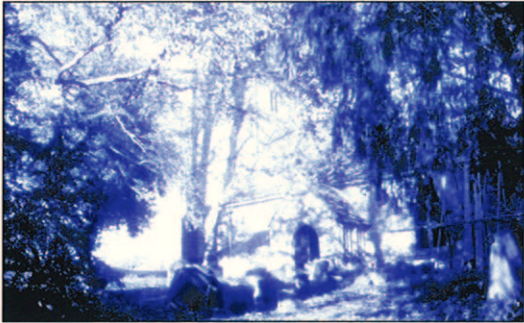


The Church of  
St John the Evangelist  
Wembley



**Archaeological  
Watching Brief Report**



**Oxford Archaeology**

August 2005

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Date: 12th April 2005

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# Church of St John the Evangelist, Wembley, London

By Annsofie Witkin

## *ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT*

### CONTENTS

Summary.....	2
1 Introduction.....	2
1.1 Location and scope of work.....	2
1.2 Geology and topography.....	2
1.3 Archaeological and historical background.....	2
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims.....	2
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results.....	3
3.1 Trench 1.....	3
3.2 Trench 2.....	3
4 Discussion And Conclusions.....	5
5 Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory.....	6
6 Appendix 2 Bibliography and references.....	7
7 Appendix 3 Summary of Site Details.....	8

### LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 OS Site location map  
Fig. 2 Site plan of area of watching brief

## SUMMARY

*In March 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the church of St John the Evangelist, Wembley, London (NRG TQ 178 851). The work was commissioned by Killby and Gayford Limited in advance of underpinning the eastern side of the church. The excavation of two possible graves revealed one empty brick-lined shaft dated to the 19th century. No human remains were excavated.*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Location and scope of work

1.1.1 In March 2005 Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at the church of St John the Evangelist, Wembley, London (NRG TQ 178 851). The work was carried out on the behalf of Killby and Gayford Limited on recommendations from the Diocesan Advisory Committee.

1.1.2 The work consisted of the excavation of two possible inhumation burials by Burial Ground Services (BGS). The burials were exhumed in advance of piling work required for underpinning of the eastern end of the church.

### 1.2 Geology and topography

1.2.1 The site lies on London clay at 40 m above OD (BGS sheet 257). The site is set back from the High Road at Wembley.

### 1.3 Archaeological and historical background

1.3.1 The church of St John the Evangelist was designed by George Gilbert and was consecrated in 1846. It was built on land donated by Anne and Frances Copland and was to serve the southern part of Harrow parish. The church was built in the Gothic style, of flint with stone dressing and originally comprised chancel, nave, northeast chapel and a wooden bell turret. Several extensions was added to the church between 1859 and 1935 which included a north and a south aisle. The area become a separate parish in 1846.

## 2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.

2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

## 2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The trenches were mechanically excavated using a toothless bucket by Burial Ground Services (BGS) under archaeological supervision. Any monuments present had been removed prior to the excavation.

2.2.2 The location of the trenches were at a scale of 1:50. The trenches were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. Monuments were fully recorded according to the methodology outlined in *Recording and analysing Graveyards* (H Mytum, 2002). Recording followed the procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

## 3 RESULTS

### 3.1 Trench 1

#### *Description of deposits*

3.1.1 The stratigraphically earliest deposit in trench one was a compact, firm light yellowish brown clay (2). The layer (2) contained no inclusions and was the natural subsoil of the area. The layer was excavated to a depth of 1.4 m and was overlain by topsoil (1). The topsoil consisted of 0.2 m deep dark brown friable sandy silt. The headstone and kerb forming the memorial monument (3) was situated on top of the topsoil.

### 3.2 Trench 2

#### *Descriptions of the deposits*

3.2.1 The earliest deposit seen was the natural subsoil (2) which was identical to the that seen in Trench 1. A brick lined shaft burial (5) was situated on top of the natural. The brick lining was not fully exposed but the exposed length measured 2.0 m, width at the shoulders was 0.9 m and the depth 1.6 m. There was no brick lined base present and the shaft was backfilled with redeposited natural (6). A memorial monument (7) was situated directly on top of the brick lined shaft.

***Memorial monuments***

- 3.2.2 Two memorials (3 and 7) were moved in advance of the excavation. Memorial 7 was situated at the location of Trench 1. The grave monument consisted of a headstone and kerbs. The headstone component was shouldered with indents with a Maltese cross at the top. In the middle of the cross was an incised quatrefoil with an overlapping IHS. The inscription was of incised painted lettering. The introductory text was written in Gothic style and the main text was in Roman style. The stone commemorated members of the Caubert family. Full inscription is present in the grave memorial catalogue. The headstone measured 1.96 m high, 0.75 m wide and 0.075 m thick. The kerb stones were square and plain.
- 3.2.3 Grave memorial 3 was situated on top of brick lined shaft 5. The monument consisted of a kerb only. The Kerb stones were gabled, with a flat top and a flat cross at each corner. Each cross had an incised central decoration consisting of a circle with four leaf shapes pointing towards the center. The true dimension of the monument is not known since it was in poor condition and removed prior to the excavation of the area. No inscription was present on the stone.

***Catalogue of grave memorials******Structure number: 3******Type:*** Gabled kerb with flat crosses at each corner.***Style:*** Unknown***Comments:*** No inscription present***Structure number: 7******Type:*** Headstone***Style:*** Gothic revival***Components:*** Shouldered headstone with indents and a Maltese cross at the top. Plain square kerb stone***Decoration:*** Quatrefoil with an overlapping IHS at the centre of the cross.***Inscription***

In  
Loving memory  
of  
MARIA  
WIFE OF STEPHEN CAUBERT  
WHO LEFT TO MOURN HER LOSS  
27<sup>TH</sup> FEB<sup>Y</sup> IN THE 52<sup>ND</sup> YEAR OF HER AGE

EVERYBODY'S SISTER  
STEPHEN CAUBERT 1907  
FATHER OF  
PERCIVAL STEPHEN CAUBERT 1963  
AND  
ETHEL MAY CAUBERT 1963  
HIS WIFE  
AND THEIR DAUGHTER  
MARION CAUBERT 1972

#### 4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 It was originally believed that the grave stones marked places of interments. However, the headstone which was part of the monument 7 in Trench 1 was leaning up against the church wall and only loosely placed within the topsoil. Moreover, there was no evidence of a grave beneath the monument. This monument was therefore *not in situ* and must have been displaced some time in the past.
- 4.1.2 Memorial 3 was directly on top of a brick lined shaft which was fully excavated. The grave did not contain any burials, nor did the memorial contain any commemorative inscription. This grave may therefore be a family plot that was bought and prepared for burial but for whatever reason was never used.

**APPENDICES****5 APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Depth</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Height</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1	Trench 1 and 2	Layer	0.3 m				Topsoil
2	Trench 1 and 2	Layer	1.3 m				Natural subsoil
3	Trench 2	Structure		1.26 m			Gabled kerb stone memorial
4	Trench 2	Cut					Cut for brick-lined shaft 5
5	Trench 2	Structure	1.6 m	0.9 m	2.0 m		Brick-lined shaft
6	Trench 2	Fill	1.6 m	0.75 m	1.8 m		Fill of brick-lined shaft structure 5
7	Trench 1	Structure					Grave memorial headstone and kerb



6 APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

British Geological Sheet 257

Mytum, H 2002 *Recording and analysing graveyards. Practical handbooks in Archaeology No 15*, CBA and English Heritage

OA 1992, *Fieldwork Manual* (ed. D Wilkinson, first edition, August 1992)

**7 APPENDIX 3 SUMMARY OF SITE DETAILS**

**Site name:** St John the Evangelist

**Site code:** SJV 05

**Grid reference:** TQ 178 851

**Type of watching brief:** Two machine excavated trenches

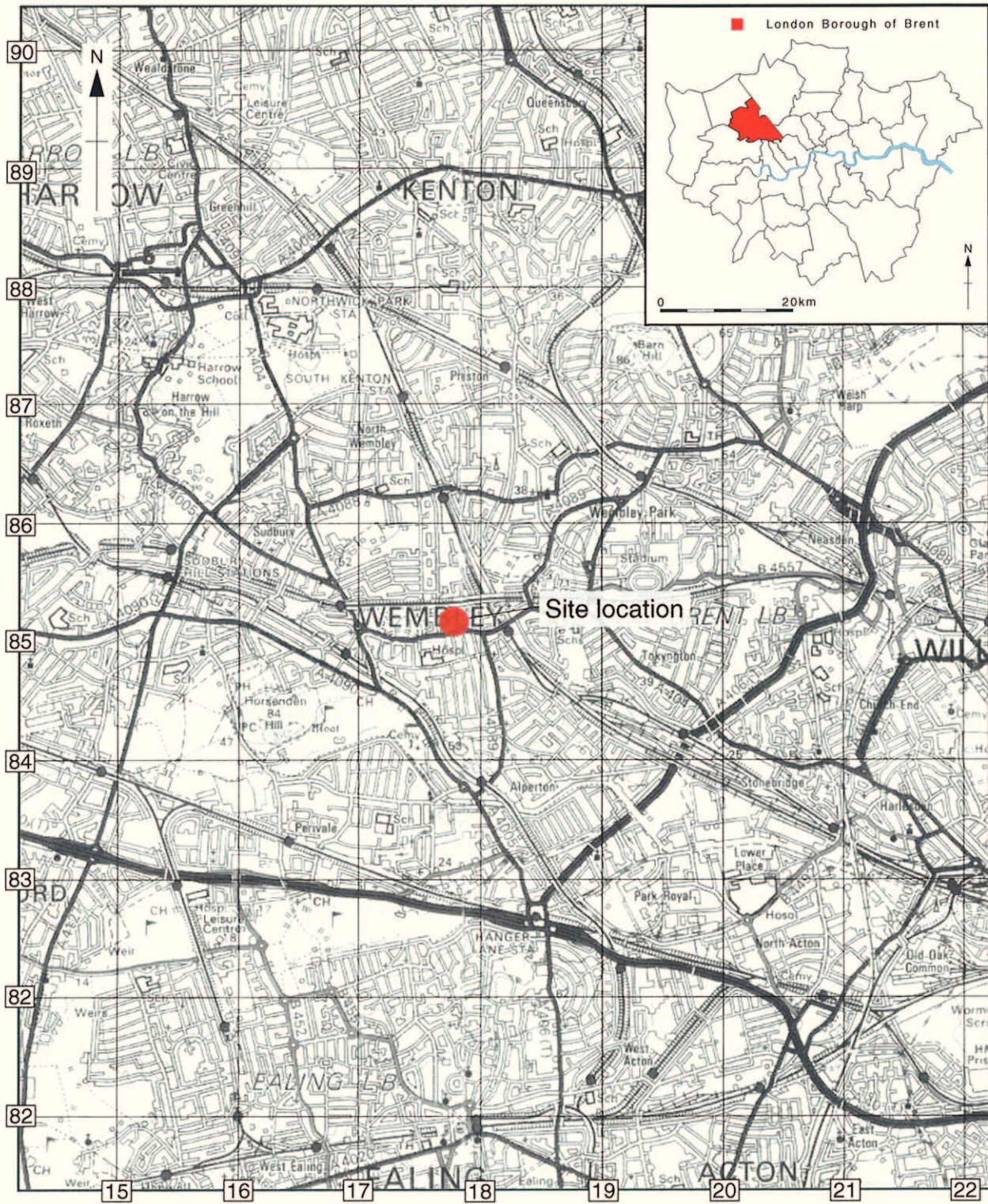
**Date and duration of project:** 17/03/05, One day

**Area of site:** Two trenches measuring 2 m by 1 m.

**Summary of results:**

**Location of archive:** The archive is currently held at OA, Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES, and will be deposited with Museum of London in due course, under the following accession number: SJV05.

Server: /oapubals\_RhnmZ/SIV05\*SIVWB\*Church of St John the Evangelist, Wembley\*CS\*13.04.05



Scale 1:50,000

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Figure 1: Site location



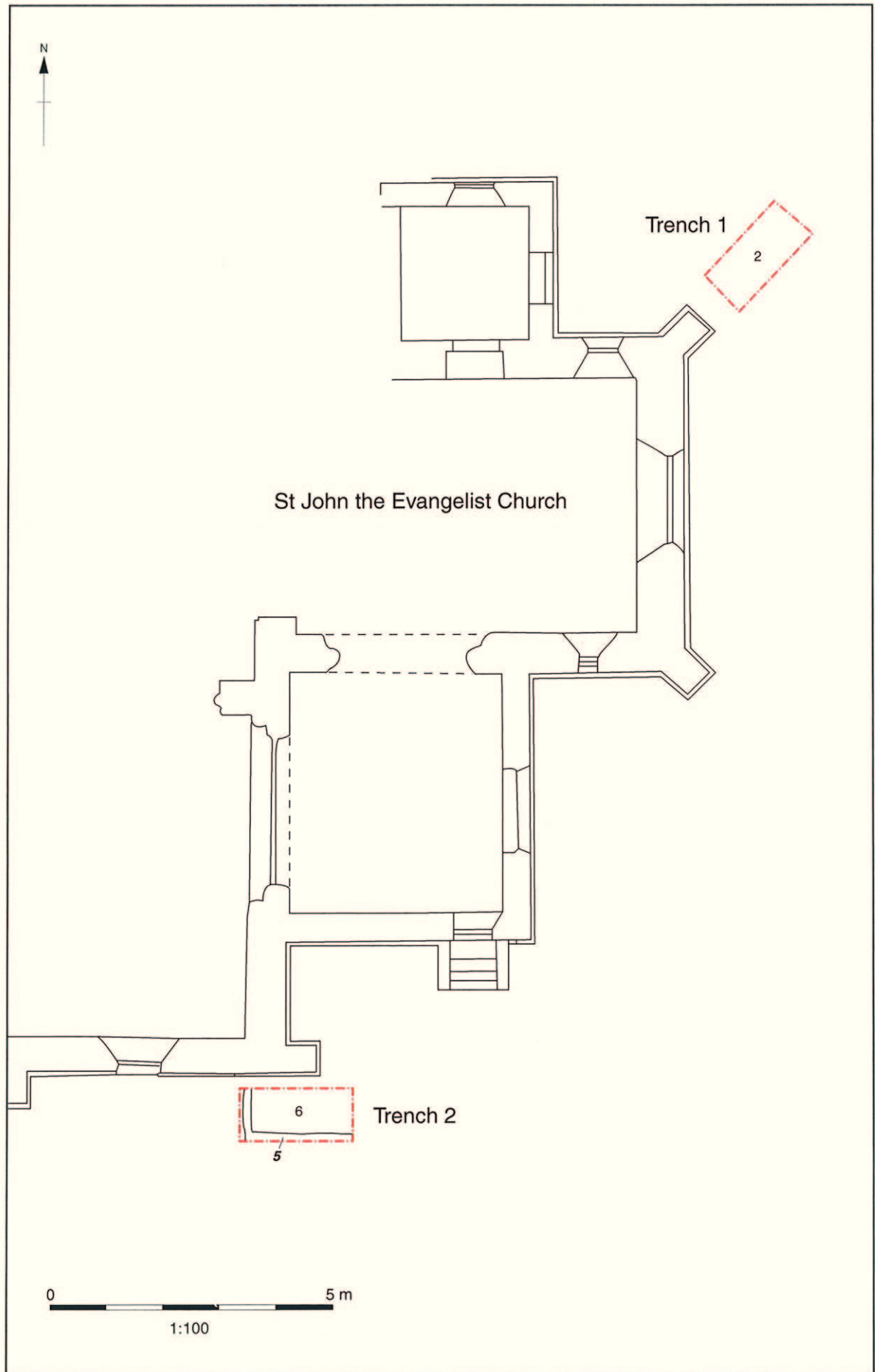


Figure 2: Trench locations