



All Saints CE Parish Church, Orton Cumbria

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

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Parochial Church Council**

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SUMMARY

Following a desk-based assessment and visual inspection report undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North in 2004 (OA North 2004), it was recommended that a watching brief be carried out during any groundworks associated with the restoration of All Saints CE Parish Church, Orton, Cumbria (NGR NY 62216 08389). Accordingly, a watching brief was undertaken by OA North on 23rd June 2005 during the excavation of an exploratory trench to identify the presence or otherwise of drains on the northern side of the church.

A single trench was excavated entirely through a previous cut for a French drain or soakaway, which had been backfilled with stone rubble. No archaeological horizons were encountered during the works and there were no further recommendations for archaeological intervention.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank IWA Architects and the Parochial Church Council of All Saints for commissioning the work.

The watching brief was undertaken by Jason Clarke and the report was written by David Tonks. The drawings were compiled by Mark Tidmarsh. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 IWA Architects have been required by English Heritage to conduct an archaeological building investigation of All Saints CE Parish Church, Orton, Cumbria (NGR NY 62216 08389; Fig 1), prior to extensive renovations being carried out on the listed building. In response to this, OA North was requested to submit a desk-based assessment and visual inspection report (OA North 2004), in which it was recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during any associated groundworks. Accordingly, a watching brief was carried out during the excavation of an exploratory trench to identify the presence or otherwise of drainage to the north of the church. This report sets out the results of the watching brief in the form of a short document.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief. The programme comprised observation during the groundworks and the examination of any horizons exposed. The groundworks were effected by hand.
- 2.1.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of any features or structures observed on OA North *pro-forma* sheets and their accurate location in plan. In addition, a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the work undertaken has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Cumbria County Record Office in Kendal, and a copy of the report will be forwarded to the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record, along with an index to the archive.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 THE SETTING

- 3.1.1 **Location:** Orton is located in the ancient county of Westmorland, now in modern day Cumbria. The village is situated four miles to the north of Tebay, and eight miles south-east of Shap (Bulmer 1905; Fig 1).
- 3.1.2 **Topography:** the village lies in a valley bottom, within the Orton Fells, an area in which the high fells contrast with valleys of rich grazing land. The river Lune and several of its tributary streams have their sources in this parish (Bulmer 1905). The village of Orton is an important element in the landscape. This historic settlement consists of limestone farms and dwellings, and narrow lanes bounded by limestone walls, which together exhibit a uniformity in scale, form and colour (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.1.3 The church is situated on high ground, rising to approximately 230m OD at the north side of the village (Ordnance Survey 1984). The church yard is spread around the north, east and west sides of the church (Fig 2).
- 3.1.4 **Geology:** the underlying solid geology of the area consists of limestones from the Carboniferous period producing extensive limestone scars and pavements. This is combined with beds of sandstone and shale (Countryside Commission 1998). This is overlain by drift geology of glacial boulder clays, with the resulting soils being from the Eardiston series, which are typical brown earths (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** All Saints Church, Orton is designated as a Listed Building (3/9 Grade II*), and is recorded in the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record (SMR 13855). Below is a general history of the site and a more detailed history of the development of the church, drawn from the desk-based assessment report (OA North 2004).

3.3 BACKGROUND HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

- 3.3.1 **Roman Period:** although there are no specific references to a Roman building or settlement at Orton, excavations carried out in 1986 during the construction of the car park revealed possible reused Roman masonry within the foundations of the north side of the nave (Cumbria County Council 1986; Plates 3 and 4). Two blocks of masonry were identified, one with simple moulding on the edge, and a second with a recess on the surface for an metal clamp (*ibid*; Plate 3). It is possible that a Roman structure was located close to the church as it is unlikely that these fairly ordinary stones would have been imported any distance. It is impossible to tell, however, from the area excavated whether there is a structure below the church, although the discovery of such a building would be highly significant for the area.

3.3.2 **Early Medieval Period:** there is no mention of Orton in the Domesday Book, as Westmorland was not included in the survey, meaning the early history of the church is difficult to trace. However, it is known that the Church of Orton in Westmorland was awarded to Conishead Priory by Gamel de Pennington (near Ulverston, in what was then part of Lancashire) between the years of 1154 and 1163 (Collingwood 1931). However, there are some discrepancies over the date of the original stone church. Bulmer (1905) suggests that it was built during the twelfth century, and had a cruciform plan comprising the chancel, nave and north and south transepts. The SMR suggests that the pier and respond still extant in the east bay of south aisle formed part of this original cruciform structure. Pevsner (1967), however, believes the origins of the stone church date to the early thirteenth century, although he is in agreement that the original church was cruciform in plan.

3.4 HISTORY OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH

3.4.1 **Medieval Period:** as the general history suggests it is difficult to assess precisely when the different elements of the church were constructed. The scarcity of documentary evidence means that it is necessary to rely on the physical evidence, in the form of datable styles and construction techniques. It would seem likely that the church was expanded throughout the medieval period; the north and south aisles are thought to have been added in the thirteenth century, with the south aisle probably originally being a chapel as there are remains of a trefoiled piscina, and a recess in the wall, which formed either a credence or an aumbry (Pevsner 1967). Both aisles are built in the perpendicular style, with the west arch of the crossing possibly supporting a tower that may have become insecure and removed (*ibid*). There are also stone brackets on the east wall which possibly held religious images.

3.4.2 Two windows were added in the wall of the south aisle in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, either side of a round-headed doorway. The easternmost pillar in this aisle show the remains of several arches suggesting different phases of building, or reuse of original building materials. The three-stage castellated tower is believed to have been built around 1504, and the north aisle was extended to the west, with a window added. However, it does not appear that the south aisle was extended at this date, as the pillar bases on this side of the church do not extend as far west as those in the north aisle (Pevsner 1967; Smith 1993; Whiteside 1904).

3.4.3 The earliest documentary references relating to the business of the church appear to date to the thirteenth century. In 1263 Bishop Robert de Chauncy, acting on behalf of the Pope, requested a valuation of the church and vicarage by the prior of Conishead, which came to £4 14s (Whiteside 1904). Instead of paying the tithe to the Priory as money, it was arranged that certain portions of the parish should be assigned instead. These portions included the assets of two dwelling houses with two oxgangs of land, mortuaries, offerings on All Saints Day, Christmas Day, Easter Day and the Day of Purification of the Blessed Mary, and at weddings, burials and churchings, tithes of wool and lambs, tithes of flax, hemp and moulter; small tithes of forest trees, geese, ducks, eggs, chickens and pigs; honey and beeswax; use of ponds, dovecotes

and gardens; and profits from trades, merchants and wages (WPR/9/I/157 1946).

- 3.4.4 **Later Medieval Period:** in 1529, during the reign of Henry VIII, the church of Orton appeared to prosper. Four new bells were placed in the tower, with one cast by John Woolley of Nottingham dated to 1530 (Parson and White 1829; although Nicolson and Burn (1777, 485) state that all four were cast by Woolley). Two of the bells in the surviving frame (now situated in north aisle) are dated 1637 and the fourth is undated (*ibid*). By 1540 the valuation of the church had risen to £17 5s 4d (WPR/9/I/157 1946).
- 3.4.5 After Conishead Priory reverted to the Crown during the Reformation, Queen Elizabeth I leased the rectory of Orton in 1586 to Richard Sadlier, who was rector of the parish at the time, for the duration of 31 years, with an annual rental of twenty pounds (WPR/9/I/65 1586). However, the lease did not remain with Richard Sadlier for the expected amount of time, as the Crown then sold the rights of the parish to two London financiers, Francis Morice and Francis Phelipe, some time after 1586 (WPR/9/I/157 1946). By 1612, the parishioners of Orton, with the rector John Corney, unhappy with the situation of two London men holding the rights to the parish, raised the money to buy back the church and advowson for £570 (WPR/9/I/13 1612). From this time onwards, the freeholders of Orton have held the advowson of the Orton living, giving them the right to elect the vicar. The parish registers began soon after in March 1654, but have no other records other than births, deaths and marriages (Whiteside 1904).
- 3.4.6 **Post-Medieval Period:** few sources relating to expansion of the church in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could be found, perhaps suggesting that there was little alteration carried out during this period. However, the Listing information suggests that the roof timbers of the nave and aisles date to the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, with the gabled porch in the nave bay in the south aisle dating to 1607. The octagonal stone font, typical of this period, was placed in the church in 1662 (Pevsner 1967). In 1749, four new pews were added for the common people and churchwardens (Whiteside 1904).
- 3.4.7 However, the post-medieval period saw the church expand its land ownership, suggesting that the parish still prospered. In 1666, Roger Keinon, the vicar of Orton, exchanged glebe land at Frybiggins held by the church, for land belonging to the late vicar George Fothergill (WPR/9/I/115 1666). Plans illustrating this could not be found. In 1736 the Rev Dr Richard Burn, co-author of *The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland* (Nicolson and Burn 1777) was elected rector. A plaque within the chancel records his time at All Saints. In 1768 the church council applied for an Act of Parliament to divide and enclose common and waste ground in Orton and Raisbeck, of which part was set aside for the vicar in lieu of tithes of wool and lamb, giving a yearly income of £25 (WPR/9/I/68 1768). The seats at this time were ‘*repaired at the public expense*’ as ‘*the modern practice of appropriating seats hath not yet obtained in this church*’ (Nicolson and Burn 1777, 485).

- 3.4.8 During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, further additions were made to the church. A faculty was granted in 1877 to take down and rebuild the chancel, and between 1878 and 1879 the restoration was undertaken by Paley and Austin (Price 1998, 86). During these renovations it was shown that the chancel walls had been altered previously, with much of the stonework consisting of re-used pieces of windows and arches (Smith 1993). No documentary record of this previous work remains, however. An organ and vestry were also added at this time, along with oak sanctuary rails. The vestry was panelled with oak which is thought to have been taken from the vicar's pew, as over the fireplace are Vicar Corney's initials, 'I.C., 1639'. Part of the capital of the pillar in the nave was cut away to accommodate the three decker pulpit, which is no longer extant. The clay floor of the church was replaced first with flags and then with boards during the nineteenth century (Bulmer 1905). Radiators were introduced into the church in 1901, and a fuel chamber was built in 1913, but electric lights were not installed until 1938. The peal of six bells was replaced with a peal of eight bells in 1916, and a war memorial was erected in 1919 (WPR/9/I/159-260 1877-1961).
- 3.4.9 The church continued its acquisition of land during this period. As part of the enclosure award in 1852, the advowson was augmented with two allotments called the Knott and Vicar's Moss, consisting of about 200 acres given in lieu of lamb and wool tithes (Parson and White 1829). This area of enclosed land was mapped at the time (WPR/9/Z/19-20 1852; Fig 2). Further plots of land were subsequently bought, specifically to increase the size of the churchyard.
- 3.4.10 **Historic Map Regression:** the earliest detailed maps of the site relate to these periods of enclosure. There are two plans available of the church and churchyard dating to 1886, showing the church, churchyard and vicarage along with the surrounding enclosed fields (WPR/9/I/127 1886; Plate 1). The accompanying documentation discusses the extra land acquired for the churchyard. The earliest Ordnance Survey maps showing the site in detail were consulted but do not provide any additional information about the plan of the building. A more detailed plan drawn in approximately 1946, shows the addition of an area to the churchyard to the north of the church (WPR9/I/120 n.d.; Plate 2). The church is shown as the same shape as in 1886 and evidently did not change a great deal during the twentieth century.

4. RESULTS

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 A single trench measuring 20m x 0.5m x 0.4m was excavated by hand along the western, external side of the north wall of the church (Plate 1). Turf and shallow topsoil was removed exposing stone rubble backfill, which itself sealed stony topsoil along the length of the excavation (Plate 2). There were no finds and no archaeological horizons were encountered during the work.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 CONCLUSION

- 5.1.1 The stone rubble encountered was undoubtedly the backfill for a previously dug soakaway or French drain. Such material is characteristic of these types of feature as it assists drainage of the ground. It is concluded that the trench was entirely excavated through the cut and backfill of such a feature.
- 5.1.2 There were no finds and no archaeological features were exposed during the works. This is entirely attributable to the ground being previously disturbed by the digging of the soakaway feature and its deliberate backfilling with stone.
- 5.1.3 There are no further recommendations for archaeological intervention or works.

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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

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Plate 1: North wall of All Saints Church

Plate 2: Exploratory trench facing west

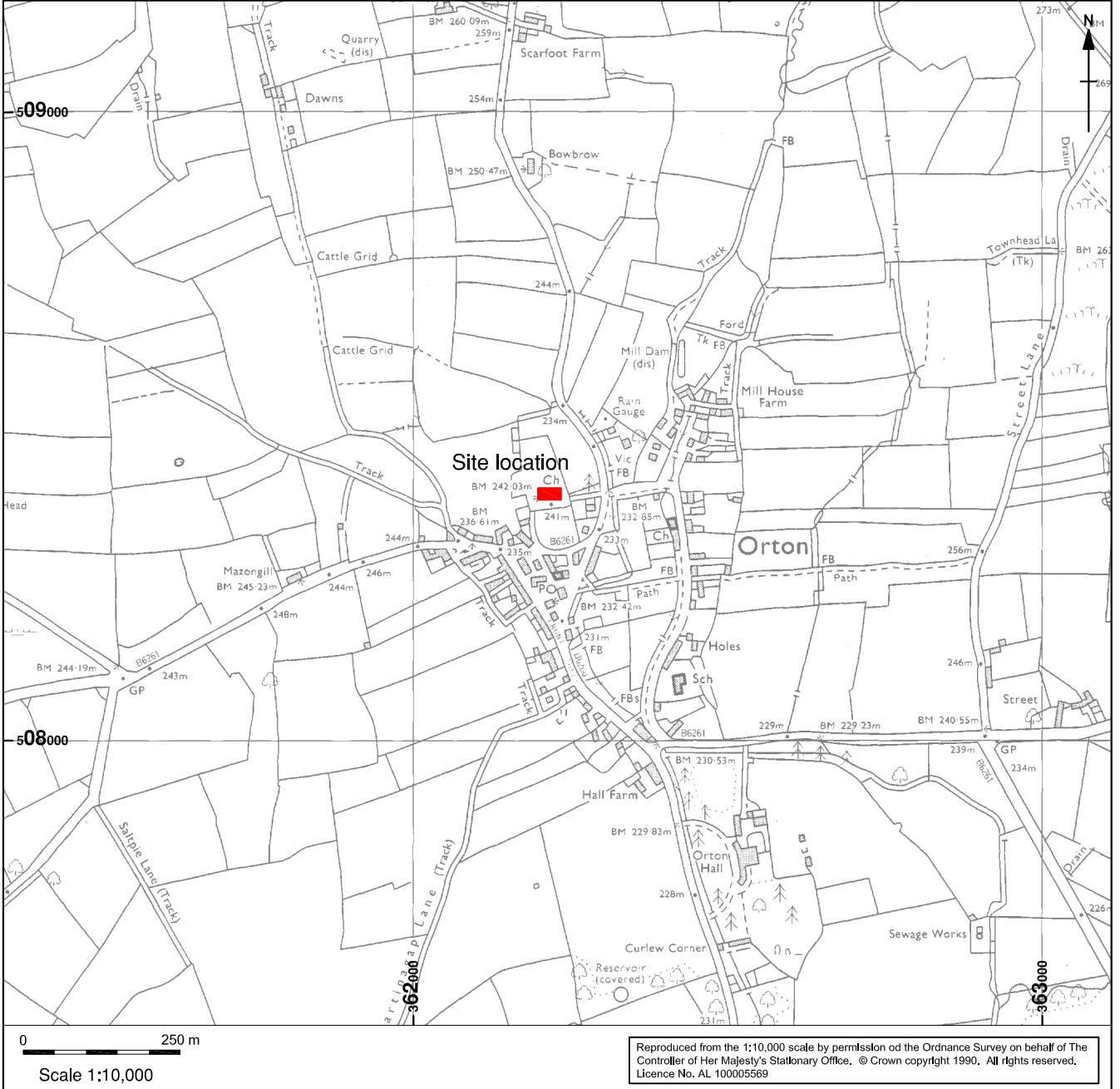
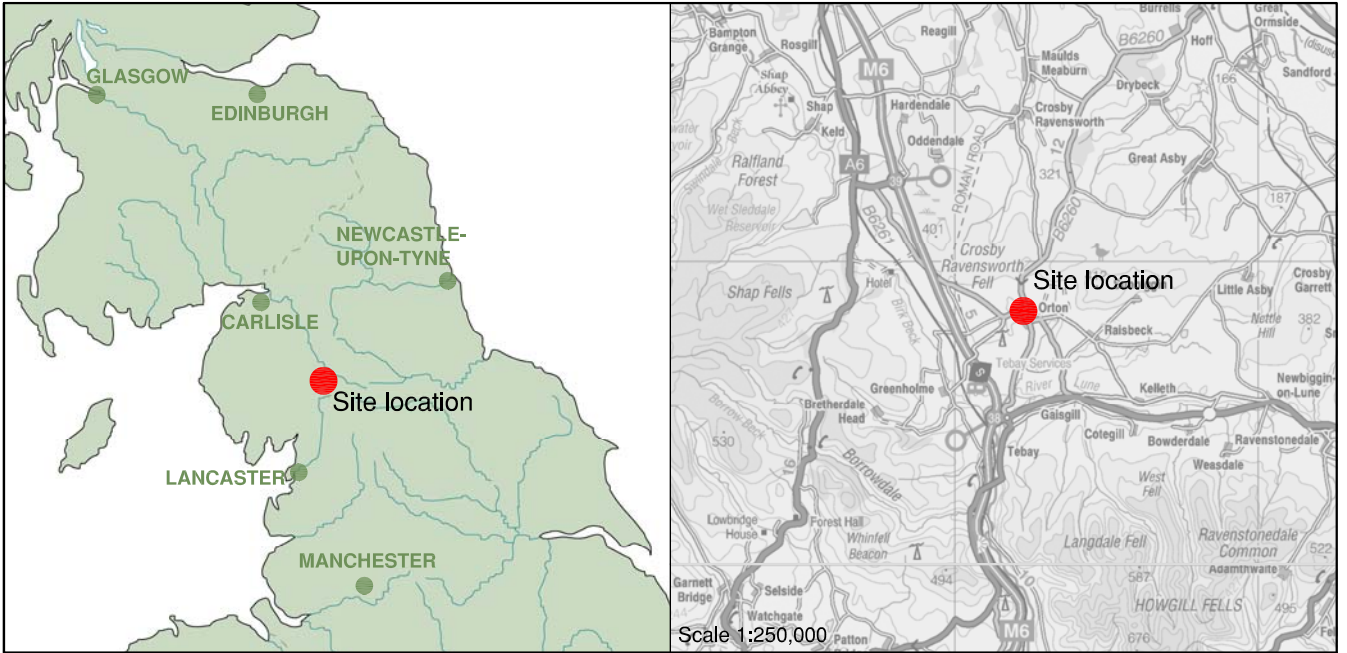


Figure 1: Site Location

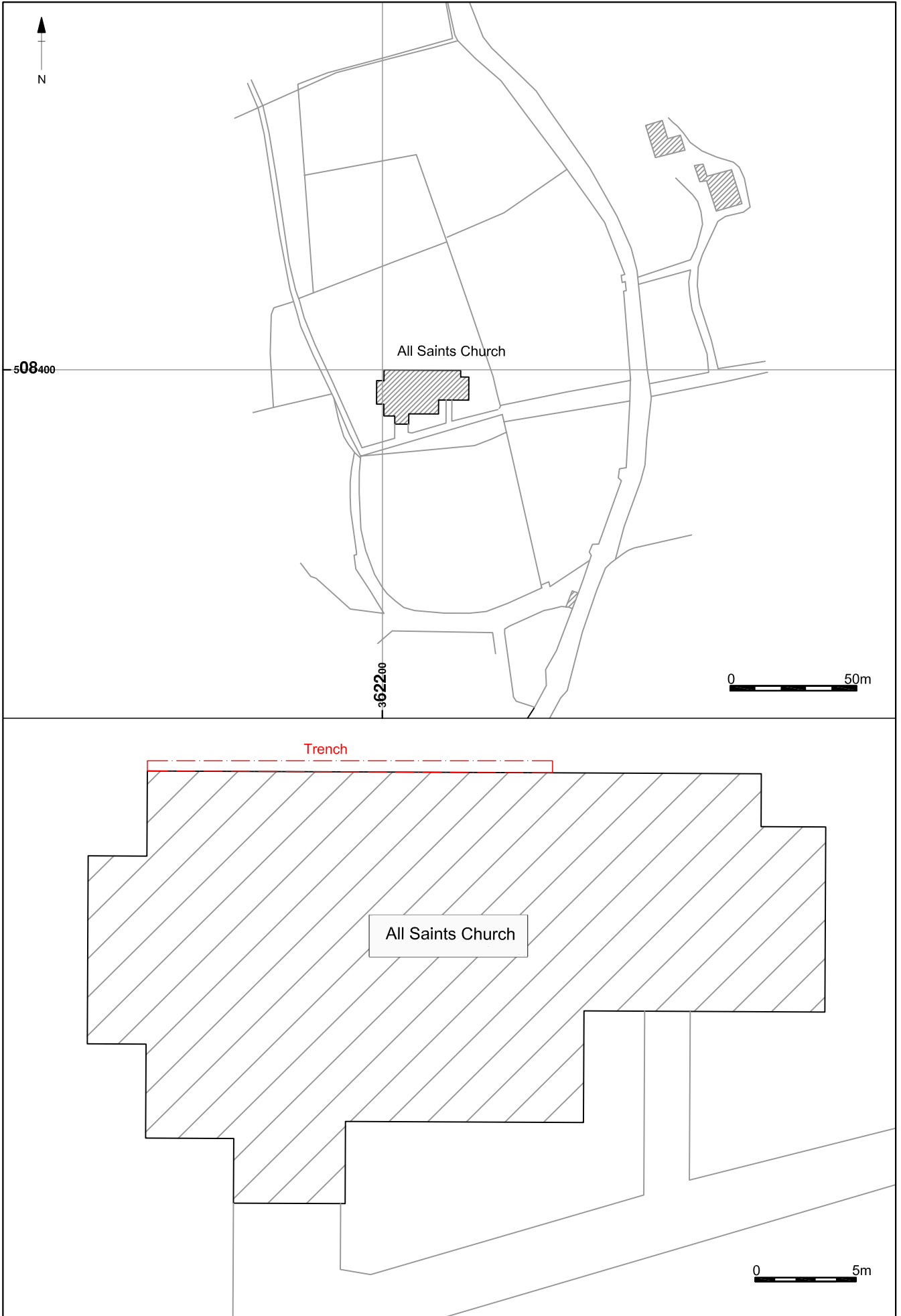


Figure 2: Trench location plan



Plate 1: North wall of All Saints Church



Plate 2: Exploratory trench facing west

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design has been compiled for IWA Architects with reference to the requirement for an archaeological building investigation of All Saints CE Parish Church. Section 2 states the objectives of the project, Section 3 deals with OA North's methodology. Section 4 addresses other pertinent issues including details of staff to be involved, and project costs are presented in Section 5.
- 1.2 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment and investigation of historic buildings of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Watching briefs and building investigations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. Recent church projects include St Paul's and St Mary's in Preston, St Laurence, Chorley, St Helen's, Waddington and St Conan's Kirk in Argyll.
- 1.3 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, **registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the building investigation are to provide an outline analysis of the church prior to and during building works, which will serve to both preserve by record and inform the project engineers.
- 2.1.1 To achieve the objective outlined above the following listed specific aims are proposed.

Stage 1:

- (i) to undertake a desk-based assessment and visual inspection of the church;
- (ii) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

Stage 2:

- (iii) to undertake an archaeological watching brief;
- (iv) to produce a report and archive in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 Stage 1 - DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 The following will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material.

3.1.2 **Documentary and Cartographic Material:** this work will comprise a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource. It will include an appraisal of the data in the CSMR (Kendal), appropriate sections of County histories, early maps (printed and manuscript), and such primary documentation (tithes and estate plans etc.) as may be reasonably available. Particular attention will be paid to field and place names recorded on early cartographic sources relating to estate and parish boundaries, field boundaries, woodlands and routes, as these often provide important evidence of archaeological activity and transformation of the historic landscape. All available published and unpublished documentary sources will also be examined and assessed. The County Record Office (Kendal) and relevant local studies library will also be consulted.

3.1.3 **Visual Inspection:** a brief visual inspection of the church will be undertaken to RCHME level I-type survey. This level of survey is purely descriptive and will result in an outline development and use of the building.

3.1.4 **Photographic Archive:** a photographic archive will be produced utilising a 35mm camera to produce both black and white contact prints and colour slides. The archive will comprise general shots of the church (both internal and external) and surroundings, and detailed coverage of agricultural features.

3.1 Stage 2 - WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving architectural/archaeological features exposed during the reduction to external ground levels and the removal of any unsuitable render during the internal works. This work will comprise observation and the systematic examination of features exposed during the course of the works, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features identified during observation.

3.2.2 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important features. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to costing. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in

order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential

- 3.2.3 **Burials:** should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed.
- 3.2.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.
- 3.2.5 OA North generally calculates a 1:0.5 ratio of fieldwork: post-fieldwork (archive, analysis, and report preparation) if the level of archaeology observed is low or 1:1 if the level of archaeology is high.

3.3 STAGES 1 AND 2 - REPORT AND ARCHIVE

- 3.3.1 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a further two copies submitted to the County SMR (one paper copy and one digital copy) within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above and will include a full index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, together with appropriate illustrations, including detailed plans and sections indicating the locations of archaeological features. The report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- 3.3.2 This report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities will be made. Illustrative material will include a location map, section drawings, and plans. This report will be in the same basic format as this project design.
- 3.3.3 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives

for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the County SMR (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office.

- 3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.
- 3.3.5 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of the CCC Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

4 TIMETABLE AND RESOURCES

- 4.1 The desk-based assessment will take five days to complete; a further one day will be required for the visual inspection.
- 4.2 The duration of the watching brief will depend upon the progress of the contractor.
- 4.3 The final report will follow within eight weeks of completion of the data collection and fieldwork, although a shorter deadline can be negotiated.
- 4.4 The project will be under the direct management of **Alison Plummer BSc (Hons)** (OA North senior project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.
- 4.5 The desk-based assessment is likely to be undertaken by **Daniel Elsworth MA** (OA North supervisor). Daniel has a great deal of experience in the assessment and analysis of historic buildings throughout the NorthWest.
- 4.6 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be carrying out each specific task, but all elements of the project are likely to be supervised by an OA North project supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.
- 4.7 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.