

ST MARTIN'S CHURCH

WHITE RODING

ESSEX

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY



Essex County Council
FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY UNIT

July 2012

ESSEX HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD SUMMARY

Site Name & Address: St Martin's Church, White Roding, Essex	
Parish: White Roding	District: Uttlesford
NGR: 556165 213353	Site Code: WHRMC 12
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Group: M. Germany / E. Heppell ECC Field Archaeology Unit
Date of Work: June 2012	Oasis Ref. essexcou1-130466
Location of Finds/Curating Museum: Saffron Walden	Funding Source: Developer
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos: 4361-2
Final Report: EAH Roundup Summary	
Periods Represented: Undetermined Post-medieval Modern	
<p>SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by the Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit at St Martin's Church, White Roding, during construction works being carried out by Noble and Taylor Ltd for the Parochial Church Council. As the works lay within an area of archaeological potential an archaeological condition was placed on the development requiring that monitoring be carried out on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal and reduction of the floor level within the church tower • Excavation of pit for cess tank in the churchyard <p>The sewer, vent and water supply trenches were not subject to monitoring but were inspected if open when the archaeologist was on site. The archaeological monitoring was carried out in accordance with a brief of works from the ECC Historic Environment team.</p> <p>The parish church of St Martin (EHER 4361-2) is a Grade II Listed Building of flint rubble, with some brick and clunch dressings. The nave is judged to have been built in the 11th or early 12th centuries with additions and rebuilds to the church dating to the 14th and 16th centuries. The vestry was added in 1878-9, at which time the church was generally restored. The church lies in a graveyard, bounded by high trees and largely laid to grass.</p>	

The internal works involved the removal of the floor and reduction of its level, along with the excavation of a drilling pit to allow services to run through the church walls. Concrete, 0.15m thick was removed across the entire floor of the tower. A thin (0.08m) layer of compacted sand (02) lay below the concrete and rested on a dark brown, soil-like, silty clay deposit (03), which was over 0.45m thick. This is thought to be a construction/levelling deposit and contained occasional small pieces and flecks of lime based mortar. No finds were recovered.

Outside the church a 2 x 3m cess tank pit was excavated to a depth of >1.8m, the edges of which were unstable due to the ingress of water at this depth. The vegetation/ topsoil (04) was removed onto a greyish brown silty clay (05). This deposit was between 0.1m and 0.4m thick, being more extensive towards the south. Below this lay further greyish brown sandy silt deposits (06 and 08), again thicker to the south. The edges of these deposits were unclear, and both contained occasional pieces of brick and tile, disarticulated bone and chalk fragments. A band of sandy silt (07), 0.5m wide, crossed the pit diagonally (from the north east to south west), its exposed length being 2.4m. The edges of the deposit were unclear but, in section, it appeared to have vertical edges and extend to a depth of >1.2m. It is possible that this material may have been the infill of a grave cut but the limitations presented by the size and depth of the pit mean that this interpretation cannot be confirmed. The base of the pit, at 1.8m, comprised a sandy silt with a loose friable texture and frequent chalk. The excavation of the remainder of the pit was not observed as the sides began to collapse so the works were shuttered.

The service trench linking the pit and the vestry was observed. A small jumble of disarticulated bone (presumably human) was recovered in the end of this, adjacent to the corner of the vestry. These remains, which included small pieces of skull and pelvis, part of a jaw, teeth and fragments of long bones were located at the base of the narrow trench (0.45m below the present surface level). These bones were not *in situ* and, being in close proximity to an existing water pipe and drain cover, had probably already been disturbed. They were left in their present location, and are now below a pipe/cabling.

No finds other than fragments of post medieval/modern building material (not collected) and disarticulated bone (re-buried site), were observed during the archaeological monitoring.

Previous Summaries/Reports: N/A

Author of Summary: E. Heppell

Date of Summary: 16 July 2012



Plate 1. Drilling pit in the tower



Plate 2. Cess tank pit, west facing section (1.5m scale)



Plate 3. Disarticulated bone in service trench by vestry (0.5m scale)

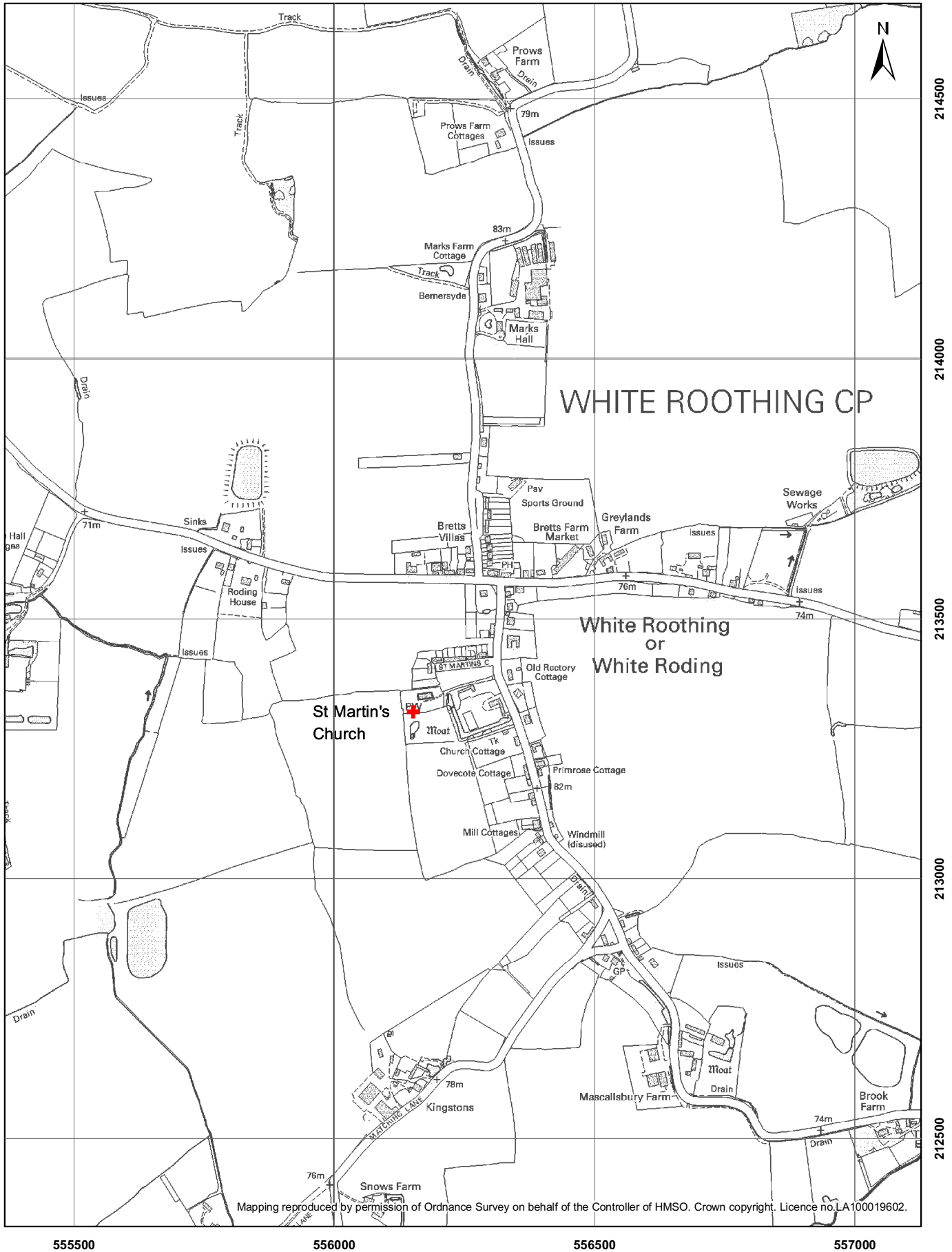


Fig. 1 Location

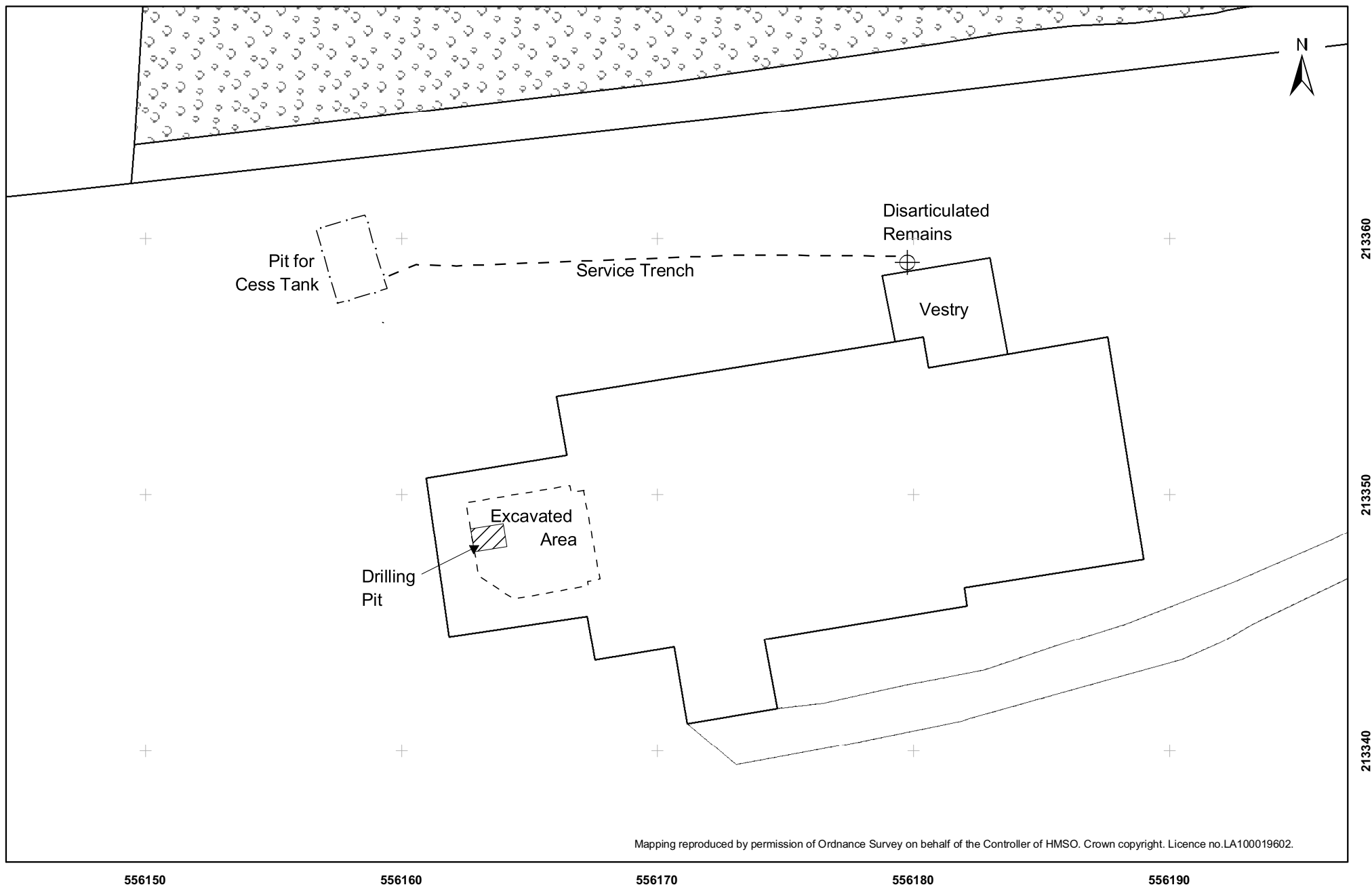


Fig. 2 Detailed Location

