

# Archaeological Monitoring of a Wheelchair Access Pathway at St Mary's Church, Ickworth Park, Horringer, Suffolk.



Prepared for the  
Ickworth Church Conservation Trust

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## Archaeological Monitoring during the creation of a Wheelchair Access Path at St Mary's Church, Ickworth Park, Horringer, Suffolk.

<b>Location:</b>	Ickworth Park, Horringer
<b>Grid Ref:</b>	TL 8125 6112 (centred on St Marys)
<b>SCCAS HER No:</b>	IKW 006.
<b>Dates of fieldwork:</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> , 9 <sup>th</sup> & 10 <sup>th</sup> of May 2013

### 1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by Tania Gomez Duran of Freeland Rees Roberts Architects on behalf of Ickworth Church Conservation Trust, to undertake archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the creation of a wheelchair access path at St Marys Church, Ickworth Park, Horringer, Suffolk (Planning Ref. SE/13/0113/FUL).

St. Mary's is owned by the Ickworth Church Conservation Trust. The Trustees have raised funds in partnership with English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a programme of intensive restoration: including repairing the roof, conserving the stained glass and medieval wall paintings and conserving the internal furnishings.

The church of St Mary is the oldest surviving building in the Ickworth Estate. As a former parish church, St Marys' was at the heart of a medieval village that once existed to the north-west of the building, with the manor house situated to the east. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the landowners were primarily the Hervey family who later became known as the Earls and Marquises of Bristol. The church has served primarily as a Chapel of ease for the Hervey family from the 1700s.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a brief issued by the Conservation Team of the Suffolk County Council Archaeology Service (Ref: 2013\_0113) on behalf of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

The aim of the monitoring work was to record the presence/absence, date, nature, and extent of any buried archaeological remains and features identified during groundworks. This report presents a brief description of the methodology followed and an archaeological interpretation of the results.

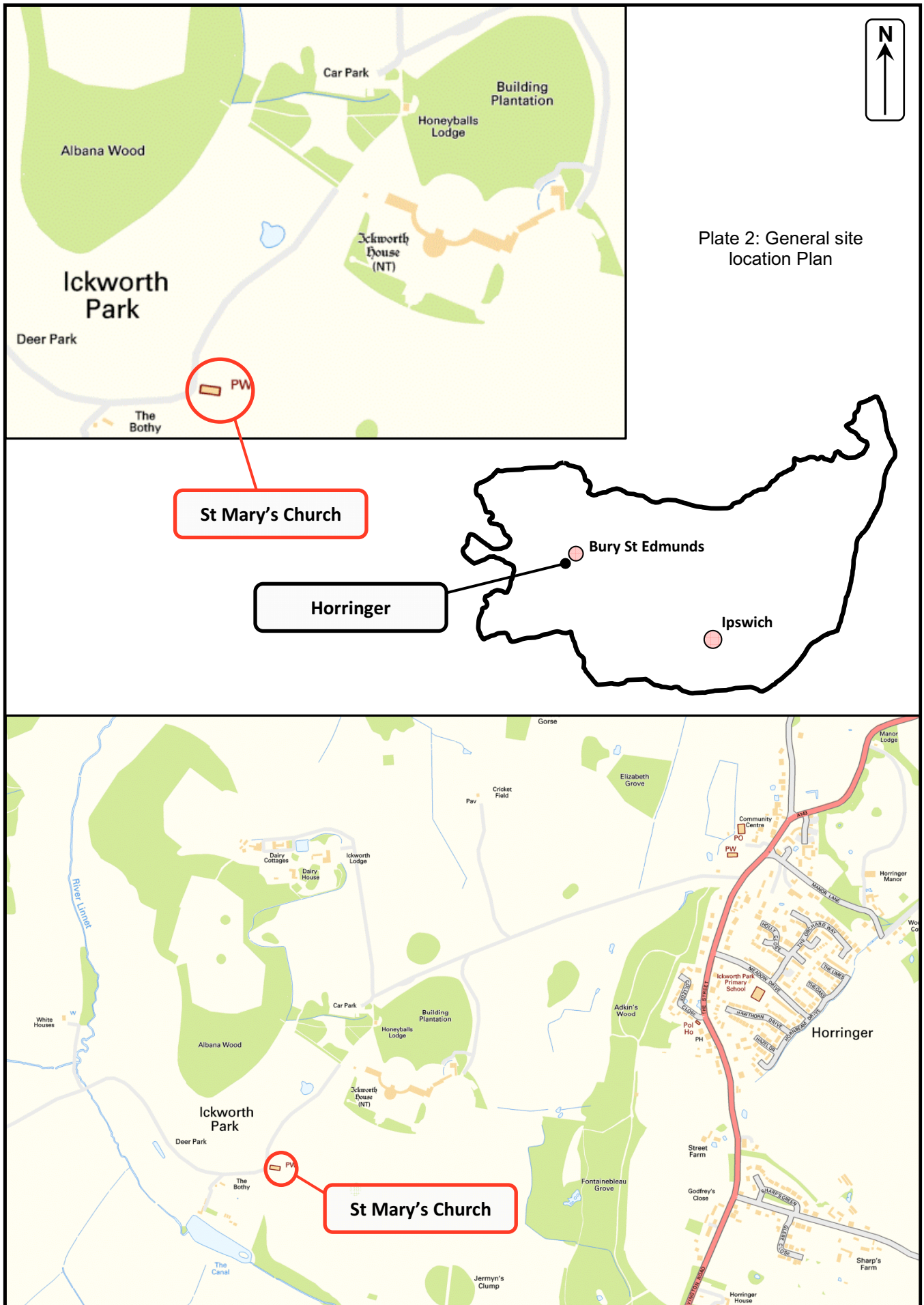
On completion of the project, the site archive will be offered to the Ickworth Church Conservation Trust for display alongside other artefacts collected during the course of the recently completed repair and refurbishment programme.

### 2.0 Summary of Results

No subsurface archaeological features or graves were encountered during the works; it appears that the western curtilage wall does indeed mark the western boundary of the medieval cemetery, with lower deposits sloping markedly down to the west – although this may have been emphasised by later post-medieval landscaping of soils outside of the cemetery area.

A shallow sequence of deposits was recorded in the area of the north porch which included a recently infilled hollow path, cemetery soils and possible natural sandy-clay geology. Gently sloping deposits on the western side of the curtilage wall included natural clay below a possible archaic subsoil, buried below late post-medieval make-up. Two prehistoric flints in fresh condition were collected from the subsoil, which include a small scraper of possible Mesolithic date.

Three sherds of medieval pottery were collected as residual finds in later soils which date from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century. Other finds amount to two musketballs and a 1953 Threepence.



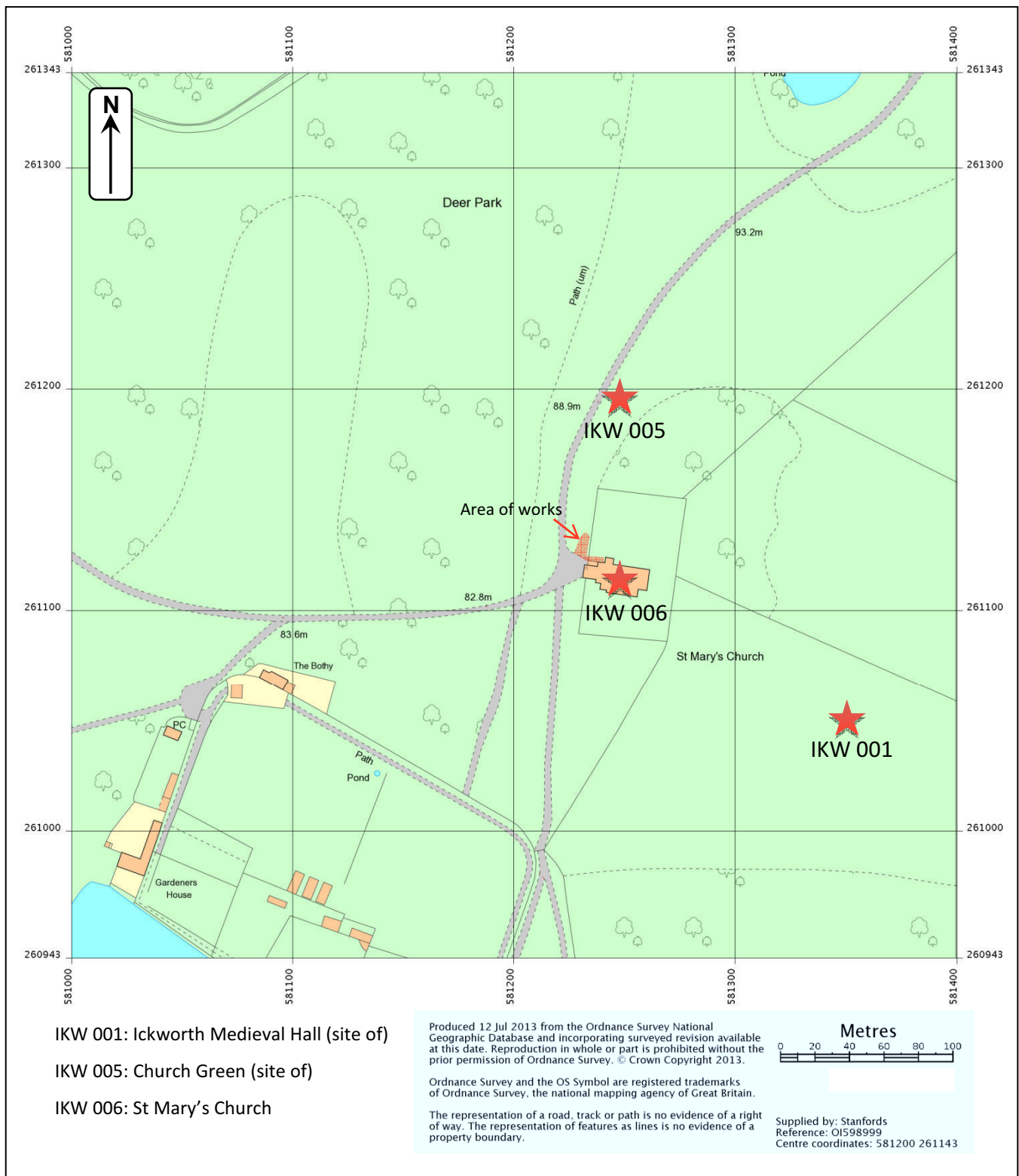


Figure 2. Site Location.



### 3.0 Geology and Topography

The site of St Mary's Church is located within the estate grounds of Ickworth Park. The church is located on sloping ground along the northern side of the River Linnet. The church is sited on an area of raised ground at c. 87m OD.

The underlying geology is Upper Chalk overlain by sand and gravels with alluvium deposits further to the south closer to the river channel.

Superficial deposits comprise of poorly sorted gravel and sands, with clay lenses, formed mostly by solifluction and/or hillwash and soil creep -



Plate 2: St Mary's Church looking south

Geology of Britain Viewer at a scale of 1:50 (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>)

The sub-surface geology of the site encountered during the fieldwork can be characterised as mid orange, slightly sandy-clay.

### 4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

Ickworth is a small civil parish, almost coextensive with the National Trust landscape estate of Ickworth Park. It is located in the St Edmundsbury Borough of Suffolk, c. 3.7 km south-west of Bury St Edmunds. The bulk of the land was formerly Lord Bristol's main freehold estate which was sold for public benefit to the National Trust in 1956.

The church of St Mary is the oldest surviving building in the Ickworth Estate. As a former parish church, St Marys' was at the heart of a medieval village that once existed to the north-west of the building, with the manor house situated to the east. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the landowners were primarily the Hervey family who later became known as the Earls and Marquises of Bristol.

In the early 1700s John Hervey inherited Ickworth from an aunt. The old derelict Hall was demolished and he and his family moved into a large farmhouse (now the Dower House). He created a large enclosed deer park by moving tenants into newly built homes in the next village of Horringer. From about this time the church became a family chapel dedicated to the Hervey family, their staff and remaining tenants.

**Sites of interest in the immediate proximity or of particular relevance or interest which fall in close proximity to the site include:**

*Ickworth Church of St Mary's, a chapel of ease (IKW 006)*

Most members of the Hervey family, from Thomas Hervey (d. 1467) up to the 7th Marquess of Bristol, have been buried at Ickworth Church (a Grade II\* Listed Building); which is located within the Park, a short walk from the house. The current church has Norman origins (a church with half an acre of land is listed here in Domesday) with many later alterations and additions, and possesses a 15th-century wall painting of the Angel of the

Annunciation, a 15th-century font, and roundels of Flemish glass from as early as 14th century, as well as numerous marble achievements to different members of the Hervey family over the centuries.

Recent work in 2012 to 2013 to reinstate a curtilage wall surrounding the cemetery utilising modern materials, discovered several buried examples of medieval worked-stone and a deposit of broken late-medieval to early post-medieval window glass on the southern side of the church (Angus Wainwright, National Trust Regional Archaeologist *pers. comm.*). The majority of the decorative and shaped worked stone pieces have been set in to the west facing elevation of the new brick & flint wall.

#### *Ickworth House & Park (IKW 002)*

Ickworth House is a large Grade I listed neoclassical building set in parkland. It comprises three- storeys and an elliptical rotunda with Classical-style pilasters and frieze, surmounted by a domed and balustraded top. Two curved corridors connect the rotunda to flanking wings. A large Classical portico fronts the main entrance to the house. The house was built between 1792 and 1830, and was formerly the primary estate owned by the Hervey family, later Marquesses of Bristol, since 1467. The building was the creation of Frederick 4th Earl of Bristol and Bishop of Derry who commissioned the Italian architect Asprucci to design him a classical villa in the Sussex countryside. The Earl died in 1803, leaving the completion of the house to his successor.

In 1956, the house, park, and a large endowment were given to the National Trust in lieu of death duties. As part of the handover agreement, a 99-year lease on the 60-room East Wing was given to the Marquess of Bristol. However, in 1998 the 7th Marquess of Bristol sold the remaining lease on the East Wing to the National Trust. This wing is now a 27-bedroom hotel.

The landscaped park and gardens associated with Ickworth House were created between 1700 and 1731 by John, Lord Hervey 1st Earl of Bristol. The park included a pleasure ground and a large deer park. Capability Brown carried out some works here between 1769 and 1776. Further large-scale planting and landscaping works took place in stages between 1796 and c. 1830 under the 4th and 5th Earls, to complement the present Ickworth House. Aerial photographs taken in 2003 show cropmarks of a formal garden layout on the south side of the west wing of Ickworth House.

#### *Ickworth Medieval Hall (IKW 001)*

To the east of St Mary's is the site of a former medieval manor house, demolished c.1710. It was set within a rectangular enclosure, visible both on aerial photographs and as an earthwork on the ground. Past excavations have located the plan of the building.

#### *Church Green (IKW 005)*

The site of a church green to the north of St Mary's as derived from a 1665 survey of the estate.

#### *Deserted Medieval Village (IKW 010 to 013)*

Deserted settlement in Ickworth Park, located in a broad ribbon running north from St Mary's Church, west of Ickworth House, up to and around Ickworth Lodge. There is a large field system in the park associated with the former settlement along with several earthworks; including trackways, banks and ditches.

#### *Roman Coin Hoard (Monument No. 382328)*

A Roman coin hoard was reportedly found at Ickworth in the 18th century as noted in Camden's *Britannia*, Vol 2, 1806 (ed. R Gough).

*The following information has been sourced from the Suffolk Historic Environment Record:*

Ref.	Site Name	Period	Brief Summary	NGR
IKW 001	Ickworth Hall (site of). SF6556	Medieval	Site of Hall, East of St Mary's Church	TL81356105
IKW 002	Ickworth House, Ickworth Park. SF7742	Post-medieval	Ickworth House, Park & Gardens	TL81066153
IKW 003	Ickworth Lodge. SF7743	Post-medieval	Located on the edge of The Green (or 'Ickworth Green') (IKW 004) c. 1665 when probably in use as a farmhouse	TL81406200
IKW 004	Ickworth Green. SF7744	Medieval	Site of Ickworth Green or The Green as shown on a reconstruction mapped from a 1665 survey, with 3 buildings shown, including Ickworth Lodge	TL81306215
IKW 005	Church Greene. SF7745	Medieval	Site of Church Green as shown on the mapped construction of 1665, it adjoined Ickworth Church	TL81256119
IKW 006	St Mary's Church. SF7746	Medieval	Church of St Mary in Thingoe hundred, diocese of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich, archdeaconry of Sudbury, deanery of Horringer, status of rectory.	TL81256112
IKW 007	Ice House (site of). SF7747	Post-medieval	Ice house marked on 1st edition OS plan	TL8126272
IKW 008	Homestead (site of)	Medieval	'A part water-filled homestead situated on level ground NW of Martin's Green Gate.	TL81185982
IKW 009	Lownde Wood. SF15997	Uncertain	Ancient woodland	TL80506020
IKW 010	Earthworks in Ickworth Park. SF20092	Uncertain	Aerial photos show various earthworks, including a poss. trackway and penannular bank	TL81076176
IKW 011	Earthworks in Ickworth Park. SF20080	Uncertain	Earthwork showing hollow ways and banks c. 50m N to S, by 150m E to W	TL81806191
IKW 012	Earthworks in Ickworth Park. SF20081	Uncertain/?Roman	Earthworks as a series of parallel ridges c. 20m apart within a rectilinear field system	TL80006000
IKW 013	Earthworks in Ickworth Park. SF20082	Uncertain	Ditch & bank with internal ditch to N of building. Also earthworks to the north, poss. relate to the medieval village	TL81106211
IKW 014	Archaeological Survey and monitoring of Ickworth House Car park	-	In 2004 monitoring of topsoil stripping following earthwork survey recorded no significant archaeological activity	TL8143 160

## 5.0 Methodology (Figure 2)

The objective of the archaeological monitoring was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during machine excavation to the formation level of the new pathway. The machine work was carried out by a small 'JCB'-type machine fitted with a toothed-bucket. The ground in front of the church proved to be recently laid rubble. The worn hollow path at the gateway was infilled to raise the ground level while the winding pathway cut into the bank on the outside of the curtilage wall was excavated twice; it was extended and modified slightly following a change in design during the works.



Plate 3: Work at the north porch (looking west) [1x1m scale]





Plate 4: Work on the main access path  
(looking south-east)

Spoil, exposed surfaces and features were scanned with a metal detector (Minelab XTerra 705). All metal-detected and hand-collected finds were retained for inspection, other than those which were obviously modern.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using Norvic Archaeology pro forma sheets. The trench location, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales and photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits.

All levels taken were tied to an OS benchmark of 86.82m OD located on the southern buttress base at the main entrance to the church.

## **6.0 Results** (*Appendix 1a*)

### ***Pathway within the curtilage***

Reduction of the former pathway leading to the north porch was excavated to a shallow formation depth and widened. Recent 20th-century rubble deposits were encountered just below the surface. This material was left *in situ* and utilised as hard-core for the new path. The edge of the grassed bank was truncated slightly and the soil sequence recorded.

Below the active turf (101) was a well-mixed soil (102) from which a single abraded sherd of medieval pottery and a 1953 'thrupenny bit' were collected. A stray fragment of human ilium was encountered and immediately reburied below the level of the pathway. Below the soils and beyond the edge of the rubble infilled hollow-way was a firm, mid orangey-brown sandy-clay which was sterile of finds (104). This deposit can be interpreted as either natural sub-surface geology or possibly a redeposited natural material.

### ***Pathway on the exterior of the curtilage***

Machine reduction to create the gently sloping wheelchair access path on the outside of the churchyard necessitated excavation of the existing bank. An initial approach was superseded by a second longer cut for the pathway to achieve the correct angle of slope with a single elbow shaped turn. The footprint of the pathway work revealed a sequence of deposits and the cut against the steepest part of the bank close to the curtilage wall revealed up to 0.4m of gently sloping deposits.

### ***Archaic subsoil above natural sandy clays***

The earliest deposit encountered was a dense clay natural (110) which lay below what may be interpreted as either an archaic clay-sand subsoil or a layer of redeposited natural (109). Two prehistoric flints in good condition were collected from the small area of this layer which was exposed at the northern return of the pathway.

### *Post-medieval make-up (Late 18<sup>th</sup> - to 20<sup>th</sup>-century)*

A gently sloping deposit of well-mixed imported soil was exposed which contained abraded fragments of late post-medieval brick and tile in sandy red fabrics (108). Above this was a layer of much firmer bank material which comprised of a chalk rich soil. This contained late post-medieval inclusions of brick and tile and slate (106).

## **7.0 Finds Analysis** *(Appendix 2a)*

### • **Pottery** *(Appendix 3)*

Three sherds of medieval pottery in relatively sandy fabrics were recovered during the monitoring work.

Two were collected from a post-medieval make-up outside the churchyard, these comprise of a small, abraded sherd of Medieval Coarse Ware (MCW) weighing just 1g and an unabraded everted rim sherd with Medieval Micaceous Coarse Ware (MCWM) weighing 11g. The larger sherd may be from a storage jar but has a slightly sooted exterior and may be from a cooking vessel with an original rim diameter of 160mm.

The other piece is a fairly abraded body sherd of Local Medieval Unglazed ware (LMU).

This small assemblage represents residual domestic material of 12th to 14th century activity in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Context	Description	Fabric	Date Range	No	Wt/g	Eve	MNV	Form	Comments
102	Local Medieval unglazed	LMU	11-14 <sup>th</sup> C.	1	3	0.04	1		Body sherd, mod. abraded
108	Medieval coarseware micaceous	MCWM	12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> C.	1	11	0.01	1	?Jar	Rim sherd, sooted surface
108	Medieval coarseware	MCW	L.12 <sup>th</sup> -14 <sup>th</sup> C.	1	1	0.08	1		Abraded
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>3</b>		

### • **Flint**

Two prehistoric struck flints were collected during the monitoring work, weighing a total of 10g. Each piece was examined by eye and with the aid of a hand lens (x6 magnification) before being catalogued according to a basic typology using standard lithic terminology where possible.

Both pieces have been manufactured from the same fine grained opaque flint, with occasional interclasts. The fabric is a very pale greyish-yellow honey colour when viewed through a strong white light. Both pieces retain a thin cortex and the collection source is likely to be local, selected from surface stone or as pebbles from a water channel. Both are free of patination being fresh and in fine condition with no evidence for post-depositional damage. This normally indicates that they have been recovered close to where they were originally discarded/buried.

A small scraper weighing 7g with a diameter of 24mm was found, known both as a micro-scraper or thumbnail scraper. It has been manufactured from a small, short flake with neat semi-abrupt retouch extending partly along a single lateral edge with a small amount of bifacial retouch. This is a soft hammer struck flake with evidence for a neatly prepared platform. The thin cortex remains on the majority of the dorsal side, to facilitate handling. The tool is simply but neatly made and remains in a fresh condition.

Although button/thumb nail scrapers are a distinctively Early Bronze Age type, this example has been made from well selected flint, has much less retouch than expected and is finer and slightly larger in diameter than many common Early Bronze Age examples. Similar scrapers are relatively common on Mesolithic sites and although originally thought to be part of an Early Bronze Age tradition they are well documented in Mesolithic contexts (Butler 2005, 105).

The flake is of the same flint fabric as the small scraper and is a short flake struck with a soft hammer technique. There remains part of a neat platform with no evidence of platform abrasion.

Dating these struck flints in isolation from a larger assemblage of diagnostic pieces is problematic. Although an Early Bronze Age date may also be applicable the overall methods of manufacture, the use of soft hammer methods, the flake size and use of good quality flint are more persuasive toward a Mesolithic industry. The thumb nail scraper also points to a possible Mesolithic date.

Context	Type	Qty	Weight (g)	Context Type
109	'Thumb nail' scraper	1	3	Lower ?subsoil
Soft struck concave short flake with some remnant of a platform. Thin cortex on majority of dorsal side, with neat pressure flaking retouch mainly down one lateral side, minimal signs of use-wear, in fresh condition. 3g, diameter of 24mm, 3mm thickness (max.)				
102	Flake	1	7	Lower ?subsoil
Relatively soft hammer struck, secondary flake, retaining cortex on distal end. Evidence of two previous removals, one, soft removal the other stepped. Small neat platform, no evidence of platform abrasion. Fairly short flake, in fresh condition. 7g, 38mm L, 28mm W, 8mm T (max.).				

- **'Musket Balls'**

Two small musketballs or 'pistol-shot' in varying condition were collected from post-medieval make-up in the area of the path on the outside of the churchyard. One has a light brown patina and has been damaged, perhaps where it has ricocheted off a hard surface while the other is in much better condition, with the mould seam and sprue scar still present. The better preserved examples is more likely to be a casual loss than a fired example, particularly as prominent sprue scars are normally trimmed or filed down before use.

Both have diameters of 12mm, which according to Harding's (2012) ;'Lead shot of the Civil War' fall into the category for pistols,

Context	Type	Qty	Weight (g)	Context Type
108	'Musketball'	1	8.72	Lower ?subsoil
12mm diameter pale brown patina, slightly abraded and rough surface, damaged in the form of deep angular notch, no sprue scar present. Falls into the size range for pistol shot. Weighs 8.72g				
108	'Musketball'	1	10.69	Lower ?subsoil
12mm diameter, casting sprue scar present and mould seam visible, smooth surface. No impact damage. Falls into the size range for pistol shot. Weighs 10.69g				

- **Coin – 'Thrupenny bit'**

A threepence coin or 'Thrupenny bit' was collected from the modern soils making up the bank at the path's edge close to the north porch (102). Although tarnished this brass coin is in good condition. The coin was minted in 1953 and bears the inscription ELIZABETH II DEI GRA BRITT OMN REGINA F D which translates as Elizabeth II by the Grace of God, Queen of all the British territories, Defender of the Faith (unlike all three pence coins produced in subsequent years which are marked ELIZABETH II DEI GRATIA REGINA F D meaning Elizabeth II, by the grace of God, Queen and Defender of the Faith). Following decimalisation, the brass threepence ceased to be legal tender after 31 August 1971.

## 8.0 Conclusions

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks for the creation of the new wheelchair access path recorded a shallow sequence of deposits in the area of the north porch and the bank on the western side of the recently restored curtilage wall.

No subsurface archaeological features or graves were encountered in either area; in fact it appears that the western curtilage wall does indeed mark the western boundary of the medieval cemetery, with lower deposits sloping markedly down to the west – although this may have been emphasised by later post-medieval landscaping of soils outside of the cemetery area. Three sherds of medieval pottery were collected as residual finds in later soils which date from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century.

A hollow-way leading up to the north porch had been recently infilled by 20<sup>th</sup> century rubble, while a possible natural sandy-clay was partly exposed below the cemetery soils.

The sloping bank deposits on the western side of the cemetery wall were mostly comprised of late-post-medieval soils which overlay either an archaic subsoil or layer of redeposited natural. Two prehistoric flints were collected from this material, which include a small scraper of possible Mesolithic date.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Freeland Rees Roberts Architects who commissioned Norvic Archaeology to carry out this work. Thanks are also due to the on-site team of F.A.Valiant & Son for their assistance and cooperation on site. All stages of the monitoring and post-excavation analysis work were carried out by the author.

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- |                                |      |  |
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### Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	SSD	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
101	Deposit	Internal	Friable, mid-greyish brown v.sandy-loam 80mm to 140mm deep	Active turf	<i>Modern</i>
102	Deposit	Internal	Friable, mid-yellowish brown sandy loam (clay 10%), Occ. cbm/mortar/flints/chalk flecks, 110mm to 180mm deep	Soil bank	<i>Modern</i>
103	Deposit	Internal	V.firm mix of modern rubble & crushed mortar with soil, inc. 70% brick and occ. modern cut limestone blocks and occ. bathroom tiles.	Make-up	<i>Modern</i>
104	Deposit	Internal	Firm, md-orangey brown sandy-clay, occ. stones, rare charcoal flecks	?Natural	<i>Uncertain</i>
105	Deposit	External	Similar to (101)	Active Turf	<i>Modern</i>
106	Deposit	External	Firm, chalk rich, mid-yellowish brown sandy-clay/loam mix rich in cbm, occ. slate & chalk lumps	Make-up	<i>C.19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup></i>
107	Deposit	External	Modern coarse shapring aggregate	Make-up	<i>Modern</i>
108	Deposit	External	Friable, dark-yellowish brown clay-loam, occ. cbm/chalk flecks, rare coke lumps, occ. stones	Make-up	<i>L. Post-medieval</i>
109	Deposit	External	Firm, mid-yellowish brown, clay-sand, rare cbm flecks, occ. stones, occ. chalk flecks	?Archaic subsoil	<i>?Prehistoric</i>
110	Deposit	External	V.firm/dense light brownish-yellow clay (sand 5%), mod. chalk lumps, mod. stones	Natural	-

### Appendix 2: Finds Summary by Context

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)	Comment
102	Coin	1	7	1953 Threepence
	Flint	2	10	Prehistoric/?Mesolithic
	Pottery	1	3	Medieval
108	Pottery	2	12	Medieval
	Musketballs	2	20	Post-medieval



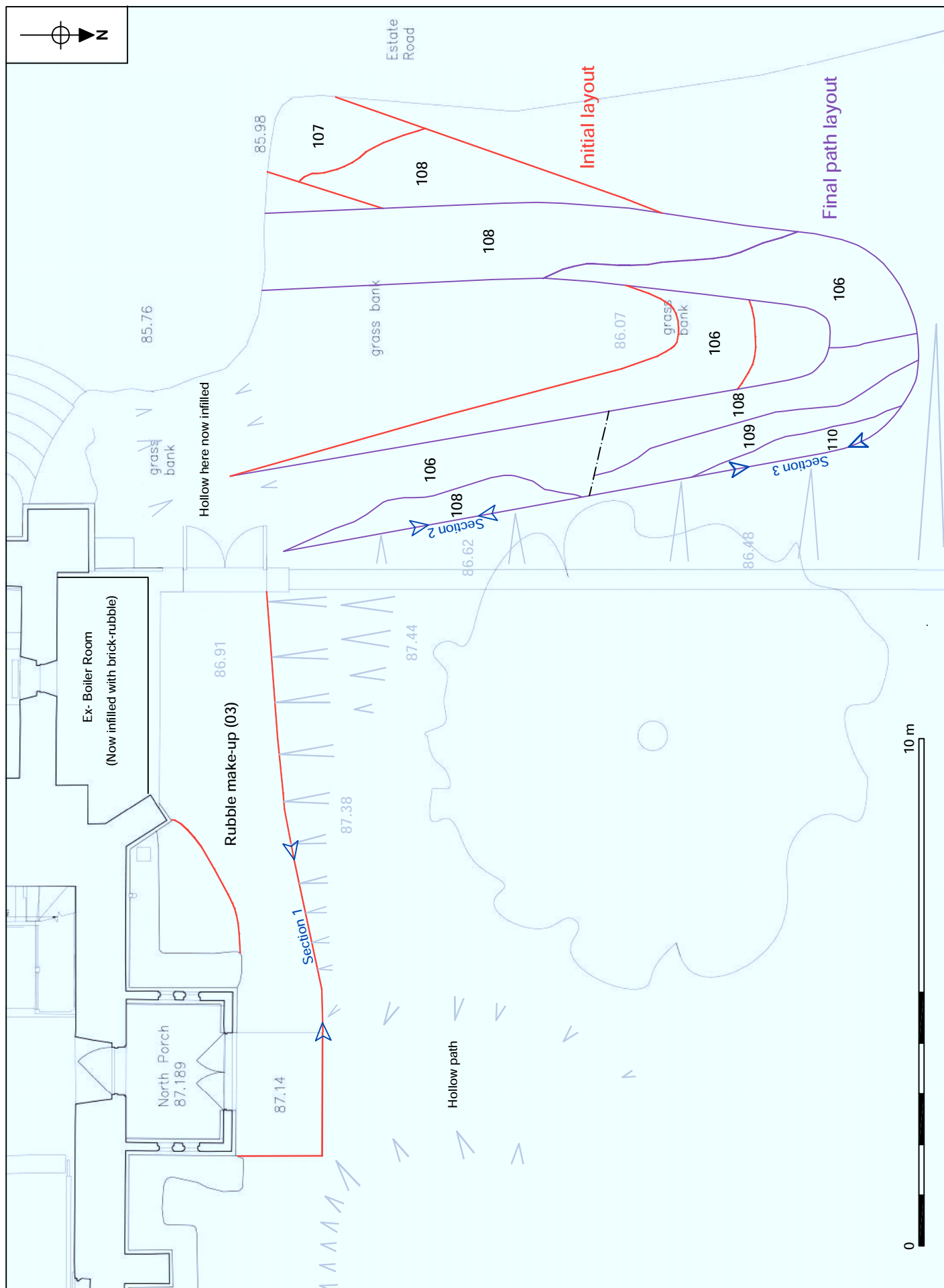
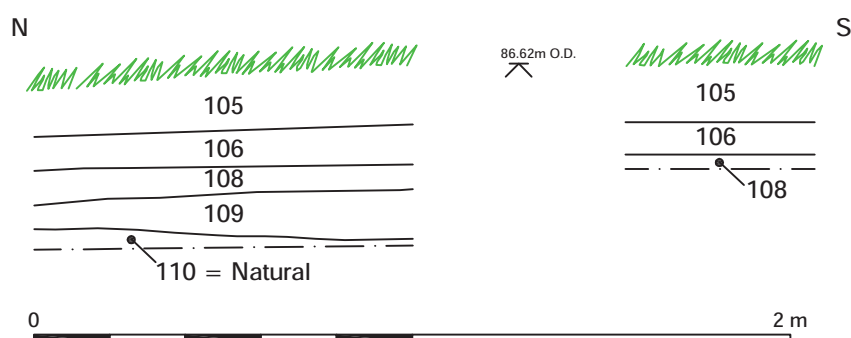


Figure 3. Site plan. Scale 1:100

'SECTION 2 & 3: SW Facing Section of bank deposits'



'SECTION 1: N Facing Section of path edge deposits'

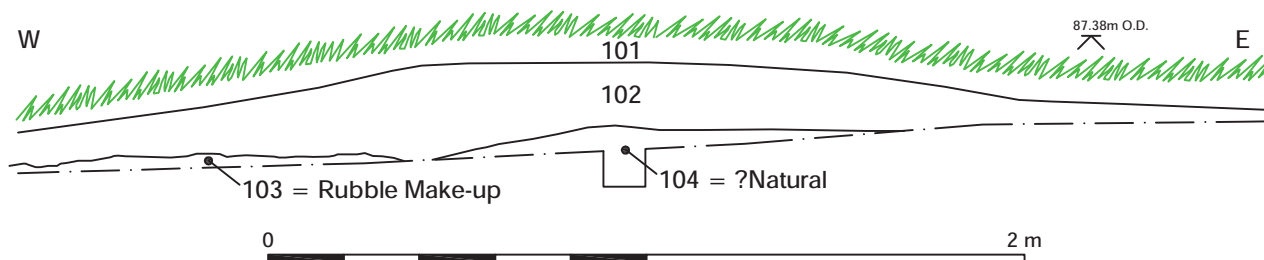


Figure 4. Recorded Sections. Scale 1:20