

**CHICKSANDS PRIORY DII(F) WORKS
BEDFORDSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION
AND INVESTIGATION**

Project: CP1344

Document: 08/118

Version: 1.0

Compiled by	Checked by	Approved by
Adam Lodoen	Rob Wardill	Drew Shottliff

7th July 2009

Produced for:
Defence Equipment and Support
DISC
Chicksands
Shefford
Bedfordshire
SG17 5PR

© Copyright Albion Archaeology 2009, *all rights reserved*



Contents

Non-Technical Summary	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Project Background	5
1.2 Site Location and Description	5
1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background	5
1.4 Project Objectives	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Standards	7
2.2 Description of Works	7
2.3 Archive	7
3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION	8
4. BIBLIOGRAPHY	9

List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location plan

Figure 2: Removal of French drain gravel fill prior to installation of cable

Figure 3: Installation of turning chamber

Figure 4: Exposure of sandstone within turning chamber excavation

The figures are bound at the back of the report.



Preface

Every effort has been made in the preparation of this document to provide as complete a summary as possible within the terms of the method statement. All statements and opinions in this document are offered in good faith. Albion Archaeology cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party, or for any loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in this document.

*Albion Archaeology
St Mary's Church
St Mary's Street
Bedford, MK42 0AS
☎: 01234 294007
Fax: 01234 294008
E-mail: office@albion-arch.com*

Version Number	Date of issue	Reason for Amendment
1.0	7 th July 2009	n/a

Key Terms

Throughout this report, the following terms or abbreviations are used:

CAO	County Archaeological Officer
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DISC	Defence Intelligence and Security Centre
EH	English Heritage
HER	Heritage Environment Record
IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
SM	Scheduled Monument

Acknowledgements

The project was commissioned by Owen Jones of the DISC Equipment and Support. The fieldwork was carried out by Adam Lodoen (Archaeological Supervisor) who also prepared this report, with figures by Joan Lightning (CAD Technician).



Non-Technical Summary

A new communications cable was to be installed adjacent to Chicksands Priory scheduled ancient monument which lies within the grounds of the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre, Chicksands, Bedfordshire.

The DCMS consented to the works subject to them being accompanied by a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and reporting. Installation of the cabling and archaeological monitoring was carried out on 26th September 2009.

The limited nature of the building works associated with the installation of the communications cable meant that they had very little impact on deposits that had the potential to contain archaeological remains. Although some sandstone was encountered at a relatively shallow depth, because only a small surface area of this material was exposed it was not possible to say whether it formed part of the remains of larger structure or was just a rubble deposit.



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *Project Background*

A new communications cable was to be installed adjacent to Chicksands Priory scheduled ancient monument which lies within the grounds of the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre (DISC), Chicksands, Bedfordshire.

The DCMS consented to the works, where they affected the scheduled ancient monument, subject to them being accompanied by a programme of archaeological works. The English Heritage (EH) Inspector of Ancient Monuments recommended that this programme comprise observation and recording of groundworks associated with the installation, and the investigation and recording of any archaeological remains that were encountered. This was to be followed by a programme of post-excavation analysis and publication (as appropriate).

Albion Archaeology was commissioned by the DISC to carry out the archaeological work. Prior to commencement, a Project Design (Albion Archaeology 2008) was prepared and approved by the EH Inspector.

1.2 *Site Location and Description*

The DISC and Chicksands Priory are located off the A600, approximately 13km south-east of Bedford (Figure 1). The Priory buildings themselves are centred on grid reference TL 12150/39310.

The site lies on the Greensand Ridge which runs SW-NE through central Bedfordshire. The Priory itself is situated on the north side of the valley of the River Flit at c.49m OD. The land slopes gently down towards the river in the south and rises more steeply northwards to the crest of the Greensand Ridge.

1.3 *Archaeological and Historical Background*

Chicksands Priory (HER 375, SM93) was founded around AD1150 by Payne de Beauchamp and his wife, Countess Rohese, for the cannons and nuns of the Gilbertine Order. By tradition, the buildings of this order formed two quadrangles, one accommodating the nuns and the other the cannons. The quadrangles are thought to have been built around the north and south sides of the Church of St Mary which had existed prior to 1150. The remains of the medieval claustral buildings, dating to the 13th and 15th centuries, are incorporated into the present buildings on the site, mainly around the southern courtyard, in particular the west and north ranges. The priory was dissolved in 1538 and by 1600 only the south quadrangle remained, plus perhaps some other ancillary buildings.

Substantial alterations were made to the buildings in the 18th century by Isaac Ware and then in the 19th century by James Wyatt. These re-modellings extended the building to the north with the addition of a north wing and a stable yard (Smith, 1991).



In 1969 an east-west pipeline, installed to the south of the Priory building, revealed a number of burials, which were presumably of monastic origin, and cut through some of the garden features (Dyer 1970).

Drainage works undertaken around the north courtyard in 1988 revealed no evidence of medieval activity, but to the east of the Priory medieval deposits including building material were uncovered (Jackman 1991)

An archaeological evaluation in 1996 discovered undated structures, including stone foundations, north-east of the surviving Priory buildings (BCAS 1996).

1.4 Project Objectives

The specific objectives of the fieldwork were to:

- Monitor all significant groundworks that had the potential to reveal archaeological remains.
- Record those works and investigate any archaeological deposits encountered within them.

The general aim of the project was to add to the knowledge and understanding of the archaeology of Chicksands Priory and produce a report for deposition in the appropriate archive that fully describes the archaeological works.



2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards

Throughout the project the standards set out in the following documents were followed:

- Albion Archaeology. *Procedures Manual for Archaeological Fieldwork* (2001)
- English Heritage. *Management of Archaeological Projects* (1991)
- IfA. *Code of Conduct* (1999)
- IfA. *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999) and *the Analysis of Fieldwork Records* (2001)
- BCC. *Preparing Archaeological Archives for Deposition in Registered Museums in Bedford* (1998)

2.2 Description of Works

The cabling was installed adjacent to the north-eastern wall of the Priory building (Figure 1). It comprised approximately 40m of cabling within plastic trunking 0.10mm in diameter. At six points where it was necessary for the cabling to turn, 0.30m x 0.30m chambers were installed.

A French drain also lay adjacent to the Priory walls, comprising a gravel filled trench. The cabling and chambers were installed within this existing trench, but it was necessary in places to excavate below its base.

2.3 Archive

The archive for the site comprising original records, photographs and supporting documentation will be deposited with The Friends of Chicksands Priory. A copy of this report will also be submitted to the Archaeology Data Service's online OASIS database.



3. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken on 26th September 2008. At that time, all groundworks which required monitoring were completed. All excavations were carried out by hand.

The French drain within which the new cabling and turning chambers were installed measured 1.0m wide and approximately 0.10m deep and was filled with gravel (Figure 2). The cable was laid within the 0.10m depth of the gravel; only the excavations for the turning chambers (Figure 3) extended c.0.15m below this level.

In one turning chamber excavation potential archaeological remains were revealed (Figure 4). They comprised fragments of orange sandstone which were uncovered at a depth of c. 0.20m below surface level.

The limited nature of the building works associated with the installation of the communications cable at Chicksands Priory meant that they had very little impact on deposits that had the potential to contain archaeological remains. Although some sandstone was encountered at a relatively shallow depth, because only a small surface area of this material was exposed it is not possible to say whether it formed part of the remains of larger structure or was just a rubble deposit.



4. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion Archaeology, 2008. *Chicksands Priory DII(F) Works, Bedfordshire. Project Design for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication.* Document 2008/67.
- Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS), 1996, *Chicksands Priory, Archaeological Field Evaluation.* Report 96/14.
- Dyer, J., 1970. "The burial ground at Chicksands Priory, Bedfordshire," *Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal*, 5, 101-108.
- Jackman, T., 1991. "A watching brief at the Gilbertine Priory of Chicksands, Bedfordshire", *Bedfordshire Archaeology*, 19, 125-129.
- Smith, W. H., 1991. "Chicksands Priory and the Work of the Friends of the Priory," *Bedfordshire Archaeology*, 19, 120-124.

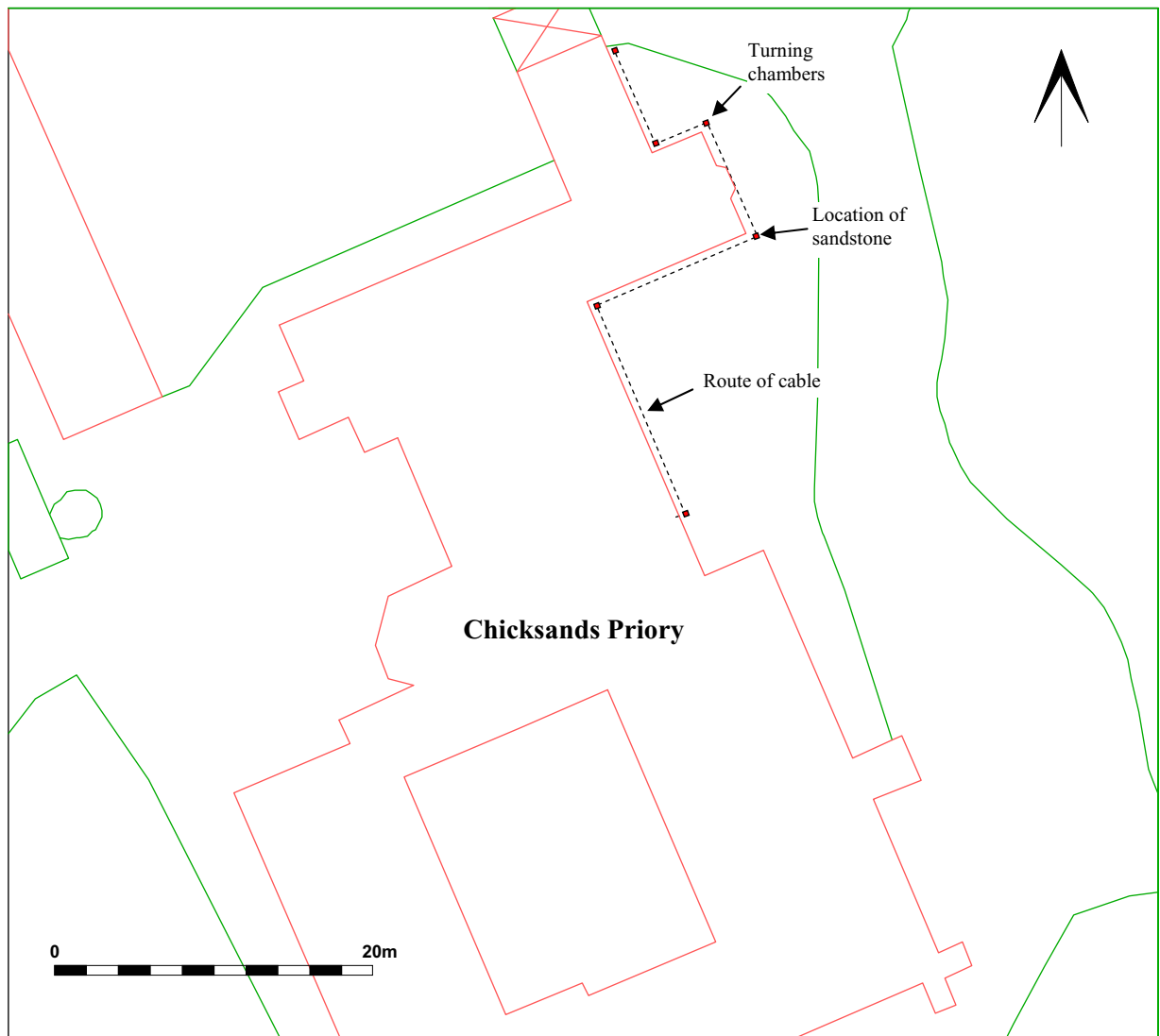
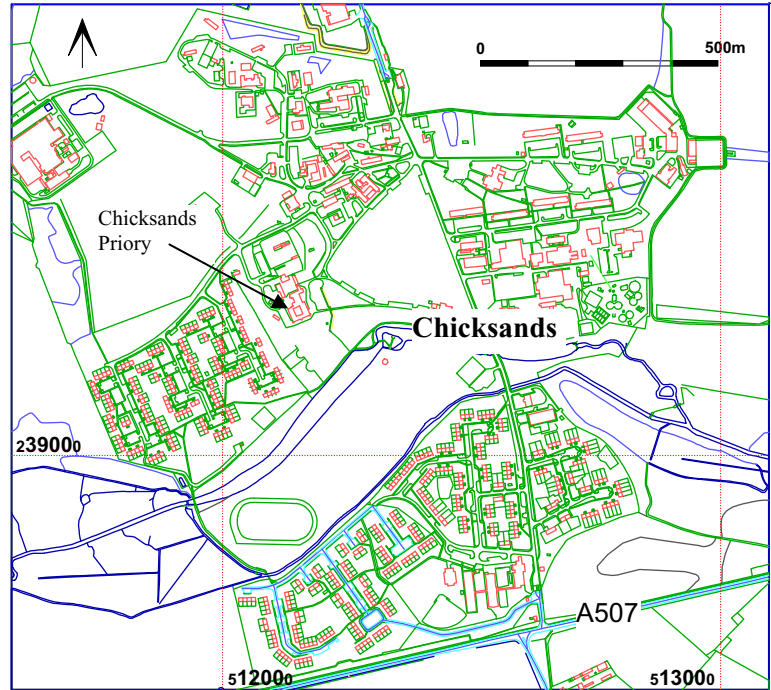
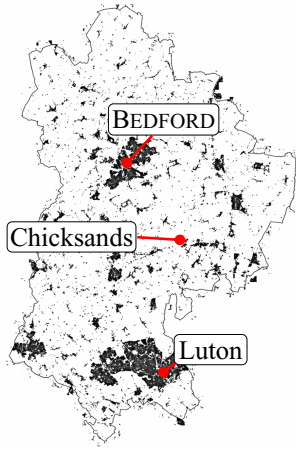




Figure 2: Removal of French drain gravel fill prior to installation of cable



Figure 3: Installation of turning chamber



Figure 4: Exposure of sandstone within turning chamber excavation