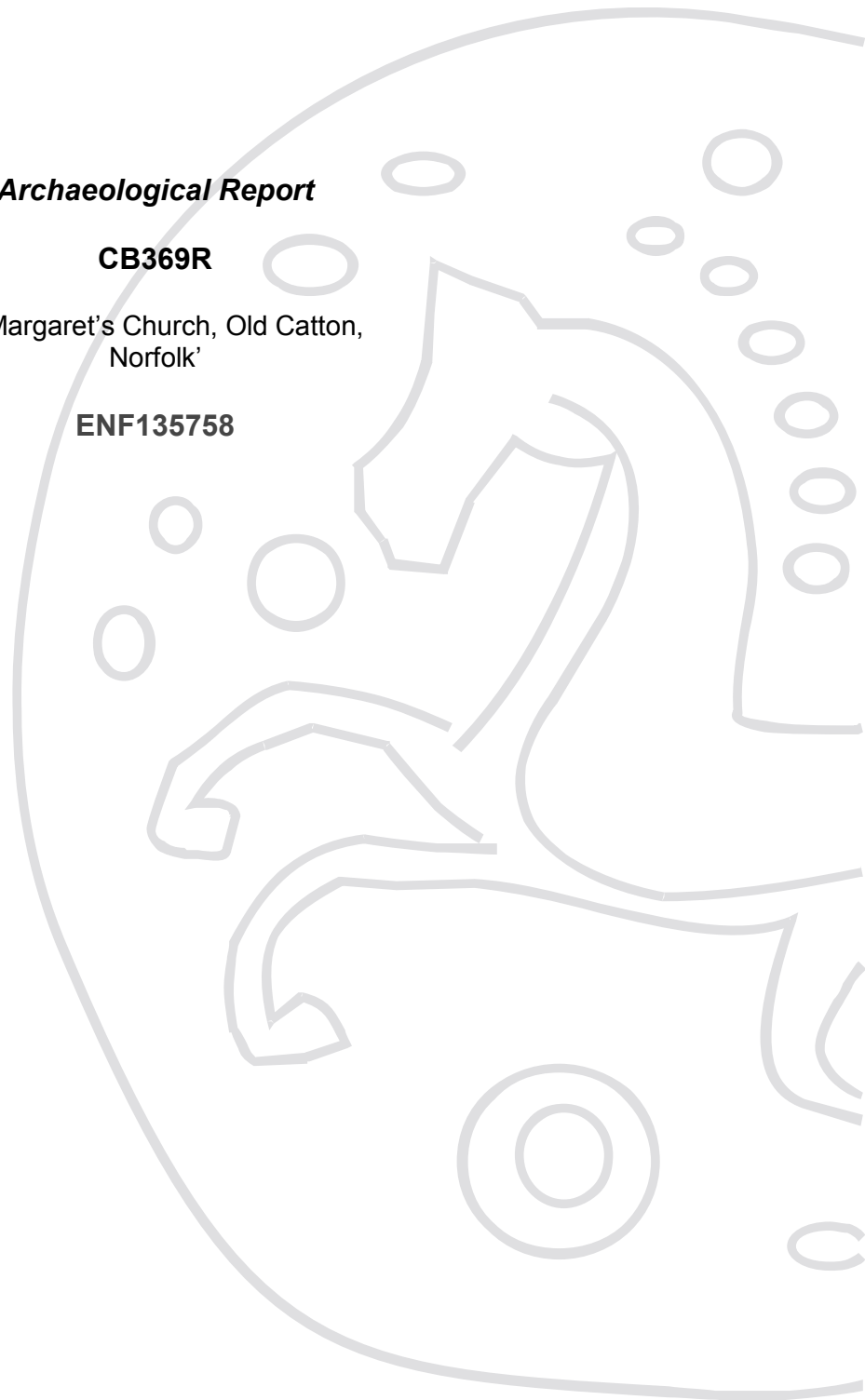


***Archaeological Report***

**CB369R**

'St Margaret's Church, Old Catton,  
Norfolk'

**ENF135758**



Reference No. CB369R  
© Chris Birks January 2015

*All rights reserved*



Archaeological Services – Urban & Rural

**Report on an Archaeological Watching  
Brief at St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk'**

**ENF135758**

Prepared for:  
The PCC of Old Catton St Margaret  
c/o Reverend Andrew Parsons  
St Margaret's Vicarage  
Church Street  
Old Catton  
Norwich  
NR6 7DP

Reference No. CB369R  
© Chris Birks January 2015

*All rights reserved*

## **Contents**

---

<i>Section</i>	<i>Page</i>
<i>Summary</i>	1
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Project Background	1, 2
3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background	2, 3
4.0 Geology and Topography	3
5.0 Observations	3 - 5
6.0 Conclusions	5

### ***Acknowledgements***

### **Bibliography**

### ***Appendix 1*** OASIS Record

***Figure 1*** Site location

***Figure 2*** Site plan

***Plate 1.*** Floor reduction in the south aisle, looking east

***Plate 2.*** Northern floor reduction in the nave, looking northeast

***Plate 3.*** Sample view during excavation of the foul water trench, looking southeast

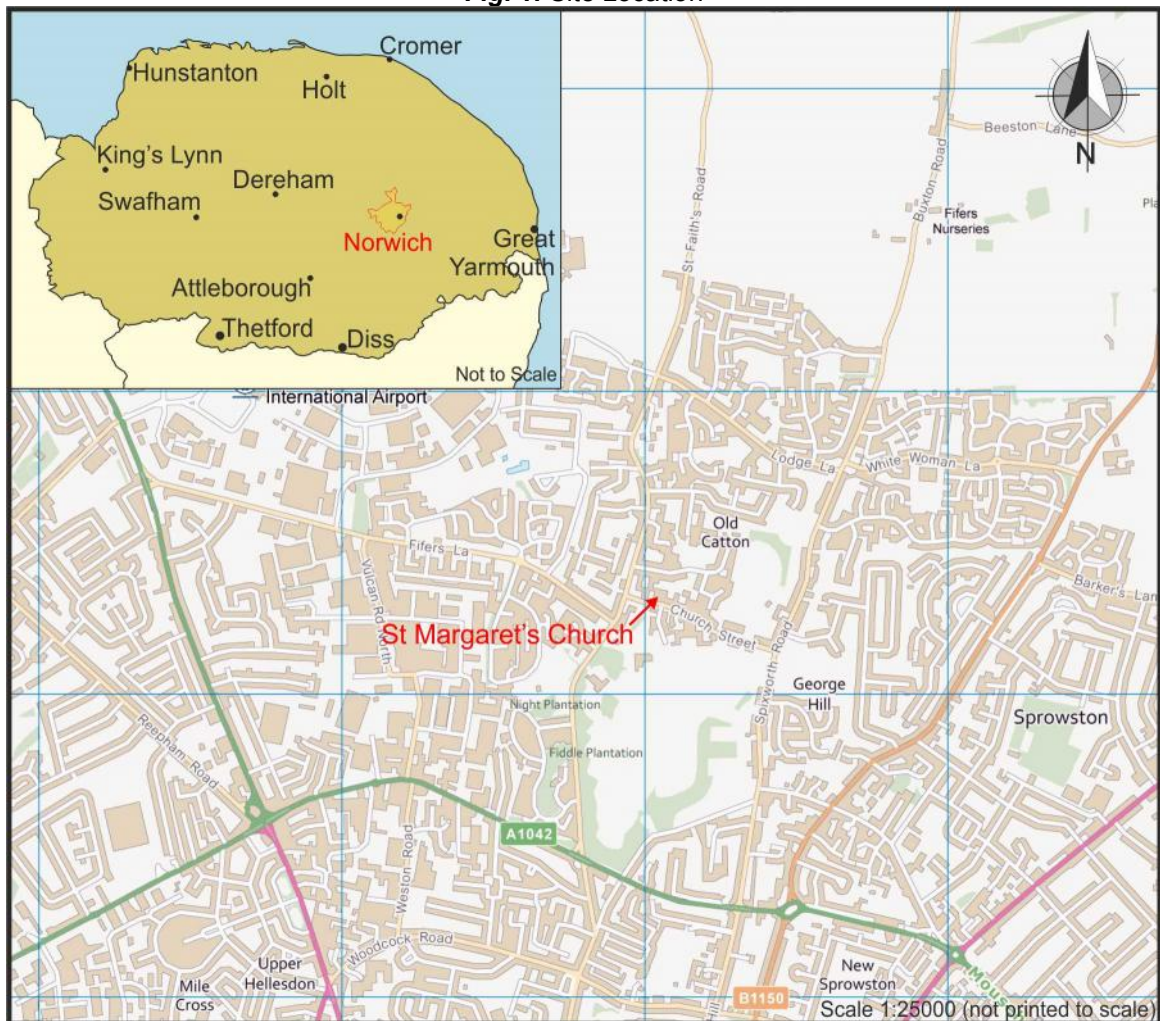
## Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out at 'St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk' (ENF135758) during groundworks associated with a new foul water drainage system and the reduction of internal floor levels during dry rot treatment and reconstruction of the floor in 2014. No significant archaeological remains were encountered.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Monitoring ("Watching Brief") was carried out during groundworks St Margaret's Church, Church Street, Old Catton, Norfolk, NR6 7DN' (grid reference TG 23057 12337).
- 1.2 This report, CB369R, details how Chris Birks undertook these works and summarises the results. A copy of the report has been submitted to the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

**Fig. 1. Site Location**



## 2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 A proposal for the installation of a new foul water drainage system and the treatment of dry rot was approved subject to a Programme of Archaeological Work requested by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service. Archaeological monitoring ('Watching Brief') at a level of constant attendance was required to determine the presence/absence, date, and extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological deposits or features.
- 2.2 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a generic Brief for Monitoring under Archaeological Supervision and Control issued by the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service and a generic Project Design for Archaeological

Monitoring (“Watching Briefs”) by Chris Birks (Birks 2004). This forms part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology; a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown, N., and Glazebrook, J. (eds) 2000) and *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England* (Medlycott 2011). It is hoped that information resulting from this project would contribute to some or all of these research aims. Full details of research aims, methodology and standards are provided in the Project Design.

- 2.3 Norfolk Historic Environment Record ENF135758 and Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) id chrisbir1-199017 apply. The site archive will be held by the Norfolk Museums Service, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards.

### **3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 3.1 A number of entries exist in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record (NHER) for Old Catton and a search of those within a 500m radius of the site was carried out. Due to the lack of significant archaeological remains, only those records within the immediate vicinity of the site are summarised in this report. Full details of these and all other entries can be seen at the NHER office based at Gressenhall, near Dereham, by prior appointment. The accuracy of these records is presumed correct.
- 3.2 A number of prehistoric flints were found in a garden to the northwest of the church in 1984 including prehistoric flakes and Neolithic to Bronze Age scrapers and a borer (NHER 21114).
- 3.3 Roman, Late Saxon, medieval and Post-medieval pottery fragments were found in the garden of 224 St Faiths Road to the northwest of the church since 1976 indicating activities in this area during these periods (NHER 11796). Late Saxon metal objects, including a lead model for a box mount with a lobed terminal was found to the west/southwest of the church through by metal detecting in 1993 (NHER 29738).
- 3.4 St Margaret's Church (NHER 8132) has a round west tower with splayed flint base and 15<sup>th</sup> century octagonal top with yellow brick trim and traceried Perpendicular bell openings. The massive nave quoins suggest the tower may date to the Late Saxon or Norman period and there are also other Norman fragments in the church. The chapel arch dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century but most of the church is of 15<sup>th</sup> century date. The aisled nave features a Perpendicular north arcade and nave clerestory. There is a Decorated south porch and chancel with Perpendicular windows and a Decorated arch to a lady chapel on the north side. The west gallery of 1773 with stair turret is an unusual survival. The church was heavily restored 1850-52.
- 3.5 The probable site of a medieval manor or grange (NHER 8130) lies to the west of the church. The earliest part of the building surviving is the timber-framed 16<sup>th</sup> century north-to-south wing. An east-to-west wing containing much reused limestone blocks was added or rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and was once paralleled by another wing to form an H-shaped block. This second wing was removed sometime before the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. There was a grand refurbishment of the house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the chimneys, ground floor, partitions in the east-to-west wing and the fireplaces (including a good pre-Raphaelite example) were inserted.
- 3.6 Investigation of clay pits to the northwest of the church in 1973 marked on the 1843 tithe map of Old Catton uncovered early medieval and Post-medieval pottery, indicating that they started to be filled in the medieval period (NHER 8122).
- 3.7 Catton Hall was built in 1780 on an undeveloped site by Jeremiah Ives who was the mayor of Norwich between 1786 and 1801 (NHER 8131). The extensive parkland around it was laid out between 1788 and 1790 by Humphry Repton and it is his earliest known paid commission (NHER 30435). Changes took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Camellia House, a large cast iron cross-shaped conservatory adjoining the building was built in 1830. It was privately owned until 1948 but was used as a military convalescence home during World War

One. It was bought by Norfolk County Council in 1948 and became an old people's home. It is now privately owned. Developments at the hall in 2003 led to the discovery of a large range of cellars extending beneath the garden south of the house and this has been interpreted as a possible icehouse.

- 3.8 Even numbers 48 to 58 Church Street (NHER 39772) lie to the southeast of the church and comprise a terrace of six red brick houses built in 1858 for J H Gurney, owner of the Catton Hall Estate. On the opposite (south) side of the street are buildings listed by English Heritage as a 19<sup>th</sup> century estate farm and outbuildings (NHER 12383). One of these includes much reused stone that may have come from a chapel previously on the site or brought here from Norwich. A Norman tithe barn recorded as being in the parish may also have stood here. To the south of the farm buildings is a Victorian squash court, now in the garden of Catton House and further south still, a former (late 18<sup>th</sup> century) orangery that became the village hall (NHER 12515).
- 3.9 Horsham St Faith airfield (Norwich Airport) lies to the northwest of the church (NHER 8137). The airfield was established just before the start of World War Two and became operational at the outbreak of hostilities. Hangars, technical and domestic buildings and grass runways were constructed and the Officers' Mess and three Picket Hamilton forts (NHER 32543 to 32545) are amongst the buildings that survive. The base was used by RAF bomber and fighter squadrons from 1939 to 1942 and the United States Army Air Force between 1942 and 1945. The RAF returned in 1945 and used the airfield until 1963. The site was purchased by the local authority in March 1967 and is now used as Norwich Airport and an industrial estate. Aerial photographs show the extent of the World War Two airfield and the many associated structures.

#### **4.0 Geology and Topography**

- 4.1 Old Catton lies upon a solid geology of Upper Chalk overlain by Boulder Clay in the south of the parish and Norwich crag overlain by sands to the north (Funnell 2005). The Boulder clays are 'stiff grey clayey glacial tills rich in chalk stones', overlain thinly by windblown sand and it is the thickness of this coversand that is related to the texture of the topsoil (Corbett & Dent 1994). The subsoil is clay which is impermeable and supports a perched water table, the most common soil is a 'gley with dark, flinty and sandy clay loam topsoil over mottled brown and grey clay' (Corbett & Dent 1994).
- 4.2 St Margaret's Church lies to the north of Church Street in Old Catton on the north side of Norwich and is bordered by housing to the north and south. The site is gently sloping towards the southwest at an elevation of c. 31m OD.

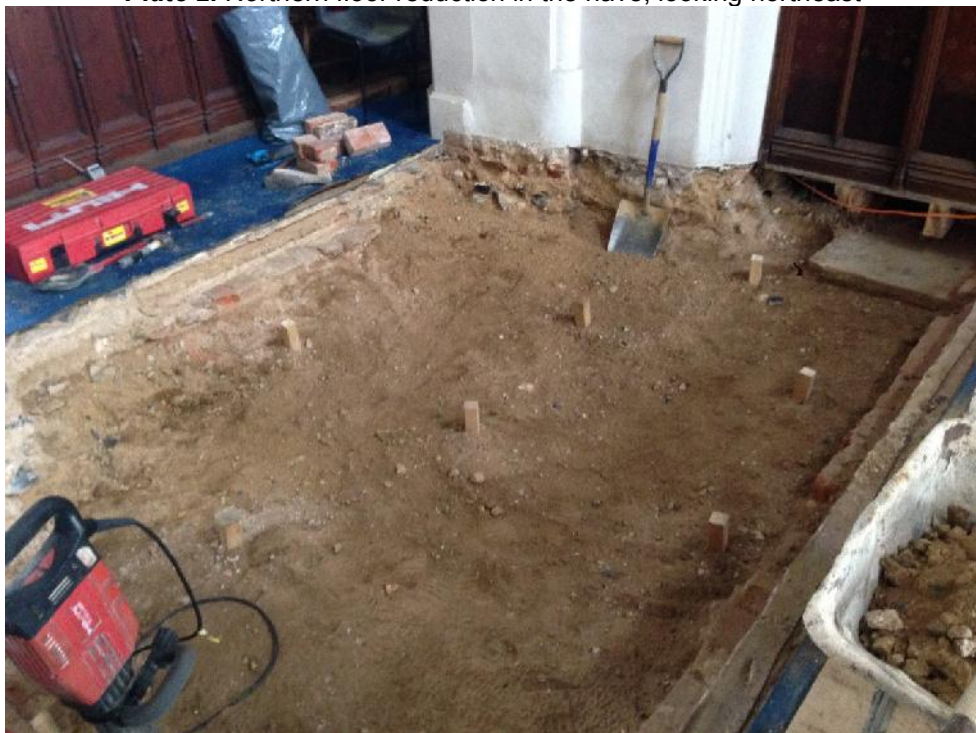
#### **5.0 Observations**

- 5.1 Monitoring was carried out on between 13 January and 13 May 2014 during excavations associated with the installation of the new foul water drainage system and treatment of dry rot inside the church (*Fig. 2*). Deposits were scanned with a metal detector. No context numbers were allocated during fieldwork due to the lack of significant archaeological remains. Site conditions were good and access was gained from Church Street to the south of the church. The weather was variable from dry and sunny to rain showers.
- 5.2 The internal floor in the south aisle covering an area approximately 6.1m by 1.8m was reduced by 0.25m in depth removing glazed terracotta floor tiles and 0.13m of mixed lime mortar and red brick/tile rubble that overlay dark brown silty sand deposit, the full extent of which was not reached (*Plate 1*). A replacement tiled floor over a lime concrete sub base was laid.
- 5.3 Two areas at the east side of the nave that each measured approximately 3.4m by 2.5m were reduced in depth by c. 0.25m. Initially, glazed terracotta floor tiles and 0.12m of mixed lime mortar and red brick/tile rubble were removed that overlay mid to dark brown silty sand deposit, the full extent of which was not reached. A replacement tiled floor over a lime concrete sub base was laid.

**Plate 1.** Floor reduction in the south aisle, looking east



**Plate 2.** Northern floor reduction in the nave, looking northeast



- 5.4 An area to the west side of the north transept that measured approximately 6.2m by 4.2m was reduced in depth by c. 0.25m removing a platform floor and 0.1m of mixed lime mortar and red brick/tile rubble that overlay mid to dark brown silty sand deposit, the full extent of which was not reached. A replacement tiled floor over a lime concrete sub base was laid.
- 5.5 A trench for foul-water drainage extended from the west side of the north transept, followed the line of the footpath at the base of the tower and crossed the porch entrance to the

churchyard boundary wall adjacent to Church Street (*Fig. 2*). It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.72m beneath present ground level removing 0.26m of dark greyish brown silty sand topsoil and dark brown silty sand subsoil, the full extent of which was not reached (*Plate 3*). A total of 64 fragments of human bone were recovered from topsoil and subsoil deposits and by consent of the Parochial Church Council were reburied in the backfill of the trench. No significant information was gained from the bone due to its fragmentary nature.

**Plate 3.** Sample view during excavation of the foul water trench, looking southeast



## **6.0 Conclusions**

- 6.1 Monitoring carried out during groundworks associated with the installation of the new foul water drainage system and floor reduction during the treatment of dry rot did not reveal any remains of archaeological significance. The reasons for this are unknown though the limited size and depth of the excavations may be the cause. The minimal depths of excavation inside the church exposed deposits of modern date, possibly associated with renovations during the Victorian period.
- 6.2 No specific information was gained from the human bone recovered during the excavations due to the fragmentary nature of the remains. They are typically found in such locations and are the result of the disturbance of earlier graves through successive grave digging over centuries of use of the churchyard. A small quantity of bone remains was later discovered following the building contractor making good during which time the archaeologist was not present. It is understood arrangements for their reburial were made.



### ***Acknowledgments***

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks for St Margaret's Parochial Church Council who also funded the work. Monitoring was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons. Many thanks to W S Lusher & Son Ltd who carried out the church renovations and to Mr David Lemon at The Whitworth Co-Partnership LLP.

The report was written by Chris Birks and John Simmons.

Many thanks to Anj Beckham, Alice Cattermole and Heather Hamilton at the Norfolk Historic Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to James Albone, David Gurney, Ken Hamilton, Kelly Powell, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Norfolk County Council Historic Environment Service.

## ***Bibliography***

- Birks, C., 2000 *Generic Project Design for Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Chris Birks unpublished document
- Brown, N., and Glazebrook, J.(eds), 2000 *Research and Archaeology; a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy*
- Corbett, W & Dent, D., 1994 'The Soil Landscapes', in *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, Wade-Martins, P. (ed.)
- English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*
- Funnell, B., 1994 'The Soil Landscapes', in *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, Wade-Martins, P. (ed.)
- Funnell, B., 2005 'Solid Geology' in *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk*, edited by Ashwin, T., and Davison, A.
- Gurney, D., 2003 *Standards for Field Archaeology in the East Of England* (East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Papers 14)
- Medlycott, M., 2011 *Research and Archaeology Revisited: A Revised Framework for the East of England*). East Anglian Archaeology Occasional Paper 24
- SCAUM 1997 *Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, The Management of Health and Safety Regulations 1992 and Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*

## Appendix 1. OASIS Record

### OASIS ID: [chrisbir1-199017](#)

#### Project details

Project name	St Margaret's Church, Old Catton - Archaeological Monitoring
Short description of the project	Archaeological monitoring at St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk during groundworks associated with a new foul water drainage system and the treatment of dry rot in 2014 revealed no significant archaeological remains.
Project dates	Start: 13-01-2014 End: 13-05-2014
Any associated project reference codes	ENF135758 - HER event no.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	CHURCH Medieval
Monument type	CHURCHYARD Medieval
Monument type	CHURCHYARD Post Medieval
Monument type	CHURCHYARD Modern
Significant Finds	HUMAN BONE Uncertain
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORFOLK NORWICH NORWICH St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk
Site coordinates	TG 23057 12337 52.6622875261 1.29886966153 52 39 44 N 001 17 55 E Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Chris Birks
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Chris Birks
Project director/manager	Chris Birks
Project supervisor	Chris Birks
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No

Paper Archive recipient	Norfolk Museums Service
Paper Archive ID	ENF135758
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Plan","Report","Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	Colour digital images in the report

---

### Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at 'St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk'
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Birks, C.
Other bibliographic details	Report Number CB369R
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Chris Birks
Place of issue or publication	Contractor's Report
Description	Bound A4 single-side printed report with text, site location plan, site plan drawing and colour digital images

---

Entered by	Chris Birks (chris@chrisbirksarchaeology.co.uk)
Entered on	6 January 2015

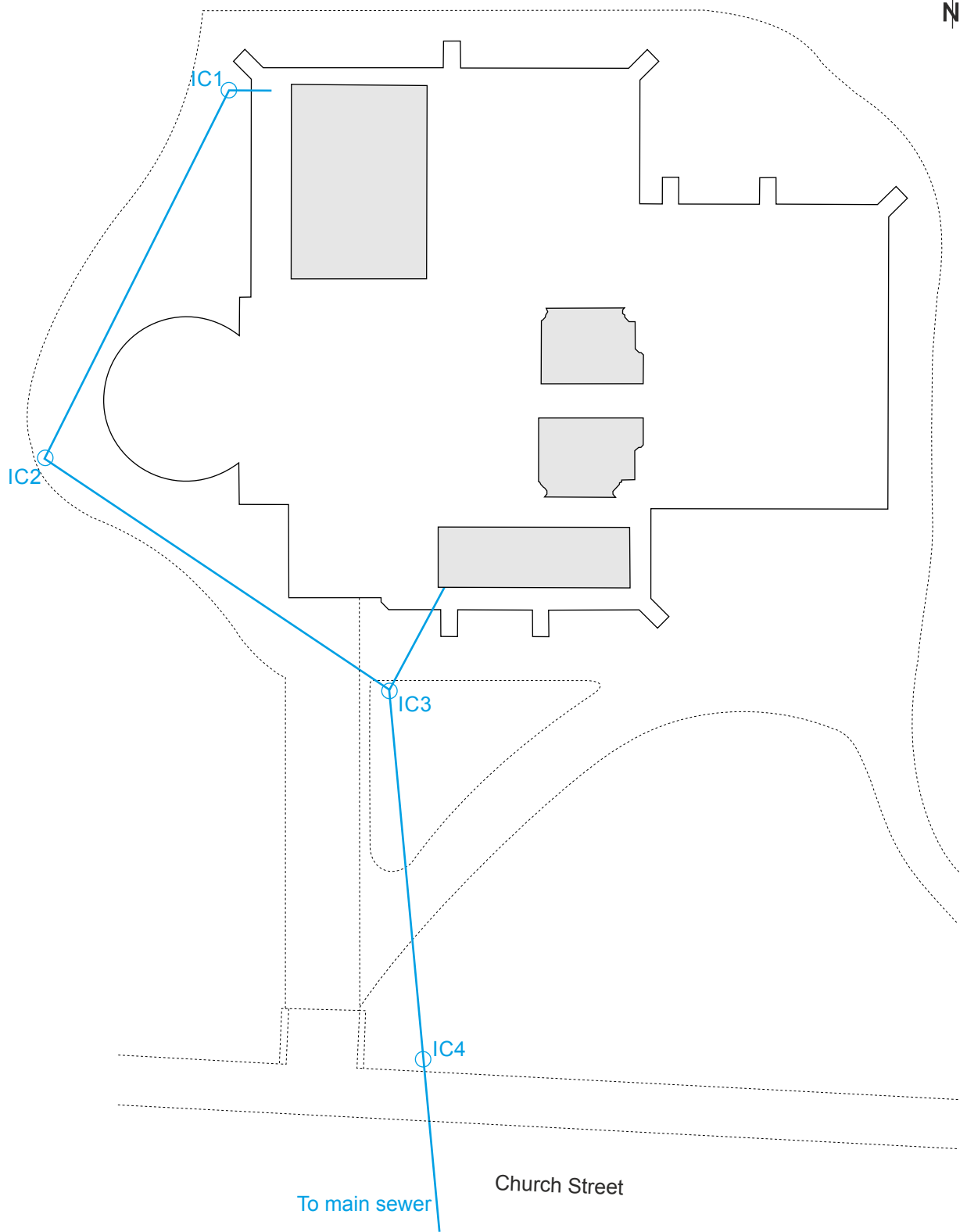
---




## OASIS:


Please e-mail [English Heritage](#) for OASIS help and advice

© ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham and Jen Mitcham, email](#) Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012

Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page



-  New drain
-  IC4 Inspection chamber
-  Internal excavation

 Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural	
St Margaret's Church, Old Catton, Norfolk	
Not to scale	Report Number CB369R

Based on drawings kindly provided by WCP Partnership

**Figure 2.** Site plan drawing