

## STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST NO 6

### CANTURBURY COLLEGE (LATER INCORPORATED INTO CHRIST CHURCH)

**Asset/Monument Type:** Monastic College

**Summary:** Canterbury College was established in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century. It survived until the Dissolution after which it was acquired and then absorbed into Christ Church.

**Location (NGR):** SP51550608

**Definition:** A college is an establishment housing a community of secular clergy sharing a degree of common life less strictly controlled than that within a monastic order. Colleges are normally identified through documentary evidence. Their buildings are usually associated with a parish church (not necessarily of formal collegiate status) although some extra-parochial and academic colleges had their own chapel. Other morphological elements present may include one or more cloisters or quadrangles, ranges of lodgings (either communal or more commonly as separate apartments), a common hall or refectory, service buildings (kitchen, buttery etc.), a master or warden's lodging, a guest house, gate houses and sometimes an associated school or bede-house.

#### Key characteristics

*The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking) are based on the Secretary of State's criteria for assessing Scheduled Monuments. They should not be regarded as definitive, but as an indicative provisional assessment.*

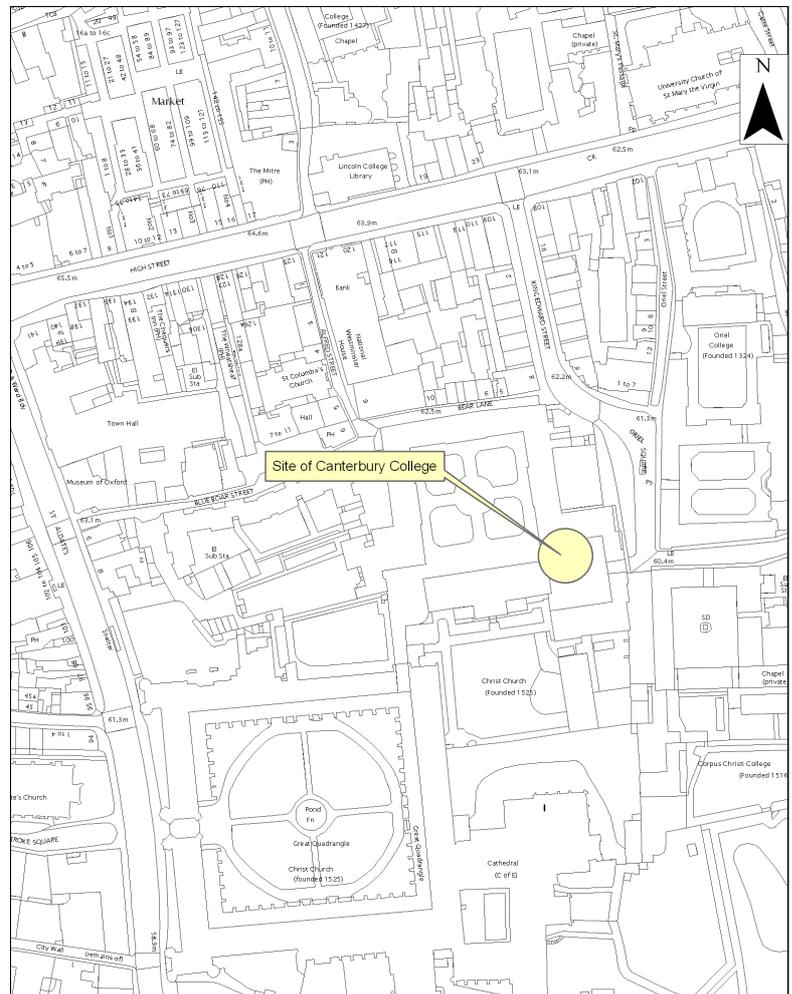
1. **Period:** Does the asset characterise a category or historic period?

**Assessment:** The college represents a period of monastic higher education from the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century. Monastic colleges are just one of many asset types which characterise the medieval and post-medieval period.

**Score:** Medium

2. **Rarity:** What is the rarity of the asset in terms of regional and national context?

**Assessment:** The University of Oxford is only directly comparable to the University of Cambridge. A total of 22 medieval academic and chantry colleges are recorded in the



Location of former Canterbury College

Scale: 1:1,500

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Oxfordshire OHER. The college represents one of only five monastic colleges founded in Oxford.

**Score:** Medium

3. **Documentation:** *To what extent is the significance of the asset enhanced by existing documentation or lack thereof?*

**Assessment:** The archives of the college are now maintained by Christ Church. Further work is required to establish the quality of documentation. The level of archaeological documentation is low.

**Score:** Medium- High

4. **Group Value:** *is the value of the asset enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments or with monuments of different periods?*

**Assessment:** The college has group value for its association with other monastic and secular colleges in Oxford of similar design and its later association with Christ Church.

**Score:** High

5. **Survival/Condition:** *What is the estimated level of above and below ground survival?*

**Assessment:** A new quadrangle for Christ Church was built over the college in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. No visible structures survive. The character and extent of buried deposits relating to the college is currently not well understood. The full extent of Canterbury College is not known. It was located north of St Frideswide's Priory on what is now Oriel Street.

**Score:** Low-Medium

6. **Fragility/Vulnerability:** *susceptibility to change*

**Assessment:** Vulnerable to small scale works associated with permitted development.

**Score:** High

7. **Diversity:** *Does the asset possess a combination of high quality features?*

**Assessment:** The character and quality of surviving features is not known.

**Score:** Low

8. **Potential:** *Is there a likelihood that currently unrecorded evidence can be anticipated?*

**Assessment:** The asset has uncertain potential, further work is required to establish the character, extent and quality of buried remains.

**Score:** Medium

Overall score (17/24)

**Overall Assessment of Archaeological Interest: Medium**

## **HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTION**

In 1331 a hall near the Church of St Peter in the East was used by the priory of Christ Church, Canterbury for four monks to study at Oxford (VCH ii: 68). Canterbury College was subsequently founded in 1362 in St Edward's parish by Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury. Originally for 12 students it is notable for the appointment of a secular warden John Wycliffe in 1365 (Knowles and Hadcock 1971: 72). Wycliffe was a scholastic philosopher known for early dissent in the Catholic Church and founder of the Lollard movement. At the Dissolution the college was acquired by Christ Church (VCH ii: 68). The college buildings have now gone and the extent of the college is known only from documents and historic depictions (e.g. Loggan's 1675 view of Christ Church in Tyack 1997: 141). Archaeological investigations have previously recorded remnants of the boundary wall of the 14th century College (Sturdy 1961-62: 32).

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## Academic statements

MPP Class Description for Colleges

“A sample of nationally important sites should include examples of early medieval establishments of secular priests (if a well-preserved site can be identified), a prebendal or portional college of the 12th or 13th century, later medieval chantry foundations of both high and low status in both urban and rural situations, and possibly several major academic colleges. This last type is of special importance in demonstrating the post-medieval continuity of a tradition restricted to a narrow social and economic context.” (English Heritage. 1989)

## Research agenda

Pre-college research agenda

- Potential for prehistoric activity relating to the ritual and funerary landscape on the 2<sup>nd</sup> gravel terrace (noting previous suggestion of a monumental prehistoric earthwork in the vicinity of Christ Church Cathedral).
- Potential for Middle and Late Saxon occupation and subsequent medieval tenement activity (please refer to City Research Agendas).

College research agenda

- Can structural remains and related plot activity be identified and associated with the Monastic College? What can this tell us about the layout, status, diet and material culture of the college? How do the remains differ from contemporary secular institutions?

## Associated Monuments

UAD Monument 108: Christ Church

UAD Monument 363: Canterbury Chantry College (site of). Demolished 1773

UAD Monument 393: Priory. Former priory of St Frideswide's

UAD Monument 673: Gardens and quadrangles of Christ Church

UAD Monument 746: St Frideswide's Lane (site of). Former road removed in medieval period

UAD Monument 774: Medieval settlement, Salter South East 2

UAD Monument 778: Medieval settlement, Salter South East 6

UAD Monument 802: Late Saxon settlement, south east sector

UAD Monument 805: Late Saxon settlement, south

UAD Monument 830: Chimer's Hall (site of). Former Academic Hall

## Associated Events

- *Excavations at Corpus Christi College, 1958 (UAD 186)*: Evidence of the boundary wall with Christ Church was recorded. The 14<sup>th</sup> century wall of Canterbury College was exposed. Below were remains of the earlier road and the early medieval houses which fronted it. In the occupation layers was 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> century pottery.
- *Excavations in the Cathedral Garden, 1961 (UAD 185)*: Earliest evidence comprised late Saxon occupation layers including several postholes, kilns or ovens and pits. Several medieval graves and a charnel pit were also recorded to the south. A 12<sup>th</sup> century road was recorded to the north above which 14<sup>th</sup> century and later foundations indicate a terminus ante quem for the road. Evidence suggests the presence of a stables associated with the college in the area.
- *Excavations at Staircase 9, Peckwater Quad, 1964 (UAD 203)*: Several 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century rubbish pits containing some pottery were recorded.

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