

CHURCH OF ST NICHOLAS, NORTON, HERTS.

HN696

Report No. 440

Site name and address:	St Nicholas Church, Norton, Hertfordshire		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Hertfordshire
Village/town:	Norton	Parish:	Norton
Planning reference:	n/a	NGR:	TL 2315 3446
Client name and address:	Norton Parochial Church Council c/o Michael Dales Partnership, 95 Sharpenhoe Rd., Streatley, Luton, LU3 3PS		
Nature of work:	New drainage channel and soakaway	Former land use:	Churchyard
Site Status:	Listed Building	Reason for investigation:	Voluntary/self-interest
Position in planning process:	n/a	Project brief originator:	Client
Size of affected area:	c.11m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.11m ²
Site Code:	HN696	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc...	Monitoring	Archive Recipient:	N Herts Museums
Start of work	10/10/07	Finish of work	24/10/07
Related SMR Nos:	n/a	Periods represented:	Uncertain
Oasis UID:	heritage1- 34370	Significant finds:	Human Bone
Monument types:	Church		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Narrative:

At the request of the Norton Parochial Church Council, the Heritage Network was commissioned to monitor the excavation of a new drainage channel and soakaway at St Nicholas Church, Norton, Hertfordshire.

The church of St Nicholas, Norton, lies at the north western end of the village and the study area is located on the southern side of the church, centred on NGR TL 2315 3446 (Figure 1). The chancel arch and parts of the east, north and south walls of the nave date to the late 11th or early 12th century. The west tower was built and the nave was lengthened westwards in the mid 15th century and the chancel was rebuilt in c.1814. An archaeological evaluation during the underpinning of the northern and eastern walls of the chancel in 1995 revealed that the eastern wall was built on disturbed ground (Murray 1995). Although no dateable artefacts were recovered, the report suggests that the presence of a layer of clunch adjacent to the northern wall of the chancel indicates a post-Norman date of construction.

The drainage channel was excavated by hand and ran east-west around the front of the porch, and part way along its eastern and western elevations. It measured 5.75 m in length, had a maximum width of 0.38m and was 0.38m deep. A further length of drainage channel extended approximately 4m southwards from the south-eastern corner of the porch passing under the existing pathway. This section was 0.33m wide with a depth of 0.5m (Figure 2). The general stratigraphy of the drainage channel consisted of a layer of very dark grey (10YR 3/1) silt topsoil, 0.10m in depth, over dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay subsoil with occasional medium flints. The channel crossed a paved area directly in front of the porch entrance below which was a make-up layer of sand and shingle, 1.10m in length. Some modern brick rubble and CBM were observed within this layer but not collected.

The rectangular soakaway was also excavated by hand and was located 4.5m from the south-eastern corner of the porch. It extended from the southern drainage channel and ran north-south, measuring 1.10m wide, 1.20m long, and 1.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of a layer of very dark grey (10YR3/1) silt topsoil, 0.20m in depth over a layer of dark brown (10YR 3/3) silty clay subsoil with occasional large flints. Some root activity was observed within this layer. The natural geology of greyish green clay was reached at a depth of 1.2m.

Three burials were encountered in the soakaway at the depth of 1m (Figure 3). The grave cuts could not be identified in the subsoil but the remains in Graves 1 and 2 were aligned NW-SE. Grave 3 was disturbed and

contained disarticulated remains broadly aligned N-S. Wooden coffin fragments were identified around Grave 2. The burials were recorded and, in keeping with current guidelines, the human remains were re-interred.

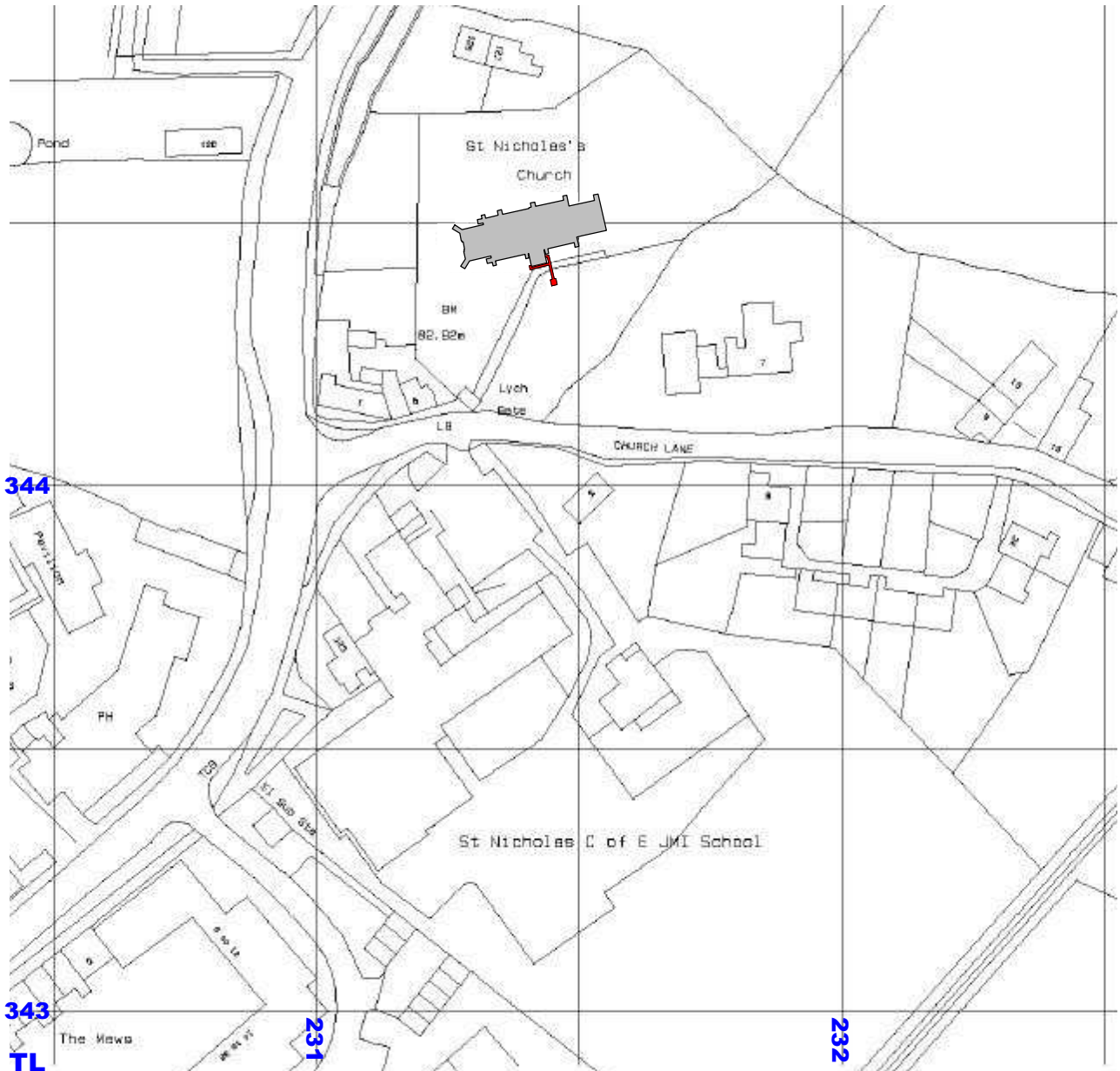
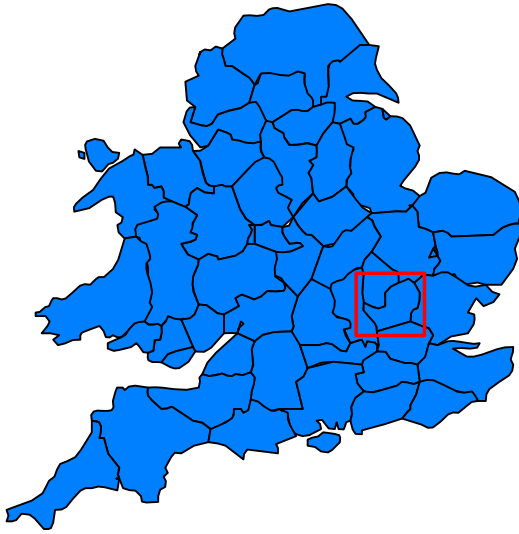
No other archaeological cut features or deposits were observed during these works. The spoil from the excavation was inspected and fragments of post-medieval tile, modern brick and CBM were noted but not collected. No other datable artefacts were observed or recorded.

Alison Hudson, B Ed
November 2007

Illustrations:

- Figure 1Site location
- Figure 2Site layout
- Figure 3Inhumations (Sk01-03)

- Plate 1Study area, looking north
- Plate 2Drainage trench at base of porch, looking north
- Plate 3Graves 1 & 2, looking east
- Plate 4Grave 3, looking west

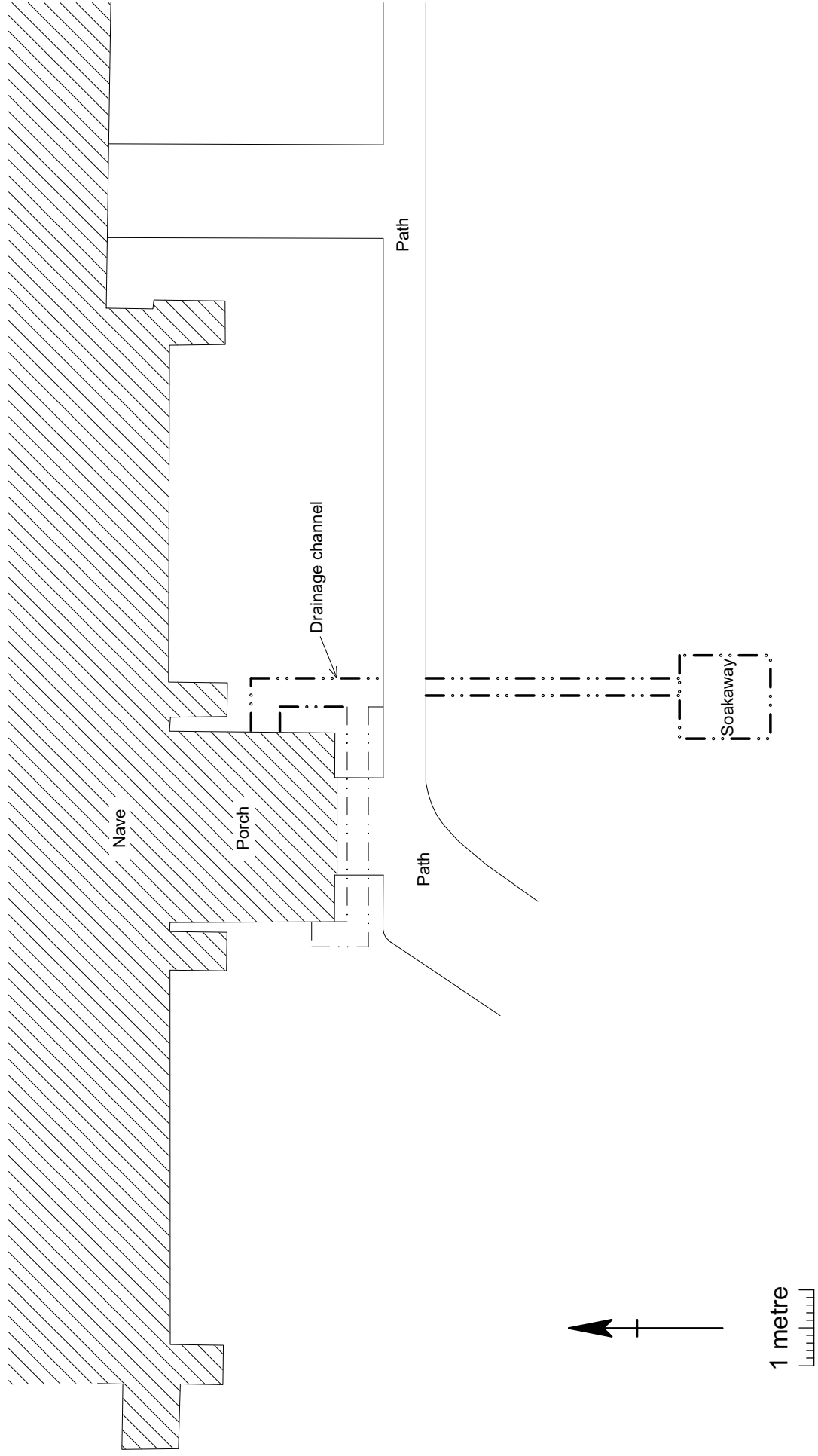


Site Location

Scale 1:2500

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Figure 1



Site Layout

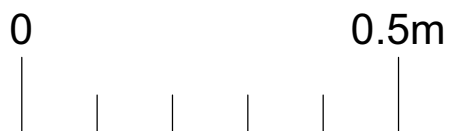
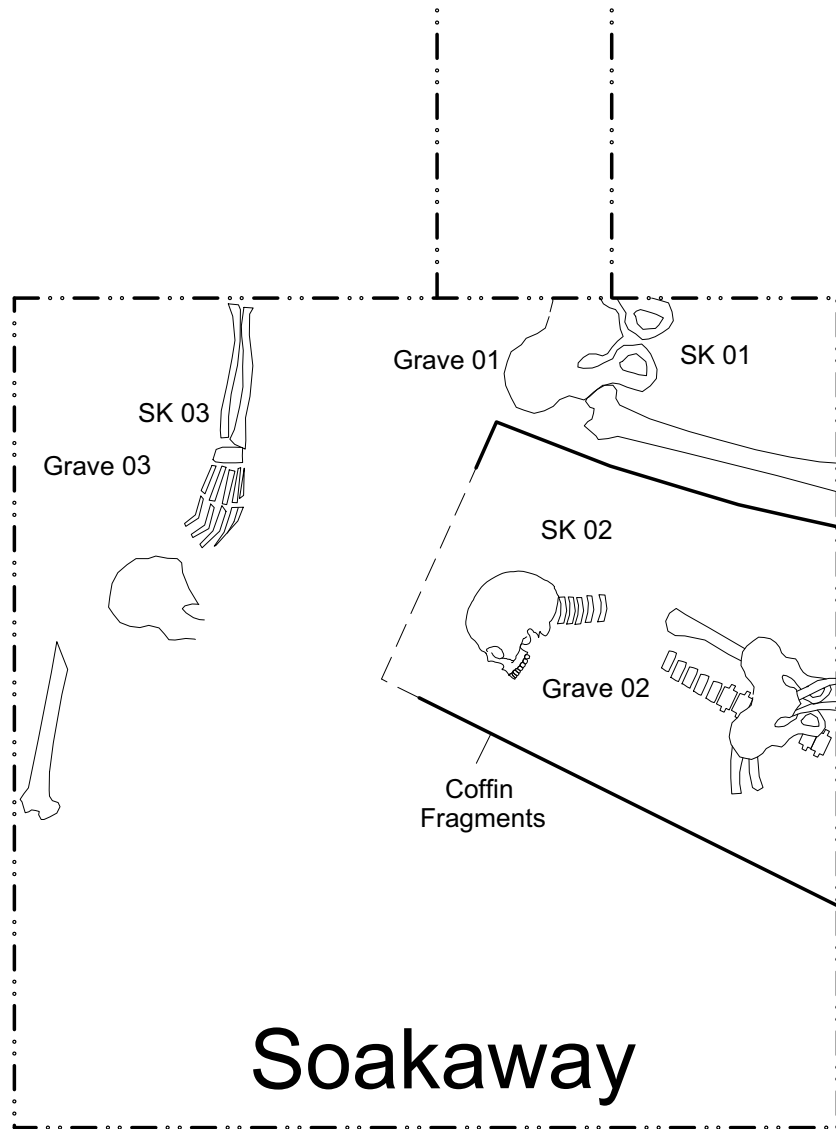




Plate 1: Study area, looking north



Plate 2: Drainage trench at base of porch, looking north



Plate 3: Graves 1 and 2, looking east



Plate 4: Grave 3, looking west