

CHURCH OF ST CATHERINE, COSSALL, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING OF GROUNDWORKS WITHIN THE CHURCHYARD

2021

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SUMMARY

- During 2021, Matt Hurford Historic Buildings and Archaeological Services was commissioned by Cossall Parochial Church Council to carry out archaeological monitoring during the excavation of groundworks at the Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire centred on National Grid Reference SK 48397 42289. The work is in response to proposals to lay water from the standpipe in the north-west corner of the churchyard to the north-west corner of the north aisle.
- The objective of the archaeological work was to ensure that any archaeological information present was recorded appropriately and the results presented within a report.
- The principal surviving elements of the early church are the two-stage 13th century tower and the 14th century spire as the remainder of the church was substantially rebuilt and enlarged in 1842-3. The north aisle was added at this time, the foundations of which incorporated medieval masonry. During archaeological excavations within the north aisle in 1999 stone slabs were exposed believed to be the remains of a path that once led through the churchyard to a door in the north wall of the nave prior to the Victorian remodelling of the church.
- The groundworks comprised the excavation of a single trench, Area 01, that was 12.20m in length, 0.30m in width and up to 0.46m in depth extending from the standpipe in the north-west corner of the churchyard to the north-west corner of the north aisle.
- The trench had a basic stratigraphy of two deposits comprising topsoil and natural substrata. The Victorian foundations of the north aisle were encountered at the east end of the trench.
- The complete absence of in-situ burials or other significant archaeological remains encountered during the trenching through the churchyard is likely to be due to the limited scope of the work carried out which ensured that the destructive impact on the archaeology was minimal.

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
CONTENTS	3
List of Figures	3
List of Plates	4
Acknowledgements	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. OBJECTIVES	5
3. SITE BACKGROUND	5
4. METHODOLOGY	6
5. RESULTS	6
6. CONCLUSION	6
REFERENCES	7

Figures

Plates

Appendix 1: Context Summary

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Site location, scale 1:20,000 at A4.
Figure 2: Area 01 location plan. Scale 1:100 at A3.
Figure 3: Area 01 east end post excavation plan of 0004. Scale 1:20 at A4.
Figure 4: Area 01 west facing section of 0004. Scale 1:20 at A4.
Figure 5: Area 01 south facing section of 0001-0005. Scale 1:20 at A4.

List of Plates

- Plate 1: General view of Area 01 with the north aisle in the background, viewed looking east.
Plate 2: Foundations 0004, viewed looking north.
Plate 3: The west face of the north aisle and foundations 0004, viewed looking east.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was managed, and the fieldwork undertaken, by Matt. Hurford. Monitoring was by the Archaeological Advisors to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham. Thanks are extended to Cossall Parochial Church Council for commissioning the work.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. During 2021, Matt Hurford Historic Buildings and Archaeological Services was commissioned by Cossall Parochial Church Council to carry out archaeological monitoring during the excavation of groundworks at the Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire centred on National Grid Reference SK 48397 42289 (Figure 1). The work is in response to proposals to lay water from the standpipe in the north-west corner of the churchyard to the north-west corner of the north aisle (Figure 2).

1.2. The work was carried out in accordance with faculty requirements (2020-047272) and adhered to the recommendations made by the DAC Archaeological Advisors.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. The objective of the archaeological work was:

- To ensure the archaeological monitoring of all aspects of the development programme and the recording of any archaeological remains encountered during the groundworks and the results presented within a report (preservation by record).

2.2. The proposed work comprised:

- Area 01: the excavation of a trench 12.20m in length, 0.30m in width and up to 0.46m in depth extending from the standpipe in the north-west corner of the churchyard to the north-west corner of the north aisle.

2.3. The groundworks were excavated by volunteers from the parish under the observation by the archaeologist (watching brief).

2.4. The recording was to result in 'the preparation of a report and ordered archive', in line with the guidelines of the CIFA Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, (Standard and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief published December 2014).

3. SITE BACKGROUND

3.1. The village of Cossall is centred at SK 48306 42292, just over a mile to the east of Ilkeston. The church lies at 80m OD. The British Geological Survey shows that the underlying bedrock geology is Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation of sandstone with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey 2021).

3.2. History & Fabric

3.2.1. The earliest documentary reference to a church or chapel-of-ease at Cossall was recorded in the parish of Wollaton in the possession of the Morteyn family in 1236, the family retaining the manor until 1312 when it passed to the Willoughby family. The two-stage tower is contemporary with the Morteyn's, being of 13th century date, with the octagonal spire erected during the 14th century. These are the principal surviving elements of the early church as it was substantially rebuilt and enlarged in 1842-3. The north aisle was added at this time, the foundations of which incorporated medieval masonry. During archaeological excavations within the north aisle in 1999 stone slabs were exposed believed to be the remains of a path that once led through the churchyard to a door in the north wall of the nave prior to the Victorian remodelling of the church (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2021).

3.2.2. The overall potential for the survival of below-ground archaeology in the churchyard is considered to be moderate to high principally comprising burials, medieval construction evidence, 19th century restoration and landscaping features (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2021).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The groundwork was carried out under archaeological observation. All deposits were inspected in order to identify any archaeological remains of interest in particular those medieval or earlier in date, (including church foundations). Where possible these were cleaned by hand, examined and recorded.

4.2. Recording of all groundworks included the position and depths of the excavations and the deposits exposed, by drawing (both in section and plan where applicable) and photograph.

4.3. Prior to backfilling spoil heaps were inspected for any datable or significant archaeological artefacts.

4.4. All identifiable deposits were given unique individual four-digit context numbers e.g. 0001, 0002 etc. starting at 0001.

4.5. All saved artefacts were to be given individual three letter finds codes e.g. AAA, AAB.

4.6. Disarticulated human remains found in the confines of the work were to be recorded appropriately and left on site for reburial. Advice from the Diocese Archaeological Advisor would be sought if articulated remains were present

5. RESULTS

5.1. The groundworks comprised the excavation of Area 01, a single trench 12.20m in length, 0.30m in width and up to 0.46m in depth extending from the standpipe in the north-west corner of the churchyard to the north-west corner of the north aisle (Figure 2).

5.2. Area 01 (Figure 3-6 and Plates 1-3)

5.2.1. The excavation of Area 01 revealed a basic stratigraphy of two deposits comprising topsoil 0001, and natural bedrock 0002. The topsoil 0001, which extended to a depth of between 0.22m and 0.46m, consisted of a very dark brown silty clay loam with sandstone fragments become increasingly frequent to the west with beds of hard reddish yellow to strong brown sandstone 0002 below.

5.2.2. In the east end of the trench the sandstone rubble foundation 0004 for the west wall of the north aisle, dating to 1842-3, was encountered. The very top of 0004 incorporated brick or tile fragments which were probably used to level or strengthen the foundation. The brick or tile was bonded to the wall above and sandstone below with a light brown lime mortar in contrast to the sandstone which used firm brown sandy clay. The foundations reached a depth of 0.26m and extended up to 0.34m from the face of the north aisle wall and were set in a trench 0003 which truncated the natural sandstone 0002 and was partially infilled with firm brown silty clay loam (0005).

6. CONCLUSION

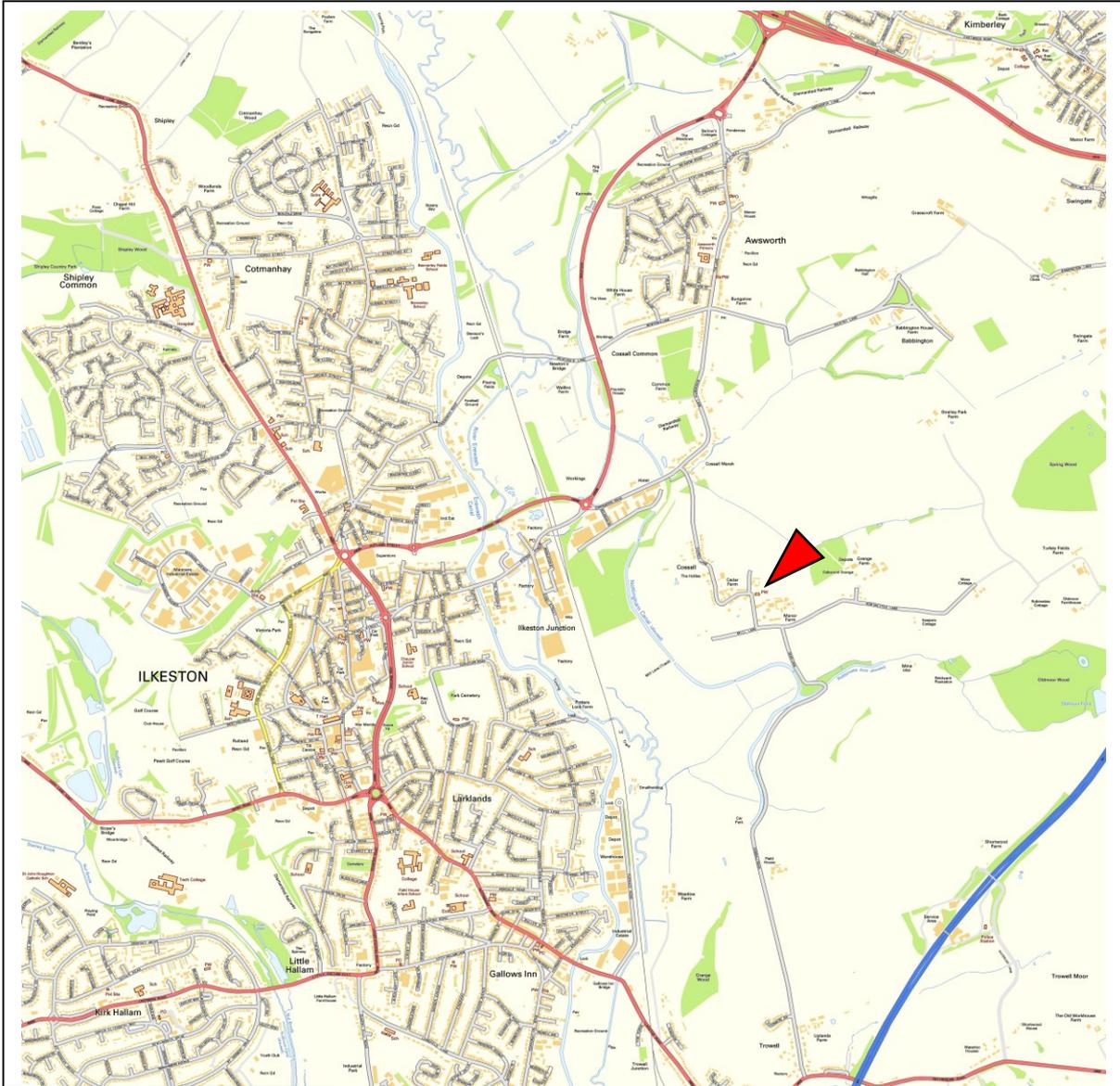
6.1 The complete absence of *in-situ* burials or significant archaeological remains encountered during the trenching through the churchyard is likely due to the limited scope of work carried out which ensured that the destructive impact on the archaeology was minimal.

REFERENCES

British Geological Survey 2021 Geology of Britain Viewer accessed 24/05/2021, <<http://mapsmappapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home/html>>

Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2021 *Cossall St Catherine*, accessed 29 April 2021, <<https://southwellchurch.history.nottingham.ac.uk/cossall/histro.php>>.

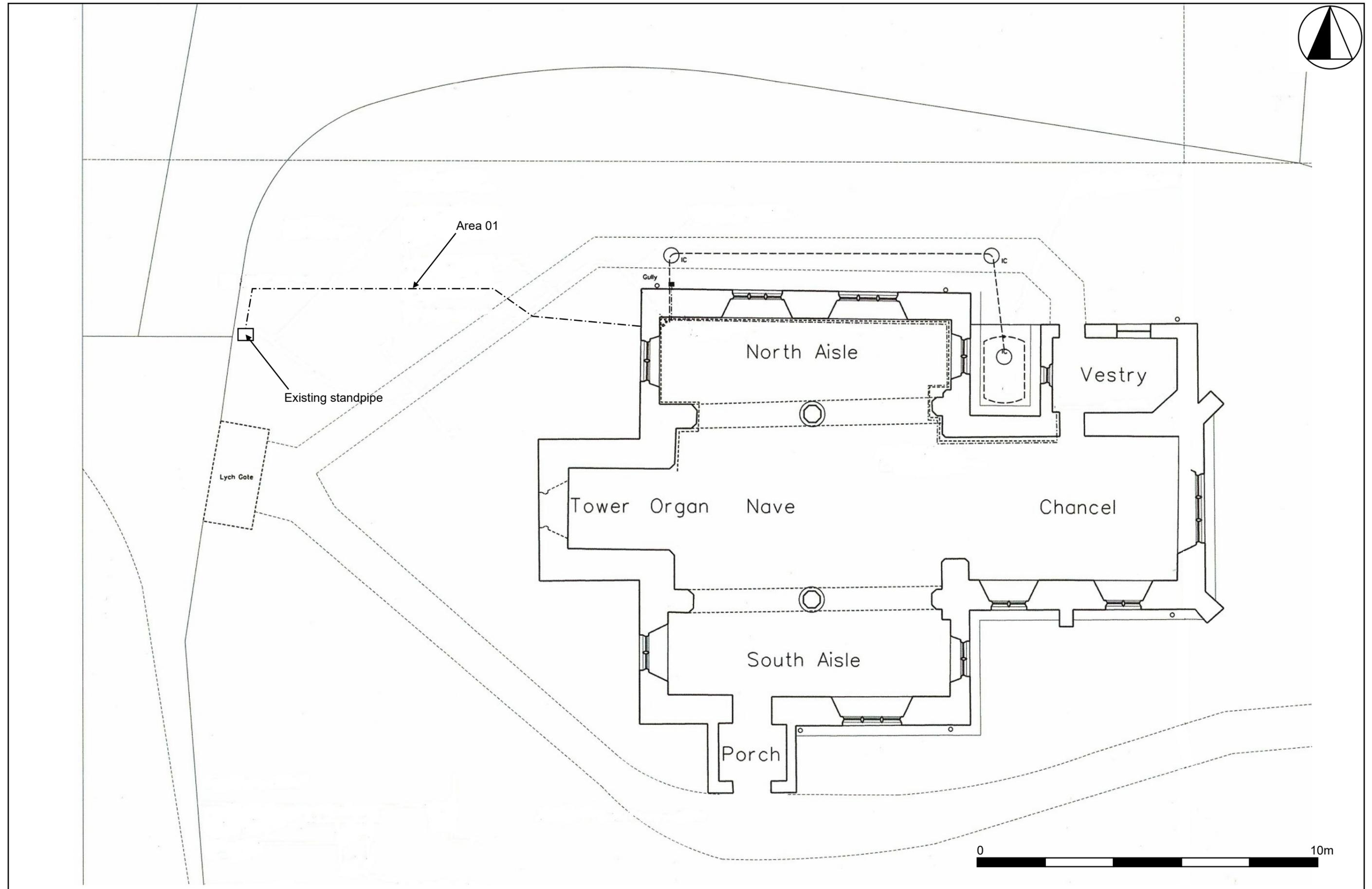
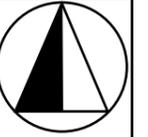
Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014 *Standard and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief*.



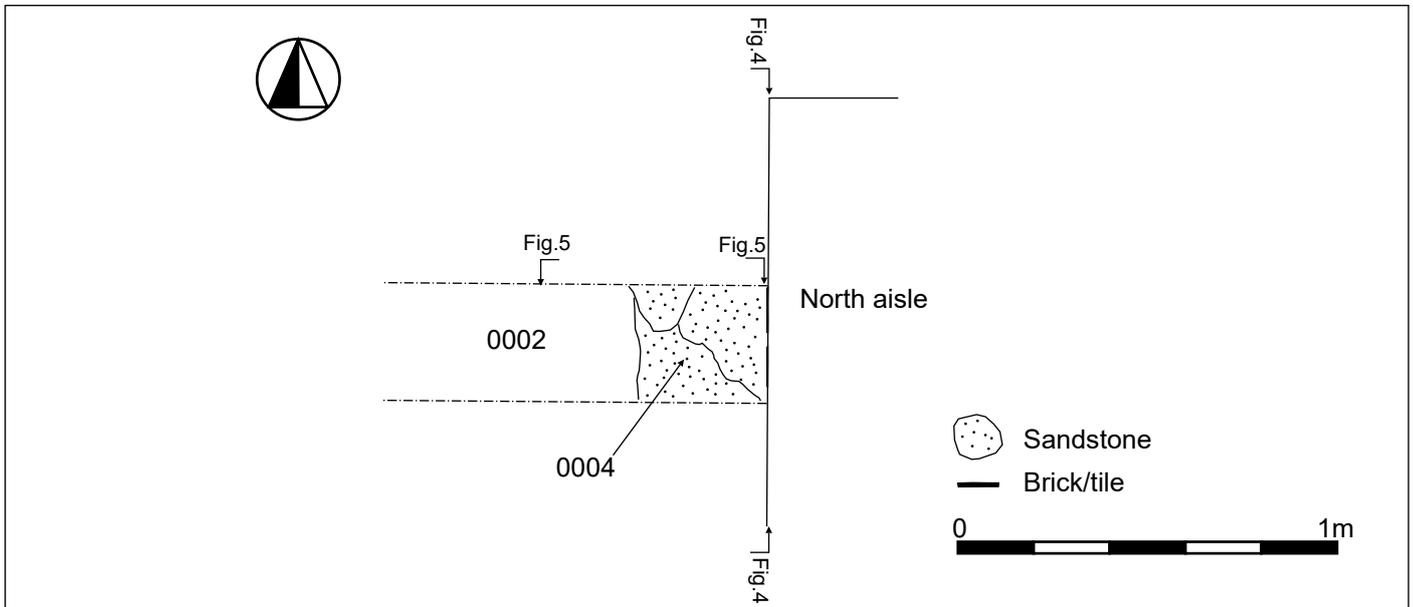
SCC.1 Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire.

Figure 1: Site location. Scale 1:10,000 at A4.

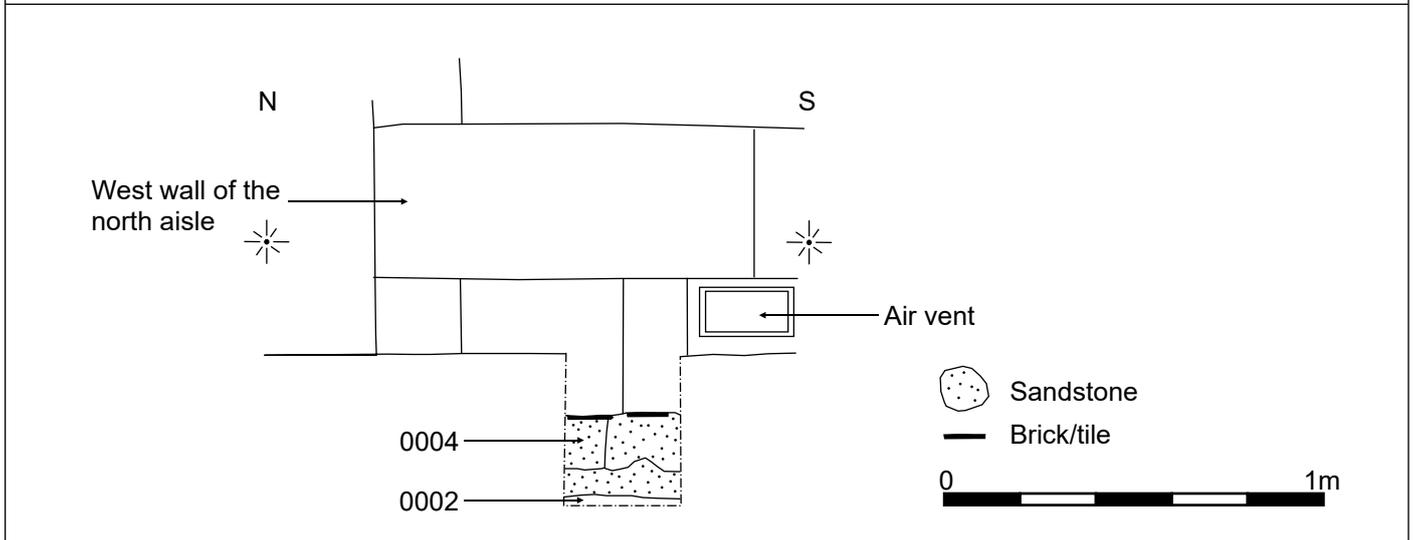
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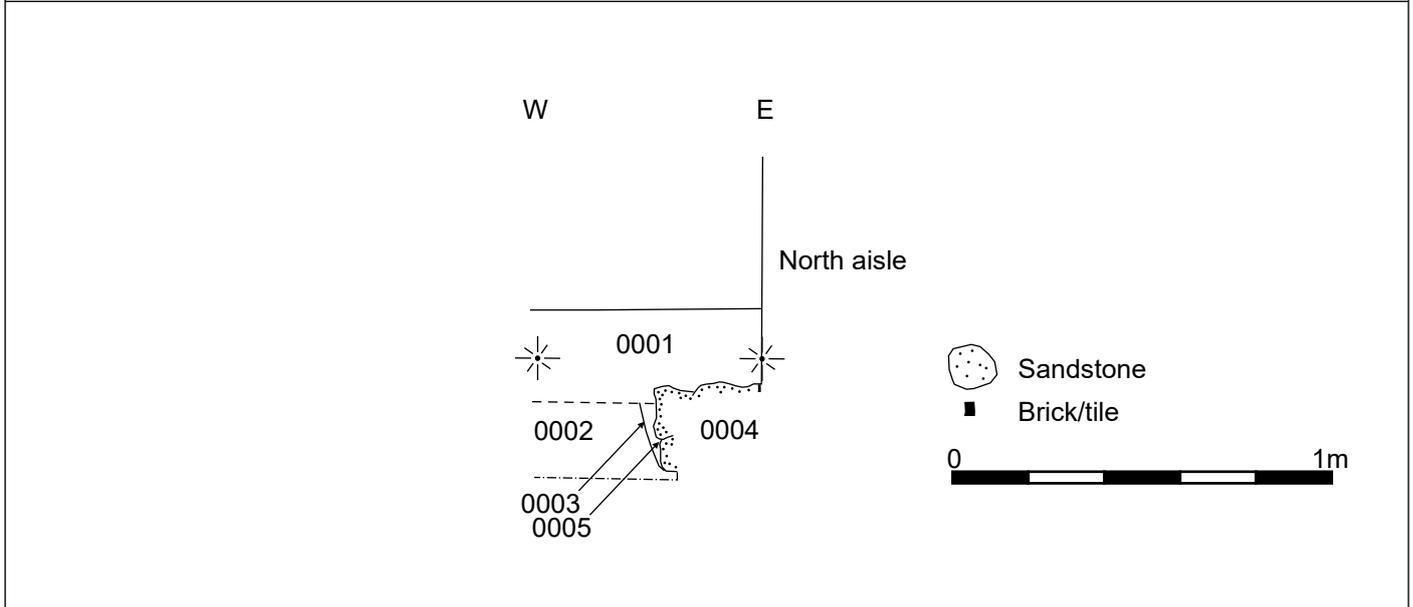
SCC.1 Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire.
Figure 2: Area 01 location plan.
Scale 1:100 at A3.



SCC.1 Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire.
 Figure 3: Area 01 east end post excavation plan of 0004.
 Scale 1:20 at A4.



SCC.1 Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire.
 Figure 4: Area 01 west facing section of 0004.
 Scale 1:20 at A4.



SCC.1 Church of St Catherine, Cossall, Nottinghamshire.
 Figure 5: Area 01 south facing section of 0001-0005.
 Scale 1:20 at A4.



Plate 1: General view of Area 01 with the north aisle in the background, viewed looking east.

Plate 2: Foundations 0004, viewed looking north.

Plate 3: The west face of the north aisle and foundations 0004, viewed looking east.

Appendix 1 Context Summary

Context	Area Description	Interpretation
Area 01		
0001	<p>Firm 7.5YR 2.5/2 very dark brown firm silty clay loam, 1% tiny fibrous roots, sharp boundary with 0002 below between 0.22m and 0.26m thick at the eastern end of the trench.</p> <p>5.15m from the west wall of the north aisle the deposit becomes deeper, extending to a maximum depth of 0.46m with 10% roots, mainly belonging to the Yew trees, with 20-25% sandstone pieces, angular, unworked and up to 120mm x 150mm</p>	Topsoil.
0002	Hard 7.5YR 6/6 reddish yellow to 5/6 strong brown sandstone truncated by 0003.	Natural bedrock.
0003	Cut, 0.18m in depth, 0.32m in width, side has a 70 degree slope, flat base, truncates 0002, below 0004 and 0005.	Foundation cut for the north aisle foundations 0004 dating to 1842-3
0004	Angular unworked sandstone bonded with firm 7.5YR 4/4 brown sandy clay. Stones exceed 140mm x 120mm x 150mm. Between the wall and the sandstone is brick or tile, only 20mm exposed 10YR 6/8 brownish yellow mortared to the sandstone below and wall above with 7.5YR 6/4 light brown lime mortar. The stonework is up to 0.26m in depth and extends 0.24m from the face of the north aisle wall.	North aisle foundations of 1842-3.
0005	Firm 7.5YR 5/2 brown silty clay loam, <5% sandstone fragments up to 25mm in size.	Backfill of cut 0003.