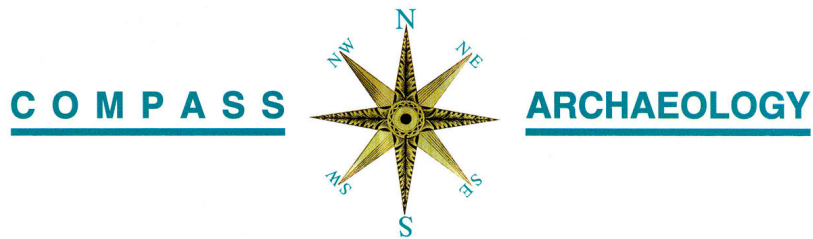


ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH CARSHALTON
LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

July 2007



ALL SAINTS PARISH CHURCH CARSHALTON
LONDON BOROUGH OF SUTTON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

SITE CODE: ASZ07

SITE CENTRE NGR: TQ 2798 6449

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Project sutt002

Abstract

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during drainage installation works at All Saints Parish Church, Carshalton, London Borough of Sutton between May and June 2007.

Six areas of trenching were observed in the area of the churchyard on the north side of the Church, facing the High Street.

Significant quantities of disarticulated human remains were recovered from deposits in the main east-west trench along the existing footpath. All remains were bagged in biodegradable packaging and reburied within the trench under the direction of the Rector Dr John Thewlis. One definite and one possible area of articulated human remains were exposed but posed no obstruction to continuing works and were thus left in-situ and undisturbed.

No significant archaeological finds or features were observed, although the lack of human remains or archaeological material at the north-eastern and north-western extents of the churchyard are possible indications of historical entranceways to the churchyard.

A single sherd of 12th- 13th century pottery, and a small piece of moulded greensand were recovered from disturbed deposits within the main east-west trench. No further finds or features were recorded.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report describes the results of an archaeological watching brief attached to the Grant of Faculty for new drainage installation works at All Saints Parish Church, Carshalton, London Borough of Sutton
- 1.2 The area affected by the groundworks was located on the northern side of the Church, approximately centered at NGR TQ 2798 6449 and running for some 50m east-west.
- 1.3 The watching brief concentrated on monitoring of the contractors' groundworks.
- 1.4 The watching brief was commissioned by the Rector Dr John Thewlis on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) of All Saints Parish Church.

2. Acknowledgements

- 2.1 Compass Archaeology is grateful to the Rector Dr John Thewlis for commissioning the archaeological watching brief and report.
- 2.2 The on-site work was undertaken by Rosie Cummings and Gill King of Compass Archaeology, with additional support by Andrew Skelton (local historical expert).
- 2.3 Pottery analysis and identification was undertaken by Paul Blinkhorn.

3. Background

3.1 Location and Geology

All Saints Church stands near the foot of a north-facing slope, overlooking Carshalton ponds and on the southern side of the historic settlement. The ground levels in the area of the groundworks is between 37.79m and 39.96m OD.

The British Geological Survey indicates that the site lies at a junction between the Upper Chalk of the North Downs and – to the north – localised areas of Thanet Sand plus much more recent and extensive River Terrace Deposits [Hackney Gravel] (BGS 1998, *South London. Sheet 270*).

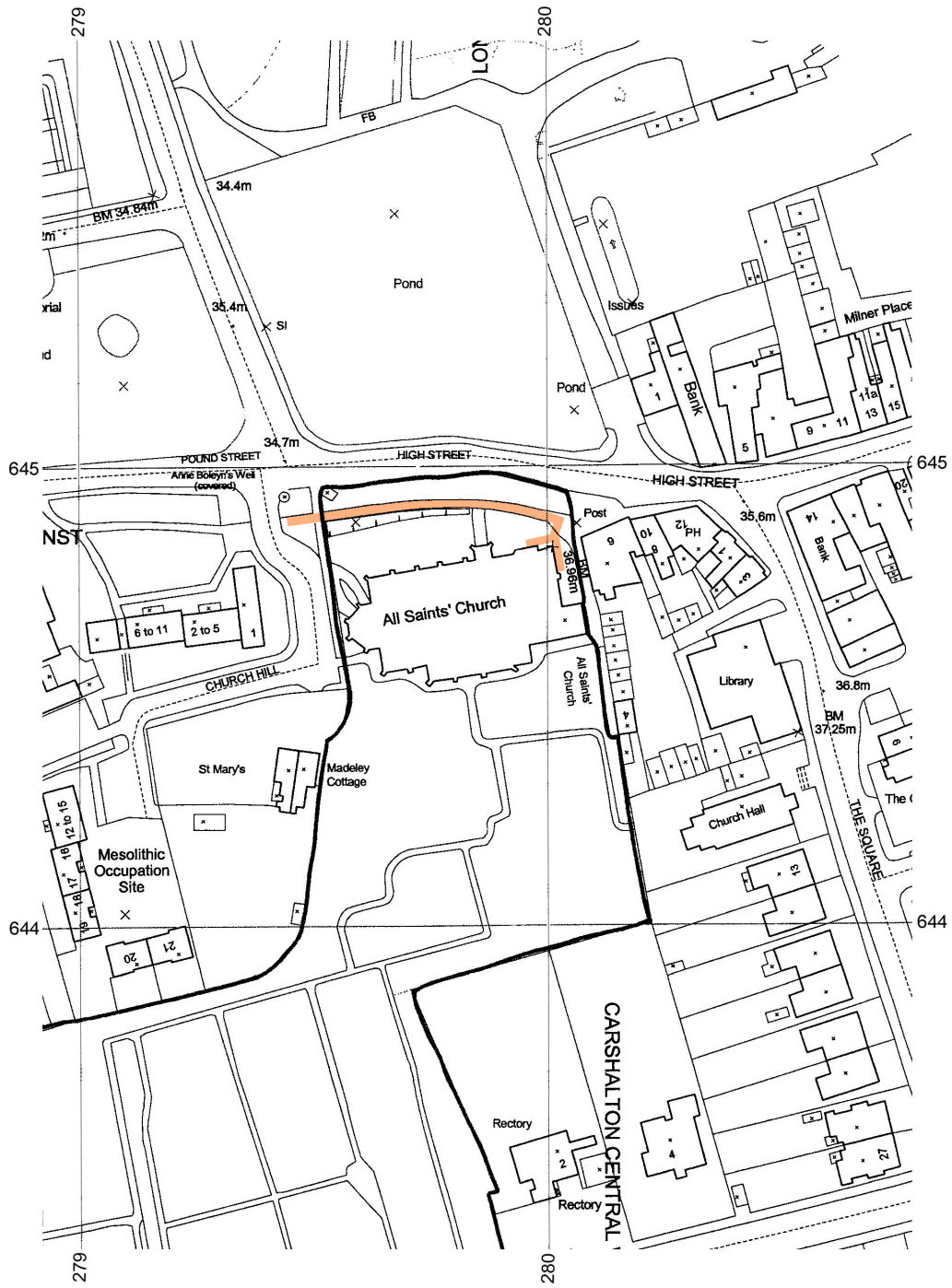


Fig 1. Location of the groundworks in relation to 1:1250 Ordnance Survey map.

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3.2 Historical Background

The earliest part of the present Church – the tower – appears to date from the 11th century, and may even be earlier. The adjacent south aisle and chancel (now the Lady Chapel) were constructed about 1200, whilst other parts of the structure such as the roof and possibly the eastern end of the chancel represent later medieval additions (Thewlis 2007)

The Church retained its medieval outline up to the late 19th century, as reflected in the 1866-67 Ordnance Survey. However, extensive building works between the 1880s and 1914 replaced the earlier nave and north aisle, and resulted in a significant extension of the Church to the north and west.

Although the southern part of the Churchyard has undergone progressive expansion since the late 19th century there has been no corresponding change to the north, and the boundary appears unchanged from that recorded by the Carshalton Tithe map of 1848. The northwest corner was previously occupied by a small dwelling, latterly known as *Dame Duffin's Cottage* and demolished in 1836. It has been suggested that this may have originated as a later medieval chantry chapel (Jones 1973, 90-93).

The new drain route will largely follow an existing east-west footpath that runs across the northern part of the Churchyard. This appears to be of some antiquity, as does the steeply embanked ground immediately to the south. Both features appear to be illustrated in an engraving of 1807 (Roberts 1973, 8), and at its western end the footpath probably ran just behind *Dame Duffin's Cottage* (cf. Jones 1973, 21). The path is also recorded on the OS plan of 1866-67 (Figure 2), and the high ground level between this and the old Church is indicated in a more or less contemporary photograph (Brightling 1872, 67).

Although there is no real evidence, it is suggested that the footpath *may* represent an earlier boundary of the Churchyard, with the relatively narrow strip of ground between this and the High Street forming an addition. In plan the path does not make a lot of sense in relation to the position of the old Church, and the difference in levels might suggest that it was originally outside the Churchyard.

4. Methods and objectives of the watching brief

4.1 Standards

The field and post-excavation work were carried out in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (in particular, *Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork, Guidance Paper 3*). Works also conformed to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs'). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full Member of the Institute.

4.2 Fieldwork

The watching brief took place during the contractors' groundworks, involving the presence of one or two archaeologists, as required, to monitor works and to investigate and record any archaeological remains.

Any *in situ* burials discovered were to be avoided and worked around, where necessary by localised revision of the groundworks. In the event this precaution was unnecessary. Two possible examples of *in-situ* burial were observed, in both cases these presented no obstacle to the works and were thus left undisturbed.

4.3 Methodology

Archaeological deposits and features were investigated and recorded in stratigraphic sequence, and where appropriate finds dating and environmental evidence recovered.

Archaeological contexts and features were recorded as appropriate on *pro-forma* sheets and/or drawn in plan or section, generally at scales of 1:10 or 1:20. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork record was supplemented as appropriate by photography.

During excavation, spoil from archaeological levels was deposited separately, in such a way as to facilitate examination. Particular attention was given to evidence for worked stone, which may be architectural or from grave slabs or markers.

Some areas yielded relatively large quantities of displaced and fragmentary human bone. This was collected within a biodegradable receptacle and reburied in the base of the trenches as agreed with Rector Dr John Thewlis. *In-situ* burials were not disturbed (see 4.2 above), but suitable provision was agreed were problems with necessary disturbance encountered.

The recording system followed the procedures set out by the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement the recording and drawing sheets used were compatible with those developed by the Museum.

5. The archaeological watching brief

5.1 Summary of the findings

The following pages detail the results of the archaeological watching brief, undertaken between May and June 2007. Due to the nature of the groundworks, the results are presented through discussion of six individual excavations – representative of the phases of archaeological monitoring over the course of the project.

Trenches 1 and 2 consisted of small, shallow test-pits along the pathway to the north of the church, exposing tarmac and shallow concrete hardcore over rubble base.

Trench 3 was situated along the eastern side of the church as the east end, adjacent to the Choir Vestry and approximately 0.4m from the wall. Shallow top soil and turf were observed overlying mottled sandy rubble and mortar, most likely mixed graveyard deposits and those relating to the construction of late 19th – early 20th century construction of the north-east extension to the church.

Trench 4 ran along the south side of the northern footpath to a length of some 49m. Tarmac and shallow concrete hardcore were observed overlying a silty soil with frequent pebble and flint inclusions. This deposit produced large amounts of disarticulated human bone which was collected and later reburied. Orange sandy gravel was partially observed at the base of the trench to the east, while to the west natural chalk bedrock with some heavily degraded chalk patches were observed. Heavy root activity was present for the length of the trench. Two *in-situ* burials were observed, both heavily truncated and only partially surviving, neither of which presented an obstacle to the works and were thus left undisturbed.

Trench 5 presented the deepest excavation and therefore the highest potential for archaeological deposits and *in-situ* burials. In the event, nothing of significance was observed. A man-hole access chamber was excavated here to a depth of 1.8m, but natural chalk bedrock was recorded at approximately 1m below the natural ground level, sealed by the same mixed deposits described in Trench 4. Here, the present ground surface consisted of herringbone brick paving in sand bedding and thicker underlying concrete hardcore.

Trench 6 constituted the connection excavations between Trenches 3, 4 and 5. A shallow trench running from the manhole chamber (trench 5) south to the northern end of trench 3, then veering west to connect to the standing building, close to the external walls. The exposed deposits here consisted of a shallow tarmac and concrete path surface, overlying a very mixed silty soil with numerous CBM, flint and pebble inclusions. The presence of roofing tile and large quantities of flint suggest this deposit relates to the construction of the northeast extension to the church in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

5.2 Trenches 1 & 2

5.2.1 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
1	Tarmac	Current ground surface.
2	Concrete	Concrete hardcore, pavement makeup.
3	Silty soil with very frequent rubble inclusions.	Recent ground makeup.

5.2.2 Summary and discussion

Monitoring undertaken on the 15th May 2007 involved the observation of two small test pits on the south side of the northern footpath, adjacent to the southern fence line (see Fig: 2).

Trench 1 was recorded at 0.4m (north-south) by 0.5m (east-west) and excavated to a depth of 0.3m below the current ground level. The tarmac constituting the existing path surface was supported by a thin layer of concrete hardcore. A mixed mid-brown silty deposit was observed below this, containing numerous pebble, flint, concrete and CBM inclusions. This deposit is considered to represent a shallow rubble base, associated with the most recent period of path makeup and relaying (Fig 3)

Trench 2 presented a similar makeup and was measured at the same dimensions, but located further east towards the north-east corner of the church (Fig 4)

No archaeological finds or features were recorded in either of the two trenches.

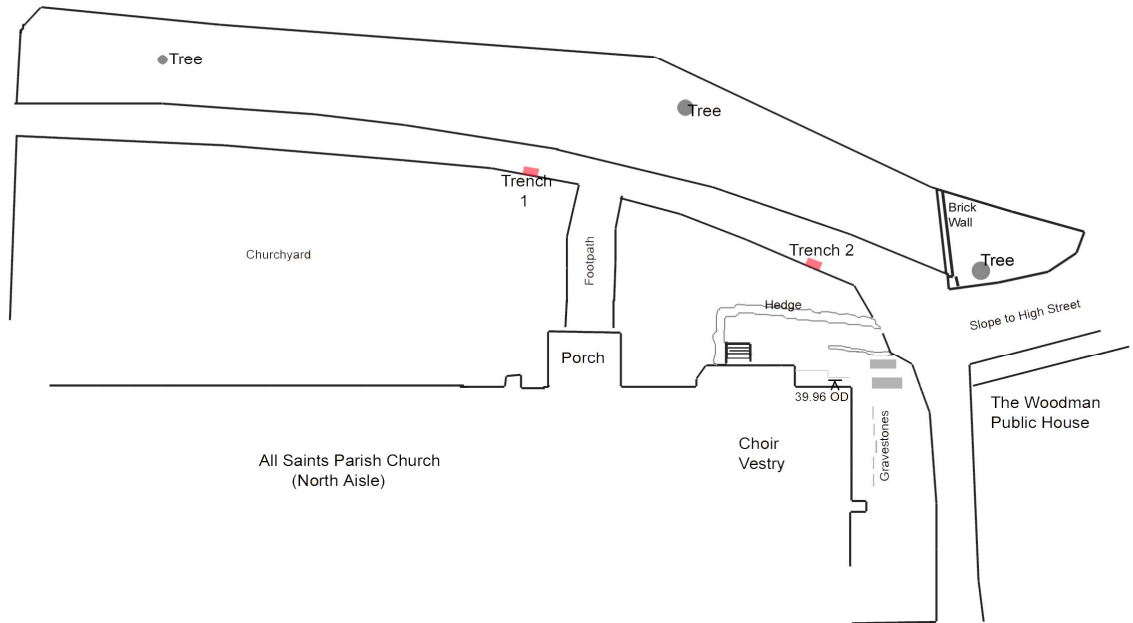


Fig 2: Schematic sketch plan showing the location of trenches 1 & 2.



Fig 3: Trench 1 (0.2m scale)



Fig 4: Trench 2 (0.2m scale)

5.3 Trench 3

5.3.1 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
4	Existing turf and mid/dark brown silty soil with occasional pebble inclusions.	Turf and topsoil
5	Mottled sandy, silty clay soil with rubble and mortar, chalk flecks and frequent flint and CBM inclusions. Occasional bone, c. 7 very small-abraded pieces.	Mixed graveyard deposits, probably related to, and much disturbed by, the construction of the early 20 th century extension to the church.

5.3.2 Summary and discussion

Trench 3 was located on the eastern side of the church, running north-south adjacent to the east wall of the Choir Vestry. Measuring 6m in length (north-south) by 0.3m in width and excavated to a depth of 0.6m (Fig 5).

The location of the trench is clearly indicative of the deposits recorded therein; to the west, the eastern extension of the church and replaced nave and north aisle (1880's –1914) consists of flint faced walls and tiled roof, to the east a line of gravestones stands on a ridge which then slopes sharply down to the footpath. The tile and frequent flint inclusions are clearly representative of the development of the early 20th century, which are likely to have disturbed the existing graveyard deposits. The small number of abraded human bone fragments is further testament to this process (Figs 6 and 7).

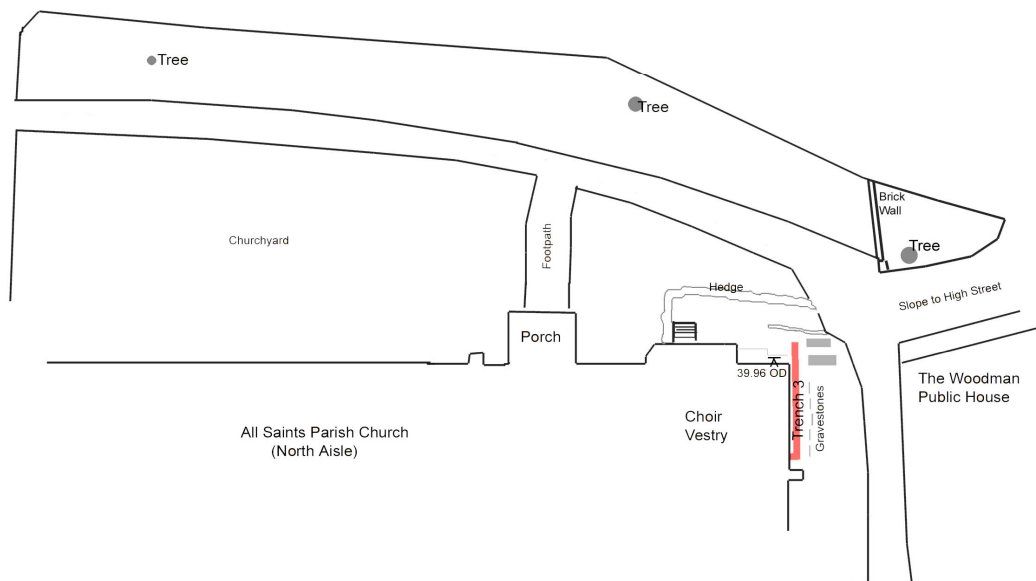


Fig 5 Schematic sketch plan showing the location of Trench 3



Fig 6: Trench 3, south facing section



Fig 7: Trench 3 looking south

5.4 Trench 4

5.4.1 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
6	Tarmac and concrete hardcore	Modern pathway makeup and surfacing.
7	Mid-brown silty soil with frequent pebble and flint inclusions. Quantities of disarticulated human bone.	Very disturbed deposit, possibly relating to historic pavement makeup but more likely constituting naturally disturbed deposits from successive land-use.
8	Yellow/Orange sandy gravel	Likely to represent disturbed areas of natural gravels.
9	Light brown/grey silty soil, 75% degraded chalk and pebble inclusions.	Degraded chalk bedrock, possibly due to heavy root activity.
10	Chalk bedrock	Natural chalk.

5.4.2 Summary and Discussion

The existing ground surface is represented by tarmac and a relatively shallow layer of concrete/rubble makeup [6]. On removal this exposed a highly disturbed deposit [7] that was observed for the full length of the trench and overlay natural deposits of chalk [10] and gravels [8]. (See Figs 8, 9 and 10)

A significant amount of disarticulated human bone was recovered from this context, all of which was bagged in biodegradable packaging and reburied below the drainage pipe within the same trench. A section of *in-situ* articulated skeleton was recorded in the south-facing section, approximately 4m west of the eastern limit of the trench. The skeleton was highly truncated, consisting of a partial vertebral column, abraded pelvic lobe, four ribs and the proximal head of the humerus. As the skeleton posed no obstruction to the laying of services or continued excavation it was left *in-situ*. A further possible area of surviving articulated remains was recorded approximately 12m west of the eastern extent of the trench, again in the south facing section. A partially exposed skull was exposed and orientated in the correct manner to signify *in-situ* remains. However, as with the previous remains, the skull posed no obstruction to further work and was thus not excavated further or removed for reburial.

Excessive root activity was observed within this deposit [7] for the full length of the trench, relating to the large lime trees to the north, all protected by Tree Preservation Orders under the London Borough of Sutton.

The origins of [7] are difficult to determine, being neither an obviously naturally occurring deposit nor an obvious layer of made-ground. It is likely that it represents a culmination of both natural (or non-cultural site formation processes) and cultural processes. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from this deposit and identified as a grey-brown sandy ware of the 12-13th century from the rim of a small jar. A small piece of moulded greensand was also recovered from this context. The presence of these, and the quantity of disarticulated human remains indicates that the deposit has some relation to human activity in the area, directly

and indirectly related to the church and churchyard. However, whether the deposit occurs in its current state (as an overlying layer) through human deposition or through natural hill-wash and root activity is unclear. The slope rising from the footpath (38.8m OD) to the church (39.85m OD) is steep, and similarly sharp from the footpath down to the road (37.79m OD), this topography would indicate natural slumping and below-ground hill wash activity.

The chalk bedrock [10] observed in the western end of the trench was first observed in section approximately 8m east of the western extent of the trench, at a level of 37.96m OD. Some 2m of degraded chalk and silt [9] preceded [10] to the east. These contexts are clearly part of the natural geological makeup of the site, situated as it is on a junction between the North Downs chalk and River Terrace gravels. The junction between the mixed deposit [7] and chalk/degraded chalk [9] [10] was a sharp, vertical line transition. Whether this transition represents a natural outcropping of a chalk or a man-made cut into the bedrock is unclear. The related degraded chalk and silt [9] would indicate the latter, but the original purpose/nature of the cut was not determinable. It may have been an earlier grave-cut (supported by the human remains found in [7]) but its location in the centre of the historic footpath would seem to belie this assertion, unless the cut belonged to a much earlier period, prior to the establishment of the footpath. The presence of Dame Duffins Cottage in this area of the church yard (demolished in 1836 and possible an earlier Medieval Chantry Chapel), may also provide an explanation for cut features in the vicinity, also the exact nature of the feature if this solution is accepted remains unclear.

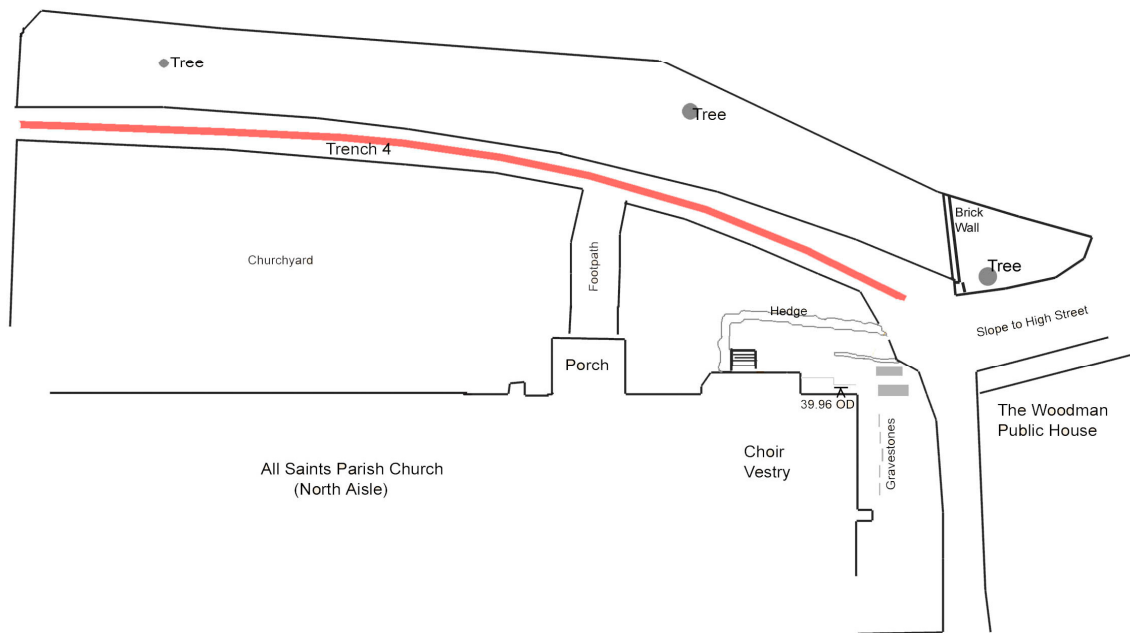


Fig 8: Schematic sketch plan showing the location of Trench 4



Fig 9: North facing section of Trench 4 showing degraded chalk-outcropping



Fig 10: View of Trench 4 looking west

5.5 Trench 5

5.5.1 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
11	Brick paving and sand bedding	Herringbone brick paving and makeup.
12	Concrete	Modern path makeup.
13	Mid-brown silty soil with frequent pebble and flint inclusions.	Very disturbed deposit, possibly relating to historic pavement makeup but more likely constituting naturally disturbed deposits from successive land-use. Same as [4/002]
14	Mottled orange/grey silty clay.	Natural/redeposited clay, possibly relating to hill-wash/natural formation processes.
15	Chalk bedrock	Natural chalk.

5.5.2 Summary and Discussion

Modern ground surfaces and makeup layers were represented by brick-herringbone paving [11] in a basic sand-bedding overlying 0.2m of concrete hardcore [12]. (See Figs 11 and 12).

Below the modern makeup the same mixed silt-soil deposit [13] as observed in Trench 4 [7] was recorded. Both deposits were of the same silty composition, relatively loose compaction with frequent pebble and flint inclusions. However, a significant difference between the two was the absence of disarticulated human bone in Trench 5, nor the recovery of any other finds.

The location of Trench 5 may partly explain this lack of cultural material. Although inside the church boundary, it was located at the very north-eastern extent. The main east-west path appears to have run in the same position and alignment for at least 200 years, but it is still some 5m south of the wall now marking the church boundary. The presence of disarticulated and minimal articulated remains within the deposits below the current path surface indicate that it must have lain within in-use burial ground at some stage, or at least subject to depositing of spoil from disturbed graves elsewhere. The same may not have applied to the north-eastern corner at which Trench 5 was located, being the very limit of the boundary. If this corner of the boundary was an entranceway into the churchyard, logically it would not be utilised as burial ground. The absence of even disturbed human remains from Trench 5 would seem to support this premise. It is therefore feasible to suggest that the north-eastern corner of the churchyard, now part of the footpath has an historically similar use.

Mottled orange clay [14] and chalk [15] both appear to be natural deposits. Natural chalk bedrock was observed at 37.90m OD, slightly deeper than that observed in Trench 4, suggesting the level of natural chalk rises to the west.

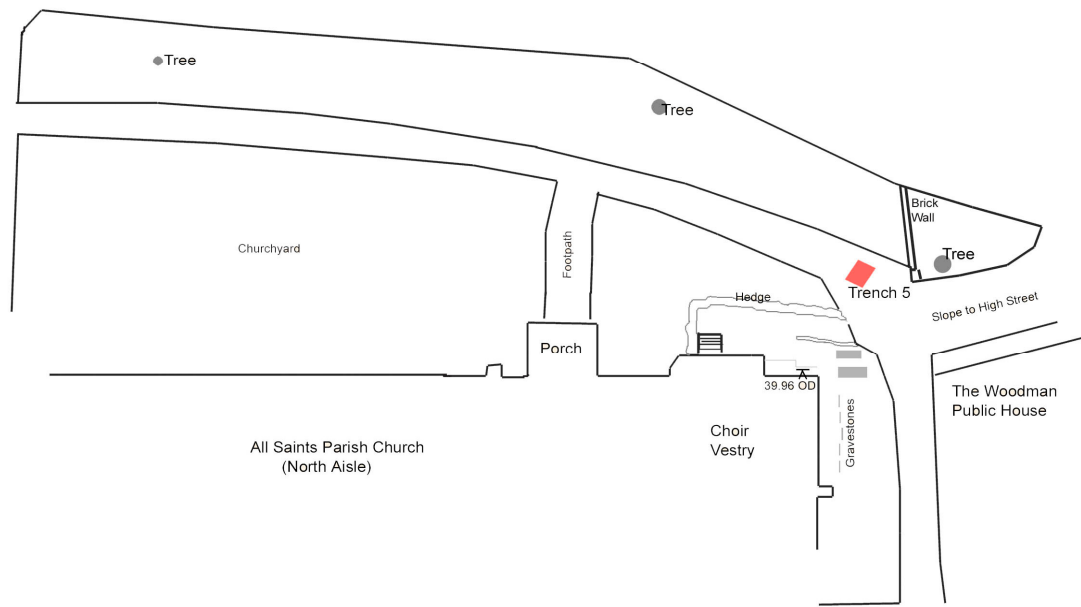


Fig 11: Schematic sketch plan showing location of Trench 5



Fig 12: West facing section of Trench 5

5.6 Trench 6

5.6.1 List of recorded contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation
16	Tarmac	Existing ground surface
17	Concrete	Modern path makeup.
18	Mid-brown/grey silty soil with frequent pebble, flint and CBM inclusions.	Mixed makeup probably relating to construction of north aisle and north-eastern extension

5.6.2 Summary and Discussion

Modern activity in Trench 6 was represented by tarmac [16] and shallow concrete makeup [17] to a depth of 0.3m.

Mixed deposits below the present ground surface [18] contained numerous flint and CBM inclusions. These deposits are likely to be associated with the construction and related activity of the north aisle, and northeast extension between 1880's and 1912. The flint-facing on the church walls is a useful explanation for the quantities of flint pieces in this deposit.

The natural geology was not exposed in this trench, being excavated to just 0.5m below the current ground surface. (See Figs 13 and 14).

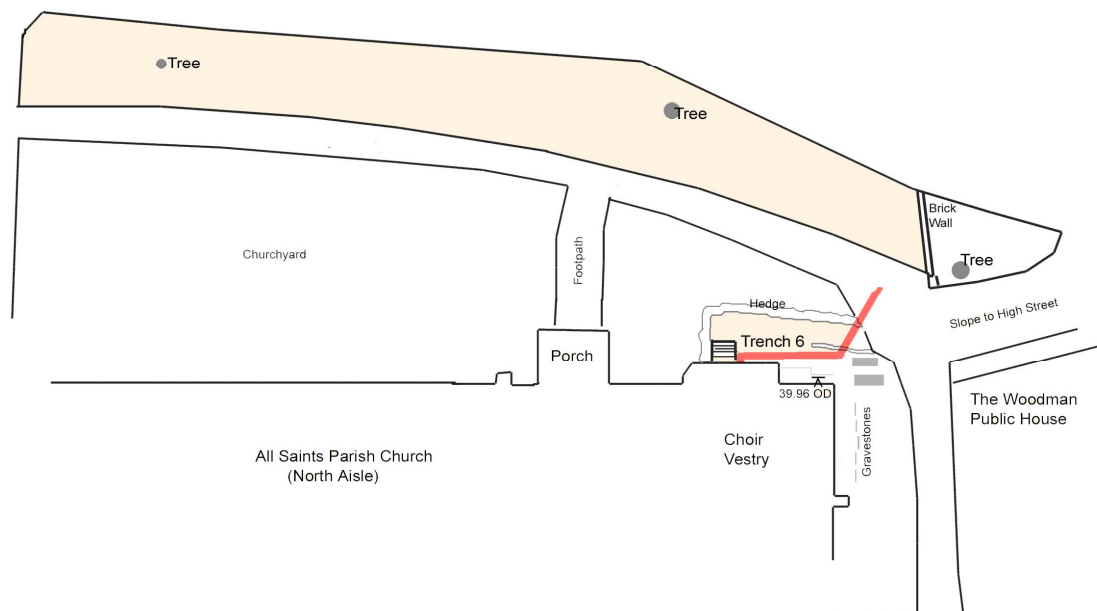


Fig 13: Schematic sketch plan showing location of Trench 6



Fig 14: North-south section of Trench 6, looking south.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary of the results

Overall, no significant archaeological finds or features were observed during the course of the archaeological watching brief.

Ground makeup associated with the current ground surface was observed in all trenches, representing the modern activity within the churchyard.

Trenches 4 and 5 presented the most interesting results, although these should perhaps be considered under the heading of 'negative evidence'. The subsoil deposits recorded in both trenches were of a similar composition, compaction and colour, but in Trench 4 a considerable quantity of disarticulated human remains were recovered. The absence of remains in the subsoil of Trench 5 is revealing in itself. As discussed above (5.4.2) the absence of remains in trenching in the northeast corner of the churchyard, would suggest that area was never utilised as burial ground. Being within the bounds of the churchyard, but not used for burial, would indicate another use – given the location, it is logical to suggest that the north-east corner is an historical entrance into the church grounds.

Similarly, the presence of chalk bedrock to the western extent of Trench 4 (at the northwest corner of the churchyard) again indicates the lack of utilisation for burial. By similar reasoning, the absence of activity in this corner could indicate that the spot was historically left un-worked, therefore another entrance into the grounds of the church.

The question then remains as to the use of the area of the churchyard now covered by the footpath, along which Trench 4 ran and from which a significant quantity of human remains were recovered. The presence of one definite, and one possible section of articulated *in-situ* skeleton suggests that the area along the footpath must have been used for active burial at some stage. The quantity of disarticulated human remains suggests that either burials were located in this area and since subjected to heavy disturbance, or alternatively that the source of this disturbed material is elsewhere in the churchyard, and their present location the result of dumping or ground makeup.

The footpath appears to be an historical feature, and can be traced back to the early 19th century at least. It has been suggested that the feature dates back some considerable time prior to its appearance on maps and plans of the churchyard. The results of the archaeological watching brief seem to support this position in relation to the northeast and northwest entrance point, but raise doubts in relation to the main stretch of path between these two points. The solution is, unfortunately, unclear but a number of possible conclusions exist:

- The footpath is a later addition to the churchyard, its current location having a prior use and the human remains representing its prior function as burial ground.
- The footpath has changed alignment/position, remaining a historically significant feature but now existing somewhat altered from its original design.
- The footpath has been re-laid following make-up/dumping activity at some point; the deposits below its current surface representing redeposited material originally from elsewhere in the churchyard.
- The deposits observed below the current ground surface are the results of natural formation processes.

6.2 Archaeological assessment

The archaeological watching brief has shown that no significant archaeological remains relating to the historic church are present in the trenched area. While the lack of evidence is revealing to an extent, nothing of material note has survived.

The areas immediately adjacent to the standing building have been subject to much disturbance – notably from the construction of the late 19th century to early 20th century extensions.

No direct evidence for the historical position or construction of the east-west footpath was observed. In this case the ‘presence of absence’ has been used to argue certain conclusions relating to the paths history, but no solid conclusions can be reached.

Appendix I – London Archaeologist Summary

All Saints Parish Church, Carshalton. NGR: TQ 2798 6449 (centre). CA (Rosie Cummings). Watching brief. May-June 2007. The PCC of All Saints Church. ASZ07

Following permission for the installation of new drainage works in the grounds of All Saints Parish Church, Carshalton, an archaeological watching brief was carried out.

No significant archaeological finds or features were observed. A large quantity of disarticulated human remains were recovered and reburied within the churchyard. There were however two areas where no bone was found, perhaps reflecting the position of original pathways.

A single sherd of 12th-13th century grey-brown sandy ware pottery from the rim of a small jar was recovered from disturbed deposits below the current ground surface.

Natural deposits consisted of a mixture of orange clayey/sandy gravel and to the west chalk with some heavily degraded patches.

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