

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS CHURCH, BEETHAM, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Watching Brief



Client: PCC St Michael and All
Angels, Beetham

NGR: 349611 479573

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October 2023



The Site	
Site Name	St Michael and All Angels Church, Beetham
County	Cumbria
NGR	349611 479573

Client	
Client Name	PCC St Michael and All Angels, Beetham

Planning	
Pre-planning?	n/a
Planning Application No.	n/a
Plans (e.g. conversion, extension, demolition)	Removal of selected pews
Condition number	-
Local Planning Authority	Westmorland and Furness Council
Planning Archaeologist	Jeremy Parsons
Groundworks subject to watching brief	Removal of pews

Archiving	
Relevant Record Office(s)/Archive Centre(s)	Kendal
Relevant HER	Cumbria
Relevant Museum	Kendal

Staffing	
Desk-based assessment	Dan Elsworth
Watching brief	Dan Elsworth
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Non-Technical Summary

As part of reordering work at St Michael and All Angels Church, Beetham, Cumbria, Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an archaeological watching brief. The watching brief consisted of the monitoring of nine areas that were exposed following the removal of pews plus a tenth area which was exposed during a condition check/investigation of an area of flooring.

The local area is rich in remains dating from the end of the last Ice Age onwards, with Beetham in particular being present as a settlement from at least the early medieval period. Numerous burials have been uncovered in the local area, and although most are of uncertain date, some are very likely early medieval. The most recent examples, uncovered in the garden of nearby Temple Bank, have been dated to the 7th to 9th centuries AD. St Michael and All Angels Church undoubtedly has early medieval origins, having had a possible unusual earlier dedication to St Lioba/St Leoba. Much of the surviving fabric of the church is medieval, although it was substantially internally reordered in the 1870s and 1880s.

The watching brief principally monitored nine exposed voids where the current, late 19th century pews, had been removed and a hole cut through part of the flooring in order to investigate its condition. In all of the cases where the pews had been removed a shallow void, between 0.2m and 0.35m deep below the current floor level was present, with a loose fill of gravel rich in lime in the base. In most cases bricks had been stacked along one edge and/or timber beams were in place to support the pews, so that they were raised off the ground. In the tenth area the original floor joists were found to be supported on a larger beam sat directly on the ground. No remains of archaeological significance were encountered; the present features clearly relate to the reordering that took place in the late 19th century. Very few finds were recovered, but these included offcuts from window glass, pieces of marble monument, and a half penny dated 1861. All of these presumably represent accidental losses deposited during the installation of the pews or items that fell between the floorboards at a later date.

Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank the PCC at St Michael and All Angels Church, Beetham, for commissioning the project and for their assistance during the watching brief. Additional thanks are due to John Coward Architects, particularly Mike Darwell, for providing information about the site and drawings.

1. Introduction

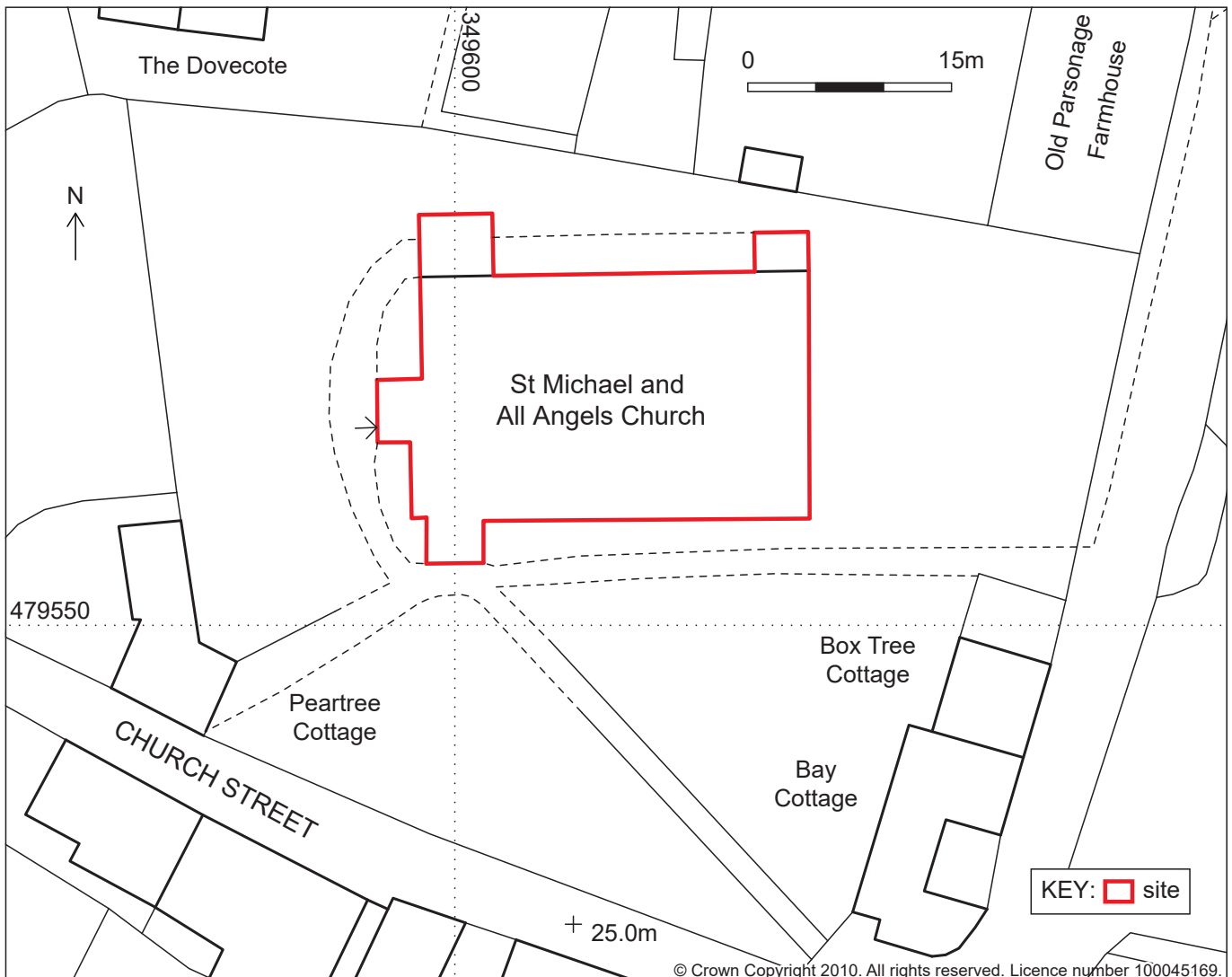
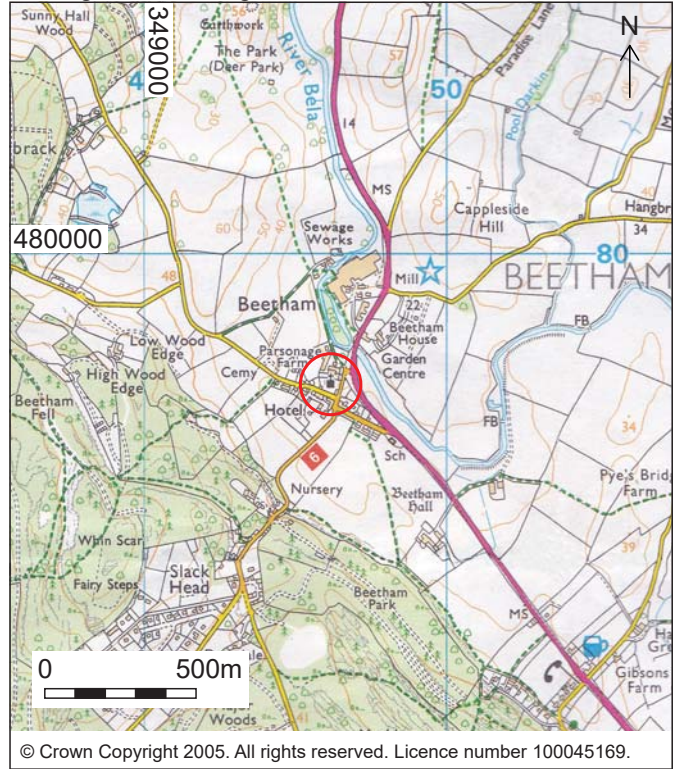
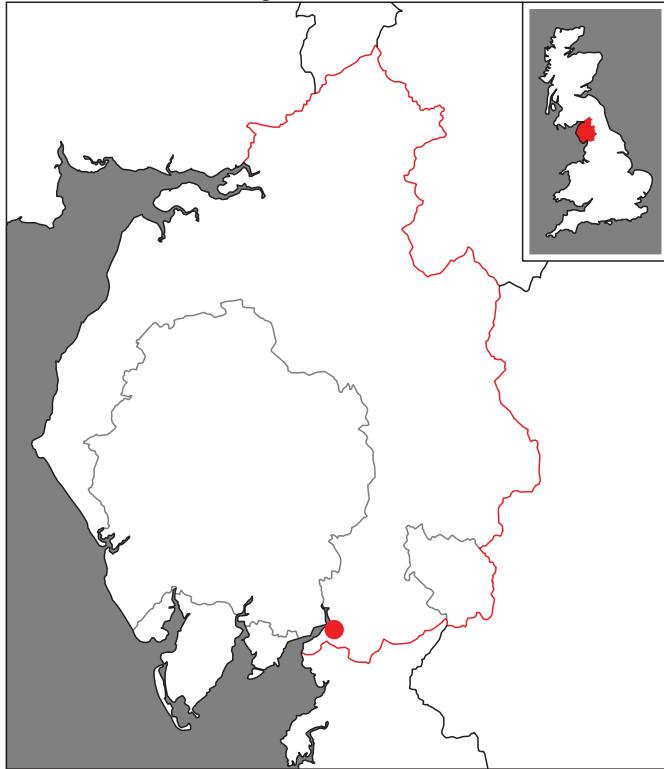
1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 The circumstances of the project are set out in the tables on the inside cover of this report.

1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The site is located in the centre of Beetham and at approximately 30m above sea level (Figure 1; Ordnance Survey 2011). The village and parish of Beetham is less than 2km south of Milnthorpe and west of the A6, on the eastern edge of Morecambe Bay.

1.2.2 The site lies within the area of Morecambe Bay Limestones, a rolling landscape dominated by the intertidal zone (Countryside Character 1998, 69) and solid geology comprising carboniferous limestone (Moseley 1978, plate 1). This in turn is overlain by glacial deposits of boulder clay, although lower-lying areas have also been influenced by sea-level change with mosslands having developed as a result (Countryside Character 1998, 72).



Client: PCC St Michael and All Angels, Beetham

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Figure 1: Site location

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk-Based Assessment

2.1.1 A desk-based assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020a). This principally comprised an examination of published secondary sources in order to produce a historical and archaeological background to the site and provide some context for the results. A number of sources of information were used during the compilation of the desk-based assessment:

- **Online Resources:** where available relevant sources were also consulted online;
- **Greenlane Archaeology:** Greenlane Archaeology's office library includes maps, local histories, and unpublished primary and secondary sources. These were consulted where relevant, in order to provide information about the history and archaeology of the site and the general area.

2.2 Archaeological Watching Brief

2.2.1 All aspects of the archaeological recording were carried out according to the standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020b) and Greenlane Archaeology's own excavation manual (2007). The deposits encountered were recorded in the following manner:

- **Written record:** descriptive records of all deposits were made using Greenlane Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets. A detailed description of the contexts encountered is presented in *Appendix 1*;
- **Photographs:** photographs in colour digital format (12 meg JPEG) were taken of the site as well as general working shots. A selection of the colour digital photographs is included in this report. A written record of all of the photographs was also made using Greenlane Archaeology's *pro forma* record sheets;
- **Drawings:** drawings were produced on site as follows:
 - i. a site plan was produced on site by hand at a scale of 1:100 by annotating an as-existing drawing provided by the client's architect.

2.3 Environmental Samples

2.3.1 No environmental samples were taken as no appropriate deposits were encountered.

2.4 Finds

2.4.1 Some finds were observed during the watching brief but these were noted on site and not removed. They are therefore not separately recorded within this report.

2.5 Archive

2.5.1 The archive of the project will be deposited with the relevant Record Office or Archive Centre, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report, together with a copy of the report. The archive has been compiled according to the standards and guidelines of the CIfA guidelines (CIfA 2020c). In addition, details will be submitted to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) scheme. This is an internet-based project intended to improve the flow of information between contractors, local authority heritage managers and the general public. A copy of the report will be given to the client and a digital copy of the report will be passed on to the relevant Historic Environment Record, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report.

3. Desk-Based Assessment

3.1 Site History

3.2.1 **Prehistoric Period (c11,000 BC – 1st century AD):** while there is limited evidence for activity in the county in the period immediately following the last Ice Age, this is typically found in the southernmost part on the north side of Morecambe Bay. Excavations of a small number of cave sites yielded artefacts of Late Upper Palaeolithic type and the remains of animal species common at the time but now extinct in this country (Young 2002; Smith *et al* 2013). The county was also inhabited during the following period, the Mesolithic (c8,000 – 4,000 BC), as large numbers of artefacts of this date have been discovered during field-walking as well as eroding from sand dunes along the coast. Therefore, Mesolithic finds are typically concentrated in the west coast area and on the uplands around the Eden Valley (Cherry and Cherry 2002). Slightly closer to Beetham, however, a large number of finds of this date were discovered during excavations carried out in the 1970s in the park belonging to Levens Hall, and, although largely ignored at the time, they were subsequently published (Cherry and Cherry 2000). In addition, a small amount of Mesolithic material has been found at the north end of Windermere during excavations on the Roman fort site (see for example Finlayson 2004). These discoveries, particularly those at Levens, demonstrate that further remains of similar date are likely to exist in the local area and that river valleys, lakesides and coastal areas are a common place for such remains to be discovered (Middleton *et al* 1995, 202; Hodgkinson *et al* 2000, 151-152).

3.2.2 In the following period, the Neolithic (c4,000 – 2,500 BC), large scale monuments such as burial mounds and stone circles begin to appear in the region and one of the most recognisable tool types of this period, the polished stone axe, is found in large numbers across the county, having been manufactured in the Langdales to the north-west (Hodgson and Brennand 2006, 45). None are recorded in the immediate proximity of Beetham although one was found during archaeological excavations on Sizergh Fell, apparently deliberately placed into a limestone gryke (Edmonds and Evans 2007), and another is recorded as having been found near Levens (Cherry and Cherry 1987; Fell 1987). During the Bronze Age (c2,500 – 600 BC), monuments, particularly those thought to be ceremonial in nature, became more common still, and it is likely that settlement sites thought to be Iron Age or Romano-British in date have their origins in this period. Sites of this date are represented to the north by a collection of remains on Sizergh Fell and in the area around Levens, including a settlement and various mounds, which have been subject to survey and excavation on a number of occasions (Anon 1904; Hughes 1904a, 71 and 76-9; 1904b 201-204; 1912b, 404; RCHME 1936, 157; Fell 1953; Edmonds *et al* 2002; Evans and Edmonds 2003; Edmonds and Evans 2007). Burials, in the form of cremations, are a relatively common find of the Bronze Age, including a small cremation cemetery revealed during archaeological work in advance of developments at Dallam School in Milnthorpe (Platell 2013), as well as a Beaker burial on Sizergh Fell (Fell 1953). Stray finds of metal work of the period are also known, and include an early Bronze Age cast-flange axe head recorded next to the River Kent (Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds ID: LVPL288). Sites that can be specifically dated to the Iron Age (c600 BC – 1st century AD) are very rare in the wider region, although it is likely that some or all of the settlement sites probably originating in the Bronze Age continued to be occupied into this period (Hodgson and Brennand 2006, 34). One of the most well-known types of site of the Iron Age is the hillfort, and while there are several examples around Morecambe Bay and extending towards Kendal, few have seen any excavation or are properly dated (Elsworth 2014). Levens is unique in Cumbria in having excavated Iron Age burials, discovered in the village in 2002 (OA North 2002; 2004), although the cemetery appears to be very small. There is also likely to have been a considerable overlap between the end of the Iron Age and the beginning of the Romano-British period; it is evident that in this part of the country, initially at least, the Roman invasion had a minimal impact on the native population in rural areas (Philpott 2006, 73-74), something that is apparent at the settlement on Sizergh Fell, which had some finds thought to date to the 2nd or 3rd century AD (Hughes 1912a; a brooch of similar style from Langbank crannog in Scotland was dated to the 1st century AD; Alexander 2000, 157 and 159).

3.2.3 **Romano-British to Early Medieval Period (1st century AD – 11th century AD):** the area immediately around Beetham yields little evidence for activity from the Roman period, the nearest known

Roman forts being at Watercrock to the north (on the south side of Kendal), and Lancaster to the south. Roman stray finds, however, particularly coins, are relatively well-known from the wider area (Shotter 2004). Whether the Roman military had a greater influence over the north side of Morecambe Bay via crossing the sands and establishing a fort in Furness is still being debated; there is some evidence that they did, but further proof is still needed (Elsworth 2007). In the Beetham area it is apparent that the 'native' style settlement on Sizergh Fell continued to be occupied into the Roman period, and it seems likely that the impact of Roman rule was less substantial in rural areas. The nearest fort, Watercrock, was identified at an early date (Potter 1979, 143), but was only excavated in the middle of the 20th century and later, revealing evidence for activity from the late 1st century and into the 4th century (*op cit*, 176-180). Recent archaeological work in the environs of the fort has found evidence for associated activity, perhaps part of an extended *vicus*, as has been revealed at other Roman forts in the area (Elsworth and Mace 2021).

3.2.4 The early medieval period is not well represented in the area in terms of physical archaeological remains that can definitely be attributed to the period; this is a common situation throughout the county. Place-name evidence from the area around Beetham indicates a strong Anglian and Norse influence. The name Beetham itself derives from a Norse word *bjǫð* meaning earth, land, or more likely embankment and so probably referring to embankments made by the river (Smith 1967, 67). While this does not necessarily prove there was a settlement there in the early medieval period, Beetham is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086, proving that there was one there by at least the end of the 11th century. Numerous finds of human remains have been discovered in and around Beetham though, some of which are potentially of early medieval date. An account of some found to the south of the River Bela in Beetham was taken as evidence for a battle in the area in the early medieval period (Nicholson 1832, 23), although no evidence to corroborate was provided. Interestingly, however, four skeletons were also found near Levens in 1911, while laying pipes for a water supply (Hughes 1912b, 404; see also Read 2016), and these may belong to the early medieval period on account of their approximately east/west orientation and lack of other finds. Contemporary newspaper accounts speculated that the field in which these burials were found had also been the site of a battle and reported a coin amongst the finds (Anon 1911a; 1911b). Both were dismissed in the published account, the coin was apparently a 'York token' found some distance away and the graves were considered too orderly to have resulted from '*the hurried burial of people plague-stricken or slain in battle*' (Hughes 1912b, 404). Investigation of some of the remains by Professor Macalister at the Museum of Human Anatomy in Cambridge concluded that they were '*of the same type as the mixed Scandinavian race still found in that district*' (*op cit*, 404-405). At least one other cist burial (again, possibly early medieval) was also reputedly discovered nearby, although its location is not recorded other than being between Hying and Levens (Hughes 1912b, 404; this may be the same site as a group of nine skeletons in cists found at an unknown location near Levens in 1867, although from the description these seem more likely to have been prehistoric; Anon 1867).

3.2.5 A possible context for the burials at Levens can, however, perhaps be found in the Welsh heroic poetry of Taliesin, which may describe events of the 6th century AD (Clancy 1970). The poems record a battle at *Gwen Ystrat* or *Gwensteri*, thought to equate to the Winster valley, c5km to the west of Levens (Breeze 2012, 61). Another battle is also said to have been fought at *Argoed Llwyfyain*, which approximately translates as 'Leven Forest' (*op cit*, 58) with Levens in Cumbria being suggested as one of a number of possible locations (Morris 1973, 234, although he mistakenly states that Levens is in Furness). In both of these battles the native Britons were victorious and were Christians, in which case they would have had time to bury their dead in accordance with their own customs. A concentration of battles in a single strategic location, potentially controlling the landward route west into Cumbria (the Winster was also formerly the county boundary between Lancashire-north-of-the-Sands and Westmorland), is not inconceivable; the suggestion has been made that references to a single conflict during the same period at *Catraeth* (usually equated with Catterick in Yorkshire) might in fact relate to a series of battles at a single key site (Padel 2013, 139). Further evidence for activity in that period might also have been present at Castlehead, a probable hillfort near Grange-over-Sands, effectively at the southern end of the Winster valley, at which a range of finds were discovered during building work in the 18th century, many of which are remarkably similar in description to objects typically found at fortified 'royal' sites of the early medieval period in Scotland (Elsworth 2014). More recently, a group of 11 burials in four graves was found in the grounds of Temple Bank in Beetham, a short distance to the south-east of

St Michael and All Angels Church (Greenlane Archaeology 2023). While investigation into these burials is ongoing initial radiocarbon dating confirms that they are 7th to 9th century AD in date.

3.2.6 In addition, the St Michaels and All Angels Church at Beetham, now dedicated to St Michael, was said to be dedicated to ‘*Saint Leoth or Lithe (Lioba or Liobgytha)*’ by Machell, writing in 1692 (Ewbank 1963, 50), suggesting an early medieval origin (Lioba was active in the 8th century). A small group of 11th century coins, of Edward the Confessor, William the Conqueror, and William Rufus (the HER has these listed as of Cnut: SMR 3084), was found during excavations for a grave within the tower of the church in 1834. They ‘*had been placed in a block of ashlar hollowed out for their reception*’, so it was thought that they could be used to date the foundation of at least part of the current building (Bintley 1870, 260).

3.2.7 **Medieval Period (11th century AD – 16th century AD):** The village of Beetham is recorded a number of times in 12th/13th century documents (Smith 1967, 66), although they provide little information about the size of the settlement at that time. However, a number of significant structures of medieval date exist in relatively close proximity of the site, the most important of which are the suggested remains of a chapel dedicated to St John, which are recorded as having been on the site at Temple Bank prior to the construction of the present house. Curiously, the chapel is not mentioned by the earliest antiquarian account of the area made by Rev. Thomas Machell at the end of the 17th century (Ewbank 1963). The earliest record of the chapel dates from c1700, when ‘*St John’s Chapple*’ is named in the description of a boundary of land claimed by Edward Wilson of Dallam Hall (Curwen 1924, 164-165), although a St John’s Cross is also recorded in Beetham as early as 1612 (Smith 1967, 73). The most detailed early account of the site is in the *Beetham Repository*, written in about 1770, by the vicar of Beetham, Rev. William Hutton. He states:

‘On the highest Ground in the Street leading to the Hall [Beetham Hall] stands the Site of an antient Chapel dedicated to St John. Probably it went into Ruin when our present Church was built. The House, Barn &c now on the Spot have many blocks of Freestone in the Walls. The Garden is full of Human Bones, & some Years since, the late Owner dug up the Foundations of the Chapel. A little while agoe, a Mole dug up a large Amber Bead, & with it an oval piece of Silver, the Bulk nearly of a Shiling. On the One side was impress’d Our Saviour crucify’d, above the ✠ I.n.r.i. the common Motto. On the right of the ✠ a Crescent, on the Left a rising Sun. At the Bottom, the Virgin Mary in a weeping Attitude. On the other side of the Coin a Lamb with the Standard and St Andrews Cross. N.B. There is a Hole thro’ this Silver piece from which I suppose that the amber Bead was ty’d to it, & so hung round the Arm of [sic] Neck of some Deceased Person’ (Ford 1906, 96).

3.2.8 This account was printed almost *verbatim* by Nicholson and Burn, who mentioned Hutton’s account and evidently had access to it:

‘About 40 yards distant from the place where the school-house now stands there was anciently a chapel, which is said to have been dedicated to St John, and near it many human bones have been dug up in a place which is now converted into a garden. A mole some few years ago cast up a large amber bead, and with it an oval piece of silver near the bigness of a shilling. It had an hole through it, and on one side of it was impressed our saviour crucified, and these letters above the crucifix I.N.R.I. On the right thereof there was a crescent, and on the left a rising sun. At the bottom, the Virgin Mary in a weeping attitude. On the reverse, a lamb with the standard and St Andrew’s cross’ (Nicholson and Burn 1777, 223).

3.2.10 Later accounts of the chapel and any burials are limited, excepting what the Ordnance Survey maps show. Cornelius Nicholson also recorded the discovery of human remains in Beetham but not specifically at the site of Temple Bank and he does not mention a chapel, instead he considers them evidence for a battle having been fought in Beetham in the early medieval period: ‘*[a] great number of human bones... are found in digging in almost every part of the village. It is indeed to be regretted that a further search for relics was not made when some of the modern houses were erected, on the south side of the stream, where the bones are chiefly found*’ (Nicholson 1832, 23). However, this location would potentially place them close to Temple Bank. Another account in the *Beetham Repository*, specifically regarding the construction of the house at Temple Bank itself, provides further evidence:

‘On the above nam’d Ground now stands a House built by the Revd Joseph Thexton Vicar, in digging the foundation of the Building a large quantity of Human Bones were dug up, and again deposited all

together deep in the Ground, in all above half a Cartfull, also some small pieces of Silver coin were found, about the size of a Sixpence, one in the reign of Edward the Sixth plain to decipher, the other defac'd so as not to be intelligible. The coins are in the possession of me Joseph Thexton, Vicar' (Ford 1906, 97). As is discussed below, Joseph Thexton became vicar at Beetham in 1811 (Curwen 1926, 250) and so this work cannot have been carried out before that date. However, as already mentioned, the most recent work at Temple Bank has revealed that the human remains buried there are actually early medieval in date (Greenlane Archaeology 2023).

3.2.11 As suggested above, the parish church of St Michael has very likely earlier origins and seems to originally have had a different dedication. Much of the standing building is medieval however, with substantial elements dating to the 15th century (RCHME 1936, 202; Salter 1998, 22-23). Archaeological monitoring for the construction of a new extension and associated works at the church revealed *in situ* burials and unstratified human bones, some of which had apparently been disturbed during the construction of the north aisle in c1400 (Neil 2006). Some medieval pottery and a possible bell-casting pit or smelting hearth were also revealed (*ibid*). Beetham also had a chantry college of medieval date, although this was largely demolished in 1756 and only a small part now survives in the south wall of Parsonage Farmhouse; archaeological monitoring in 1991 and 2016 found very little of archaeological interest (HER 4036; CFA Archaeology 2016). Machell describes it as '*formerly called the College of St Mary's and belonged to the Monastery of St Mary's York, but at the Dissolution in the time of Henry VIII it [passed] to the crown'* (Ewbank 1963, 50-51). The *Beetham Repository* provides a remarkable description of it prior to its destruction in 1756: '*Twas a large antient Building; the Hall was open to the Roof which was part Thatch & part Slate and lighted by four Windows of Freestone and very large, & I think of the same Antiquity with the Church. A large Gothick Arch'd Doorcase lead thro' the Screens betwixt the College with the Parsonage. Over the Screens was a Dormitory wch woud have held about 8 beds; & a Square hole out of this room look'd into the Hall. The Walls of the College were above 2 Yards thick'* (Ford 1906, 113). There were at least two named wells in Beetham, both of which are likely to have been of medieval or earlier origin: a St Michael's well near the church (*op cit*, 112), and an 'Abs Well' recorded by Machell (Ewbank 1963, 52).

3.2.12 **Post-medieval Period (16th century AD – present):** early maps demonstrate that the general area had reached its present state of development by the 19th century and it is likely that relatively little changed in the area immediately following the end of the medieval period, although a grammar school was established in 1663 and rebuilt in 1827 (Winchester 2016, 50). Already connected to a number of industries such as limestone quarrying, fishing, and farming, Beetham became home to a substantial paper mill that is still in use today, although its trade connections were damaged by the coming of the railway, which led to the demise of the nearby port at Arnside (*ibid*).

3.2.13 While much of the fabric of St Michael's Church remains medieval (Salter 1998, 22-23) it was subject to a significant restoration in the 1870s and 1880s, which included the installation of the solid current pews (Anon nd).

4. Watching Brief

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The watching brief monitored 10 areas, nine of which (Areas 1-9) were voids exposed below pews that had been removed, while the tenth (Area 10) was located within an area of floorboards that were removed to inspect the condition of the supporting timbers. In all cases the pews had been removed and the voids were exposed before the watching brief commenced.

4.1.2 There was typically no excavation as such as the voids exposed already existed below the pews. Some investigative excavation was carried out by hand in areas where further consolidation was required.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 **Area 1:** this comprised an area on the west side of the south aisle, 1.6m east/west by 2.4m north/south and 0.3m deep below the surrounding flag floor. It too had a fill of loose lime in the base, loose timber on top (Plate 1), and bricks piled along the north side and more evident laid below the *in situ* flag floor (Plate 2), plus a beam set against the wall to the south (Plate 3). The bricks were typically dark red in colour, with no frog and 23cm long by 11cm wide and 7.5cm thick. A further pair of small voids (**Areas 1a** and **1b**) were present immediately to the north of this, either side of the westernmost pillar of the arcade, only 0.25m deep and with a very similar fill (Plate 4).



Plate 1 (left): View of Area 1 from the north-east

Plate 2 (right): View of Area 1 from the south showing bricks along the north side



Plate 3 (left): Beam along the south side of Area 1, viewed from the north



Plate 4 (right): Area 1a viewed from the west

4.2.2 **Area 2:** this comprised an area on the east side of the south aisle, 1.75m east/west by 2.2m north/south, extending to a depth of 0.35m below the flag floor. The fill at the base of the void was loose lime mortar and fragments of timber (Plate 5), with loose bricks piled on the north side, presumably to support a pew (Plate 6). The void was immediately adjoining a grave cover inscribed 'WILLIAM HUTTON OBIT. NOV^R 12th 1853 CATHERINE HUTTON OBIT. DEC^R 15th 1860' on the east side, which had slightly dropped and loose rubble could be seen below it in the west side of Area 2. There was also a small square aperture in the south wall within the void, presumably for a vent.



Plate 5 (left): View of Area 2 from the north, with the grave cover to the east and aperture in the wall to the south



Plate 6 (right): View of Area 2 from the east, showing the bricks against the north side

4.2.3 **Area 3:** this is at the east end of the nave and comprised two narrow areas, the north (**Area 3a**) 3.35m north/south by 0.8m east/west and the south (**Area 3b**) 3.45m north/south by 0.8m east/west. Both were only 0.2m deep and had a similar lime-rich fill but also with some gravel and loose fragments of brick and some larger stones (Plate 7 to Plate 10).



Plate 7 (left): Area 3a viewed from the north

Plate 8 (right): Area 3a viewed from the south



Plate 9 (left): Area 3b viewed from the north



Plate 10 (right): Area 3b viewed from the south

4.2.4 **Area 4:** this was located at the east end of the north aisle and 2.2m north/south by 1.7m east/west and little more than 0.2m deep (Plate 11). It had bricks stacked along the north (Plate 12) and south sides and they were also evidently supporting the flag floor along the south side (Plate 13). Amongst the rubble on the east side were various offcuts of window glass, some with right-angled corners.



Plate 11 (left): General view of Area 4, from the south



Plate 12 (right): Bricks stacked against the north side of Area 4, viewed from the south



Plate 13: Bricks below the flag floor on the south side of Area 4, viewed from the north

4.2.5 **Area 5:** this was located on the west side of the north aisle and 2.3m north/south by 1.6m east/west, extending beneath some *in situ* pews, and 0.2m deep. It had the same loose gravelly lime-rich fill as the rest of the voids and a beam along the north side and bricks along the south (Plate 14).



Plate 14: General view of Area 5 from the south

4.2.6 **Area 6:** this was located within the west end of the nave, and was 3.3m north/south by 1.3m east/west, and 0.2m deep. The fill was similar to elsewhere but with much more lime and there were bricks along the north and south sides (Plate 15 and Plate 16).



Plate 15 (left): General view of Area 6 from the north



Plate 16 (right): General view of Area 6 from the south

4.2.7 **Area 7:** this comprised a very small area against the west wall of the nave, only 1.5m north/south by 1m east/west. It contained a lot of brick, concrete and cables and was not easily accessible.

4.2.8 **Area 8:** this was on the south side of the chancel, and comprised an area 4.3m east/west by 2.8m north/south, and 0.3m deep. It had the same general fill as the other areas but with more loose rubble and some voids (Plate 17). There were bricks stacked along the south side (Plate 18) and laid flat below the flags along the east side, with a void below the centre of this, and north side (Plate 19). There were also bricks and concrete along the west side, below the Hutton grave cover (Plate 20). A halfpenny of Queen Victoria dated 1861 and a piece of grey marble, presumably broken from a monument within the church, were recovered from the fill of the void.



Plate 17 (left): General view of Area 8, from the west



Plate 18 (right): The south side of Area 8, from the north-west



Plate 19 (left): The north side of Area 8, viewed from the south-east



Plate 20 (right): The west side of Area 8, viewed from the east

4.2.9 **Area 9:** this comprised an area on the north side of the chancel, 4.4m east/west by 3m north/south and 0.3m deep (Plate 21). It had the same loose lime-rich fill as the other areas, with bricks stacked along the north side (Plate 22), with some slate chocking, and laid bricks on the south side (Plate 23).



Plate 21 (left): General view of Area 9, from the east



Plate 22 (right): Bricks stacked against the north side of Area 9, viewed from the south-east



Plate 23: The south side of Area 9, viewed from the north-east

4.2.10 **Area 10:** this comprised a small area approximately 1.5m north/south by 1m east/west. The boards removed were thicker compared to those elsewhere and they were not tongue and groove. Furthermore, they were laid on joists orientated east/west against dressed slabs at the steps to the doorway in the north wall (Plate 24). A bearing timber beam running north/south directly alongside these was entirely decayed (Plate 25) and there was loose stoney rubble between the joists.



Plate 24 (left): General view of Area 10, from the west

Plate 25 (right): Area 10 viewed from the east, showing the north/south beam below the joists

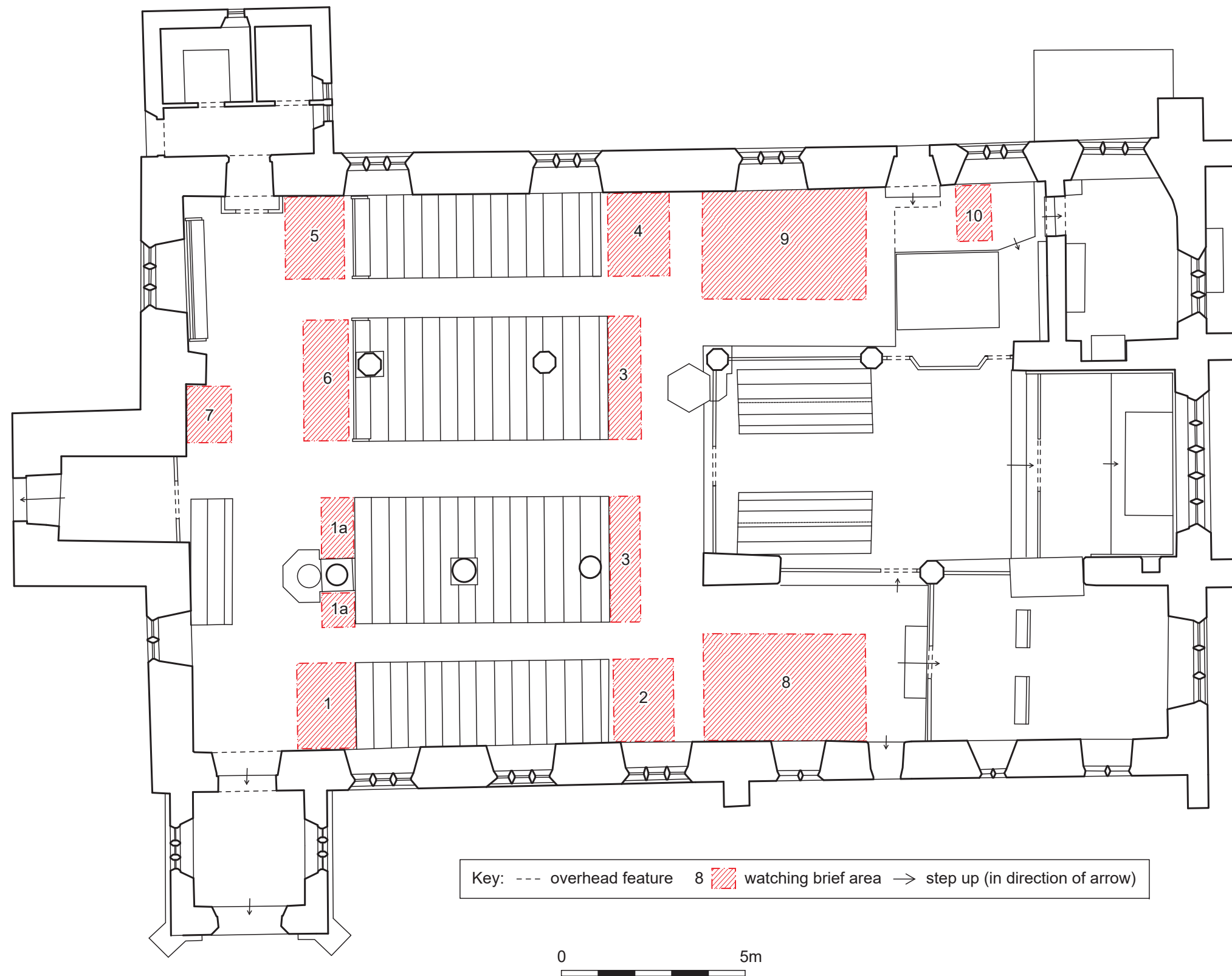


Figure 2: Site plan

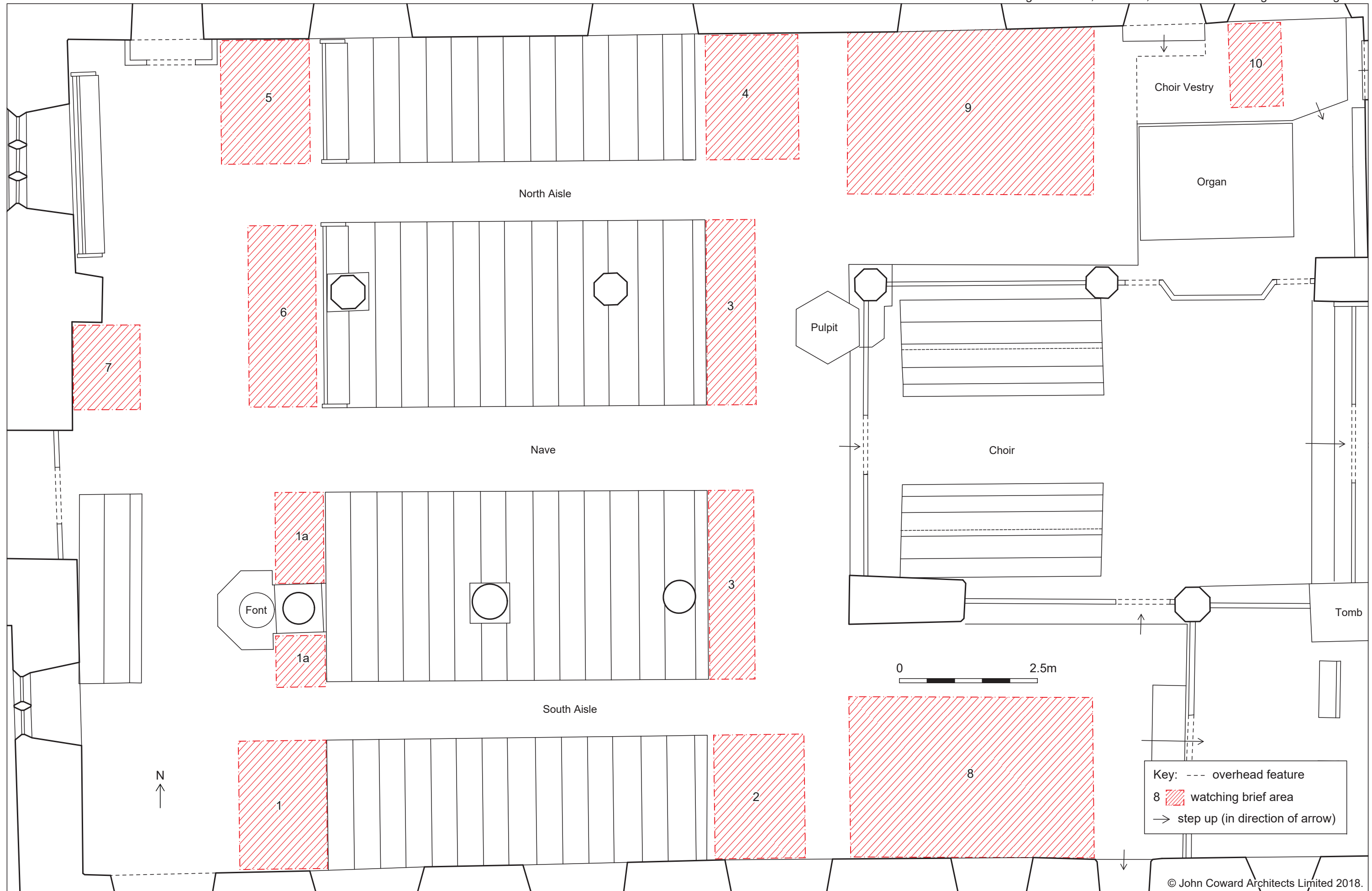


Figure 3: Trench location plan

5. Discussion

5.1 Results

5.1.1 In all cases the removal of the pews revealed a similar type of void, typically between 0.2m and 0.35m deep and with a loose deposit of lime-rich gravel in the base. Stacked bricks and stones were present in most cases, and occasionally horizontal beams, which were clearly intended to raise the pews off the ground to protect them from damp.

5.1.2 The joists revealed in Area 10 were laid directly onto a beam, which in turn sat on the ground. As a result this had become damp and decayed. It is possible that this pre-dates the reordering of the 1870s and 1880s, which included the installation of the current pews.

5.1.3 No features of archaeological significance were revealed and very few finds were recovered. Those that were probably relate to the period in which the pews were installed or later. The only aspect of any interest that was revealed was how extensive the reordering of the 1870s and 1880s was: then, the entire floor was re-laid, at least partly on brick, and presumably to raise it off the original ground allowing the installation of heating pipes. In addition, the grave cover for William and Katherine Hutton, which cannot have originally been laid before 1860, was evidently incorporated into this new floor and put in its current position, where it would be visible between the pews. However, in order to facilitate this, it was reorientated to north/south, rather than the usual east/west.

5.2 Significance

5.2.1 While St Michael and All Angels Church is an important local monument with undoubted early medieval origins in an area with considerable archaeological evidence for settlement over thousands of years, the current re-ordering work inside the church did not reveal any features or finds of archaeological significance. The nature of the work did not involve any deep excavation and only really revealed the floor surface that was left in place below the pews after they were installed in the late 19th century. Nevertheless, it did demonstrate that original deposits potentially lie below this level, unaffected by the most recent changes within the church.

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