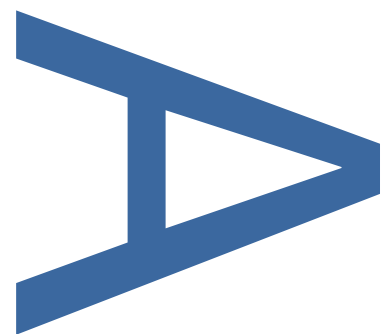
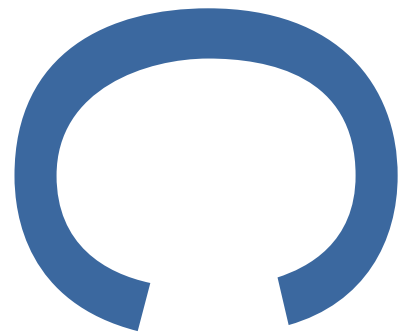


**ST LAURENCE CHURCH,
CHURCH HATCH,
DOWNTON,
WILTSHIRE
SP5 3PU**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF DURING EXCAVATION OF A
TRENCH ADJACENT TO THE
NORTH WALL OF THE
CHURCHYARD**

PCA REPORT NO: R14413

MARCH 2021



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**ST LAURENCE CHURCH, CHURCH HATCH, DOWNTON, WILTSHIRE SP5 3PU
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING THE EXCAVATION OF A
TRENCH ADJACENT TO THE NORTH WALL OF THE CHURCHYARD**

Local Planning Authority: Wiltshire Council
Planning Reference: Not required for maintenance and repair

Site Code: WSLD20
Central NGR: SU 18114 21637

Commissioning Client: Wiltshire Council

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March 2021

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DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

Site Name: St Laurence Church, Church Hatch, Downton, Wiltshire, SP5 3PU.

Type of project: Watching Brief

Report: R14413

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code: K6903		
	Name & Title	Date
Text Prepared by:	G. Howland	03/03/2021
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Graphics Checked by:	M. Roughley	12/03/2021
Project Manager Sign-off:	C. Matthews	15/03/2021

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Figure 2: Detailed Site Location

1 ABSTRACT

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) was appointed by the Historic Building Advisory Service on behalf of Wiltshire Council to carry out an archaeological watching brief at St Laurence Church, Church Hatch, Downton, Wiltshire. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation.

No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the watching brief. The deposits and finds uncovered were typical of post-medieval topsoil.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

2.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) was appointed by the Historic Building Advisory Service on behalf of Wiltshire Council to carry out an archaeological watching brief at St Laurence Church, Church Hatch, Downton, Wiltshire, hereafter 'the Site' (**Figure 1** and **2**).

2.1.2 The 'Churchyard Boundary Wall Immediately North of Church of St Laurence and South West of Manor House, Barford Lane' is Grade II Listed (**Plate 1**). In its listing citation it is described as:

'Churchyard boundary wall. C18 with earlier work and some C19 rebuilding. Mainly English bond red brick, possibly, early C18, with some earlier flint and brick at centre and C19 section rebuilt in flint and brick at west end. Forms boundary of churchyard immediately north of church of St Laurence and the front garden of the Manor House'.

2.1.3 This report describes the result of the watching brief, which was undertaken intermittently from 18th February to 2nd March 2021.

2.1.4 This report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (ClfA 2014, updated June 2020) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England, 2015). PCA is a ClfA Registered Archaeological Organisation and is bound by its code of conduct.

2.2 Location, Topography and Geology

2.2.1 The village of Downton lies on the east bank of the River Avon in southern Wiltshire, about 10km southeast of the city of Salisbury. St Laurence Church is located within the core of the historic village to the north of the High Street. It is bordered to the north by the Manor House.

2.2.2 The Site is fairly flat, and characteristic of its valley floor location: to the west the village lies on alluvial deposits of the River Avon which flows south. The Site lies to the east on superficial Head (clay and silt) deposits over Chalk bedrock.

2.3 Archaeological Background

2.3.1 The Site lies in an area of known archaeological sites, findspots and monuments ranging in date from the later prehistoric period to the post-medieval period. This archaeological evidence combined with historical and cartographic information was used to inform an Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) of Downton (WCAS 2004) that describes its archaeological and historical background.

2.3.2 The EUS summarises Downton's archaeological and historical background as follows:
'A cluster of prehistoric sites and finds are known from an area to the south of the historic core of the village.

A substantial Roman villa site also lies just to the south of the village. In Castle Meadow a pair of intersecting Roman roads were discovered, along with ditches and postholes. One

of the roads was aligned upon the villa site to the south.

Excavations in Castle Meadow revealed a large gravel pit, near the base of which was found Saxon pottery tentatively dated to the 7th or 8th centuries. Elsewhere in Castle Meadow, a series of ditches were recorded cutting the surfaces of two Roman roads, and a number of deposits filling the Roman roadside ditches. The stratigraphic relationships suggested the group of features to be of late Saxon origin. A group of three iron axes were discovered during the excavation of building foundations at the former Downton Mills. The group includes a battleaxe of "Frankish Form" dated to the 7th to 9th centuries, a "bearded" battleaxe of 11th century date, and a woodmans axe of probable later Saxon date.

There is strong circumstantial evidence to suggest the presence of a minster at Downton. The architectural evidence points to the Norman elements of the present church standing upon the foundations of an earlier structure, a not unusual aspect of late 11th and 12th century church building. The historical record gives details which are consistent with the activities and status of a minster: at the time of Domesday the church at Downton served, and received tithes from, the entire episcopal estate - a very extensive area including several sub-settlements and villages. Such a ministry implies the presence of more than one priest and the existence of a "mother church".

Minsters provided an economic stimulus via the organic growth of trade & commerce, and as the sites of shrines attracted numerous pilgrims. They were often sited on prominent places and above watercourses – as is the present St Laurence's - and it is possible that the first church at Downton may relate to the period of establishment of Christianity within the West Saxon kingdom in the late 7th/early 8th centuries, and specifically to the third quarter of the 7th century, following the elevation of the church at Winchester (which tradition holds was granted the manor at Downton by King Cenwalh in c.650) to cathedral status.

The medieval period was Downton's chief period of expansion, and several sites and findspots are known. Possibly the most important site in the period following the Conquest was the episcopal palace at the site now called "Old Court", which was the source of the settlement's prosperity, and was later the driving force behind the expansion of the town and its elevation to borough status.

The presence of an important episcopal site in Downton led indirectly to the creation of the town's best known monument, The Moot. At the outbreak of hostilities between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda in the 12th century, Stephen's brother - Henry de Blois, Bishop of Winchester – ordered the construction of a ringwork stronghold on the slightly higher ground to the east of his episcopal palace. The historical record shows this structure to have had a short active life, being captured and plundered in 1147, and slighted soon afterwards.

Downton's High Street is probably one of the oldest routes through the town but was first so called in documentary records in 1452.

The church of St. Laurence has architectural details dating to the mid-12th century, although the majority of the church is of 13th and 14th century date with later restorations and alterations. A church has probably stood on this site since at least the later Saxon period, given the known early ecclesiastical links with Downton. The irregular spacing of the nave arcades and the raking transepts probably indicate that the 12th and 13th century work is built upon the pre-existing foundations of an earlier structure – a premise reinforced by the offset on the north side of the north arcade wall, which may suggest that the pre-12th century work continued further to the east than is represented by the standing architecture. Within the churchyard stands a Medieval stone cross of unknown history. To the north of the church stands the Manor House, of 14th century date, with later additions. This was formerly the manor house of Downton Rectory, appropriated by the Bishops of Winchester in 1380. Given the known grants of land to Downton Church estate in the period immediately following the Conquest, it is possible that the present building stands upon the site of an earlier ecclesiastical dwelling or farm.’

2.3.3 Of specific relevance to the Site, the EUS states:

‘St Laurence’s Church has been identified as the site of a possible minster and later Saxon church. Research is required to determine the earliest ecclesiastical use and subsequent chronology of the site. Although it is recognised that a significant development-generated archaeological project here is unlikely, churches and churchyards are occasionally subject to minor interventions such as underpinning, damp-proofing, and the cutting of drainage and service trenches, all of which offer the opportunity for archaeological observation on this site of local importance’.

3 AIM

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

3.1.1 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to monitor groundwork and investigate and record archaeological remains that are identified, taking account of the date, nature, extent, bio-archaeological and palaeo-environmental potential of the remains and the potential of the Site that has been identified.

3.1.2 A further aim of the work was to prepare an archive of the results of the investigation leading to, if the archaeological evidence warrants it, the preparation of post-excavation assessment report and, if appropriate, a further programme of analysis and publication.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following presents a summary of the watching brief results, based upon the Site archive, which comprises a Site diary, written and drawn records and digital photographs. A selection of photographs (**Plates 1 to 4**) are shown in **Appendix 1**. An OASIS report is provided in **Appendix 2**. The archive is held at PCA's Winchester office under the site code **WSLD 20** and will in due course be deposited with the Salisbury Museum.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the methodology that was detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (PCA 2020).

4.2.2 The watching brief was carried out intermittently from 18th February to 2nd March 2021. The monitored works included the excavation of a hand-dug trench c.0.3m wide and 0.3m deep, formed against the north churchyard wall (**Figure 2; Plate 1**).

4.3 Deposition Sequence

4.3.1 Natural solid or drift geology was not revealed.

4.3.2 A layer of dark brown topsoil was observed across the whole trench. This layer contained disarticulated bone, post-medieval and modern artefacts (glass bottles, miscellaneous Fe objects) and building material (ceramic building material: brick and tile). No medieval or earlier finds were retrieved.

4.4 Conclusion

4.4.1 No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the watching brief. The deposits and finds uncovered were typical of post-medieval topsoil.

4.4.2 All the bone uncovered during the watching brief was disarticulated and the majority was clearly identifiable as animal bone.

5 ARCHIVE PREPARATION AND DEPOSITION

5.1 The Site Archive

5.1.1 The Site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, will be prepared in accordance with '*Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage*' (UKIC 1990) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*' (CIfA 2014, updated 2020). In due course the project archive will be deposited with Salisbury Museum.

5.2 Copyright

5.2.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative archive relating to the site will be retained by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. Salisbury Museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use shall be non-profitmaking, and conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights regulations 2003. Further distribution and uses of the report either in its entirety or part thereof in paper or electronic form is prohibited without the prior consent of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

5.2.2 The licence extends to the use of all documents arising from this project in all matters relating directly to the project, as well as for bona fide research purposes (which includes Wiltshire Archaeology and Historic Buildings Record).

5.2.3 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the content of this report. However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from, errors, inaccuracies or omissions this report contains.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology is grateful to Wiltshire Council for commissioning the work.

The Watching Brief was undertaken by Maisie Marshall, Bartłomiej Grden and Gareth Howland and managed by Charlotte Matthews. This report written by Gareth Howland. Illustrations were prepared by Diana Valk.

7 REFERENCES

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014, updated 2020, *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*

Historic England, 2015, *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment MoRPHE*

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, 2020, *St Laurence Church, Church Hatch, Downton, Wiltshire SP5 3PU: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief during Excavation of a Trench Adjacent To The North Boundary Wall Of The Churchyard*

WCAS, 2004, *The Archaeology of Wiltshire Towns: An Extensive Urban Survey of Downton*, Wiltshire County Archaeological Service

Appendix 1: Photographs (Plates 1 - 4)



Plate 1. North boundary wall of churchyard (left) and St Laurence Church (right), looking east.



Plate 2. East end of trench, looking northeast.



Plate 3. Trench mid excavation, looking east.

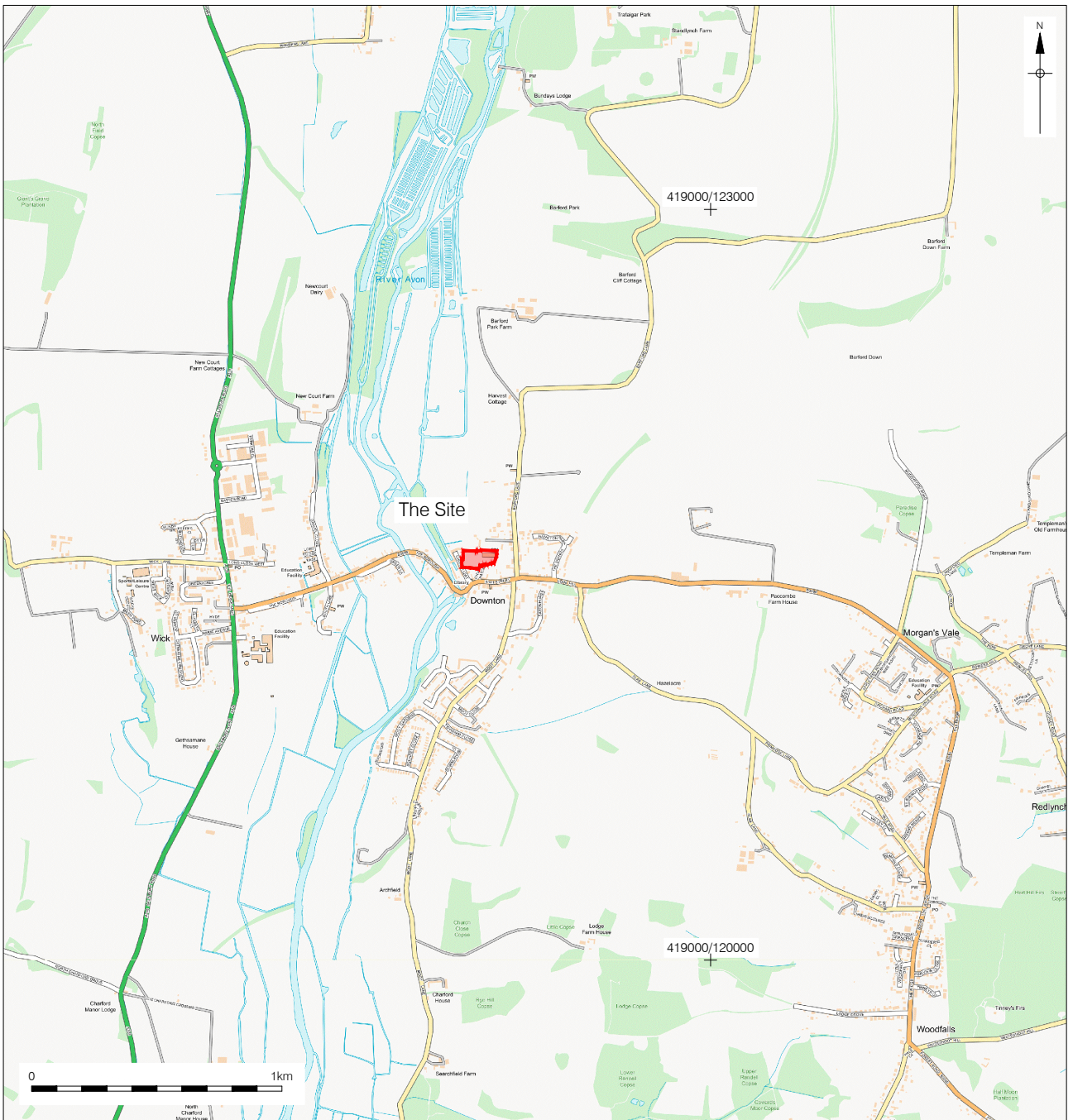
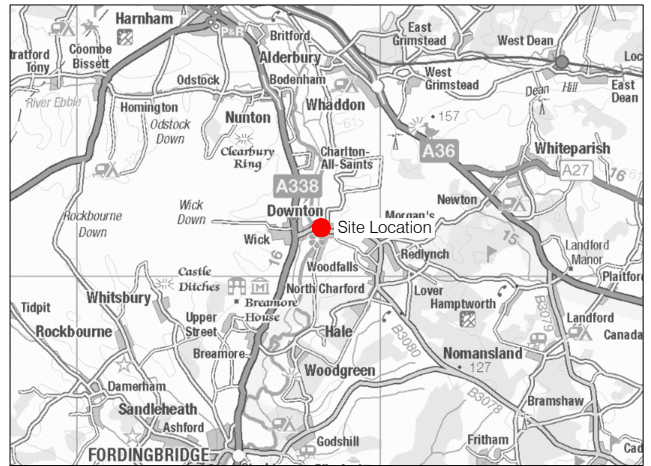


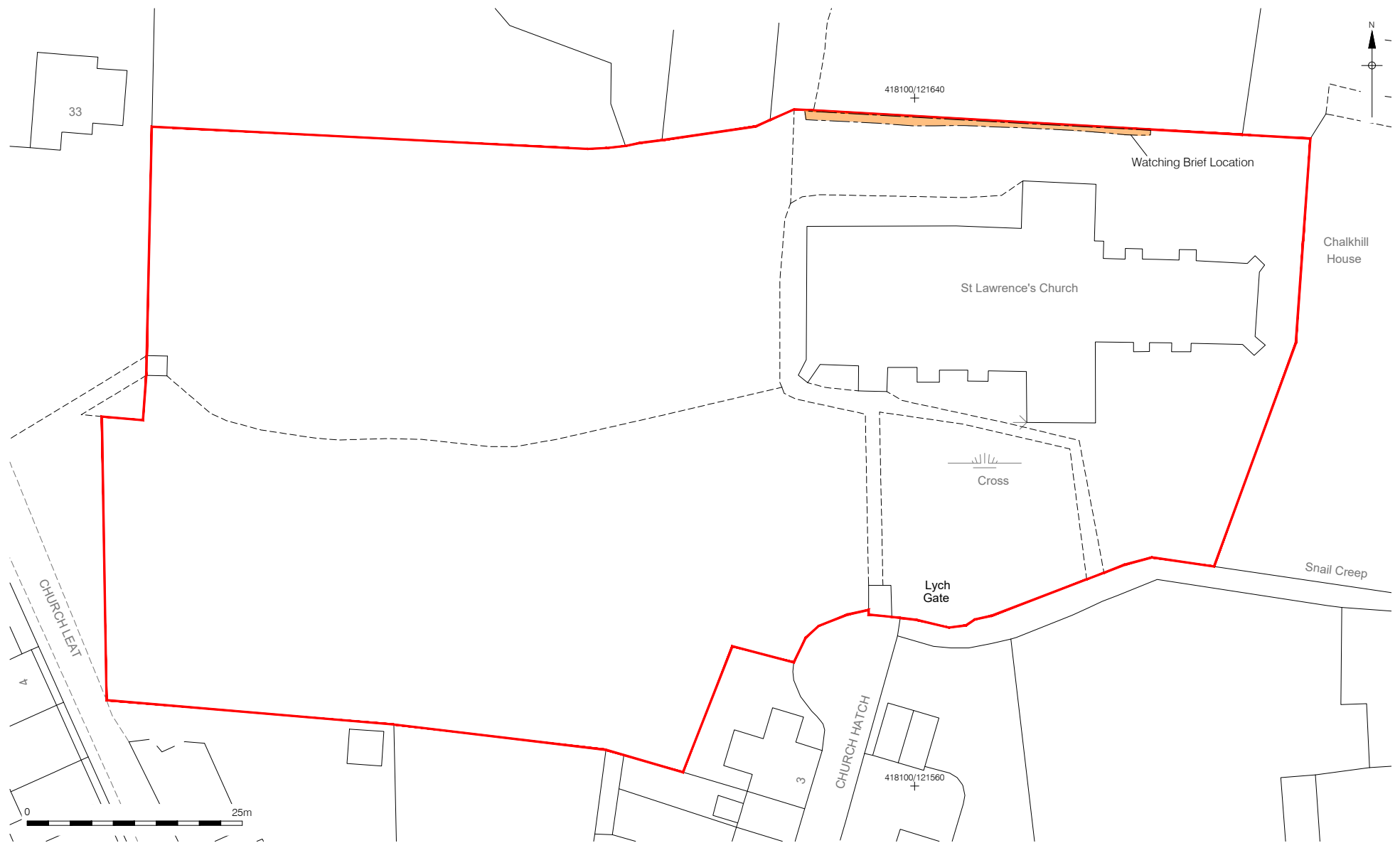
Plate 4. Trench mid excavation, looking northwest.

Appendix 2: OASIS Form

Summary for preconst1-501396

OASIS ID (UID)	preconst1-501396
Project Name	Watching Brief at St Laurence Church, Downton
Activity type	Watching Brief
Project Identifier(s)	St Laurence Church, Downton
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Heritage management
Organisation Responsible for work	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project Dates	18-Feb-2021 - 02-Mar-2021
Location	St Laurence Church, Downton NGR : SU 18114 21637 LL : 50.9938476316385, - 1.74326949160105 12 Fig : 418114,121637
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Wiltshire District : Wiltshire Parish : Downton
Project Methodology	The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the methodology that was detailed in the Written Scheme of Investigation. The watching brief was carried out intermittently from 18th February to 2nd March 2021. The monitored works included the excavation of a trench c.0.3m wide and 0.3m deep, formed against the north boundary wall of the churchyard.
Project Results	No significant archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the watching brief. The deposits and finds uncovered were typical of post medieval topsoil.
Keywords	
HER	Wiltshire and Swindon HER - unRev - STANDARD
HER Identifiers	
Archives	PAPER, DIGITAL - to be deposited with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum





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