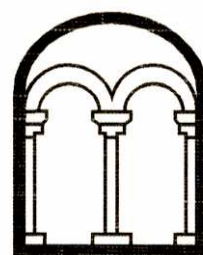


**CHURCH OF ALL SAINTS
LITTLE STAUGHTON
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,
INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING**

Albion
archaeology



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LITTLE STAUGHTON
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION
INVESTIGATION AND
RECORDING**

Project: LSC1819

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Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Marcin Koziminski	Robert Wardill	Drew Shotliff

Produced for:
Victor Farrar Partnership
2 Loak Close, Clapham
Bedford
MK41 6GQ

on behalf of
The Church of All Saints PCC



1. INTRODUCTION

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by The Victor Farrar Partnership on behalf of The Church of All Saints Parochial Church Council to oversee groundworks associated with excavation of foundations for new sleeper walls at the west end of the south aisle in the church in Little Staughton, Bedfordshire, and to investigate and record any archaeological remains that were uncovered.

The attendance of an archaeologist had been requested by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA) as a precaution against the discovery of archaeological remains during the building groundworks.

All work was carried out in accordance with a Brief issued by the DAA (2011).

The archaeological works were undertaken by, and the report written by Marcin Koziminski with a section on artefacts by Jackie Wells and figures by Joan Lightning.

2. BACKGROUND

The Church of All Saints is located in the north-east part of Little Staughton known as Green End, at the east end of Church Lane, centred on grid reference TL107630 (Figure 1).

The church developed from a 13th-century nave and chancel with the south aisle and a chapel being added in the 14th century and the present chancel, clerestory and west tower in the 15th century (BHRS 2000).

3. DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

The purpose of the building works was to re-floor a 5.13m x 3.25m area at the west end of the south aisle (Figure 1). The works involved removal of the finished floor wooden panels as well as underlying concrete surface. This was followed by ground level reduction by hand to a depth of c. 0.4m below the existing floor level.

The last stage of the groundworks comprised hand excavation of three sleeper wall foundation trenches aligned N-S. All of them were 0.6m wide, between 2.5m and 3m in length and were excavated to formation level, which was at c. 0.6m below the finished floor (Figure 2).

The underlying geological strata were not revealed in any part of the trenches.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was undertaken between 30th November and 2nd December 2011. The methods employed during the project complied with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999), English Heritage's *MoRPHE (Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment)* (2006), ALGAO East's *Standards for Field*



Archaeology in the East of England (2003) and Albion Archaeology's *Procedures Manual* (2001).

The groundworks were carried out by the main building contractor. They were suspended and handed over to the archaeologist whenever significant deposits, structural evidence or human remains were encountered within the extent of ground disturbance.

All revealed deposits were cleaned by hand. Plans and sections were drawn and a digital photographic record was made of the works and all significant features. All deposits were recorded using a unique number sequence starting at 1.

In accordance with the DAA's brief (2011) and *Taking Care of Human Remains*, issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese of St Albans in 2000, all human bone was left on site for reburial after appropriate recording.

5. RESULTS

Deposits and archaeological features found during the observations are summarised below and shown in Figure 2. Detailed information on all deposits and features is presented in the Appendix.

5.1 Deposits

From top to bottom the stratigraphy comprised:

- Floor (1), comprising 0.04m thick wooden panels.
- Concrete surface (2) up to 0.12m thick.
- Levelling layer (3), comprising up to 0.05m thick deposit of light grey sand with moderate stone inclusions. The deposit produced a small quantity of mixed artefacts (see below).
- Consolidation layer (4) – was only partially preserved and in poor condition and consisted of frequent stones varying between 0.05m and 0.3m in size and brick fragments. The deposit was placed directly on top of buried soil layer (5).
- Buried soil (5), comprising mid brown grey silty clay deposit. Contained occasional stones, flecks of limestone and a moderate amount of disarticulated human remains and other finds (see below).
- South aisle wall foundation trench [6] with shallow and concave profile, at least 0.45m wide, cut into soil layer (5).
- Foundation trench fill (7), up to 0.2m thick deposit comprising brown cobbles and pieces of limestone.
- South aisle wall (8) – stone wall of the south aisle – plastered and white-washed from the inside.

5.2 Human Remains

Human remains encountered during the works consisted of a reasonably high number of disarticulated bones within soil layer (5) (approximately 20-22kg).



The disarticulated bone included nine fragments of skulls, indicating a number of re-deposited burials. The remains were evenly distributed within the deposit.

No articulated remains or grave cuts were observed within soil layer (5)

5.3 Artefacts

Artefacts were recovered from levelling layer (3) and buried subsoil (5). They comprise twenty pottery sherds (151g), glazed ceramic floor tile (474g), a window glass fragment (4g) and a partial clay tobacco pipe stem (4g), the latter of post-medieval date.

The pottery ranges in date from the Saxo-Norman to the early post-medieval periods and has been identified in accordance with the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series, currently maintained by Albion Archaeology (Table 1). Although small, with an average sherd weight of 7g, the pottery survives in good condition, displaying only moderate abrasion.

Fabric Type	Common Name	Context/Sherd No.
<i>Saxo-Norman</i>		
B01	St Neots-type ware	(5):2
B01A	St Neots-type ware (orange)	(5):3
<i>Early Medieval</i>		
B07	Shell (developed St Neots)	(5):6
C67	Mixed inclusions	(5):1
<i>High medieval</i>		
B09	Lyveden/Stanion type	(3):1, (5):2
C11	Brill/Boarstall type (coarse)	(3):2
<i>Late medieval</i>		
E01D	Reduced sand (buff-red margins)	(5):2
E03	Oxidised sand	(5):1

Table 1: Pottery type Series

The earliest pottery comprises five shell-tempered sherds of St Neots-type ware (fabrics B01 and B01A), datable to the 10th–11th centuries. A simple rounded bowl rim is the only diagnostic vessel form.

Six sherds of 12th–13th-century shelly ware (B07) were recovered, likely to derive from production centres in the vicinity of Harrold (Beds.) or Olney (Bucks.). Forms are a jug and a bowl with a flat thumbled rim. Two body sherds have sooted surfaces, suggesting use as a cooking pot. An undiagnostic sandy body sherd (C67) of similar date was also collected. Pottery of 13th–14th-century date comprises a glazed jug sherd and two unglazed sherds of Lyveden/Stanion ware (B09), and two glazed Brill/Boarstall type jug sherds (C11), traded wares deriving respectively from Northamptonshire and Buckinghamshire.

Two body sherds in the late medieval reduced ware tradition (E01D) and an oxidised, micaceous sand-tempered rim of late medieval/transitional early post-medieval date (E03) represent the latest pottery.



Levelling layer (3) yielded two pieces from a Gault clay floor tile (thickness 28mm) with a glazed surface and knife-trimmed edges. The tile is likely to be of post-medieval or perhaps more recent origin. The deposit also contained a clear, pale green soda glass fragment (1.3mm thick) with a diamond cut, lead-stained edge. The lack of iridescence / weathering and the diamond cutting suggest the fragment is likely to be modern.

The artefacts were returned to the churchwarden.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological investigations carried out during the building groundworks revealed floor make-up deposits probably associated with the construction of the south aisle in the 14th century, and the renewal of the floor in more recent times. Evidence for the site's earlier use as a graveyard was present in the form of numerous disarticulated human bones.

Pottery dating suggests the use of the site from as early as the Saxo-Norman period. Whether this very early use was associated with a contemporary church or a secular settlement is not clear from the results of the archaeological investigations.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

DAA 2011. *Brief for Archaeological Excavation, Recording and Reporting at the Church of All Saints, Little Staughton, Bedfordshire*. 7th June 2011.

Bedfordshire Historical Record Society (BHRS) 2000. *Bedfordshire Churches in the Nineteenth Century, Part III Parishes S-Y*. Vol. 79. ed. Chris Pickford.



8. APPENDIX: CONTEXT SUMMARY



Area: **WB**

Extent (ha):

OS Co-ordinates:

Description: **Excavations for installation of new floor in south aisle**

Context:	Type:	Description:	Excavated:	Finds Present:
1	Floor	Hard mid brown . 0.04m thick wooden floor panels - finished floor level	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	Internal surface	Hard light grey concrete moderate small-medium stones. Up to 0.12m thick layer of concrete surface, which underlies wooden floor (1).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	Levelling layer	Loose light grey sand moderate small-medium stones. Up to 0.05m thick levelling deposit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4	Levelling layer	Hard occasional small-large CBM, frequent small-medium stones, moderate large stones. Up to 0.1m thick layer of stones and rubble.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	Buried subsoil	Firm mid brown grey silty clay occasional small-large stones. At least 0.6m thick deposit of mixed soil. Contained moderate amount of disarticulated human remains, occasional flecks of limestone and was moderately rooted.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
6	Foundation trench	Linear E-W sides: concave base: uneven dimensions: min breadth 0.45m, max depth 0.2m, min length 5.13m. Foundation trench for south aisle wall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7	Foundation	Firm mid red brown sandy limestone moderate small-large stones. South aisle wall foundation deposit - brown cobbles and limestone pieces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8	Wall	South aisle wall - plastered and white-washed from the inside.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

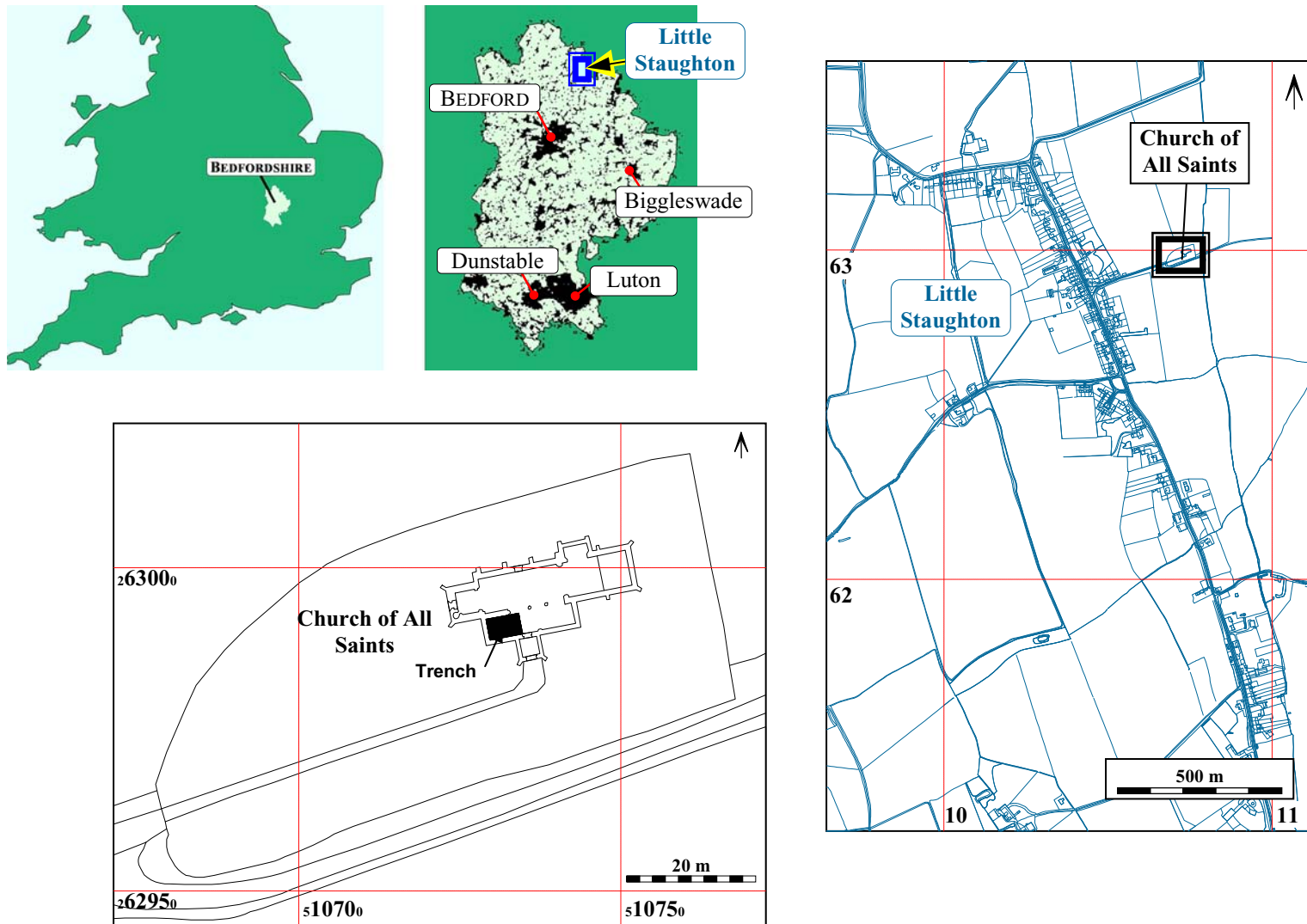
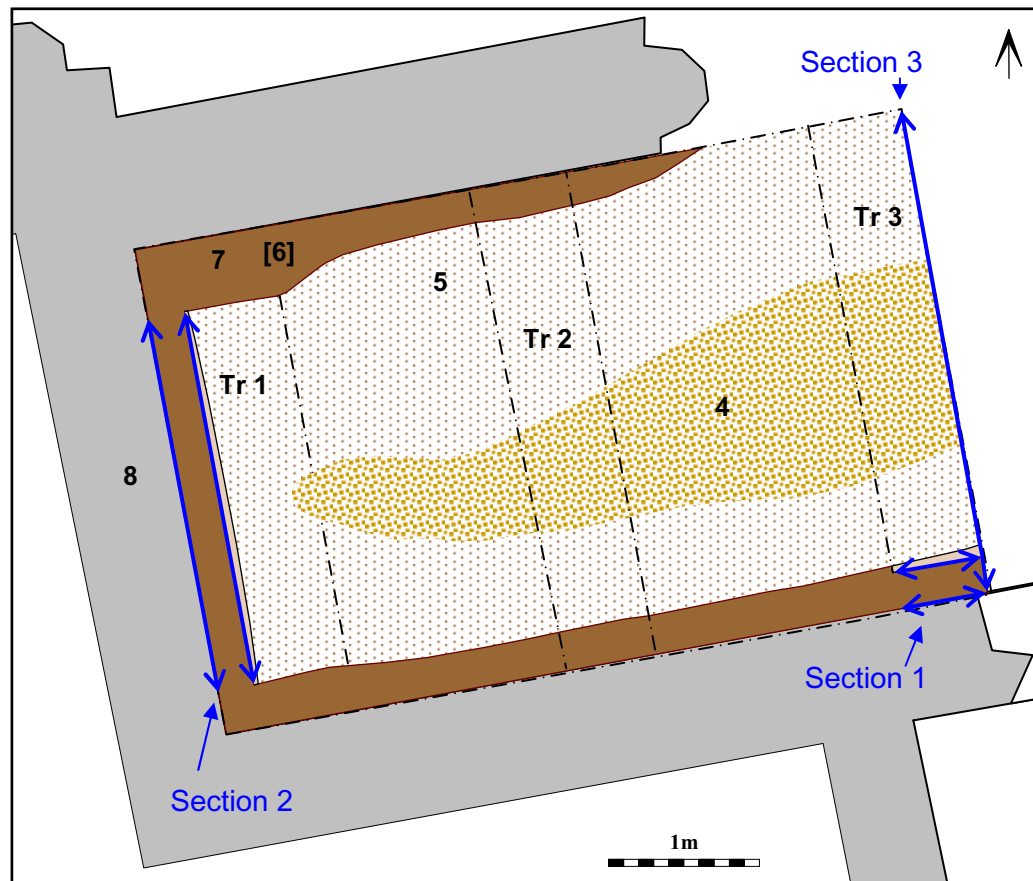


Figure 1: Site location

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Plan of trench after removal of layers 1, 2, and 3.



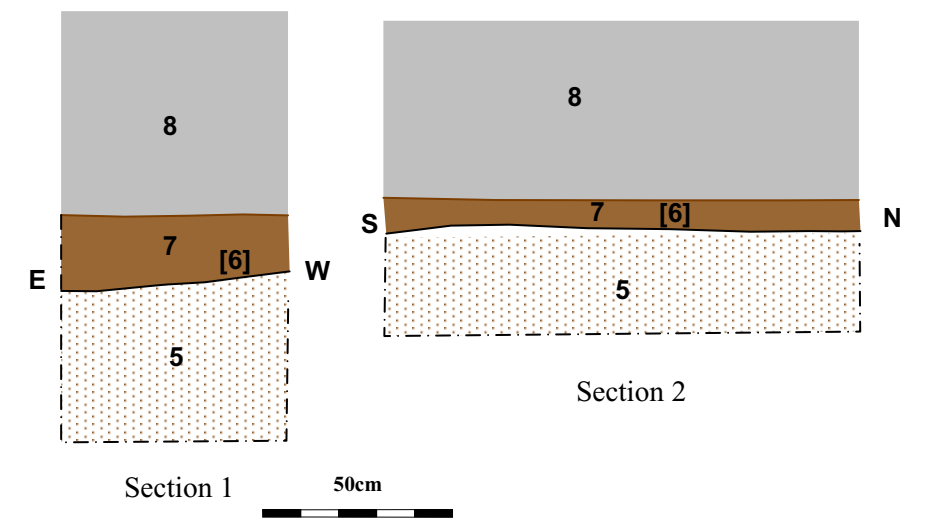
Stone consolidation layer 4. Scale 1m



Section 1. Scale 1m



Section 3. Scale 1m



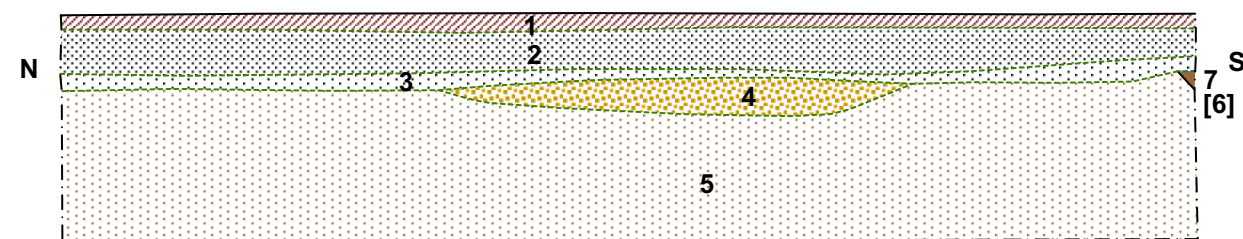
Section 2

Section 1

50cm



Photograph of trench after digging sleeper wall trenches.

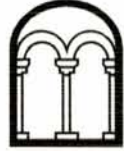


Section 3

Figure 2: All features

Central
Bedfordshire

Albion
archaeology



Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford
MK42 0AS

Telephone 01234 294000
Email office@albion-arch.com
www.albion-arch.com

