

# Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.

## Historic Building Recording



# **Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.**

## **Historic Building Recording**

for

**Jacobstowe PCC**

by



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## Non-technical summary

*Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of historic building recording at the church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon, in September 2014. This comprised a desk-based study of archaeological and historic data relating to the church and analysis of the standing building. The project was commissioned by Jacobstowe PCC and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in conjunction with Jacobstowe PCC.*

*The archaeological works were advised by Ms Meriel O'Dowd (Heritage at Risk Surveyor, English Heritage), following a visit after the collapse of the western nave pew bases. Ms O'Dowd suggested that a construction history survey should be carried out and advice sought on the re-laid tiles within the nave aisle as part of the proposed reordering of the church. The construction history survey comprises analysis of the development, history and construction of the building which will also form part of the church leaflet. It also informs the scope and nature of any archaeological constraints with relation to the proposed works.*

*The church of St James, Jacobstowe, originated as a Norman foundation set within an enclosed churchyard, suggested as being an early Christian graveyard. The width of the side walls and the position of the south doorway indicates a small two-cell church comprising an aisleless nave with single-splayed windows and is likely to have had an apsidal east end typical of the period. The simple architectural forms of the south doorway, the free-standing font and the possible altar indicate an early Norman date. The 15<sup>th</sup> century extensions and re-modelling would have transformed the church into a more imposing building. The tower would have made the church visible from a greater distance and both the tower and the extended east end greatly lengthened the church. Perpendicular windows in the west and east elevations and mullion windows along the side walls would have brought the church architecturally up-to-date, improved the natural daylight and, with the provision of glazing, made the church more comfortable.*

*From the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century no major structural changes are evident, with alterations and additions relating to improving comfort and installation of memorials. The provision of two additional windows in the east end during the 17<sup>th</sup> century would have enhanced the natural light to the chancel; the installation of pews would have provided permanent seating; and the fireplace or stove would have further improved the comfort of the congregation. The presence of 19<sup>th</sup> century memorials in the form of monuments and stained glass windows are testimony to the continued importance of the church within the community.*

*The 1902 restoration work may partly have been a response to structural problems in the north elevation, while the east extension was designed to provide additional space for liturgical practices within the chancel. The provision of a vestry in 1935, and a new window at the west end of the north elevation, is testimony to the continued role which the church played in the community. The interior of the church was re-plastered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an example of continued investment in the historic fabric. As part of this, the re-laid decorated tiles are significantly important to warrant specialist analysis and this should be considered prior to the tiles being taken up and incorporated elsewhere within the church.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Context One Archaeological Services Ltd (COAS) carried out a programme of historic building recording at the Grade II\* Listed church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon, in September 2014. This comprised a desk-based study of archaeological and historic data relating to the church and analysis of the standing building from ground level. The project was commissioned by Jacobstowe PCC and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund in conjunction with Jacobstowe PCC.
- 1.2 The archaeological works were advised by Ms Meriel O'Dowd (Heritage at Risk Surveyor, English Heritage), following a visit after the collapse of the western nave pew bases. Ms O'Dowd suggested that a construction history survey should be carried out and advice sought on the re-laid tiles within the nave aisle as part of the proposed reordering of the church, which includes a new kitchen and toilet within the 1935 vestry and adjustment and alterations to the church pews and floor. The works were also required for an updated visitor leaflet.
- 1.3 The construction history survey comprises analysis of the development, history and construction of the building which will form part of the church leaflet. It also informs the scope and nature of any archaeological constraints with relation to the proposed works.
- 1.4 The historic building recording work breaks down into three elements; historic building recording; a desk-based study of archaeological and historic data; and report production. In addition to this report, a shorter non-technical text has also been submitted for a new church leaflet.

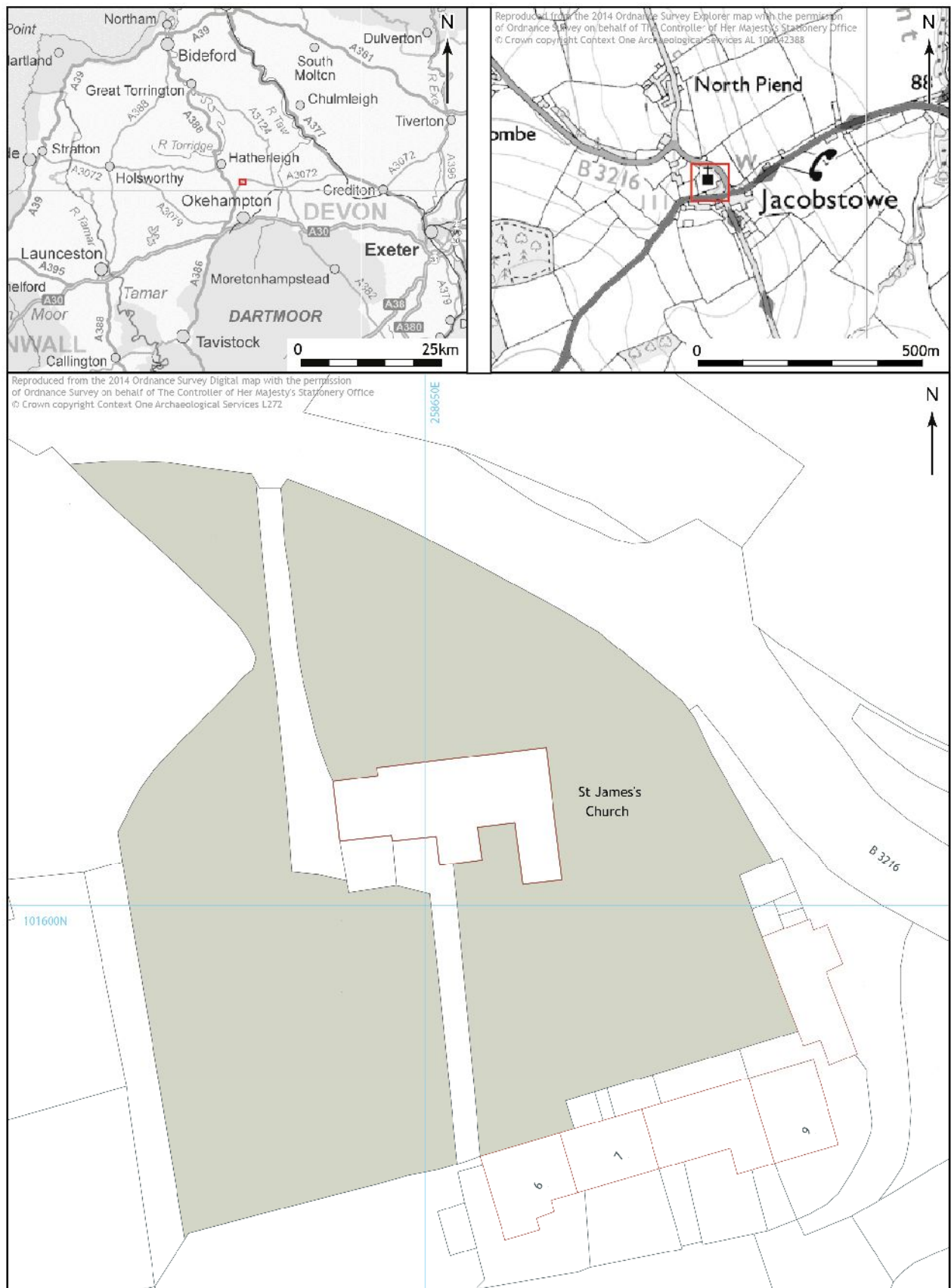
## 2. Location

- 2.1 St James church is located within the small hamlet of Jacobstowe, situated between Hatherleigh and Okehampton, West Devon (**Figure 1**). Set within a rural area of undulating agricultural and pastoral fields, the hamlet is focussed on a cross-roads with a further small hamlet of North Piend to the north. The church (centred on NGR SS 58576 01672) is set within a roughly sub-circular churchyard in the north-western quadrant of the cross-roads. A row of cottages adjoin the south side of the churchyard, the old vicarage adjoins the west side, and the modern B3216 runs alongside the northern and eastern sides with open fields beyond. The church stands on level ground at a height of c. 110m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), the churchyard occupying a terrace at approximately the same height overlooking the lower ground to the north and west.

## 3. Methodology

- 3.1 A desk-based study was carried out to assemble readily available historical and archaeological evidence relating to the church. This included the examination of historic maps such as estate maps, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Tithe Plan, Ordnance Survey maps from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and published accounts of the church. These were available from the Devon Heritage Centre (with West Country Studies Library) in Exeter and the North Devon Record Office, with additional material kindly provided by Mr Rod Lane, Jacobstowe PCC.
- 3.2 The survey conformed to recording Level 2/3 as set out in *Understanding Historic Buildings - A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006). Both the exterior and the interior were viewed, described and photographed from ground level in order to ascertain the physical developmental history of the church. The photographic survey set the church in context with general shots illustrating form and setting. All elevations (internal and external) and individual architectural features were photographed where possible and evidence for structural alterations, phasing and significant historic features were noted and photographed. Each viewpoint included a scale where possible.





**Figure 1.** Site setting

*Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.*

- 3.3 The photographs consisted of digital images taken with a Nikon D40X 10.1 megapixel digital SLR camera fitted with an 18-55mm lens. Images were captured on a 4GB SD card in the field and were subsequently transferred to the COAS online server for storage. External overhead and angled aerial photographs were taken using a remote controlled quadcopter equipped with a digital camera.
- 3.4 The historic building survey was carried out in accordance with the *Understanding Historic Buildings - A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage, 2006) and *Standard and Guidance for an for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures* published by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) in September, 1996 (rev.2001 & 2008). COAS adhered to the Code of Conduct issued by the IfA (2012; 2008), at all times during the course of the investigation.

#### 4. Historical and archaeological background

- 4.1 The archaeological and historical background for the Site and its environs has been drawn from secondary sources, including a data search of archaeological records held by Devon County Council as part of the Historic Environment Record (HER), by English Heritage as part of the National Heritage List for England, and readily available cartographic and documentary sources. The primary and secondary records held at the Devon Heritage Centre includes estate, tithe and ordnance survey maps (**Appendix 1**).
- 4.2 St James parish church (HER no. MDV15182) is thought to have originated in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, with the main fabric dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The church was restored and the east end extended in 1902-3 and the vestry was added to the south side of the chancel in 1935. The HER entry refers to a report by Jonathan Rhind Architects which states that repairs were required to replace raised timber floors and pews in the west end of the nave which had collapsed due to decay. The churchyard (HER no. 41906) is thought to be a possible early Christian graveyard. This is based on the association of the word 'stow' with 'place of assembly, holy place'. Jacobstowe was first recorded in 1331 with the Domesday manor of Broomford located to the south-east of the village. The old manor burned down in 1740/50 (*pers comm* Rod Lane) and the present Broomford Manor, located to the north-west of Jacobstowe, is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century Tudor-style house (Hoskins 1954, 417).
- 4.3 Details from the Grade II\* Listing (No. 1326489) are as follows:

*"...stone rubble walls with granite ashlar to buttresses and upper stage of tower. Gable ended slate roof. Plan: nave, chancel, west tower and south porch, vestry on south side of chancel. The church dates back to the C12 from which the south doorway and the font are the only recognisable feature although some of the fabric of the nave may also be similarly early. There was evidently a major remodelling in the C15 when the tower was added. In 1902-3 the church was restored, the chancel lengthened by 5 feet and the vestry probably added on its south side.*

*Exterior: 3 stage battlemented west tower with crocketed pinnacles and diagonal buttresses. Granite 4-centred west doorway, hollow and roll moulded with incised scroll stops. Its hood mould has armorial shields in its labels. C17 or earlier studded plank door with moulded cover strips and foliage carving in its head. 3-light granite Perpendicular west window. North side of nave has C15 2-light mullion window with 2-centred heads restored 1 and 2-light window of similar style to either side. C17 2-light mullion window between them. 3-light Perpendicular east window, above which - set into the wall - is a carved stone seated figure which may be Norman. Vestry projects in small wing from south side of chancel. On south side of nave is another 2-light C17 mullion window and a 3-light cinquefoil-headed restored window to the west of it. Restored C15 2-light cinquefoiled window to west of porch. Small single storey south porch has crudely chamfered round arched doorway.*

*Interior: walls have C20 plaster. Plain C12 south doorway with round head. C16 or C17 studded plank door with chamfered cover strips. Porch roof is plastered. Double chamfered round headed tower arch. Simple wagon roof whose ribs have been renewed and a decorative wooden arch inserted over the junction between nave and chancel. The pulpit incorporates pieces of carved wood believed to come from the medieval rood screen. Simple square*



probably C12 tub font on central shaft set in square base.

4.4 In Pevsner's *Building of England* series, St James is described as follows:

*'St James. West tower with diagonal buttresses and pinnacles. Aisleless nave. South doorway with round-headed. Much restored in 1902. Font - square with chamfered angles; featureless. Monument - Lady Madden d. 1849, by J. Ternouth of Pimlico, London, with two large allegorical females. Pretty wooden Gothic fencing around the churchyard and the former vicarage, a low building with early C19 Gothic glazing and Tudor drip moulds to the windows. Croft: a remarkably complete 15<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century farmstead with farm buildings of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century in a courtyard in front of the house'*

(Cherry & Pevsner 1989, 511).

4.5 In 1342 there is mention of the Archdeacon of Totnes visitation, who reported that:

*"The church is ruinous and inadequate. The windows are unglazed. The legenda & Antiphonary are worthless. The Capitular, Collectar, & Hymnary was defective, under the present rector Sir John De Bere. The rectory and glebe fences are in bad condition. These defects can be put in order for 20 marks".*

Sir John died during the Black Death in 1350 and it was not until the 15<sup>th</sup> century that major repair and rebuilding work was undertaken. A map of 1775/6 shows the church in elevation with the tower clearly evident and possibly the south porch (Plate 1).



Plate 1. Map of 1775/6 showing Jacobstowe church in elevation (North Devon Record Office B170/134)

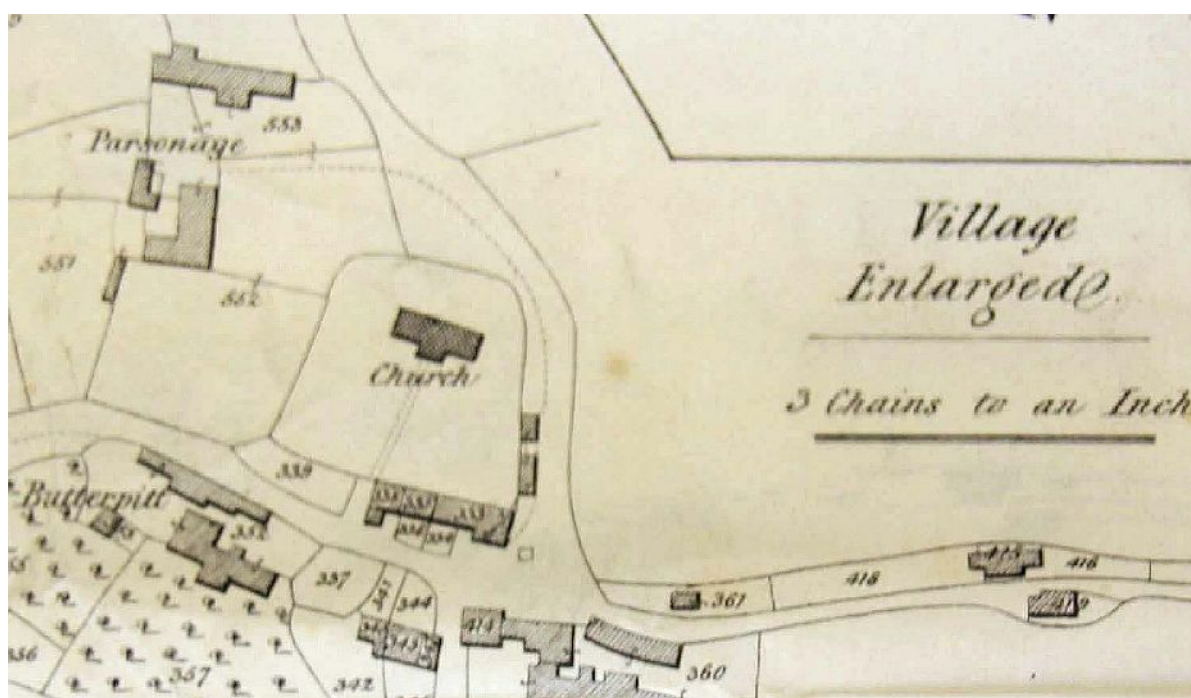


Plate 2. Inset of Jacobstowe from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century map (DHC 1262M/6/E/22/59)

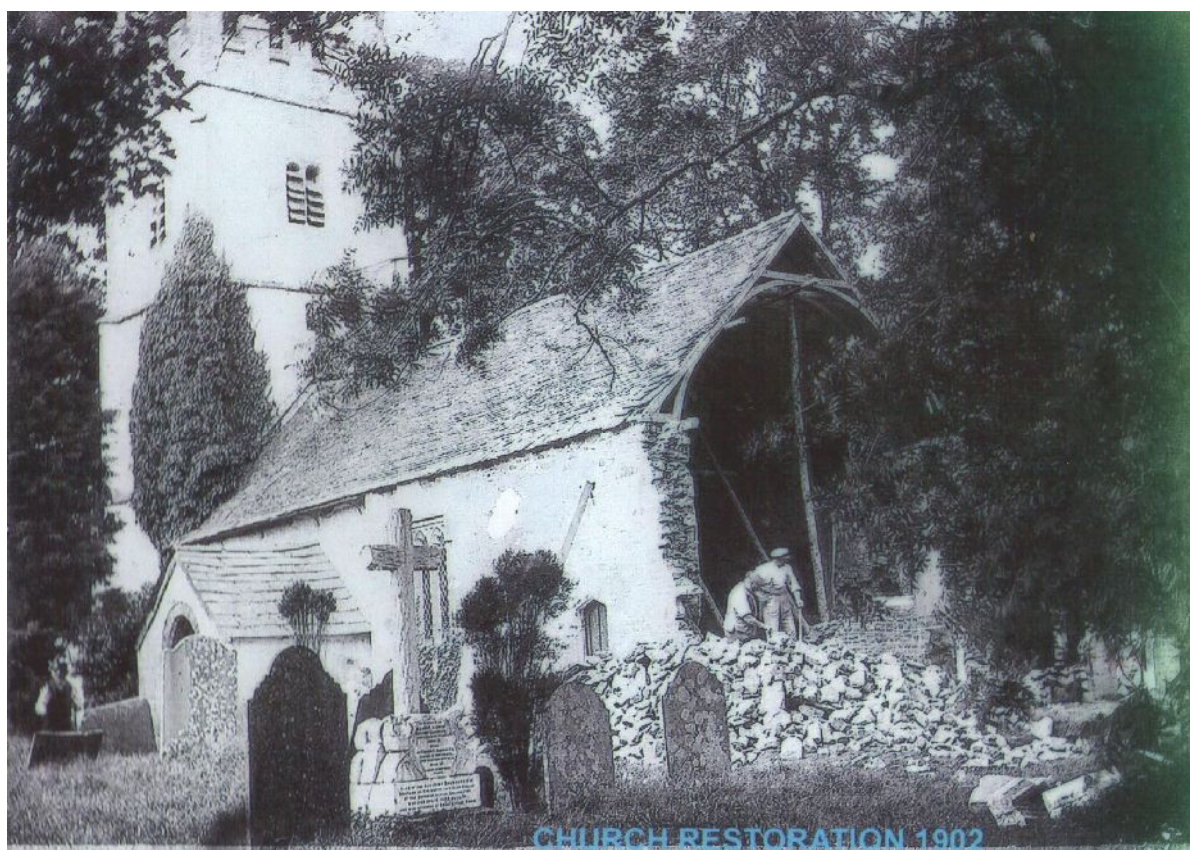


Plate 3. Photograph of 1902 restoration showing dismantled east end (DHC 4084A/PY/5/1)





Plate 4. South elevation from Copeland photographs, post-1935 (Devon Heritage Centre: IV/81/7)



Plate 5. Font from Copeland photographs, post-1935 (Devon Heritage Centre: 17332/10/20a/6)

*Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.*

- 4.6 A mid-19<sup>th</sup> century map shows the south porch (**Plate 2**), which is also present on the 1839 tithe map (see below). The next phase of documented work is the 1902 restoration, which has been described as an over-restoration (Hoskins 1954, 417). As part of the restoration work the east end was extended by 1.52m and the wooden wagon roof repaired; a photograph of these works show the arched braces supported on a precarious-looking thin upright timber (**Plate 3**). In 1935 the vestry was added; a black and white photograph encompassing the edge of the vestry shows the poor state of the render on the tower in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century (**Plate 4**). This was subsequently removed and the only part of the church currently rendered is the porch. The photograph comes from the Copeland collection which also contains a photograph of the Norman font (**Plate 5**). In the background is the eastern side of the stone-faced fireplace, proving that by the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century the font was in its current position on the same stone base as it has now.

#### Map regression

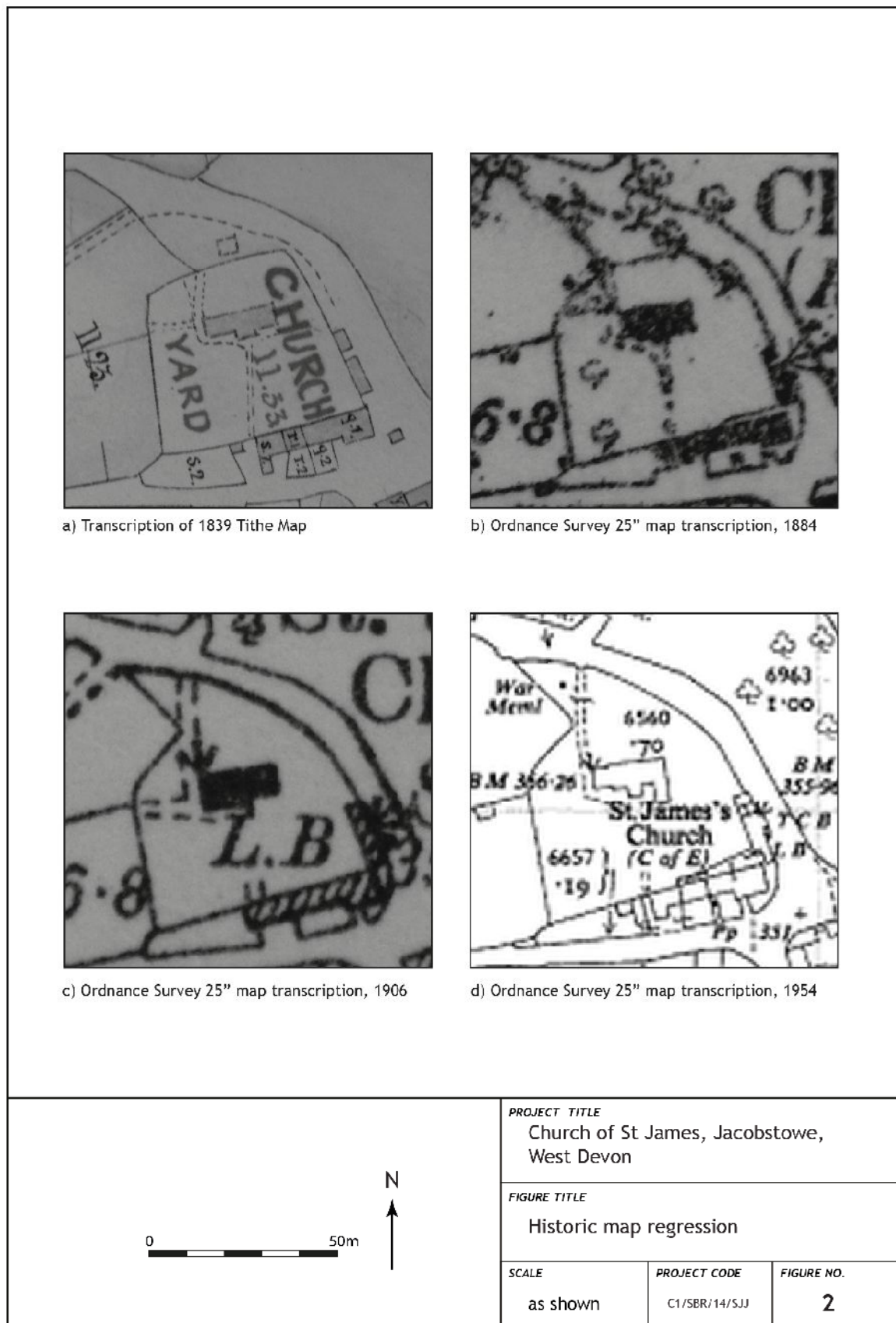
- 4.7 The 1839 Jacobstowe tithe map shows the church with south porch, with buildings along the south side and the southern part of the east side of the churchyard (see **Figure 2; a**). The 1889 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map shows the semi-circular shape of the northern part of the churchyard (see **Figure 2; b**), with rectory to the north-west. By 1906 the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey map reveals that the north boundary of the churchyard had been extended to encompass a triangular plot of land (now crossed by the footpath from the church gate) (see **Figure 2; c**). Also, one of the buildings along the southern part of the east side of the churchyard is labelled as a school. By 1954, the war memorial was present in the triangular plot which had previously become part of the churchyard (see **Figure 2; d**). The vestry is also shown protruding southwards from the chancel.

## 5. Results of historic building recording

- 5.1 A Site visit was carried out on 5 September 2014 during dry and bright weather conditions. The viewpoints of the digital photographs taken externally at ground level during the visit are shown on **Figure 3**, with some of the internal viewpoints.
- 5.2 The external elevations of the church and its setting within the enclosed churchyard remains largely unaltered since the last major addition in 1935 (**Plate 6 & 7**). The walls are faced with grey river stone and red sandstone with granite for most of the dressings. For the walls, the stone was laid using a combination of coursed, unevenly coursed and uncoursed random rubble (see **Cover image**). The roof of the nave and chancel has been renewed with slate and late Victorian ridge tiles, while the tower roof (also covered with slates) is dual-pitched towards a central lead drainage gully (**Plate 8**). The vestry roof is of asbestos 'slate' tiles with a ceramic ridge.

#### General description of elevations (see **Plates 43-46**)

- 5.3 Along the south elevation, the walling of the nave comprises unevenly coursed and uncoursed small random rubble. This is distinct from the fabric of the tower, which employs larger blocks of coursed and unevenly coursed rubble with large blocks of granite for the dressings and angled buttresses, with large coursed blocks of granite for the battlemented parapet, top stage and upper part of the central stage of the tower. The west and north elevations of the tower are identical in terms of construction. The south porch has been recently rendered and to the east is another change in fabric, with slightly larger stones amongst the unevenly coursed and uncoursed random rubble. This coincides with a narrow southward projection in the fabric which continues eastwards.
- 5.4 The north elevation of the nave has a shallow chimney breast with a buttress further east, supporting the wall which has a distinct vertical bow. Both are present on a 1902 plan depicting the church prior to restoration work (DHC 4084A/PY/5/1). To the east of the chimney breast there is a change from unevenly coursed small random rubble to regularly coursed random rubble incorporating larger stones, some of which are carved and indicative of re-use. To the east of the buttress the facing material is unevenly coursed and uncoursed small random rubble, incorporating some larger stones. The eastern 1.5m of the church is faced with regularly coursed random rubble which continues in the east elevation, incorporating larger blocks which also appear to be carved. Above the east window is a small carved seated figure, certainly re-used (**Plate 9**).



**Figure 2.** Historic map regression

*Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.*





Plate 6. Oblique aerial view of St James church (from NEE)



Plate 7. Aerial view of St James church (from above)





Plate 8. Aerial view of roofs (from above)



Plate 9. East end with seated figure above east window (from SE)

- 5.5 The only *in situ* Norman feature is the round-headed south doorway. This is a very simple form, the ornamentation confined to a chamfer around the external jamb and arch (**Plate 10**). Internally, there is a deep rebate above the doorway (**Plate 11**). Other Norman features include a crudely carved square font with chamfers to the angles and to the underside of the bowl, set on a circular shaft above a later base comprising two courses of stonework (**Plate 12**). The appearance and location of the font is unaltered from the post-1935 photograph (**Plate 5**). A free-standing rectangular structure sited between the south porch and the vestry, has the same simple chamfer to the underside as the font (**Plate 13 & 14**). Measuring 1.8m long and 0.5m wide and constructed of large ashlar blocks, the structure is considered to be too narrow for a tomb and is most likely the Norman altar. The outer south porch doorway is also round-headed with one straight chamfer to the external jamb and arch (**Plate 15**), possibly indicating it has been re-set from another part of the church. Deep splays in the two western 15<sup>th</sup> century nave windows, including a row of possible voussoirs re-set as a shoulder course above the window in the north elevation (**Plate 29**), suggest Norman origins for these openings (see below).
- 5.6 Most of the church can be attributed to the 15<sup>th</sup> century re-modelling and extensions. This includes the west tower with simple two-light openings in the top stage; a small round-headed opening in the east elevation of the central stage (**Plate 16**); a parapet with crocketed pinnacles topped with crosses (**Plate 17**); a four-centred west doorway with hollow and roll-moulded decoration, incised scroll stops and hood-mould terminating in labels with armorial shields (**Plate 18**); and Perpendicular west window with late 19<sup>th</sup> century stained glass (**Plates 19 & 20**). The armorial shields are 'Chevrons charged with roses' for the Cary's and 'chevron between three cinquefoils' for the Strechleigh's, with John Cary holding the manor in 1383 followed by the Strechleigh's in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Cresswell 1927).
- 5.7 The western end of the nave is abutted by the 15<sup>th</sup> century tower; the nave walls curve inwards where they are abutted by the tower buttresses (**Plates 21 & 22**). The windows in the south side of the nave comprise a 15<sup>th</sup> century two-light cinquefoiled window at the west end (**Plates 23 & 24**); a 15<sup>th</sup> century three-light cinquefoiled window in the centre (**Plate 25**); and a 17<sup>th</sup> century two-light mullion window to the east (**Plate 25**). The windows in the north side of the nave comprise a two-light mullion window at the west end, erected in 1935 by the rector E. J. White as a memorial (**Plates 27 & 28**); a 15<sup>th</sup> century two-light mullion window with two-centred heads in the centre, the stained glass dating to 1887 (**Plates 29 & 30**); a 17<sup>th</sup> century two-light mullion window to the east with original stained glass (**Plates 31 & 32**) and a 1902 one-light cinquefoiled window at the east end. Re-set within the 1902 extension to the chancel is a three-light Perpendicular window with late 19<sup>th</sup> century stained glass (**Plates 33 & 34**).
- 5.8 The 15<sup>th</sup> century priests doorway in the south wall of the chancel (now providing access to the 1935 vestry) has a depressed pointed arch with simple hollow chamfer to the external jamb and arch (**Plate 35**). The south porch is likely to date to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, incorporating a carved stone in the lowest course of the east elevation adjacent to the external doorway (**Plate 36**). The stone has three panels; the left one is empty while the central panel depicts a marigold and the right hand panel depicts an equilateral cross. Although the stone may have been re-used from another source, the emblems suggest a medieval date. The Bow Conglomerate (Breccia) flag stones in the porch are comparable to those within the body of the church, with the threshold stone dated 1777 (*pers comm* Rod Lane). The extant oak doors within the west doorway and south doorway are described in the Listing as 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century respectively (see above).
- 5.9 The 1902 works saw the extension of the east end by 1.5m (**Plate 3 & 44**); restoration of all the 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century windows described above; and extensive renewing of the wagon roof with new ribs (**Plates 37, 38 & 39**). Marks left by the fixings for the lathe and plaster remain visible on the underside of the original ribs above the nave (**Plate 39**). Above the chancel the timber of the wagon roof is all new, incorporating a decorative wooden chancel arch and wooden bosses (**Plate 40**). The facing of the central part of the north elevation is very similar to the 1902 work, suggesting this section was re-faced as part of the restoration work (**Plate 44**), perhaps in response to a vertical bulge in the wall which is still evident today. In 1935 the vestry was added to the south side of the chancel, with access to the chancel provided by the 15<sup>th</sup> century priest's doorway (**Plate 41**).





Plate 10. Norman south doorway within south porch (from S; 2 x 1m scales)

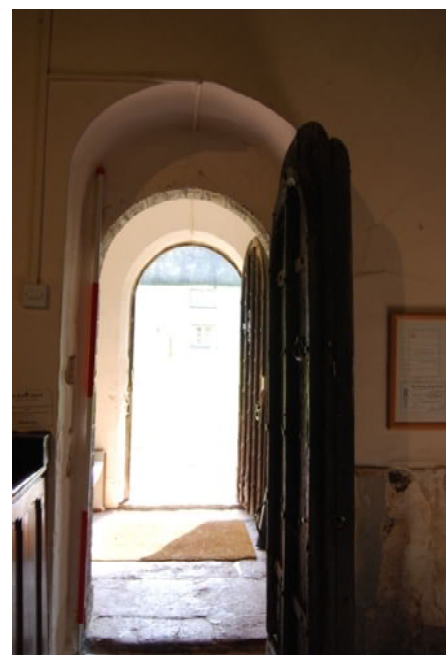


Plate 11. Interior of Norman south doorway (from N; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 12. Norman font on later stone plinth (from W; 1 x 0.2m scales)



Plate 13. Possible Norman altar repositioned between south porch & vestry (from S; 1 x 1m scales)



Plate 14. Possible Norman altar repositioned between south porch & vestry (from E; 1 x 0.2m scales)



Plate 15. South porch (from S; 2 x 1m scales)



Plate 16. Oblique aerial view of tower (from ESE)





Plate 17. Oblique aerial view of tower roof (from S)



Plate 18. West doorway into tower (from W; 1 x 2m scales)

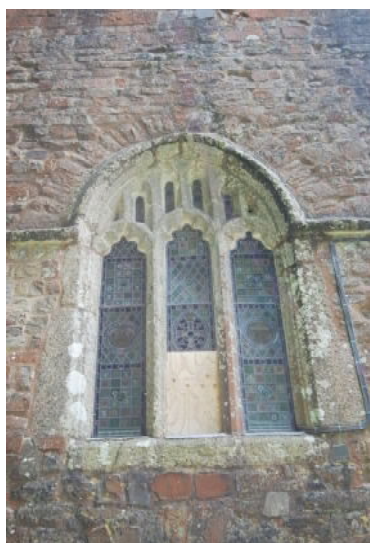


Plate 19. West window (from W)

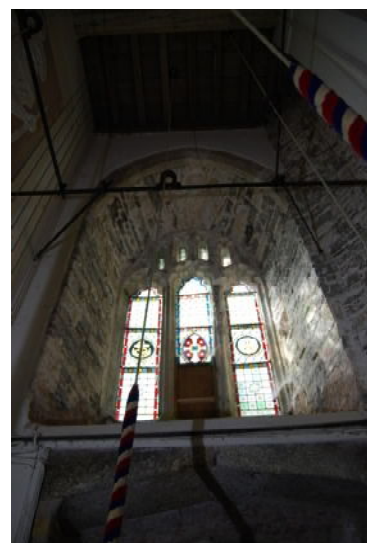


Plate 20. West window (from E)

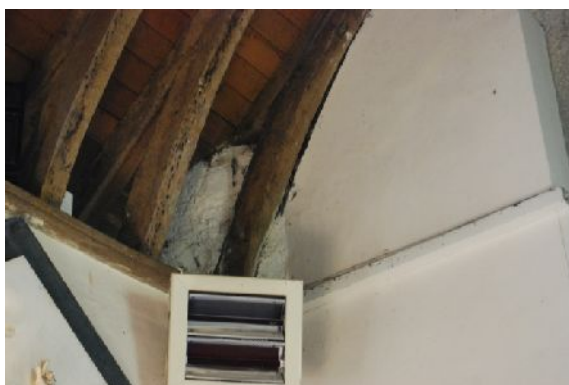


Plate 21. South-west corner of nave showing curved nave walling (above heater) abutted by tower to right (from NE)



Plate 22. North-east corner of nave showing curved nave walling adjacent to scales abutted by tower to right (from NW; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 23. West window in south wall of nave, exterior (from SW)



Plate 24. West window in south wall of nave, interior (from N)





Plate 25. Central window in south wall of nave, exterior (from S; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 26. Eastern window in south wall of nave, exterior (from S; 1 x 1m scales)



Plate 27. Western window in north wall of nave, exterior (from N; 1 x 1m scales)

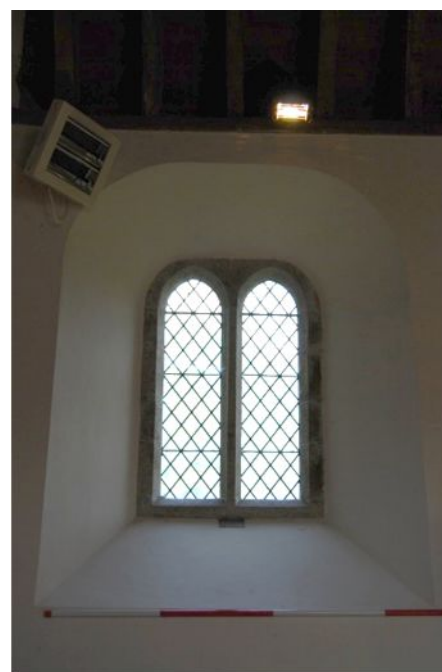


Plate 28. Western window in north wall of nave, interior (from S; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 29. Central west window in north wall of nave, exterior (from N; 1 x 1m scales)

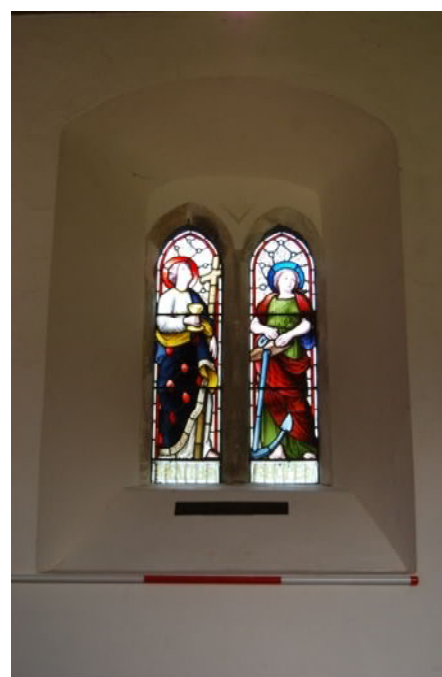


Plate 30. Central west window in north wall of nave, interior (from S; 1 x 1m scales)



Plate 31. Central east window in north wall of nave, exterior (from N; 1 x 2m scales)

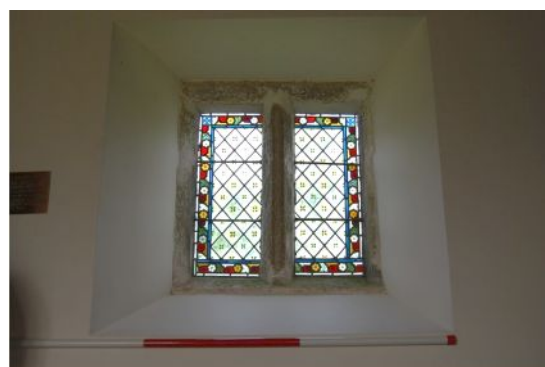


Plate 32. Central east window in north wall of nave, interior (from S; 1 x 1m scales)





Plate 33. East window, exterior (from E; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 34. East window, interior (from W; 1 x 2m scales)



Plate 35. Doorway between chancel & vestry (from N; 1 x 1m scales)



Plate 36. Carved stone in east elevation of porch showing marigold & cross (from E; 1 x 0.2m scales)



Plate 37. Nave & chancel, interior (from W)



Plate 38. Nave & tower, interior (from E)





Plate 39. Wooden wagon roof with decoratively carved chancel arch (from W)



Plate 40. Wooden wagon roof with decoratively carved chancel arch & bosses (from E)





Plate 41. Oblique aerial of vestry on south side of chancel (from SW)

- 5.10 Between the extant pews in the nave aisle is a pavement of re-laid tiles known as the ‘Barum tiles’ (Plate 42). The majority of the tiles appear undecorated, although residues of green glazing and inlay on a number of these tiles reveal that this is mostly a result of wear. Fortunately, there are a number of tiles where the decoration is recognisable, particularly along the northern side of the pavement and to the west of the southern pew. Five different designs were recognised. The rose (Plate 42; a) comprises two rows of five-lobed petals (a popular motif from the early 14<sup>th</sup> century before it was adopted as the Tudor emblem in 1485). Tiles with a diamond and fleur de lys to each corner (Plate 42; c) are almost identical to a group of late 13<sup>th</sup> tiles used at Glastonbury Abbey (Harcourt forthcoming, design number 61, group 4b). These are described as ‘Central pierced quatrefoil within square set diamond fashion from each face out-turned fleur de lys to each corner. Large slender side petals arched not reflexed’. Similar tiles have also been identified at Muchelney Abbey, Cleeve Abbey and Wells Cathedral. Although no precise parallel could be identified for the cross flory (Plate 42; b), pelican (Plate 42; d) and lion passant (Plate 42; e), similar designs are recorded from 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century monastic contexts.





Plate 42. Re-laid tiles within eastern half of nave central aisle



a) rose



b) cross flory



c) diamond with fleur de lys to each corner



d) pelican



e) lion passant



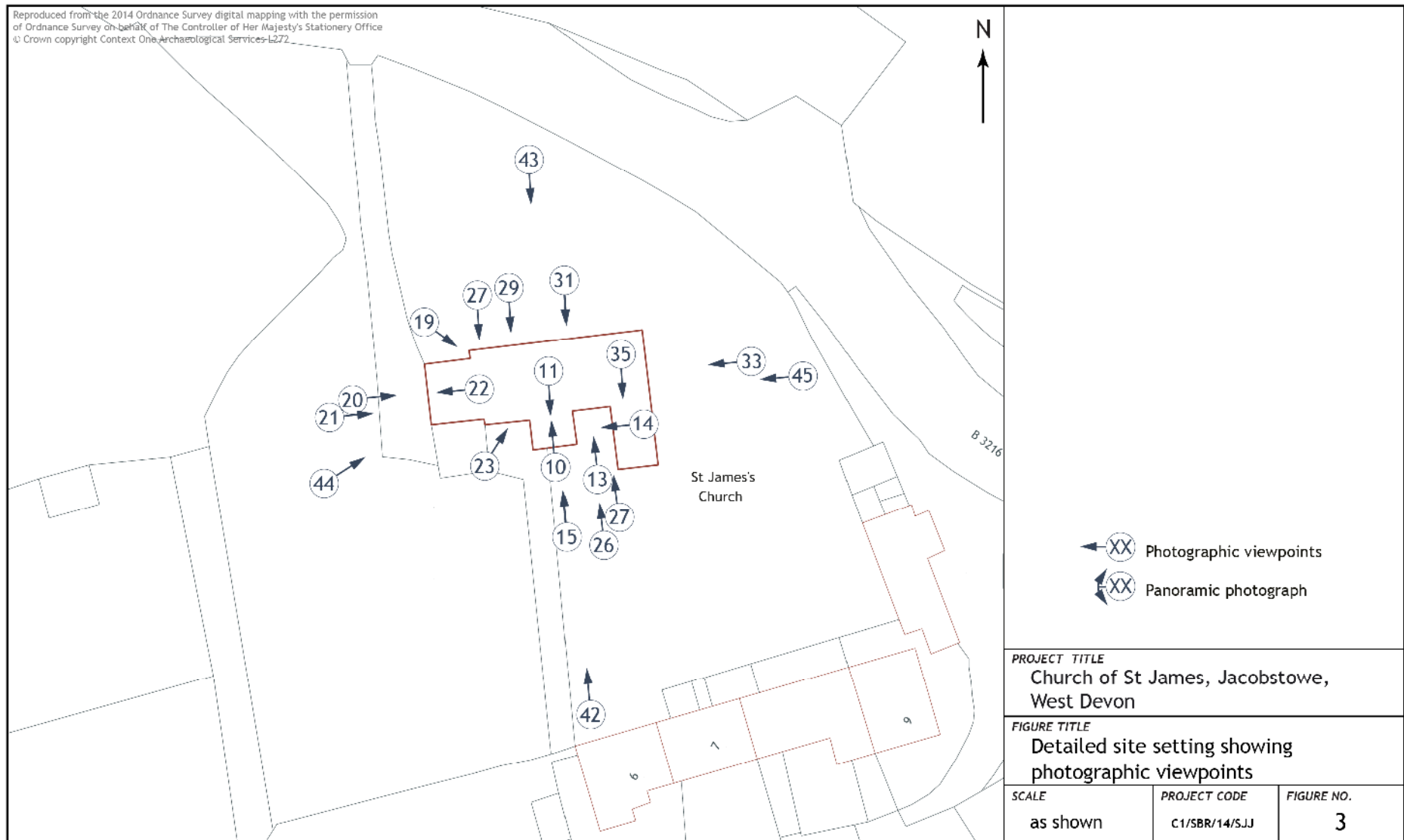


Figure 3. Detailed site setting showing photographic viewpoints

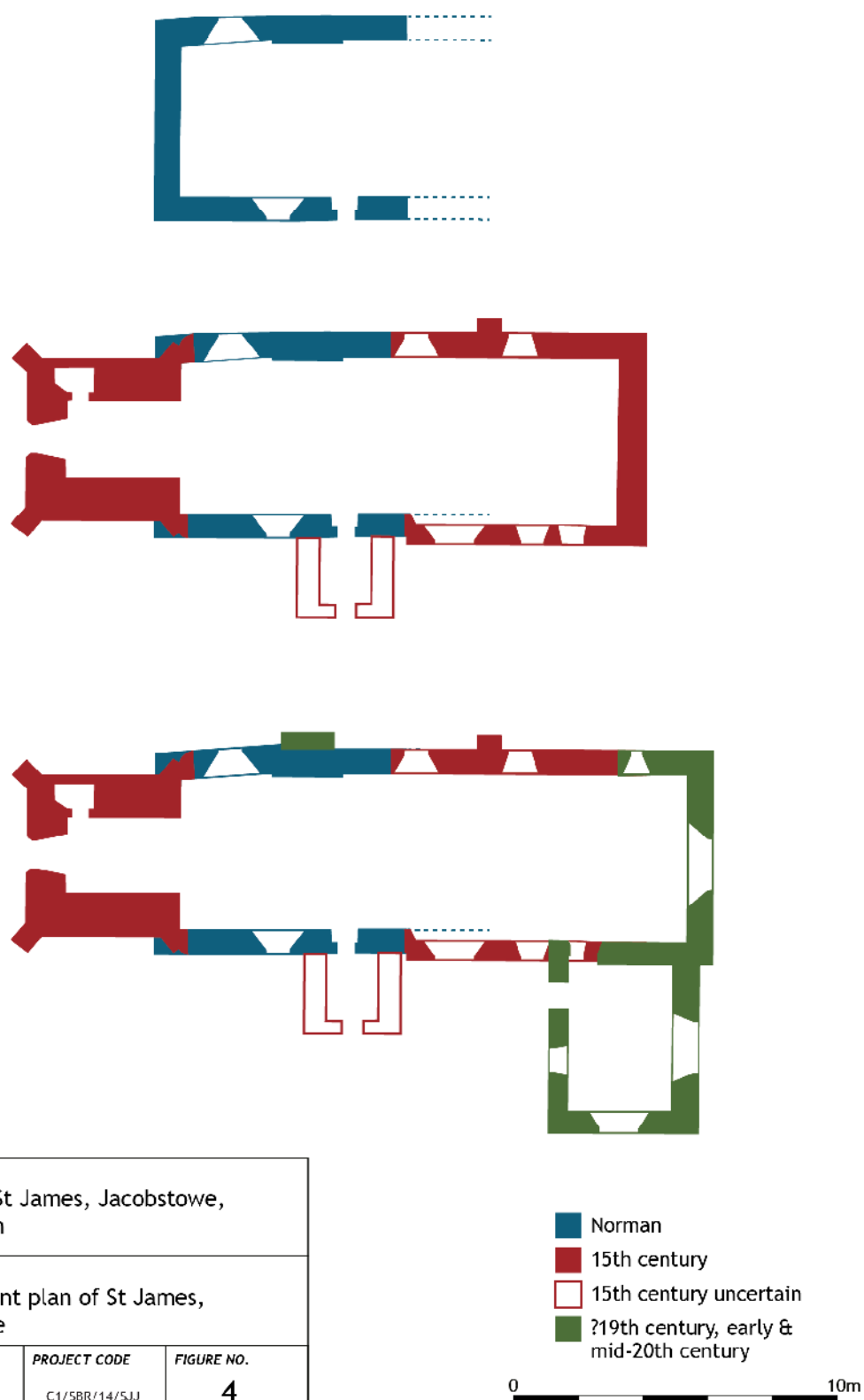


Figure 4. Development plan of St James, Jacobstowe



Plate 43. South elevation with approximate phasing, exterior (from S)

*Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.*





Plate 44. North elevation with approximate phasing, exterior (from N)

*Church of St James, Jacobstowe, West Devon.*





Plate 45. West tower, exterior (from WSW)



Plate 46. East elevation of chancel & vestry, exterior (from E)



## 6. Discussion and Conclusions

### Discussion

- 6.1 The following discussion amalgamates the results of the desk-based research and the historic building recording. The text should be read in conjunction with **Figure 4** which shows the development of the church through each major phase of construction or alteration. The colouring for each of these phases is used as a wash on photographs of the south and north elevations (**Plates 43 and 44**), although it should be noted that this is only approximate and does not reflect modern re-facing. Images of the west and east elevations are not phased as they belong to one and two phases respectively (**Plates 45 and 46**).
- 6.2 The south doorway is the only surviving *in situ* Norman feature and is of an undecorated form, with chamfer around the external jambs and arch and a deeply rebated internal arch. Generally, such simple forms are considered to be typical of the early Norman period (late 11<sup>th</sup> to early 12<sup>th</sup> centuries), although the remote rural location may reflect a delay in the spread of new architectural ideas. The western part of the south wall of the nave is contemporary with the south doorway along with the western part of the opposing north wall (**Plates 43 & 44**), although some re-facing may have taken place at a later date. The west ends of both walls curve in towards the 15<sup>th</sup> century tower; this may reflect re-modelling to accommodate the tower, nevertheless the position of the south doorway indicates that the western termination of the Norman church was in this location. The simple round-headed doorway of the south porch appears to be a re-set Norman doorway. Also, an external shoulder course above a 15<sup>th</sup> century window in the north elevation appears to re-use voussoirs from an arch which may have derived from a Norman window.
- 6.3 Within the nave, a free-standing crudely carved font is also likely to be early Norman, with chamfers to the angles and underside of the bowl, above a circular shaft set on a later square base. Standing outside the church, between the south porch and vestry, is a narrow rectangular stone-built structure topped by a slab with straight chamfer underneath (**Plate 43**). Too narrow to be a tomb and sharing the same simply-chamfered ornamentation as the font and south doorway, it is possible that this is the Norman altar perhaps re-sited following the 15<sup>th</sup> century work. If correct, the careful re-building and retention of this feature is interesting, perhaps providing spiritual agency to the renovated church.
- 6.4 Re-building in the 15<sup>th</sup> century appears to have swept away any recognisable Norman fabric to the east of the south doorway where the south wall steps-out (**Figure 4; Plate 43**). In contrast, the north wall retains the same line along its eastward course (**Figure 4**), however re-facing as part of the 1902 restoration obscures any change in build (**Plate 44**). A slight dog-leg in the alignment of the north wall perhaps suggests the Norman fabric is less extensive than shown on **Figure 4**, and is perhaps confined to the walling between the later chimney and the tower. However, in the absence of conclusive evidence, the eastern extent of the Norman fabric is shown mirroring the south wall.
- 6.5 An account in 1342 regarding the poor condition of the church reveals that the 15<sup>th</sup> century re-building and renovation were long overdue, possibly delayed by the Black Death and the effects this had on subsequent generations. The works comprised the addition of a three-stage tower with battlemented parapet and crocketed pinnacles (dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century by the armorial shields on the west door); the widening of the south wall eastwards from the south porch, and the likely eastward extension of the church (the walls continuing along the same line as the nave walls) to accommodate a square ended chancel (see **Figure 4; Plates 43 & 44**). The single-splayed Norman windows which must have pierced the north and south walls were probably replaced with the mullion cinquefoiled windows. Large Perpendicular windows were positioned in the west wall of the tower (**Plate 45**) and the east wall of the chancel, the latter re-positioned within the 1902 east extension (**Plate 46**). The west wall of the tower was provided with a four-centred doorway with armorial shields in its labels. A tower arch with double chamfer and round head was inserted between the nave and chancel and a small priests doorway constructed within the south wall of the chancel. A narrow spiral stair situated in the north-west corner of the tower provided access to the church clock (first floor), belfry with five bells (second floor) and roof. The south porch is likely to date to this period, the doorway described above possibly re-used from the Norman fabric (perhaps

the original north doorway). The floor appears to be contemporary with the nave floor, with the 1777 porch threshold stone possibly relating to this or some other architectural element. During the recent replacement of the external render a carved stone, with emblems of a marigold and an equilateral cross within a circle, was found to have been built into the external east elevation.

- 6.6 The presence of two opposing 17<sup>th</sup> century mullion windows in the north and south elevations indicate that more light was required in the chancel. The wooden south door and the wooden west door are Listed respectively as 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century and 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier. In the subsequent three centuries additions and improvements include the provision of pews with daisy stops set on four sets of timber pew bases; a pulpit (which according to the Listing incorporated carved wood believed to have come from the medieval rood screen); a chimney in the north elevation (the 1902 plan indicates a stove within the fireplace); a monument to Lady Madden (d. 1849); a stained glass window dated 1887 inserted within a 15<sup>th</sup> century mullion; a stained glass window erected in 1883 by public subscription within the east window, to the memory of Rev. John Vincent (Kelly's Directory 1889); and a stained glass window erected in the west window to the memory of Lady Margaret Day, d. 1874 (*ibid.*). The two western sets of pew bases have recently collapsed and the wall plaster behind the bench ends exposed, however no traces of earlier wall painting were observed.
- 6.7 The extensive restoration work of 1902 has been lamented by Pevsner (Cherry and Pevsner 1989, 511), Hoskins (1954, 417) and Cresswell. The 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century windows in the nave and chancel have been restored. Many of the ribs forming the simple wagon roof have been replaced, although the original timbers above the nave are evident from marks left by a lathe and plaster suspended ceiling. The central section of the north elevation has been re-faced externally, although a distinct bow in the wall and the earlier provision of a buttress in this location indicates that this repair work may have been structurally essential. The chancel was extended eastwards by 1.5m, the 15<sup>th</sup> century Perpendicular window with late 19<sup>th</sup> stained glass, re-set with a carving of a small seated figure positioned externally above the window. The carving appears to be medieval and was found in the belfry (Cresswell 1927), although it may have derived from another religious building.
- 6.8 The vestry was added to the south of the chancel in 1935, retaining the priest's doorway to provide access between the vestry and chancel. The lower part of the vestry walls are wood-panelled and a doorway in the west elevation provides external access. Also dated to 1935 is a window at the western end of the north elevation.
- 6.9 The tiles within the nave aisle are an important group with five different designs recognised, although many of the tiles are undecorated or the inlay has been worn away. The uneven laying of the tiles and the varied orientations of the designs prove they have been re-used from elsewhere. The designs date from the late 13<sup>th</sup> and early 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and comprise a rose motif (adopted as the Tudor emblem in 1485); the cross flory, pelican and lion passant also known from 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century monastic contexts; and a diamond with fleur de lys to each corner, which date to the late 13<sup>th</sup> century at Glastonbury Abbey and have also been identified at Muchelney Abbey, Cleeve Abbey and Wells Cathedral. The elaborate designs would have required a high level of craftsmanship akin with a high status building such as a monastery or palace. *Note: since carrying out the survey the tiles have now been subject to a comprehensive assessment by John Allan and dated as mid-17<sup>th</sup> to early 18<sup>th</sup> century.*

### Conclusions

- 6.10 The church of St James, Jacobstowe, originated as a Norman foundation set within an enclosed churchyard, suggested as being an early Christian graveyard. The width of the side walls and the position of the south doorway indicates a small two-cell church comprising an aisleless nave with single-splayed windows (probably two in each side wall) and is likely to have had an apsidal east end typical of the period. The simple architectural forms of the south doorway, the possible re-set south porch doorway, the free-standing font and the possible altar indicate an early Norman date. The 15<sup>th</sup> century extensions and re-modelling would have transformed the church into a more imposing building. The tower would have made the church visible from a greater distance and both the tower and the extended east end greatly lengthened the church. Perpendicular windows in the west and east elevations and mullion windows along the side walls would have brought the church



architecturally up-to-date, improved the natural daylight and, with the provision of glazing, made the church more comfortable.

- 6.11 From the 17<sup>th</sup> century to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century no major structural changes are evident, with alterations and additions relating to improving comfort and installing memorials. The provision of two additional windows in the east end during the 17<sup>th</sup> century would have enhanced the natural light to the chancel; the installation of pews would have provided permanent seating; and the fireplace or stove would have further improved the comfort of the congregation. The presence of 19<sup>th</sup> century memorials in the form of monuments and stained glass windows are testimony to the continued importance of the church within the community.
- 6.12 The 1902 restoration work may partly have been a response to structural problems in the north elevation, while the east extension was designed to provide additional space for liturgical practices within the chancel. The provision of a vestry in 1935, and a new window at the west end of the north elevation which would also have improved the natural light at the west end of the church, is testimony to the continued role which the church played in the community. The interior of the church was re-plastered in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, an example of continued investment in the historic fabric which is set to continue into the present century. As part of this, the re-laid decorated tiles are significantly important to warrant specialist analysis and this should be considered prior to the tiles being taken up and incorporated elsewhere within the church.

## 7. COAS acknowledgements

- 7.1 We would like to thank the following for their contribution to the successful completion of this project:

Jeremy Chadburn, Chadburn Conservation Architect  
 Rod Lane, Archaeological advisor to Jacobstowe PCC  
 Jerry Sampson, Buildings Archaeologist  
 Staff at Devon Heritage Centre

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|   |   |
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| Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), September 1990 (rev. October 2008)  | <i>Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology.</i> Reading: IfA  |
| Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), October 1996 (rev. 2001/2008)       | <i>Standard and Guidance for an for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures published by the Institute for Archaeologists</i> , Reading: IfA |

## Appendix 1. Historic maps and documents

| Date                         | Type  | Reference                              | Comments  |
|------------------------------|---|--|---|
| 1775/6                       | Map showing Jacobstowe Church: 'A Map or Plan of the Manor of Broomford lying within the Parishes of Jaconstow Honychurch & Hatherleigh in the County of Devon the Property of John Burton Esqr Survey'd in 1775 and ampp'd in 1776 by Wm Hole & A Law' | North Devon Record Office: B170/134    | Shows Jacobstowe Church in elevation                      |
| 1839                         | Tithe Map of Jacobstowe   | Devon Heritage Centre                  | Jacobstowe not named on tithe map. Only shows North Piend |
| Mid-19 <sup>th</sup> Century | Map of the manor of Broomford in the parish of Jacobstow. Showing the boundary of the whole parish, village included. Enlarged plan of mid-19 <sup>th</sup> C.  | Devon Heritage Centre: 1262M/6/E/22/59 | Photographed  |
| 1891                         | Ordnance Survey: 1 <sup>st</sup> edition 25 inch, sheet 64 NE   | Devon Heritage Centre                  | See text  |
| 1906                         | Ordnance Survey: 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition 25 inch, sheet 64 NE   | Devon Heritage Centre                  | See text  |
| 1906                         | Kelly's Directory   | Devon Heritage Centre                  | Photographed  |
| Post-1935                    | Photograph of font in St James church, from Copeland collection   | Devon Heritage Centre: 17332/10/20a/6  | Photographed  |
| Post-1935                    | Photograph of exterior of St James church from south, from Copeland collection  | Devon Heritage Centre: 17332/IV/81/7   | Photographed  |