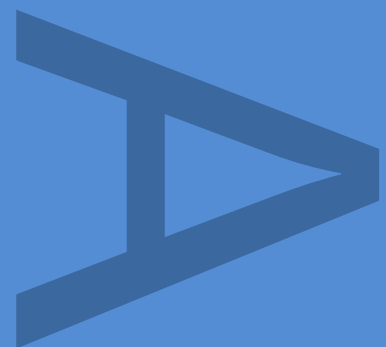


**Archaeological Monitoring at
Canonry House, Ely,
Cambridgeshire**

September 2014



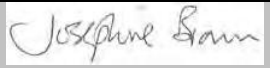
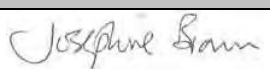
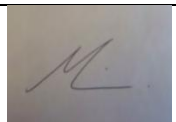
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

CANONRY HOUSE, ELY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd	
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Report Number	R 11836

	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Mary- Anne Slater		August 2014
Graphics Prepared by:	Josephine Brown		August 2014
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		August 2014
Project Manager Sign-off:	Mark Hinman		August 2014

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
The Granary
Rectory Farm
Brewery Road
Pampisford
Cambridgeshire
CB22 3EN

Archaeological Monitoring at Canonry House, Ely, Cambridgeshire

Local Planning Authority: N/A (ecclesiastical land administered by Dean and Chapter of Ely Cathedral)

Planning Reference: N/A

Central National Grid Reference: TL 541 801

Site Code: CECR14

Report No. R11836

Written and researched by: Mary-Anne Slater
Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project Manager: Mark Hinman

Commissioning Client: King's School, Ely

Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Central Office
The Granary
Rectory Farm
Brewery Road
Pampisford
Cambridgeshire
CB22 3EN

Tel: 01223 845522

E-mail: mhinman@pre-construct.com

Website: www.pre-construct.com

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August 2014

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ABSTRACT

This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on Canonry House drive, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 541 801) on 20th-21st August 2014. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by King's School, Ely in response to a condition attached to consent provided by Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England. The aim of the monitoring was to record any archaeology revealed by the ground works.

The monitoring identified a demolition layer and wall in the western end of the trench. This is located within the proposed line of the eastern range of Ely cloister and may relate to the demolition of this range following the dissolution of the monastery in AD 1539. The results of the fieldwork provide limited information regarding the monastic buildings of Ely Cathedral at the time of the Dissolution and can be characterised as being of local significance.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at Canonry House, Ely, Cambridgeshire, CB7 4DL (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 541 801) on 20th-21st August 2014 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The site is located in the south-eastern part of Ely Cathedral precinct, with the Cathedral to the north, fields to the east and south and existing buildings of the Cathedral complex to the west.
- 1.3 The archaeological work was commissioned by King's School, Ely in response to an archaeological condition attached to the excavation of a shallow trench for electricity cables to provide bollard-style lighting to the driveway of Canonry House.
- 1.4 The aim of the archaeological monitoring was to determine the location, date, extent, character, condition and quality of any archaeological remains on the site, to assess the significance of any such remains in a local, regional, or national context, as appropriate, and to assess the potential impact of the development proposals on the site's archaeology.
- 1.5 A 37m long, narrow trench was excavated and recorded on 20th August 2014, with four small, shallow spurs, c.0.4 to 0.6m long, excavated perpendicular to the trench on 21st August 2014. A post-medieval demolition layer and wall rubble were seen in the western end of the main trench, no archaeology was seen in the spur trenches as they did not go below the topsoil.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the monitoring. The site archive will be deposited at Ely Cathedral.

2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 The geology of the site is Woburn Sands Formation - Sandstone (British Geological Survey 2014; Website 1). In the trenches the natural geology was not reached.
- 2.2 The site is at an elevation of c. 25.8m above Ordnance Datum (OD), sloping down slightly to the west (Figure 1). Ely occupies the highest land in the fens and, before fen drainage, was an 'island' surrounded by low-lying wetlands. The cathedral complex occupies some of the highest ground of the island, with land falling away fairly sharply to the east towards the River Ouse.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The following material has been derived from the Archaeological Assessment of the Site (Dixon 2014), as well as from the report on recent archaeological excavation on the site of an extension to the Almonry Restaurant (Boyer and Woolhouse 2013).
- 3.2 A monastery was established in Ely by St Æthelthryth in AD 673. It was destroyed by the Danes in the late 9th century and re-founded as a Benedictine Abbey for men in c. 970. Following the creation of the Diocese of Ely, it became a cathedral in AD 1109, with construction work continuing throughout the 12th century. Developments within the main cathedral building and elsewhere in the precinct continued throughout the medieval period. The cathedral suffered minor damage during the Dissolution in AD 1539, but was re-founded in AD 1541 and further modifications and additions were made during the 17th to 19th centuries, with major restoration work being carried out towards the end of the 20th.
- 3.3 The alignment of the southern end of the eastern range of Ely Cloister is shown by a surviving fragment of the inner wall of the walkway outside the south entrance to the Cathedral. The southern end of the eastern range contained the dormitory at first floor level and the warming house, approximately to the side of the modern Canonry House. The range was demolished after the monastery was dissolved in AD 1539.
- 3.4 Excavations to the east of Canonry House in 1989-90 revealed no archaeological features down to a depth of c.0.45m.

4 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The archaeological monitoring observed the excavation of a shallow trench 37m long, 0.4 to 0.5m wide and 0.45 to 0.65m deep (Figure 2; Plates 2,5). Four small spurs perpendicular to the main trench, 0.4 to 0.6m long, 0.4m wide and 0.4m deep, were monitored.
- 4.2 Ground reduction was carried out under archaeological supervision using a 5-tonne tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.4m-wide bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in spits to a depth of 0.45 to 0.65m. Exposed surfaces were cleaned by trowel as appropriate and all further excavation was undertaken manually using hand tools.
- 4.3 Deposits or the removal of deposits judged by the excavating archaeologist to constitute individual events were each assigned a unique record number (often referred to within British archaeology as 'context numbers') and recorded on individual pre-printed forms (Taylor and Brown 2009). Archaeological processes recognised by the deposition of material are signified in this report by round brackets (thus), while events constituting the removal of deposits are referred to here as 'cuts' and signified by square brackets [thus]. The record numbers assigned to cuts and deposits are entirely arbitrary and in no way reflect the chronological order in which events took place. All features and deposits recorded during the evaluation are listed in Appendix 2. Artefacts recovered during excavation were assigned to the record number of the deposit from which they were retrieved.
- 4.4 Metal-detecting was carried out during the topsoil and subsoil stripping and throughout the excavation process. Archaeological features and spoil heaps were scanned by metal-detector.
- 4.5 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Post-Medieval Wall Rubble (102) (Figure 3; Plate 4)

- 5.1.1 The stone rubble remains of a wall (102), on a north-south alignment were seen in the western end of the main trench, measuring 0.5m+ long and 1.5m wide. The depth is unknown as it was below the impact level of the trenching. The stones were medium to large in size, mostly unworked but some showing signs of being worked and faced.

5.2 Post-Medieval Demolition Layer (101) (Figure 3; Plate 3)

- 5.2.1 Below the topsoil was a layer of light to mid greenish yellow clayey silt (101) 0.35 to 0.5m below ground level, with frequent stone fragments, tiles and chalk flecks. Measuring 6m+ long, 0.4m+ wide and 0.3m+ deep, this layer has been interpreted as the demolition or levelling layer associated with the dissolution of the monastery in AD 1539.

6 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Archaeological monitoring identified two phases of post-medieval activity on the site which appear to be related to the demolition of the eastern dormitory range of Ely cloister after the monastery was dissolved in AD 1539.
- 6.2 Layer (102) comprised a loose rubble wall, which has been interpreted as relating to the demolition of the eastern wall of the dormitory range in the 16th century.
- 6.3 Layer (101) overlay (102) and appears to be a demolition or levelling event which may be associated with the demolition and levelling of the ground following the closure of the monastic buildings in AD 1539.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Archaeological monitoring of works at Canonry House, Ely Cathedral revealed evidence for activity during the post-Medieval periods. The western area of site appears to be related to the eastern range of Ely's monastic buildings, which contained the dormitory and is believed to extend south from Ely Cathedral to Oyster Lane, just south of Canonry House.
- 7.2 The fieldwork has thus enhanced the understanding of the medieval layout of the monastic buildings of Ely Cathedral prior to their demolition following the dissolution of the monastery in AD 1539. The results are of local significance.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank King's Ely for commissioning the work. PCA are also grateful to Philip Dixon of Philip Dixon Associates for monitoring the work. James Lee machine-excavated the trenches. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by Josephine Brown of PCA's CAD Department.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

9.1 Printed Sources

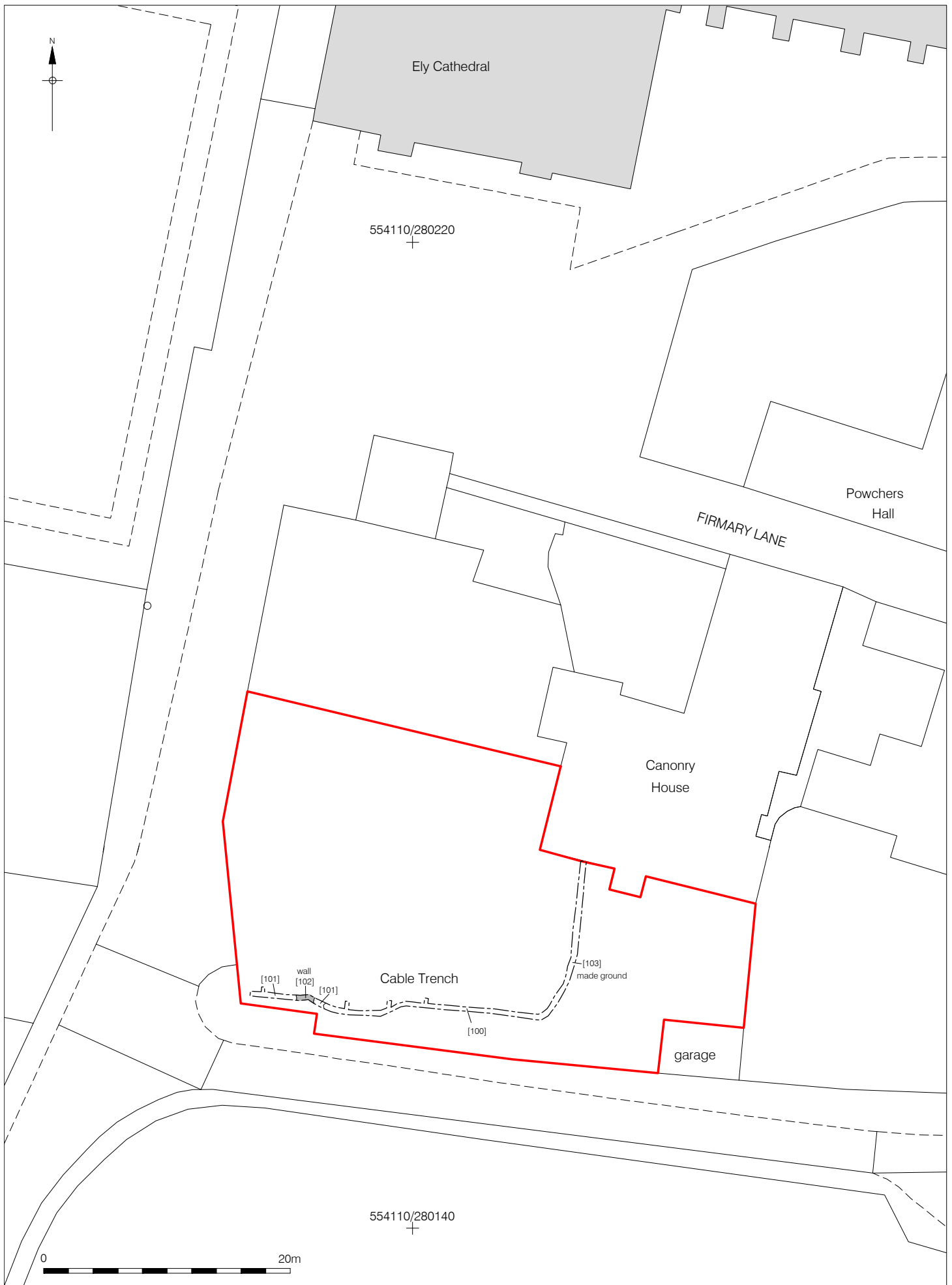
Boyer, P. and Woolhouse, T. 2013. Archaeological Excavation on the Site of the Almonry Restaurant Extension, Ely Cathedral, Cambridgeshire. (unpublished, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd)

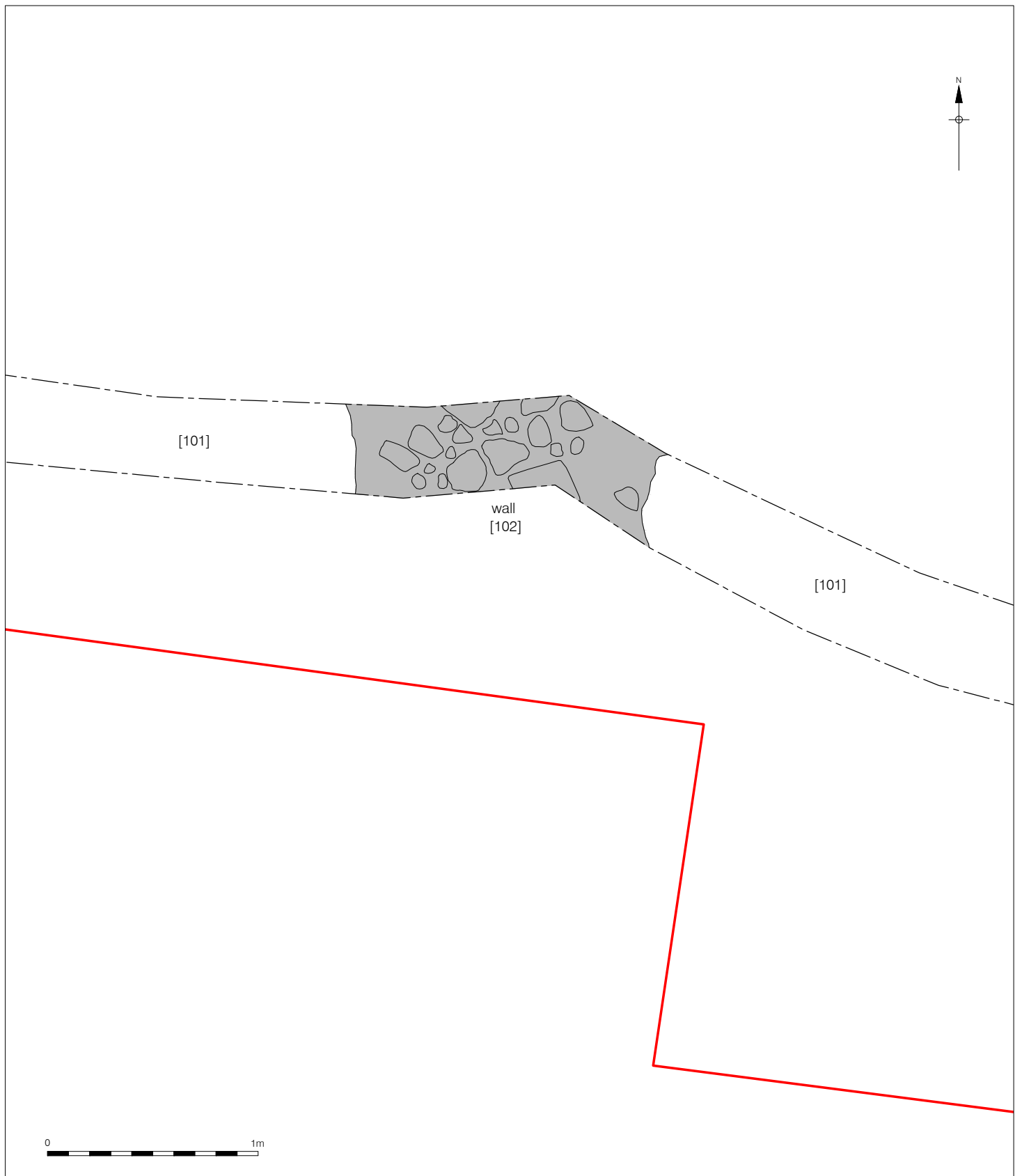
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1) British Geological Survey 2014 Geology of Britain Viewer
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?location=IP9%203DG>.
Date accessed 22nd August 2014

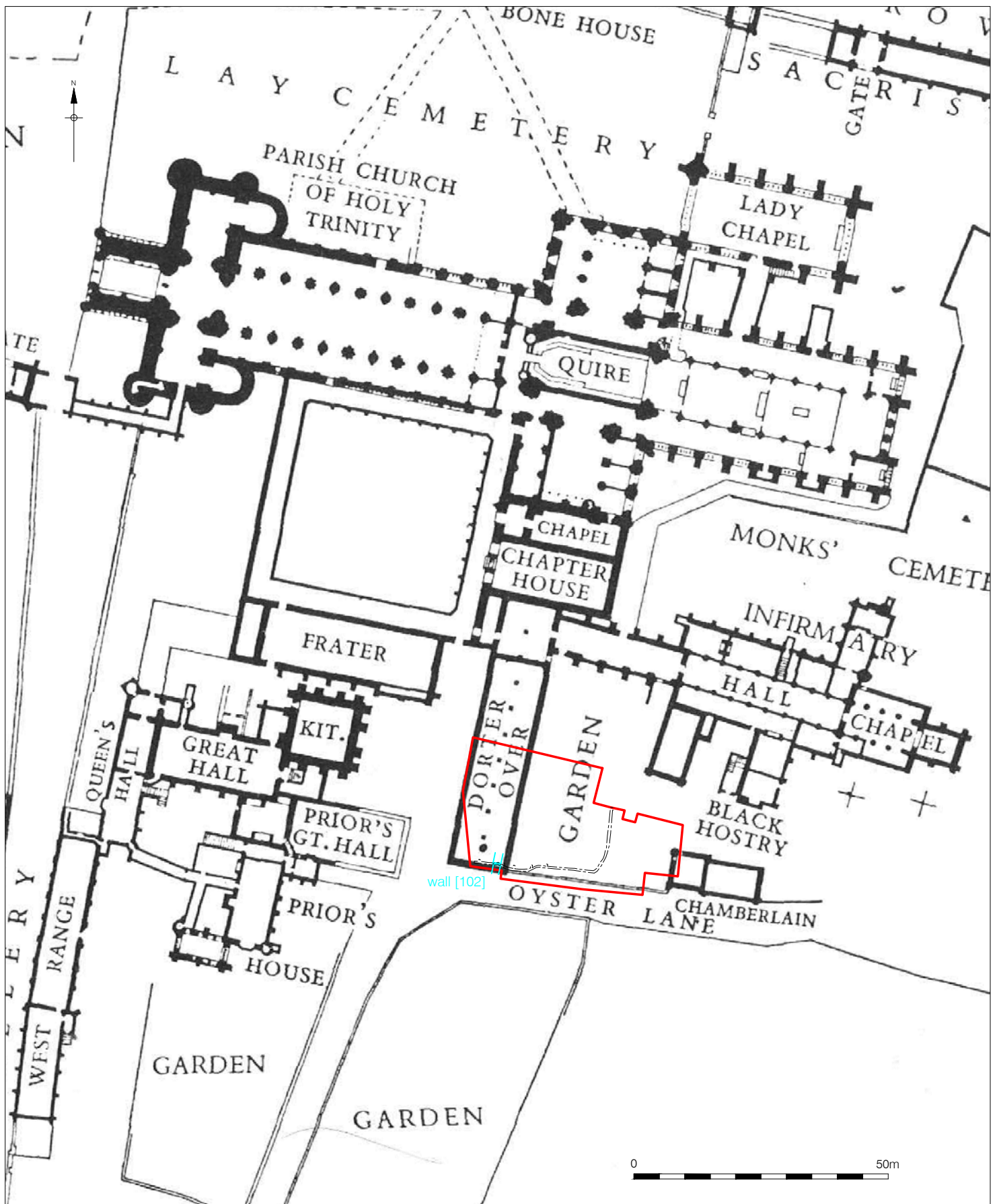






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Figure 3
Plan of demolition layer and wall
1:25 at A4



After T D Atkinson, VCH, taken from Maddison, 2000

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27/08/14 JB

Figure 4
Cable Trench and wall [102] overlaid on the Plan of the Cathedral Precinct
1:1,000 at A4

10 APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: The site prior to ground works, view east



Plate 2: The cable trench, view east



Plate 3: Demolition layer (101), view east



Plate 4: Demolished wall (102), view south



Plate 5: Cable trench, view north



Plate 6: Light fittings in place, view east

11 APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Cut	Type	Category	Period	Interpretation
100	N/A	Layer	Topsoil	N/A	N/A
101	N/A	Layer	Demolition	Post-Medieval	Demolition of monastery
102	N/A	Layer	Demolition	Post-Medieval	Demolition of monastery
103	N/A	Layer	Made ground	Modern	Made ground

12 APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-188128

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Monitoring at Canonry House, Ely
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology on Canonry House drive, Ely, Cambridgeshire (NGR TL 541 801) on 20th-21st August 2014. The archaeological monitoring was commissioned by King's School, Ely in response to a condition attached to consent provided by Cathedrals Fabric Commission for England. The aim of the work was to record any archaeology revealed by the works. The monitoring identified a demolition layer and wall in the western end of the trench. This is located within the proposed line of the eastern range of Ely cloister and may relate to the demolition of this range following the dissolution of the monastery in AD 1539. The results of the fieldwork enhance our understanding of the layout of the monastic buildings of Ely Cathedral at the time of the Dissolution and can be characterised as being of local significance.
Project dates	Start: 20-08-2014 End: 21-08-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	CECR14 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	MONASTIC DEMOLITION Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	"Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Development type	Pipelines/cables (e.g. gas, electric, telephone, TV cable, water, sewage, drainage etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition

Position in the
planning process

Not known / Not recorded

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE ELY Canonry House, Ely
Postcode	CB7 4DL
Study area	134.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 553999 280203 51.9285092432 0.260398063272 51 55 42 N 000 15 37 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.
Project brief originator	King's Ely
Project design originator	King's Ely
Project director/manager	Mark Hinman
Project supervisor	Mary-Anne Slater
Type of sponsor/funding body	School

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Ely Cathedral
Physical Archive ID	CECR14
Physical Contents	"Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"

Digital Archive recipient	Ely Cathedral
Digital Archive ID	CECR14
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Ely Cathedral
Paper Archive ID	CECR14
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Monitoring at Canonry House, Ely
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Slater, M.
Date	2014
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Place of issue or publication	Cambridge

PCA

PCA SOUTH

UNIT 54
BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE
96 ENDWELL ROAD
BROCKLEY
LONDON SE4 2PD
TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091
FAX: 020 7639 9588
EMAIL: info@pre-construct.com

PCA NORTH

UNIT 19A
TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK
DURHAM DH6 5PG
TEL: 0191 377 1111
FAX: 0191 377 0101
EMAIL: info.north@pre-construct.com

PCA CENTRAL

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN
TEL: 01223 845 522
FAX: 01223 845 522
EMAIL: info.central@pre-construct.com

PCA WEST

BLOCK 4
CHILCOMB HOUSE
CHILCOMB LANE
WINCHESTER
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8RB
TEL: 01962 849 549
EMAIL: info.west@pre-construct.com

PCA MIDLANDS

17-19 KETTERING RD
LITTLE BOWDEN
MARKET HARBOROUGH
LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN
TEL: 01858 468 333
EMAIL: info.midlands@pre-construct.com

