
Archaeological investigations at the Old Schools, University of Cambridge

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The Old Schools of the University of Cambridge, which houses its central administrative offices, stands prominently in the heart of the historic town core (TL 4474 5846; Fig. 1). Today the building complex is of double-quadrangular form: the original, *Cobble Court* (with which this paper is concerned) and, in the west, *Old Court*, originally part of King's College until its ownership was transferred in the mid-nineteenth century.

The irregular layout of Schools' constituent components reflects its piecemeal development, spanning the fourteenth to the early twentieth centuries (Fig. 1). The architectural history of its original Cobble Court core was detailed (and 'problematised') through a conversion-related recording programme conducted in 1995. With its results, and an appraisal of relevant source-material, fully published in *The Antiquaries Journal* in 1999 (Evans and Pollard 1999), for our immediate purposes only its key themes need concern us at this time. The first, relates to the counter-clockwise progression of its construction, starting in c. 1370 with the construction of the Divinity School in the north and which arguably first stood as an independent hall. Thereafter, construction of its other three ranges continued over the next century and was only completed with its eastern front – as depicted on the Loggan print of 1668 (Fig. 1) – in c. 1480. Following prevailing later Medieval courtyard-type spatial models, the Schools were effectively hidden behind the domestic properties fronting onto King's Parade (Fig. 1). This only changed in the mid-eighteenth century with the construction of Wright's neo-classical façade. Appreciation of its grand public face required an appropriate 'display space' and led to the demolition of the street-front properties to provide a suitable lawn-vista; the long process of the University's architectural/institutional 'realisation' and the establishment of its readily visible core facilities being the other main theme of the 1999 paper.

A decade on, in June and July of 2009, the proposed installation of a new lift-shaft in the northeast corner of the former Divinity School-range resulted in the excavation, by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU), of a c. 2 x 2.70m trench (Figs. 1 and 2; Newman 2009). Not only did this allow for the investigation of its original east-front foundations, but also pro-

vided a 1.40 x 2.70m exposure of the Medieval strata of the properties preceding it. This, accordingly, adds an earlier strand to this remarkable building's town/gown-interaction 'story'

Excavation Results

Second terrace river gravels were encountered at 7.45m OD; overlain by friable pale brown sandy silt subsoil horizon ([059]; 0.28m thick; Figs. 2 and 3), its excavation yielded a single abraded sherd of Roman greyware. Six further sherds of Roman pottery (including two samian), plus a fragment of *opus signinum* mortar, also occurred residually within subsequent-phase features. No cut features of Roman date were identified, however, implying that the material was probably introduced through manuring associated with arable cultivation.

Above this horizon, three phases of activity were distinguished, with the first two being the most significant:

- 1) Domestic settlement activity (eleventh century to c. 1370)
- 2) The establishment of the University's Divinity School (c. 1370)
- 3) Post-Medieval/Modern alterations to the Divinity School (1754 to the present).

Note that for our immediate purposes, full specialist reports will only be presented for selected finds categories and economic data from the first phase, with other material only fully described and discussed within the site's archives.

Domestic Settlement (Phase 1)

Settlement commenced within the immediate site-area some time during the eleventh century, when a timber-framed structure was erected. The building remains were represented by beam-slot F.15 and banded floor layers [062] (Figs. 2 and 3); eleventh century pottery was recovered from an ash- and charcoal-rich trample deposit that had accumulated above one of its compacted clay floor surfaces. Yet, despite having

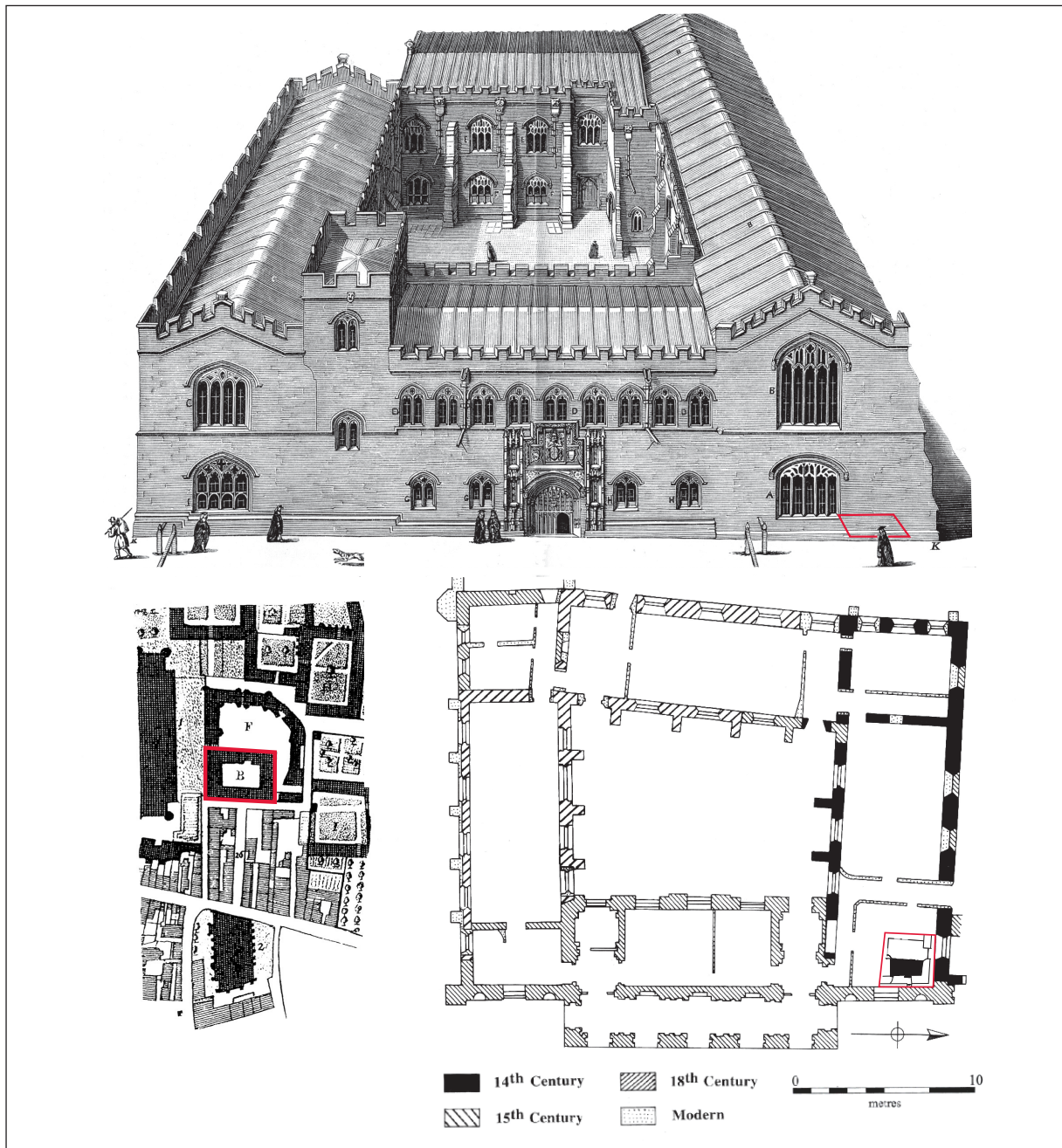


Figure 1. The Old Schools, with Loggan's 1668 print above and map, lower left (with Schools complex red-outlined; '2' indicates Great St Mary's); lower right, Royal Commission's 1959 plan showing the complex's construction phases and with the 2009 area of excavation indicated in red (as it is also been projected upon the façade of the print-view above).

had its floor re-laid at least twice, the use of the structure appears to have been relatively short-lived (suggesting that it may have played only an ancillary role within the initial property plot).

A series of refuse pits were subsequently inserted to the north of the building, one of the earliest of which, F.14, truncated the then robbed-out and backfilled beam-slot. This feature contained twelfth century pottery, along with a dog burial. Further pits were then created, including (in broad stratigraphic order) F.13, F.12, F.11 and F.10. Of these, F.12 and F.11

are of particular interest. The former was vertically-sided and, judging by the profile of its fills, appears originally to have been revetted (most probably with wattle). Unfortunately, it could not be bottomed due to its proximity to the foundation of the standing structure within which the excavation took place; however, from the excavated sample it can be seen that it is very likely to have comprised a well or cess-pit. The feature was deliberately backfilled during the twelfth century with deposits of domestic waste, which included a large quantity of charred cereal re-

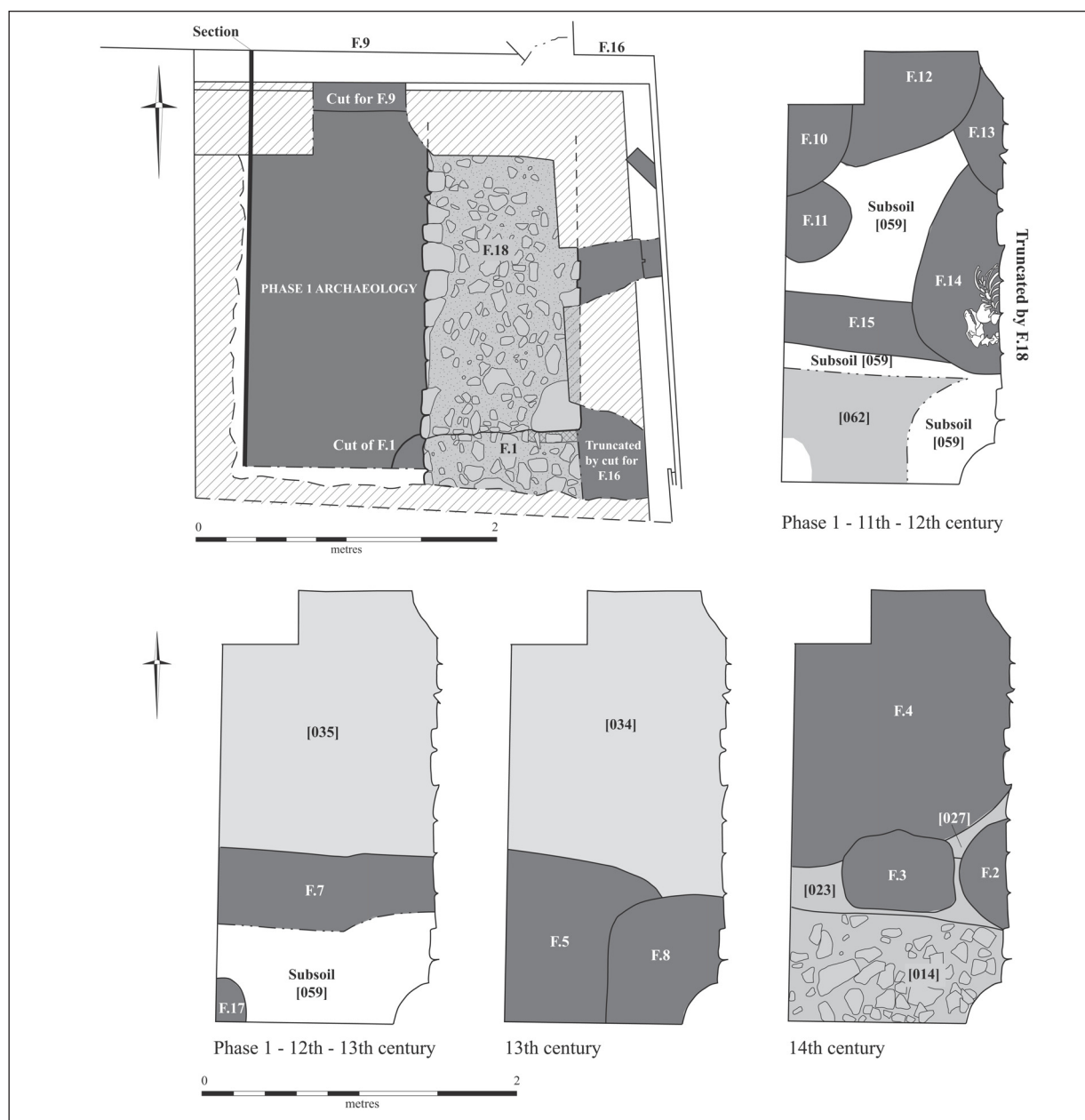


Figure 2. The 2009 Lift-shaft Excavations: Upper left, total area of investigation and, otherwise, the eleventh–fourteenth century Phase 1 sequence as it survived west of the main, F.18 foundation.

mains, along with the bones of cattle, fish, rabbit and frog/toad. F.11, in contrast, was much smaller in size, but contained a near-complete St Neots-type ware jar. It is, thus, clear that domestic occupation remained ongoing throughout this period.

Towards the close of the twelfth century, the area became sealed beneath layer [035]. This most probably represents a short-lived phase of backyard horticultural activity, although it may alternatively have originated as the upcast material generated by the digging of a series of pits located beyond the boundary of the investigation. During the thirteenth century, the layer became sealed, in turn, beneath a second timber-framed structure. Notably, this building – which

is represented archaeologically by beam-slot F.7 and posthole F.17 – precisely re-establishes the location of the former eleventh century structure, thus implying a direct continuity of layout in the property. Few remains of the succeeding structure survived, however, due to the extent of later pitting. By the end of the thirteenth century, the replacement building had itself been abandoned. It was subsequently overlain by [034], a layer which represents a second phase of up-cast/cultivation activity.

In the late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, two pits (F.5 and F.8), both containing domestic refuse, were inserted into the area of the former building, thereby removing all trace of any associ-

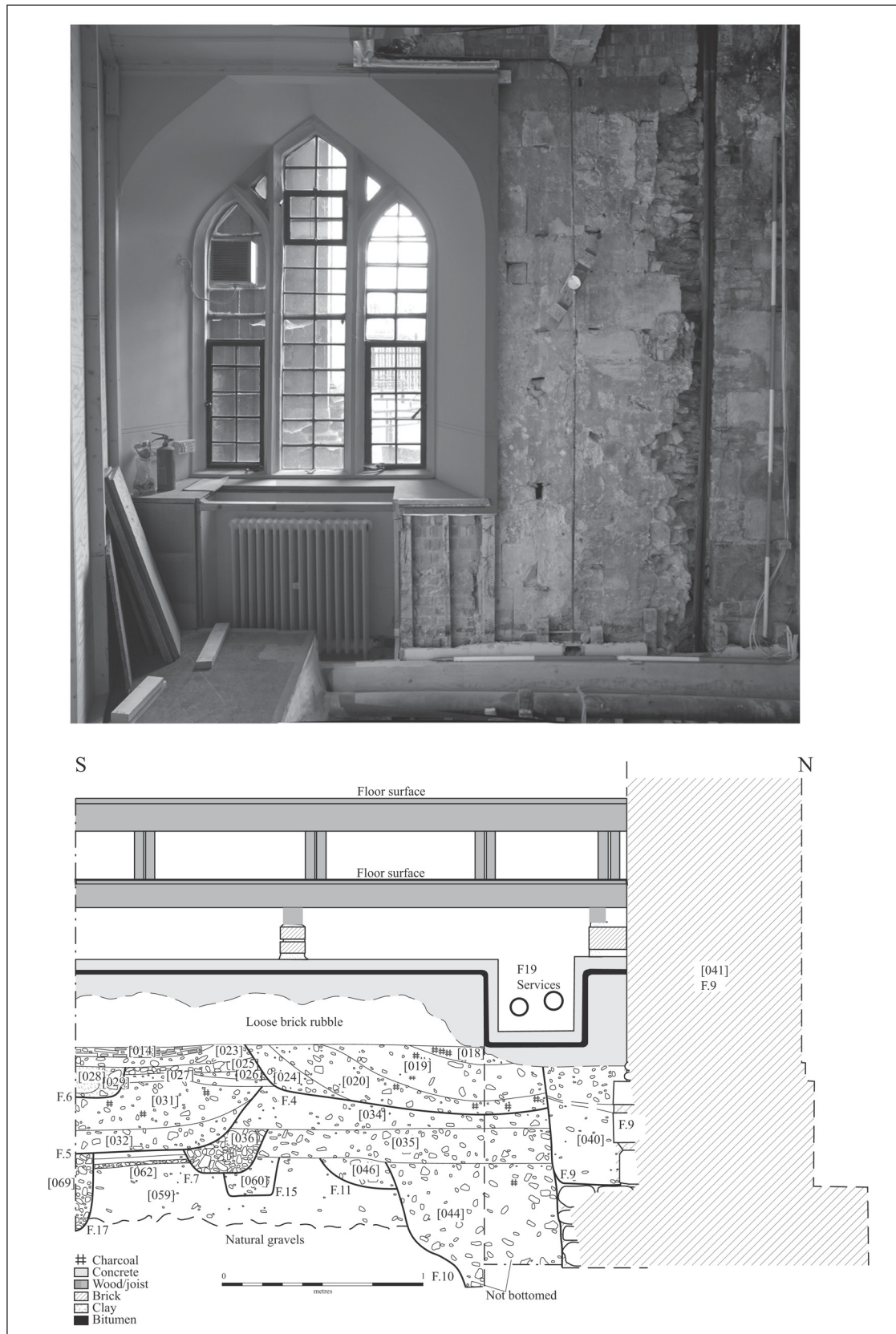


Figure 3. Top, photograph showing the north wall (F.9; note, rebuild-line marking the insertion of the eighteenth century façade wall, left; photograph D Webb) and, below, main east-facing section (see Fig. 2 for location).

ated floor surfaces. These were subsequently overlain by trample/foundation layers [027] and [026], which were themselves sealed beneath a metalled surface ([025]). A small posthole, F.6, also appears to have been associated with this activity. Given the nature of these deposits, it is unlikely that they represent the re-establishment of a third successive structure in this location, although it is notable that they appear to have respected very closely the northern limit of their precursors' extent (suggesting that elements of the earlier structure still survived as an otherwise undemarcated boundary). Instead, they are much more likely to have been associated with an external yard surface or working area. At around the same time that this area was being established, during the early to mid-fourteenth century, an additional rubbish pit – F.4 – was also inserted a little way to the north.

The final episode of activity undertaken during this phase, which occurred in the mid to late fourteenth century, was markedly different to those that had preceded it. Although it was comprised of feature-types that had occurred frequently in earlier centuries – including postholes F.2 and F.3, and layers [023] and [014] – in this particular case the features were either composed of, or had been backfilled with, large quantities of demolition debris (including flat-laid Collyweston roof tile fragments and quantities of render/plaster). Two possible explanations for this exist. On the one hand, the features may have been associated with the demolition of a nearby structure, one which, given the nature of the material involved, would have been relatively large and prestigious; on the other, they may alternatively have been associated with initial construction of such a structure, and been discarded during the building process. In either case, their creation appears to have been directly associated with the structure which was subsequently constructed on the site during Phase 2.

Material Culture

In addition to the pottery presented below, also recovered was a pierced, rectangular copper alloy sheet (from [035]), possibly either a furniture/box- or belt-mount, and 14 iron fragments (94g). The majority of the latter was associated with the mid to late fourteenth century demolition horizon, but also included five nails that had been pressed into the surface of early fourteenth century layer [025].

Clearly deriving from a single source, 30 fragments of render/plaster (297g) were recovered from the backfilled post-pipes of contemporary mid to late fourteenth century postholes F.2 and F.3 and trample/foundation layer [023]. Five fragments of ceramic building material (143g) were also recovered from mid to late fourteenth century post-

hole F.3. These consisted of a green-glazed ridge tile of Ely manufacture, three unglazed tile pieces and a brick fragment; the latter is perhaps the most unusual in a fourteenth century context, as brick was an expensive and relatively prestigious building material at this time.

Of the worked stone, pieces from a single limestone mortar were recovered from the mid-late fourteenth century layer, [014], with a fragment of lava quern also coming from the thirteenth century layer [034]. The mid-late fourteenth century layers, [023] and [014], were almost entirely composed of flat-laid Collyweston roof tiles. Of the 137 fragments retrieved, 11 had peg-holes; no complete tiles were present.

Pottery

Richard Newman and David Hall

Excluding residual Roman material, a total of 286 sherds of pottery, weighing 5209g, were recovered from Phase 1 deposits; this assemblage has been subdivided on a chronological basis. In total, 96 sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery (3359g) were recovered. The material is exclusively comprised of the three fabrics – St Neots-, Thetford-type and Stamford Wares – that are found ubiquitously on sites of this period throughout southern Cambridgeshire (see Table 1).

As is typical across the region, St Neots-type Ware is the most common fabric by count (62.5%), Thetford-type Ware is a substantial component of the assemblage (34.4%) and Stamford Ware is only a minor element (3.1%). Somewhat unusually, St Neots-type Ware is also the most frequent fabric by weight (75.9%). If, however, the presence of near complete St Neots-type Ware jar from F.11 (Fig. 5.1) is discounted (removing 1690g), this disparity is less apparent (with St Neots-type Ware comprising 52% and Thetford-type Ware 46% of the total). The earliest diagnostic material to be recovered consists of fragments of a small St Neots-type Ware jar and an open bowl that are tenth, or more probably eleventh, century in date and were recovered from floor layer [062] (Figs. 4 and 5.2). Several sherds of Thetford-type Ware also bore rouletted decoration, which is generally indicative of a tenth or eleventh century origin (P. Blinkhorn pers. comm.), although this is a less reliable indicator of date than vessel-form.

In total, 115 sherds of thirteenth–fourteenth century pottery (1.79kg) were recovered. In terms of composition, the material consists of the usual range of coarsewares, finewares and material that is intermediate between the two (see Table 2, below). Much the most common of these categories were the coarsewares (74.8% of the assemblage by count and 74.4% by weight), whilst the finewares were less common (16.5% by count; 17%, weight) and the intermediate wares relatively infrequent (8.7% by count; 8.6%, weight). The range of fabrics identified is typical of those present at other contemporary sites in Cambridge (Edwards and Hall 1997; Cessford and Hall 2007; Newman and Hall 2008) and southern Cambridgeshire generally (e.g. Cessford *et al.* 2006). The Medieval coarsewares consisted of utilitarian brown, buff, grey, pink, and red fabrics, often containing large grit inclusions. By far the most common of these was grey coarseware,

Table 1. Saxo-Norman pottery from the Old Schools Site by ware (MSW = mean sherd weight).

Ware	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	Date range	Source
St Neots-type	60	2551	42.5	9th–12th century	Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire
Stamford	3	41	13.7	10th–12th century	Stamford
Thetford-type	33	767	23.2	9th–12th century	Across East Anglia
Total	96	3359	35.0		

which accounts for 60% of the coarseware assemblage by count and 63.9% by weight. A number of sherds of intermediate Medieval Ely Ware were also present, including a fragmentary lamp base recovered from a late thirteenth or early fourteenth century pit (F.5; Fig. 5.5); fragments derived from a Grimston Ware face-jug, including its handle, were also present in the same feature (Fig. 5.3).

Perhaps the most notable aspect of the Medieval fineware assemblage, however, is the presence of Siegburg stoneware and Essex Redware sherds in sealed contexts which stratigraphically predate the construction of the Phase 2 structure in c. 1370. Although the former fabric has previously been recorded in fourteenth century archaeological deposits in London (Gaimster 1997, 84), this evidence provides solid confirmation of its importation into Cambridge at least a century earlier than has previously been identified. Similarly, whilst Essex Redware has been identified in contexts provisionally dated to the fourteenth century at Grand Arcade (Cessford 2007), the new finding provides a *terminus ante quem* that securely corroborates this result. This again accords with the earliest date that this particular fabric is known to have been imported into London (Pearce *et al.* 1982). The presence of Siegburg stoneware and Essex Redware in fourteenth century contexts at the Old Schools Site, therefore, suggests that a relatively high status-pattern of consumption occurred during the latter part of Phase 2.

Economic Data

In addition to the contributions that follow, 33 oyster shell fragments (264g) were recovered. Although these derived from 13 separate contexts, none of the deposits contained more than six individual items. This stands in contrast to other contemporary Cambridge sites, where groups of over 100 individuals have been regularly recorded. Also somewhat unusual is the fact that no mussel or cockle shells were identified.

Animal Bone

Vida Rajkovača

Of the 347 specimens in this site/phase sub-set, 118 (or 34%) were identified to family or species. Livestock make up more than all of the other species combined, with ovicaprids being much the most dominant (see Table 3). This dominance may possibly reflect the economic prevalence

of the Medieval wool industry in this part of East Anglia (Dobney *et al.* 1996). Both sheep and goat were positively identified based on several complete specimens. These are followed in frequency by cattle, pig and chicken and geese. Red deer are represented by the remains of loose teeth and phalanges which demonstrated the use of wild resources. (In addition, small quantities of fish, rabbit, unidentified small mammal and frog/toad were present in the environmental sample residues). Signs of butchery were observed on 48 bones (c. 14%), with the actions performed including carcass dismemberment and bone splitting for marrow removal. A number of ribs and vertebrae have also been chopped, possibly to separate left and right portions while the carcass was hung. In addition, ribs were cut to 'pot-sizes' in several instances, thus representing typical residues of domestic food waste. One cattle metacarpal was sawn, and this is likely to represent bone that was being prepared for working as the use of a saw is unusual in other contexts. Eleven ageable specimens were noted, which is insufficient to create kill-off profiles for each of the species; however, some suggestions could be made based on the data obtained. It seems that both cattle and pigs were killed around their first year and that sheep/goats were slaughtered much later, as evidenced by some specimens aged up to eight years. Some of the elements of the latter from fourteenth century contexts were noticeably smaller in size, which might imply malnutrition. Withers estimates derived for ovicaprids based on a complete calcaneum produced the height of 60cm, however, which is in the middle of the size range (Von den Driesch & Boessneck 1974, 329).

Perhaps of greatest individual note is the articulated dog skeleton recovered from F.14 (eleventh/twelfth century; Fig. 2). Obviously deliberately buried, all body parts were present with the exception of the hind limbs (femora, tibiae and metatarsals) that had been truncated by the foundation of a later building. Shoulder height estimates were derived from a complete humerus (following Harcourt 1974, 154) and provides a height of around 61cm (24 inches). Harcourt cites the height range for Anglo-Saxon dogs as being c. 9–28 inches (*ibid.* 171, table 14), and based on that, this specimen could be considered to be towards the top end of the size range.

In addition, a fragment of a tibio-tarsus belonging to the Accipitrinae (hawk/eagle family) was recovered from F.5 (thirteenth/fourteenth century). Judging by its size, this specimen is likely to represent the remains of a hawk, such

Table 2. Medieval pottery from the Old Schools Site by Ware (MSW = mean sherd weight).

Ware	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)	Date range	Source
Brill	3	126	42	13th–15th century, with a 13th century floruit	Buckinghamshire
Coarsewares	86	1331	15.5	13th–15th century	Cambridgeshire
Ely Ware	9	150	16.7	12th–15th century	Cambridgeshire
Ely-Grimston	1	4	4	13–15th century	Cambridgeshire
Essex Redware	5	36	7.2	Late 13th–15th century, with a 15th century floruit	Essex
Grimston	5	83	16.6	12th–15th century, with a 14th century floruit	Norfolk
Hertfordshire Fineware	1	12	12	13th–15th century	Hertfordshire
Lyveden/Stanion	1	16	16	13th–14th century, with a 13th century floruit	Northamptonshire
Siegburg	1	6	6	14th–15th century	Germany
Surrey Borders	3	26	8.7	14th–15th century, with a 14th century floruit	Surrey
Total	115	1790	15.6		

Taxon	NISP	%NISP	MNI
Ovicaprids	52	44.1	4
Sheep	4	3.4	1
Goat	2	1.7	1
Cow	28	23.7	2
Pig	14	11.9	2
Chicken	6	5.1	1
Domestic goose	2	1.7	1
Horse	2	1.7	1
Dog	2	1.7	2
Red deer	4	3.4	1
Deer (sp.)	1	0.8	1
Accipitrinae (Hawk family)	1	0.8	1
Identified to family/ species	118	100	.
Cattle-sized	62	.	.
Sheep-sized	125	.	.
Rodent-sized	1	.	.
Mammal n.f.i.	23	.	.
Bird n.f.i.	15	.	.
Fish n.f.i.	3	.	.
Total	347	.	.

Table 3. Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) for all species. The abbreviation n.f.i. denotes that a specimen could not be further identified.

as a sparrowhawk, rather than an eagle. Birds of prey such as this are not uncommon finds on Medieval urban sites.

Environmental Remains

Anne de Vareilles

Two eleventh/twelfth century-feature soil samples were chosen for analysis. These were processed using an Ankara-type flotation machine, with 300µm aperture meshes for collecting the flots and a 1mm mesh for the heavy residues.

All plant macro remains were preserved through carbonisation. The sample from pit F.12, was very rich in cereal grains, which, though quite heavily burnt, retained enough of their form to be identifiable to species. There was less organic material in the sample derived from pit F.11, but it was also more heavily burnt, with quite a few bits of amorphous parenchyma that are probably fragments of grains. Very few intrusive modern rootlets were found and blind burrowing snails only occurred sporadically in F.11.

Both pits both had a similar composition of plant remains, although these occurred in much higher quantities in F.12. The latter contained over 230 barley (*Hordeum vulgare* sl.), 75 oat (*Avena* sp.) and 57 wheat (*Triticum aestivum* sl. and *Triticum* sp.) grains. Oat chaff was absent and so the caryopses could not be distinguished into wild or cultivated types. Nevertheless, it is likely they were intentionally grown as oats were a common crop by this period (Greig 1991). Compared to the number of cereal grains the samples had few wild plant seeds, mainly arable weeds as well as some fragments of hazel nut shell (*Corylus avellana*). Field gromwell (*Lithospermum arvense*), appearing as one seed in F.12, is a loam indicator (Hanf 1983) and suggests that one of these crops (if not all) was grown on good agricultural soil. In conclusion, samples as rich in hulled barley as the one from F.12 are uncommon in twelfth century Cambridge. The absence of chaff and the relatively low numbers of wild plant seeds are intriguing, as one would expect high concentrations of such items if the assemblage represented ani-

mal feed or cereal processing waste. The remains therefore appear to represent burnt, partially processed stored crops; this was clearly introduced into the features as domestic refuse.

The Divinity School (Phase 2)

Obviously associated with the late fourteenth century Divinity School, large wall foundations were exposed, with three distinct builds identified. The earliest was the standing east-west aligned wall F.9 (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). Its foundation was composed of seven courses of lime-mortared clunch fragments, averaging 0.25m by 0.12m in size. The three uppermost courses comprised well-worked rectangular blocks, whilst the lower four had been incorporated into a 0.43m deep step that projected out 0.3m from the wall's face. Above the clunch were at least two courses of rough Barnack limestone, which appear to have been used to retain a mortared clunch core. The foundation was approximately 1m deep and 1m wide, expanding to 1.6m wide at its base. Two principal reasons may exist to explain its step. Firstly, F.9 supported a main load-bearing wall and secondly, in this location it directly overlay the Phase 1 wicker-lined pit/well, F.12, and it may, therefore, have been felt that it required additional support.

Feature 9 had been abutted by a partially truncated, north-south foundation, F.18, which was composed of identical materials (Figs. 2, 3 and 4). Between five and seven courses of lime-mortared clunch were present, surmounted by two courses of Barnack limestone. F.18 was 0.98m+ deep by 1.05m wide (without a step) and

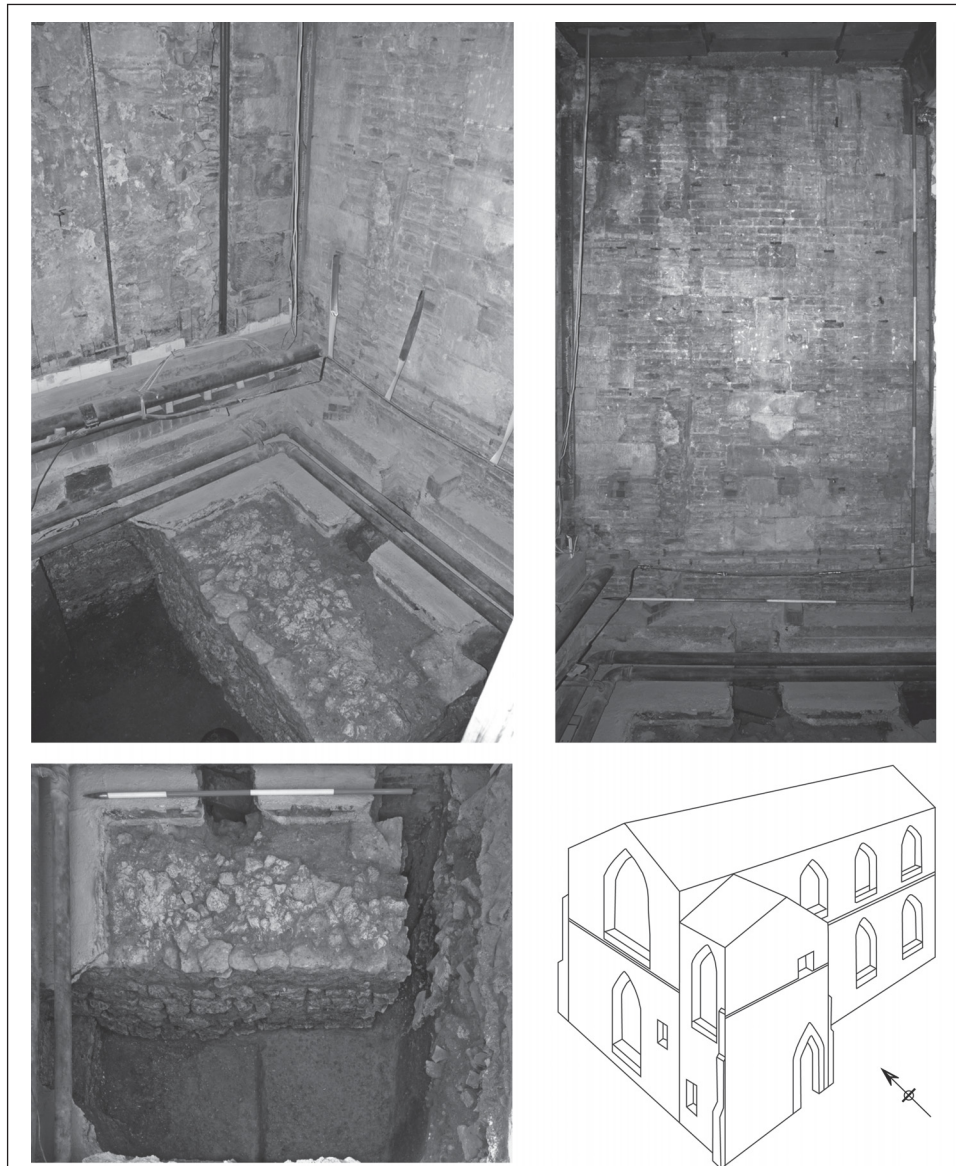


Figure 4. Upper left, showing northeast corner junction of original F.9 north wall and eighteenth century façade (see also upper right for the latter) with detail of F.18 foundation; lower left, detail of F.18 foundation; lower right, isometric reconstruction of the fourteenth century Divinity School as a free-standing hall (C Begg; photographs by D Webb).

2.32m long; as with all of the foundations that comprised this phase, it had clearly been trench-built.

F.18 had, in turn, had been abutted by F.1 (the latter extending F.18's north-south axis further to the south; Fig. 2). With a depth of 0.99m+ and 1.17m+ wide (its length could not be determined as it was only partially present within the trench), although this latter foundation was also composed of at least four courses of clunch blocks: the lower two were divided by trampled horizons of dark greyish brown silt, whilst the upper two were bonded with sandy yellow mortar.

The most significant difference between the various builds was the presence of a lower step in F.9, which was not replicated in either F.18 or F.1. In addition, although F.9 and F.18 were built in a similar fashion and utilised near identical materials, F.1 was

notably much more crude in construction, its lower courses not even having been bonded with mortar.

The phase's remains were all directly associated with the standing building and, for reasons of structural stability, were not excavated but left in situ. A small slot was, however, inserted into F.1 in order to gain access to the foundation of the eighteenth century façade (see further Phase 3). A quantity of moulded clunch blocks was encountered. The majority were roughly shaped blocks and had been only very crudely trimmed. At least four finished blocks were also employed. These were more finely squared and varied between by 0.22m by 0.48m in length, although no clear tool marks were visible. Notably, at least one face on each of these bore traces of weathering, indicating that they may previously have been

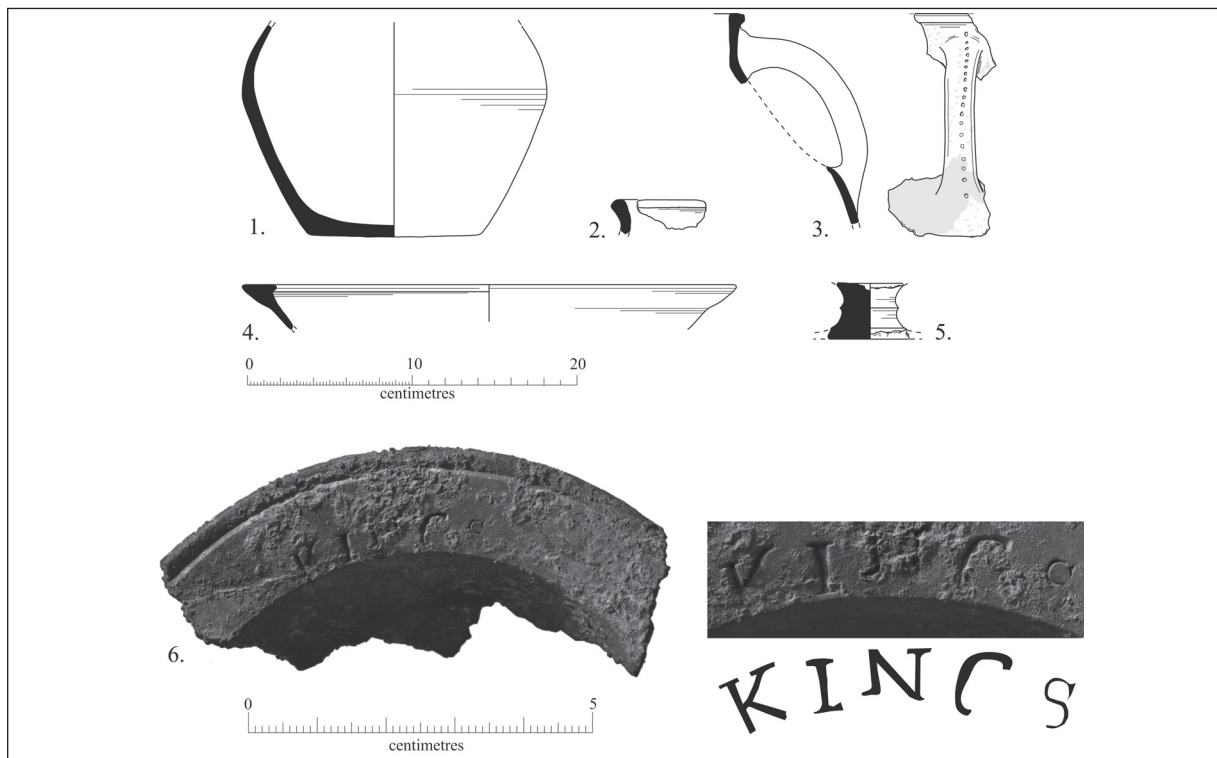


Figure 5. Selected Artefacts. 1) St Neots-type Ware jar (F.11, [46]); 2) Small St Neots-type Ware jar ([062]); 3) handle from Grimston Ware face-jug (F.5, [31]); 4) St Neots-type Ware open bowl ([62]); 5) Ely Ware lamp base (F.5, [31]); 6) Pewter vessel rim-section stamped with 'KINGS' (with close-up, left).

incorporated into the wall of an above-ground structure such as that which was potentially demolished at the end of Phase 1 (although it is also possible that they may simply have been abandoned on site for several years prior to their incorporation into the foundation). Note, although a number of well-finished clunch blocks had also been incorporated into foundation F.9, these could not be investigated as they remained bonded into the extant fabric.

Building Alterations (Phase 3)

This phase solely consisted of significant alterations made to the fabric of the standing building; two such episodes have been identified, both of which took place within the last three centuries. The first of these, which consisted of the addition of a neoclassical façade to the eastern frontage of the Old Schools complex, is represented archaeologically by wall F.16 (Figs. 2 and 4). This was composed of handmade unfrogged red bricks bonded with white lime mortar and interspersed with vertical courses of squared ashlar blocks. Its foundation, which could not be bottomed, extends down at least 1.7m (or 2.53m below the present floor-height) and consists of roughly coursed red bricks. The foundation trench was back-filled with a deposit of loose mid-greyish brown silty sand, which contained frequent fragments of ceramic building material, mortar and domestic refuse.

This eastern façade-wall was appended during the mid-eighteenth century, at which time the original eastern wall of the Divinity School (which included Phase 2 foundations, F.18 and F.1) was demolished to below floor-height in order to allow the new frontage to extend at right angles to the eighteenth century Senate House to the east.

The second major alteration took place during the early twentieth century. At this time, the building was extensively remodelled and new service pipes were inserted (F.19); a timber floor was also constructed. Later in the century, a second floor was added, resting directly upon its predecessor (see Fig. 3).

Relatively little archaeological material was recovered from Phase 3 deposits. With the exception of a stamped brick recovered from F.19 ('E.J. & J. PEARSON [Ltd?]/STOURBRIDGE'), this was exclusively recovered from mid-eighteenth century wall foundation F.16. Its included three sherds of utilitarian tin-glazed earthenware that appear to have been derived from a single chamber pot, a small rim sherd derived from a polychromatic tin-glazed earthenware bowl that may well be Netherlandish or Anglo-Netherlandish in origin (Crossley 1990, 259–60) and, finally, a base sherd derived from a green-glazed fine-ware vessel of unidentified origin. Three shards of glass from eighteenth century 'utility bottles', eight clay tobacco stem fragments (plus a heel fragment), four animal bones and some 30 oyster shell pieces were also recovered.

As reported upon by Andrew Hall, perhaps the most significant find from this phase was a rim-section of a lead alloy (pewter) vessel dating to the first half of the eighteenth century or possibly late seventeenth century (Fig. 5.6). This appears to be a fragment of a small bowl (c. 10cm dia.) with a flared rim, possibly a small condiment vessel; alternately, this could be the lid of a pint tankard, the latter made either in pewter or ceramic. The flange is indistinctly stamped with the word 'KI?Gs', in capitals with serifs, most likely 'KINGs'. Its attests to the fact that Cambridge's colleges would have had large services of utilitarian pewter wares, often engraved with the college arms or simply stamped in this manner.

Discussion

The probable Roman agricultural activity identified at the Old Schools Site corresponds closely with evidence from a number of other nearby excavations. A Roman-attributed ploughsoil was encountered during work within the Bateman Building, Gonville & Caius College, situated only a short distance to the northwest (Alexander 1995, 3–4) and, in residual status, Romano-British pottery was recovered during investigations conducted across King's College front lawn (Cessford in prep. b); further to the north, Late Roman quarries and a possible riverside hard-standing were found during excavations at St John's College (Dickens 1996, 6–10).

The site's Phase 1 domestic occupation was evidently established some time during the eleventh century, and this agrees closely with the general pattern of early settlement activity that is now beginning to emerge in Cambridge. So far, the earliest Medieval settlement evidence (mid–late tenth century date) identified south of the River Cam was encountered close to Bridge Street at the St John's Triangle Site (Newman 2008, 74–94). It has, however, long been noted that a series of eleventh century churches were scattered along the length of the Medieval High Street, latter-day King's Parade (Cam 1959, 123–32; Addyman & Biddle 1965, 94–6; Lobel 1975, 4). This routeway follows the spine of a gravel ridge flanking the course of the River Cam, and indicates the primary direction in which the newly emerging settlement was to expand.

Few documentary sources relating to the early history of the immediate Schools Site-area have survived. Despite this, it is known that much of the land immediately to the south was donated to the University by one Nigel de Thornton in 1278, when it was occupied by a number of messuages (dwellings). Unfortunately, it is not entirely clear whether these include the Schools' plot itself (Willis & Clark 1886, III, 7). Nevertheless, it is apparent that, in the late thirteenth century, much of the area was occupied by domestic tenants. During the early fourteenth century this pattern, however, began to change; by 1328, at least three schools were situated at the eastern end of North School Lane, although these do not necessarily

appear to have been associated with the University itself (*ibid.* 2). By 1349 the School of St Margaret had, moreover, been established immediately to the north, and it is likely that a number of additional schools also then existed in the vicinity (*ibid.*). These developments provide a context for the potential demolition of a relatively prestigious building at the Old Schools Site in the later fourteenth century, which may well have been stone-built, with stone roof tiles and fine quality plaster rendering. Other indicators of status present at the site at this time include imported German Siegburg Stoneware, which has not previously been identified in a fourteenth century context in Cambridge and, also, the relatively high percentage of red deer amongst its animal bones.

The acquisition of properties such as that at the Old Schools Site for the University, and the differential legal and economic treatments accorded to members of the 'gown', as opposed to the 'town', caused bitter local resentment. Indeed, during the late fourteenth century – only around a decade after construction of the Phase 2 building began – this was to receive its bloodiest expression: "the distinctive feature of the Cambridgeshire rising [part of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381] was the attitude of the rebels to the University of Cambridge ... This was not just anti-ecclesiastical resentment by the poorer inhabitants of Cambridge, but a general hatred of the University that united all, including the mayor" (Dunn 2004, 157). Over the course of a few days in June 1381 the chancellor, John Cavendish, was murdered and the properties of several senior members of the University hierarchy were destroyed; Corpus Christi College was ransacked, many of the University's archives were destroyed and the contents of the University Library were consigned to a bonfire in the market square (*ibid.* 158).

The Phase 2 foundations clearly formed part of the fabric of the Old Schools' northern Divinity School range. The building, which housed the faculty of theology from the end of the fourteenth century until 1879 (Willis & Clark 1886, III, 229), played a key role in the early history of the University. This significance is reflected in the incorporation of the Senate House (the University's official meeting chamber) into the Divinity School's upper storey, along with a small private chapel (Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England 1959 (RCHM[E]), I, 12). It comprised one of the most prestigious structures in the burgeoning town, a fact reflected in both the scale and the quality of its construction.

The 2009 investigation revealed that the process of its construction was not, however, seamless; instead, at least two (and probably three) successive phases of work were identified within its eastern wall-foundation. Whilst these could, of course, have occurred within a brief time-frame, representing seasons or perhaps even only different weeks of stop/start labour, historical accounts indicate that a more prolonged gestation and that its construction was, in fact, interrupted: hence why it took twenty years to complete (*ibid.* 11–18; Roach 1959, 312–21; Willis & Clark 1886, III, 1–14). As regards the wall's builds, one other

possibility needs, at least theoretically, to be entertained and that relates to potential alterations arising from the completion of the Schools' eastern range in c. 1480. While on the Loggan print no build-line is visible separating the end of the Divinity School range from the larger complex's eastern front (Fig. 1), which might imply extensive modification had occurred of the north range's end, the portrayed architectural detail rather indicates that the integrity of the Divinity School's fabric was largely maintained. It is, therefore, unlikely that its foundation would then have been subject to any significant rebuilding.

The first of the two episodes of major alterations that comprised Phase 3 was undertaken in 1754–58. Part of a wider programme of redevelopment (much never realised), the architect, Stephen Wright, designed a neoclassical façade for the Old Schools complex to complement Gibbs' earlier Senate House (Fig. 6; RCHM[E] 1959, I, 12). The latter, which had been

completed in 1730, had, in part, been constructed to release space within the Divinity School itself, as the preceding Senate House situated on its first floor could then be adapted to hold books from the ever-expanding University Library (Roach 1959, 318–19). The remodelling that took place during the mid-eighteenth century was, however, extensive and it can also be seen as a physical manifestation of the growing confidence and display by the University at that time. Allied with the demolition of many of the domestic buildings that had formerly obscured the Old Schools from general view, they represent the institution's donning a well-ordered 'public face' (Evans and Pollard 1999, 235).

The second phase of major rebuilding work identified was undertaken in 1935, when the University Library was transferred to a new, purpose-built building (Roach 1959, 297; RCHM(E) 1959, I, 12). Following the move, the Old Schools complex (which had up



Figure 6. *The Institutional Façade; top, Wright's mid-eighteenth century Schools' face with Gibbs' new-build Senate House of 1730, right; below, looking down onto the Schools from atop King's College Chapel roof and showing Wright's neo-classical façade masking the Schools' Medieval fabric (photographs, C Evans).*

until then had been exclusively occupied by the library) was converted to house the University's administrative offices, with the upper floor of the Divinity School transformed into a Combination Room (*ibid.*). At this time the original floor surface(s) of the fourteenth century school were evidently destroyed. These are likely to have lain at c. 8.5–8.7m OD, as the surface height in the centre of Cobble Court, (which is unlikely to have risen significantly since the fifteenth century) lies at the latter level; this is markedly lower than the floor-height in the Schools' eighteenth century wing, c. 9.90m OD. Unfortunately, as part of the remodelling, the archaeological sequence within the area of excavation appears to have then been reduced to around 8.4m OD.

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