

Archaeological Watching Brief at St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul Birtsmorton Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for the Parochial Church Council of Birtsmorton

March 2019



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ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY WITH ST PETER AND ST PAUL BIRTSMORTON WORCESTERSHIRE

Archaeological watching brief report



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SITE INFORMATION

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Archaeological Watching Brief at St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, Birtsmorton, Worcestershire

By Jamie Wilkins

With contributions by Laura Griffin

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) from January 2019 to February 2019 at the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, Birtsmorton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8011 3550). The monitored works comprised the archaeological monitoring of improvements to an external drainage system and the excavation of new soakaways and associated drainage trenches within the churchyard.

The village of Birtsmorton comprises a dispersed settlement and civil parish within the Malvern Hills district of Worcestershire, approximately 7km south-west of Upton-on-Severn. The contemporary village is generally focussed along Birts Street and Rye Street, with Birtsmorton Court and the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul representing the eastern extent of the modern settlement.

A small number of graves were identified within the confines of the groundworks. Subsequent adjustments to the drainage designs allowed the graves to be preserved *in situ*. Despite not being excavated, three of the graves were identified as potential coffin burials of probable post-medieval origin. During groundworks, a single burial was partially exposed and comprised the skull of a juvenile. The burial was covered and protected with a membrane and sand.

A considerable amount of disarticulated human bone was recovered from overlying graveyard soils. The majority of the bone was recovered from groundworks south of the church building and may reflect the popularity of burials in the south of churchyards. This is perhaps supported by the presence of deeper graveyard soils in this location. The disarticulated bone was recorded and immediately reinterred within the excavated trenches.

Other features of note comprised a former limestone pathway, and stone foundations for the main church building and tower. Two rim sherds of medieval Malvernian-ware pottery reflect 15th-16th century activity on-site, consistent with the date of the nearby Birtsmorton Court and the church.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) from January 2019 to February 2019 at the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, Birtsmorton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8011 3550). This comprised the archaeological monitoring of improvements to an external drainage system and the excavation of new soakaways and associated drainage trenches within the churchyard. The project was commissioned by Rev. Anthea Elston of the Parish of Birtsmorton and Hollybush, following the submission of a faculty to the Diocese of Worcester by the Parochial Church Council of Birtsmorton.

The DAC archaeological advisor for Worcestershire County Council considered that the proposed works had the potential to impact upon potential archaeological assets.

The project conforms to a brief prepared by the DAC archaeological advisor (WCC 2018). A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018) and approved by the DAC archaeological advisor. The archaeological watching brief conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014a) and also by Worcestershire County Council in the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location, topography and geology

The site is located within the churchyard of the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, Birtsmorton.

The village of Birtsmorton comprises a dispersed settlement and civil parish within the Malvern Hills district of Worcestershire, approximately 7km south-west of Upton-on-Severn. The contemporary village is generally focussed along Birts Street and Rye Street, with Birtsmorton Court representing the eastern extent of the settlement.

The churchyard is generally flat, sitting at c 18m *above ordnance datum* (AOD), and is bounded by a churchyard wall.

The underlying geology comprises bedrock of Sidmouth Mudstone formation overlain by superficial deposits comprising alluvium of clays, silts, sands and gravels (BGS 2019). The alluvial deposits are focussed along the route of a small tributary of the Langdon brook, c 100m south of the churchyard.

2 Archaeological and historical background

The archaeological background to the site is given in the brief (WCC 2018). Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcestershire HER was completed, covering a search area of 1km around the site. A summary of the results of this research are presented below.

2.1 The Church

The church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul is Grade II* listed. The present church building dates to the 14th century and was restored in 1877. However, the Benefice of Birtsmorton is mentioned in the Taxatio of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291. The benefice included the church at Birtsmorton which was valued at £4 13s 4d and a portion valued at 4s 0d payable to the Prior of Monmouth.

The font is noteworthy as it likely dates to c 1200, and comprises a round bowl on a base with a chamfered plinth.

2.2 Birtsmorton Court

The churchyard is located c 27m north-east of Birtsmorton Court, a Grade I listed moated manor house. The building dates from the late 16th century with some 14th century remains and both 18th and 19th century alterations. The manor is built around a courtyard and constructed out of stone and brick with timber-framing and tile roofs. The present building is accessed via a 20th century bridge across the moat.

The manor was acquired by John Nanfan in 1424-5, who is said to have demolished most of the house before his death in c 1447. The house was likely remodelled for Giles Nanfan from c 1572. Further work in the 18th to 20th centuries provided varied aspects on either side. The east range of the house was destroyed by fire in the 18th century, but was re-created in 1929-30 by A Hill Parker and Son.

The manor is surrounded by a moat (WSM29168) which is likely contemporary with the medieval building, however there is evidence for a second moat (WSM07610) to the east of the house, which has been dated to the Saxon period.

The ornamental garden (WSM29019) to the north of the house is 19th century in origin, and no garden survives that predates this period. The working farm and associated buildings (WSM29167) located immediately north of the house are post-medieval in origin.

2.3 Previous archaeological work on site

The area surrounding Birtsmorton Court is thought to be the site of the deserted medieval village of Birtsmorton (WSM15402), and is indicated by the presence of the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul. This was further supported by archaeological work undertaken in 2000 in preparation for landscaping associated with car parking, c 50m north of the church.

Archaeological works comprised phases of geophysical survey (WSM29518) and trial trenching (WSM29251), followed by open area excavation (WSM29786). The results indicated the presence of a short-lived domestic settlement dating from the 11th to 13th centuries (Hurst *et al* 2000). It is theorised that the abandonment of the medieval settlement may correspond with a period of nationwide retraction within rural settlement following the Black Death in the mid-14th century (Miller & Jones 2000). Conversely, Hurst (*pers comm*) identifies that the abandonment of the village may coincide with the expansion and development of Birtsmorton Court in the 14th century.

3 Project aims

The aims of the watching brief were to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible within the constraints of the Client's groundworks.

4 Project methodology

4.1 Fieldwork methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2018). Fieldwork was undertaken between 4 January 2019 and 14 February 2019.

Groundworks with an archaeological interest could be split into three main phases:

- the excavation and instatement of a new external French-drain around the footprint of the church building;
- the excavation of a soak-away and associated drainage run in the north of the churchyard;
- the excavation of a soak-away and associated drainage run in the south of the churchyard.

The excavated trenches are shown in Figures 2-4.

The brief stated that human remains should be reinterred on site and disarticulated human bone was reinterred within the excavated trenches whilst three articulated burials encountered were left *in situ*.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed under constant archaeological supervision using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material and environmental samples, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012) and trench and feature locations were surveyed using a differential GPS with an accuracy limit set at <0.04m.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through a combination of structural and artefactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. Subject to the agreement of the landowner it is anticipated that it will be deposited at Worcestershire County Museum.

4.2 Artefact methodology, by Laura Griffin

The finds work reported here conforms to the following guidance: for finds work by ClfA (2014b), for pottery analysis by PCRG/SGRP/MPRG (2016), for archive creation by AAF (2011), and for museum deposition by SMA (1993).

4.2.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

4.2.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. This date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on a Microsoft Access 2007 database.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by Worcestershire Archaeology (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

4.2.3 Discard policy

Artefacts from topsoil and subsoil and unstratified contexts will normally be noted but not retained, unless they are of intrinsic interest (eg worked flint or flint debitage, featured pottery sherds, and other potential 'registered artefacts'). All artefacts will be collected from stratified excavated contexts, except for large assemblages of post-medieval or modern material, unless there is some special reason to retain such as local production. Such material may be noted and not retained, or, if appropriate, a representative sample may be collected and retained. Discard of finds from post-medieval and earlier deposits will only be instituted with reference to museum collection policy and/or with agreement of the local museum.

5 Archaeological results

5.1 Introduction

The features recorded in the trenches are shown in Figures 2-4, and further illustrated with a number of plates (1-14) at the end of this report. The trench and context inventory is presented in Appendix 1.

5.2 Trench descriptions

5.2.1 Trench 1 – French-drain

Trench 1 was located around the foot of the church building and measured between 0.80m-0.88m deep in the north and between 0.60-0.65m deep in the south (Fig 2; Plates 1-4). The trench measured between 0.60-0.70m wide. No burials or grave-cuts were present within the trench and no disarticulated human bone was recovered from the excavated deposits.

Much of the trench was located within the footprint of a former French-drain comprised of gravels and a ceramic land-drain. The former French-drain was 0.50m deep and truncated the natural substrate.

The stratigraphic sequence observed within Trench 1 was markedly different on the north and south sides of the church building. Within the northern extent of Trench 1 no graveyard soils were observed. Topsoil (100) was present to a depth of 0.18m and overlay the natural red-marl geology (102).

Within the southern extent of Trench 1, a mixed dark reddish-brown, clay silt graveyard soil (108) was present. It was between 0.40-0.60m deep and was not bottomed within the trench.

A possible former pathway or stone surface (110) was exposed within Trench 1, immediately south of the church tower (Plate 3). The surface comprised un-mortared limestone slabs, measuring 1.30m wide. The surface was located 0.20m below ground surface (*bgs*) and was sealed by topsoil (100). It measured just 0.15m deep and was sat on a rubble hard-core deposit (111).

Trench 1 abutted the church building, and subsequently the foundations (105) of which were exposed (Plate 2). The foundations measured just 0.30m-0.50m deep and comprised roughly dressed sandstone blocks. The foundations for the church tower (106) were more substantial however, and were recorded as 0.70m deep (Plate 4).

5.2.2 Trench 2 – north soakaway

Trench 2 was located to the north-east of the church and comprised a large soakaway with an associated drainage run (Figs 2-3; Plates 5-6). The soakaway measured just over 3m by 2m and the drainage run measured 5.20m by 0.60m.

A thin topsoil (200) measuring 0.19m deep overlay a thicker graveyard soil (201) (Plate 6). This deposit comprised a mixed, mid reddish-brown silty-clay measuring 0.47m deep and containing moderate disarticulated human bone fragments and ceramic tiles. The natural substrate (202) was consistent with that observed in trench 1 and was encountered at 0.66m *bgs*.

Three graves were identified within the trench, at 0.80m *bgs* and were observed to cut the natural substrate. The first grave [205] was located in the south of the soakaway (Fig 3; Plates 7-9) and had a visible length of 2.01m and width of 1.04m. It was aligned broadly north-east to south-west. The skull of a juvenile was slightly exposed in the north-west corner of the grave (Plate 8). The bone was poorly preserved and the cranium distorted but it appeared to measure 0.12m by 0.16m. The skull was facing south, suggesting it was positioned on the right shoulder. The burial was left *in situ* and protected with a membrane and sand.

Grave [205] was truncated on the northern edge by a smaller grave [207] (Fig 3; Plates 7, 9). Grave [207] was coffin-shaped and measured 1.28m long and 0.50m wide. It was aligned broadly east-west. Grave [207] was left *in situ* and no burial was exposed within the cut. The size of the grave-cut indicates this was a juvenile burial.

A third grave was exposed within the drainage run for Trench 2 (Fig 3; Plates 10). Grave [210] measured 0.83m wide and was exposed for a length of 0.91m within the trench. The grave was first identified by the presence of a line of 20 iron coffin nails along the northern edge of the burial (Plate 10). It is likely that any wood panels had degraded and rotted, with just the iron nails representing what was left of the former coffin. The grave was aligned north-east to south-west and like all others, was left *in situ*.

A considerable amount, 52 fragments, of disarticulated human bone was recovered from the graveyard soil (201). This included:

- 2 molars
- 4 skull fragments
- 8 fragments of unidentified long bone
- 1 fragment of fibula
- 37 unidentified fragments.

The bone was collected from the excavated material and reinterred within the trench.

5.2.3 Trench 3 – south soakaway

Trench 3 was located to the south of the porch, on the south side of the church building (Fig 4; Plates 11-12). It comprised a large soakaway and associated drainage run. The soakaway measured 2.46m by 2.40m and the drainage run measured 5.20m by 0.60m. It had an excavated depth of between 0.80m-0.88m.

Similarly to Trench 2, a thin topsoil (300) measuring 0.15m deep, overlay a much thicker graveyard soil (301) (Plate 12). The graveyard soil was much deeper here, with a recorded depth of 0.73m, and was not bottomed within the soakaway. Natural geology (301) was only exposed within the north of the drainage run, and was identified at 0.75m *bgs*.

Two possible graves were identified at c 0.82m *bgs*. The first [304] was located in the north of the trench (Fig 4). It was only partially exposed, and was visible for a length of 1.26m and a width of 0.28m. No human remains were exposed within the grave and it was subsequently left *in situ*.

The second grave [307] was more diffuse, but did align with a nearby, but unreadable, headstone to the west. Similar to [304] the grave was not fully exposed, but did have a visible length of 1.04m and a width of 0.72m. The remnants of a coffin, comprising an iron coffin handle and strap, were exposed at the northern edge of the grave (Fig 4; Plate 13). The coffin handle (306) measured 110mm long and 15mm thick. The grave and the coffin furniture were left *in situ* and protected by tarpaulin and sand.

In total, 279 fragments of disarticulated human bone were recovered from the graveyard soil (301) within Trench 3 (Plate 14). This included:

- 14 skull fragments
- 1 mandible fragment
- 1 clavicle
- 6 fragments of vertebrae
- 6 fragments of pelvis
- 11 rib fragments
- 8 fragments of phalange
- 9 fragments of femur
- 1 fragments of tibia
- 3 fragments of radius
- 4 fragments of humerus
- 32 unidentified fragments of long bone
- 183 unidentified fragments

The bone was collected from the excavated material, boxed and reinterred within the trench.

6 Artefactual evidence

The assemblage recovered from the site totalled 10 finds weighing 719g (see Tables 1 and 2). All the material was from topsoil and graveyard soil, the majority being of late medieval and post-medieval date. Level of preservation was fair with finds displaying moderate levels of surface abrasion.

period	material class	object specific type	count	weight (g)
Roman	ceramic	pot	1	4
late med/early post-med	ceramic	pot	2	67
late med/early post-med	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	5	245
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	2	403

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

6.1 Summary of artefactual evidence by period

6.1.1 Roman

Just a single sherd of oxidised Severn Valley ware (fabric 12), which was from the graveyard soil of trench 2 (context 201), was a highly abraded rim, and most likely from a tankard of 2nd–early 3rd century date (Webster 1976, fig 7, no 40).

6.1.2 Late medieval–early post-medieval

Material of this period consisted of two sherds of pottery and five pieces of flat roof tile (contexts 201 and 301). The pottery was identified as rim and base sherds of an oxidised glazed Malvernian ware jar of 15th–16th century date, decorated with an impressed applied strip around the neck and a thin green-speckled glaze (Worcestershire form 69.8). The roof tile also included relatively local Malvernian production (ie from Hanley Castle parish).

6.1.3 Post-medieval

Two fragments of flat roof tile were identified as being of post-medieval date. Both were well-fired and one had distinctive slag-like inclusions (fabric 5, context 301). Tile of this fabric type have previously been identified at sites to the west of Worcester (Griffin 2008; Walsh 2015) and dated 16th–18th century.

context	material class	object specific type	count	weight(g)	start date	end date	finds tpq
200	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	1	34	16C	18C	16-18C
201	ceramic	pot	1	4	2C	E3C	late medieval/early post-medieval
201	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	3	117	15C	17C	
301	ceramic	pot	2	67	15C	16C	16-18C
301	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	2	128	15C	17C	

301	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	1	369	16C	18C	
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Table 2: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6.2 Recommendations

No further work required.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event no deposits were identified which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

The archaeological investigations at the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul have identified a small number of archaeological features consistent with the character of the site as a Christian cemetery dating from the medieval period onwards.

Four graves were identified within the confines of the groundworks, with two in the south of the site, and three in the north (Figs 2-4). The graves were identified at c 0.80m-0.85m bgs, and following discussion between Worcestershire Archaeology, D.A. Cook Builders Ltd and Hook Mason Architecture, it was decided that in the interest of preservation *in situ*, the graves would not be excavated. To allow for a reduced depth, the surface area of each soakaway was slightly increased.

Discussion around the unexcavated graves is limited; however, two of the graves [210, 307] were identified as coffin burials due to the presence of coffin furniture. A third coffin burial seems likely due to the shape of grave cut [207] though this could not be confirmed.

Coffin burials within Christian contexts are generally a post-medieval practice and can typically be split into two categories: 'simple coffin burials' (c 1550-1750) and 'elaborate coffin burials' (c 1750 – present) (Litten 1991; Mann *et al* 2016). Though unconfirmed, the presence of an iron handle and strap or fitting may indicate that grave [307] was an 'elaborate coffin burial' and may date from c 1750 onwards.

Of the four graves identified, only one had any human remains exposed within the groundworks. A skull was partially exposed in the western limit of grave [205], and though not excavated, appeared to be the skull of a juvenile. The grave was of considerable size and with the juvenile positioned against the northern edge; it is possible that the grave may have contained more than a single burial.

Grave [205] predates later grave [207], as evidenced by truncation to the northern edge. Additionally, the lack of a coffin and the poor preservation of the bone may indicate grave [205] predates c 1550 and is medieval in origin. However, as the burials were preserved *in situ*, this remains unconfirmed.

In total 331 fragments of disarticulated human bone within the graveyard soil were recovered during groundworks. The majority (279 fragments) were recovered from Trench 3, to the south of the church. This is perhaps unsurprising as traditionally the south of a churchyard is the most popular for burial, in part due to the increased exposure to sunlight. This is further strengthened by the comparative depths of the graveyard soils, which were considerably deeper in the south, indicating an increased level of disturbance. The disarticulated human bone was recorded and immediately reinterred within the excavated trenches.

Little of archaeological interest was identified within Trench 1, around the foot of the church building. This is perhaps in part due to the presence of an earlier French-drain which was re-excavated and measured 0.50m in depth. A former limestone pathway, south of the church tower, is unlikely to predate the post-medieval period and was immediately underneath the topsoil.

A single sherd of Romano-British pottery within the graveyard soil is representative of activity in this period within the wider landscape.

Two rim sherds of residual medieval Malvernian-ware pottery within the graveyard soil are of some interest. The sherds represent some domestic 15th – 16th century activity on-site, likely associated with Birtsmorton Court and the church, as evidence indicates the medieval settlement was abandoned in the later 13th century (Hurst et al 2000; Miller & Jones 2000). Within the wider landscape, the pottery sherds represent a period of significant pottery production within Malvern Chase, centred on Hanley Swan c 7km north.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the trenches to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features. It is considered that the nature, density and distribution of archaeological features provides an accurate characterisation of the development site as a whole.

9 Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) from January 2019 to February 2019 at the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, Birtsmorton, Worcestershire (NGR SO 8011 3550). This comprised the archaeological monitoring of improvements to an external drainage system and the excavation of new soakaways and associated drainage trenches within the churchyard.

The village of Birtsmorton comprises a dispersed settlement and civil parish within the Malvern Hills district of Worcestershire, approximately 7km south-west of Upton-on-Severn. The contemporary village is generally focussed along Birts Street and Rye Street, with Birtsmorton Court and the church of St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul representing the eastern extent of the modern settlement.

A small number of graves were identified within the confines of the groundworks. Subsequent adjustments to the drainage designs allowed the graves to be preserved in situ. Despite not being excavated, three of the graves were identified as potential coffin burials of probable post-medieval origin. During groundworks, a single burial was partially exposed and comprised the skull of a juvenile. The burial was covered back over and protected with a membrane and sand.

A considerable amount of disarticulated human bone was recovered from overlying graveyard soils. The majority of the bone was recovered from groundworks south of the church building and may reflect the popularity of burials in the south of churchyards. This is perhaps supported by the presence of deeper graveyard soils in this location. The disarticulated bone was recorded and immediately reinterred within the excavated trenches.

Other features of note comprised a former limestone pathway, and stone foundations for the main church building and tower. Two rim sherds of medieval Malvernian-ware pottery reflect 15th-16th century activity on-site, consistent with the date of the nearby Birtsmorton Court and the church.

10 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Jamie Wilkins, assisted by Elspeth Iliff and Tim Cornah.

The project was managed by Tom Rogers. The report was produced and collated by Jamie Wilkins. Specialist contributions and individual sections of the report are attributed to the relevant authors throughout the text.

11 Acknowledgements

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The project was monitored by the DAC archaeological advisor to Worcestershire County Council and Worcestershire Archaeology would also like to thank them for their advice.

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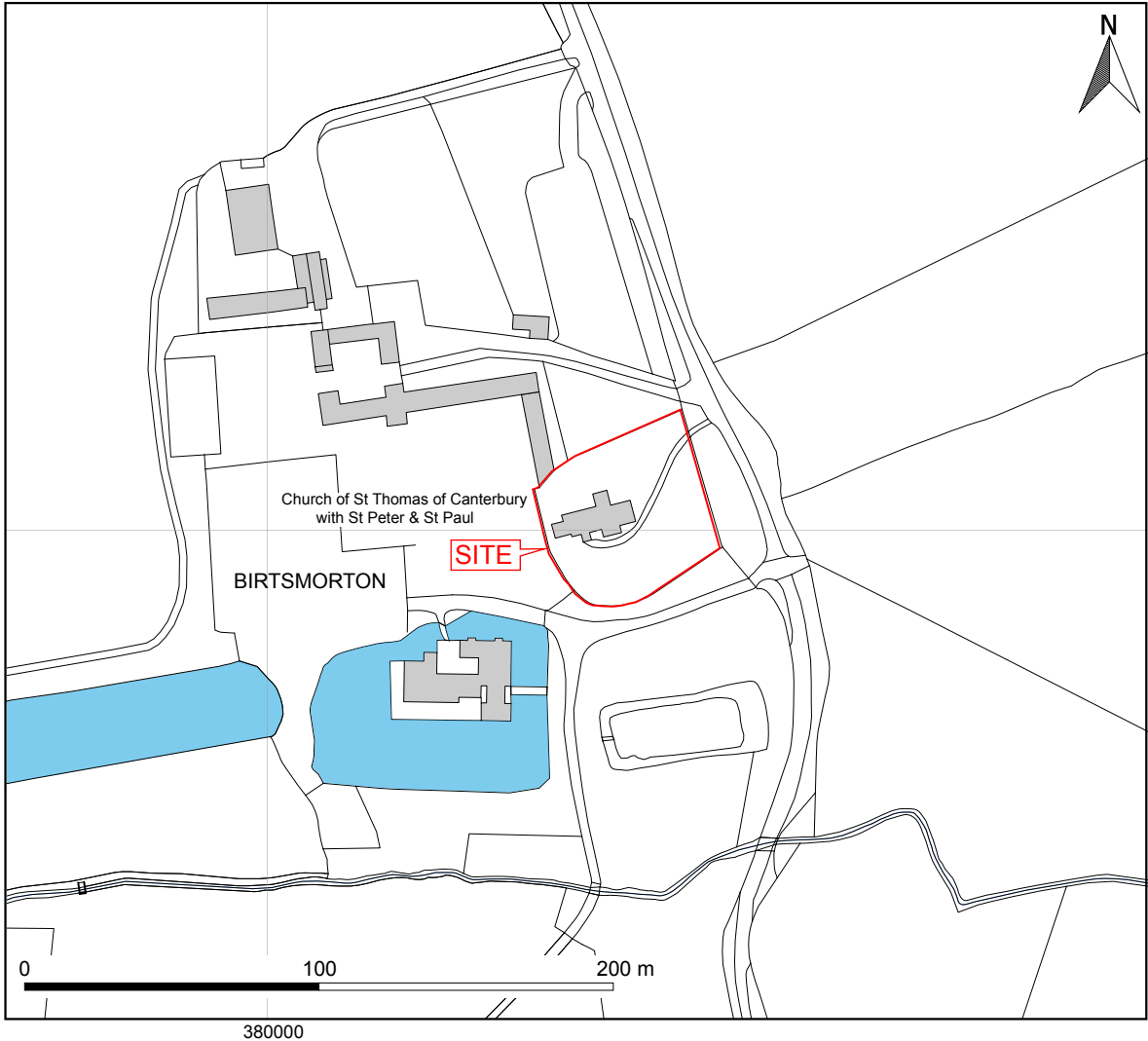
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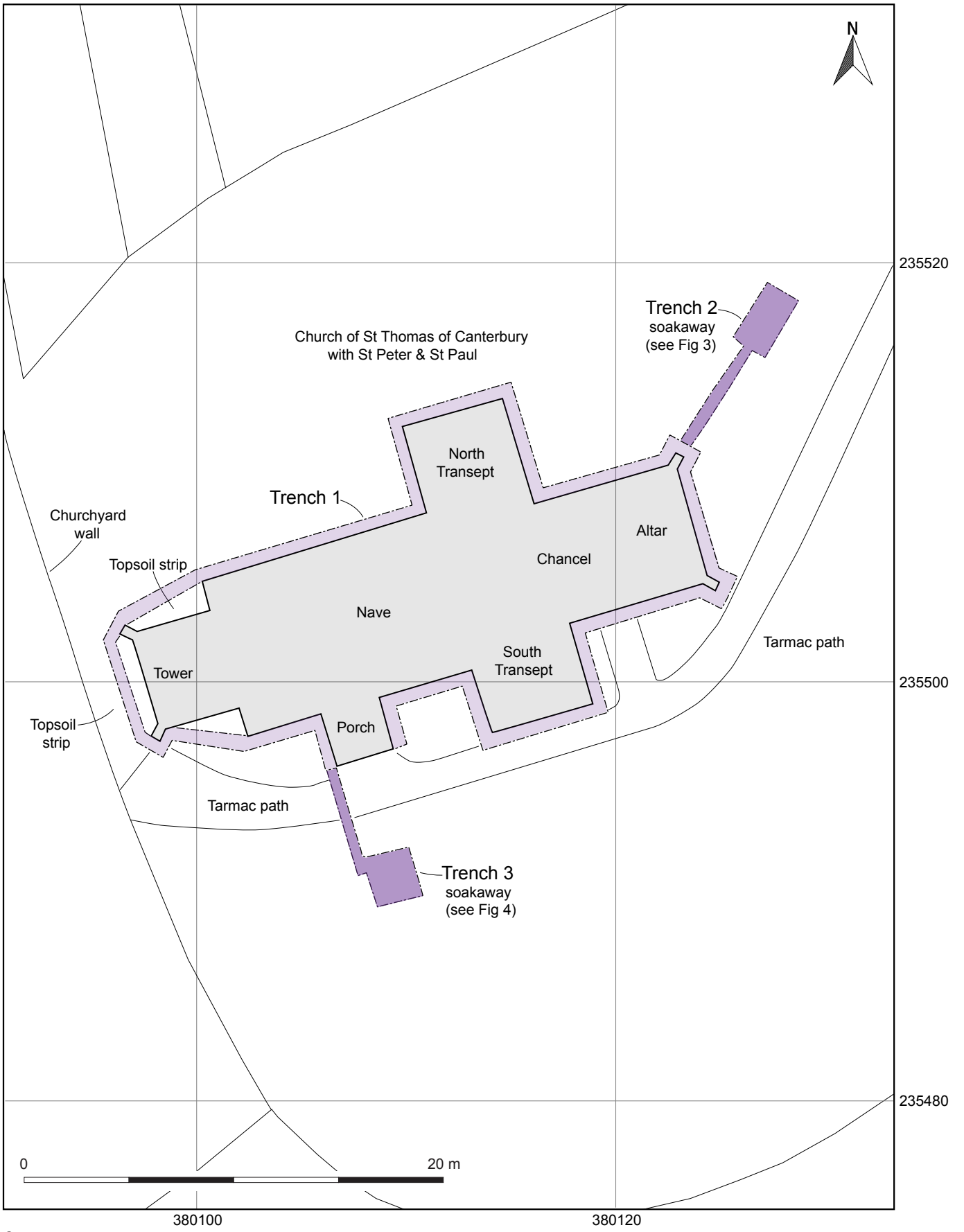
Figures



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Location of the site

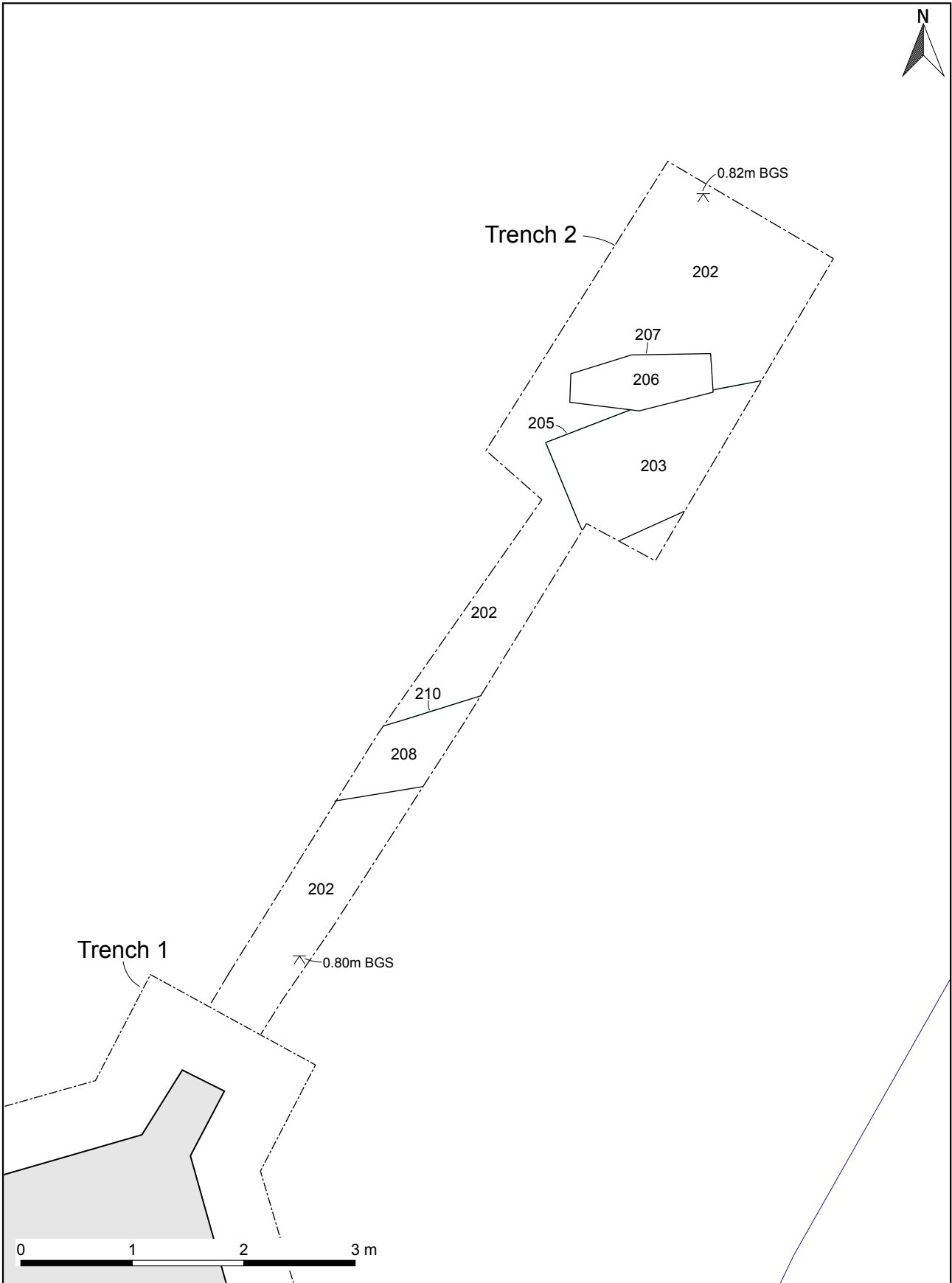
Figure 1



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Trench location plan

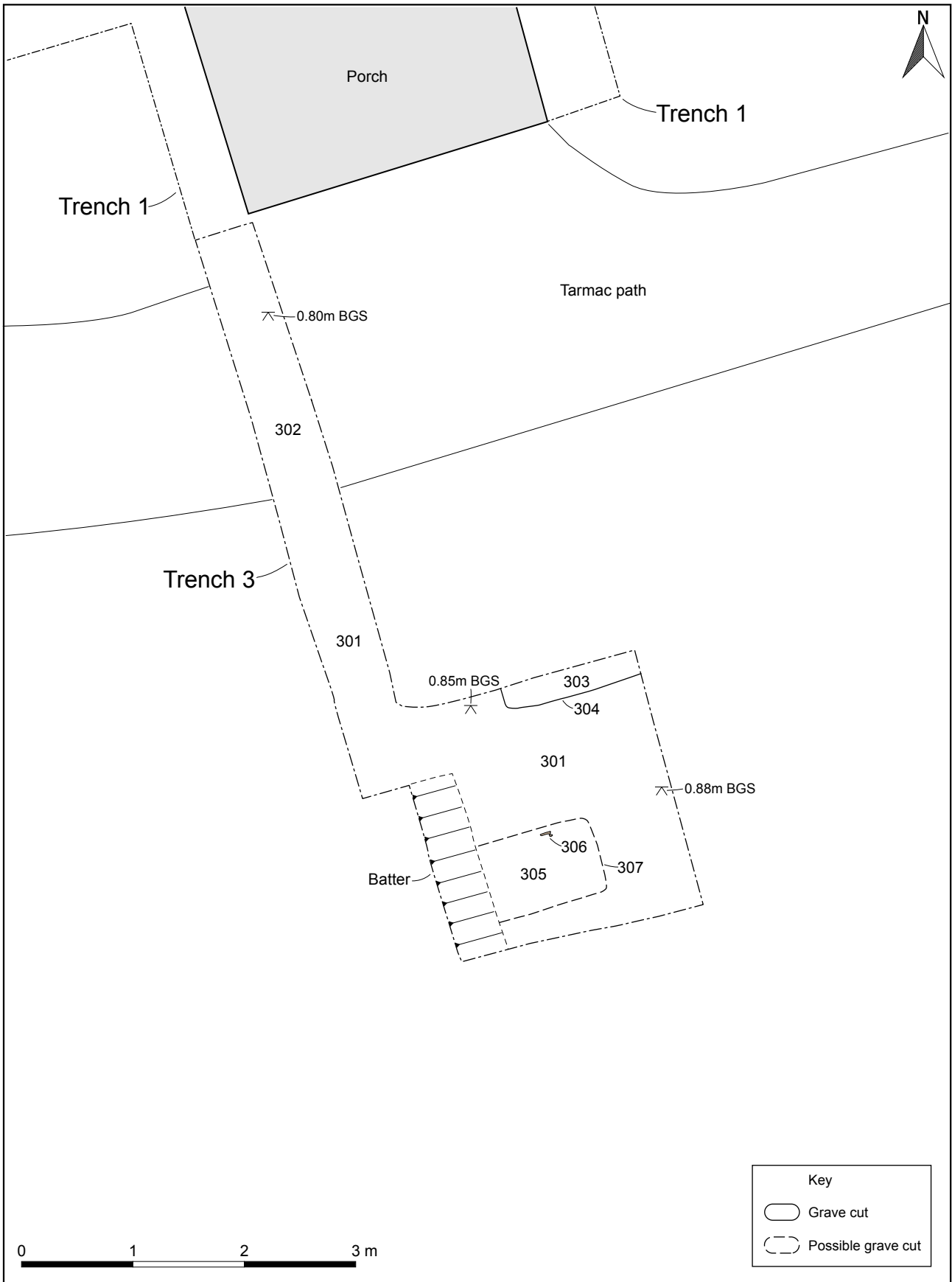
Figure 2



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Plan of Trench 2

Figure 3



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Plan of Trench 3

Figure 4

Plates



Plate 1: Looking west across Trench 1 against the northern wall of the church, 1m scale.



Plate 2: Church foundations (105) set into natural geology (101) exposed within Trench 1. View east, 1m scale.



Plate 3: Looking north-east across former pathway (110) below topsoil (100) within Trench 1, 1m scale.



Plate 4: Church tower foundations (106) exposed within Trench 1. View south, 1m (right) and 0.4m (left) scales.



Plate 5: Looking north-east across the excavation of Trench 2, scales 1m.



Plate 6: North-west facing baulk of Trench 2 showing topsoil (200) overlaying graveyard soil (201), overlaying red marl natural (202). 1m scales.



Plate 7: Looking west across grave [205]. Grave [207] is also visible immediately right of the north arrow. 0.3m (top) and 0.5m (left) scales.



Plate 8: Burial (204) – the skull of a juvenile within grave [205]. The skull is facing south. View west, 0.2m scale.



Plate 9: Coffin-shaped grave [207]. The size of the grave indicates another juvenile burial. Grave [205] is visible to the left. View west, 1m scale.

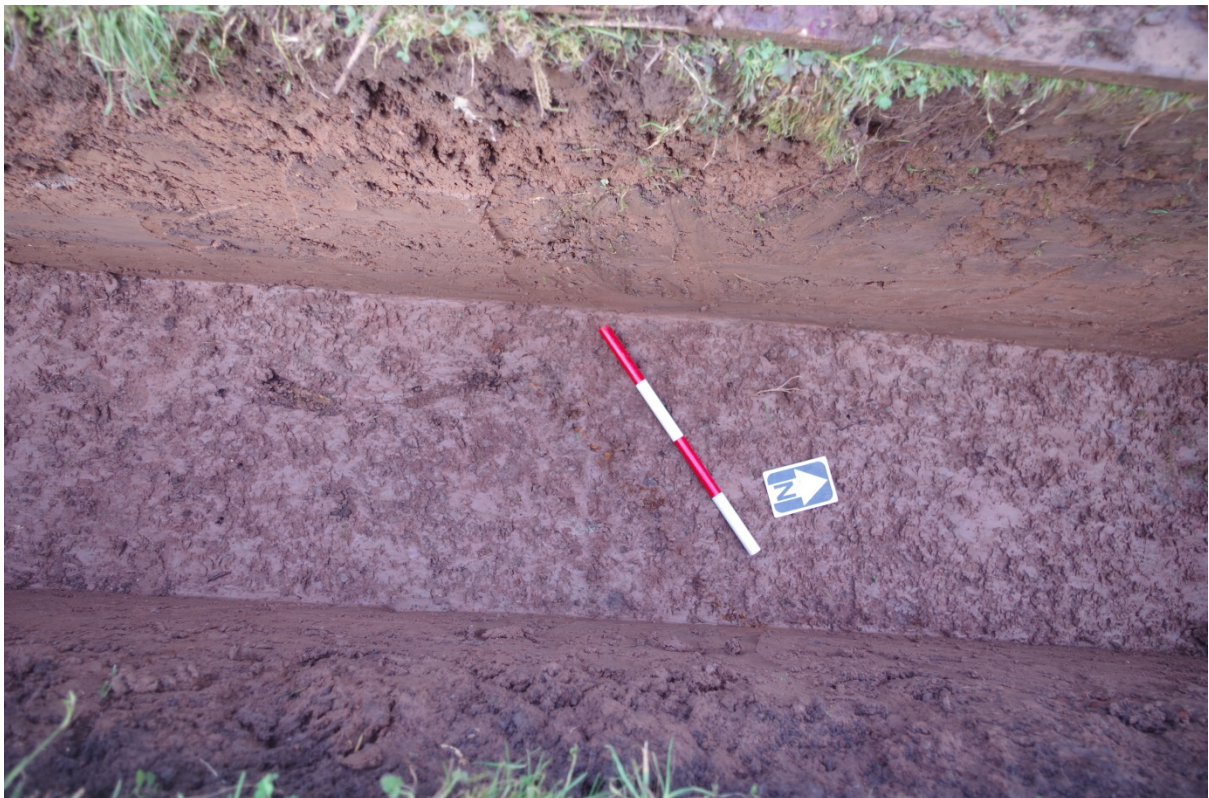


Plate 10: Looking west across grave [210] within the drainage run of Trench 2. A line of iron coffin nails (209) are visible to the left of the 0.5m scale.



Plate 11: Looking south-west across Trench 3, 1m scales.



Plate 12: North facing baulk of Trench 3, showing topsoil (300) sealing graveyard soil (301), 1m scales.



Plate 13: Coffin handle and strap (306) within grave [307]. Possibly part of an 'elaborate coffin burial' associated with burials post-dating c 1750. View south, 0.2m scale.



Plate 14: An example of some larger fragments of disarticulated human bone recovered from graveyard soil (301) whilst excavating Trench 3. All human remains were recorded and reinterred immediately within the trenches. 0.5m (top) and 0.4m (right) scales.

Appendix 1: Trench descriptions

Trench 1 – French Drain

Depth: 0.88m Width: 0.60m-0.70m Length: N/A

Context	Type	Description	Max. Depth	Depth below ground surface
100	Topsoil	Friable, dark blackish-brown, silty loam, frequent rooting, occasional ceramic building material	0.28m	-
101	Natural	Firm, mid brownish-red with some blue mottling	0.70m+	0.18m-0.28m
102	French-drain	Fill of former French-drain comprising orange ceramic pipe and blue-grey gravels. Fill of [103].	0.50m	-
103	French-drain	Cut of former French-drain containing (102). Largely arbitrary. Truncates (101).	0.50m	-
104	Church building	Arbitrary number given to the church building itself.	-	-
105	Church foundations	Foundations / footings for the primary church building. Comprises sandstone and limestone blocks.	0.30m-0.50m	-
106	Tower foundations	Foundations / footings for the church tower. Comprises sandstone and limestone blocks.	0.70m	0.04m-0.10m
107	Construction cut	Construction cut for the church building and tower. Largely arbitrary. Truncates (101).	0.30m-0.70m	-
108	Graveyard soil	Friable, dark reddish-brown, clay silt graveyard soil present on the south-side of the church.	0.50m	0.10m-0.20m
109	Redeposited natural	Firm, dark brownish-red, silty clay containing moderate charcoal and lime mortar. Redeposited natural possibly associated with the church construction or a grave.	0.20m+	0.40m
110	Stone surface	Former pathway / stone surface within the churchyard, comprising un-mortared grey limestone slabs.	0.15m	0.20m
111	Hard-core	Rubble bedding / hard-core layer for former stone surface (110). Comprises frequent limestone fragments within a dark reddish-brown silty-clay matrix.	0.15m	0.35m

Trench 2 – north soakaway

Depth: 0.82m Width: 2.00m (max.) Length: 8.20m (max.)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Depth	Depth below ground surface
200	Topsoil	Friable, dark brownish-black, clay loam containing frequent rooting, charcoal, mortar and ceramic building material.	0.19m	-
201	Graveyard soil	Moderately compact to friable, mid reddish-brown, silty-clay containing moderate disarticulated human bone, ceramic building material and occasional animal bone.	0.47m	0.19m
202	Natural	Firm, mid brownish-red with some blue mottling, clay.	0.16m+	0.66m
203	Grave fill	Backfill of grave [205]. Unexcavated. Compact, light greyish-red, silty-clay containing frequent rooting and charcoal.	-	0.80m
204	Skeleton	Partially exposed skeleton within grave [205]. Comprises a juvenile skull measuring 0.12m by 0.16m. Left <i>in situ</i> .	-	0.80m
205	Grave cut	Unexcavated grave containing (203) and (204). Rectangular grave cut truncated by [207].	-	0.80m
206	Grave fill	Backfill of grave [207]. Moderately compact to friable, dark reddish-brown, silty-clay containing frequent rooting and moderate lime mortar and small stones.	-	0.80m
207	Grave cut	Unexcavated grave containing (206). Coffin shaped, but small in size suggesting a juvenile burial.	-	0.80m
208	Grave fill	Backfill of grave [210]. Compacted mid greyish/reddish-brown, silty-clay containing occasional small stones.	-	0.80m
209	Coffin	Number assigned to a former coffin within grave [210]. Comprises a line of 20 iron nails on the north side of the grave.	-	0.80m
210	Grave cut	Unexcavated grave containing (208) and (209). Rectangular grave only partially exposed within the trench.	-	0.80m

Trench 3 – south soakaway

Depth: 0.80m-0.88m Width: 2.46m (max.) Length: 7.60m (max.)

Context	Type	Description	Max. Depth	Depth below ground surface
300	Topsoil	Friable, dark brownish-black, clay-loam containing frequent rooting and ceramic building material.	0.15m	-
301	Graveyard soil	Moderately compact to friable, dark reddish-brown, silty-clay containing frequent disarticulated human bone, ceramic building material, charcoal and rooting; occasional pottery.	0.73m+	0.15m
302	Natural	Firm, mid brownish-red with some blue mottling, clay.	0.05m+	0.75m
303	Grave fill	Backfill of grave [304]. Compact, mid brownish-red, silty-clay.	-	0.82m
304	Grave cut	Unexcavated grave containing (303). Only partially exposed within the trench but seemingly rectangular.	-	0.82m
305	Grave fill	Backfill of grave [307]. Compact, dark reddish-brown, silty-clay containing frequent charcoal, rooting and pebbles.	-	0.82m
306	Coffin	Number assigned to a former coffin within grave [307]. Comprises an iron coffin handle (110mm long, 15mm thick) and an iron strap / fitting (100mm long, 2mm thick). Located on the north side of the grave. Left <i>in situ</i> .	-	0.82m
307	Grave cut	Unexcavated grave containing (305) and (306). More diffuse and difficult to identify due to rooting and lack of natural geology. Rectangular grave, western extent not fully exposed.	-	0.82m

Appendix 2: Summary of project archive (WSM 71275)

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	Ceramics
Paper	Context sheet, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing, Plan, Report, Section
Digital	GIS, Images raster/digital photography, Survey, Text

*OASIS terminology

Appendix 3: Summary of data for Worcestershire HER

WSM 71275 (event HER number)

P5408

Artefacts

period - note 1	material class	object specific type	start date	end date	Count	weight (g)	specialist report? (note 2)	key assemblage? (note 3)
post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	16C	18C	2	403	N	N
Roman	ceramic	pot	2C	E3C	1	4	N	N
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic	roof tile (flat)	15C	17C	5	245	N	N
late medieval/early post-medieval	ceramic	pot	15C	16C	2	67	N	N

Notes

- 1) In some cases the date will be "Undated". In most cases, especially if there is not a specialist report, the information entered in the Date field will be a general period such as Neolithic, Roman, medieval etc (see below for a list of periods used in the Worcestershire HER). Very broad date ranges such as late Medieval to Post-medieval are acceptable for artefacts which can be hard to date for example roof tiles. If you have more specific dates, such as 13th to 14th century, please use these instead. Specific date ranges which cross general period boundaries can also be used, for example 15th to 17th century.

period	from	to
Palaeolithic	500000 BC	10001 BC
Mesolithic	10000 BC	4001 BC
Neolithic	4000 BC	2351 BC
Bronze Age	2350 BC	801 BC
Iron Age	800 BC	42 AD
Roman	43	409
Post-Roman	410	1065
Medieval	1066	1539

Post-medieval	1540	1900
Modern	1901	2050

period specific	from	to
Lower Paleolithic	500000 BC	150001
Middle Palaeolithic	150000	40001
Upper Palaeolithic	40000	10001
Early Mesolithic	10000	7001
Late Mesolithic	7000	4001
Early Neolithic	4000	3501
Middle Neolithic	3500	2701
Late Neolithic	2700	2351
Early Bronze Age	2350	1601
Middle Bronze Age	1600	1001
Late Bronze Age	1000	801
Early Iron Age	800	401
Middle Iron Age	400	101
Late Iron Age	100 BC	42 AD
Roman 1st century AD	43	100
2nd century	101	200
3rd century	201	300
4th century	301	400
Roman 5th century	401	410
Post roman	411	849
Pre conquest	850	1065
Late 11th century	1066	1100
12th century	1101	1200
13th century	1201	1300
14th century	1301	1400

15th century	1401	1500
16th century	1501	1600
17th century	1601	1700
18th century	1701	1800
19th century	1801	1900
20th century	1901	2000
21st century	2001	

2. Not all evaluations of small excavation assemblages have specialist reports on all classes of objects. An identification (eg clay pipe) and a quantification is not a specialist report. A short discussion or a more detailed record identifying types and dates is a specialist report. This field is designed to point researchers to reports where they will find out more than merely the presence or absence of material of a particular type and date.

3. This field should be used with care. It is designed to point researchers to reports where they will be able to locate the most important assemblages for any given material for any given date.