

Old St Oswald's Church, Fulford

Archaeology Report – Cutting V

- 1 -

STO.5

St Oswald's, Fulford

CUTTING V (1987)

Introduction

This cutting (4.24 x 2.98m) was done by students of the Department of Archaeology of the University of York, by private arrangement with the owner, Roy Grant. This was after the retirement of PAR in July 1986, and was not supervised by any member of staff. This was the first dig done by the students, presumably the Archaeological Society of the department. The work was directed and recorded by Julie Lockyer. She made the drawings in a finished state, which she used for her 1988 Portfolio, for assessment. She was assisted principally by Ian -, David Fell, and Peter Bushell. The last seems to have been responsible for the finds; most of these, notably the human bones, disappeared in the chaos surrounding his incarceration for misdemeanour.

Method

A preliminary start was made in October 1986, but most of the work was done during the Easter vacation of 1987. The excavation was done with considerable care; numbers were given for all contexts: layers, cuts and skeletons. Seven plans (plans 1-7) were made as the excavation area was lowered in stages, with numerous levels being done at key locations (not on plans, but in archive); and a section was drawn of that part of the eastern face of the cutting, between the SW corner of the tower and the 1980 paved path (fig 000).

The avowed research aim was to test the hypothesis that PAR and LW had set up in 1981, after the excavations of 1980-81 (Cuttings I-III)

that

X (and expanded by Duncan Hawkins in 1984 in Cutting IV): ~~the~~ the linear W-E cobble foundation, extending from the nave and tower to the west, was that of the north wall of part of a church which was demolished before the present structure was built. The students hoped to find evidence for a complementary wall foundation on the south side, and in this they were successful, though not so positively so as they had hoped.

Results

Plans 2 and 3 display a spread of cobbles in the expected area; but the area had suffered extensive disturbance from grave-digging up to the 19th century; in contrast to the comparable area on the north side (Cutting IIc), where no graves were noted. The south side of churches attracted more burial than the north.

In spite of this, however, in the lower part of the excavation an area of more substantial cobble and gravel foundation was defined; the south side of this (580) was a well-defined edge, which gives a limit to the foundation of the postulated structure, and allowing its north-south dimension to be given within a small margin of error (see general discussion later).

The excavation was not completed to natural in 1987, so the depth of the cobble foundation was not determined, but it is likely to have been similar to that on the north side. Its width was at least 83cm, between the edge 580 and the graves to the north; this minimum dimension may be the original, ?grave 592 being possibly dug alongside the foundation, rather than cutting into it.

The extent of grave-digging is shown in plans 1-7, and the details of particular graves, their skeletons, coffins, and fittings are in the

appended context detail. No bones survive, so no biological report can be made.

St Oswald's, Pulford

CUTTING V Context details

(from Julie Lockyer's site notebook)

- 501 Turf
- 502 Topsoil, with some flints, medieval sherds and modern finds and some builders' material; partly grave upcast
- 503 Sand laid with path to south
- 504 Brown sandy with building rubble and plaster
- 505 Silty grey/black soil; modern sherd
- 506 Brown sandy; with clay patches, cobbles and disturbed human bones
- 507 Dark brown silt, chalk and pebbles, lightweight slag, flint nodules
- 508 Dark brown soil, bone, tile

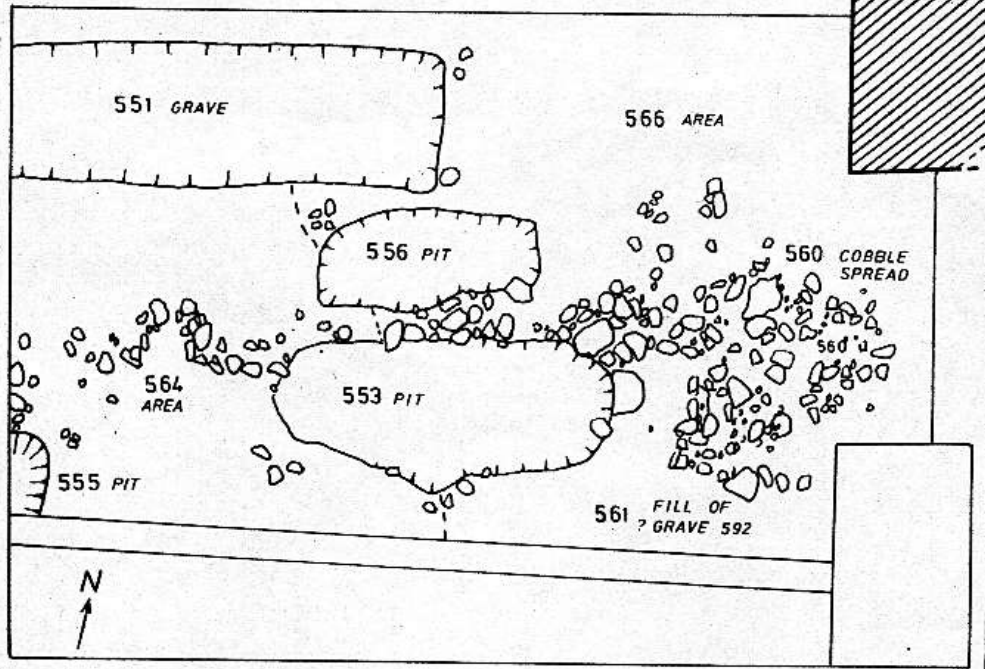
- 550 Clayey light brown sandy, fill of 551; some cobbles
- 551 Grave cut, with skeleton 559 in coffin
- 552 Light brown sandy, some cobbles; fill of pit 553
- 553 Pit, fill 552
- 554 Dark grey sandy clay loam, fill of linear cut 555
- 555 Linear cut
- 556 Pit, fill 557
- 557 Light brown sandy clay loam, fill of pit 556
- 558 Mid brown clay loam; MOR, tile, charcoal
- 559 Skeleton; in coffin (a grey stain); gilded iron handles; decorated plates on lid, black enamel paint, with red painted letters; name mainly

- illegible, but ended in -SON; date of death
?August 1850, aged 72 years; supine, W-E.
PAR note: this skeleton does not figure on
any of plans or photographs; possibly no
time to record it, or lift it
- 560 Spread of cobbles, up to 15cm diameter, c10-15cm
deep; with a matrix of brown sandy; cut by 592
- 561 Brown sandy clay loam, charcoal and MOR flecks, and human bone;
in cut 592 (?grave)
- 562 Ditto, lower in fill
- 563 Cobbles, bedded into 562, but below 560
- 564 Brown sandy loam, cobbles, MOR, tile
- 565 Skeleton, W-E, supine; wrist and R hand bones
above pelvis; LH hand bones below pelvis, with
complete L arm; both legs intact; possibly feet truncated by
medieval tower construction trench; cut by pit 563
- 566 Brown sandy, charcoal, MOR, limestone, gravel
- 567 Similar to 566, cut by grave 594
- 568 Similar, in linear cut 592 (?grave)
- 569 Similar, fill of grave 571
- 570 Skeleton, immature, W-E, supine; ?iron-faced wooden
coffin, metal plate formerly on lid; illegible
lettering; lid formerly secured with domed metal
nails, penetrating linear scalloped edged metal
ribbon
- 571 Grave cut, with skeleton 570
- 572 Brown sandy clayey; some human bones

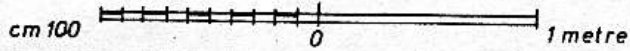
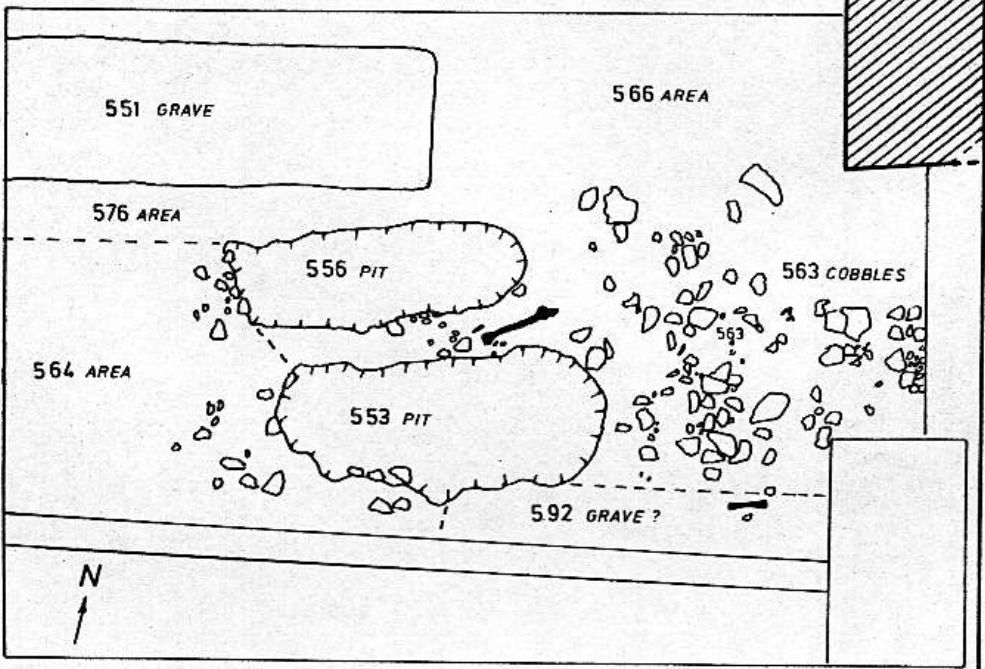
- 573 Ditto, above grave cut 584
- 574 Reddish-brown clayey soil, some cobbles
- 575 Disturbed cobbling, interspersed with some red-grey sandy clay loam, + skeleton frs
- 576 Brown sandy clay, some loose gravel
- 577 Compact block of gravel 1-4cm, mixed with grey-brown clayey sand
- 578 Ditto, above 580
- 579 Ditto, up to 7cm, above 280
of cobble foundation
- 580 Linear edge, W-E, defining the boundary between (on plan 4) 566 and 577; and (on plan 5) a more positive division between 574 and 575, 577, 578
- 581 Skeleton, W-E supine, below 575 (disturbed cobbling); in grave cut 589; below 575
- 582 Skeleton, W-E, supine, in grave cut 593; cut by grave cut 571
- 583 Skeleton, W-E, supine; legs and feet from knees down, upper part truncated by later grave cut 584; some of bones of 583 in 584 fill; in grave cut 588
- 584 Grave cut, fill 573 and skeleton 585
- 585 Skeleton, immature, W-E; in coffin with handles (see plan 7)
- 586 Mid grey-brown sandy clay; above coffin 587
- 587 Coffin, below 586 (no further details)
- 588 Grave cut with skeleton 583

- 589 Grave cut with skeleton 581; above grave 591
- 590 Skeleton, W-E, supine, immature; below 589,
in 591
- 591 Grave cut, with skeleton 590, below 589
- 592 Linear cut, W-E; fills 561, 562, 568, 572;
probably grave; possibly robbed; some bones
recorded in fill, no skeleton noted, possibly
not reached
- 593 Grave cut, with skeleton 582; cut into 595
- 594 Grave cut, with skeleton 565, cut 553
- 595 Disturbed cobbles up to 15cm, in a matrix
of brown sandy clay loam

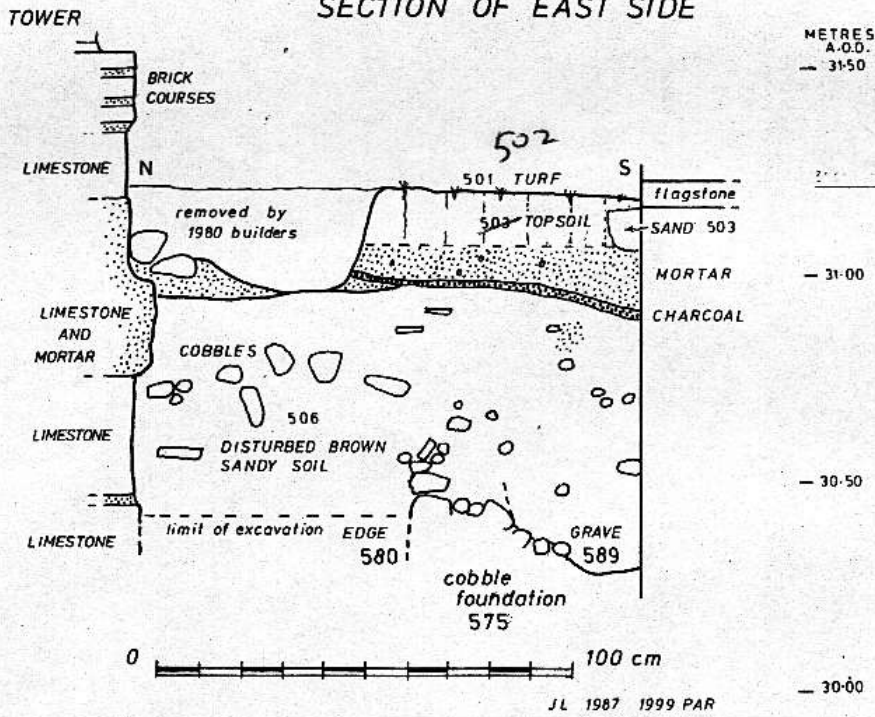
PLAN 2



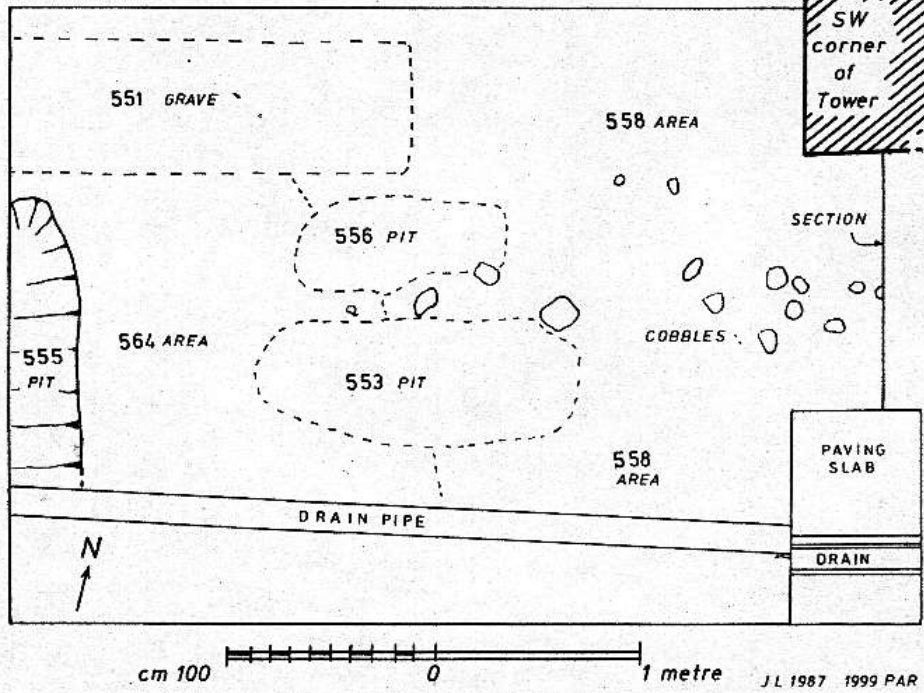
PLAN 3



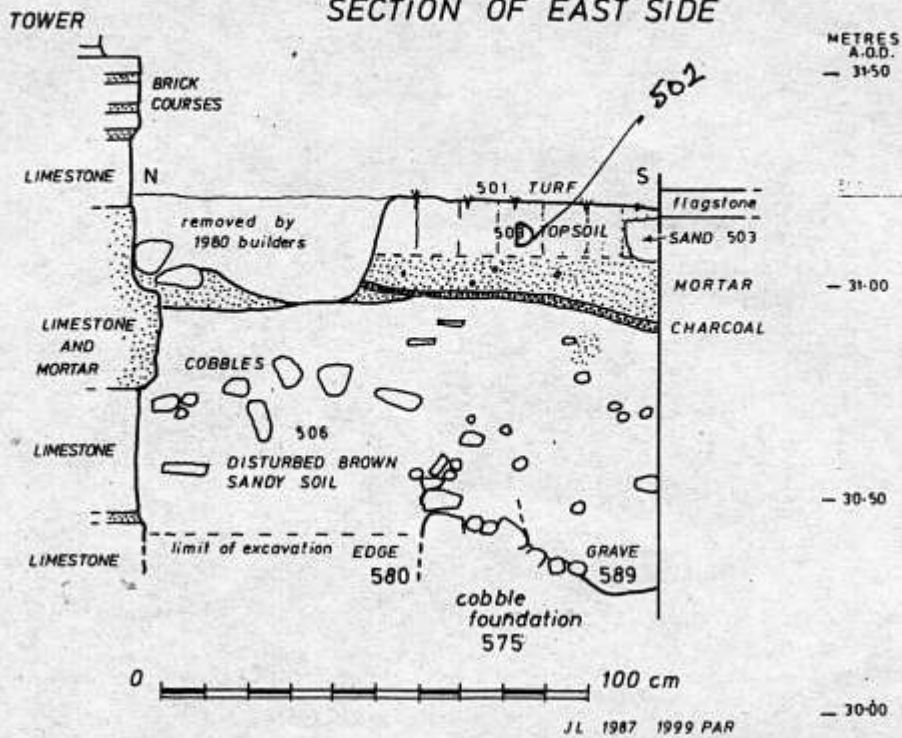
SECTION OF EAST SIDE



PLAN 1



SECTION OF EAST SIDE



PLAN 1

