

Archaeological watching brief at The Baptist Chapel, Netting Street, Hook Norton, Banbury, Oxfordshire



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Background information

<i>Client</i>	Freedom WSE on behalf of Western Power Distribution plc
<i>National Grid reference</i>	SP 3537 3307
<i>Project design</i>	WA 2017
<i>Project parameters</i>	ClfA 2014

Site Background

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at The Baptist Chapel, Nettings Street, Hook Norton, Banbury, Oxfordshire (NGR SP 3537 3307). It was undertaken for Freedom WSE on behalf of Western Power Distribution plc. The works involved electricity network alterations including the removal of the existing overhead line to the Chapel, and replacing it with an underground service cable from the adjacent land. The cable was moled, with two receiving pits within the churchyard grounds excavated by hand (Trenches 1 and 2). It was confirmed in correspondence prior to the works, by Peter Brookes, the Pastor for the Baptist Church, that the grounds were not consecrated and there was no Faculty process required.

Historical Background

The Baptist Chapel (Plate 1) is a Grade II Listed building (Source ID 1369861; EHL ID 244051). It was listed in 1955 and the listing text reads:

'Baptist Chapel. Re-built 1781. Re-set datestone 1714. Coursed regular ironstone rubble. C20 tile roof. 2 bays. 2 tall round-headed windows with intersecting glazing bars. Hipped roof. Porch on right also of ironstone with C20 tile roof and a stone coping to right. Round-headed doorway to chapel and to stone steps to the gallery. Interior: Gallery on cast iron columns. Repaired in 1856.' (Dickins 1928, 144 - 145).

A Chest Tomb (Source ID 1046452; EHL ID 244052; Plate 2) to the northwest of the Baptist Chapel was also listed in 1984 with the listing text reading:

Chest tomb. 1771. Ironstone with panelled sides and heavy chamfered ledger slab. Inscription illegible.

The solid geology of the area is recorded by the BGS (2018) as the Marlstone Rock Formation of Ferruginous Limestone And Ironstone. No superficial deposits are recorded.

Aims

The aim of the watching brief was to observe and record archaeological deposits, and to determine their extent, state of preservation, date and type, as far as reasonably possible, within the constraints of the clients groundworks.

Methods

Groundworks were monitored on 9 January 2018. Fieldwork was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). The excavations involved a T-shaped trench 1.00m in length and 0.80m wide (Trench 1- Plate 3-5) to the west of the porch and a 0.50m² pit

(Trench 2 Plate 6-) within the porch. Both excavations were a maximum of 0.40m deep. The location of the site and the excavations are indicated on Figs 1 and 2.

Access to or visibility of deposits

Observation of the excavated areas was undertaken during hand excavation. The exposed surfaces were sufficiently clean to observe well-differentiated archaeological deposits.

Statement of confidence

Access to, and visibility of, deposits allowed a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved.

Deposit description

The description of the deposits is given below:

Trench 1

Maximum dimensions: Length: 1.00m Width: 0.80m Depth: 0.40m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
100	Topsoil	Dark greyish brown sandy silt topsoil and turf with frequent rooting from nearby tree and occasional pebbles. No finds.	0.00 - 0.20m
101	Natural	Compact, weathered pale brownish orange limestone and ironstone brash, with frequent limestone and sandstone pieces in a silty clay matrix with solid limestone and ironstone slates at 0.40m.	0.20 – 0.40m+

Trench 2

Maximum dimensions: Length: 0.50m Width: 0.50m Depth: 0.40m

Main deposit description

Context	Classification	Description	Depth below ground surface (b.g.s) – top and bottom of deposits
200	Floor slab	Limestone and sandstone floor slab within Baptist Chapel porch.	0.00 – 0.10m
201	Natural	Compact weathered pale orange limestone and ironstone brash, with frequent limestone and ironstone pieces in a sandy clay matrix with solid limestone and ironstone slates at 0.40m.	0.10 – 0.40m+

Discussion and conclusions

In both trenches the undisturbed natural matrix was observed at a very shallow depth, 0.10m and 0.20m below the present surface. In Trench 1 this was overlain by a sandy silt topsoil, and in

Trench 2 by the stone slabs for the porch floor. It was unclear if the lack of a defined subsoil in Trench 1 was the result of general landscaping or truncation.

No significant archaeology was revealed during the works. No in situ burials were disturbed or grave cuts defined, nor artefacts recovered. No significant archaeology was disturbed during the groundworks.

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.

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Freedom WSE on behalf of Western Power Distribution plc at Hook Norton Baptist Chapel, Nettings Street, Hook Norton, Banbury, Oxfordshire (NGR: SP 3537 3307). The site included the chapel which is a Grade II listed building and a Grade II listed chest tomb, located to the north-west of the Chapel within the churchyard. Two trenches were excavated during electrical cable alterations. The excavations were 0.40m deep and only revealed the natural geology, underlying graveyard topsoil and paving slabs. No significant archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were revealed during the works, nor burials disturbed.

Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following for their kind assistance in the successful conclusion of this project, Nick Perkins (Freedom WSE), James Millward (Western Power Distribution), Peter Brookes, (Pastor, Hook Norton Baptist Church), and Peter Preston (Architect, Made Manifest),

Bibliography

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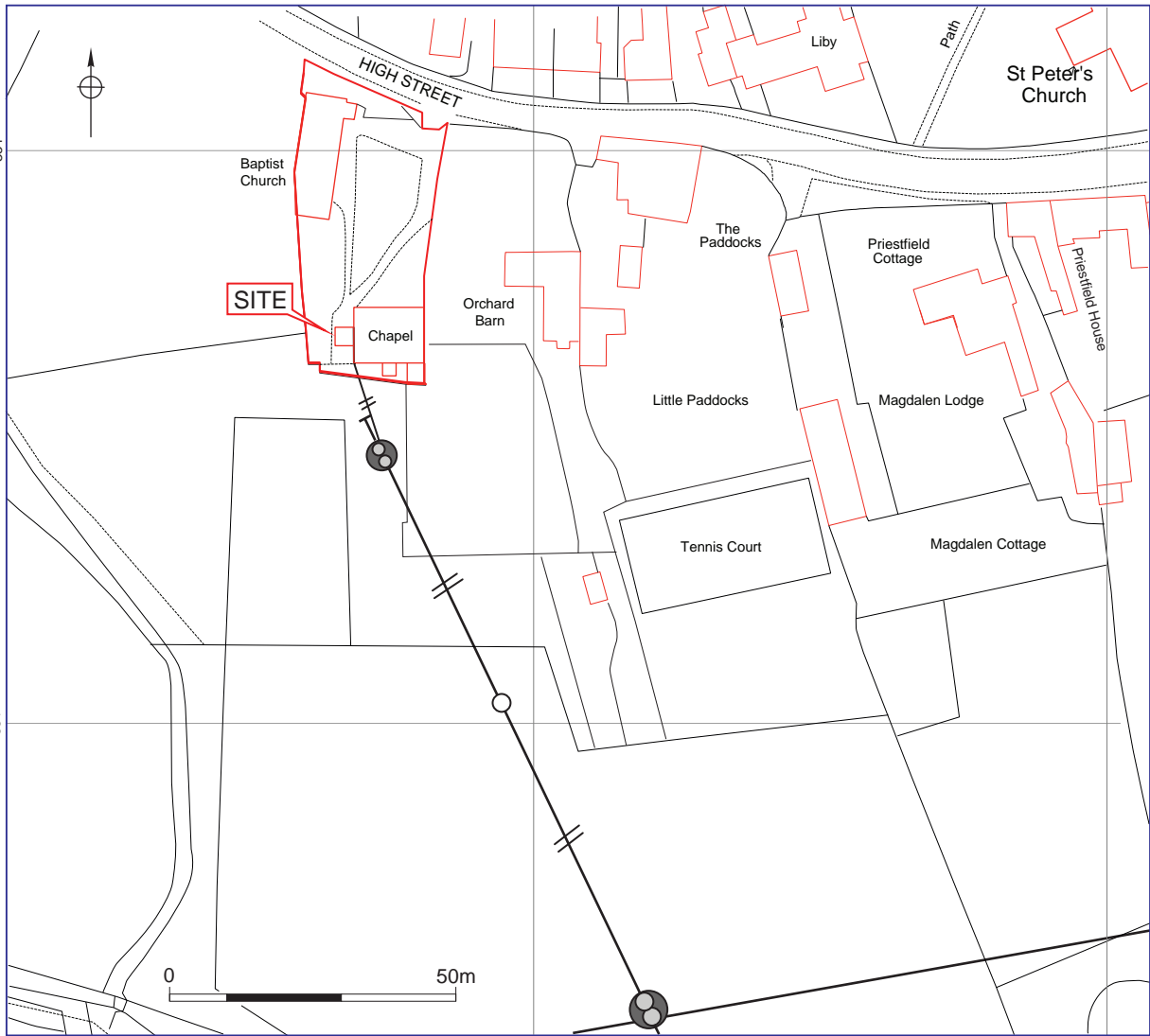
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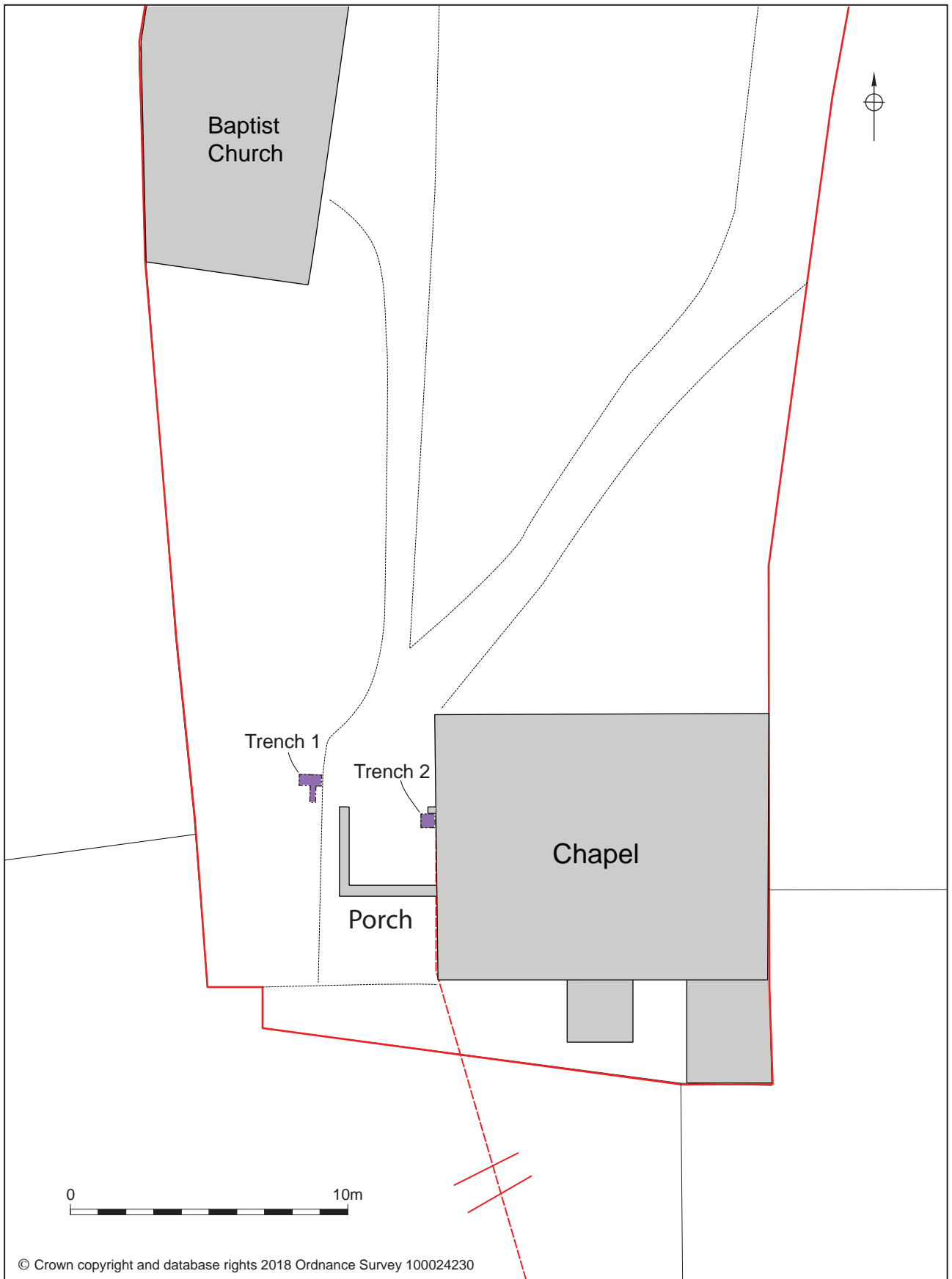
Figures



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Location of the site

Figure 1



Trench location plan

Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1 The Baptist chapel and porch, view south



Plate 2 The Baptist chapel porch and listed chest tomb, view south



Plate 3 Trench 1 location with turf removed, view south-west, 1m scale



Plate 4 Trench 1 following excavation, with listed chest tomb in background, view north-east, 1m, 0.50m and 0.30m scales



Plate 5 Trench 1 close up of sections looking north-east. 1m, 0.50m and 0.30m scales



Plate 6 Trench 2 within the porch; floor slab broken out onto natural ground, view east, 1m and 0.50m scales



Plate 7 Trench 2 excavated, view north, 0.50m and 0.30m scales

Appendix 1 Technical information

The archive (WA project code: P5184)

The archive consists of:

- 1 Field progress reports AS2
- 1 Photographic records AS3
- 66 Digital photographs
- 1 Trench record sheets AS41
- 1 CD disc
- 1 Copy of this report (bound hard copy)

The project archive is intended to be placed at:

Oxfordshire County Museum and Archive Store
Witney Road,
Standlake,
Oxon, OX8 7QG

A copy of the report will be deposited with the appropriate Historic Environment Record (HER).