

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief at
Holy Trinity Church,
Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire
November 2006
Accession No: 2007.38



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Report 07/35

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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Approved by	Andy Chapman		

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during exploratory ground-works at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire. The ground-works comprised the excavation of two test pits and three bore holes. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.	
Project type	Watching brief	
Site status	Ecclesiastical	
Previous work	Watching Brief undertaken by Buckinghamshire County Museum, Aylesbury in 1993	
Current Land use	Ecclesiastical	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Grade II Listed Building	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Buckinghamshire	
Site address	Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire	
Study area	4sq m	
OS Easting & Northing	4803 2413	
Height OD		
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Steve Parry	
Sponsor or funding body	The Morton Partnership, London	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	November 2006	
End date	November 2006	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper	Buckinghamshire County Museum	Watching brief forms (1) Colour slides (8) Black and white contact prints (8)
Digital	Ditto	Report text and figures

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION
2	BACKGROUND
3	OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY
4	THE RECORDED EVIDENCE
5	THE SITE ARCHIVE
6	CONCLUSIONS
	BIBLIOGRAPHY

Figures

Fig 1: Location of Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire

Fig 2: Location plan of ground-works

Plates

Plate 1: Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton

Plate 2: The east wall of the chancel

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT HOLY TRINITY CHURCH,
OLD WOLVERTON, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NOVEMBER 2006**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during exploratory ground-works at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire. The ground-works comprised the excavation of two test pits and three bore holes. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology during November 2006 during exploratory ground-works at Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton, Buckinghamshire (NGR: SP 803 413; Fig 1; Plate 1). The work was carried out on behalf of The Morton Partnership Ltd acting for Holy Trinity Church and was undertaken following a specification prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology, and approved by The Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

The development area is located within Old Wolverton approximately 1km north-east of Stoney Stratford. The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising Jurassic Limestone.

2.2 Historical Background

Holy Trinity Church lies within an area of archaeological interest. Close by to the north and west lie the well-preserved earthworks of Old Wolverton deserted village. These are of medieval date and comprise the remains of house platforms and roads. A motte and bailey of Norman date lies immediately adjacent to the east. This is a scheduled site and comprises a motte approximately 4.9m high, measuring approximately 50m across.

The present church stands on the site of an earlier medieval church and is a Grade II Listed Building built in 1809 in the Reformed Norman Style. Whilst the bulk of the building is of 19th century date it incorporates aspects of the earlier medieval church including a stone spiral staircase.

Previous archaeological work undertaken at the church has included a watching brief conducted in 1993 during drainage works and the construction of a septic tank. During the course of the work two fragments of medieval floor tile were recovered (ADS 2006).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objectives of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Observe and record all archaeological deposits, revealed during the ground-works.
- ◆ Note the character of the foundations in relation to the wall above, and any evidence of phasing.
- ◆ Determine and record the date, extent, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits.

The ground-works comprised the excavation of two test pits and three bore holes and was carried out to allow a strategy to be produced to deal with ground subsidence that is threatening the fabric of the church. The work was carried out using a combination of hand and machine tools. A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept. The written record used Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 2001).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 The test pits (Fig 2)

Two test pits were excavated at the eastern end of the church against the east wall of the chancel (Plate 2). These were excavated using hand tools with an extension in test pit two using drilling equipment.

Test pit 1 was excavated against the north-east corner of the chancel and measured 0.40m square with a maximum depth of 1.0m. The stratigraphic sequence comprised grey/brown natural clay encountered at a depth of c0.36m below present ground level. Sealing this was grey/brown topsoil/turf layer, up to 0.30m thick, containing occasional fragments of modern, red ceramic building material and occasional fragments of sandstone. No cut for a construction trench could be discerned, however disturbed material, comprising numerous fragments of sandstone and ceramic building material adjacent to the chancel wall clearly indicates the presence of a construction trench.

An examination of the wall foundation within the test pit revealed that the masonry steps out 0.18m at a depth of around 0.25m. This is of similar construction, although rather more rudimentary, to the masonry above and extends down to a depth of c0.85m below present ground level.

Test pit 2 was excavated against the south-east corner of the chancel and measured 1.55m square with a maximum depth of 1.9m. An examination of the stratigraphic sequence revealed made up ground, comprising numerous fragments of modern ceramic building material and occasional fragments of sandstone within a matrix of mid brown silt loam with occasional pockets of gravel and coal ash. This extended from the base of the pit up to 0.30m below present ground level and was sealed by grey/brown silt loam topsoil/turf layer containing occasional fragments of modern ceramic building material, up to 0.30m thick.

The construction of the wall foundation differed to that revealed in test pit 1 in that it was stepped out four times to a maximum distance of 1.32m from the face of the upper wall. The largest step-out was 0.70m at a depth of 1.67m below present ground level, this extended to the base of the trench. Above this, the second step projected out approximately 0.45m from the upper wall face and was 0.20m high. The two upper steps measured 0.07m and 0.10m and measured a combined distance of 0.17m from the upper wall face. The foundation was of similar construction although rather more rudimentary to the above ground wall.

4.2 The bore holes (Fig 2)

Three bore holes were put down using mechanical methods. Due to the methodology employed in this type of ground exploration it was not possible to examine the stratigraphic sequence within each bore hole. An examination of the up-cast revealed a mixed material which appeared to comprise grave earth and made up ground. A full report of the bore holes along with each bore hole log sheet has been produced by the Geotechnical Consultants (Listers 2006).

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The watching brief has generated a small archive, which comprises:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	1
Colour slides	8
Black and white contact prints	8

6 CONCLUSIONS

No dating evidence was recovered during the course of the watching brief, however the foundations revealed in both of the test pits suggest that, although constructed of rougher material, they are probably contemporary with the upper wall of the chancel.

The results of the watching brief show that the north-east corner of the chancel is built on natural clays, whereas the south-east corner is constructed on made up ground containing modern ceramic building material suggesting some relatively recent levelling up activity, presumably during the 19th century construction. The builders of the present church appear to have taken this into account during construction and provided this area with more substantial foundations than that employed at the north-east corner.

The church is built in close proximity to the motte and bailey that stands to the east and it is probable that the church stands above a feature such as a defensive ditch which has been levelled over prior to the construction of the church. It is possible that this relatively unstable ground accounts for at least some of the subsidence that the church is presently suffering.

The watching brief was carried out in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable. The archive is presently under consolidation subsequent to which it will be deposited with Buckinghamshire County Museums.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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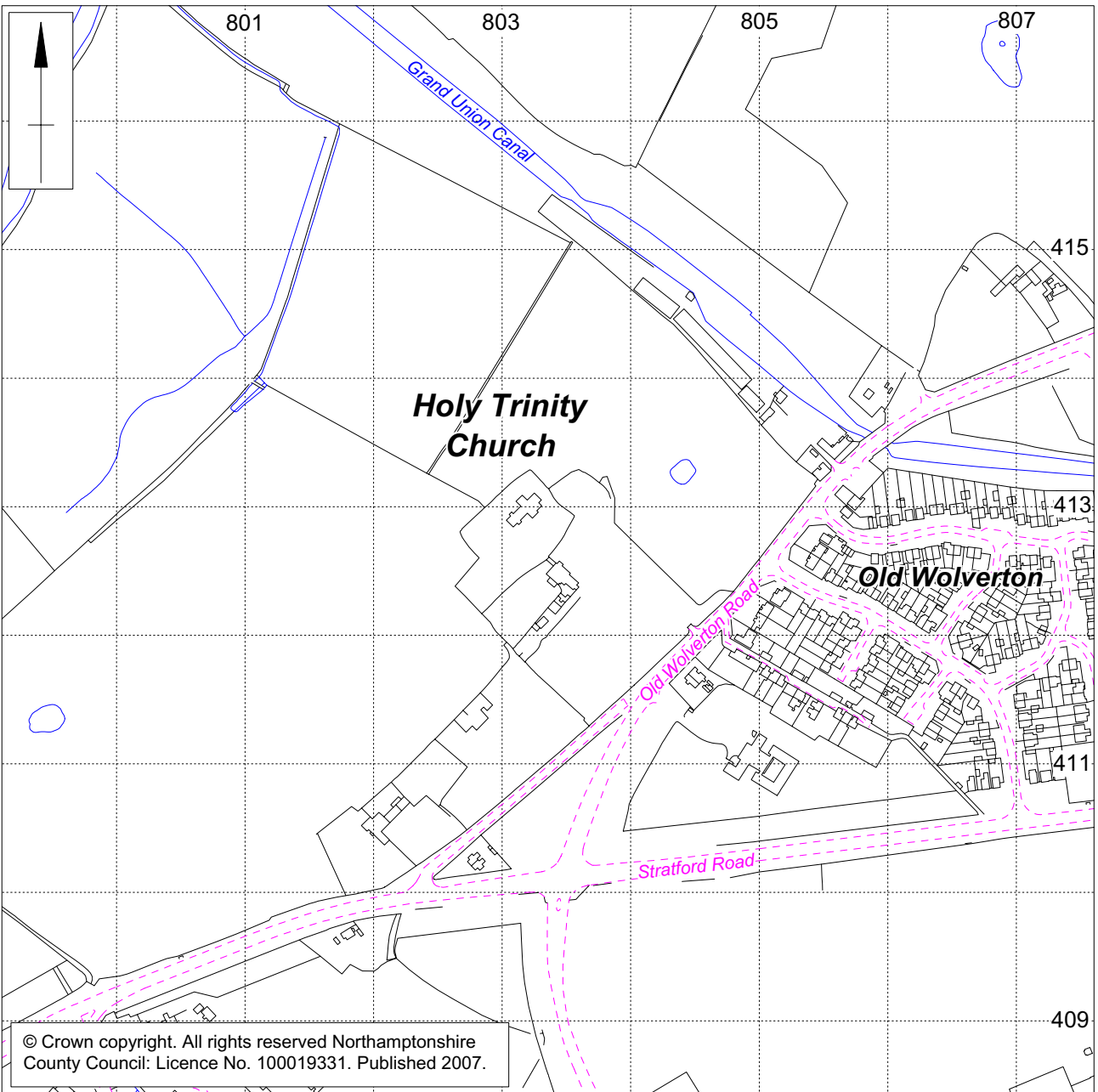
Listers 2006, *Geotechnical Investigation, Holy Trinity Church, OLD WOLVERTON, Buckinghamshire, Report No:06-05-022* Listers Geotechnical Consultants



Plate 1: Holy Trinity Church, Old Wolverton



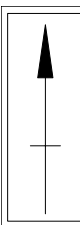
Plate 2: The east wall of the Chancel



Scale: 1:5,000

Location of Holy Trinity Church Fig 1

Scale 1:200



803

Borehole ● **Test Pit 1** ◆

Chancel

Holy Trinity Church

Tower

Location of the groundworks

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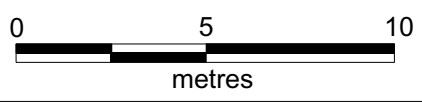
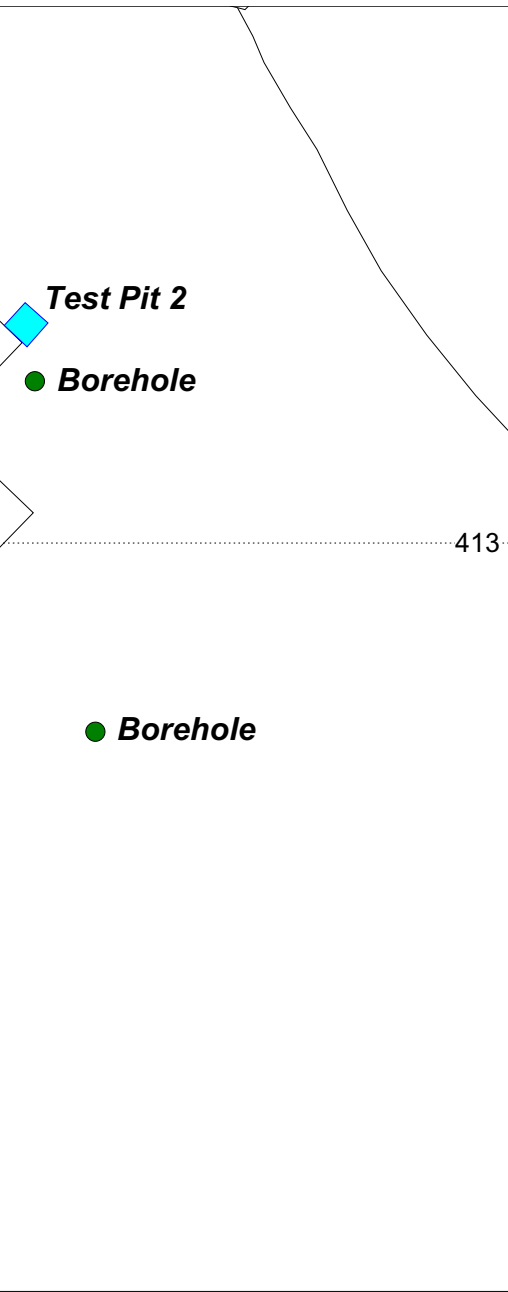


Fig 2



Test Pit 2

● **Borehole**

413

● **Borehole**