

# ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH, EXETER

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FABRIC RECORDING AND EXCAVATION DURING REORDERING WORKS 2011-2012



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*SUMMARY*

*Archaeological excavation uncovered part of an early Norman crypt and evidence for a Saxon predecessor. Recording of the standing structure showed that the church was extended eastward in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century with the addition of a chancel built above an archway spanning a narrow street. The church acquired aisles and a west tower in the later medieval period. It underwent major rebuilding in 1660-65, and extensive internal rearrangement and re-roofing in 1826. A collection of ledger stones dating from 1613 or 1615 to 1845 was uncovered temporarily and recorded.*

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

St Stephen's church (Fig. 1; Plates 1 and 2) has a long history stretching back to Saxon times when the church had a crypt beneath it. In the early Norman period, the church was granted to William Warelwast, who became Bishop of Exeter and rebuilt Exeter Cathedral. The crypt at St Stephen's was rebuilt with Beer stone columns and capitals, quite possibly by William Warelwast. The church developed and grew throughout medieval times to include a chancel or sanctuary at its east end which was raised up on an archway allowing pedestrians to pass beneath it, a feature still surviving today, known as St Stephen's Bow. The present tower at its west end was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The north aisle and large south aisle date from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church was made redundant in 1656 and sold. It was re-instated under Charles II, and repairs started in the early 1660's. It suffered a fire in 1662 and was extensively rebuilt in 1664/5. Its interior was re-arranged and its roof replaced in 1826, when excavation works uncovered part of the crypt. A painting of two columns with capitals was made as a record. The church suffered WW2 bomb damage to the tower, main roof and east end. Repairs and alterations were made in 1950, 1960, and again in 1972, when the chancel was divided off. Recent consolidation works took place in 2007-8.

The church overlies Roman deposits and features including defensive ditches associated with the legionary fortress established at Exeter c.55AD.

## THE PROJECT

St Stephen's Church (SX 921927) lies in the Parish of Central Exeter. The archaeological recording project was required as a condition attached to a faculty for refurbishment and re-ordering of the church interior which included reducing the floor level in places and replacing the floor surface (Faculty Application 20 November 2009). A written scheme of investigation (WSI) for the archaeological project was prepared in January 2010 (Appendix 1). The archaeological monitoring and recording project was carried out by Stewart Brown Associates in 2011-2012 and funded by the churchwardens and PCC of St. Stephen's, Exeter.

### **Previous Archaeological work**

Four archaeological projects have been undertaken in recent years by Exeter Archaeology. In 2004, a preliminary archaeological appraisal was made of the south elevation in order to inform consideration of how this side of the church would best relate to the redesigned

Catherine Square to its south (Allan 2004). In 2006, a report was compiled on the documentation relating to the structural history of the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Collings 2006). Also in 2006, Stuart Blaylock made some observations in the roof (Blaylock 2006). In 2007, there was a report on the conjectural reconstruction of the Romanesque crypt known to survive beneath the church (Parker 2007).

## DESCRIPTION

### **Standing structure**

Architects drawings of the church do not include external elevations apart from the tower, so marked-up photographs have been used to illustrate different phases of construction. Each elevation has been phased independently, so phase numbers relating to one do not equate to those of another.

#### *External front (north) elevation (Fig. 2)*

##### Phase 1

The masonry below window sill level is built of coursed Heavitree breccia ashlar. The masonry has narrow joints and a plinth rising some 0.4m above ground level. It is bonded with white/cream lime mortar with an aggregate of gravel and stone fragments. It dates from the late medieval period, probably from about the same time as the 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower, which is similarly constructed. The lower parts of the buttresses are continuous in construction and coursing with the north wall so are contemporary. The plinth continues around the base of the buttresses.

##### Phase 2

The masonry above window sill level is coursed stonework made up of Heavitree blocks mixed with generally smaller volcanic stones, bonded with soft light brown earthy mortar. This phase of masonry includes the three windows and the doorway at the west end, the latter having been inserted through the phase 1 masonry (Plates 3 and 4). There can be little doubt that the phase 2 masonry dates from the 1660-65 extensive rebuilding of the church, as suggested by John Allan (2004, 6). The windows and door surround are of Beer stone. The window heads and door head are semi-circular in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century style. The style of the windows is Perpendicular Gothic but the quatrefoil heads of the four main lights have shallower cusping than is usual, and the six-light oblong panel tracery above has no cusping at all. The moulding of the door surround is shown in Fig. 12, e.

The window drip mouldings above the windows are also of Beer stone but have suffered considerable weathering damage and have been repaired with 'Roman cement' (which was in widespread use in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) and modern cement. The drip mould of the westernmost window has been entirely replaced by a modern one made of cast concrete containing stone fragments. The drip moulds have a hollow chamfer moulding with out-turned label stops. The doorway has a hollow moulding flanked by a roll each side, and the same hollow-chamfered drip moulding and out-turned label stops as the windows.

##### Phase 3

Above the windows is a band of later masonry. This comprises small-stone rubble bonded with hard light brown mortar containing lime flecks. This masonry dates from the same constructional phase as the moulded cornice above, which is made from cast Roman cement. These two features are clearly associated with the remodelling of the wall tops which took place in 1826 when the church was re-roofed. The upper parts of the buttresses are built of brick bonded with 'Roman cement', so also date from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The lowest areas of brick are repairs made to the earlier phase 1 stone buttresses; the upper parts raised the buttresses' height to that of the cornice. These upper parts of the buttresses abut the face of the phase 2 (17<sup>th</sup>-century) wall.

#### Phase 4

The parapet above the cornice has been rebuilt in modern times. It is built of mixed rubble bonded with a very hard cementaceous pink mortar and rendered. This extends around the northwest corner to the tower stair. Patches of the same modern pink mortar appear in places at the west end of the wall, where repairs were made following the removal of a building which once adjoined the church at this corner, as shown on the 1876 OS map (Collings 2006, Fig. 1).

#### *External elevation of the west end of the north aisle (Fig. 3)*

The masonry phases at the west end of the north aisle (Phases 1-4) correspond with those identified in the front elevation. The upper area of phase 2 has been extensively patched in modern times where the masonry has been affected by weathering.

#### *External elevation of the east end of the north aisle (Fig. 4)*

#### Phases 1 and 2

Two small areas of masonry corresponding to phases 1 and 2 in the front elevation continue around the northeast corner of the north aisle onto this elevation. Phase 2 masonry (1660-65) overlies phase 1 masonry (late medieval), which retains part of its original plinth.

#### Phase 3

The east end wall of the north aisle is occupied largely by a doorway inserted in 1936. The mixed rubble masonry above the doorway also belongs in phase 3.

#### *External elevation of the front (north end) of the Bow archway (Fig. 5)*

The Bow archway is one of the earliest parts of the standing church masonry. It dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century when the church was extended eastwards by erecting a new chancel above an archway spanning a street which had been in existence since Saxon times.

#### Phase 1

The archway has a low segmental arch built in two chamfered orders (a drip course above the arch appears to be a modern addition). The masonry immediately above the arch is contemporary with the archway. It is made up largely of coursed volcanic stone and

Salcombe stone ashlar but includes a few blocks of red Triassic sandstone. In places small stones have been used as packing to level courses. The masonry is bonded with white lime mortar containing river gravel aggregate. Phase 1 masonry survives higher up on the west side where it incorporates volcanic and Beer stones comprising one side of a small window, the other side of which is obscured behind masonry forming part of the north aisle, which therefore is later in date. The window (Plate 5) would have lit the uppermost steps of the stair up from the nave to the new chancel and may well have been one of a pair of lancet windows which originally lit the chancel. The east end wall of the north aisle blocks most of the window, but a small angled squint was fashioned in the 17<sup>th</sup>-century blocking masonry so that a narrow slit was left open to allow light in. The masonry supporting the two sides of the arch is rendered, The works of 2011-12 left the render intact so the character of the masonry beneath was not observed.

## Phase 2

Above the arch on its east side is a column of later masonry. This is made up of Heavitree breccia with some volcanic stones, bonded with hard off-white sandy lime mortar with little or no gravel aggregate. The Heavitree stones are squared and coursed but the masonry is of lesser quality than ashlar. This phase of masonry presumably represents a rebuilding of the chancel whilst the earlier phase 1 archway was retained. A likely date lies in the late medieval period.

## *Phase 3*

Phase 3 masonry comprises the present 2-light window with pointed head in this elevation and the masonry surrounding it (Plate 6). The window surround and cusped tracery are built of Bath stone, as is its drip moulding with carved head stops. Bath stone was rarely used in Exeter before the 19<sup>th</sup> century, indicating that the present window was inserted in 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, almost certainly replacing an earlier one in the same position. The phase 3 masonry has clearly been inserted through the earlier phase 2 masonry. It is made up of mixed Heavitree and volcanic rubble with some brick, set in buff-coloured mortar with many small lime lumps and flecks.

## *Phase 4*

The masonry a little above the window, as well as the present cornice and parapet dates from after WW2, when bomb damage affected this end of the church and the chancel roof was destroyed. The masonry includes stones with freshly-tooled faces which may well be stones salvaged from the ruins and re-dressed. The mixed Heavitree and volcanic masonry is laid in courses and bonded with buff sandy cementaceous mortar. The same mortar was used to re-point the earlier masonry below.

## *External elevation of the rear (south end) of the Bow archway (Fig. 6)*

### Phase 1

The arch at the rear of the archway is built of volcanic and Salcombe stone set in cream-coloured sandy lime mortar containing stone fragments and lime lumps. The arch is however supported by and set into masonry comprising coursed Heavitree ashlar bonded with the same mortar. The arch and Heavitree ashlar must therefore be contemporary. This would suggest

that the original archway was rebuilt at this end sometime in the late medieval period when Heavitree ashlar was the principle style of masonry being erected, possibly when the tower and/or the north aisle were constructed. If so, the present archway should consist of masonry of two different periods, the earlier being at the front. The west side wall of the archway is rendered so the masonry beneath cannot be inspected in detail, but there are indications in the eastern side wall that two phases are indeed present. The Heavitree ashlar masonry supporting the archway has a projecting impost course at its top, just below the arch springing (Plate 7). This continues for some distance through the archway but stops toward the front, precisely where the side wall becomes rendered, and where there is a hairline crack in the soffit (underside) of the archway. This evidence, whilst not definitive, supports the view that the archway has been rebuilt at its south end. The original volcanic and Salcombe stone voussoirs of the arch at this end, which together form two chamfered orders as at the front, would appear to have been re-used in the rebuilding. The phase 1 Heavitree ashlar masonry rises some 2m above the arch, and may well be contemporary with the coursed Heavitree masonry in the front elevation of the archway described above (Fig. 5, phase 2). The phase 1 masonry is abutted by the east wall of the south aisle (below).

### Phase 2

Phase 2 masonry includes and surrounds the present two-light window with pointed head (plate 8). The window, like the one in the front elevation, is built of Bath stone and has carved head stops to its drip moulding. It doubtless dates from the same period, ie 19<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> century, and replaced an earlier window in the same position. The phase 2 masonry was inserted through the earlier phase 1 masonry. It is made up of mixed Heavitree and volcanic rubble with some brick, set in light brown sandy mortar containing lime flecks. At its top, this masonry includes bricks.

### Phase 3

The top of the wall is modern and contemporary with the replacement of the chancel roof following WW2 bomb damage. The masonry is made up of small stones comprising mixed Heavitree and volcanic rubble bonded with hard buff cementaceous mortar with brick fragments in it. This masonry abuts the east wall of the south aisle (below).

### *External elevation of the east wall of the south aisle (Fig. 7)*

#### Phase 1

Most of the masonry in this elevation belongs to a single phase of construction, despite differences in character. The lowest area, apart from the footings (phase 3, below) is built of coursed Heavitree ashlar bonded with light brown earth mortar containing occasional lime flecks. The masonry extends for a short distance around the southeast corner of the south aisle onto the south elevation, where it was interpreted by John Allan as belonging to the extensive rebuilding of the church in 1664/5 (EAR No, 04-59, 4, Fig. 8). This dating would seem reasonable since the masonry contains a round-headed doorway which is built into the wall and is probably a 17<sup>th</sup>-century feature. The doorway is built of Beer stone and has a surround with both ogee and ovolo mouldings (Fig. 12, d; Plate 9). This area contains a band of largely volcanic stones to each side of the doorway which may have been intended as a decorative feature breaking up the mass of Heavitree facework. Above the Heavitree ashlar is rubble masonry comprising small Heavitree and volcanic stones with occasional inclusions of

late medieval floor tile fragments. This is bonded with the same mortar as the Heavitree ashlar and is therefore almost certainly contemporary in date. John Allan identified a similar change in character in the south wall's 17<sup>th</sup>-century masonry at the level of the window label stops. It would appear that the 17<sup>th</sup>-century rebuilding varied in character and quality from place to place according to how far it was from street level and whether it was more or less visible.

The phase 1 masonry has a diagonally sloping edge high up in the elevation on its northern side. This is evidence to show that the east end wall of the south aisle was formerly gabled and must therefore have been roofed separately from the nave and north aisle. Lower down on the north side are a few stones which probably once formed part of a relieving arch above a large 17<sup>th</sup>-century east window over the doorway (Plate 10).

#### Phase 2

Phase 2 masonry was built up against the diagonally sloping edge of the phase 1 masonry mentioned above and must have infilled the valley which existed between two former roofs, ie a roof over the south aisle and another over the nave and north aisle (see also *Internal elevation of the east end of the nave, features f and g*, below). Such an infilling would have been necessary when the present single roof was erected in 1826. The masonry comprises small-stone Heavitree and volcanic rubble bonded with hard light brown/buff mortar with inclusions of lime flecks and occasional brick fragments.

#### Phase 3

At the bottom of the wall is a rendered plinth which was repaired in 2011-12. It was observed during repair that the plinth was not faced, but instead made up of uneven rubble more closely resembling below-ground footings. If this was indeed the case, then the phase 1 wall was built at a higher ground level than the present one and the footings must have been exposed at a later date, perhaps when St Stephen's Street was widened at this point to take in what must previously have been a narrow strip of ground next to the wall. The threshold of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century doorway is set at this higher level, so it is likely that a step or two led up to it across this strip of ground. When the footings were initially exposed, they were pointed with 'Roman cement', indicating a date in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### Phase 4

Above the doorway there is a column of modern masonry which was set into the wall after the removal of a large window soon after WW2 (Plate 10). The window appears in photographs taken of bomb damage (see The St Stephen's Project website). The mixed Heavitree and volcanic masonry is very similar to that at the top of the front elevation of the Bow archway (Fig. 5 phase 4). It is bonded with similar buff sandy cementaceous mortar and includes stones which appear to have been re-used and freshly dressed. The same mortar was used to point surrounding earlier masonry in this elevation.

#### Phase 5

Phase 5 masonry occurs high up on the north side of this elevation, above the level of the chancel roof. It is similar to phase 3 masonry in the south elevation of the Bow archway, ie small stones comprising mixed Heavitree and volcanic rubble bonded with hard buff

cementaceous mortar with brick fragments. It dates from after WW2, probably having replaced phase 2 masonry damaged by bombing.

*Internal elevation of the east end of the nave* (Figs. 8 and 9)

Fig. 8 shows the present arrangement at the east end of the nave, which dates from the alterations of 1826, with the addition of a doorway on the north side in 1936.

Fig 9 shows hidden and part-hidden archaeological features a-i, some of which are still accessible, others of which were uncovered temporarily during the 2011-12 works. The features were plotted in relation to survey drawings by Van der Steen Hall Architects.

a Saxon and Norman crypt – see *East end crypt excavation*, below.

b early 14<sup>th</sup>-century chancel arch. The arch is largely exposed on its east side (Plate 11). From the west it is obscured behind the phase 8 arcade at the west end of the nave (Fig. 8) and wall plaster. The arch is two-centred (pointed) and has plain chamfered mouldings (Fig. 12, f). It is covered with modern white paint, but in a few places where the paint has fallen away it can be observed to be built of Beer stone. Its two sides are raised up higher than the nave floor on rubble bases (Plates 12 and 13). The arch stood half-way up a flight of steps leading to the chancel. The arch clearly forms part of the phase 3 construction of the chancel above the Bow archway. Stylistically, it dates from the late 13<sup>th</sup> or early 14<sup>th</sup> century. Its rubble bases are built of volcanic and Heavitree stone, the inclusion of the latter suggesting a date in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century or later, since Heavitree stone first appears as a building stone in Exeter only at the very end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, when it was used for prestigious structures. Here, it was used as rubble in a secondary context, so probably had been salvaged from an earlier structure. In the sequence of development phases of the church (below), the arch forms part of phase 3. Part of the arch was rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, quite possibly owing to damage caused during the fire of 1662. Stones on the west face of the northern side of the arch were replaced with poor quality masonry comprising volcanic stones set in light brown mortar (Plates 14 and 15). This masonry is continuous with that of the north aisle above window sill level, which dates from 1664/5 (Fig. 2, phase 2, above).

c Remains survive from a large 17<sup>th</sup>-century round-arched window high up on the interior of the east wall of the south aisle. Two fragments of the window's rere arch can still be seen in the roof space (Plate 16). The window is built into the wall, the exterior of which has been identified as of 17<sup>th</sup>-century date (Fig. 7, phase 1, above). In the sequence of development phases of the church, the window forms part of phase 7.

d A blocked round-headed doorway survives in the east wall of the south aisle below window c. The doorway was covered by internal wall cladding (part removed in the 2011-12 works) but is visible from outside, where it can be seen to have been built into the wall (Fig. 7, phase 1, above, Plate 9). Stylistically, its round head and external ogee and ovolo moulding (Fig. 12, d) suggest a date of around the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the window forms part of phase 7.

e A blocked window was uncovered during the works high up at the northeast end of the elevation, It has a timber lintel and is blocked with brick (Plate 17). The bottom of the window was had been cut through by brick arch for a later alcove (feature i, below). The window was built into rubble masonry with light brown earth mortar which is continuous in

construction with masonry identified in the front wall as of 17<sup>th</sup>-century date (Fig. 2, phase 2, above). In the sequence of development phases of the church, the window forms part of phase 7.

f High up in the elevation and visible in the present roof space is an area of whitewashed wall plaster which has an upper limit defined by a curved line marking the position of a former ceiling (Plate 18). The present roof cuts across the area of plaster so its probable original extent has been reconstructed, together with the likely position of the roof above the ceiling (dashed lines). This upper part of the wall at the east end of the north aisle was rebuilt in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (see feature e, above), so the plaster and ceiling line must date from then or later. It would seem almost certain that the roof associated with the surviving ceiling line was the one erected when the church was extensively rebuilt in 1664/5. The semi-circular shape of the former ceiling (as reconstructed) indicates a wagon roof. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the evidence for the former ceiling forms part of phase 7.

g This is very similar to feature f, but relates to a former ceiling above the south aisle. The feature is still visible in the roof space (Plate 19). The former ceiling here appears not to have been semi-circular in shape, so may have been low segmental or slightly pointed. As with feature f, its possible form has been reconstructed, together with the likely position of the roof above (dashed lines). The upper part of the wall at the east end of the south aisle has been identified with the 17<sup>th</sup>-century rebuilding of 1664/5 (Fig. 7 phase 1, above), so this feature must date from then or later, like feature f. The evidence therefore indicates that the 17<sup>th</sup>-century church had two roofs, one above the nave and north aisle, the other spanning the large south aisle, with a valley between them. These survived up until the 1886 re-roofing, when a single large-span roof replaced them. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the evidence for the former ceiling forms part of phase 7.

h A ledge survives high up in the east wall of the nave, still visible in the roof space (Plate 19). This part of the east wall has been identified on the exterior as dating from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 7, phase 2). The construction of the new roof in 1886 entailed building up the walls at each end of the nave, thereby infilling the valley between the two former roofs. The masonry both above and below the ledge is built up of small-stone rubble bonded with hard buff-coloured mortar. It has no wall plaster. The ledge appears to represent a stage reached in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century building up of the wall once the valley had been infilled, before remodelling the upper gabled section of the wall which was built thinner. A similar ledge survives at the west end of the nave (Fig. 11, p; see below). In the sequence of development phases of the church, the ledge forms part of phase 8.

i A brick arch was exposed during the works in the wall beneath feature e at the north end of the elevation. This evidently formed the top of an alcove before the present doorway was inserted at this corner in 1936. The feature cuts through the bottom of feature e, and probably dates from the re-organisation of the interior in 1826, but could be a little earlier or later. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the arch forms part of phase 8.

*Internal elevation of the west end of the nave (Figs. 10 and 11)*

Fig. 10 shows the 2010 arrangement at the west end of the nave and the present roof, which dates from the alterations of 1826.

Fig 11 shows hidden and part-hidden archaeological features j-r, some of which are still accessible, others of which were uncovered temporarily during the 2011-12 works. The features were plotted in relation to survey drawings by Van der Steen Hall Architects.

j The upper part of the tower arch is visible in the roof space (Plate 20). The rest is presently hidden behind wall plaster and other features dating from the re-organization of the interior in 1826. The arch is round-headed with plain chamfer mouldings (Fig. 12, c). The outer ring of the arch is built of Heavitree stone, like the rest of the tower, but the inner ring is Beer stone. The arch forms part of the tower's construction so dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the arch forms part of phase 4.

k An empty socket for a roof timber survives in the tower wall above arch j (Plate 21). The socket appears to be a secondary feature inserted into the masonry. It has a short timber lintel above it. The purpose of the socket is uncertain, but the timber it once contained may well have been associated with a late medieval roof since it is central to the tower and the socket seemingly does not relate to later roofs. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the socket probably belongs in the date range phases 4-6.

l The tower retains external render which is visible in the present roof space. The render descends to a former diagonal roof line passing above socket k (Plate 21). The old roof line formerly extended much higher but has been cut across by the present roof. Its likely original line is reconstructed with a dashed line. The date of the external render is uncertain; it could be medieval or date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. A date in the 17<sup>th</sup> century seems more likely since equivalent evidence relating to the same roof surviving at the east end of the nave is of this period (f, above). In the sequence of development phases of the church, the arch forms part of phase 7.

m This is the upper edge of another whitewashed plaster feature corresponding to feature f at the east end of the nave (above). It is visible in the roof space (Plate 21) and marks the position of a former semicircular-shaped ceiling, probably part of a wagon roof. It is almost certainly contemporary with roof line l just above it and feature f at the east end, ie 17<sup>th</sup> century. It has been cut across by the present roof. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the ceiling line is very likely to form part of phase 7.

n This is the upper limit of another whitewashed plaster area denoting the position of a former ceiling (Plate 22). It corresponds to feature g at the east end. As at the east end, the ceiling appears to have been of low segmental or slightly pointed shape (reconstructed with dashed line). Also as at the east end, no evidence survives higher up for the roof which must have supported the ceiling. The likely position of the roof is indicated by dashed line. The plaster is on the upper part of the west wall of the south aisle. Fig. 8 in Exeter Archaeology's Report No 04-59 indicates that this masonry dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the ceiling line forms part of phase 7.

o Another, later ceiling line has been cut into the plaster below feature n (Plate 22). This follows the shape of an inverted V. A secondary, lower ceiling must have been inserted at this end of the aisle sometime between the 17<sup>th</sup>-century rebuilding of 1664/5 and the 1826 re-roofing. In the sequence of development phases of the church, this ceiling line lies between phases 7 and 8.

p This is a ledge corresponding to ledge h at the east end (Plate 22). It is set at much the same level and is very likely to represent a stage in the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century building up of the gable wall, above which the wall was built thinner. In the sequence of development phases of the church, the ledge forms part of phase 7.

q A column of brick 1m wide is visible in the wall in the roof space. More of the brick feature was uncovered further down the wall when wall plaster was replaced. It would seem that the brick infilled a vertical scar left behind when a wall projecting eastwards was removed. The former wall probably formed the west end of the north aisle arcade, which must have stood from the time that the north aisle was added in the late medieval period until the rebuilding of 1664/5. A remnant or stub of the wall presumably survived until 1826 when the wall face was tidied up using brick.

r This is a step in the line of the west wall of the north aisle. It coincides with the north side of brick feature q above, and also with the north face of a wall footing excavated in the north aisle (58, below). This feature is probably also associated with the former late medieval north aisle arcade. It was not possible to ascertain whether the step was formed of brick or stone since old wall plaster was left in situ at this point.

s This is a scar for a medieval wall which once extended eastwards from the west end of the nave. The masonry uncovered during re-plastering was ragged and uneven (Plate 23). It comprised volcanic stone rubble with occasional Heavitree stone bonded with white lime mortar. The former wall was presumably built in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century, since the 15<sup>th</sup>-century tower masonry abuts the other (west) side of this masonry.

#### *Internal elevation of the north wall*

The works included replacing a strip of plaster high up on the north wall interior at the level of the window heads. Removal of the old plaster revealed Heavitree and volcanic stone rubble masonry bonded with light brown earth mortar. The upper part of the north wall containing the three windows was identified on the exterior as 17<sup>th</sup>-century in date (Fig. 2, phase 2, above). The plaster stripping also revealed the rere arches of the semicircular window heads, which are formed of re-used Beer stone fragments from earlier window rere arches, probably pointed ones since they do not fit very well (Plate 24). This indicates that the wall was rebuilt above window sill level in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the present round-headed windows were set in place, re-using earlier Beer stone carved stone which came from late medieval windows with pointed heads.

#### **Ledger stones in the nave and former seating arrangements**

The 2011-12 works included laying a new floor with Portland stone surface. This entailed removing the existing parquet floor. The surface beneath the parquet floor comprised part concrete and part ledger stones (Plate 25). A plan was made of the ledger stones (Fig. 13). They were also photographed individually and transcripts made of the inscriptions so far as these were legible (archive prints of the photographs and transcripts are held at the church, as well as the Devon Record Office and Westcountry Studies Library, Exeter). The date range of the surviving inscriptions is 1613 or 1615 to 1845.

The layout of the ledger stones clearly relates to the present internal arrangements which date from 1826. They provided a floor surface for alleys between blocks of seating, one block in

each of the north and south aisles, and another in the nave. The two side alleys respect the line of the two aisle arcades so the ledger stones must therefore have been set in position after the arcades had been erected in 1826. Many of the ledger stones were broken and/or laid incorrectly for them to be in their original positions, so these evidently had been lifted from elsewhere in the church and set in the alleys to preserve them when the seating arrangements were altered. The seating before 1826 comprised box pews. These were replaced by bench seating. Panels from the box pews were salvaged and re-used as wall paneling in the north and south aisles, where they survive today (Plate 26). Cut into the upper rail of the paneling are a series of regularly-spaced notches where the backs of the later bench seating were attached (Plate 27). The notches provide evidence for the arrangement of bench seating reconstructed in Fig 20 Phase 8. Three benches were set in each bay of the aisle arcades.

Inscriptions on the ledger stones continue up to 1845, showing that burials were taking place in the church for some two decades after 1826. The new burials are recorded on ledger stones with other family names already on them, ie relating to family vaults which already contained burials. The new burials were therefore evidently made as additions to existing family vaults.

### **Excavations** (Fig. 13)

Excavations took place in advance of works to reduce floor levels in the tower basement and north aisle. A record was also made of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century under-floor heating duct exposed during the works at the southwest corner of the church. Works at the east end of the north aisle uncovered a medieval stone pier. This was examined in more detail by opening a small evaluation excavation around the pier. In addition, it was decided to take the opportunity whilst the floor was being replaced to open a small evaluation excavation at the east end in the vicinity of the chancel arch, in order to assess the survival of the Norman crypt known from 19<sup>th</sup>-century records. Trench excavations opened by contractors outside the church for new underground services were monitored and a record made.

The excavation in the tower basement (trench 1) was allocated context numbers 1-12; that in the north aisle (trench 2), context numbers 50-64; the heating duct, context 70; the two evaluation trenches (trenches 3 and 4), context numbers 80-84 and 90-99; and the trench excavations outside the church (trenches 5-7) context numbers 100-00. Numbers in between were not used.

### *Clearance of burials*

Most of the burials and burial vaults had been cleared of coffins and backfilled with loose stony deposits comprising mid-brown claysand containing many small stones, brick fragments, mortar and lime flecks, gravel, human bone fragments and sometimes animal bone, floor tile and pottery fragments, and clay pipe stems. The majority of clearances almost certainly took place in the 1826 alterations. Very similar deposits were found infilling around walls and other upstanding features, as well as infilling an area known to have been excavated in 1826, ie the crypt excavation beneath the chancel arch. It therefore appears that the works of 1826 included exploratory excavations across much of the church, principally in order to clear coffins. All the graves and burial vaults mentioned below were filled with this general backfill, apart from one containing two lead coffins which had been left intact (53, below). As mentioned above, ledger stone inscriptions show that burial continued in the alleys between blocks of seating into the 1840's. These burials were not investigated in the 2011-2012 works, so it is not known if they have been cleared. One burial in a wooden coffin

survived at the west end of the nave. This was observed whilst its covering ledger stone was provided with additional support (ledger stone numbered 8 in the location plan relating to the photographic record of ledger stones).

#### *Excavation of tower basement (Fig. 13, Trench 1)*

Excavation was carried out to the required level for inserting the new floor. Features and deposits uncovered at that level were recorded but not excavated further (Plate 28). The earliest features were four 17<sup>th</sup>- or 18<sup>th</sup>-century burials which were located and planned but not fully excavated (7-10). Later features and deposits are described but not illustrated in this report (plan in archive).

Burial 8 was a rectangular stone-lined grave. Its walls were built largely of Heavitree stone with occasional volcanic stones bonded with white lime mortar. The internal faces of the grave were covered with a thin skim of white lime plaster. The grave was cut by later graves 7, 9 and 10.

Burial 7 was another stone-lined grave. Only the west (head) end survived. Its walls were more rounded at the west end than grave 8 and built of unmortared volcanic stone with one Heavitree stone. Burial 7 was cut through by a brick-lined burial vault dug at the west end of the nave (12, below).

Burial 9 was an earth-cut grave dug between grave 8 and the north wall of the tower. Its south side had been dug in part against against the wall of grave 8 so the burial was later in date.

Burial 10 was another earth-cut grave. Only the west (head) end lay within the area of excavation. Its south side had been cut against the wall of grave 8 so the burial was later in date.

Graves 8-10 had been cut through a greasy clay deposit containing large quantities of charcoal and ash which extended across much of the northern half of the tower basement (11). This is evidently a remnant from a fire in the church, quite possibly the one documented in 1662. If so, graves 7-10 all post-date the fire. A deep deposit of mortar which was partially exposed to the south of layer 11 may have been associated with mortar-mixing during the rebuilding of the church following the fire.

Overlying the graves was a compacted trampled and uneven surface containing lime lumps and some charcoal and ash, suggestive of a construction level (5). This surface spread across the entire tower basement floor and had subsided partway into the earlier graves. The layer was cut into by the laying of the ledger stones in the nave, so dates from a little earlier, probably the 1826 alterations to the church interior. Above this was a 0.5m – 0.7m deep deposit of loose earth and gravel containing rubble, mortar, clay lenses, brick and slate fragments, human bones and oyster shells, and fragments from broken ledger stones (4). In places there were distinct pockets of human bones, some tipped into upright positions. One such pocket could be identified as a hole dug to re-bury a number of child's bones, including the skull and finger bones but not the legs or pelvis. The hole had been dug through much of deposit 5 and partly into graves 7 and 8. This mixed deposit of charnel, broken ledger stones, and building waste must surely represent upcast produced from digging graves in the church which disturbed earlier burials, some in stone or brick vaults. It accumulated over a number

of years, perhaps two decades or so after 1826 up to the time of the latest inscription on the ledger stones (1845).

The increase in level within the tower basement required that a new retaining wall be built between the tower and nave. An unmortared wall comprising large re-used Heavitree blocks was laid across the tower entrance, with a step built partly of brick at its north end (3). At the same time, the eastern side of the tower basement was provided with a new surface of stone paving, comprising ledger stone fragments and volcanic stone flagstones re-used from elsewhere in the church (2). The paving led to the tower stair doorway. Overlying the paving and extending across the whole tower basement was a 20<sup>th</sup>-century concrete floor up to 0.1m deep (1).

#### *Excavation in north aisle (Fig. 13, trench 2)*

Excavation in the north aisle was necessary to accommodate a new ramp for use by the disabled extending eastward from the front entrance. The excavation was therefore deeper at the west end of the aisle and decreased in depth toward the east.

The earliest feature uncovered by the excavation was a medieval wall footing at the west end of the aisle (58; Plate 29). This is 1m wide and built of volcanic stone rubble bonded with white lime mortar. It projects for a short distance eastward from the west end of the aisle after which it has been removed by post-medieval burials. The footing aligns with the north side of the chancel arch, so must be a remnant of the north wall of the nave, evidently dating from before the north aisle was added since the footings for the west wall of the north aisle abut it. The footing therefore probably dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century. It has a projecting plinth 0.1m wide on its north side. Features in the standing masonry above the footing are thought to relate to the later medieval north aisle arcade which stood on much the same line, probably re-using the footings (*Internal elevation of the west end of the nave*, features q and r, above).

The next earliest feature was the wall footing for the north wall of the north aisle (59). This was uncovered through the present entrance and at two points further east, where the footings projected from beneath the inside of the wall in a series of shallow steps (Plate 30). The footings were in most places built of small stone volcanic and Heavitree rubble with occasional cobbles bonded with a mortar which appeared light brown but which may originally have been white, having become discoloured owing to damp. Across the entrance, however, large blocks of Heavitree stone capped the footings to form a threshold. Above ground level the north wall was built of large Heavitree blocks on the exterior (Fig. 2, phase 1 above) but much smaller stone rubble like the footings on the inside. The same was true for the west wall of the aisle.

A narrow wall, probably the south side wall of a stone-lined grave, survived in part between later burials (57). The wall was 0.25m wide and built of single Heavitree stones with occasional volcanic stones laid in a row. The wall was cut at each end by features built of brick (51 and 55, below). It contained no brick itself so probably dates from the early period of burial in the church in the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

To the south of wall 57 was a linear feature extending west to east with a hard compacted mortar and stone fragment surface along its bottom. The feature aligns with wall footing 58 3.5m to its west so may well represent a robber-trench for the wall. The feature was filled with the same general deposit which infilled the burials, so was probably robbed of its stone

in 1826 when building stone would have been needed for the foundations of aisle new arcades.

To the east of the features mentioned above were five brick-lined burial vaults, all of which had been cleared of their coffins and backfilled (54-56, 60, 62; Plate 31). These were not fully excavated. Vault 55 was large enough to be a family vault. The others were for single burials. A small remnant from an earlier brick vault which had been largely destroyed by later burials also survived (61). At the west end of the aisle was an intact vault containing two lead coffins (53; Plates 32 and 33). This vault is unusually orientated N/S rather than E/W, probably since it had been squeezed into the area of the north porch and the preferred option was not possible. The vault had mortared stone walls with sockets built in each side to take wooden beam supports for a second tier of coffins. The sockets were evidently not used. The south end wall was built of brick, presumably so that further burials could be made relatively easily by taking down and rebuilding the brick blocking. The roof of the vault was built of two skins of brick, the upper one partly removed at the north end when flagstones were laid in the porch probably during the internal alterations of 1826. The name plate on the eastern coffin was observed to have the date 1827 on it (pers. comm. Martin from Ellis and Co.). This shows that at least one of the burials took place sometime after the vault had been built, and after the alterations of 1826. The bricks and mortar used in the construction of the vault were very similar to those used in the construction of the porch east wall (51, below), suggesting a similar date, albeit slightly earlier. The vault had to be reduced in height to accommodate new access arrangements.

The east wall of the north porch was built in 1826 and taken down in the 2011 alterations. It was built of local hand-made late 18<sup>th</sup>-/early 19<sup>th</sup>-century brick stamped JHR in a rectangular frog (recess) bonded with hard light brown mortar containing lime flecks. The wall footings were built with the same brick and mortar set on a base of mortared stone rubble. A square brick plinth set against the north wall was built in a similar manner and probably also dates from 1826. Its purpose is uncertain.

The general construction and burial clearance deposits dating from 1826 mentioned above surrounded features 51 and 52, and underlay the flagstones in the north porch. In this area, the deposits were allocated context number 50. Above this was a modern reinforced concrete floor.

During removal of the concrete by the site contractors, a 2m-deep hole appeared in the infilling of burial vault 54. The hole was approximately 1m wide and roughly circular. Inspection made by lowering a camera showed revealed nothing to explain the hole's origin. Human bones were visible in its sides near the bottom. The hole must post-date the infilling of the vault, ie *c.* 1826, since the vault fill had subsided to leave the open feature. The circular shape suggests subsidence into a well. The feature was capped and covered by concrete slab.

#### *Uncovering of under-floor heating duct*

Works by the contractors at floor level in the southwest corner of the church uncovered a 19<sup>th</sup>-century heating duct (Fig. 13, 70). This was cleaned and planned. The duct was lined with brick, some burnt *in situ*, and had a heavily sooted interior. It extended from close to the tower to a chimney at the southwest corner which rose up through the roof.

*Evaluation excavation at the east end of the north aisle (Fig. 12, b; and Fig. 13, trench 3)*

Whilst removing modern concrete at the east end of the north aisle, the site contractors uncovered the top of an old masonry pier, following which a small archaeological evaluation trench was opened around the pier to a depth of 1.2m. The pier was surrounded by the same general construction and burial clearance deposits found elsewhere in the church, indicating that it had been exposed and then covered over in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this area, the general deposits were allocated context number 80.

The stone pier was built of volcanic stone with occasional Beer stone rubble masonry bonded with white lime mortar (81; Fig 12 b; Plate 34). On its east side, it was faced with ashlar rising to a chamfered impost (82; an impost is a projecting course of masonry from which an arch is sprung). The impost is likely to have been associated with an arched doorway. The north end of the pier was rounded and whitewashed. Extending away from its west side were remains of a narrow wall 0.3m wide (83). The wall was continuous in construction with the pier and built of the same materials. The upper part of the wall had been robbed, leaving a ragged scar on the west side of the pier. A similar ragged scar 0.3m wide on the south side of the pier (84) showed that another masonry feature, perhaps a buttress, originally projected on this side.

The pier seems likely to have been the central support for a medieval circular stair descending below the church floor level, at the bottom of which was an arched doorway. The doorway must have led into the crypt. The stair is likely to be an inserted feature since it was not built into the thickness of a wall like many spiral stairs, but was instead constructed as an independent feature, presumably within in a gap broken through a wall for its insertion. The narrow wall leading west would have infilled the gap to the west of the pier and screened the stair from the crypt, as well as providing the stair's threshold. The feature leading south from the pier could have been a pilaster buttress. A likely date for the insertion of the stair is in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century, at about the time that the church was extended eastwards by building a new chancel over the Bow archway, since a new stair down to the crypt may have been needed following the alteration (see Development, phase 3, below).

*Evaluation excavation at east end beneath the chancel arch (Fig, 13, trench 4 and Figs. 14-15)*

The evaluation excavation was opened beneath the middle of the chancel arch (Plates 35 and 36), having first removed a deposit of concrete which had been tipped onto the area when modern concrete floors were laid throughout the church in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was known from records made during works in 1826 and 1865 that columns forming part of an early Norman crypt survived in this location (Introduction, above). The excavation exposed one column to each side. That on the south can be identified as the one shown on the left of the painting made in 1826 (A; Plate 37). The one on the north (B; Plate 38) was mentioned in the written description made in 1865.

The excavation measured approximately 1m x 1m. Deposits similar to the general burial clearance deposits were excavated to a depth of 1m. The deposits presumably date from the 1865 exposure of the northernmost column, but were probably the 1826 deposits which had been dug out and then used as backfill. This uncovered the top parts of the two columns (90, 92), which were carved from Beer stone, their capitals (91, 93), also carved from Beer stone, and a small surviving part of the semicircular vault of the crypt (94), which was built of

volcanic stone rubble bonded with mid brown mortar. Figs. 14 and 15 show the west elevation and E-W section respectively. Fig. 16 shows record drawings of the two capitals (A and B, see Fig. 14 for location). The vault and columns had been set against an earlier wall. Between the columns, an arched recess had been hollowed out from the earlier wall to a depth of 0.24m (96). The arch matched the vaulting precisely and continued its semicircular form into the wall. It had no voussoirs however and rather uneven rear and sides formed of stones which had been broken through. These had been covered with mid brown plaster up to 2cm thick very similar in appearance to the mortar used to build the vault. Part of another arch with a plastered rear face set back 0.24m was uncovered to the south of column 92 and capital 93 (97), showing that the Norman crypt incorporated a series of arched recesses along its east end. These would have formed a blind arcade with columns standing between the recesses. The vault of the Norman crypt continued no further eastward than the earlier wall so must originally have extended westwards from this point. The thickness of the surviving section of vaulting was 0.25m – 0.3m, so the floor level inside the Norman church above the crypt would have been about 0.25m – 0.3m above the top of the arched recess.

The earlier wall almost certainly dates from the Saxon period since it was standing before the early Norman crypt was built against it. The wall preserved some of its original volcanic and Salcombe stone ashlar facing, which was bonded with brown mortar (98). Low down the wall and largely hidden behind capital 93 was a remnant from an arch springing (99). The arch had a plain soffit (underside) and formerly extended westward from wall 98. It must have formed part of a Saxon crypt before the Norman one. The arch clearly had been taken down to make way for the Norman columns and vault. The removal of the arch left a scar in the wall face which was patched over with volcanic stone rubble set in mid brown mortar (100). The patching dates from after the removal of the arch so must date from just before the Norman vault was erected. The floor level in the Saxon church is uncertain, but may well have been similar to that in Norman times.

Overlying the Saxon and Norman remains is an area of later rubble masonry which slopes backwards and rises up to the floor of the chancel over the bow archway (Plate 35). This was cleaned and investigated so far as possible in the area immediately above the excavation. The rubble was found to comprise three different layers (Figs 14 and 15, 101-103). The lowest layer was made up of large volcanic stones, some pitched on their narrow ends, set in dark brown clay (101). A few stones at the north end had tumbled forward across the wall. The rubble clearly dates from after the Saxon wall (98) had been taken down to a level just above the crypt vault. It evidently provided a base for the white-mortared rubble masonry overlying it (102), which forms part of the vault of the present Bow archway to the east. The latter mortared rubble comprises courses of volcanic stones laid at a shallow but noticeable pitch forming part of an arc.

Access to this previously closed off area beneath the chancel arch allowed further observations relating to the arch and its foundations. The Bow archway dates from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century when the church was extended eastwards by erecting a new chancel above it (see *External elevation of the front (north end) of the Bow archway, phase 1, above*). The present chancel arch also dates from this period (see *Internal elevation of the east end of the nave, b, above*). It was built on the line of the former Saxon wall to separate the older part of the church from the new chancel. Its original foundation survives on its south side, made up of white-mortared volcanic and Heavitree stone rubble (104). At the top of the foundation and immediately beneath the arch is a plinth or base of Beer stone (105). The arch is also built of Beer stone (106; Fig. 12, 00). The west face of the north side of the arch was rebuilt in the

17<sup>th</sup> century, together with the volcanic and Heavitree stone rubble foundation beneath (see *Internal elevation of the east end of the nave, b*, above).

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, building waste and earth were tipped down the slope in this area (103). This latter deposit was part excavated in order to reveal the underlying features.

*Watching brief during excavation of service pipe trenches* (Fig. 13, trenches 5-7, and Fig. 17a and b)

A watching brief was maintained during the cutting of a new service pipe trench through the Bow archway (Fig. 13, trench 5). A section drawing was made of the west side of the trench (Fig. 17, a). No finds were recovered, so dating of deposits is tentative. A large 20<sup>th</sup>-century cast-iron pipe set in concrete passed along the east side of the trench from its south end to the north side of the Bow archway, in one place separating areas of stratified deposits. All modern features and deposits were allocated context number 100.

The earliest level uncovered was a compacted red/brown clay containing many stone and slate fragments, charcoal and mortar flecks and burnt clay patches (111). This may be a medieval road surface. Overlying the surface was a dump of soft, loose, light brown gravelly clay containing stone and slate fragments, pebbles, and many small patches of buff mortar (110). To the south a very similar deposit may be contemporary (106). These deposits appear to have been intended to make up the ground level. A thin layer of charcoal and ash overlay deposit 6 (105). This continued to the edge of a trench containing footings for the east wall of the south aisle (104). The same charcoal deposit tipped down the side of the trench indicating that the wall footing had been cut soon after the charcoal had been deposited. The wall is thought to date from the rebuilding which took place in development phase 7 (c. 1660-65; above). Above the charcoal and ash was a compacted pebble and cobble road surface (102) overlying a make-up deposit of dark brown gravelly clay with pebbles, cobbles, stone fragments, mortar, charcoal, and burnt clay flecks (103). The road surface had been lost at the north end of archway and further north into High Street, where modern surfaces and features must have removed it (101, 107-9). Two volcanic ashlar stones set into the ground (108) probably formed part of a below-ground footing for iron railings, which are known from photographs to have enclosed the front of the church at the time of WW2. The present surface comprises modern granite flagstones set on a bed of concrete.

A section was made of the south side of a small trench opened outside the main High Street entrance to connect a new electric cable (Fig. 13, trench 6; Fig. 17, b). The earliest deposits were two road surfaces comprising compacted light brown clay with numerous pebbles and small cobbles (112, 113). The uppermost layer (112) also contained much charcoal and ash, possibly associated with fires caused by bombing in WW2. The lower layer probably dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The existing electric cable trench (114) cut through the road levels. The modern paved surface overlay a concrete bedding (115).

A trench dug across the pathway to the west of the church to connect a new drain uncovered only existing modern drains and backfilling deposits containing bricks, lumps of concrete and demolition rubble (Fig. 13, trench 7). The modern deposits continued beyond the bottom of the trench at a depth of 0.9m, suggesting that they infilled a cellar. A steel joist which was partly exposed along the east side of the trench, abutting the west wall of the church, may well be associated with 20<sup>th</sup>-century flooring over of the cellar.

## Development phases

The scope of the 2011-2012 fabric recording and excavations was limited by the extent of the repair and re-ordering works, which uncovered largely 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century features and deposits. Very few earlier wall footings were exposed and no undisturbed medieval deposits. Clearance of burials in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century caused extensive damage to earlier archaeological levels. Nonetheless, the recording work identified sufficient areas of masonry dating from different periods to piece together an outline sequence of construction across much of the site. When combined with the records made of the standing masonry in the south wall by Exeter Archaeology during the 2004 works, it is possible to compile a series of suggested development phase plans covering the period from Saxon times to the present day (Phases 1-9, below).

### *Phase 1 Late Saxon* (Fig. 18, Phase 1)

#### Date

The date of the early church is unknown, but it certainly pre-dates the early Norman crypt (Phase 2, below). It could belong in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, since it is thought that in England generally the majority of urban church foundations were made around 1000 onwards (Higham 2008, 119). At this period, churches were private possessions whose congregations came from the landholding or estate of the patron/founder. Exeter had yet to be divided into parishes.

#### Reconstruction

Evidence for the earliest phase comprises the excavated east wall of the crypt and the remains of an arch springing westward from the wall which formed part of the earliest crypt vault (wall 98, arch springing 99). The wall must mark the east end of the church as a whole since beyond it was a street established by late Saxon times (Allan et al 1984, Fig. 123). The N-S alignment of wall 98 shows that the east end was square. It would seem likely that a church of this period would have a simple rectangular form containing a nave and chancel. Indeed, it has been suggested that in the late Saxon and early Norman periods all of Exeter's local churches were simple, two-cell structures with square-ended chancels (Higham 2008, 123, quoting an unpublished dissertation by Jim Navin). The reconstruction shown in Fig 17 Phase 1 therefore follows this form. The position of the north and south walls can be gauged from later features which were constructed on the same alignment, in particular features dating from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century alterations: the chancel arch, the Bow archway, the stair down to the crypt, and two remnants from walls at the west end of the nave, wall footing 58, and a wall scar (Fig. 11, s). The length of the early church is uncertain. A reasonable estimate would place its west end just inside the later medieval west end and tower. This would allow for a square chancel and nave about twice as long.

#### Crypt

The Saxon crypt lay beneath the chancel and may well have been the same size. The arch of which a remnant survived would have spanned from the east wall to a column. Other columns would have been arranged in a regular pattern to support the crypt's vault. The columns are likely to have been more than 1m apart to allow easy access around the crypt, so a 2 x 2 pattern of columns a little over 1.5m apart centre to centre would fit the space best. Arches at

this time were semicircular, and vaults either barrel vaults (long and semicircular) or groined vaults (where barrel vaults intersect at right angles). The columns could have been either round or square. To judge from the level of the arch springing, the top of the vault, and therefore the floor in the church above the crypt, would have been about 0.5m higher than the present floor level in the nave. The floor level in the nave is itself higher than the surrounding street level, and probably much the same as in medieval times. This would mean that the floor level in the early church was set at two different levels, that in the chancel raised above that in the nave. There would probably have been space to light the crypt by windows high up in its external walls. Other Saxon crypts in England are known to have been part sunk into the ground with a raised floor level above, eg at St Wystan's, Repton, Derbyshire and Sidbury, Devon.

Saxon crypts are very rare in England. Examples are known from Hexham (Northumberland), Ripon (N. Yorks) Glastonbury (Somerset), Brixworth (Northants), Wing (Bucks), Cirencester (Gloucester), Abingdon (Oxfordshire), Sidbury (Devon), and from documentary evidence at Canterbury and Exeter Cathedrals (Wilson 1976, 174-5; Taylor 1969; Allan et al 1984, 393). The Saxon crypt at Sidbury is a room some 12ft square whose lower parts survive beneath the present chancel, dating probably from the late Saxon period (Higham 2008, 123-4).

Some of the crypts appear to have started as independent structures, probably mausolea, and were later incorporated into churches, whereas others were built in conjunction with a church. Most were associated with major churches at abbeys, minsters and Cathedrals. St Stephen's church lay in the shadow of the Saxon minster at Exeter (Exeter Cathedral after 1050) and was one of numerous churches standing in the city by the time of the Norman Conquest (Allan et al. 1984, 397-400; Higham 2008, 116-119) so presumably cannot have held a higher status than a privately built and owned estate church (later becoming a parish church). The parish church at Sidbury has an unusual amount of fine 12<sup>th</sup>-century architecture as well as the crypt so in its early days may have had above-average status, perhaps as a sub-minster of Exeter Cathedral (Higham 2008, 124-5).

There must have been a reason for the existence of the crypt such as a shrine to a local saint whose relics were kept there. For nearby St Sidwell's church, just outside the city, there is an 11<sup>th</sup>-century documentary source which records that it was the resting place of Saint Sydefulla, presumably associated with a church and shrine (Allan et al 1984, 397). No such documentary evidence survives for St Stephens but it is very likely that the crypt would have held relics, an attraction for pilgrims. Relics were collected and held in large numbers at this time, and passed from one church to another, often when a new church was founded or re-founded. There would have been access to the crypt for pilgrims to pay their respects, probably a stair leading down from the nave, an area open to visitors.

*Phase 2 Early Norman (Fig. 18, Phase 2)*

Date

The date of the excavated crypt capitals is early Norman, ie late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century (pers. comm. Hazel Gardiner, Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture - Devon). The 1826 painting shows another, plain cushion capital. Such cushion capitals are Norman in date (Curl 1986, 59).

## Reconstruction

The alterations of this period replaced the structure of the crypt but left its Saxon east wall standing. This would suggest that it was only the crypt which was rebuilt, and that the rest of the church may well have been retained much as it was.

## Crypt

The positions of the two early Norman columns and the remains of the vault sprung between them, provides measurements for reconstructing the pattern of columns and vaulting throughout the rest of the crypt. The columns stood inside the earlier Saxon wall so the span between them was less than the span of the Saxon vault - 1.3m instead of 1.5m. Semicircular arches were sprung from column to column with groined vaults between. The blind arcades dug into the Saxon walls would have visually extended the vault beyond the outermost columns. The floor level in the chancel above the crypt would have been raised above that in the nave as before.

The two Beer stone capitals are carved with different designs although both are derived from classical Corinthian capitals. The capitals have suffered damage, probably at various times when they were exposed and reburied, as well as prior to being installed in the crypt. They may represent items salvaged from elsewhere. Both had been decoratively carved in the round, even though one of their faces was hidden by being set against the east wall. Moreover, capital A shows axe marks around its lower part where a former band of decoration appears to have been removed in order to reduce the height of the capital to match that of capital B. This would suggest that the capitals came from another building, and that at least one of them had been re-modelled for use in the crypt.

The most likely historical context for the rebuilding of the crypt is the ownership of the church by William Warelwast, Bishop of Exeter from 1107. William was a native of Normandy and was a royal clerk and envoy for King William II. He was granted eight churches in Devon and Cornwall, including St Stephen's at Exeter. He began the rebuilding of Exeter Cathedral *c.* 1114 and died in 1137. An intriguing possibility suggested by Bob Higham (*pers. comm.*) is that the capitals came from the demolition of the Saxon minster when it was replaced by the Norman one. The minster could have contained early Norman architectural detail since it is thought that it is likely to have undergone major alterations and additions in the years after 1050, when the bishopric was moved from Crediton to Exeter (Allan et al. 1984, 393). William may have wished to embellish the church he had acquired in the city, and would have had high quality architectural remnants to hand.

The English Heritage web site PastScape lists some thirty crypts in parish churches in England, some known only from limited excavations and not well dated. About ten are Norman in date, including: St Oswald's, Ashbourne, Derbyshire; St Mary le Bow Greater London; All Hallows, Barking, Greater London; St Mary's Warwick; St Kenelm, Romsley, Worcs.; Lavington, N Yorks; and Berkswell, Warwick. The grandest Norman crypts were built in major churches, as at: Worcester Cathedral; Canterbury Cathedral; Gloucester Cathedral; Winchester Cathedral; York Minster; and Waltham Abbey. There is another in Durham Castle. The crypt in St Stephens was smaller in scale but contained finely-carved columns and capitals comparable in quality with some of these.

It is possible that the church was also enlarged and made grander at this time with the addition of aisles to north and south, so that its plan would have resembled that of 12<sup>th</sup>-century St Mary Arches in Exeter. No evidence was found for such early aisles however. The only footings uncovered beneath the north wall of the north aisle contained Heavitree stone, so cannot date from as early as the Norman period. Future work might however uncover further evidence.

### *Phase 3 Early 14<sup>th</sup> century* (Fig. 18, phase 3)

In phase 3, the church was largely rebuilt above ground level and extended eastwards with the addition of a new chancel built above the Bow archway.

#### Date

The date of this phase is provided by the architectural style of two of its most prominent surviving features, the Bow archway and the chancel arch. The Bow archway has a low segmental arch. Arches of this shape were introduced to bridge-building in England at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Harris 2006, 117), so it is likely that the Bow arch dates from after *c.* 1300. The chancel arch is pointed (two-centred) in the 13<sup>th</sup>- or 14<sup>th</sup>-century style. John Allan's view is that the chancel arch is likely to date from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century (2004, Fig 6).

#### Reconstruction

Phase 3 masonry contains volcanic and Heavitree stone and is bonded with white mortar, which means it can be distinguished from the earlier Saxon and Norman masonry (which does not contain Heavitree stone and is bonded with brown earthy mortar). White mortar was used to build the Bow archway, the chancel arch, the stair down to the crypt, and two areas of masonry at the west end of the nave. Together, these indicate an extensive rebuilding of the church above ground level, resulting in a long thin church. The construction of the stair shows that the fine Norman crypt was retained, so the floor level above it would have been raised higher than that in the nave as before. Since the new chancel was raised even higher above the Bow archway, there must have been three different floor levels within the church. The area occupied by the former chancel presumably became part of an enlarged nave, so would have been accessible by parishioners and pilgrims wishing to visit the crypt. This might explain the necessity for a new stair in an area from which previously laity was excluded. The steps up to the new chancel were lit by the small lancet window uncovered in the north wall next to the Bow. There may well have been another similar one in the south wall and probably another pair further east to light the east end of the chancel and altar.

As in Norman times, the early 14<sup>th</sup>-century church may possibly have had aisles but no evidence for them was uncovered during the 2011-2012 works.

### *Phase 4 15<sup>th</sup> century* (Fig. 19, phase 4)

In phase 4 the church was enlarged with the addition of the present west tower and north aisle. A south aisle was probably built at this time but later absorbed within a larger south aisle (phase 6, below). The tower and aisle(s) may be exactly contemporary or approximately so. It was not possible to establish a relationship between the west wall of the north aisle and tower since the tower masonry had been rendered before the works of 2011-12.

## Date

The tower with its embattled parapet, projecting semi-octagonal stair turret, paired belfry windows and Heavitree stone ashlar facing is typically 15<sup>th</sup> century in date but not more closely datable. No architectural features of this period which could have helped with dating survive in the north aisle. The phase 4 masonry is built of mixed volcanic and Heavitree rubble bonded with white mortar. It has external Heavitree ashlar facing comprising large rectangular blocks which distinguishes it from the earlier phase 3 masonry.

## Reconstruction

The lower parts of the two buttresses of the north aisle belong in this phase. The present three windows are later in date but it is very likely that these replaced Perpendicular Gothic phase 4 windows in the same positions. There must have been phase 4 aisle arcades inside the church of which nothing now survives above ground. The 2011-2012 excavations did not extend to areas which may contain foundations for the former piers. The suggested phase plan shows octagonal piers but other more slender and intricately moulded Perpendicular Gothic forms are possible. However, a description of the church interior in 1825, when the south arcade was still standing, mentions 'heavy pillars and arches' (Collings 2006, 2), suggesting plain substantial forms.

It is not known when the crypt became disused, but if it was retained in this phase, the floor level above its vault would have been higher than the floor of the aisles to each side. Alternatively, its vault may have been taken down in this phase in order to level the floor throughout the nave and aisles. Crypts were generally going out of favour in the later medieval period. Very few were built or refurbished after the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The present two windows in the north and south walls of the chancel date from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but these may well be replacements for phase 4 (ie 15<sup>th</sup>-century Perpendicular) windows of much the same style and size in much the same position. If so, the phase 4 windows would have replaced the small phase 3 lancet windows which it is suggested above previously lit the east end of the chancel.

### *The work on the south wall by Exeter Archaeology*

Recording work conducted by Exeter Archaeology on the south wall in 2004 identified three main phases of masonry dating from before modern times. Suggested dates are the late medieval period, the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century, and the 1660's (Allan, 2004). The following descriptions of Phases 5-7 below are based on the Exeter Archaeology findings and interpretation.

### *Phase 5 Late medieval (Fig. 19, phase 5)*

The earliest part of the south wall is at the east end below window sill level. This is coursed masonry made up of volcanic, Heavitree and other stone types (Plate 2 right-hand side). The wall is most likely to have been part of a chapel, perhaps a chantry chapel, added to the southeast corner of the church in the late medieval period.

## Reconstruction

The position of the surviving wall shows that the chapel must have projected at an angle from the south side of the church, as did the later south aisle on this side (Phase 6, below). Late medieval and later additions made to the south side of the church followed the general alignment of property boundaries round about, rather than the alignment of the church itself, which had been built at a slight angle to High Street so as to align more closely with an E-W axis.

### *Phase 6 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century (Fig. 19, phase 6)*

The next earliest masonry in the south wall is at the west end below window sill level. This is faced with Heavitree ashlar with occasional volcanic stones. It includes the lower parts of the present two buttresses, as well as the head of a doorway which led underground beneath the south aisle. This masonry extends around the southwest corner and continues to the tower. The external face of the wall on west side is rendered so the masonry is not observable. The phase 6 masonry formed part of a much larger south aisle which replaced the existing narrow one and incorporated the phase 5 chapel at the east end. Such added aisles can date from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, but many are now known to date from the later 16<sup>th</sup> century or even the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, later than has generally been supposed (Allan 2004, 5, referring to Colvin 1999).

The doorway low down in the south wall is presently blocked, but alterations proposed for the future in this area might possibly include opening it up. The purpose of the doorway is uncertain. It has been suggested that the doorway might open onto a passage leading to the western end of the crypt, but this is less likely than the doorway leading to a burial vault beneath the south aisle (Parker 2007, 3).

### *Phase 7 1660-65 (Fig. 19, phase 7)*

This phase includes the repair works begun in the early 1660's and those of the extensive rebuilding which followed the major fire of 1662. It includes most parts of the building above window sill level, apart from the tower and chancel over the Bow. Some walls were rebuilt or partly rebuilt to below ground level, including the east walls of the north and south aisles. The phase 7 masonry facework varies from coursed Heavitree ashlar containing occasional volcanic stones to mixed stone rubble construction of far lesser quality. The bonding material however remains constant throughout, consisting of a soft light brown earthy mortar.

There are also phase 7 features surviving in the internal elevations at the east and west ends of the nave which show that there was a double gabled roof erected at this time, one roof over the nave and north aisle, the other spanning the large south aisle.

## Reconstruction

The north aisle arcade is very likely to have been removed in this phase since it would have been made redundant by the construction of the roof which spanned both the nave and north aisle. The present round-headed doorways at the northwest corner (main entrance) and southeast corner (now blocked) belong to this period. The main entrance had presumably remained in much the same position for a very long time, since the tower did not have a west doorway and the principal entrance is likely always to have been from the High Street. The

southeastern doorway provided access to and from the large south aisle for parishioners and would additionally have served as a priest's door, being set close to the chancel.

Some of the present windows also date from phase 7. The 17<sup>th</sup>-century window in the west wall of the south aisle (recently unblocked) is a variant of the 'South Hams' type with a transom above its main lights (Allan 2004, 6; Fig. 12, a). Three other windows of the same design survived in the south wall until the 1950's, as shown by photographs taken at the time (*ibid.* Fig 10). The present three Beer stone windows along the High Street frontage (north wall) were built into the phase 7 masonry above sill level and are also 17<sup>th</sup>-century in date, with Perpendicular tracery under round heads, a late survival of the Gothic style. These have four main lights which are shallowly cusped and six upper oblong lights which are uncusped. The rere arches of the windows are awkwardly formed of re-used Beer stone fragments from earlier windows of about the same size but probably pointed.

Written accounts of the church just before its interior was considerably altered in 1826 describe it as comprising a nave, one aisle, a chancel, and long gallery. The one aisle must be the south aisle, so the nave and north aisle had clearly become merged as one beneath a single roof, as suggested above.

A small part of the gallery floor survived above the porch at the northwest corner of the church until the porch was removed in the works of 2011-2012.

The late 17<sup>th</sup>-century church would have had a good number of box pews. These may well have been added to or replaced in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Remains from dismantled box pews, some with ramps, have been used as paneling in the present north and south aisles.

## Burials

Some of the ledger stones uncovered in the nave date back as far as the early 17<sup>th</sup> century so burial was taking place in the church before phase 7. The excavated stone-lined burials in the tower may possibly be as early as the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but the brick-lined vaults uncovered in the north aisle all date from the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Construction of some of the brick-lined vaults would have removed the foundations of the earlier north aisle arcade.

## *Phase 8 1826 rebuilding* (Fig. 20, phase 8)

The present internal arrangements comprising the two aisle arcades and the arches in front of the chancel arch date from the 1826 rebuilding (Plate 25), together with the present roof, which spans the entire width of the building (Figs. 8 and 10). The part of the roof above the nave is a king post roof of a form which was common across the country in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. This is supported on each side by another, slightly modified king post assembly, such that the three parts together form a remarkable single gabled structure. There is an arched pointed ceiling over the nave and flat ceilings over the aisles. There are vents in the ceiling with decorative quatrefoil surrounds. The vents open into large box-like structures built in the roof space which formerly had louvres above them. The interior is described in Pevsner as 'charming... a surprise: inexpensive fragile neo-Gothic of 1826, with thin quatrefoil piers and traceried openings in the ceiling, now blocked' (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 395-6).

The arrangement of ledger stones uncovered in the nave dates from this time. Most of the stones had been relocated from elsewhere in the church and were broken or set inappropriately for *in situ* burials. Some intact stones date from after 1826 so evidently mark burials made in the alleys up until 1845 between blocks of seating. The seating arrangements were also changed in 1826, from box pews to bench seating. The present paneling in the north and south aisles (made up of re-used sections of box pews) has small notches cut out of its top at regular intervals. These show where the backs of the bench seats were fixed to the paneling. Every third notch aligns with one of the piers in the 1826 arcades, showing that there were three bench seats in each bay, as indicated in Fig. 20. The present font dates from this period although it was carved in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century perpendicular style.

#### *Phase 9 Later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (not illustrated)*

The present north and south windows in the chancel are carved from Bath stone, which was rarely used in Exeter before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The label stops are heads carved in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century style. It is not recorded when these were inserted but they almost certainly replaced medieval windows sometime in the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. They were in place when photographs taken around the time of WW2.

The ('long') gallery survived as a remnant feature up until 1895, when alterations include the taking down of 'the small gallery at the west end, which has for many years been wholly disused....' (Collings 2006, 3).

A plan of the church interior was made in 1936 by the architect Harbottle Reed when he inserted a new doorway at the northeast corner of the north aisle (reproduced in EA Report No. 06.37, Fig. 3). The layout had changed since 1826 since alterations had been made on a number of occasions in between, including some in 1865 when the arrangement of seating and stairs at the east end was altered. The number of steps up to the chancel was described as eight in 1834 (*ibid.* 2), whereas Harbottle Reed's plan shows ten. In 1913, a new oak screen replaced the one described in 1834 as 'A large altar screen of wood, formed by Corinthian pilasters and a pediment', evidently a rather grand 17<sup>th</sup>-century screen.

Following bomb and fire damage in WW2, the next 20 years saw a number of repairs and alterations (Collings 2006, 4-5). The chancel was re-roofed and the three windows in the south wall replaced by the present Bath stone windows which reflect the style of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century windows in the front wall, although with more pronounced cusping above the main lights. The tower was also re-roofed and its upper parts repaired. The ridge of the roof was patched up. The stair up to the chancel was blocked off and a smaller flight inserted a little to the north.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks must go to Bob Snowden, Director of The St Stephen's Project, who made the archaeological project run smoothly and enjoyably, and who kindly provided much background information regarding the history of the church. Thanks also go to Pip Morrison of Van der Steen Hall Architects and Martin of Ellis and Co. Ltd. for their understanding and helpful assistance with the archaeological project. Martin Fletcher kindly gave advice regarding the burial vaults and other aspects of the church's archaeology, and provided comments on a draft of the report. John Allan and Richard Parker both gave of their time to visit and discuss the development of the church.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MONITORING AND RECORDING DURING REORDERING WORKS AT  
ST STEPHEN'S CHURCH, EXETER

Stewart Brown Associates January 2010

**Location: St Stephen's Church, Exeter**  
**Parish: Parish of Central Exeter**  
**District: Exeter**  
**County: Devon**  
**NGR: SX 921927**  
**Exeter Diocese Faculty Application: 20 November 2009**  
**Proposal: Refurbishment and re-ordering of church interior**

**1 BACKGROUND**

1.1 This written scheme of investigation has been prepared on behalf of the PCC of the Parish of Central Exeter and their agents Van der Steen Hall Architects. The archaeological works are required as a condition attached to the faculty for repair and re-ordering the internal arrangements of the church.

1.2 St Stephen's church has a long history stretching back to Saxon times. The Norman church had a crypt beneath it. The church developed and grew throughout medieval times to include a chancel or sanctuary at its east end which was raised up on an archway allowing pedestrians to pass beneath it, a feature still surviving today, known as St Stephen's Bow. The present tower at its west end was added in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The large south aisle dates from the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. The church was made redundant in 1656 and sold off. It was re-instated under Charles II, suffered a fire in 1662 and was extensively rebuilt in 1664. In 1826, repair work temporarily uncovered the crypt, and a painting was made as a record of it. The church suffered considerable bomb damage in WW2 to the tower, main roof and east end. Repairs were made in 1950 and again in 1972.

The church overlies Roman deposits and features including defensive ditches associated with the legionary fortress established at Exeter c.55AD.

The first phase of the current repair and refurbishment programme known as 'The St Stephen's Project' has already been completed. The proposed works as outlined in paragraph 1.3 below comprise the second phase.

1.3 *Alterations to the East End*

The chantry or sanctuary above the medieval stone archway known as the 'St Stephen's Bow' is to be restored. This area has been screened off from the rest of the church since 1972. It contains the medieval chancel arch which is presently only partially visible but which will be more fully exposed during the works. Remains of the former steps up to the sanctuary and surrounding

medieval fabric may also be revealed. Plaster is to be stripped from walls in this area, so historic fabric will be exposed.

#### *Alterations at the West End*

The west end of the church was also damaged in WW2. Part of it now serves as the vestry and is screened off from the nave by modern stud partition walls. This area is to be refurbished so that it will contain new community meeting rooms on the ground and first floors of the tower, a serving area, and a gallery approached by a stair in the southwest corner. Prior to 1895 there was a gallery at the west end of the church, with a stair at the southwest corner, so the proposed refurbishment restores this earlier arrangement. The present entrance lobby at the northwest corner is to be replaced by a glazed porch. The east wall of the porch, which dates probably from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is to be taken down to make way for a full mobility access ramp.

Evidence survives in the walls at this end for both the former gallery and for a south aisle which is earlier than the present one. Plaster is to be stripped from the walls, so additional historic features may be revealed. The present plastered timber studwork covering the 17<sup>th</sup>-century west window of the south aisle is to be removed.

#### *Alteration to the south wall*

A new doorway is to be opened through the west end of the south wall where there is presently a window.

#### *Lowering of floor level*

The present floor of the church is laid on a bed of 20<sup>th</sup>-century concrete. The concrete is to be reduced in level or removed in places in order to install full mobility and wheelchair access. Areas affected comprise the porch, tower, and the north aisle alongside the north wall. The removal of the concrete may possibly uncover archaeological deposits of interest but it is not anticipated that these will be extensive or exposed to any great depth.

#### *Groundworks outside the church*

Trenches are to be dug in order to make connections with existing services.

- 1/ trench connecting with an existing drain to the east of the church in Stephen Street.
- 2/ trench connecting with an existing gas main to the east of the church in Stephen Street.
- 3/ trench connecting with an existing electric main to the west of the church in Catherine Street.
- 4/ trench connecting with an existing drain to the west of the church in Catherine Street.

A new flight of stone steps leading up from Catherine Square is to be installed.

## 2 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

Four archaeological projects have been undertaken in recent years by Exeter Archaeology. In 2004, a preliminary archaeological appraisal was made of the south elevation in order to inform consideration of how this side of the church would best relate to the redesigned Catherine Square to its south (EAR Report No. 5097). In 2006, a report was compiled on the documentation relating to the structural history of the church in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (EAR Report No. 5677). In 2007, there was a report on the conjectural reconstruction of the Romanesque crypt known to survive beneath the church (EAR Report No. 6240). A further report by Exeter Archaeology covering archaeological observations and recording during recent roof and tower repairs is forthcoming.

## 3 OBJECTIVES

3.1 The principal objectives of the archaeological programme are to:

- i) record historical fabric and features exposed by the works and to set these into the context of the overall development of the church.
- ii) monitor groundworks to allow exposed archaeological features and deposits to be investigated and recorded.

## 4 PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS

- 4.1 Historic features exposed by the works will be recorded at a scale of 1:20 and plotted onto existing elevations and plans drawn by Van der Steen Hall Architects. Areas of historic plaster and exposed historic fabric containing no architectural features will be recorded photographically.
- 4.2 Archaeological features and deposits uncovered by groundworks will be investigated and recorded at a scale of 1:20. Section drawings will be made where appropriate.
- 4.3 A photographic record will be made in B/W print for archive purposes, supplemented by digital record. Inkjet prints of digital images will be included in the report. The drawn site records will be made on drafting film and copied onto a digital medium.
- 4.4 Should deposits be exposed that contain palaeoenvironmental or datable elements specialist advice will be sought and appropriate sampling strategies initiated.
- 4.5 Unarticulated human remains found during the excavation will be passed to the incumbent via the Parochial Church Council for re-interment elsewhere. Articulated human remains and coffin burials will initially be left *in situ*, covered and protected. Removal will only take place under appropriate Ministry of Justice and environmental health regulations. Such removal will be in compliance with the relevant primary legislation.

- 4.6 Should gold or silver artefacts be exposed these will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act 1996. 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.
- 4.7 The work will be carried out in accordance with the relevant IFA Standards and Guidance for archaeological excavation.

## 5 **REPORTING**

- 5.1 A report will be prepared collating the written, graphic, and recorded information outlined above. The report will include a written description and drawn plans of the archaeological features and deposits, including their location, together with their interpretation.
- 5.2 The report will be prepared within three months of completion of fieldwork dependent upon the provision of specialist reports, radiocarbon dating results etc the production of which may exceed this period. If a substantial delay is anticipated then an interim report will be produced.
- 5.3 On completion of the report in addition to copies required by the client, hard copies of the report will be supplied to the Devon County Council's archaeological section (HES) on the understanding that one of these copies will be deposited for public reference. In addition to the hard copies of the report, one copy will be provided to the HES in digital format, on the understanding that it may in future be made available to researchers via a web-based version of their records.
- 5.4 Should particularly significant historic fabric, architectural features, below-ground remains, or finds be encountered, then publication of a short note or summary of the excavation results will be required. Such notes are normally sent to the Devon Archaeological Society for publication.

## 6 **FINDS**

Finds from the excavations will at minimum need to be assessed and identified by relevant specialists (e.g. pottery, metal, stonework). The specialists will contribute individual specialist reports as appendices to the final site report. Should any of the finds require specialist conservation treatment, this will be sought from the Conservation Lab at Exeter Museum.

## 7 **PERSONNEL**

The work will be carried out under the control of Stewart Brown, who is a member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). A list of specialists who can be consulted if required appears at the end of this document.

## 8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

Archaeological work will be carried out in accordance with guidelines issued by the Health and Safety Executive. Once appointed by the PCC and in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2007, the Principal Contractor will be responsible for general safety on the site, checking for live underground services, and for preventing access by unauthorised persons to the area of excavation.

## 9 SITE ARCHIVE AND DEPOSITION OF ARCHIVE AND FINDS

A project archive will be prepared containing project records and finds in a permanently accessible form within a reasonable time of the completion of works (normally six months). The structure of the archive will follow the specifications outlined in 'Management of Archaeological Projects 2' (English Heritage). The archive, including the finds, will be deposited with Exeter Museum (Accession number to be sought before excavation begins). The museum's guidelines for archive preparation and storage will be followed. It is usual practice for ownership of the archive and finds to pass into the hands of the museum in order to guarantee permanent safekeeping (the museum cannot accept the archive unless ownership has been transferred; written permission for transference of ownership will be requested from the PCC ).

## 10 LIST OF SPECIALISTS WHO COULD ADVISE OR CONTRIBUTE TO THIS PROJECT IF REQUIRED:

Medieval and post medieval finds - John Allan (Exeter Archaeology);  
Roman finds - Paul Bidwell (Tyne & Wear Museums, Arbeia Roman Fort);  
Prehistoric lithic finds - John Newberry (Paignton);  
Prehistoric ceramic finds - Henrietta Quinzel (Exeter);  
Bone artefacts - Ian Riddler;  
Clay tobacco pipes – David Higgins (Liverpool);  
Coins and tokens - Norman Shiel (Exeter);  
Finds conservation - Exeter RAM Museum Conservation Service (contact Alison Hopper-Bishop);  
Environmental sampling - Vanessa Straker (English Heritage, Bristol);  
Faunal remains - Southampton University Faunal Remains Unit;  
Plant remains - Julie Jones (Bristol);  
Geological identification and mineral analysis – Roger Taylor (Exeter Museum).

## 11 INSURANCE

- 11.1 Stewart Brown Associates has insurance cover in the following areas: Public Liability, Employers Liability, Professional Indemnity, All Risks, and Personal Accident.
- 11.2 Stewart Brown Associates will not be liable for any damage caused to the site which unavoidably results from archaeological site operations being carried out within the agreed scope of works.

## 12 PERMISSIONS

The PCC or their agents Van der Steen Hall Architects will be responsible for obtaining any necessary permissions or consents required for the purpose of archaeological excavation and recording.

### APPENDIX 2 FINDS IDENTIFICATIONS By John Allan

All the finds from the excavations came from deposits used to backfill the site following grave clearances in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The deposits would have originated from outside the church so the finds are very largely if not entirely residual and do not relate directly to the features they were retrieved from inside the church. None of the finds were of intrinsic archaeological interest so all were discarded after identification.

Context - **50** (general deposit covering much of the north aisle excavation area and infilling numerous different features – indistinguishable from grave infilling) – 6 sherds from 17<sup>th</sup>-/18<sup>th</sup>-century coarsewares; 2 fragments from 17<sup>th</sup>-/18<sup>th</sup>-century clay pipe stems; 1 fragment of 17<sup>th</sup>-/18<sup>th</sup>-century window glass; 1 fragment of Roman Oxford ware flanged bowl dating from the late 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> century (clearly residual in this context, having come into the church with earth deposits from outside).

Context – infilling of burial vault **55** – 3 sherds from 17<sup>th</sup>-/18<sup>th</sup>-century coarsewares; 1 fragment from clay pipe stem, probably 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Context – infilling of burial vault **56** – 3 sherds from one vessel - 17<sup>th</sup>-century S. Somerset ware.

Context – infilling of burial vault **62** – 1 fragment of 17<sup>th</sup>-/18<sup>th</sup>-century S Somerset ridge tile.

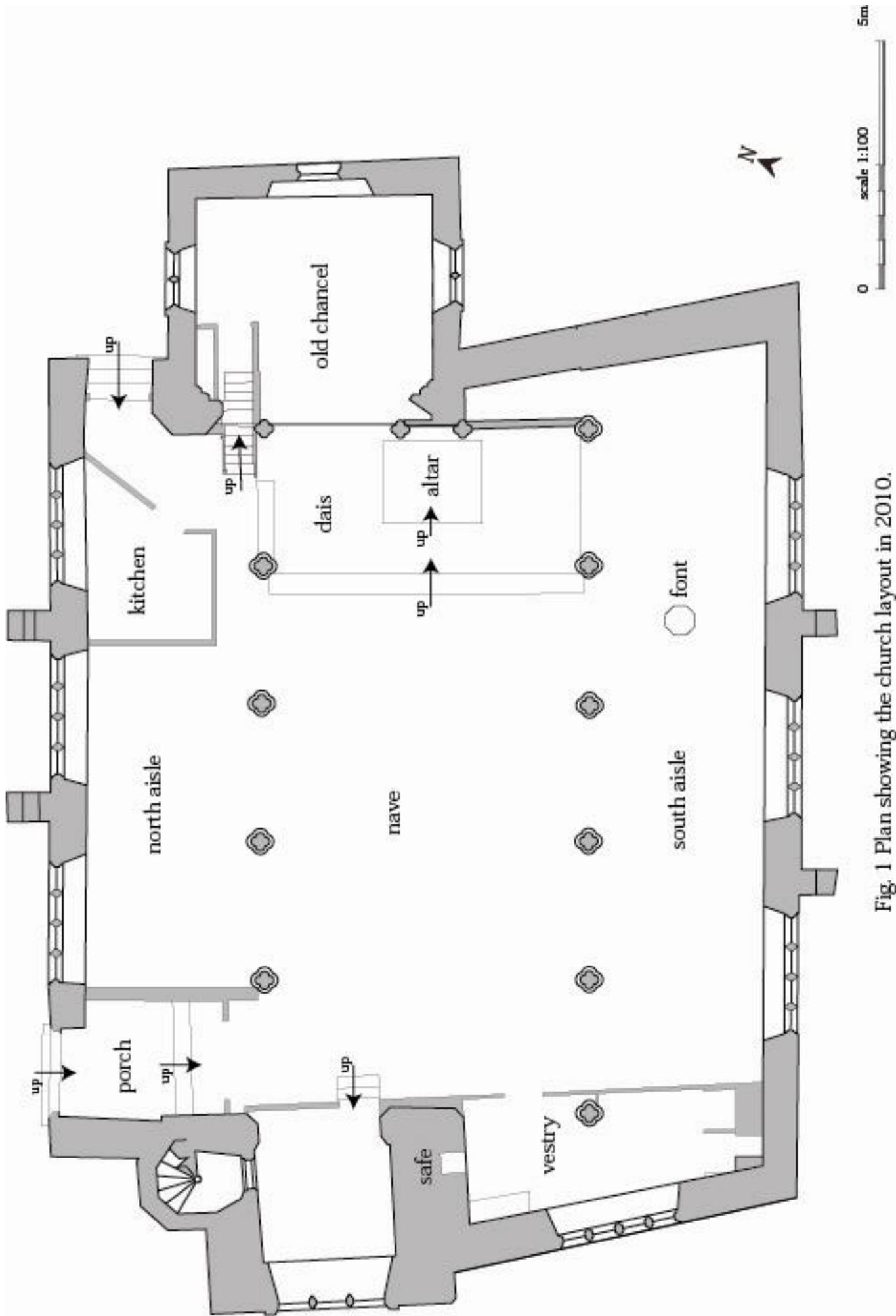


Fig. 1 Plan showing the church layout in 2010.



Fig. 2 Front (N) elevation of north aisle, showing phases of construction.

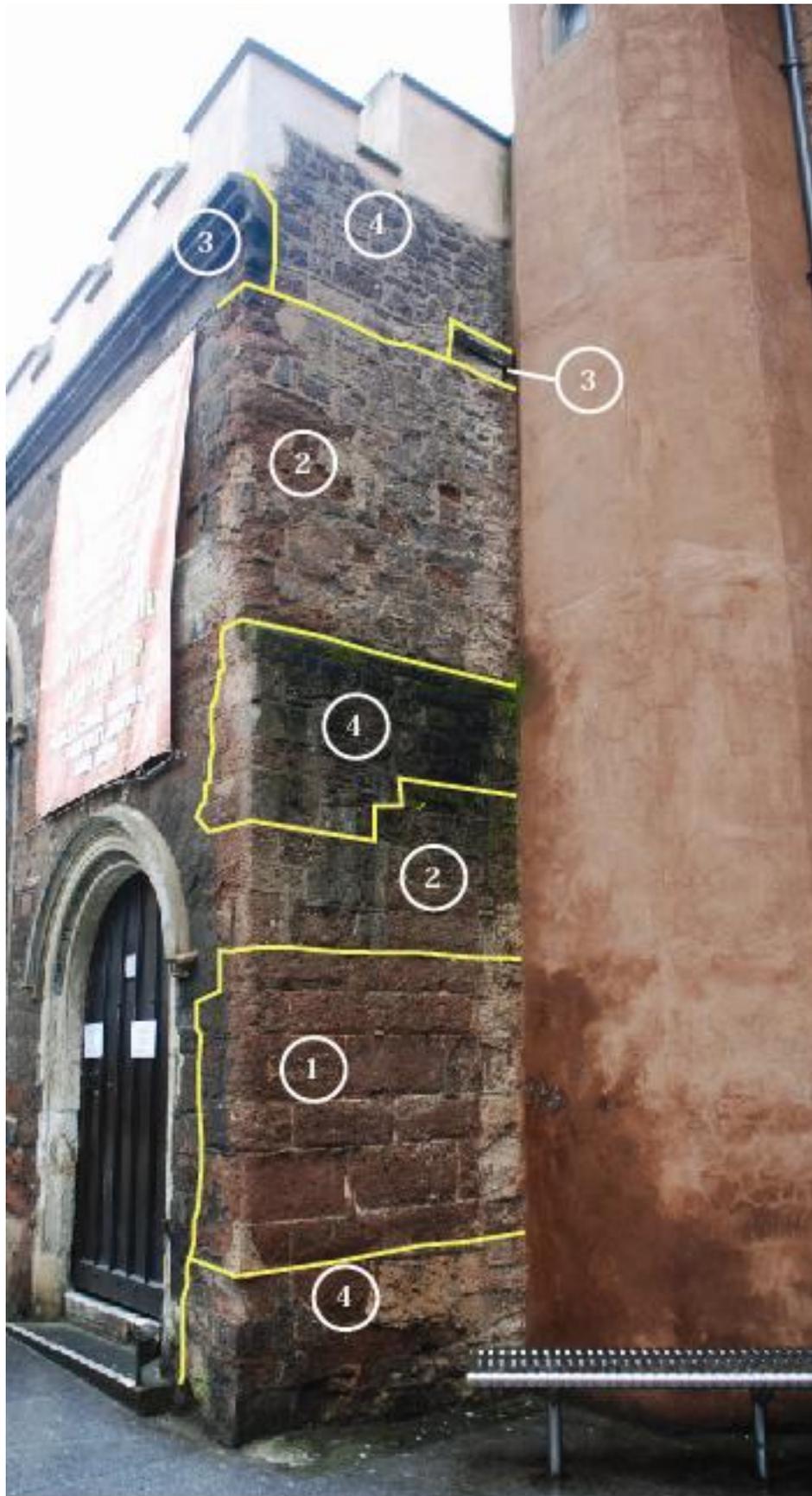


Fig. 3 West elevation of north aisle, looking southeast, showing phases of construction.



Fig. 4 East elevation of north aisle, showing phases of construction.



Fig. 5 Front (N) elevation of Bow archway, showing phases of construction.



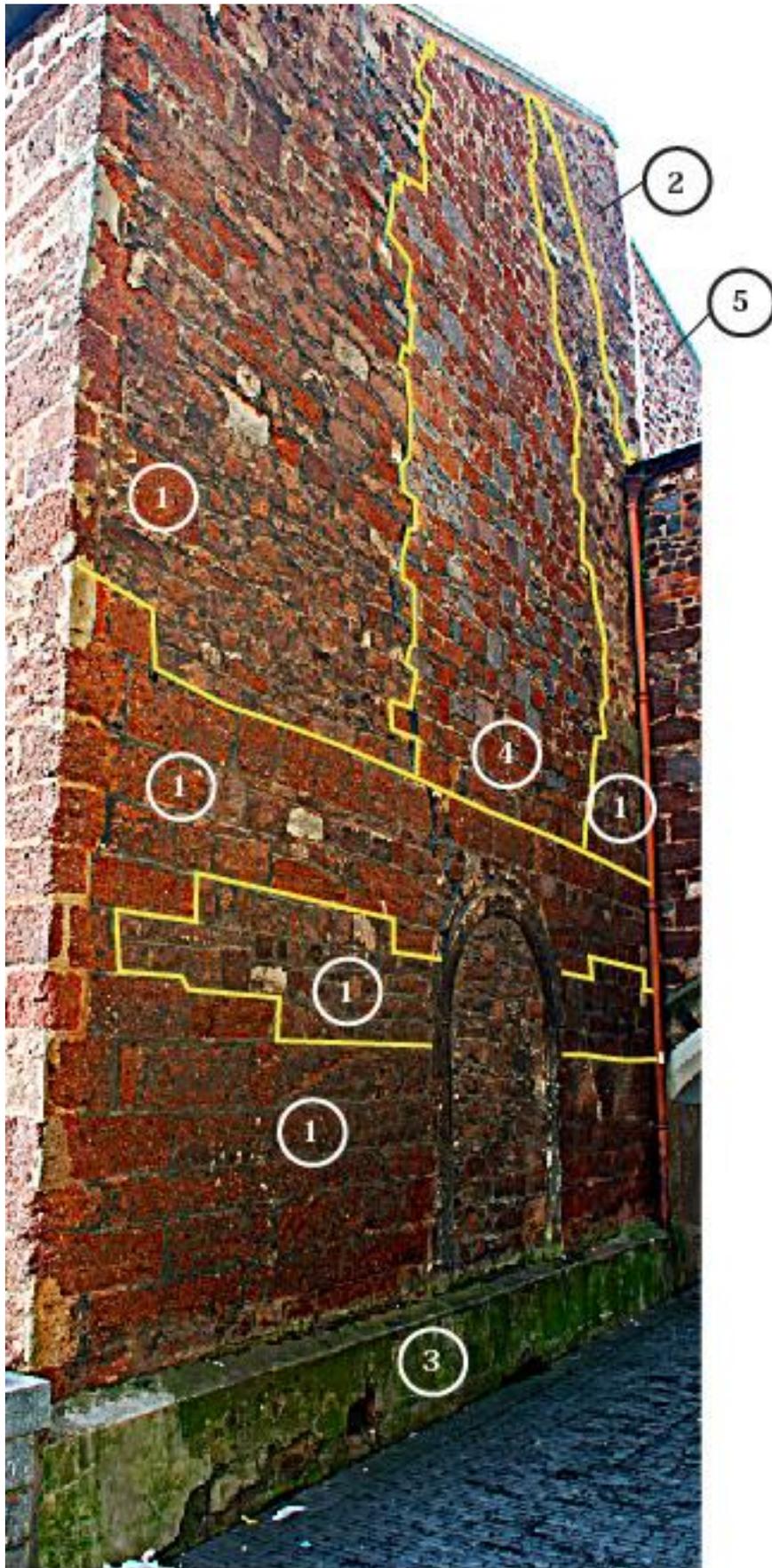


Fig. 7 East elevation of south aisle, looking NW, showing phases of construction,

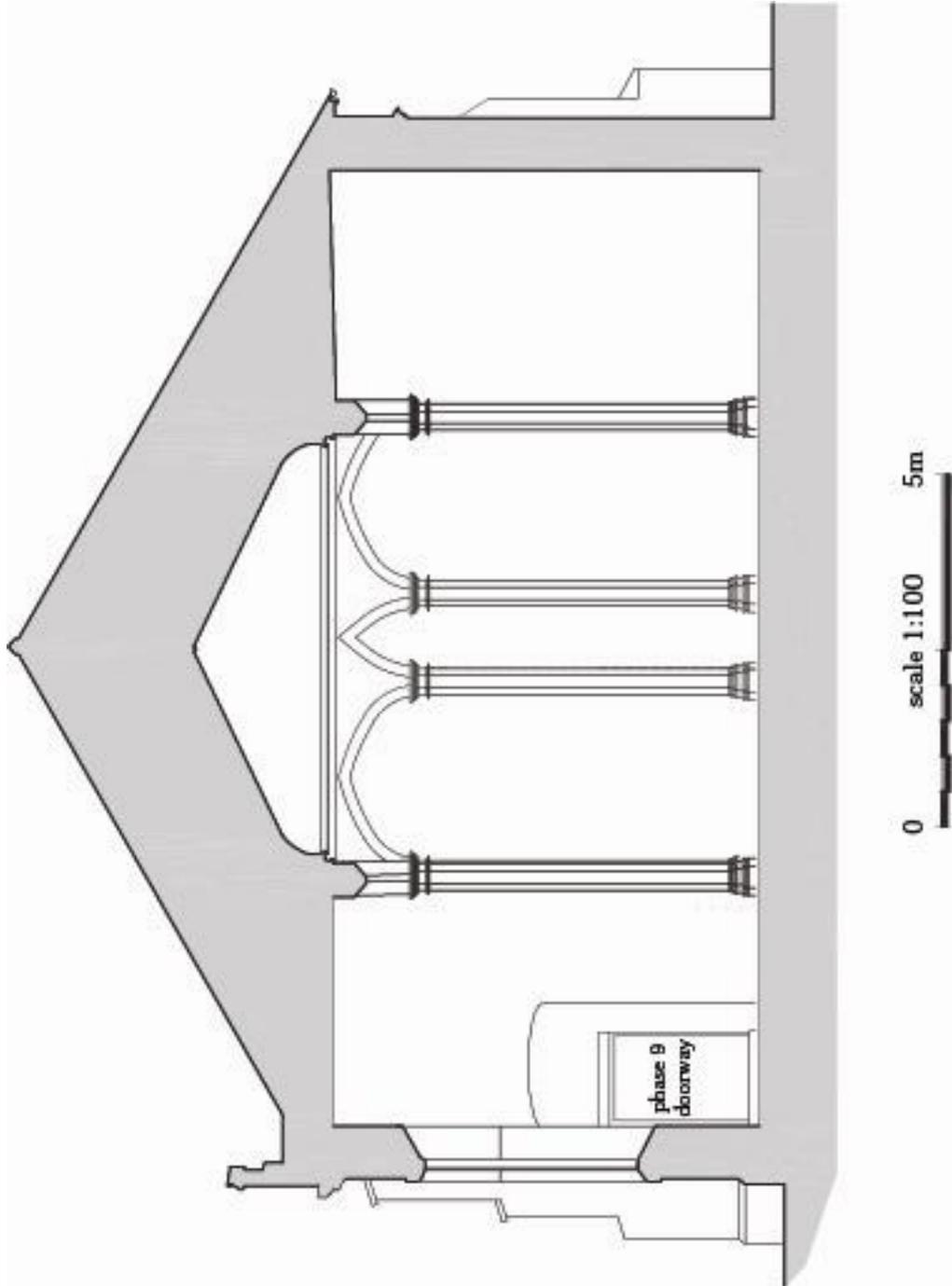


Fig. 8 Section across east end of nave, showing phase 8 (1826) arcade and phase 9 doorway. Survey drawing by Van der Steen Hall Architects.

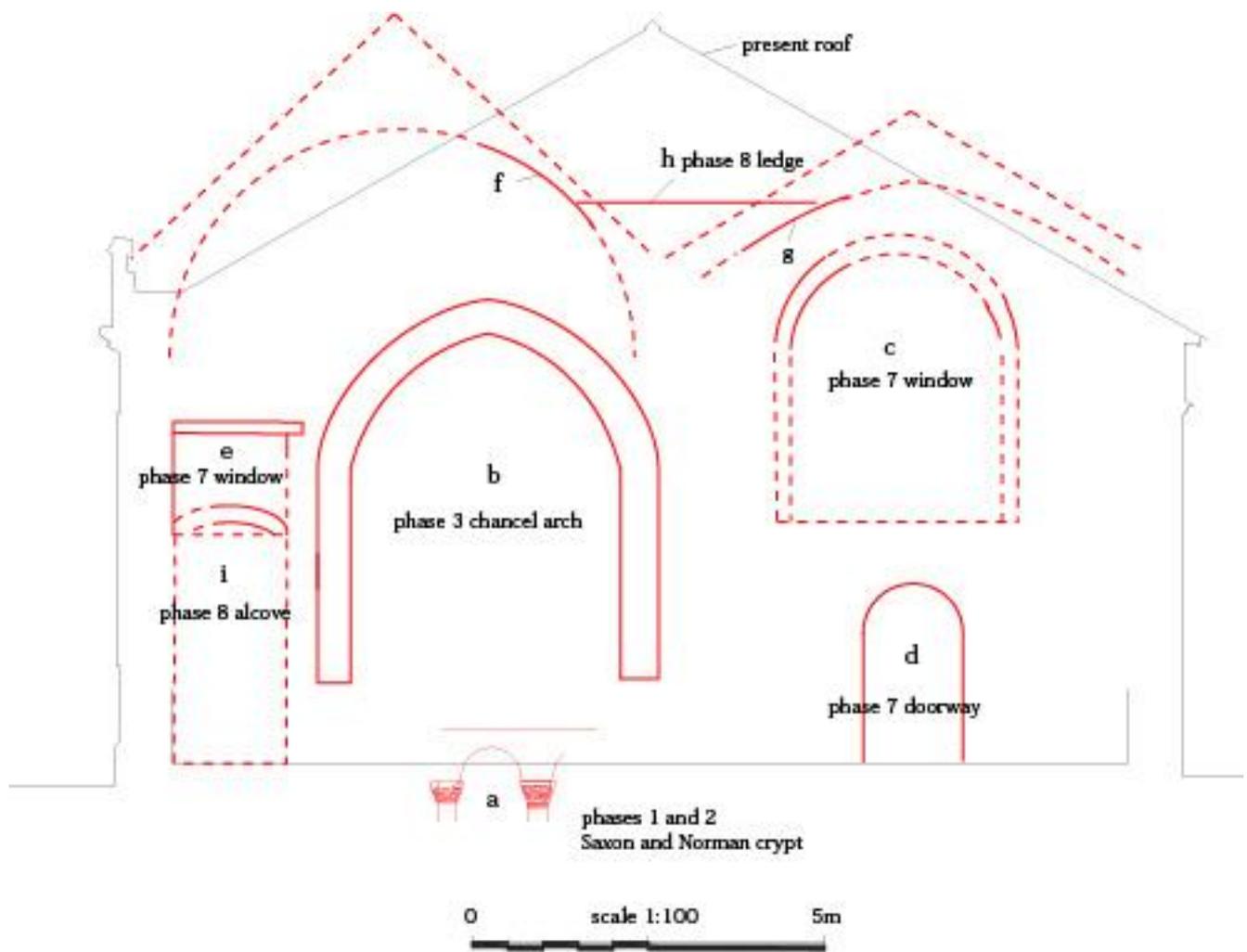


Fig. 9 Internal elevation of east end of nave, showing hidden and part-hidden features a-i, including evidence for former roofs.

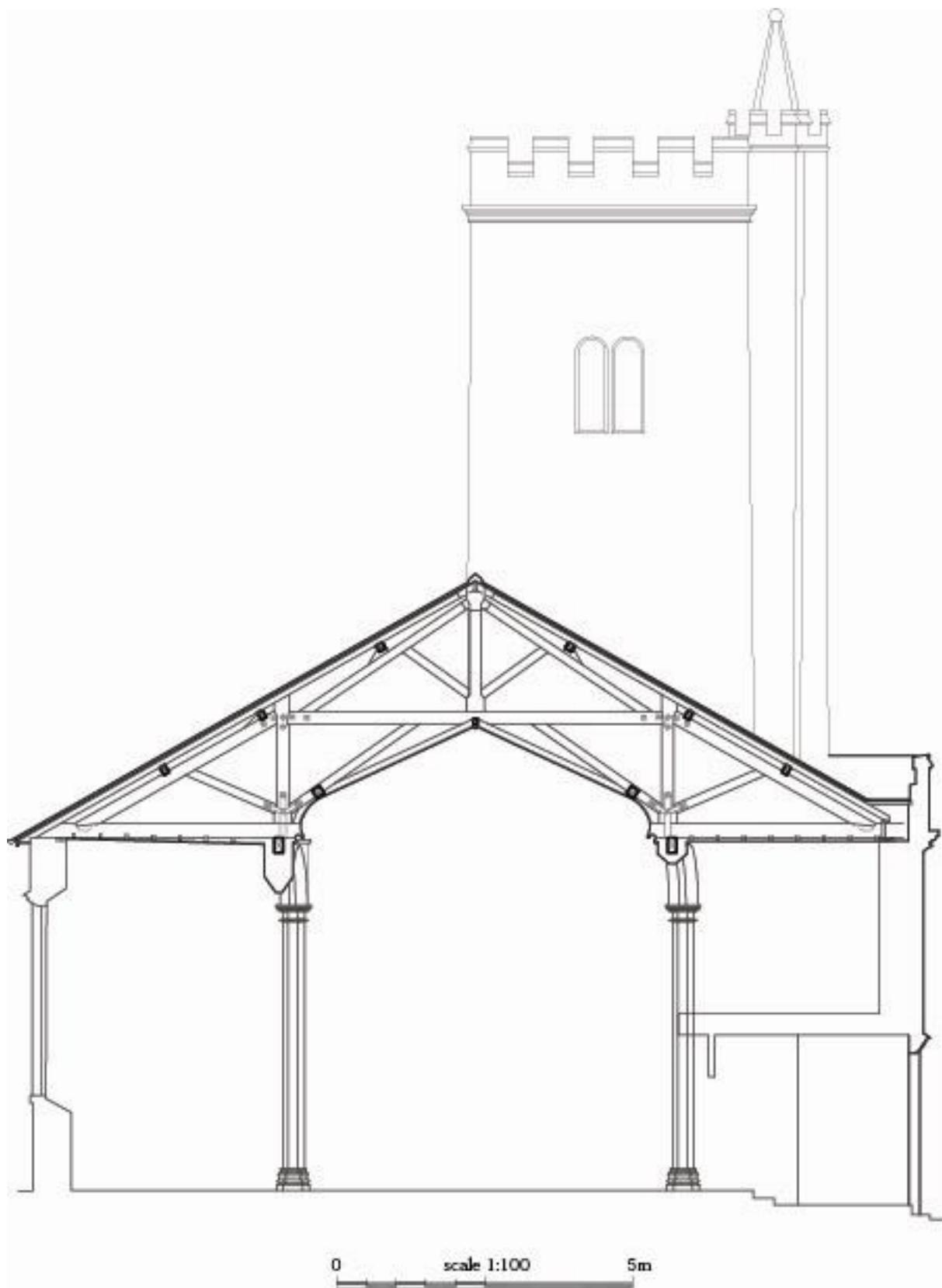


Fig. 10 Section across west end of nave, showing phase 8 roof (1826).  
Survey drawing by Van der Steen Hall Architects.

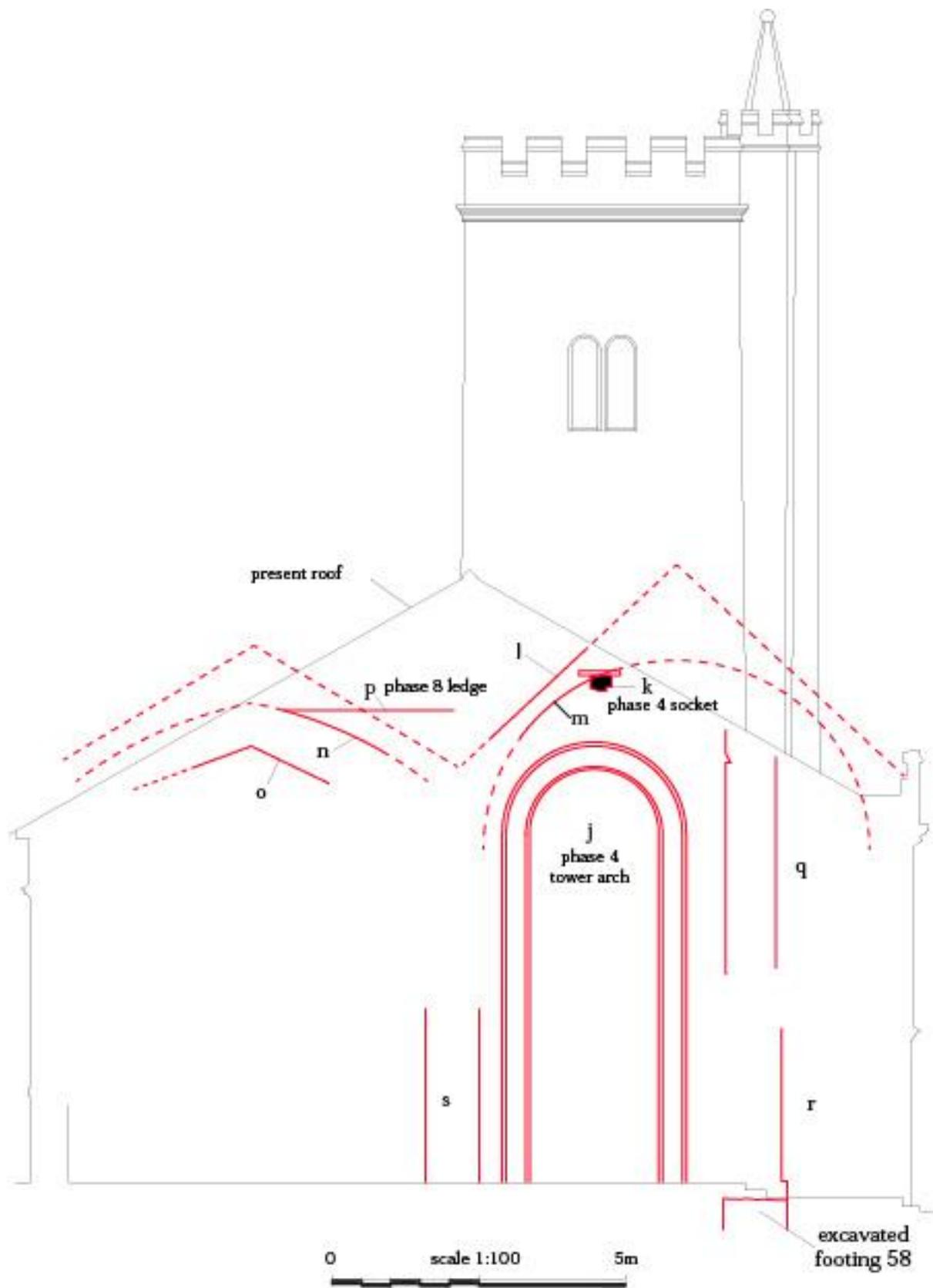
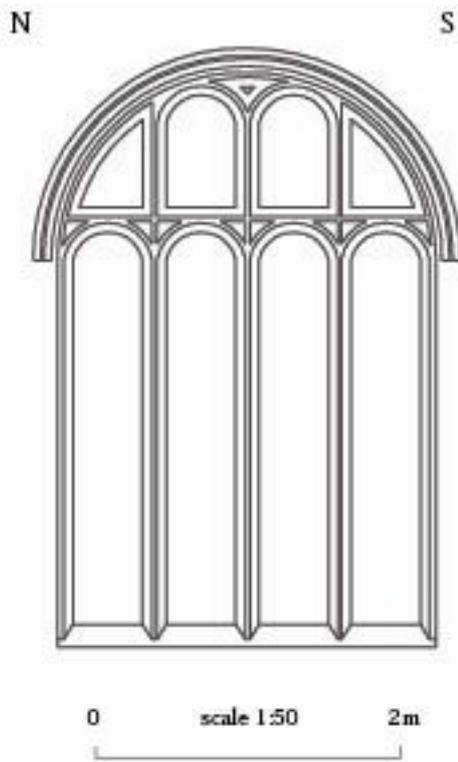
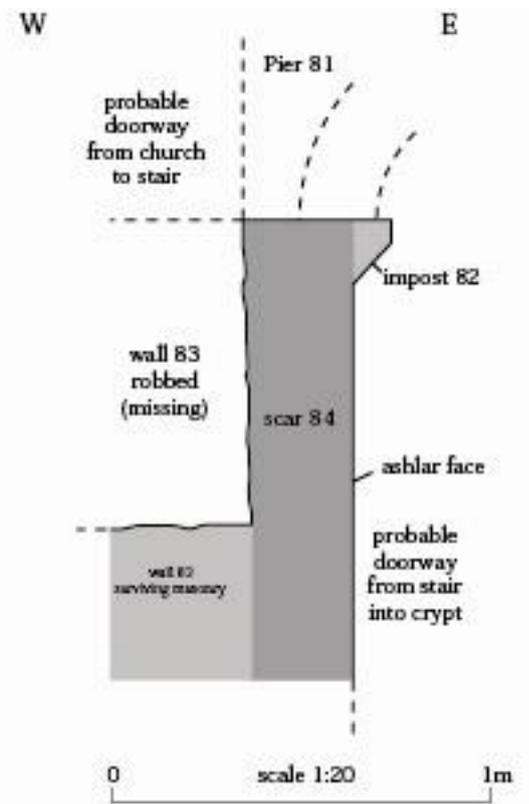


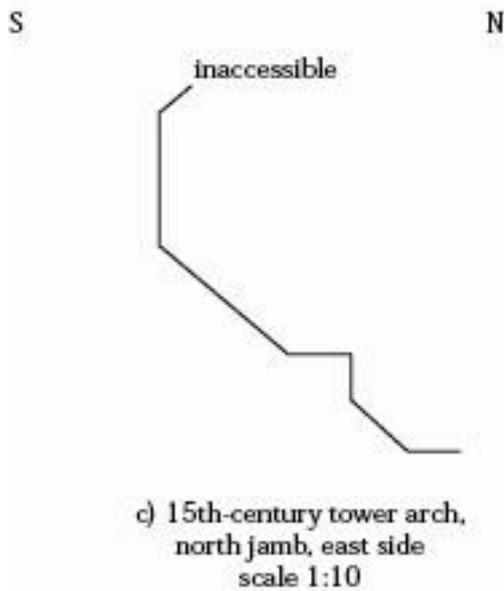
Fig. 11 Internal elevation of west end of nave, showing hidden and part-hidden features j-s, including evidence for former roofs.



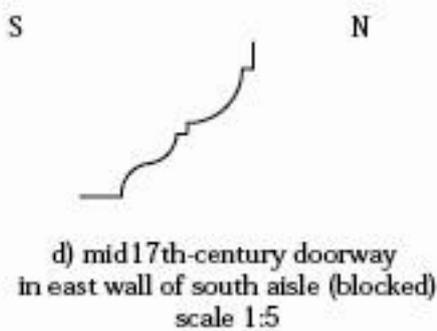
a) window in west wall of south aisle, surveyed by Brookes Surveys, 2006.



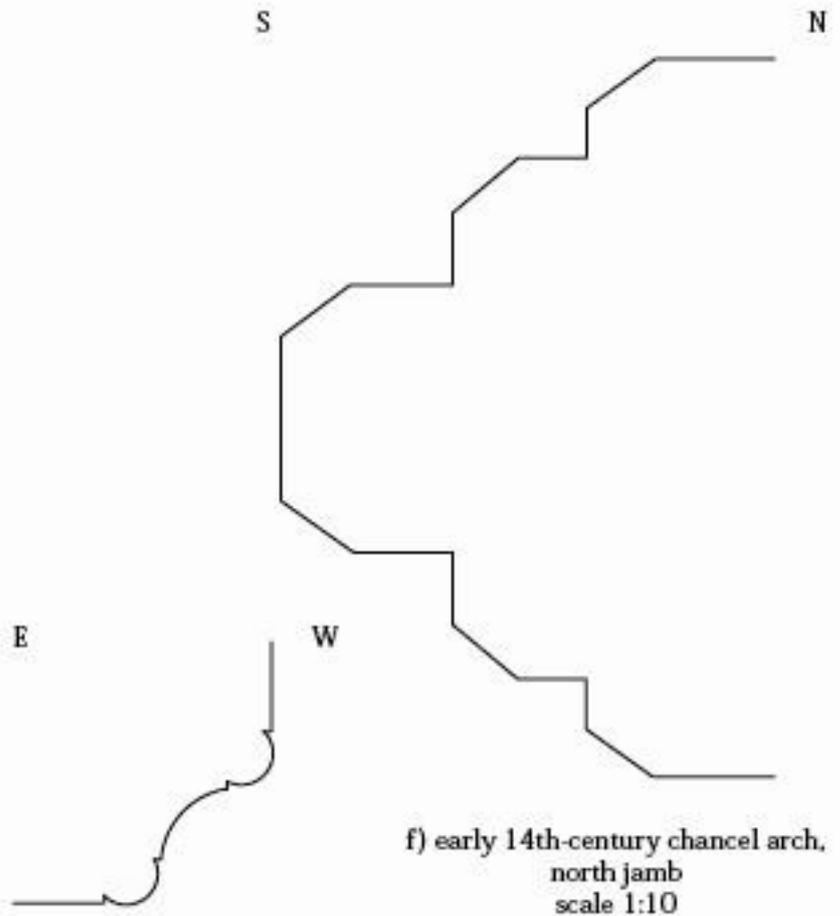
b) excavated early 14th-century pier 81, elevation looking north



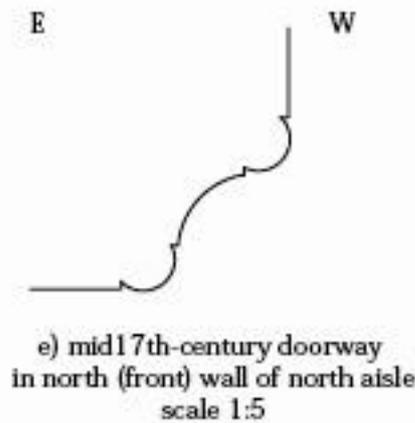
c) 15th-century tower arch, north jamb, east side scale 1:10



d) mid 17th-century doorway in east wall of south aisle (blocked) scale 1:5



f) early 14th-century chancel arch, north jamb scale 1:10



e) mid 17th-century doorway in north (front) wall of north aisle scale 1:5

Fig. 12 Architectural details a-f.

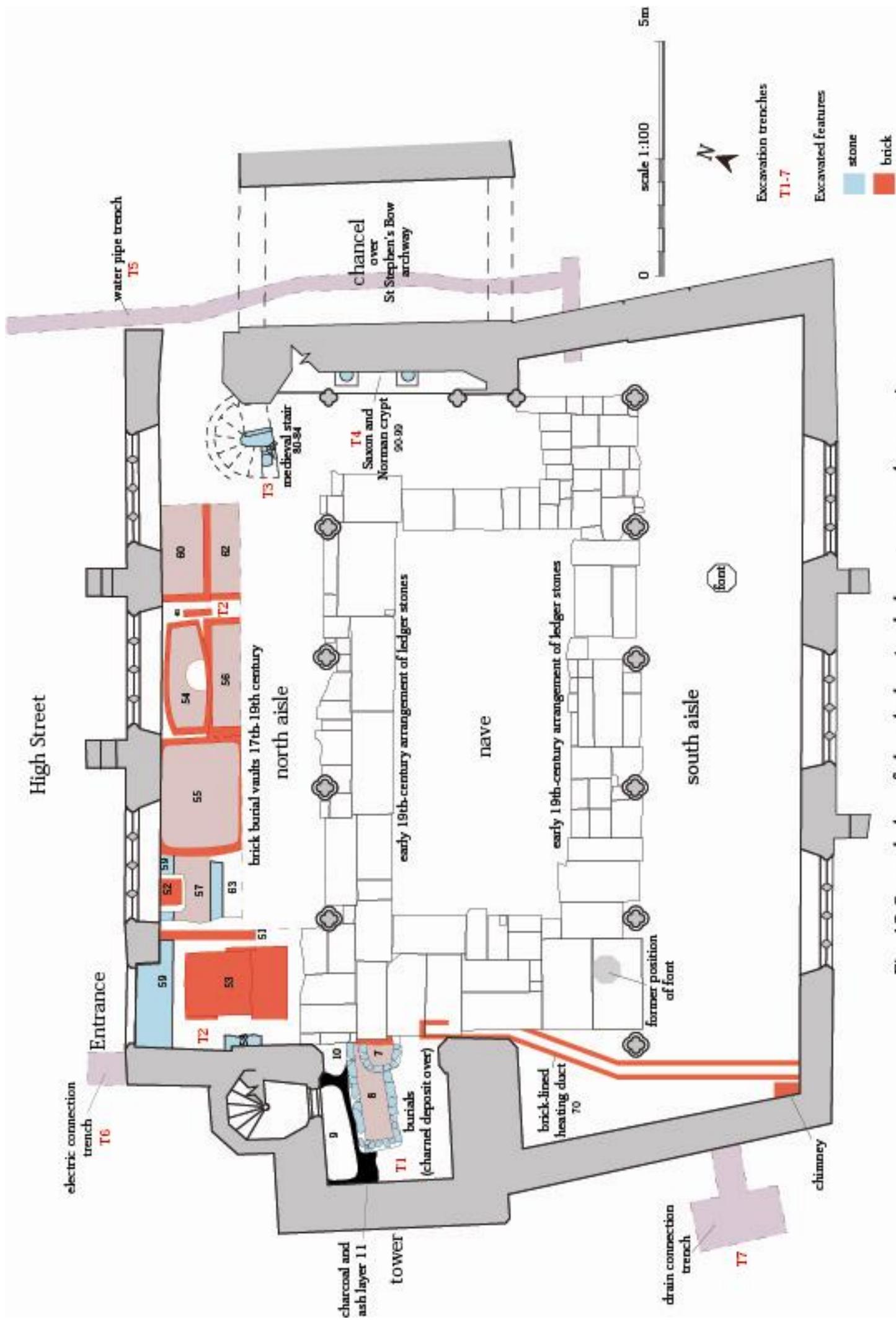


Fig. 13 Ground plan of church showing ledger stones and excavations.

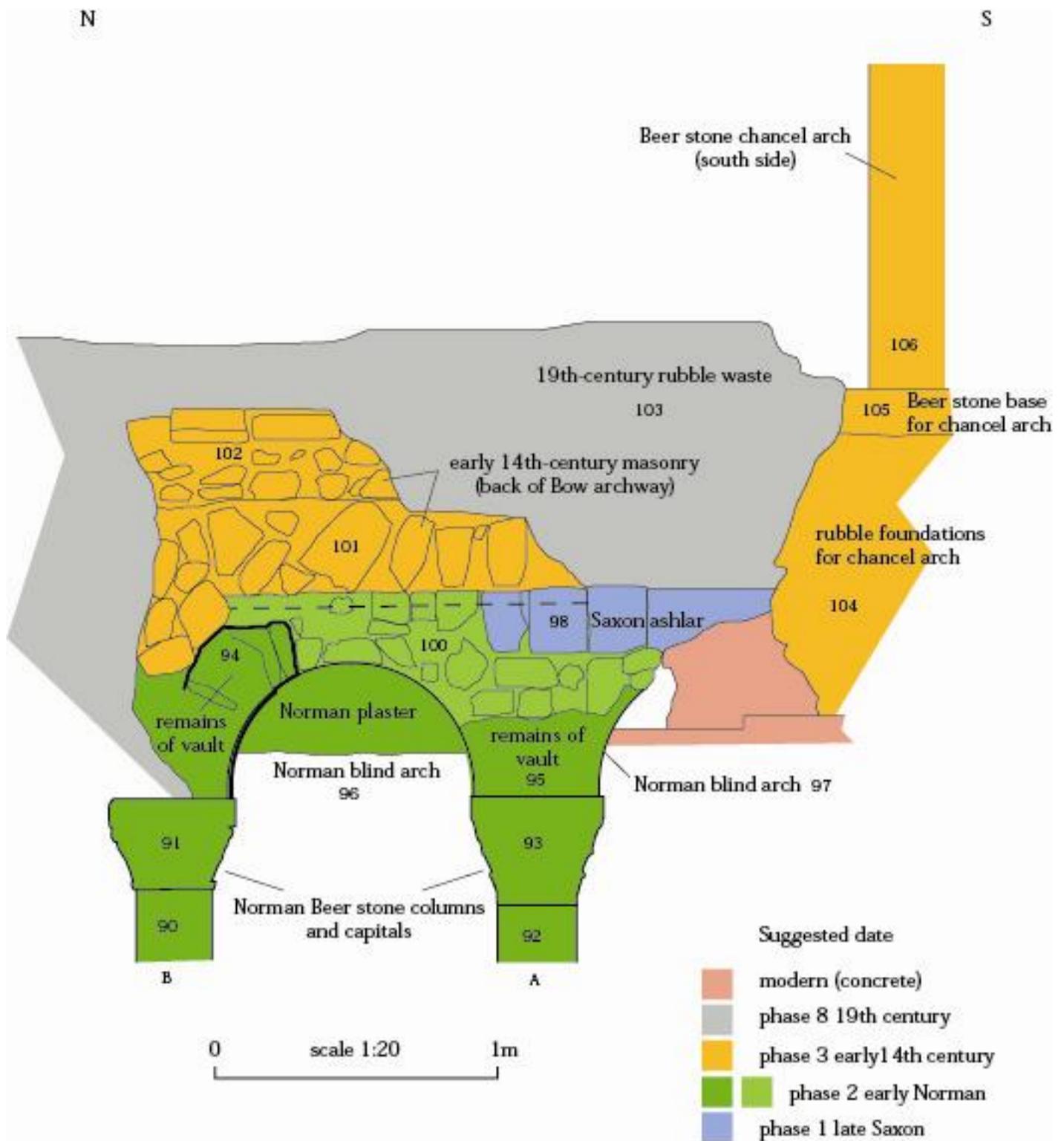


Fig. 14 Elevation of masonry excavated beneath chancel arch, looking east.

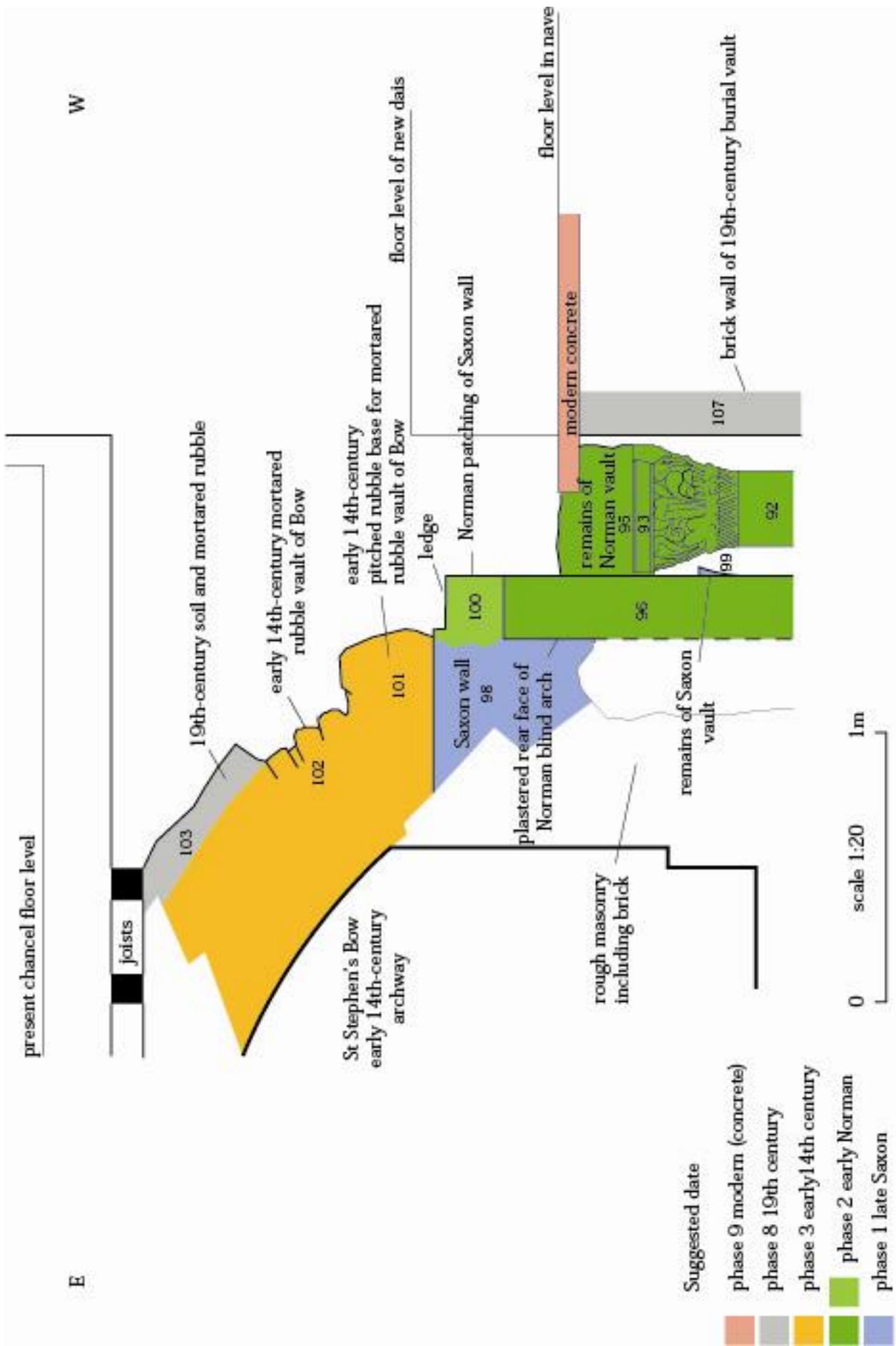


Fig. 15 Section through masonry excavated beneath chancel arch, looking south.

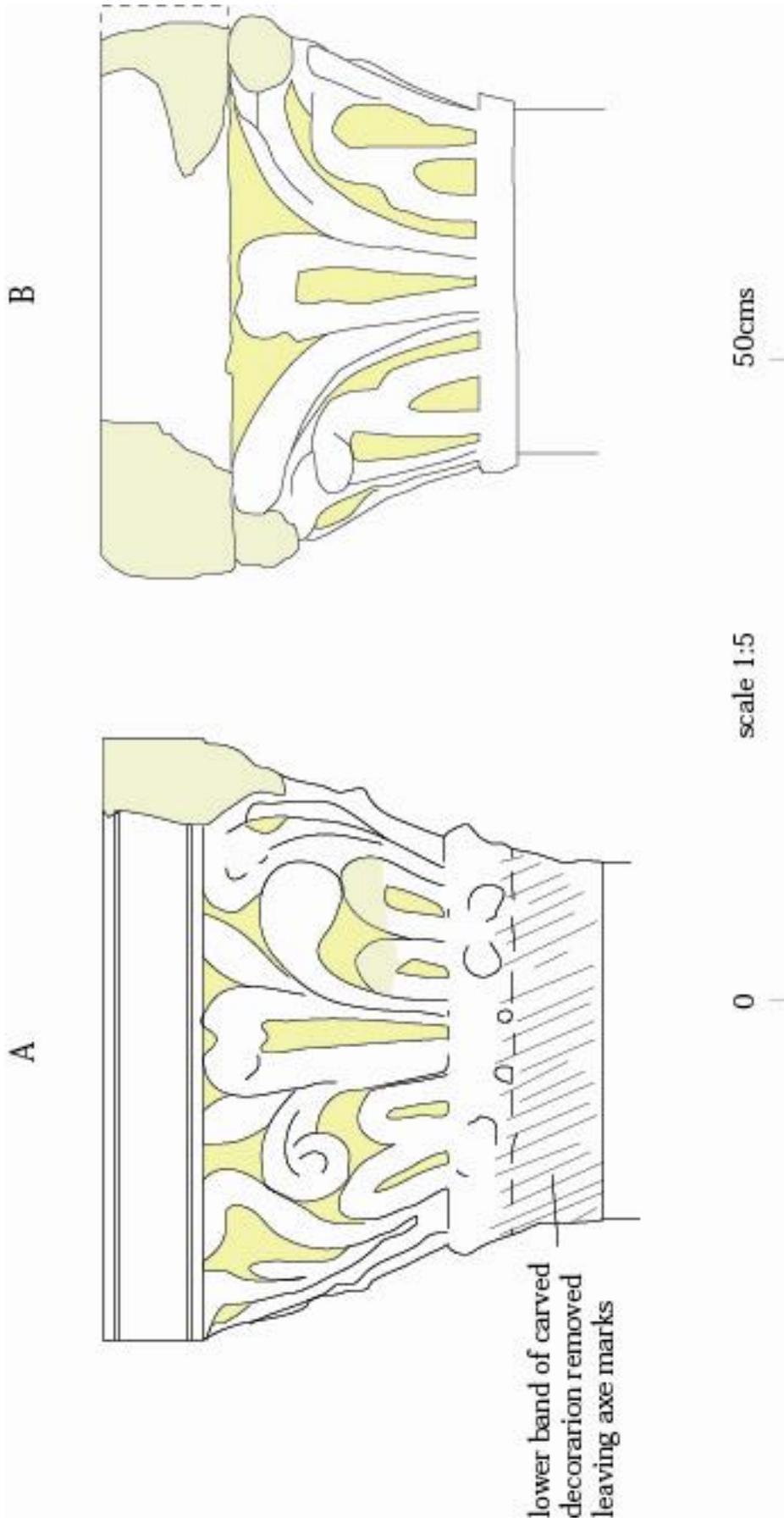
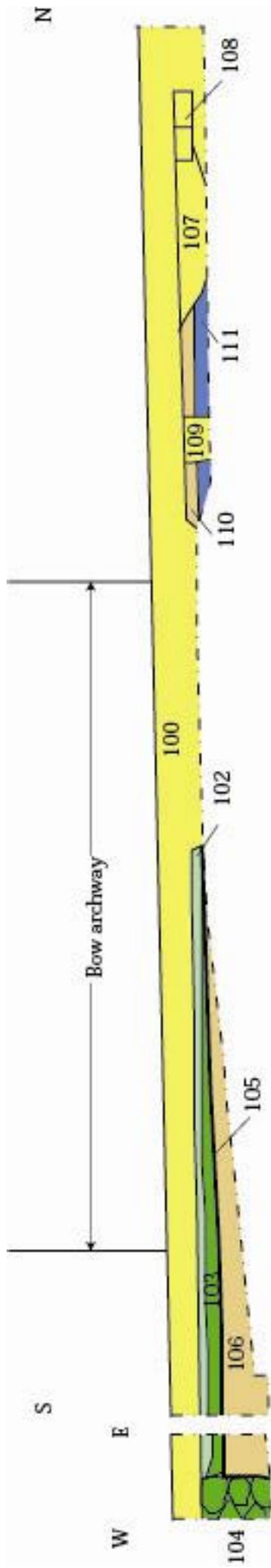
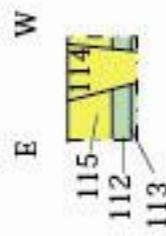


Fig16 Record drawing of the two early Norman capitals A and B.



a) section of trench 5 for new water pipe through Bow archway, looking west.



b) section of trench 6 for new electric connection, looking south.

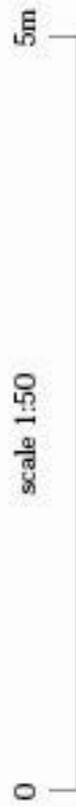
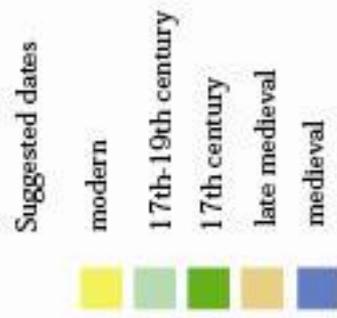


Fig. 17 Sections of trenches 5 and 6 for new underground services.

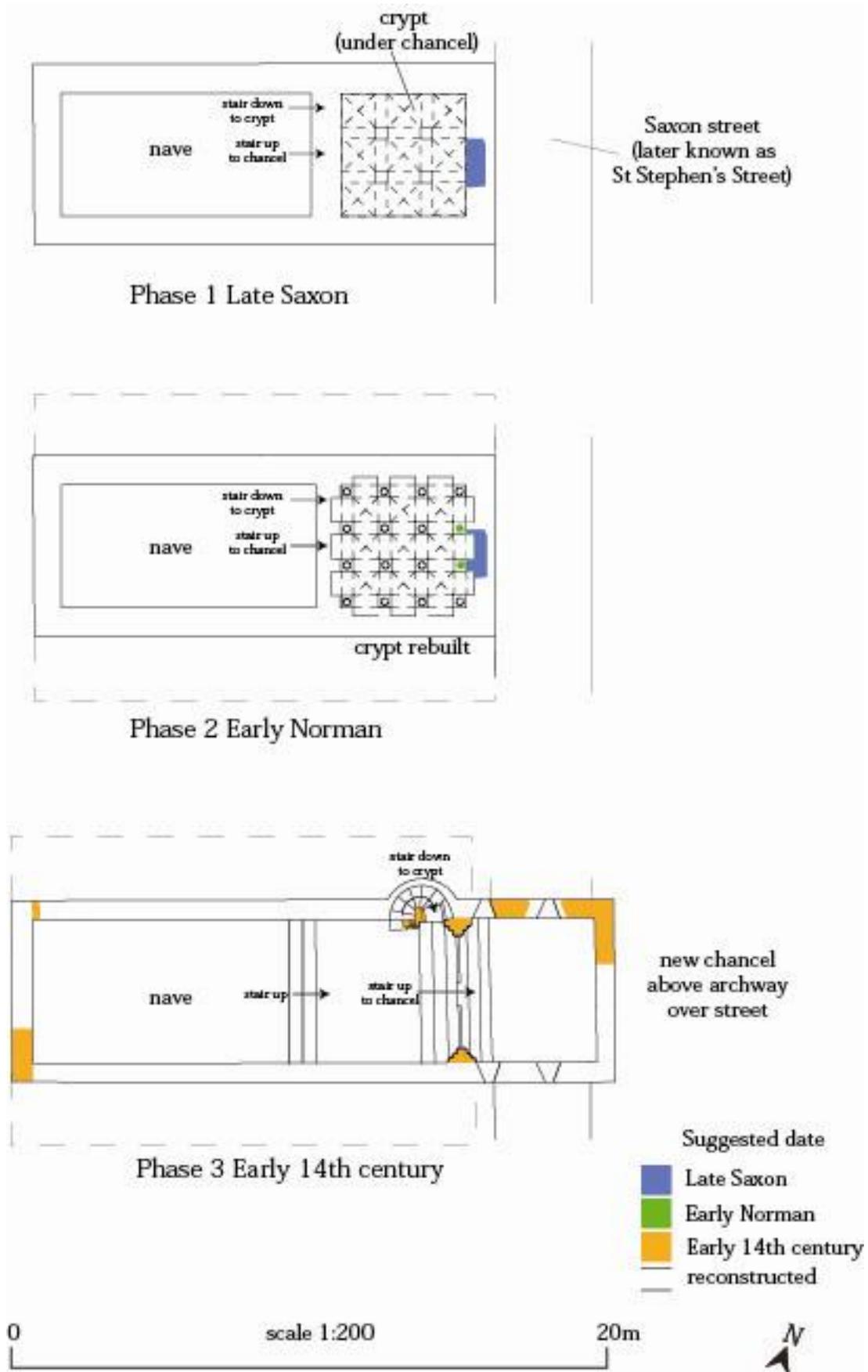
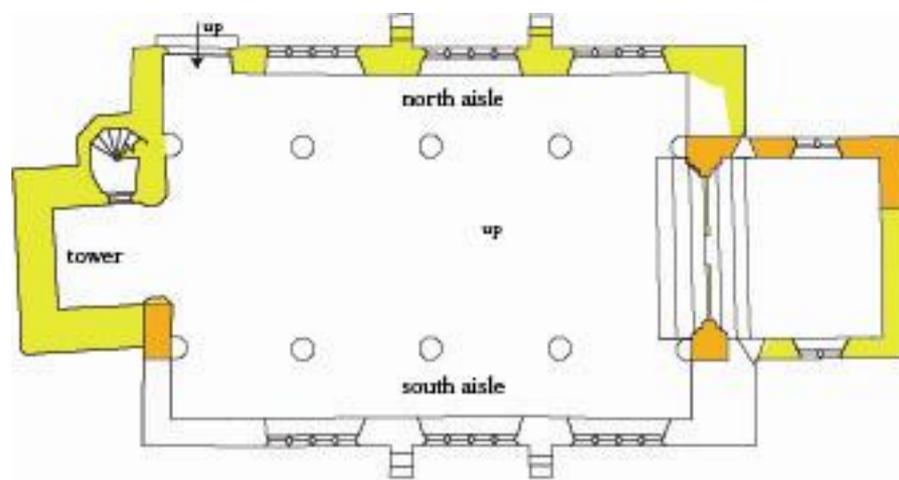
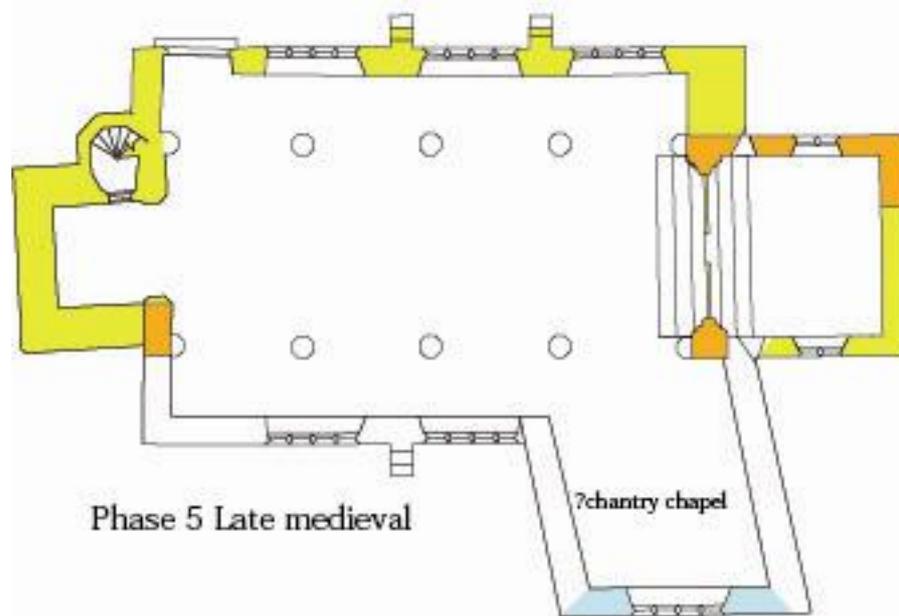


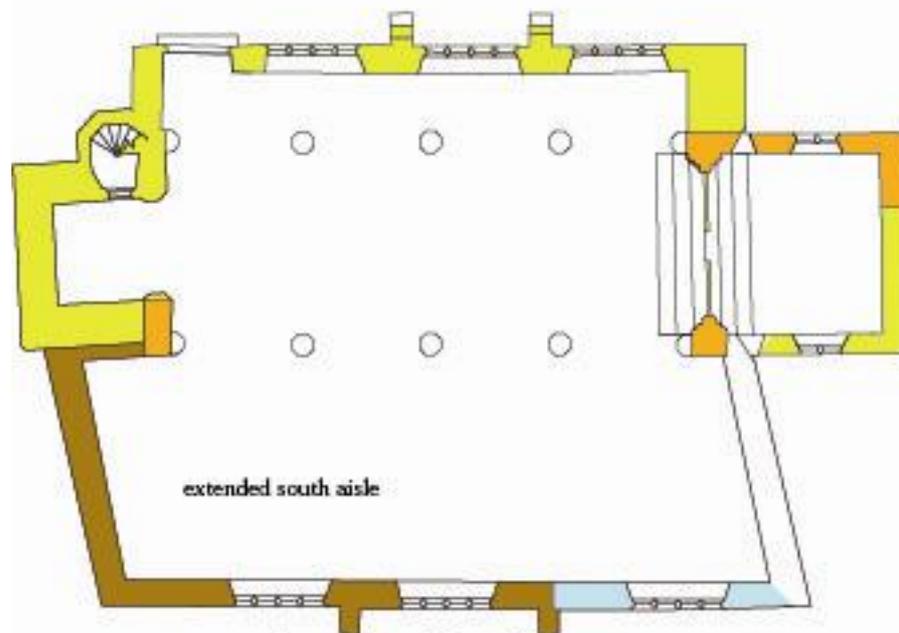
Fig. 18 Phase plans 1-3.



Phase 4 15th century



Phase 5 Late medieval



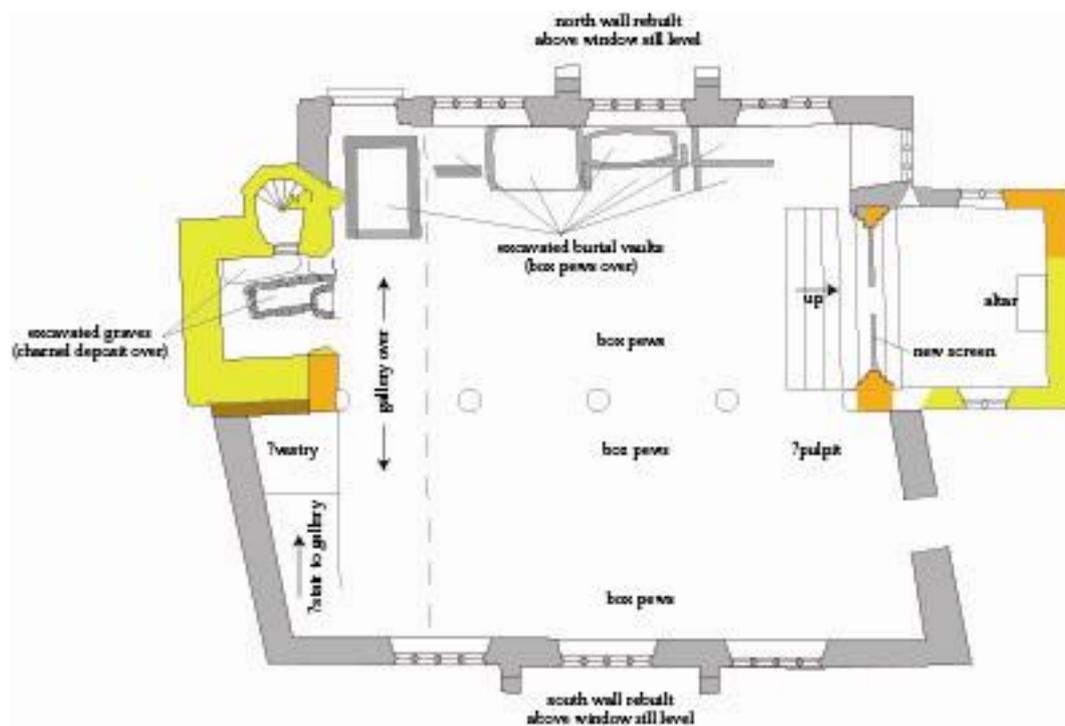
Phase 6 15th/16th century

- Suggested date
- Early 14th century
  - 15th century
  - Early 16th century
  - Late 16th century
  - reconstructed

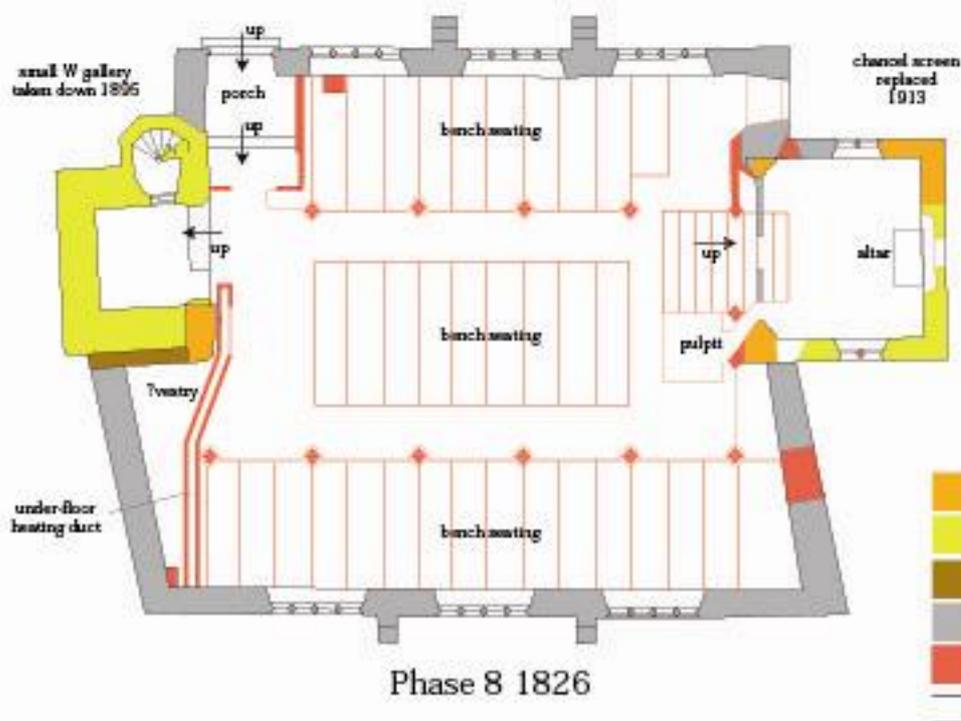
0 scale 1:200 20m



Fig. 19 Phase plans 4-6.



Phase 7 c. 1660-5  
and excavated late 17th - early 19th-century burials



Phase 8 1826

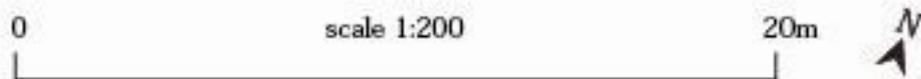


Fig. 20 Phase plans 7 and 8.



Plate 1 St. Stephen's Church, looking southwest.



Plate 2 St Stephen's Church, looking northwest.



Plate 3 One of the three 17th-century windows in the front (north) wall, looking south.



Plate 4 The 17th-century doorway at the west end of the front (north) wall, looking south.



Plate 6 The 19th- or early 20th-century Bath stone window above the front (north side) of the Bow archway, looking south.



Plate 5 The small 14th-century stair window in the front (north) wall of the Bow archway (to left of drain pipe), looking southwest.



Plate 7 The east side of the Bow archway, showing impost course, looking northeast.

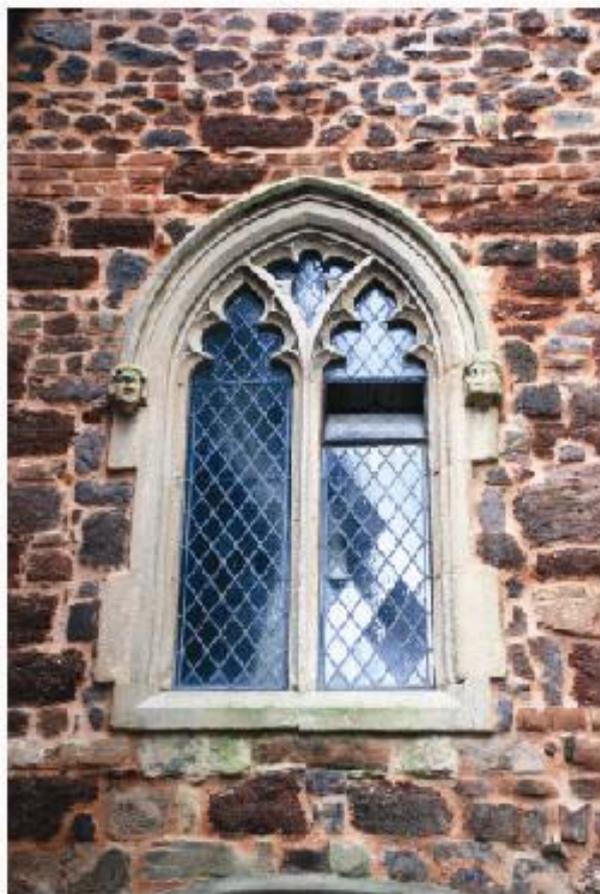


Plate 8 The 19th- or early 20th-century Bath stone window over the back (south side) of the Bow archway, looking north.





Plate 11 The early 14th-century chancel arch, looking southwest.



Plate 12 The rubble footings beneath the north side of the chancel arch, looking east.



Plate 13 The rubble footings beneath the south side of the chancel arch, looking south.



Plate 14 The north side (west face) of the chancel arch rebuilt in the 17th century, looking northeast.



Plate 15 The north side (west face) of the chancel arch rebuilt in the 17th century, looking northeast.



Plate 16 Remains from the 17th-century window in the east wall of the south aisle, showing part of its round head, looking northeast.



Plate 17 Blocked 17th-century window with timber lintel high up in the east wall of the north aisle, looking east.



Plate 18 Area of whitewashed wall plaster with curved upper edge marking position of former ceiling at the east end of the north aisle, looking southeast.



Plate 19 Remnants of plaster with patches of whitewash surviving at the east end of the south aisle, with curved upper edge marking position of former ceiling, looking east. Also, Phase 8 ledge h.



Plate 20 Top of 15th-century tower arch, looking southwest.



Plate 21 Evidence for former roof. Socket k, external render l and whitewashed plaster m surviving in the roof space at the west end of the nave, looking northwest.



Plate 22 Area of whitewashed plaster surviving at the west end of the south aisle. Its curved upper edge (n) marks the position of the former ceiling. Also, at a lower level, secondary ceiling line (o) looking southwest.



Plate 23 Scar of a former wall which once projected eastward from the west end of the nave, looking west.



Plate 24 The re-arch of one of the windows in the front (north) wall, looking north. The re-arch is made up of re-used Beer stone fragments from an earlier window.



Plate 25 The church interior during works showing ledger stones, looking northwest.



Plate 26 The present paneling in the north aisle, made up of re-used panels from 18th-century box pews, looking north.



Plate 27 One of the infilled notches where once the backs of 19th-century bench seats were fixed to the paneling in the north aisle, looking northwest.



Plate 28 Excavation in the tower basement showing stone-lined graves 7 & 8, looking west.



Plate 29 Excavated medieval wall footing 58, looking west.



Plate 30 Excavated late medieval stepped footings 59 for north wall of the north aisle, looking north.



Plate 31 Excavated 18th- and early 19th-century brick-lined burial vaults in the north aisle, looking west.



Plate 32 Burial vault 53, which unusually is aligned north to south, looking north.



Plate 34 Excavated stone pier 81 which probably formed the central column of a medieval stair leading down to the crypt, looking northeast.



Plate 33 Burial vault 53 showing lead coffins aligned north to south, looking south.



Plate 35 The crypt excavation showing early Norman arched recess 96, looking northeast.



Plate 36 The crypt excavation showing early Norman arched recess 96 and the tops of the two capitals to each side, looking east.



Plate 37 Early Norman capital A, showing carved detail and diagonal axe marks at the bottom, looking south.



Plate 38 Early Norman capital B, showing carved detail and plastered face of the vault above, looking north.