

Church Archaeology

Archaeological Assessment and Recording

Parish Church

English Parish churches have often been located at the core of the village or town in which they are located for over 1000 years. The material from which the building is made, the artworks it contains, the documentary sources which refer to it; all are of great interest. The churchyards surrounding such churches contain the remains of parishioners buried over many centuries. Many such buildings are Listed and the ground beneath others may be scheduled as a monument. We fully understand the special value of such buildings and the ground within close proximity of them.

Types of Projects

We have worked on a variety of other kinds of Church and Chapel. Some in use and some being converted for other use. Others abandoned as ruins long ago. In all cases compliance with Planning Conditions and/or Faculty has been paramount. The communication skills needed to work with teams on these special sites have been well developed by these projects. These projects present a wonderful opportunity to harness the creative problem-solving skills of different team members. Specifically, the knowledge of structural engineers is vital. These individuals can design safe ways of enabling building works to be delivered whilst preserving the most important remains which such buildings tend to have within, below and close to them. Specifically, human burials and archaeological remains of earlier Churches (or pre-church) buildings.

Joe managed the mitigation stage of archaeological works at St Peters Church, Petersham. He was an integral part of the team on this project. He contributed ideas to all of the following areas; in each case bringing experience from other projects and ensuring that relevant Policy and Guidance was taken into consideration as decisions were made:

- Budget and Timescale, access arrangements, respect for site users and neighbors
- Compliance with Faculty – via the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor
- Compliance with Planning Conditions - Historic England and the Local planning authority
- Working with the Architect to understand the proposals
- Changes to design in order to preserve archaeological remains - Structural Engineer

Who often uses this service?

Ministry of a specific Church

Ecclesiastical authorities

Architects working with a Church

Why use this Service?

To fulfil a requirement of a Faculty

Recognise the level of destruction/preservation on a site and explain this to the client

To inform design, especially in terms of understanding the spatial distribution of archaeological remains

Relevant Project Examples

St Peters Church, Petersham
St Mary Magdalene Church, Richmond
Church of St Pauls, Bedford
Church of St Mary Northchurch, Hertfordshire
St Nicholas Church, Stevenage
Church of St Peter, Dunstable

Professional Standards and Guidance

Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England. 2nd Edition. 2017. Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England.

Church Building Works with Archaeological Implications. 2021.
<https://www.churchofengland.org/resources/churchcare/advice-and-guidance-church-buildings/archaeology>

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- Archaeological considerations with respect to design (impact) -
- Compliant approach – building contractor
- Keeping to scope, budget and timescale – archaeological contractor and exhumation contractor

Can we help?

If you would like to talk over a site or any of the topics mentioned above, please give us a call or send an email. We are happy to help out with some preliminary observations on archaeology and heritage.

Find out More:

<https://www.abramsarchaeology.co.uk/>

<https://www.abramsarchaeology.co.uk/blog-commercial-archaeology>

Who often uses this service?

Commercial and Residential Property Developers

Homeowners wanting to extend their home

Ecclesiastical authorities

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