

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION:
LAND TO THE WEST OF
THE CHURCH OF ST MARY THE VIRGIN
KENSWORTH
BEDFORDSHIRE**

NGR: TL 0306 1905

on behalf of St Mary's Parochial Church Council



J Richards BA PIFA

December 2008

ASC: 1120/KMV/3



Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall,
Milton Keynes MK6 1NE
Tel: 01908 608989 Fax: 01908 605700
Email: office@archaeological-services.co.uk
Website: www.archaeological-services.co.uk



Site Data

<i>ASC project code:</i>	KMV	<i>ASC project no:</i>	1120
<i>OASIS ref:</i>	archaeol2-49715	<i>Event/Accession no:</i>	LUTN: 2009.96
<i>County:</i>	Bedfordshire		
<i>Village/Town:</i>	Kensworth		
<i>Civil Parish:</i>	Kensworth		
<i>NGR (to 8 figs):</i>	TL 0306 1905		
<i>Extent of site:</i>	770 square metres		
<i>Present use:</i>	Pasture		
<i>Planning proposal:</i>	Graveyard extension		
<i>Planning application ref/date:</i>	07/12222		
<i>Local Planning Authority:</i>	South Bedfordshire District Council		
<i>Date of fieldwork:</i>	3 rd November 2008		
<i>Client:</i>	Kensworth Parochial Church Council Church End Cottage Kensworth Dunstable Bedfordshire LU6 3RA		
<i>Contact name:</i>	David Shelley		

Internal Quality Check

<i>Primary Author:</i>	J Richards BA PIFA	<i>Date:</i>	19 th December 2008
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<i>Revisions:</i>		<i>Date:</i>	
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<i>Edited/Checked By:</i>	Bob Zeepvat	<i>Date:</i>	19 th December 2008
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Figure 1: General location (Scale 1:25,000)

Summary

In November 2008 ASC carried out an evaluation at land to the west of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth, Bedfordshire, in advance of the extension of the churchyard. The foundations of a wall formed of flint nodules were revealed, as was a deposit interpreted as levelling for a floor. These form the remains of the former vicarage. A probable boundary gully, cut by the wall, and a line of postholes or truncated pits, also a probable boundary, were also revealed during the evaluation. Several fragments of tile of probable post-medieval date were recovered from the subsoil, along with a single sherd of white glazed china of modern date. Apart from a single fragment of peg tile recovered from the gully, no other dating evidence was revealed during the evaluation.

1. Introduction

1.1 In November 2008 *Archaeological Services and Consultancy Ltd* (ASC) carried out an evaluation at land to the west of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth, Bedfordshire. The project was commissioned by *St Mary's Parochial Church Council*, and was carried out according to a brief (Mather 2008) prepared on behalf of the local planning authority (LPA), *South Bedfordshire District Council*, by their archaeological advisor (AA), the *Heritage and Environment Group* (HEG) of *Bedfordshire County Council*, and a project design prepared by ASC (Richards 2008). The relevant planning application reference is 07/1222.

1.2 *Planning Background*

This evaluation was required under the terms of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (PPG16), as a condition of planning permission for the extension of the churchyard.

1.3 *Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd*

Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd (ASC) is an independent archaeological practice providing a full range of archaeological services including consultancy, field evaluation, mitigation and post-excavation studies, historic building recording and analysis. ASC is recognised as a *Registered Archaeological Organisation* by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, in recognition of its high standards and working practices.

1.4 *Management*

The project was managed by Karin Semmelmann BA MA MIFA, and was carried out under the overall direction of Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

1.5 *The Site*

1.5.1 *Location & Description*

The site is located in the parish of Kensworth in the administrative district of South Bedfordshire. It is situated in the small settlement of Church End, which is to the north of Kensworth village and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TL 0306 1907 (Fig. 1).

The site comprises a 770 square metre parcel of land to the west of the church and is accessed via a gate from Hollicks Lane to the southeast (Fig. 2). The site is currently a pasture field and contains no standing buildings or other structures.

1.5.2 *Geology & Topography*

The soils of the area comprise those of the *Batcombe Association*, being “fine silty over clayey and fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging; some well drained clayey soils over chalk; variably flinty” (Soil Survey 1983, 582a). These overly Upper Cretaceous Chalk (BGS, Sheet 220).

The site lies on the southeast facing slope of a steep valley and lies at an elevation of *c.*180m AOD.

1.5.3 *Proposed Development*

The proposal is to extend the existing graveyard, which lies to the east of the site (Fig. 2).

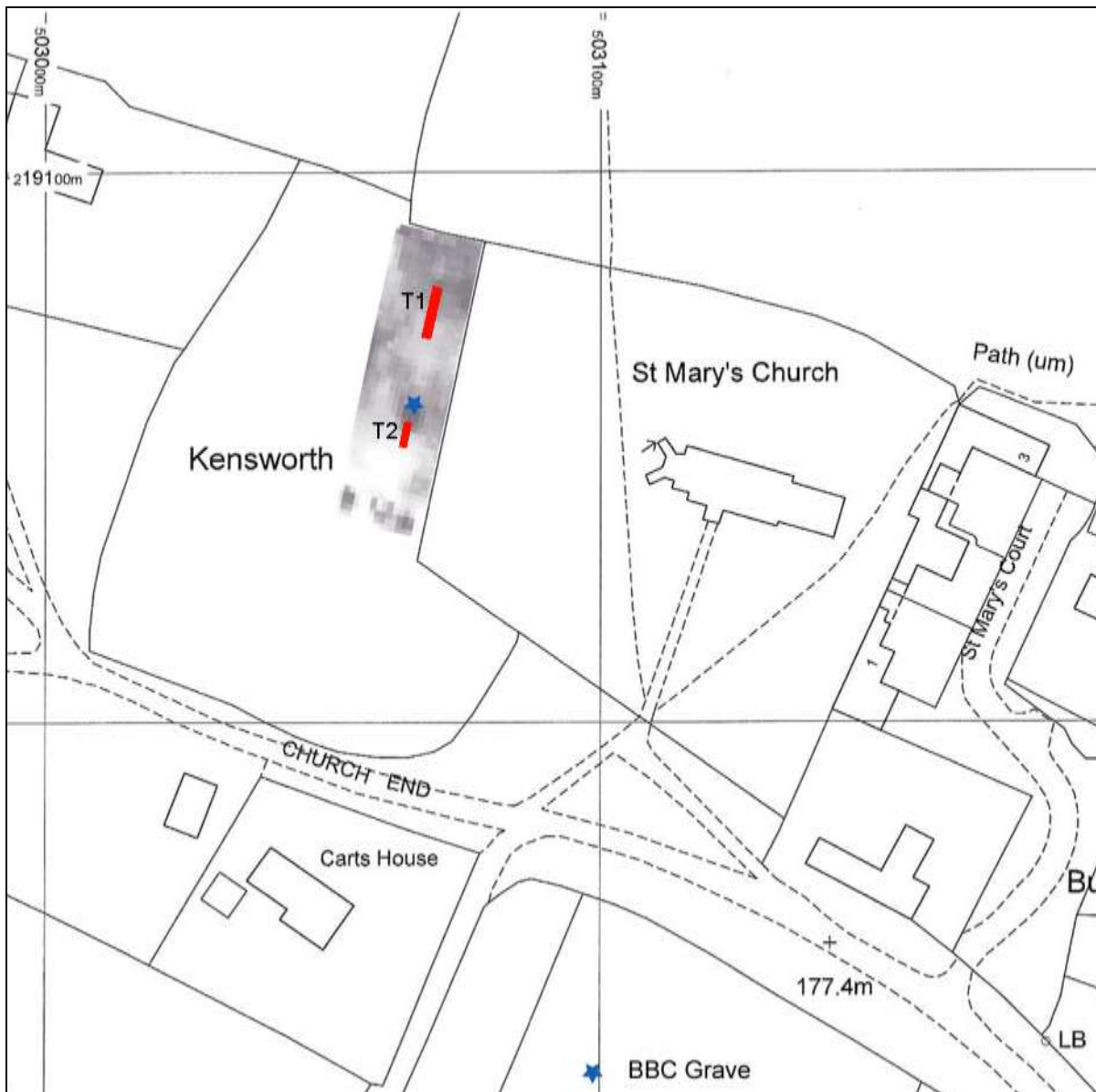


Figure 2: Site plan showing trench locations and results of geophysical survey carried out by Manshead Archaeological Society (Scale 1:1250)

2. Aims & Methods

2.1 *Aims*

In line with the requirements of the brief (Section 2), the aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine the location, extent, nature, integrity, state of preservation and date of any archaeological features or deposits that may be present

2.2 *Standards*

The work conformed to the project design, to the relevant sections of the Institute of Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (IFA 2000) and *Standard & Guidance Notes* (IFA 2001), to the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers East of England Region *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East of England* (ALGAO 2003), and to the relevant sections of ASC's own *Operations Manual*.

2.3 *Methods*

The work was carried out according to the brief (Section 3), which required:

- 24 square metres of trenching. An indicative trench location is shown on Fig. 3
- A contingency for a further 4 square metres to allow for further investigation of any significant features or deposits that are encountered

3. Archaeological & Historical Background

3.1 The following section provides a summary of the readily available archaeological and historical background to the development site and its environs. The site lies within an area of archaeological and historical interest, and has the potential to reveal evidence of a range of periods.

This section has been compiled with information from the Bedfordshire *Historic Environment Record* (HER), and other readily available sources.

3.2 **Prehistoric & Iron Age** (before AD43)

South Bedfordshire was an important area of settlement throughout the prehistoric period. A small number of palaeolithic artefacts have been found in the Kensworth area, notably an axe from Mount Pleasant north of the site (Smith 1894; HER13570). Activity may have intensified during the later Neolithic and Bronze Age periods and a quantity of Neolithic and Bronze Age flint has been located north of the site at Kensworth Quarry (McSloy & Shotliff 1996; HER13576, 13577).

Extensive fieldwalking in the parish by the *Manshead Archaeological Society* between 1994 and 1995 identified several flint scatters from Mesolithic to Bronze Age date (HER16249, 16253, 16259). A large number of Bronze Age round barrows (burial mounds) are situated in this area of the Chilterns, notably a group known as the *Five Knolls*, 3km west of the site (Dyer 1991).

The line of a prehistoric track to the northeast of the site could be traced as an earthwork as recently as 1894, and is thought to be a forerunner of *Watling Street* which runs on a similar alignment further to the east (HER276).

3.4 **Roman** (AD43-c.450)

The Chiltern hills were an important area during the Roman period and a major Roman road, now known as *Watling Street*, ran northwest from *Londinium* (London) passing 1km east of the site (Fig. 1). The site lies 3km south of the small Roman town of *Durocbrivis* (Dunstable: Burnham & Wachter 1990; Matthews 1989).

The HER records that Roman pottery was regularly found during grave digging in the existing grave yard (HER 106; Simco 1984). This, and other Iron Age and Roman pottery found at Hollick's Lane to the south of the site (Horne 1997), may indicate that a Roman settlement was situated at Church End. The *Manshead Archaeological Society* have also found Roman quernstone fragments whilst fieldwalking in the parish (HER16259, 16254).

3.5 **Saxon** (c.450-1066)

Kensworth was mentioned in the Domesday survey, when the land was held by the Canons of St Paul's, London, and was valued at seventy shillings (Morris 1977). The manor had land for 10 ploughs, and supported 8 villains, 3 bordars and 3 slaves, suggesting that Kensworth was a moderately sized settlement by the time of the Norman Conquest (Williams & Martin 2003).

The settlement may therefore have been in existence at Church End during the Saxon period and the presence of the parish church indicates that Church End may have formed the original centre of Kensworth.

The early development of St Mary's Church is not understood in detail. The building may have originated during the Saxon period, as the remains of a Saxon flint wall were revealed in 1987 during repair work (HER 1082). The majority of the existing fabric is Norman, but later alterations Pevsner (1968, 105).

3.6 **Medieval** (1066-1500)

The building now known as *Bury Farm*, to the east of the church was the formerly the site of the manor (Page 1908) described in leases of 1152 and 1299 (HER12711). Archaeological evaluations and watching briefs at Bury Farm have not revealed any evidence of activity earlier than the construction of the post medieval barns, when this site was extensively landscaped (Fell 2001), although the HER records that reused stones originally from the church were found during rebuilding work to the house in 1880 (Cussons 1881).

3.7 **Post-Medieval & Modern** (1500-present)

The manor of Kensworth was held by the canons of St Paul's until 1871 except for a brief period in the 17th century when Kensworth was sold to William Barbour of Redbourne, and later restored to the church.

Two "donkey wheels" are recorded in the vicinity of the site, one at Bury Farm dated to 1771, and the other at Church End Farm dating from 1688 (HER1527, 1524). These were used to raise water from wells up to 197 feet deep until the early 20th century. This difficulty in obtaining water may explain why the settlement at Church End remained very small (S Coleman *pers. comm.*).

Kensworth Parish was enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1801, and the subsequent redistribution of the land separated Kensworth Village (now known as Church End) from Kensworth Common, now the main settlement, which had developed along the Whipsnade to Markyate road (Fell 2001).

The population of Kensworth increased rapidly with the expansion of chalk quarrying and brick making in the 19th century, and Kensworth Quarry is still extant to the north west of the site (Fig. 1).

A rectory formerly stood in the close west of the church from at least 1297, when it was assigned to the vicar, although the parish registers indicate that it was renovated or rebuilt in 1800, as it had been used as two tenements for poor people until then (HER13585). Two buildings are shown on the Enclosure Map of 1801 (Coleman 1985). These were demolished in 1820, and the current vicarage is located 500m southeast of the site, on Spratt's Lane (Fig. 1).

The *Manshead Archaeological Society* carried out a geophysical survey and test pitting of the site in 2008 and identified a rubble layer interpreted as the remains of the vicarage, demolished in 1820 (Hudspith *et al* 2008). This survey also identified the location of a "grave" dug as part of a film set for a BBC film in 1996 (*ibid*).

4. Results

4.1 General

Two trenches were excavated within the area of the proposed graveyard extension. Dark brownish-black clayey-silt topsoil (14) overlay mid orangey-brown silty-clay subsoil (15), which contained inclusions of tile, particularly in Trench 2, and flint, as well as small chalk inclusions. Below this the natural strata comprised mid orange clay with occasional flint inclusions over white chalk.

Detailed information regarding the trial trenches and their contents appears in Appendix 1.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figs 3 & 4: Plates 1-4)

This trench contained three possible postholes, or truncated pits, on a north-south alignment (Figs 3-5). No finds were recovered from these features (contexts [1], [3] and [5]), which were sub-circular in plan and were sealed by the subsoil.

Feature [1] cut the natural clay and was 0.92m in length (east-west), 0.62m in width and 0.06m deep. It had gently sloping, irregular sides and a concave base, and was filled with a light greyish brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions (2).

Feature [3] was partly cut into the natural clay and chalk. It was 0.91m in length (east-west), 0.72m in width and 0.05m deep, it had sloping, irregular sides and a concave base and was filled with a light greyish brown silty clay with frequent flint inclusions (4).

Feature [5] was cut into the natural chalk, and was 0.96m in length (north-south), 0.72m in width and 0.13m deep, it had steeply sloping sides and an irregular concave base and was filled with a light greyish brown silty clay with occasional flint inclusions (6).

4.3 Trench 2 (Figs 3 & 4: Plates 5 & 6)

This trench contained a possible posthole (context [13]), a north-south aligned gully (context [7]), an east-west aligned wall foundation (context [10]) and a levelling layer (context (11)) (Fig. 5). Several tree roots were observed within the topsoil (14) in this trench, but the root disturbance did not extend into the subsoil (15).

Gully [7] was 0.70m wide and 0.20m deep. It was filled by dark brownish orange silty clay with occasional flint inclusions (8). A single fragment of peg tile was recovered from this feature, which extended north beyond the trench and was cut by the east-west aligned wall foundation. The fill of this feature was almost indistinguishable from the subsoil, but contained no chalk inclusions.

This gully cut Posthole [13], which measured 0.32m north-south, and was filled by orange clay (12), identical to the natural. Posthole [13] had almost vertical sides and a flat base. It was cut into the chalk and was 0.12m deep.

Wall foundation [10] extended east and west beyond the trench edges. It was 0.71m wide and 0.28m deep. It was constructed with large flint nodules forming four courses, bonded with light brownish yellow clayey sand. The construction cut [9] had vertical sides and a flat base, and was cut into the natural clay to the north.

Butting this wall to the south was a 0.19m thick layer comprised of an evenly distributed mix of light brownish yellow chalk, mid orange sand and mid brown clayey silt (11), overlying the natural chalk. The natural chalk was observed at a much deeper level at the south of the site than at the north, and this mixed layer may represent a levelling deposit for the floor within the building. A sub-circular depression in the natural was observed below, and filled by, this layer (Fig. 3).



Plate 1: Section of Trench 1



Plate 2: Section of Posthole [1]



Plate 3: Section of Posthole [3]



Plate 4: Section of Posthole [5]



Plate 5: Section of Gully [7]

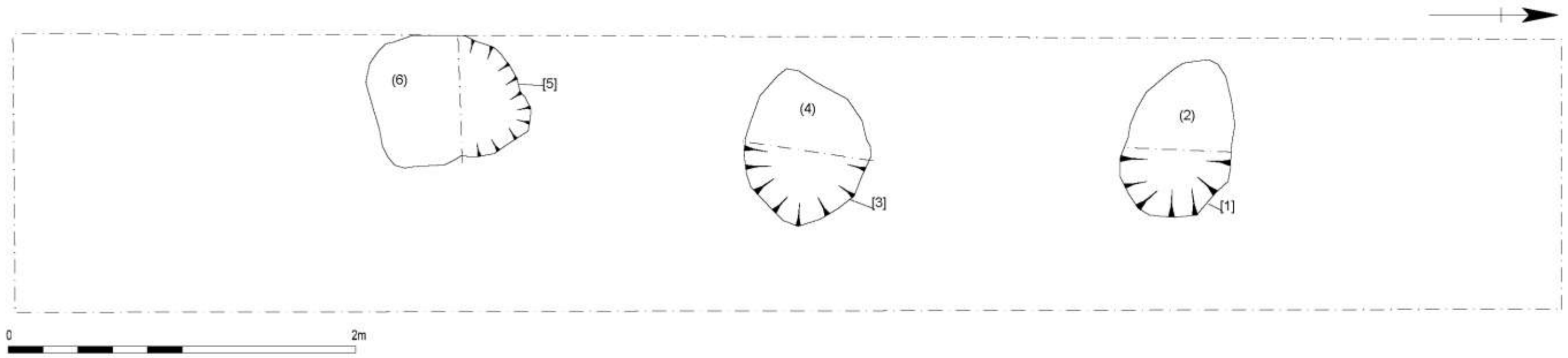


Plate 6: Section of Wall [9]



Plate 7: Section of Posthole [13] and Gully [7]

Trench 1



Trench 2

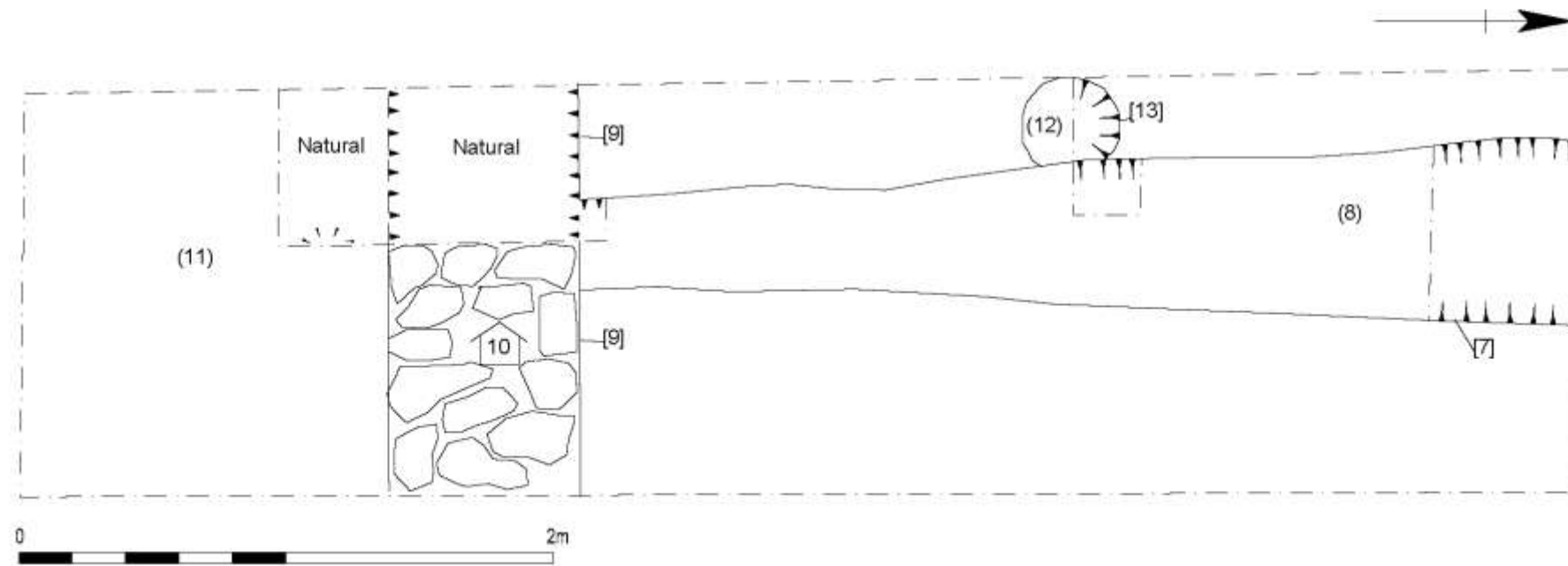
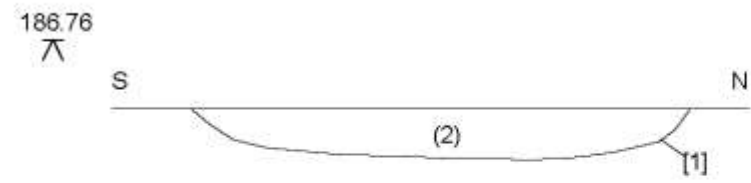
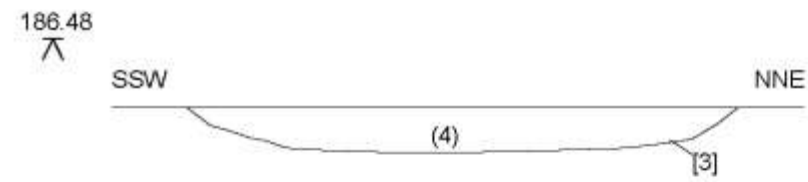


Figure 3: Trench plans (Scale 1:25)

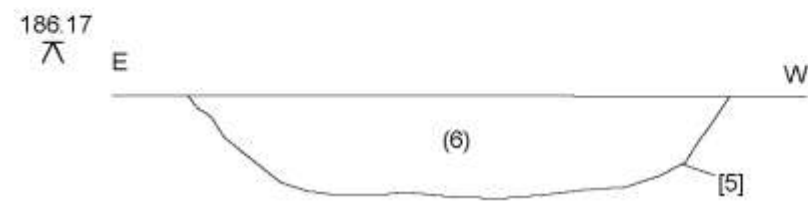
East facing section of Pit [1]



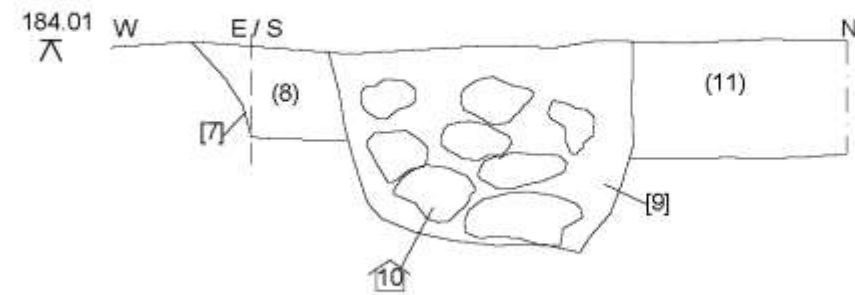
East facing section of Pit [3]



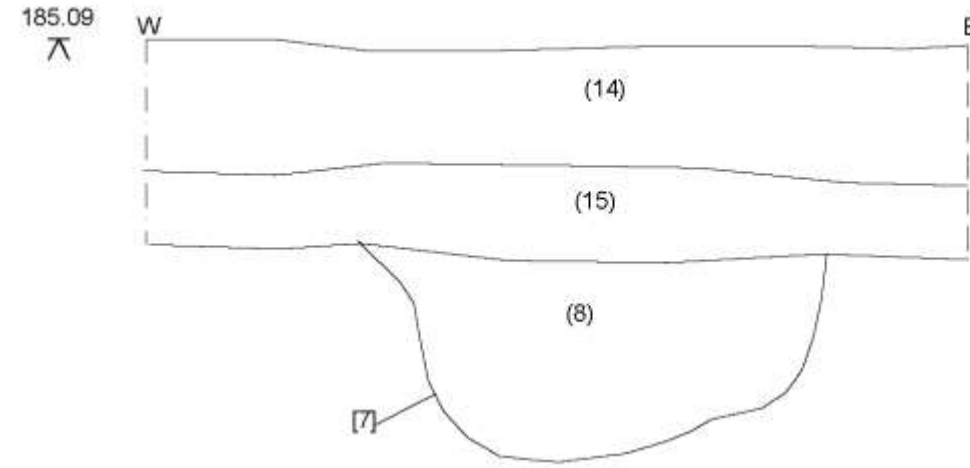
North facing section of Pit [5]



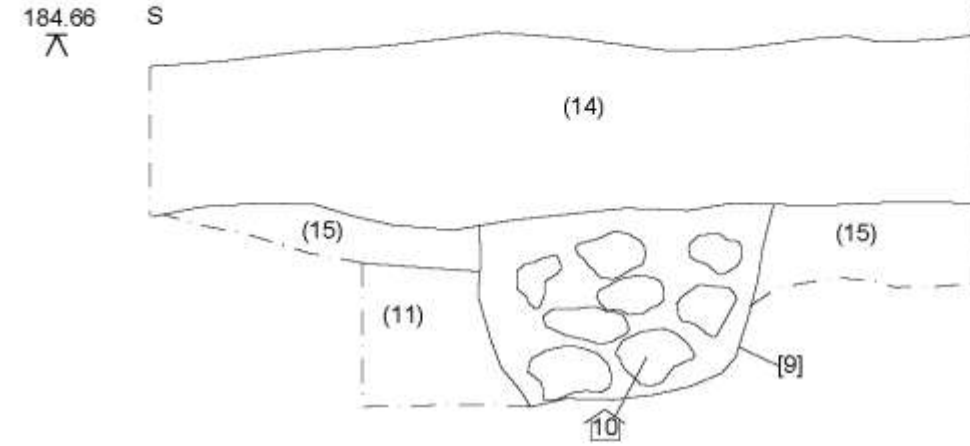
South and West facing sections of Wall [10] and Gully [7]



South facing section of Gully [7]



East facing section of Wall [10]



Example section of Trench 1

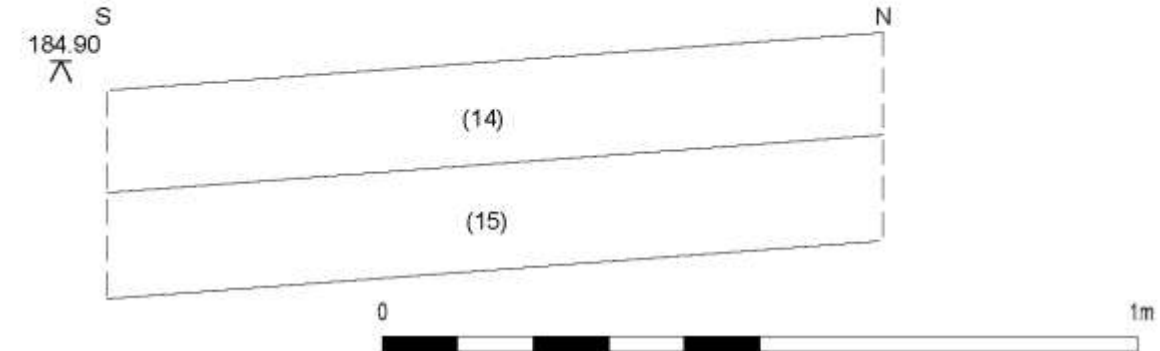


Figure 4: Sections (Scale 1:10)

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The evaluation trenches revealed an east-west aligned wall footing [10] formed of large flint nodules with clayey sand bonding material, associated with a mixed deposit (11) likely to have formed a levelling layer for the floor of the former building.
- 5.2 A north-south aligned gully [7] was cut by the wall foundation [9], and in turn cut a small posthole ([13]). The gully contained a single fragment of peg tile, similar to the fragments of tile observed in the subsoil. This gully was not observed in Trench 1, although a line of large postholes or truncated pits (contexts [1], [3] and [5]) was observed on a north-south alignment.
- 5.3 The wall footing and floor layer are within an area of low and high resistance anomalies identified by the geophysical survey carried out by the Manshead Archaeological Society (Fig. 2). The gully and the postholes/pits were not identified by the survey, but this may be due in part to the shallow and ephemeral nature of these features, and also to the variations in the natural strata, which had several small outcrops of chalk within the clay.
- 5.4 No other significant archaeological features were observed in the trenches. While the existence of further individual isolated archaeological features away from the trenches cannot be specifically excluded, it is unlikely that large numbers of archaeological features were present on the site out-with the former vicarage building.
- 5.5 *Confidence Rating*
The evaluation took place in moderately good weather, and full co-operation was received from the client throughout. A high confidence rating is therefore attached to the results of the evaluation.

6. Acknowledgements

The evaluation was commissioned by *St Mary's Parochial Church Council*. The writer is grateful to David Shelley for his assistance. The project was monitored by Lesley-Ann Mather on behalf of the local planning authority. Thanks are also due to Stephen Coleman of the *Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record* for his assistance, and to *JRS Contracting* for arranging the hire of the JCB.

The project was managed for ASC by Karin Semmelmann MA MIFA. Fieldwork was carried out by Jenny Richards BA PIFA with the assistance of Chris Swain. The report was prepared by Jenny Richards and edited by Bob Zeepvat BA MIFA.

7. Archive

7.1 The project archive will comprise:

1. Brief
2. Project Design
3. Initial Report
4. Clients site plans
5. Site records
6. Finds
7. Site record drawings
8. List of photographs
9. B/W prints & negatives
10. CDROM with copies of all digital files.

7.2 The archive will be deposited with *Luton Museum* (LUTN: 2009.96).

8. References


Standards & Specifications


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- EH 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition. English Heritage (London).
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Appendix 1: Trench Summary Tables

Trench 1						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	9m	Width	1.60m	Depth	0.60m
	Levels					
	Trench base north			186.88m OD		
	Trench top north			187.25m OD		
	Trench base south			185.09m OD		
	Trench top south			185.98m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	5030070 219080		S	503068 219070	
	Orientation			N-S		
Reason for Trench			Planning condition			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
14	Layer	Dark brownish-black clayey silty (topsoil)	-	200	-	
15	Layer	Mid orangey brown silty clay, flint and chalk inclusions, occasional tile, 1 fragment of white glazed china (subsoil)	-	200	200	
2 1	Fill Cut	Light greyish-brown silty-clay Sub-circular, gently sloping sides, concave base	920	60	400	
4 3	Fill Cut	Light greyish-brown silty-clay, flint inclusions Sub-circular, steeply sloping sides, concave base	910	50	400	
6 5	Fill Cut	Light greyish-brown silty-clay Sub-circular, steeply sloping sides, concave base	960	130	400	

Trench 2						
	Max Dimensions (m)					
	Length	5m	Width	1.60m	Depth	0.80m
	Levels					
	Trench base north			184.52m OD		
	Trench top north			185.09m OD		
	Trench base south			183.51m OD		
	Trench top south			184.66m OD		
	NGR Co-ordinates					
	N	503065 219054		S	503064 219048	
	Orientation			N-S		
Reason for Trench			Planning condition			
Context	Type	Description and Interpretation	Width (max: mm)	Thickness (max: mm)	Depth (BGL: mm)	
14	Layer	Dark brownish-black clayey silty (topsoil)	-	200	-	
15	Layer	Mid orangey brown silty clay, flint and chalk inclusions, occasional tile, 1 fragment of white glazed china (subsoil)	-	200	200	
8	Fill	Mid orangey brown silty clay, flint inclusions, single fragment of peg tile.	720	200	400	
7	Cut	Linear, steep sided, concave base; cuts (12); cut by [9].				
10	Fill	Large flint nodules in light brownish yellow clayey sand	710	280	400	
9	Cut	Linear, vertical sides, flat base				
11	Layer	Mixed light brownish yellow clayey-sand with mid orange sand and light brown clayey silt	-	190	400	
12	Fill	Dark orange clay, no inclusions	375	150	400	
13	Cut	Circular, steep sided, concave base; cut by [7]				

Appendix 2: List of Photographs

SITE NAME: St Mary's, Kensworth			SITE NO/CODE: 1120/KMV
Shot	B&W	Digital	Subject
1		✓	Working shot
2		✓	Working shot
3		✓	Working shot
4	✓	✓	Trench overview
5	✓	✓	Trench overview
6	✓	✓	Trench 1 from north
7	✓	✓	Trench 1 from south
8	✓	✓	Possible posthole / pit [1]
9	✓	✓	Possible posthole / pit [3]
10	✓	✓	Possible posthole / pit [5]
11	✓	✓	Section of Trench 1
12	✓	✓	Trench 2 from north
13	✓	✓	Trench 2 from south
14	✓	✓	Section of gully [7]
15	✓	✓	Section of wall [9]
16		✓	Church from south
17		✓	Site from Hollick's Lane (southeast)
18	✓	✓	Section of wall, west facing
19	✓	✓	Section of wall, south facing
20	✓	✓	Section of posthole and gully, north facing

Appendix 3: Finds Concordance

Context	Pottery		Tile	
	(no)	(g)	(no)	(g)
7			1	
15	1			

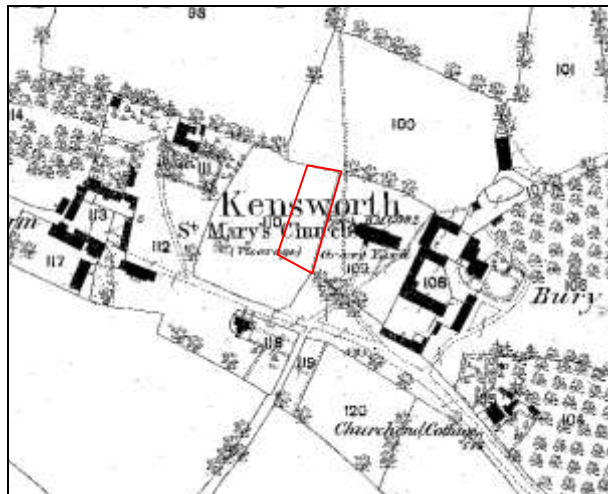
Appendix 4: Map Regression



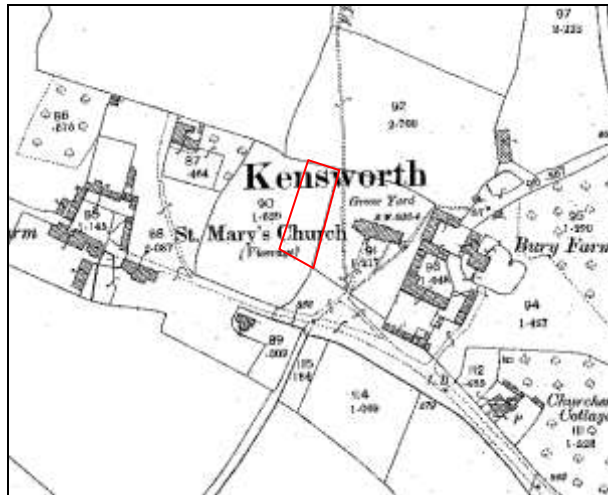
1798 Enclosure Map (*not to scale*)



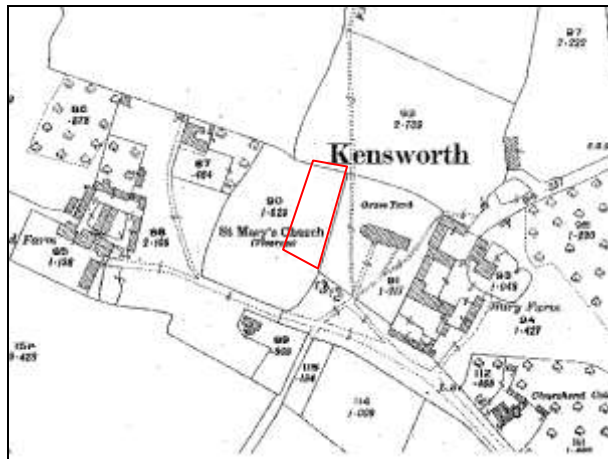
1855 Estate Map (*not to scale*)



OS 1st edition 1880 (25" to 1 mile)



OS 2nd edition 1901 (25" to 1 mile)



OS 3rd edition 1924 (25" to 1 mile)

Appendix 5: ASC OASIS Form

PROJECT DETAILS			
Project Name:	Land west of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth		
Short Description:	In November 2008 ASC carried out an evaluation at land to the west of The Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth, Bedfordshire, in advance of the extension of the churchyard. The foundations of a wall formed of flint nodules were revealed, as was a deposit interpreted as levelling for a floor. These form the remains of the former vicarage. A probable boundary gully, cut by the wall, and a line of postholes or truncated pits, also a probable boundary, were also revealed during the evaluation. Several fragments of tile of probable post-medieval date were recovered from the subsoil, along with a single sherd of white glazed china of modern date. Apart from a single fragment of peg tile recovered from the gully, no other dating evidence was revealed during the evaluation.		
Project Type: (indicate all that apply)	Trial Trenching		
Site status: (eg. none, SAM, Listed)	None	Previous work: (eg. SMR refs)	Unknown
Current land use:	Pasture	Future work: (yes / no / unknown)	Unknown
Monument type:	Vicarage	Monument period:	Post Medieval
Significant finds: (artefact type & period)	Fragments of post-medieval tile		
PROJECT LOCATION			
County:	Bedfordshire	OS reference: (8 figs min)	TL 0306 1905
Site address: (with postcode if known)	Land to the west of the church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth		
Study area: (sq. m. or ha)	770 sq. m.	Height OD: (metres)	180
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation:	Archaeological Services & Consultancy Ltd		
Project brief originator:	Mather, L-A.	Project design originator:	Richards, J.
Project Manager:	Semmelmann, K.	Director/Supervisor:	Richards, J.
Sponsor / funding body:	St Mary's Parochial Church Council		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date:	3 rd November 2008	End date:	6 th November 2008
PROJECT ARCHIVES			
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg. pottery, animal bone, files/sheets)	
Physical:	Luton Museum (LUTN: 2009.96)	1 sherd pottery, 1 fragment of tile	
Paper:		Project Design, Report, Site records, B&W photos and negatives	
Digital:		CD with copies of digital files including photos	
BIBLIOGRAPHY (Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report)			
Title:	Archaeological Evaluation: Land to the West of the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Kensworth, Bedfordshire		
Serial title & volume:	ASC Ltd Report ref. 1120/KMV/3		
Author(s):	J Richards BA PIFA		
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