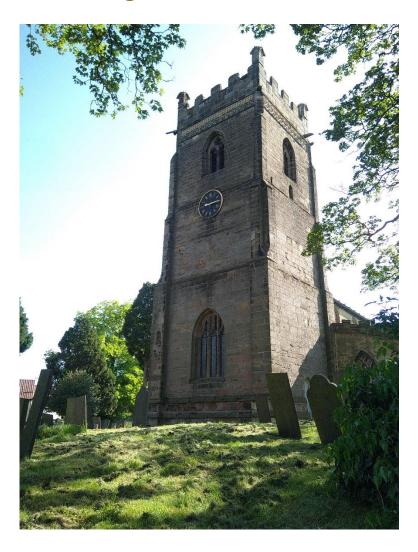
ST GILES CHURCH, CROPWELL BISHOP, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

Archive Report for:
Archaeological Monitoring



Prepared by

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	Issue	Excavation Officer	Project Manager	

Northern Office 15 Beaumont Fee Lincoln LN1 1UH Tel: 01522 532621 Email: enquiries@netarch.co.uk



Southern Office
22 High Street Buckingham MK18 1NU
Tel: 01280 816174
Email: enquiries@netarch.co.uk



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Non-Technical Summary

In June 2023 Network Archaeology Ltd, acting on behalf of Soul Architects Ltd and the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham's Registry, undertook a programme of Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief) on groundworks at the 13th century, Grade I listed parish church of St. Giles, Cropwell Bishop, Nottinghamshire. The work took place under a Grant of Faculty and involved monitoring groundworks associated with improvements to the church, including the partial removal of the existing church floors and the levelling of sub-floor layers, prior to the installation of a new under-floor heating system.

Traces of a single grave were encountered in the south-western corner of the church. However, the grave was situated below the formation level of the current works. In consequence it was left in situ and no human remains were exhumed.

Excavations revealed the foundation raft and soakaway drain associated with the 14th century church font, together with remains possibly representing medieval floor foundation rafts.

Parts of a brick-lined heating flue were also identified. These were associated with the former boiler house on the northern side of the church and are likely to be of 19th century date.

Several fragments of human bone were recovered during the removal of sub-floor deposits. These had most likely been disturbed during the removal of the previous flagstone flooring and the installation of the existing sprung wooden floor in the western part of the church. All the human remains were retained on site and were re-interred within the church.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

This archaeological monitoring report is designed to inform the relevant parties of the results of the programme of Archaeological Monitoring (Watching Brief) undertaken by Network Archaeology Ltd on development groundworks at St Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop, Nottinghamshire, during June 2023.

1.2 Project Background

1.2.1 Proposed development and planning history

The proposed groundworks consisted of the removal of the existing church flooring, the reduction of sub-floor deposits, the installation of new under-floor heating and the creation of new floors within the church building. All groundworks were undertaken under a Grant of Faculty issued for the works by the Bishop of Southwell and Nottingham's Registry.

1.2.2 Location, description and natural environment

The site lies on the south-eastern side of the village of Cropwell Bishop, on the northern side of Fern Road. The Development Area (DA) consisted of the North Aisle, South Aisle and nave of the existing church building; an area of approximately 208.18 sq m. No works took place outside the church building.

The church remains in use as house of worship, although the building was closed to the public for the duration of the development.

The DA was situated at the western end of the church an area which contained carved and ornamented wooden pews of 14th to 15th century date and a 14th century stone font. Both the font and the pews were removed and stored elsewhere in the church prior to the commencement of works.

The church itself lies within an existing churchyard, which extends on all four sides of the building. The churchyard is open for burials and the majority of funeral monuments (gravestones) range in date from the late 18th to 20th centuries.

1.3 Archaeological background

Cropwell Bishop lies 1.5km east of the main A46 Newark to Leicester Road and 11km east of Nottingham city centre (Fig. 1).

St Giles' Parish Church is located in the south-eastern corner of the village, the churchyard occupying the angle between Fern Road, extending east to Langar, and Church Street, leading north to Cropwell Butler (Fig 1). The churchyard is raised above the level of the road by over one metre, retained by a churchyard wall, built in 1838. The churchyard is generally well maintained, and forty-nine 18th or early 19th century headstones survive, along with the churchyard wall, are Grade II listed structures.

Documentary evidence suggests that the present church was established around 1215 AD and the earliest part of the church, the north arcade is of early 13th century date. Its arches are carried on three short but stout cylindrical piers. The south arcade is very similar, but lacks the characteristic nail-head decoration around the capitals. This indicates that it was probably built slightly later than the north arcade, but still within the first half of the thirteenth century. The south arcade, in particular, has suffered from subsidence, and the piers deviate very considerably from vertical (https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1045650?section=official-list-entry).

The north aisle has a largely solid north wall, pierced by two small lancet windows, one round- and one square-headed. The battlemented south wall of the south aisle has two square-headed windows, one with two aisles have matching, three-light windows. The nave clerestories each have four two-light windows, and are probably of later fourteenth- or early 15th century date.

The tower was added in the 15th century. Unlike the rest of the fabric of the building, this is in ashlar blocks of red Triassic sandstone. While this material had been used for the piers and for some quoins, the earlier work mostly utilises roughly dressed blue Lias limestone. This stone is strongly laminar, weathering into thick slaty slabs and lending the exterior of the church its overall rustic texture.

The nave roof was probably remodelled at the time that tower was added or shortly after. Carved initials and dates show that roof repairs were carried out in 1600, 1785 and 1794 but there are traces of earlier work in the timbers of the aisle roofs. Inscriptions on the nave roof commemorate the re-leading in 1714 and 1999, during the church wardenships of John Mabbot and William Barnes, and Alison Mona Clark and Philip Stephen Bush, respectively.

The chancel was extensively restored in 1854, with completely new roof timbers and a tiled roof, meeting the ridge of the nave roof at its apex and probably reproducing the steep pitch of the original roof. The upper courses of the eastern end of the chancel appear to show at least two episodes of rebuild or repointing.

1.4 Previous works

Previous archaeological monitoring work in and around the church consists of the excavation of a drainage soakaway in the churchyard, which yielded fragments of charnel bone for the graveyard soils, but no *in-situ* burials. (John Samuels Archaeological Consultants 1999).

Further new drains were installed in the churchyard in 2014 and a programme of restoration work, involving the dismantling and subsequent rebuilding of the east wall of the nave above the chancel arch, was also undertaken. Small quantities of human bone were found during excavation of the drains and significant elements of the church structure were revealed during the restoration work (NAL 2014).

Additional work was undertaken in 2016, which involved the installation of a kitchen area and lavatory facilities in the base of the church tower, and the installation of a floor above to form a glass-fronted gallery for the bell-ringers. Again, the work allowed structural elements of the church to be examined, whilst the excavation of an external soakaway, undertaken as part of the works, yielded further disarticulated human remains (NAL 2016).

1.5 Objectives

The prime objective of the archaeological works was to mitigate the impact on the archaeological resource of the works carried out on the fabric of the church. This was achieved by;

- establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains,
- locating, investigating and recording any archaeological deposits
- recovering, recording and conserving significant archaeological finds to allow for their interpretation, and
- examining and recording any elements of the fabric of the church pertinent to the understanding its development and history.

2 Results

2.1 Overview

The groundworks took place in the western part of the church, with the eastern limit of excavation roughly corresponding with a line running from eastern side of the southern porch to the opposite doorway in the northern wall of the church (Figure 3). The excavation area included part of the north aisle, the nave and part of the south aisle. The existing flooring in this area consisted of modern concrete (north aisle) raised timber flooring and tiles of probable 19th century date (nave) and Yorkstone slabs laid in the 1950s (south aisle).

Following removal of the pews, font and flooring in the development area, excavations continued to a depth of 0.28m below existing floor level, this being the formation level required for the installation of the new underfloor heating system and new floor.

2.2 Results

2.2.1 Grave 108, southern aisle

Excavations revealed a mixed sandy deposit at the formation level of the excavation, 117=121, which extended across the entire excavation area. The deposit contained fragments of mortar, animal bone and rubble and presumably represents a medieval trample deposit associated with the construction of the church.

Deposit 117=121 was cut by a single grave, **108**, which was located in the southwestern corner of the southern aisle. The grave was aligned east to west and was rectangular in plan, measuring 0.70m by 2.50m. It was filled by a deposit of sandy clay, *107*, within which fragments of human bone were visible. However, as the grave lay below the formation level of the proposed new floor, the fill was not excavated and the bone fragments were left in-situ.

2.2.2 Southern nave foundation raft 110=109

Deposit 117=121 also truncated by a rectangular cut **112**, for a foundation raft structure, 110=109. This feature was rectangular in plan and was located immediately to the west of the westernmost column of the southern arcade separating the southern side of the nave from the southern aisle (Figure 3). Foundation raft 110=109 was formed of roughly dressed stone blocks measuring a maximum of 0.67m by 0.42m by 0.09m, set in a limestone mortar matrix. It was aligned east to west and measured 1.45m x 0.90m.



Plate 1. Foundation 110=109, facing north

Structure 110=109 abutted the existing column as described and therefore must be circa early 13th century or later in date. However, there was no evidence surviving on the column or the arch it supported to suggest that 110=109 had ever extended above the floor level of the church. It is therefore most likely that the structure represents a foundation raft for the church floor. Given the construction and materials of the raft (similar to font foundation 118 see below), the structure is likely to be of medieval date, although re-used for later floor surfaces.

2.2.3 Northern nave foundation raft 114

The southern foundation raft 110=109 was mirrored by a second similar structure to the north. This again consisted of a rectangular foundation cut 116, which was located immediately to the west of the westernmost column of the northern arcade separating the northern part of the nave from the northern aisle (Figure 3). Cut 116 was filled by a 1.40m by 0.40m rectangular structure, 114. The construction was similar to 110=109 and consisted of roughly dressed stone blocks measuring maximum of 0.4m by 0.32m by 0.09m, set in limestone mortar. Structure 114 butted the column and therefore must be of mid-13th century or later date.

Butting structure 114 to the north was a second foundation structure, 115. This measured 1.48m by 0.32m and was of similar build to 114. It is likely that 115 represents a partial rebuild or extension of 114.

As with structure 110=109, there was no evidence that structures 114 and 115 had ever extended above floor level. Again, the likeliest interpretation is that they represent foundations for the medieval church floor.

2.2.4 Font foundation raft 118 and associated features

Prior to the commencement of the archaeological works the church font, which dates to the 14th century, was removed from its original position at the western end of the nave for safe storage elsewhere in the church. The excavation groundworks subsequently revealed a sequence of features which relate directly to the font.

The earliest feature encountered was a 0.50m diameter sub-circular cut, **124**, which was located directly under the position of the font. Cut **124** truncated deposit *117=121* and had a vertical-sided, concave-based profile. It contained a carved c-shaped stone measuring 0.50m in diameter, *119*. The upper surface of the stone appeared to be chamfered and the stone itself was circa 0.08m thick. It appeared to have been re-used, as the open side of the stone had been deliberately closed by the addition of a second, rectangular stone, *126*. This measured 0.35m by 0.20m by 0.09m in size and had been affixed to stone *119* with blobs of limestone mortar.



Plate 2. Font soakaway structure 119 and 126 (foreground), facing west

Together features 124, 119 and 126 formed a soakaway for baptismal water draining from the font.

Features **124**, *119* and *126* were surmounted by a large rectangular structure, *118*. This measured 1.70m by 1.30m by 0.36m and consisted of two to three courses of mixed stone, flint and tile, bonded with a cream limestone mortar. The feature incorporated a 0.20m diameter void or pipe leading to the underlying soakaway formed by **124**, *119* and *126*.



Plate 3. Font foundation raft 118, facing west

There is no evidence that the font had ever been moved from its location prior to the commencement of the current works. Since the font is known to be of 14th century date, it follows that the underlying foundation raft and soakaway must date from that period at the latest.

2.2.5 Later layers and underfloor heating features

All the features described above were sealed by a sequence of made ground deposits. These included silty sand layer, 111, a similar overlying layer, 113=102, a layer incorporating quantities of dumped roof tiles, 106, and layers of sand containing rubble and limestone fragments 101=121 none of the layers were particularly noteworthy and all represented post-medieval and later levelling and bedding layers for the various church floors.



Plate 4. Layer 106, facing north-west

The latest layer in the sequence, a 0.14m deep deposit of silty sand, 103, was cut by a brick-built flue, 122, several sections of which were identified. Flue 122 ran from the northern wall of the church (where the exterior boiler house is situated) in a southerly undulating direction for a distance of circa 5m. A second 3m long section of the same flue was identified close to the southern wall of the church.

Flue 122 appeared to be of 19th century date and had been superceded by a second feature; a large brick-lined trench, 125, containing in-situ iron heating pipes. This feature represents the previously operational heating system which is being replaced by the current development. It ran across the church in a north-south direction. Whereas the southern end of this feature was capped by Victorian iron gratings (which formed part of the existing floor surface prior to the commencement of works) the northern end was capped by re-used Yorkstone flags, 123.



Plate 5. Flues 123 (left) and 122 (right) facing south

Finally, deposit 103 also formed the bedding layer for two 0.05m thick compact limestone mortar layers, 105 and 104. Both layers measured 4.60m by 2.80m and represented the foundations for the timber platform flooring in the northern and southern sides of the nave respectively.



Plate 6. Floor foundation 105, facing north-west



Plate 7. General view of area at formation level of excavation, facing north-west

3 Discussion

The archaeological monitoring confirmed that the sub-floor deposits in the western end of the church were mostly of modern date, representing disturbance and levelling works associated with the insertion of 19th century wooden and tile floors, heating systems and the later 20th century relaying of the Yorkstone flag flooring. Nevertheless, some features of archaeological interest survived within the excavation area.

The archaeological monitoring revealed one inhumation burial (**108**, *107*) which was encountered at a depth of 0.43m below the existing church floor level. The burial was isolated and it is possible that it pre-dates the present 13th century church. However ,this cannot be confirmed, as the burial was not excavated due to being situated below the formation level of the current development (0.28m below existing floor level).

Any future work within the church should expect to encounter further inhumation burials at around the same level (circa 0.40m below exiting floor level).

Several features of archaeological interest were encountered during the archaeological monitoring. The first of these was the foundation raft for the existing font (118), together with the font soakaway drain (124, 119, 126) that was situated immediately below the foundation. Leaving aside the possibilities that these structures were built for an earlier font, or that the present font has been moved from its original location at some point, then they clearly date at the latest to the installation of the present font in the 14th century.

Two further stone-built structures (110=109 and 114) were also recorded. These butted the standing columns of the southern and norther arcades respectively, and so post-date the mid-13th century construction of the arcades. Given their construction similarities with font raft 118, it is likely that these structures represent floor foundations which were constructed in the 14th century.

A final feature of interest was the brick-built heating flue 122. This feature pre-dated the more elaborate Victorian heating system (125, 123) and presumably dates to the addition of the boiler house to the northern side of the church.

4 Conclusion

The archaeological monitoring (Watching Brief) at, St Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop, was successful in that it identified archaeological features of several periods, with the potential to add to the overall understanding of the church and its historical development.

This report confirms that the full programme of mitigation works at St Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop, Nottinghamshire, as stipulated in the WSI, was accomplished.

5 Archive

All finds that were retained as part of the archive will be returned to the site for reburial. The physical and digital archive will also be returned to the diocese to be amalgamated into their archive. Details of the archive and finds can be seen in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 1: Archive Quantification

Archive component	Count
Context registers	1
Context sheets	26
Digital colour photographs	102
Drawing registers	1
Drawing permatrace sheets (A3)	5
Photographic registers	1

Table 2: Finds Quantification

Туре	No.	Wgt (g)
СВМ	3	990
Glass	1	1
Mortar	3	866
Pottery	3	46
Total	10	1903

6 Bibliography

6.1 Secondary Sources

Reference	Year	Title	Published
AAF	2007	Archaeological Archives: A Guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation	
CIfA	2007	Archaeological Archives: A Guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation	
CIfA	2014a	Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology	
CIfA	2014b	Standards and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials	
CIfA	2014c	Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation	
CIfA	2014d	Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives	
Ferguson L.M. & Murray D.M.	1997	Archaeological Documentary Archives: Preparation, Curation and Storage, Paper 1,	Institute of Field Archaeologists' Manchester
Historic England	1991	Exploring Our Past	London
Historic England	1997	English Heritage Archaeology Division Research Agenda (Unpublished draft)	London
Historic England	2009	Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment and MoRPHE Project Planning Note 3: Excavation	London
Historic England	2011	Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from sampling and recovery to post excavation (second edition) (Centre for Archaeology Guidelines)	London
John Samuels Archaeological Consultants	1999	A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Church of St Giles, Cropwell Bishop, Nottinghamshire	
McKinley, J.I. & Roberts, C.	1993	Excavation and Post-Excavation Treatment of Cremated and Inhumed Human Remains	Institute of Field Archaeologists Technical Paper 13
NAL	2014	St. Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop Drainage Improvements and Restoration Of Chancel Arch: Archaeological Monitoring	Network Archaeology
NAL	2016	St. Giles' Church, Cropwell Bishop Archaeological Monitoring: new Ringing Gallery and Kitchen Area, and associated works	Network Archaeology
Museums & Galleries Commission	1992	Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections	London
Network Archaeology	2006	Health, Safety and Welfare Policy	
Society of Museum Archaeologists	1995	Towards an accessible archaeological archive - the transfer of archaeological archives to museums: guidelines for use in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales	Society for Museum Archaeologists, London
UKIC	2001	Excavated Artefacts and Conservation	United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Conservation Guidelines No. 1, revised

Reference	Year	Title	Published
Walker, K.	1990	Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage.	United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, Archaeology Section (London)
Watkinson, D & Neal A. V	1998	First Aid for Finds	Rescue Publications, Hertford

6.2 Website Sources

Reference	Title	Link
ADS, undated	Digital Archives from Excavation and Fieldwork: Guide to Good Practice Second Edition	http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/excavation/
British Geological Survey, undated	Geology of Britain viewer	http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html
Cranfield University/NSSI, undated	Soilscapes Viewer	https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/
Heritage Gateway		http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results.aspx
Historic England	Church of St Giles, Official List Entry	https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1045650?section=official-list-entry
Medieval Graffiti	Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey	http://www.medhttp://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/index.html

7 Appendices

APPENDIX A

Summary context data

	Cont			Fill	Dimensions in metres			Spot-
Area	ext	Туре	Filled by	of	(Length, width, depth / thickness)	Description	Interpretation	date
South Aisle	100	Layer	n/a	n/a	8m x 10m x 0.05m thick	Rectangular dressed flagstones 1.3m x 0.66m x 0.05m	Modern York stone flag floor	n/a
South Aisle	101	Layer	n/a	n/a	8m x 10m x 0.07m thick	Limestone fragments within limestone mortar matrix	Bedding layer for floor 100	n/a
South Aisle	102	Layer	n/a	n/a	0.25m thick	Light brown silty sand with limestone inclusions	Made ground layer below 101	n/a
All areas	103	Layer	n/a	n/a	0.17m thick	Light grey-brown sandy silt with limestone inclusions	Made ground layer below 100, above 101	n/a
South nave /aisle	104	Layer	n/a	n/a	4.60m x 2.80m x 0.05m	Compact limestone mortar	Foundation raft for wooden floor	n/a
North nave /aisle	105	Layer	n/a	n/a	4.60m x 2.80m x 0.05m	Compact limestone mortar	Foundation raft for wooden floor	n/a
North aisle	106	Layer	n/a	n/a	4.10m x 2.0m	Broken tiles in silty mortar matrix	Foundation raft for floor in NW corner of church	n/a
South Aisle	107	Layer	n/a	108	2.50m x 0.70m	Red-brown sandy clay	Grave fill	n/a
South Aisle	108	Layer	108	n/a	2.50m x 0.70m	Sub-rectangular cut filled by 107, not excavated	Grave cut	n/a
South nave	109	Masonry	n/a	n/a	0.30m x 0.27m x 0.08m	Roughly dressed stone block, upper course of 110	Foundation raft for floor in nave	n/a
South nave	110	Masonry	n/a	112	1.45m x 0.90m x 0.09m	Roughly dressed stone blocks 0.67m x0.42.0.09m max in limestone mortar matrix	Foundation raft for floor in nave	n/a
South nave	111	Layer	n/a	n/a	1.45x 0.9m	Yellow-brown silty sand	Made ground layer	n/a
South nave	112	Cut	110	n/a	1.45x 0.9m	Rectangular vertical-sided cut	Foundation cut filled by 110	n/a
North aisle	113	Layer	n/a	n/a	4.10m x 2.0m	Orange-brown sandy silt with frequent limestone inclusions	Bedding layer for layer 106	n/a
North nave	114	Masonry	n/a	116	1.40m x 0.40m	Roughly dressed stone blocks 0.4m x0.32m x0.09m max in limestone mortar matrix	Foundation raft for floor in nave	n/a
North nave	115	Masonry	n/a	n/a	1.48m x 0.32m	Roughly dressed stone blocks 0.4m x0.32m x0.09m max in limestone mortar matrix	Fragment of wall/foundation raft butting 114	n/a
North Nave	116	Cut	114	n/a	0.52m x 1.40m x 0.40m	Sub-rectangular vertical sided cut	Foundation cut filled by 114	n/a
North nave	117	Layer	n/a	n/a	NFE	limestone mortar inc. limestone fragments, gravel surface	Surface cut by 116	n/a
Nave	118	Structure	n/a	n/a	1.70m x 1.30m x0.32m	Mixed courses of rough limestone blocks, flint and tile bonded with cream lime mortar	Foundation raft for14 th C font	n/a

Appendix A Summary context data

	Cont			Fill	Dimensions in metres			Spot-
Area	ext	Туре	Filled by	of	(Length, width, depth / thickness)	Description	Interpretation	date
Nave	119	Structure	n/a	124	0.50m x 0.50m	Worked c-shaped stone with closing rectangular stone mortared to open section	Sculptural stone repurposed as font soakaway	n/a
North Aisle	120	Deposit	n/a	n/a	1.0m+ x 1.80m x o.20m	Mid yellow-grey sandy mortar	Infill beneath wooden floor	n/a
Blue North Aisle	121	Layer	n/a	n/a	1.0m= x 1.80m+	Mid brown-orange sandy silt	Soil horizon at formation level, northern aisle	n/a
Nave/ north aisle	122	Structure	n/a	n/a	0	Un-mortared frogged red bricks 0.22m x 0.11m x0.09m	Brick-built heating flue	n/a
All	123	Structure	n/a	n/a		Brick built trench running north to south-across church; contains large iron pipe and is sealed by iron gratings forming existing church floor	Modern heating pipe trench	n/a
Nave	124	Cut	119	n/a	0.50m x 0.50m	Sub circular bowl-shaped cut	Soakaway cut filled by 119	n/a
All	125	Structure	n/a	n/a			Flagstone capping on northern end of 123	
Nave	126	Structure	n/a	n/a	0.35m x 0.20m x 0.09m			

APPENDIX B

Summary finds data and assessment

Context No.	Material Type	Object	Description	Provisional Date	No.	Wgt (g)
102	СВМ	Tile	Two fragments of flat roof tiles - different fabrics	Post-medieval	2	192
102	Glass	Uncertain	Thin, iridescent fragment	Uncertain	1	1
102	Pottery	Various	Black glazed ware. Brown glazed ware. Slipware (mocha ware) with blue dendritic decoration	Post-medieval	3	46
106	СВМ	Tile	Flat roof tile with pulled nib	Medieval - Post- medieval	1	798
110	Mortar	Lining	Lime mortar and plaster	Post-medieval	1	318
110	Mortar	Lining	Lime mortar and plaster	Post-medieval	1	278
114	Mortar	Lining	Lime mortar and plaster	Post-medieval	1	270

Assessment (Diana Fernades, NAL Finds Manager)

The artefacts recovered during the archaeological works comprised fragments of tile, glass, pottery, lime mortar and plaster. The finds have been sorted and processed and were primarily dated to the post-medieval period, with the exception of the shard of glass and tile. These were recovered from layers beneath the flooring and were associated with the nave wall masonry. No further work is deemed necessary and the finds will therefore be returned to the diocese.

APPENDIX C

Figures



