

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING OF
GROUNDWORKS FOR AN EXTENSION AT
ST ANDREWS CHURCH
SHALFORD
ESSEX**



**Essex County Council
Field Archaeology Unit**

October 2009

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As part of our desire to provide a quality service, we would welcome any comments you may have on the content or the presentation of this report.

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EHER Summary Sheet

Site Name/Address: St Andrews Church, Shalford, Essex	
Parish: Shalford	District: Braintree
NGR: TL 7239 2924	Site Code: SFSA 08
Type of Work: Archaeological Monitoring	Site Director/Team: Andy Letch ECC FAU
Dates of Work: July 2009	Size of Area Investigated: N/A
Curating Museum: Braintree	Funding Source: St Andrews Parochial Church Council
Further Work Anticipated? No	Related HER Nos. HER 14715-6 & 28147; Grade 1 listed
Final Report: Summary in EAH	
Periods Represented: Roman, medieval & post-medieval	

SUMMARY OF FIELDWORK RESULTS:

An extension was built onto the north side of St Andrews, Shalford for a new kitchen/meeting room and toilet. The church was primarily built in the 14th century, although the tower dates from the 12th century, and was restored in the 19th century. The natural slope of the ground falls slightly towards the stream to the north and a flat area of floodplain that probably marked the early northern limit of the graveyard.

A test pit was dug in September 2008 close to the north-west buttress to examine the church foundations and underlying deposits. The trench was approximately 0.5m wide and 1m deep. Examination revealed shallow flint foundations onto a brown soil/flinty layer followed by darker probable graveyard soil. Natural deposits were not encountered.

For the current works, an area of ground measuring 5.25 x 6.25m was stripped by machine to a maximum of 0.45m to form a flat working area. Ground beam trenches 0.8m wide were then dug around the edges and across the middle (fig. 1) to a depth of approximately 1.00m from ground level, revealing a grey brown sandy silt topsoil containing mortar, peg tile and flint inclusions, from the 19th century restoration. Below was a thick dark brown layer of graveyard soil (context 4) and a brown subsoil that continued to the base of the trench (context 5). Medieval pot and brick were collected from finds spot 1 (fig. 1) and context 5.

A section of concrete gully was dug out against the north aisle and 0.3m of soil removed for a new drain. Below the gully was found an unabraded sherd of medieval pottery dated to the 15th century (finds spot 2, fig. 1).

Service trenches were dug on the western side of the extension footings. Trench 1 (fig. 1) was dug for a shingle soakaway, 0.65m deep and varying in width from 0.3 to 0.6m. The upcast produced a small quantity of Roman tile and medieval/post medieval pottery sherds (context 6, unstratified). Finds spot 8 yielded a Roman box flue tile and a medieval pottery sherd (fig. 8). In the centre of the trench, dug slightly deeper, natural sandy gravel was recorded at a depth of 0.8m, beneath the graveyard soil and mixed subsoil (context 11). Silty flood plain deposits were found at the north-west end, towards the stream.

A second trench was dug to the west to link with the existing sewer system. This trench was narrower (0.3m) but slightly deeper at 0.75m. Natural gravel was recorded at the western end at 0.6m from ground level, covered by the same grey gravelly silt floodplain deposit.

A similar trench was dug from the existing water supply by the porch to the new extension to a similar depth and encountered the graveyard soil only and no finds.

Monitoring works found natural gravel 0.8m below ground level on the high ground and 0.6m along the floodplain. A general graveyard deposit lies above it that contains small amounts of disarticulated human bone, but no inhumations or obvious grave cuts. Inhumations are therefore assumed to lie beyond the depth of present groundworks (0.6-0.8m). Much of the dated material is contemporary with the main part of the church (14th century onwards) and originates from finds spots in the gravesoil. However there is some evidence of earlier activity indicated by fragments of Roman tile, and in particular a box flue tile associated with underfloor heating (finds spot 8), which suggests the presence of an important building in the vicinity.

Previous Summaries/Reports: None

Author of Summary: A. Letch

Date of Summary: 21st October 2009

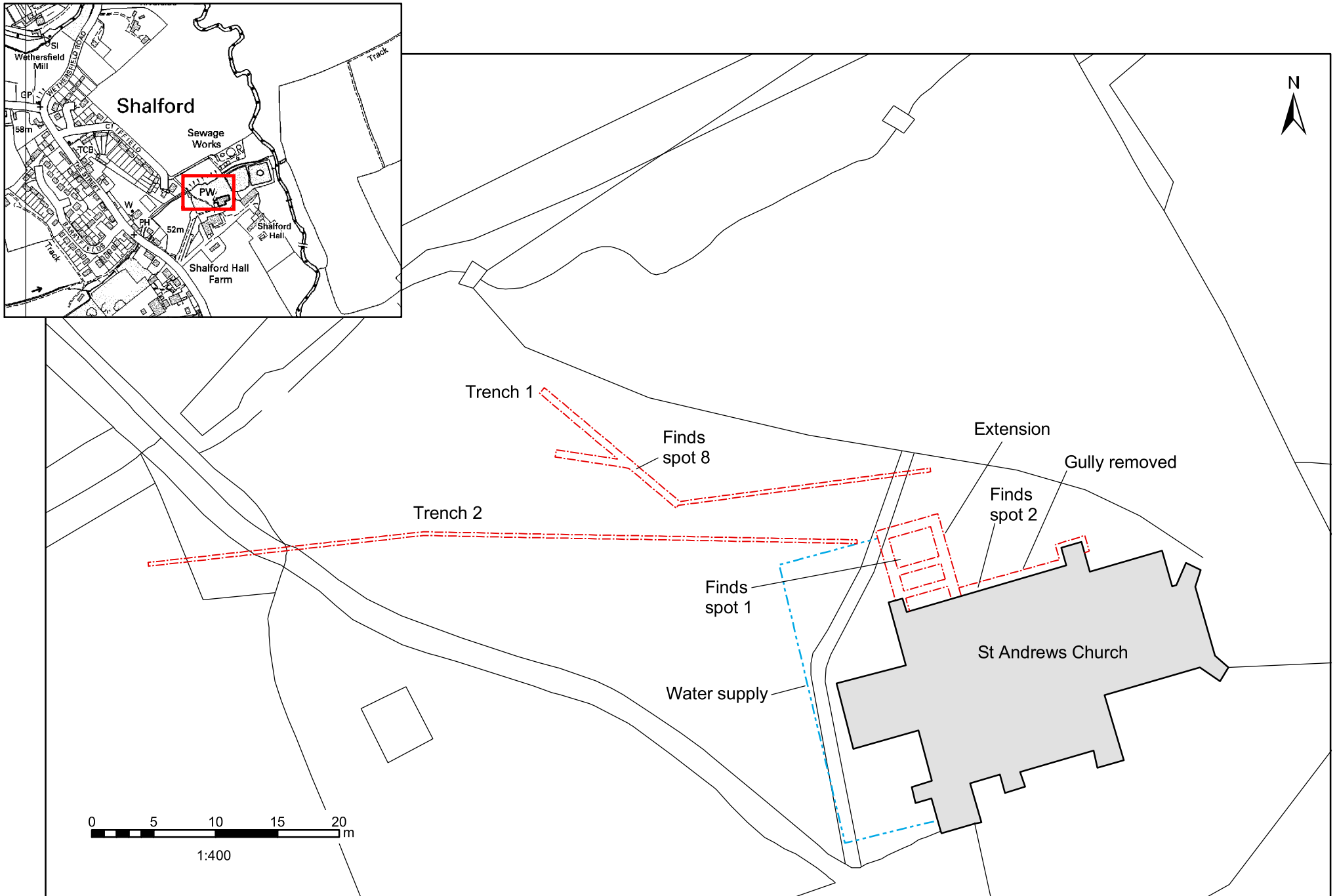


Fig.1. Location of monitored areas

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1896: St Andrew's Church, Shalford (SFSA08)

Finds report by Joyce Compton

Finds were recovered from six contexts, mainly representing unstratified material from various findspots. All of the finds have been recorded by count and weight, in grams, by context. Full quantification details can be found at the end of this report. The finds are described by category below.

Pottery by Helen Walker

A total of nine sherds, weighing 468g, was excavated from five contexts. The pottery has been catalogued according to Cunningham's typology of post-Roman pottery in Essex (Cunningham 1985, 1-16). All the pottery is either unstratified or from the subsoil.

Most of the pottery is medieval, the earliest comprising sherds of medieval coarse ware including a B2 rim, most likely from a cooking pot, and datable to c.1200 (Walker 1988). Slightly later, perhaps 13th to 14th century, is an unglazed bowl rim in Hedingham fine ware fabric, a fabric usually reserved for glazed and decorated jugs. The bowl is fire-blackened internally, perhaps indicating something was heated inside.

The most interesting find is a large fragment from a Cheam white ware barrel-shaped or rounded jug datable to the 15th century (Pearce & Vince 1988). This was made at Cheam, in Surrey, from white-firing clay, and is widely but sparsely distributed throughout Essex, rarely occurring in large quantities. The rim of a very large buff ware bowl and a glazed sandy orange ware sherd, also found, may be contemporary with the Cheam ware. Two sherds of glazed post-medieval red earthenware were recovered, but the bulk of pottery dates to the medieval and late medieval periods.

Brick and tile

Six contexts produced brick and tile fragments, amounting to thirty-four pieces, weighing 2.2kg. Almost all of the assemblage comprises undiagnostic fragments probably dating to the post-medieval period. Findspot 1 produced fragments from the same unevenly-made brick, which has a depth of 35mm. This is likely to be an early brick, therefore, and could date to the medieval period. A piece of roof tile in the same context may also be an early type.

Four pieces of Roman tile, weighing 554g, were recovered. Three pieces, one of which is a corner fragment, came from findspot 6. A piece of combed box-flue tile came from find spot 8. The presence of Roman brick and tile in the fabric of the church has been noted (Ryan

1996, 104) and so the finds of Roman tile in the vicinity of the church are unsurprising. The fragment of box-flue tile may be noteworthy, however, as this type of tile is normally associated with hypocausts in Roman buildings, such as bath houses.

Metalwork

Most of the metalwork comprises iron nails, but a single copper alloy object was recorded in findspot 2. This is a gilded pendant in the form of a tube-like frame of 60mm diameter with a small suspension ring. The object probably dates to the post-medieval period and may derive from a disturbed burial.

Human bone

Human bone was recorded in two contexts, both of which represent material from disturbed graves. Skull and rib fragments were collected from the upcast (6) of a service trench. Long bone shafts and other fragments came from findspot 7.

Animal bone

Six pieces, weight 106g, of animal bone were collected from the upcast of the service trench. These consist of joining fragments from the distal end of a cattle tibia, which has been chopped during butchery, along with other undiagnostic fragments. The animal bone is likely to be derived from domestic food waste.

Other finds

The upcast of the service trench also produced a single oyster shell, a fragment of mortar and a fragment of shaped stone, probably a floor tile, with a depth of 35mm. The fragment appears to have been burnt at some stage.

Comments on the assemblage

Small groups of finds, mostly post-medieval, were recorded. The presence of small amounts of medieval pottery and brick is worth noting, as is the presence of Roman tile. No further work is required on any of the material. The smaller pieces of post-medieval brick and tile and some undatable material, such as the shell, have been discarded following recording. The bone, both human and animal, has been returned to the church for reburial. All of the remaining finds should be retained.

The retained finds occupy less than one box.

References

- Cunningham, C. M. 1985 'A typology for post-Roman pottery in Essex', in Cunningham, C. M. and Drury, P. J., *Post-medieval sites and their pottery: Moulsham Street, Chelmsford*, Chelmsford Archaeol. Trust Rep. **5**, Counc. Brit. Archaeol. Res. Rep. **54**, 1-16
- Pearce, J. E. and Vince, A. G. 1988 *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery Part 4: Surrey Whitewares*, Trans London Middlesex Archaeol. Soc. Spec. Pap. **10**
- Ryan, P. 1996 *Brick in Essex: from the Roman conquest to the Reformation* (Chelmsford)
- Walker, H. 1988 'The pottery', in Sellers, E., Ryan, P. M. and Walker, H., 'Maiden's Tye: a moated site at High Easter', *Essex Archaeol. Hist.*, **19**, 180 - 191

Finds data

Context	Feature	Count	Weight	Description	Date
1	u/s	1	4	Iron nail (Discarded)	-
		7	320	Brick fragments, all same brick, unevenly made, dark grey core, max depth 35mm	?Medieval
		1	146	Roof tile fragment, brown fabric	?Medieval
		2	382	Roof tile fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		1	78	Pottery; rim sherd	Medieval
2	u/s	1	12	Copper alloy pendant, gilded	Post med.
		1	184	Pottery; jug handle	Medieval
5	Subsoil	1	6	Iron bradnail (Discarded)	Post med. Medieval
		2	24	Roof tile fragments (Discarded)	
		1	4	Pottery; body sherd	
6	u/s	2	30	Iron nails	-
		6	106	Animal bone; cattle tibia, distal end, joining, chopped; fragments (Discarded)	-
		5	14	Human bone; skull and rib fragments	-
		1	26	Shell; oyster, one valve (Discarded)	-
		1	218	Stone ?floor tile fragment, depth 35mm, ?burnt (Discarded)	-
		1	16	Mortar	
		8	418	Brick fragments (6/324g discarded)	Post med.
		9	340	Roof tile fragments (Discarded)	Post med.
		3	444	Tile fragments, depth 30mm; corner fragment, depth 30-34mm	Roman
		5	172	Pottery; rim and body sherds	Med/post med.
7	Finds	5	112	Human bone; long bone shafts; fragments	-
		1	32	Roof tile fragment (Discarded)	Post med.
8	Finds	1	110	Tile fragment; combed box-flue	Roman
		1	30	Pottery; rim sherd	?Medieval