

**Notes on a negative watching brief for a wall support
foundation in the churchyard at St Martin's,
West Stockwell Street, Colchester,**

October 2011



**report prepared by Stephen Benfield
on behalf of G. R Building Services**

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A small, shallow trench was hand excavated by the building contractors against the south boundary wall of the churchyard of St Martin's, West Stockwell Street, Colchester. The entire excavation was monitored by an archaeologist from the Colchester Archaeological Trust (CAT). A paper and photographic record of the excavation was made. The trench was dug to accommodate a concrete foundation for the construction of a brick pier wall support. This is part of other repair work to the wall (including the insertion of new bricks) as it is bowed and leaning into the churchyard. The excavated trench was rectangular, extending 1100 mm from the wall, 900 mm in width and 400 mm deep. The west edge was located at 18.70 m from the road frontage on West Stockwell Street.

Almost the entire depth of the excavation took place within dark topsoil and nothing of archaeological significance was encountered. Non-organic finds observed consisted of post-medieval and modern pottery sherds, clay pipe bowls and stems and some ceramic building material – mostly pieces of peg-tiles. Small quantities of animal and human bone were encountered and recovered. A small concentration of bone, much clearly human, was located in the north east corner of the trench toward the base. This was rapidly cleaned and closely examined *in situ* but proved to be redeposited disarticulated and broken bone. All of the bone encountered was kept aside for reburial by the building contractors, either within the soil covering the foundation or beneath it.

It can be noted that a metal service pipe and a communications cable were located in the trench, both between 100-150 mm of the surface. The service pipe crossed the area of the trench east to west approximately across the middle, with the cable running in the same direction close to the north edge of the trench.