



---

# Zionist Baptist Chapel, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8AQ.

June - July 2018  
V 1.0



aeon archaeology



Archaeological Watching Brief  
Project Code: A0153.1  
Report no. 0178

---



aeon archaeology

---

# Zionist Baptist Chapel, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8AQ.

## June - July 2018

Report no. 0178 v1.0

Archaeological Watching Brief

Aeon Archaeology  
25, Mold Road  
Broughton  
Chester  
CH4 0PQ

Written by: Josh Dean BA ACIfA

Checked by: Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA



Project Code: A0153.1

Date: 29/08/2018

Client: Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STaRH)

info@aeonarchaeology.co.uk

---

# Figures

**Figure 01:** Location of the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal. Scale at 1: 20,000 @ A4.

**Figure 02:** Location of the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal. Scale at 1: 5,000 @ A4.

**Figure 03:** Traced map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, Tithe map (1840), no scale.

**Figure 04:** Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1888), no scale.

**Figure 05:** Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1903), no scale.

**Figure 06:** Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1948), no scale.

**Figure 07:** Plan of Baptist Chapel, Shifnal showing context numbers and levels (OD) Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Figure 08:** Plan of Baptist Chapel, Shifnal showing materials used in construction Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Figure 09:** Plan showing location of all arches and their associated group numbers, Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Figure 10:** Plan showing phases of construction for the Baptist Chapel, Shifnal. Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Figure 11:** Section of Southern wall (103) showing visible arches (115), (116), (121). Arches are projected below ground onto observed sandstone bases. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

**Figure 12:** Plan showing direction of plates 1-57 (exc. plates 3, 10-12, visible on Figure 13. Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Figure 13:** Plan showing direction of photographic plates (3,10 - 12) and levels (OD) within the southern and eastern trenches.

**Figure 14:** Section through backfill layers of interior of Baptist Chapel, Shifnal showing (104), (192), (191) & (107). Scale (2x) 1m.

**Figure 15:** Sections showing the arches (163) and (175) comparing the parabolic arch form to the rounded forms found within the chapel walls. Scale 1:20 @ A4

# Plates

**Plate 01:** Pre-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the south - scale 1m

**Plate 02:** Pre-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the southwest - scale 1m

**Plate 03:** Pre-excavation shot for southern area of site - from the east - scale 1m

**Plate 04:** Concrete slab (101) in situ prior to lifting - from the southwest - scale 1m

**Plate 05:** Post-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the south - scale 2m

**Plate 06:** Post-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the north - scale 2m

**Plate 07:** Post-excavation shot of Baptist Pool (128) - from the west - scale 2m

**Plate 08:** Post-excavation oblique shot of Baptist Pool (128) - from the southwest - 2m

**Plate 09:** Section showing layers of deposition (from top); (104), (192), (191), (107) within the eastern bay - from the south - scale 2m

**Plate 10:** Generic section of southern trench - from the east - scale 1m

**Plate 11:** Post-excavation shot of southern trench - from the west - scale (2x) 1m

**Plate 12:** Post-excavation shot of eastern trench - from the south - scale (2x) 1m

**Plate 13:** Shot showing example of wall and arch construction (southwestern corner of chapel) - from the west - scale 2m

**Plate 14:** Shot showing visible depth of arches (southern wall of chapel) the sandstone base is obscured by water table - from the north - scale 2m

**Plate 15:** Shot of eastern wall (123) showing (on left) the sandstone corbels which may have supported a timber ring beam - from the north - 0.50m

**Plate 16:** Shot of orange ash rubble (138) used as leveling layer below eastern drain (131) - from the east - 0.50m

**Plate 17:** Eastern drain (131) - from the northwest - scale 1m

**Plate 18:** Eastern drain (131) - from the northeast - scale 0.5m

**Plate 19:** Western drain (132) - from the northeast - scale 2m

**Plate 20:** Western drain (132) - from the northwest - scale 0.50m

**Plate 21:** Point at which drains (131) & (132) are connected on top of buttress (112) - from the west - scale 0.5m

**Plate 22:** Buttress (112) situated to south of interior wall (110) - from the southwest - scale 1m

**Plate 23:** Western Gully (144) - from the south - scale 0.5m

**Plate 24:** Context shot showing drain area and archway (175) - from the west - scale 2m

**Plate 25:** Linear drain (133) - from the south - scale 0.50m

**Plate 26:** Western interior wall (139) - from the south - scale 1m

**Plate 27:** Eastern interior wall (139) - from the south - scale 1m

**Plate 28:** Northern wall of baptismal pool (128) showing sandstone foundation below (145) - from the north - scale 2m

# Plates (2)

**Plate 29:** Baptismal Pool (128) with polished cement liner (129) - from the south - scale 2m & 0.5m

**Plate 30:** Baptismal Pool steps (130) - from the northeast - scale 2m & 0.5m

**Plate 31:** Shot showing physical relationship between interior wall (139), Archway (160) and drain (south eastern corner) - from the east - scale 1m

**Plate 32:** Shot of baptismal pool base, showing steps (130) and south eastern drain - from the north - scale 1m & 0.5m

**Plate 33:** Shot focused on drain within baptismal pool - from the north - scale 0.5m

**Plate 34:** Overspill channel within south western corner of baptismal pool wall (128) - from the west - scale 0.5m

**Plate 35:** Dividing wall (111) in southern bay - from the east - scale 1m

**Plate 36:** Northern dividing walls (168) (left) & (159) (right) - from the south - 2m

**Plate 37:** Context shot across dividing walls (168) (foreground) & (159) (background) - from the west - scale 0.5m

**Plate 38:** Baptismal Pool (128) with ash backfill (137) - from the south - scale 2m

**Plate 39:** Baptismal Pool (128) with ash backfill (137) - from the northwest - scale 2m

**Plate 40:** Grey brown ash (104) backfill found covering the whole site beneath the concrete floor slab (101) - from the west - scale 1m

**Plate 41:** Concrete floor slab (101) collapsed into void - from the southeast - scale 1m

**Plate 42:** Concrete floor slab (101) collapsed into void (close up) - from the southeast - scale n/a

**Plate 43:** Drain (134) built into wall of the eastern pool (128) - from the north - 0.50m

**Plate 44:** Drain (135) to the southeast of drain (134) - from the west - 0.50m

**Plate 45:** Orange ash rubble (138) below linear drain (133) - from the southeast - 0.50m

**Plate 46:** Eastern bay of chapel - from the north - scale (2x) 1m

**Plate 47:** Western bay of chapel - from the south - scale 2m

**Plate 48:** Parabolic Archway (163) (foreground) & Rounded archway (149) (background) - from the west - scale 2m

**Plate 49:** Rounded Archway (149) (foreground) & Parabolic archway (163) (background) - from the east - scale 2m

**Plate 50:** Parabolic arch (163) - from the east - scale 1m

**Plate 51:** Parabolic arch (163) & east-west 'bricked up archway' (164) - from the southeast - scale 2m

**Plate 52:** Test pit showing stratigraphy onto blue clay (190) - from the east - scale 2m

**Plate 53:** Examples of metal slag - n/a direction - scale 0.50m

**Plate 54:** Archway (120) in southern interior wall (110) - from the south - scale 1m

# Plates (3)

**Plate 55:** Section showing physical relationship between interior wall (110) and exterior wall (127)  
- from the southeast - scale 1m

**Plate 56:** Shot in plan showing physical relationship between interior wall (110) and exterior  
wall (127) - from the west - scale 0.5m

**Plate 57:** Shot showing relationship between exterior wall (123) and southern interior wall (110) and  
that wall (122) abuts over archway (113) located within wall (110) - from the north - scale 1m

## Contents

1.0	NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY .....	1
2.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	1
3.0	INTRODUCTION .....	2
4.0	PROJECT BACKGROUND.....	3
5.0	SITE LOCATION AND HISTORY .....	4
6.0	METHODOLOGY.....	6
6.1	Archaeological Watching Brief .....	6
6.2	Post-excavation Assessment .....	7
6.3	Post-excavation Report .....	7
6.4	Archive.....	8
7.0	QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS .....	9
7.1	The Documentary Archive.....	9
8.0	RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.....	10
8.1	Description of the archaeological remains (as) found at the Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road.	10
8.2	Accumulation of deposits within chapel .....	11
9.0	CONCLUSION.....	17
10.0	SOURCES.....	18
	APPENDIX I – DETAILS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS .....	19
	APPENDIX II – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF .....	21

## **1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**

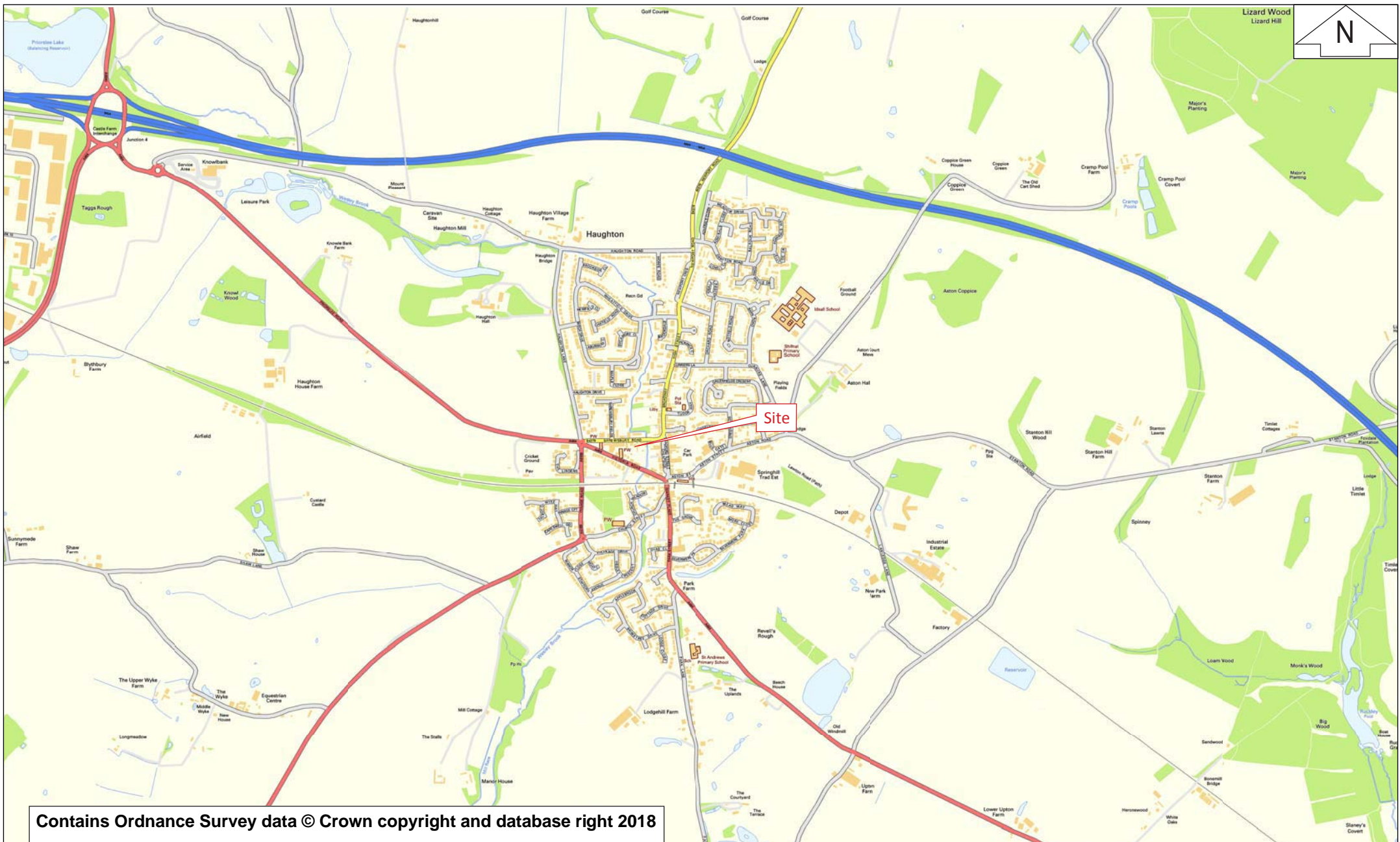
Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Fellows Inspired Project Solutions on behalf of Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STaRH) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the demolition and groundworks associated with the erection of seven new apartments (in two blocks) at the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Street, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8AQ.

The archaeological watching brief encountered no evidence to suggest that the site had seen the burial of individuals other than the two burials that had been previously recorded to the north of the site. However the watching brief allowed for an opportunity to record the substantial below ground archaeological remains of the building and the unique interior features of the chapel which had been hidden by the mass deposition of ash probably from local industrial processes. These remains included numerous brick archways and columns which extended onto sandstone bases situated below the water table, a slate-lined interior drainage system, a brick-lined well, and a baptismal pool with steps and drainage systems. Furthermore during examination of these remains it was possible to formulate an elementary plan of building phases associated with the development of the structure ranging from its initial construction, investiture as a baptismal chapel, renovation and finally its conversion into a courthouse for the town of Shifnal shortly after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

## **2.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Aeon Archaeology would like to extend its gratitude to the Shifnal Local History Group for their contribution to the historical narrative of this report. Acknowledgment is also given to Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing and Fellows Inspired Project Solutions for their help in undertaking the fieldwork associated with this project.



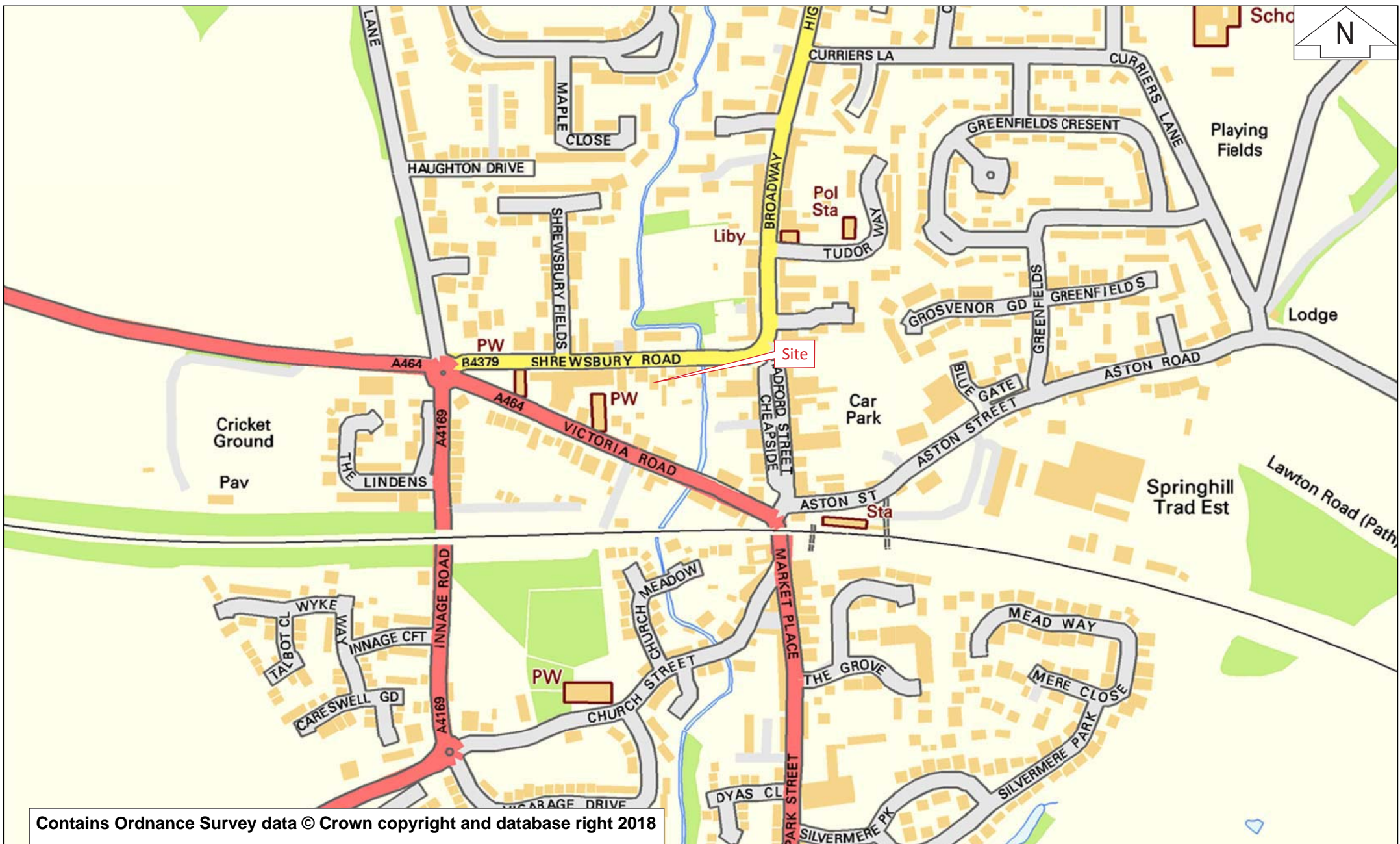


Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

Figure 01: Location of The Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.



**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIFA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018

Figure 02: Location of The Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.



**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIFA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)

### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology was commissioned by Fellows Inspired Project Solutions on behalf of Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STaRH), hereafter the Client, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the demolition and groundworks associated with the erection of seven new apartments (in two blocks) at the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Street, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8AQ (**NGR SJ 74753 07806**).

A mitigation brief was not prepared for this scheme by the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council but the following condition was imposed upon full planning permission (**17/01565/FUL**):

#### *Condition 7*

*No development approved by this permission, other than the demolition and site clearance, shall commence until a phased programme of archaeological work has been secured based on a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The program of archaeological work shall thereafter be carried on in complete accordance with the agreed specification.*

*Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest and as such the information is required prior to commencement to ensure that any archaeology is recorded and taken into account in the development of the site.*

The use of such a condition is in line with guidance set out in paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government; Policy MD13 of the SAMDev component of the Shropshire Local Plan; and Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

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

## 4.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

An archaeological evaluation and photographic survey was undertaken by Archaeology Wales in November 2017 (report 1628). The evaluation involved the excavation of a single trench measuring 7m x 2m located in the yard to the rear of the chapel. This investigation revealed that the backyard had been used previously as an area of dumping of structural material in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as an area used by the Old Fire Station as possible practicing ground in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The photographic survey recorded the present condition of the chapel.

The chapel was built in 1843 and its function as a place of worship lasted until 1921. From 1931 this space was re-used as a magistrates' court until 1985 when the building was left unoccupied. The Old Chapel is listed in the local HER as a non-designated asset and is located within the Shifnal Conservation Area. The site has been investigated previously in the form of a desk-based assessment and a heritage statement carried out by Bear Archaeology in 2016 (Sowerby 2016).

The principle archaeological interest at the site was that of the potential for human burials beneath the chapel floor and within the immediate surrounding site. There are two grave markers situated to the immediate north of the chapel which were to be retained undisturbed and in-situ, however it was not known whether further burials were present and may have been encountered during the demolition and groundworks at the site.

The site was therefore recognised as a disused burial ground and protected by the Disused Burial Ground Act 1884 and by the Amendment Act, Disused Burial Grounds Act 1981. In addition as the chapel closed in 1921 there was the potential for burials less than 100 years old to be encountered and as such the treatment of human remains was to be protected via the Human Tissue Act 2004.

The Human Tissue Authority confirmed that as all recovered remains were to be reburied and were not to be used for a scheduled purpose (as defined in the Human Tissue Act 2004) a licence for exhumation was not required. In addition due to the possibility of encountering human remains that were less than 100 years old, the Environmental Health Officer for the district was also informed that the work was to take place.

An application was made to the Ministry of Justice for a licence to excavate human remains for archaeological purpose. Furthermore, the Baptist Union was contacted and confirmed that any recovered remains were to be reburied at Chorley Chapel, High Green, Chorley, Shropshire WV16 6PP with Mr Alan Vincent, the Pastor for Chorley Chapel, taking overall responsibility for the reinterment of any recovered human remains should they have been recovered.

If any inscriptions were found identifying the family name of the deceased then the burial was to be left undisturbed and in-situ while efforts were made to establish whether there were any surviving relatives. These were then to be contacted and informed of the excavation and reburial procedure.

If sealed coffins or crypts were encountered during the works these were to be left undisturbed and a specialist team commissioned to undertake the exhumation of the interred remains.

## **5.0 SITE LOCATION AND HISTORY**

(The following historical context for the Baptist Chapel at Shifnal was kindly provided by Marilyn Higson on behalf of the Shifnal Local History Group following a request by Aeon Archaeology).

### **A Brief History of Shifnal**

In the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Shifnal was a prosperous market town benefitting from lucrative coaching trades. It was an important stop on the London to Shrewsbury to Holyhead (and thence Ireland) coach road. Coach traffic reached its peak in the 1820s and 1830s; the turnpike roads were arteries along which people, information and goods flowed and Shifnal was a part of this network.

Between 1801 and 1841, the population of the town rose from 1141 to 1872 people, a rise of over 60%. Much of this rise can be attributed to immigration, particularly of itinerant labourers and their families who provided the workforce for the construction of new roads and railways as well as on the land to feed the growing industrial towns. In 1861, almost one tenth of Shifnal's population had been born in Ireland. Another group of newcomers were professional people needed to fill the new bureaucratic civic roles such as registrars, clerks to magistrates, and the national school teacher.

During the rise of the coaching trade, road improvements had been a feature in Shifnal. In 1789, Shrewsbury Road was re-aligned bringing it in at right angles to the main street (Broadway) and between in 1824, a new road (Victoria Road) was constructed as part of Thomas Telford's improvements to the Holyhead Road, providing coaches with less acute angles when driving into the centre of Shifnal. During the 1840s there was a building boom in housing due to the increasing population and (in advance of) the expectation of growth with the coming of the railway. The triangular area between Shrewsbury Road and Victoria Road provided new land for building, within the town boundaries, and on the west side of the Wesley Brook and the noxious smells of small water-powered industries. The plots were taken up by the professional classes and also by three Christian communities to build new places of worship – the Baptists in 1844, the Catholics in 1860 and the Methodists in 1879.

From the 1850s Shifnal grew very slowly. The arrival of the railway in 1849 did not bring a significant increase in trade but increased choice by opening access to suppliers in other market towns. Shifnal saw no industrial growth, unlike the nearby townships on the Coalbrookdale Coalfield and its location in its saucer shaped valley made the construction of sidings for the transport of agricultural and bulky goods very difficult. Shifnal became a market town with a wide range of small traders, a commuter town, an ecclesiastical centre for East Shropshire and a focal point for postal services.

### **Zion Baptist Church and Magistrates Court**

The tithe map for 1840 (Figure 03) shows the area as a rectangular enclosed plot located to the south of Shrewsbury Road. This plot is listed as number 2124 and is tenanted by a John Bartley with its use as a garden. The tithe map shows that the Wesley Brook had already been diverted by this time to the east of plot 2127, which is tenanted by Barker & Bullock and is also in use as a garden. The historic map regression for the site shows very little change between the period 1888-1948 (Figures 03-06).

A community of Baptists is said to have existed in Shifnal from about 1700 and there was definitely a Baptist Church from 1780, possibly in Aston Street, which was used by both Particular and General Baptists. In 1841, the Baptists split; the Particular Baptists remained at the Aston Street Chapel, whilst the larger group of General Baptists moved to the new purpose built Chapel (Shrewsbury Road) for which Charles King, a seedsman, of Shifnal obtained the necessary licence from the Bishop of Lichfield.

Work on the construction of the chapel was commenced in 1843 and completed in 1844. The official opening of the Chapel occurred on 15th March 1844 and there is a brief report of the opening in the Baptist Reporter, New Series, Volume 1, 1841, page 117 as follows: Shifnal – ‘A new meeting house was opened here., March 15, when Messrs S.J Davies, M. Kent and D. Payne preached. The cost was above £600 - about half raised by friends on the spot. This is very commendable’.

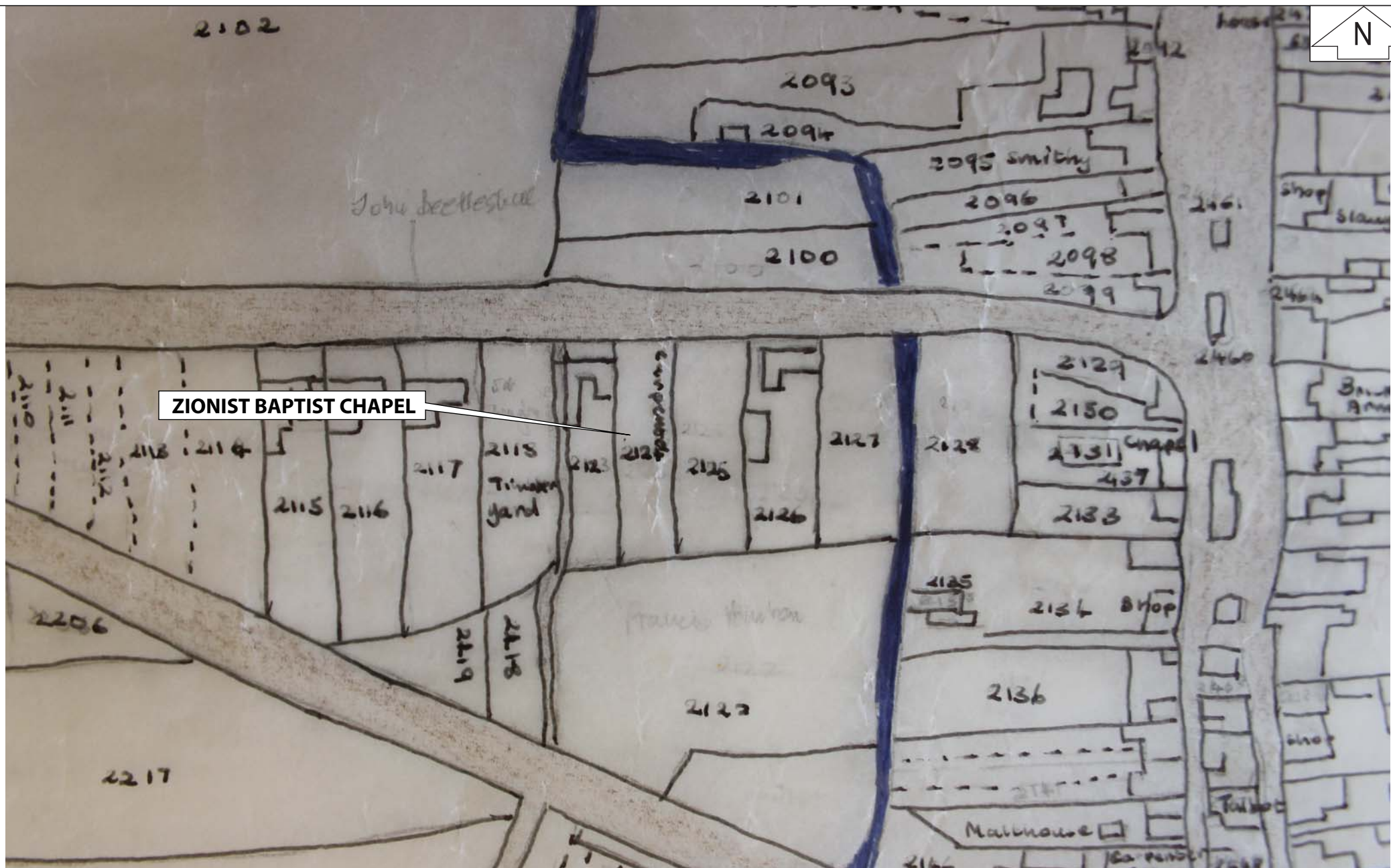
The building measured 50 feet long and 28 feet wide with seats for a congregation of 350 people and a vestry. With its fittings and small areas of surrounding land, the building had cost £640. By 1851, the Zion Chapel had a membership of 23 baptised members but the statistics given for Census Sunday on 30<sup>th</sup> March of that year report an average attendance of 150 adults and 60 Sunday School children.

Membership of Baptist Churches in Shifnal appears to have not been particularly strong and in 1877 the original Baptist Chapel in Aston Steet closed. The Zion Baptist Chapel in Shrewsbury Road also closed in 1890 but reopened the following year after possible refitting. The last mention of the Shrewsbury Road Zion Chapel appeared in the Baptist Handbook as an active place of worship in 1921.

By 1930 the chapel and immediate site had been bought by Shropshire County Council and likely remained empty until soon after the Second World War, when the building was refitted as a magistrates’ court. The vestry became the main room for the sitting magistrate and Shropshire Police whilst the northern end of the building was converted into rooms for the duty solicitor, witness waiting room and WC.

The Shifnal petty sessional division covered the parishes of Albrighton, Boningale, Boscobel, Donington, Kemberton, Ryton, Shifnal and Tong. All crimes committed in these areas were dealt with in Shifnal at court sessions sitting every Friday morning – liquor licencing and minor offences on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays and juvenile crime and domestic proceedings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Fridays.

The Court closed in the early 1980s when the new magistrates’ courts were established in Telford New Town and remained empty until redevelopment in 2018.



ZIONIST BAPTIST CHAPEL



Figure 03. Traced map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, Tithe map (1840), no scale.

Aeon Archaeology  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk



Figure 04. Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1888), no scale.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)





Figure 05. Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1903), no scale.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)

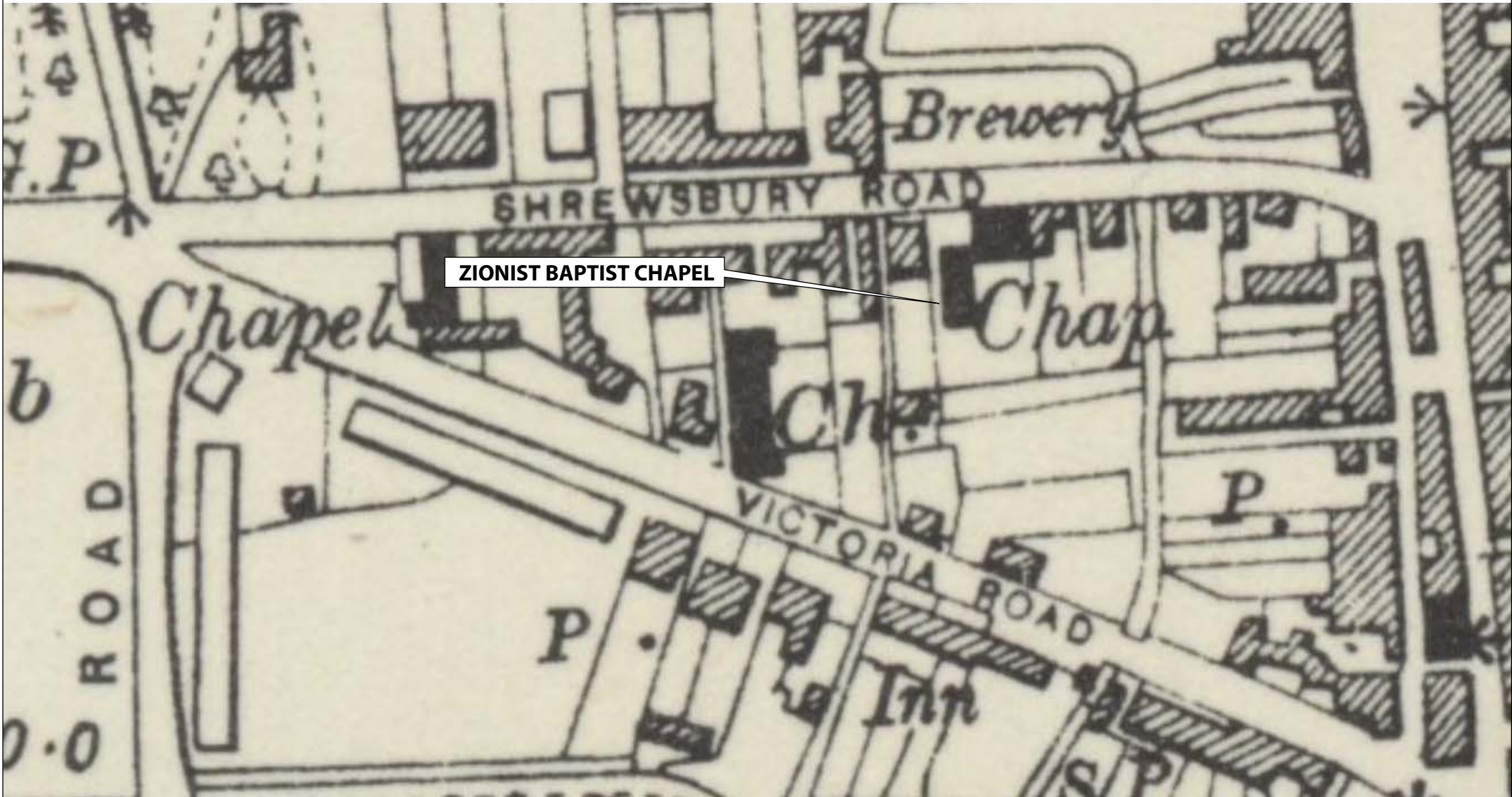


Figure 06. Map showing location of Zionist Baptist Chapel, OS 6 inch (1948), no scale.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIfA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)

## **6.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **6.1 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 Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council.

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.

Any of the archaeological deposits, features and structures identified were to be investigated and recorded under the terms of the watching brief and to be 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 **A0153.1**.

## 6.2 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.

## 6.3 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.

#### **6.4 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 upon approval from the Client copies of the report will be sent to the Shropshire Historic Environment Record, the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council, and the OASIS online database.

## **7.0 QUANTIFICATION OF RESULTS**

### **7.1 The Documentary Archive**

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

Watching brief day record sheets	9
Digital photographs	303
Context sheets	92
Drawings	3

## **8.0 RESULTS OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

The archaeological watching brief was maintained between 14<sup>th</sup> of June to the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2018 during the groundworks associated with the erection of seven new apartments (in two blocks) at the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Street, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8AQ. The weather conditions were consistently bright and sunny with only very occasional periods of cloud cover. During the excavations archaeological contexts were assigned where relevant and are shown in brackets. Details of contexts are presented in appendix I. The location and orientation of photographic plates are shown on Figures 12 & 13.

### **8.1 Description of the archaeological remains (as) found at the Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road (Figures 07 & 08).**

The chapel building comprised of an exterior foundation wall comprising of contexts; (103), (123), (127) & (165), this wall was rectangular in plan, orientated north to south and measured approximately 19.00m in length by 9.32m in width. These walls comprised of red brick arches (group numbers, (176), (177), (178), (179)), which supported sandstone rubble walls, these in turn acted as foundations for the red brick wall (102) which formed the visible face of the building as its exterior wall. The three interior foundation walls of the building (110), (122) & (139) were also supported by red brick arches (group numbers; (180), (181), (182)). There was also a single interior foundation wall which ran east to west (110) separating the southern 1/6 of the building into a 3m wide, east to west aligned cell. The remaining 5/6's of the building were separated by two interior foundation walls (122) & (139) that ran north to south; these then formed three long narrow bays (also aligned north to south) measuring in (maximum) width (east to west) 1.50m, 2.15m and 1.60m respectively. The southern interior wall (110) was tied into the stone work (plate 56) of the exterior walls (123) & (127) making it contemporary with those walls, however the interior walls were abutting the northern exterior wall (165) and the interior southern wall (110) (plate 31) meaning that these were stratigraphically later in date following the erection of the external wall foundations.

The exterior walls of the chapel had a series of sandstone corbels situated at regular intervals (between 1.30-1.85m apart) around the interior face of the wall. The southern interior wall (110) had a long sandstone buttress (112) situated approximately 1/3 of the way along its length; this buttress was roughly centralised along the wall and projected south (into the southern bay) and was located in between the two arches (120) & (133), it measured 2.65m long and was 0.78m wide. To the south of the buttress (112) was the southern cell which had a brick lined circular well in the south-western corner constructed from red bricks and Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC); also in this area two test pits were excavated into the natural clay (see below). The area directly to the north of the interior wall (110) had preserved in-situ archaeological remains; which occupied the space between the two interior north-south walls. This was taken up with a brick and slate constructed drainage system; composed of two connected drains (131) & (132), arranged in the shape of a wishbone which ran to the northeast and northwest respectively. They discharged into a brick built gully (144) in the west and directly into the eastern bay in the east.

To the immediate north of these drains was a brick built baptismal pool (128) which had been covered with a polished cement liner (129) and had a set of three steps (130) leading to the base; these descended from south to north. Within the base of the pool there was a small copper drain in the south-eastern corner of the pool and situated in the south-western corner (at the top of the pool wall) was another drain – which was probably placed to compensate for overflow of water from the pool. Built into the south-eastern portion of the wall (southeast of the drain) was a brick gully (134) which permitted access to the drain channel that emptied away from the pool. Immediately east of this gully was a linear drain (133) which ran from north to south and emptied into another brick gully (135).

All of the arches within the chapel were of a similar construction; generally rounded in shape and comprised of a dual course of header bricks that ran onto brick columns that projected approximately

2m down into the ground (from the top of the wall) onto sandstone block bases. Of these arches two were markedly different (Figure 15); the arch (163) exhibited a parabolic arch comprising of a single course of red brick and the arch (164) had been purposefully bricked up (plates 50-51). The reason for the shape of the parabolic arch is unknown although it may have provided access (headroom) to the undercroft of the chapel at some point in the past. The arch (164) may have been bricked up in order to provide strength in this area of the chapel which was the traditional entrance.

## **8.2 Accumulation of deposits within chapel**

Within the interior of the chapel there were a series of deposits (Figure 14); initially there was 0.95m of backfill deposits (explained in detail below) comprising of clinker (107), grey-blue ash (191), sandstone demolition (192) and (104); which was the final backfill layer and covered the entire area below the concrete slab; this ash (104) was very friable and soft, was mid-grey-brown (with black mottling) and with frequent brick, mortar and metal slag inclusions. This deposit lay above 0.37m of quite soft, dark-grey-brown, sand-clay-silt subsoil (108), which in turn overlaid 0.20m of alluvial material; which was light-grey-brown and sand-silt in texture. Directly below this was a 0.13m deposit of a peaty material (189) which was dark-black-brown and which lay directly above a >0.10m deposit of dark blue clay (190).

These were the maximum depths of excavation conducted within the Baptist chapel interior which were only exposed in selected areas (test pits) due to the rapid influx of ground water and concerns for the stability of the standing remains of the chapel. For the above purposes and general concerns around safety the ground level was reduced by 1.20-1.30m (84.04 OD) in most areas within the confines of the chapel – during these works no signs of burials were encountered.

Visible within the interior of the chapel on the surface of the subsoil (108) was a foundation cut [117] which ran parallel with all the walls (interior and exterior) of the chapel. This cut was approximately 0.12m wide and ran to a depth of 1m from its revealed horizon within the top of the subsoil. This foundation trench [117] cut through 0.37m of subsoil, 0.30m of alluvial silt, 0.23m of dark organic material and 0.10 into the dark blue clay deposit.

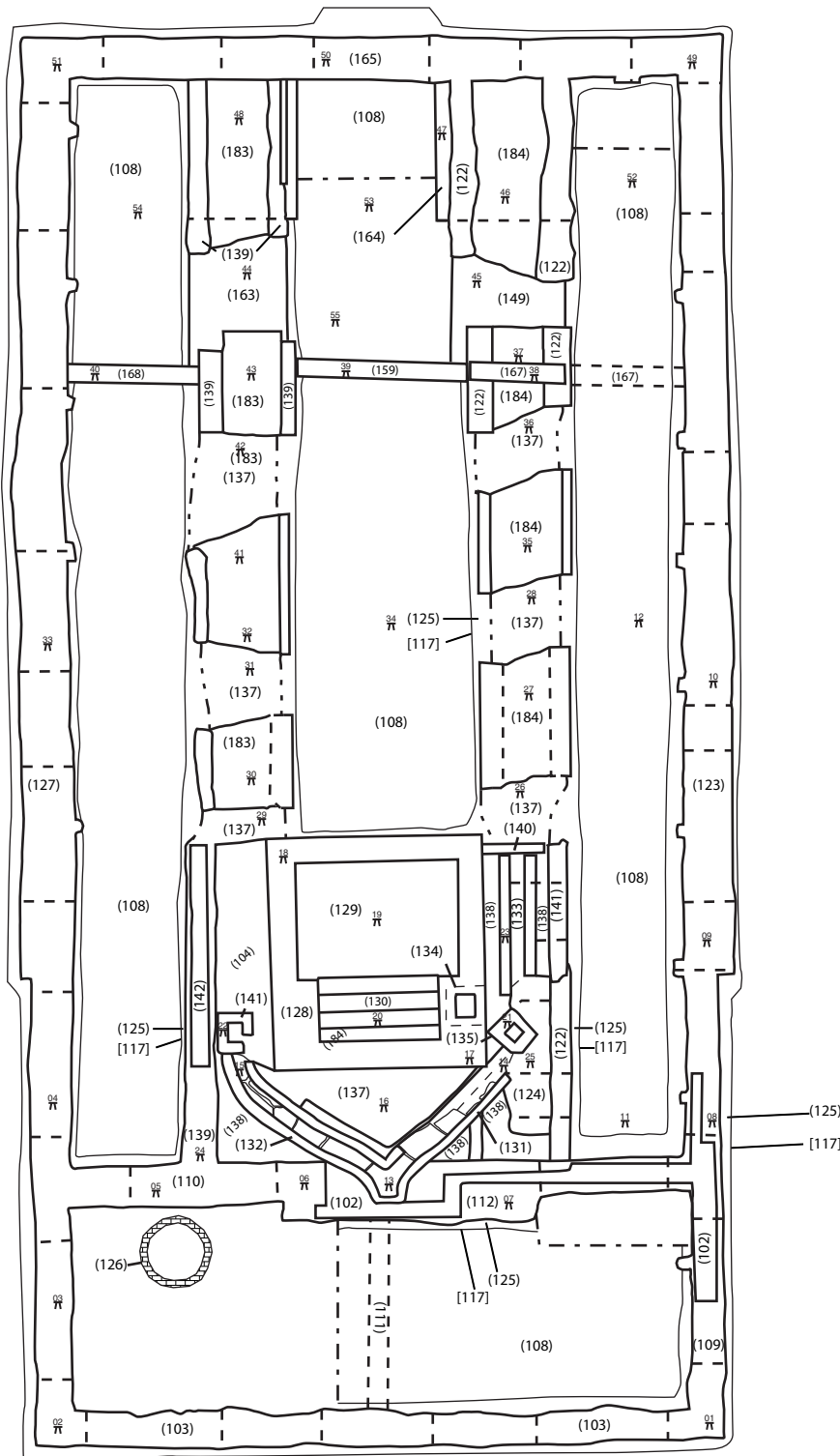
Below is a summation of the depth of the deposits from uppermost to lowest (2.10m = final observed depth).

- Topsoil – 0m-0.25m
- Ash deposits/Backfill – 0.25m-1.20m
- Subsoil – 1.20m-1.57m
- Alluvial - 1.57m-1.77m
- Peaty – 1.77m-2.00m
- Clay – 2.00m->2.10m

## **8.3 Description of eastern and southern trenches**

To the south of the chapel an area of soil was reduced to 83.90m (OD), or 600mm below finished floor level (FFL) for the project. The trench measured 9m long by 7.80m wide and was orientated east to west. This trench cut through 0.28m of turf and topsoil (105) which was a mid-grey-brown, sand-silt with small sub-rounded/sub angular pebble inclusions. Beneath this was a demolition deposit (185) which was 0.28m in depth and consisted of a firm, mid-grey-brown (mottled orange) clay-silt with frequent mortar, CBM (ceramic building material), plastic and metal inclusions. Beneath this demolition layer was a >0.54m deep deposit of made-ground (186); this was a very soft, mid-grey-black, clay sand silt with abundant glass, post-war ceramic, CBM and mortar inclusions.





**Levels (ODM)  
(in meters)**

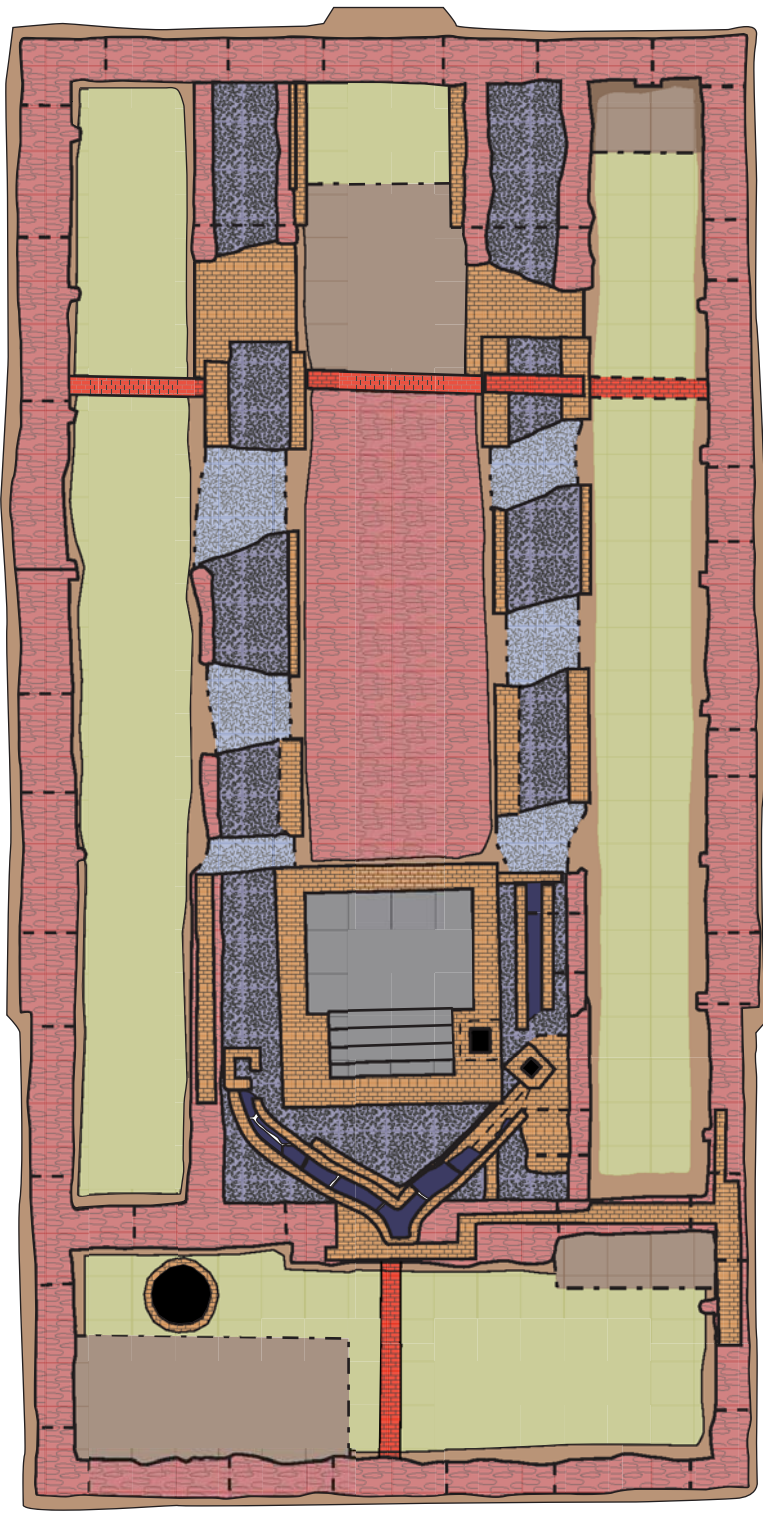
1 - 85.31	31 - 84.06
2 - 85.16	32 - 84.61
3 - 85.11	33 - 84.75
4 - 85.27	34 - 83.44
5 - 85.31	35 - 84.61
6 - n/a	36 - 84.61
7 - 85.04	37 - 84.61
8 - 85.29	38 - 84.71
9 - 85.15	39 - 84.68
10 - 85.41	40 - 84.77
11 - 84.04	41 - 84.62
12 - 84.04	42 - 84.62
13 - 84.04	43 - 84.68
14 - 85.35	44 - 84.06
15 - 85.29	45 - 84.55
16 - 85.29	46 - 84.61
17 - 85.47	47 - 84.17
18 - 85.50	48 - 84.82
19 - 85.90	49 - 84.72
20 - 85.46	50 - 84.81
21 - 85.30	51 - 84.09
22 - 85.42	52 - 83.37
23 - 85.42	53 - 83.55
24 - 85.26	54 - 83.45
25 - 85.15	55 - 82.73
26 - 84.46	
27 - 84.61	
28 - 84.58	
29 - 84.53	
30 - 84.06	












1:100



Figure 07. Plan of Baptist Chapel, Shifnal showing context numbers and levels (OD) Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCIFA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk



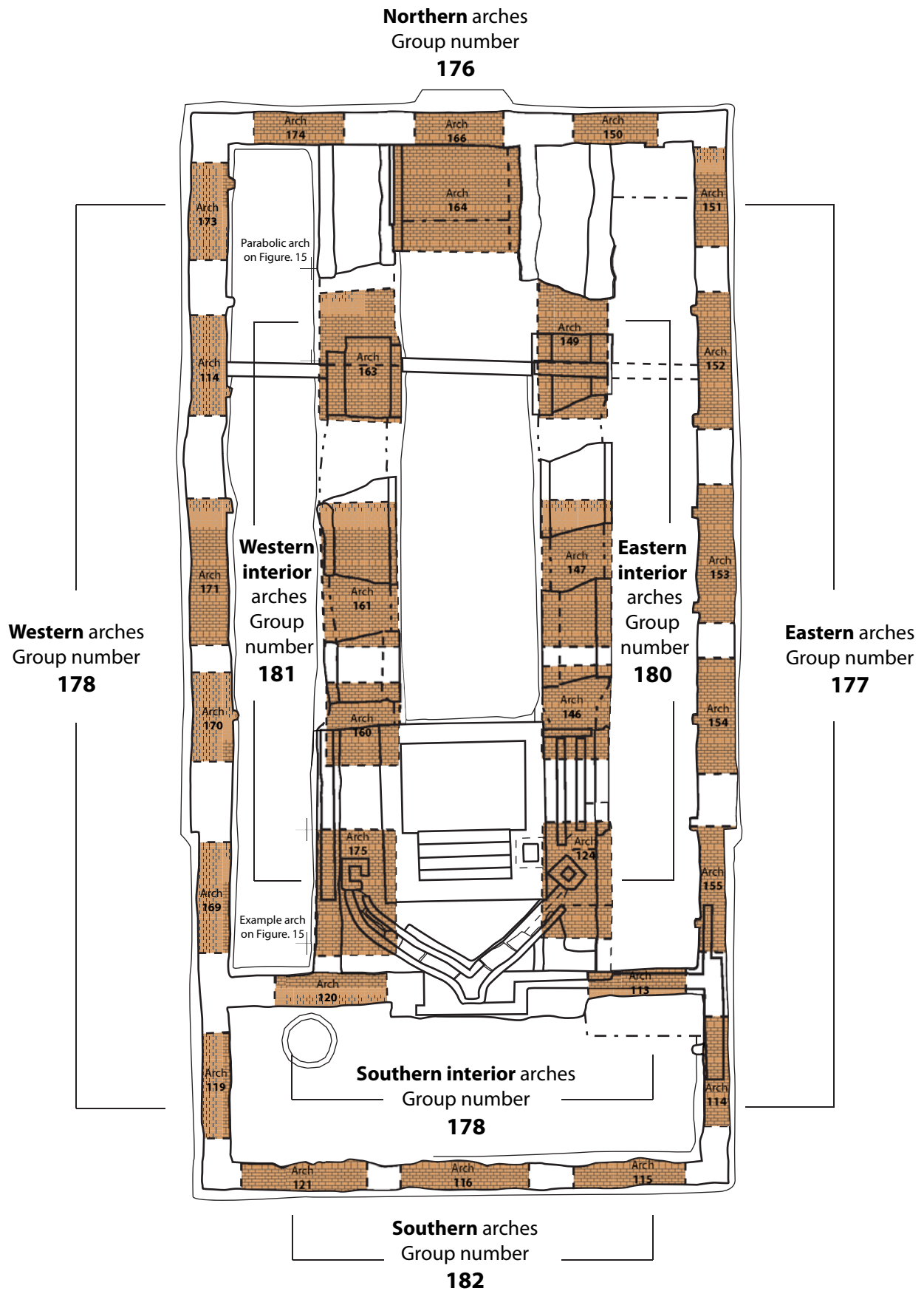
- KEY**
-  Sandstone wall
  -  Brick wall (102)
  -  Brick wall new
  -  Rubble infill
  -  Ash
  -  Slate
  -  Enamel
  -  Soil
  -  Backfill of foundation cut
  -  Test Pit
  -  Void

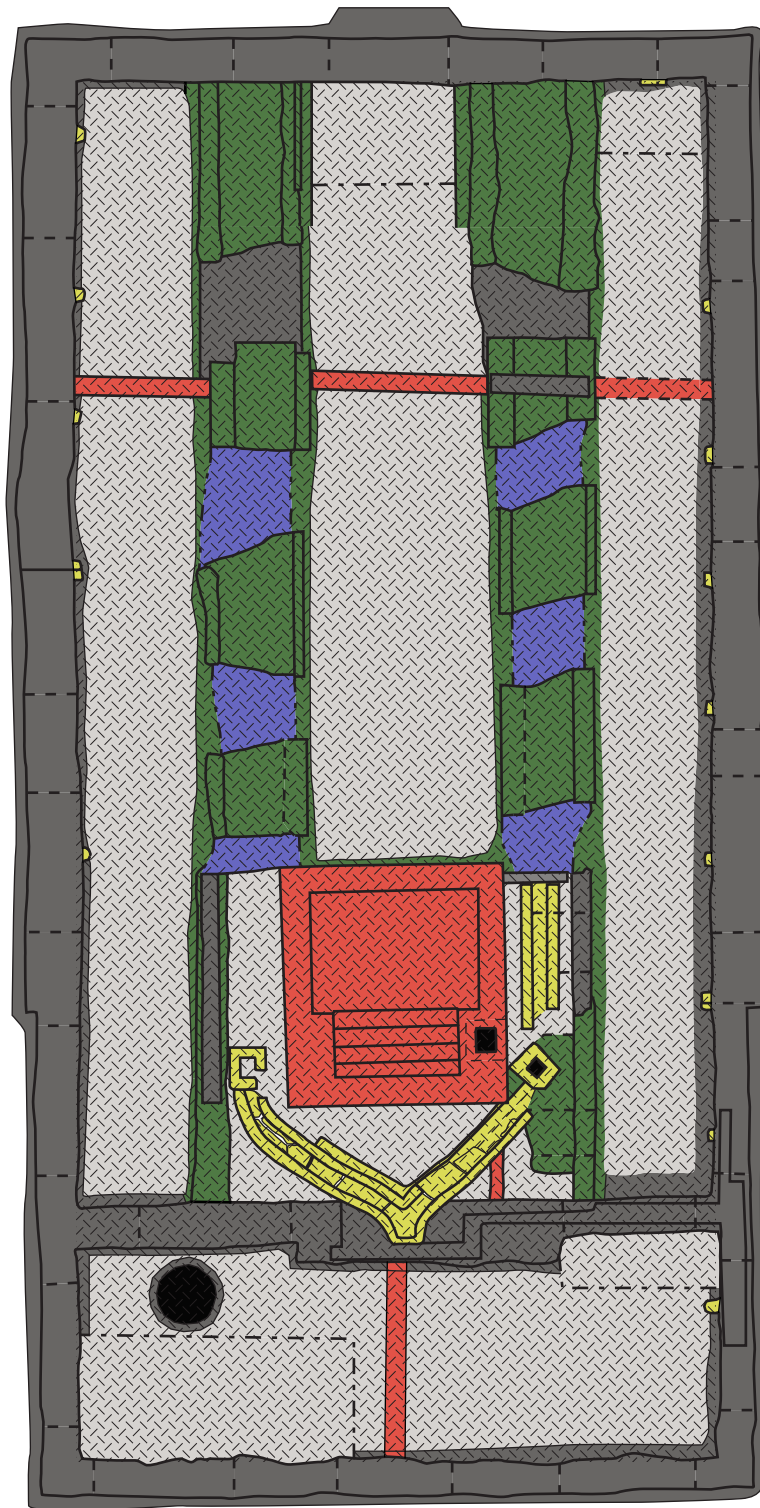
1:100











Figure 08. Plan of Baptist Chapel, Shifnal showing materials used in construction Scale 1:100 @ A4.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk





### KEY

-  Void
-  1st Phase (a) structural work (**1843/44**)  
Foundation trench excavated, exterior sandstone walls and brick arches built, (bonded with lime mortar).
-  1st Phase (b) structural work  
2nd Foundation trench for internal sandstone walls and associated brick arches, (bonded with lime mortar).
-  (c) installation of floors and drainage  
Timber raft floor installed upon sandstone corbels, and 'V-shape', slate lined drainage channels constructed north of vestry.
-  2nd Phase (a) remodeling and improvement (**1890**)  
Baptismal Pool added, and with addition of brick dividing walls, new wooden floor (?) - (bonded with Portland cement mortar).
-  3rd Phase (a) remodeling and backfilling - (**post 1945**)  
Wooden floor is removed - backfill of voids with ash (probably) from local industry.
-  3rd Phase (b) demolition and backfilling  
Central arches along walls (139) and (122) are deliberately broken and backfilled with more ash.
-  3rd Phase (c) structural  
Concrete slab is cast over entire area as building is converted to magistrate's courts.

1:100



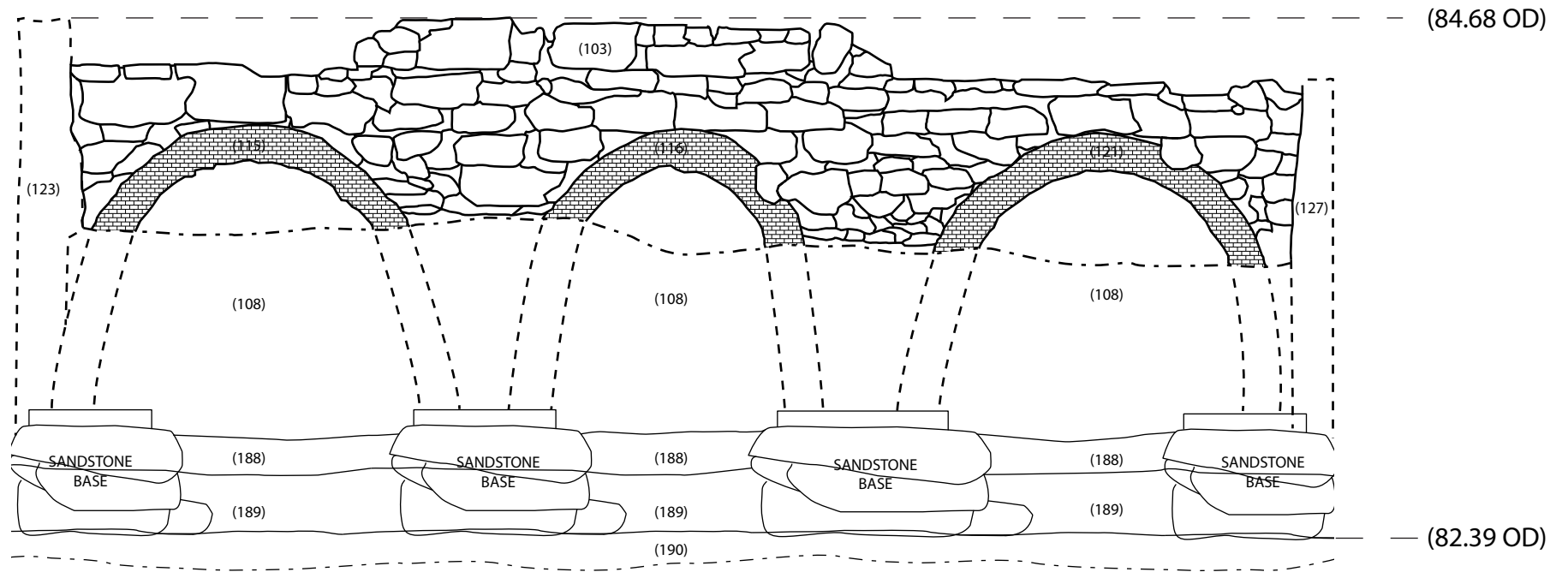
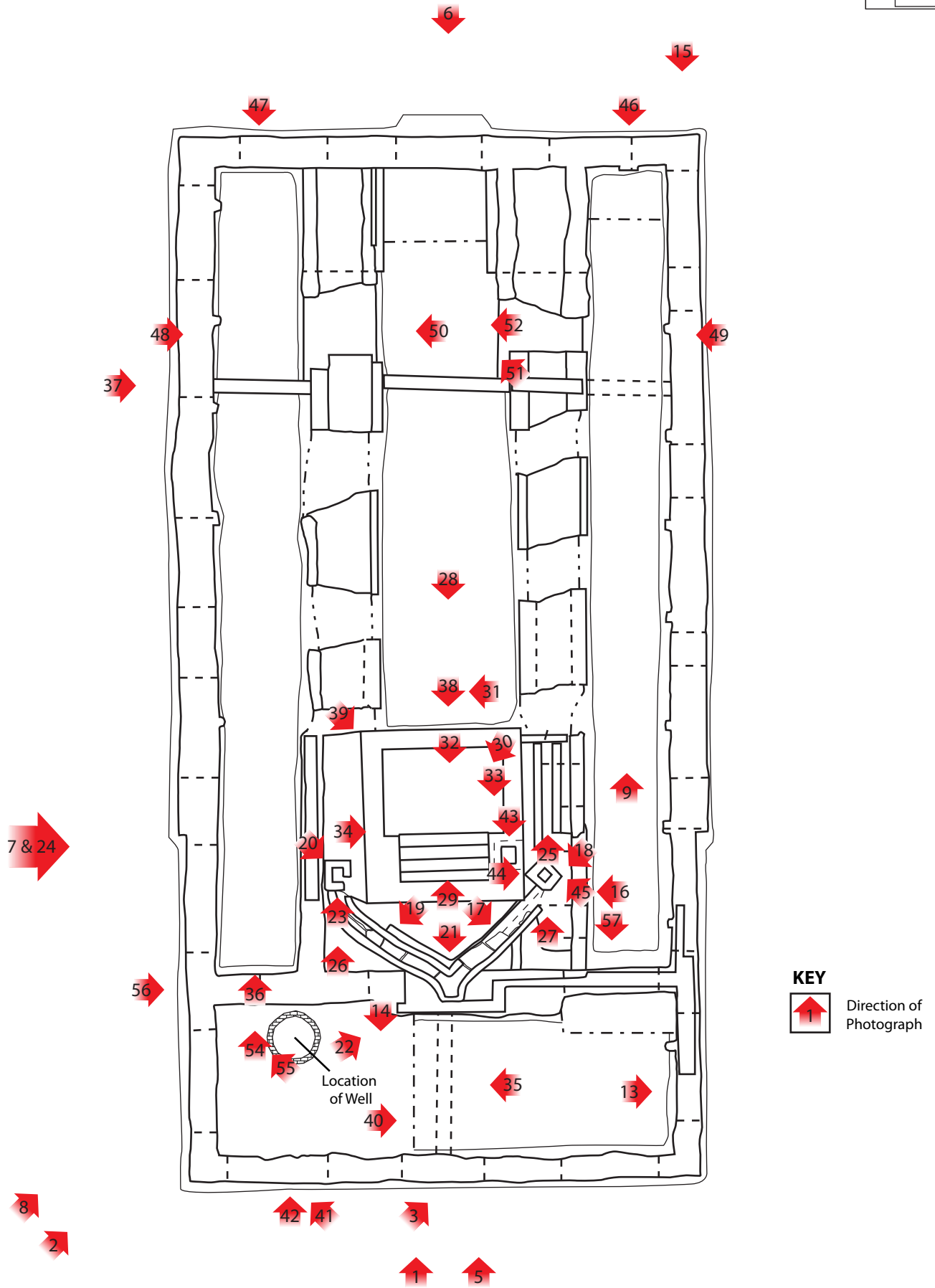


Figure 11. Section of Southern wall (103) showing visible arches (115), (116), (121). Arches are projected below ground onto observed sandstone bases. Scale 1:20 @ A4.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)



1:100



# SHREWSBURY ROAD

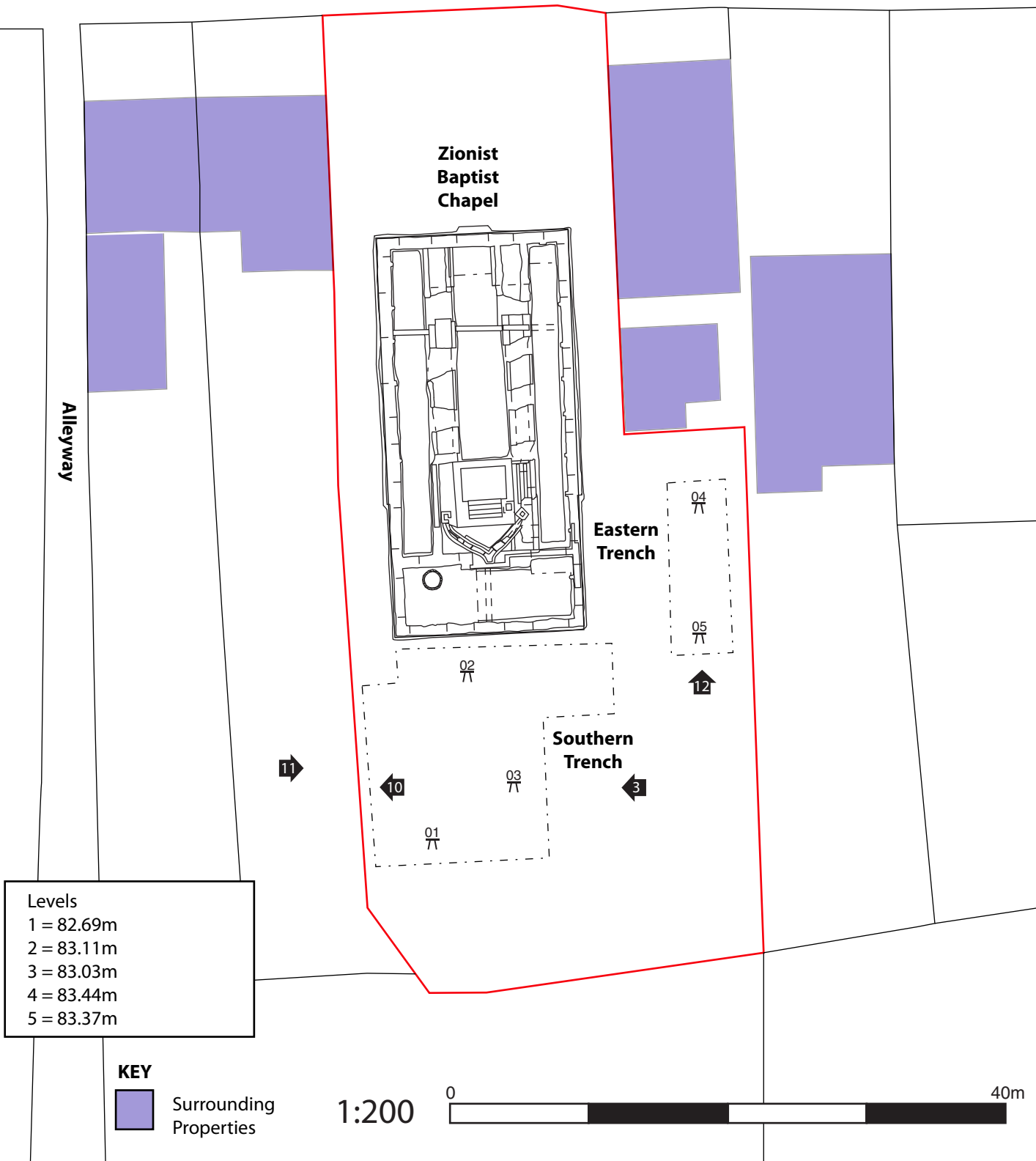


Figure 13. Plan showing direction of photographic plates (3,10 - 12) and levels (OD) within the southern and eastern trenches.

To the east of the chapel another trench was excavated to 600mm below FFL. This trench measured 6.20m long by 2.20m wide and was orientated north to south. The trench cut through 0.15m of concrete onto a >0.45m of a soft, mid-grey-black, clay-sand-silt (187) with abundant glass, CBM and mortar inclusions. This material (187) was probably the same or a similar material found south of the chapel (186); constituting of made-ground.

#### **8.4 Construction phases of the chapel building on Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal (Figure 10).**

##### **Phase 1: The Initial construction (1844)**

The first phase of building works to commence at the site of the Zionist Baptist's Chapel, Shifnal consisted of the excavation of a foundation cut [117] into the subsoil (108) which the chapel's exterior walls; (103), (123), (127), (165) and their arches, (176), (177), (178) and (182); and the interior walls (110), (122), (139) and their arches (178), (180), (181) were all constructed (Figure 09). The visible exterior walls consisted of red brick bonded by lime mortar (102) however these sat upon sandstone blocks also bonded by lime mortar. These walls were supported by rounded arches consisting of a dual course of unfrogged red brick bonded by lime mortar. These arches were at their maximum height approximately 1.65m tall with varying widths (between 1.95-2.20m); each side of the arches' columns were seated upon large sandstone blocks which were themselves situated just below the horizon of the natural clay (190), (2.00m below the surviving height of the walls at the time of excavation (82.69 OD), Figure 11), furthermore these sandstone bases were well below the level of the water table (0.70m approx.), meaning that any attempt to record the full height of these arches was thwarted by the immediate inundation of ground water. It was not deemed appropriate to use a pump to dewater the site as the chapel remains were to be retained in situ. Also incorporated as part of the exterior walls were sandstone corbels which are likely to have supported a timber ring beam for a wooden floating floor.

Prior to the installation of the drainage system there was a 0.32m deep leveling layer (138) of a quite firm, orange-grey-brown, ashy rubble with frequent fragments of slate, mortar and metal slag inclusions placed upon the interior walls (122) & (139) at their southern end. The drainage system was also located towards the southern end of the building (north of the southern bay) and was found to be contemporary with the initial phase of works judging by the materials used and the physical relationships observed. The eastern drain (131) was 2.45m long by 0.45m wide and 0.10m in depth and orientated southwest to northeast. It comprised of three visible courses of '*purposefully snapped*' header bricks to the south and full *unbroken* bricks to the north; these were unfrogged red bricks bonded by lime mortar with the full bricks measuring 23cm long by 12cm wide by 10cm deep. The western drain (132) was 2.89m long by 0.56m wide by 0.10m in depth and orientated southeast to northwest. It comprised of header bricks and followed the same materials and dimensions utilised in the construction of drain (131).

The drains (131) and (132) also had a built-in gradient; the top of the gradient began for each drain at the point at which they coalesced (on top the central part of the buttress (112) which was incorporated into the fabric of the southern interior wall (110)). The drains then had a direction of fall away to the northeast and northwest respectively; the eastern drain (131) appeared to empty directly into the eastern bay of the chapel (conical clay drain pieces were observed in this area, perhaps aiding drainage in the undercroft), with a fall of 31cm across its length, whereas the western drain (132) discharged into the brick gully (144) with a fall of 25cm across its length. The gully (144) had also been constructed directly onto the brick arch (175) making the arches of the western interior wall roughly contemporary with the western drain (132). The drains were constructed from three courses of bricks respectively which formed a splayed base; the uppermost of the brick courses formed a channel which was lined at the base with pieces of slate and these had had been secured into place with a soft white mortar.



Another brick built drainage gully (135) had been constructed directly to the north of the exit point of drain (131) directly onto archway (124) meaning that this drain was contemporary with the eastern interior wall. This gully most likely received (no observed physical relationship) the discharge from the linear drainage channel (133) which was present to the north of the brick gully (135). The linear drain (133) was 2.02m long by 0.48m wide and 0.09m in depth and orientated north to south which was also the direction of its gradient. It comprised of one visible course of stretcher bricks to either side of the channel; these were unfrosted red bricks bonded by lime mortar which measured 23.5cm long by 11.5cm wide by 9cm deep. The drain was truncated to the north by a small linear brick built wall (140). This wall was bonded with a Portland cement mortar and most likely related to a later phase in construction. To the north of the drainage area situated at various points along the interior walls (122) and (139) were the remnants of laid slate bases, reminiscent of those found at the base of the drains to the south; there is a possibility that these drains ran the length of the church along the interior walls, although no bricks forming channels were formally identified.

## **Phase 2: The Renovation (1870)**

The next phase of construction followed a phase of restoration/improvement within the chapel most likely occurring around 1870 as alluded to in the historical record. This centered on the installation of a baptismal pool immediately north of the existing drainage system. The walls of the pool were placed upon a sandstone footing wall (145) which abutted with the interior walls (122) and (139). The sandstone wall was 2.20m in length and >0.45m in height and orientated east to west. There was no foundation cut observed for the wall; but neither was it 'tied' into the interior walls suggesting that it was a later imposition into the existing structure (plate 33). Situated upon this sandstone wall (145) was the northern wall of the baptismal pool. The walls of the baptismal pool (128) formed a single structure; which was rectangular in plan measuring, 3.08m long by 2.93m wide by 0.78m in height and was orientated east to west. It is reasonable to assume that the new brick pool may have replaced an earlier wooden pool as part of the refurbishment.

The walls of the baptismal pool comprised of 11 courses of stretcher bricks, these were unfrosted red bricks bonded by OPC and measured 24cm long by 12cm wide by 6cm deep. When viewed in plan the walls of the pool were three courses wide (0.38m) and formed an opening in the center of the pool; this area was 2.15m long by 1.37m wide by 0.57m in depth and was covered by a polished cement (129). This polished cement was between 18-30mm thick and faced the interior walls of (128) on the south, west and east sides as well as the base. To the north of the pool was a recess into which three steps (130) were constructed, these had also been covered in the same polished cement lining (129) found elsewhere in the baptismal pool. The steps were all uniform in dimensions; 1.65m long by 0.22m wide and 0.19m tall and allowed access to the pool base. In the south-eastern corner of the base of the pool was a small copper pipe drain which would empty the pool; set above this and built into the eastern brick wall of the pool (128) was a brick gully (134) which permitted access to the drain, most likely for cleaning purposes. In the south-western corner of the pool wall (128) was a small over spill channel (plate 34) comprised of the same polished cement (129) that was used to line the pool.

Another element that formed part of this phase of construction was the erection of four red brick dividing walls bonded by Portland cement – it is the utilisation of this cement which alludes to the contemporary nature of the pool and the brick divisions. Three of these walls were constructed towards the northern end of the chapel; in the western bay was (168), in the central bay (159) and in the eastern bay (167), another further wall (111) was constructed bisecting the southern bay of the church into two distinct areas. The walls were comprised of between 11 - 14 courses of red bricks with a hard OPC, all were also only a single wythe (course wide) of bricks; the bricks used measured 23cm long by 11cm wide by 7.5cm deep. The northern walls were orientated east to west and were situated about a quarter distance along the chapel's northern bays from the northern end, forming three distinct cells; one cell in each of the three bays. These walls may have been implemented to

support new wall divisions or they could have been added to add additional support to the original wooden floor or a completely new wooden floor in 1870.

### **Phase 3: Conversion to law courts (Post 1945)**

Following the installation of the baptismal pool and brick walls in 1890 the chapel slowly fell out of use as a place of worship by 1930, when it was purchased by Shropshire County Council and subsequently refitted as a magistrate's court soon after the Second World War. During this phase of construction works it appears as if the wooden floor was taken up entirely and the baptismal pool infilled with a very loose ash (137) which was a bluish grey-black, fine silt with occasional fragments of brick and mortar inclusions. This dark ash material (137) was used to fill the baptismal pool (128) and cover the steps (130), and was used to fill the void located between the drains (131) and (132) to the south of the baptismal pool's southern wall.

Once the floor was removed and the baptismal pool backfilled with ash, the four bays (three northern, one southern) were subsequently backfilled with a series of deposits. The initial stage in backfilling consisted of a 0.24m deep deposit of loose/friable, black, clinker (107) with abundant small to medium angular/sub angular fragments of charcoal, coke and slag. The next layer to be deposited was a 0.13m deep loose light-blue-grey, silt/ash (191) with occasional fragments of metal slag and mortar. Following this a 0.22m layer of firm, mid-orange-brown, silt-sand (192) with frequent medium to large blocks of sandstone masonry and fragments of mortar and slate was added, with the final layer of backfill consisting of a 0.28m deep deposit of very soft, dark-grey-brown (black mottled), silt/ash (104) with very frequent bricks, brick fragments, mortar, glass and metal slag inclusions (Figure 14).

Following the backfilling of the bays the arches within the internal walls (122) and (139) were broken in order to reveal voids, these were then subsequently backfilled with a 0.25m layer of clinker (107) and then a 0.45m layer of soft grey white ash (104). This final layer of ash (104) also covered the dark ash (137) used to backfill the pool and covered all of the internal walls by a depth of 0.10m approx. It was upon this leveled surface (85.60 OD approx.), across the entire interior space of the chapel that the concrete slab (101) of was cast - to a depth of 0.21m forming the new floor surface of the magistrate's court.

When the concrete slab (101) was encountered during this watching brief it was found to be broken in many places especially around the northern and southern bays (plate 41). A property of the soft grey white ash (104) located beneath the slab is that it was heavily absorbent and prone to expansion and contraction over the course of a year; therefore creating a void beneath the concrete over time (plate 42). As a symptom of using this ash as a leveling layer and base for the concrete slab to be cast upon, the foundation of the slab became compromised; causing it to break underneath its own weight and slump into the void that had been created by the contracted ash layer below.

Outlined below is a broad summation of the 3 construction phases discovered during the archaeological watching brief;

#### *1st Phase - Original (1843/44)*

##### (a) Structural work

Foundation trench excavated, exterior sandstone walls and brick arches built, (bonded with lime mortar).

##### (b) Structural work

2<sup>nd</sup> Foundation trench for internal sandstone walls and associated brick arches, (bonded with lime mortar).

(c) Installation of floors and drainage

Timber raft floor installed upon sandstone corbels, and 'V-shape', slate lined drainage channels constructed north of vestry.

#### *2nd Phase - renovation works (1870)*

(a) Remodeling and improvement

Baptismal Pool added, and with addition of brick dividing walls, new wooden floor (?) - (bonded with Portland cement mortar).

#### *3rd Phase - post 1945*

(a) Remodeling and backfilling

Wooden floor is removed - backfill of voids with ash (probably) from local industry.

(b) Demolition and backfilling

Central arches along walls (139) and (122) are deliberately broken and backfilled with more ash.

(c) Structural

Concrete slab is cast over entire area as building is converted to magistrate's courts.

## **8.5 Discussion**

With regards to the structural composition of the chapel the arches present the most formative question associated with the construction of the building; both with regards to design choice by the architect and how the foundations were excavated given the height/depth of the water table. The arches' pillars were situated upon large sandstone bases which themselves had been laid upon the natural clay (190); these large pads displaced the weight of the building above and anchored the building on a stable building surface. However the depth at which these sandstone pads were located was approximately 2m (82.69 OD) below the ground level and 0.70m below the water table (83.39 OD approx.). The original groundwork for the chapel foundation cut [177] would have been significant with large amounts of material having to be removed in order to accommodate the pads at the depth of 2m. Furthermore the waterlogged nature of the area would have presented additional challenges to construction; for example how to keep water away whilst the pads were located properly, what mortar to use, or how to keep the area dry long enough for mortar to set.

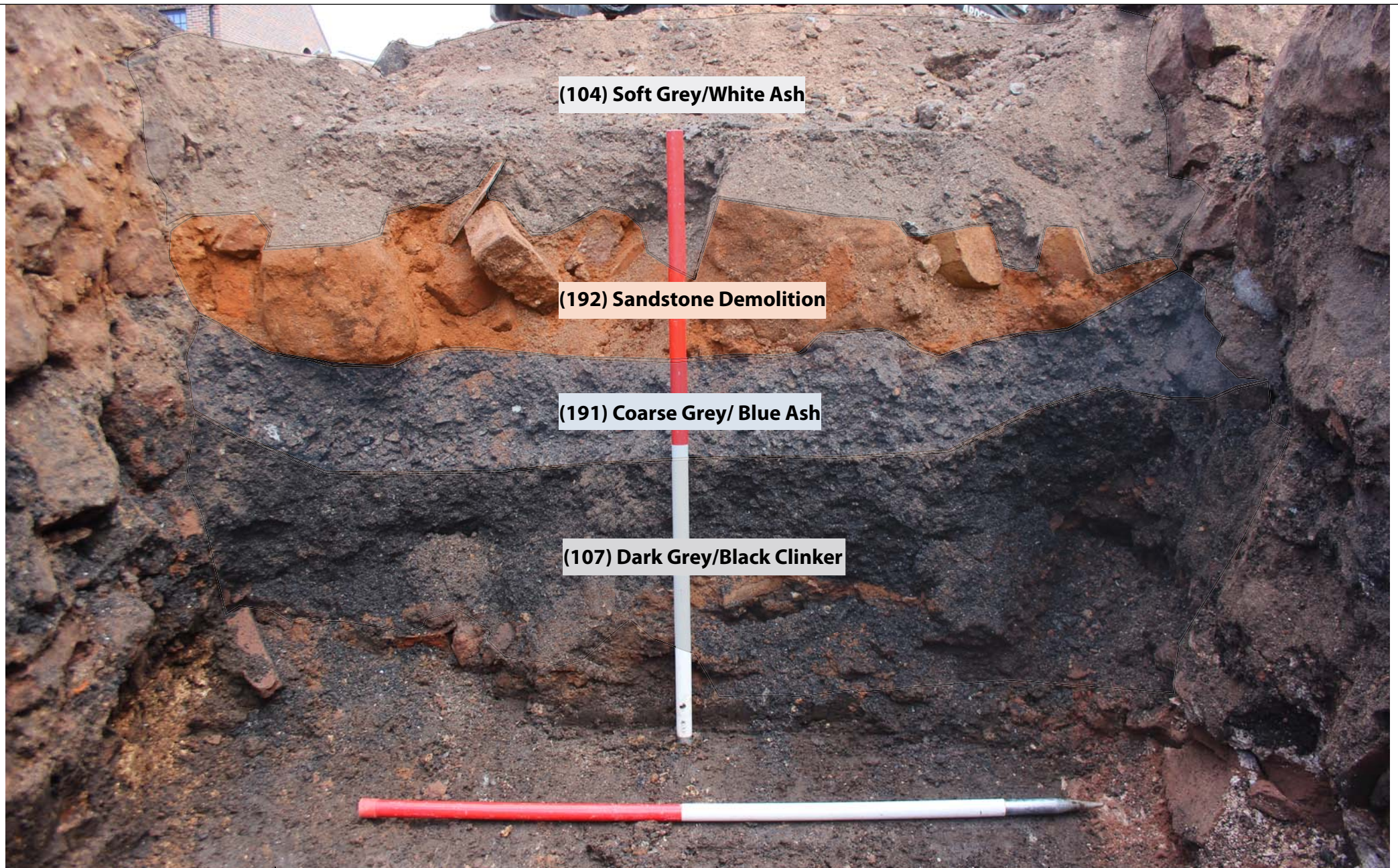
The year(s) prior to the construction of the chapel could be of significance with some of the design choices of the early Victorian architects and builders. The realignment of the Shrewsbury Road in 1789 and Thomas Telford's construction of a new road (Victoria Road) in 1824 almost certainly resulted in the rerouting of the Wesley Brook (probably the Shrewsbury Road works). The 1840 tithe map of Shifnal exhibits a right angled elbow in the brook to the north of the Shrewsbury Road carrying the watercourse east and south before it appears to resume its course south of the Victoria Road. The reason for the rerouting is not immediately clear; however it may be possible to extrapolate from the evidence that the brook may have originally opened out at this point, creating a wider part of the stream which could have been liable to flood and therefore not acting as a reliable ford; as such the original course of the road may have respected the natural geography of the stream before it became necessary to realign it in 1789 – this theory is supported by the depth and nature (alluvial) of the deposits encountered during the excavation within the church interior. It is therefore suspected that

the original route of Shrewsbury Road ran north of its current alignment and joined Broadway (to the east) at a more acute angle in order to avoid the wider part of the stream. Furthermore the re-channeling of the brook may have drained the area as a whole and subsequently made it a candidate for new building and expansion of the town during the 1840's. This may also suggest why the foundations of the church are so significant, both in order to reach the stable natural clay below the softer alluvial deposits and also to bridge over the high water table.

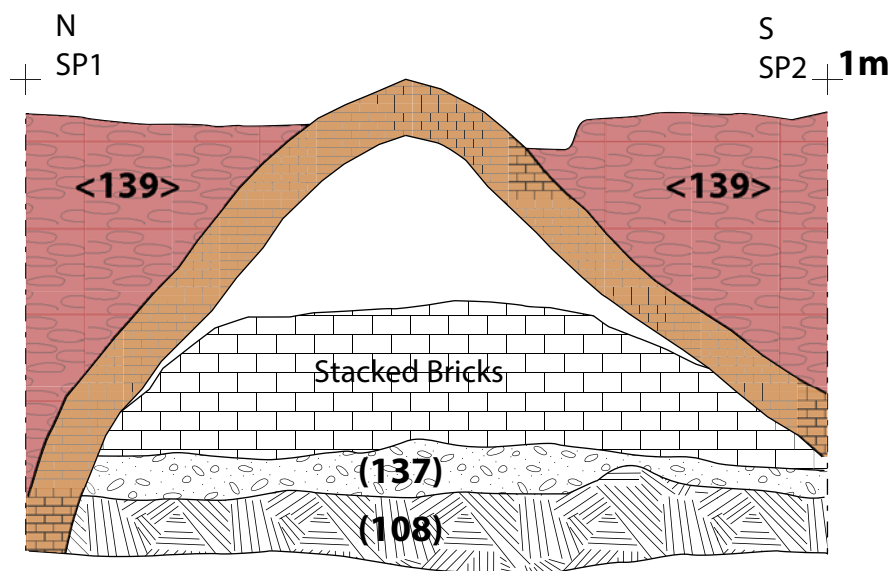
The use of ash as backfill for the chapel foundation may represent a specific regional response to the traditional process of backfilling inbetween structural foundations; where the use of a material to backfill enhances the strength and integrity of a foundation. This trend of using industrial byproducts within the region of the West Midlands (and East Shropshire) is a well-known regional practice. The origin of the ash is not known, although there is potential for the Coalport Works (chain & wire) to the east of town to have produced material in large enough quantities during its manufacturing processes to have been sufficient to fill the area between the foundations of the chapel.

The occurrence of different types of mortar within the construction of brick built structures is often useful when attempting to understand the construction phases of a building when physical relationships are not present or sufficiently obvious. The inception of Ordinary Portland Cement (OPC) had begun with William Aspidin in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century although he did not patent the invention until 1843; and it did not become truly popular until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when its ability to set hard and quickly became more widely appreciated by builders. The transition from the traditional hydraulic lime based mortars of the post-medieval period to OPC was slow and not unilateral within England and did not fully occur until 1930. Therefore in the example of the Baptist chapel, Shifnal the initial (early) phase of construction can be understood as having been conducted using a hydraulic lime mortar/cement and unfrogged orange/red bricks in 1843/44, whilst the secondary (later) phase of construction was carried out with OPC and unfrogged red and blue-grey bricks in 1870 reflecting this change in use of materials and the increased popularity of the more efficient OPC (Meir 2015).

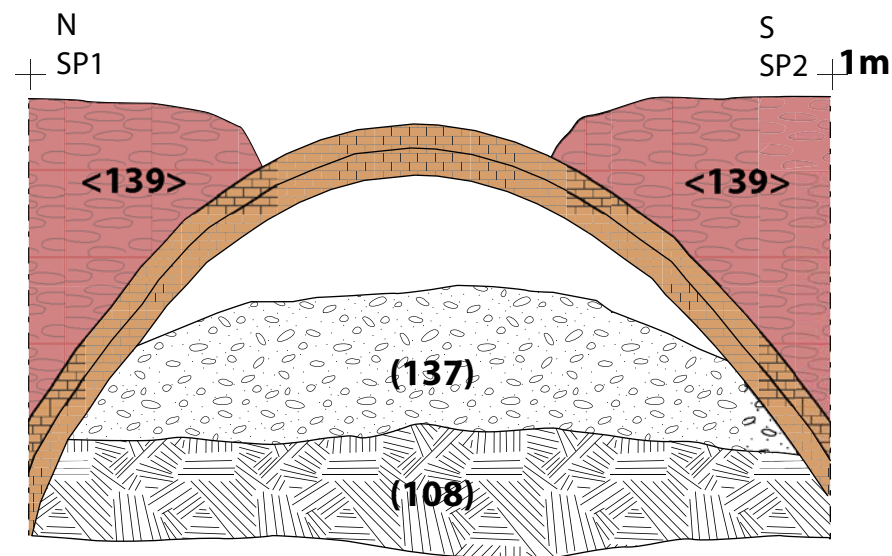
In wider terms the watching brief provided a unique opportunity to record the considerable structural remains of the chapel building and has produced an archaeological record which helps to contribute, in a fashion, to the more general studies associated with industrial/post-industrial communities within East Shropshire and the West Midlands. In more acute terms it informs on the specific anthropogenic reactions to the environment (with specific focus on Shifnal and its environs) and how it was changed by the expansion/alteration of transport networks during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore this report appraises on an aspect of wider social-cultural responses to an altering demographic within the community of Shifnal. The potential is that by the examination of the alteration of this building it reflects (to a certain extent) these cultural responses over time, for example; the influx of a migrant community corresponds with the erection of Christian places of worship on Shrewsbury Road, then the diminishing relevance of the non-conformist religion towards the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries sees the building convert to a Magistrate's Court therefore responding to the changing requirements of society.



a) Drawn Section of the Parabolic Arch (163).



b) Drawn Section of a Rounded Arch (175).





**Plate 01:** Pre-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the south - scale 1m



**Plate 02:** Pre-excitation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the southwest - scale 1m





**Plate 03:** Pre-excitation shot for southern area of site - from the east - scale 1m



**Plate 04:** Concrete slab (101) in situ prior to lifting - from the southwest - scale 1m



**Plate 05:** Post-excitation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the south - scale 2m



**Plate 06:** Post-excavation shot of Zionist Baptist Chapel - from the north - scale 2m



**Plate 07:** Post-excitation shot of Baptist Pool (128) - from the west - scale 2m



**Plate 08:** Post-excitation oblique shot of Baptist Pool (128) - from the southwest - 2m



**Plate 09:** Section showing layers of deposition (from top); (104), (192), (191), (107) within the eastern bay - from the south - scale 2m



**Plate 10:** Generic section of southern trench - from the east - scale 1m





**Plate 11:** Post-excitation shot of southern trench - from the west - scale (2x) 1m



**Plate 12:** Post-excavation shot of eastern trench - from the south - scale (2x) 1m



**Plate 13:** Shot showing example of wall and arch construction (southwestern corner of chapel) - from the west - scale 2m



**Plate 14:** Shot showing visible depth of arches (southern wall of chapel) the sandstone base is obscured by water table - from the north - scale 2m



**Plate 15:** Shot of eastern wall (123) showing (on left) the sandstone corbels which may have supported a timber ring beam - from the north - 0.50m



**Plate 16:** Shot of orange ash rubble (138) used as leveling layer below eastern drain (131) - from the east - 0.50m



**Plate 17:** Eastern drain (131) - from the northwest - scale 1m



Plate 18: Eastern drain (131) - from the northeast - scale 0.5m





Plate 19: Western drain (132) - from the northeast - scale 2m



Plate 20: Western drain (132) - from the northwest - scale 0.50m



**Plate 21:** Point at which drains (131) & (132) are connected on top of buttress (112 - from the west - scale 0.5m



Plate 22: Butress (112) situated to south of interior wall (110) - from the southwest - scale 1m



Plate 23: Western Gulley (144) - from the south - scale 0.5m



**Plate 24:** Context shot showing drain area and archway (175) - from the west - scale 2m



**Plate 25:** Linear drain (133) - from the south - scale 0.50m



**Plate 26:** Western interior wall (139) - from the south - scale 1m





**Plate 27:** Eastern interior wall (139) - from the south - scale 1m



**Plate 28:** Northern wall of baptismal pool (128) showing sandstone foundation below (145) - from the north - scale 2m



**Plate 29:** Baptismal Pool (128) with polished cement liner (129) - from the south - scale 2m & 0.5m



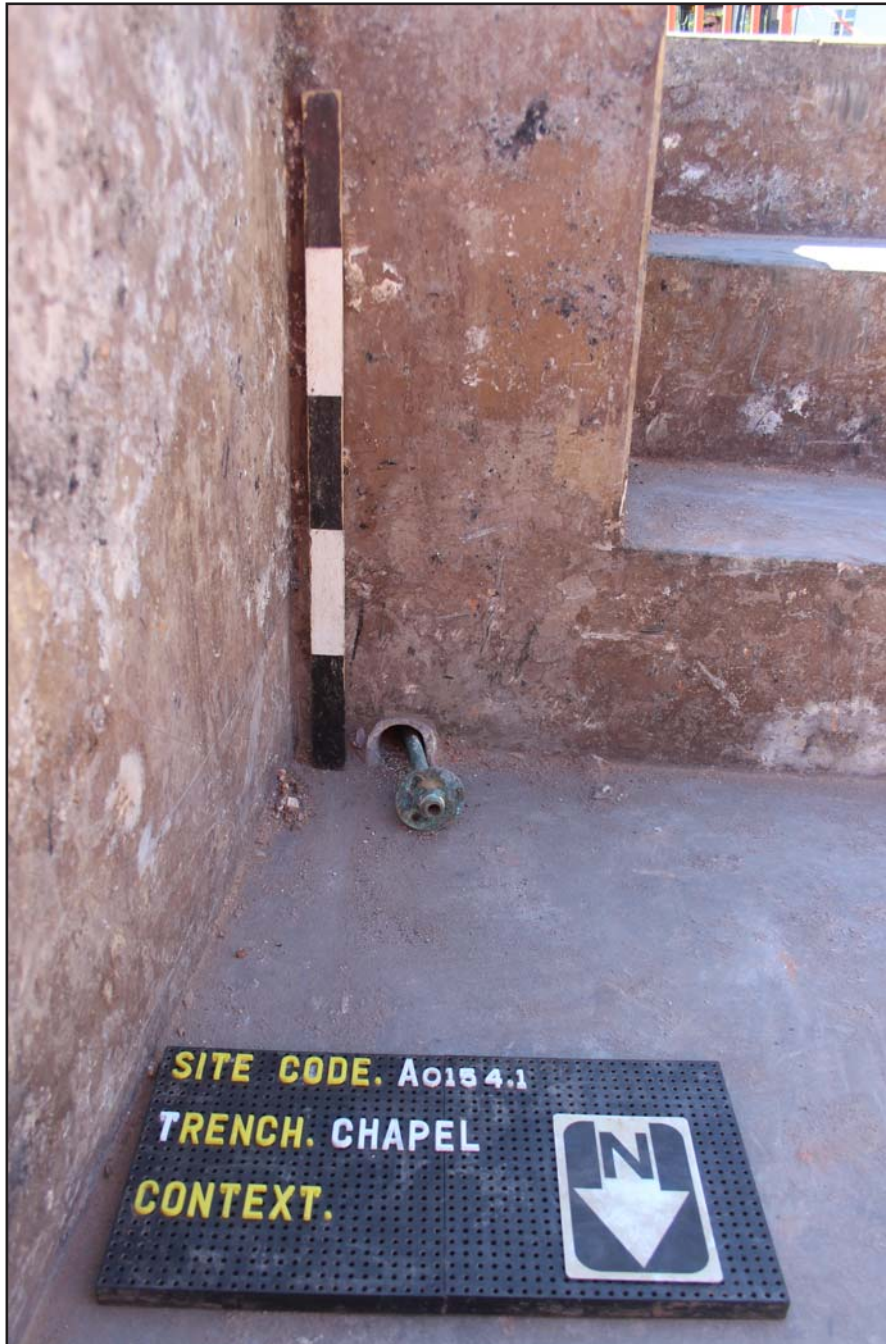
Plate 30: Baptismal Pool steps (130) - from the northeast - scale 2m & 0.5m



**Plate 31:** Shot showing physical relationship between interior wall (139), Archway (160) and drain (south eastern corner) - from the east - scale 1m



**Plate 32:** Shot of baptismal pool base, showing steps (130) and south eastern drain - from the north - scale 1m & 0.5m



**Plate 33:** Shot focused on drain within baptismal pool - from the north - scale 0.5m



Plate 34: Overspill channel within south western corner of baptimal pool wall (128) - from the west - scale 0.5m





Plate 35: Dividing wall (111) in southern bay - from the east - scale 1m



Plate 36: Northern dividing walls (168) (left) & (159) (right) - from the south - 2m



**Plate 37:** Context shot across dividing walls (168) (foreground) & (159) (background)  
- from the west - scale 0.5m



Plate 38: Baptismal Pool (128) with ash backfill (137) - from the south - scale 2m



Plate 39: Baptismal Pool (128) with ash backfill (137) - from the northwest - scale 2m



**Plate 40:** Grey brown ash (104) backfill found covering the whole site beneath the concrete floor slab (101) - from the west - scale 1m



**Plate 41:** Concrete floor slab (101) collapsed into void - from the southeast - scale 1m



**Plate 42:** Concrete floor slab (101) collapsed into void (close up) - from the southeast - scale n/a





Plate 43: Drain (134) built into wall of the eastern pool (128) - from the north - 0.50m



Plate 44: Drain (135) to the southeast of drain (134) - from the west - 0.50m



Plate 45: Orange ash rubble (138) below linear drain (133) - from the southeast - 0.50m



Plate 46: Eastern bay of chapel - from the north - scale (2x) 1m



**Plate 47:** Western bay of chapel - from the south - scale 2m



**Plate 48:** Parabolic Archway (163) (foreground) & Rounded arcway (149) (background) - from the west - scale 2m



**Plate 49:** Rounded Archway (149) (foreground) & Parabolic archway (163) (background) - from the east - scale 2m

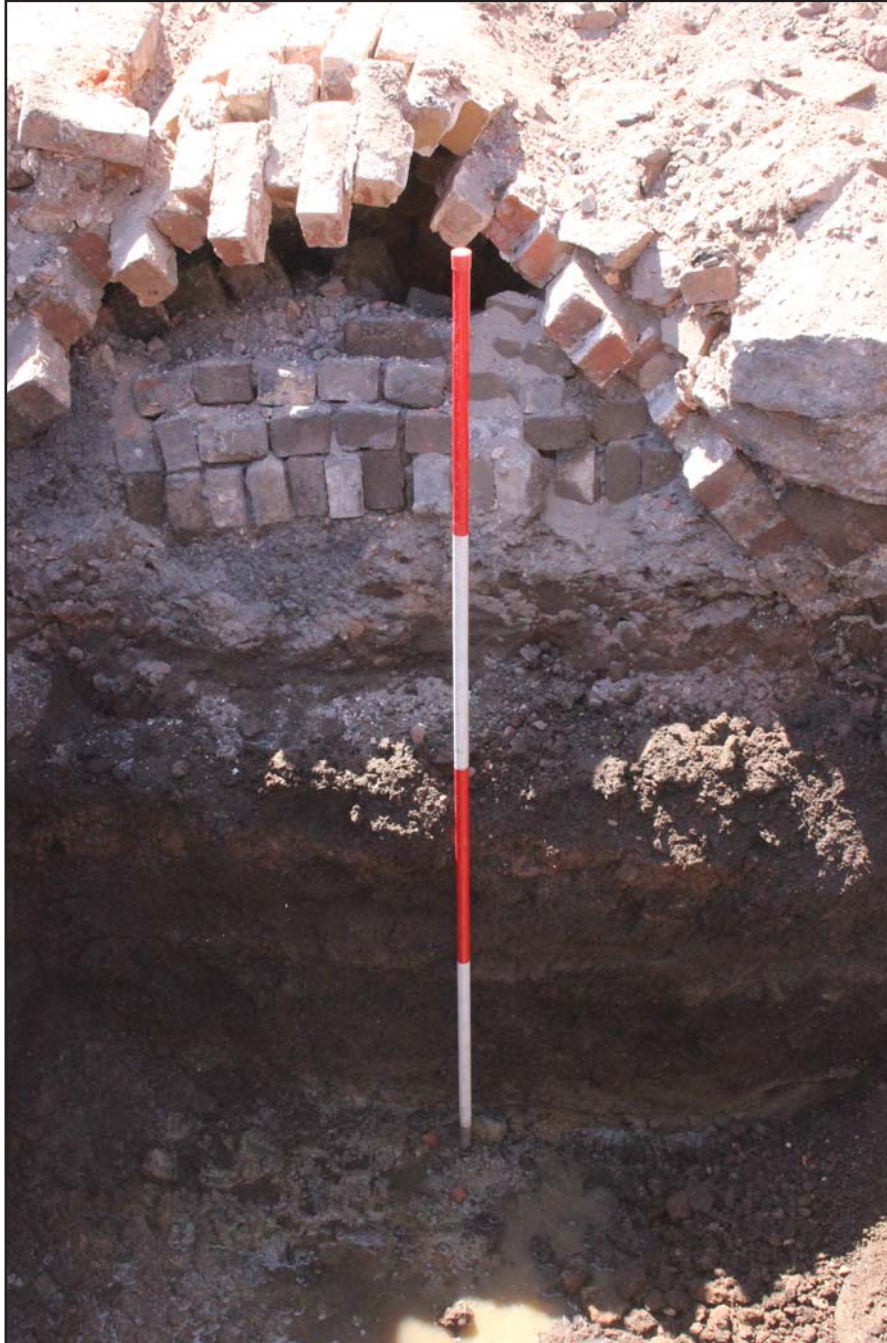


Plate 50: Parabolic arch (163) - from the east - scale 1m





**Plate 51:** Parabolic arch (163) & east-west 'bricked up archway' (164) - from the southeast - scale 2m



**Plate 52:** Test pit showing stratigraphy onto blue clay (190) - from the east - scale 2m



**Plate 53:** Examples of metal slag - n/a direction - scale 0.50m



Plate 55: Section showing physical relationship between interior wall (110) and exterior wall (127) - from the southeast - scale 1m



**Plate 56:** Shot in plan showing showing physical relationship between interior wall (110) and exterior wall (127) - from the west - scale 0.5m



**Plate 57:** Shot showing relationship between exterior wall (123) and southern interior wall (110) and that wall (122) abuts over archway (113) located within wall (110) - from the north - scale 1m

## 9.0 CONCLUSION

The archaeological watching brief that took place during the demolition and groundworks associated with the erection of seven new apartments (in two blocks) at the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Street, Shifnal found no evidence to suggest that the site had seen the burial of individuals, other than the two burials that had been previously recorded to the north of the site.

However the building was found to comprise of 29 brick archways situated on brick columns which extended 2m (82.69 OD) below ground level onto purposefully placed sandstone bases situated 0.70m (83.39 OD approx.) below the water table. This design choice was the most prominent feature pertaining to the building; as the significant foundations were situated within the former stream bed of the Wesley Brook which had been moved in the decades prior to the chapel's construction. The chapel sat above the high water table but also utilised the water to its advantage by constructing a brick lined well, probably in order to procure water for the use in Baptist ceremonies. The chapel was initially constructed with a slate lined, interior drainage system in 1843/44 and was embellished with a purpose built baptismal pool with steps and associated drainage system circa. 1870. Furthermore during the examination of these remains it was possible to formulate a basic plan of building phases associated with the development of the structure starting with its initial construction, investiture as a baptismal chapel, renovation and finally its conversion into a courthouse for the town of Shifnal shortly after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War.

In summation the watching brief provided a unique opportunity to record the considerable structural remains of a non-conformist chapel building from the early-mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. In wider terms the study provided an example of a specific anthropogenic reaction to environmental challenges and presented possible evidence by which to observe wider social-cultural responses to an altering demographic within the township of Shifnal during a period of rapid change.

The watching brief can be said to have met the aims and expectations of the condition and it is therefore recommended that the condition now be discharged.

## 10.0 SOURCES

### *OS Maps*

OS 1:10 000 Series sheet SJ 70 NE, SJ 70 SE, SJ 70 SW and SJ 70 NW.

### *Published sources*

Brown D. H., 2007. Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation. Archaeological Archives Forum

British Geological Survey website. [www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

English Heritage, 1991. Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)

English Heritage, 2006. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE)

Meir, R., 2015. *"Hard-Headed Man"*. Distillations. Chemical Heritage Foundation. 1 (2): 36–37  
Available at: <https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/magazine/hard-headed-man>

Richards, J. & Robinson, D., 2000. Digital Archives from Excavation and *Fieldwork: Guide to Good Practice* (Second Edition). The Archaeology Data Service Guide to Good Practice: Oxbow Books

Shifnal Local History Group website. <http://shifnalhistory.org>

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Code of Conduct*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*



## APPENDIX I – DETAILS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS

Context	Description
101	Concrete floor
102	Exterior brick wall for chapel
103	Sandstone wall (south)
104	Grey/White Ash
105	Turf and Topsoil
106	(see 117)
107	Dark Clinker layer
108	Subsoil
109	(see 123)
110	South central sandstone wall
111	Southern red brick dividing wall
112	Butress within 110
113	Eastern arch in 110
114	Void
115	Eastern arch in 103
116	Central arch in 103
117	Foundation cut for chapel
118	(see 127)
119	Southernmost arch 127
120	Western arch in 110
121	Western arch in 103
122	Internal wall east
123	External chapel wall east
124	1st (south) arch in 122
125	Backfill of 117
126	Well in SW of chapel
127	External wall chapel west
128	Brick wall baptismal pool
129	Enamel/concrete liner of pool
130	Slate steps
131	Eastern drain
132	Western drain
133	Eastern drain of pool
134	Gulley within pool
135	Gulley to east of the pool
136	Stub wall
137	Dark ash clincker
138	Red/Orange rubble
139	Dividing wall west
140	Stub wall
141	Void
142	Brick wall on top of 124
143	Void
144	Western gulley
145	Sandstone foundation 128
146	2nd Arch in 122
147	3rd Arch in 122
148	4th Arch in 122

149	5th Arch in 122
150	Eastern arch northern wall
151	1st arch (north) external wall east
152	2nd Arch in 123
153	3rd Arch in 123
154	4th Arch in 123
155	5th Arch in 123
156	Void
157	Void
158	Void
159	Brick wall division central bay
160	1st arch (north) external wall east
161	Central Arch in 139
162	Norther Arch in 139
163	Parabolic Arch in 139
164	Bricked up Arch in 139
165	External chapel wall north
166	Central wall in 165
167	Eastern dividing wall (Eastern bay)
168	Void
169	2nd Arch in 127
170	3rd Arch in 127
171	4th Arch in 127
172	5th Arch in 127
173	6th Arch in 127
174	North Arch in 139
175	First Arch west facing wall, western bay
176	Northern Arches
177	Eastern Arches
178	Western Arches
179	Southern Arches
180	internal Eastern Arches
181	internal Western Arches
182	Internal Southern Arches
183	internal western rubble core
184	internal eastern rubble core
185	Demolition deposit
186	Made ground
187	Made ground (eastern trench)
188	Alluvial silts
189	Organic Black material
190	Blue Clay Natural
191	Grey/Blue Ash
192	Orange Sandstone demolition rubble

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



---

**The Old Baptist Chapel,  
Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal,  
Shropshire TF11 8AQ.**

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

**March 2018 v1.0**

**aeon archaeology**



Project Code: A0153.1  
Planning Ref: 17/01565/FUL

---

1.0 INTRODUCTION .....	2
2.0 ARCHEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND .....	3
3.0 WATCHING BRIEF - ARCHAEOLOGICAL AIMS .....	4
4.0 METHODOLOGY .....	5
4.1 Archaeological Watching Brief .....	5
4.2 Watching brief report.....	7
4.2.1 Post-excavation Assessment .....	7
4.2.2 Post-excavation Report .....	7
5.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS DESIGNS (FAWDs) .....	9
6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES .....	9
7.0 HUMAN REMAINS .....	9
8.0 ARTEFACTS .....	10
9.0 UNEXPECTED DISCOVERIES: TREASURE TROVE .....	12
10.0 ARCHIVING.....	12
11.0 PERSONNEL .....	13
12.0 MONITORING AND LIAISON .....	13
13.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	13
14.0 INSURANCE .....	13

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Aeon Archaeology has been commissioned by Fellows Inspired Project Solutions on behalf of Shropshire Towns and Rural Housing (STaRH), hereafter the Client, to provide a written scheme of investigation (WSI) for carrying out an archaeological watching brief during the demolition and groundworks associated with the erection of seven new apartments (in two blocks) at the Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Street, Shifnal, Shropshire TF11 8AQ (NGR SJ 74753 07806).

A mitigation brief was not prepared for this scheme by the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council but the following condition was imposed upon full planning permission (17/01565/FUL):

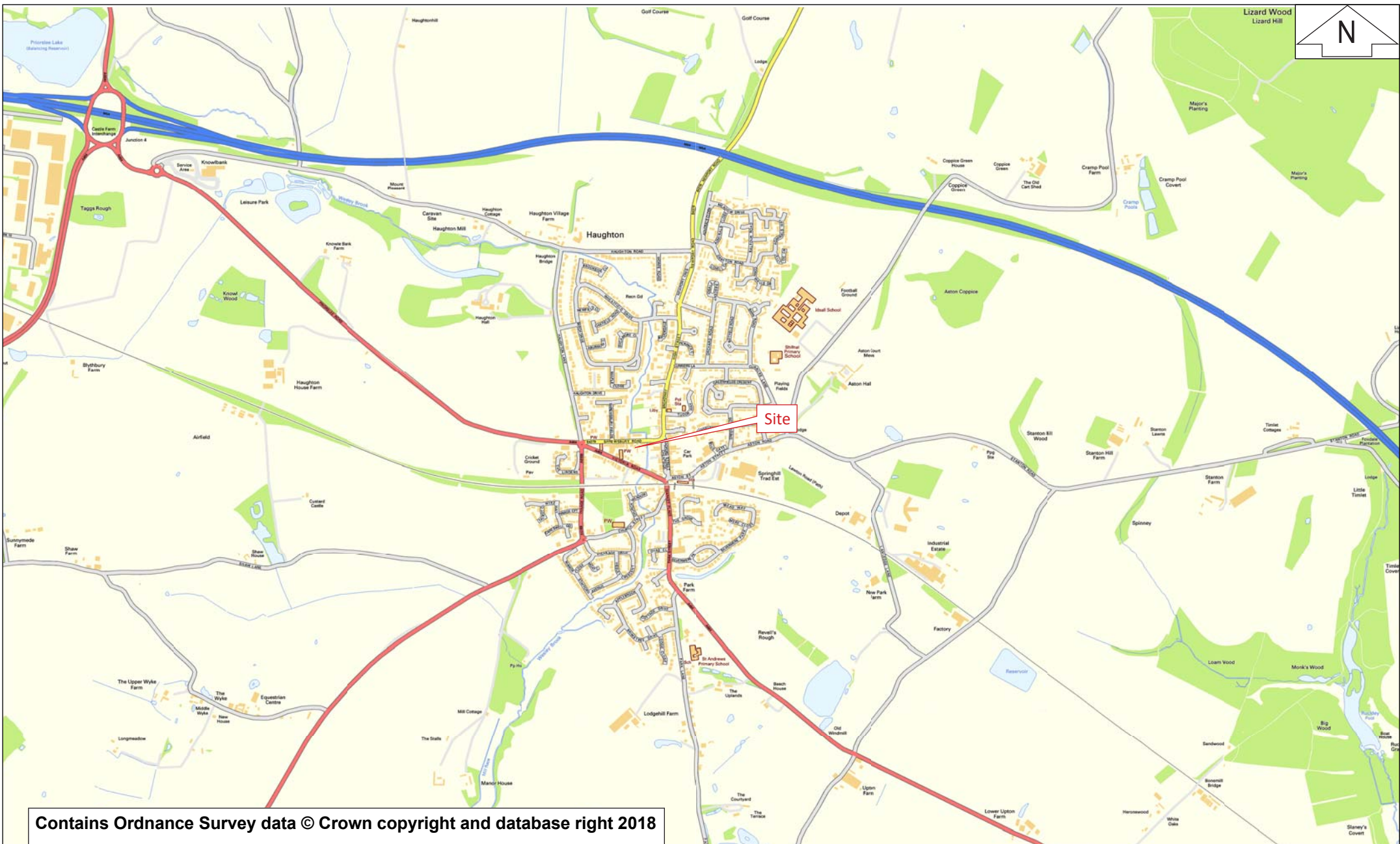
### *Condition 7*

*No development approved by this permission, other than demolition and site clearance, shall commence until a phased programme of archaeological work has been secured based on a specification (Written Scheme of Investigation) submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The program of archaeological work shall thereafter be carried on in complete accordance with the approved specification.*

*Reason: The site is known to hold archaeological interest and as such the information is required prior to commencement to ensure that any archaeology is recorded and taken into account in the development of the site.*

The use of such a condition is in line with guidance set out in paragraph 141, Section 12 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment) of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), published by the Department for Communities and Local Government; Policy MD13 of the SAMDev component of the Shropshire Local Plan; and Managing Significance in Decision Taking in the Historic Environment, Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 2 (Historic England 2015).

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

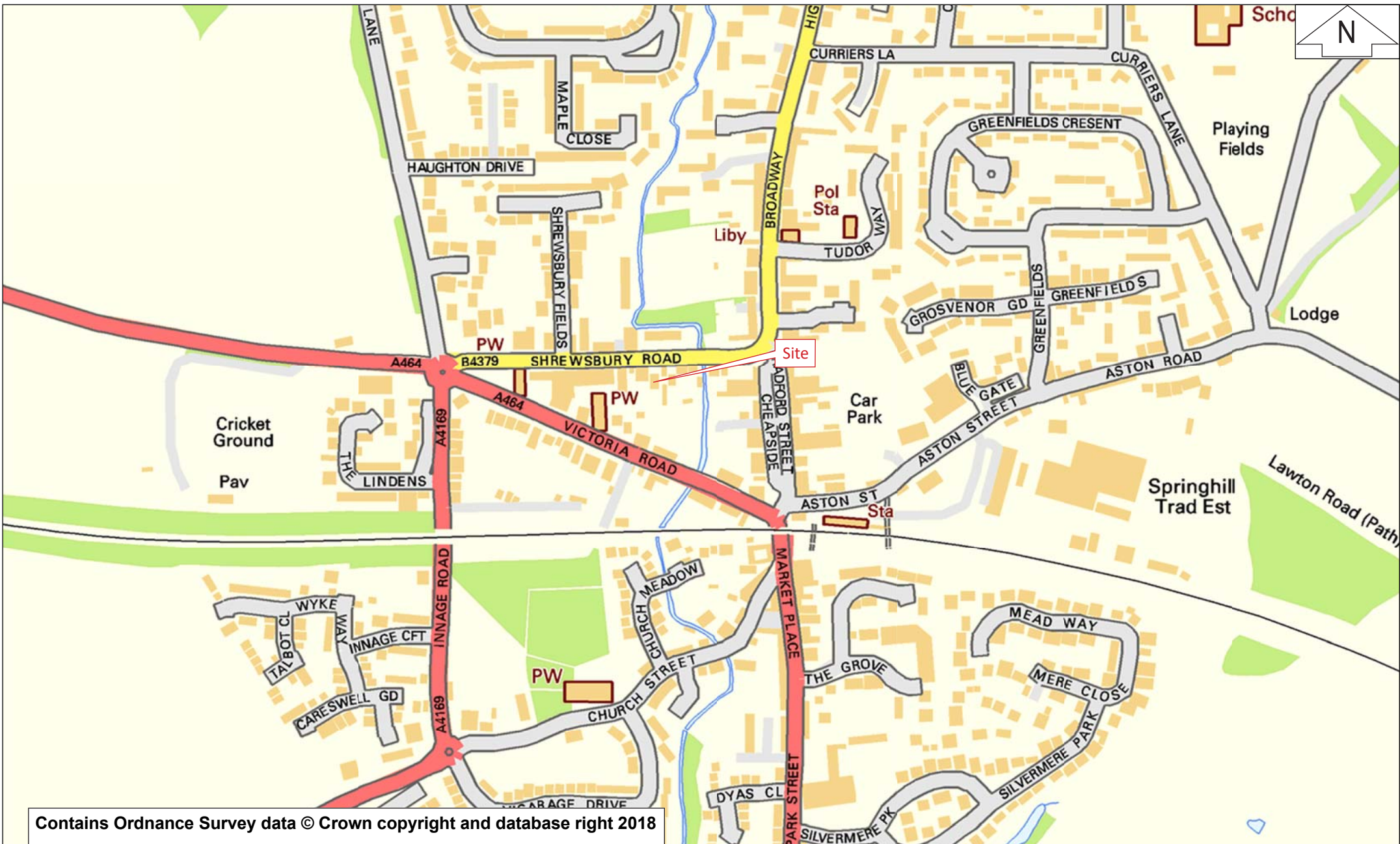


Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018



Figure 01: Location of The Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal.  
Scale 1:20,000 at A4.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)



Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2018



Figure 02: Location of The Old Baptist Chapel, Shrewsbury Road, Shifnal.  
Scale 1:5,000 at A4.

**Aeon Archaeology**  
Richard Cooke BA MA MCifA  
25 Mold Road, Broughton, Chester CH4 0PQ  
Tel: 07866925393 / 01244 531585  
[www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.aeonarchaeology.co.uk)



## 2.0 ARCHEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

An archaeological evaluation and photographic survey was undertaken by Archaeology Wales in November 2017 (report 1628). The evaluation involved the excavation of a single trench measuring 7m x 2m trench located in the yard to the rear of the chapel. This investigation revealed that the backyard had been used previously as an area of dumping of structural material in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and as an area used by the Old Fire Station as possible practicing ground in the later 20th century. The photographic survey recorded the present condition of the chapel.

The chapel was built in 1843 and its function as a place of worship lasted until 1921. From 1931 this space was re-used as a magistrates' court until 1985 when the building was left unoccupied. The Old Chapel is listed in the local HER as a non-designated asset and is located within Shifnal conservation area. The site has been investigated previously in the form of a desk-based assessment and a heritage statement carried out by Bear Archaeology in 2016 (Sowerby 2016).

The principle archaeological interest at the site is that of the potential for human burials beneath the chapel floor and within the immediate surrounding site. There are two grave markers situated to the immediate north of the chapel which will be retained undisturbed and in-situ, however it is not known whether further burials are present and may be encountered during the demolition and groundworks at the site.

The site is therefore recognised as a disused burial ground and protected by the Disused Burial Ground Act 1884 and by the Amendment Act, Disused Burial Grounds Act 1981. In addition as the chapel closed in 1921 there is the potential for burials less than 100 years old to be encountered and as such the treatment of human remains is protected via the Human Tissue Act 2004.

The Human Tissue Authority have confirmed that as all recovered remains will be reburied and will not be used for a scheduled purpose (as defined in the Human Tissue Act 2004) a licence for exhumation will not be required. In addition due to the possibility of encountering human remains less than 100 years old the Environmental Health Officer for the district has been informed that the work is to take place.

An application has been made to the Ministry of Justice for a licence to excavate human remains for archaeological purpose (pending). Furthermore, the Baptist Union has been contacted and have confirmed that any recovered remains shall be reburied at Chorley Chapel, High Green, Chorley, Shropshire WV16 6PP with Mr Alan Vincent, the Pastor for Chorley Chapel, taking overall responsibility for the reinternment of any recovered human remains.

If any inscriptions are found identifying the family name of the deceased then the burial will be left undisturbed and in-situ while efforts are made to establish whether there are any surviving relatives. These will then be contacted and informed of the excavation and reburial procedure.

If sealed coffins or crypts are encountered during the works these will be left undisturbed and a specialist team commissioned to undertake the exhumation of the interred remains.

### 3.0 WATCHING BRIEF - ARCHAEOLOGICAL AIMS

The archaeological watching brief shall be maintained:

1. During the latter stages of demolition of the Old Baptist Chapel.
2. During groundworks at the Site including the excavation of service trenches.

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.

## **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 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 on behalf of the Council will be carried out by the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council. 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 Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council. 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.

The photographic record will be maintained throughout using a digital SLR camera (Canon 600D) set to maximum resolution (72 dpi) and all archaeological features will be recorded photographically with photographs taken in RAW format and later converted to TIFF format for long-term storage and JPEG format for presentation and inclusion in the archive. The standards for the digital archive will adhere to those set out in *'Digital Archiving: Appendix 6. Digital Archive Repository Requirements* (Archaeological Data Service, 2015).

The archive produced will be held at Aeon Archaeology under the project code **A0153.1**.

## 4.2 Watching brief report

### 4.2.1 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* (Historic England 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 be subject to a specification for approval by the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council upon the conclusion of the fieldwork project and preliminary report.

### 4.2.2 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.

Illustrations will include plans of the location of the study area and archaeological sites. Historical maps, when appropriate and if copyright permissions allow, will be included. Photographs of relevant sites and of the study area where appropriate will be included.

A draft copy of the report will be sent to the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council and to the client for comment and approval prior to production of the final report.

**Aeon Archaeology will not be held responsible for delays and subsequent costs incurred through the onset of adverse weather. If such conditions occur additional costs may be incurred.**

## **5.0 FURTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS DESIGNS (FAWDs)**

The discovery of substantial archaeological remains and/or features during the archaeological works may result in the requirement for an extended programme of archaeological mitigation. This may require the submission of revised quotes to the client as well as a new specification which will be required to be approved by Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council prior to implementation.

## **6.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLES**

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)

## **7.0 HUMAN REMAINS**

Any finds of human remains will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected, and both the coroner and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council. If removal is necessary it will take place under appropriate regulations and with due regard for health and safety issues.

The site is recognised as a disused burial ground and protected by the Disused Burial Ground Act 1884 and by the Amendment Act, Disused Burial Grounds Act 1981. In addition as the chapel closed in 1921 there is the potential for burials less than 100 years old to be encountered and as such the treatment of human remains is protected via the Human Tissue Act 2004.

The Human Tissue Authority have confirmed that as all recovered remains will be reburied and will not be used for a scheduled purpose (as defined in the Human Tissue Act 2004) a licence for exhumation will not be required. In addition due to the possibility of encountering human remains less than 100 years old the Environmental Health Officer for the district has been informed that the work is to take place.

An application has been made to the Ministry of Justice for a licence to excavate human remains for archaeological purpose (pending). Furthermore, the Baptist Union has been contacted and have confirmed that any recovered remains shall be reburied at Chorley Chapel, High Green, Chorley, Shropshire WV16 6PP with Mr Alan Vincent, the Pastor for Chorley Chapel, taking overall responsibility for the reinternment of any recovered human remains.

If any inscriptions are found identifying the family name of the deceased then the burial will be left undisturbed and in-situ while efforts are made to establish whether there are any surviving relatives. These will then be contacted and informed of the excavation and reburial procedure.

If sealed coffins or crypts are encountered during the works these will be left undisturbed and a specialist team commissioned to undertake the exhumation of the interred remains.

## 8.0 ARTEFACTS

All artefacts and ecofacts will be retrieved for identification and recording and will be treated in accordance with Cifa 2008 Guidelines for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

All artefacts are the property of the landowner but it is recommended that finds are deposited with the rest of the project archive within an appropriate museum. Furthermore, the client agrees to granting access to all artefacts recovered by Aeon Archaeology for analysis, 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 archaeological works. Any changes in recovery priorities will be under guidance from an appropriate specialist and agreed with the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council. There will be a presumption against the disposal of archaeological finds regardless of their apparent age or condition.

All finds will be collected and processed including those found within spoil tips. Their location and height will be plotted; 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 artefacts 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.

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)

Depending upon the material of the remains the following experts will be consulted regarding the conservation and analysis of artefacts:

- 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: George Smith, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, Bangor.
- Wood artefacts: Jane Foley, Foley Conservation, Builth Wells.
- Leather: Quita Mould, Barbican Research Associates.



- Environmental Material: Dr Mike Allen, Allen Environmental Archaeology.
- Numismatics: Peter Guest, Barbican Research Associates.
- Ceramics: Leigh Dodd

**If well preserved materials are found it may be necessary to employ additional staff. Furthermore, it may be necessary to suspend work within a specific region of the site, or across the whole site, while conservation and excavation/recording takes place. Aeon Archaeology accepts no responsibility for any costs incurred from delays as a result of unexpected archaeological finds.**

## 9.0 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.

## 10.0 ARCHIVING

A draft copy of the report will be produced within two months of the completion of the fieldwork and sent to the Client and the Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council for comment prior to finalisation of the report and dissemination. Bound copies of the report and an archive CD will be sent to the regional HER, and the Oasis online database for long term archiving. Furthermore, a summary of the project will be sent to relevant journal for publication if required.

## **11.0 PERSONNEL**

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

## **12.0 MONITORING AND LIAISON**

Regular liaison and site monitoring meetings will take place during all stages of work. The Natural and Historic Environment Manager at Shropshire Council will be informed of the start date and of discreet subsequent stages.

## **13.0 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.

## **14.0 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 07/09/18

Professional Indemnity Insurance – Insignia Underwriting Policy 347002

Limit of Indemnity £500,000 any one claim

The current period expires 07/09/18

