

Great St. Mary's Church, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire

HN1178

Report No. 919

Site name and address:	Great St. Mary's Church, Church Street, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	East Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Sawbridgeworth	Parish:	Sawbridgeworth
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TL 48500 14822
Client name and address:	Great St. Mary's PCC, c/o Mr N. Bright, 4 Yewlands, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9NP		
Nature of work:	Repair works – nave floor	Present land use:	Church
Site Status:	Listed building	Reason for investigation:	Diocesan Faculty
Position in planning process:	N/A	Project brief originator:	N/A
Size of affected area:	16m ²	Size of area investigated:	16m ²
Site Code:	HN1178	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Observation and Recording	Archive Recipient:	Bishops Stortford Museum
Start of work	08/01/2015	Finish of work	05/02/2015
Related HER Nos:	HER 1104	Periods represented:	Post-medieval, modern
Oasis UID:	heritage1-199716	Significant finds:	Burial vault
Monument types:	Burial vault		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Narrative:

As part of the faculty requirements for repair works to the floor of the nave, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring at Great St. Mary's Church, Sawbridgeworth, Hertfordshire.

The study area lies within the church building, centred at NGR TL 48500 14822 (Figure 1).

The groundworks consisted of ground reduction, covering an area measuring 7.8m in length and 2m in width, in the centre of the nave (Figure 2). The ground was reduced by 0.40m across the whole area, removing the existing tiled surface. The stratigraphy exposed in the sections below the tiles comprised a layer of light grey silt, >0.40m in depth, interpreted as a make up or levelling layer. The natural substratum was not reached during the present works.

Three brick structures were revealed in this area. Structure [101], was encountered in the southwest corner of the trench and was orientated east – west, along the nave. It was built of handmade red bricks, bonded with lime mortar and had a curving roof. Its exposed area measured 2.50m in length, 0.80 in width and 0.15m in depth (Figure 3, Plate1). The structure has been interpreted as a burial vault of mid 19th century or earlier date.

Structure [102] was located on the northern side of the aisle, to the north of [101], and lay below ledger stone 16 (Figure 3, Plate 2). It was also aligned east – west and constructed of red handmade bricks bonded with lime mortar. Its exposed area measured 2.5m in length, 0.40m in width and 0.20m in depth. No lettering was visible on the ledger stone.

Structure [103] was located towards the eastern end of the aisle, to the east of [102] and was orientated north - south (Figure 3, Plate 3). Its exposed area measured 0.75m in length, 0.80m in width and 0.12m in depth. It was constructed of red machine manufactured bricks, which had been broken to fit. The bricks, which were laid at least two courses high and bonded with a dry lime mortar, may have been reused or reclaimed for this purpose. This structure was apparently of later date than the postulated burial vaults to the east, although it's purpose is unknown.

No other archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the works.

Finds collected during the course of the present project comprised seventeen disarticulated human bone fragments and a sherd of slip-trailed pottery of probable 18th century date (Plate 4). With the agreement of the vicar, these were all reburied in the trench after the work was complete.

Discussion:

The Church of Great St. Mary (HER 1104) is a Grade I listed building (List Entry No. 160758), largely of late medieval date, which replaced an earlier structure. The earliest parts of the present building date to the 13th century and comprise the chancel, nave and lower part of the west tower. The north and south aisles were added in the 14th century. A priest is recorded at Sawbridgeworth in 1086, and the 13th century building is unlikely to have been the first on the site, but no evidence for an earlier structure has been identified.

The groundworks for the present project were located in the centre of the nave. This work exposed the roofs of two probable brick built burial vaults dating to the mid 19th century or earlier, and a 20th century brick structure of unknown purpose.

Illustrations:

- Figure 1 Site Location
- Figure 2 Site Layout
- Figure 3 Trench Layout

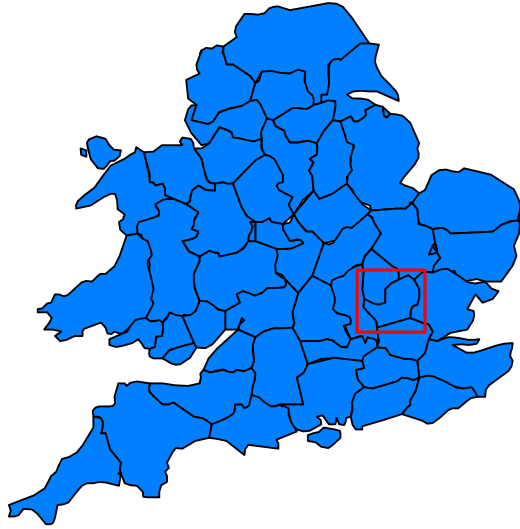
- Plate 1 Vaults [102] and [101] looking E.
- Plate 2 Vaults [101] and [102] looking W.
- Plate 3 Brick structure [103] looking N
- Plate 4 Disarticulated bone and pottery sherd .

Greg Jones
October 2015

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Great St. Mary's Church,
Sawbridgeworth, Herts.

HN1178

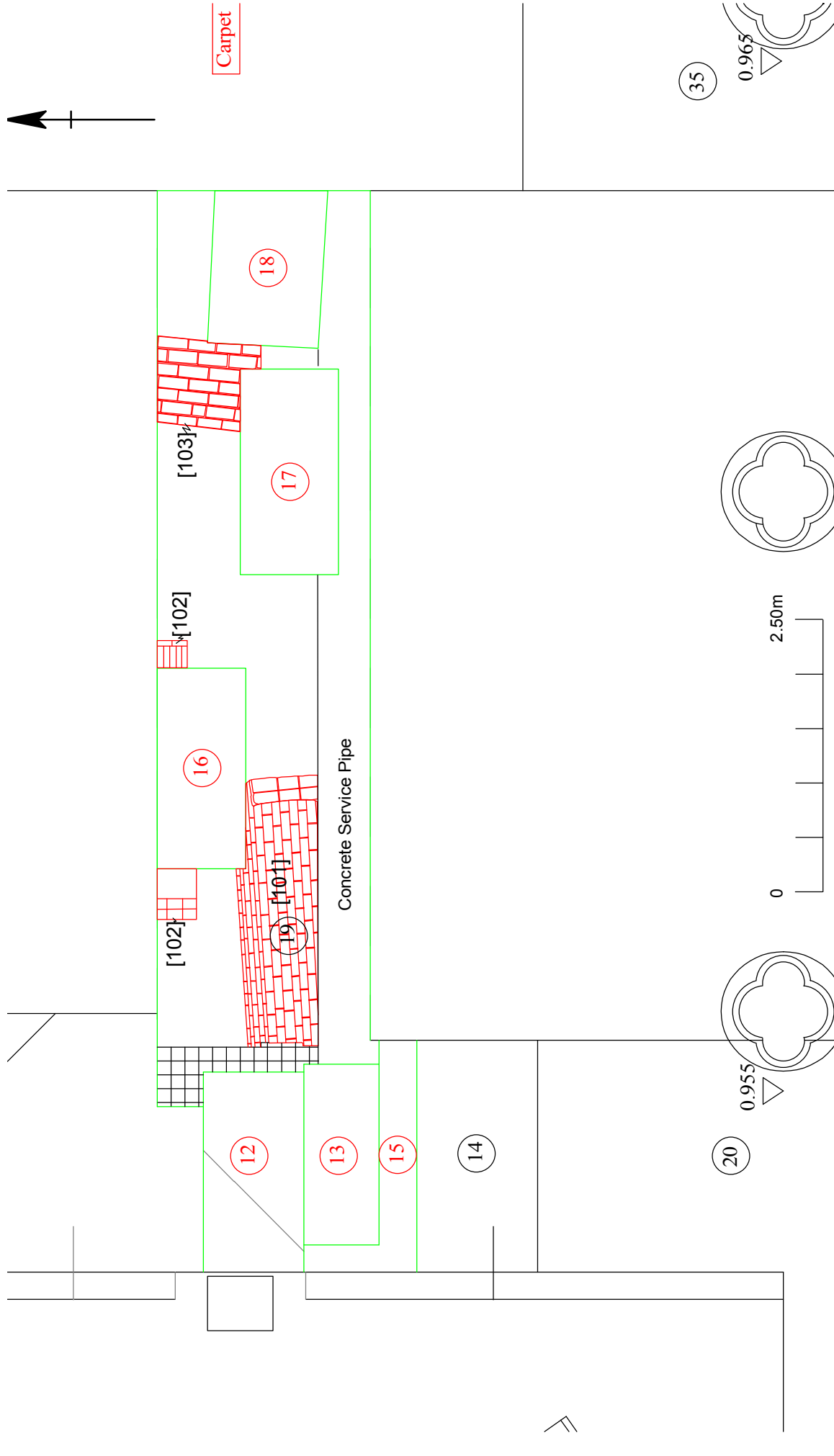


Site Location

Scale 1:7500

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Figure 1



Plan of Archaeology



Plate 1: Vaults [102] and [101] looking east



Plate 2: Vaults [101] and [102] looking west



Plate 3: Brick structure [103] looking north



Plate 4: Disarticulated bone and pottery sherd

Site Name:	Gr. St. Mary's Church, Sawbridgeworth,	HN ref:	1178
	Herts.	Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GAT	Arrive time:	12:45pm	Return travel:	2.0 hrs
Date:	08/01/15	Depart time:	15:30pm	Total hours:	5.25 hrs

Reported to:	Brian Cooper	Position:	Contractor.
Purpose of visit:	O/R excavation of subsided Nave Aisle.		

Photograph film no	
Staff on site:	GAT.
Observations:	<p>Arrived and spoke with Brian, and also met the Vicar and the Churchwarden. I informed them that they could carry on, and I would record anything that shows up.</p> <p>Brian had excavated down to a depth of 0.25m in the void areas around the ledger stones. A brick built vault structure [101] was uncovered in the SW corner of the excavated area. Vault [101] measured 2.5 m long (exposed) and 0.6m wide. The depth exposed was < 0.15m.</p> <p>The material removed in the void areas was loose and dry and contained post-medieval pottery and tile frags as well as mortar frags. This material is likely to date from the same time as the tiled floor surface (18th Century?).</p> <p>Photographed + recorded [101], the finds and the stratigraphy.</p>

	Sheet	1	of	3
	Additional records:			
	Text sheet(s)			
	Sketch sheet(s)			1
	Context form(s)			1
	A4 Scale dwng(s)			
	A3 Scale dwng(s)			
Weather:	N/A (INDOORS)	Photographs		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Site Name:	Great St. Marys Church, Sawbridge worth, Herts.	HN ref:	1178
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GATJ	Arrive time:	12:50pm	Return travel:	1.5hrs
Date:	09/08/15	Depart time:	13:45pm	Total hours:	2 1/2 hrs

Reported to:	Brian Cooper	Position:	Contractor
Purpose of visit:	OR excavations of central Aisle of Nave.		

Photograph film no	
Staff on site:	GATJ
Observations:	
<p>Site visit to view the finished hand dug excavation in the central Aisle of the Nave.</p> <p>No more features exposed. Vault [101] was slightly more exposed than yesterday. Further photographs were taken.</p> <p>A small void had appeared in the NW corner of the trench. The stratigraphy was the same as that observed yesterday. Brian put his broom down this hole and it reached $3\frac{1}{4}$'s of the handle. (approx 0.75m)*</p> <p>Tiled floor (c. 18th/19th century?)</p> <p>- Below which was dry silty layer. Light Grey with frequent mortar frags and mortar dust, with frequent sub-rounded / sub-angular stones.</p> <p>Inclusions - Post-med pot + tile bits/scaps of occ. wood. Handful of disarticulated bone was recovered. Photographed and re-buried.</p> <p>Natural Not seen. Excavations went down only 0.25m below tile surface.</p>	
* It was not possible to see inside.	Sheet 1 of 1
	Additional records:
Brian informed me that there would be a site meeting Monday to discuss next phase with the architect. I said I was finished, however if any further groundworks are deemed necessary then we should be informed.	Text sheet(s)
	Sketch sheet(s)
	Context form(s)
	A4 Scale dwng(s)
	A3 Scale dwng(s)
Weather:	INDOORS Photographs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Site Name:	GIS+Mauy's, Sawbridgeworth	HN ref:	1178
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	DJH	Arrive time:	10.15	Return travel:	2h
Date:	30/1/2015	Depart time:	11.15	Total hours:	3h

Reported to:	Barry Hill	Position:	Architect
Purpose of visit:	Meeting to discuss way forward		

Photograph film no					
Staff on site:	Nick Bright, Aidan O'Hiergill, Brian				
Observations:	Decision made to reduce to c.500mm overall (less to E) introduce ballast and then create concrete slab.				
	Visit required when impact depth achieved before new material laid.				
		Sheet	1	of	1
		Additional records:			
		Text sheet(s)			
		Sketch sheet(s)			
		Context form(s)			
		A4 Scale dwng(s)			
		A3 Scale dwng(s)			
Weather:		Photographs			

Site Name:	Gr. St. Marys Church, Sandbridgewoth Merts.	HN ref:	1178
		Site Code:	

Recorder(s):	GATJ	Arrive time:	10:35 am	Return travel:	2.0 hrs
Date:	5/2/15	Depart time:	12:15 pm	Total hours:	3.75 hrs

Reported to:	Church Warden	Position:	" "
Purpose of visit:	Site visit - Photograph/record exposed features.		

Photograph film no			
Staff on site:	GATJ		
Observations:			
<p>Visited site and photographed exposed area. Structure 101 (vault) is now fully exposed and a second vault 102 was exposed partially below one of the headstones (see plan). This structure appear very similar to vault 101, though it was only exposed partially at either end of the headstone.</p> <p>Also revealed to the east (NE corner of trench) was a flat brick surface ¹⁰³ 7 rows wide (by no more than 5 bricks long - exposed) which had 2 courses. The upper course was not banded, whereas the lower course was (had line? mortar). The courses ran N-S. It is possible that the 'surface' was longer N-S and deeper too. Full extent unknown. Purpose unclear. It definitely isn't a vault as the structure is significantly different to the exposed vaults. It was proposed by the Church Warden that it may have been a brick capping for the crypt. This is certainly possible and without any other information is as good an interpretation as any other.</p>			
			Sheet 1 of 2
			Additional records:
			Text sheet(s)
			Sketch sheet(s) 1
			Context form(s) 2
			A4 Scale dwng(s)
			A3 Scale dwng(s)
Weather:	INDOOR W/A.		Photographs

SITE CODE HN1178	Sub-division Name	Co-ordinate	Context Type STRUCTURE	CONTEXT No 101
Description				
Fill/Layer	① Red Brick. Hand made.			Cut
1. Matrix colour	② Bond. Stretcher bond, with bricks laid on side.			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	Bonding material: Dry sandy lime mortar.			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	③ > 2.5m (exposed length) x 0.8m wide x < 0.15m high (exposed height). <u>BRICK DIMENSIONS</u> :-			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	0.23m x 0.11m x 0.07m			4. Base
5. Dimensions	④ Approximately EW			5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material				1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				
* On second visit exposed height was 0.37m (5 courses).				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below Floor scree	Above	
	Butted by modern concrete	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of	Same as	

* modern concrete scree.

Discussion and interpretation

BRICK BUILT VAULTED TOMB IN NAVE AISLE EXPOSED DURING GROUNDWORKS FOR SUBSIDENCE WORK. POST-MEDIEVAL (LATE PM), EITHER LATE 18th/Early 19th Century? Either contemporary with or pre-dates existing tiled floor.

Checked interpretation

Provisional date **18th Century? Early 19th Cent?**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile **Brick** A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation **Wet-sieve** Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. Buckets/Litres

Reason for sample

Plan no. Sketch Plan 1.	Photo (b/w) -	Signature RAJ
Section no.	Photo (colour) ✓	Date 08/1/15
Weather conditions Dry /Indoors	Risk of contamination NO.	Checked ✓
Excavation methods Hand.		Cont.

SITE CODE HN1178	Sub-division NAVE	Co-ordinate	Context Type STRUCTURE	CONTEXT No 102
Fill/Layer	Description			Cut
1. Matrix colour	① Red brick vault (Red bricks) Hand made.			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition	② Bond - Stretcher bond with bricks laid on sides. Bonding material, Dry sandy lime mortar.			2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction	③ > 2.5m x > 0.4m wide x > 0.2m. BRICK DIMENSIONS: 0.23m x			3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	④ E-W 0.11m x 0.07m			4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments				6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material	⑤ Similar to 101			1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation				

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below Slab 16	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

Partially exposed red brick vaulted tomb situated to the immediate north of 101 and below tomb slab (ledger stone) 16.
 Most probably 18th/19th Century in date. BRICKS SIMILAR TO THOSE SEEN IN VAULT 101 - ALTHOUGH SLIGHTLY ~~PALER~~ PALER - LESS REDDISH IN COLOUR.

Checked interpretation Provisional date 18th? 19th Century?

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile Brick A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

Sample No. _____
Buckets/Litres _____

Reason for sample _____

Plan no. Sketch.	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAT
Section no.	Photo (colour) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DIG.	Date 5/2/15
Weather conditions N/A	Risk of contamination NO.	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods Hand.		Cont. <input type="checkbox"/>

SITE CODE HN 1152	Sub-division NAVE	Co-ordinate	Context Type STRUCTURE	CONTEXT No 103
Fill/Layer	Description			Cut
1. Matrix colour	① Red bricks, machine made. Re-used/reclaimed bricks (possibly broken to fit)			1. Shape in plan
2. Matrix composition				2. Dimensions/depth
3. Matrix compaction				3. Sides
4. Inclusions (frequency & size)	② Dry line? Mortar bonding laid in stretcher courses.			4. Base
5. Dimensions				5. Orientation
6. Other comments	③ 0.75m x 0.8m (exposed) x 0.12m high.			6. Other comments
Structure				Group
1. Material	④ N/A			1. Type
2. Bonding				2. Contexts
3. Dimensions				
4. Orientation	⑤ Much later than vaults 102 & 101 .			

Stratigraphic Relationships	Cut by	Cuts	Cut contains
	Below 17 + 18 ledges flow	Above	
	Butted by	Butts	Part of Group
	Fill of	Same as	

Discussion and interpretation

MODERN BRICK CAPPING FOR CRYPT? 20th Century?

Checked interpretation Provisional date **19m/20m C?**

Finds (circle):

None Pottery Metal Glass Tile **EXCEPT Brick** A.Bone Shell Burnt mats. Other:

Registered Finds

Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:
Find No	Type	Coords & level:

Samples (circle):

Mollusc Flotation Wet-sieve Dry sieve C14 Other:

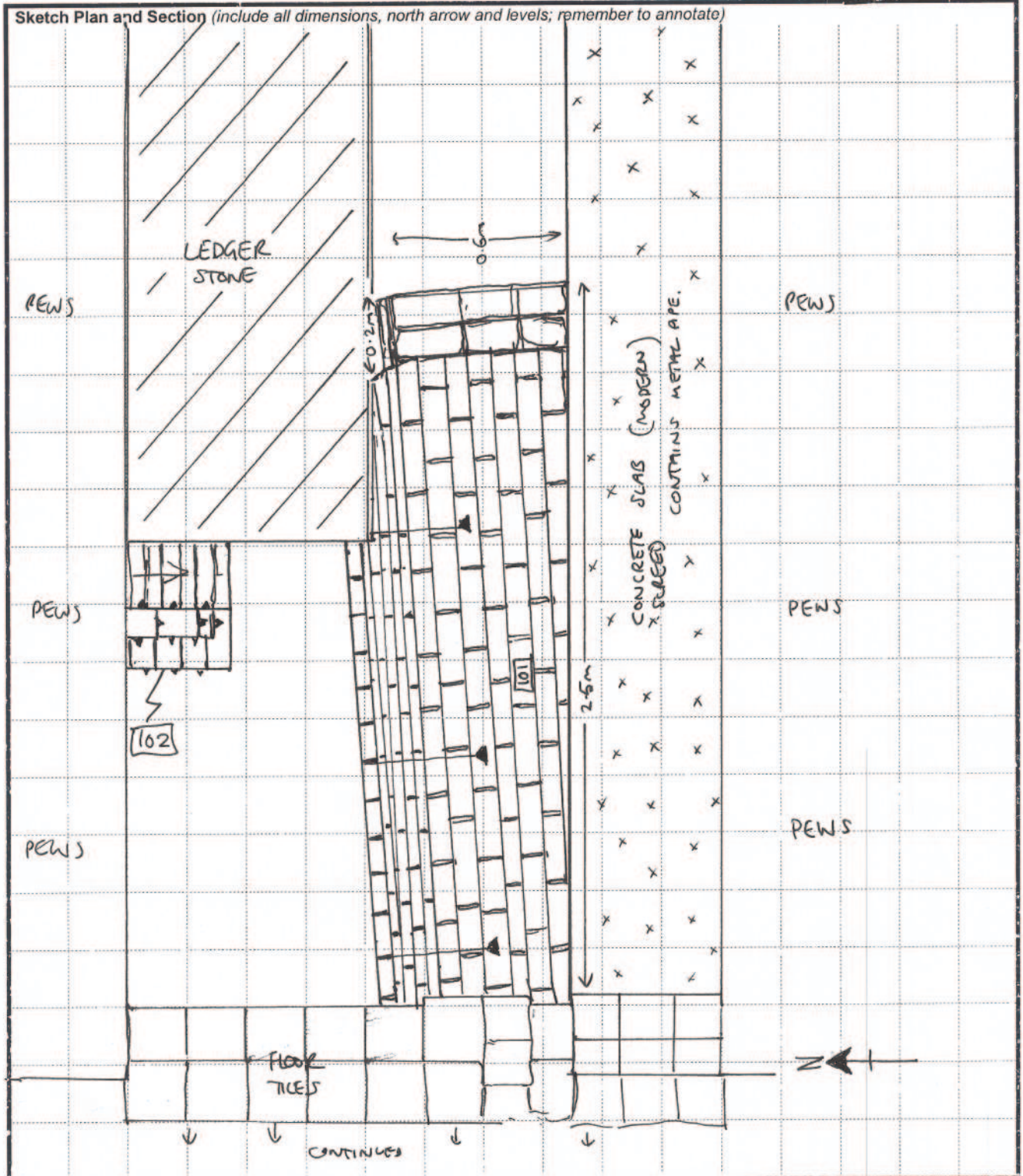
Sample No. _____

Buckets/Litres _____

Reason for sample _____

Plan no. Sketch.	Photo (b/w)	Signature GAS
Section no.	Photo (colour) DIGITAL.	Date 5/2/15
Weather conditions N/A.	Risk of contamination No.	Checked <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excavation methods HAND.		Cont. <input type="checkbox"/>

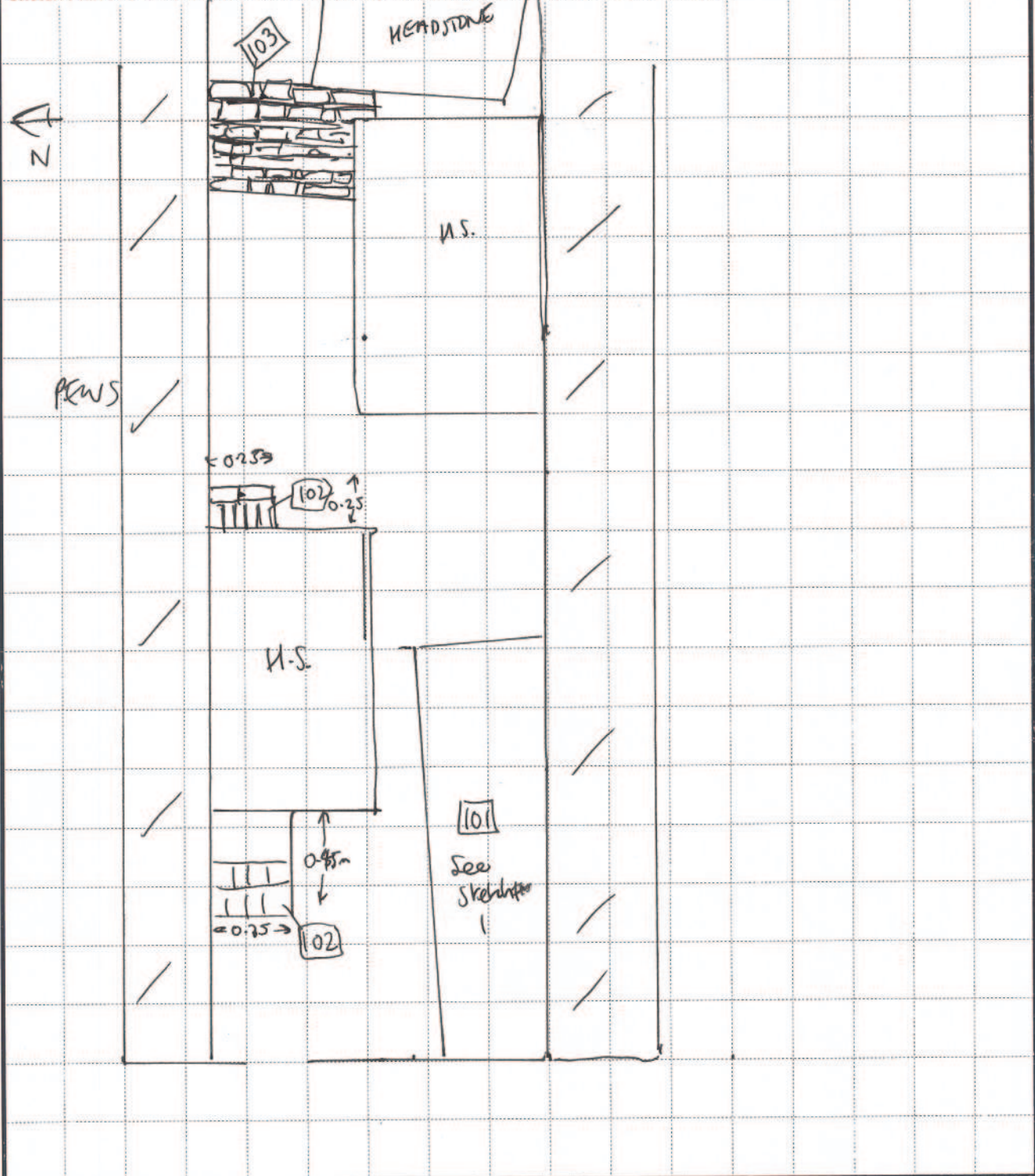
SITE CODE YN 1178	Site Name Sawbridgeworth Ch. St. Mary's Church	Sub-division NAVE	CONTEXT [101]
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Discussion and interpretation	BRICK BUILT VAULT [101] (EXPOSED DIMENSIONS:- 2.5m		
	long by 0.5m wide).		
Scale	1:20		
Signature	DAJ		
Date	8/1/15		
Checked	✓		
Sheet	2	of	3

SITE CODE KN1178	Site Name Gr. St. Marys Sandbridge	Sub-division NATVE	CONTEXT 101 102 103
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Sketch Plan and Section (include all dimensions, north arrow and levels; remember to annotate)



Discussion and interpretation				Scale	N.T.S.
				Signature	G.A.J.
				Date	5/2/15
Sheet	2	of	2	Checked	✓

Site Name / Code GREAT ST. MARYS CHURCH, SAWBRIDGEWORTH, HERTS.						
Site	Shot Number	Details	View	Date	Time	Initials
HN1178	1	VAULT (101) BRICK STRUCTURE	LE	08/1/15	-	GAS
	2	GENERAL SHOTS	LE	↓	-	
	3	↓	LE		-	
	4	VAULT (101)	LW		-	
	5	↓	↓		-	
	6	↓	LS		-	
	7	↓	LS		-	
	8	↓	LE		-	
	9	STRATIGRAPHY	LN		-	
	10	↓	LN		-	
	11	GENERAL SHOTS	LNE		-	
	12	↓	LE		-	
	13	↓	LNW		-	
	14	FINDS BONE + POT	-		-	
	15	↓ POT	-		-	
	16	POT	-		-	
	17	General Struck Flaming (101)	LW		09/1/15	
	18	↓	↓		-	
	19	↓	↓		-	
	20	↓	↓		-	
	21	↓	↓		-	
	22	↓	↓		-	
	23	↓	CE		-	
	24	↓	↓		-	
	25	↓	↓		-	
	26	↓	↓		-	
	27	General Strat (showing void)	LN		-	
	28	↓	LN		-	
	29	(101) PROFILE	LW		-	
	30	↓	↓		-	