



KDK ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Archaeological Observation and Recording Report

Church of St Lawrence
Church Street
Bovingdon
Hertfordshire



Quality Check

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<i>Revision</i>		<i>Version</i>		<i>Date</i>	
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Summary

In November 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at the Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire to fulfil a Faculty requirement. The works included the installation of a soakaway to the south of the church and an associated service run from the existing down pipe. The location of known burials and cremations were considered during this programme of works and concessions were made to avoid these features as much as possible. No cremations or articulated burials were encountered during this investigation.

1 Introduction

1.1 In November 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at the Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire. The project was commissioned by The Vicar and Churchwardens of St Lawrence Church, and was carried to fulfil a Faculty requirement. All works were done in accordance with a Method Statement produced by KDK Archaeology Ltd (Kaye 2021).

1.2 *The Site*

Location & Description

The church of St Lawrence is a Grade II* listed building (HER 936) and is located in the village and civil parish of Bovingdon, in the administrative district of Dacorum Borough Council. It is centred on National Grid reference TL 01717 03717 (Fig. 2).

Geology & Topography

The geological characteristics of the site comprise a superficial deposit of clay with flint above a bedrock of Lewis nodular and Seaford Chalk formation (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>). The development area lies at approximately 145mAOD.

Development

The works consist of the excavation of a new soakaway and an associated drain run (Fig. 3)

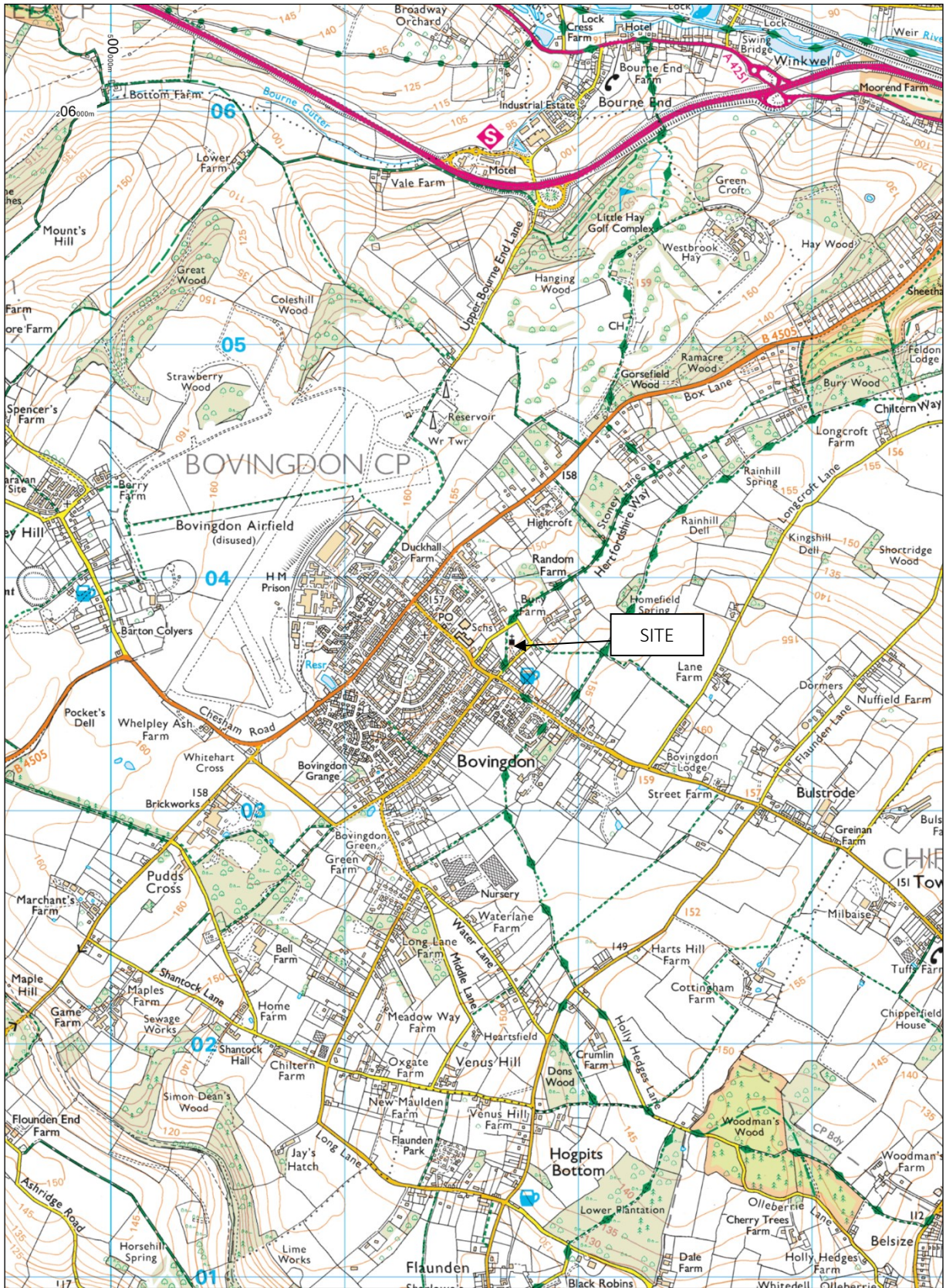


Figure 1: Site location plan (scale 1:25,000)

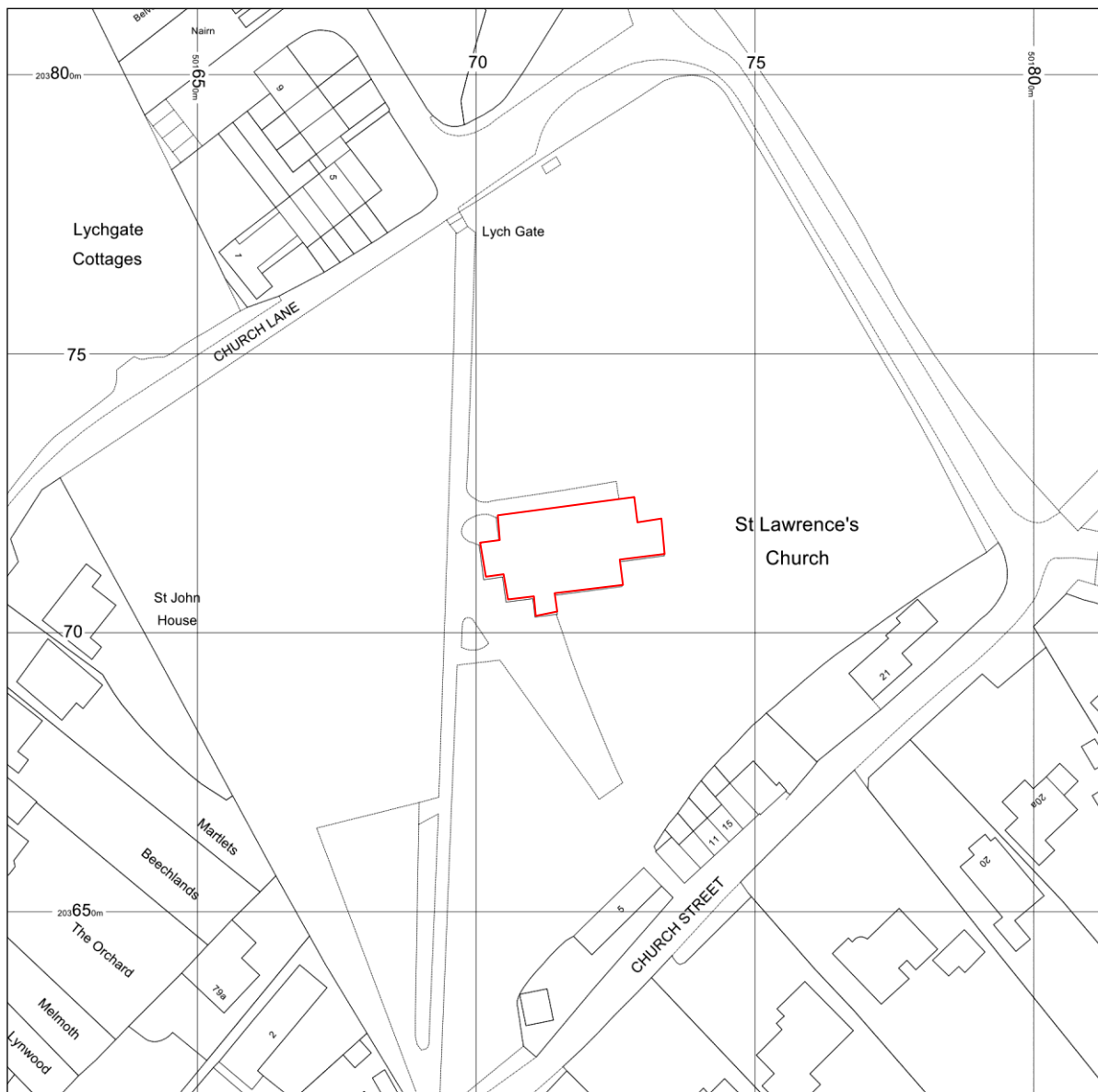


Figure 2: Site layout plan (scale 1:1,250)



2 Methods & Standards

2.1 *Methods*

In line with the requirements of the Method Statement (Kaye 2021), the methods used were as follows:

- All groundworks were monitored by an experienced archaeologist

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the following requirements:

- The Method Statement
- The relevant sections of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (CIfA 2020a)
- The Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists Guidance Note 1: Archaeological Requirements for Works on Churches and Churchyards. (ADCA 2013)
- The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2021)
- Current English Heritage guidelines (EH 2008, HE 2015)
- 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

The village of Bovingdon appears to have developed as a small cluster of farmsteads in the hinterland of Hemel Hempstead in the 13th century. It is first mentioned c.1200 but the manor of Bovingdon was not documented until 1289 when the queen and her tenants in Langley still had common rights of the woods and wasteland, and timber was being sourced from Bovingdon forest for Berkhamsted castle. A chapel was established by 1235, although it is likely to have been replaced by the present church by the mid14th century (Moir 2009: 6). Bovingdon became a separate parish in 1841 (VCH online).

The church of St Lawrence is a Grade II* listed building that is described as follows (NHLE Ref. 1348432):

Parish church. Medieval Dec and Perp, thoroughly restored 1845 by Thomas Talbot Bury FSA so that much of the fabric is of this date. Flint rubble with uncoursed flint facing (coursed on tower) and stone dressings. Old stonework in clunch, C19 work in Bath stone. Steep slated roofs with graduated sizes to chancel. A scholarly Gothic church in local style. Chancel, 5-bays nave with N and S aisles, S porch, embattled W tower with spire, and NE lean-to vestry. Moulded parapets to nave and aisles. 3-stage tower has crocketed corner pinnacles. Diagonal corner buttresses. 5-bay aisles with buttresses between windows. S porch has puddingstone as well as flint in its S gable. Pointed arch of 2 chamfered orders closed by iron gates. Lockers as seats in porch. Continuously moulded S door with pointed arch and battened door with decorative iron hinges. 4 S-aisle windows have unusual saltire tracery with trefoil cusping. Other windows either re-used (W window of N aisle) or follow previous form. 3-light pointed Dec W window has mullions renewed. Square hoodmould renewed of Perp arched doorway with spandrels. Moulded base course of tower original as well as of buttresses to aisles, but offsets in Bath stone. Clunch quoins and string course to nave presumably original. Only clunch buttresses of porch remain and bonding stones to S aisle. Segmental arched recess in tower for knight's effigy now in nave. 'A.B.S.R' on gilded bosses of tower ceiling. York stone slab floor to church. Tower arch of 2 chamfered orders 5 bays nave with low-pitched boarded roof with moulded purlins, ridge, wallplates, tie-beams and wallposts off stone corbels. 2 order chamfered C14 style pointed arcade with chamfered upright panel central to each pier as if it were 2 piers back-to-back. Octagonal moulded bell-caps and roll-moulded bases. Moulded string course below sills of 2-light trefoil clerestory windows. Painted inscriptions on labels over tower and chancel arches. Pine pews with doors and fine carved poppy heads down central aisle. 2-light stained glass window 1874 to Isobel Cator at W end of S aisle. 1855 wall monument to Henry Stewart Ryder by R. Brown of London, a soldier leaning on a Gothic sarcophagus surmounted by a cross. White marble with pointed head and slate border. Chest tomb at S side of chancel arch with effigy in stone of a knight of c.1370 with fragments of painting, pointed basinet, plate armour and chain mail gorget. Hands in prayer. Wall monuments to Ryder family of Westbrook Hay. Chancel floored in Belgian marble C17 inscribed slabs, some with brass plates, 1605 '-UM BEARAT', Andrew Mayne d.1621. Commandments and painted scrolls flank 3-light stained glass E window by Lavers 1856 designed by the painter Charles West Cope (Pevsner). Long gothic arcaded memorial tablet on N wall of chancel in memory of Lady Georgiana Ryder, 3rd daughter of 6th Duke of Beaufort 1800-65 and Hon. Granville Dudley Ryder d.1879 who was a local benefactor, through whose efforts the church was restored. Chancel roof of 2 bays with half-bays each end. Arch braced steep roof with moulded purlins, ridge, wallplates, and wallposts off stone corbels. 3 benefaction boards in N aisle. Stained glass window in N aisle to Thomas Talbot Bury d.23 Feb 1877, the architect for the restoration. Octagonal panelled font with instrument of the Passion. Coloured perspective in vestry inscribed 'Bovingdon Church as restored by T. Talbot Bury FSA'. (RCHM(1911)66 no.2: Kelly (1914)69: Pevsner (1977)107).



The churchyard and its immediate environs have produced evidence for Roman activity. A black burnished-ware dish was found during grave digging to the north of the church (HHER17175). In a consultation letter dated This has been described as a 'rare and important find that almost certainly is derived from a burial of Roman date' (Batt 2011) and which could be one of several Roman burials in the vicinity. Roman activity is also known from the houses on Church Street backing onto the churchyard where a medieval boundary ditch was excavated in 2010 that contained residual Roman pottery (HER 16239). Although shown on the 1838 Tithe Map as extending into the area of excavations that took place in Church Street in 2014, the boundary ditch was not observed (HER 31318).

A mid nineteenth century report states that Anglo-Saxon building fabric was found when St Lawrence's church was extensively rebuilt (HER 936). However, as Norman architectural features were often assigned to the late Saxon period at this time (*cf.* Britton 1807), this report must be treated with some caution.

Nonetheless, the possibility of Roman period burials on the site raises the hypothesis that the site of the present church may have been considered ritually significant, at least intermittently, for some two thousand years.



4 Results

4.1 Introduction

The excavation consisted of a service trench and associated soakaway (Figures 3 & 4). The works were located to the south of the church, close to the south porch, and were undertaken using a 2 tonne excavator fitted with a 0.90m and 0.25m toothless ditching bucket. This was done under constant archaeological supervision.

4.2 Description

The soakaway was located to the south of the church, just beyond series of tombs and graves belonging to the Ryder family (Plates 1 & 2). It measured 2.10x1.10m and was excavated to a depth of 1.10m. The stratigraphy comprised:

- Topsoil (001). Mid greyish brown, slightly clayey silty sand. Friable with occasional angular flints. Heavy rooting was noted, particularly to the west of the soakaway. This layer reached a depth of 0.28m.
- Made ground (002). Mid orangey brown sandy clay containing occasional flint pieces. Rooting was present throughout. The depth of this layer was 0.22m.
- Cemetery soil (003) Mid brown sandy clay. Fairly malleable with a moderate number of angular flints. Large roots were present within this layer. It contained a number of finds including disarticulated human remains. The base of this layer was not reached and the natural geology below was not exposed anywhere on the site.

Soakaway

Modern disturbance within the soakaway was minimal, being limited to rooting from a neighbouring holly tree and the edge of another service trench within the southwest corner of the excavation. The cemetery soil had been buried by a layer of made ground, (002), which was deposited to heighten the ground level close to the church.

No articulated burials were encountered during this investigation; however, several fragments of disarticulated bone were noted. These included, the mid shaft of a right tibia, four pieces of skull (parietal bone) and two metatarsals. No grave cuts or cut features were observed within the soakaway. Artefacts recovered from the cemetery soil included glass, tile, brick, pottery (Plate 3). In addition, there were a number of objects associated with coffins observed. These included; fragments of wood, copper alloy studs and iron coffin nails (Plate 4).

Once the soakaway had been fully recorded, it was lined with a geotextile membrane and plastic crates were placed into the hole. All finds and disarticulated bone was reburied within the soakaway.

Service Trench

The service trench was excavated between the existing down pipes connected to the church roof and the newly dug soakaway (Plate 5). The trench, which measured 3.77x0.25m, was excavated parallel to the south porch and close to a number of 20th century cremation burials, although these were not exposed during this investigation. A depth of 0.60m was reached within this trench, exposing an identical stratigraphical composition to the soakaway. Similar finds were also recovered from the service trench as well as clunch and limestone fragments. A York stone slab 0.47m wide was observed within the trench, 2.40m to the south of the church wall (Plate 6). Its full length could not be determined as it continued beyond the limit of excavation to the east and west. As the stone was at the required depth for the installation



of the service, it was deemed unnecessary to disturb the stone itself, and what could potentially be beneath it, any further and it was left *in situ*.

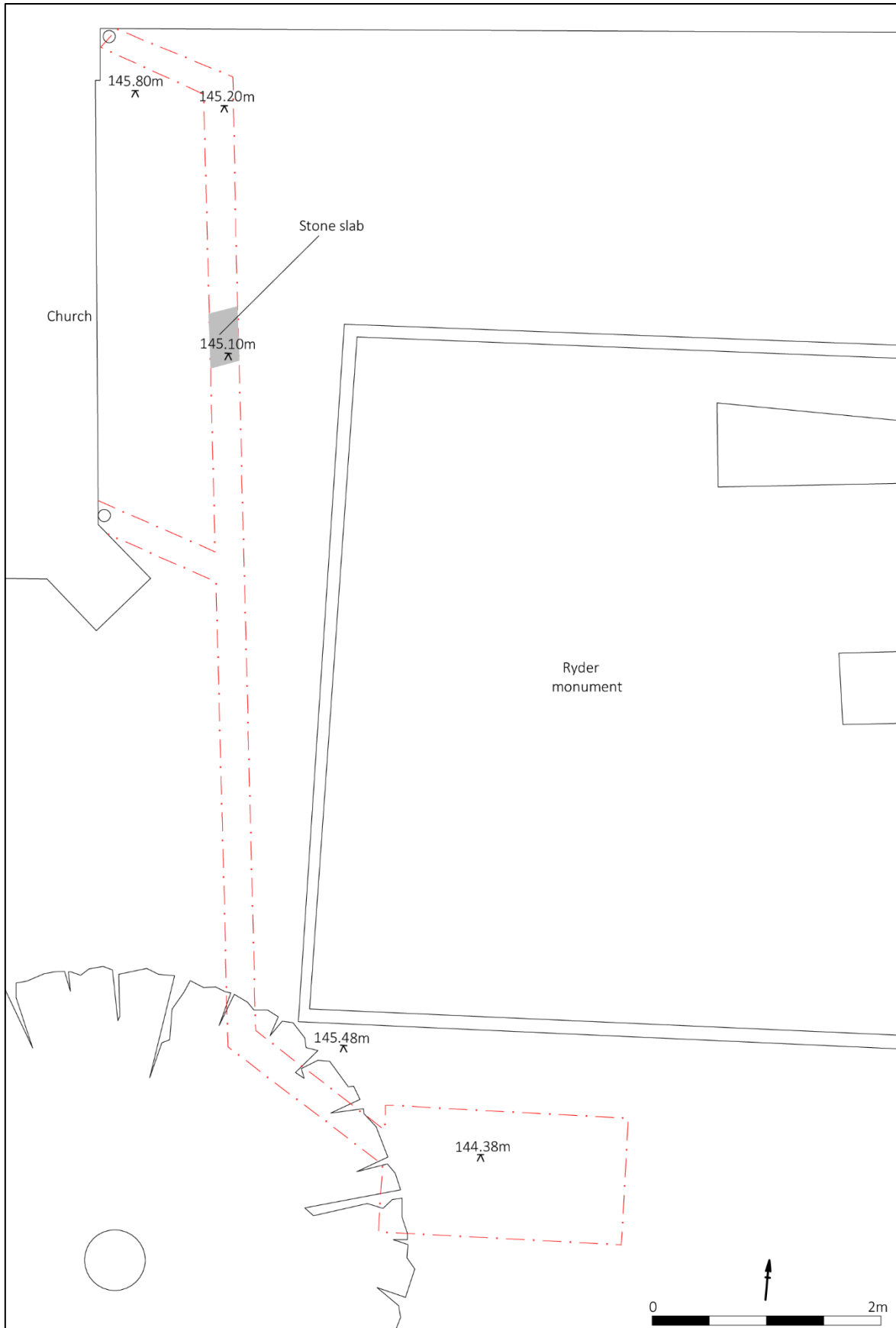


Figure 3: Excavated areas (scale 1:50)



Plate 1: Soakaway, looking east



Plate 2: Site stratigraphy, taken within the Soakaway. Looking north

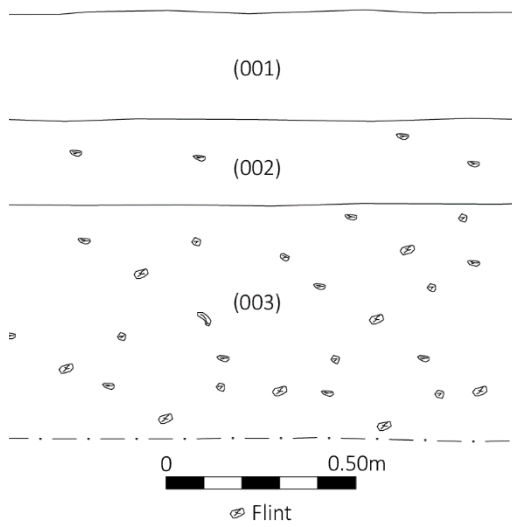


Figure 4: Representative stratigraphy (scale 1:20)



Plate 3: Representative assemblage of finds from cemetery soil (003)



Plate 4: Coffin wood, nails and studs found within the soakaway



Plate 5: Service trench, looking north northeast



Plate 6: Stone found within service trench, looking south southwest



5 Conclusions

The excavation comprised a single service trench and a soakaway to the south of the church. Some minor disturbance had previously been caused by the installation of a power cable to the southwest of the soakaway and the roots of a well-established holly tree located to the west.

Few disarticulated human remains were encountered and the lack of articulated burials, particularly within the soakaway, was surprising. The natural geology was not reached anywhere within the excavation so it is likely that further burials exist below the depth excavated during this project. In addition, a thin layer of made ground was noted above the cemetery soil to elevate and level the ground which now holds the Ryder monument. It is unclear when this had occurred but would have undoubtedly been done prior to the construction of the Ryder family tombs.

The finds mainly consisted of modern and post-medieval building material. Coffin fragments and fixings were also noticed which, due to their preservation, were likely also late post-medieval/modern in date. A York stone slab was exposed in the service trench near to the church. No inscription was noted on the stone and it was left *in situ* to avoid damaging it or disturbing what may lie beneath.

No cut features were observed within the excavated areas.



6 Acknowledgements

KDK Archaeology is grateful to The Vicar and Churchwardens of St Lawrence Church for commissioning this report and for their assistance on site. Thanks are also due to Diocesan Archaeological Adviser, David Baker for monitoring the project and to the staff of Chay Hedger Ltd.

The fieldwork was carried out by Laura Dodd MSc ACIfA. The report was written by Laura Dodd, and edited by Karin Kaye MA MCIfA.



7 Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Method Statement
2. Initial report
3. Monitoring sheets
4. Site drawings
5. Client's site plans
6. List of photographs

7.2 The digital archive for this project will be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service in line with the Hertfordshire Archaeological Archive Standards 2017 (Ref. kdkarcha1-502223)



8 References

Standards & Specifications

ALGAO 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England*. East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 14.

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CIfA 2019a *Archaeological Archive Selection Toolkit*. Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

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EH 2015 *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* London: English Heritage

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Paul, S. 2018 *Hertfordshire Archaeological Archive Standards: a countywide standard for the creation, compilation and transfer of archaeological archives in Hertfordshire* Hertfordshire Association of Museums

VCH: 'Parishes: Hemel Hempstead', in *A History of the County of Hertford: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London, 1908), pp. 215-230. British History Online <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/herts/vol2/pp215-230> [accessed 20 August 2021].

Watkinson D & Neal V 1998 *First Aid for Finds* Hertford & London: Rescue



Appendix 1: Photograph List

Shot	Digital	Subject
1	X	Soakaway, looking east
2	X	Soakaway stratigraphy, looking north
3	X	Coffin wood, copper alloy studs and iron coffin nails found in soakaway
4	X	Example of finds recovered from soakaway and service trench
5	X	<i>In situ</i> stone slab, looking southwest
6	X	Service trench, looking northwest



Appendix 2: OASIS and Site Data

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name & Address	Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire	Project Site Code	634/BSL
OASIS reference	kdkarcha1-502223	Event/Accession no	
OS reference	TL 01717 03717	Study area size	5.52sq m
Project Type	Observation and Recording	Height (mAOD)	145
Short Description	In November 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at the Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire to fulfil a Faculty requirement. The works included the installation of a soakaway to the south of the church and an associated service run from the existing down pipe. The location of known burials and cremations were considered during this programme of works and concessions were made to avoid these features as much as possible. No cremations or articulated burials were encountered during this investigation.		
Previous work	None	Site status	Grade II*
Planning proposal	Excavation of a new soakaway and associated drain runs	Current land use	Grave yard
Local Planning Authority	Dacorum Borough Council	Planning application ref.	N/A
Monument type	None	Monument period	None
Significant finds	None	Future work	None
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	KDK Archaeology Ltd		
Project Brief originator	None	Project Design originator	KDK Archaeology Ltd
Project Manager	Karin Kaye	Director/Supervisor	Laura Dodd
Sponsor/funding body	The Vicar and Churchwardens of St Lawrence Church		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	08.11.2021	End date	08.11.2021
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical		N/A	
Paper		Report, Method Statement, paper records	
Digital		All digitalised files to be uploaded to ADS	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title	Archaeological Observation and Recording Report: Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire		
Serial title & volume	634/BSL/2.1		
Author(s)	Laura Dodd MSc ACIfA		
Page no's	18	Date	11.11.2021



Appendix 3: Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Sheet

Site name and address: Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire	
County: Hertfordshire	District: Dacorum
Village/Town: Bovingdon	Parish: Bovingdon
Planning application reference: N/A	
Client's name, address, & tel. no: Vicar and Church Wardens, Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire	
Nature of application: Installation of soakaway and associated drainage	
Present land use: Grave yard	
Size of application area: 5.52sqm	Size of area investigated: 5.52sq m
NGR (to 8 figures): TL 01717 03717	Site code: 634/BSL
Site director: Karin Kaye	Organization: KDK Archaeology Ltd
Type of work: Observation and Recording	
Date of Work: Start: 08.11.2021	Finish: 08.11.2021
Curating museum: Dacorum Museum	
Related HER no's: HER 936	Periods represented: None
Relevant previous summaries/reports:	
Summary of fieldwork results: In November 2021 KDK Archaeology Ltd undertook a programme of Observation and Recording at the Church of St Lawrence, Church Street, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire to fulfil a Faculty requirement. The works included the installation of a soakaway to the south of the church and an associated service run from the existing down pipe. The location of known burials and cremations were considered during this programme of works and concessions were made to avoid these features as much as possible. No cremations or articulated burials were encountered during this investigation.	
Author: Laura Dodd MSc ACIfA	Date: 11.11.2021