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ST PETER'S CHURCH, HUDDERSFIELD,  
WEST YORKSHIRE.

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REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF

OSA REPORT NO: OSA22WB26

September 2022

**OSA**

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**Report Summary.**

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**REPORT NO:** OSA22WB26

**SITE NAME:** St Peters Church, Huddersfield.

**COUNTY:** West Yorkshire

**NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:** SE 14580 16775

**COMMISSIONED BY:** One17 Architects  
The Dye House  
Armitage Road  
Armitage Bridge,  
Huddersfield  
HD4 7PD

**TEXT:** Kate Langley

**GRAPHICS:** Kate Langley

**FIELDWORK:** Kate Langley

**TIMING:** Fieldwork  
25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Post excavation & report preparation  
September 2022

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## 1.0 Abstract.

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*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology, in August 2022, during the excavation of a test pit at St. Peter’s Church, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire.*

*The investigation comprised the monitoring of the hand excavation of a single test pit within the crypt of the church. A single neonate/infant burial was found within a backfill deposit, as well as a large quantity of disarticulated human bone. All the material within the trench is believed to date to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when the church was renovated, and the west end was extended.*

## 2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

The church of St Peter’s is located in a prominent position within the historic core of the town of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. The church is centred at approximately National Grid Reference SE 14580 16775 (Figure 1). The church lies within its churchyard and is flanked by Byram Street, Kirkgate, Lord Street and St Peter’s Gardens/St Peter’s Street (Figure 2).

The underlying geology on this site is sandstone (Middle Band Rock) with superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (Head). (<http://bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

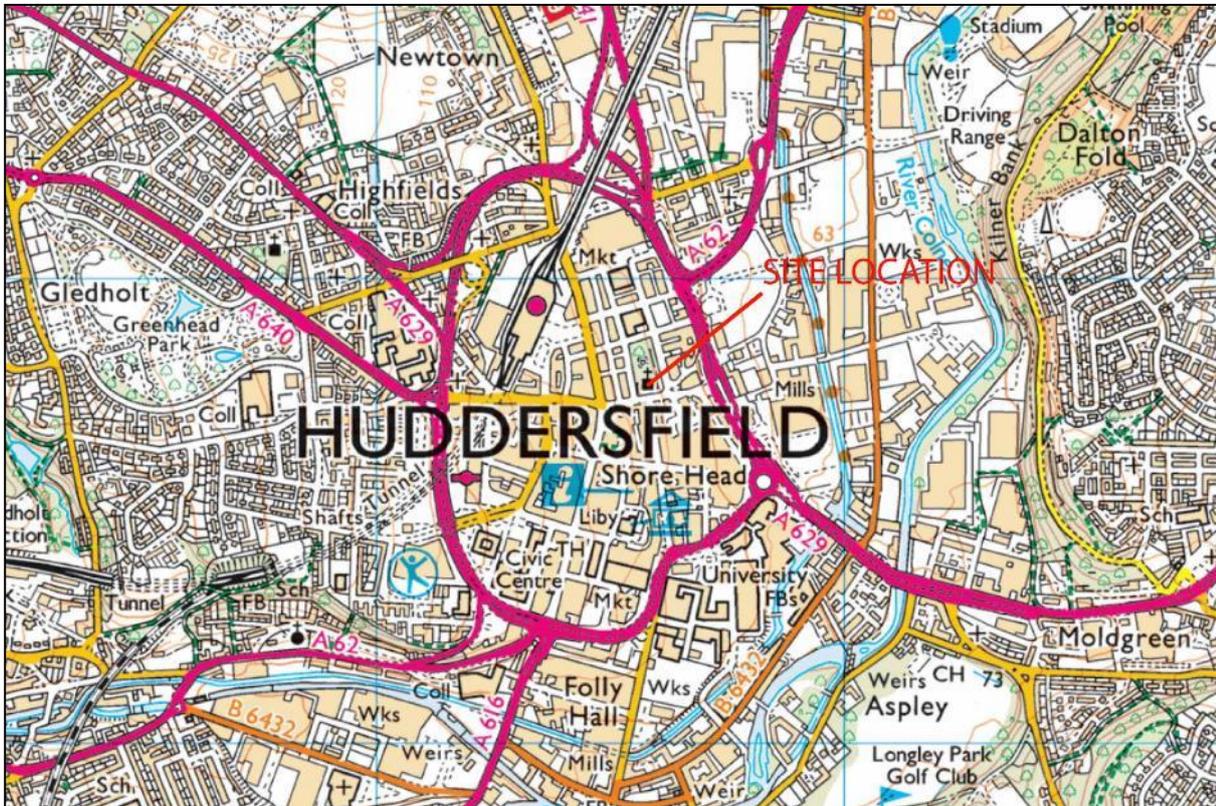


Figure 1. Site Location (centred) NGR SE 99865 37155

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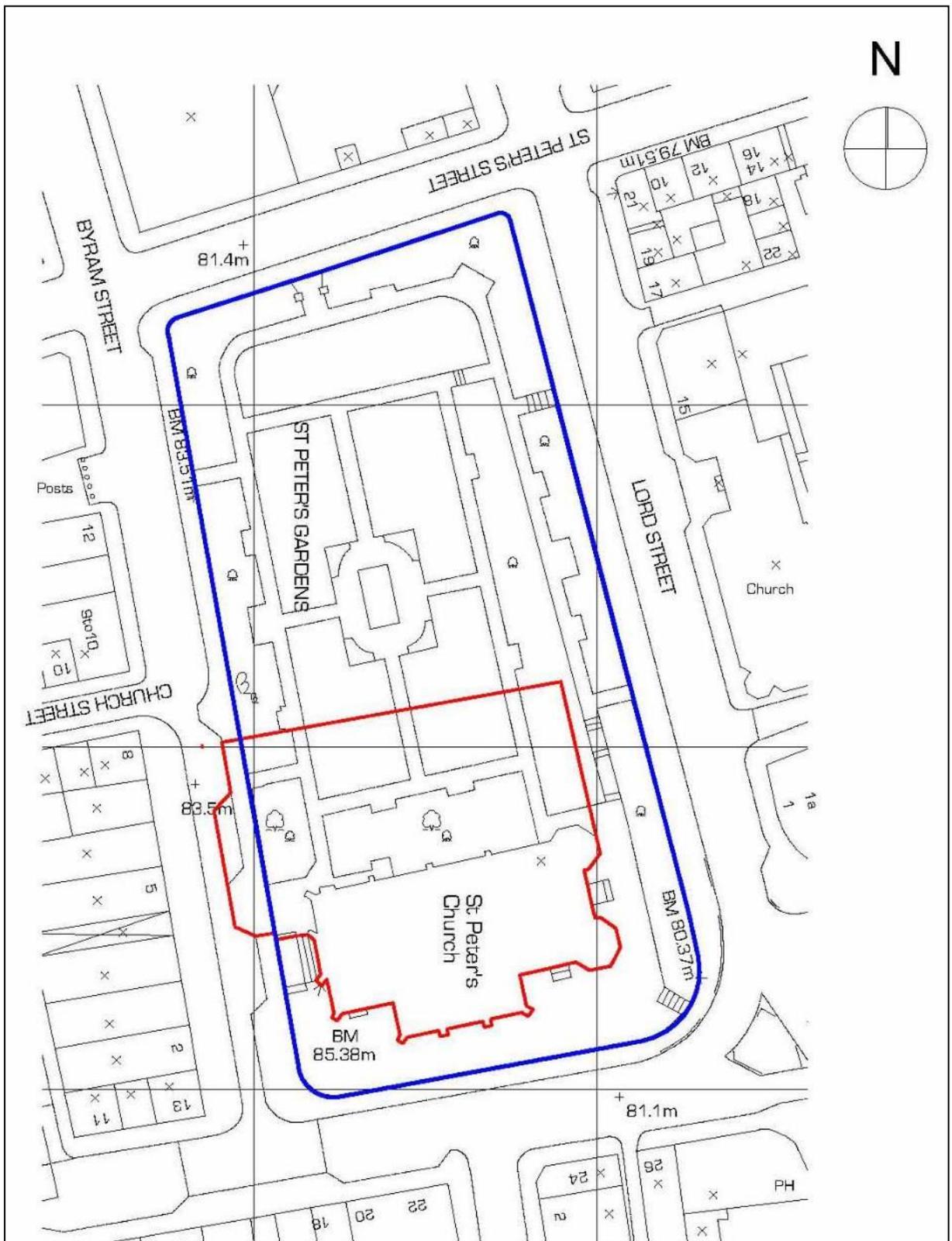


Figure 2. Detailed site location.

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### 3.0 Archaeological Background

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It is thought that the earliest church on this site was founded by the de Lacy family, who had been granted the manor of Huddersfield for their support of William I in the conquest of England, at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The right to choose the vicar of St. Peter’s was granted by the king to Nostell Priory in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. At the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the church was rebuilt in the perpendicular style. The current church (a Grade II\* Listed Building (1134977)) was built in 1836 after the previous building had fallen into a state of disrepair and the size of the church needed to be enlarged to cope with the growth in population of Huddersfield during the Industrial Revolution. An eminent architect from York, J.P.Pritchett, was commissioned to carry out the work. To make the church grander an extra storey was added, and the ground floor was vaulted to create a crypt. Much of the stone was reused from the previous building and the west end was also extended.

Three previous archaeological investigations have been carried out at the site. Two are recorded in the English Heritage National Monuments Record Excavations Index. In 1983 lowering of the ground level revealed disturbed burials and building debris. A deep excavation at the east end of the church produced a few fragments of human bone. In 2006 evaluation trenches recorded post-medieval burial activity overlying an earlier feature. The third investigation was carried out as part of the current development programme and involved the archaeological monitoring by On-Site Archaeology of a drainage trench excavated through the existing crypt floor in 2021 (OSA, 2021). This did not reveal any pre-modern deposits or human remains.

## 4.0 Methodology

The aim of this archaeological investigation was to preserve by record any archaeological remains disturbed by the development of the site and to avoid, or keep to a minimum, any disturbance to in-situ human remains.

The watching brief comprised the monitoring of the hand excavation of a single test pit trench required to investigate the foundations of the northern and western crypt wall within the plant room (Figure 3; Plates 1 and 2), in order to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and preservation of any archaeological remains and to ensure that any archaeological deposits encountered could be recorded. The trench measured 1m wide and c.4m in length, in an L-shape. It was excavated to a depth of 0.90m BGL (below ground level).

Standard On-Site Archaeology techniques were followed throughout the investigation and a photographic record was also maintained. A catalogue of context descriptions and photographs is provided in Appendix 1.

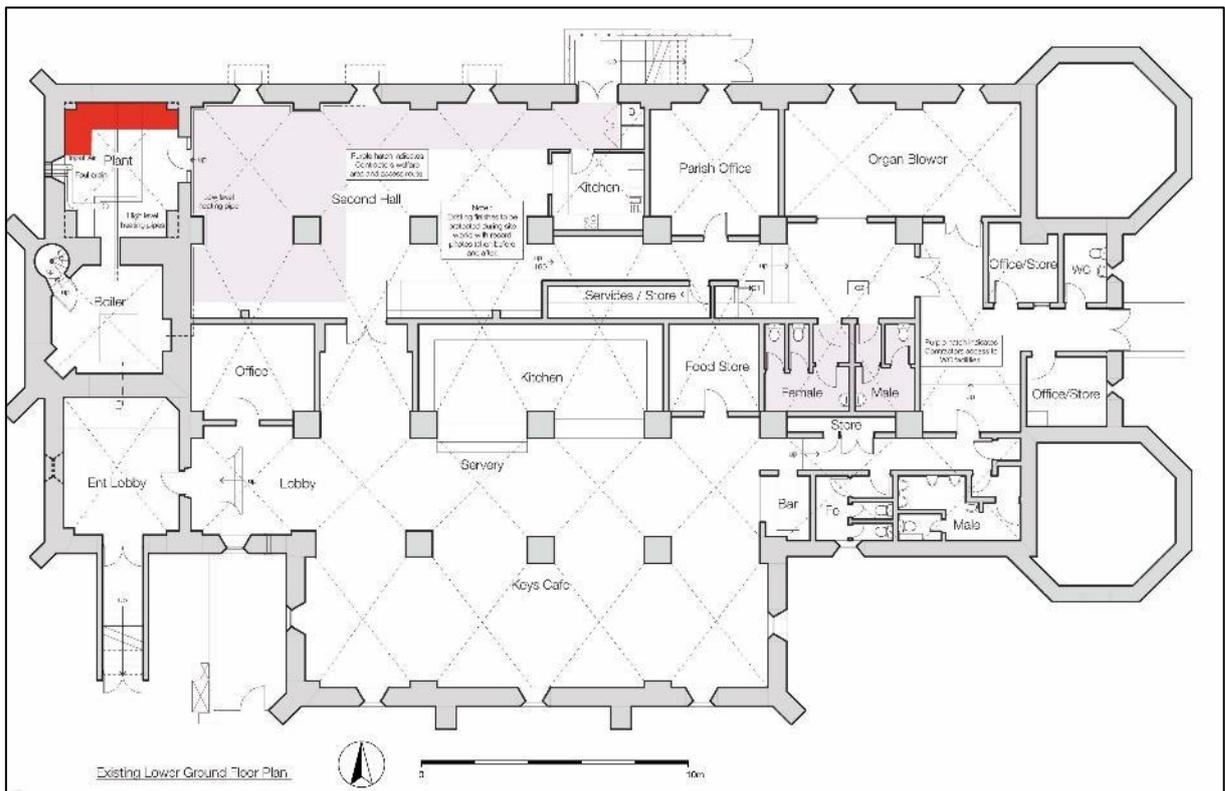


Figure 3. Location of test pit (red).

## 5.0 Results.

The earliest deposit encountered was a dumping deposit (103) (Plate 3) consisting of mid brownish grey sandy silt with moderate inclusions of stone, mortar, CBM (ceramic building material), cinder and slag. This layer was only seen in the eastern part of the trench. The deposit was encountered at 0.30m BGL at its highest point but sloped down towards the west. Above this deposit was layer (101), a dark brownish grey sandy clayey silt with inclusions of stone, CBM, clay pipe and modern pottery (Plate 4). This deposit also contained a relatively large quantity of dis-articulated human remains and some degraded fragments of wood that may have been remnants of coffins. This deposit measured between 0.30m and over 0.90m. The base of the deposit was not found in the western part of the trench. Within this deposit located in the northwestern corner of the trench a neonate or infant skeleton was found. This appeared to be an articulated skeleton buried within deposit (101) against the northern wall. The skeleton was aligned east to west and was found at 0.30m BGL. Above deposit (101) was a single layer of stone slabs that formed the flagged floor of the plant room.

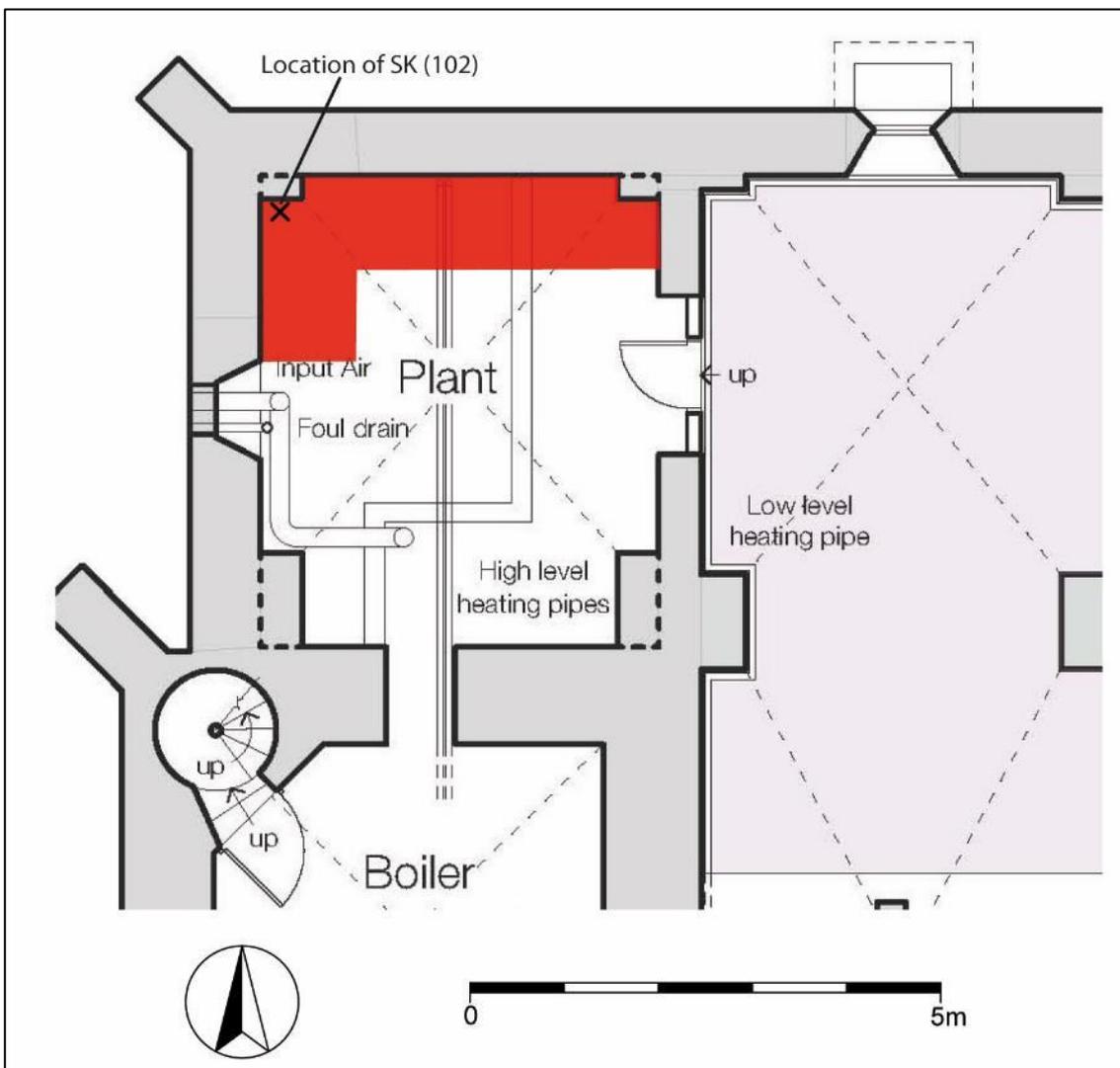


Figure 4. Plan of trench showing location of skeleton (102).

## 6.0 Conclusion

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No archaeological features were found during the monitoring of the single test pit trench excavated during this watching brief. The only deposits encountered were likely to be of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century date. It is thought the lower deposit encountered was imported industrial material dumped to raise the ground level possibly after truncation through the construction of the extension to the west end of the church in the 1830’s. The deposit above appeared to also be dumped material although this layer also contained a large quantity of dis-articulated human remains. The nature of the human remains indicated they may have been disturbed during the construction of the west end extension and placed within this upper deposit as a form of reinterment. Also, within this deposit the articulated skeleton of a neonate or infant was found tucked in the northwestern corner of the room. Upon completion of the archaeological watching brief all human remains were handed over to the church authorities to arrange suitable reburial.

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## 7.0 Bibliography

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OSA, 2021, St. Peter’s Church, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief. OSA Report No. OSA21WB12.

OSA, 2022, St. Peter’s Church, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. OSA report No. OSA22WB26 (WSI).

## 8.0 Appendix 1 ~ Archive Index.

### 8.1 *List of contexts.*

Context	Description	Thickness	Extent
100	Stone flags. Existing floor surface.	0.07m	Trench
101	Dark brownish grey sandy clayey silt. Backfill deposit.	0.30-0.90m+	Trench
102	Neonate/ infant skeleton. Burial.	0.10m	0.20m x 0.50m
103	Mid brownish grey sandy silt. Dumping deposit of industrial material.	0.60m+	1m+ x 3m+

### 8.2 *Photographic register.*

Frame No.	Description	Date
Photo download 26/08/22		
1-30	Shots of test pit.	25+26/08/22

## 9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Plates.



*Plate 1. Pre-ex shot of test pit trench, looking north.*



*Plate 2. Post-ex shot of test pit trench, looking northwest.*



*Plate 3. North facing section of trench, showing deposits (101) and (103).*



*Plate 4. West facing section of trench, showing deposit (101).*