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St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover, East Cheshire.

February 2017
V 1.0



Archaeological Watching Brief
Project Code: A0105.1
Report no. 0117



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Archaeological Watching Brief

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Project Code: A0105.1

Date: 22/02/2017

Client: Wardens and PCC of St. Oswald's Church
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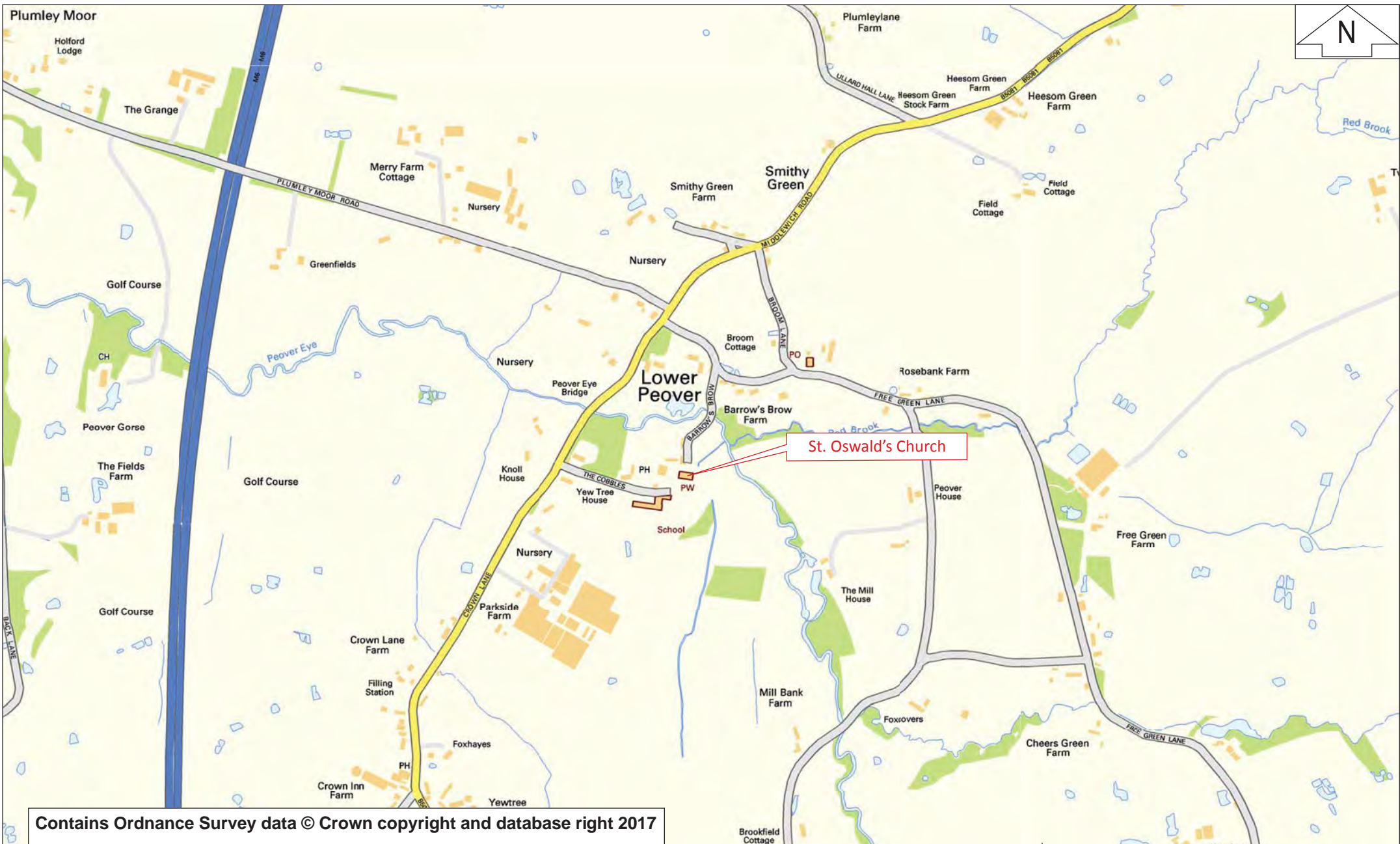
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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by the Wardens and PCC of St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover to carry out a programme of archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the construction of a new toilet block at St. Oswald's Church, Crown Lane, Lower Peover, Cheshire WA16 9PY (centred on **NGR SJ 74317 74169**) (Faculty Permission: **062/14**).

The archaeological watching brief at St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover revealed information about previous topography of the graveyard with the potential remains of a wall foundation. Furthermore the watching brief called for recording work to be carried out on five grave markers to the northeast of the church and three further grave markers closer to the eastern end of the northern aisle wall of the church - which were moved as the result of ground works.

The monitoring of the excavation for the drop shaft for the sewage treatment plant close to the north-eastern boundary of the churchyard revealed a large area of made ground comprised of tipped Victorian refuse, rotted down vegetation and leaf mulch. The foundation trench for the toilet block to the northeast of the church discovered a deposit of clay within a cut which may have been a wall foundation. The origin and identity of this wall is unknown however there is potential for it to have been a boundary wall which is supported by the presence of a land partition (Figure 08) on the Great Budworth, Nether Peover tithe map (1836-51) in this general location.

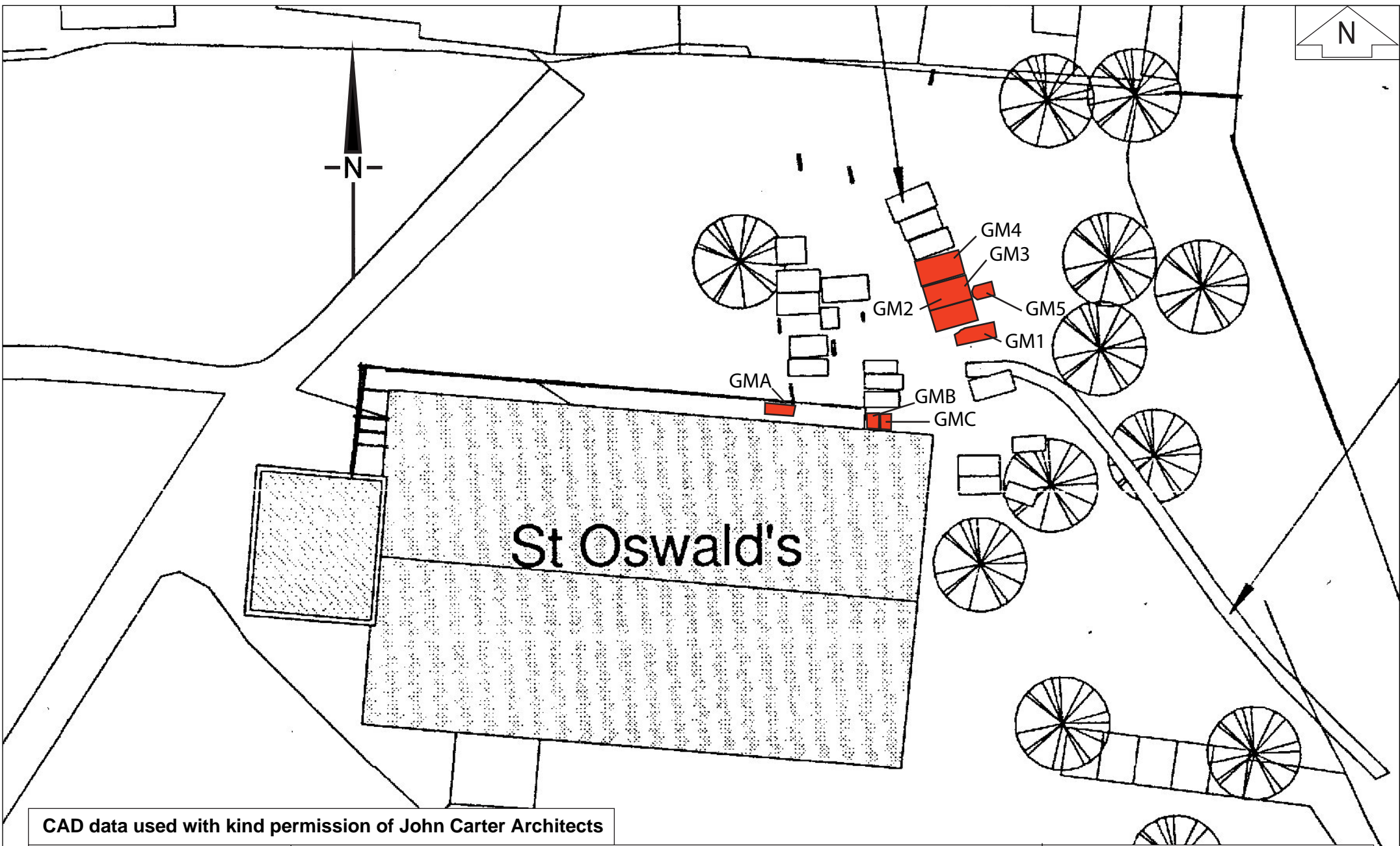


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Figure 01: Location of St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover, Cheshire. Scale 1:10,000 at A4.



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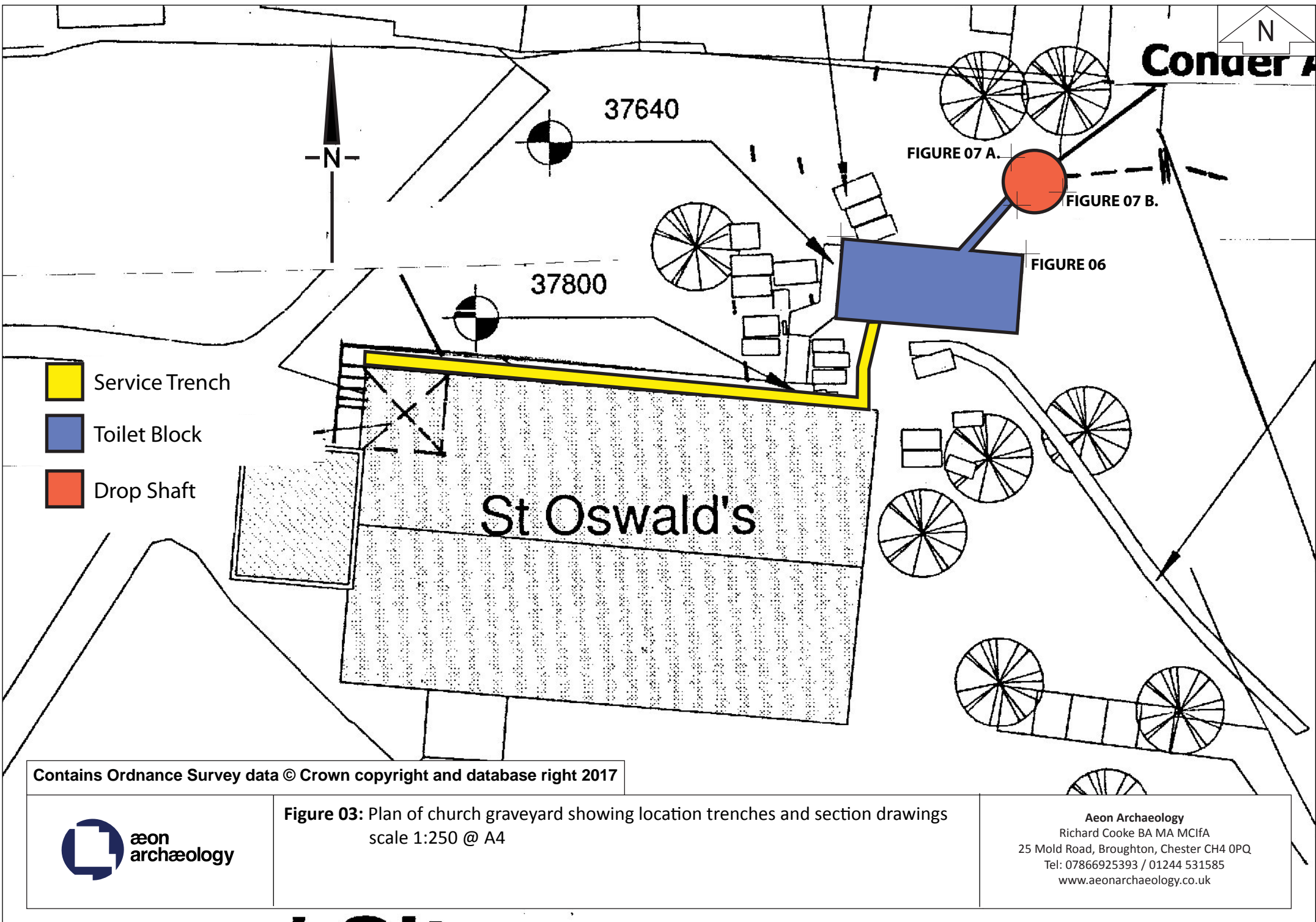


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Figure 02: Plan of church graveyard showing location of grave markers (GM)
scale 1:250 @ A4

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2.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by the Wardens and PCC of St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover to carry out a programme of archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the construction of a new toilet block at St. Oswald's Church, Crown Lane, Lower Peover, Cheshire WA16 9PY (centred on (NGR SJ 74317 74169) (Faculty Permission: 062/14). The toilet block footprint was located northeast of the Church and involved the excavation of a foundation trench by tracked excavator to a maximum depth of 0.70m, as well as the excavation of a drop shaft for the treatment plant to 1.46m depth (Figure 03). Furthermore along the northern wall of the church, starting from the north-western extent of the aisle wall, a service trench was excavated to a depth of 0.60m, this trench ran along the length of the northern aisle elevation before turning northeast to connect with the building footprint.

In addition five grave markers were found to occupy the extension footprint and three legible grave markers were disturbed during the excavation of the service trench. It was a requirement that these were recorded photographically as well as having their locations recorded and descriptions taken, after which they were to be relocated to outside of the development area.

The watching brief took place under Faculty condition;

Condition C

There shall be an archaeological watching brief throughout the works (Faculty issued by the Diocese of Chester)

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012) and is also in accordance with the advice contained in the Church of England and English Heritage's *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (2005).

A written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was undertaken by Aeon Archaeology in January 2017 (appendix II) which outlined the principle aims of the watching brief and the methods by which they would be met. This formed the basis of a method statement submitted for the work. The archaeological work was undertaken in accordance with this document.

The work undertaken adhered to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

3.0 SITE LOCATION AND HISTORY

Lower Peover is a civil parish located in the Borough of Cheshire East in the county of Cheshire. The name Peover may derive from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning '*a bright river*'. The village and its neighbour Peover Superior lie on the river Peover.

The Domesday Book of 1086 describes the area previously known as Nether Peover as '*a small vill, waste and woodland, held by William Fitznigel from Earl Hugh*'. It is reasonable to assume the parish developed around St Oswald's Church which lies on the parish boundary. It was built as a Chapel of Ease in 1269 by Richard Grosvenor of Hulme Hall, to act as relief for St Mary and All Saints Church at Great Budworth, 6 miles north west of the parish.

In 1464, Robert Grosvenor added a chantry chapel which was demolished in 1542 by order of Henry VIII. In the 15th century the Shakerley family, who continued the Grosvenor tradition of support for the church, inherited Hulme Hall. The Shakerley family crest, a hare and wheatsheaf, can still be seen on several of the box pews today. The present structure of nave and chancel probably date to the late 14th and 15th Centuries. The aisles have been altered and the building was re-roofed in 1852 by Anthony Salvin; with the west tower probably being added around 1582, but possibly of earlier date. The current Church is a grade I Listed Building (ref. 1139104).

The Warren de Tabley Arms Public House was built in the mid thirteenth century, it still stands today as a Grade I listed building (immediately west of St. Oswald's) however it has acquired a new name: The Bells of Peover. This name did not originate from its proximity to the church, but from the Bell family, who once lived there in the 1890s. The Old School House, just outside the St Oswald's graveyard, was founded in 1710 by Richard Comberbach.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

The methodology for the watching brief was prepared with reference to the CifA's document *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014) and was kept under constant review during the project, in order to see how far it met the terms of the aims and objectives, and in order to adopt any new questions which should they have arisen.

Curatorial monitoring of the archaeological work was carried out by the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocesan Registrar.

A suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist from Aeon Archaeology was commissioned for the maintenance of the watching brief. On arrival on site, the archaeologist reported to the site manager and conformed to the arrangements for notification of entering and leaving site. The archaeologist kept a record of the date, time and duration of all attendances at site, the names and numbers of archaeologists deployed and any actions taken. The archaeologist was provided with a Health & Safety Induction by the construction contractor and wore a safety helmet, safety footwear and high visibility jacket/vest at all times.

All of the archaeological deposits, features and structures identified were investigated and recorded under the terms of the watching brief and were excavated manually in a controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project.

The method of recording followed the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation and the stratigraphy was recorded by written descriptions even where no archaeological deposits were identified. The archaeologist recorded archaeological deposits using proformae recording forms and located them on a large-scale site plan related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum references.

The groundworks excavations were undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

The drawn record comprised of plans at scale 1:20 and sections drawn at scale 1:10; propriety electronic hardware and software to prepare site drawings was used as appropriate.

A photographic record was maintained throughout, using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution and any subsurface remains were also recorded photographically, with detailed notations and measured drawings being undertaken where required.

The archive produced is held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0105.1**.

4.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment

This report on the results of the watching brief, in accordance with the recommendations in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006; 2015), and in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014) has now been produced upon conclusion of the archaeological fieldwork.

4.2.2 Post-excavation Report

This report includes the following:

- A non-technical summary.
- A table of contents.
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site.
- A statement of the project aims.
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same to include a statement on preservation bias and the means of data collection and sampling strategies.
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site.
- A statement setting out the nature, quantity and condition of the material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) including commentary on any bias observed due to collection and sampling strategies and commentary on long-term storage requirements.
- A statement setting out the nature and quantity of the documentary archive (notes, photographs, drawings, digital data).
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the areas subject to watching brief and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the works.
- Plans and sections at appropriate scales, augmented with appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid.
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate.
- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses.
- A discussion of the location, extent, date, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits and finds identified during the project.
- A discussion of any research implications arising from the archaeological work.
- Notes on consultations with conservators and the nominated archive repository related to the immediate and long-term conservation and storage requirements for the data held in the site archive and recommendations of retention/discard of artefacts and ecofacts.
- A bibliography of sources consulted.
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive and a statement on its location/proposed repository.
- In addition the post-excavation report will summarise and draw together the findings of all of the phases of work.

4.3 Archive

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project has been prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions have been labelled, and cross-referenced, and will be archived within a suitable repository agreed in advance with the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocese of Chester. Copies of the report will be lodged with the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER); Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist; Diocesan Registrar, and Oasis online database within six months of the completion of the project.

5.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS

5.1 The Documentary Archive

The following documentary records were created during the archaeological watching brief:

Watching brief day record sheets	4
Digital photographs	36
Context sheets	12
Drawings	3 on 2 sheets

6.0 SPECIALIST ANALYSIS – ARTEFACTS

Summary

The St. Oswald's ceramic and finds assemblage comprised the following range of fabrics: 9 sherds of post-medieval pottery and 3 fragments of clay tobacco pipe. The finds span approximately a 300 year period between the early modern period through to the 19th century.

Artefact Category	Post-Medieval Pottery		Clay Tobacco Pipe	
	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.
(1001)	2	90	1	3
(1003)	1	44		
(1005)	6	937	2	6
Total	9	1071	3	9

Table 1: Quantification of all finds by category and context

Post-Medieval Pottery

The post-medieval pottery comprised a reasonably limited range of wares representing the 17th - 19th centuries, comprising of: Cistercian ware, slipware, blackware and brown stoneware. The forms were primarily those for the table and the pantry.

Wares	Blackware		Stoneware		Cistercian		Slipware	
	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.	No.	Wt.
(1001)	1	48			1	23		
(1003)							1	43
(1005)			6	937				

Table 2: Quantification of post-medieval pottery by ware group and context

Context (1001)

This context produced single sherd from a blackware jar and a single body sherd from a Cistercian ware vessel. The components of this assemblage — suggest a date within the 17th -18th centuries.

Context (1003)

This context produced a single sherd of slipware from a plate rim. The sherd suggests a date somewhere between the late 17th to early 18th centuries.

Context (1005)

This context produced several sherds from a stoneware jar; a date within the first half of the 19th century is suggested.

Clay Tobacco Pipe

Context (1001)

Along with the post-medieval pottery, this context produced two fragments of stem and a single fragment from a bowl. Although these finds are not closely datable - a suggested a date would be somewhere c. 1800–50.

Conclusion

The assemblage is consistent with a graveyard that was in operation within the post medieval period. The ceramic is broadly contemporary with the grave markers in the graveyard with only the slipware plate and possible the Cistercian ware body sherd pushing the date back into the late 17th century. The 19th century stoneware jar is most likely associated with clearance of grave memorandum during this period or later resulting in the refuse layer (1005); which may well represent the only distinct anthropogenic deposit according to the ceramic analysis.

Therefore due to the nature of the heavily worked soils within the area (1001), (1003) it would not be prudent to assign a patent stratigraphic sequence to the graveyard from this assemblage – rather these finds only allude to general dates of usage within the graveyard.

7.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The archaeological watching brief was maintained between 1st February and 4th February 2017 during the excavation of the drop shaft for the sewage treatment plant, the toilet block footprint and the service trench. Archaeological contexts have been assigned where relevant and are shown in brackets. Details of contexts are presented in appendix I. Before the excavations began a record was produced of the grave markers that were to be disturbed by the works, these are listed below.

7.1 Relocated Grave Markers

Grave Marker 1 'Snelfon/Snelson' – Plate 3, figure 02

Dimensions; 1.78m long by 0.66m wide by 0.07m deep.

Inscription:

Here lyeth ye Bo...
Of John Snelfon wh...
Dyed January ye 8th
Aged 27 Years.
And of John his son who dyed ~
January ye 15th both
In ye Year 1740
~Here~
Lieth the Body of Jose^{ph}
Snelson of Allostock
Who departed this
Life June 15th 1796
Aged 78 Years

Grave Marker 2 'Lockett' – Plate 4, figure 02

Dimensions; 1.82m long by 0.94m wide by 0.09m deep.

Inscription:

~Here~

Lieth interred the body
Of Sarah daughter of
Thomas and Hannah Lockett
Of Birmingham?? ... (unintelligible)
This Life January 8th 1801
Aged 15 Years

Mourning ...
I hope with... Christendom
Life is... and...
Thy would but cherish the...

Also Thomas Lockett who
Died April 29th 1830 Aged 76
Also Betsey Moureshead
Daughter of Thomad & Hannah
Lockett of Birmingham??
Died march 28th 1830 aged 36
Also Hannah wife of Aforesaid
Thomas Lockett who departed this
Life April 6th 1838 aged 83/53 Years

Grave Marker 3 'Wright' – Plate 5, figure 02

Dimensions; 1.99m long by 1.98m wide by 0.09m deep.

Inscription:

Richard

...son of William and Betty Wright
... Knutsford died March 7th
1823 aged 13 months
Also John Wright of Middle
-wich who departed this life aged 49 Years

(Broken and laminated section)

HANNAH WRIGHT
WHO DIED MAY 24TH 1886
AGED 78 YEARS

Grave Marker 4 'Wright' – Plate 6, figure 02

Dimensions; 2.00m long by 1.10m wide by 0.12m deep.

Inscription:

SACRED

In the manor of
William Wright kin^{??}
Of Mobbley
Who departed this life
June 18th 1800/1806
Aged 26^{??} years

Prepare to meet thy God
William Wright of Knutsford
Son of the above William Wright
Departed this life May 26th 1827
Aged 27^{??} years

Also the body of Elizibeth wife of aforementioned^{??}
William Wright of Knutsford
Who departed this life June
18th aged 21^{??} Years

Grave Marker 5 ‘Jarvis’ – Plate 7, figure 02

Dimensions; 0.97m long by 0.60m wide by 0.04m deep.

Inscription:

PRICILLA

DAUGHTER OF

JOSEPH AND MARY JARVIS
WHO DIED DECEMBER 15TH 1889
AGED 28 YEARS

ALSO BEN THEIR SON WHO DIED
JANUARY 21ST 1898 AGED 18YEARS
ALSO MARY THE BELOVED WIFE OF
JOSEPH JARVIS WHO DIED

APRIL 17TH 1886 AGED 52 YEARS

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

ALSO ABOVE JOSEPH JARVIS
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE NOVEMBER 1922
AGED 79 YEARS

“THY WILL BE DONE”

ALSO MINNIE JARVIS
BORN OCT 19TH 1867 DIED FEB 14TH 1933
AT REST

Grave Marker A ‘Johnson’ – Plate 8, figure 02 & 04

Dimensions; 0.86m long by 0.65m wide by 0.08m deep.

Discovered during temporary movement of pathway grave markers along northern elevation of St. Oswald's church – (Figure 04)

Inscription:

Here lieth the Body
Of Mary Daughter
Of John and Sarah
Johnson of Allostock.
Died Nov^r 14th 1791
Aged 25 Years

Grave Marker B 'JH' – Plate 9, figure 02 & 04

Dimensions; 0.68m long by 0.38m wide by 0.04m deep.

Inscription:

JH
1703

Grave Marker C 'SS' – Plate 10, figure 02 & 04

Dimensions; 0.82m long by 0.45m wide by 0.05m deep.

Inscription:

SS
1700

Discussion

The archaeological watching brief was maintained while all seven grave markers were carefully lifted using fencing posts to roll the grave markers into a different position (Plate 12). The bases of all slabs were cleaned and inspected for inscriptions that may have been beneath ground level, and all markers were carefully stored to the west and south of the extension footprint (Plate 13). Upon completion of the works the grave markers will be re-instated as part of the pathway to the new toilet block.

7.2 Drop-shaft for treatment plant

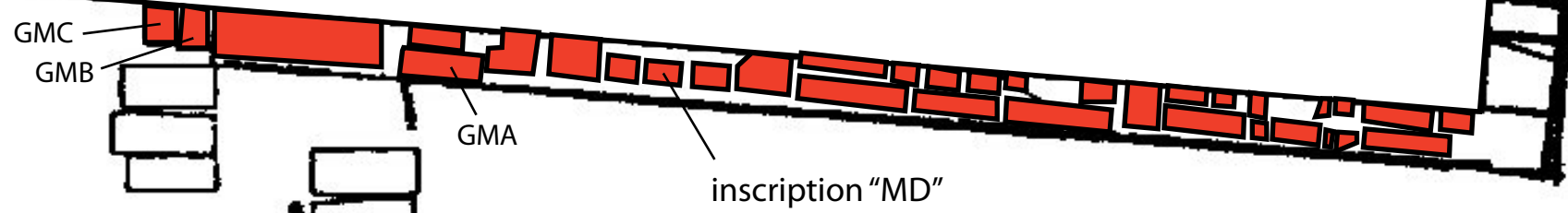
Description

The archaeological watching brief was maintained while the drop shaft was excavated towards the north-eastern corner of the churchyard. Initially two wild cherry trees were felled (Plate 14) and their stumps removed – careful attention was given at this stage should human or artefactual remains be disturbed and brought to the surface. The drop shaft excavation was sub-circular in shape and measured approximately 1.80m in diameter and was excavated to a depth of 1.46m.

A mechanical excavator fitted with toothless ditching bucket was utilised to excavate the deposits. The following was visible in the west facing section (Figure 05) of the drop shaft trench, which ran perpendicular to the natural slope of the churchyard. The drop shaft was excavated through 0.90m of a



St. Oswald's Church



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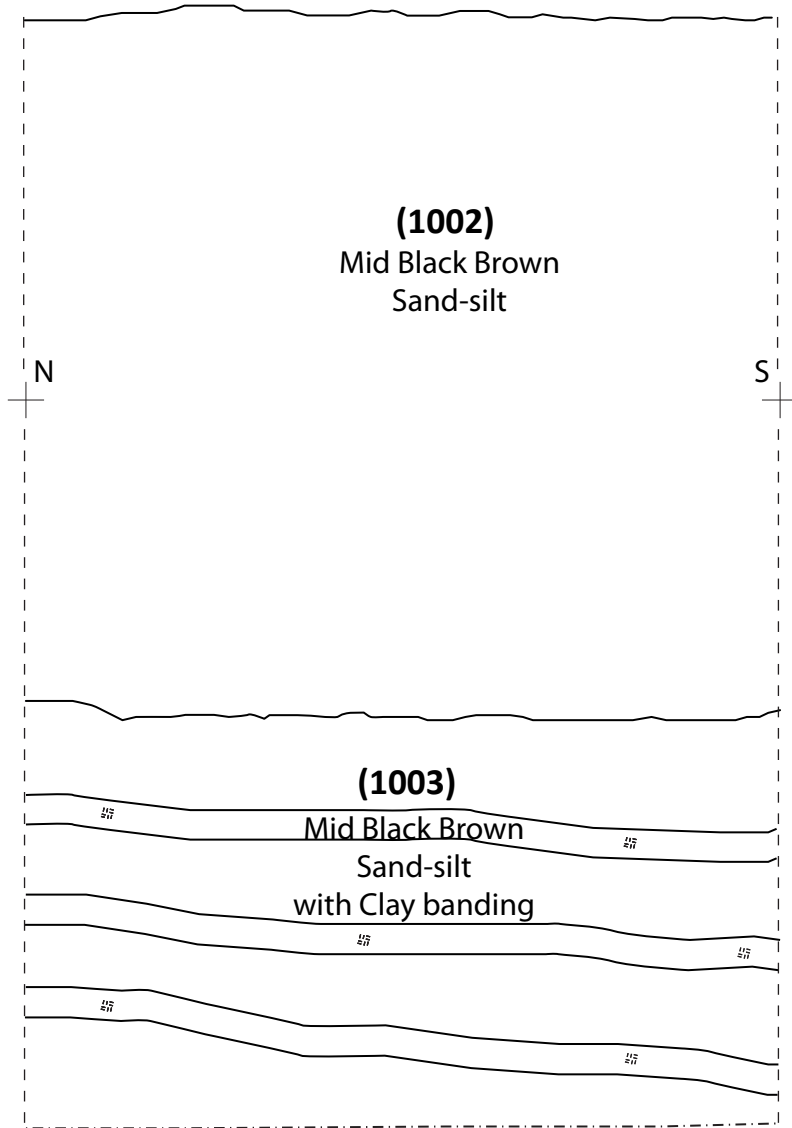


Figure 04: Plan of church graveyard showing location of grave markers on pathway prior to removal scale 1:200 @ A4

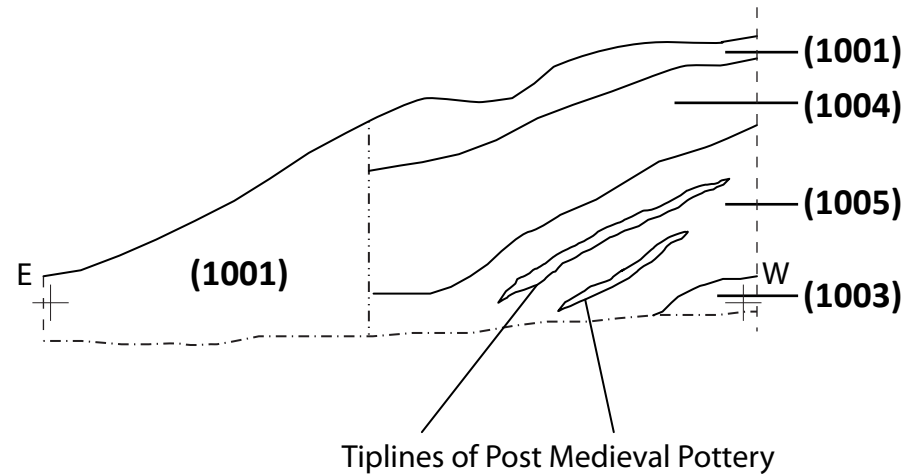
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A. East facing section of drop shaft



B. North facing section of drop shaft



Both sections located on Figure. 03

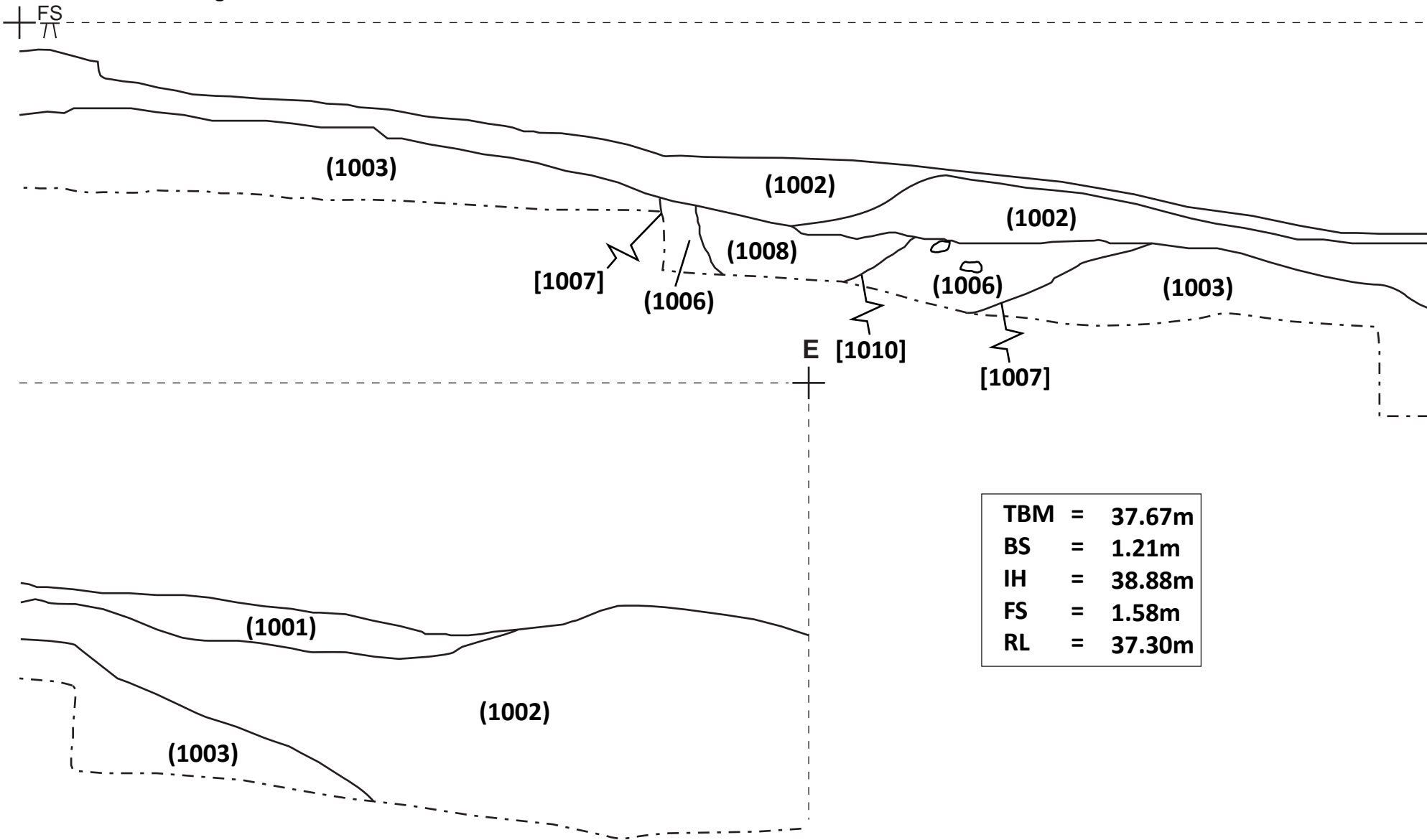
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Figure 05: East and north facing sections of drop shaft - showing slope profile and refuse tiplines scale 1:10 & 1:50 @ A4 (A & B respectively)

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W Located on Figure. 03

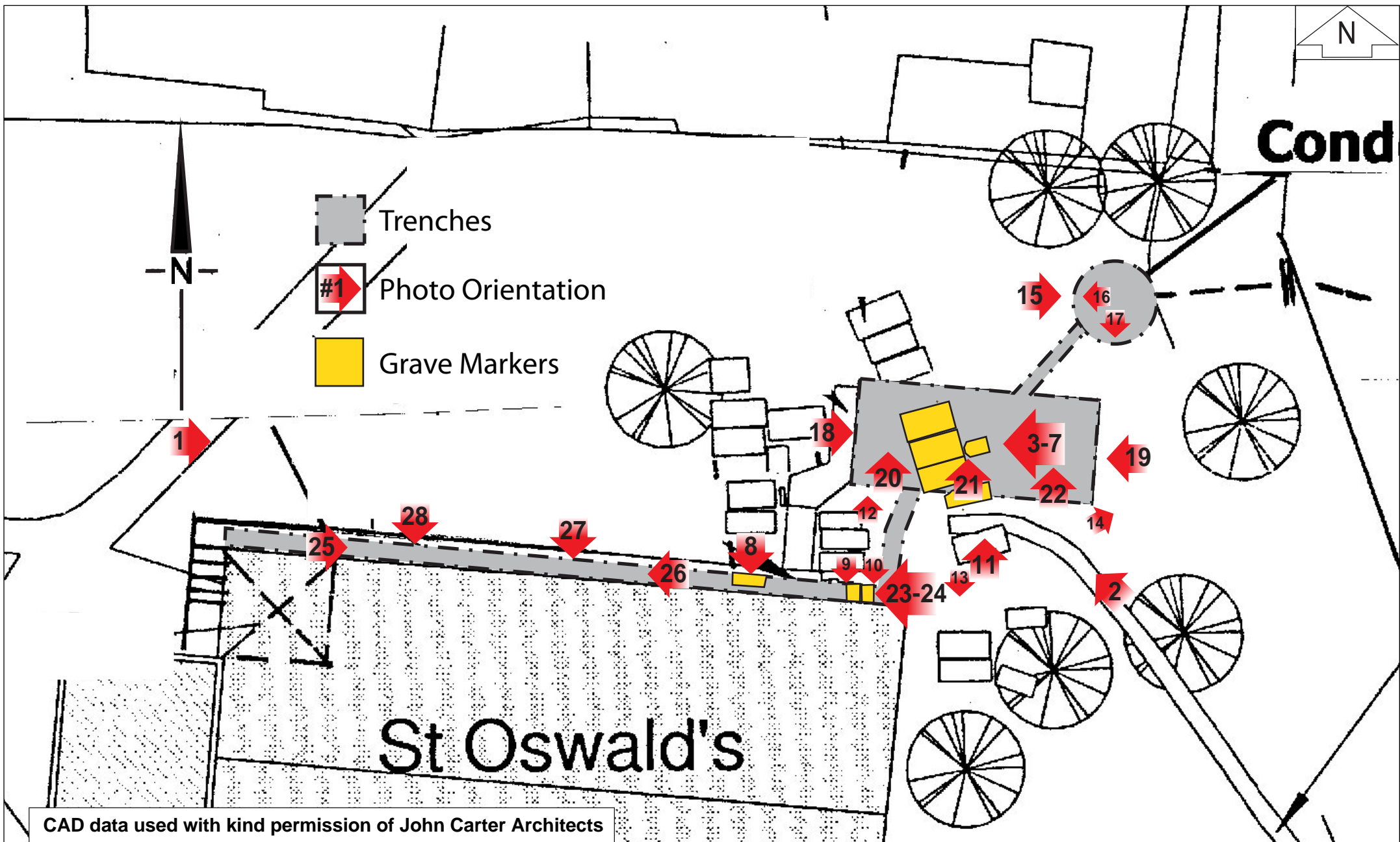


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Figure 06: South facing section of toilet block trench showing wall foundation (1006)
scale 1:50 @ A4

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Figure 07: Plan of graveyard at St. Oswald's Church, showing orientation of photography
scale 1:200 @ A4

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decomposed leaf mulch layer (1002) which lay across the entire footprint – this material was a loosely amalgamated mid black brown sand-silt inundated with root activity and small sub-rounded pebbles. After which a 0.56m deposit (1003) was excavated – this was a moderately soft dark grey brown silt-sand characterised by narrow bands of light grey brown silt clay lenses; these clay lenses could represent areas of redeposited natural substrata from deeper grave cuts – although the natural substrata was not observed at any point during this excavation.

The northern facing section (Figure 05) which ran parallel with the natural slope of the churchyard predominantly demonstrated how the bank had been formed via the repeated deposition of materials over time. The drop shaft excavation cut through a 0.31m deposit (1009) of loosely amalgamated dark grey brown sand-silt inundated with root activity and occasional small sub-rounded pebbles. Then it cut through a 0.84m (maximum depth) deposit (1004) of very loose dark black brown sand silt which had frequent fragments of post medieval pot, ceramic building material (CBM) and glass within its matrix. Directly below this layer was a 0.92m (maximum depth) layer (1005), which appeared to extend below the limit of excavation; this was a very loose light grey brown sand-silt which had visible tip lines of post medieval ceramic, CBM, glass and some discarded iron railings. Partially visible in section to the bottom right corner was a small example of the dark grey brown silt-sand subsoil (1003).

Discussion

The west facing section provides a cross section of the natural slope comprised of the subsoil (1003) with a 0.95m deposit of made ground above it in the form of cleared vegetation and fallen leaf litter (1002). The north facing section provides a profile of how the bank was formed via the deposition of refuse layers with only a small remnant of the subsoil (1003) or relict ground level visible in the bottom right hand corner. The light grey brown (1005) is visible above (1003) replete with tip lines of 19th century ceramic and assorted CBM as this deposit appears to cascade down slope, this is mirrored by the deposit above (1004). The topsoil (1001) then appears to cover these deposits.

7.3 Toilet block footprint

Description

Following the excavation of the drop shaft work began on the footprint of the toilet block. This was excavated just to the north east of the church. The excavation began with the removal of the grave markers 1-5 (Plate 11); these were rolled away with fencing posts and stored to the south and west of the excavation. The toilet block excavation was rectilinear in shape and aligned east to west. It measured approximately 7.65m in length by 3.50m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.25m. The excavation was purposefully stepped down via two increments moving east to west (Figure 06); 0.38m and then 0.42m respectively to the east end of the trench – this was to facilitate the method of construction for the concrete slab.

The following was visible in the south facing section (Figure 06) of the toilet block trench. Initially the trench was excavated through 0.60m (maximum depth) of turf and topsoil (1001); this deposit was a loose dark grey brown sand-silt with occasional rounded pebbles and post medieval pottery. Below this at its western end it cut through a further 0.63m of subsoil (1002); this was generic and probably represented a heavily disturbed graveyard subsoil – reasonably loose mid red brown silt-sand with occasional sub-angular sandstone fragments. At its eastern end it cut through 1.60m deep deposit (1002) of a very loose mid black brown sand silt; this deposit was evidently the result of rotting vegetation and leaf litter either deposited by the trees or via clearance in the graveyard, (1001) sat above (1002) stratigraphically. Below this deposit (1002) at the eastern end was the subsoil (1003) which appeared to be falling away in level to the east – generating a slope.

Approximately 2.40m east from the western extent of the trench, below the topsoil (1001) and the mulch layer (1002) there was a >0.13m deposit of reasonably loose, very dark black grey sand silt with infrequent charcoal lumps (1008). This was possibly situated within the cut [1010]; this had gradually sloping sides leading to a uniformly concave base – the cut was 0.94m in width and >0.24m in depth. Below this was a >0.61m deep deposit (1006) of very firm, light red brown clay with occasional sub-rounded stone cobbles and occasional charcoal flecks possibly set within the possible cut [1007].

Discussion

The clay (1006) may have been introduced to the stratigraphy via the cut [1007] suggesting anthropogenic origins – either from the result of re-deposition via grave digging into the natural substrata or the importation of material from elsewhere - this could be supported by the presence of charcoal within the deposit. The presence of the very dark black grey deposit (1008) could represent a tree bowl which had been either removed or burnt out during land clearance. However if the clay layer (1006) was utilised as a foundation for a wall or boundary then (1008) could be the backfill of a possible cut [1010] making it a ‘robber-trench’ used to reclaim stone from a previous stone wall perhaps. This interpretation is not supported by the continuation of either (1008) or (1006) further to the south (not visible in section), however it is possible that the remnants further to south were quite ephemeral and were machined away. Following this activity the mulch layer (1002) formed above (1008) and (1006) to the east either via vegetation clearance of leaf litter falling from the canopy above and the turf and topsoil (1001) was imported into the western area to cover the subsoil.

7.4 Service trench

Following the excavation of the toilet block footprint work began on the service trench. This ran along the northern elevation of the church and was aligned east to west. It measured approximately 31.20m in length by 0.12m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m. The excavation involved the removal of 34 grave markers which had previously been utilised as a pathway along the northern side of the church – only three grave markers (GM 6,7 & 8) had inscriptions and these were subsequently recorded (see earlier section).

The service trench involved the removal of the grave markers and then cut into a 0.07m deep deposit (1011) red brown sand, through 0.24m of topsoil (1001) and 0.34 of subsoil (1003) to the limit of excavation. At the western end there appeared to be a cut [1012] for a drain (Plate 28) which appeared to post-date the pathway. The cut [1012] appears to have become quite diffuse near its base as it has slumped into the subsoil (1003) this soil horizon was heavily disturbed through centuries of grave digging.



Land division roughly correlating with location of clay foundation (1006)

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Figure 08. 1836-51 tithe map of Nether Peaover showing land partition along eastern end of churchyard

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Plate 01: General shot of excavation area from West - no scale



Plate 02: General shot of excavation area from South East - no scale



Plate 03: Shot of Grave Marker 1 'Snelson' from East - 1m scale



Plate 04: Shot of Grave Marker 2 'Lockett' from East - 1m scale



Plate 5: Shot of Grave Marker 3 'Wright' from East - 1m scale



Plate 6: Shot of Grave Marker 4 'Wright' from East - 1m scale

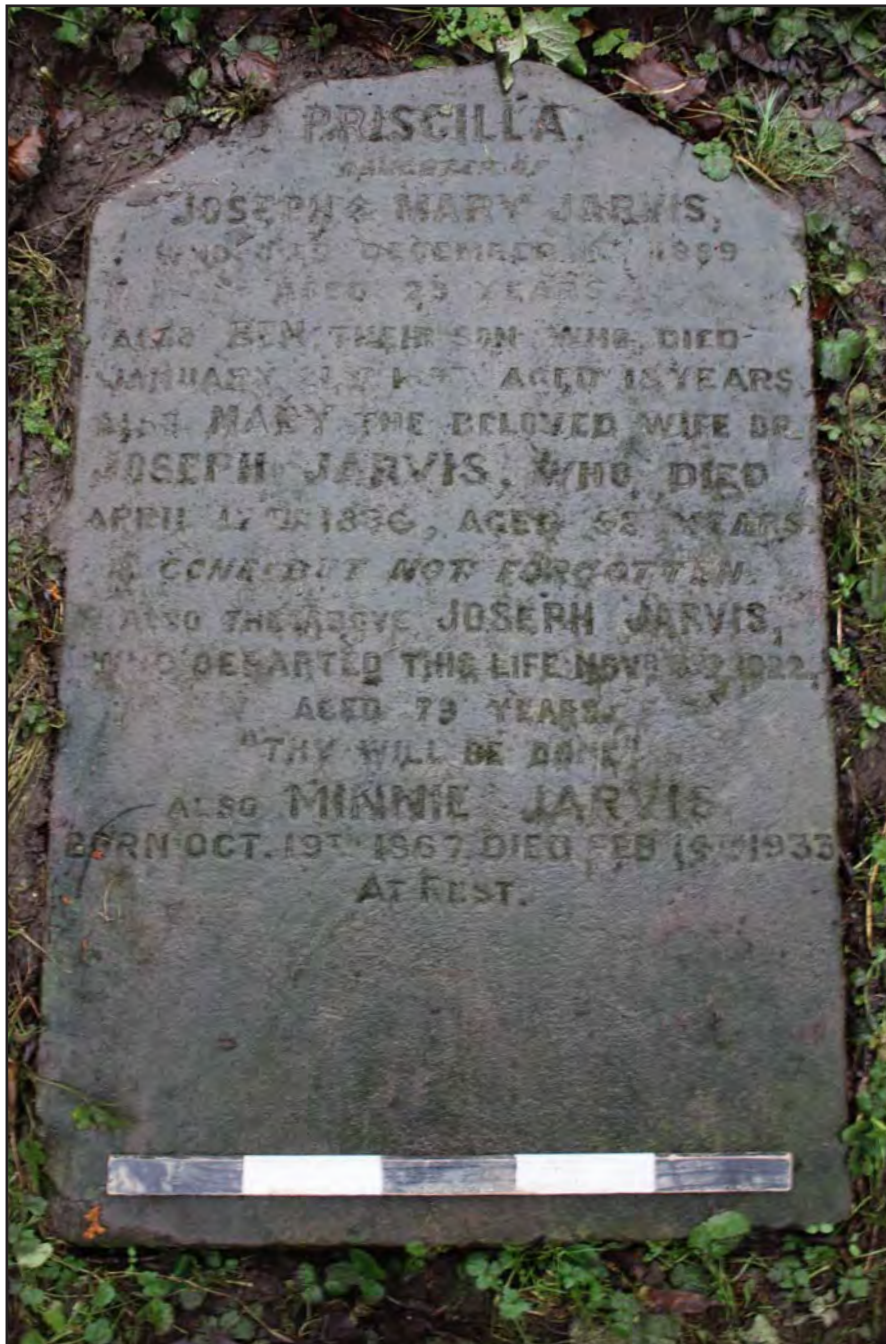


Plate 7: Shot of Grave Marker 5 'Jarvis' from East - 1m scale



Plate 8: Shot of Grave Marker A - 'Johnson' from East - 0.5m scale



Plate 9: Shot of Grave Marker B - 'JH 1703' from North - 0.5m scale

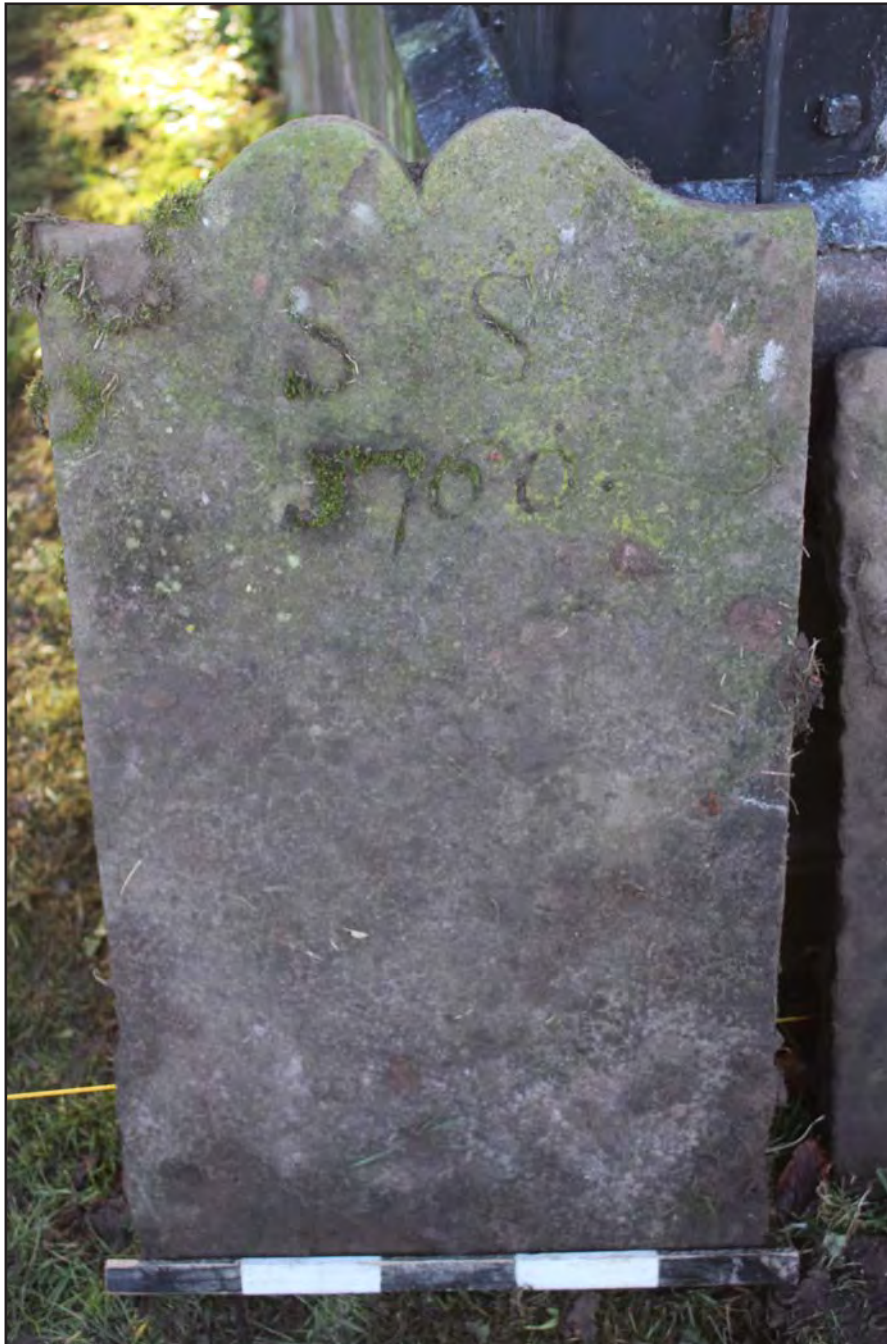


Plate 10: Shot of Grave Marker C - 'SS 1700' from North - 0.5m scale



Plate 11: General shot of Grave markers (1-5) in original context before being moved- 1m & 0.5m scale



Plate 12: Working shot of Grave markers 1-5 being moved with fenceposts- no scale



Plate 13: Example of storage of Grave markers (1 and 5) being stored on boards - no scale



Plate 14: Cherry Trees being felled - no scale



Plate 15: General shot of Drop Shaft Excavation - 1m scale



Plate 16: North east facing section of Drop Shaft Excavation - 1m scale



Plate 17: North east facing section of Drop Shaft Excavation - 1m scale



Plate 18: Shot of toilet block trench excavation from west - 1m scale



Plate 19: Shot of toilet block trench excavation from east - 1m scale



Plate 20: Shot of northern section (left hand end) of toilet block trench excavation from south - 0.5m scale



Plate 21: Shot of northern section (centre) of toilet block trench excavation, showing clay (1006) from south - 0.5m scale



Plate 22: Shot of northern section (right hand end) of toilet block trench excavation from south - 0.5m scale



Plate 23: Pathway along northern elevation of St. Oswald's Church prior to removal of grave markers - from east - 1m scale



Plate 24: Pathway along northern elevation of St. Oswald's Church following removal of grave markers - from east - 0.5m scale



Plate 25: Shot of excavated service trench - from west - 0.5m scale



Plate 26: Shot of excavated service trench - from east - 0.5m scale



Plate 27: Generic section of excavated service trench - from north - 0.5m scale



Plate 28: Section of drain cut [1012] in excavated service trench - from north - 0.5m scale

8.0 CONCLUSION

The archaeological watching brief at St. Oswald's, Lower Peaover revealed the potential of an earlier boundary wall and its clay foundation to the north east of the medieval churchyard. This correlates with a land division visible on the 1836-51 tithe map (Figure 08) for Nether Peabody. The apportionment 334 is given to a narrow area on the eastern limit of the churchyard with the plot name '*slip by churchyard*' belonging to John Allen for use as meadow- this could offer evidence to support the fact that the land appeared to be sloping away to the east in this general location – with a wall having previously been necessary to denote the boundary between church and meadow land. Furthermore this area of the churchyard appears to have been used as a deposition area for refuse; both in terms of vegetation and leaf litter but also with regards to 19th century ceramic and glass possibly associated with grave memorandums over the centuries in which the churchyard has been in use – perhaps the slope in this area provided a convenient area in which to deposit refuse.

The monitoring of the service trench to the north of the church revealed no archaeology or church foundations, this was because the trench was situated slightly north of the church wall. The post-medieval finds recovered correlate with a churchyard that was in operation during the post medieval period.

9.0 SOURCES

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APPENDIX I – DETAILS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

Context	Description
1001	Topsoil & Turf.
1002	Decomposed Vegetation.
1003	Mixed graveyard soil.
1004	Refuse Layer
1005	Refuse Layer
1006	Wall Foundation/ Clay deposit
1007	Cut of Wall Foundation
1008	“Robber Trench”/ Tree Bowl
1009	Topsoil (Same as 1001)
1010	Cut of “Robber Trench”/ Tree bowl

**APPENDIX II – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**



aeon archaeology

**St. Oswald's Church, Crown Lane,
Lower Peover, Cheshire WA16 9PY.**

**Written Scheme of Investigation
for Archaeological Watching Brief.**

January 2017 V 1.0



Project Code: A0105.1
Faculty Ref: 062/14

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology has been commissioned by the Wardens and PCC of St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover to provide a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with the construction of a new toilet block at St. Oswald's Church, Crown Lane, Lower Peover, Cheshire WA16 9PY (NGR SJ 74317 74169) (Faculty Permission: 062/14).

The development footprint is located to the northeast of the northern elevation of the Church and includes a rectangular area measuring approximately 7.7m in length by 2.9m in width orientated east to west. In addition a new drain measuring 5.6m in length will run northeast from the northern elevation of the toilet block to an outfall culvert. The groundworks associated with the development will not intrude beyond 0.5m depth however there is the potential for articulated burials and disarticulated human bone to be encountered.

In addition, three grave markers occupy the development footprint and it is a requirement that these are recorded photographically as well as having their locations recorded and descriptions taken, after which they will be relocated to outside of the development area. A watching brief will also be maintained during the excavation of a new drain.

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) addresses the following:

Condition C

There shall be an archaeological watching brief throughout the works (Faculty issued by the Diocese of Chester)

The watching brief will be maintained during intrusive groundworks, as detailed below.

This WSI states the aims, objectives and methodology for implementing the archaeological watching brief so as to meet the spirit and intent of the archaeological condition.

It is requirement that the content of this WSI be approved by the Diocese of Chester and the Cheshire West and Chester archaeological planning service prior to the commencement of works.

The use of such a condition is in line with the guidance set out in paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), and in accordance with the advice contained in the Church of England and English Heritage's *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (2005).

Reference will be made to the guidelines specified in Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

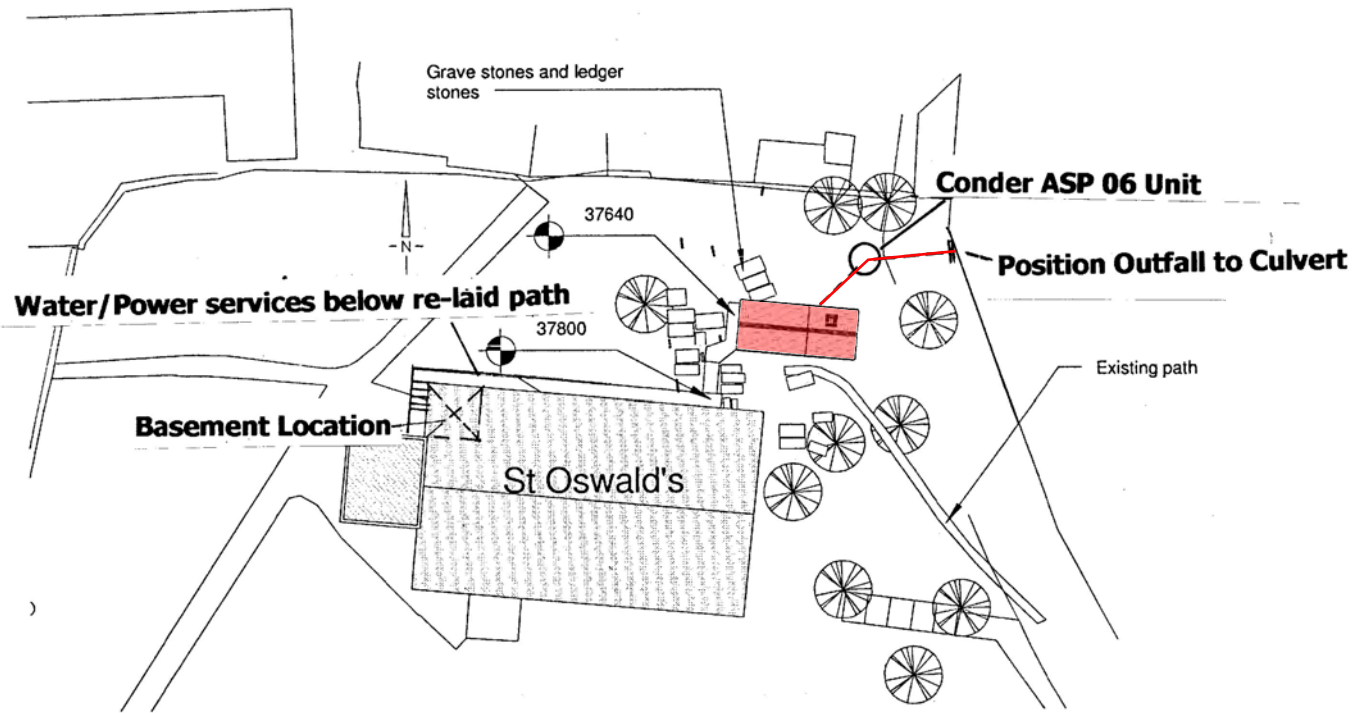


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Figure 01: Location of St. Oswald's Church, Lower Peover, Cheshire. Scale 1:10,000 at A4.



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Figure 02: Location of proposed works at St Oswald's Church, Lower Peover (shaded red). Scale 1:500 at A4.

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2.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The archaeological watching brief shall include the following:

1. Photographic and descriptive record of four grave markers within the development footprint.
2. Watching brief during any groundworks (including utility trenches) associated with the construction of the new toilet block.

The Cifa maintains a standard for archaeological watching brief which states that:

An archaeological watching brief will record the archaeological resource during development within a specified area using appropriate methods and practices. These will satisfy the stated aims of the project, and comply with the Code of conduct and other relevant by-laws of Cifa.

An archaeological watching brief is defined by the Cifa as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons (Cifa 2014). The watching brief will take place within a specified area within the Site where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.

The Cifa further identifies the purpose of a watching brief as allowing, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works.

It is also important to note that a watching brief provides an opportunity, if needed, for a signal to be made to all interested parties, before the destruction of the archaeological materials, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard.

A watching brief is, therefore, not intended to reduce the requirement for excavation or preservation of known or inferred deposits, and it is intended to guide, not replace, any requirement for contingent excavation or preservation of possible deposits.

The aims of the watching brief are:

- To allow, within the resources available, the opportunity to gain information about and record the presence/absence, nature and date of archaeological remains on the Site affected by excavations and groundworks, the presence and nature of which could not be established with sufficient confidence in advance of works which may disturb them.
- To provide the facility to signal to the relevant authorities, before irreversible impact to remains that an archaeological and/or historic find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are inadequate to support their treatment to an adequate and satisfactory standard.

The specific objectives of the watching brief are:

- To observe and recover any artefacts of archaeological significance.
- To record the location, dimensions and nature of any deposits, features, structures or artefacts of archaeological significance.
- To recover samples of any deposits considered to have potential for analysis for palaeoenvironmental data should the opportunity arise.

2.0 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St Oswald's has been a chapel since 1269, however the present structure of nave and chancel probably date to the late 14th and 15th Centuries. The aisles have been altered and the building was re-roofed in 1852 by A.Salvin; with the west tower probably being added around 1582, but possibly of earlier date.

The current Church is a grade I Listed Building (ref. 1139104).

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

The methodology for the watching brief has been prepared with reference to the CIFA's document Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (2014) and will be kept under constant review during the project, in order to see how far it is meeting the terms of the aims and objectives, and in order to adopt any new questions which may arise.

Curatorial monitoring of the archaeological work will be carried out by the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocesan Registrar. To facilitate the curatorial monitoring, the officer shall be provided with a minimum of two weeks' notice of the start of the archaeological work.

A suitably qualified and experienced archaeologist(s) from Aeon Archaeology will be commissioned for the maintenance of the watching brief. On arrival on site, the archaeologist(s) will report to the site manager and conform to the arrangements for notification of entering and leaving site. The archaeologist(s) will keep a record of the date, time and duration of all attendances at site, the names and numbers of archaeologists deployed and any actions taken. The archaeologist will be provided with a Health & Safety Induction by the construction contractor and wear a safety helmet, safety footwear and high visibility jacket/vest at all times.

If deposits and or artefacts are exposed during excavations for the development which require recording and recovery, it may be necessary to delay works whilst the proper investigation and recording takes place. Watching brief recording can often be undertaken without delay to groundworks, depending upon the specific circumstances and flexibility of all the staff on site.

Within the constraints of the terms of the watching brief work, the archaeologist will not cause unreasonable disruption to the maintenance of the work schedules of other contractors on site. In the event of archaeological discoveries the treatment of which (either arising from the volume/quantity of material and/or the complexity/importance of the material) is beyond the resources deployed the Client will be notified and a site meeting/telephone consultation arranged with the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocesan Registrar. The aim of the meeting will be to confirm that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard and identify measures which would be sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard prior to destruction of the material in question.

Any archaeological deposits, features and structures identified which can be investigated and recorded under the terms of the watching brief will be excavated manually in a controlled and stratigraphic manner sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project – subject to the limitations on site access.

It may not be necessary to excavate the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits but the inter-relationships between archaeological deposits, features and structures will be investigated sufficient to address the aims and objectives of the project and the complete stratigraphic sequence to geologically lain deposits will be investigated where practicable.

The method of recording will follow the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation and the stratigraphy will be recorded in written descriptions even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. The archaeologist will record archaeological deposits using proformae recording forms and locate them on a large-scale site plan related to the Ordnance Survey National Grid and Datum references.

The groundworks excavations shall be undertaken using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

The drawn record will comprise plans at scale 1:20 and sections at scale 1:10; propriety electronic hardware and software to prepare site drawings may be used as appropriate.

A photographic record will be maintained throughout, using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution and any subsurface remains will be recorded photographically, with detailed notations and measured drawings being undertaken if required.

The archive produced will be held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0105.1**.

3.2 Watching brief report

3.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment

A report on the results of the watching brief, in accordance with the recommendations in *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment Project Manager's Guide* (English Heritage 2006; 2015), and in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (2014) will be required to be produced upon conclusion of the archaeological fieldwork. The report will be completed within a maximum of two months of completion of work on site and may include examination and quantification leading to the identification of function, form, date, method of manufacture, material/fabric type, source, parallels, attributes and condition of artefacts; of the exploitation of wild or domesticated resources; the reconstruction of environments; and the nature of human populations.

Full analysis of the results of the project, including: dating and interpretation of excavated features; pottery and other finds analysis; analysis of industrial residues by an appropriate specialist or specialists; analysis of samples for environmental data (including pollen, plant macrofossils and beetles) by an appropriate specialist or specialists; radiocarbon dating; discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context, including relating the excavated features and palaeoenvironmental data to evidence from nearby sites, and discussion of the results in their local, regional and national context may be required.

The scope of post-excavation assessment will subject to a specification for approval by the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocese of Chester, upon the conclusion of the fieldwork project and preliminary report.

3.2.2 Post-excavation Report

Following completion of the stages outlined above, a report will be produced that will include:

- A non-technical summary.
- A table of contents.
- An introduction with acknowledgements, including a list of all those involved in the project and the location and description of the site.
- A statement of the project aims.
- An account of the project methodology undertaken, with an assessment of the same to include a statement on preservation bias and the means of data collection and sampling strategies.
- A factual summary of the history, development and use of the site.
- A statement setting out the nature, quantity and condition of the material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) including commentary on any bias observed due to collection and sampling strategies and commentary on long-term storage requirements.
 - A statement setting out the nature and quantity of the documentary archive (notes, photographs, drawings, digital data).
- A general site plan indicating the position and size of the areas subject to watching brief and the locations of archaeological deposits identified and recorded during the works.
- Plans and sections at appropriate scales, augmented with appropriate photographs. All plans and sections will be related to the Ordnance Survey datum levels and to the National Grid.
- Other maps, plans, drawings, stratigraphic matrices and photographs as appropriate.
- Summary assessment reports on the artefact, bio-archaeological, dating and other assessments/analyses.
 - A discussion of the location, extent, date, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits and finds identified during the project.
 - A discussion of any research implications arising from the archaeological work.
- Notes on consultations with conservators and the nominated archive repository related to the immediate and long-term conservation and storage requirements for the data held in the site archive and recommendations of retention/discard of artefacts and ecofacts.
- A bibliography of sources consulted.
- Appendices to the report will include artefact catalogues, reports on assessments/analyses and an index to the project archive and a statement on its location/proposed repository.
- In addition the post-excavation report will summarise and draw together the findings of all of the phases of work.

3.3 Archive

A full archive including plans, photographs, written material and any other material resulting from the project will be prepared. All plans, photographs and descriptions will be labelled, and cross-referenced, and archived within a suitable repository to be agreed in advance with the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocese of Chester. Copies of the report will be lodged with the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER); Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist; and Oasis online database within six months of the completion of the project.

4.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

The identification of significant archaeological features during the watching brief stage may necessitate further archaeological works. This will require the submission of new cost estimates to the contractor and may be subject to a separate WSI, to be agreed with the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocese of Chester prior to implementation.

This WSI does not include a methodology or cost for examination of, conservation of, or archiving of finds discovered during the watching brief, nor of any radiocarbon dates required, nor of examination of palaeoenvironmental samples associated with any peat deposits. The need for these will be identified in the post-fieldwork programme (if required), and a new WSI will be issued for approval by the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist and Diocese of Chester prior to implementation.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES

If necessary, relevant archaeological deposits will be sampled by taking bulk samples (a minimum of 10.0 litres and maximum of 30.0 litres) for flotation of charred plant remains. Bulk samples will be taken from waterlogged deposits for macroscopic plant remains. Other bulk samples, for example from middens, may be taken for small animal bones and small artefacts.

Bulk environmental samples will also be taken from any fills, deposits or structures which yield archaeological artefacts, charcoal flecks/ fragments, bone, or any other historic remains.

Advice and guidance regarding environmental samples and their suitability for radiocarbon dating, as well as the analysis of macrofossils (charcoal and wood), pollen, animal bones and molluscs will be obtained from Oxford Archaeology.

For guidance purposes the following volume criteria represent the minimum feature sampling requirements:

- 50% of each discrete feature (e.g. pits and postholes)
- 25% of the exposed areas of each liner feature and all terminals/intersections
- 50% of structural features (e.g. beamslots, ring-ditches)
- 50%-100% of domestic/industrial working features (e.g. hearths and ovens)

6.0 HUMAN REMAINS

During the watching brief thorough inspection of removed soils will take place and all disarticulated bone collected and catalogued. All disarticulated bone will remain securely stored on site and will be given to the Church Warden at the end of the project for reburial within the consecrated Churchyard.

Any finds of articulated human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected with soil, and both the Diocesan Registrar and the Cheshire Archaeology Planning and Advisory Service Archaeologist informed. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues. All articulated remains will be cleaned and recorded photographically before being carefully removed and securely stored on site, prior to reburial. There will be a presumption against chasing articulated remains beyond the limits of excavation.

7.0 SMALL FINDS

The vast majority of finds recovered from archaeological excavations comprise pottery fragments, bone, environmental and charcoal samples, and non-valuable metal items such as nails. Often many of these finds become unstable (i.e. they begin to disintegrate) when removed from the ground. All finds are the property of the landowner; however, it is recommended that all finds are donated to an appropriate museum (Neath Port Talbot Museum Service) where they can receive specialist treatment and study. Access to finds must be granted to Aeon Archaeology for a reasonable period to allow for analysis and for study and publication as necessary. All finds would be treated according to advice provided within *First Aid for Finds* (Rescue 1999). Aeon Archaeology staff will undertake initial identification, but any additional advice would be sought from a wide range of consultants.

The recovery policy for archaeological finds will be kept under review throughout the fieldwork phase. Any changes in recovery priorities will be under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist. There will be a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds with the exception of unstratified items dating to the twentieth or twenty-first centuries AD which will be recorded by material, type, form, identification and weight, and discarded.

All finds will be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Their location will be recorded; finds numbers attributed, bagged and labelled as well any preliminary identification taking place on site. Where specialist advice is required provision will be made to do so at the earliest possible convenience.

After processing, artefacts which are suitable will be cleaned and conserved in-house. Artefacts requiring specialist cleaning and conservation will be sent to the relevant specialist. All finds will then be sent to a specialist for analysis, the results of which will then be assessed to ascertain the potential of the finds assemblage to meet the research aims of the project. The value of the finds will also be assessed in terms of the wider educational and academic contributions.

8.0 UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES: TREASURE TROVE

Treasure Trove law has been amended by the Treasure Act 1996. The following are Treasure under the Act:

- *Objects other than coins* any object other than a coin provided that it contains at least 10% gold or silver and is at least 300 years old when found.
- *Coins* all coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found (if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least 10. Any object or coin is part of the same find as another object or coin, if it is found in the same place as, or had previously been left together with, the other object. Finds may have become scattered since they were originally deposited in the ground. Single coin finds of gold or silver are not classed as treasure under the 1996 Treasure Act.
- *Associated objects* any object whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or that had previously been together with, another object that is treasure.
- *Objects that would have been treasure trove* any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. These objects have to be made substantially of gold or silver, they have to be buried with the intention of recovery and their owner or his heirs cannot be traced.

The following types of finds are not treasure:

- Objects whose owners can be traced.
- Unworked natural objects, including human and animal remains, even if they are found in association with treasure.
- Objects from the foreshore which are not wreck.

All finds of treasure must be reported to the coroner for the district within fourteen days of discovery or identification of the items. Items declared Treasure Trove become the property of the Crown.

The British Museum will decide whether they or any other museum may wish to acquire the object. If no museum wishes to acquire the object, then the Secretary of State will be able to disclaim it. When this happens, the coroner will notify the occupier and landowner that he intends to return the object to the finder after 28 days unless he receives no objection. If the coroner receives an objection, the find will be retained until the dispute has been settled.

9.0 STAFF & TIMETABLE

9.1 Staff

The work will be managed and undertaken by Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA, Archaeological Contractor and Consultant at Aeon Archaeology.

9.2 Timetable

The evaluation work can currently be undertaken from February 2017, although the client is encouraged to give as much notice as possible to Aeon Archaeology as project commitments are currently high.

10.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Aeon Archaeology has a Health and Safety Policy Statement which can be supplied upon request. Furthermore, site-specific Risk Assessments and Method Statements are compiled and distributed to every member of staff involved with the project prior to the commencement of works.

11.0 INSURANCE

Liability Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002

- Employers' Liability: Limit of Indemnity £10m in any one occurrence
- Public Liability: Limit of Indemnity £2m in any one occurrence
- Legal Defence Costs (Health and Safety at Work Act): £250,000

The current period expires 07/09/17

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002

- Limit of Indemnity £500,000 any one claim

The current period expires 07/09/17

12.0 GENERAL

All project staff will adhere to the *Code of Conduct of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*.

The project will follow the requirements set down in the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief* prepared by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

A Method Statement and Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the commencement of fieldwork and circulated to all staff concerned.

Please note the following:

Aeon Archaeology will not be held responsible for any delays to the work programme resulting from the discovery of archaeological sites or finds.

The cost quoted does not include examination of, conservation of or archiving of finds discovered during the archaeological programme, nor of any radiocarbon dates required, nor of examination of palaeoenvironmental samples.

SPECIALISTS

Specialist advice required will be sought from the following list if required:

- Bone: Nora Bermingham
- Glass: Hilary Cool, Barbican Research Associates.
- Metal artefacts: Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services, Cardiff.
- Slag, burnt clay, hammerscale: Dr. Tim Young, Geoarch, Cardiff.
- Stone artefacts: Oxford Archaeology
- Wood artefacts: Jane Foley, Foley Conservation, Builth Wells.
- Leather: Quita Mould, Barbican Research Associates.
- Waterlogged environmental: Dr Mike Allen, Allen Environmental Archaeology.
- Environmental samples: Oxford Archaeology
- Numismatics: Peter Guest, Barbican Research Associates.
- Pottery (all periods): Oxford Archaeology
- Clay pipe: Oxford Archaeology

Depending upon the material of the remains the following experts will be consulted regarding the conservation of waterlogged material:

- Organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)
- Non-organic material: Mr Phil Parkes, Cardiff Conservation Services (tel: +44(0)29 2087 5628)

