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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT BARDNEY ABBEY,
BARDNEY,
LINCOLNSHIRE
BASM 09**

Work Undertaken for
The Jews' Court Trust

December 2009

Report compiled by
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National Grid Reference: TF 1133 7060
Museum Accession No: LCNCC 2009.189

APS Report No: 122/09

*Not yet approved -
awaiting approval
from EH.
(Jan 2010.)*

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
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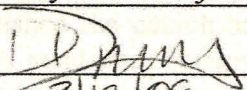
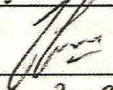
Quality Control

Bardney Abbey

Bardney

BASM 09

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Checked by Senior Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
 Denise Drury	 Tom Lane
Date: 3/12/09	Date: 3-12-09

1. INTRODUCTION

Jews' Court Trust commissioned Archaeological Project Services to undertake an evaluation at Bardney Abbey, Bardney, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TF 1133 7060). The work was carried out in order to assess the surviving fabric of the buried remains in advance of possible public display. Bardney Abbey is a Scheduled Monument (No. 22619) and the works were subject to Scheduled Monument Consent granted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The work was undertaken between the 23rd and 25th November 2009 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by English Heritage.

2. BACKGROUND

The medieval abbey of Bardney was founded as a Benedictine priory by Gilbert de Gand in 1087, on or near the site of a Saxon monastery first mentioned in the late 7th century. Gilbert's son, Walter, raised the status of Bardney to an abbey in 1116.

Following the dissolution, the land was acquired by Sir Robert Tyrwhitt, who demolished the church and transformed the remaining conventual buildings into a private residence, occupying the area of the abbot's lodging and converting the cloister into a walled garden. By 1718, when Browne Willis surveyed the site, all the buildings, including Tyrwhitt's house, had gone and only a fragment of the gatehouse remained standing.

Excavation of the site was commenced in 1909 by the local vicar, Reverend Charles Laing. This work was continued for six years, uncovering the ruins of the main abbey buildings, before being terminated by the war and Laing's death. A report on these investigations was published in 1922 (Brakspear 1922). Left open to view, the stonework deteriorated due to exposure to the weather. In 1933, to protect them against further decay, the ruins were covered over in such a way that the outlines of buildings remained visible for the benefit of visitors.

In 1974, a trench was excavated to assess the state of preservation (White 1978, 29). This trench was located over the nave pier and across the north wall of the church.

3. AIMS

The main requirement of the work was to uncover buried masonry to allow for a stone conservator to assess the condition and conservation requirements of the stonework (work undertaken by Jane Cowan and subject of a separate report).

4. METHODOLOGY

Four trenches were excavated by hand across the earthworks of Bardney Abbey (Fig. 1). Two trenches were located over the line of the west front of the church (Trenches 1 and 2) and one trench was situated over the north wall of the refectory (Trench 4). A fourth trench was proposed in the refectory area, however this was moved, with the consent of the Senior Inspector, English Heritage, to examine the wall of the south

aisle within the church (Trench 3). Consent was also given to lengthen the trenches, as the 2.5m length originally specified was insufficient.

Prior to excavation, the position of each trench was photographed. Once excavated, each trench was cleaned and photographed and a plan drawn at a scale of 1:50. No other recording was undertaken and finds noted but not retained. Following excavation and recording, the trenches were backfilled and the area reinstated with further photographs taken.

5. RECORD OF THE WORK UNDERTAKEN

The work undertaken is discussed below in trench order.

Trench 1

This trench was excavated across the west wall of the church to the south of the north arcade pier respond. It measured 5m long and 1m wide. The western part of the trench contained *in situ* wall core, including that for a buttress, with no exterior worked stone present. Within the church, the western respond base was partially exposed resting on the foundation course. Two courses of stonework of the west wall were exposed, the

upper quite badly damaged. Upon this, a flat piece of ashlar perhaps indicates a bench, a feature not recorded during the initial excavation.



Plate 1 – Trench 1 after cleaning, looking northwest. North arcade pier respond can be seen resting on the foundation course, with elements of the wall and bench in the background. In the foreground are two grave slabs.

At the eastern end of the trench were two fragments of grave slabs. Both are shown on Brakspear's plan with a brief description in Appendix 1 of the report. The more northerly slab has an inscribed clustered trefoil cross which Brakspear does not mention.

Finds associated with this trench include flat roofing tile and a sharpened goose bone, perhaps used as a pen or pointer.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located just north of the south door to the church and over the staircase to the upper levels. This trench measured 5.8m long by 1m wide. Photographs taken

during the excavations show the doorway to survive to two courses above its plinth course with the interior surviving to a greater height. A column base for a blind arcade on the west front was the only stone to remain *in situ*.



Plate 2 – The south doorway of the church following excavation by Laing between 1909-14. Trench 2 was located to the left of this view



Plate 3 – The west front as revealed in Trench 2 showing the foundation plinth, the intact wall core and worked stone. The column base (centre top) is *in situ*

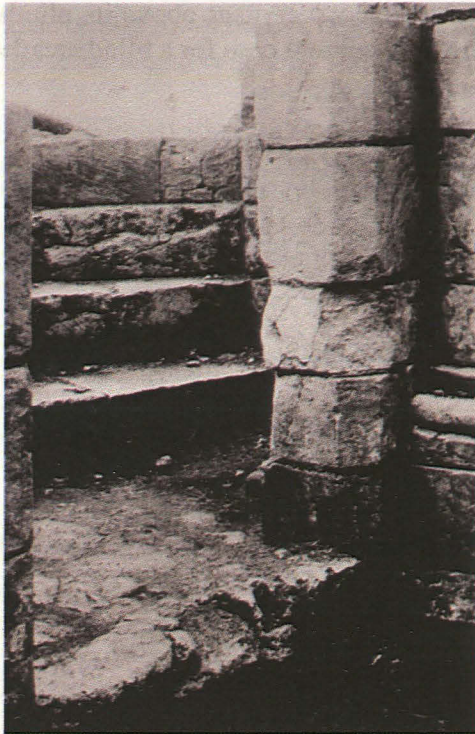


Plate 4 – The stairs to the west front as revealed in the original excavations of the early 20th century



Plate 5 – The stairway as revealed during the evaluation. Up to three courses of stonework have been removed and some damage has occurred to the masonry

Trench 3

A small exploratory trench, measuring 1.6m by 1.5m, adjacent to the south wall of the church was opened (instead of a second trench over the refectory) and situated over the base of a respond for a vault shaft. The wall survived to a height of c. 1.3m within the trench and was partly covered by a lime render. A keystone for the vault lay against the wall (ribs for the vault were revealed in Trench 2).



Plate 6 – Trench 3 after excavation showing the base of the vault shaft and keystone of the vault, looking south

Finds from this trench included fragments of painted window glass, brick and tile fragments and a fragment of bone that exhibited a degree of polishing. The finds were re-buried within the trench.

Trench 4

A trench was excavated over the north wall of the refectory measuring 5.35m by 1m wide. The north wall of the refectory was exposed, along with the base of the bench and a socketed stone that supported the trestle table. There was a further step down to the floor well, though no surfaces were identified during the work. Within the cloister alley, the edge of the original excavation trench was found approximately 0.45m to the north of the refectory wall, suggesting Laing was excavating along the lines of walls within the cloister area.

Pottery and painted window glass were found within the trench and subsequently re-buried.



Plate 7 – Trench 4 looking north. The north wall of the refectory is visible at the back with the bench to the front. The stone support for the trestle table lies left of the scale

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Jews' Court Trust for commissioning the fieldwork and report compilation. The work was coordinated by Denise Drury who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Site work was undertaken by the author and Ross Kendall with volunteer assistance from Jane Doughty, Dave Start and Glyn Coppack. The site team would like to extend a warm thanks to Lynne Goforth and Barry Newlove for providing lunches. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

7. ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

The archive, comprising correspondence, plans and photographs, will be deposited at;

The Collection
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire
Danes Terrace
Lincoln
LN2 1LP

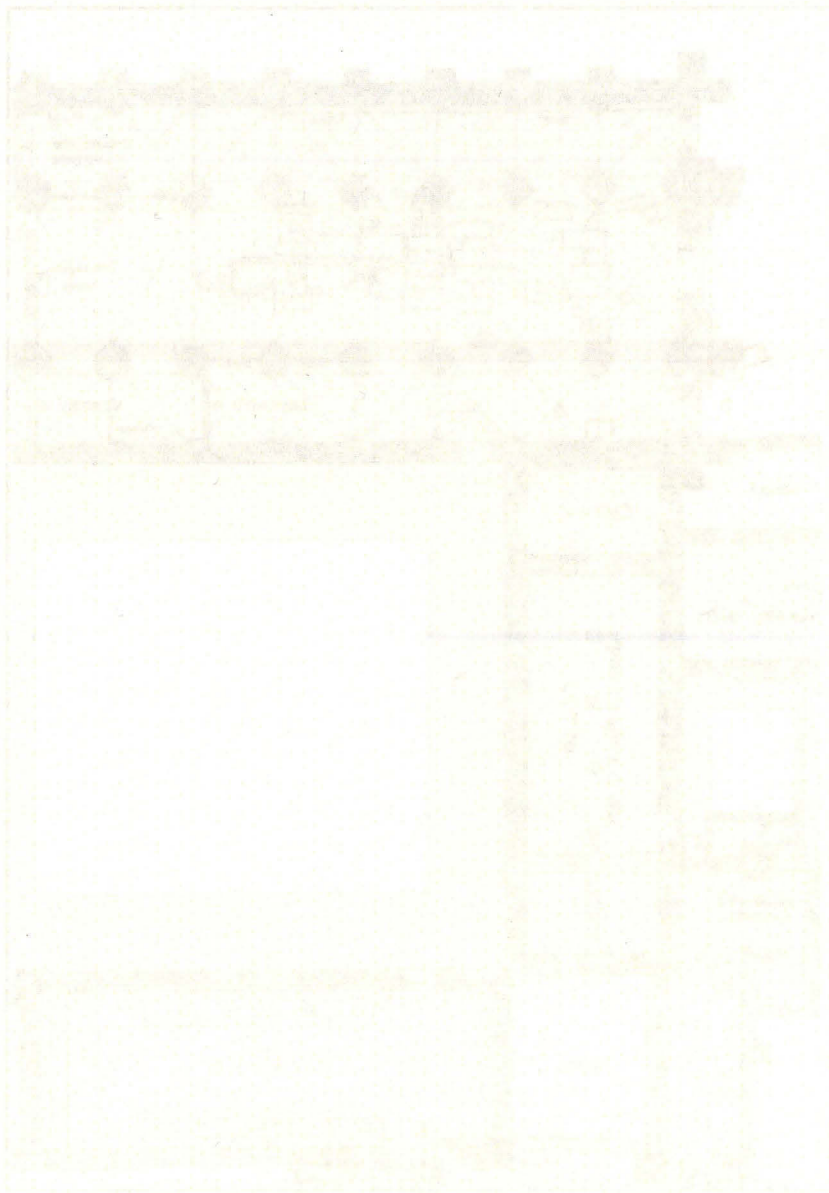
Accession No: LCNCC: 2009.189

A copy of all data will also be provided to The Jews' Court Trust

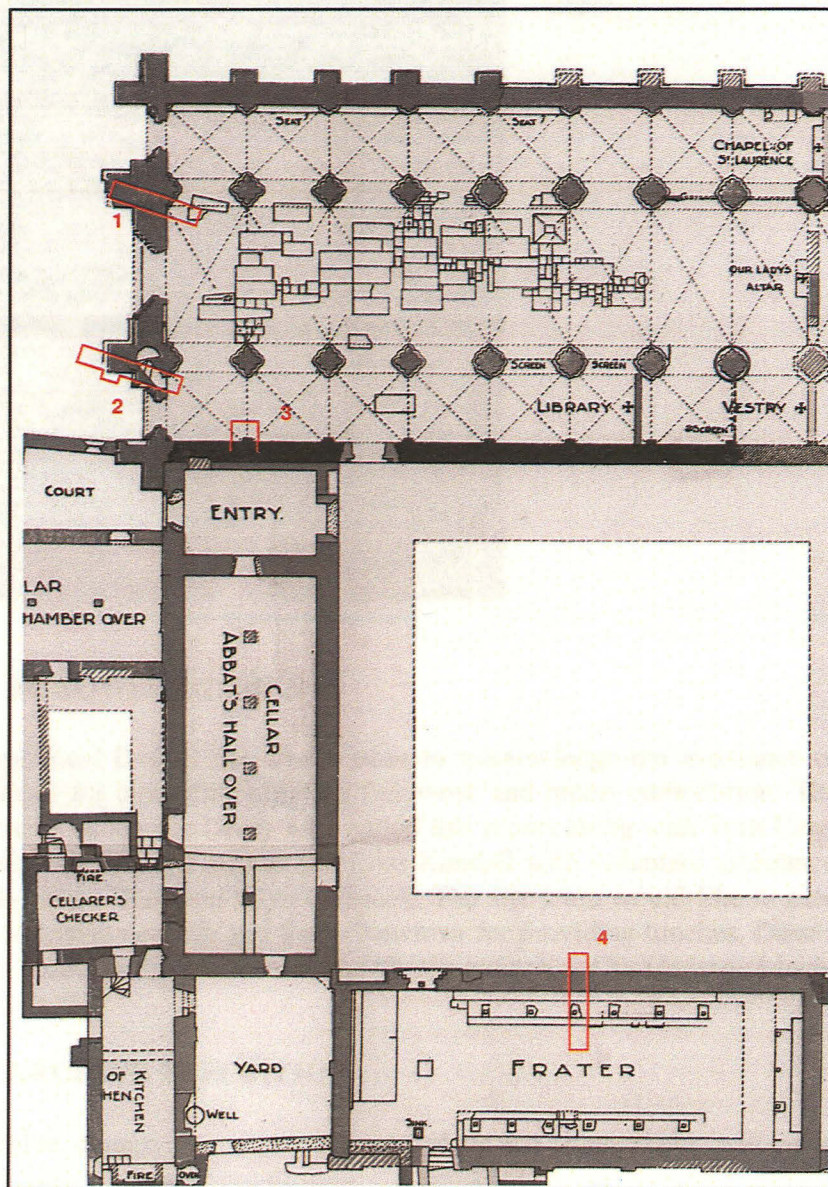
8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brakspear, H, 1922 'Bardney Abbey' *The Archaeological Journal* **LXXIX**

White, AJ, 1978 'Bardney' *East Midlands Archaeological Bulletin* **12**



Archaeological Project Services
Project Name: Bardney Abbey Excavation
Date: 1/10/2007 Drawn by: FCF Report No: 102/07



Based on Brakspear's plan (1922)

0 20m



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Bardney Abbey BASM09

Scale 1:400 Drawn by: PCF Report No: 122/09

Figure 1 - Trench location plan