



NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

LAND AT ST JOHN THE BAPTIST
CHURCH, EGGLESCLIFFE,
STOCKTON-ON-TEES

prepared for

Stockton-on-Tees Borough
Council

NAA 31/22
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Client Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Location St John the Baptist Church, Egglecliffe

District Stockton-on-Tees

Grid Ref NZ 42054 13222

Dates of Fieldwork 11th – 12th July 2022

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH, EGGLESCLIFFE, STOCKTON-ON-TEES
Negative Watching Brief Report

Site name: St John the Baptist Church **Grid reference:** NZ 42054 13222
Parish: Egglescliffe **District:** Stockton-on-Tees
County: Stockton
Administrative authority: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Development: Repair to graveyard boundary wall
Client: Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Site supervisor: Holly Drinkwater **Project manager:** Cath Ross
Fieldwork date(s): 11th-12th July 2022 **NAA project number:** 2130 **Site code:** JBC22
NAA report number: 31/22 **Report date:** 08 August 2022

Reasons for watching brief

An archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council to monitor repair works to the churchyard boundary wall of the Grade I listed St John The Baptist Church, Egglescliffe (NHLE 1104901, Fig.1). The current building stands on the site of an earlier Saxon church and houses elements of stonework dating from the 13th and 14th centuries, including grave effigies and cross-slabs that indicate burial was taking place in the churchyard from the early medieval period onwards.

Three known phases of repairs to the boundary wall have been undertaken previously and were all subject to archaeological monitoring. The first, and most significant of these, was carried out in 1996, in which the demolition of three sections of the wall to the south-west and south-east sides of the churchyard revealed five human burials of potentially medieval date along with disarticulated human remains, an animal burial and a stretch of an earlier boundary ditch (Platell 1996). In 1999, a second watching brief accompanied the demolition of a section of the south-west boundary wall, directly to the west of the current works. Although no human remains were observed, a sandstone wall foundation was recorded beneath the modern boundary and a small assemblage of medieval pottery recovered (Sherlock 1999). A third watching brief was carried

out in 2007, along a section of the southern boundary wall. Archaeological deposits were identified behind the wall, but not disturbed (Grahame 2008).

Results

The current repair work comprised the demolition of a 22m section of the brick boundary wall, between the 1996 (Trench A) and 1999 reconstructions (Fig.2), and minor excavation of a 0.3m-wide strip of the graveyard soils behind to accommodate the reconstruction. Results of the previous archaeological works indicated that there was significant potential for archaeological deposits and human remains to be present in the course of the current work, even though disturbance to graveyard soils would be minimal.

The span of brick wall to be demolished measured 0.6m in height and comprised seven visible courses above the level of the tarmac footpath that ran alongside. The wall had bowed outwards significantly to the south-west, presumably due to rooting from a removed hedge-line, the stumps of which remained in situ along the inner face (Plate 1). The brickwork was demolished by hand, down to the level of the tarmac, leaving an even platform for the reconstruction. The baulk of soil behind was then excavated along a 0.3m wide strip and the remnants of the defunct hedge-line removed (Plate 2).

No significant archaeological remains were identified. The deposits behind the boundary wall comprised a 0.4m-thick horizon of topsoil that had been established upon a layer of post-medieval demolition rubble that primarily consisted of displaced bricks, sandstone fragments and lime mortar (Plate 3). It is probable that this rubble horizon related to an earlier boundary wall of brick and sandstone, a section of which remains in-situ along the southern edge of the churchyard (Wall BW8, Grahame 2008, 4). Several fragments of transfer-printed pottery and modern glass were found but not retained.



Plate 1: Bowing of the western boundary wall, looking south towards the 2007 reconstruction.



Plate 2: Baulk of graveyard soils revealed after removal of brick wall and residual hedge-line.



Plate 3: Topsoil overlying the horizon of post-medieval demolition rubble.

Documentation: No archaeological material was collected and no physical records were created.

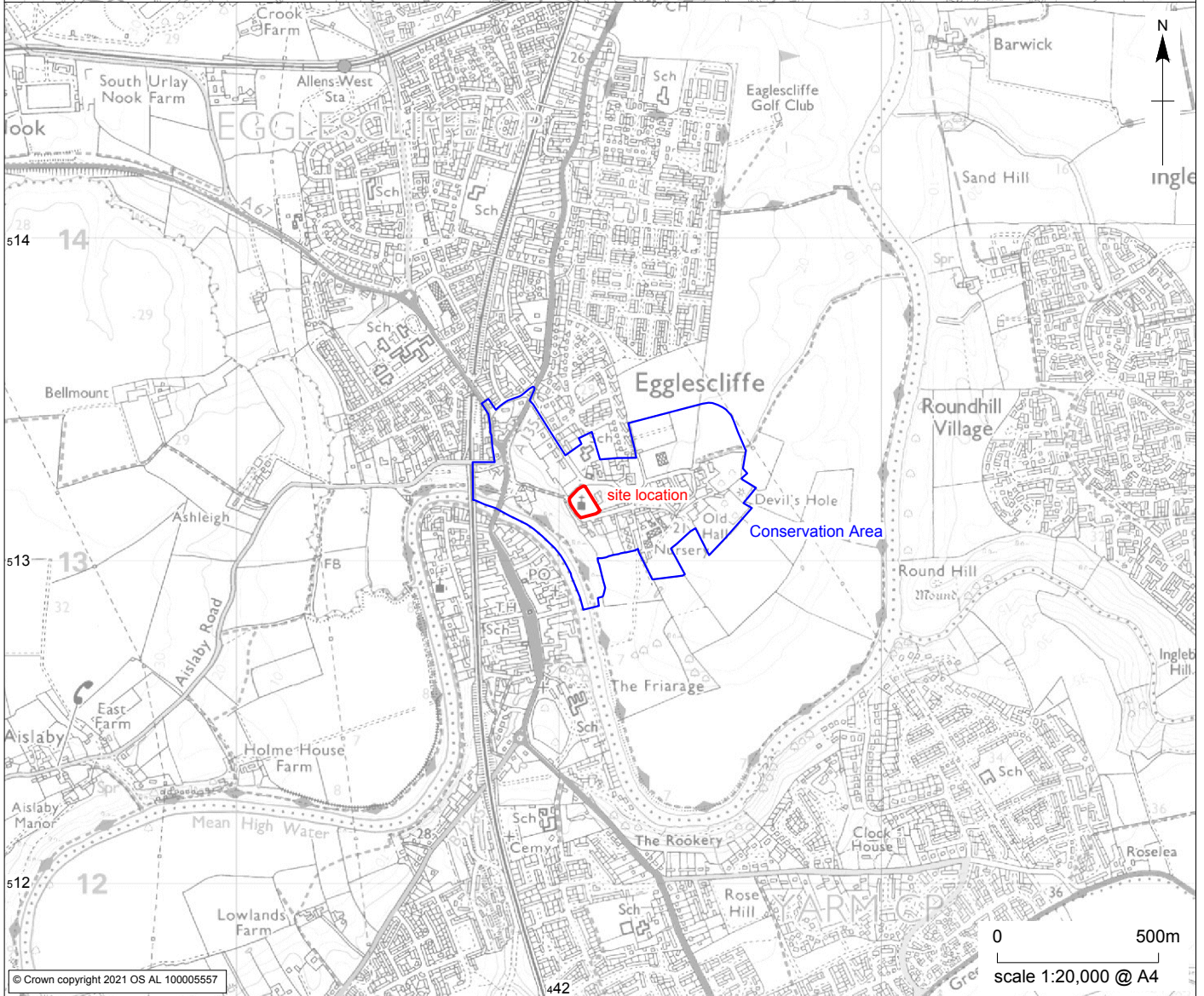
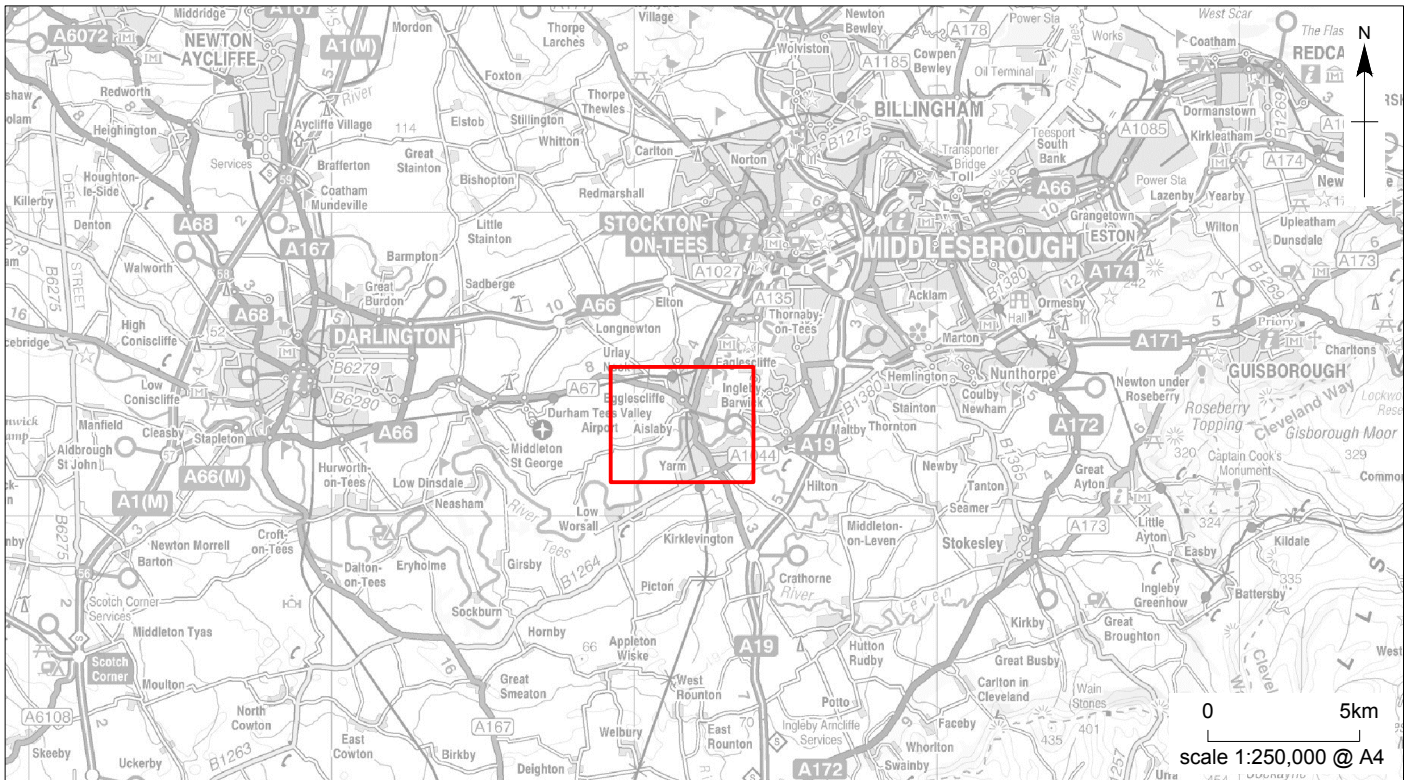
Archive deposition: The digital archive is stored internally at NAA and online with the Archaeology Data Service and OASIS. OASIS ID: northern1-508471

References

Grahame, R. (2008) *“Archaeological Monitoring at the Church of St John the Baptist, Egglecliffe, Stockton-on-Tees”* Tees Archaeology Unpublished Report TA08/01.

Platell, A. (1996) *“A Watching Brief at Egglecliffe Church”* Tees Archaeology Unpublished Report.

Sherlock, S. (1999) *“Archaeological work at St. John the Baptist Church, Egglecliffe”* Tees Archaeology Unpublished Report.

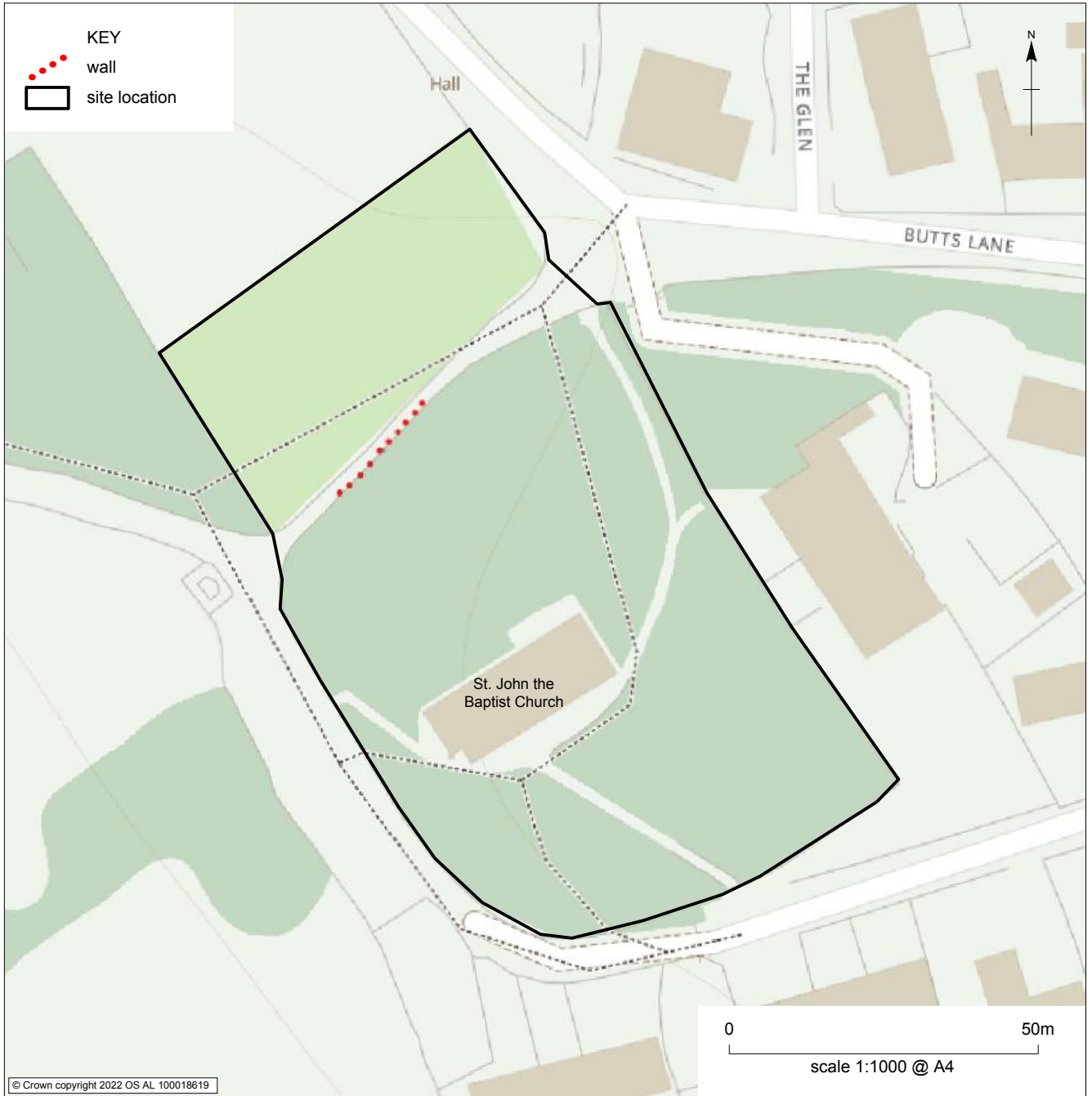


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St John the Baptist Church, Egglecliffe: site location

Figure 1



St John the Baptist Church, Eggescliffe: location of repairs

Figure 2