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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS  
AT ST MARY'S CHURCH,  
CONGERSTONE,  
LEICESTERSHIRE  
(CSMC18)**

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Work Undertaken For  
**Peter Rogan and Associates Limited**

Report Compiled by  
Mark Peachey BA(Hons)

National Grid Reference: SK 3670 0545  
Leicestershire Museums Accession Number:  
X.A51.2018  
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-318867

APS Report No: **39/18**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*Two hand-excavated archaeological test pits were required prior to construction of new facilities at St Mary's Church, Congerstone, Leicestershire.*

*The church lies within the heart of the medieval (AD 1066-1540) settlement of Congerstone, with earthworks indicating the possible location of a manor house to the north. St Mary's church is of 16<sup>th</sup> century date and is thought to have replaced an earlier structure which documentary evidence suggests was founded by the 13<sup>th</sup> century.*

*The investigation involved the excavation and recording of two test pits, revealing the mortar sub floor and wall of a previous structure, presumably relating to an earlier church, and a possible path.*

*Two medieval floor tiles were retrieved during the investigation.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Planning Background

A programme of test pitting was required prior to construction of an extension to the church of St Mary, Congerstone, in order to ascertain the nature of archaeological deposits, their likely disturbance and to inform the specification for the subsequent building works. Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Peter Rogan and Associates Limited to undertake this work which was carried out on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2018, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Archaeological Project Services.

### 2.2 Site Location

Congerstone is located 12km south of Ashby de la Zouch and 23km west of

Leicester, in the administrative district of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, Leicestershire (Fig. 1).

St Mary's Church is situated in the northwest part of Congerstone, west of Main Street, at National Grid Reference SK 3670 0545 (Fig. 2).

### 2.3 Geology and Topography

Local soils are of the Whimple 3 Association, typically stagnogleyic argillic brown earths (SSEW 1983). These soils are developed upon a drift geology of river terrace sands and gravels which in turn seals a solid geology of Triassic mudstones of the Gunthorpe Member (BGS 2010).

St Mary's Church lies at a height of c. 91m overlooking the floodplain of the River Sence to the west.

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Congerstone is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Cuningstone* the name is derived from the Old English and means 'the estate, settlement (*tūn*) belonging to the King (*cyning*)' (Cox 2005, 26).

The Domesday Survey records that Henry de Ferrers held the principal portion of Congerstone with Robert Despense holding a smaller share. Extensive arable lands are recorded along with a mill and 3 acres of meadow (Williams and Martin 1992, 637; 641).

The first definite mention of a church in Congerstone is in 1220, when the church was under the advowson of a William, the then Rector, who was instituted by Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln (Nichols 1811, 580). In 1242, William de Shopeya, his wife Matilda, and several others petitioned Richard de Thorp to present a suitable parson to the church of *Conyngeston*

(Farnam 1930, 88).

The *Taxatio* of the late 13<sup>th</sup> century assessed St Mary's church for a tax of £4 when it was under the patronage of Ralph de Charnels (Astle *et al.* 1802). The de Charnels held the patronage into the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Farnam 1930, 90).

In 1452, a Knight, Robert Morton, and his wife Elisabeth were held the advowsons of the churches of *Pekulton* and *Conston* ((Farnam 1930, 91). By 1464, the advowson was held by a John Beaumont, who was attainted of high treason (Nichols 1811, 580).

The current St Mary's Church was probably built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although there is scant supporting documentary evidence. It was restored 1834 at the expense of Earl Howe of Gospel Hall, to plans prepared by Henry Stevens. An illustration from 1793 indicates that the main external change was to the chancel, which was rebuilt to be wider and higher.

### 3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the work was to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological remains present on the site and to establish whether further archaeological excavation was required to preserve the archaeological resource by record.

The objectives were to:

- Establish the type of archaeological activity that may be present within the site.
- Determine the likely extent of archaeological activity present within the site.

- Determine the date and function of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the state of preservation of the archaeological features present on the site.
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features present within the site
- Determine the extent to which the surrounding archaeological features extend into the application area.
- Establish the way in which the archaeological features identified fit into the pattern of occupation and land-use in the surrounding landscape.

### 4. METHODS

The investigations comprised two hand excavated test pits, the first being a metre square, the second being smaller, at the request of the engineer.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation, finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was based on the

nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

## 5. RESULTS

The results of the archaeological investigations are discussed in trial pit order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

### Test Pit 1

The earliest deposit recorded in Test Pit 1 was at least 0.48m thick loose dark grey silty clay (005) with rounded pebbles and cobbles, identified as a possible graveyard soil.

This was overlain by a 0.12m thick cream mortar layer (004), possibly a sub-floor foundation. Above which was a 0.19m thick dry grey soil (003) from which two medieval floor tiles were retrieved. This was in turn sealed by 0.14m thick hard yellow mortar (002) with occasional brick fragments, above which was the current topsoil (001) (Fig. 5, Section 1).

### Test Pit 2

This test pit was excavated to a shallow depth as very solid wall footing (006) was encountered. This comprised large flint nodules, up to 0.22m across, set in hard yellow mortar. The remainder of the test pit, north of (006), was taken up with hard dark yellow mortar (007), similar to (002).

## 6. DISCUSSION

In Test Pit 1, the earliest deposit revealed was the probable general graveyard soil (005). Overlying it was a probable mortar floor or base for a tile floor, two loose tiles perhaps relating to this were retrieved from the overlying deposit and were dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century. Above this was a

thick hard mortar surface which may have been a former path around the church. There was similar material in the smaller Test Pit 2 adjacent to a stone wall footing. The stone wall hints at an earlier church at the site, probably predating the 16<sup>th</sup> century, although works were carried out in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which may have removed an element of the 16<sup>th</sup> century church.

It is probable that the proposed extension will impact the remains of the floor and wall revealed during the test pitting, particularly as the depth of the foundations will be approximately 1m below the current ground level. As such, further mitigatory works are likely to be required, the scope of which will be determined by the archaeological curator.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of two test pits was undertaken at St Mary's Church, Congerstone, Leicestershire, as there was the possibility that planned building work might disturb unmarked graves or construction features associated with the current or earlier church.

The test pitting revealed a mortar surface which may have been the base for a tile floor, a later probable path and part of a stone wall footing, perhaps relating to the documented medieval church. No graves were disturbed.

Two floor tiles were retrieved which are of 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century in date.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Scarlett Eaton of Peter Rogan and Associates Limited for commissioning the fieldwork

and post-excavation on behalf of the PCC to the church. The work was coordinated by Paul Cope-Faulkner who also edited this report.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Site Supervisor: Mark Peachey  
 Finds Processing: Denise Buckley  
 Archiving: Denise Buckley  
 Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey  
 Illustration: Mark Peachey  
 Post-excavation Analysis: Mark Peachey

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Astle, T, Ayscough, S and Caley, J (eds), 1802 *Taxatio Ecclesiastica Angliae et Walliae Auctoritate P. Nicholai IV*

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Nichols, J, 1811 *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, Vol. **IV**, Pt. **II**

Pevsner, N, 1992 *Leicestershire and Rutland*, The Buildings of England (2<sup>nd</sup> edition revised E Williamson)

SSEW, 1983 *Soils of Western and Midland England*, 1:250,000 map sheet **2**

Williams, A, and Martin, GH, 1992 *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation* Penguin Books

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services  
 BGS British Geological Survey  
 SSEW Soil Survey of England and Wales

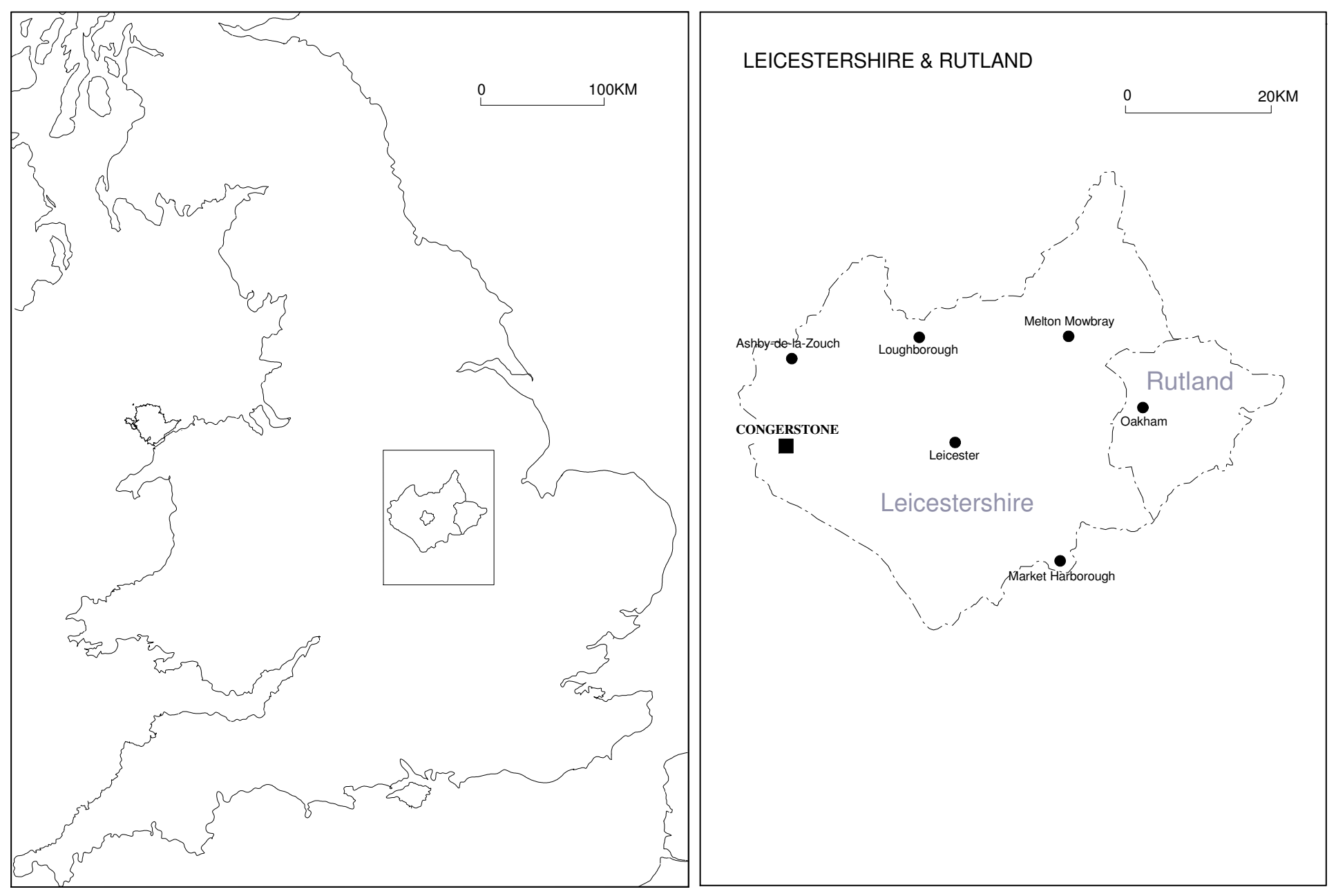
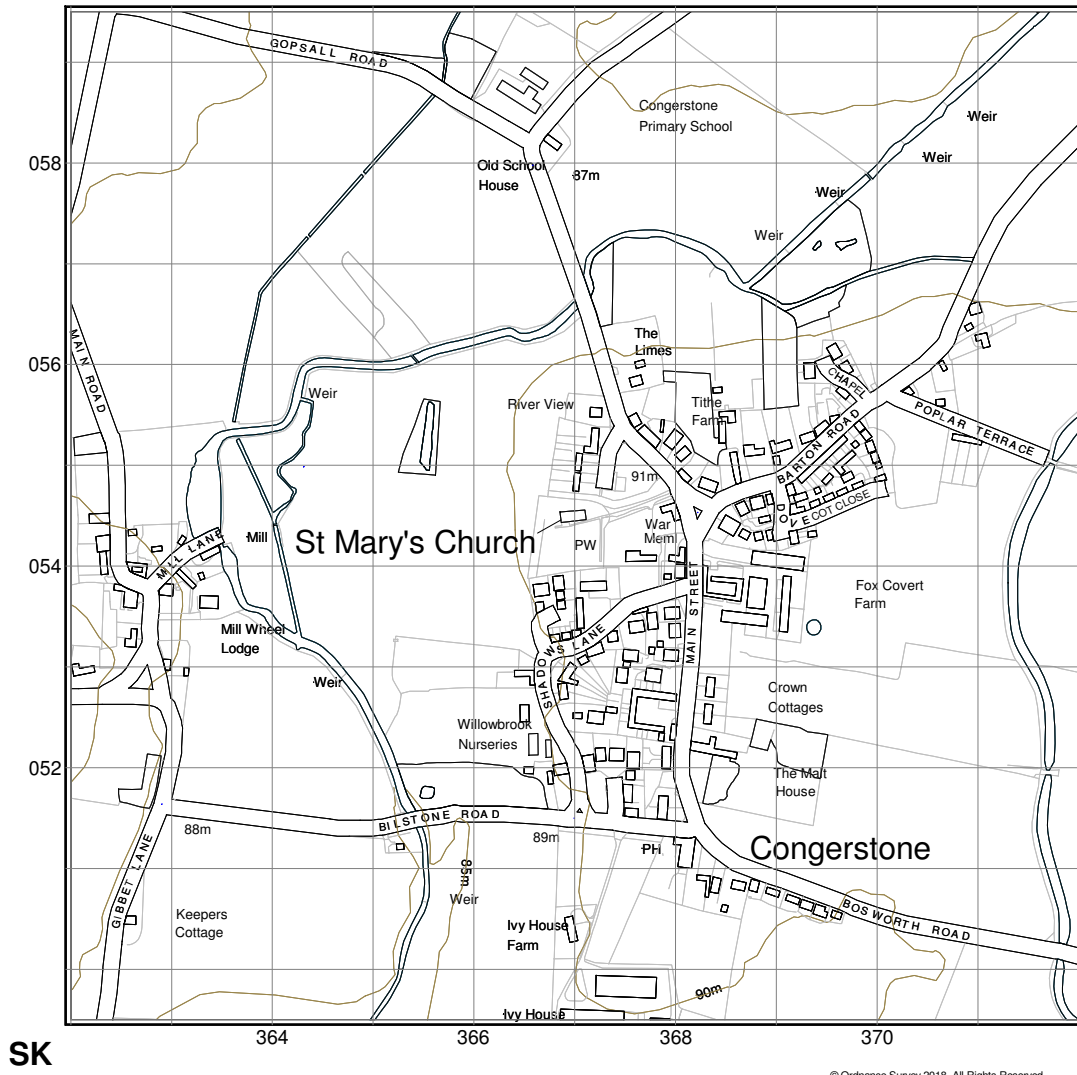
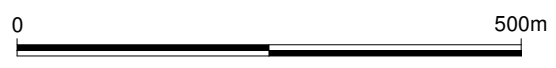


Figure 1 - General location plan





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<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES</b>		
Project Name: Congerstone St Mary's Church		
Scale 1: 7500	Drawn by: MJP	Report No: 39/18

Figure 2. Site location

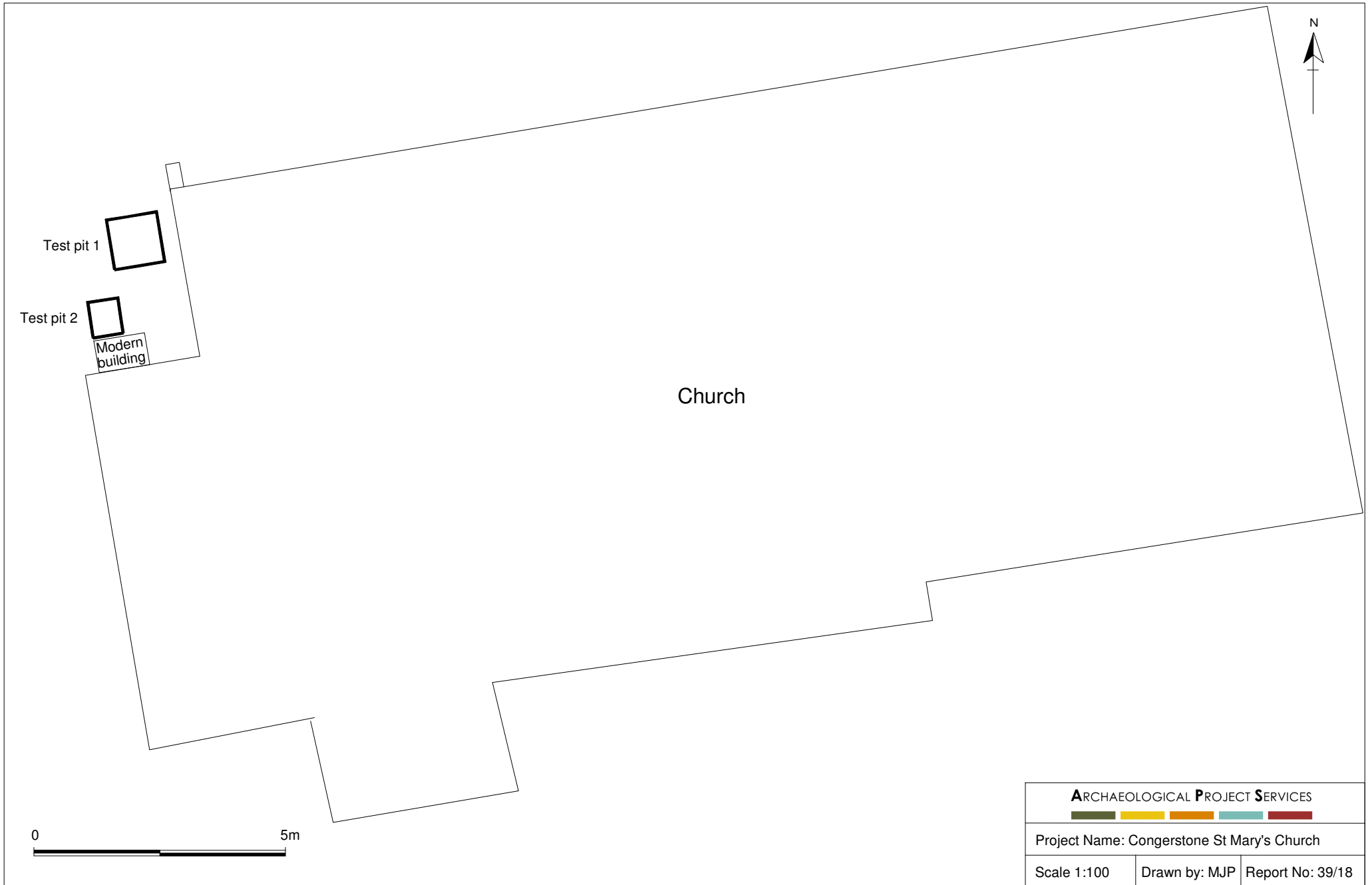
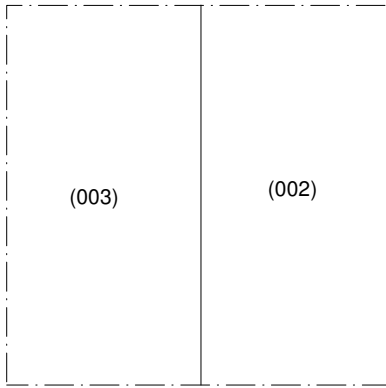


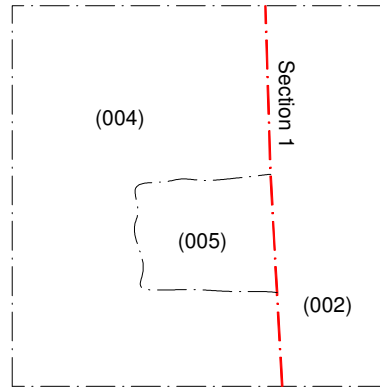
Figure 3. Test pit locations.



### Test pit 1

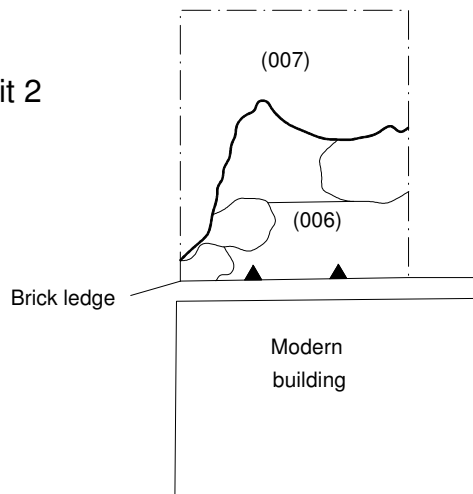


**Plan 1 (showing path (002))**



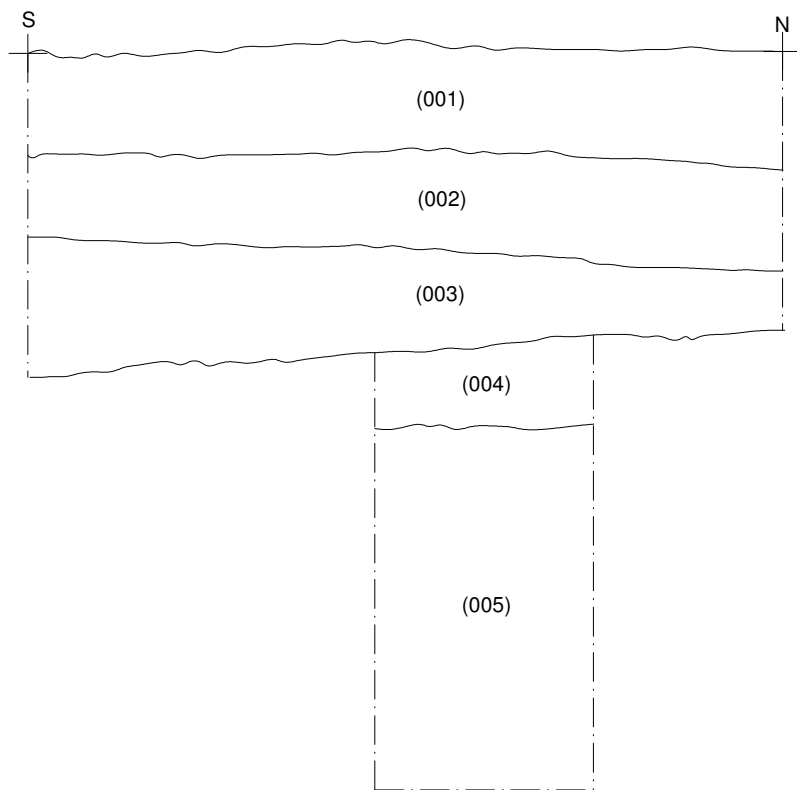
**Plan 2 (final)**

### Test pit 2



<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES</b>		
Project Name: Congerstone St Mary's Church		
Scale 1: 20	Drawn by: MJP	Report No: 39/18

**Figure 4. Trench plans**



Section 1, Test pit 1



<b>ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES</b>		
Project Name: Congerstone St Mary,s Church		
Scale 1:10	Drawn by: MJP	Report No: 39/18

Figure 5. Section 1





Plate 1. Location of the two test pits prior to excavation looking southeast



Plate 2. Test Pit 1, probable mortar path (002), looking east





Plate 3. Test pit 1, possible mortar floor (004), looking east



Plate 4. Test Pit 2, wall [006], looking south

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Test pit	Description	Interpretation
001	1, 2	Loose dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small pebbles, 0.15m thick	Topsoil
002	1	Hard dark yellow mortar with occasional brick frags, 0.14m thick	Former mortar path around church
003	1	Friable mix of dry grey soil and lime mortar flecks, up to 0.19m thick, contains 2 floor tiles	Levelling layer for path (002)
004	1	Friable cream mortar (lime), up to 0.12m thick	Lime mortar floor or possibly a base for a tile floor
005	1	Loose dark grey silty clay with common small to medium rounded pebbles/cobbles, at least 0.48m thick	Subsoil/graveyard soil
006	2	Wall footing comprising large flint nodules, up to 0.22m across, set in hard yellow mortar, structure at least 0.6m x 0.45m in plan	Stone wall footing
007	2	Hard dark yellow mortar, not excavated	Mortar path similar to (002)

## Appendix 2

### THE FINDS

#### CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

By Denise Buckley

##### Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group (2002). A total of 2 fragments of ceramic building material, weighing 732 grams, was recovered from the site.

##### Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Fragments were counted and weighed within each context. The ceramic building material was examined visually for an initial assessment of the material. An archive list of the ceramic building material is included in Table 1.

##### Condition

Both the tiles are intact but the upper surfaces are heavily worn and abraded.

##### Results

Table 1, Ceramic Building Material Archive

Context	Cname	Full Name	Description	No. Fragments	Weight (g)	Date
003	DFT	Decorated Floor Tile	Square 111 x113 x 20mm, slightly bevelled on one side, other sides vertical. Hard, oxidised fabric.	1	500	14 <sup>th</sup> -15 <sup>th</sup> century
	PFT	Plain Floor Tile	Triangular, one corner broken off, 102 x 125 x 20mm, vertical bevel. Hard, oxidized fabric.	1	232	
<b>Totals</b>				<b>2</b>	<b>732</b>	

##### Provenance

The tiles were recovered from (003), a levelling layer for a later path (002).

##### Range

Two medieval floor tiles, dating to probably the 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century, were retrieved. One is plain and has been split to form a triangle. It has the remains of a dark green glaze visible, but it is very worn and abraded. The other tile is square and decorated with a stamped and slipped geometric pattern, with a white slip overlain by an olive green glaze, but again, is very worn and abraded, making the overall pattern unclear. Also, the stamp has only made an impression at one end of the tile.

##### Potential

The tiles offer a high potential for further study. If further work is envisaged at the site, the floor tiles should be re-examined in the light of any new discoveries or additional material. They should be retained as part of the site archive and pose no problems for long term storage.

#### ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments



NoS                    Number of sherds  
W (g)                  Weight (grams)

**REFERENCES**

Eames, E, 1985 *English Medieval Tiles*, British Museum Publications

Eames, E, 1992 *English Tilers*, British Museum Press

Stopford, J, 1990 *Recording Medieval Floor Tiles*. CBA Practical Handbook **10**

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, <i>e.g.</i> [004].
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Domesday Survey</b>	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
<b>Faculty</b>	License to carry out work on a church.
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
<b>Old English</b>	The language used by the Saxon ( <i>q.v.</i> ) occupants of Britain.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
7	Context record sheets
1	Plan record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Daily record sheet
1	Sheet of scale drawings

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services  
Room 500  
County Hall  
Leicester Road  
Glenfield  
Leicester  
LE3 8TE

Museum Accession No:	X.A51.2018
Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	CSMC 18
OASIS Record No:	archaeo11-318867

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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**OASIS ID: archaeol1-318867**

### Project details

Project name	St Mary's Church, Congerstone
Short description of the project	Test pitting was undertaken to inform the foundation design for a new extension to the existing church of St Mary. A former mortar floor and possible wall foundation were revealed which relate to the earlier church that formerly stood at the site.
Project dates	Start: 02-05-2018 End: 20-05-2018
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	CSMC18 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	X.A51.2018 - Museum accession ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	MORTAR FLOOR Uncertain
Monument type	WALL Uncertain
Significant Finds	FLOOR TILE Medieval
Investigation type	"Test-Pit Survey"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	LEICESTERSHIRE HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH SHACKERSTONE St Mary's Church, Congerstone
Study area	2 Square metres
Site coordinates	SK 3670 0545 52.64519532388 -1.457521436505 52 38 42 N 001 27 27 W Point

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Project Services
Project brief originator	None
Project design originator	Archaeological Project Services

Project director/manager Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Project supervisor Mark Peachey  
 Type of sponsor/funding body Parochial Church Council

### Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Leicestershire Museums Service  
 Physical Archive ID X.A51.2018  
 Physical Contents "Ceramics"  
 Digital Archive recipient Archaeological Project Services  
 Digital Contents "Ceramics"  
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Text"  
 Paper Archive recipient Leicestershire Museums Service  
 Paper Archive ID X.A51.2018  
 Paper Contents "Ceramics"  
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

### Project bibliography 1

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