

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**St Catherine's Church, Burbage,
Hinckley, Leicestershire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: BBH11/05

(SP 4428 9275)

**St Catherine's Church, Burbage,
nr Hinckley, Leicestershire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

For The Incumbent and Church Wardens,

St Catherine's Church

by JamesMcNicoll-Norbury
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeBBH11/05

February 2011

Summary

Site name: St Catherine's Church, Burbage, nr Hinckley, Leicestershire

Grid reference: SP 4428 9275

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 22nd February 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Site code: BBH 11/05

Summary of results: A stone-built wall of possible medieval origin and two undated floors were located within trial holes inside the church. A fourth trial hole in the churchyard revealed no archaeological deposits. No human remains nor burials were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Leicestershire Museum Service in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.03.11 Steve Preston ✓ 02.03.11

St Catherine's Church, Burbage, nr Hinckley, Leicestershire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 11/05

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at St Catherine's Church, Hinckley Road, Burbage, Hinckley, Leicestershire (SP 4428 9275) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Jones, of Acanthus Clews Architects, Acanthus House, 57 Hightown Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9BE on behalf of The Incumbent and Church Wardens, St Catherine's Church, Burbage.

A faculty has been sought from the Diocese of Leicester to install a new geothermal underfloor heating system at the church. The system will require the removal of some floor structure and floors along with a borehole manifold in the churchyard for which exploratory test pits are required.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by the Diocese of Leicester Archaeological Adviser and the fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury, Tim Dawson and Aidan Colyer on 22nd February 2011 and the site code is BBH 11/05.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Leicestershire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located at St Catherine's Church on the east side of Hinckley Road, in the eastern part of Burbage, which is near the south-western border of Leicestershire (Fig. 1). The interior of the church consists of concrete slabs and raised wood panelled floors, pews, two rows of columns and vaulted ceilings. The grounds around the church are in use as a cemetery, and the surrounding area is residential to the north and west but with Manor Farm to the south and farmland to the east (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Dunsmore gravel (BGS 1994) and the site lies at 126m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The parish church is usually considered to lie at the centre of the historic (late Saxon and medieval) core of a settlement and in this case Burbage (*Burbece*) is mentioned both in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) and in AD 1043 as an endowment of the new abbey at Coventry. A medieval moat/manorial complex lies to the

south-west. It is possible that the church also has Saxon origins. The church was built in the early 13th century and is dedicated to St Catherine of Alexandria, although it is doubtful any of the original structure remains above ground and it is thought that the foundations of the tower, the oldest part of the church, are of Saxon origin. The South door dates back to 1633 and the font, thought to be 400 years old, bears the coat of arms of the Hastings family.

The church was rebuilt on the previous foundations in the 1840s in what was then described as the ‘modern gothic style’ and was extensively re-ordered in 1994 when a Lady Chapel was created at the end of the north transept, the font was relocated to the south aisle and the Choir stalls were rebuilt in the north aisle. With the chancel opened up, the Victorian tiled floor was uncovered repaired and extended. The church is a Grade II* listed building.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the digging of the test pits and borehole manifold location, to determine the extent to which human remains survive within any of the areas and to observe the presence of graves and vaults.

Results

Four of the seven intended test pits were excavated. A complete list of test pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Church Interior

Three of the planned test pits within the church (1, 3 and 6) could not be dug due to fixed features inside the church and service valves located in the immediate area (Fig. 4).

Test pit 2 was dug to a depth of 0.66m and measured 0.80m by 0.42m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.03m wooden floor boards, 0.25m void, 0.38m loose pale grey/brown sand and rubble (50) overlaying a stone built wall (53). Natural geology was not observed. Only the top course of stones was visible in the test pit due to the small area available to dig. Despite this the wall appears to be aligned WSW-ENE and the blocks measured between 144–176mm by 128mm. No bonding material appeared to be present between the rough faced blocks. The alignment of the wall could suggest that it formed part of the north aisle at one time before being demolished to allow the building of a wider aisle. No close date can be offered for either the building or the

demolition of this wall, but the construction would not be out of place in a medieval setting and the demolition seems most likely to have been part of the Victorian rebuilding.

Test pit 4 was dug to a depth of 0.57m and measured 0.32m by 0.40m. The stratigraphy comprised 0.03m wooden floor boards, 0.20m void, 0.22m loose pale grey/brown sand and rubble (50) overlying 0.12m brown sandy clay with stone (54). Natural geology was not observed. The full extent of the test pit could not be dug as intended due to immovable joists under the floor panels.

Test pit 5 measured 1.00x1.00m and was 0.55m deep and contained a mixture of loose sand and stone rubble which was probably the remains of previous floors of the church which were replaced in the 19th century. The stratigraphy comprised 0.05m concrete paving slabs, 0.05m builders sand, 0.09m brick floor (51), 0.03m crushed mortar and sand, 0.06m stone slabs, 0.13m stone blocks (52) overlying 0.14m pale grey brown sand with stone rubble (50). Natural geology was not observed in this test pit.

Exterior

External test pit 7 (for the borehole manifold) was 1.00x1.00m and 0.95m deep and was dug into an existing path (Fig. 3). The stratigraphy comprised 0.10m Tarmac and 0.10m grey sand and crush which overlay 0.62m dark brown sand subsoil which in turn overlay orange/brown sandy clay with gravel, interpreted as the natural geology. No archaeological features nor graves were identified.

All soils excavated were sieved for the recovery of human remains, however, none were recovered.

Finds

No finds were recovered.

Conclusion

The stratigraphy encountered in the test pits within the church would suggest that the ground beneath the floor of the church had been significantly disturbed in the past, most likely during the rebuilding of the church in the 19th century. No crypts nor other burial deposits were encountered, but an unmortared stone-built wall was revealed which might possibly be of medieval date, though the limited availability of space made examination of it difficult.

Outside the church it was found that the area of the borehole manifold (along a current path) has not been disturbed as shown by the presence of subsoil in that area overlying the natural geology, and that it was not occupied by any burial deposits.

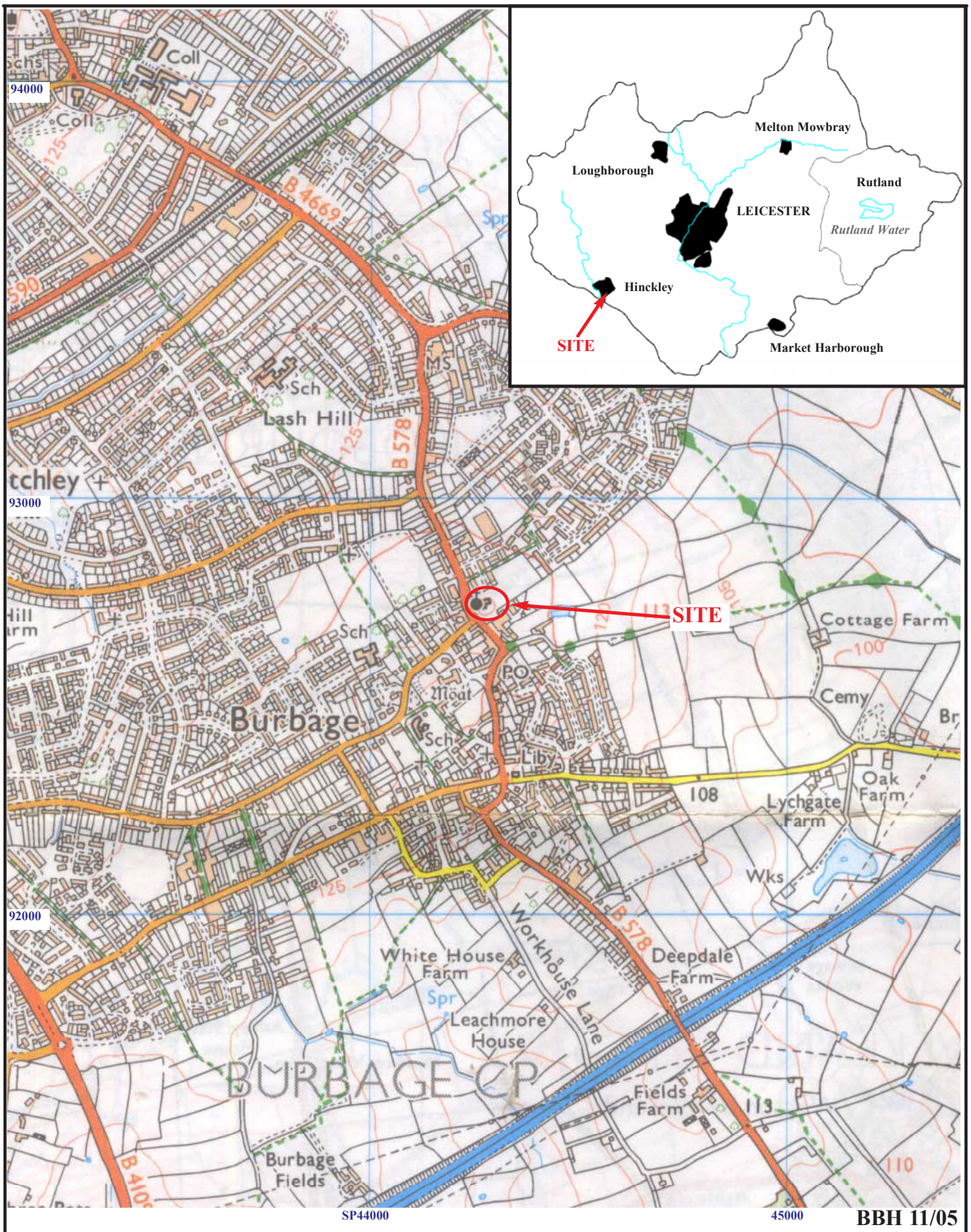
References

BGS, 1994, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 169, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth

Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, A complete Translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Test pit details

<i>Trial Hole</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
2	0.80	0.42	0.66	0–0.03m wooden floor boards; 0.03–0.28m void, 0.28–0.66m loose pale grey brown sands and rubble (50) overlying a stone built wall (53). [PI. 1]
4	0.48	0.32	0.57	0.00–0.03m wooden floor boards, 0.03–0.23m void, 0.23–0.45m loose pale grey brown sands and rubble (50) 0.45–0.57m brown sandy clay with stone (54). [PI. 2]
5	1.00	1.00	0.55	0–0.05m concrete paving slabs, 0.05–0.10m builders sand, 0.10–0.19m brick floor (51), 0.19–0.22m crushed mortar and sand, 0.22–0.28m stone slabs, 0.28–0.41m stone blocks (52) 0.41–0.55m pale grey brown sands with stone rubble (50). [PI. 3]
7 (external)	1.00	1.00	0.95	0–0.10m Tarmac; 0.10–0.20m grey sand and crush; 0.20–0.82m subsoil; 0.82m+ orange brown clayey sand with gravels (natural geology). No archaeology nor burial deposits. [PI. 4]



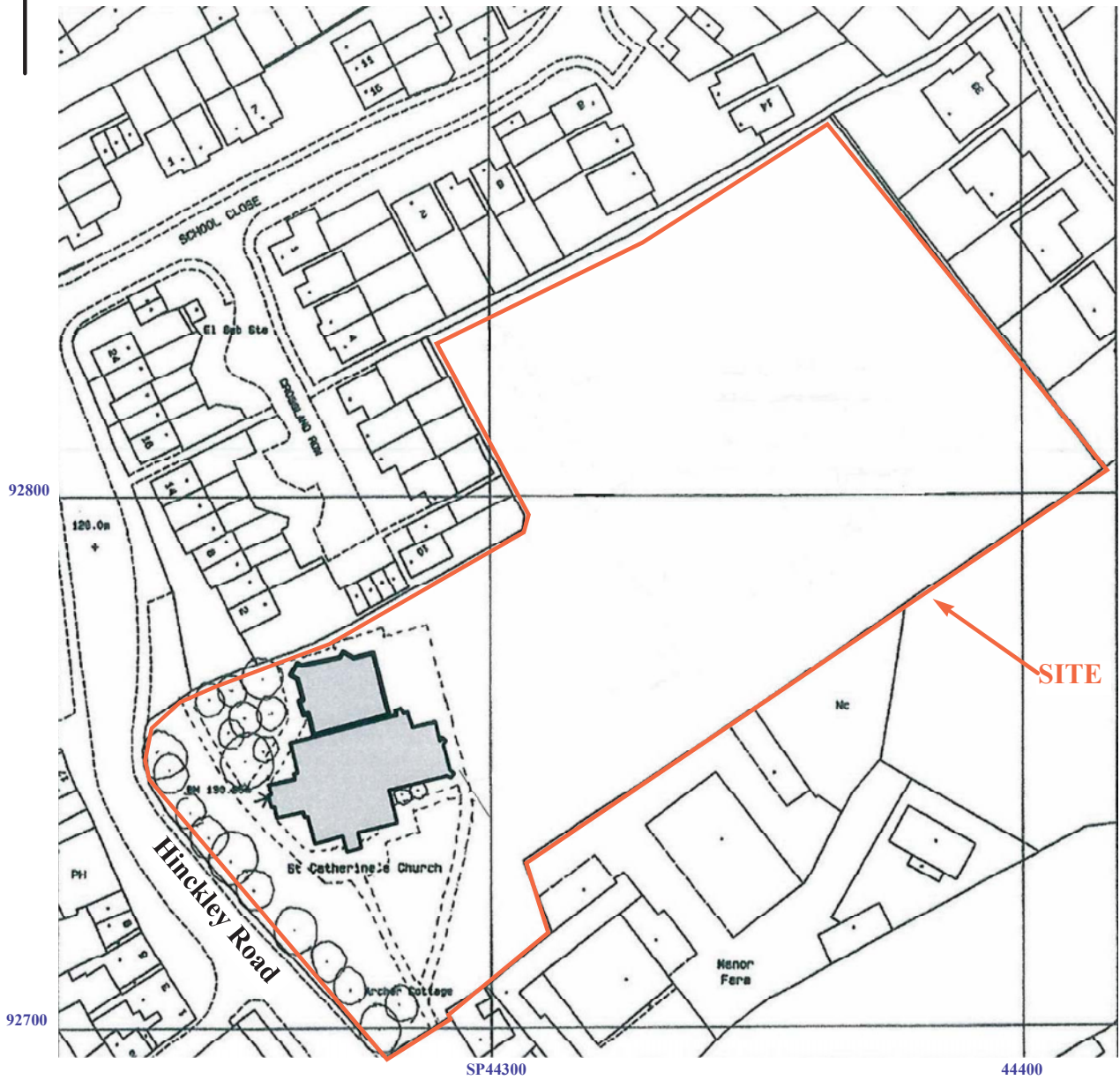
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Figure 1. Location of site within Burbage and Leicestershire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Hinckley Road.

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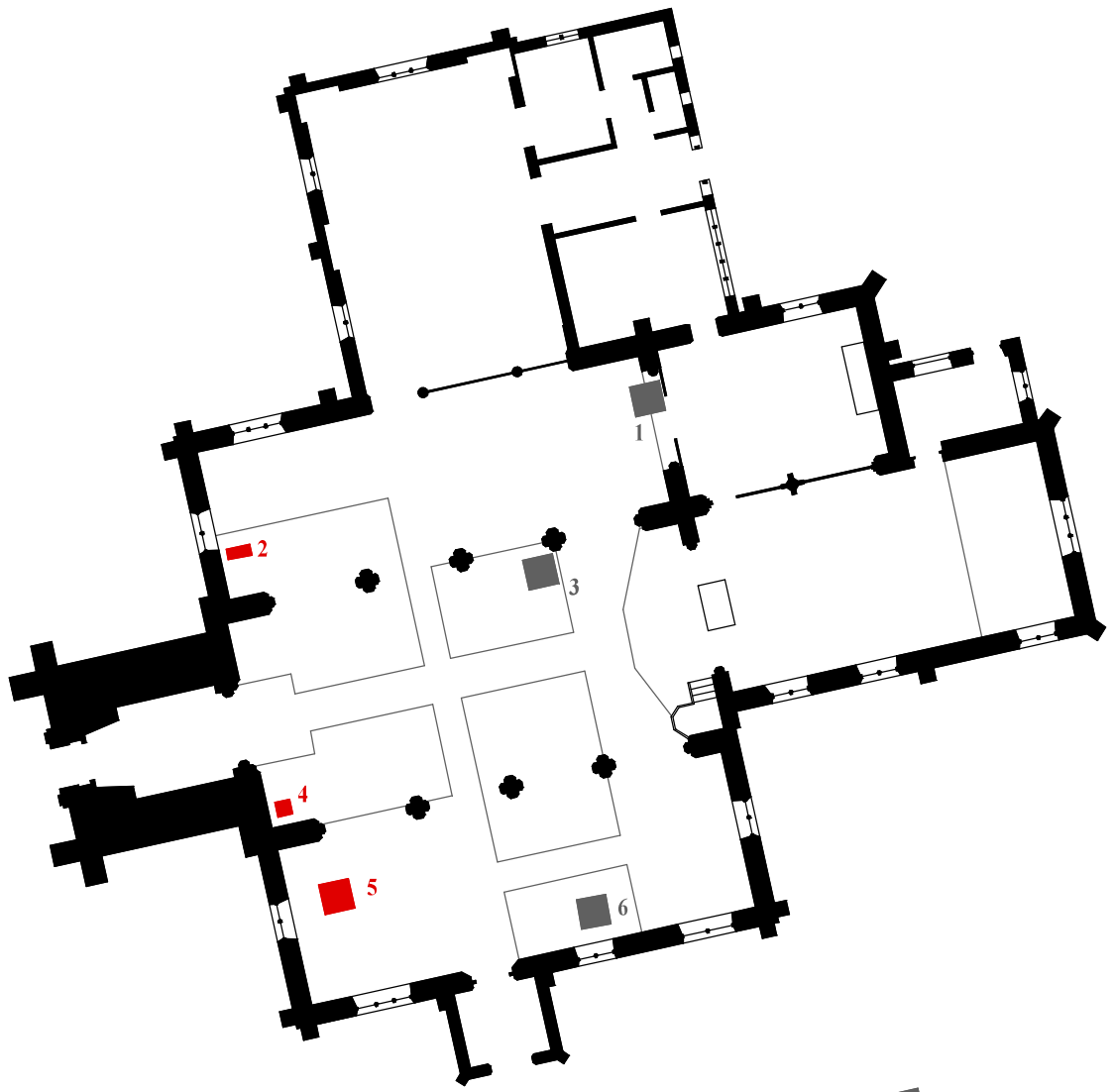
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Figure 3. Location of exterior test pit.





Not dug
 1
 Dug
 5

0 25m

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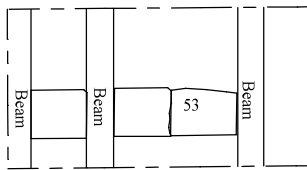
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Figure 4. Location of interior test pits

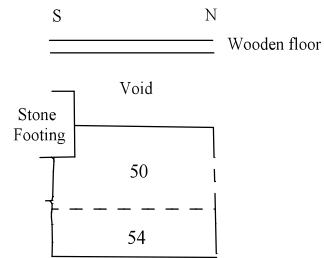
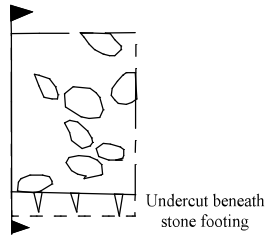




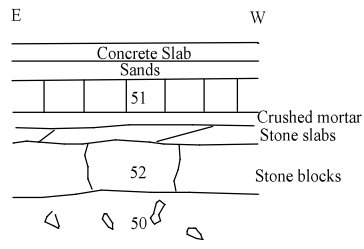
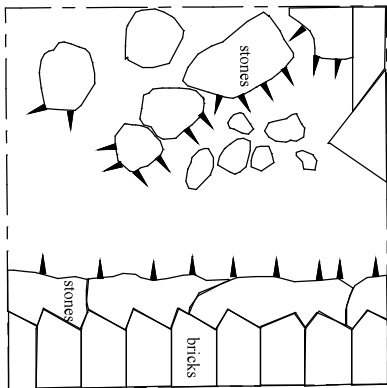
Test Pit 2



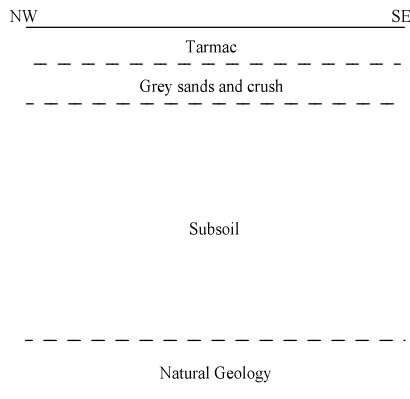
Test Pit 4



Test Pit 5



Test Pit 7



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Figure 5. Plans and Representative Sections





Plate 1. Test Pit 2, looking north, Scales: 0.1m and 0.3m.



Plate 2. Test Pit 4, looking south, Scales: 0.1m and 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Test Pit 5, looking east, Scales: 1.0m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Test Pit 7, looking north-east, Scales: 1.0m.

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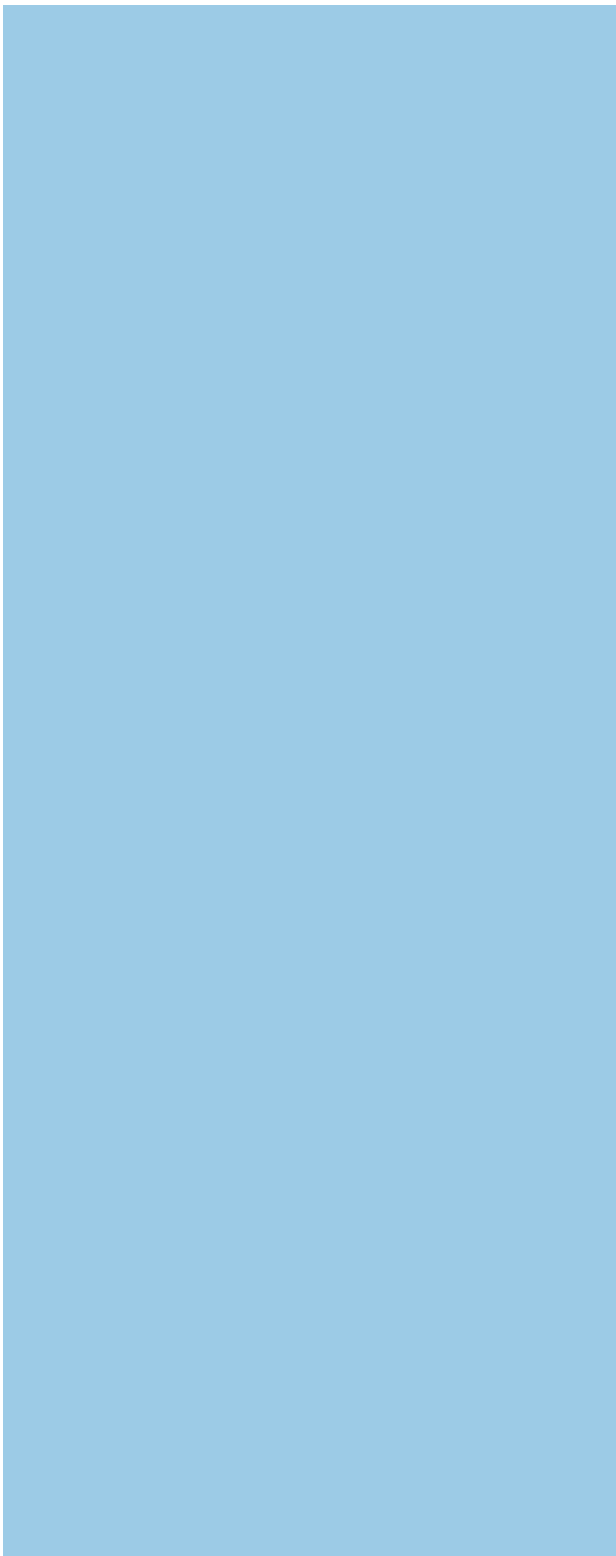
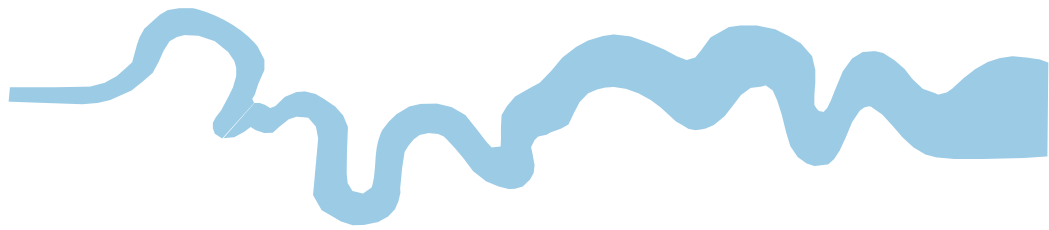
Plates 3 and 4.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road, Reading,
Berkshire, RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**