

7 March 2019

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL CLOSE

Report on an archaeological watching brief maintained during the installation of a timber fence at the end of the Deanery garden

Winchester UAD Site Code WINCM:AY 539
Scheduled Monument Hants 585 585, HA 1005520
Local Site Code DeanFence 2019
SMC dated 30 April 2018, reference No. S00189552

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is a report on the below-ground works required for the construction of an oak fence at the bottom of the Deanery Garden, Winchester Cathedral Close.
- 1.2 Scheduled Monument Consent for these works was granted by letter dated 30 April 2018 from Alex Bellisario, Assistant Inspector of Ancient Monuments to Mr Peter Macfarlane, Deputy Receiver General, Winchester Cathedral ref. S00189552.
- 1.3 The works were the subject of the following documents:
 - Dr John Crook. 'Winchester Cathedral Close: Proposal to install an oak fence at the new end of the Deanery Garden', Unpublished Desk-Based Assessment dated 5 March 2018.
 - *Idem.* Winchester Cathedral Close: Proposal to install an oak fence to mark the revised east boundary of the Deanery Garden. Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for archaeological monitoring during the excavation of fence posts.' Unpublished WSI dated 16 June 2018.
- 1.4 The Scheduled Monument Consent included the following conditions:
 - (3.b) Photographs shall be prepared of the monument before the start and after completion of the works and a set of the digital images shall be sent to Historic England (Alex.Bellisario@HistoricEngland.org.uk) within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).
 - (3.c) No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and

approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.

(3.f) A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the County Historic Environment Record and to [name] at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

(3.g) The contractor shall complete and submit an entry on OASIS (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations - <http://oasis.ac.uk/england/>) prior to project completion, and shall deposit any digital project report with the Archaeology Data Service, via the OASIS form, upon completion.

2 Location of the Works

2.1 The works were centred on OS grid reference SU 48262916. The location is shown in Figure 1 to Figure 3. The position of the individual fence posts is shown in Figure 10.



Figure 1. Location of the Inner Close, Winchester Cathedral.

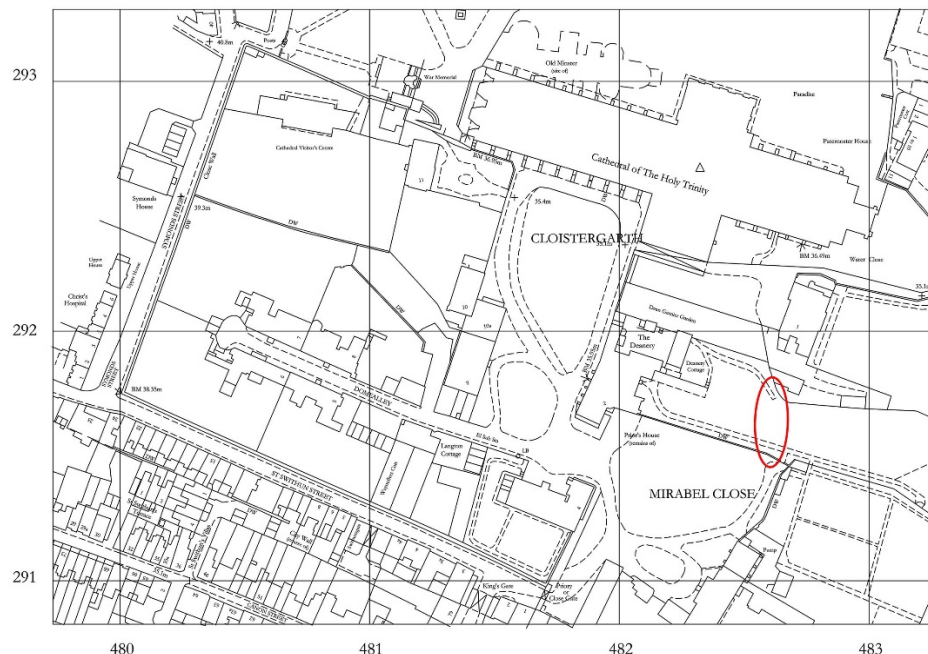


Figure 2. General plan showing (red circle) the area of proposed works. Base plan reproduced from Superplan Data® by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Licence No. 100043183 © Crown Copyright 2005. All rights reserved.

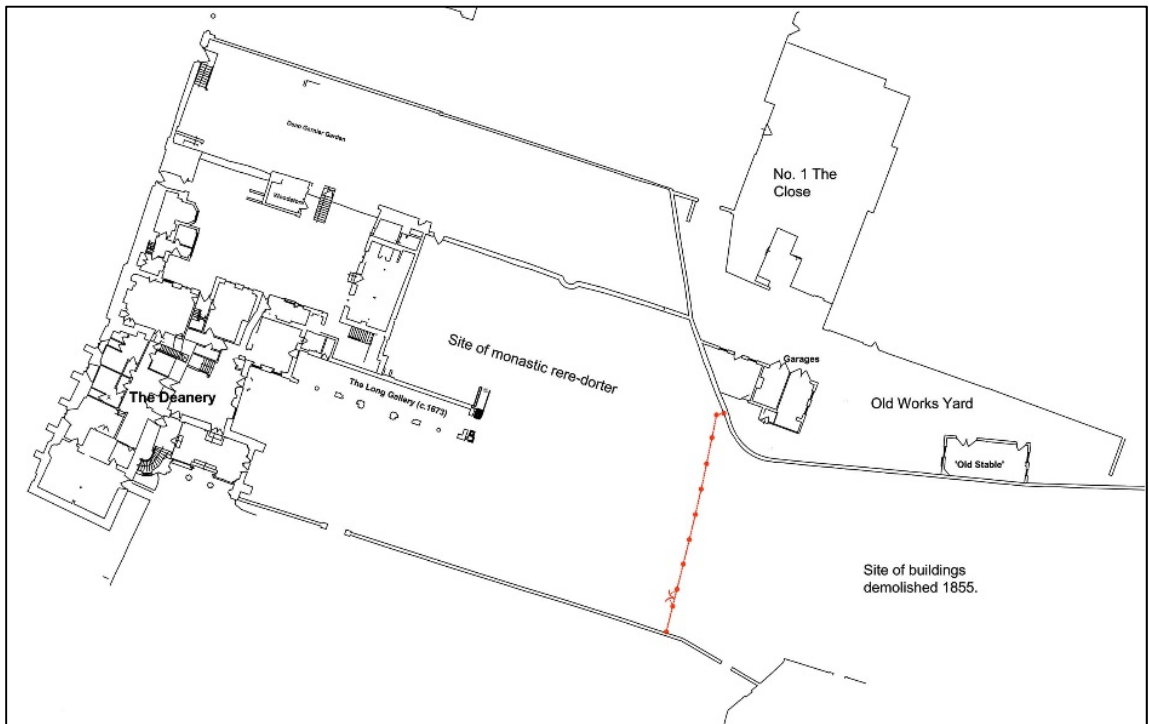


Figure 3. Location plan of the fence within the Deanery garden as reconfigured.

3 The site—general photographic record

- 3.1 As noted above, Condition (b) of the smc stated as follows: Photographs shall be prepared of the monument before the start and after completion of the works and a set of the digital images shall be sent to Historic England (Alex.Bellisario@HistoricEngland.org.uk) within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).
- 3.2 The pre-works photographs are included in this report as Figure 4 to Figure 7, below.
- 3.3 In addition, the site during the works is shown in Figure 8 and Figure 9. The latter image shows the north end of the site denuded of the vegetation which hindered the pre-works photography, including the stump of a yew tree which was felled a week before the works, with appropriate permissions.



Figure 4. Pre-works view of the site, looking west.



Figure 5. Pre-works view of the site, looking north-west.



Figure 6. Pre-works view of south end of the site, looking west.



Figure 7. Pre-works view of the south end of the site looking south-west.



Figure 8. The fence under construction, looking NNE.

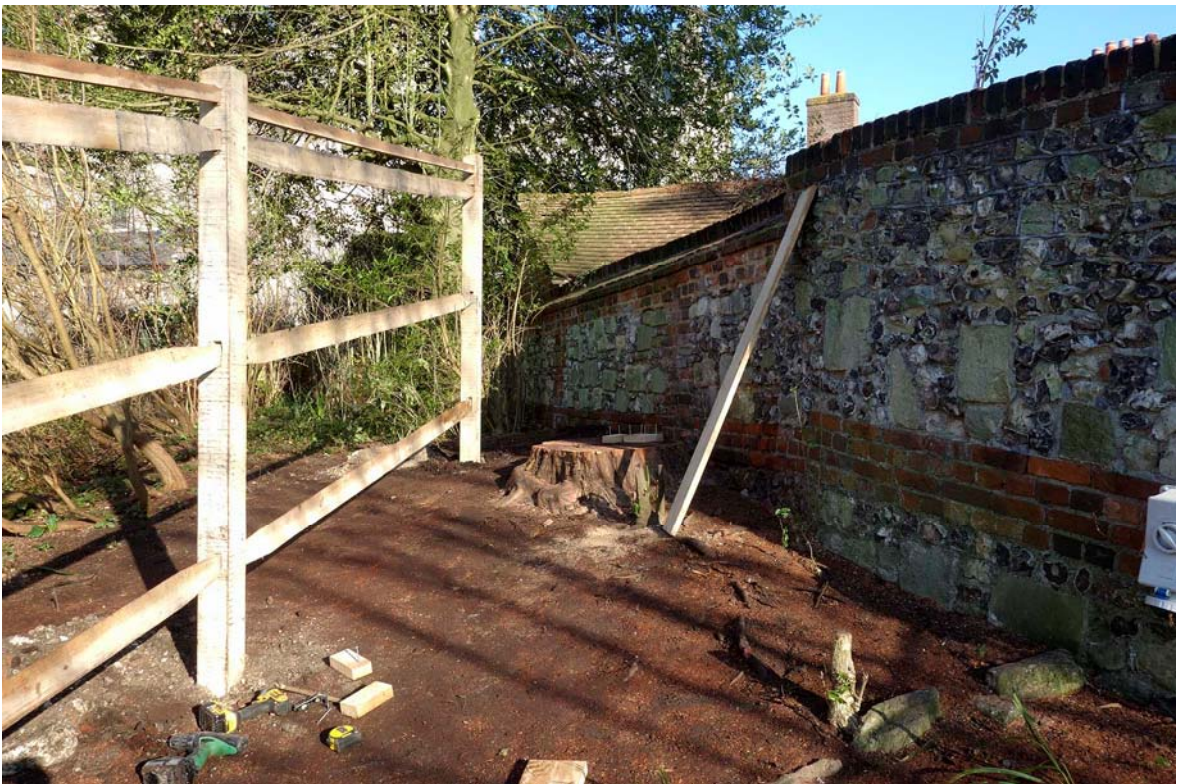


Figure 9. North end of site during works. The photograph also shows (centre) the stump of a yew tree which was felled a week before the works, with appropriate permissions.

4 The works and archaeological observations

- 4.1 The below-ground excavations for the works were undertaken on 14 February 2019 under the archaeological supervision of the author. A total of 11 post-holes were dug, each 250mm in diameter and 900mm deep. Figure 10 shows the numbering system adopted in this report. Work began with post No. 1 and worked northwards, concluding with No. 11. All the below ground work was completed in a single day, 14 February 2019.

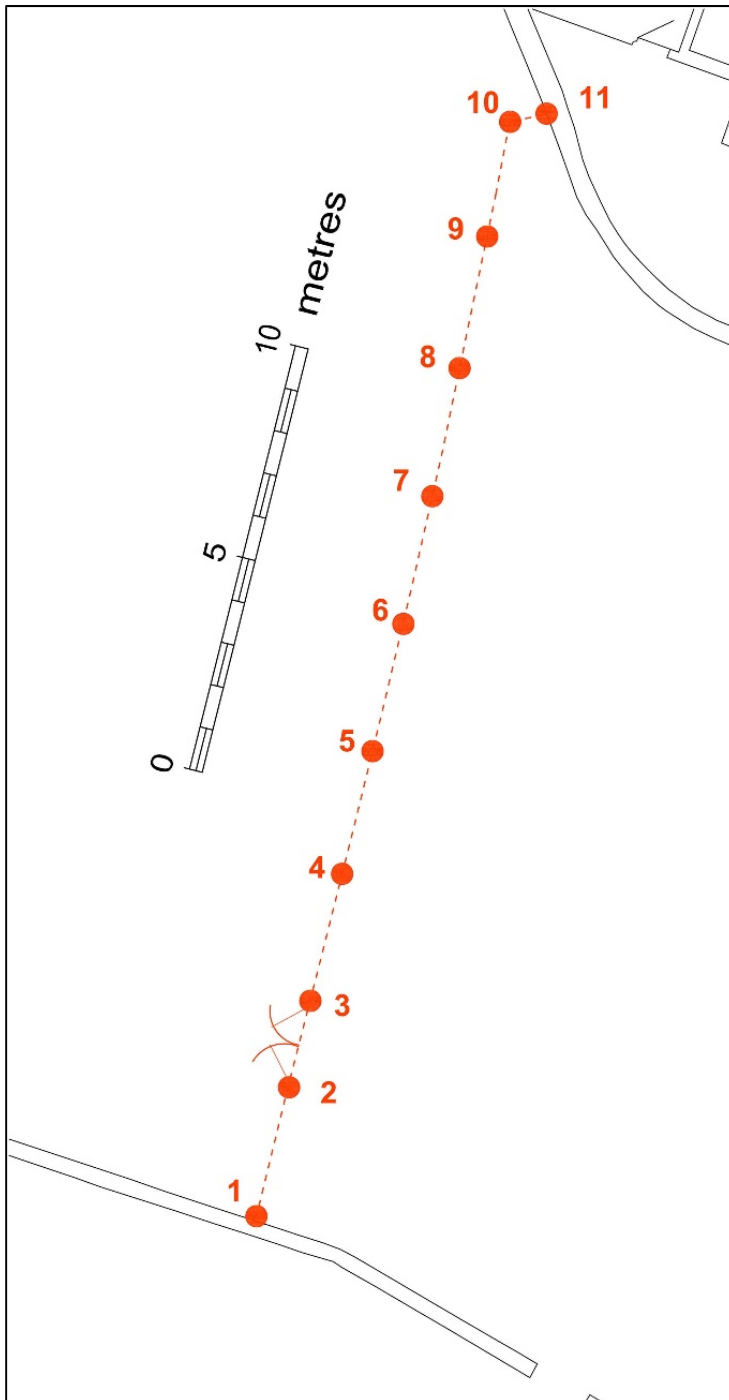


Figure 10. Numbering of fence post trenches.

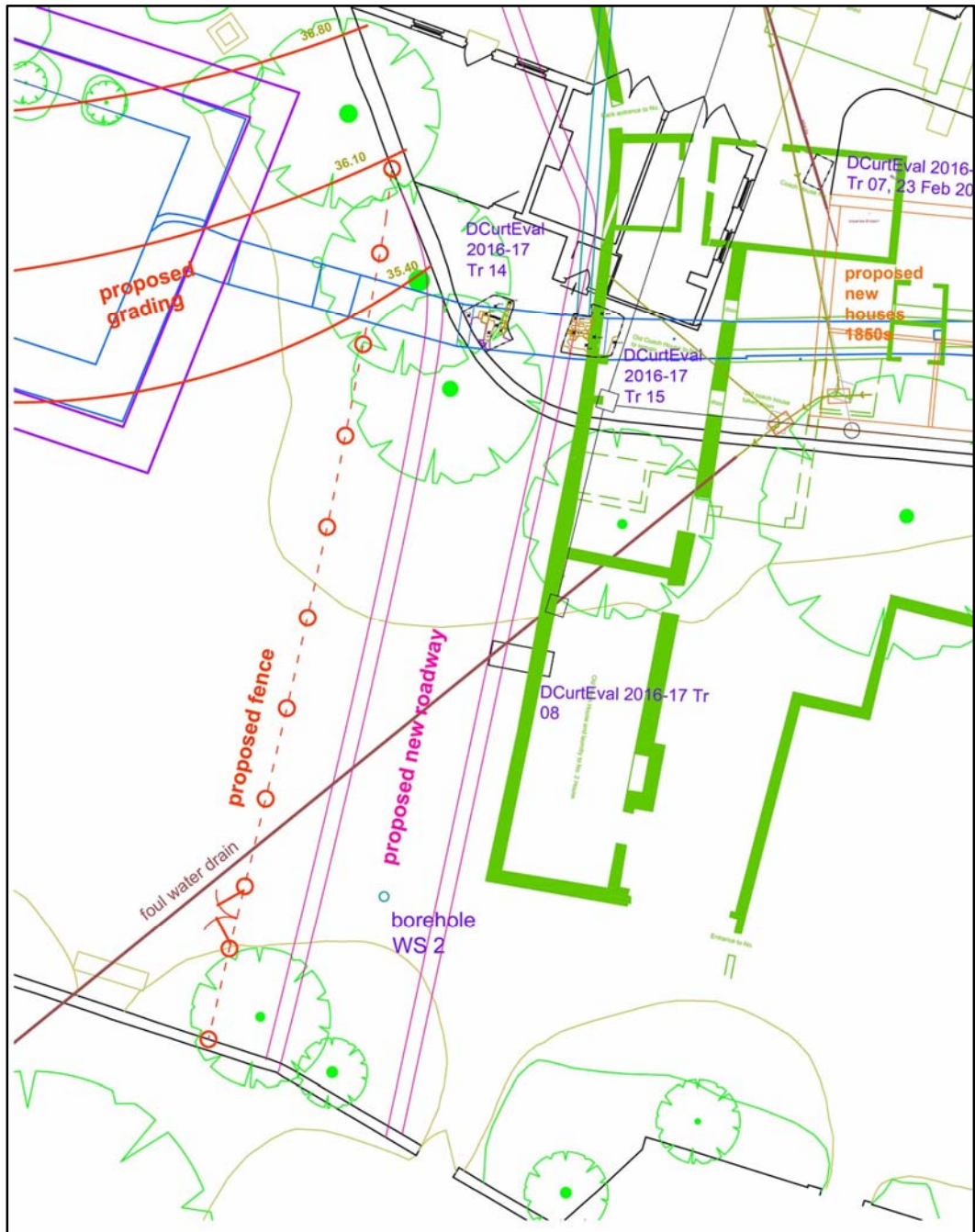
- 4.2 **Posthole 1** was excavated against the south wall of the Deanery garden. This part of the wall appears to date from the 1660s, as mentioned in a Desk-Based Assessment relating to the proposed demolition of the more recent (1850s) eastwards continuation of the same wall: John Crook, ‘Winchester Cathedral Close—Deanery Garden Wall. Notes on a length of wall which it is proposed to demolish.’ Unpublished Desk-Based Assessment dated 21 May 2016.
- 4.3 The post-hole was mostly accommodated in the garden soils of a flower-bed which had been formed against the wall. Some fragments of red brick with adhering white lime mortar were excavated from the bottom of the trench, identified as back-fill from the construction trench of the wall itself.
- 4.4 In **Posthole 2** the succession was as follows: turf and dark loam (01) down to -150mm, followed by a lighter coloured chalky loam (02) to -450.¹ This included a large tree root at -300mm, presumably from the overhanging cherry tree, which was severed. At -450mm were spreads of chalk and lime mortar (03), including occasional flints and roof tile (retained).
- 4.5 In **Posthole 3** 150mm of topsoil as before (01), then a grey to buff mortary/chalky soil (03) containing chalk limps and flints, and occasional tile fragments. Context (03) of this posthole appeared identical to context (03) of posthole 2.
- 4.6 In **Posthole 4** black topsoil (01) continued to -200mm. Thereafter, in the same topsoil, were increasing proportion of chalk lumps, occasional brick fragments. Then at -230mm context (02) was a grey loam containing brick and slate fragments. A post-medieval pottery shard was recovered at -750mm (a random residual deposit).
- 4.7 In **Posthole 5** black topsoil (01) continued to -200mm where there was a 100mm spread of white chalk (02) down to -300mm. This must have been a demolition deposit. It was succeeded by further demolition deposits (03) at -300mm: roof tile, slate fragments, in a dark grey loam.
- 4.8 In **Posthole 6** topsoil as before was succeeded by gravel spreads at -150mm (possibly a garden path?) followed by a spread of chalk (02) as in posthole 5, then presumed demolition deposits (03) comprising slate and roof tile fragments in a dark grey loam.
- 4.9 **Posthole 7** was located on the bank on the north side of the Deanery garden, so the deposit of topsoil (01) was deeper, going down to -400mm. At -400 were spreads of chalk (02) then, at -500mm rubble in grey loam including curved red roof tile fragments and slate fragments.
- 4.10 **Posthole 8** was immediately adjacent, and on the E side of, an old tree stump possibly another yew tree. The stump had rotted away. A large brick fragment was retained measuring >215 x >100 x 59mm, red fabric, similar to late 17th-century bricks found, for example, in the Dome Alley houses of the 1660s. Topsoil (01) down to -300 was succeeded by dark loam and rubble (02), i.e. brick and roof tile fragments. This material might have been heaped up to form the bank.

¹ Depths prefixed by a minus sign ‘-’ are measured from the ground level at the location of the post.

- 4.11 The sequence in **Posthole 9** was similar to posthole 8. At -300mm was a considerable amount of chalk rubble, brick fragments, and roof tile fragments, again interpreted as forming the build-up to the bank of c.1855.
- 4.12 In **Posthole 10** 150mm of topsoil (01) was immediately followed by spreads of crumbly white lime mortar and brick fragments – clearly demolition deposits.
- 4.13 **Posthole 11** was excavated against the wall of c.1855. Black loam and tree roots continued to the full depth of the excavation.

5 Interpretation

- 5.1 Needless to say, the small diameter of the excavations for the postholes meant that archaeological observations were limited.
- 5.2 Cumulatively, however, the sequence of deposits is consistent with the known history of the site. As analysed in the DBA referred to in para 1.3 above, until the mid 1850s a lane or ‘passage’ ran from north to south 1800mm east of the line of the new fence. A number of houses stood on the east side of the lane. These were demolished in the 1850s and the Deanery garden was extended eastwards as far as the Mill Stream. It is now intended to reinstate this lane, and the erection of a fence on the line of the pre-1850s eastern boundary of the Deanery garden is the first step in this process.
- 5.3 The position of the lane is shown on the analytical plan below, which also shows in green the plan of the houses which until the 1850s stood on the east side of the lane.
- 5.4 The demolition of the houses and the abandonment of the lane were followed by landscaping of the garden, notably the creation of the bank which follows the slope of an older terrace further west, over the remains of the monastic rere-dorter. The ceramic material (brick and roof tile and slate fragments) is interpreted as deriving from the demolition of the houses, as is in particular the thick build-up of rubble beneath the bank.



6 Site archive

- 6.1 The finds are stored in the cathedral's archaeological repository. A report on the watching brief is being uploaded to the national archaeological database, OASIS.

7 Photographs of the Site on completion of works

- 7.1 The following photographs of the site on completion of the works form part of the site archive and digital files of the pre- and post-works photographic record are being sent to Historic England in fulfilment of the condition mentioned in para 3.1 above.



Figure 11. Fence completed, view NNE.



Figure 12. Fence completed view south-east.



Figure 13. Fence completed. West side of top end.



Figure 14. Fence completed. View NNW.



Figure 15. Fence completed, East side of bottom end.



Figure 16. Fence completed. View north-west.



Figure 17. Fence completed. West side of south end.



Figure 18. Fence completed. Accommodation of cherry tree.