



**CAM ARC Report Number 859**

## **Late Post-Medieval Burials at All Saints Church, Landbeach, Cambridgeshire**

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**An Archaeological Evaluation and  
watching brief**

Rob Atkins BSocSc DipArch

September 2007

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**An Archaeological Evaluation and  
watching brief**

Rob Atkins BSocSc DipArch

With a contribution by Paul Spoerry BTech PhD

Site Code: LAN ASC 05

CHER Event Number: ECB2122

Date of works: 30th-31st January and 14th June 2006

Grid Ref: TL 4765 6535

Editor: Elizabeth Shepherd Popescu BA MIFA

Illustrator: Carlos Silva

## CAM ARC OASIS Report Form

OASIS Number: Cambridg1-31205

PROJECT DETAILS				
Project name	Evaluation and watching brief at All Saints church, Landbeach			
Short description	An archaeological evaluation took place in advance of the construction of a north porch to the church and associated works. One trench (total length 4m) was partially excavated along the proposed eastern footings for the new porch. Three rows of burial plots were encountered with dense stratified late post-medieval and modern burials between 0.55m and 1.20m below the present ground level. Only the extreme southern burial row was lowered to the full depth of the proposed footings. Here, six articulated burials were encountered as well as at least one disarticulated burial recovered from throughout the layer. Due to large numbers of burials encountered proposed plans were changed. Four c.1.3 m <sup>2</sup> square holes for piling were dug at the corners of the proposed structure. Work within the church itself comprised removing c.half the pews to install pipes. The depth of this work was c.0.3m-0.4m below the present floor level but no archaeological remains were disturbed. The only stone remains consisted on the stonewall footings of the northern wall of the church and an east to west wall of unknown date running parallel to the northern wall along roughly the centre of the northern transept. Victorian brick walls were also seen around some of the medieval column bases and giving support to some of the former pews.			
Project dates	Start	30/1/06	End	14/6/06
Previous work	No		Future work	No
Associated project reference codes	Site code LAN ASC 05, HER Event number ECB2122			
Type of project	Evaluation and watching brief			
Site status	Not known			
Current land use (list all that apply)	Graveyard			
Planned development	North porch for church			
Monument types / period (list all that apply)	Church			
Significant finds: Artefact type / period (list all that apply)	Stone walls of medieval and unknown date			
PROJECT LOCATION				
County	Cambridgeshire	Parish	Landbeach	
HER for region	Cambridgeshire			
Site address (including postcode)	All Saints Church, High Street, Landbeach, Cambridgeshire			
Study area (sq.m or ha)	c20m <sup>2</sup>			
National grid reference	TL 4765 6535			
Height OD	Min OD	8mOD	Max OD	10m OD
PROJECT ORIGINATORS				
Organisation	CAM ARC			
Project brief originator	Tony Baggs , former Diocesan Advisor (Ely)			
Project design originator	James Drummond-Murray			
Director/supervisor	Rob Atkins			
Project manager	James Drummond-Murray			
Sponsor or funding body	Landbeach PCC			
ARCHIVES	Location and accession number	Content (e.g. pottery, animal bone, database, context sheets etc)		
Physical	Landbeach PCC	Eight medieval pottery sherds		
Paper	Cambridgeshire County Store	Photos, background info, 1 plan and 1 section		
Digital	CAM ARC			
BIBLIOGRAPHY				
Full title	Late Post-Medieval Burials at All Saints Church, Landbeach, Cambridgeshire			
Author(s)	Rob Atkins			
Report number	859			
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## Summary

In 2006 CAM ARC, Cambridgeshire County Council (formerly Archaeological Field Unit) undertook an archaeological evaluation and watching brief at All Saints Church, Landbeach (TL 4765 6535) in advance of the construction of a north porch to the church and associated works. The work was commissioned by Landbeach PCC.

The area of the new porch was lowered by 0.30m and one trench (total length 4m) was partially excavated along the proposed eastern footings for the new porch. The evaluation found no articulated burials in the 0.30m strip but within the trench three rows of burial plots were encountered with dense stratified burials encountered in all the rows. Twelve articulated burials were excavated. These burials were encountered between 0.55m and 1.20m below the present ground level (further burials may exist below this level as the natural subsoil was not encountered). Only the extreme southern burial row was lowered to the full depth of the proposed footings. Here, six articulated burials were encountered as well as at least one disarticulated burial recovered from throughout the layer. This burial row was cut by the foundations of the modern buttress on the northern wall of the church.

The contractors decided to change the proposed plans for the development and pile the new porch. Four c.1.3 m<sup>2</sup> square holes were dug at the corners of the proposed structure but only grave earth could be seen within them. Work within the church itself comprised temporary removing c.half the pews to install pipes. The depth of this work was c.0.3m- 0.4m below the present floor level but no archaeological remains were disturbed. The only stone remains consisted on the stonewall footings of the northern wall of the church and an east to west wall of unknown date running parallel to the northern wall along roughly the centre of the northern transept. Victorian brick walls were also seen around some of the medieval column bases and giving support to some of the former pews.

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## 1 Introduction

An archaeological evaluation (30th and 31st January) and subsequent watching brief (14th June) was undertaken at All Saints Church, Landbeach (TL 4765 65435) in advance of construction of a new north porch to house toilet facilities and a boiler room (Fig. 2). There will also be a new access path and associated service runs. The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Brief issued by Tony Baggs, Diocesan Archaeological Adviser (Baggs 2005; Planning Application S/2489/04/F), supplemented by a Specification prepared by CAM ARC (formerly Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Field Unit (CCC AFU)) (Drummond-Murray 2005).

The work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed redevelopment area, in accordance with the guidelines set out in *Planning and Policy Guidance 16 - Archaeology and Planning* (Department of the Environment 1990). The results of the evaluation were to enable decisions to be made by the architect responsible for the development to construct a suitable scheme for the new porch and also enable the Diocesan Archaeological Adviser to recommend what, if any, further archaeological work is needed during the proposed scheme.

A draft report on the findings of the evaluation was submitted in February 2006. After the evaluation, the architect changed the proposed development plans for the porch in favour of piling the development. The new plans and the subsequent proposed archaeological watching brief were approved by Tony Baggs. Dr Tim Reynolds took over as Diocesan Archaeological Advisor after Tony Baggs's death on May 31st 2006.

The site paper archive is currently held by CAM ARC and will be deposited with the appropriate county stores in due course. All human remains were reburied when the evaluation trench was backfilled within the churchyard and pottery was returned to All Saints Church, Landbeach.

## 2 Geology and Topography

The site overlies 2nd Terrace Deposits (British Geological Survey 1981). These sands and gravels were encountered in an auger survey within the evaluation between 1.45 and 1.8m below ground level.

The ground is fairly flat with the benchmark on the church at 8.07m OD.

### 3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Landbeach was first mentioned in Domesday as Utbeche, Ut meaning the outlying part from the main settlement (Waterbeach), and beche meaning a stream. Landbeach is on slightly higher and drier ground than Waterbeach and it is thought that Landbeach may have first been used for winter grazing by the people of Waterbeach (Ravensdale 1974).

The present church of All Saints is mainly 13th to 14th century in date, although the building contains some pieces of reused Norman architectural stonework (Gambell 2005, 2). The first rector known by name is Pers de Cantebrigg, who was presented in the reign of Henry II, probably around the year 1160 (Gambell 2005, 2). Overall, it is likely that originally there was a Norman or even a Late Saxon church at Landbeach.

The archaeological evaluation took place adjacent to the north door of the church, which dates from the 14th century. The 1878 restoration removed the box pews within the church and new pew benches inserted. This restoration also removed a part of a medieval gravestone which had been used as the sill for the north door (pers. comm. Ray Gambell). In this area the buttresses on the exterior wall may also have been affected by the church restoration in 1878. There are some records relating to this restoration but none concerning any restoration to the buttresses in the area of the evaluation (Ray Gambell pers. comm.). The plan of All Saint's Church before the restoration of 1878 (CRO P104/6/3) shows that the external buttress directly to the west of this north door was at 45° to the north nave wall whereas the present buttress is perpendicular to the wall. Presently, all the corners of the church have buttresses at 45° except this area.

An early copy of the positions of 19th-century burials on the northern side survives (Fig. 3). This plan shows that the burials are neatly spaced out in north to south rows with large blank areas around the church and along the north wall of the churchyard. The burial map implies the graveyard was arranged so that families were buried in plots. Within the proposed development area the Cropley and the Mallow families were recorded. Burial records show members of both families were interred here between 1836 and 1899 (Ray Gambell pers. comm.).

The churchyard itself was always fairly small and, in 1873 and 1924, the rector gave a rood from his glebe to enlarge the churchyard eastward (Wright 1989, 154). This implies that burials adjacent to the north wall would therefore pre-date the expansion of the church.

The population of the village was registered as 32 peasants in Domesday Survey (1086). Since only the heads of household were recorded in the Domesday Survey historians have argued that the total should be multiplied by 4 or 5 times to get true population figures (128 to 160 people). Recorded populations in Landbeach fluctuated so that by c.1549 there were around 170 inhabitants, and this figure was roughly stable until 1795 when 239 people were recorded (Wright 1989, 139). After 1800 population grew rapidly, rising to a peak of 510 by 1881 and the numbers have fluctuated since.

## **4 Methodology**

The object of the archaeological evaluation work was to determine the character, date, state of preservation and extent of any archaeological remains within the proposed perimeter foundation trench (0.60m wide and 1.50m deep) and general ground reduction on the footprint of the porch to a depth of 300mm below existing northern floor level.

The Brief stated that in the event that unexpected archaeological remains, such as high status or potentially early burials, unexpected structural remains or significant pre-church activity, were present, the archaeological work would be halted to allow consultation with the Diocesan Advisory Committee Archaeological Advisor.

The brief also highlighted the sensitive area where a trench ran up to the church wall. This area was to be recorded by section to demonstrate the survival or extent of disturbance of archaeological stratigraphy against the wall. No human remains were to be removed from the church or churchyard without reference to the diocese.

It was anticipated that the work would take place in stages with an archaeologist required to be present during any disturbance of floor levels within the church and in any other sensitive areas as well as during the construction of the new path and service pipes running across the churchyard to the north door. The services would consist of a new drainage pipe 0.10m diameter and a water pipe 25mm diameter below the proposed pathway.

The present archaeological evaluation was to determine if the foundation design was practical. A letter by Iain Frearson of Freeland Rees Roberts Architects dated 7th June 2005 stated that at this stage, it was unclear whether trench foundations, small square pad foundations (c.1m<sup>2</sup>), mini-piles, or a reinforced slab will be used. It was hoped the evaluation would determine which design was most practical.

The evaluation began on the 30th January in the area of the new porch. The 0.30m ground reduction took place with a mini-digger with a



1m wide toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. As this toothless bucket was far larger than the proposed footings and would have disturbed too many burials, a 0.70m wide toothed bucket was used along the foundation trench.

The ground was carefully stripped until the top of a burial was exposed. This was quickly cleaned and recorded, numbered up and put in plastic bags. Machining was then continued until another burial was exposed. As a result of the fact that numerous burials were uncovered, less than one complete foundation trench was excavated with 12 articulated burials found as well as disarticulated fragments. Enough of the area was sampled to provide a representative insight into the number of burials and type of soil conditions to give both the architect and the structural engineer a good idea which scheme of works was preferable.

After the area was evaluated the site was fenced off. A meeting on the morning of the 31st January comprising Ian Frearson (the architect), the structural engineer (Andy Watson), Ray Gambell (churchwarden) and Alan Wyatt (parish council) and representatives from CCC AFU. During the meeting, Andy Watson hand augered on both sides of the proposed porch to assess the type of soil that the development would encounter and measure the depth to the natural subsoil.

The possibilities of the various options were debated after the nature of both the archaeology and natural sub-soil was exposed although no definite outcome was decided at this stage. Due to the density of burials it was agreed that the provisional scheme had to be revised in the light of the discoveries made. A revised scheme would be prepared by Alan Watson for approval by the Tony Baggs (Diocesan Archaeologist) and the Architect. Tony Baggs was kept updated with the discoveries of the evaluation and he visited the site on the afternoon of the 31st January.

All human skeleton remains (HSR) were put in boxes and kept in the vestry until they were reburied, after a service, when the evaluation trench was backfilled on February 3rd. All features and deposits were recorded using CCC AFU's pro-forma sheets. A section across the trench was drawn at 1:20 (Fig. 4). The photographic record comprised colour print and monochrome of trenches and excavated features, and digital photographs.

A draft archaeological evaluation report was produced and sent to Tony Baggs for approval and Iain Frearson and Ray Gambell for comment on 24th February. The pottery finds on 28th February were handed over to Dr Ray Gambell who acted on behalf of Landbeach Parochial Council.

The detail plans from the structural engineer was subsequently received with the new proposals comprising four c.1m<sup>2</sup> square piles at

each of the four corners of the porch. On 17th March Tony Baggs was contacted concerning the proposed plans and he agreed that it was impractical to excavate by hand four c.1m<sup>2</sup> pile pits to a depth of c.1.5m and the evaluation had shown that only 18th or 19th century burials could be expected. The only archaeological interest was the western pit adjacent to the church wall, which would need to be recorded. It was also thought not necessary to monitor work on the new pathway leading from the proposed porch to the roadway although if the contractors uncovered anything of interest they were to inform the archaeologists. Any groundwork within the church was thought to be potentially of interest.

After the death of Tony Baggs on 31st May 2006, Dr Tim Reynolds was appointed Diocesan Archaeological Advisor. The watching brief on the four piles and the work within the church took place on the 14th June and Dr Reynolds visited at the same time. This visit showed that the pipes would not impact on any possible archaeology remains within the church and Dr Tim Reynolds said the only remaining area of interest was when the stone sill of the north door was lifted. Both Rob Atkins and Dr Tim Reynolds subsequently also monitored this.

## **5 Results**

### **5.1 General ground reduction**

The proposed porch area, measuring 5m by 4m, was stripped to a depth of 0.30m. This stripping largely removed the topsoil but no features were clearly defined and no articulated burials encountered. There was an area of modern contamination where some burning (bonfire?) had occurred and a few small pieces of modern brick/tile were evident within the soil at this level.

### **5.2 Foundation trench**

The foundation trench was dug along the proposed eastern foundation trench leading from the existing buttress (Fig. 4). The excavation along this wall found three distinct rows of burials at least 1.05m wide. Below modern topsoil 0.25-0.28m deep (2) there was evidence for three different plots uncovered with vertical edges running from just below the topsoil layer to the bottom of the trench. The soil within all three plots was very different showing that the burial soils from the three plots were not intermixed. The ground level was not higher than the floor level of the church implying there has not been wholesale introduction of new ground soil.

Within each of the plots, the adult burials were encountered at the same position with the centre of the body uncovered (pelvis, lower arms and upper legs, middle and lower vertebrae and ribs). The infant

burials were placed within the centre of the plot and the skull and upper remains were therefore encountered.

### **Row 1**

The southern most plot (Row 1) was more than 1.30m wide and was at least 1.2m deep and was filled with a mid to dark grey brown sandy silt with the occasional charcoal flecks. Several medieval pottery sherds were encountered at all levels in the backfill of this plot (Appendix 1).

Augering into the side of the plot found compacted natural a further 0.4m down below the excavated limit. It is uncertain whether there was a further burial(s) excavated in the centre of the plot (where the row of burials were all placed; Fig. 4). At the base of the excavated trench a few disarticulated bones were found demonstrating the possible presence of further burial(s) here.

An articulated adult (HSR 6) was found 1.15m below ground level. Directly 0.15m above HSR 6 a further adult burial (HSR 5) was placed. Two adult burials were found 0.85m below ground level with HSR 3 displaced by HSR 4. HSR 3 was only partly moved creating a disordered bundle of bones comprising part of the skull, ribs and two long bones. Two infant burials were buried side by side at 0.55-0.60m below ground level with HSR 1 probably around neo-natal age while HSR 2 was around a year old (two front teeth recovered).

Cutting the burial plot was a large construction trench for the buttress (4). This was 0.50m wide and 0.82m deep and filled with a very clean yellow/orange sands and gravels (3). A slight sondage (0.10m) was dug under one part of the buttress and no stone foundations were uncovered. Some concrete was laid up to the base of the buttress and this was sealed by a small modern gravel layer (1).

### **Row 2**

The middle burial plot (Row 2) was 1.16m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1.14m (not bottomed). It was filled with a mid orange grey brown sandy silt with very occasional small stones/peagrit. The earliest burials encountered was HSR 8 which cut HSR 9, 0.80m below ground level in the centre of the plot. Two further burials were found near to the northern edge of the plot. A child/adolescent burial (HSR 10) was found 0.80m below ground level and an adult burial (HSR 7), 0.60m below ground level.

### **Row 3**

This row was only very partially excavated. It was more than 0.94m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.60m and was filled with a mixed layer comprising a mid grey brown sandy silt (80%+) and lenses of mid orange brown sandy silt. Two burials were encountered (HSR 12) 0.68m below ground level and, directly above (HSR 11), 0.55m below ground level.

### **5.3 The four pile pits**

The four pile pits at the corner of the proposed porch were between 1.1m<sup>2</sup> and 1.3m<sup>2</sup> in size and they all went through former grave earth. The western pit was dug about 0.3m away from the wall of the church and so the stone courses were not exposed.

### **5.4 Work within the church**

Work within the church itself comprised temporary removing about half the wooden pews to install pipes. The depth of this work was c.0.3m to 0.4m below the present floor level but no archaeological remains were disturbed (Plates 1 and 2). The only stone remains consisted of the stonewall footings of the northern wall of the church which was stepped in by c.0.3m (Plate 1). There was also an east to west wall of unknown date running parallel to the northern wall along roughly the centre of the northern transept. Victorian brick walls were also seen around some of the medieval column bases and also running along the side of where the wooden pews had been. These brick walls would give support to the former pews which had been installed within the church in 1878 (Plate 2). It is probable that the undated stone wall (above) was also built in this period to support the bench pews. The sill of the north door was lifted but only Victorian work was uncovered.

## **6 Discussion and conclusions**

Burials were located in the northern part of the graveyard. Traditionally, this was the most unfavoured side of the church, where medieval burials rarely occur. It is therefore likely that even the disarticulated remains date from the post-medieval period.

Deeply stratified burials up to at least 6 graves deep (as well as parts of disarticulated burials) were recovered in three burial rows between 0.55m and 1.40m+ below the present ground level. Burials were recorded here in the 19th-century burial plan of the churchyard, and are likely to date to the 18th and 19th centuries. This part of the burial ground was the last area to be used before the churchyard was extended in 1873.

The vertical cut for the three burial rows was clearly seen running from below the topsoil to 1.4m+ below the ground level. This indicates that each of the rows were cut as separate events and that - due to differential treatment of the soil in each burial row - the soil was made markedly different. The row nearest the church was dark grey in colour and contained most of the medieval pottery sherds (Appendix 1). It is most likely that some nearby domestic waste was used and mixed with

soil from this burial plot to create this colour although the ground level was not higher than the floor level of the church implying there has not been wholesale introduction of new ground soil.

The middle row was mid orange grey brown in colour and therefore contained a significant amount of redeposited natural subsoil. Row 3 contained a mixed deposit implying the presence of domestic waste and redeposited natural. Having established this soil colouring, later burials were recut within their row, away from the cut, and backfilling with the same soil. Apart from two pairs of intercutting burials in Rows 1 and 2, the other burials (especially in Row 1) were reasonably well-planned implying that they were consecutively laid above each other over a relatively short time span.

The 19th-century burial plan (Fig. 3) rightly indicates the presence of three rows of burials within the evaluation trench but the archaeological trench was located between two recorded families, the Cropleys and the Mellows and it is therefore uncertain which of these family plots were disturbed. The burials within this part of the burial ground were far more frequent than the burial record implied.

There was no evidence for a pathway leading from the north door during the removal of 0.3m soil. The 19th century burial plan does not show any pathway here, indeed, burials were placed all across this location and where the pathway would have led to the street (Fig. 3). This therefore implies that the north doorway had not been in use from at least the early 19th century.

The evaluation trench was placed up against the existing buttress (Fig. 4). The foundations for this buttress cut burial Row 1 and therefore must date from after this time, probably during the 1878 restoration.

The density of burials of 6+ in a row (3m by 1m) would give a density of 2 bodies per 1m<sup>2</sup>. This figure seems to tally with the probable density in the burial ground. The church was in use over the last 900 years, during which time there has been on average around 200 people living in Landbeach (see Section 3 above) - if they lived on average for around 30 years (taking into account child mortalities) then there is likely that at least 6,000 people are buried in the churchyard. The church burial ground area measures around 3,000m<sup>2</sup> implying that if there was an even distribution there should be around 2 people buried per 1m<sup>2</sup>.

Within the church the work was only 0.3m to 0.4m deep and no archaeological deposits were removed dating before the Victorian restoration. The stone clunch footings of the northern wall of the church was exposed and seem to widen as it was stepped in by c.0.3m (Plate 1). There was also an east to west wall of unknown date running parallel to the northern wall along roughly the centre of the northern transept but its significance is unknown and together with

brick footings found elsewhere they are likely to have been built in the 1878 restoration for supporting the new pew benches.

## Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Landbeach PCC who commissioned and funded the archaeological work especially Dr Ray Gambell (churchwarden) who supplied historical documents, a copy of his church guidebook and overlooked all work, including reburial of the human remains. Freeland Rees Roberts arranged the work and Iain Frearson supplied proposed plans and other details. The project was managed by James Drummond-Murray. The work was carried out by Rob Atkins and Glenn Bailey. The drawings were illustrated by Carlos Silva, pottery was reported on by Dr Paul Spoerry and this report was edited by Liz Popescu.

The brief for archaeological works was written by Tony Baggs, who visited the site and monitored the first part of the evaluation. Dr Tim Reynolds monitored and visited the site during the watching brief.

## Bibliography

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## **Appendix 1: The Pottery**

by Dr Paul Spoerry

A small group of eight medieval pottery sherds (51g) recovered from the evaluation all of which came from Row 1. The material consisted of generally abraded pottery from the 12th to 14th centuries:

Four sherds (39g) Developed St Neots ware (12th - 13th centuries). Sooting on two sherds.



Two sherds (9g) Ely ware (12th - 13th centuries).

One sherd (2g) Mill Green Coarse ware (late 13th - 14th centuries).

One sherd (1g) unidentified sandy ware (12th - 14th centuries).

## Drawing Conventions

### Sections

Limit of Excavation	-----
Cut	_____
Cut-Conjectured	-----
Soil Horizon	.....
Soil Horizon - Conjectured	.....
Intrusion/Truncation	-----
Top of Natural	_____
Top Surface	_____
Break in Section	-----
Cut Number	
Deposit Number	117
Ordnance Datum	18.45m ODN ^
Burial	

### Plans


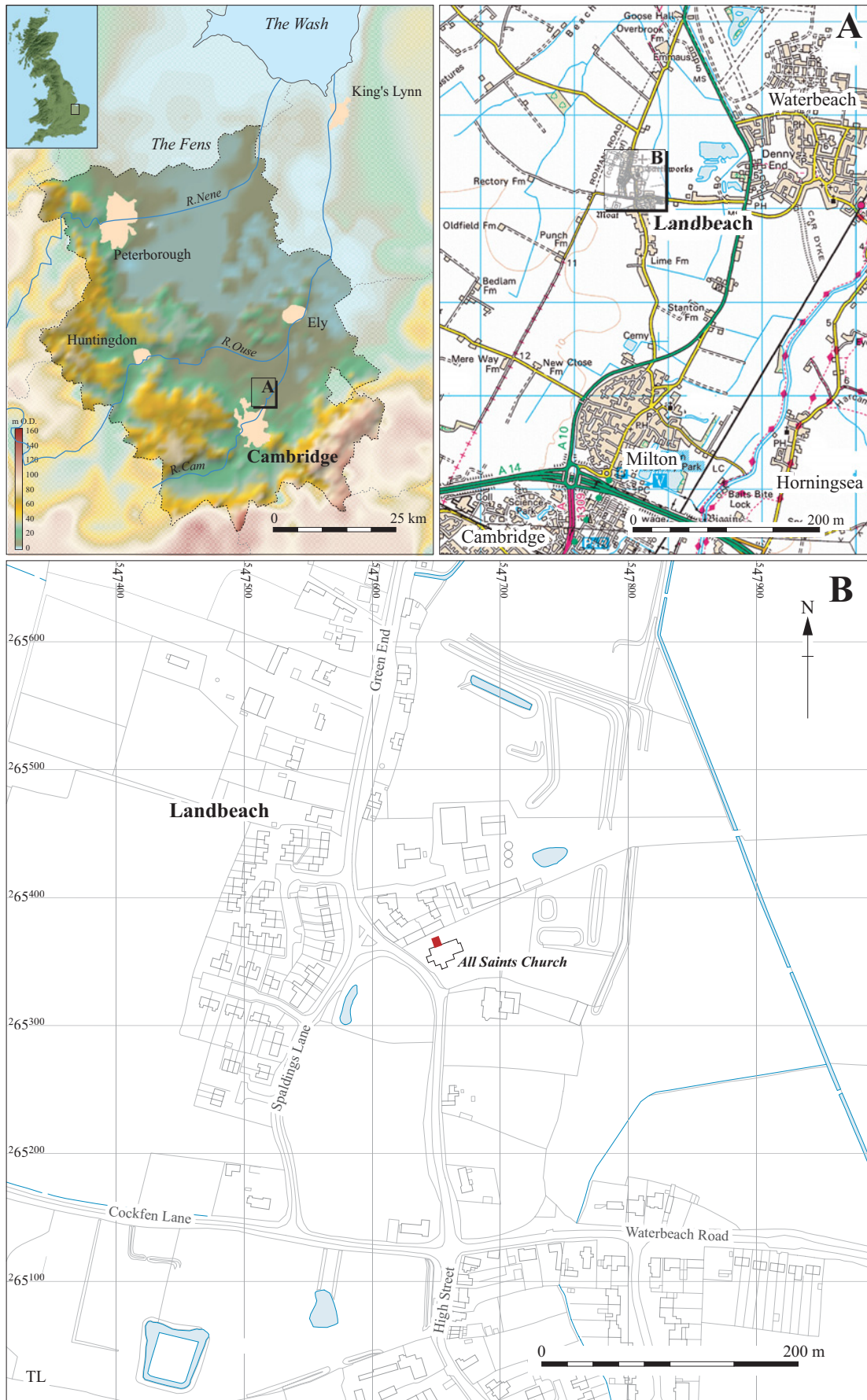
Limit of Excavation	_____
Deposit - Conjectured	-----
Natural Features	.....
Intrusion/Truncation	-----
Sondages/Machine Strip	-----
Illustrated Section	<u>S.14</u>
Excavated Slot	
Cut Number	<b>118</b>

Figure 1: drawing Conventions





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Figure 2: Site location showing development area (red)

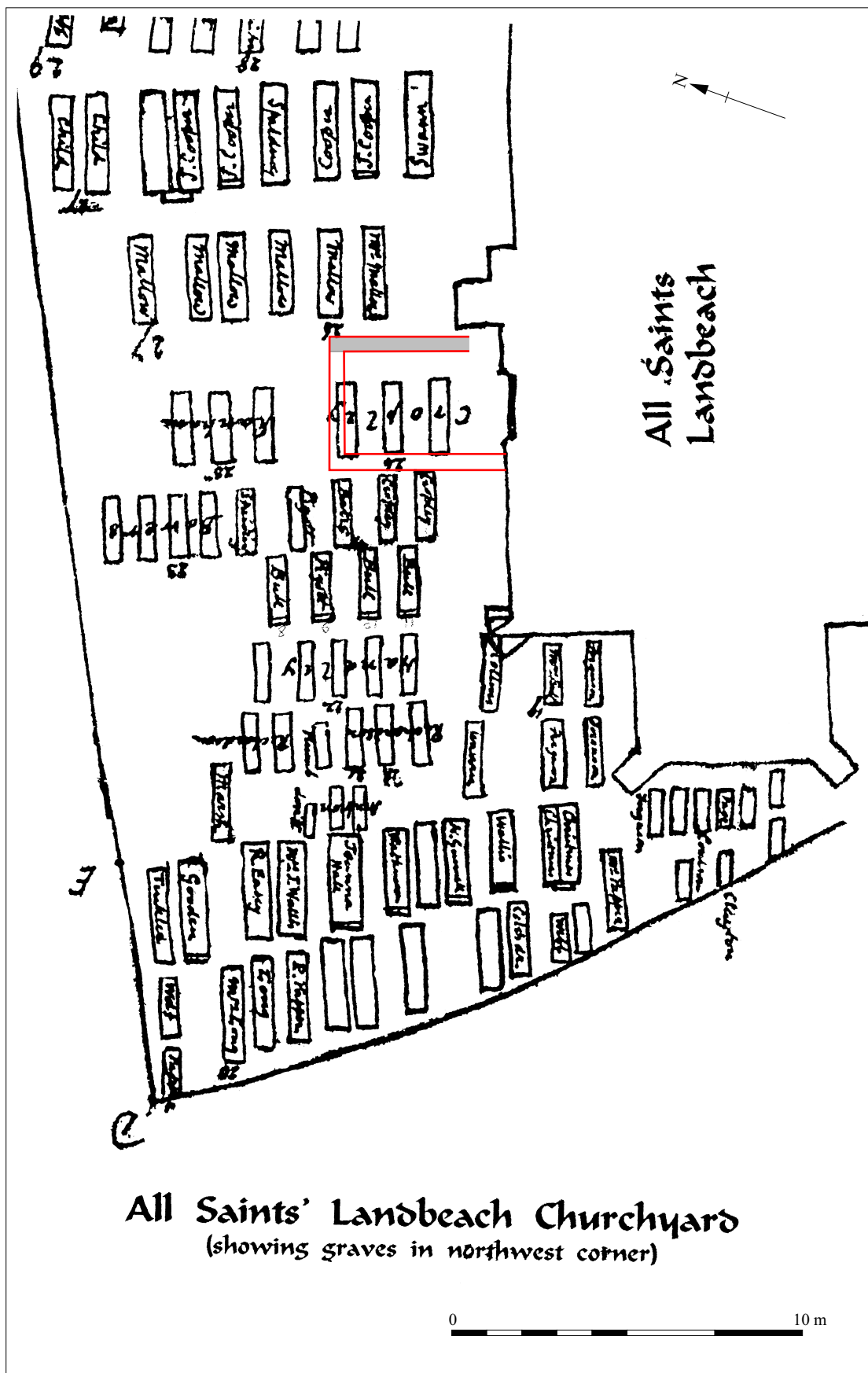


Figure 3: 1923 copy of 19th century burial plan with archaeological trench [courtesy of Landbeach PCC]

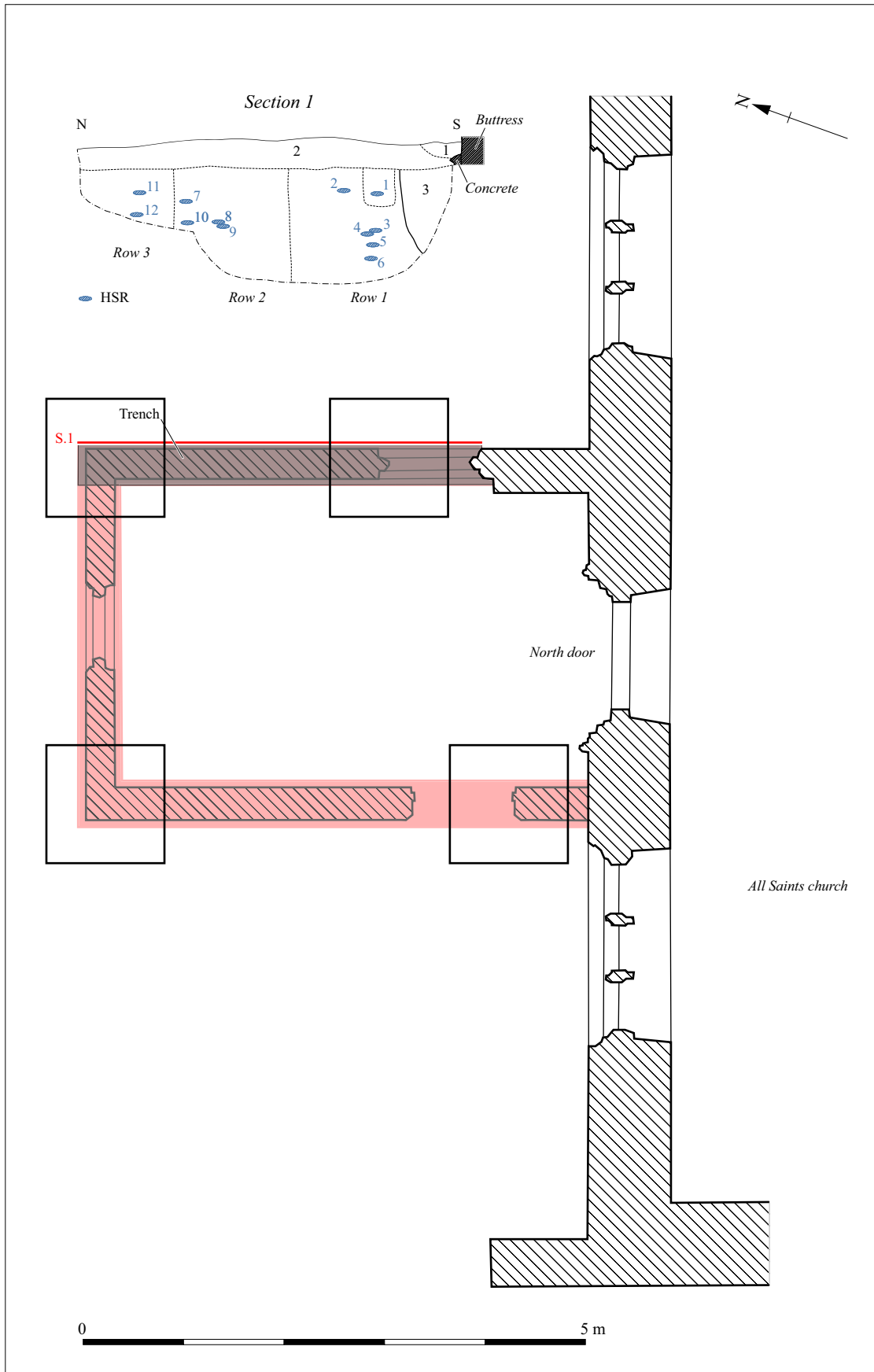


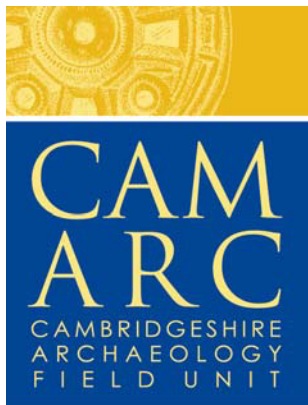
Figure 4: Plan and section of proposed new north porch (red) with archaeological trench (grey fill) and pile pits (black outline)



*Plate 1: Stones walls remaining after removal of pews in north transept*



*Plate 2: Brick walls for supporting former wooden pews and around base of medieval column*



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<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology>