

**Report on an Archaeological Evaluation
by Trial Trenching at 'St Andrew's Church,
Framingham Earl, Norfolk'**

NHER ENF125826

Prepared for
GBM Architecture
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on behalf of
Framingham Earl Parochial Church Council

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Summary

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching was carried out at 'St Andrew's Church, Framingham Earl, Norfolk' (NHER ENF125826) in February 2011 prior to proposed construction of an extension to the church. The present mound investigated at the base of a deodar tree was formed by material deposited around the base of the tree. A sherd of medieval pottery, disarticulated human bone fragments, roof tile and slate and modern glass were recovered from these deposits that had been cut by a modern soakaway. There were no remains relating to pre-conquest (Saxon) activities.

No further archaeological finds and no archaeological features were encountered.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 A programme of Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching resulting from development proposals at 'St Andrew's Church, Framingham Earl, Norfolk' (Grid refs. TG 2774 0277) has been requested by the Historic Environment Service (ref. CNF42597, Ken Hamilton 13 July 2010).
- 1.2 Pre-planning application.
- 1.3 Project Design, CB215, details how Chris Birks (hereafter 'the Contractor') would undertake these works and has been prepared for Mr David Bonner of GBM Architecture on behalf of Framingham Earl Parochial Church Council (hereafter 'the Client') to provide a quotation and Project Design for undertaking works. A *draft* copy of the Project Design was submitted and approved by the Historic Environment Service.
- 1.4 This report describes the results of the archaeological evaluation and a copy has been forwarded to the Historic Environment Service for consideration. Approval was received on 11 April 2011.
- 1.5 NHER ENF125826 and OASIS ID chrisbir1-92359 apply.

2.0 Project Background

- 2.1 The proposed development affects a site of high archaeological potential.
- 2.2 An Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching is required to determine the presence/absence, date, extent, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological layers or subsoil archaeological features. The information gained will be used to assist with the planning application. A further phase of Archaeological Excavation or Archaeological Monitoring ('Watching Brief') may be required.
- 2.3 Details of the relevant planning policy background can be seen in the Historic Environment Service Brief (bullet 1, page 2).

3.0 Archaeological & Historical Background

- 3.1 A number of entries exist in the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record (NHER) for Framingham Earl and the surrounding area. Only those within the immediate vicinity of the site are described and further details of these and all other entries can be seen in the NHER based at Gressenhall by prior arrangement.
- 3.2 The history and archaeology of St. Andrew's Church is given in detail in Harris (1987). The cemetery was established pre-12th century and the church was built in the late 11th/early 12th century as a two celled structure with an apsidal chancel and round tower added in the mid-to-late 12th century. The apsidal chancel was squared, windows inserted

and a south porch added in the 15th century. A north porch was added in the late 19th/early 20th century. There appears to be some dispute between Harris (1987) and Taylor and Taylor (1965) regarding the earliest date of the fabric of the church, the former siting a post-conquest date and the latter, pre-conquest, based primarily on the nature of the flint quoins and chancel pilasters.

- 3.3 The proposed development affects a large mound adjacent to the north porch (*Plate 1*). A mound is visible at this location in a painting of the church by Cotman in 1817 (*Plate 2*), but its origin is not known. The mound is currently occupied by a large deodar tree (not visible on Cotman's painting).

Plate 1. Deodar tree and mound to northwest of the north porch, looking south/southeast. By D. Bonner



Plate 2. Mound shown in Cotman's painting, looking southeast



- 3.4 In the early 19th century Framingham Earl fell victim to a smallpox epidemic: Dr Rigby the Norwich surgeon was so concerned at the scale of the outbreak that he turned over

a wing of his house (Framingham Old Hall) to be a hospital for the victims (Harris 1987). It is possible some of the graves excavated during 1984 relate to some of these victims.

- 3.5 To summarise, there is a potential that remains relating to late Saxon and medieval periods in particular may survive as sub-surface archaeological finds, features and/or deposits. The recovery of such information would contribute greatly to Research Topics for the Eastern Counties.

4.0 Geology and Topography

- 4.1 Framingham Earl parish lies upon a solid geology of the Upper Chalk series (Funnell 2005) with overlying boulder clay deposits in the east of the parish and areas of overlying glacial sands and gravels elsewhere (Funnell 1994). The soil landscape of the parish is the Boulder Clay Plateau of High Norfolk (Corbett and Dent 1994).
- 4.2 The site lies to the southeast of Norwich and northeast of Poringland on relatively flat ground at an elevation of c. 57m OD.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 As much information as possible is sought on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the site.
- 5.2 Specific aims are to establish the states of preservation of archaeological features and/or deposits within the area indicated. These form part of the research agenda for the eastern counties of England in *Research and Archaeology: a Framework for the Eastern Counties, 1. Resource Assessment* (Glazebrook, J. (ed) 1997) and *Research and Archaeology; a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown, N., and Glazebrook, J. (eds) 2000)
- 5.3 Generic Aims of the project are to;
- 5.3.1 Determine the nature and date of the mound and the presence of archaeological remains during investigation of the site by excavating a single trench as close to the tree as possible.
- 5.3.2 Establish the extent, condition, nature and date of any such archaeological remains.
- 5.3.3 Create datasets relating to the stratigraphic, artefactual and environmental information recovered during excavations for analysis.
- 5.4 The specific aims of the project are to seek information regarding Research Topics in *Research and Archaeology; a Framework for the Eastern Counties 2. Research agenda and strategy* (Brown, N., and Glazebrook, J. (eds.) 2000)) through this programme of archaeological works.
- 5.5 Contributions may also be made to environmental archaeology research aims (Murphy 2000).

6.0 Method Statement

6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 The required archaeological works identified in the *Historic Environment Service Brief* specify that the primary purpose of the evaluation is to recover as much information as possible on the extent, date, phasing, character, function, status and significance of the

site. The states of preservation of archaeological features or deposits within the area indicated were to be determined. This was achieved through the following methodology.

6.2 Archaeological Evaluation

- 6.2.1 An OASIS online record was initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms.
- 6.2.2 The Historic and Environment Record (HER) Officer was contacted to obtain a HER number for the site.
- 6.2.3 Consultation of a service plan and CAT-scan of the area was carried out prior to any excavations. Any service runs were clearly marked on site using spray line marker, and avoided during excavations.
- 6.2.4 The excavations were monitored by arboriculturist Andrew Coombes and any artefacts and/or skeletal material were recovered. Areas where archaeological excavation caused minimum damage to the tree were identified by Andrew Coombes.
- 6.2.5 At the agreement with Ken Hamilton, one trench was initially excavated as close to the centre of the mound as was practical and safe (*Fig. 2*) with the proviso to excavate a further trench if it weren't possible to positively establish the nature of the mound.
- 6.2.6 Excavations were carried out manually.
- 6.2.7 Topsoil, subsoil, archaeological features & deposits and spoil were metal detected during manual excavation.
- 6.2.8 Spoil arisings were stored at a safe distance of c. 1m from each trench.
- 6.2.9 Archaeological features were sample excavated by hand, using appropriate tools, as below;

Linear features	10%
Pits, post-holes	50%
Structural remains	20% (depending upon extent of remains)
Human Burials	*

* No burials were encountered

- 6.2.10 Archaeological features and deposits were recorded on Chris Birks *pro-forma* context sheets. Section and plan drawings were recorded at an appropriate scale (1:50;1:20;1:10) depending upon the level of detail required.
- 6.2.11 A photographic record was made using digital, 35mm colour transparencies and 35mm black & white film.
- 6.2.12 Appropriate registers for contexts, drawings, photographs and environmental samples were made.
- 6.2.13 Environmental samples were taken from suitably well-sealed and dated archaeological features/deposits.
- 6.2.14 A single-context planning methodology was employed and a matrix of the sequence of deposits was made on-site.
- 6.2.15 Provisions were made for the Historic Environment Service to monitor the project during fieldwork.
- 6.2.16 The trench was backfilled following excavation.

6.3 Post-excavation Analysis and Report

- 6.3.1 Artefactual remains recovered during excavations were cleaned, catalogued and analysed by Chris Birks following fieldwork, in accordance with *Standards and Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (Institute for Archaeologists 2001).
- 6.3.2 An assessment of the recorded evidence was made in accordance with *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)* (English Heritage 1991).
- 6.3.3 The analysis of stratigraphical/structural records, Artefactual and environmental materials was made for inclusion in a final site report.
- 6.3.4 A *draft* copy of the report was submitted for consideration by the Historic Environment Service. No amendments or revisions were required and approval was received on 11 April 2011 prior to submission of this *final* report.
- 6.3.5 Three copies of the *final* report will be submitted to the Historic Environment Service, two copies to the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record, one copy to the Local Planning Authority, one copy to the Client, one copy to archive and one copy to the Science Advisor for English Heritage.
- 6.3.6 The OASIS online form will be completed and submitted to the Norfolk Historic Environment Record, including an uploaded .pdf version of the report.
- 6.3.7 The archive will be prepared in a form suitable for microfilming, if required. It will be prepared consistent with the principles of *Management of Archaeological Projects* ('MAP2', English Heritage 1991) and submitted to the Norfolk Museums Service for long-term storage.
- 6.3.8 Excepting those covered by the Treasure Act of 1996, all archaeological materials will remain the property of the landowner/s. A formal agreement will be sought regarding any items of local, regional or national significance for donation of finds to an appropriate Museums Service.

7.0 Results

7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 Fieldwork was carried out on 03 February 2011 and access was gained from Yelverton Road to the north of the site. The weather remained dry with occasional sunny spells.
- 7.1.2 Context numbers were allocated during fieldwork, summarised in *Appendix 1*. Finds were recorded in the field.

7.2 Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

- 7.2.1 The trench was approximately north-to-south orientated, measured c. 3.4m by 0.7m and was located extending radially from the deodar tree (*Figs. 2 and 3*). It was excavated to a maximum depth of c. 1.04m (to c. 56.5m OD) from present ground level at the north end of the trench (*Fig. 4, Plate 3*) removing c. 0.2m of grass covered dark brown humic topsoil [1] that forms the present ground surface. Mid brown fine sand subsoil [2] was present closest to the tree, sealed by topsoil and extended beyond the maximum depth of excavation. A sherd of probable medieval pottery, disarticulated human bone fragments, roof tile, roof slate and modern glass were recovered from [2] that had been cut by modern soakaway [3]. This soakaway contained a mid brown fine sand fill [4],

similar to subsoil [2] but also contained plastic, rubble and disarticulated human bone fragments. Undisturbed 'natural' deposits were not encountered.

- 7.2.2 A brief topographical survey (by theodolite) of the mound was carried out during the present works (*Fig. 3*) which in conjunction with a previous topographical survey (drawing provided by GBM Architecture) demonstrates the mound rises from c. 57m OD to c. 57.6m OD at its highest point. A north-to-south profile of the mound is shown in *Fig. 4*, the datum used shown in green on *Fig. 3*.
- 7.2.3 The earliest graves in proximity to the tree (*Fig. 3*) date to 1870 and 1876, the headstones clearly sitting upon, and therefore postdating, the present mound. This indicates an earlier date for the planting of the tree or that a bank existed to the immediate east of the location of the tree prior to its planting.

Plate 3. South-facing section of trench, looking north



Horizontal scale is 1m on 0.5m increments,
vertical scale in cm

- 7.2.4 No further finds and no archaeological features or deposits were present.

8.0 Arboricultural Comments

by A.T. Coombes NDF MICFor

- 8.1 The trench was extended up to the stem of the tree under arboricultural supervision. No major roots were severed in the course of the operation and in my view the condition of nearby trees will be totally unaffected by the works carried out.
- 8.2 The Deodar species (*Cedrus deodara*) was introduced from the Himalayas in 1831. The species became a popular component of Victorian gardens and was widely planted. This particular tree is likely to have been planted between 1870 and 1900.

- 8.3 It was interesting to note only four conifer roots were found, three of these under 10mm diameter and one larger. The nature of the bark under the soil and shape of the stem with basal buttressing not occurring until near the bottom of the excavation (at approximately the path level) leads me to the conclusion that the mound has been built up around the tree at some time in the past and at a time when the tree was already of a substantial size. The small number of roots found are likely to be adventitious roots that have been stimulated when a previously exposed part of the stem has been covered by soil. These form in the same way that aerial roots form in cavities and tight forks.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The single sherd of medieval pottery is residual with modern finds but demonstrates activities in the area during this period. The disarticulated and fragmentary nature of the human bone remains is typical in graveyards and cemeteries where successive burials have disturbed earlier ones.
- 9.2 The present mound comprises deposits placed around the trunk of a tree and therefore does not relate to the mound shown in Cotman's 1817 painting as this deodar tree most likely dates to between 1870 and 1900, possibly slightly earlier. There appear to be two ill-defined mounds (one approximately at the location of the present tree and one to the northwest of the north door and tower) shown in the painting. The nature of these mounds remains unknown – they may relate to deposits remaining after grave digging (though there are no headstones shown in Cotman's painting) or other excavations such as the pathway leading from the north door, though this also is not shown in the painting. It is possible they relate to the burial of the victims of a smallpox epidemic in the early 19th century.
- 9.3 A soakaway was present to the south of the tree and most likely relates to a rain water downpipe at the junction of the west wall of the late 19th/early 20th century porch and the north wall of the church.

Acknowledgments

The project was undertaken by Chris Birks for GBM Architecture on behalf of Framingham Earl Parochial Church Council who also funded the work.

Many thanks to David Bonner of GBM Architecture and Andrew Coombes of A T Coombes Associates, Chartered Foresters & Consulting Arboriculturists.

Fieldwork was undertaken by Chris Birks and John Simmons. Figures were prepared by Chris Birks and the report was written by Chris Birks.

Many thanks to Alice Cattermole and Sarah Howard at the Norfolk Historic and Environment Record office based at Gressenhall. Thanks also to James Albone, David Gurney, Ken Hamilton, David Robertson and Andrew Rogerson at the Historic Environment Service.

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Appendix 1. Context Summary

Context No.	Type	Description	Initials/Date
1	D	Dark brown humic topsoil	CB/03.02.2011
2	D	Mid brown fine sand subsoil	CB/03.02.2011
3	C	Modern soakaway	CB/03.02.2011
4	D	Mid brown fine sand fill of [3]	CB/03.02.2011

Key

C Cut
D Deposit

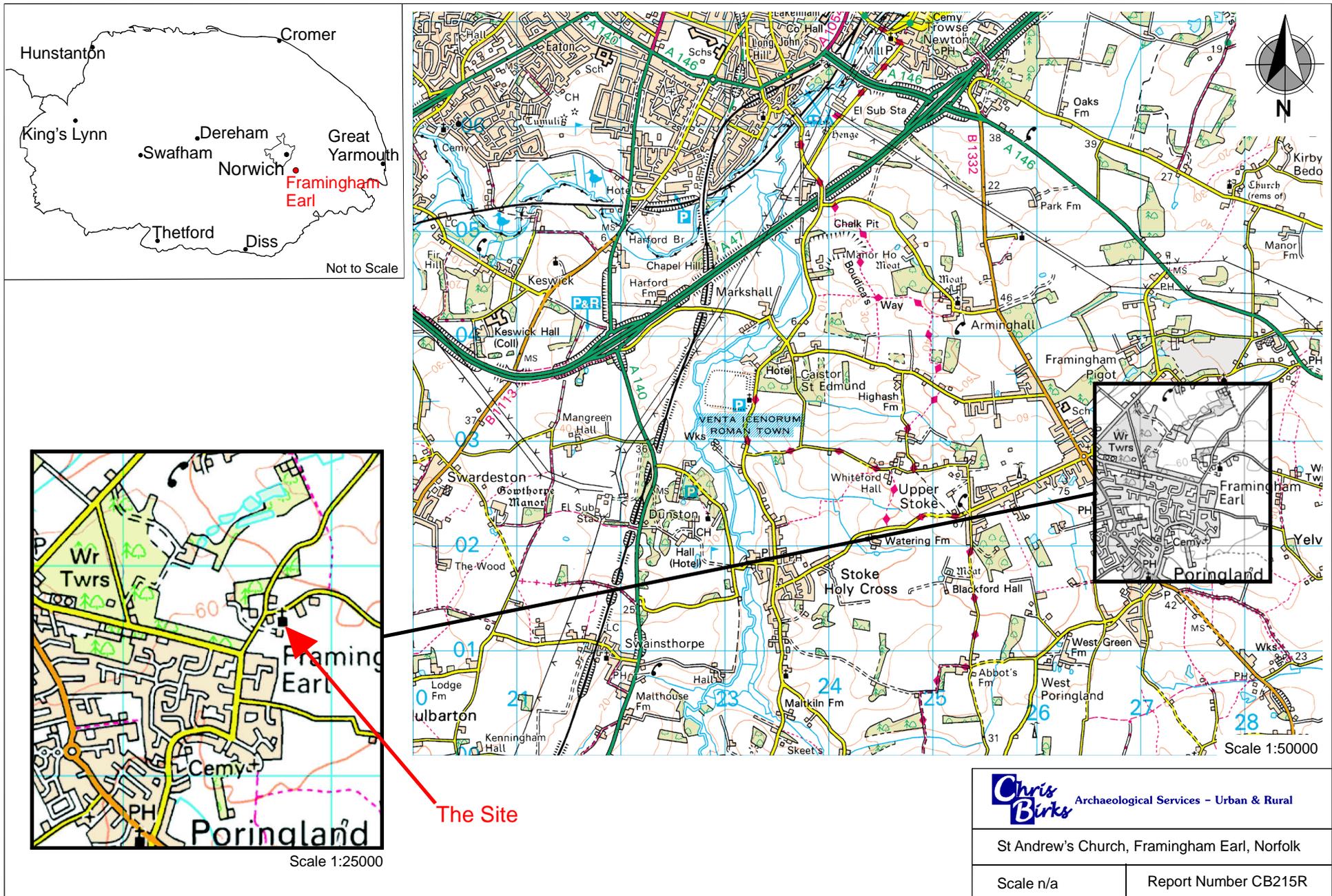


Figure 1. Site location

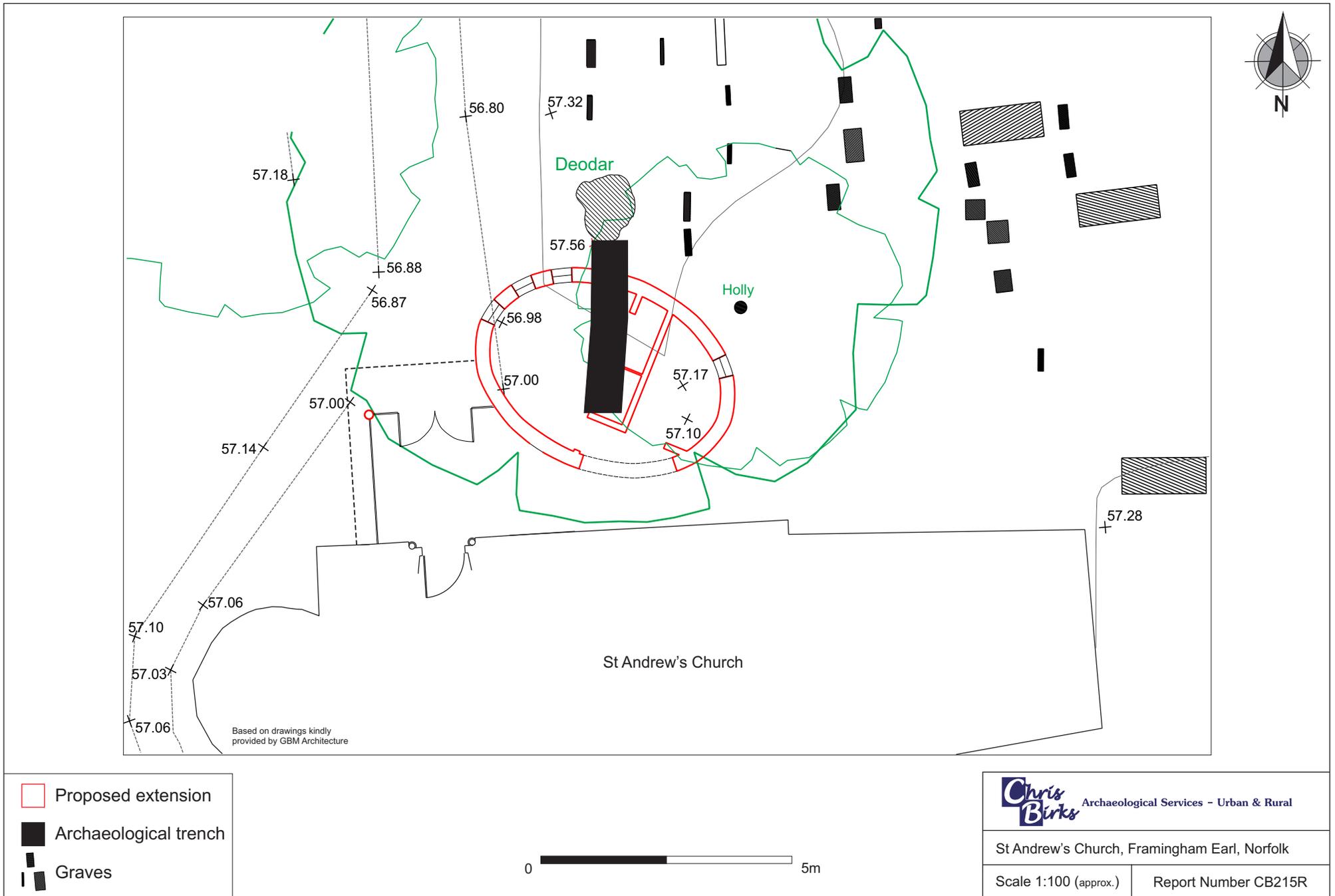
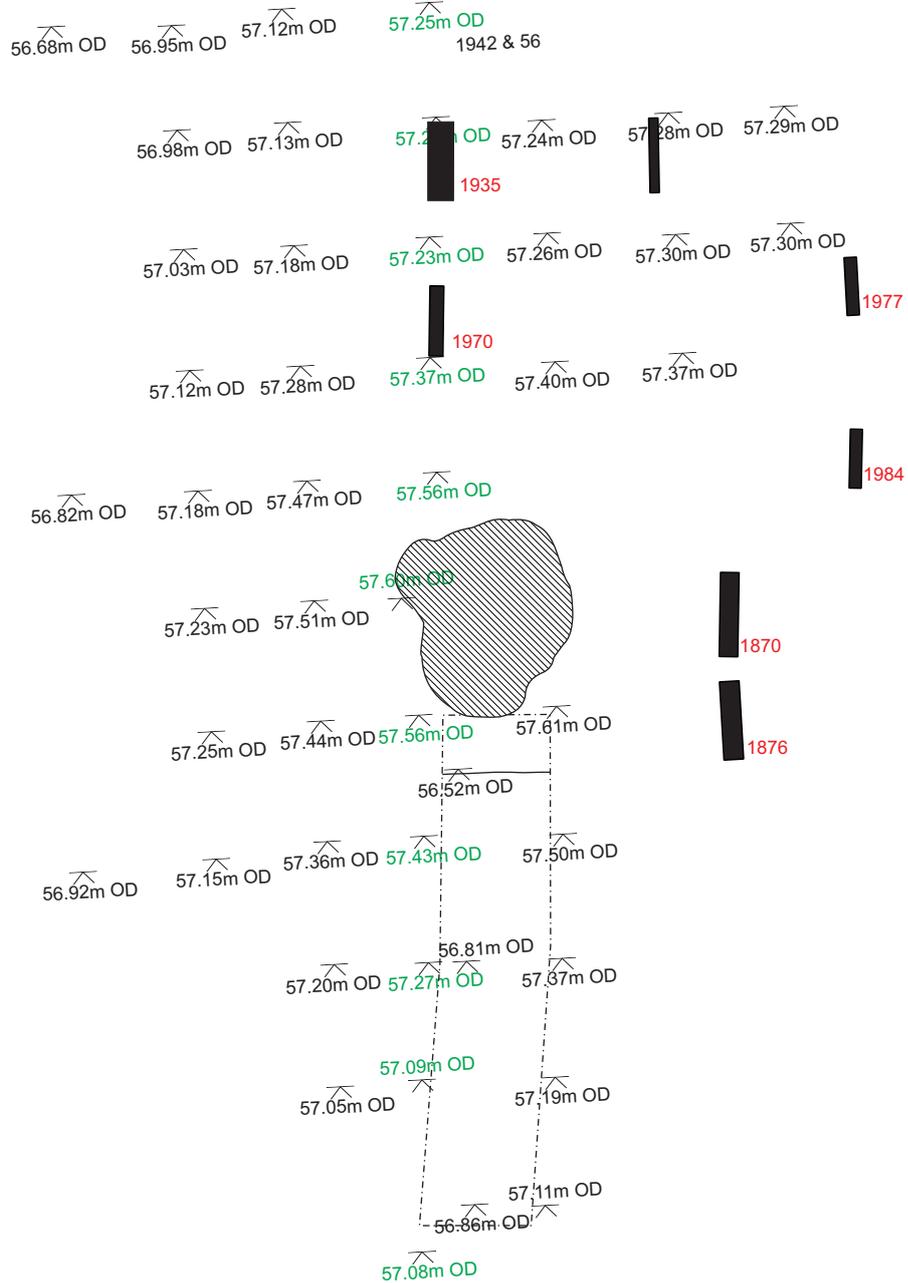


Figure 2. Site plan



-  Deodar tree
-  Archaeological trench
-  Grave

 Archaeological Services - Urban & Rural	
St Andrew's Church, Framingham Earl, Norfolk	
Scale 1:50	Report Number CB215R

Figure 3. Trench plan

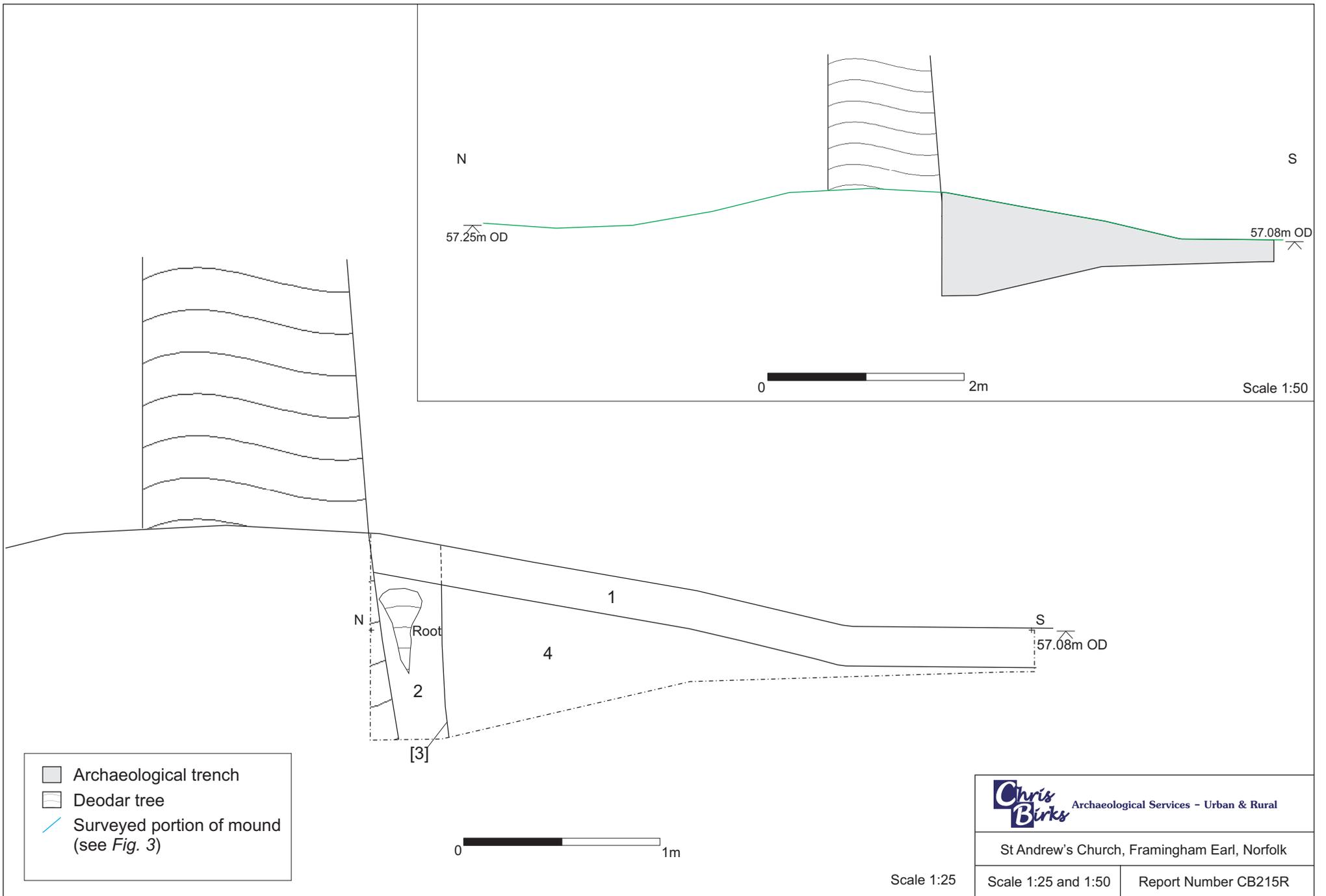


Figure 4. Section drawings