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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS LTD**

**CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS,  
FELSTED, ESSEX**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

Authors: Peter Thompson MA (Desk-based assessment) Gareth Barlow MSc (Fieldwork & report)	
NGR: TL 6765 2039	Report No: 3660
District: Uttlesford	Site Code: FLHC10
Approved: Claire Halpin	Project No: P4100
Signed:	Date: October 2010

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## OASIS SUMMARY SHEET

<b>Project details</b>			
Project name	<i>Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex</i>		
<i>In October 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation in the churchyard of the Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 6765 2039). The evaluation was conducted to provide further information to inform a planning and DAC application a proposed extension to the immediate north of the church.</i>			
<i>The evaluation revealed the base of the church wall foundation and ten grave cuts, aligned east-west. All continued below the 700mm excavation depth limit and so were not excavated. As the cuts were visible in the post-medieval/ modern layers L1001 and L1027 the graves are of post-medieval date or later. One, F1022, appeared to have the remains of a modern headstone (M1007) still in place at its western end. The base of Wall M1002 of the church northern aisle (early 14<sup>th</sup> century) was revealed. It was built directly on to the natural deposits (L1004) at a depth of only 0.40m.</i>			
Project dates (fieldwork)	<i>14 – 20 October 2010</i>		
Previous work (Y/N/?)	<i>N</i>	Future work	<i>TBC</i>
P. number	<i>P4100</i>	Site code	<i>FLHC10</i>
Type of project	<i>Archaeological trial trench evaluation</i>		
Site status	<i>-</i>		
Current land use	<i>Church graveyard</i>		
Planned development	<i>Extension to north side of church</i>		
Main features (+dates)	<i>Post-medieval / modern grave cuts</i>		
Significant finds (+dates)	<i>In situ modern grave headstone broken off below ground surface level. Ten grave cuts</i>		
<b>Project location</b>			
County/ District/ Parish	<i>Essex</i>	<i>Uttlesford</i>	<i>Felsted</i>
HER/ SMR for area	<i>Essex HER (EHER)</i>		
Post code (if known)	<i>-</i>		
Area of site	<i>200m<sup>2</sup></i>		
NGR	<i>TL 6765 2039</i>		
Height AOD (max/ min)	<i>73m AOD</i>		
<b>Project creators</b>			
Brief issued by	<i>Richard Havis. Historic Environment Management Team, Essex County Council Historic Environment Branch</i>		
Project Supervisor/s(PO)	<i>Gareth Barlow</i>		
Funded by	<i>Felsted PCC</i>		
Full title	<i>Church of the Holy Cross, Station Road, Felsted, Essex, Archaeological Trial Trench Evaluation</i>		
Authors	<i>Barlow, G., &amp; Thompson P.,</i>		
Report no.	<i>3660</i>		
Date (of report)	<i>October 2010</i>		

# CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, FELSTED, ESSEX: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

## SUMMARY

*In October 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation in the churchyard of the Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 6765 2039). The evaluation was conducted to inform a proposed planning and DAC application for a proposed extension to the immediate north of the church.*

*Palaeolithic stone tools have been found in the vicinity of the church (EHER 1375). The Church of the Holy Cross (EHER 37028) is Grade I listed and dates from the 12<sup>th</sup> century with subsequent additions and rebuilding in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, and restoration work in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. An archaeological watching brief uncovered a large lump of Sarsen stone 1m south-west of the west tower (EHER 18609), and an 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century brick built tomb 9m south of the south edge of the tower (EHER 18610).*

*The evaluation revealed ten grave cuts, aligned east-west, with one in Trench 1 and the remaining nine in Trench 2. All continued below the 700mm excavation depth limit and so were not excavated. As the cuts were visible in the post-medieval/ modern layers L1001 and L1027 the graves are of post-medieval date or later. One, F1022, appeared to have the remains of a modern headstone (M1007) still in place at its western end. The base of Wall M1002 of the church northern aisle (early 14<sup>th</sup> century) was revealed. It was built directly on to the natural deposits (L1004) at a depth of only 0.40m.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In October 2010, Archaeological Solutions Ltd (AS) conducted an archaeological evaluation in the churchyard of the Church of the Holy Cross, Felsted, Essex (NGR TL 6765 2039; Figs. 1-3). The evaluation was conducted to inform a proposed planning and DAC application for a proposed extension to the immediate north of the church. It was commissioned by Freeland Rees Roberts Architects on behalf of Felsted PCC.

1.2 The evaluation was carried out in accordance with a brief issued by the Historic Environment Management Team of the Essex County Council (ECC HEM) (Richard Havis, dated 20/09/2010), and a specification compiled by AS (dated 24/09/2010), and approved by ECC. It followed the procedures outlined in the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance*

*for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (both revised 2008), the *IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2008) and the *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (Gurney 2003).

1.3 The evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development. The principal research aims was to identify any evidence of any earlier phases of the church structure adjacent to the north wall, and to identify any evidence of early occupation or burials in the graveyard.

### **Planning policy context**

1.4 PPG16 (1990), the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to archaeology and PPG15 (1994) the national Planning Policy Guidance Note which applies to conservation of the historic environment (by protecting the character and appearance of Conservation Areas and protecting listed buildings (of architectural or historical interest) from demolition and unsympathetic change and safeguarding their settings as far as is possible) have been replaced by Planning Policy Statement 5 (2010), the national Planning Policy Statement that applies to the historic environment.

1.5 PPS5 states that those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are heritage assets. The Planning Policy Statement aims to deliver sustainable development by ensuring that policies and decisions that concern the historic environment recognise that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource, take account of the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits of heritage conservation, and recognise that intelligently managed change may sometimes be necessary if heritage assets are to be maintained for the long term. It aims to conserve England's heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance. It states that opportunities to capture evidence from the historic environment and to contribute to our knowledge and understanding of our past, and to make this publicly available, should be taken, particularly where a heritage asset is to be lost.

## **2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE (Figs. 1 - 2)**

2.1 Felsted is situated approximately 14km north of Chelmsford and 5km south-east of Great Dunmow in Essex. It is also 2.25 km south of the A120 between Great Dunmow and Braintree which follows the course of the former Roman Road of Stane Street. The Church of the Holy Cross is close to the centre of the village. Immediately to the south of the church precinct are houses fronting Station Road. To the north and east of the church is the main area of the church yard, and beyond is a small area of parkland comprising trees, grass and

pathways. To the west of the church is a small area of the graveyard with a car park and buildings beyond.

### **3 METHODOLOGY (Desk-based assessment)**

#### **3.1 Archaeological databases**

The Essex Historic Environment Record (EHER) was consulted in order to identify any local archaeological remains in the area that might be affected by, or relate to, the development.

### **4 THE EVIDENCE**

#### **4.1 Topography, geology and soils (Fig. 1)**

4.1.1 The Church of the Holy Cross is situated at approximately 70m AOD on a hill overlooking the river Chelmer some 750m to the west. The local soil is 'typical calcareous pelosol' of the Hanslope Series which are permeable clayey soils with no prominently mottled (gleyed) subsurface horizon at or above 40cm depth. Subsurfaces contain a calcareous horizon and no clay enriched soil. The underlying geology comprises Palaeogene clays, silt and sand deposited between 23 and 65 million years ago.

#### **4.2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

4.2.1 A sparse scatter of prehistoric stone implements have been found in the area including Palaeolithic (EHER 1375) and Neolithic tools (EHER 1374 and 1379). Four Palaeolithic hand axes and two fragments of other stone tools were found in the vicinity of Felsted church (EHER 1302). A 'Celtic' harness and Roman coins have been recovered from the parish and the Roman Road of Stane Street ran to the north.

4.2.2 *Felstede* means 'open-land place' and is first documented in the 1086 Domesday survey. The manor was granted by William the Conqueror to the bishop of Bayeux and later to the abbey of Caen. The current Church of the Holy Cross (EHER 37028) is Grade I listed and built of rubble and flint, with stone dressing, and brick and tile in places. Some of the latter is re-used Roman material indicating a building of that date in the vicinity. The south chapel of the church is built of clunch ashlar. The building dates from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century with the west tower and north-west angle of the nave surviving, whilst the south aisle and part of the arcade are late 12<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the church's architecture including the chancel, north aisle, north vestry and south porch date to the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. It also underwent restoration works in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church was patronized by Lord Richard Rich who became Chancellor of England

during the Reformation. He is buried in the church and there is an altar tomb monument with his effigy. The church interior also contains remains of a 14<sup>th</sup> century altar tomb and 15<sup>th</sup> century effigies. A group of four late 17<sup>th</sup> century tomb stones near the north aisle belong to the Bigg family (EHER 37029).

4.2.3 An archaeological watching brief carried out on a trench for a water pipe identified a large lump of disturbed Sarsen stone 1m south-west of the west tower (EHER 18609). A parallel has been noted with the church at Great Bardingfield where sarsens were used to underpin the corners of the structure. The watching brief also found a brick-built corbelled tomb 9m south of the south edge of the tower. It was of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date although the thin corbelled roof is in Tudor-style brick. There was no grave marker to identify the spot (EHER 18610).

## **5 METHODOLOGY (Trial trenching)**

5.1 Two trial trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 700mm (Fig. 3). The latter was determined by the impact of the proposed development, as agreed with ECC HEM. Grave cuts exposed at this level were not excavated, but were recorded in plan only. Disarticulated human bones disturbed by the evaluation were collected and returned to the church at the end of the fieldwork for reburial.

5.2 Trench 1 (2.00 x 1.00m) was located against the northern side of the church and was excavated entirely by hand. The brief originally required that this trench be 2.00 x 2.00m, however, after consultation with Alexander Hobohm (architect), Venn Design (Consulting DAC Architect) and Richard Havis (ECC HEM) it was agreed that the trench side against the wall could be reduced to 1.00m square to reduce the risk of structural damage to the wall.

5.3 Trench 2 (13.30 x 2.00m) was located diagonally across the footprint of the proposed extension, to the north of Trench 1. The length of the trench was reduced from c.17m, at the north-western end, to avoid a tree root protection area (RPA). Undifferentiated overburden was removed under close archaeological supervision using a 2.5 tonne, rubber tracked, 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.60m wide toothless ditching bucket. Thereafter, all further investigation was undertaken by hand.

5.4 Exposed surfaces in both trenches were cleaned as appropriate and examined for archaeological features and finds. Deposits were recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets, drawn to scale and photographed.

## **6 DESCRIPTION OF RESULTS**

Individual trench descriptions are presented below:

### Trench 1 (Figs. 4-5)

<i>Sample section: South end, east facing</i> <i>0.00 = 73.44m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.41m	L1000	Topsoil. Friable, dark grey brown, organic sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints.
0.41 – 0.75m	L1001	Subsoil. Firm, dark mid orange brown, sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints.

<i>Sample section: North end, south facing.</i> <i>0.00 = 73.59m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.14m	L1000	Topsoil. As above
0.14 – 0.68m	L1001	Subsoil. As above

*Description:* Trench 1 contained an undated grave cut (F1005) and the base of the northern aisle exterior wall (M1002).

M1002 was the base of the north wall of the early 14<sup>th</sup> century north aisle of the church. It was present to a depth of 0.40m below ground and was built of undressed flint nodules (0.19 x 0.08m – 0.40 x 0.40m) and occasional rounded sandstone (0.16 x 0.05m) and chalk blocks (0.18 x 0.08m) randomly arranged in a matrix of pale orange brown mortar. There was no construction cut apparent as the two layers of earth against the wall were modern. The wall was built on L1004, a firm, mid orange brown sandy silt with frequent small and medium rounded and angular flints. L1004 was the natural, and it was truncated c.0.22m out from the wall.

F1005 was a grave cut, partially revealed, at a depth of 0.70m below the surface. It appeared to be aligned east-west, and was filled with L1006, a friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with crushed degraded chalk or mortar, and moderate small rounded and angular flint.

### Trench 2 (Figs. 4-5)

<i>Sample section: Southeast end, northeast facing.</i> <i>0.00 = 73.54m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.22m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.22 – 0.66m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.66 – 0.72m+	L1027	Disturbed ground. Friable, dark mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints.

<i>Sample section: Northwest end, southwest facing.</i> <i>0.00 = 73.23m AOD</i>		
0.00 – 0.17m	L1000	Topsoil. As Trench 1
0.17 – 0.48m	L1001	Subsoil. As Trench 1
0.48 – 0.70m+	L1027	Disturbed ground. As above.



*Description:* Trench 2 contained nine grave cuts (F1008, F1010, F1012, F1014, F1016, F1018, F1020, F1022, and F1024) and an *in situ* modern headstone (M1007) that had been broken off below ground surface level.

M1007 was a modern grave headstone located upright and, therefore, probably *in situ*, at the western end of Grave F1022. It had been placed just outside the western end of the cut and was directly above the far eastern end of Grave F1024. It was made from a very pale creamy brown limestone slab (0.6 x 0.47 x 0.10m). It had been broken off at a level below the current ground surface, and some of the fragments were lying adjacent to its top edge. The west facing side had a flat smooth finish whilst the east facing side was left rough with the chisel marks still apparent on the lower 0.40m. Above this, just below the line of the break, the thickness had been reduced, on the east facing side only, from 0.10m to 0.06m and the finish on this reduced side was also smooth. The fragments found were also smooth finished on both sides. No inscriptions were present.

Nine grave cuts were revealed within the trench (tabulated below). As they were visible within Layer L1027 that contained post-medieval/modern CBM they are of relatively modern date. Grave F1022 with its *in situ* headstone is modern. As Grave F1014 cuts Graves F1012 and F1016 it post dates them, but more than this cannot be determined.

Feature	Context	Dimensions (m)	Plan	Fill
F1008	L1009	0.90+ x 0.95	West end; sub-rectangular.	Friable, dark grey brown sandy silt with moderately frequent rounded and angular flint.
F1010	L1011	0.80+ x 0.90	East end; sub-rectangular.	As above.
F1012	L1013	1.60+ x 0.85	East end; sub-rectangular.	As above.
F1014	L1015	0.90+ x 0.85	East end; sub-rectangular.	Friable, dark grey brown sandy silt, with lenses of mid brownish orange silty sand, and moderately frequent rounded and angular flint.
F1016	L1017	2.00 x 0.85	Sub-rectangular.	As L1009.
F1018	L1019	1.60+ x 0.90	West end; sub-rectangular.	As L1009.
F1020	L1021	1.50+ x 0.70	West end; sub-rectangular.	As L1009.
F1022	L1023	1.65+ x 0.70	West end; sub-rectangular.	As L1009.
F1024	L1025	0.60+ x 0.80	East end; sub-rectangular.	As L1009.

*Grave cuts in Trench 2.*

## **7 CONFIDENCE RATING**

7.1 It is not felt that any factors inhibited the recognition of archaeological features or finds present.

## **8 DEPOSIT MODEL**

8.1 At the top of the sequence was Topsoil L1000, a friable, dark grey brown, sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints. It was present across the whole site at varying depths. At the south end of Trench 1 it was 0.41m thick, whilst at the north end it was only 0.14m thick. In Trench 2 it varied from 0.22m at the southeast end to 0.17m at the northwest.

8.2 Below L1000 was Subsoil L1001, a firm, dark mid orange brown, sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints, also present across the whole site. It was not bottomed in Trench 1 and was at least 0.54m thick. In Trench 2 it was between 0.44m thick in the southeast and 0.31m thick in the northwest.

8.3 At the base of the sequence revealed in Trench 2 was L1027, a layer of disturbed ground ('graveyard soil') consisting of a friable, dark mid grey brown sandy silt with frequent small and medium angular and rounded flints. It was not bottomed (thickness 0.22m+). The exception to this was in the extreme northwestern corner of Trench 2 where an outcrop of a natural deposit (L1026) occurred, consisting of a firm, mid brownish orange clay silt with moderate small angular flints.

## **9 DISCUSSION**

9.1 Ten grave cuts, aligned east-west, were identified with one being in Trench 1 and the remaining nine in Trench 2. All continued below the 700mm excavation depth limit and so were not excavated. As the cuts were visible in the post-medieval/ modern layers L1001 and L1027 the graves are of post-medieval date or later. One, F1022, appeared to have the remains of a modern headstone (M1007) still in place at its western end.

9.2 The base of Wall M1002 of the church northern aisle was revealed. It was built directly onto the natural (L1004) at a depth of only 0.40m. There was no evidence of the use of larger building materials or increased wall thickness to help support the weight of the wall, neither was there any evidence of subsidence.

9.3 The church building dates from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century with alterations and additions in the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. No evidence of buildings or other

activities were present in the trenches. The excavations were limited to a depth of 700mm, and that the natural was not exposed at this depth, so it is possible that early remains survive below this. It is equally possible that the continued disturbance of the ground to depths greater than this 700mm has removed all trace. No finds of medieval date were found in Topsoil L1000, Subsoil L1001 or Layer L1027.

## **10 DEPOSITION OF THE ARCHIVE**

Archive records, with an inventory, will be deposited with any donated finds from the site at Saffron Walden Museum. The archive will be quantified, ordered, indexed, cross-referenced and checked for internal consistency. In addition to the overall site summary, it will be necessary to produce a summary of the artefactual and ecofactual data.

## **11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Solutions Limited would like to thank Felsted PCC for funding the works and Mr Alexander Hobohm of Freeland Rees Roberts Architects for commissioning this evaluation on behalf of Felsted PCC and for his assistance.

AS is pleased to acknowledge the advice and input of Mr Richard Havis of ECC HEM.

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## **WEB SITES**

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**APPENDIX 1      CONCORDANCE OF FINDS**

**FLHC10: Church of the Holy Cross, Felstead, Essex**  
 Concordance of finds by  
 feature

Feature	Context	Trench	Description	Spot Date	Pottery (13) 190g	CBM (g)	A.Bone (g)	Other
1000		1	Topsoil	Modern		1749	7	B.Flint 63g Fe Frag 23g C.Pipe 3g Shell 11g Glass 16g Slate 7g
1001		1	Subsoil			319	51	Glass 17g Fe Frag 16g Button 2g
1027		2	Modern Layer			658	52	S.Flnt 6g Fe Frag 82g

## APPENDIX 2 SPECIALIST REPORT

### The Pottery

by Peter Thompson

The evaluation recovered 7 moderately abraded sherds weighing 101g. The sherds are all unstratified from L1000 and comprise 1x12g of internally and externally glazed post-medieval red earthenware, probably from a bowl, of 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century date, and 6 sherds of modern mass-produced porcelain weighing 89g from a lamp shade.

### The Ceramic Building Materials

*Andrew Peachey*

The evaluation recovered a total of 44 fragments (2726g) of late post-medieval to early modern (18<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century) CBM. The CBM, comprising peg tile and brick, was entirely recovered from topsoil, subsoil or modern made ground layers (Table 1) and although moderately fragmented was relatively un-abraded.

Layer	Peg tile		Brick	
	F	W	F	W
Topsoil L1001	8	319		
Subsoil L1000	23	1242	4	414
Modern Made Ground L1027	6	658		
<i>Total</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>2219</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>414</i>

Table 1: Quantification of the post-medieval to early modern CBM by frequency (F) and weight (W, in grams)

### *Methodology*

The CBM was quantified by fragment count and weight with fabrics examined at x20 magnification and all data entered into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that will be deposited as part of the archive.

### *Results*

The peg tile and brick both occur in a single fabric that was probably produced in the region. The fabric is oxidised red-orange throughout with inclusions of common, well-sorted quartz (0.1-0.5mm), occasional iron rich grains and flint (<5mm). It has smooth to slightly abrasive surfaces.

The peg tile in the assemblage is 12-14mm thick with circular peg holes (c.10mm diameter) and a sanded base, while the brick is 60mm thick. None of the CBM is present in any concentration, and was probably deposited during nearby construction/redevelopment work or as a constituent part of material used for made ground.



PHOTOGRAPHIC INDEX



1  
*General view of the site. Looking south*



2  
*The 12<sup>th</sup> century tower. Looking east.*



3  
*General view of Trench 1. Looking south.*



4  
*North facing section of Trench 1.*



5  
*West facing section of Trench 1.*



6  
*Trench 1 post excavation. Looking south.*





7  
Excavating Trench 2. Looking southeast.



8  
Headstone M1007 pre excavation. Trench 2. Looking west.



9  
Headstone M1007 post excavation. Trench 2. Looking west.



10  
Sample section 1. Trench 2. Southeast end, northeast facing.

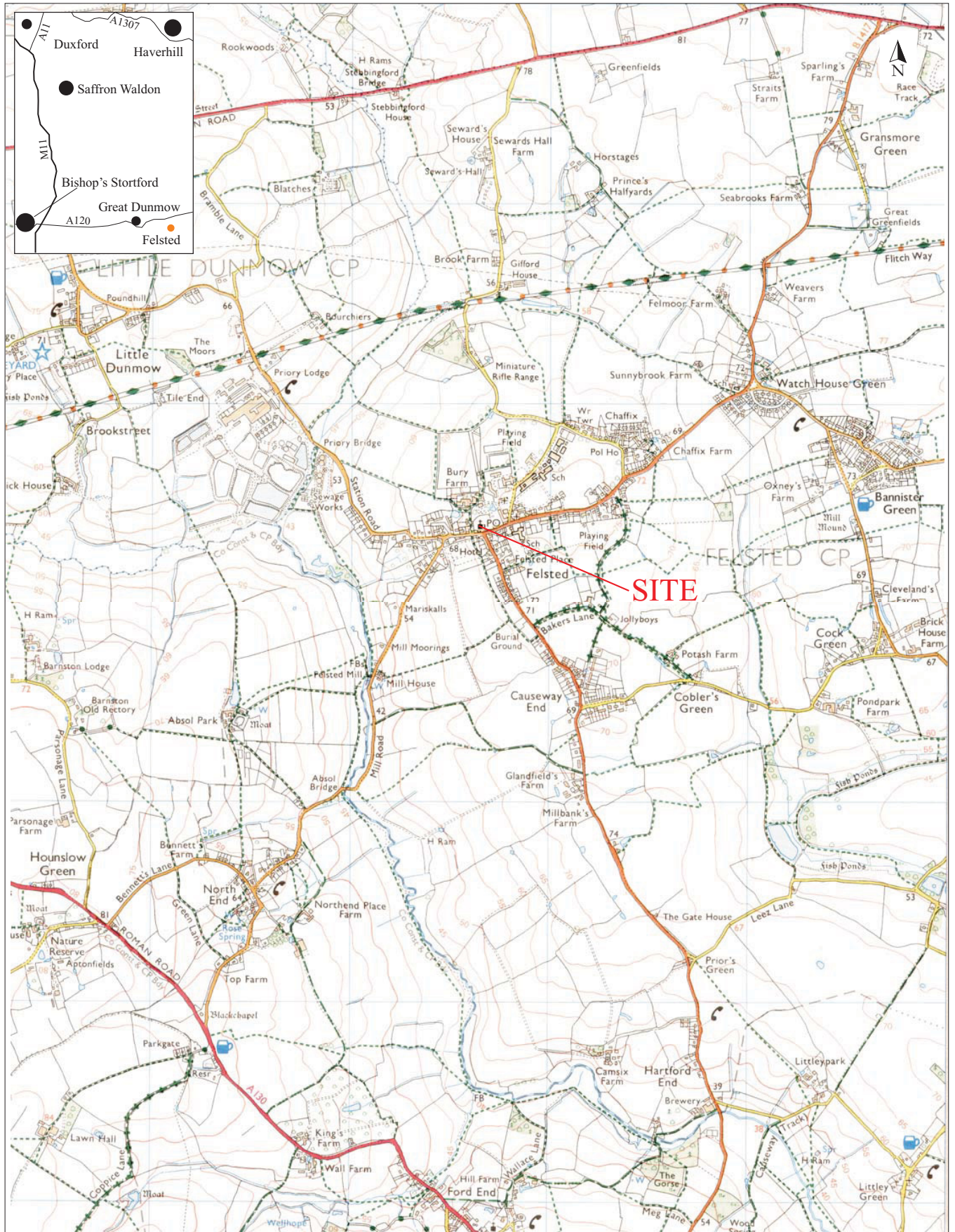


11  
Sample section 2. Trench 2. Northwest end, southwest facing



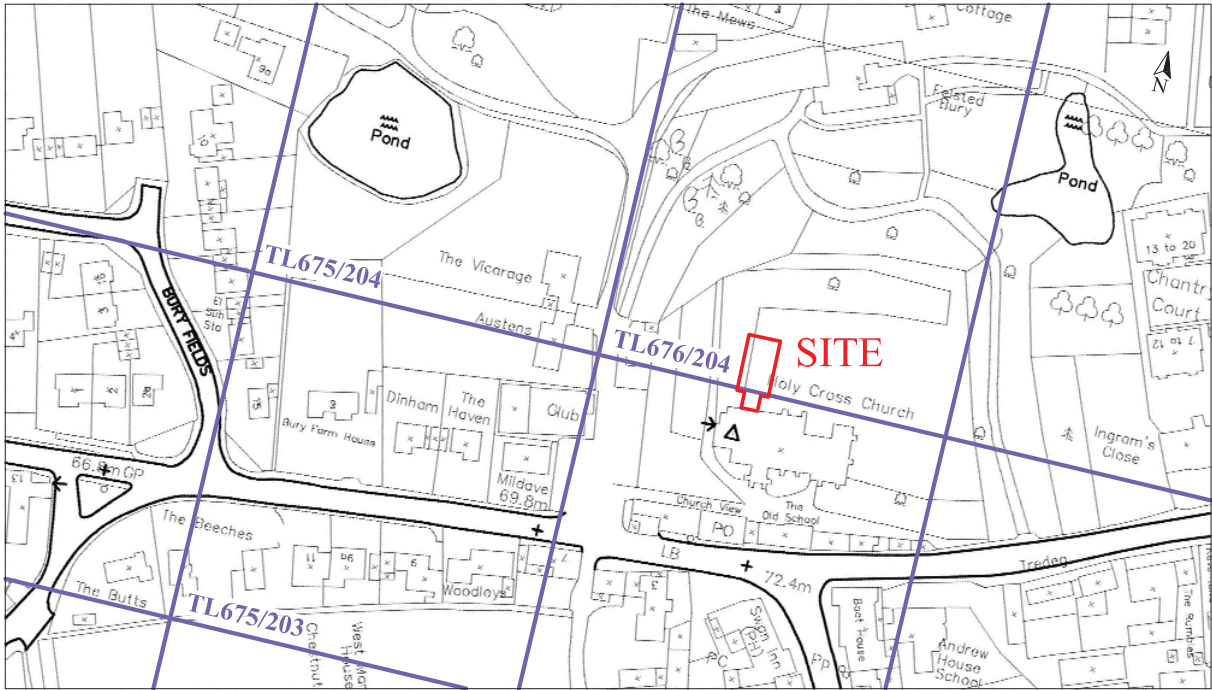
12  
Trench 2 post excavation. Looking northwest.





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**Fig. 1 Site location plan**  
 Scale 1:25,000 at A4

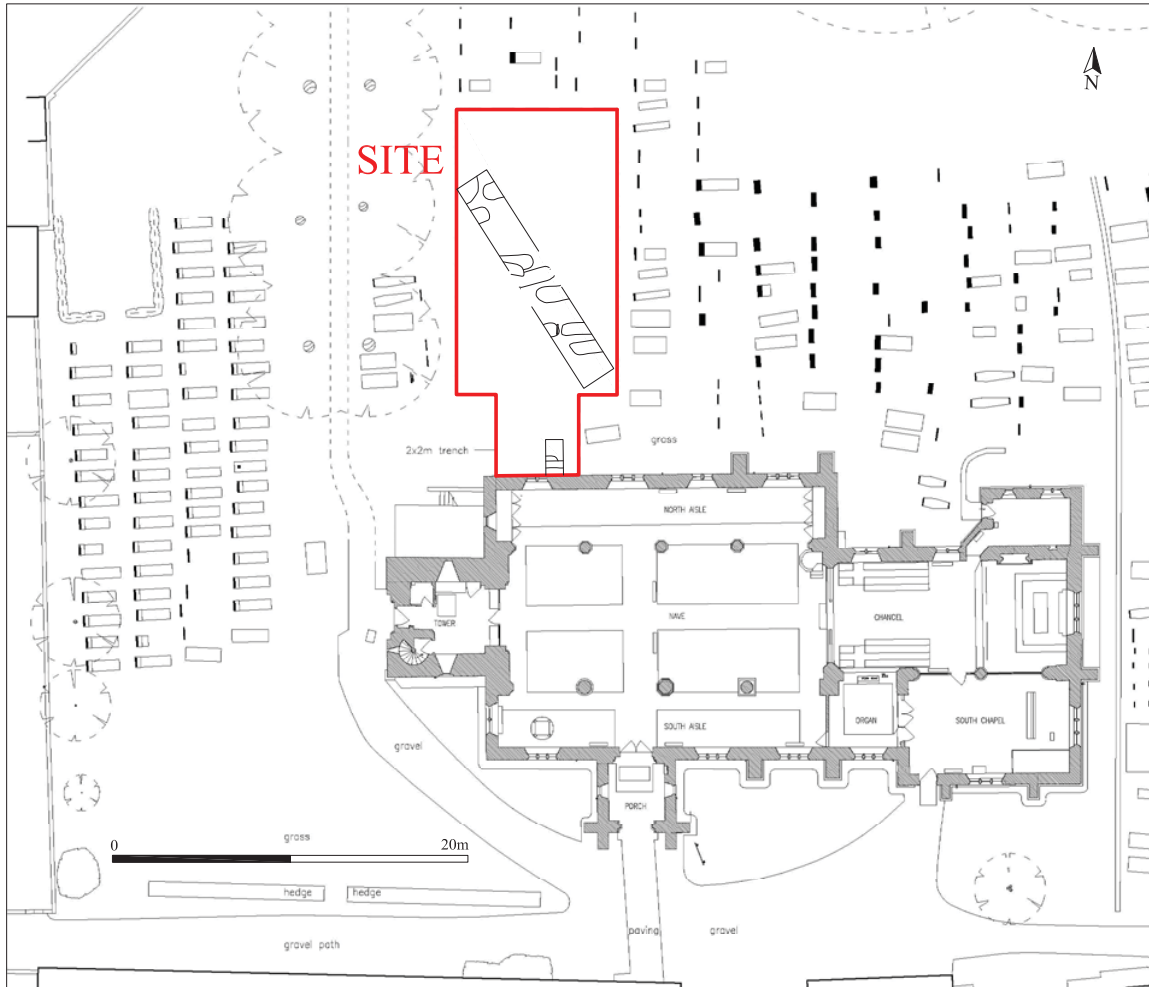


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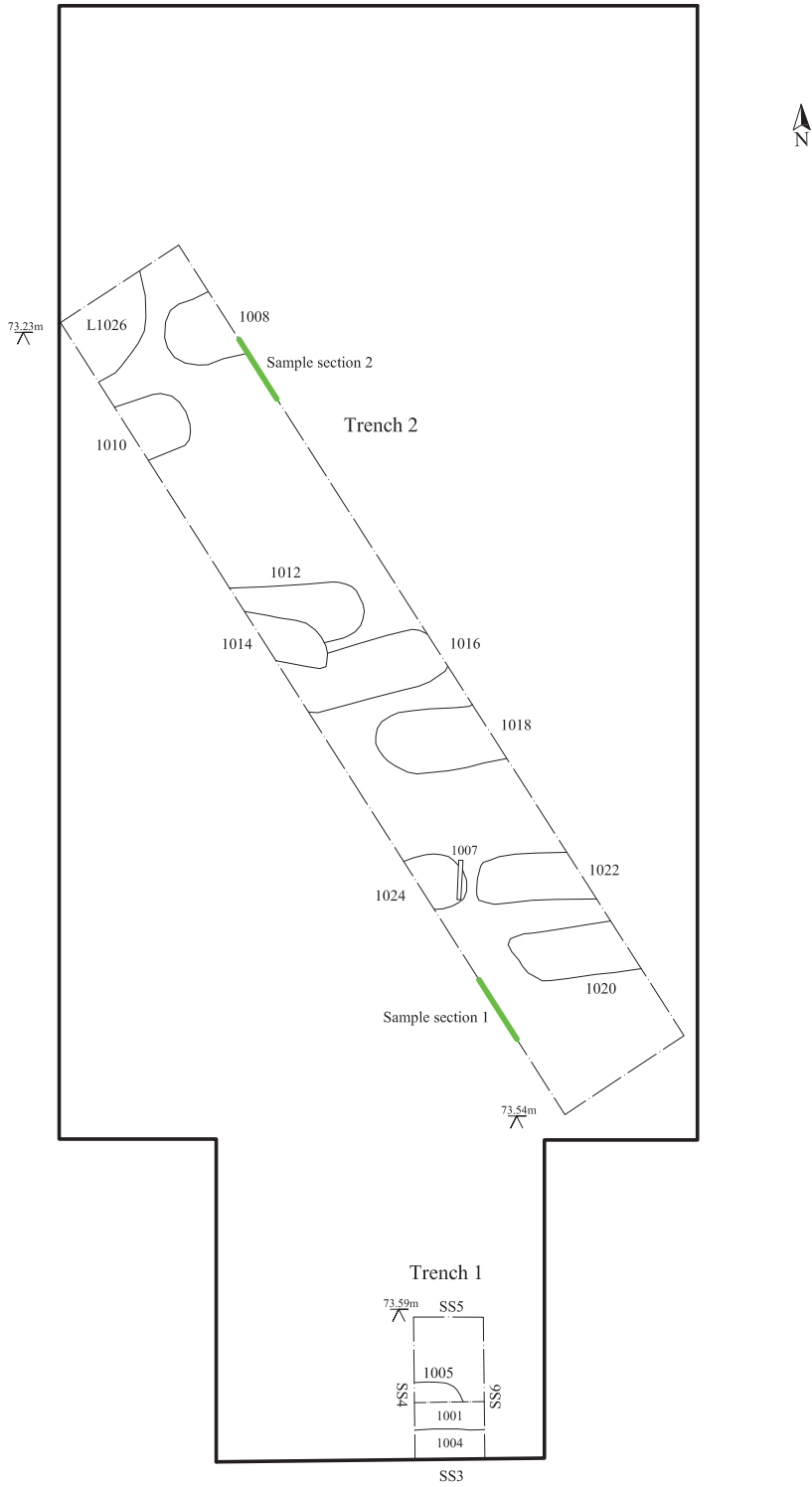


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**Fig. 2 Detailed site location plan**  
 Scale 1:2000 at A4

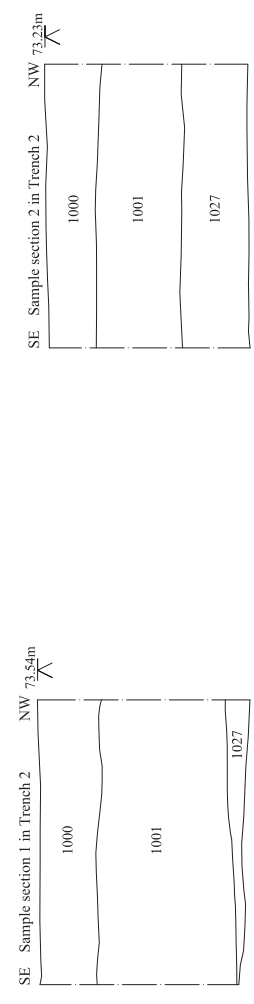
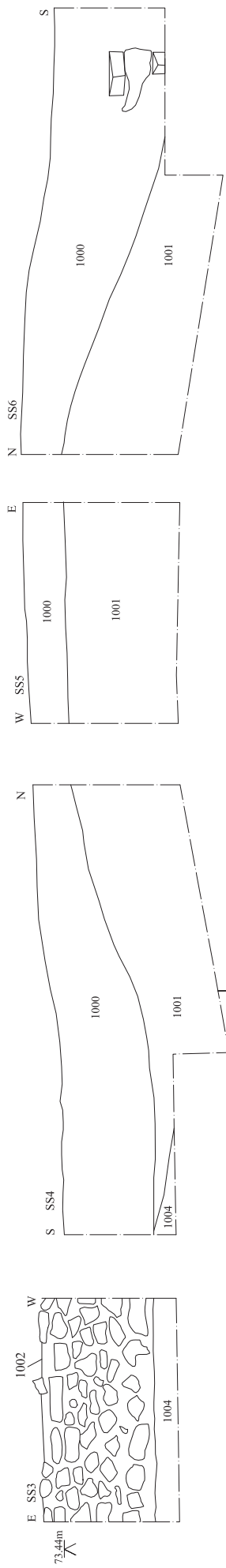




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**Fig. 3 Trench location plan**  
 Scale 1:400 at A4



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**Fig. 4 Features plan**  
 Scale 1:100 at A4



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**Fig. 5 Sections**  
 Scale 1:25 at A4