

Church of St John the Baptist, Aldenham, Hertfordshire

HN1165

Report No. 895

Site name and address:	Church of St John the Baptist, Church Lane, Aldenham, Herts. WD25 8BR		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	Hertsmere Borough Council
Village/town:	Aldenham	Parish:	Aldenham
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TQ 13990 98472
Client name and address:	Aldenham PCC, c/o Michael Dales Partnership, 95 Sharpenhoe Road, Streatley, Luton, LU3 3PS.		
Nature of work:	Access ramp	Present land use:	Churchyard
Site Status:	Listed building	Reason for investigation:	Diocesan Faculty
Position in planning process:	N/A	Project brief originator:	N/A
Size of affected area:	34.20m ²	Size of area investigated:	34.20m ²
Site Code:	HN1165	Other reference:	n/a
Organisation:	Heritage Network	Site Director:	David Hillelson
Project type, methods etc.	Observation and Recording	Archive Recipient:	Watford Museum
Start of work	24/10/2014	Finish of work	27/10/2014
Related HER Nos:	HER 4380	Periods represented:	N/A
Oasis UID:	heritage1-192663	Significant finds:	None
Monument types:	None		
Physical archive:	None		
Previous summaries/reports:	Ashworth, H. 2012 <i>St John the Baptist Church, Aldenham, Herts.: archaeological monitoring report</i> . Heritage Network report no.763.		

Narrative:

As part of the faculty requirements, the Heritage Network was commissioned to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring during the groundworks for the construction of an exterior access ramp at the Church of St John the Baptist, Church Lane, Aldenham, Herts. The present project is part of an ongoing scheme of works to improve the facilities at the church.

The study area lies immediately north of the church, which is located at the southern end of the parish, centred at NGR TQ 13990 98472 (Figure 1).

The groundworks consisted of an area of ground reduction, which measured 19m in length and 1.80m in width, on the north side of the church. The ground was reduced by 0.12m across the whole area, removing an existing tarmac surface. Two narrow channels, 0.35m in width and between 0.30m in depth at the western end and 0.45m in depth at the eastern end, were created on the northern and southern sides, leaving a central island (Figure 2, Plate 1).

The central island was reduced by c.0.33m, to the same depth as the channels on either side, at 6.50m from the eastern end of the trench (Figure 2, Plate 2). This area, which was designed to allow a York stone insert, measured 1.40m in length and 1.80m in width.

The stratigraphy exposed in the sections below the tarmac comprised a layer of very dark greyish brown (10YR 3/2) friable silty clay topsoil, 0.10m in depth, above a dark yellowish brown (10YR 3/4) sandy silty clay subsoil, over 0.30m in depth (Plate 3). This has been interpreted as a cemetery soil. The natural substratum was not reached during the present works.

A number of unstratified finds were present in the spoil. These included fragments of disarticulated human bone, post-medieval brick and tile fragments, and two sherds of Hertfordshire Greyware, of 12th – 14th century date (Plate 4). The disarticulated human bone fragments were reburied on site.

No archaeological features or deposits were revealed during the works.

Discussion:

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

Previous archaeological monitoring of the excavation of service trenches around the church hall, immediately to the east of the present site, revealed a similar stratigraphy, but no archaeological features or deposits (Ashworth 2012).

The present groundworks lay on the north side of the church, immediately west of the passage between the church and the modern church hall. No evidence for cut graves or other archaeological features was observed and the only finds noted were unstratified artefacts, largely of post-medieval date.

Illustrations:

Figure 1 Site Location

Figure 2 Site Layout

Plate 1 Area of main ground reduction, looking E

Plate 2 Area of secondary ground reduction, looking E.

Plate 3 Indicative section, looking S

Plate 4 Pottery sherds recovered from the cemetery soil.

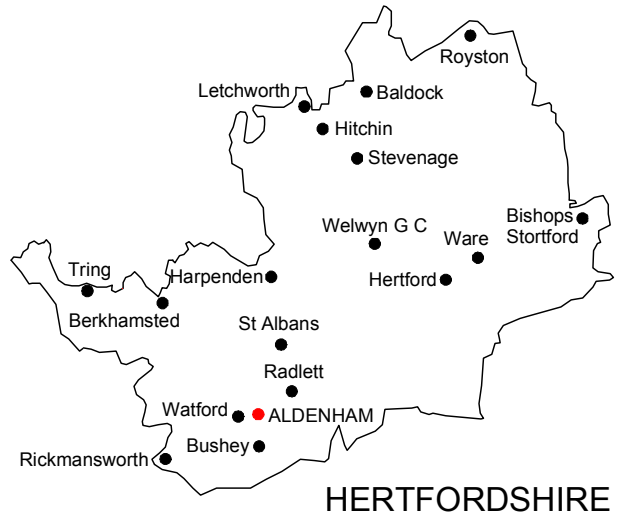
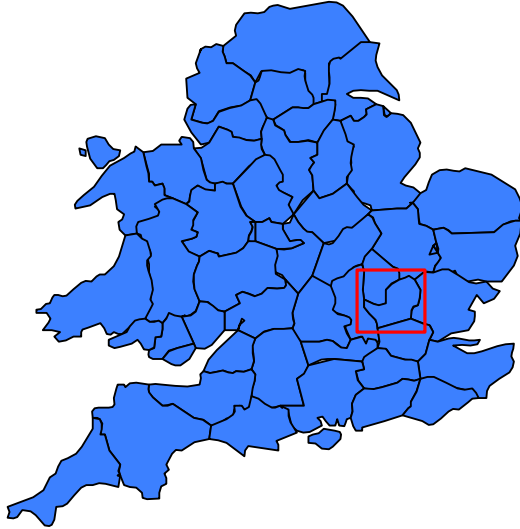
Helen Ashworth

November 2014

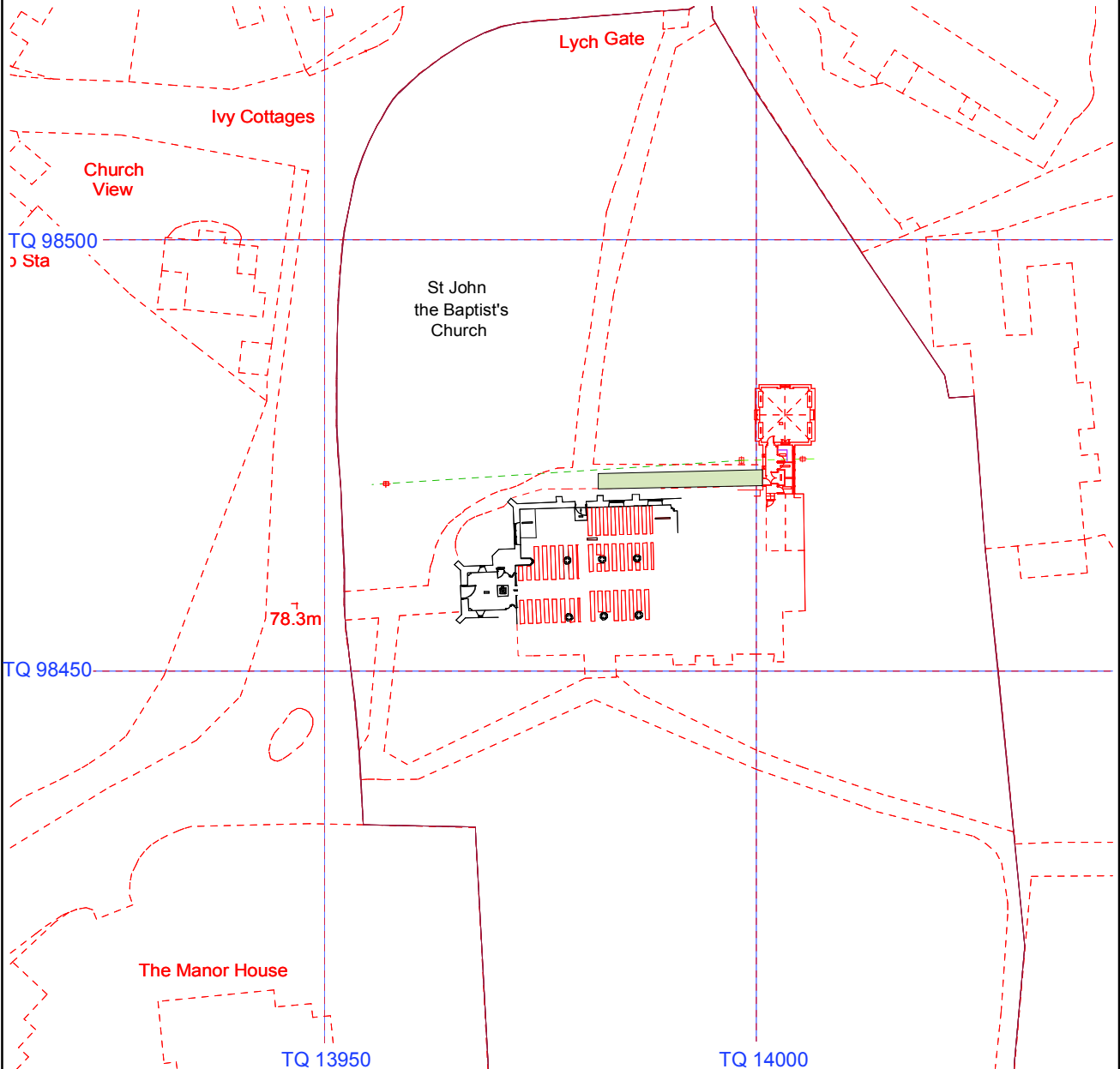
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St John the Baptist Church,
Aldenham, Herts.

HN1165



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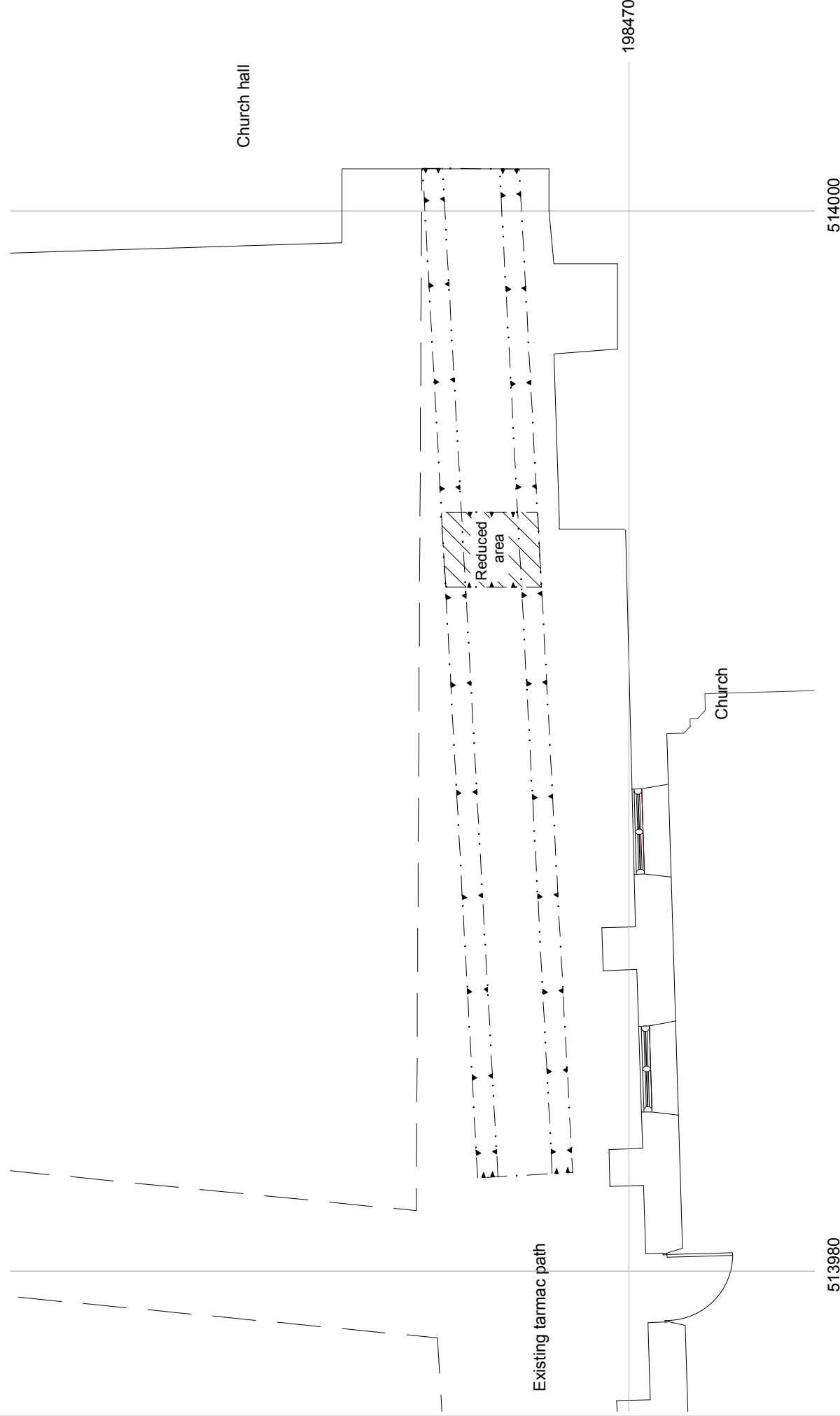


Site Location

Scale 1:750

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Figure 1



513980

514000

198470

Site layout

Scale 1:100

Figure 2



Plate 1: Area of main ground reduction, looking east



Plate 2: Area of secondary ground reduction, looking east



Plate 3: Indicative section, looking south



Plate 4: Pottery sherds recovered from the cemetery soil