

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT
CHURCH LANE
AND HIGH STREET,
STANTON,
GLOUCESTERSHIRE



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Archaeological watching brief at Church Lane and High Street, Stanton, Gloucestershire

Jonathan Webster

With contributions by Dennis Williams

Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Church Lane and High Street, Stanton, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 068 342). It was commissioned by WSE Limited on behalf of their client Western Power Distribution, who intends to replace the existing overhead electric cables with underground cable routes.

Two post-medieval culverts associated with removing storm water were revealed running along both Church Lane and the High Street, whilst an undated structure was seen to the immediate north of the Old Manor Farmhouse. Due to severe truncation of the latter structure little can be said regarding its form or usage.

The excavations in the graveyard revealed only a highly mixed late post-medieval soil that contained fragments of disarticulated human bone. Although the side of a coffin was exposed in the side of the trench, no inhumations were disturbed during the course of the works.

Whilst the natural substrate was seen on occasion, the majority of the excavations remained within later post-medieval deposits and it is clear that the potential for earlier features and deposits to exist remains. Although prehistoric and Romano-British activity has previously been recorded within and around the village, no artefacts, features or deposits pre-dating the post-medieval were noted during the present works.

Report

1 Background

1.1 Reasons for the project

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Church Lane and High Street, Stanton, Gloucestershire (NGR: SP 068 342). It was commissioned by WSE Limited on behalf of their client, Western Power Distribution, who intends to replace the existing overhead electric cables with underground cable routes.

The proposed development site is considered to have the potential to impact on significant archaeological features and/or deposits and as a result a watching brief was requested by the curator, Jan Wills (County Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council).

The project conforms to a project proposal (including detailed specification) produced by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013) following discussions with the curator.

The project also conforms to the *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (IfA 2008) and the *Statement of standards and practices appropriate for archaeological fieldwork in Gloucestershire* (GCC 1996).

2 Aims

The aims and scope of this project were to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible, within the groundworks associated within the proposed scheme.

Significant deposits may be defined as those likely to be of Anglo-Saxon and medieval date or earlier.

3 Methods

3.1 Personnel

The project was undertaken by Jonathan Webster, BA (Hons); who joined Worcestershire Archaeology in 2009 and has been practising archaeology since 2001. Finds analysis was undertaken by Dennis Williams, BSc MA PhD CPhys, MinstP, who has been in professional archaeology since 2006, when he joined WA. The project manager responsible for the quality of the project was Tom Vaughan AIFA BA (Hons) MA. Illustrations were prepared by Carolyn Hunt, MIFA BSc (Hons).

3.2 Documentary research

Prior to fieldwork commencing a search was made of the Gloucestershire Historic Environment Record (HER).

3.3 List of sources consulted

Cartographic sources

- 1st edition Ordnance Survey map, 1884, scale 25":1 mile
- 1902 Ordnance Survey map, scale 25":1 mile
- 1923 Ordnance Survey map, scale 25":1 mile
- 1975 Ordnance Survey map, scale 1:2,500

Documentary sources

Published and grey literature sources are listed in the bibliography.

3.4 Fieldwork strategy

A detailed specification has been prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2013).

Fieldwork was undertaken between 13 and 17 May 2013. The WA site reference number and site code is P3862.

Trenching was excavated along the line of the new underground electric cable routes (Fig 2; Plate 4) at a width of 0.3m to a depth of 0.65m. In addition four inspection chambers were excavated, each an average of 2m in length by 1m in width, down to a depth of 1m below the present ground level.

Deposits considered not to be significant were removed using a 360° tracked excavator, employing a toothless bucket or via hand excavation dependent on conditions, and under archaeological supervision. Subsequent excavation was undertaken by hand. Clean surfaces were inspected and selected deposits were excavated to retrieve artefactual material, as well as to determine their nature. Deposits were recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). On completion of excavation, trenches were reinstated by replacing the excavated material.

3.5 Structural analysis

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was effected through a combination of structural, artefactual and ecofactual evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources.

3.6 Artefact methodology, by Dennis Williams

3.6.1 Recovery policy

The artefact recovery policy conformed to standard WA practice (WA 2012; appendix 2).

3.6.2 Method of analysis

All hand-retrieved finds were examined. They were identified, quantified and dated to period. A *terminus post quem* date was produced for each stratified context. The date was used for determining the broad date of phases defined for the site. All information was recorded on *pro forma* sheets.

Artefacts from environmental samples were examined, but none were worthy of comment, and so they not included below, nor included in the Table 1 quantification.

The pottery and ceramic building material was examined under x20 magnification and referenced as appropriate by fabric type and form according to the fabric reference series maintained by the Service (Hurst and Rees 1992 and www.worcestershireceramics.org).

3.6.3 Discard policy

The following categories/types of material will be discarded after a period of 6 months following the submission of this report, unless there is a specific request to retain them (and subject to the collection policy of the relevant depository):

- where unstratified
- post-medieval pottery, and;
- generally where material has been assessed as having no obvious grounds for retention.

3.7 Statement of confidence in the methods and results

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

4 The application site

4.1 Topography, geology and archaeological context

The village of Stanton sits within the rolling plains within the northern part of the Cotswolds with the land rising to the east and north-east up towards the ridge at Broadway. The underlying geology of the site is recorded as Charmouth Mudstone formation of the Jurassic Period.

Archaeological investigations to the south of the village have revealed both prehistoric and later Romano-British artefacts within a band of colluvium at the base of Shenberrow Hill although no specific features were noted (SMR Ref: 27590). Investigations undertaken by Worcestershire County Council along the route of the Severn Trent water supply trunk line between 2001 and 2004 found evidence of a Roman settlement between Stanton and Stanway (SMR Ref: 27593). Work undertaken in the grounds of the church of St Michael and All Angels in 1999 (SMR Ref: 6159 & 8251) recovered residual fragments of Romano-British pottery within the later post-medieval graveyard soils whilst a bronze coin of Claudius II is known to have been recovered from the garden of Stanton Rectory (SMR Ref: 6908). Later medieval ridge and furrow has been identified known from ground survey and cropmarks to the north, west and south of the village (SMR Ref: 8574, 5786 and 27590).

The village cross located at the corner of Church Lane and the High Street (SMR Ref: 77) comprises a 17th century aslar stone cross and sundial that was constructed directly on top of the base and shaft of an earlier 15th century cross which itself sits on an earlier 12th century base.

Old Manor Farmhouse (SMR Ref 36878) located at the south-west corner of the current investigation area is thought to date from the late 16th century with several inscribed stones within the building dated to 1615, 1618 and 1622, although later alterations to the building continue into the mid 20th century. This building was initially associated with part of the Stanton Court complex to the north-west but was later sold and became an independent property, it should be noted that like most of the buildings on the southern side of the High Street it still contains a long 'burgage plot' style garden.

The church of St Michael and All Angels (SMR Ref: 36835) is known to have elements that date back to the 12th century with alterations throughout the post-medieval period and into the early 20th century. Of particular note are two medieval wall paintings, two panels from the medieval chancel screen and medieval stained glass brought from Hailes Abbey in the 19th century.

The documentary history of Stanton begins in 811 when Kenulf, King of Mercia, grants the tithe and patronage of Stanton to Winchcombe's Benedictine Abbey. It next appears in the Domesday Book in 1086 as *Stantone*, the interpretation of which is believed to be 'Stony farmstead' and a settlement has been known to exist from this date (SMR Ref: 8826).

4.2 Current land-use

The intrusive works were located along the present streets of Church Lane and the High Street along with the rear garden of several properties and the graveyard of Stanton Church.

5 Structural analysis

The trenches and features recorded are shown in Figures 2 and 3 and Plates 1-3. The results of the structural analysis are presented in Appendix 1.

5.1 Stratigraphic narrative

The underlying natural substrate was seen in Trench 3 to the immediate south of the current properties and was noted as being a heavily weathered limestone brash typical of the Cotswold escarpment. This was overlain by a mixed deposit of limestone and clays that was seen in all of the investigation trenches and was clearly post-medieval in date. Highly worked and turned over, this deposit was used as a bedding layer for the overlying street surfaces. Of note running roughly east to west along the High Street and north-east to south-west along Church Lane were large

stone culverts, averaging an internal width of 0.45m. These structures were constructed from large roughly hewn limestone blocks that were bedded together in a dry stone form with no bonding agent (Fig 3; Plate 1). It is clear that they were designed and are still used to aid in the drainage of storm water. They truncated the aforementioned post-medieval deposits and are considered to be 19th century in date.

Investigations within the churchyard revealed a highly mixed humic graveyard soil that was loosely compacted and contained a moderate amount of disarticulated human bone. Of particular note was a piece of wood noted in the eastern section of the Trench 2 (Plate 2). Although only 0.2m below the present ground level, the wood was ornately carved and suggestive of a coffin side associated with the grave of Rosemary Horeford.

Finally a stone structure 407 that may relate to the Old Manor Farmhouse was recorded in the southern limit of investigation of the westernmost inspection chamber (Trench 4). At least two courses in height, it was built from large roughly hewn limestone blocks with no bonding visible (Plate 3). Unfortunately no date can be ascribed to this stonework as it was truncated to both the east and west by modern intrusions whilst the base was masked by a modern service.

5.2 Artefact analysis, by Dennis Williams

The artefactual assemblage recovered is summarised in Tables 1 and 2.

The assemblage came from three stratified contexts and could be dated from the post-medieval period onwards (Table 1). Using pottery as an index of artefact condition, this was generally good with the majority of sherds displaying low levels of abrasion, and the mean sherd weight was above average.

period	material class	material subtype	object specific type	count	weight (g)
post-medieval	ceramic	-	clay pipe	2	5
post-medieval	ceramic	-	pot	3	30
post-medieval	metal	copper alloy	-	1	36
post-medieval/ modern	ceramic	-	pot	3	69
post-medieval/ modern	glass	-	window	1	2
post-medieval/ modern	metal	copper alloy	-	1	32
post-medieval/ modern	metal	iron	-	2	153
post-medieval/ modern	metal	iron	nail	1	30
undated	bone	animal bone	-	3	181
totals:				17	538

Table 1: Quantification of the assemblage

Pottery

As summarised in Table 2, the pottery assemblage consisted of a small range of post-medieval and modern fabrics, found in graveyard soil (202) and deposit (305). The pottery finds were undiagnostic in terms of form, except for a handle from a 17th-18th century red ware (fabric 78) jug or mug, found in (202).

period	fabric code	fabric common name	count	weight (g)
post-medieval	78	Post-medieval red wares	1	23
post-medieval	84	Creamware	1	4
post-medieval	91	Post-medieval buff wares	1	3
post-medieval/ modern	85	China	3	69
totals:			6	99

Table 2: Quantification of the pottery

Other artefacts

Two fragments of clay pipe stems were recovered from graveyard soil (202), along with post-medieval/modern window glass. Metal objects from the same context included a brass door-lock strike plate and a piece of a cast iron roof gutter, both of post-medieval or modern origin. A more unusual metal find, from deposit (305), was part of a brass riding spur, possibly dating from the late 17th century. The only find recovered from garden soil (103) was a large fragment of bone, from a cow or horse.

5.3 Artefact Significance

The assemblage from this watching brief was a very limited one. The mix of finds from the graveyard was indicative of both post-medieval and modern activity within the surrounding area. *Terminus post quem* date ranges for the contexts are shown in Table 3.

context	material class	object specific type	fabric code	count	weight (g)	start date	end date	tpq date range
103	bone	-	-	1	133	-	-	-
202	metal	nail	-	1	30	1850	1950	1850-1950
	metal		-	1	32	1850	1950	
	metal	-	-	1	95	1850	1950	
	metal	-	-	1	58	1850	1950	
	ceramic	pot	78	1	23	1600	1800	
	ceramic	clay pipe	-	2	5	1600	1900	
	glass	window	-	1	2	1850	1950	
305	bone	-	-	2	48	-	-	1800-1950
	ceramic	pot	85	1	55	1800	1950	

	ceramic	pot	85	1	9	1800	1950
	ceramic	pot	84	1	4	1760	1790
	ceramic	pot	85	1	5	1800	1950
	ceramic	pot	91	1	3	1600	1800
	metal	brass	-	1	36	1650	1675

Table 3: Summary of context dating based on artefacts

6 Synthesis

The archaeological investigations undertaken during the excavation of these service trenches has revealed that relatively significant post-medieval deposits survive within the village whilst the potential for earlier in situ features remains. The route of two culverts along Church Lane and the High Street constructed from local materials is quite a common one in the Cotswolds and there is nothing to suggest that these structures were built any earlier than the late 19th or early 20th century. Likewise the highly mixed and late nature of the graveyard soils is typical for not only churches in the region but as a general wider indicator. Of specific note is the small stone structure 407 that was noted immediately next to the northeast corner of the Old Manor Farmhouse, which unfortunately due to heavy truncation a provisional date or form cannot be ascribed but it is potentially associated with one of the many phases of the building, be it associated with the original foundation (which seems unlikely given the very hard nature of the underlying geology), part of an additional wing/structure which was later demolished, or a structure unrelated to the house but more with an earlier phase of the High Street. Unfortunately at present we are only able to speculate at its date and usage, but further investigation would be recommended if future works were to occur in the vicinity.

7 Publication summary

Worcestershire Archaeology has a professional obligation to publish the results of archaeological projects within a reasonable period of time. To this end, Worcestershire Archaeology intends to use this summary as the basis for publication through local or regional journals. The client is requested to consider the content of this section as being acceptable for such publication.

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8 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Nick Perkins (WSE Ltd), Helen Alcock (Western Power Distribution), Jan Wills (County Archaeologist, Gloucestershire County Council) and Tim Grubb (HER Officer, Gloucestershire County Council).

9 Bibliography

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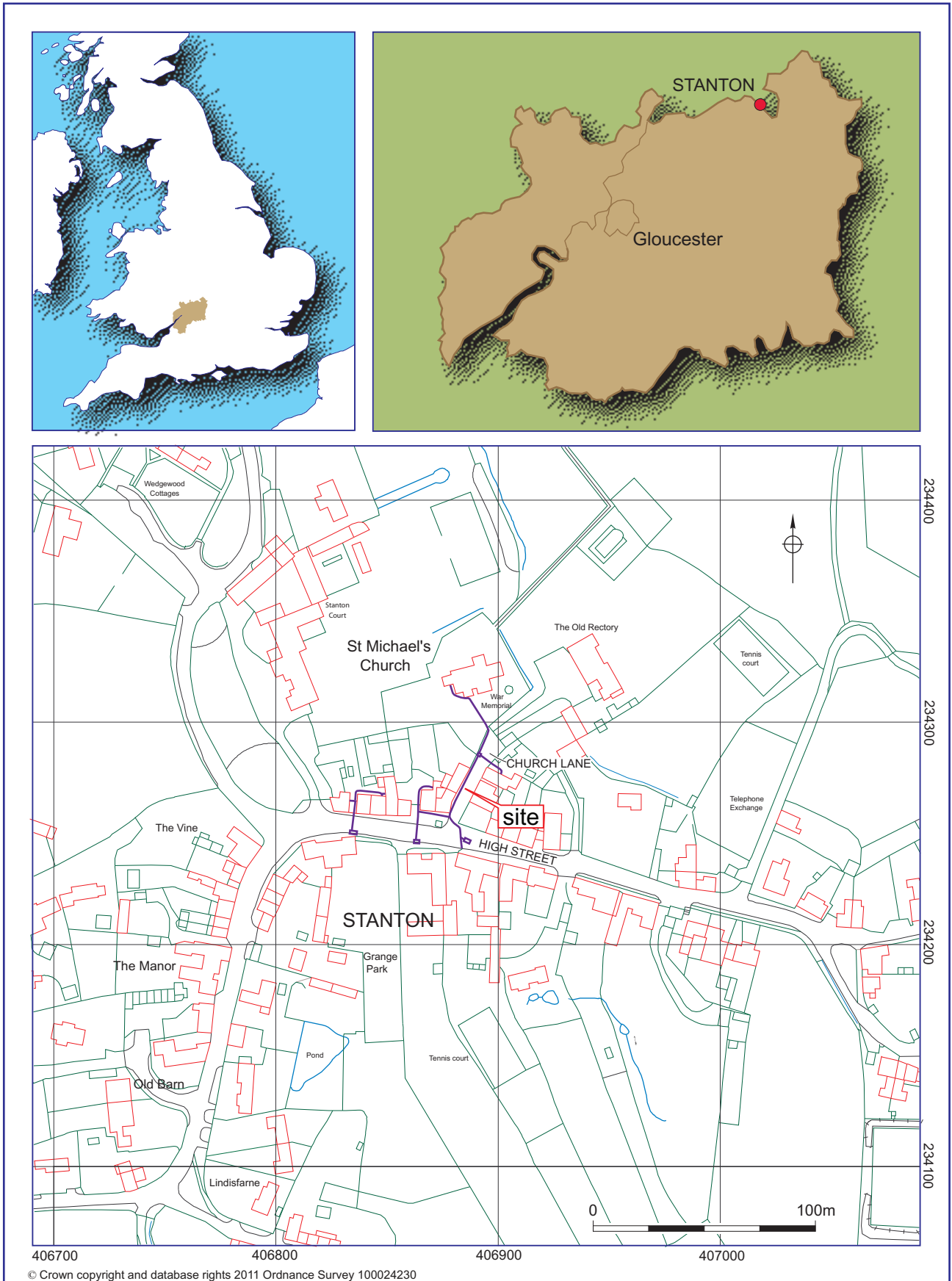
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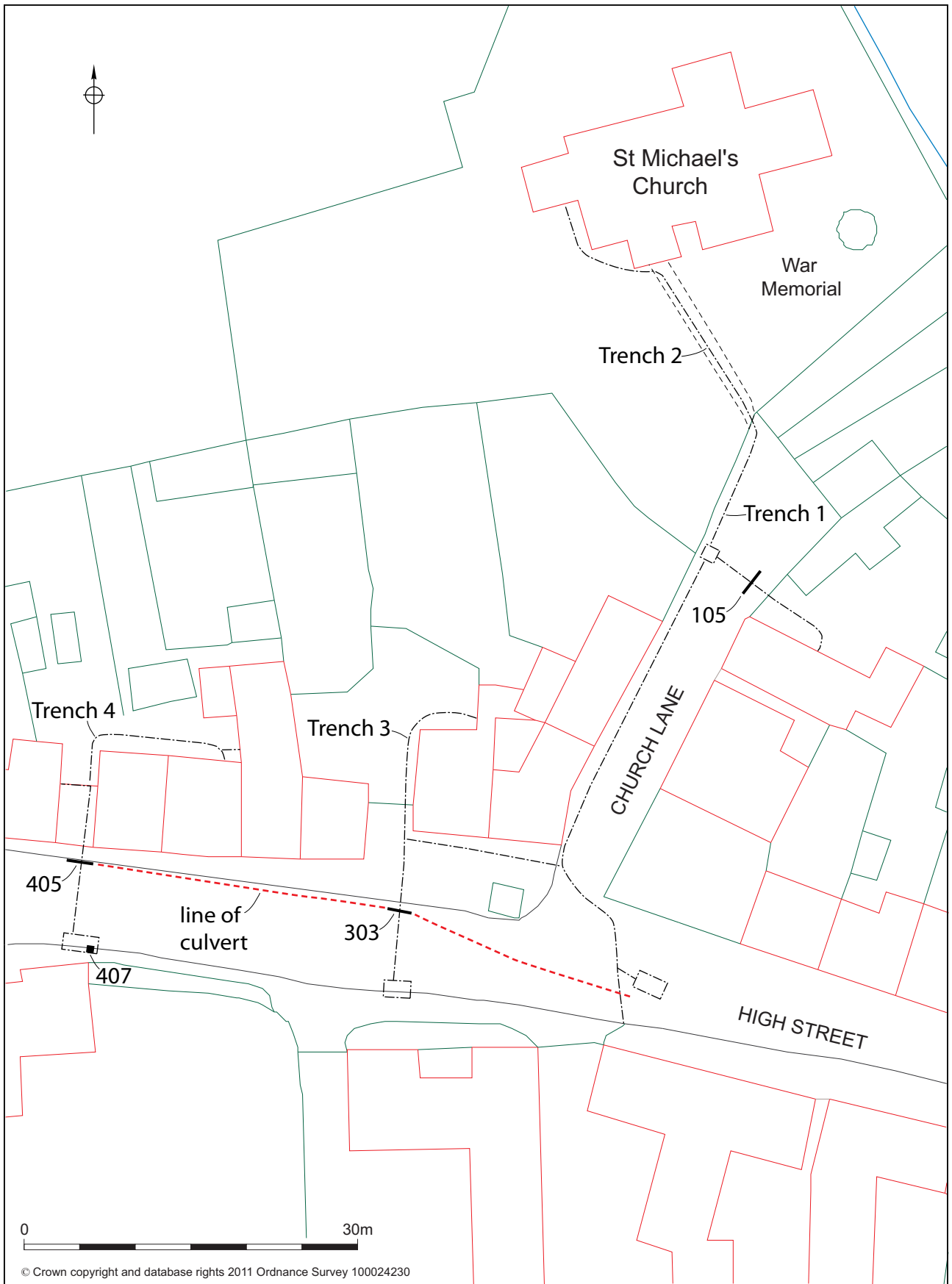
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Figures



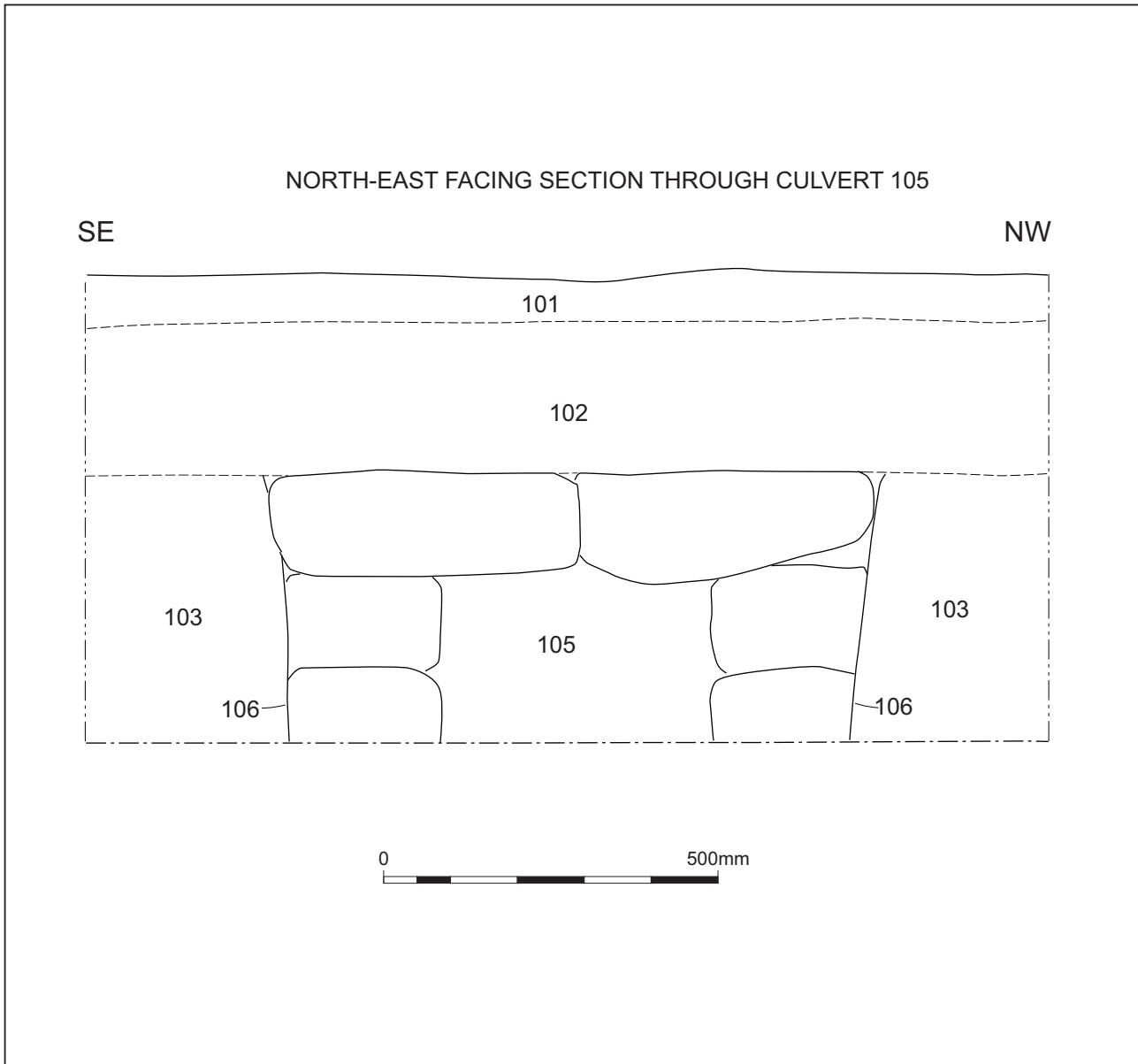
Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of service trenches and inspection pits

Figure 2



Section through culvert 105

Figure 3

Plates



Plate 1; Sample view of stone culvert construction, looking west



Plate 2; Trench 2, coffin side noted within graveyard, looking east, Scale 0.3m



Plate 3; Trench 4, stone structure 407, looking south, Scale 0.3m

Appendix 1 Trench descriptions

Trench 1 main deposit descriptions

Maximum dimensions: Length: 55m Width: 0.30m Depth: 0.65m

Orientation: North-east to south-west

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
101	Tarmac road surface	Modern tarmac road surface with at least two phases of activity becoming three phases along the southern stretch across the high street	0.00-0.12m
102	Deposit	Light yellowish grey limestone crush of firm compaction with occasional voids and tarmac and charcoal flecks throughout. Thought at present to be a foundation for road surface.	0.13-0.30m
103	Deposit	Mid greyish brown silt rich sand with firm compaction and occasional charcoal flecks and angular limestone inclusions throughout. Fairly humic in nature and is thought to be a possible former garden soil.	0.30-0.59m
104	Deposit	Light orange yellow silt rich sand of firm compaction with no visible inclusions that becomes more clay rich with depth. Possible natural interface	0.59-0.65m+
105	Structure	Stone drain culvert constructed of roughly hewn limestone slabs placed onto each other with no visible bonding noted. Drain is rectangular in shape.	0.30-0.65m+
106	Construction cut for structure 105	Roughly north/south aligned linear with vertical sides and no corners, the base wasn't seen and feature truncated deposit 103 and 104. Measured 0.87m in width by at least 0.30m in length.	0.30-0.65m+

Trench 2 main deposit descriptions

Maximum dimensions: Length: 31m Width: 0.30m Depth: 0.40m

Orientation: South-east to north-west

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
201	Turf/topsoil	Dark bluish grey humic topsoil mix highly disturbed by root action and loose in compaction.	0.00-0.18m
202	Graveyard soils	Mid bluish grey humic topsoil like deposit with moderate disarticulated human bone throughout and highly disturbed through reworking.	0.19-0.40m+
203	Modern path	Imported gravels rounded to angular and well sorted being derived from a flint based source. Modern in date	0.00-0.05m
204	Deposit	Light orange grey silt rich sands with frequent limestone fragments throughout. Also noted 19 th /20 th century ceramic	0.06-0.40m+

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		drain that ran along the eastern face of the excavation along the length of the path. Thought to be drainage associated with the graveyard	

Trench 3 main deposit descriptions

Maximum dimensions: Length: 47m Width: 0.30m Depth: 0.65m

Orientation: North to south

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
301	Tarmac road surface	Modern tarmac road surface with at least two phases of activity becoming three phases along the southern stretch across the high street	0.00-0.07m
302	Deposit	Light orange grey silt rich sand and limestone brash mix of moderate to firm compaction with occasional CBM and post-med dated pottery noted throughout.	0.08-0.30m
303	Structure	Stone drain culvert constructed of roughly hewn limestone slabs placed onto each other with no visible bonding noted. Drain is rectangular in shape.	0.30-0.65m+
[304]	Construction cut for structure 303	Roughly north/south aligned linear with vertical sides and no corners, the base wasn't seen and feature truncated deposit 103 and 104. Measured 0.90m in width by at least 0.30m in length.	0.30-0.65m+
305	Deposit	Limestone brash natural substrate interface. Sterile of finds and firm compaction.	0.30-0.65m+

Trench 4 main deposit description

Maximum dimensions: Length: 33m Width: 0.30m Depth: 1m

Orientation: North/south

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
401	Yard surface	Imported gravels rounded to angular and well sorted being derived from a flint based source. Modern in date and laid directly on to a terram membrane that was laid directly on to the underlying 402	0.00-0.04m
402	Deposit	Light orange grey silt rich sand and clay mix with frequent limestone inclusions. Moderately compact with moderate charcoal flecks and CBM throughout	0.05-0.65m+
403	Deposit	Dark bluish brown humic rich topsoil, loosely compacted and highly mixed with frequent root action throughout. Only	0.00-0.65m+

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
		present immediately adjacent to the northeast corner of the property 0.87m in length.	
404	Deposit	Light greyish orange silt rich sand and limestone brash mix with occasional tarmac, CBM and clinker/ash inclusions throughout. Dating recovered from lowest band within the deposit. Thought to have been placed in an attempt to help raise ground levels	0.05-1m+
405	Structure	Stone drain culvert constructed of roughly hewn limestone slabs placed onto each other with no visible bonding noted. Drain is rectangular in shape.	0.35-0.65m+
[406]	Construction cut for structure 405	Roughly north/south aligned linear with vertical sides and no corners, the base wasn't seen and feature truncated deposit 103 and 104. Measured 0.89m in width by at least 0.30m in length.	0.35-0.65m+
407	Structure	Limestone block wall foundation with no visible bonding. At least two courses high and constructed from large roughly hewn blocks. Truncated to both the east and west by modern intrusions. At least 0.70m wide by 0.27m+.	0.26-0.86m+

Appendix 2 Technical information

The archive

The archive consists of:

- 5 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 270 Digital photographs
- 3 Scale drawings
- 4 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 Box of finds
- 1 CD-Rom/DVDs
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum
Clarence Street
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL50 3JT

Tel. Cheltenham (01242) 237431
Fax Cheltenham (01242) 262334
