



ST KATHERINE'S CHURCH, ICKLEFORD, HERTFORDSHIRE

Precautionary Archaeological Attendance, Observation, Recording and Reporting

Albion Archaeology Project No: KCI1232

Report No: 2007/62

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Introduction

In May 2007 Albion Archaeology was invited by The Victor Farrar Partnership to carry out the archaeological observation of improvement works at St Katherine's Church, Ickleford, Hertfordshire (NGR: TL 1824 3164). The church stands in the middle of the village of Ickleford, which is located in north Hertfordshire, to the east of Letchworth (Figure 1).

The attendance of an archaeologist was requested by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA) as a precaution against the discovery of archaeological remains during the improvement works. The fieldwork was undertaken by Adam Lodoen (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report with illustrations by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).

Historical Background

The village of Ickleford is not mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), probably because it was at that time included in the manor of Pirton. However, it is likely that the village has a history stretching back at least to the Anglo-Saxon period.

St Katherine's Church is a Grade I listed building and dates to the medieval period. The nave dates from the middle of the 12th century and the chancel and the west tower are both early 13th century. The south porch dates from the middle of the 15th century. The south aisle, south chapel and north vestry were all added during construction and restoration works carried out in 1859.

Project Methodology

All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with a Brief prepared by Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA 2006). Methods employed during the project complied with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Codes of Conduct and Standards and Guidance documents (specifically *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, September 1999), and English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991), and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* (2001).

A copy of this report and the project archive will be deposited with the North Hertfordshire Archaeological Service Museum Resource centre in Hitchin.



Works Description

The improvement works comprised the installation of a drainage pipe along the south side of the church (Figure 1). This involved the excavation of a trench approximately 25m long, 0.30m wide and 0.45m deep. The trench was excavated by mechanical mini digger and, where necessary, by hand with pick-axe and shovel.

Results

The observation of the pipe trench took place from 23rd to 25th May 2007. Excavation of the trench was carried out by the appointed building contractors under archaeological supervision.

No archaeological features or deposits were found, either in section or plan, within the excavated pipe trench. Material removed from the trench around the porch (Plate 1) comprised friable grey sand silt which contained fragments of brick, tile and mortar.

To the east of the porch, excavated material comprised orange brown silt sand which contained pieces of worked limestone, tile, brick and large flint nodules. The worked stone, brick and tile were 19th century in date and were recovered in front of the door leading to the chapel (Plate 2). It is believed that this material originally formed part of the make-up of a paved entranceway which may have been demolished and dumped during the renovation works carried out in 1859.

Exposed wall footings revealed within the trench comprised of at least five courses of bricks beneath the aisle and chapel walls. There was no obvious significant foundation or consolidation beneath the walls of the porch.

Conclusions

No archaeological features or deposits, or artefacts of archaeological significance were revealed during the course of the improvement works excavations.

The likely reason for this is that the pipe trench was not wide or deep enough to extend beyond the 19th-century foundation trenches associated with the construction of the south aisle and chapel. The material removed during the present improvement works comprised the backfill of these earlier foundation trenches and around the aisle and chapel this material contained artefacts confirming its 19th-century date.

Bibliography

DAA. 2006. *Brief for Precautionary Archaeological Attendance and any necessary Recording and Reporting at the Church of St Katherine, Ickleford, Hertfordshire.*

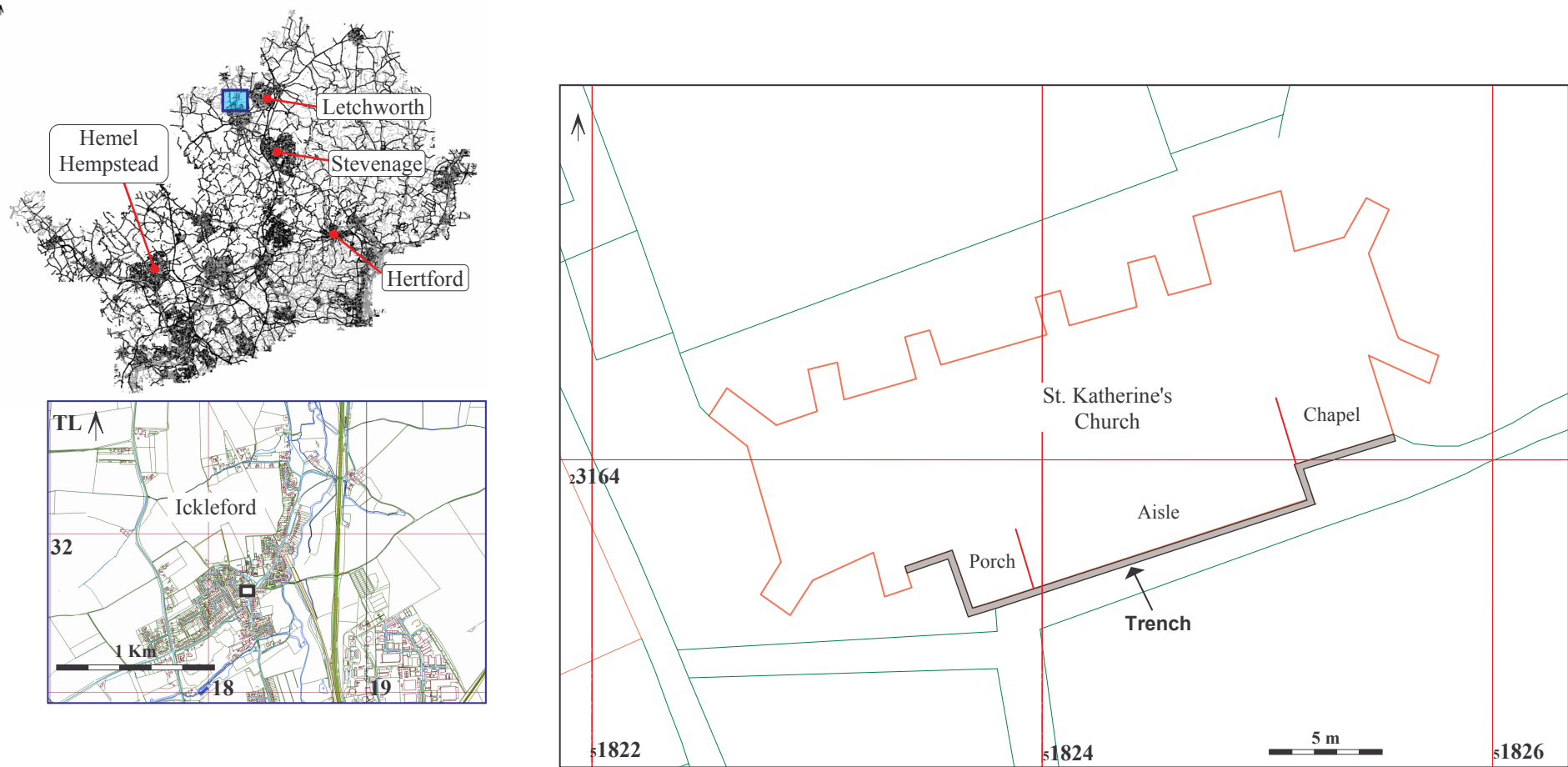


Figure 1: Site and trench location map

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Plate 1: Excavation of trench adjacent to the porch



Plate 2: Excavated trench adjacent to chapel

**Trench: 1**

Max Dimensions: Length: 25.00 m. Width: 0.30 m. Depth to Archaeology Min: m. Max: m.

Co-ordinates: OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182555: Northing: 316410)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182520: Northing: 316397)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182520: Northing: 316383)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182367: Northing: 316333)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182459: Northing: 316359)

OS Grid Ref.: TL (Easting: 182339: Northing: 316352)

Reason: Exavation of trench for drain pipe

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
100	Foundation trench	Dimensions: min breadth 0.3m, min depth 0.45m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
101	Backfill	Firm mid orange brown silty sand moderate medium ceramic building material, moderate large stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
102	Foundation trench	Dimensions: min depth 0.45m, max breadth 0.5m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
103	Backfill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt moderate medium ceramic building material	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
104	Foundation trench	Dimensions: min breadth 0.3m, min depth 0.45m	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
105	Backfill	Friable mid grey brown sandy silt occasional small stones	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>