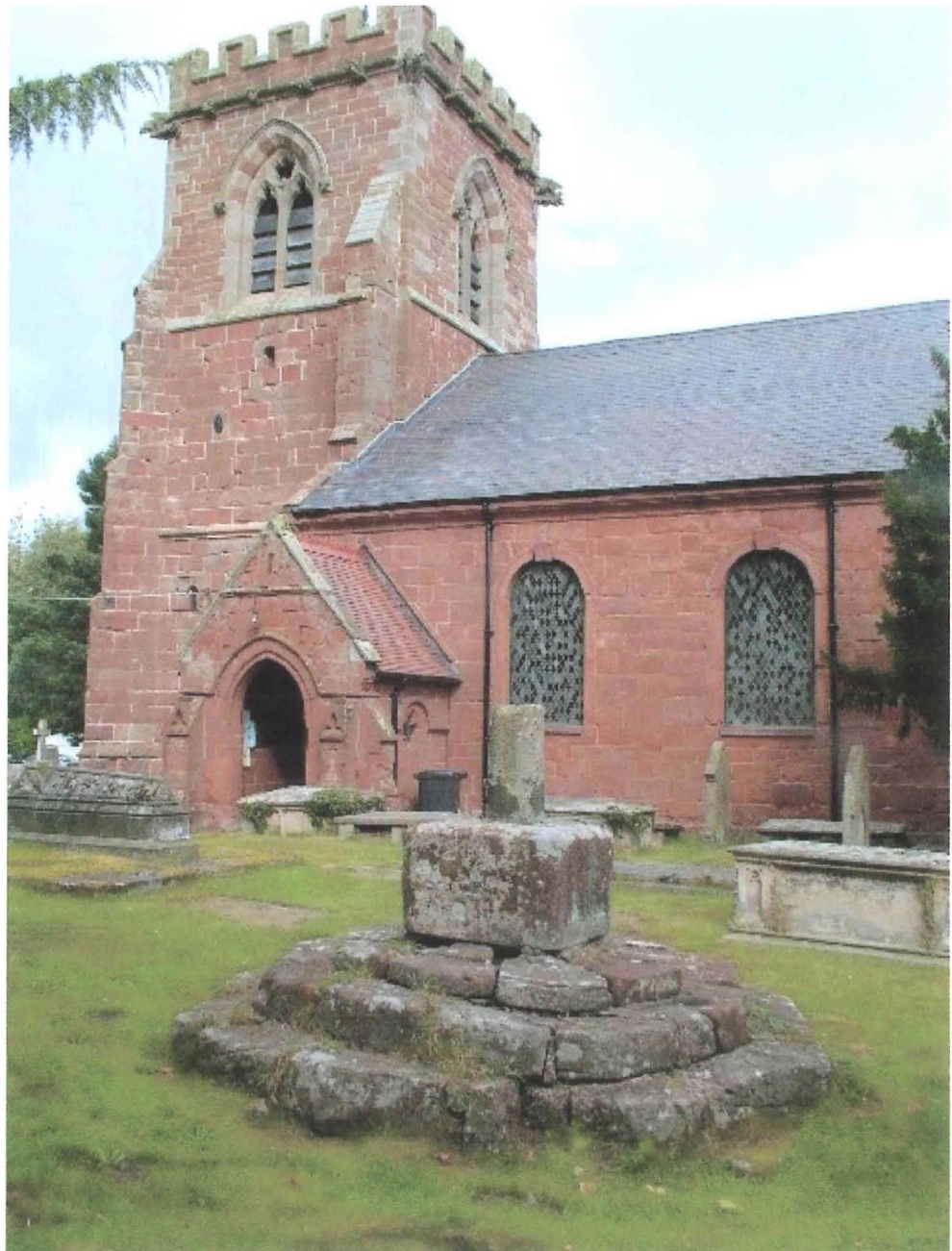


**THE CLWYD-POWYS ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**

# **St Mary's Church, Kinnerley, Shropshire**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



**CPAT Report No 889**

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# **St Mary's Church, Kinnerley, Shropshire**

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**N W Jones**  
September 2007

Report for Kinnerley Parochial Church Council

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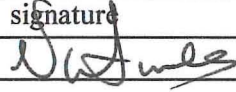
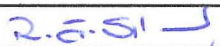

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## CPAT Report Record

### Report and status

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## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 In April 2007, the Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) was invited by Donald Insall Associates, on behalf of Kinnerley Parochial Church Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a pipe trench through the churchyard at St Mary's Church, Kinnerley, in Shropshire. The work formed part of a wider scheme of refurbishment and repairs to the church, relating specifically to the installation of a new toilet and washing facilities inside the tower, at the west end of the church.
- 1.2 The groundworks were initially programmed for May 2007 but were eventually undertaken several months later, between 17 and 18 September 2007.

## **2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

- 2.1 The small village of Kinnerley is located 1.5km south-south-east of Knockin, and 10km south-south-east of Oswestry in Shropshire. St Mary's Church lies on the east side of the road junction near the centre of the village (SJ 33852095). The churchyard is surrounded by a red sandstone revetment wall, with the interior ground level up to 1.5m higher than the exterior level.

## **3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 St Mary's Church is built of red sandstone and comprises a medieval tower and a Georgian nave and apsidal chancel. The tower rises in two stages from a base moulding, with diagonal buttresses on the north-west and south-west corners, and Perpendicular buttresses on the remaining two corners, now incorporated into the later body of the church. The west window is all 19<sup>th</sup>-century and the upper stage of the tower dates from 1862. The Georgian rebuild dates from 1773-4 and includes the four-bay nave and the chancel, which have round-headed windows. The main entrance is on the south side through a porch which was added during restoration works in 1887-90, and there is a second doorway on the north side.
- 3.2 Within the churchyard there is an old sandstone font to the west of the porch which is inscribed with a Greek palindrome, while to the south of the church there is the base of a medieval cross set on a stepped octagonal base.

## **4 WATCHING BRIEF**

- 4.1 The watching brief was conducted between 17 and 18 September 2007 during the excavation of a pipe trench southwards from the north-west corner of the tower and then west along the edge of a path to the western gate of the churchyard (Fig. 1). A drawn, written and photographic record was maintained throughout the archaeological works (see Appendix 2). All fragments of disarticulated bone which were recovered during the watching brief were placed in temporary storage inside the church pending reburial.
- 4.2 Numbers in brackets in the following text refer to individual contexts recorded on site and used in the site archive. The site archive will be deposited in due course with the Curator of Archaeology and Social History at Acton Scott, Shropshire.

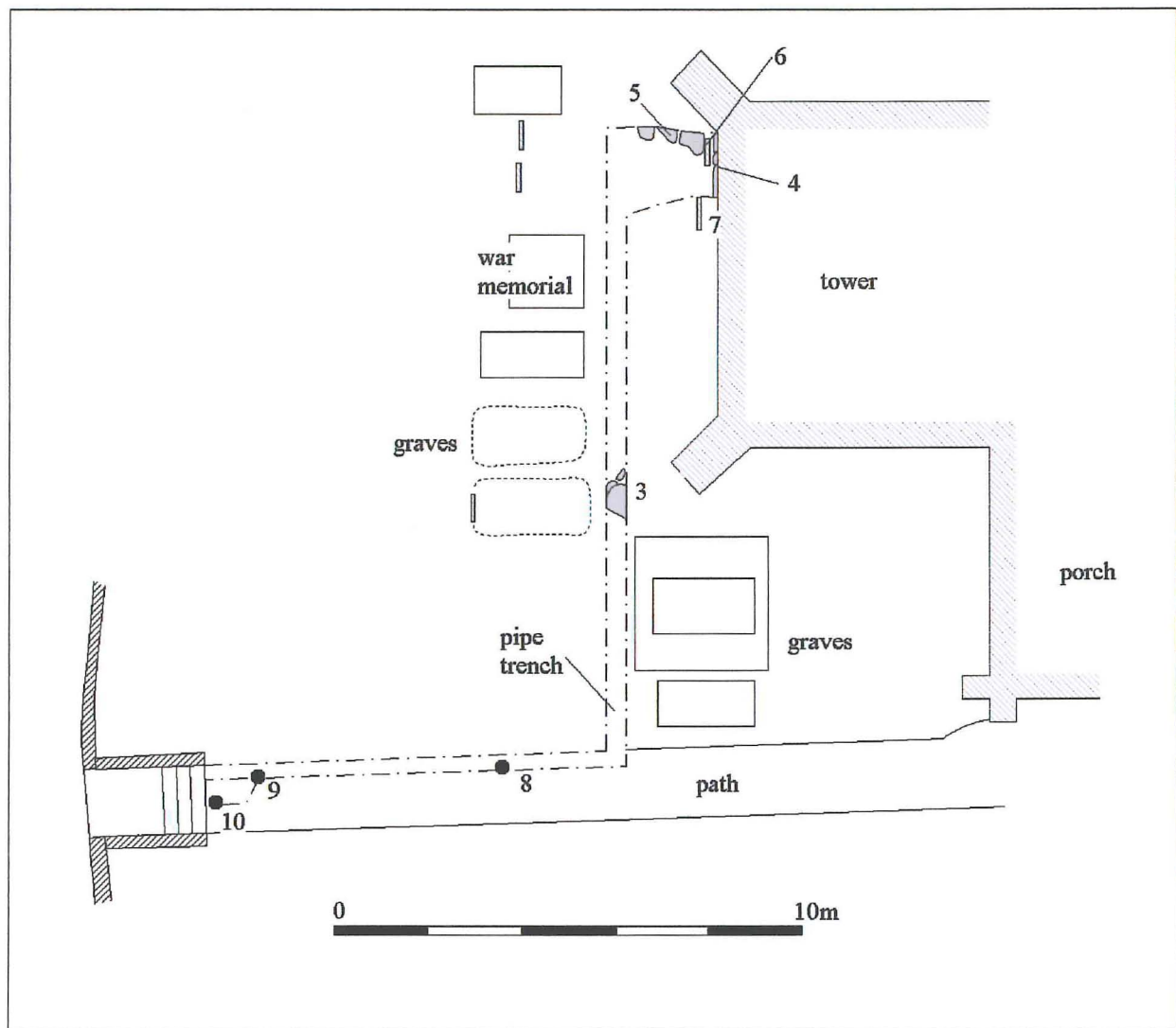


Fig. 1 Location of pipe trench and contexts

- 4.3 The pipe trench to the west of the tower was positioned to avoid a number of graves which could be easily identified, either by memorials and grave slabs, or as earthwork mounds. The trenches were generally 400mm wide and typically 450mm deep, and were mechanically excavated using a 300mm-wide toothless bucket. A wider area was excavated close to the north-west corner of the tower to allow access for drilling equipment to cut through the base of the west wall of the tower, which at this point was estimated to be around 2m thick.
- 4.4 The excavations close to the north-west corner of the tower involved the removal of a headstone which was evidently not in its original position. The stone (6), which was set loosely into the topsoil, was inscribed with a memorial to Annie Cadwallader of Kinnerley, who died in 1770, aged 39 years. A second headstone (7), dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Davies, lay immediately south of the trench and was visible in the north-facing section, demonstrating that the ground level had been raised by 0.2m since the stone was erected.
- 4.5 At the base of the west wall of the tower stepped footings (4) were identified, composed of dressed sandstone blocks projecting up to 0.2m from the base of the wall. Adjacent to these blocks, and at the same level, were several rough blocks of sandstone (5) which are assumed to be part of the foundations for the buttress on the north-west corner of the tower.





Plate 1 Excavated area against the west wall of the tower showing the stepped footings (4) and foundation (5) for the north-west buttress.

- 4.6 The opportunity was taken to record the profile of the lower section of the west wall of the tower, which included not only the stepped footings, but also a lower elaborately moulded chamfered plinth (Fig. 2).

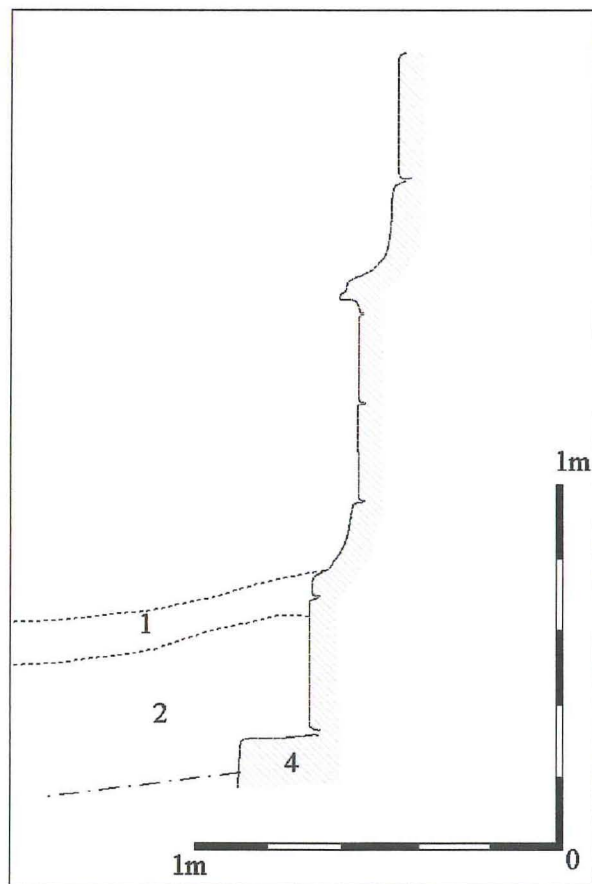


Fig. 2 Profile of the carved moulding and footings at the base of the tower west wall.

- 4.7 The upper deposit (1) contained fragments of sandstone, lime mortar, slate and disarticulated bone and extended throughout the area to the west and south-west of the tower. Beneath this was a deposit of disturbed soil (2) which also contained fragments of building material and disarticulated bone. No grave cuts were identified between the north-west corner of the tower and the path, although the trench was not deep enough to disturb any in-situ burials and it is possible that graves were present in this area.



Plate 2 Pipe trench alongside the tower, viewed from the north.

- 4.8 A large block of sandstone was identified close to the buttress on the south-west corner of the tower, along with several smaller fragments of stone which were assumed to be part of the buttress foundations (3). Although no cut was visible it was notable that the west-facing section appeared disturbed and contained a significant quantity of sandstone fragments, while the opposing section did not.





Plate 3 Sandstone block, possibly part of the foundations for the buttress on the south-west corner of the tower.

- 4.8 The path leading westwards from the porch had been cut through the upper deposits in this area of the churchyard, so although the pipe trench along its northern edge maintained a depth of around 0.45m below ground level it was effectively cut through deeper deposits than alongside the tower. Significantly more disarticulated bone was recovered along this section, along with the recognition of three possible in-situ burials (see Fig. 1). The left-hand side of a rib cage was identified within the trench and removed by hand, although no further associated skeletal remains were present, suggesting the burial had already been disturbed by a later grave. At the western end of the trench, adjacent to the steps, two skulls were visible in the north-facing section, neither of which was disturbed by the present excavations. At this point the base of the trench cut into undisturbed natural sand (11) at a depth of 0.6m below the path, and the trench was then tunnelled beneath the steps by hand.
- 4.9 Apart from the disarticulated bone and fragments of building materials the only artefact recovered during the watching brief was a sherd of pottery found near the north-west corner of the tower. This was in a fabric known as 'Midlands Purple' and may be part a large jug or storage jar dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.



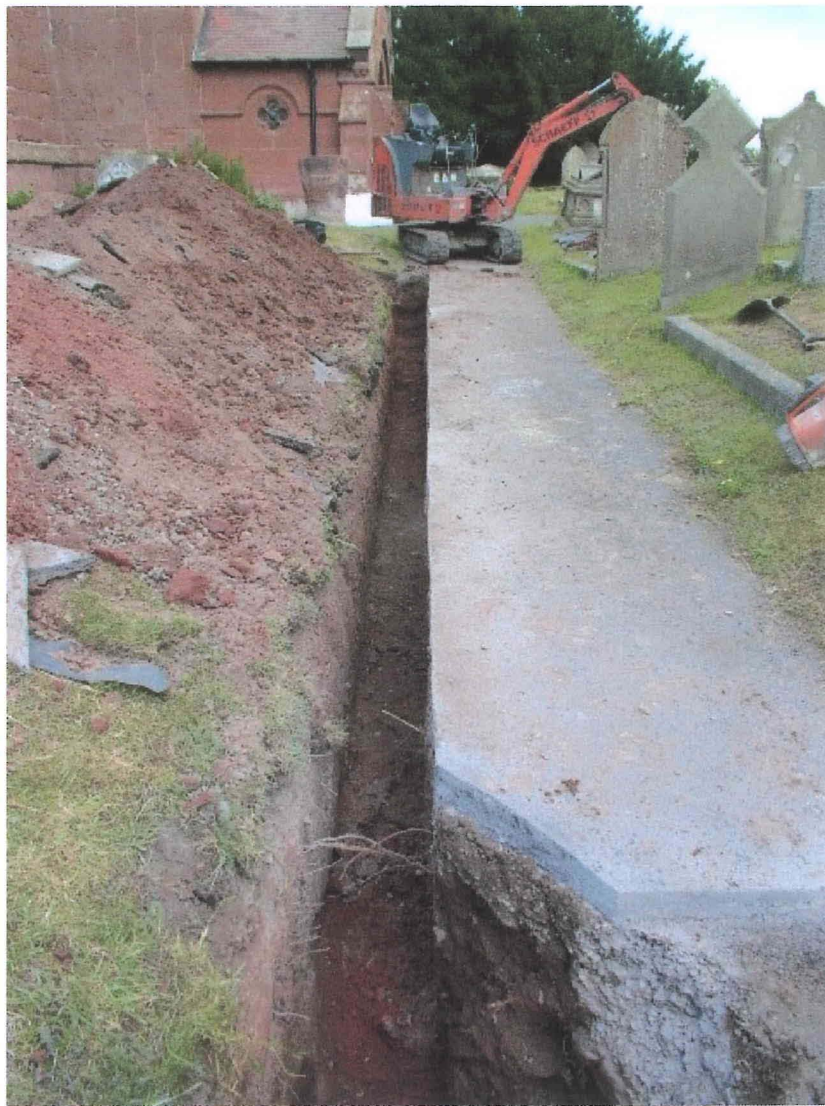


Plate 4 Pipe trench alongside the path viewed from the west

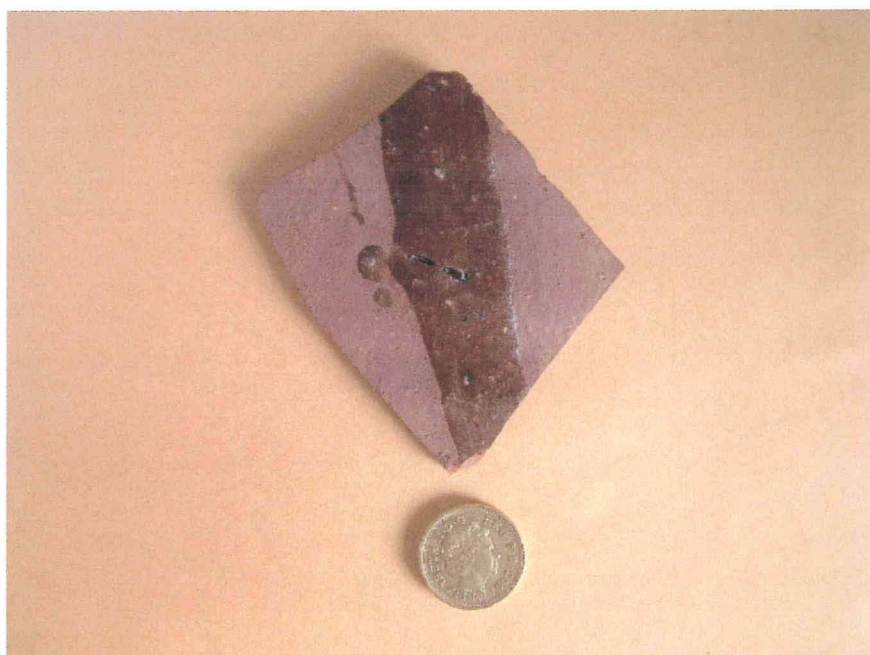


Plate 5 Sherd of 15-16<sup>th</sup>-century Midlands Purple ware found near the north-west corner of the tower

## **5 CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The watching brief identified a number of significant features, including the footings for the west wall of the medieval tower and the foundations for the buttresses at the north-west and south-west corners.
- 5.2 Although the pipe trench extended for a total of 21m across the churchyard it appeared that in general it was of insufficient depth to disturb in situ burials. The only exception to this was along the side of the path where the ground level had already been reduced and three possible in situ burials were identified at relatively shallow depths, although the general area had evidently been disturbed to a greater depth than the base of the trench.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1 The writer would like to thank the staff of Chester Masonry and JS Construction for their assistance and co-operation.



## **APPENDIX 1**

### **SPECIFICATION**

#### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Field Services Section of the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) have been invited by Donald Insall Associates Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief in connection with the construction of a new drain within the churchyard of St Mary's Church in Kinnerley, Shropshire (SJ 33852095).

#### **2 Objectives**

- 2.1 The objectives are:
- 2.1.1 to record any archaeological features identified during the archaeological monitoring of groundworks to ensure their preservation by record;
- 2.1.2 to prepare a report outlining the results of the watching brief.

#### **3 Methods**

- 3.1 Archaeological supervision of all relevant groundworks to include: the inspection of revealed surfaces for archaeological features; recording of archaeological features; limited excavation of features, where appropriate.
- 3.2 All archaeological deposits and/or features noted during the watching brief will be recorded and, where appropriate, excavated by hand and recorded by drawn section/plan and/or photography. All photography will be in digital format to a minimum resolution of 4 mega pixels. All features identified will be tied in locationally to points which are identifiable on modern Ordnance Survey mapping.
- 3.3 The on-site contractors are required to allow sufficient opportunity for appropriate archaeological excavation and recording to be undertaken. Every effort will be made to minimise any disruption to the overall scheme of works.
- 3.4 Following the on-site work an illustrated and bound report will be prepared. This will be in A4 format and contain, as necessary, conventional sections on: Site location, Topography and Geology; Historic Background; Watching Brief; Conclusions and References, together with any appropriate appendices on archives and finds.
- 3.5 The site archive will be prepared to specifications laid out in Appendix 3 in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), to be deposited with the County Museums Service.

#### **4 Resources and Programming**

- 4.1 The watching brief will be undertaken by an experienced field archaeologist and overall supervision will be by Mr RJ Silvester, a senior member of CPAT's staff who is also a member of the Institute of

Field Archaeologists (IFA). CPAT is an IFA Registered Organisation. The duration of the watching brief will be entirely determined by the contractor's programme of work.

- 4.2 All report preparation will be completed by or with the assistance of the same field archaeologist who conducted the fieldwork.
- 4.3 Copies of the report will be deposited with the client within one month of the completion of on-site works. If appropriate, a short report will be published in an appropriate regional or national journal.
- 4.4 Requirements relating to Health and Safety regulations will be adhered to by CPAT and its staff.
- 4.5 CPAT is covered by appropriate Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

N.W. Jones  
4 April 2007

## APPENDIX 2 SITE ARCHIVE

### Site archive

11 Context record forms

Photographic catalogue

Context Register

Photographic Register

22 Digital images – CPAT film no 2473

1 A1 site drawing

### Context Register

Context	Description
1	Topsoil
2	General context for disturbed material below topsoil
3	Foundation for tower SW buttress
4	Footings for W wall of tower
5	Foundation for tower NW buttress
6	Headstone in memory of Annie Cadwallader
7	Headstone in memory of Elizabeth Davies
8	Burial – left-hand side of ribcage only
9	Burial – skull visible in side of trench
10	Burial – skull visible in side of trench

### Finds

1 sherd of Midlands Purple ware from near NW corner of tower