

**HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LENTON, NOTTINGHAM**  
**Archaeological monitoring of renewal of  
drainage, and associated works**



# DOCUMENT CONTROL SHEET

Project title	HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, LENTON, NOTTINGHAM					
Document title	Archaeological monitoring of renewal of drainage, and associated works					
Report no.	17005					
Project code	LEN16					
Accession no.	TBA					
Local Authority	Nottingham					
Parish	City of Nottingham					
Postcode	NG7 2FF					
NGR	455440 339320					
Distribution	Alex Ford, CEL Group; Carl Andrews: Soul Architects; Southwell and Nottingham Diocesan Advisory Committee					
Document comprises:	Doc. Control	Contents and summary	Text	Figures	Photos	Appendix
	1	2 pages	3 pages	2 (2 pages)	11 (4 pages)	1 page

Ver	Status	Author	Reviewer	Approver	Date
1.0	Issue	Richard Moore	Claire Lingard	Chris Taylor	10/03/2017

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Cover image: Holy Trinity Church, Lenton, viewed from the north-east

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OASIS Collection Form

## Summary

An archaeological monitoring visit was made while new drains were being installed in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Lenton, Nottingham. The drains carry rainwater from the roof to an existing manhole in the churchyard to the north-east of the church, from where it discharges into the storm water drains in Church Street. The excavated drainage trenches were seen to be mostly confined to previously disturbed ground and there appeared to be no impact on any significant archaeological remains. No evidence of landuse pre-dating the nineteenth century church building was noted and no human interments were disturbed by the works.

## Introduction

Network Archaeology was commissioned in January 2017 to monitor works to be carried out on the installation of new drains in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Lenton, Nottingham (Fig 1) SK55443932.

The prime objective of the archaeological fieldwork was to mitigate the impact on the archaeological resource of the groundworks within the churchyard (Lingard 2017). This was to be achieved by:

- establishing the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains;
- locating, investigating and recording archaeological deposits;
- recovering, recording and conserving significant archaeological finds;
- producing a site archive and report for submission to the receiving museum and Nottinghamshire HER, as appropriate.

Groundworks centred around the excavation of drainage trenches, to take 100mm-diameter plastic pipes, and five pits for inspection chambers at the eastern end of the church, to allow rodding of the drains where they joined and changed direction. On the south side of the church, the drains ran beneath an existing path, and this path was largely relaid after the installation of the drains.

## The church and churchyard

Lenton, now a suburb of Nottingham stretching westward from beyond the castle and out to the University, originated as a village on the River Leen, close to the present-day site of Queen's Medical Centre. A Cluniac priory was established here in the first decade of the twelfth century, and flourished until the dissolution, after which part of the building became the parish church of St Anthony.

The construction of the canal system at the end of the eighteenth century encouraged the rapid industrialisation of Nottingham, creating intense pressure for urban expansion. In response, the area of New Lenton was developed to the north and east of the original village. The parish church of St Anthony Church had fallen into disrepair by this time, and Holy Trinity Church was built as a replacement, more conveniently sited to serve the newer parts of the parish. Designed by Henry Isaac Stevens, Holy Trinity was opened in 1842. Subsequently, Lenton became incorporated into the Nottingham in 1872. St Anthony's was eventually rebuilt and reopened in 1883.

The church is in Early English style, built using a local Triassic sandstone, with the surfaces of the blocks pecked in alternating diagonal patterns. Close to, this produces a warm, honey-coloured surface, but the atmosphere of industrial Nottingham has not been kind to the building and much of the surface is heavily sooted. This, together with the solid Gothic verticality of the aisle and chancel walls, and the high-pitched roof can give the building a heavy, brooding appearance, especially when seen from the north (Photos 1, 2).

This is enhanced by the tight clustering of the nineteenth-century memorials in the churchyard, crowding in on the building (Photo 3). This is particularly marked in the area to the north of the church, where up to seven rows of graves occupy the relatively narrow strip of land between the north aisle and the iron railings along the Church Street frontage. The sombre aspect that this creates is enhanced by the heavy shade from the row of lime trees along the outer edge of this area. There are three rows of similarly clustered graves on the south side of the church, where the

churchyard is unshaded and has a lighter, more open aspect (Photo 4). Beyond these three rows, the regular pattern of memorials continues but with gaps and whole rows missing. In some cases, it is clear that these spaces are where the grave-markers have been lost, but others may never have been used for graves.

These distinct areas of the churchyard must have had a different history of use, but it is not immediately clear whether the southern part is a later extension, or whether the northern part, where most of the graves date from the later nineteenth- or earlier twentieth-centuries, perhaps after the southern part filled up. Or the area close to the church building may have been more exclusive, accounting for the more elaborate memorials in this area.

Along the south side of the church, a wide tarmac path extends from the entrance gate on Church Street, around the side of the porch, past the west door through the tower and along the side of the aisle, vestry and chancel. This gives access to the cellar boiler room and to the external doorway in the east wall of the vestry.

## Construction work undertaken

The renewal of the drains was part of wider programme of restoration work, which included repairs to the stonework, most prominently in the replacement of the two columns in the western opening of the belfry, but also along the roof parapets and elsewhere (Photo 5). Roof repairs were carried out, including the renewal of flashing between the tower and the nave roof, and the gutters and down pipes were refurbished.

The drainage works included installing new grids and silt traps below each of the downpipes, concreted in and with a surround of engineering bricks (Photo 6). These were then connected to drains running along each side of the building, those from the south side of the building then running across the east end, joining those from north side before discharging into an existing manhole (Photo 7), which, in turn discharges into the storm-water drains in Church Street. Five Inspection chambers were installed at the junctions and of the drains at the east end of the church

Because of the tight constraints of the memorials close the church, especially on the north side, the drains were laid much closer to the building than might normally be the case. The memorial stone for Matilda Barton, died 11th May 1926, for instance, is only 950mm from the wall of the north aisle, severely limiting the space through which the trench to take the north drain could pass (Photo 8). Space was also tightly constrained at the eastern end of the church, where the curbs of a number of large graves pressed closely on the surround of the vent from the basement boiler room (Photo 9).

There was slightly more space on the south side, where no memorial is less than 1.65m from the wall of the south aisle or vestry. Here, the drains were laid beneath the path, and the tarmac relaid after they were installed (Photo 10). The grids in the existing tarmac surface draining surface water from the path were replaced as necessary and re-connected to the new drains.

The limitations on access and space meant that the use of a mechanical excavator was not possible and the trenches to hold the drains and the pits for the inspection chambers had to be hand-dug. Fortunately, a stand-down on another project allowed the contractor to redeploy the workforce from there, and the works were completed much more quickly than anticipated.

## Monitoring and observations

As the work was not considered to pose a high risk to significant archaeological deposits, a permanent archaeological presence during the works was not thought to be a proportionate response. Monitoring was confined to a single visit, on Friday 20th February 2017.

The drainage trenches and pits to hold the inspection chambers did not need to penetrate to any great depth, and were typically no more than 600mm below the surface. Close to the church building, the ground had, unsurprisingly, been disturbed to a considerable depth, so that the impact of the works on previously undisturbed deposits was minimal.

## Discussion and conclusions

The ground disturbance as a result of digging the new drains was minimal. The disturbance that there was, was mostly confined to the area close to the building, where earlier construction activities are likely to have disturbed any earlier archaeological deposits that may have once been present.

The graves on the northern side of the church press close to the walls of the building, but it is unlikely that any would have been much closer to it than 0.95m, the closest of the remaining memorials. While there are undoubtedly many graves that are no longer marked, especially on the south side of the churchyard (Photo 11), it seems likely that burials have followed a consistently regular pattern since the early days of the churchyard. As the works avoiding memorials and obvious gaps between memorials, the risk of disturbing graves was therefore minimised. In any case, during the lifetime of the churchyard, it is likely that all interments would have been at a much greater depth than the level of disturbance from these works.

No disarticulated human skeletal remains were noted, and the monitoring provided no evidence of any previous disturbance to graves.

No other archaeological artefacts were recovered, and there was nothing that would indicate the nature of any earlier use of the land, prior to the construction of the church. Documentary research on the earlier use of the land is beyond the scope of this study, but it is likely that it was agricultural land, possibly part of the priory lands prior to the reformation. The results of the monitoring would certainly be consistent with the land having been a 'green-field' site before the church was built.

## Archive

In addition to a copy of this report, the documentary archive consists of photographic indexes, and digital photographs. No artefacts were retained. With the approval of the clients, a copy of this report will be uploaded to the OASIS website of Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

## Acknowledgments

Network Archaeology acknowledges the support of CEL and would like to thank Carl Andrews of Soul Architects and Alex Ford of CEL, and the drainage sub-contractors for their help and co-operation.

## References

Lingard, C. 2017. Holy Trinity Church, Nottingham: Archaeological Method Statement, Network Archaeology, Lincoln

# Figures

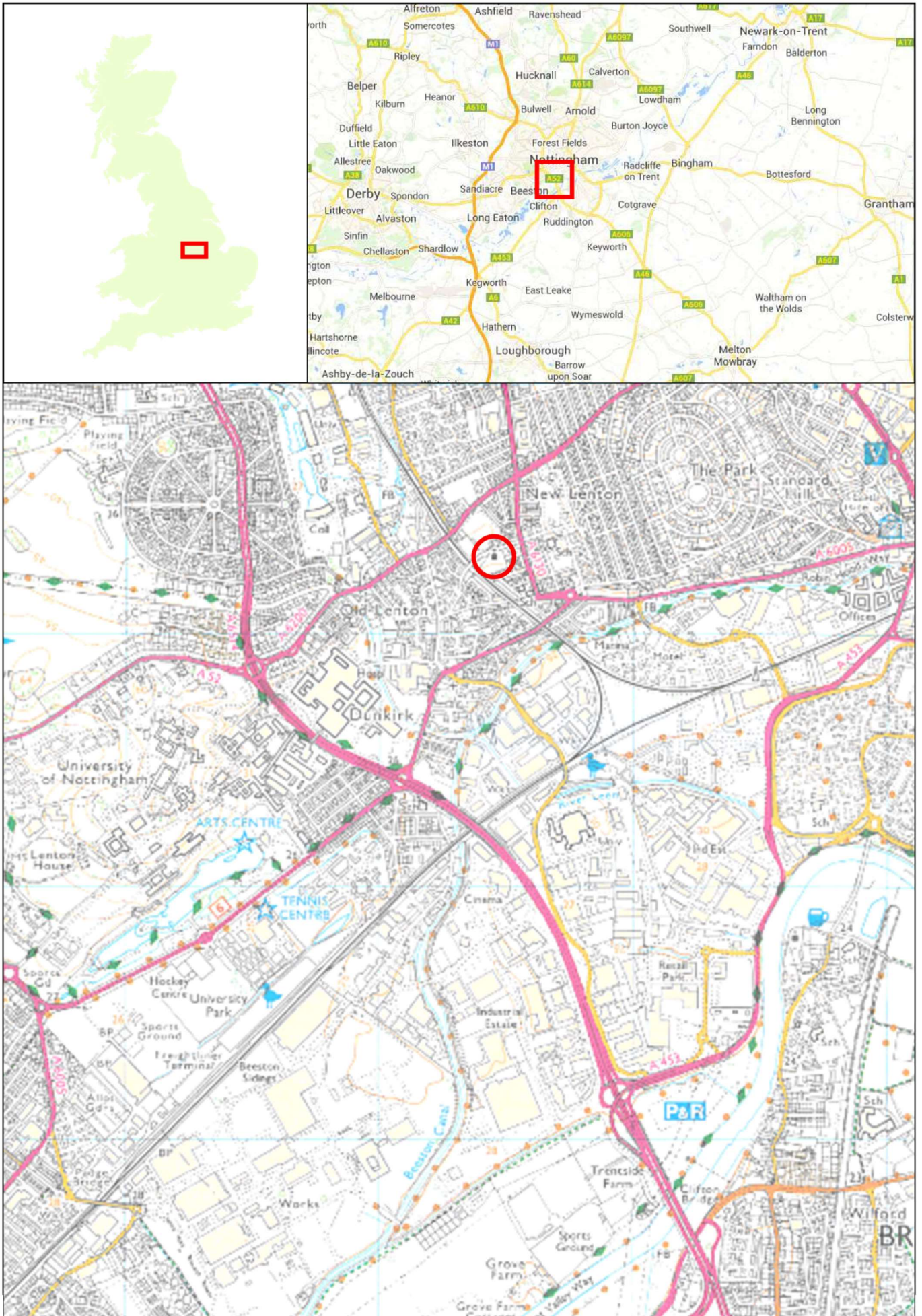


Figure 1: Location of Holy Trinity Church, Lenton, Nottingham, scale (main map) 1:20 000 (at A4)



# Figures

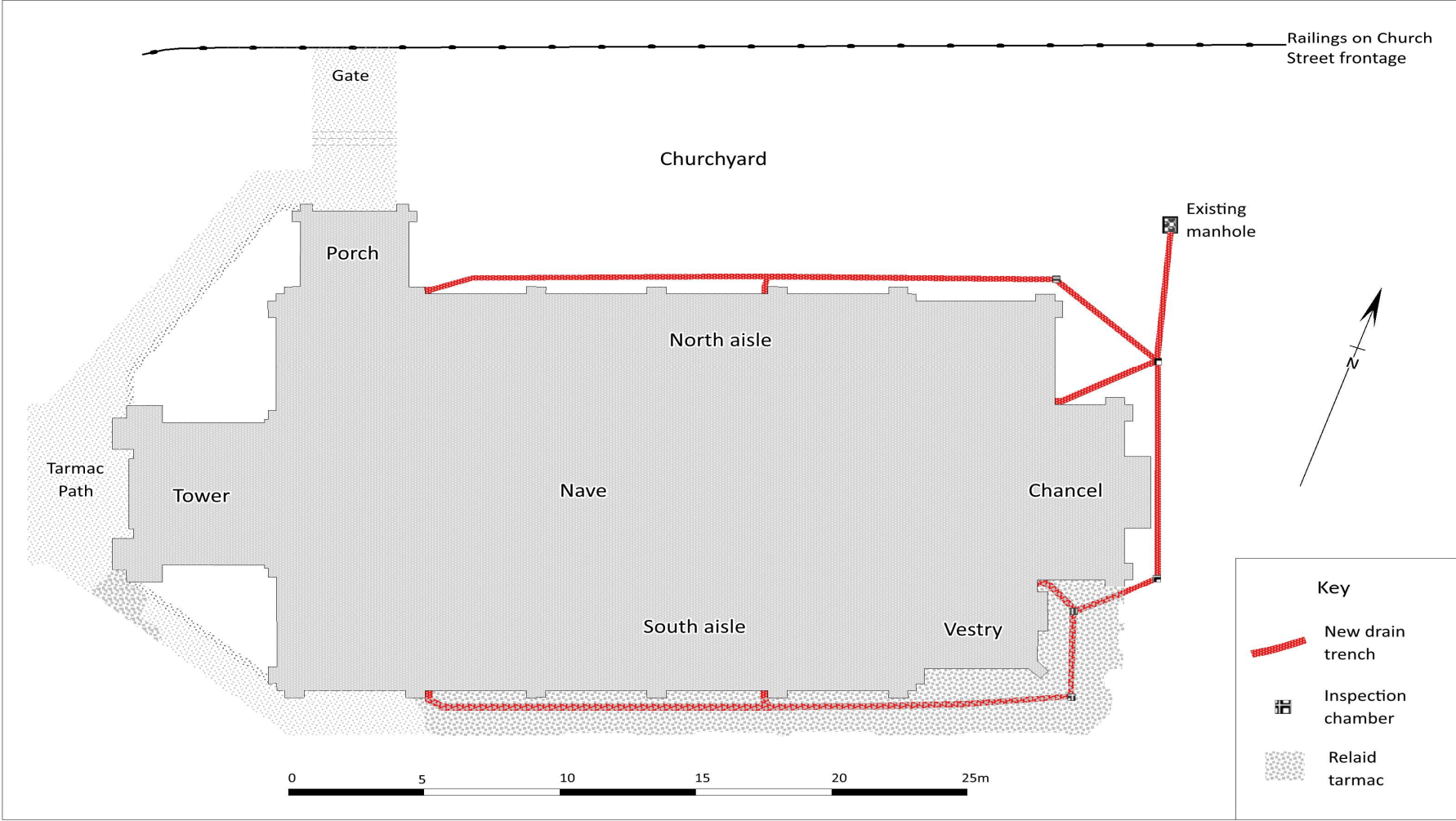


Figure 2: Outline plan of Lenton Church, showing location of excavated drainage trenches and inspection chambers, scale 1:200 (at A4)



# Photographs



1: View of the church from the south-east, showing angle of south aisle chancel and vestry



2: The north side of the church, looking eastward

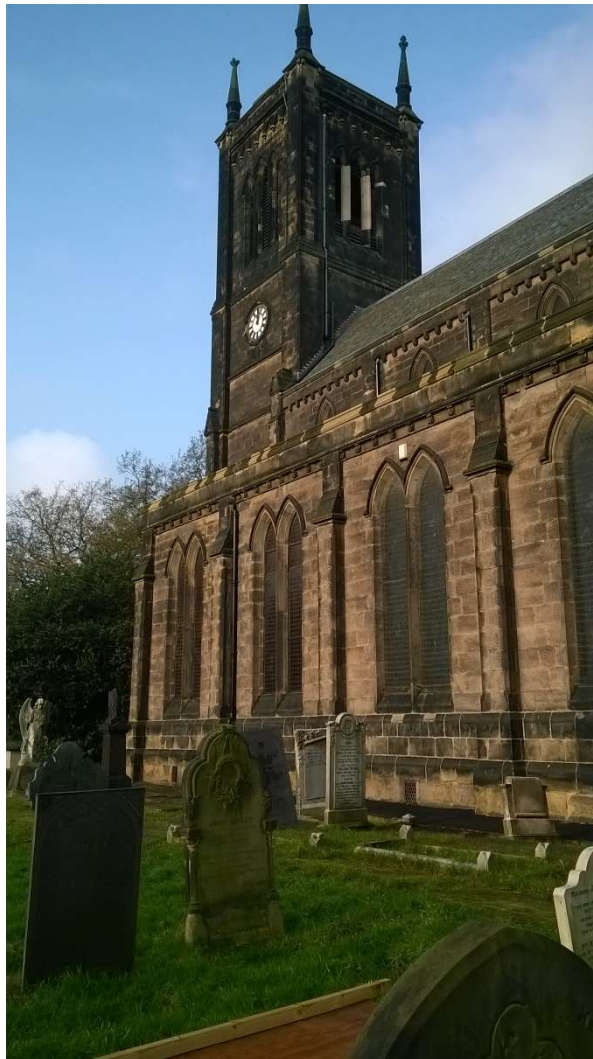


3: The northern part of the churchyard, between the Church Street frontage and the building, looking eastward from the entrance through the porch, showing the tightly packed memorials in this area

# Photographs



4: The southern part of the churchyard, looking north-eastward to the south aisle



5: The tower and south aisle looking north-westward

# Photographs



6: Newly constructed gully against the north wall of the chancel



7: The existing manhole between the eastern end of the church and Church Street

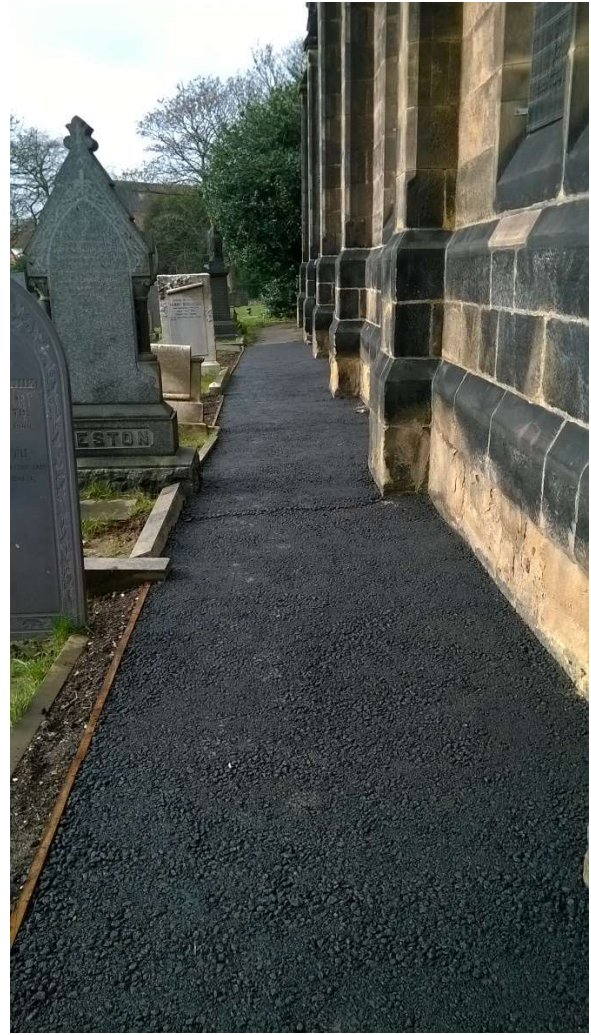


8: The memorial to Matilda Barton, showing the limited space between the graves and the wall of the north aisle

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9: View northward along the east end of the chancel, showing the infilled drainage trench between the boiler room vent and the kerbed graves



10: The south side of the church after reinstatement of the tarmac path



11: View of the church from the south part of the churchyard showing the arrangement of gravestones in rows, with gaps where memorials have been lost

# Appendix: OASIS Form

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