

**FORMER ST. LUKES CHURCH SITE
ST. LUKES STREET
GLOUCESTER
GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

NGR: SO 8265 1794

CEMETERY CLEARANCE

September 2007

Report No. 572

Quality Assurance

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SUMMARY

Site Name: Former St. Lukes Church, St. Lukes Street, Gloucester

Site Activity: Cemetery Clearance

Date: July 26th – 3rd August 2007 – 7 days on site

Project Manager: Diana King BA AIFA

Site Supervisor: Austin Ainsworth

Site Code: SLG07

Summary of Results:

Between July 26th and 3rd August 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook a cemetery clearance at the Former St. Lukes Church, St. Lukes Street, Gloucester (NGR: SO 8265 1794). The work took place during ground reduction work undertaken as pre-construction site reclamation as part of the Gloucester Quays redevelopment project. The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson on behalf of Bovis Homes Ltd.

At the start of the project six burials and a quantity of disarticulated bone were expected to be encountered within the site. The final number of burials removed from the site reached 52 with a large quantity of disarticulated bone. The human remains were stored on site until the end of the project and then removed to Coney Hill cemetery for reburial. All grave goods were recorded on the relevant human remains recording sheet for the grave and reburied with the human remains. All coffins were recorded on the relevant human remains recording sheet but were not reburied with the human remains. The fill of the graves was a uniform well sorted grey to yellow silty clay derived from the *in-situ* alluvial deposits which the graves were cut through.

In general ground conditions were amenable to investigation and interpretation. A part of the excavation area was excavated prior to the arrival of Foundations Archaeology on site; therefore human remains which may have been present in this part of the site were not removed under controlled conditions and may be present on spoil heaps in the development area or may have been removed from the site.

The burial area was triangular, and the burials were orientated east-west, although the corners were filled by burials oriented north-south in order to utilise the space. The graves were aligned in rows, generally southwest to northeast. One brick lined grave containing a lead capped wooden coffin was found in the south of the graveyard, the lead seal had been broken and the human remains removed. Survival of the human remains was best in the north of the site; the south appeared to have been subject to a previous phase of burial clearance.

The current works have confirmed that the site has no significant archaeological potential. The burials have been removed and reburied without scientific study. No further work is anticipated for this site.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Archaeology

For the purpose of this project, archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

CBM

Ceramic Building Material.

Natural

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

NGR

National Grid Reference from the Ordnance Survey Grid.

OD

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea level.

OS

Ordnance Survey

CBM

Ceramic Building Material

Medieval

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and *circa* AD 1500

Post-medieval

The period from *circa* AD 1500 onwards

Roman

The period from AD 43 to AD 410

Saxon

The period from *circa* AD 410 to AD 1066

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Between July 26th and 3rd August 2007 Foundations Archaeology undertook a cemetery clearance at the Former St. Lukes Church, St. Lukes Street, Gloucester (NGR: SO 8265 1794) (Figure 1). The work took place during ground reduction work undertaken as pre-construction site reclamation as part of the Gloucester Quays redevelopment project. The work was commissioned by Scott Wilson on behalf of Bovis Homes Ltd.
- 1.2 The work did not constitute an archaeological project. No brief was issued by the Gloucester City Planning Archaeologist, but a written scheme of investigation was prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2007). A verbal brief was subsequently issued on the third day of site work by the Gloucester City Planning Archaeologist. The remaining works were undertaken in accordance with the WSI as modified by the verbal comments of the Planning Archaeologist.
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the cemetery clearance. The project was not an archaeological exercise and does not, therefore, conform to the specification set out in Appendices 4 and 5 of The Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991).

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 The study area is located within the Gloucester Quays development area with access from St. Lukes Street at NGR: SO 8265 1794 (Figures 1 and 2).

3 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The site formerly comprised the cemetery of St. Lukes church. The cemetery was cleared after the church went out of use in 1934 and was deconsecrated in 1939. In recent years it has been used as a carpark but is now a demolition site.
- 3.2 A number of disarticulated human remains were identified within the site area, some of which were associated with coffins and former grave cuts. Further disarticulated bone was also identified from across the site. The identification of this material resulted in Foundations Archaeology being instructed to complete the cemetery clearance.
- 3.3 The Ministry of Justice and the Coroner were approached for guidance prior to the commencement of site works.

4 AIMS

- 4.1 The aims of the operation are to retrieve the human remains and rebury them in an appropriate location.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 Non-significant overburden was removed to the top of the burials or disarticulated bone. This was achieved through use of a mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket working under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist. Thereafter excavation was conducted by hand.
- 5.2 The human remains were excavated with in accordance with normal standards for cemetery clearance. The burials were screened from public view and were treated with decency.
- 5.3 The location of each burial was precisely located on a base plan provided by the client.
- 5.4 The burials were photographed *in-situ*, although they were not subjected to hand-cleaning. A brief written description was also made on pro-forma record sheets.
- 5.5 Each discrete burial was placed within a biodegradable Hessian sack and was suitably stored on site until the project was complete. Upon completion of the excavation works, the remains were removed to Coney Hill Cemetery for reburial.

6 RESULTS

- 6.1 A total of 52 burials were excavated and removed from the site, along with a large quantity of disarticulated bone. The human remains were stored by Foundations Archaeology and subsequently taken to Coney Hill cemetery for reburial. All grave goods were recorded on the relevant human remains recording sheet for the grave and reburied with the human remains. All coffins were recorded on the relevant human remains recording sheet but were not reburied with the human remains. The fill of the graves was a uniform well sorted grey to yellow silty clay derived from the in-situ alluvial deposits which the graves were cut through.
- 6.2 The locations of the burials are not discussed in detail in this section of the report, although the burials, each with a unique identifying grave number, are located on the grave location plan (Figure 3). A brief description for each burial; the human remains, coffin and grave goods (where present) is given below. Grave cuts were not recorded for any of the burials. Where coffins or grave goods are not mentioned, there were none. The absence of human remains within graves will be noted, this possibly indicates a previous phase

of cemetery clearance. All coffins were constructed from wood unless stated otherwise. All burials are oriented east-west with the head to the west unless stated otherwise. Scientific osteological terminology has not been used in the descriptions.

6.3 Burial 1

The burial was oriented north-south with the head to the south and located in the southwest corner of the triangular burial area. The coffin was 1.4 m long, 0.46 m wide, 0.4 m deep and lay 0.7 m below ground level. The feet, legs, left arm, left hand and left collar bone were recovered for reburial.

6.4 Burial 2

The coffin was 1.8 m long, 0.44 m wide, 0.8 m deep and lay 1.1 m below ground level. Most of the bones were lying on the north side of the coffin and were comprised of the lower legs and feet, part of the left hand and the right shoulder.

6.5 Burial 3

Most of the human remains were absent except for fragments of severely degraded long bones, the coffin was largely intact.

6.6 Burial 4

The human remains were intact and articulated and the coffin was complete.

6.7 Burial 5

The human remains were intact and in good condition except for the shoulders and skull which were absent.

6.8 Burial 6

The human remains were 1.65 m from head to toe, 0.30 m wide and 0.06 m deep. The coffin was present but severely degraded.

6.9 Burial 7

The human remains were complete except for the head which was missing due to truncation of the western end of the coffin.

6.10 Burial 8

The coffin had been truncated with only the central section remaining, the eastern end by the feet having been destroyed by modern tarmac. The western end from the shoulders up was also absent. Only a small amount of degraded bone survived in the coffin.

6.11 Burial 9

The ground around this burial was contaminated with petrol/diesel and the bones were in poor condition. The coffin was 1.70 m long and 0.45 m wide. Only the lower legs, arms, hands and feet survived.

- 6.12 Burial 10
The human remains were represented by the lower legs and feet and some arm bones. The human remains were 1.50 m long, 0.40 m wide and had a depth of 0.08 m. the western end of the coffin had been truncated. A small button was found near the left arm.
- 6.13 Burial 11
The coffin was largely complete, the human remains were represented by the lower leg bones, arms, hands, feet and left shoulder. The burial was 1.68 m long, 0.55 m wide and 0.11 m deep.
- 6.14 Burial 12
The skeleton and coffin were well preserved with dimensions of 1.78 m long, 0.50 m wide and 0.30 m deep.
- 6.15 Burial 13
The skeleton and coffin were well preserved with dimensions of 1.78 m long, 0.55 m wide and 0.30 m deep.
- 6.16 Burial 14
Only the western end of the coffin survived with almost no bone survival. The grave was 1.2 m long, 0.44 m wide and its depth below ground level was 0.70 m
- 6.17 Burial 15
The coffin was in poor condition and very little bone survived. The grave was 1.74 m long 0.50 m wide.
- 6.18 Burial 16
The coffin and human remains were largely complete with a length of 1.84 m, 0.46 m wide and 1.00 m below ground level.
- 6.19 Burial 17
The coffin and human remains were largely complete with a length of 1.74 m and 0.42 m wide.
- 6.20 Burial 18
The coffin was in fair condition with survival of the lower part of the body and arms; the lower jaw also survived. The grave was 1.84 m wide and 0.55 m wide.
- 6.21 Burial 19
This burial was partially destroyed by ground reduction before recording of the graveyard began, only the lower legs survived; the coffin was largely destroyed.
- 6.22 Burial 20
The coffin and human remains were largely complete with a length of 1.90 m and 0.50 m wide.

- 6.23 Burial 21
The coffin and human remains were largely complete with a length of 1.80 m and 0.49 m wide. The feet were missing and the skull was very fragmented.
- 6.24 Burial 22
The coffin was intact; the human remains were largely intact except for the hands and feet. The burial was 1.80 m long and 0.43 m wide.
- 6.25 Burial 23
The coffin was substantially intact; the human remains were largely intact except for the hands and feet. The burial was 1.60 m long and 0.40 m wide.
- 6.26 Burial 24
The coffin was intact; the human remains were largely intact except for the long bones of the legs, left arm, shoulders, hands and feet. The burial was 1.70 m long and 0.55 m wide.
- 6.27 Burial 25
The coffin was in good condition but only the lower legs, lower arms, hands and feet survived. The burial was 1.72 m long and 0.49 m wide. The burial was oriented north-south and was located in the northern corner of the triangular graveyard.
- 6.28 Burial 26
The coffin lay beneath Burial 25, contained no bones, was oriented east to west and was 0.96 m long.
- 6.29 Burial 27
The coffin was completely degraded and there was only partial survival of the human remains. Fragments of the skull arms, ribs and the right leg survived. The burial was 1.60 m long and 0.40 m wide.
- 6.30 Burial 28
The coffin was intact; the human remains were largely intact except for the lower jaw, shoulders, lower spine, hands and feet. The burial was 2.00 m long and 0.50 m wide.
- 6.31 Burial 29
The coffin was largely intact but few bones remained in the grave. The burial was 1.29 m long and 0.30 m wide.
- 6.32 Burial 30
The coffin and human remains were largely intact, the burial was 1.54 m long, 0.46 m wide and buried c. 0.30 m deeper than the surrounding graves.
- 6.33 Burial 31
The coffin was almost completely degraded but the human remains were largely intact, the burial was 1.80 m long and 0.50 m wide.

- 6.34 Burial 32
The coffin and human remains were largely absent due to being 'hit' by the mechanical excavator before Foundations Archaeology was present on site. The length of the coffin was 1.30 m and it was 0.40 m wide.
- 6.35 Burial 33
The coffin was almost completely degraded but the human remains were largely intact, the burial was 1.80 m long and 0.53 m wide.
- 6.36 Burial 34
The coffin was almost completely degraded but the human remains were largely absent, the burial was 1.60 m long, 0.45 m wide and 0.09 m deep.
- 6.37 Burial 35
The human remains and the coffin were heavily truncated, only the upper western half of the coffin survived, the skull was also missing. The burial was 1.25 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.05 m deep.
- 6.38 Burial 36
The coffin and remains were almost complete; the coffin was studded around the edges and was also fitted with black-painted tin escutcheon plates to the coffin lid and sides. The coffin was 1.82 m long, 0.58 m wide and 0.35 m deep. Five metal buttons and a leather strap were recovered from inside the coffin.
- 6.39 Burial 37
The coffin survived well but only partial survival of the human remains was observed. The skull, lower arms, upper legs and pelvis were absent. The coffin was 1.70 m long, 0.38 m wide and 0.17 m deep.
- 6.40 Burial 38
There was partial survival of the human remains and coffin. The skull and pelvis were largely absent. The coffin was 1.82 m long, 0.46 m wide and 0.04 m deep.
- 6.41 Burial 39
The coffin was largely intact but only the lower half of the body survived. The coffin was 1.60 m long, 0.53 m wide and 0.12 m deep.
- 6.42 Burial 40
The coffin survived intact but no bones were present within it. The coffin was 1.40 m long, 0.35 m wide and 0.03 m deep.
- 6.43 Burial 41
The coffin was heavily damaged and the body which was intact appears to have been placed inside it face down. The burial was 1.88 m long, 0.40 m wide and 0.05 m deep.

6.44 Burial 42

The coffin was complete as was the skeleton except for the skull which appeared to have been removed. The burial was contaminated with tarmac, was 1.84 m long, 0.41 m wide and 0.09 m deep.

6.45 Burial 43

The coffin was heavily degraded and the skeleton was missing its lower legs and pelvis. The burial was oriented north to south and located in the northern corner of the triangular graveyard. The length of the coffin was 1.25 m and the width was 0.50 m

6.46 Burial 44

The burial was the only one on site which was contained within a red brick lined grave. The bricks are unfrosted but otherwise standard for the late 19th /early 20th century. The dimensions are 2.40 m long, 0.70 m wide and 0.65 m deep. The coffin was plain, measured 2.20 m long and 0.50 m wide and 0.50 m deep. The coffin was sealed with a lead top which was subsequently broken through, rolled back and the human remains inside removed.

6.47 Burial 45

The base of the coffin survived well and the skeleton was almost complete. The coffin was 1.83 m long, 0.52 m wide and 0.09 m deep.

6.48 Burial 46

The base of the coffin survived and the human remains were almost intact. Hobnails were found at the base of the coffin by the feet. The coffin was 1.81 m long, 0.51 m wide and 0.13 m deep.

6.49 Burial 47

The base of the coffin survived well but the skeleton was absent. The coffin was 1.47 m long, 0.43 m wide and 0.05 m deep.

6.50 Burial 48

The coffin was absent, only the long bones survived. The grave was 1.48 m long and 0.47 m wide.

6.51 Burial 49

The coffin and human remains were intact; the coffin was 1.87 m long, 0.49 m wide and 0.30 m deep.

6.52 Burial 50

The only burial of a child of the 53 burials, the skeleton was intact except for the skull which was missing; the coffin was also intact. The coffin was 1.10 m long, 0.25 m wide and 0.09 m deep.

6.53 Burial 51

The burial was oriented north to south in the northern corner of the triangular site. The coffin and skeleton were complete and the body was buried with its hands crossed across the groin. The coffin measured 1.89 m long, 0.42 m wide and 0.11 m deep.

6.54 Burial 52

The coffin and human remains were intact; the coffin was 1.89 m long, 0.52 m wide and 0.05 m deep.

6.55 A selection of photographs are given on Figure 4.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 In general ground conditions were amenable to investigation and interpretation. A part of the excavation area (see Figure 3) had been excavated prior to the arrival of Foundations Archaeology on site. Human remains which may have been present in this part of the site were not, therefore, removed under controlled conditions and may be present on spoil heaps in the development area or may have been removed from the site. The burial area was roughly triangular, the corners being filled by burials oriented north-south in order to utilise the space. The graves were aligned in rows, generally southwest to northeast (Figure 3). One brick-lined grave containing a lead capped wooden coffin was found in the south of the graveyard, the lead seal had been broken and the human remains removed. Survival of the human remains was best in the north of the site; the south appeared to have been subject to a previous phase of burial clearance.

7.2 A total of 52 graves were excavated and the human remains and grave goods, where present, have been reburied at Coney Hill cemetery.

7.3 The current works have confirmed that the site has no significant archaeological potential. The burials have been excavated and reburied without scientific study. No further work is anticipated for this site.

8 NATURE OF THE RECORD

8.1 The stratigraphic archive for the site consists of the following elements:

Human Remains Sheets
Plans
Individual Grave Photographs
General Photographs

8.2 The on-site methodologies used to recover any evidence were comprised those set out in a non-standard Foundations Archaeology specification. In summary, the following excavation methods were utilised: observation of all substantial groundworks associated with the ground reduction. The ground works were

undertaken by contractors using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All site recording was undertaken in accordance with the WSI for the site. All site records are available in the site archive.

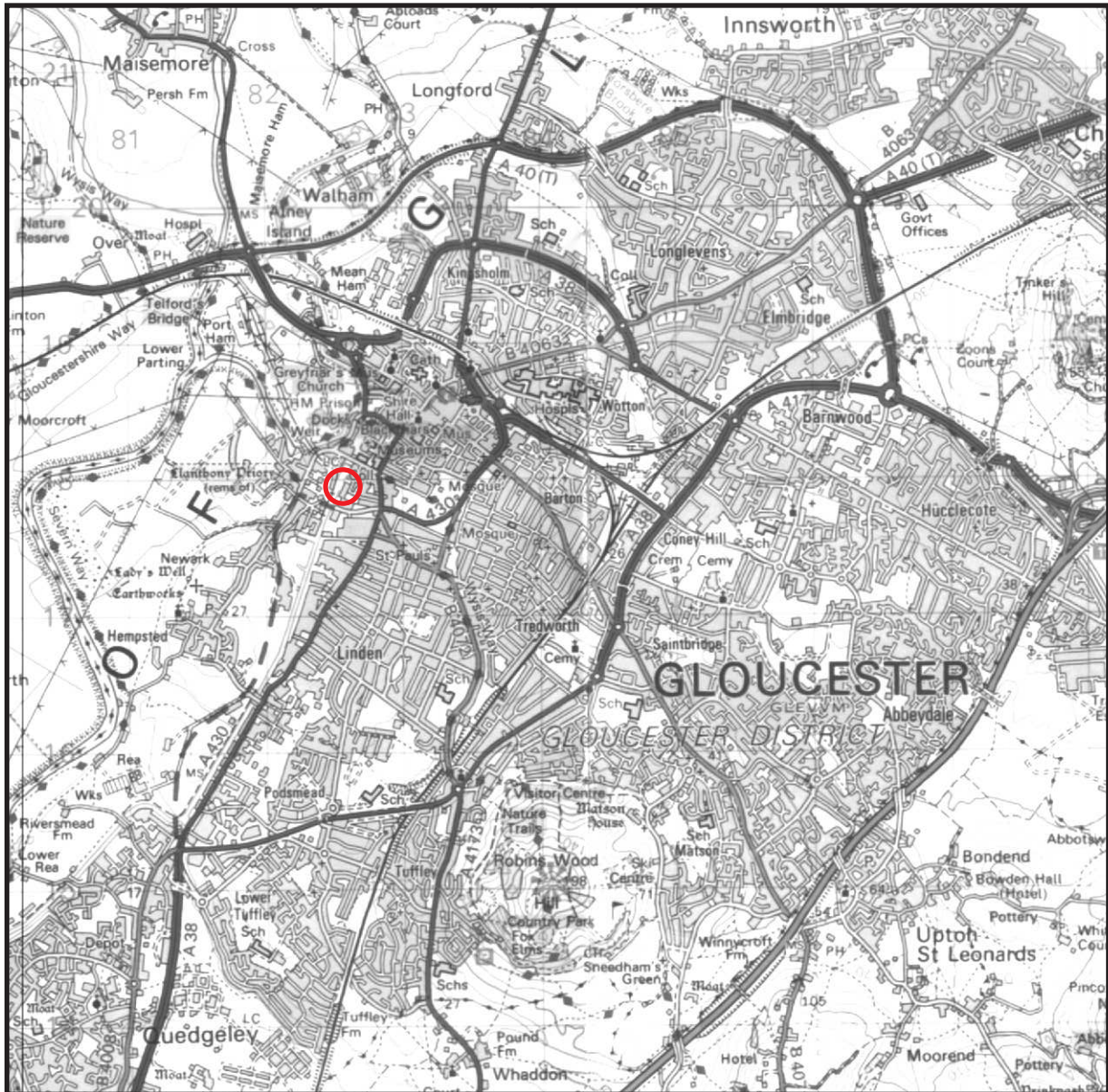
- 8.3 Following the completion of the cemetery clearance an ordered, indexed, and internally consistent site archive has been compiled.
- 8.4 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology and will be deposited with Gloucester Museum within 12 months of completion.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Foundations Archaeology 2007 *former St. Lukes Church, St. Lukes Church, Gloucester: Written Scheme of Investigation*

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Andrew Mayes of Scott Wilson and Jonathan Smith of Gloucester City Council for their assistance in the completion of this project.



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FIGURE 1: Site Location

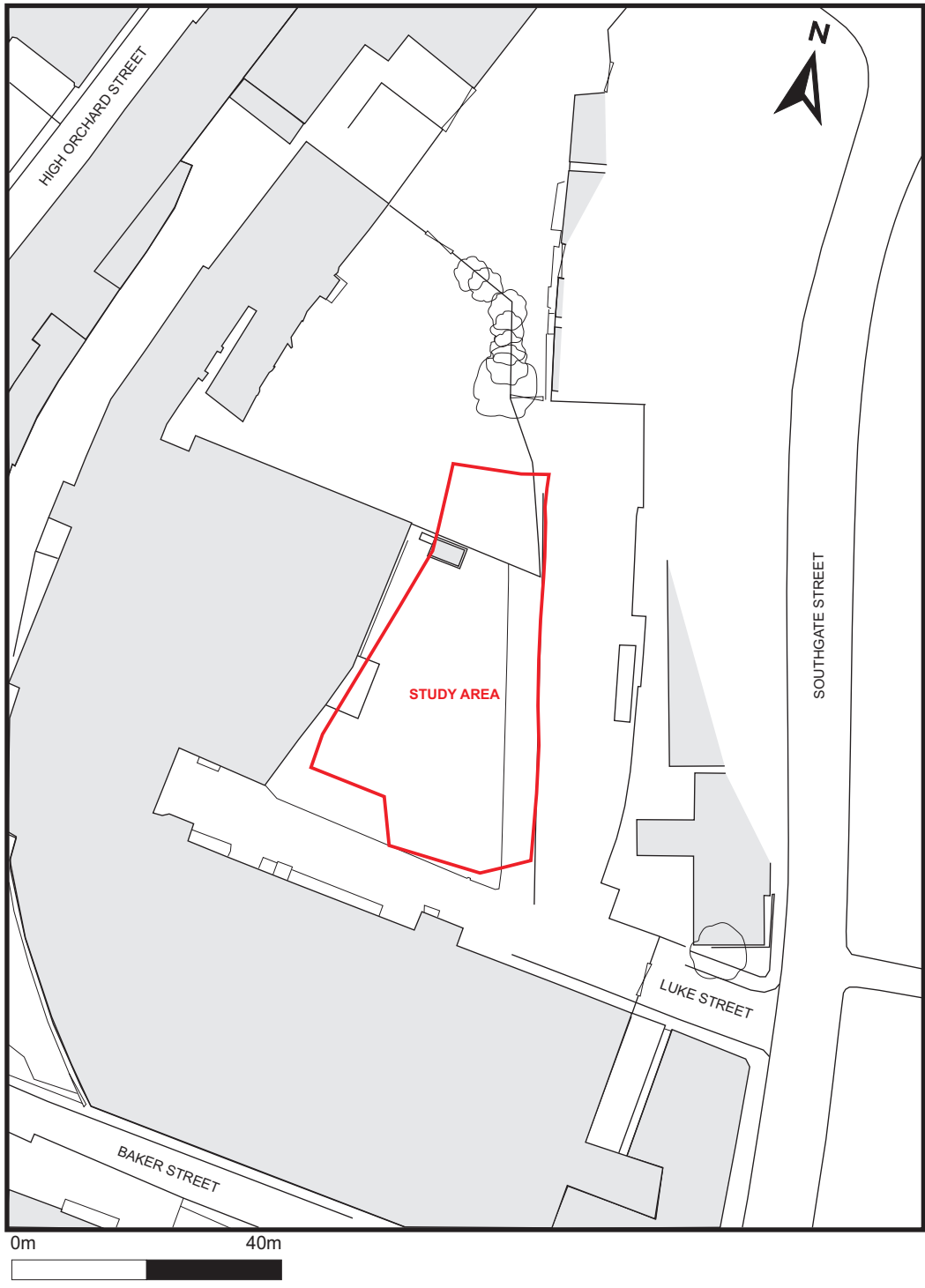


FIGURE 2: Study Area Location Plan

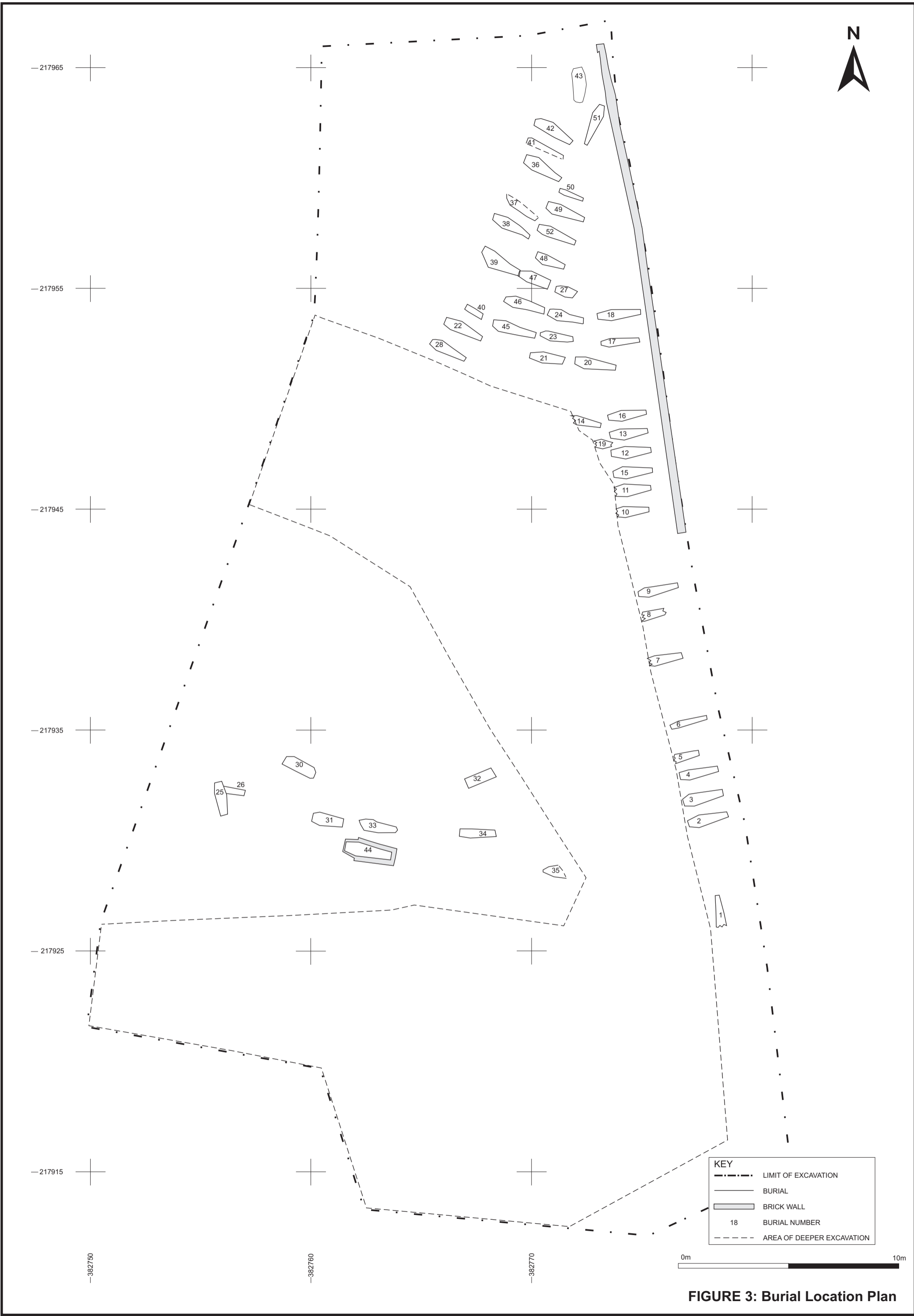


FIGURE 3: Burial Location Plan



FIGURE 4: Photographs