

ST MARY'S CHURCH, BIDEFORD, DEVON

(NGR SS 4538 2641)

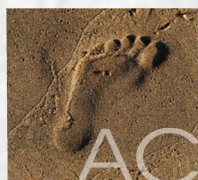
Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

Prepared by:
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On behalf of:
St Mary's Parochial Church Council

Report No: ACD1787/1/0

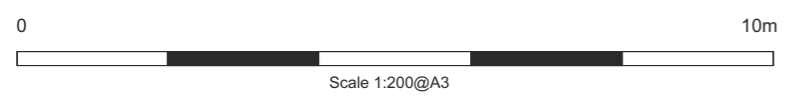
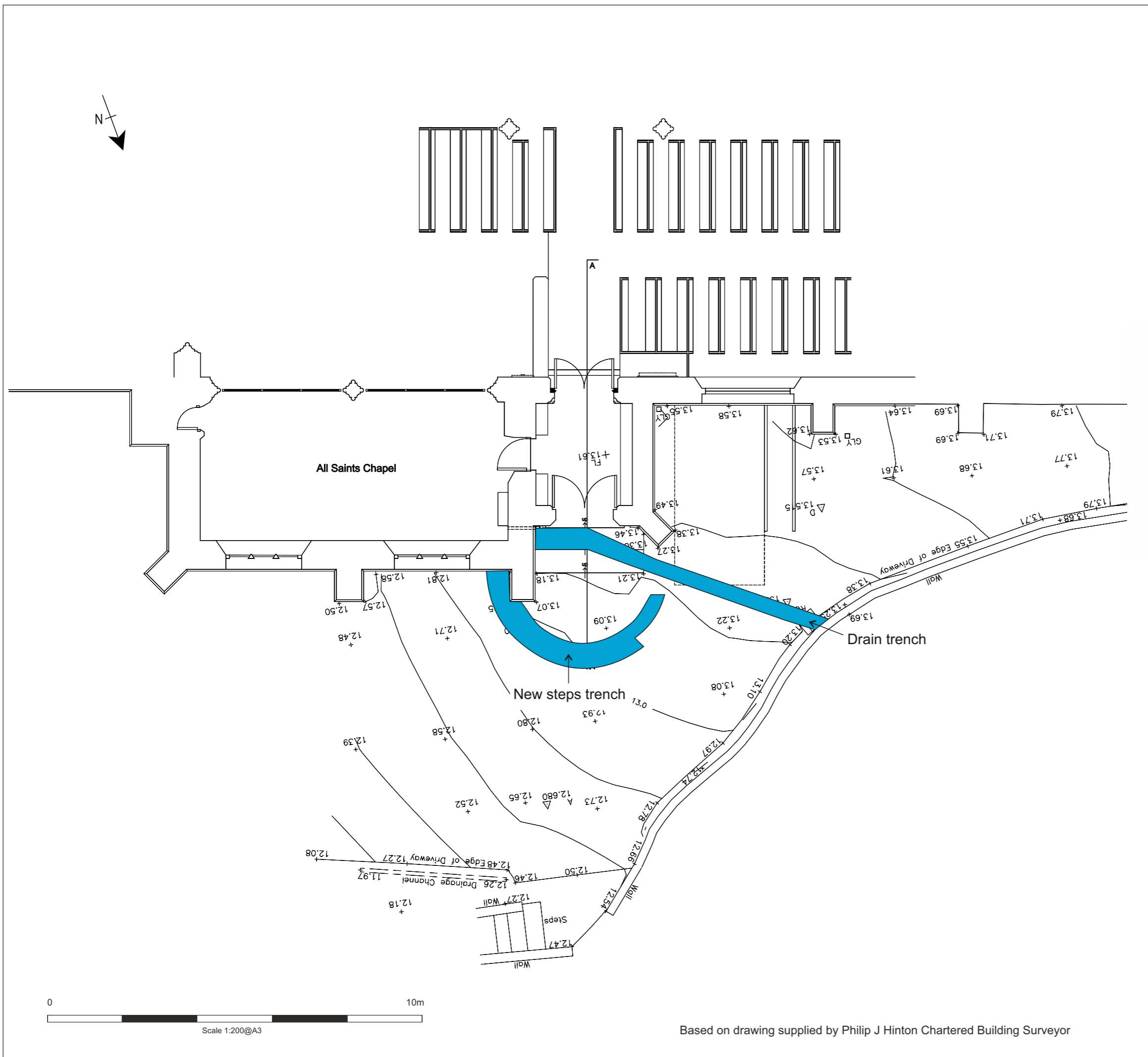
Date: March 2021



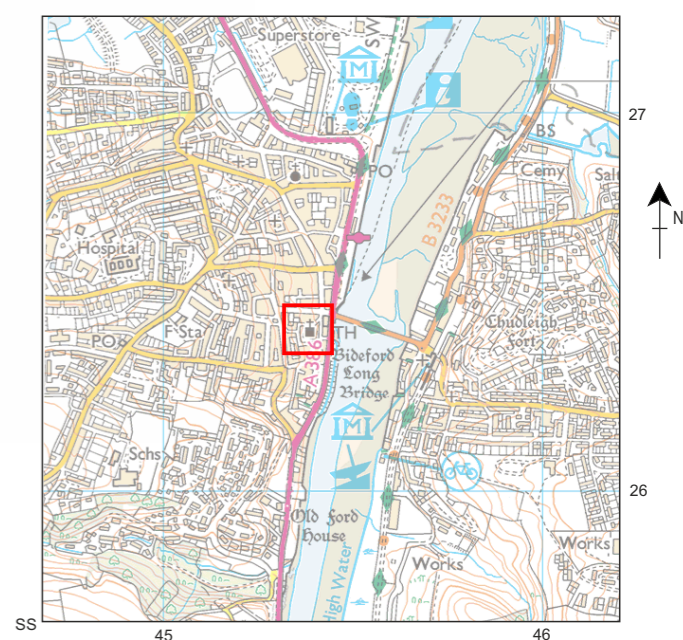
archaeology

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 1-3
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: 17-18 August 2020	
<p>Introduction (Fig. 1) Archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out by AC archaeology during external 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 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.</p> <p>Results (Fig. 1; Plates 1-3) Monitored works comprised the removal of steps in front of the north porch with replacement new steps in a different position, a platform and ramp all for the north porch access and a new drain. Other than the original steps the remaining area was tarmac surfaced.</p> <p>The trench for the new steps was curvilinear in plan and a maximum of 0.63m wide by 0.43m deep against the church wall rising to 0.23m deep at the terminal end (Plate 1). The trench exposed modern made ground only.</p> <p>The drain trench was 0.15m deep at the southeast end adjacent to the porch and deepening to 0.6m in the northwest (Plate 2). It was generally 0.3m wide except in front of the porch where the steps had been removed and was up to 0.56m wide here (Plate 3). The deposits exposed were modern rubble made ground and a small amount of redeposited soil also forming made ground. The latter contained two sherds (91g) of post-medieval pottery and two post-medieval to modern iron nails (33g). The pottery comprised a handle sherd from a North Devon Gravel-tempered jug, and a North Devon gravel-free base sherd, both dating from the 17th or 18th centuries.</p> <p>During the works a small number of fragmented disarticulated human bone was collected and must derive from previously disturbed burials; these were retained by the church for reburial.</p> <p>Comments The groundworks outside of the north porch exposed modern made ground deposits only which were probably associated with the surfacing of the area with tarmac. No earlier phases of the church or associated deposits were exposed.</p> <p>This report represents the archive for the project.</p>		
Recorder: Christopher N. Caine, AC archaeology		Date sent to HER: 2 March 2021



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Legend

- Location of monitored trenches



PROJECT
St Mary's Church, Bideford, Devon

TITLE
Fig. 1: Location of site and monitored areas



Plate 1: General view of the monitored works area with the steps trench in the foreground, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 2: The drain trench, looking southeast (1m scale)



Plate 3: Southeast end of the drain trench, looking south (1m and 0.5m scales)

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