

**An Archaeological Standing Building Survey and
Watching Brief at the King William Bridge,
Sheepwash Lane, Anstey, Leicestershire.**

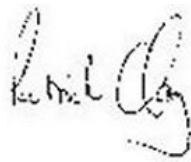
(NGR SK 5564 0895)

Gerwyn Richards

Planning Application: N/A

For: Leicester City Council

Checked by Project Manager



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An Archaeological Standing Building Survey and watching brief at the King William Bridge, Sheepwash Lane, Anstey, Leicestershire (SK 5564 0895).

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Leicester City Council to undertake an archaeological standing building survey prior to repair and resurfacing work and a watching brief during the subsequent work on the King William Bridge, Sheepwash Lane, Anstey.

The King William Bridge appears to date from the late 17th Century and is mainly rubble built with two rounded arches. The bridge has been widened on the downstream (Northern face), using brick. This widening is widely accepted to have taken place for the visit of King William III in 1696. As expected there has been extensive maintenance and repair making the identification of phases and rebuilding extremely difficult. There is, however, the possibility that some of the cobbled surface is original.

The watching brief was limited to visual examination of the parapets after the old cement was raked out. No intrusive work on the deck was carried out.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Leicester City Council to undertake an archaeological standing building survey and watching brief at the King William Bridge, Sheepwash Lane, Anstey, Leicestershire (SK 5564 0895), a Grade II Listed Building. The bridge was scheduled in the 1980s (Reference Number: SM00195). Leicester City Council Culture & Regeneration sought Scheduled Monument Consent under the 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, and this consent has been granted for a programme of repair and resurfacing work to be carried out.

King William's Bridge acquired its name after being crossed by King William III in 1696 on his way to visit the Gray family at nearby Bradgate, and it was at this time that the bridge was widened to the north. The bridge, however, is known by other names, most commonly Sheepwash Bridge while other sources refer to it as Dambridge (Worth 1981). The bridge itself is located a little less than a kilometre north-east of the village crossing Anstey Brook, which becomes Rothley Brook before joining the Soar at Farnham Bridge.

King William's Bridge stands on Sheepwash Lane, approximately 170metres from the junction with Cropston Road. Sheepwash Lane is thought to be an ancient track and although there is no pre-enclosure record of it; the bridge itself is clearly pre-eighteenth

century in date; Jervoise (1932) suggests a late seventeenth century date. It is possible that Sheepwash Lane was known by another name and the Enclosure Award (1761-62) mentions a Brookhursts Lane, which appears to be in the same location. The award granted the fields each side of the lane 'exclusive of the width of the road'. The new owners, therefore, had no alternative than to leave the full width of the road when fencing their land, a fact which confirms the lane and the bridge was an established and recognised public carriage road by the eighteenth century.

Of the bridge itself, very little is definitively recorded; there are three other bridges of historical interest within the area of Anstey, The Pack Horse Bridge, in Anstey itself, the Sandham Bridge (also known as the Coffin Bridge), in Thurcaston and the Roman Bridge, again in Anstey which collapsed after vandalism in the early 1980's. Identifying specific references to King Williams Bridge was, therefore, problematic. As previously stated the bridge was so named because it was used by the Royal Coach of William III in 1696 on a trip from Leicester to Bradgate. It was realised that the bridge was too narrow for the Royal Coach and was hastily widened. What is not clear, however, is whether an existing bridge was widened or whether the current bridge replaced an earlier medieval bridge on the same site. Although widely referenced, no clear evidence for the origin of this information has been located.

2. Aims and Methodology

Addressing the framework created by the *Brief For Building Recording At King William's Bridge, Leicester & Anstey* (Leicester City Council Aug 2007), the aim of the historic building recording was to:-

- Investigate the fabric of the bridge and elucidate its structural development.
- Research the history of the bridge through written and graphical sources.
- Describe the history of the bridge and explain its architectural and historic significance.

The standing building survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards. Photographs, in 35mm monochrome negative and colour transparency formats covered items 1-6 of the English Heritage guidelines (2006, 4; Appendix 4.1.2). The site visits were carried out on October 5th, 8th and 9th. The watching brief on the ground works was carried out on February 21st, 26th, 28th, and March 10th 2008.

All work followed the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) *Code of Conduct* and adhere to their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures* and *Archaeological Field Evaluations*. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's *Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire* and Rutland was be adhered to while the English Heritage guidelines (2006) have been used as a basis for defining levels of recording.

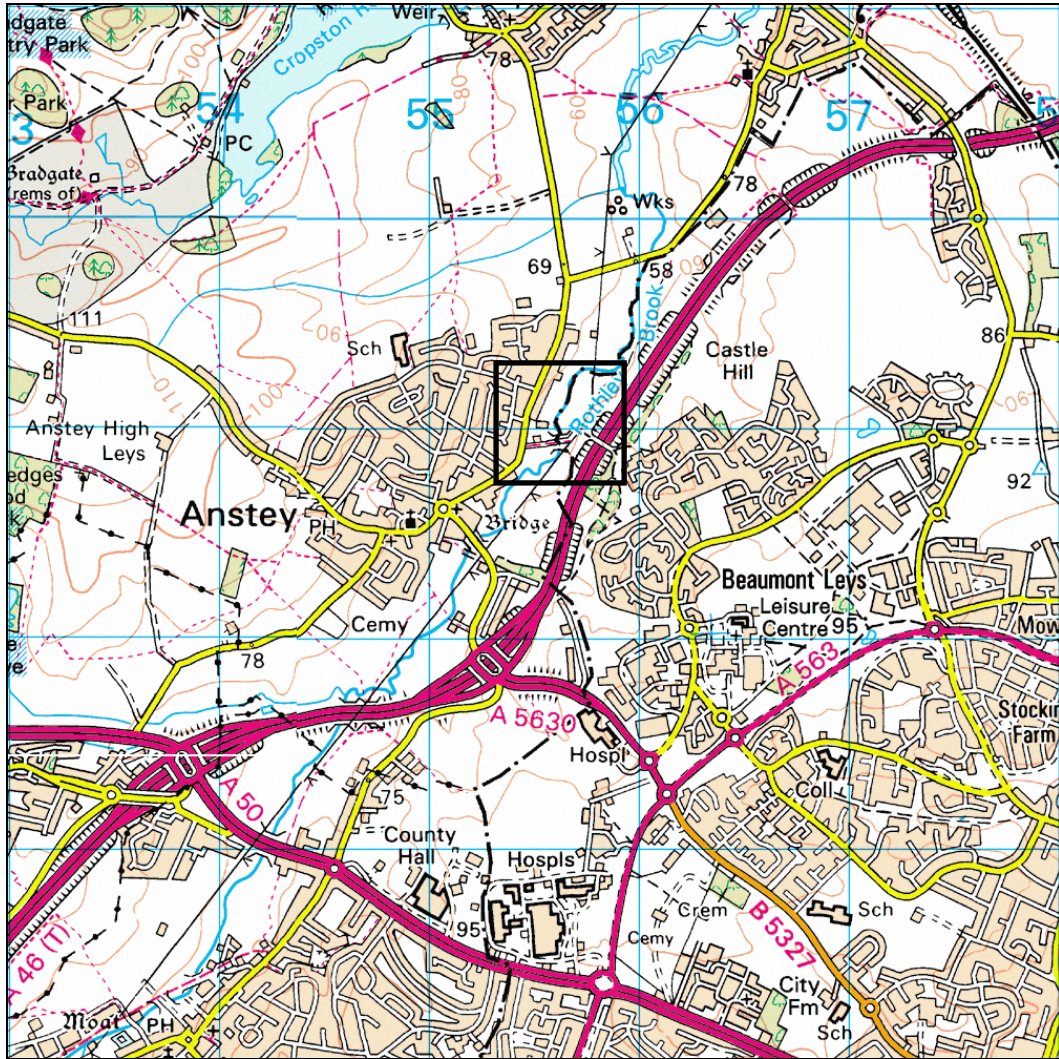


Figure 1 Site Location Plan (1:50,000)
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3. Standing Building Survey

King Williams Bridge consists of a small rubble-built pack-horse bridge with two rounded arches and a full height pointed cut water on the upstream, southern face and a small buttress near the water level on the northern face. The western parapet approaches are splayed out, more so the southern parapet with the addition of a more recent stone-built shoulder to counteract the erosion on the bend in the brook.

A closer examination of the structure confirms the rubble construction, most of which are medium to large angular granite blocks. There are occasional patches of roughly coursed slate blocks concentrated on the south facing parapet at deck level and within the cut water towards the current water level (*Figure 5*). There is also very occasional use of cobbles within the structure, almost certainly recent inserts during repair. There has been extensive and poorly carried re-pointing with cement mortar, but there are limited areas of earlier lime mortar pointing remaining. This cement pointing makes identifying phases virtually impossible.

It is likely, however, that the western shoulder of the southern face is a newer addition, added to re-enforce the bridge. The shoulder contains a great deal more slate than the bridge itself, and it also contains a re-used unusually moulded brick. There is also a large projecting stone at approximately deck height which may suggest that the parapet above this point has been rebuilt. The arches are, like the rest of the bridge 'rough' in appearance, with the voussoirs only roughly shaped or possibly not shaped at all and only selected because of their shape; there is no clearly identifiable keystone only a series of stones within the crown acting in unison as a keystone.

It is the northern face (*Figure 6*) which contains the most information, and it is here that the clearest proof of the widening can be seen; the segmental arches are lined with brick as are the intrados. The original arches can also be seen rising from the central pier and the eastern abutment, and it appears the extension is not square to the original bridge. Unlike the opposite face, there appears to be a greater amount of slate used in the construction and again the amount of cement mortar re-pointing makes identifying phases impossible. There are also a number of iron cleats set into mortar near the water level.

Curiously the bricks within the arches are all 9inch by 3inch apparently wire cut red bricks; these dimensions and their appearance does suggest a cautious date of the early to mid nineteenth century (Between 1825 and 1850). The dimensions of the bricks match those established by the Brick Tax in 1803 (effectively limiting the size of green bricks to 10inch by 5inch by 3inch), appearing to confirm an early nineteenth century date. This together with possible indications of the bricks being wire cut suggests a pre-1850 date but certainly post-1803, and not late seventeenth century. The bricks for nearby Bradgate House were made by firing Boulder Clay at a site now flooded by Cropston Reservoir (Loughborough Naturalists Club, 1981); it is possible that the bricks used to widen the bridge also came from this source, although with c. three hundred years difference in date, this is unlikely. Another possibility is that stone was used to widen the bridge in 1696 in what would have undoubtedly been a rushed job and the brick we see in the bridge today is a later repair or rebuild. A list of expenditure on the County's bridges between 1779 and 1830 (Chalkin 1999) does not record any expenditure on the bridge, but if the bridge was still in private ownership at this time there is no certainty that a record of the works would have been made or indeed survive. Further examination of City & County Council Records did not provide any additional information, the only recorded works being minor repairs carried out in the early 1990s (N Lad, pers.comm.).

While most of the documentary sources consulted claim the bridge was widened in 1696 for the visit of King William III, no clear source of this information has, however, been located. The most likely origin of this was believed to be the Family and Estate Records Grey, Earls of Stamford & Warrington held at Leicestershire Records Office, although an examination of these did not locate it. Another source states the bridge was actually built for the visit of the King (Forsyth, 1974, 22), while both Jervoise (1932) and Pevsner (1992) suggest a seventeenth century construction date.

In is more than likely that both are true; as it is clear that Sheepwash Lane is an ancient trackway, well established and in use by the seventeenth century, it can be assumed,

therefore, that some kind of crossing existed. It was likely that this earlier structure was 'widened' for the visit of the King in 1696 by being rebuilt as the bridge we now see, known as King William's Bridge.

A physical examination of the bridge carried out during this building survey, however, does confirm the bridge has been widened by the addition of brick built arches on the downstream side. As previously stated the bricks used are undoubtedly early nineteenth century in date. The Enclosure Award (1761-62) resulted in the creation of a "double" road as a boundary between two different landowners, Daniel Glover downstream (to the north) and Mary Heard upstream (to the south), and the width of this double road can still be seen today. It is possible that this wider road led to an increase in traffic, necessitating the widening of the bridge in the early nineteenth century. There was a brickworks in operation in nearby Glenfield supplying bricks for the construction of the Glenfield Tunnel on the Leicester & Swannington Railway in 1831, and it is possible that these works continued in operation after the completion of the tunnel supplying bricks to local markets.

It is the precarious condition of the deck which necessitated the proposed phase of works and as expected the deck is in a poor state of repair. The crowns of the brick arches can be seen as well as the core, the original surfacing has long since disintegrated. There are however two patches of cobbled surface (*Figure 7*); it is unlikely that these are the original cobbles, but if they are not original they most likely mirror an earlier surface. Such cobbles are normally bedded in clay, although there was no evidence of the clay on the bridge, however given the condition of the deck any clay would have been washed away. There is, however, possible evidence of tyre ruts, which are likely to be early in date and caused by cart wheels. There are also a number of projecting stones on the parapets which may suggest the original deck level.

Although not directly attached to the bridge, but, nevertheless, worthy of note is where erosion to the path, approximately 5metres east of the bridge has revealed a brick built structure, possibly a culvert. The bricks and building method appear almost identical to that of the bridge itself. A local member of public stated that this is where sheep were washed, hence the name and it is possible that this structure is related to the bridge in some way.

4. Conclusion

This standing building survey has, unfortunately, not revealed a great deal of additional information. The extensive re-pointing has made identifying any potential rebuilding or phases virtually impossible. Raking out of this mortar failed to provide a better picture of the bridge.

The deck, as expected, was in a poor state of repair; it is possible, however, that the patches of cobbles are, if not original, then very early and it was suggested that the resurfacing should attempt to copy this as much as possible.

The most interesting fact encountered during the building survey was the dimensions of the bricks used in the northern arches. Their size and appearance suggests a nineteenth

century date and there is the possibility that this part of the bridge has been rebuilt or at least repaired.

5. Photographic Index

Colour Slide	Black & White	Description	Dir
001	001	South Facing Elevation, General	N
002	002	South Facing Elevation, General	N
003	003	South Facing Elevation, General	N
004	004	South Facing Elevation, Detail Left	N
005	005	South Facing Elevation, Detail Left	N
006	006	South Facing Elevation, Detail Left	N
007	007	South Facing Elevation, Detail Right	N
008	008	South Facing Elevation, Detail Right	N
009	009	South Facing Elevation, Detail Right	N
010	010	Coursed Slate in South Facing Cut Water	
011	011	Coursed Slate in South Facing Cut Water	
012	012	Coursed Slate in South Facing Cut Water	
013	013	Projecting Stone, South Facing Elevation	
014	014	Projecting Stone, South Facing Elevation	
015	015	Projecting Stone, South Facing Elevation	
016	016	Reused Moulded Brick in Shoulder	
017	017	Reused Moulded Brick in Shoulder	
018	018	Reused Moulded Brick in Shoulder	
019	019	North Facing Elevation, General	S
020	020	North Facing Elevation, General	S
021	021	North Facing Elevation, General	S
022	022	North Facing Elevation, Detail Right	S
023	023	North Facing Elevation, Detail Right	S
024	024	North Facing Elevation, Detail Right	S
025	025	North Facing Elevation, Detail Left	S
026	026	North Facing Elevation, Detail Left	S
027	027	North Facing Elevation, Detail Left	S
028	028	New Brick Arch & Original Arch, North Facing (Right)	
029	029	New Brick Arch & Original Arch, North Facing (Right)	
030	030	New Brick Arch & Original Arch, North Facing (Right)	
031	031	Iron Cleats on North Facing Cut Water	
032	032	Iron Cleats on North Facing Cut Water	
033	033	Iron Cleats on North Facing Cut Water	
034	034	Deck, General	NE
035	035	Deck, General	NE
036	036	Deck, General	NE
037	037	Deck, Westernmost Cobbled Surface, Detail	
038	038	Deck, Westernmost Cobbled Surface, Detail	
039	039	Deck, Westernmost Cobbled Surface, Detail	
040	040	Deck Brickwork Detail, Left	
041	041	Deck Brickwork Detail, Left	
042	042	Deck Brickwork Detail, Left	
043	043	Deck Brickwork Detail, Right	
044	044	Deck Brickwork Detail, Right	
045		Deck Brickwork Detail, Right	
046	046	Deck, Easternmost Cobbled Surface, Detail	

047	047	Deck, Easternmost Cobbled Surface, Detail
048	048	Deck, Easternmost Cobbled Surface, Detail
049	049	South Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
050	050	South Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
051	051	South Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
052	052	North Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
053	053	North Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
054	054	North Facing Internal Parapet, General (Oblique)
055	055	Southern Cut Water at Deck Level
056	056	Southern Cut Water at Deck Level
	057	Southern Cut Water at Deck Level

6. Watching Brief

The purpose of the standing building survey was to record the bridge prior to a programme of repair work being carried out. It was intended that an archaeological watching brief be carried out, monitoring this repair. The work was carried out by sub-contractors appointed by Leicester City Council and a series of watching brief visits were carried out between February 21st and March 10th 2008. All work was carried out using hand tools.

Initial work consisted of raking out recent cement pointing on the internal parapets. It was hoped that the removal of the accumulated cement mortar may reveal evidence of phased building or repairs. Unfortunately, no such evidence was observed, which was not surprising due to the rubble construction employed.

The next phase of work was monitoring the repair and re-surfacing of the deck. As the initial building survey suggested the existing deck level was considerably lower than its original level it was unlikely that any considerable disturbance would occur. Some very limited and localised reduction was carried out during the re-surfacing work; this was limited to the removal of some humic material and topsoil (apparently dumped on the bridge as a temporary road block a few years previous). On the whole the exposed core material remained un-touched.

It was decided to leave the two patches of early cobbled surface *in-situ* as they were below the formation level of the new surface.

Using the projecting stones recorded during the building survey, the new deck surface was raised by approximately 150mm to 200mm (and deeper in places). This new surface sealed the exposed core and the crowns leaving the bridge water tight. The approaches to the bridge were to be laid with tarmac by Leicester City Council at a later date, and as this will again involve raising the levels there was no need for an archaeological watching brief.

No work was carried out on the parapets during this phase of work.

7. Archive and Publication

The site archive consists of

3 A2 permatrace sheet containing plans and elevations
79 Black and white negatives contact sheets
57 Colour transparencies
CD of 21 digital images & contact sheet
A4 Photo index sheet
3 A1/A2 Paper plans supplied by clients
Unbound copy of this report

The archive will be held at Leicester City Council under the Accession Number A12.2007.

A version of the summary (above) will be published in *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course.

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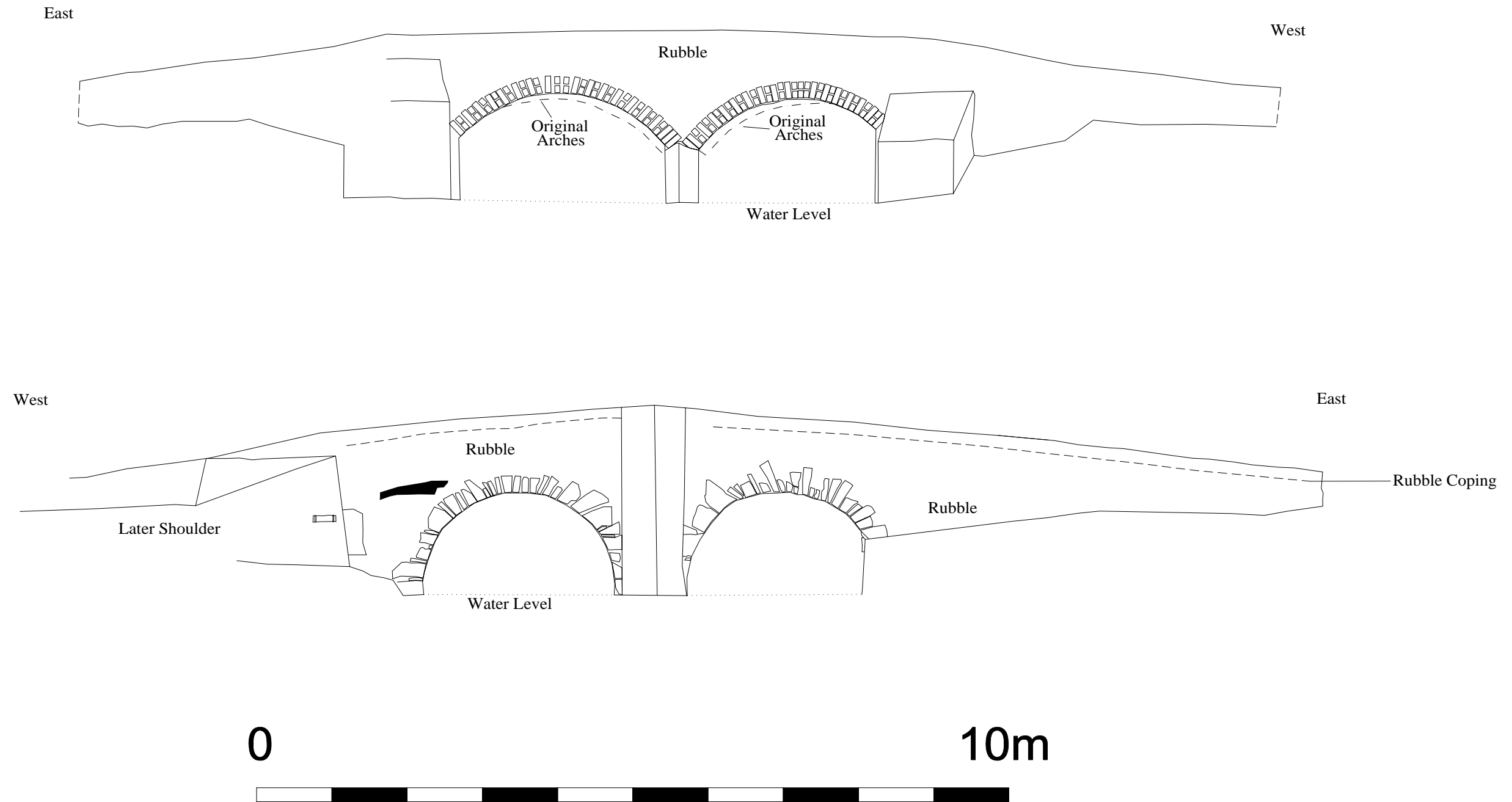


Figure 2 Parapet Elevations

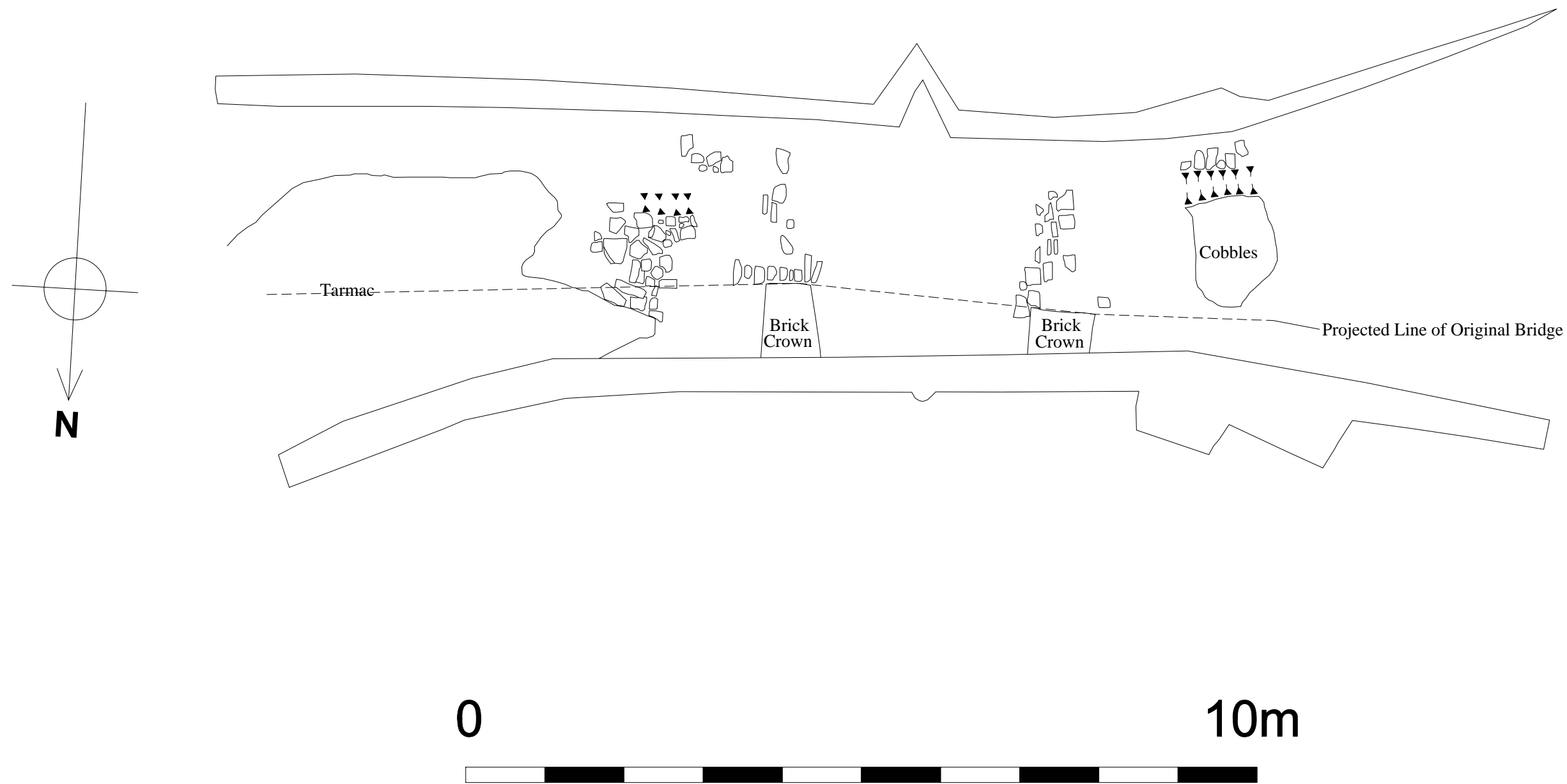
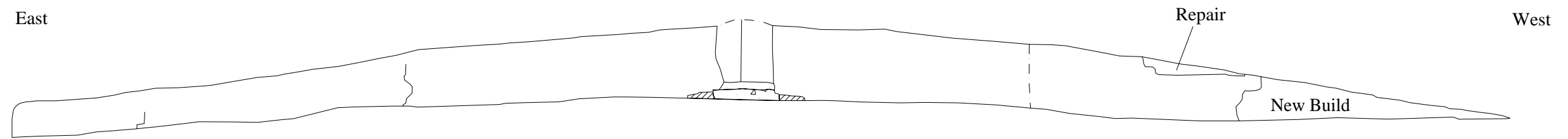


Figure 3 Deck Plan



- Concrete
- Projecting Stone
- ▨ Void
- ▧ Slate

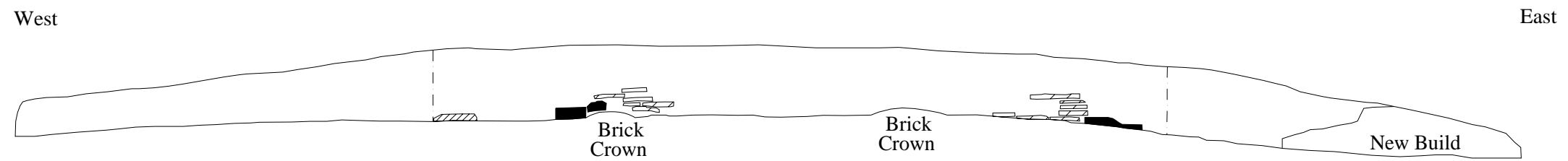


Figure 4 Internal Parapet Elevations.



Figure 5 South- Facing Parapet.



Figure 6 North Facing Parapet.



Figure 7 Early Cobbled Surface.



Figure 8 Exposed Brick Crowns.



Figure 9 New Deck.

Appendix

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for archaeological work

King Williams Bridge, Anstey and Leicester

Leicestershire (SK 5564 0895)

For: Leicester City Council, Culture and Regeneration Department

1 Definition and scope of the specification

1.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Guidelines 16 (PPG16, Archaeology and planning), para.30, this specification provides a written scheme for Historic Buildings Recording prior to a programme of resurfacing and repair to King Williams Bridge, Leicester and Anstey required by the Planning Authority, of any groundworks.

1.2 It addresses the requirements detailed in the *Brief For Building Recording at King Williams Bridge, Leicester and Anstey* (Leicester City Council 03.08.2007, hereinafter the 'Brief').

1.3 All archaeological work will adhere to the Institute of Field Archaeologist's (IFA) *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Standing Building survey* and the *Guidelines for Archaeological Work in Leicester* (LMARS). The building recording will follow the guidelines included in English Heritage (2006).

2 Background

2.1 King Williams bridge is a narrow two-arched packhorse bridge with a pointed cutwater. It is mainly of stone construction and spans Rothley Brook on the modern boundary between Thurcaston, Anstey Lane and the City of Leicester. The bridge is a Scheduled Monument and a grade II Listed building.

2.2 A late 17th century date is suggested for the bridge although it has been widened to the north. Documentary evidence records that it was widened in 1696 to accommodate a visit by William III.

2.3 The Listed building description is as follows:

Location: KING WILLIAM'S BRIDGE, SHEEPWASH LANE

ANSTEY, CHARNWOOD, LEICESTERSHIRE

Date listed: 01 June 1966

Date of last amendment: 01 June 1966

Grade II

ANSTEY SHEEPWASH LANE SK 50 NE 6/16 King William's Bridge (that 1.6.66 part in Anstey Parish) II Pack horse bridge probably of C17. Small granite and slate rubble stone bridge with two round arches and pointed cutwater rising into parapet on upstream side. Parapet approaches splayed out. Arches repaired with brick, as bridge widened on downstream side, supposedly for William III's visit to Bradgate in 1696. Scheduled ancient monument.

3 Aims

3.1 *Historic building recording* The building recording will aim to:

1. Investigate the fabric of the bridge and elucidate its structural development ('Brief' 3.1)

2. Research the history of the bridge through written and graphical sources ('Brief' 3.2).

2. Describe the history of the bridge and explain its architectural and historic significance. ('Brief' 3.3)

4 Methods

4.1 The historic building recording, requires investigation and recording prior to the proposed alterations. An initial record will be made of the fabric to be affected before works start and recording will also take place during development. The scope of the latter will be identified with the contractor for LCC ('Brief' 3.10) and the WSI revised accordingly ('Brief' 4.2.iii).

4.2 The research will involve the examination of local records and archives to combine the documentary research into a synthetic report ('Brief' 3.2).

4.3 A set of plans and elevation drawings will be produced capable of resolution at 1:50 scale including interpretation of the phasing ('Brief' 3.4). Interpretative reconstruction drawings and photographic records will be made of the structure.

4.8 Internal monitoring procedures will be undertaken including visits to the site from the project manager. These will ensure that professional standards are being maintained. Provision will be made for monitoring visits with representatives of Leicester City Council, and English Heritage.

6 Report and Archive

6.1 A report on the investigation will be provided following the groundworks.

6.2 Copies will be provided for the client, Sites and Monuments Record and planning Authority. The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

6.3 A full copy of the archive as defined in the 'Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage' (UKIC 1990), and Standards in the Museum care of archaeological collections (MGC 1992) and 'Guidelines for the preparation of site archives and assessments for all finds (other than fired clay objects) (Roman Finds Group and Finds Research Group AD 700-1700 1993) will be presented to Leicester City Council, Museum Services normally within six months of the completion of analysis. This archive will include all written, drawn and photographic records relating directly to the investigations undertaken.

6.3 On the completion of fieldwork the originating organisation should complete the on-line OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> on completion of the fieldwork.

7 Publication

7.1 A summary report will be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork. A full report will be submitted if the results are of significance.

8 Timetable and Staffing

8.1 The building recording is scheduled to commence in early November. An experienced buildings archaeologist will be present during this work. It is proposed to identify which works require monitoring following the building survey. The survey will be undertaken by Gerwyn Richards and the project will be managed by Patrick Clay

9 Health and Safety

9.1 ULAS is covered by and adheres to the University of Leicester Statement of Safety Policy and uses the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (revised 2005) with appropriate risks assessments for all

archaeological work. A draft Health and Safety statement for this project is in the Appendix. The relevant Health and Safety Executive guidelines will be adhered to as appropriate.

10 Insurance

10.1 All ULAS work is covered by the University of Leicester's Public Liability and Professional Indemnity Insurance. The Public Liability Insurance is with St Pauls Travellers Policy No. UCPOP3651237 while the Professional Indemnity Insurance is with Lloyds Underwriters (50%) and Brit Insurances (50%) Policy No. FUNK3605.

11. Bibliography

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SMA 1993, *Selection, retention and Dispersal of Archaeological Collections. Guidelines for use in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (Society of Museum Archaeologists)

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23.10.2007

Appendix

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement

King Williams Bridge, Anstey and Leicester

Leicestershire (SK 5564 0895)

For: Leicester City Council, Culture and Regeneration Department

1 Nature of the work

1.1 This statement is for an historic buildings survey.

1.2 The work will involve inspection of buildings and observation of groundworks during daylight hours and recording of any underlying archaeological deposits revealed. Overall depth is likely to be c. 0.2-0.5m. This will involve the examination of the exposed surface with hand tools (shovels, trowels etc) and excavation of archaeological features. All work will adhere to the University of Leicester Health and Safety Policy and follow the guidance in the ULAS Health and Safety Manual (2001) together with the following relevant Health and Safety guidelines.

1.3 HSE Construction Information Sheet CS8 Safety in excavations.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)143 (L): Getting to grips with manual handling.

HSE Industry Advisory leaflet IND (G)145 (L): Watch Your back.

CIRIA R97 Trenching practice.

CIRIA TN95 Proprietary Trench Support Systems.

HSE Guidance Note HS(G) 47 Avoiding danger to underground services. HSE Guidance Note GS7 Accidents to children on construction sites

1.4 The Health and Safety policy on site will be reassessed during the evaluation .

1.5 All work will adhere to the contractors' health and safety policy.

2 Risks Assessment

2.1 Working within a building site

Precautions. No work will be undertaken beneath section faces. Loose spoil heaps will not be walked on. Protective footwear will be worn at all times. Hard hats will be worn at all times. A member of staff qualified in First Aid will be present at all times. First aid kit, vehicle and mobile phone to be kept on site in case of emergency.

2.2 Working with plant.

Precautions. Hard hats, protective footwear and hazard jackets will be worn at all times. No examination of the area of stripping will take place until machines have vacated area. Observation of machines will be maintained during hand excavation. Liaison will be maintained with the contractors to ensure programme of machine movement is understood.

2.3 Working within areas prone to waterlogging.

Protective clothing will be worn at all times and precautions taken to prevent contact with stagnant water which may carry Vialls disease or similar.

2.4 Working with chemicals.

If chemicals are used to conserve or help lift archaeological material these will only be used by qualified personnel with protective clothing (i.e a trained conservator) and will be removed from site immediately after use.

2.5 Other risks

Precautions. If there is any suspicion of unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g chemical contaminants, unexploded bombs, hazardous gases work will cease immediately. The client and relevant public authorities will be informed immediately.

2.9 No other constraints are recognised over the nature of the soil, water, type of excavation, proximity of structures, sources of vibration and contamination.

Patrick Clay
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