

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**St Mary Magdalen Church, 193 Bermondsey Street,
Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Felicity Howell

Site Code: MMB12

(TQ 3332 7945)

**St Mary Magdalen Church, 193 Bermondsey Street,
Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For the Parochial Church Council of St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey

by Felicity Howell

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code MMB 12

September 2012

Summary

Site name: St Mary Magdalen Church, 193 Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark

Grid reference: TQ 3332 7945

Planning reference: 10-AP-2735

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 24th August 2012

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Felicity Howell

Site code: MMB12

Summary of results: No archaeological features were recorded during the monitoring of external alterations to the western facade of the church and the installation of a new lighting system. Human remains and late post-medieval finds were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London, in due course.

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	Steve Preston ✓ 14.09.12

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An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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Report 12/82

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at St Mary Magdalen Church, 193 Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey, London Borough of Southwark (TQ 3332 7945) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Roger Molyneux of Molyneux Architects, Molyneux Architects, 181 Union Street, London, SE1 0LN on behalf of the Parochial Church Council of St Mary Magdalen, Bermondsey.

A diocesan faculty and planning permission (10-AP-2735) had been gained from the London Borough of Southwark to carry out alterations to the western facade of the church and install uprights along the frontage. The permission was subject to a standard condition (3) relating to archaeology, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work prior to the commencement of groundworks. Dr Chris Constable, Senior Archaeology Officer at Southwark Borough Council, advised that this should take the form of a watching brief, to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that PPS5 has now been superseded by the recent *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012). The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the Borough Council Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell on 24th August 2012, and the site code is MMB12. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Museum of London, in due course with accession code MMB12.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Bermondsey, within the London Borough of Southwark (Fig. 1). The parish church itself is situated on the east side of Bermondsey Street, with the rectory to the south and a fairly large churchyard to the rear (Fig. 2). The site is relatively flat and lies at a height of approximately 3m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of Alluvium (BGS 1981) although this was not seen during the watching brief due to the relative shallowness of the cable trench.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site mostly stems from its location close to the historic core of Bermondsey. A church has stood on or near the site since at least the late 13th century, and unusually, “a new and handsome church” is mentioned in one of the two Domesday Book entries for Bermondsey (William and Martin 1992, 72). However, by the late 17th century the parish church was in danger of collapsing and so it was demolished. A new church was subsequently built on the site, and much of the existing structure dates from this rebuilding, although there have been various additions and alterations from the late 17th century onwards. Despite this, the church still retains many of its original 17th-century features.

Objectives and methodology

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks immediately adjacent to the west façade of the church. This was to involve the archaeological monitoring the excavation of a cable trench for new uprights along the frontage. Other works inside the church were covered by a faculty and did require archaeological monitoring. Sufficient time was to be allowed within the developer’s and groundworker’s schedules to record any archaeological features revealed.

Results

The cable trench was excavated by hand along the western frontage of the church, along with six small pits for the new uprights (Fig. 3). All of these excavations took place along the front of the church, in an area of flagstones, which are higher than the adjacent pavement (Pl. 1). Much of the cable trench was just 0.08m wide, although it was much wider (0.5m) at the southern end where it entered the church. The trench was 16.75m long and up to 0.2m deep, with flagstones and their bedding layer being removed to reveal a layer (50) of mid greyish brown sandy silt (Pl. 2). This layer was at least 0.1m thick, and probably represents a made ground deposit (Fig. 4). Some fragments of clay pipe and pottery were recovered from this layer, along with three small pieces of human bone. Numerous fragments of late post-medieval ceramic building material were also noted within the deposit, but were retained on site. Although the pottery found could date from anytime between the 17th and 19th centuries, a decorated fragment of clay pipe stem, bearing the name Critchfield, suggests that the made ground deposit probably dates from the first half of the 19th century.

The six small pits for the new uprights each measured 0.2m by 0.2m, and were up to 0.2m deep. Modern concrete was recorded at all of their bases immediately beneath the flagstones and bedding sand.

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised two sherds with a total weight of 11g, both from context 50, made ground. It was recorded using the fabric codes of the Museum of London post-Roman type-series (Vince 1985), as follows:

PMR: **Post-medieval redware**, 1580-1900. 1 sherd, 8g.

TGW: **English tin-glazed ware**, 1600-1800. 1 sherd, 3g.

Both types are common finds in London and its hinterland.

Clay Pipe by Sean Wallis

Four fragments of clay pipe stem, weighing 10g, were recovered from the made ground deposit. One of these is decorated, and shows its place of manufacture as Bermondsey (*BERMO*) and the makers name Critchfield. The Critchfield family were well known pipe makers, recorded in Bermondsey, Bethnal Green and elsewhere during the early 19th century. Another fragment is a mouthpiece, which may date from the 18th century, based on bore-hole size (Ayto 2002).

Human Bone by Felicity Howell

A total of three fragments (7g) of bone were recovered from the made ground deposit (50). These include a fragment of unidentified long bone, a sternal rib end fragment and an incomplete manual phalanx. No gnawing, burning or pathology was observed on any of the elements. A small amount of green staining was identified on the distal, volar aspect of the phalanx. The manual phalanx is definitely human in origin, and the other two fragments are also likely to be human, based on their texture (Bass 1995). The presence of human bone within the made ground suggests that this deposit may be partly derived from the graveyard which presumably lay around the original church.

Conclusion

The watching brief at this site successfully examined the area in front of the church which was to be most affected by the installation of new uprights. A made ground deposit, probably dating from 19th century, was recorded immediately to the west of the church, beneath flagstones. Human bone fragments within this deposit indicate that the area around the church was significantly disturbed, probably during renovation work in the first half of the 19th century. No archaeological features were recorded.

References

- Ayto, E G, 2002, *Clay Tobacco Pipes*, Princes Risborough
- Bass, W M, 1995, *Human Osteology – A Laboratory and Field Manual*, Columbia
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- Vince, AG, 1985, 'The Saxon and Medieval Pottery of London: A review', *Medieval Archaeology* **29**, 25-93
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 1992, *Domesday Book – a Complete Translation*, London

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OASIS ID: thamesva1-133991

Project details

Project name	St Mary Magdalen Church, Bermondsey
Short description of the project	No archaeological features were recorded during monitoring of external alterations to the west facade of the church and installation of a new lighting system. Disarticulated human bone and late post-medieval finds were recovered.
Project dates	Start: 24-08-2012 End: 24-08-2012
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MMB12-82 - Contracting Unit No.
Any associated project reference codes	MMB12 - Museum accession ID
Any associated project reference codes	10-AP-2735 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Faculty jurisdiction
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPS

Project location

Country England

Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK BERMONDSEY ROTHERHITHE AND SOUTHWARK St Mary Magdalen Church, 193 Bermondsey Street, Bermondsey
Study area	8.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3332 7945 51 0 51 29 51 N 000 04 44 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 2.00m Max: 2.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	TVAS South
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Sean Wallis
Project director/manager	Sean Wallis
Project supervisor	Felicity Howell
Type of sponsor/funding body	Parochial Church Council
Name of sponsor/funding body	St Mary Magdalen PCC

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Museum of London
Physical Archive ID	MMB12
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Human Bones"
Physical Archive notes	temporarily with TVAS in Reading pending deposition
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London
Digital Archive ID	MMB12
Digital Contents	"other"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Digital Archive notes	temporarily with TVAS in Reading pending deposition
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London
Paper Archive ID	MMB12
Paper Contents	"Ceramics", "Human Bones", "Stratigraphic", "Survey"

Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Correspondence", "Drawing", "Matrices", "Microfilm", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section", "Survey ", "Unpublished Text"
Paper Archive notes	temporarily with TVAS in Reading pending deposition

Project bibliography 1

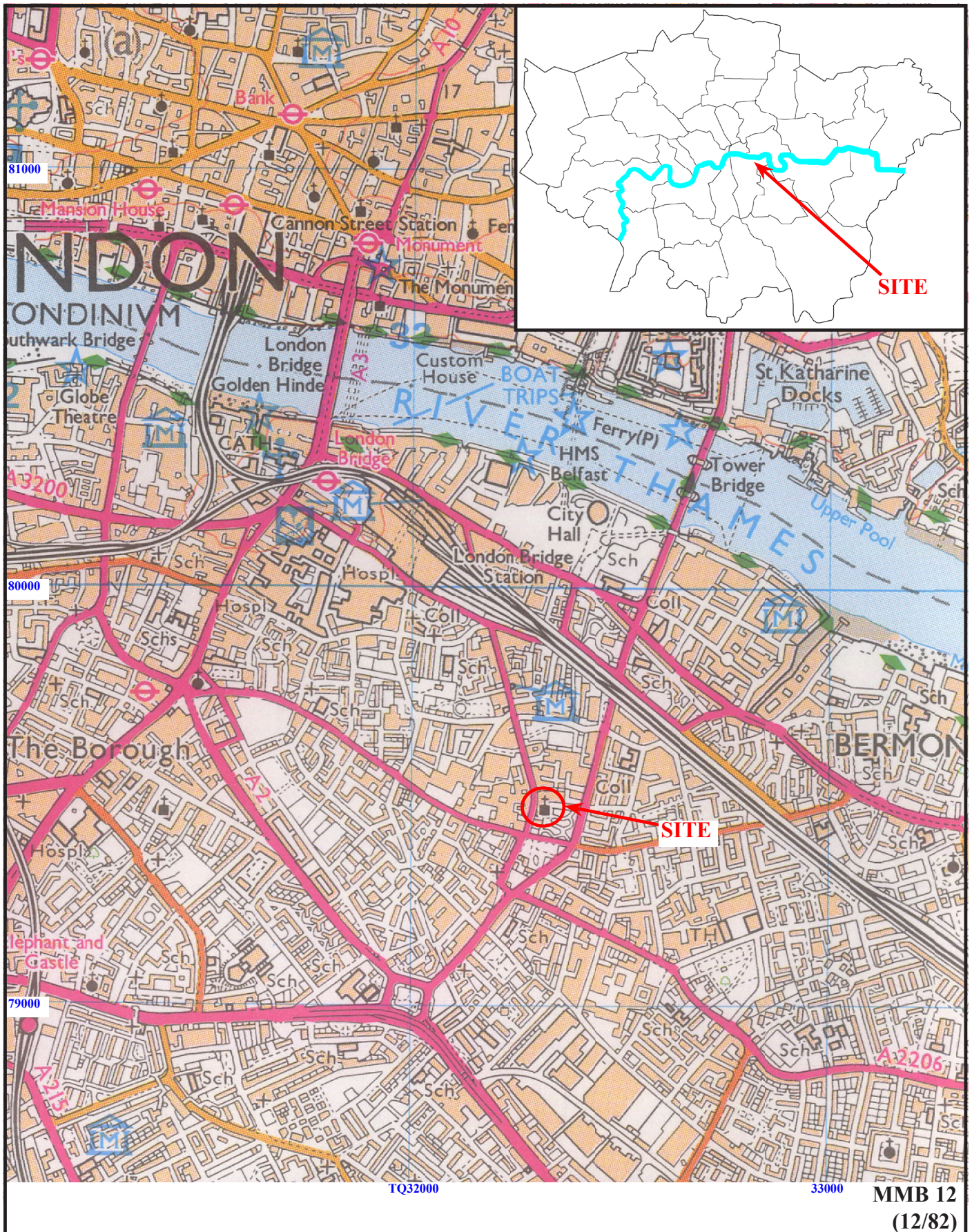
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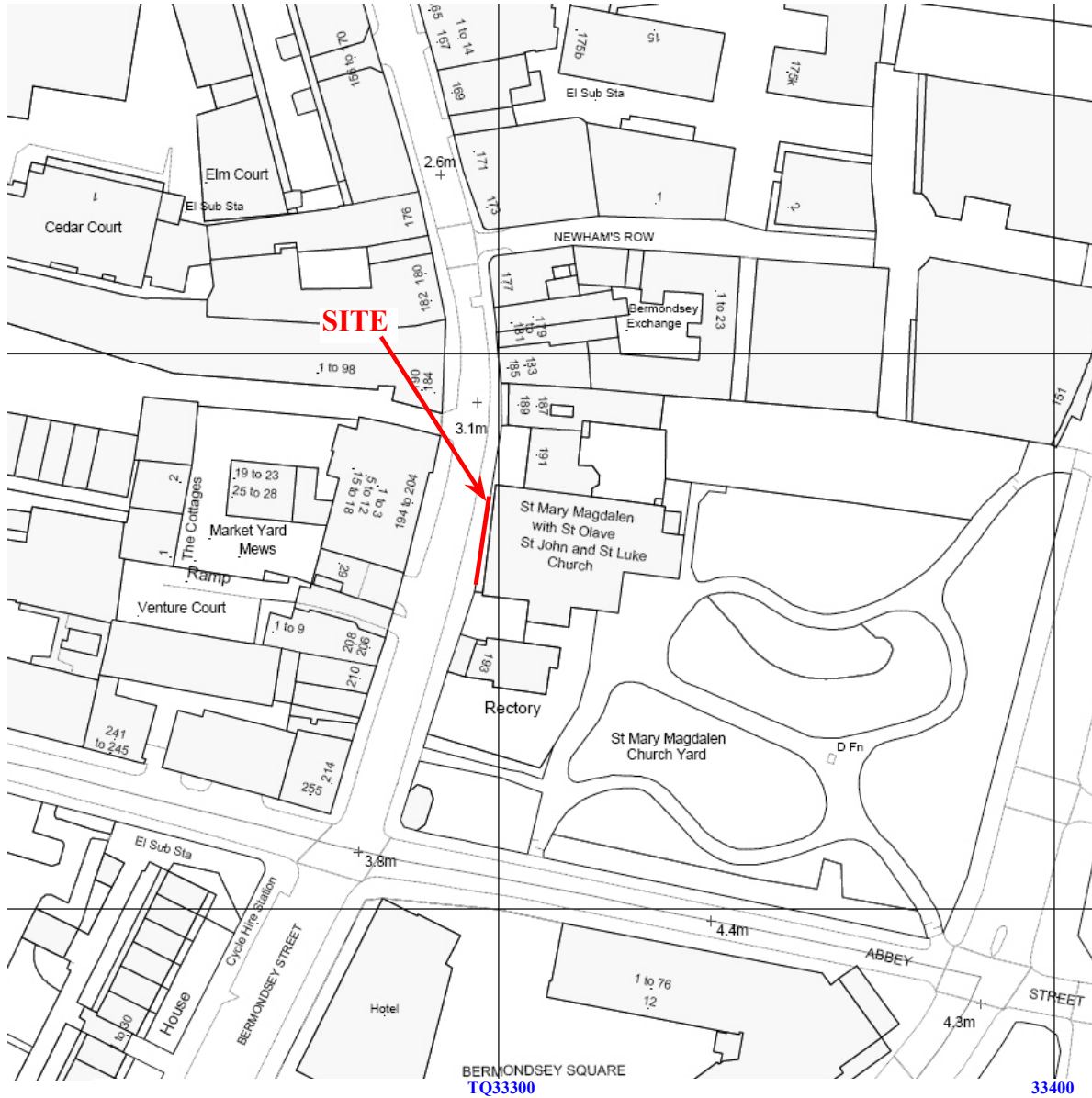
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Figure 1. Location of site within Bermondsey and London.

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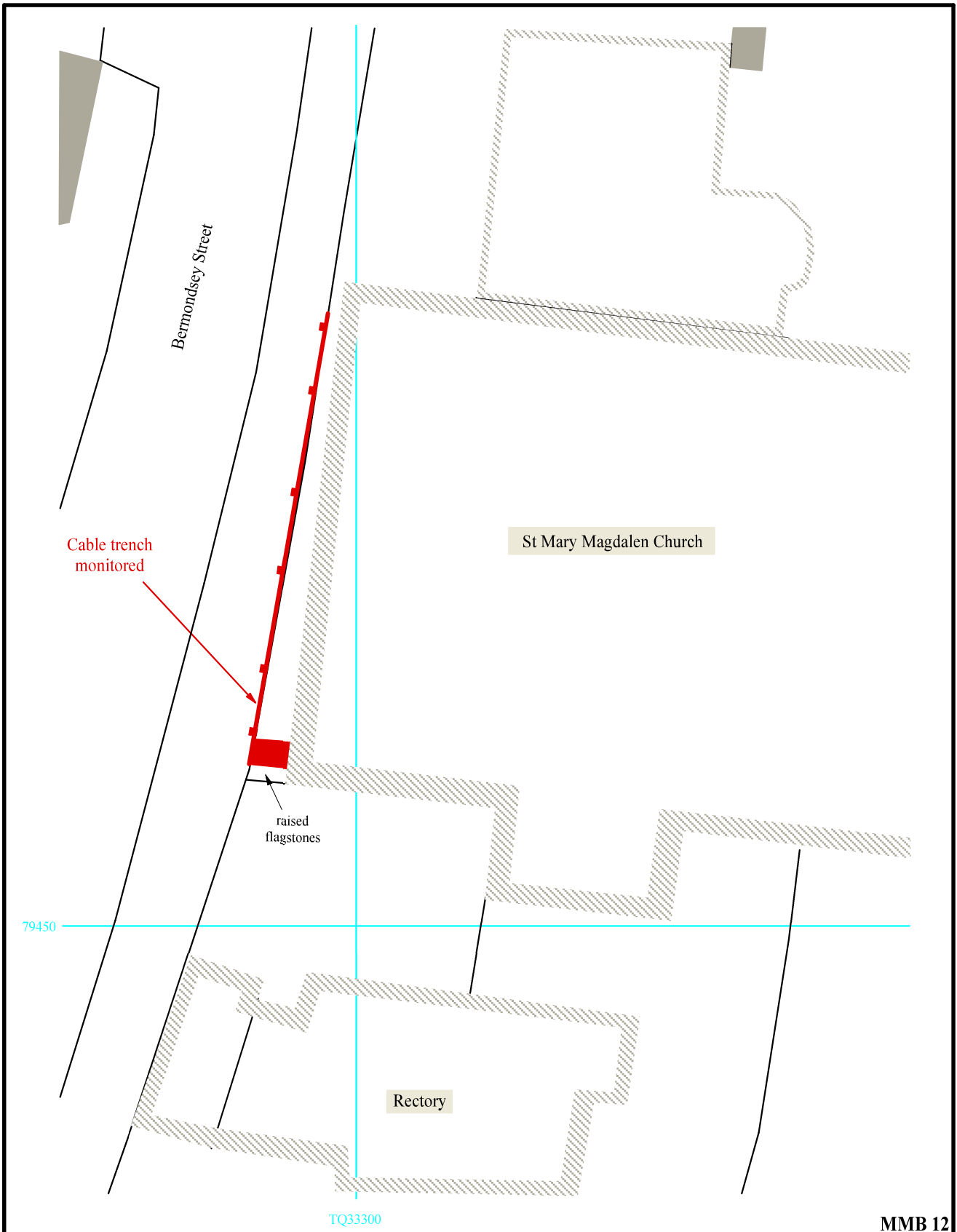
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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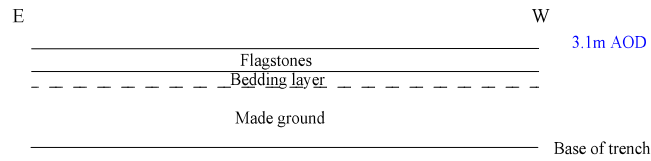
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Figure 3. Location of areas monitored.



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Cable trench



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Area of investigation, looking north east.



Plate 2. Raised flagstones, looking south east, Scales: 1m and 0.1m.

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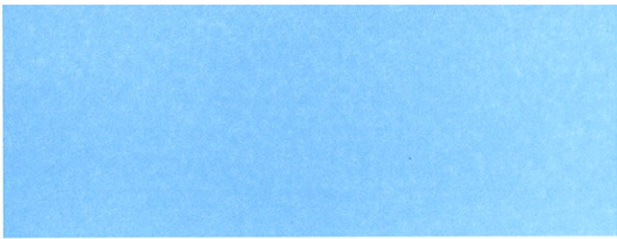
Plates 1 and 2.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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