

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE

The Church of St. Andrew, Walberswick (WLB 014); Record of an Archaeological Evaluation & Excavation

SCCAS Report No. 2007/195; Oasis No. suffolkc1-33407



Excavation in progress

Stuart Boulter
Field Team
Suffolk C.C. Archaeological Service

© October 2007

Lucy Robinson, County Director of Environment and Transport
Endeavour House, Russel Road, Ipswich, IP1 2BX
Tel. (01473) 264384



Suffolk County Council



Suffolk County Council
Environment and Transport



Contents

| | Page No. |
|---|----------|
| List of Contents | i |
| List of Figures | i |
| List of Plates | i |
| List of Tables | i |
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Summary | ii |
| | |
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. Methodologies | 2 |
| 2.1 Fieldwork | 2 |
| 2.2 Post-Excavation | 2 |
| 3. Results | 2 |
| 3.1 Fieldwork | 2 |
| 3.2 The Finds (by Sue Anderson) | 10 |
| 4. Archaeological Interpretation | 10 |
| 5. Bibliography | 11 |

List of Figures

| | |
|---|---|
| Fig. 1 1:10,000 scale OS map extract showing the location of the site | 1 |
| Fig. 2 1:100 scale plan showing the location of the excavated trenches | 4 |
| Fig. 3 Trench 1, 1:20 scale section drawing | 5 |
| Fig. 4 Trench 3, 1:20 scale plan | 6 |
| Fig. 5 Trench 5 & pipe-trench, composite 1:20 section drawing | 8 |
| Fig. 6 Pipe-trench, 1:50 scale plan | 9 |

List of Plates

| | |
|---|---|
| Cover: Excavation in progress | |
| Plate 1: West side of Trench 1 | 5 |
| Plate 2: Detail of Trench 2 | 5 |
| Plate 3: Trench 3, tiled floor 0020 | 7 |
| Plate 4: Trench 3, tiles 0014 & threshold 0017 | 7 |
| Plate 5: Pipe-trench, feature 0024 | 7 |
| Plate 6: Pipe-trench, Grave 0027 | 8 |
| Plate 7: Pipe-trench, Graves 0028 & 0029 | 8 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 Context/OP list & descriptions | 3 |
| Table 2 Details of the retained finds | 10 |

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team consisted of Jez Meredith (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Project Officer) and John Blow (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Project Assistant) while the subsequent excavation was undertaken by Stuart Boulter (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Senior Project Officer) and Tony Fisher (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service Supervisor). Archaeological planning advice was provided by Robert Carr (Suffolk County Council Archaeological Conservation Team & Diocesan Archaeologist) while the project was initially managed by Tom Loader, and later by John Newman (Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team). Funding was provided by Walberswick Parochial Church Council.

Summary

Walberswick, Church of St. Andrews (TM 4898 7473; WLB 014) Provision of a new disabled toilet at the Church of St. Andrew, Walberswick included considerable ground disturbance within the body of the nave of the medieval church (now ruined). Three trenches were manually excavated as an evaluation on the line of the proposed sewer within the body of the church, and subsequently the sewer trench itself was excavated by archaeologists. No medieval floor surfaces were encountered, although pavements had been re-used and lain as a semi-formal surface immediately south of the doorway. Generally, the soil profile comprised c.0.20-0.30 metres of sandy loam topsoil over a further c.0.20-0.30 of brown stony sand, with localised sandy layers and inclusions of tile, brick and lime mortar, with the naturally occurring podsolised sand subsoil encountered at a depth of c.0.6 metres. A linear feature crossing the evaluation trench was not subsequently identified in the sewer trench itself. However, the cuts for three presumed burials were recorded continuing on down into the subsoil beyond the excavated depth of the trench. These remained undisturbed. One other feature, with evidence for *in-situ* burning, was recorded towards the northern end of the sewer trench and was interpreted as a hearth used to melt lead during the partial demolition of the nave and north aisle. The flint rubble and lime mortar footing for the north wall of the nave was found to continue uninterrupted across the north doorway, the vestiges of a sandstone threshold was recorded during the evaluation stage of the project. (Stuart Boulter for Suffolk County Council and Walberswick Parochial Parish Council).

1. Introduction

The Church of St. Andrew, Walberswick lies towards the western end of the present village (Fig. 1) (TM 4897 7473) on a shallow spur of land between the coastal marshes to the south and those flanking the River Blyth to the east and north. The site lies at between 10 and 11 metres OD.



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2007

Fig. 1 1:10,000 scale OS map extract showing the location of the St. Andrew's Church, Walberswick

The building as it stands today represents only a small proportion of the structure as it would have been in its pomp during the 15th century, but the decline in the town's port and the appropriation of the church tithes by Henry VIII (Mortlock 1992, 207) resulted in a loss of revenue that was catastrophic to the upkeep of the church. In a ruinous state by the end of the 17th century, the now small congregation sought permission to 'downsize' by unroofing the north aisle, nave and chancel and retreating to the south aisle refurbished with the proceeds from selling the materials from the partially demolished structure. This is much how we see the church today with the remaining shell of the earlier structure enclosing the north side of what was the south aisle which effectively became the nave of the refurbished building.

During 2002, the details for a proposed new disabled toilet to be inserted within the standing structure (planning application C/03/400) were studied by the archaeological conservation officer (and Diocesan Archaeologist), Robert Carr, and were deemed to have archaeological implications, particularly where the associated services and foul sewer cut across the groundplan of the former nave and north aisle. On that basis he advised the project architect (Hilary Brightman) that archaeological evaluation, in this instance comprising the hand-excavation of trial-trenches on the line of the proposed service trenches, should be undertaken in order to inform the need for further archaeological work. Subsequently, Suffolk County Council's Archaeological Service Field Projects Team (hereafter SCCASFPT) were commissioned to undertake the trenching evaluation, the fieldwork for which was carried out on November 7th, 2002 under the direction of Jezz Meredith. The results of the evaluation prompted Robert Carr to specify that when the main project was

initiated, that the service trench across the earlier nave, north aisle and a short length beyond the into the churchyard should be excavated and recorded by archaeologists. Subsequently, SCCASFPT were commissioned by the project architect to undertake work, the excavation for which was carried out on 24th of April 2007 under the direction of Stuart Boulter.

The results of the earlier evaluation have been combined into this report, all to be deposited with the county Sites & Monuments Record (hereafter SMR).

2. Methodologies

2.1 Fieldwork

All trenches were excavated manually with the locations governed by the detailed plans of the proposed services. Features and their stratigraphic elements were allocated OP (Observed Phenomena) numbers within a 'unique continuous' numbering sequence under the SMR code WLB 014 (Table 1)

Where appropriate, plans and sections were drawn, in pencil on plastic drafting film, at scales of 1:10, 1:20 and 1:50 depending on their complexity (reproduced as Figs 3-6).

A full photographic record (digital, monochrome print & colour slide) was made and has been deposited with the rest of the site archive at Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.

All finds were retained for subsequent identification, quantification and dating.

2.2 Post-excavation

All retained finds were processed (washed & marked) before being quantified and identified (Table 2). A short report was prepared by Sue Anderson (see The Finds).

Drawn plans and sections were inked to archive standard and were scanned for inclusion in this report.

A descriptive text was also prepared for inclusion in this report and a site archive, including all the documentation, digital files and photographs, was compiled into a site archive and was subsequently deposited in the county SMR at Bury St. Edmunds.

3. Results

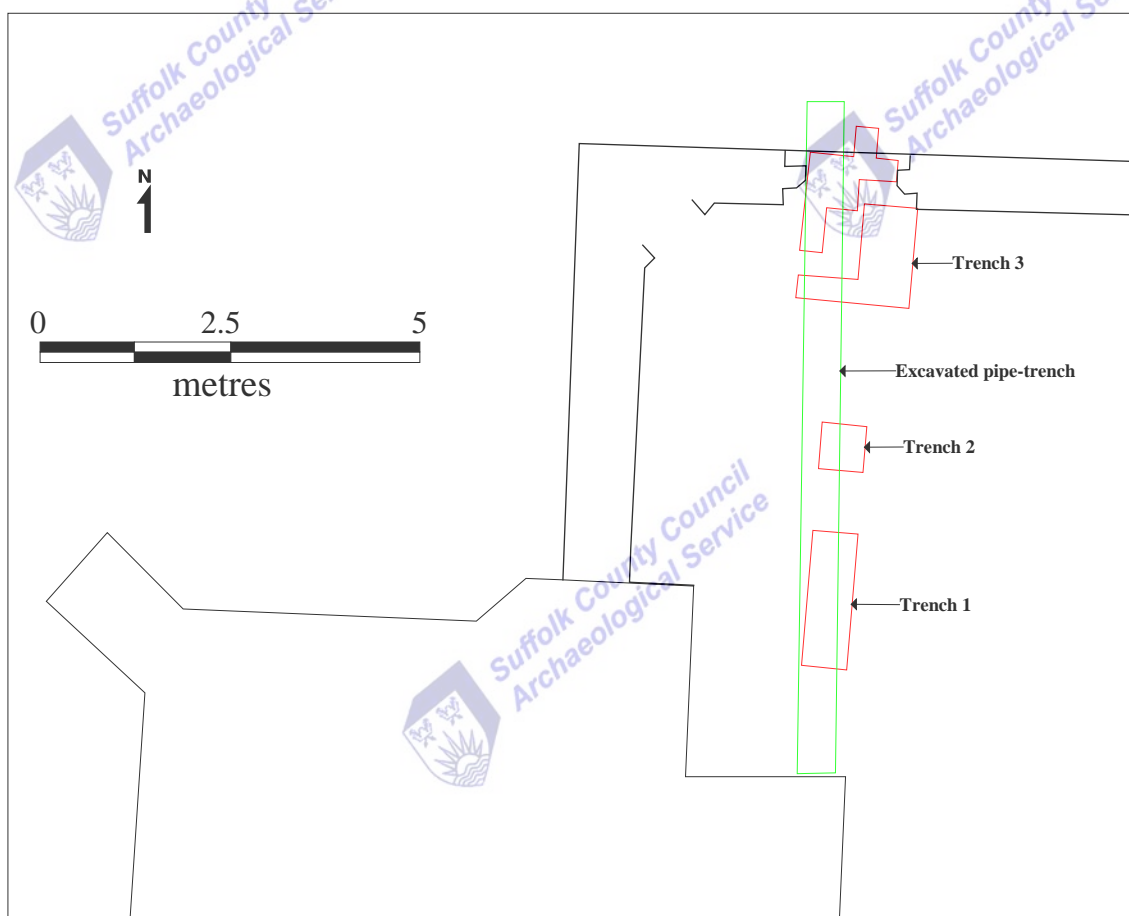
3.1 Fieldwork

The locations of the excavated trenches, three for the evaluation in red and the overall service trench in green, are shown on Figure 2. A context/OP list with information regarding the features and stratigraphy revealed in all of the trenches appear as Table 1.

The area enclosed by the earlier church walls was covered by grass and the considerable time that had elapsed between the evaluation stage of the project and the service trench excavation meant that the location of the earlier trenches was not obvious to the naked eye. Similarly to the evaluation stage of the project, the cut curves from the pipe-trench were stacked separately in order that they could be replaced with as little visible disruption as possible.

| OP | Context | Location | Description |
|------|---------|------------------------|--|
| 0001 | 0001 | Whole site | Unstratified finds |
| 0002 | 0002 | Trench 1 | Topsoil |
| 0003 | 0003 | Trench 1 | Layer; orange sand (c.0.05 m) |
| 0004 | 0004 | Trench 1 | V-shaped cut? E-W orientated, not seen in subsequent service trench |
| 0005 | 0004 | Trench 1 | Fill of 0004; loose sandy lime mortar with occasional flint cobbles |
| 0006 | 0006 | Trench 1 | Layer; mottled grey sand with mortar flecks (c.0.10 m) |
| 0007 | 0009? | Trench 1 | Layer; lime mortar crumbs with occasional flint cobbles (c.0.08 m) |
| 0008 | 0009? | Trench 1 | Layer; clean yellow coarse sand (c.0.09 m) |
| 0009 | 0009 | Trench 1 | Recorded as possible cut of wall footing (later discounted, probably demolition layers) |
| 0010 | 0010 | Trench 2 | Topsoil |
| 0011 | 0011 | Trench 2 | Spread of tile & brick fragments below topsoil at c.0.26 m depth. Demolition? |
| 0012 | 0012 | Trench 2 | Layer; dark brown loam below 0011 |
| 0013 | 0013 | Trench 3 | Topsoil |
| 0014 | 0014 | Trench 3 & Pipe Trench | Semi-formally lain tile floor (same as 0020) |
| 0015 | 0015 | Trench 3 | Layer; thin spread of loam with sandy lenses. ?Bedding for 0014 |
| 0016 | 0016 | Trench 3 & Pipe Trench | Cut for north wall of earlier aisle |
| 0017 | 0017 | Trench 3 | Vestiges of original threshold. Sandstone slab? |
| 0018 | 0018 | Trench 3 & Pipe Trench | Flint rubble and mortar footing for north aisle wall, continuous trough doorway |
| 0019 | 0019 | Trench 3 | Layer; grey/brown silty with stones, see also 0023 (c.0.40 metres) |
| 0020 | 0020 | Trench 3 | Semi-formally lain tile floor, probably equivalent to 0014 in west side of trench (8 inch tiles) |
| 0021 | 0018 | Trench 3 | Same as 0018 |
| 0022 | 0022 | Pipe Trench | Topsoil |
| 0023 | 0019 | Pipe Trench | Layer; grey/brown silty with stones (c.0.40 metres) |
| 0024 | 0024 | Pipe Trench | Small pit seen in west side of pipe trench |
| 0025 | 0024 | Pipe Trench | Heat-reddened clay lining to 0024 |
| 0026 | 0024 | Pipe Trench | Grey ashy deposit in 0024 over 0025. ?lead oxide |
| 0027 | 0027 | Pipe Trench | Grave cut into subsoil |
| 0028 | 0028 | Pipe Trench | Grave cut into subsoil, cuts 0029 |
| 0029 | 0029 | Pipe Trench | Grave cut into subsoil, cut by 0028 |
| 0030 | 0030 | Pipe Trench | Toed brick footing for north wall of standing building at south end of pipe trench |

Table 1 Context/OP list & descriptions



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Suffolk County Council Licence No. 100023395 2007

Fig. 2 1:100 scale plan showing the location of the excavated trenches

Trench 1: measuring 1.80 metres by 1.20 metres, this trench was located towards the southern end of the proposed pipe-run, partially within the angle afforded by the standing buildings (Fig. 2).

A sequence of layers and a possible incised feature were recorded (Fig. 3 & Plate 1). For the southernmost 0.6 metres of the trench the *c.*0.26 metre thick layer of topsoil (0002) gave way an intermittent spread of orange sand (0003) with a maximum thickness of 0.05 metres. Below this, a *c.*0.10 metre thick layer (0006) comprising mottled grey sand with mortar flecks was recorded with an uneven interface with the underlying podsolised naturally occurring sand subsoil. At *c.*0.70 metres from the southern end of the trench a *c.*0.30 metres wide linear feature (0004), with a rounded v-shaped profile, was seen in section to cross the trench. While clear in the trench sides it was not recognised during the excavation and also not in the subsequent pipe-trench and, as a result, its lateral persistence must be questioned. The fill of this feature (0005) comprised loose sandy mortar with occasional flint cobbles. While the base of 0004, where it cut the natural subsoil and layer 0008, to the north, was well defined, its relationship with layer 0006, to the south, and 0007, to the north, was less clear.

Below the topsoil immediately north of feature 0004 and continuing to the end of the trench a *c.*0.08 metres thick layer (0007) of unconsolidated mortar with occasional flint cobbles was found to overlie a further, similar in thickness, layer

(0008) comprising clean coarse yellow sand. In turn, 0008 gave way to the naturally occurring sand subsoil with a clearly defined boundary between the two.



Plate 1: West side of Trench 1

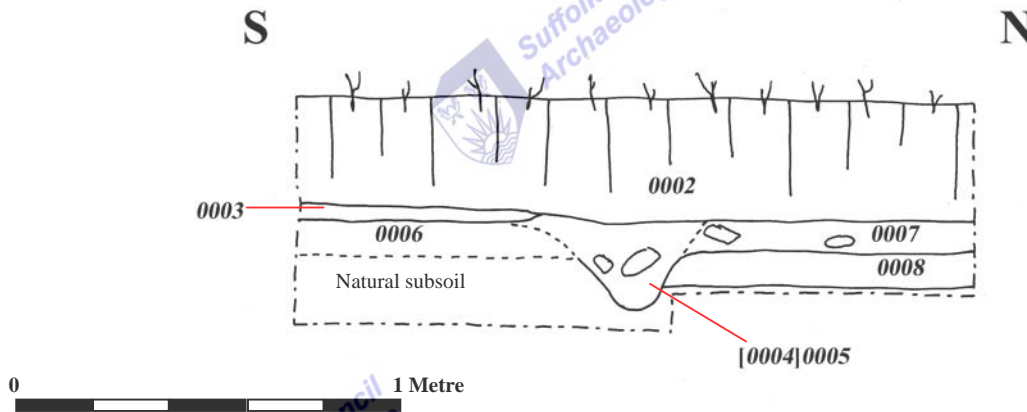


Fig. 3 Trench 1, 1:20 scale section drawing



Plate 2 Detail of Trench 2

Trench 2: measuring 1 metre by 1 metre and located halfway between the standing building to the south and the earlier north aisle wall to the north (Fig. 2), this trench was only excavated down to a depth of c.0.26 metres, effectively removing the topsoil (0010) down to the top of a spread of mortar lumps and tile/brick fragments (0011) (Plate 2).

Trench 3: comprising two separate, but adjacent components, Trench 3 covered

an area of approximately 2 square metres straddling the threshold of the earlier doorway through the north aisle of the 15th century church (Figs 2 & 4).

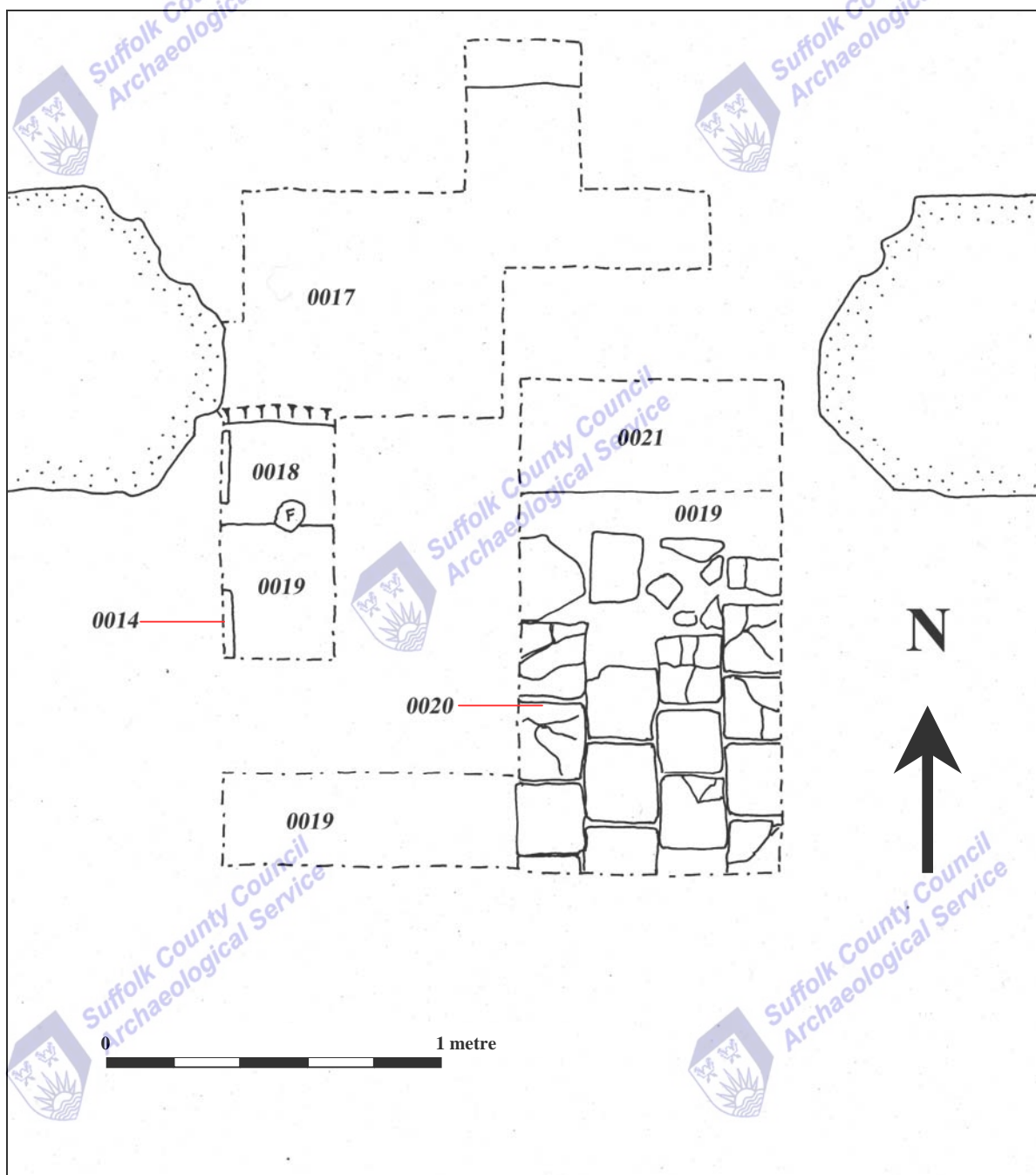


Fig. 4 Trench 3, 1:20 scale plan

On the inside of the standing ruin a semi-formally laid tile floor was encountered, mainly in the eastern of the two trenches (0020), but also seen in the side of the western component (0014) (Figs. 4 & 5; Plates 3 & 4). The tiles measured *c.*0.20 metres square (8 inches) and had a red sandy fabric. While many were cracked and worn, evidence for green glaze was present on some. There was no consolidated bedding layer for the tiles, at most a thin spread of sandy loam (0015) seen in the side of the western trench component. This suggests that they did not represent a medieval floor in the earlier church, but a later path put in place subsequent to the demolition, although possibly using salvaged materials.

The more extensive area of tiles in the eastern trench component was left intact, while excavation down in the western component revealed a layer of sandy loam (0019) continuing down beyond the excavated base of the trench at c.0.45 metres (Figs. 4 & 5). This layer was clearly cut by the below ground flint and mortar footing for the north aisle wall (0016/0018/0021) which was found to run as a continuous feature under the door threshold with its base at 0.4 metres below the existing ground surface. The vestiges of a sandstone step (0017) were recorded within the doorway itself.



Plate 3 Trench 3, tiled floor 0020



Plate 4 Trench 3, tiles 0014 & threshold 0017

Pipe-Trench: The pipe-trench was excavated as a continuous strip running from the standing building to the south to the western side of the doorway through the north aisle wall and on for c.1 metre beyond (Fig. 2), encroaching on the positions of all three of the earlier evaluation trenches. The possible linear feature 0004 was not encountered, questioning its lateral persistence, but the sand and mortar layers 0007 and 0008, previously interpreted as part of a possible wall footing 0009 were seen. While these did not have the appearance of a discrete wall footing, their location close to the line of what would have been the north nave arcade suggests that they may have been associated with the demolition of the arcade piers.

The northern end of the trench re-exposed the features of the aisle wall and threshold previously seen in evaluation Trench 3. However, immediately to the south,



Plate 5 Pipe-trench, feature 0024

a round bottomed feature (0024) was seen to cut the grey/brown silty, stony sand layer 0023 (same as 0019 in Trench 3) below the topsoil (Fig. 5 & Plate 5). In section, the feature was 0.6 metres wide with a depth of 0.30 metres, measured from the base of the topsoil. The feature was lined with a c.0.18 metre thick layer of very sandy clay (0025), the upper surface of which was heat-reddened to a depth of up to 0.10 metres. The fill above the lining

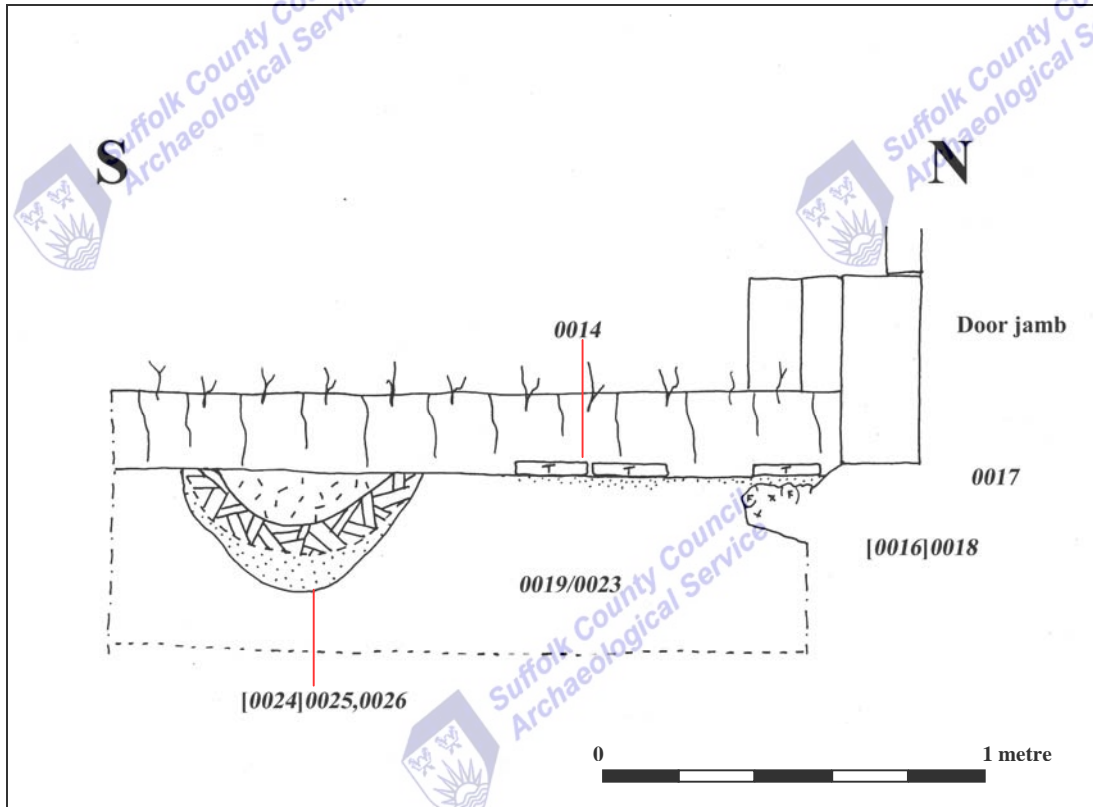


Fig. 5 Trench 3 & pipe-trench, composite 1:20 scale section

(0026) comprised very fine grey ashy material.

Four other features were recorded in the pipe-trench that had not previously been seen. One of these was the toed brick footing of the standing building at the southern end of the trench, clearly not part of the original medieval building. The remaining three features were all thought to be graves (0027, 0028 & 0029) (Fig. 6 & Plates 6 & 7), although no human remains were encountered as excavation was halted at the level of the naturally occurring subsoil. Grave 0027 was a square-ended and continued out under the eastern edge of the trench and was located towards the southern end some 2 metres from the standing building. Grave 0028, 2 metres to the north, exhibited a more rounded western end, and clearly cut Grave 0029 immediately to the north, both running under the eastern edge of the trench and clipped by its western edge.



Plate 6 Pipe-trench, Grave 0027



Plate 7 Pipe-trench, Graves 0028 & 0029

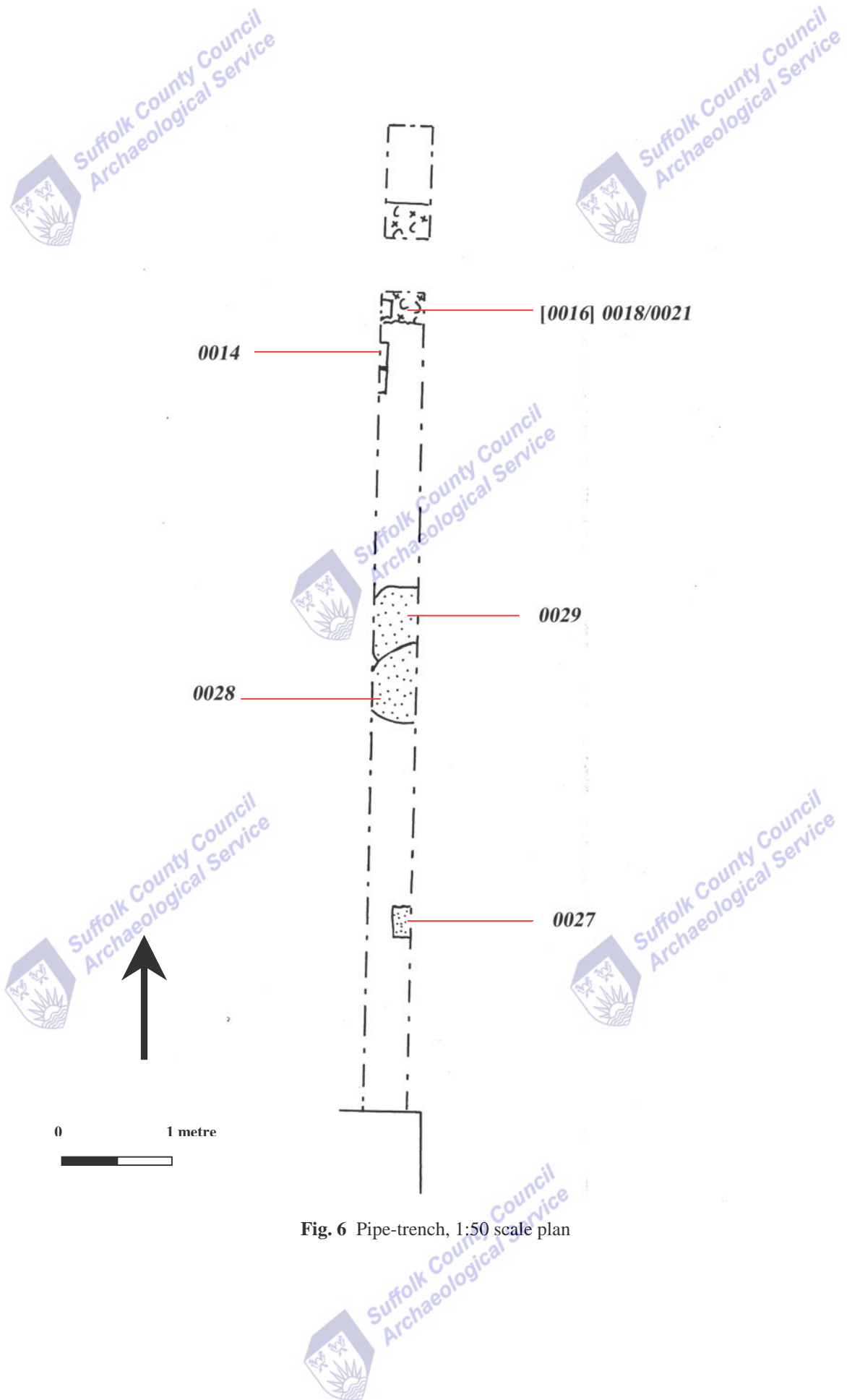


Fig. 6 Pipe-trench, 1:50 scale plan

3.2 The Finds

The following finds were collected during the evaluation, none were collected during the subsequent excavation of the service trench:

| Context | Find type | No. | Wt/g | Description | Date |
|---------|-----------|-----|--|--|----------------|
| 0002 | Glass | 1 | 6 | Window quarry, probably diamond-shaped, grozed edge, surfaces almost lost but no evidence of paint. | Med/LMed |
| | CBM | 1 | 58 | Early brick (estuarine fabric) fragment. | 13th-15th c. |
| | | 1 | 46 | Floor tile fragment with worn surface, grog-tempered, Flemish type. | 14th-15th c. |
| | | 1 | 92 | Red sandy peg tile. | LMed+ |
| | | 1 | 88 | Fine red pantile fragment. | 17th c.+ |
| 0006 | CBM | 5 | 385 | Fragments of large Flemish floor tiles with white slip/yellow glaze or green/brown glaze, some mortar on surfaces. | 14th-15th c. |
| | Bone | 1 | 1 | Fragment of medium mammal rib (probably sheep/goat). | |
| 0011 | CBM | 1 | 460 | Early brick, 94 x 47mm, sanded base. | L.13th-14th c. |
| | | 1 | 473 | Early brick, 100 x 45mm, sanded base. | L.13th-14th c. |
| | | 2 | 923 | Early brick, 120 x 52mm, strawed base, prob. 1 brick. | 14th-15th c. |
| | | 1 | 727 | Early brick, 129 x 58mm, strawed base. | 14th-15th c. |
| | | 4 | 622 | Early brick fragments. | 13th-15th c. |
| | | 2 | 361 | Fragments of small and large Flemish tiles, covered in mortar, 1 with worn surface. | 14th-15th c. |
| | Mortar | 2 | 361 | Large fragments of lime mortar, one containing coal fragments. | PMed |
| | Stone | 1 | 231 | Worked fragment of fine-grained oolitic limestone. | ? |
| | 5 | 741 | Fragments of dark grey, possibly machine-cut, slate. | PMed? | |
| 0013 | CBM | 5 | 1221 | Flemish tile fragments covered in mortar. | 14th-15th c. |
| 0014 | CBM | 1 | 1153 | Large Flemish tile, 200mm wide, 30mm thick, brown glazed, mortar on surface. | 14th-15th c. |

Table 2 Details of the retained finds

All find types are typical of those found in excavations at other Suffolk churches. The Flemish tiles appear to have been covered with a layer of plaster or mortar whilst *in situ*, suggesting that the floor in which they were originally used was resurfaced at some point. Again, this is a practice which has been noted elsewhere (for example, Cotton & Hinderclay). Most of the earlier building material in this assemblage is associated with later fragments and is presumably redeposited.

4. Archaeological Interpretation

Other than the structural elements of the north aisle wall and possibly the graves, none of the recorded features are likely to have been directly associated with the medieval phase of the church. However, two of the features may have been associated with the demolition phase in the final years of the 17th century. These being layers of mortar and sand (0007 & 0008), possibly relating to the demolition of the north aisle arcade, and the small pit with its *in situ* heat-reddened lining. A similar feature was recorded at Dunwich Greyfriars, where demolition of the church and other friary buildings was undertaken after the reformation. Here the feature was interpreted as being used to melt down lead recovered from the stained glass windows (comes) or possibly from other sources such as the roof or piping (Boulter 1999).

The tile floor recorded immediately south of the doorway in the north aisle wall was clearly lain on topsoil and while possibly re-using materials from the earlier building was not itself related directly to the medieval structure. This is likely to be a

localised feature forming part of a semi-formally lain path providing a access to the standing building.

5. Bibliography

Boulter, S. P.
1999

Dunwich Greyfriars, Dunwich (DUN 025), Record of an Archaeological Evaluation, SCCAS Rpt. No. 99/21

Mortlock, D. P.,
1992

The Popular Guide to Suffolk Churches, No. 3 East Suffolk. Acorn Editions