

Urban Archaeology

...define, record, remove...

St Nicholas' church, Kemerton, Worcestershire, Diocese of Gloucester

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

**for Richard Bennett on behalf of
Kemerton PCC**

Chiz Harward BA MCIfA

©Urban Archaeology 2019

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

St Nicholas' church, Kemerton, Worcestershire, Diocese of Gloucester

Client:	Richard Bennett, on behalf of Kemerton Parochial Church Council
Diocese:	Gloucester
Faculty date:	List B
NGR:	SO 94588 36806
Project no:	UA212
Author:	Chiz Harward BA MCIfA
Doc Ref:	UA212_WB_report_v1
Date:	October 23rd 2019
Site Code:	KEM19
HER number:	WSM71956
OASIS ref:	urbanarc1-365295

Urban Archaeology

A trading name of Chiz Harward BA MCIfA
Unit 24D Daniels Industrial Estate, Bath Road, Stroud, Glos. GL5 3TJ
07881 486837
enquiries@urban-archaeology.co.uk

Non Technical Summary

On October 7th 2019 Urban Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief for Richard Bennett on behalf of Kemerton Parochial Church Council. The watching brief was on the excavation of a 0.3m deep trench for a new water pipe at the church of St Nicholas, Kemerton, Worcestershire, GL20 7HX, SO 94588 36806.

Natural substrate was not encountered during the watching brief. The earliest deposit was a sandy clay silt containing human bone, probably a cemetery soil created by the repeated digging of burials and disturbance of earlier burials within the cemetery. Twenty-nine fragments of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the cemetery soil, illustrating the use of the cemetery for repeated burial. The bones were in a fragmented state, typical of parish churchyards. The human remains will be reburied in an area that will not be used for future burials.

A layer of limestone chippings, including fragments with toolmarks, probably dates from the rebuilding of the church in the mid nineteenth century. The tarmac path probably dates to the 20th century. The residual medieval floor tiles probably originate in the church, although they could be from the nearby manor house.

The results of the watching brief have met the aims of ensuring that an adequate archaeological record has been made of the remains disturbed, exposed or destroyed by the groundworks. The results of the watching brief are of local significance only and no further work is recommended on the site archive.

1 Introduction and Faculty background

- 1.1 On 7th October 2019 Urban Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief for Richard Bennett on behalf of Kemerton Parochial Church Council, at the church of St Nicholas, Kemerton, Gloucestershire, GL20 7HX, SO 94588 36806 (Fig. 1). The watching brief took place during excavation of a 0.3m deep trench for a new water pipe around the east and south side of the chancel (Fig. 2).
- 1.2 Approval for the work was granted under a List B Archdeacon's Authorisation. An archaeological watching brief was required on the excavation of the trench (Falconer 2019).
- 1.3 A *Written Scheme of Investigation, or Method Statement*, was prepared by Chiz Harward, BA MCIfA and approved by the Diocese of Gloucester as a methodology for the archaeological program of works required to discharge the Faculty condition (Harward 2019).
- 1.4 The fieldwork followed the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA 2014a), Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Worcestershire (2016) and the Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE): Project Manager's Guide (EH 2006). A 500m radius search of the Worcestershire HER (WSM71956).
- 1.5 The Site Code for archaeological work was KEM19.

2 Site background

- 2.1 The church of St Nicholas is a Grade 2* Listed church (list no1296868, Appendix 1) and is located within a churchyard in the village of Kemerton, Worcestershire. The village lies on the lower slopes of Bredon Hill and lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Magic 2019). The church lies at approximately 46m OD.
- 2.2 The site sits within a gently rolling landscape, the surrounding area is made up of small to medium sized, regular fields that are under arable cultivation. Tree cover is mainly seen in the scattered hedgerows and lining watercourses, with some associated with nucleated settlement. The villages within this region have not expanded much past their historic cores, with the exception of Bredon which has expanded significantly in the last century. Locally, nucleated cluster settlement is surrounded by modern infill, meadow, piecemeal and Parliamentary enclosure and field amalgamation (HER 2019).
- 2.3 The geology of the site is mapped as Charmouth Mudstone Formation - Mudstone, with head deposits of gravel, sand, silt and clay (British Geological Survey 2019).

3 Archaeological and historical background

- 3.1 Prehistoric activity is known from the area of Kemerton with Neolithic and Bronze Age monuments and artefacts found e.g. to the southwest of the site (NMR index (1056903). Kemerton lies to the south of the major Iron Age hillfort of Bredon Hill which would have

dominated the landscape. Roman remains are known from the vicinity, with a hoard of 3800 coins found buried within a Roman villa at Bredon Hill.

- 3.2 Excavation southwest of the site uncovered a Saxon sunken featured building (NMR index 1915720) and an early medieval site (NMR index 1855989).
- 3.3 According to the VCH around '760 Uhtred, under-king of the Hwicce, granted to the thegn Ceolmund 8 hides at a place called 'Habene Homme' which, from the evidence of the boundaries given, was the equivalent of the later manor of Kemerton. In 840 lands in Kemerton were among those restored to the church of Worcester by Beorhtwulf, King of the Mercians'.
- 3.4 At Domesday Kemerton was recorded as a very large village of 40.5 households and was taxed at 11 geld units. There was a total of 14 plough teams, with 8 acres of meadow and four mills (Open Domesday 2019).
- 3.5 Based on tithe records of Tewkesbury Abbey a church is known to have existed from the mid-12th century, 'the north arcade was early Norman, the south arcade and the tower arch 14th century. The windows on the south were of the 13th and 14th centuries with a 15th-century window at the west. The south porch added in the 15th or early 16th century had fan-vaulting. Above the porch was a small chamber used for vestry meetings and the Sunday school. The piscina, of which a fragment survives, was of the 14th century. A small chapel formerly stood at the east end of the north aisle over the vault of the Parsons family. There was a staircase turret at the north-east angle of the tower' (VCH). The tower alone remains of the medieval church, the lower two stories are 13th century, with the upper stage early 16th century (Brooks and Pevsner 2007, 388)
- 3.6 In 1844 the Archdeacon of Bristol Diocese Thomas Thorp became vicar of St Nicholas. At this point the church was in poor repair with rotten roof timbers, missing window stonework and the masonry walls were in poor condition. A large buttress had been added to support the east end of the north aisle. Thorp had been president of the Cambridge Camden Society from 1839, and he planned to restore the church following the Society's principles. Following legal disputes over cost and liturgy, the church was almost entirely rebuilt by RC Carpenter between 1846 and 1849, with only the medieval tower remaining (Herbert 1971).
- 3.7 The church was rebuilt in an early 14th century Decorated style, with a chancel, nave and aisles. Internally the church retains much of Carpenters furnishings, with a painted reredos by GM Hopton added in 1912. There is glass by Willement (1847), Hardman (1852–4) and Clayton and Bell (1850–1). The stonework of the tower was repaired in 1879 (Bennett 2013).
- 3.8 The church is surrounded by the grounds of Upper Court and Kemerton Court, with two watermills and their ponds lying southeast of the church.

4 Research aims

- 4.1 The research aims are to minimise disturbance to archaeological remains and to record, as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and

quality of any surviving archaeological remains that will be exposed or destroyed by the proposed development. Attention will be given to sites and remains of all periods (including evidence of past environments).

5 Methodology

- 5.1 All work was carried out in accordance with the relevant *Standards and Guidance* produced by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. And followed the methodology set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Harward 2019). The watching brief was carried out on the 7th October 2019 during excavation of a 0.3m deep trench around the chancel (Fig 2). All excavation was carried out by hand.
- 5.2 Levels were taken relative to the OS benchmark on St Nicholas's Church (value 46.12m OD, Ordnance Survey 2019).
- 5.3 The Site Code for the archaeological work was KEM19.

6 Results

- 6.1 This section provides an overview of the watching brief; summaries of the recorded contexts and a Harris matrix are to be found in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 6.2 Natural substrate was not reached; the earliest deposit was a friable mid-grey brown sandy clay silt (5) containing occasional human bone fragments and limestone fragments (Figs 3–5). The deposit was observed at a depth of approximately 0.25m below ground level. At the east of the chancel this was sealed by a 20-200mm thick layer of limestone chippings (6); some of the limestone had axed toolmarks and probably relates to the mid-19th century rebuilding of the church. The construction debris was sealed by turf and topsoil (4).
- 6.3 The concrete roof of the underground boiler house [7] was identified at the west end of the trench. A tarmac path had been laid around the chancel: the line of the path was horizontally truncated [3], and a layer of compact orange stone was laid as a sub-base to 60mm of tarmac.

7 The Finds

The Ceramic Building Material

- 7.3 Context (5) produced two fragments of very abraded medieval floor tile, weighing 113g in total (Table 1). They are both in a hard, sandy fabric with a reduced core. The chamfered side of the tile survives in both examples. No glaze or inlaid pipeclay is visible, and the top surface of both fragments are very worn. No complete dimensions survived other than thickness, 23mm and 26mm.

Potential and further work

- 7.9 The CBM assemblages is small and has little potential for further work; no further work is recommended on the finds assemblage.

Discard

- 7.10 The CBM assemblage has been recorded and may be discarded.

Small finds catalogue

Context	Type	Weight (g)	Dimensions	Comment	Discarded /retained
(5)	Floor tile	113g	23mm and 26mm thick	Two fragments of a medieval floor tiles	Discarded

Table 1 Finds

8 The human remains

- 8.1 Twenty-nine fragments of disarticulated human bone were recovered from cemetery soil (5). The human remains were fragmented as might be expected within a heavily dug-over cemetery. The fragments were scanned for obvious pathologies and counted (

Skeletal element	No of fragments (5)
Juvenile femur	2
Adult femur	8
Tibia	1
Radius	1
Ulna	1
Neonate bones	2
Pelvis	4
Unidentified	10
TOTAL	29

Table 2 Human remains: quantification

2).

Skeletal element	No of fragments (5)
Juvenile femur	2
Adult femur	8
Tibia	1
Radius	1
Ulna	1
Neonate bones	2
Pelvis	4
Unidentified	10
TOTAL	29

Table 2 Human remains: quantification

- 8.2 Osteological assessment was not required by the DAC, and the human remains will be reinterred in the churchyard in a location where they will not be disturbed.

9 Conclusions and statement of significance

- 9.1 Natural substrate was not encountered during the watching brief. The earliest deposit encountered was a sandy clay silt containing human bone, probably a cemetery soil overlying interments. The mixed 'cemetery soil' is created by the repeated digging of burials and disturbance of earlier burials within the cemetery, within which it is very difficult to identify individual grave cuts or different fills. Twenty-nine fragments of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the cemetery soil, illustrating the use of the cemetery for repeated burial. The bones were in a fragmented state, typical of parish churchyards. The human remains will be reburied in an area that will not be used for future burials.
- 9.2 The layer of limestone chippings, including fragments with toolmarks, probably dates from the rebuilding of the church in the mid nineteenth century. The tarmac path probably dates to the 20th century.
- 9.3 The residual medieval floor tiles probably originate in the church, although they could be from the nearby manor house.
- 9.4 The results of the watching brief have met the aims of ensuring that an adequate archaeological record has been made of the remains disturbed, exposed or destroyed by the groundworks. The results of the watching brief are of local significance only and no further work is recommended on the site archive.

10 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Urban Archaeology would like to thank Richard Bennett for commissioning the watching brief on behalf of Kemerton PCC and for providing information and drawings. We would also like to thank Adam Klups, DAC Secretary and David Thackray, DAA, for their help and advice, Toby Falconer at Falconer & Gilbert Scott for his assistance and providing drawings, and Brian Marshall and his team at Vale Plumbing for their assistance and forbearance on site. The watching brief was carried out by the author.

11 Archive

- 11.1 The site code KEM19 has been allocated to the watching brief.
- 11.2 The archive from the watching brief is currently held by Urban Archaeology at their offices in Stroud. The site archive will comprise all written, drawn and photographic records and subject to the agreement of the legal landowner will be deposited Worcester County Museum and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).
- 11.3 The archive will be prepared in accordance with Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990), specifically complying with Museums Worcester County and OASIS/ADS guidelines. The archive will be presented to the receiving museum within six months of the completion of the fieldwork (unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing with the Diocese). The archive will then become publicly accessible.
- 11.4 A copy of this report and a summary of information from this project will be submitted to the OASIS database of archaeological publications (Appendix 4). A further copy of the report will be submitted to Worcester County HER. Shape files of the watching brief trench locations will also be submitted to the HER.

12 Bibliography

Electronic:

British Geological Survey Index: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain3d/index.html> Accessed 30th August 2019

Heritage Gateway <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/> Accessed 30th August 2019

Historic England Listing: <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1296868> Accessed 30th August 2109

Magic, <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/magicmap.aspx> Accessed 30th August 2019

Open Domesday <https://opendomesday.org/place/SO9437/kemerton/> Accessed 30th August 2019

Ordnance Survey benchmark locator <https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/benchmarks/> Accessed 30th August 2019

'Parishes: Kemerton', in *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 8*, ed. C R Elrington (London, 1968), pp. 209-220. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol8/pp209-220> [accessed 26 September 2019].

Architects Drawings:

Falconer, T 2019 *Church of St Nicholas, Kemerton, Schedule of Works - Replacement Boiler, Second Draft – 2nd May 2019*

Falconer and Gilbert Scott 2019 *Church of St Nicholas, Kemerton, as proposed ground floor plan, drawing 1617-11 Rev A*

References:

Bennett, R 2013 *St Nicholas' Church, Kemerton – Statement of Significance*

Brooks, A and Pevsner, N 2007 *The Buildings of England: Worcestershire*

Herbert, NM 1971 *Archdeacon Thorp and Kemerton Church*, *Trans. Glos. & Bristol Arch. Soc.* **90**, 192-215

Worcestershire Archive and Advisory Service 2016 *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire*

Worcestershire Historic Environment Record 2019 *An Historic Environment Record Search for WSM71956 Watching Brief at St. Nicholas' Church, Kemerton*

Statutory Guidance:

Association for Environmental Archaeology, 1995 *Environmental Archaeology and Archaeological Evaluations - Recommendations regarding the environmental archaeology component of archaeological evaluations in England*, AEA working paper No. 2

AAF, 2007 *Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*,

APABE, 2017 *Guidance for Best Practice for the treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, (second edition)

Brickley M & Mckinley J, 2004 *Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains*, IFA Paper No. 7

English Heritage, 2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation*, English Heritage

English Heritage/Church of England 2005 *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*, English Heritage

English Heritage, 2008 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment. PPN 3: Archaeological Excavation*, English Heritage

English Heritage, 2009 (V1.1) *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*, English Heritage

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014a *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014b *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Code of conduct*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*

Leigh D, Watkinson D (Ed.) & Neal V (ED.) 1993 *First Aid for Finds*, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works, Archaeology Section

Mckinley J & Roberts C, 1993 *Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains*, IfA Technical Paper No. 13

Ministry of Justice 2007 *Burial Law and Policy in the 21st century: The way forward*

Murphy & Wiltshire, 1994 *A Guide to Sampling Archaeological Deposits for Environmental Analysis*

Museums and Galleries Commission, 1994 *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections*, Museums and Galleries Commission

Society of Museum Archaeologists, 1993 *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections: Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*, Society of Museum Archaeologists

Spence C (ed.), 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual, 3rd edition*, Museum of London

Walker K, 1990 *Conservation guidelines 2: Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage*, United Kingdom Institute for Conservation

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1983 *Packaging and Storage of Freshly Excavated Artefacts from Archaeological Sites*, Conservation Guidelines No. 2

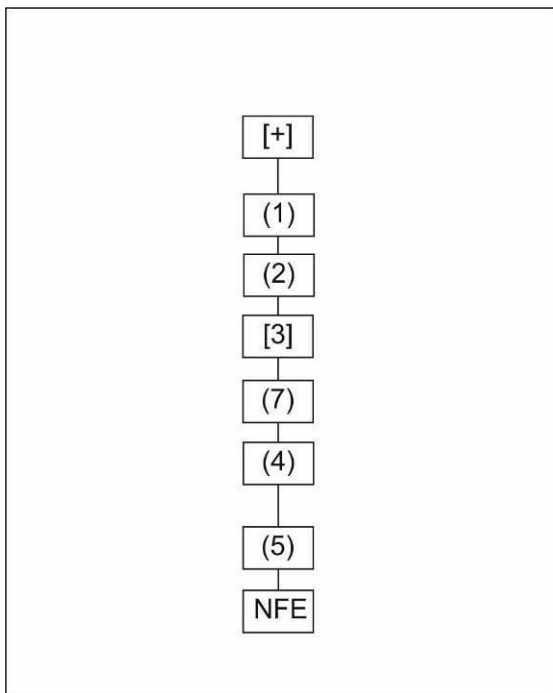
Appendix 1 Context Register

Context no	Type	Description
1	Deposit	Tarmac path
2	Deposit	Stone sub-base for tarmac path
3	Cut	Cut for path
4	Deposit	Topsoil and turf
5	Deposit	Cemetery soil containing human bone
6	Deposit	Construction debris: limestone chippings
7	Masonry	Boiler house

Table 3: Context register

Appendix 2 Harris matrix

Harris matrix of KEM19



Appendix 3 Archive contents

Digital archive

Type	Number	Comments
Digital photographs	7 images	Archived with ADS

Table 4: Digital archive

Paper archive

Type	Number	Comments
Trench Record Sheet	1	

Table 5: Paper archive

Finds

Type	Number	Comments
Ceramic Building Material	2 fragments	Discarded

Table 6: Finds archive

Appendix 4 OASIS Form

OASIS ID: urbanarc1-365295

Project details	
Project name	St Nicholas Kemerton
Short description of the project	On October 7th 2019 Urban Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief for Richard Bennett on behalf of Kemerton Parochial Church Council. The watching brief was on the excavation of a 0.3m deep trench for a new water pipe at the church of St Nicholas, Kemerton, Worcestershire, GL20 7HX, SO 94588 36806 (Fig. 1). Natural substrate was not encountered during the watching brief. The earliest deposit was a sandy clay silt containing human bone, probably a cemetery soil created by the repeated digging of burials and disturbance of earlier burials within the cemetery. Twenty-nine fragments of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the cemetery soil, illustrating the use of the cemetery for repeated burial. The bones were in a fragmented state, typical of parish churchyards. The human remains will be reburied in an area that will not be used for future burials. A layer of limestone chippings, including fragments with toolmarks, probably dates from the rebuilding of the church in the mid nineteenth century. The tarmac path probably dates to the 20th century. The residual medieval floor tiles probably originate in the church, although they could be from the nearby manor house. The results of the watching brief have met the aims of ensuring that an adequate archaeological record has been made of the remains disturbed, exposed or destroyed by the groundworks. The results of the watching brief are of local significance only and no further work is recommended on the site archive.
Project dates	Start: 07-10-2019 End: 07-10-2019
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	KEM19 – Sitecode; UA212 - Contracting Unit No.; WSM71956 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	CHURCHYARD Medieval; CHURCHYARD Post Medieval; CHURCHYARD Modern
Significant Finds	FLOOR TILE Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	WORCESTERSHIRE WYCHAVON KEMERTON St Nicholas Kemerton
Postcode	GL20 7HX
Study area	0sq m
Site coordinates	SO 94588 36806 52.029217070918 -2.078892997043 52 01 45 N 002 04 44 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Urban Archaeology
Project brief originator	Diocesan Archaeologist
Project design originator	Urban Archaeology
Project director/manager	Chiz Harward
Project supervisor	Chiz Harward
Type of sponsor/funding body	PCC
Name of sponsor/funding body	Kemerton PCC
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No

Digital Archive recipient	ADS
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Worcestershire County Museum
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St Nicholas' church, Kemerton, Worcestershire, Diocese of Gloucester An Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Harward, C
Date	2019
Issuer or publisher	Urban Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	Stroud
Description	Illustrated typescript report
Entered by	Chiz Harward (chiz@urban-archaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	17/10/19



Fig. 1 Site location

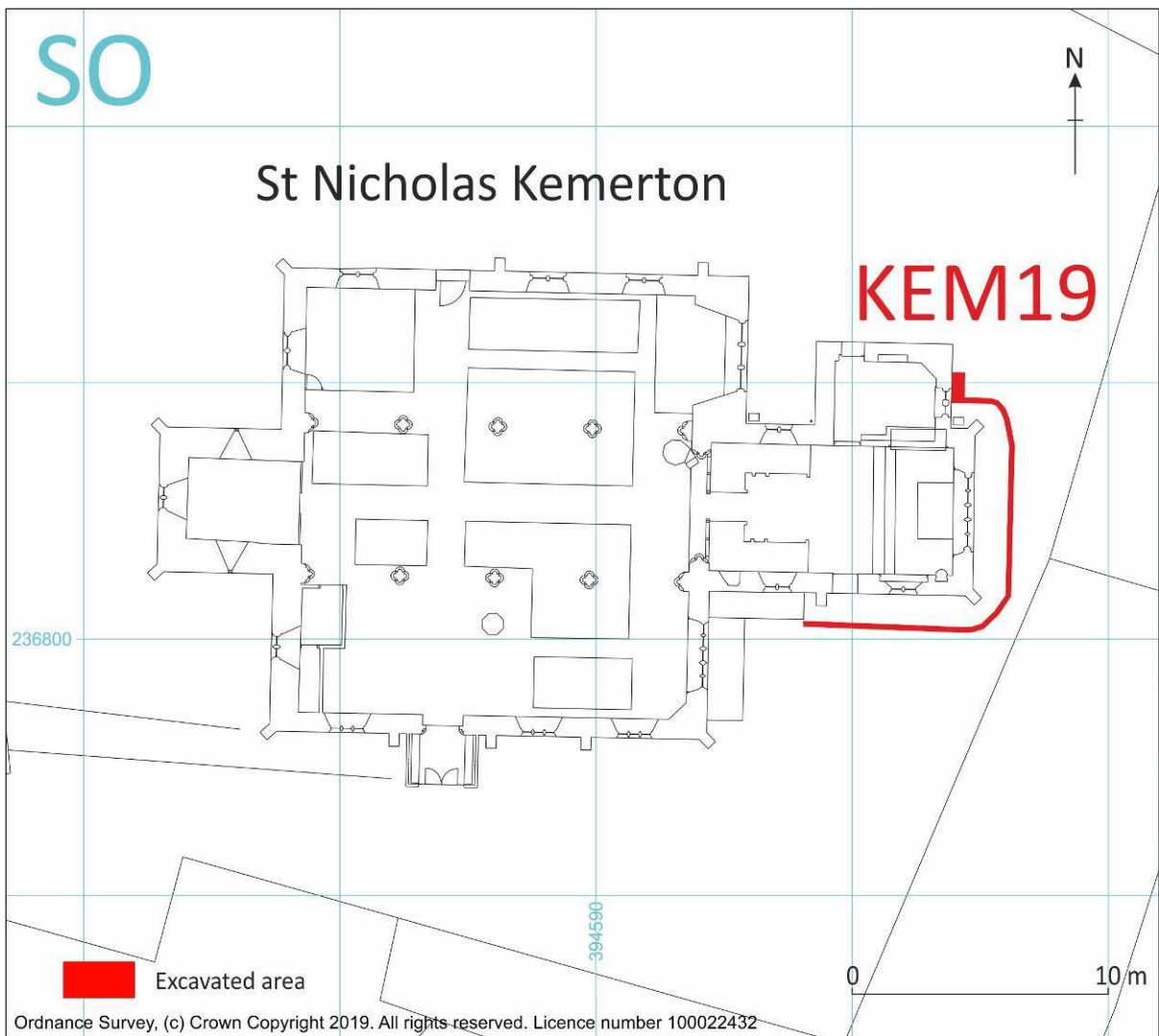


Fig. 2 Trench location



Fig. 3 The trench, looking south; scale 1m

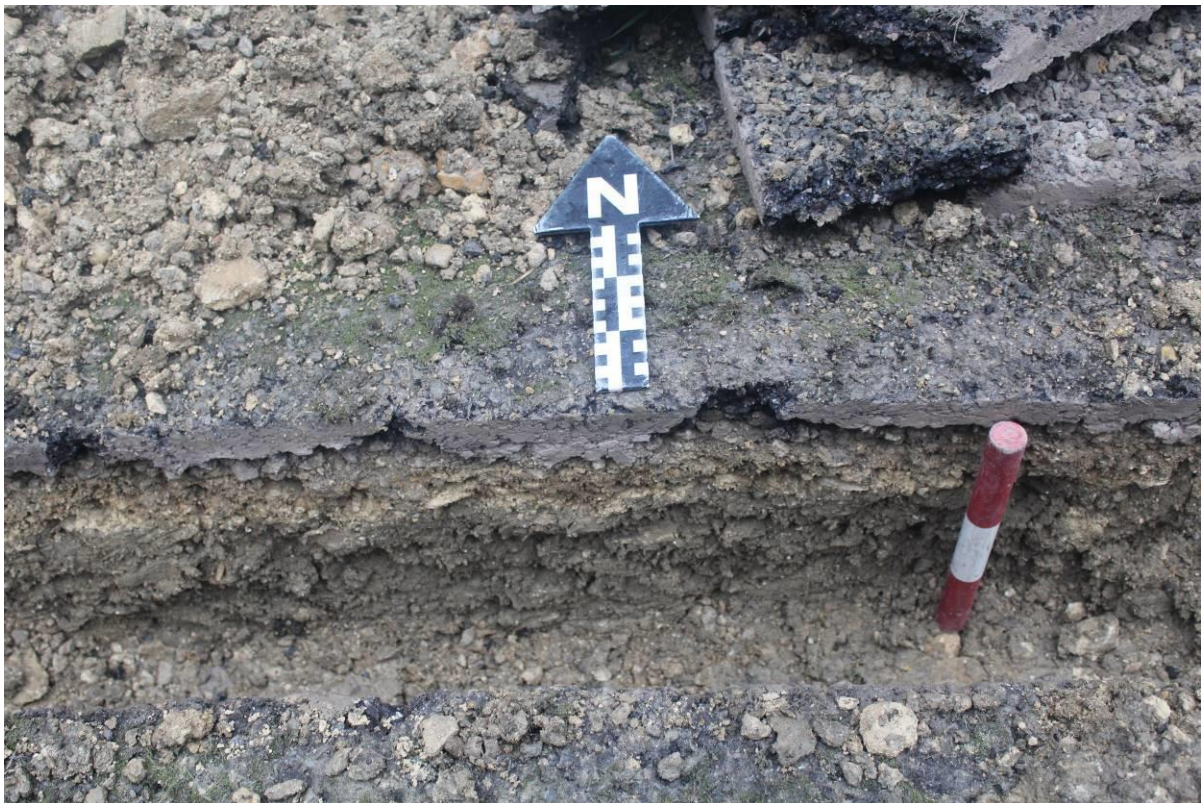


Fig. 4 South facing section of the trench showing limestone construction debris; scale 0.3m



Fig. 5 The southern trench, looking west; scale 1m