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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT ALL SAINTS' CHURCH,  
WALSOKEN,  
NORFOLK  
(NHER 2209)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Birdsall, Swash and Blackman LLP  
Chartered Architects and Diocesan Surveyors  
On behalf of  
Walsoken Parochial Church Council**

May 2010

Report Compiled by  
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OASIS Record No: archaeo11-76667

APS Report No. **35/10**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at All Saints' church, Walsoken, Norfolk. The watching brief monitored the removal of overburden within the north aisle prior to the insertion of a new floor.*

*All Saints' church dates from the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century with later additions including a 13<sup>th</sup> century tower and 14<sup>th</sup> century aisle.*

*The watching brief revealed a sequence of subsoil, a medieval pier base and post-medieval air ducts and pew supports. A late post-medieval floor surface was also recorded. Finds from the investigation comprise brick, floor tile, window glass, clay pipe and metalwork.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.*” (IFA 1999).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Birdsall, Swash and Blackman LLP, Chartered Architects and Diocesan Surveyors on behalf of the Parochial Church Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the insertion of a new floor in the north aisle at All Saint's Church, Walsoken, Norfolk. The work was undertaken on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> March 2010 in accordance with a brief

prepared by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Walsoken is located 15km northwest of Downham Market and 17km southwest of King's Lynn, in the administrative district of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk (Fig. 1).

All Saints' church is located towards the centre of the village at National Grid Reference TF 4772 1055 (Fig. 2). Situated on the north side of Church Road, the site lies at a height of 4m OD on a slight prominence amongst generally level ground.

Local soils are of the Blacktoft Association, typically gleyic brown calcareous alluvial soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984). These soils are developed upon Flandrian alluvial deposits including peat layers.

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Walsoken is first mentioned in a foundation charter of Ramsey Abbey dating to AD 974. Referred to as *Walsocna* and *Walsocne*, the name is derived from the Old English and means ‘the soke by the wall’, the wall referring to a sea-bank (Ekwall 1989, 494). The charter refers to the gift of Walsoken and other properties to Ramsey Abbey by King Edgar (Hart 1966, 79). The charter is considered a later fabrication, though partly based on fact. A further grant dating to between 969 and 983 records the gift of 5 hides of land at Walsoken by Ealdorman Æthelwine (*ibid.* 241).

At the time of the Domesday Survey of c. 1086, Walsoken is recorded as still being held by Ramsey Abbey and it contained 12 acres of meadow and a fishery (Brown 1984).

All Saints' church dates from the mid 12<sup>th</sup>

century with a 13<sup>th</sup> century west tower and aisles that were remodelled in the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner 1990, 365). In the wall of the north aisle is a stone commemorating a heart burial (*ibid.* 366).

### 3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to locate and record archaeological deposits and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

The north aisle was stripped of its floorboards, followed by the removal of the tiled surface and subsequent reducing of the ground floor level by machine to a depth of *c.* 0.3m below the floor level. The stripped area was examined for archaeological deposits and the sides were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 3). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

### 5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets

are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of the stripped area within the north aisle was a layer of brown sandy silt (006). Interpreted as a possible subsoil, this measured in excess of 0.14m thick (Fig. 4, Section 1).

Inserted into this deposit was a limestone plinth of the easternmost pier of the arcade between the north aisle and nave (015). This was a 1m wide plain chamfered base with a small moulded decoration on its side and corners (Fig. 4, Section 2; Plate 2). No other pier bases were affected by the works.

Cutting (006) were two north-south trenches (011) and (012). Within these were low brick or stone walls either side of a channel which had then been capped by stone slabs forming an air duct (Plate 4).

Above these were east-west aligned foundation trenches (008) which contained brick walls (007), perhaps re-using medieval and post-medieval brick and tile. These were identified as the former supports for the wooden pews.

Deposited over the air ducts and between the pew supports were a number of dumped deposits. These comprised yellowish brown mortar and sand with frequent post-medieval floor tile fragments (004), brown silty sand (005) and greyish brown clayey silt (009). These measured up to 0.3m thick.

Sealing these deposits was a layer of brown sand (003) which provided levelling for a brown mortar sub-floor (002) for the current surface of red and black tile (001).

### 6. DISCUSSION

The earliest deposit encountered appeared to be a former subsoil and must, therefore,

pre-date the construction of the north aisle. Alternatively, it may be a dumped deposit and mask earlier levels associated with the 14<sup>th</sup> century aisle or an earlier 12<sup>th</sup> century predecessor. A medieval pier plinth was partly exposed inserted into this layer.

Air ducts and pew supports were found and are likely to be of later post-medieval date. Above this was the tiled floor with its associated contexts which are broadly contemporary.

Apart from the brick and tile, clay pipe, window glass and metalwork were also retrieved and were mainly of post-medieval date.

## 7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at All Saints' church, Walsoken, as archaeological deposits associated with the development of the building might be disturbed.

However, no remains were encountered that were associated with the medieval church, although a pier plinth of this date was exposed during the works. Post-medieval pew supports and air ducts were also recorded.

Finds retrieved from the investigations comprise brick, tile, glass, clay pipe and metalwork.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs R Blackman of Birdsall, Swash and Blackman LLP, Chartered Architects and Diocesan Surveyors, for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by

Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
 Site Supervisor: Mark Peachey  
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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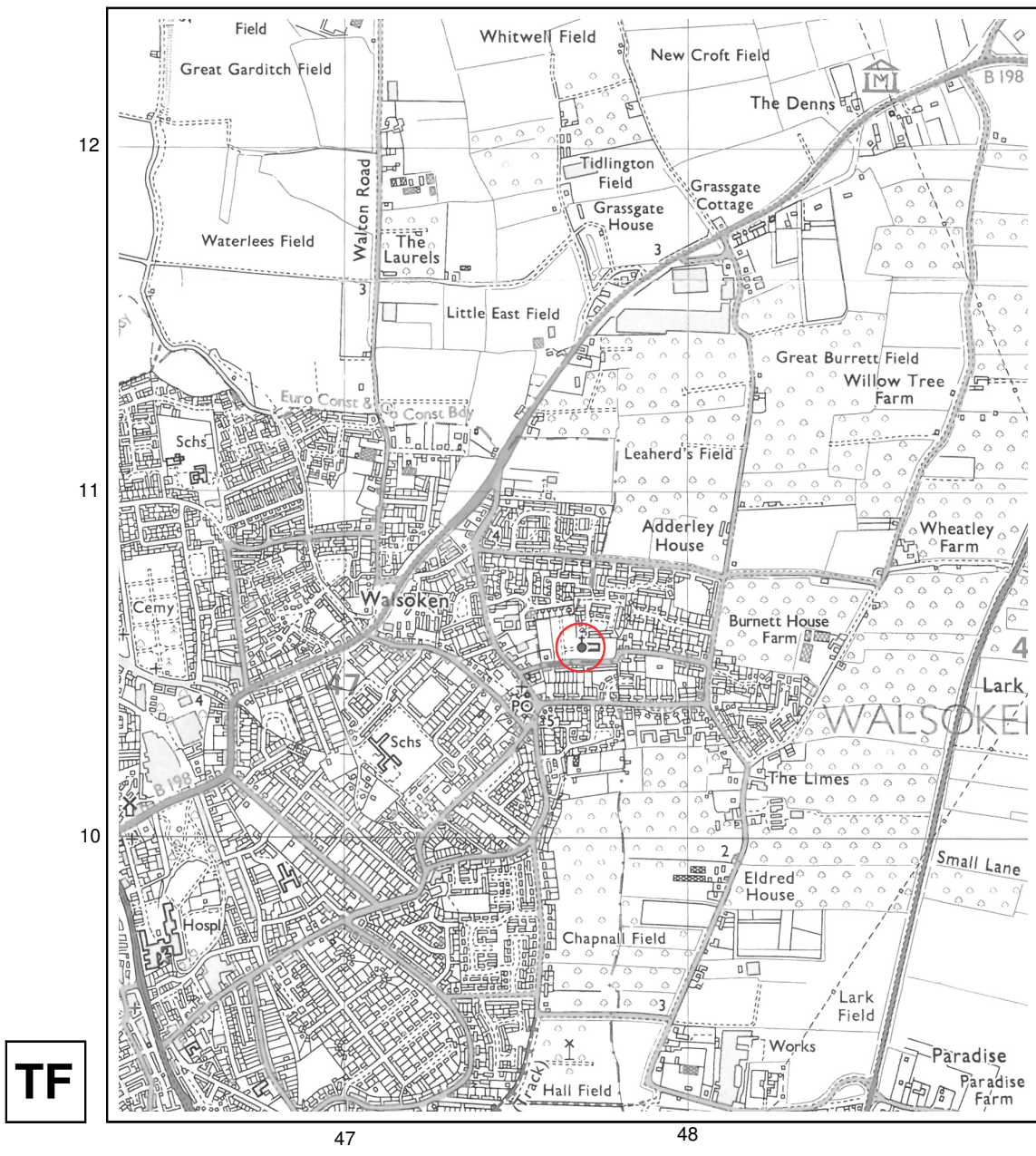
## 11. ABBREVIATIONS


APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 General Location Plan



 All Saints' Church

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Scale 1:20000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 35/10

Figure 2 - Site location plan



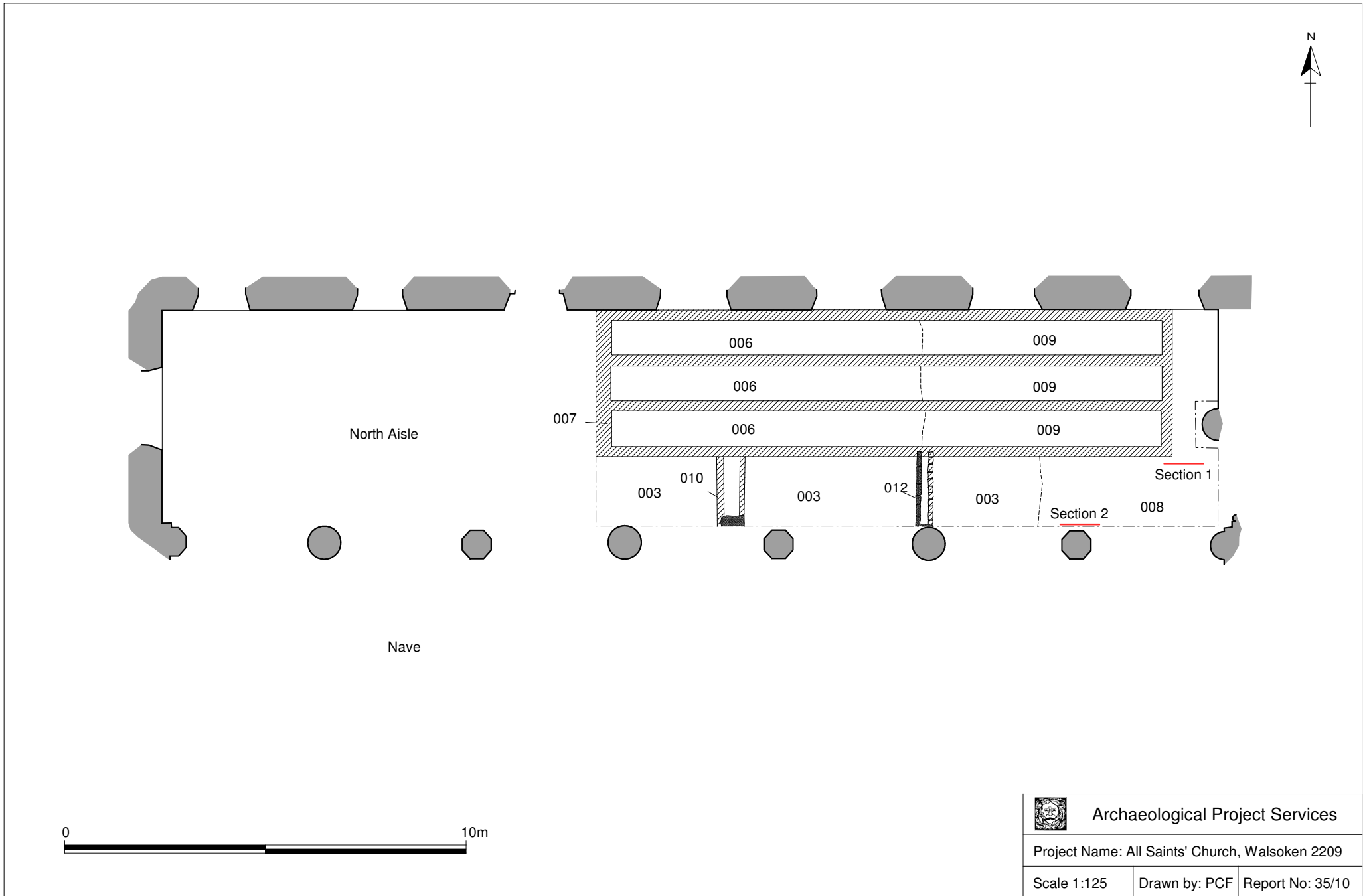
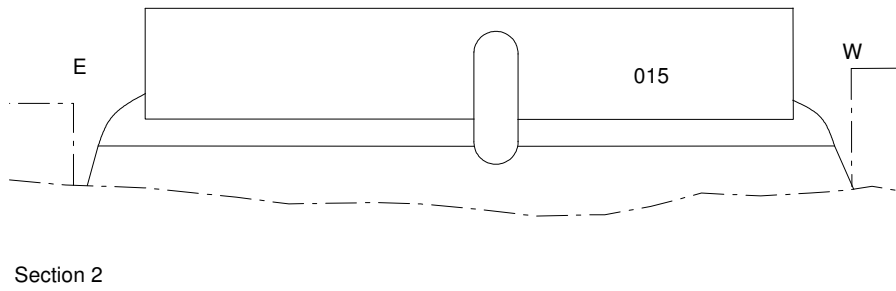
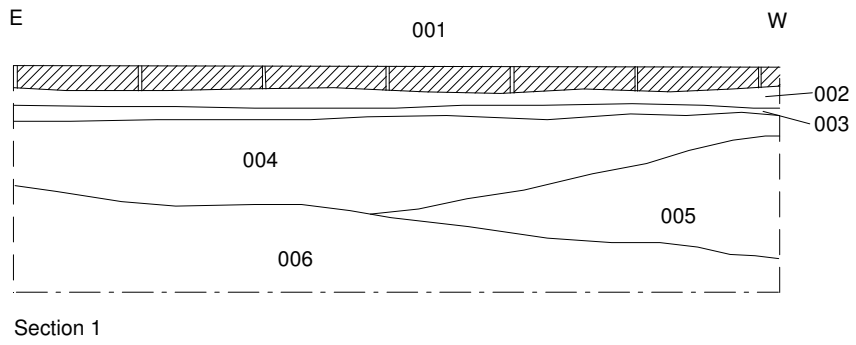


Figure 3 - Plan of the north aisle area showing principal features




 <b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: All Saint's Church, Walsoken 2209		
Scale 1:10	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 35/10

Figure 4 - Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 – General view of the area of works, looking northeast



Plate 2 – Section 1 showing the general sequence of deposits encountered, looking south



Plate 3 – Section 2 showing the exposed pier base, looking south



Plate 4 – View of the air duct (012), looking south

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Red and black tiles (160mm x 160mm x 24mm) structure, laid flat	Church floor
002	Firm dark brown mortar, 15mm thick	Base for (001)
003	Loose mid brown sand, 20mm thick	Base for (001)
004	Loose mid yellowish brown mortar and sand with frequent tile fragments, 0.13m thick	Dumped deposit
005	Loose mid brown silty sand, 0.15m thick	Dumped deposit
006	Friable dark brown sandy silt, >0.14m thick	Subsoil
007	Brick (250mm x 130mm x 65mm) structure, forming low walls in random bond	Supports for pews
008	Linear feature, aligned east-west, 15.3m long by 0.25m wide, not excavated	Foundation trench for (007)
009	Friable dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.3m thick	Dumped deposit
010	Brick (240mm x 130mm x 55mm) and stone (300mm x 230mm x 40mm) structure, 2 brick courses high topped with stone slab, 1.9m long by 0.3m wide and 0.2m high	Air vent beneath floor
011	Linear feature, 1.9m long by 0.3m wide and 0.2m high, aligned north-south, not excavated	Foundation trench for (010)
012	Brick (220mm x 110mm x 60mm) and stone (460mm x 180mm x 100mm) structure, 2 courses of brick to east, 1 of stone to west, 1.85m long by 0.38m wide by 0.22m high	Air vent beneath floor
013	Linear feature, aligned north-south, 1.85m long by 0.38m wide by 0.22m high, vertical sides and flat base	Foundation trench for (012)
014	Unstratified finds retrieval	
015	Limestone structure, pier plinth exposed by works, 1m wide	Pier plinth

## Appendix 2

### THE FINDS

#### CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

*By Anne Boyle*

##### Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the ACBMG (2001). A total of 10 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 20083 grams was recovered from the site.

##### Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Fragments were counted and weighed within each context. The ceramic building material was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the ceramic building material is included in Archive Catalogue 1, with a summary in Table 1.

##### Condition

Nearly all examples of brick and tile in the assemblage are complete and several have mortar adhering to them. Where visible, the floor tiles showed signs of extensive wear on upper surfaces.

##### Results

*Table 1, Ceramic Building Material Archive*

Cname	Full name	NoF	W (g)
BRKDISC	Brick (discarded)	3	9410
FLOOR	Floor tile	1	515
FLOORDISC		3	7367
MODTILDISC	Modern tile (discarded)	2	2748
TILEDISC		1	43
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20083</b>

##### Provenance

Early modern floor tiles paved the church floor (001), with 16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century material occurring in dumped deposit (004). Brick and tile of mixed date was used as pew supports (007) and for air vents (010) and (012), suggesting that some of the ceramic building material has been reused in later structures.

##### Range

Examples of medieval, post medieval and early modern brick and floor tile were recovered from the site. Some of the earlier pieces may have been reused in later structures, as mortar occurs over broken and worn surfaces; in one case a floor tile has a thick layer of mortar over a heavily sooted surface.

##### Potential

All the ceramic building material was discarded, in accordance with current Norfolk Museum policy, as verbally communicated to Archaeological Project Services.

##### Summary

An assemblage of mixed date ceramic building material was recovered from five contexts.

#### GLASS

*By Gary Taylor*

##### Introduction

Four pieces of glass weighing a total of 77g were recovered.

##### Condition

Although naturally fragile all the glass is in good condition.

**Results***Table 2, Glass Archive*

Cxt	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
014	Colourless window quarry, diamond-shaped, 19 <sup>th</sup> century	1	12	19 <sup>th</sup> century
	Light green square window panel, 31mm x 31mm, 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	1	4	
	Blue stained glass window panel, 18 <sup>th</sup> -19 <sup>th</sup> century	1	5	
	Green 'bull's eye' window glass, pontil scar, 19 <sup>th</sup> century	1	56	

**Provenance**

All of the glass was recovered as unstratified material.

**Range**

Only window glass was found. With the exception of the 'bull's eye' panel all of the remaining three pieces have mounting scars indicating they were parts of leaded windows.

**Potential**

The glass is of limited potential though indicates the church had leaded stained glass windows.

**CLAY PIPE**

*By Gary Taylor*

**Introduction**

Analysis of the clay pipes followed the guidance published by Davey (1981) and the material is detailed in the accompanying table.

**Condition**

The clay pipe is in good condition.

**Results***Table 3, Clay Pipes*

Context no.	Bore diameter /64"					NoF	W(g)	Comments	Date
	8	7	6	5	4				
014				1		1	3	Hexagonal bore	18 <sup>th</sup> century

**Provenance**

The clay pipe was recovered as unstratified material. It is probable a fairly local Wash-area product, perhaps from nearby King's Lynn.

**Range**

A single pipe stem was found and has a hexagonal bore. Angular bores are extremely unusual as the bore moulding wires were usually twisted on removal, this twisting generating a round hole even when a rectangular or other form of wire was used. However, while this feature is rare it seems to be a characteristic of the region around The Wash, as previous examples have been found in this area, including at Boston (Taylor 2002) and King's Lynn (Taylor 2003).

**Potential**

As an isolated piece the clay pipe is of limited potential. However, its angular bore adds to a small corpus of such pieces already identified.

**OTHER FINDS**

*By Gary Taylor*

**Introduction**

Two other items, together weighing 175g, were retrieved.

**Condition**

The other finds are in good condition though the iron, in particular, is corroded.

**Results**

Table 4, Other Materials

Cxt	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
014	Iron	Nail, L-shaped head	1	14	
	Lead and iron	Rectangular lead sheet, 100mm x 60mm, with two holes, one containing an iron nail	1	161	

**Provenance**

The other finds were retrieved as unstratified material.

**Range**

Only metals were found. The nail is perhaps a coffin fixing while the lead appears to have been a patch that was nailed to some other item.

**Potential**

As a small collection of undated items the other finds are of limited potential.

**SPOT DATING**

The dating in Table 5 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 5, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
001	19th to 20th	Date on CBM
004	16th to 18th	Date on CBM
007	15th to 16th	Date on CBM
010	13th to 15th?	Date on single fragment of CBM
012	17th to 18th	Date on CBM
014	19th	Based on glass

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
W (g)	Weight (grams)

**REFERENCES**

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- Taylor, G, 2002 'The clay pipe from Pescod Square', in G. Davies, *An Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching) of land at Pescod Square, Boston, Lincolnshire*. ARCUS Project Report 270c.1
- Taylor, G, 2003 'The clay pipe', in P. Cope-Faulkner, *Archaeological Evaluation on land at Greyfriars, King's Lynn, Norfolk (S477KLY)*, unpublished APS report 136/03

**ARCHIVE CATALOGUES**

*Archive catalogue 1, Ceramic Building Material*



Cxt	Cname	Fabric	Subform	NoF	W (g)	Description	Date
001	MODTILDISC	Vitrified	30 x 160 x 160mm	2	2748	Two complete - black and red; worn upper surfaces; mortar; discard	Early modern
004	FLOORDISC	Oxidised; fine sandy	30 x 145mm	1	3000	Heavy mortar; traces of sooted surface	Post medieval?
004	FLOORDISC	Oxidised; fine sandy	40 x 125 x 250	1	4000	Heavy mortar on all faces; complete	Post medieval?
004	TILEDISC	Oxidised; fine sandy	20mm	1	43	Abraded	?
007	BRKDISC	Calcareous	50 x 130 x 250mm	1	3766	Complete; bedded on organic material	Late medieval to early post-medieval
007	FLOORDISC	Oxidised; fine sandy	25 x 110 x 110mm	1	515	Complete; worn upper surface; possible dark green glaze; mortar	Medieval
007	FLOORDISC	Oxidised; fine sandy	35mm	1	367	Brown glaze; stacking scar; mortar	Post-medieval
010	BRKDISC	Calcareous	65 x 135 x 240mm	1	3575	Handmade; complete; discarded; heavy mortar	Medieval?
012	BRKDISC	Gault	60 x 105 x 200	1	2069	Handmade; slop moulded; complete; discarded	Late post-medieval

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Alluvium</b>	A deposit (usually clay, silts or sands) laid down in water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea and freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or within lakes.
<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Dumped deposits</b>	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
<b>Fill</b>	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

15	Context records
3	Sheets containing scale drawings (plans and sections)
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Bag of finds
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Norfolk Museums Service  
Union House  
Gressenhall  
Dereham  
Norfolk  
NR20 4DR

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *County Standards for Field Archaeology in Norfolk*, produced by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:

NHER 2209

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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