

**ST MARY'S CHURCH  
CARLTON  
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION,  
INVESTIGATION, RECORDING, ANALYSIS,  
AND PUBLICATION**

**Albion**  
archaeology



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## Preface

*All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and was prepared solely for the benefit of the client. The material contained in this report does not necessarily stand on its own and should not be relied upon by any third party. This document should not be used for any other purpose without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and the prior written authority of Albion Archaeology (a trading unit of Central Bedfordshire Council). Any person/party relying on the document for such other purposes agrees and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Albion Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Albion Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the persons/party by whom it was commissioned. This document is limited by the state of knowledge at the time it was written.*

*Archaeological monitoring works were undertaken by Mark Phillips (Project Officer) who is the author of this report. Artefacts were reported on by Jackie Wells (Finds Officer). The project was managed on behalf of Albion Archaeology by Drew Shotliff (Operations Manager).*

## Acknowledgements

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Albion Archaeology  
 St Mary's Church  
 St Mary's Street  
 Bedford, MK42 0AS  
 ☎: 0300 300 8141  
 E-mail: [office@albion-arch.com](mailto:office@albion-arch.com)  
[www.albion-arch.com](http://www.albion-arch.com)

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## Key Terms

*Throughout this report the following terms or abbreviations are used:*

Albion	Albion Archaeology
CifA	Chartered Institute for Archaeologists
DAA	Diocesan Archaeological Advisor
HER	Historic Environment Record
NHLE	National Heritage List England
PCC	Parochial Church Council



## **Non-Technical Summary**

*The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Carlton is a grade I listed church with fabric dating back to the late Saxon period. To remedy damp problems in the building a scheme was devised for the PCC by the Victor Farrah Partnership (architects). Works comprised a French drain along the east end and north side of the building with two soakaway pits to the north. The works were permitted by a faculty issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese of St Albans. As the proposed drainage works were expected to impact on potential archaeological remains there was a requirement for a programme of archaeological works, which Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake. The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken between 10th and 25th February 2020.*

### **Late Saxon (later 10th or 11th century)**

*In this phase the church had a two-cell plan consisting of a nave and chancel, with the chancel being approximately square in plan.*

*The chancel is built of roughly coursed rubble with areas of herringbone work and irregular rubble quoins. The foundations have an offset up to 180mm wide and are constructed from a single course of sizeable (up to 600mm long) rubble blocks. The surviving masonry at the corners of the nave is heavily patched and has irregular rubble quoins. The foundation recorded at the north-west corner of the nave had no offset and included a single course of large (up to 400mm long) roughly squared blocks near the base.*

### **Late Saxon to Saxo-Norman (11th century)**

*The tower is comparable to other church towers in the area believed to be Saxon in date, such as Clapham and Lavendon. It is most likely that the tower was a later addition to the original two-cell building.*

*The walls and foundations of the tower are different in character to those of the nave and chancel. It is constructed from small, mostly thin stone in uncoursed masonry. The foundations have a small offset and are constructed from coursed, small thin rubble slabs. Where investigated in the trench, evidence for the sequential relationship between the nave and tower was inconclusive.*

### **Fourteenth century**

*The north aisle is probably a little later than the south aisle of c.1300 and the eastern extension to the chancel has features which suggest an early 14<sup>th</sup>-century date. These parts of the building are constructed with coursed squared stone.*

*The foundations for the north aisle and east extension of the chancel are different in character. The former are quite substantial, constructed from large blocks or slabs with an offset between 150mm and 240mm wide. Those for the east extension of the chancel are more irregular and are mostly in smaller rubble with no offset in the east end wall and an irregular, narrow offset elsewhere. The buttresses at the east end of the chancel have quite poorly constructed foundations in random rubble.*



### ***Fifteenth century***

*Evidence from this period within the French drain trench consisted of the buttresses which were added to the tower. These were clearly later additions, with stepped foundations made with large, roughly-finished rectangular stones up to 700mm long.*

### ***Soil layers***

*The soil layers around the base of the church walls consisted of topsoil, above a layer containing limestone rubble (presumably construction debris), above a homogenous 'grave earth' type deposit. The rubble layer extended all the way around the areas investigated on the east end and north sides of the church, becoming deeper towards the west. The layer appears to extend several metres from the building, with similar material recorded in a trench to the north of the chancel.*

*Geological deposits were seen in a trench to the north of the chancel. They consisted of clay subsoil probably derived from the Blisworth Clay Formation at a depth of 700mm below the ground surface over Blisworth Limestone Formation bedrock at a depth of 800mm below the ground surface.*

### ***Burials***

*Human bone was recorded in the two soakaway pits that were excavated on the north side of the church.*

*A trench north of the tower contained the skeleton of an individual aged between their early teens and early twenties, and the feet bones of another burial that extended beyond the limit of excavation. A trench to the north of the chancel contained a mixed bone assemblage and an apparent lack of evidence for in-situ burials, such as paired long bones or characteristic east-west alignment of long bones. However, cleaning and recording for a section drawing revealed one probable in-situ grave in section, suggesting that such a burial may have been obscured by the presence of charnel material during excavation of the trench.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 **Background to the Project**

The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Carlton is a grade I listed church with fabric dating back to the late Saxon period.

In order to deal with problems of damp inside the building a new drainage scheme was designed for the PCC by the Victor Farrah Partnership (architects). The drainage improvements comprised a French drain extending around the east end and north side of the church with two soakaway pits located to the north of the building.

The works were permitted by a faculty issued by the Chancellor of the Diocese of St Albans. As the proposed drainage works could impact on potential archaeological remains there was a requirement for a programme of archaeological works. Guidance on the nature of the required works was provided by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA). This guidance identified the main points of archaeological sensitivity as:

- Construction evidence in the footings exposed by the excavation of the French drain.
- Human remains likely to be encountered in the new drains and soakaway pits.

Albion Archaeology was commissioned to undertake the archaeological works, which were completed between 10th and 25th February 2020.

### 1.2 **Archaeological Background**

The church is situated on the north side of Turvey Road at OS grid reference SP 95176 54852 (Figure 1). It lies to the south-west of the village of Carlton, in an isolated rural setting, surrounded by fields.

The church is grade I listed (NHLE 1114248); the list description is included as Appendix 1.

There have been two previous archaeological investigations at the church. In 1987, a watching brief was undertaken during installation of a gas main (HER8871). It produced no significant results. In 2008, archaeological recording was undertaken during drainage works (Albion Archaeology 2008). A 10m-long trench arch drain was constructed in the churchyard to the west of the church. A large fragment of a broken medieval stone sarcophagus was found just below the topsoil, c.12m to the west of the tower. An undated burial was found c.4m west of the tower at a depth of 0.95m.





### 1.3 **Historical Background of the Church**

#### 1.3.1 **Documentary sources**

Historic architectural descriptions of the building can be found in *The History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Willey* (Harvey 1872–8) and the Victoria County History (Page, 1912). The list description prepared in 1964 is included at the end of the report as Appendix 1.

The most recent description of the building is given in Pevsner (O'Brien and Pevsner, 2014, 129–30).

Various primary sources were examined by Chris Pickford in *Bedfordshire Churches in the Nineteenth Century* (1994, 170–6). These included a glebe terrier of 1822; Archdeacon Bonney's historical notes (c.1820–40) and visitation notebook (1823–39); an article by W.A. published in 1847; Sir Stephen Glynne's church notes (1848); parish records and other sources. These provide information on the condition of the building and the repairs carried out during the 19th century.

#### 1.3.2 **Building history**

The building comprises chancel, nave, tower, north and south aisles and a south porch (Figure 2).

The earliest construction phase dates from the late Saxon period. This was a two-cell church consisting of a nave and chancel. In the chancel, masonry from this period can be seen in the exterior elevations of the north and south walls, with herringbone masonry and a blocked round-headed window in the north wall (Images 9 and 10). The construction details of the blocked window suggest a probable late Saxon date (Hare 1971, 34). Some masonry of this phase can be seen in the corners of the nave, e.g. at the north-west corner where it is abutted by the later north aisle (Image 17).

The tower is likely to have been a slightly later addition to the original two-cell building (Image 2). It is in rubble masonry of a different character to the chancel and has small, single-splay windows with arches formed from a single stone in its north and south sides. The details of the tower are consistent with a late Saxon or early post-conquest date.

The font dates from the 12th century and has a base that was altered c.1300.

The south aisle, which dates from c.1300, has an arcade with octagonal piers. The north aisle is likely to be slightly later, with quatrefoil piers in the arcade (Images 4 and 5).

The chancel was lengthened in the early 14th century. The junction between this and the earlier end of the chancel is visible as a straight join in the external masonry in the south and north walls (Images 3, 9 and 10). The ogee-headed piscina in the south side of the chancel and reticulated tracery in the east window (renewed in the 19th century), suggest a construction date of c.1330.



The building has other 14th-century features. A blocked arch in the south wall of the chancel marks the former location of a now demolished south chapel (Image 3). A chimney on the west end of the south aisle indicates the location of a former priest's house with a first-floor room.

During the 15th century the tower was altered and a clerestory was added to the nave. The additions to the tower comprise the upper stage, the buttresses and the stair built into the north-west corner.

The chancel was recorded as being in a poor state of repair in 1578 (Pickford 1994, 170).

Archdeacon Bonney recorded that the chancel was under repair in 1823 and in 1839 that the building had been "entirely refreshed". His notes also suggest the nave roof may have been replaced in around 1830 (Pickford 1994, 173).

During the first half of the 19th century there were plans to demolish the building. Harvey wrote that 'a few years ago' it was proposed to demolish the churches in Carlton and Chellington and to replace with them with a building between them (Harvey 1872–8, 255). The benefices of Carlton and Chellington were legally united in 1769. Proposals to replace the two churches were considered during the 1830s and 40s but were eventually dropped (Pickford 1994, 170).

Various repairs were undertaken during the late 19th century. The roof was repaired in 1868 (Pickford 1994, 170). Masonry work was probably being carried out in 1871–2, because the blocked window in the north side of the chancel and the small windows in the north and south sides of the tower were discovered at this time (Harvey, 1872–8, 256). The porch was rebuilt and tracery in a number of the windows was renewed at some time before 1875; the chancel roof was replaced in 1889 (Pickford 1994, 170–2).

#### **1.4 Geological background**

The bedrock recorded in the area of the church is Blisworth Limestone Formation; sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 166 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic Period<sup>1</sup>. A short distance to the south the limestone is overlain by Blisworth Clay Formation.

No superficial geological deposits are recorded in the area around the church.

#### **1.5 Description of Development Works**

The groundworks consisted of a French drain against the base of the walls and two soakaway pits in the churchyard (Figure 3).

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<sup>1</sup> Contains British Geological Survey materials @NERC 2020



The French drain extended along the north side of the tower, around the north aisle and the north and east walls of the chancel (Trench 1). The trench measured c.43m long overall, 0.7m wide and up to a maximum depth of 0.6m.

The soakaway pits were of the plastic crate type drains. A small soakaway (Trench 2) was dug to take runoff from the tower (dimensions: 1.2m square and 0.9m deep). A larger soakaway (Trench 3) was dug to the north of the chancel to take water from the French drain trench (dimensions: 2m long, 1.3m wide and 1.3m deep).

## 1.6 **Project Objectives**

The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to make a full record of any archaeological remains impacted by the development, and to place them within their cultural and environmental setting. The specific aims of the archaeological work were therefore to:

- monitor all groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains
- investigate the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of archaeological deposits encountered within the groundworks
- pay particular attention to ensure minimal disturbance of any articulated human remains encountered during groundworks.

## 1.7 **Methodology**

The trench excavated next to the church walls for the installation of the French drain was hand-dug by the building contractor. Following the opening of the trench the foundations and other structural details were subject to archaeological recording by Albion staff.

The trenches for the construction of the soakaway pits were hand-dug by the building contractor under archaeological observation. When *in-situ* burials were identified, the remains were excavated and recorded by Albion staff before being lifted.

Human remains were stored on site before being reburied during the course of works within the trenches, as close as possible to where they were found; the presumption being against disturbance of burials unless unavoidable and in favour of immediate appropriate reburial. No specialist osteological assessment was carried out on the remains. Due to the limited extent of the trenches the remains were generally partially rather than completely exposed and were also undated. Details of the burials are included in the description of the monitoring works and are illustrated in the site plans and photographic images.



## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

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### 2.1 Introduction

Archaeological monitoring covered a trench for a French drain (Trench 1) along the east end and north side of the building, and two soakaway pits (Trenches 1 and 2) that were dug to the north of the tower and chancel respectively. Narrow pipe trenches linking up the drains and the soakaway pits were relatively shallow and produced no useful archaeological observations; they cut through the topsoil and upper part of the grave earth layers.

The location of all of the works is shown in Figure 3. The plan of the church is based on the plan reproduced in the Victoria County History. It has been rotated for best fit with the current Ordnance Survey and the dimensions have been amended slightly using measurements taken during the recording work.

### 2.2 Trench 1: French Drain Trench

This trench was hand-dug by the building contractor and archaeological recording was carried out when it had been fully opened.

The field records for the trench comprise: photographs; a plan at a scale of 1:50; measured and annotated sketches at intervals along the trench. The measured sketches are profile drawings across the trench, recording the soil layers and details of foundations and walls. These have been translated into scale drawings for the report (Figures 7 and 8) with their locations indicated on the plan figures. The trench is illustrated in plan in Figure 4 (chancel) and Figure 5 (north aisle and tower).

#### 2.2.1 Trench 1: Soil layers

The base of the trench was up to 600mm deep below the ground level. No undisturbed geological deposits were identified within the trench. There was no evidence for *in-situ*, undisturbed burials in the area immediately next to the walls. The building contractor encountered a small number of disarticulated bones during the excavation of the trench. Three soil layers were observed extending along the length of the trench. They are shown in the trench profiles illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

##### (100) Topsoil

Dark grey-brown silty loam with occasional small stones. This layer was approximately 150mm thick along the east and north walls of the chancel, and became gradually thicker in the sections adjacent to the north aisle and tower, to a maximum of 250mm next to the tower.

##### (101) Rubble layer

Mixed deposit with varying amounts of angular limestone fragments in a mid-grey-brown silty soil. It was 80–130mm thick along most of the trench with a thicker layer at the west, forming a deposit 150–250mm thick adjacent to the west end of the north aisle and the north side of the tower.

**(102) Grave earth**

Mid-yellow-brown clay loam with moderate amount of small to medium-sized stones. This is a fairly homogenous soil layer formed by reworking over the centuries through the continued reuse of the site for burial.

**2.2.2 Trench 1: Chancel foundations**

The foundations of the chancel are in two parts. The foundations at the eastern end (103) are where the chancel was extended during the early 14th century. To the west of this, the foundations (104) belong to the earliest surviving part of the chancel, probably dating from the late Saxon period.

**(103) Eastern end of chancel**

The foundations for the buttresses on the south-east and north-east corners of the chancel are similar. Both have very roughly made random rubble foundations, with an irregular offset projecting up to 100mm from the face of the buttress (Figure 7-A; Images 6 and 8).

In the east end wall the foundation (103) consists of roughly coursed rubble extending c.400mm below the present ground surface. This part of the foundation has no offset. The wall above is constructed in larger, more regularly coursed stone, with a course of noticeably larger stones at the base of the wall directly on the foundations (Figure-B; Image 7).

The north side of the chancel foundation (103) has a slight (c.100mm) offset at its eastern end, which runs out towards the west where it abuts the earlier part of the chancel (Figure 7-C; Image 11). On this side the chancel foundation (103) consists of roughly coursed rubble, which includes a few larger blocks up to 600mm long and 150mm high in the uppermost course of the foundation.

**(104) North side of chancel**

Foundation (104) is an offset foundation projecting between 100mm and 180mm from the face of the wall (Figure 7-D; Images 11 and 12). The offset diminishes towards the west end. It consists of a course of relatively large rubble blocks up to 600mm long and 250mm high. The wall above it is constructed in small and medium-sized roughly coursed rubble masonry, which includes areas of herringbone work and a blocked round-headed window of probable late Saxon date (Images 9 and 10).

**(105) Masonry in angle of chancel and north aisle**

A small rectangular block of masonry with tiled weathering abuts the east wall of the north aisle, at its junction with the chancel (Image 13). The foundation (105) of this block is very roughly constructed from uncoursed rubble. The foundation and block of masonry are a later addition, abutting the east end of the north aisle. The function of the masonry is unclear.

**(106) North aisle**

The north aisle is thought to date from the early 14th century. The foundations (106) of the north aisle are fairly consistent in character throughout. Above the foundation, the plinth at the base of the walls consists of a single course of



squared stone below a plain chamfer course. The masonry in the walls is coursed, squared stone.

The foundation at the east end of the aisle consists of a fairly narrow offset *c.*130mm wide, with an upper course of large rubble blocks up to 500mm long by 150mm high with smaller coursed rubble in the lower part of the foundation (Figure 7-E, Image 14). The foundation extends northwards to form a foundation pad below the buttress.

In the north wall the foundation has a *c.*200mm-wide offset, with an upper course of large, thin slabs up to 620mm long by 80mm high (Figure 7-F, Image 15). Towards the west end of the aisle (in front of the north door) there is an abrupt change in the width of the offset (Image 15), possibly corresponding to a break or sectional construction of the foundation.

In the west wall the foundation has an offset up to 240mm wide and is made of blocks up to 450mm long by 150mm high (Figure 7-G, Image 16). The offset in the foundation diminishes towards its south end, where it abuts the foundations of the earlier nave.

#### **(107) Nave**

Part of the north-west corner of the nave is visible where it is abutted by the west end of the north aisle (Image 17). The wall is made of mainly small random rubble that is heavily patched with larger rubble blocks for the quoins.

The foundation exposed in the trench was flush with the wall above, having no offset (Figure 8-H; Images 18 and 19). The lower *c.*100mm of the foundation consists of three courses of small, thin rubble. Above this is a course of larger roughly squared blocks up to 400mm long by 180mm high. Where the foundations of the nave meet those of the tower (Image 19) there is a clear difference in the character of the masonry, indicating that they belong to different construction phases. At the junction itself the sequential relationship between the two was unclear. The nave side was fairly poorly defined with soil between the stones. At the point where two walls meet there was a small void.

#### **(108) Tower**

The wall of the tower is constructed from relatively small stones, with a mixture of thin slabs and irregular blocks in uncoursed masonry.

The foundation (108) is constructed in coursed rubble masonry made from thin slabs with an offset of up to 120mm wide (Figure 8-I; Images 19 and 20).

#### **(109) Tower buttress**

The tower has large diagonal buttresses at the north-west and south-west corners, added during the 15th century. In Trench 1 the foundations (109) of the north-west buttress were partly uncovered (Figure 8-J; Images 21 and 22). The foundation is stepped with two courses of stone, each projecting *c.*70mm. It is formed from large, roughly finished rectangular stones, measuring between 500mm and 700mm long and up to 180mm high. The masonry in the buttress



abuts the earlier masonry of the tower in a ragged irregular join. The buttress is constructed in ashlar masonry formed from large, finely finished limestone blocks.

## **2.3 Trench 2: Soakaway Pit North of Tower**

### **2.3.1 Trench 2: soil layers**

This trench was excavated for the installation of a plastic crate type soakaway (Figure 6; Images 22–24). It was located *c.*4.5m north of the tower and 3.5m west of the north aisle. This small soakaway (1.2m square by 900mm deep) was for drainage of rainwater from the tower. The trench was hand-dug by the building contractor under archaeological observation to a depth of *c.*800mm. The lower part of the trench, where articulated human remains were found, was excavated by Albion staff in order to expose and record any *in-situ* burials.

Due to its relatively shallow depth, no geological deposits were uncovered in this trench. The uppermost soil layer (200) consisted of a dark grey silty topsoil layer, *c.*120mm thick. Below the topsoil was a *c.*320mm-thick layer (201) of dark grey-brown silty soil with frequent small to medium-sized fragments of angular limestone rubble. The lower part of the trench contained a layer (202) of homogenous mid-yellow-brown clay-loam with occasional small stones. This lower layer is a ‘grave-earth’, formed through the process of reworking by the burial process over hundreds of years.

An abraded pottery body sherd (12g) of 12th–13th-century date was recovered from layer (201). The sherd is shell-tempered (fabric B05 of the Bedfordshire Ceramic Type Series) and likely to derive from one of a number of local kiln sites in North Bedfordshire (Harrold), Buckinghamshire (Olney-Hyde) and Northamptonshire (Yardley Hastings), known to have been producing shelly ware products during the early medieval period.

### **2.3.2 Trench 2: burials**

One definite *in-situ* burial (203) was found and evidence for another (204) was seen in the extreme north-east corner of the trench.

#### **(203) Burial**

The upper part of this burial was partially exposed in base of trench, at a depth of 800–900mm below ground level. The rest of the burial was below the formation level of the base of the trench at more than 900mm and was therefore not disturbed. Exposed remains consisted of the skull, upper left arm, part of the left scapula and the right arm and hand. The left arm was flexed with the hand on the upper chest area. The arrangement of the left arm was not clear. The skull was in an upright position with the front facing towards the right shoulder.

Examination of the right humerus showed an unfused proximal end. The left humerus was not so well preserved. There were 14 teeth in the mandible, which was well preserved. The third molars had not erupted, indicating a likely age range in the early teens to early twenties. Absence of evidence for coffin



fittings or nails, together with the upright position of the skull suggests that this was an un-coffined burial.

The bones found above the base of the trench were uncovered and recorded, before being reburied in the south-east corner of the trench.

#### **(204) Burial**

A group of articulated foot bones were found in the north-west corner of the trench at a depth 800mm below ground level. They probably indicate a burial extending towards the west, beyond the limit of excavation.

The bones were recorded on plan, before being reburied in the south-east corner of the trench.

### **2.4 Trench 3: Soakaway Pit North of Chancel**

#### **2.4.1 Trench 3: soil layers**

This trench was excavated for the installation of a plastic crate type soakaway to drain rainwater from the chancel and north aisle (Figure 6; Images 25–27). It was located 7m north of the chancel and was 2m long by 1.3m wide and 1.3m deep. The trench was hand-dug by the building contractor under archaeological observation.

The uppermost soil layer (300) was dark grey silty topsoil, c.240mm thick. Below this was a layer (301) of dark grey-brown clay loam with moderate concentration of small to medium-sized limestone fragments. Layer (301) varied in thickness from a maximum of 190mm, thinning to towards the north edge of the trench where it was c.60mm thick. The principal deposit in the trench was a c.400–700mm-thick layer (302) of homogenous mid-yellow-brown clay-loam with occasional small stones, which represents a ‘grave-earth’ layer. A quantity of disarticulated bone was recovered from layer (302) and reburied (see below).

The underlying geological deposits comprised layers (303) and (304); see below for description.

#### **2.4.2 Trench3: burials and grave cuts**

The building contractor’s excavation of this trench was closely monitored for evidence of *in-situ*, articulated human remains that would have required archaeological excavation and recording. Human bone was collected for reburial within the south side of the trench, close to where it was found.

Observation during excavation showed no clear evidence for any *in-situ* burials. Bones that were found appeared to be from a mixed assemblage, e.g. neonate or infant bones were found with adult bones. The larger bones that were recovered were incomplete and there was a lack of any patterning to suggest the presence of any *in-situ* burials, such as paired long bones or characteristic east-west alignment of long bones.





The base of the soakaway trench was excavated into the underlying bedrock. Along the south side of the trench the grave earth layer (302) extended deeper into the underlying bedrock, suggesting the presence of possible grave cuts along this side of the trench. When fully excavated the west end of the trench was cleaned in order to draw the section (Figure 6). The section revealed evidence for a burial within a grave cut that was not apparent during excavation of the trench. Bones visible in the section comprised a poorly preserved central vertebra and what are likely to be upper arm bones.

#### **2.4.3 Geological deposits**

A layer of mid-yellow-brown silty clay (303) was recorded at a depth of 700mm below the ground surface, overlying the limestone bedrock in the northern half of the trench. This is likely to be a subsoil deposit derived from the Blisworth Clay Formation.

The base of the trench was cut into the underlying limestone bedrock (304), which forms part of the Blisworth Limestone Formation. The upper surface of the bedrock was recorded at a depth of 800–950mm below the ground surface.



### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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#### 3.1 **Structural Evidence**

The structural evidence that was recorded in the trench along the east and north sides of the building is summarised below.

##### 3.1.1 **Late Saxon (later 10th or 11th century)**

In this phase the church had a two-cell plan consisting of a nave and chancel, with the chancel being approximately square in plan.

The chancel is built of roughly coursed rubble with areas of herringbone work and irregular rubble quoins. The foundations have an offset up to 180mm wide and are constructed from a single course of sizeable (up to 600mm long) rubble blocks. Relatively little of the nave survives from this phase. Where it is visible at the corners it has been heavily patched and has irregular rubble quoins. The foundation was uncovered at the north-west corner of the nave, where it had no offset and included a single course of large (up to 400mm long) roughly squared blocks near the base.

##### 3.1.2 **Late Saxon to Saxo-Norman (11th century)**

The tower is comparable to other church towers in the area believed to be Saxon in date, such as Clapham and Lavendon. It is most likely that the tower would have been a later addition to the original two-cell building.

The walls and foundations of the tower are different in character to those of the nave and chancel. It is constructed from small, mostly thin stone in uncoursed masonry. The foundations have a small offset and are constructed from coursed, small thin rubble slabs. Where investigated in the trench, evidence for the sequential relationship between the nave and tower was inconclusive.

##### 3.1.3 **Fourteenth century**

The north aisle is probably a little later than the south aisle of c.1300 and the eastern extension to the chancel has features which suggest an early 14th-century date (O'Brien and Pevsner 2014, 129). These parts of the building are constructed with coursed squared stone.

The foundations for the north aisle and east extension of the chancel are different in character. The former are quite substantial, constructed from large blocks or slabs with an offset that is 150–240mm wide. Those for the east extension of the chancel are more irregular. They are made mostly from smaller rubble with no offset in the east end wall and an irregular, narrow offset elsewhere. The buttresses at the east end of the chancel have fairly poorly constructed foundations in random rubble.

##### 3.1.4 **Fifteenth century**

Evidence from this period within the trench was limited to the buttresses which were added to the tower. These were clearly later additions with stepped



foundations made with large, roughly-finished rectangular stones up to 700mm long.

### **3.2 Soil Layers**

The soil layers around the base of the church walls consisted of topsoil, above a layer containing limestone rubble, above a homogenous 'grave earth' type deposit. The rubble layer extended around the east end and north sides of the church, becoming deeper towards the west, particularly next to the tower where it was up to 250mm thick. This layer of construction debris extends several metres from the building, with similar material recorded in a trench to the north of the chancel.

Geological deposits were seen in a trench to the north of the chancel. This consisted of a clay subsoil probably derived from the Blisworth Clay Formation at a depth of 700m below the ground surface. Blisworth Limestone Formation bedrock was found at a depth of 800mm below the ground surface.

### **3.3 Burials**

Human bone was recorded in the two soakaway pits that were excavated on the north side of the church.

A trench north of the tower contained the skeleton of an individual aged between their early teens and early twenties, and the feet bones of another burial that extended beyond the limit of excavation.

Monitoring during the excavation of the trench to the north of the chancel showed a mixed bone assemblage and an apparent lack of evidence for *in-situ* burials. Cleaning and recording for a section drawing revealed one probable *in-situ* grave in section, suggesting that such a burial may have been obscured by the presence of charnel material during excavation of the trench.



#### 4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## 5. APPENDIX 1: LIST DESCRIPTION

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**Grade:** I

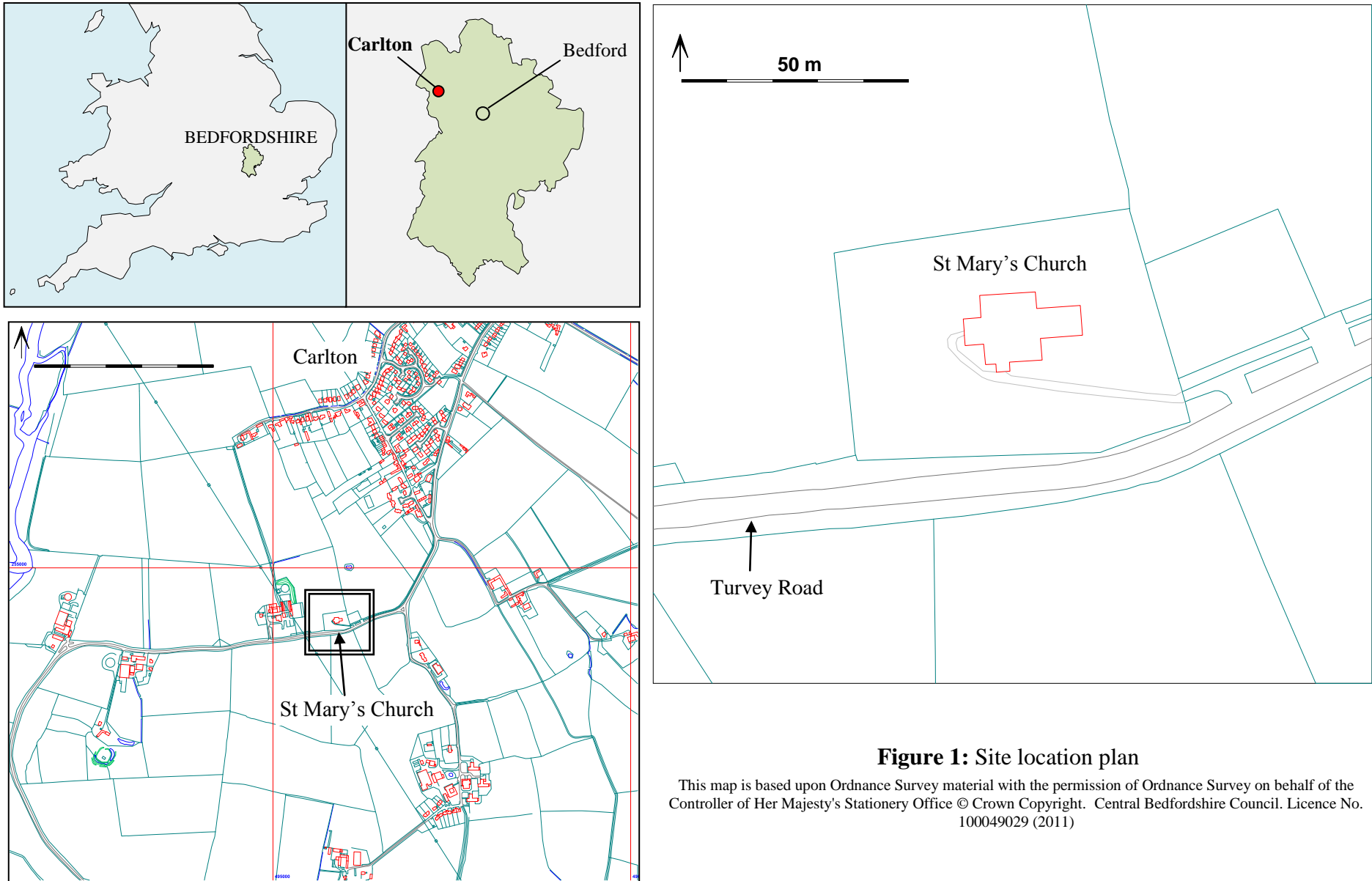
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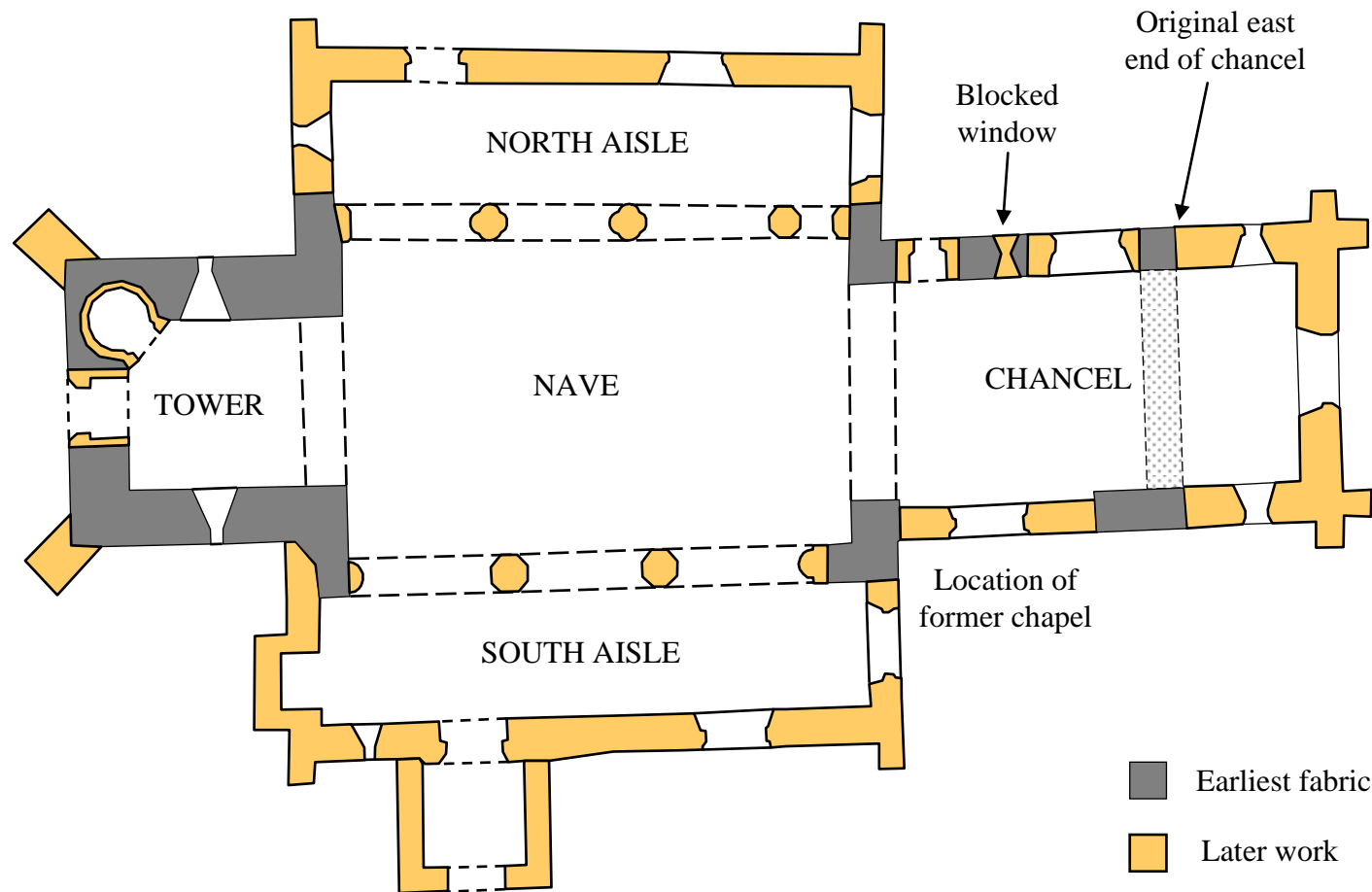
**Date first listed:** 13-Jul-1964

**Address:** Parish Church of Saint Mary, Turvey Road

**Description:**

Parish Church of coursed limestone rubble with clay tile roofs. Plan consisting of 2-bay chancel, 3-bay nave and N. and S. aisles, W. tower and S. porch. There are some remains of Anglo-Saxon work in the N. wall of the chancel and the base of the tower. The nave was originally aisleless. The S. aisle was added early C14. The arcade has octagonal piers. The N. aisle is slightly later and has quatrefoil piers. Above the arcades, a clerestorey was added C15 with three windows to each side, each of two trefoiled lights under a square head. The Anglo-Saxon chancel was extended eastwards in C14. (There was a C14 S.chapel - since demolished). 3 stage tower. Top stage C15 with embattled parapet and gargoyles at each corner. C.15 chancel screen. Most of the pews and the pulpit are Jacobean.





**Figure 2:** Plan of church

(Based on plan in Victoria County History and Hare 1971, fig. 1)

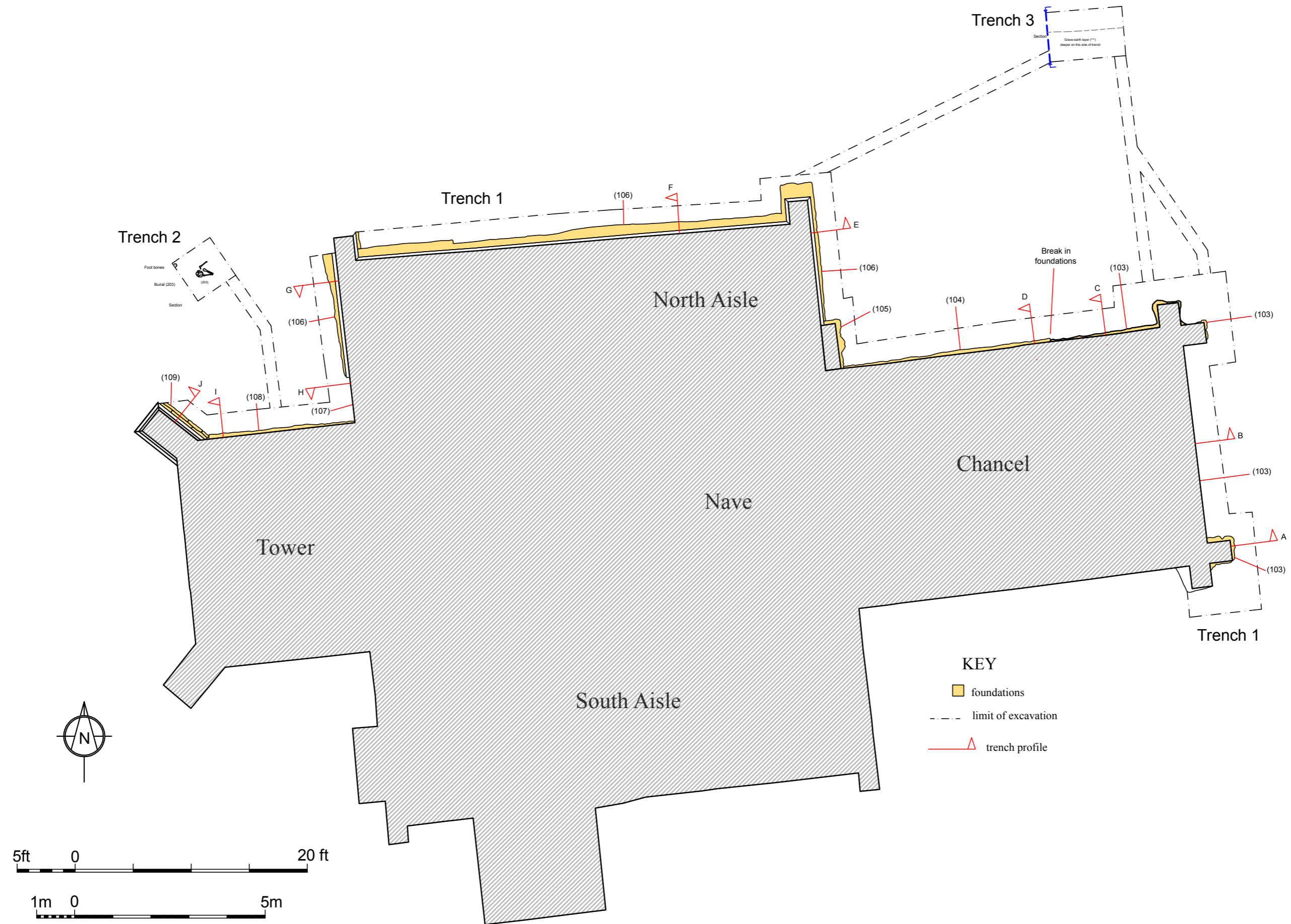
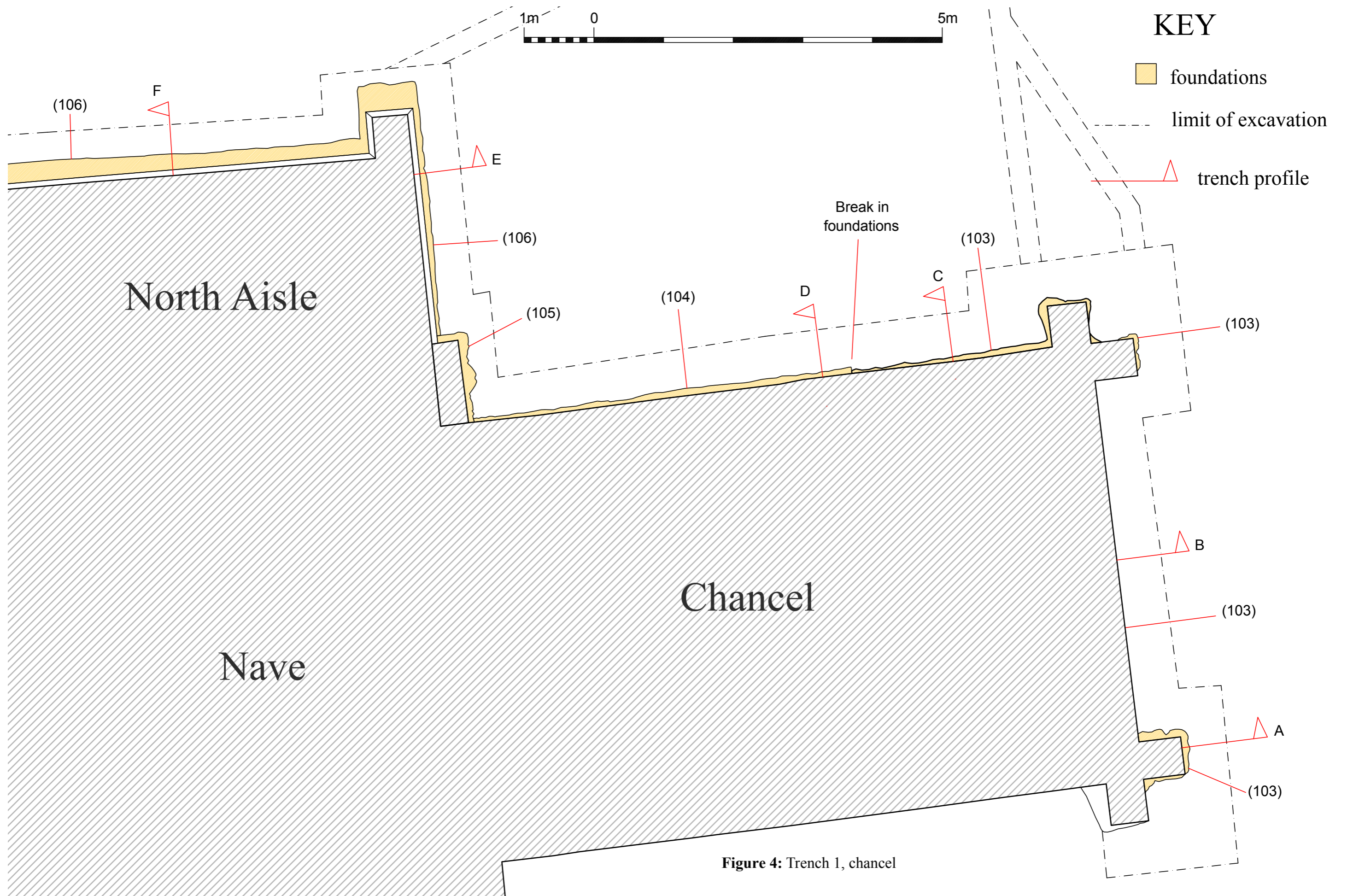


Figure 3: Plan showing location of all works

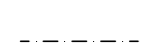






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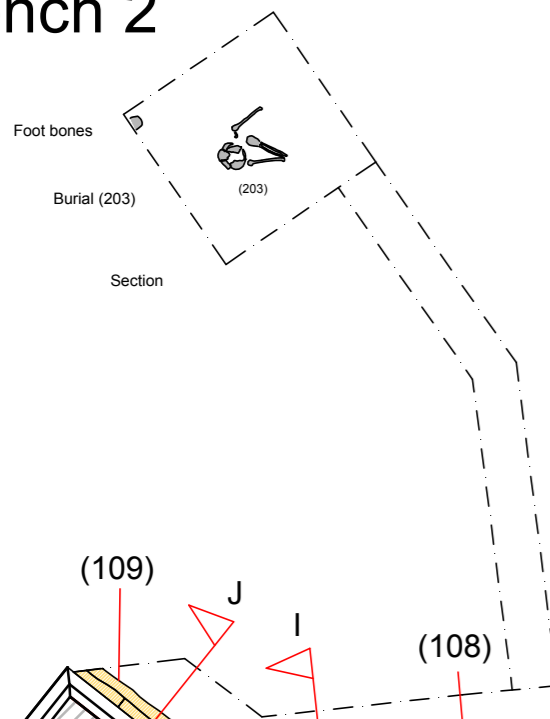
 foundations

 limit of excavation

 trench profile



## Trench 2



## Trench 1

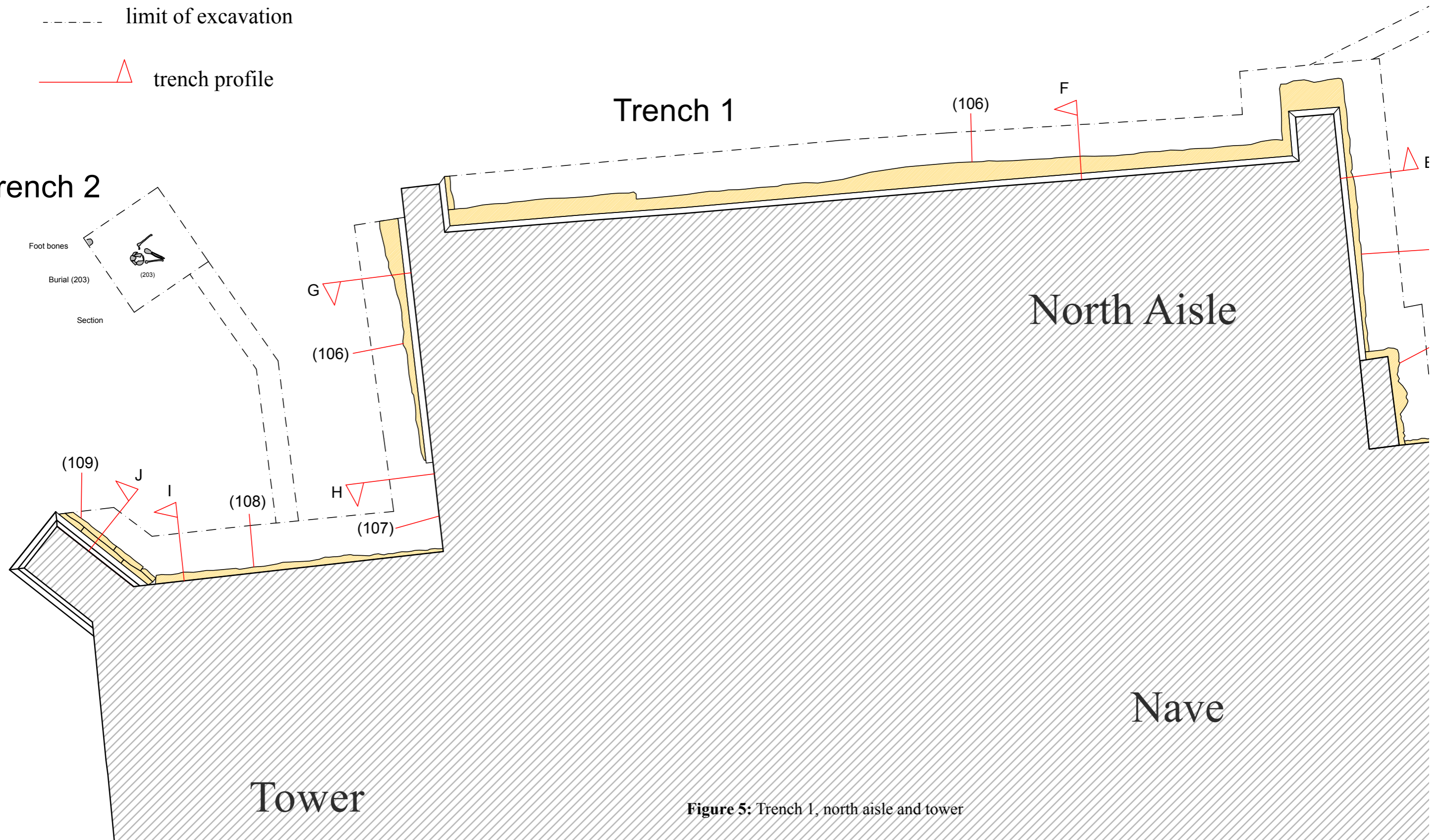


Figure 5: Trench 1, north aisle and tower

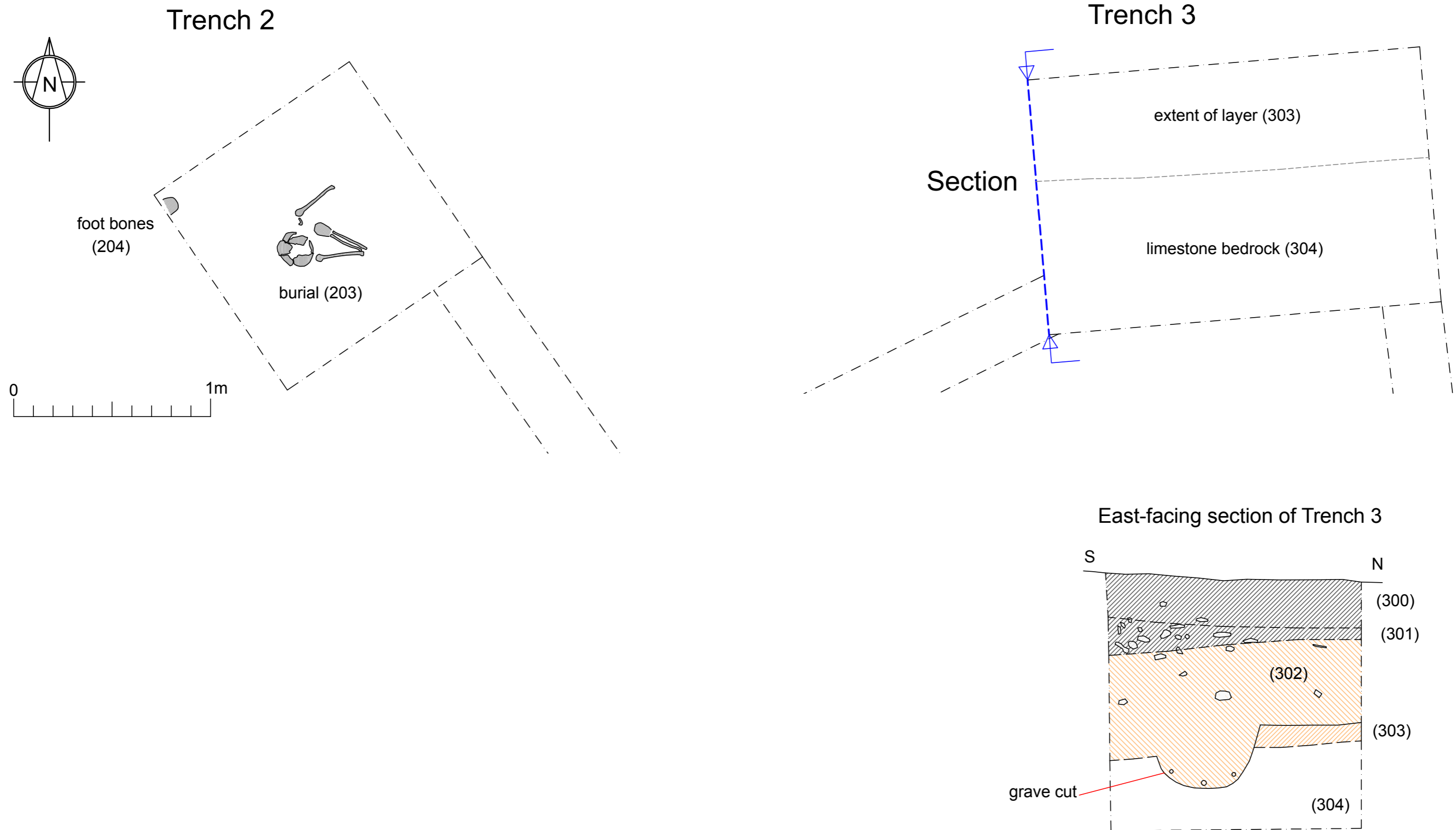
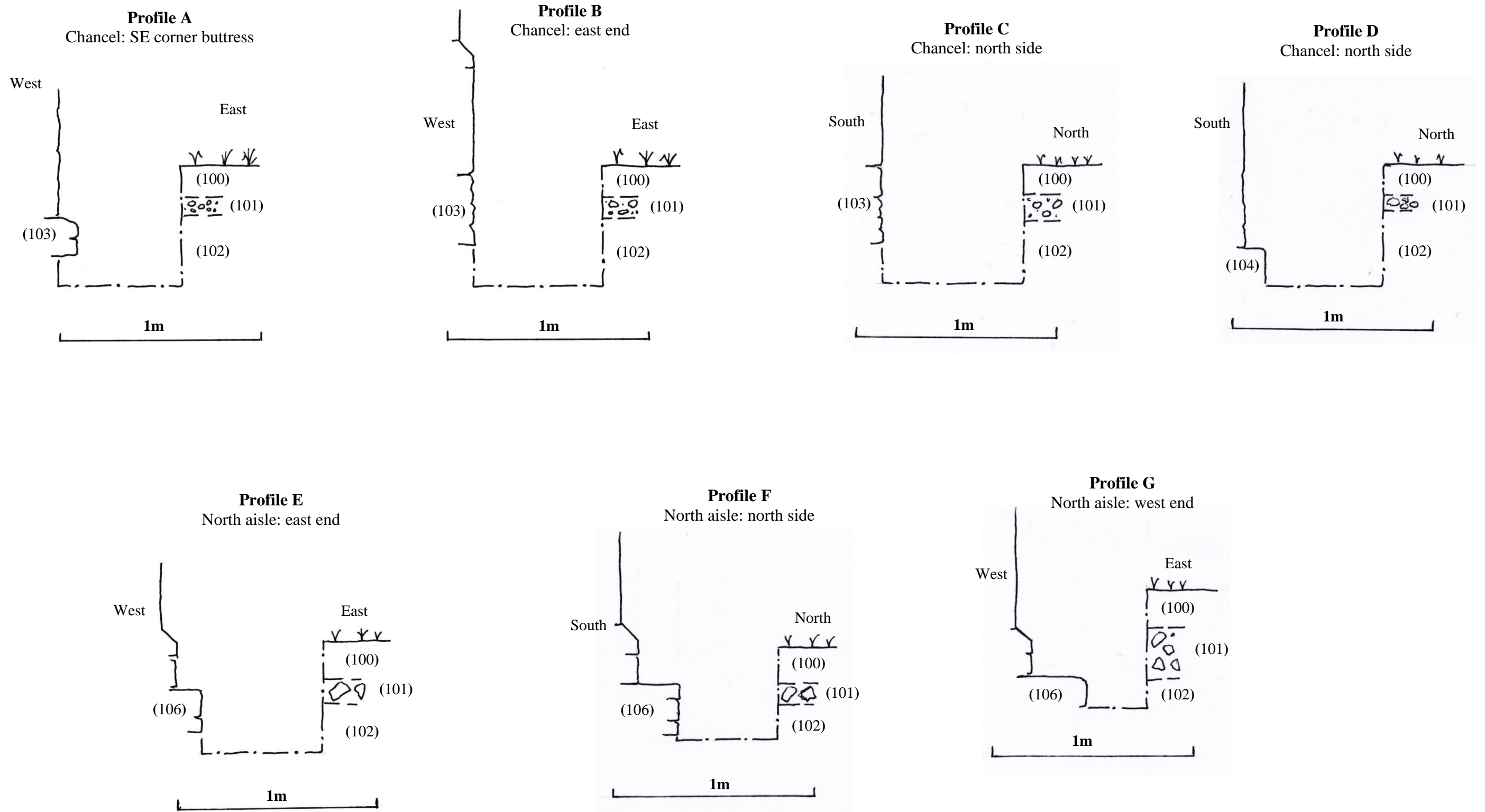


Figure 6: Trenches 2 and 3

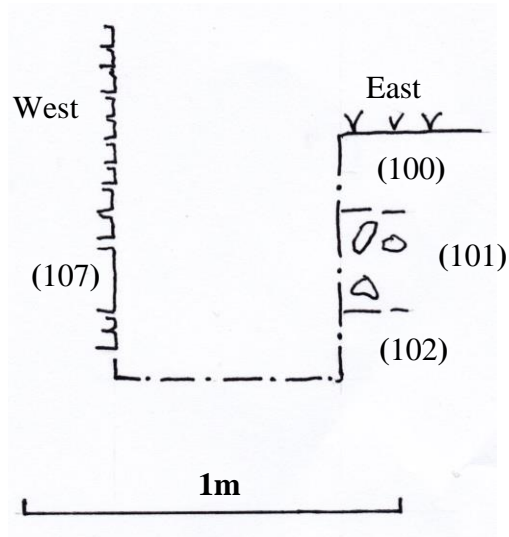


**Figure 7:** Trench profiles A to G

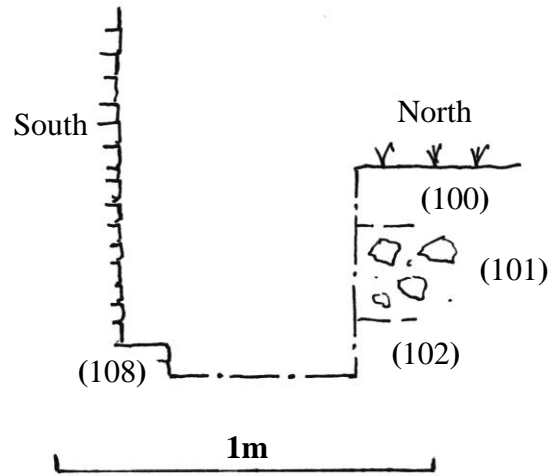
Drawings based on measured sketch records showing foundations and masonry in lower part of walls (Scale 1:50 at A3)



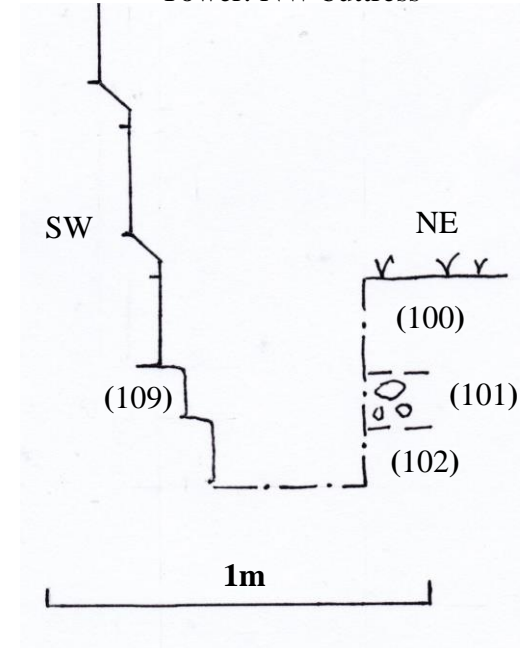
**Profile H**  
North aisle: west end  
(SW corner of nave)



**Profile I**  
Tower: south side



**Profile J**  
Tower: NW buttress



**Figure 8:** Trench profiles H to J

Drawings based on measured sketch records showing foundations and masonry in lower part of walls (Scale 1:50 at A4)



**Image 1:** View of the church from the south-east



**Image 2:** View of the church from the north-west

Shows north aisle and north side of tower



**Image 3:** South side of chancel

Shows blocked arch relating to a former chapel and a vertical straight join where the east end of the chancel was extended.



**Image 4:** Interior of nave looking east



**Image 5:** Interior of nave looking west



**Image 6:** Trench 1: south-east corner of chancel

Foundation (103), looking north-west, showing angle buttresses on south-east corner of chancel (scale 0.4m)





**Image 7:** Trench 1: east wall of chancel

Foundation (103), looking west, showing right-hand part of wall adjacent to north-east corner buttress (scales 1m and 0.4m)

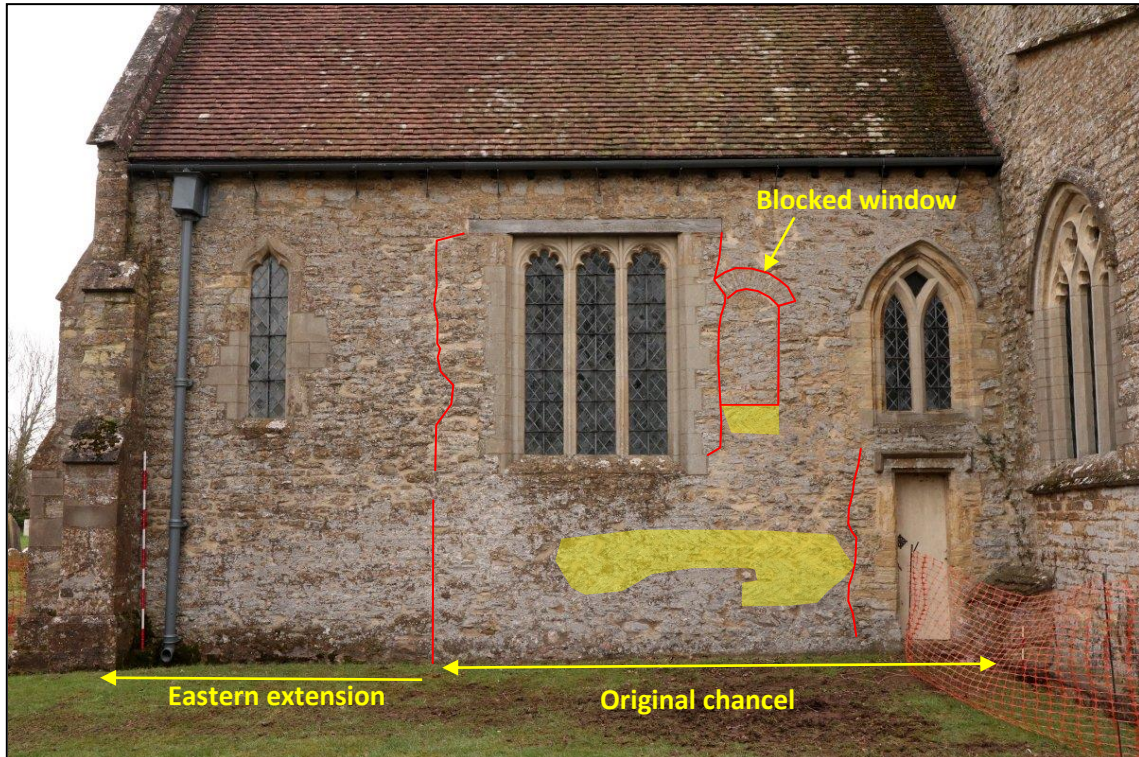


**Image 8:** Trench 1: north-east corner of chancel

Foundation (103), looking south-west, showing angle buttresses on north-east corner of chancel (scale 0.4m)



**Image 9:** South wall of chancel  
(scale 2m)



**Image 10:** South wall of chancel (interpretation)

Lines in red indicate changes in masonry and yellow shading indicates areas of herringbone masonry (scale 2m)



**Image 11:** Trench 1: south wall of chancel, eastern part

Shows change in foundations with original chancel foundations (104) to the right and the later extension (103) to the left (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 12:** Trench 1: south wall of chancel, west end

Shows foundations (104) with herringbone masonry in the wall above (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 13:** Trench 1: masonry in angle of chancel and north aisle

Shows block of masonry and foundations (105) abutting east end of north aisle

(scale 0.4m)



**Image 14:** Trench 1: north-east corner of north aisle

Foundations (106) of north aisle, showing north-east corner (scale 0.4m)



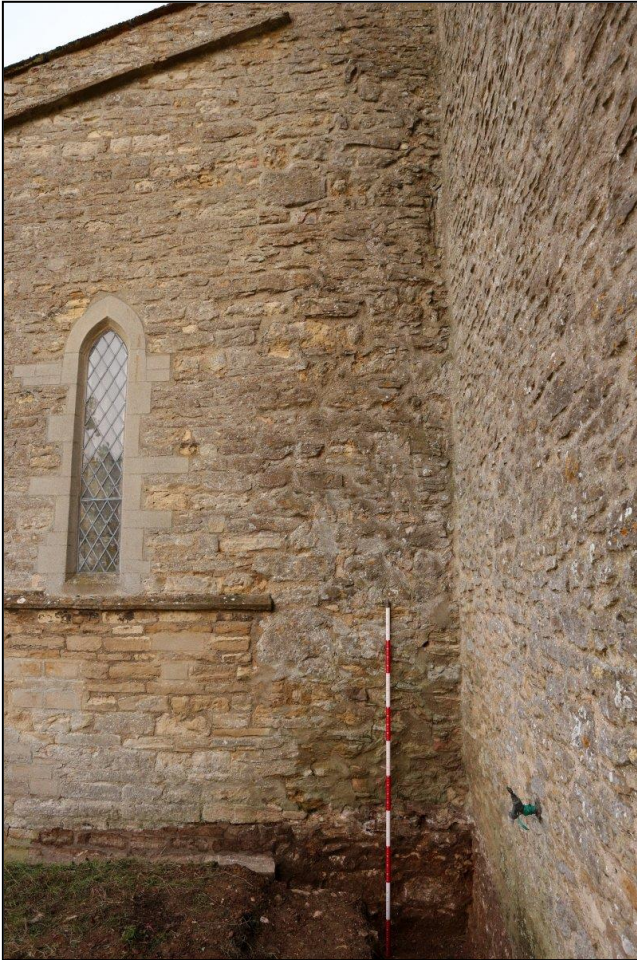
**Image 15:** Trench 1: north side of north aisle

Shows foundations below door in western part of wall (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 16:** Trench 1: west end of north aisle

Shows foundations (106) towards south end of wall (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 17:** West end of north aisle and nave

Shows vertical join where north-west corner of nave is abutted by the west end of the north aisle (scale 2m)



**Image 18:** Trench 1: west end of north aisle and nave

Shows foundations at junction of north aisle (at left) and north-west corner of nave (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 19:** Trench 1: junction of nave and tower

Shows foundations of north-west corner of nave (107) (left) and the north side of the tower (108) (right) (scale 0.4m)



**Image 20:** Trench 1: north side of tower

Shows foundations (108) on north wall of tower (scales 1m and 0.4m)

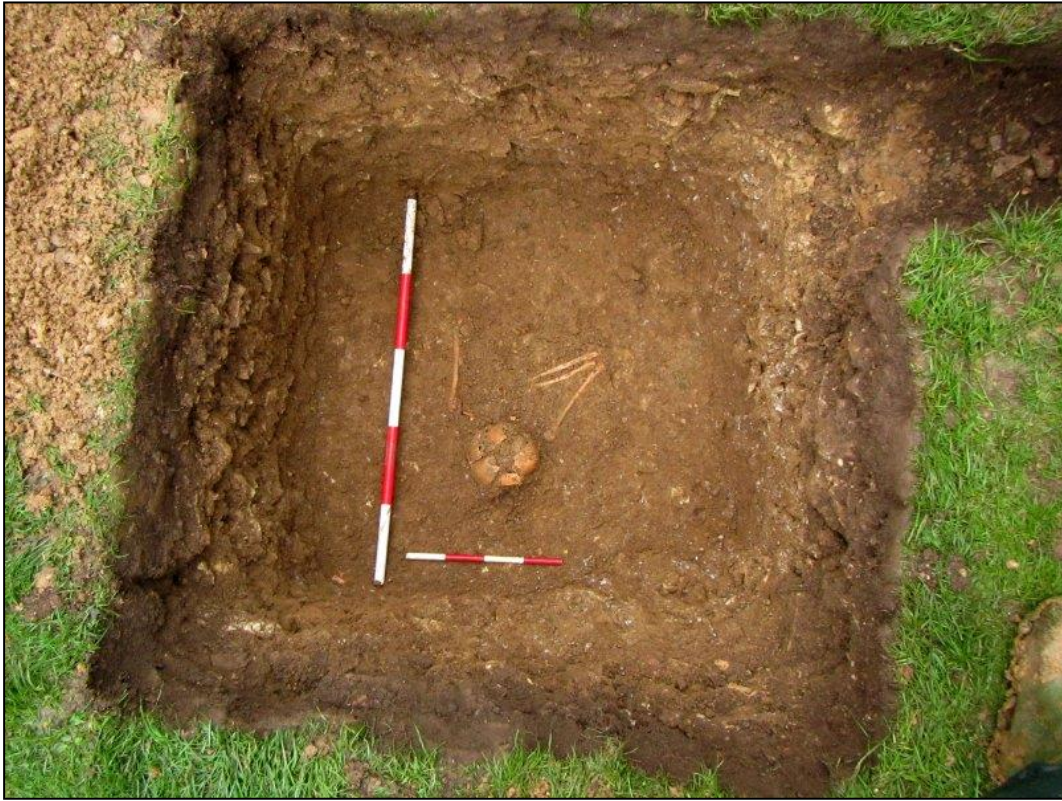


**Image 21:** Trench 1: north-west corner of tower  
Showing foundations (109) on north-east side of buttress (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 22:** Trench 2: general view showing trench location  
Looking south-east showing trench with north aisle and tower in background





**Image 23:** Trench 2: vertical view

North-east at top, showing burial (203) (scales 1m and 0.4m)



**Image 24:** Trench 2: soil profile

Looking south-east, showing soil layers (200), (201) and (202) (scale 1m)



**Image 25:** Trench 3: general view showing trench location

Looking south-west showing trench with chancel and north aisle in background



**Image 26:** Trench 3: fully excavated view

Looking west-south-west (scale 1m)



**Image 27:** Trench 3: section  
Showing west end of trench (scale 1m)

Central  
Bedfordshire

**Albion**  
archaeology



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

**Telephone** 0300 300 8141  
**Email** [office@albion-arch.com](mailto:office@albion-arch.com)  
[www.albion-arch.com](http://www.albion-arch.com)

