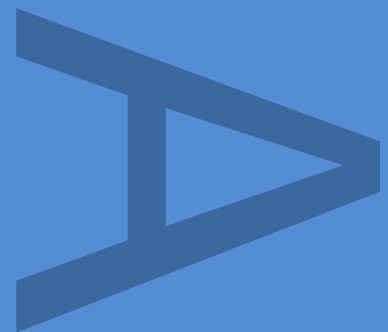


Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral,  
Ely, Cambridgeshire:  
Archaeological Monitoring

April 2016



## **Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Monitoring**

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

**Central National Grid Reference:** TL 5415 8020

**Site Code:** ECB4727

**Planning Reference:** N/A

**Report No.** R12469

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**April 2016**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR TL 5415 8020) on 20th April 2016. Monitoring of two areas of drain trenches was undertaken as part of a refurbishment of Powcher's Hall. The aim of the work was to monitor and record any archaeological remains which would be damaged or destroyed by the new development.*

*Monitoring identified no archaeological features or deposits. The drain trenches were excavated through ground previously disturbed for earlier drains.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) at Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire (centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (NGR) TL 5415 8020) on 20th April 2016 (Figure 1; Plate 1).
- 1.2 Powcher's Hall is located on the southern side of Ely Cathedral, amongst the 14th-15th century monastic buildings.
- 1.3 Monitoring of two areas of drain trenches was undertaken as part of a refurbishment of Powcher's Hall.
- 1.4 The aim of the monitoring was to characterise the nature, extent, date, state of preservation and significance of any archaeological features or deposits within the areas affected by the ground reduction.
- 1.5 The monitoring identified no archaeological features or deposits.
- 1.6 This report describes the results of the archaeological monitoring at Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral. 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, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 100 to 125 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period (British Geological Survey 2015; Website 1).
- 2.2 The site is at an elevation of approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum. 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 report on the archaeological excavation on the site of an extension to the Almonry Restaurant (Boyer and Woolhouse 2013) and a search of the CHER.
- 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 building previously sited where Powcher's Hall now stands was part of the Infirmary. It was almost completely rebuilt by Prior Powcher in 1416 and a third storey of timber was added in the early 16th century. On the south side there are five bays of the 12th century Infirmary arcading, which are now blocked.

## **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The archaeological monitoring observed the reduction of ground for drainage to a depth of c.1m in the trenches to the east of Powcher's Hall and to a depth of c.0.13m in the trench on the north elevation.
- 4.2 Ground reduction was manually carried out under archaeological supervision using a spade and shovel.
- 4.3 High-resolution digital photographs were taken of all relevant features and deposits, and were used to keep a record of the excavation process.



## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 Monitoring of the drainage trenches revealed no archaeological features or deposits. The trench on the north elevation of Powcher's Hall did not go deeper than the garden soil and the eastern trenches were excavated through ground previously disturbed for earlier drains.
- 5.2 These results are of local significance.

## **6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 6.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Vicki Roulinson, Director of Works at Ely Cathedral, for her help in a number of aspects of the project. The project was managed for PCA by Mark Hinman. Figures accompanying this report were prepared by PCA's CAD Department.

## **7 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

### **7.1 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)

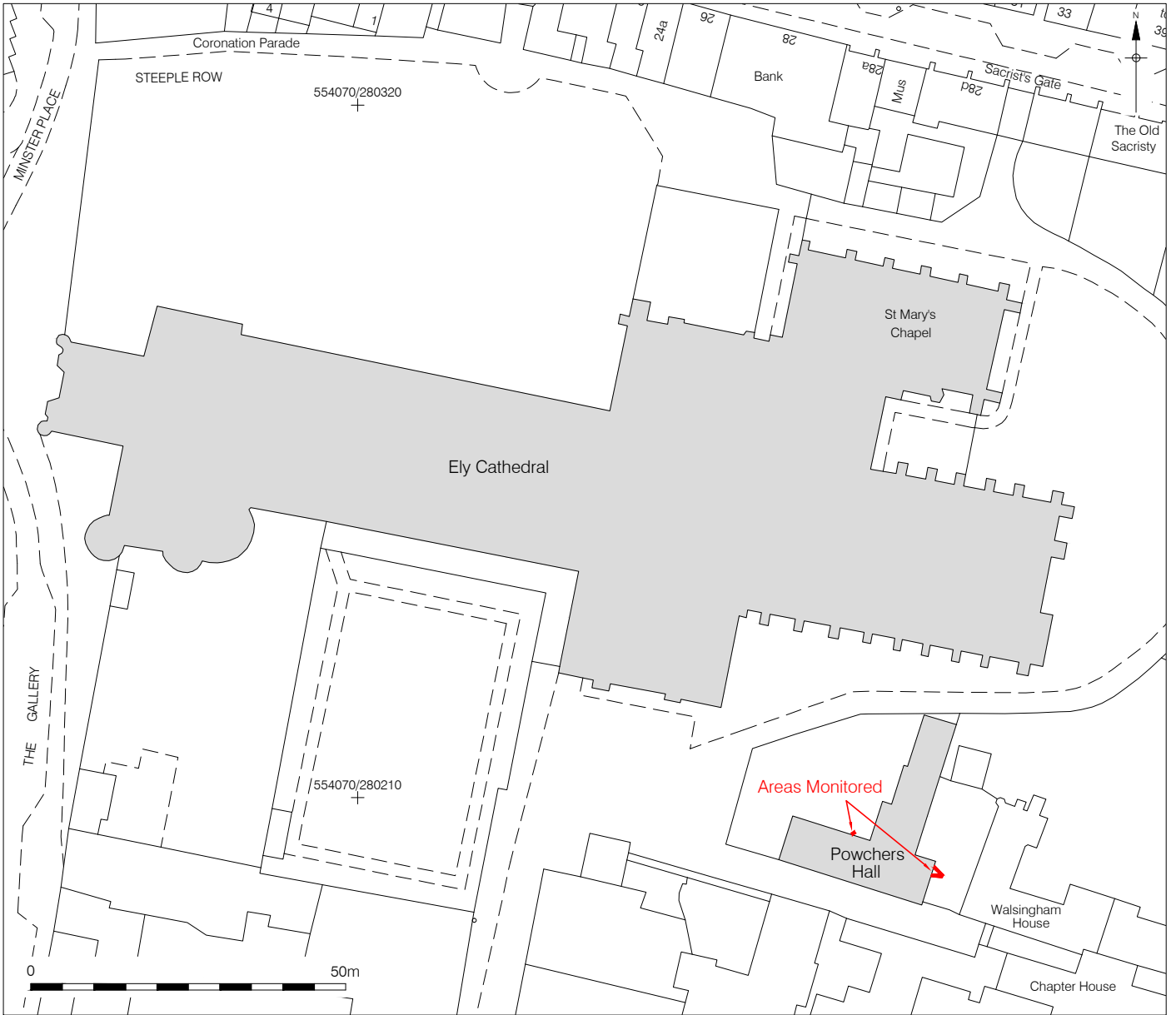
### **7.2 Online Sources**

British Geological Survey Geology of Britain Viewer  
<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> Accessed 26/04/2016



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Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:2,000,000 and 25,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
Areas Monitored  
1:1,000 at A4



**8 APPENDIX 1: PLATES**



Plate 1: Powcher's Hall east elevation, view south





Plate 2: Eastern drain trench, view west





Plate 3: Area monitored on northern elevation, view south-west



Plate 4: Depth of drain trench on northern elevation, view south-west



## 9 APPENDIX 2: OASIS FORM

### OASIS ID: preconst1-249777

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#### Project details

Project name	Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire: Archaeological Monitoring
Short description of the project	This report describes the results of archaeological monitoring carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology at Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely, Cambridgeshire (centred on NGR TL 5415 8020) on 20th April 2016. Monitoring of two areas of drain trenches was undertaken as part of a refurbishment of Powcher's Hall. The aim of the work was to monitor and record any archaeological remains which would be damaged or destroyed by the new development. Monitoring identified no archaeological features or deposits. The drain trenches were excavated through ground previously disturbed for earlier drains.
Project dates	Start: 20-04-2016 End: 20-04-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	N/A None
Significant Finds	N/A None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"

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#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE ELY Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral, Ely
Study area	0 Square metres

Site coordinates TL 5415 8020 52.397666169469 0.265930871642 52 23 51 N 000 15  
57 E Point

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Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator none

Project design originator n/a

Project director/manager Mark Hinman

Project supervisor Mary-Anne Slater

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Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient Ely Cathedral

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"

Paper Archive recipient Ely Cathedral

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media available "Report"

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Project bibliography

1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

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