



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

Archaeological Attendance, Inspection
and Recording at St Bartholomew's
Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe,
Leicestershire

NGR: SK 3413 0944 centre

Tim Higgins



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**Archaeological Attendance, Inspection and Recording
at St Bartholomew's Church**

Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire

NGR: SK 52072 04658

Tim Higgins

**For: St Bartholomew's Church, Kirby Muxloe PCC
and Pick Everard**

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for new drainage prior to installation of a single storey extension to provide kitchen and W.C. facilities at the St. Bartholomew's Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire, NGR SK52072 04658.

These groundworks revealed a total of three modern brick-lined graves or vaults within the former churchyard. All contained inhumations that were located above the extension formation levels. A total of six coffin burials and one cremation urn was exhumed. Three additional cremation urns were also revealed during the area strip and all burials were later re-interred within the churchyard.

No other archaeologically significant finds or evidence for earlier structures were encountered during the course of the archaeological attendance. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council (LCC) under the Accession Number X. A43.2014.

Introduction

This report presents the results of archaeological attendance, inspection and recording (a 'watching brief') carried out at St. Bartholomew's Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire, in October 2014 by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) during groundworks for the creation of a single storey extension to provide kitchen and W.C. facilities, and associated drainage.

Planning permission has been granted for a single storey extension and associated drainage (12/0517/1/PX). The single storey extension is to be located against the northern wall of the church, which will involve the insertion of a new doorway through the existing fabric. The requirements are detailed in the *Brief For A Historic Building Photographic Survey And Archaeological Attendance St Bartholomew's Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire* (LCC 22.11 2013).

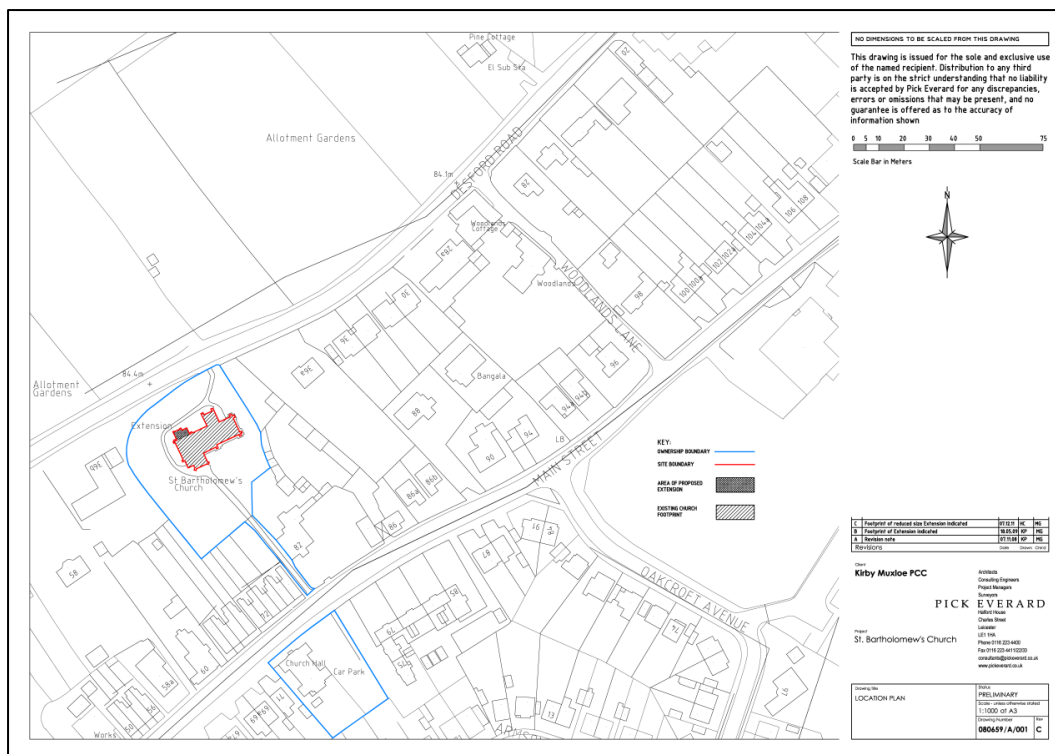


Figure 1: Location of Kirby Muxloe Church

Site Description, Topography and Geology

The proposed development is located at The Church of St. Bartholomew is a Grade II* Listed Building and lies within the historic settlement core of Kirby Muxloe and close to the Castle. It is bordered by residential properties. The site is within Blaby District.

Topographically the site is at an approximate height of c. 89m aOD and is on fairly flat land. Geological maps indicate that the site contains Gunthorpe Member Mudstone overlain by mid-Pleistocene glaciofluvial sand and gravel.

Historical and Archaeological Background

The Church of St. Bartholomew is a Grade II* Listed Building dating to the early 13th century, with 14th and 15th century alterations and 19th and 20th century restorations (**LB ref: 1177204; HER ref: MLE11081**). The Church lies within the historic settlement core of Kirby Muxloe (**MLE211**) and is likely to have been a focus for activity during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

An historic building survey was undertaken by Sophie Clarke of University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) in advance of the construction of a new single storey extension (Clarke 2014).

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the archaeological work was:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed ground works.
- To record any archaeological deposits to be affected by the ground works.
- To advance understanding of the heritage assets
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Methodology

The work followed the Written Scheme of Investigation (Clay 2014) and adhered to the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct* (rev. 2010) and their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (rev. 2008) (Appendix 3).

The programme of work consisted of the excavation of foundation trenches for a new extension in order to provide kitchen and W.C. facilities on the north side of the church. Additional excavations involved associated drainage trenches from the church to the trench arch drain located in the graveyard (Figures 2 and 3).

Human Remains

Within the graveyard soil itself, there was also a strong likelihood for the presence of quantities of disarticulated human bone resulting from previous disturbance of burials. The plan was for all disarticulated human bone to be carefully collected for reburial elsewhere within the churchyard. Articulated human remains encountered would initially be left in situ, covered and protected, only being exhumed for reburial if it could be shown that they would definitely be affected by the proposed works. Where such exhumation took place, it was undertaken using standard archaeological excavation and recording techniques, the remains then being lifted and placed in a suitable container and stored in the church pending reburial within the churchyard in due course. Excavated human bone remained at all times within the church precinct.

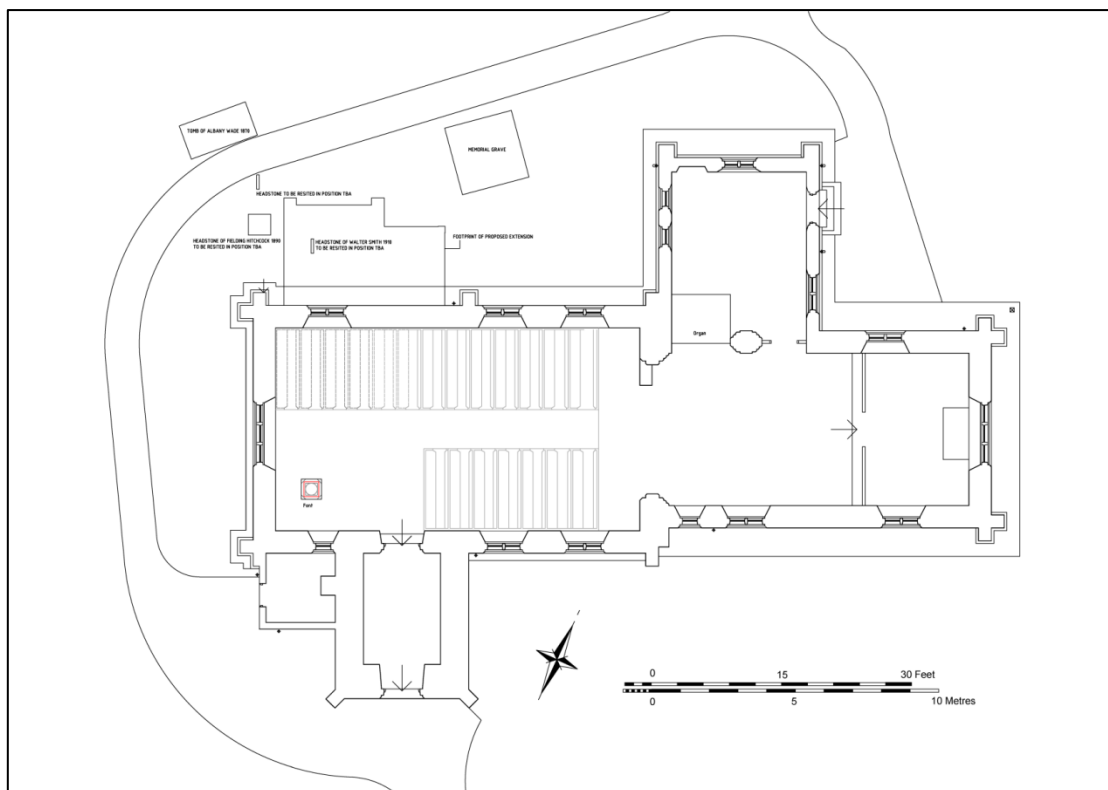


Figure 2: Site plan

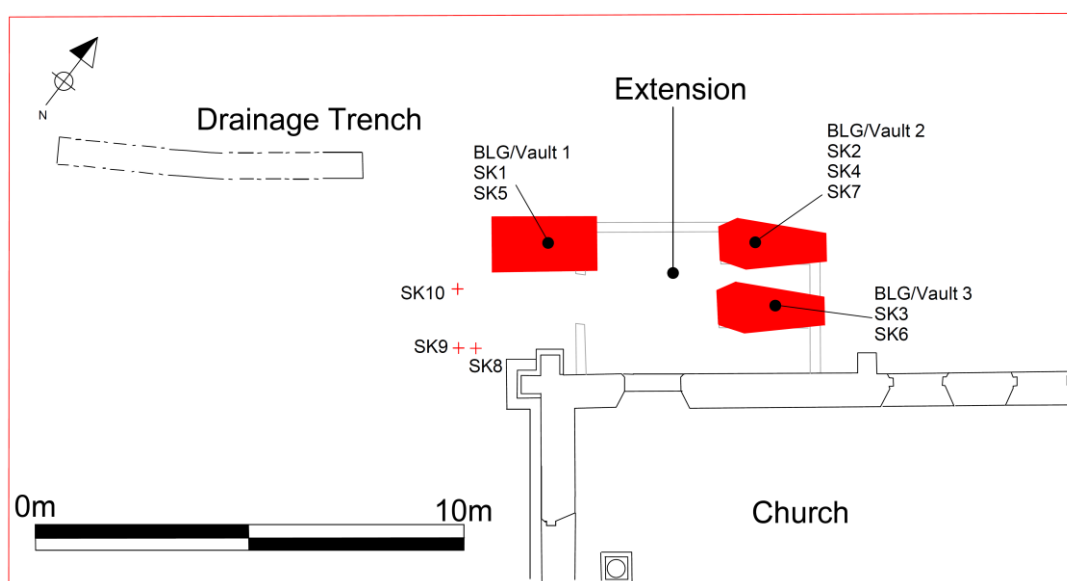


Figure 3: Plan of Brick-lined graves and drainage trench

Results

The site was visited between 17th and 22nd October 2014 during the groundworks for the new extension, drainage trenches and a trench arch drain. The sides and bases of the trenches were inspected and the spoil heaps checked for artefacts.

The external work comprised the removal of all graveyard turf and a general reduction of the ground level within the footprint of the extension by machine against the north wall, at the western end of the nave. The topsoil consisted of dark brown clayey sand 0.20m thick, overlying reddish brown, slightly clayey sand with frequent medium sized rounded pebbles and occasional fragments of mortar, brick, tile and slate. Below was a fairly loosely compacted graveyard soil, consisting of reddish brown clayey sand, with frequent rounded pebbles and occasional fragments of modern brick and tile. Within the graveyard soil itself, there was the presence of quantities of disarticulated human bone resulting from previous disturbance of burials.

The plan was for all disarticulated human bone to be carefully collected for reburial elsewhere within the churchyard. No articulated human remains were encountered within graveyard soil during these excavations.

The area strip for the foundations trenches led away from north wall towards three headstones. These were marked the burials of Sarah and Samuel Smith (d. 10th May 1918 and 2nd January 1934 respectively); their son, Walter Henry Smith (d. 12th March 1910), and William Fielding Hitchcock (d. 8th July 1890) and his wife Sarah. The excavations for the new extension required removal and relocation of these headstones within the graveyard.

The removal of turf graveyard soil revealed the top of three coffin-shaped brick-lined graves or vaults (BLG 1 2 and 3) at a depth of 0.20m below the ground level. Each comprised multiple chambers that contained inhumations buried in what were now decayed coffins with associated coffin furniture (Figure 3). All three appeared to be constructed with the capacity for at least two or possibly three adult burial chambers that were separated and capped with slate slabs. Each brick-lined grave contained two inhumations (SK 1, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7) with exception of BLG 2, which also contained one cremation SK2 that had been placed in a third upper chamber (Figure 3). All these burials dated from 1890s to late 1930s.

All burials were found to be located above the 1.50m formation level for the extension and would definitely be affected by the proposed works. Hence, all burials were recorded and carefully removed, and stored with the other collected disarticulated human remains within the church that were awaiting re-interment. Once all the brick-lined graves were empty they were dismantled by machine and foundation trenches were excavated across them. The sides of the trenches were inspected and the graveyard soil and underlying natural substratum had been heavily disturbed. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Further removal of graveyard turf and a general reduction of the ground level outside the extension revealed three cremations urns (SK8, 9 and 10) located close to the north-west corner of the church (Figure 3). These cremations which dated from the early 1980s were also recorded and carefully removed, and stored with the other human remains within the church that were awaiting re-interment (A full list of the exhumed burials can be found in Appendix 2 below).

The external works exposed the foundations of the north wall, at the western end of the nave (Figure 3). The wall dates to the restoration of 1848-50 and foundation's mortar and arrangement of the stones appeared to match the rest of the nave wall (Clarke 2014). These foundations are believed to be contemporary and no earlier footings were observed during these excavations.

The drainage trench led away from the church nave on a north-west alignment and was machine excavated between the gravestones (Figure 3). The trench arch drain measured 1.20m wide and was approximately 10m long. It was excavated to a depth of 0.9m at the south-east end, becoming shallower towards the north-west end, where it was 0.70m deep. Topsoil, as previously described, overlay a relatively loosely compacted graveyard soil, consisting of reddish brown clayey sand, with frequent rounded pebbles and occasional fragments of modern brick and tile. The topsoil was approximately 0.20m thick in this area; however the boundary between the topsoil and subsoil was quite diffuse. The grave yard soil in this location was up to 0.80m deep and was lying on reddish brown sand and natural gravel substratum. No archaeological deposits were observed.



Figure 4: Brick-lined graves within the area strip looking south-west



Figure 5: Brick-lined graves within the area strip looking south-east



Figure 6: Drainage trench looking west

Conclusions

No record was made during previous developments and clearances, so the current height or location of burials or cremations was unknown.

These excavations revealed a total of three brick-lined graves or vaults within the former church yard all containing coffin inhumations. All were found above the formation levels for foundations and services of the new extension. Six burials and one cremation were exhumed and were later reinterred. Three additional cremation urns were also revealed during area strip at a depth of 0.50m. These were removed for later re-interment.

These various narrow subterranean lined burial chambers within this graveyard are commonly classified as brick-lined graves. The true definition of a burial vault is stone or brick capable of housing a minimum of two coffins side by side with an internal height of not less than 1.74m (Litten 1991, 207). Within various vaults the six burials were identified (Appendix 2). The brass plates attached to the coffins suggest that these vaults dated from the late 19th and early to 20th centuries. Burial within brick-lined graves was a popular mode of intramural burial associated more closely with city and large town churches in the 18th and 19th centuries (Litten 1991, 197). It is thought that the construction of brick-lined graves or vaults were attempts by affluent families to create their own private burial space in what were often over crowded churchyards (Houlbrooke 1999, 193).

No earlier archaeological deposits, structures or finds were encountered during the course of this archaeological attendance.

Archive

Subject to confirmation the site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council HNET, with the Accession No. X.A43.2014.

The archive contains site notes (watching brief pro forma sheets), digital photographs and a photo index.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York. Available at: <http://oasis.ac.uk/>

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* and *Rutland Record* in due course. The report has been added to the Archaeology Data Service's (ADS) Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) database held by the University of York.

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09.02.2015

Appendix 1 Oasis

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	St. Bartholomew's Church Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Dr Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	Building Survey/None
Current Land Use	Graveyard
Development Type	Church Extension
Reason for Investigation	NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SK 52072 04658
Start/end dates of field work	17/10/2014 to 22/10/2014
Archive Recipient	Subject to confirmation Leicestershire County Council HNET
Study Area	28 square meters

Appendix 2 List of Burials

Watching Brief Kirby Muxloe Church

St Bartholomew's Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe, Leicestershire SK 52072 04658

List of exhumed burials 17/10/2014 to 22/10/2014

Skeleton No.	Location	Type	Name	Details	Box Number
SK1	BLG 1	Inhumation	Sarah Jane Hitchcock	Died March 30th 1920 Aged 69	1
SK2	BLG 2	Cremation	John Bell	Died 2nd June 1939 Aged 81 Years	2
SK3	BLG 3	Inhumation	Sarah Stevens Morrison	Died December 5th 1915	3
SK4	BLG 2	Inhumation	Katherine Ann Bell	Died 10th May 193?	4
SK5	BLG 1	Inhumation	William Fielding Hitchcock	Born April 27th 1853 Died July 8th 1890	5
SK6	BLG 3	Inhumation	Frederick John Morrison	Died October 31st 1911	6
SK7	BLG 2	Inhumation	Harry? or Mary? Glover	Born ??? 4th 1849 Died Nov 22nd 1891 Aged 42 Years	7
SK8	Near north west corner of the church	Cremation	Harold Jarvis Greasley	Died 9th December 1981 Aged 83	Box Marked 8 and 9
SK9	Near north west corner of the church	Cremation	Brenda Hoyle	Died November 24th 1980 Aged 88	Box Marked 8 and 9
SK10	Near north west corner of the church	Cremation	Winfred Annie Farmer	Died 1st September 1982 Age 75	No Box?

Key SK = Skeleton/Cremated Bone Remains Number
BLG = Brick Lined Grave or Vault Number

Names and details taken from coffin or casket inscription plates.

Not sure of date of death for SK4. Final digit for the year of death was illegible.

Not sure of the first name for burial SK7 and date of birth. First name could be Mary? but was more likely Harry. The month for date of birth was illegible

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