



St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset

Observations and Recording



Report No. 53355/3/1

March 2012

St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording During New Gas
Supply and Other Services, September-October 2011

Report No. 53355/3/1

March 2012

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Table of Contents

Project Report Summary Page	iv
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Part 1: Introduction

1.1 Project Introduction	1
1.2 Brief	1
1.3 Site Location and Topography	1
1.4 Geology	1
1.5 Archaeological and Historical background	1
1.6 Aims and Objectives.....	2
1.7 Fieldwork	2
1.8 Methods.....	2
1.9 Archive and Dissemination	3

Part 2: Results

2.1 Natural Deposits.....	3
2.2 Layer 100/101.....	3
2.3 Stone Drain 109	4
2.4 Soil Deposits 104 and 104	4
2.5 Graveyard Soil.....	4
2.6 Graves	4
2.7 Modern Church Path.....	5

Part 3: Finds

3.1 Finds	5
3.2 Iron	5
3.3 Pottery (Lorraine Mephram)	5
3.4 Clay Tobacco Pipe	7
3.5 Ceramic Building Material	7
3.6 Stone Building Material.....	8
3.7 Shale.....	8
3.8 Flaked Stone	8
3.9 Glass.....	9
3.10 Animal Bone.....	9
3.11 Marine Shell	9

Part 4: Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion.....	9
4.2 Conclusions	9

Part 5: References	10
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Figures

1 Location plan	11
2 Plan of Archaeological Observations.....	12
3 Plan of observations showing archaeological features close to the church.....	13

Plates

1 Trenching works adjacent to the West Tower and South Aisle.....	14
2 Trenching works west of the West Tower	14
3 In situ limestone marker south west of the West Tower	14
4 Drain 109. View from the east	15
5 Skull 106 (Grave 104) adjacent to the West Tower	15
6 Skeletons 114 (Grave 113) and 117 (Grave 116)	15

Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terrains1-110791		
Project Title	New Gas Supply and other services, St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth		
Short Description of Project	An archaeological watching was carried out by Terrain Archaeology during on groundworks associated with new services at St Andrew's parish church, Preston, Weymouth in September and October 2011. The observations revealed four medieval or early post-medieval uncoffined human burials near the North Porch, and a skull potentially belonging to a fifth uncoffined burial was noted immediately northwest of the West Tower. Several episodes of levelling and dumping were recorded around the western end of the church and may be associated with different phases of alteration of the building in the 16 th and 19 th centuries. The service trenching was not sufficiently deep to establish with any certainty whether undisturbed graveyard soils underlie the dumped deposits.		
Project Dates	Start: 19-09-2011	End: 5-10-2011	
Previous/Future Work	No/No		
Project Code	53355		
Monument Type and Period	Grave (medieval); Grave (post-medieval)		
Significant Finds	Pottery (medieval); Floor Tile (medieval)		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ Weymouth and Portland/Weymouth		
Site Address	St Andrew's Church, Preston, 4 Church Rd, Preston, Weymouth, DT3 6BU		
Site Coordinates	SY 7058 8296		
Site Area	135 m ²		
Height OD			
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Andrew's Church, Preston with Sutton Poyntz		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.
Contents	Ceramics, glass	Digital photography	context sheets, photographs, plans, report

St Andrew's Church, Preston, Weymouth, Dorset Archaeological Observations and Recording During New Gas Supply and Other Services, September-October 2011

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by The PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Andrew's Church, Preston with Sutton Poyntz to undertake archaeological observations and recording during groundworks associated with modification of gas, electricity and water supplies, and creation of a new rainwater drain at the Grade II* listed parish church of St Andrew, Church Road, Preston, Weymouth (Figure 1, hereafter referred to as 'the site').

'Archaeological observations and recording', also more colloquially known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) as "a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive" (IfA 2008).

Fieldwork was carried between the 19th September and the 5th October 2011 by Mike Trevarthen (AlfA)

Medieval pottery was assessed by Lorraine Mephram, MlfA (Wessex Archaeology). The project was managed for Terrain Archaeology by Peter S. Bellamy (MlfA).

Terrain Archaeology gratefully acknowledges cooperation, support and assistance of the Reverend Tim West and the groundworkers during the project.

1.2 Brief

No written brief was issued by, or on behalf of, the Salisbury Diocesan Advisory Committee (DAC).

1.3 Site Location and Topography

The site (centred on OS NGR SY 7058 8296) lies on gently southwest sloping ground on the south east side of Preston village, west of Church Road. The West Tower appears to rest on a low raised terrace or promontory, which is potentially of artificial origin. The eastern end of the church is deeply terraced into the local hillside. The church and upper churchyard lie somewhat above a local spring line, with the land immediately south of the churchyard prone to seasonal groundwater saturation.

The church buildings are Grade II* listed. The lynch gate and several individual graveyard monuments also individually listed in their own right.

1.4 Geology

The underlying geology is mapped as mudstones of the Kimmeridge Clay Formation. No superficial deposits are recorded (http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

No pre-medieval evidence has been reported from the site itself, but its environs attest a long history of human activity. Numerous Mesolithic/Early Neolithic flints and some Bronze Age cremations have been found to the west and south west of the site (Gardiner 2003). Further Mesolithic material, along with Neolithic occupation evidence, has been found at Sutton Poyntz (Rawlings 2007).

Significant Roman activity is attested from the area with Romano-British occupation remains at Sutton Poyntz (Rawlings 2007; RCHME 1970, 618), a Roman villa at Preston, on the west bank of the river Jordan (RCHME 1970, 618) and a Roman temple, cemetery and further occupation evidence at Jordan Hill (RCHME 1970, 616-7).

Remnants of a banked and ditched field system have been identified from aerial photographs immediately to the west of the site and one ditch has been excavated on the Weymouth Bay Holiday Park (Rawlings 1998).

The Parish church of St Andrew may be an early 14th century foundation, as parts of its Nave, Tower Arch and North Doorway seem to be of this date. The Chancel, Chancel Arch and North Porch were rebuilt in the 15th century. The West Tower was rebuilt and the South Aisle added in the 16th century.

Extensive restoration of the church was carried out in 1855 under the direction of T. H. Wyatt (RCHME 1970, 361). In relation to this work, the editors of the third edition of Hutchins *History of Dorset* note that removal of the font from its former position by the south door (now blocked) revealed numerous fragments of late medieval encaustic tile, of various patterns (Emden 1977, 40-41). Possibly found amongst these (but nevertheless known to come from St Andrew's) is an Italianate tile now in the Victoria and Albert Museum and made originally for Sir William Sharington (d.1553), and bearing his badge (a scorpion) and his initials (Emden 1977, 16).

A subterranean boiler house located immediately outside the west end of the South Aisle may be part of Wyatt's 1855 works. The Vestry was built in the 1950s.

1.6 Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the archaeological works were laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Terrain Archaeology 2011).

The aim of the archaeological observations is to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource, including historic built structures, existing on the site.

The archaeological works will observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits, features and historic building elements revealed during the redevelopment to an appropriate professional standard.

The results of the archaeological works will be presented in a report.

1.7 Fieldwork

The groundworks comprised mechanical excavation two trenches for the re-routing the pipework for the installation of a new gas boiler in the vestry to replace the former underground boiler house and the excavation of a new storm water drain trench through the churchyard. The new gas boiler groundworks comprised of a short trench 0.3 m wide and c. 0.6 m deep immediately southwest of the South Aisle to locate the existing gas main (Plate 1), and larger trench about 0.5 m wide and 0.7 m deep from the former boiler room west of the South Aisle (Plate 2) around the western and northern sides of the church to the northwest corner of the vestry (Figure 2). The storm water drain trench was about 0.5 m wide and up to 0.7 m deep, which ran southwards along the western edge of the upper churchyard and through the central part of the more recent lower churchyard extension (Figure 2).

1.8 Methods

The methodology and scope of the works was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Terrain Archaeology in August 2011 (Terrain Archaeology document no. 3355/0/1).

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008), and followed the Church of England/English Heritage document *Guidance for Best Practice for Treatment of Human Remains Excavated from Christian Burial Grounds in England* (Mays 2005) and the Association of Diocesan and Cathedral Archaeologists Guidance (ADCA 2004).

The excavation of the trench was undertaken using a small tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, which observed for the whole length of the trench by a suitably qualified archaeologist. A plan of the course

of the trench and any observations made during the works was drawn on site using taped measurements to the church and churchyard wall.

All features and deposits, regardless of their perceived date and archaeological significance, were recorded using components of Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current AAF guidelines (2007), IfA guidelines (2009) and the requirements of the receiving museum.

A photographic record of the watching brief was maintained in digital format. This record includes specific aspects of its technical detail as well as its conduct and wider landscape setting of the project.

1.9 Archive and Dissemination

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53355. In due course, and subject to the legal agreement of the PCC of the Ecclesiastical Parish of St Andrew's Church, Preston with Sutton Poyntz to full Transfer of Title, it is anticipated that those components of the archive not re-interred on-site, or selected for discard in accordance with appropriate policies will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, which has agreed, in principal, to accept it, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. Deposition of the archive will place it in the public domain.

A paper copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terrains1-110791*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief summary of the fieldwork results will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the next edition of the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. No further publication is proposed.

2. Results

2.1 Natural Deposits

Natural deposits were not positively identified in the vicinity of the church: However, within the new drain south of the church, a subsoil deposit of mid yellow brown clay-loam with common small fragments of limestone lay beneath c. 0.3 m of humic topsoil.

2.2 Graveyard soil

An undifferentiated external graveyard soil (110) was present below modern path makeup deposits in the eastern part of the service trench north of the church. It comprised an unknown depth of firm mid- to mid-dark yellowish brown silty clay-loam, containing variable amounts of small-medium limestone fragments, slate, pottery and redeposited human bone. Layer 110 was partially sealed beneath dumped levelling deposits 103/107 (see below).

2.3 Graves

Five *in situ* (or possibly *in situ*) inhumation burials were discovered to the north of the church building (Figure 3). All were aligned east-west with the head to the west. The absence of coffins or coffin fittings, together with skeletal posture (where seen) suggests all are likely to be medieval or early post-medieval in date.

Grave 104

Grave 104 (Plate 5) was recorded immediately northwest of the north buttress of the West Tower's west wall. No grave cut was seen, and the extents of the grave remain unknown. Trenching exposed a cranial vault (106) within the

grave (0.6 m BGL), indicating interment of an adult or sub-adult, supine and extended, and uncoffined. The grave fill (150) remained largely unexcavated and comprised firm, semi-plastic mid dark grey-brown clay-loam.

There seems insufficient room between the skull and tower footing to permit insertion of a full-length adult inhumation, and the burial may pre-date at least the 16th century rebuilding of the tower (and potentially its original construction). The skull was re-interred at slightly greater depth in order to accommodate the new pipework.

Grave 111

Grave 111 was noted northwest of the north porch. No grave cut was seen, and the extents of the grave remain unknown. Only the extreme right margin of a cranial vault (112) was exposed (0.65 m BGL) in the north edge of the trench, indicating an adult or sub-adult interment, supine and extended, uncoffined. No evidence for the sub-cranial skeleton was seen, and this is assumed to have lain below the base of the trench. The burial was left *in situ*.

Grave 113

Grave 113 (Plate 6) was situated just north east of the north porch. No grave cut was seen and the extents of the grave remain unknown. Trenching exposed the cranium (0.6 m BGL) and upper torso of a moderately-proportioned adult or sub-adult (114), supine and extended with forearms crossed over abdomen, uncoffined. The grave backfill (115) was indistinguishable from the undifferentiated graveyard soil 110. The lower abdomen appeared to have been destroyed or truncated by digging of adjacent grave 116. The skull was re-interred at slightly greater depth in order to accommodate the new pipework.

Grave 116

Grave 116 (see also Plate 6) was located just east of grave 113. No clear grave cut was seen and the extents of the grave remain largely unknown. Trenching exposed the cranium (0.6m BGL), upper torso, right pelvis and leg (117) of an adult, supine and extended with forearms crossed slightly up over abdomen, uncoffined. The grave backfill (118) was indistinguishable from the undifferentiated graveyard soil 110. The skull was re-interred in the same position but at slightly greater depth in order to accommodate the new pipework.

Grave 119

Grave 119 was identified northeast of grave 116. No grave cut was seen and the extents of the grave remain unknown. Only the right margin of the right leg (121) was exposed (0.7 m BGL) in the north edge of the trench, indicating an adult or sub-adult interment, supine and extended, uncoffined.

2.4 Stone Drain 109

Part of an ENE-WSW aligned drain (109, Figure 3, Plate 4) was seen near the northwest corner of the West Tower. The drain is assumed to have lain within a construction cut (108), although the possibility that its creation was contemporary with deposition of layer 103/107 cannot be ruled out. The drain structure comprised two parallel rows of three to four courses of unmortared limestone rubble forming a central channel c. 0.15 m wide. No base stones were present, but the drain was capped (at c. 0.35 m BGL) with undressed and unmortared tabular limestone pieces up to 0.35 m across, and presumably intended to lie below the contemporary ground level.

The drain continued westward beyond the observed area, but appeared to originate within the trench. The drain is not closely datable but must be contemporary with, or later than, layer 103/107 (see below), and pre-date the construction of the existing church path (102).

2.5 Levelling Deposits West and North of the Church

Layer 103 (west of the church) and layer 107 (north of the church) are probably elements of the same undated levelling-up activity. Both deposits were sealed by the existing path 102, and comprised firm (sometimes damp) semi-plastic mid-dark greyish brown clay-loam containing moderate- to abundant angular and tabular limestone rubble, with individual stones up to c. 0.7 m across. Some slate and pottery were found but almost no redeposited human bone was present, suggesting that the soil was imported from a source outside the churchyard. It remains unclear whether or not layers 103 and 107 seal *in situ* burials at greater depth. The discovery of Grave 104 (and also Graves 111, 113, 116 and 119 further east) suggest that this is a possibility.

2.6 Soil Layers South of the Church

Two distinct soil deposits were noted south of the church building. The upper deposit (100) comprised c. 0.3 m of short turf and redeposited firm mid yellowish-brown silty clay loam with occasional small stones and other anthropogenic materials including redeposited human bone, ceramic floor tiles, pottery, slate, glass etc. Below this, layer 101 was of similar character but with frequent small limestone fragments, redeposited human bone and occasional pieces of light grey sandy mortar. No graves or *in situ* human remains were identified with certainty in the works south of the church, but the base of a small rough-dressed limestone marker stone was discovered *in situ* immediately south west of the West Tower (Plate 3). This had been broken off some 0.1 m below the modern turf.

Both soil layers appear to be redeposited – at least adjacent to the church building. The presence of late medieval/early post-medieval encaustic tile in the upper layer 100 suggests its formation relates to the 19th century renovation of the church; possibly representing spreading of extracted internal soils. The lower soil 101 is clearly older, and might relate to construction of the adjacent South Aisle in the 16th century.

2.7 Modern Church Path

West and north of the church building, the modern church path (102) comprises loose 15-20 mm flint gravel over compact yellow-brown loamy clay-sand (with crushed limestone and concrete west of the West Tower) to a total depth of c. 0.2 – 0.3 m. This overlies layers 103, 109 and 110.

3. Finds

3.1 Finds

Artefacts recovered during the course of the archaeological works are quantified below (Table 1). The nature of the groundworks meant that the great majority of these were recovered from mixed mechanically excavated spoil after its removal from the service trenches. It was not possible to collect material separately from soils 100 and 101 (both south of the church), and these have generally been treated as a single entity (layer 100/101). All of the finds assemblages carry a high risk of cross-context contamination. The presence of dumped, probably imported, soils 103 and 107 in the area immediately north and west of the church buildings also means that some finds probably have an off-site provenance, and are functionally unrelated to the church.

Context	Iron	Pottery	Clay Tobacco Pipe	Ceramic Building Material	Stone Building Material	Shale	Flaked Stone	Glass	Animal Bone	Shell
100/101	2/189g	21/223g	6/21g	43/4917g	40/27003g		9/161g	10/15g	2/9g	5/34g
103		4/26g								
107		14/95g			4/1210g					6/142g
110		39/291g	1/3g	2/60g	26/362g	5/585g				1/22
Total	2/189g	78/636g	7/24g	45/4977g	70/28575g	5/585g	9/161g	10/15g	2/9g	13/198g

Table 1: Quantification of finds by context

3.2 Iron

Two metal objects were recovered, both from layer 100/101. One was a flat fragment of cast iron (182g); the other was a possible coffin nail (7g). Both are probably 18th-19th century.

3.3 Pottery

Lorraine Mephram (Wessex Archaeology)

Introduction

The assemblage from St Andrew's Church comprises 78 sherds of pottery (635g). The finds derived from five separate contexts, and range in date from Romano-British to modern, although the majority are of medieval date. None of the finds are securely stratified; the provenance includes dumped or graveyard soils (100, 101), potentially imported levelling layers (103, 107) and reworked graveyard soil (110), all of which almost certainly contained redeposited material.

Despite the probable high level of reworking, the condition of the material is fair to good; the pottery sherds are, on the whole, relatively small, but show low levels of surface and edge abrasion. Mean sherd weight overall, however, is relatively low at 8.5 g.

The pottery has been quantified by ware type within each context, and the results are presented in Table 2.

Context	Ware Type	No. sherds	Wt. (g)	Comments	Spot Date
100/101	West Dorset sandy	1	5		medieval
100/101	Creamware	2	15		C18/C19
100/101	Verwood-type earthenware	1	9		post-med
100/101	Refined whiteware	2	28	transfer-printed	C19/C20
100/101	Post-med redware	4	50	3 base sherds	post-med
100/101	West Dorset sandy	3	18	1 glazed	medieval
100/101	West Dorset sandy	1	9	curvilinear tooling; glaze spots	medieval
100/101	RB sandy	1	6		Roman
100/101	Cheddar-type	2	33	1 rim, 1 base	C10-C12
100/101	Sandy coarseware	2	31	1 glazed	medieval
100/101	Sandy coarseware	1	14	jar rim, dished, internally bevelled	medieval
100/101	Flint-tempered coarseware	1	5	jar rim, internally bevelled	medieval
103	Fine sandy ware	1	2	glazed	C13/C14
103	Sandy coarseware	3	24	1 glazed	medieval
107	West Dorset sandy	3	14	1 with possible curvilinear tooling	medieval
107	Flint-tempered coarseware	3	26		medieval
107	Sandy coarseware	5	55	2 bases	medieval
107	Post-med redware	1	1		post-med
107	Fine sandy ware	1	1	glazed	C13/C14
107	SE Wilts/E Dorset coarseware	1	29	hammerhead dish rim	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	30	233	body sherds; 2 glazed	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	1	4	base	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	1	10	jar rim, internally bevelled	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	1	4	jar rim; internally thickened	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	1	12	jar rim, simple, thickened	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	1	22	jar rim, internally bevelled & finger impressed (dia 160mm)	medieval
110	West Dorset sandy	3	4	slightly coarser variant with rare flint	medieval
110	Post-med redware	1	2	manganese mottled glaze	post-med

Table 2: Pottery by context

Romano-British

A single sherd from soil layers 100/101 (dumped or graveyard soils) was identified as Romano-British; this is an undiagnostic body sherd in a coarse sandy ware. It is clearly residual in this context, a fact reflected in its abraded condition.

Medieval

The medieval assemblage amounts to 66 sherds (555 g). Several different ware types were identified. Perhaps the earliest comprises two sherds from soil layers 100/101 in a hard-fired, coarse fabric, probably wheelthrown, containing rare quartz grains and (leached out) calcareous material. One is from the short, everted rim of a jar; the rim has a simple, slightly thickened profile. Comparable wheelthrown wares are found sporadically over Wessex and the West Country between the 10th and 12th centuries; one potential source is in the Cheddar area (Rahtz 1974; 1979), although the fabric type seen here appears closer to the early wheelthrown wares from Ilchester (Pearson 1982, type A4).

The remaining medieval sherds fall within a potential date range of 12th to 14th century. Most are coarsewares, amongst which three broad types were recognised:

- Relatively fine-grained sandy wares with a slightly powdery feel, a type found across west Dorset. One possible source for these wares was the 13th century kiln at Hermitage, but they clearly have a much wider date range, into the 14th and probably 15th century, as seen, for example, at Sherborne Old Castle (Mephams forthcoming). A few sherds are very patchily glazed, and may derive from jugs, but the only diagnostic pieces seen are jar rims, some internally bevelled, one with finger-impressed decoration. Two body sherds carry curvilinear tooling.

- Coarsewares containing varying amounts of quartz, flint/chert and occasionally chalk/limestone. These are of unknown source, although probably relatively locally made. Similar wares are found in the Dorchester area and westwards to Bridport; they occurred in small quantities, for example, at a nearby site at Sutton Poyntz (Mephram 2007, 60). Again, diagnostic forms are limited to jar rims, one of which is of the convex (or 'dished') profile which appears across the West Country c.1200 (e.g. Allan 1984, 4, fig. 3).
- Coarse sandy wares of a type found widely across east Dorset and south-east Wiltshire. Comparable wares were produced at the 13th/early 14th century kilns at Laverstock near Salisbury (Musty *et al.* 1969; Musty *et al.* 2001), but similar wares were almost certainly produced at other centres within the distribution area, for example around Poole Harbour, from at least the 12th century. Only one sherd is present here, from a dish with an inturned, 'hammerhead' rim, which is a form particularly characteristic of south-east Dorset (e.g. Barton *et al.* 1992, fig. 66. nos. 731, 745).

Alongside the coarsewares, there are two sherds in finer sandy glazed wares, probably from the Poole Harbour area; both probably derive from jugs of 13th or 14th century date.

Post-Medieval

The remaining 11 sherds are of post-medieval date; these include coarse earthenwares (both pale-firing Verwood-type ware and redwares), creamware and transfer-printed refined whiteware.

3.4 Clay Tobacco Pipe

Seven pieces of clay tobacco pipe (24g) were recovered (layers 100/101 and 110). All were unmarked stem fragments, one piece retaining part of the swelling toward the heel. None need pre-date the 18th-19th century.

3.5 Ceramic Building Material

By Lorraine Mephram & Mike Trevarthen

Forty-five pieces of ceramic building material were recovered (Table 1). This material comprises mainly floor and roof tile of medieval and post-medieval date. One piece of Roman roof tile was recovered. Also, some modern (19th-20th century) brick and tile was noted in the upper path deposit 102, but was not collected.

Roman roof tile

One piece of Roman roof tile (163g) was found in layer 100/101. This comprised part of the flat central portion of a tegula, c. 18 mm thick and made in dense, fine, well-fired dull orange fabric. The upper surface bore part of a characteristic curvilinear tile signature.

Ceramic roof tiles

Five pieces of ceramic roof tile of medieval and post-medieval date were recovered. These include two (joining) fragments of tile (presumably roof tile) in a coarse, flint-tempered fabric, from graveyard soil 110. This piece is probably of medieval date, as is a fragment of glazed roof tile in a coarse sandy fabric from upper soil layers 100/101. The remaining two fragments, from layers 100/101 and 110, are in relatively fine-grained sandy fabrics; all are glazed and could derive from post-medieval ridge tiles.

Context	No. sherds	Wt. (g)	Comments	Spot Date
100/101	1	163	Tegula fragment	Roman
100/101	39	4542	Ceramic floor tile	C15-C16?
100/101	2	191	glazed roof tile (ridge?)	post-med?
100/101	1	22	glazed roof tile	medieval
110	2	60	flint-tempered tile	medieval

Table 3: Ceramic roof tile assemblage

Ceramic floor tiles

Some thirty-nine fragments of encaustic floor tile were recovered from undifferentiated layer 100/101. No complete tiles were found but one piece allows the measurements of the square tiles to be reconstructed as c. 140 x 140 mm. Two partial triangular tiles were noted (three fragments), both representing half-squares. The upper surfaces of all the floor tiles were in extremely worn condition, and in most cases the glaze, decoration and the outer layer of oxidised

fabric had been eroded to expose reduced grey core fabric. Where glaze survived (for example on tile edges) it varied from dark- to mid green. Slightly less than half the tile assemblage (17 fragments) showed evidence for pre-firing stabbing or deep conical keying recesses on the underside.

Three fragments retained traces of decoration in shallow-recessed white clay, and these provide the late medieval date for the assemblage. One small fragment bore a row of three circular dots and another retained a relatively common tri-lobate corner motif with central dot outside part of a circular (foliate?) frame. The third fragment was the most noteworthy, comprising part of a well-executed geometric knotwork motif beneath traces of mid- green glaze. An identical tile is illustrated by Emden (1977). Of this tile series Emden notes:

"Unless a more conclusive county of origin is discovered, there may be claimed for Dorset the manufacture of a group of late medieval tiles of special merit in design and competence in craftsmanship. The group comprises five tiles bearing ingenious inter-laced patterns and two border tiles to match (Nos. 186-90, 193-94). These interlaced patterns may have been provided by a scrivener whose craft favoured designs of this sort during the Tudor period for the ornamentation of documents. Associated with them are two other tiles of distinctive design and two more border tiles (Nos. 71, 191, 195-96). They were largely used at Milton Abbey and Fordington. One of them incorporates in its four-tile pattern the shield of arms assigned to King Alfred and the West Saxon royal house. It is possible that these tiles were primarily designed for Milton Abbey, which claimed King Athelstan as its founder, and are connected with the architectural embellishments ordered by the abbey's great builder, William Middleton, abbot from 1482 to 1525" (Emden 1977, 18).

3.6 Stone Building Material

Two broken corner-pieces from dressed limestone blocks (1030 g) with diagonal tool marks were found in layer 100/101.

The majority of stone building material came from roof slates. Sixty pieces of slate (960g) were recovered from contexts 100/101, 107 and 110. These all probably represent broken roof tiles, and potentially encompass a wide range of dates. The slates ranged up to 8 mm thick and several retained evidence of piercings for suspension nails. A single limestone roof tile (1100g) with part of a suspension hole came from layer 107.

A single marker stone (24.8 kg) (Plate 3), possibly a small grave marker, was found set vertically into layer 100 and broken off some 0.1m below ground level. This was 125 mm thick, rough-hewn and 304 mm wide at its base, but dressed to form a rectangular shaft in its upper portion.

3.7 Shale

Five flat pieces of shale (585g) were recovered from layer 110. One piece had a straight sawn edge. Other than this, no original surfaces survived.

3.8 Flaked Stone

Nine pieces (161 g) of artificially flaked stone were recovered, all from layer 100/101. All were unmodified waste flakes. Seven pieces (162 g) were of local grey limestone chert, with two of opaque grey flint. All are potentially of prehistoric origin, although none are chronologically or functionally diagnostic, and derivation from more recent stone-dressing cannot be ruled out in some cases.

3.9 Glass

Ten pieces of glass were recovered from layer 100/101. Three sherds were from vessels with the remainder comprising flat window glass ranging from c. 1-3 mm thick. Clear- and pale green window glass was noted, but other pieces were too laminated or degraded to determine original colour. The glass may range from medieval to recent/modern in date.

3.10 Animal Bone

Two teeth (9 g) from layer 100/101 were both from sheep or goat. Neither is datable.

3.11 Marine Shell

Thirteen pieces of undated marine shell (198g) came from layers 100/101, 107 and 110. The assemblage was dominated by oyster with lesser amounts of limpet. One periwinkle shell and one fragmentary cockle shell were also noted.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Discussion

The results of the observations all relate to the use of the site for the church and churchyard. Although there is some earlier material was recovered, namely potentially prehistoric flaked stone and Roman ceramics, these were in such small quantities that they cannot be taken to indicate occupation or other intensive activity on the site during these periods. They form part of the background scatter of artefacts of these periods found in this area.

A number of finds and deposits appear to relate to the construction and modification of the church building. In particular, there are significant levelling deposits around the western end of the church over 0.7 m thick, which have raised the ground levels in this part of the site. The existence of these deposits raises significant questions about their origin and date (and in the case of layer 103/107 about their purpose). The limited nature of the groundworks have not allowed the relationship between the phases of church construction and renovation, ground levelling, and burial in this part of the churchyard to be determined and the deposits remain incompletely understood. The assemblage of floor tile recovered complements limited existing records of similar finds from the 1855 refurbishment scheme and adds to a corpus of late medieval tiles that are potentially of native Dorset origin (Emden 1977, 18, 40-1).

The survival of four medieval or early post-medieval burials at about 0.6 – 0.7m below ground level in the scarped area near the North Porch and Vestry is somewhat unexpected, and suggests that construction of the Vestry in the 1950s may have had a less severe impact on earlier graves than might otherwise have been predicted. As its terracing and construction impact will have lessened southwards, it must therefore be concluded that the Vestry retains an unexpectedly high archaeological potential for the survival of human burials.

The quantities of redeposited human bone and other artefacts recovered from the trenching diminished rapidly southwards away from the church. Excavation through the southern parts of the 'old' churchyard and the newer southern cemetery extension was archaeologically sterile.

4.2 Conclusions

Although limited in extent and depth, the observations have enabled a basic archaeological characterisation of the site to be made. The work has highlighted a significant difference between the churchyard to the north of the church where there are a number of surviving unmarked burials of medieval or early post-medieval date, and the churchyard and extension to the south where no unmarked burials were found. The lack of a developed graveyard soil and unstratified human bone fragments suggests that there are no (or very few) burials present, which are not part of the regular alignment visible today. Perhaps the most interesting discovery is the levelling deposits around the west tower, which may point to significant modification of the ground levels during either the construction of the church, or more probably, during one of the periods of alteration or repair of the building.

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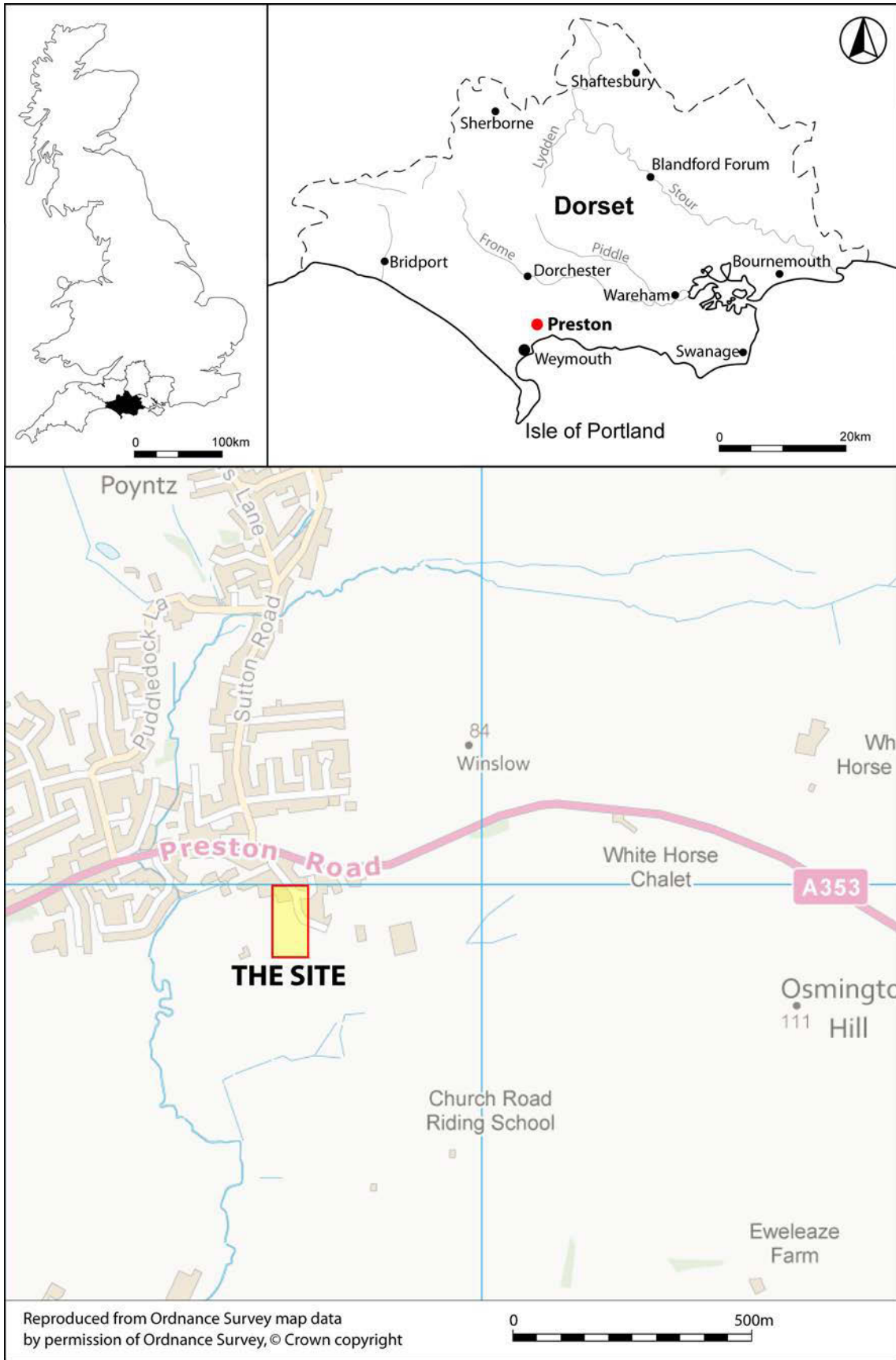


Figure 1: Location map

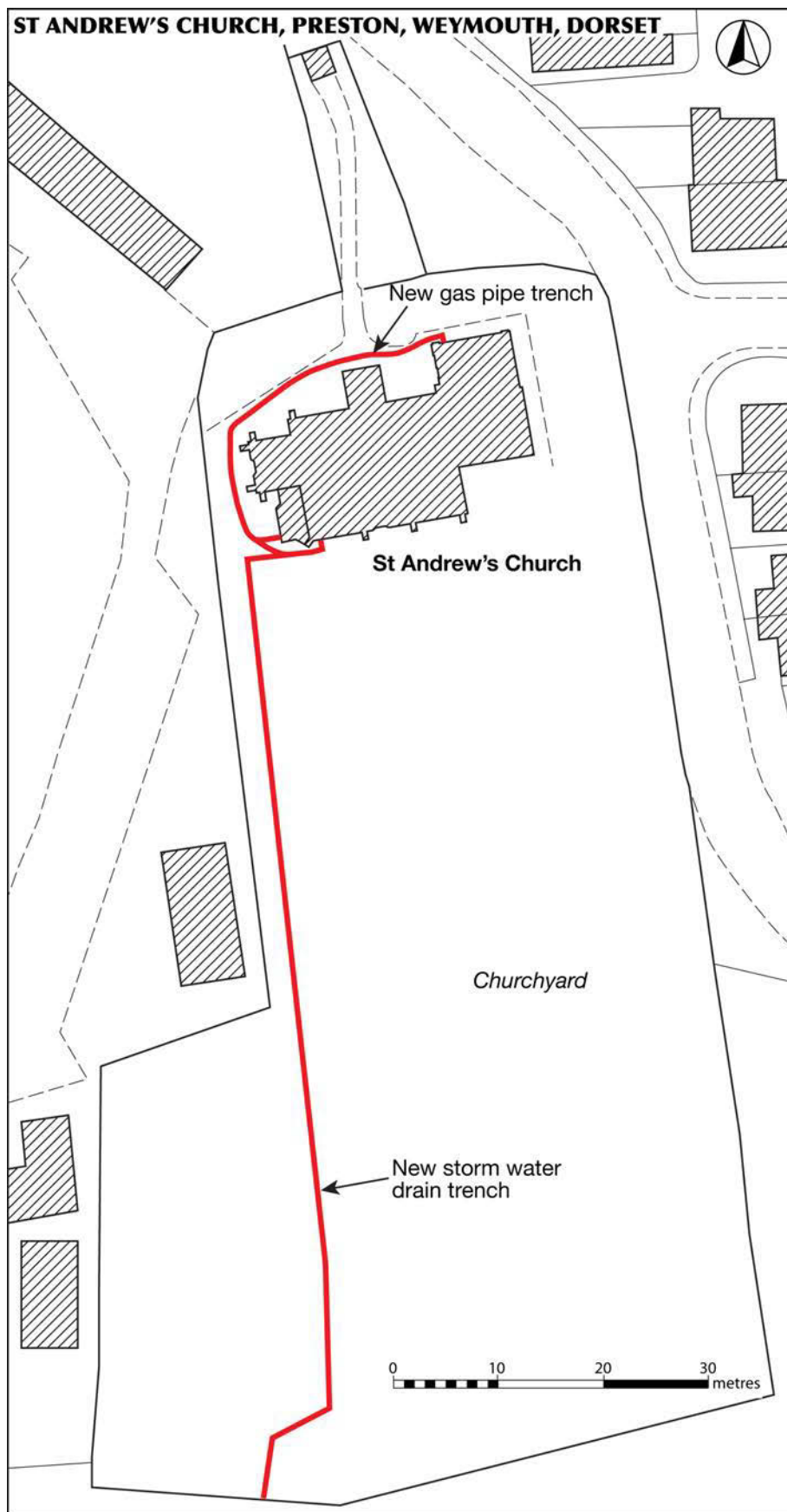


Figure 2: Plan of Archaeological Observations

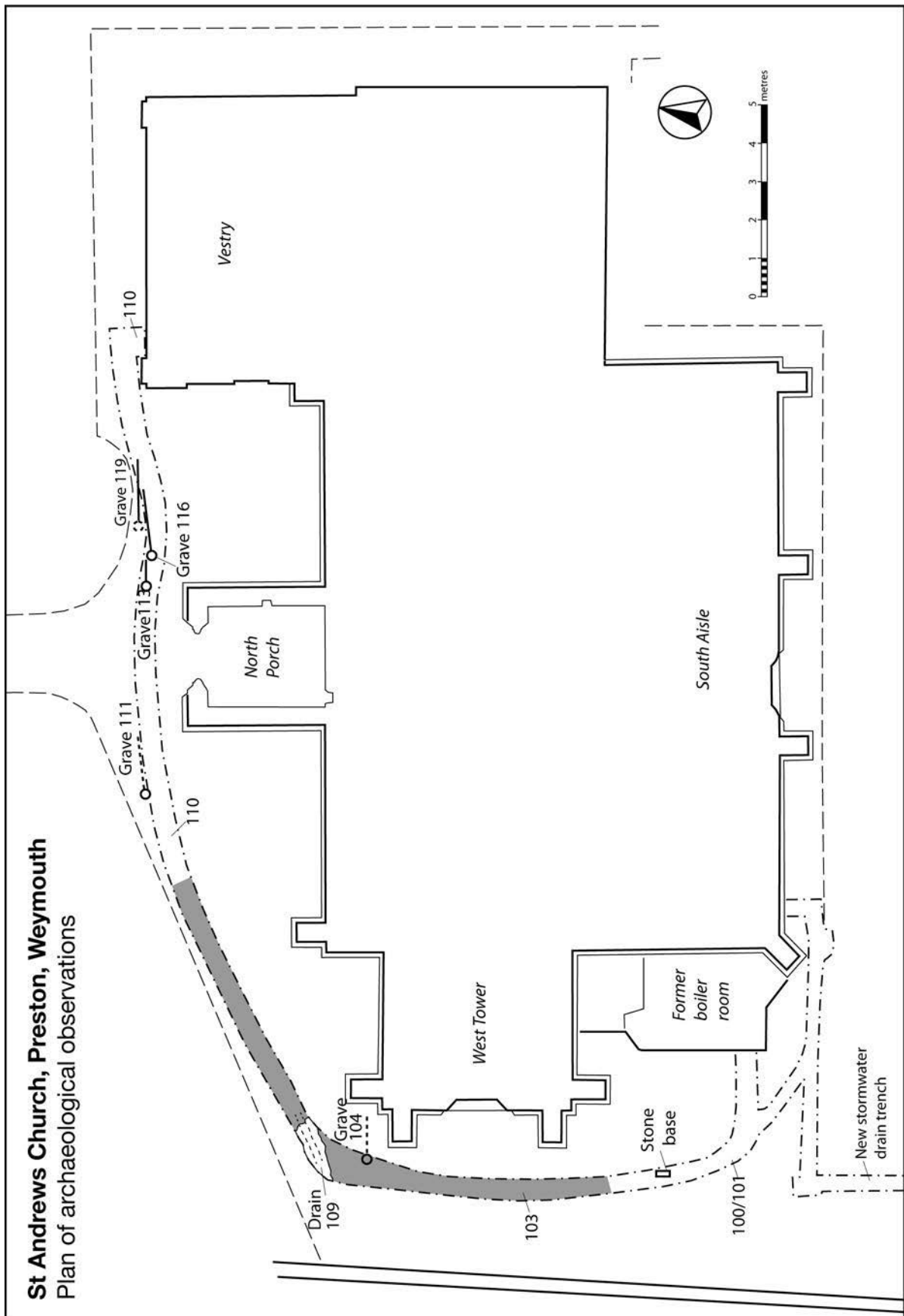


Figure 3: Plan of observations showing archaeological features close to the church



Plate 1: Trenching works adjacent to the West Tower and South Aisle. View from the west.



Plate 2: Trenching works west of the West Tower. View from the north.

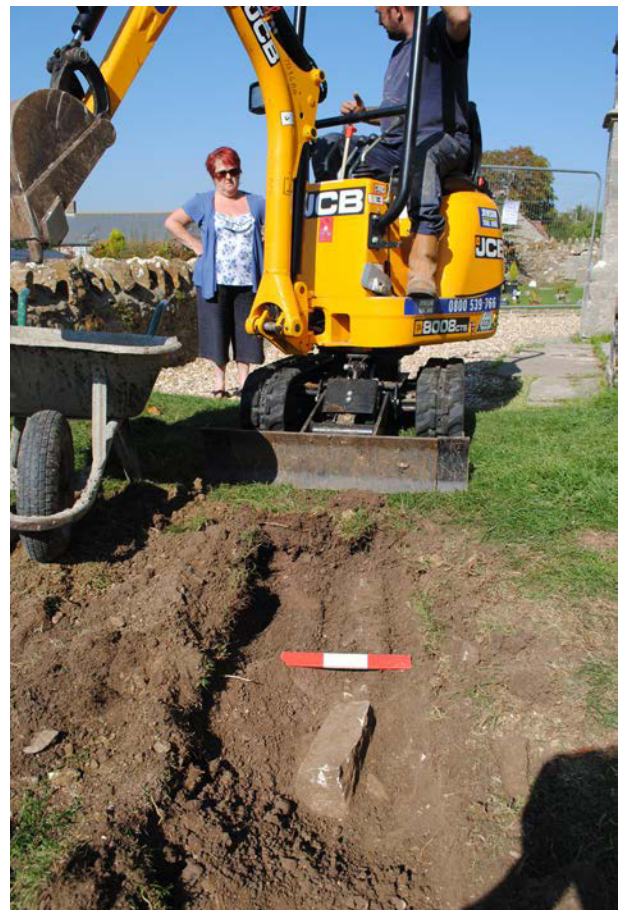


Plate 3: In situ limestone marker south west of the West Tower. View from the south: 0.3m scale.



Plate 4: Drain 109. View from the east: 0.3m scale.



Plate 5: Skull 106 (Grave 104) adjacent to the West Tower. View from the west: 0.3m scale



Plate 6: Skeletons 114 (grave 113) and 117 (grave 116). View from the east: 0.3m scale.