

An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire



Post excavation view of trench, looking south-west.

ARS Ltd Report No. 2016/88
OASIS ID - archaeo15-255598

Compiled By:

Ben Dyson
Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Suite 1
First Floor
Dunham House
Cross Street
Sale
M33 7HH

Checked By:

Reuben Thorpe MCIFA, FSA
Tel: 01629 814540
Fax: 01629 814657
admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com



Archaeological Research
Services Ltd

An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton Cheshire

ARS Ltd Report 2016/88

June 2016

Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	ii
<i>Executive Summary</i>	iii
1 Introduction	1
2 Aims and Objectives.....	1
3 Methodology.....	1
4 Results.....	1
5 Discussion.....	2
6 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright	3
7 Statement of Indemnity.....	3
8 Acknowledgements.....	3
9 References	3
Appendix 1: Figures.....	4
Appendix 2: Context Register	11
Appendix 3: Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)	12
Appendix 4: OASIS Form	29

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Site location.	5
Figure 2. Plan of proposed archaeological works.	6
Figure 3. View of the development area looking south-east prior to excavation. Yellow paint marks the north-western corner of the trench.	7
Figure 4. Working shot looking east showing removal of sand (105) beneath tarmac path (104) and slabs (F101).	7
Figure 5. Strip, map and sample excavation area plan.	8
Figure 6. Post-excavation shot looking south-west showing features cut into the natural clay substrate (109) below the area of the removed paving slabs (F101). Scale = 0.5m graduations.	9
Figure 7. View looking south of manhole (F106) and scar of disturbed ground (F111) marking the drainage course. Scale = 0.5m graduations.	9
Figure 8. View looking north of the brick-built grave/crypt structure (F107) with overlying capping stones (F108) at the northern extent of the trench. Scale = 0.5m graduations.	10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire

Site Code: SMA15

Planning Authority: Cheshire East Council

Planning Ref: 12/2065N

Geology: The underlying geology of the site is halite-stone and mudstone of the Wilkesley Halite Member overlain by superficial glaciofluvial deposits of Devensian sand and gravels (BGS 2016).

NGR: SJ 63163, 53098

Date of Fieldwork: 5th November 2015

Date of Report: June 2016

Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Wardens and PCC St. Mary's to undertake an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire, during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension of the Church into the churchyard.

Fieldwork took place on 5th November 2015 and comprised the excavation of a single trench c. 5m x 3m off the northern aisle of the church. Removal of stone paving slabs and a section of the modern tarmac pathway adjacent to the church revealed a shallow depth of sandy levelling material overlying the natural substrate. Stone blocks sitting on the substrate acted as a foundation for the paving slabs above. A brick-built, stone-capped manhole was also observed along the line of an active drainage trench. No significant archaeological features or deposits, other than a brick-built, partially stone-capped crypt, were observed. The crypt underlay the modern pathway at the northern extent of the trench and will not be impacted upon by development.

A watching brief was due to take place during the excavation of a new drainage line running northwards from the church towards the Alms Houses at the north of the churchyard. This was later deemed unnecessary once it became clear that the intended drainage system was to be built within the footprint of existing services and that the necessary excavations would be through previously excavated and backfilled ground.

Based on the results of the strip, map and sample excavation, no further archaeological work or recording is considered necessary.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In November 2015 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Wardens and PCC St. Mary's to undertake an archaeological watching brief and strip, map and sample excavations at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire (Figure 1). The works were carried out to address Condition 6 of the planning consent as stated in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (see Appendix 3).

1.2 The development area was located on the northern side of St. Mary's Church with the strip, map and sample excavation limited to the area of the proposed extension and the proposed area of the watching brief stretching northwards across the churchyard towards the Alms Houses (Figure 2).

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 The primary aim of these works was to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on any archaeological remains and historic buildings. A summary of the objectives can be found within section three of the approved WSI (see Appendix 3).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 The strip, map and sample excavation consisted of a single trench, c.5x3m in size, which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m to create a levelled area ready for the construction of a foundation slab. The trench was excavated by a 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under careful archaeological supervision. The base of the trench was cleaned by hand whilst features and deposits were recorded according to the method set out in the WSI (see Appendix 3).

3.2 The strip, map and sample excavation was undertaken in accordance with the *Cifa Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation* (2014b) alongside Cheshire County Council's revised *General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants* (2003).

3.3 A risk assessment was completed by Archaeological Research Services Ltd prior to any ground-works taking place and safe-working practices were adhered to at all times.

4 RESULTS

Strip, Map and Sample Excavation: 5th November 2015

4.1 Sandstone paving slabs (F101) were lifted from in front of an entrance and a single step between two buttresses along the exterior of the northern isle of the church (Figure 3). A section of the modern tarmac path (104) was also removed exposing a thin, loosely compacted layer of sand (105) across the area of the entire trench. This sand formed levelling up and bedding for the path and the re-laying of the paving slabs in recent times (Figure 4).

4.2 This deposit of sand, which was of varying depth, was excavated to reveal the underlying natural substrate (109). A number of features were exposed which all cut

into this substrate (Figure 5). A modern water supply, access tap and electrical cable were also revealed beneath the layer of sand (105).

4.3 A second entrance step (F102) and two dressed stone blocks (F103E and F103W) were recorded which had been overlain by paving slabs (F101) and bedding sand (105). These features were set into the clay substrate (109) and had been incorporated and reused *in situ* as foundations for paving slabs (F101) prior to their removal (Figure 6).

4.4 A drainage feature (F106) was set into the clay substrate (109) towards the eastern side of the trench, comprising a brick-built manhole with a sandstone cap. A straight-edged linear scar (F111) was observed cutting through the substrate on an east to west alignment. This linear scar (F111) ran from a grid at surface level at the south-eastern corner of the trench up to the manhole (F106) and then continued from the other side of the manhole to extend beyond the western edge of the excavation area. The full extent of this feature was unobserved though of itself was clearly associated with the runoff drainage system of the church (Figure 7).

4.5 At the northern extent of the trench part of a rectangular, brick-built, structure (F107) was uncovered. The eastern side of this structure (F107) was overlain by two large stone blocks and it is likely that this structure represents a stone-capped crypt or grave, the western capping stones having been removed during the construction of the churchyard path (Figure 8). It was possible to see into crypt (F107) where the capping stones were missing. This revealed that (F107) had been subsequently infilled with mottled silt (110) which is likely to have been deposited during the creation of the overlying path.

4.6 No finds were observed or recovered during the excavations.

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 The results of the strip, map and sample excavation serve to confirm the archaeological and historical background as attested in the WSI. More recent disturbance (manhole F106 and drainage course) is probably associated with 19th century rebuilding of the northern aisle.

5.2 The step (F102) probably represents an original feature testifying to the presence of an entrance through the northern wall of the aisle. This was later levelled over with the creation of the paved area and modern ground surface. It is possible that two dressed stone blocks (F103E and F103W) represent re-used structural masonry of the original church wall, predating the rebuilding of the aisle in the 19th century, re-used as a foundation for the overlying paving slabs (F101).

5.3 Whilst grave/crypt (F107) represents an in-situ structure, its location along the very northern edge of the proposed development area means that it should not be impacted upon by the laying of the foundation slab and consequent construction of the extension.

5.4 Based on the results of the strip, map and sample excavation, and given the fact that the proposed watching brief area is now due to be excavated along the same line as an existing service trench, no further archaeological work or recording is considered necessary.

6 PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

6.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

6.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7 STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 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.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, particularly Wardens and PCC St. Mary's for commissioning the work and William Taylor of William Taylor Stonemasons for his assistance on site.

9 REFERENCES

British Geological Survey <http://www.bgs.ac.uk> – accessed 15.01.16

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014a. *Code of Conduct*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). 2014b. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation*. Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Cheshire County Council. 2003. *General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants* in Cheshire.

APPENDIX 1: FIGURES



Site name: St Mary's Church, Acton
 Date: October 2015
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: Varies

Figure 1:
Site location



Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB



Tel: 01629 814540

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

This drawing: © ARS Ltd

Contains Ordnance Survey data.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2015

Site Boundary
 Cheshire East

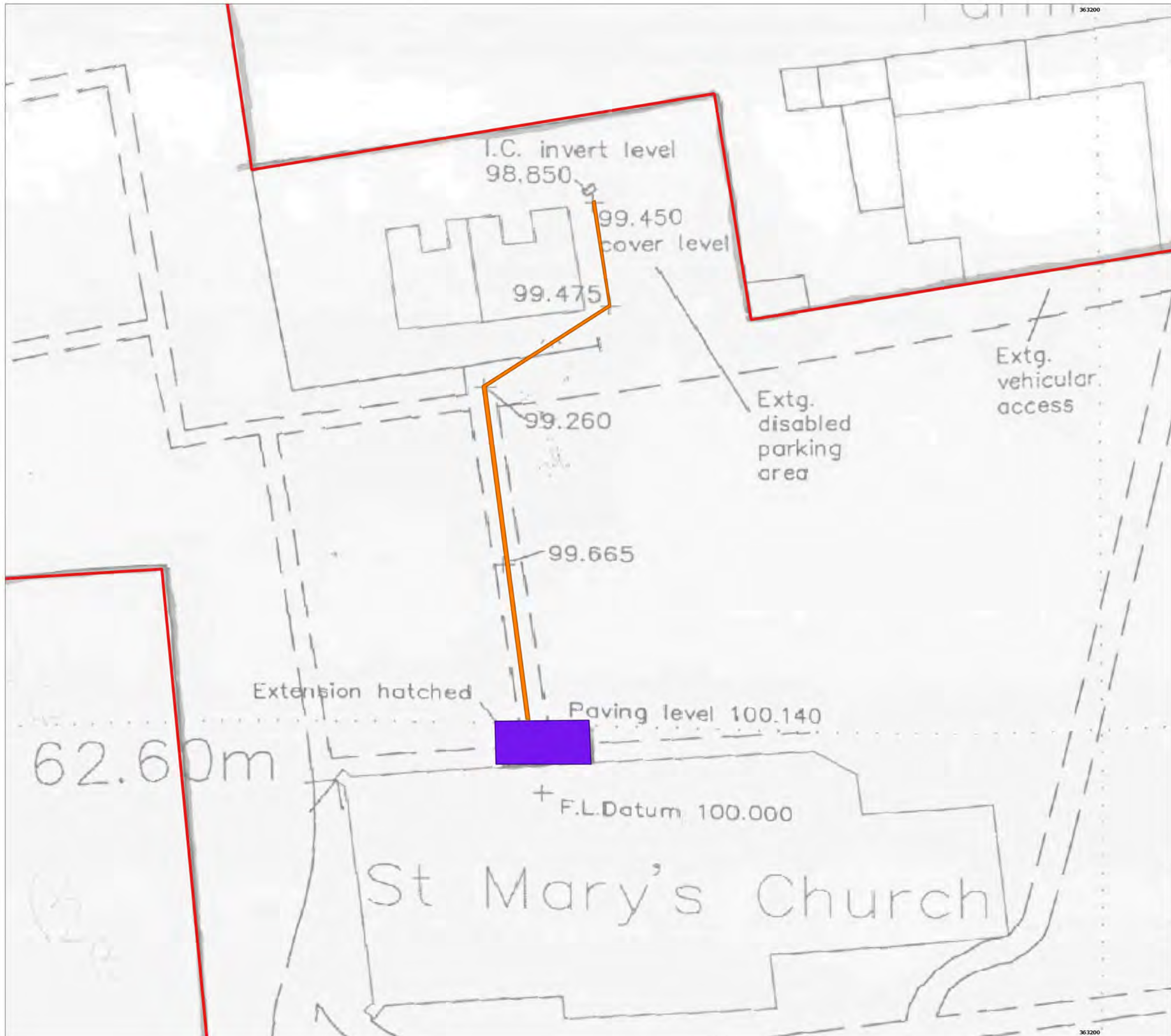
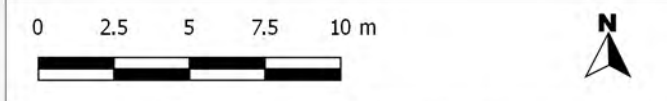


Figure 2: Archaeological Works

- Site Boundary
- Strip, Map and Sample
- Watching Brief (Original proposed route)



Site name/code: St Marys Church, Acton
 Date: October 2015
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: 1:250 @ A3

Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB



This drawing: Copyright ARS Ltd
 Ordnance Survey mapping (if applicable):
 Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
 Reproduced with permission.
 Licence no. 100045420

Tel: 01629 814540
 Fax: 01629 814657
 www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com



Figure 3. View of the development area looking south-east prior to excavation. Yellow paint marks the north-western corner of the trench.



Figure 4. Working shot looking east showing removal of sand (105) beneath tarmac path (104) and slabs (F101).

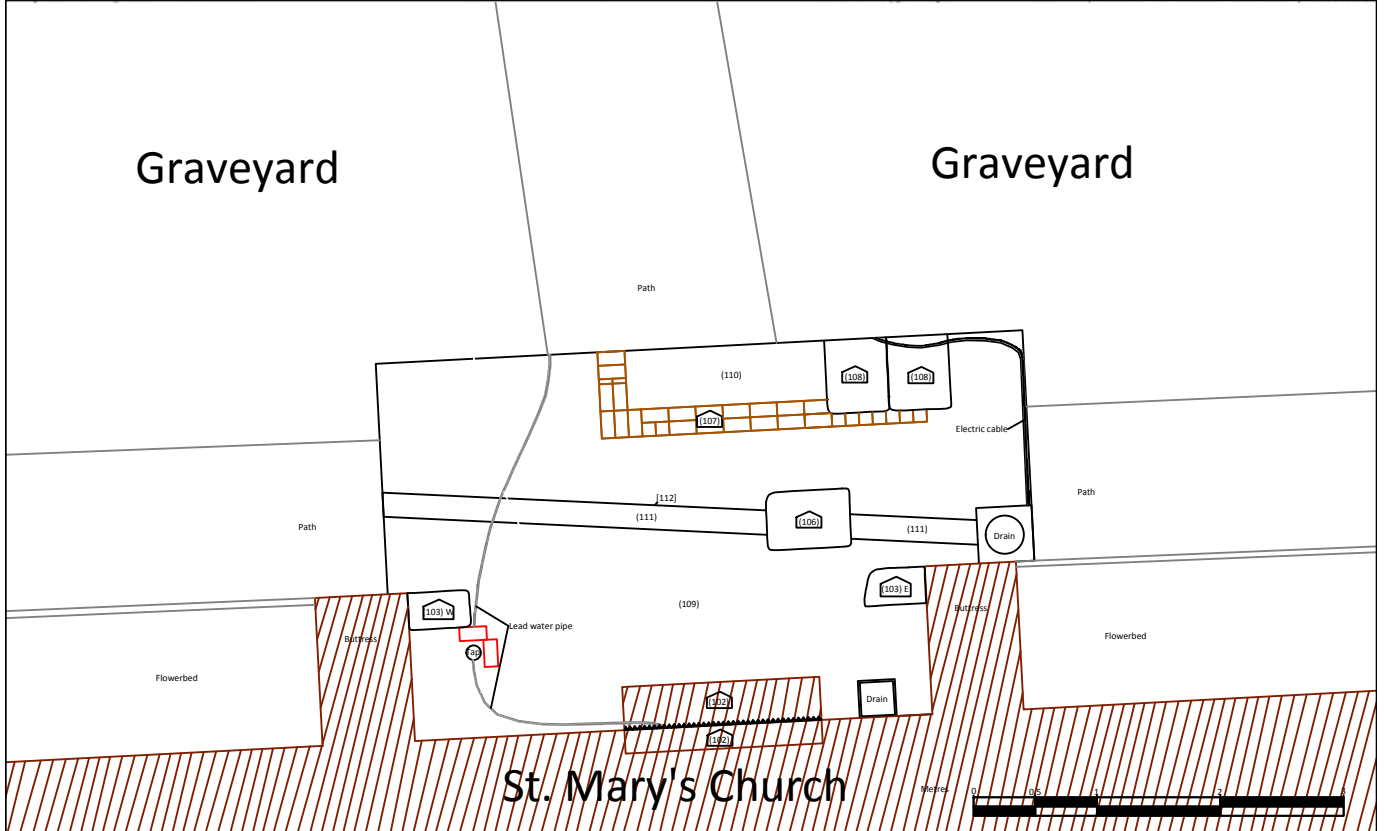
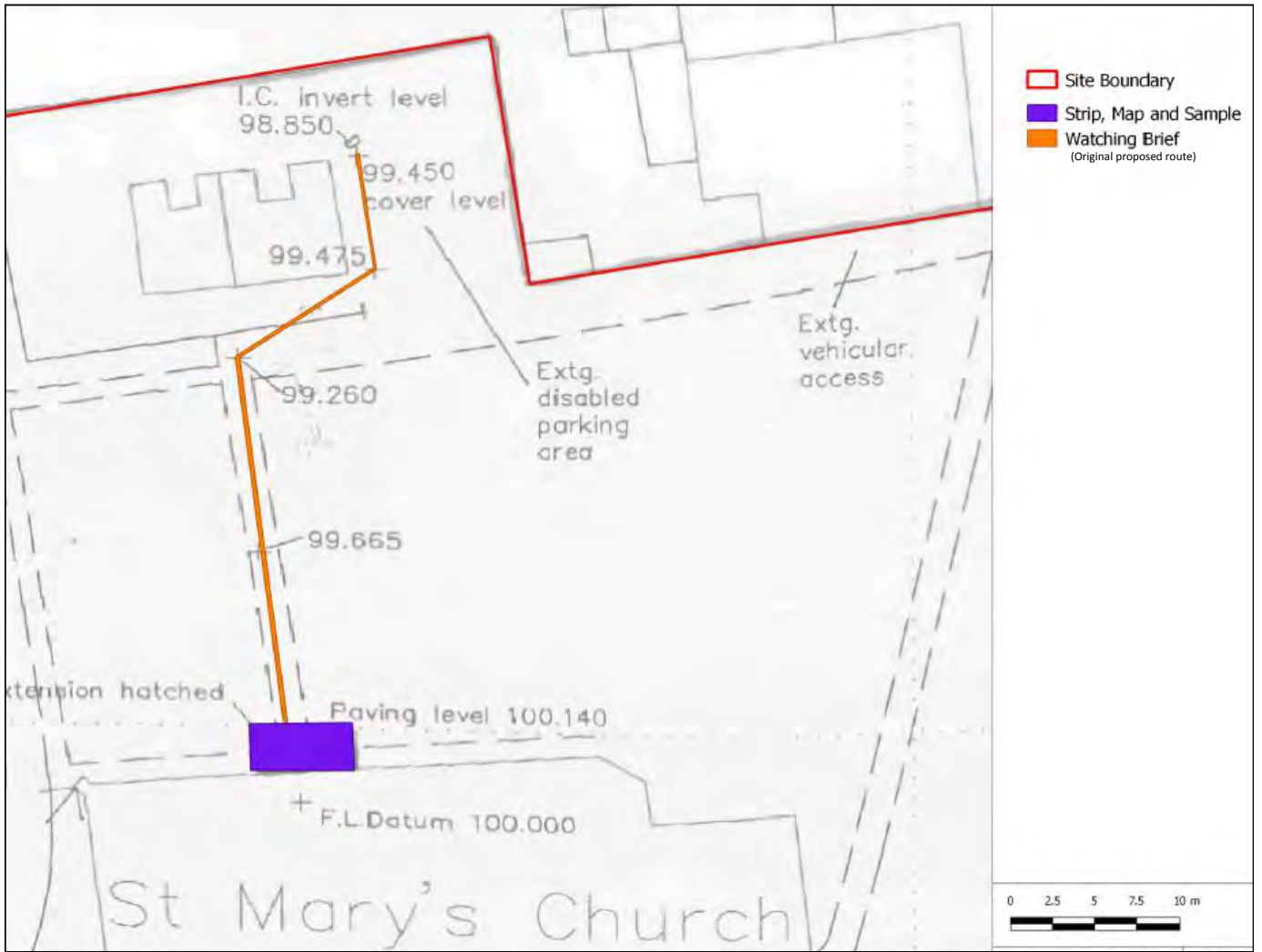


Figure 5. Strip, Map and Sample Excavation Area Plan

Scale:
 Upper = 1:400@A4
 Lower = 1:60@A4



Copyright/ Licencing
 This Drawing
 © A.R.S. Ltd

Ordnance Survey data if applicable
 © Crown Copyright, all rights reserved
 reproduction with permission.
 Licence No. 100045420



Figure 6. Post-excavation shot looking south-west showing features cut into the natural clay substrate (109) below the area of the removed paving slabs (F101). Scale = 0.5m graduations.



Figure 7. View looking south of manhole (F106) and scar of disturbed ground (F111) marking the drainage course. Scale = 0.5m graduations.



Figure 8. View looking north of the brick-built grave/crypt structure (F107) with overlying capping stones (F108) at the northern extent of the trench. Scale = 0.5m graduations.

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context	Type	Description / Processual Interpretation	Thickness/Extent (l) = length, (w) = width, (d) = depth
101	Surface	Sandstone paving slabs to exterior of northern aisle church door	5m ² of paving slabs (variously sized), c.0.04m thick removed from between two buttresses. Two kerbing stones removed from northern limit of paving area measured: (l) 2m, (w) 0.35m, (d) 0.2m
102	Structure	Buried sandstone step (revealed by removal of paving slabs F101)	(l) 1.6m, (w) 0.35m, (d) 0.2m
103E	Structure	Dressed sandstone levelling plinth (revealed by removal of paving slabs F101)	(l) 0.48m, (w) 0.3m, (d) not obs.
103W	Structure	Dressed sandstone levelling plinth (revealed by removal of paving slabs F101)	(l) 0.5m, (w) 0.3m, (d) not obs.
104	Surface	Modern tarmac surface of church pathways	(d) 0.05-0.1m (varied)
105	Deposit	Levelling deposit of orange sand beneath (104)	(d) 0.02-0.35m (varied)
106	Structure	Red-brick-built manhole with sandstone capping slab	Bricks: (l) 0.23m, (w) 0.11m, (d) 0.07m Capping stone: (l) 0.68m, (w) 0.47m, (d) 0.03m
107	Structure	Rectangular red-brick-built crypt/grave	Bricks: (l) 0.22m, (w) 0.11m, (d) 0.07m Structure: (l) 2.64m, (w) extended 0.7m into trench, full width not obs. (d) 0.22m (2 brick courses exposed)
108	Structure	Rough-hewn sandstone slabs overlying F107	Slabs: (l) extended 0.6m into trench, full length not obs. (w) 0.5m, (d) 0.14m
109	Natural substrate	Orange/brown sandy clay substrate with rare rounded stone inclusions <5mm	Only 0.06m of substrate removed. Full thickness not observed. Encountered across full trench extent, c.5x3m
110	Deposit	Mixed, yellow/brown mottled silty sandy material observed within crypt F107	Observed within feature, not disturbed other than to assess composition.
111	Fill of drainage course	Disturbed, mixed backfill of drainage trench/redeposited natural substrate	(l) 5m observed (runs beyond W limit of trench), (w) 0.19m, (d) not obs.
112	Cut of drainage course	Linear ditched feature, orientated east to west	(l) 5m observed (runs beyond W limit of trench), (w) 0.19m, (d) not obs.

APPENDIX 3: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI)

St Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire

Written Scheme of Investigation

2015



© Archaeological Research Services Ltd 2015

Angel House, Portland Square, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1HB

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

on behalf of

Wardens and PCC St. Marys

**Written Scheme of Investigation for a Strip, Map and Sample and
Watching Brief at St Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	1
2.1	Site Location and Geology	1
2.2	Historical and Archaeological Background	1
3	AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	2
3.1	Archaeological Works Aims and Objectives	2
3.2	Regional Research Aims and Objectives	2
4	ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS.....	3
4.1	Strip, Map and Sample Methodology	3
4.2	Watching Brief Methodology	4
4.3	Recording.....	5
5	FINDS PROCESSING AND STORAGE	6
6	MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS.....	7
7	STAFFING.....	7
8	REPORT.....	8
9	ARCHIVE DEPOSITION	8
10	GENERAL ITEMS.....	9
10.1	Health and Safety.....	9
10.2	Insurance Cover	9
10.3	Changes to the Written Scheme of Investigation	9
10.4	Publication.....	9
11	REFERENCES.....	10



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This scheme of works relates to the proposed ground works at St Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire, CW5 8LG which consists of the construction of an extension to the church to accommodate an accessible toilet.

1.2 Planning permission has been granted for the works through a successful application (Application Reference: 12/2065N) made by John K Carter. Condition number 6 of the planning permission requires that:

6. No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological mitigation, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and approved in writing. The work shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme.

1.3 This document comprises a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) confirming the nature of the archaeological monitoring to be undertaken during a strip, map and sample and watching brief by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) at St Mary's Church, Acton, in accordance with guidance from Mark Leah, Development Control Archaeologist for Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service (CAPAS).

1.4 The aim of the programme of works is, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 141 (DCLG 2012), to record and enhance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost during the proposed development in a manner proportionate to their importance, and to make this evidence (and any archived generated) publically accessible.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site Location and Geology

2.1.1 The site is located at St Mary's Church in Acton, a village to the west of Nantwich, Cheshire. The proposed extension will be alongside the north aisle of the church, extending into the graveyard. The proposed drainage system will run north of the site to an existing foul drainage connection on the north side of the churchyard at the Alms Houses (NHLE 1138567). The site is centred at NGR SJ 63163, 53098 (Figure 1).

2.1.2 The underlying geology of the site is halite-stone and mudstone of the Wilkesley Halite Member, formed during the Triassic Period when the local environment was previously dominated by hot deserts. This is overlain by superficial glaciofluvial deposits of Devensian sand and gravels (BGS 2015).

2.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

2.2.1 The site of the proposed extension will affect the north aisle of St Mary's Church, a Grade I Listed Building (NHLE 1330112), which once formed the centre of an important parish and has pre-Conquest origins. While the proposed development site has likely been disturbed by the rebuilding of the north aisle in the late 19th century as a result of instability, there is almost certain that articulated and



disarticulated human remains are present within the footprint of the proposed extension. Additionally, it is possible that structural remains associated with earlier phases of the church will also be exposed (Leah 2012).

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Archaeological Works Aims and Objectives

3.1.1 The principal aims of this assessment are to produce a report detailing the archaeological potential of the PDA, and to assess the potential impacts of the proposed development upon any buried and upstanding archaeological remains and historic buildings.

3.1.2 The following objectives will contribute towards accomplishing this aim:

- ◆ To collate and assess existing information about the historic environment within the study area and to determine as fully as possible from the available evidence the nature, survival, quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains and any upstanding buildings/structures within the PDA.
- ◆ To provide an assessment of areas of archaeological potential and survival based on the above research and assess the potential for the use of particular investigative techniques in order to aid the formulation of any necessary mitigation strategy, including further evaluation, excavation, and/or preservation of archaeological remains.
- ◆ To assess, where possible from the available sources, the extent of any ground disturbance associated with any previous intrusive development.
- ◆ To provide an initial assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development to the settings of cultural heritage assets, and make recommendations for further detailed assessment should this be considered necessary.

3.2 Regional Research Aims and Objectives

3.2.1 Research topics identified in *Research and Archaeology in North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework for North-West England: Volume 2: Research Agenda and Strategy* (Brennand 2007, 87) for early medieval religion and burial is as follows:

- ◆ It is recognised that church archaeology has been an understudied discipline in most parts of the region. The opportunity for intrusive archaeological work within or around churches is limited, but the current emphasis on providing toilet and kitchen extensions has provided several opportunities to examine the depth and nature of the archaeological deposits at these sites, usually through excavation. Archaeological curators need to formalise and agree appropriate protocols with the Diocesan authorities which will enable all



intrusive work on and around these sites to be monitored archaeologically, and for evaluation or excavation to be carried out where appropriate.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

4.1 Strip, Map and Sample Methodology

4.1.1 The strip, map and sample will be undertaken in accordance with the ClfA *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Excavation* (2014b) alongside Cheshire County Council's revised *General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants* (2003). The records will follow standard conventions set by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) (2002). ARS Ltd will provide a suitably qualified archaeologist during ground works on the site to undertake a strip, map and sample. The on-site archaeologist will be fully apprised of the archaeological potential of the site. The archaeologist will be given the opportunity to stop site work in order to investigate potential archaeological features and adequate time will be allowed for recording any such features.

4.1.2 The area of the footprint of the proposed extension (Figure 2) is to be stripped down to the depth necessary to accommodate the slab and sub-base in order to determine if any human remains or foundations of an earlier building survive within this zone of disturbance.

4.1.3 All relevant ground works will be undertaken by a suitable mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket within the proposed extension area. Hard standing, unstratified modern material and topsoil will be removed mechanically by a machine using a wide toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. No machinery will track over areas that have previously been stripped until the area has been signed off by ARS Ltd.

4.1.4 The areas will be appropriately cleaned using hand tools in order to expose the full nature and extent of archaeological features and deposits.

4.1.5 All spoil removed during groundworks will be scanned visually to recover small finds. Any finds so recovered will be recorded and their location noted on a site plan at a relevant scale. The finds will be retained and recorded.

4.1.5 Once the area has been stripped and cleaned, consultation will take place with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS and a decision taken as to the best method of proceeding.

4.1.6 Isolated, discrete features such as pits not belonging to structures or industrial activities will be 50% samples, although if they produce artefacts then provision is made for full excavation.

4.1.7 Any deposits relating to funerary/ritual activities, such as burials and cremation deposits will be 100% excavated. Domestic/industrial activity (such as



walls, postholes, floors, hearths) will be sufficiently excavated to understand their form and function and to recover potential dating evidence and artefact and ecofact assemblages.

4.1.8 Area deposits such as buried soils, or middens, will be hand excavated at a minimum 10%.

4.1.9 Limited representative samples of bricks from brick-built structures and selective products of the brick working process will be retained for specialist analysis where appropriate.

4.1.10 For deposits that have potential for providing environmental or dating evidence, a minimum of 10 litres of sample will be taken, or 100% if the sample is smaller. This material will be floated and passed through graduated sieves, the smallest being a 500 μ mesh. Should other types of environmental deposits be encountered, appropriate specialist advice will be sought and an appropriate sampling strategy devised. Samples will be assessed by a suitable specialist with provision for further analysis as required. Advice from the Historic England Scientific Advisor will be taken as appropriate.

4.1.11 Any human remains discovered will initially be left in-situ and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations and in discussion with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS.

4.1.12 Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.

4.1.13 ARS Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site. Regular contact will be ensured between ARS Ltd. and the site project manager to ensure that ARS Ltd. is kept up to date with site works and given the chance to respond appropriately and in line with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS requirements.

4.1.14 All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with ARS Ltd's health and safety policy. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

4.2 Watching Brief Methodology

4.2.1 The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the ClfA *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014c) alongside Cheshire County Council's revised *General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants* (2003). The records will follow standard conventions set by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) (2002). ARS Ltd will provide a suitably qualified archaeologist during the excavation of the services trenches on site to undertake a watching brief. The on-site archaeologist will be fully apprised of the archaeological potential of the site. The archaeologist will be



given the opportunity to stop site work in order to investigate potential archaeological features and adequate time will be allowed for recording any such features.

4.2.2 All relevant ground works will be undertaken by a suitable mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket within the areas of the service trenches (Figure 2). If significant archaeological features are identified, the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS will be notified and a decision taken as to the best method of proceeding.

4.2.3 Where archaeological features and/or deposits are identified during the watching brief, then a sufficient quantity of the said features will be investigated by hand to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascribed.

4.2.4 Any human remains discovered will initially be left in-situ and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations and in discussion with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS.

4.2.5 Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.

4.2.6 ARS Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site. Regular contact will be ensured between ARS Ltd. and the site project manager to ensure that ARS Ltd. is kept up to date with site works and given the chance to respond appropriately and in line with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS requirements.

4.2.7 All site operations will be carried out in a safe manner in accordance with ARS Ltd's health and safety policy. A risk assessment will be prepared before commencement on site.

4.3 Recording

4.3.1 The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. The site will be recorded using a single context planning system in accordance with ClfA guidance and the ARS Ltd field recording manual.

4.3.2 A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. A plan of the excavated areas will be maintained, features noted and section lines recorded. All drawings will be carried out at an appropriate scale and all contexts will be recorded using a single context recording system. Sample representative levels will be taken to record the maximum depth of excavation and /or natural should no archaeological features be uncovered.



4.3.3 For brick structures, the record will include details of brick dimensions and type (handmade/machine-made, plain/frogged), mortar (colour, composition, hardness) and the extent of structures (number of courses, thickness in skins).

4.3.4 The stratigraphy of the site will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.

4.3.5 Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

4.3.6 All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.

4.3.7 Site photography will be in high resolution (7 megapixel or greater) colour DSLR photography. Photography will include general site shots, shots of the excavation area and shots of individual features and groups of features. All photographs will include a suitable photographic scale (where appropriate) and will be recorded on a photographic register with the subject and direction of each shot.

5 FINDS PROCESSING AND STORAGE

5.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in accordance with the ClfA (2014d) *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* and the UKIC (1990) *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage*.

5.2 Artefact collection and discard policies will be appropriate for the defined purpose.

5.3 Bulk finds which are not discarded will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labelling will be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded. This process will be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.

5.4 All small finds will be recorded as individual items and appropriately packaged (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated.

5.5 During and after the excavation all objects will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (including controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will have appropriate security provision.

5.6 The deposition and disposal of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner and the appropriate Museum prior to the work taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner.

5.7 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.



6 MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

6.1 At least one week prior notice of the commencement of the ground works to be given to the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS:

Mark Leah
Development Control Archaeologist
Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service
The Forum
Chester
CH1 2HS
Email: mark.leah@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Tel: 01244 973289

6.2 ARS Ltd will liaise with the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS at regular intervals throughout the course of the work.

6.3 The client will afford reasonable access to the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS, or his representative, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological mitigation

7 STAFFING

7.1 The Project Manager for the watching brief will be Mark Potter, Office Manager at ARS Ltd. The Fieldwork Project Officer will be Megan Fletcher-Cutts, Archaeological Officer at ARS Ltd.

7.2 Specialist analyses will be carried out by appropriately qualified specialists as detailed subject to availability.

◆ Flint and prehistoric pottery:	Dr Robin Holgate
◆ Romano-British pottery:	Ruth Leary/Paul Bidwell
◆ Samian Ware:	Gwladys Monteil/Paul Bidwell
◆ Medieval and post-medieval pottery:	Lisa Watling/Chris Cumberpatch
◆ Clay pipes:	Mike Wood MCIfA
◆ Industrial Remains:	Chris Scott MCIfA
◆ Plant macrofossils and charcoals:	Elise McLellan
◆ Pollen and Molluscs:	Dr Andy McWilliams
◆ Human and animal bone:	Milena Grzybowska
◆ Radiocarbon dating:	Prof Gordon Cook (SUERC)



- ◆ Finds conservation: Durham University

8 REPORT

8.1 Following completion of the watching brief, Archaeological Research Services Ltd will produce a report which will include,

- ◆ Non-technical executive summary
- ◆ Introductory statement
- ◆ Aims and purpose of the project
- ◆ Methodology
- ◆ A location plan showing all excavated areas and any archaeological features with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads
- ◆ Illustrations of all archaeological features with appropriately scaled hachured plans and sections
- ◆ An objective summary statement of results
- ◆ Conclusions
- ◆ Supporting data – tabulated or in appendices
- ◆ Index to archive and details of archive location
- ◆ References
- ◆ Statement of intent regarding publication
- ◆ Confirmation of archive transfer arrangements
- ◆ A copy of the WSI and OASIS form

8.2 One bound copy of the final report with a digital copy of the report in PDF/A format on disk will be deposited with the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER). A copy of the report will be uploaded as part of the OASIS record (see below) for online access via the Archaeological Data Service.

9 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

9.1 If the project produces archaeologically significant finds, then the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS and Museum Curator will be notified at the earliest opportunity, and an accession number will be produced for the site. In addition, a digital, paper and artefactual archive will be prepared by ARS Ltd, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data (in a format to be agreed by the appropriate Museum). The archive will be deposited in line with the ClfA (2013e) *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, and the Society of Museum Archaeologists (1993) *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of*



Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and will be deposited within two months of the completion of the report. The Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS and Museum Curator will be notified in writing on completion of the fieldwork with projected dates for the completion of the report and deposition of the archive. The date for deposition of the archive will be confirmed in the report and the Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS informed in writing on final deposition of the archive.

9.2 All artefacts and associated material will be cleaned, recorded, properly stored and deposited in the archive (see above).

9.3 A full set of annotated, illustrative pictures of the site, excavation, features, layers and selected artefacts will be deposited with the archive as digital images on a CD ROM.

9.4 At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> will be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included within the archive).

10 GENERAL ITEMS

10.1 Health and Safety

10.1.1 All work will be carried out in accordance with The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. Specific health and safety policies exist for all our workplaces and all staff employed will be made aware of the policy and any relevant issues. The particular risks involved with this project will be assessed, recorded and relevant mitigation measures put in place as part of a full risk assessment, which will be compiled in advance of fieldwork and will be read and signed by all on-site operatives. ARS Ltd retains Peninsula as its expert health and safety consultants.

10.2 Insurance Cover

10.2.1 ARS Ltd has full insurance cover for employee liability public liability, professional indemnity and all-risks cover.

10.3 Changes to the Written Scheme of Investigation

10.3.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with prior written approval of the Cheshire Development Control Archaeologist for CAPAS.

10.4 Publication

10.4.1 If significant archaeological remains are recorded, a summary of the project with, if appropriate, selected drawings, illustrations and photographs will be prepared for publication in online, journal or monograph form as appropriate. Additional popular articles will also be produced for local and/or national magazines



as appropriate. The final form of the publication is to be agreed with the planning archaeologist and the client dependent on the results of the fieldwork.

11 REFERENCES

Brennand, M. (ed). 2007. *Research and Archaeology in North West England: An Archaeological Research Framework for North-West England: Volume 2: Research Agenda and Strategy*. Council for British Archaeology North West.

British Geological Survey 2015. Geology of Britain viewer. Available online at: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home/html> [Accessed 14th October 2015].

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) 2014a. *Code of Conduct*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA). 2014b. *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation*. Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA). 2014c. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014d. *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*. Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. 2014e. *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*. Reading, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

Cheshire County Council. 2003. *General Conditions for Archaeological Contractors and Consultants in Cheshire*.

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). 2012. *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*. London, The Stationery Office.

Leah, M. 2012. *Cheshire Archaeology Planning Advisory Service Response: Application Number: 12/2065N*.

Museum of London Archaeological Services (MoLAS). 2002. *Site Manual*. London, Museum of London.

Society of Museum Archaeologists 1993. *Selection, Retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland*. London: Society of Museum Archaeologists.



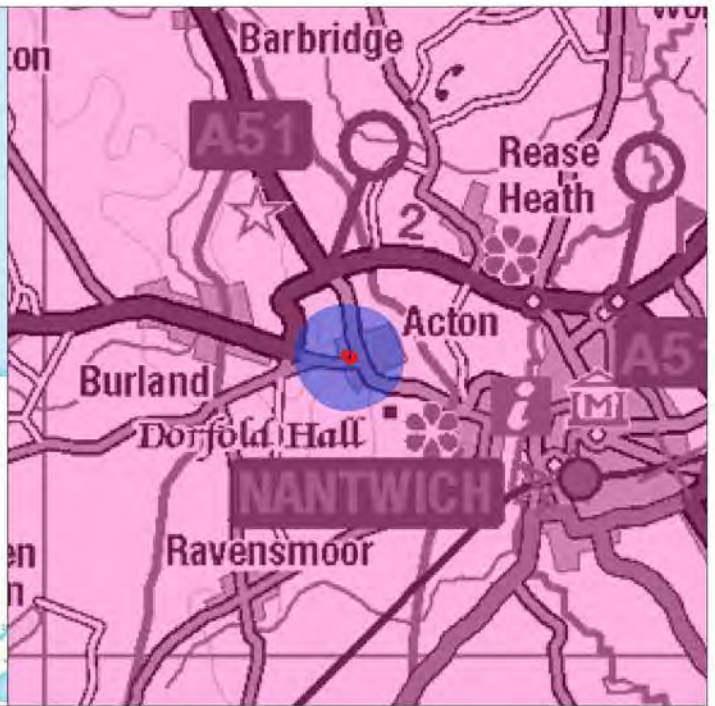
*Written Scheme of Investigation for a Strip, Map and Sample and
Watching Brief at St Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation. 1990. *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage.*



FIGURES





Site name: St Mary's Church, Acton
 Date: October 2015
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: Varies

Figure 1:
Site location



Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB



Tel: 01629 814540

www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

This drawing: © ARS Ltd

Contains Ordnance Survey data.
 © Crown copyright and database right 2015

Site Boundary
 Cheshire East

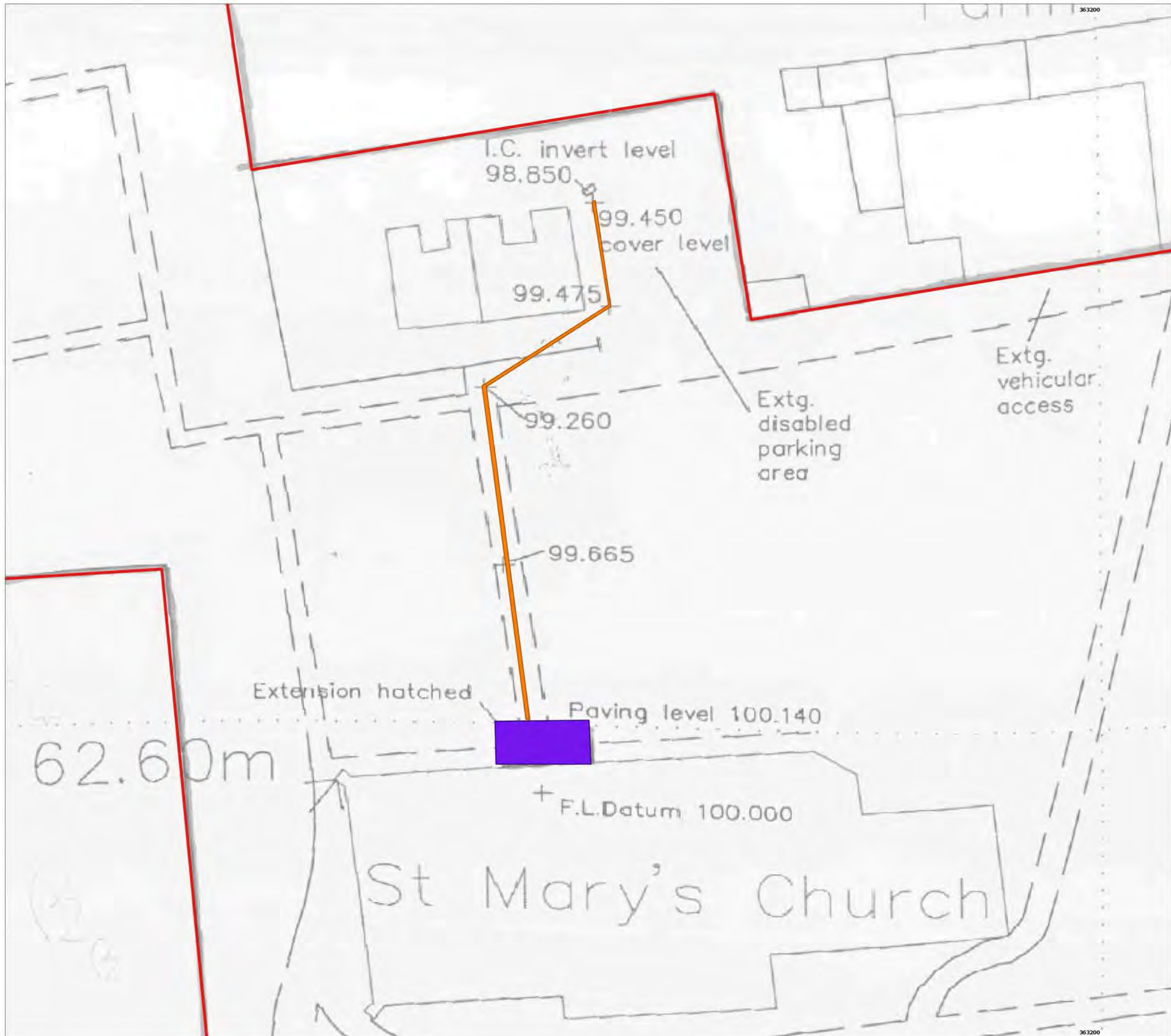
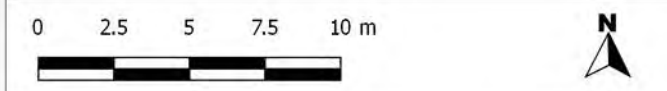


Figure 2: Archaeological Works

- Site Boundary
- Strip, Map and Sample
- Watching Brief



Site name/code: St Marys Church, Acton
 Date: October 2015
 Drawn by: MB
 Scale: 1:250 @ A3

Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB



This drawing: Copyright ARS Ltd
 Ordnance Survey mapping (if applicable):
 Crown Copyright. All rights reserved.
 Reproduced with permission.
 Licence no. 100045420

Tel: 01629 814540
 Fax: 01629 814657
 www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

[List of Projects](#) | [Manage Projects](#) | [Search Projects](#) | [New project](#) | [Change your details](#) | [HER coverage](#) | [Change country](#) | [Log out](#)

Printable version

OASIS ID: [archaeol5-255598](#)

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire
Short description of the project	<p>In November 2015 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Wardens and PCC St. Mary's to undertake an archaeological strip, map and sample excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire during groundworks associated with the construction of an extension in the churchyard. The excavation took place on 5th November 2015, comprising a single trench off the northern isle of the church that measured c.5x3m. Removal of stone paving slabs and a section of the modern tarmac pathway immediately adjacent to the church revealed a shallow depth of sandy levelling material overlying the natural substrate. Stone blocks were set within the substrate acting as supports for the paving slabs and a brick-built, stone-capped manhole was also observed along the line of an active drainage trench. No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered, although part of a brick-built and partially stone-capped crypt was observed underlying a modern pathway at the northern extent of the trench which will not be impacted upon by development. A watching brief was due to take place during the excavation of a new drainage line running northwards from the church towards the Alms Houses at the north of the churchyard. This was later deemed unnecessary when it became clear that the intended drainage system followed the line of an existing service trench and excavations would only be taking place through previously excavated and backfilled ground.</p>
Project dates	Start: 05-11-2015 End: 05-11-2015
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Type of project	Recording project
Monument type	DRAIN Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL Modern
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Open-area excavation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE CREWE AND NANTWICH ACTON St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire
Study area	15 Square metres
Site coordinates	SJ 63163 53098 53.07354252924 -2.549891793971 53 04 24 N 002 32 59 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
----------------------	--------------------------------------

Project brief originator Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Project design originator Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Project director/manager Clive Waddington
 Project supervisor Ben Dyson

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
 Digital Archive recipient Cheshire HER
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography"
 Paper Archive recipient Cheshire HER
 Paper Contents "none"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Drawing", "Photograph", "Plan"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
 Title An Archaeological Strip, Map and Sample Excavation at St. Mary's Church, Acton, Cheshire
 Author(s)/Editor(s) Dyson, B.
 Date 2016
 Issuer or publisher Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Place of issue or publication Sale, Greater Manchester
 Entered by Ben Dyson (ben.dyson@archaeologicalresearchservices.com)
 Entered on 22 June 2016

OASIS:

Please e-mail [Historic England](mailto:historicengland@oasis.ac.uk) for OASIS help and advice
 © ADS 1996-2012 Created by [Jo Gilham](#) and [Jen Mitcham](#), email Last modified Wednesday 9 May 2012
 Cite only: <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm> for this page