

# Archaeological excavation within a planter and observations of the blocked west window at St Marys Priory Church, Warham Road, Binham, Norfolk.



Prepared on behalf of Binham PCC

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**Contents**

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Summary of Results	2
3.0	Geology and Topography	4
4.0	Brief Archaeological and Historical Background	4
5.0	Methodology	7
6.0	Results	7
7.0	Finds Analysis	10
8.0	Conclusions	13
9.0	Acknowledgements	13
10.0	Bibliography	14
	Appendix 1a: Context Summary	15
	Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table	16
	Appendix 2a: Finds by Context	17
	Appendix 2b: Finds summary table	17
	Appendix 3 Observations of the West Window	21
	Appendix 4: OASIS form	27
<b>Figures</b>		
	Figure 1 General site location plan	3
	Figure 2 Planter location plan	4
	Figure 3 Initial plan of planter	18
	Figure 4 Plan of all features within the planter	19
	Figure 5 Recorded Sections 1 & 2	20
<b>Plates</b>		
	Plate 1 The west end of the church looking east	Cover
	Plate 2 The Priory Church and remains	6
	Plate 3 The planter	7
	Plate 4 Adult SK07 & Infant SK08	7
	Plate 5 Neonatal SK20	8
	Plate 6 Masonry elevation	10
	Plate 7 Post-excavation shot	10

## Archaeological Excavation within a planter and observations of the blocked west window at St Marys Priory Church, Warham Road, Binham, Norfolk. NR21 0DQ.

<b>Location:</b>	Binham
<b>Grid Ref:</b>	TG 98164 39945
<b>NHES Event No:</b>	ENF141352
<b>Date of fieldwork:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> to the 29 <sup>th</sup> of September 2016

### 1.0 Introduction

Norvic Archaeology was commissioned by Pauline Scott of the PCC, to undertake an excavation of soils within a modern planter, located immediately west of the north door of the north aisle at St Marys Priory Church. The excavation of the planter soils was necessary to allow for measures to be taken against rising damp.

The modern planter is located in an area previously excavated in 2008, undertaken in advance of the construction of the current visitor centre and improved access (APS Report 137/08, 2009). The soil block defined by the planter was believed to have been left in place against the medieval masonry wall adjacent to an area with several excavated inhumations. This would go some way to explain the discovery of a human skull within the planter soils by work undertaken by contractors at the site prior to the issue of the Archaeological Brief.

The Historic Environment Service and Historic England requested that the soils of the planter be excavated as part of a targeted programme of archaeological work (HES Ref: CNF46960) to be undertaken as part of a Scheduled Monument Consent.

Binham priory was a cell of St Alban's abbey, founded towards the end of the 11th century by Peter of Valognes and his wife. The priory was suppressed in 1539 and the priory buildings were dismantled apart from the nave of the church which continued in use by the parish. To the south and east lie the excavated and displayed ruins of the chancel, transepts and the conventual buildings set around the cloister. To the west of the church lies the ruined gateway and the complex is partly surrounded by the precinct wall. Contained within the precinct are a number of earthworks, including fishponds and the site of a mill. The standing parts of the church (i.e. the nave) date largely to the 12th century, the claustral ranges date from between the 12th and 15th centuries.

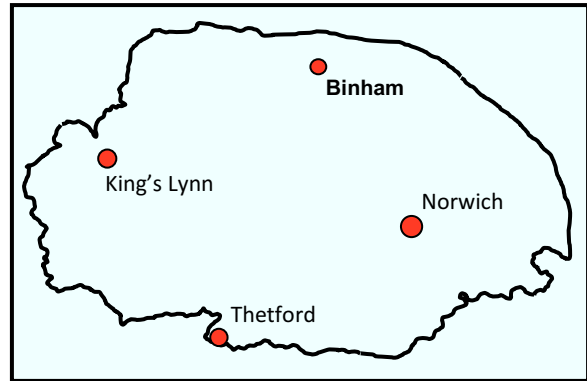
### 2.0 Summary of Results

The reduction of soils within the planter to sterile natural clay-sand, identified evidence for up to 8 individual burials of probable medieval date, of which all but one were child burials. The majority of these appeared to be poorly preserved neonatal burials, with one infant estimated to be between 1 to 1.5 years of age. The single adult was female and post-dated the 1 year old's inhumation.

A feature was recorded which suggests that the wall fabric here was subject to 19<sup>th</sup> century remedial work. Two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were present in the lowest elevation exposed. This work is currently presumed to have taken place during demolition of the north aisle in 1809.

Concurrent remedial work by Brick & Flint Solutions and Conservation Solutions on the west window, discovered that much of the original tracery may survive behind the 19<sup>th</sup> century brick blocking. This is generally believed to be the earliest example of bar tracery extant in Britain, erected during a building programme of 1225 to 1244. It seems likely that the bricking up was initially intended as a temporary measure and that the window was to be re-built if funds could be found. Their observations of the stone fabric have been presented within an appendix of this report.

Figure 1. General Site Location



### 3.0 Geology and Topography

Binham is located c.11km north-east of Fakenham and 38km north-west of Norwich. The Binham Priory church lies to the north of the centre of the village, east of Warham Road, at National Grid Reference TF 9817 3994. The church sits on a slight ridge at a height of c.22m OD on land that slopes down to the north and east overlooking the River Stiffkey.

Local soils are of the Newmarket 2 Association, typically deep calcareous coarse loamy soils (Hodge et al. 1984, 289). These soils overlie a drift geology of glacially derived till which in turn seals a solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk.

The sub-surface geology of the site encountered during the fieldwork can be characterised as a firm clay-sand, with silty-sand and patches of soliflucted chalk.

### 4.0 Brief Archaeological and Historical Background

#### 4.1 Historical Background

Binham is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Binneham* and *Benincham* the name is derived from the Old English and means ‘the village (*hām*) belonging to *Bynna*’ (Ekwall 1989, 44). At the time of the Domesday Survey, the land was held by Peter de Valognes and contained a manor house and two mills (Brown 1984, 34/15; 66/89).

The priory (NHER 2081) was founded by Peter de Valognes and his wife Albreda perhaps as early as c.1090 as a cell or dependency of St. Alban’s Abbey (Knowles and Hadcock 1953, 59). It was certainly in existence by 1093, according to Matthew Paris, although the foundation charter dates to the reign of Henry I, probably in or around 1104 (Page 1906, 343). Although no church is recorded in the Domesday Survey, a confirmatory charter of the late 11th century records the grant of the church of St. Mary in Binham along with the manor (Cushion and Davison 2003, 131).

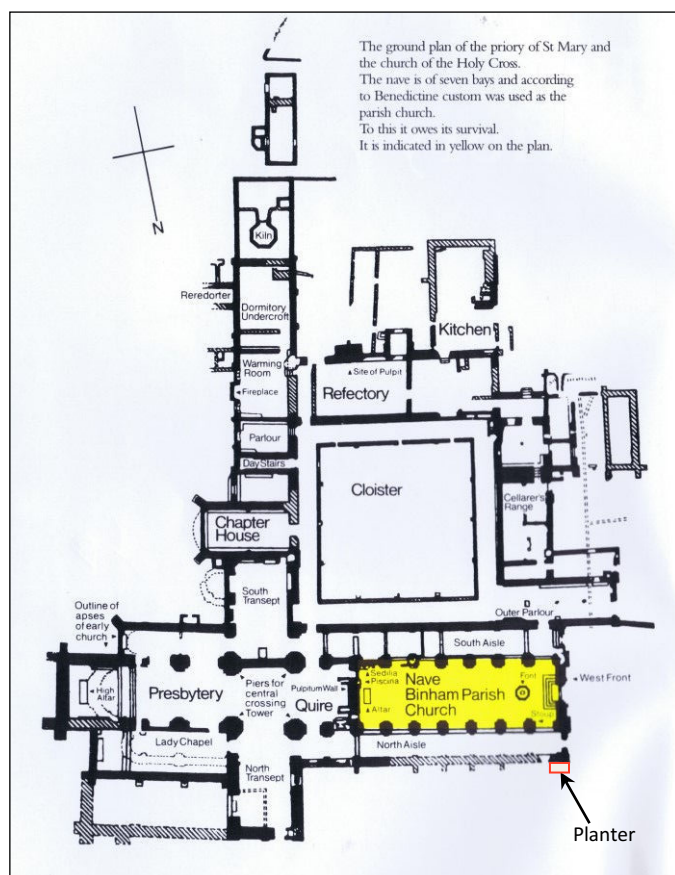


Figure 2. Ground plan to show the planter location

There is a suggestion that the original village of Binham lay to the west of the priory and was moved following the foundation (*ibid.*). Following the suppression of the house in 1539, much of the priory, along with its houses, buildings, barns, stables, dovehouse, yards, orchards and gardens, were granted to Thomas Paston in c. 1541. The only exception was the nave and north aisle of the church which belonged to the parish.

The north aisle was dismantled in 1809, with the rubble used to heighten the floor level within the church. The great west window had fallen into disrepair and was blocked up with brick at this time.

#### 4.2 Previous archaeological interventions

The largest programme of excavation at the site was undertaken during the 1930s by the former Office of Works. Typical of the period, these works were primarily to clear rubble and consolidate the remains. No surviving records of these excavations are known and no report has been produced (Hundleby 2004, 17).

Excavations were also undertaken in 1964 at the external angle of the south and west claustral ranges, where a thick mortar and flint raft that was overlain by 16th century refuse from the adjacent kitchens was identified (Hurst 1965, 181).

A modern programme of archaeological investigations has taken place at the site carried out by Archaeological Project Services between 2005-8 in mitigation of a visitor centre and improved access to the site (Cope-Faulkner 2009). Initial work comprised of an evaluation to locate the foundations of the precinct wall which had collapsed in the 1980s, undertaken during 2007. Construction of the visitor's centre commenced in 2008 and archaeological intervention was required for ground lowering, service trenches and access routes. In addition, small pits for interpretation boards were also excavated.

A summary report of the results from the 2005-8 archaeological work, along with an artefact studies report on the 1930s excavation assemblage, has been published in the journal of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society Vol. XLVII, part II 2015. The APS work recorded a number of ditches west of the church, which may represent former boundaries, a large pit (perhaps for chalk extraction) and a series of drainage channels.

'Area F' which included the area of the planter was first summarised in the APS Assessment & Updated Project Design produced in 2009 as follows:

*This area was one of the more complex excavated during the works. This was largely due to many intercutting burials. The earliest features recorded were a northwest-southwest aligned ditch and a parallel gully. No actual relationship to the north aisle wall was established, though they were on a slightly differing alignment. Seventy-three partial or complete burials were recorded and date from the medieval to post-medieval periods.*

None of the skeletal remains were retained as a data set for further off-site analysis and at the cessation of excavations a trench was dug to re-inter human bone disturbed by the work. However, it was noted that some of the burials had the potential to be of early medieval or even Saxon date, relating to an earlier Pre-Conquest monastic or ecclesiastical community at the site and four samples of human remains were retained for potential Scientific Dating. This included material from two burials that appeared to predate the construction of the north aisle, generally considered to date to the latter half of the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Radiocarbon dating has since confirmed that at least one burial was of Late Saxon date, suggesting that the church occupied that of an earlier ecclesiastical foundation, suggested to have a focus to the east.

Evidence for a former post-medieval porch was recorded on the north side of the 9th bay of the north aisle (close to the current doorway adjacent to the modern planter).

Pottery provides the main dating for the site and comprises a range of medieval and later wares. The earliest ceramics recovered was Roman pottery, retrieved as residual finds.

#### 4.3 *Architectural history*

Of the original priory complex only the nave remains extant. To the south and east lie the excavated and displayed ruins of the presbytery, transepts and the conventual buildings set around the cloister. To the west of the church lies the ruined gateway and the complex is surrounded by remnants of the precinct wall. Within the precinct are a number of earthworks including further buildings, fishponds and the site of a mill (Cushion and Davison 2003, 131).

The standing parts of the nave date largely to the 12th century and show the progression from Romanesque to Early English architecture. Arches of 12th century date give way to pointed arches of 13th century date and indicate an interruption in the building programme (English Heritage 1996).

The west front of the church is of 13th century date and represents one of the earliest forms of bar tracery in the country. Matthew Paris claims that Prior Richard de Parco (1226-44) built 'the front of the church from the foundation to the roof', which supports a view taken by some that the west window dates to 1244 or earlier, when this form of architecture was first being used on the continent, or as a later insertion of 1260-70 (Thurlby 1991, 157). The precinct wall adjoins the 15th century gatehouse, once referred to as the Jail Gate, which survives to the level of the first-floor storey, though all archways are broken. The survival of this monastic element may be due to its subsequent use as a lych-gate (Morant 1995, 184).



Plate 2. General view of the Priory Church and remains. (looking N)

## 5.0 Methodology

The objective of the archaeological excavation was to reduce the soil level within the planter sufficiently to allow the church masonry to be exposed for possible consolidation and a membrane to be put in place to limit current damp problems inside the church.

All deposits were hand excavated by the author, with spoil, exposed surfaces and features scanned with a metal detector (Minelab XTerra 705).

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 digital and monochrome images were taken of all relevant features and deposits.



Plate 3. The planter (looking E)  
[1x2m Scale]

## 6.0 Results (Appendix 1a) (Figures 3 to 5)

- **Lateral deposits**

A firm natural clay-sand (31) with silty-sand, and patches of soliflucted chalk was exposed across the base of the excavation area. Above this was a lateral deposit of cemetery soils surviving to a depth of c. 0.5m (05 & 06), the upper division of which (05) was particularly well-mixed and contained a moderate frequency of small limestone pieces.

The inside of the planter had been infilled with an imported mix of sandy-clay and silty-loam (02), with occasional inclusions of modern building materials and a handful of fragmentary human bone.



Plate 4. Adult SK07 and Infant SK08. (looking S) [1x 0.5m & 1x0.3m Scales]



- **Burials**

Evidence for up to eight inhumations was recorded within the area of the planter, which included two partial cuts for graves disturbed by subsequent burials ([17] & [28]). Of these all but one (SK:08) represent the burial of children, with one infant estimated to be between 1 to 1.5 years of age based on a femur length of c. 155mm, with the remainder being neonatal (after Schafer et al 2009). The remains were poorly preserved and several were truncated by the edge of the modern concrete footings for the planter.

The adult burial (SK:07) was of a relatively gracile female individual, with clear female pelvic traits and skull morphology. The remains were laid out west to east as an extended burial, with the arms extended alongside the body and hands resting behind the pelvis. A fragment of redeposited infant cranium was recorded within the grave fill. No evidence of a coffin was present. The dentition showed no antemortem tooth loss and, despite wear to the molars, the teeth were in good condition. The grave appears to post-date the infant burial SK:08.



Plate 5. Neonatal SK20  
(looking W) [1x0.5m Scale]

The child burials include some intercutting and some variation in the form of the grave cuts, with no evidence of coffins or caskets present. The insertion of SK:23 disturbed one or two previous neonatal burials. The grave cut for SK:23 was slightly unusual, in that it was a less uniform lozenge shape on a slightly different alignment to all the other graves (which respect the W-E orientation of the adjacent church. This may indicate that the grave was dug in a different way from the others, possibly marking it out for consideration as a potential 'night burial'.

Just three residual pottery sherds were collected from grave fills, of 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century date. Dating of the burials themselves remains uncertain, with no grave goods or clear stratigraphic relationship with datable features. However, given that the remains appear to respect the orientation of the church, and that one of the burials seemed to be tucked up against the footings, a medieval to early post-medieval date is presumed. In addition to this, the grave fills were free of any residual material (such as mortar, brick and tile) that might be expected in later graves and a medieval date seems likely. The adult female appears to pre-date the creation of a lost porch, which was identified by flint & mortar foundations by previous excavation here by APS. Masonry remnant '529' recorded by APS lay above the expected eastern end of this grave (Figure 11 in Cope-Faulkner 2015). The porch is believed to be of post-medieval or possible late medieval date and was absent prior to the collapse of the north aisle as it does not feature in illustrations that show the north aisle intact (Cope-Faulkner 145, 2015).

The presence of a grouping of neonatal burials so close to the walls is part of a pattern witnessed through excavation at numerous parish churchyards in the region. The placement of newborns tucked in close to church walls is a common occurrence within parish cemeteries and has generally been accepted to have some quasi-religious significance. In Anglo-Saxon Christian cemeteries the practice of burying children below the eaves of churches has been suggested to have been carried out so that the water running off the 'holy' roof would 'double bless' them (Daniell 2006, 128) and this practice appears to continue into the medieval and post-medieval period at many parish churches.

The modern planter was constructed following archaeological work in 2008, when several inhumations were excavated from the immediate area. A soil block had been left in place against the aisle footings here, to avoid disturbance to the corner buttress where it was thought no modern disturbance would take place as part of the visitor centre construction. Despite this some disturbance of neonatal burials appears to have occurred during the construction of the concrete footings for the planter (SK26, 20 & 30), with minor truncation to the pelvis of adult skeleton SK07 (whose legs had previously been excavated and reburied during work by APS (as *Area F context 931*). The upper torso and head of neonatal burial SK30 appears also to have been excavated as part of the APS excavation (as *Area F context 935*). The relevant site drawings consulted for Area F are Plans 196 & 203 - with schematic remains shown as Figure 10 in Cope-Faulkner, 2015.

- ***Evidence for ?early 19th century or later remedial work***

A feature ([15]) was investigated and recorded against the footings of the north aisle, which was initially assumed to be a further burial. This feature contained a notably different fill (15) than the graves, in the form of a very silty dark brownish-grey deposit with occasional pieces of burnt chalk and charcoal. A single bird bone (galliforme) and a single fragment of limestone waste (with medieval tool marks) was collected from the fill.

A discrete spread of mortar waste was noted, along the base of the wall footing which sealed the top of this infilled feature. This mortar residue appears to have been formed during some form of remedial work on the existing masonry. Close inspection of the wall fabric revealed that two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were present in the lowest elevation exposed – a fragment of flat roof tile and a fragment of brick in a hard-fired orange fabric typical of 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century types. This evidence points to the feature (which echoes the width of the corner buttress) being a deeper part of a narrow trench excavated against the sub-surface masonry in the late post-medieval period, as part of a programme of renovation and remedial work. This is currently presumed to have taken place during demolition of the north aisle in 1809. The extent of the cut appears to match with a change in the face-work mortar fabric (c) – see below.

A record was made of the exposed masonry which demonstrates several phases of construction/remedial work to the north aisle wall and sub-surface footings (shown as fabrics a to f and x);

*Fabric a: hard, sandy, pale yellowish-white fine mortar*

*Fabric b: significant mortar loss, and soil replaced*

*Fabric c: friable/weak, v.sandy medium grained mortar with occasional chalk flecks + grit*

*Fabric d: similar to (c) but firmer*

*Fabric e: similar to (c) but higher chalk + lime content*

*Fabric f: same as (c)*

*Fabric x: modern cementitious mortar, v even courses.*

Much of the face-work has been repointed and repaired in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest and possibly most original mortar type present was seen as fabric (d).

A fragment of lava stone, presumed to be a fragment from a lava quern, was noted in the elevation (in the area of fabric x) and its presence duly recorded. Such reused pieces are noted in the fabric of medieval churches across East Anglia and are commonly found in Late Saxon and medieval deposits in the region, where they are usually classified as

Rhenish lava stone. This reused fragment may indicate domestic scale grain processing in the vicinity of the site.

The Barnack-type limestone used as quoins and string work in the medieval construction was noted to be well-worn, although the lowest examples remained less worn (as they were at subsurface levels and had therefore avoided weathering erosion).



Plate 6. Masonry elevation (looking S) [1x 0.3m & 1x0.5m Scales]



Plate 7. Post-excavation shot (looking S) [2 x 0.5m Scales]

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

### • Animal Bone

A small assemblage of fragmentary animal bone was collected as residual finds from four separate contexts. Overall the bone shows moderate preservation with several pieces showing surface damage from surface weathering and insect/mollusc damage. The bone provides additional, albeit limited residual evidence of food refuse at the site, of which the majority is likely to be linked to the monastic period of activity.

A total of 9 pieces of animal bone (weighing a combined total of 273g) were collected from the site; the bone has been identified to species where possible and examined for pathology, butchery and other modifications (see table below). Cattle, Sheep/goat and probable chicken are present with some signs of butchery/final processing – which includes the removal of marrow from cattle bones.

Context	Quantity	Wt (g)	Species	Adult	Juv.	Elements	Comments
02	1	39	Sheep/goat	1		Metatarsal (proximal)	Abraded
	1	67	Cattle	1		Metatarsal (proximal)	Light cut marks and Chopped/spiral break
	1	60	Cattle	1		Metatarsal (proximal)	Chopped/spiral break
	1	18	?Cattle	1		Limb frag.	
06	1	3	Galliforme	1		Tarsometatarsus	
16	1	10	Cattle		1	Metacarpal	Unfused epiphysis
18	2	47	Sheep/goat	2		Scapula, ?tibia	Abraded/surface damage
	1	29	Cattle	1		Carpal	Highly abraded

### • Worked Stone

A single small fragment (35g) of fine grained limestone (Barnack-type) was collected from context (16). A small area of original surface exhibits fine tooling in the form of clawing consistent with medieval tooling.

### • Tyvek Label

A standard Tyvek label, hole punched and labelled in permanent marker 'S.103' was collected from context 02 and relates to recording work carried out during excavations here by APS.

### • Burnt Flint

Three burnt flints weighing a combined total of 96g were collected as residual evidence of localised hearth activity (from contexts 02, 05 and 18). The flints range from reddened and granulated in appearance to well-calcined and fire-cracked.

### • Iron Nail

A single handmade carpentry-style of nail (10g) was collected from context (02). The nail is complete (c. 70mm in length), with a bent point, with a square shank and round head.

• **Ceramic roof tile**

Two fragments of flat roofing tile were collected, from contexts (02) and (05). They are consistent with the assemblage of 110 highly fragmentary pieces of medieval to post-medieval roof tile collected during the 2005-8 archaeological work, which included glazed and unglazed fragments of 'peg, nib or ridge tile'. Tiles at the site may not be just evidence for roofing, but may also derive from string courses in walls, hearth linings and as reused material in walls.

- The piece from context (02) weighs 8g, measures 15mm thick and is of a uniform reddish-orange sandy fabric. Traces of a greenish hued lead glaze are present on one surface.
- The edge-piece (32g) from context (05) is 14mm thick and is of a gritty estuarine-type fabric with ferrous temper and a single wiped surface. It has a mid-grey core and oxidised orange margins and is hard-fired. This piece of a similar fabric type to medieval tiles identified in the 1930s excavation assemblage (Anderson 2008).

• **Pottery**

Just seven sherds of pottery weighing a combined total of 55g were collected from five contexts. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric. Three of the sherds are residual finds from redeposited soil used with the planter, the Romano-British sherd was collected from the lower cemetery soils, while the remaining three medieval sherds were collected from grave fills.

The pottery is typical of medieval fabrics identified by Sue Anderson from the site for material collected in the 1930s excavations (Anderson 2008 and 2015). The small piece of Roman greyware is not an isolated find, with six unstratified sherds of similar fabric collected during the 2005-8 archaeological work and 17 sherds (14 of which classified as greyware) identified from the 1930s assemblage. The residual Roman sherds and also the Anglo-Saxon pottery are indicators of early occupation at the site.

Context	Description	Fabric	Date Range	No	Wt/g
02	North Norfolk glazed ware	NNGW	?C12-14th	1	21
02	Local medieval unglazed	LMU	11th-14th c.	1	9
02	Grimston coarseware	GRCW	C12th-13th	1	13
06	Romano-British greyware	RB	C2nd -4th	1	2
14	Medieval coarseware	MCW	12th-14th c.	1	3
18	Medieval coarseware	MCW	12th-14th c.	1	3
24	Local medieval unglazed	LMU	11th-14th c.	1	4
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>

Pottery quantification by context/fabric.

## 8.0 Conclusions

The modern planter was constructed following archaeological work in 2008 undertaken by APS, when several inhumations were excavated from the immediate area. A soil block had been left in place against the aisle footings, to avoid disturbance to the corner buttress where it was thought no modern disturbance would take place as part of the visitor centre construction. This soil block was subsequently enclosed by the construction of the modern planter.

The reduction of soils within the planter to sterile natural clay-sand identified evidence for up to 8 individual burials, of which all but one were child burials. The majority of these appeared to be poorly preserved neonatal burials, with one infant estimated to be between 1 to 1.5 years of age. The single adult was female and post-dated the 1 year old's inhumation. One of the neonatal burials was contained by a lozenge shaped grave cut on a noticeably differing alignment. This may indicate that the grave was dug in a different way from the others, possibly marking it out for consideration as a potential 'night burial'.

The orientation of the burials seems to respect the medieval wall line and are likely to be of medieval or late medieval date, with no evidence of coffins or caskets. The female burial predates the construction of a former north-porch of possible late medieval to post-medieval date. The presence of a grouping of neonatal burials so close to the walls is part of a pattern witnessed through excavation at numerous parish churchyards in the region. The placement of newborns tucked in close to church walls is a common occurrence within parish cemeteries and has generally been accepted to have some quasi-religious significance.

A feature which was assumed to be a grave or possible construction trench has been interpreted as 19<sup>th</sup> century disturbance – associated with a phase of remedial work of the masonry here. Close inspection of the wall fabric revealed that two fragments of post-medieval ceramic building material were present in the lowest elevation exposed – a fragment of flat roof tile and a fragment of brick in a hard-fired orange fabric typical of 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century types. This work is currently presumed to have taken place during demolition of the north aisle in 1809.

Noteworthy finds include a fragment of reused lava quern stone set within the fabric of the wall, two fragments of medieval roof tile, a small number of medieval pottery sherds and a small sherd of Romano-British greyware.

Concurrent remedial work by Brick & Flint Solutions and Conservation Solutions on the west window discovered that much of the original tracery may survive behind the 19<sup>th</sup> century brick blocking. This is generally believed to be the earliest example of bar tracery extant in Britain, erected during a building programme of 1225 to 1244. It seems likely that the bricking up was initially intended as a temporary measure and that the window was to be re-built if funds could be found. The observations of the stone fabric have been presented within this report as Appendix 3 in order that the information enters the historical environment record.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the PCC who commissioned Norvic Archaeology to carry out this work. Thanks are also due Andy Cunningham of Brick & Flint Solutions Ltd and Joseph Picalli of Conservation Solutions Ltd for their assistance and cooperation on site. Julie Curl of Sylvanus Archaeology kindly commented on the infant remains. Paul Cope-Faulkner kindly supplied information relation to APS 'Excavation Area F'. All stages of the monitoring and post-excavation analysis work were carried out by the author. The Archaeological Brief was issued by David Robertson of the Historic Environment Service.

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## Appendix 1a: Context Summary

Context	Category	Fill of	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
01	Deposit		Soft, orangey-yellow sharp sand over electrical cabling	Sharp sand	<i>c. 2008</i>
02	Deposit		Firm, well-mixed, mottled mid-grey/yellowish-brown sandy-clay+silty-loam, occ. stones, occ. modern cbm, v.rare HSR frags.	Infill	<i>c. 2008</i>
03	Cut		Planter footing construction trench	Construction cut for 04	<i>c. 2008</i>
04	Masonry		Concrete block walling with stone capping	Planter Wall	<i>c.2008</i>
05	Deposit		Friable, mid-yellowish-brown silty/sandy-clay mix 'sticky', mod. stones (inc. fractured), freq. chalk, mod. limestone pieces. Max 0.3m deep	Cemetery soils	<i>Post-medieval</i>
06	Deposit		Friable (dense), homogenous mid-yellowish-brown silty-clay, occ. stones, occ. chalk + mortar flecks c. 0.2m deep	Lower soils	<i>Med-P.med.</i>
07	Skeleton		Gracile adult, moderate to poor preservation, good Female traits, hands at sides resting below pelvis, no tooth loss (good condition but worn molars). NB: Neonatal cranium above pelvis (no other – so redeposited)	Female burial	<i>Medieval</i>
08	Skeleton		Poor preservation, fragmented and compressed skull, infant <1year	Neonatal burial	<i>Medieval</i>
09	Deposit	[11]	Friable, mid-yellowish-brown silty-clay, occ. stones, occ. chalk flecks	Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
10	Deposit	[12]	Friable, mid-yellowish-brown silty-clay, occ. stones, occ. chalk flecks	Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
11	Cut		V. base of an adult grave (W-E)	Grave for SK7	<i>Medieval</i>
12	Cut		Base of an infant burial 0.85L, 0.3W, rounded ends	Grave for SK8	<i>Medieval</i>
13	Cut		Eastern squared end of a small grave c. 0.2m wide tight against masonry footings	Grave for SK30	<i>Medieval</i>
14	Deposit	[13]	V.friable, mid-yellowish-grey silty-sand, occ. chalk + stones	Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
15	Cut		Steep sided, blunt base, 0.37m deep	Construction / remedial work disturbance	<i>19<sup>th</sup> century</i>
16	Deposit	[15]	Friable (dense), v.silty dark-brownish-grey, freq. chalk flecks, occ. burnt chalk, occ. stones, occ. charcoal	Fill	<i>19<sup>th</sup> century</i>
17	Cut		Linear edge of a shallow feature ?poss. grave	?Grave	<i>Medieval</i>
18	Deposit	[18]	Firm, mid-orangey-brown clay-silt, occ. chalk flecks	Fill	<i>Medieval</i>
19	Cut		Rounded edge of a small grave est.. 0.6m length	Grave for SK20	<i>Medieval</i>
20	Skeleton	[19]	Left side truncated by modern footings and lower body by grave [25]: v.poor preservation,	Neonatal burial	<i>Medieval</i>
21	Deposit	[19]	Friable, mid-yellowish-brown silty-clay, occ. stones/chalk.	Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
22	Cut		Unconventional lozenge shaped grave cut, 0.65 L, 0.33 W	Grave for SK23	<i>Medieval</i>
23	Skeleton	[22]	Poorly preserved, NB: redeposited neonatal limb bone above head	Neonatal burial	<i>Medieval</i>



Context	Category	Fill of	Brief Physical Description	Interpretation	Period
24	Deposit	[22]	Firm, mid-orangey-brown clay-silt, occ. chalk flecks	Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
25	Cut		Southern edge of a probable neonatal grave severely truncated by modern footings	Grave	<i>Medieval</i>
26	Skeleton?	[25]	?Neonatal burial represented by poorly preserved radius (assuming in situ)	?Neonatal burial	<i>Medieval</i>
27	Deposit	[25]	Firm, mid-orangey-brown clay-silt, occ. chalk flecks	?Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
28	Cut		c. 0.6m L, southern edge clear, shallow cut with no signs of in situ burial, poss. due to disturbance by grave [22]	?Neonatal Grave	<i>Medieval</i>
29	Deposit	[29]	Firm, mid-orangey-brown clay-silt, occ. chalk flecks	?Grave fill	<i>Medieval</i>
30	Skeleton	[13]	Highly disturbed by modern footings, v. poorly preserved tibia and fibula present	Neonatal burial	<i>Medieval</i>
31	Deposit		Firm mid-yellowish to dark orange clay-sand _ silty-sand (with softer sandier patches) plus patches of soliflucted chalk	Natural Geology	-

**Appendix 1b: OASIS feature summary table**

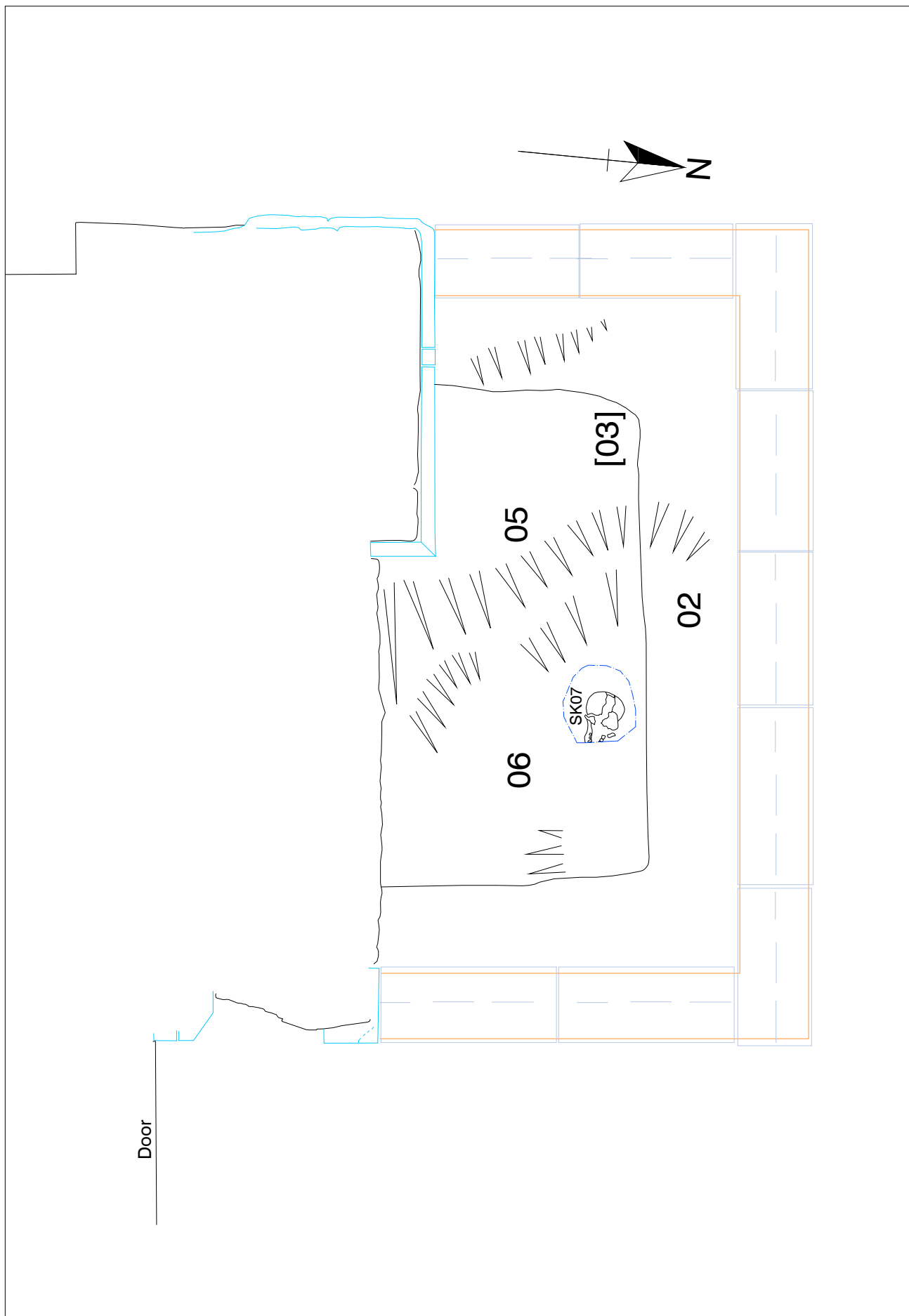
Period	Feature Type	Quantity
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Aisle	1
	Church	1
	Grave	8
	Inhumation	6
	Priory	1

***Appendix 2a: Finds by Context***

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)
02	Animal bone	4	184
02	Burnt flint	1	27
02	Ceramic Roof tile	1	8
02	Iron Nail	1	10
02	Pottery	3	43
05	Burnt flint	1	5
05	Ceramic Roof tile	1	32
06	Pottery	1	2
06	Animal bone	1	3
14	Pottery	1	3
16	Animal bone	1	10
16	Worked stone	1	35
18	Animal bone	3	76
18	Burnt flint	1	8
18	Pottery	1	3
24	Pottery	1	4

***Appendix 2b: Finds summary table***

Period	Feature type	Quantity
Unknown	Animal bone	9
	Burnt flint	3
Roman (42 to 409AD)	Pottery	1
Medieval (1066 to 1539AD)	Ceramic roof tile	2
	Pottery	6
	Worked stone	1
Post-medieval (1540 to 1900AD)	Iron nail	1



0 2 m  
Figure 3. Plan of planter (post initial clean-up). Scale 1:20

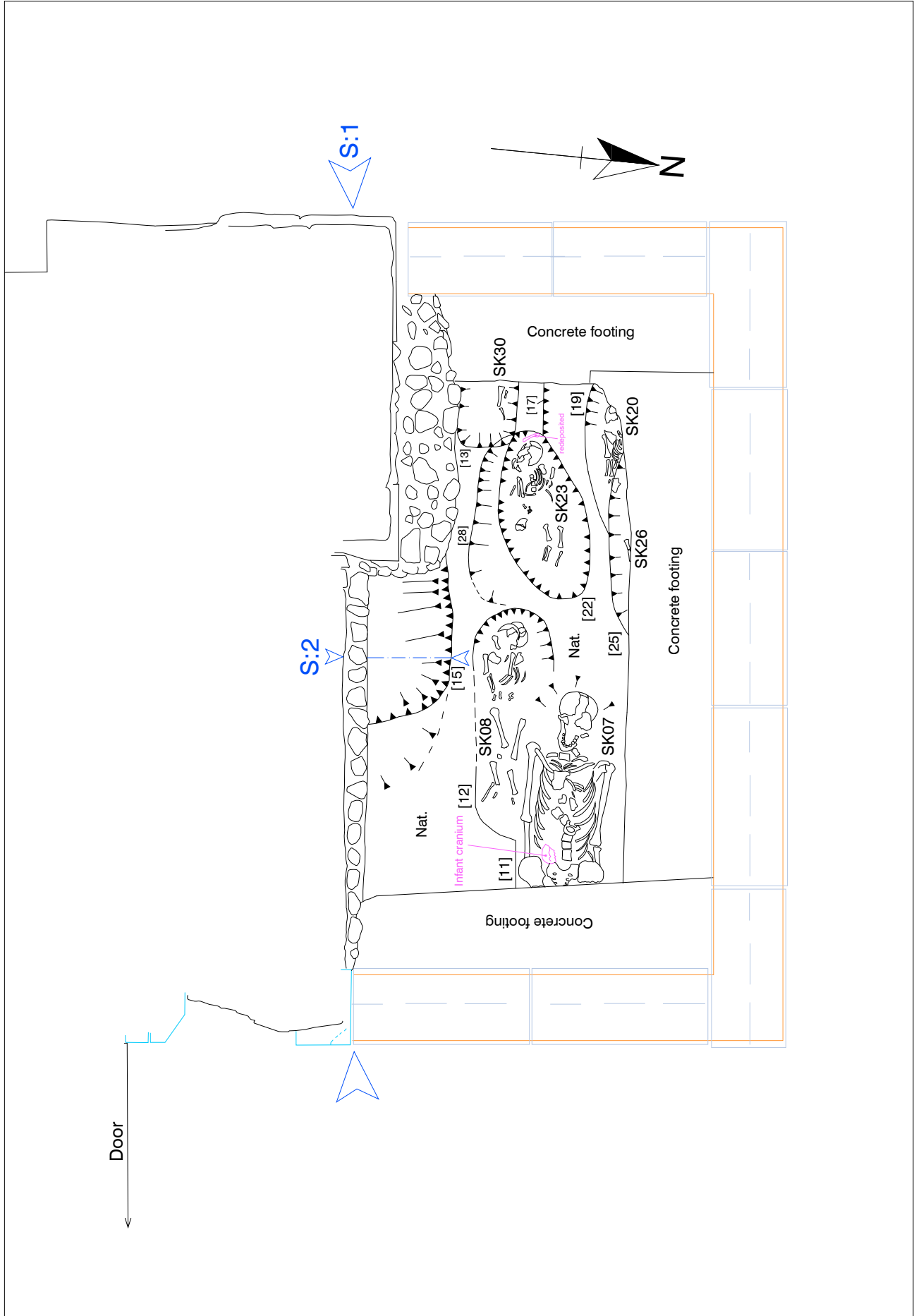


Figure 4. Plan of all features recorded within the planter . Scale 1:20

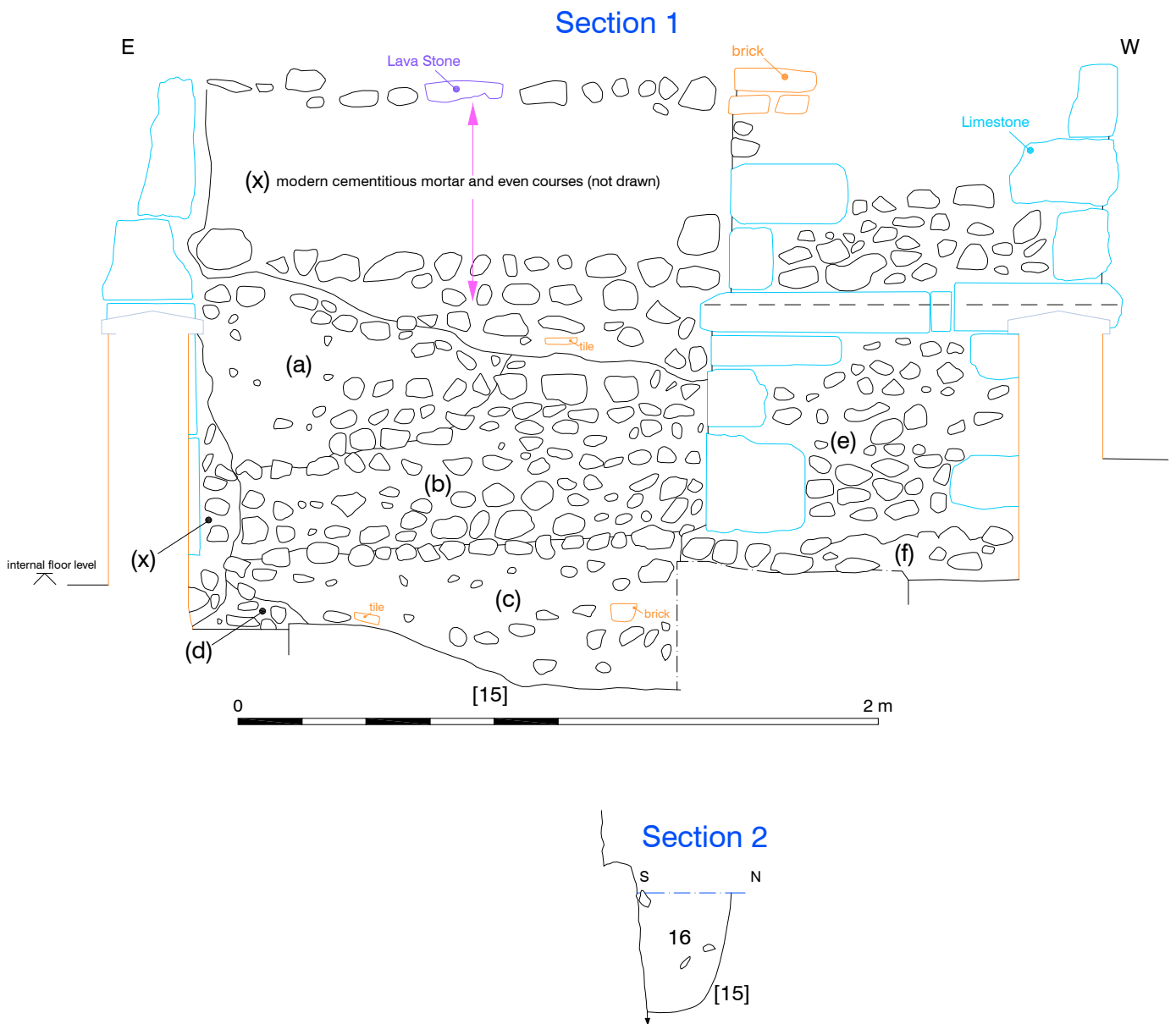


Figure 5. Recorded elevation/sections. Scale 1:20



St Mary and the Holy Cross:  
Warham Road,  
Binham,  
Norfolk.  
NR21 0DQ

Photographic record of and observations on elements of the tracery of the west front of St. Mary and the Holy Cross, Binham, made during the conservation programme of autumn 2016.

Prepared on behalf of:  
Binham P.C.C.

By

Joseph Picalli of Building Conservation Solutions Ltd.

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Background**

Brick and Flint Solutions were contracted to undertake repair and conservation works to the west front and south elevation of the church between September 5<sup>th</sup> and early November 2016. Building Conservation Solutions were retained as specialist conservations sub-contractors to undertake the conservation elements of the contract.

The contract specified the replacement of eroded bricks that constitute the infill of the architecturally significant west front window. This is generally believed to be the earliest example of bar tracery extant in Britain and held to be erected during a building programme of 1225-1244.

During the conservation works, as bricks were removed elements of the window's mouldings and tracery were uncovered. This report locates and photographically records these elements and suggests how the brickwork's bonding might indicate the presence of stonework beneath it.

## **2. Discussion**

It would appear the windows were bricked up leaving all the extant tracery in place. This is surmised from the evidence of tracery remains behind brickwork, which has needed replacement during the conservation works of autumn 2016.

Additionally, it was discovered that the way the bricks had been laid was influenced by the presence or absence of tracery: - thus the brickwork either side of the central mullion is actually of brick slips set in mortar. This has allowed for the retention of the engaged columns on either side of the mullion. It is likely that the bricks set on face at the top of the south arch have been so set in order to allow for tracery beneath.

Given that the effort was made during the bricking up process (c. 1809) to preserve existing tracery it seems likely that the measure was seen as temporary and that at some point the window was to be re-built, presumably if funds could be found.

### 3. Location of Revealed Stonework

West front of Binham Priory: south light, where stonework was exposed outlined in red



Close-up of south light with areas where stone was exposed outlined in yellow



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**OASIS ID: norvicar1-279034**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological excavation within a planter and observations of the blocked west window at St Marys Priory Church
Short description of the project	The results of an excavation of soils within a modern planter, located immediately west of the north door of the north aisle at St Marys Priory Church. The excavation of the planter soils was necessary to allow for measures to be taken against rising damp. The modern planter is located in an area previously excavated in 2008, undertaken in advance of the construction for the current visitor centre and improved access (APS Report 137/08, 2009). The soil block defined by the planter was believed to have been left in place against the medieval masonry wall adjacent to an area with several excavated inhumations. The Historic Environment Service and Historic England requested that the soils of the planter be excavated as part of a targeted programme of archaeological work (HES Ref: CNF46960) to be undertaken as part of a Scheduled Monument Consent. The reduction of soils within the planter to sterile natural clay-sand identified evidence for up to 8 individual burials of probable medieval date, of which all but one were child burials. The majority of these appeared to be poorly preserved neonatal burials, with one infant estimated to be between 1 to 1.5 years of age. The single adult was female and post-dated the 1 year old's inhumation. Concurrent remedial work by Brick and Flint Solutions and Conservation Solutions on the west window discovered that much of the original tracery may survive behind the 19th century brick blocking. This is generally believed to be the earliest example of bar tracery extant in Britain, erected during a building programme of 1225 to 1244.
Project dates	Start: 26-09-2016 End: 29-09-2016
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ENF141352 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	NVC/2016/321 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	CNF46960 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Scheduled Monument (SM)
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	AISLE Medieval
Monument type	CHURCH Medieval
Monument type	GRAVE Medieval
Monument type	INHUMATION Medieval
Monument type	PRIORY Medieval

Significant Finds	ANIMAL BONE Uncertain
Significant Finds	BURNT FLINT Uncertain
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Significant Finds	CERAMIC ROOF TILE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	WORKED STONE Medieval
Significant Finds	IRON NAIL Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Part Excavation"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK NORTH NORFOLK BINHAM St Marys Priory Church, Warham Road, Binham, Norfolk.
Postcode	NR21 0DQ
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TG 98164 39945 52.873364431352 2.431620520286 52 52 24 N 002 25 53 E Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Norvic Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Norvic Archaeology
Project director/manager	Giles Emery
Project supervisor	Giles Emery
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parish Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Binham PCC

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	NMAS and Norvic Archaeology
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal","Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	NMAS
Digital Contents	"Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	NMAS
Paper Contents	"Survey"
Paper Media available	"Map","Plan","Report","Section"

**Project  
bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological excavation within a planter and observations of the blocked west window at St Marys Priory Church, Warham Road, Binham, Norfolk.
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