

## **An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Church of St Michael and All Saints, Brimington, Derbyshire.**



St Michael and All Angels Church

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**Compiled By:**  
Brian Marshall  
Archaeological Research Services Ltd  
Angel House  
Bakewell  
Derbyshire  
DE45 1HB  
[admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com](mailto:admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com)  
[www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com](http://www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com)

**Checked By:**  
Dr. Richard Chatterton  
Tel: 01629 814540  
Fax: 01629 814657

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

*In February 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Chesterfield Borough Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St Michael and All Saints, Brimington. The monitoring was carried out during ground works concerned with the rebuilding of a section of the churchyard wall on its western boundary.*

*The work required a section of the wall which was in disrepair to be removed and a foundation trench excavated. A later built adjoining section of wall was demolished to its existing foundations. This enabled the new run of the wall to be constructed in context with the features of the remaining standing walls of the churchyard.*

*The work required an archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd to be on site to observe all ground works and to ensure preservation by record of any archaeological deposits discovered. Despite the very close proximity of grave headstones to the foundation trench no archaeological features were encountered.*



## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1. In February 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Chesterfield Borough Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief at the Church of St Michael and All Saints, Brimington (Fig.1). The work was carried out during groundworks for the repair to the churchyard boundary walls.

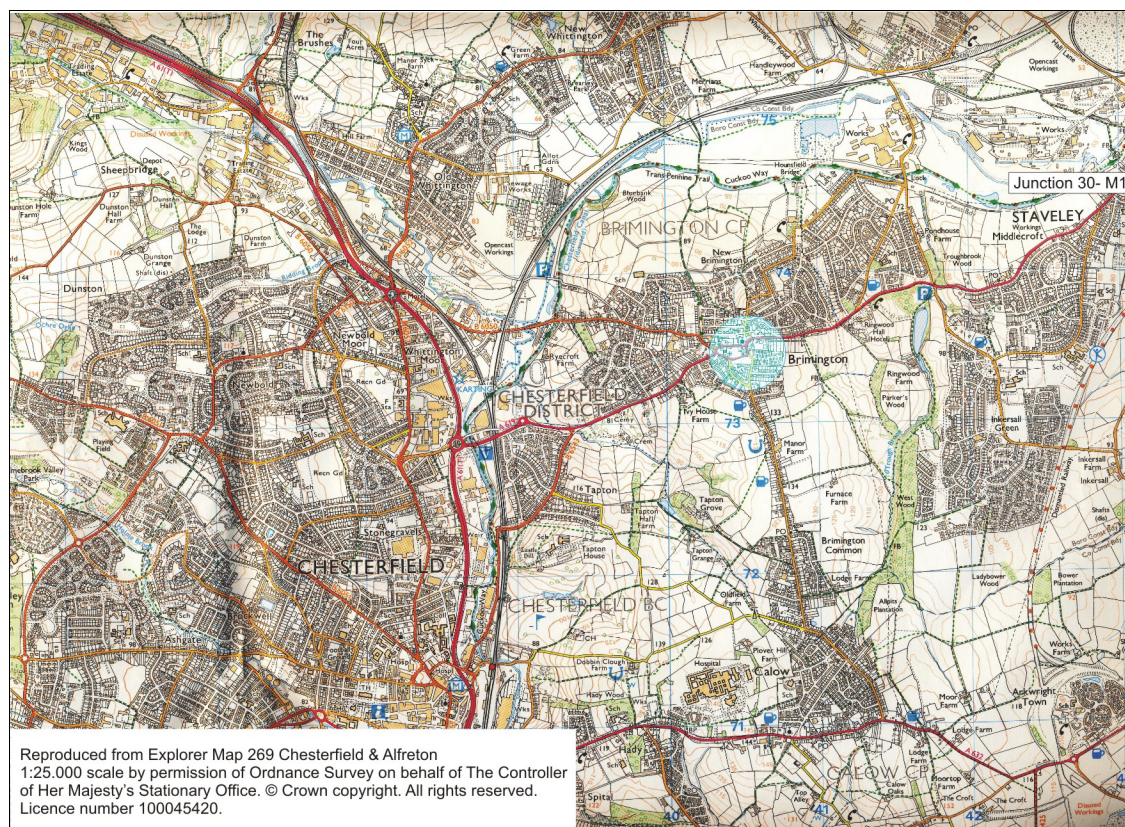


Fig. 1 Site location

- 1.1.2. The site is centred at SK 404 735 in the civil parish of Brimington and lies 5km north east of Chesterfield. There is mention of a chapel in Brimington being augmented by lot in 1737 (Lysons & Lysons 1817, 75). The present church was built in 1847 retaining, strengthening and raising the stone tower, which was originally built in 1796. The chancel was built in 1891 (Pevsner 2002, 110). Headstones situated within 0.25m of the excavated trench were engraved with dates ranging from 1862 to 1884.

### 1.2 Geology and preservation

- 1.2.1 The solid geology of the site consists of Westphalian coal measures of the Carboniferous period laid down over 300 million years ago. The surface drift geology upon which the site is located consists of sandy clay Glacial Till (Aitkinhead 2002).

1.2.2 Fig 2. Site plan with areas of groundworks

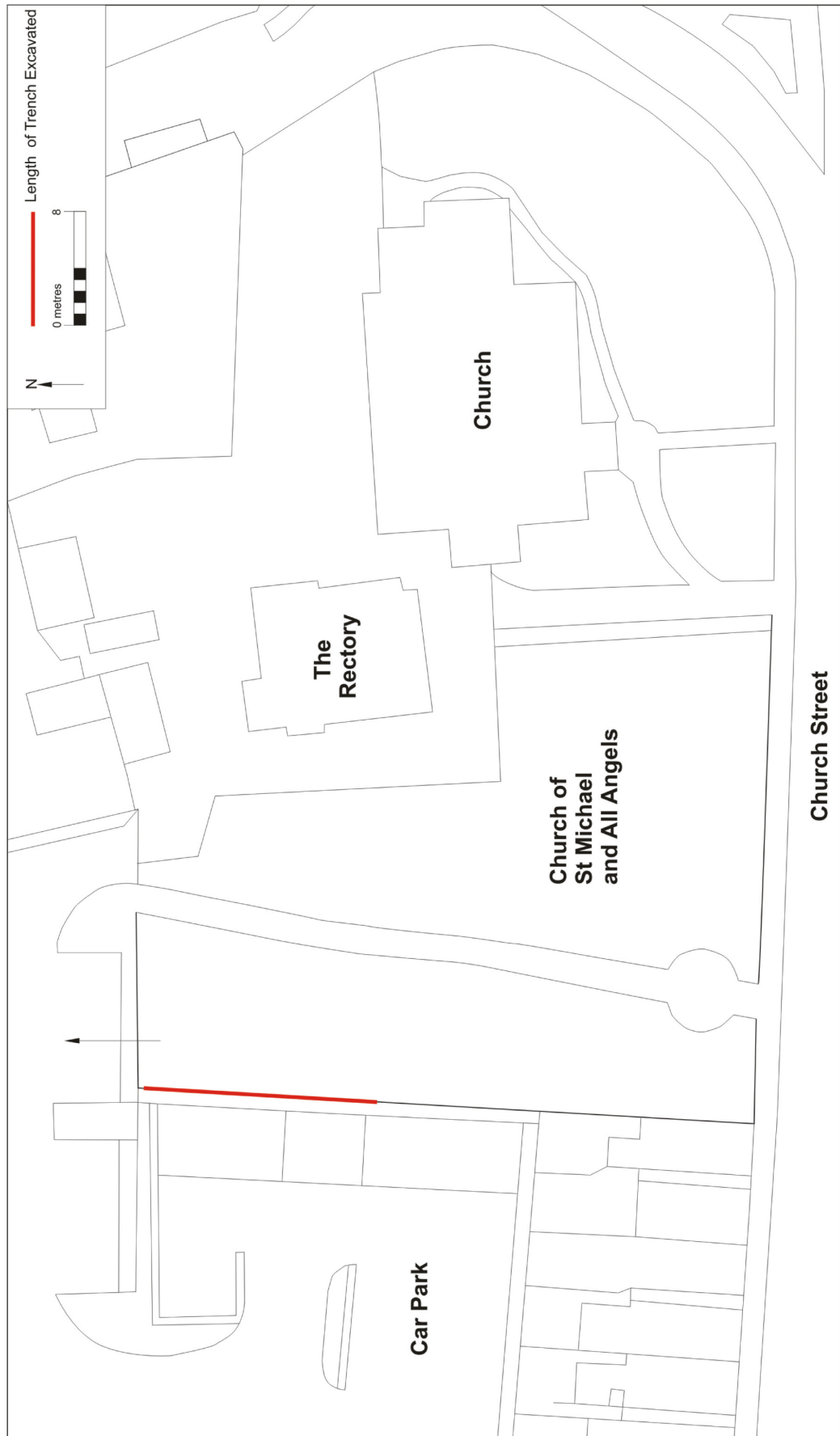


Fig 2 : Site Plan



## 2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The specification required that a watching brief be carried out to observe any ground works taking place during the rebuilding of boundary walls, in order to identify any potential archaeological remains. This involved an archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd monitoring and supervising the excavation of a foundation trench on the site (Fig. 2).
- 2.2 Loose surface stone from the damaged wall was removed by hand. A trench 16.5m in length was then excavated by machine under continuous archaeological supervision.

## 3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The removal of loose wall stones exposed an area made up of loose topsoil and small pieces of sub rectangular sandstone (Fig. 3).



Fig 3: Trench line to be excavated. Facing north

The topsoil (001) was fine sandy silt black in colour 7.5YR 2.5/1 and covered the area east of the wall line into the churchyard. To the west of the wall line redeposited topsoil (002) had been used in the landscaping of an area containing bushes and small trees, this was dark greyish brown in colour 10YR 3/2.

- 3.3 The trench was excavated below ground level on the west side; this level was established as a tarmac pavement abutting the car park (Fig. 4).



Fig 4: Tarmac pavement. Facing east.

Sub rectangular stone of various sizes which constituted the lower level of the existing wall was removed by hand and machine. This exposed a trench approximately 0.25m below the tarmac level and exposed a face of 0.9m on the eastern churchyard side (Fig. 5).



Fig 5: West facing elevation of trench. Facing east.



- 3.2 The trench excavation uncovered the route of an electric cable overlain by detailed electricity bricks (Fig 6). This cable had not been identified on any plans or discovered by cat scanning. It was presumed to be a disused line, but care was taken to keep the cable buried.



Fig 6: Bricks overlaying electric cable.

The cable was positioned west of a row of headstones that came within 0.25m of the trench edge. The fill of the trench that housed the cable was topsoil context (001) with inclusions of sandstone fragments, modern pottery and bottles. This fill had a maximum depth of 0.65m and overlay sandy clay subsoil (003), brown in colour 10/YR 4/3. A maximum of 0.25m was removed from the subsoil; this was variable due to an upward slope of the ground from north to south (Fig 5).

- 3.3 The roots of a large tree 14.2m from the northern boundary wall intruded into the trench (Fig 7), this was left in situ and will be bridged to accommodate the wall foundations.



Fig 7: Tree roots intruding into the trench. Facing south.

- 3.5 A modern wall as seen in fig. 4 was demolished by machine. The existing foundations abutted the excavated trench, which were left in situ and would connect to the new foundations laid in the trench

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1. Although grave headstones were in close proximity to the excavated trench no archaeological features, deposits, buried land surfaces or small finds were located within the trench. This is possibly due to the fact that evidence would have been removed in the construction of the earlier electric cable trench.

#### **5. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT**

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

#### **6. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY**

- 6.1 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.

#### **7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 7.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Andy and James of A Hardy and Son Limited Ltd and Mark Botham building surveyor from Chesterfield Borough Council

## **8. REFERENCES**

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## **APPENDIX I: CONTEXT REGISTER**

<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Topsoil found in the churchyard. Fine sandy silt. Black colour 7.5YR 2.5/1
002	Redeposited topsoil in the car park. Sandy. Dark greyish brown colour 10YR 3/2
003	Subsoil. Sandy clay. Brown in colour 10YR 3/2