

Old St Oswald's Church, Fulford

Archaeology Report – Cutting I

SECOND

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St Oswald's Old Church, Fulford

CUTTING I (fig 000)

(levels approximate; not linked to exterior in 1980)

This cutting was excavated in late June-early July 1980 for the York Archaeological Trust, directed by David Brinklow. It was 2m square, in the interior of the church, within the angle of the NW corner of the nave, in advance of drainage installation work. The area had, however, already been disturbed by the builders earlier in 1980; they had removed the modern wooden floor and an underlying stone floor, and cut a trench in the southern part.

The natural undisturbed sand and clay deposits were not encountered in this cutting. The lowest stratum (108) was sand with some mortar and charcoal flecks. Clearly the natural had been cut into, or truncated, possibly by earlier burial.

The next activity was represented by a substantial foundation (107) of medium to large cobbles, closely packed in mortary sand; in these cobbles were fragments of waterworn Roman tile. This foundation extended westwards under the nave west wall. It might, on this evidence, be interpreted as the foundation for this wall, but excavation outside the church, to be discussed below (p. 000), suggests that the cobbles are earlier. As seen in the section illustrated (fig. 000), the eastern side of the cobbles foundation is clearly defined, in its construction trench, cutting 108. There were, however, looser cobbles extending eastwards from the main mass, suggesting extensive disturbance. The compact part of 107 extends further south from the church nave west

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wall, following the line of the tower/nave wall, continuing through the arch into the tower.

The next context was a layer of clay and mortar fragments (106)¹

which could have been contemporary with the use of the cobble foundation 107, or later. Its surface was compact, as a 'skin' of pale grey/white mortar, presumably a floor level (106A).

There follows a layer of burnt clay and charcoal (104) capped in one part by charcoal (104A). This is interpreted as a destruction level of a structure associated with the floor 106A, possibly including timber and clay constructions.

These layers were cut by the construction trenches (101) (of the present church walls) to the west and north; it also continued south through the tower arch. In the section this trench evidently cut away part of the cobble foundation. The construction trench here may have been dug down into the cobbles to determine its suitability to be re-used as a foundation. The fill of 101 (101A) was loose pale yellow mortar and sand; in this were two large blocks of limestone (see plan 1, fig 000), one of which was plastered on its exterior face, indicating re-use of earlier masonry for the present wall. 103 (mortary trample) is probably associated with this building activity (cf Cuttings II and III below).

Probably later than these building activities was a posthole (102) in a slight depression (plan 1, fig 000).

I. Duncan Hawkins, who wrote a draft of this part of the archaeology in 1984, mentions C13-C14 sherds beneath 106; but these are not mentioned in Brinklow's notes made in 1980.

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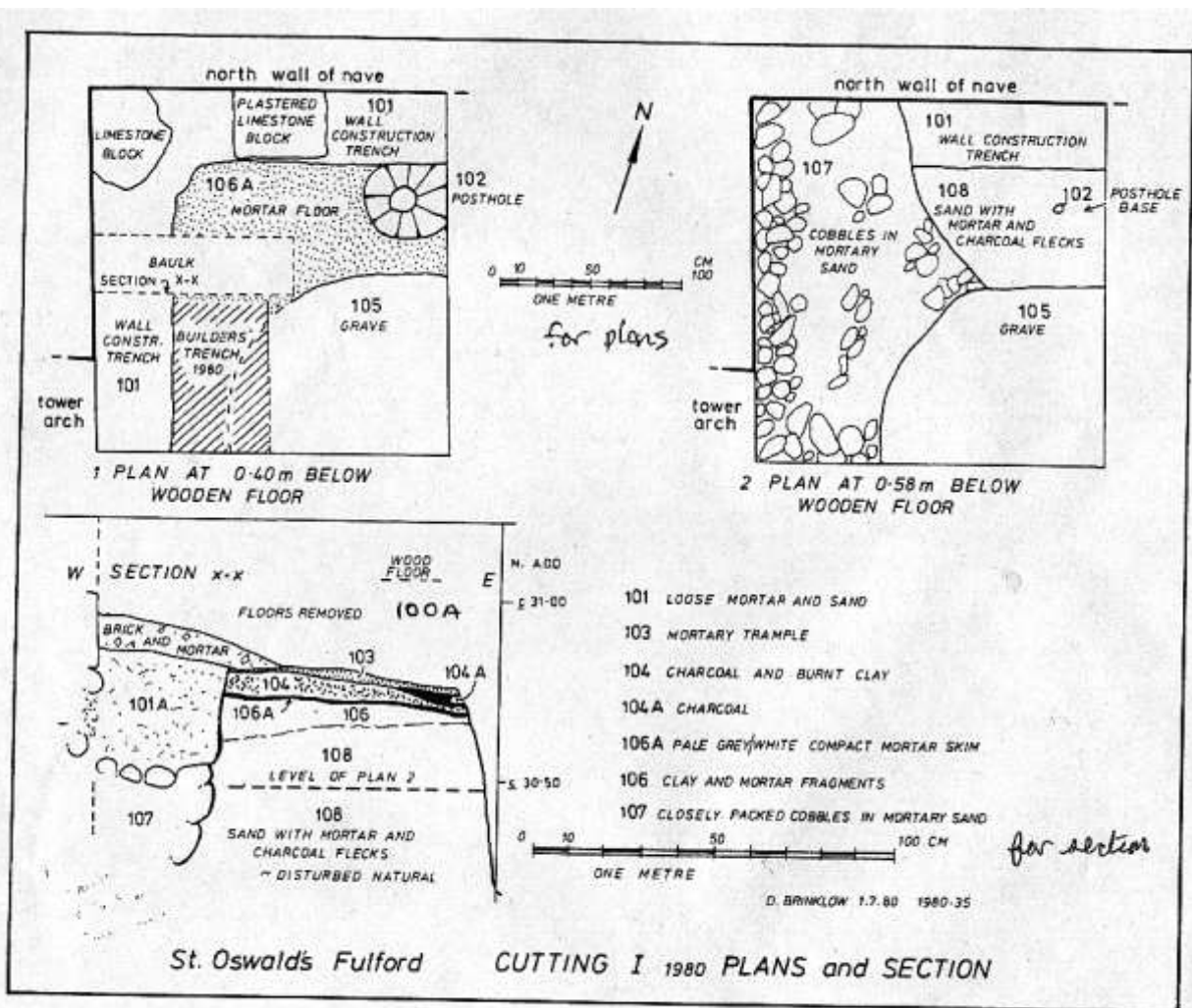
larger } The NW corner of a grave (105) was defined at a high level, cutting all neighbouring contexts; part of a skeleton was encountered at the level of the stone floor.² In the fill were pieces of medieval or later tile.

The final context was a dump of brick and mortar (see section), presumably of relatively recent date.

The data from Cutting I will be discussed below (p 000), when the other cuttings have been described.

The only finds recorded in Cutting I, apart from the Roman tile in 107, and the sherds mentioned in footnote 1, were three pieces of window glass, but at present it is not clear which context they come from. There is, however, a report of 1980 on this glass from David O'Connor (see ch 000).

2. The bone was not lifted (see letter from Brinklow to Hawkins, 1984).



St Oswald's Fulford

CUTTING I (internally)

Context Details (D Brinklow, edited by DW)

- 100A Wooden floor of pre-1980 church nave
- 100B Stone floor below 100A
- 101 Construction trench, alongside the inside face of the north part of the west wall of the nave, and along the inside face of the west part of the north wall of the nave
- 101A Fill of 101; loose pale yellow mortar and sand, and two large limestone blocks, one plastered on one side
- 102 Posthole; as first defined (plan 1), it was c10 cm in diameter, tapering down for c30 cm (plan 2), 1m below
- 102A *Fill of 102, not recorded*
- 103 *Building debris; pale yellow mortar and sand trample; cut by 101 and 102*
- 104 *Burnt clay and charcoal*
- 104A *Charcoal*
- 105 *Grave in SE corner of cutting*
- 105A *Fill of 105; medieval or post-medieval tile, human bone (not lifted) in matrix of loose fine sandy silt*

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not itale

- 106 *Clay and mortar; base layer of floor*
- 106A *Pale grey/white compact mortar skin; rendering of floor 106*
- 107 *Cobbled closely packed in mortary sand; foundation; water-worn fragments of Roman tile; extended along west wall and E wall of tower, continuing through tower arch, perhaps turning east or partially collapsed; some looser cobbles to east*
- 108 *Sand with mortar and charcoal flecks; two sherds of 13th-14th century; disturbed natural; pottery intrusive?*