

Report on Archaeological Monitoring
The Church of St Lawrence, Brundish, Suffolk

SHER ref. BUH 016

ESF ref. 23350

Prepared for Brundish PCC

Sarah Bates (Report No. 25)

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Project name	St Lawrence's Church
Parish	Brundish
District	Mid Suffolk
Grid reference	TM 2715 6954
SHER Ref.	BUH 016
ESF Ref.	ESF23350
Date of fieldwork	5th – 18th January 2016

Summary

Archaeological monitoring during the installation of a new drainage system at St Lawrence's Church, Brundish led to the recording of footings of some of the church buttresses.

No evidence of pre-church activity, or of an earlier church, was seen and no burials were disturbed. The only finds recovered during the work were two fragments of window glass of post-medieval or later date, and some fragments of modern pottery.

1.0 Introduction

St Lawrence's Church (TM 2715 6954) is situated in Brundish parish in the south-west area of Mid Suffolk district about 6km south-east of Stradbroke. The church was originally at the centre of the settlement but now stands, with Chantry Farm and a few other scattered houses, to the south of a second nucleus at Brundish Street.

Building and rainwater drainage improvements were being undertaken at the church by G.F. Atthowe Builders Ltd on behalf of Nicholas Warns Architect Ltd for Brundish PCC. The work included renewing the drains around north and south sides of the church. This involved installing new drainage gullies beneath downpipes, a ground drain along the north side of the nave, and catchpits to the north and south of the west tower and at each side of the south porch. Drains ran from all of these; either to a soakaway south-west of the church or into the river at the east side of the churchyard.

The archaeological work involved monitoring and recording during the groundworks associated with the new drains. (Fig. 1). This work was carried out in accordance with a Project Design prepared by Sarah Bates following consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Committee's archaeological advisor, Bob Carr.

Brundish PCC funded the repairs, improvements and archaeological work with the aid of a National Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The archaeological archive will, on completion of the project, be deposited with the Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service following the relevant policy on archiving standards. An OASIS form is included below as Appendix 1.

2.0 Geology and topography

The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Crag group sedimentary sand formed in shallow seas in the Quaternary and Neogene periods. This is overlaid by clays, silts, sands and gravels accumulated by downslope movement and from which the sandy clay loam soils of the area derive (Wymer 1999, 16-19, Martin 1999, 20, British Geological Survey © NERC 2015).

The church is positioned on the west bank of the upper part of the River Alde which feeds the moat of the site at The Chantry immediately to the south of the churchyard (see below). The churchyard is an open area but is surrounded by trees and small copses within a wider landscape of pasture and arable farmland. The ground slopes very gently away from the church building in all directions and a lower-lying area across the south side of the churchyard is sometimes wet or flooded (Brundish parishioners pers. com.). At the time of the work the churchyard grass was mown to the west and south with rougher wildlife-friendly areas to the north-east.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

'Brundish' comes from the Old English 'burna' and 'edisc' meaning stream with pasture and this name is well-reflected at the site of the church (see above). The existing building, which is aligned from east to west, comprises nave and chancel with square west tower and south porch. Its medieval dedication was to St Andrew.

The Suffolk HER records the building as consisting of a 12th-century unbuttressed square tower with late 14th-century nave and chancel and 15th-century porch. The angle piscina and, probably, the font are of 14th-century date and the pulpit and some poppyhead bench ends date from the 15th century. The Priests doorway was partly renewed in the 19th century.

A study of the building was undertaken by Hugh Richmond for the current project (Richmond 2014) and his observations are summarised here. The lower part of the tower is considered to be the earliest surviving part of the building and dates to c.1100. Changes in the fabric of the nave walls and corresponding indications of former roof lines on the tower walls suggest that the nave was originally lower and could be contemporary with the early tower. The tower was raised in the late 12th century and in the later 14th century the walls of the nave were raised and the present windows and doors inserted and the present chancel was built. The south porch post-dates the 14th-century windows and is probably of 15th century date. Restorations to the church occurred in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Detailed descriptions and a history of the church are included on the Brundish Church website set up in association with the present programme of building improvements and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund (Brundish Church 2016). It is recorded elsewhere that some Victorian stained glass was destroyed by a bomb in World War II (Knott, 2010).

Others sites and finds recorded in the SHER within a 500m radius of the church include Chantry Farm; a medieval moated site and fishponds immediately to the south of the church. This was the residence of the Master of the Brundish Chantry which was founded in 1385 and suppressed in 1545. Two undated ditches were recorded during archaeological monitoring at the site in 2007. Two other medieval moated sites exist further away; 600m to the west at Yew Tree Farm and 700m east of the church at Moat Farm. Immediately to the east of the churchyard is the site of Brundish Hall. This is thought to have been of 16th century date with later additions. It was dismantled and shipped to America in the early 20th-century. Only a length of garden wall remains.

Just outside the 500m search area a Mesolithic axe is known to have been found south-east of the church and three coins, and pottery, of Roman date, and pottery and a coin of medieval date have been found in an area to the north. An area of enclosures and boundaries further to the south-east may include another moated site.

4.0 Methodology

Archaeological monitoring aimed to observe and record the presence or absence, location, nature and date of any surviving archaeological deposits within the areas affected by the drainage works.

The soakaway, gully and drain trenches were dug, mostly by machine with some hand-digging, by the site contractors.

The location of the trenches was recorded and trenches were assigned context numbers which were used for unstratified finds from those trenches. Otherwise, archaeological features and deposits were recorded using *pro forma* context sheets in the standard way. Digital and black and white film photographs recorded the archaeological deposits and the work at the site generally.

Finds of archaeological significance were retrieved.

No articulated skeletons were exposed. A very few small fragments of human bone were retrieved during the work. They were replaced just below the bottom of the trench in which they were found.

No deposits required sampling for environmental assessment.

Site conditions (weather, light and access) were generally good.

5.0 Results (Figs. 1 and 2, Plates 1-10)

Context numbers are shown in square brackets and listed in Appendix 2. Depths cited were measured from the existing ground surface. Deposits which had accumulated due to the repeated digging and redeposition of material by grave-digging and other activity in the churchyard are described below as 'churchyard soil'. These were overlaid by the brown clayey sandy loam topsoil.

Tower catchpits (Fig. 1, Plates 1 and 2)

Shallow trenches for water catchpits were dug at the north and south sides of the tower. Neither of the trenches extended right up to the tower wall so the lowest parts of the walls and their footings were not exposed. Trench [10], to the north, was 2.80 x 2.30m in size and sloped down away from the church from 0.25m to 0.40m in depth (Plate 1). Mixed light brown clayey silt churchyard soil with frequent flecks of mortar and moderate numbers of small and medium flints was exposed in the bottom of the trench below the brown slightly clayey sandy loam topsoil. Nothing of archaeological interest was revealed.

At the south side of the tower three gravestones were temporarily removed by the contractors in order to dig trench [11] (Plate 2). The trench was 2.50 x 2.20m in size and was the same depth as trench [10], sloping down very slightly away from the church. The same deposits were excavated and exposed as to the north and nothing of archaeological interest was seen. The gravestones were reinstated following completion of the site work.

Porch catchpits (Fig. 1)

Trench [12], at the west side of the porch, was dug in the area of a previous catchpit/soakaway. It was 1.80 x 1.40m in size. Its maximum depth was 0.50m and across most of its area the loose flint gravel fill of the former soakaway remained in place beneath the new catchpit. Otherwise only disturbed topsoil was seen and nothing of archaeological interest revealed. The trench did not extend as far as the porch wall.

Excavation of the catchpit at the east side of the porch was not monitored; it was excavated into the flint gravel of another previous soakaway and the contractors did not see anything else existing there.

Drain trenches to the north of the church (Figs 1 and 2, Plates 3-7)

A short length of drain ran eastwards from the north tower catchpit. The end of the flint footing of the northwest corner buttress of the nave was exposed in the lower side of the drain trench [17] (Figs 1 and 2A, Plate 3). It comprised medium and large flints in a hard cream lime mortar. The footing was not exposed as far south as the buttress itself.

A ground drain of Fildrain type was installed along the north side of the nave from its west corner to the first side buttress (from the east end) [1] (Fig. 1, Plate 4). It was about 0.80m wide (at the top) with the south side sloping away from the church wall at forty-five degrees to a depth of 0.65m. Light brown sandy clay with occasional small 'grits' of chalk was exposed in the bottom and sides of the trench [6]. It seemed likely that at least

some disturbance by grave-digging would have occurred here and the deposit was a mix of natural subsoil and churchyard soil. It was overlaid by the dark brown slightly clayey sandy loam topsoil [2]. Part of the footing of the nave's second side buttress was exposed in the trench [7] (Fig. 1, Plate 5). It consisted of cream mortar with occasional mostly medium-sized, flint set within it. It appeared to have sloped down away from the buttress; not much of it was removed during machining and it did not appear in the north side of the drain trench although it continued downwards below its base. At the east end of the Fildrain trench part of the footing of the first side buttress was seen in the small deep hole dug to install the downpipe gully pot [8] (Fig. 1). It comprised flints in a hard cream lime mortar and continued down beneath the bottom of the excavated hole (depth approximately 0.75m from the ground surface (Plate 6). Nothing else of archaeological interest was seen.

A drain trench ran eastwards from the end of the Fildrain (Fig. 1). In the south side of this trench, immediately north of the first nave buttress, a series of deposits were thought to relate to the construction of the buttress footing (Fig.2B). Within a probable construction cut (not numbered) were deposits of pinkish light brown slightly gritty clay [4] and large irregular flints in cream lime mortar [5]. The clay had small sub-angular fragments of chalk (including small flecks) of chalk. It was firm, wet and quite sticky but was the colour of partly-fired material. The mortared flints formed a hard lump of masonry [5]; almost certainly the northern end of the buttress footing - although it was about a metre north of the buttress. It seems likely that the clay (originating from the natural subsoil at the site) was used as a foundation deposit. Perhaps it was partly-fired waste material of some kind. Overlaying the deposits was a thin layer of mid to light brown sandy silt [3]. Topsoil overlay these deposits and slumped into a depression where some masonry may have been removed. Just to the east the trench turned at a dog-leg and part of a former drain was seen in the north side of the trench just opposite the east end of the nave. The trench here was 0.60m deep. A single spur ran off to a gully at the chancel side buttress (where nothing of archaeological interest was seen) and further east the trench was dug through the undergrowth at the edge of the churchyard to enter the river at a depth of 0.80m (Plate 7).

Nothing of archaeological interest was seen in the eastern trenches.

Drain trenches to the south of the church (Figs 1 and 2, Plates 8-10)

The footing of the south-west corner buttress of the nave was exposed in the drain trench running between the tower and porch catchpits. It was of cream mortar and flints and was solid [15] and was seen beneath the topsoil at a depth of 0.30m from the surface (Fig. 1, Plate 2).

A drain trench ran west to east along the south side of the nave and chancel [9] (Plate 8). A spur ran to a gully at the chancel side buttress (where nothing of archaeological interest was seen). The trench was 0.35m deep at its west end, 0.55m deep opposite the chancel's south door and 0.80m deep opposite the east end of the chancel. It entered the river at a depth of 0.75m.

The solid footing of the first nave buttress was recorded in the drain trench [13]. (Figs 1 and 2C, Plate 9). It was of medium and large flints in light cream mortar. Its bottom was not reached when the masonry was broken and removed from the (0.50m deep) trench by the contractor to enable pipe-laying.

To the east, an electricity cable was partly exposed in the drain trench (Fig 2) and to the south-east of the chancel doorway the stone slab of a vaulted tomb (associated with an above-ground tomb) was exposed in the bottom of the drain trench at a depth of 0.80m. It was not disturbed by the drainage work.

Nothing else of archaeological interest was seen in the southern drain trenches.

Trench for soakaway [14]

A trench for a new soakaway was excavated about nine metres to the south-west of the church [14] (Fig. 2, Plate 10). It was 3.70 x 1.30m in size and 0.60m deep with a deeper area (0.90m) at its north end where an inspection chamber was to be installed.

In this deeper area gritty chalk-flecked grey clay was revealed and thought to represent the undisturbed subsoil. Elsewhere mid to light brown clayey silt with some chalk-flecked grey clay patches was exposed. This was mixed churchyard soil; no graves were identified in the area of the soakaway but the fact that the mixed soil continued across the base of the trench suggested that some, at least, probably occurred at a greater depth – the patches of grey clay suggested that the natural subsoil had been dug into and redeposited. Two or three very small fragments of human bone were found in the mixed soils (again suggesting disturbance by repeated grave-digging in the area). Following consultation with a church official, the bone fragments were reburied in the bottom of the trench.

Nothing else was found in the trench.

6.0 The finds

A few pieces of modern china, a struck flake from medieval building flint and a very small rectangular cut fragment of lead were recovered from the drain trenches north of the church but have not been retained.

Two fragments of window glass were also found in the trenches north of the church. One fragment (19g, 3mm thick), is bluish green hand-made glass, grozed along one edge and with uneven slightly rippled surfaces. It is of a thickness to have been held within a lead came. It is probably of Victorian date. A smaller piece (3g, 1.25mm thick) is pale green and probably of 19th or early 20th-century date. It may be machine-finished and is probably a fragment from a plain glass window pane.

7.0 Conclusions

The natural subsoil was reached in the area dug for the inspection chamber adjoining the north end of the soakaway. It was encountered at a depth of about 0.90m and comprised chalk-flecked grey clay.

No evidence of pre-church activity, or of an earlier church, was seen.

The footings of some of the church buttresses were exposed in the drain trenches and were recorded. They were of mortared flint construction and extended to some depth; sometimes below the bottom of the drain trench. In one case, some pinkish clay with chalk inclusions was exposed at each side of a flint footing. Its colour suggested it may have been slightly fired waste material. It appeared to have been used as a foundation deposit.

Two small fragments of window glass of post-medieval or later date were found, one green fragment had a grozed edge and was from a stained glass window; it is probably of Victorian date and may have originated from a window destroyed by a World War II bomb.

No burials were disturbed by the drainage works although a few small fragments of human bone were found in the trench for the soakaway which was almost certainly positioned in an area where burials existed at a greater depth than the excavated trench. The fragments of bone were reburied in the trench.

Acknowledgements

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The advice of and interest of Iain Walker and Gethin Harvey (Nicholas Warns Architect Ltd), the Churchwardens and members of Brundish PCC and church is gratefully acknowledged. Information from the SHER was provided by staff of Suffolk Historic Environment Service.

Archaeological monitoring and recording was by Sarah Bates.

Figure 1 uses a drawing of the church provided by Nicholas Warns Architect Ltd.

References:

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Knott, S, 2010	http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/brundish.htm , Churches of East Anglia, The Last of England, www.simonknott.co.uk
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Wymer, J., 1999	<i>Solid Geology in Dymond, D. and Martin, E., An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged Edition, Suffolk County Council Environment and Transport, Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, (Third edition), 16-17</i>
Wymer, J., 1999	<i>Surface Geology in, Dymond, D. and Martin, E., An Historical Atlas of Suffolk, Revised and Enlarged Edition, Suffolk County Council Environment and Transport, Suffolk Institute of Archaeology and History, (Third edition), 18-18</i>

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OASIS ID: sarahbat1-234756

Project details

Project name	St Lawrence Church Brundish drainage work
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring during the installation of a new drainage system at St Lawrence's Church, Brundish led to the recording of footings of some of the church buttresses. No evidence of pre-church activity, or of an earlier church, was seen and no burials were disturbed. The only finds recovered during the work were two fragments of window glass of post-medieval or later date, and some fragments of modern pottery.
Project dates	Start: 05-01-2016 End: 18-01-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BUH 016 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	ESF - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	FOUNDATION Medieval
Significant Finds	WINDOW GLASS Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"

Project location

Country	England
Site location	SUFFOLK MID SUFFOLK BRUNDISH Church of St Lawrence
Study area	0 Square metres
Site coordinates	TM 2715 6954 52.276451072752 1.330138814153 52 16 35 N 001 19 48 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Sarah Bates
Project brief originator	Diocesan Archaeologist
Project design originator	Sarah Bates
Project director/manager	Sarah Bates
Project supervisor	Sarah Bates
Type of sponsor/funding body	PCC
Name of sponsor/funding body	Brundish PCC

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Physical Contents	"Glass"
Digital Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

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Appendix 2: List of contexts

Context	Category	Description
1	Contractor's trench	drain trench
2	Layer	topsoil
3	Layer	churchyard soil
4	Layer	foundation deposit/make-up
5	Footing	N nave buttress footing
6	Layer	churchyard soil
7	Footing	N nave buttress footing
8	Contractor's trench	trench for gully
9	Contractor's trench	drain trench
10	Contractor's trench	trench for tower N catchpit
11	Contractor's trench	trench for tower S catchpit
12	Contractor's trench	trench for porch W catchpit
13	Footing	S nave buttress footing
14	Contractor's trench	trench for soakaway
15	Footing	SW nave corner buttress footing
16	Unstratified	finds from N of church
17	Footing	NW nave buttress footing

Appendix 3: Finds by context

Context	Category	Description
16	Glazed china	4 sherds - modern – not retained
16	Lead	Very small rectangular off-cut – not retained
16	Flint flake	?medieval building debris - not retained
16	Window glass	2 fragments; post-medieval/modern

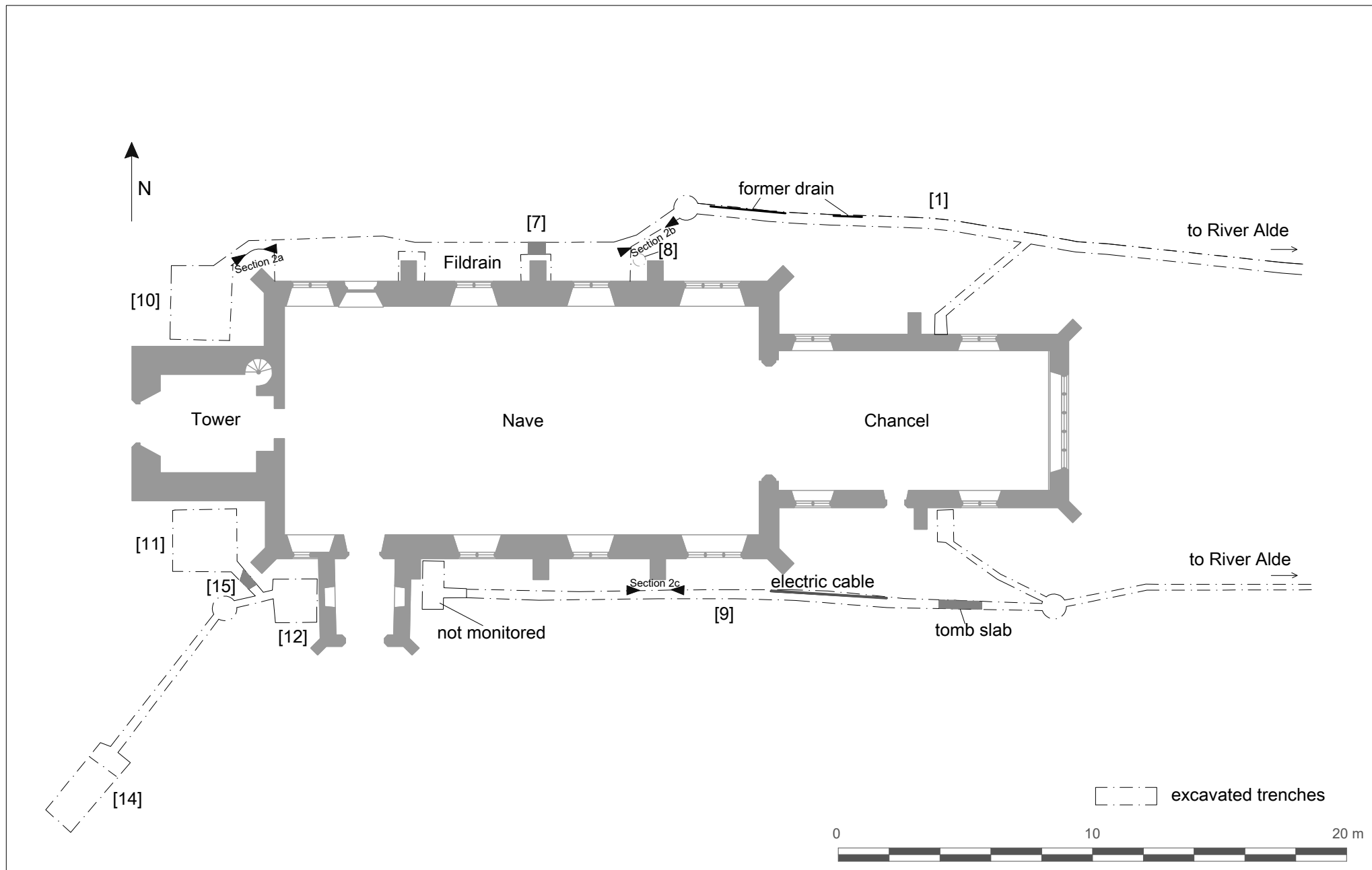
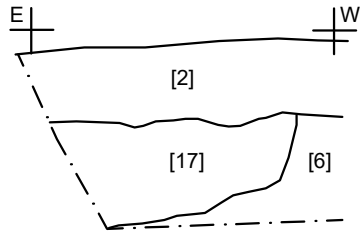
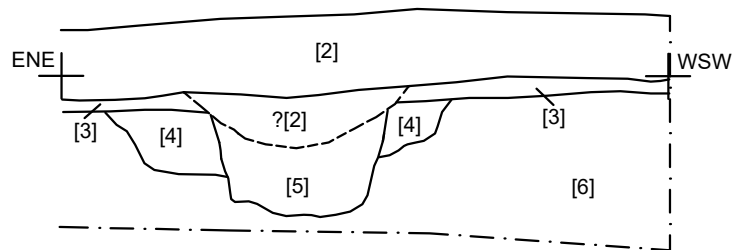


Figure 1: Plan of church with excavated trenches, scale 1:200

A N-facing section, nave NW corner buttress [17]



B WSW-facing section, nave N buttress footing [5]



C S-facing section, S nave buttress [13]

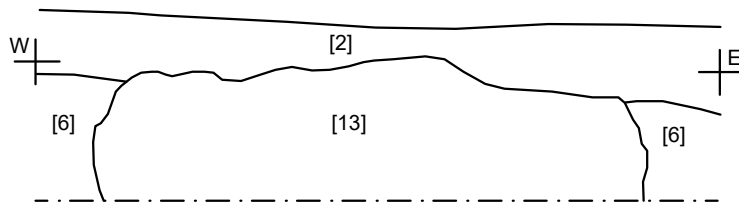


Figure 2: A-C; Church buttress footings, scale 1:20



Plate 1: N tower catchpit trench [10], looking S, 1m scale



Plate 2: S tower catchpit trench [11], footing [15], looking N, scale 0.5m



Plate 3: NW nave corner buttress and footing [17], looking S, 0.5m scale



Plate 4: N nave, drain trench [1], looking E, 0.5m scale



Plate 5: N nave footing [7], looking E, 0.5m scale



Plate 6: N nave buttress footing, [8], looking E, 0.5m scale



Plate 7: Drain trench [1] enters River Alde, looking E,
0.5m scale



Plate 8: Drain [9], S of nave, looking W



Plate 9: S nave buttress footing [13], looking W,
0.5m scale



Plate 10: Soakaway trench [14], looking NNE,.....
1m scale