

**Church of Saints
Nicholas and Peter,
Curdworth,
Warwickshire**

**An Archaeological
Watching Brief, 2008**

Checked by	
Supervisor.....	date.....
Project Manager.....	date.....

**Project No. 1854
September 2008**

**Church of Saints Nicholas and Peter, Curdworth, Warwickshire
An Archaeological Watching Brief, 2008**

by

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CHURCH OF SAINTS NICHOLAS AND PETER, CURDWORTH
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Church of Saints Nicholas and Peter, Curdworth
NGR: SP 177 928
Type: Watching brief
Date of fieldwork: 03/09/2008

In September 2008 an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at the Church of Saints Nicholas and Peter, Curdworth, Warwickshire, during groundworks associated with the installation of a new staircase.

No archaeological features, structures, deposits or horizons were identified during the course of the groundworks. No artefactual material predating the 20th century was recovered, and it is possible that restoration of the stone floor in the area of the groundworks has either truncated or sealed any earlier *in situ* remains.

CHURCH OF SAINTS NICHOLAS AND PETER, CURDWORTH: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF, 2008.

1 INTRODUCTION

In September 2008 Birmingham Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief at Saints Nicholas and Peter Church, Curdworth (hereafter referred to as the site). The work was carried out in advance of proposed building work. The project conformed to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IFA 2001).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

The site is located in the village of Curdworth, Warwickshire, approximately 8 miles northeast of Birmingham, and is centred on NGR SP 177 928 (Fig. 1).

The present character of the site is a parish church set within its churchyard to the west of the main street through the village.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The principal aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features, structures, deposits, or horizons exposed during intrusive groundworks across the site.

More specific aims were to:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme likely to impact on any archaeological remains.
- To secure the analysis, conservation and long term storage of any artefactual/ecofactual material recovered from the site.

4 METHODOLOGY

Groundworks carried out by the contractors comprised the hand excavation of one small pit to take the support for a new spiral staircase. This was monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist and complemented with the salvage recording of any archaeological deposits and features revealed during works.

All stratigraphic sequences were recorded, even where no archaeology was present. A comprehensive written record was maintained using a continuous numbered context system on *pro-forma* context and feature cards. Photographs supplemented written records and scale plans and sections.

The full site archive includes all artefactual remains recovered from the site. The site archive will be prepared according to guidelines set down in Appendix 3 of the Management of Archaeology Projects (English Heritage, 1991), the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage (UKIC, 1990) and Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological collections (Museum and Art Galleries Commission, 1992). The paper archive will be deposited with the appropriate repository subject to permission from the landowner.

5 THE SITE

The parish church of Saints Nicholas and Peter stands on a rise to the west of the main street of the village of Curdworth. The church consists of a west tower, an aisleless three-bay nave with south porch, and a two-bay chancel (plate 1). The chancel and two easternmost bays of the nave were built in the latter half of the 12th century; partial refenestration in the early 14th century was accompanied by the insertion of new pair of opposed nave doorways. A major construction phase was carried out in the 15th century comprising the extension of the nave by a further bay to the west, the construction of the tower, and the addition of the south porch. Restoration was carried out in 1800 when the south porch was rebuilt above the base, the 12th-century windows were blocked, and others deprived of their mullions and fitted with iron casements; low-pitched roofs covered with slates were substituted for the medieval roofs. In 1895 the church was again restored, the windows being renewed or opened out, and new, higher pitch roofs constructed.

6 RESULTS

A single stone slab was raised in the northeast corner of the nave and a small square pit measuring 0.45m x 0.45m was hand excavated to a depth of 0.5m (figs 2 and 3; plate 5). Mid red brown silt sand and pebbles (**103**) 0.18m in depth (excavated depth, not entire depth of deposit) underlay dark brown silt sand and small rounded pebbles (**102**) measuring 0.12m in depth. This layer was sealed by mid orange brown silt sand and rounded pebble layer **101**, measuring 0.16m in depth. Stone slabs (**100**) sealed layer **101**.

7 CONCLUSION

Despite the archaeological potential of the development site, the watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area, and, the excavated material, taking into account its sterile nature, appeared to have been imported for the express purpose of levelling up the ground surface, presumably during relaying of the stone floor in this area. Although it is possible that the 0.5m build up layer is indicative of the truncation of archaeological deposits in this location, it is also conceivable that remains of archaeological interest may be encountered below the level of excavation. Similarly, whether the depth of recent build up encountered in the pit is general to the nave or whether it is confined to this particular part of the church, must, for the moment, remain an imponderable.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

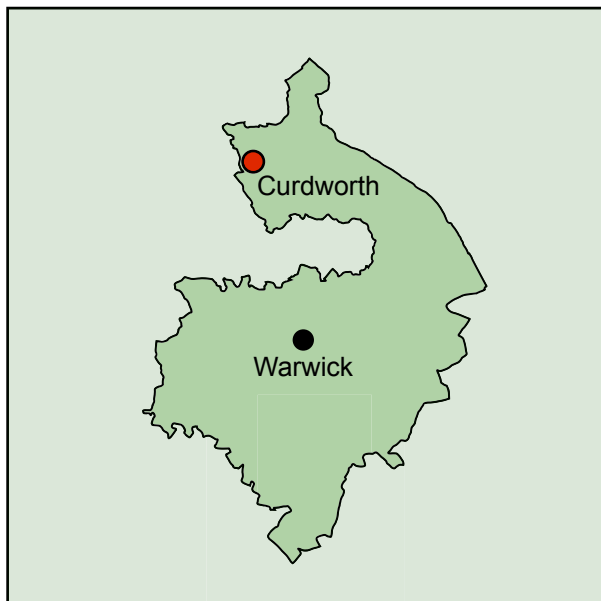
Thanks are due to Reverend Dr Matthew Rhodes for his co-operation and assistance throughout the project. The fieldwork was undertaken by Emily Hamilton who also produced the written report which was illustrated by Helen Moulden, and edited by Malcolm Hislop who managed the project for Birmingham Archaeology.

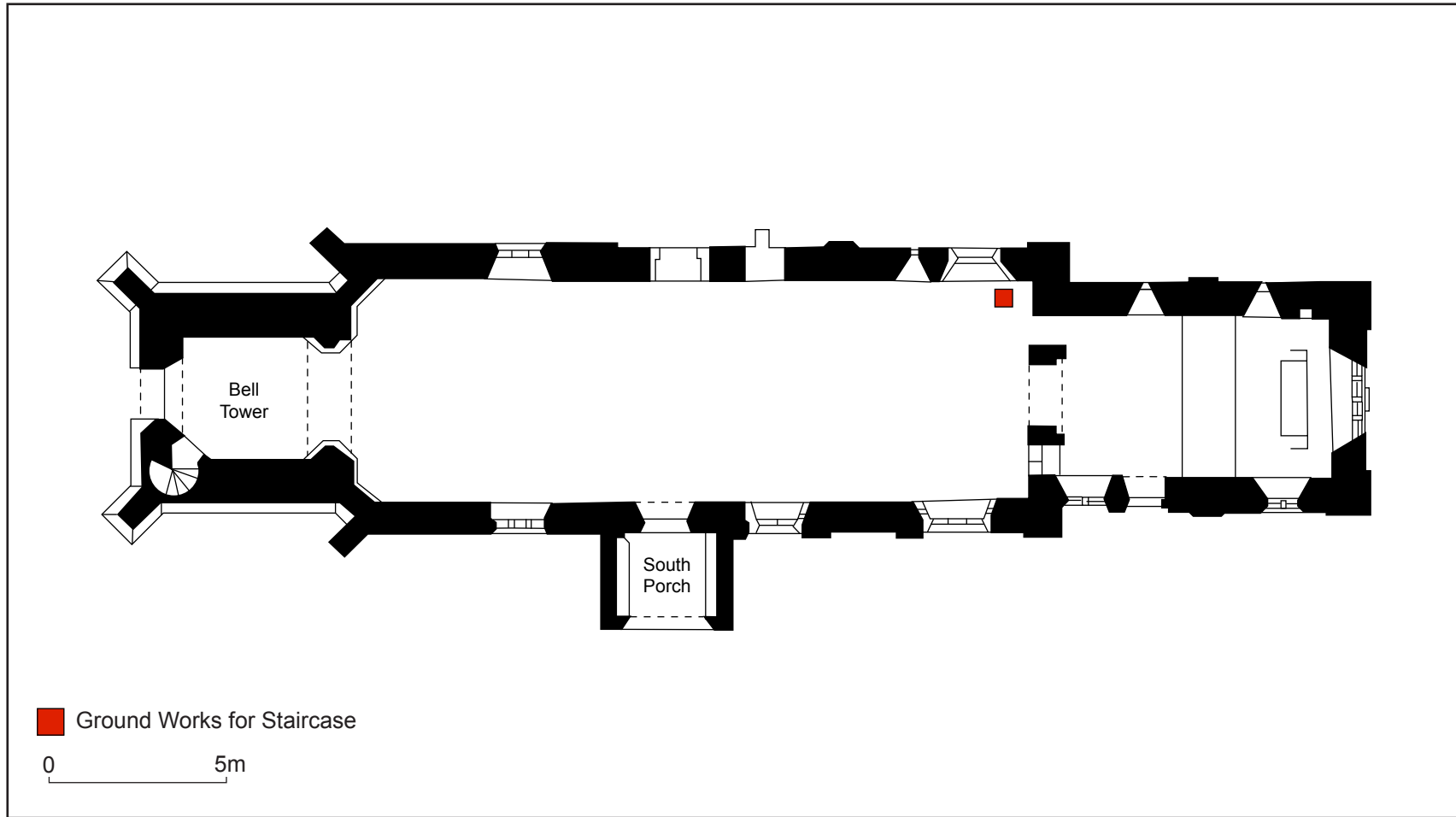
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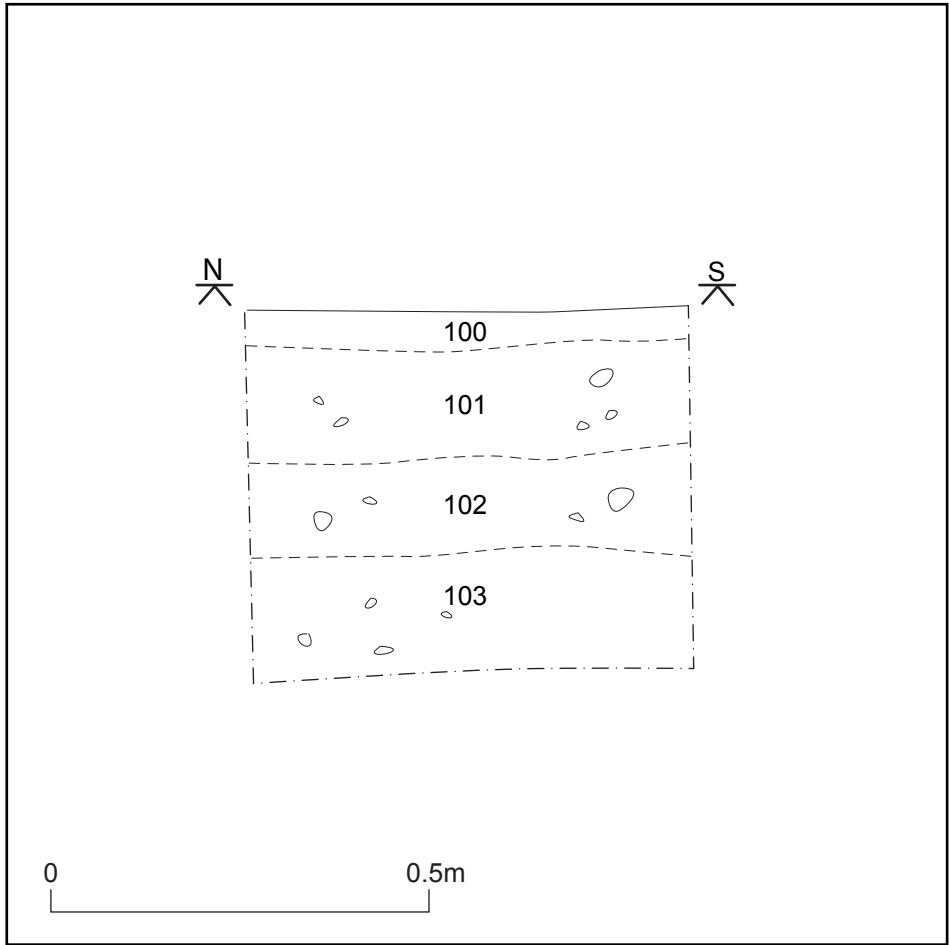




Plate 1: The church from the Southwest



Plate 2: The chancel from the Northeast



Plate 3: The tower from the Northwest



Plate 2: The nave from the East



Plate 5: The hand excavated pit from the West