



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD



**OBSERVATION & RECORDING REPORT:
ST MARY MAGDALENE CHURCH
GREAT HAMPDEN
BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

on behalf of Great Hampden Parochial Church Council



NGR: SP 4850 0236

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KDK: 057/GHC/1

August 2014

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Site Data

<i>KDK project code:</i>	057/GHC		
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	kdkarcha1-188102	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	TBC
<i>County:</i>	Buckinghamshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Great Hampden		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Great and Little Hampden		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	SP 4850 0236		
<i>Present use:</i>	Churchyard		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Installation of disabled WC		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	Wycombe District Council		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	N/A		
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<i>Commissioned by:</i>	Peter Dalling Associates The Studio, 75, Moffats Lane, Brookmans Park, Hatfield, Herts. AL9 7RT.		
<i>Client:</i>	Great Hampden Parochial Church Council		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David Brown		

Quality Check

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Figure 1: General location (scale 1:25,000)



Summary

During July and August 2014 a series of visits were made to St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire to monitor groundworks being carried out for the installation of a toilet block with store room to the west of the church. This included the excavation of a new soakaway to the southwest of the church, where the partial remains of five skeletons were uncovered. Several disarticulated human remains were found to the west and northwest of the church, but no other archaeological remains or features were discovered.

St Mary's Church is located opposite Hampden House, the former manor house that belonged to the Earls of Buckinghamshire, and which dates from the early 14th century. The church is possibly earlier as aisles were added to the nave in the early 14th century. It is likely to have been built as a manorial church. Today the church and the former manor house stand in isolation as the settlement has moved approximately 1 mile away.

1 Introduction

1.1 In July 2014 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of observation and recording of St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire. The project was commissioned by David Brown on behalf of Great Hampden PCC, and was carried out according to a Faculty (No.9412).

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of Faculty No.9412 prepared by the Diocese of Oxford.

1.3 *The Site*

Location & Description

The site is located in the parish of Hampden on the slopes of the Chiltern Hills in the Wycombe district of Buckinghamshire to the south east of Princes Risborough. It is centred on National Grid Reference SP 4850 0236 (Fig. 2).

Geology and Topography

The geology of the site consists of superficial deposits of clay-with-flints, clay, silt, sand and gravel, overlying bedrock geology of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation (BGS 2014). The site is flat and at a height of 215.5m AOD.

Development

The development comprised the installation of a disabled WC and storeroom to the west of the church.

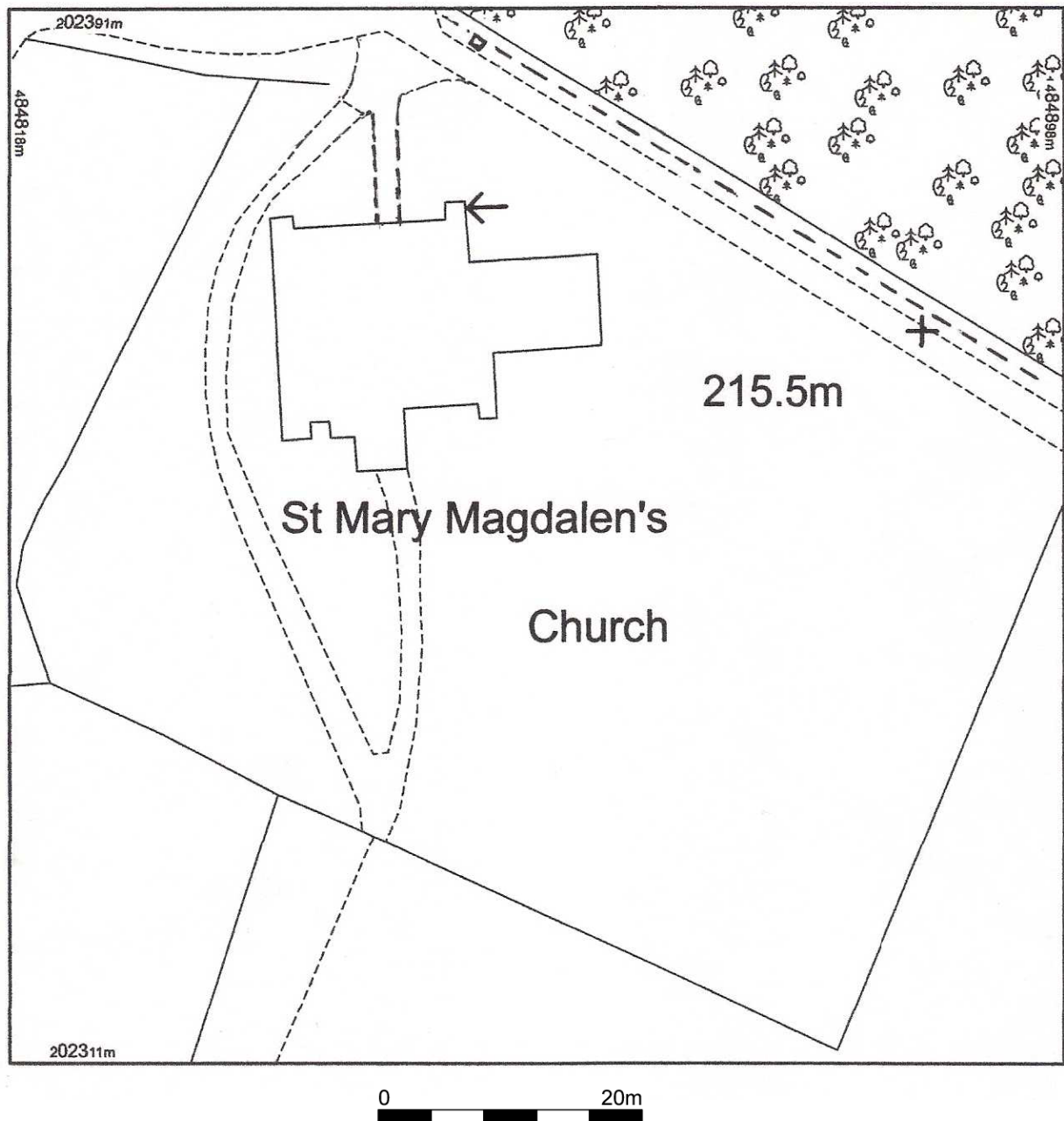


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:500)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project were:

- To monitor all groundworks to ensure any archaeological remains uncovered were appropriately and fully recorded

2.2 *Methods*

The methods used were as follows:

- Continuous and constant monitoring of all the groundworks, in this instance the ground reduction and excavation of foundation and service trenches.

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The relevant sections of the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2008a)
- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2013)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2006,2008)
- The Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003)



3 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 St Mary Magdalene Church is located directly to the south of Hampden House. The churchyard of St Mary Magdalene surrounds the east, south and west of the church. The name of Great Hampden most likely derives from the Old English for 'valley with an enclosure' *hamor + denu* (Mills 1991: 155). The church of St Mary Magdalene was not primarily built for the scattered farms and cottages that now make up the village, but for the neighbouring manor house, home to one of the most notable Buckinghamshire families the Hampdens.

Prehistoric (before 600BC)

A prehistoric earthwork, known as Grim's Ditch, directly bounds the north of the site, in an east – west alignment. The private road which leads to Hampden House from the main road to the east follows the same route.

Saxon (c.450-1066)

Prior to the Norman Conquest Great and Little Hampden was a single 3 hide estate that was held by Baldwin, a man of Archbishop Stigand (Williams and Martin 2002: 408). It is possible that Baldwin was an ancestor of the Hampdens whose lineage has been traced to Osbert who held the manor of William FitzAnsculf at the time of the Domesday Survey (Keen nd: 1).

Medieval (1066-1500)

Although Hampden House has been altered and added to greatly, the oldest part may date from the first half of the 14th century. However, the majority of the present house was built in the 17th century and was greatly added to and 'embellished' in the 18th century (Page 1908: 287-291).

The church is thought to date to earlier than the 14th century, which is when the aisles are thought to have been first added to the nave between 1325 and 1350. Of the same date is the lower part of the tower; the upper part seems to be 15th century and it is possible that the Black Death interrupted construction (Page 1908: 287-291). The tower is internally separated from the south aisle by an arch of clunch, and deep scoring marks can be seen from the bell ropes as the old treble bell had no stay and so the arch was used as a brake (Keen nd: 9).

Post-Medieval (1500-1900)

The earliest record for the need of restoration work to the church comes from 1519 when Bishop Atwater of Lincoln made a visit to the Wendover Deanery and the church was criticized for the poor state of the chancery. At the same time the Bishop was informed that the churchyard was not well enclosed or properly cared for. Later in 1670 a register notes the "Churchyard Mounds to be repaired and maintained by several occupiers of farms and cottages" (*ibid*: 10). In 1700 the churchyard is described as 'hardely halfe an acre' therefore it must have been extended at dates later than this (*ibid*).

In 1899 some restoration work to the tower was necessary after it was deemed unsafe and required underpinning. In addition, new brick buttresses with flint facings were installed to replace earlier ones and large Denner Hill stones were put into the base of the tower. The Victorian phase of restoration work included creating a dry ditch around the entire church to reduce the damp problems. This was carried out under the direction of Thomas Thurlow, an architect from High Wycombe at a cost of £900 (Keen nd: 10). At the end of the 19th century



the tower of the church was largely restored and an outer steep –pitched roof was put on the nave. Traces of earlier gables are still visible on the west elevation (Page 1908: 287-291).

The most famous of the Hampdens associated with the great manor house was John Hampden ‘the patriot’ whose refusal, along with others, to pay tax for ship money in 1642 led to Charles I ordering his arrest prior to the Civil War (Page 1908: 287-291). He died after being fatally wounded in battle at Chalgrove Field in 1643 (Keen nd: 18).

Modern (1900-present)

The roof of the church and the south porch were restored in 2000 (<http://www.greathampden.org.uk/index.php/history>).



4 Results

Introduction

Several monitoring visits were made between 2nd July and 14th August 2014 to monitor the various aspects of the building project (Fig. 3). The groundworks were undertaken using either of 1.5ton or 5ton tracked Kubota fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

The ground excavated was typical of churchyards, being greatly mixed with modern debris and re-deposited natural all making up the majority of the subsoil to a depth of 0.9m .

WC and store room (Plates 1-4)

The area initially reduced for the new build measured 2.9m x 4.8m and was reduced by 0.12m in the first instance. It contained a number of large roots from nearby trees, which had to be cut with a chainsaw in order to remove them. The exposed ground consisted of re-deposited natural and modern debris within the mixed subsoil, including a notable quantity of roof tile, pieces of brick and occasionally small pieces of modern glass. This is thought to have derived from the recent re-roofing of the church.

Following the initial ground reduction, 6 piles were sunk, and the ground reduced by a further 0.3m (0.45m close to the piles). This took the area to a maximum depth of 0.65m below ground level (BGL) around the piles, leaving a small rectangular island in the centre c.0.40m BGL. The total open area measured 5.4m (north – south) x 3.3m (east – west).

The ground that made up the WC block was very mixed, with occasional fragments of tile and brick. A couple of fragments of human bone were found as was a skull fragment by the central pile to the east. The skull was at a depth of 0.76m BGL, and had probably been disturbed during previous groundworks as it was found in isolation.

Pits (Plates 5-10)

A 0.75m square pit (Pit 1) was excavated to the north of the church to allow a moling machine to pass under the driveway to Pit 2. This was machined to a depth of 0.7m and comprised c.0.12m of topsoil over c.0.42m of made-ground consisting of a mixture of subsoil, some re-deposited natural and frequent modern building debris. The natural was reached c.0.54m BGL and no archaeological features or finds were observed.

Pit 2, which measured 1.0m x 1.5m, was excavated to the east of a water hydrant on the northern edge of the driveway. It was positioned between the church and the manor house, but just beyond the churchyard boundary. The topsoil was 0.15m deep, and the underlying made ground contained brick, mortar, tile, large flints and chalk inclusions as well as some rooting. The water hydrant pipe was found 1.0m BGL, which appeared to be sitting on more solid clay, possibly the natural geology. There were no archaeological features or finds.

A cess pit (Pit 3) was excavated to the west of the church and north of the new measuring 2.60m square. The topsoil was c.0.12m deep, over c.0.50m of subsoil of mid brown sandy clay with flint and a small amount of CBM. At 1.20m the natural orange clay with gravel had been breached by c.0.30m without revealing any cuts or features, though three fragments of disarticulated human remains were recovered. No further finds or archaeological features were observed.



The pit for the soakaway (Pit 4), which was located to the southwest of the church, measured 2.0m (north – south) x 1.8m (east – west) x 1.3m in depth. The ground was mixed with no clear stratigraphy below the topsoil which was up to 0.18m deep. Five articulated skeletons were partially uncovered at depths of 0.9m – 1.1m BGL, including four sets of legs and one incomplete torso. One set of legs were uncovered in the northwest corner, orientated northwest-southeast. Two more were revealed to the south, orientated northwest-southeast, with a leg underlying them orientated on a north northeast-south southwest alignment. To the east of the soakaway was the head and torso of an east-west burial. The majority of the bones were in very poor condition and soft, breaking easily when removed. A more detailed description of the human remains is given below.

Trenches (Plates 11-15)

Trench 1, which was aligned northeast – southwest, measured 0.5m in width and 0.7m in depth. It was excavated to the west of the western path. The stratigraphy comprised c.0.12m of topsoil over c.0.42m of made-ground, which consisted of mixed subsoil, some re-deposited natural and frequent modern building debris. The area had been considerably disturbed by the presence of two electric cables and a sewage pipe at a depth of c.0.70m. Two small fragments of human bone were found in the trench and it is probable they had been mixed in with the made ground after being disturbed at an earlier point.

Trench 2 was on a similar alignment to Trench 1 and connected the service block with Pit 3. It was 1.6m long and approximately 0.95m at its widest point. There was considerable rooting in the area and no archaeological features or finds were observed.

Trench 3, which linked the west wall of the church to the north side of the WC block, was 0.4m wide, and between 0.75m and 0.9m deep. The trench was widened to 1.15m by the wall to allow room for the coring machine to go through the wall. The stratigraphy consisted of c.0.12m topsoil over made ground containing natural and occasional brick and tile debris.

At the face of the west wall of the church was a gully which had to be breached to gain access to the foundations for the coring machine. The gully was made of blue bricks three courses wide and 0.05m deep. Under this was a layer of cement c.0.14m deep over made ground, largely consisting of rubble, at least 0.44m deep. The made ground by the wall was mixed and loose, perhaps to serve as a French drain. The natural geology was not reached and there were no archaeological features found.

Trench 4, which was located to the southwest of the church and linked the WC block with the soakaway, was 5.0m long and c.0.45m deep. The ground was more compacted than at the WC block, with frequent flint and broken tile. The north of the trench was heavily rooted. Fragments of human bone were found in the south of the trench as was a sherd of glazed tile.

Church interior (Plate 16)

A small area measuring 0.45m x 0.50m x 0.65m deep was opened in the west wall for the services to be brought inside the church. The flooring was quarry tiles laid over a large block of clunch c.0.24m thick, which was possibly dressed on one side, and may have been re-used from elsewhere. Below this was a layer of soil, c.0.10m thick, with broken brick, which overlay a c.0.5m thick layer of red brick. This was possibly an earlier floor level as the nave was re-floored in 1870 (Keen nd: 5). It appears to have been a mix of 0.11m square quarry tiles and small red bricks. Under the brick layer was very compacted, fine earth at least 0.30m deep, with occasional small brick debris.



Human Remains (Figure 4)

Some fragments of disarticulated remains were recovered from the ground reduction for the WC block, in Trench 1, Trench 4 and Pit 3. These were recovered and stored for later reburial.

The only articulated remains were found in Pit 4 to the southwest of the church. Five partially articulated skeletons were discovered, although there were no visible grave cuts for any of the burials. All the remains were in very poor condition with only the larger bones, such as the femur and tibia, surviving in a reasonable condition. This combined with the solid clay they were buried in and rooting in and around them, meant that exhuming them in the main destroyed their structural integrity.

Skeleton 1: Lower legs; left tibia, fibula and patella, right tibia. Lower section of both femurs retained in the pit section. The remains were orientated NW-SE, at a depth of 1.09m BGL. The bone was very soft and friable. The femur was left *in situ*, and the pit was extended to the east by 0.10m to compensate. No foot bones were found, possibly because they had become too fragile to survive. Coffin nails were found associated with the leg bones.

Skeleton 2: Skull, upper torso including clavicle, scapula, part of the right humerus, ulna and radius. Orientated E-W, at a depth of 1.04m BGL. The machine bucket crushed most of the skull leaving only part of the mandible intact. Ribs and vertebrae were recovered; all were very soft and easily crumbled. A single coffin nail was found associated with this skeleton.

Skeleton 3: Upper leg and knee cap; left and right femur, left patella and upper sections of both tibia, possibly also part of the hip. Orientated NW-SE, at a depth of 0.93m BGL. Bones were in a very poor condition and had roots growing through them making their after retrieval very poor. A single nail was found associated with these remains.

Skeleton 4: Femur, possibly of left leg. Orientated NW-SE, at a depth of 0.94m BGL. When uncovered appeared in good condition but with retrieval it fragmented into many pieces. Found immediately west of Skeleton 3 at the same depth and in the same alignment.

Skeleton 5: Only a small section of leg bone. Orientated NNE-SSW, underlying Skeleton 4 at a depth of 0.96m BGL. In very poor condition, only the loose bone pieces were collected and the remainder left in the pit section.

To the north of Skeletons 3, 4, and 5 was an area c.0.54 x 0.18m of bone fragments of no discernible shape and in such poor condition it was impossible to discern what the bones had been. It could possibly have been the remains of foot or hip bones associated with the legs.

At the request of the PCC the remains were not analysed further, but were left for reburial as required by the Faculty. Although it may have been possible to identify some metric traits and pathologies on some of the sturdier remains, the number of individuals that the bones represented and the poor quality of the remains would have provided very limited archaeological information to enhance the understanding of the history of the site and its populace.



Plate 1: WC block and store room: initial ground reduction, view north



Plate 2: WC block and store room: full ground reduction with piles, view north



Plate 3: WC block and store room: partial skull, view north



Plate 4: WC block and store room: stratigraphy of ground reduction



Plate 5: Pit 1, view east



Plate 6: Pit 2, view northeast



Plate 7: Pit 3, view west



Plate 8: Pit 4 stratigraphy, view west



Plate 9: Pit 4: skeleton 2, view west



Plate 10: Pit 4: skeletons 3, 4 & 5, view southeast



Plate 11: Trench 1, view southwest



Plate 12: Trench 3 from church, view northwest



Plate 13: Trench 3 at west wall of church, view southeast



Plate 14: Trench 4 stratigraphy, view southwest



Plate 15: Trench 4, view northwest



Plate 16: Church interior: pit in bell tower, view west

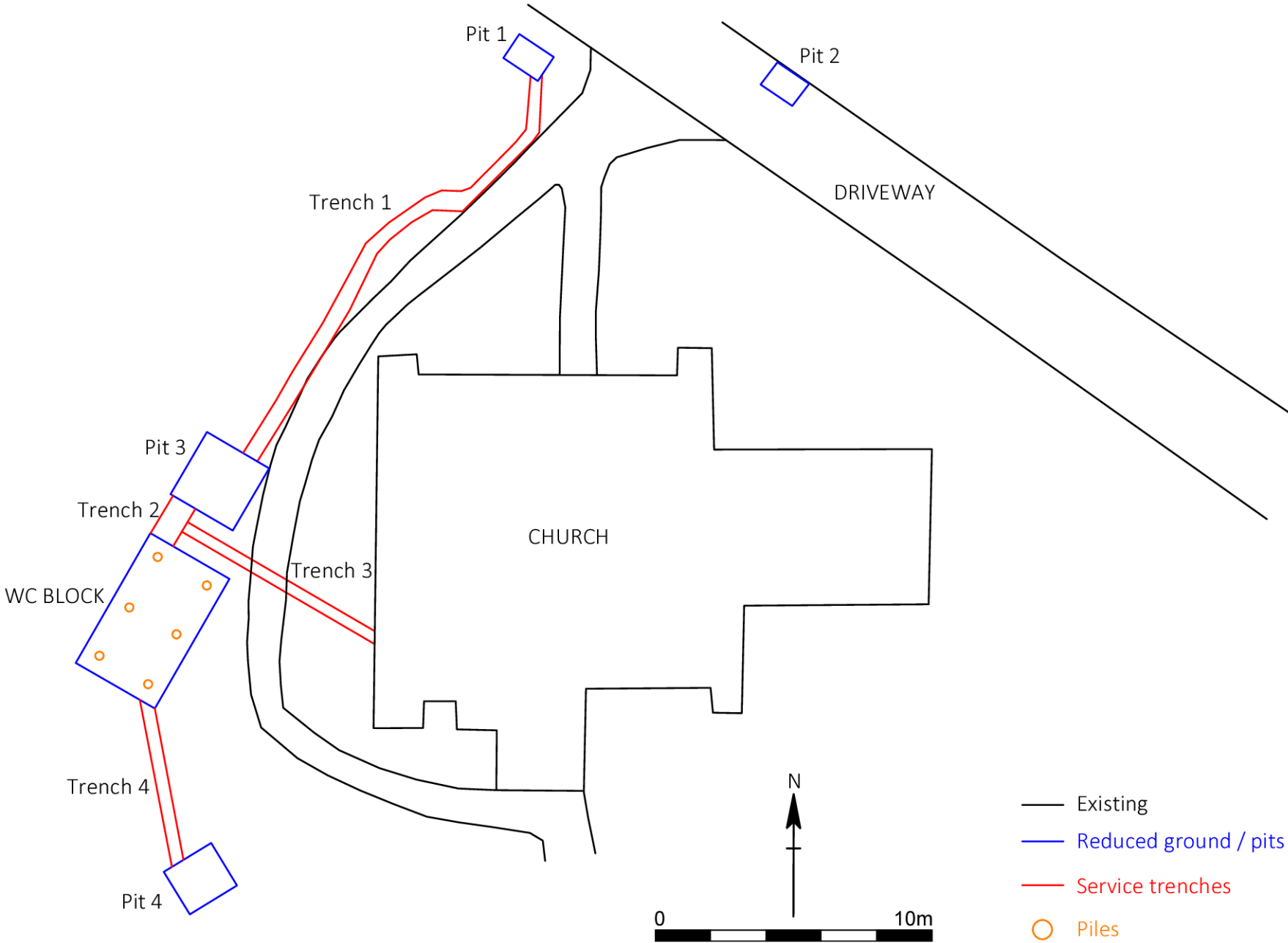


Figure 3: Plan showing excavated areas (Scale 1:50)

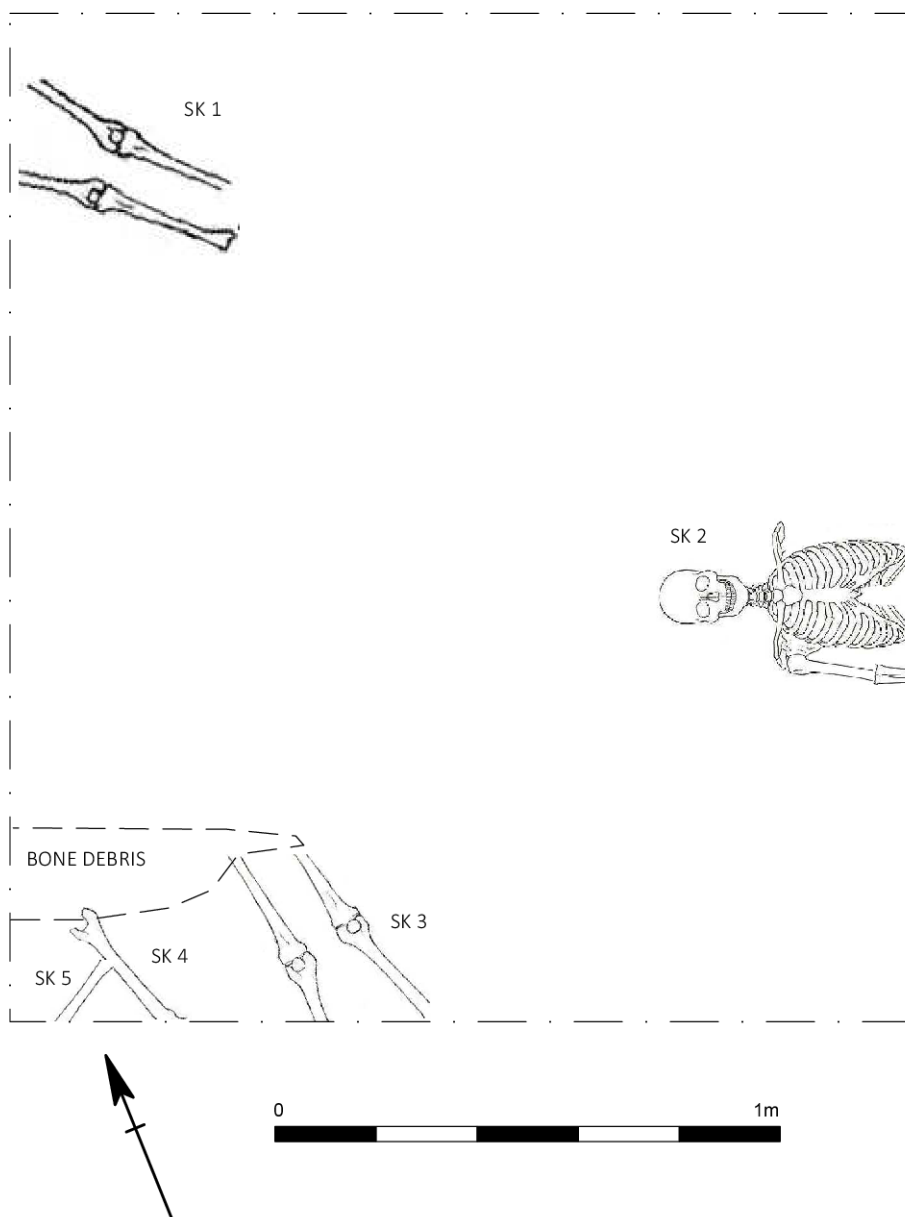


Figure 4: Plan of soakaway showing location of skeletons (Scale 1:15)



5 Conclusions

The stratigraphy of the site is typical of historic churchyards that are still in use, with evidence for previous building and restoration works and the installation of modern services. Burials were largely absent to the north and west of the church, presumably as a result of these being traditionally the least favoured burial areas reserved for less favoured members of society such as paupers and those having fallen foul of the law.

The natural geology was encountered at depths varying between c.0.5m to 0.9m BGL but no archaeological features or finds were observed other than the disarticulated human remains in the ground reduction for the WC block, Trenches 1 and 4 and Pit 3 and the partial remains of articulated burials in the soakaway (Pit 4).

Although no grave cuts were observed, the presence of coffin nails would suggest that two of the burials in Pit 4 (Skeletons 2 and 3) appear to have been coffined. Of interest is the orientation of the burials, with only Skeleton 2 on the traditional east-west alignment, which in this case is the orientation of the church itself. It would be easy to speculate that the three burials aligned northwest-southeast may have followed the alignment of an earlier church on the site, but the presence of a coffin nail with Skeleton 3 would suggest that this is a post-medieval burial and the different burial alignments is due to reasons that are as yet unclear.

The paucity of archaeological features or finds, despite being within a churchyard and the proximity to Grims Ditch, is partially due to the north and west of the church being the less favoured burial area, and also the level of post-medieval and modern disturbance during building works and the installation of services.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Peter Dalling of Dalling Associates for commissioning this report on behalf of Great Hampden PCC. His assistance in providing the drawings which have been used as a basis for the plans in this report is also duly acknowledged. KDK would also like to thank David Brown for his help throughout the project and Danny, Trevor and Andy from Saunders Brothers for their assistance during the fieldwork.

Fieldwork was undertaken by: Lydia Breeze-Chilcott BA MSc & Karin Kaye MA MIfA. The report was prepared by Lydia Breeze-Chilcott and was edited by David Kaye BA AIfA.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Written Scheme of Investigation
2. Initial report
3. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs
7. B/W prints & negatives
8. Specialist reports
9. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museum.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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- British Geological Survey 2014 *Geology of Britain Viewer*: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>



Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE: 057/GHC			Site Name: St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	✓	✓	Stratigraphy of pit for water mains, view east.
2	✓	✓	Stripped area for WC block, view north east.
3	✓	✓	Stratigraphy shot of service trench from water mains pit, view east.
4		✓	Shot along service trench, view south.
5		✓	Shot along the middle stretch of service trench along path, view south west.
6		✓	Shot along the middle stretch of service trench along path, view south west.
7	✓	✓	Shot along southern stretch of service trench along path, view south.
8		✓	General shot of service trench along path, view north east.
9		✓	Church, view north.
10		✓	Church, view north east.
11		✓	General shot of service trench from west wall of church, view north west.
12	✓	✓	Stratigraphy of service trench from west wall of church, view south west.
13		✓	General shot of service trench from west wall of church, view east.
14		✓	Stratigraphy of soak away service trench, view south west.
15		✓	General shot along soak away service trench, view north west.
16		✓	Location of church interior where services will come in, view north west.
17		✓	Location of church interior where services will come in, view north west.
18		✓	Pit by water hydrant to connect to mains water, view north.
19		✓	Piling in the WC block, view south east.
20		✓	Drilled hole for Pile 1.
21		✓	Drilled hole for Pile 1.
22		✓	West wall of church where coring will enter, view east.
23		✓	Church interior: layer of clunch over red brick, view north west.
24		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
25		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
26		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
27		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
28		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
29		✓	Church interior: pit for coring to enter with services, view north west.
30		✓	West wall of church, view east.
31		✓	General working shot: digging footings for WC block, view north east.
32		✓	Beginning of footing around piles in WC block, view north east.
33		✓	General working shot: footings of WC block, view north east.
34	✓	✓	Disarticulated skull in WC block footings, view north.
35		✓	Disarticulated skull in WC block footings, view north.
36		✓	Disarticulated skull in WC block footings, view north.
37		✓	Stratigraphy of WC block, view east.
38	✓	✓	Stratigraphy of WC block, view north.
39		✓	Stratigraphy of WC block, view west.
40		✓	Stratigraphy of WC block, view west.
41		✓	General shot of finished footings of WC block, view south.
42		✓	General shot of finished footings of WC block, view south.
43		✓	General shot of finished footings of WC block, view north.
44	✓	✓	Skeleton 1: view west.
45	✓	✓	Skeleton 1: view west.
46	✓	✓	Skeleton 1: view west.
47	✓	✓	Skeleton 1: view west.



48	✓	✓	Skeleton 2: view west.
49	✓	✓	Skeleton 3: view south west.
50	✓	✓	Skeletons 3, 4 & 5: view south west.
51	✓	✓	Stratigraphy of soak away pit, view north.
52	✓	✓	Stratigraphy of soak away pit, view west.
53		✓	Cess tank, view west
54		✓	Bone fragments of Skeleton 1 leg
55		✓	Bone fragments of Skeleton 1 leg
56		✓	Bone fragments of skull



Appendix 2: KDK OASIS Sheet

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire	OASIS reference:	kdkarcha1-188102
Short Description:	<p>During July and August 2014 a series of visits were made to St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire to monitor groundworks being carried out for the installation of a toilet block with store room to the west of the church. This included the excavation of a new soak away to the southwest of the church, where the partial remains of five skeletons were uncovered. Several disarticulated remains were found to the west and northwest of the church, but no other archaeological remains or features were discovered.</p> <p>St Mary's Church is located opposite Hampden House, the former manor house that belonged to the Hampden family (who were elevated to become the Earls of Buckinghamshire), which dates from the early 14th century. That aisles were added to the nave in the early 14th century would suggest that the church is older and it is likely that it was built as a manorial church. Today the church and the former manor house stand in isolation as the settlement has moved approximately 1 mile away.</p>		
Project Type:	Observation and Recording:		
Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Listed Building Ref: 1158762	Site status: (eg. none, SAM, listed)	Grade II*
Current land use:	Church graveyard	Future work: (yes/no/unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	Church	Monument period:	Medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	5 partially articulated human remains. Medieval/ post-medieval		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Buckinghamshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	SP 4850 0236
Site address: (+ postcode if known)	St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire, HP16 9RD		
Study area: (sq. m. / ha)	1094 sq.m.	Height OD: (metres)	217m A OD
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project brief originator:	-	Project design originator:	-
Project Manager:	Karin Kaye	Director/Supervisor:	Lydia Breeze-Chilcott
Sponsor / funding body:	Great Hampden PCC		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	02.07.14	End date:	14.08.14
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Buckinghamshire County Museum	None	
Paper:		1 box containing field notes, photographs etc	
Digital:		1 CD	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Observation & Recording Report: St Mary Magdalene Church, Great Hampden, Buckinghamshire		
Serial title & volume:	KDK Archaeology Ltd Report ref: 057/GHC/1		
Author(s):	Lydia Breeze-Chilcott MSc & Karin Kaye MA		
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