

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Brixton, South Hams	National Grid Reference SX 55392 52163	Number:
Subject: Archaeological monitoring of works to Southern Boundary Retaining Wall, St. Mary's Churchyard, Brixton		Photo attached? YES
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: Plymouth Museum	
OASIS ID: southwes1-295076	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: BM17	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 8 th -9 th August 2017	
<p>Description of works.</p> <p>Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of Stuart Truss of South Hams District Council (the Client) during groundworks associated with the rebuilding of part of the southern churchyard wall at St. Mary's Church, Brixton, South Hams, Devon. Monitoring was carried out by S. Walls.</p> <p>The site is situated in an area of well drained fine loamy and fine silty soils over rock of the Trusham Association (SSEW 1983) overlying slates of the Middle Devonian Formation (BGS 2016).</p> <p>The southern churchyard wall is c.1.6m high, extending for approximately 60m from the entrance gate to the churchyard to the west and Number 2 The Old Road to the east. The area subject to monitoring is approximately centrally located in this wall, opposite the entrance to the post office. The churchyard wall appears to abut No. 2 Old Road, and is likely a largely 19th century rebuild of the boundary, although it has been subject to numerous phases of repair and re-pointing. A c.4.6m wide stretch of the wall was taken down by hand, under archaeological supervision.</p> <p>It was apparent that the failed stretch of wall had been re-built previously, on at least two occasions, as the original wall thickness appears to have been c.0.55m, but the majority of the portion taken down during these works was only c.0.3m wide, with rubble and soil behind. The wall is constructed primarily out of local slatestones, typically c.0.3m x 0.1m x 0.15m, elsewhere in the wall (but not the repaired stretch) occasional limestone is used, particularly to the west towards the churchyard gate. Elsewhere in the wall occasional blocky stones c.0.4m x 0.2m are visible, but none were apparent in the stretch subject to repair. The wall was largely bonded and repointed in various cements, although the core appears to have a dry yellow-brown silt-clay bond with a soft cream lime mortar bond.</p> <p>The stratigraphy behind the wall revealed c.0.3m deep grey humic topsoil (100), overlying a c.0.3m deep layer of clean yellowish-brown silt-clay (101). This overlay c.0.6m thick layers of re-deposited natural (102). The re-deposited natural is likely to be backfill deposits within the cut for the wall.</p> <p>Finds recovered included 2x fragments of slate headstone with inscriptions; 1x fragment of limestone headstone with inscription (see Figure 3), 1x drinks can; 9x small fragments of human bone and teeth (c.20g); 1x sherd of 19th century yellow slip ware (25g); 1x sherd of white refined earthenware (3g); 3x sherds of late medieval (14th-16th centuries) South Devon coarsewares, including 1x handle (24g); 1x fragment of an iron crucible/ladle (36g); 1x clay pipe stem (<1g); 2x fragments of glazed medieval floor tiles of the Totnes-type with characteristic granite-derived sand tempered fabric including black mica and dating to the 15th and 16th centuries. The human bone and gravestone fragments were reburied behind the re-built wall.</p> <p>Conclusions</p> <p>The archaeological monitoring identified that the southern churchyard boundary wall is probably of 19th century date and that the portion subject to this work has been partially rebuilt on at least two previous occasions. The fragments of memorials recovered did not include any names or dates, but all appear to be 19th century in date. The small quantity of medieval finds is of note, but hardly surprising for the location.</p> <p>Bibliography</p> <p>British Geological Survey 2016: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer</i>. http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html [accessed 04.09.2017].</p> <p>Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales</i>.</p>		
Recorder: S. Walls	Date sent to HER: 06.09.17	

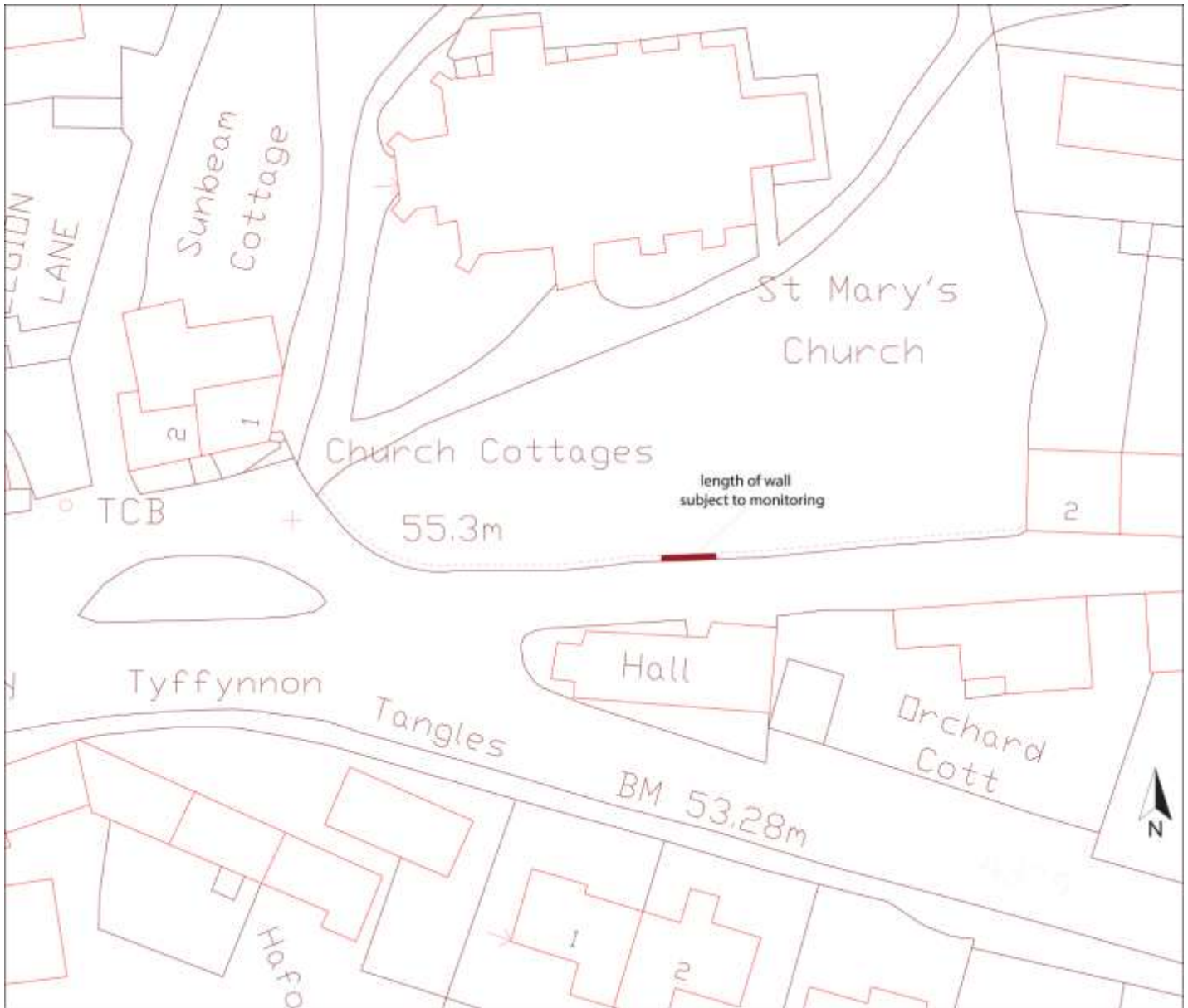


Figure 1: Location map, indicating the length of wall subject to archaeological monitoring.



Figure 2: Left and top right: Photos of the fragments of grave stones recovered from within the build (1m scales). Bottom right: Lucozade drinks can incorporated into a phase of recent (1990s?) repairs (1m scale).



Figure 3: Full extent of wall removal, viewed from the south-east (1m scale).