



St Mary's Church Capel St. Mary, Suffolk

Client:

Capel St. Mary PCC

Date:

February 2015

CSM 013
Archaeological Monitoring Report
SA CIC Report No. 2015/003
Author: Stuart Boulter
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St. Mary's Church, Capel St. Mary

CSM 013

Archaeological Monitoring Report

SCCAS Report No. 2015/003

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HER Information

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Report Number SA CIC 2015/003

Planning Application No: NA

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Curatorial Officer: Diocesan Archaeologist Bob Carr

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Date: February 2015

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Position: Managing Director

Date: February 2015

Signed:

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Summary

A programme of reordering at the church of St. Mary, Capel St. Mary included the insertion of an underfloor heating system. In order to mitigate against possible damage to archaeological deposits, a programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken while the works were in progress.

The principal recorded features were as follows:

- A ledger stone located below a pew floor base close to the north nave doorway was not thought to be *in situ*. The stone would originally have been set in the floor above the Maundrell family vault/tomb. A marble wall monument in the chancel recorded the same information that was transcribed from the stone.
- A wall stub running between the three easternmost arches of the south aisle arcade was interpreted as the vestiges of the earlier south nave wall. This wall would have been extensively demolished to accommodate the insertion of the arcade arches.
- A void which opened up close to the south aisle doorway was thought to have been caused by a collapsed coffin.
- The lower section of the now blocked rood stair was revealed by the removal wood boarding from the internal face of the north nave wall.
- Evidence for the tying in of the later brick-built buttresses was recorded on the internal faces of the south aisle wall and the north nave wall, although that to the north was complicated by the presence of a possible surviving jamb that arguably may have related to an earlier opening.
- Three vents recorded through the north nave wall were interpreted as relatively recent insertions providing air flow behind the wall boarding and under the pew floor bases in order to try and reduce the effects of damp.

1. Introduction

Capel St. Mary PCC is currently undertaking a programme of reordering of the nave of St. Mary's church (Fig. 1). These works include the provision of under-floor heating.

Given the potentially archaeologically disruptive ramifications of this invasive work, a programme of archaeological evaluation was agreed at a project meeting held on the 6th February 2014 and attended by representatives of the parish, the project engineer (Phil Chatfield), Bob Carr (Diocesan Archaeological Advisor) and Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team (now Suffolk Archaeology CIC, hereafter SA CIC).

In preparation for the meeting, the PCC had removed small areas of the pew platform floor to allow inspection of the ground surface makeup immediately below. As a result of this meeting, recommendations were put forward by Bob Carr for a limited programme of archaeological evaluation/investigation to further assess the character of the ground surface to the depth of disturbance that would occur if the project were to be instigated in its present form.

Subsequently, Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team (now SA CIC) were commissioned by Capel St. Mary PCC to undertake the archaeological evaluation, the fieldwork for which was carried out on the 26th of February 2014. A report of the findings from these initial works was prepared (SCCAS Rpt. No. 214/27) and submitted to the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

In the opinion of the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, the results of the archaeological evaluation suggested that the potential disruption to significant archaeological levels would be localised and could adequately be recorded by a programme of archaeological monitoring while the contractors were undertaking the work.

The then Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Projects Team (now SA CIC) were commissioned by Capel St. Mary PCC to undertake the archaeological monitoring, the fieldwork for which was carried out during four site visits on the 12th, 16th, 20th January and 5th February 2015.

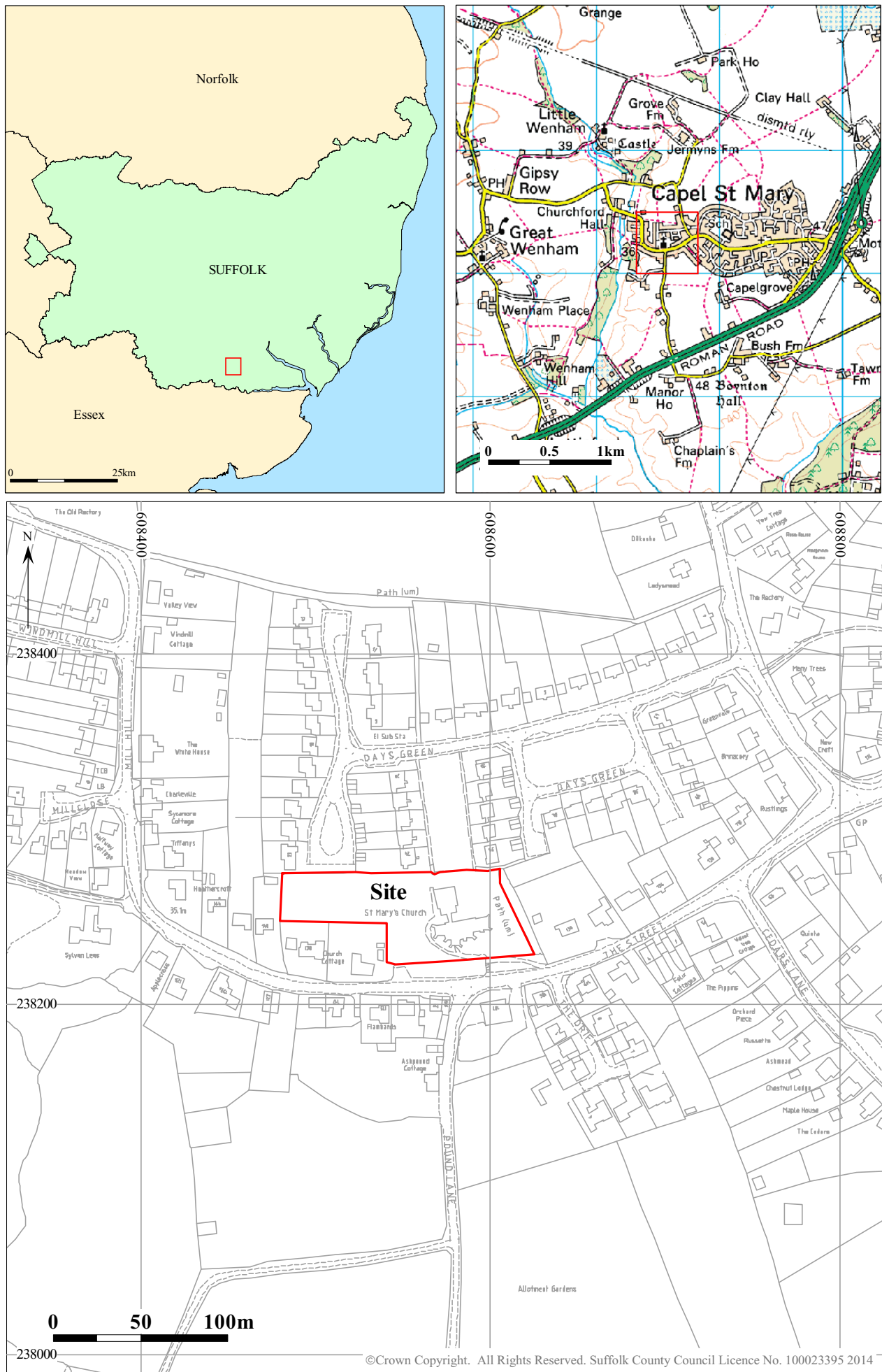


Figure 1 Location map

2. Geology and topography

The church lies at approximately 40m OD on a relatively steep south facing slope with the underlying drift geology comprising heavy glaciogenic clays.

3. Archaeology and historical background

With the exception of the modern extension on the north side and various post-medieval repairs and embellishments, the extant buildings are principally of the 14th and 15th centuries. A blocked doorway with a circular arch and some adjacent herringbone work in the north wall was thought to be indicative of its earlier, Norman, origin (Mortlock 1990). However, the semi-circular arch in fact simply reflects the shape of the rood stair where it exited the church into its external element that has since been removed.

4. Methodology

The archaeological monitoring works were undertaken during four site visits; 12th, 16th, 20th January and 5th February 2015 with that on the 16th January corresponding with a visit by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor. During this meeting the specific requirements of the monitoring works were agreed:

- The exposed ledger slab to be fully recorded. Following excavation to formation level to be reburied with a permeable membrane placed on its surface.
- After general reduction of the ground level the exposed stub of the former south nave wall was to be cleaned and photographed.
- The internal face of the north nave wall to be inspected and recorded after the removal of the rotten wooden boarding covering the lower half of the wall.
- A record to be made of any unexpected discoveries.

Observations were made in a site notebook and on a groundplan of the church. The information gleaned forms the basis of this report.

A photographic record (high resolution digital format only) was made throughout with selected shots included in this report. The full photographic archive was allocated the codes HZI 1 - 58 in the Suffolk Archaeology CIC's Photographic Archive.

5. Results

5.1 Ledger stone

During the earlier evaluation works, one of the test-holes (Boulter 2014, Fig. 2) revealed the edge of an inscribed ledger stone. An attempt was made to transcribe the inscription, but the limited size of the excavation meant that only a small portion was retrievable at that time.

Removal of the wooden flooring prior to ground level reduction revealed the ledger stone in its entirety (Fig. 2 and Plate 1). The stone was aligned with its long axis parallel to that of the church with the inscription readable looking west. Given that stones such as these would, if *in situ*, have been located in the aisles or other exposed open floor areas not covered by wooden flooring in order to be visible, it was no surprise to find that there was no associated tomb immediately below the stone. In addition, the level of the upper surface of the stone was below that of the existing tiled aisles, an observation considered to be further evidence that the stone had been translocated from its original location within the church, probably during an earlier reordering.

The stone was rectangular, measuring 1.89m by 0.92m with a thickness of between 8cm and 9cm with cleanly cut edges at 90° to the flat upper surface. Petrologically, the stone appeared to be of a type similar to York Stone, a fine grained slightly micaceous sandstone with horizontal partings, the latter resulting in some of the lettering having flaked away, while other areas seemed to have been worn, probably by the passage of feet when the stone was in its original position.

Cleaning of the stone surface revealed the inscription to its best advantage allowing for its transcription (see below and Plate 1). However, there were still areas where wear and flaking had made the inscription illegible. Fortunately a marble monument on the north wall of the chancel (Plate 2) included essentially the same details in perfect clarity which facilitated the resolution of the ledger stone text with some certainty.

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
SARAH RELICT OF
ROBERT MAUNDRELL ESQ
OF BLACKLANDS
IN THE COUNTY OF WILTS
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
FEBRUARY 25TH 1830
AGED 59
ALSO
ROB. MAUNDRELL ESQ
HER SON
WHO DIED AT PARIS
ON THE 9TH OF JULY 1830
IN THE 38TH YEAR
OF HIS AGE
AND IS INTERRED
IN THIS VAULT

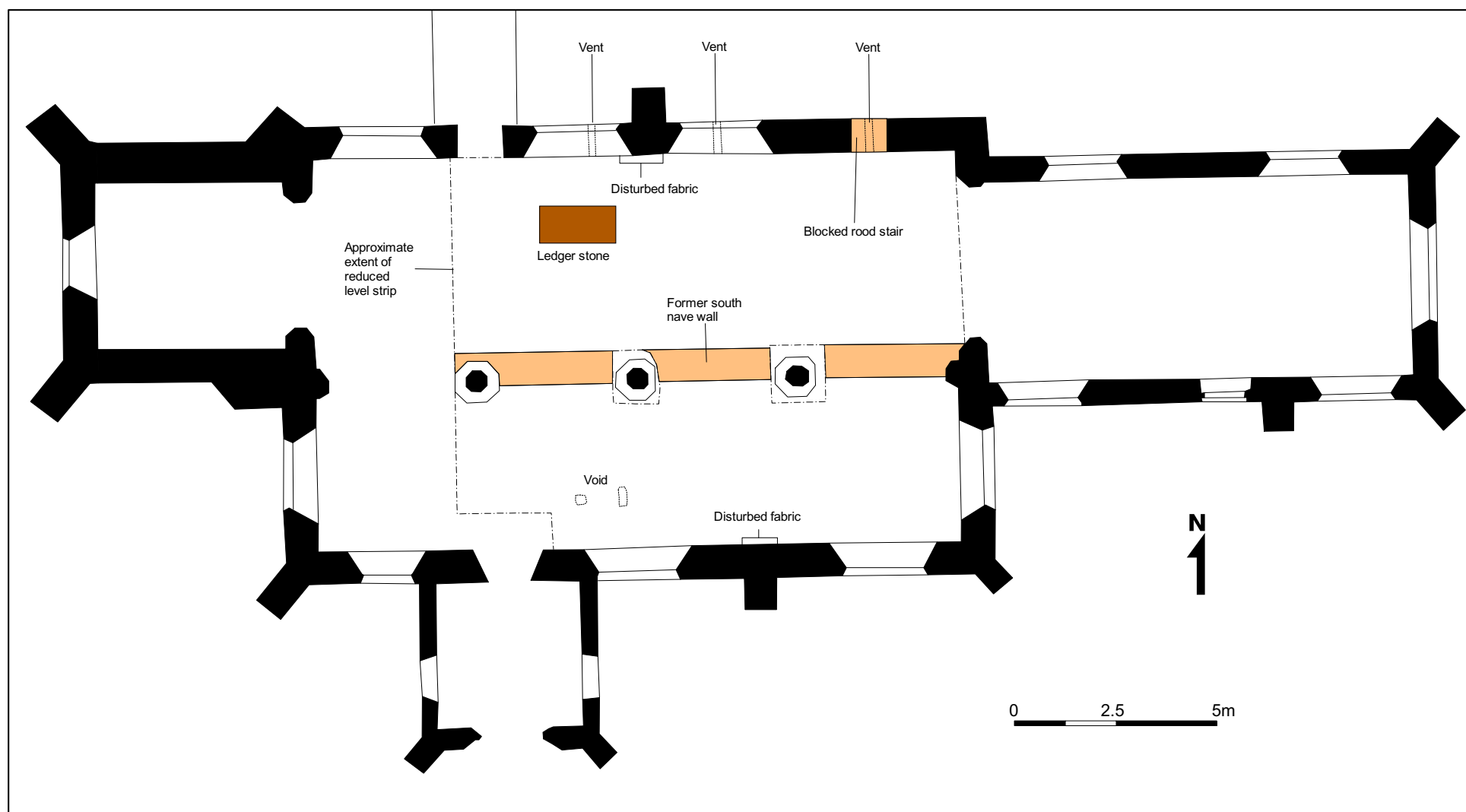


Figure 2. Plan of observed features



Plate 1. Ledger stone; taken from the east



Plate 2. Chancel wall monument

5.2 General ground reduction

The removal of the pews and pew floor bases revealed a relatively uniform deposit of grey/brown silty clay/sand which had been previously identified in the evaluation. This layer almost certainly represents reworked grave fill, although no individual cuts were visible at this level. Approximately 0.20m of this deposit was removed down to the required formation level for the new heating system and associated floor slab. An intact glazed medieval floor tile recovered by the contractors may be representative of a later medieval, possibly 15th century, floor surface disrupted by a previous reordering.

Very little of archaeological interest was found, although the following observations were made.

An area of brickwork seen below the base of the wooden wall boarding on the internal face of the south aisle wall (Fig. 2) coincided with the position of an external, mainly brick-built buttress and clearly represented where this architectural element had been tied into the medieval wall.

Other than the relatively undifferentiated layer of presumably reworked grave fill, the only other features encountered were the stub of the former south nave wall, described in detail below, and a void that opened up during ground lowering process.

The void was located within the south aisle of the church just to the east of the doorway (Fig. 2 and Plate 3). No structural evidence such as brickwork was present to suggest that this was a compromised tomb, and it is likely that it represented a void left by the collapse of a coffin/coffins.

5.3 Former south nave wall

The south aisle of the church is recognised as a later extension to the nave, probably in the later 14th or 15th century and would have required the almost total demolition of the existing south nave wall in order to construct the four arches of the arcade. However, it had clearly been found unnecessary to remove the base of the wall below what would become the new floor level. Indeed the pier bases for the arcade almost certainly incorporated the surviving wall stub as part of their footings.



Plate 3. Void; taken from the north



Plate 4. Stub of nave wall, easternmost arcade arch; taken from the north

The reduced level strip revealed the stub of the former south nave wall as a continuous feature running between the three aisle piers and the eastern respond (Fig. 2 and Plates 4 - 8). The existing tile floor between western respond and the westernmost pier was not disrupted during the site works (Fig. 2).

The exposed wall stub was 0.80m wide and projected up to a maximum of 0.20m above the reduced level surface. Proportionately, the fabric comprised c.80% flints (measuring up to 30cm, but mostly ranging between 5cm and 10cm), c.15% septaria and c.5% brick and tile. The latter comprising poorly mixed and badly fired pieces of varying size, but mainly quite thin. Some of the pieces almost looked Roman in date and fragments of possible opus signinum (a Roman cementitious material used frequently for flooring) was also recorded suggesting that this may be the case.

The lime mortar matrix was generally cream coloured, with a pinkish tinge locally, and was granular in texture, relatively unconsolidated, with moderate inclusions of gravel sized stones and small chalk lumps.

There was no definitive evidence to indicate where the original south doorway had been located, although the wall stub was somewhat different in character for a c.2.00m section immediately to the west of the second pier (Figure 2 and Plate 6). At this juncture the fabric contained very few medium to large flints and was almost entirely composed of small pebbles in unconsolidated mortar. If this difference was in some way indicative of the location of the pre-aisle doorway it would have been marginally further to the east than the later version, although not to such an extent that it could be considered to be unusual.

5.4 Nave north wall

The basal c.0.25m of the internal face of the north nave wall was exposed during the reduced level strip, while a further 1.50m was revealed by the removal of the wood board cladding which had been found to be rotten and was now going to be replaced as part of the project.



Plate 5. Stub of nave wall, second arcade arch from east; taken from the north



Plate 6. Stub of nave wall, third arcade arch; taken from the north



Plate 7. Stub of nave wall; general shot from the north-east



Plate 8. Stub of former nave wall; general shot from the north-west

The base of the solid bonded element of the nave north wall was above the excavated formation level with only loose flints in a clayey matrix encountered below that point. It was unclear whether this lower material represented the fill of an excavated footing or natural clay subsoil off which the wall had been built. Given the external ground surface sloped up markedly towards the north, the original nave was constructed on a terrace cut into this slope. As a result, the external ground level adjacent to the north nave wall was higher than the internal floor level and a scenario where the base of the solid bonded wall was internally only just below the contemporary floor level is not unreasonable.

Above the level of the wood boarding the wall was plastered and whitewashed so that no fabric was visible. However the area that had been covered by the boarding was not in as good condition with plaster only surviving over c.30% - 40% of the surface, mostly lower down (Plate 9). The descriptions below relate entirely to the lower third of the wall.

The principal wall fabric was poorly course and comprised c.90% rounded flints up to 15cm in size with fragmented septaria, brick/tile and occasional erratics making up the remaining 10% (Plate 10). The brick fragments exhibited poorly mixed fabrics with variable levels of firing and similarly to the, presumably contemporary, south nave wall stub, these could have been Roman in date. The lime mortar matrix was light cream/grey in colour with frequent small chalk lumps and small stones.

Two redundant architectural features were recorded in association with the original wall fabric: a blocked doorway that would have provided access to the rood stair and another possible opening to the east of the extant doorway.

The rood stair doorway was 0.88m wide with mouldings cut from a fine-grained grey/green limestone with some localised survival of lime wash paint on their surface (Plate 11). The material blocking the opening comprised 95% brick with occasional flint pebbles and exhibited wide uneven joints (Plate 12). Brick sizes varied between 1.5 inches to 2.5 inches in thickness and were markedly different in character to the fragments within the main wall fabric. The lime mortar matrix was yellow/cream in colour with frequent inclusions of small pebbles and chalk lumps.

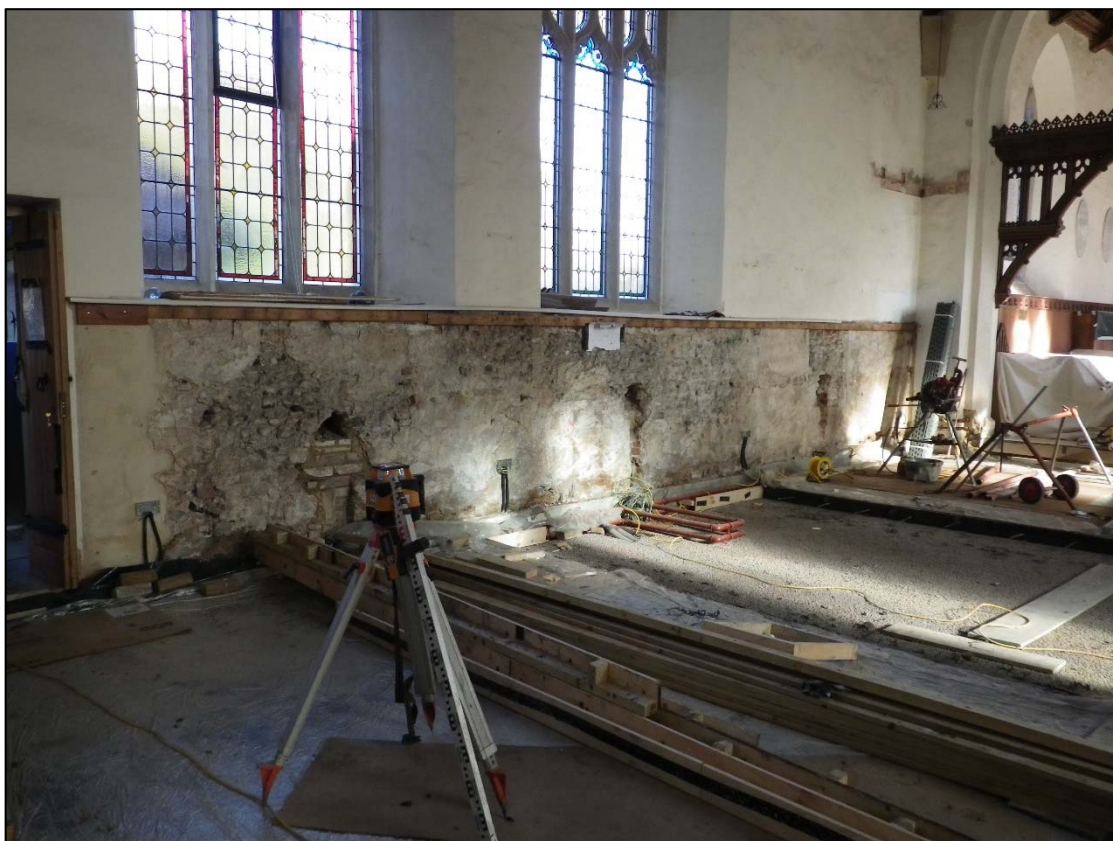


Plate 9. North nave wall; general view taken from south-west



Plate 10. North nave wall; representative section of main wall fabric



Plate 11. North nave wall; blocked rood stair opening taken from the south-east



Plate 12. North nave wall; detail of rood stair opening blocking, from the south



Plate 13. North nave wall; possible blocked opening, taken from the south



Plate 14. North nave wall; possible opening, detail of jamb, taken from the south



Plate 15. North nave wall; brick-built buttress, taken from the north-east



Plate 16. North nave wall; westernmost vent, taken from the south



Plate 17. North nave wall; middle vent, taken from the south



Plate 18. North nave wall; external opening to easternmost vent, taken from the north

A second possible architectural feature located between the two windows to the east of the extant doorway was more difficult to interpret (Figure 2). A 1.10m wide vertical strip of wall fabric was clearly different in character from the flanking main wall (Plates 13 and 14). The eastern junction between the two fabrics was marked towards the top by what appeared to be a surviving jamb (Plate 14) constructed from 1.5 inch thick pieces of brick similar in character to those seen elsewhere in the fabric of the north nave wall and the south nave wall stub and tentatively identified as roman. In addition, vestiges of the plastered face of the jamb survived. To the west, the junction was simply defined by a vertical interface between the two markedly different wall fabrics; that of the original nave wall to the west, and the blocking material to the east comprising predominantly of randomly lain small rounded flints with occasional fragments of septaria set in a dark cream coloured lime mortar with frequent inclusions of gravel-sized stones.

Interpreting this feature was somewhat problematic. Externally, this strip of fabric coincides with the location of a brick-built buttress (Plate 15). A similar and contemporary buttress constructed external to the south aisle was visible internally as an area of brick fabric in the narrow strip exposed during the reduced level excavation below the level of the wood boarding. This is also the most likely explanation for the observations made on the north wall although this does not explain the surviving possible jamb, or the lack of bricks in the blocking fabric. While definitely not a blocked window, the junction continued below the level that could be expected if this were the case, it is possible that it represents an earlier blocked doorway that predated both the inserted perpendicular windows and the later buttress.

Three air vents had been inserted through the wall; two through the early fabric (Plates 16 and 17) and the third through the brick blocking of the entrance to the former rood stair (Plate 11). These were clearly designed to provide circulation of air both behind the wall boarding and on down beneath the pew floor bases. Externally, the exits of the vents were constructed from roof tiles (Plate 18) while the internal cuts of the westernmost two were formalised with re-used bricks and floor bricks.

6. Finds and environmental evidence

No finds were collected during the project and no environmental samples were taken.

7. Conclusions

While the archaeological impact of the nave reordering was kept to a minimum, a programme of monitoring was set in place which facilitated the full recording of the known features previously seen in the earlier evaluation and also allowed for unexpected discoveries.

The wall stub observed in evaluation Test-pits 2 and 5 was confirmed as representing the vestiges of the pre-south aisle south nave wall that was similar in character to, and would have been contemporary with, the extant north nave wall. The presence of probable Roman brick and tile fragments was not unexpected as similar material can be seen in the external wall fabric, particularly the chancel. It is not unusual to find Roman building materials re-used in later structures such as churches, and a likely source would have been the known villa site at Windmill Hill at the western end of the village.

The exposed base of the north nave wall suggested it had been constructed against the rear of incised terracing excavated in order to provide a flat floor surface in the church while the surrounding ground slopes markedly up to the north.

Only one definite architectural feature contemporary with the north nave wall was recorded, the internal opening to the rood stair which was located directly opposite the blocked external opening to the same. The stair itself would originally have been partially external to the body of the nave, although this element of the structure had at some time been removed. This removal left an external opening through the wall which looked, to all extensive purposes, like a semi-circular arched Norman doorway. In his popular guide to churches, Mortlock cites this along with the presence of a small area of herring bone brickwork immediately to the east of the blocked opening, as evidence for surviving Norman wall fabric. However, in reality, the former was just a reflection of the shape of the top of the rood stair passage and the herringbone work appears to be a

localised later patching of the main wall which, overall, exhibits relatively poorly defined coursing which developed later in the medieval period.

A second possible opening located in the area between two of the inserted perpendicular windows was more enigmatic. On balance, the evidence points to it representing disruption to the north nave wall fabric where the later external brick-built buttress had been tied in. However, the situation was complicated by the presence of what looked like the vestiges of a jamb and the marked difference between this and the south aisle wall, where the tying in of the buttress included extensive brickwork similar in character to that in the buttress itself.

The three vents recorded in the north wall were relatively recent in date, almost certainly inserted either to prevent damp or in response to an existing damp problem. With the external ground level to the north being higher than that internally, the wall at this juncture would be particularly prevalent to damp. This was also attested to by the presence of a layer of plastic sheet placed behind the wood boarding on the north side of the church. While ultimately ineffectual as a solution, this clearly indicated that the problem had been recognised and an attempt at mitigation made.

Other than the void close to the south aisle doorway, the only direct evidence for burials at the levels investigated during the project was the ledger stone recorded close to the north nave doorway. While clearly not *in situ*, probably moved to this location during a previous reordering, the stone represents an interesting piece of social history. The Maundrell family must have been at least moderately wealthy as in addition to having a burial vault within the church, they also had a marble wall monument repeating the information inscribed on the ledger stone. A simple internet search of the Maundrell family and their previous location (Blacklands, Wiltshire) indicated that between 1759 and 1810 the Maundrell family owned Blackland Manor, comprising Blackland Farm and The Blackland House Estate in Wiltshire.

8. Archive deposition

The site archive will be deposited with the County HER.

9. Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (Bob Carr), project engineer (Phil Chatfield), Capel St. Mary PCC and site foreman Pat O'shea. Good lines of communication between all of these project personnel resulted in smooth and efficient completion of the required archaeological work with no wasted visits.

Project management, fieldwork and post-excavation was undertaken by Stuart Boulter.

The report illustrations were created by Linzi Everett and Stuart Boulter and the report was edited by Rhodri Gardner.

10. Bibliography

- | | |
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Suffolk</i> , Acorn Editions |

Appendix 1. Oasis data sheet

OASIS ID: suffolka1-202729

Project details

Project name	(CSM 013) St. Mary's Church, Capel St. Mary, Suffolk. Record of Archaeological Monitoring
Short description of the project	A programme of reordering at the church of St. Mary, Capel St. Mary included the insertion of an underfloor heating system. In order to mitigate against possible damage to archaeological deposits, a programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken while the works were in progress.
Project dates	Start: 12-01-2015 End: 05-02-2015
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SCCAS Rpt No. 2014/27 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	CHURCH Medieval
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Recorded Observation"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK BABERGH CAPEL ST MARY CSM 013, St. Mary's Church, Capel St. Mary
Study area	200.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 0858 3824 52.0028208045 1.03912252448 52 00 10 N 001 02 20 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 40.00m Max: 40.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Suffolk Archaeology CIC
Project brief originator	Diocesan Archaeologist

Project design originator	None
Project director/manager	Stuart Boulter
Project supervisor	Stuart Boulter
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Capel St. Mary PCC
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk HER
Digital Archive ID	CSM 013
Digital Contents	"Survey","other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk HER
Paper Archive ID	CSM 013
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Correspondence","Drawing","Map","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished Text"
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Entered on	10 February 2015

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