AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF UNDERTAKEN AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HIGH STREET, HURSTPIERPOINT, WEST SUSSEX.

N. G. R. TQ 27955 16500

Mid Sussex District: parish of Hurstpierpoint

Project Number 08 / 15

Site Code: HTH 08

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ABSTRACT.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two surface water drainage trenches at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex.

Holy Trinity Church was built between the years 1843 - 5 as a replacement for an earlier church (dedicated to St. Lawrence) at the site. However, no deposits, cut features, buried structures or artefacts of genuine archaeological significance were discovered during the fieldwork. No evidence for St. Lawrence Church, demolished in 1843, was therefore recorded.

Nevertheless, a slope / area of relatively high ground located at the south-western corner of the current church building was found to contain 19th century brick fragments and two sherds of similarly - dated china. A small number of displaced, disarticulated and fragmentary human bones clearly indicative of previous graveyard disturbance were also recovered from the monitored cuttings.

1.0. INTRODUCTION.

- 1.1. This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief maintained on the excavation of two surface water drainage trenches within the cemetery of Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex (N. G. R. TQ 27955 16500) (Figure 1).
- 1.2. The archaeological watching brief followed the advice given by the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC) namely that:
 - No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to and approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor and all works shall be carried out in accordance with the WSI.
- 1.3. The archaeological methodology employed during the project (see Section 5.0.) was based upon a targeted Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Christopher Greatorex of C. G. Archaeology and agreed with John Mills the West Sussex County Council Archaeologist and Vivienne Coad the Archaeological Advisor to the Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches (DAC). The Faculty Consent reference number for the monitored drainage work is AD011 / 08.
- 1.4. The archaeological fieldwork was carried out by Christopher Greatorex, Annalie Wood and Jo Seaman of C. G. Archaeology between the 20th October 2008 and 9th February 2009. The collation of the examined historic maps was undertaken by David Dunkin.
- 1.5. All aspects of the archaeological investigation described below were commissioned by Peter Pritchett of John D. Clarke and Partners to whom thanks are extended.

2.0. TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.

- 2.1. Holy Trinity Church is located towards the western end of Hurstpierpoint High Street at c.50m. O.D. The current building sits on an area of flat land, the south-west corner of which rises sharply above the level of the surrounding cemetery (figures 1, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).
- 2.2. The 1: 50,000 British Geological Survey (Sheet 318 / 333: Brighton and Worthing) records the 'natural' geology at the church as Lower Greensand.

3.0. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.

- 3.1. Holy Trinity Church was built between the years 1843 5 to the design of eminent architect Sir Charles Barry. However, it is known that the current structure replaced an earlier church (dedicated to St. Lawrence) at the site. Indeed, a church was recorded at Hurstpierpoint in the Domesday Book of 1086.
- 3.2. In its final (i.e. mid 19th century) form, St. Lawrence Church possessed a square Norman west tower with shingle spire, nave, south aisle, chancel and south chapel. Box pews and galleries had also been installed. The excellent church guide states that "the length of the nave including the tower was about 64 feet; the width about 21 feet. The south aisle was about 13 feet wide and the area of the south chapel about 30 feet by 20 feet" (Norris 1996). Records suggest that this building had been extensively altered during the early 15th century by the then rector, John Urry. By the 19th century the window tracery and other medieval features had certainly disappeared. In 1843, the parish decided that St. Lawrence Church was simply too small to serve the local population. Consequently, the rather dilapidated remains of the old structure were pulled down and replaced by the much larger Holy Trinity Church.
- 3.3. Today, Holy Trinity Church (intended to seat 1000 people) comprises a chancel with arcades of two bays, a north chapel (1854) south chapel (1874: see Section 6.1.4.) nave with clerestory, north and south transepts, north arcade and aisle of four bays, south arcade and aisle of five bays and a north-west tower with porch. A number of monuments and features rescued from the earlier church of St. Lawrence have been incorporated into the new structure. These include a 13th century font and two effigies of knights thought to date from the 13th and mid 14th centuries respectively. Holy Trinity Church is Grade II* Listed Building.
- 3.4. The church cemetery contains both 18th century and early 19th century monuments. Five tapering coffin lids dating from the 12th or 13th century (one displaying the faint trace of a raised cross) are also located by the west wall of the building.

4.0. PROJECT OBJECTIVES.

4.1. The approved Written Scheme of Investigation for the project (see Section 1.3.) defined the primary objectives of the archaeological fieldwork as follows.

'Maintain an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of surface water drainage trenches at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Hurstpierpoint. All human remains, structural remains, cut features, deposits, grave stones, artefacts and ecofacts of archaeological interest exposed and / or affected by the monitored groundworks will be recorded and interpreted to appropriate professional standards'.

5.0. INVESTIGATIVE METHODOLOGY.

- 5.1. An inspection was first made of the West Sussex County Historical Environment Record (HER) (see Section 6.2). This study was supplemented by an examination of historic cartographic sources stored at the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester (see Section 6.1). Relevant publications were also consulted for additional details concerning those sites and find-spots of archaeological / historical significance identified within a c.500m. radius of the church.
- 5.2. The two surface water drainage trenches shown on Figure 9 were excavated manually by the project's main groundworks contractor (B. G. Drains) under the constant supervision of C. G. Archaeology. In this way even spits were removed from the cuttings until the depth required by the groundworks contractor (between 0.40m. and 1.70m. below ground level) had been reached.
- 5.3. Each archaeological context exposed during the fieldwork (see Section 7.0.) was investigated by hand in order to assess its archaeological / palaeoenvironmental character and then documented on an individual Context Record Sheet.
- 5.4. A groundworks location plan was prepared at a scale of 1: 50 and a full photographic record of the fieldwork maintained as appropriate.
- 5.5. A small quantity of disarticulated / displaced human bone discovered during the watching brief was re-interred within the westernmost drainage trench at the request of Fr. John Joyce the church rector. It should be noted that these bones were not subject to quantification or specialist osteological analysis.

6.0. RESULTS OF BACKGROUND RESEARCH.

- 6.1. The cartographic evidence.
- 6.1.1. The following historic maps were examined at the West Sussex Record Office, Chichester.
 - Plan of Hurstpierpoint village (W. S. R. O. ref: Add. MS. 28783) 1736
 (Figure 2)
 - Plan of Hurstpierpoint village (W. S. R. O. ref: Add. MS. 17683) 1841 (Figure 3)
 - Tithe map and apportionment for the parish of Hurstpierpoint (W. S. R. O. ref: TD/E 29) c.1842 (Figure 4)
 - 1st Edition 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 38.16) 1874 (Figure 5)
 - 2nd Edition 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 38.16) 1897 (Figure 6)
 - 3rd Edition 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 38.16) 1910 (Figure 7)
 - 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet 38.16) 1937 (Figure 8)
 - 25" Ordnance Survey (Sheet TQ 2616 2716) 1963
- 6.1.2. St. Lawrence Church (see sections 3.1. and 3.2.) is recorded on each of the three earliest plans listed above (figures 2, 3 and 4). Rather intriguingly, the c.1842 tithe map (Figure 4) describes the land located to the immediate south of the then church (plot number 1145) as a 'church garden' occupied by a Henry Pierce. The 'owner' at the time was the Rev. Carey Bowen. Full details of the tithe apportionment are held within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).
- 6.1.3. The 1874 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 5) is the first of the examined maps to show Holy Trinity Church and the sharp break in slope located just beyond its south-west corner (see sections 2.1., 7.3., 7.4., 7.5., 7.6. and 8.3.). This new building seemingly encompassed the entire footprint of the earlier and smaller St. Lawrence Church (see sections 3.1. and 3.2.). Changes made

to the boundaries of the church cemetery since the tithe award of c.1842 (Figure 4) can also be seen.

- 6.1.4. The 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey of 1897 (Figure 6) is the earliest to document the construction of the church's current South Chapel (foundation stone laid on the 2nd September 1874: see Section 3.3.). The presence of two 'new' external buttresses against the north-east corner of the North Chapel and the extension of the cemetery to the south and south-west is also recorded.
- 6.1.5. The footprint of Holy Trinity Church and the boundaries of the cemetery remain unchanged on the 1910 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey (Figure 7). Nevertheless, this map does for the first time show a formal arrangement of paths within the graveyard.
- 6.1.6. The 1937 Ordnance Survey (Figure 8) suggests that two external buttresses had been added to the south-east corner of the South Chapel since the year 1910 (Figure 7). No other significant changes to the footprint of the church, cemetery boundaries or paths are discernible.
- 6.1.7. The 1963 Ordnance Survey is identical in all relevant respects to its predecessor and is thus not reproduced here.

6.2. The Historical Environment Record.

6.2.1. An inspection of the West Sussex County Historical Environment Record produced 12 sites / find-spots of archaeological significance within a c.500m. radius of Holy Trinity Church. These are listed in numerical order and described briefly below. Full details of the search, including a catalogue of Listed Buildings located in the study area, are held within the Project Archive (see Section 9.0.).

6.2.2. SMR No: 2769 – MWS73

Grid Ref: TQ 28000 16000

Date: Medieval

A medieval park documented from the 13th century onwards. Owned by Simon de Pierpoint.

6.2.3. SMR No: 3773 – MWS882

Grid Ref: TQ 27900 16500

Date: Anglo-Saxon

A clay loomweight of probable Anglo-Saxon date found in Holy Trinity Church cemetery during the mid 19th century.

6.2.4. SMR No: 3774 – MWS3203

Grid Ref: TQ 27900 16500

Date: Romano-British

Large quantities of Romano-British pottery and coins apparently recovered from Holy Trinity Church cemetery in the mid 19th century.

6.2.5. SMR No: 3778 – MWS562

Grid Ref: TQ 28000 16000

Date: Neolithic

Neolithic implements found at Hurstpierpoint. No further information.

6.2.6. SMR No: 3786 - MWS563

Grid Ref: TQ 28000 16000

Date: Prehistoric

A flint arrowhead found near Tott Farm in the mid 19th century.

6.2.7. SMR No: 3794 - MWS889

Grid Ref: TQ 27955 16500

Date: Modern

Holy Trinity Church (see Section 3.0. for details).

6.2.8. SMR No: 5292 – MWS5558

Grid Ref: TQ 27950 16500

Date: Medieval to Post - medieval

The site of 'Hurst Park', the old manor house of the Dacres. Believed to have been inhabited by the Pierpoints. The building had fallen into decay by the mid 16th century.

6.2.9. SMR No: 5293 – MWS3982

Grid Ref: TQ 27900 16450

Date:

A gold ring discovered in Church Field during the 1830s.

6.2.10. SMR No: 5295 – MWS3983

Grid Ref: TQ 28150 16330

Date: Post - medieval

A workman's lead token found on the southern side of High Street.

6.2.11. SMR No: 7252 – MWS7312

Grid Ref: TQ 279 164

Date:

Earthworks noted by a member of the public to the south of Holy Trinity Church.

6.2.12. SMR No: 7271 – MWS7334

Grid Ref: TQ 27913 16495

Date: Post – medieval to modern

Post – medieval and modern pottery, brick, tile and clay tobacco pipe stem fragments discovered during a watching brief at 24 High Street.

6.2.13. SMR No: 7274 – MWS7337

Grid Ref: TQ 27487 16666

Date: Mesolithic and medieval

Mesolithic flints and medieval pottery recovered from spoil excavated in Orchard Way.

6.3. In addition to the entries listed above, it should be noted that in 1991 an archaeological watching brief was carried – out at 'Culvers', Church Fields, located adjacent Holy Trinity Church cemetery (see Figure 1). Here the excavation of foundation trenches to a depth below original ground level of c.1m. was observed. However, no archaeological features or significant artefacts were discovered (Butler 1991).

7.0. RESULTS OF FIELDWORK.

- 7.1. Only three contexts of archaeological significance (1, 2, 3) were recorded during the watching brief. These are described below.
- 7.2. A c.0.90m. thick deposit of compact but friable, mid orange brown silty clay loam 'graveyard soil' containing occasional flint inclusions (c.5mm. 10mm.) (1) was stripped from the c.0.40m. wide lengths of trench highlighted in red on Figure 9. No cut features, structures, artefacts or other layers of archaeological interest were discovered as a result of this procedure. Nevertheless, the examination of the removed 'graveyard soil' did glean a small assemblage of displaced, disarticulated and fragmentary human bone clearly indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance. These bones were not subject to quantification or specialist osteological analysis (see Section 5.5.).
- 7.3. The slope / area of relatively high ground located at the south-western corner of the current church (see sections 2.1. and 6.1.3.) was impacted upon by the remaining lengths of drainage trench marked in black on Figure 9 (depths of excavation also indicated). Here, the uppermost surviving layer consisted of a compact, dark grey brown silty clay (2) containing occasional undiagnostic brick / tile and flint inclusions (c.5mm. 10mm.). Context 2 possessed a maximum recorded thickness of c.0.20m., but petered out at the foot of the slope defined by hachures on Figure 9. Its investigation yielded a single encaustic tile with clearly discernible fish motif. This 6 inch square and ½ inch thick tile (almost complete, but broken into four fragments) once formed part of a set manufactured by the Worcester Encaustic Tile Works in 1845. These were "laid in the chancel when the new church was built and put out in 1886 when the present black and white mosaic was laid" (Norris 1996, 17).
- 7.4. The main body of the slope / area of relatively high ground located at the south-western corner of the church was found immediately below Context 2.

This final context comprised a re-deposited layer of mixed 'graveyard soil' (as described in Section 7.2.) and 'natural', compact yellow clay (3). It should be noted that the 1: 50,000 British Geological Survey (Sheet 318 / 333: Brighton and Worthing) shows the presence of Weald Clay just c.300m. to the north of Holy Trinity Church.

- 7.5. Context 3 possessed a maximum observed thickness of 0.60m., but also petered out at the foot of the slope defined by hachures on Figure 9. The excavation of this layer exposed a small but spatially confined group of disarticulated and fragmentary human bones at a depth below the original ground surface of c.0.40m. (location marked on Figure 9). These skeletal remains comprised elements of at least two displaced individuals and had clearly been incorporated into Context 3 at the time of its deposition (no associated grave cut or pit being observed despite careful investigation). The bones were lifted from the route of the intended new drainage pipe by staff from C. G. Archaeology and then on completion of the necessary groundworks re-interred within the trench at the request of the church rector. It should again be reiterated that the bones were not subject to quantification or specialist osteological analysis (see Section 5.5.).
- 7.6. Context 3 also contained a number of 19th century brick fragments (c.10mm.) and two small sherds of 19th century transfer printed china. Context 3 was found to directly overlie Context 1 (see Section 7.2. for description).
- 7.7. The groundworks undertaken adjacent the south facing wall of the church failed to reveal any useful information concerning the 19th century masonry. Indeed, no other layers, cut features, buried structures, funerary remains, artefacts or ecofacts were discovered during the watching brief.

Table 1: Context Register.

CONTEXT	SUMMARY DESCRIPTION /	ASSOCIATED		
NUMBER.	TUMBER. PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS.			
		ECOFACTS.		
1.	Compact but friable, mid orange - brown	Human bone.		
	silty clay loam 'graveyard soil'.			
	Below 3.			
2.	Compact, dark grey – brown silty clay.	Brick / tile frags.		
	Above 3.	Encaustic tile (19 th		
		century).		
3.	A mixed dump of re-deposited 'graveyard	Brick frags. (19 th		
	soil' and 'natural', compact yellow clay.	century).		
	Comprised the main body of the slope /	Two sherds of		
	area of relatively high ground located at	china (19 th century)		
	the south–western corner of the church.	Human bone.		
	Above 1.			
	Below 2.			

8.0. CONCLUSIONS.

- 8.1. No deposits, cut features, buried structures or artefacts of genuine archaeological significance were recorded during the watching brief undertaken at Holy Trinity Church, Hurstpierpoint. Furthermore, not one context of palaeoenvironmental significance was exposed.
- 8.2. No evidence for St. Lawrence Church, demolished in 1843 (see sections 3.1. and 3.2.) was therefore revealed as a result of the project. The fieldwork also failed to uncover any signs of the local Romano-British / Anglo-Saxon activity suggested by artefactual discoveries made in the mid 19th century (see sections 6.2.3. and 6.2.4.). It should be noted that a similar absence of archaeologically significant features and artefacts was documented on the site of the watching brief carried out at nearby 'Culvers', Church Fields (Butler 1991) (see Section 6.3.).
- 8.3. Nevertheless, the watching brief undertaken by C. G. Archaeology has at least enabled the formation of the slope / area of relatively high ground located at the south-western corner of the current church to be established (see sections 7.3., 7.4., 7.5. and 7.6.). The main body of this landscaped 'feature' (Context 3: see sections 7.4., 7.5. and 7.6. for description) was found to contain 19th century brick fragments and two sherds of similarly dated china. It would thus seem reasonable to suggest that after the demolition of St. Lawrence Church in 1843, Context 3 was dumped upon / spread over the original land surface (i.e. Context 1: see Section 7.2. for description) in order to create a flat 'platform' for the construction of the new larger church of the Holy Trinty. Such a theory is supported by the fact that the break in slope / area of relatively high ground under discussion here is not shown on the three pre 1843 maps examined at the West Sussex Record Office (see sections 6.1.1., 6.1.2. and 6.1.3.).

- 8.4. A small number of displaced, disarticulated and fragmentary human bones clearly indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance were recovered from the monitored groundworks (see sections 7.2. and 7.5.). However, it should be reiterated that no *in-situ* human remains or funerary monuments (i.e. grave cuts, tombs or vaults) were exposed.
- 8.5. It can be seen that little fresh information concerning the origins or history of Hurstpierpoint parish church was gleaned from the project. Even so, it is believed that the investigative methodology employed by C. G. Archaeology satisfied the primary objectives of the investigation defined in Section 4.0.
- 8.6. Despite the essentially negative results of the fieldwork under consideration, the future discovery of extant archaeologically significant remains within Holy Trinity Church cemetery should certainly not be discounted.

9.0. ARCHIVE.

9.1. It is intended that the full paper and digital records arising from this project will be collated in accordance with 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKICI 1990) and deposited in a repository approved by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor and West Sussex County Council Archaeologist. The fragmented encaustic tile and two sherds of 19th century china recovered from the fieldwork are not considered to hold any potential for further analysis and as such will be disposed of appropriately.

10.0. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

10.1. C. G. Archaeology would like to thank John Mills of West Sussex County Council, Vivienne Coad the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, Peter Pritchett of John D. Clarke and Partners (Chartered Architects) and B. G. Drains for their assistance with the project.

11.0. REFERENCES.

Butler, C. 1991. 'An archaeological watching brief at Culvers, Church Fields, Hurstpierpoint'. *Mid Sussex Field Archaeology Team Newsletter No. 15*.

Norris, J. 1996. 'Notes on the church: Holy Trinity Hurstpierpoint'. *Church guidebook*.

HISTORICAL ENVIRONMENT SUMMARY SHEET.

Site Code.	HTH 08						
Site identification and address.	Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Hurstpierpoint						
County, district and / or borough.	West Sussex						
O.S. grid ref.	•						
Geology.	Lower Greensand						
Project number.	ct number. 08 / 15						
Fieldwork type.	Eval.	Excav.	W.Brief.	Survey.	Otl	her.	
			X				
Site type.	Rural.	Urban.		Other. Churchyard			
Date of fieldwork.	20 th October 2008 – 9 th February 2009						
Client.	John D. Clarke and Partners.						
Project manager.	roject manager. Christopher Greatorex						
Project supervisor	Annalie Wood						
Period summary.	Palaeo.	Meso.	Neo.	B. Age.	I. Age.	R – B.	
	A. S.	Med.	P. Med	Other.			
				19 th century activity			
	i						

Project Summary.

An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two surface water drainage trenches at Holy Trinity Church, High Street, Hurstpierpoint. Holy Trinity Church was built between the years 1843 – 5 as a replacement for an earlier church (dedicated to St. Lawrence) at the site. However, no deposits, cut features, buried structures or artefacts of genuine archaeological significance were discovered during the fieldwork. No evidence for St. Lawrence Church, demolished in 1843, was therefore recorded. Nevertheless, a slope / area of relatively high ground located at the south-western corner of the current church building was found to contain 19th century brick fragments and two sherds of similarly – dated china. A small number of displaced, disarticulated and fragmentary human bones clearly indicative of earlier graveyard disturbance were also recovered from the monitored cuttings.