

**NEVILLE HALL MIFA
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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY,
ST. MARY'S LANE,
CLAXBY, LINCOLNSHIRE.

National Grid Reference: TF 1112 9457
Site Code: SMCC16
Accession No: LCNCC: 2016.18

PREPARED FOR MR. LEE HOLMES ON BEHALF OF HIS CLIENTS - THE VICAR AND
CHURCHWARDENS OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH, CLAXBY

By

Neville Hall MIFA

April 2016

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Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording took place during internal alterations to comprise the removal of three pews and a pew platform, the relocation of the font and the reinstatement of existing tiled floors at the church of St Mary, St. Mary's Lane, Claxby, Lincolnshire. This archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Neville Hall MIFA on the 21st-22nd of March 2016.

The removal of the timber pews, platform and associated supporting timber beams initially revealed a deposit of a mix of rubble and lime mortar. This deposit was of 19th century origin and was associated with the 1871 renovations. This deposit overlay a deposit of sandy silt. This was followed by hand ground reduction to a required final level below the surrounding floor of the south aisle, which established that this sandy silt deposit extended to the base of this ground reduction. These deposits did not produce any finds.

Also exposed by this hand ground reduction and within the sandy silt deposit were an east-west aligned line of worked, shaped and faced stones which extended along the northern edge of the area of ground reduction. This was interpreted as a wall foundation of the original south wall of the church which pre-dated the addition of the south arcade by Fowler in 1871. To the immediate south a patch of partly worked stones was also exposed by this hand ground reduction. This was interpreted as the possible pad or base for a buttress to this original south wall. The sandy silt deposit was thought to represent the original pre-1871 exterior ground levels that would have been outside the earlier church. This hand ground reduction also exposed a line of brickwork of a single course of brick around the south and west walls at the south-western corner of this south aisle. These would have originally supported the timber platform and beams of the removed pews and were part of the renovations of 1871.

The removal and relocation of the 1871 font by the west tower confirmed this date. Underlying the font was a central brick lined drain within a mortar base. The font was then relocated to the south-western corner of the south aisle. The removal of wall rendering to the south wall of the church here revealed an underlying wall fabric of worked, shaped and faced ironstone ashlar, the construction of which was also part of the renovations of 1871.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Neville Hall MIFA was commissioned by Mr. Lee Holmes on behalf of his clients - the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Mary's Church, Claxby - to undertake the archaeological monitoring and recording of internal alterations that comprised the removal of three pews and a pew platform, the relocation of the font and the reinstatement of existing tiled floors at the church of St Mary, St. Mary's Lane, Claxby, Lincolnshire, centred at National Grid Reference TF 1112 9457. The archaeological monitoring was undertaken at the site on the 21st-22nd of March 2016.
- 1.2 The archaeological site work was carried out according to the requirements of a Faculty (Ref No.: 4269), which was issued by the Diocese of Lincoln. This report documents the results of this archaeological site work.
- 1.3 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the clients, Ms Louise Jennings, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, the Diocese of Lincoln, the Lincolnshire Heritage Environment Record (HER) and The Collection, Lincoln, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The parish church of St Mary is situated on the western frontage of St. Mary's Lane and within the historic core of the modern settlement of Claxby. The village of Claxby is located approximately 6km to the north of Market Rasen and 20km to the south-west of Grimsby. The site is situated at National Grid Reference TF 1112 9457, and at a height of approximately 45mAOD. The village of Claxby is situated within the parish of the same name, and in the administrative district of West Lindsey, county of Lincolnshire [**Figure 1**].
- 2.2 The site is located within a slightly undulating upland area to the immediate west of the foot of the scarp slope of the Jurassic limestone escarpment which traverses the county from south-north. The site is situated on sandy and coarse loamy soils of the Blackwood Series, which overlie glaciofluvial drift deposits and on Amphill and Kimmeridge Clays of the Upper Jurassic [BGS, 1982; Soil Survey, 1983].

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 Following the granting of a Faculty (Ref No.: 4269), issued by the Diocese of Lincoln, a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during internal alterations that comprised the removal of three pews and a pew platform, the relocation of the font and the reinstatement of existing tiled floors at the church of St Mary, St. Mary's Lane, Claxby, Lincolnshire [**Figure 2**].
- 3.2 A specification or a written scheme of works for this archaeological watching brief was submitted to and approved by Ms. Louise Jennings, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor prior to the commencement of the archaeological site works.
- 3.3 This report documents the results of the archaeological watching brief and will be submitted to the Diocese of Lincoln and to Ms. Louise Jennings, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

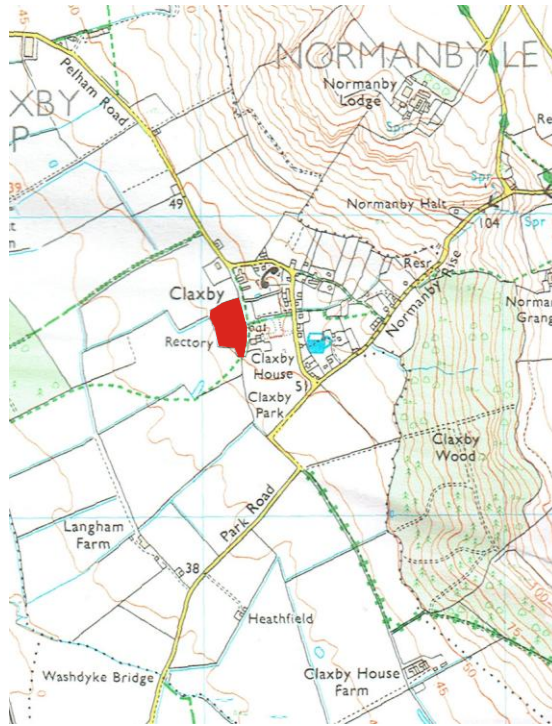


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000.
The site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence)

4. Aims and Objectives of the Archaeological Watching Brief

4.1 The aims of the project were the continual archaeological monitoring of all internal alteration works within the church which comprised the removal of three pews and a pew platform and the relocation of the font.

4.2 The objectives of the project were:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

4.3 The alteration works which took place within the church interior may encounter evidence of earlier elements of the church fabric and of associated finds probably of medieval date. There is also a reference in the Domesday Survey entry for Claxby to a contemporary church, predating the present one. It is possible that remains associated with this earlier church may also be found here. Remains and finds associated with a Roman building were found to the immediate north of the church in the 19th century. It is possible that further remains and finds associated with this site may also be encountered here. The specific objectives of the project were to record any archaeological features, deposits, structures and finds associated with the earlier church, with earlier medieval church fabric or with the site of the known Roman building.

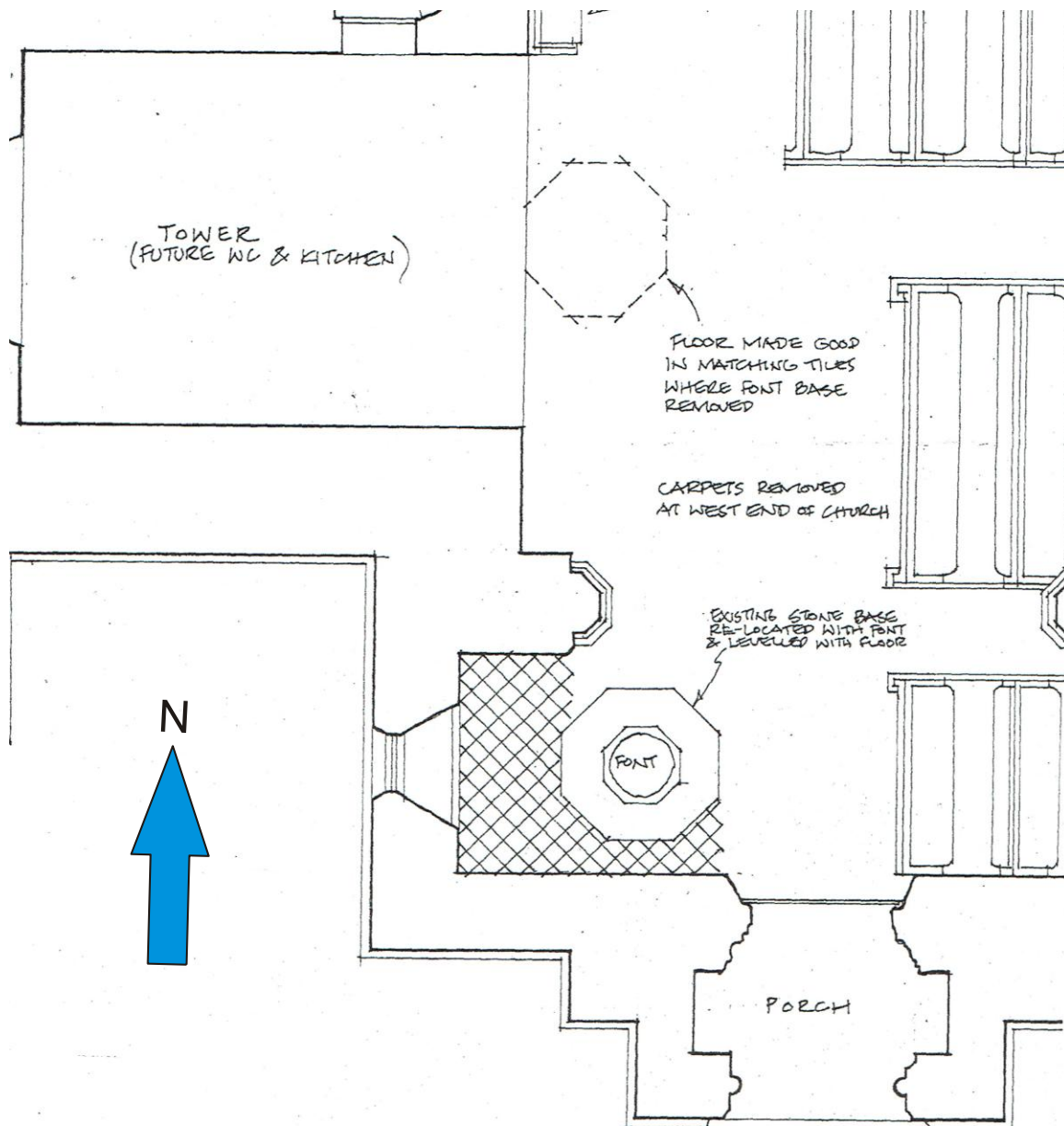


Figure 2: Block plan showing the extent and location of the internal alteration works at an original scale of 1:250, (not to scale), (extract from Architects plan).

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 5.1 Background research sources were consulted at the Lincolnshire Archives, the Lincoln Local Studies Library and the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER). A search of the Lincolnshire HER was conducted within the vicinity of the site. The National Heritage List of Historic England was also consulted.
- 5.2 The site of a Roman building with a tessellated pavement along with finds of Roman coins and a box tile were found to the immediate north of the church in the churchyard in

the 19th century (HER 50137). The finding of this pavement is featured on the First and Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. maps of 1887 and 1907 respectively.

- 5.3 The settlement of Claxby is first documented in the Domesday Survey of AD1086 as *Cleaxby* and as *Clachesbi*. The Domesday Book entry for Claxby records it together with Normanby le Wold, the adjacent parish. This is reflected in the reference in this Domesday entry to two churches, one for Claxby and one for Normanby. This is significant in that there is a reference to an earlier church than the present medieval church on the site. The Domesday Survey records the parishes as containing five estates which were held by Ivo Tallboys, Jocelyn, son of Lambert, Drogo de la Beuvriere, Norman of Arcy and Durand Malet. The place name itself is derived from an old Danish personal name and the Old Danish *by* and denotes 'Klak's farmstead/village'. By the time of the Lindsey Survey of .c.AD1115, Stephen, Earl Albemarle held six bovates of land in *Clachesbi*, the Bishop of Lincoln held one bovat of land in *Clachesbi*, Norman de Arecio one bovat and Ranulf Meschin three carucates of land in *Clachesbi* in the Wapentake of Walecroft or Walshcroft. Later medieval documentary references variously refer to this settlement as *Clakesbi* (AD1155-60) and as *Clakesby* (AD1186-1200) [Morris, 1986; Foster and Longley, 1976; Cameron, 1998; Ekwall, 1991].
- 5.4 The Grade I listed parish church which is dedicated to St Mary comprises a west tower, a nave with clerestory, north and south aisles, a south porch, a chancel and a vestry (HER 50150, NHL 1359789). This is a parish church which has 13th, 15th and 16th century features with a the west tower being of Early English date and the upper stage of late Perpendicular date. Much of the external detail of the church is Victorian. The church underwent alterations in the 15th and 16th centuries and was extensively restored in 1871 by James Fowler. The north doorway is Early English and is blocked in. The south doorway is of Perpendicular origin. Of the two arcades, the north arcade is Early English and the south arcade an 1871 copy. The south aisle was added to the church in 1871. Other changes made in 1871 included reroofing and the renewal of most of the windows. The pulpit, font and lectern also date from the 1871 renovations [Pevsner and Harris, 2008].
- 5.5 Both in tenure and in returns on which an assessment of population may be based, Claxby is bound up with Normanby le Wold throughout the medieval period. Most of the surviving settlement earthworks in the village relate to the former post-medieval gardens and park of the nearby Claxby House. The principal focus and orientation of the medieval settlement (HER 51887) was likely to have been a north-south orientated street which is now represented by the current St Mary's Lane and its continuation to the south as a broad holloway. No settlement remains relating to this street have survived later changes unless the empty closes to the north of the village e.g. Town End Close in 1847 were village properties [Everson, Dunn and Taylor, 1991].
- 5.6 A second village focus may be indicated by scatters of medieval pottery together with a bronze annular brooch which were found in a ploughed field at the eastern end of Boggle Lane. This area lies to the east of the parish church and on rising ground at the foot of the scarp. Boggle Lane provided a link between the northern end of St Mary's Lane and this second presumed settlement nucleus to the east. The existing closes on the north side of Boggle Lane have a regular aspect and in 1847 comprised considerably more than survive now. Though they enclosed poor waterlogged land at the foot of the scarp, they were formerly under arable cultivation. The pattern of closes to the south of Boggle Lane has been almost entirely removed, but the tithe map of 1847 as well as some ditches give slight inductions of a set of closes similar to but shorter than that on the north. This regularity of form might suggest that the Lane and its closes were a late, planned development, perhaps removing or relocating the principal village focus from St Mary's Lane as that area was engulfed by Claxby House and its gardens, perhaps as late as the 17th century [*ibid*].

- 5.7 The only surviving north-south aligned through-way is the present Mulberry Road along which a major part of the village is now located. This was certainly in existence by the early 19th century, but the fact that its adjacent properties are characteristically shallow and more importantly, that it overrides the remains of the 17th century garden indicated that it is a later element in the village plan [*ibid*].
- 5.8 Garden remains lie to the immediate east of the church, St Mary's Lane and Claxby House. These represent an elaborate formal garden probably of 17th century date, together with the results of later landscaping. The present Claxby House is a Grade II listed 19th century building, said to have been built in 1809-10 and replacing an earlier house (HER 47556, NHL 1166003). This earlier house is shown on a drawing of 1795 as a building of probable 18th century date., and it appears to have been little more than a farmhouse. It may have incorporated elements of an earlier building of higher status [*ibid*].
- 5.9 To the immediate east of Claxby House is a group of earthworks which are the remains of a formal garden formerly associated with the house. The most prominent feature of which is a series of broad marshy ditches known as Claxby Stew Ponds. These have been interpreted as being three sides of a broad platform. Although this site may have originated as a medieval moat, its present form is that of a centre piece of the formal garden, though much altered. The formal gardens are likely to have been of 16th or early 17th century origin. By the end of the 18th century, the house had declined in status and certainly the gardens had been abandoned by this time and were cut across by Mulberry Road in the early 19th century [*ibid*].
- 5.10 Some of the earthworks to the south and south-west of the Rectory and the church are marked on the tithe map of 1847 as existing field boundaries, though others seem to relate to an earlier field pattern. Most of these were removed in the second half of the 19th century as part of the creation of the present Claxby Park (HER 55593). This park is featured on the First and Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. maps of 1887 and 1907 respectively [*ibid*].
- 5.11 A 17th century token of a half penny denomination was found in Claxby churchyard in 1973 (HER 50146).
- 5.12 A previous archaeological watching brief took place on this site and to the north-east of the church in 2010. (Site code: CLAX10). This took place on the groundworks for a new car parking area on land at the church. The site was situated within a former garden to the east of the church. The monitoring identified a topsoil and a subsoil along with a spread of debris which was associated with a former boundary wall. No further finds or features were recorded [Allen Archaeology, 2010].
- 5.13 A map regression exercise was undertaken using published Ordnance Survey (O.S.) maps from the Lincolnshire Archives and the local studies collections of the Lincoln Central Library. The earliest map consulted comprised an extract from the tithe map for the parish of Claxby by Normanby of 1847 (Archive ref: D479). This map shows the church situated within a large enclosure, (plot no. 186), which is marked on this map as a part of the parish glebe lands with the Rectory situated to the immediate west. Two further plots (Plot nos. 184-185) are situated along the western frontage of St Mary's Lane and are occupied by woodland.
- 5.14 The extract from the First Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1887 shows that these frontal areas of woodland by St Mary's Lane have gone, incorporated into the enclosure in which the church stands with the enclosure now being occupied by mixed woodland within the churchyard.

- 5.15 The extract from the Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1907 shows that the large enclosure within the churchyard is now bisected by the addition of a new east-west orientated field boundary with the northern portion of this former large enclosure now being occupied by deciduous woodland.
- 5.16 The Provisional Edition six inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1949 and the 1:10,560 scale O.S. map of 1956 shows the same layout to the area around the church which is featured on the map of 1907.
- 5.17 By 1975, the 1:2,500 scale O.S. map of that date shows a driveway extending westwards from St Mary's Lane to the Rectory replacing the east-west orientated field boundary which was featured in the earlier maps. This new driveway now defines the northern boundary of the present churchyard.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Neville Hall MIFA at the site on the 21st-22nd of March 2016. This comprised the continual archaeological monitoring and recording of the removal of wooden pews and associated platform and beams, hand ground reduction of an area in the south-western corner of the south aisle of the church followed by the repositioning of the font to this location.
- 6.2 Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording, and the deposits and structures identified were recorded on standard *pro-forma* context recording sheets. A plan at a scale of 1:25 was compiled on site of the monitored site works. This plan is reproduced at this scale as **Figure 3** in this report. A section of the original south wall of the earlier church was also compiled on site at a scale of 1:10 [designated as **Section 1**]. This section, which is also reproduced at this same scale on **Figure 3**, which also shows the location of this section. A complimentary digital colour photographic record was also maintained, which is reproduced as **Plates 1-27, Appendix 1**. A list of contexts recorded is reproduced in **Appendix 2**.
- 6.3 All work was carried out according to the approved Specification and to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs.

7. Results [Figure 3; Appendix 1, Plates 1-27]

- 7.1 The internal alteration works which comprised the removal of three pews and a pew platform and the relocation of the font were the subject of continual monitoring and recording. **Plate 1** features the *in situ* font at its original position by the west tower. **Plate 2** features the *in situ* pews and pew platform.
- 7.2 The first part of this programme of internal alterations comprised the hand removal of the three pews and the pew platform in the south-western corner of the south aisle [**Plates 3-6**]. Following the removal of the timber platform, the supporting beams to the platform were also removed by hand [**Plate 7**]. A shallow void was revealed below the raised floorboards of the pew platform.
- 7.3 The removal of the pew platform and the supporting boards also revealed an uppermost deposit which consisted of a loose mortar and rubble mix (**101**) below which lay a sandy silt deposit (**102**) [**Plates 8-16**]. The removal of the deposit (**101**) by hand to a depth of 0.20m below the floor levels revealed a line of worked stone (**103**), which was aligned from east-west at the northern edge of the area of ground reduction along with a further

patch of partly worked stone (104), which was situated to the immediate south of (103). Further ground reduction entailed the partial removal of the underlying sandy silt deposit (102) and fully revealed both the line of worked stone (103) and the patch of partly worked stone (104) [Plates 17-18]. This ground reduction also revealed two lines of brick (100) at the base of the west and south walls of the south-western corner of the south aisle. These had supported the timber beams of the platform for the pews and was thus part of this construction. These were left *in situ*. Part of the line of (103) is featured on **Section 1**.

- 7.4 Further ground reduction to a final level of 0.39m below the surrounding floor levels revealed that the deposit (102) extended to the base of the excavation [Plate 19]. This reduction also revealed the full extent of the line of worked stone (103) along the northern edge of the reduced area and the patch of partly worked stone (104) to the immediate south of this. The brick base to the former pew platform (100) which extended along the south and west walls of the south-western corner of the south aisle was also fully exposed by this point [Plates 20-24].
- 7.5 The font was then removed from its original location by the west tower and the surface below this exposed [Plate 25]. This revealed a rubble base of some 1.28m across. In the centre of this exposed surface was a brick lined void which acted as a drain. This drain measured 0.37m square and was 0.56m in depth from the surrounding floor level and was composed of two courses of brick. The exposed rubble lay on a lime mortar base. This rubble was then reduced by 4.5cm onto the mortar spread to allow the laying of replacement floor tiles.
- 7.6 Following the completion of the ground reduction to the required levels at the south-western corner of the south aisle, a new base for the font was laid down [Plate 26]. During this process, part of the wall rendering of the south wall at the south-western corner of the south aisle had been removed revealing the underlying wall fabric of coursed, worked, shaped and faced ironstone ashlar that were bonded by a light brown sandy lime mortar [Plate 27].

8. Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 All of the groundworks pertaining to this project, which comprised the removal of three wooden pews and the timber platform and beams, followed by hand ground reduction within the south-western corner of the south aisle and the relocation of the 19th century font by the west tower to this location in the south aisle were continually monitored and recorded.
- 8.2 The removal of the timber pews, platform and associated supporting timber beams initially revealed a deposit of a mix of rubble and lime mortar. This deposit was of 19th century origin and was associated with the 1871 renovations. This deposit overlay a deposit of sandy silt. This was followed by hand ground reduction to a required final level below the surrounding floor of the south aisle, which established that this sandy silt deposit extended to the base of this ground reduction. These deposits did not produce any finds.
- 8.3 Also exposed by this hand ground reduction and above the sandy silt deposit was an east-west aligned line of worked, shaped and faced stones which extended along the northern edge of the area of ground reduction. This was interpreted as a wall foundation of the original south wall of the church which pre-dated the addition of the south arcade by Fowler in 1871. To the immediate south a patch of partly worked stones was also exposed by this hand ground reduction. This was interpreted as the possible pad or base for a buttress to this original south wall. The sandy silt deposit was thought to represent

the original pre-1871 exterior ground levels that would have been outside the earlier church. This hand ground reduction also exposed a line of brickwork of a single course of brick around the south and west walls at the south-western corner of this south aisle. These would have originally supported the timber platform and beams of the removed pews and were part of the renovations of 1871.

- 8.4 The removal and relocation of the 1871 font by the west tower confirmed this date. Underlying the font was a central brick lined drain within a mortar base. The font was then relocated to the south-western corner of the south aisle. The removal of wall rendering to the south wall of the church here revealed an underlying wall fabric of worked, shaped and faced ironstone ashlar, the construction of which was also part of the renovations of 1871.

9. Effectiveness of Methodology and Confidence Rating

- 9.1 The methodology chosen clearly demonstrated the nature of the archaeological activity and of the nature of the deposit sequence on this site; while providing sufficient time to record the deposit sequence and archaeological activity observed. It is considered that the implemented methodology was sufficient to confirm both the nature of the archaeological activity and the nature of the deposit sequences present within the area of the site with a high degree of confidence.

10. Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Thanks are gratefully extended to Mr. Lee Holmes and his clients – the Vicar and Churchwardens of St. Mary's Church for commissioning this work. Thanks are also extended to Ms. Louise Jennings, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, to Mark Bennet of the Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record and to the staff of the Lincolnshire Archives and of the Lincoln Central Library for their kind assistance.

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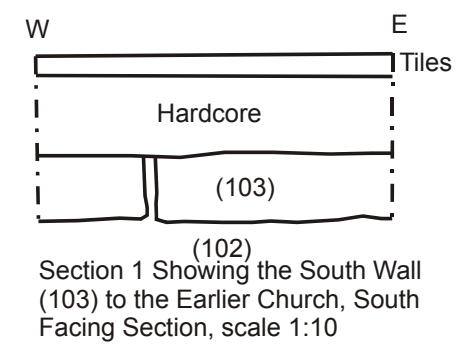
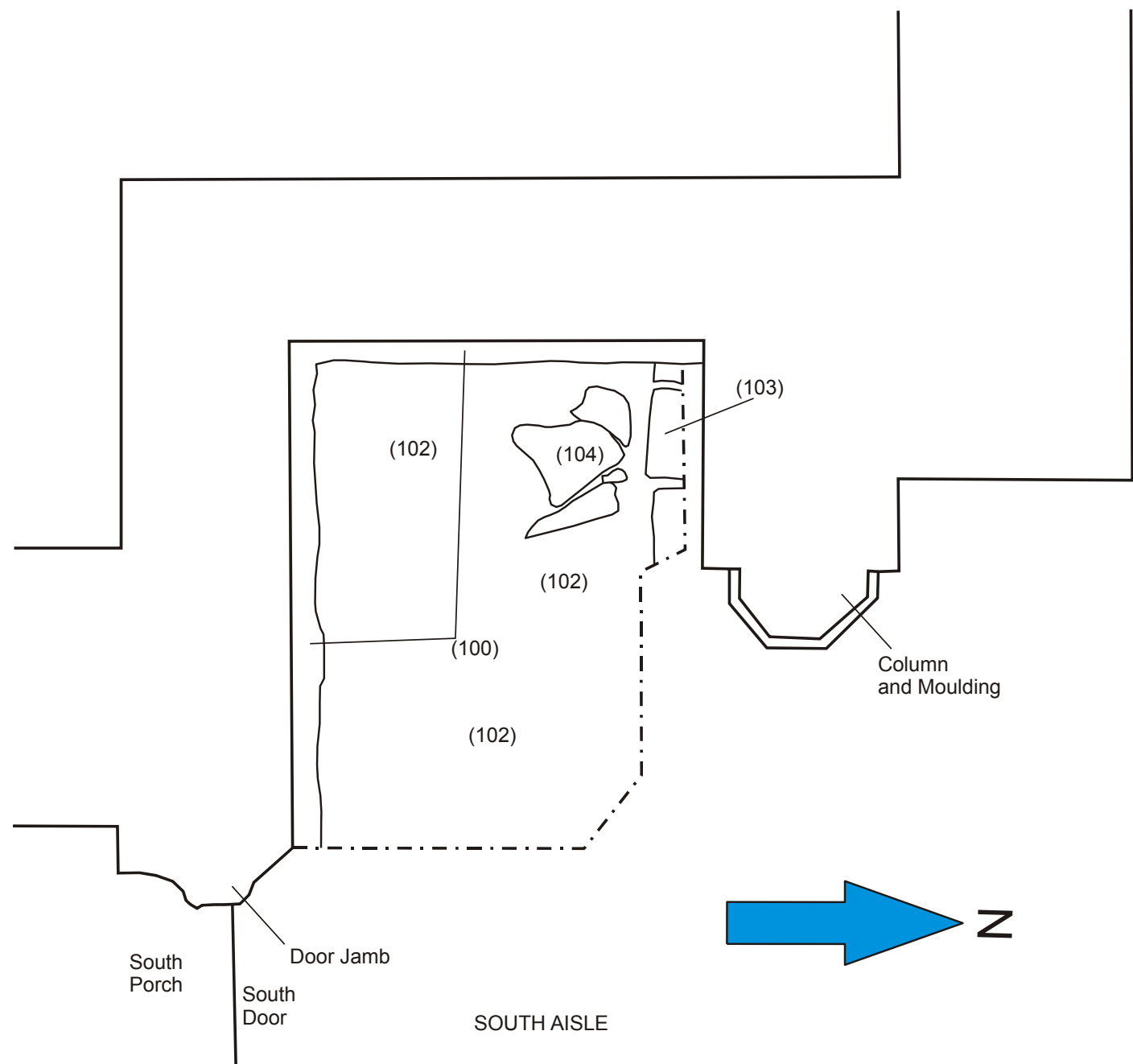


Figure 3: Plan of the Monitored Internal Alterations at a scale of 1:25 and Section 1 at a scale of 1:10

Appendix 1: Plates



Plate 1: *In situ* font by the west tower, from the south-east



Plate 2: *In situ* pews in the south aisle, from the east



Plate 3: Removal of the pews, from the north



Plate 4: Removal of the pews, from the east



Plate 5: Removal of the pews, from the east



Plate 6: Removal of the pews, from the east



Plate 7: Removal of the beams, from the east



Plate 10: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 8: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 11: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 9: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 12: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 13: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the north-east



Plate 16: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 14: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 17: View of the revealed line of worked stone (103) and the patch of partly worked stone (104), from the east



Plate 15: View of the revealed deposits (101) and (102), from the east



Plate 18: View of the revealed line of worked stone (103) and the patch of partly worked stone (104), from the east



Plate 19: Further ground reduction, from the east



Plate 22: View of the patch of partly worked stone (104), from the south



Plate 20: View of part of the line of bricks (100) at the west wall and of the fully exposed line of worked stone (103) and the patch of partly worked stone (104), from the east



Plate 23: View of the line of worked stone (103), from the south



Plate 21: View of the line of worked stone (103) and the patch of partly worked stone (104), from the south



Plate 24: View of the line of worked stone (103) and part of the line of bricks (100) at the base of the west wall, from the south



Plate 25: View of the exposed surface below following the removal of the font, from the east



Plate 26: View of the base of the new font location in the south-western corner of the south aisle, from the east



Plate 27: View of the exposed wall fabric of the south wall at the south-western corner of the south aisle, from the east

Appendix 2: List of Contexts

- 100** Line of a single course of brick left in situ along the south and west walls of the south-western part of the south aisle and revealed by hand ground reduction here. These bricks supported the timber platform and beams of the removed timber pews and were part of the 1871 renovations by Fowler.
- 101** Deposit of loose mortar and rubble containing small fragments of stone and roof slate revealed by the removal of the pew platform and supporting beams. Above (**102**). Depth - 0.20m.
- 102** Deposit of friable dark sandy silt below (**101**) revealed by the removal of the pew platform and supporting beams and extended to the base of the area of hand ground reduction. Represented original pre-1871 external ground levels. Depth - >0.25m.
- 103** Line of worked, shaped and faced stones, east-west aligned revealed by the area hand ground reduction and situated along the northern edge of the excavated area. Represented the line of the original south wall of the earlier church, pre-1871. Above (**102**). Recorded in **Section 1**. Length - >0.86m, width - >0.14m, depth - 0.78m.
- 104** Patch of roughly worked stones within (**102**) situated to the immediate south of (**103**) and thought to represent the remains of a base or pad to an external buttress to the original south wall of the earlier church. Length - 0.70m, width - 0.54m, depth - not determined.

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary Sheet

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