

Archaeological Watching Brief at All Saints Church, Church Lench Worcestershire

Worcestershire Archaeology
for All Saints Church Parish Council

November 2019



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Archaeological Watching Brief Report



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SITE INFORMATION

Site name: All Saints Church, Church Lench, Worcestershire
Local planning authority: Wychavon District Council
Planning reference: 18/01873/FUL
Central NGR: SP 02412 51269
Commissioning client: All Saints Church Parish Council
WA project number: P5514
WA report number: 2743
HER reference: WSM 71535
Oasis reference: Fieldsec1-371243

DOCUMENT CONTROL PANEL

Version	Date	Author	Details	Approved by
1	25/11/2019	Graham Arnold	Final (Phase 1 works)	R Jackson

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	1
REPORT	2
1 INTRODUCTION	2
1.1 Background to the project	2
1.2 Site location and background.....	2
2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	2
2.1 Introduction	2
3 PROJECT AIMS	2
4 PROJECT METHODOLOGY	2
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS	3
6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE	3
7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE	3
8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	3
9 PROJECT PERSONNEL	4
10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
11 BIBLIOGRAPHY	4

FIGURES

PLATES

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF PROJECT ARCHIVE

An archaeological watching brief at All Saints Church, Church Lench, Worcestershire

By Graham Arnold

Illustrations by Carolyn Hunt

Summary

An archaeological project comprising building recording and a watching brief was undertaken at All Saints Church, Church Lench, Worcestershire (NGR SP 02412 51269). It was commissioned by All Saints Church Parish Council in advance of the replacement of church steps to make better access to the church. Planning permission has been granted, with an archaeological condition placed on the works.

The steps that were being replaced consisted of York stone. No mason marks were visible. Concrete paving slabs were on the path above and below the steps.

The intrusive groundworks only involved lifting the existing York stone steps, removing part of the eastern stone wall and lifting the concrete slabs, before laying terram and building up with bedding material to the existing porch entrance level. Underlying the stone steps and concrete paving slabs, was a layer of bedding stone, with graveyard soil being revealed beneath this and behind the stone wall following its removal. Disarticulated human bones (charnel) were observed, having been cut by the original stone wall construction and these were replaced within the graveyard soil and covered over in the eastern section of the wall cut to protect them from further disturbance. No further human remains or archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were observed during the works. The posts for the handrails on the church path involved limited excavation and it was determined that these did not warrant archaeological monitoring.

Report

1 Introduction

1.1 Background to the project

An archaeological project was undertaken by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA) in October 2019 at All Saints Church, Church Lench, Worcestershire (NGR SP 02412 51269; Figure 1). This comprised a level 1 photographic building recording prior to works followed by the observation of the replacement of steps and associated intrusive works.

The project was commissioned by All Saints Church Parish Council. Planning permission has been granted subject to a programme of archaeological works (planning reference 18/01873/FUL). Aidan Smyth, the Archaeology Planning Advisor to Wychavon District Council (the Curator) considered that the development had the potential to impact upon possible heritage assets.

No brief was provided but a WSI was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019) and approved by the Curator. The watching brief also conforms to the industry guidelines and standards set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists in the *Standard and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2014) and the *Standards and guidelines for archaeological projects in Worcestershire* (WCC 2010).

1.2 Site location and background

All Saints Church, Church Lench is located in the centre of the Church Lench village.

The footpath was 2.75m wide, bounded by church path walls, with the graveyard either side and the porch entrance. The intrusive works covered an area of 3.50m in length.

2 Archaeological and historical background

2.1 Introduction

Prior to fieldwork commencing, a search of the Worcestershire HER was completed.

3 Project aims

The aims of the project were to:

- Undertake a photographic record of any historic fabric removed or altered during the works.
- Undertake a watching brief 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.

4 Project methodology

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Worcestershire Archaeology (WA 2019). Fieldwork was undertaken between 4 and 8 October 2019.

The extent of the church path and location of the works is indicated in Figure 2.

Following completion of the Level 1 photographic survey and annotated measured scale plan of the area, the steps were lifted by contractors using specialist equipment with hand removal of the adjacent wall also undertaken. Excavation of any underlying material was undertaken by hand by the contractors.

Deposits were observed by the archaeologist in attendance and recorded according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). These were tied into scaled plans provided by the Parish Council and georeferenced in QGIS.

All fieldwork records were checked and cross-referenced. Analysis was undertaken through structural evidence, allied to the information derived from other sources. Photographs of the Level 1 Building recording and of the monitored groundworks are provided in the Plates section.

The project archive is currently held at the offices of Worcestershire Archaeology. It is anticipated that it will be deposited at Worcestershire Museum.

5 Archaeological results

The Photographic survey (Plates 1-9) and a detailed measured plan took place before any groundworks. The footpath was 2.75m wide, with the steps constructed of York stone, each a maximum of 1.83m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.15m high. The central path, above and below the steps was 1.35m wide and made of concrete paving slabs with topsoil to either side. There were no masons marks visible. A concrete paving slab path was located both above and below the steps.

The intrusive groundworks (Plate 10 -13) involved lifting the existing York stone steps, removing part of the eastern stone wall and lifting the concrete slabs, before laying terram and building up with bedding material to the existing porch entrance level. Underlying the stone steps and concrete paving slabs, was a layer of modern bedding stone, a maximum of 0.20m deep, with graveyard soil beneath this, which was undisturbed. Graveyard soil was also present in the eastern section revealed behind the stone wall following its removal. Disarticulated human bone (charnel) was observed and had probably been disturbed by the foundation cut for the stone wall. The bones were replaced within the graveyard soil and covered over in the eastern section of the wall cut to protect them from further disturbance. No further human remains or archaeologically significant finds, features or deposits were observed during the works. The settings for the posts for the handrails on the church path involved limited excavation and with the agreement of the Curator, it was decided did not require archaeological monitoring.

6 Artefactual evidence

Recovery of artefacts was undertaken according to standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no artefacts were identified which were considered to be suitable for analysis. The disarticulated bone was reburied on site during the works.

7 Environmental evidence

Environmental sampling was approached using standard Worcestershire Archaeology practice (WA 2012). In the event, no deposits were excavated which were considered to be suitable for environmental analysis.

8 Discussion and conclusions

Due to the limited impact of the project groundworks, no significant archaeological finds, deposits or features were observed during the works. The small amount of disarticulated human bone recovered, previously disturbed by the eastern stone wall construction, was reburied on site in the graveyard soil and protected from further disturbance.

The methods adopted allow a high degree of confidence that the aims of the project have been achieved. Conditions were suitable in all of the areas to identify the presence or absence of archaeological features.

9 Project personnel

The fieldwork was led by Graham Arnold PCIFA.

The project was managed by Robin Jackson, MCIFA. The report was produced and collated by Graham Arnold.

10 Acknowledgements

Worcestershire Archaeology would like to thank the following: Richard Ball, Church Warden of All Saints Church, Church Lench for providing access, the Fear & Sons stone masons for their help during the fieldwork and Aidan Smyth from Wychavon District for his input and advice both prior to and during the course of the works.

11 Bibliography

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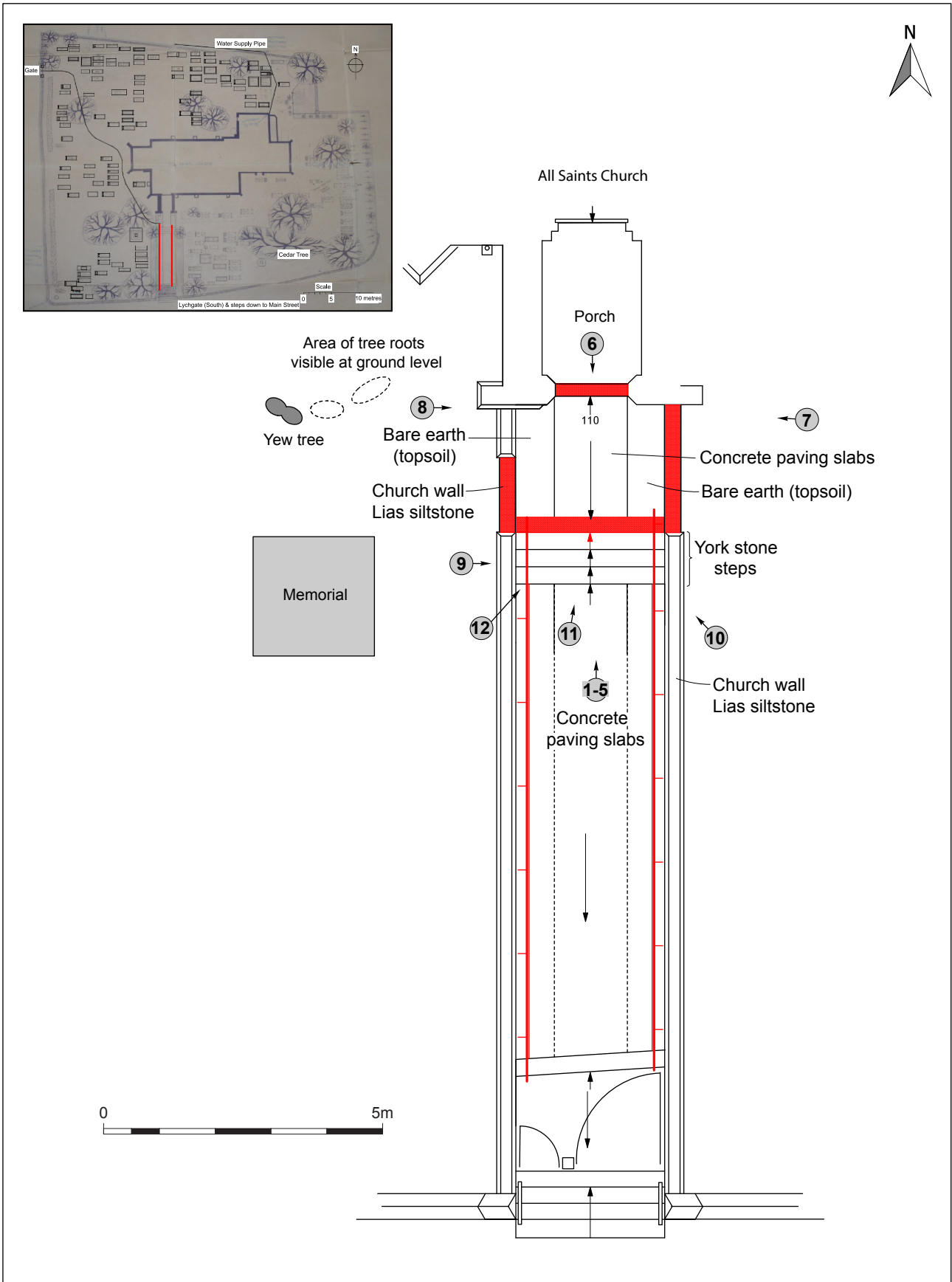
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Figures



Location of the site

Figure 1



Location of recorded/monitored areas with photolocations (based upon Mark Evans Architect Ltd Drg No 237 P02 Rev A) Figure 2

Plates



Plate 1: Church entrance and porch. 1m scales, view north



Plate 2: Church steps prior to replacement. 2x1m scales and 0.2m scale. View north



Plate 3: Church entrance and porch. 1m scales, view north



Plate 4: Church entrance and porch. 1m scales and 0.2m, view north

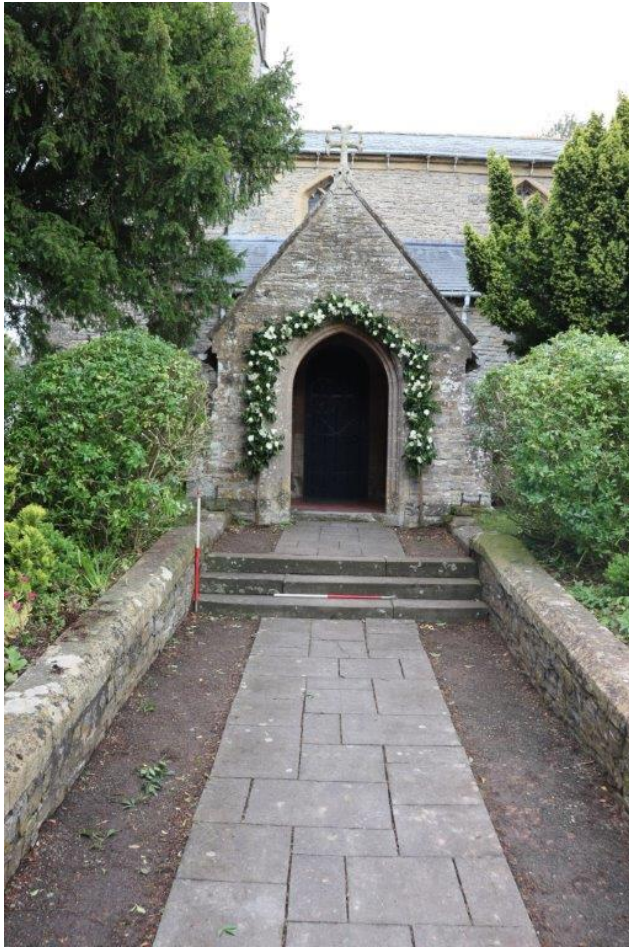


Plate 5: Church entrance and porch. 1m scales, view north



Plate 6: Church path entrance from the porch. 1m scales, view south. Lychgate covered by scaffold for improvements



Plate 7: Concrete paving slab path and loose soil. 2 x 1m scales. View west



Plate 8: Concrete paving slab path and loose soil. 2 x 1m scales. View west



Plate 9: York stone steps and concrete paving slabs, view east from above. 2 x 1m scales and 0.2m. View west



Plate 10: Lifting the steps using specialist equipment, following removal of adjacent church walls. View northwest



Plate 11: The area of intrusive works following lifting of the steps, showing gravel bedding. 1m, 0.5m and 0.2m scales. View north



Plate 12: The area of intrusive works west facing section showing gravel yard soil, and disarticulated bone, prior to reburial. 1m, 0.5m and 0.2m scales. View northeast



Plate 13: Close up of disarticulated bones and head of a long bone in situ within graveyard soil. Cut by churchyard stone wall. These were buried in the west facing section and covered over for protection, prior to commencement of the works.0.2m scale. View west

Appendix 1: Summary of project archive

TYPE	DETAILS*
Artefacts and Environmental	None
Paper	Context sheet, Correspondence, Diary (Field progress form), Drawing,
Digital	digital photography; Text

*OASIS terminology