

HERITAGE NETWORK



**LAND NW OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH
Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire**

HN657

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

LAND NW OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire

HN657

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Stondon Parochial Church Council

by

Mark Winter, BSc PgDip

Report no. 398

April 2007

© The Heritage Network Ltd

11 FURMSTON COURT, ICKNIELD WAY, LETCHWORTH SG6 1UJ
TEL: (01462) 685991 FAX: (01462) 685998

Contents

	Summary.....	Page i
Section 1	Introduction.....	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork	Page 2
Section 3	Discussion	Page 6
Section 4	Conclusion	Page 6
Section 5	Bibliography.....	Page 7
Section 6	Illustrations & Plates	following Page 8

The cover illustration shows All Saints Church, looking northeast.

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Mark Winter and Alison Hudson. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Mark Winter, and the report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Mike Cooper of Stondon Churchyard Maintenance Committee; Peter Wilson, Plant Hire; Lesley-Ann Mather and the staff of the Heritage and Environment Section, Bedfordshire County Council, for their help and co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Land Northwest of All Saints Church, Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Mid Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Upper Stondon	Parish:	Stondon
Planning reference:	03/0255/FUL	NGR:	TL 1501 3558
Client name and address:	Stondon PCC, c/o Sandryle, 77a Station Road, Lower Stondon, Henlow, Bedfordshire, SG16 6JN		
Nature of work:	Extension of graveyard	Former land use:	Arable land
Site status:	None	Reason for investigation:	Direction of local planning authority (PPG 16)
Position in planning process:	After full determination (eg. As a condition)	Project brief originator:	Local authority
Size of affected area:	c.1176m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.68m ²
Site Code:	HN657	Other reference:	Accession no. LUTNM 2007/135
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Evaluation	Archive recipient:	Luton Museum
Start of work	26/03/2007	Finish of work	30/03/2007
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Roman, post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-26396	Significant finds:	Pottery sherds, animal bone, tile
Monument types:	2 pits – uncertain date, 1 medieval gully, 1 post-medieval ditch, 1 ditch – uncertain date		
Physical archive:	Pottery sherds, animal bone, tile, shell		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis: : In order to determine the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to extend the graveyard of All Saints Church, Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire to the northwest, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the Stondon Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation.

Three trial trenches were opened across the proposed development area, one measuring 1.5m by 20m and two measuring 1.5m by 10m. A medieval gully, a post-medieval ditch, two potentially modern post-holes and a ditch of unknown date were recorded.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instruction of *Stondon Parochial Church Council*, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site located at Land Northwest of All Saints Church, Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire.

1.2 The planning permission for the development (ref. 03/0255/FUL), granted by Mid Beds District Council (MBDC) was subject to a standard archaeological condition, in accordance with the provisions of the Department of the Environment's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16). The scope of the required work followed the *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation* issued by the *County Archaeological Officer* (CAO) of Bedfordshire County Council, acting as advisers to MBDC. A full specification of the work was contained in the Heritage Network's approved *Project Design*, dated February 2007.

1.3 Upper Stondon is situated approximately 8km west of Henlow. The site is located on the northern side of the Meppershall Road, centred on NGR TL 1501 3558 (Figure 1). The area is presently under agricultural cultivation. The development proposes the extension of the existing graveyard at All Saints Church, into the adjacent farmland to the west.

1.4 The aim of the evaluation has been to consider the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any such remains which are liable to be threatened by the development, and to provide a local and regional archaeological and historical context for them, in accordance with the current published regional research agenda (Glazebrook 1997, Brown and Glazebrook 2000), if they were discovered.

1.5 The present report is intended to provide the planning authority with sufficient data to allow it to consider the archaeological implications of the proposed development, and to determine what further, if any, mitigation measures may be required to allow the development to proceed.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The study area consists of land to the northwest of All Saints Church, principally used as arable land. The site slopes gently from the front of the site near the road to the rear of the site in a north-easterly direction.

2.2 The stratigraphy of the site appeared to be homogenous ploughsoil. The natural geology across the site varied from a silty clay to a sandy clay.

METHODOLOGY

2.3 All work was carried out in accordance with the approved *Project Design*, current health and safety legislation, and both IFA and ALGAO standards.

2.4 Three trenches were opened using a wheeled JCB excavator fitted with a 1.5m wide toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision (Figure 2).

2.5 Trenches were machined to the first significant archaeological horizon. Spoil from the machining was inspected for archaeological artefacts.

2.6 All potential archaeological features and deposits were sampled to ascertain their nature, depth, date, and quality of preservation.

2.7 All identified contexts were photographed and recorded using the appropriate proforma. Scaled plans and sections were drawn on drafting film at scales of 1:10 and 1:50.

RESULTS

Stratigraphy

2.8 The stratigraphy observed within Trench 1 consisted of a very dark grey (7.5YR 3/1), silty clay topsoil layer overlying an olive brown (2.5Y 4/4), silty clay subsoil. Beneath this was a strong brown (7.5YR 4/6), sandy clay natural. Trench 2 was similar except that the subsoil layer was less evident, only appearing in the southwest end of the trench and overlay a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), silty clay natural. Trench 3 appeared to have undisturbed stratigraphy and consisted of only topsoil covering silty clay natural.

Trench 1

Length (m):	11.80	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.50	Orientation	NW-SE	
Level at South East End of Trench (mOD)			Top	74.47	Level at North West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	74.52
			Base	73.72			Base	74.00
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
101	Layer	Very dark grey silty clay topsoil	11.80+	1.6+	0.25			
102	Layer	Olive brown silty clay subsoil	11.80+	1.6+	0.25			
103	Layer	Strong brown sandy clay natural	11.80+	1.6+	-			
111	Cut	Ditch	1.50+	1.34	0.44			
112	Fill	Dark yellowish brown, silty clay fill of ditch [111]	1.50+	1.34	0.44			
113	Cut	Square posthole	0.58	0.43	0.08			

114	Fill	Very dark grey, silty clay fill of posthole [113]	0.58	0.43	0.08
115	Cut	Square posthole	0.38	0.35	0.12
116	Fill	Very dark grey, silty clay fill of posthole [115]	0.38	0.35	0.12

2.9 Trench 1 was located at the southwest end of the site (Figure 2), and contained a linear feature [111] and two small square features [113] and [115]. Gully [111] was at least 1.50m in length by 1.34m wide running approximately SW-NE. It was 0.44m deep and contained a dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4), firm silty clay fill (112) with infrequent stones and occasional chalk flecks. A small fragment of animal bone and some shell were recovered from this feature.

2.10 Posthole [113] was located 0.4m northwest of [111] and measured 0.58m long by 0.43m wide. It was 0.08m deep and contained a very dark grey (10YR 3/1), firm silty clay fill, with occasional stone inclusions (114).

2.11 Posthole [115] was located a further 0.90m to the northwest. It measured 0.38m by 0.35m and had a similar appearance to [113] (Figure 3). It was 0.12m deep and contained a very dark grey (10YR 3/1), firm silty clay fill with occasional stone inclusions (116). No finds were recovered from either posthole.

Trench 2

Length (m):	20	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.4	Orientation	NE-SW	
Level at South West End of Trench (mOD)			Top	74.55	Level at North East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	74.86
			Base	74.08			Base	74.58
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
201	Layer	Very dark grey silty clay topsoil	20+	1.6+	0.42			
202	Layer	Olive brown silty clay subsoil	4.60+	1.6+	0.10			
203	Layer	Dark yellowish brown silty clay natural	20+	1.6+	-			
211	Cut	Gully	1.5+	0.53	0.13			
212	Fill	Very dark grey, silty clay fill of gully (212)	1.5+	0.53	0.13			

2.12 Trench 2 was located in the centre of the site (Figure 2). A single linear feature [211] measuring at least 1.5m long by 0.53m wide was identified in this trench (Figure 3). It was 0.13m deep and contained a very dark grey (10YR 3/1), firm silty clay fill with occasional large stones, frequent chalk flecks and infrequent charcoal inclusions (212).

Trench 3

Length (m):	11.00	Width (m):	1.6	Maximum Depth (m):	0.44	Orientation	NW-SE	
Level at North-West End of Trench (mOD)			Top	74.95	Level at South-East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	74.86
			Base	74.63			Base	74.54
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)					
			Length	Width	Depth			
301	Layer	Very dark grey silty clay topsoil	11+	1.6+	0.48			
302	Layer	Dark yellowish brown silty clay natural	11+	1.6	-			
311	Cut	Ditch	1.5+	1.3	0.31			

312	Fill	Dark yellowish brown, silty clay fill of ditch [311]	1.5+	1.3	0.31
-----	------	--	------	-----	------

2.13 Trench 3 was located at the northeastern end of the site (Figure 2), and contained a single linear feature [311] (Figure 3). This measured at least 1.5m long by 1.3m wide. It was 1.3m deep and contained a dark yellowish brown (10YR 4/4), firm silty clay fill (312). This contained a frequent amount of chalk and small stones. A fragment of tile was recovered from this feature.

CONCORDANCE OF FINDS

Context	Pottery		CBM		An bone		Shell	
	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
212	31	305						
312			1	190				
112					1	5	2	10

Animal Bone

2.14 One fragment of animal bone weighing 5g was recovered from the fill of linear [111]. This was the glenoid of a small mammals scapula. No butchery evidence was observed but the bone has been gnawed, probably by rodents.

Recommendation

2.15 Due to the size and nature of this assemblage, no further work is proposed.

CBM

2.16 One piece of post-medieval tile was recovered from the fill of linear [311].

Recommendation

2.17 Due to the nature of this assemblage no further work is proposed.

Pottery

2.18 A total of 31 sherds of pottery, weighing 305g, was recovered from the fill of linear [211]. They were types BO1B, C and C61 and date to the medieval period. Type BO1B is St Neots type, dating to the 10th to 11th century. Type C is unrecognised medieval pottery and type C61 has calcareous inclusions and dates to the 11th to 12th centuries. This type appears to have been hand made but finished on a wheel. It was first recognised in Stratton and seems to occur only in the local area.

Recommendation

2.19 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Shell

2.20 A total of 2 pieces of snail shell were recovered from linear (111), weighing 10g.

Recommendation

2.21 No further work is proposed on this assemblage.

Bulk Environmental Samples

2.22 Two bulk samples were taken from dated contexts. Approximately 1 litre from each sample was passed through a fine mesh and then scanned for artefactual and environmental evidence using a hand lens to assess their potential. The results are summarised in the table below:

Sample Number	Context	Potential	% of Archaeological Material in sample	Mammal Bone	Mammal Bone	Burnt Mammal Bone	Charcoal	organic matter	Burnt grain	Burnt Chaff	Weed seeds	Fe Object	Pottery
1	212	Moderate	1-5	✓			✓		✓				
2	312	Low	<1	✓			✓						

Discussion

2.23 The sample taken from context (312) contained only small amounts of faunal evidence and charcoal. These samples have a limited potential to yield further information on the site.

2.24 The sample, taken from context (212), contained small amounts of mammal bone, charcoal and burnt grain. Context (212) yielded pottery dated from the 10th century AD to the 12th century AD. The sample has a moderate potential to yield further information on the local environment at this time, although the significance of such information is considered to be low.

Recommendations

2.25 On the basis of the assessment results no further detailed work is proposed on the samples.

3. Discussion

3.1 An examination of the Bedfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record has shown that there is evidence of activity in the Upper Stondon area dating from the Iron Age onwards. A bronze coin of Tasciovanus (NMR 362418), dated to the Iron Age, was recovered in Stondon, and a 3rd century Roman coin has been discovered to the west in nearby Shillington.

3.2 All Saints Church was erected in 1857 and replaced a late Norman structure, possibly dating to the mid 12th century. Earthworks located c. 200m to the north and east of the church represent the remnants of a deserted medieval settlement (HER 387).

3.3 Further cropmarks include the corner of a rectilinear feature and a possible ring ditch, approximately 500m to the west of the site (HER 16779) and a large subcircular enclosure on top of a ridge c. 350m to the northeast (HER 16791).

3.4 The recorded archaeology within Trench 1 consisted of a small ditch [111] and two postholes, [113] and [115] (Figure 7) (Plate 5). The ditch fill (112) contained a fragment of animal bone and shell. The postholes were similar in nature and may represent the remains of a fence line. Although no dating evidence was recovered from these features the square appearance of both postholes suggests a modern date.

3.5 Trench 2 contained one archaeological feature, gully [211]. The fill of this feature (212) contained pottery sherds which were medieval in date.

3.6 The recorded archaeology in Trench 3 consisted of ditch [311] (Figure 5) (Plate 6). It contained fill (312) which yielded one fragment of post-medieval tile.

Conclusion

3.7 The evaluation of the site has demonstrated the presence of medieval, post-medieval and potentially modern features. No evidence of pre-medieval activity was encountered. All Saints Church is believed to have origins dating to the mid 12th century. As such it is not surprising to have evidence of activity dating from this time onwards. The observed remains do not appear to be structural in nature and do not reflect occupation. It seems likely that they represent low grade agricultural boundaries.

3.8 On this basis, the risk that the proposed development would disturb archaeological remains of any significance should be considered to be low.

Confidence Rating

3.9 In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than high.

4. Bibliography

Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)

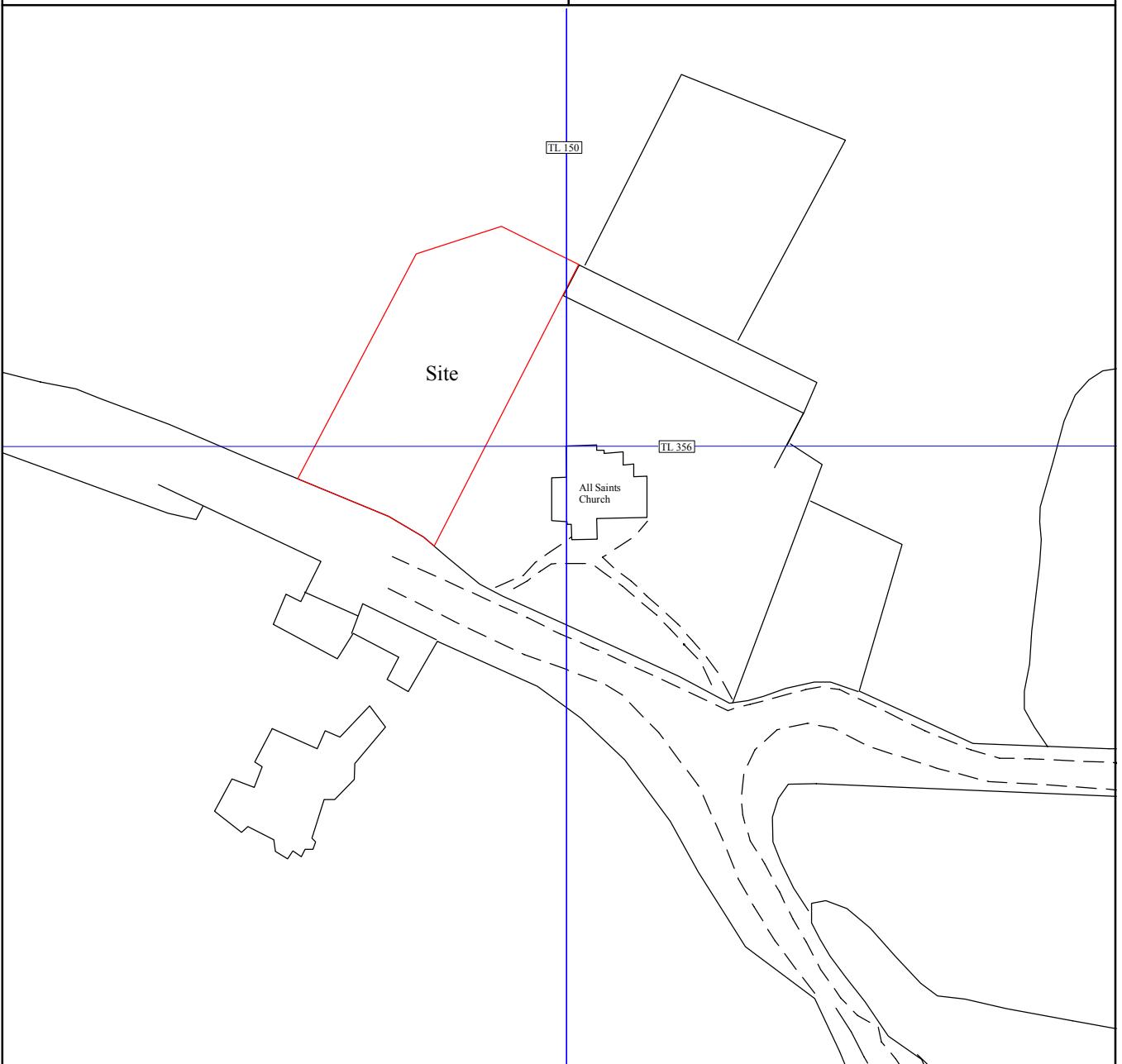
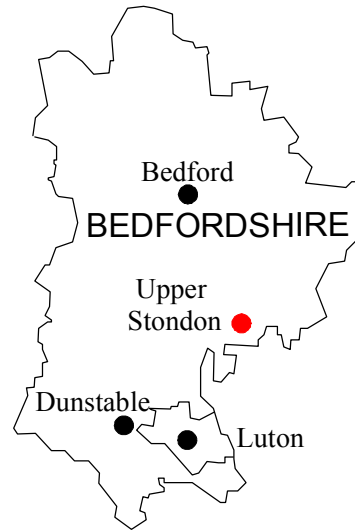
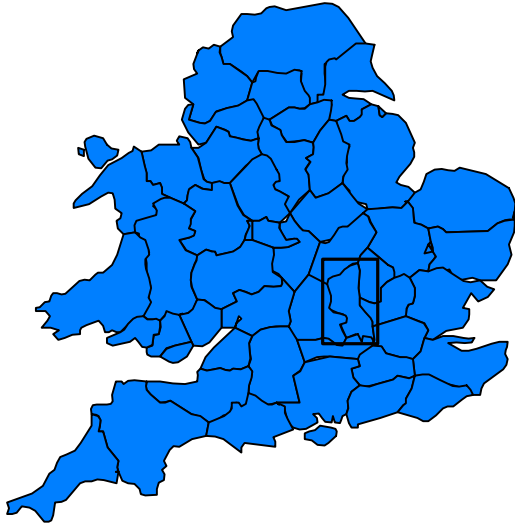
Brown, N. & Glazebrook, J. 2000, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties, 2. Research agenda and strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*.

Mather, LA. 2006, *Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation of land to the North West of All Saints Church, Upper Stondon, Bedfordshire*. Heritage and Environment Section, Bedfordshire County Council.

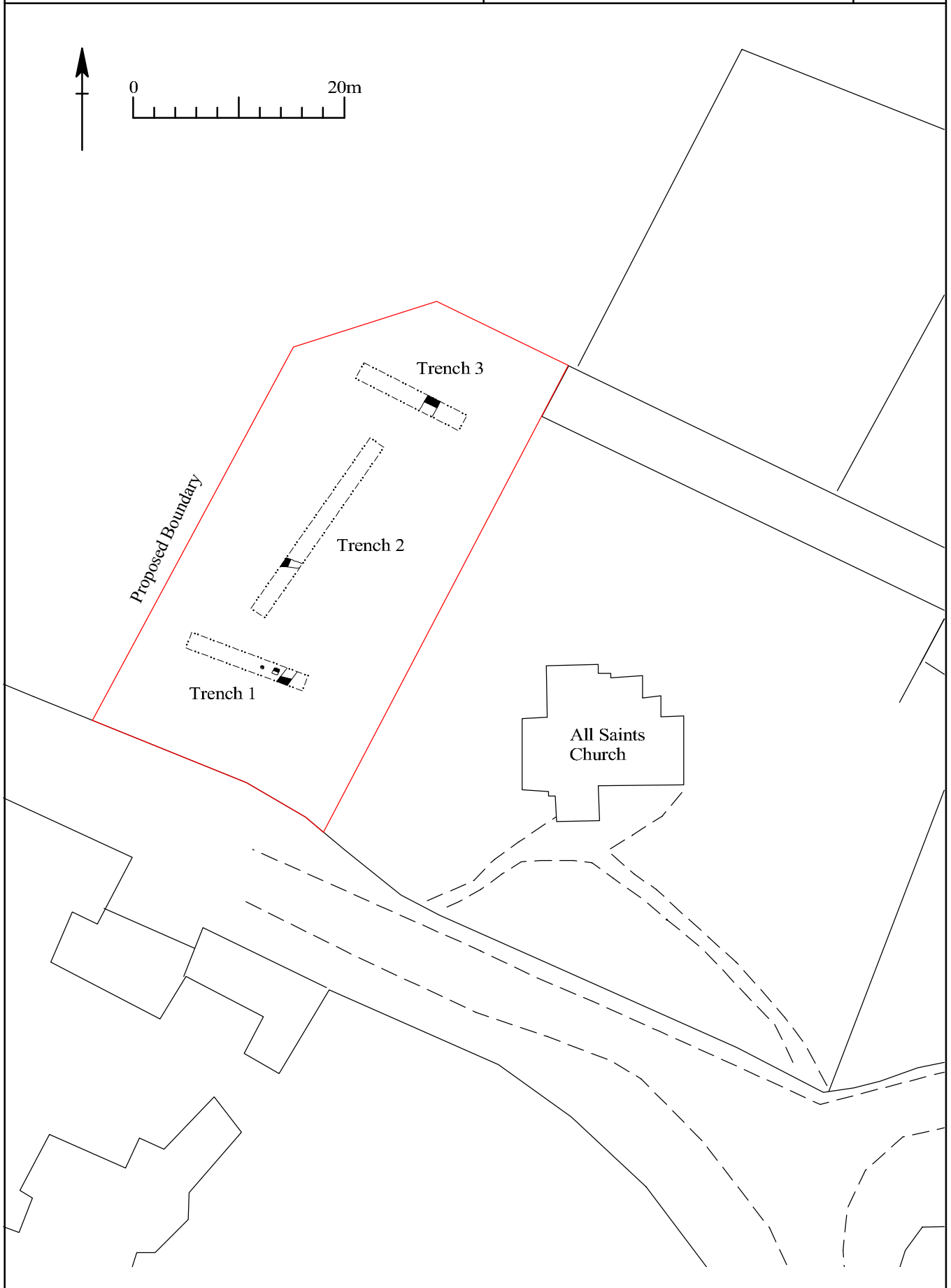
5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Site Layout
Figure 3	Trench 1 and 2
Figure 4	Trench 3
Figure 5	Sections
Figure 6	Sections
Plate 1	Trench 1
Plate 2	Trench 2
Plate 3	Trench 3
Plate 4	Ditch [111]
Plate 5	Posthole [113]
Plate 6	Posthole [115]
Plate 7	Ditch [211]
Plate 8	Ditch [311]



Site Location

Scale 1:1000

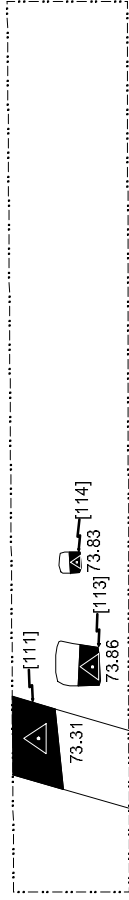


Site Layout

Scale 1:500

Figure 2

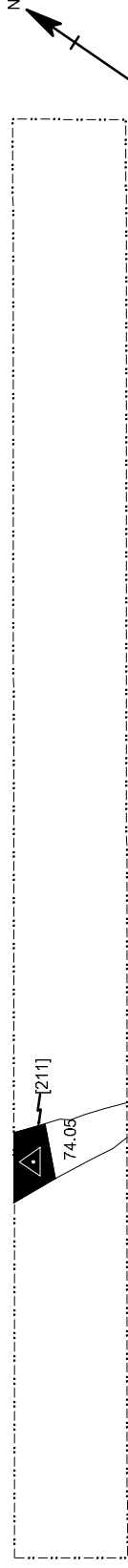
Trench 1



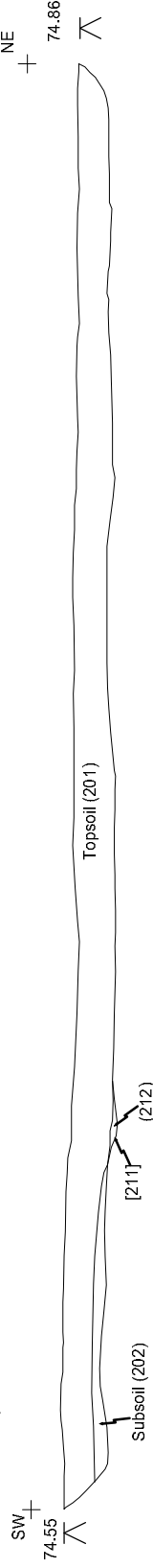
NE facing section through trench 1



Trench 2

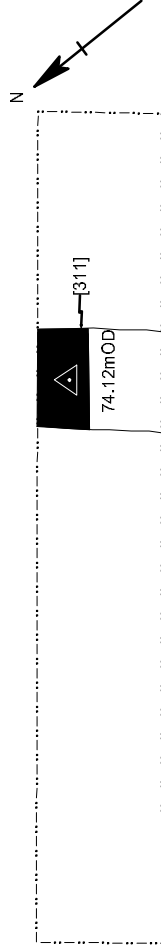


SE facing section through trench 2

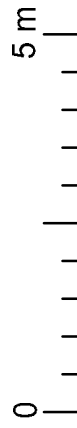
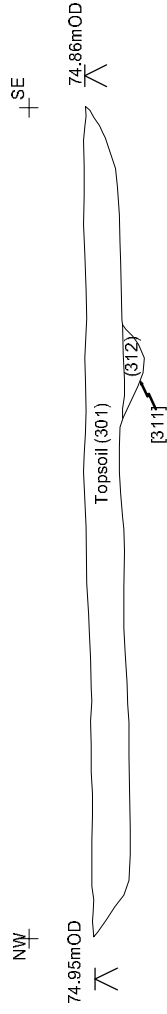


Trench 1 and 2

Trench 3

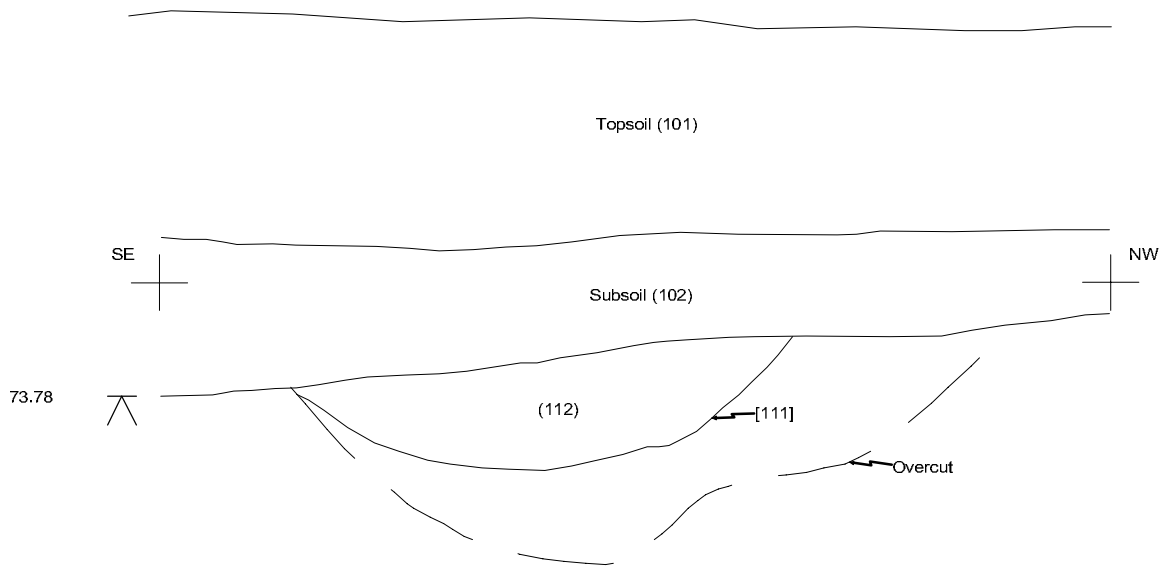


SW facing section through trench 3

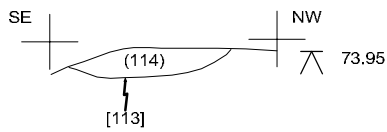


Trench 3

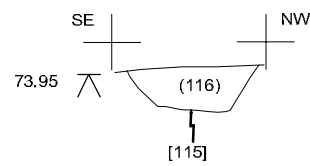
NE facing section through gully [111]



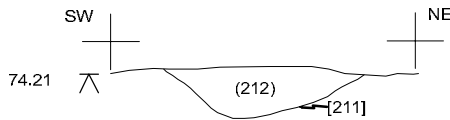
NE facing section through posthole [113]



NE facing section through post hole [115]



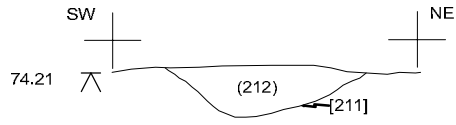
SE facing section through gully [211]



SW facing section through ditch [311]



SE facing section through gully [211]



SW facing section through ditch [311]





Plate 1: Trench 1 looking northwest



Plate 2: Trench 2 looking northeast



Plate 3: Trench 3 looking southeast



Plate 4: Ditch [111] looking southwest



Plate 5: Posthole [113] looking southwest



Plate 6: Posthole [115] looking southwest



Plate 7: Ditch [211] looking northwest



Plate 8: Ditch [311] looking northeast