

All Saints Church, Laxfield LXD 032

Archaeological Evaluation Report

SCCAS Report No. 2012/173

Client: Laxfield Parochial Parish Council

Author: Stuart Boulter

November 2012

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All Saints Church, Laxfield

LXD 032

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Editor: Rhodri Gardner

Report Date: November 2012

HER Information

Site Code: LXD 032
Site Name: All Saints Church, Laxfield
Report Number 2012/172
Planning Application No: Faculty Consent
Date of Fieldwork: 02/11/2012
Grid Reference: TM 2960 7243
Oasis Reference: Suffolkc1-137411
Curatorial Officer: Diocesan Archaeologist Bob Carr
Project Officer: Stuart Boulter
Client/Funding Body: Laxfield Parochial Church Council
Client Reference: N/A

Digital report submitted to Archaeological Data Service:

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit>

Disclaimer

Any opinions expressed in this report about the need for further archaeological work are those of the Field Projects Team alone. Ultimately the need for further work will be determined by the Local Planning Authority and its Archaeological Advisors when a planning application is registered. Suffolk County Council's archaeological contracting services cannot accept responsibility for inconvenience caused to the clients should the Planning Authority take a different view to that expressed in the report.

Prepared By: Stuart Boulter
Date: November 2012

Approved By: Rhodri Gardner
Position: Contracts Manager
Date: November 2012
Signed:

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Summary

Two small evaluation test-pits were excavated within the body of the tower of All Saints Church, Laxfield on the line of proposed new service trenches.

Immediately below the existing concrete floor in Trench 1 the remains of an earlier brick floor was uncovered. The bricks were heavily sooted on their upper surface and were interpreted as representing a 19th or early 20th century structure that would have formed a stable base for a stove. Two other similar bases survive in the nave.

Below the brick floor in Trench 1 and immediately below the concrete floor over Trench 2, a layer of disaggregated lime mortar and flints was recorded. No medieval floor levels were encountered. Judging by the base level of the extant limestone mouldings, particularly in the area of Trench 1, medieval floor levels would have been similar to those of today and, on that basis, are likely to have been replaced rather than built over.

1. Introduction

The consent for an expected faculty application covering works to the west nave and tower base at All Saints, Laxfield (Fig. 1) was to include provision for archaeological mitigation works. In the first instance, the scope of these works was outlined in a Brief and Specification document prepared by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, Bob Carr (Appendix 1).

Building works essentially were to involve the provision of new toilet and kitchen facilities in the base of the tower.

2. Archaeological and historical background

While no previous archaeological work had been undertaken, the historic character and importance of the structure is clear, both from the point of view of the architectural merit of the building itself and its internal fittings.

The tower is of mid 15th century date and is unusual for Suffolk as it exhibits a significant area of stone facing up to the bell stage. However, the general character of the tower is similar to that of St. Peters, Eye to which it was closely allied (Mortlock 1992, 112).

3. Methodology

Two c.0.5m by c.0.5m holes were to be excavated through the floor of the tower and located on the line of the proposed pipe-trench under the new, reduced level, floor (Fig. 2).

During an initial site visit it was agreed with the project architect (Ruth Blackman) that the existing concrete floor could be broken out by agents of the parish in order to reduce the archaeological costs. The underlying deposits, down to a maximum depth of 0.45m, were then to be excavated by an experienced archaeologist. Unfortunately, this was not entirely adhered to with one of the holes, that adjacent to the west doorway, already excavated to its full depth prior to attendance by the archaeologist.

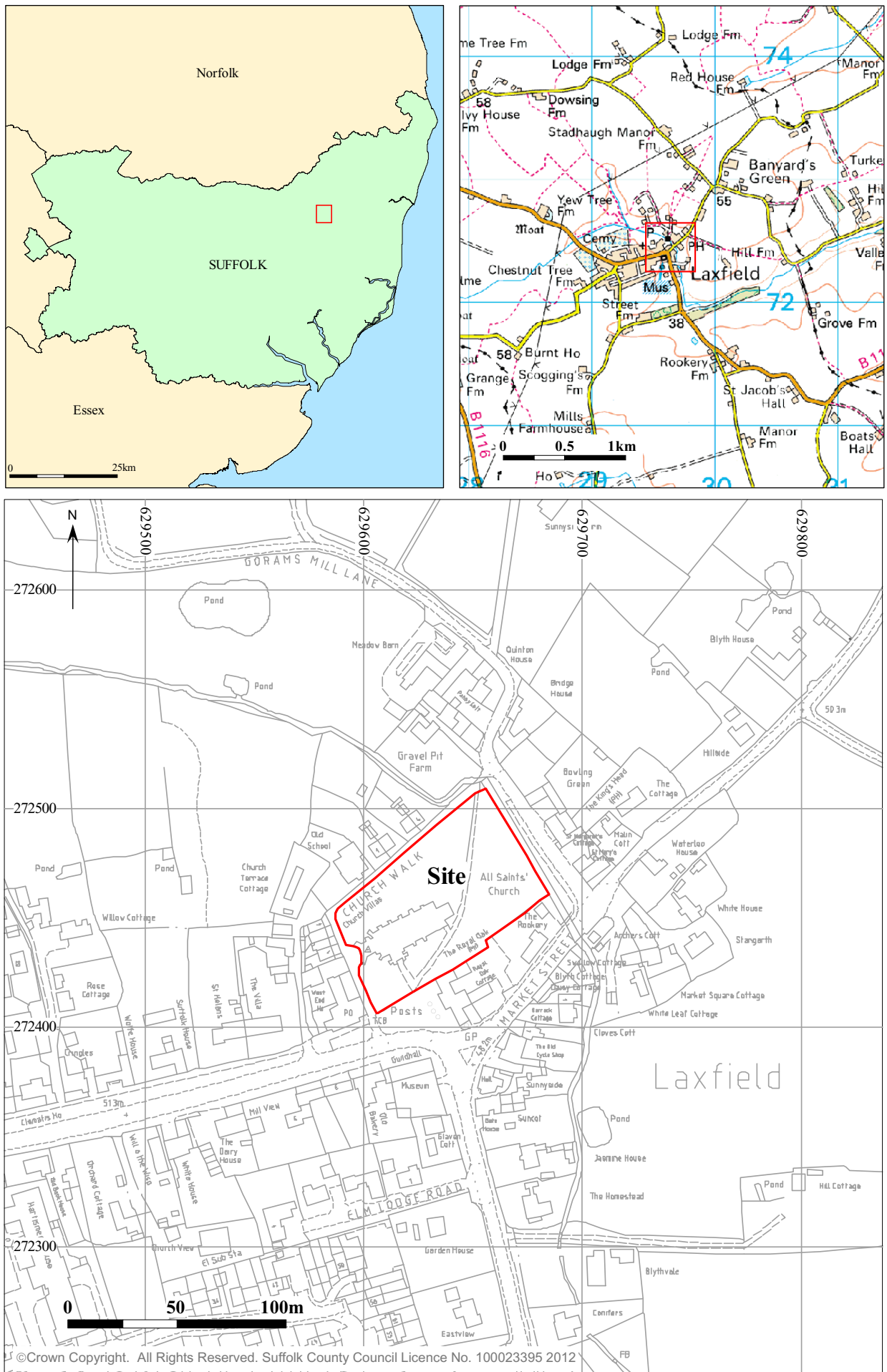


Figure 1. Location map

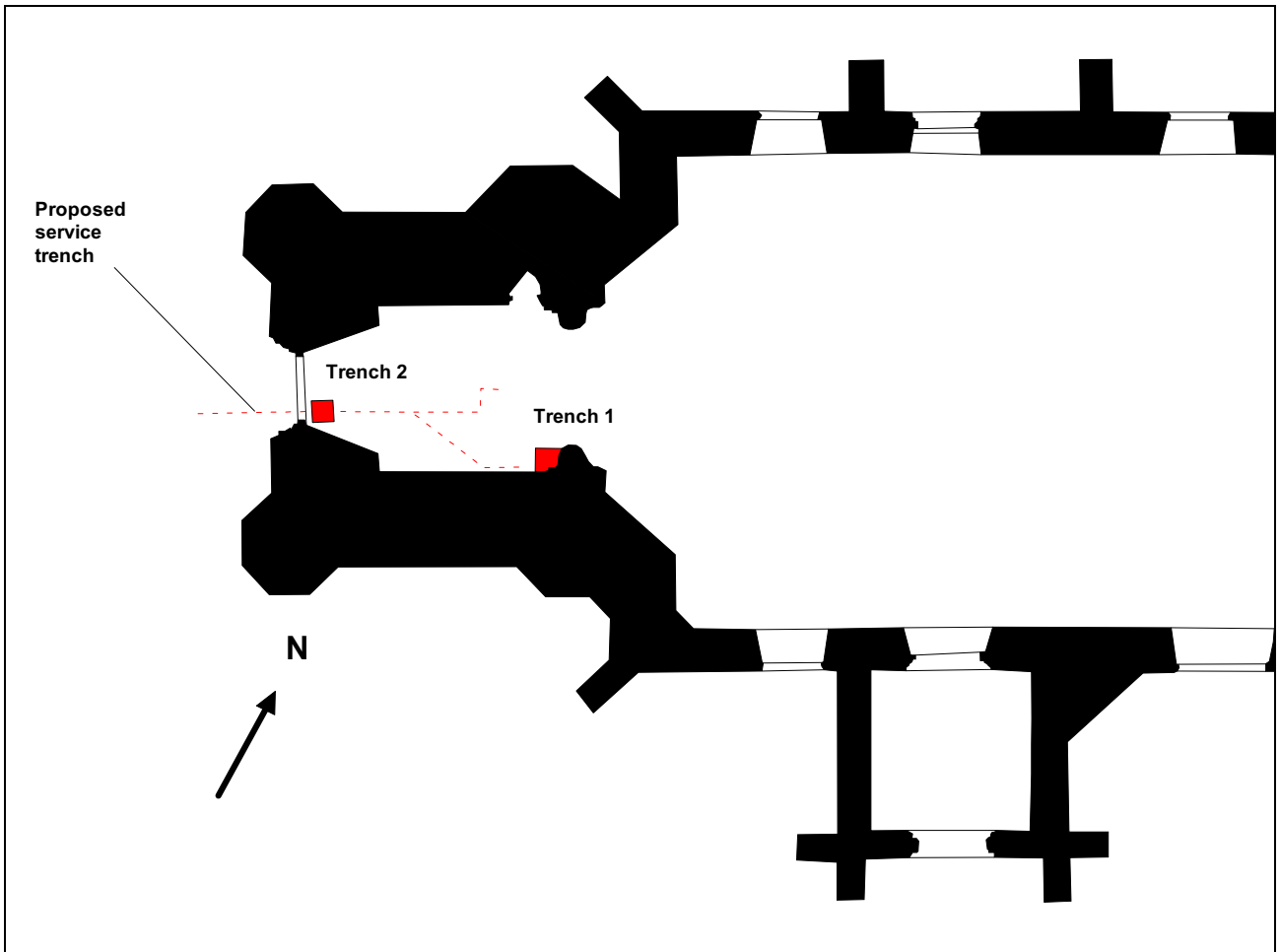


Figure 2. Trench location plan (Scale approximately 1:150)

All of the stratigraphic elements recorded were allocated an '*observed phenomena*' number within a '*unique continuous number sequence*' under the HER (Historic Environment Record) code LXD 032 (Appendix 2).

The location of the two trenches was plotted with 1:20 scale plans and sections recorded on plastic drafting film.

A high resolution photographic record was made and has been deposited in the Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Photographic Archive under the film codes HRE 16 - 27.

The drawn plans and sections were digitised in order for them to be included in this report.

4. Results

4.1 Introduction

Two trenches were excavated in the locations specified by Bob Carr (Fig. 2).

4.2 Trench results

Trench 1

Trench 1 was excavated in the south-east internal corner of the tower base (Fig. 2). The previous breaking and removal of the extant c.10cm thick concrete floor (0001) by agents of the parish had revealed a brick floor (0002) over the northern half of the trench with a regular edge to the south (Fig. 3 and Plate 1).

The bricks themselves were red in colour, although their upper surfaces were heavily blackened with soot, and measured $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 9 by $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches. The brick floor was left intact. Beyond the brick surface to the south, the removal of the concrete floor had revealed a layer of sandy clay with inclusions of brick fragments and lime mortar (0003) (Fig. 3 S1). When removed by the archaeologist, layer 0003 was found to be approximately 8cm thick and abutting both the adjacent brick floor and the limestone mouldings that formed the base of the wall at this juncture.

Below 0003 a deposit of disaggregated lime mortar and flints was encountered which continued down to and beyond the base of the excavated trench at a depth of c.45cm (Fig. 3 S1). The formal limestone mouldings only continued below the existing surface level of the concrete floor for between 8 and 13cm. Below this, the wall fabric comprised flints in lime mortar, with the face angling out from the base mouldings.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated immediately to the east of the existing stone step forming the threshold of the tower's west doorway (Fig. 2). Unfortunately, this trench had been excavated to its full 45cm depth by agents of the parish prior to inspection by the archaeologist.

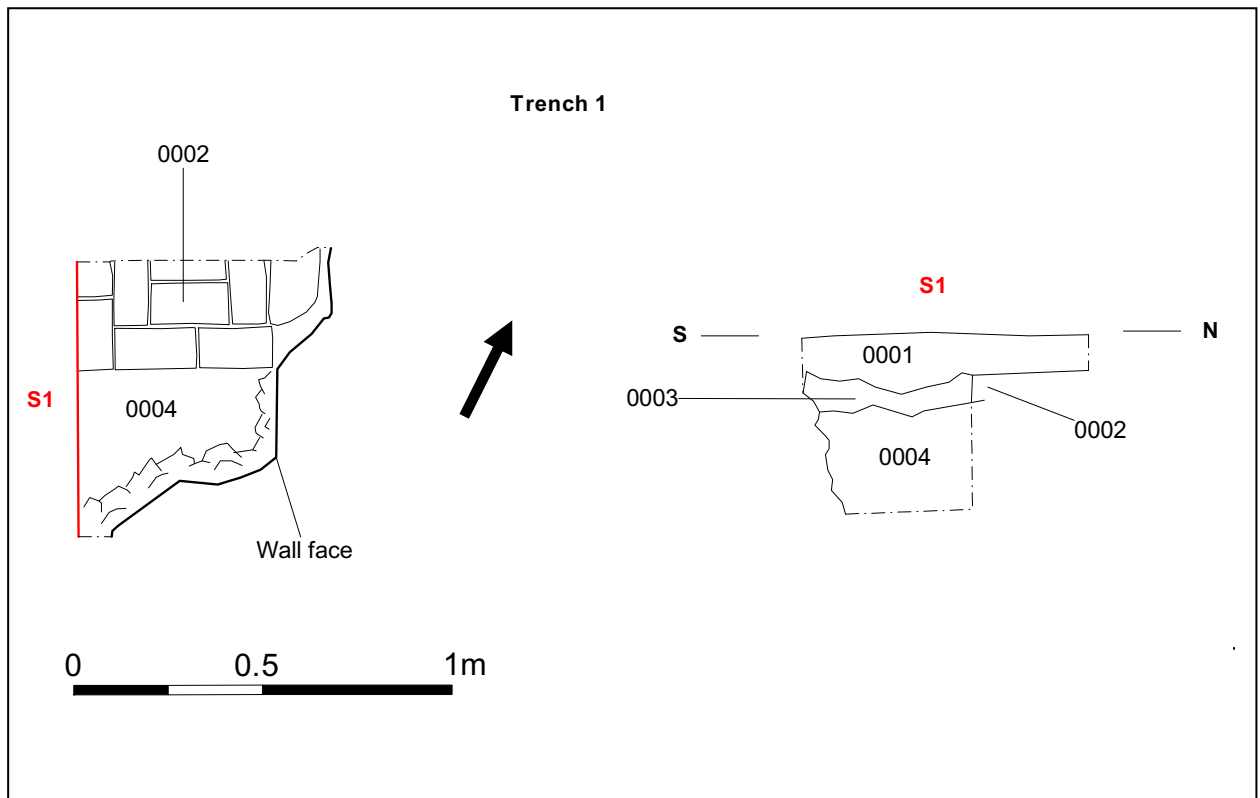


Figure 3. Trench 1: plan and section



Plate 1. Trench 1 (taken from the west)

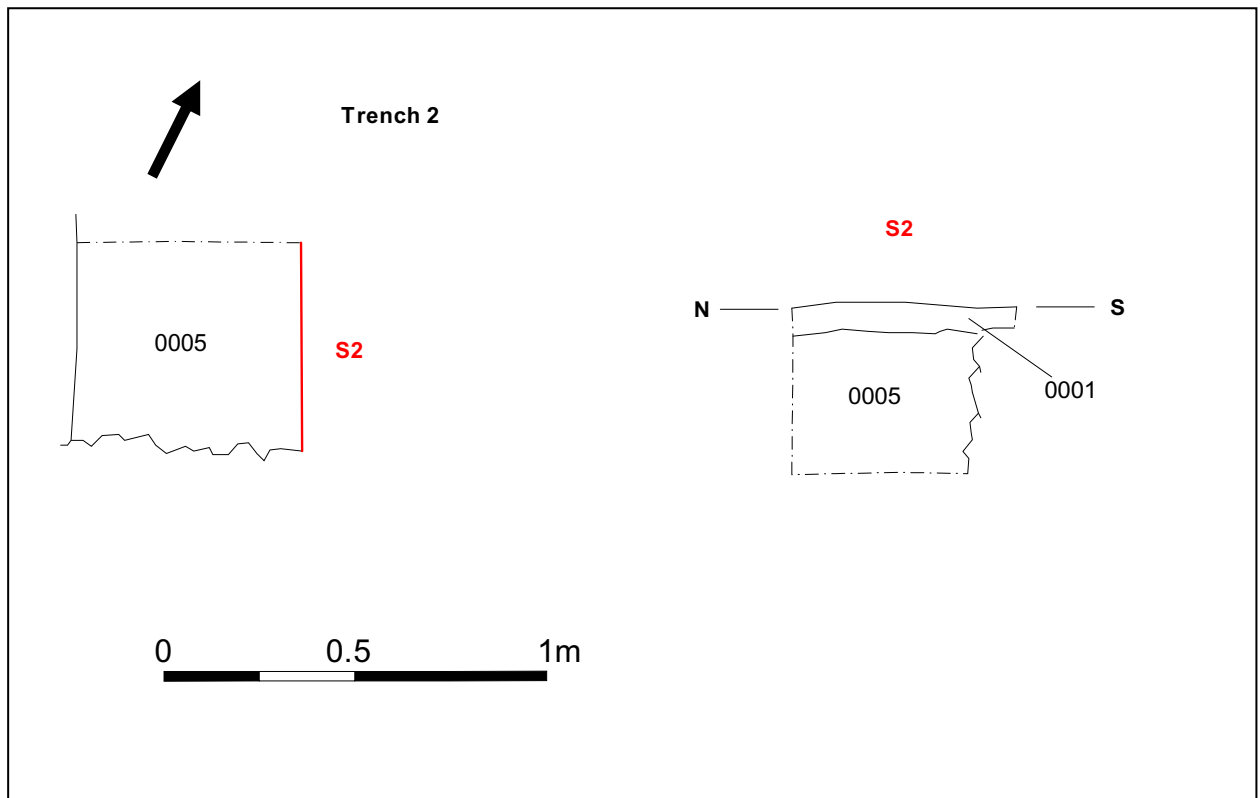


Figure 4. Trench 2: plan and section



Plate 2. Trench 2 (taken from the east)

At this juncture, concrete floor 0001 was only 8cm thick and directly overlay a deposit of disaggregated lime mortar and flints 0005 which exhibited a hint of stratification (Fig. 4 S2 and Plate 2). As this hole was effectively on line with the tower's west wall, it was clear that the below ground footing of the tower did not continue across the threshold.

5. Archaeological interpretation

Other than the brick floor in Trench 1, no earlier formal floor surfaces were encountered in either trench.

Clearly, the brick floor did not continue over the whole base of the tower and it is difficult within the confines of such small trenches to deduce whether the straight edge in Trench 1 represents a formal feature or later alteration to a more extensive surface.

Interestingly there are two discrete areas of brick flooring extant in the nave, one against the north wall and one against the south. The bricks were identical in character to those in the tower and were known to represent a solid, fire-proof base on which heating stoves were placed and probably date to the 19th or early 20th century. It seems likely then that the brick floor in the tower also represents the base for a heating stove, an interpretation that is strengthened by the presence of soot on the upper surface of the bricks.

The evidence provided by the level of the surviving mouldings also suggests that any earlier floor surface would have been at a similar level to the extant concrete floor and, as a consequence, must already have been removed.

The layer of disaggregated lime mortar and flints encountered in both trenches is more difficult to interpret. In character, this deposit resembles demolition material, but could also represent debris accumulating during the construction of the tower itself.

6. Recommendations for further work

While the evaluation suggests that no medieval floor surfaces survive within the body of the tower, there remains some archaeological potential. Given that the concrete floor will be removed as part of the project, it is suggested that a programme of

archaeological monitoring is undertaken in order to record the full extent of the underlying brick floor. In addition, the below floor service trenches should also be monitored in order to glean further information regarding the underlying deposits.

7. Archive deposition

Paper and photographic archive: SCCAS Bury St Edmunds

Digital archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Archive\Laxfield\LXD 032 Evaluation

Digital photographic archive: SCCAS R:\Environmental Protection\Conservation\Archaeology\Catalogues\Photos\HRE 16 - 27

8. Acknowledgements

The fieldwork was directed and carried out by Stuart Boulter.

Project management was undertaken by Stuart Boulter.

The report was written by Stuart Boulter and the illustrations were created by Stuart Boulter and Linzi Everett.

Report editing was undertaken by Rhodri Gardner.

9. Bibliography

Mortlock, D. P., *The popular guide to Suffolk Churches, No. 3 East Suffolk*, Acorn Editions
1992

*Outline Brief and Specification for the Evaluation of Church Fabric
prior to development and prior to Faculty*

CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS LAXFIELD

The parish should establish from the Secretary of the DAC whether faculty consent should be sought for this archaeological evaluation.

Although this document is fundamental to the work of the specialist archaeological contractor the Parish and its Project Manager should be aware that it is outline guidance only. There may be a need for Method Statement to be prepared by potential archaeological contractors in order that standards and costs can be adequately defined (see para 1.6).

1. Background

- 1.1 A Faculty application is expected to be made to undertake works to the W nave and tower base in order to provide WC and kitchen facilities (drawings by Ruth Blackman, letter dated 2/04/12). A faculty has not yet been granted but it is understood that any consent will be conditional upon archaeological mitigation works.
- 1.2 The church is of regional importance, primarily because of its setting in the historic environment, its size and quality of fittings in the nave.

The tower dates from the mid 15th century with a floor set above the level of the nave. The proposal is likely to require the removal of an existing concrete surface and the lowering of the floor level by c.140mm. On the assumption that a formation level for such a floor will be c.250mm, (i.e. total disturbance likely to be c.400mm from present floor surface) and that there will be service trenches for water and sewerage there is potential for significant disturbance to underlying deposits which may be of archaeological value.

The acceptability of the proposal and the precise extent of archaeological mitigation which may be required - including limits which may be set to ground lowering in order to preserve archaeological features - cannot be determined at this moment because there is no information on the archaeological deposit beneath the tower floor.

- 1.3 Under Ecclesiastical Exemption the church is expected to model its historic building controls upon the methodologies employed in the lay planning system. The process of evaluating the likely impact of development and using conditions to ensure mitigation for damage to historic fabric is integral to government Planning Policy Statement 5: 'Planning for the Historic Environment'.
- 1.4 A programme of Conservation-Based Research and Analysis (CoBRA) is needed in order to:
- i) Better articulate the significance of the building.
 - ii) Record significant fabric to be removed or hidden during building work
 - iii) Produce a record of features which will be lost in mitigation of partial or wholesale excavation for footings.

- 1.5 All arrangements for the recording, the timing of the work, access to the site, the definition of the precise area of landholding and area for proposed development are to be defined and negotiated with the commissioning body.
 - 1.6 This brief should not be considered sufficient to enable the total execution of the project. A Project Design or Written Scheme of Investigation (PD/WSI) based upon this brief and the accompanying outline specification of minimum requirements is an essential requirement. This must be submitted by the church or their agent to the Secretary or the Archaeological Advisor of the Diocesan Advisory Committee (116 Hardwick Lane, Bury St Edmunds IP33 2LE; telephone 01284 for approval. The work must not commence until this office has approved both the archaeological contractor as suitable to undertake the work, and the PD/WSI as satisfactory. The PD/WSI will *provide the basis for measurable standards* and will be used to establish whether the requirements of the Faculty condition will be adequately met
2. **Brief for Archaeological Trial Excavation.**
 - 2.1 Undertake trial excavation within the tower base.
 - 2.2 Sufficient evidence should be collected to evaluate the impacts of the proposal to lower the floor, remove the step which projects into the nave area and insert service trenches which will pass out under the W doorway threshold.
 - 2.3 It is suggested that at least two holes c500 X 500 mm square will be needed within the tower; one on the line of the proposed service trench leaving the church by the W doorway and another in the SE corner in the angle between the tower arch impost and the S wall. Both investigations should extend to 450mm below present floor level unless intact medieval floor surfaces are encountered. At all times there is to be a presumption that early floor surfaces or structures (e.g. bell founding pits) are to be left undisturbed unless consultation with the parish and the DAC agrees that disturbance may take place.
 3. **General Management**
 - 3.1 A timetable for all stages of the project must be agreed before the first stage of work commences, including monitoring by the Archaeological Advisor to the DAC.
 - 3.2 The composition of the project staff must be detailed and agreed (this is to include any subcontractors).
 - 3.3 A general Health and Safety Policy must be provided, with detailed risk assessment and management strategy for this particular site.
 - 3.4 No initial survey to detect public utility or other services has taken place. The responsibility for this rests with the archaeological contractor.
 - 3.5 The Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standards and Guidance* should be used for additional guidance in the execution of the project and in drawing up the report.
 4. **Report Requirements**

- 4.1 An archive of all records and finds must be prepared consistent with the principles of English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 1991.
- 4.2 The data recording methods and conventions used must be consistent with, and approved by, the County Historic Environment Record.
- 4.3 The objective account of the archaeological evidence must be clearly distinguished from its archaeological interpretation.
- 4.4 Reports on specific areas of specialist study must include sufficient detail to permit assessment of potential for analysis, including tabulation of data by context, and must include non-technical summaries.
- 4.5 The Report must include a discussion and an assessment of the archaeological evidence. Its conclusions must include a clear statement of the archaeological potential of the site, and the significance of that potential in the context of the Regional Research Framework (*East Anglian Archaeology*, Occasional Papers 3 & 8, 1997 and 2000).
- 4.6 The site archive is to be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record within three months of the completion of fieldwork. It will then become publicly accessible.
- 4.7 Where positive conclusions are drawn from a project a summary report, in the established format, suitable for inclusion in the annual 'Archaeology in Suffolk' section of the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology*, must be prepared. It should be included in the project report and submitted by the end of the calendar year in which the evaluation work takes place, whichever is the sooner.
- 4.8 County Historic Environment Record sheets must be completed, as per the county Historic Environment Record manual.

Specification by: R D Carr

Archaeological Advisor to the DAC
116 Hardwick Lane
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk IP33 2LE

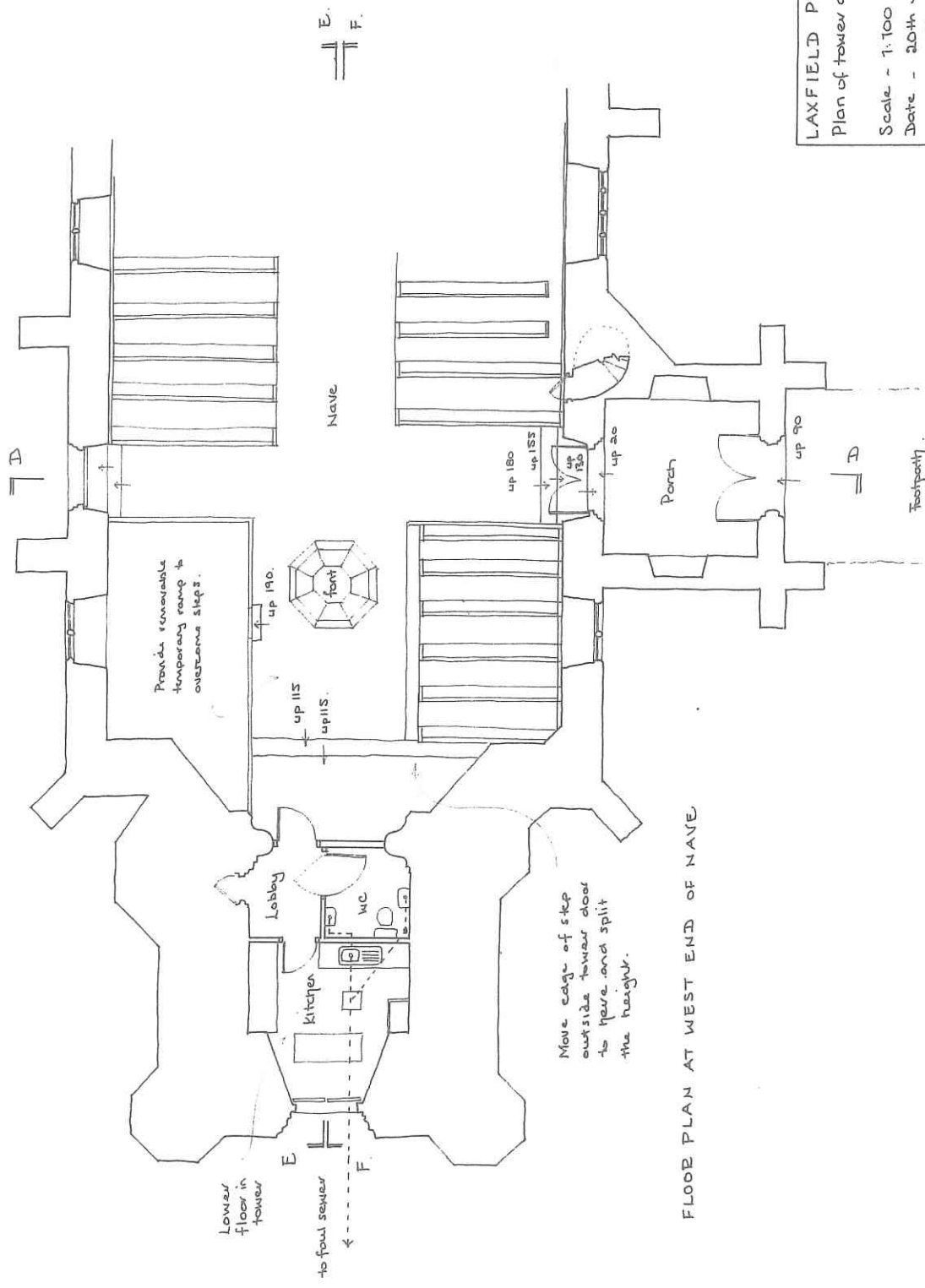
Tel: 01284 753228

Date: 25th June 2012

Reference: /SpecChurch_Laxfield_12

This brief and specification remains valid for 12 months from the above date. If work is not carried out in full within that time this document will lapse; the DAC should be notified and a revised brief and specification may be issued

Appendix 1



FLOOR PLAN AT WEST END OF NAIVE

LAXFIELD PARISH CHURCH : SUFFOLK
 Plan of tower and west end of nave -
 as proposed.
 Scale - 1:100 DWG no: 05A.
 Date - 20th January 2012
 Drawn by Ruth Blackman for and on behalf
 of Bursall, Swash and Blackman Ltd

Appendix 2. Context list and description

Context No.	Location	Description
0001	Trenches 1 and 2	Existing concrete floor covering the whole internal tower base.
0002	Trench 1	Brick floor seen in half of Trench 1. Red bricks with sooted upper surface
0003	Trench 1	Sandy clay with brick and lime mortar fragments. Abuts 0002
0004	Trench 1	Disaggregated lime mortar and flints seen below 0002 and 0003. Continues down beyond excavated base of trench
0005	Trench 2	Disaggregated lime mortar and flints seen below 0002 and 0003. Exhibits a hint of stratification. Continues down beyond excavated base of trench

Appendix 3. Oasis data collection form

OASIS ID: suffolkc1-137411

Project details

Project name	LXD 32, All Saints Church, Laxfield, Archaeological Evaluation Report
Short description of the project	Two small evaluation test-pits were excavated within the body of the tower of All Saints Church, Laxfield on the line of proposed new service trenches. Immediately below the existing concrete floor in Trench 1 the remains of an earlier brick floor was uncovered. The bricks were heavily sooted on their upper surface and were interpreted as representing a 19th or early 20th century structure that would have formed the stable base for a stove. Two other similar bases survive in the nave. Below the brick floor in Trench one and immediately below the concrete in Trench 2 a layer of disaggregated lime mortar and flints were recorded. No medieval floor levels were encountered. Judging by the base level of the extant limestone mouldings, particularly in the area of Trench 1, medieval floor levels would have been similar to those of today and, on that basis, are likely to have been replaced rather than built over.
Project dates	Start: 02-11-2012 End: 02-11-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Monument type	CHURCH Medieval
Significant Finds	BRICK FLOOR Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Targeted Trenches","Visual Inspection"

Development type Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration

Prompt Faculty jurisdiction

Position in the
planning process Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country England

Site location SUFFOLK MID SUFFOLK LAXFIELD All Saints Church, Laxfield

Study area 2.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TM 2960 7243 52 1 52 18 04 N 001 22 04 E Point

Height OD / Depth Min: 48.50m Max: 48.50m

Project creators

Name of
Organisation Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service

Project brief
originator Diocesan Archaeologist

Project design
originator Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Field Team

Project
director/manager Stuart Boulter

Project supervisor Stuart Boulter

Type of sponsor/funding body Parochial Church Council

Name of sponsor/funding body Laxfield Parochial Church Council

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Suffolk County SMR

Digital Archive ID LXD 032

Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Suffolk County SMR

Paper Archive ID LXD 032

Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"

Paper Media available "Context sheet","Correspondence","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Title LXD 032, All Saints Church, Laxfield, Archaeological Evaluation Report

Author(s)/Editor(s) Boulter, S. P.

Other bibliographic details SCCAS Rpt. No. 2012/172

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