

## St. Giles Church, Matlock Watching Brief Report



Trench under excavation in graveyard of St Giles Church Matlock

**ARS Ltd Report 2006/29**

August 2006

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### ***Executive Summary***

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Derbyshire County Council along the course of a trench excavated to convey an electricity cable being laid to the war memorial at Pic Tor Matlock. The watching brief was maintained at the request of the Diocesan Advisory Committee through land belonging to St Giles Church Matlock including the graveyard (National Grid Reference SK 299 596). The watching brief took place between 27<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and comprised the observation of all ground works including the recording of any archaeological features encountered. No significant archaeological features were encountered.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The watching brief at St Giles Church Matlock was undertaken by Richard Chatterton of Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Derbyshire County Council during the laying of a new electricity cable. The location of the watching brief can be seen in Figure 1. The cable connects the war memorial at Pic Tor with pre-existing services on Church Street to the east. The route of the cable runs along the south side of the church along a tarmac path up hill through the graveyard to Pic Tor (Fig. 2).



Fig. 1 Location of site.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 St Giles Church is a listed building which is located within the Old Matlock Conservation Area. Cox (1877) confirms that although no mention is made of St. Giles Church in the Domesday Book there are fragments of Norman masonry outside the church, strongly suggesting the existence of a church on this site in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. Cox states that it is likely the church 'was built and presented in the reign of Stephen from 1135 to 1154' (ibid. p. 518). The first written record of the church is in 1291 and the church was extensively altered in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries. The latter works removed any surviving medieval structure (Drackley 2006). However, the area of the churchyard through which the trench for the electricity cable passed is a much later Victorian extension.

## 3. Aims of the Project

- 3.1 The project was an archaeological watching brief as recommended by the Diocesan Advisory Committee. The aim of the watching brief was to advise the contractors upon the best route for the electricity cable in order to avoid

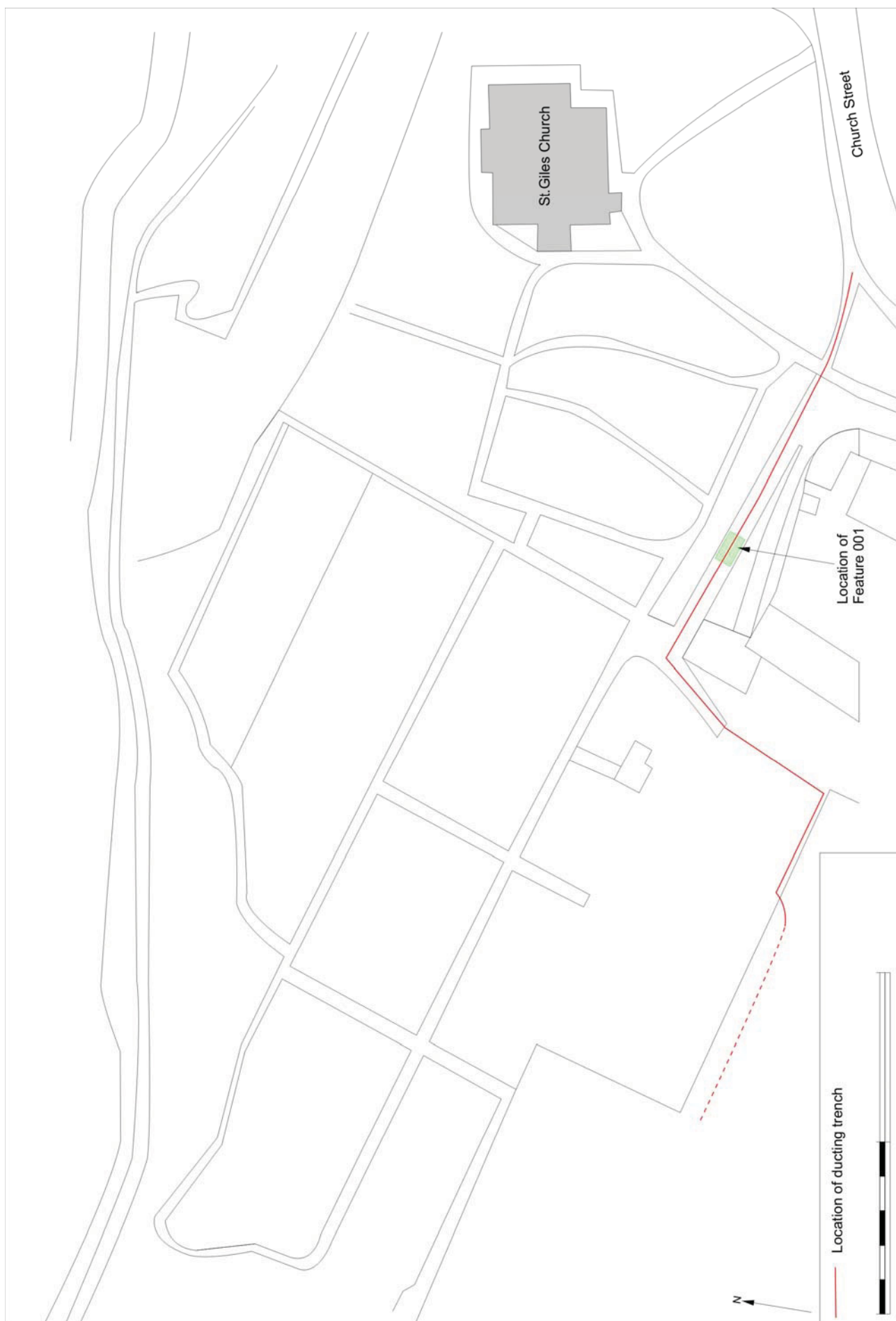


Fig 2 Location of the electricity duct trench



archaeological remains, to observe all subsequent ground works for the presence of archaeology and to fully record and excavate any archaeological features encountered.

#### **4. Method Statement**

- 4.1 The trench excavated to carry the electricity cable was positioned beneath the tarmac pavement leading to the west and uphill from Church Street. The work proceeded by machine cutting of the tarmac, followed by the breaking up of the surface. The ground beneath the tarmac surface was then removed by a mini excavator with a 0.2m toothless ditching bucket. The resultant trench was 0.3m wide and 0.6m in depth (Fig.3) and the route of the trench can be seen in Fig.2. The entire process was monitored by an archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd. All the overburden was context recorded on pro-forma sheets, and a context register, along with a photographic register, were produced for inclusion in the archive.



Fig. 3 General view of the cable trench looking west.  
Scale: 2m

#### **5. Watching brief results**

- 5.1 In the initial area of trenching at the base of the slope once the tarmac surface had been removed the topsoil (001) consisted of a very loose matrix containing deposits of coal, modern glass, Victorian and later pottery and small fragments of animal bone. This continued to a depth of 0.25m beneath which the solid limestone bedrock was encountered. This solid bedrock was exposed for a distance of 11m and caused considerable delay as the contractors specification stated that the cable duct had to be buried to a depth of 0.45m necessitating the use of a breaking machine. These problems were to be encountered intermittently throughout the project.

- 5.2 Where sufficient depth was encountered due to the absence of bedrock close to the surface the natural subsoil above the limestone bedrock was a stiff clay (10yr 3/6). This was encountered at a depth of between 0.43m and 0.63m and rested directly upon the limestone bedrock.
- 5.3 As the trench proceeded care was taken to avoid any areas of cobbling and where any stones of Victorian or earlier date were removed they were carefully restored to their original position.



Fig. 4 Trench under excavation in driveway to graveyard  
Photograph taken looking west. Scale: 2m

- 5.3 The only feature identified (001) was located beneath the sunken tarmac driveway leading to the graveyard (Figs 2 & 4). This consisted of a linear arrangement of placed sandstone blocks, the largest of which measured 0.46m in length, 0.22m in width and 0.19m in depth (Figs 5 & 6). To the west of these stones was an area of levelled ground (005) (Fig. 7) which consisted of a dark brown (10YR 3/2) deposit containing small pieces of coal, brick and Victorian pottery. This was a relatively shallow deposit (0.08m) and overlay another deposit of lime mortar to a depth of 0.09m (006). This layer rested upon the natural limestone bedrock and was again found to contain small pieces of brick and Victorian pottery. The feature had a width of 6.95m and was bounded to the rear by the natural limestone bedrock which rose close to the Tarmac surface. The feature can best be interpreted as the remains of a structure of uncertain date but probably dating to the Victorian period in view of the nature of the pottery and the presence of coal.
- 5.4 No features were identified as the trench proceeded through the graveyard. This was due in part to the deliberate selection of a route that avoided any potential



archaeological features including graves and to the south of the graveyard a route was chosen outside the area where graves had been inserted. As the trench proceeded uphill and to the west the natural limestone bedrock was again encountered at a shallow depth (0.25m) necessitating the use of the breaking machine.

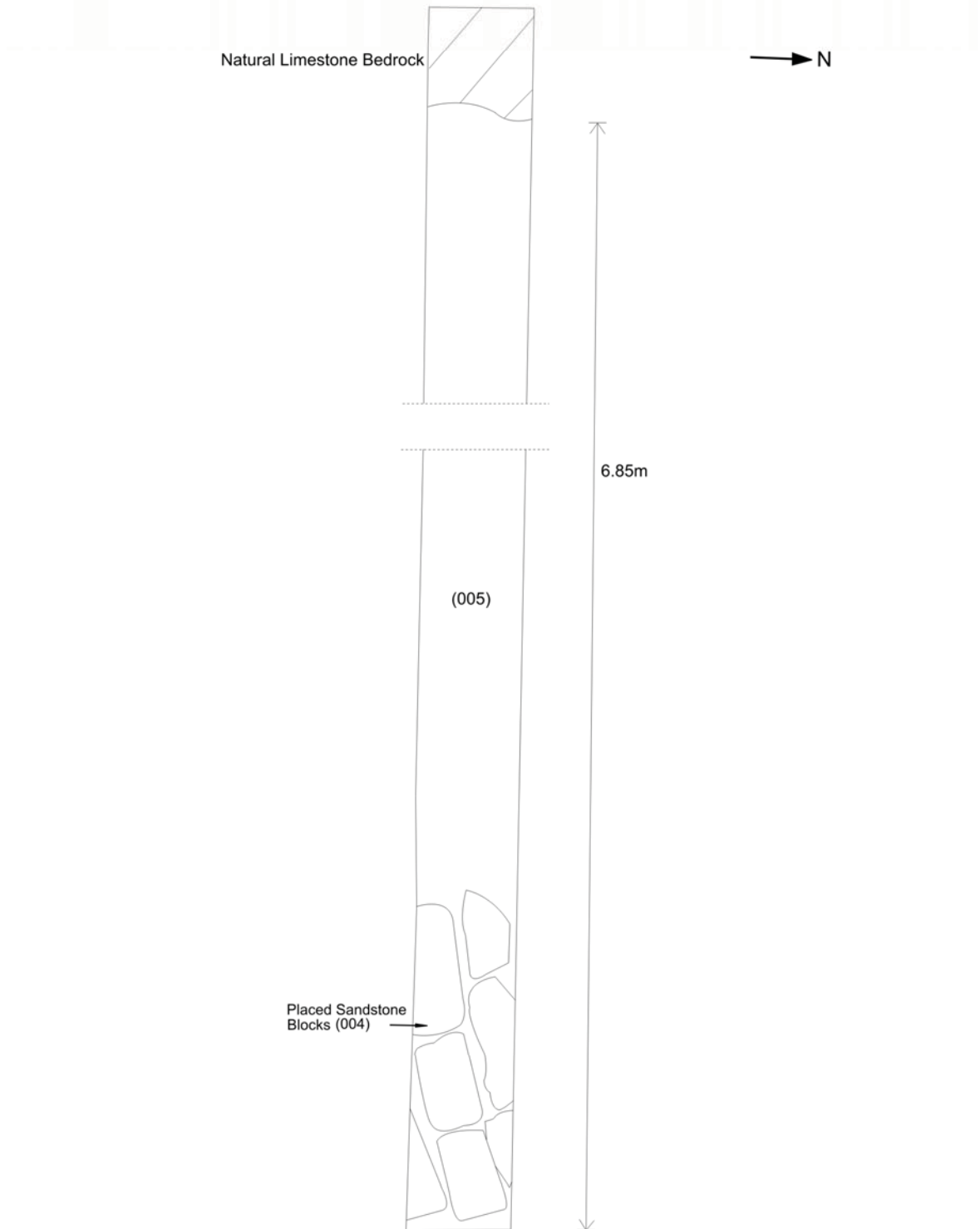


Fig. 5 Linear feature of placed sandstone blocks. Vertical shot.  
Scale: 1m



Fig. 7 Feature (001) looking west.  
Scale: 2m

 <p>Archaeological Research Services Ltd</p>	<p><b>Fig. 6</b></p> <p><b>Feature 001</b></p> <p><b>St. Giles Church, Matlock</b></p>	<p>On behalf of</p> <p><b>Derbyshire County Council</b></p>
		<p>0 1m</p> <p>1:20</p>



## **6. Small finds**

- 6.1 Other than Victorian and 20<sup>th</sup> Century pottery and glass the only finds identified from the trench were fragments of animal bone beneath the tarmac path outside the graveyard. These pieces of bone were found lying loose in the topsoil beneath the pavement. The bone was not associated with any clear context and could be of any date from medieval to modern day. The bone included that of sheep/goat and cattle.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 During the course of the archaeological watching brief no significant archaeological remains were encountered. The only feature identified was the base of a structure of probable Victorian date.

## **8 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright**

- 8.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 8.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

## **9. Statement of Indemnity**

- 9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

## **10. Acknowledgements**

- 10.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the smooth running of the project, especially Alison Baker of Derbyshire County Council, the Reverend Mark Crowther Alwyn and the workforce of Whitehouse Construction.

## References

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