



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Church of St James the Great
High Wych Road
High Wych
Hertfordshire



Quality Check

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



Summary

In May-June 2016 a programme of Archaeological Observation and Recording and Photographic Survey was undertaken at the Church of St James the Great, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire as a Faculty requirement in association with the construction of a kitchenette in the church and the associated drainage. No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were revealed during the course of the project other than the foundations of the church tower. This is in part due to the depth of the trenches, but also that the site lay outside the developed settlement prior to the church being built.

1 Introduction

1.1 In May-June 2016 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording of St James' Church, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by Barkers Associates, and was carried out according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by KDK (Bertrand 2016), and approved by David Baker, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA) for the Diocese of St Albans.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This project has been required under the terms of a Faculty and has been detailed by David Baker, Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA) for the Diocese of St Albans.

1.3 *The Site*

The development site is in the administrative district of East Hertfordshire, and the village and civil parish of High Wych. The church is located at National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 46350 14135 (Fig. 1).

Description

The development site is bounded to the north-west by fields, to the north-east by the High Wych Memorial Hall and carpark, and to the south-west by the High Wych Church of England Primary School. The churchyard fronts onto High Wych Road at the south-east (Fig. 2).

St James' Church is a Grade II* listed building (English Heritage Listed Building No. 1220513) and is described as follows:

Parish Church. 1860-61 by George Edward Pritchett (1824-1912) for and chiefly at the cost of Rev H F Johnson (memorial in chancel). '1860' on rainwater heads and on brick at NE corner of nave. Foundation stone laid 25.7.1860: completed and consecrated 17.6.1861 (Bishops Stortford Observer 20.4.1861 and 29.6.1881). A striking village church in Pritchett's personal interpretation of the Early English style. A vast red tile roof tops low buttressed walls of uncoursed knapped flints with red brick bands and stone lancet windows and dressings. The brick bands run round the buttresses, and red brick and knapped flint voussoirs alternate in outer arches over the 2-centred arched stone heads of all windows and doors. The interior is in white brick with red brick bands, the chancel and apse are vaulted in brick and have painted linear diaper and foliage decoration on vault and walls. There is a lofty 4-bay nave, S aisle, S porch, SW round tower, a raised chancel, eastern apse, and SW vestry with a rounded E end. The rounded plan forms are echoed in the part-conical roof forms of tower, apse and vestry, flanking the higher gabled nave roof. The narrower octagonal bell stage and shingled fleche of the tower do not detract from the dominance of the nave. The aisle roof continues the nave roof at a flatter pitch. There is no clerestory and the nave is lit by tall paired lancets on the N and 3 lancets above the W door.



Externally, this has 2 recessed orders with dog-tooth ornamentation to the inner, a cross worked in red brick on each side and glazed ceramic plaques with alpha and omega, set into the bottom stone of each jamb. The S porch has a large apsidal bulge on the W, low trefoil headed windows on the E, and an ornamental dog-tooth arch with an outer order with deep hollows springing from a recessed shaft with foliate capital. 2 ornate iron boot scrapers. 2 simple chamfered orders to S door with hood-mould stops of king and bishop. Interior of church virtually unaltered. The arcade with red and white voussiors is carried on single slender stone columns with the exaggeratedly large square foliate capitals prominent in the wall paintings in the nave of St Albans Abbey. The 2 narrow arches on a central column under a wider arch, used between chancel and vestry, seems to be from a similar source although the column is here repeated in the depth of the wall as in a cloister. Polychrome encaustic tile floor. Contemporary stained glass windows in chancel and apse and slightly later in nave, aisle and vestry. Jambs of brick chancel arch have dog-tooth arrises up to stone block at springing of chamfered brick arch with hood mould and foliate stops. Similar arch next to apse. Stone pulpit in NE corner with quatrefoil panel of a sower carved on W face, foliage carved shelf corbel, a marble shaft below an integral stone bible shelf, and stone steps on the S side. Square stone font on 4 marble pillars, with figure carving on each face. Organ by 'Father' Willis about 1881, renovated by Willis 1946. Carved oak lectern by Warham Guild 1947. Original stone and marble reredos extends all round the apse with aumbrey and piscina in aedicules at ends. Carved surface diaper with openwork carved cresting with 4 freestanding shafts carrying angels above cresting. Marble figure panel behind altar. Altar-rails and dwarf screens to chancel by Warham Guild 1949. Gabled stone aedicule on S face of round tower has clockface set between spiral columns with 6-pointed star carved above. A striking church of original design of which contemporary critics said it shows considerable skill on the part of the architect (Ecclesiologist (1861) 282) and which Pevsner regarded as "as original in its handling of Gothic forms as anything in the Art Nouveau of forty years later" (Pevsner (1977) 195-6). The church is of the greatest architectural interest, unaltered and retaining its original scheme of painted decoration counterpointing the white and red brickwork of the interior. It is also the key central building in the group of contemporary flint buildings by Pritchett for Rev H F Johnson built to furnish the centre of the newly created parish. (Sources; Builder 8.3.1912 p 283; WEA II (1967) 28-30) (HE 2016).

Geology & Topography

The superficial geological deposit on the development site is Lowestoft Formation (Diamicton), with a bedrock geology of London Clay Formation; clay, silt and sand. The overall topography of the site is fairly level, at c.70mAOD (FreeMapTools 2016).

Development

The development comprises the internal reordering and removal of pews, the relocation of the organ, and the installation of a kitchenette and toilet, with associated drainage (Fig. 3).

Constraints

Although the excavation of two small pits close to or on the footpath to the south of the church for the moleing apparatus was to have been monitored as part of the project, KDK was not informed that they were being dug until they had been backfilled. However, given the size and location of these pits and that no archaeological features had been revealed in the service trenches to the north of the church, it is unlikely that significant features were missed as a result.

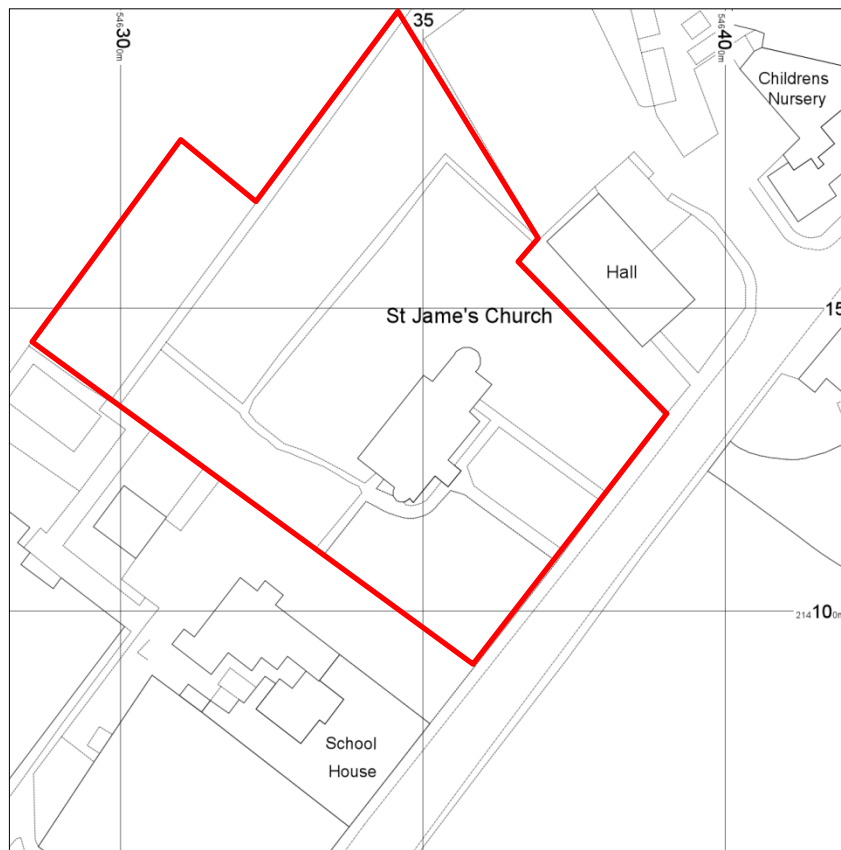


Figure 2: Site location (scale 1:1250)



Figure 3: Proposed services route (red shows drainage, blue shows water supply) (scale as shown)

)



2 Aims & Methods

2.1 The aims of this project as defined in the approved WSI (Bertrand 2016) were:

- To provide a comprehensive record of the proposed alterations to the building
- To establish the date, nature and extent of any activity within the impacted areas both internally and externally
- To better understand the relationship of any remains found to the surrounding and/or contemporary environment

2.2 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the brief, the methods used were as follows:

- All external groundworks that were likely to have an impact on archaeological deposits were done under continuous and constant archaeological supervision.
- A photographic survey was undertaken on internal areas affected by the development. This was primarily in a 35mm black & white format, and supplemented by digital photography.

2.3 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The design brief
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance Notes* (CIfA 2014)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2014)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (HE 2015, EH 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 & Historical Background

High Wych, meaning 'high woodland', was originally a hamlet on the road from Sawbridgeworth to Gilston, and used to be a part of the Sawbridgeworth parish (Page 1912; UOP 2014). It became an ecclesiastical district in 1862 (Page 1912), and by 1872 it had a population of 1100 (UOP 2014).

The parish church of St James the Great (HER 16601) was built between July 1860 and June 1861 (UOP 2014), mainly at the expense of the vicar, Reverend Johnson (HER 16601, BBC 1986). Designed by George Edward Pritchett (1824 – 1912), along with other buildings in the village centre, the walls are of flint and red brick and are in a 13th century style (Page 1912). The interior has had only minor alterations since its construction. The boundary wall and entrance gates at the roadside are also designed by Pritchett and are Grade II listed (Historic England Listed Building No. 1220514, Pevsner & Cherry 1977). Within the church is an organ built by Henry Willis, installed the same year the church was opened (Barker Associates 2015).

Associated buildings by Pritchett include High Wych Village School (HER 16602) to the south-west of St James' Church and the Vicarage (HER 30125). The school and the vicarage were built at much the same time as the church, with the school being opened in April 1861. The school house is Grade II listed (Historic England Listed Building No. 1290936 & 1290938). The school and the church share the aforementioned boundary wall. The vicarage is built in Gothic style and is built in stone, with outbuildings in white brick. It was sold in 1929 and renamed High Wych Grange. It is also Grade II listed (English Heritage Listed Building No. 1290958).



4 Results

Introduction

A visit was made in early May to photograph the parts of the church to be impacted by the development and three visits were made in May and June to monitor the groundworks.

The groundworks were largely dug using a 1.5 tonne machine fitted with a 0.2 toothless bucket; they were otherwise dug by hand. The line of the drainage trench was designed to avoid the burials with only the kerbstones of a grave in the southeast corner of Trench 1 having to be temporarily removed for the trenching. The trench itself was too shallow to impact on the burial itself (Figure 4, Plate 4).

Description

The excavation of Pit 1 and Trench 1 revealed a stratigraphy comprising 0.20m of topsoil, overlying 0.30m of made ground contacting brick and tile fragments. It is likely that this deposit is a result of levelling the site after the construction of the church (Figure 4, Plates 1, 2, 3 and 4).

No archaeological features or finds were recovered, but the tower foundations were revealed in the west section of Pit 1 (Plate 2).

The stratigraphy of the drainage trench in the new extension of the cemetery (Trench 2 and Pit 2) comprised by a layer of topsoil over the natural geology (Figure 4, Plate 5 and 6). No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.



Plate 1: Pit 1, facing SE.



Plate 2: Tower foundations in Pit 1, facing SE.



Plate 3: Trench 1 southeast end, facing NW.



Plate 4: Trench 1 northwest end, facing SE.



Plate 5: Trench 2, facing NW.



Plate 6: Pit 2, facing W.

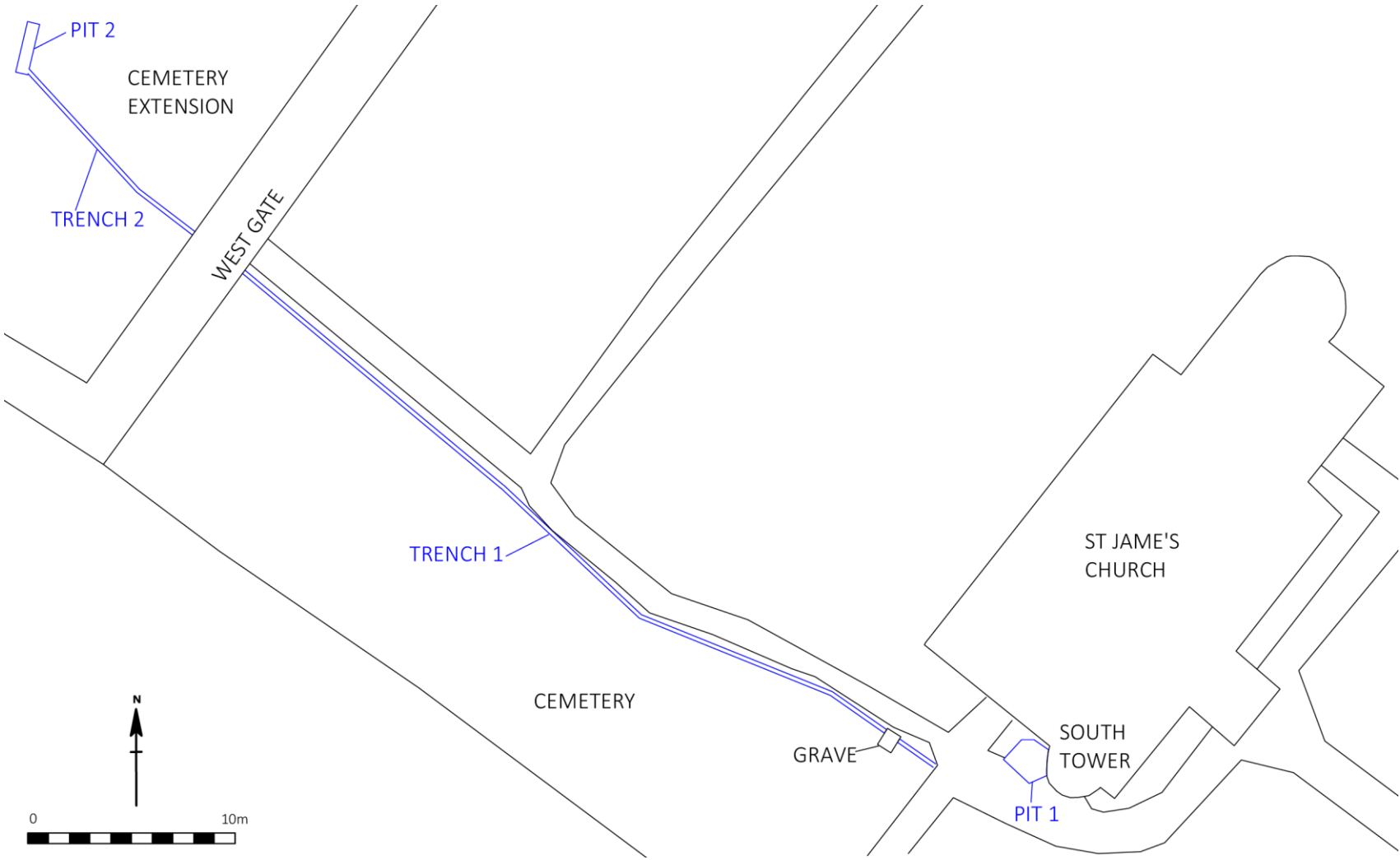
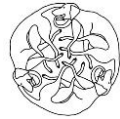


Figure 4: Plan of monitored groundworks (scale 1:300)



Plate 7: Southwest corner of the nave



Plate 8: Southern end of the nave



Plate 9: Southeast corner of the nave

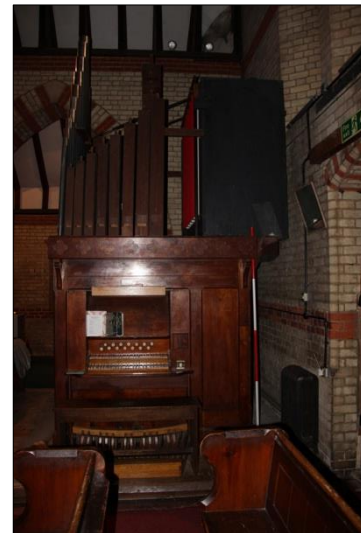


Plate 10: Organ detail from the north



Plate 11: Organ detail from the east



Plate 12: Organ detail from the south



Plate 13: Pews along the west wall



Plate 14: General shot of the southwest corner



Plate 15: The pews in front of the organ



Plate 16: View of the impacted area from the northeast



Plate 17: Pew numbers



Plate 18: Pews west of the south door



Plate 19: Detail of numbered pews west of the south door



Plate 20: detail of organ keyboard door

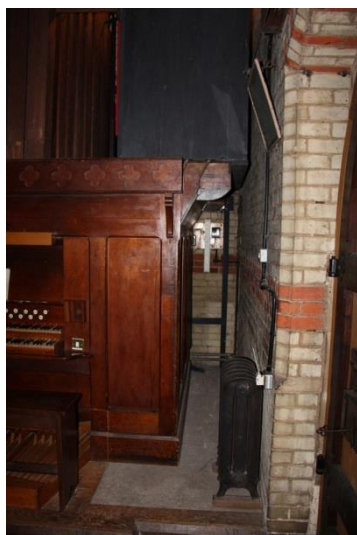


Plate 21: Organ and adjacent wall



Plate 22: Organ detail

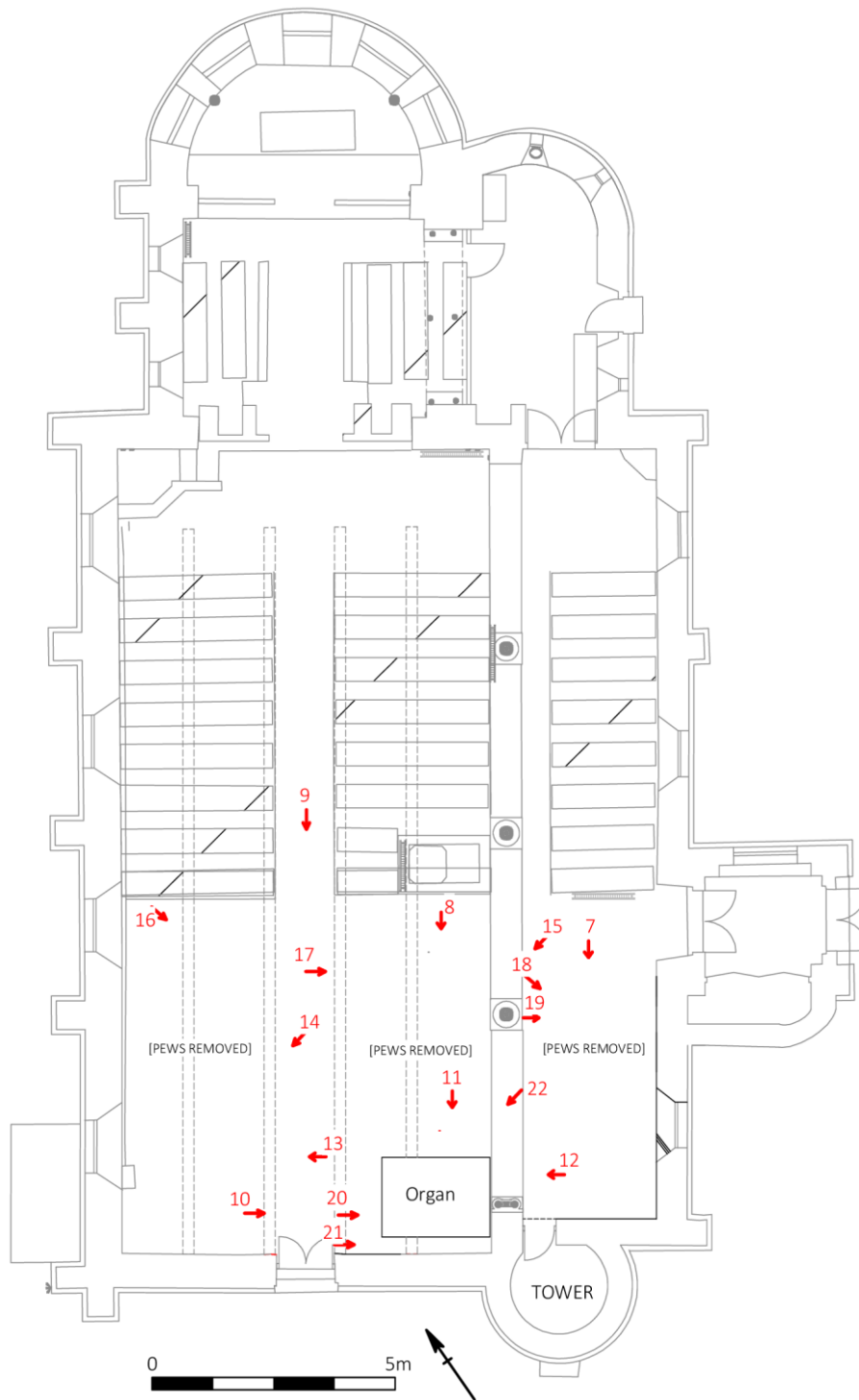


Figure 5: Church photo plan (scale 1:150)



5 Conclusions

The programme of archaeological observation and recording carried out during the groundworks in the churchyard of St James revealed that the site was levelled after the church was built in 1860.

No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were revealed during the course of the project other than the foundations of the church tower. This is in part due to the depth of the trenches, but also that the site lay outside the developed settlement prior to the church being built.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to Barker Associates for commissioning this report on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St James' Church. Thanks are also due to Dr Isobel Thompson of Hertfordshire County Council for providing historic environment records and other relevant documents; the staff of Hertfordshire County Council for their assistance in the historic research and to David Baker Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of St Albans monitoring the project.

The fieldwork was carried out by Eva Estela MA. The report was written by Eva Estela, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCIfA.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

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

7.2 The archive will be deposited with Bishop's Stortford BISHM2016.2.



8 References

Standards & Specifications

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Appendix 1: Photograph List

SITE NO/CODE:201/HWC			Site Name: St James Church, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire.
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1	X	X	Pit 1, facing NE (1x1m scale)
2	X	X	Tower foundations in Pit 1, facing NE (1m scale)
3	X	X	Trench 1 southeast end, facing NW (1m scale)
4	X	X	Trench 1, facing NW (2m scale)
5	X	X	Trench 1, facing SE (2m scale)
6	X	X	Trench 1 northwest end, facing NW (2m scale)
7	X	X	Stratigraphy Trench 1, facing W (1m scale)
8	X	X	Trench 2, facing W
9	X	X	Stratigraphy in Pit 2, facing N (1m scale)
10	X	X	Pit 2, facing W (1m scale)
11		X	Southwest corner of the nave, facing SW.
12		X	Southern end of the nave, facing SW (2m scale)
13		X	Southeast corner of the nave, facing SE (2m scale)
14		X	Organ detail from the north (2m scale)
15		X	Organ detail from the east (2m scale)
16		X	Organ detail from the south (2m scale)
17		X	Pews along the west wall (2m scale)
18		X	General shot of the southwest corner facing S
19		X	The pews in front of the organ (2m scale)
20		X	View of the impacted area from the northeast
21		X	Pew numbers
22		X	Pews west of the south door, facing SW (2m scale)
23		X	Detail of numbered pews of the south door
24		X	Detail of organ keyboard
25		X	Organ and adjacent wall
26		X	Organ detail



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	St James' Church, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	201/HWC
OASIS reference	Kdkarcha1-242751	Event/Accession no	BISHM2016.2
OS reference	TL 46350 14135	Study area size	4060 square m
Project Type	Archaeological Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	70mAOD
Short Description	In May-June 2016 a programme of Archaeological Observation and Recording and Photographic Survey was undertaken at the Church of St James the Great, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire as a Faculty requirement in association with the construction of a kitchenette in the church and associated drainage. No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were revealed during the course of the project other than the foundations of the church tower. This is in part due to the depth of the trenches, but also that the site lay outside the developed settlement prior to the church being built.		
Previous work	None	Site status	Grade II listed
Planning proposal	Internal alterations to accommodate sanitary and kitchen facilities, and associated drainage	Current land use	Place of worship and churchyard
Local Planning Authority	N/A	Planning application ref.	N/A
Monument type	Church	Monument period	Post-medieval-Modern
Significant finds	None	Future work	None
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator		Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Karin Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Eva Estela
Sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council of St James' Church		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	19.05.16	End date	25.05.16
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical	Bishop's Stortford Museum		
Paper		WSI, Report, site records, B&W photographs and negatives	
Digital		CD containing all digital files	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation & Recording: St James' Church, High Wych, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	201/HWC		
Author(s)	Eva Estela		
Page no's	22	Date	08/07/16



Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: St James' Church, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire		
County: Hertfordshire	District: East Hertfordshire	
Village/Town: High Wych	Parish: High Wych	
Planning application reference: N/A		
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Parochial Church Council of St James' Church		
Nature of application: Internal alterations to accommodate sanitary and kitchen facilities, and associated drainage		
Present land use: Place of worship and churchyard		
Size of application area: N/A	Size of area investigated: 17.62 square m	
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 46350 14135	Site code: 201/HWC	
Site director: Eva Estela	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd	
Type of work: Archaeological Observation and Recording		
DATE OF WORK:	Start: 19.05.16	Finish: 25.05.16
Curating museum: Bishop Stortford Museum		
Related HER no's:		Periods represented: Postmedieval/Modern
Relevant previous summaries/reports:		
Summary of fieldwork results:		
<p>In May-June 2016 a programme of Archaeological Observation and Recording and Photographic Survey was undertaken at the Church of St James the Great, High Wych Road, High Wych, Hertfordshire as a Faculty requirement in association with the construction of a kitchenette in the church and associated drainage. No archaeological features, artefacts or deposits were revealed during the course of the project other than the foundations of the church tower. This is in part due to the depth of the trenches, but also that the site lay outside the developed settlement prior to the church being built.</p>		
Author: Eva Estela	Date: 08/07/16	