



University of
Salford
MANCHESTER

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

St Peter's Church,
Church Road,
Halliwell,
Bolton

Client:

Diocese of Manchester

Technical Report:

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Report No:

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Summary

In June 2019, Salford Archaeology was commissioned by Bradshaw, Gass & Hope LLP on behalf of the Diocese of Manchester to maintain an archaeological watching brief during intrusive groundworks carried out during the excavation of five geo-technical trial pits around the exterior of the St Peter's Church in Halliwell, Bolton (centred on NGR 369243 410628). The church dates to 1823 but was largely rebuilt in 1840, and is currently a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number 1387969). The geo-technical trial pits were located around the external walls of the church and a modern extension, and targeted the foundations of the buildings to inform the design proposals for remodelling of the connecting corridor between the church and the extension. Each trial pit could be excavated up to a maximum depth of 0.85m.

Due to the potential for undisturbed archaeological remains and deposits to be present within the Site, GMAAS suggested that a phased programme and methodology of investigation and recording be drawn up, which was specifically to include an archaeological watching brief.

The site investigation was carried out in July 2019. During the archaeological watching brief foundations in all five geo-technical trial pits were exposed and recorded according to CiFA standards and guidelines. No other archaeological remains were encountered during the excavation.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning Background

A programme of intrusive investigations and material testing was required to assess the construction of St Peter's Church in Halliwell, Bolton, in order to inform design proposals for the remodelling of the connecting corridor between the church and an extension that was erected in 1984. Five test pits, to a maximum depth of 0.85m, were positioned adjacent to the foundations in order to assess the ground conditions in advance of the remodelling.

St Peter's Church is a Grade II listed building, encompassed by a graveyard. In order to secure heritage interests, and ensure that any human remains uncovered during the works were treated in an appropriate manner, the Diocese of Manchester requested that the excavation of the trial pits was monitored archaeologically. In the light of this recommendation, Bradshaw, Gass & Hope LLP, acting on behalf of the Diocese of Manchester, commissioned Salford Archaeology to implement a watching brief during the geo-technical investigation. The watching brief was carried out in July 2019.

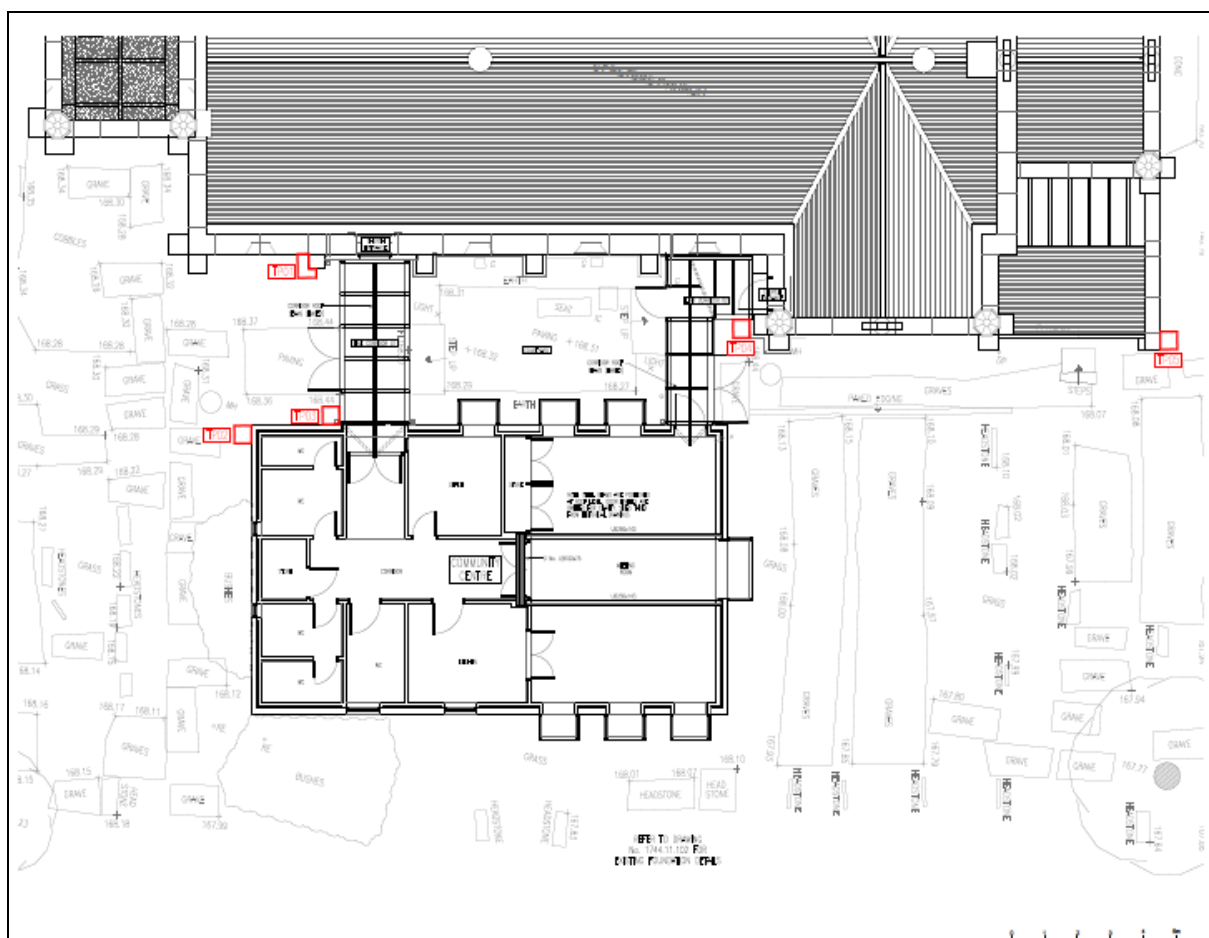


Plate 1: Plan of test pits produced by Bradshaw, Gass & Hope LLP. Test pits shown in red

2. The Setting

2.1 Location

St Peter's Church is located on the south side of Church Road in the Halliwell area of Bolton (centred on NGR 369243 410628). The church is bounded by Church Road to the north, Captains Clough Road to the east and Church Road Primary School to the south. A modern extension built in 1984, as referenced by a date stone in the north wall, lies to the rear of the church, which is encompassed by its associated graveyard. The extension is attached to the church via a pair of wood and glass corridors that form a small courtyard in the centre. This courtyard is paved with ledger stones, although it is uncertain whether these were relocated during the construction of the extension in 1984, or if they remain in their original position, overlying burials.

St Peter's Church is afforded statutory protection as a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number 1387969), although it does not fall within a conservation area.



Plate 2: Aerial view across St Peter's Church

2.2 Geology

The solid geology of the area comprises Milnrow Sandstone. The overlying drift geology has not been recorded for this area (www.bgs.ac.uk).

3. Methodology

3.1 Archaeological Watching Brief

Following consultation with the Diocese of Manchester, it was recommended that the implementation of an archaeological watching brief would be an appropriate strategy to offset any harm of excavating trial pits around St Peter's Church. The work was carried out in accordance with the ClfA Standards and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (2014). All ground-breaking works was supervised closely by a suitably experienced archaeologist, and any structural remains will be cleaned manually to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date.

All information identified during the site works was recorded stratigraphically. Results of the watching brief were recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets, and was accompanied with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and high-resolution digital photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features.

Context Recording: all contexts were recorded using *pro-forma* sheets, and details incorporated into a Harris matrix. All written recording of survey data, contexts, photographs, artefacts and ecofacts were cross-referenced from record sheets using sequential numbering.

Photography: a full and detailed photographic record of individual contexts was maintained and similarly general views from standard view points of the overall site at all stages of the watching brief were generated. Photography was undertaken using high-resolution digital cameras, and in accordance with current Historic England guidance embodied in *Digital Image capture and File Storage Guideline for Best Practice* (Historic England 2015).

Finds policy: finds recovery and sampling programmes were in accordance with best practice (following current Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' guidelines; ClfA 2014b) and subject to expert advice in order to minimise deterioration. Finds storage during fieldwork and site archive preparation followed professional guidelines (UKIC 1990).

4. *Historical Background*

4.1 *Prehistoric Period*

Evidence for prehistoric activity in North-West England is based largely on sporadic and chance finds, due to the local geology of boulder clays not being conducive to early farming methods. There is no known evidence for prehistoric settlement in Halliwell, but there are various monuments around Rivington just to the north, such as the Bronze Age burial cairn at Noon Hill (SA 2017).

4.2 *Romano-British Period*

Although there is no evidence for Roman activity in Halliwell, it lies about 5km from the A6, believed to follow the line of a Roman road branching off the Manchester-Wigan road (SA 2017) and the main Roman road from Warrington to Wigan runs nearby as revealed at Ashton in Makerfield and Cuerden (SA 2019).

4.3 *Medieval and Post-medieval Periods*

The medieval manors of Halliwell and Smithills were established in the 13th and 14th centuries. Halliwell had disappeared by the 17th century and Smithills lasted until the 20th century, when Smithills Hall was given to the council in 1938 by Col. Richard Henry Ainsworth.

The manor of Halliwell was originally a member of the lordship of Barton and seems at first to have been part of the possessions of the Pendlebury family. In 1289, William son of Roger de Pendlebury granted the whole vill of Halliwell with its appurtenances to Richard de Hulton, with the homages of Robert de Shoresworth and Hugh de Halliwell for the lands they held; an annual rent of a silver penny was payable. In 1302, it was held by Richard de Hulton of the lord of Manchester by the tenth part of a knight's fee. Three oxgangs of land here contributed to the sustenance of the foresters of Horwich.

In 1325–6 Richard de Hulton granted to his brother John land in Hulton and Westhoughton, and this is supposed to be the John de Hulton of Halliwell, whose son and heir Richard was in 1351 contracted to marry Margery daughter of Adam the Ward of Sharples. Nothing further is known of this branch of the Hulton family, but in 1473 Robert Hulton held the lordship of Halliwell by the ancient service.

Adhering to the Yorkist side during the Wars of the Roses, Robert Hulton's lands were confiscated in 1487 and conferred by Henry VII on the Earl of Derby. By 1601, the manor was held by Edward Stanley. About that time, it seems to have been sold, part going to Robert Marsh of Halliwell, whose son-in-law Samuel Shipton was in possession in 1638; afterwards it descended to Samuel Aspinall, and then disappears from notice (Farrer, Brownbill 1911).

4.4 Development of the Site

St Peter's is a daughter church of the ancient Parish of St Mary, Deane, which was in existence in the year 1100. Through Smithills Chapel, it is linked to the memory of George Marsh, Martyr of Deane.

George was a protestant minister, born in Deane, who fell out of favour with the Royal Court during the reign of Catholic Mary I. After a trial, he was convicted of heresy and condemned to be burned as a heretic. The sentence was carried out on the 24th of April 1555 at West Chester.

The Parish of St Peter was formed in 1840 in response to the population growth from the rise of the cotton trade in Bolton. Its original boundaries were similar to the current Halliwell ward boundaries (Plate 3). In 1848, St Paul's took part of the west, the in 1874 St Luke's took part of south, and St Thomas' part of the east.

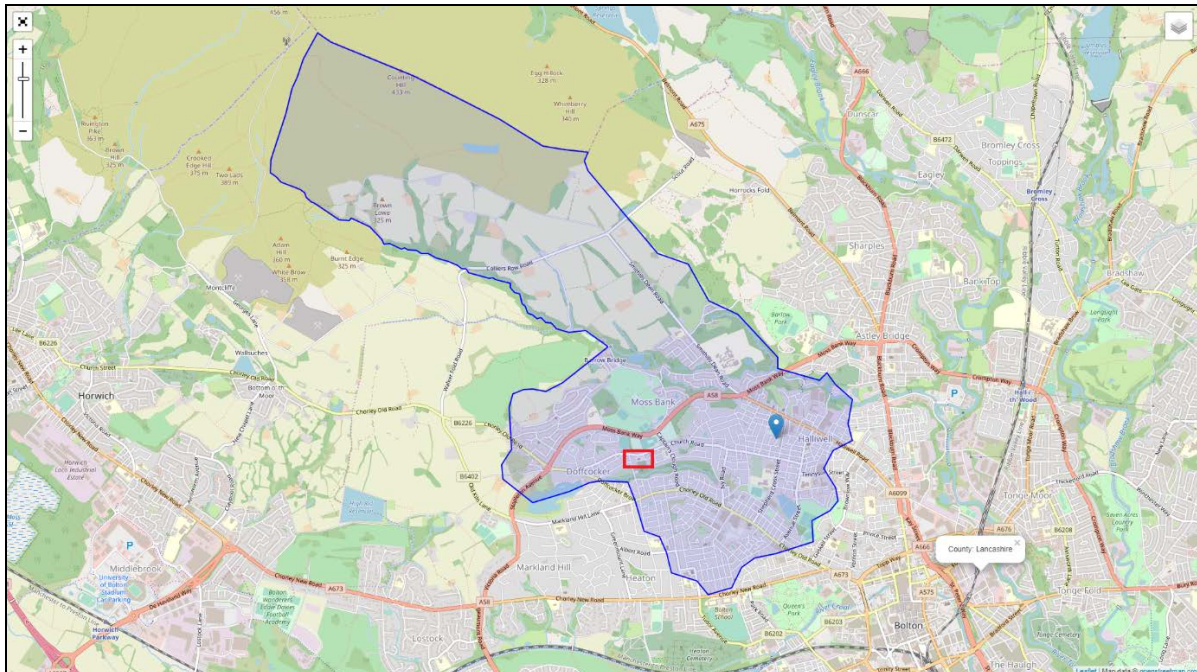


Plate 3: Current Halliwell ward boundary that is similar to the original St Peter's parish boundary. The Church is marked by the red box

St Peter's was consecrated on October 11th 1840, but soon started to show signs of dry rot. It closed for repair and enlargement May 8th 1843, and was re-opened and re-consecrated on November 30th, 1844.

A program of restoration was carried out in 1880 that involved considerable remodelling. The nave seating was rearranged, the South Porch, formerly a vestry, was re-opened and a new doorway inserted. The font was moved to a central position and fitted with a new cover, seating for the choir was provided on a raised tile floor, and the pulpit was moved. The organ was reconstructed and placed in the newly formed North Transept, and a new vestry was built south of the apse.

In the Jubilee year of 1890, the old vestry was converted to an organ chamber, the organ was moved from the North Transept to the South (it is now back in the North Transept), and a new vestry was erected by the South Porch. Gas lighting was installed in 1869, and electric lighting in 1925.

In 1933, another vestry was built between the existing vestry and the South Transept. To harmonise with the rest of the church, weathered stone, quarried from the same place, was donated from Ainsworth's old bleachworks buildings (Plate 4).



Plate 4: Archive photo from St Peter's website showing the 1933 vestry

In 1965, St Peter's received a donation for chairs for the Jubilee School and improvements to the church. There was much discussion over the improvements and, 1979, the decision was made to build an extension to the south of the church for a meeting room, kitchen and toilet facilities. Work started on the 1st of November 1983 and the building was opened on 19th May 1984 (Plate 5).

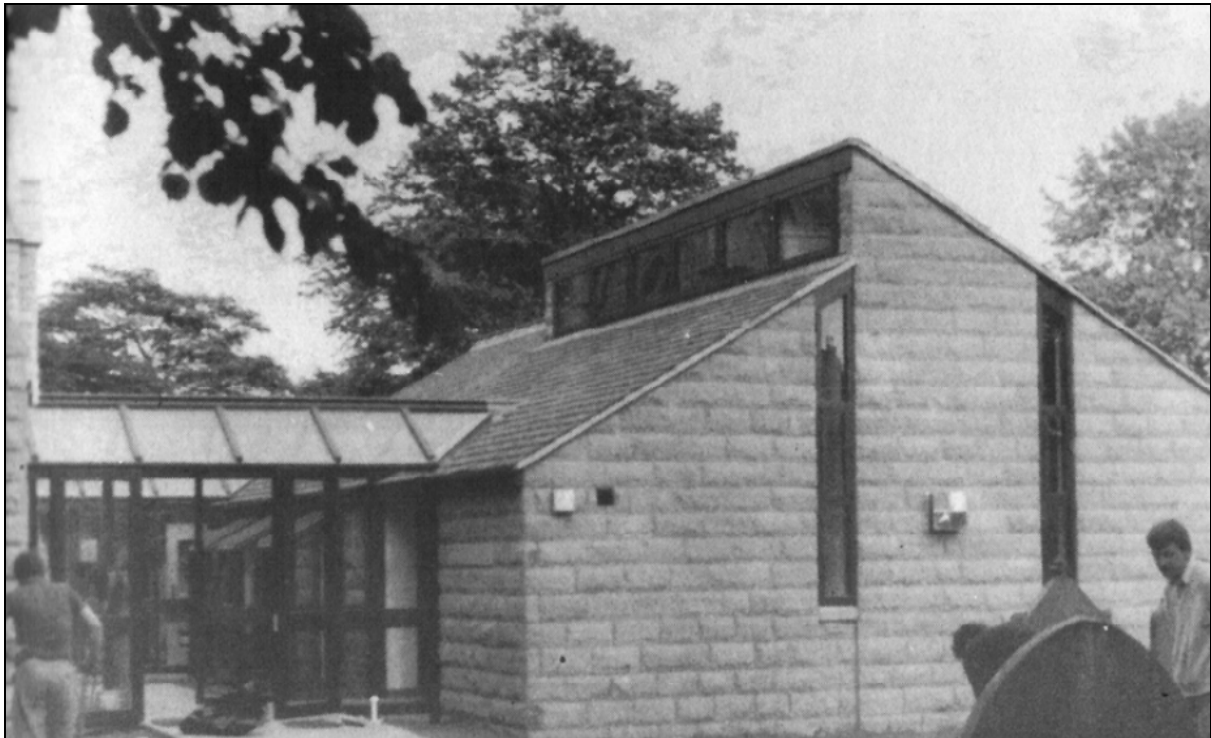


Plate 5: Archive photo from St Peter's website showing the 1984 extension shortly after its completion in 1984

5. *Watching Brief Results*

5.1 *Introduction*

Salford Archaeology maintained an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of five geo-technical trial pits in July 2019. The trial pits each measured less than 1m x 1m, and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.85m in order to assess the ground conditions for a program of proposed remodeling works. The trial pits were located against the exterior walls of the church and the modern extension. No finds or features of archaeological significance or any human remains were encountered during the course of the archaeological investigation.

5.2 *Results*

5.2.1 *Geo-technical Trial Pit 1*

Trial Pit 1 had maximum dimensions of 1m x 0.8m, and was located on the south side of the church, forming an L-shape around a buttress. The trial pit was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.64m, exposing the foundations of the church and an associated buttress (Plate 6).

The stone foundations of the church were laid in regular courses and extended below the base of the excavated trial pit. The foundation courses stepped out from the wall by 80mm at a depth of 130mm below the current ground surface (Plate 7). In contrast to the regular coursing of the church walls, the fabric of the buttress comprised random courses of stone rubble, with occasional inclusions of brick.



Plates 6 and 7: View of Trial Pit 1 showing the offset in the foundation and the regular coursing of the church wall, looking north



Plate 8: View of Trial Pit 1 showing stone and brick rubble, looking east

5.2.2 Geo-technical Trial Pit 2

Trial Pit 2 was placed against the west wall at the north-west corner of the 1984 extension. The pit measured 0.84m in length, 0.57m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.43m, to the level of the concrete raft upon which the 1984 extension is built; the concrete raft extended for beyond the western extent of the pit (Plate 9). The concrete raft was overlain by a 150mm thick layer of sand, which in turn was sealed by the topsoil (Plate 10)



Plate 9: View of Trial Pit 2, looking west



Plate 10: View of north-facing section of Trial Pit 2, looking south, showing the concrete raft and sand layer overlaid with garden soil.

5.2.3 Geo-technical Trial Pit 3

Trial Pit 3 was situated in the south-east corner of the site, between the north wall of the 1984 extension and the western glass corridor. The trial pit measured 1m x 0.5m, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m (Plate 11).

Part of the concrete raft for the 1984 extension was exposed in the trial pit, extending 0.4m to the north of the wall for the building. This had evidently been laid on a layer of levelling material that included a proportion of gravel and cinders. As was noted in Trial Pit 2, the concrete raft was overlain with a thin layer of sand, and sealed beneath topsoil.

Part of a drain was also exposed in the trial pit, running along the side of the glass corridor that led away from the extension gutter towards the church (Plate 12). The drain formed part of the 1984 extension. A damp-proof layer of plastic was visible under the drain.



Plates 11 and 12: View of Trial Pit 3, showing the concrete raft for the 1984 extension and the surface water drain

5.2.4 Geo-technical Trial Pit 4

Geo-technical pit 4 was placed on the eastern side of the pair of connecting corridors, against the west wall of the south transept. The pit measured 1.16m long and 0.53m wide, and was excavated to a depth of 0.80m. A modern foundation of brick and sandy mortar beneath a single course of stone was exposed along the north edge of the pit, forming part of the eastern corridor (Plate 13). These foundations were set on top of a concrete block wrapped in plastic, and set on a 200mm-thick layer of coarse concrete (Plate 14). These foundations were probably associated with the 1933 vestry.

The eastern edge of the trial pit was formed by the buttress at the south-west corner of the transept, which was constructed of stone. A stone plinth with a width of 130mm protruded from the buttress at ground level. The below-ground foundations stepped out a further 100mm at a depth of 220mm. The foundation trench was packed with fragments of brick, stone and ceramic rubble.



Plates 13 and 14: View of Trial Pit 4, showing wrapped concrete

5.2.5 Geo-technical Trial Pit 5

Trial Pit 5 was located at the south-east corner of the east wall, which appeared to be a later addition to the church (Plate 15). The trial pit measured 1m long and 0.5m wide, and was excavated to a depth of 0.9m, whereupon a layer of concrete was exposed. Three courses of bricks were laid on top of the concrete, above which were courses of stone masonry (Plate 16). It seems possible that these foundations were intended to underpin the foundations of the wall that formed the south-east corner of the east wall, perhaps in response to some subsidence.



Plate 15: View of east wall showing the joint in the stonework between two phases of construction



Plate 15: View of Trial Pit 5, showing brick courses below stone foundations

5. Conclusions

5.1 Summary

All five trial pits were excavated against the church walls and, as such, only touched the foundation trench fill of stone, brick and ceramic rubble. The foundations of the structures were shown to be varied and this can be accounted for by the different documented phases of building. No human remains were discovered, most likely due to proximity to the building. No small finds were recovered.

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Archive and Acknowledgements

Archive

The results of the archaeological investigation will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards and in line with current ClfA guidelines, updated 2014. 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 ClfA in that organisation's code of conduct. As part of the archiving process, the on-line OASIS (On-line Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations) form will be completed.

The site archive will be so organised as to be compatible with the other archaeological archives produced in the Northwest of England. All drawn records will be transferred to and stored in digital format, in systems which are easily accessible. The integrity of the site archive will be maintained upon completion of the archaeological works with the archive.

Acknowledgements

Salford Archaeology would like to thank Bradshaw, Gass & Hope LLP, as especially Andrew Ruaux, for commissioning the archaeological works on behalf of the Diocese of Manchester.

The watching brief was conducted by Lorraine McVinnie, who also compiled the report. The report was edited by Ian Miller, who was also responsible for project management.

Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1 Site location

Figure 2 Location of the trial pits



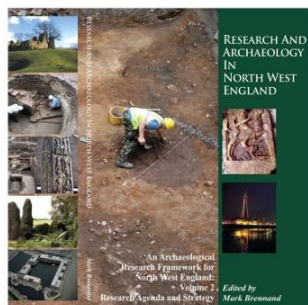
Figure 1:
Site location



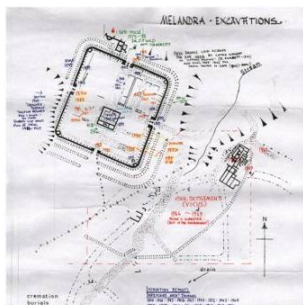
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DESK BASED ASSESMENTS



WATCHING BRIEF & EVALUATION



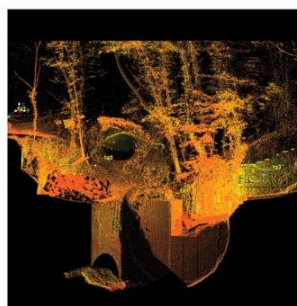
EXCAVATION



BUILDING SURVEY



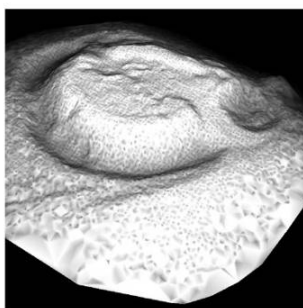
3D LASER SCANNING



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



LANDSCAPE SURVEYS



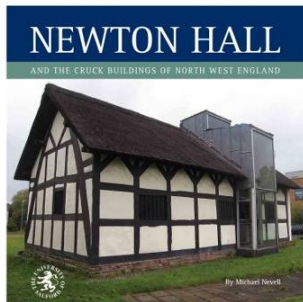
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