



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND
RECORDING AT
ST MARGARET'S CHURCH,
PASTON,
NORFOLK
(ENF 129491)**

**Work Undertaken For
Paston Parochial Church Council**

October 2012

Report Compiled by
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National Grid Reference: TG 3228 3443
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-135943

APS Report No. **77/12**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks at St Margaret's church, Paston, Norfolk. The investigations monitored the excavation of a series of trial holes to examine current drainage.

The church dates from the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) with the main body of the church dating to the 14th century. St Margaret's may have replaced an earlier church which was granted to Bromholm priory in the 12th century. The church has later additions and was restored twice during the 19th century.

The investigations revealed subsoil, only encountered in areas close to the church, graveyard soils and the current topsoil. The foundations revealed that there were at least three phases of construction, relating to the main body of the church, the chancel and the south porch. Absence of subsoils on the north side of the church may indicate alterations on that side, perhaps widening of the church to the north. Where encountered, the current buttresses overlie remnants of an earlier buttress, the former dating to the 17th century as evidenced by a date of 1601 inscribed into the stonework of one of the southern buttresses. No finds were retrieved during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Birdsall Swash and Blackman Limited on behalf of Paston Parochial Church Council to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks at St Margaret's church, Paston, Norfolk. The investigations were carried out on the 18th September 2012 in accordance with a brief

prepared by the Planning Archaeologist, Norfolk County Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Paston is located 28km northeast of Norwich and 37km northwest of Great Yarmouth, in the administrative district of North Norfolk (Fig. 1).

St Margaret's church is situated towards the centre of the dispersed village at National Grid Reference TG 3228 3443 (Fig. 2). The church lies to the south of Bacton Road at a height of c. 22m OD on land that slopes gently down to the east towards the coast.

Local soils are of the Wick 2 Association, typically deep coarse slightly stony loamy soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 346). These soils are developed upon a drift geology of glacial sands and gravels which in turn seals a solid geology of Pleistocene Crag (BGS 1998).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Paston is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Pastuna*, the name is derived from the Old English *pæsc* and means either 'pasture-land' or 'the village (*tūn*) by the puddle' (Ekwall 1989, 358).

At the time of the Domesday Survey the land was held by William de Warenne, St Benet's abbey and William de Écouis and contained a mill (Williams and Martin 1992, 1087, 1136, 1141).

St Margaret's church dates to the 14th century with a later porch and a south buttress with a date of 1601. The church was restored twice during the 19th century and a 13th century sedilia may indicate that an earlier church stood on the site (Pevsner and Wilson 1998, 637). A church at Paston was gifted to the priory of Bromholm in the mid 12th century (Page 1906, 359).

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 total of eight trial holes were excavated around the church by hand. Following excavation the sides of each hole was 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.

Test Pit 1

The earliest deposit encountered in this pit comprised an orange brown silty sand subsoil (003). This measured in excess of 60mm thick (Fig. 4, Section 1). This was overlain by a graveyard soil of grey sandy silt (002) which was over 0.3m thick.

Sealing the graveyard soil was the current

topsoil of brown sandy silt (001) that was 0.13m thick.

It was noted within this trench that the porch foundations were stepped out (Plate 1).

Test Pit 2

Subsoil comprising orange brown silty sand (007) overlain by brown sandy silt topsoil (008) were the only deposits encountered within this pit (Fig. 4, Section 4).

The mortared flint foundations of the church building were also revealed. Butting against these was a slightly offset foundation, possibly of an earlier buttress, upon which was built the current and slightly larger buttress (Plate 2).

Test Pit 3

A subsoil (004) was overlain by a graveyard soil of brownish grey clayey sand (005) which was over 0.4m thick (Fig. 4, Section 2). Completing the sequence was the current topsoil of brown sandy silt (006).

The earlier buttress was also visible within this test pit (Plate 3).

Test Pit 4

Overlying the orange brown silty sand subsoil (010) was the current topsoil of brown sandy silt (009). These had a combined thickness of 0.5m (Fig. 4, Section 3).

The foundations of the church were slightly stepped out. Abutting these was traces of an earlier buttress (Plate 4).

Test Pit 5

Only subsoil (012) and topsoil (011) were encountered within this trench (Fig. 5, Section 5). The foundations of the chancel were noted to extend deeper than the trial pit, over 0.5m below the current ground level.

Test Pit 6

Again, only subsoil (013) and topsoil (014) deposits were revealed (Fig. 5, Section 6). The foundations of the chancel were noted to be similar to those encountered in Test Pit 5 (Plate 5).

Test Pit 7

Measuring over 0.5m thick was a graveyard soil, comprising grey sandy silt (015). This was in turn overlain by topsoil (018) which sealed the stepped foundation of the church against which was an earlier buttress. The later buttress was again larger.

Test Pit 8

Beneath the foundations of the buttress was a graveyard soil of grey sandy silt (016) which was overlain by topsoil (017). The stepped foundations of the earlier buttress and church wall were also revealed (Plate 6).

6. DISCUSSION

No natural deposits were encountered during the investigation. The general sequence across the site comprised subsoil, particularly where it was protected by the church building, which was overlain by graveyard soil and topsoil.

The foundation courses of the church and its buttresses were revealed in all trenches, although there were no buttresses associated with the chancel. Traces of earlier buttresses were recorded which butted against the wall, indicating that they are later than the body of the church. The buttresses were replaced, and as one of the southern buttresses has a date of 1601, it is possible that these works date to this time.

The foundations of the chancel (as revealed in Pits 5 and 6) were not stepped out and this would suggest that it was of a different build to the nave. No subsoil was encountered in the two northern pits (Test Pits 7 and 8) where the wall was inserted

into graveyard soils and this may indicate that the church had been widened. The south porch also had slightly differing foundations and is also presumed to be a later build.

No other archaeological deposits or features were revealed and no artefacts were retrieved from the investigation.

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at St Margaret's church, Paston, as groundworks would impact on buried archaeological remains of medieval and later date.

The investigations revealed a general sequence of subsoil, graveyard soils and topsoils around the church. Differing foundations suggest that the chancel and south porch were built at a different time to the main body of the church. Additionally, the church may have been altered on its northern side, perhaps being widened. Two phases of buttress construction were recorded, the latter probably dating to the 17th century. No artefacts were observed or collected during the work.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs Ruth Blackman of Birdsall Swash and Blackman Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Paston 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: Alex Beeby
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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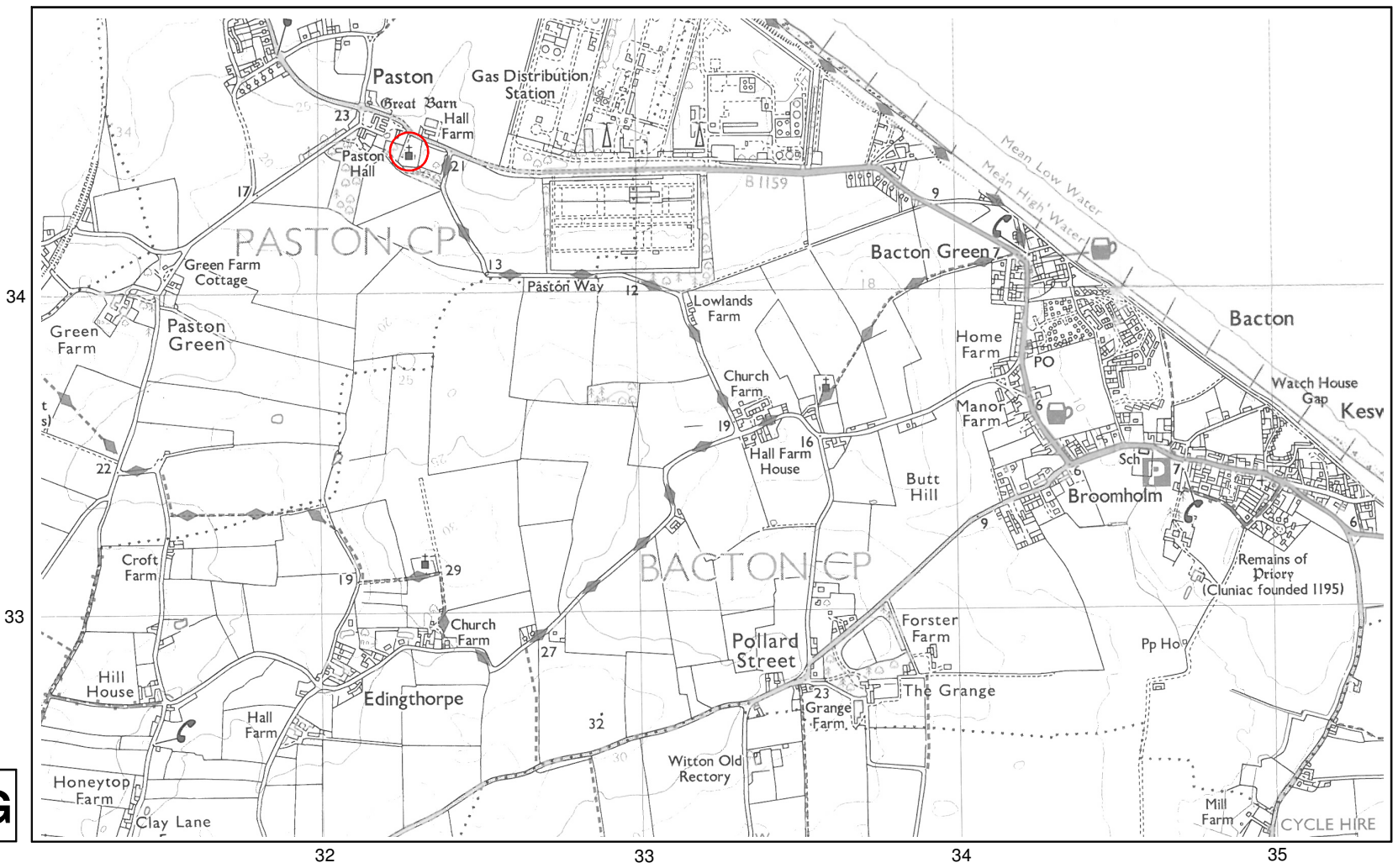
11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey




Figure 1 - General location plan



TG



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 St Margaret's Church


	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: St Margaret's Church, Paston		
Scale 1:20000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 77/12

Figure 2 - Site location plan

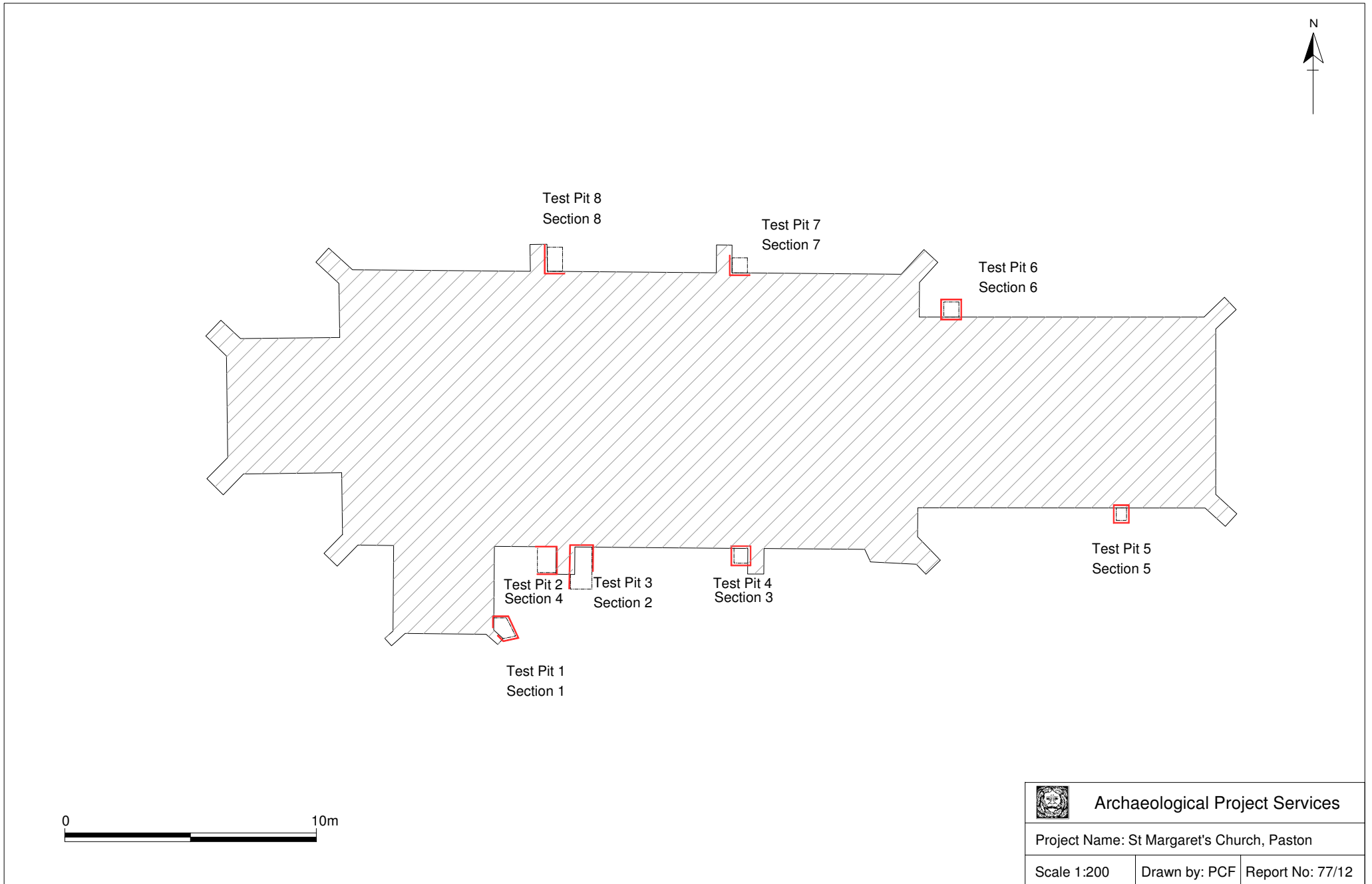


Figure 3 - Plan of the church showing Test Pit locations

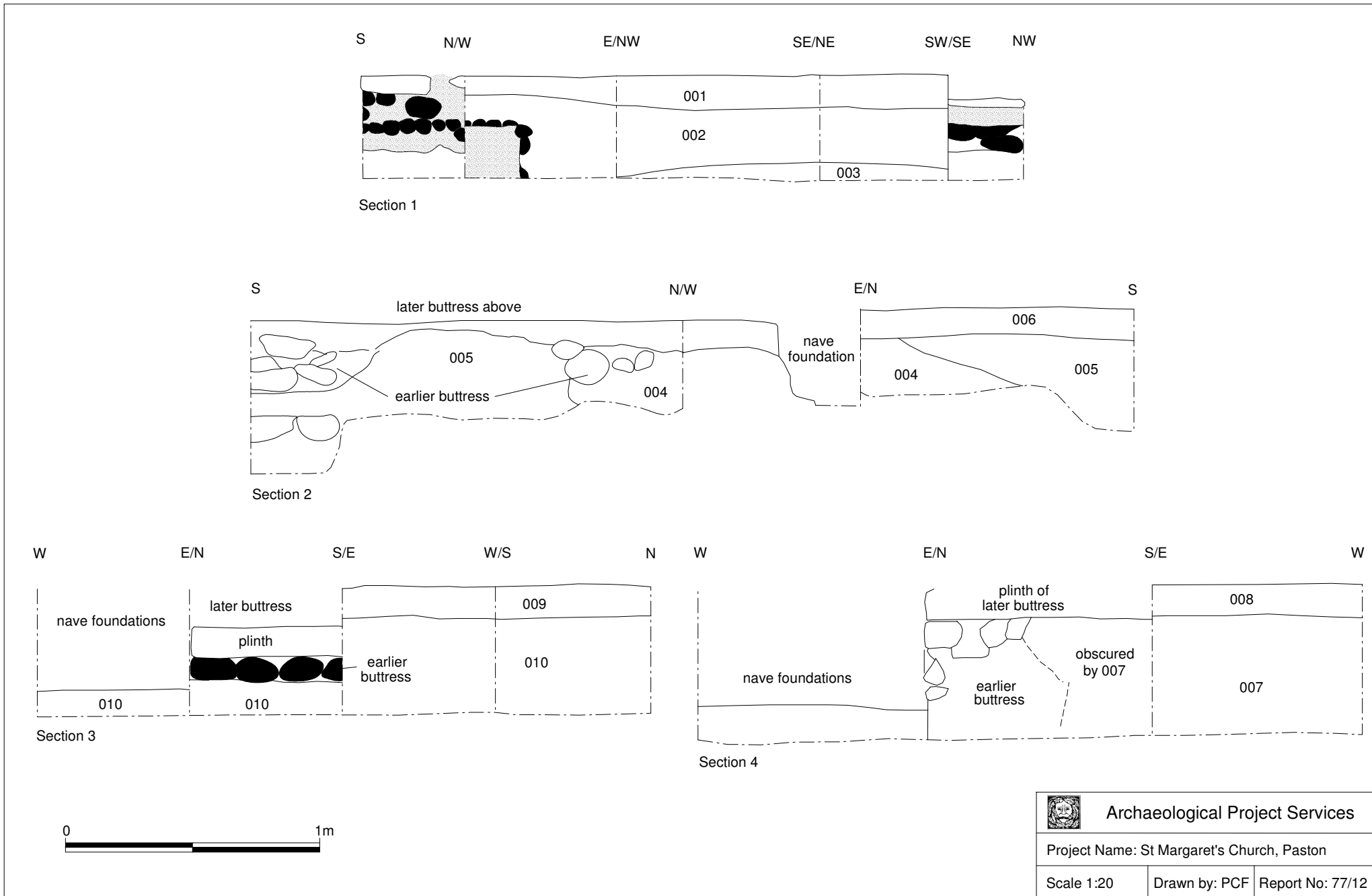
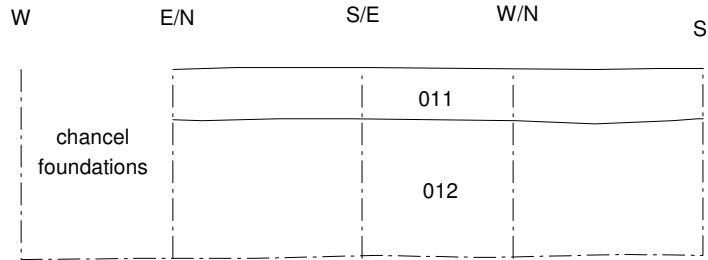
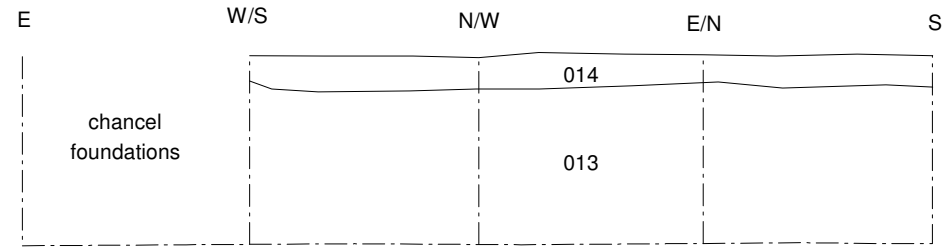


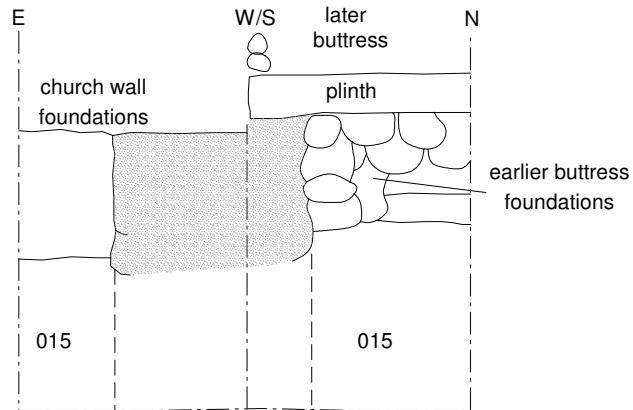
Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 4



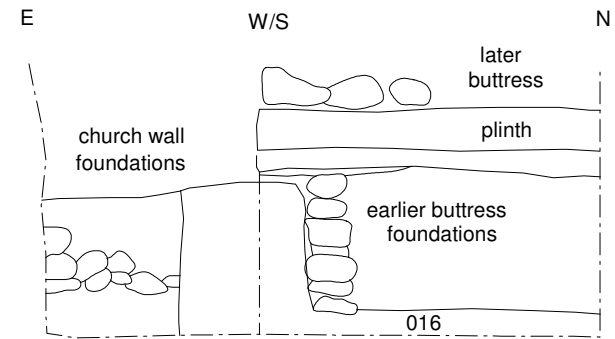
Section 5



Section 6



Section 7



Section 8



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Scale 1:20

Drawn by: PCF

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Figure 5 - Sections 5 to 8



Plate 1 – Test Pit 1, showing the porch foundations, looking west



Plate 2 – Test Pit 2, Foundations of the church with buttress overlying earlier buttress (left), looking north



Plate 3 – Test Pit 3 showing the extent of the earlier buttness, looking northwest



Plate 4 – Test Pit 4, earlier buttness overlying stepped foundations of the nave, looking northeast



Plate 5 – Test Pit 6 showing the foundations of the chancel, looking south



Plate 6 – Test Pit 8, stepped foundations of the church with the earlier and later buttresses built against it, looking west

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Test Pit	Description	Interpretation
001	1	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.13m thick	Topsoil
002	1	Loose mid brownish grey sandy silt, >0.3m thick	Graveyard soil
003	1	Loose and soft mid orange brown silty sand, >60mm thick	Subsoil
004	3	Loose and soft mid orange brown silty sand, >0.23m thick	Subsoil
005	3	Loose dark brownish grey clayey sand, >0.4m thick	Graveyard soil
006	3	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.11m thick	Topsoil
007	2	Soft mid orange brown silty sand	Subsoil
008	2	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.12m thick	Topsoil
009	4	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.12m thick	Topsoil
010	4	Soft mid orange brown silty sand, >0.4m thick	Subsoil
011	5	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.13m thick	Topsoil
012	5	Soft mid orange brown silty sand, >0.36m thick	Buried soil
013	6	Soft and friable grey sandy silt, >0.42m thick	Graveyard soil
014	6	Loose dark brown sandy silt, 0.13m thick	Topsoil
015	7	Soft and friable grey sandy silt, >0.5m thick	Graveyard soil
016	8	Soft and friable grey sandy silt, >70mm thick	Graveyard soil
017	8	Loose dark brown sandy silt	Topsoil
018	7	Loose dark brown sandy silt	Topsoil

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).
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.
Sedilia	Seats for the clergy, which are generally set into the south wall of the chancel.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Daily record sheet
1	Section register sheet
1	Photographic register sheet
1	Context register sheet
18	Context record sheets
5	Sheets 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 129491

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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