

HERITAGE NETWORK



**Church Hall Extension
ST ANDREW'S CHURCH
Biggleswade, Beds.**

HN805

Archaeological Evaluation Report



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

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Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

Church Hall Extension ST ANDREW'S CHURCH Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

Project no.: HN805
LPA ref.: MB/07/02175/FUL
Accession no.: BEDFM 2009.41

Archaeological Evaluation

Prepared on behalf of Biggleswade Parochial Church Council

by

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Report no. 538

May 2009

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The cover illustration shows Structure [201] in Trench 2

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by Mark Winter, Geoff Saunders and Alison Hudson. The report was edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to Chris Parker, St Andrew's Church; Peter Walker, Moulton-Walker; Peter Wilson Plant Hire; Martin Oake and the staff of the Conservation and Design Team, Central Bedfordshire Council, for their help and co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	St Andrew's Church, Shortmead Street, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT		
County:	Bedfordshire	District:	Central Bedfordshire
Village/town:	Biggleswade	Parish:	Biggleswade
Planning reference:	MB/07/02175/FUL	NGR:	TL 18783 44625
Client name and address:	Biggleswade PCC, St Andrew's Church, Shortmead St, Biggleswade, SG18 0AT		
Nature of work:	New extension	Current land use:	Churchyard
Site status:	Listed building	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.95m ²	Size of area investigated:	c.21m ²
Site Code:	HN805	Museum accession no:	BEDFM 2009.41
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Evaluation	Archive recipient:	Bedford Museum
Start of work	22/04/2009	Finish of work	23/04/2009
Related HER Nos:	1018, 9020	Periods represented:	Medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-59007	Significant finds:	Human remains
Monument types:	13 graves, 1 structure		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	n/a		

Synopsis:

In order to determine the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to extend the existing church hall in the graveyard of St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation.

Two trial trenches were opened across the proposed development area, both measuring approximately 2.00m by 5.00m. These revealed thirteen graves and the base of a structure – possibly a grave monument. Variations in the alignment of the graves suggest at least four phases of deposition, none securely dateable. All the graves were identified at a depth of approximately 1m below the existing surface.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared on the instructions of Messrs. Moulton Walker, acting on behalf of the Biggleswade Parochial Church Council, as part of the archaeological evaluation of a development site located at St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire.

1.2 The investigation has been a requirement of the planning consent granted by the former Mid-Bedfordshire District Council (MBDC) (ref. MB/07/02175/FUL), under the provisions set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note No.16 (PPG16) on Archaeology and Planning (DoE 1990). The extent of the work has been defined in a series of briefs prepared by the Archaeology Officer for Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC), the new unitary authority for the area.

1.3 The site, centred on NGR TL 1880 4460, lies in the churchyard on the western side of the town, approximately 100m east of the line of the river Ivel (Figure 1). The churchyard is bounded on the east by Shortmead Street, on the south by the car park to the Conservative Club, on the west by nos.13-17 Ivel Gardens, and on the north by the vicarage and nos.1-11 Ivel Gardens. The development proposes an extension to the existing church hall which occupies the north-east corner of the churchyard, with associated access and landscaping.

1.4 On the basis of the location of the development within a medieval churchyard and adjacent to a Grade B (II*) listed church, the CBC advised that archaeological evaluation of the development site should be undertaken before the development proceeded.

1.5 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, Oake et al 2007), if they were discovered.

1.6 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 a small area of land in the northwest angle of the existing L-shaped church hall. The site lies on level ground at approximately 30m AOD.

2.2 The geology of the site consists of glacial clays and gravels above the river terrace gravels of the Ivel (Albion 2003). The soils on the site are unclassified being mainly urban and industrial in nature (SSEW).

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 Two trenches were opened using a tracked mini-digger fitted with a 0.8m wide toothless bucket, under close archaeological supervision.

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 In Trench 1 there was a firm, brown (10YR 4/3), sandy clay dump layer 0.26m thick, over a soft, very dark brown (10YR 2/2), silty clay buried topsoil, 0.28m thick. Beneath this a firm, dark brown (10YR 3/3), sandy silty clay subsoil layer, 0.70m thick, was observed covering the loose, yellowish brown (10YR 5/8), sandy gravel natural. In Trench 2 a 0.30m thick layer of loose, very dark brown (10YR 2/2), sandy silt topsoil overlay a 0.62m thick layer of loose, dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4), sandy clay subsoil, Beneath this was the same sandy gravel natural as observed in Trench 1.

Trench 1

Length (m):	4.95	Width (m):	2.14	Maximum Depth (m):	1.75	Orientation	N-S
Level at South End of Trench (mOD)		Top	30.34	Level at North End of Trench (mOD)		Top	30.26
		Base	28.59			Base	28.49
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
		Brown (10YR 4/3) firm sandy clay dump	4.95+	2.14+	0.26		
		Very dark brown (10YR 2/2) soft silty clay topsoil	4.95+	2.14+	0.28		
		Dark brown (10YR 3/3) firm sandy silty clay subsoil	4.95+	2.14+	0.70		
		Yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) loose sandy gravel natural	4.95+	2.14+	-		
101	Layer	Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/6) firm sandy clay.	1.03	-	0.50		
102	Cut	East-southeast – west-northwest orientated grave cut	1.46+	0.63	-		
103	Fill	Brown (10YR 4/3) very sandy clay fill of [102]	1.46+	0.63	-		
104	Cut	East-northeast – west-southwest orientated grave cut	0.63+	0.16+	-		
105	Fill	Brown (10YR 4/3) very sandy clay fill of [104]	0.63+	0.16+	-		
106	Layer	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) sandy clay	0.40	-	0.38		
107	Cut	East-northeast – west-southwest orientated grave cut.	0.88+	0.58	-		
108	Fill	Dark greyish brown (10YR 4/2) loose sandy clay fill of [107]	0.88+	0.58	-		
109	Cut	East-northeast – west-southwest orientated grave cut	0.92+	0.60	-		
110	Fill	Brown (10YR 4/3) firm sandy clay fill of [109]	0.92+	0.60	-		
111	Cut	Grave cut with vertical sides and a flat base, partially removed by machine – fill uncertain	0.78+	0.38	-		
112	Cut	Northeast-southwest orientated grave cut	1.73+	1.10+	-		
113	Fill	Very dark greyish brown (10YR3/2) soft slightly sandy clay	1.73+	1.10+	-		
114	Cut	East-northeast – west-southwest orientated grave cut. Edge and fill uncertain.	1.04+	0.78+	-		

2.9 Trench 1 was located at the south end of the site and was extended to meet the existing building in order to provide the clients with geotechnical information for the development (Figure 2); it contained seven graves (Figure 3, Plates 1 and 2). No evidence for grave goods or coffins was observed and the human remains were left undisturbed. The graves were aligned east-northeast – west-southwest with the exception of grave [102], which was aligned east-southeast – west-northwest.

2.10 Evidence of two layers, which may represent a cemetery soil, was also observed in the trench. Layer (101) was a firm, dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/6) sandy clay, while layer (106) was a very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2), sandy clay.

Trench 2

Length (m):	4.5	Width (m):	1.05	Maximum Depth (m):	0.94	Orientation	E-W
Level at West End of Trench (mOD)		Top	30.28	Level at East End of Trench (mOD)		Top	30.19
		Base	28.82			Base	28.65
Context	Type	Description	Dimensions (m)				
			Length	Width	Depth		
		Very dark brown (10YR 2/2) loose sandy silt topsoil	4.50	1.05	0.30		
		Dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) loose sandy clay subsoil	4.50	1.05	0.62		
		Yellowish brown (10YR 5/8) loose sandy gravel natural	4.50	1.05	-		
201	Structure	Concrete floor and rubble foundation	2.30	1.30	0.32		
202	Layer	Sandy clay levelling layer for [201]	2.09+	1.30+	0.27		
203	Cut	Northwest-southeast orientated grave cut.	0.32	0.38	-		
204	Fill	Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) silty sand fill of [203]	0.32	0.38	-		
205	Cut	Northwest-southeast orientated grave cut.	0.58	0.37	-		
206	Fill	Strong brown (7.5YR 4/6) silty sand fill of [205]	0.58	0.37	-		
207	Cut	East-west orientated grave cut	0.72+	0.48+	-		
208	Fill	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) loose sandy clay fill of [207]	0.72+	0.48+	-		
209	Cut	East-west orientated grave cut	0.78+	0.52	-		
210	Fill	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) loose sandy clay fill of [209]	0.78+	0.52	-		
211	Cut	East-west orientated grave cut	0.59	0.46	-		
212	Fill	Very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) loose sandy clay fill of [211]	0.59	0.46	-		
213	Cut	East-west orientated grave cut	1.95+	0.75+	-		
214	Fill	Dark brown (10YR 3/5) loose sandy clay fill of [213]	1.95+	0.75+	-		

2.11 Trench 2 was located at the north end of the site (Figure 2). A total of six graves was encountered. Graves [203] and [205] were orientated in a northwest-southeast direction while all others were aligned east-west. In addition to the graves, the remains of a structure were encountered. This consisted of a concrete layer resting on a foundation formed of sandstone, ironstone and tile in a sandy mortar (Figure 3, Plate 3). This may form the base of a grave monument or vault of unknown date, although the concrete layer which caps the structure is unlikely to be earlier in date than late 19th century.

3. Discussion

Archaeological Setting

3.1 A scheduled Motte and Bailey dating to the 12th century has been recorded in the area and cropmarks on the site show a Bronze Age barrow overlain by the east Bailey ditch (HER 468). The barrow overlies an earlier feature, possibly an enclosure of Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date. A potentially Iron Age or Romano-British enclosure has also been identified 50 metres to the north of the bailey, and a palaeo channel of late Romano-British date is also recorded on the site.

3.2 Numerous listed buildings are recorded near to the church including a 16th – 17th century row of houses at 2-6 High Street (HER 2058); the late 17th/early 18th century White Horse Inn located at 1 High Street (HER 2057); the early 18th century Conservative Club on St Andrews Street, which has a 19th century 3-storey front (HER 2063); the early 19th century stables associated with the Conservative Club (HER 7413); and the 19th century Biggleswade Mill, which has now been converted into flats (HER 1690).

3.3 Additional buildings of significance in the area include the Greene King Brewery at Church Street, which was established for over 250 years prior to being rebuilt in c.1900 (HER 7322); a post medieval maltings, demolished after 1838 (HER 13948); a c.18th century maltings at Church Street (HER 7321); a post medieval manor, thought to be the area of Bishops Palace, shown on tithe map of 1838 as Bishops Land and Common Right located immediately west of the church at Ivel Gardens (HER 13953); the site of a post medieval wharf and pleasure ground, shown on the 1838 tithe (HER 13954); and the early 19th century Black Bear Public House, which was demolished in 2006 (HER 2051).

3.4 Just to the east of the church lies the Market Place. This is believed to have been laid out in the early 13th century after the right to hold a market was granted to the Bishop of Lincoln by King John (Albion Archaeology 2003). Three trial trenches (HER 16080) in the area revealed a line of stake holes representing either a fence of Saxon or early medieval date or evidence of internal divisions relating to an early phase of the market square. In addition to these a brick wall foundation, forming the southeast corner of an 18th-19th century building was also observed.

3.5 There are no known Roman or Saxon sites in the vicinity of the present study area, but prehistoric activity is recorded on the HER, and struck flints were recovered during an archaeological investigation to the rear of 24-39 Shortmead Street (Albion Archaeology 2003).

Site Specific Data

3.6 St Andrew's (HER 1018) Church lies at the western end of the medieval core of Biggleswade (HER 17124). It includes elements of early 14th century date and is believed to occupy the site of an earlier building. A recent watching brief, undertaken in the course of the installation of a French drain around the perimeter of the building, revealed earlier foundations as well as human remains. The current site lies within the churchyard (HER 9020).

3.7 The archaeology recorded on site consisted of a total of thirteen graves and one structure. The orientation of the graves varied, probably indicating different phases of burial: graves 111, 207, 209 and 211 were aligned east-west; graves 203 and 205 were aligned northeast-southwest; graves 104, 107, 109, 112 and 114 were aligned east northeast – west southwest; and graves 102 and 213 were aligned east southeast – west northwest. The graves were identified, for the most part, at a depth of approximately 1m below the existing surface, with the structure being encountered at a depth of 0.40m.

3.8 Examination of historic OS maps did not show any evidence for a structure in the study area, though grave markers and monuments are not usually shown. It is possible that the observed structural remains represent the base of a grave monument or part of a vault. It was noted that the rubble foundation of the structure was similar in appearance to the exterior elevation of the north-aisle of the church, though less compact.

Conclusion

3.9 The evaluation of the site has demonstrated the presence of inhumation burials and a graveyard structure of unknown date. The trenches were positioned close to the line of the proposed footings for the new extension, which are expected to extend to the natural geology. On this basis, the risk that the proposed development would disturb human remains and further structures should be considered to be High.

Confidence Rating

3.10 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

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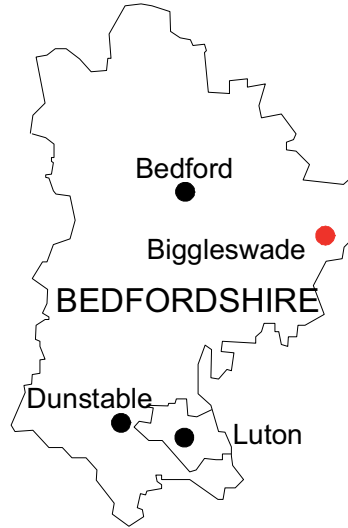
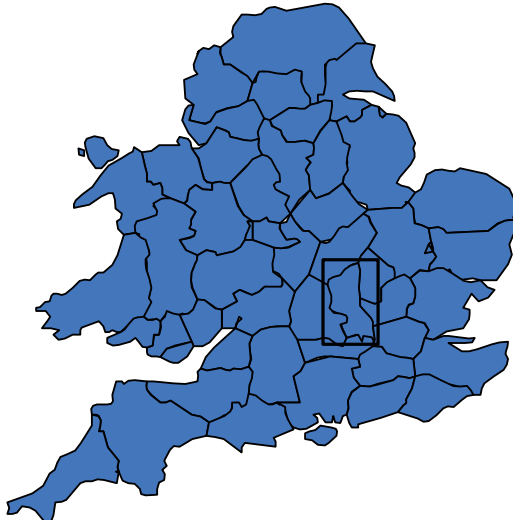
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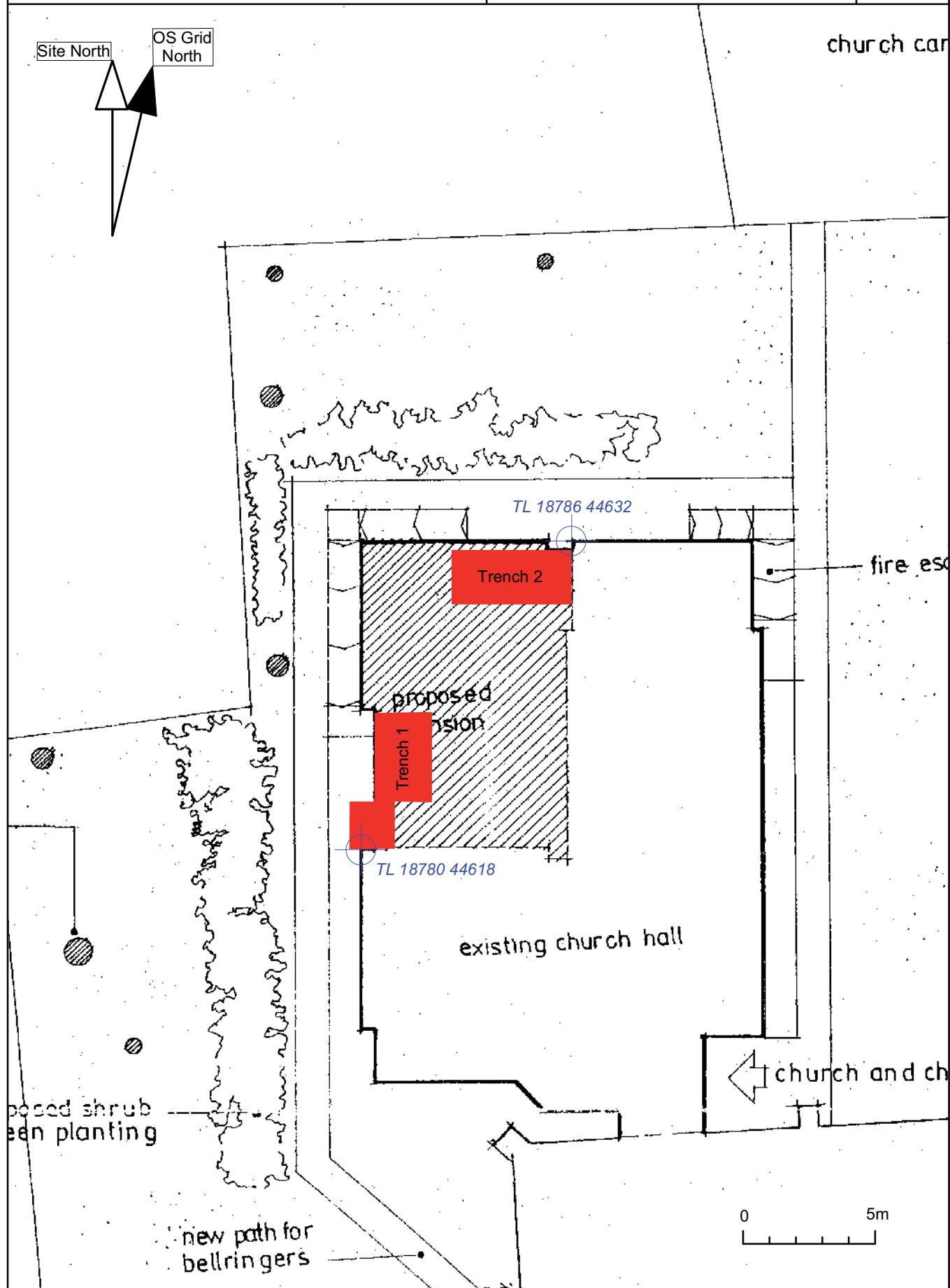
5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Site Layout
Figure 3	Trench plans and sections
Plate 1	Northern end of Trench 1, looking east
Plate 2	Southern end of Trench 1, looking east
Plate 3	Trench 2, looking northwest



Site Location

Scale 1:15000



Site Layout

Scale 1:200

Figure 2



Plate 1: Northern end of Trench 1, looking east



Plate 2: Southern end of Trench 1, looking east



Plate 3: Trench 2, looking northwest

Appendix

OASIS ID: heritage1-59007	
Project details	
Project name	St Andrews Church, Biggleswade, Beds
Short description of the project	In order to determine the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to extend the existing church hall in the graveyard of St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, the Heritage Network was commissioned by the Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological evaluation. Two trial trenches were opened across the proposed development area, both measuring approximately 2.00m by 5.00m. These revealed thirteen graves and the base of a structure – possibly a grave monument. Variations in the alignment of the graves suggest at least four phases of deposition, none securely dateable. All the graves were identified at a depth of approximately 1m below the existing surface.
Project dates	Start: 22-04-2009 End: 23-04-2009
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	HN805 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	BEDFM 2009.41 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	GRAVES Uncertain
Monument type	STRUCTURE Uncertain
Methods & techniques	'Targeted Trenches'
Development type	Large/ medium scale extensions to existing structures (e.g. church, school, hospitals, law courts, etc.)
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	BEDFORDSHIRE MID BEDFORDSHIRE BIGGLESWADE St Andrews Church
Postcode	SG18 0AT
Study area	95.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	NGR - TL 18783 44625 LL - 52.0867870162 -0.266157712855 (decimal) Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 30.19m Max: 30.34m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Heritage Network
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	Geoff Saunders
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding	Biggleswade Parochial Church Council

body	
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bedford Museum
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
Paper Archive recipient	Bedford Museums
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Diary', 'Drawing', 'Photograph', 'Plan', 'Report', 'Section', 'Survey '
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St Andrew's Church, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire: Archaeological Evaluation Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Winter, M.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number 538
Date	2009
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Hertfordshire
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 8 pages, 3 figures, 3 plates