
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING AT
ST MARGARET'S CHURCH,
LYNG,
NORFOLK
(ENF 128947)**

Birdsall Swash and Blackman Limited
on behalf of
Lyng Parochial Church Council

May 2012

Report Compiled by
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National Grid Reference: TG 0688 1785
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-127748

APS Report No. 41/12

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at St Margaret's church, Lyng, Norfolk. The investigations monitored the excavation of a new electricity cable trench to the church.

The church is of the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) with the earliest portion being the west tower dating to the 13th century and the remainder constructed during the 15th century.

The investigations identified the 15th century foundations of a buttress and a further stone foundation, possibly a building or crypt, which lay to the west of the 13th century tower. Graveyard soils, topsoil, a drainage trench and gravel path were also encountered. The depth of the cable trench precluded the examination of natural or other possible archaeological deposits. No artefacts were retrieved or observed during the work.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Limited on behalf of Lyng Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with a new electrical service trench at St Margaret's church, Lyng, Norfolk. The watching brief was carried out on the 24th May 2012 in accordance with a brief prepared by the Historic Environment Service, Norfolk County Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Lyng is located 19km northwest of Norwich and 9km northeast of Dereham in the administrative district of Breckland,

Norfolk (Fig. 1).

St Margaret's church is located towards the eastern side of the modern village at National Grid Reference TG 0688 1785 (Fig. 2). Situated to the northwest of The Common, the church lies at a height of 16.3m OD on land overlooking the valley of the River Wensum which lies to the north.

Locals soils are of the Burlingham 1 Association, typically stagnogleyic argillic brown earths developed on chalky till (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 132).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Lyng is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Ling*, the name is derived from the Old English *hlinc*, meaning a hill (Ekwall 1989, 309).

The Domesday Survey records that Lyng was held by Count Alan and contained 9 acres of meadow, woodland and a mill (Brown 1984, 4/29).

The earliest part of St Margaret's church is the west tower dating to the 13th century. The nave, chancel and south porch are largely 15th century, with the porch having been remodelled during the 18th century and the chancel restored in the 20th century (Pevsner 1990, 252).

3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

A single trench for the new cable was excavated by machine to a depth of 0.34m

below the current ground surface. Following excavation, the sides of the trench 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 the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Adjacent to the church (Plate 1), the earliest context recorded was the limestone foundations of the southwest buttress of the nave (003) which extended into the cable trench (Fig. 4, Section 1; Plate 2).

Lying above the stepped foundation was the backfill of a drainage trench (002). Comprising brown sandy silt with frequent gravel overlying a ceramic pipe, the cut for the drainage trench was not observed. This was sealed by a 50mm thick layer of gravel (001) of the path around the church.

To the west of the church was an east-west limestone foundation (006) that was 1.9m wide (Fig. 4, Plan 2; Plate 3). The wall was heavily eroded and no courses survived above the limit of the trench.

Sealing the former foundation was a

graveyard soil comprising brown sandy silt (005) that measured over 80mm thick (Fig. 4, Section 2; Plate 4). This was in turn sealed by the current topsoil of dark brown sandy silt (004) which was 0.25m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

No natural deposits were encountered during the investigation due largely to the depth of the cable trench. It is probable that further archaeological deposits lie at depth.

The foundation of the buttress of the nave was revealed in the southern part of the trench and is of 15th century date. To the west of the tower a similar wall foundation was revealed. This latter wall is unusual and may date to an earlier phase of church construction, although as it lies west of the tower its function is not readily apparent. Apart from an unidentified building, it may alternatively be a crypt. This was sealed by a graveyard soil.

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at St Margaret's Church, Lyng, Norfolk, as proposed works may reveal information relating to earlier phases of the building's construction.

The earliest deposits encountered include the foundation to a nave buttress and a short length of a stone structure, either a wall of an unknown building or a crypt, lying west of the tower. Other deposits encountered during the investigation include a graveyard soil, a drainage trench, a gravel path and topsoil. No other archaeological deposits were encountered and no artefacts were retrieved.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to

acknowledge the assistance of Ruth Blackman of Birdsall, Swash and Blackman Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Lyng Parochial Church Council. 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: Bryn Leadbetter
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner


10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Ekwall, E, 1989 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* (4th edition)
- Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**
- Pevsner, N, 1990, *North-West and South Norfolk*, The Buildings of England



Figure 1 - General location plan



 St Margaret's church



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	Archaeological Project Services	
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Scale 1:20000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 41/12

Figure 2 - Site location plan

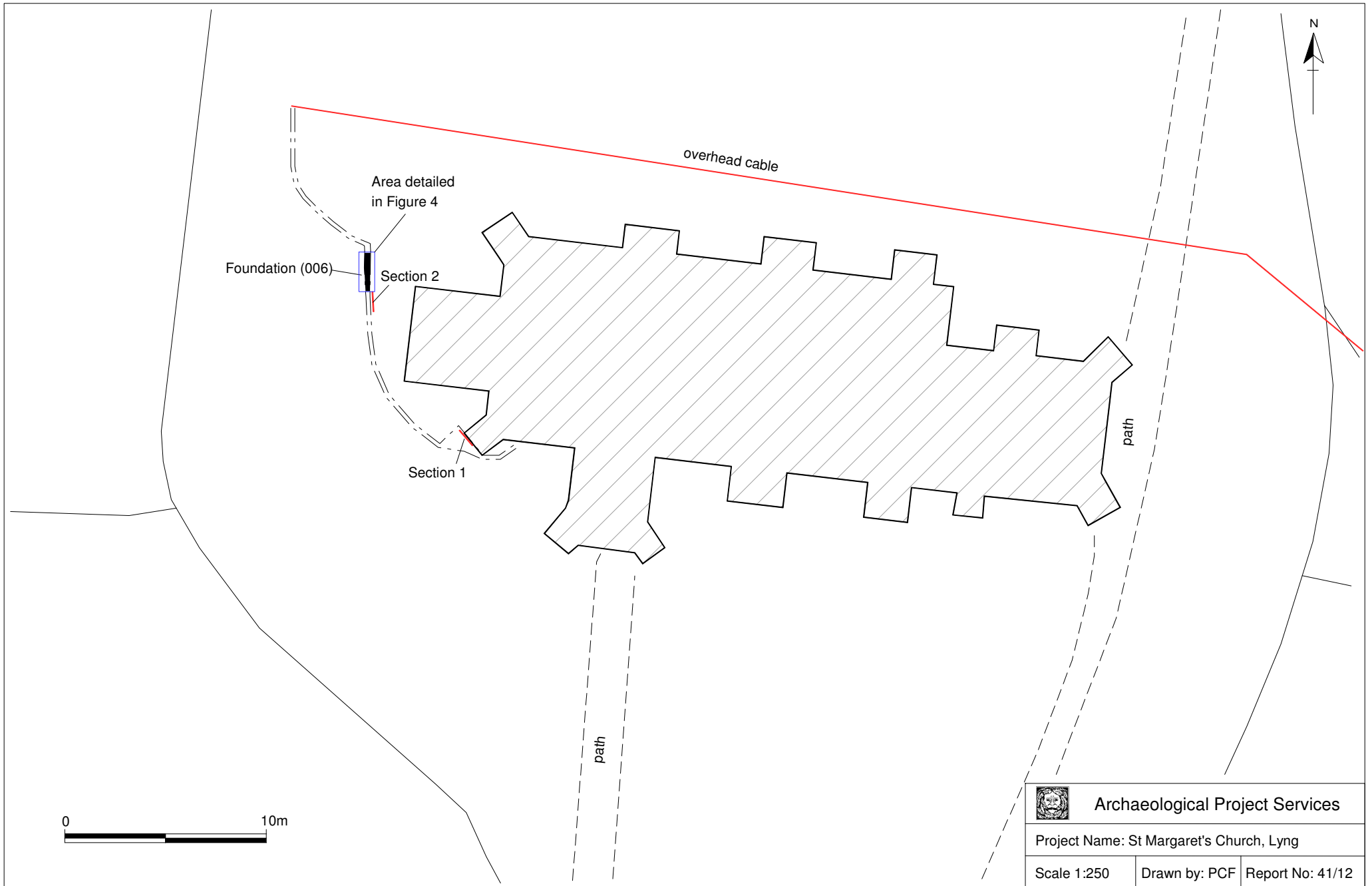
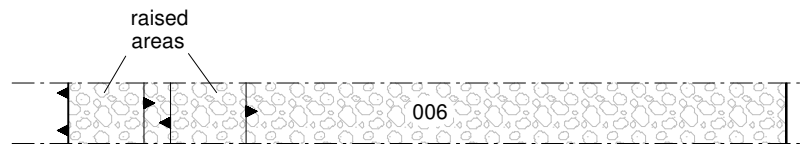
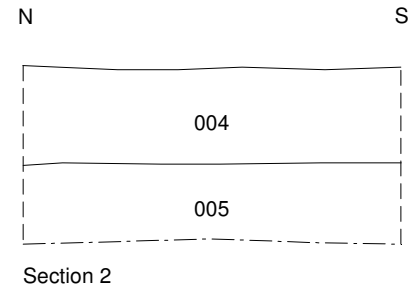
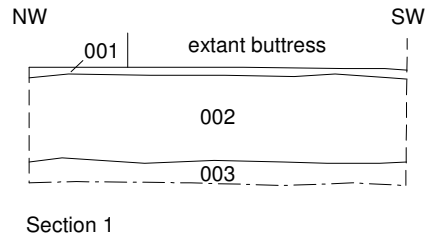


Figure 3 - Plan showing the route of the cable trench and principal features




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Scale 1:20	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 41/12

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 2 and Plan 2



Plate 1 – General view showing the works in progress, looking northeast



Plate 2 – Section 1 showing the exposed buttress foundation, looking northeast



Plate 3 – Wall foundation (006) as exposed, looking north



Plate 4 – Section 2, looking east

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Loose gravel, 50mm thick	Path
002	Friable dark brown sandy silt with frequent gravel, 0.15m thick	Backfill of drainage trench
003	Limestone structure, roughly coursed, >60mm high	Buttress foundation
004	Friable dark brown sandy silt with frequent angular flints, 0.25m thick	Topsoil
005	Friable mid to light brown sandy silt with frequent angular flints, >0.2m thick	Graveyard soil
006	Limestone structure, aligned east-west, 1.9m wide	Wall foundation

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Context	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).
Cut	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.
Fill	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).
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Daily record sheet
1	Section register sheet
1	Photographic register sheet
1	Context register sheet
6	Context record sheets
1	Sheet of scale drawings

All primary records 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

Norfolk Historic Environment Service Site Code:

ENF 128947

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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