

# Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

<b>Civil Parish &amp; District:</b> Barnstaple, North Devon	<b>National Grid Reference:</b> SS 55994 33339	<b>DCHET Number:</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Archaeological monitoring and recording during construction of a support-buttress on the north-east corner of Christ Church Methodist URC, Bear Street, Barnstaple		<b>Photo attached?</b> Yes
<b>Planning Reference:</b> 71589	<b>Recipient museum:</b> Museum of North Devon at Barnstaple	
<b>OASIS ID:</b> southwes1-400597	<b>Museum Accession no:</b> N/A	
<b>Contractor's reference number/code:</b> BCCB21	<b>Dates fieldwork undertaken:</b> 22.06.2021	
<p><b>Description of works.</b> Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of David Wilson Partnership (the Agent) on behalf of Christ Church Methodist URC during building renovation works on the church and the creation of a support-buttress for an archway to the north-east corner of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building, on Bear Street Barnstaple, Devon. This work was carried out by E. Wapshott on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2021 in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI; Boyd 2020) having been agreed in consultation with Devon County Council Historic Environment Team (DCHET).</p> <p>The proposed site lies within the parish and deanery of Barnstaple and the historic hundred of Braunton. The site lies on Bear Street, which can be traced through documents back to 1312, when it represented the principle route into Barnstaple through the East Gate. The name is thought to come either from the presence of the 'Bar' or town gate at the west end of the street, or the 13<sup>th</sup> century tenure of the de la Barre family. The site lies within the Barnstaple Town Centre Conservation Area, forming part of the historic core of Barnstaple. Christ Church URC is Grade II Listed. The site is at 13m AOD and the bedrock is the Pilton Mudstone formation.</p> <p>A c.2.10mx1.07m rectangular trench was excavated by hand, removing the paved brick pathway (001) which was laid on a thick bed of sharp-sand (002), 0.15m deep. The stratigraphy of the site comprised: a 0.07-0.08m layer of hardcore chippings/scalping (003), mixed with crushed and broken tarmac or bitumen, some plastic and part of a tin can was mixed in with this, from late 20<sup>th</sup> century; beneath this was a 0.05m thick of lime-crete/cinder-crete (004), dark greyish-white, hard packed, inclusions of coal and charcoal and ash within the lime and cement mix, this was thicker to the east end, c.0.1m. Below this historic surface was a dark black-brown soft-friable clay-silt (005) mixed with organic matter (sticky consistency and slight smell in places) and evidence of building rubble, this was c.0.1-0.15m thick; beneath this was a thin (0.002-0.003m) lens of greenish sandy soil and river pebbles(006) a former loosely packed floor(?), largely removed, abutting/infilling a section against wall {007}. Beneath the wall a further pale grey-brown occupation layer (008) with flecks of charcoal and lime/shell, but this was the limit of excavation (0.6m depth), so the excavation arbitrarily stopped at the required formation level.</p> <p>Wall {007} was exposed in the north-facing section of the trench, so the trench was expanded to 1.5m wide to the east end, 1.25m to the west end, against the wall, to ensure further detailed recording of this feature. The wall exhibited historic structural phasing, to the east end, for 0.95m it was built of roughly shaped blocks, laid in courses in a clay bond, with slate and shale levelling courses packed between, creating tight joints {017}. Some of these stones were exceptionally large, roughly faced to each side of the wall, which was 0.6-0.65m in width. There was then a disturbance line at c.1m and beyond for c.0.55m the wall was of a looser rubble build, incorporating some shaped stones, possibly a repair of the original wall fabric, reusing the same material but also included broken hand made bricks {027}; this had a lime and clay mixed mortar and lime pointing. To the east end, 0.6m, away from the church wall there was a cut [009] which appeared to indicate a rough trench, possibly for services, this was back-filled with hard packed rubble and debris, including some modern rubbish and some loosely packed bricks alongside the church wall.</p> <p>The only finds were 2 butchered fragments of animal bone, probably bovine due to size and form and a piece of chunky (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century) pipe stem all from lime-crete layer (004). These finds were subsequently discarded.</p> <p><b>Conclusions</b> A wall with two phases of build on the line of the buildings on Bear Street is presumably the remains of the structure which was demolished to form the car park area. The potentially medieval (more likely 17<sup>th</sup> century) wall showed evidence of post-medieval repair, possibly when an earlier attached building was demolished and replaced by the church.</p> <p><b>Bibliography</b> Boyd, N. 2020: <i>Christ Church, Bear Street, Barnstaple: Written Scheme of Investigation.</i> British Geological Survey 2021: <i>Geology of Britain Viewer.</i> <a href="http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html">http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html</a> Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: <i>Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales.</i></p>		
<b>Recorder:</b> E. Wapshott	<b>Date sent to HER:</b> 29.07.2021	

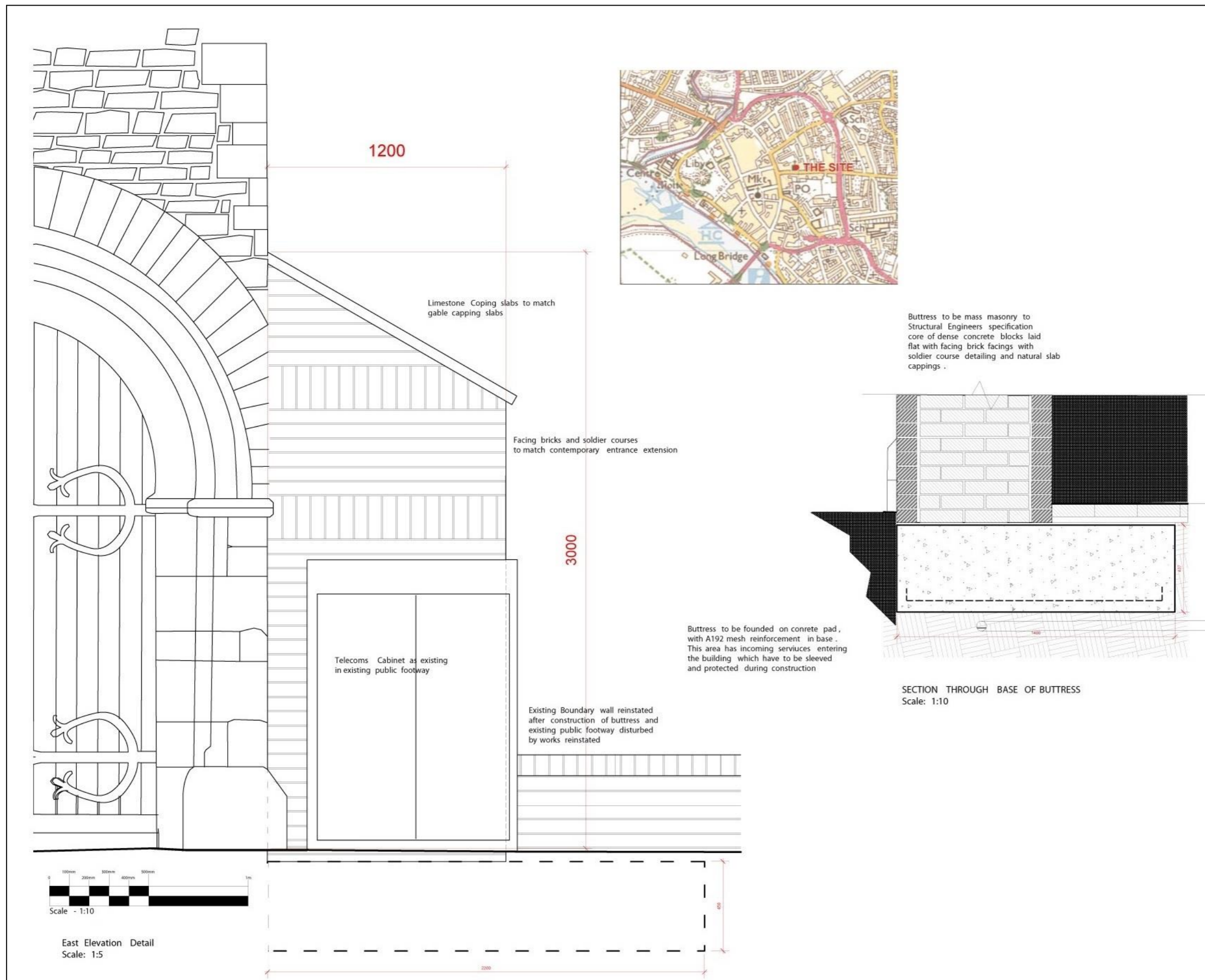


FIGURE 1: BUTTRESS DESIGN AND SITE LOCATION PLAN (BASED ON AGENTS PLANS).





FIGURE 2: STONE WALL EXPOSED IN THE NORTH-FACING SECTION; FROM THE NORTH-WEST (1M X 0.3M SCALES).

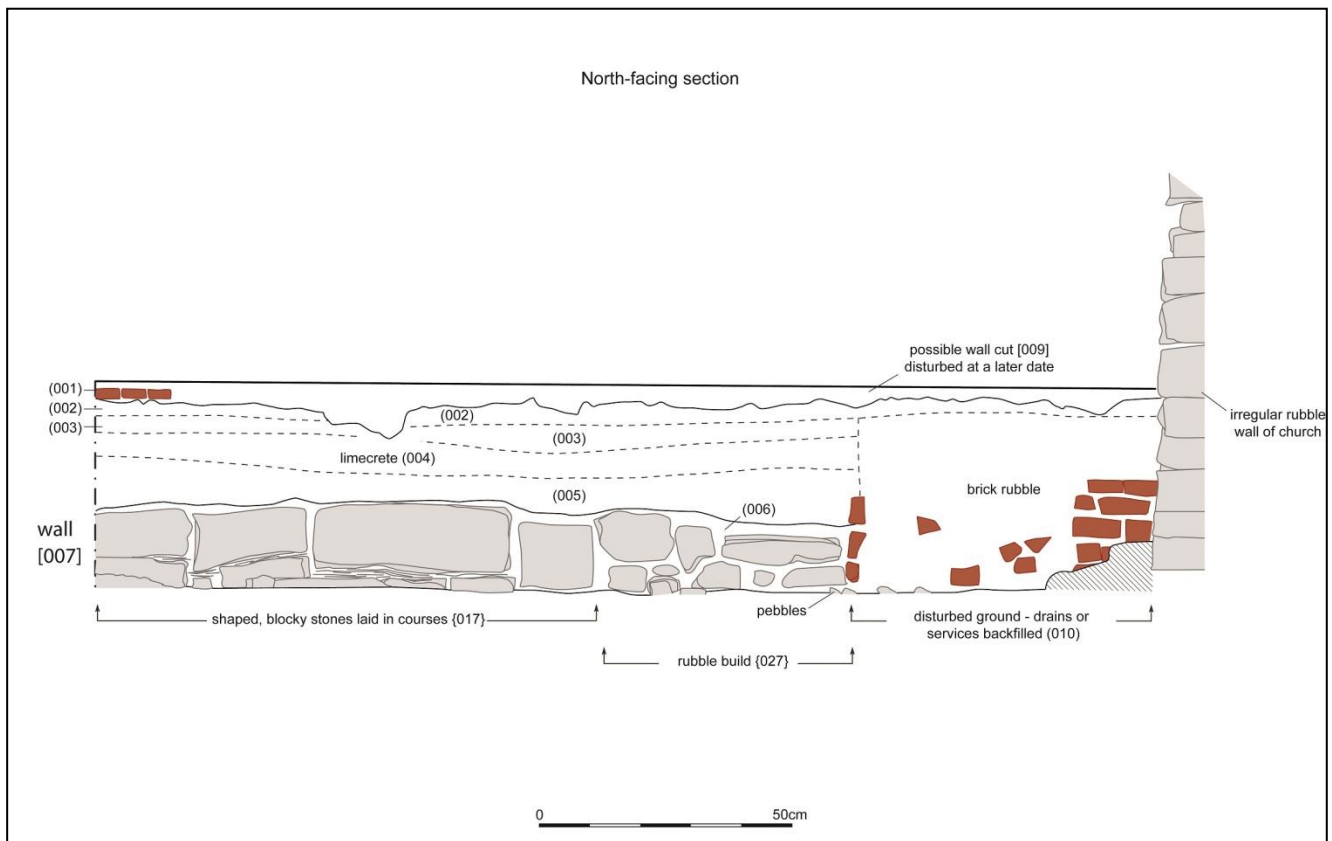


FIGURE 3: WEST-FACING SECTION OF WALL [007].