

ST MARY'S CHURCH, BIDEFORD, DEVON

(NGR SS 4538 2641)

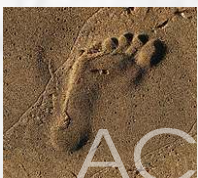
Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Prepared by:
Simon Hughes

On behalf of:
St Mary's Parochial Church Council

Report No: ACD1787/2/0

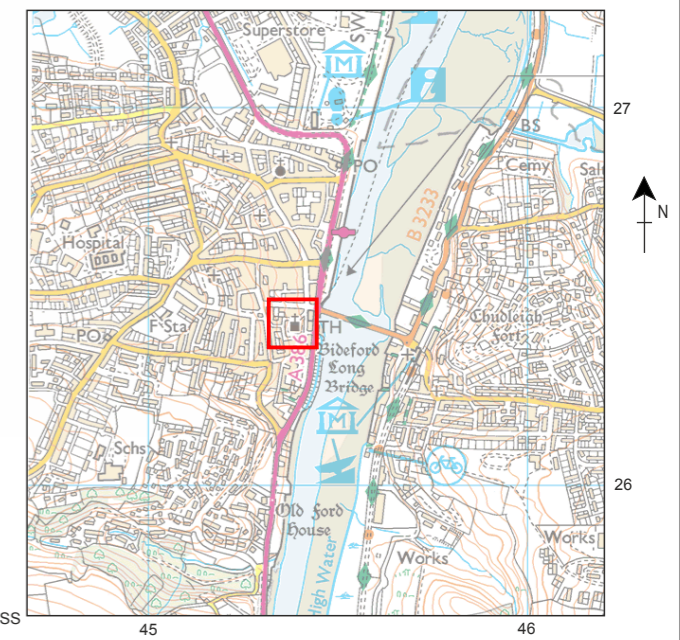
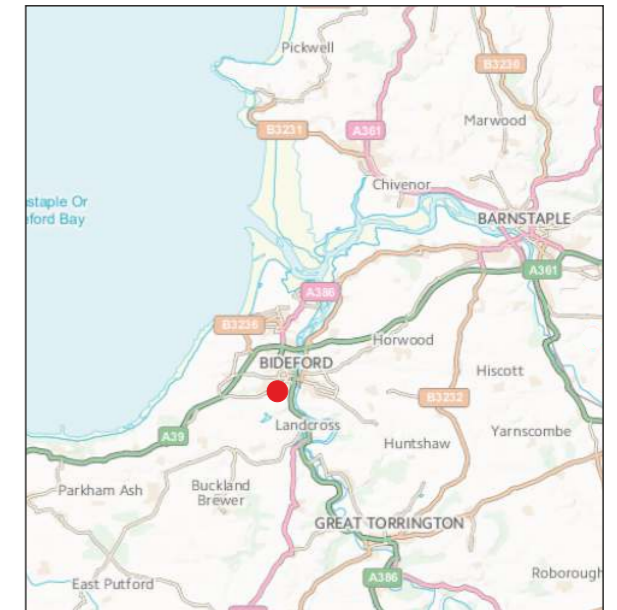
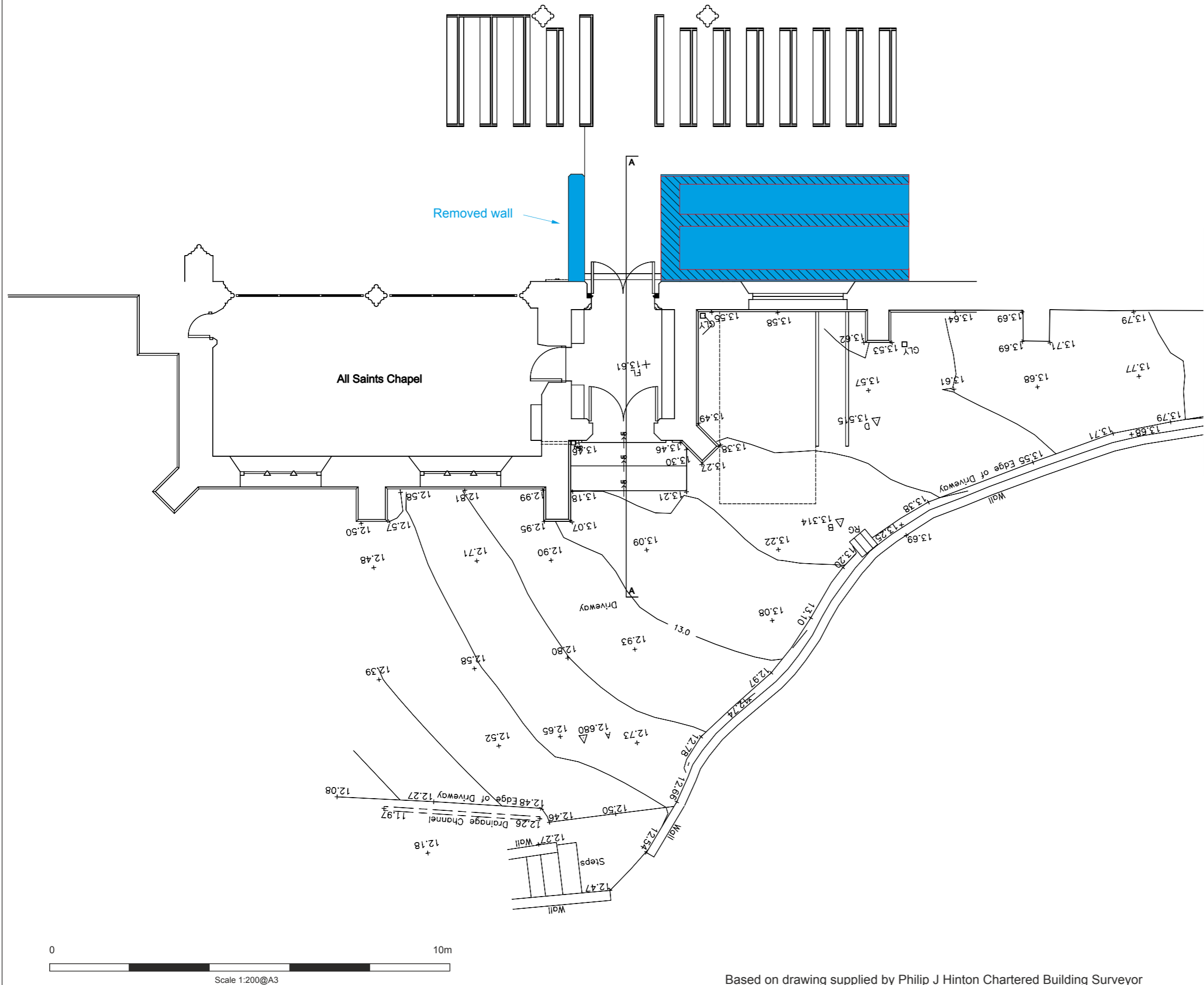
Date: July 2019



archaeology

Devon County Council Historic Environment Record

Civil Parish & District: Bideford, Torridge	National Grid Reference SS 4538 2641	Number:
Subject: St Mary's Church, Bideford, Devon: Results of archaeological monitoring and recording		Photo attached Plates 1-2
Planning Application no: N/A	Recipient museum: N/A	
OASIS ID: 360450	Museum Accession no: N/A	
Contractor's reference number/code: ACD1787	Dates fieldwork undertaken: 15 May 2019	
<p>Introduction (Fig. 1; Plate 1) Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by AC archaeology during internal improvement works at St Mary's Church, Bideford, Devon (SS 4538 2641). St Mary's church is situated in the centre of Bideford and occupies a sub-square plot between Bridge Street to the north and Lower Meddon Street to the south. The church is positioned within a terrace at around 16m aOD (above Ordnance Datum) set on ground that slopes moderately-steeply towards the River Torridge to the east.</p> <p>The church of St Mary lies within the historic core of Bideford and close to the medieval bridge across the River Torridge. A settlement at Bideford was present at the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, when it was known as <i>Bediforda</i>. The town was granted Borough status in the late 12th or early 13th-century. Dating from the 15th century, the Church of St Mary is Grade II-listed. Only the tower is of this late medieval date, while the remaining building was largely rebuilt between 1862 and 1865. Potential evidence for an earlier phase of the church pre-dating its current 15th century origin is suggested by records of structural remains exposed during the 19th century reconstruction as well as its Norman font (Plate 1).</p> <p>Results (Fig. 1; Plates 1-3) Monitored works comprised the removal of a suspended floor platform and a partition wall that were both located adjacent to the south entrance.</p> <p>The suspended floor platform measured 0.1m high and was constructed from machine-cut floorboards resting on joists and with a perimeter timber frame. This had Beneath the floor was a 0.3m deep mortar-lined void with mortar bonded stone rubble sleeper walls on which the joists spanned (Plate 2). The void contained a small quantity of loose rubble and debris from which two human bones were recovered. These consisted of a proximal femur and part of a left humerus. Two coins were also recovered from beneath the floor platform; a sixpence dated 1949 and a 10p dated 1969.</p> <p>The removed partition wall measured 0.5m wide. It had abutted the external church wall and been constructed directly on a mortar bed on which the abutting flagstone floor was lain (Plate 3).</p> <p>Comments The suspended floor platform with associated sleeper walls and the removed partition wall formed part of the 19th century rebuild to the church. No earlier phases to the church or associated deposits were exposed within the void beneath the floor due to its mortar lining. The disarticulated human bone present within the rubble under the suspended floor was perhaps derived from disturbed inhumation or inhumations, either during the 19th century rebuild, or subsequent works such as installing the heating system.</p> <p>This report represents the archive for the project. The human remains and coins were left with the parish vicar.</p>		
Recorder: Simon Hughes, AC archaeology	Date sent to HER: 22 July 2019	



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Legend

- Location of monitored works
- Sleeper walls



PROJECT
St Mary's Church, Bideford, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and monitored works



Plate 1: General working view looking east with Norman Font in foreground



Plate 2: Showing area of removed timber support plinth with exposed sleeper walls below. view to east



Plate 3: Showing removed wall scar. View to south (scales 1m and 0.4m)

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