surface. A large number of tile fragments were observed throughout the fills of the graves and are probably from the restoration of the church in the late 1860's. Therefore it is suggested that the burials probably date from the mid 19th century. This is supported by the grave markers to the west and south of the site dating to the same period and pre dating those in the new extension to the north-east.
- 4.1.2 Feature (8) is thought to be a root hole of a tree or shrub in the graveyard or an old chanel pit as it was near to the north boundary of the graveyard.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context No</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Width (m)</i>	<i>Thick (m)</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>	<i> Finds</i>
1	Layer		0.2 m		Graveyard Topsoil	
2	Layer		0.5 m		Cultivated Graveyard soil	
3	Natural				Clay	
4	Cut	0.45 m	0.52 m	1.5 m	Grave Cut	
5	Fill				Fill of grave	
6	Cut	0.48 m	0.45 m	1.08 m	Grave Cut	
7	Fill				Fill of grave	
8	Cut	0.55 m	0.32 m	0.8 m	Possible Charnel pit or Root Hole	
9	Fill				Fill of 8	
10	Cut	0.45 m	0.6 m	1.1 m	Grave Cut	
11	Fill				Fill of grave	
12	Cut	0.42 m	0.4 m	0.78 m	Grave Cut	
13	Fill				Fill of grave	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

Archdeaconry of Berkshire: Deanery of Sonning 2004 *All Saints Church, Wokingham, Archaeological Recording Specification*

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

APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS

Site name: All Saints Church, Wokingham, Berkshire

Site code: WOASC 04

Grid reference: NGR SU 8165 6855

Type of evaluation: Single evaluation trench to evaluate depth and number of graves in the area of development.

Date and duration of project: Two days from the 16th to 17th of February 2004.

Area of site: 3 m x 1 m

Summary of results: Four graves and charnel pit/root hole were located within the trench.

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: REDMG:2004.11

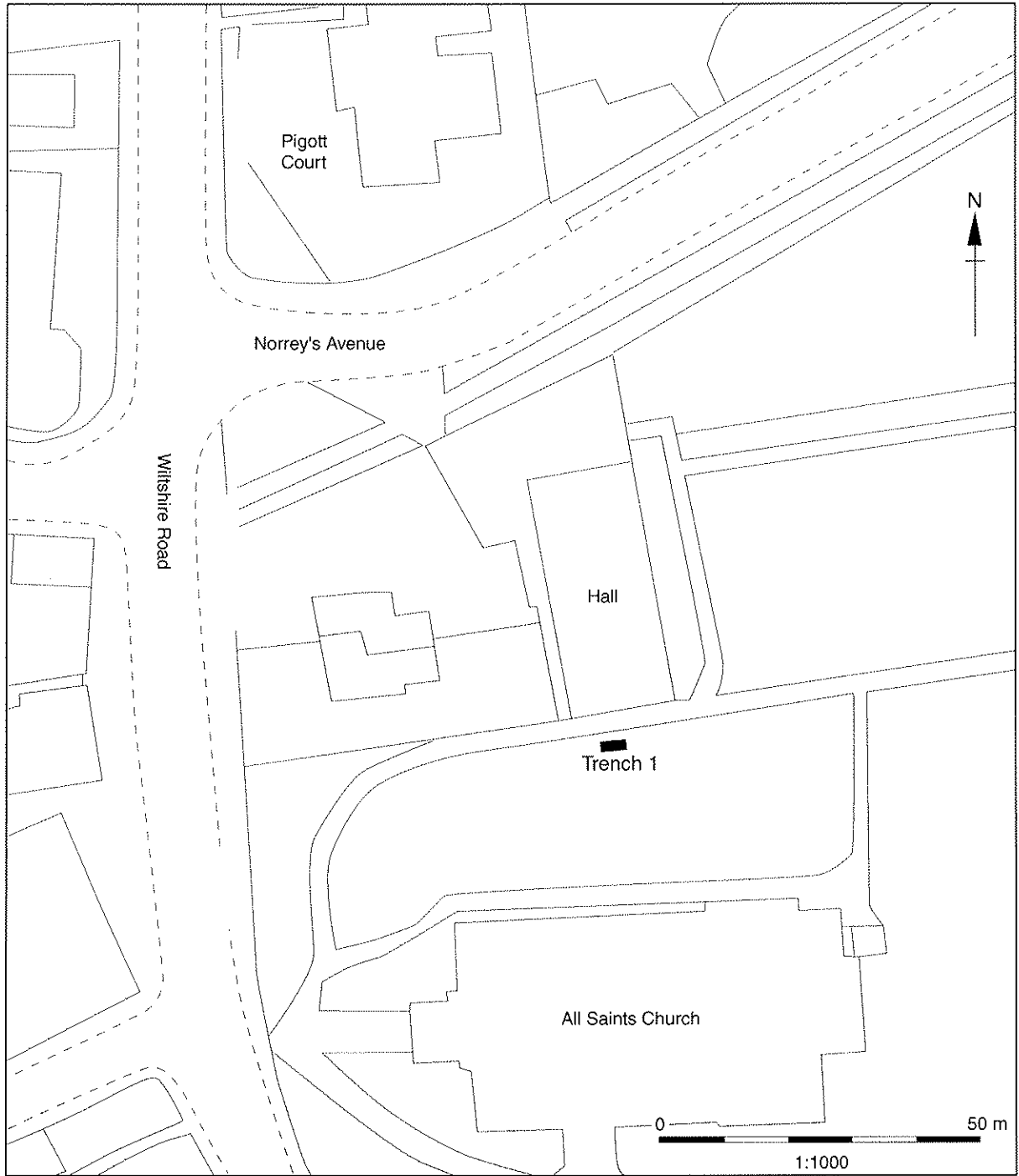


Figure 2: Site location of trench

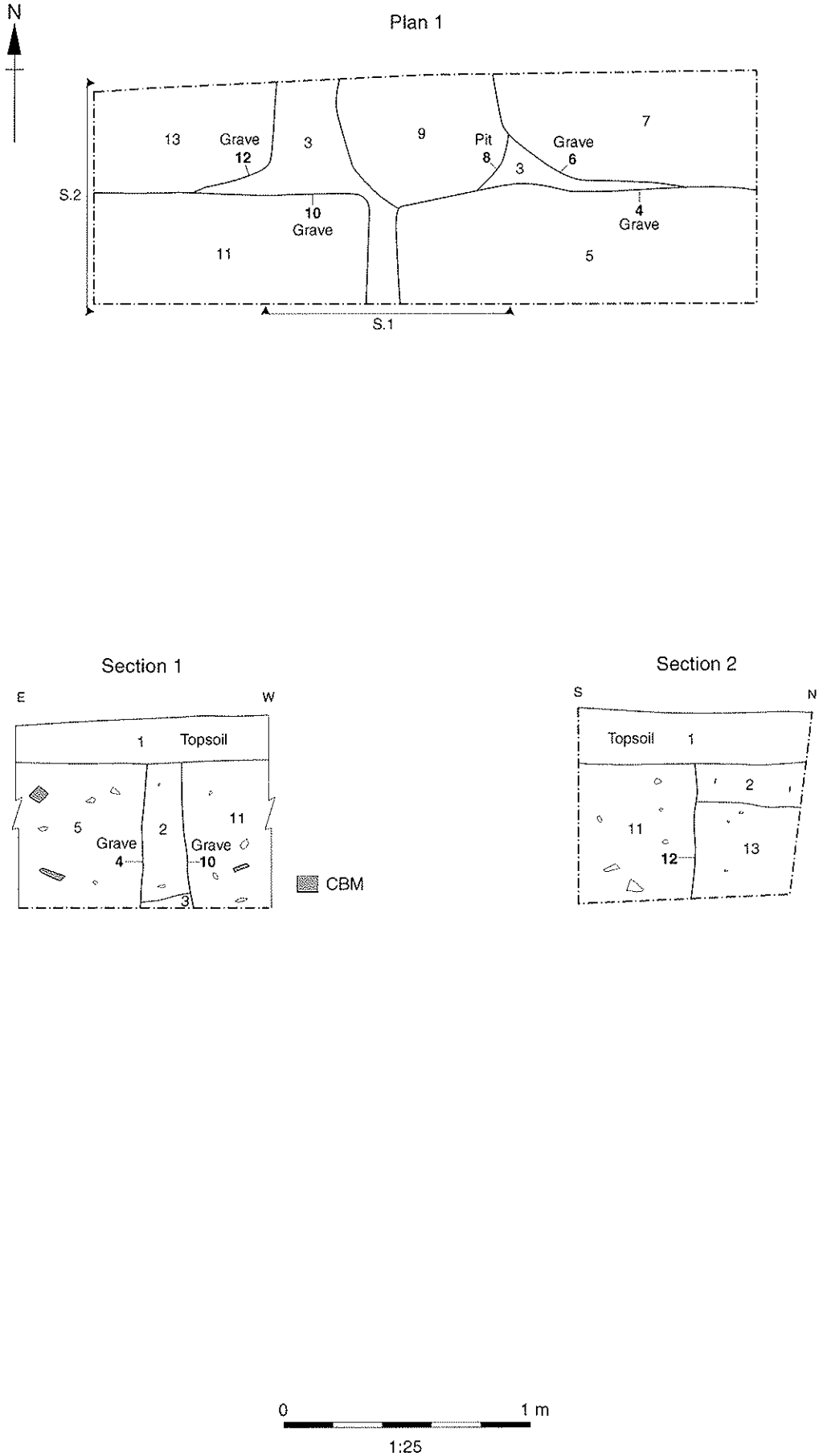






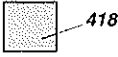








Figure 3: Trench plan and sections

	Section line and number
	Section through feature not illustrated with section drawing
	Limit of excavation
	Sondage / Interior limit of excavation
	Fill line and number
	Cut line and number
	Structure number
	Unclear boundary
	Stones
	Hachures indicate inclination of slope inside excavated feature
	Levels
	Grid point
	Continuation line (trench edge continues)



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