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**Archaeological monitoring at the churchyard of St
Mary's Church, Dunsford
Devon**



on behalf of
Paul Heighway Associates

Report No. 12-05

Project No. 1001

November 2012



OAKFORD ARCHAEOLOGY

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Contents

Summary	
1 Introduction	1
1.1 The site	1
1.2 Archaeological background	1
2. Methodology	1
3. Results	2
3.1 External works	2
3.2 Internal works	2
4. Conclusions	3
5. Project Archive	3

Acknowledgements

Bibliography

Appendix 1: Method statement

List of illustrations

Fig. 1 Location of site.

Fig. 2 Plan of Church tower and north aisle showing location of observations.

Fig. 3 Elevation of North aisle and tower.

Fig. 4 Window from the north aisle of St Mary's Church, Dunsford. Scale 1:5.

List of plates

Plate 1 General view of excavation area showing foundations of North aisle and tower.
Looking southeast.

Plate 2 General view of excavation area showing foundations of North aisle and tower.
Looking south.

Plate 3 Close-up of North aisle foundation. Looking east.

Plate 4 Close-up of tower foundation. Looking south.

Plate 5 Close-up view of tower foundation. Looking east.

Plate 6 Close-up view of tower foundation. Looking south.

Plate 7 Close-up view of building break between North aisle and tower. Looking southeast.

Plate 8 General view of west window in North aisle showing rubble blocking. Looking west.

Plate 9 General view of internal excavation area showing modern truncation and foundations
of tower. Looking west.

Plate 10 Close-up view of tower foundations showing plinth course. Looking south.

Summary

Archaeological monitoring was carried out by Oakford Archaeology in the churchyard of St Mary's, Dunsford, Devon (SX 8130 8920), between October and December 2011. The work comprised the monitoring of construction works associated with a new vestry.

Groundworks exposed the remains of two pre-Victorian graves in the area immediately to the north of the church tower. The works also exposed the relationship between the tower and the later north aisle. The dismantling of a 15th century window in the north aisle was also monitored.

1. INTRODUCTION

Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by Oakford Archaeology (OA) at St Mary's churchyard and church, Dunsford, Devon (SX 8130 8920), between October and December 2011. The work was commissioned by Dunsford Parochial Church Council. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with a 'written scheme of investigation' (WSI) prepared by Oakford Archaeology (Steinmetzer 2011) in response to a condition attached to the Faculty (85/11) and the grant of Planning Permission (0078/11).

1.1 The site

The site of St Mary's church lies in the centre of Dunsford (Fig. 1). It lies at a height of 89m AOD, on high ground overlooking the River Teign. The underlying solid geology of the area belongs to the Crackington Formation - Interbedded Mudstone and Sandstone, sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 314 to 325 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period (BGS Sheet 326).

1.2 Archaeological and historical background

The site lies immediately to the north and east of the tower of the medieval parish church of St Mary. This is a grade I Listed Building and contains fabric of 15th century date, although the building was heavily altered in the 19th century.

The structural history of St Mary's Church as currently understood can be summarised as follows. The earliest church was dedicated in 1261 and in common with so many in Devon and Cornwall, underwent a series of major extensions in the years between the Black Death and the Reformation. The present structure appears to be largely 15th century in date; the arms of Bishop Lacy on a former font may indicate that the works were carried out during his episcopacy (1420-55). In 1822 the south wall of the church and the porch were rebuilt, while in 1845 the nave was extended east by a further bay and the chancel largely reconstructed. It is probably during this period that most of the windows were replaced, although at least three Perpendicular 15th century cusped windows survive in the north wall of the north aisle. The west window of the aisle was probably blocked when the gallery was added in the 19th century.

2. METHODOLOGY

The site of the new vestry had previously been excavated by the Victorians during drainage improvement works. The work to the north of the tower comprised the machine excavation of an area 4.6m in length, 4m wide and approximately 0.6m deep. The works inside the church consisted of a single trench, 1.85m long, 1.85m wide and approximately 0.25m deep. The positions of the excavations as excavated are shown on Fig.2.

Machine excavation was undertaken under archaeological control using a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless grading bucket. Topsoil and underlying deposits were removed to the level of either natural subsoil, or the top of archaeological deposits (whichever was higher). Areas of archaeological survival were then cleaned by hand, investigated and recorded.

The standard OA recording system was employed. Stratigraphic information was recorded on *pro-forma* context record sheets, plans and sections for each trench were drawn at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate and a detailed black and white print and colour (digital) photographic record was made. Registers were maintained for photographs, drawings and context sheets on *pro forma* sheets.

Building recording observations were recorded by means of a written description on watching brief record sheets, annotation of existing architect's plans, and black and white print and colour digital photographs. Detailed scale drawings were made of any architectural features or exposed details of particular significance that could not be recorded by the above means

3. RESULTS

Relevant detailed plans and elevations are included as Figs 2-4. A generally uniform overlying layer sequence of topsoil, mixed graveyard soil, onto weathered natural subsoil was encountered. The depth of the overlying deposits was on average 0.6m.

3.1 External works (Fig. 2, pl. 2-7)

The working area was stripped of disturbed dark brownish black silty clay with frequent inclusion of charcoal, slate and brick. This exposed a mixed mid yellow brown silty clay graveyard soil along the northern edge and base of the excavation area. This contained patches of naturally occurring shale.

Inspection of the area showed little evidence of archaeological features. The remains of two heavily truncated burials were exposed. Grave 1004 was located immediately to the west of the north aisle, aligned E-W, it measured approximately 1.75m in length and 0.4m in width. The fill 1005 consisted of mid to dark yellowish brown silty clay with occasional shale fragments. 15 fragments of disarticulated human bone were present in fill 1005 but not recovered. Grave 1006 was aligned E-W. Located immediately to the north of the church tower it was 1.86m long and 0.6m wide. The fill (1007) consisted of mid to dark yellowish brown silty clay containing frequent shale inclusions. A further 23 fragments of disarticulated human bone were present in the fill (1007) but not recovered. Both graves were heavily truncated by the late 19th century Victorian drainage works, with only the bottom 0.05m surviving. The graves were cut into the underlying geology and no finds or articulated human remains were recovered from the excavations.

The excavation exposed the relationship between the north aisle wall and the tower. Inspection of the junction confirms the expected relationship: the tower is the earlier – a point evident at their foundations. The footings of the north aisle truncated the foundations of the stair turret, with the masonry of the north aisle butting up to the north wall of the stair turret.

3.2 Internal works (Fig. 2, pl. 8-10)

Groundworks inside the church, involving the insertion of a new doorway in the west wall of the north aisle and a reduction in floor level for a new kitchen were also monitored.

The provision of a new kitchen required the removal of a small section of wooden flooring immediately to the east of the stair turret. The works were relatively shallow and no excavation was required to insert the pipework for the kitchen. The works exposed the lower levels of the stair turret showing that the northern arcade was built over the original line of the north wall of the nave. The presence of a plinth course, visible only to the north of the arcade pier and running at the base of the east side of the stair turret before returning through the thickness of the west wall of the north aisle, suggests that this part of the tower would originally have been an external elevation. After the construction of the north aisle, probably during the first half of the 15th century, this became encased in the wall of the north aisle. This is corroborated by evidence from the external works.

To the north a new door was inserted directly underneath an existing 15th century window in the western wall of the north aisle. The removal of plaster offered the opportunity to examine the relationship between the walls of the aisle and the tower, and the original window in more detail. The western wall of the north aisle was composed of stone rubble. This was composed mainly of fine grained sandstone, although some limestone was also present. All the elements of the window were made of Beer stone, a chalk from Beer in south-east Devon. The window consisted of a simple 2-light arrangement with simple ogival arches. The exterior had a simple hood mould and heavily worn carved label-stops.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The observations and recording at St Mary's church have provided important and new information about the structural development of the building. The works have shown that the northern arcade is built on the line of the original north wall of the north aisle and that the eastern side of the stair turret was originally an external face. Following the construction of the north aisle in the 15th century the eastern wall of the stair turret became encased in the wall of the north aisle. No evidence was found during the works to date the construction of the tower.

5. PROJECT ARCHIVE

The site records have been compiled into a fully integrated site archive currently being held by Oakford Archaeology (project no. 1001) pending deposition at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (ref. no. 11/78). Details of the investigations, including a copy of this report have been submitted to the on-line archaeological database OASIS (oakforda1-138155) and the Dartmoor National Park HER.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was commissioned by Paul Heighway (Heighway Architects) and funded by the Dunsford Parochial Church Council. Thanks are due to the Revd. Martin Fletcher (DAC) and Andy Crabb (DNPA) for their input and advice throughout. Further thanks are due to Phil Bastin. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Marc Steinmetzer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Unpublished sources

Steinmetzer, MFR. 2011 *Monitoring and recording at St Mary's Church, Dunsford, Devon.*

Written Scheme of Investigation.

Published sources

Soil Survey of England and Wales. 1983. *Soils of England and Wales: Sheet 5 South West England*. Ordnance Survey, Southampton.

APPENDIX 1: METHOD STATEMENT

WITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING AT ST MARY'S CHURCH, DUNSFORD, DEVON

Prepared by Oakford Archaeology for Dunsford PCC

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document has been prepared by Oakford Archaeology (OA) for Dunsford PCC to describe the methodology to be used during an archaeological programme of works at St May's Church, Dunsford, Devon (SX 8130 9198). This document represents the 'Written Scheme of Investigation' for archaeological work required under DAC Faculty (85/11) for the grant of planning permission for the construction of a new vestry and disabled access. The work is required by the local planning authority, advised by the Diocesan Archaeological Advisor (DAA).
- 1.2 The church is a grade I listed building and contains fabric of 15th century date, although the interior of the church was substantially altered during the 19th century. The development involves the construction of a new vestry building adjacent to the rear northwest corner of the church.

2. AIMS

- 2.1 The principal aim of the monitoring is to make a record of any exposed architectural or historic building fabric that may be exposed by the works, and any surviving archaeological artefacts or deposits exposed during the groundworks. The aim of the archaeological works is to further improve our understanding, to inform the formulation of approaches to repair or change and to inform decision-making during the course of repairs/change, as well as for academic purposes and the archaeological record.

3. METHOD

- 3.1 Liaison will be established with the client and their contractor prior to and after the works commencing, as well as during groundworks in order to advise on OA requirements.

Watching Brief

- 3.2 All relevant groundworks associated with the development will be undertaken with the site archaeologist in attendance. Any archaeological deposits identified will be recorded as per OA standard recording procedures (see below) and in accordance with the Code of Conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists and their 1994 document (revised 2001) *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*.

3.3 All machining will be carried out under direct archaeological control, using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless grading bucket. Machining will proceed in spits, and will cease if archaeological deposits are exposed in order to allow those deposits to be investigated, excavated and recorded. This may cause localised delays to the groundworks programme, although every effort will be made to keep any such delays to a minimum. If no such deposits are present then, once natural subsoil has been confirmed, or formation/invert level reached, across the whole of the development area, archaeological monitoring will be terminated. Similarly, if it can be demonstrated that there has been significant modern truncation, then archaeological monitoring will be terminated in these areas.

3.4 If archaeological features are present, then hand-excavation will normally comprise:

- The full excavation of small discrete features;
- half-sectioning (50% excavation) of larger discrete features;
- the excavation of long linear features to sample up to 10% of their length - with hand-investigations distributed along the exposed length of any such features, specifically targeting any intersections, terminals or overlaps.

Should the above percentage excavation not yield sufficient information to allow the form and function of archaeological features/deposits to be determined, full excavation of such features/deposits will be required. Additional excavation may also be required for the taking of palaeoenvironmental samples and the recovery of artefacts.

3.5 Disarticulated human bone will be treated with appropriate respect and arrangements will be made for the re-interment of any remains by the PCC.

3.6 Should any articulated human remains be exposed, these will initially be left in situ. Human remains must initially be left in-situ, covered and protected. Removal can only take place under ecclesiastical law. Guidance contained in 'Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England' (C of E/English Heritage, 2005) will be followed.

3.7 Environmental deposits will be assessed on site by a suitably qualified archaeologist, with advice as necessary from Allen Environmental Archaeology or the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, to determine the possible yield (if any) of environmental or microfaunal evidence, and its potential for radiocarbon dating. If deposits potential survive, these would be processed by AC Archaeology using the EH Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology (EH CfA Guidelines 2002/1), and outside specialists (AEA) organised to undertake further assessment and analysis as appropriate.

General project methods

3.8 Initial cleaning, conservation, packaging and any stabilisation or longer term conservation measures will be undertaken in accordance with relevant

professional guidance (including *Conservation guidelines No 1* (UKIC, 2001); *First Aid for Finds* (UKIC & RESCUE, 1997) and on advice provided by A Hopper-Bishop, Specialist Services Officer, RAM Museum, Exeter.

- 3.9 Should artefacts be exposed that fall within the scope of the Treasure Act 1996, then these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Act. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery suitable security measures will be taken to protect the finds from theft.
- 3.10 The project will be organised so that specialist consultants who might be required to conserve artefacts or report on other aspects of the investigations can be called upon (see below).
- 3.11 Health and Safety requirements will be observed at all times by archaeological staff working on site, particularly when machinery is operating nearby. Personal protective equipment (safety boots, helmets and high visibility vests) will be worn by staff when plant is operating on site. A risk assessment will be prepared prior to excavation.
- 3.12 The DAA will be informed of the start of the project, and will monitor progress throughout on behalf of the planning authority and will wish to inspect the works in progress. Any amendments to the trenching plan or to any subsequent excavation plan will be agreed with him prior to implementation and completion. A date of completion of all archaeological site work will be confirmed with the DAA and the timescale of the completion of items under section 5 will run from that date.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

- 4.1 The standard OA recording system will be employed, consisting of:
 - (i) standardised single context record sheets; survey drawings, plans and sections at scales 1:10, 1:20, 1:50 as appropriate;
 - (ii) black and white print and colour digital photography;
 - (iii) survey and location of finds, deposits or archaeological features, using EDM surveying equipment and software where appropriate;
 - (iv) labelling and bagging of finds on site from all excavated levels, post-1800 unstratified pottery may be discarded on site with a small sample retained for dating evidence as required.

5. REPORTING AND ARCHIVING

- 5.1 The reporting requirements will be confirmed with DAA on completion of the site work. If little or no significant archaeology is exposed then reporting will consist of a completed DNPA HER entry, including a plan showing location of groundworks and of any significant features found. The text entry and plan

will be produced in an appropriate electronic format suitable for easy incorporation into the HER, and sent to the DNPA within 3 months.

- 5.2 Should significant deposits be exposed the results of all phases of archaeological work and historic building recording will be presented within one summary report within three months of the date of completion of all archaeological fieldwork. Any summary report will contain the following elements as appropriate:
- location plan and overall site plans showing the positions of the trenches and the distribution of archaeological features within them,
 - a written description of the exposed features and deposits and a discussion and interpretation of their character and significance in the context of the known history of the site
 - plans and sections at appropriate scales showing the exact location and character of significant archaeological deposits and features;
 - a selection of photographs illustrating the principal features and deposits found;
 - specialist assessments and reports as appropriate.
- 5.3 One bound and illustrated hard colour copy and a .pdf version of the report will be produced and distributed to the Client, the DAC and the DNPA on completion of sitework. A copy of the report and.pdf version will also be deposited with the site archive.
- 5.4 An ordered and integrated site archive will be prepared with reference to *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991 2nd edition) upon completion of the project. This will be deposited with Exeter Museum (RAMM 11/78).
- 5.5 A .pdf copy of the updated summary report will be submitted, together with the site details, to the national OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological investigationS) database within three months of the completion of site work.
- 5.6 A short report summarising the results of the project will be prepared for inclusion within the “round up” section of an appropriate national journal, if merited, within 12 months of the completion of site work.
- 5.7 Should particularly significant remains, finds and/or deposits be encountered, then these, because of their importance, are likely to merit wider publication in line with government planning guidance. If such remains are encountered, the publication requirements – including any further analysis that may be necessary – will be confirmed with DAA, in consultation with the Client. OA, on behalf of the Client, will then implement publication in accordance with a timescale agreed with the Client, and the DAA. This will be within 12 months of the completion of all phases of archaeological site work unless otherwise agreed in writing.

6. CONFLICT WITH OTHER CONDITIONS AND STATUTORILY PROTECTED SPECIES

- 6.1 If topsoil stripping or groundworks are being undertaken under the direct control and supervision of the archaeological contractor then it is the archaeological contractor's responsibility - in consultation with the applicant or agent - to ensure that the required archaeological works do not conflict with any other conditions that have been imposed upon the consent granted and should also consider any biodiversity issues as covered by the NERC Act 2006. In particular, such conflicts may arise where archaeological investigations/excavations have the potential to have an impact upon protected species and/or natural habitats e.g. SSSIs, National Nature Reserves, Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Ramsar sites, County Wildlife Sites etc.

7. COPYRIGHT

- 7.1 OA shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports, tender documents or other project documents, under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in this document.

8. PROJECT ORGANISATION

- 8.1 The project will be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced archaeologists, in accordance with the Code of Conduct and relevant standards and guidance of the Institute for Archaeologists (*Standards and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures*, 1996, revised 2008, and *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, 1994, revised 2008), plus *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* 1994, revised 2008). The project will be managed by Marc Steinmetzer. Oakford Archaeology is managed by an Associate Member of the Institute for Archaeologists.

Health & Safety

- 8.2 All monitoring works within this scheme will be carried out in accordance with current *Safe Working Practices (The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974)*.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Specialists contributors and advisors

The expertise of the following specialists can be called upon if required:

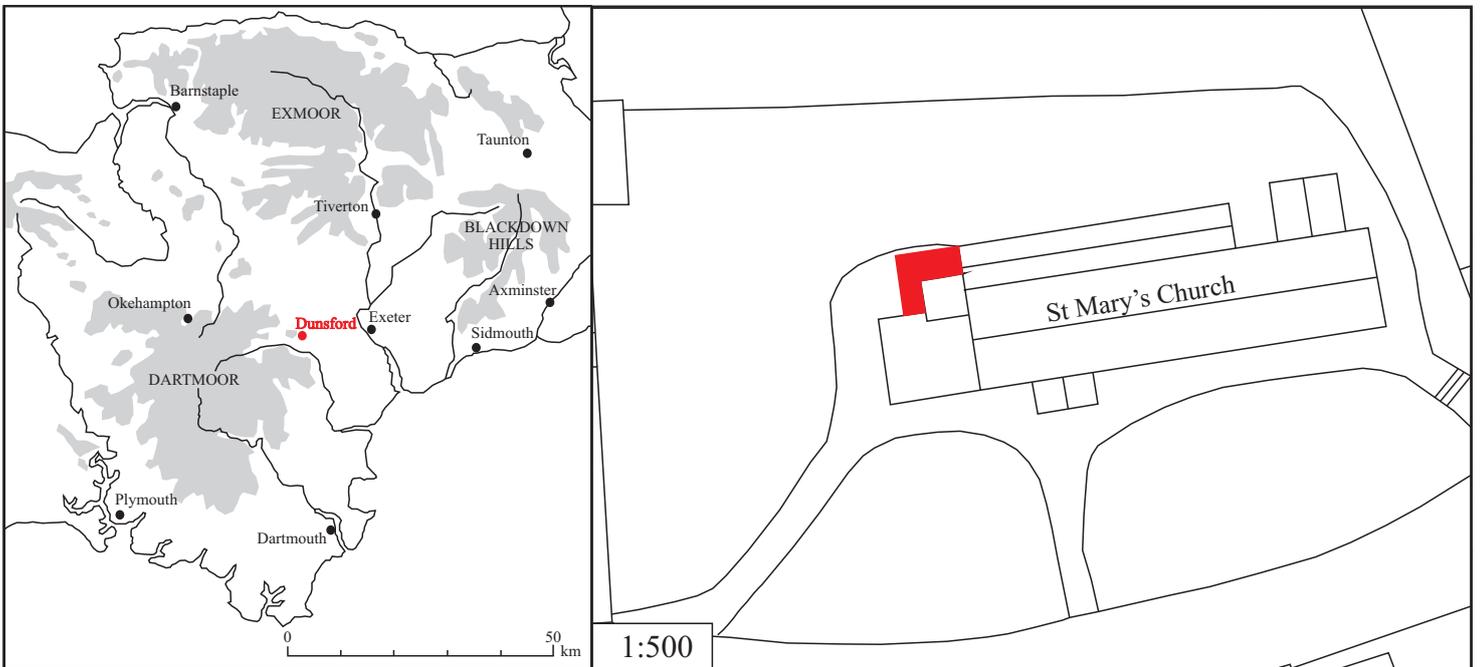
Bone artefact analysis: Ian Riddler;

Dating techniques: University of Waikato Radiocarbon Laboratory, NZ;

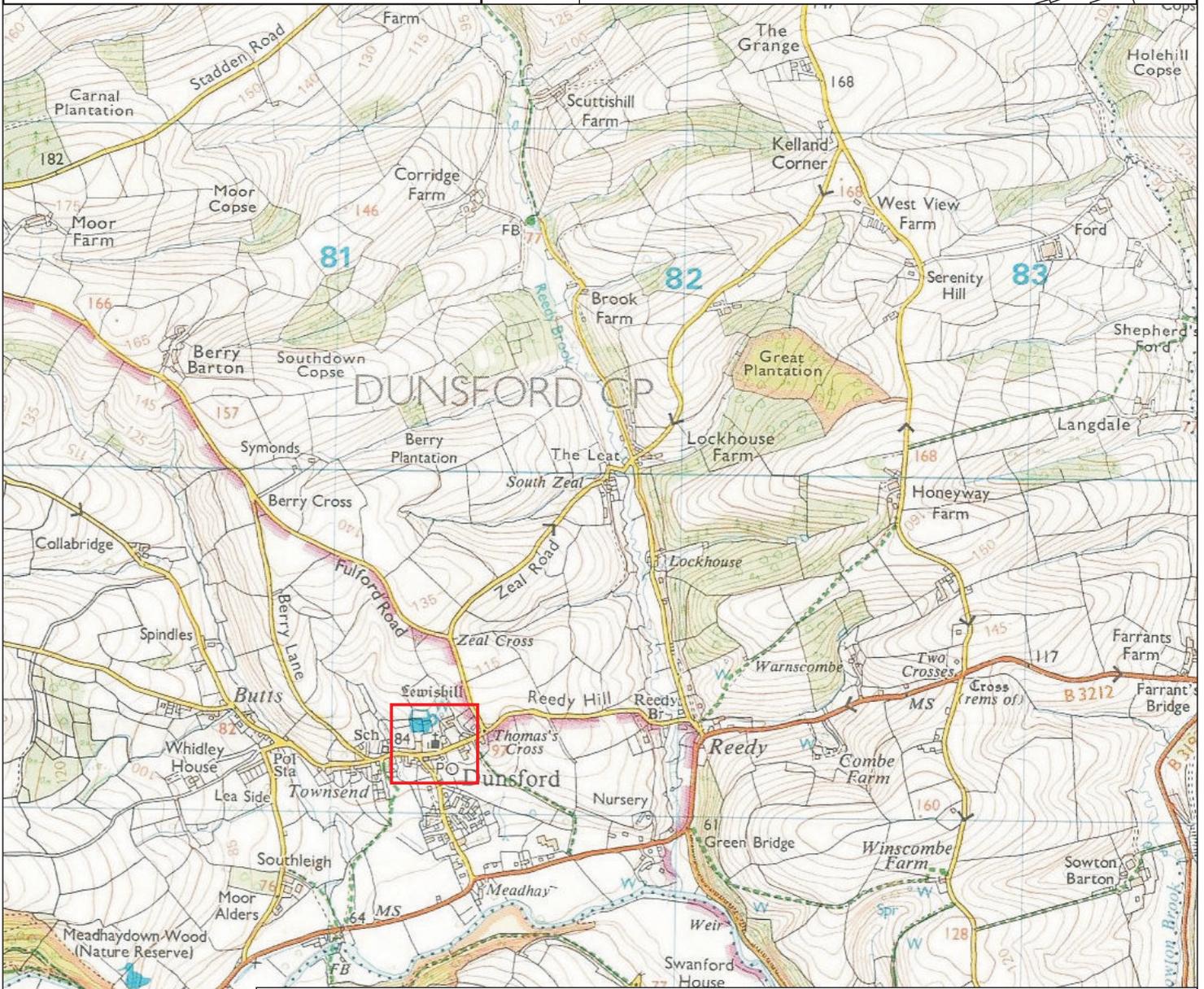
Building specialist: Richard Parker;

Illustrator: Sarnia Blackmore;

Charcoal identification: Dana Challinor;
Diatom analysis: Nigel Cameron (UCL);
Environmental data: Vanessa Straker (English Heritage);
Faunal remains: Lorraine Higbee (Wessex);
Finds conservation: Alison Hopper-Bishop (Exeter Museums);
Human remains: Louise Loe (Oxford Archaeology), Charlotte Coles;
Lithic analysis: Dr. Linda Hurcombe (Exeter University);
Medieval and post-medieval finds: John Allan;
Metallurgy: Gill Juleff (Exeter University);
Numismatics: Norman Shiel (Exeter);
Petrology/geology: Roger Taylor (RAM Museum);
Plant remains: Julie Jones (Bristol);
Prehistoric pottery: Henrietta Quinnell (Exeter);
Roman finds: Paul Bidwell & associates (Arbeia Roman Fort, South Shields);
Others: Wessex Archaeology Specialist Services Team



1:500



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Fig. 1 Location of site

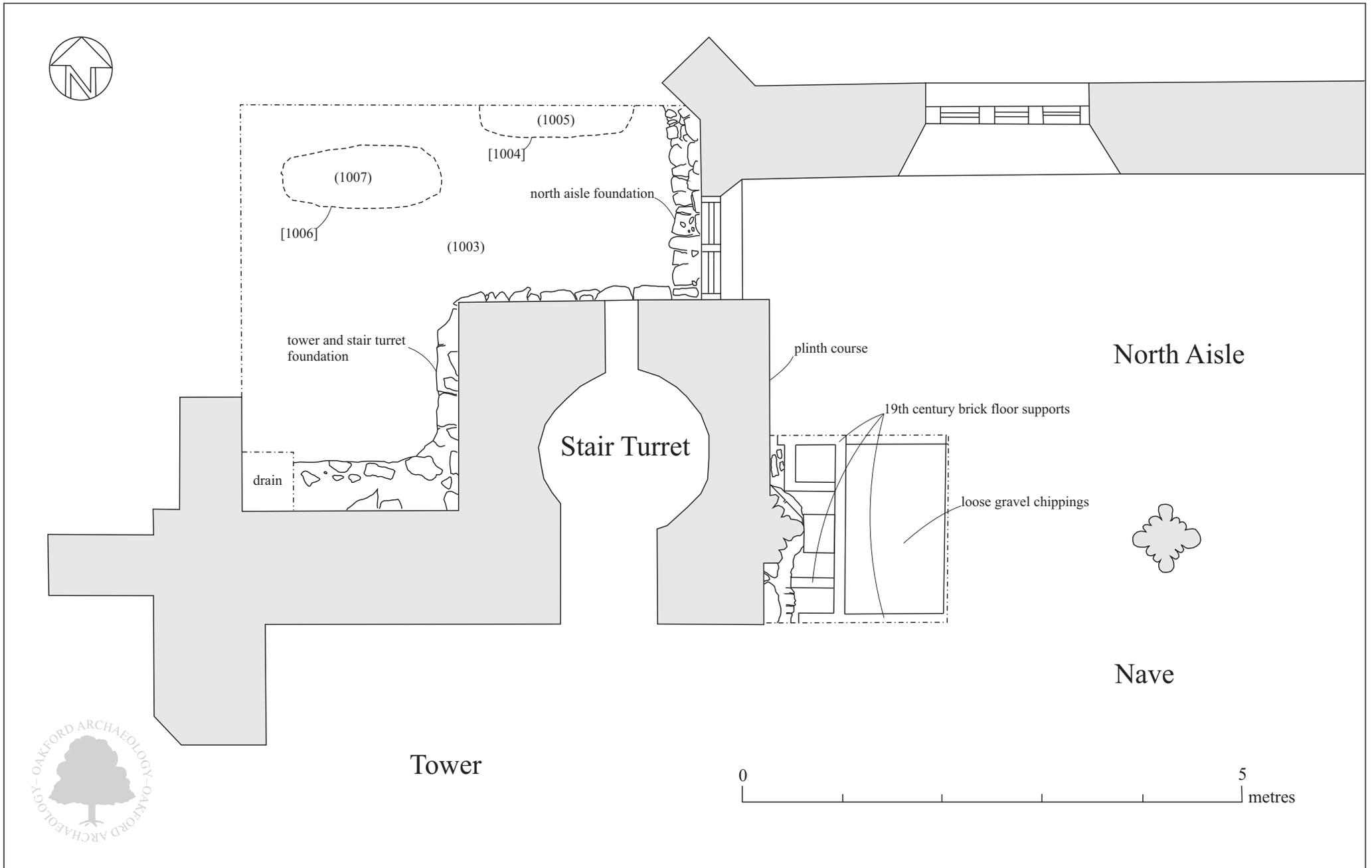


Fig. 2 Plan of Church tower and north aisle showing location of observations.

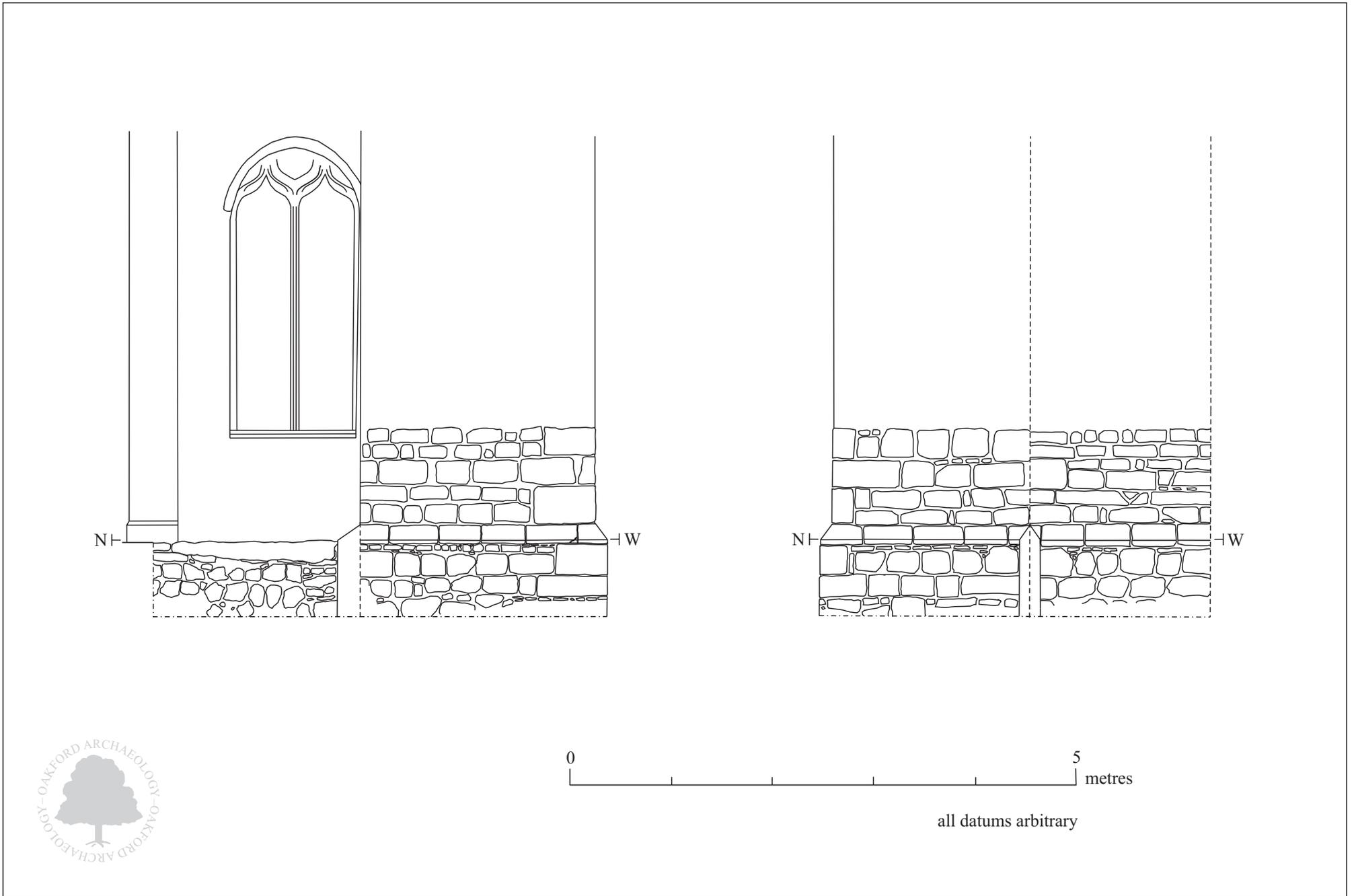
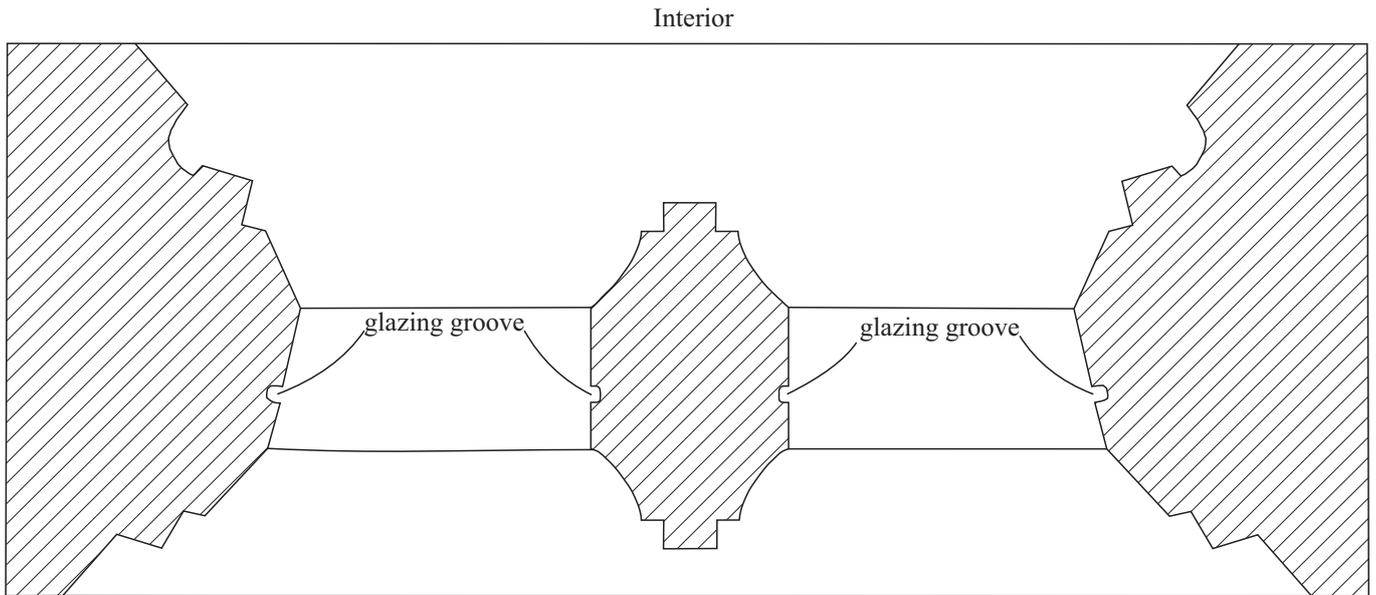


Fig. 3 Elevation of North aisle and tower.



0 200 mm



Fig. 4 Window from the north aisle of St Mary's Church, Dunsford. Scale 1:5.



Pl. 1 General view of excavation area showing foundations of North aisle and tower. 1m scales. Looking southeast.



Pl. 2 General view of excavation area showing foundations of North aisle and tower. 1m scales. Looking south.



Pl. 3 Close-up of North aisle foundation. 0.25m and 1m scales. Looking east.



Pl. 4 Close-up of tower foundation. 0.25m and 1m scales. Looking south.



Pl. 5 Close-up view of tower foundation. 0.25m and 1m scales. Looking east.



Pl. 6 Close-up view of tower foundation. 0.25m and 1m scale. Looking south.



Pl. 7 Close-up view of building break between North aisle and tower. 0.25m scale. Looking southeast.



Pl. 8 General view of west window in North aisle showing rubble blocking. Looking west.



Pl. 9 General view of internal excavation area showing modern truncation and foundations of tower. 1m scale. Looking west.



Pl. 10 Close-up view of tower foundations showing plinth course (right). 1m scale. Looking south.