

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WILLAND, DEVON

(NGR ST 0368 1043)

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Prepared by:
Simon Hughes

On behalf of:
Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery

Report No: ACD1929/2/0

Date: February 2019



AC archaeology

ST MARY THE VIRGIN CHURCH, WILLAND, DEVON

(NGR ST 0368 1043)

Results of archaeological monitoring and recording

Client	Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery
Report Number	ACD1929/2/0
Date	25 February 2019
Status	Version 1
Report Author	Simon Hughes
Contributions	-
Checked by	Paul Rainbird
Approved by	Simon Hughes

Acknowledgements

The monitoring and recording was commissioned by Jonathan Rhind Architects Ltd. on behalf of Tiverton and Cullompton Deanery. The site works were carried out by Elisabeth Patkai and Chris Blatchford. The illustrations for this report were prepared by Stella de-Villiers.

The views and recommendations expressed in this report are those of AC archaeology and are presented in good faith on the basis of professional judgement and on information currently available.

Copyright

AC archaeology Ltd shall retain full copyright of any report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved, excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the Client for the use of the report by the Client in all matters directly relating to the project. Any document produced to meet planning requirements may be freely copied for planning, development control, education and research purposes without recourse to the Copyright owner subject to all due and appropriate acknowledgements being provided.

CONTENTS

	<i>Summary</i>	
1.	Introduction	1
2.	Archaeological and historical background	1
3.	Aims	2
4.	Methodology	2
5.	Results	2
7.	Comments	3
8.	Archive and OASIS	3
9.	References	3

List of figures

Fig. 1: Location of site and plan of St Mary the Virgin Church with monitored areas and footing S103 shown

Fig.2: Detailed plan and section of footing S103

List of plates

Plate 1: General view looking west towards St Mary the Virgin Church

Plate 2: Representation of excavated drain trench with exposed footing S107. Chancel elevation, view to west

Plate 3: Showing underpinning pit excavated into chancel wall footing. View to north

Plate 4: Showing excavated drain trench with footing S103. View to west

Plate 5: Footing S103, view to north

Plate 6: Showing footing S103 in relation to masonry scar of former rood screen stair turret. View to north

Summary

Archaeological monitoring and recording at St Mary the Virgin Church, Willand, Devon (ST 0368 1043) was undertaken by AC archaeology between December 2018 and January 2019. The work comprised the monitoring of excavations associated with a new drainage system extending around the perimeter of the church building and some structural underpinning.

The archaeological works exposed the below-ground construction of the church. This generally comprised shallow rubble footings, which were constructed within a mixed clay and rubble probable levelling layer. A buried lime mortar bonded stone footing was also exposed by the work. This was likely to represent the remains of a dismantled former rood screen stair turret, which corresponds with an infilled section in the elevation above and would originally have projected externally from the south elevation.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring and recording at St Mary the Virgin Church, Willand, Devon (ST 0368 1043) was undertaken by AC archaeology between December 2018 and January 2019. The work was required by the Diocese Advisory Committee, Exeter, as conditions of a faculty licence granted for the work (reference 2018-018502).
- 1.2 The Church of St Mary the Virgin lies on the southwest side of Willand, with its associated churchyard bounded by Old Willand Road to the west and the lane to Bradfield to the north (Fig. 1). It is situated on flat ground at 79m aOD (above Ordnance Datum), with the underlying solid geology consisting of mudstone of the Aylesbeare Mudstone Group beneath a head deposit of gravel (www.bgs.ac.uk).
- 1.3 The groundworks requiring archaeological monitoring comprised the installation of a new drainage system and the underpinning of part of the south elevation.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 St Mary the Virgin Church, which lies in the historic core of Willand, is Grade-I listed and dates from the 15th century, with 16th and 19th century additions (National Heritage List for England ref. 1306617). Comprising a coursed stone rubble building, the church is formed of a nave, north aisle, chancel and tower, with 19th century porch to the south and modern kitchen and toilet extension to the north.
- 2.2 The Willand parish tithe map of 1839 shows the church and churchyard as broadly unchanged from their current arrangement. The main variation is depicted on the 1888 Ordnance Survey 25-inch map edition 1888, with the inclusion of a property, Harpitt Cottage, shown as having been built in the northwest portion of the churchyard by this date.

3. AIMS

- 3.1** The aim of the monitoring and recording was to preserve by record any archaeological features and to recover artefacts present on the site, which would be destroyed or disturbed by the works. This was with reference for the potential for graves or structural remains of the church or other former ecclesiastical buildings to be exposed by the work.

4. METHODOLOGY

- 4.1** The monitoring and recording was undertaken in accordance with a project design prepared by AC archaeology (Hughes 2018) and with reference to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2014). The groundworks, which consisted of the installation of a new drainage system and the underpinning of part of the south elevation, were undertaken by hand and tracked excavator.
- 4.2** All features and deposits revealed were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2* (revised August 2012). Detailed sections and plans were produced at a scale of 1:10, 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate.

5. RESULTS (Plan Figs 1 & 2a and section 2b; Plates 1-6)

- 5.1** The drainage trenches excavated around the perimeter of the church measured approximately 0.5m wide and were dug to a depth of between 0.4m and 0.7m below existing levels. The drainage trenches linked to a 1.4m wide by 1m deep soakaway pit, which was situated on the east side of the church. Underpinning pits were located at the east end of the south elevation. These measuring 0.5m wide and 0.75m deep were excavated 0.6m into the base of the footing from within the adjacent drainage trench.
- 5.2** Undisturbed natural subsoil (context 112), which consisted of a mid red clay with common gravel inclusions, was exposed within the soakaway pit at a depth of 0.9m below existing levels. This was overlain by a 0.4m thick probable root-disturbed natural subsoil (111). The weathered natural subsoil was sealed by a 0.4m thick mixed mid reddish-brown silty-clay graveyard soil, which in the area immediately around the perimeter of the church, blended to comprise a probable construction levelling layer that contained common stone rubble and gravel inclusions (102).
- 5.3** The footings for the church (107) generally measured between 0.2m and 0.3m deep below current ground levels and was comprised of mixed sandstone and chert rubble. At the east end of the south elevation, and in the portion of the church in which underpinning pits were excavated, the footing construction was approximately 0.65m deep and comprised a 0.26m thick light yellow sand bed, overlain by rubble footing.
- 5.4** Extending from the south elevation a north to south aligned stone footing was exposed (S103). The footing, which were comprised of sandstone rubble in a lime mortar bond, measured 1.55m wide and extended below the excavated level of the trench. The position of the footings corresponded with a clear vertical masonry joint present on the elevation above (Plate 6).

6. COMMENTS

- 6.1 The monitoring of groundworks exposed the character of the below-ground construction of the church. This generally comprised shallow rubble footings (107), which were constructed within a mixed clay and rubble probable levelling layer (102). Some variation in depth to these was exposed, with deeper footings set on a sandy bed present in the southeast corner of the chancel.
- 6.2 Buried mortar bonded footing S103 was likely to represent part of a former phase to the current church. Its corresponding position to a section of infilled masonry of similar width visible in the fabric above, suggests that these features are associated (Plate 6). This feature in the south elevation is included in the Historic England listing description as representing the traces of a dismantled and infilled former rood screen stair turret. Based on exposed footing S103, the former stair turret would have projected externally from the south elevation to access the top of a former rood screen dividing the nave from the chancel. No datable evidence was recovered to date the footing, but it is likely that the former rood screen and associated stair turret, would have been part of the original 15th or subsequent 16th century phase of the church.
- 6.3 The excavations associated with linking the drains excavated around the perimeter of the church to the soak away pit at the east exposed graveyard soil but no *in situ* or disarticulated human remains.

7. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 7.1 An online OASIS entry has been completed, using the unique identifier **343183**, which includes a digital copy of this report. This report represents the archive for this project.

8. REFERENCES

British Geological Survey (www.bgs.ac.uk)

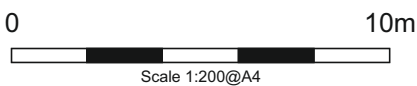
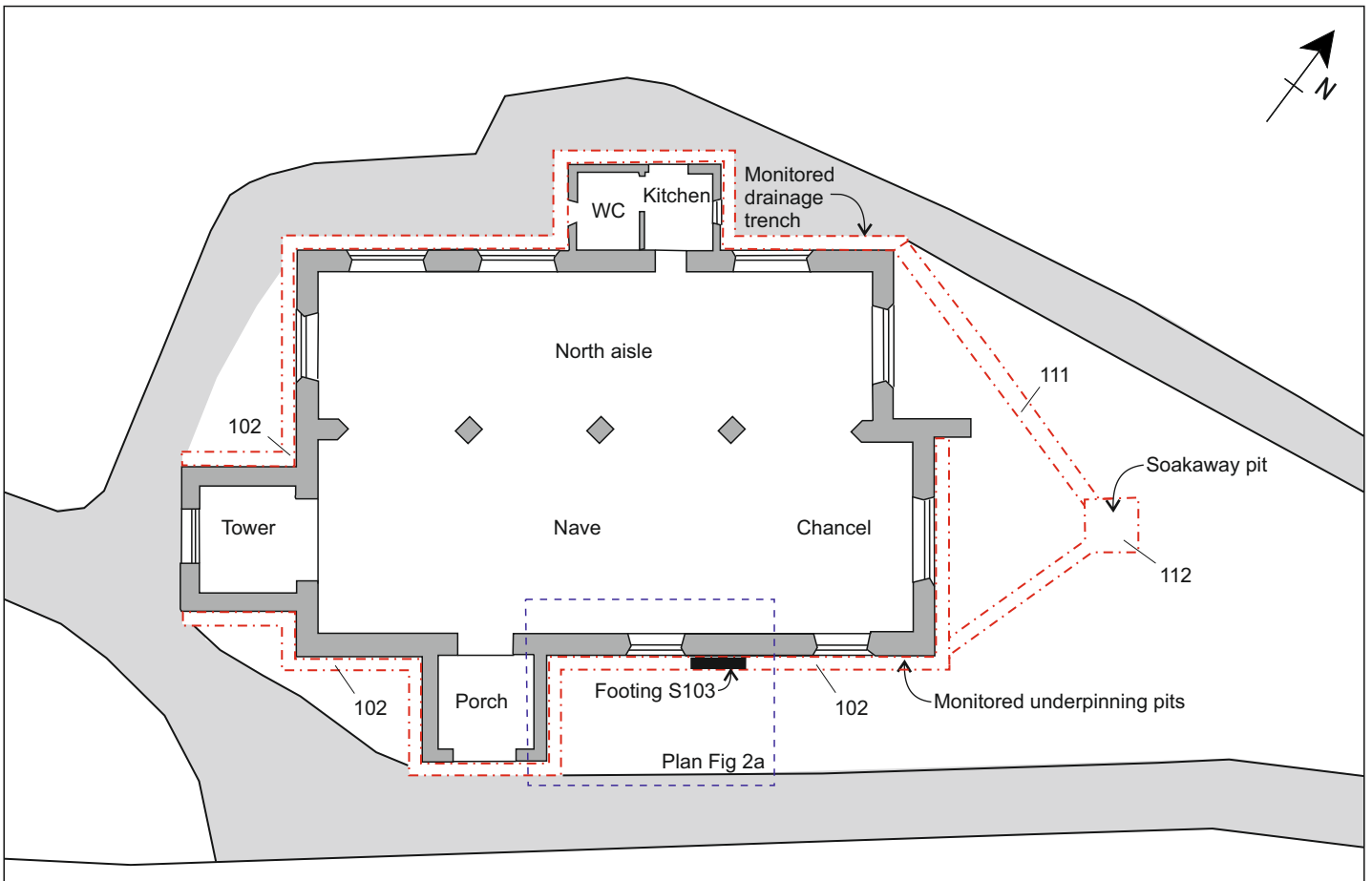
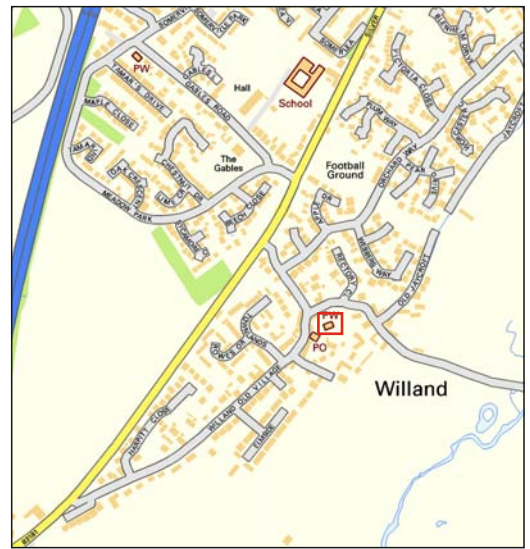
The Genealogist <https://www.thegenealogist.co.uk/>

Hughes, S., 2018, *St Mary the Virgin Church, Willand, Devon: Project design for archaeological monitoring and recording*. Unpublished AC archaeology document ref. ACD1929/1/0

The National Heritage List for England (www.list.english-heritage.org.uk)

Old Maps (www.old-maps.co.uk)

Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawing: Exeter 5 1801



Based on Drawing provided by Jonathan Rhind Architects

PROJECT

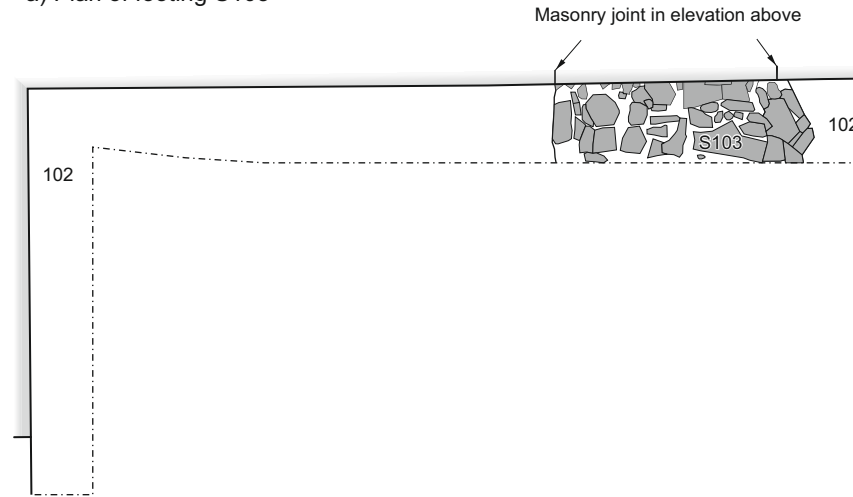
St Mary Church The Virgin, Willand, Devon

TITLE

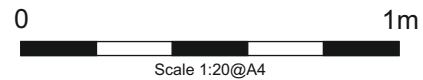
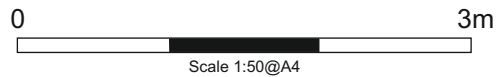
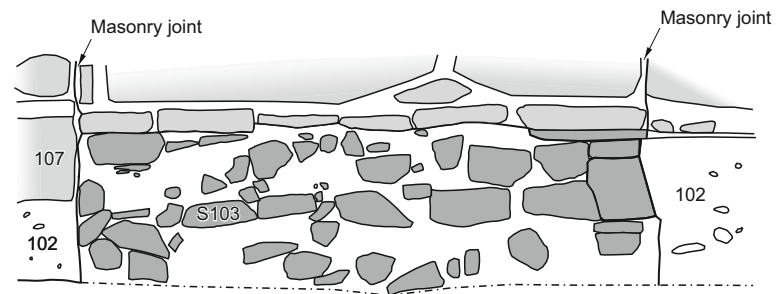
Fig.1: Location of site and plan of St Mary's Church with monitored areas and footing S103 shown



a) Plan of footing S103



b) Section of S103



PROJECT
St Mary The Virgin
Church, Willand, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 2: Detailed plan and
section of footing S103





Plate 1: General view looking west towards St Mary the Virgin Church



Plate 2: Representation of excavated drain trench with exposed footing S107. Chancel elevation, view to west (scale 0.5m)



Plate 3: Showing underpinning pit excavated into chancel wall footing. View to north (scale 0.5m)



Plate 4: Showing excavated drain trench with footing S103. View to west (scale 0.5m)



Plate 5: Plate 5. Footing S103, view to north (scale 1m)



Plate 6: Plate 6. Showing footing S103 in relation to masonry scar of former rood screen stair turret. View to north (scale 1m)

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone: 01392 882410

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581

Fax: 01747 820440

www.acarchaeology.co.uk