



WYAS  
**Archaeological  
Services**

**St Wilfrids Church**

**Calverley**

**West Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report no. 2767

June 2015

**Client:** Richard Crooks Partnership



# St Wilfrids Church, Calverley, West Yorkshire

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### *Summary*

*A watching brief was carried out during improvement works to St Wilfrid's Church, Calverley including reduction of the ground level within the base of the tower and a drainage trench leading from the tower, across the nave and a short distance across the graveyard on the north side of the church. Modern features were recorded which undercut the tower foundations, interpreted as foundation inspection pits, foundations from an early medieval phase of the church were exposed and some disarticulated human bone was disturbed, before being returned to the church for reburial.*

## Report Information

Client: Richard Crooks Partnership  
Address: 14 Calverley Lane, Horsforth, Leeds, W. Yorkshire, LS18  
4DZ  
Report Type: Watching Brief  
Location: Calverley, Leeds  
County: West Yorkshire  
Grid Reference: SE 2082 3716  
Period(s) of activity  
represented: Medieval, Post-medieval, Modern  
Report Number: 2767  
Project Number: 6630  
Site Code: SWC15  
OASIS ID: archaeol11-216200  
Museum Accession No.: Awaiting number  
Date of fieldwork: June 2015  
Date of report: June 2015  
Project Management: David Williams BA MICfA  
Fieldwork supervisor: Matt Wells BSc MA  
Report: Matt Wells  
Illustrations: Matt Wells  
Photography: Site staff

Authorisation for  
distribution: \_\_\_\_\_



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PO Box 30, Nephshaw Lane South, Morley, Leeds LS27 0UG  
Telephone: 0113 383 7500.  
Email: [admin@aswyas.com](mailto:admin@aswyas.com)



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## **1 Introduction**

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Richard Crooks Partnership to carry out an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to the installation of a new floor level within the tower and the excavation of a drainage trench at St Wilfrid's Church, Calverley. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the requirements of a Church of England Faculty, employing a strategy and scope of work agreed with the Archaeological Advisor to the Diocese of West Yorkshire and the Dales. The archaeological work complied with the relevant standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014a; 2014b; 2014c) and English Heritage (2006; 2008).

### **Site location and topography**

The church is located in Calverley village, on land bounded by Carr Road to the west and south with the Calverley Church of England Primary School located to the north. The church is bound to the east by an extensive churchyard with numerous standing monuments. The site is centred at NGR SE 2082 3716 and lies at a height of approximately 113m OD.

### **Soils, geology and land-use**

The underlying bedrock of the site comprises Rough Rock, sandstone group, with a band of Devensian Till located directly to the north of the church (British Geological Survey 2015). The soils of the area are classified in the Rivington 1 association characterised as well drained coarse loamy soils over sandstone (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983). The church and adjoined graveyard are still in active use.

## **2 Archaeological and Historical Background**

Calverley is recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book as 'Caverleia' and 'Caverlei'. The presence of Anglo-Saxon cross fragments (see below) suggests that the village may have an older origin. The following background is taken from Ryder (1993). The parish church of Calverley (St Wilfrid's) consists of a four-bay aisled nave with a west tower and south porch, and a chancel with a two-bay north chapel and a north vestry. The nave walls are of 11th or early 12th-century date, but only one architectural feature has survived from that period: a blocked window above the south arcade which has its external, round arched head cut from a single block of stone. The window may be pre-conquest but it is not possible to say this with any confidence. The tower is 13th or early 14th-century in date, with alterations from the late 14th century when the chancel was rebuilt. The nave aisles and top stage of the tower were added in the 15th century. The nave aisles and chancel were again rebuilt in 1869, although the latter is more or less a copy of its medieval predecessor. The church contains a collection of medieval cross slabs as well as one Anglo-Saxon fragment, and medieval glass in the east window.

### **3 Aims and Objectives**

The primary aim is to identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date (as far as circumstances permit) of any graves, human remains and/or other archaeological features and deposits that are disturbed or revealed during the groundworks. The drainage trenches in the churchyard were placed to avoid all extant grave monuments and be tied into the pre-existing drainage. Although there was a presumption for preservation in situ for human remains, where this was not possible burials would be subject to appropriate recording and careful manual excavation, such that the remains may, following analysis, be returned to the church for reburial. The required archaeological monitoring outlined above is designed to mitigate the destruction of any buried archaeological remains through 'preservation by record'.

### **4 Methodology**

All work was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standards (CifA 2014a; English Heritage 2008). The watching brief was conducted by an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeologist who was present during all ground works. ASWYAS methodologies and standards were also adhered to (ASWYAS 2011).

Mechanical excavations, were only carried out using a small machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, operated under direct archaeological supervision. Where archaeological remains were encountered and required clarification, the relevant areas were cleaned by hand.

### **5 Results**

The watching brief was carried out in two phases. The first involved the reduction of ground level within the base of the tower, at the western end of the church. The second involved the excavation of a trench from the tower, beneath the northern wall of the church and for a short distance through the churchyard before feeding into an existing drain. Inside the church, the stone flag floor was lifted and further deposits were excavated by machine. The flagstones were laid on a levelling deposit of lime mortar, beneath which was weathered sandstone bedrock. Outside the church a layer of topsoil only 100mm thick covered the bedrock.

#### **Ground reduction within tower**

An area of 5m x 4m, within the standing walls of the tower was reduced by around 500mm. This exposed the base of the tower's foundations which were a single course of stone 200mm thick, bonded with lime mortar and laid directly onto the sandstone bedrock. A further 250mm of bedrock was excavated beneath the foundations to reach the desired level. Two features were observed cutting the natural and they extended beneath the tower's foundations.

Feature [101] measured 1.14m long and 0.88m wide before extending beyond the south-west corner of the tower. It was backfilled with a charcoal-rich, blackish sandy-silt with frequent brick or tile and mortar fragments (100). A stem fragment of undated clay pipe was recovered from the surface of the fill. The feature had a sub-rounded, elongated shape with steep sides and east-west alignment. This was consistent with a grave cut though its modern fill suggests it post-dates, and therefore undercuts, the tower wall (dated to the 13th or early 14th-century), rather than being sealed by it. As it is unlikely a grave would undercut an existing wall, feature [101] is much more likely to be an inspection pit for the foundations. Feature [103] was similarly seen undercutting the southern wall of the tower 3m to the east, though the lack of an east-west alignment again suggests the feature is not a grave. The feature was backfilled with a blackish silty-sand with occasional small lime mortar fragments (102).

### **Drainage trench**

The drainage trench extended for 9m from the tower, across the west end of the nave and northern aisle and measured 600mm deep and 300mm wide towards the church's present exterior northern wall. No archaeological features were seen beneath the flagstones aside from an east-west aligned wall foundation between the nave and northern aisle (104). The foundation was a single course of stone, measuring 1m in width and 200mm in depth, again laid directly onto the bedrock. As the aisles and gothic arches are 15th-century additions to the nave, it is likely that the footing was the base of the exterior wall of the nave during an earlier phase of the church's construction, possibly dating to the 11th or early 12th-century. The drain was inserted beneath the footing, allowing it to be preserved in-situ.

Beyond the northern wall of the church the drain extended for around 17m before feeding into an existing drain. Here the trench increased to 800mm wide and dropped to a level of 1.3m in depth. The drain managed to avoid disturbing any in-situ burials, although a small amount of disarticulated human remains were disturbed which were returned to the church for reburial.

## **6 Conclusions**

The watching brief methodology was successful in mitigating any damage to archaeological remains exposed during groundworks carried out both inside and outside the church. It has also allowed a small insight into the wider character and survival of archaeology in and around the church and no permanent damage to the medieval fabric of the church was required during the works. All other deposits were suitably recorded where required.



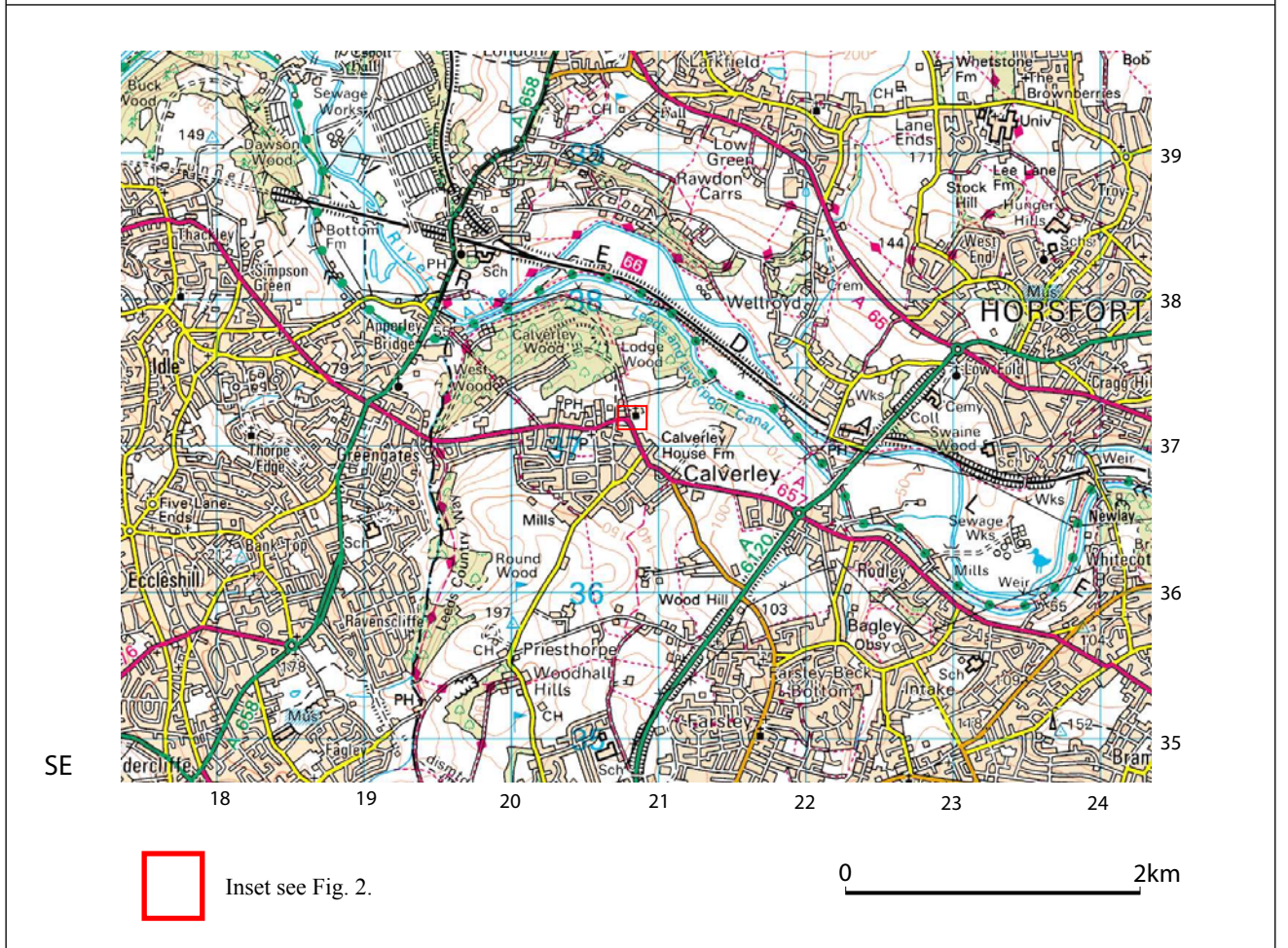
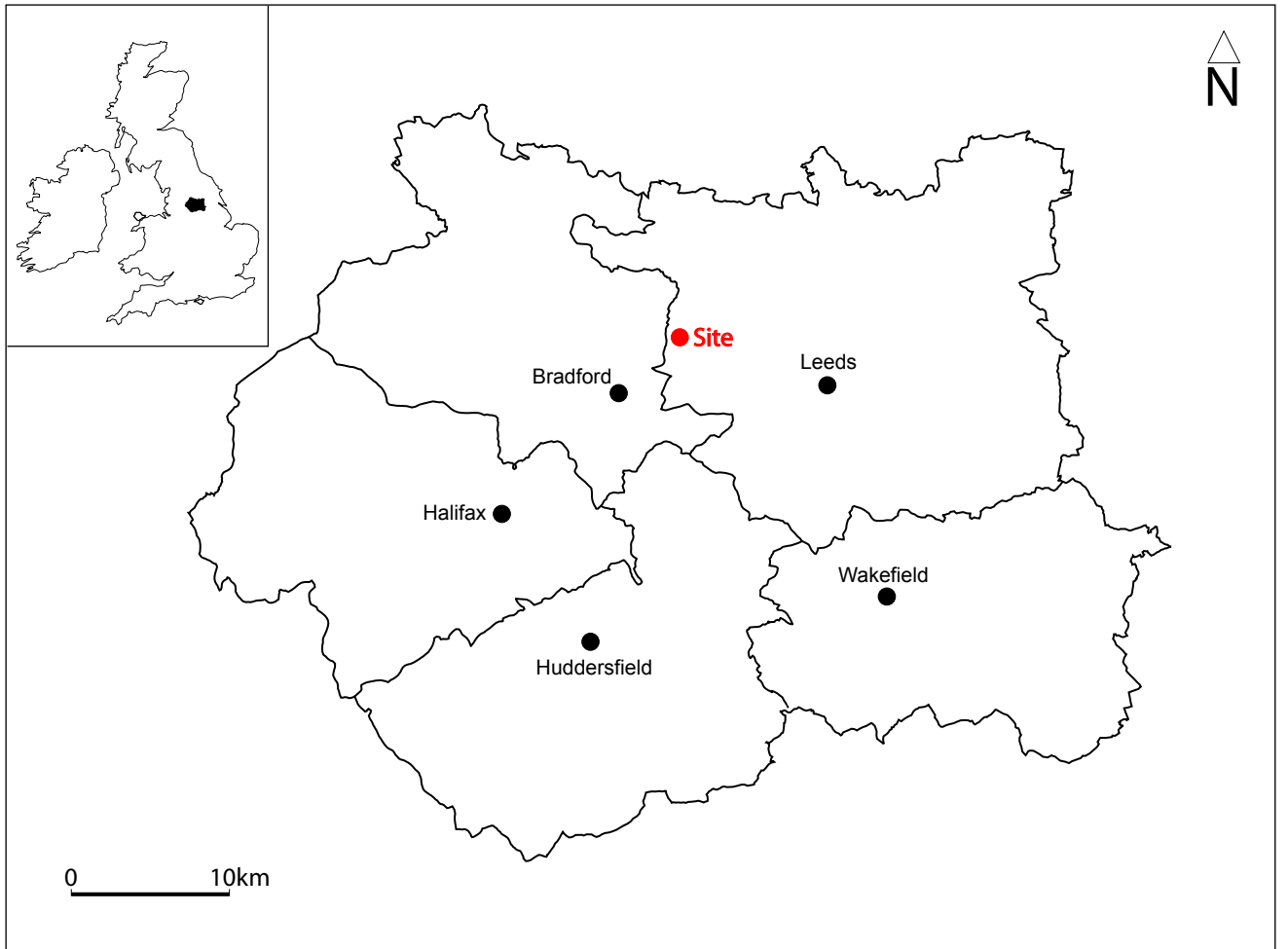


Fig. 1. Site location

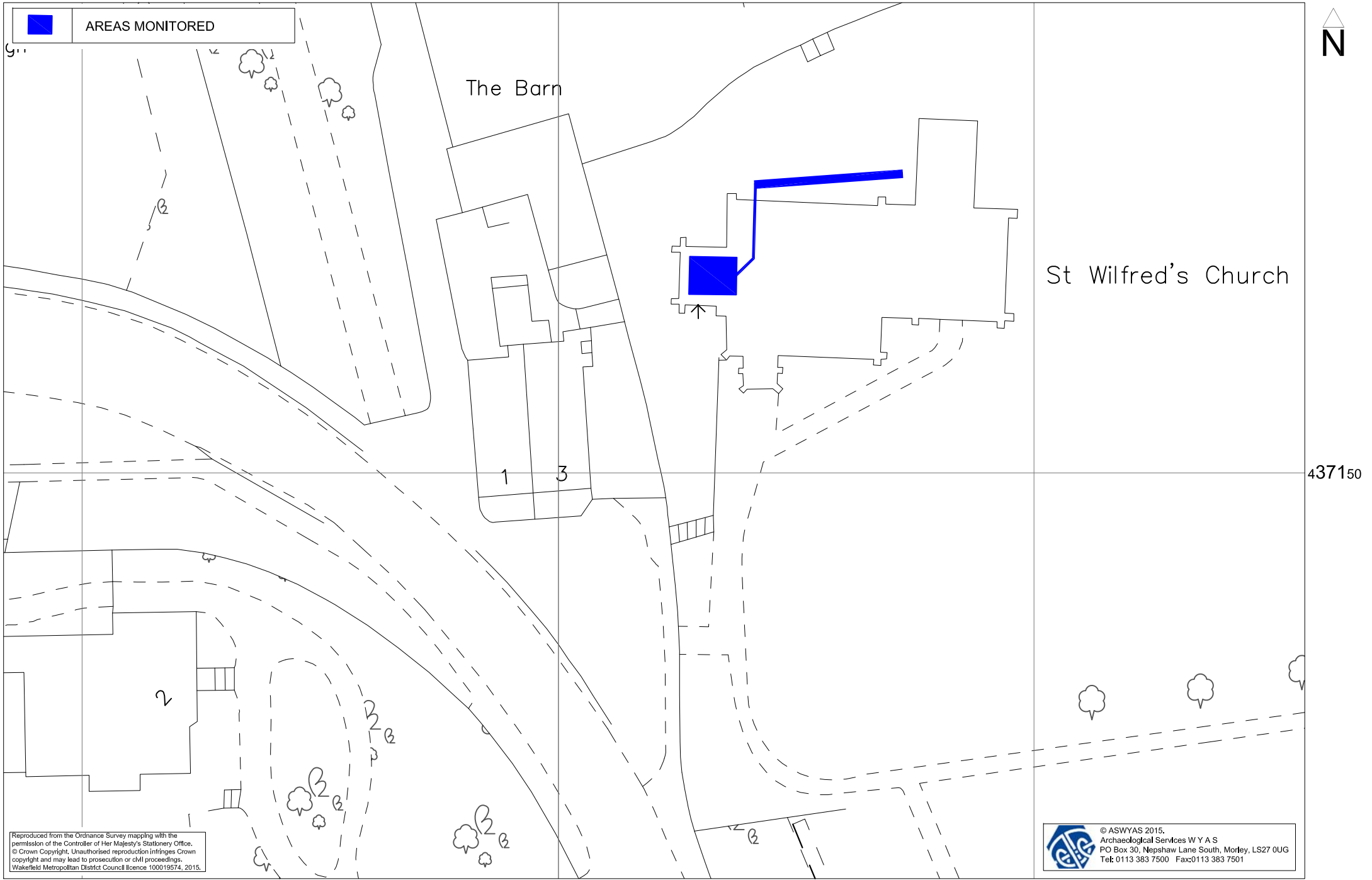


Fig. 2. Plan of monitored areas (1:500 @ A4)

0 50m

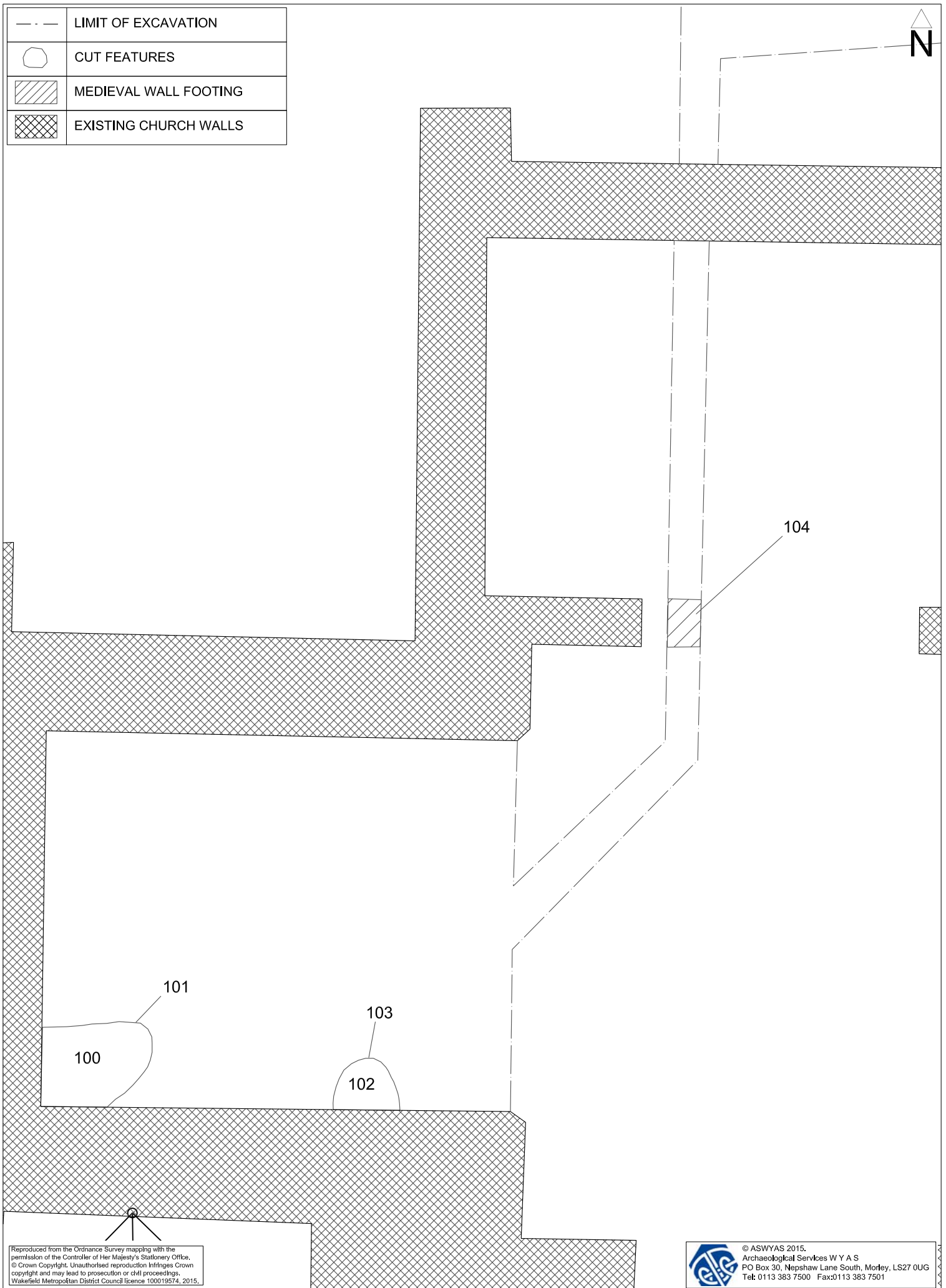
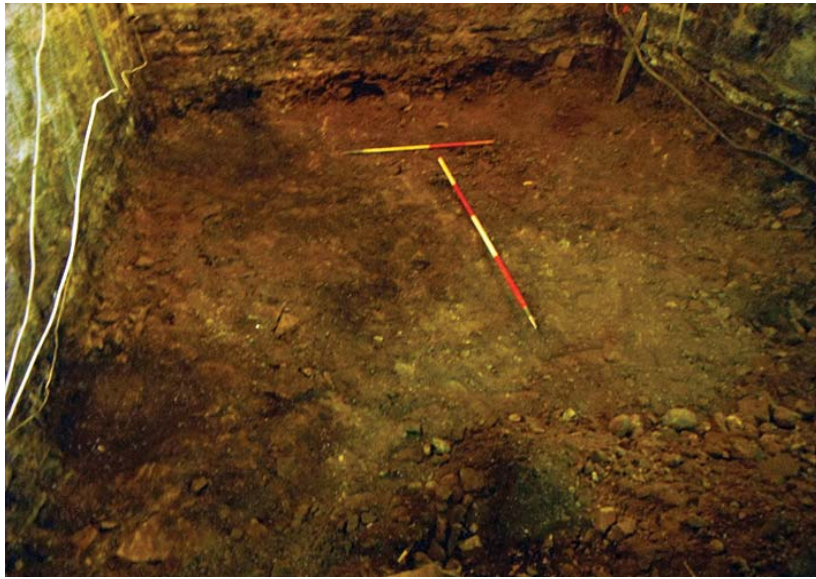


Fig. 3. Plan of archaeological features (1:50 @ A4)



*Plate 1. View of tower excavation and features 101 and 103, looking west*



*Plate 2. Completed drainage trench across the nave, looking north*



*Plate 3. Base of gothic pillar on base of earlier foundation, looking west*



*Plate 4. Excavation of topsoil from external drain trench, looking south*

**Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive**

File/Box No	Description	Quantity
File no.1	Daily record sheets	4
	Digital photograph records	1
	Annotated site plan	1
	Permatrace	1

**Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts yielding artefacts or environmental remains**

Context	Description	Artefacts and environmental samples
100	Fill of [101]	Clay pipe
101	Cut of modern feature	
102	Fill of [103]	
103	Cut of modern feature	
104	East-west wall footing	

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