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*ST. BRANDON'S CHURCH  
BRANCEPETH  
COUNTY DURHAM*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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NOVEMBER 2022

*The Archaeological  
Practice Ltd.*



ST. BRANDON'S CHURCH  
BRANCEPETH  
COUNTY DURHAM

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



*Frontispiece: View of Skeletons 3, 2, 1 and 4 (left to right) looking west.*

<b>Grid reference (NGR):</b>	<i>NZ 22502 37685</i>
<b>Date of fieldwork:</b>	<i>March 2022; August-September 2022</i>
<b>Client:</b>	<i>St Brandon's, Brancepeth PCC</i>
<b>Project code:</b>	<i>AP 21/33</i>
<b>Stage:</b>	<i>Final</i>
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Prepared by Michelle Gamble, October 2022

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## SUMMARY

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*This document, prepared by the Archaeological Practice Ltd. and commissioned by Brancepeth, St. Brandon's PCC, reports on a programme of archaeological investigation and monitoring, conducted as part of a second phase of repairs to St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth (centred upon NGR: NZ 22479 37696) in County Durham. St Brandon's Church is located approximately 4 miles south-west of Durham, on the south side of the A690 road. The church lies to the south-east of the village of Brancepeth, and to the east of the much expanded and altered Brancepeth Castle. Long regarded as one of County Durham's finest churches, a devastating fire gutted the church in 1998, necessitating a significant restoration.*

*Further repairs of stonework at St Brandon's will also entail an overhaul of drainage infrastructure in the churchyard to the south of the church. These works required initial investigation of an existing culvert via trial holes to be followed by the monitoring of excavations for a new soakaway. The investigation of the churchyard at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth by the excavation of trial holes revealed a feature likely to represent a ruined culvert. This ruled out the possibility of reusing the culvert for new drainage. The only find of note was a mid-15th century French jeton recovered from TH2.*

*A percolation test conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022 on the site of TH2 produced results representing extremely fast percolation of water in this position. This informed the size and composition of a new soakaway. The remaining works for the soakaway were monitored by means of a continuous watching brief. This watching brief encountered much disarticulated human bone in the pipe trenches and first stages of the soakaway pit. Full excavation of the soakaway pit revealed four skeletons in graves cut into natural, as well as a fifth possible grave that yielded no skeletal remains. In response to the discovery of the human remains, a bespoke addendum was added to the WSI, fully detailing the process for dealing with the human remains encountered, as well as any further articulated remains.*

*Articulated human remains were recorded in situ with a burial record form and a detailed plan drawing at 1:10. In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation parts of skeletons still lying under the baulk were not 'chased'. At this stage the skeletal remains were analysed on site by the project osteoarchaeologist. This analysis included a detailed inventory, assessment of the minimum number of individuals present, assessment of age and sex of articulated remains and record of pathologies. The skeletons were concluded to represent two grown adults (Sk2 and Sk3) and a likely young adult (Sk1), with Sk4 unable to be aged in situ. Analysis of sex concluded two probable females (Sk1 and Sk4) and a male (Sk3). Sk2 had no visible elements with which an analysis of sex could be made. The frequent remains of coffin materials, the observation of areas of coffin staining and the presence of shroud pins, along with the compact situation of the skeletons suggest that all four burials were likely shrouded and buried in narrow coffins. It is therefore highly likely that all four articulated skeletons derive from post-medieval burials. These burials represent at least two phases of interment. Additionally, two possible further individuals were represented by disarticulated remains within the grave cuts. All human skeletal remains were reinterred in December 2022 in the new churchyard to the north of the original churchyard at St Brandon's Church.*

*No further analysis of the skeletal material is recommended, as no justifiable research aims can be attached to such a small sample size of skeletons. Future work in and around St Brandon's Church should be considered on its own merits, and any deep excavation within the churchyard will require special attention and carry the expectation of finding burials.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Planning Background

1.1.1 This document, prepared by the Archaeological Practice Ltd. and commissioned by St. Brandon's PCC, reports on a programme of archaeological investigation and monitoring, conducted as part of a second phase of repairs to St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth (*centred upon NGR: NZ 22479 37696*) in County Durham. Repairs to stonework will also entail an overhaul of drainage infrastructure in the churchyard to the south of the church. These works required initial investigation of an existing culvert via trial holes (individually referred to as TH1, TH2 etc.), followed by the monitoring of excavations for a new soakaway.

## 1.2 Previous Archaeological Work

St Brandon's Church is located approximately 4 miles south-west of Durham, on the south side of the A690 road. The church lies to the south-east of the village of Brancepeth, and to the east of the much expanded and altered Brancepeth Castle. Long regarded as one of County Durham's finest churches, a devastating fire gutted the church in 1998, necessitating a significant restoration.

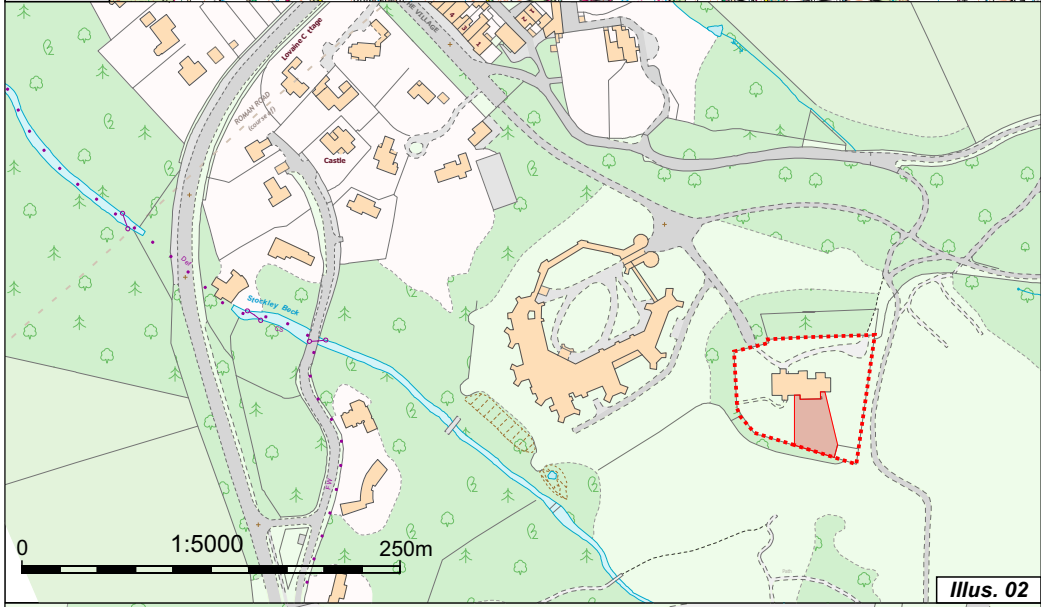
Before this, a small tunnel under the south wall of the churchyard was recorded by Peter Ryder after its accidental discovery in 1996. He noted a possible culvert running into the north end of the tunnel (Ryder 2005: Appendix III), a route which seems consistent with that of the culvert identified by a ground penetrating radar (GPR) survey undertaken by Atlantic Geomatics in 2021. It was concluded on the basis of this survey that the culvert likely coursed north-north-east from the southern church wall, under the Boyne memorial, before angling slightly to course almost due north. The course of the culvert was lost c. 10m south-east of the south-east corner of the chancel.

Prior to the 1998 fire, an archaeological assessment had been commissioned by the diocese, which was completed just months before the fire. After the fire, archaeological monitoring took place during the removal of debris from the church to recover elements of the church's structure and fragments of stonework and memorials. During this work, a significant number of previously unknown cross-slabs were discovered. New observations were able to be made about the church's history from structural details revealed by the removal of plaster (Ryder 2005). In addition to these works, a service run installed during the renovation of the church was monitored, initially by Peter Ryder and subsequently by PCA. A large number of burials, thought in the region of 60 or 70 individuals (J. Morgan; P. Ryder: pers comm., December 2022) of unspecified period were discovered. It is unclear if any human skeletal remains were ever lifted. No analysis of these remains was ever carried out and no report on this project was ever finalised.

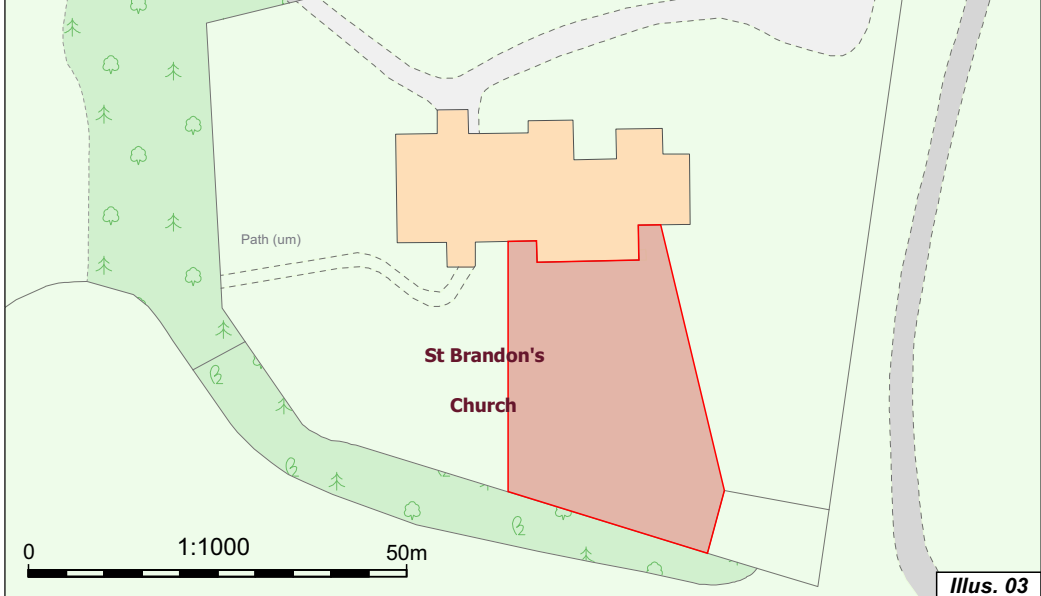
**Illus. 01-03:** The location of St Brandon's church, Brancepeth, south-west of Durham (highlighted in Illus. 01) and the area within which groundworks will take place (highlighted, Illus. 03) shown in relation to Brancepeth village and castle (Illus. 02).



**Illus. 01**



**Illus. 02**



**Illus. 03**



## 2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 The percolation test

As part of the works, a percolation test was required to inform the planning of drainage infrastructure. It was decided that the percolation test would occur ahead of, and in the same location as, TH2 and be later expanded into the full-sized trial hole.

The test required a hole 0.30 m x 0.30 m wide and 1.00 m in depth to be excavated and filled with water. The timings of the water reaching levels of 75% capacity and 25% capacity were recorded. These figures were to form the basis for the calculation of the percolation value by the following formula:

$$\text{Percolation Value (Vp)} \quad (Vp) = \frac{T}{D}$$

T = time taken in seconds  
D = depth between 75% and 25%

### 2.2 The excavation of trial holes

2.2.1 Five possible trial holes were located along the route of the proposed new drainage and the route of the culvert. The excavation of the trial holes was carried out to fulfil one or both of two aims:

- To confirm the presence, character and state of preservation of the culvert throughout its course, in order to confirm whether re-use of the existing culvert in future drainage works is viable.
- To investigate ground conditions and determine whether any features such as unmarked graves are present.

2.2.2 TH1 was located south of the chancel wall on the course of proposed drainage routes. Its excavation was carried out to test ground conditions and identify any possible unmarked graves. TH2 was located on the proposed route of the new drainage system, and close to the end of the projected route of the culvert. TH5 was located south of TH2, on the projected route of the culvert. As aforementioned, TH2 doubled as a percolation test hole, while TH5's primary purpose was to establish the presence and state of preservation of the culvert. Further trial holes (TH3 and TH4) were not excavated.

2.2.3 The excavation was carried out by hand. All sections and deposits exposed were systematically examined in case of the need to identify, sample and record, as appropriate, any previously unidentified archaeological features which survive within the area of excavation.

2.2.5 Archaeological deposits encountered were to be recorded by written and drawn record and photographically. Photographic recording was undertaken where no archaeological features were encountered and include general working shots. Given the role of the site as a burial ground, the discovery of human remains was anticipated during the investigatory works. No articulated remains were uncovered during the works. Disarticulated human bone was bagged and retained next to each of the trial holes, then reinterred in TH2 prior to backfilling.

## 2.3 Monitoring of site works

2.3.1 As stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) version 5, compiled and approved before works commenced, remaining works were monitored by means of a continuous watching brief. The works consisted of a drainage run and a new soakaway, the installation of which required the digging of a deep pit measuring 2 m x 1.5 m x >1.30 m in depth, but in practice with a slightly larger footprint to allow for construction of the soakaway tank. These excavations were set out by the principal contractor in the locations specified on the drainage plan produced by Knox McConnell (BSB08 010 Drainage Plan: 2021).

2.3.2 These works were carried out in their entirety by hand-digging. This was continuously monitored for the presence of archaeological finds and features. All faces of excavation requiring examination or recording were to be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains.

2.3.3 The WSI version 5 detailed a broad process to deal with human remains, articulated and disarticulated, but in response to the discovery of multiple and in some cases intercutting human remains during monitoring on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022, a bespoke addendum was added to the WSI by the Archaeological Practice Ltd., fully detailing the process for dealing with the human remains encountered, as well as any further articulated remains. This WSI, now version 6 (see *Appendix 2*) was written on the basis of a site meeting on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September in order to support an application to the Chancellor of the Diocese from Knox McConnell. The resulting direction from the consistory court allowed the project to proceed under the terms of the new WSI.

2.3.4 The process for dealing with human remains as specified in the addendum in WSI version 6 consisted of the following:

- Articulated human remains were to be recorded in situ with a burial record form and a detailed plan drawing at 1:10. Skeletons were to be cleaned with wooden tools to avoid damaging the remains or creating artificial pathologies. While the remains were revealed, the excavation area was required to be screened from the public by terram or a similar material.
- Once recorded, the skeletal remains were to be exhumed in accordance with CIfA Guidelines (2017) and bagged by skeleton, separated as standard into body parts. No effort is to be made to recover parts of skeletons still lying under the baulk. At this stage the skeletal remains were to be analysed **on site** by the project osteoarchaeologist. This analysis was to include a detailed inventory, assessment of the minimum number of individuals present, assessment of age and sex of articulated remains and record of pathologies.
- The possibility of further, off-site and potentially destructive analysis was acknowledged in meeting and discussed within the WSI, but the presumption in this case was against off-site analysis. Any further analysis would have required strong justification and a realistic prospect of useful results. Assuming no further analysis was to be required, the remains were to be stored in a locked area of the church awaiting reinterment in the 'new' churchyard by the parish (see section 7.2 below). The reinterment of the burials in this instance was to be carried out by the parish.

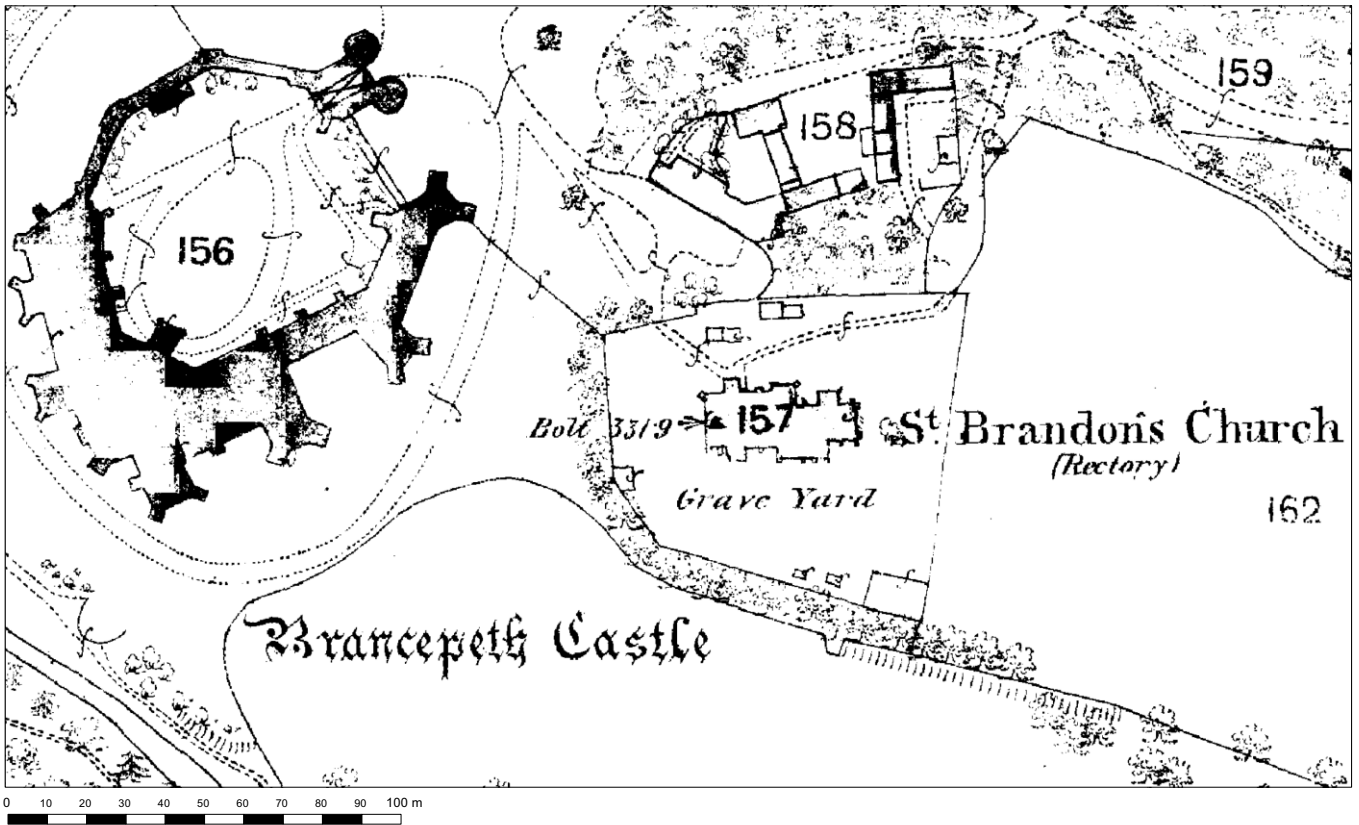
### 3. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

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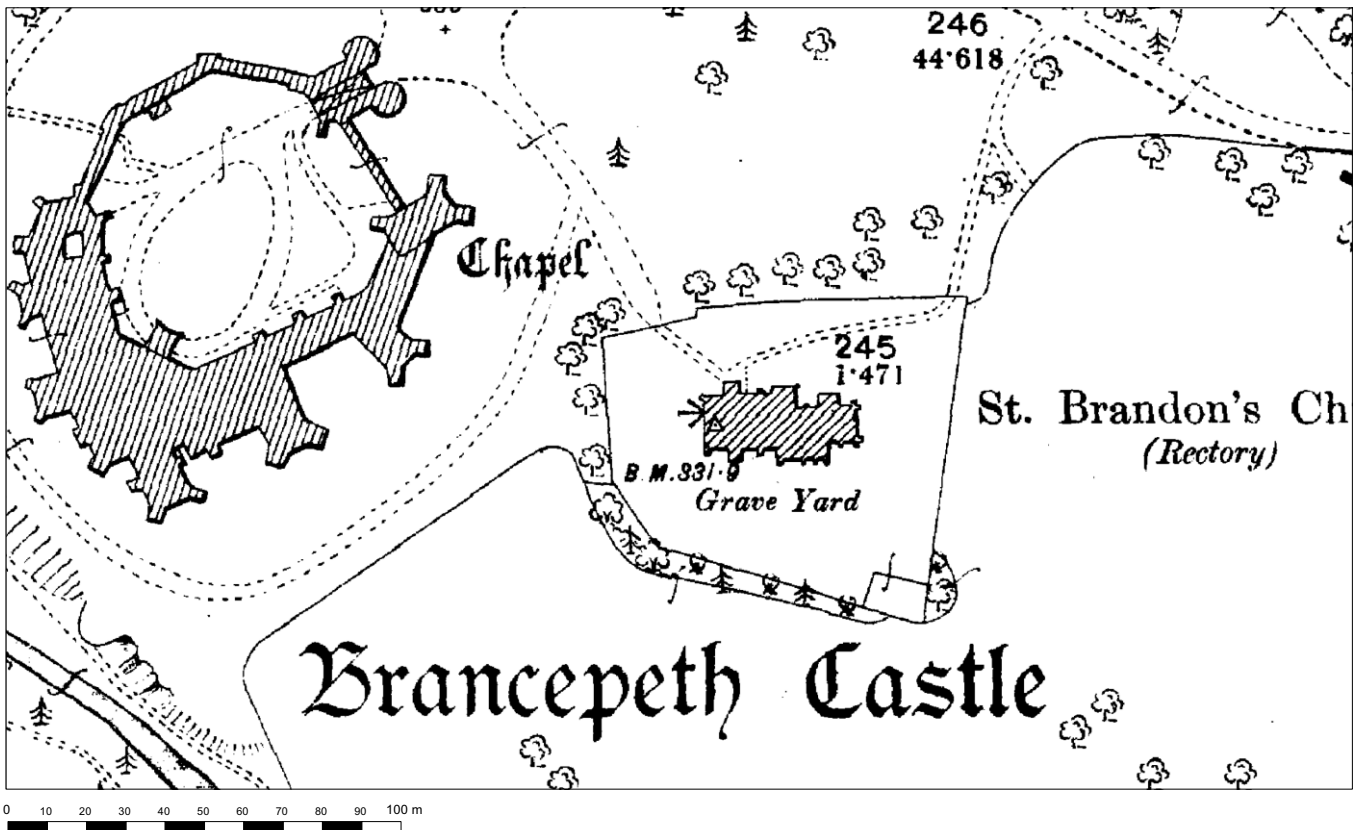
The name Brancepeth has two theories of etymology. A popular understanding of the derivation is of Brancepeth forming from “Brawn’s path”, referring to the killing of a large brawn (wild boar) by Roger de Ferie in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Perhaps more likely is the evolution of “Brandon’s Path” into Brancepeth, given the dedication of the church. A small amount of evidence for pre-medieval activity is known around Brancepeth in the form of prehistoric flint scatters and Roman finds, but the most significant parts of Brancepeth’s cultural heritage are its post-Roman developments.

Upon its listing in 1967, the oldest surviving parts of the church at Brancepeth were considered to be the late 12<sup>th</sup> century tower, with subsequent additions in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (NHLE No. 1158956). Subsequent to the devastating fire of 1998, Peter Ryder’s suspicions that material of Saxon character survived in the original nave walls was able to be put to the test. He concluded that although nothing could be firmly dated, the original nave walls were a pre-conquest survival (Ryder 2005: 25). Prior to the fire, the church was known for its two effigial monuments: the first the “Peacock of the North”, a stone effigy thought to represent Robert Neville, killed in battle by the Scots in 1318, the second a pair of wooden effigies designed to lie adjacent to each other representing the Second Earl of Westmorland Ralph Neville and his wife Margaret. The church was also well known for its beautiful wooden fittings and furnishings, installed by John Cosin in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. The wooden effigies and Cosin’s woodwork were lost in the 1998 fire, while the Peacock of the North, albeit lead-splashed and fire-damaged, was able to be conserved (Ryder 2005: 37). Much of the stonework throughout the church, including marble and alabaster monuments and the 12<sup>th</sup> century fossiliferous limestone font, were shattered by the heat, although the font at least was able to be reconstructed, and showed evidence of having been shattered before (Ryder 2005: 34). The church and churchyard have remained almost entirely unchanged in the period covered by historic OS mapping (*see Illus. 04-07*).

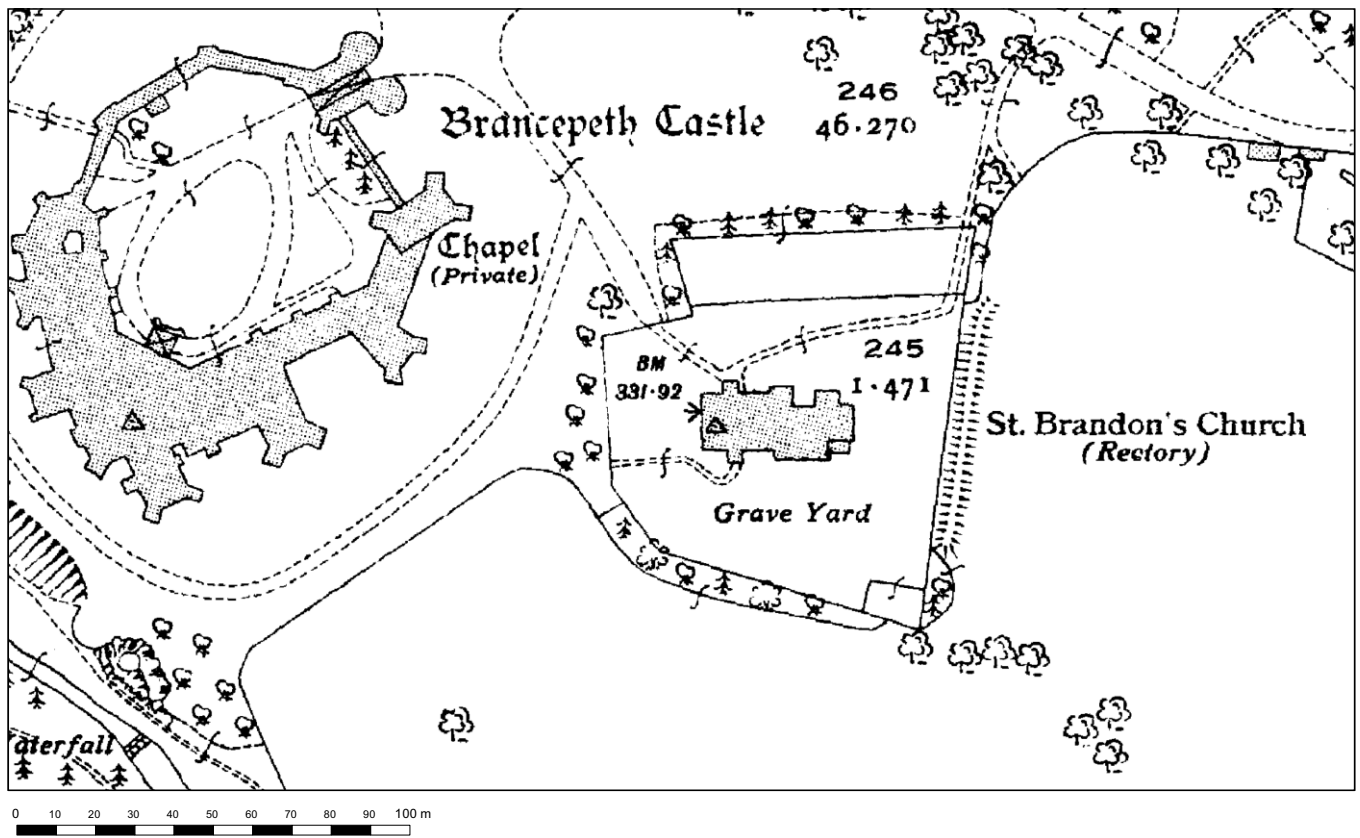
From at least the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, a castle has been present at Brancepeth, west of the church. The site passed into the hands of the Neville family, and it was rebuilt in the later years of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In 1569, the castle was confiscated from Charles Neville, the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Westmorland, for his role in the Rising of the North during which anti-Elizabethan forces had assembled at Brancepeth Castle before seizing Durham. The ownership of the castle has changed hands several times in the subsequent centuries, before significant 19<sup>th</sup> century alterations were undertaken in turn by architects John Paterson and Anthony Salvin at the behest of members of the Russell family.



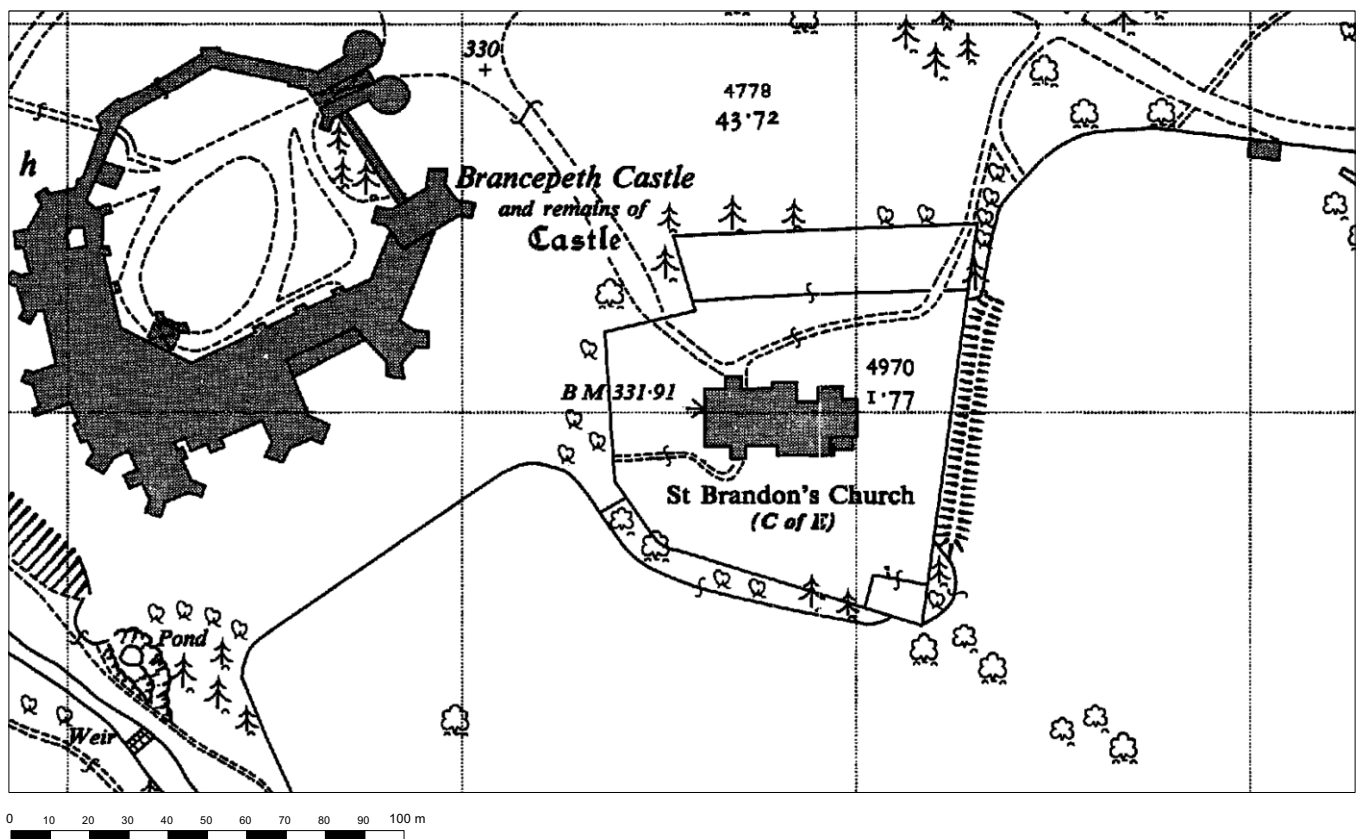
*Illus. 04: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of County Durham, c.1857.*



*Illus. 05: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Map of County Durham, c.1857.*



*Illus. 06: Extract from the 1939 Ordnance Survey Map of County Durham.*



*Illus. 07: Extract from the 1962 Ordnance Survey Map of County Durham.*

## 4. RESULTS - THE PERCOLATION TEST

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### 4.1 The percolation test

Three percolation tests were carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022, as described above (section 2.1). They indicated extremely fast percolation of water. It should be noted that the hole used for the percolation tests was not saturated the day before, as recommended by some guides, thereby perhaps accounting for the extremely fast percolation of the first test.

In archaeological terms, no finds or features of note were encountered. Small amounts of disarticulated bone were found, while moderately frequent sandstone rubble was encountered from just below the surface to a depth of 1 m at the base of the test hole. No articulated human remains were encountered. All recovered bone was subsequently reinterred in Trial Hole 2.

## 5. RESULTS - THE TRIAL HOLES

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### 5.1 Trial Holes

(See *Illus. 08* for locations of works.)

Trial Hole 1 (see *photos 01-02*), located south of the chancel, was excavated to the depth of 1 m, and was 1.5 m in length and 0.60 m wide. Mid grey-brown clayey silt topsoil was present throughout, with few inclusions of rubble. No unmarked graves were located, and nothing of note was observed in terms of archaeological finds or features. A yellow pipe, presumed to be a gas pipe, curved through the northern third of the trial hole at a depth of c. 0.40 m from the ground surface, and deposits under this were not excavated. A moderate amount of disarticulated bone was found and retained to be later reinterred in the ground from which it came.

Trial Hole 2 (see *photo 03*), expanding on the footprint of the percolation test, was excavated to a depth of 1 m, and was 1 m in width and 0.60 m in depth. Mid grey-brown clayey silt topsoil was present throughout, with moderately frequent rubble inclusions present at least to depth. No features of archaeological interest were encountered. The only find was a probable 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century copper-alloy jeton, likely of French origin (see *photos 07 and 08*), discovered while digging the trial hole, around 0.80 m below the ground surface. How it came to be deposited this far down is unclear, as the jeton was not in any evident cut or layer, but it is plausible that it was lost during excavation of a grave or feature. Its obverse depicts a crown while its reverse depicts a cross. A small amount of disarticulated bone was found in TH 2 and retained. It was later reinterred in the same hole.

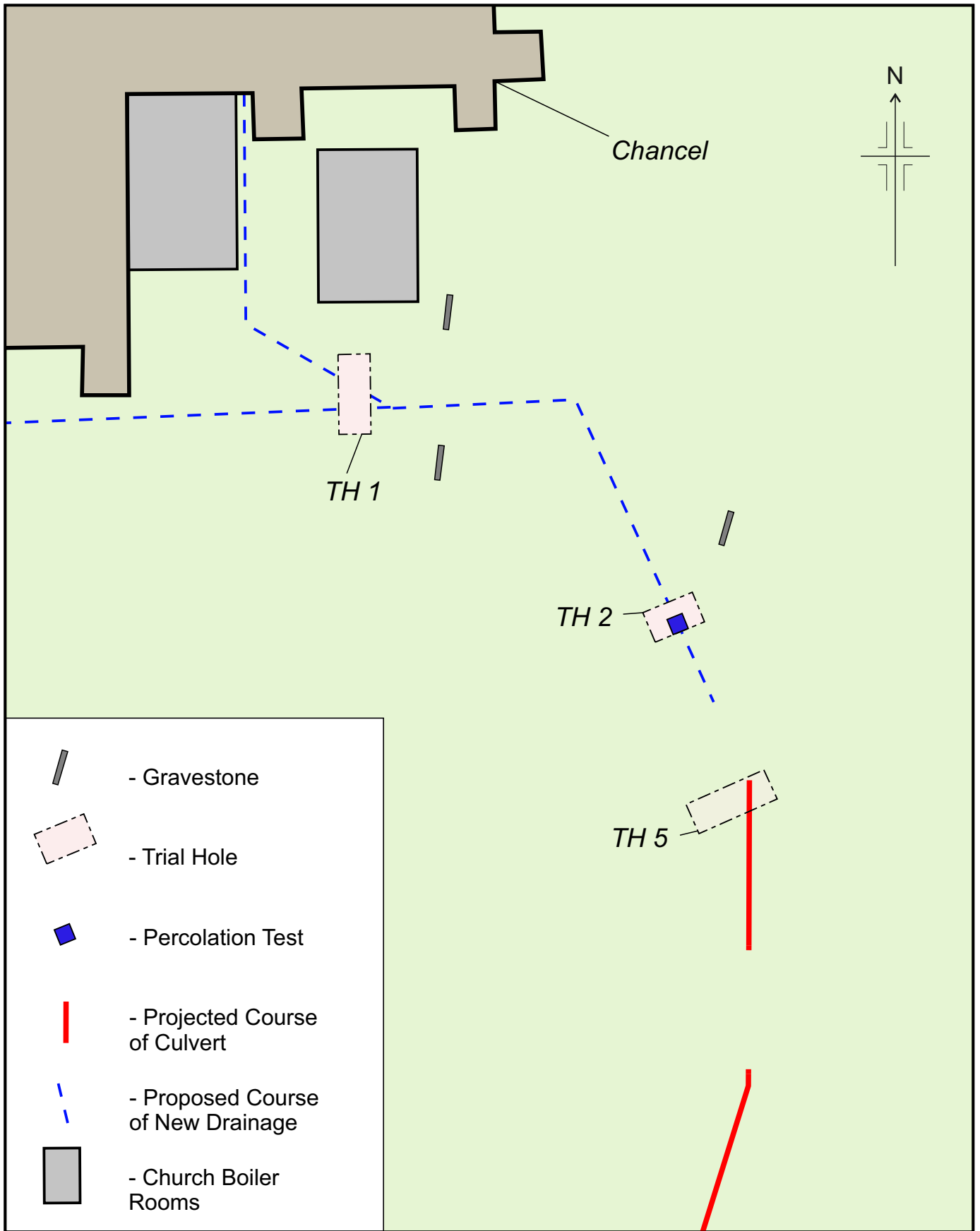
Trial Hole 5 (listed next because TH3 & TH4 were not excavated) was located along the projected line of the culvert. It was initially excavated to a depth of 1 m, with a footprint 1 m long and 0.60 m wide (see *photo 04*). Much sandstone rubble was present in the soil, including some very large stones, especially toward the eastern end of the trial hole. No obvious culvert was identified in these initial dimensions. To attempt to locate the culvert, the trial hole was excavated to a greater depth of 1.25 m (see *photo 06*), with further large stones encountered on the base of the trial hole at its eastern end. TH5 was subsequently expanded 0.60 m in this direction. While reducing the ground level, two further large stones along the same alignment (see *photo 05*) were encountered at c. 0.70 m depth and left *in situ*. These stones were seemingly sitting on the same clayey-silt encountered in the rest of the trench. This collection of structural remains and rubble was found in a position consistent with that of the culvert previously recorded by Ryder, the course of which was subsequently confirmed by geophysical survey. Mid grey-brown clayey silt topsoil was present throughout, with moderately frequent rubble inclusions present at least to the depth of the trench. A very small amount of disarticulated bone was retained and was later reinterred in Trial Hole 5.

### 5.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

In all trial holes, a homogenous mid grey-brown clayey silt topsoil [101] was present throughout. It contained varying amounts of sandstone rubble inclusions - very little sandstone rubble was contained in TH1, TH2 had moderate amounts, and TH5 contained frequent sandstone rubble. Greater quantities of disarticulated bone were encountered closer to the chancel, while very few were encountered in TH5. None of the test holes reached either natural sub-soil or bedrock.

The sandstone rubble and stonework encountered in the east end of TH5 likely represent the remains of a ruined culvert [102]. These remains were in the correct place according to the GPR survey, but most of the stones were not in any sort of alignment or order. The two stones that were aligned may have represented former capping stones of a crude culvert. The fact they were sitting on deposits of soil might indicate that they were supported in place by a completely blocked-up former culvert channel. The only find in any trial hole beyond rubble and disarticulated bone was the copper alloy jeton found during the expansion of TH2. Continental jetons are found fairly often in the British Isles, seemingly brought back as souvenirs or keepsakes.





**Illus. 08.** Overview Plan of Trial Holes at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth

## 6. RESULTS – THE WATCHING BRIEF

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### 6.1 Summary Results of the Watching Brief

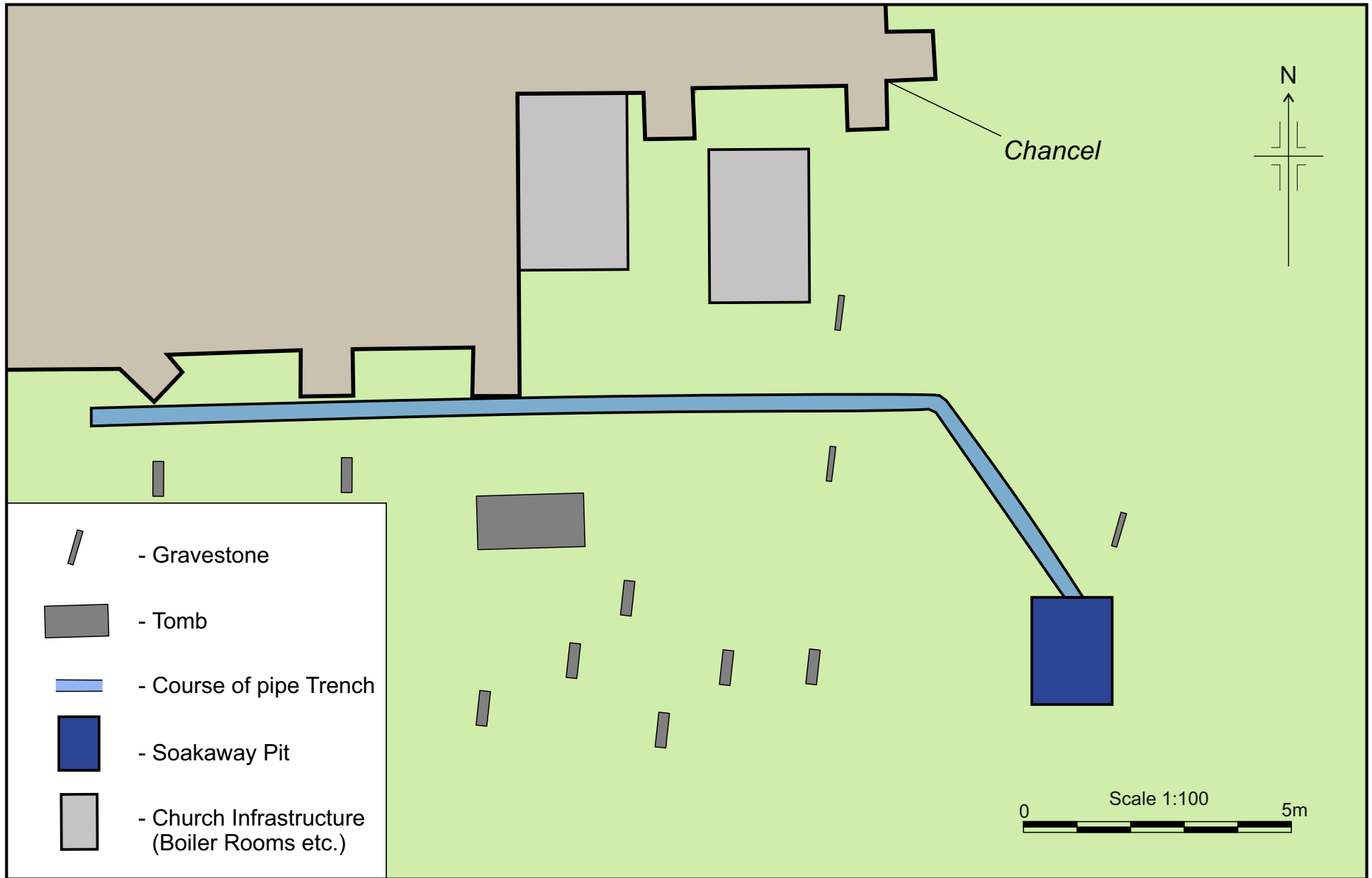
*(Illus. 09-11)*

The drainage works at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth, consisted of a pipe trench leading to a soakaway pit. These works consisted of a pipe trench starting directly south of the south-east corner of the South Transept and coursing west for a length of c. 16 m before angling south-east for a distance of c. 4.45 m to meet with the soakaway pit. At its start, the pipe trench was excavated to a depth of 0.38 m below ground level, while at its meeting with the soakaway, it was excavated to a depth of c. 0.50 m below ground level. The soakaway pit was designed to measure 2.00 m by 1.50 m in plan, but its actual footprint was larger. Its depth was to be determined by the fall required on the installed pipe, but was expected to reach at least 1.30 m, with the possibility of being as deep as 1.80 m. Excavations were carried out between August and October 2022 and continuously monitored by staff from the Archaeological Practice Ltd.

Along the length of the pipe trench, no finds or features were encountered beyond disarticulated human bone and remnants of previous drainage infrastructure. Close to the church buildings in the main pipe trench, fragments of ceramic salt-glazed pipes were found, among a deposit of coarse stone rubble. This was concluded to represent a defunct 'French drain'. A brick-vaulted structure was also revealed, apparently connecting the boiler house to an oil tank. This was evidently installed later as the existing drain has been smashed in this area. A moderate amount of disarticulated human bone was recovered from these excavations, much of it presumably disturbed during the installation of services and redeposited in the ground amongst the backfill. In the continuation of the pipe trench, east of the southern wall of the 'Lady Chapel' no more services were observed, nor were any other features observed or finds recovered, beyond the recovery of moderately frequent amounts of disarticulated human bone.

The soakaway pit was aligned north-south and was designed to be 2.00 m by 1.50 m in plan. In practice, it was slightly wider and longer than this to allow room for the soakaway to be installed within the hole. Beyond its southern and eastern edges, a step of just under a metre was excavated to facilitate access to the hole once it was excavated to significant depths. Its north-western corner was located c. 9.15 m from the south-eastern corner (buttress) of the 'Lady Chapel' and c. 10.30 m from the south-eastern corner of the chancel. With continuous monitoring by staff from the Archaeological Practice Ltd., the pit was excavated in broad spits by operatives of the principal contractor with spades, spits, mattocks and shovels. Below a dark grey-brown silty sand topsoil (200), a homogenous mid to dark grey-brown silty sand graveyard soil (201) was present throughout to a depth of c. 1.25 m below the ground surface. This graveyard soil contained frequent disarticulated human bone and frequent rubble inclusions, including larger stones at the east end of the pit that might have once belonged to the ruinous culvert. Within this deposit, no features or finds were encountered, beyond disarticulated bone. Concentrations of human bone prompted a gentle clean with a trowel in order to establish whether bone was articulated or disarticulated. In all cases above c. 1.25 m below ground level, all bone encountered was disarticulated, with few large or long bones and much fragmentation of bone.

At a depth of around 1.25-1.30 m below ground level, mattocking of the soil turned up concentrations of hand and foot bones in the centre of the pit. As with concentrations of bones higher up in the deposit, this prompted a trowel clean which quickly established that the



*Illus. 09. Overview Plan of Drainage Works at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth*

excavations had disturbed an articulated burial. All drainage work ceased. This burial, and the rest of the bottom of the pit, was loosely cleaned in order to be able to photograph and contextualize what was present. It was concluded that the articulated bone present actually consisted of two burials later termed Skeleton 1 [213] and Skeleton 2 [214] (skeletons abbreviated hereafter to Sk-). These burials were oriented with feet facing east, as would be expected in a churchyard context. Both individuals were presumed to lie partially under the baulk to the west of the soakaway pit. Sk1 had clearly truncated the left side of Sk2, of which only a right leg was present. The bottom of the soakaway pit, once clean, showed that the grave cuts for Sk1 and Sk2 had been cut into a presumed natural subsoil (202). The soil that constituted the grave fills was inseparable in colour from the homogenous dark grey-brown graveyard soil above, inhibiting the earlier detection of the graves. Once cleaned, both to the north and south of these burials, further apparent cuts were noted, indicating the possible presence of further burials. At this point, archaeological work ceased, the burials were photographed and covered and Knox McConnell and the Durham DAC were informed. In the hiatus that followed, a site meeting was held and a new WSI (version 6) was prepared to support Knox McConnell's ultimately successful application to the Chancellor of the Diocese (*above, section 2.3.3*). The project resumed in late September under the terms of the updated WSI (*above, section 2.3.4, also see Appendix 2*).

Upon resumption of the project, the previously exposed skeletons, having been protected by a tarpaulin sheet lightly covered with spoil, were re-cleaned. The apparent grave cuts to the north and south were also cleaned and excavated. A further two skeletons were encountered in the same orientation with feet to the east, one to the north of Sk1 and Sk2 and one to the south of Sk1 and Sk2. That to the south, Sk3 [215], was buried to a greater depth than Sk1 and Sk2. Like Sk1 and Sk2, only part of the skeleton was present, with the rest presumed to lie under the baulk. That to the north, Sk4 [216] was located at roughly the same height as Sk1 and Sk2. Only Sk4's right limbs and right pelvis were visible within the soakaway pit. Sk4 was only visible at all because the section had been undercut during the course of the works. All four skeletons were carefully cleaned with wooden implements, recorded by way of 1:10 plan and skeleton recording sheet, and then photographed in situ.

From the 3rd October 2022, the elements of Sk1, Sk2 and Sk3 that were present within the pit were carefully lifted by body part, with separate bags for the left scapula and clavicle, right scapula and clavicle, vertebrae, left ribs, right ribs, left arm, right arm, left hand, right hand, pelvis, left leg, right leg, left foot, right foot and a bag for any loose or clearly mislocated bone. Each skeleton was given its own context number to avoid confusion with loose bone recovered from the same grave fill. The skeletons were then subjected to on-site analysis by the Project Osteologist. After consultation with the church warden, it was determined that Sk4 was in such a position that it would not be affected by the soakaway. On this basis, it was decided that there was no need to further disturb what little of Sk4 was visible within the pit and Sk4 was subjected to a brief analysis in situ by the Project Osteologist instead of being lifted.

## **6.2 Summary of Skeletons**

### **6.2.1 Skeleton 1 – [213]**

Sk1 was the first to be located. The skeleton itself was given the context number [213]. Sk1 lay in grave 1 [203], the edges of which were fairly clear at the northern bound of the cut, but less clear at the southern bounds of the cut where [203] had cut grave 2 [205]. The eastern bounds of the grave cut, at the feet of Sk1, were similarly difficult to pinpoint. Grave 1 was filled by (204), a dark grey-brown silty sand indistinguishable from (201) in colour and with similar consistency.

Sk1 was present within the soakaway pit from its feet to the upper vertebrae/upper humerus, although no scapulae were observed. It survived in very good condition, although its left hand and left and right foot bones were likely displaced shortly before its discovery by mattocking. The cuboid bone thought to remain in situ in the right foot was actually a left cuboid positioned by the right foot, most likely as the result of disturbance during the soakaway works and assumption of the part of the excavator that it belonged where it lay. Roots were frequent, but seem not to have overly moved or disturbed any skeletal elements. All limbs were extended. The hands were resting on or tight to the hips, appearing to be prone. The tightness of the hands and ankles suggests potential shrouding of Sk1 within the coffin. Osteological analysis suggested that this individual was probably a female, tall in stature and deceased as a later adolescent or young adult (*Appendix 1*).

A handful of iron nails were recovered from the grave fill, as well as a small piece of partially-glazed medieval pottery that is almost certain to constitute residual material, having likely been dug up and redeposited several times over several hundred years in the graveyard environment. A copper alloy pin SF1, presumed to be a shroud pin, was recovered from spoil generated during cleaning of the right ribs. Measured at the centre of the left pelvis, Sk1 returned a level of 98.16 m AOD.

#### 6.2.2 Skeleton 2 – [214]

Sk2 consisted solely of a right leg located to the south of Sk1. Most of the right hand bones were recovered from the soil south of the femur upon lifting. The skeleton was later given the context number [214]. Sk2 lay in grave 2 [205], the southern bounds of which were clear and discernible, while the eastern bounds beyond the foot of Sk1 were not fully discernible. As stated above, the point at which grave 1 [203] cut through [205] was not able to be accurately discerned. Grave 2 was filled by (206), a dark grey-brown silty sand the same colour as (201) and (204).

Sk2 was present from its right foot to the upper femur. The knee joint was level with the right hand of Sk1. It survived in generally very good condition, although the long bones of the leg were fragmentary on lifting. The leg was extended with the hand resting on around the right femur, although the positioning of the feet was ambiguous. The presence of a shroud pin below the foot suggests the strong possibility of the burial being shrouded, possibly within a coffin. Curiously, upon analysis by the Project Osteologist, the four metatarsal foot bones east of the ankle as well as a medial cuneiform were shown to be derived from a left foot, not a right foot. Unlike the displaced foot bones of Sk1, these bones were revealed and cleaned in situ and had not been disturbed by groundworks. Perhaps the likeliest explanation is that the left foot, presumably mostly removed by the excavation of grave 1 [203], came to lie pointing to the south, although this doesn't explain the absence of many of the right foot bones. Another possibility is that this positioning represents a quirk of the disturbance caused by the later excavation of [203]. Small roots were again frequent, without greatly disturbing the bones of [214]. Beyond concluding that Sk2 represented an adult individual, no age-at-death estimation or sexing probability was possible due to the limited material present. Sk2's femur displayed a patch of eburnated bone indicating osteoarthritis. This perhaps suggesting an older individual or an individual whose work or livelihood had an impact on their knee joint or joints (*Appendix 1*).

No nails were recovered from grave fill (206). A single copper alloy pin, presumed again to be a shroud pin and given the number SF2, was photographed in situ and recovered from below the feet of Sk2. Measured (in the absence of a visible pelvic bone) at the westmost visible part of the femur, Sk2 returned a level of 98.13 m AOD.

### 6.2.3 Skeleton 3 – [215]

Sk3 was located at the southern boundary of the soakaway pit. The line of the baulk neatly bisected Sk3, meaning that only the left and spinal body parts were visible. This skeleton was given the number [215]. Sk3 lay in grave 3 [207], which was cut deeper into the natural subsoil. The limits of the grave cut were much sharper and clearer than in [203] and [205]. Grave 3 was filled by (208), a dark grey-brown silty sand visually similar to (201) and the other grave fills. (208) contained frequent angular and sub-angular pebbles, unlike any of the other grave fills, sometimes bedded together to create areas of compaction.

Sk3 was present within the soakaway pit from the foot to the shoulder. The very bottom of the mandible was visible in a collapsed part of the section, but would have required significant undercutting to lift and so was left undisturbed. Sk3 was in generally very good condition. The leg appeared extended, although with the lower leg offset north from the knee joint about 0.05m. The left hand of Sk3 appeared to have been rested on the lower hip or upper leg, with the arm gently flexed and the hand prone. It was suggested that Sk3 might have been shrouded within the coffin, while the foot appears to have been flexed upwards against the end of the coffin. Rooting was slightly more frequent in (208), but again without any great effect on [215]. Analysis of the pelvic area concluded that the individual was a male individual of around 1.80 m with an age estimate of 30-40 years at death (*Appendix 1*).

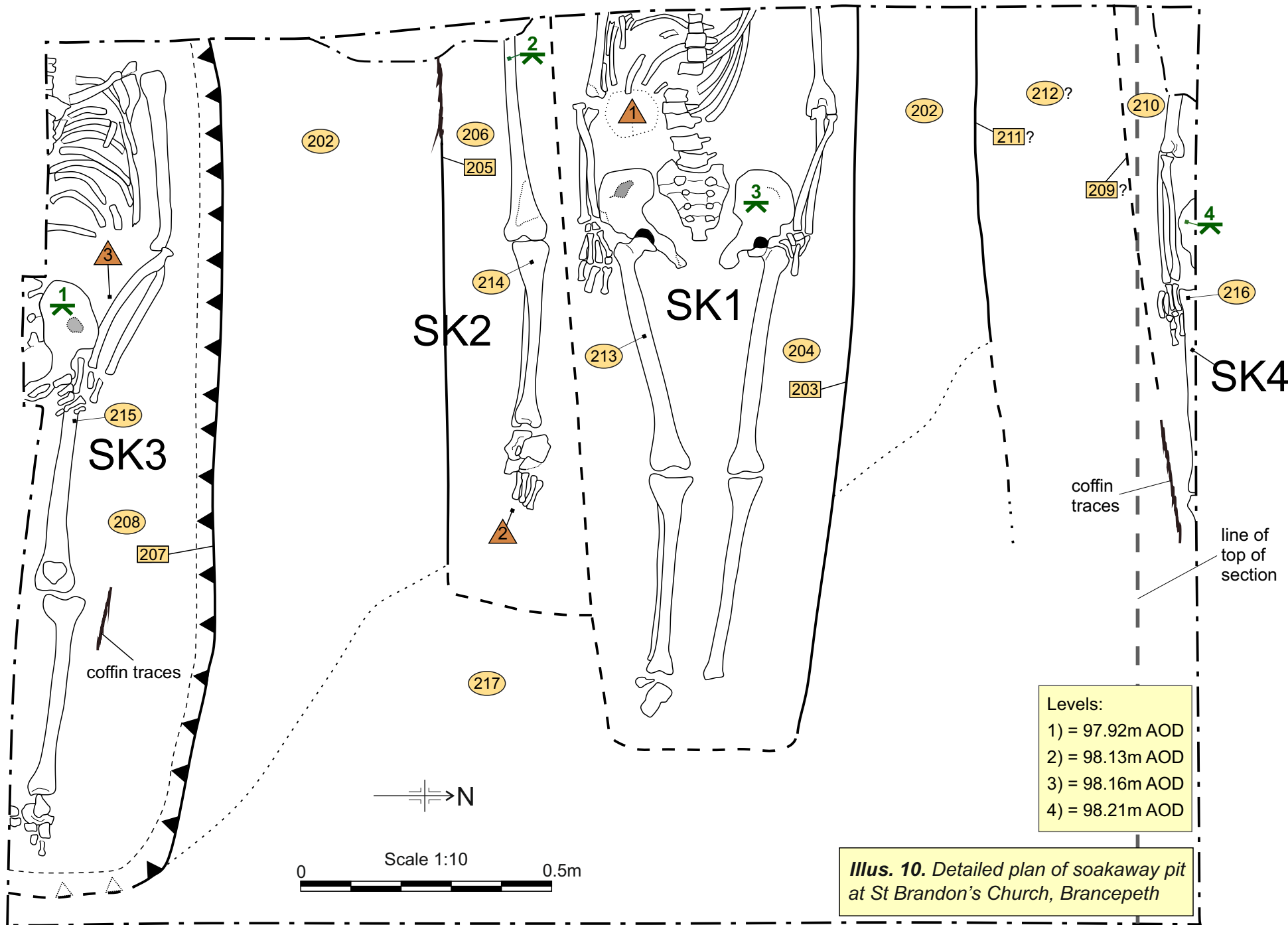
A handful of nails were recovered from grave 3, as well as a surviving right angle of coffin wood with traces of an iron nail or fitting. Another piece of medieval pottery, this time green-glazed, and certainly residual, was recovered from high up in (208). A single copper alloy pin fragment, presumed to be a fragment of shroud pin and given the number SF3, was photographed in situ and recovered from the inner left arm of Sk3. Measured at the centre of the left pelvis, Sk3 returned a level of 97.92 m AOD.

### 6.2.4 Skeleton 4 – [216]

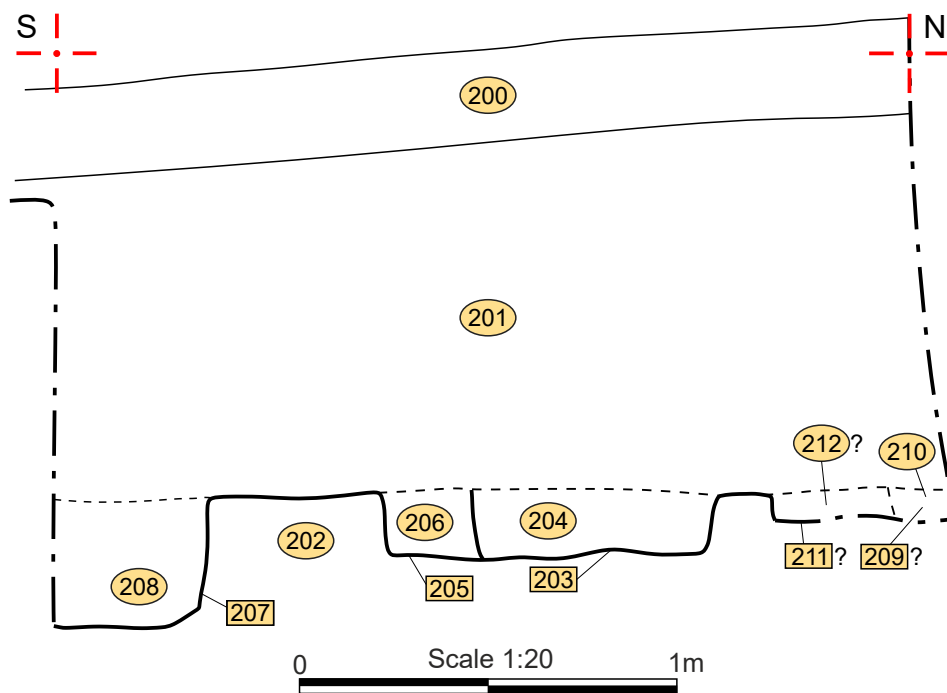
Sk4 was located in the northern boundary of the soakaway pit, with all skeletal material lying north of the line of top of the section, meaning Sk4 was outside of the footprint of the soakaway's construction. This was due to the section having been somewhat undercut during the excavation of the soakaway pit. The presumed grave cut in which Sk4 lay was called grave 4 [209], which was filled by grave fill (212), a dark grey-brown silty sand much like (204) and (206). A line of coffin staining was present close to the femur and tibia of Sk4 and a possible cut line could be discerned between the dark grave fill and dark soil to the south.

The line of a possible further cut was visible nearly 0.40 m south of Sk4's right arm. There exists the possibility that this more distant line represented a hypothetical earlier grave cut (given the number [211]), with a relationship between this hypothetical grave cut and [209] potentially being similar to that between [203] and [205]. However, no articulated bones or stains where bones might have been were observed in this area.

The elements of Sk4 revealed by the soakaway pit excavations were the right arm bones, seven visible elements of the right hand, the right pelvis and the right leg bones. Only basic observations were able to be made about Sk4, but it was clearly in extended position, with the hand prone and tight to the femur. It was suggested, as potentially with Sk1 and Sk3, that the tightness of the arm to the leg might be due to the shrouding of Sk4 within a coffin. No finds were recovered from grave 4 or the putative grave 5.



**Illus. 10.** Detailed plan of soakaway pit at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth



**Illus. 11.** East-facing section of soakaway pit showing graves 203, 205, 207, 209 and possible grave 211



### 6.3 Context List

- (200) Topsoil – Dark grey-brown silty sand
- (201) Graveyard Soil – Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with frequent rubble and stone cobbles and pebbles
- (202) Natural – Mid yellow-brown silty clay
- [203] Cut of Grave – Sub-rectangular grave cut associated with Sk1
- (204) Fill of Grave – Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with moderately frequent stone pebbles
- [205] Cut of Grave – Sub-rectangular or rectangular grave cut associated with Sk2
- (206) Fill of Grave – Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with moderately frequent stone pebbles
- [207] Cut of Grave – Sub-rectangular grave cut associated with Sk3
- (208) Fill of Grave – Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with frequent stone pebbles
- [209] Cut of Grave – Presumed sub-rectangular or rectangular grave cut associated with Sk4
- (210) Fill of Grave – Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with moderately frequent stone pebbles
- [211] Possible Cut of Grave – Theorised grave cut. Presumed sub-rectangular or rectangular grave cut
- (212) Possible Fill of Grave – Theorised grave fill. Mid to dark grey-brown silty sand with moderately frequent stone pebbles
- (213) Skeleton 1
- (214) Skeleton 2
- (215) Skeleton 3
- (216) Skeleton 4
- (217) ?Layer - Dark grey-brown ?layer east of graves, possibly associated with disturbance from the construction of the culvert.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 7.1 Conclusions

Initial investigation of the churchyard at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth by the excavation of trial holes revealed a feature likely to represent a ruined culvert. While very little of the feature appeared to remain in situ, the presence of surviving built remains amongst a significant concentration of rubble in the location suggested by the GPR survey suggests that it is the culvert feature known from previous investigations of the site. The culvert was concluded to have collapsed and was deemed completely inviable for utilisation. A percolation test conducted on 7th March 2022 on the site of TH2 produced results representing extremely fast percolation of water in this position. The only find of any note was the jeton of likely 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century origin recovered from a considerable depth below ground in TH2. The jeton was not recovered from an obvious feature, therefore does not illuminate or help to date anything else, but remains an interesting find in its own right.

Further monitoring of the soakaway works encompassed pipe trenching and the beginnings of the soakaway pit excavations, producing large amounts of disarticulated bone but no finds or features beyond remnants of defunct drainage. Full excavation of the soakaway pit revealed four skeletons in graves cut into natural, as well as a fifth possible grave that yielded no skeletal remains. The skeletons were concluded to represent two grown adults (Sk2 and Sk3) and a likely young adult (Sk1), with Sk4 unable to be aged in situ. Analysis of sex concluded two probable females (Sk1 and Sk4) and a male (Sk3). Sk2 had no visible elements with which an analysis of sex could be made.

The frequent remains of coffin materials, the observation of areas of coffin staining and the presence of shroud pins, along with the compact situation of the skeletons suggest that all four burials were likely shrouded and buried in narrow coffins. This form of burial only became prevalent from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it is therefore highly likely that all four skeletons derive from multiple phases of post-medieval burials, possibly even extending into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The grave cut of Sk1 appears to have largely removed the remains of Sk2, suggesting that Sk2's grave marker was not visible when Sk1 came to be buried. It is suggested here that [209], the grave cut for Sk4, cut through an earlier burial in a grave cut [211], the skeletal material from which has either completely degraded or was wholly disturbed during the process. This might be interpreted as a wider pattern of a row of more recent graves cutting through a row of older graves, with the later graves slightly positionally offset to the north-east.

Without associated headstones, or any indications of plots, it isn't possible to say anything about the individuals and their place in the community with any certainty. Given their positioning in rows, and the multiple phases of burial including the cutting of graves by later burials, these burials might represent parishioners interred outside of family plots, subject to the freeing up of 'space' for new burials. Sk1, an adolescent female, stands out for her tall stature (projected at c. 1.75m) and presumably had a good diet. Such a diet might have been more easily attainable in the environs of Brancepeth, in and around the grounds of an estate, than was attainable in contemporary towns or mining communities, and need not indicate higher status. Evidence of possible labour in the life of one of the individuals exhumed is present in the form of a pathology on Sk2. The age of this individual could not be estimated beyond an adult, but a pathology on the right knee indicates osteoarthritis, possibly due to repetitive activity, perhaps through labour involving a high level of stress on the knee joints.

## 7.2 Recommendations

No further analysis of the skeletal material is recommended, as no justifiable research aims can be attached to such a small sample size of skeletons, one of which did not need to be lifted at all. The skeletal material, including disarticulated remains, will be reinterred in the 'new' churchyard to the north of the original churchyard, at approximately National Grid Reference NZ 225075 377325. This will be carried out by the parish, with appropriate ceremony by the Parish Priest. Future work in and around St Brandon's Church should be considered on its own merits, and any deep excavation within the churchyard will require special attention and carry the expectation of finding burials. In the case of such discoveries, **detailed recording of in situ remains would be considered a minimum level of recording**, with the possibility of similar on-site osteological analysis. In this case, as with the current project, the possibility of off-site analysis could not be completely ruled out.

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**Photo 01.** North view of TH1.



**Photo 02.** South view of TH1.



**Photo 03.** South view of TH2.



**Photo 04.** East view of TH5, excavated to a depth of 1m.



**Photo 05.** East detailed view of sandstone rubble in TH5, after excavation to a depth of 1.25m.



**Photo 06.** South view of TH5 after excavation to 1.25m depth.



*Photo. 07: The obverse side of the jeton found in TH2.*



*Photo. 08: The reverse side of the jeton found in TH2.*



**Photo 09.** North view of excavations east of the 'Lady Chapel'.



**Photo 10.** Excavations expose the base of the central buttress of the 'Lady Chapel'. North view.



**Photo 11.** West view of pipe trench alongside the 'Lady Chapel'.



**Photo 12.** East view of pipe trench alongside the 'Lady Chapel'.





**Photo 13.** East view of pipe trench, east of the 'Lady Chapel'.



**Photo 14.** South-east view of pipe trench and the beginnings of the soakaway pit.



**Photo 15.** South view of the initial stages of the soakaway pit.



**Photo 16.** Overview looking west of Sk1-4, showing their relative positions.



**Photo 17.** Overview shot of Sk1 and Sk2.



**Photo 18.** Detail of the hands and pelvic area of Sk1.



**Photo 19.** Detail of the feet of Sk1. The cuboid bone (the left most of the foot bones) is a left cuboid, likely disturbed during excavation and thought to belong where it was found.



**Photo 20.** Detail of the right foot of Sk2. Note iron-staining, and the pin to the right of the foot.



**Photo 21.** Vertical overview shot of Sk3.



*Photo 22. Oblique overview shot of Sk3 looking west.*



*Photo 23. Detail of the left foot of Sk3.*



**Photo 24.** Detail of the left hand and pelvic area of Sk3.



**Photo 25.** Detail of the left clavicle of Sk3.



**Photo 26.** Overview shot of Sk4.



**Photo 27.** Detail of the right hand and pelvic area of Sk4.



**Photo 28.** Detail shot of right knee of Sk4 and coffin line south of Sk4.



**Photo 29.** Detail shot of right knee of Sk4 with coffin line marked in red.



## **APPENDIX 1: St. Brandon's Church, Brancepeth: Human Osteological Report**

Prepared by: Michelle Gamble

October 2022

Prepared for: The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

### **Non-technical summary**

- Four articulated individuals were uncovered and recorded. There are two possible females, one possible male and one individual where sex could not be determined. While all are adults, one individual is not skeletally mature, indicating an age of between 12-22 years-at-death, another is between 30-40 years-at-death, and the other two could not be assessed for age-at-death.
- All individuals are supine with their heads to the west, and grave furniture including coffins and possible shrouding, suggesting Christian burials.

### **Introduction**

An osteological assessment was undertaken on the human skeletal material which was excavated during the course of works taking place at St. Brandon's Church, Brancepeth, County Durham. This is a parish church with a long history dating back to the Anglo-Saxons and restored following a devastating fire in 1998 (Ryder 1999). Drainage works through the southeast corner of the churchyard uncovered a minimum of four articulated individuals. This report will detail the body positioning of the skeletons in their graves. It will provide an inventory of the skeletal material recovered, along with the age-at-death and sex of each individual where possible and present any pathological and taphonomic changes observed on the bone material.

### **Skeletal Material and Burial Position**

The articulated skeletal material reported on here is derived from the soakaway pit which was dug as part of the works to improve drainage from the church. It was clear at the early planning stages that digging in this area would most likely uncover human remains, and that those uncovered would be approached conservatively to minimise disturbance as per the APABE Guidelines (2017). Excavation of the human remains follows the guidelines of the ClfA and BABAO (2017). A minimum of four individuals were recovered and examined, however, there are likely five or six individuals present with a small amount of disarticulated skeletal material recovered from the grave fill around skeletons 1 and 3.

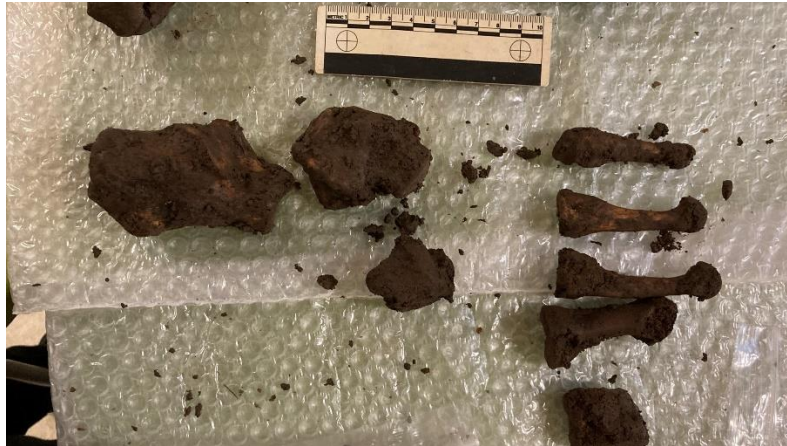


*Figure 1: The four articulated skeletons in situ. Skeleton 1 is the most complete one, in the centre of the image, with Skeleton 2 represented by the leg to the south of Skeleton 1. Skeleton 3 is along the south end of the trench and Skeleton 4 is along the north edge. (Photo courtesy of A. Leigh, *The Archaeological Practice*).*

The four articulated individuals are all in a supine, extended position, with their arms to their sides, on or under the pelvis and their legs extended (Figure 1). Their heads are all to the west, though all crania are still under the baulk and have remain unexcavated. The archaeological evidence suggests that coffins were present, and some aspects of body position could indicate shrouding as well. All of these attributes suggest that these are Christian burials.

- Skeleton 1 (213), cut [203], fill (204) was uncovered from the mid-humerus/mid-torso to the feet. Their hands are palm down adjacent to the hips. Overall, the orientation of the hands and tightness of the ankles together suggests that the individual was buried within a coffin and potentially shrouded, though this may just be due to the coffin structure keeping the individual together.
- The burial of Skeleton 1 seems to have cut through burial of Skeleton 2 (214), cut [205], fill (206). Therefore, Skeleton 2 is only partially present. While in situ it appeared to be simply a right leg, hand and foot – with the hand bones located on and around the right femur; however, the osteological analysis revealed that the metatarsals were from a left foot and suggests that perhaps the right and left feet were initially quite close together and when the left portion of the body was disturbed and removed, there was some mixing of the bones of the feet and ankle (Figure 2).
- Skeleton 3 (215), cut [207], fill (208) is along south edge of works area and only the left side of the body is exposed as the line of the trench edge runs directly long the centre of the body. Therefore, in line with APABE, as much of the skeleton was left in situ as possible, including its axial elements. The left hand is sitting on top of the proximal end of the femur with the palm down, which could suggest shrouding. The left foot may have been flexed up against the end of the grave cut or coffin.
- Skeleton 4 (216), cut [209], fill (210) is along the north edge of the works area with only the right side of the body partially exposed. The right hand is palm down and is pressed against the right femur, suggesting shrouding. Since the trench edge is slightly

overcut towards the base of the trench, it was decided to record the skeleton in situ and not remove the remains, and to ensure further digging in the area avoids this skeleton. The inventory is provided in the table. A disarticulated right petrous portion was within the fill (210) of this grave. It is unclear if it belongs to Skeleton 4 or if it represents the remains of an earlier individual which was disturbed by [209].



*Figure 2: Left foot found with the right foot remains.*

### **Methods**

Standard methods of macroscopic observation were employed, in agreement with Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994) and Mitchell and Brickley (2017). All the skeletal material was recorded in an inventory attached in Appendix 1. The length of the bone is recorded where possible to be used for stature estimation (Bass 1995; White and Folkens 2005). Any pathological changes are identified and described in agreement with Mitchell and Brickley (2017) and Ortner (2003).

Standard age and sex assessment scales were used (Buikstra and Ubelaker 1994; Schaefer et al. 2009; White and Folkens 2005 – and references within each). The cranium and os coxa (pelvis) inform on the sex of the individual and the epiphyseal ends of long bones, os coxa and dentition provide age-at-death ranges for the individual. Given that there were no crania or dentition present, the conclusions in this report rely primarily on the ossa coxae.

No sampling was undertaken at this time, however, if it does need to be, the Advisory Panel on Archaeology of Burials in England [APABE] (2013) and suggestions in Squires, Booth and Roberts (2019) should be followed.

### **Summary of Observations**

All skeletal material was examined on site at the parish church to avoid removing the remains from their initial resting place. It was roughly cleaned using wooden tools where needed, and the remains have stayed on site with the intention of re-burying the skeletons as per APABE guidelines. The surface preservation, fragmentation levels and completeness of each bone are all excellent. This material is very well preserved. A total of 184 bone elements were examined from a minimum of four individuals; however based on the burial contexts there are at least six individuals represented with disarticulated material within the grave fill of the articulated burials. All the skeletal material examined is recorded in the inventory in Appendix 1.

Skeleton 1 (213) is the most complete of the skeletons exposed and is approximately 75% present with excellent surface preservation. The upper portion of the skeleton is still under the trench edge, with the eighth thoracic vertebra down to the fifth lumbar vertebra exposed, including the lower arms and thorax down to the feet. This individual is a possible female aged between 14-20 years-at-death based on the observed level of fusion of the bones of the skeleton. Her estimated stature is 174.88 cm +/- 3.72 based on the left femur (White and Folkens 2005: 399 – for a white female). The sternum is unfused with only four sternal bodies present, two of which were fused and were still rather billowy and gracile which suggests a younger individual, suggesting an age-at-death of 15-20 years (Schaeffer et al. 2009). (Figure 3) The proximal epiphysis of the of the femora still show their fusion line indicating that this individual is not a fully mature adult, likely aged between 12-22 years (Figure 3). The vertebrae are in relatively good condition with some damage to the spinous processes on several of the vertebrae. There is no indication of pathology. The ossa coxae are unfortunately missing the pubic symphyses but seem to reflect a young age based on the visible fusion line of the anterior iliac crest, some of which has detached on the left os coxa which suggests an age between 14-19 years (Schaeffer et al. 2009 and references within), and the smooth auricular surface (Phase 1 or lower from Lovejoy et al. 1985). A very wide sciatic notch suggests this is a female individual (Figure 4). Overall, the size of these bones and the estimated stature reflect a rather large female individual and would thus suggest an age-at-death towards the older end of the assessment, perhaps 18-22 years-at-death.

There was an indeterminate, likely animal bone fragment, found within context (204).



*Figure 3: (L) The sternum of Skeleton 1 showing the lack of fusion of the sternum and the general youthful appearance of this bone. (R) The right femur showing the anterior view of the proximal epiphysis, with fusion line still visible.*



*Figure 4: The ossa coxae of Skeleton 1 – note the wide sciatic notches and the fragment of the anterior iliac crest on the right side of the picture.*

Skeleton 2 (214) is only partially present. Roughly 15% of the skeleton was excavated, with only the right leg recovered as the grave has been cut through and the skeletal material removed or displaced, likely during the burial of Skeleton 1. No sex or age-at-death estimation was possible beyond an adult individual. The only pathology observed was a patch of eburnated bone on the distal epiphysis of the femur towards the anterior lateral aspect which is an indication of osteoarthritis and perhaps suggests an older individual or one who has used their knee in repetitive activity.

Skeleton 3 (215) has only the left side of the body exposed as the line of the trench edge runs directly along the centre of the body. Approximately 35% of the skeleton was recovered with the vertebrae left in situ and the cranium under the west trench edge. This is a male skeleton based on the pubic symphysis and pelvic traits and is aged 30-40 years-at-death based again on pelvic traits (Figure 5). The estimated living stature of this individual is based on the femur and is 180.89 cm +/-3.27 cm.



Figure 5: Left os coxa of Skeleton 3.

Skeleton 4 (216) is located along north edge of works area, with only the right side of the body partially exposed (Figure 6). Since the trench edge is slightly overcut towards the base of the trench, it was decided to record the skeleton in situ, and to advise that this skeleton not be disturbed by ensuring further digging in the area avoids it. There is approximately 35% of the skeleton present of a possible female individual. No age-at-death estimation is possible and the estimated living stature is based off the femur, and suggests a height of 160.31 cm  $\pm$  3.72 cm.



*Figure 6: Skeleton 4 in situ. (Photo courtesy of A. Leigh, The Archaeological Practice Ltd.).*

A small amount of disarticulated bone was also recovered and recorded where it was associated with the articulated graves. Disarticulated bone from other contexts has not been inventoried as it will not provide any new information about the site.

To conclude, there were four articulated individuals uncovered and analysed for this report – a probable female aged 12-22 years-at-death, a male aged 30-40 years-at-death, a female with no age estimation possible and an adult individual with no age or sex estimation possible. All these individuals were in a supine position and there were indications of funerary furniture and burial practices suggesting Christian burials. All of the skeletal material is in excellent preservation and has remained within the Church for future reburial.

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## **Appendix 1 to St. Brandon's Church, Brancepeth: Human Osteological Report**

Observations were recorded for all the skeletal material from a single context in a detailed inventory in the following order:

- bone element – where T# = thoracic vertebra, L# = lumbar vertebra, MC = metacarpal, MT = metatarsal, prox = proximal, inter = intermediate, dist = distal, phal = phalanx;
- side – where L = left, R = right, A = axial, U = un-sided;
- the segment of the skeletal element present - where a long bone or small bone of the hand or foot is recorded, Buikstra and Ubelaker's (1994) abbreviations are employed to record the segment present (PE = proximal epiphysis, P1/3 = proximal third of the diaphysis, M1/3 = middle third of the diaphysis, D1/3 = distal third of the diaphysis, DE = distal epiphysis, Pend = un-fused proximal end, Dend= un-fused distal end);
- the number of fragments ('Frag');
- the percentage of the bone present ('Comp');
- the level of fragmentation - where intact = 0, broken (sizeable pieces) = 1, fragmentary = 2, very fragmentary = 3, no recognizable fragments = 4 ('Frag');
- and the surface preservation level of the skeletal element.

Further details regarding bone length and pathologies can be found in the excel spreadsheet associated with the digital record of this report.

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
1	213	Humerus	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Ulna	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Radius	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Humerus	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Ulna	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Radius	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Ribs 3-11	R	heads, shafts	17	25	3	Fair
1	213	12th Rib	R		1	95	1	Fair
1	213	Sternum	A	sternal bodies	3	75	0	Fair
1	213	Ribs 3-11	L	heads, shafts	16	35	3	Fair
1	213	12th Rib	L		1	95	1	Fair
1	213	Femur	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Tibia	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Fibula	L	P1/3-DE	2	95	1	Excellent
1	213	Femur	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Tibia	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Fibula	R	P1/3-DE	2	90	1	Excellent
1	213	T8	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
1	213	T9	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	T10	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	T11	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	T12	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	L1	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	L2	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	L3	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	L4	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	1	95	1	Excellent
1	213	L5	A	body, facets, transverse process, spinous process	7	80	3	Good
1	213	Sacrum	A	S1-S5, coccyx	6	90	1	Excellent
1	213	Os coxa	L	Ilium and Ischium	3	75	1	Excellent
1	213	Os coxa	R	Ilium and Ischium	1	75	1	Excellent
1	213	Scaphoid	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Lunate	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Triquetral	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Pisiform	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Trapezium	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Trapezoid	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Capitate	R		1	100	0	Excellent

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
1	213	Hamate	R		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC1	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC2	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC3	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC4	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC5	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist hand phal	R	M1/3-DE	1	40	1	Excellent
1	213	Lunate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Triquetral	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Pisiform	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Trapezium	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Hamate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Capitate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC1	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC2	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	MC5	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	1st Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	1st dist hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Calcaneus	R	tubercle, superior facet and body	1	65	1	Excellent
1	213	Talus	R	proximal half	1	40	1	Excellent
1	213	Cuboid	L		1	100	0	Excellent
1	213	Dist 1st foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	85	1	Excellent
2	214	Scaphoid	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Lunate	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Trapezoid	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Capitate	R		1	40	1	Excellent
2	214	MC1	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MC2	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MC3	R	M1/3-DE	1	60	0	Excellent

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
2	214	MC4	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MC5	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Prox 1st Hand Phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Dist hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Femur	R	PE-DE	3	95	1	Excellent
2	214	Tibia	R	PE-DE	0	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Patella	R		4	15	4	Poor
2	214	Fibula	R	PE-DE	3	95	1	Good
2	214	Calcaneus	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Talus	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Cuboid	R		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	Medial Cuneiform	L		1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MT1	L	PE-DE	1	90	1	Excellent
2	214	MT2	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MT3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
2	214	MT4	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Humerus	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Ulna	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Radius	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Femur	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Tibia	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Fibula	L	P1/3-DE	1	90	1	Excellent
3	215	Patella	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Scapula	L	glenoid, acromion, coracoid and blade	7	95	1	Excellent
3	215	Clavicle	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Scaphoid	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Lunate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Capitate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Hamate	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Trapezium	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Trapezoid	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Triquetral	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MC1	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MC2	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MC3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
3	215	MC4	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MC5	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st dist hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Inter hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Dist hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st rib	L	head, angle	1	50	1	Fair
3	215	2nd rib	L	angle	1	50	1	Fair
3	215	Ribs 3-11	L	heads, shafts	26	50	3	Fair
3	215	Os coxa	L	pubis, ilium, ischium	3	95	1	Excellent
3	215	Sternum	A	manubrium	1	20	1	Fair
3	215	Navicular	R		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT1	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st prox foot phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox foot phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Calcaneus	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Talus	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Navicular	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Cuboid	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Medial Cuneiform	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Intermediate Cuneiform	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Lateral Cuneiform	L		1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT1	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT2	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT4	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	MT5	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st prox foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Prox foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	Inter foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
3	215	1st dist foot phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Humerus	R	D1/3-DE	1	10	0	Excellent

Sk	Context	Bone	Side	Segment	Frag	Comp	Frag	Preservation
4	216	Ulna	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Radius	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	MC2	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	MC3	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	MC4	R	PE-D1/3	1	90	1	Excellent
4	216	MC5	R	PE-DE	1	80	1	Excellent
4	216	Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Inter hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	1st Prox hand phal	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Os coxa	R	ilium	1	30	1	Excellent
4	216	Femur	R	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Patella	R		1	100	0	Excellent
4	216	Tibia	R	PE-M1/3	1	50	0	Excellent
4	216	Fibula	R	PE-M1/3	1	30	0	Excellent
	208	MC3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Fair
	204	MC4	L	PE-DE	2	98	1	Fair
	208	Max I1	L	crown and root	1	98	0	Excellent
	208	ManM2	L	crown and root	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	MC3	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	MC4	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	MC5	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent
	204	Prox hand phal	L	PE-DE	1	100	0	Excellent

**APPENDIX 2:**

**ST BRANDON'S CHURCH, BRANCEPETH, COUNTY DURHAM - Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, vs.6, September 2022**

Prepared by The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

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ST. BRANDON'S CHURCH  
BRANCEPETH  
COUNTY DURHAM

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief  
Vs.6 (with addendum)

*Prepared by*

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

September 2022

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*Grid Reference:* NZ 22500 37683 (centre)  
*Client:* Brancepeth, St Brandon's PCC  
*Project Code:* AP 21/33  
*Oasis Number:* thearcha2-505301



## CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY
3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION
4. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

## ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover photo.: View of St Brandon's Church from the south-east.

*Illus. 01-03: The location of St Brandon's church, Brancepeth, south-west of Durham (highlighted in Illus. 01) and the area within which groundworks will take place (highlighted, Illus. 03) shown in relation to Brancepeth village and castle (Illus. 02).*

*Illus. 04: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey plan showing Brancepeth castle and church, including features probably associated with a tunnel entrance (circled) in the south-east corner of the cemetery.*

*Illus. 05: Ryder's (1996) plan of a tunnel in the south-east part of St Brandon's cemetery.*

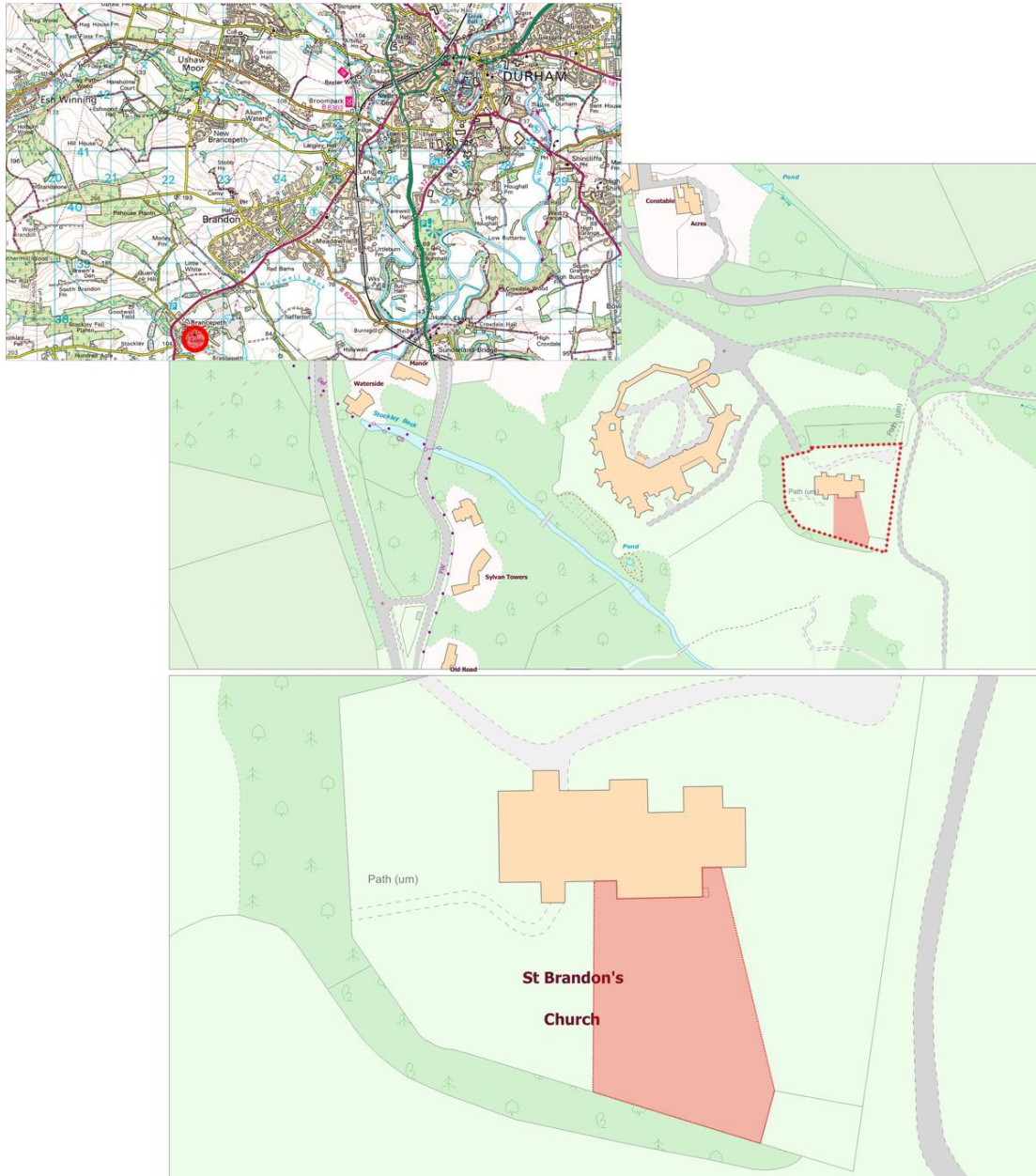
*Photo. 01: View from the east of southern buttresses to the nave, showing a rise in ground level onto the cemetery area to the south.*

APPENDIX 1: Addendum detailing the treatment of burials encountered 31/08/22.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

St Brandon's is a small rural church located in the village of Brancepeth, approximately 4 miles South-West of Durham. Knox McConnell Architects have been instructed by the Parochial Church Council of St. Brandon's to plan and oversee a second phase of stonework repairs to the church, following completion of the first phase of repairs in January 2016.



*Illus. 01-03: The location of St Brandon's church, Brancepeth, south-west of Durham (highlighted in Illus. 01) and the area within which groundworks will take place (highlighted, Illus. 03) shown in relation to Brancepeth village and castle (Illus. 02).*

The church is Listed Grade I and was once one of the most outstanding medieval churches in the Diocese of Durham, embodying elements from the 12th to the 15th Centuries and much enhanced in the 17th Century. The building comprises a Clerestoried Nave, flanked by Aisles, which clasp the West Tower, Transepts, a Chancel with a Chapel to its South and a Vestry to its North. There are North and South Porches near the West ends of the Aisles. The 12<sup>th</sup> century base of the Tower and early 13<sup>th</sup> century Nave are the earlier surviving elements of the current building.

#### Summary of List Entry for the CHURCH OF ST BRANDON

*NGR: NZ 22479 37696; List entry No.: 1158956; Grade: I; Date first listed: 10/05/67*

**St Brandon I Parish church.** *Late C12 tower; early C13 aisled nave with late C13-early C14 east bay and transepts; aisles widened and extended to engage tower in C14; chancel rebuilt, south transept extended to east and north chapel and nave clerestory added in C15; c.1630 north porch; C19 south porch and restorations. Chancel roof 1638 by Robert Barker for Rector John Cosin. Dressed sandstone chancel, north chapel and east bay of south transept; squared and rubble stone elsewhere. Lead roofs. West tower engaged by aisles; aisled nave with north and south porches and transepts; aisleless chancel with north and south chapels, the latter on east return of transept. Unbuttressed 4-stage tower with round-headed loops on second stage, paired lancets above and embattled parapet on corbel table. 3-bay nave has 3-light clerestory windows between thin buttresses. Buttressed aisles have pointed windows with mainly restored curvilinear tracery. Buttressed 3-bay chancel has chamfered plinth and pointed windows with Perpendicular tracery. Defaced stone panel with Christ in mandorla on south-east buttress of chancel. Diagonally-buttressed transepts have pointed windows with curvilinear tracery. North and south chapel windows similar to chancel. Low-pitched roofs behind parapets. North porch, added by Cosin, has pointed doorways, blocked on west return, framed by pilasters with strapwork, friezes with Cosin Arms and cherub heads; semicircular pediment on front and battlements on returns. Gabled south porch. Interior: Pointed double-chamfered arches to tower, 3-bay nave arcades and chancel, the latter arch moved one bay to east in late C13. Arcades under hoodmoulds and on octagonal piers with moulded capitals. Elaborate C15 wood nave roof with carved bosses. C15 ribbed wood tunnel vault, between south transept and chancel, has bosses with shields, crocketed extrados and crowning angel bust. Woodwork: Reredos re-uses C15 Perpendicular panelling. Altar in south transept by Thompson of Kilburn made from C14 Flemish chest with Flamboyant tracery. Superb fittings with elaborate carving installed by Cosin c.1630-40 in two distinct styles: 1) contemporary Jacobean with strapwork and Classical motifs (nave pews, box/family pews and pulpit); 2) conscious Gothic Revival with poppyheads, tracery, some Classical motifs and strapwork (font cover, rood screen, choir stalls and chancel panelling). 1628 6-leg Communion table and contemporary rail. 1638 chancel roof has flat rib vault and ceiling above altar with lierne ribs and bosses with winged angels. 2 carved wood fragments above chancel arch: 1) with Gothic ribs, cresting and Instruments of the Passion (possibly contemporary with the Cosin fittings); 2) with square panels containing Flamboyant tracery. Font cover raised on 4 iron posts in 1972 by G.G. Pace. Monuments. Large cross-legged stone effigy of Robert Neville died 1319. Recumbent wood effigies of Ralph Neville*

*died 1484 and his wife. Stone tomb chest of Ralph Neville died 1523. Brasses to Thomas Claxton died 1403 and Richard Drax died 1456. Several C17 and C18 floor slabs and wall monuments. Glass: 3 possible Flemish roundels in north aisle window; Boyne testimonial window 1864 by Blackmore of London. Note: John Cosin (1595-1672), Rector of Brancepeth 1620-46 and Bishop of Durham 1660-72, was responsible for sumptuous fittings in several churches in the County including the Cathedral.*

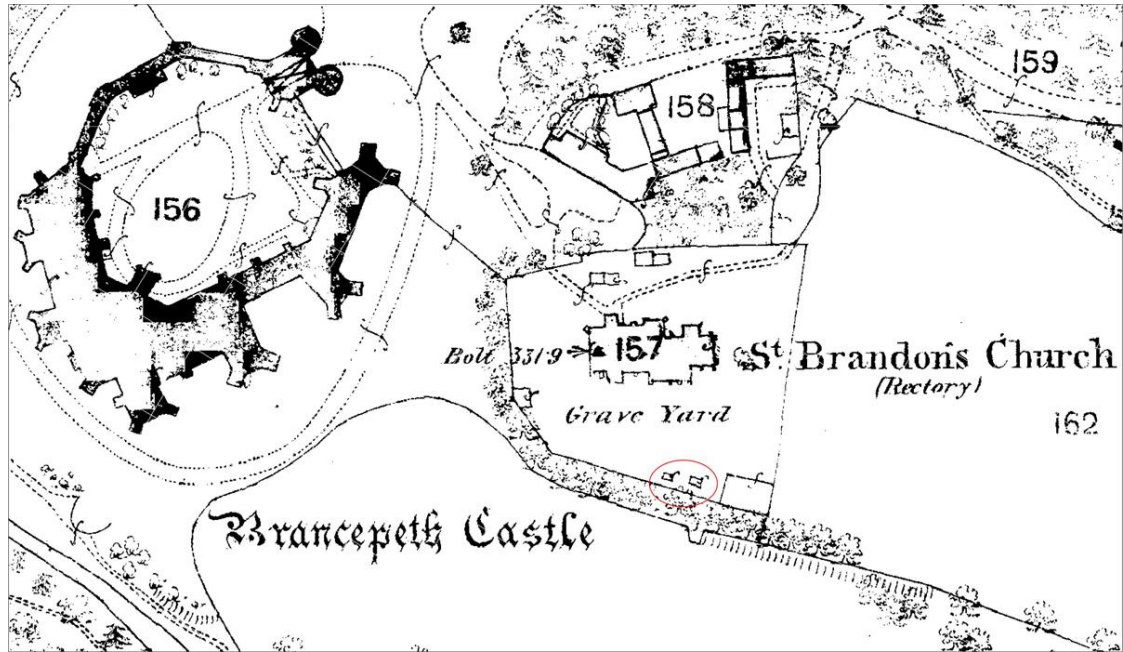
In 1998 the building was devastated by fire which destroyed its interior, including all timber work, roofs and stained glass windows. Since then an extensive period of repair and rebuilding has taken place including new roofs, new windows and new interior. The 2013 Quinquennial Inspection identified significant decay to the stonework throughout the church, as well as ongoing movement in the Chancel and North Transept. Following the recommendations of the Quinquennial Inspection Report, a first phase of stonework repairs was undertaken in 2015/16.

Based on the 2013 Quinquennial Inspection report, reinforced by the 2018 report, a second phase of stonework repairs and other improvements aims to address some of the problems of stonework decay as well as widening the appeal of the building and through local and wider regional/national public engagement.

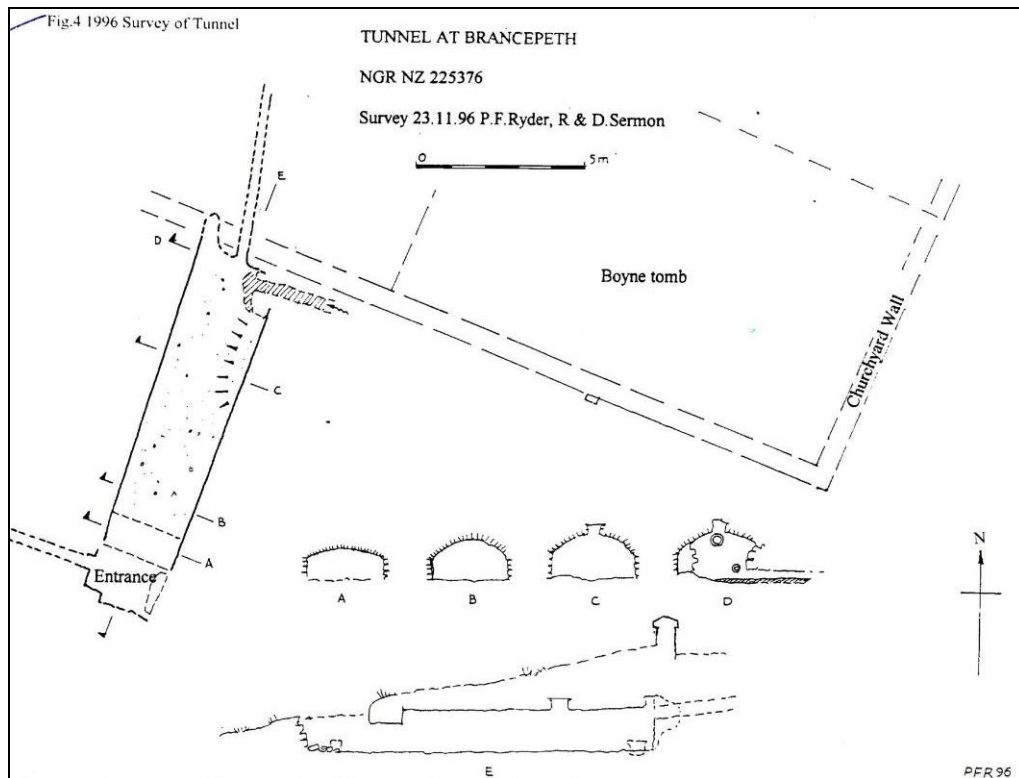
Previous archaeological and historic buildings recording work carried out on the church, notably in relation to the 1998 destruction and subsequent conservation works, principally by Ryder (2002 & 2009)<sup>1</sup> has noted the potential for earlier origins of the church and the possibility for earlier phases of building and burial remains within the current precinct. Earlier work by Ryder also charted the course and dimensions of a tunnel, likely associated with the Boyne memorial in the south-east corner of the churchyard (see *Illus. 04 & 05*, below).

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<sup>1</sup> 2002 Report with Durham County Sites and Monuments Record; subsequently published as - Ryder, P F, 2009, *The Cross Slabs of Brancepeth ....after the fire: A major archaeological discovery*. Broomlee Publications.



Illus. 04: Extract from the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey plan showing Brancepeth castle and church, including features probably associated with a tunnel entrance (circled) in the south-east corner of the cemetery.



Illus. 05: Ryder's (1996) plan of a tunnel in the south-east part of St Brandon's cemetery.

## 1.2 Nature of Proposed Developments

The proposed scheme of conservation and maintenance works at St Brandon's will include a programme of stone replacement and works to address problems emanating from water ingress, including superficial damp and more serious structural issues. Damp problems identified internally and externally, and movement in the Chancel & North Transept walls are to be addressed through an overhaul of the existing rainwater disposal.

The works to improve rainwater disposal are the subject of this project design for archaeological monitoring. Excavation works were to be undertaken in two phases to reduce as far as possible any disturbance to sub-surface archaeological remains, including burials, the culvert or any other built and deposited remains. The first stage, detailed below, was carried out in March 2022. The results of this are discussed in section 1.3. The second phase is to be carried out in June 2022.

The **first phase** involved the excavation of trial holes by the Archaeological Practice Ltd., following which an interim report was submitted to the DAC for approval. Following approval of the interim report submitted to the DAC as well as an updated Written Scheme of Investigation (the present document), the **second phase** will involve the excavation of the drainage facility itself by the main contractor, monitored by the Archaeological Practice Ltd.

With respect to drainage, it is understood that there is an existing drainage culvert running beneath the churchyard. This may be the same culvert identified as running into the north end of a tunnel, recorded in 1996 by Ryder, adjacent to the Boyne memorial in the south-east corner of the churchyard (see *Illus. 04 and 05*).

A GPR survey by Atlantic Geomatics traced the culvert for most of its course from the south side of the cemetery up to a point c. 10 m south-east of the south-east corner of the chancel, whereupon it was lost due to the presence of tree roots. The results did not show any further unmarked graves over the culvert or the projected course. This survey determined the location of trial holes excavated in the first phase of investigations.

## 1.3 Results of First Phase of Investigations

A possible total of five trial holes were proposed as part of the initial, investigatory stage of the scheme. These were located as follows:

TH1 - South of the chancel south wall on the course of proposed drainage routes and a potential soakaway.

TH2 - On the proposed route of new drainage route and potential soakaway, on or close to the projected line of the existing culvert. TH2 was also used as a percolation test to check the viability of any soakaway.

TH3 - On the projected line of the existing culvert mid-way between the south side of the chancel and entrance to the culvert close to the south-east corner of the cemetery.

TH4 - On the projected line of the existing culvert south of TH3.

TH5 - At the north end of the culvert as traced by geophysical survey.

Trial Holes 1, 2 and 5 were excavated first, with the excavation of Trial Holes 3 and 4 held in reserve in case more information was needed on the condition of the culvert. No previously unknown graves were encountered in Trial Holes 1 or 2, although a probable gas pipe was present in TH1. Excavation in TH5 concluded that the culvert contained no clear channel at its north end. The culvert appeared to have silted up and partially collapsed, with few elements left in situ. It was concluded that its condition rendered it unviable for appropriation by the proposed drainage works. These results made the excavation of Trial Holes 3 and 4 unnecessary.

Small amounts of disarticulated bone were discovered in the trial holes, decreasing in the amount recovered per trial hole the farther away the trial holes were located from the church. The only significant find of the first phase of investigation was a likely mid-15<sup>th</sup> century copper alloy jeton, comparing well to similar examples from France. This was found in the homogenous topsoil present throughout in Trial Hole 2. The jeton was not recovered from an obvious feature - it therefore does not illuminate or help to date anything else but remains an interesting find in its own right. No archaeological finds or features were encountered apart from the jeton and the collapsed culvert.

#### **1.4 Monitoring Scheme**

Having ruled out the appropriation of the existing culvert, the scheme of works will now take the form of a narrow drainage run leading to a soakaway in the location of Trial Hole 2. The soakaway's footprint is 2m by 1.5m. It will require at least 500mm of cover, although it has been noted that the downpipe gullies are at a lower level than the grass in much of the graveyard (*see Photo 1*). In order to achieve the desired gradient on the pipe run with an appropriate amount of cover, it might be necessary to dig 250-300mm deeper than previously thought (*pers comm.* Fiona Johnson, Knox-McConnell architects). Therefore, the excavation depth of 1500mm detailed in the specification (Knox McConnell Phase 2 Specification - 31 March 2022, p.12) might instead reach 1750-1800mm.

With this being noted, the works for the soakaway will consist of a significant excavation, measuring at least 2m by 1.5m in plan, and up to 1.8m in depth. The drainage run will be comparatively narrow, housing a 110mm drainage pipe, and will not exceed 300mm in width. It will feed into the top of the soakaway tank and excavations for the pipe run will not therefore not exceed 1m in depth.

The archaeological work's main aim will be to monitor the groundworks for the disturbance of human remains, and to further ensure that any human remains encountered are handled and recorded appropriately (see section 2.3 below, and Appendix 1). More generally, the results of the monitoring will be related to the research aims of the NERRF, which aims to place developer-led archaeological fieldwork in a context of academic understanding of the history and archaeology of the region (Petts and Gerrard 2006).<sup>2</sup> The NERRF research priorities of obvious relevance here are included in Chapter 19, Twentieth-century research agenda and include the Key Research Priorities of *Religion and Belief*, *Death and Burial* and *Military and Defence* (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 194-95).



*Photo. 01: View from the east of southern buttresses to the nave, showing a rise in ground level onto the cemetery area to the south.*

## 2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 General

2.1.1 The Archaeological Investigation will be carried out by means of archaeological watching brief.

2.1.2 The remaining monitoring will be carried out during the main phase of works when a drainage run and a soakaway pit will be excavated by the contractor. The drainage works will be limited to a specific route indicated by the interrupted blue line running from the south-east corner of the church on the drawing supplied (Knox McConnell - BSB08 010 Drainage Plan) as an Appendix to these proposals. The soakaway will be excavated in the exact location specified in the drainage plan cited above.

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<sup>2</sup> Petts, D and Gerrard, C , 2006, *'Shared Visions: The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment'*.



2.1.3 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and will follow the CIFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.

2.1.6 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

## **2.2 Groundworks**

2.2.1 The setting out of the route of the excavations and the location of the soakaway shall be carried out by the principal contractor on site.

2.2.2 All excavations will be continuously monitored for the presence of archaeological finds and features. As with any churchyard excavation, particular emphasis will be placed on the treatment of human remains, as detailed in section 2.3.

2.2.3 The excavations will be carried out by hand under continuous archaeological supervision.

2.2.4 The recent overburden will be removed in successive spits down to the first significant archaeological remains.

2.2.5 All faces of excavations requiring examination or recording, and the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, will be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains.

**Note: A bespoke methodology has been written in response to the discovery of three or more burials on the 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. This methodology, detailing the treatment and recording of the burials, is included in this updated WSI as an addendum (see Appendix 1). The constituent parts of section 2.3 are still applicable in general, and have been retained in this updated WSI as they form the basis of the specific treatment proposed for the burials.**

## **2.3 Process for Dealing with Human Remains**

2.3.1 As reiterated by the DAC, the prevention of disturbance to human remains is the overriding presumption. Remains must only be disturbed if it is necessary under the scheme of works.

2.3.2 Remains that cannot remain undisturbed will be treated in accordance with the guidelines produced by the Church of England and Historic England (2017) and the CiFA

(2017).

2.3.3 Disturbed human remains must be hand-excavated. The location of disarticulated remains encountered must be recorded and where possible, photographed in-situ. A record should be made of the anatomical elements present before they are reinterred. An osteoarchaeologist may need to be consulted, depending on the extent of remains.

2.3.4 In the event of the discovery of articulated human remains, i.e. burials, all work must stop and the site of the remains must be screened from public view. The DAC and Registry must be notified immediately and an application made to the Chancellor for permission to excavate. The proposed treatment of these remains at all stages will need to be detailed by the Archaeological Practice Ltd, including costs for analysis and provisions for reburial (see Appendix 1). If permission is granted, the remains should be hand excavated and recorded in accordance to current general archaeological guidelines for dealing with human remains.

2.3.5 Once the remains have been recorded, permission from the Court must be sought to remove the remains from the site. Remains should be lifted and bagged, and kept on site until any such decision is made. If the removal is approved by the Chancellor, the remains should be assessed by a qualified osteoarchaeologist. Contingency will be factored in for an osteoarchaeologist to attend site at short notice if required. If permission is not granted for removal, the remains should be reverently reburied as close to their point of discovery as possible. The marking of the reburial site should be discussed with the PCC.

2.3.6 In the event of unexpected or complex archaeological deposits being encountered, the PCC and DAC should be informed so that a revision of strategy can be agreed. The DAC would then advise on whether further application needed to be made to the Chancellor for permission to proceed.

2.3.7 No material culture may be removed from the churchyard until permission has been obtained from the Court or a Place of Safety Order has been made by the Archdeacon.

**Note: Large parts of sections 2.4 and 2.6 below will only become relevant in the event of archaeological finds or features other than burials being encountered. While this seems unlikely in the churchyard setting, these sections have been left in the WSI in the event of unexpected features or deposits (as per 2.3.6) being encountered deep below the present churchyard surface and pending approval from the DAC to proceed.**

## **2.4 Archaeological Recording**

2.4.1 Archaeological stratigraphy revealed by excavation will be recorded by the following means:

**2.4.2 Written descriptions.** Each archaeological context will be recorded on a pro-forma sheet. Minimum recorded details will consist of the following: a unique identifier; an objective description which includes measurements of extent and details of colour and composition; an interpretative estimate of function, clearly identified as such; the identifiers of related contexts and a description of the relationship with such contexts (for preference, executed as a mini Harris matrix); references to other recording media in which representations of the context are held (plans, sections, photographs).

**2.4.3 Measured illustrations.** The drawn record from the site will include a representative selection of long sections from the excavations that clearly allow the nature and depth and any significant changes in the deposits recorded to be demonstrated. Detail plans and sectional profiles of archaeological features will be at appropriate scales (1:20 or 1:10). Archaeological contexts will be referenced by their unique identifiers. All illustrations will be properly identified, scaled and referenced to the site survey control.

**2.4.4 Photographs.** Digital photographs will be taken for purposes of record. A system will be used for identifying the archaeological features photographed.

**2.4.5** All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant CIFA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

**2.4.6** Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artifacts encountered will be recovered.

**2.4.7** The potential requirement for specialist analyses (see below) is an unavoidable risk in all such excavations. The scientific investigation of any features/deposits which are considered significant will be undertaken as a non-negotiable part of this programme. Any such analyses would be carried out by specialists and priced to the client on a costs only basis (see Contingencies in the Project Costing).

## **2.5 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data**

**2.5.1** Following the completion of the Field Investigation and before any of the post-excavation work is commenced, an archive (the Site Archive) containing all the data gathered during fieldwork will be prepared.

**2.5.2** Following completion of the Field Investigation, a full report will be prepared collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the works.

## **2.6 Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating**

2.6.1 Any investigations of archaeological features will be undertaken in a manner consistent with *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide (EH 2015)*, *Standards for all Archaeological Work in County Durham and Darlington (DCC 2021)* and the latest ClfA guides, including *Standard and guidance. Archaeological watching brief. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA 2014)*.

2.6.2 A strategy for environmental sampling will be confirmed with Don O'Meara, Historic England North-East Science Advisor (tel. 0191 269 1250) in the event of archaeological features other than burials being encountered.

2.6.3 Deposits/fills with potential for environmental evidence will be assessed by taking up to two bulk samples of 30 litres from any context selected for analysis by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. Deposits/fills of potential significance totalling less than 30 litres in volume will be sampled in their entirety. Only those collected samples which are judged to be derived from uncontaminated and reasonably well-dated deposits and/or recognisable features will be selected for full analysis, reporting and publication.

2.6.4 Any significant animal bone assemblages, which can be used to explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment will be assessed by a recognised specialist.

2.6.5 Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in *Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather (English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995)*.

2.6.6 Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. A maximum of three samples of material suitable for dating by scientific means (eg: Radiocarbon, Luminescence, Remnant Magnetism, etc.) will be collected.

2.6.7 Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

2.6.8 If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Practice Ltd. will comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure will be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer, Benjamin Westwood (Tel. 03000 267 011) for guidance on the Treasure Act procedures. Treasure is defined as the following:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found

- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

## **2.7 Production of Final Report**

2.7.1 Following excavation of the trial pits, an interim report was submitted to the Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC) setting out the results of the trial-pits along with the architect's updated scheme of works to improve the drainage system, and any further archaeological works associated with this, for approval by the DAC.

2.7.2 The updated scheme of drainage works and accompanying updated WSI for archaeological works (this document) will be implemented, following which a final report will be prepared for submission on all phases of archaeological investigation.

2.7.3 Copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork to the Client, and the DAC's advising archaeologist. An additional hard and digital copy of the report will be lodged with the Durham County HER.

2.7.4 Two bound and collated copies of the report will be provided. Each will be bound, with each page and heading numbered. Any further copies required will be produced electronically. The report will include as a minimum the following:

- Executive summary
- A site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with at least an 8 figure central grid reference
- OASIS reference number; unique site code; museum accession number for the site
- Planning application number
- Contractor's details including date work carried out
- Nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details
- Description of the site location and geology
- A summary statement of methodologies used.
- A site plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
- Discussion of the results of field work

- Context & feature descriptions
- Features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating & scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format
- Stratigraphic matrices for the various areas examined
- Plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale
- Initial assessment reports by specialists
- Discussion of how the work has contributed to the NERFF objectives identified in the WSI
- Recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work
- Bibliography

2.7.5 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines.

2.7.6 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated repositior, Sevenhills Repository, Spennymoor within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Digital data, in particular a selection of important site photographs will be archived with ADS at the University of York.

2.7.7 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in the appropriate Notices, Annual Reviews, Reports, etc.

2.7.8 The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS). The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to all relevant parties.

2.7.9 A copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS within one week of final submission of the completed report to the DAC's advising archaeologist.

### 3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

3.1 The Developer has appointed The Archaeological Practice Ltd. as a professionally competent Archaeological Contractor, on agreed terms, to execute the scheme as set out in the brief supplied.

3.2 The present project design must be submitted for approval and, if necessary, modification by the DAC's advising archaeologist before work on-site can proceed.

3.3 The Developer will allow the DAC's advising archaeologist and the appointed contractor all reasonable access to the site for the purposes of the archaeological investigation, subject only to safety requirements.

3.4 The archaeological contractor appointed to manage the execution of the scheme shall ensure that:

3.4.1 The appropriate parties are informed of the objectives, timetable and progress of the archaeological work.

3.4.2 The progress of the work is adequately and effectively monitored and the results of this are communicated to the appropriate parties.

3.4.3 Significant problems in the execution of the scheme are communicated at the earliest opportunity to the appropriate parties in order to effect a resolution of the problems.

3.5 The archaeological contractor will carry, and will ensure that other archaeological contractors involved in the scheme carry appropriate levels of insurance cover in respect of Employers Liability, Public and Third Party Liability & Professional Indemnity.

3.6 The archaeological contractor will prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Safety Plan for the archaeological work.

3.7 At or before the commencement of the scheme the Developer, the appointed Archaeological Contractors, the DAC's advising archaeologist and other appropriate parties will agree arbitration procedures to be followed in the event of any unresolvable difficulties or disputes arising from the scheme.

3.8 Careful assessment has led to the definition of a number of research objectives which identify with a high degree of likelihood the kind of archaeological deposits which the investigation will encounter. Nevertheless, it is possible that discoveries will be made which could not reasonably have been foreseen on the basis of all the information currently available. Any difficulties arising from unforeseen discoveries will be resolved by discussion between all the parties involved. There will be a presumption, the investigation having been carried out in accordance with the schedule set out in this document, and to the satisfaction of the DAC's archaeologist, and all other considerations being equal, that no executive or financial obligation shall attach to any particular party in the event of unforeseen discoveries being made, and that the executive and financial responsibility for dealing with such unforeseen discoveries shall rest outside the currently agreed scheme of investigation.

3.9 The Archaeological Contractor(s) appointed to execute the scheme will procure and comply with all reasonable requirements of any church or other religious body or civil body regarding the manner and method of removal, re-interment or cremation of the human

remains, and the removal and disposal of any tombstones or other memorials discovered within the site. The Developer will incur all costs resulting from such compliance.

#### 4. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

It is envisaged that the remaining groundworks will take place from August 2022.

**Personnel:**

***Archaeological Practice***

*Project Manager: Richard Carlton*

*Project Officer: Marc Johnstone*

*Project Archaeologists: Mike Parsons;*

*Adam Leigh*

***Sub-Contractors***

*Archaeological Services Durham University*

*(Environmental remains)*

*Peter Ryder (Built remains)*

*Michelle Gamble (Osteoarchaeologist)*



## APPENDIX 1: Addendum detailing the treatment of burials encountered 31/08/22.

**This addendum to the WSI for archaeological monitoring at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth details the proposed treatment for human burials encountered during a scheme of works to install a new soakaway in the churchyard. It has been written to support application for permission to exhume.**

### 1. Background

1.1 Following the discovery of multiple, intercutting human burials during drainage works at St Brandon's Church, Brancepeth, a site meeting was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2022 to propose a course of action for the treatment of the remains ahead of any application to the chancellor. Present were members of the Diocesan Advisory Committee, a representative of the Parish Church, the Principal Contractor, the Archaeological Practice Ltd., and Michelle Gamble, the Archaeological Practice's appointed osteoarchaeologist for the project.

1.2 Burials were first encountered at a depth of approximately 1.2m in centre of the soakaway pit on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2022. Work by the principal contractor towards the completion of the soakaway pit was stopped, the DAC was notified, and the burials were cleaned *in situ*. One burial appeared complete from the feet to the mid torso, with the rest of the skeleton presumed to lie complete under the baulk. The other burial consisted of the right leg from the foot the upper femur, and much of this skeleton is also presumed to lie under the baulk. The more complete burial appeared to truncate the incomplete burial. These burials lay within one or more discernible cuts.

1.3 Further archaeological cleaning of the base of the soakaway pit to the north and south revealed further features, likely to be graves, cut into a probable natural subsoil. The archaeologist present concluded that the cut to the south almost certainly contained another burial due to the presence of articulated bone. In line with Section 2.3.4 of the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for site investigation agreed in advance of fieldwork, this information was communicated to the DAC on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September and no further investigation carried out pending further discussion.

### 2. Proposed Treatment of Remains

At a site meeting on the 8<sup>th</sup> September, it was concluded that the burials so far encountered, as well as any further burials encountered within the soakaway pit could not remain in place if the current scheme of works was to be completed. It was also concluded that any plans to relocate the soakaway pit would more than likely run into similar problems while also adding significant delays to the project. The proposed treatment of the remains agreed at meeting, subject approval from the Chancellor, consists of the following:

2.1 The articulated remains, including those already known, as well as any other burials encountered within the soakaway pit, are to be recorded *in situ* by a trained archaeologist

from the Archaeological Practice Ltd. by way of a photographic record of the remains in situ, a detailed plan drawing at a 1:10 scale and burial record form which is in agreement with the latest guidelines. This provides a comprehensive record of the burial and the skeletal material present. The recording of human remains will follow the ClfA Guidelines (2017).<sup>3</sup> The careful excavation and cleaning required will utilise wooden tools to avoid damaging the remains or creating artificial pathologies ahead of analysis. While the remains are exposed, the soakaway pit is to be screened by way of terram or a similar material applied to the 'Heras' style panel fencing currently surrounding the soakaway pit.

2.2 In line with the relevant guidance,<sup>4</sup> the skeletons which extend under the baulk should not be 'chased' and in general, further excavation beyond that which is deemed necessary and was established in the original WSI will not be undertaken at this time unless deemed necessary through the discovery of an exceptional find, as determined by the Parish, the DAC and Durham Diocese.

2.3 The skeletal material exposed due to the works will be exhumed by the Archaeological Practice Ltd. in accordance with ClfA Guidelines (2017). The remains will not be removed from the Parish grounds at this stage and will be examined on-site by a trained osteoarchaeologist. The on-site analysis of the human skeletal material will again follow the ClfA Guidelines (2017) and will include: an inventory of the skeletal material present based on context, the minimum number of individuals present, age and sex of articulated skeletons where possible, and any details of pathological changes which can be observed on the skeletal material. This will be recorded on skeleton recording forms which will then become a part of the site archive, and a summary will be included in the final site report.

2.4 As per the APABE Guidelines, further off-site analysis will only be conducted if subsequent finds or skeletal material uncovered during the removal of the currently exposed skeletal material or in the course of completing the works outlined in the previous WSI, is deemed to be of significance by The Archaeological Practice Ltd., the DAC, the Parish and Durham Diocese. Should this occur, further detailed records of the human skeletal material will require the thorough cleaning of the remains. Information regarding health, disease, activity and lifeways of the individuals will be discussed and the usefulness of destructive analyses will be presented. Annex S1 of the APABE Guidelines outline some of the potential research avenues and information which can be garnered from studying collections of human skeletons from Christian burial grounds.<sup>5</sup> The recommendations of the project osteologist with regard to the potential for further analysis of the human remains will be communicated to the DAC. Should further discussion be required in order to reach a final decision on potential further analysis, a further on-site meeting will then be arranged, if requested by the DAC, between the Archaeological Practice Ltd. and its project osteologist, and the DAC and its archaeological advisor.

2.5 It was agreed at the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> September that following on-site analysis of the human remains by an osteologist and assuming no further analysis is deemed necessary, the remains will be stored in a locked area of the church awaiting reinterment.

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<sup>3</sup> ClfA (2017) Updated Guidelines to the Standards for Recording Human Remains

<sup>4</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex E5

<sup>5</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex S1

While it is understood that best practice is to reinter human burials as near as possible to their original resting place,<sup>6</sup> it was determined that it is not practically possible to reinter the remains in the current soakaway pit, which will be subject to construction works, or in the immediate vicinity where additional historic graves may be encountered. Instead, the remains will be interred in a grave within the 'new' churchyard to the north of the church's 'main' churchyard, not greatly far from the original resting place of the burials. This will be arranged by the parish, with an appropriate reinterment ceremony conducted by the Parish Priest. As this churchyard is not closed, reburial will be recorded in the parish burial records.

2.6 Once the remains have been lifted and are stored in a safe, locked place in the church building, excavation of the soakaway pit can resume with further archaeological monitoring in view of the potential for additional burials at lower levels. If further burials are encountered the DDAC should be informed. However, the presumption will be that any such remains will be recorded and excavated in accordance with the existing methodology without the need for a further amendment to faculty.

### 3. Potential for Further Analysis

As with any archaeological investigation, the possibility of a discovery that might merit further analysis cannot be entirely ruled out. This applies equally to the investigation of burials and skeletal material as it does to general archaeological investigation. This section aims to relate the possibility of further analysis directly to the current project.

3.1 An array of scientific analyses can be used on human bone. For instance, it is common for skeletal material to be carbon-dated using a small amount of bone from an individual skeleton. Various destructive techniques to establish ancestry, diet and mobility have been utilised in ground-breaking studies in recent decades.<sup>7</sup> Without knowing what will be encountered during the proposed next stages of investigation, it should be acknowledged that these techniques are now considered standard tools of archaeological analysis. It should be noted, however, that these techniques are not normally utilised for low numbers of burials in active churchyards.

3.2 Any potential destructive analysis, which in this case would require removal from site of parts of individuals, should, according to Church of England/Historic England guidance "take place within a planned research programme and should have a realistic prospect of producing useful knowledge".<sup>8</sup> Annex E6 of the APABE Guidelines provides details as to if and when destructive sampling should take place.<sup>9</sup> The 2006 regional research framework for the historic environment in the North-East, *Shared Visions*, states that adequate provision (within the Church of England/Historic England guidance) should be made for the

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<sup>6</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex E4, Item 173

<sup>7</sup> HE/APABE (2013) *Science and the Dead*

<sup>8</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex E6, Item 185

<sup>9</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex E6

analysis of medieval skeletal material on church sites,<sup>10</sup> but makes no counterpart statement for post-medieval (16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century) skeletal material.<sup>11</sup> No change to this statement appears on the updated digital version.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, the destructive analysis of post-medieval burials is not encompassed within the regional research framework as a matter of course. It should be noted also that scientific analysis of burials has shifted away from the study of potentially interesting individuals in favour of providing data about wider populations; given the small number of individuals likely to be found in the soakaway pit, it would be considered necessary that any such analysis “*is in the public interest*”<sup>13</sup> as stated by the guidance.

3.3 Destructive analyses (i.e. aDNA, stable isotope, etc.) should only therefore be undertaken if they will contribute to wider research questions regarding this community. If it becomes necessary to take samples, these will be taken by a trained osteoarchaeologist and recorded and documented according the ClfA Guidelines (2017). These analyses typically provide information regarding the ancestry of an individual, their diet and possible geographical mobility during their lifetime.

**3.4 It is concluded on the basis of various guidance that the strong presumption for this project is for limited, on-site analysis only. The potential for further, off-site analysis whether destructive or non-destructive is considered low, on the basis that this would require strong justification and a realistic prospect of useful results which does not appear to be present.**

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<sup>10</sup> Petts, D & Gerrard, C. (2006) *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*, 173

<sup>11</sup> Petts, D & Gerrard, C. (2006) *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*, 177-188

<sup>12</sup> <https://researchframeworks.org/nerf/>

<sup>13</sup> HE/CofE/APABE (2017) *Guidance for Best Practice for the Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England*, Annex E4, Item 176