



ST GILES CHURCH
WEST BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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INTRODUCTION

The evaluation of the church of St Giles, West Bridgford, was carried out at the request of Colin Maber Associates Ltd; acting on behalf of the Diocese of Southwell; and as the result of a Geophysical Survey conducted by A. Aspinall and S.J. Dockrill on the 16th of March 1988.

The church of St Giles was originally founded in the 13th century and part of this building makes up the south aisle of the present church. The tower was added in the 15th century and a new chancel and nave were added in 1896-8. In 1911 the north aisle was built completing the church as it is seen today.

With respect to the early origin of the church it was felt necessary to establish the presence or absence of structures of archaeological or historic interest in the proposed area for a new church hall immediately adjacent to the north side of the church, a roughly triangular shaped level area approximately 1000m².

The geophysical survey (appendix 1) revealed a broad linear high resistance feature running across the survey area. Aspinall and Dockrill suggested this feature may be associated with drains, as there are two manhole covers in the area. However, as a result of auger samples they also proposed the alternative interpretation that the high resistance feature was produced by compacted material, the result of ground consolidation, or levelling, or possibly the presence of a building. They recommended that an excavation be conducted to clarify this matter.

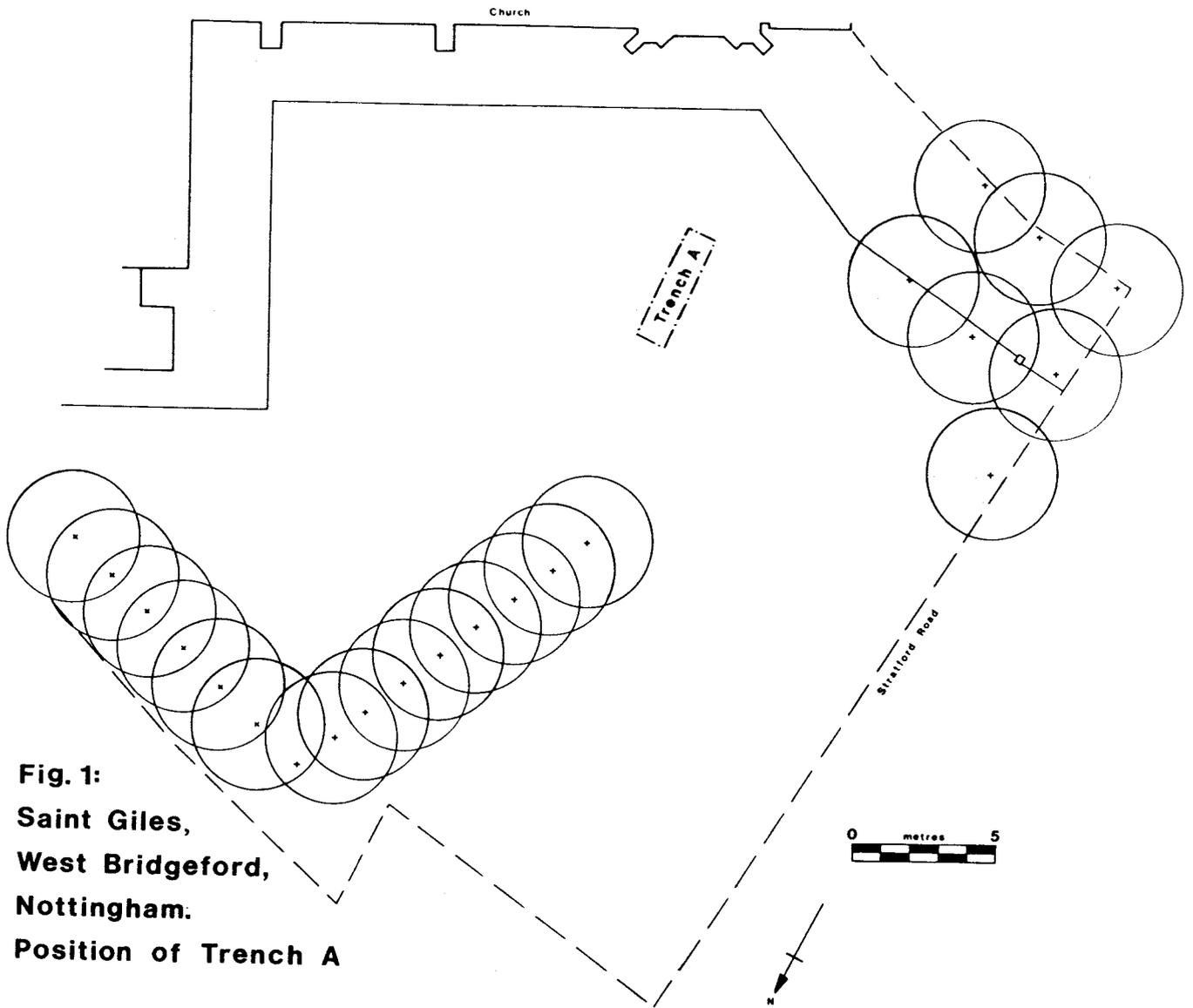


Fig. 1:
Saint Giles,
West Bridgeford,
Nottingham.
Position of Trench A

THE EXCAVATION

A trench (trench A) of 4.00m. x 1.00m. was excavated approximately 8.00m north-east of the church (fig 1). The trench was excavated in part, to a depth of 0.92m (fig 4).

The turf was cut (fig 2), lifted and carefully stacked away from the trench. This revealed a dark sandy loam soil (001) which contained substantial amounts of gravel (the proportion of gravel increased with depth through contexts 001 - 004, see appendix 2). This top soil contained a variety of artefacts including modern brick, glass, glazed pottery, stoneware, slate, lead, tile, corroded iron nails, and flint; some of which was worked and of prehistoric origin (appendix 1). The top soil extended to a depth of 0.28m.

Immediately below (001-004) was a much lighter brown sandy-mortar layer (005) some 0.08m thick (fig 3). (005) contained much broken stone and brick. This compacted layer is typical of bedding material for a tile or flagstone surface, no trace of which survives.

Beneath (005) lay (006), a substantial deposit; 0.38m. thick; of building rubble within a matrix of sandy loam. (006) contained large amounts of fragmented dressed and undressed stone, pink mortar nodules, tile, 17th or 18th century brick and two sherds of modern stoneware pottery. This deposit has all the appearance of 'hardcore' used to provide a firm base for the surface above (005), and most probably came from the destruction of nearby brick buildings and waste material from other sources (see figs 5 & 6).

The rubble layer (006) was underlain by a sandy loam soil (007), which contained some stone, brick (with white and cream mortar), slate and corroded ironwork. This deposit appeared to have been somewhat disturbed and was quite soft. The disturbed nature of 007 suggests that further archaeological features may be present, but more deeply buried; however, the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.92 metres which apparently is already deeper than the proposed foundations of the new building and thus any further archaeological deposits should remain undisturbed. It should be noted that (007) was not fully excavated and continues to an undefined greater depth.

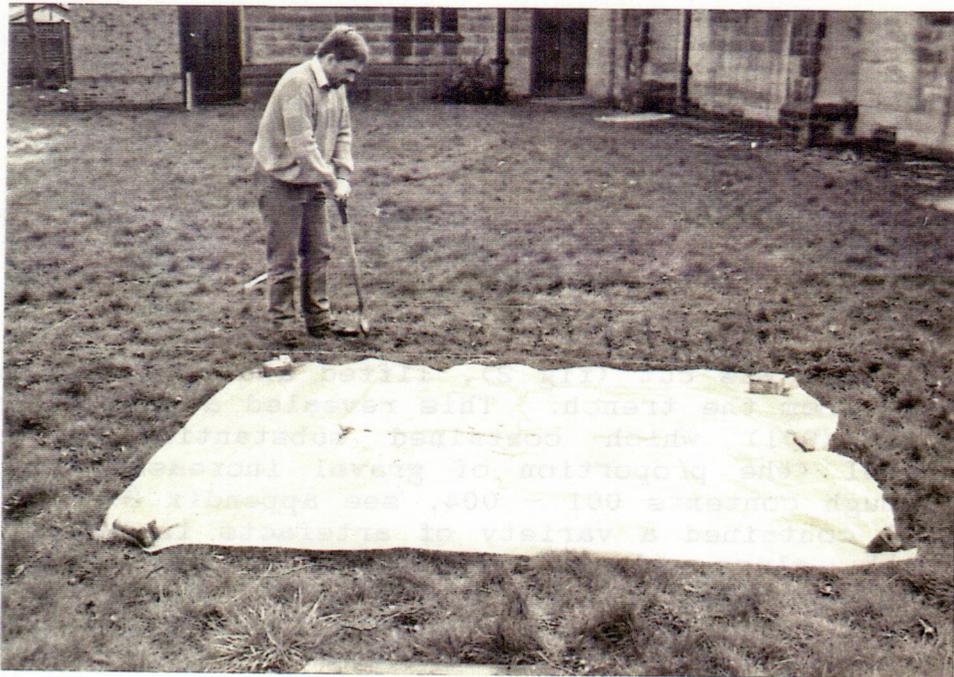


FIG 2: REMOVING TURF FROM TRENCH A.

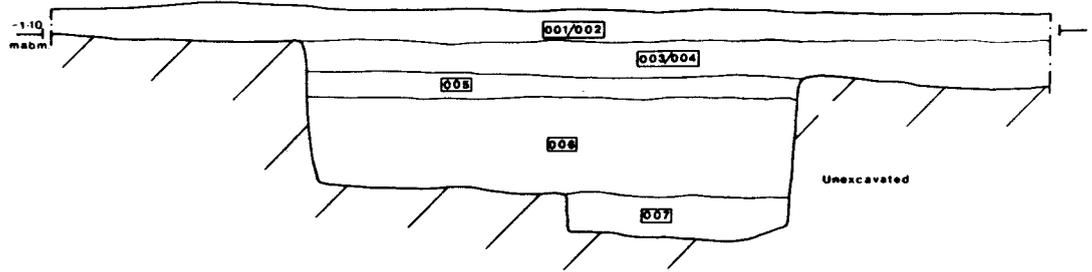
FIG 3: SURFACE OF (005), MORTAR.



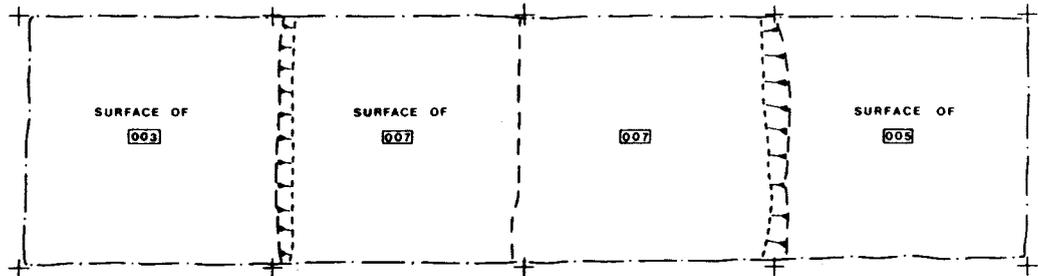
Fig. 4: Saint Giles, West Bridgeford, Nottingham

East facing section and plan, Trench A: 2/4/88

East facing Section



Plan



INTERPRETATION

No artefacts from the excavation appeared to be earlier than the 16th or 17th century A.D. (except for the few prehistoric flints in the top soil which must have been brought on to the site in the recent past). The archaeological deposits suggest the following sequence of events.

Layer (007), found in the bottom of trench A, appears to be an earlier buried soil horizon; presumably representing the old ground surface prior to subsequent deposition of the rubble layer (006). The nature of layer (007) could be the result of disturbances to the soil, which given the location of the excavation, may well be connected with grave digging. Even though this area is some distance to the north of the medieval church the existence of graves here would not be unusual. However, if burials are present, they are unlikely to cause problems for the construction of the church hall as they will be at least 1 metre deeper than the lowest point of trench A. No grave cuts were visible in (007).

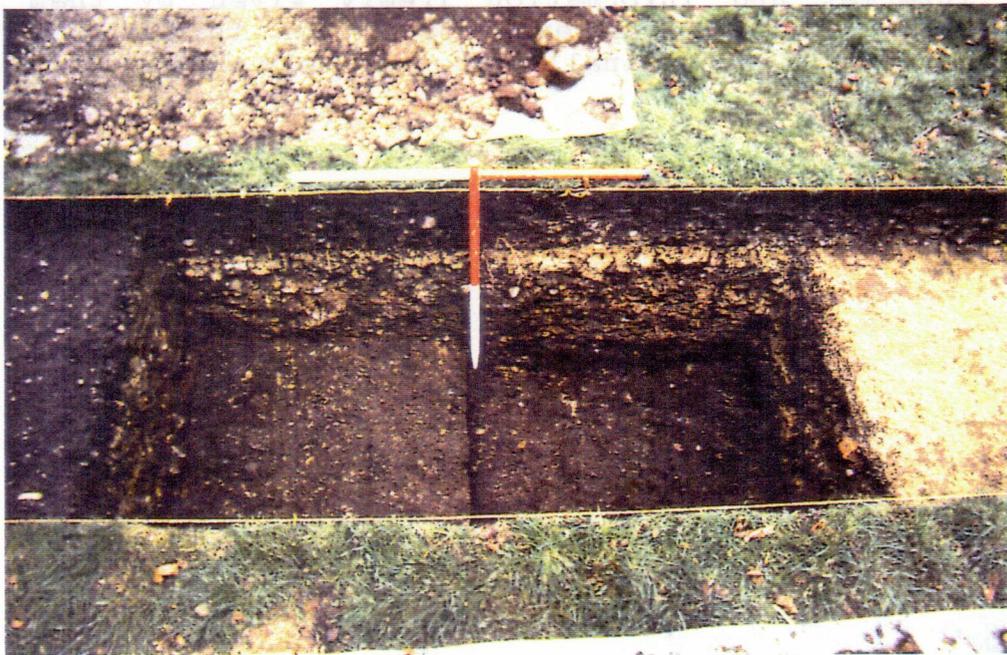
At some point within the last 100-150 years; possibly associated with the extension of the church in 1896-8 or 1911; one or more 17th century brick buildings had been demolished on or near the site. These may well have been similar in construction to the cottages which stand at the east corner of the churchyard, constructed in 1695 of brick similar to that found in (006). The presence of fragments of dressed stone in (006) further suggests that this event was linked with the late 19th/early 20th century extensions to the church. This rubble had been used as 'hardcore' to level the area, providing a firm foundation for a substantial surface. This surface may have been tiled or, more likely, flagged, and may have been a 'yard' area or the floor of a building. We have however, found no evidence for the presence of enclosing walls.

At a later date the floor was removed and a layer of topsoil was dumped onto the mortar bedding, presumably to facilitate the transformation of the area into the present grassed area. It is possible that plans and records of the 19th/20th century building work still survive and may shed further light on the sequence of suggested events. However, such research is outside the scope of this evaluation.



FIG 5: VIEW OF TRENCH A LOOKING TOWARDS THE CHURCH

FIG 6: VIEW OF THE DRAWN SECTION (FIG 4)



CONCLUSION

The archaeological investigations at St Giles church, West Bridgford has revealed interesting information relating to human activity in the area over the last three or four centuries. However, the evidence indicates that the construction of the church hall will not destroy any significant archaeological deposits as long as the depth of the foundations do not greatly exceed 0.75m. In view of the possible presence of 17th or 18th century buildings it may be of local historical interest for a 'watching brief' to be undertaken during the excavation of the church hall foundations, to elaborate upon the interpretation presented here.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to Mr. M. Siebert in particular, and Colin Mabey Associates Ltd. and the Diocese of Southwell in general for their consideration of this site in commissioning the archaeological evaluation. We should also like to thank the Rector and members of Saint Giles for permission to conduct the work, and for their interest and information freely given by them during the course of the excavation. Our thanks must also go to Mr. A. Aspinall for his help and advice throughout.

FIG 7: 17TH CENTURY HOUSE TO SOUTH EAST OF THE CHURCH



A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AT ST GILES CHURCH W. BRIDGFORD, NOTTINGHAM

A. ASPINALL & S. J. DOCKRILL

THE SITE

This survey was carried out at the request of Colin Maher Associates Ltd., acting on behalf of the Diocese of Southwell. The site was a grassed area of some 1000m², and of roughly triangular shape, situated on the north side of the church. In view of the early medieval date of the original foundation of the church, there is the possibility of the presence of the remains of structures beneath the site.

THE SURVEY

The earth resistance technique of geophysical survey is appropriate for the detection of buried structures. In this the electrical resistance of the earth, immediately beneath stations spaced at 1.00m. intervals, was measured using the so-called twin-probe method with a Geoscan RM4 resistance meter.

A base line was set out parallel to Stratford Road, set 4.00m in from the boundary fence and an area (A) 12.00m. x 20.00m. was laid out, the shorter side being on the base line and starting 0.8metres from (the projection of) the southern entrance to the site. The area encompassed auger points 2, 5 and 6 from an earlier bore-hole survey. A second area (B) of 10m x 9m was laid out by extending the first area northward at its end nearer the church. Further extension of area B westward towards the original base line was prevented by the presence of a concrete platform adjacent to Stratford Road. Area B encompassed bore holes 3 and 4.

Earth resistance measurements, taken at 1.00m. intervals in areas A and B, were processed using an Epson HX20 microcomputer to give a visual interpretation in a "dot-density" format. In this a random pattern of dots representative of the resistance magnitude at each station is produced so that High resistance features are displayed as dark areas relative to low resistance surroundings. The resulting pattern for the two areas is shown superimposed on the area plan (not given in this report).

Interpretation

The presence of man-made subsurface features such as walls, floors or other masonry give rise to corresponding high anomalies in the earth resistance measurements. However, similar values may occur due to well drained natural or artificial features such as gravel lenses or ground consolidation. Only regular well-defined patterns may identify the former features. In the case of the present survey, it can be seen that there is evidence of a pattern in the form of broad, approximately linear; high resistance features crossing the site to enclose a lower resistance area on three sides. By appropriate selection of the upper and lower limits of resistance values displayed, it is possible to emphasise the higher resistance values as shown in Figs 2(a), (b) and (c), the form (a) being chosen for Fig 1. Figs 2(b) and (c) point more strikingly to a high linear feature running eastwards towards the church and containing, in a spur towards its west end, the man-hole cover of a drain. It is possible, therefore, that the linear, high resistance feature observed may be associated with drains. However, the limited evidence available from the auger survey (boreholes 2 and 5) suggests the presence of "hard standing" in the high resistance areas. This may reflect boundaries of compacted material. It is recommended therefore that a limited excavation of, say, a 1m x 4m trench, running north from borehole point 2, to a depth of 0.75 metres would identify the nature of the recorded, high resistance features and thus resolve the question of further excavation before construction commences.

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB88 DATE 01/04/88 RECORDER OM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 001 CATEGORY TURF LAYER

DIMENSIONS 4m X 1m. TOP -1.0 msd *
LEVEL BOTTOM -

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. DRY, SUNNY, WARM. SOIL COL. VERY DK. GRAY.

MUNSEL NO. 5YR 3/1 SOIL TEXT. SANDY LOAM %STONE 5%

STONE SIZE SMALL STONE SHAPE 1 %CHARCOAL -

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE METAL FLINT

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE GLASS

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER TILE BRICK [OTHER]

EXCAVATION METHOD SPADE

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES - CUT BY CUTTING

OVERLIES 002 WITHIN ADJACENT TO CONTAINS

ASSOCIATED WITH BUTTS BUTTED BY BONDED TO

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS ROOTY TURF LAYER.

GRADES INTO 002 WITH NO CLEAR BOUNDARY

Nb

* SITE DATUM IS TENCH MARK ON SOUTH SIDE OF CHURCH TOWER:

I.e. ALL LEVELS ARE GIVEN RELATIVE TO THIS.

PLAN NO SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS

PHOTO B/W ✓ COLOUR ✓ EXCAVATED PASSED

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGEFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB 88 DATE 01/04/88 RECORDER OTM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 002 CATEGORY LAYER

DIMENSIONS 4m X 1m. TOP -
LEVEL BOTTOM -1.13masd

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. DRY, SUNNY, WARM SOIL COL. VERY DK. GRAY

MUNSEL NO. 5YR 3/1 SOIL TEXT. SANDY LOAM %STONE 15%

STONE SIZE SMALL STONE SHAPE 1 %CHARCOAL -

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE METAL FLINT

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE GLASS

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER TILE BRICK [OTHER] SLATE COAL

EXCAVATION METHOD TROWEL

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES 001 CUT BY CUTTING

OVERLIES 003 WITHIN ADJACENT TO CONTAINS

ASSOCIATED WITH BUTTS BUTTED BY BONDED TO

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS SANDY LOAM, DIRECTLY BENEATH & SIMILAR TO 001; SIT ON GRAVELLY LAYER 003. CONTAINS GLAZED POTTERY, STONEWARE & MODERN-LOOKING BRICK (ALSO FLINT), OCCASIONAL SMALL PIECES OF COAL.

PLAN NO SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS

PHOTO B/W COLOUR EXCAVATED PASSED

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGEFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB 88 DATE 01/04/88 RECORDER OM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 003 CATEGORY LAYER

DIMENSIONS 4m X 1m TOP -1.13 masd
LEVEL BOTTOM -

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. SUNNY, DRY, WARM. SOIL COL. VERY DK. GRAYISH BROWN.

MUNSEL NO. 10 YR 3/2 SOIL TEXT. SANDY LOAM %STONE NE END 50% SW END 35%

STONE SIZE SMALL STONE SHAPE 1 %CHARCOAL -

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE (METAL) (FLINT)

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE (GLASS)

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER (TILE) (BRICK) (OTHER) (SLATE)

EXCAVATION METHOD MATTOCK, SHOVEL, TROWEL.

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES 002 CUT BY CUTTING

OVERLIES 004 WITHIN ADJACENT TO CONTAINS

ASSOCIATED WITH BUTTS BUTTED BY BONDED TO

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS BECOMES STONIER ABOUT MIDPOINT IN TRENCH: STONIER TO NORTH. LEAD & IRON PRESENT. TOP SOIL.

PLAN NO 1 SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS

PHOTO B/W - COLOUR - EXCAVATED - PASSED

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGEFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB 88 DATE 01/04/88 RECORDER CM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 004 CATEGORY LAYER

DIMENSIONS 3m X 1m TOP - LEVEL BOTTOM -1.28 masd

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. OVERCAST, WARM, DAY. SOIL COL. DK. YELLOWISH BROWN.

MUNSEL NO. 10 YR 3/4 SOIL TEXT. SANDY LOAM %STONE 35%

STONE SIZE SMALL STONE SHAPE 1 %CHARCOAL OCCASIONAL

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE METAL FLINT

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE GLASS

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER TILE BRICK [OTHER] COKE

EXCAVATION METHOD MATTOCK, SHOVEL, TROWEL, HAND SHOVEL.

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES 003 CUT BY _____ CUTTING _____

OVERLIES 005 WITHIN _____ ADJACENT TO _____ CONTAINS _____

ASSOCIATED WITH _____ BUTTS _____ BUTTED BY _____ BONDED TO _____

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS OCCASIONAL PIECES OF COKE & CHARCOAL

SLIGHT CHANGE IN COLOUR BUT ESSENTIALLY 'SAME AS' 003.

PLAN NO _____ SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS _____

PHOTO B/W _____ COLOUR _____ EXCAVATED _____ PASSED _____

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGEFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB 88 DATE 01/04/88 RECORDER OM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 005 CATEGORY LAYER (FLOOR?)

DIMENSIONS 3m X 1m X 0.08m LEVEL TOP -1.28 msd BOTTOM -1.36 msd

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. DRY, OVERCAST, COOL SOIL COL. BROWN.

MUNSEL NO. 10YR 5/3 SOIL TEXT. SAND %STONE 25%

STONE SIZE SMALL-MEDIUM STONE SHAPE 2-3 %CHARCOAL -

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE METAL FLINT

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE GLASS

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER TILE BRICK [OTHER]

EXCAVATION METHOD TROWEL

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES 004 CUT BY CUTTING

OVERLIES 006 WITHIN ADJACENT TO CONTAINS

ASSOCIATED WITH BUTTS BUTTED BY BONDED TO

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS MORTAR FLOOR? OR BEDDING FOR ONE.

FLAGSTONES OR TILES ORIGINALLY ON THIS REDDING; NOW COMPLETELY REMOVED.

PLAN NO 1 SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS

PHOTO B/W ✓ COLOUR ✓ EXCAVATED PASSED

ST. GILES CHURCH, WEST BRIDGEFORD, CONTEXT RECORD FORM.

SITE CODE WB88 DATE 01/04/1991 RECORDER DM GR. - MEX - MN

SITE SUB. DIV. TRENCH A CONTEXT NO. 006 CATEGORY LAYER

DIMENSIONS 2m X 1m X 0.38m TOP -1.36 masd
LEVEL BOTTOM -1.74 masd

SOIL COND. DAMP WEATHER COND. OVERCAST, LOOKS LIKE RAIN. SOIL COL. DK. BROWN.

MUNSEL NO. 10 YR 3/3 SOIL TEXT. SANDY LOAM %STONE 40%

STONE SIZE SMALL-MEDIUM STONE SHAPE 2-3 %CHARCOAL -

NON NATURAL INCLUSIONS: POTTERY ANIMAL BONE HUMAN BONE METAL FLINT

WKD WOOD WKD BONE SLAG WKD STONE BUILDING STONE BURNT STONE GLASS

DAUB MORTAR PLASTER LEATHER TILE BRICK (OTHER)

EXCAVATION METHOD MATTOCK, SHOVEL, TROWEL.

RELATIONSHIPS:

UNDERLIES 005 CUT BY _____ CUTTING _____

OVERLIES 007 WITHIN _____ ADJACENT TO _____ CONTAINS _____

ASSOCIATED WITH _____ BUTTS _____ BUTTED BY _____ BONDED TO _____

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTS/PROBLEMS PINKY MORTAR IN WHAT LOOKS LIKE A

'DESTRUCTION' LEVEL. PERHAPS DETRITUS FROM A CHURCH BUILDING

PHASE - USED TO LEVEL AN AREA AS HARDCORE - WITH A FLOOR THEN SET

ON THAT HARDCORE; A YARD (STONEMASONS?) OR A BUILDING. THE

'HARDCORE' IS CLEARLY MAINLY FROM A BRICK BUILDING; POSSIBLY ON THIS

SITE OR NEARBY. THE BRICK IS ROUGH HANDMADE & SMALL; c. 6cm THICK

" POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS (17" (RES). SAME THICKNESS AS BRICK IN COTTAGE ON SOUTH

SIDE OF CHURCH. THIS WAS BUILT IN 1195 ACCORDING TO THE LADY

WHO LIVES IN IT.

PLAN NO _____ SECTION NO 1 SAMPLE NOS _____

PHOTO B/W _____ COLOUR _____ EXCAVATED _____ PASSED _____

