

STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST NO 23

THE QUEENS COLLEGE

Asset/Monument Type: Academic College

Summary: The Queen's College was founded in the mid 14th century as a hall and was elevated to college status in 1585. The college was first established as a quadrangle on Queen's Lane before gradually extending south to incorporate the High Street frontage.

Location (NGR): 51790629

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.

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Key characteristics

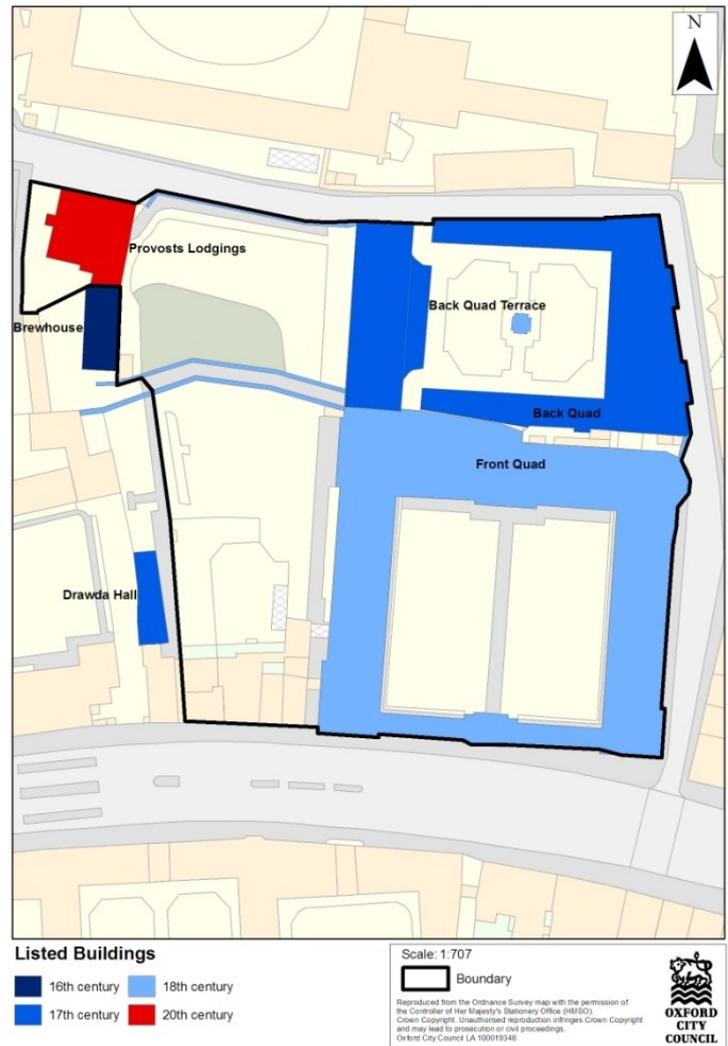
The following criteria (which are not in any order of ranking) are based on the Secretary of State's criteria for assessing Scheduled Monuments. They should not be regarded as definitive, but as an indicative provisional assessment.

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

Assessment: The collegiate college was founded in the 14th century and remains in use today. Academic colleges are just one of many asset types which characterise the medieval and post-medieval period. Academic colleges are alone among the medieval types of college in containing examples of post-medieval foundation as well as post-medieval survival.

Score: Medium

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



Assessment: At a national level The University of Oxford is an institution only directly comparable to the slightly later University of Cambridge. At a county level, 22 medieval academic and chantry colleges are recorded in the Oxfordshire OHER. The Queen's 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 colleges maintain their own extensive archives with records dating back to the 12th century. The college has a good level of 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 spatially associated with the Late Saxon eastern suburb and the medieval intramural settlement, it is possible that industrial activity occurred in the area during the late Saxon period. Several former academic halls are recorded on the site of the college as are a series of medieval tenements fronting onto the High Street and Queens Lane. The medieval college included a large area of formal walled gardens to the rear and a medieval quad is located beneath the two main quads

Score: High

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

Assessment: Queens College is the only college with no surviving elements of medieval structures, the whole college being completely redeveloped following the Restoration. Post-medieval structures are well preserved. Archaeological investigation has demonstrated the presence of well preserved below ground remains.

Score: Medium

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

Assessment: Vulnerable to small scale works, permitted development and pressure to improve on site facilities.

Score: Medium

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

8. **Assessment:** Queens College comprises three Quads, several gardens and walls, a Provosts Lodging and a Brewhouse.): Very high. Excluding the academic colleges, very few college sites retain sufficient visible elements to recreate the complete plan of the medieval establishment.

Score: High

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

Assessment: The college has a good potential for further unrecorded evidence to be present.

Score: High

Overall score (21/24)

Overall Assessment of Archaeological Interest: High

HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTION

The Queen's College was originally founded by Robert of Eglesfield in 1341 as a collegiate hall for a provost and 12 scholars under the name of 'the Hall of the Queen's scholars of Oxford' (VCH iii: 133). The hall was finally incorporated into a college in 1585. The medieval college shown on Agas' map of 1578 occupied a single quad set back from the High Street fronting on to Queen's Lane with a series of medieval tenements lining the High Street beneath what is

now the Front Quad. To the rear of the medieval quad was a large area set aside for the college gardens and orchards extending back to the Provost's Lodgings. The illustrated view of the medieval quad suggests it was irregularly set with the main gate on the corner of the east range facing Queen's Lane with the chapel to the south. Loggan's map of the city some 100 years later (1675) depicts the same medieval quad with new range extending north along Queen's Lane and west along New College Lane beneath what is now North Quad, while to the rear of the college a series of formal walled gardens and lawns were laid out.

Evidence for the medieval college has been recorded on a number of occasions at Queen's College. In the 19th century extensive foundations thought to be part of the medieval chapel were recorded in the Front Quad during renovation works (UAD 1350). Although the foundations were re-investigated in 1903 little is known about the results. In the 1940s, several paving tiles thought to come from the old chapel were also recorded (UAD 136). The tiles were identified using Haberly's Medieval English Paving tiles which included a number of tile designs used in Oxford (Leeds and Atkinson 1943-4: 203). Excavations in 1987 recorded evidence of the north range in the lawn of the North Quad. This investigation comprised a single trench recorded a window from the basement of the medieval range at a depth of approximately 1.2 metres (Blair 1987: 1).

Between 2006 and 2008 several trenches excavated in the North Quad recorded evidence of the north-east corner of the medieval west range (Hiller 2006: 1; Norton and Mumford 2010). The investigations recorded substantial stonework forming the corner of the west range at a depth of around 0.8-1.2 metres with a garden wall to the north and east. No cellar was evident in the west range (*ibid.*: 11). The evidence would suggest that the medieval college did not form a classical quad with the west range out of alignment with the north. Evidence for a hearth of 14th century date, located within the west range, was recorded.

Excavations in 1998 in the Provost's Garden recorded evidence of Saxo-Norman activity and later medieval pits (Cook 1999: 1). Several pits dating to the 11th-14th century were recorded across the excavation area, the majority containing domestic rubbish (*ibid.*: 12). Garden soils dating to the 14th century probably relating to the foundation of the college were noted. There was some localised truncation by a World War II air raid shelter. The site was subject to an archaeological watching brief in 2001 which recorded a number of additional archaeological features including several large pits that may have been used for gravel extraction (Bashford 2001: 8).

In 2008 Oxford Archaeology undertook an excavation in advance of the construction of a new kitchen. The excavation uncovered 10th-11th century pits below the foundations of the college's 15th century west and north ranges. The medieval kitchen was seen to lie below its more recent counterpart. The excavation also supplied significant information about the fellows' diet (Norton and Mumford 2010). An extensive excavation undertaken prior to the construction of a sunken lecture theatre in the garden of Drawda Hall recorded several intercutting medieval pits (Oxford Archaeology forthcoming) relating to the backyard of the Drawda Hall, which lay outside the medieval core of the college.

The stone vaulted cellars of the 18th century College buildings are described by Norton and Mumford (2010). A crypt below the chapel was uncovered in 1976 when coffins of former provosts were noted (*ibid.*: 167). Excavations prior to the construction of a new kitchen basement in 2008 noted dumps of 18th century construction debris. A trench within the back quad in 1987 recovered 17th-18th century pottery and clay pie. A limestone layer likely associated with the construction of the library in 1692-5 was noted. The investigation noted that the 18th century cellars and range had been constructed within one large foundation trench (Blair 2010).

A timber framed Brew House at the west end of the fellows garden at The Queen's College may be 16th century in origin, though heavily restored (RCHME, 1939, p100). A book on Brewing by King (1947) records it as 'probably the oldest in the British Isles still operating'. However the accuracy of this claim needs checking. The building is listed and no longer functions as a Brewery, the Brew House was closed in 1939. A photograph of the copper fire in the Brewhouse taken in the 1930s is published in Peaty (Peaty 1997, 55).

The current Queens College is located on the High Street and comprises three main quadrangles with a number of subsidiary buildings, although its frontage property was not acquired until the 18th century. The Front Quad (LB Ref 9/255A) comprises three ranges around a classical cloister, the front range being a single storey screen. Built in the English Baroque style the Quad was built between 1709 and 1760. The 17th century North Quad (LB Ref 9/255B & E) was likely heavily influenced by Wren however it was extensively remodelled in the 18th century. To the west of North Quad is the 16th century Brewhouse (LB Ref 9/255C) and the 20th century Provosts Lodgings (LB Ref 9/10024). A series of former domestic buildings along the High Street have been absorbed into the modern college; to the west of Front Quad the Drawda Buildings comprise three buildings dating from the 15th to 18th century, although separately listed they are considered to form a group of historic buildings on the north side of the High Street. To the east of the Front Quad, Queens Lane Quad includes a 16th and 20th century listed building.

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, Ledebøer & 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 New Library at Queens built in the 1690s 'survives as a largely unaltered example of the superbly accomplished craftsmanship of the time, and a rarely surpassed model for future library design' (Tyack 1998: 140-1).

The 18th century apsidal Chapel is 'one of the most impressive ecclesiastical interiors of its date in England' (Tyack 1998: 155).

The Front Quad is 'the most consistently classical set of buildings of any Oxford college' (Tyack 1998:155)

Research agenda

Pre College research agenda

- Can further evidence of Late Saxon occupation be identified. What was the character of activity in this eastern part of the burh. Can we establish when plots were laid out? Are there any variations in pottery usage between this and other areas of the burh? Is there any evidence for commercial or manufacturing activity?

College research agenda

- What can the evidence for material culture and diet tell us about social life at the college in the medieval and post-medieval period?
- A comprehensive building survey - Was any of the material from the medieval quad reused in the current college?
- Is there a detailed record of the Brew House structure?
- The desirability of an integrated conservation management plan that addresses the issue of the long term conservation of below ground archaeological deposits is noted.

Associated Monuments

UAD Monument 119: The Queens College. University College. 14th century

UAD Monument 130:34 High Street. 18th century

UAD Monument 131: 35-36 High Street. 17th century

UAD Monument 132: 37-38 High Street. 16th century

UAD Monument 615: Historic buildings, High Street (north side)

UAD Monument 710: High Street. Saxon

UAD Monument 720: New College Lane. Saxon?

UAD Monument 727: Queen's Lane. Medieval

UAD Monument 791: Medieval settlement Salter North East 3

UAD Monument 792: Medieval settlement Salter North East 4

UAD Monument 804: Late Saxon settlement, Eastern suburb

UAD Monument 891: St Katherine Hall. Former academic hall

UAD Monument 916: Wileby Hall. Former academic hall

Associated Events

- *Finds in 1887 (UAD 1350):* foundations of the west wall of the ante-chapel from the 16th century college buildings.
- *Find in 1892 (UAD 1222):* An iron key was dug up.
- *Finds in 1903 (UAD 1257):* Medieval stained glass, pottery and tile and an 18th century cast iron coffin handle was discovered in the crypt.
- *Observations in 1940s (UAD 136):* Medieval paving-tiles from the old chapel were found.
- *Finds in 1950s (UAD 1471):* Bone implements recorded
- *Excavations in 1959 (UAD 174):* 17th century activity had removed most earlier activity. A mid 13th century pit containing sherds from lamps and pots was found. Post-medieval pottery
- *Find in 1967 (UAD 1469):* A bottle was found during work on the basement of Staircase 5, Back Quad, which was completed in 1719.
- *Recording in 1976 (UAD 743):* The crypt itself proved to run NS with an E bay extension, but did not extend under the whole of the chapel. Seven coffins, some chests, belonging to former Provosts were discovered.

- *Excavations, Back Quad. 1987 (UAD 1768)*: Limited trenching revealed a splayed window from the basement of the range. Post-medieval pottery recorded.
- *Building Survey in 1998 (UAD 453)*: The Lodgings were built on two floors between 1694 and 1707, off two staircases. Each room had a living area and a partitioned sleeping area with a closet within. The rooms are panelled in the style fashionable from 1707 to 1730. The Newell staircases are in a 1670s style.
- *Evaluation in 1998 & watching brief in 2001 (UAD 407)*: At the southern end a gravel surface, a pit and a posthole with 10th century deposits including slag were found. These finds suggested a yard surface. The site also produced medieval pits and a 13th century occupation deposit. Disturbance caused by a 1939 Anderson shelter was recorded.
- *Evaluation, 2006 (UAD 1724)*: The work revealed layers of construction/demolition debris cut by the foundation trench and wall forming the NE corner of the medieval West Range depicted on historic views. The northern end of the West Range was equipped with a hearth and later a possible doorway inserted within the wall leading to the yard outside. A narrow garden wall and a path were identified leading to the building and these are probably of later/early post-medieval date. The northern line of the medieval North-Range, identified in a previous excavation, was confirmed in service trenches and trial pits by its robber trench.

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