



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at
Holy Trinity Church, Church Street,
Barrow Upon Soar, Leicestershire**

NGR: SK 5764 1757

Tim Higgins



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For: Barrow on Soar PCC

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An Archaeological Watching Brief at Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Leicester (SK 5764 1757)

Timothy Higgins

Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological watching brief on land at Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Leicestershire, (SK 5764 1757) between the 17th and the 19th of May 2011. This work was undertaken on behalf of the Barrow Upon Soar PCC during the ground works for the construction of a new extension adjacent to the north aisle of the church. The watching brief revealed foundations of the North Aisle and North Transept both of which had been underpinned with modern concrete, which probable dates to the 19th century refurbishment of the church.

Introduction

This document constitutes the final report for an archaeological watching brief carried out at Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Leicestershire (SK 5764 1757). The work was carried out on behalf of Barrow Upon Soar Parochial Church Council by University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) between 17th and 24th May 2011.

The proposed extension would impact upon a number of recorded 19th century graves/tombs, ten are noted within or in the vicinity of the proposed footprint. In addition to disarticulated human remains, it is very likely that unknown and potentially significant number of unmarked burials will be affected. In addition to burials, it is possible that the earlier phases of the church or associated features/structures may occur within the proposed foot print.

Following advice from the Senior Planning Archaeologist to the Parochial Church Council (PCC) an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks to confirm the presence or absence of archaeological remains at the site.

Geology and Topography

The site is mainly situated on flat land at height of 59m O.D. The Ordnance Survey Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 142 indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of alluvium overlying natural sand and gravel.

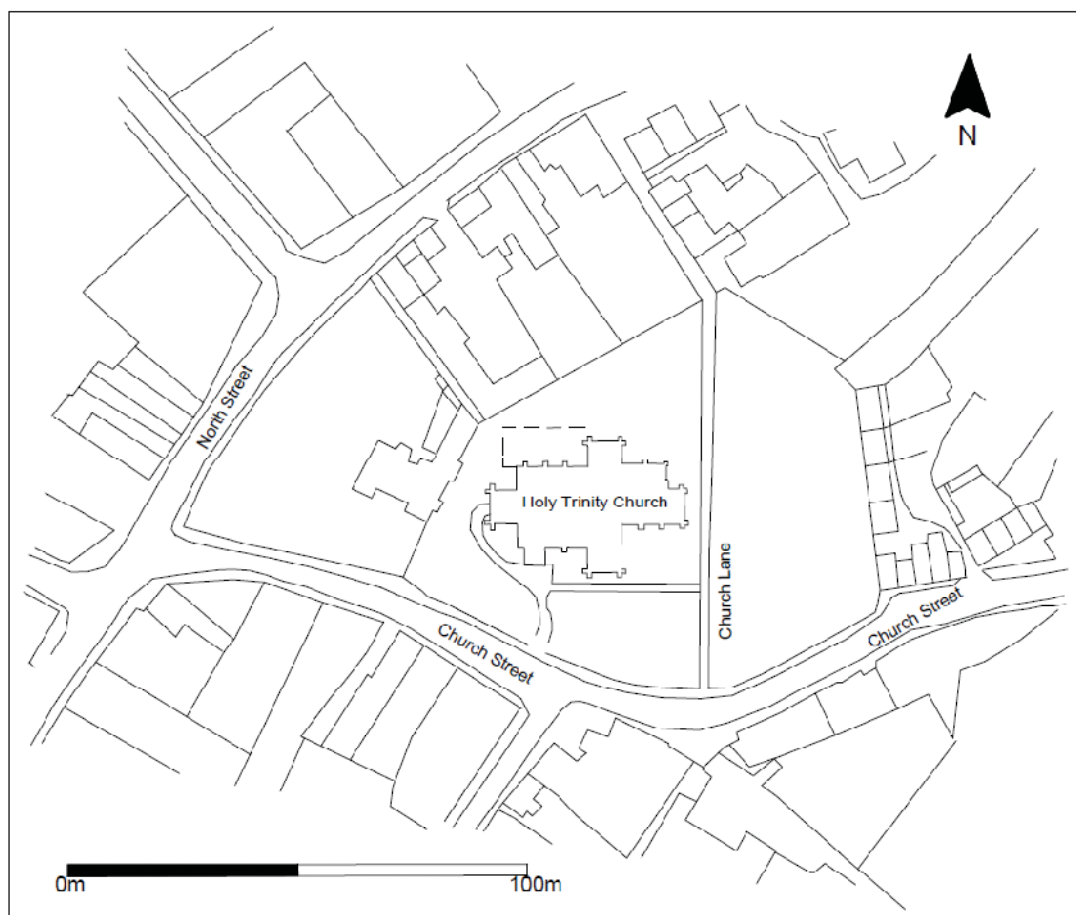


Figure 1. Location Plan

Historical and Archaeological Background

The works will involve alterations to historic fabric of Holy Trinity Church, which is Grade II listed building. Documentary evidence records that Barrow church was originally the mother church of three chapels, those of St Bartholomew's in Quorn, St Mary's in Woodhouse and St John the Baptist (later St Peter's) in Mountsorrel. This association implies an early origin for the church and might suggest a Saxon date.

The first direct evidence we have for a church at Barrow dates from the first half of the 12th century, at which point the Earl of Chester gave the church and the chapel of Quorndon to Leicester Abbey, subsequently confirmed during the reigns of Henry II and Edward II (c. 1318). Records of the diocese of Lincoln first record a named vicar at barrow in the early 13th century, however the earliest surviving fabric within the standing building dates from the late 13th century (nave arcade). The church was extensively 'restored' in 19th century (1860s and 70s), the latest phase of which was complicated by collapse of the tower.

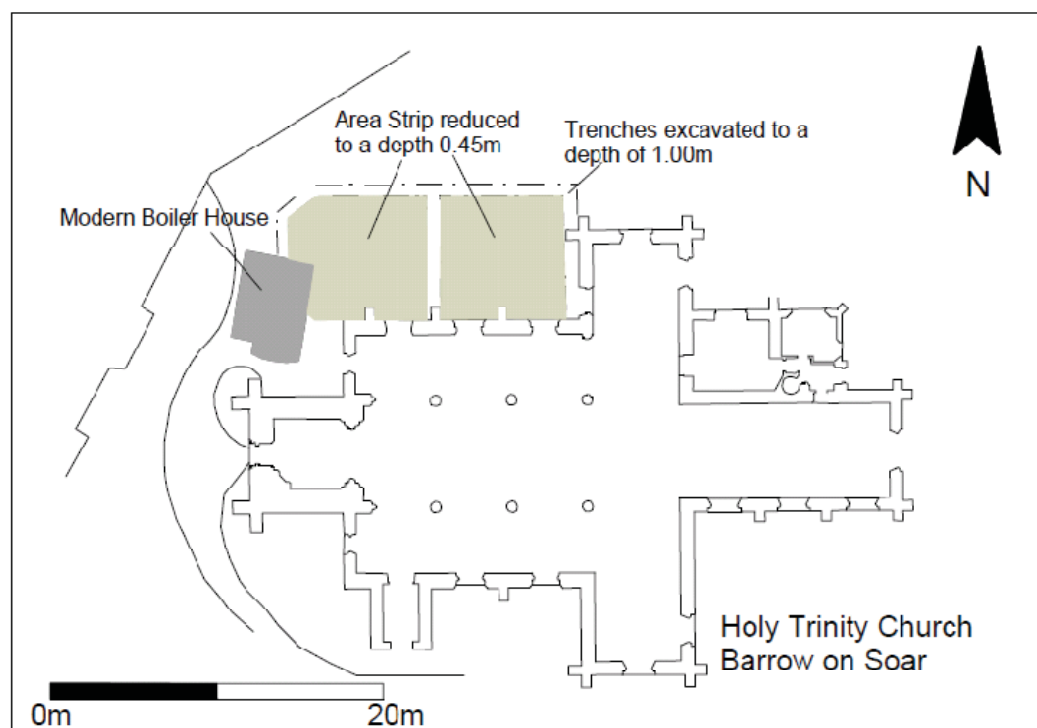


Figure 2. Excavated areas

Archaeological Objectives

The principal objectives of the watching brief were:

- To identify the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date of any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To excavate and record any archaeological deposits to be effected by the proposed ground works.
- To produce a report and archive of any results.

Methodology

The project required a professional archaeologist to inspect all groundwork likely to impact upon any archaeological remains.

The work involved the supervision and inspection of machine and hand dug trenches in order to identify any archaeological deposits or the natural substratum. Where possible, this was carried out using a mini 360° mechanical excavator with a 0.60m toothed bucket. All exposed areas, sections and existing spoil heaps were visually inspected for features and finds. Archaeological deposits were hand cleaned, planned, photographed and sample excavated as appropriate to addressing the objectives of the watching brief. Field notes were recorded on pro-forma ULAS watching brief recording forms whilst any stratigraphic units would be given a unique context number and recorded on pro-forma ULAS context sheets if deemed appropriate.

All work followed the *Institute for Archaeologists' (IFA) Code of Conduct* and adhered to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland (LMARS)*.

Results

Ground-works

Work began on the 17th May 2011 with a topsoil strip in the north-west corner of the church graveyard starting at North Transept and continued back towards the underground boiler house. At the same time the boiler house was in the process of being demolished and would be eventually backfilled with stone. The foundation trench was excavated in the north-east corner of the new extension and abutted the west wall of the North Transept (Figure 2 and Plate 1). The trench measured 0.85m deep, 1.00m wide and 3.00m long. At the base of the trench no natural soil was reached. A lower layer of brown silty clay subsoil/graveyard soil was observed within trench section with a minimum depth 0.55m and had considerable tree root disturbance. The layer contained crushed fragments of mortar, occasional pebble, small stone fragments, and disarticulated human bone. The lower layer was sealed by topsoil layer 0.30m deep, which comprised greyish silty clay mixed with crushed mortar, occasional brick and disarticulated human bone.

During these initial excavations part of the north transept wall was exposed (Plate 1). The wall footings consisted of a modern concrete which comprised abundant stone gravel bonded with pale yellowish brown mortar matrix 0.55m deep. Overlying was course of slate 0.10m thick followed by a course of roughly hewn granite blocks 0.23m thick. The wall courses comprised ashlar limestone blocks and roughly hewn granite blocks.

A second visit was undertaken on the 19th May 2011 and the ground works had progressed slowly. Only the northern foundation trench of the new extension had been excavated (Figure 2). The trench was orientated west to east and measured 8.00m long, 0.70m wide and 1.00m deep. The trench section displayed the same stratigraphic sequence that was recorded in the first trench. The subsoil/graveyard soil was excavated to depth of 0.70m and no natural soil was reached at the base of this trench. This layer was again heavily disturbed by tree roots and contained disarticulated human bone. Sealing this layer was 0.30m thick top soil.

A third visit was undertaken on the 24th May 2011 and area strip had taken place for the internal floors of the new extension (Plate 2). The ground level was reduced by 0.45m and comprised of top soil and subsoil/graveyard (Figure 2). No graves were exposed at this depth with only a scatter disarticulated human bone found. In addition to area strip the other foundations trenches were excavated and measured 0.70m wide and 1.00m deep. No natural soil or features were observed at the base of these trenches. The north aisle wall foundation was exposed and consisted of the same modern concrete foundations and granite blocks that were observed supporting the North Transept. A scatter of loose stone rubble was observed within the trenches that abutted the North Aisle. These stones were thought to be the remnants of the former stone foundations that were perhaps removed from under the walls and replaced with concrete.



Plate 1. North Transept Foundations



Plate 2. Area Strip and North Aisle foundations exposed

Discussion

The external wall face and foundations of both the North Transept and North Aisle appear to have been extensively refurbished. The foundations have had their stone removed and walls are underpinned with concrete. The walls external face comprised a mixture of ashlar blocks and granite and are again thought to be modern. The modern foundations and outer wall face are all probably associated with the 19th century refurbishment of the church.

No grave cuts were observed within the stripped area and foundations of the new extension with only disarticulated human bone observed and graveyard in this area may have been extensively disturbed during the 19th century refurbishment of the church. No graves were reached directly under tomb stones that were removed during the topsoil strip and were presumed to be much deeper.

Bibliography

Clay, P. 2010 *Design Specification for Archaeological Work*
Site: Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Barrow Upon Soar,
Leicestershire: University of Leicester Archaeological Services
(ULAS)

Archive

The site archive consists of:
3 A4 watching brief record form
21 digital photographs and B+W Photos

The archive will be held by Leicester Museum Service under the accession number X.A70.2011.

Publication

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 1).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course

Acknowledgements

Thanks are extended to the client and the contractors for their co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Higgins. The project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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24/06/2011

Appendix 1: OASIS Database entry

Project Name	Holy Trinity Church, Church Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Leicestershire
Project Type	Watching Brief
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Graveyard
Development Type	Church extension
Reason for Investigation	PPS5
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition, listed building
Site Co-ordinates	SK 5764 1757
Start/end dates of field work	17/5/2011 – 24/5/2011
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	153 sq meters

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