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**BUILDING RECORDING AT  
WIGGENHALL ST MARY MAGDALEN'S AND ST  
PETER'S CHURCHES,  
NORFOLK  
(ENF125594)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen PCC**

February 2011

Report Compiled by  
Mark Peachey BA (Hons)

National Grid Reference: TF 5986 1138  
and TF 6042 1326  
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-92857

APS Report No. **12/11**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**


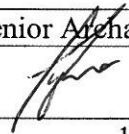




## Quality Control

### Building Recording, Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen's and St Peter's Churches, Norfolk (ENF 125594)

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Date: 11 February 2011	Date: 11 February 2011



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## 1. SUMMARY

*A programme of archaeological building recording was undertaken on St Mary Magdalen and St Peter's churches, Wiggenhall, Norfolk. The outer walls were examined at six different locations around each of these early 15<sup>th</sup> century churches in order to compare the brickwork. Dimensions were taken and notes made of brick colour and detail such as kiln marks. The brickwork was similar at both churches although there was more stone intermixed at St Peter's and the occasional reused floor tile.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of Archaeological Building Recording

Building recording is defined as:

*'... a programme of work intended to establish the character, history, dating, form and archaeological development of a specified building, structure, or complex and its setting, including its buried components on land or under water.'* (IfA 2008).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen PCC, through the agencies of Birdsall, Swash and Blackman LLP, Chartered Architects and Diocesan Surveyors, to undertake building recording of brickwork at St Mary Magdalen's church, Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen, and St Peter's church, Wiggenhall St Peter, Norfolk.

The building recording was carried out on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2010 in accordance with the requirements of a letter from English Heritage to the client.

## 2.3 Site Location

Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen is located 9km south of King's Lynn and 29km northwest of Thetford in the administrative district of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Norfolk (Fig. 1).

The church is situated at the centre of the village at National Grid Reference TF 5986 1138 (Fig. 2). Lying north of Church Road, the site is at a height of 3.7m OD on a slight mound that occupies the churchyard.

Wiggenhall St Peter is a hamlet 2km to the north of Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen. The church is immediately adjacent to the east bank of the River Great Ouse at National Grid Reference TF 6042 1326 and at a height of 3.9m OD.

## 2.4 Historical Setting

Wiggenhall is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Wigrehala*, the name is from the Old English and derives from *halh*, meaning land by a river, and the personal name *Wicga* (Ekwall 1989, 212, 517). At this early date there was no distinction made between the various Wiggenhalls until the Valuation of Norwich in 1254 (*ibid.*). The Domesday Survey records that Wiggenhall was held by Ralph Baynard and contained a fishery, 20 acres of meadow and a half share of a mill (Brown 1984).

St Mary Magdalen's church dates largely from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and is constructed mainly from red brick. It is a big Perpendicular church with a stone tower (Pevsner 1962). The tower has 13<sup>th</sup> century elements in its lower courses. Re-used Norman stonework was recorded in the chancel in 1987.

A small scale excavation within the church revealed that the rebuilding of the church in the 15<sup>th</sup> century involved raising the floor level some 0.7m above that of the

earlier church, perhaps as a result of flooding (Nenk *et al.* 1996, 275).

Earlier in 2010, an excavation was carried out in advance of the insertion of a new floor within the south aisle of the church and a watching brief was undertaken during trenching for new drains on the southern exterior. The investigations revealed natural alluvial layers upon which were deposits associated with the 15<sup>th</sup> century church. A series of graves were encountered within and outside the church. Finds included an important assemblage of painted and stained glass of 15<sup>th</sup> century date comparable to the extant glass in the windows of the north aisle (Cope-Faulkner 2010).

Pevsner (1962, 385) describes St Peter's church as 'an excellent ruin on the brink of the River Ouse'. It has a Perpendicular nave and chancel with large windows. The west tower is ashlar with a brick top. The chancel, nave and west tower were all rebuilt c.1421. The aisle was demolished in 1840. The church was abandoned in 1929 and is now roofless (Batcock 1991).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the work was to provide an archaeological overview of the brickwork and to make comparisons between the two churches based on these observations.

### 4. METHODS

The detail of the brickwork was examined at six observation points on each church (Figs 3, 4). Photographic recording was undertaken with a digital camera. An index of the photographs was compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro forma recording sheets. Munsell charts were used to determine the colour of the bricks.

## 5. RESULTS

Brickwork was examined and recorded at various points around each church. Large parts of St Mary's church were rendered making the choice of observation points limited.

At St Peter's much of the area around the tower was inaccessible due to the presence of scaffolding.

### St Mary Magdalen's Church (Fig 3)

#### *Observation Point 1* (Plate 2)

*Location:* southwest buttress of the porch.

*Height of courses:* nine were 0.93m high.

*Colour of bricks:* Munsell 2.5YR 4/6 red to 2.5YR 5/6 red; clinkered surfaces 5Y 6/2 light olive grey

*Size of bricks:* stretchers around 199-229mm by 45-49mm deep.

*Gaps:* a typical 18mm of mortar between courses, 9mm between adjacent bricks.

*Notes:* irregularly bedded in some areas-repair? No sanded surfaces so presumably slop moulded. Some surfaces very abraded. Many headers with sunken margins. Many areas repointed with modern mortar. Some of the bricks clinkered.

#### *Observation Point 2* (Plate 3)

*Location:* northwest buttress of the tower.

*Height of courses:* ten courses were 0.82m high.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 3/6 dark red

*Colour of mortar:* 2.5YR 8/1 white

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 106-195mm by 40-56mm.



*Gaps:* approximately 25mm between courses and 9-16mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* some sunken margins, no obvious sanding, many bricks abraded. Flint mortar. Mix of headers, stretchers, stone blocks and flint nodules. Some bricks with clinkered surface.

**Observation Point 3** (Plates 4, 5)

*Location:* west end of the north aisle.

*Height of courses:* five courses were 0.37m high above a flint pebble bonding course.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 5/6 red

*Size of bricks:* stretchers about 200-245mm by 45-67mm.

*Gaps:* approximately 25-40mm between courses and 5-12mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* similar to Points 1 and 2. Some sunken margins. Flint mortar, many bricks abraded, slop moulded, some organic impressions.

**Observation Point 4** (Plate 6)

*Location:* west of a north side buttress.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 5/8 red, 10YR 7/2 light grey

*Colour of mortar:* 10YR 8/4 very pale brown

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 232-234mm by 66-67mm.

*Gaps:* 24-30mm between courses and 12-15mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* stone and sand moulded bricks, very regular and clearly later in date than the majority of the building. Prominent kiss marks on one brick.

**Observation Point 5** (Plate 7)

*Location:* east end of the north aisle.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/6 red, 2.5YR 5/6 red

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 220-240mm by 50-55mm.

*Gaps:* approximately 25mm between courses and 10mm between ends.

*Notes:* similar to Points 1-3. Struck or trimmed edges, occasional sunken margins and clinkered ends.

**Observation Point 6** (Plate 8)

*Location:* north side of chancel.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/6 red, 2.5YR 5/6 red

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 226-237mm by 54-63mm. Headers 100-157mm by 50-57mm.

*Notes:* some bricks with white salt surfacing. Slop moulded and frequently trimmed. More obviously clinkered and some limestone mixed in with the bricks.

**St Peter's Church** (Fig 4)

**Observation Point 1** (Plate 10)

*Location:* south side of chancel.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/6 red, 2.5YR 4/8 red

*Colour of mortar:* 10YR 8/2 very pale brown

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 230mm-240mm by 50-57mm, headers 105-128mm by 40-51mm.

*Gaps:* 21-30mm between courses with 11-17mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* mix of bricks in oxidised clay as well as brick-shaped limestone blocks. Some vitrified surfaces. High fired bricks with occasional sunken margins. No obvious sanding. Rare knife trimming on surfaces. Sandy mortar with large calcareous grits.

**Observation Point 2** (Plate 11)

*Location:* east end of chancel.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/6 red, 2.5YR 4/8 red

*Colour of mortar:* 10YR 8/2 very pale brown

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 230mm by 57mm, headers 103-136mm by 47-50mm.

*Gaps:* 12-17mm between courses and 12-22mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* as Point 1 but with surfaces more abraded. Some bricks overfired and obviously clinkered.

**Observation Point 3** (Plate 12)

*Location:* north side of chancel.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/8 red, 2.5YR 3/6 dark red

*Colour of mortar:* 10YR 7/2 light grey

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 229-245mm by 56-64mm. Headers 123-136mm by 48-56mm .

*Gaps:* 12-23mm between courses and 10-20mm between ends.

*Notes:* as Point 2 with very abraded surfaces in this area. Two (later?) gault bricks, probably repair.

**Observation Point 4** (Plate 13)

*Location:* north side of the nave towards the east end.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/8 red, 2.5YR 5/8 red

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 220-240mm by 52-60mm. Headers 120-128mm by 53-66mm.

*Gaps:* 9-20mm between courses and 5-18mm between brick ends.

*Notes:* as Point 1 but occasional use of floor tiles in wall make-up. Some clinkered/overfired bricks. Occasional sunken margins and straw impressions. Mortar covered in render.

**Observation Point 5** (Plate 14)

*Location:* north side of the nave to the west of Point 4.

*Colour of bricks:* 2.5YR 4/8 red, 2.5YR 3/6 dark red

*Size of bricks:* stretchers 233-240mm by 55-61mm. Headers 125-140mm by 55-58mm.

*Notes:* almost identical to Point 4. Occasional kiss marks. Mortar rendered.

**Observation Point 6** (Plate 15)

*Location:* North side of tower.

*Colour of bricks:* red

*Notes:* photographed only, for safety reasons under the scaffolding.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Both churches are constructed largely of red brick in irregular bonds. There was similar variation in brick sizes at each

church. There was more stone intermixed at St Peter's and the occasional reused floor tile. The brickwork was also more abraded.

The nave buttresses of St. Mary Magdalen's church appear to be later than the walls with more regular brick and darker mortar.

It would seem likely that the brick was made on site, or immediately nearby, at each of the two churches. The Fenland silts and clays of the region were extensively used for brick and tile making, and there is documentary evidence for on-site brickmaking at different locations and separate times. Thus, at the 15<sup>th</sup> century mansion of Ayscoughfee Hall in Spalding, there is a reference in 1616 to brick moulds, bricks in a clamp and some tiles (Roberts 1974). Similarly, in the Fenland at Holbeach, proposals made to build two churches in the 1860s were accompanied by an intention of the committee to make their own bricks. Permission was given for them to extract clay for the building of these two churches, at St. Matthew's and St. Mark the Evangelist, both in the parish of Holbeach St, Mark with St. Matthew (MacDonald 1890, 250-1).

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

A programme of archaeological building recording was undertaken on St Mary Magdalen and St Peter's churches, Wiggenhall, Norfolk. The outer walls were examined at six different locations around each of these early 15<sup>th</sup> century churches in order to compare the brickwork. Dimensions were taken and notes made of brick colour and detail such as kiln marks.

Both churches appear to be constructed of comparable red brick of similar varied sizes. This is probably confirmation of their recorded early 15<sup>th</sup> century date.

## 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, who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalen PCC. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
 Building Recording: Alex Beeby  
 Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey  
 CAD Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Mark Peachey  
 Analysis and reporting: Mark Peachey

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## **11. ABBREVIATIONS**

APS Archaeological Project Services

IfA Institute for Archaeologists

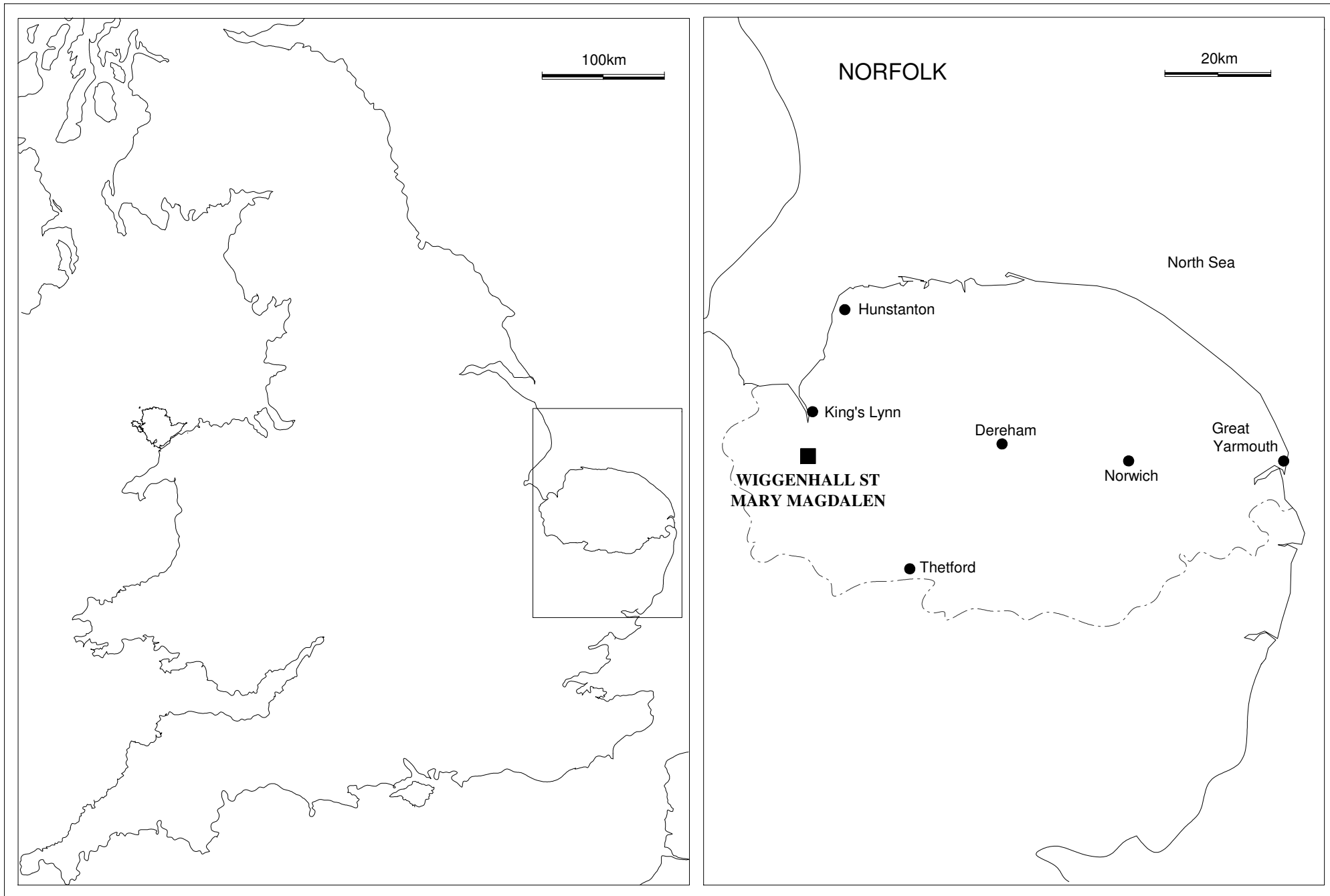
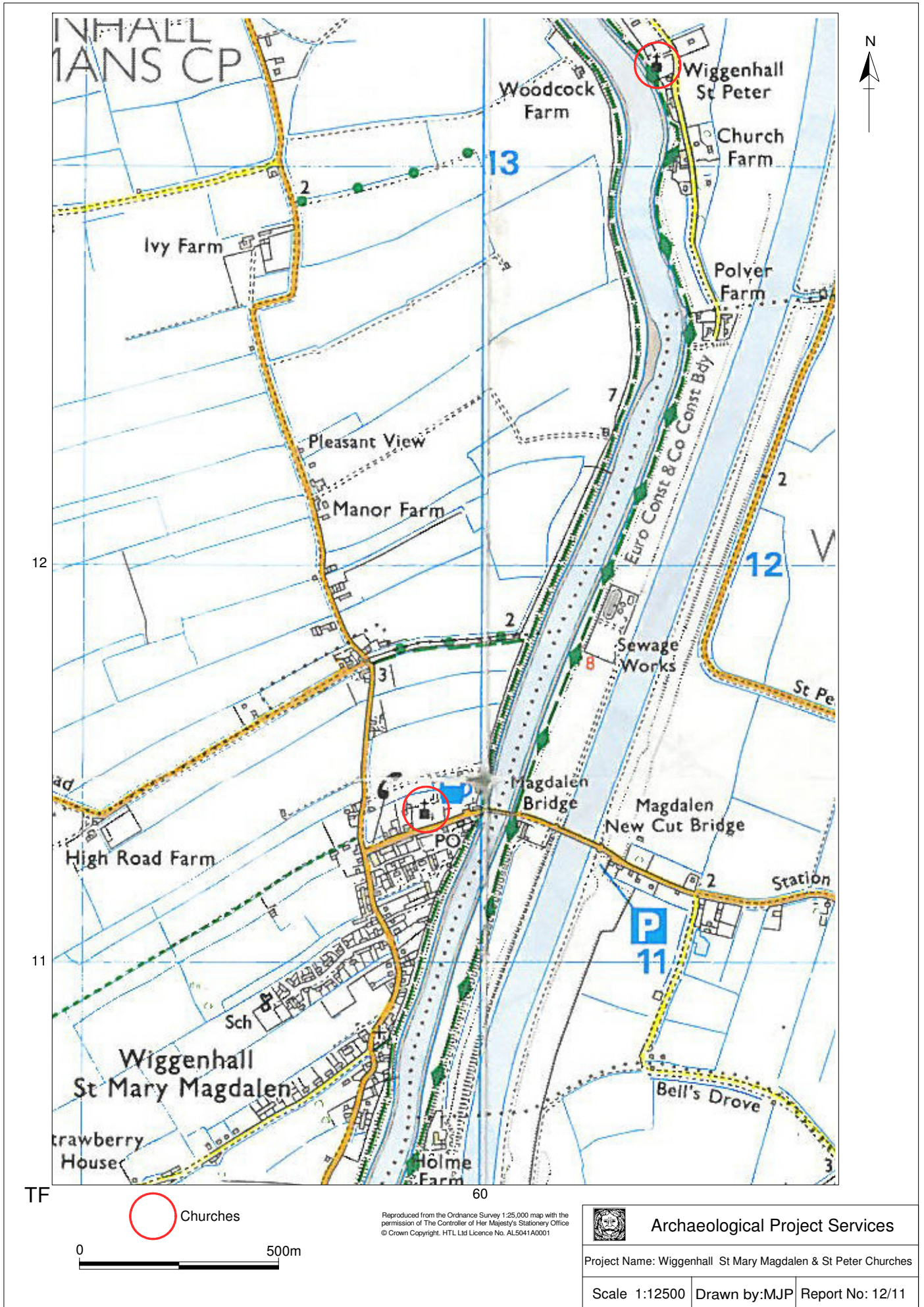


Figure 1 General Location Plan





○ Churches

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Scale 1:12500 Drawn by:MJP Report No: 12/11

Figure 2. Site Location Plan





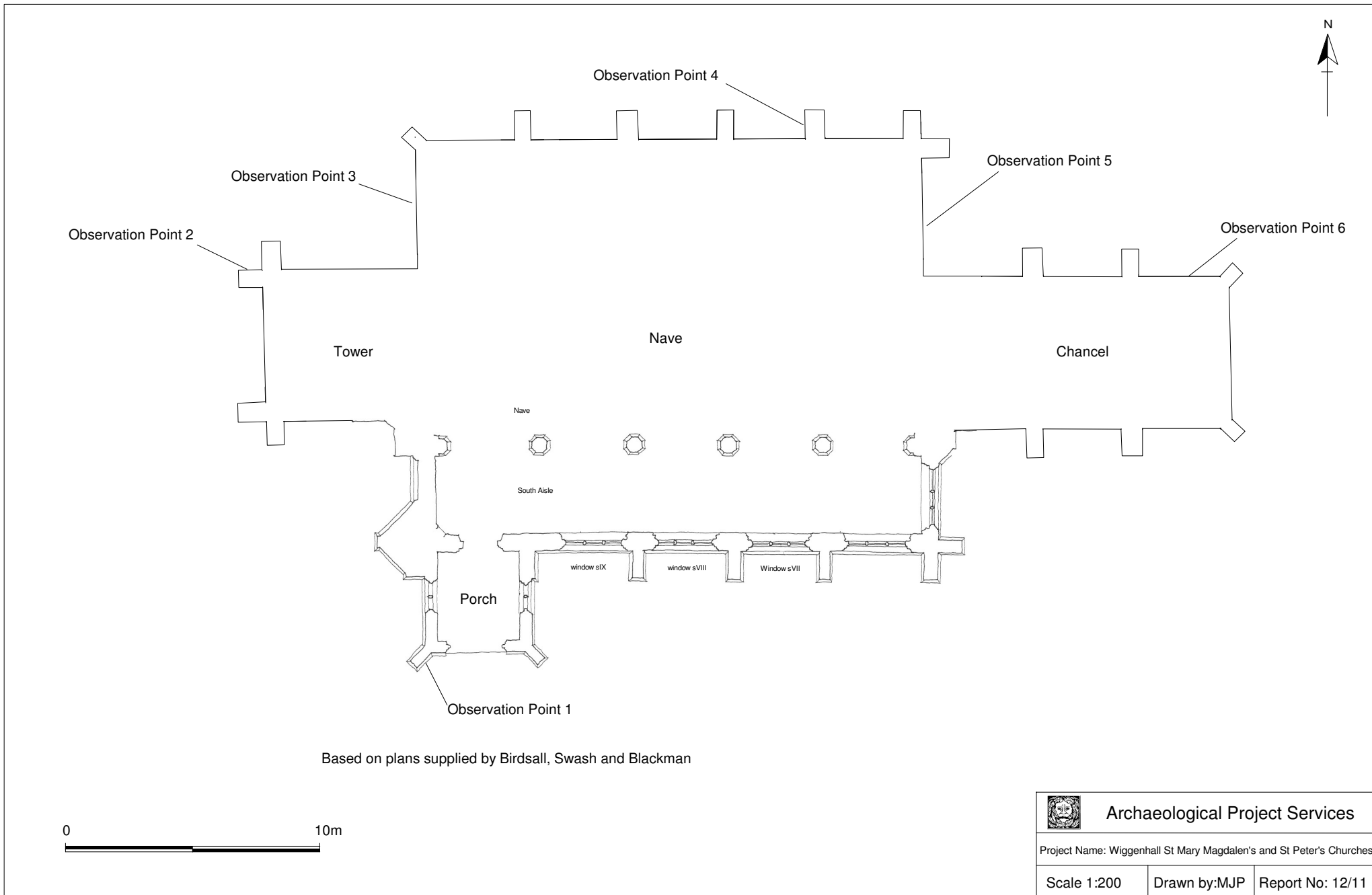
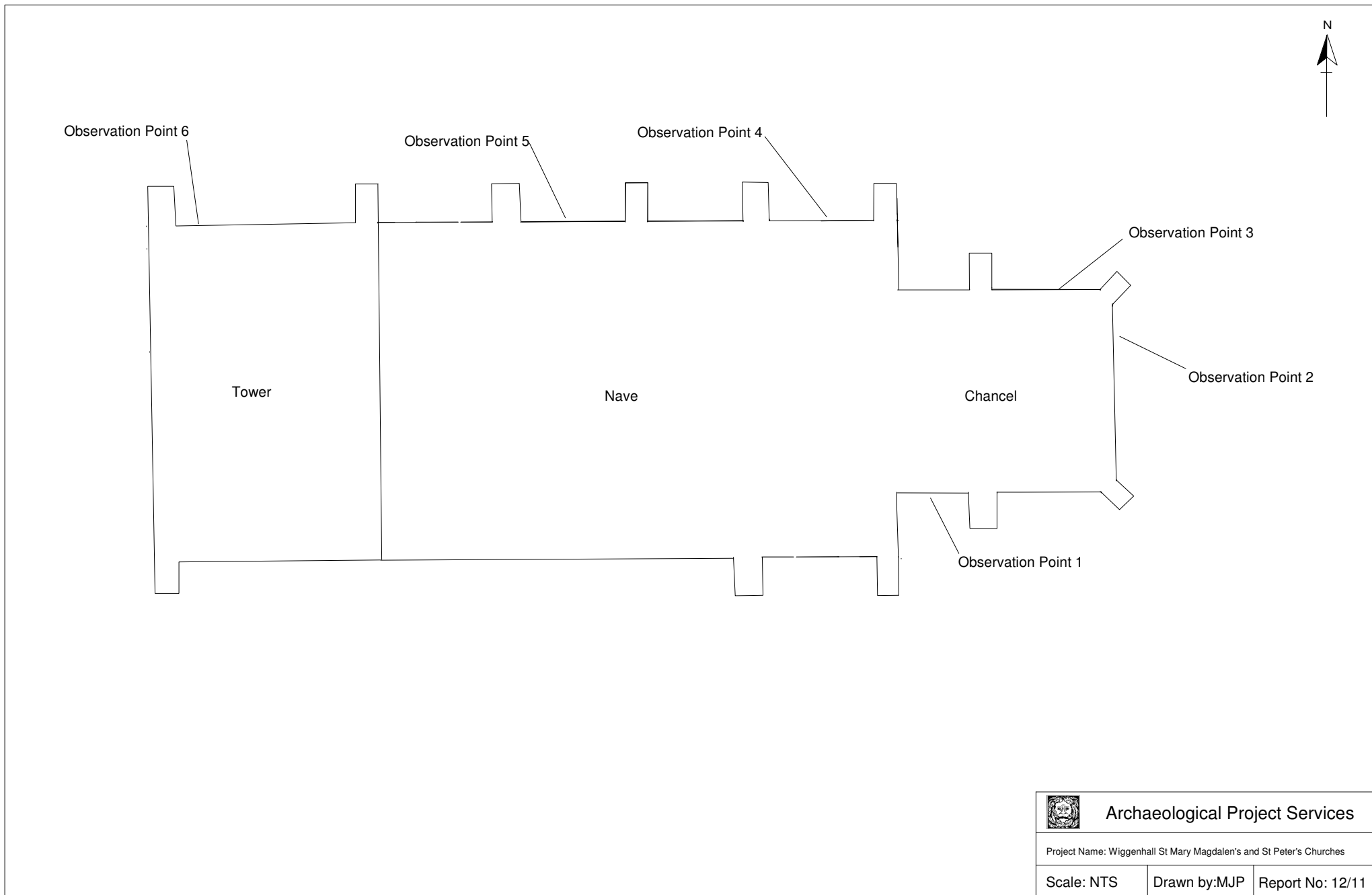


Figure 3. Plan of St Mary Magdalen's Church showing brickwork observation points






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Figure 4. Sketch Plan of St Peter's Church showing brickwork observation points





Plate 1. St Mary Magdalen Church looking north



Plate 2. St Mary's observation  
Point 1 on porch





Plate 3. St Mary's observation Point 2, buttress of west tower



Plate 4. St Mary's observation Point 3, west end of north aisle







Plate 5. Location shot of Point 3



Plate 6. St Mary's observation Point 4  
on a buttress of north aisle





Plate 7. St. Mary's observation Point 5, east end of north aisle



Plate 8. St Mary's observation Point 6, north side of chancel





Plate 9. General view of St Peter's church looking northwest



Plate 10. St Peter's observation Point 1, south side of chancel



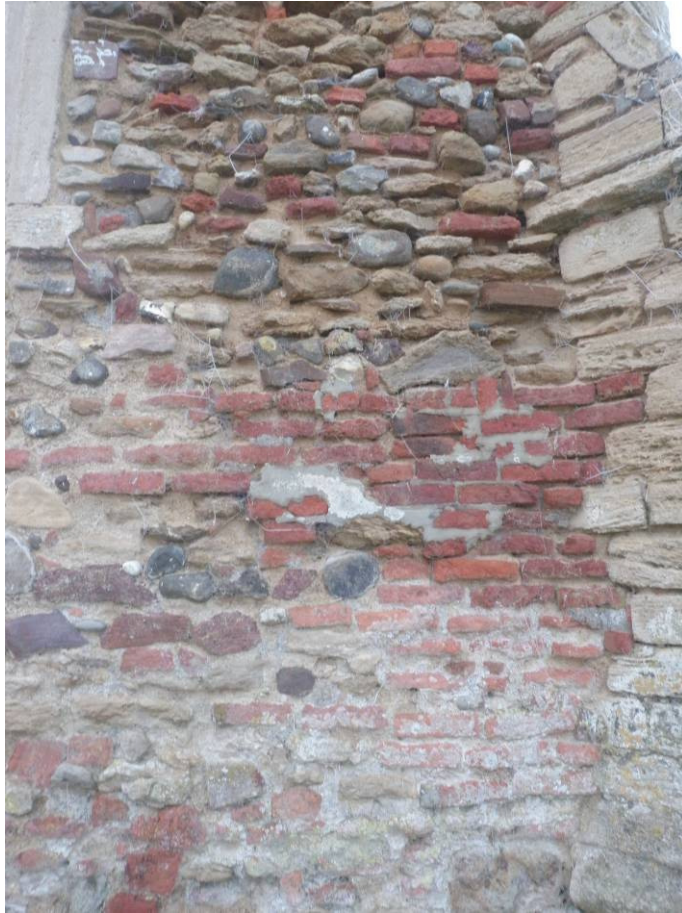


Plate 11. St Peter's observation Point 2 on east end of chancel



Plate 12. St Peter's observation Point 3 on north side of chancel







Plate 13. St Peter's observation Point 4 on north side of nave



Plate 14. St Peter's observation Point 5 on north side of nave





Plate 15. St Peter's observation Point 6 on north side of tower



Plate 16. Reused floor tiles in wall of St Peter's church



## **Appendix 1**

### **GLOSSARY**

<b>Alluvium</b>	Deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea, and fresh water alluvium is laid down by rivers and in lakes.
<b>Domesday Survey</b>	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Old English</b>	The language used by the Saxon (q.v.) occupants of Britain.
<b>Perpendicular</b>	Division of English Gothic architecture in use from c.1350 - c.1530.
<b>Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany

## Appendix 2

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Daily record sheet
3	Photographic record sheets
2	Sketch plans
8	Sheets of notes

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

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	WCMP10
Norfolk Museums Accession No:	ENF125594
Oasis Record No:	archaeo11-92857

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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