

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
AT SHREWSBURY CHURCH, 2021-2022**

**Interim Report 1 - 5 April 2022
Interim Report 2 – 31 August 2022**

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210 S. Cross Street





5 April 2022

Mr. Rob Busler
Shrewsbury Parish Church
12824 Shrewsbury Church Rd.
P.O. Box 187
Kennedyville, MD 21645

Re: Interim Letter Report - Investigations of Foundation Remains on Church Grounds

Dear Mr. Busler:

This letter serves as an interim report on our archaeological investigations of apparent foundation remains on church grounds. This work was carried out pursuant to a proposal dated February 10, 2021. Pandemic constraints delayed various phases of the work, but the bulk of the fieldwork was carried out on September 24 -25, 2021, with laboratory processing of artifacts and analysis at various date through the rest of the fall and winter of 2021. The work was carried out by a team from the Past Is Present Archaeology Lab of Washington College.

Background

When first observed by the archaeological team, the foundation in question (Figure 1, next page) appeared to be comprised of fragmented brick (hand-made) and both native and non-native stone (some of the latter possibly being ship's ballast). It ran in a roughly east-west line in the southwest corner of the cemetery. The materials seemed to only be visible seasonally, from the surface, but clearly were mortared together. The visible portions of the feature's width measured approximately 0.6 - 1.1ft (18.3 - 33.5 cm), and it extended for at least 7.5 ft (2.29 m) before disappearing underground to the east and being disrupted by a cedar tree in the west. There was evidence of possibly related stone on the far side of the tree, potentially extending the feature's total length.

As it was apparent that more of the feature was buried and the function was unknown, archaeological excavations were determined upon as a means of further investigation. Possible explanations for the feature that were suggested prior to investigation included:

- part of an earlier church foundation;
- a portion of a retaining wall or an earlier vault (although no records show a grave at this location); or
- a wall outlining a family grave parcel.



Figure 1: Brick and stone feature as seen on February 8, 2021 looking south
(scale is 4 ft in length)

This Investigation

The fieldwork in this phase of the project began with photography of the feature from multiple angles, along with preparation of a scaled plan view of elements visible from the surface. A grid was established across this portion of the church yard, starting from an arbitrary point well to the southwest and off the property. This grid extends to the north and east of its theoretical starting point, allowing the precise location of various features to be referenced via grid coordinates. These coordinates are expressed as distances north and east from the origin. A rectangular excavation unit, Unit 1, was placed across the feature, measuring 5.00 ft (1.52 m) north-south by 2.50 ft (0.76 m) east-west. The southwest corner of the excavation was placed at grid point North 200 / East 300 (N200/E300 in field notes). The west side of the excavation unit was located 5.00 ft east of a large cedar tree. The location of Excavation Unit 1 is shown in Figure 2.

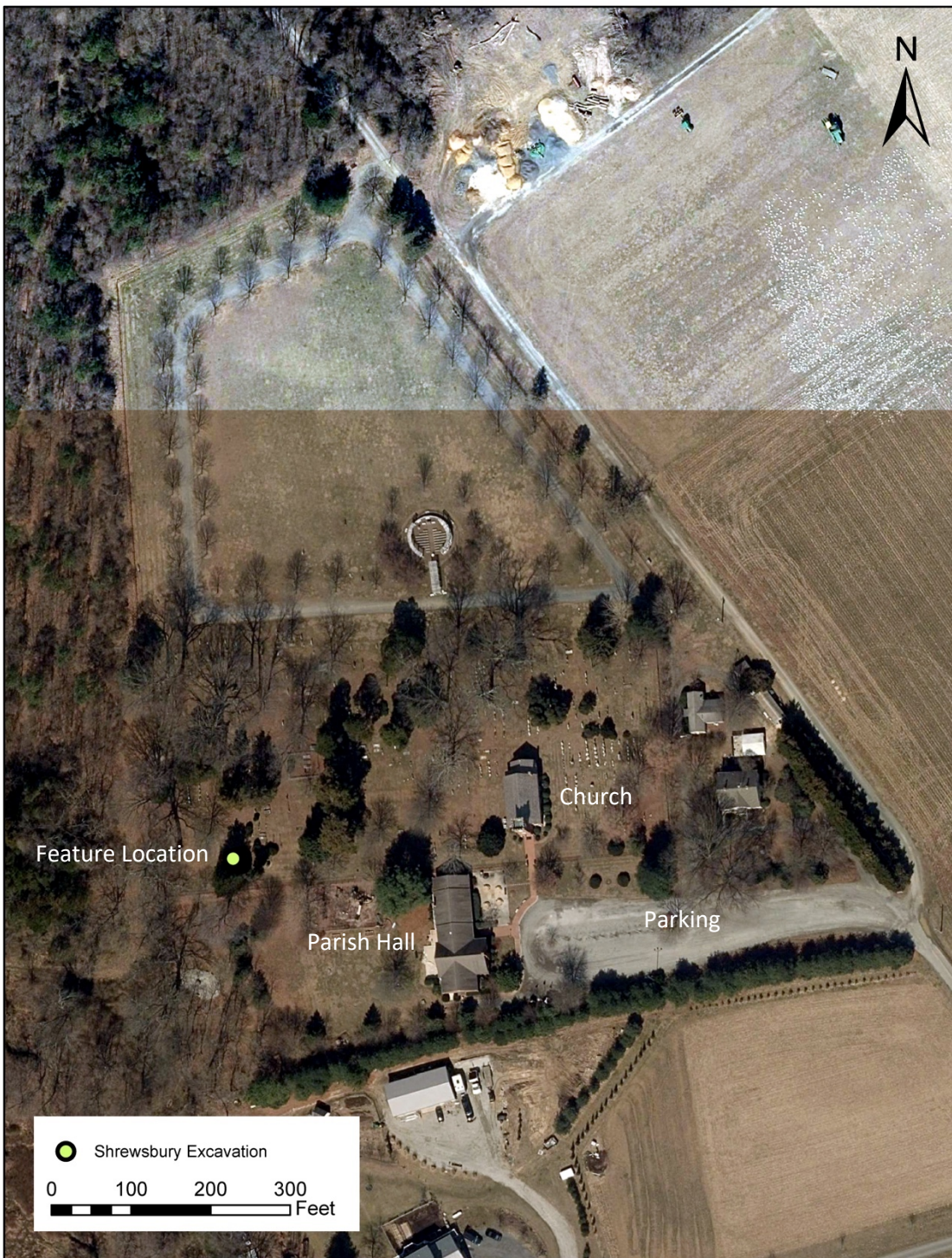


Figure 2: Location of Excavation Unit 1 (shown in green)

The original field drawing showing the feature in plan (from above) is shown as Figure 3.

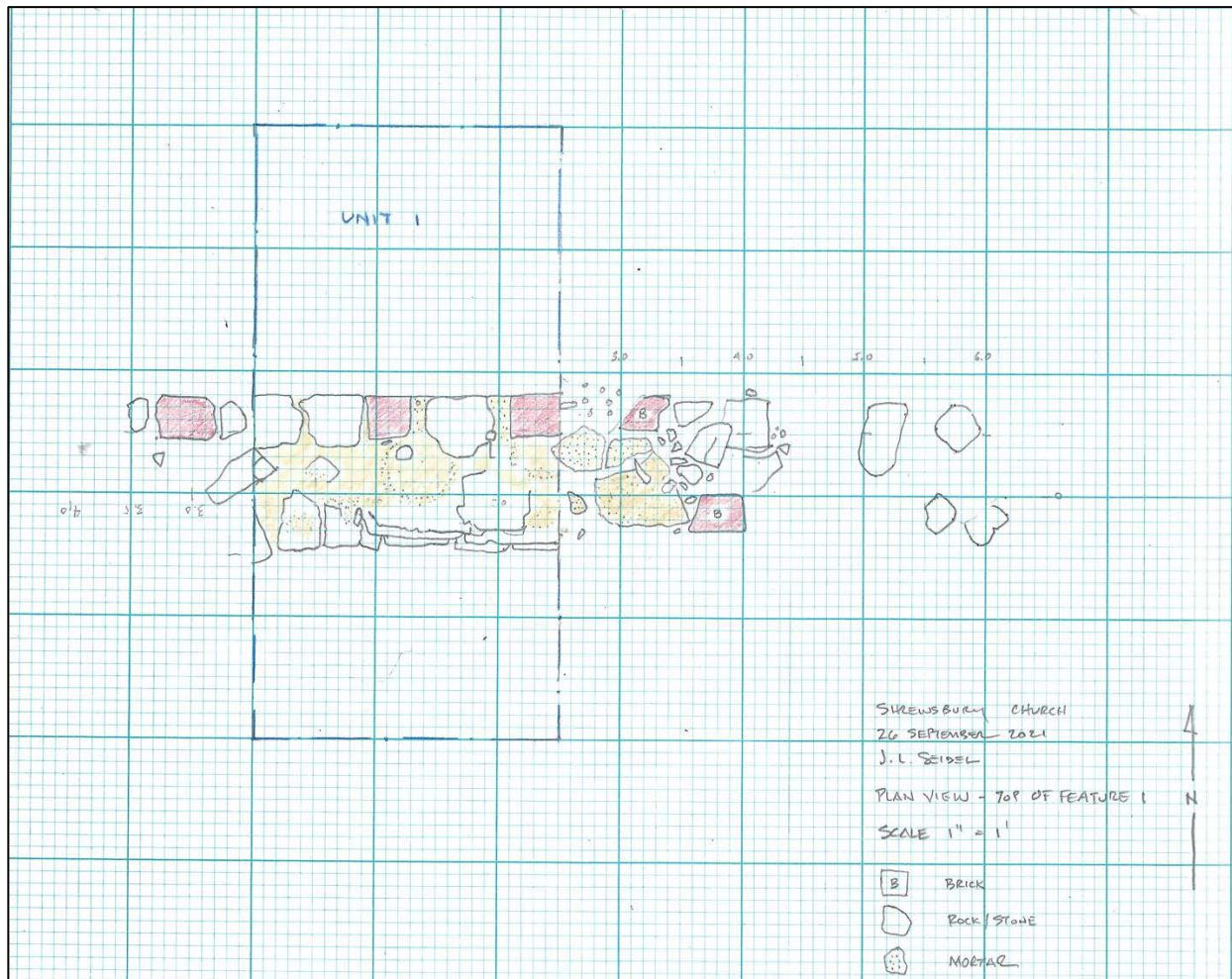


Figure 3: Unit 1 in plan view – field drawing (bricks depicted in red; mortar in yellow)

The general surroundings of the unit are shown in Figure 4, and the intent behind Unit 1 was to excavate across the feature, examining soils or strata abutting the wall and revealing a cross-section of the feature and associated deposits. This would allow a determination of how the feature was constructed and an assessment of its true size and depth. Depth and width are critical variables in assessing the likelihood that this is a building foundation related to an earlier church, as opposed a retaining wall or parcel delineator. In addition, there was the potential of encountering a builder's trench excavated for the placement of the subsurface portions of the foundation. This kind of archaeological feature and associated artifacts often can yield clues as to the age of a wall or structure.

The corners of the excavation were located and mapped via real-time kinematic GPS (RTK GPS) in the Geographic Information System (GIS) already constructed for the church.



Figure 4: Excavation area looking west; screening area to the left.

Excavation of Unit 1 was done on September 24-25, 2021 using standard archaeological methods, digging stratigraphically by hand, with trowels and small tools. The layout of the unit is shown in Figure 5. Artifacts recovered were segregated by stratum, with provenience information recorded for all finds. Excavated soil was screened through mesh measuring a maximum of $\frac{1}{4}$ inch. All features and deposits were recorded using photography and scaled drawings, including plan views and section drawings of the excavation walls. Daily notes and standardized record forms were used to record all relevant evidence and information.

Dr. John L. Seidel and Elizabeth A. Seidel, both from Washington College's Past Is Present Archaeology Lab, were present for the entire excavation, assisted by volunteers Michelle Henry, a student at Washington College, and Shannon Forester, a descendant of early church members.



Figure 5: Excavation Unit 1 before excavation; looking north.

Excavation Results

The initial step in excavation was to peel back the topsoil, revealing more clearly the top of the rock and brick feature, designated Feature 1, and the soils on either side of Feature 1. The upper level of soil on either side of the feature was designated Level 1, ranging from 0.05-0.10 ft (1.5-3 cm) in depth. The unit is shown with Level 1 being removed in Figures 6-7.



Figure 6: Excavation Unit 1 with Level 1 being removed; looking north.



Figure 7: Unit 1 with Level 1 being removed; looking west.

The following discussion of excavation results will consider the deposits to the north of the wall feature (Feature 1) first, followed by the deposits to the south.

The soil to the north of Feature 1 was Level 2, a very dark grayish brown sandy loam (Munsell 10YR3/2). It extended throughout the entirety of the northern half of Unit 1. Artifacts retrieved included brick and mortar fragments, 2 hand-wrought iron nails, a fragment of iron rod, some curved glass, and pearlware. Photos of a sample of the materials recovered from Level 2 are depicted in Figure 8.

Wrought nails typically date to before 1800, although they continued to be used in limited quantities into the early 19th C. Pearlware, as developed by Josiah Wedgwood, was introduced in 1779, although earlier variants were developed by other potters at least as early as 1775. The ware was common in North America until around 1820. The presence of pearlware and wrought nails seems to indicate late 18th or early 19th C. activity.



Figure 8: Artifacts from Level 2; iron rod at top; from left to right – mortar, curved glass, pearlware sherd, wrought nail.

Below Level 2 in the north half of the unit, two different deposits were discerned (Figures 9-10). Up against the wall (Feature 1) was a dark grayish brown silty loam (10YR4/2) full of mortar rubble, brick fragments, and gravel. Abutting it in the north was a very dark grayish brown sandy loam (10YR3/2) – this layer was somewhat more compact and contained none of the gravel seen to the south. This northern level was designated as Level 4. The gravelly deposit between Level 2 and the wall Feature 1 seemed most likely to be a builder's trench excavated for the installation of the wall. It therefore was designated as Feature 2, Level A.

If this identification and interpretation is correct, then this new feature would have been excavated into the surrounding soils, i.e., Level 2. In other words, Feature 2 Level A would be more recent and stratigraphically above Level 4, so it had to be excavated first. The scaled field drawing in Figure 4 shows the relative positions of Level 4 and Feature 2 Level A, as seen from above.

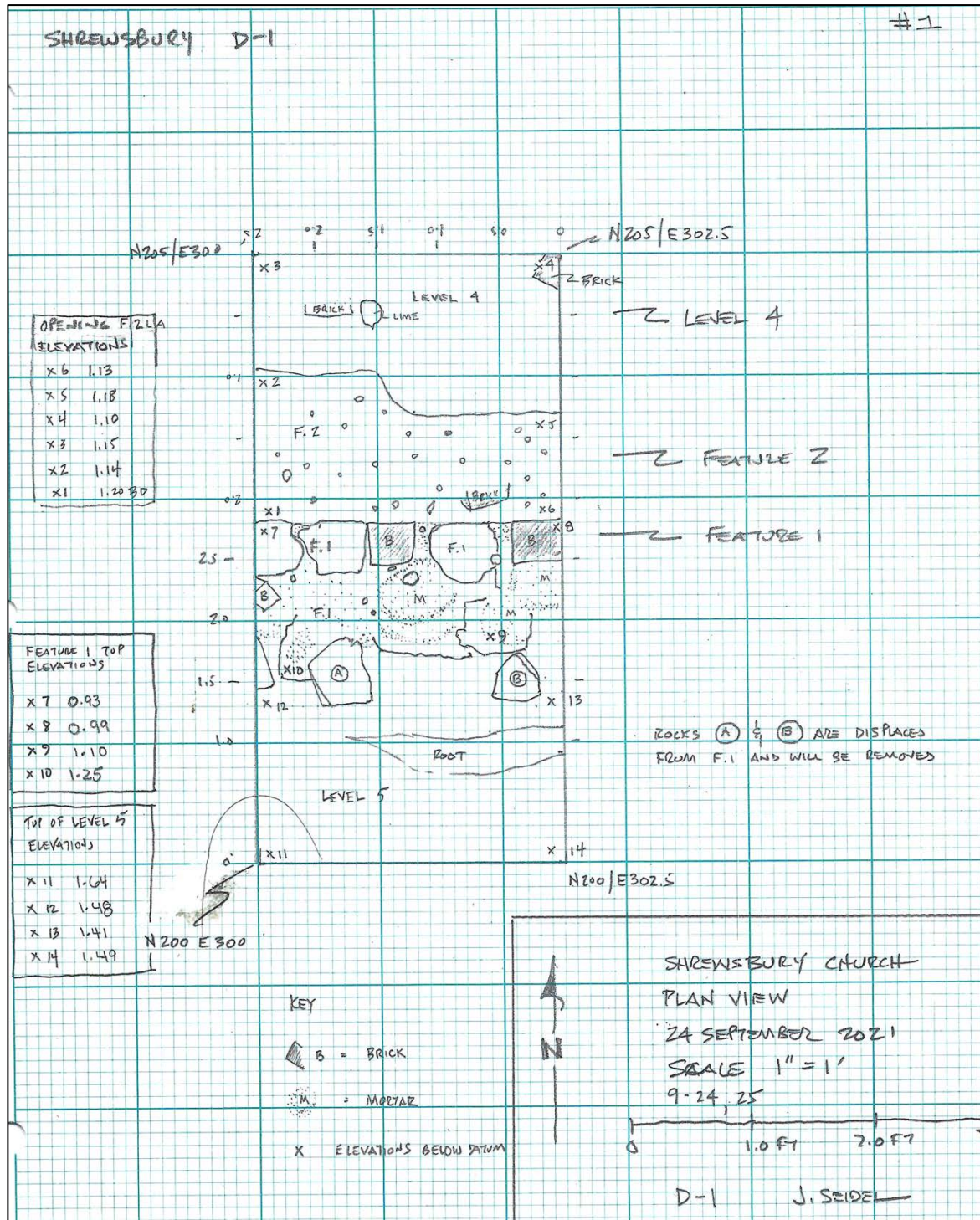


Figure 9: Plan view of Unit 1 in early stages of excavation, with Level 4 and Feature 2 exposed in the north (upper) half of the unit.



Figure 10: Photo showing the north half of Unit 1, with Level 4 and Feature 2 exposed in the north half of the unit; looking south (note level and feature numbers in the photo).

As Level A of Feature 2 was excavated, it became clear that this interpretation of the deposit as a builder's trench was correct. The soil was full of loose gravel, and its interface with Level 4 to the north gradually moved south, toward the wall – this was a clear indication that Feature 2 originally was dug into Level 4. This relationship is better seen in Figure 11, which is a cross-section across the entire excavation unit. Focusing on the right side of this drawing, which is the northern half of the unit, the builder's trench, Feature 2 (F. 2), can be seen in cross-section. Level A (L. A. in the drawing) was just the top deposit within this builder's trench, as it was underlain by a much more extensive and deeper deposit, Level B. It is helpful to think of the diagonal separation between the two levels of Feature 2 and Levels 4 and 7 to the north as the demarcation of a shovel-dug trench that was excavated so that the foundation for a wall could be installed below grade.

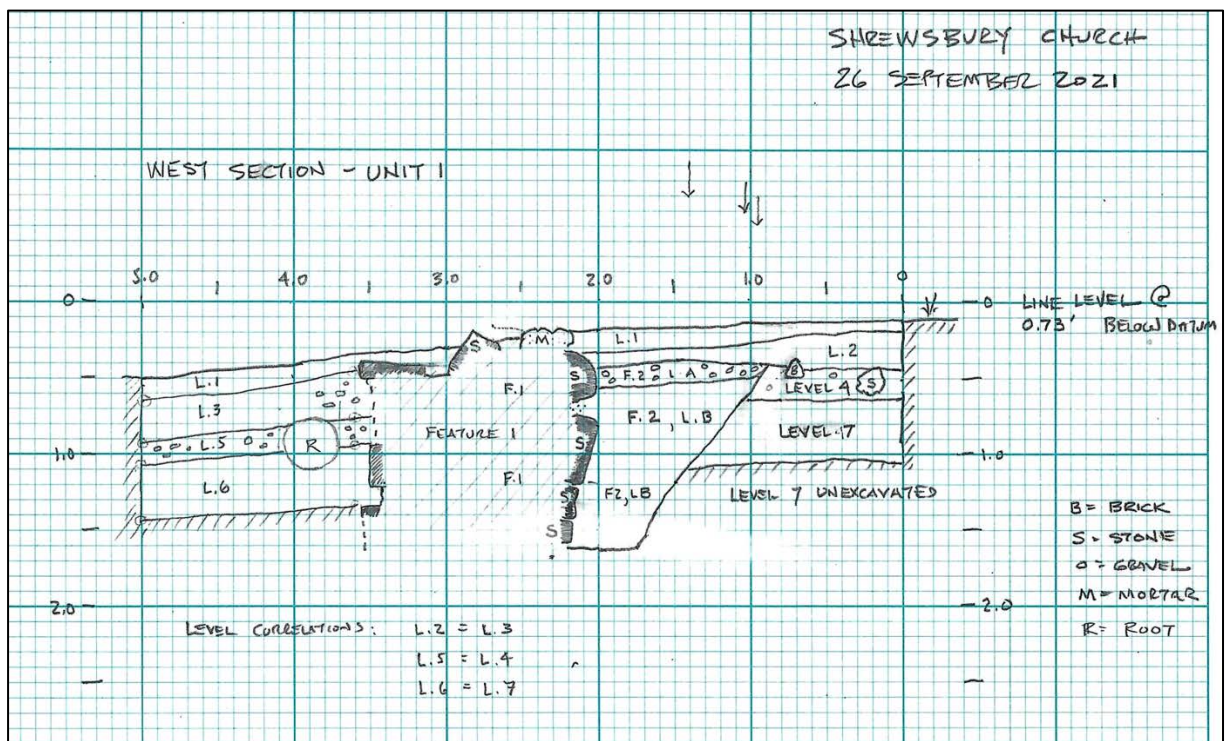


Figure 11: Cross-section through Unit 1, looking west

The uppermost deposit in the builder's trench (shown as F. 2, L. A. in Figure 11) was relatively thin and underlain by a brown silty loam (10YR3/2). Level A had wrought nail in it, while the lower Level B held three identifiable artifacts: a piece of kaolin pipe stem, a cut glass "gem stone," and a cut nail (Figures 12-13).

It is not possible to confidently date the pipe stem or glass piece, but cut nails can be roughly dated. Fabricated by machine rather than hand-forging, these nails are later in date than wrought nails, reflecting a shift toward industrialization. Their production started in the 1790s with a cut shank and hand-hammered head, followed in the 1820s by heads that were machine-formed. This nail has a machine-formed

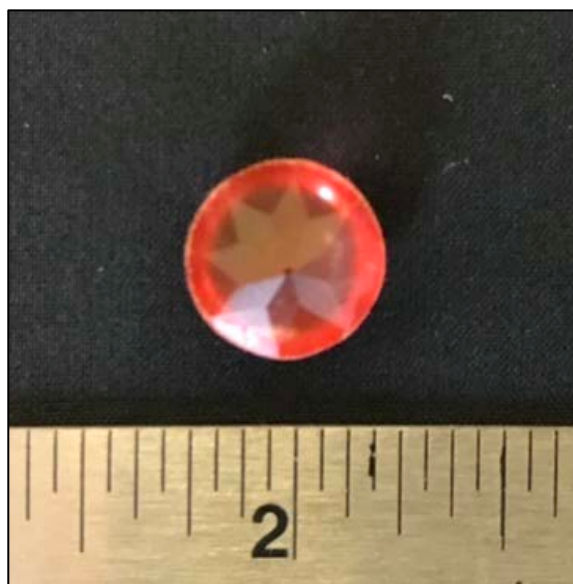


Figure 12: Glass "gem stone" from Feature 2, Level A



Figure 13: Artifacts from Feature 2 Level B (unit 1)

head and obviously was deposited at the time that the builder's trench was backfilled, at the time of construction, suggesting a 19th C. date for Feature 1.

Upon the complete removal of the builder's trench, Feature 2, the entirety of the wall or foundation Feature 1 was visible. It extended to a depth of 1.40 ft (0.43 m) below grade (Figures 14-15).

Once the builder's trench was removed, excavation continued to the north, removing the levels into which that trench originally had been dug. These were Level 4, noted previously, and a layer beneath it, Level 7, which appeared to be undisturbed subsoil. No artifacts were found in either level, lending support to the interpretation that these are natural soil levels. Excavation of Level 7 was halted at 1.0 ft (0.30 m) below surface. The unit at this stage of excavation is shown in Figures 14-15.



Figure 14: Unit 1 with the Feature 2 builder's trench removed and Level 7; looking south.



Figure 15: Unit 1 with the Feature 2 builder's trench removed and Level 7; looking south.

On the south side of the wall, Feature 1, three levels were encountered, but no builder's trench was discerned (Figure 11, left hand side of the drawing). Level 3, roughly 0.3 ft (9 cm) in thickness, was similar to Level 1, but lighter in color, a very dark grayish brown sandy loam (10YR3/2). Artifacts included a cut nail, a hand-wrought nail, brick and mortar fragments, and material that may have been used as parging on a masonry surface.

Below Level 3 was Level 5 (Figure 16), a sandy loam that included much heavier amounts of mortar fragments, as well as brick bits, some gravel, and portions of kaolin pipe stems. Its removal (at a thickness of roughly 0.15-0.20 ft, or 4.6-6.12 cm) revealed a soil that was similar, but without the dense amounts of mortar debris. This new stratum, Level 6, was excavated to a depth of roughly 0.90 ft (0.27 m) below surface. Level 6 was a very dark grayish brown silty loam (10YR3/2) with mottled spots of brown (10YR5/3). It included a much smaller number of small brick fragments, half of a brick, 2 pipe stem fragments, and another small fragment of kaolin (Figures 17-18). Located near the top of the stratum, these may have moved down in the soil profile due to root activity or other bioturbation. The level also was heavily dissected by

roots that made excavation a challenge. These were left intact so as not to compromise the adjacent cedar tree. Aside from the material culture in the top of the level, this had all of the appearance of a natural soil level.



Figure 16: Level 5 exposed in Unit 1; looking north.



Figure 17: Kaolin pipe stem fragments (bottom) and a small fragment of kaolin (top) from Level 6.



Figure 18: Brick fragment from Level 6.

Lab Processing

All of the recovered artifacts were washed, sorted, identified, and catalogued in the Past Is Present Archaeology Laboratory in Chestertown. An inventory was prepared, including identifications and dates for materials. These materials will be conveyed to the church when the archaeological investigations are completed.

Interpretation

Excavation makes it clear that the wall that was the target of this investigation was not a surficial or ephemeral feature, but rather a substantial foundation that was intentionally installed (Figures 15, 19, 20). Comprised primarily of stone laid in mortar, partial bricks (usually half a brick) were incorporated into the upper levels. This opens the possibility that upper courses of brick are now missing. The foundation was laid into a builder's trench that was dug at least 1.3 ft (39.6 cm) below grade at the time that it was constructed. At the bottom, the foundation was 1.4 ft (42.7 cm) in width, extending to a maximum width of 1.6 ft (48.8 cm), wider than what was visible from the surface. This suggests that a substantial wall could have been on top of the foundation. Its size makes it less likely that it merely demarcated a family burial plot or was a church yard wall.

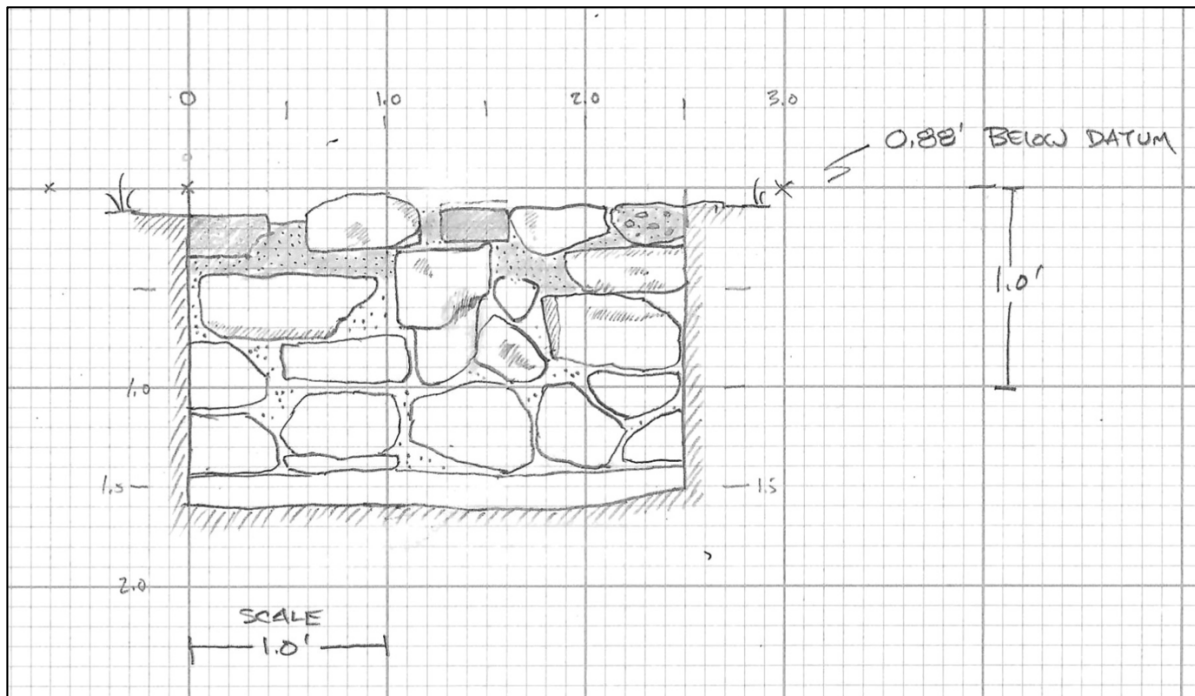


Figure 19: Elevation of north face of Feature 1 wall foundation; looking south; bricks are shaded.



Figure 20: Top of Feature 1 wall foundation; looking east.

The absence of a builder's trench on the south side of the wall is likely explained by a common building technique of laying the foundation up against one side of the builder's trench. Often, the builder excavated the foundation trench around the footprint of the planned building with the outer edge of the trench mirroring the exterior dimension of the finished structure. When the foundation was laid up against this outer edge of the trench, the precise building dimension was achieved. If this procedure was followed here, then the interior of the larger structure

must have been to the north of the foundation exposed by our excavation. However, while that practice often was followed for buildings, it did not necessarily apply to boundary walls or other installations.

Based on the evidence at hand, it is not yet possible to say with any certainty what the function of this wall was. It seems less likely that this was a wall around a family plot. The width suggests that it could have supported a frame structure or a small brick building. The large amounts of mortar probably are related to the later demolition of masonry, but whether this was from the superstructure or simply the upper portions of the foundation is not clear. Based on the admittedly sparse materials from the builder's trench, it may be that this feature dates to the early 19th C. However, the artifact sample is small and the presence of 18th materials such as pipe stems and ceramics clearly demonstrates earlier activity in this vicinity. The general absence of domestic debris, such as food remains, bone, shell, bottle glass, and household goods, is in keeping with a church yard.

If this is indeed part of an old structure, the manner in which the builder's trench was dug and the foundation laid suggests that the interior of a structure lay to the north. Should further work be desirable, the logical places to expand the investigation therefore would be to the north and along the wall to the east and west, seeking its terminus or corners.

Recommendations & Next Steps

The substantial nature of the foundation, the presence of 18th C. materials, and the lack of clarity on function and identification suggest that further investigation is warranted. As noted above, the logical extension of efforts should be to the north and to the east and west, seeking both corners of a possible building and a foundation that parallels Feature 1 to the north. Should this be desirable, we recommend two methods, as discussed in our meeting of April 4, 2022.

First, we suggest a more comprehensive pattern of probing for subsurface remains, extending this work to the east, west, and north. The location of any solid obstructions and their depth would be noted. The spaces between probes would be tightened up in areas where solid hits are encountered, to try and determine the width of any buried features. We now know the width of this foundation (roughly 1.5 ft [45.7 cm]), so patterns or dimensions that are similar may be indicative of more buried foundations. Based on our knowledge of historic architecture, dimensions or building units of 16-18 ft (4.88-5.49 m) were common in earlier structures, so this also provides a means of targeting the efforts. Probing 16-18 ft north of Feature 1, for example, should be a priority.

Second, based on the results of this probing effort, we recommend the excavation of longer, but narrower trenches positioned so as to cross any potential foundations revealed by field observation and probing. By excavating trenches that are roughly a shovel blade in width, more

area can be covered in a given amount of time, thus maximizing the potential to encounter foundations. The excavation would still be done stratigraphically, and any features would be excavated by hand. The same procedures used for Unit 1 would be followed, including stratigraphic excavation, segregation of artifacts by stratum or feature, and recording via photography and scaled drawings.

Based on our Monday discussion, Washington College's Past Is Present Archaeology Lab will be delighted to pursue this extension of the work. The same budget categories and expense rates will pertain to this work and, as before, I will donate my time to the project as a budget match. We understand that \$3,000 is available for this work, and we will do as much as possible within that budget.

Probing can begin in April, with follow-up excavations in the late spring and summer. Field days will be coordinated with Maura Ryan as a representative of the parish.

Upon completion of the field work, all artifacts will be processed using the same methods as for this first phase of the project. A final report will be prepared, combining the results of both investigations into a single document. The results also will be incorporated into the Shrewsbury GIS, as appropriate. All artifacts and records will be turned over to the parish upon completion of the project.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this exciting project. Please let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

With best wishes,



John L. Seidel, Ph.D.
Director, Center for Environment & Society
Lammot du Pont Copeland Associate Professor
of Anthropology & Environmental Studies



MEMORANDUM

TO: Rob Busler & Maura Ryan, Shrewsbury Church **DATE:** 31 August 2022
CC: Elizabeth Seidel
FROM: John L. Seidel

RE: Archaeology progress to date

In our letter report of April 5 and May 15, 2022, we summarized our findings from an archaeological investigation of a wall feature located in the southwest corner of the Shrewsbury cemetery. The additional work that you requested was not complete at the time we prepared the May 15 progress report, as we needed to complete excavations in Unit 3. . This memo recapitulates the May 15 progress report, with updates that discuss the completed excavation and some additional probing.

Probing

As noted on May 15, 2022 we probed at 90 locations to the east of our original excavation (Unit 1), which had uncovered a foundation wall oriented east-west. These initial probes extended 20 feet east of the eastern edge of the previous excavation unit, with probing perpendicular to the projected wall alignment – the intent was discover how far to the east the foundation might extend. Probing was done systematically, at regular intervals, recording the depths at which any obstructions were encountered and assessing the possibility that these obstructions might be an extension of the foundation.

That probing showed convincing evidence that the buried foundation continued underground for at least another 8 feet to the east of the previously exposed wall segment. Further to the east, many obstructions were encountered, but they were inconsistent both in linear extent and depth. These could be natural obstructions, or they might be the result of debris from the dismantling of a wall. This suggested the need for excavations over the possibly continuous portions of the wall, as well as some of the discontinuities, to determine their nature.

Probing then moved to the north, seeking a possible parallel wall at 16 to 18 feet north of the mapped foundation. Beginning 13 ft north of the existing foundation in Unit 1, we probed to

the north at 0.5 ft intervals for 10 ft. Not a single obstruction was encountered, indicating the absence of a buried wall foundation in that locale.

Additional probing was done to the west of Unit 1 and the adjacent cedar tree. No consistent obstructions were encountered, thus providing no evidence of a continuation of the wall to the west. To verify this, a shovel test was excavated in the western area – no evidence of a wall or other features was encountered. Based on this evidence, it appears that the wall feature's western end is consistent with the cedar tree west of Unit 1.

Excavation

In our April 5 report, we suggested that the results of the probing effort be used to guide additional excavations. We recommended the excavation of longer, but narrower, trenches positioned so as to cross any potential foundations revealed by field observation and probing.

We conducted these additional excavations on April 25 and May 2, 2022. First, a trench was opened up 15 ft east of the east edge of Unit 1, where inconsistent obstructions had been encountered. This narrow trench (1.0 ft wide) extended for 4.0 ft N-S, crossing the projected line of the foundation. This trench was designated as Unit 2.

The source of the underground obstructions was found to be several disarticulated bricks. These bricks can be seen during excavation in Figure 1. No evidence of any wall or foundation was encountered, nor were any soil disturbances indicative of an earlier wall that had been dismantled seen.

We then moved into the space between Units 1 and 2, roughly where the consistent underground obstructions stopped being encountered by probing. This excavation was 5.0 feet east of the east edge of Unit 1, and it was located over the area at which the consistent probing started to end. This unit, Unit 3, started as a 1.5 ft (E-W) by 4.0 (N-S) area, but was extended another foot to the east to enlarge Unit 3 to 2.5 ft by 4.0 ft.

The relative positions of Units 1 and 3 are shown in Figures 2 and 3. As depicted in the plan view of Unit 3, an extension of the foundation uncovered in Unit 1 was also exposed in Unit 3. However, the wall seemed to end abruptly in the middle of the unit (see also Figure 4). There is no evidence that it turned a corner and ran to the north or south. It was not immediately clear whether this was the original terminus of the wall, but subsequent excavation revealed that the wall did indeed originally extend farther to the east, but that the foundation had been dug up and removed at some point. In other words, the abrupt end to the feature is a function of later activity, and this demolition or "robbing" probably is also the source of the rubble encountered to the east in Unit 2.

The following figures illustrate the excavations completed as of May 15 in Units 2 and 3.



Figure 1: Excavation of Unit 2, showing disarticulated bricks being exposed, looking north.

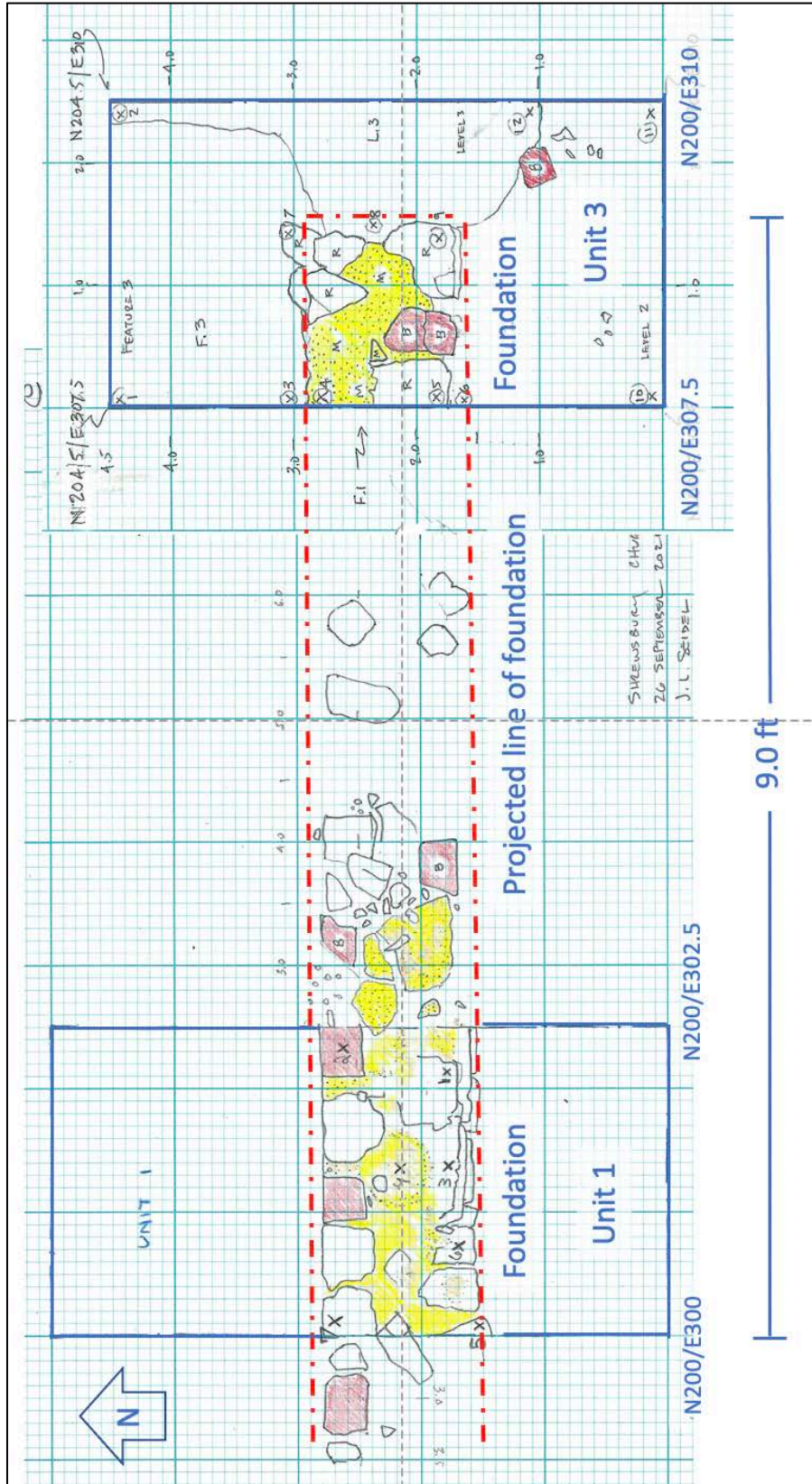


Figure 2: Excavation Units 1 & 3, showing buried foundation and eastern terminus.



Figure 3: Units 1 (background) and 3 (foreground), looking west.



Figure 4: Unit 3 looking north, showing eastern extension of the foundation during excavation.

We completed the excavation of Unit 3 on June 20, 2022 and returned on August 12, 2022 to complete scaled drawings. In addition, we completed additional probing to the east of Units 1-3 to assess the potential that Feature 1, the wall, extended even farther east. This work is summarized below in that order.

Completion of Unit 3

The excavation of this small unit proved to be complicated. Numerous rodent burrows ran through the unit, some recent (dug since we opened the unit) and others that were old. These disturbed the original deposits and made it difficult to follow natural and anthropogenic layers during excavation. As in Unit 1, we hoped to discover a foundation trench or builder's trench, which would have been dug during construction to place the foundation below grade. This proved elusive, as discussed below.

Figure 2 above shows a plan view of the deposits in May. Note that the wall (Feature 1) terminated in Unit 3, with a disturbed or intrusive deposit to the east, designated as Level 3. We assumed that this is fill inside a trench dug to remove or "rob out" portions of the wall, perhaps to re-use the materials, for aesthetic reasons, or to eliminate an obstacle to additional burials. As excavations proceeded, it became apparent that this was the case. As the fill in the robber trench became more well-defined, it was designated as Feature 4, and it may be seen in Figure 5, below. Rodent burrows also are shown, illustrating their propensity for following the junctions between archaeological deposits. This also was the case along the foundation, Feature 1, potentially obscuring any foundation trench.

Comparing the robbed-out area east of the foundation terminus in Figures 2 and 5 shows that the "robber trench" (the term usually used by archaeologists to denote such features) started as a wide deposit near the ground surface and then narrowed as the "robbers" or demolition crew reached the bottom. The stone and brick making up this part of the foundation were removed, after which the trench was backfilled, yielding the deposits we excavated. Why only a portion of the wall was removed and it was left intact elsewhere is unknown, but it could simply be that the remaining portion was far enough away from the church and in a remote corner, so it simply seemed a waste of effort to continue to dig up the foundation.

In the south half of Unit 3, excavation uncovered one stratum with heavy deposits of fragmented brick and mortar (Level 2), and this was undoubtedly related to either the construction of the wall or, more likely, its later demolition. Beneath that was a thin layer of soil that also had evidence of mortar and brick, but in much smaller amounts. Excavation stopped at what appeared to be subsoil that was disturbed only by rodents. The elevation was consistent with the subsoil encountered in Unit 1. As in Unit 1, there was no evidence of a builder's trench. These various strata can be seen in Figure 6.

To the north, the deposits were more puzzling. No clear evidence of a discrete builder's trench was found, although the ubiquitous fragments of brick and mortar found throughout show that the soil clearly had been disturbed by human agency. Level 1 (see Figure 6) consisted of topsoil

that has built up over the past decades. Beneath it, Level 2 contained many fragments of brick and mortar, as seen to the south. Below this were two more layers, the lower of which was Level 5, sitting on top of undisturbed subsoil. These contained little in the way of artifacts, aside from small fragments of brick and mortar that reveal that these are intentionally laid human deposits. Additional photographs of the unit and features can be seen in Figures 8-10.

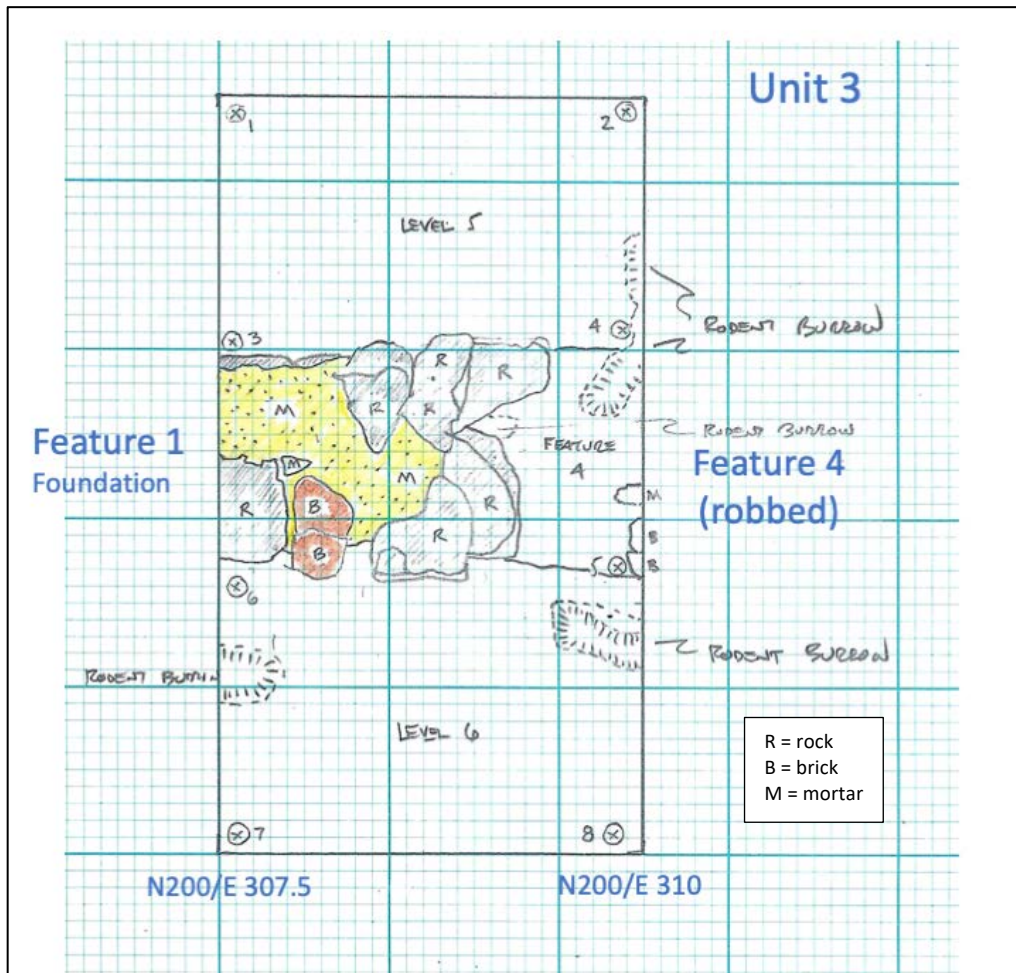


Figure 5: Unit 3 plan view, nearing the completion of excavations. The robber trench is visible as Feature 4, and both the truncated Feature 12 and rodent burrows are visible.

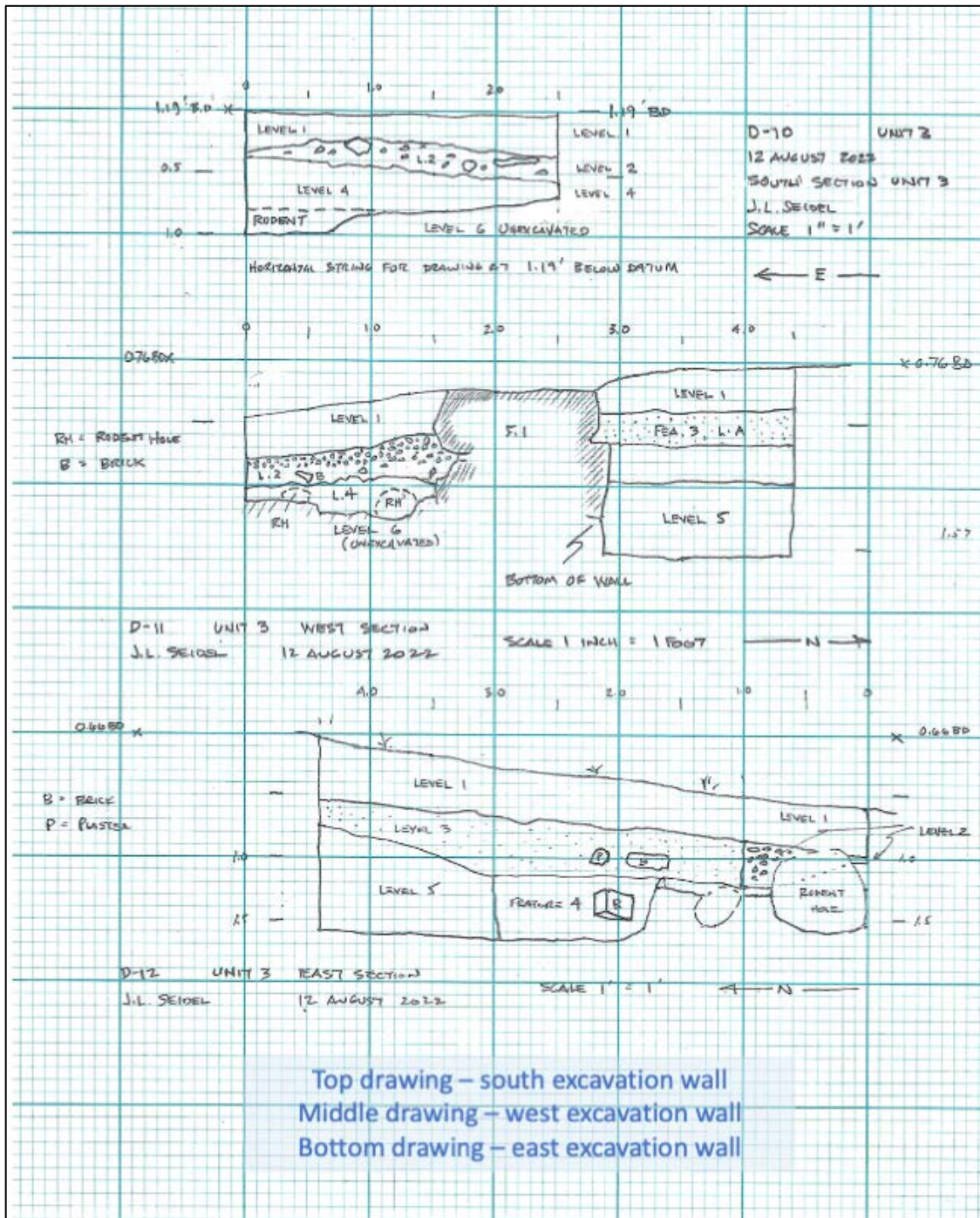


Figure 6: Field drawings of Unit 3 excavation walls (sections, or profiles): east, south, and west walls.

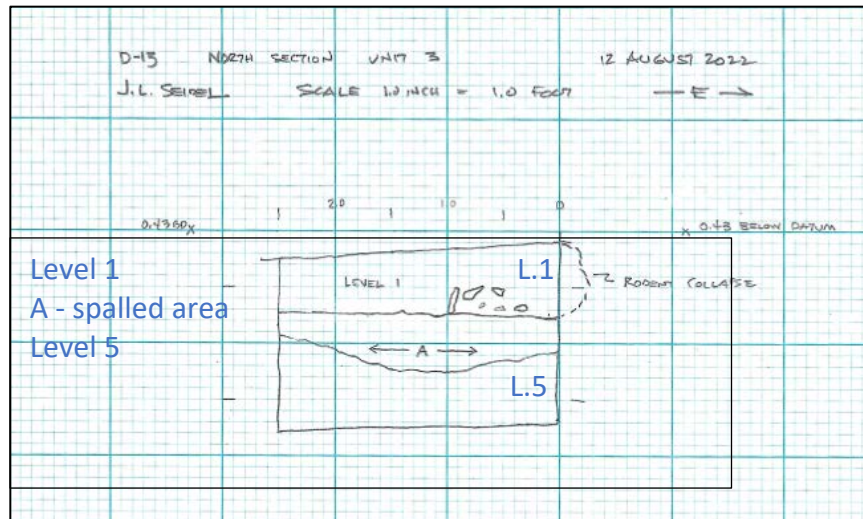


Figure 7: Field drawing of Unit 3 north section wall.



Figure 8: Unit 3 at completion of excavation, looking north.



Figure 9: Unit 1 at completion of excavation , showing Feature 1 (top) and the area of the robber trench (bottom). West is at the top of the image.



Figure 10: Unit 3, Feature 1 elevation, looking south. The soil at the bottom of the image is undisturbed and extends under the stones.

In Unit 1, clear evidence of a builder's trench was found along the northern edge of the foundation, and this often is useful because the deposit dates from the time of construction. Artifacts in the fill therefore can yield dates as to the construction. The absence of a foundation trench Unit 3 therefore was disappointing. However, the disturbed nature of the soil in Levels 1-5 in the north suggest that perhaps the foundation trench was simply wider than the limits of excavation for Unit 3. In other words, we were digging *in* the foundation trench, but no north edge could be discerned simply because its width exceeded our northern excavation limit.



Figure 10: Unit 3 looking NE, with nearby marked graves in the background.

Following this reasoning, we considered extending the excavation another several feet to the north, but quickly ruled this out due to the proximity of marked grave sites. These can be seen in Figures 10 and 11.

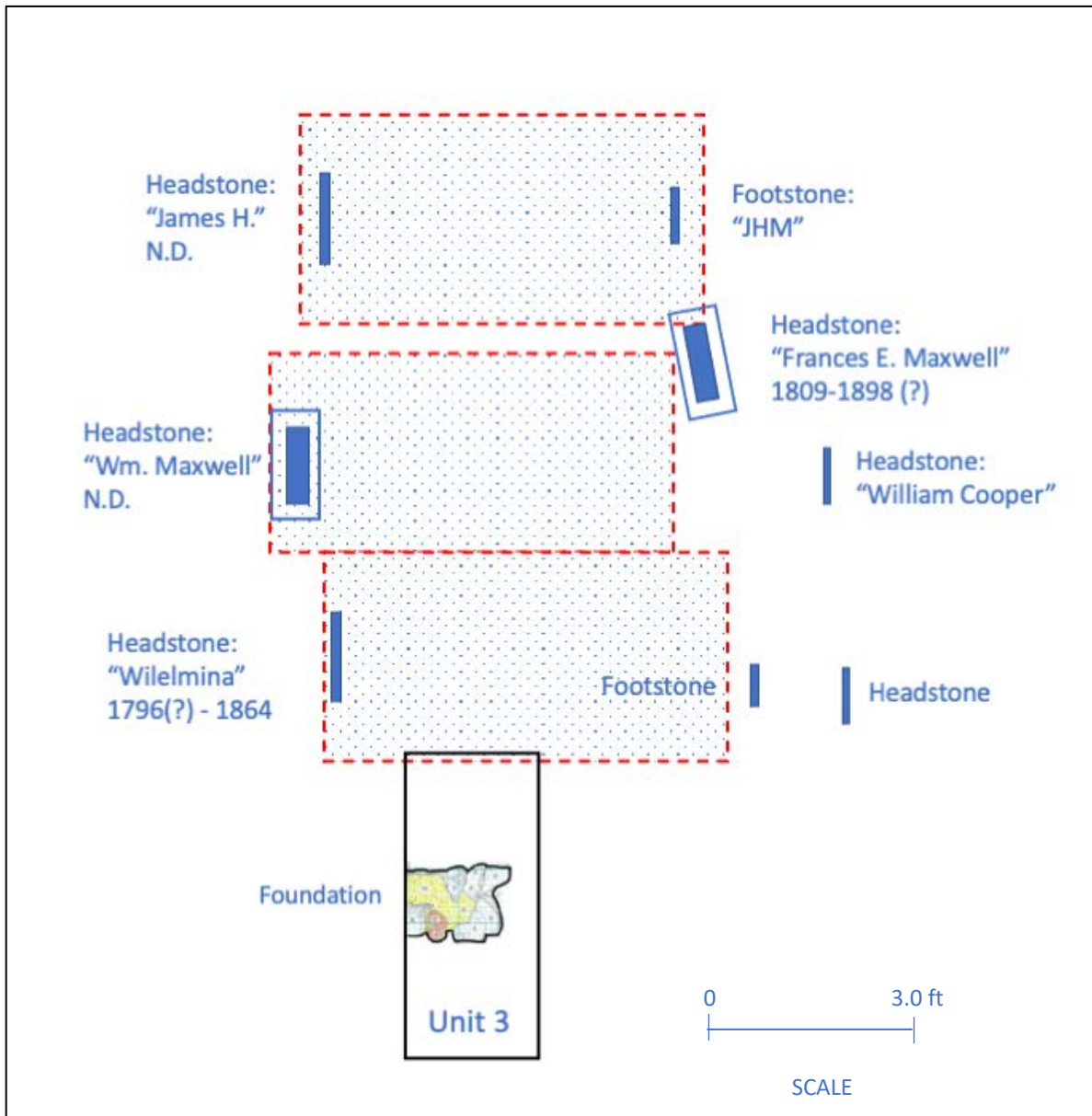


Figure 11: Plan view showing the location of Unit 3 and adjacent graves. North at top.

Figure 11 shows the grave stones in plan view, with stippling denoting the traditional three-foot width for grave shafts (modern grave shafts widths typically are set at 2.5 ft.). This shows that the interment of Wilemina (Maxwell) lies too close to Unit 3 to allow for any northern expansion of excavation. In any case, if the foundation trench is indeed wider than the limits of Unit 3, then its northern edge was almost certainly disturbed by the burial shaft. That this may indeed be the case is perhaps evidenced by the spalled area of soil in the north wall on Unit 3

(see Figures 7 & 8). As the north wall of the unit was being scraped clean for photography, soil spalled or flaked off of the wall, suggesting that it is disturbed. This may well be disturbed soil from the adjacent burial site.

Relatively few artifacts were encountered that offered precise dating of the levels and features in Unit 3, which is not surprising in a church yard far removed from the church or the parish house. A sherd of window glass and several cut and wrought nail fragments were found in Level 1, but these offer no help in dating the foundation. Part of a cut nail (19th C.) was recovered from Level 2. In Level 3, which was fill in the robber trench and thus disturbed or displaced, a fragment of a clay tobacco pipe bowl was recovered. Brick fragments were numerous, and almost all appear to have been hand-made. These likely came from the wall that sat on top of the stone foundation, offering only the most general of dates – they could date to any time from the colonial period into the late 19th century.

Archival Evidence

Several volunteers assisted with the excavations, one of whom was Shannon Forester, whose family has a long association with Shrewsbury Parish. Ms. Forester has done extensive genealogical research, while also diving into vestry records and other sources. During the project, she discovered a record that may shed light on the foundation wall.

In the parish vestry records for 1840, she found a July 22 entry stating: “ordered that the wall around the grave yard be repaired as it now stands.” Note that this refers to a “wall,” as opposed to a fence. This suggests that it most likely was constructed of brick, perhaps with a stone foundation. The entry also suggests that the wall enclosed the entirety of the grave yard. If it was a stone or brick wall, then some time must have elapsed before it needed to be repaired, suggesting a much early construction date.

Given the location of our foundation, Feature 1, at the southern limit of the grave yard, it seems entirely likely that this is a remnant of the wall referred to in this July 22, 1840 entry. During repair, mortar bits and broken brick are usually produced, perhaps explaining some of the deposits encountered during our excavations.

If this interpretation is correct, then the wall was far more extensive than uncovered in this project, and it should run a much greater distance to the east. To test this hypothesis, additional probing was done to the east.

Probing

An easterly line of probes was laid out, extending 60 feet beyond the east edge of Unit 1 (by contrast, the previous probing only extended 20 feet to the east). The probe consists of a steel rod with a “t-handle” and sharp point. Pushed into the ground, the user can not only detect solid obstructions like walls and measure their depth, but also assess to some degree the nature of the soil (Figure 12).



Figure 12: Probing to the east of the foundation uncovered in nits 1 & 3.

The results of the probing are recorded in Table 1:

Distance East	Results	Depth
30 ft	Solid obstruction	0.5 ft
31 ft	Sold obstruction	0.4 ft
32 ft	Resistance, but no solid hit	1.2 ft
33 ft	Solid obstruction	1.5 ft
34 ft	Solid obstruction	1.4 ft
35 ft	Solid obstruction	1.1 ft
36 ft	Solid obstruction	1.3 ft
37 ft	Brief resistance, then none, no obstructions	
38 ft	Resistance at 0.7 ft, then a solid hit	1.6 ft
40 ft	Resistance at 1.5 ft, then no obstructions	
45 ft	Solid obstruction	1.6 ft
50 ft	Solid obstruction	1.3 ft
55 ft	Resistance at shallow depth, then “rubble” down to 1.5 ft	1.5 ft
60 ft	Solid obstruction	0.5 ft

Table 1: Results of probing east of Unit 1

With probing, it is always possible that the probe will encounter an isolated rock or obstruction by chance, giving the illusion that a wall or feature lies below. In this probing, however, the consistent results suggest otherwise. Solid obstructions were encountered in 10 of the 14 probe locations. In the others, resistance often was met, suggesting that some altered soils lie below, or perhaps debris. Debris or rubble certainly seems to have been encountered at 55 ft east.

These results are consistent with a buried feature such as a foundation that continues well to the east of the foundation encountered in excavations, a full 60 ft east of Unit 1. We did not probe farther to the east due to a grave located along this alignment at 71 ft east.

Interpretation of the Foundation & Recommendations

Based on the work to date, it is clear that a brick wall with a stone foundation stood at the edge of the grave yard on the southwest corner. Intact portions were encountered in Units 1 & 3, with debris from demolition encountered in Unit 2. Probing suggests that the wall is not part of a building and that it terminated about where a large cedar tree grows today at the west end of the project area. But based on probing, the foundation and wall may well have extended at least another 60 feet to the east. This suggests that it demarcated the grave yard, at least along its southern boundary. The 1840 vestry record called for a repair of the wall surrounding the grave yard, and it seems likely that this is that wall, built at an unknown date around 1800 or earlier, repaired in 1840, and then demolished at some later date. It would be interesting to see if earlier vestry records note its construction, or later records order the wall’s removal, which

would pin down a date for those events. Shannon Forester will continue her research in the hope that such orders may be found.

The hypothesis that wall is an enclosure wall and that it extends at least 60 ft east-west is based on the 1840 vestry record entry and the results of probing, so it is not definitive. If more concrete evidence is desired, a series of slot trenches could be quickly excavated along the alignment suggested by the probe. This would quickly determine whether or not the wall truly does extend that far east. If it was an enclosure wall, then it must also have turned corners, but that alignment would be more difficult to ascertain. However, if the dimensions of the original grave yard can be found, this would offer a guide. As an alternative and supplement, an analysis of the distribution of graves that date from before 1820 might offer some clues. That kind of analysis also might help determine where the earlier churches stood, based on gaps or lacunae in the grave distribution for those time periods.

Particularly useful for further analysis would be the original ground penetrating radar data completed several years by McCrone for mapping the grave yard. That project was done primarily in order to find grave sites, so no attention was paid in reporting to possible buildings or walls. If we can review those original radar records, they may reveal evidence of the wall elsewhere on the grounds. Our efforts to obtain those data have so far been unsuccessful, but this remains a useful objective.

If any of these additional analyses are desired, The Past Is Present Archaeology Lab stands ready to assist. Also, if a comprehensive report that combines all of this work is desirable, as opposed to three separate reports, that can be discussed.

Thank you for the opportunity to conduct this work and present our findings.