

Marches Archaeology

The Church of Holy Cross Bobbington Staffordshire

**A report on an
archaeological watching brief**

August 2005

Marches Archaeology Series 391

This report is produced by

Marches Archaeology

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**The Church of Holy Cross
Bobbington
Staffordshire**

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archaeological watching brief**

NGR: SO 808 906

**Report by
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NGR: SO 808 906

A report on an archaeological watching brief

Summary

Drainage work at The Church of Holy Cross, Bobbington, Staffordshire uncovered the lower course of stonework and the foundations of part of the south wall of the nave. This consisted of a chamfered plinth and rubble foundations. This wall could date from the Norman or medieval period. No other features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated.

1 Introduction

Restoration and drainage works are being undertaken at The Church of Holy Cross, Bobbington. The site is situated at SO 808 906 (Fig. 1). The vicar, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, commissioned Marches Archaeology to carry out a watching brief on the drainage works. There was no Brief for the works.

2 Aims and objectives

The scope of the project was defined as:

- { observation of all topsoil stripping, other earthmoving and trench excavation until natural subsoil was reached
- { the recording of the sequence of soil deposits present and all archaeological deposits and features
- { the identification and cataloguing of all artefacts
- { if significant archaeology had been identified the archaeologist on site would have informed the County Archaeological Officer and Project Engineer immediately in order that appropriate action may have been taken to minimise the damage to such deposits and to record them appropriately.

The purpose of an archaeological watching brief is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:

‘to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works’

and:

‘to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support a treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard’.

3 Methodology

Documentary research

No documentary research was carried out for the project.

Fieldwork

Observations and appropriate recording were undertaken of all ground breaking activity in association with the proposed development. This consisted of the re-excavation of 19th and 20th century drainage trenches as well as the excavation of new drainage trenches (Fig. 2). Most of the trenches were between 400mm and 700mm deep but a soakaway to the east of the church was 1.20 metres deep.

The recording system included written, drawn and photographic data. The primary written record was by means of site notes, accompanied by sketches. Context numbers were allocated and a location plan and elevation were drawn. The photographic record was made using black and white negative and colour transparency film.

Office work

On completion of fieldwork a site archive was prepared. The written, drawn and photographic data was catalogued.

4 Site description

The site lies in the village of Bobbington (Fig. 1). The church is surrounded by a graveyard.

5 Archaeological and historical background

The core of the nave of the church is of a mid-Norman date. The north arcade is of four bays with round piers, square many scalloped capitals and single step arches. Some rebuilding took place in the 13th century and Sir Arthur Blomfeld restored the church in 1878.

6 The watching brief (Fig. 2)

The general stratigraphic sequence was of a topsoil of firm pinkish silty clay with occasional sand and pebbles [1]. This varied from about 100mm to 200mm in thickness. Underneath this was a darker silty clay with frequent pebbles and occasional sand [2]. Around the east end of the church a layer of pinkish silty clay containing 50% rubble [3] was seen underneath [1]. This was interpreted as building rubble from the construction of the east end of the church and was about 300mm thick. Below this was the rubble foundations of the east end of the church [4].

At the south side of the nave, adjacent to the porch, the stonework that was originally above ground and the foundations of the nave were revealed [5]. This consisted of a course of squared chamfered sandstone blocks which formed a plinth. Below this the foundations were of sandstone fragments and cobbles set in a red sandy clay. The foundations continued below the level of excavation.

7 Discussion

The ground level when the south wall of the nave was built was exposed as was the foundation of this wall. The ground level has risen over 400mm in this area and consequently the original chamfered plinth of the wall was hidden from view. The foundations of the south wall of the nave were also exposed. However, it is still unclear when this part of the church was built. The plinth and rubble foundations cannot be closely dated and this wall could have been built in the Norman period or the medieval period. No other features or deposits of archaeological significance were excavated.

8 References

Published references

Pevsner, N, 1951, *The Buildings of England; Staffordshire*

Jeavons, S, A, 1963, The Pattern of Ecclesiastical Building in Staffordshire in *The Transactions of the Lichfield and South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, Vol. IV*

9 Archive

The site code is HCB05A. The archive consists of:

- 2 field drawings on sheet
- 1 sheet of site diary and notes
- 2 photo record sheets
- 1 film of black and white photographic negatives
- 1 film of colour photographic transparencies

The archive is currently held by Marches Archaeology awaiting transfer to an appropriate museum.