

CHURCH OF ST ANDREW, SKEGBY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE:

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

2026

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Summary

- During 2026 Matt Hurford Historic Buildings and Archaeology Services was commissioned by the Church of St Andrew PCC to carry out archaeological monitoring at the Grade II listed (List Entry Number 1234873) Church of St Andrew, Mansfield Road, Skegby, Nottinghamshire centred on National Grid Reference SK 49254 60972. The work was undertaken following the removal of the pew platforms in the nave, north aisle and south aisle. The work adhered to the recommendations made by Dr Chris Brooke and Dr Mike Hawkes the DAC Archaeological Advisors.
- 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 Church of St Andrew comprises a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, porch and vestry. Though it has medieval origins it has been extensively restored due to subsidence caused by coal mining, initially in 1870 when the aisles and porch were rebuilt and the vestry added, again in 1905-6 when the tower was largely reconstructed and the north aisle repaired and finally in 1984 when the chancel was completely rebuilt.
- A lime mortar and sandstone levelling layer dating to the 1870 restoration was encountered which extended across the nave and both aisles sealing any earlier archaeology below. A broadly contemporary heating system, repaired or upgraded after 1929, was also exposed. Subsidence affected the west end of the church, possibly impacting on the heating system and pew arrangement.

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Acknowledgments

The project was managed and the fieldwork undertaken by Matt Hurford. Much appreciated on site co-operation was provided by staff of W. Howlett & Sons Ltd. Monitoring was by was by Dr Chris Brooke and Dr Mike Hawkes the Archaeological Advisors to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham. Thanks are extended to Church of St Andrew PCC for commissioning the work.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 During 2026 Matt Hurford Historic Buildings and Archaeology Services was commissioned by the Church of St Andrew PCC to carry out archaeological monitoring at the Grade II listed (List Entry Number 1234873) Church of St Andrew, Mansfield Road, Skegby, Nottinghamshire centred on National Grid Reference SK 49254 60972 (Figure 1). The work was undertaken following the removal of the pew platforms in the nave, north aisle and south aisle (Figure 2).
- 1.2 The investigation was carried out in accordance with Written Scheme of Investigation submitted by Matt Hurford Historic Buildings and Archaeology Services (Hurford 2026) and approved by Dr Chris Brooke and Dr Mike Hawkes the Archaeological Advisors to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham.

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 work comprised:

Areas 01-04: the removal of the pew platforms in the north aisle (Area 01), the nave (Areas 02 and 04) and south aisle (Area 03) with the resulting exposed deposits recorded. A new floor was to be laid on the exposed surface (Figure 2).
- 2.3. The pew platforms were removed by staff of the main contractor.
- 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 and updated in June and October 2020).

3 Site Background

- 3.1 The Church of St Andrew, formerly a chapel of ease of Mansfield St Peter until 1860, consists of a chancel, nave, north and south aisles, south porch and west tower. It was rebuilt during the thirteenth century during the reign of Henry III (1216-1272). The church was in a ruinous state in the late nineteenth century due to subsidence caused by coal mining resulting in an extensive restoration in 1870 with both aisles and porch rebuilt and the vestry added. Plans dating to this time (Figure 3) do not show the boiler house abutting the tower though it was present by the publication of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884, surveyed between 1875 and 1877 (Figure 4). Further work was required in 1905-6, again due to subsidence, comprising the almost complete rebuilding of the tower and additional work to the north aisle and once more in 1984 when the chancel was demolished and rebuilt by the National Coal Board. During the later works four brick tombs were encountered (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2026).
- 3.2 Numerous medieval cross shafts are built into the external walls of the church, the majority apparently placed there by the Victorian rebuilders. Most are incised with several complete,

though trimmed square to fit in with the coursing of the wall (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2026).

- 3.3 The standing fabric of the nave dates from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century though it is expected that the below-ground stratigraphy has been disturbed, notably during the restorations of 1870 and 1905-6, however medieval deposits probably survive at depth. Thus, the potential for the survival of below-ground archaeology within the nave is judged to be moderate to high (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2026).

4 Methodology

- 4.1 The watching brief was carried out by a professional archaeologist. All deposits were inspected in order to identify any archaeological remains of interest, in particular those of medieval or earlier date. These were cleaned by hand, examined and recorded.
- 4.2 Recording of the groundworks included the position and depths of 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. 0100, 0101 etc. Context numbers started at 0100.
- 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 recorded appropriately and left on site for reburial. Advice from the Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of Southwell & Nottingham would be sought if articulated skeletons which required moving were present.

5 Results (Figures 5-10, Plates 1-3 and Appendix 1)

- 5.1 The removal of the pew platforms in Areas 01-04 within the nave, north and south aisles revealed a basic stratigraphy of three deposits comprising a flag floor 0100, 0200, 0300 and 0400 which was made of both plain rectangular slabs and gravestones, the earliest dating to 1768, that were between 1 and 5 inches thick. Repairs had been undertaken to the floor as both lime and cement mortars had been used to bond the flags. Below was a 0.1m thick rubble bedding layer 0101, 0208, 0301 and 0404 which was supported on a very hard lime mortar and sandstone deposit 0102, 0201, 0302 and 0401 (Plates 1 and 2). Subsistence cracks extended through the deposit, notably in Area 02 where it was found to be up to 0.35m thick. In Area 01, the north aisle, two 3 inch bricks were present within the deposit 1.5m apart, possibly additional supports for the longer extant pews.
- 5.2 In Area 02 (Plate 3), extending west to east at the east end, was a 1.10m wide trench 0202 infilled with 0203 comprising a ceramic pipe encased in brickwork which held three metal pipes of the heating system and backfilled with loose brown silt loam. The bricks were 9 x 4 x 3 inches and bonded with a very hard white lime mortar. A total length of 5.10m was exposed and it exceeded 0.3m in depth. Stratigraphically it cannot be established if the mortar and sandstone deposit 0201 was shuttered during construction creating the trench for the heating system or whether 0201 was laid in full and subsequently, within only a few years, truncated for the heating system. At the west end of the trench there was further brickwork though of a different nature. It was two bricks thick and housed metal heating pipes. The bricks were 9 x 4 x 3 inches and stamped STAVERLEY a local brick company that first produced bricks in 1929 (Fretwell 2015). A very pale brown cement mortar has been used to bond the bricks. The

difference in bricks and bonding indicates different phases, possibly an upgrade or repairs due to subsidence. The pipework continues into Area 04 where the trench 0402 is neither brick lined nor the pipes held within a ceramic pipe, the trench being capped by the flag floor (Figure 4).

- 5.3 At the west end of the nave subsidence has been an issue relatively recently with 0201 slumping, becoming 0201a, upon which new parallel brick walls 0205 were built to support the pews (Figure 5). Over the subsidence loose rubble 0204, which contained a single skeletal fragment, had been deposited. It is possible that at this time the heating system failed as much of it was either taken out, sunk into a void below the church or a mixture of the two and infilled with light reddish brown sand 0207 and 0403. The flags in the slumped area had been reset and bonded with grey concrete 0405.
- 5.4 A single course of foundations for the c. 1250 circular piers in Area 02 were encountered. The westernmost example 0209 comprising a single stone slab 0.08m thick with 0.44m in length revealed (Plate 6). A void in the section beneath the flag floor exposed the slab further suggesting that it could potentially be hexagonal. The western pier foundation 0211 comprised three unmortared stones exceeding 0.15m thick (Plate 7). To the south, the easternmost foundations of the hexagonal pier 0210 were also partially exposed (Plate 8) and were again unbonded. All foundations were overlaid by 0208 and 0201.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 The lime mortar and sandstone deposit extends across nave and both aisles. As the aisles were rebuilt in 1870, and the deposit overlies medieval fabric with nothing to suggest that it is of an early date, it is a fair supposition that it is contemporary with the restoration. The considerable depth of the deposit would suggest that it was designed to stabilise the floor from subsidence and create a level for the flag floor. It would be curious for the heating system not to be installed at this time though it is not recorded on the architects plans of 1870 though the boiler house was present by 1875-1877 indicating that the heating system had been installed by this time. The use of lime mortar for the bricks is certainly suggestive of a late nineteenth rather than twentieth century date for it. However, the system was either updated or repaired after 1929 as evidenced by the STAVELEY bricks. Subsidence was clearly an issue during the twentieth century as the lime and mortar sandstone deposits has sunk with new brick walls for the pews built.

7 References

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020a *Standard Guidance for the Creation, Transfer, and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2020b *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives*
<https://www.archaeologists.net/selection-toolkit>

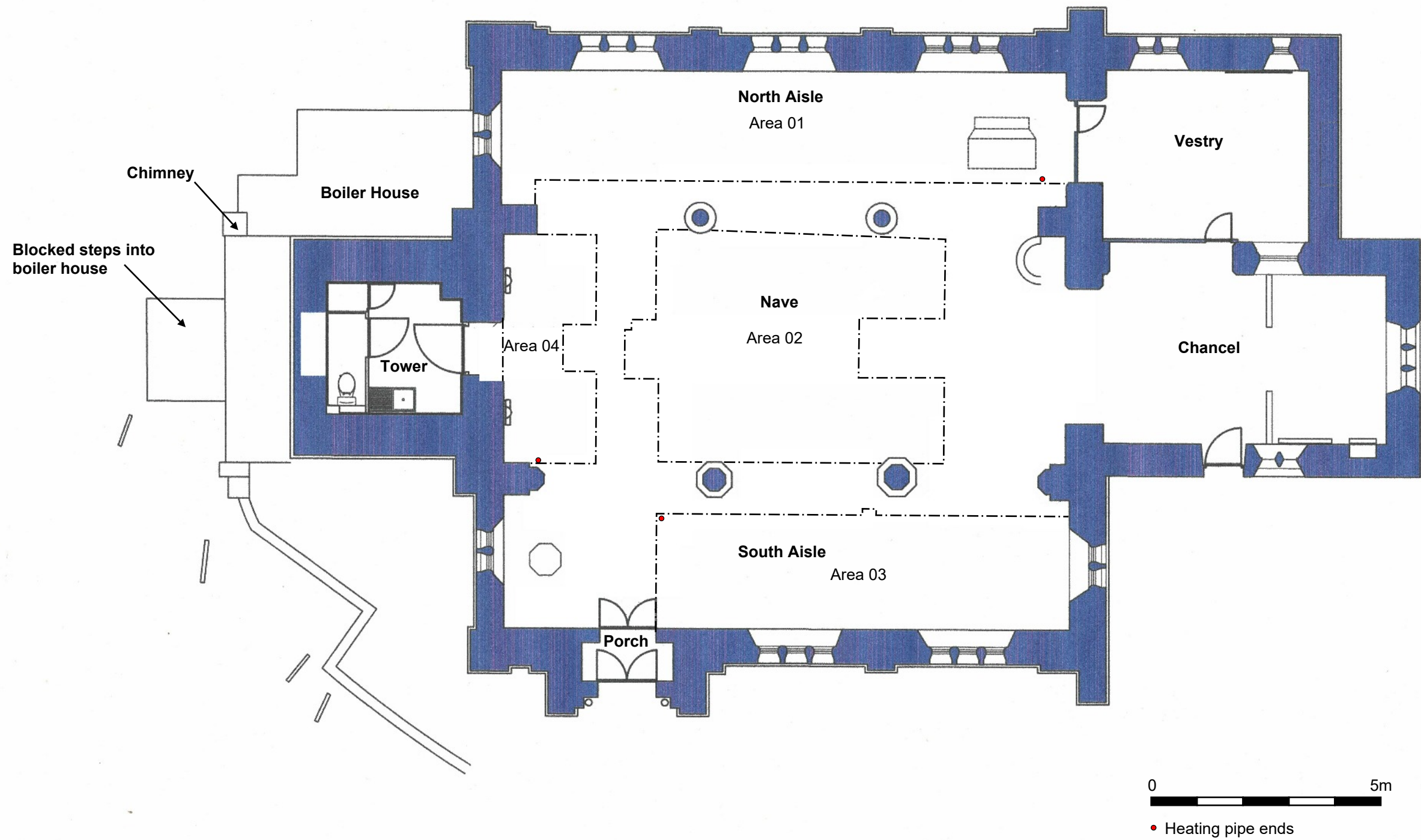
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<https://eastmidlandsnamedbricks.blogspot.com/2015/09/chesterfield-staveley-brickworks.html>

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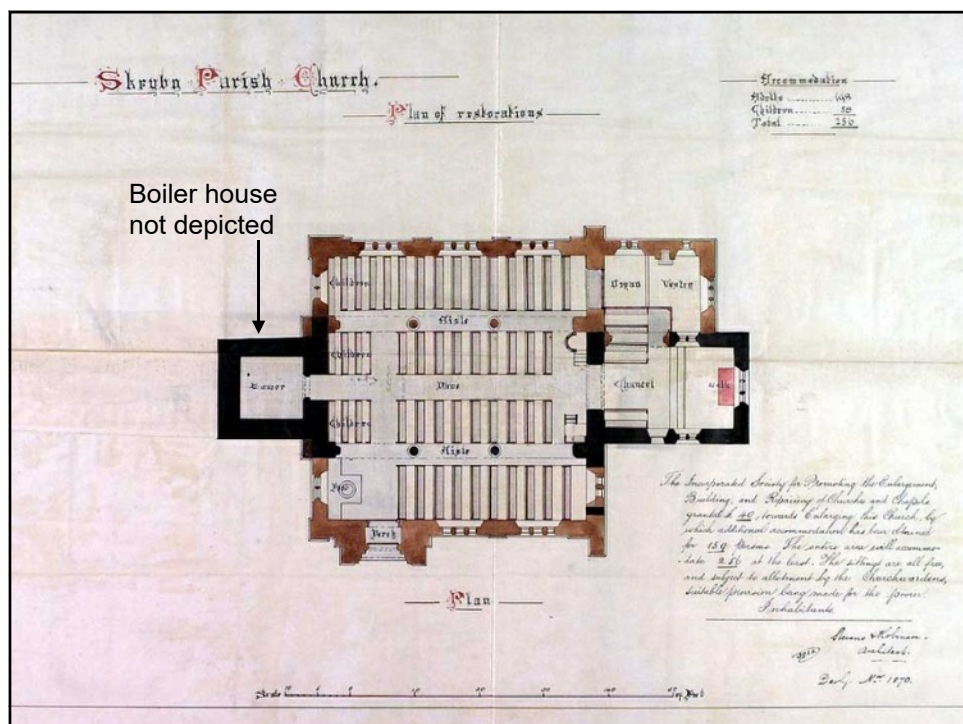
Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2026 *Skegby St Andrew* accessed 22/04/2026 <<https://southwellchurches.nottingham.ac.uk/kirkby-st-wilfrid/hintro.php>.>



CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.
 Figure 1: Site location. Scale 1:10,000 at A4.
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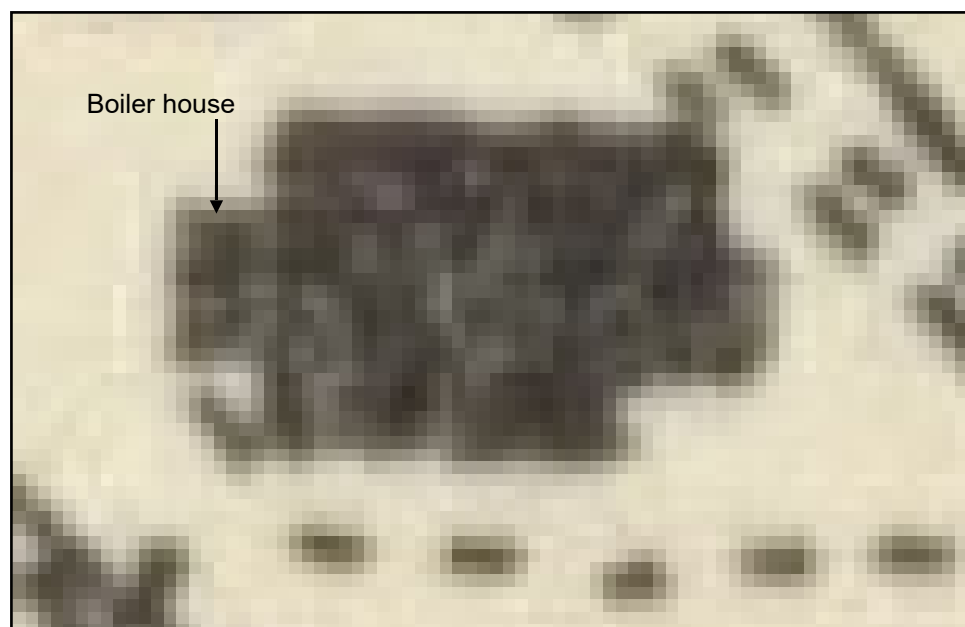
CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.
Figure 2: Area plan, based on a drawing provided by the client.
Scale 1:100 at A3.



CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.

Figure 3: Architects plan for the restoration dating to 1870 (Southwell & Nottingham Church History Project 2026). Note that the boiler house is not depicted.

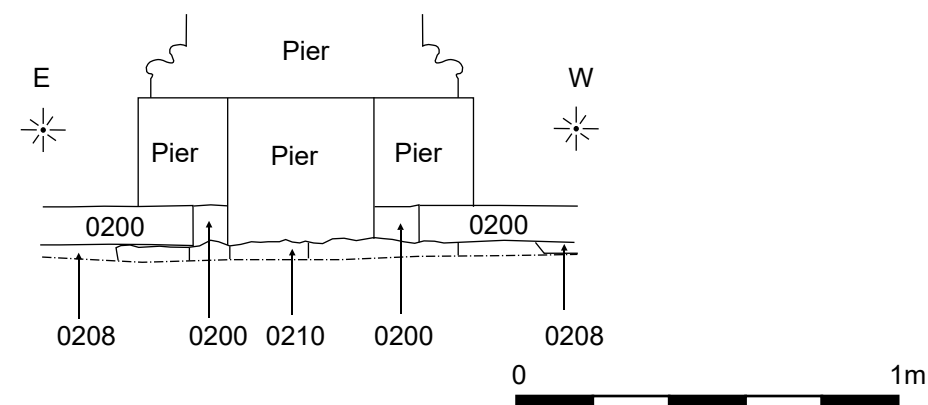
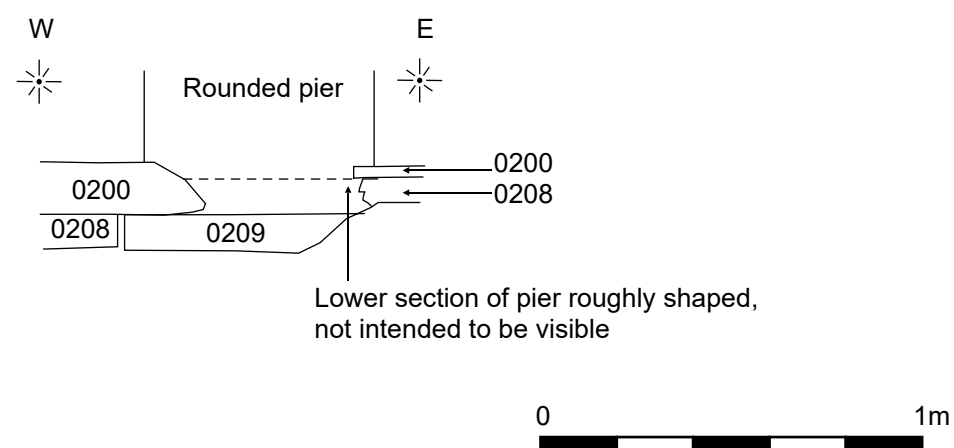
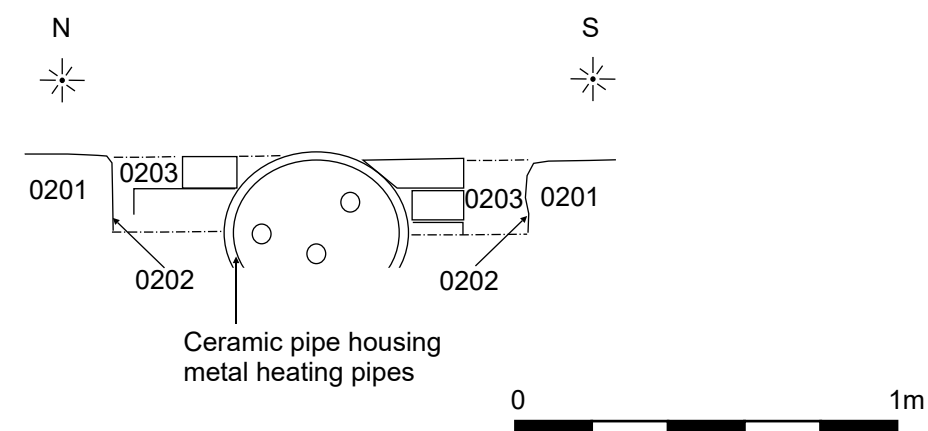
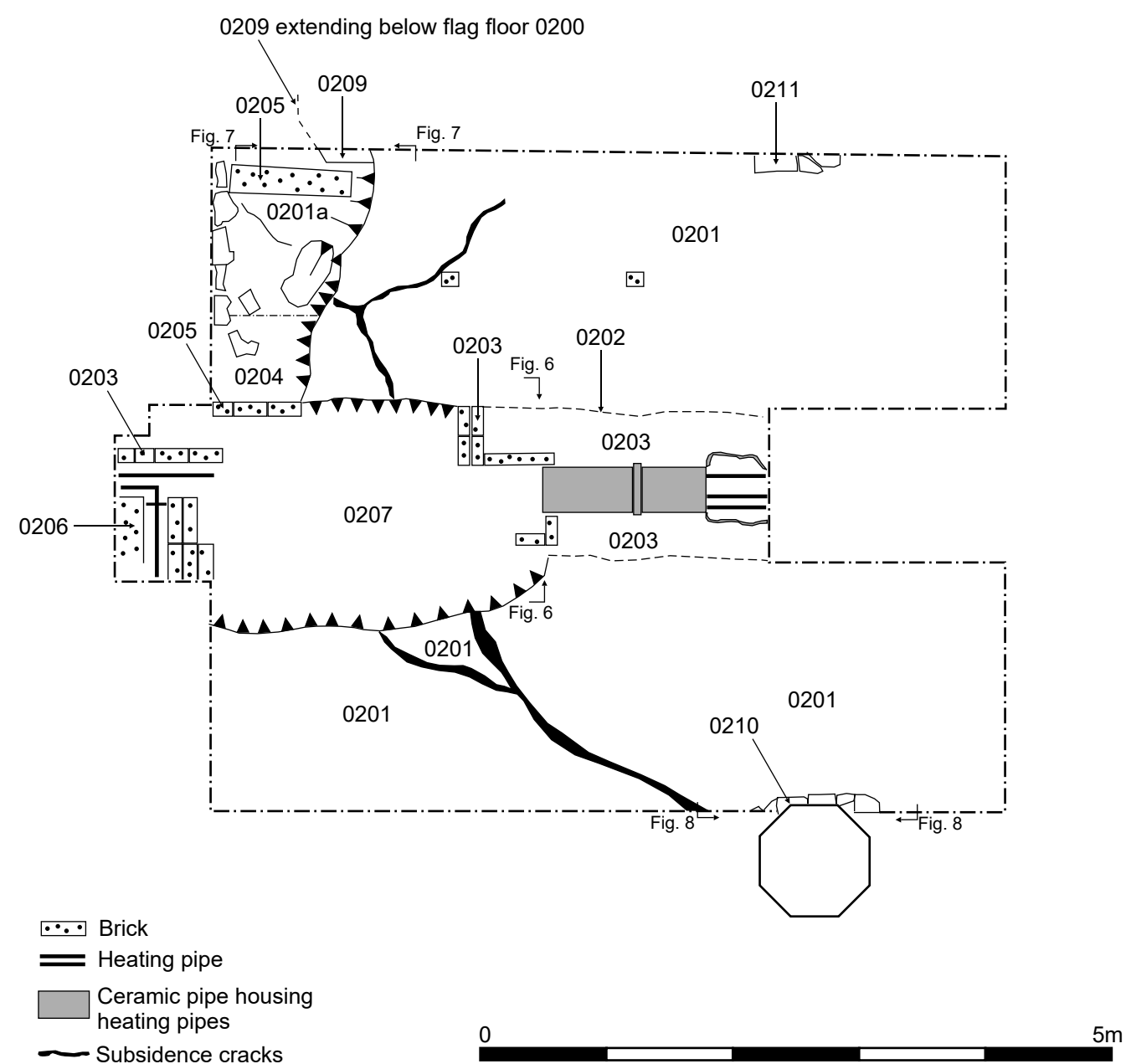
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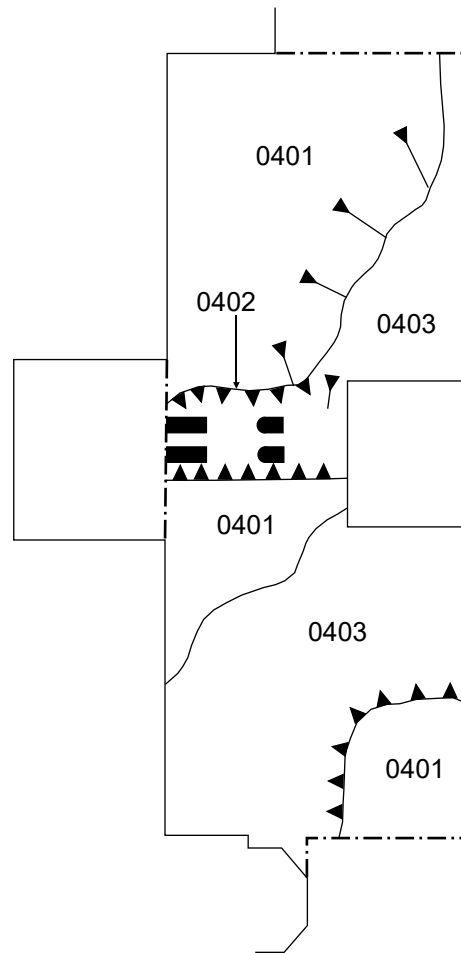
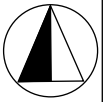


CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.

Figure 4: Extract from the 6 inch scale First Edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed between 1875 and 1877 and published in 1884. The boiler house has either been built of a building is situated within its footprint.

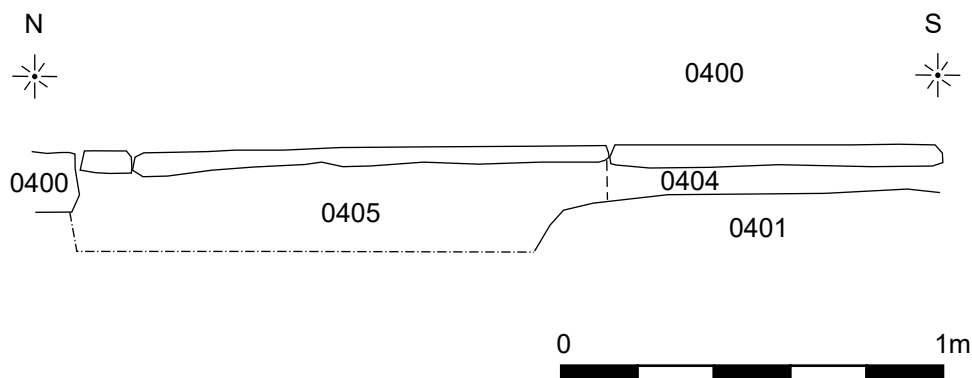
Not to regular scale.





■ Metal pipes

CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.
Figure 9: Area 04 post excavation plan.
Scale 1:50 at A4.



CAK.1 Church of St Andrew, Skegby, Nottinghamshire.
Figure 10: Area 04, south end, west facing section through subsided floor.
Scale 1:20 at A4.

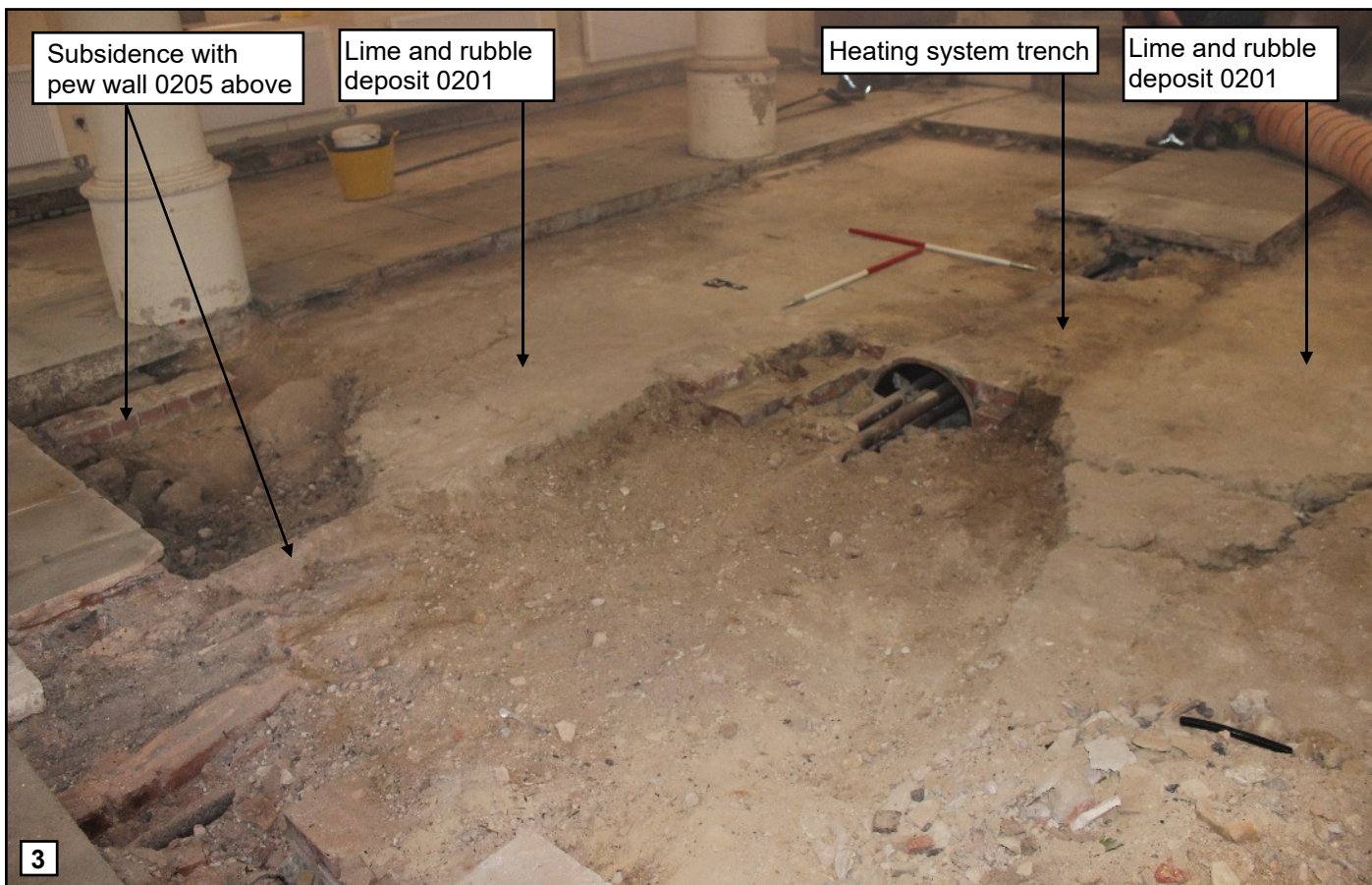


Plate 1: Lime mortar and sandstone deposit 0102 exposed in Area 01, the north aisle, viewed looking west.
Plate 2: Lime mortar and sandstone deposit 0201 exposed in Area 03, the south aisle, viewed looking east.
Plate 3: General post excavation view of Area 02 within the nave, viewed looking north-east.



Plate 4: Continuation of the pipework of the heating system into Area 04 within the nave which extends into the tower and presumably to the boiler house abutting the west elevation of the tower, viewed looking west.



Plate 5: Heating pipe and trench in Area 02, the nave, viewed looking east. The brickwork in the foreground is later than that in the mid and background, a likely repair required due to subsidence which can clearly be seen in the lower half of the photograph.

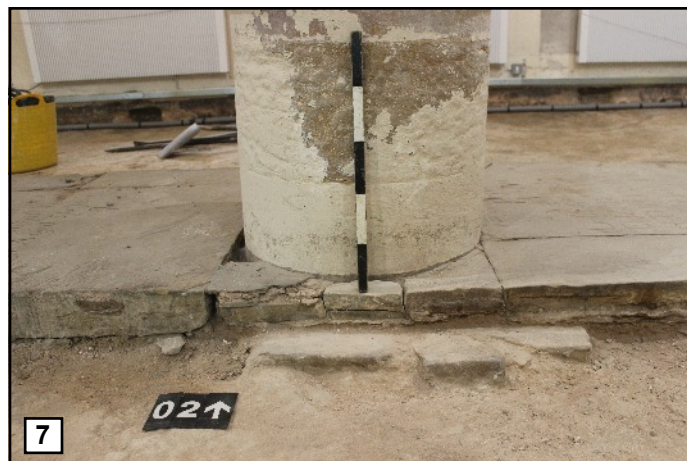


Plate 6: Western circular pier and foundation 0209 in Area 02, viewed looking north.

Plate 7: Eastern circular pier and foundation 0211 in Area 02, viewed looking north.

Plate 8: Eastern hexagonal pier and foundation 0210 in Area 02, viewed looking south.

Appendix 1 Context Summary

Context	Area Description	Interpretation
Area 01		
0100	Flag floor, numerous stones used, including former grave stones, thickness ranges from 1 to 5 inches, both lime mortar, 7.5YR 7/4 pink is used and later cement mortars presumably later repairs. Above 0101.	Flag floor, extends across the nave and aisles dating to the restoration of 1870.
0101	0.1m thick compacted layer of rubble bonded in places to the flags above with lime mortar 7/1 light grey. Above 0102 and below 0100.	Bedding for flag floor 0100.
0102	Very hard lime mortar and rubble sandstone deposit, lime is 7.5YR 7/4 pink, the stones are angular up to 120mm x 111mm, <1% charcoal, two 3 inch bricks embedded within, likely supports for the no longer extant pews. In Area 02 it is 35-40cm thick. Below 0101.	Deposit dating to the 1870 restoration, likely an attempt to level the interior of the church with a deposit which a new floor and pews could be laid without risk of further issues relating to subsidence caused by coal mining which had left the church in a ruinous state by the late nineteenth century.
Area 02		
0200	Same as 0100. Above 0208.	Flag floor dating to 1870.
0201	Same as 0102, stones 150mm x 140mm. Below 0200. Truncated by 0202.	1870 levelling deposit.
0201a	Same as 0201 but at a lower level, up to 0.25m, caused by subsidence. Below 0204 and 0205,	Subsided 1870 levelling deposit.
0202	West to east cut through 0201, 5.10m in length exposed, 1.10m wide and exceeds 0.3m in depth, vertical edges. Infilled with 0203, below 0208.	Heating trench post-dating the levelling deposit 0201 of 1870 though the boiler house is depicted on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map surveyed between 1875 and 1877.
0203	Infill of 0202, loose silt loam 7.5YR 5/2 brown, 5% angular stones up to 28mm x 20mm x 15mm. Centrally placed within the trench is ceramic pipe housing at least three metal pipes, the edges of the ceramic pipe are lined with bricks, a single brick thick, three courses exposed, bricks are 9 x 4 x 3 inches and bonded with very hard 7.5YR 8.1 white lime mortar	Infill of heating trench 0202 dating to 1870-1875-7.
0204	Loose rubble, stones up to 26cm x 16cm x 10cm with 3 inch brick fragments throughout in a matrix of loose sandy silty loam, 7.5YR 6/3 light brown, 10% mortar flecks, 5% timber fragments, top of a human cranium was encountered. Plastic present. Overlies 0201a, below the pew platform.	Modern backfill over the subsidence in the north-west corner of the area.
0205	Parallel row of bricks, both a single course, bricks 8 x 4 x 2 ½ inches and though only 2 ½ inches thick they are modern mass produced bricks, bonded with cement mortar. Laid over 0201a, abutted by 0204.	Modern brick supports for the pew platforms laid following subsidence.
0206	Brick walling 2 bricks thick housing metal heating pipes, bricks 9 x 4 ½ x 3 inches, bonded with cement mortar 10YR 8/2 very pale brown, four course exposed. Brick are frog type stamped STAVELEY	Repair to the heating system, likely following issues with subsidence. Staveley brickworks at Barrows Hill, Staveley was built in 1929 and produced bricks

		into the latter part of the twentieth century thus
0207	Sand, 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown, 10% fragments of 0201. Infills collapsed heating system.	Modern material used to level the floor following the collapse of the heating system through subsidence.
0208	0.1m thick compacted layer of rubble bonded in places to the flags above with lime mortar 7/1 light grey. Above 0201 and below 0200.	Bedding for flag floor 0200.
0209	Stone slab, 0.44m in length exposed and 0.08m thick. No bonding material. Single course exposed, Overlaid by 0208 and 0201.	Foundation stone for the easternmost rounded pier. More of the stone can be seen in a void beneath the flag floor suggesting that it is potentially hexagonal. c. 1250.
0210	Stones exceeding 0.2m x 0.22m, no bonding material, single course exposed, below 0208 and 0201.	Foundations for easternmost hexagonal pier. C13.
0211	Stones, up to 0.44m x 0.15m, unbonded, single course exposed. Overlaid by 0208 and 0201.	Foundation stone for the western rounded pier. c. 1250.
Area 03		
0300	Flag floor, numerous stones used, including former grave stones, thickness ranges from 1 to 5 inches, both lime mortar, 7.5YR 7/4 pink is used and later cement mortars presumably later repairs. Above 0301.	Flag floor, extends across the nave and aisles dating to the restoration of 1870.
0301	0.1m thick compacted layer of rubble bonded in places to the flags above with lime mortar 7/1 light grey. Above 0302 and below 0300.	Bedding for flag floor 0300.
0302	Very hard lime mortar and rubble sandstone deposit, lime is 7.5YR 7/4 pink, the stones are angular up to 120mm x 111mm, <1% charcoal, two 3 inch bricks embedded within, likely supports for the no longer extant pews. In Area 02 it is 35-40cm thick. Below 0301.	1870 levelling deposit.
Area 04		
0400	Flag floor, numerous stones used, including former grave stones, thickness ranges from 1 to 5 inches, both lime mortar, 7.5YR 7/4 pink is used and later cement mortars presumably later repairs. Above 0401.	Flag floor, extends across the nave and aisles dating to the restoration of 1870.
0401	Very hard lime mortar and rubble sandstone deposit, lime is 7.5YR 7/4 pink, the stones are angular up to 140mm x 110mm, <1% charcoal, two 3 inch bricks embedded within, likely supports for the no longer extant pews. In Area 02 it is 35-40cm thick. Below 0400.	1870 levelling deposit.
0402	Cut, west to east aligned, vertical sides, 0.55m in width, 1.2m in length exposed, exceeds 0.25m in depth, houses heating pipes, capped with the flags of the floor.	Heating trench post-dating the levelling deposit 0401 of 1870 though the boiler house is depicted on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map surveyed between 1875 and 1877.
0403	Sand, 5YR 6/4 light reddish brown, plastic present. Infills collapsed heating system.	Modern material used to level the floor following the collapse of the heating system through subsidence.

0404	0.1m thick compacted layer of rubble bonded in places to the flags above with lime mortar 7/1 light grey. Above 0401 and below 0400.	Bedding for flag floor 0400.
0405	Grey concrete adhering to the west face of the flags at the south-east end of the area.	Bonding for the flags, presumably when lifted to infill the heating system following subsidence.