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ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH Aldenham, Herts.

HN1030

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD
Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation
Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CHURCH
Aldenham, Hertfordshire

Project no.: HN1030

Archaeological Monitoring Report

Prepared on behalf of Aldenham Parochial Church Council

By

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Report no.763

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Contents

	Summary	Page i
Section 1	Introduction	Page 1
Section 2	Fieldwork	Page 3
Section 3	Discussion	Page 5
Section 4	Schedule of site visits.....	Page 7
Section 5	Bibliography.....	Page 7
Section 5	Illustrations.....	following Page 8
Appendix	OASIS data entry form.....	Page 9

The cover photograph shows the Charrington Memorial prior to relocation, looking north

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork for this project was carried out by David Hillelson. The report text and illustrations were prepared by Helen Ashworth, and edited by David Hillelson.

The Heritage Network would like to express its thanks to: Mike Dales, Michael Dales Partnership; David Baker, St Albans DAC; Phil Attersley, Lodge & Son; and the ground crew from E.J. Taylor, for their co-operation and assistance in the execution of this project.

Summary

Site name and address:	Church of St. John the Baptist, Aldenham, Herts., WD25 8BR		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Watford
Village/town:	Aldenham	Parish:	Aldenham
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TQ 1398 9848
Client name and address:	Aldenham PCC, c/o Michael Dales Partnership, 95 Sharpenhoe Rd, Streatley, Luton, LU3 3PS		
Nature of work:	New kitchenette & services	Existing land use:	Church & churchyard
Site status:	Listed Building	Reason for investigation:	Direction of Diocesan Faculty
Position in planning process:	n/a	Project brief originator:	Diocesan Advisory Committee
Size of affected area:	c. 10sq ^m	Size of area investigated:	c. 10sq ^m
Site Code:	HN1030	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.:	Monitoring	Archive recipient:	Bushey Museum
Start of work	30/10/2012	Finish of work	04/12/2012
Related HER Nos:	4380	Periods represented:	Post-medieval
Oasis UID	heritage1-136482	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	Church		
Physical archive:	n/a		
Previous summaries/reports:	None		

Synopsis:

In response to the requirements of a diocesan faculty, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Aldenham PCC to implement a scheme of archaeological monitoring during the works ahead of the installation of a new kitchen at St. John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, Hertfordshire.

The monitoring of the relocation of the Charrington memorial revealed the re-use of the left hand tablet. The original front, now the back of the tablet, was prepared after 1771, the year the Revd Nicholas Charrington died, and before 1777, the year his widow, Elizabeth, died. Following Elizabeth's death in 1777, the tablet was turned round and the original back inscribed with all the names recorded previously, but re-spaced to allow room to add her name at the bottom. The death of her sister in 1788 was also added, in slightly different lettering. The family memorial then extended to a second tablet, recording deaths from 1803 to 1907.

The creation of the access holes for water and drainage revealed that the foundation to the mid-15th century north wall is formed of closely packed flint in a strong mortar.

Monitoring of the water main and drainage trenches revealed no evidence for archaeological features, deposits or finds. A buried grave slab, covering part of a brick-lined grave, was revealed in the north-eastern corner of a manhole pit excavated along the line of the existing foul drain.

No evidence for the suggested earlier church was encountered during the present project.

1. Introduction

1.1 This report has been prepared at the request of Michael Dales Partnership Architects, acting on behalf of Aldenham Parochial Church Council, as part of the archaeological monitoring and recording of the creation of a kitchenette, with associated service trenches, at St John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, Hertfordshire.

1.2 The study area, centred on NGR TQ 1398 9848, is located both within the church and in the churchyard immediately to the north of the church, which is bounded on the east by Glebe House, on the south by properties fronting Church Farm Way, and on the north and west by Church Lane (Figure 1). The works for the present project include the removal and rehangings of two memorial tablets in the north-western corner of the north aisle, the excavation of a drain to link the new kitchenette with the existing foul drain running to the north of the church, and the laying of new water and power supplies to the new kitchenette.

1.3 On the basis that the works were located inside a Grade I listed church and within a medieval churchyard, the Diocesan Archaeology Adviser recommended that archaeological monitoring of the works should be carried out under a proviso to the diocesan faculty for the works. It was considered that the relocation of two memorial tablets could reveal hidden architectural details in the north wall of the nave and that the service trenches could disturb human remains and possibly expose evidence relating to the construction and development of the church.

1.4 The present report describes the findings of the monitoring programme and is intended to complete the requirements of the faculty.

2. Fieldwork

SITE TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Aldenham lies to the east of Watford, on the eastern side of the valley of the River Colne. The site lies on slightly sloping ground, rising to the north and east, at approximately 78m AOD.

2.2 Locally the soils belong to the Sonning 1 Association (581b), described as: *Well drained flinty coarse loamy and gravelly soils, mainly over gravel. Some coarse loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging.* (SSEW 1983).

2.3 The underlying geology consists of chalk of the Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation, a sedimentary bedrock, formed in warm shallow seas approximately 71 to 89 million years ago, during the Cretaceous Period (www.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/viewer.html).

METHODOLOGY

2.4 The timetable for the fieldwork followed the client's work schedule. A number of site visits were made to record the relocation of the memorial tablets and supervise the excavation of the service trenches.

2.5 The machining for the service trenches was undertaken using a 360-degree tracked mini-digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket or a toothed bucket, as required.

2.6 All human remains were rapidly assessed on site for evidence that might indicate age at death and sex, and any sign of obvious pathology. As the remains were disarticulated and did not represent a statistically significant sample of the population, it was decided that there was no justification for further detailed study off site and the bones were handed to the vicar for reburial.

2.7 No *Project Design* was requested for the present project. Nevertheless, all work was undertaken in consultation with the DAC, following model DAC Briefs. It was carried out in accordance with both the Heritage Network's documented practice, and with current standards and guidelines published by English Heritage, the Institute for Archaeologists, and others.

INTERIOR WORKS

Relocation of the Charrington memorials

2.8 The memorials were located in the north-western corner of the north aisle, to the west of the window and between two other memorials (Figure 2; Plate 1). The height above ground of the Charrington memorials meant that they would be obscured by the proposed new kitchenette enclosure and it was decided that they should be re-sited at a higher level on the same wall.

2.9 The memorials consist of two adjacent simple arched tablets in marble, with a varicoloured marble border (Plate 2). The tablet to the left commemorates the Reverend Nicholas Charrington, vicar at the church for 49 years, who died October 20th, 1771, aged 79. This memorial, which was originally erected by his widow, Elizabeth, also names their children, some of their grandchildren and Elizabeth Charrington's sister. The plaque to the right commemorates

some of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The dates recorded on the tablets range from 1771 to 1907.

2.10 The removal of the left hand tablet revealed that its present front face was the original back. An earlier inscription, prior to the death of Elizabeth Charrington and two additional infants, was exposed (Plate 5). The original wording had been copied to the reverse and respaced to allow for the inclusion of Elizabeth, her sister Anne, and two additional infants, the children of John Charrington.

2.11 Each of the tablets was supported on two small stone corbels, with the left hand tablet cut back into the plaster and held at the top by a metal clip. The right hand tablet was glued to the existing plaster. The flint facing of the north wall was exposed behind the left hand tablet (Plate 3).

Access Holes

2.12 Two access holes were knocked through the north wall of the church, to feed drainage and services to the new kitchenette (Figure 2). The first was located at 0.37m to the west of the splay to the north door. The hole measured 0.30m x 0.15m on the interior, extending to 0.45m in depth. A vertical ceramic pipe was exposed on its eastern side, providing access for an earlier, defunct service (Plate 6). On the exterior the cut was 0.60m west of the door splay and measured 0.40m in width by 0.60m in depth (Plate 7). The hole was cut through the foundation of the mid 15th century north wall, which is formed of closely packed flint in a strong lime mortar.

2.13 The second hole was located at the eastern end of the north wall, at 0.15m to the west of the buttress adjacent to the Church Room. It measured 0.35m in width, 0.20m in height and 0.30m in depth and was cut into the foundation to the north wall, which is as described above (Plate 8).

EXTERIOR WORKS

2.14 These comprised the excavation of two short lengths of trench, one for a water main (Trench 1) and the other to provide drainage for the new kitchenette (Trench 2).

Trench 1

2.15 A trench for a new water main ran north from the south-eastern corner of the Church Room around the building (Figure 3). The trench measured 0.30m in width and 0.75m in depth. The stratigraphy revealed in the sections consisted of a layer of mid-brown silty clay graveyard soil, with frequent chalk fragments and occasional flints, under turf (Plate 9). The underlying natural substratum was not encountered.

2.16 Occasional fragments of disarticulated human bone were noted in the cemetery soil. These were collected and handed to the vicar for reburial.

2.17 No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in this area, which is likely to have been cleared prior to the construction of the Church Room.

Trench 2

2.18 This ran north from the first access hole to link the new kitchenette with a new manhole on an existing foul sewer (Figure 2). The manhole was inserted as part of the re-opening of the existing service trench and was not monitored.

2.19 The excavation for the manhole had clipped the north-eastern corner of a buried grave slab sealing a brick grave (Plate 10). The inscription on the stone reads [...AS & SON and [J]OHN CONINGS...] (Plate 11).

2.20 The trench measured 0.25m in width and was excavated to a depth of 0.80m. The sections revealed a layer of tarmac above cemetery soil (Plates 12 & 13). Some fragments of human bone were visible at the impact depth, these were left in situ. No archaeological features, deposits or finds were present in the trench.

2.21 The last link to the church was not monitored as the impact level of the trench was rising and the risk of encountering features or finds of archaeological significance was considered to be small.

3. Discussion

Archaeological Setting

3.1 Aldenham is a scattered village, located to the east of Watford on the eastern slope of the valley of the River Colne. The church lies at the southern end of the parish and is likely to have formed part of the manorial complex.

3.2 No evidence for prehistoric activity has, as yet been identified in the vicinity of the church. Activity in the area appears to have started in the Roman period. Flint packed postholes containing early Roman pottery and clay oven debris (HER 10779) were identified during archaeological investigation at Church Farm, to the south of the churchyard. Other finds included Roman building material, indicative of a substantial structure nearby. Roman brick has also been recorded in the fabric of the church (HER 733).

3.3 The site of the medieval manor (HER 715) is thought to lie to the south-east of the churchyard. Archaeological investigations at Church Farm (HER 10779) uncovered a flint and clunch built wall and a large, possibly palisaded, ditch or moat, which are likely to relate to the medieval manor. Pottery and floor tile of 15th century date have also been recovered from a field immediately to the south-east of the churchyard. The manor house was apparently replaced by a large mansion in the late 16th century.

3.4 The Church of St. John the Baptist (HER 4380) is a Grade I listed building (List Entry No. 1103642), largely of late medieval date, which replaced an earlier structure. The earliest part of the present building appears to comprise the west wall of the south aisle, the location of a window dating to the 12th century. This is thought to be in its original position. The west tower, chancel and south chapel are of early 13th century date, and were lengthened around 1300. The nave and south aisle were rebuilt c. 1340 and the north aisle added in the mid 15th century. Apart from the 12th century window, no evidence for the earlier structure remains.

Current Work

3.5 The monitoring of the relocation of the Charrington memorial revealed the re-use of the left hand tablet. The original front, now the back of the tablet, was prepared after 1771, the year the Revd Nicholas Charrington died, and before 1777, the year his widow, Elizabeth, died. The latest deaths recorded on this side are of a teenage male in 1774 and an infant, Catherine, in 1775. This infant and her mother, also Catherine, are spelt as Katherine on the present front face of the tablet.

3.6 Following Elizabeth's death in 1777, the tablet was turned round and the original back face was then inscribed with all the names recorded previously, but re-spaced to allow room to add her name at the bottom. The death of her sister in 1788 was also added, in slightly different lettering. The family memorial then extended to a second tablet, recording deaths from 1803 to 1907.

3.7 The removal of the memorial did not reveal any hidden architectural features. The flintwork to the north wall was only exposed below the edges of the left hand tablet.

3.8 The creation of the access holes for water and drainage revealed that the foundation to the mid 15th century north wall is formed of closely packed flint in a strong mortar.

3.9 Monitoring of the water main and drainage trenches revealed no evidence for archaeological features, deposits or finds. A buried gravestone, covering part of a brick-lined grave, was revealed in the north-eastern corner of a manhole excavated prior to the Heritage Network's involvement in the project.

3.10 No evidence for the suggested earlier church was encountered during the present project.

3.11 Fragments of disarticulated human bone were also encountered during the groundworks. These were either collected and handed to the vicar for reburial, or, where they were at the impact level of the groundworks, left in situ.

Confidence Rating

3.12 In the course of the fieldwork, weather and ground conditions were acceptable for the identification of potential features and deposits, and for their investigation. There were no circumstances which would lead to a confidence rating for the work which was less than *High*.

4. Schedule of site visits

Date	Staff	Hours	Comments
30/10/2012	DJH	3	Site meeting & photographic record of memorial in situ
15/11/2012	DJH	3	Record removal of memorial tablets
21/11/2012	DJH	4	Record access holes & Trench 1
04/12/2012	DJH	4	Monitor excavation Trench 2

5. Bibliography

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Glazebrook, J. 1997, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for the eastern counties*, 1. *Resource Assessment*. East Anglian Archaeology

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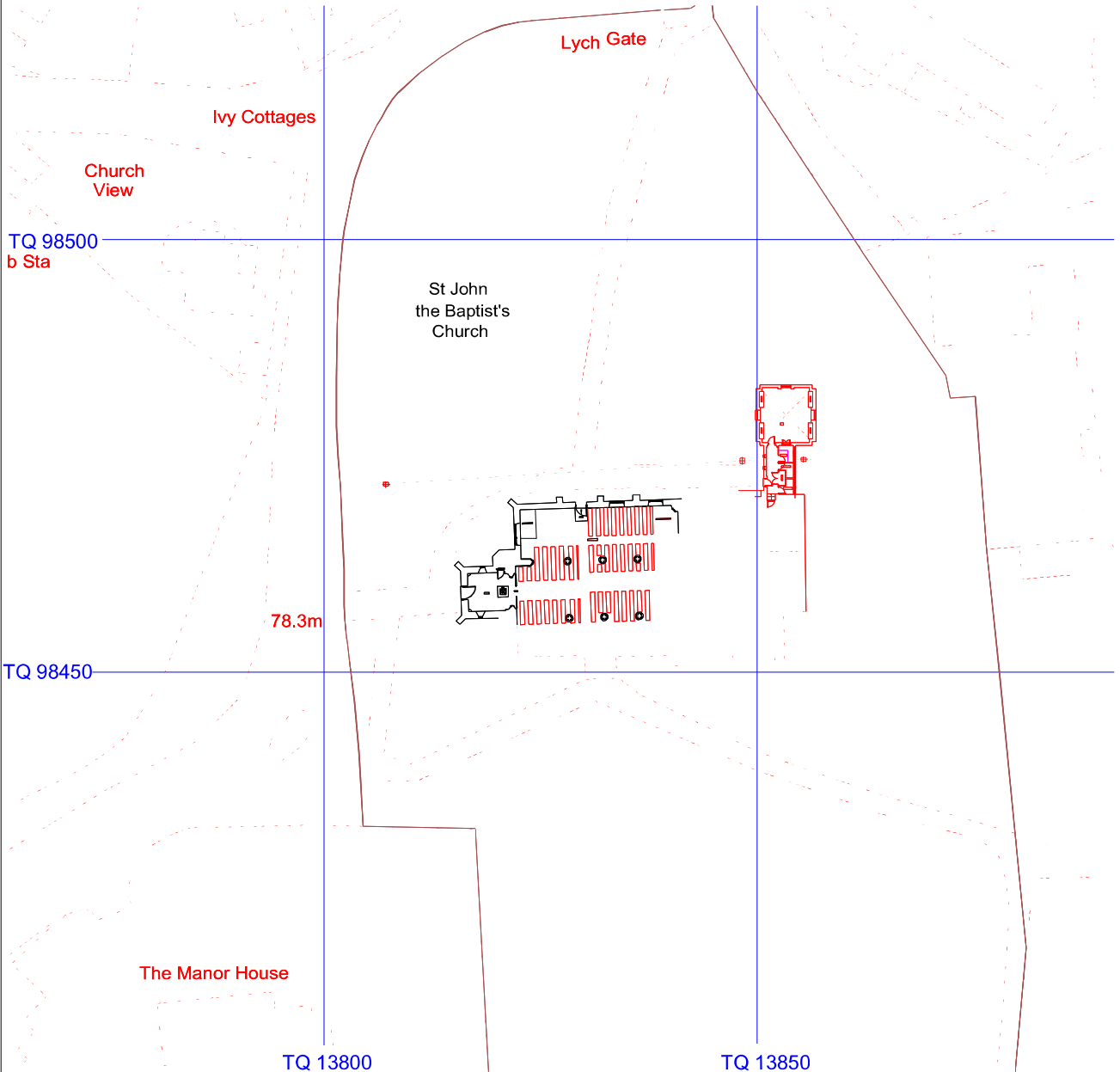
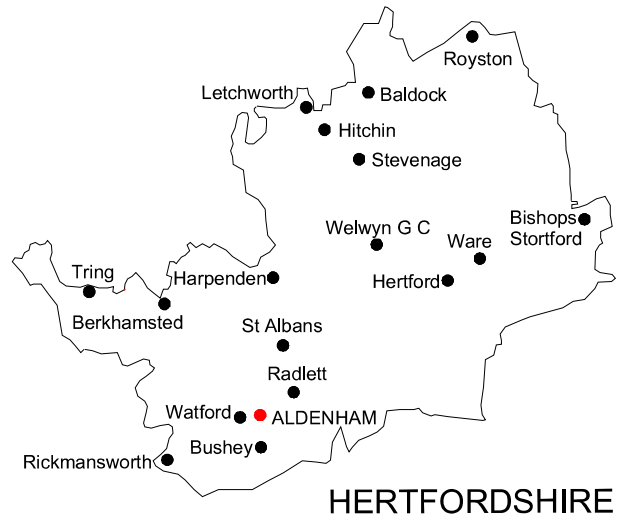
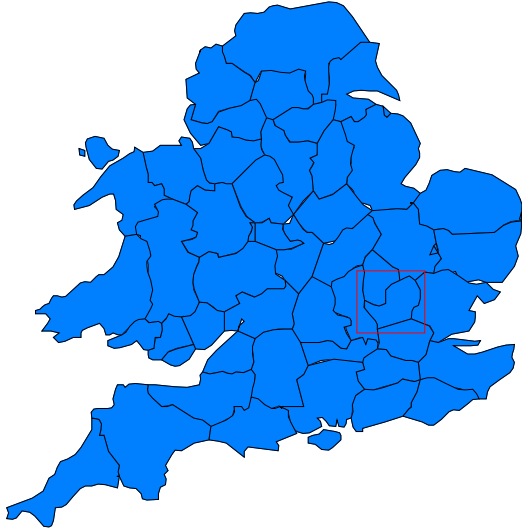
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6. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site Location
Figure 2	Re-location of the Charrington memorial
Figure 3	Location of service trenches & access holes
Plate 1.....	The Charrington memorial before removal
Plate 2.....	Detail of the memorial
Plate 3	The north wall, following the removal
Plate 4	Detail of exposed flintwork below the left tablet
Plate 5	Rear of the left hand tablet
Plate 6	Access hole 1, from the interior
Plate 7	Access hole 1 from the exterior
Plate 8	Access hole 2, from the exterior
Plate 9	Stratigraphy revealed in Trench 1
Plate 10.....	Buried grave slab in manhole pit
Plate 11.....	Detail of the grave slab
Plate 12.....	Trench 2, looking east
Plate 13.....	Trench 2, looking south



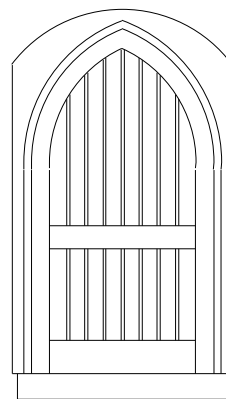
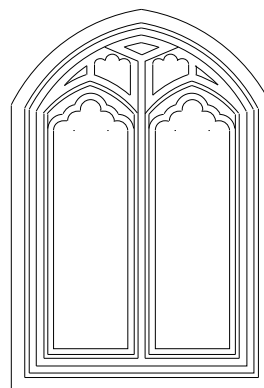
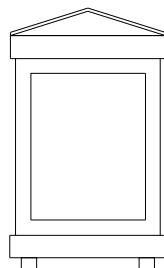
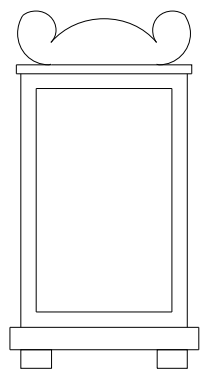
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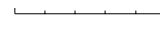
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Figure 1

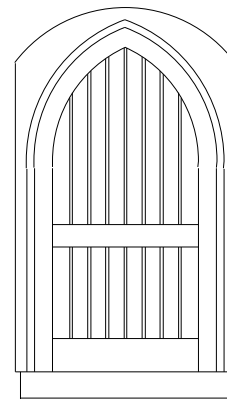
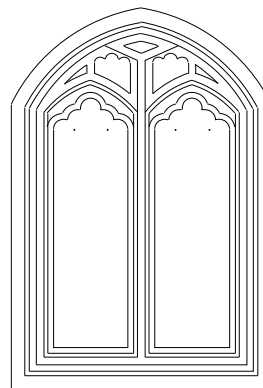
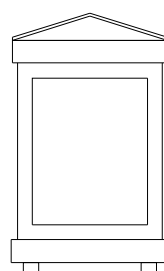
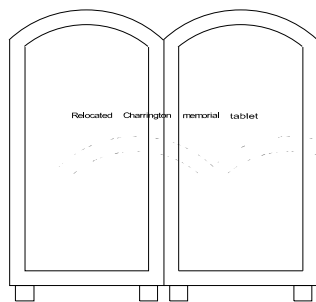
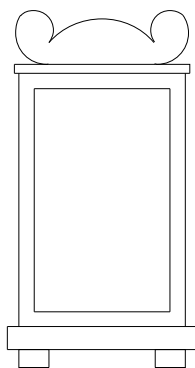
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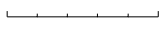
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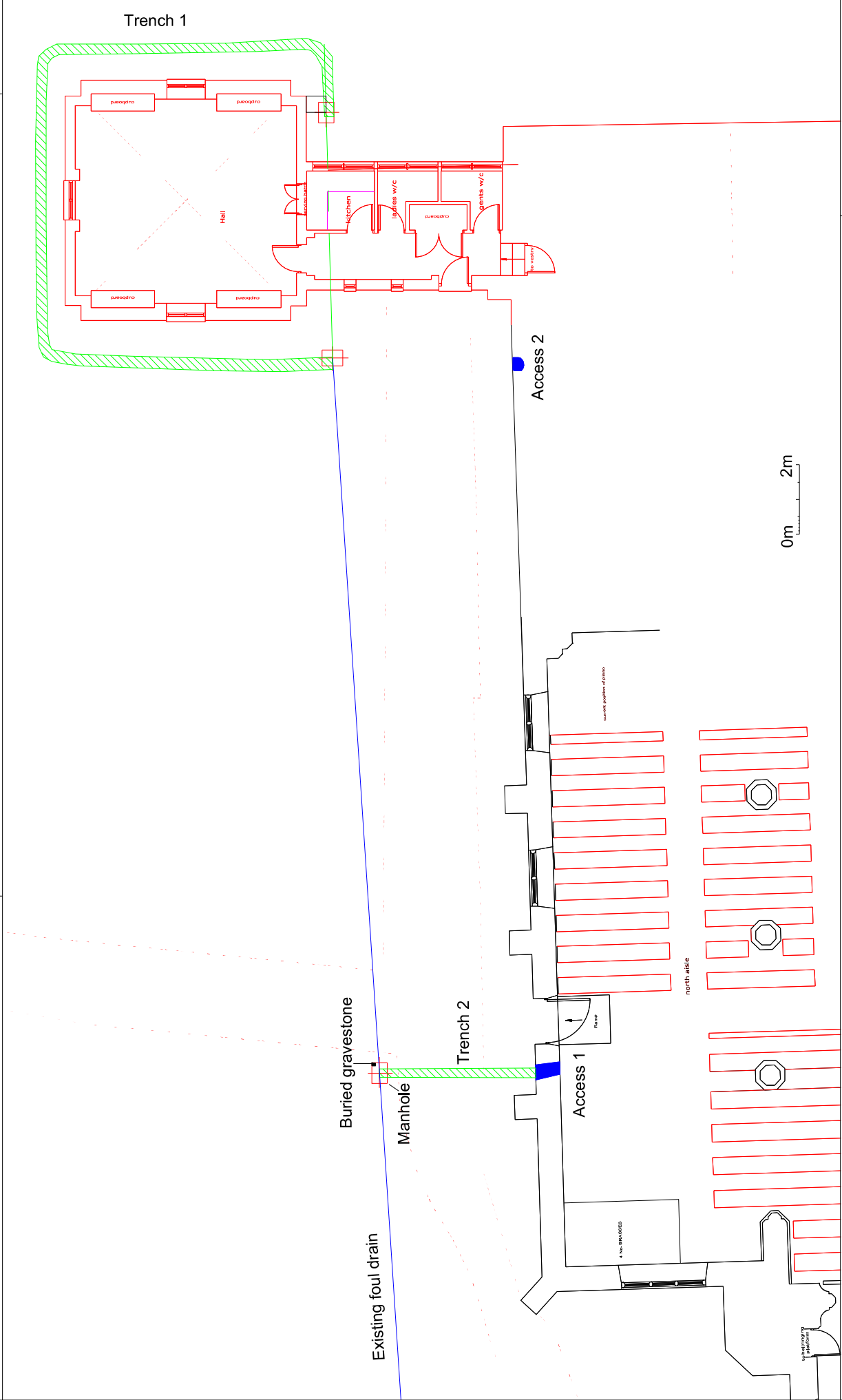


Proposed location



0m 2m





Location of service trenches and access holes

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Scale 1:100

Figure 3



Plate 1: The Charrington memorials before removal, looking north

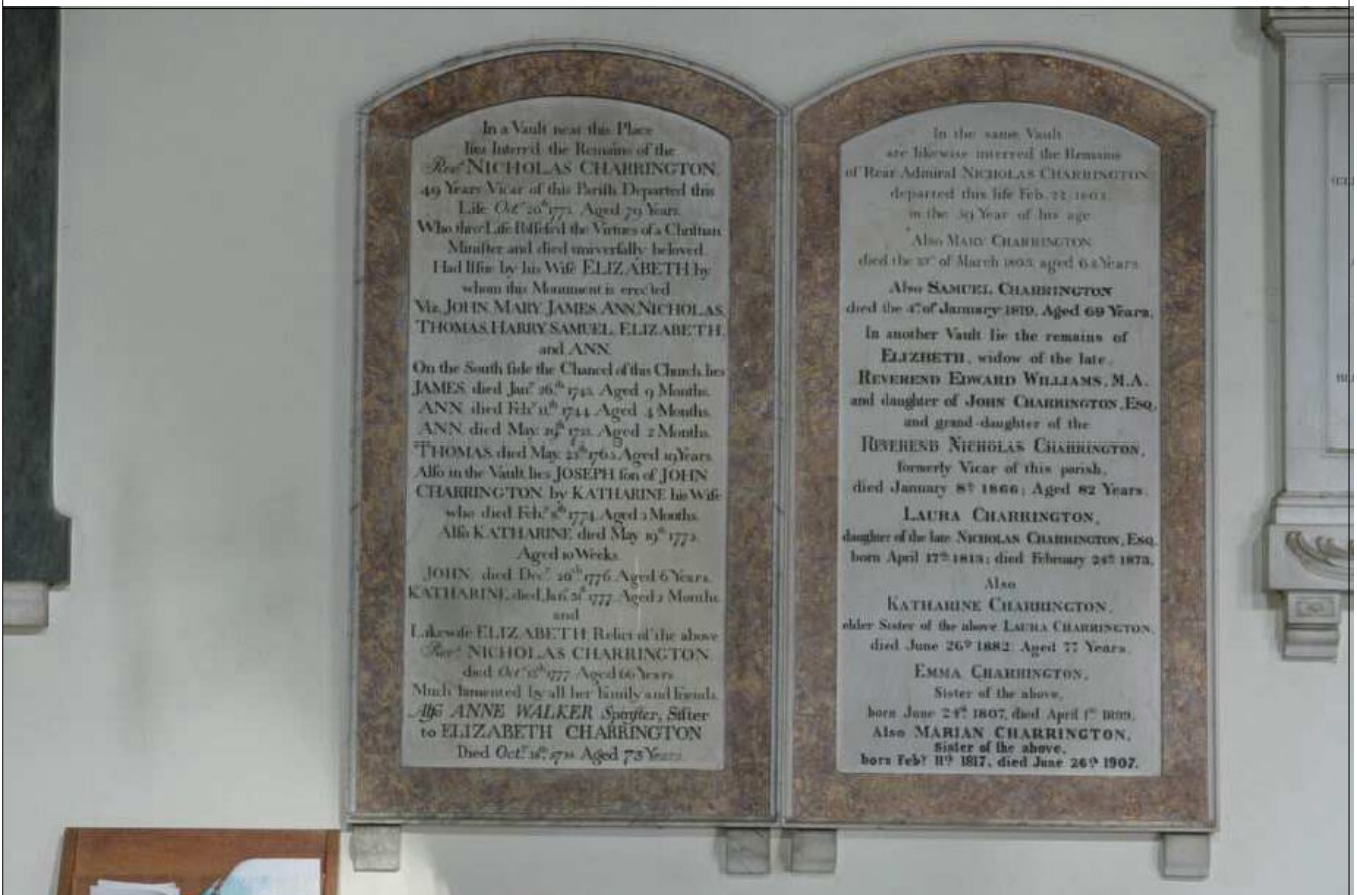


Plate 2: Detail of the memorials in situ, looking north

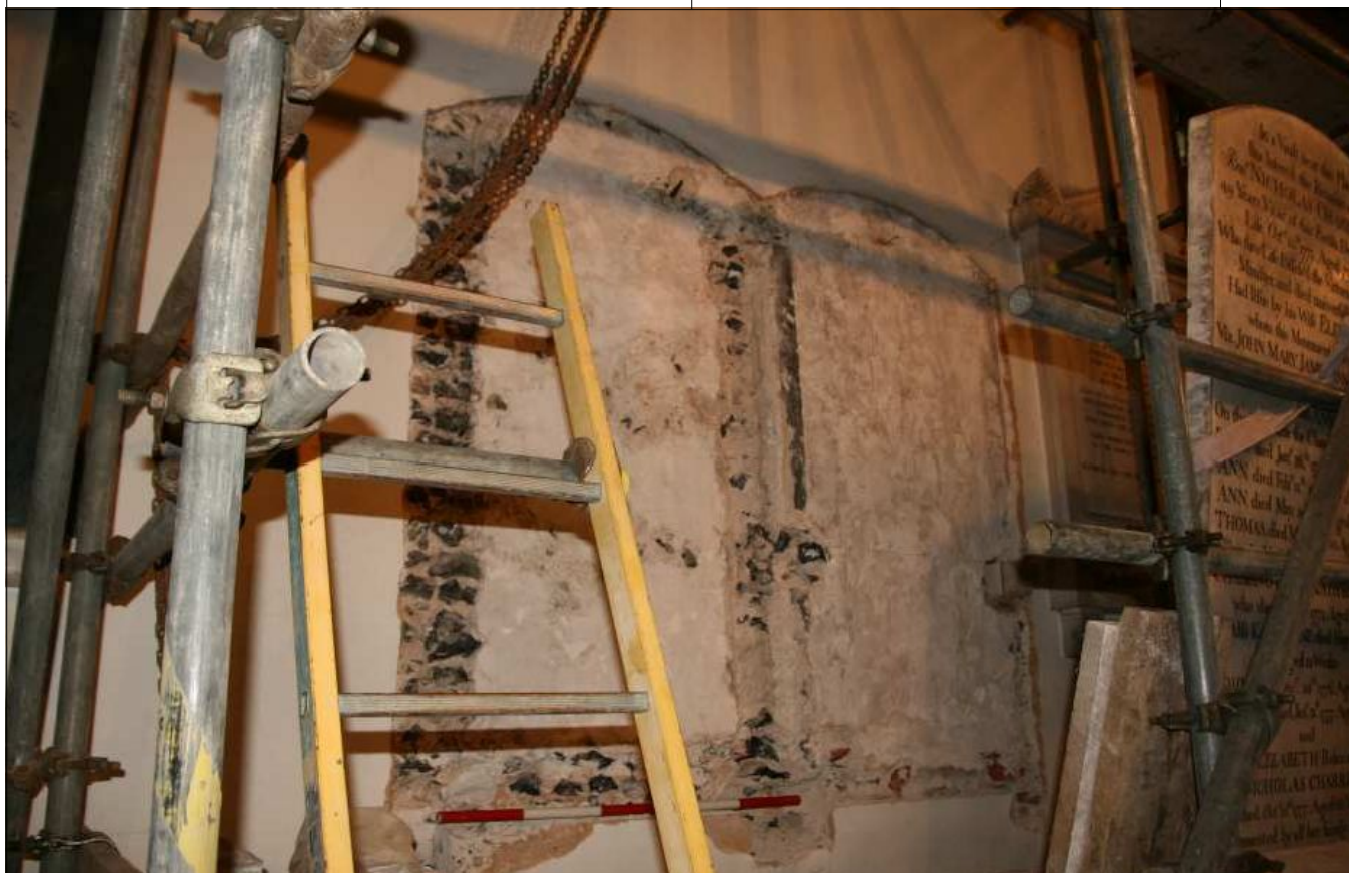
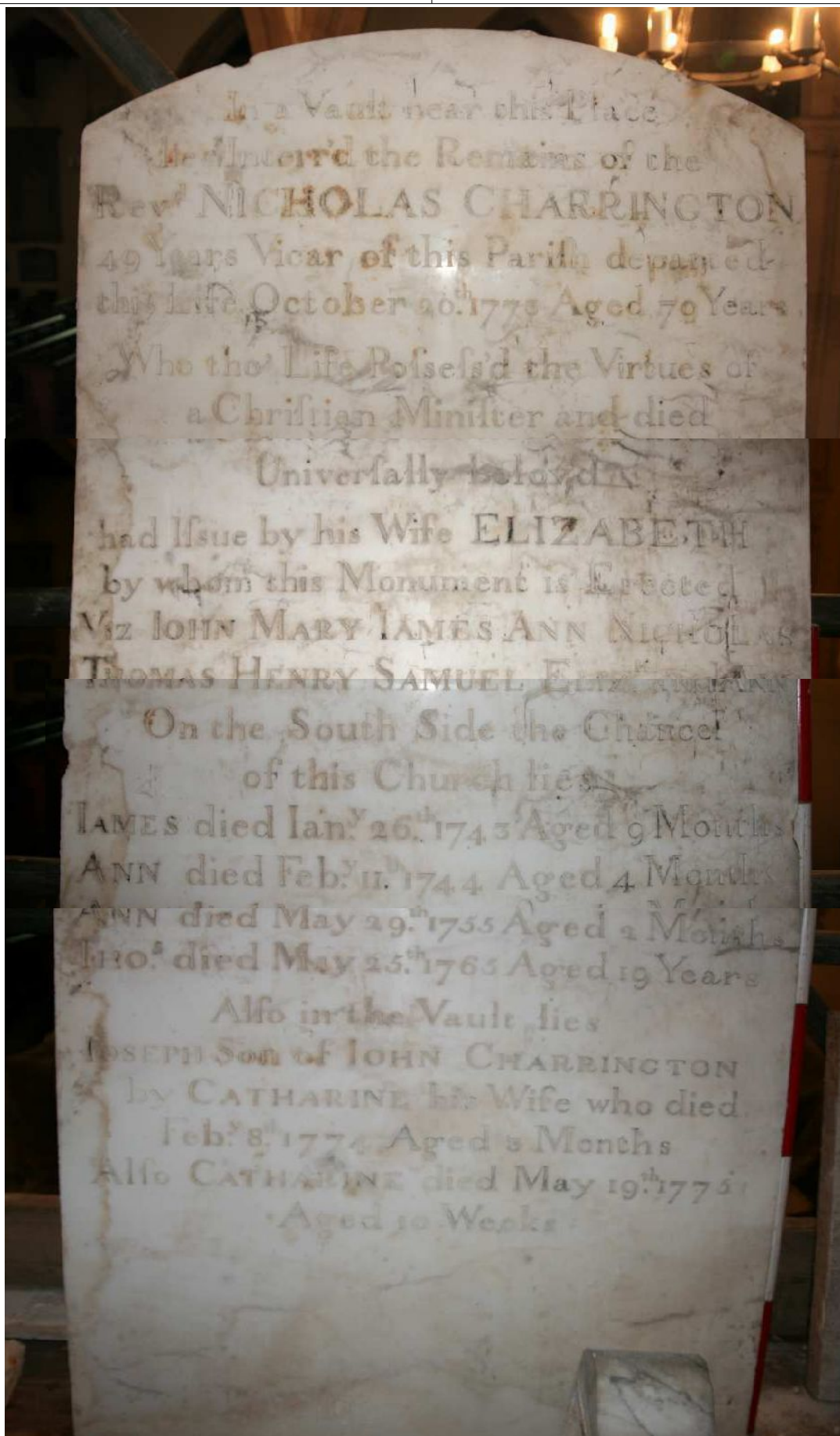


Plate 3: The north wall following the removal of the memorial tablets



Plate 4: Detail of the exposed flintwork below the left hand memorial



Rear of the left hand memorial tablet

not to scale

Plate 5



Plate 6: Access hole 1, from the interior



Plate 7: Access hole 1, from the exterior



Plate 8: Access hole 2 from the exterior, looking south



Plate 9: Stratigraphy revealed in Trench 1 sections



Plate 10: Buried grave slab in manhole pit



Plate 11: Detail of the buried grave slab



Plate 12: Trench 2, looking east



Plate 13: Trench 2, looking south

Appendix: OASIS data entry form

OASIS ID: heritage1-136482	
Project details	
Project name	Aldenham, Church of St. John the Baptist
Short description of the project	In response to the requirements of a diocesan faculty, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Aldenham PCC to implement a scheme of archaeological monitoring during the works ahead of the installation of a new kitchen at St. John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, Hertfordshire. The monitoring of the relocation of the Charrington memorial revealed the re-use of the left hand tablet. The original front, now the back of the tablet, was prepared after 1771, the year the Revd Nicholas Charrington died, and before 1777, the year his widow, Elizabeth, died. Following Elizabeth's death in 1777, the tablet was turned round and the original back inscribed with all the names recorded previously, but re-spaced to allow room to add her name at the bottom. The death of her sister in 1788 was also added, in slightly different lettering. The family memorial then extended to a second tablet, recording deaths from 1803 to 1907. The creation of the access holes for water and drainage revealed that the foundation to the mid 15th century north wall is formed of closely packed flint in a strong mortar. Monitoring of the water main and drainage trenches revealed no evidence for archaeological features, deposits or finds. A buried grave slab, covering part of a brick-lined grave, was revealed in the north-eastern corner of a manhole pit excavated along the line of the existing foul drain. No evidence for the suggested earlier church was encountered during the present project.
Project dates	Start: 30-10-2012 End: 04-12-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	HN1030 - Contracting Unit No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	CHURCH Medieval
Monument type	MEMORIAL TABLET Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	HERTFORDSHIRE HERTSMERE ALDENHAM Church of St. John the Baptist
Postcode	WD25 8BR
Study area	10.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 1398 9848 51 0 51 40 22 N 000 21 05 W Point
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Heritage Network
Project brief originator	None
Project design	None

originator	
Project director/manager	David Hillelson
Project supervisor	David Hillelson
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Bushey Museum
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Bushey Museum
Paper Contents	"other"
Paper Media available	"Diary","Report"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, Hertfordshire. Archaeological Monitoring Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ashworth, H.
Other bibliographic details	Report no.763
Date	2012
Issuer or publisher	Heritage Network
Place of issue or publication	Letchworth, Herts.
Description	A4 booklet, comb bound, green cover, 10 pages, 3 figures, 13 plates