Report 2289

nps archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief at St Margaret's Church, Church Road, Upton, Norfolk

ENF128790

Prepared for
The Friends of St Margaret's Church, Upton

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Location:	St Margaret's Church, Church Road, Upton, Norfolk
District:	Broadland
Grid Ref.:	TG 3929 1216
Planning Ref.:	DAC
HER No.:	HER ENF128790
OASIS Ref.:	126794
Client:	Friends of St Margaret's Church
Dates of Fieldwork:	19 March 2012

Summary

An archaeological Watching Brief was conducted for the Friends of St Margaret's Church ahead of the insertion of a sewage drainage pipe and the lowering of the floor within the tower for disability access.

There were no archaeological features encountered during the archaeological work. A number of disarticulated human bones were collected which were left at the church for reburial.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The introduction of new drainage at St Mary's Church, Upton necessitated archaeological monitoring of the trench as it passed through the churchyard and the south wall of the tower into the tower itself (Fig. 1). The trench measured 10.34m long by 0.50m wide by 1.15m deep. Within the church tower the floor was to be lowered by 0.13m to enable disabled access to the new toilet which is going to be built in the south east corner of the tower.

This work was undertaken to fulfil planning requirements set by the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) and a brief issued by Norfolk Historic Environment Service (Ref. CNF42533, Ken Hamilton 08 October 2009). The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. BAU2289, Nigel Page 15 March 2012). This work was commissioned and funded by the Friends of St Margaret's Church, Upton.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010). The results will enable decisions to be made by the Local Planning Authority about the treatment of any archaeological remains found.

The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service (NMAS), following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site geology consists of bedrock of crag sands and gravels (http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html). There is a thin

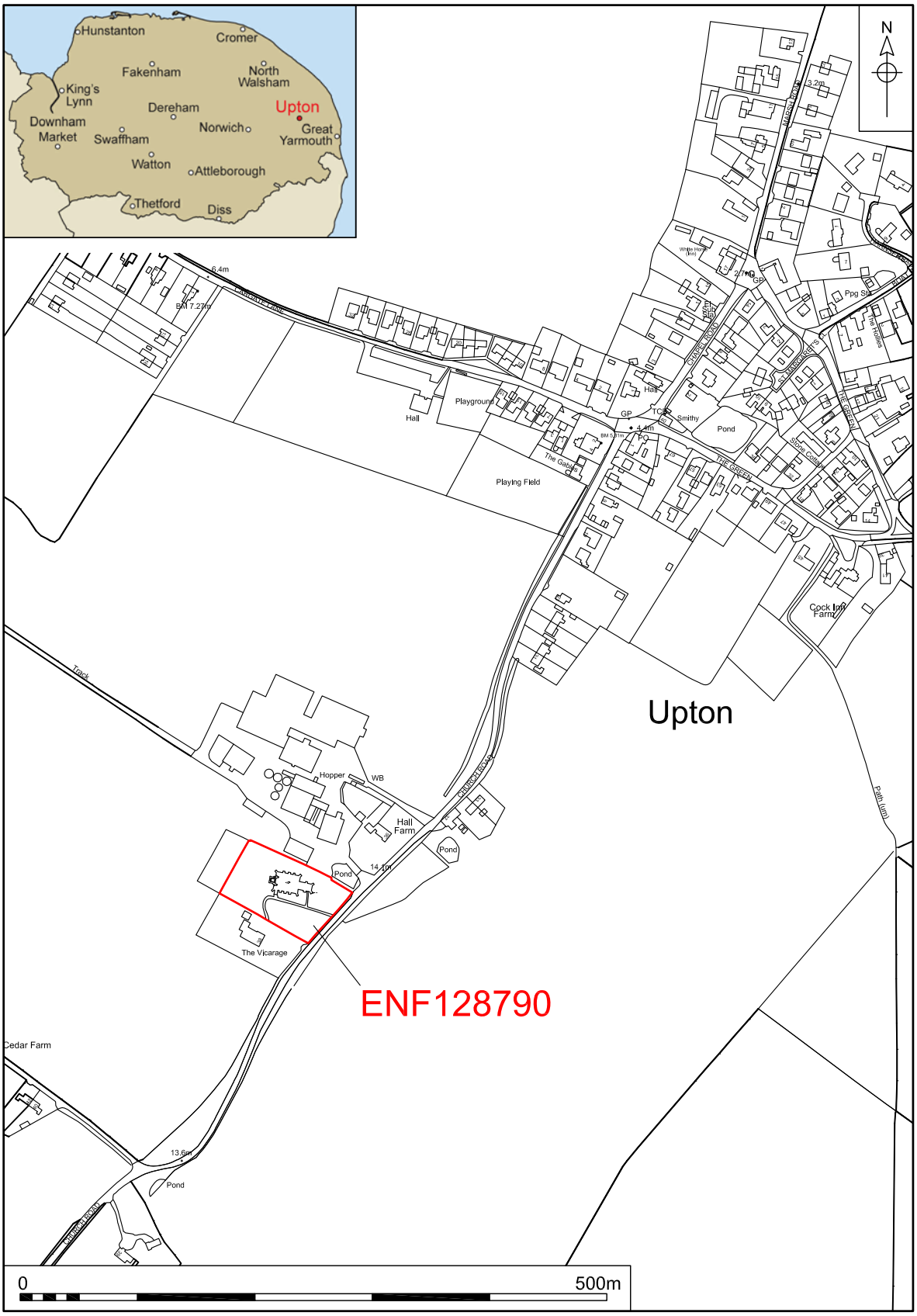

Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

layer of topsoil which merged into a churchyard soil with a sandy layer - possibly natural.

The trench was located at the west end of the church within the churchyard, running north-south away from the tower. The surface of the churchyard is significantly higher than Church Road which runs north-east to south-west along its south-eastern edge (Fig. 1). The church occupies a site just to the south of the centre of the main village with the River Bure a bit further to the east. The church is on a slightly elevated site above the 10m OD contour line with a bench mark with a value of 17.19m OD carved on its east end.

Plate 1. Pipe trench, facing south

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A survey of data held by the Norfolk Historic Environment Record within a 1km radius of St Mary's church was commissioned. There were many sites identified within this area and those that are closest to the church are discussed here.

St Margaret's Church (NHER 8518) is medieval with modern repair. The tower collapsed in 1587 with the bell stored for another nearly 350 years until 1928-31 when the tower was rebuilt and the bell was re-hung. The bell was cast in 1440. Most of the building is in perpendicular style and there are elements of Norman

and decorated styles throughout the church. The church was restored in the 19th century after being derelict for some time.

In January 2008 during the excavation of a drainage trench along the churchyard path, 60 skeletons were discovered (NHER 54060). These burials were shallow and surprisingly most were aligned north-south with only one aligned east-west (coffin furniture was also found associated with this grave).

There are documentary sources which suggest that location NHER 14472 in the vicarage garden is the site of early to middle Saxon cremation urns.

In 2009 a building survey was carried out on a local barn (NHER 52960). The barn is a combination of threshing barn and stable block. Brick details and its general appearance suggest that the building dates to the 1820s. However 20th century alterations have obscured some of the barn's open features.

In the field across the road, at the east end of the church, several metal objects have been discovered (NHER 51677). These objects range in date from Late Saxon to post-medieval.

Locations NHER 41928 and NHER 31509 are find spots generated by metal detecting exercises. These artefacts range in date from Roman to post-medieval.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological remains and collect any artefacts exposed during groundworks at the site. The Brief required that the trenching and floor reduction would be monitored by and experienced archaeologists.

Machine excavation was carried out with a hydraulic 360˚ excavator equipped with a toothed ditching bucket and operated under constant archaeological supervision.

Environmental samples were not taken.

All archaeological features and deposits were recorded using NPS Archaeology pro forma. Trench locations, plans and sections were recorded at appropriate scales. Colour, monochrome and digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits where appropriate.

The temporary benchmark used during the course of this work was transferred from an Ordnance Survey benchmark with a value of 17.19m OD, located at the east end of the church on the southern buttress on the north east face.

Site conditions were good, with the work taking place in fine weather with moving cloud and gusts of wind.

5.0 RESULTS

Pipe Trench

There were three main layers observed within the drainage trench in the churchyard (Fig. 2, Plate 1).

Topsoil (1) was a mid to dark brown, sandy silt with sparse sub angular flint pebbles with a loose friable compaction. There is a high risk of contamination with the context below as many graves over the years have been dug through it. The

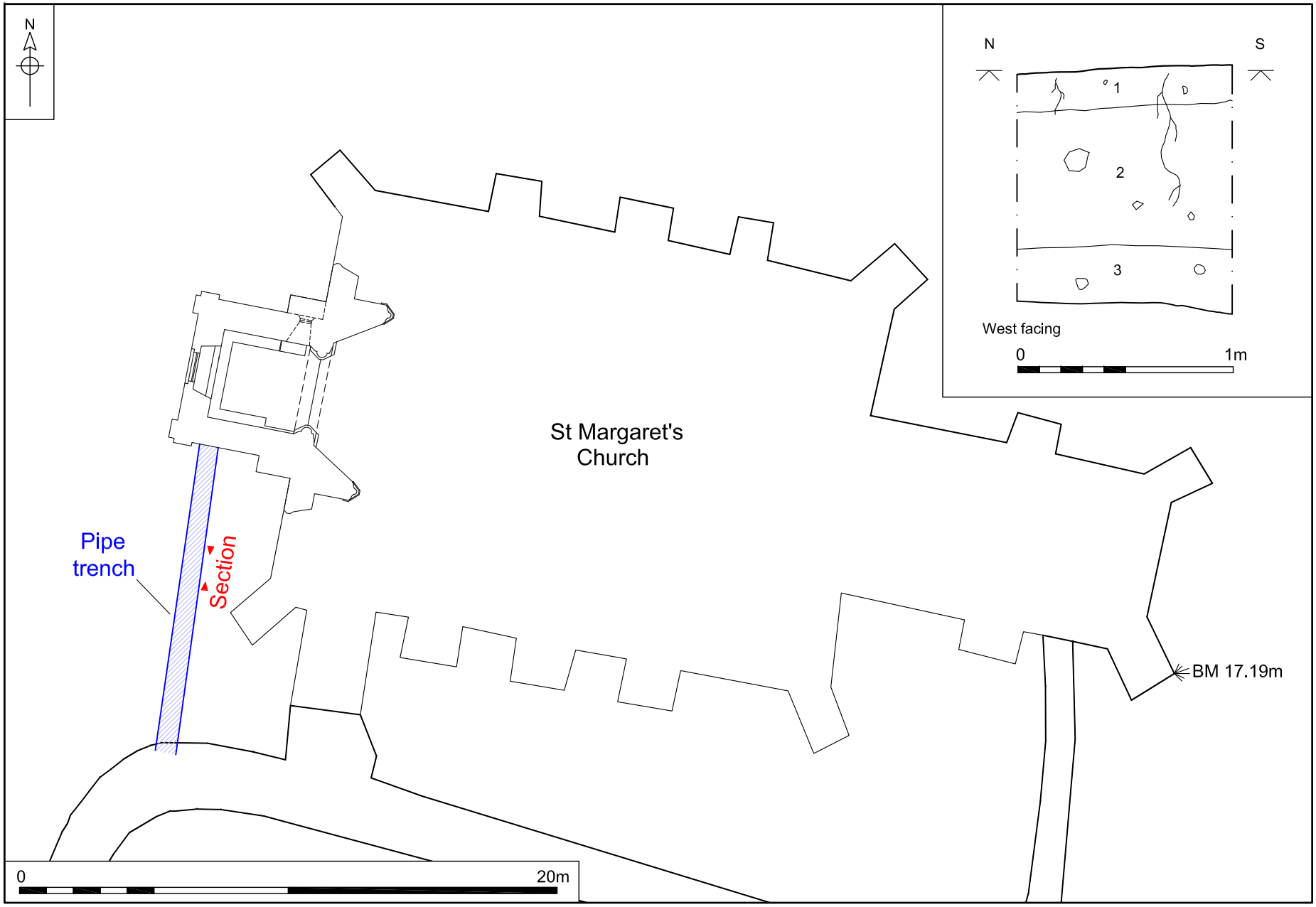

Figure 2. Location of pipe trench, scale 1:200.
Section at scale 1:25

topsoil has a diffuse horizon with the subsoil/churchyard soil. This is due to the high degree of bioturbation and grave excavation.

The churchyard soil (2) is mid grey orangey brown sandy silt with sparse sub angular flint pebbles and a medium soft compaction. This layer seems to be like subsoil but has most likely been created by the excavation of graves and a high degree of bioturbation. This has led to diffuse horizon with the topsoil. The horizon with context 3 is only clear due to a colour differentiation.

Deposit (3) appeared to be natural however evidence of human bones within this layer indicates that it had been disturbed in the past. It has a mixed horizon with deposit (2); colour differentiation is the most obvious distinguishing feature.

Tower Floor

The pipe route entered the tower via the southern wall of the tower through a hole drilled in the flint wall (Plate 2).

Plate 2. Hole drilled through church wall, facing north

Within the church itself, deposit (4) is a modern sand layer which had been placed most likely to protect the electrical cables which run through it (Plate 3). There were no archaeological features within this layer.

Plate 3. Tower floor excavations, facing west

6.0 FINDS

Disarticulated human bone was disturbed during the excavation of the trench through the churchyard. This bone was left on site to be reburied.

There were no discernable grave cuts in which the skeletons were placed. No other archaeological finds were recovered.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

There was no visible archaeology observed in the drainage trench or within the floor of the church tower

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Michael Powell for his organisation on site, the Friends of St Margaret's Church, Nigel Page and Rebecca Sillwood.

This report was illustrated and produced by David Dobson and edited by Jayne Bown.

Bibliography and Sources

Department for Communities and Local Government 2010 *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* TSO, Norwich

http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html Accessed 19.03.2012

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Category	Cut Type	Fill Of	Description	Period	Notes
1	Deposit	-	-	Topsoil	Modern	Pipe Trench
2	Deposit	-	-	Church yard soil	Uncertain	Pipe Trench
3	Deposit	-	-	Natural	-	Pipe Trench
4	Deposit	-	-	Builders' sand	Modern	Tower Floor