

STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST NO 19

MAGDALEN COLLEGE

Asset/Monument Type: Academic College

Summary: Magdalen College is a late 15th century foundation on the site of the former Jewish Burial Ground and the medieval Hospital of St John. It comprises an extensive walled precinct that encompasses a small urban deer park. The College is located to the north of the High Street outside the medieval walled town. The original 15th century college has been significantly extended in the late post-medieval and modern periods.

Location (NGR): SP52220624

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 bedehouse.

Version: 12/2/2012

Key characteristics

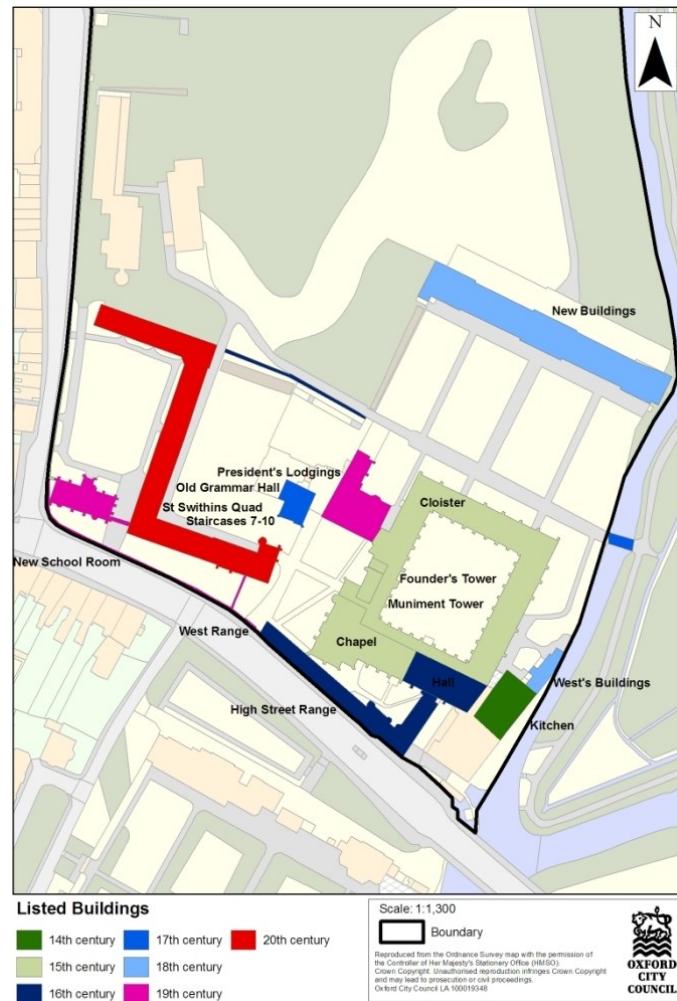
The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking) are based on the Secretary of State's criteria for assessing Scheduled Monuments. They should not be regarded as definitive, but as an indicative provisional assessment.

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

Assessment: The College is characteristic of a period of higher education from 15th century to the present. Academic 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: At a national level, Oxford University is an institution only directly comparable to the slightly later Cambridge University. At a county level, 22 medieval academic and chantry colleges are recorded in the Oxfordshire OHER. Magdalen College is one of 18 Oxford Colleges established by the 16th century

Score: High

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

Assessment: The College maintains its own archives containing a wealth of information on the history and structure of the college and its possessions. The college has good archaeological documentation.

Score: 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 is associated with the late 12th- early 13th century *Jewish cemetery* as well as the medieval *Hospital of St John the Baptist* and the site of medieval tenements fronting onto High Street and Longwall Street. The college is strongly associated by function and architectural form with contemporary monastic and secular colleges. It also has extensive land holdings in the city.

Score: High

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

Assessment: Architecturally, Magdalen College comprises exceptional and well preserved buildings dating from the 14th to the 20th century. Archaeological investigations indicate a good level of preservation of the medieval tenements recorded along the High Street and Longwall Street.

Score: High

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

Assessment: Vulnerable to small scale works, permitted development.

Score: Medium

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

Assessment: Magdalen College includes three Quads, a Cloister range, a Chapel, a Kitchen, a Hall, two towers, a deer park and the President's Lodgings. Several former formal gardens are known to have existed to the rear of the college.

Score: High

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

Assessment: The historic core of the college has potential to preserve remains relating to the Jewish Burial Ground and the medieval hospital of St John (1st and 2nd site). The remains of domestic tenements fronting onto High Street and Longwall and of medieval ridge and furrow are also preserved within the ground. The precinct is also likely to preserve evidence for structures, material culture and diet relating to the college. Geophysical survey to the rear of the college have also demonstrated the potential for evidence of the medieval formal garden design

Score: High

Overall score (23/24)

Overall Assessment of Archaeological Interest: High

HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTION

Magdalen College is located outside of the Saxon and medieval walled town in a site that originally contained the 'Jews Garden' or burial ground between the late 12th century and 1231 at which point the plot was taken over by the Hospital of St John and the burial ground moved south of the High Street. The precinct of the college also encloses the original 1st site of the medieval hospital on Longwall Street.

Magdalen College was initially founded as an academic hall inn 1448 by William de Waynflete, bishop of Winchester in 1448 and was intended to support a President and 50 graduate scholars. The hall was originally located to the west of the current Examination Schools on High Street and was distinct from a second Magdalen Hall which was founded by 1487 and located between the later Magdalen college and Longwall (i.e. on the site of the present St. Swithun's quadrangle of the current Magdalen College) (VCH iii: 193). The second Magdalen Hall was eventually damaged by fire and transferred to another site on Catte Street to become Hertford College. The Victoria County History notes that the relationship between this second Magdalen Hall and Magdalen College cannot be exactly defined based on the available records. In 1458 Waynflete founded Magdalen College on the site of the former St John's hospital outside of the East Gate, although building did not start until 1467. The new college incorporated the chapel and part of the hall of the hospital into its new buildings (these eventually becoming the College kitchen and then the Junior Common Room). Magdalen college was the second of the major 15th century collegiate foundations in Oxford and is notable for introducing the relationship of the 'feeder school' in the case that of Winchester and also for the parallel formation of an associate grammar school which in its early years taught the boy choristers who sang in the college Chapel and the sons of townspeople and undergraduates who needed grammatical teaching. Tyack notes that as an architectural ensemble, Magdalen College vies with anything in late 15th century England' (Tyack 1997:62). Building work started on the main precinct walls in 1467 and for the main buildings in 1474 (Sherwood and Pevsner 2002: 149). The college is unique in that it had its own deer park, formal gardens and fishponds to the rear of the property (Steane 1998: 91). The provision of a battlemented precinct wall and Bell tower located just outside the gates of the walled town can be seen as 'a startling assertion of autonomy, even defiance' (Tyack 1997: 62). The gardens appeared to be in active management from the 15th century onwards with tree planting in formal avenues and the creation of a series of formal gardens to the east by the river (Steane 1998: 94).

The medieval college was approached via a pathway (the Gravel Walk) to the south of the High Street, with the Grammar School located adjacent and a gateway leading to an open forecourt (now St John's Quadrangle). The medieval school room survived until the 19th century. The main buildings were arranged around a large quadrangle entered through a gatehouse (the Founders Tower). The 15th century great quadrangle contains a covered walkway or cloister which is unique amongst Oxford colleges. The west range contains the library, chambers take up most of the north range , the south side of the quadrangle is taken up by the Hall, raised up over an undercroft and the Chapel, which has the same T shaped plan as the Chapels of All Soul's and New College. Along the High Street frontage a range of post-medieval buildings incorporates the late 14th century Bell Tower, the tallest medieval tower in Oxford.

The current Magdalen College is a large complex comprising of three quadrangles. The whole property is enclosed by the 15th century wall constructed when the college was first founded (LB Ref 419WQ). The Great Quad is entirely 15th century and is made up of the Cloister (LB Ref 419J), collegiate chapel to the south (LB Ref 419G) and the Muniment Tower (LB Ref 419K) and Founders Tower (LB Ref 419L) to the west. In the 16th century, a hall was added to

the front of the Great Quad (LB Ref 419H) along with a long range on the High Street frontage (LB Ref 419F). The original kitchen is located to the south-east in a detached building. It is thought to date primarily to the 13th century and includes elements of the Hospital of St John (LB Ref 419N; M). In the 18th century a bridge was added over the Holywell Mill Stream connecting the College with its meadows to the east (LB Ref 419X), and the Old Grammar Hall was added to the west of the Great Quad (LB Ref 419D). The 18th century saw the addition of the New Buildings north of the Great Quad (LB Ref 419P) and West's Building to the rear of the Kitchen (LB Ref 419O). In the 19th century the President's Lodgings were built immediately to the west of the Great Quad (LB Ref 419E). The boundary wall along the High Street was also added in the 19th century (LB Ref 419S) and Longwall Quad was built (LB Ref 419C).

Previous investigations at the college have focused on the early Hospital elements. In 1976 13th century blocked arches and stonework were recorded along with unarticulated human remains, indicating that part of the hospital structure had been incorporated into the college (Durham 1991a: 20). The medieval kitchen was surveyed in 1982 when elements of the 13th-14th century hospital were recorded along with evidence of significant remodelling in the 16th century (Steane and Taylor 1983c: 78). In 1983 several medieval floor layers and fragments of an oven were recorded during a small-scale watching brief in the kitchen (UAD 479). In 1988 a survey carried out prior to its conversion into a common room indicated that the kitchen originally functioned as a large open hall with a substantial timber roof and may once have been larger. The mortar in the walls appeared to be consistent with that of the medieval hospital (Durham 1988: 53).

Elsewhere the roof of the hall and chapel were surveyed in 1983 indicating several periods of repair from the 18th century onwards (Steane and Penney 1985: 82). Also extensive geophysical survey was carried out in the grounds in 1996 which recorded evidence of the medieval and post-medieval gardens located to the rear of the college (Steane 1998). The results of the survey appear to show an extensive layout of formal gardens and fishponds to the rear of the Great Quad extending as far back as the Cherwell. The gardens also included the large meadow with fritillaries and water walks as well as the post-medieval deer park and bowling green. The gardens are illustrated on Agas' map in 1578 and Loggan's map of 1675. For an examination of the evidence for the late medieval garden see Steane (1998). Recent evaluations in front of the current Library Longwall Quad have revealed the remains of the medieval 'Gravel Walk' leading to the college (Oxford Archaeology forthcoming).

Architects:

Chapel & Cloister: William Orchard 1475 (mason)

Bell Tower: William Reynold? 1492 (mason)

New Buildings: Dr Clarke. 1733

President's Lodgings: Bodley & Garner. 1886-8

Library: J C Buckler 1849-51

Longwall Annexe: J E Thorpe 1935

Waynflete Buildings: Booth, Ledeboer & Pinckheard 1960-61

Academic statements

MPP Class Description

"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).

The second of the major 15th century collegiate foundations (Tyack 1998: 60)
'As an architectural ensemble, Magdalen College vies with anything in late 15th century England' (Tyack 1998: 62).

In the Bell tower 'Gothic architecture reached a degree of perfection which it was rarely, if ever, to attain in later years' (Tyack 1998: 65).

Research agenda

Pre College research agenda

- Can we establish the character and extent of the 1st and 2nd sites of St John's Hospital and related features such as the water supply and burial ground?
- Can we establish the character and extent of the 'Jewish Garden' [Burial Ground]
- Can more hospital features be identified, what can these tell us about the layout, function and clientele of the hospital?

College research agenda

- Synthesis of the material culture recorded from the college, what can this tell us about social life at the college in the medieval and post-medieval period
- Reconstruction of the formal garden design, can the gardens be reconstructed at the college?
- Desirability of integrated Conservation management plan including truncation and deposit potential map noted.
- What is the potential for archaeological evidence at the college for settlement prior to its foundation?
- Establish the character and extent of surviving college era remains. What can these tell us about changing patterns of wealth, material culture and diet and about the evolution of college structures?

Associated Monuments

UAD Monument 45: Bowling Green. Magdalen College Grove. Post-medieval

UAD Monument 114: Magdalen College. University College. 15th century

UAD Monument 364: Hospital of St John the Baptist. 13th century

UAD Monument 471: Magdalen Bridge. 18th-19th century

UAD Monument 500: Greyhound Inn, High Street. 19th century

UAD Monument 589: Holywell Mill Stream. 13th century.

UAD Monument 615: Historic Buildings, High St. Post-medieval

UAD Monument 675: Magdalen College. Park & Gardens. Post-medieval

UAD Monument 710: High Street. Saxon

UAD Monument 716: Longwall Street. Saxon?

UAD Monument 741: Benseval Street. 15th century

Associated Events

- *Find, undated (UAD 708):* A quartzite hammerstone was found when foundations were dug.

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- *Finds in 1874 (UAD 1298)*: Professor Rolleston acquired the skulls of two individuals. The remains may have come from the former Jewish cemetery.
 - *Observations in 1881 (UAD 1176)*: 17th century iron candlesticks were found.
 - *Observations in 1884 (UAD 1190)*: Undated bronze thimble was found.
 - *Observations in 1894 (UAD 1230)*: Early 17th century stirrups were found and an Abbey token.
 - *Observations, Magdalen College, 1890s (UAD 1373)*: A view of Perrot's House was recorded from the gravel walk. It had oriel windows and an overhanging porch.
 - *Find 1911 (UAD 748)*: The rim of a 15th century green glazed pot was found.
 - *Observations in 1930-1 (UAD 781)*: A tile dating from the reign of Edward III recorded
 - *Excavations near Magdalen College Lodge, 1958 (UAD 170)*: Three graves recorded in south part of the road, possibly part of the Jewish cemetery or later Hospital of St John.
 - *Observations in 1967 (UAD 782)*: Ceramic wig curlers, resembling clay pipes recorded.
 - *Building work, Chaplain Quad, 1976 (UAD 329)*: Several burials and some 13th century stonework recorded during renovation.
 - *Watching Brief in 1983 (UAD 478)*: Some large post-medieval features, probably ditches, were exposed. The smaller contained late 17th century rubbish possibly from the Civil War defences.
 - *Watching brief at Magdalen College kitchen, 1983 (UAD 479)*: Several floor layers and possible fragments of an oven were recorded.
 - *Building Survey in 1983 (UAD 635)*: The original 15th century roofs had been replaced in the late 18th century because they were in poor condition. Wyatt raised the walls by 3 ft 6 inches and installed lath and plaster ceilings with stucco decoration. The roof of the Hall was replaced in 1903 when parts of the original roof and a perpendicular window were revealed. An oak ceiling below a low pitched lead roof was installed. Felt replaced lead in 1950. The current work used steel framing, timber purlins and Cornish slate. The height of the Hall roof was brought to the same level as that of the Chapel.
 - *Gravel Survey in 1984 (UAD 674)*: The site, identified in 1924, lies in the Eynsham gravel on the Summertown-Radley Terrace. Pollen and molluscs were recovered. The natural clay was overlain with bands of gravel containing some silt lenses. One shallow archaeological feature, possibly a pit or gully, was seen, which produced a few sherds of late medieval pottery, oyster shell and animal bone.
 - *Building Survey in 1985 (UAD 1527)*: Extensive alterations were carried out in the old grammar school. Stonework was drawn and photographs taken before and during work.
 - *Excavations at Magdalen College, 1986 (UAD 301)*: The medieval stone kitchen, one of the last surviving structures from the hospital was recorded while excavations at the new kitchen site were also carried out recording the eastern part of the infirmary lying at right angles to the southern end of riverside range containing a hall. The south east corner of the hospital was found to lie on an artificial embankment. A culverted water supply at the chapel end of the infirmary was also noted. Silts below the hospital suggested a fast flowing channel during the 13th century.
 - *Watching Brief in 1986 (UAD 582)*: Coursed stone block wall, bonded into the north boundary wall. There is some indication of an EW return in the trench. The wall is probably from an outhouse. Pre 18th century maps do not show anything in that location.

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- *Building Survey, Magdalen College Kitchen, 1988 (UAD 501)*: The hall was probably originally longer. The mortar in the walls was typical of the medieval hospital. Shaped of ashlar window jambs were recorded, one with the full arch. This was two -centred of common 13th century style. A doorway was discovered the capitals of which extended 0.5 m above the modern ground level.
 - *Building Survey, Magdalen College Kitchen, 1988 (UAD 645)*: The kitchen range lies to the east of the Hall and contains traces of 13th or 14th century work. In the north façade there are three possible lancet windows. After a 16th century refurbishment open fireplaces and chimney stacks were fitted at either end.
 - *Observations at Magdalen College in 1888-90 (UAD 1386)*: Hurst recorded various features including the elevation of the President's House, showing blocked openings from medieval doors and windows. These were later covered with plaster.
 - *Excavations at Magdalen College, 1991 (UASD 356)*: The ploughed floor of a managed pond was found close to the assumed line of the aqueduct supplying the medieval Hospital of St John.
 - *Excavations at Holywell Ford, 1993 (UAD 312)*: Evidence of the medieval house and mill were recorded including walls from a series of buildings, thought to be associated with the mill, were uncovered, the earliest dating to the 15th century with a stone lining on part of the wall, possibly a water channel, for the mill or St John's Hospital.
 - *Excavations at Longwall Quadrangle, 1995 (UAD 321)*: Structural evidence possibly part of the hospital or domestic activity. 12th-13th century cultivation activity recorded to the south.
 - *Resistivity Survey in 1996 (UAD 320)*: The plot appeared to locate the four gardens at the rear of St John's Hospital site, listed in the 1490s. They all lay in the south east quadrant of the Grove and subdivided into beds with two rectangular fishponds.
 - *Evaluation 2006 (UAD 1688)*: Iron Age pottery was recovered from two post holes. A number of pits with 13th century pottery were interpreted as gravel quarries although the dating evidence was sparse and the date is therefore uncertain, but they were defined on the N side by a ditch again with 13th-century pottery that may reinforce the date. There was also a large N-S aligned ditch that is interpreted as part of the Civil War defences, although 60 m forward of any part of the St Clements starwork illustrated on de Gomme's plan of the defences, which elsewhere in Oxford has proved to be fairly reliable. It may be conjectured that this was an outwork, or alternatively it may be a large boundary ditch defining an area of post-medieval pits to the east and unrelated to the defences.
 - *Watching brief & Recording, 2010 (UAD 1757)*: A wall adjacent to the Provost's Lodgings was recorded during reconstruction work, a later phase of construction noted at the top of the wall however poor quality of the wall made identifying other phases impossible. The wall foundations were recorded but no further archaeological evidence was recovered.
 - *Evaluation in Longwall Quadrangle 2011 (Not currently in the public domain)*.

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