

Report 2513



nps archaeology

Archaeological Watching Brief at St John the Baptist Church, Garboldisham, Norfolk

ENF125507



Prepared for
Youngs Homes Ltd
Eastern House
Eastern Court
Earnest Gage Avenue
New Costessey
Norwich
NR5 0JU



NPS Archaeology

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www.nps.co.uk

PROJECT CHECKLIST		
Project Manager	Nigel Page	
Draft Completed	Nigel Page	22/07/2011
Graphics Completed	David Dobson	22/07/2011
Edit Completed	Jayne Bown	29/07/2011
Signed Off	David Whitmore	29/07/2011
<i>Issue 1</i>		

NPS Archaeology

Scandic House
85 Mountergate
Norwich
NR1 1PY

T 01603 756150

F 01603 756190

E jayne.bown@nps.co.uk

www.nau.org.uk

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Location:	St John the Baptist Church, Garboldisham
District:	Breckland
Grid Ref.:	TM 0041 8163
HER No.:	ENF125507
OASIS Ref.:	106080
Client	St John the Baptist Church PCC
Date of fieldwork	7 April 2011

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was conducted for St John the Baptist Church Parochial Church Council during the excavation of a new stairway into the external boiler room at St John the Baptist Church, Garboldisham. The boiler room is located to the north of the chancel and its construction had truncated at least three burials, which were further disturbed by the construction of the new stairway.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This work was undertaken to fulfil a planning condition set by Norfolk Historic Environment Service, formerly Norfolk Landscape Archaeology, who issued an Archaeological Brief (ref: CNF42943) that outlined the scope of the archaeological works. The work was conducted in accordance with a Project Design and Method Statement prepared by NPS Archaeology (Ref. NAU/BAU2513/NP) for St John the Baptist Church PCC who commissioned and funded the work.

This programme of work was designed to assist in defining the character and extent of any archaeological remains within the footprint of the new stairway, following the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010).

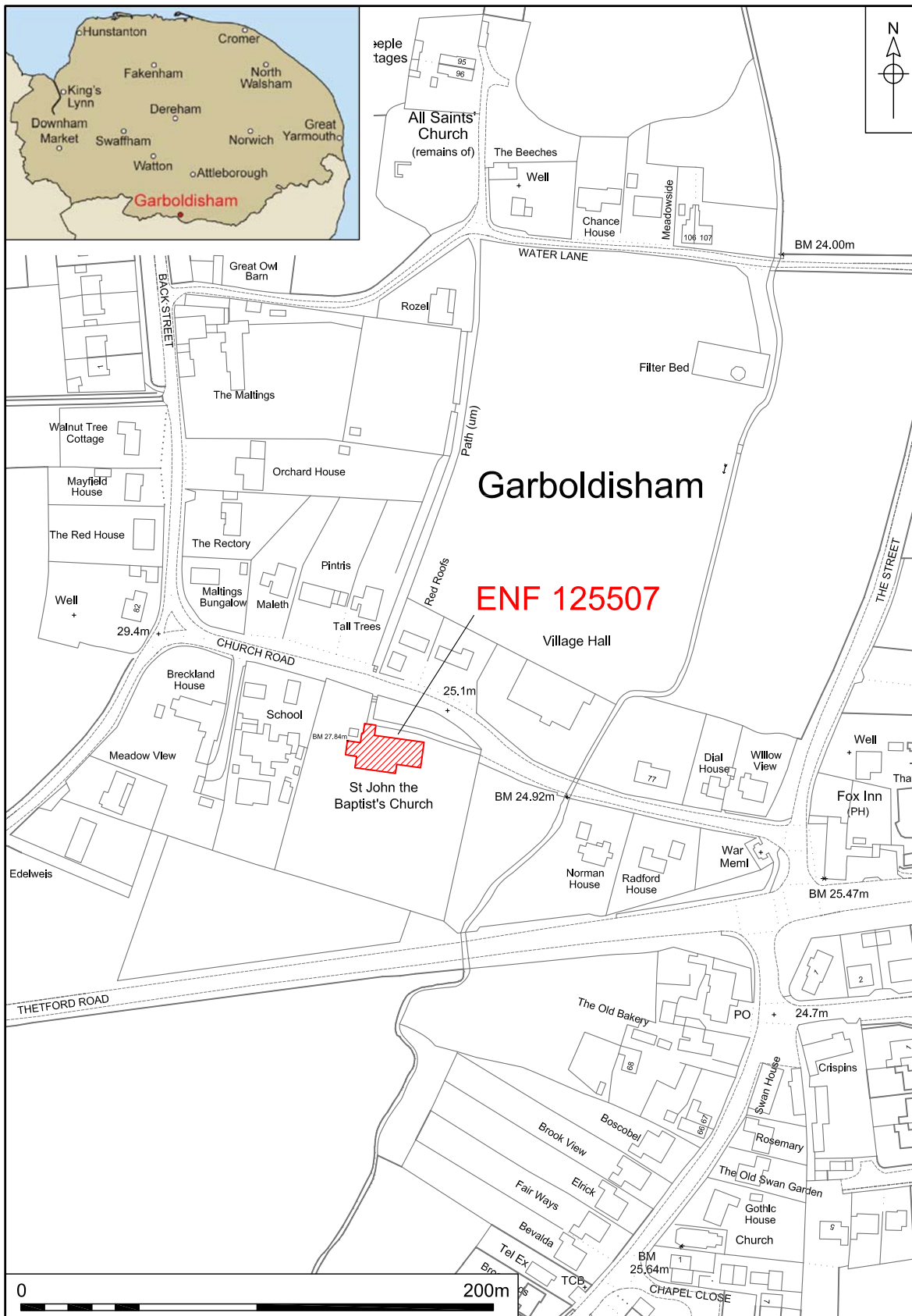
The site archive is currently held by NPS Archaeology and on completion of the project will be deposited with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service following the relevant policies on archiving standards.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The parish of Garboldisham overlies the change from Breckland soils to those of the Boulder Clay plateau. The most common soil type in this area is a dark flint-rich clay loam topsoil over mottled brown and grey clay. The boulder clay is of glacial origin and overlies Cretaceous chalk bedrock (BGS 1985). On higher ground in the village above the 25m OD contour the underlying geology comprises dark orange Breckland sand (Evans 2000). The church site itself lies close to the 25m OD contour line.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The church of St John the Baptist (NHER 5577) at Garboldisham (Fig. 1) is of 13th-century fabric, with 15th-century and more vigorous Victorian alterations. The ruins of another church, All Saints (NHER 5573), lie only 200m to the north of St John's. All Saints' Church became ruined around 1736, after part of the 15th-



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Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:2500

century tower collapsed, and the nave was then demolished. It is thought that the village could no longer sustain two churches, although it had clearly been a prosperous place when both churches were constructed, and both churches have evidence of merchants' marks, and may be the key to the wealth of the parish.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological remains exposed during the works and disseminate that information in the form of a report.

The Brief required that the excavation of new stairway to the boiler room be monitored to ensure that any archaeological remains that were present were recorded.

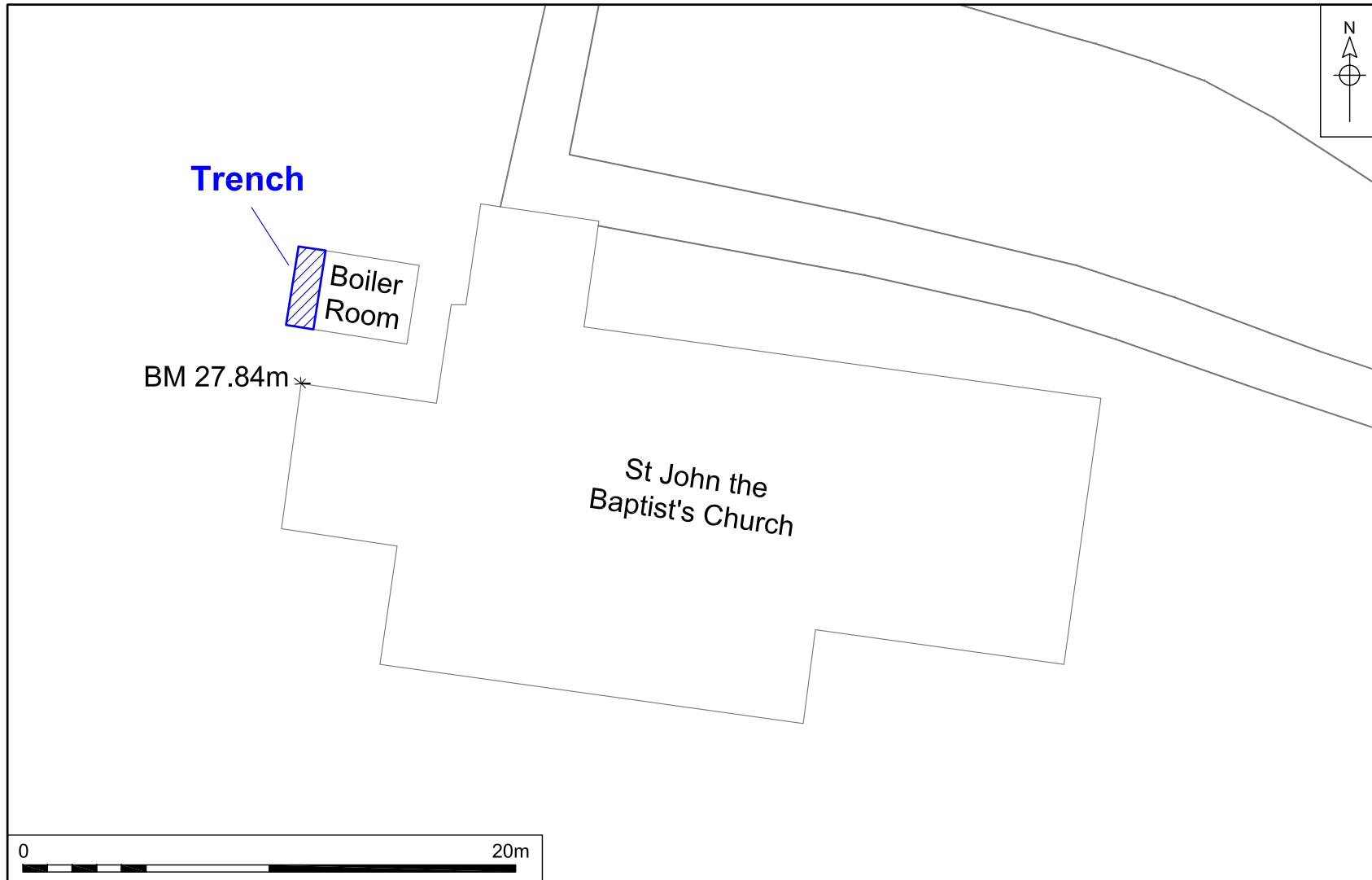
Machine excavation was carried out using a small hydraulic 360° excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket and operated under archaeological supervision. Archaeological deposits, in this case three partial burials, were cleaned by hand and recorded prior to lifting. The human remains were left with the church for reburial.

No environmental samples were taken and no finds were recovered.

A plan was made of the locations of the three disturbed burials and a representative section was drawn of the trench side to record the general stratigraphic sequence.



Plate 1. General view south-west showing the location of the boiler room.



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Figure 2. Trench location. Scale 1:250

5.0 RESULTS

The excavation required for the new stairway measured c.3m x 1.4m, was of varying depth and was located against the west wall of the boiler house. Three partial burials (Burials 1, 2 and 3) were exposed, all of which had already been truncated by the construction of the boiler room (Fig. 2 and Plates 2 and 3).



Plate 2. View north-east showing location of the new stairway and the three partial burials at the north-eastern end on the trench.

The burials consisted of the partial remains of the upper body of three individuals, all laid in a supine position on a roughly east-west alignment. Burial 1 had been laid in a coffin, evidenced by wood staining along the south side of the grave cut and, even though there was no evidence, it is reasonable to suppose that the other two burials had originally been coffined.

Burials 1 and 3 had been truncated just below the pelvis and Burial 2 was truncated through the base of the ribcage.

The bases of the graves were dug into the yellow/orange clay and gravel natural and they were overlain by a typical graveyard deposit of mixed natural clay and loose brown loam. The upper levels of the grave cuts were not easily identified, but they had probably been cut through the graveyard deposit.

The graveyard deposit itself contained a large amount of struck flint flakes and stones, which may have derived from the 19th-century building works on the church.

The three burials remained *in situ*, below the construction for the new stairway.



Plate 3. Detail of the three partial burials at the north-eastern end on the trench.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The burials disturbed during this watching brief had already suffered some previous disturbance, probably from the construction of the boiler house in the mid 20th century. It is thought that the burials were of post-medieval date.

Acknowledgements

The monitoring was funded by St John the Baptist Church PCC.

David Dobson produced the graphics and this report which was edited by Jayne Bown.

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