

# Archaeological Watching Brief on the proposed extension at the parish church of St Peter & St Paul, Church Road, Ash, Kent

Site Code ASH/WB/17



Report for St Peter & St Paul Parish Church  
Date of report 30/10/2017

## **SWAT ARCHAEOLOGY**

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Site Code ASH/WB/17  
NGR 60181 64565

Date of report: 30/10/2017

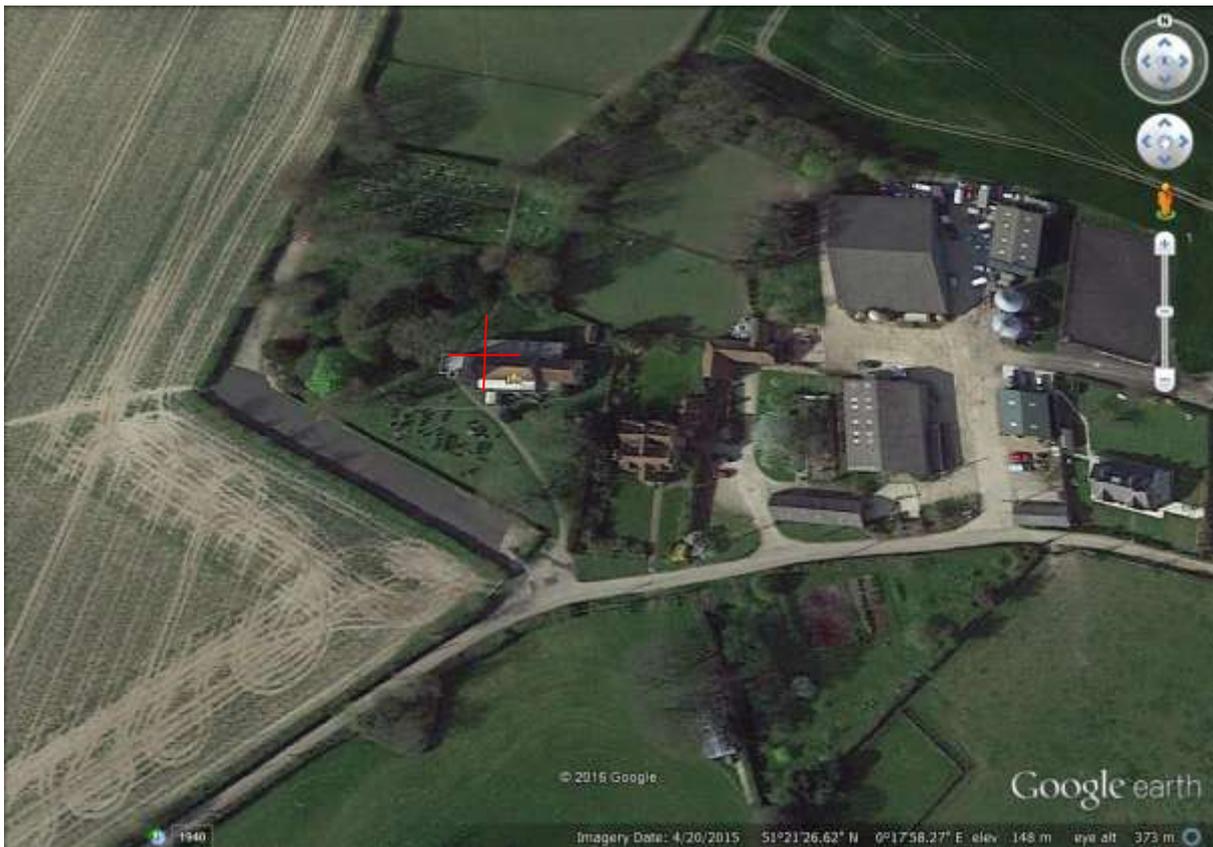


Plate 1. Aerial view of site (red target) showing the site prior to development.

(Google Earth 20/4/2015: Eye altitude 373m).

## **1.0 Abstract**

1.1. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017 Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA of Swale and Thames Archaeological Survey Company (SWAT Archaeology) carried out an Archaeological Watching Brief on ground works involved in the build of a new lean-to extension to the north of the church building and a new below ground cess pool to the south of the church of St Peter and St Paul Church in Church Road, Ash in Kent. (Fig. 1 & Plates 1-9).

1.2. The works were carried out on behalf of the parish council.

1.3. An Archaeological Watch was kept during the site reduction of topsoil and subsoil and digging out foundations for the new lean to- drainage runs and new cess pool (Figure 1).

The archaeological work was undertaken in three phases.

Phase 1: The digging out of the foundations for the lean-to (Plates 3-6)

Phase 2: the excavation of a shallow drainage trench (Plate 7)

Phase 3: The digging out of the cess pool (Plates 8-9)

1.4. The Archaeological Watching Brief was to watch for any signs of archaeological activity. In particular, any evidence of archaeological activity associated with the known archaeological sites in the area including the adjacent St Peter & St Paul Parish Church which is a Grade I Listed Building (TQ66SW64), dating to 13th century that stands in an isolated position within an L-shaped enclosure of 1.35 acres, bordered by mature trees (Figure.1)

1.5. The Planning Application Number for the development is SE/16/03697/FUL.

1.6. Although the archaeological potential has been highlighted by the SWAT Archaeology Desk-Based assessment the Archaeological Watching Brief revealed no buried archaeological features and no archaeological finds were retrieved.

## **2.0 Introduction**

2.1 The site is located in an isolated position within an L-shaped enclosure of 1.35 acres, bordered by mature trees. Open fields surround the church grounds to the north and west, while Ash Manor, a substantial red brick house constructed in 1637 by Sir Edmund Fowler, shares the east boundary extending to Ash Place Farm. A single track leads from the church and the Manor past the cricket ground and southwest to the village of Ash. The village is in an area located on the North Downs, in the county of Kent, south of New Ash Green. It shares the civil parish of Ash-cum-Ridley with the nearby village of Ridley and is in the district of Sevenoaks (Figure.1)

### **2.2 Planning Background**

Planning application SE/03697/FUL was submitted to Sevenoaks District Council the Local Planning Authority and dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017. There were five conditions none of which referred to archaeological works.

### **3.0 Schedule of Visits**

An archaeologist suitably experienced attended the site (Paul Wilkinson SWAT Archaeology) and monitored the excavation works from the 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

### **4.0 Aims and Objectives**

4.1. The reason for the monitoring and recording, were to:

*“The objectives of the archaeological watching brief are to contribute to heritage knowledge of the area through the recording of the archaeological remains exposed as a result of excavations in connection with the groundworks. Particular attention will be made to the character, height below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits.” (SWAT 2017).*

4.2. The ground works were to strip the topsoil and excavate the foundations for the lean to, the drainage run and the excavation for the cess pool (Plates 2-9).

4.3. A full programme of proposed works by the contractor were made available to SWAT Archaeology before the on-site monitoring took place.

4.4. Confidence Rating

No factors hindered the recognition of archaeological and deposits during the monitoring and recording exercise.

### **5.0 Archaeological and Geological Background**

5.1. The underlying geology at the site according to the British Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50,000) indicates that the site's bedrock geology is formed of Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation (undifferentiated) - Chalk. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 71 to 89 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period in a local environment previously dominated by warm chalk seas. These rocks were formed in warm shallow 'Chalk' shelf seas with little sediment input from land. They often consist of a calcareous ooze of the microscopic remains of plankton, especially the disc shaped calcite plates or coccoliths that make up the spherical coccolithophores.

Superficial deposits of Clay-with-flints Formation - Clay, Silt, Sand And Gravel, formed up to 5 million years ago in the Quaternary and Neogene Periods in a local environment previously dominated by weathering processes. These rocks were formed from the rock debris left behind. It varies according to source rock type, climate and processes and may include mechanical weathering by frost wedges to break rock apart; chemical weathering to decompose some minerals; and dissolution of carbonates. (BGS 1:50,000 digital).

The PDA sits at an average height of 485.56ft (147.99m) aOD.

5.2. The application site consisted of an area of known important archaeological remains. On the proposed development site (PDA) the HER notes that St Peter & St Paul Parish Church is a Grade I Listed Building (TQ66SW64), dating to the 13th century.

5.3 The installation of a gas pipeline 150m north of the church in 1969 prompted an intensive resistivity survey and trial excavations uncovering a Romano-British ditch believed to be an enclosure ditch (TQ66SW15).

5.4 A second 23Km gas pipeline from Farningham to Hadlow resulted in several types of investigation including Field Walking in 2000 (EKE5745), a Geophysical Survey in 2007 (EKE9896), an Evaluation of 38 trenches in 2008 (EKE10029) and Excavations and Watching Briefs in 2010 (EKE14480). Various archaeological features and deposits were observed including areas of high concentrations of burnt flint and slag (EKE5745), possible boundaries, ditches and pits (EKE9896), undated post-holes, gullies, ditches and quarry pits (EKE10029/TQ66SW138/TQ66SW139) and a Mesolithic paleochannel with a significant quantity of struck flint, over 15 ditches and pits of different orientations from the Late Iron Age and Romano British period, an oven/kiln and a series of post holes that could not be dated (TQ66SW20) but were thought to be of the same period.

5.5 Fawkham & Ash Archaeological Group carried out an archaeological assessment (EKE5401) at the church on 27th February 1998 in advance of the construction of a single storey meeting room to the west end of the north aisle. The trial trenching revealed a ditch possibly dating to the 12th/13th century based on two sherd of medieval pottery although no connection between the ditch and the existing church was established.

5.6 Despite archaeological evidence from the surrounding area, there was no evidence of the Romano-British period.

## **6.0 Methodology**

6.1. The Watching Brief was conducted in accordance with the Archaeological Specification compiled by SWAT Archaeology and it also complied with the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA: Dec 2017).

6.2. The works comprised the observation of all ground works, including the inspection of subsoil and natural deposits for archaeological features and finds.

6.3. The Watching Brief was carried out according to the needs of the building contractors from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June 2017.

6.4. Excavation of the area was carried out by contractors using a 360 degree machine equipped with a toothed bucket necessary to remove the topsoil down to formation level and a toothed bucket to excavate the pit for the cess pool (Plates 2-9).

6.5. All excavation was carried out under the constant supervision of an experienced archaeologist (Dr Paul Wilkinson MCifA).

6.6. Where possible the areas of excavation were subsequently hand-cleaned with the intention of revealing any observed features in plan and section.

6.7. If found archaeological features under threat were to be excavated to enable sufficient information about form, development date and stratigraphic relationships to be recorded without prejudice to more extensive investigations, should these prove to be necessary.

6.8. The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with current CifA Standards and Guidance, (CifA: 2017), and methodology as outlined in the WSI Watching Brief. Any human bones recovered were bagged for reburial as per the policy statement as approved by the PCC Standing Committee (Appendix 1).

## **7.0 Results**

### **7.1 General**

No archaeological features or finds were revealed or recovered. The subsoil encountered across the site was deposits of silty clay overlaid by topsoil. No archaeological features were revealed in the natural geology and no archaeological finds retrieved from the topsoil.

7.2 The development site is rectangular in shape and measures 4.42 x 2.94 metres. The area was surveyed in and is shown on Figure 1.

7.3 The site reduction was about 10cm-12cm deep at about 148.00m aOD. The foundations were about 1.30m BGL. The site produced no archaeological features or deposits or finds and no environmental potential was recognised on site.

## **8.0 Finds**

No finds were retrieved.

## **9.0 Discussion**

The development site is in an area of archaeological potential. However, no archaeology was revealed on the development site.

## **10.0 Conclusion**

The Archaeological Monitoring has fulfilled the primary aims and objectives of the SWAT Archaeological Specification. As far as it is known no buried archaeological features have been affected as a result of the development.

## **11.0 Acknowledgments**

SWAT Archaeology would like to thank parish council for commissioning the project. Fieldwork was undertaken and report written by Dr Paul Wilkinson MCIfA.

## **References**

HER data (Historic England 2017)

CIfA (2017) Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs

**Appendix 1**  
**Kent County Council HER Summary Form**

**Site Name:** Development of land at the parish church of St Peter & St Paul, Ash, Kent

**SWAT Site Code:** ASH/WB/17

**Site Address:** As above

**Summary:**

Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT) carried out Archaeological Monitoring on the development site above. The site has planning permission for a new lean-to and cess pool whereby Parish Council requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be undertaken to determine the possible impact of the development on any archaeological remains.

The Archaeological Monitoring consisted of site attendance which encountered no buried archaeological features or artefacts.

**District/Unitary:** Sevenoaks District Council

**Period(s):**

**NGR (centre of site to eight figures)** 60181 64565

**Type of Archaeological work:** Archaeological Watching Brief

**Date of recording:** June 2017

**Unit undertaking recording:** Swale and Thames Survey Company (SWAT. Archaeology)

**Geology:** Bedrock geology is Seaford Chalk Formation

**Title and author of accompanying report:** Wilkinson P. (2017) Archaeological Watching Brief in advance of the proposed extension at the parish church of St Peter & St Paul, Church Lane, Ash, Kent

**Summary of fieldwork results (begin with earliest period first, add NGRs where appropriate)**

See above

**Location of archive/finds:** SWAT. Archaeology. Graveney Rd, Faversham, Kent. ME13 8UP

**Contact at Unit:** Paul Wilkinson

**Date:** 30/10/17



Plate 2. General view of site (looking NE)



Plate 3. View of ground reduction for the lean-to (looking SW)



Plate 4. View of foundation trenches to lean-to (looking S)



Plate 5. View of completed foundation trenches



Plate 6. View of completed trenches (looking E)



Plate 7. View of drainage run (looking S)



Plate 8. View of cess pool



Plate 9. View of cess pool

## Appendix 1

### **St Peter and St Paul. Ash. Kent. Policy statement on Church and Churchyard Human Remains**

In the church and churchyard of this 12th century church building it is anticipated that human remains may be found when digging for new graves, drainage trenches, soakaways or foundations.

This policy sets out the respectful way in which these remains are to be handled and how they are to be reburied.

1. A gravedigger may be employed to dig a new grave in open ground where no burials have been recorded for 100 years or more. Any human remains found should be respectfully bagged and reburied within the same location, but deeper than the new grave.

2. An archaeologist will maintain a watching brief during any excavations in the church or churchyard associated with new building or internal re-ordering of the church.

3. Method of handling any human remains discovered while digging for specific purposes

a) New Font Soakaway and Baptistry

Remains to be carefully and respectfully recorded, bagged and re-buried under the new baptistry floor.

b) Removal of font from existing position

Remains to be carefully and respectfully recorded, bagged and reburied under the new floor in the same location at an adequate depth.

c) New Extension to Church

When digging the foundations of the new porch, the associated soak-away, the apron and the apron footway, remains are to be carefully and separately bagged and tagged as recovered. They are to be re-buried in a hole no less than 1m deep under the apron footway.

d) Drainage ditches and Cess Pit

When digging, any remains discovered are to be carefully bagged, tagged and their position flagged before reburial at a suitable depth, as close as possible to the original site in a hole no less than 1m deep.

4. Any human remains which may be temporarily left unburied are to be bagged, approximate location of find noted, dated and placed in a sealed box, provided by the PCC, under the Lady Chapel Altar, and the Churchwarden and Priest-in-Charge notified of same.

5. Should whole skeleton(s) be found, the services of a gravedigger may be employed to rebury, and a suitable committal service be said by a minister.

6. All remains will be reburied in a respectful manner according to proscribed protocol where appropriate.

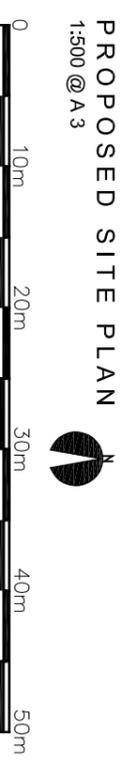
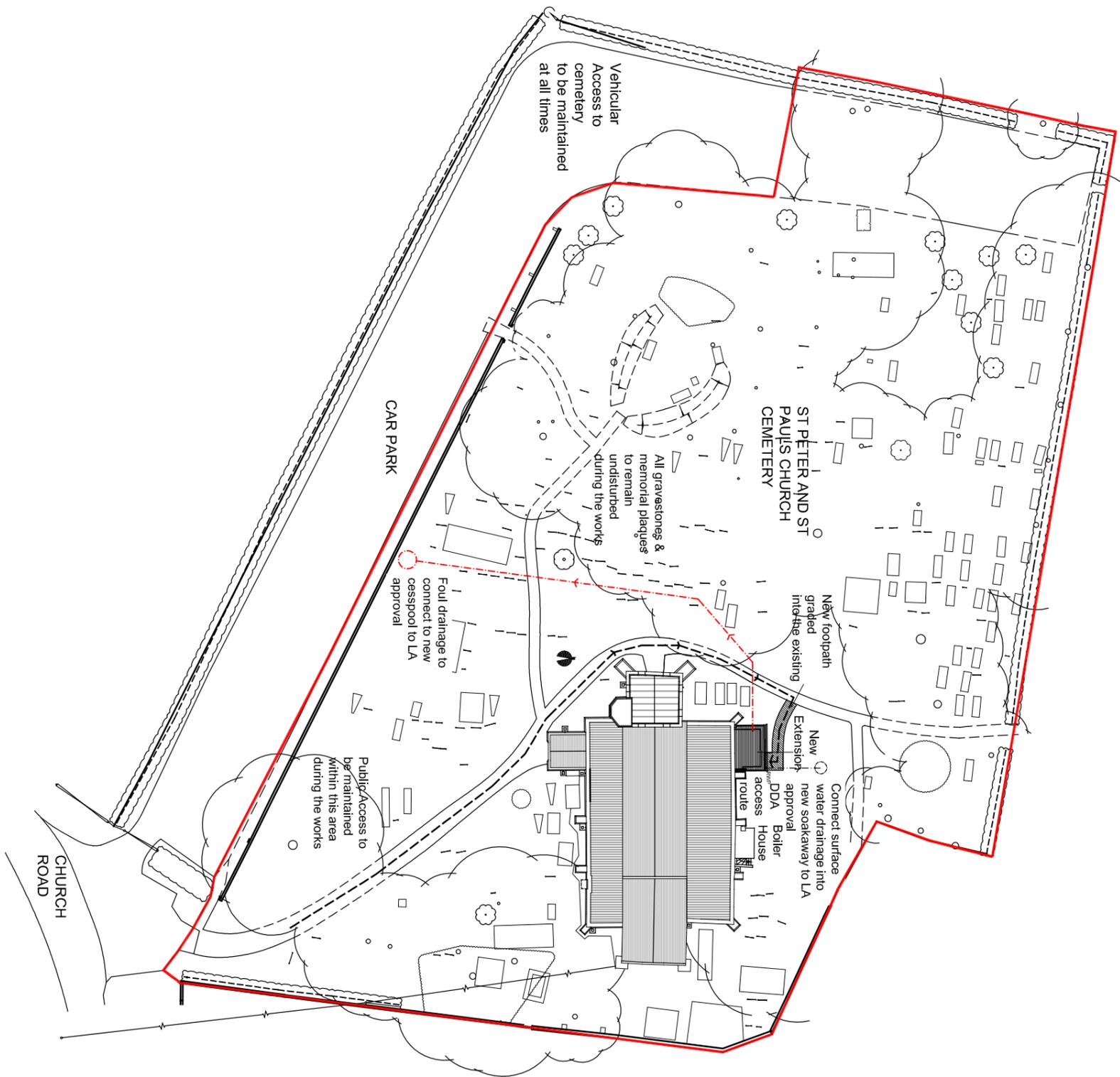
This policy should be approved by the PCC (or its Standing Committee) and reviewed at the date of each Quinquennial Inspection thereafter.

Date of Policy: 20\* September 2016. Approved by the PCC Standing Committee.

Date of review: May 2021 at Quinquennial Inspection.

Author: Reverend Canon Ruth Oates, Priest in Charge, St Peter and St Paul, Ash.

Figure 1. Showing the lean-to site (in black), the drainage run and cess pool in red dotted line and dotted circle



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 and planning consultants

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PROJECT  
 Ash Church, Sewenods : new toilets & kitchen

DATE  
 St Peter & St Paul, Ash Church, Sewenods/5/10/15

PREPARED BY  
 Proposed Site Plan HC

SCALE  
 1:500 @ A3

DRAWING NUMBER  
 08133-PL (00) 009 A