

# Archaeological watching-brief at the Church of St John the Baptist, Adel, Leeds

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**Archaeological Watching Brief at the Church of St John the Baptist, Adel,  
Leeds**

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# CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY .....	iii
1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
2 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY .....	1
3 METHODOLOGY .....	1
3.1 Aims.....	1
3.2 Methodology.....	1
4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	1
5 RESULTS .....	2
6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	2
7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
8 REFERENCES.....	3
PLATES .....	4
FIGURES .....	9
APPENDIX 1: INDEX TO ARCHIVE .....	10
APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST .....	11
APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION .....	12

## Plates

Plate 1: Duct 1003 & 1009 on the eastern side of the trench. Looking west, scale 0.5m.....	4
Plate 2: West side of the trench, looking south. Scale 0.5m.....	5
Plate 3: East side of the trench, looking south, showing duct 1003 & 1009. Scale 0.5m.....	6
Plate 4: North end of the trench, looking west, showing coal chute (1008). Scale 0.5m.....	7
Plate 5: North end of the trench, looking east, showing coal chute (1008). Scale 0.5m.....	8

## Figures

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Proposed works

Figure 3: As existing plan of buildings on the site

Figure 4: Plan of the drainage trench

Figure 5: Representative section of the vestry structure and associated deposits

## Tables

Table 1: List of archive contents ..... 10

Table 2: List of contexts..... 11

## **NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St John the Baptist, Adel, Leeds. The church is 12<sup>th</sup> century in origin, Grade I Listed and located in the Adel St John's Conservation Area. Following a quinquennial inspection at the church, a programme of repair and maintenance work was scheduled, which included the excavation of a new 600mm wide drainage channel around the outer perimeter of the vestry. The watching brief was completed on all groundworks associated with the drainage works.

The watching brief identified a coal chute and the stone foundations of the 1830s vestry. A drainage system was also identified, slightly later in date than the 1830s vestry, likely to be mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> century in date. No earlier finds or features were identified which were associated with the original medieval construction of the church.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St John the Baptist, Adel, Leeds. The work was requested by the Adel St. John The Baptist Parish Church Council and was completed during maintenance works to the drainage system around the outside perimeter of the 1830s vestry. The work was undertaken following a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Appendix 3), approved by the Diocesan Advisory Comity to the Diocese of Leeds who issued a Faculty for the works to be undertaken.

## 2 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The Church of St John the Baptist is located in Adel, West Yorkshire, centred at NGR SE27465 40230 (**Figure 1**). The church is set in 6.5 acres of the surrounding churchyard, the church hall and a field. The church is accessed from the east side of Church Lane.

The site is a 12<sup>th</sup> century Grade I Listed building (List entry Number: 1255610). The whole church area is set in a defined Conservation Area known as Adel St John's Conservation Area.

The superficial geology of the site comprises Harrogate Till Formation of clay, sand and gravel. The bedrock geology is sandstone of the Huddersfield White Rock Formation (BGS 2015).

## 3 METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Aims

The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to monitor all groundworks associated with the excavation of the drainage trench, and to record any archaeological remains that were uncovered or disturbed by the works.

### 3.2 Methodology

The drainage trench was hand dug by contractors using spades, with mattocks and demolition bars used where required. The limits of excavation continued as per the agreed plans (**Figure 2**), 600mm wide by 600mm deep. Notes were made during the excavation along with sketch drawings, black and white print photographs and digital images.

Discussions on site with the architect and building team confirmed it was not required to remove and rebuild the former coal chute.

Full details of the excavation and recording methodology are detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Appendix 3). All work was completed with reference and in accordance to the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA) guidelines.

## 4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Church of St John the Baptist is considered to be one of the best and most complete Norman village churches in Yorkshire. The origins of the main fabric of the church can be traced back to 1150-1170, with 14<sup>th</sup>- and 16<sup>th</sup>-century alterations. The west gable and bellcote were added in 1838-39 by RD Chantrell (**Figure 3**), who later restored the roof in 1843, and again in 1879 (Historic England 2015).

## 5 RESULTS

The features and deposits encountered during the watching brief are discussed below, and detailed in **Figures 4 and 5**.

The oldest deposits encountered related to the footings of the vestry (1006). Within the excavated area the footings were observed approximately 50mm below the current ground level, projecting between 50mm to 400mm out from the standing vestry wall (1005). The footings were made of roughly shaped sandstone blocks that were more coarsely laid than the above ground vestry stonework, and bonded with a limestone mortar. No construction cut was identified for the footings within the excavated area, hence it is likely that a cut does exist but outside the area of the excavation. The construction backfill (1002) was predominantly sandstone rubble, although this varied in composition with a higher percentage of incorporated soil to the north and west. It is possible that some of this backfill (1002) has been disturbed during the construction of other features discussed below, although it was not possible to confirm this during the site works.

A coal chute (1008) was located on the north side of the vestry which connected to the vestry basement, and this appeared to be broadly contemporaneous with main vestry structure. The coal chute, which was built of stone with a large stone slab capping it, remains *in-situ*. To the west of the coal chute was a drain system (1007) comprising salt-glazed pipework. The nature of the pipework suggests that it dates from 1848 onwards, making it a later addition to the 1830's vestry.

On the east side of the vestry, a brick-lined duct (1003) measuring 940mm north to south and 400mm east to west was visible, built up to the side of the vestry footings. The duct was a single brick thick and extended down beyond the limit of the excavations. The duct appears to extend down the side of the vestry basement, indicated by a blocked up hole, in line with the duct, which was located just above the floor level inside the basement. This was bonded with a grey cement mortar and is clearly an addition to the original build of the vestry. The engineering bricks used in the duct appeared the same as, and are probably contemporary with, bricks seen beneath the steps leading down into the basement. The duct had been backfilled with loose sandstone rubble (1009). The uppermost bricks of the structure had subsequently been disturbed during the laying of the modern path around the vestry.

Flanking the vestry to the east and west was a sandstone path (1000) set in concrete on compacted sharp sand and stone bedding (1001). This did not appear to be contemporary with the concrete slab located to the north of the vestry, and the sandstone path appeared to have been laid, or re-laid, after the construction of the slab.

No archaeological finds were recovered during the monitoring except for occasional fragments of brick incorporated into the backfill (1002) of the foundations for the vestry. The brick fragments were of the same type used in the construction of the duct (1003) and were not retained.

## 6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Very few archaeological features or finds were revealed during the watching brief. All of the structural remains revealed by the construction of the new drainage system relate to the



construction of the vestry in the 1830's and subsequent additions and alterations. No evidence of earlier activity associated with the original construction of the medieval church was identified.

Given the age of the church and the large associated burial ground, it would be the norm to find at least a small amount of disarticulated human bone, coffin furniture or similar. The lack of bone could be partially explained by acidic soils across the site reducing the potential for preservation, although this would not explain the absence of coffin furniture. It therefore appears likely that during the construction of the vestry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, considerable effort was put into recovering all human remains from the vestry area for reburial elsewhere within the church grounds.

The construction of, and subsequent additions to, the vestry and vestry basement have caused significant disturbance to the northeast of the medieval church. This watching brief on the current works did not encounter a construction cut for the vestry, so it appears that the current works were undertaken entirely within the area disturbed by the original vestry construction. The construction cut for the vestry and vestry basement appears to be located beyond the limit of current excavation works.

Any future works in the vicinity of the vestry may be able to take advantage of the area disturbed during the vestry's construction to avoid disturbing any burials or earlier archaeological deposits.

## **7 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Many thanks to 'Bob' and the team on site for clean and careful excavation of the drainage trench in what were inclement conditions.

## **8 REFERENCES**

BGS. 2015. Geology of Britain Viewer. <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?> [Accessed 21<sup>st</sup> December 2015].

Historic England. 2015. Church of St John the Baptist. <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1255610> [Accessed 21st December 2015].

## PLATES



Plate 1: Duct 1003 & 1009 on the eastern side of the trench. Looking west, scale 0.5m.



Plate 2: West side of the trench, looking south. Scale 0.5m.





Plate 3: East side of the trench, looking south, showing duct 1003 & 1009. Scale 0.5m.



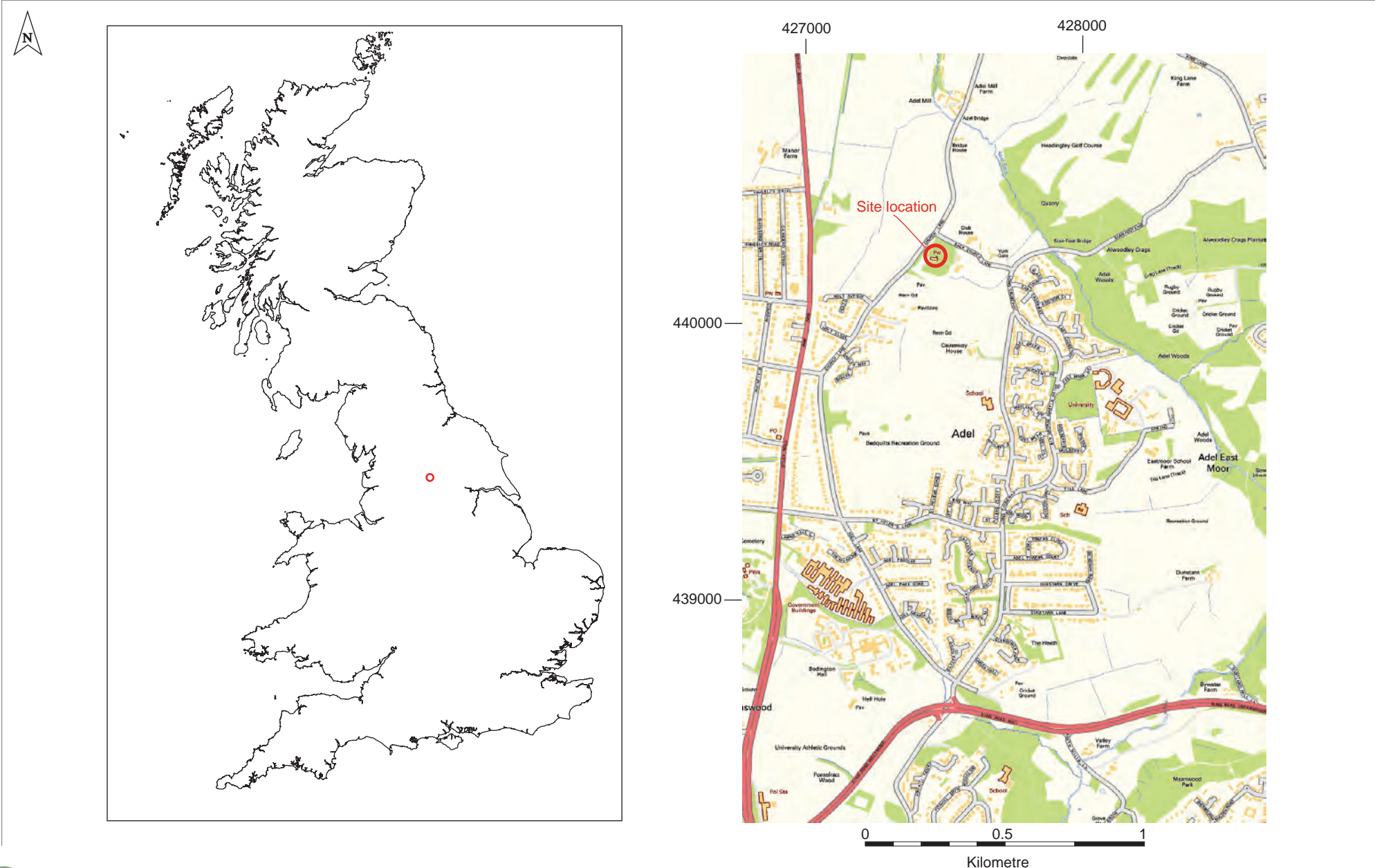


Plate 4: North end of the trench, looking west, showing coal chute (1008). Scale 0.5m.





Plate 5: North end of the trench, looking east, showing coal chute (1008). Scale 0.5m.

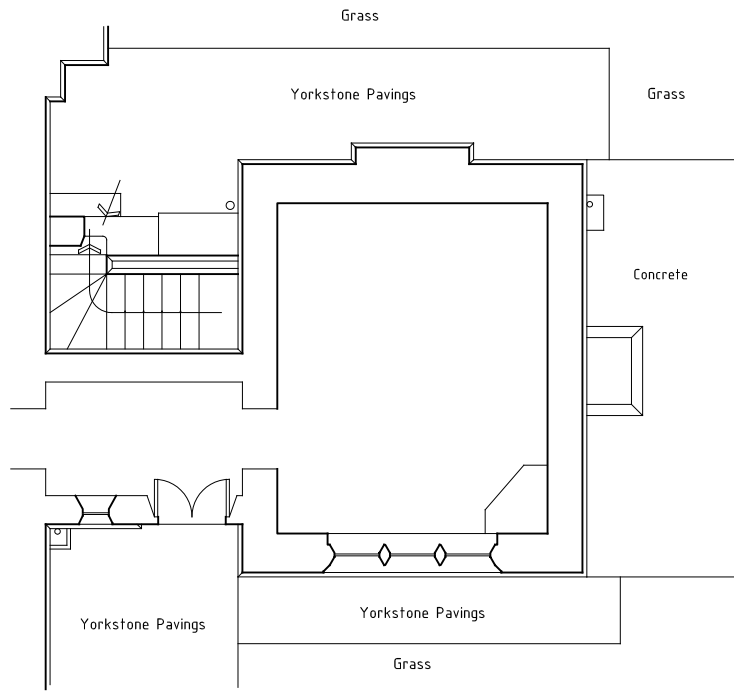


**Figure 1: Site location**

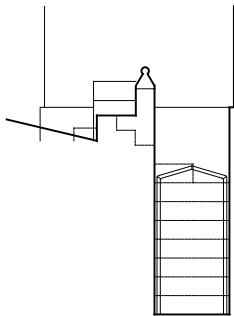




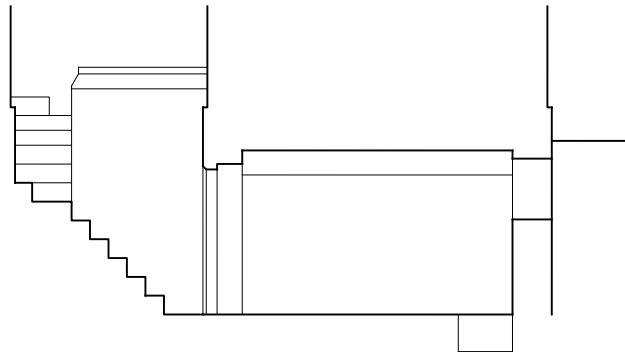




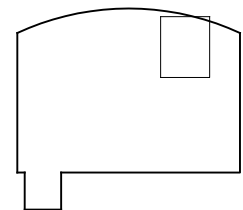
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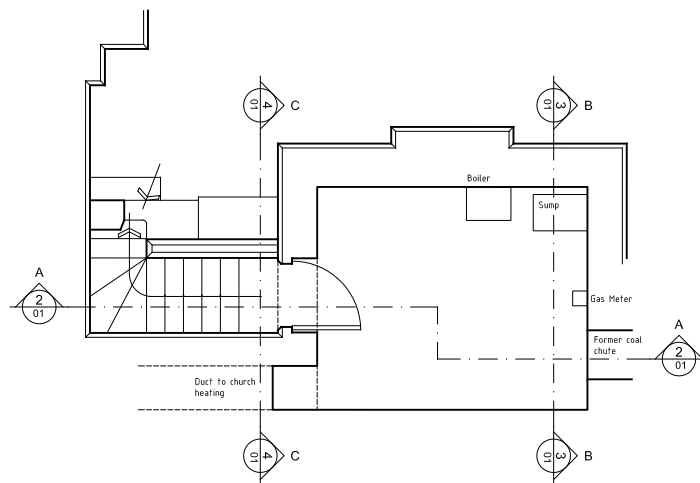
SECTION C-C



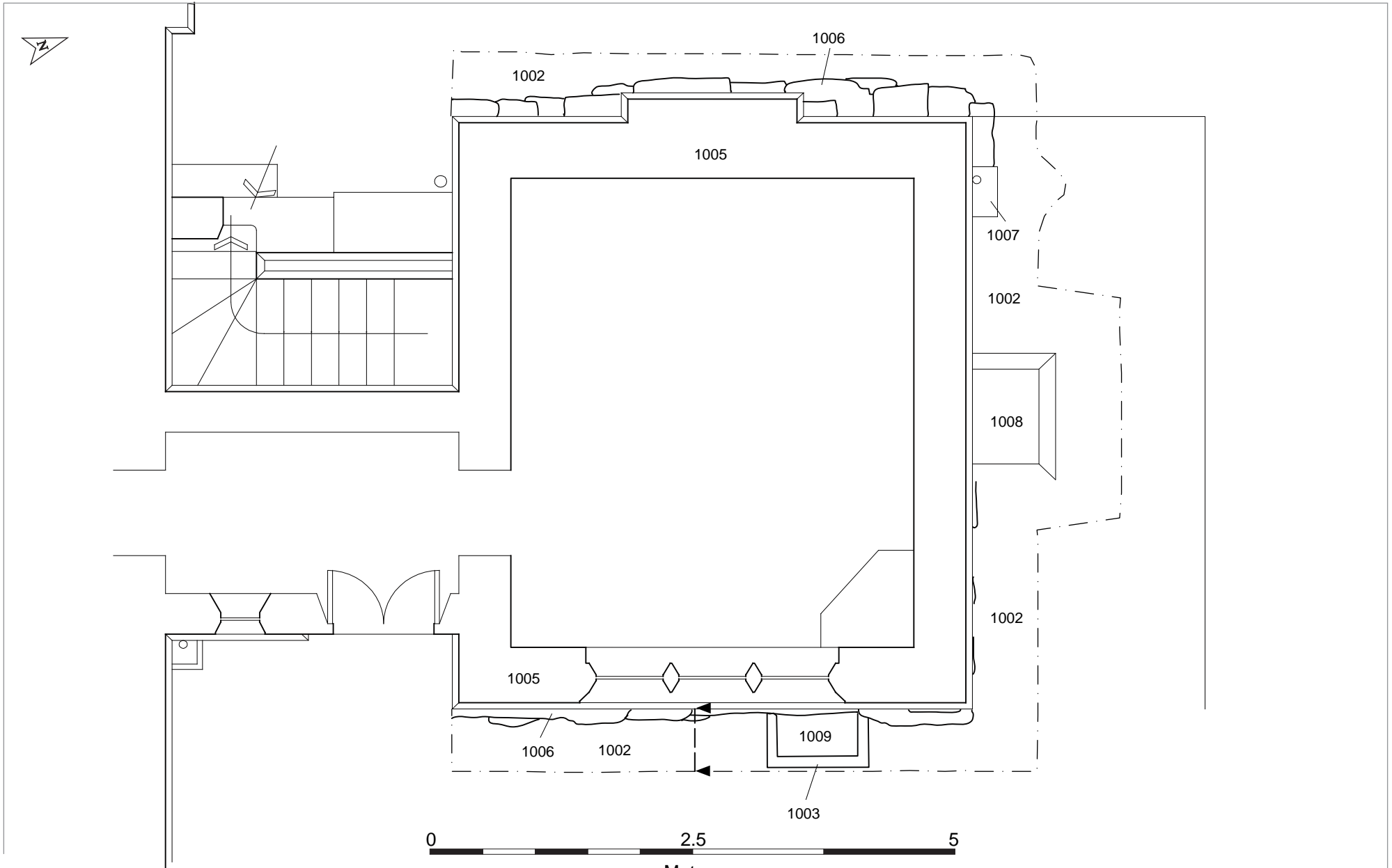
SECTION A-A



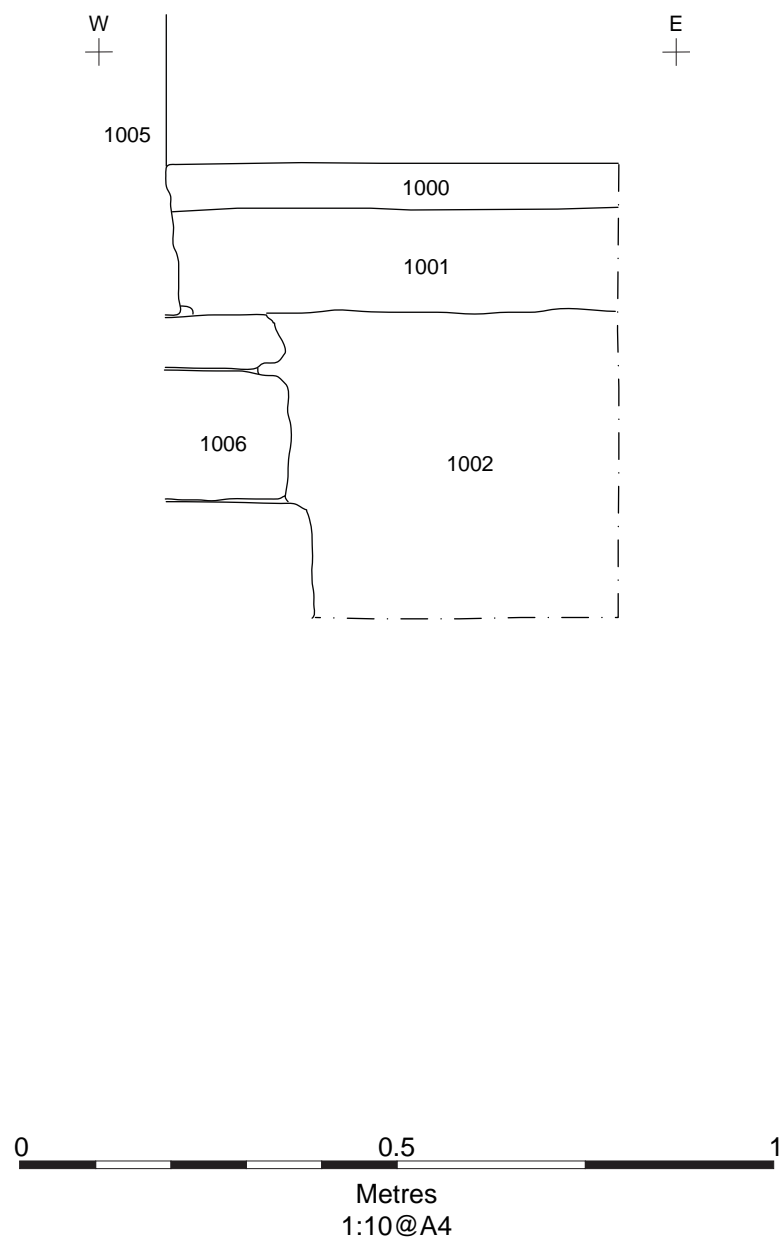
SECTION B-B



BASEMENT PLAN



**Figure 4:** Plan of the drainage trench



**Figure 5:** Representative section of the vestry structure and associated deposits.

## APPENDIX 1: INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Context register	1
Context sheets	10
Photographic register	2
B/W photographs (films/contact sheets)	10
Colour photographs (films)	1
Digital photographs	10
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	2

Table 1: List of archive contents

## APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Description
1000	Stone path
1001	Stone path bedding
1002	Construction infill around vestry
1003	Duct, brick lined
1004	Concrete on north side
1005	Vestry wall
1006	Vestry wall footings
1007	Drain
1008	Coal chute
1009	Duct infilling

Table 2: List of contexts

## APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION



### WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

**Site Location:** Church of St John the Baptist, Church Lane, Adel  
**NGR:** SE2746540230  
**Proposal:** Maintenance of grounds and buildings  
**Prepared for:** Pearce Bottomley Architects by ArcHeritage, July 2015  
**Status of WSI:** Draft for approval

#### 1 SUMMARY

1.1 Following a quinquennial inspection at the Church of St John the Baptist, Adel, a programme of repair and maintenance work has been scheduled. This includes the excavation of a new 600mm wide drainage channel around the outer perimeter of the vestry.

1.2 Where the reduced dig level for the above work exceeds 200mm, it has been determined that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken on the groundworks.

1.3 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared in response to a Schedule of Works Specification supplied by the PCC of the Church of St John the Baptists, Adel. The work will be carried out in accordance with the specification and this WSI.

#### 2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The Church of St John the Baptist is located in Adel, West Yorkshire. The church is set in 6.5 acres of the surrounding churchyard, the church hall and a field. The church is accessed from the east side of Church Lane.

#### 3 DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

3.1 The proposal site is a 12<sup>th</sup> century Grade I Listed building. The whole church area is set in a defined Conservation Area known as Adel St John's Conservation Area.

#### 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

4.1 The archaeological interest of the site lies in the 12<sup>th</sup> century origins of the church, and any associated medieval or later remains that may be uncovered during groundworks.

## 5. GROUNDWORKS TO BE MONITORED

5.1 This work will comprise a **continuous** watching brief on all groundworks involving the removal or disturbance of earth. The original schedule of works (section 6.2) identified that all ground works that exceed 200mm in depth would be subject to a watching brief.

5.2 Due to the difficulty in determining final excavation depths in advance of site works and a lack of existing information on the potential depth of archaeological deposits it is proposed that the watching brief is undertaken on all groundworks below current surfaces. Current ground surfaces (tarmac or flags) may be removed without monitoring; however any disturbance or excavation beneath such surfaces will require monitoring.

5.3 The ground works requiring the archaeological watching brief should be restricted to the perimeter of the vestry where new drainage will be installed to connect with an existing soakaway.

## 6 DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

6.1 All earth-moving machinery must be operated at an appropriate speed to allow the archaeologist to recognise, record and retrieve any archaeological deposits and material.

6.2 It is not intended that the archaeological monitoring should unduly delay site works. However, the archaeologist on site should be given the opportunity to observe, clean, assess and, where appropriate hand excavate, sample and record any exposed features and finds. In order to fulfil the requirements of this WSI, it may be necessary to halt the earth-moving activity to enable the archaeology to be recorded properly.

6.3 Plant or excavators shall not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the archaeologist on site has given explicit permission for operations to recommence at that location.

## 7 RECORDING METHODOLOGY

7.1 The location of the monitoring will be recorded on a base map of the site provided by Pearce Bottomley Architects, and tied into the OS grid.

7.2 Unique context numbers will be assigned to all individual deposits and structures. Each context will be described in full on a pro forma context record sheet in accordance with the accepted context record conventions.

7.3 Archaeological deposits will be planned at a basic scale of 1:20. Larger scales will be utilised as appropriate. Cross-sections of features will be drawn to a basic scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the size of the feature. All drawings will be related to Ordnance Datum. Where it aids interpretation, structural remains will also be recorded in elevation. All drawings will be drawn on inert materials. All drawings will adhere to accepted drawing conventions

7.4 Photographs of archaeological deposits and features will be taken. This will include general views of entire features and of details such as sections as considered necessary. The photographic register will comprise 35mm format black and white prints. Digital photography will be used in addition, but will not form the primary site archive. All site photography will adhere to accepted photographic record guidelines.

7.5 Areas which are inaccessible (e.g. for health and safety reasons) will be recorded as thoroughly as possible within the site constraints. In these instances, recording may be entirely photographic, with sketch drawings only.

7.6 All finds will be collected and handled following the guidance set out in the ClfA guidance for archaeological materials. Unstratified material will not be kept unless it is of exceptional intrinsic interest. Material discarded as a consequence of this policy will be described and quantified in the field. Finds of particular interest or fragility will be retrieved as Small Finds, and located on plans. Other finds, finds within the topsoil, and dense/discrete deposits of finds will be collected as Bulk Finds, from discrete contexts, bagged by material type. Any dense/discrete deposits will have their limits defined on the appropriate plan.

7.7 All artefacts and ecofacts will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication *First Aid for Finds*, and recording systems must be compatible with the recipient museum. All finds that fall within the purview of the Treasure Act (1996) will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures outlined in the Act, after discussion with the client and the local authority.

7.8 An environmental sampling programme will be undertaken for the recovery and identification of palaeoenvironmental remains where suitable deposits are identified. The collection and processing of environmental samples will be undertaken in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 2011). Environmental and soil specialists will be consulted during the course of the excavation with regard to the implementation of this sampling programme. The sampling regime will include samples of the three types of deposit sample as appropriate. These are described below:

- **Bulk-sieved Sample (BS).** Sample size will depend upon the context/feature size, but should be up to 40-60 litres in size (if the context size allows). They are taken for the recovery of charcoal, burnt seeds, bone and artefacts. The samples will be processed (flotation) on site where possible with 1mm and 500micron sieves on a rack to collect the carbonised washover. The retents and flots will then be dried, sorted and assessed to advise the potential for further analysis.
- **General Biological Sample (GBA):** These are only taken if a deposit is waterlogged. A 10 litre sample size will be used (if the context size allows). These samples will be processed in the laboratory, to recover macrofossils and microscopic remains such as pollen and insects.
- **Spot samples:** these samples are taken as required. they may be contexts or material not suited to sieving, such as caches of seeds, pieces of eggshell or any specific finds of organic material. They may also be specialist samples (e.g. charcoal for radiocarbon dating).

7.9 It is considered unlikely that industrial activity be present on the site. If industrial activity of any scale is detected, industrial samples and process residues will also be collected. Separate samples (c. 10ml) will be collected for micro-slags (hammer-scale and spherical droplets) (English Heritage 2011).

7.10 Other samples will be taken, as appropriate, in consultation with ArcHeritage specialists and the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, as appropriate (e.g. dendrochronology, soil micromorphology, monolith samples, C14, etc.). Samples will be taken for scientific dating where necessary for the development of subsequent mitigation strategies. Material removed from site will be stored in appropriate controlled environments.

- 7.11 In the event of human remains being discovered during the evaluation these will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, in the first instance. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with environmental health regulations and following discussions with, and with the approval of the Church of England. If human remains are identified, the Ministry of Justice and WYYAS will be informed immediately. An osteoarchaeologist will be available to give advice on site. If **disarticulated** remains are encountered, these will be identified and quantified on site. If trenches are being immediately backfilled, the remains will be left in the



ground. If the excavations will remain open for any length of time, disarticulated remains will be removed and boxed, for immediate reburial by the Church.

- If **articulated** remains are encountered, these will be excavated in accordance with recognised guidelines and retained for assessment.
- Any grave goods or coffin furniture will be retained for further assessment.

7.12 Where a licence is issued, all human skeletal remains must be properly removed in accordance with the terms of that licence. Where a licence is not issued, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with the requirements of Civil Law, IfA Technical Paper 13 (1993) and English Heritage guidance (2005).

## 8 REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION

8.1 Upon completion of the groundworks, a report will be prepared to include the following:

- a) A non-technical summary of the results of the work.
- b) An introduction which will include the planning reference number, grid reference and dates when the fieldwork took place.
- c) An account of the methodology and results of the operation, describing structural data, associated finds and environmental data.
- d) A selection of photographs and drawings, including an overall plan of the site accurately identifying the areas monitored.
- e) Specialist artefact and environmental reports as necessary.
- f) Details of archive location and destination (with accession number, where known), together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
- g) A copy of the key OASIS form details
- h) Copies of the Brief and WSI
- i) Additional photographic images may be supplied on a CDROM appended to the report

8.2 Copies of the report will be submitted to the commissioning body, the HER and the DAC (also in PDF format).

8.3 Leeds Museums and Galleries will be contacted prior to the commencement of work in order to ascertain their requirements for the archive which will be prepared in line with these and deposited to an agreed timetable. Allowance will be made within the project for the curation and deposition of the archive.

8.4 Provision for the publication of results, as outlined in the Brief, will be made.

8.5 The owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the information and documentation arising from the work, would grant a licence to the County Council and the museum accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions. Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), such documentation is required to be made available to enquirers if it meets the test of public interest. Any information disclosure issues would be resolved between the client and the archaeological contractor before completion of the work. EIR requirements do not affect IPR.

## 9 POST EXCAVATION ANALYSIS & PUBLICATION

9.1 In the event that no further fieldwork takes place on the site, a full programme of post excavation analysis and publication of artefactual and scientific material from the evaluation may be required by the WYAAS. **Where this is required, this work will be a new piece of work to be commissioned.**

9.2 The results of the work may be publicised locally, as appropriate.

9.3 The results of the work may be published in a relevant journal, as appropriate.

## 10 HEALTH AND SAFETY

10.1 Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

10.2 A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of site works.

## 11 TIMETABLE & STAFFING

11.1 A timetable of works will be provided by the client prior to commencement of any groundworks.

11.2 Specialist staff available for this work are as follows:

- Head of Artefact Research - Dr Ailsa Mainman
- Human Remains - Malin Holst (York Osteoarchaeology Ltd)
- Palaeoenvironmental remains – Dickson Lab York Archaeological Trust
- Head of Curatorial Services - Christine McDonnell
- Finds Researcher Rachel Cubitt
- Medieval Pottery Researcher - Anne Jenner
- Archaeometallurgy & Industrial Residues – Dr Rod Mackenzie and Rachel Cubitt
- Conservation – Dr Ian Panter

## 12 MONITORING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

12.1 As a minimum requirement, West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service (WYAAS) and the DAC Archaeologist will be given a minimum of one week's notice of work commencing on site, and will be afforded the opportunity to visit the site during and prior to completion of the on-site works so that the general stratigraphy of the site can be assessed. ArcHeritage will notify the WYAAS and the DAC Archaeologist of any discoveries of archaeological significance so that site visits can be made, as necessary. Any changes to this agreed WSI will only be made in consultation with the WYAAS.

## 13 COPYRIGHT

13.1 ArcHeritage retain the copyright on this document. It has been prepared expressly for the named client, and may not be passed to third parties for use or for the purpose of gathering quotations.

## 13 KEY REFERENCES

ADS and Digital Antiquity. 2013. Caring for Digital Data in Archaeology: A guide to Good Practice.

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See the website of the ClfA for all Guidance and Standards documentation.  
<http://www.archaeologists.net/codes/ifa>

See the **HELM** website for a full list of English Heritage Guidance documents.

<http://www.helm.org.uk/guidance-library/>



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