

New Community Centre, St Andrew's Parish Church, Cullompton, Devon

NGR ST0217107203

Results of an archaeological trench evaluation

Planning ref. Mid Devon District Council 09/01579/FUL

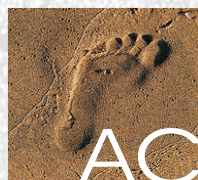
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On behalf of:
St Andrew's Parochial Church Council

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AC archaeology

NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE, ST ANDREW'S PARISH CHURCH, CULLOMPTON, DEVON

(ST0217107203)

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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation, consisting of three machine-excavated trenches, was undertaken by AC archaeology in August 2010 on land adjacent to St Andrew's parish church, Cullompton, Devon (ST0217107203). The trenching was the first stage in a programme of archaeological works as a condition of planning permission for the construction of a new community centre.

The site is located within the historic core of the town, in an area where maps of 1633 and 1841 show structures present at these times. While archaeological features, deposits and structural evidence were present in all trenches, these remains appear to date to the period c. 1750 – 1850. Other than a few sherds of 16th and 17th century pottery, no earlier evidence for occupation was identified.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out the results of an archaeological trench evaluation undertaken on land adjacent to St Andrew's parish church, Cullompton, Devon (ST0217107203). The work was carried out by AC archaeology during August 2010 and was commissioned by St Andrew's Parochial Church Council. The location of the site is shown on Fig. 1.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken as the first stage in a programme of archaeological works required as a condition of planning permission. The new development will comprise the demolition of the existing church hall, which will be followed by the construction of a replacement building, together with associated parking and services.
- 1.3 The site lies at around 59m OD and the underlying solid geology comprises Permian Breccia.
- 1.4 The present church hall is brick-built and was originally constructed in the late 19th century, but was added to in the 1970s. It is situated to the north of the churchyard on land which slopes gently down to the north and east.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A settlement at Cullompton is recorded as early as 880 AD, when it was known as 'Columntune'. Throughout most of the medieval period it was a royal holding (DCHER ref. 71719). The present parish church dates to the 15th century, but is probably on the site of an earlier minster church dating to the late Saxon period (54301).
- 2.2 The earliest detailed map found which depicts the site is a fine estate map dating to 1633. This shows the church precinct in its present form, with a row of buildings outside, but alongside the northern boundary. By 1841, the Cullompton parish tithe map also shows houses and gardens on the north side of the church precinct, but this time two rows of buildings are present.
- 2.3 By 1888, the 1st edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map shows that the buildings on the north side of the wall had by this time been removed and by 1904 the present church hall had been constructed.

2.4 Archaeological monitoring of geotechnical test pits has been previously undertaken on the site (Sims and Firth 2009). The locations of the pits are shown on Fig. 1, with Trial Pits 3, 5 and 6 containing archaeological remains, although the full extent and function of these features and structures could not be firmly established owing to the restricted nature of the trial pits. Finds recovered dated to between the 16th and 18th centuries, but only the very upper levels of features and structures were exposed so there is a possibility that earlier material might also still be present.

2.5 In the area where buildings are shown on the 1633 map, Trial Pits 1 and 7 contained no *in situ* archaeological remains, other than the footings for the existing churchyard boundary wall in Trial Pit 1.

3. AIMS

3.1 The main aim was to determine, as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains present on the site, as dictated by current best practice. The results of the work as set out in this report will be reviewed and used to inform the need for any subsequent mitigation as a second stage of archaeological works.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 The investigation comprised the machine-excavation of three trenches totalling 45m in length, with each 1.6m wide (Fig. 1). All overburden removal was undertaken under the control and direction of the Site Archaeologist. Hardstanding and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator, using a wide toothless bucket, and ceased at the level at which archaeological deposits or natural subsoil was exposed.

4.2 The trenches were recorded using the full range of the standard AC archaeology *pro forma* recording system. All site levels relate to Ordnance Survey datum.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1 (Plan Fig. 2a, sections Fig. 2b-f, Plates 1 and 2)

This approximately northwest-southeast aligned trench was 25m long and was excavated onto natural subsoil, present at an average depth of 0.9m below the existing ground level. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.2m of modern gravel and tarmac, 0.45m of dark brown silty clay buried topsoil (context 100), and 0.25m of reddish brown subsoil, composed of mixed soil, loose stone, brick, lime mortar, clay and gravel (101). This was directly overlying red sandy clay natural subsoil (103).

Cut into the natural subsoil and extending out of the southeast end of the trench was a probable semi-circular feature (F104). Only the northern part was exposed, which was 0.62m deep and had a gently sloping edge and a flat base (Fig. 2c-d). This probable pit contained a basal fill (105) composed of a mid greyish brown silty clay. The secondary fill, (106) was a red clay deposit, and the uppermost fill (107) was composed of dark brown silty clay. Finds recovered from context 107 comprised pottery dating to the 17th or 18th century. Overlying the pit was shallow feature (F108), which contained single fill (109), composed of a dark brown silty clay deposit containing modern demolition material and late 18th century to 19th century pottery and other finds.

Approximately 2m northwest of these features was a north-south aligned linear feature (F112). This was 1.22m wide and 0.7m deep and had steeply inclined, almost vertical sides and a slightly rounded base (Fig. 2e). The probable ditch contained a primary fill (111=113), composed of a reddish-brown clay with frequent sub-rounded stone and flint nodule inclusions and upper fill (114), of a dark brown silty clay containing modern demolition material. Pottery dating to the 18th century and later was recovered from both fills.

In the northwest half of the trench there was a lot of disturbance caused by modern service trenches and it would appear that the majority of features in this part of the trench are cut into the subsoil layer 101.

The latest feature, a stone and brick-lined culvert (F131), cut across the top of what appeared to be a 1.25m deep large pit (F127). The pit contained a dark brown, almost black, clay silt deposit (128), which had an abundance of demolition material, post-medieval pottery and large (<0.8m) sub-angular stone blocks. This probable robber or demolition pit was overlying the remains of two wall footings. North-south aligned wall F129 stood at a height of 0.76m and was composed of large angular footing stones (>1m in size), with two further clay and mortar bonded courses of smaller (0.3-0.4m) angular stone and brick blocks. Extending at a right angle from this was wall F130. This return wall stood at a height of 0.24m and was made up of two courses of clay and mortar-bonded angular stone and brick blocks.

Cut into the natural subsoil at the northwest end of the trench was a north-south aligned linear feature (F121), probably the same feature as (F603) identified in the previous archaeological investigation (Sims & Firth 2009). Although only the eastern edge was exposed, it was excavated to its full depth of 0.95m and had a steep almost vertical edge and flat base (Fig. 2f). It contained four fills and produced pottery post-dating 1770. In its western extent the linear feature was overlain by a possible cobbled surface (126), and truncated in its southern extent by probable ditch (F115). This was 0.8m wide and 0.65m deep and had very steep, vertical edges and a flat base. Feature F115 was orientated approximately east to west, and contained a single mid greyish-brown sandy silty clay deposit (116). The feature was cut by a number of stakeholes and has been interpreted as a possible fence line.

5.2 Trench 2 (Plan Fig. 2g, section Fig. 2h, Plate 3)

This east-west aligned trench was 10m long and was excavated onto natural subsoil (226) in the western extent only, present at 1m below existing ground level.

The earliest cut feature in this trench was an east to west linear (F224), of which only the northern edge was visible. Deeper in its eastern extent, it was excavated to a full depth of approximately 0.8m and had a steeply inclined edge and flattish base. It contained a single fill (211=213), composed of a mixed reddish-brown silty clay, which produced brick, tile and 18th century pottery. This feature was cut towards the southern end by a northwest to southeast aligned stone-lined drain (F206/207). This appeared to be contemporary with and possibly paired with a corresponding stone-lined drain (F208/209) protruding out of the northern edge of the trench. These two drains were overlain by a mixed mottled brown and red silty clay deposit (218), which was approximately 1.2m wide and 0.1m deep.

At the far eastern end of the trench, truncating linear F224 was a large pit (F214). The full depth of this feature was not established, but it was approximately 2m wide. It contained three visible fills, with the lowest exposed (215) a mid brown silty clay, which was overlain by 216, a mid reddish-brown silty clay, while the uppermost fill (217) was a mid brown silty clay deposit. The pit contained 18th century and later finds.

Above and truncating the upper fill of F214 and layer 218 was shallow rubbish pit (F219). The pit contained a stone lining (220) and contained three fills (221, 222 and 223) all of which contained 18th and 19th century finds.

Above these features the overlying deposit sequence had a combined depth of 1m and comprised a mixture of make-up for the church car park (200), buried topsoil (201), a modern service trench and its backfill (F203, 204) and subsoil/makeup material (202) and 205).

5.3 Trench 3 (Plan Fig. 3a, sections Fig. 3b-c, Plate 4)

This north-south aligned trench was 10m long and was excavated onto natural subsoil (302), present at an average depth of 0.75m below existing ground level. The overlying layer sequence comprised 0.26m of modern gravel and tarmac (300) and 0.48m of reddish brown demolition material, composed of mixed soil, loose stone, brick, lime mortar, clay and gravel (context 301). No buried topsoil was present in this trench.

Most archaeological features were located in the northern end of the trench, the earliest of which was F312 (Fig. 3b). This east to west aligned linear feature was 1.2m wide and 0.42m deep and had an irregular profile. It contained a single fill (311), composed of a mid brownish-red sandy silt which produced pieces of animal bone, slag and 18th century pottery. A property boundary is shown in this location on late 19th century maps. This was cut by modern brick wall (F314) and stone lined drain (F310). This latter feature also cut an earlier stone lined drain (F304, Fig. 3c).

Cut by F304 was a small circular pit or posthole (F306). This was 0.03m deep and had an extremely shallow and rounded profile (Fig. 4c). It contained a single fill (305), which was composed of mid brownish red silty clay. A single sherd of Staffordshire china was recovered.

6. THE FINDS

by Kerry Dean and John Allan

6.1 Introduction

All finds recovered on site have been cleaned and marked where appropriate. Finds have been quantified according to material type within each context and then scanned by context to extract information regarding the range, nature and date of artefacts represented.

6.2 The pottery

The assemblage comprises 177 sherds (8281g) and consists solely of post-medieval material (Table 1). There are four residual sherds of late 16th/early 17th century date in later pits and sherds dating to c. 1690-1730 from later pits and ditches. However the major contexts, forming almost all of the material date to c. 1770-1850. The assemblages contain a surprisingly high proportion of coarseware for this period and an unexpected feature is the lack of wares from the North Devon potteries. Previous work in

Cullompton has demonstrated that in the 16th and 17th centuries the South Somerset potteries dominated the ceramic market, but North Devon wares are present in most groups, forming about 20-30%. This new material shows that in the period 1750-1850 the South Somerset potters clearly had a monopoly of the Cullompton coarseware market. 66 sherds were discarded after analysis.

Table 1: Pottery quantification (weight in grams)

Context	Context Description	No	Wt	Description
107	Upper fill of pit F104	2	28	South Somerset coarseware: 2 sherds, 2 vessels 17th/18th C. Context date: after 1700.
109	Fill of F108	22	603	1 sherd Staffordshire-type transfer print, after 1780. 1 white salt-glazed stoneware, 1760-80. 1 white engobe stoneware, 1700-30. 1 sherd Westerwald Stoneware, tankard 1700-20. 1 residual green-glazed white Border ware from Hants/Surrey, late 17th/early 18th C. South Somerset coarseware: 14 sherds, approx 10 vessels 17th/18th C. Context date: after 1780.
113	Primary fill of ditch F112	7	43	1 sherd Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware 1730-60. 1 plain Delft. South Somerset coarseware: 6 sherds, approx 4 vessels. Context date: after 1730, probably mid 18th C.
114	Secondary fill of ditch F112	8	37	1 sherd Chinese export porcelain, after 1700. 1 Staffordshire industrial green-glazed whiteware after 1770. 1 blue-glazed delftware scrap, undated. South Somerset coarseware: 5 sherds, approx 4 vessels. Context date: after 1770, early 19th C.
116	Fill of ditch F115	8	55	1 sherd Staffordshire blue transfer-printed whiteware, after 1780. South Somerset coarseware: 7 sherds, approx 4 vessels. Context date after 1780.
123	Secondary fill of ditch F121	6	68	1 sherd Staffordshire industrial whiteware, after 1770. South Somerset coarseware: 5 sherds discarded. Context date after 1770.
128	Fill of culvert F131	10	333	3 Staffordshire industrial whiteware, 3 vessels: 1 willow pattern, 1 creamware & 1 shell-edged. South Somerset coarseware: 7 sherds, approx 4 vessels. Context date: after 1780. Creamware & South Somerset coarseware discarded.
211	Fill of ditch F224	2	102	2 sherds South Somerset coarseware, including 1 comb slip-ware dish. Context date: after 1700, probably 18th C.
215	Lowest exposed fill of pit F214	5	229	1 sherd copper green-glazed slipware cup 18th C. 2 South Somerset coarseware 18th C. 2 residual South Somerset coarseware late 16th/early 17th C. Context date 18th C.
217	Upper fill of pit F214	36	1454	1 sherd Staffordshire blue scratch salt-glazed stoneware, 1760-70. 3 Bristol/Staffordshire-type slipwares 1680-1780 including 1 press-moulded dish. South Somerset coarseware: 30 sherds, approx 15 vessels. 1 residual 16th/early 17th C jug handle. Context date 18th C.
221	Primary fill of pit F219	4	108	1 Bristol/Staffordshire-type slip-ware press- moulded dish. South Somerset coarseware: 3 sherds, 3 vessels. Context date 18th C.
222	Secondary fill of pit F219	7	200	2 sherds Staffordshire white ware, 1 retained. 4 sherds South Somerset coarseware discarded. Context date 19th C.
223	Upper fill of pit F219	37	1822	1 sherd blue transfer-print, 1810-30. 1 lustre jug handle in the form of a dog head, 1800-40. 3 sherds Bristol/London brown stoneware, 1 vessel, 1 retained. South Somerset coarseware: 30 sherds, approx 15 vessels 18th/early 19th C discarded. Context date early 19th C.
301	Subsoil Trench 3	20	3183	1 sherd Staffordshire creamware, 1 vessel. 19 sherds South Somerset coarseware from 1 tall bowl, rim handle and base retained. Context date 19th C.
305	Fill of possible pit of post-hole F306	1	8	1 sherd Staffordshire bone china, 1780-1830.
308	Primary fill of drain F310	1	5	1 sherd South Somerset coarseware, 17th/early 18th C
311	Fill of ditch F312	1	3	1 sherd South Somerset coarseware, 17th/18th C
TOTAL		177	8281	

6.3 Other finds

Other finds recovered from the site are itemised in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Other finds quantification (weight is in grams)

Context	Description	Animal Bone		Clay Pipe		Glass		CBM		Slag	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
109	Fill of F108			3	14			1	76		
113	Primary fill of ditch F112			5	17			2	1724		
114	Secondary fill of ditch F112					2	11	1	1059		
116	Fill of ditch F115	1	78			5	47				
123	Secondary fill of ditch F121	1	12								
128	Fill of culvert F131	2	53	1	8	1	55				
213	Fill of ditch F224							2	218		
215	Fill of pit F214			1	3						
217	Upper fill of pit F214	1	22			1	11	1	285	1	63
223	Upper fill of pit F219			1	9	1	2			1	2
301	Subsoil Trench 3	1	47			1	2			1	1
303	Fill of drain F304	1	5								
308	Primary fill of drain F310			1	7	1	3				
311	Fill of ditch F312	1	1							1	1
TOTALS		8	218	12	58	12	131	7	3362	4	67

Clay tobacco pipe

There are twelve fragments of clay tobacco pipe (58g), dating to c. late 18th-19th century, including two bowl pieces; one with moulded comb decoration and ten plain stem fragments, one with substantial charring.

Glass

There are twelve pieces of post-medieval glass (131g), including eight sherds of green bottle glass, one clear bottle glass fragment and three pieces of clear window glass.

Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

Seven pieces of ceramic building material were recovered (3,362g). These consist solely of industrial red brick fragments dating to the 19th century.

Animal bone

There are eight pieces of animal bone (218g) derived from cattle and sheep dated by association to the 18th-19th century. Three fragments demonstrate butchery marks, including saw cuts, and two have examples of rodent gnaw marks. One piece is burnt and another has adhering lime mortar.

Slag

There are four fragments of undiagnostic iron tap slag present (67g).

7. COMMENTS

- 7.1 All trenches excavated contained buried archaeological remains, although the associated pottery evidence indicates that the majority of these are likely to date to the period c. 1750 – 1850. No medieval or earlier finds were recovered, while only a few sherds of 16th and 17th century pottery were present in later contexts. The features, deposits and structures present on the site do indicate domestic occupation, with the usual range of pits, postholes, structural remains and property boundaries recorded.

- 7.2** The date range for the remains present fits in reasonably well with the historic map evidence, although there were few finds and no structural evidence which appear to relate to the buildings shown 1633 map (see above). The c. 1850 cut off date for most finds indicates that the structures shown on the 1841 tithe map were removed in the middle part of the 19th century and, with the exception of a cottage on the western boundary and two structures on the north boundary (the latter two away from the trenched area), the site is shown as an open plot on the 1888 25-inch first edition map. By 1904 the first phase of the church hall had been built.
- 7.3** Fig. 4 shows the position of the trenches in relation to the 1843 tithe map and 1888 25-inch map. As can be seen, structural evidence relating to buildings depicted in 1843 should have been present towards to the southern end of Trench 1, but none were found. The remainder of this building is mostly covered by the footprint of the existing church hall. Segments of walls were present in Trench 3 and these were part of a building shown on both 19th century maps. The walls identified in Trench 1 do not appear to relate to any structures shown on historic maps, but they are clearly of later post-medieval date. Only small parts of these were exposed, so their function is unclear.
- 7.4** The apparent absence of the 17th century structures indicates possibly that the site had two phases of post-medieval occupation, with the first as depicted on the 1633 map. The buildings shown appear to have been either completely removed prior to possible 18th century re-modelling as depicted on the tithe map, or perhaps they were more ephemeral timber buildings with no traces surviving. The buildings depicted in 1841 were also removed prior to 1888, when seemingly much of the site was levelled and infilled, prior to the construction of the late Victorian church hall.
- 7.5** There is also likely to have been further landscaping on the site, possibly when the car park and 1970s church hall extension was built. It is likely that the building as identified in Trench 3 was demolished around this time. It is also apparent that the ground surface immediately to the west of the site is approximately 1m higher than the car park surface.

8. IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION

- 8.1** Despite being located in the historic core of the town, very little in the way of early occupation was found during the work. Groundworks for the new community centre will be very extensive, but based on the findings and the good trench coverage, it appears unlikely that these will impact on *in situ* archaeological remains pre-dating the mid 18th century. If early remains are present then these are likely to be highly localised in extent and restricted to the footprint of the Victorian part of the existing church hall. The survival of archaeological deposits within this area would depend on the amount of ground disturbance caused when the hall was constructed, but based on the results from elsewhere, it is considered unlikely that early remains will survive even here.

9. ARCHIVE AND OASIS

- 9.1** The paper and digital archive and finds are currently held at the offices of AC archaeology Ltd, at 4 Halthaies Workshops, Bradninch, near Exeter, Devon, EX5 4LQ. They will be deposited at Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter under the accession code 81/2009. The OASIS (Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS) number for this project is 82185.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The evaluation was commissioned by Mr Simon Friend on behalf of St Andrew's Parochial Church Council. The site trial trenching was carried out by Kerry Tyler, Dan Carter, Simon Hughes and Tina Tapply and the illustrations for this report were prepared by Cain Hegarty. The advice and collaboration of Stephen Reed and Helen Rance, Devon Archaeology Officers, is duly acknowledged.

11. REFERENCES

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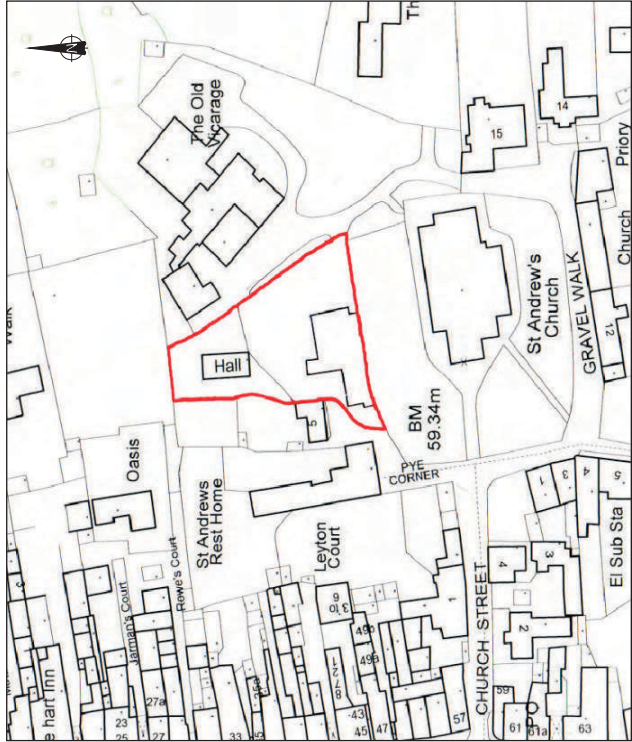
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Ordnance Survey 25-inch Devonshire sheet 57.2, surveyed 1888, published 1889, revised 1903, published 1904

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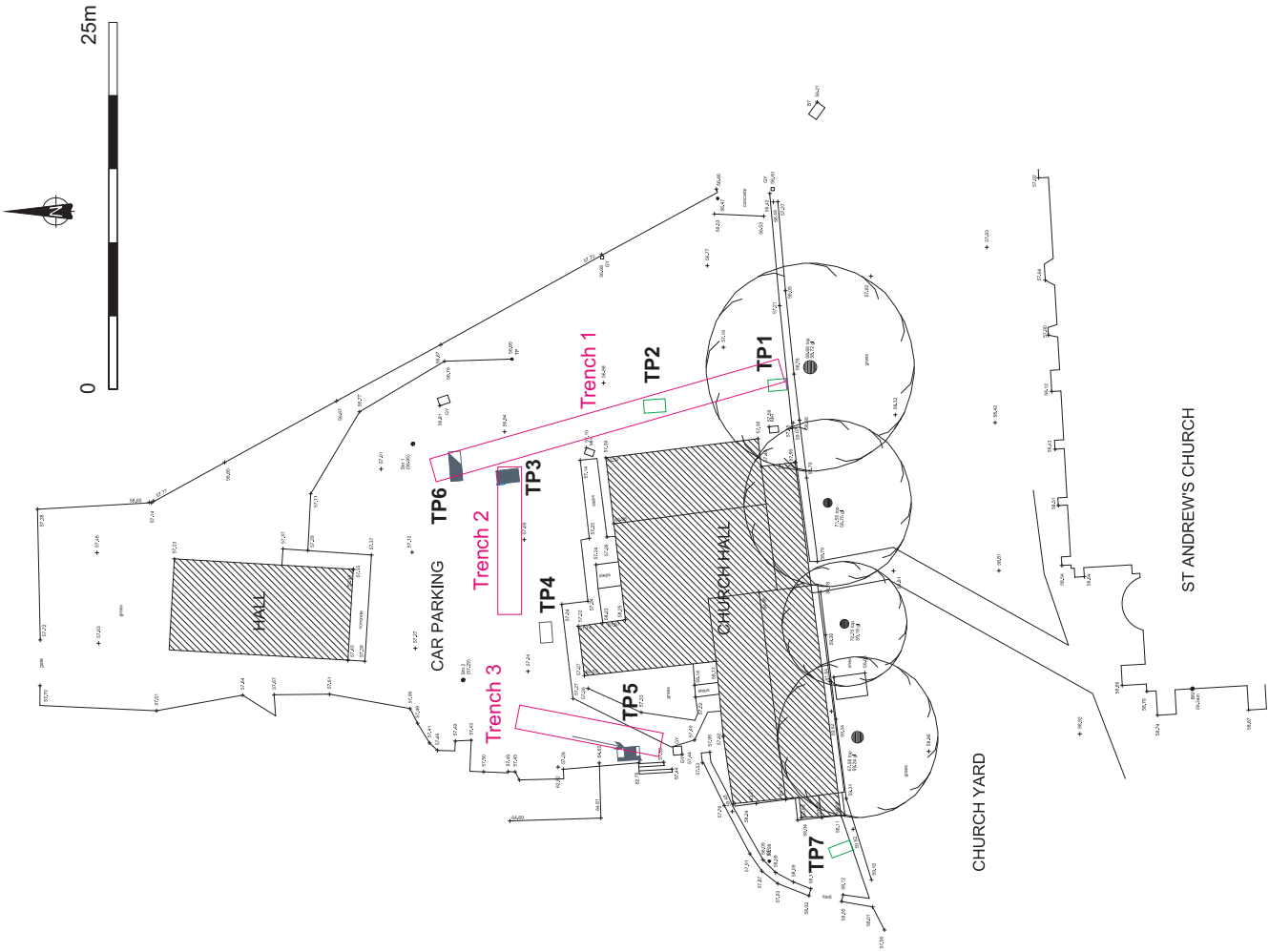


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PROJECT
ACD185 Cullompton Church Hall



TITLE
Fig 1: Site location maps and position of trenches



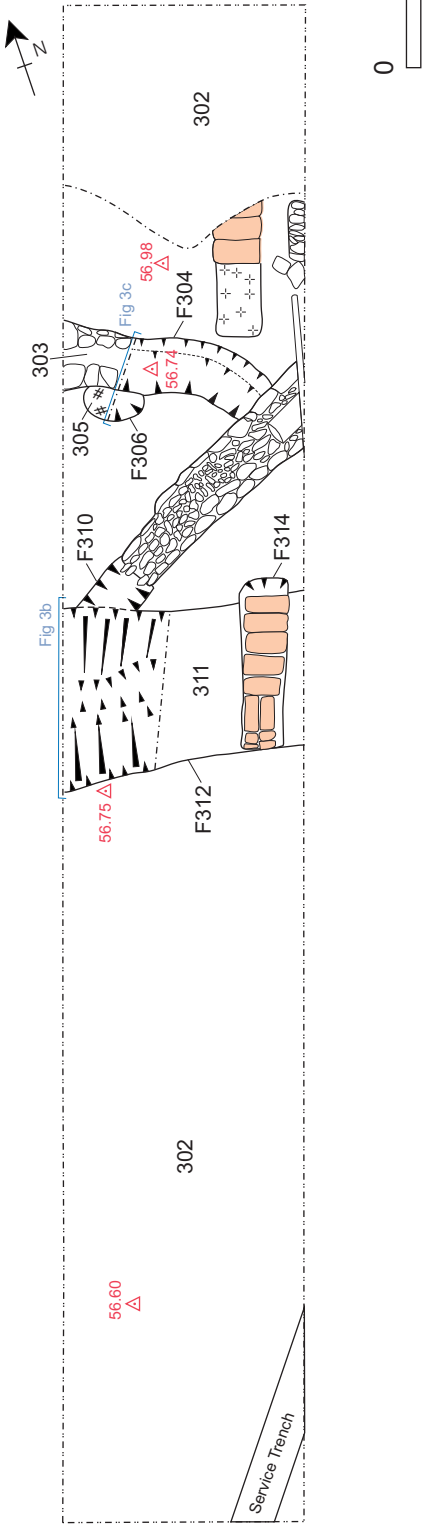
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a) Plan

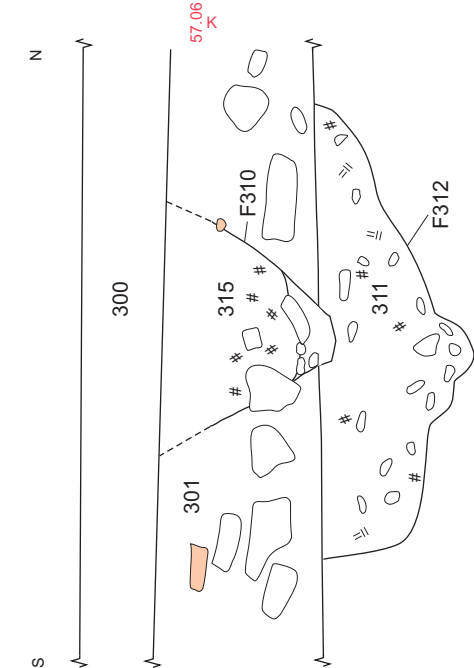


Trench 3

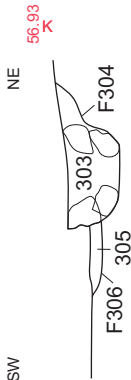
a) Plan

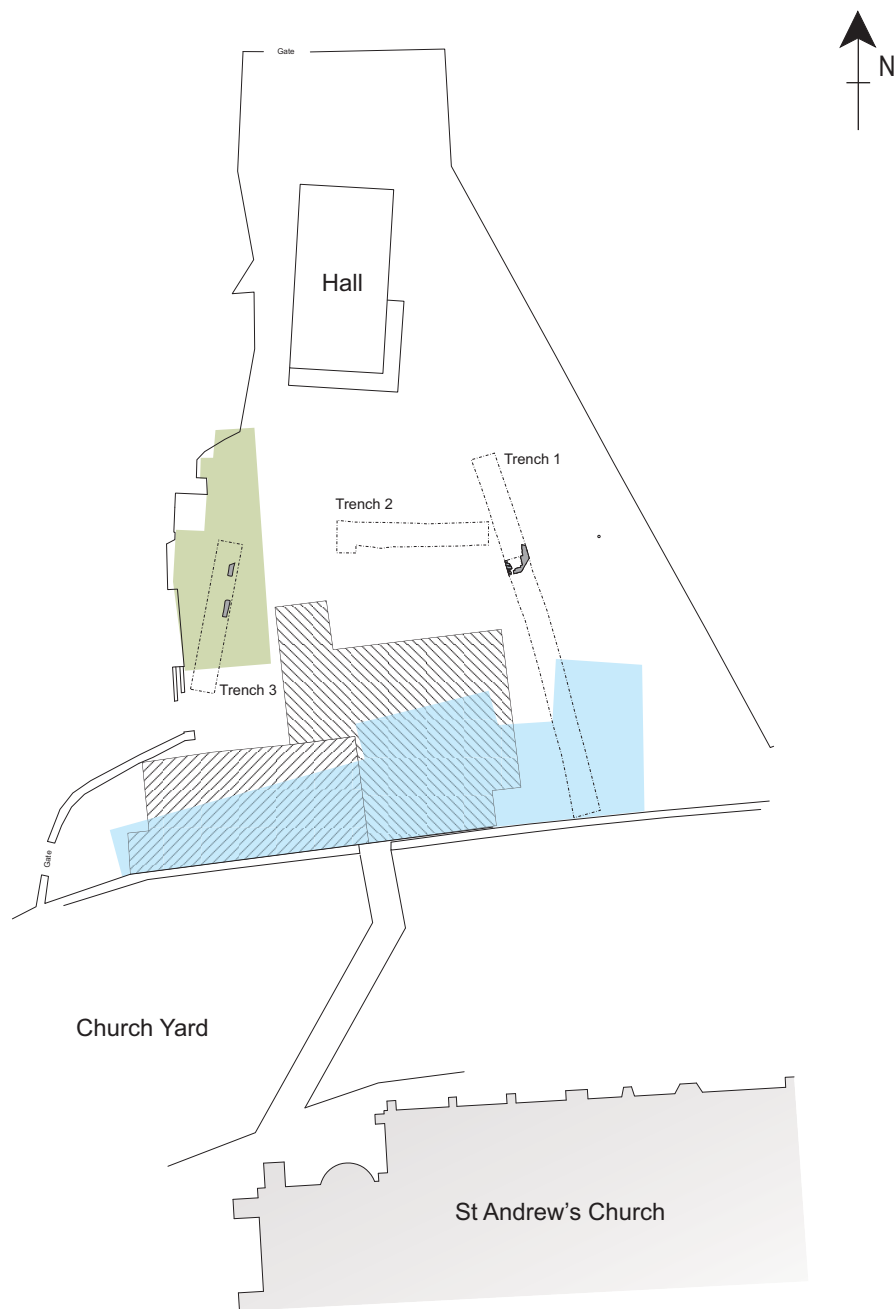


b) Section, F312 and F310



c) Section, F 306 and 304

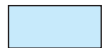




0 25m



Structure depicted on 1843 tithe map
and Ordnance Survey 1st edition map, 1888



Structure depicted on 1843 tithe map



Structural evidence recorded during evaluation



Church Hall to be demolished, Victorian and
1970s construction

PROJECT

ACD185 Cullompton Church Hall

TITLE

Fig 4: Location of trenches in
relation to former buildings
shown on historic maps





Plate 1: General view of Trench 1, looking southeast
(scales 2 x 1m)



Plate 2: Southeast end of Trench 1 showing pit F104
(scales 2 x 1m)



Plate 3: General view of Trench 2 looking west
(scale 1m)



Plate 4: General view of Trench 3 looking southwest
(scales 2m & 1m)

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