
ST. MARY'S CHURCH
EASINGTON
COUNTY DURHAM

~ ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF ~

JULY 2019



Prepared for: <i>St. Mary's Easington PCC</i>		By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>		
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REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Prepared by:

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Frontispiece: *Drainage excavations along the south side of St. Mary's Church in July 2019.*

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Client: St. Mary's Easington PCC
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SUMMARY

This document reports on a process of archaeological monitoring conducted in July 2019, to mitigate the impact upon any sub-surface features encountered during groundworks associated with new drainage installations at St. Mary's Church, Easington, a Grade I listed building.

The archaeological watching brief requested was carried out during all excavation works associated with the drainage works within the churchyard, primarily focussing upon GY01, MH1 (a supposed manhole at the west end), and at GY07 at the south east corner of the nave where there is a tomb chest close-by.

Except for the inclusion of pathways in the late 19th century, analysis of historic maps illustrating St. Mary's Church indicate no noteworthy alterations to the churchyard within recorded history. However, the recent discovery of Pre-Conquest sculpture, and the apparent evidence of earlier gable lines in the west side of the church tower, raise the possibility that Pre-Conquest work may survive in and around the present building.

The results of archaeological watching brief concluded that no significant archaeological features, other than occasional disarticulated human bones, were disturbed during the current phase of drainage works at St. Mary's Church Easington. The groundworks were essentially able to locate and reuse existing drainage runs without the need for deeper invasive excavations that had the potential of impacting upon in situ archaeological remains.

No further archaeological monitoring is required during the groundworks associated with this scheme. However, given the potential for significant archaeological deposits to exist within the churchyard, it is recommended that any future interventions should be considered on their own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention.

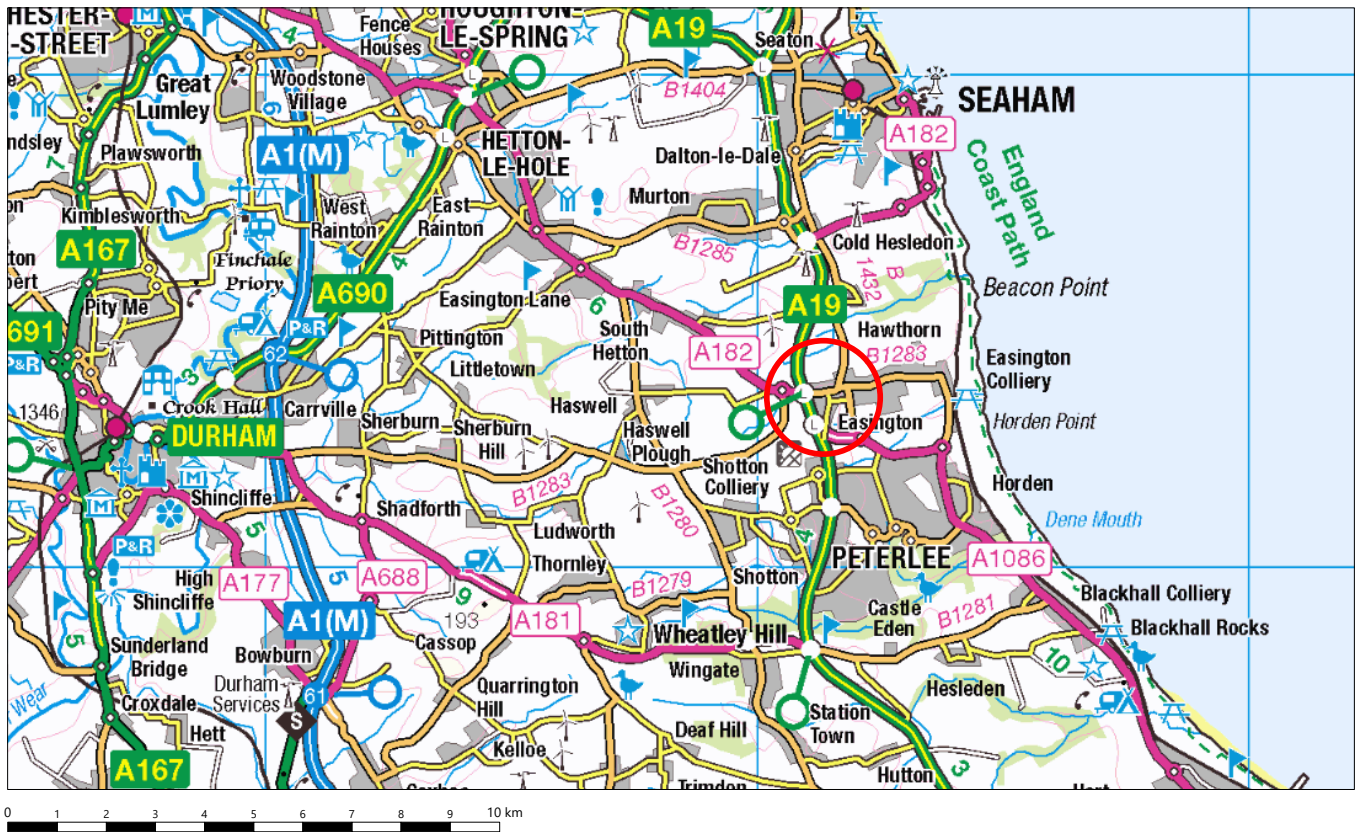
1. PURPOSE OF WATCHING BRIEF

1.1 This document reports on a process of archaeological monitoring conducted in July 2019, to mitigate the impact upon any sub-surface features encountered during groundworks associated with new drainage installations at St. Mary's Church, Easington (*centred on NGR: NZ 41430 43445*) (*see Illus. 01-02*). The work was carried out for St. Mary's PCC according to plans designed by Beaumont Brown Architects.

1.2 Easington is situated in eastern County Durham between the larger settlements of Seaham and Peterlee new town, lying approximately 8½ miles (13.5km) east of Durham city centre and just over 8 miles (13km) south of Sunderland city centre. The centre of the old village lies some 3 km inland and is dominated by St Mary's parish church, ensconced on a hillock above the north-west corner of the green which slopes towards the east and south-east.

1.3 Drainage works were proposed to the exterior of St Mary's church, Easington, a Grade I listed building. An archaeological watching brief had been requested and was carried out during all excavation works associated with the drainage works within the churchyard, primarily focussing upon GY01 (*see Illus. 03*), MH1 - a supposed manhole at the west end, and at GY07 at the south east corner of the nave where there is a tomb chest close-by.

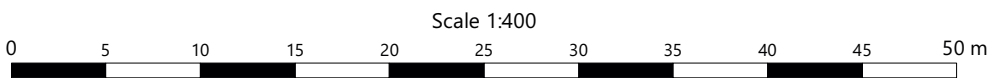
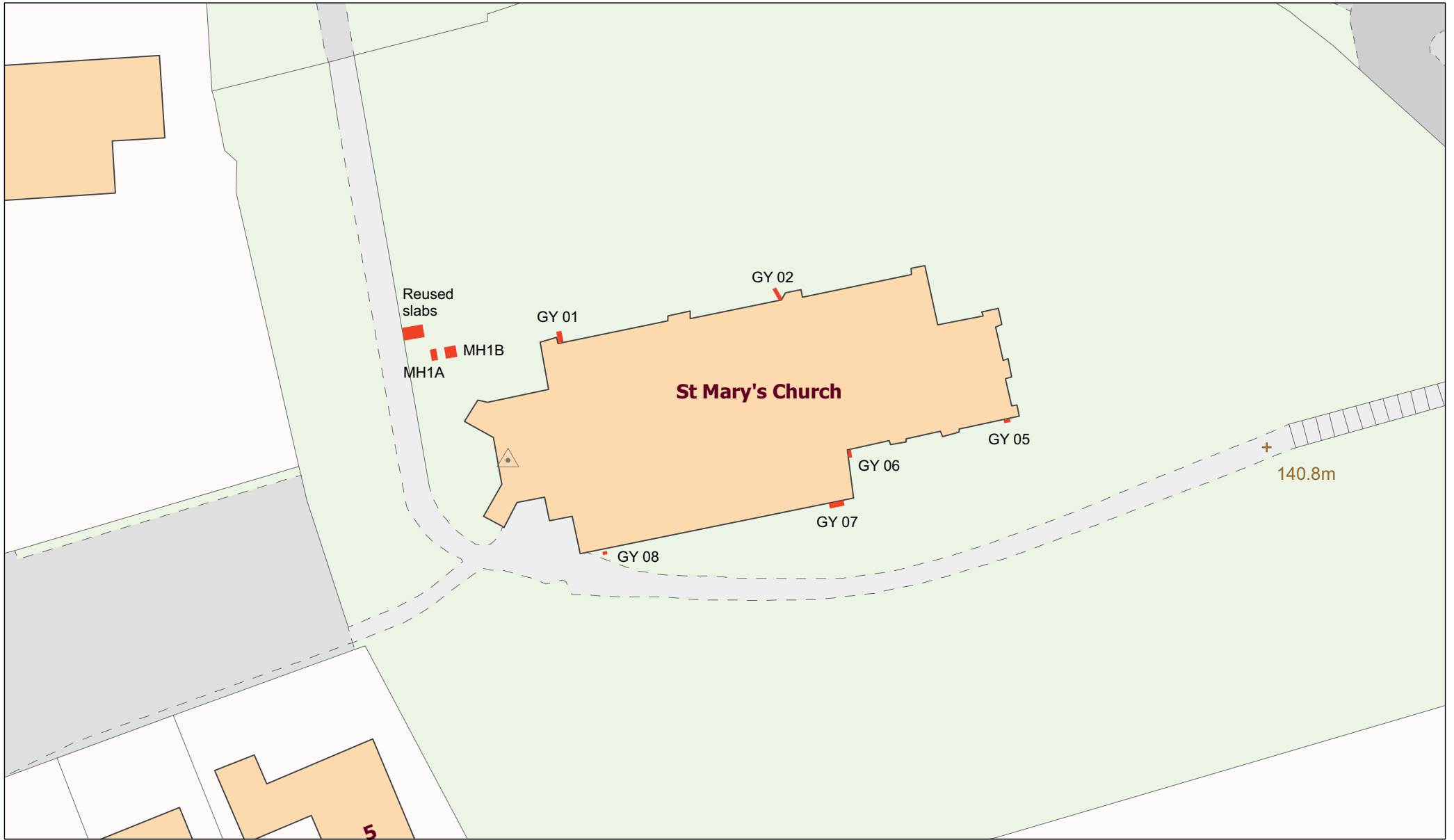
1.4 Except for the inclusion of pathways in the late 19th century, analysis of historic maps illustrating St. Mary's Church (*see Illus. 04-09*) indicate no noteworthy alterations to the churchyard within recorded history.



Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Easington village (circled in red), near Peterlee in the east of County Durham.



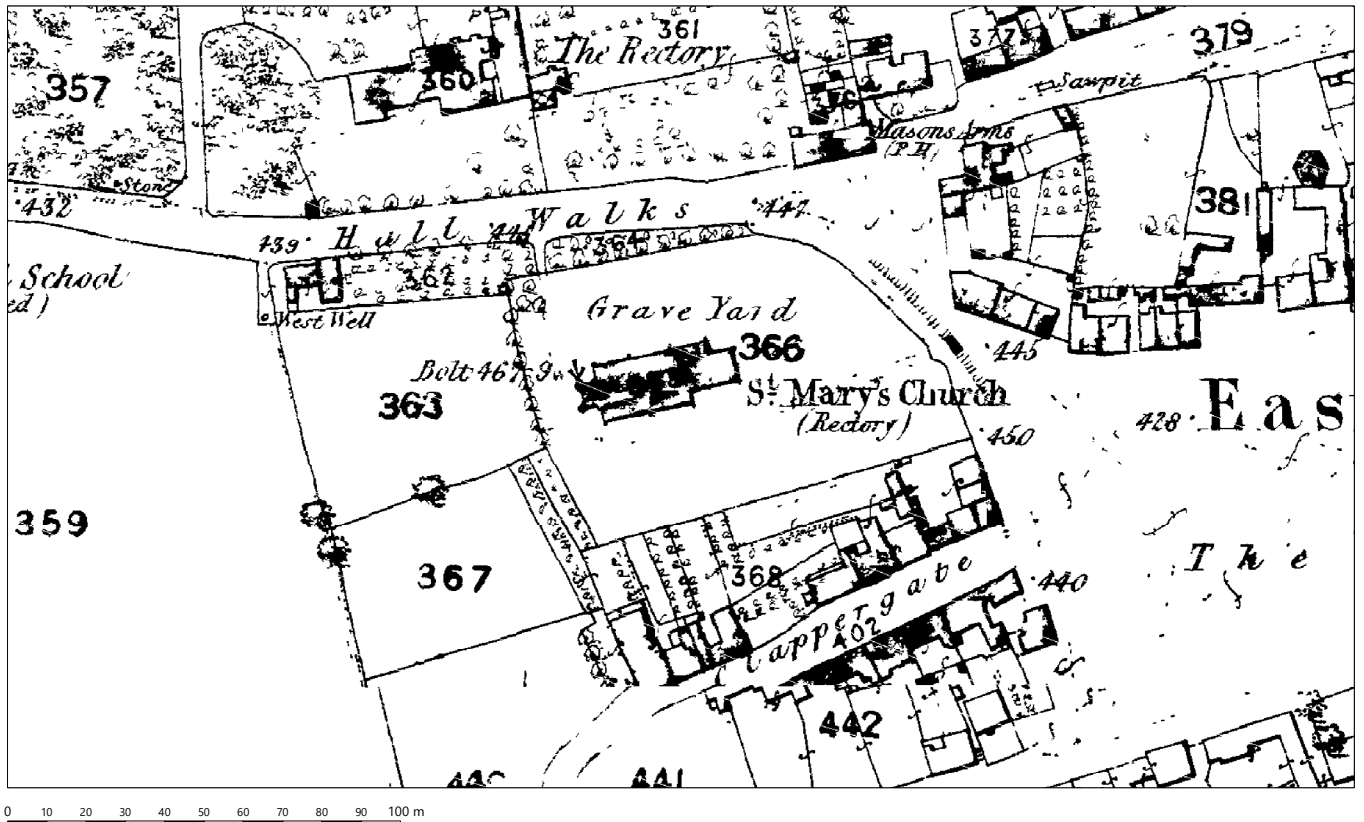
Illus. 02: Village view, showing the location of St. Mary's Church (circled in red), at the centre of Easington village.



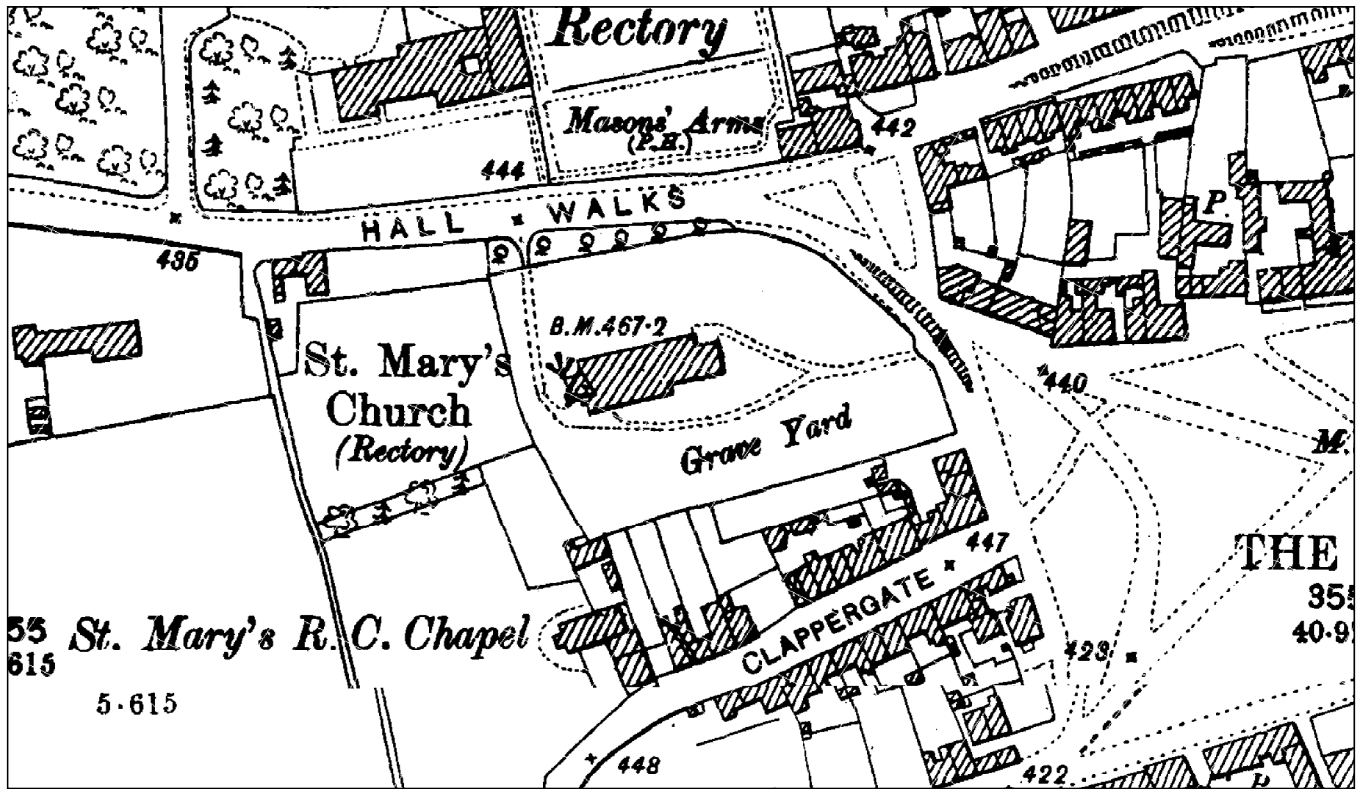
Illus. 03: Site view, showing the location of watching brief excavations around the exterior of St. Mary's Church, Easington.



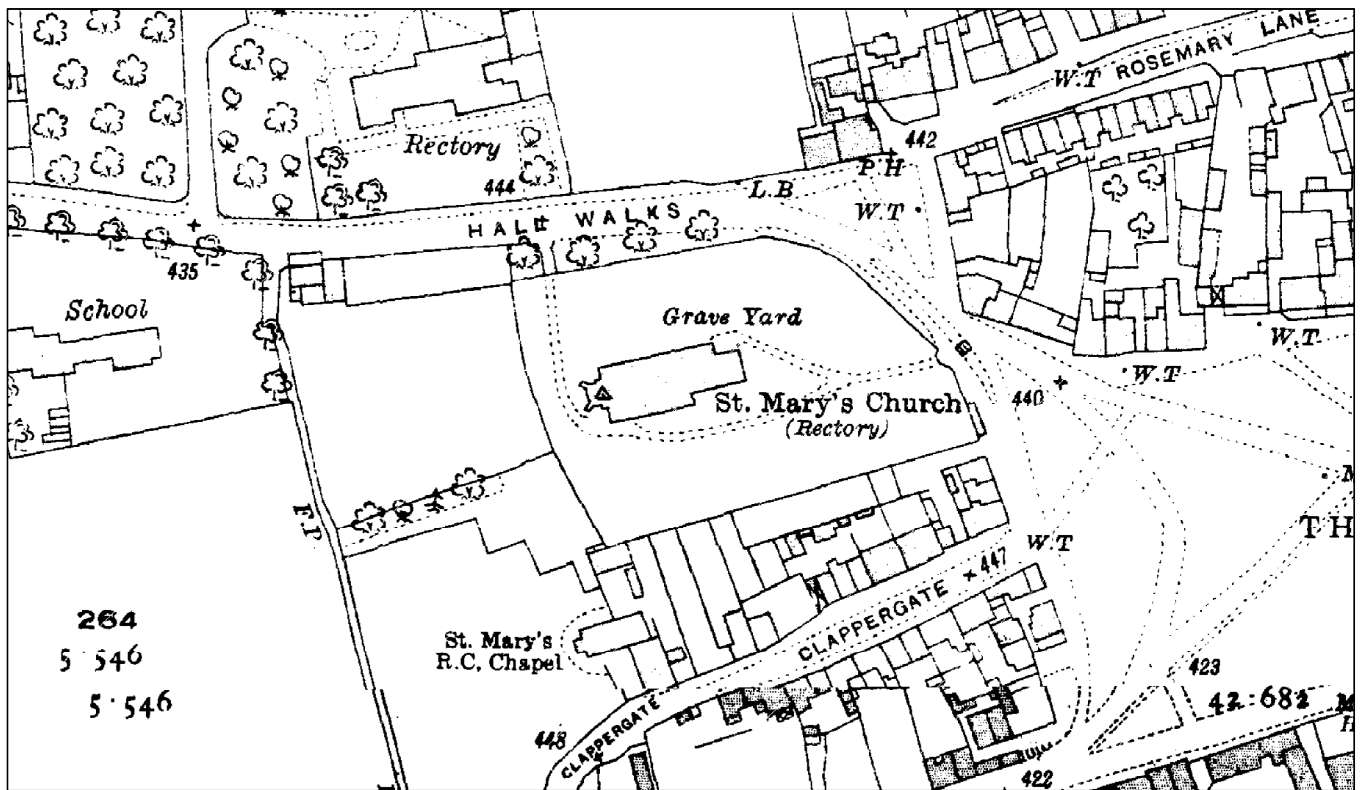
Illus. 04: Extract of the Easington Tithe Map c.1840, showing the watching brief site.



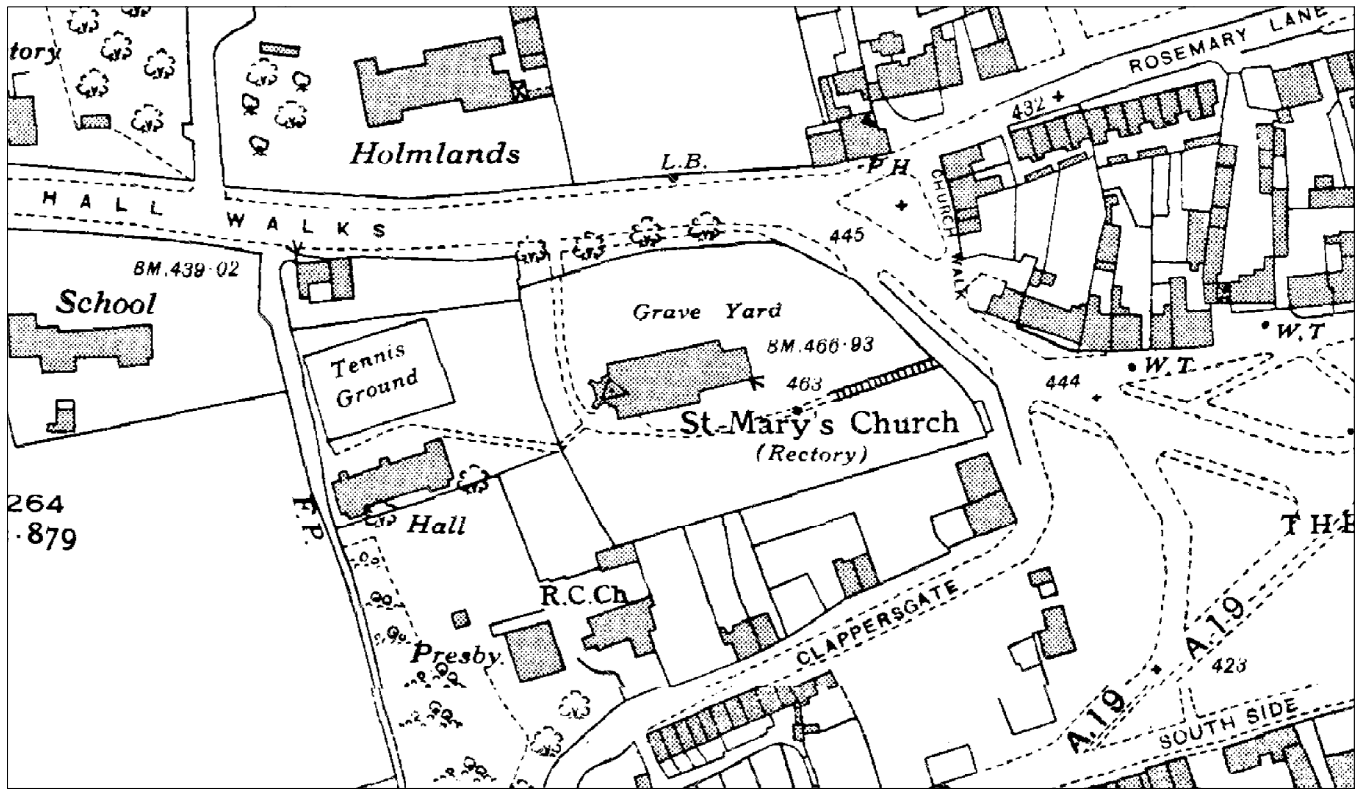
Illus. 05: Extract of the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1857, showing St. Mary's Church, Easington.



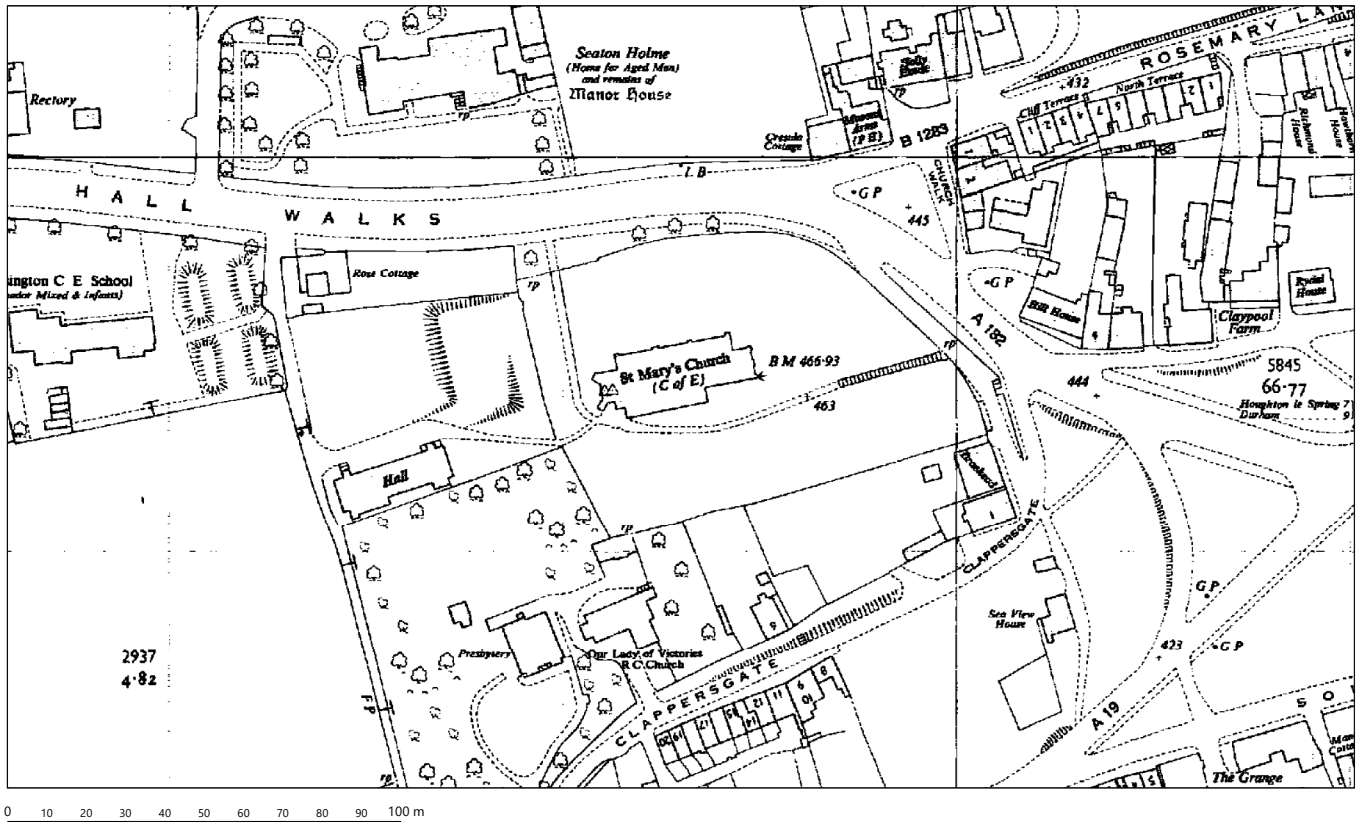
Illus. 06: Extract of the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1897, showing St. Mary's Church, Easington.



Illus. 07: Extract of the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1919, showing St. Mary's Church, Easington.



Illus. 08: Extract of the 4th Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1939, showing St. Mary's Church, Easington.



Illus. 09: Extract of the c.1957 Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, showing St. Mary's Church, Easington.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

The following information has been summarised from Peter Ryder's account of the church in the Easington Village Atlas (*The Archaeological Practice Ltd. 2015, 63-77*).

2.1 Phased Development of St Mary's Church (see *Illus. 10*)

The recent discovery of Pre-Conquest sculpture, and the apparent evidence of earlier gable lines in the west side of the tower, raise the possibility that Pre-Conquest work may survive in the present building. If the structural evidence in the tower indicates a gabled western porch or porticus, then this would be a strong indicant of a Saxon, and relatively early Saxon, structure.

The usual diagnostic features of Pre-Conquest work are fabric and in particular angle quoins. At Easington the fabric offers no real clue as to date; it is of roughly-coursed local limestone, virtually identical above and below the apparent gable lines, and the angle quoins of tower and west end of nave are all concealed by later buttresses. There is no sign of quoining or a straight joint at the south-east corner of the nave, where one might expect to see one, were the south aisle an addition, although it could be of course that quoins were removed to bond new walling in.

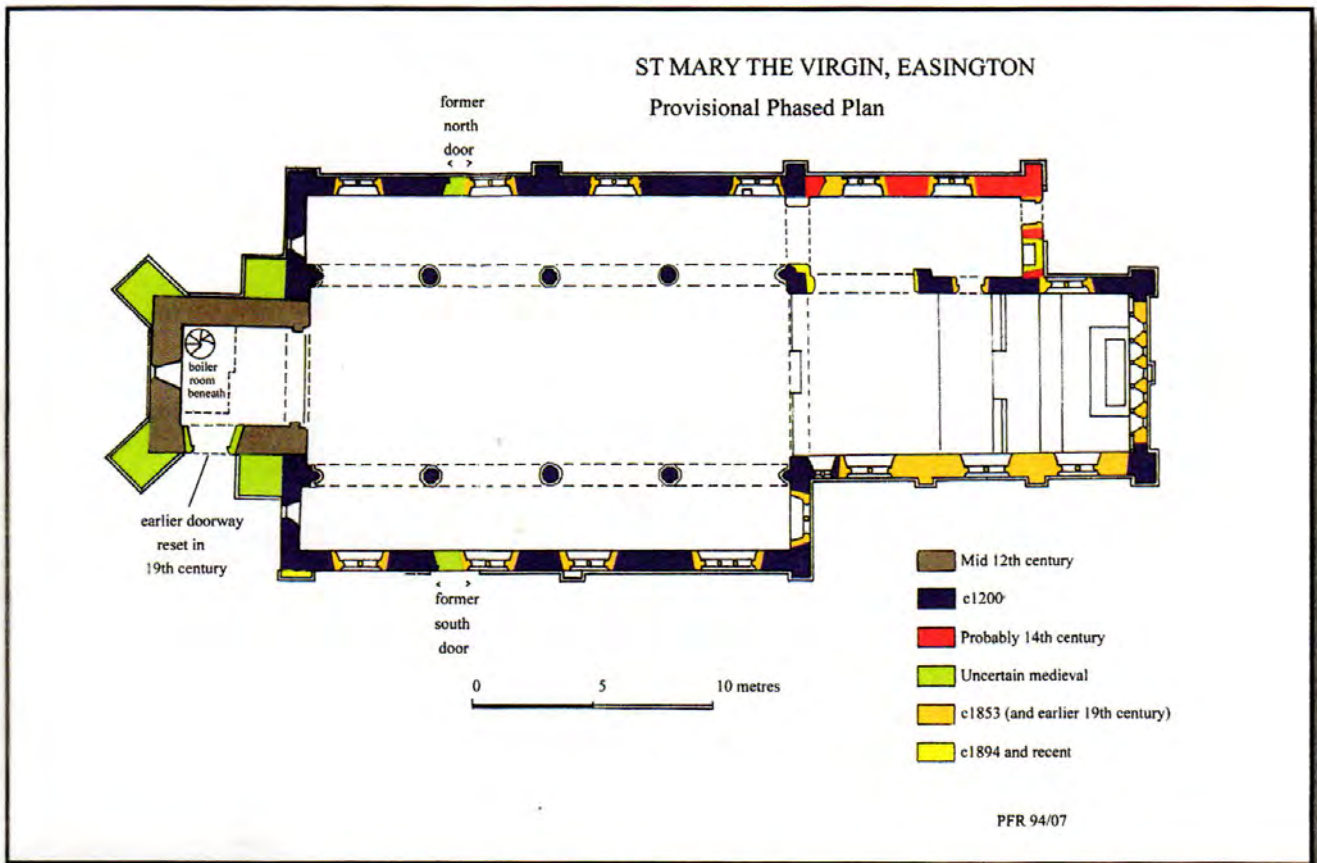
The tower does have a chamfered plinth and a chamfered set-back (below the upper gable-line) which both look of 'medieval' (12th/13th-century) character. So, the apparent gable lines must remain an enigma; and the usual interpretation of the tower as of simple Norman character and mid-12th-century date remain the best hypothesis until further evidence comes to light.

A major remodelling of the church appears to have taken place in the late 12th century or c. 1200, when everything but the tower was completely rebuilt. Savage suggests that the Norman nave had been the same width as the tower, but there is no clear evidence of this; from discrepancies in the depth of the western responds he deduces that the arcades were constructed from the east end, implying that the earlier nave had been removed. The late 12th-century nave was of the same dimensions as present.

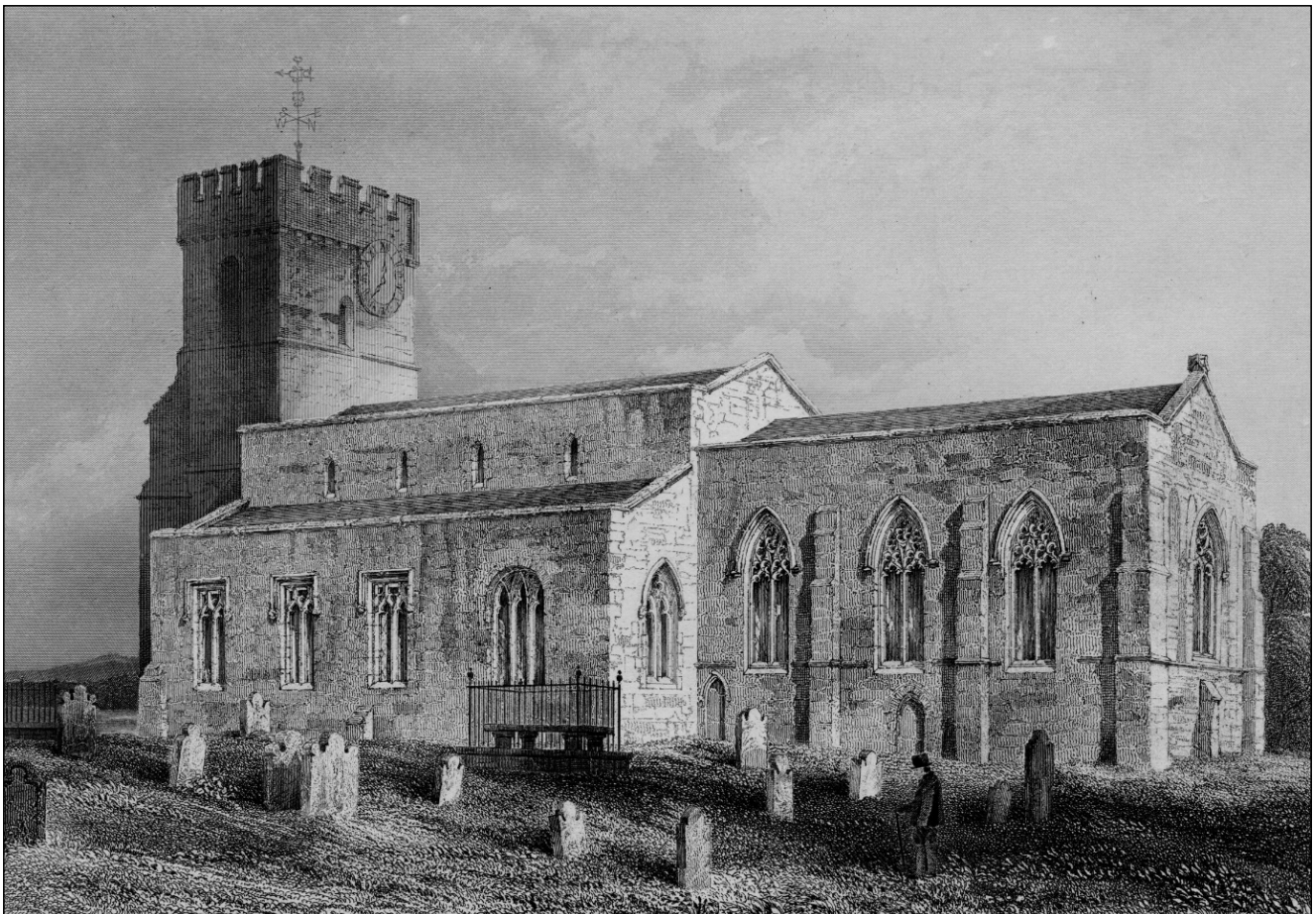
It is not clear at what period the structural stability of the west end started giving cause for concern, but the massive diagonal buttresses at the western angles of the tower have been cited both as 13th- and 15th-century work; the similar heavy buttresses flanking the tower may be part of the same scheme.

The vestry/organ chamber block would appear to be an addition of the later 13th or early 14th century; it is clear from its junction with the north aisle that it was built before the aisle walls were raised in the 14th century.

A further remodelling of the church took place in the 14th century, when the aisle walls were heightened, and the chancel refenestrated. Unfortunately, little original architectural evidence of this phases, or phases, survived the 1853 'restoration' (See Cover print of the SE aspect of the church, above – produced by E Blore in 1815 – for a view of the church prior to the Victorian restorations).



Illus. 10: Phased Plan of St. Mary's Church, Easington. By Peter Ryder 1994.



Illus. 11: Engraving showing the southeast view of St. Mary's Church, Easington. By George Billings c.1846.

Easington is one of those churches unfortunate enough to suffer two phases of Victorian 'restoration', the second partly aimed at undoing the archaeologically-uninformed excesses of the first. The first, by Hardwicke in 1853-4, saw the rebuilding of much of the chancel and the wholesale removal of its 14th-century fenestration; the stonework of the chancel windows is reported to have been placed in the rectory gardens, where it remained when Savage wrote, but has since been lost (except perhaps for the fragment lying outside the east end of the vestry).

The W. S. Hicks' restoration of 1894-5 saw the nave roof reconstructed to a rather lower pitch, the tower arch opened out again, and the western half of the vestry converted into an organ chamber. Since this date what structural works there have been have mostly been in the nature of repairs.

2.2 The Churchyard

The churchyard is roughly rectangular in plan, elongate east-west with the north-east angle rounded (presumably where ground was given up for road widening in 1937 - see faculties); the ground falls away from the church on all sides, most steeply to the north and west. The present boundary walls are of no great age; the southern, a meandering rubble wall, may be the oldest. The churchyard monuments are mostly 19th-century; a number are in poor condition, and in some areas at least they have clearly been thinned out (see 1977 faculty). Close to the south-west corner of the south aisle is a worn 18th-century box tomb. South of the east end of the chancel is a small railed enclosure of 19th-century date, but immediately north of this is a tapered medieval slab 2.20 m by 0.67 m (head) by 0.52 m (base), with any design worn away but retaining a moulded edge. Lying on the north side of the chancel are one piece, and a tiny fragment, of 14th-century mouldings (probably from one of the chancel windows removed in 1852), and a broken gable finial which may be of 19th-century date. On the north side of the tower are the brick footings of a 20th-century outbuilding, perhaps an external boiler room.

2.3 Archaeological Assessment

There have been several pointers to Easington being an important site prior to the Norman Conquest, but the discovery of the carved fragment in the south aisle wall, perhaps of the 10th century, is the most substantial evidence yet of an early ecclesiastical (and perhaps monastic) settlement here. The hilltop position of the present church makes it almost certain that any earlier buildings stood on the same site, and that their remains may underlie the present fabric.

As often, it is difficult to assess the degree of survival of sub-surface archaeological evidence. Inside the church the heating chamber will probably have removed most archaeological deposits beneath the western half of the tower. Elsewhere the relaying of floors conceals evidence both of burials and of 19th-century underfloor heating systems; it is only reasonable to suppose some degree of disturbance, especially in view of the floor having been 'lowered to the original level' in 1894. Nevertheless, in view of the importance both of the site and of the present building, any sub-floor works will require archaeological inspection and recording. There is said to be a vault beneath the east end of the south aisle.

The internal wall faces in the church are all plastered; it is not clear whether earlier plasters survive beneath. Any renewal of plaster (except perhaps on the south side of the chancel, where the wall is known to have been completely rebuilt in the mid-19th century) should also be accompanied by the recording of the fabric exposed.

Externally, the drainage trench which runs around the whole perimeter of the church (another part of the 1894 works) is another common but archaeologically-destructive feature. The churchyard itself does not have a great number of interesting monuments, but is potentially of considerable archaeological importance. In view of this, any ground works in the vicinity of the church at all will require archaeological monitoring.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief took place during all invasive groundworks carried out as part of the development within the boundaries of the churchyard, specifically:

- Hand excavation works associated with provision of drainage at downpipe locations GY01-08, around the perimeter of the church.
- Hand excavation works associated with locating an existing manhole, MH1, at the northeast side of the church tower.

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means.

The small trenches/sondages were excavated exclusively by hand. All excavations were closely monitored by a suitably trained and experienced archaeologist from The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sondage at GY01 – (see photos 01-02)

4.1.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the northwest nave buttress and the nave north wall. Orientated NNW-SSE. Dimensions: 0.40 m (width) x 0.85 m (length) x 0.40 m (depth below ground level).

4.1.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

Below the topsoil [101], an existing salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe was revealed [102] of probable 19th century date. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.1.3 Context List

- [101] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam.
- [102] Existing salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe.

4.2 Sondage at GY02 – (see photos 03-04)

4.2.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the northeast nave buttress and the nave north wall. Orientated NW-SE. Dimensions: 0.35 m (width) x 1 m (length) x 0.40 m (depth below ground level at south end), 0.60 m (depth below ground level at north end).

4.2.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

Below the topsoil [201], an existing salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe was revealed [202] of probable 19th century date. The north end of the sondage was a little deeper, following the line of the existing drainpipe, with some hard-core back-fill observed above it [203]. Some disturbed disarticulated human bone was scattered randomly in the topsoil. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.2.3 Context List

- [201] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam, some disarticulated human bone.
- [202] Existing salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe.
- [203] Hard-core/cement-based back-fill of drainage slot at north end of sondage.

4.3 Sondage at GY05 – (see photos 05-06)

4.3.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the southeast chancel buttress/pilaster and the chancel south wall. Orientated WSW-ENE. Dimensions: 0.23 m (width) x 0.50 m (length) x 0.19 m (depth below ground level).

4.3.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

Within the topsoil [501], an existing ceramic drainpipe was revealed [502] of probable 19th century date. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.3.3 Context List

- [501] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam.
- [502] Existing ceramic drainpipe.

4.4 Sondage at GY06 – (see photos 07-08)

4.4.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the nave east wall and the chancel south wall. Orientated NNW-SSE. Dimensions: 0.25 m (width) x 0.52 m (length) x 0.15 m (depth below ground level).

4.4.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

An existing ceramic drainpipe was exposed [602] after breaking out a portion of modern concrete [601]. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.4.3 Context List

- [601] Modern concrete drainage plinth/channel abutting and parallel to nave east wall.
- [602] Existing ceramic drainpipe.

4.5 Sondage at GY07 – (see photos 09-12)

4.5.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the southeast nave buttress/pilaster and the nave south wall. Orientated WSW-ENE. Dimensions: 0.40 m (width) x 1.14 m (length) x 0.44 m (depth below ground level).

4.5.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

Below the topsoil [701] - which contained some disturbed disarticulated human bone, a very small rubble-based wall [702] protected double salt-glaze ceramic drainpipes [703-4] of probable 19th century date. A vandalised chest tomb was observed abutting the east end of the sondage but was not affected by the drainage works.

4.5.3 Context List

- [701] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam, some disarticulated human bone.
- [702] Small rubble-based wall above ceramic drainpipe [703] measuring 0.18 m (width) x 0.32 m (depth), aligned WSW-ENE, parallel to nave south wall.
- [703] Existing salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe, aligned WSW-ENE.
- [704] A second salt-glaze ceramic drainpipe parallel to the first [703].
- [705] East end of sondage abuts a brick-built vaulted chest tomb (see photos 09-10) of I.W.C. Robinson c.1825. Not affected by the drainage works but in need of repair and re-pointing, as recently subject to vandalism - with several bricks removed.

4.6 Sondage at GY08 – (see photos 13)

4.6.1 Location and Dimensions

Located below the downpipe at the intersection of the southwest nave buttress/pilaster and the nave south wall. Orientated WSW-ENE. Dimensions: 0.20 m (width) x 0.35 m (length) x 0.15 m (depth below ground level).

4.6.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

Within the topsoil [801], an existing ceramic drainpipe was revealed [802] of probable 19th century date. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.6.3 *Context List*

- [801] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam.
[802] Existing ceramic drainpipe.

4.7 **Sondage at MH1a – (see photos 14-15)**

4.7.1 *Location and Dimensions*

This sondage was located 4.35 m northwest of the tower northwest buttress, and 7.92 m west of the nave northwest buttress. Aligned NNW-SSE.

Dimensions: 0.50 m (width) x 0.80 m (length) x 1.40 m (depth below ground level).

4.7.2 *Stratigraphy and Interpretation*

At the base of the topsoil [901] two small electricity cables were observed [902] running parallel to the churchyard path. Below this was a sandy-silt subsoil [903] followed by natural boulder-clay [904]. No archaeological remains were observed, nor was the existing manhole which the excavation sought to find.

4.7.3 *Context List*

- [901] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam, some disarticulated human bone.
[902] Twin black cables, probably for electricity, located at base of topsoil on an NNW-SSE alignment parallel to the main churchyard path.
[903] Subsoil, comprising of light grey-brown, firm/friable sandy-silt with pebbles throughout and some disarticulated human bone.
[904] Natural boulder-clay, with inclusions of magnesian limestone.

4.8 **Slabs adjacent to MH1a – (see photos 16-17)**

During the excavation of MH1a, a series of reused sandstone slabs were noted poking out through the topsoil, located 1.13 m to the northwest of MH1a, abutting the pathway retaining wall on a WSW-ENE alignment. The slab area measured 1.50 m (length) x 0.90 m (width). This feature was briefly explored and found to comprise at least five sandstone slabs, reused from the pedestal bases of (presumably fallen) gravestones. The feature has been interpreted as ad hoc revetting, probably constructed in the late 19th or early 20th century, to help stabilise the bank adjacent to the pathway retaining wall.

4.9 **Sondage at MH1b – (see photos 18-19)**

4.9.1 *Location and Dimensions*

This sondage was located 3.70 m northwest of the tower northwest buttress, and 6.43 m west of the nave northwest buttress. Aligned WSW-ENE.

Dimensions: 0.82 m (width) x 0.80 m (length) x 0.50 m (depth below ground level).

4.9.2 *Stratigraphy and Interpretation*

Below the topsoil [1001] and redeposited subsoil [1002], a square concrete manhole [1003]-MH1 was located at a depth of 0.50 m below ground level. No archaeological remains were observed.

4.9.3 Context List

[1001] Topsoil, comprising of fairly-firm, mid grey-brown silt-loam, some disarticulated human bone.

[1002] Redeposited subsoil backfilled above manhole. Comprised light grey-brown firm/friable sandy-silt with pebbles throughout and some disarticulated human bone.

[1003] Concrete manhole MH1, square concrete sides with internal square hole.

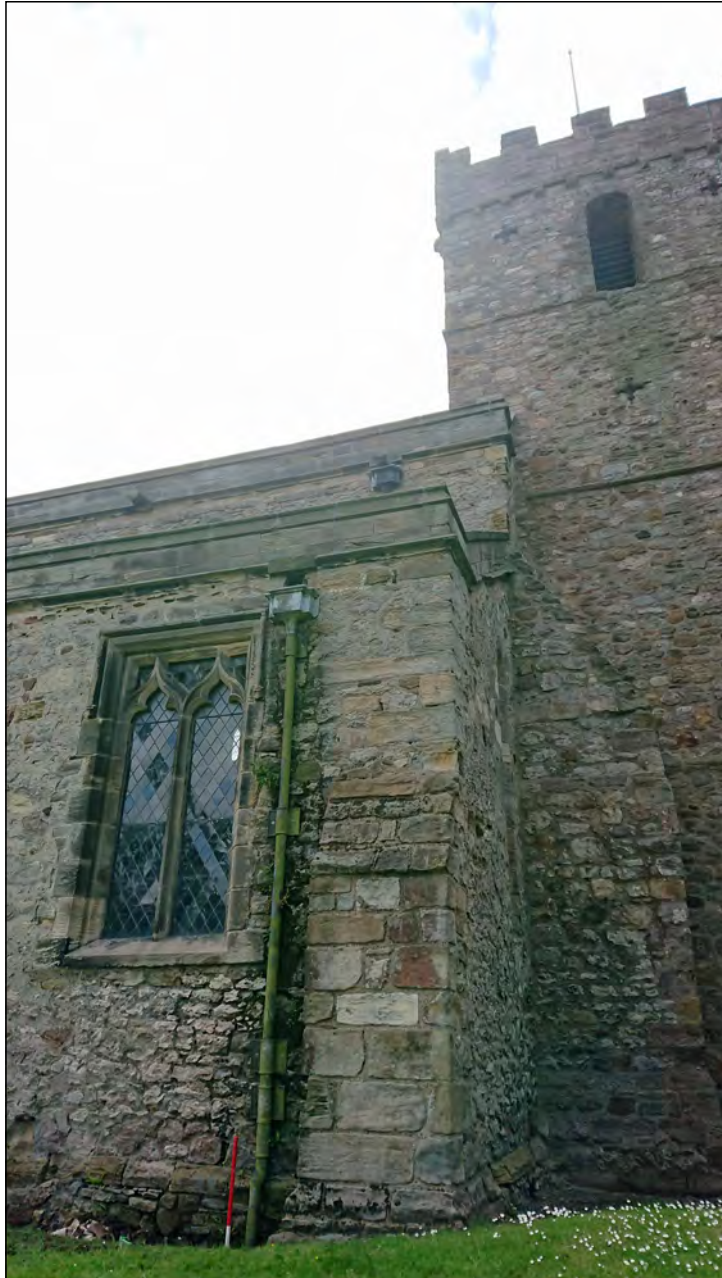


Photo 01. Broad view looking south towards Drainage excavation GY01.

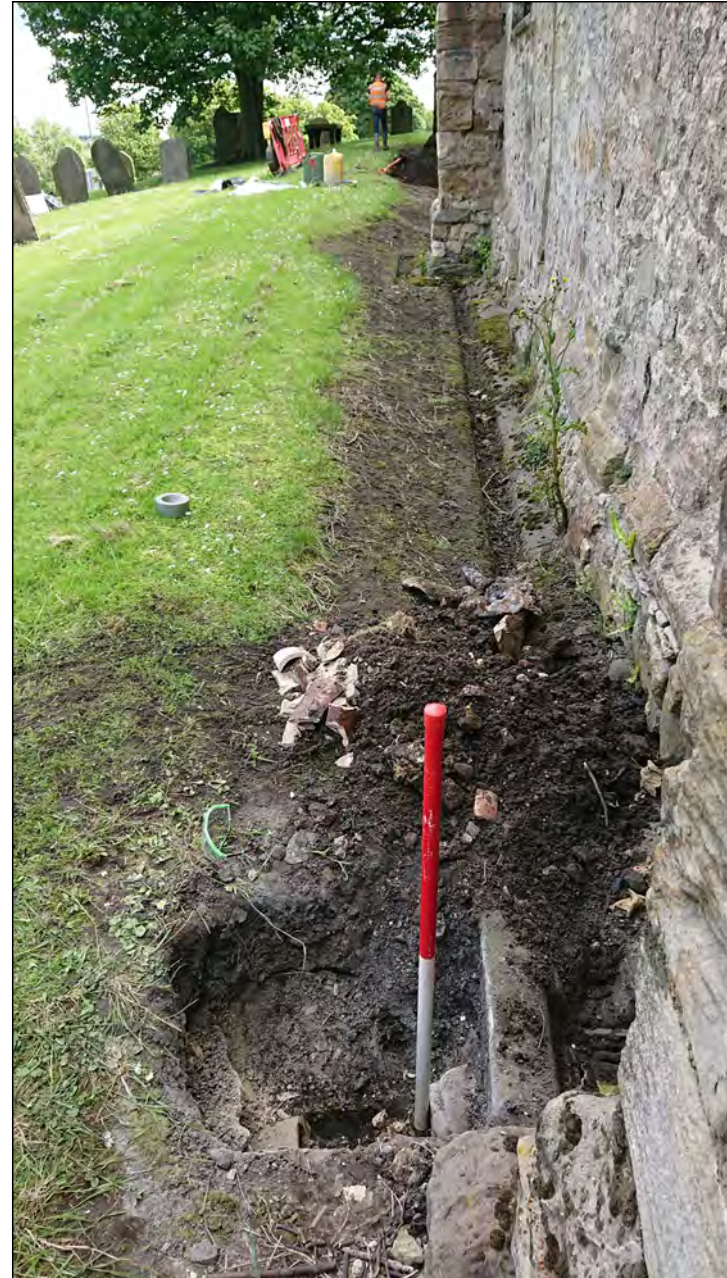


Photo 02. View looking east at Drainage excavation GY01.



Photo 03. Broad view looking southeast towards Drainage excavation GY02.



Photo 04. View looking northwest along Drainage excavation GY02.



Photo 05. Broad view looking west towards Drainage excavation GY05.



Photo 06. View looking north at Drainage excavation GY05.



Photo 07. Broad view looking west towards Drainage excavation GY06.



Photo 08. View looking north at Drainage excavation GY06.



Photo 09. Broad view looking west towards Drainage excavation GY07 and Tomb Chest 'A'.



Photo 10. Dedicatory inscription on Tomb Chest 'A', with recently vandalised brick vault beneath.



Photo 11. View looking west along Drainage excavation GY07.



Photo 12. Detail of existing ceramic drain in GY07.



Photo 13. View looking west at Drainage excavation GY08.



Photo 14. Broad view looking west, showing the first excavation attempt to find Mh1 (MH1a).



Photo 15. View looking north at the first excavation attempt to find Mh1 (MH1a) before being abandoned.



Photo 16. Broad view looking southeast, showing a row of stone slabs reused probably in the 20th century torevet the main pathway retaining wall.



Photo 17. View looking east along row of stone slabs reused probably in the 20th century torevet the main pathway retaining wall.



Photo 18. Broad view looking approximately east at second (successful) excavation attempt to find MH1.



Photo 19. View looking ENE at second (successful) excavation attempt to find MH1.

5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is concluded that no significant archaeological features, other than occasional disarticulated human bones, were disturbed during the current phase of drainage works at St. Mary's Church Easington, and monitored under watching brief conditions.

5.2 The groundworks were essentially able to locate and reuse existing drainage runs without the need for deeper invasive excavations that had the potential of impacting upon *in situ* archaeological remains.

5.3 No further archaeological monitoring is required during the groundworks associated with this scheme. However, given the potential for significant archaeological deposits to exist within the churchyard, it is recommended that any future interventions should be considered on their own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention.

6. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1:

St. Mary's Church, Easington Village, Durham. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief. Prepared by The Archaeological Practice Ltd. March 2019.

ST. MARY'S CHURCH EASINGTON VILLAGE DURHAM

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared by

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

March 2019

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3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

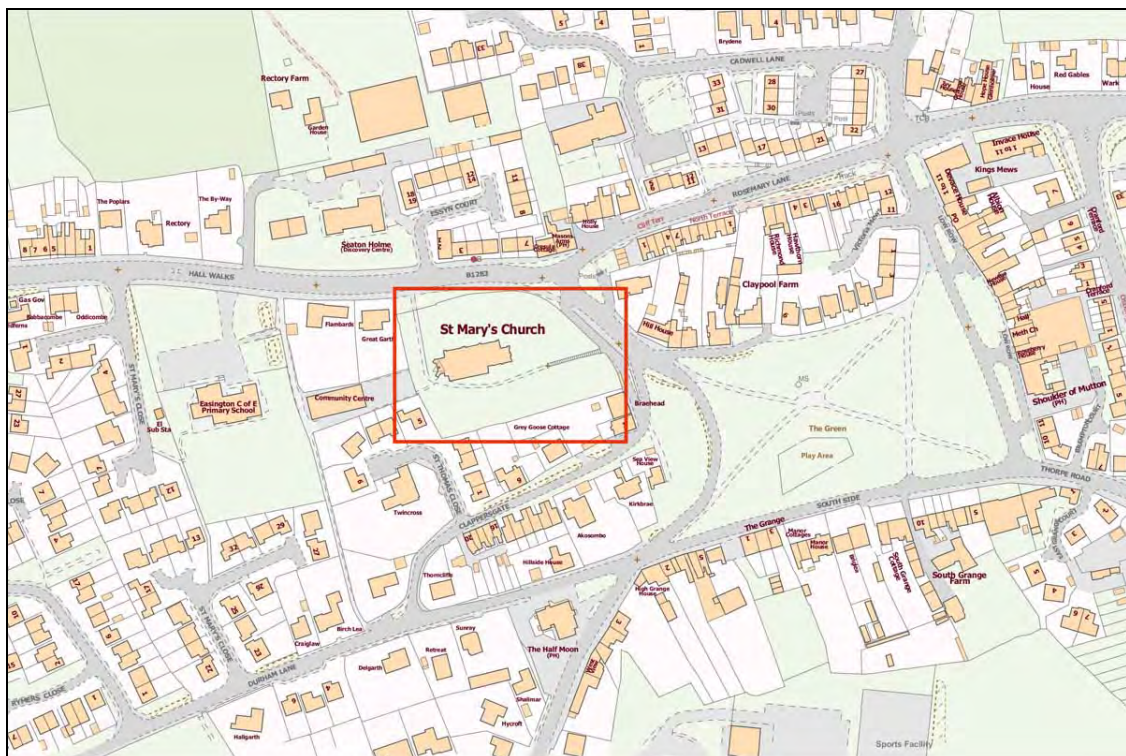
Easington is situated in eastern County Durham between the larger settlements of Seaham and Peterlee new town, lying approximately 8½ miles (13.5km) east of Durham city centre and just over 8 miles (13km) south of Sunderland city centre. The centre of the old village lies some 3 km inland and is dominated by St Mary's parish church, ensconced on a hillock above the north-west corner of the green which slopes towards the east and south-east

The following represents a project design for an archaeological watching brief to mitigate the impact of groundworks upon any sub-surface features encountered during groundworks associated with new drainage installations at St. Mary's Church, Easington (see *Illus. 01-03 below*). The work is to be carried out for St. Mary's PCC according to plans designed by Beaumont Brown Architects (see *Illus. 02*).

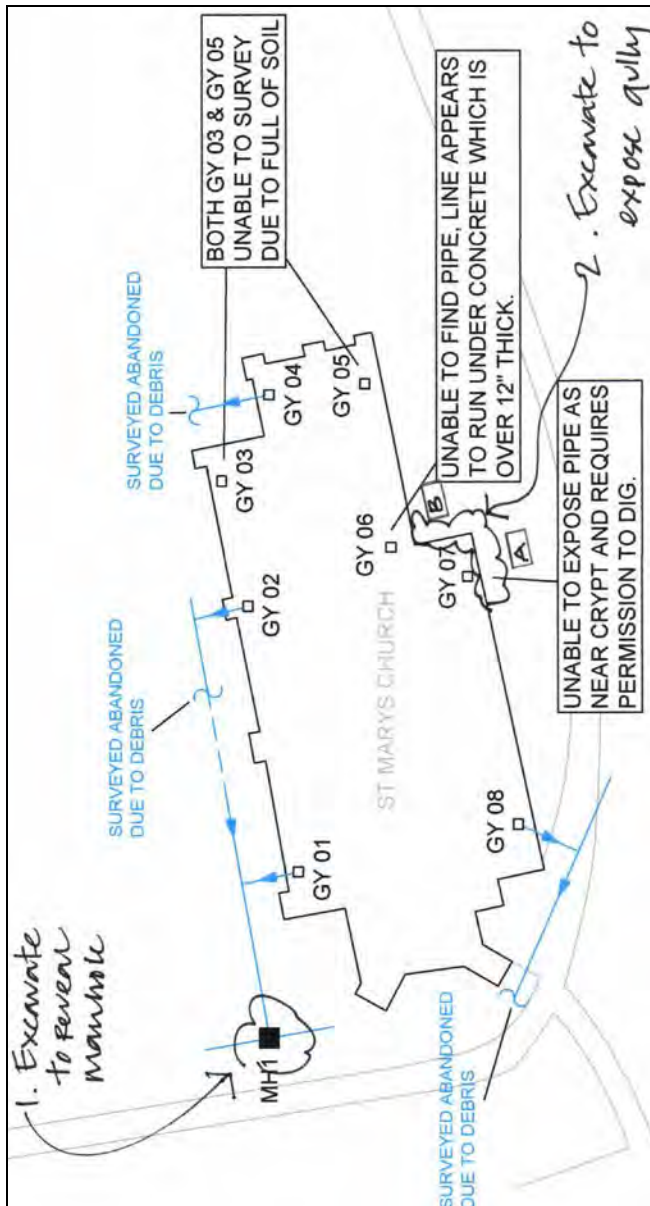
1.2 Nature of Proposed Developments

Drainage works are proposed to the exterior of St Mary's church, Easington, a Grade I listed building (see *Illus. 04*).

An archaeological watching brief has been requested and will be carried out during all excavation works associated with the drainage works within the churchyard, specifically at GY01 (see *Illus. 03, below*), a supposed manhole at the west end, and at GY02 at the south east corner of the nave where there is a tomb chest close-by.



Illus. 01: The Location of St Mary's Church in Easington village.



Illus. 02: Location of proposed drainage works on the west side of the churchyard.

1.3 Cultural Heritage Background

The following information has been summarised from Peter Ryder's account of the church in the Easington Village Atlas (The Archaeological Practice Ltd. 2015, 63-77)

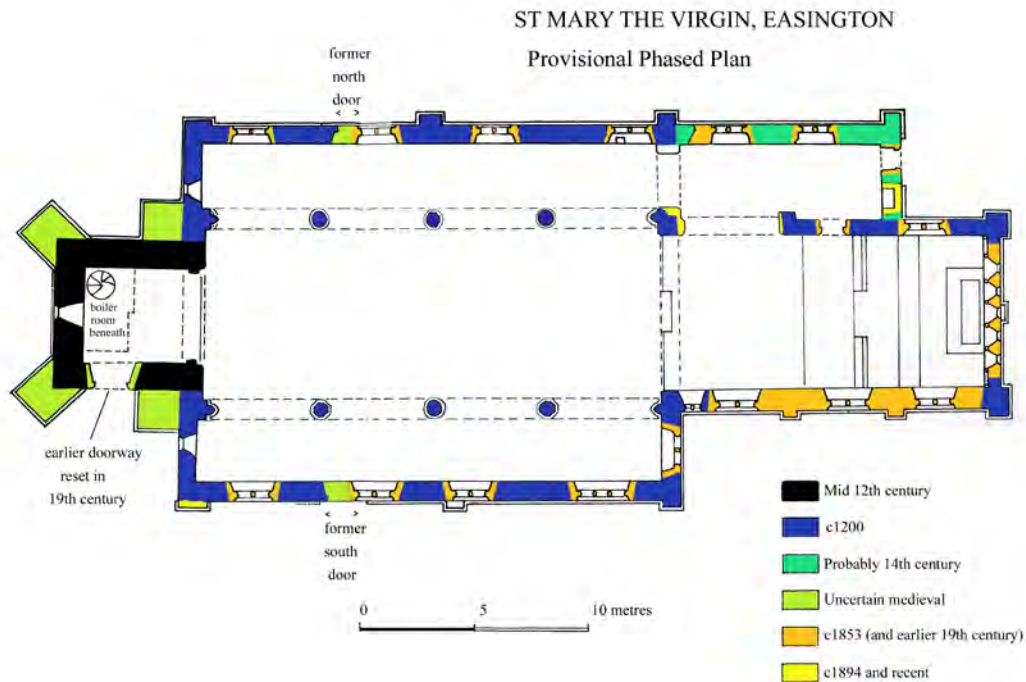
1.3.1 Phased Development of St Mary's Church (see Illus. 03)

The recent discovery of Pre-Conquest sculpture (see Illus. 04), and the apparent evidence of earlier gable lines in the west side of the tower, raise the possibility that Pre-Conquest work may survive in the present building. If the structural evidence in the tower indicates a gabled western porch or porticus, then this would be a strong indicator of a Saxon, and relatively early Saxon, structure.

The usual diagnostic features of Pre-Conquest work are fabric and in particular angle quoins. At Easington the fabric offers no real clue as to date; it is of roughly-coursed

local limestone, virtually identical above and below the apparent gable lines, and the angle quoins of tower and west end of nave are all concealed by later buttresses. There is no sign of quoining or a straight joint at the south-east corner of the nave, where one might expect to see one, were the south aisle an addition, although it could be of course that quoins were removed to bond new walling in.

The tower does have a chamfered plinth and a chamfered set-back (below the upper gable-line) which both look of 'medieval' (12th/13th-century) character. So the apparent gable lines must remain an enigma; and the usual interpretation of the tower as of simple Norman character and mid-12th-century date remain the best hypothesis until further evidence comes to light.



Illus. 03: Phased Plan of St Mary's Church by Peter Ryder.

A major remodelling of the church appears to have taken place in the late 12th century or c. 1200, when everything but the tower was completely rebuilt. Savage suggests that the Norman nave had been the same width as the tower, but there is no clear evidence of this; from discrepancies in the depth of the western responds he deduces that the arcades were constructed from the east end, implying that the earlier nave had been removed. The late 12th-century nave was of the same dimensions as present.

It is not clear at what period the structural stability of the west end started giving cause for concern, but the massive diagonal buttresses at the western angles of the tower have been cited both as 13th- and 15th-century work; the similar heavy buttresses flanking the tower may be part of the same scheme.

The vestry/organ chamber block would appear to be an addition of the later 13th or early 14th century; it is clear from its junction with the north aisle that it was built before the aisle walls were raised in the 14th century.

Illus. 04 (below): Views of St Mary's Church and associated features.

St. Mary's Church



View from the north-west



View of the church from the south



Exterior view of the chancel at the E end of the church



The tower with its massive corner buttresses



C10/11 cross-head reused in the W wall of the tower



E Blore's SE aspect of the church, 1815



C10-11 or C8 carved stone found in the S aisle S wall

A further remodelling of the church took place in the 14th century, when the aisle walls were heightened, and the chancel refenestrated. Unfortunately, little original architectural evidence of this phases, or phases, survived the 1853 'restoration' (See Cover print of the SE aspect of the church, above – produced by E Blore in 1815 – for a view of the church prior to the Victorian restorations).

Easington is one of those churches unfortunate enough to suffer two phases of Victorian 'restoration', the second partly aimed at undoing the archaeologically-uninformed excesses of the first. The first, by Hardwicke in 1853-4, saw the rebuilding of much of the chancel and the wholesale removal of its 14th-century fenestration; the stonework of the chancel windows is reported to have been placed in the rectory gardens, where it remained when Savage wrote, but has since been lost (except perhaps for the fragment lying outside the east end of the vestry).

The W. S. Hicks' restoration of 1894-5 saw the nave roof reconstructed to a rather lower pitch, the tower arch opened out again, and the western half of the vestry converted into an organ chamber. Since this date what structural works there have been have mostly been in the nature of repairs.

1.3.2 The Churchyard

The churchyard is roughly rectangular in plan, elongate east-west with the north-east angle rounded (presumably where ground was given up for road widening in 1937 - see faculties); the ground falls away from the church on all sides, most steeply to the north and west. The present boundary walls are of no great age; the southern, a meandering rubble wall, may be the oldest. The churchyard monuments are mostly 19th-century; a number are in poor condition, and in some areas at least they have clearly been thinned out (see 1977 faculty). Close to the south-west corner of the south aisle is a worn 18th-century box tomb. South of the east end of the chancel is a small railed enclosure of 19th-century date, but immediately north of this is a tapered medieval slab 2.20 m by 0.67 m (head) by 0.52 m (base), with any design worn away but retaining a moulded edge. Lying on the north side of the chancel are one piece, and a tiny fragment, of 14th-century mouldings (probably from one of the chancel windows removed in 1852), and a broken gable finial which may be of 19th-century date. On the north side of the tower are the brick footings of a 20th-century outbuilding, perhaps an external boiler room.

1.3.3 Archaeological Assessment

There have been several pointers to Easington being an important site prior to the Norman Conquest, but the discovery of the carved fragment in the south aisle wall, perhaps of the 10th century, is the most substantial evidence yet of an early ecclesiastical (and perhaps monastic) settlement here. The hilltop position of the present church makes it almost certain that any earlier buildings stood on the same site, and that their remains may underlie the present fabric.

As often, it is difficult to assess the degree of survival of sub-surface archaeological evidence. Inside the church the heating chamber will probably have removed most archaeological deposits beneath the western half of the tower. Elsewhere the relaying of floors conceals evidence both of burials and of 19th-century underfloor heating systems; it is only reasonable to suppose some degree of disturbance, especially in view of the floor having been 'lowered to the original level' in 1894. Nevertheless, in view of the importance both of the site and of the present building, any sub-floor works will require archaeological inspection and recording. There is said to be a vault beneath the east end of the south aisle.

The internal wall faces in the church are all plastered; it is not clear whether earlier plasters survive beneath. Any renewal of plaster (except perhaps on the south side of the chancel, where the wall is known to have been completely rebuilt in the mid-19th century) should also be accompanied by the recording of the fabric exposed.

Externally, the drainage trench which runs round the whole perimeter of the church (another part of the 1894 works) is another common but archaeologically-destructive feature. The churchyard itself does not have a great number of interesting monuments, but is potentially of considerable archaeological importance. In view of this, any ground works in the vicinity of the church at all will require archaeological monitoring.

1.4 Monitoring Scheme

The main objective of the work is to record any sub-surface remains of significance revealed by the excavation works.

The monitoring work will be related to the research aims of the NERRF, which aims to place developer-led archaeological fieldwork in a context of academic understanding of the history and archaeology of the region (Petts and Gerrard 2006).¹ The NERRF research priorities of obvious relevance here are included in Chapter 19, Twentieth-century research agenda and include the Key Research Priorities of *Religion and Belief, Death and Burial and Military and Defence* (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 194-95).

2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

2.1.1 The Field Investigation will be carried out by means of Archaeological watching brief.

2.1.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and will follow the CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.

2.1.3 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

2.2.2 The setting out of the drainage works will be undertaken by the main works contractor.

2.2.3 The excavations will be carried out by hand under continuous archaeological supervision.

2.2.4 The recent overburden will be removed in successive level spits down to the first significant archaeological remains.

¹ Petts, D and Gerrard, C , 2006, *Shared Visions: The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*.

2.2.5 Spoil will be kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trench, as far as possible, at the conclusion of the work.

2.2.6 All faces of trenches requiring examination or recording, and the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, will be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains

2.2.7 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits identified will be cleaned and recorded by hand through a sampling procedure to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described. Pits and postholes will normally be sampled by half-sectioning although some features may require complete excavation. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. All feature intersections will also be investigated.

The sampling procedure will typically comprise:

50% of every discrete feature

25% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill

10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill

2.3 Archaeological Recording

2.3.1 Archaeological stratigraphy revealed by excavation will be recorded by the following means:

2.3.2 **Written descriptions.** Each archaeological context will be recorded on a pro-forma sheet. Minimum recorded details will consist of the following: a unique identifier; an objective description which includes measurements of extent and details of colour and composition; an interpretative estimate of function, clearly identified as such; the identifiers of related contexts and a description of the relationship with such contexts (for preference, executed as a mini Harris matrix); references to other recording media in which representations of the context are held (plans, sections, photographs).

2.3.3 **Measured illustrations.** The drawn record from the site will include a representative selection of long sections from the excavations that clearly allow the nature and depth and any significant changes in the deposits recorded to be demonstrated. Detail plans and sectional profiles of archaeological features will be at appropriate scales (1:20 or 1:10). Archaeological contexts will be referenced by their unique identifiers. All illustrations will be properly identified, scaled and referenced to the site survey control.

2.3.4 **Photographs.** Digital photographs will be taken for purposes of record. A system will be used for identifying the archaeological features photographed.

2.3.5 All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant CIFA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

2.3.6 Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artifacts encountered will be recovered.

2.3.7 The potential requirement for specialist analyses (see below) is an unavoidable risk in all such excavations. The scientific investigation of any

features/deposits which are considered significant will be undertaken as a non-negotiable part of this programme. Any such analyses would be carried out by specialists and priced to the client on a costs only basis (see Contingencies in the Project Costing).

2.4 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data

2.4.1 Following the completion of the Field Investigation and before any of the post-excavation work is commenced, an archive (the Site Archive) containing all the data gathered during fieldwork will be prepared.

2.4.2 Following completion of the Field Investigation, a full report will be prepared collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the works.

2.5 Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating

2.5.1 The investigations will be undertaken in a manner consistent with *MoRPHE EH 2006 and PPN 3* and with "Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists", English Heritage, 2003.

2.5.2 The following strategy for environmental sampling will be confirmed with *Don O'Meara, Historic England North-East Science Advisor (tel. 0191 269 1250)* before the excavation begins.

2.5.3 Deposits/fills with potential for environmental evidence will be assessed by taking up to two bulk samples of 30 litres from any context selected for analysis by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. Deposits/fills totalling less than 30 litres in volume will be sampled in their entirety. Six of the collected samples which are judged to be most suitable on grounds of being derived from uncontaminated and reasonably well-dated deposits and/or recognisable features will be selected for full analysis, reporting and publication.

2.5.4 Any significant animal bone assemblages, which can be used to explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment will be assessed by a recognised specialist.

2.5.5 Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in *Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather* (English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995).

2.5.6 Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. As well as providing information on construction techniques, timbers will be assessed for their potential for dendrochronology dating, in which case sampling will follow procedures in *Dendrochronology: guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates* (Hillam 1998) and *Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood* (R. Brunning 1996). A maximum of 5 samples of material suitable for dating by scientific means (eg: Radiocarbon, Luminescence, Remnant Magnetism, etc.) will be collected.

2.5.7 Information on the nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods,

sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination, etc. will be provided with each sample submitted for analysis.

2.5.8 Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

2.5.9 Human remains will be treated with care, dignity and respect, in full compliance with the relevant legislation (essentially the Burial Act 1857) and local environmental health concerns. If found, human remains will be left in-situ, covered and protected, and the church authorities and County Archaeologist informed. If it is agreed that if removal of the remains is essential, a Ministry of Justice Licence will be acquired beforehand and the remains will be removed and stored with appropriate care and reburied in a location to be determined with the church authorities. Any analysis of the osteological material will take place according to published guidelines, *Human Remains from Archaeological Sites, Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports* (English Heritage 2002).

2.5.10 If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Practice Ltd. will comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure will be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officers, Benjamin Westwood (Tel. 03000 267 011) for guidance on the Treasure Act procedures. Treasure is defined as the following:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

2.6 Production of Final Report

2.6.1 Copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork to the Client, and the [DCC Archaeology Section](#). An additional hard and digital copy of the report will be lodged with the Durham County HER.

2.6.2 Two bound and collated copies of the report will be provided. Each will be bound, with each page and heading numbered. Any further copies required will be produced electronically. The report will include as a minimum the following:

- Executive summary
- A site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with at least an 8 figure central grid reference
- OASIS reference number; unique site code; museum accession number for the site

- Planning application number
- Contractor's details including date work carried out
- Nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details
- Description of the site location and geology
- A summary statement of methodologies used.
- A site plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
- Discussion of the results of field work
- Context & feature descriptions
- Features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating & scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format
- Stratigraphic matrices for the various areas examined
- Plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale
- Initial assessment reports by specialists
- Discussion of how the work has contributed to the NERFF objectives identified in the WSI
- Recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work
- Bibliography

2.6.3 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines.

2.6.4 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated repository, The Bowes Museum, within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Digital data, in particular a selection of important site photographs will be archived with ADS at the University of York.

2.6.5 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in the appropriate Notices, Annual Reviews, Reports, etc.

2.6.6 OASIS

The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS). The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to, or incorporation of, the final report into the Durham County HER.

2.6.7 A copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS within one week of final submission of the completed report to the DCC Archaeology Section.

3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

3.1 The Developer has appointed The Archaeological Practice Ltd. as a professionally competent Archaeological Contractor, on agreed terms, to execute the scheme as set out in the brief supplied.

3.2 The present project design must be submitted for approval and, if necessary, modification by the DCC archaeologist before work on-site can proceed.

3.3 The Developer will allow the DCC archaeologist and the appointed contractor all reasonable access to the site for the purposes of the archaeological investigation, subject only to safety requirements.

3.4 The archaeological contractor appointed to manage the execution of the scheme shall ensure that:

3.4.1 the appropriate parties are informed of the objectives, timetable and progress of the archaeological work

3.4.2 the progress of the work is adequately and effectively monitored and the results of this are communicated to the appropriate parties.

3.4.3 significant problems in the execution of the scheme are communicated at the earliest opportunity to the appropriate parties in order to effect a resolution of the problems.

3.5 The archaeological contractor will carry, and will ensure that other archaeological contractors involved in the scheme carry appropriate levels of insurance cover in respect of Employers Liability, Public and Third Party Liability & Professional Indemnity.

3.6 The archaeological contractor will liaise with the appointed CDM Planning Supervisor and prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Safety Plan for the archaeological work.

3.7 At or before the commencement of the scheme the Developer, the appointed Archaeological Contractors, the DCC archaeologist and other appropriate parties will agree arbitration procedures to be followed in the event of any unresolvable difficulties or disputes arising from the scheme

3.8 Careful assessment has led to the definition of a number of research objectives which identify with a high degree of likelihood the kind of archaeological deposits which the investigation will encounter. Nevertheless, it is possible that discoveries will be made which could not reasonably have been foreseen on the basis of all the information currently available. Any difficulties arising from unforeseen discoveries will be resolved by discussion between all the parties involved. There will be a presumption, the investigation having been carried out in accordance with the schedule set out in this document, and to the satisfaction of the DCC archaeologist, and all other considerations being equal, that no executive or financial obligation shall attach to any particular party in the event of unforeseen discoveries being made, and that the executive and financial responsibility for dealing with such unforeseen discoveries shall rest outside the currently agreed scheme of investigation.

3.9 The Archaeological Contractor(s) appointed to execute the scheme will procure and comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981 regarding the exhumation and interment of any human remains discovered within the site, and will comply with all reasonable requirements of any church or other religious body or civil body regarding the manner and method of removal, re-interment or cremation of the human remains,

and the removal and disposal of any tombstones or other memorials discovered within the site. The Developer will incur all costs resulting from such compliance.

4. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

It is envisaged that the groundworks will take place in early Spring 2019.

4.1 Personnel:

Archaeological Practice

Project Manager: Richard Carlton

Project Officer: Marc Johnstone

Project Archaeologists: Mike Parsons

Sub-Contractors

Archaeological Services Durham University
(Environmental remains)

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



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