

Marches Archaeology

**The Church Centre
Saint Luke's Church
Cannock
Staffordshire**

Report on a desk-based assessment

May 2004

Marches Archaeology Series 341

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Marches Archaeology

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**The Church Centre
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Staffordshire**

**A report on an archaeological
desk-based assessment**

NGR: SJ 9817 1012

**Report by
Adrian F. Nash**

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**A report on an archaeological
desk-based assessment**

Summary

This desk based assessment is produced to support the submission of a planning application on the site of the Church Centre at Saint Luke's Church in Cannock, Staffordshire.

The 1842 Tithe plan showed that the site was divided into three plots with buildings fronting along the south edge. It is possible that the plots were set out in the medieval period. The apportionment to the tithe plan recorded that these plots were privately owned. The 1884 edition of the Ordnance Survey plan showed that the earlier layout of the plots had been replaced and the buildings on the site were demolished. In the late 19th century and through the first half of the 20th century the site appears to have been part of the gardens to a substantial building, which may have been a three-storey doctor's house.

The old doctor's house, the parsonage and the parish room were demolished to make way for a new by-pass in 1973. Funding from the sale of the church property and donations financed the building of the new Church Centre.

1 Introduction

A planning application is to be submitted to the local planning authority for permission to redevelop the Church Centre at Saint Luke's Church in Cannock, Staffordshire (Fig. 1). The site is situated at NGR: SJ 9817 1012. Saint Luke's Church is registered with the Sites and Monument Record for the county of Staffordshire (SSMR: 09338) as a site of archaeological interest.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor advised that further information was required before the archaeological implications of the application could be adequately assessed and recommended that an archaeological desk-based assessment be carried out.

The Local Planning Authority's Archaeology Advisor produced a 'Brief for a desk-based assessment'. Brownhill Hayward Brown Architects (the client), commissioned Marches Archaeology to provide the archaeological services.

2 Scope and aims of the project

The purpose of Desk-based Assessment is defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists as:-

"to gain information about the known or potential archaeological resource within a given area or site, including its presence or absence, character and extent, date, integrity, state of preservation and relative quality, in order to make an assessment of its worth in the appropriate context leading to the formation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource or for further investigation where the character of the resource is not sufficiently defined, or the formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research".

3 Methodology

The archaeological assessment consulted primary and secondary sources. The Staffordshire Sites and Monuments Record, County Record Office, The Joint Record Office, Lichfield, the William Salt Library and Cannock Public Library were consulted. The following sources were also considered:

Ordnance Survey maps; Tithe maps; Estate maps and other historical maps;
Previous published and unpublished archaeological reports and archive work;
Written non-archaeological sources and geological maps.

4 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 Cannock

Our understanding of early settlement in the immediate vicinity of Cannock is limited due to the small amount of archaeological works undertaken. Knowledge of the prehistoric period is limited to an isolated find of a Bronze Age barbed and tanged arrowhead found in the garden of a house in Stafford Road in 1938. Cannock is not referred to in historic texts until the medieval period. The earliest documentary source, The Domesday Book, refers to Cannock as 'Chenet' (Hawkins & Rumble, 1976). The settlement was in Cuttlestone hundred and was held by the King. It describes it thus:

*Cannock, Earl Algar held it. 1 hide with its dependencies
Land for 15 ploughs.
8 villagers and 3 smallholders with 3 ploughs.
Woodland 4 leagues wide and 6 leagues long.
Before 1066 it paid nothing now 20s*

A further reference from Domesday is to a small parcel of land, which states that:

*Aelfric holds 1 carucate of land in Cannock
Land for 1 plough
He has 3 smallholders, Value 5s*

This gives the impression of a small settlement, exploiting the Chase (SSMR 02403), possibly originally as a hunting lodge for Earl Leofric of Mercia, Aelfric's father. It gives no indication of the antiquity of the settlement though the woodland would have been a prime site for exploitation in the early medieval period, and the place name Rugeley, on the other side of the Chase, suggests an Old English root. Edwin of Mercia, who actually held Cannock at the time of the Conquest, his father Aelfric having died in 1062, had managed to hold on to some control, but the Earldom was escheated after he took part in the rebellion of 1069-70. King William appointed Richard Chenven as Chief Forester of Cannock (Farr, 1990).

In the 1130s King Stephen granted land at Radmore to the east of Cannock for the foundation of a Cistercian Abbey.

In 1152 Pope Eugenius III confirmed some of the rights to the vill to Bishop Walter Durdant. Henry Plantagenet honoured this in 1153 when he exempted the holdings from a grant of all the royal land in Staffordshire to Ranulph Earl of Chester in 1153. Ranulph died at the end of 1153 but before doing so had granted his interest in Cannock to the Cistercian Abbey at Radmore. Henry confirmed this grant on his accession in 1155. In that same year the monks transferred to Stoneleigh in Warwickshire at their own request and at some time before 1169 the land reverted to the Crown. It was assessed with the other Royal holdings until 1187. However, in 1189, whilst raising money for the Crusades, Richard I sold the vill of Cannock and Rugeley to Hugh de Nonant, Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. Pope Celestine III confirmed this in 1191. During Richard's captivity Hugh, who was also Sheriff of Staffordshire, Warwickshire and Leicestershire, conspired with Prince John, and on Richard's return was temporarily stripped of both his see and his holdings. He was able to buy back his position the next year on the payment of a fine of 2000 marks, but was a broken man and retired from public life to live in Normandy where he died in 1198 (Poole, 1955). Richard confirmed the holdings to the next Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield but in 1200 they were returned to the Crown at a rent of £10 per year. This rent was paid until the death of the Bishop in 1208. From 1208 to 1215 the see was kept vacant and Cannock was assessed with the Royal holdings. As soon as the post was filled, by Bishop William de Cornhill (1215-1223), the rents were paid again and continued to be so until 1230. In that year the original grant of Richard I was confirmed and the manors reverted to the Bishops of Coventry and Lichfield. This grant was confirmed again in 1290 and then periodically until 1510. A charter of 1255 noted that the Bishop, as Lord of Cannock, held 1 hide free of rents. In 1259 Bishop Roger de Meuland or Longespee (1257-95) was granted free warren by Henry III, and in the same year Cannock also gained a market charter.

By 1220 there was a hospital at Cannock dedicated to Saint Mary comprising of a prior and brethren (SSMR 50409). The hospital rented land from the king, Henry III. The rent soon went into arrears and is suspected that the Hospital had closed by 1292 (*ibid.*). The location of the hospital is not known.

At some time before 1274 a twice-yearly view of frankpledge was instigated and from then until 1510 Cannock had five representatives, as did Rugeley with Brereton, Great Wyrley had 2 and Huntington 2. The value of the frankpledge to the Lord was constant at 3s for all that time. A bridge was rebuilt in Cannock in 1281, possibly the bridge near the mill. A charter of 1298 valued the 'capital messuage with a garden' at 26s 8d.

By 1309 a three weekly court was being held alternately in Rugeley and Cannock. It collected the rents and supervised the paying of heriots and reliefs as well as judging on offences reported by the Lords foresters and the issuing of brewing and baking licences.

In 1595 the court conducted a survey and divided the tenants into 'Oldholders' and 'Copyholders', with the former having the right to hunt in the forest and pay their dues twice yearly whilst the copyholders had to attend the three weekly court unless they bought exemption at ½d a week or 8d per year (VCH, 1959).

Archaeological evidence for medieval Cannock has been found in excavations at 67-9 High Street (Wainwright, 1999: SSMR 05536) and at 77 High Green, Cannock (Wainwright, Appleton-Fox and Tavener, 1999; SSMR 05537). The excavation found residual medieval pottery at 67-9 High Street and a series of five pits containing iron slag and animal bone at 77 High Green.

The episcopal connection came to an end in September 1546 when the Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations was ordered to arrange an exchange with the then bishop, Richard Sampson, of the lands and manors of the bishopric for benefices of equal value. In October of the same year the manor was sold to Sir William Paget. Three years later he was created Lord Paget of Beaudesert. Lord Paget built the first Blast Furnace in the West Midlands on his estate in the Chase in 1560, its output was up to 1 ton a day. On his death in 1563 his son Henry became the 2nd Lord Beaudesert and the family connection continued unbroken up until the present century apart from a period around 1583 when Elisabeth I confiscated the manor for a short period. From 1918 onwards the estate was gradually sold off by the now Marquis of Anglesey (VCH, 1959).

A document relating to the time of the confiscation shows that iron working and coal mining had become important in the area, and when the Queen took over Lord Paget had left '*a greate stoke of myne and cole redie caryed and layde at the mylles there*' (Hackwood, 1903). In 1589 Elizabeth gave a twenty one year lease on all the coal mining rights in New Hay and Red Moor to Gilbert Wakering, who had two mines operating by 1595 with further pits being opened shortly afterwards (Farr, 1990).

During the Civil War Cannock was held by the Parliamentarians and was the scene of a skirmish in 1646 when a cavalry unit from Stafford beat off an attack from a unit of Royalists from Lichfield (VCH, 1959). The population of Cannock in 1666 consisted of 86 households (VCH, 1959).

At the end of the 18th century Cannock was described as being positioned on 'a rising ground and in so porous a sort that water is frequently scarce in summer' (Shaw, 1798). To combat this problem the Cannock Conduit Trust was formed in 1736 to provide pipes to bring water from a spring in Rumer Hill, Leacroft. The octagonal conduit head still survives and consists of a two-storey sandstone ashlar building with a pyramidal stone roof with a ball finial on top. (SSMR: 00066). The cost was met by public subscription, this system continued to provide Cannock with water until 1942 when the effects of mining subsidence made it impossible.

The Bowling Green in Market Square was in existence by 1753 when a wall was erected around it (Farr, 1990).

Mining continued to be of great importance with new pits opening well into the 20th century and opencast mining starting in 1956. The presence of coal and clay also led to the development of a brick and tile industry in the 19th century. The coming of the canal in 1840, followed by the railway in 1858 helped with the industrialisation of the area.

In 1851 the population of Cannock was around 1,100 but by 1871 had grown to 6,650, and by 1901 it had grown to 23,974. Today the population is over 60,000.

Cannock for a town of its size has very few surviving buildings of note. The Sites and Monument Record lists that the earliest surviving secular building is No. 79 High Green, which probably dates to the 16th century (SSMR 09948). This building forms part of a group that includes No. 77, the National Westminster Bank, (SSMR 09349) and Nos. 71, 71a, 73 and 75 (SSMR 09345) and are 19th century buildings. Examples of 18th century buildings survive at Nos. 10, 8 and 8a Mill Street (SSMR 09361; 09359) and in the High Street there is the Council House (SSMR 09342) with its 19th century wrought iron gates and railing (SSMR 094343). A 19th century Congressional Chapel and manse survives on Stafford Road (SSMR 14213; 14214)

4.2 *The site*

Situated to the west of the site is the Church of Saint Luke that has masonry in the west end of the north aisle that dates back to the late 12th century (SSMR 09338). In the 14th century the church was largely rebuilt (VCH, 1959, 64). The medieval church consisted of an aisled nave of four bays with a tower at the west end and a chapel occupying the easternmost bay of the north aisle (VCH, 1959, 65). The tower was replaced in the 16th century though it was later refaced. A map of 1747 by James Smith shows the church with a few surrounding houses (Farr, 1990, 10). The south side of the church was rebuilt in 1753, with the hipped roof and clerestory being added in the same century (VCH, 1959, 65). A series of illustrations from 1841 by J. C. Buckler, in the William Salt Library collection, show the interior and exterior of the church. In 1849 the church was repewed and north side was restored. More extensive alterations took place between 1878 and 1882 when the nave aisles were extended eastwards and a new chancel, with a vestry and organ chamber, was built. In 1949 a south chapel was added to the church as a memorial to the fallen of both world wars and in 1956 a new south porch was added (VCH, 1956, 66).

The main entrance to the churchyard is through a pair of wrought iron gates with a single gate at each side that dates from the late 18th century or early 19th century (SSMR 09339). In the churchyard is a stone cross probably dating from 13th or 14th century (VCH, 1956, 66). The churchyard was closed to new burials in 1878. A photograph from the winter of 1909 shows the south facing elevation of the church with the gravestones and vaults *in-situ* (Wooley, 1995, 3). An area of the south side of graveyard was surrendered to the Ministry of Transport in 1941 to widen a section of the road near to the town (VCH, 1959, 66). In 1949-50 the old headstones and vault surrounds were removed, the ground was cleared, levelled and seeded to grass (Linford, 1976).

The site, which is situated to the east of the church and graveyard, is shown on the 1842 Tithe map as being occupied by three plots; plots 430 and 429 and part of 428 (Fig. 2). The apportionment records that the plots consisted of houses and gardens under private ownership (Table 1).

NO.	LANDOWNER	OCCUPIER	NAME & DESCRIPTION OF LAND, PREMISES
420	Masfen, William	William Peake	Three tenements and yard
421	Masfen, William	William Hobday	Malthouse
422	Lant, Edward	John Corn	House buildings and yard
423	Bailey, Robert	In hand	House, shop and garden
424	Lant, Edward	John Corn	Garden
425	Trustees of the Marquis of Anglesey	William and Joseph Haddock	House, smith, shops and garden
426	Parkes, Thomas Wright	Void	Houseyard
427	Parkes, Ann	In hand	Croft Garden
428	Parkes, Ann	In hand	House, building gardens
429	Blewitt, William	Mary Birch	House and Garden
430	Trustees of the Marquis of Anglesey	The Rev ^d John Shiel	House and Garden
431	Shiel, Rev ^d John as Curate of Cannock	In hand	Churchyard
432	Trustees of the Marquis of Anglesey	Joseph Poyner	Homestead and gardens
549	Trustees of the Marquis of Anglesey	Joseph Poyner	Lower Croft, pasture
550	Lichfield, the Dean and Chapter of	Rev ^d John M Dermont	Parsonage House and Garden
551	Lichfield, the Dean and Chapter of	Rev ^d John M Dermont	Croft
553	Lant, Edward	In hand	House building and yard

Table 1 Tithe Apportionment of 1842

The 1834 edition of the *White's Directory of Staffordshire* notes that John Shiel was reverend of the parish at that time but there is no mention of a parsonage or vicarage (White, 1834, 485). The later edition of 1851 states that a new parsonage house had been built in 1839 at the cost of £800.00 (White, 1851, 450) and this is shown on the Tithe map as plot 550 and was occupied by Reverend John M. Dermont. Why the Reverend Shiel was leasing a house is not clear from the sources though it would seem that apparent that a parsonage and a vicarage may have been required.

The plots shown on the 1842 tithe plan, with long narrow linear forms, are consistent with medieval burgage plots. It is possible that the division of these plots and the buildings shown on the plan date to this period.

A plan of 1865 (Fig. 3) only shows the north-west corner of the site. It does show the extent of the graveyard and that there was a division between it and the site. The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) shows a completely different layout to that shown on the earlier tithe map. The north-south linear plots that made up the division of the area have gone and have been replaced by three plots that are now running east to west and now appear to have frontages emphasised on Mill Street. The earlier building that stood on apportionment plots 430 and 429 have been demolished and the large buildings that formed part of the complex of buildings of 428 has either been replaced or extensively extended to the north and east. It is possible that this was a three-storey doctor's house (Linford, 1976). The outbuildings shown on the tithe map have gone and new buildings are shown on the Mill Street frontage on two of the plots. The land to the rear of the buildings, which mostly makes up the site, is shown as open land with some trees and footpaths. Kelly's directory for 1880 states that 25 acres of land was allotted glebe and parsonage. If the site was part of this land it is not shown in the evidence. The map shows a division between the church graveyard and the site. There is no indication that the open area of the site had been utilised as an extension of the graveyard.

The Ordnance Survey plan of 1902 (Fig. 5) shows few changes on the site since 1884. The only change appears to be the inclusion of a flowerbed with trees running parallel to the path along the west boundary. Since the 1884 map new paths in the church graveyard have been formed. It is of note as one the new paths runs along the west boundary of the site, which indicates that the site and the graveyard are separate entities with no right of way through the site. It looks as if the site was part of the private gardens associated with the house, though it cannot be ruled out that the land may have formed part of the glebe.

The 1918 and 1938 Ordnance Survey plans reveal no changes to the site (Fig. 6 & 7). The 1938 Ordnance Survey map does show that the path in the graveyard along the west boundary of the site was no longer present.

The most significant changes to the site occurred in 1973 when the ground to the east and north of the site were acquired by the Local Authority to build a by-pass. To make way for the development the old vicarage, the old parish room and the old doctor's house were demolished (Linford, 1976). Compensation from the parish room and land, and substantial help from the New Hall Trust, the church was able to build the present church centre (Fig. 8). The centre was designed by Hawkins and Roberts, Architects, Cannock and was built by A. & R. Astbury Ltd of Cannock (Linford, 1976).

5 Discussion and conclusions

There is little specific evidence about the site until the 1842 tithe map. The map shows that the site was divided into three north to south linear plots. The character of these plots is consistent with medieval burgage plots found in other towns, such as Lichfield, where they have been shown to have medieval origins. As the characteristics of the plots have similarities to these it would seem likely that the plots were set out in the medieval period. The buildings shown may have been from medieval period or later but presumably by the mid to late 19th century they were in poor condition and demolished. The land and buildings were not owned by the church but were in private hands though the Reverend Shiel occupied one of the plots.

The 1884 Ordnance Survey map reveals that significant changes had occurred to the site with the previous plot allocation being eradicated. The area of land was distributed into three plots orientated from the Mill Street frontage to the west towards the church. The site appears to have been part of the gardens to a substantial house, which most likely was the old doctor's house that was demolished to make way for the new by-pass in 1973.

The 20th century maps record that in the first half of the century little changed on the site. The most significant changes occurred in the early 1970s when the local authority purchased the land and property surrounding the site to construct the present by-pass. It seems that until this point the site had no affiliations to the church. The profit from the sales of the church land and properties to the north of the site provided part of the funding towards the construction of the present centre that has stood on the site since 1973.

The evidence suggests that the site may have been occupied from the medieval period onwards. Any standing archaeology from medieval or early post-medieval periods was removed in the second half of the 19th century when the site became a garden. It is possible that below ground archaeological features have survived but it is unlikely that much would have survived in the footprint of the Church Centre. There does not seem to be any indication from the sources that the site has at any time been part of the graveyard, though this cannot be wholly ruled out.

6 Sources consulted

Abbreviations used

SSMR: Staffordshire County Council Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record
CRO: County Record Office, Stafford

6.1 Cartographic source

1747 A new map of Staffordshire by James Smith

1842 Tithe Map

1865 Ordnance Survey plan by Captain James

Ordnance Survey map of 1884, 25" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey map of 1902, 25" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey map of 1918, 25" to 1 mile

Ordnance Survey map of 1938, 25" to 1 mile

6.2 *Primary records consulted*

Staffordshire County Council Archaeology Service Sites and Monuments Record

Indexes in the County Record Office

Indexes in the William Salt Library, Stafford

Indexes in the Joint Record Office, Lichfield

Maps held by Cannock Chase Central Library

6.3 *Publications consulted*

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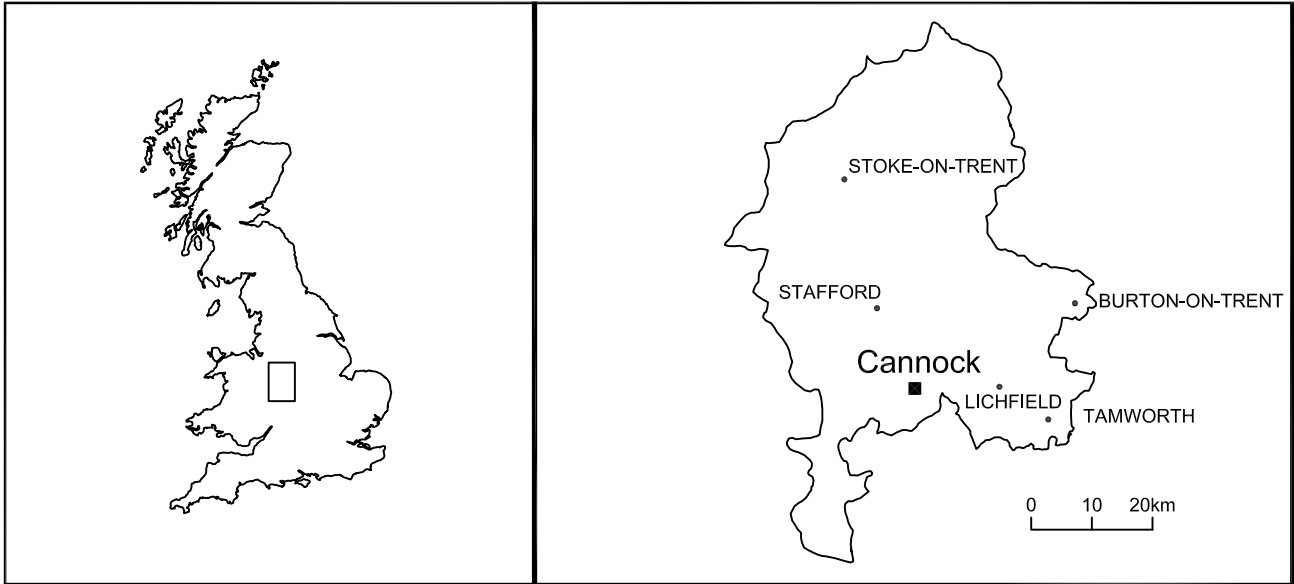
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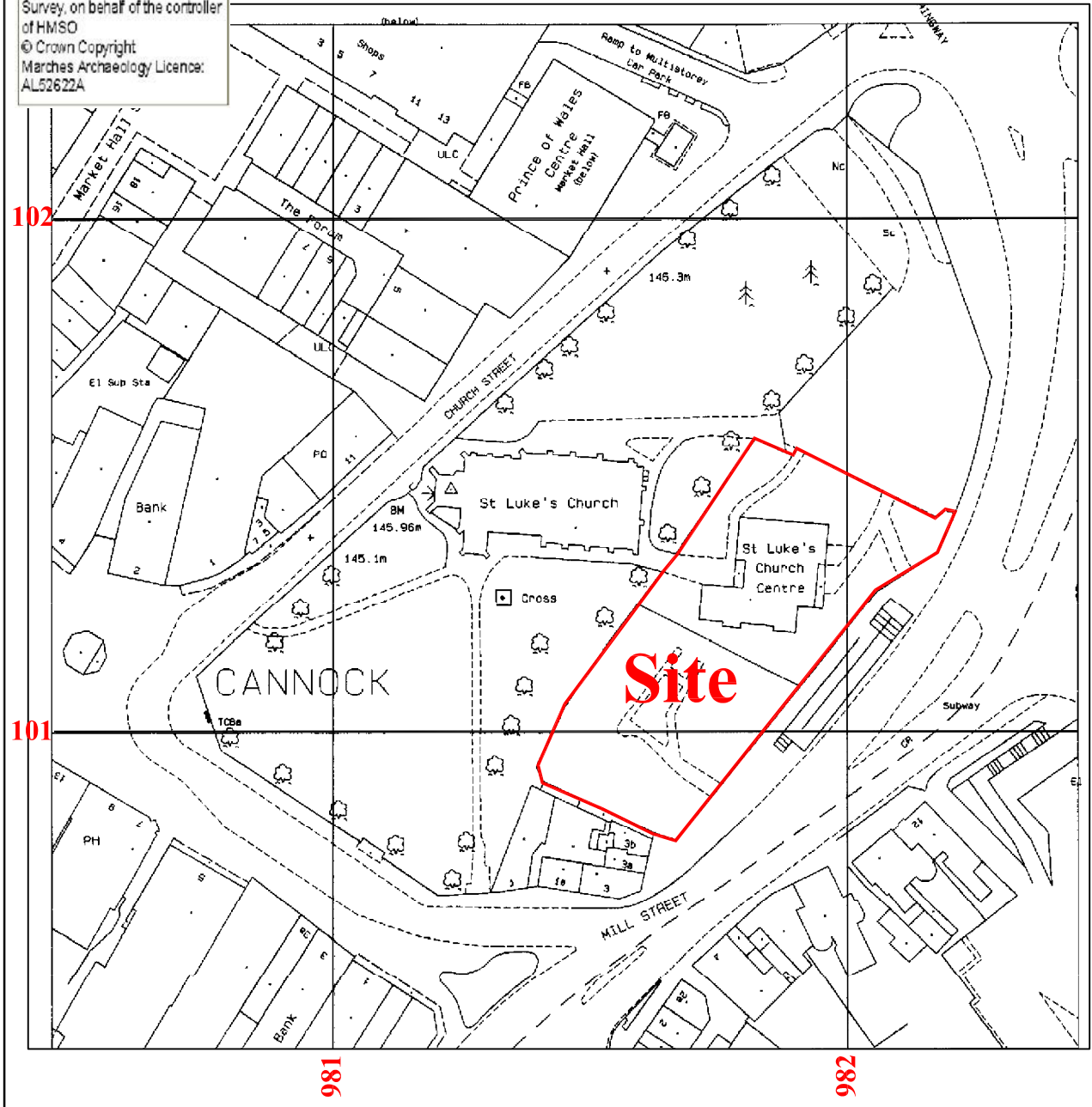


Fig. 1 Location of the site