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(Blackfriars), Austin Friars and Carmelites (Whitefriars). Oxford was one of 13 towns to have friaries belonging to all four of the major orders. (Newcastle upon Tyne, Lincoln, York, Boston, Stamford, Kings Lynn, Norwich, Cambridge, Northampton, Oxford, London, Bristol and Winchester).

**Score:** Medium

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

**Assessment:** Few records from the friary itself survive and our knowledge is primarily gained from references from other sources such as the Osney Abbey archives and a 16<sup>th</sup> century map and 18<sup>th</sup> century illustrations. There is moderate archaeological documentation.

**Score:** Medium

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

**Assessment:** Oxford is notable in having a cluster of friaries with seven orders represented in the city over nine sites. The Carmelite White friars are recorded in two locations and both may have been significant undertakings, at the second site at Beaumont Palace, they inherited the closes and buildings already in existence, subsequently adapting them to their own purposes.

**Score:** High

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

**Assessment:** There is no above ground survival of the palace or later friary structures although elements of the stonework may have been used in other Oxford buildings. Previous archaeological investigation has recorded some evidence of below ground remains.

**Score:** Medium

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

**Assessment:** Small scale development and service trenching along Beaumont Street

**Score:** Medium

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

**Assessment:** The form and size of standing and excavated examples of friaries suggests a great variation in building format, constructional technique, size and cloister orientation. The friary is located on the site of the royal palace at Oxford and was adapted for their purposes in the 14<sup>th</sup> century although there is no above ground survival and the character of surviving features is not well understood. The burial ground of the friary has been identified.

**Score:** High

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

**Assessment:** Limited archaeological investigation has recorded evidence of the palace and friary, however the extent of below ground survival given modern redevelopment is uncertain

**Score:** Medium

**Overall score (18/24)**

**Overall Assessment of Archaeological Interest: High**

## HERITAGE ASSET DESCRIPTION

Two Early Bronze Age barrows were partially investigated during excavations for the Sackler Library on Beaumont Street close to the Carmelite precinct and the area has potential for further prehistoric remains (Poore & Wilkinson 2001).

Documentary evidence for the royal palace suggests it comprised a hall, kitchen, at least two chambers, a chapel and a cloister by the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century while later additions included extra

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accommodation for the Queen, a great gate and chamber in 1257 (Poore and Williamson 2001: 5). Although originally built in around 1132 by Henry I the palace had fallen out of use as a royal residence by the late 13<sup>th</sup> century and it was granted to a series of private individuals from 1275 although it is not clear if it was inhabited again over the next 35 years (*ibid.*).

The principle area of residence for the palace, and later the friary, was beneath what is now Beaumont Street opposite Worcester College. Agas' map of 1578 recorded the precinct of the White Friars as comprising an L shaped range with the chapel to the rear within a walled precinct while a number of 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings illustrate the ruins of the precinct.

The Carmelite or White Friars came to Oxford in 1256. Initially they had a site in modern Walton Street, but in 1318 Edward II granted his palace to the Carmelites of Oxford and Shean, requiring the friars there to move to Oxford and further allowing them to create a tunnel beneath Stockwell Road itself in order to join their new and old properties (Page 1907: 139). Documentary sources from the same year also granted them permission to sell their old lands however so it is uncertain whether the tunnel was actually built (*ibid.*). On occupying their new, grander, premises the Carmelites set about adapting the king's residences for their own use, adding a library and extending the chapel.

A number of burials recorded in the vicinity of the Beaumont Street & Gloucester Street junction would indicate that a cemetery existed here at some time in the medieval period. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century eight burials were recorded during the construction of Beaumont Street (UAD 1299; 1335) while another burial was recorded in 1958 (UAD 167) placing them to the rear of the main house and chapel. During the construction of the Oxford Playhouse in 1938 a further 15 graves were recorded (UAD 122) while archaeological investigations in 1973 recorded disarticulated human remains of a medieval date (UAD 528).

The Sackler Library excavation also revealed evidence for substantial stone foundations parallel to the earlier tree planting pits that were eventually robbed out (Poore & Wilkinson 2001: 19). The wall was approximately 25m long with 6 buttresses along a roughly east-west alignment and indicates the presence of a substantial stone structure. Dating evidence for the stone building was limited although pottery and structural evidence would indicate it was in use from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards (*ibid.*: 32). Some evidence for a second possible building was also recorded in the extreme eastern corner of the excavation (*ibid.*: 24). The wall was approximately 2.5m wide and was recorded over a length of 4.5m.

The friary was dissolved in 1538 although it appears to have been in a somewhat ruinous state already and was sold to Edmund Powell in 1542 and later to St John's College in 1560 (Poore & Williamson 2001: 11). The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the creation of modern suburban development on the former precinct, first through the creation of Beaumont Street itself and then with the laying out of the residential streets to the north (*ibid.* 13).

## **Academic statements**

### **MPP Class Description**

In selecting examples of national importance an attempt should be made to identify a variety of site types and situations, examples with differing proportions of standing remains and sites prioritised by reference to their historical descriptors. For example, a house belonging to one of the more rare orders may be considered important (Crutched Friars, Friars of the Sack, Pied Friars, Trinitarians and Observants). The diversity of types that characterises friaries requires both common and unusual types to be selected. Examples of the major orders with good survival, potential and documentation should be represented, in addition to any sites attributable to the minor orders (English Heritage 1989).

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## Research agenda

- Can the layout of the friary be further defined? How were former Beaumont Palace structures adapted?
- The archaeology of medieval Oxford has exceptional potential to provide further insights into patterns of urban change and the evolving relationship, and disparities of wealth and lifestyle, between ‘town and gown’, between college institutions and religious institutions.
- The plan-form of a number of friaries and abbeys have been archaeologically investigated; can we learn more about the daily life within religious institutions – the diet and health, daily routine?
- Do the early ecclesiastical sites preserve any material culture or structural elements that can be associated with the development of learning (styli, book clasps, lamps, libraries etc)? Such features and objects would be of particular interest.
- Can the material culture and architecture of the friaries and abbeys tell us more about the relative wealth and functions of rival orders?

## Associated Monuments

UAD Monument 453: Beaumont Palace

UAD Monument 788: Medieval Settlement, Salter North 5

UAD Monument 787: Medieval Settlement, Salter North 4

UAD Monument 760: Barrow Cemetery

UAD Monument 454: Beaumont Street

UAD Monument 455: Ashmolean Museum, Beaumont Street

UAD Monument 456: St John Street

UAD Monument 439: Civil War Defences, First Phase

## Associated Events

- *Beaumont Palace c1713 (UAD 732)*: Numerous burials recorded, also painted glass, stone and brick.
- *Beaumont Street in 1822-5 (UAD 925)*: 22 inhumations recorded during construction of the road along with a medieval copper container
- *Record of evidence, Beaumont Palace, 1830 (UAD 116)*: A piece of walling set with an archway was re-erected in the grounds of The Avenue, 302 Woodstock Road. Above the arch is a circular opening, possibly the framework of a rose window.
- *8-10 Beaumont Street 1938 (UAD 122)*: At least 15 skeletons were found, 7 in a common grave. The site was the burial-ground of the Carmelites or White Friars. The burials have been dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century from a number of bronze brooches found with them.
- *Beaumont Street in 1848 (UAD 1335)*: A skull and a sword were found near to No 15 Beaumont Street. A skeleton had been found behind No 15 in 1826
- *Beaumont Street in 1876 (UAD 1229)*: Professor Rolleston collected the remains of 7 individuals from this area. The burials may be the result of the 1349 plague or White friar’s cemetery.
- *Beaumont Street c1890 (UAD 1453)*: Hurst records that a bed of limestone rubble was seen about 4 m E of where the road widens. It was c0.4 m thick, but probably not thick enough to be the remains of Beaumont Palace. A watercourse was seen running along the street.

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- *Beaumont Street in 1893-5 (UAD 1334)*: A number of burials were found, possibly from the 14<sup>th</sup> century plague. Foundations of a wall were uncovered in the centre of the road, due north of the bend in Gloucester Lane. Burials had been found in the area on many previous occasions
  - *Pusey Lane in 1951 (UAD 151)*: Undated well was found.
  - *Beaumont Street in 1958 (UAD 167)*: A grave was found under the north side of the road, immediately west of the Playhouse. The skeleton lay on its back, with its feet to the NW.
  - *St John Street in 1960 (UAD 184)*: A trench in the pavement outside 35 Beaumont Street contained a 14<sup>th</sup> century ridge tile
  - *The Playhouse in 1973 (UAD 528)*: Burials were cut into the natural gravel. This area was probably part of the cemetery of White friars Priory. The south wall of the Gloucester Arms in Friars Entry was seen to incorporate some moulded stone, probably also from the priory.
  - *1 Beaumont Buildings in 1980 (UAD 547)*: Work was carried out when a rear extension was built. A stone lined cess pit with a recent brick vault was seen, possibly Victorian.
  - *Gloucester Street in 1982 (UAD 565)*: Cellar and well, both may have belonged to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century house which had occupied the site.
  - *3 Beaumont Buildings in 1984 (UAD 574)*: Work was carried out when a sunken garden was excavated. The fill was fairly uniform to about 2 m and contained medieval and post medieval pottery. The most likely explanation is that the area had been quarried and then backfilled.
  - *63 St John Street in 1992 (UAD 601)*: Brick vaults extending under the house, were found with a staircase leading down from a brick building behind. The site is said to have been that of a smoke house for hams etc. A stone pier and a stone faced wall were found to the north, suggesting a stone lined passage. In places stone looked as if it had been used for relieving arches for an earlier building, incorporating the passage.
  - *Sackler Library in 1997-9 (UAD 395)*: Artefacts of middle Saxon date were recovered, but no features were located. A circular ditch was excavated, thought to be a Bronze Age barrow ditch. Part of a second similar ditch was found. Many robber trenches were uncovered. Remains of a number of high quality limestone walls were found, in association with painted window glass, roof and floor tiles, dating from before the 14<sup>th</sup> century. These are remains of Beaumont Palace which existed from the 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Some later carved masonry and walls probably belong to the Carmelite Friary which replaced the palace in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In one part of the site were a series of regular pits arranged in rows, containing some 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> century pottery. It has been suggested that these holes were made for tree planting.

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