



# **ST SAVIOUR'S CE CHURCH, STYDD, Lancashire**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

May 2006

**IWA Architects/ St Wilfrid's  
and St Saviour's Parochial  
Church Council**

Issue No: 2006-7/526

OA North Job No: L9405

NGR: SD 65385 35980

**Document Title:** ST SAVIOUR'S CE CHURCH, STYDD, LANCASHIRE

**Document Type:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Client Name:** IWA Architects/ St Wilfrid's and St Saviour's Parochial Church Council

**Issue Number:** 2006-7/526

**OA Job Number:** L9405

**National Grid Reference:** SD 65385 35980

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## CONTENTS

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<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Circumstances of the Project .....	4
<b>2. METHODOLOGY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1 Watching Brief.....	5
2.2 Archive.....	5
<b>3. BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>6</b>
3.1 The Setting.....	6
3.2 Background Archaeology and History.....	6
<b>4. RESULTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1 Observations .....	8
4.2 Finds.....	9
<b>5. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
5.1 Conclusion .....	11
<b>6. BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>12</b>
6.1 Primary Sources .....	12
6.2 Secondary Sources .....	12
<b>APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2: FINDS SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT TABLE .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ILLUSTRATIONS .....</b>	<b>16</b>
List of Figures .....	16
List of Plates .....	16

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## SUMMARY

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Following a desk-based assessment and visual inspection report by Oxford Archaeology North in 2004 (OA North 2004), it was recommended that a watching brief be carried out during any groundworks associated with the restoration of St Saviour's CE Church, Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 65385 35980). Accordingly, a watching brief was undertaken by OA North between 16<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006 during the excavation of new and replacement land drains to the immediate exterior of the church.

A single feature was observed in Trench 4, which comprised an east/west aligned linear ditch that apparently underlay the structure of the church. Although there were no diagnostic finds within its fill, its position beneath the building dictates that it must pre-date the building of the present church, and is likely to be medieval in date or possibly even Roman.

A fairly substantial assemblage of pottery was recovered from unstratified deposits in Trench 2. The dates ranged from the Roman and late-medieval periods through to the nineteenth century. This span was not continuous, but corroborates the known history of the site from the medieval period through to the nineteenth century, with the addition of evidence from the Roman period as well.

The works contributed to our understanding of the potential development of the church, but no recommendations are made for further archaeological intervention during the course of the present refurbishment.



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank IWA Architects and the Parish Church Council of St Wilfrid's and St Saviour's for commissioning the work. Thanks are also due to Chris Hey and colleagues of Historic Property Restoration Limited for their efforts and good humour on site.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jeremy Bradley and Christina Clarke, and the report was written by David Tonks. The drawings were compiled by Christina Clarke and the finds examined by Sean McPhillips. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 IWA Architects have been required by English Heritage to conduct an archaeological building investigation of St Saviour's CE Church, Stydd, Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 65385 35980; Fig 1), due to its status as a listed building and prior to extensive renovations being carried out at the site. In response to this, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was requested to submit a desk-based assessment and visual inspection report (OA North 2004), in which it was recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during any associated groundworks. Accordingly, a watching brief was carried out during the excavation of new and replacement land drains immediately to the exterior of the church. This report sets out the results of the watching brief in the form of a short document.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief. The programme comprised observation during the groundworks, and the examination of any horizons exposed. The groundworks were effected by a mini mechanical excavator using a small toothless bucket.
- 2.1.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed on OA North *pro-forma* sheets and their accurate location in plan. In addition, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

### 2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Lancashire County Record Office in Preston, and a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record, along with an index to the archive.

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### 3. BACKGROUND

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#### 3.1 THE SETTING

- 3.1.1 **Location:** St Saviour's Church is located at the end of Stydd Lane just south of Stydd Manor, Stydd, Lancashire (SD 65385 35980, Fig 1). It is approximately a mile north-east of Ribchester and is located in the Ribble valley roughly mid-way between the central Pennine uplands and the Irish Sea (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.1.2 **Topography:** the Millstone Grit outcrop of Pendle Hill forms part of the northern boundary to the area (*ibid*). When combined with the fells of the south Pennines, this higher ground surrounds the site and serves as an important backdrop that dwarfs the scale of the settlement in the valley bottom (*ibid*). Stydd and Ribchester are also bordered to the west by Longridge fell. Although the industrialized towns of Burnley, Accrington and Blackburn dominate much of the Lancashire Valleys, Stydd lies to the western edge of the area and is surrounded by agricultural land. The field boundaries are hedgerows that give way to stone walls and fencing on higher ground (*ibid*). Woodland is restricted to small woods and there are several areas of parkland within the Lancashire Valleys connected to large houses (*ibid*).
- 3.1.3 **Geology:** the underlying solid geology around Stydd is dominated by Sabden shales of the Millstone Grit Group masked by thick boulder clay deposits (Aitkenhead *et al* 1992). The drift geology is also characterised by typical brown alluvial soils of the Alun association (Ordnance Survey 1983).

#### 3.2 BACKGROUND ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** the historical background is covered fully in the previous report (OA North 2004). The following is intended only as a brief summary of the historical developments as detailed in that report.
- 3.2.2 Despite the church's close proximity to the Roman fort of *Bremetennacum* at Ribchester, there is no secure evidence to suggest the existence of either Christianity or a church on the site as early as the Roman period. Similarly, there is no evidence for the presence of a church in the centuries following the withdrawal of Roman administration of Britain in AD 410 nor any to suggest it was founded before the Norman conquest of 1066.
- 3.2.3 The true early history of the church seems to have been lost and what is left are conflicting accounts of ownership and attributed dates of foundation. However, the site is inextricably linked with the history of the manor and hospital of Stydd, of which it is a part. The manor is first documented in 1265 when the Knights Hospitaller acquired it, although there is evidence that an organised community occupied the site for at least fifty years prior to that event and that it may have been a leper hospital during that time (OA North 2004). A conflicting history suggests that the first 'lords of the manor' were the Knights Templars who existed in parallel with the Hospitallers. Another

history is proposed that it was built by the Knights Hospitallers of Wakefield in 1136, although the source of this remains unclear. The architectural evidence indicates that the present main body of the church is Norman in origin, and possibly built between the late-twelfth and mid-thirteenth centuries and subsequently underwent several later alterations.

- 3.2.4 Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the manor and church were seized by the Crown and subsequently given to Thomas Holt of Gristlehurst and the hospice was destroyed (OA North 2004). The church passed into the care of the vicar of Ribchester and in the following centuries it fell into dilapidation. It was fully restored and re-opened in 1925. It is presently protected as a listed building (Grade I), number 8/112.

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## 4. RESULTS

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### 4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** the groundworks were effected over a three day period and in total, seven trenches and one sump were opened (Fig 2). For all the trenches, the ground was graded to a reduced level equivalent to 0.15m below the present internal floor of the church.
- 4.1.2 **Trench 1:** oriented east/west along the southern wall of the church, this measured 3.0m x 0.6m x 0.6m. The stratigraphy entirely comprised firm, light-brown to buff gravelly clay natural with some sand and inclusions of many sandstone fragments. There were no finds and no archaeological horizons were encountered.
- 4.1.3 **Trench 2:** oriented east/west along the northern wall of the church, this measured c 18.0m x 0.6m x 1.0m (maximum). The stratigraphy comprised 0.3m dark brown sandy-clay topsoil with sandstone fragments and a moderate amount of fragments of stone roof tile over mid-greyish brown sandy, stony-clay silt subsoil with some stones. The foundation stone for the western buttress was observed within the trench (Fig 2; Plate 1) at a depth of 0.5m below ground surface. It was 0.8m long, at least 0.25m wide and over 0.25m in depth. Finds of pottery were also recovered from the trench (*Section 4.2*).
- 4.1.4 **Trench 3:** oriented north/south along the west wall of the church, this measured c; 14.0m x 0.6m x 0.9m. The stratigraphy entirely comprised 0.4m dark brown sandy-clay topsoil over 0.5m brown silty-clay subsoil. Nine large, worked pieces of stone were recovered from along its length (Plate 2), all with a chamfered edge and typically measuring 570mm x 330mm x 200mm. A foundation was encountered 3.16m north of the west buttress comprising un-worked sandstone blocks of between 340mm x 140mm and 170mm x 80mm. They were bonded by buff sandy mortar and bedded on the brown sandy-clay-silt subsoil. The maximum depth of the foundation, at its southernmost extent, was 0.6m below present ground surface.
- 4.1.5 **Trench 4:** oriented north/south along the eastern wall of the church, this measured c 10m x 0.6m x 0.65m and the stratigraphy comprised 0.1m topsoil (**100**) over 0.13m sub-soil (**101**) over clay natural (**104**). An east/west aligned linear feature (**103**, Fig 3) was observed 1.5m north of the southern terminus of the trench (Plate 3). Its fill (**102**) contained some redeposited yellow sandstone masonry with evidence of mortar bond but there were no diagnostic finds.
- 4.1.6 **Trench 5:** oriented east/west along the southern wall of the church, this measured c 10.5m x 0.6m x 0.7m and was essentially an eastward continuation of Trench 1. The trench was entirely excavated through the backfill of the original cut for the church's foundation and one sherd of abraded pottery was recovered. There were no significant archaeological horizons observed.

- 4.1.7 **Trench 6:** oriented south-west/north-east between the sump (*Section 4.1.8*) and *Trench 4*, this measured *c* 14.0m x 0.6m x 0.7m (Plate 4). The trench was entirely excavated through firm, light-brown to buff gravelly clay natural with some sand and inclusions sandstone fragments. There were no archaeological horizons observed and no finds recovered.
- 4.1.8 **Trench 7:** oriented north-west/south-east between the sump (*Section 4.1.8*) and *Trench 3*, this measured *c* 3.5m x 0.6m x 0.7m. The trench was entirely excavated through firm, light-brown to buff gravelly clay natural with some sand and inclusions of sandstone fragments. There were no archaeological horizons observed and no finds recovered.
- 4.1.9 **Sump:** the soakaway measured 2.0m x 2.0m x 1.2m (Plate 5) and was entirely excavated through firm, light-brown to buff gravelly clay natural with some sand and inclusions of sandstone fragments. There were no archaeological horizons observed and no finds recovered.

## 4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 In total, 48 sherds of pottery and a single fragment of broken Roman floor tile were recovered from unstratified deposits from Trench 2. The material is generally in good preservation with relatively clean breaks which suggests that it has not moved far from its original deposition. The range of material is presented in *Appendix 2*.
- 4.2.2 The pottery is predominantly represented by seventeenth and eighteenth century domestic wares (43), with smaller numbers of Roman (2), medieval (2) and nineteenth century wares (1).
- 4.2.3 The Roman pottery was represented by a single rim bowl sherd (Form 31R, Webster 1996) of Samian, produced by potters in Central Gaul during the latter half of the second century AD. The other sherd derived from a second century, probably locally produced, reddish-orange micaceous oxidised bowl.
- 4.2.4 The medieval sherds comprised a fragment of green-glazed Silverdale/Arnsdale-type fully reduced ware, which was commonly produced in North West England during the fifteenth and sixteenth century (White 2000), and a yellowish-green splash-glazed gritty ware body sherd of which a fifteenth century can be ascribed. The date ranges suggested for these fabrics are approximate, and are based on broad parallels from excavations elsewhere in the North West (Davey 1977; McCarthy and Brooks 1988).
- 4.2.5 A range of seventeenth to eighteenth century finewares was represented, comprising Blackwares (4), slip-coated and slip-decorated ware (3), self-glazed earthenwares (6), dark-glazed red earthenware (19, including a intensely fired distorted base or waster), and Mottled Ware (11). Of these, the black-glazed red earthenware storage, Mottled Ware, and slip-coated ware were the most numerous. Interestingly, only a single sherd from the later eighteenth and nineteenth century was represented (salt-glazed stoneware).

- 4.2.6 The forms amongst the post-medieval wares included several large jugs, pancheons, bowls and cups. Many of these derived from several sources of which were difficult to locate with accuracy, although it is highly probable the slipwares were of Staffordshire origin. It is conceivable that Mottled Ware was manufactured at Prescott, Merseyside, where such wares were produced from the early eighteenth century (Davey 1987), although it is likely that the dark glazed red earthenwares were more locally produced. The presence of the waster amongst the red earthenware assemblage suggests a kiln was producing wares of this type in the vicinity.



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## 5. DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The single linear feature in Trench 4 seemingly extended beneath the present building and, therefore, must predate its construction, although no diagnostic finds were recovered to corroborate this. Its function remains unclear and it was not evident from the section whether the ditch had silted-up naturally or had been deliberately backfilled. The presence of mortar bonded sandstone fragments within its fill does nevertheless suggest that it was open possibly during the construction of the church. If it immediately pre-dated or was contemporary with the building of the church, it is certainly of local importance given the relative paucity of medieval sites, features and finds within Lancashire as a whole.
- 5.1.2 The assemblage of pottery was also of great interest, although the finds were not recovered from stratified deposits. Finds of Roman pottery potentially represent activity from the second or third century AD extending well beyond the area of the Roman fort of nearby *Bremetennacum*, although it is possible that the finds were imported with the re-distribution of fertilisers and night-soil at a much later date. Finds of late-medieval pottery are relatively rare in the area and the sherds recovered are of local importance. The assemblage in general represents the multi-period aspect of the site and reflects well the known later history of the church with a high concentration of seventeenth and eighteenth century wares.
- 5.1.3 Following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the manor and church were seized by the Crown and the hospice, which would originally have comprised a suite of buildings, was destroyed. The chamfered blocks of stone found within Trench 2 (Plate 2) could be taken as evidence of this destruction. It is quite possible that they were the remains of another building which may well have adjoined the church to the west, the remains of which will now lie beneath the present access road to the farm.
- 5.1.4 The works have made a significant contribution to the presently collected data, and added a little more information to the known and postulated history of the site. However, no further recommendations are made for archaeological intervention during the course of the present refurbishment.

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## 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### 6.1 PRIMARY SOURCES

Ordnance Survey 1983, Soil Survey of England and Wales

### 6.2 SECONDARY SOURCES

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## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design has been compiled for IWA Architects with reference to the requirement for an archaeological building investigation of St Saviour's Stydd. Section 2 states the objectives of the project, Section 3 deals with OA North's methodology. Section 4 addresses other pertinent issues including details of staff to be involved, and project costs are presented in Section 5.
- 1.2 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment and investigation of historic buildings of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Watching briefs and building investigations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. Recent church projects include St Paul's and St Mary's in Preston, St Laurence, Chorley, St Helen's, Waddington and St Conan's Kirk in Argyll.
- 1.3 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, **registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the building investigation are to provide an outline analysis of the church prior to and during building works, which will serve to both preserve by record and inform the project engineers.
- 2.1.1 To achieve the objective outlined above the following listed specific aims are proposed.

### Stage 1:

- (i) to undertake a desk-based assessment and visual inspection of the church;
- (ii) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

### Stage 2:

- (iii) to undertake an archaeological watching brief;
- (iv) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

### 3 METHOD STATEMENT

#### 3.1 Stage 1 - DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material.

3.1.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the data in the CSMR (Preston), appropriate sections of County histories, early maps (printed and manuscript), and such primary documentation (tithe and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular attention will be paid to field and place names recorded on early cartographic sources relating to estate and parish boundaries, field boundaries, woodlands and routes, as these often provide important evidence of archaeological activity and transformation of the historic landscape. All available published and unpublished documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The Lancashire Record Office (Preston) and relevant local studies library will also be consulted.

3.1.3 **Visual Inspection:** a brief visual inspection of the church will be undertaken to RCHME level I-type survey. This level of survey is purely descriptive and will result in an outline development and use of the building.

3.1.4 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce both black and white contact prints and colour slides. The archive will comprise general shots of the church (both internal and external) and surroundings, and detailed coverage of agricultural features.

3.1.5 **Rectified Photographs:** rectified, medium format photographic coverage should be taken for the area of wall above the east window that is to be rebuilt. This will ensure that a detailed visual record of the original fabric is maintained.

#### 3.1 Stage 2 - WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving architectural/archaeological features exposed during the reduction to external ground levels and any works to internal floors. This work will comprise observation and the systematic examination of features exposed during the course of the works, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features identified during observation.

3.2.2 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important features. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is

discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to costing. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential

- 3.2.3 **Burials:** should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed.
- 3.2.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.2.5 OA North generally calculates a 1:0.5 ratio of fieldwork: post-fieldwork (archive, analysis, and report preparation) if the level of archaeology observed is low or 1:1 if the level of archaeology is high.

### 3.3 STAGES 1 AND 2 - REPORT AND ARCHIVE

- 3.3.1 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a further two copies submitted to the Lancashire SMR (one paper copy and one digital copy) within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological features. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.3.2 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design.
- 3.3.3 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The

deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Lancashire SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office.

- 3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.
- 3.3.5 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the LCAS Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

#### 4 TIMETABLE AND RESOURCES

- 4.1 The desk-based assessment will take five days to complete; a further one day will be required for the visual inspection.
- 4.2 The duration of the watching brief will depend upon the progress of the contractor.
- 4.3 The final report will follow within eight weeks of completion of the data collection and fieldwork, although a shorter deadline can be negotiated.
- 4.4 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North senior project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 4.5 The desk-based assessment is likely to be undertaken by **Daniel Elsworth MA** (OA North supervisor). Daniel has a great deal of experience in the assessment and analysis of historic buildings throughout the NorthWest.
- 4.6 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be carrying out each specific task, but all elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OA North project supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 4.7 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

## APPENDIX 2: FINDS SUMMARY

Trench	Material	Quantity	Description	Date
2	Pottery	1	Samian; Central Gaul	AD 160+
2	Pottery	1	Locally produced oxidised ware	Second century
2	Ceramic building material	1	Floor tile	Roman
2	Pottery	1	Gritty ware	Fifteenth century
2	Pottery	1	Silverdale Ware	Fifteenth to sixteenth century
2	Pottery	4	Blackwares	Seventeenth to eighteenth century
2	Pottery	3	Slip- decorated ware	Eighteenth century
2	Pottery	6	Self-glazed earthenwares	Eighteenth century
2	Pottery	18	Dark-glazed earthenwares	Eighteenth century
2	Pottery	1	Dark-glazed earthenware waster	Eighteenth century
2	Pottery	11	Mottled Ware	Eighteenth century
2	Pottery	1	Salt-glazed stoneware	Eighteenth or nineteenth century



## APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT TABLE

Context No	Dimensions (m)	Category/Form	Description
<b>100</b>	0.1m deep	Layer/Topsoil	Soft, dark brown silty-clay topsoil with 5% sub-angular to rounded stones.
<b>101</b>	0.18m thick	Layer/Subsoil	Soft, mid greyish-brown silty-clay subsoil with 5% sub-angular to rounded stones.
<b>102</b>	0.53 x 1.22 x 0.5	Deposit/Fill	Firmish grey-brown silty-clay with 2% small sub-angular stones comprising the sole fill of ditch cut <b>103</b> .
<b>103</b>	0.53 x 1.22 x 0.5	Cut/Ditch	Linear cut for a ditch comprising a U-shaped profile with fairly steep concave sides leading to a smooth break of slope with a concave base.
<b>104</b>		Natural	Firm beige clay natural with 3% yellow sandstone fragments.

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location Plan

Figure 2: Trench location plan

Figure 3: East-facing section linear feature **103**

### LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: Buttress foundation in Trench 2 – facing south-west

Plate 2: Worked masonry from Trench 3

Plate 3: Ditch in north-east-facing section of Trench 4

Plate 4: Plan of Trench 6 facing south-west

Plate 5 :General view of sump facing south-east



Figure 1: Site Location

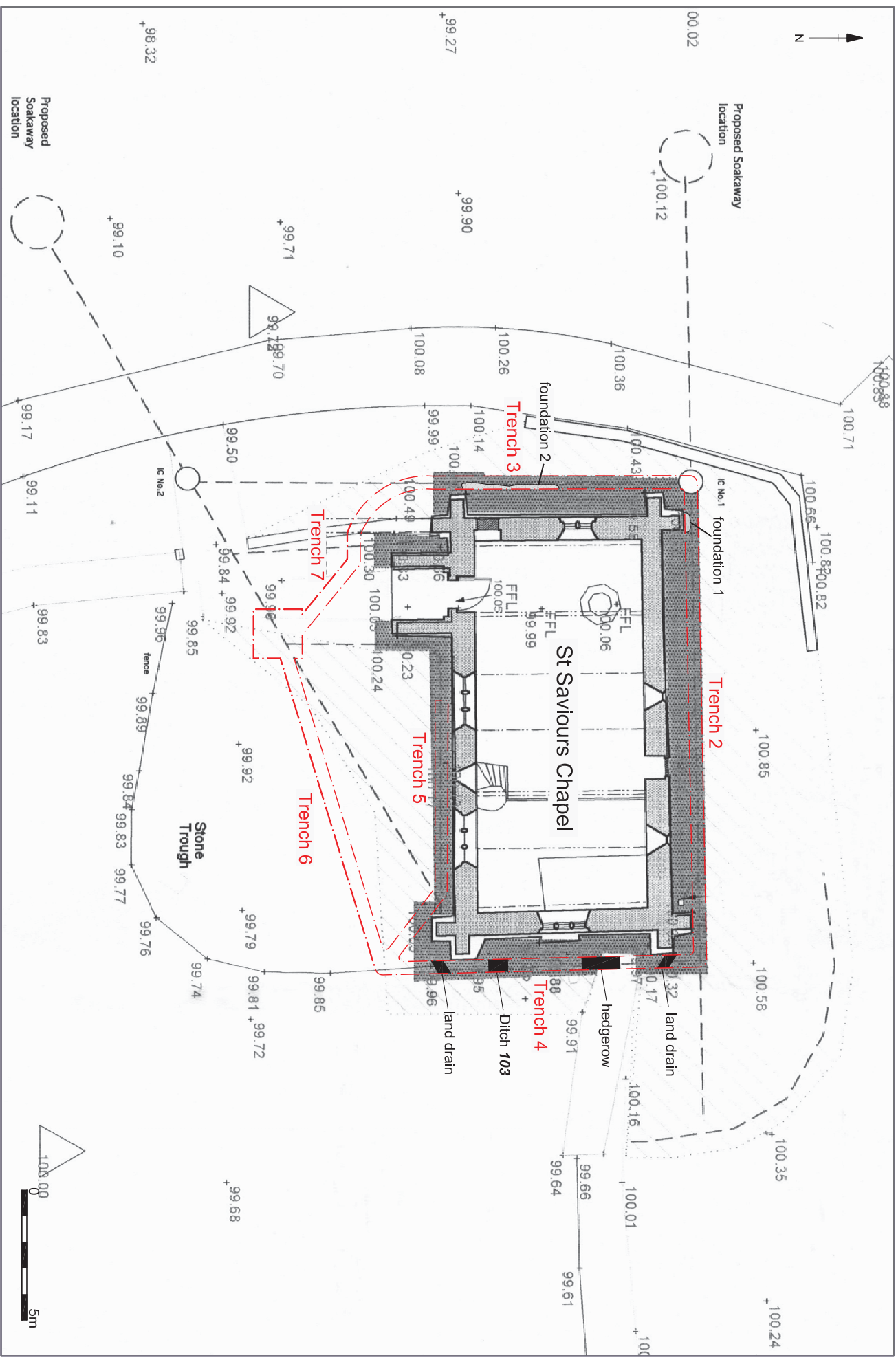


Figure 2: Trench Location Plan







Plate 1: Butters foundation in Trench 2 – facing south-west



Plate 2: Worked masonry from Trench 3





Plate 3: Ditch in north-east-facing section of Trench 4



Plate 4: Plan of Trench 6 facing south-west



Plate 5: General view of sump facing south-east