

# All Saint's Church, Knapwell, Cambridgeshire

Archaeological Monitoring February 2017



Dave Webb & Alison Dickens

**ALL SAINT'S CHURCH,  
KNAPWELL  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE:**

**Archaeological Monitoring February 2017**

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## **Summary**

*The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of two small hand dug test pits against the foundations of All Saint's Church, Knapwell, Cambridgeshire. The monitoring took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017. The works confirmed that the foundations at that point related to the churches Victorian phase and a low background level of disarticulated human remains was observed. No articulated burials were encountered in the work.*

## **Introduction**

The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook archaeological monitoring of two small test pits against the east wall of the vestry/organ room of All Saint's Church Knapwell, Cambridgeshire. The monitoring was principally to ensure that any human remains encountered or earlier archaeology observed was appropriately recorded. The work was commissioned by John Hibbett on behalf of Knapwell PCC.

The monitoring of the works took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017. The works were required to provide information about the state of underlying foundations due to severe cracking and movement in the structure above.

## **Location and Topography**

The church of All Saint's (CHER: 03511) is located at TL33581, 63012 on the east side of the High Street. The church is listed Grade II\*. Although a church is recorded in the village as early as the 1180s, the west tower is thought to be of around 1400 (Bradley & Pevsner 2014: 587), however most of the church was rebuilt in 1866 to a design by F.N. Fawcett (Wright and Lewis 1989; Longair 1978).

The village of Knapwell lies in gently rolling countryside about 7 miles northwest of Cambridge. The church sits at around 35m AOD, with the land to the east and west rising to around 50m AOD, reaching 70m AOD two miles to the south at Cambourne.

The underlying local geology is Kimmeridge Clay Formation – Mudstone (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed 1st September 2019)

## **Archaeological background**

There is little evidence of prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity beyond a stray find of iron Age pottery in nearby Overhall Grove (CHER: 01086A). A few Roman findspots are noted including metalwork found by detectorists to the west of the village (CHER: 11068) and pottery in Overhall Grove to the east (CHER: 01086B).

The village has its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period and earthworks in and near Overhall Grove attest to the greater extent of the earlier medieval settlement (CHER: 03556; CHER: 01086 (SAM1006890)). The church lies within this early area of settlement, the small modern village (with a population less than 100 in 2011) is strung along the road to the south.

## **Methodology**

The objective of the monitoring programme was to identify the presence and character of any surviving archaeological remains occurring within the area of investigation, and to observe the presence of human remains. In accordance with current guidelines to recover any disturbed disarticulated human remains for

immediate reburial and to identify the location of intact burials so that they could be avoided (Mays 2005; Brickley and McKinley 2004 - nb: both these guidelines were updated in 2017 but neither was published at the time of this recording Mays 2017; Mitchell & Brickley 2017).

The excavation of the test pits by hand was carried out by operatives from Hibbetts under archaeological supervision by CAU staff. Recording was carried out following the CAU modified MoLAS system of archaeological site recording (Spence 1994). All work was carried out in accordance with statutory Health and Safety legislation and with the recommendations of FAME (Allen & Holt 2010). In total an area of approximately one square metre was monitored.

## **Results**

The initial test pit was located at the north west end of the church adjacent to and along the north wall of the vestry/organ room. A second test pit was subsequently dug along the west side to confirm results found in the first test pit. The results are as follows:

### **Test Pit 1**

Dimensions: Length 1.20m x width 0.50m maximum depth 1.00m.

*0.00-0.15m:* A very dry desiccated topsoil composed of a dark grey silty clay loam with a moderate frequency, moderately sorted small sub-angular gravel inclusions.

*0.15-0.70m:* A dry subsoil composed of a grey silty clay with a moderate frequency, poorly sorted small to medium sub-angular gravel inclusions with frequent small to large fragments of building material (brick, tile, stone).

*0.60-0.15m:* (limit of excavation). A pale grey chalky clay with occasional small to medium sub-angular gravel inclusions and occasional fragments of building material in upper part of layer. Disturbed natural.

The test pit revealed part of the foundation of the present Victorian building. While the wall above is faced in cobbles and field stone the foundation included squared limestone blocks and brick (Figure 4). Nothing obviously relating to earlier builds of the church was observed.

### **Test Pit 2**

Dimensions: Length 0.80m x width 0.40m depth 0.40m.

*0.00-0.15m:* A very dry desiccated topsoil composed of a dark grey silty clay loam with a moderate frequency, moderately sorted small sub-angular gravel inclusions.

*0.15-0.40m:* (limit of excavation). A dry subsoil composed of a grey silty clay with a moderate frequency, poorly sorted small to medium sub-angular gravel inclusions with frequent small to large fragments of building material (brick, tile, stone).

The test pit revealed part of the foundation of the present Victorian building. While the wall above is faced in cobbles and field stone the foundation beneath included squared limestone blocks (Figure 4). Nothing obviously relating to earlier builds of the church was observed.

### *Human Remains*

A very small number of disarticulated bone fragments were recovered from the test pits, these were immediately reburied.

No articulated burials were encountered.

### **Discussion**

No articulated remains or evidence of earlier phases of the church were revealed in the test pits.

The small amount of disarticulated bone arising was immediately reburied.

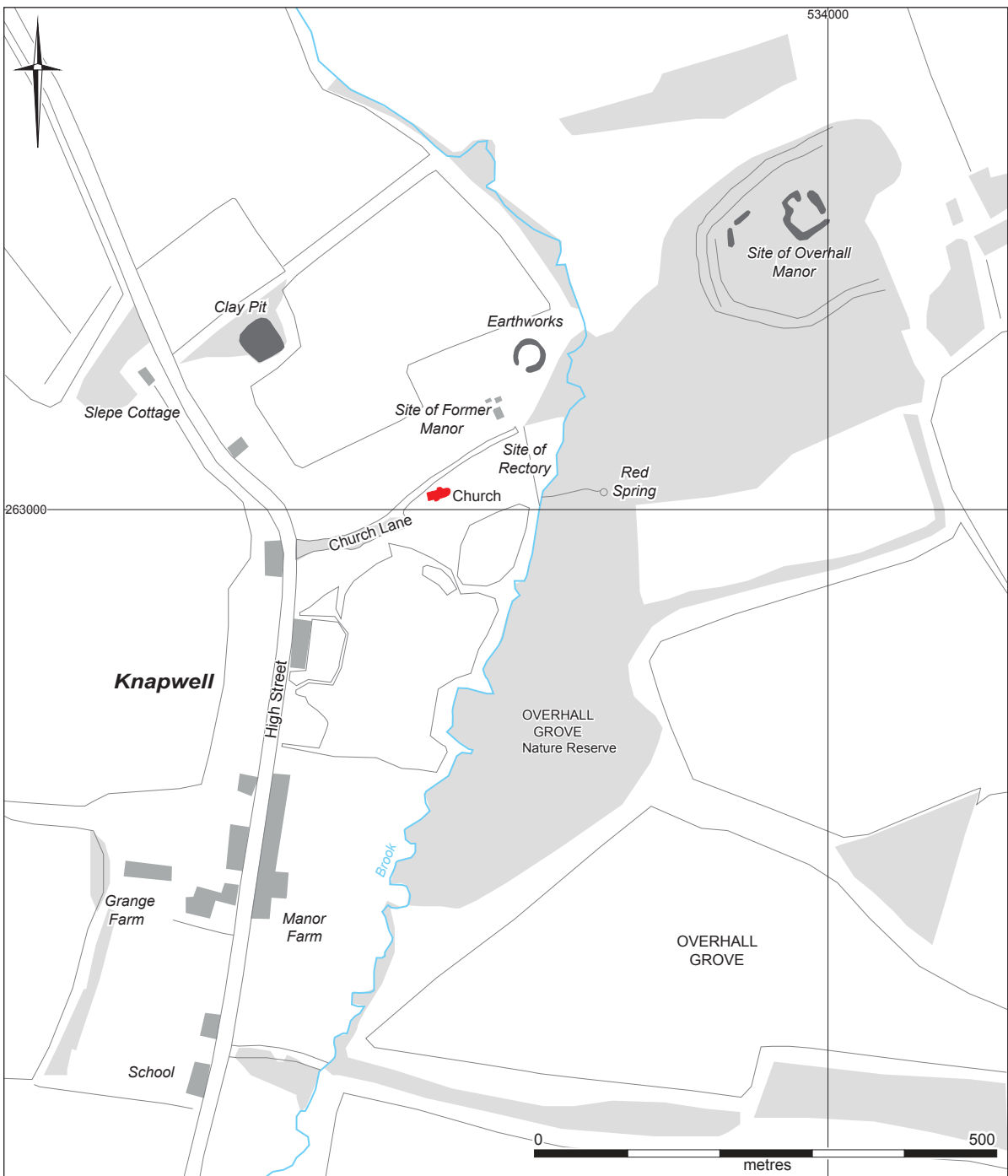
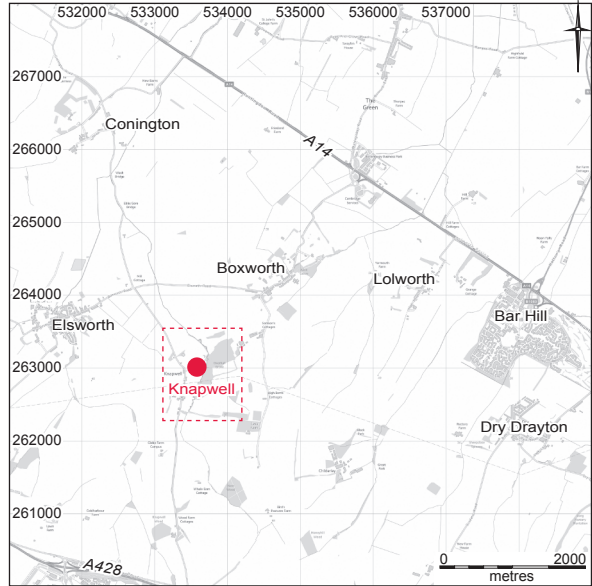
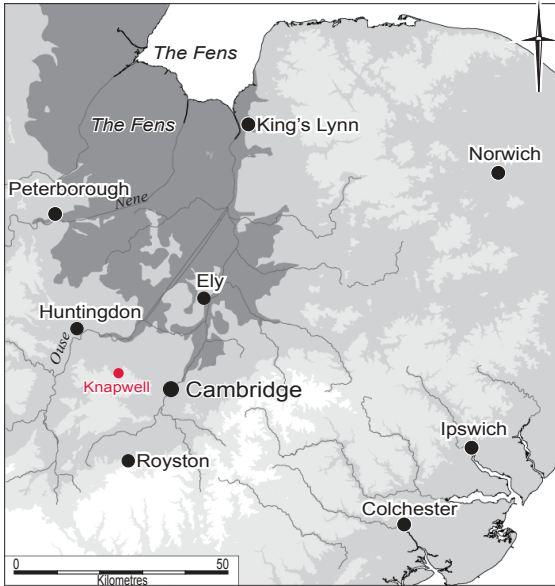


Figure 1. Location Plan

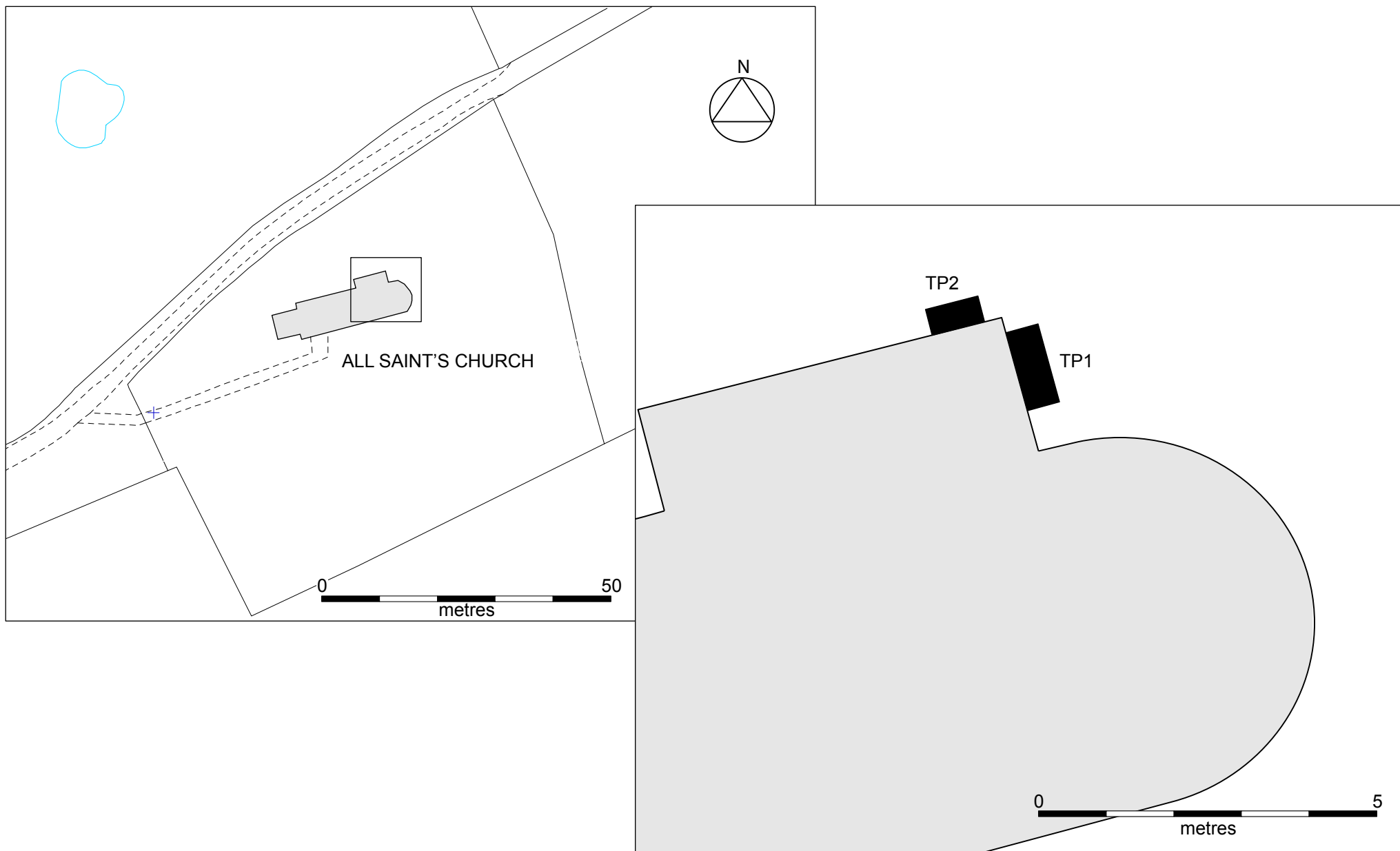


Figure 2: Location of Test Pits





Figure 3: Apsidal West End of Church



Figure 4: Test Pit 1 (left) and Test Pit 2 (right)

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**OASIS ID: cambridg3-366541**

### Project details

Project name	Archaeological Monitoring at All Saint's Church, Knapwell
Short description of the project	The Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) undertook the archaeological monitoring of two small hand dug test pits against the foundations of All Saint's Church, Knapwell, Cambridgeshire. The monitoring took place on 22nd February 2017. The works identified a degree of displacement in the churches foundations at that point and a low background level of disarticulated human remains was observed. No articulated burials were encountered in the work
Project dates	Start: 22-02-2017 End: 31-08-2019
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECB5984 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Field observation","Recorded Observation"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE KNAPWELL All Saint's Church, Knapwell
Postcode	CB23 4NW
Study area	1 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 33581 63012 52.248636699061 -0.043045410403 52 14 55 N 000 02 34 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 35m Max: 35m

**Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Parochial Church Council
Project design originator	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	David Webb
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	Knapwell PCC

**Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridgeshire County Archaeology Store
Digital Archive ID	ECB5984
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive ID	ECB5984
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Manuscript"

**Project bibliography 1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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