

**NEVILLE HALL
FREELANCE ARCHAEOLOGIST & CONSULTANT**

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
THE CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL, GREAT COATES ROAD,
GRIMSBY, NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE.

National Grid Reference: TA 2413 0902
NELMS Site Code: GRIMS: 2023.001
Faculty Reference: 2022/070476

PREPARED FOR MR. DAVID TAPPIN OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

By

Neville Hall

June 2023

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Summary

The archaeological monitoring and recording of the groundworks pertaining to the excavation of a new soakaway and associated drainage trenching in the churchyard of the Church of St. Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire was undertaken by Neville Hall on the 8th of June 2023.

All of the groundworks pertaining to this project, which comprised the hand and mechanical excavation of a new service trench along with the mechanical excavation of a new soakaway, comprising new external drainage works within the parish churchyard, were the subject of continual archaeological monitoring and recording.

A number of chalk, limestone and ironstone blocks were recovered from the hand and mechanical excavation of the new service trench alongside the Lady Chapel of 1691. It is considered that these were discarded on site during the construction phase of this late 17th century extension to the church.

The remains of an in situ and undated inhumation burial were observed and recorded within the base of and at the northern end of the new soakaway excavation. This burial was defined at depth by the line and rotted remains of a wooden coffin, the eastern end and southern side of which were both observed in the ground. An iron coffin nail and several wooden fragments of the coffin lid were also observed within the grave fill. These were not retained and there were no other finds made from this watching brief.

The remaining results from this archaeological monitoring comprised a site deposit sequence of a graveyard soil horizon which overlay an underlying natural horizon of boulder clays or glacial tills. No disarticulated human bones were found during the course of this archaeological monitoring.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Neville Hall was commissioned by Mr. David Tappin of the Parochial Church Council to undertake the archaeological monitoring and recording of the groundworks pertaining to the excavation of a new soakaway and associated drainage trenching in the churchyard of the Church of St. Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire, centred at National Grid Reference TA 2413 0902. The archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out at the site on the 8th of June 2023.
- 1.2 The archaeological site work was carried out according to the requirements of a Faculty (Ref No.: 2022/070476), which was issued by the Diocese of Lincoln. This report documents the results of this archaeological site work.
- 1.3 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the clients, Mr. Ian Marshman, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor, the Diocese of Lincoln, the Lincolnshire Heritage Environment Record (HER) and the National Fishing Heritage Centre, Grimsby along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

2. Site Location and Description

- 2.1 The development site is situated on land on the north-eastern frontage of the Great Coates Road, within the historic core of the former settlement of Little Coates at National Grid Reference TA 2413 0902 and at a height of approximately 5mAOD. The former settlement of Little Coates is located within the modern civil parish of Great Grimsby and in the administrative district of North East Lincolnshire, county of Lincolnshire **[Figure 1]**.
- 2.2 Topographically, the development site is located on a river terrace overlooking the River Freshney to the immediate north-west. The development site is situated on fine loamy soils of the Holderness Series. These overlie deposits of chalky tills and a solid geology of chalk of the Upper Cretaceous [BGS, 1990; Soil Survey, 1983].

3. Planning Background

- 3.1 Following the granting of a Faculty (Ref No.: 2022/070476), issued by the Diocese of Lincoln, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks pertaining to the excavation of a new soakaway and associated drainage trenching in the churchyard of the parish church of St. Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire **[Figure 2]**.
- 3.2 A specification or a written scheme of works for this archaeological watching brief was submitted to and approved by Mr. Ian Marshman, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor prior to the commencement of the archaeological site works.
- 3.3 This report documents the results of the archaeological site monitoring and recording and will be submitted to the Diocese of Lincoln and to Mr. Ian Marshman, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor.

4. Aims and Objectives of the Archaeological Watching Brief

- 4.1 The aims of the project were the continual archaeological monitoring and recording of the site groundworks pertaining to the excavation of the new soakaway and associated drainage trenching in the parish churchyard.

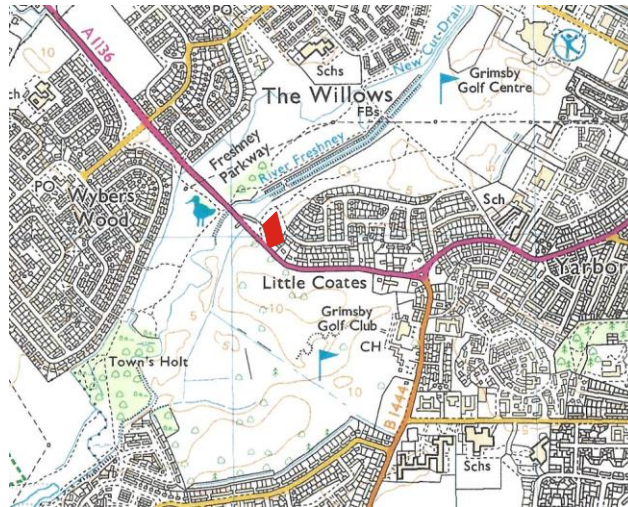


Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:25,000. The site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)

4.2 The objectives of the project were:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

4.3 The development site is located within the historic core of the shrunken medieval settlement of Little Coates and therefore within an area of high archaeological potential and also within the area of the medieval and post-medieval parish churchyard. There is also a probable earlier church, pre-dating the present church on the site. So it was considered likely that multi-period archaeological activity and finds from the late Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods could be encountered on this development site. As the site lies within the parish churchyard, it is probable that human inhumation burials along with possible fragments of disarticulated human bone may also be recovered from this site. The specific objectives of the archaeological fieldwork were to record any archaeological features, finds, structures and deposits associated with this potential multi-period archaeological activity.

5. Archaeological and Historical Background

5.1 Background research sources were consulted at the online National Library of Scotland. A search of the North East Lincolnshire District Council Historic Environment Record (HER) was conducted within a 0.25km radius of the centre of the development site. The online National Heritage List of Historic England was also consulted.

5.2 Two mounds or prehistoric barrows are located in Little Coates and were excavated in 1825 by the Reverend George Oliver (HER MNL469 - 0720/1/0). One of the mounds produced charred wood and other marks of burning and the second a broken cinerary urn and some human remains.

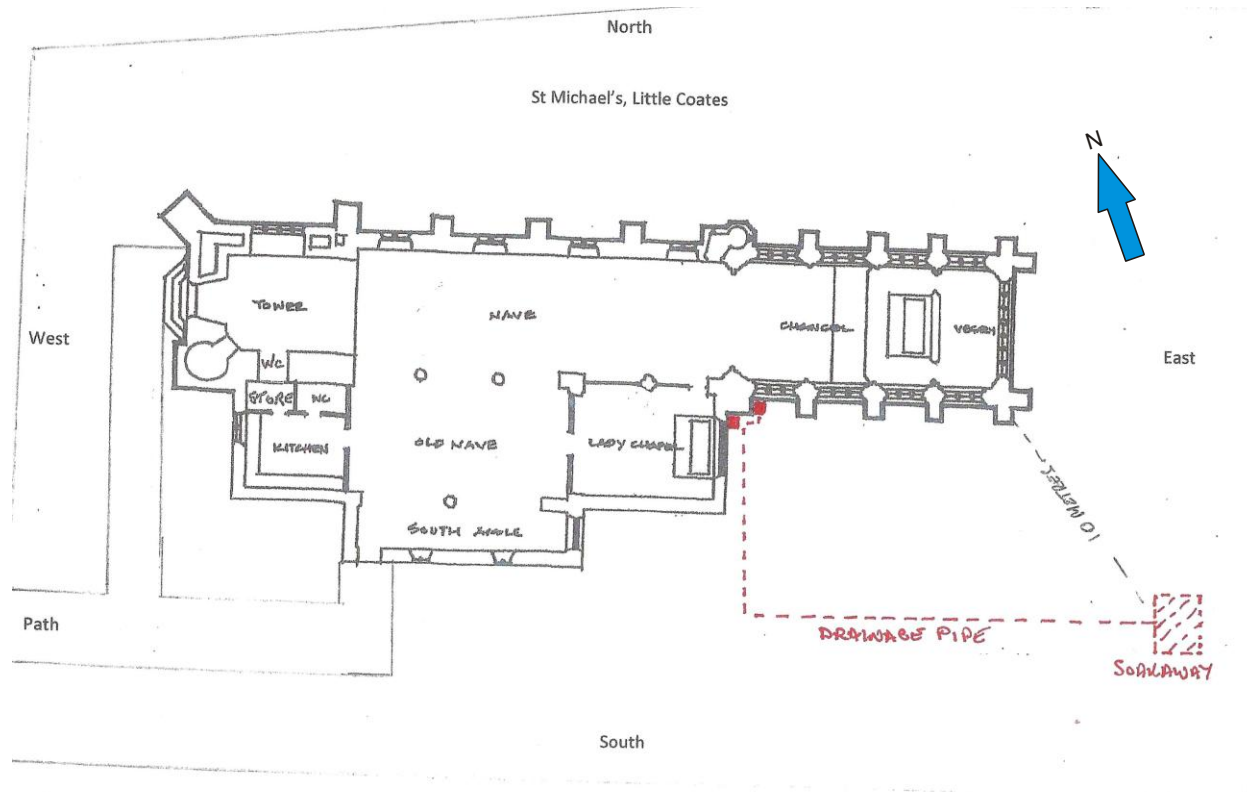


Figure 2: Plan showing the location of the proposed groundworks at a scale of 1:200 (extract from a plan submitted with the faculty)

- 5.3 Little Coates was formerly known as Sud or South Coates or Coates Parva. At the time of the Domesday Survey of AD1086, the lands here were held by the Bishop of Bayeux and by Drago of La Beuvriere. The suffix of the place name Coates is derived from the Old English 'cottage or shelter'. This hamlet was distinguished from the nearby settlement of Great Coates early on. This settlement is also referenced in the Lindsey Survey of c.1115AD. The prefix Sud was used both in the Domesday Survey and in the Lindsey Survey, but was replaced by Parva or Little in later documentation (HER MNL2255 - 0712/0/0) [Morris, 1986; Ekwall, 1991; Cameron, 1998; Mills, 1991; Foster & Longley, 1976]. The earthworks of shrunken medieval settlement are situated to the south-west and within the area of the Grimsby Golf Course. Survey from aerial photographic analysis and Lidar Survey shows a small cluster of earthworks around the parish church along with scattered fields to the west of Little Coates Farm and large areas of ridge and furrow between and around these (HER MNL2255 - 0712/0/0).
- 5.4 The church of St Michael on Great Coates Road, Little Coates is a Grade I listed parish church with a nave and south aisle of 14th-15th century date, a chancel and Lady Chapel dated to 1691 with a northern addition of 1913-14 (HER MNL587 - 0712/1/0, NHL1379845). The church comprises a west tower, nave with south aisle and a chancel. The church also contains a 13th century grave slab, which may suggest earlier origins.
- 5.5 In 2004, an archaeological watching brief took place on the excavation of new soakaways and drainage trenching to the north of the chancel (HER MNL587 - 0712/1/0). This revealed evidence for two graves and three partially decomposed wood coffin lids. No other archaeological finds were made.
- 5.6 In 2008, an archaeological excavation took place within the church interior and at the western end of the old nave during the re-siting of a number of church features that included the font and prior to the construction of a new kitchen and toilet facilities (HER MNL587 - 0712/1/0). The excavation revealed four graves, along with a further four possible graves, (the associated burials of which most likely remained below the limits of the excavation) and a probable charnel pit. Substantial wall foundations cut through the charnel pit and it was likely that they post-dated the graves. It was considered likely that the area of this excavation once formed part of a cemetery external to the church and that either the western end of the old nave had been extended to incorporate this part of the old cemetery or that the cemetery was associated with an earlier church on the site (HER MNL587 - 0712/1/0).
- 5.7 Great Coates Road was once a part of Little Coates Lane and is a road marked on the First Edition O.S. maps of 1887-9 (HER MNL3458 - 0916/2/0).
- 5.8 A 20th century sheep wash is located in Great Coates and is detailed on the Second Edition O.S. maps of 1906-8 (HER MNL1704 - 0209/1/0).
- 5.9 A 20th century bridge over the River Freshney occurs at Great Coates and is detailed on the Second Edition O.S. maps of 1906-8 (HER MNL1703 - 0208/1/0). There was a post-medieval predecessor on the site in 1576.
- 5.10 Copies of published Ordnance Survey (O.S.) maps of the area of the development site were obtained from the online National Library of Scotland. An extract from the First Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1887 shows the church of St. Michael within the curtilage and boundaries of its own parish churchyard on the north-eastern frontage of Little Coates Lane. The church is shown as detached and at a distance to the north-west from the then hamlet of Little Coates, which was to the east.

- 5.11 An extract from the Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1908 shows the same layout to the area of this development and that this had not changed between 1887 and 1908.
- 5.12 An extract from the 1935 Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S. map shows that the shape and the boundaries of the parish churchyard had become much altered between 1908 and 1935 and that by this time, this churchyard had assumed a rectangular and simplified form and shape on the north-eastern frontage of Little Coates Lane. The church is shown as still being detached from the hamlet of Little Coates to the east.
- 5.13 An extract from the Provisional Edition six inch to one mile scale O.S. map of 1951 shows that the hamlet of Little Coates to the east had expanded in size, though this parish church is still shown as detached and at a distance to the north-west of this hamlet.
- 5.14 This same layout to the area of this development site is shown on the subsequent 1:10,560 and 1:10,000 scale O.S maps of 1956 and 1968 respectively.
- 5.15 The current layout of the development site is featured on **Figure 2**.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Neville Hall at the site on the 8th of June 2023. This comprised the continual archaeological monitoring and recording of the external drainage works within the parish churchyard. The external monitored groundworks consisted of the hand and mechanical excavation of a new service trench along with the mechanical excavation of a new soakaway. The mechanical excavations were carried out by a 1.5-ton 360° mechanical excavator using a 0.30m wide toothless bucket and a 0.70m wide toothed bucket.
- 6.2 Where necessary, surfaces were hand cleaned for examination and recording and the deposit sequences and the *in situ* inhumation burial/coffin observed were recorded on standard *pro-forma* context recording sheets. A plan at a scale of 1:100 was compiled on site of the monitored groundworks within the parish churchyard. This plan is reproduced at this same scale as **Figure 3** in this report. A total of nine sections of the observed deposit sequences in the churchyard and of the grave cut and fill [designated as **Sections 1-9**] were also compiled on site at a scale of 1:20. These are similarly reproduced at this same scale also on **Figure 3**. A complimentary digital colour photographic record was also maintained, which is reproduced as **Plates 1-51, Appendix 1**. A list of contexts recorded is reproduced in **Appendix 2**.
- 6.3 All work was carried out according to the approved retrospective Specification and to the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CHIfA) standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs.

7. Results [Figure 3; Appendix 1, Plates 1-51]

- 7.1 The monitored groundworks, which comprised the hand and mechanical excavation of a new service trench along with the mechanical excavation of a new soakaway, were the subject of continual archaeological monitoring and recording. **Plates 1-4** feature pre-groundworks views of the site.
- 7.2 The monitored site groundworks programme commenced with the hand and mechanical excavation of a section of new service trenching that extended from two existing modern gullies located against the south wall of the early modern 20th century chancel. This first

section of trenching then ran southwards, parallel and to the immediate east of the east wall of the Lady Chapel of 1691. The extent of this first section of trenching is featured on **Figure 3**. This initial section of trenching had a width of 0.30m and extended to depths of 0.40m below ground levels [**Plates 5-10**]. These excavations went through a made ground horizon (**001**), (which included within its makeup, elements of stone walling, probably discarded from the external construction of the adjacent Lady Chapel in 1691), and an underlying graveyard soil horizon (**002**), which extended to the base of these excavations. The site deposit sequence here was recorded within **Representative Section 1 [Plate 11]**. Elements of the stone foundation offset of the east wall of the Lady Chapel were observed within the western side of this initial trench.

- 7.3 The mechanical excavation of the new service trench, thence extended to the south-east; the extent of which is also shown on **Figure 3**. This further and final section of new service trenching was excavated to the same width of 0.30m and to depths of between 0.40m-0.60m below ground levels [**Plates 12-13 and 15-31**]. These further excavations went through a relatively shallow topsoil horizon (**003**) and into the underlying graveyard soil (**002**), which extended to the base of these excavations. The site deposit sequence here was recorded within **Representative Sections 2-5 [Plates 14 and 32-34]**.
- 7.4 This was then followed by the monitored mechanical excavation of the new soakaway that was located at the south-eastern end of the service trenching. This final mechanical excavation extended to a length of 3.50m, to a width of 1.80m and to a depth of 1.30m below ground levels. This excavation went through the shallow topsoil horizon (**003**), the graveyard soil horizon (**002**) and into an underlying natural horizon of boulder clays (**004**), which was recorded at the base of these excavations [**Plates 35-39 and 41-43**]. The site deposit sequence within this final excavation was recorded within **Representative Section 6 [Plate 40]**.
- 7.5 At the northern end of and at the base of the soakaway excavation, the remains of an undated *in situ* inhumation burial [**005**] with fill (**006**) were identified. The site of this burial was defined at depth by the rotted remains of an *in situ* wooden coffin, the eastern end and the southern side of which had been preserved within this excavation [**Plates 44-47 and 51**]. The area of this burial was recorded within **Sections 7-9 [Plates 48-50]**. An iron coffin nail and two wooden fragments of the former coffin lid were observed within the grave fill (**005**), which were left where they were seen. There were no other surface finds.

8. Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 All of the groundworks pertaining to this project, which comprised the hand and mechanical excavation of a new service trench along with the mechanical excavation of a new soakaway, comprising new external drainage works within the parish churchyard, were the subject of continual archaeological monitoring and recording.
- 8.2 A number of chalk, limestone and ironstone blocks were recovered from the hand and mechanical excavation of the new service trench alongside the Lady Chapel of 1691. It is considered that these were discarded on site during the construction phase of this late 17th century extension to the church.
- 8.3 The remains of an *in situ* and undated inhumation burial were observed and recorded within the base of and at the northern end of the new soakaway excavation. This burial was defined at depth by the line and rotted remains of a wooden coffin, the eastern end and southern side of which were both observed in the ground. An iron coffin nail and several wooden fragments of the coffin lid were also observed within the grave fill. These were not retained and there were no other finds made from this watching brief.

- 8.4 The remaining results from this archaeological monitoring comprised a site deposit sequence of a graveyard soil horizon which overlay an underlying natural horizon of boulder clays or glacial tills. No disarticulated human bones were found during the course of this archaeological monitoring.

9. Effectiveness of Methodology and Confidence Rating

- 9.1 The methodology chosen clearly demonstrated both the nature of the archaeological activity, the nature of the finds and the nature of the deposit sequences present on this site; while providing sufficient time to record the archaeological activity and deposit sequences observed. It is considered that the implemented methodology was sufficient to confirm the nature of the archaeological activity, the finds and the nature of the deposit sequences present within the area of the site with a high degree of confidence.

10. Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Thanks are gratefully extended to Mr. David Tappin of the Parochial Church Council for commissioning this work. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Ian Marshman, the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor for his kind assistance.

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Extract from the 1935 Edition 25 inch to one mile scale Ordnance Survey (O.S.) map, map sheet no. Lincolnshire 22.10.

Extract from the Provisional Edition six inch to one mile scale Ordnance Survey (O.S.) map of 1951, map sheet no. Lincolnshire 22SW.

Extract from the 1:10,560 scale Ordnance Survey (O.S.) map of 1956, map sheet no. TA 20 NW.

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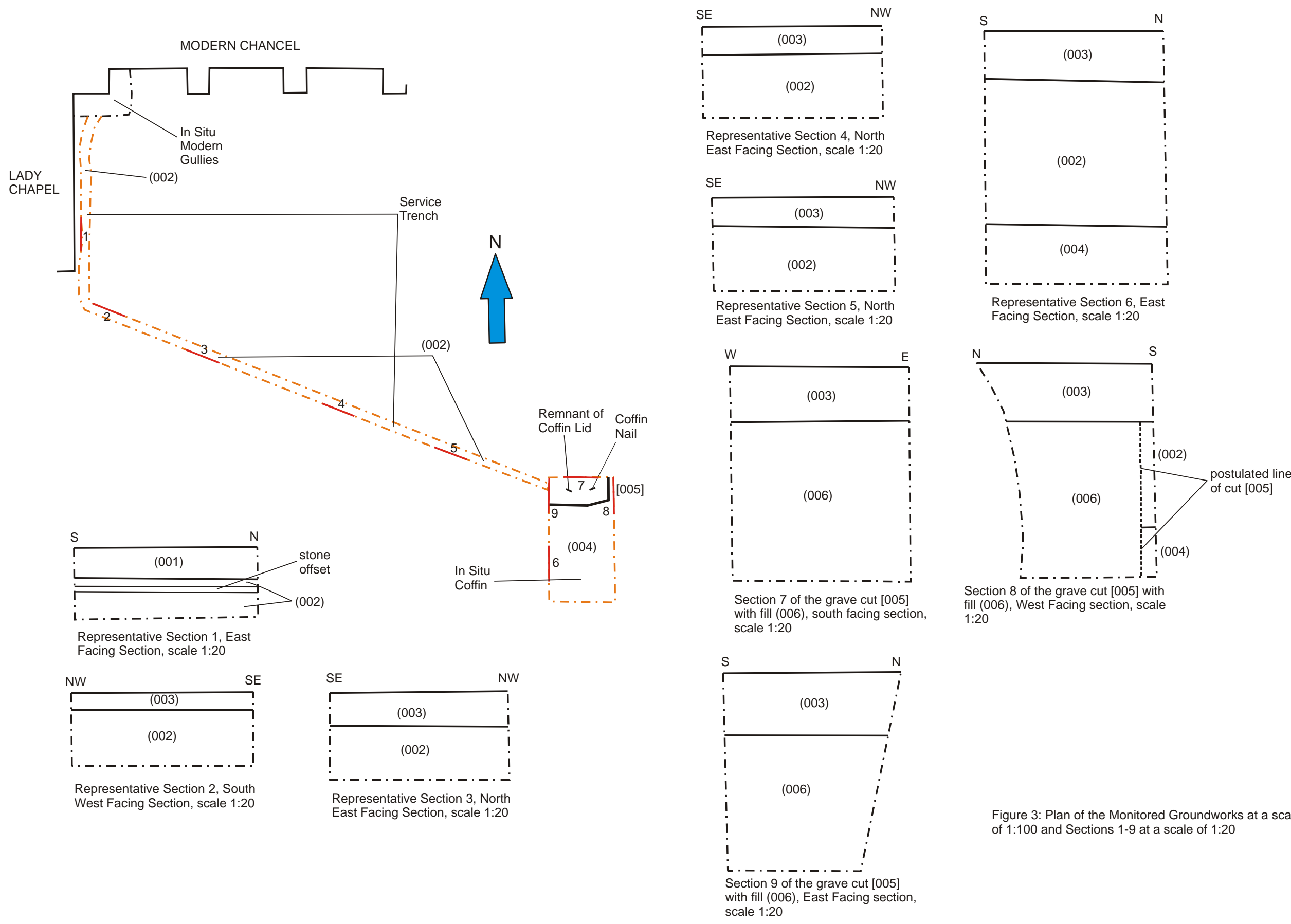


Figure 3: Plan of the Monitored Groundworks at a scale of 1:100 and Sections 1-9 at a scale of 1:20

Appendix 1: Plates



Plate 1: Pre-groundworks, from the west



Plate 2: Pre-groundworks, from the south



Plate 3: Pre-groundworks, from the west



Plate 4: Pre-groundworks, from the east



Plate 5: Excavation of the service trench, from the north-east



Plate 6: Excavation of the service trench, from the north-east



Plate 7: Excavation of the service trench, from the north-east



Plate 9: Excavation of the service trench, from the south-east



Plate 8: Excavation of the service trench, from the south-east



Plate 10: Excavation of the service trench, from the north-east



Plate 11: Representative Section 1, from the east



Plate 14: Representative Section 2, from the south-west



Plate 12: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 15: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 13: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 16: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 17: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 18: Excavation of the service trench, from the east



Plate 19: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 20: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 22: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 21: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 23: Excavation of the service trench, from the east



Plate 24: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 26: Excavation of the service trench, from the east



Plate 25: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 27: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 28: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 30: Excavation of the service trench, from the east



Plate 29: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 31: Excavation of the service trench, from the west



Plate 32: Representative Section 3, from the north-east



Plate 35: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 33: Representative Section 4, from the north-east



Plate 36: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 34: Representative Section 5, from the north-east



Plate 37: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 38: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 39: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 40: Representative Section 6, from the east



Plate 41: Excavation of the soakaway, from the north



Plate 42: Excavated soakaway, from the north



Plate 44: View of the *in situ* wooden coffin, from the south-west



Plate 43: Excavated soakaway, from the south



Plate 45: View of the *in situ* wooden coffin, from the north-east



Plate 46: View of the *in situ* wooden coffin, from the south



Plate 48: Section 7 of the grave cut [005] with fill (006), from the south



Plate 47: View of the *in situ* wooden coffin, from the south



Plate 49: Section 8 of the grave cut [005] with fill (006), from the west



Plate 50: Section 9 of the grave cut [005] with fill (006), from the east



Plate 51: View of the *in situ* wooden coffin, from the south

Appendix 2: List of Contexts

- 001** Undated made ground horizon. Soft and friable, mid orange brown silty clay with small chalk and mortar fragments and flecking 2% and frequent small-medium, chalk, limestone and ironstone fragments. Above **(002)**. Recorded within **Representative Section 1**. Depth - 0.16m.
- 002** Graveyard soil horizon. Soft, light orange brown silty clay with frequent small angular and rounded stones. Below **(001)** and **(003)** and above **(004)**. Recorded within **Representative Sections 1-6 and 8**. Depth - 0.78m.
- 003** Shallow modern topsoil horizon. Soft, dark orange brown sandy silt with moderate small angular stones. Above **(002)**. Recorded within **Representative Sections 1-9**. Depth - 0.33m.
- 004** Natural horizon of boulder clays. Soft, light orange brown silty clay with chalk flecking 1%. Below **(002)**. Cut by **[005]**. Recorded within **Representative Sections 6 and 8**. Depth - >0.32m.
- 005** *In situ* and undated inhumation burial recorded at depth, at the base of and at the northern end of the soakaway excavation. Cut **(004)**. Recorded within **Sections 7-9** and extent featured on **Figure 3**.
- 006** Grave fill of the undated inhumation burial. Soft, light orange brown silty clay with small fragments of chalk and flecking 1%. Below **(002)**. Recorded within **Sections 7-9**. Depth - >0.86m.

Appendix 3: OASIS Summary Sheet

Summary for nevilleh1-516432

OASIS ID (UID)	nevilleh1-516432
Project Name	Archaeological Watching Brief at Church of St Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire
Sitename	Church of St Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire
Activity type	Archaeological Intervention
Project Identifier(s)	Church of St. Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Ecclesiastical consent
Organisation Responsible for work	Neville Hall
Project Dates	08-Jun-2023 - 08-Jun-2023
Location	Church of St Michael, Great Coates Road, Grimsby, North East Lincolnshire NGR : TA 24130 09020 LL : 53.56312116642673, -0.127314620732351 12 Fig : 524130,409020
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Lincolnshire District : North East Lincolnshire Parish : North East Lincolnshire, unparished area
Project Methodology	An archaeological watching brief was mounted on external drainage works within the parish churchyard. The monitored groundworks consisted of the excavation of new drainage trenching and a new soakaway to the south of the church.
Project Results	The outline of a rotted wooden coffin denoted the location of an undated inhumation burial that was recorded at the northern end of and at the base of the soakaway excavation. Excavated surface finds of a coffin nail and several wooden fragments of the former coffin lid were noted. A number of chalk, ironstone and limestone bocks discarded from the construction of the Lady Chapel of 1691 were also observed.
Keywords	
Funder	
HER	North East Lincolnshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
Person Responsible for work	N, Hall
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Fishing Heritage Centre, Grimsby, via North Lincolnshire Museum Service;