

ST LEONARD'S CHURCH, THRYBERGH,  
SOUTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATIONS  
DURING GROUND INVESTIGATIONS

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On behalf of

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- 1 Photographic Record
- 2 Listed Building Description

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### Reasons and Circumstances for the Project

- 1.1 In May 2011, Ed Dennison Archaeological Services Ltd (EDAS) were commissioned by Mr Brian Foxley, architect, on behalf of the Parochial Church Council (PCC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during drainage investigation works and the excavation of three percolation pits at St Leonard's Church, Thrybergh, South Yorkshire (NGR SK 46688 95484). The works were undertaken to inform the drawing up of a more detailed conservation scheme for the church and churchyard, including improvements to the existing drainage system. This report gives a brief description of the results of the archaeological observations made during the watching brief.

### Site Location

- 1.2 St Leonard's church is located within the village of Thrybergh, near Rotherham, South Yorkshire, on the west side of the A630 Doncaster Road (see figure 1). The church stands in an elevated position at c.64m AOD, in the centre of a large churchyard (see figure 2). The ground surface within the churchyard slopes away gently to the east, south and west of the church, but rises very gently to the north. There are marked graves close to the south and west sides of the church, whereas at the east end, a raised area of ground appears to mark a former eastward extension of the chancel comprising an apse with a burial vault beneath.

### Outline Historical Background

- 1.3 The church is thought to have pre-Conquest origins, dating back to c.900 AD, and traces of this structure survive within the walls of the nave, including a blocked doorway in the south nave wall. The church was increased in size during the Norman period, the chancel extended and an apse added to the east end of the chancel with a burial crypt beneath. A tower was added to the west end of the church, and this was raised in height during the 15th century. A porch was added in c.1640 and the apse demolished, with the stone being used to raise the height of the tower (Knapton und.). The church was restored in 1871 and 1984, and an extension by architect George Gaze Pace erected in 1970 stands at the south-west corner of the church. The church is a Grade II\* Listed Building (see Appendix 2).

## 2 METHODOLOGY

### Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 No project design or brief was prepared for the archaeological work, although general advice produced by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in relation to watching briefs (IFA 1999) was considered. The aim of the work was to monitor the investigative groundworks, in order to record and recover archaeological information which might be present and which might be damaged by the development.

### Methodology

- 2.2 The locations of the percolation pits were decided following discussions between Brian Foxley (project architect), Chris Ramsden (drainage contractor) and Shaun Richardson of EDAS. Their siting reflected the potential positions of new

soakaways likely to be dug as part of the proposed drainage improvements. The location of these soakaways, and the drainage runs to them from around the church, were decided partly on the basis that they avoided marked graves, although it is still highly likely that unmarked burials will be encountered during future excavations.

- 2.3 All groundworks were subject to continuous monitoring by EDAS on 17th May 2011, so that any archaeological deposits that were uncovered were immediately identified and recorded. All excavations were undertaken by hand by the drainage contractor.
- 2.4 Following standard archaeological procedures, each discrete stratigraphic entity (e.g. a cut, fill or layer) was assigned an individual context number. A total of five archaeological contexts were recorded; these are all described in the following text as three digit numbers (e.g. 005). In-house recording and quality control procedures ensured that all recorded information was cross-referenced as appropriate. The positions of all the monitored groundworks were marked on a general site plan at a scale of 1:250 provided by the project architect. A photographic record was also maintained using digital colour prints. Photographs are referenced in the following text in bold type and square brackets, the numbers before the stroke representing the film number and the number after indicating the frame e.g. [1/32] (see Appendix 1).

### 3 RESULTS FROM THE WATCHING BRIEF

#### Percolation Pits

- 3.1 A total of three percolation pits were excavated, and these have been numbered from 1 to 3, to match those used by the project architect (see figure 2, PP1 to PP3).
- 3.2 Percolation Pit 1 [1/045-046] was located off the south-east corner of the chancel, at an elevation of c.62.5m AOD. The pit measured 0.60m north-south by 0.35m east-west, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50m below ground level (BGL) (c.62.0m AOD). From the ground surface to a depth of 0.18m BGL, turf and a mid to dark brown friable silt topsoil (001) were exposed. Beneath the topsoil, a mid to dark brown sandy silt (002) was seen, containing frequent inclusions (up to 0.10m across) of angular iron-stained sandstone fragments. This deposit continued below the base of the percolation pit, and the sandstone fragments became more frequent and compacted as the depth increased.
- 3.3 Percolation Pit 2 [1/047] was located to the north-east of the chancel, at an elevation of c.63.0m AOD. The pit measured 0.80m north-south by 0.50m east-west, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.60m BGL (c.62.40m AOD). From the ground surface to 0.20m BGL, turf and a mid to dark brown friable silt topsoil (001) were exposed. Beneath the topsoil, a mid to dark brown sandy silt (003) was seen, containing frequent inclusions (up to 0.10m across) of angular iron-stained sandstone fragments. This deposit continued below the base of the percolation pit, and the sandstone fragments became more frequent and compacted as the depth increased.
- 3.4 Percolation Pit 3 [1/048] was located to the west of George Gaze Pace's modern extension at the west end of the church, at an elevation of c.61.9m AOD. The pit measured 0.80m north-south by 0.50m east-west, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50m below ground level (BGL) (c.61.4m AOD). From the

ground surface to 0.18m BGL, turf and a mid to dark brown friable silt topsoil (001) were exposed. Beneath the topsoil, a mid to dark brown sandy silt (004) was seen, containing frequent inclusions (up to 0.10m across) of angular iron-stained sandstone fragments; the fragments became more frequent and compacted as the depth increased. In the very base of the pit, the sandy silt was seen to overlie a hard greyish mid-brown clay (005).

### **Other Ground Investigations**

- 3.5 In the south-east angle of the south porch and nave, a small inspection pit, measuring 0.60m north-south by 0.40m east-west, was excavated to investigate the base of a rainwater downpipe (see figure 2, IP1) . The pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.30m BGL (c.63.0m AOD); only the turf and topsoil (001) were disturbed and no deposits of archaeological significance were exposed [1/041-042].
- 3.6 A similar inspection pit, measuring 0.60m east-west by 0.40m north-south, was excavated just outside the north-east corner of the chancel to investigate another downpipe (see figure 2, IP2). The pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.30m BGL (c.63.8m AOD); once again, only the turf and topsoil (001) were disturbed, and no deposits of archaeological significance were exposed [1/043].
- 3.7 A small area of board flooring near the north-east corner of the nave was raised to view the ground beneath (see figure 2, IP3). Through the gap that was made, it was observed that the board floors of the nave are set over a 0.30m deep void, the base of which is formed by a hard-packed surface of sandy silt, stone rubble and also some brick rubble. The boards themselves were supported on joists resting upon roughly built brick walls [1/044].

## **4 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 All three percolation pits exposed similar deposits at similar levels. An c.0.20m depth of turf and silt topsoil overlay a sandy silt containing frequent inclusions of sandstone rubble. In Percolation Pit 3, the sandy silt was observed to overlay a hard greyish-brown clay. No human remains, including *ex situ* bone, were exposed in any of the percolation pits and other ground investigation works.
- 4.2 Nevertheless, it is recommended that an archaeological watching brief is maintained during the proposed drainage works, so that any archaeological deposits and/or human burials that are disturbed can be afforded an appropriate level of archaeological recording.

## **5 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

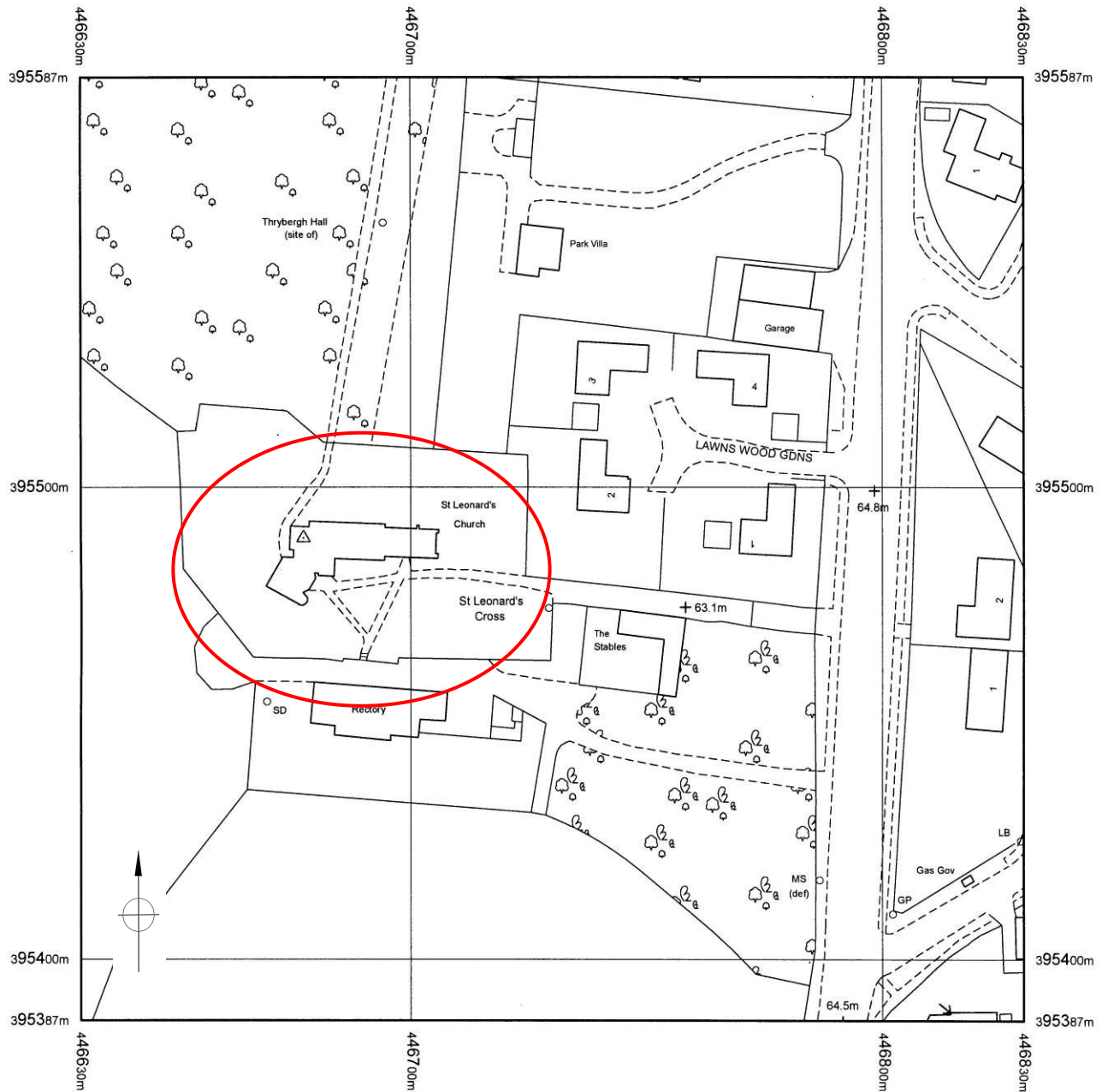
IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) 1999 *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (and subsequent revisions)

Knapton, T Und. *A Guide to the Parish Church of St Leonard, Thrybergh*

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Mr Brian Foxley (project architect) and was funded by St Leonard's Parochial Church Council. EDAS would like to thank all concerned for their co-operation in carrying out the work. The site recording was undertaken by Shaun Richardson who also produced the fieldwork

records and a draft report. Ed Dennison produced the final report and drawings, and the responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies remains with him.

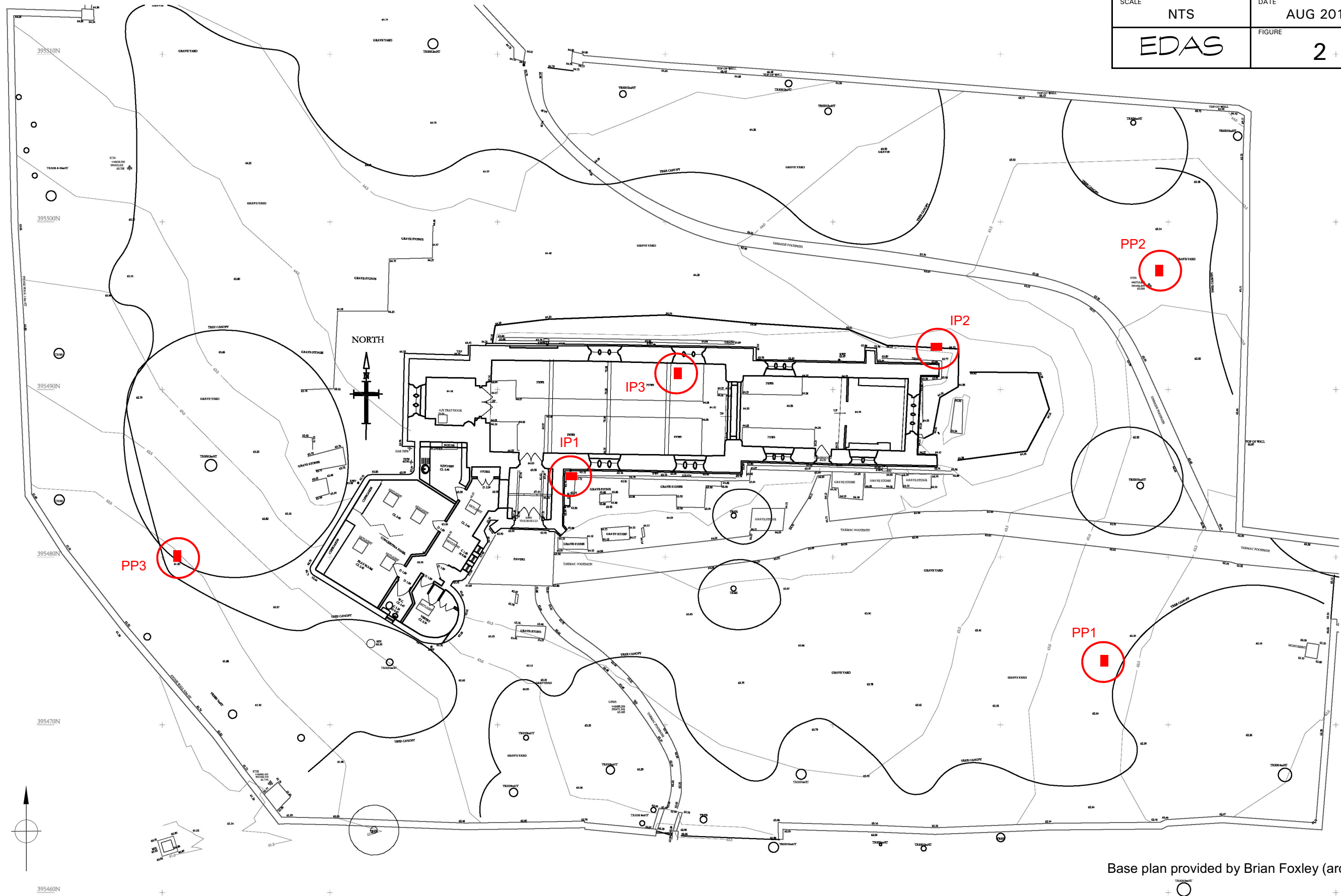


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PROJECT	THRYBERGH CHURCH	
TITLE	GENERAL LOCATION	
SCALE	NTS	DATE AUG 2011
	EDAS	FIGURE 1



PROJECT	THRYBERGH CHURCH	
TITLE	GROUND INVESTIGATIONS	
SCALE	NTS	DATE AUG 2011
EDAS	FIGURE 2	



Base plan provided by Brian Foxley (architect).

## **APPENDIX 1**

## APPENDIX 1: THRYBERGH CHURCH PHOTOGRAPHIC CATALOGUE

Film 1: Digital colour prints taken 17th May 2011

Film	Frame	Subject	Scale
1	041	IP1: drain at SE angle of porch and nave, looking W	0.50m
1	042	IP1: drain at SE angle of porch and nave, looking W	0.50m
1	043	IP1: drain at NE angle of porch and nave, looking SW	0.50m
1	044	IP3: view beneath nave flooring, looking W	-
1	045	Percolation Pit 1, looking N	0.50m
1	046	Percolation Pit 1, looking W	0.50m
1	047	Percolation Pit 2, looking W	0.50m
1	048	Percolation Pit 3, looking W	0.50m



1-041.JPG



1-042.JPG



1-043.JPG



1-044.JPG



1-045.JPG



1-046.JPG



1-047.JPG



1-048.JPG

## APPENDIX 2

## APPENDIX 2: LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Location : CHURCH OF ST LEONARD, DONCASTER ROAD (west off), THRYBERGH,  
ROTHERHAM, SOUTH YORKSHIRE

IoE number : 335545

Date listed : 29 March 1968

Date of last amendment : 29 March 1968

Grade : II\*

Church. C11 and C12 nave with C15-style windows; chancel C14; tower C15; all much restored 1871 and 1894; vestry block added 1970 by Pace of York. Irregular sandstone rubble to earliest work; coursed rubble to chancel; otherwise ashlar. Stone slates to porch; other roofs lead. West tower with spire; 3-bay nave with south porch and C20 vestry adjoining in angle with tower; 2-bay chancel. Tower: triple-chamfered plinth. 3-light west window with hoodmould. Clock on south side. String course beneath 2-light belfry openings; another string with gargoyles beneath embattled parapet; recessed, crocketed spire with weathervane. Nave: gabled porch with moulded plinth and quadrant-moulded arch to west of two 3-light Perpendicular windows with hoodmoulds. Quoins of blocked south doorway beneath bay-2 window. Upper wall ashlar; moulded parapet copings and cross to east gable. Round-arched north doorway within ashlar extension to west of original short nave. Chancel: narrower and lower; chamfered plinth. C19 priest's door beneath medieval niche; weathered carving in small triangular panel over. To left a restored 3-light window with geometrical tracery; to right a square-headed 2-light window with ogee-shaped transoms. Upper walling renewed C20; parapet as nave. Restored 4-light east window in Decorated style flanked by offset buttresses. Interior: chancel and tower arches renewed. Nave roof: framed with moulded, cambered tie-beams. C14 effigy set against south wall of tower, another within C20 vestry. Niche at south-east end of nave contains tomb of Ralph Reresby (d.1530): incised depiction of knight; reredos with arms and Latin inscription. Another table tomb, now cut in half, and fixed in south-east corner of chancel. Nave and chancel display an excellent sequence of wall monuments ranging from late C16 to early C19. Of particular note that on north wall of chancel to Lionel Reresby and wife Anne (d.1587): 2 kneelers each beneath canopy, mourners below. In addition to monuments described by Pevsner (B.O.E., pp516-517) are those to Sir John Reresby I (d.1668) over nave south door and to his son Sir John II: panel with carved skulls and trophies, plaque with scrolled pediment above. Reresby brass 1668 near chancel arch. Restored C15 stained glass in easternmost window of nave south wall. N. Pevsner, B.O.E. Yorkshire West Riding, 1967 ed.

Source: Images of England website ([www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk))