

**Launde Abbey, Launde, Leicestershire
'Oxford and Cambridge' Building:
Historic Building Survey
(SK 7972 0431)**

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For Trustees of Launde Abbey

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:**Date:**.....

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Introduction

As part of the development proposals for Launde Abbey, it is planned to move the 'Oxford and Cambridge' building from its present location between the retreat house and the stable block (at SK 7972 0431) to a position close to the walled kitchen garden, approximately 100m to the south-east. The Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council has requested the completion of a Historic Building Survey in order that the potential impact of this aspect of the proposals may be fully assessed. The survey was undertaken by Neil Finn of University of Leicester Archaeological Services on 30.6.2006. A photographic record of the exterior and interior of the building was made, in 35mm monochrome and colour formats, a written account prepared and a measured floor plan completed. This survey meets the requirements of a level 2 record as defined in the English Heritage guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006).

The 'Oxford and Cambridge' building is a timber structure of early 20th century date which probably served as changing rooms for garden sports when Launde Abbey was a private residence. Its name dates to the period after Launde Abbey became a retreat house and theological college in the late 1950s. For a time two members of the theological college lived in the building, one of whom had been educated at Oxford and the other at Cambridge. It has been known as the Oxford and Cambridge building since that time. It is currently used as a workshop.

Description of the Building

The Oxford and Cambridge building is a small, timber-built pavilion-type structure measuring c. 7.3m x 3.5m externally. The walls are clad with horizontal weather-boarding up to a height of 1.5m, above which there is vertical tongue and groove boarding. The junction is covered by a moulded rail which runs right round the building, interrupted only by the door and window openings, at which points the rail is neatly stopped. This combination of horizontal and vertical boarding appears to be the original arrangement, for decorative effect, rather than evidence of later replacement of the lower walling. There are two door and two window openings to the principal, east-facing elevation and a single window in each end wall. There are no openings in the west wall. All of the windows are of similar size and form being two-light casements, with one fixed and one opening side-hung light; each light has six panes. The two doors are similar, consisting of a basic framed structure with bead-edged planks fitted to the external face. The bottom rail is slightly raised, presumably to facilitate adjustment of door height as necessary during installation. The southern door retains what appears to be its original lock. The roof structure is hipped with louvered gables and is now covered with diamond-set asbestos tiles. The building rests on a brick and concrete base.

The interior is divided into two rooms of unequal size, the larger southern room measures 3.67m x 3.24m and the northern room 3.27m x 3.24m. There are two openings in the dividing wall, the larger one is certainly non-original. The smaller opening may or may not be original. All internal surfaces are clad with tongue and groove boarding, apparently later in date than that of the external walls. Of the timber framework only a single 100 x 50mm (4 x 2 inch) stud forming part of the dividing wall is visible. The thickness of the external walls is

consistent with a structure formed from 100 x 50mm (4 x 2 inch) timbers, however. It is assumed that the timber-framework consists of prefabricated panels, though this is not certain. Nothing of the roof structure is visible internally. An opening in the roof, now blocked, evidently accommodated the flue of a stove positioned against the back wall on the south side of the internal dividing wall.

The external weatherboarding has been cut through on the front and rear walls, adjacent to the position of the internal dividing wall, suggesting that the building has been cut in half at some point, presumably to allow the structure to be moved. No evidence of this is seen internally which supports the suggestion that the internal tongue and groove cladding is non-original, presumably having been installed after the building was reassembled. The extant roof covering may have added at the same time.

Chronology and Context

A building of this size, in this location, is shown on the 1930 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map sheet XXXIII.15 (see ULAS report 2005-096, Figure 17). This replaced a circular building in the same position illustrated on the 1904 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map sheet XXXIII.15 (*ibid.*, Figure 16). A tennis court was also laid out between these dates in the area immediately to the east and it seems reasonable to suppose that the Oxford and Cambridge building originally served as changing rooms with separate male and female accommodation, hence the two room plan with separate entrances. The building is clearly visible, in the same position, in the 1950 Cambridge University Aerial Photograph Ref: RAF/A/107 (ULAS report 2005-096, Plate 48). It is not visible in the earlier air photographs of 1948 and 1949 (*ibid.*, Plates 46 & 47), but this may be due to the camera angle and tree coverage. It is shown in the same location on the 1960 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map edition (Figure 6).

Conclusion

The building is of a type common from the late 19th century until the middle decades of the 20th century. It survives in generally good condition and is apparently largely original although the roof covering has been replaced, the internal partition wall has been truncated and the interior tongue and groove lining is non-original. It was erected at Launde in the early years of the 20th century, between 1904 and 1930 based on map evidence, and may have provided changing rooms serving the adjacent tennis court. It subsequently provided accommodation for residents of the theological college established in the late 1950s. A stove, since removed, may have been installed at that time to heat the living quarters. It is now used as a workshop. There is evidence that the building has been cut in half at some time, possibly to move it, though it appears to be in the same position now as it was in 1930 and 1960, based on map evidence. Aerial photographic evidence also shows it in this location in 1950. If the building has been moved, this would provide a context for the replacement of the roof covering and re-lining of the interior.

Bibliography

English Heritage, 2006. *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice*. English Heritage Publishing.

ULAS, 2005. *Launde Abbey, Launde, Leicestershire: Historic Building Assessment*. ULAS report 2005-096.



Figure 1. Oxford and Cambridge building, looking SW, showing the E front and N gable.



Figure 2. Oxford and Cambridge building, looking SE, showing the N gable and W wall.



Figure 3. Oxford and Cambridge building, interior looking N, note former flue position in top left corner.



Figure 4. Oxford and Cambridge building, interior looking S.

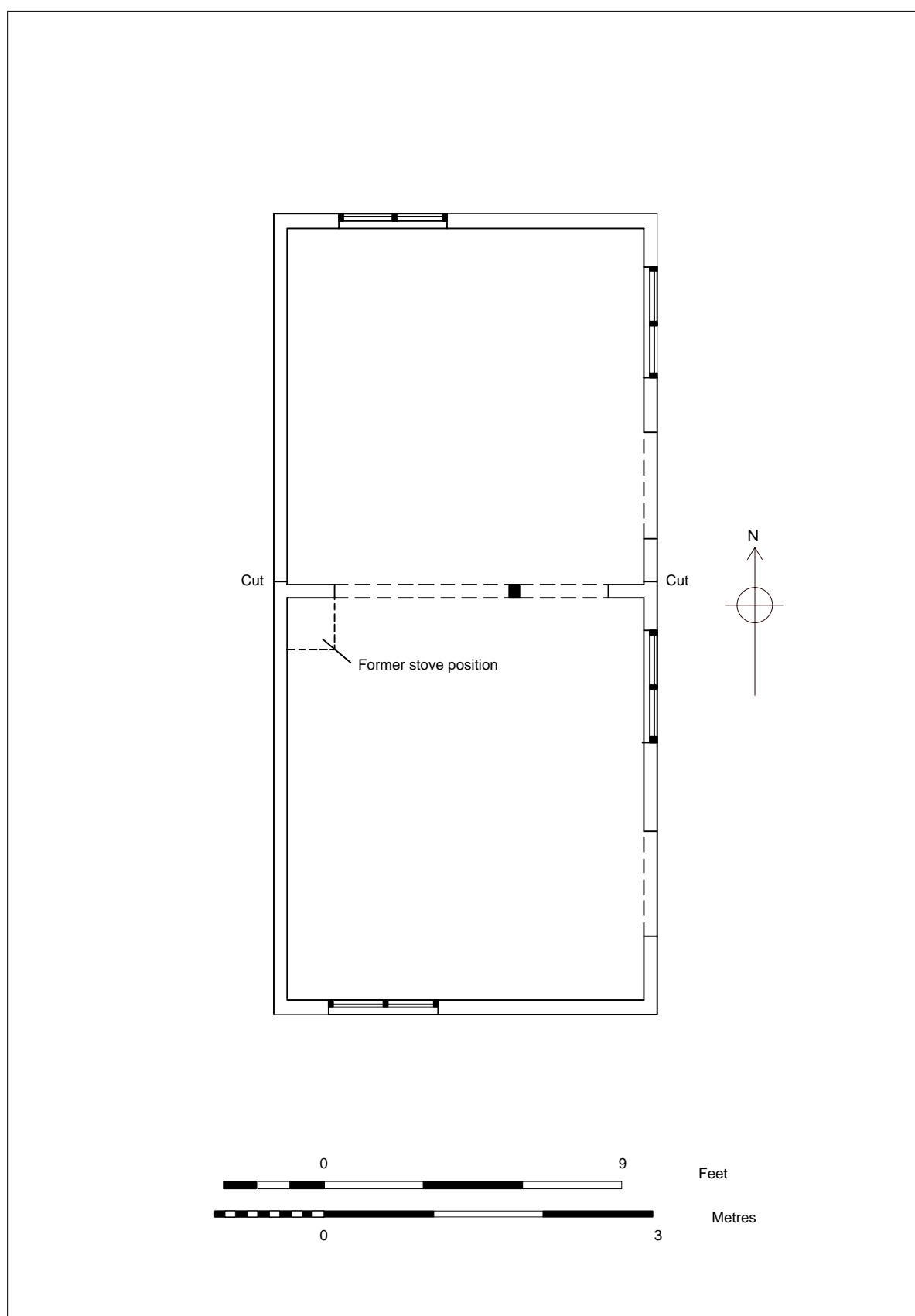


Figure 5. Launde Abbey, Launde, Leicestershire: Oxford and Cambridge Building: Scale 1:50

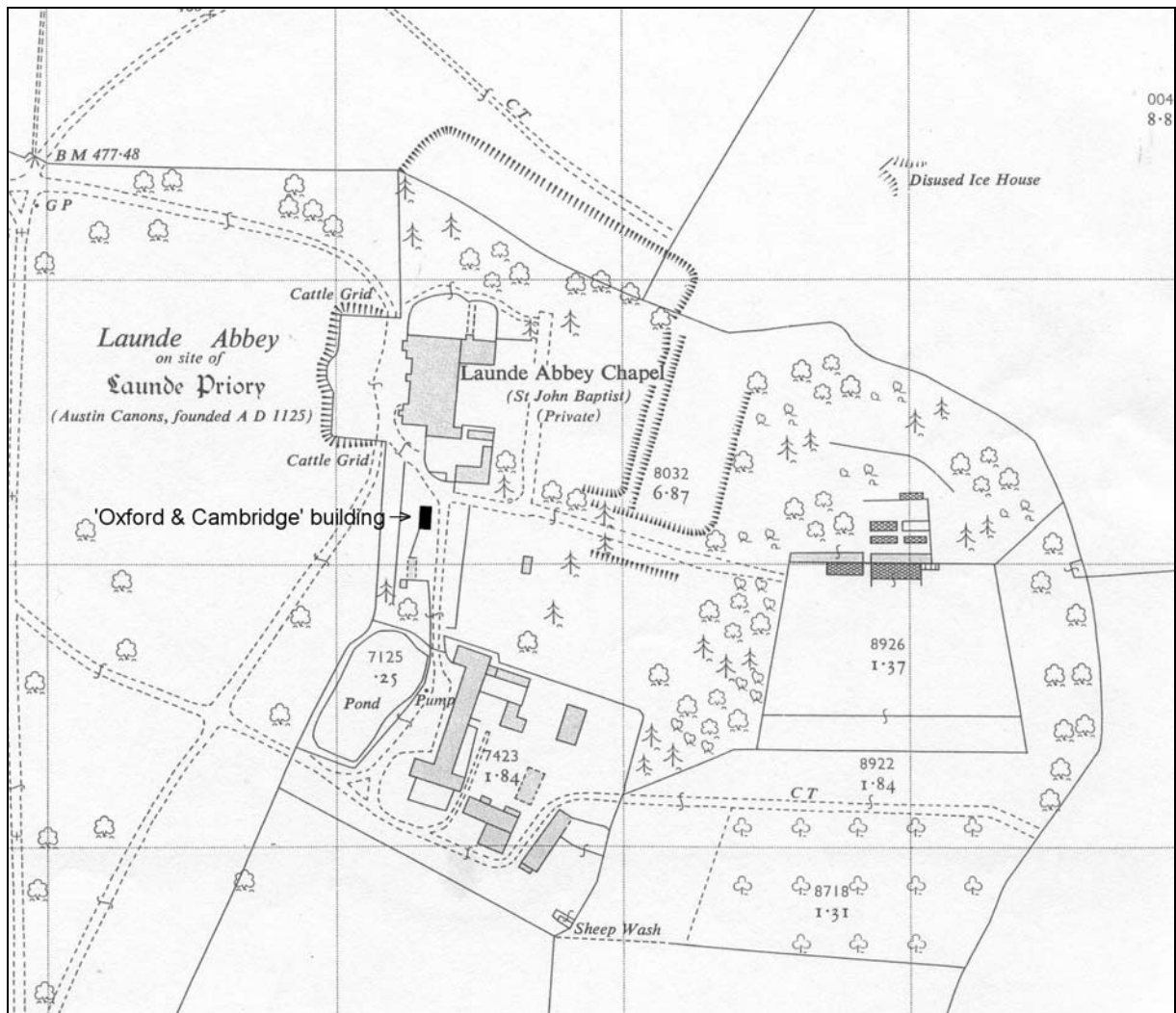


Figure 6. 1960 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map showing location of 'Oxford and Cambridge' building. Not to Scale: grid squares = 100x100m. ©Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number AL10002186.