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The monastic houses of Wearmouth and Jarrow were established between c. 670 and 685. New masonry structures were built including parts of the churches that we can see here today. In its day this monastery was one of the world's greatest international cultural centres.

Extensive excavations by Professor Rosemary Cramp have provided an almost unique insight into this distant early medieval monastic world. Evidence of large scale, lead-roofed structures, painted and sculptured wall decoration and stone sculptures have been discovered, alongside evidence for coloured window glass.

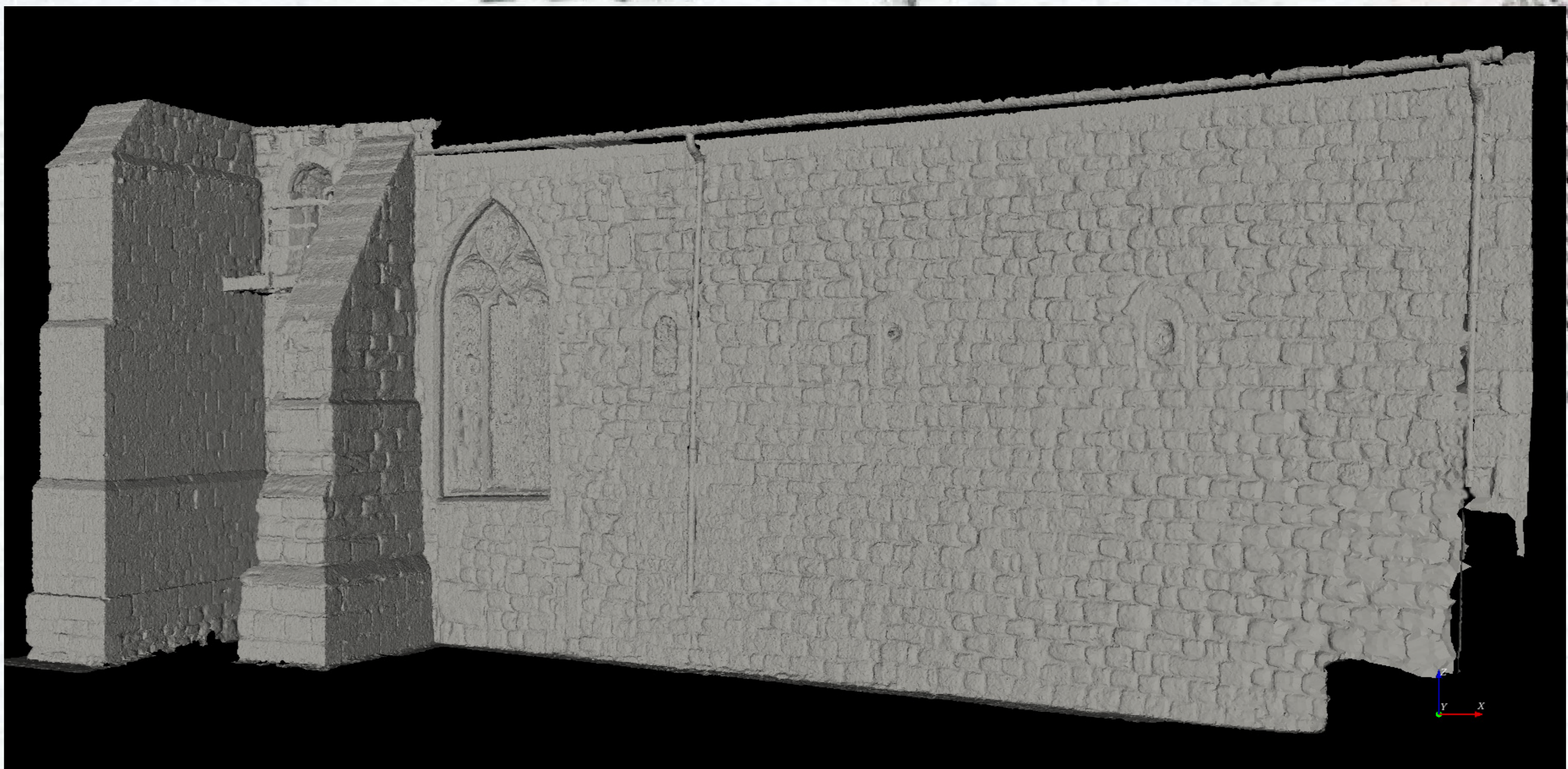
The current project, funded by English Heritage, is designed to explore the wider landscape and hinterland of these extraordinary sites and to explore the impact of the Anglo-Saxon monastic foundation and its archaeological legacy across time.

High definition laser scanning has been used to create 3-D models of the surviving Anglo-Saxon fabric. This is allowing us to explore the building techniques and architectural form of each church in more detail.

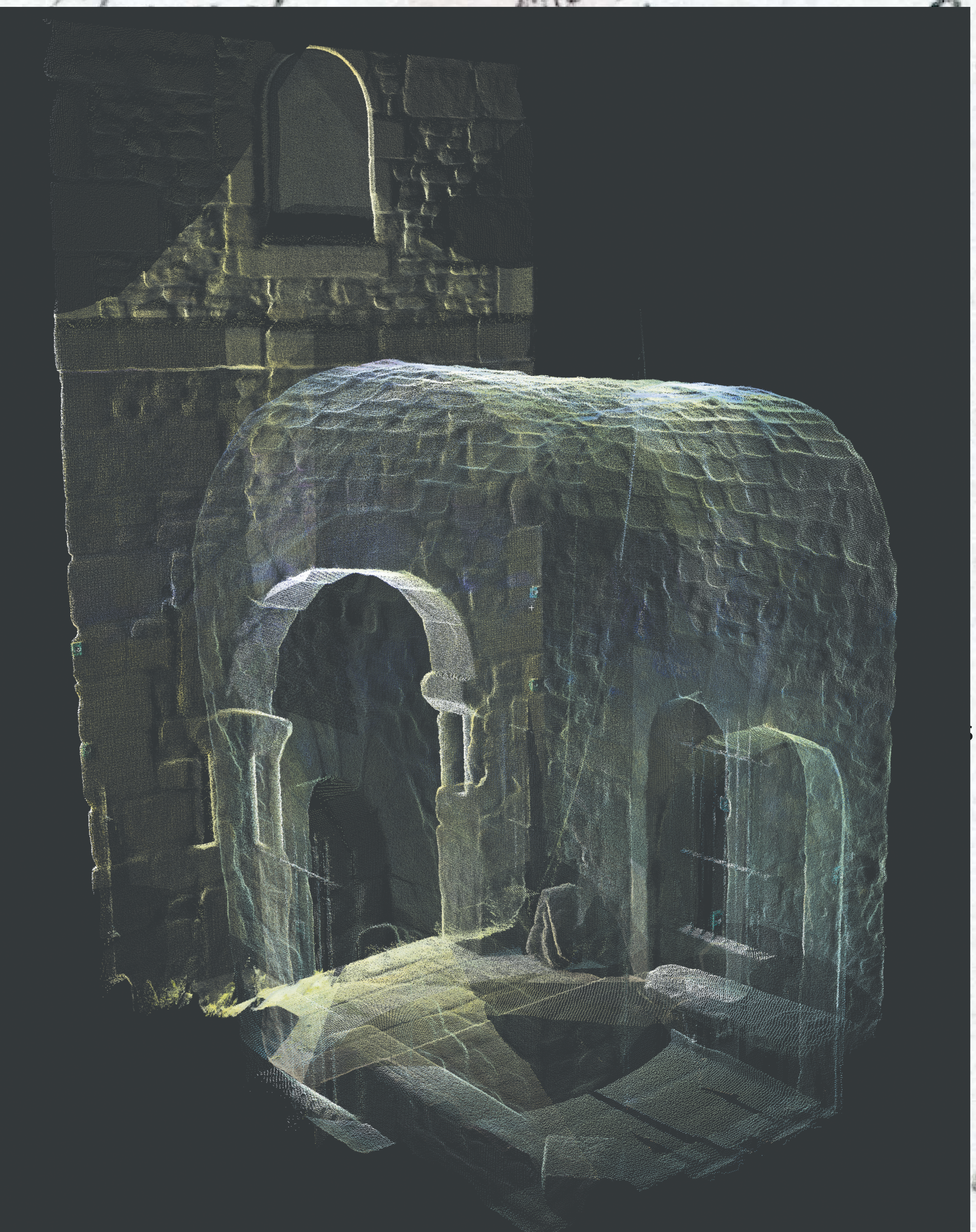
The construction of stone-built churches involved the use of a large proportion of building material taken from a Roman structure or structures. Our results suggest the source of this stone was the neighbouring Roman fort at Arbeia, at South Shields at the mouth of the River Tyne.

The highly decorated fragments of sculpture that survive at both sites suggest these buildings were also embellished with carvings and designs that drew on both continental and insular inspirations and traditions. High resolution laser scanning of individual sculptures is helping us to see these designs more clearly.

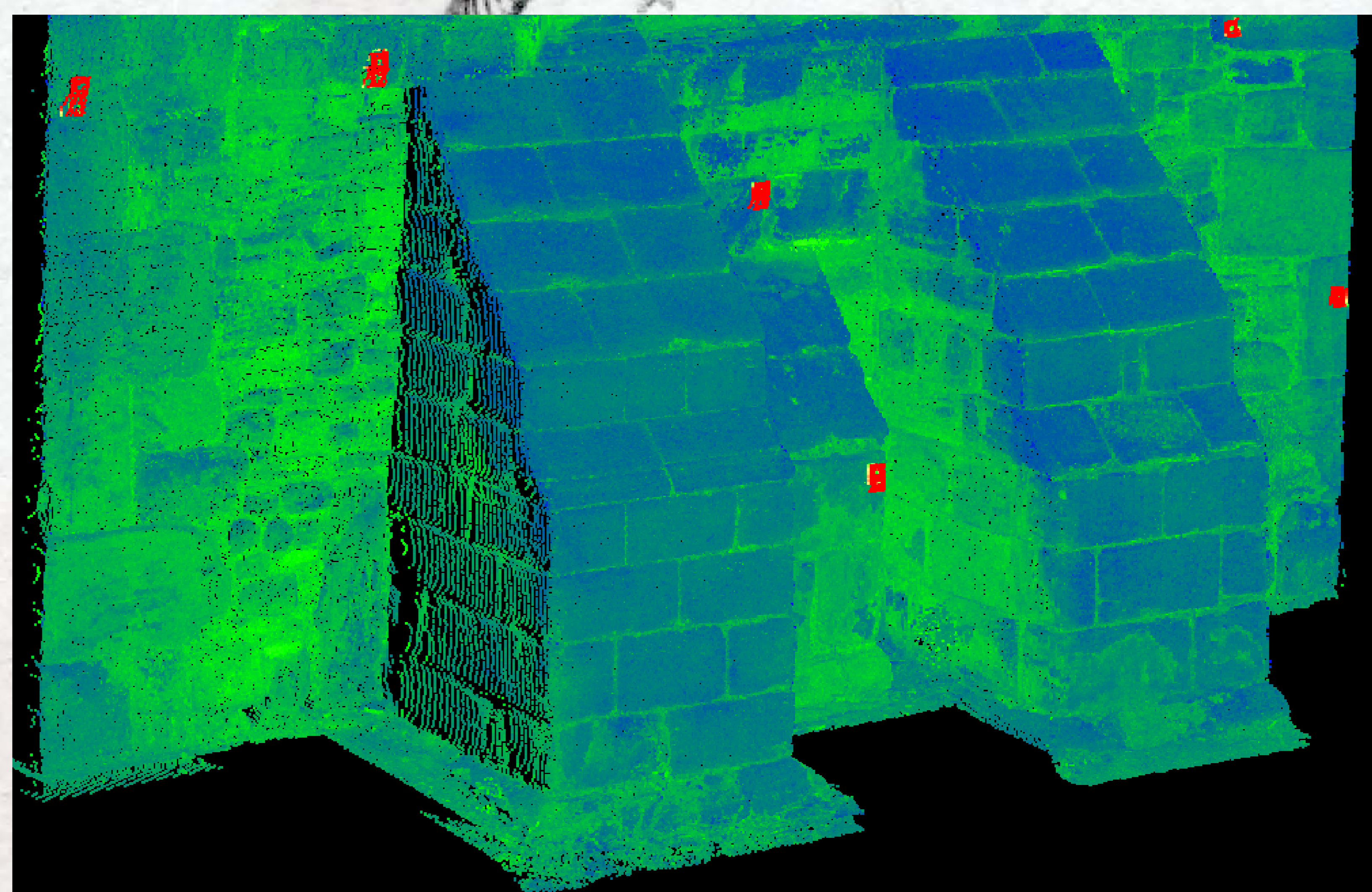
Although today visitors can see the remains of these first monastic buildings within the boundaries of the current churchyards, evidence suggests the Anglo-Saxon monastic sites had more extensive resource zones and hinterlands. Our project is showing that in situ archaeology survives in the open spaces around each site and work with historic maps is helping us reconstruct the environment and landscape of the wider monastic estates.



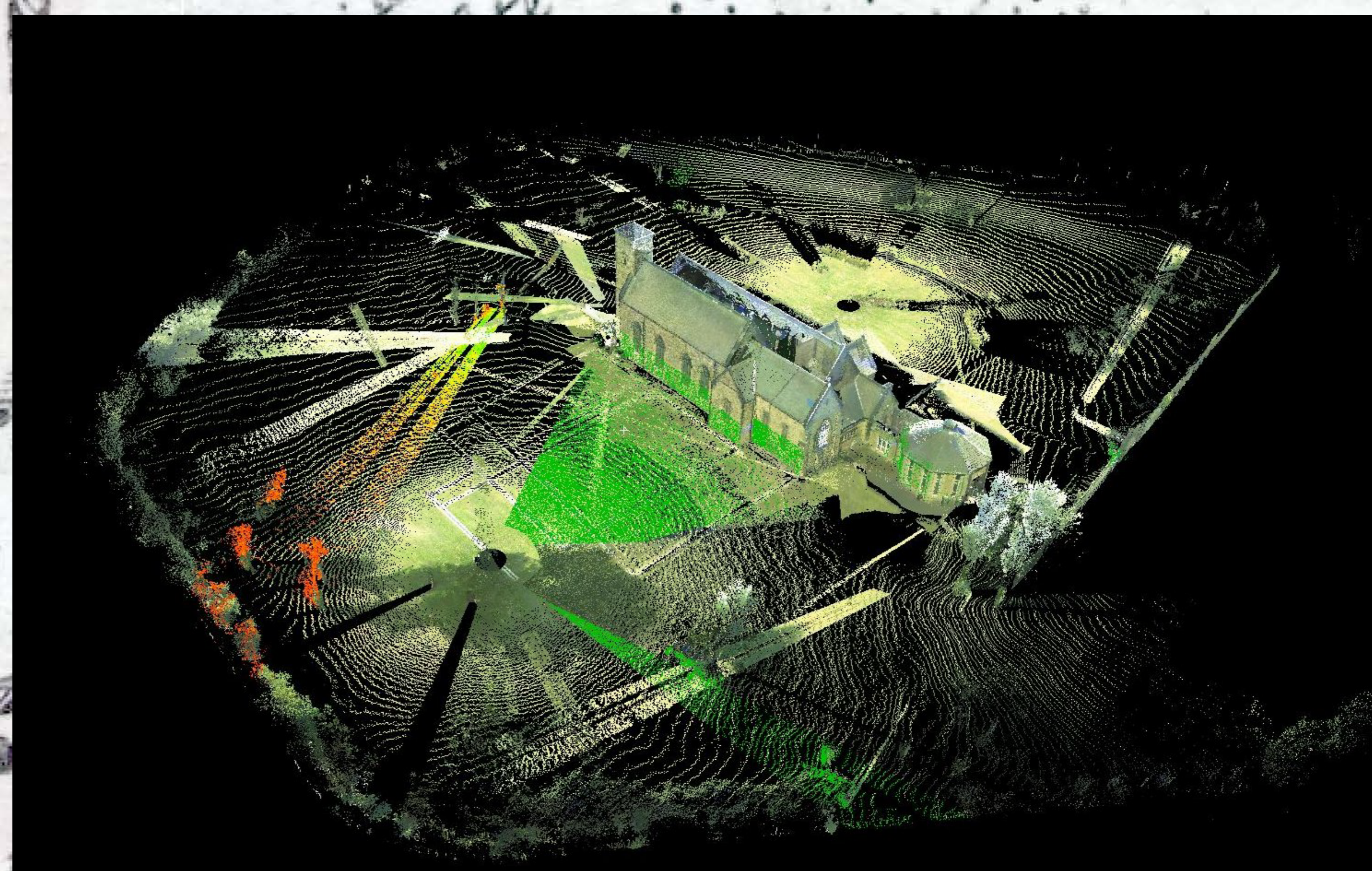
surface model of south wall of chancel at St Paul's



point cloud derived from 4 high definition scans of the porch at St Peter's



section of an intensity map for a laser scan of the east wall at St Paul's



working shot of laser scans of the churchyard around St Peter's