



Choir House, King's School, Worcester:  
archaeological monitoring and building recording

Huw Sherlock and P J Pikes  
2005



## archenfield archaeology ltd

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*Choir House, King's School, Worcester : archaeological monitoring and building recording 2005*

*The authors would like to acknowledge the help and support of Speller Metcalfe, the King's School and Chris Guy (Worcester Cathedral Archaeologist) for their help and support throughout the project.*

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Cover Photograph: The east face of Choir House



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## Summary

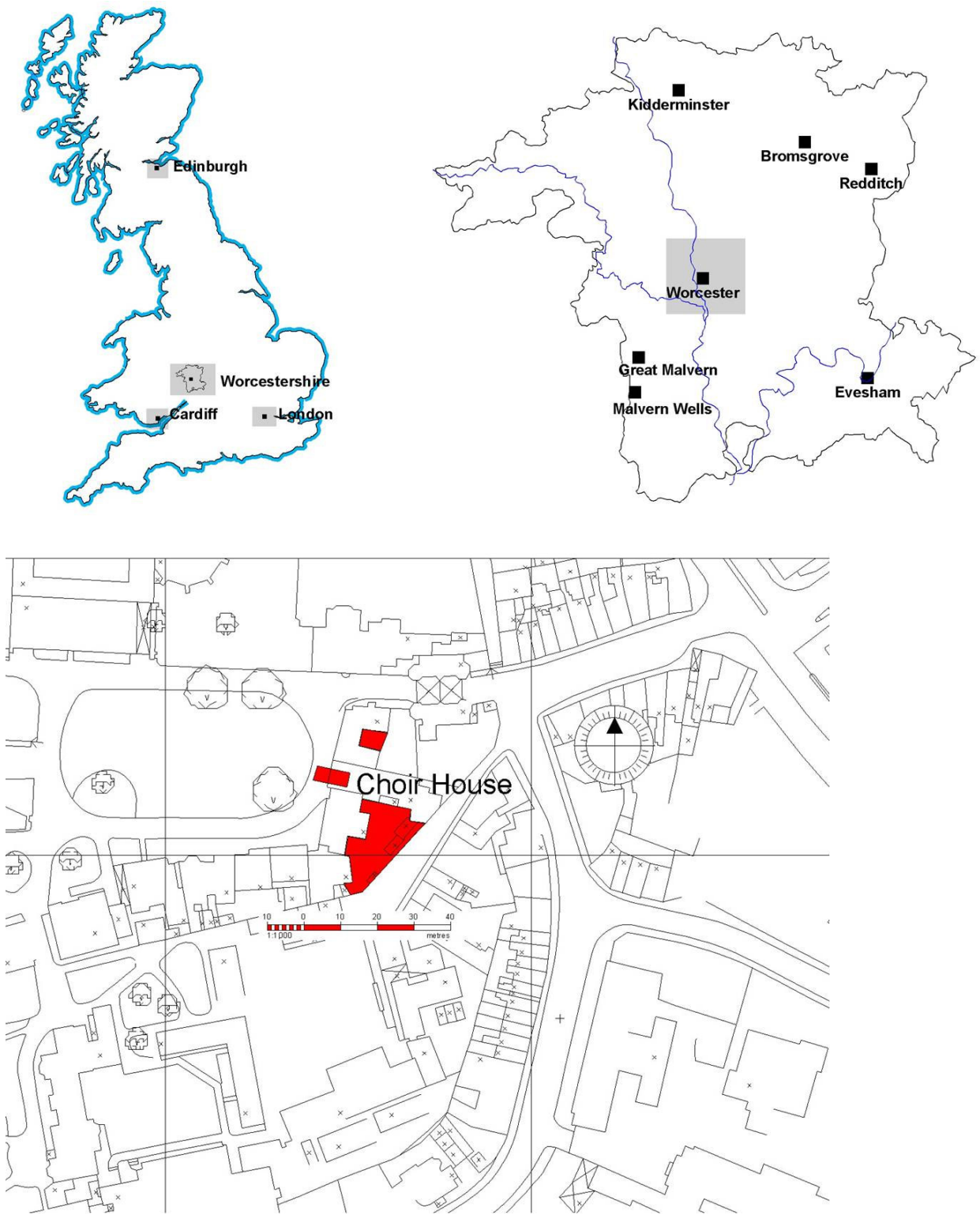
*Archenfield Archaeology conducted a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording at Choir House, King's School, Worcester when refurbishments and alterations were being carried out. The fieldwork took place between August 2000 to September 2001. A series of trenches in the yard of Choir House revealed that most of the area had been previously disturbed. Widespread deposits of ash, pottery and kiln furniture of post-medieval date was found to have been used to make up the surface of the yard. Only unstratified pieces of medieval pottery were recovered during the observation of work in this area. A photographic and drawn record of part of the former priory precinct wall that bound the school yard was also carried out. In the yard of 2 College Green a trench was excavated for the renewal of a foul sewer connection. Evidence of a stone surface approximately 1.50 metres below the current ground surface was found in situ.*

### 1.0 Introduction

Archenfield Archaeology was commissioned by Speller Metcalfe (main contractors for the reordering work at Choir House) on behalf of the governors of the King's School, Worcester (the client) to provide archaeological services during the insertion of new service runs in the yard of Choir House and adjacent to the frontage of the building.

The removal of gravel and the excavation of the service runs were done by hand except where they followed previously excavated trenches. The interior facing of the wall was photographed and drawn before and after it was taken down and mortar samples were taken from the exposed core of the wall. Subsequently a trench was excavated by hand within the yard of 2 College Green prior to the insertion of a new foul drain and inspection pit. Any archaeological deposits or features found in the area were recorded.

The entire area examined during this project lies within the area designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Worcester Cathedral, SAM 343a). Scheduled Monument Consent was obtained before the work commenced, and a variation to this was obtained to allow the additional excavation in the yard of number 2 College Green to proceed. Christopher Guy, Worcester Cathedral Archaeologist, prepared a brief for the work, and a project proposal for the conduct of the work was submitted for approval to all the relevant authorities in advance of the work commencing. The project took place between August 2000 and September 2001.



**Figure 1: Location plan**

## 2.0 Geological, historical and archaeological background

### 2.1 Geological background and land use

Worcester lies in the eastern valley of the River Severn, just north of its confluence with the River Teme. The east bank of the river is a sand and gravel terrace. The underlying geology of the site consists of beds of alluvial drift deposit over the Eldersfield mudstone formation.<sup>1</sup>

The site is currently in use as part of the King's School. The yard is covered in tarmac.

### 2.2 Historical background

The site is wholly within the precincts of the Priory of St Mary, the cathedral church of the bishops of Worcester, as they were defined from the early 13<sup>th</sup> century until the dissolution. St Mary's was one of eight Norman cathedrals in England to be served by a religious order<sup>2</sup> (Tatton-Brown).

Evidence for prehistoric activity in Worcester is scarce, and the dating of any such material recovered is uncertain. Flints from Gorse Hill and from the level gravel terraces of St Johns have been dated to the Mesolithic, Neolithic, and Bronze Ages (Whitehead, 1976, p11), but there is no evidence which indicates settlement of these areas. It has been suggested that a large circular palisaded enclosure identified at Deansway can be dated to the Neolithic period on the basis of comparison with similar sites elsewhere in Britain (Dalwood *et al* 1992, p123), but on the whole prehistoric evidence from archaeological investigations is largely negative. Small quantities of flint artefacts and Iron Age pottery have been recovered from the gravel terrace near Farrier Street, and the terrace itself is likely to have been cultivated in the prehistoric period. It is possible that there are field systems or settlement sites dating from the Bronze or Iron Ages along the gravel terrace which have not yet been excavated. Prehistoric activity in the Diglis area has been found in the form of artefacts recovered during river dredging; a Bronze Age sword was recovered below Diglis in 1902 and a Bronze Age flint dagger was found in dredged material dumped near Diglis docks in 1956.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the Roman town would have been sited in a place which was already settled, as is the case with Iron Age defended sites across the country. Remains of banks and ditches, probably dating to the late Iron Age, have been found in Worcester and tentatively identified as part of a rectilinear defended enclosure. Evidence for the existence of an Iron Age settlement remains thin however, comprising only a few dozen sherds of coarse pottery from the centre of Worcester, many of which appear to have been in contemporary use with early Roman fine wares. Worcester may have originally been chosen as a settlement site because it was a suitable location for a ford; the River Severn being tidal past this point until the building of locks in the 1840s, and the existence of a ford at Diglis has been investigated (Carver 1980b, p19). Any evidence for settlement on the floodplains however would be buried below and between layers of alluviation left from extensive flooding during the prehistoric and Roman periods.

The Roman settlement in Worcester seems to have been primarily industrial in character, with a highly developed iron smelting industry. This was possibly already active at the time of the Roman occupation and appears to have continued until their eventual withdrawal. Apart from this function, Roman

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<sup>1</sup> British Geological Survey 1:50000 geological map, Worcester Area, sheet 199.

<sup>2</sup> The others being Canterbury, Rochester, Durham, Winchester, Coventry, Norwich and Bath.

Worcester must also have been an established settlement, port, and trade and communications centre. By the late 40s and 50s AD the Roman military campaign and its extensive program of construction had reached the river Severn. A Roman road was built on the east bank of the river between the legionary fortresses at Kingsholm (near Gloucester) and Wroxeter (on the Severn near Shrewsbury), passing from north to south through Worcester. This road can be identified on a number of archaeological sites in the northern part of the city. Scatters of military equipment and coins found in the city centre do not however amount to sufficient evidence for a Roman fort at Worcester, despite the presence of late Iron Age defensive ditches here.

The early Roman settlement was first discovered when the castle motte was removed in 1833.<sup>1</sup> Much of the evidence for Roman occupation comes from this area and the cathedral close. Deposits containing Roman material indicate extensive occupation, the focus of the settlement lying within a defensive circuit. Most of the evidence excavated lies within the medieval city walls, and Roman Worcester can be characterized as a 'small town' dominated by its thriving iron working industry. The nucleus of the town would probably have contained a market area, shops, taverns, domestic buildings and, possibly, a few public buildings. The settlement was probably not an administrative centre during this period and does not appear to have been a formally planned Roman town. Structural evidence is scarce and it is presumed that most of the buildings were timber constructions. The northern part of the Roman settlement has been characterized as an 'industrial suburb' due to the scarcity of general domestic refuse. By the second and third centuries Worcester appears to have developed into a busy industrial and trading centre with extensive suburbs spreading loosely along the main axial road on the river terrace. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> century it exceeded the area covered by the later medieval city.

The English bishopric of Worcester dates from the late 7<sup>th</sup> century and therefore has had one of the longest continuous existences in the country, only exceeded by Canterbury, Rochester, London, York, Winchester and Lichfield.

Mercia had been converted to Christianity on the death of King Penda in 655, when his son, Peada, who had been baptised in 653 by St Finan, succeeded him. St Chad founded Lichfield, the premier cathedral of Mercia and briefly the archiepiscopal seat of the Mercian province, at a site that was itself '*neither a Roman town nor an Anglo-Saxon one*' (Brooks, 1989, p162).

The bishopric of the Hwicce with its seat at Worcester was part of the policy of Archbishop Theodore (669-90). The diocese of Worcester dates from 679. However, this is not likely to be the origin of Christianity in the area. There would presumably have been native British Christians in the area before the arrival of Anglo-Saxon immigrants. In 1973 two east-west burials were discovered during conversion of the undercroft of the Priory refectory into a sixth form centre by the King's School. The disturbed remains of two young men were barely 5cms below the level of the Norman floor. Radio-carbon dating suggested that the graves date between 429 and 687 and these were then reduced to a period between 483 and 643. It was suggested from evidence from the excavation, including dating of gold tissue found under the neck of one of the bodies and the presence of a single post-hole near one of the graves, that this was part of a small cemetery used by the Christian community in the settlement which later became Saxon Worcester. (C A Ralegh Radford, 1974, 149-151).

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria County History of Worcestershire



The antiquity of the church of St Helen in Worcester has been illustrated by Steven Bassett who presented a powerful case for this church pre-dating the cathedral and at least the possibility of it being originally a Roman church (1991). This is also supported by Baker who views the pattern of parish boundaries of St. Helen and St. Albans respecting the possibly levelled Roman defences as evidence of early foundations (Carver, 1980a, p3).

The first appointee to the new English diocese was Tatfrith, a monk from Whitby. Tatfrith died before he could be consecrated and another Whitby monk, Bosel was appointed in his place and became the first bishop in 680. Unlike the western Hwiccan, or Magonsaetan, diocese which may not have originally been based at Hereford, there seems no reason to suppose that the Bishops of Worcester's *cathedra* was not in a church at Worcester initially (pers Comm, Chris Guy).

In 731 Bede listed all the bishops of England. In Mercia, Ealdwine was bishop, and Walhstod was bishop of those people who live beyond the Severn '*provinciae Merciorum Alduini episcopus et eis populis qui ultra Sabrinam ad occidentam habitant Ualchstod episcopus*' Wilfred is listed separately as bishop of the Hwicce, and presumably had a *cathedra* at the monastery at Worcester.

Although the first bishop was a monk, the original foundation of Worcester Cathedral, the church of St Peter, seems to have been a house of secular canons. In 961 St Oswald introduced, or re-introduced, Benedictine monks to Worcester. The Benedictines served all the monastic cathedrals apart from Carlisle<sup>1</sup> (Midmer).

The area of College Green formed part of the priory precinct at the time of the Norman conquest. Urse d'Abitot, the Sheriff of Worcestershire, built Worcester Castle to the south of the cathedral some time before 1069 (Pevsner), and its outer bailey occupied land which had previously been part of the monastic graveyard. D'Abitot's impious act was rewarded by Bishop Ealdred's curse "Highest thou Urse! Have thou God's curse!" (Calthrop, 1906, p96).

In 1217 Henry III returned to the priory that land which had been taken by the castle in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, probably respecting the wishes of King John who died in 1216.<sup>2</sup> It seems likely that a new precinct boundary was built at this time, bisecting the castle's outer bailey. In 1217 an arrangement is recorded whereby the bishop possessed the castle bailey but the king retained the moat.<sup>3</sup>

The rebuilding of much of the church in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was accompanied by large scale projects in the rest of the priory. The Guesten Hall was built in 1320, the refectory and cloister rebuilt in 1372, and a new infirmary built in 1379 (Barker, 1994, p75). The priory precinct wall was improved by the completion of the Edgar Tower in 1368-9 and the Water Gate in 1378 (*ibid*).

By the time the original priory grounds were restored to the priory there had been a century and a half in which the standard major monastic buildings had been constructed. There would have been no pressing reason to build on the newly re-acquired land. However, Noake, (1866) suggests that the south side of the green

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<sup>1</sup> Carlisle, served by Augustinian canons, became a cathedral in 1133

<sup>2</sup> When John died in 1216, he was buried in front of the High Altar at Worcester

<sup>3</sup> *De ballio castri reddito*. Rex Johanni Marescallo, salutem. Mandamus vobis quod sine delacione faciatis habere venerabili patri nostro domino S. Wigornensi episcopo, ballium castri nostri Wigornie, quod est jus ecclesie sue; retenta ad opus nostrum mota ejusdem castri. Et in hujus rei testimonium etc. vobis mittamus. (Patent Rolls of the reign of Henry III preserved in the Public Record Office: AD 1216-1225, HMSO, 1901, 1217, p46)

Rex Johanni Marescallo, salutem. Mandamus vobis quod liberetis dilecto et fideli nostro Waltero de Bello Campo motam castri Wigornie, quam in manu nostra retinuimus, salvo episcopo Wigornensi et ecclesie sue ballio ejusdem castri, quod eidem episcopo et ecclesie sue reddimus. Et quoniam nondum habuimus sigillum, has litteras etc. (*ibid*. 1217, p52)

had been occupied by ancillary buildings including granaries, stables, a wash-house and a malt kiln by the end of the monastic period.

At the dissolution of the priory in 1540, the endowments of the priory were transferred to the Dean and Chapter of the cathedral. This in turn led to the founding of the King's School in 1541.

The monastic buildings were utilised as houses for the secular canons or prebendaries of the cathedral. In the Parliamentary Survey of 1649 Choir House was the site of the Singing School.

The core part of what is now number 3 College Green is marked as a prebendary house on George Young's plan of Worcester published in 1790. On 7<sup>th</sup> August 1882, a chapter meeting decided that '*the house now occupied by Mr Wright, coming into the possession of the Dean and Chapter at Michaelmas next, it be considered as a Choristers' or Choir House in which choristers be lodged, boarded and educated*' (Craze, 1972).

The necessary alterations to the building were made and on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1882 the building was ready for the sixteen choristers. This was a separate establishment from the King's School and the choristers were given permission to use the area between the Chapter House and the Guesten Hall as a playground (*ibid*).

Number 3 College Green was extended forward into the close in 1902 (*ibid*). A single storey flat roofed extension which had previously stood against the western wall of Choir House was demolished to make way for this extension.

### **2.3 Archaeological background**

Excavations in the grounds of Hostel House in 2000 included exposure of part of the precinct wall (Wainwright, 2000).

Further excavations in summer 2000 associated with laying a new road surface through the Edgar Tower exposed the foundations of an earlier gateway. This may have been the gateway recorded as being built by King John, originally associated with the castle rather than the priory (pers comm, Chris Guy).

A ground penetrating radar survey of the roadway west of the Edgar Tower was carried out in 1991. This suggested that there might be a large ditch aligned north-south immediately west of the tower, perhaps forming part of the Roman or Saxon defences. If this ditch continues in a straight line it would cross the area under consideration.

Underpinning work to the rear of 2 College Green in 1992 supported the possibility of a ditch aligned north-south. There was also evidence of a stone wall (perhaps of two phases), again running approximately north-south.

A watching brief in September 1980 during excavation for an electricity main in Castle Place recovered Roman pottery. These details have been provided by Worcestershire SMR but no other records exist.

In 1970 monitoring and excavation on the lines of pipe trenches in South Passage and the northern side of College Green identified 36 inhumations. Grave cuts were not distinguishable and although some of the nails found were presumably coffin nails, most of the finds were Roman. The only find which could definitely be dated to the medieval period was one sherd of late Saxon pottery (Clarke, 1980a).

Helen Clarke says that the lack of later material 'implies that burial there ceased with the Norman improvements' – that is mainly the 12<sup>th</sup> century priory refectory. It

should perhaps be added that the date of the discontinuance of the use of this cemetery also fits with the known desecration by Urse d'Abitot.

The 1885 OS map appears to show gardens to the rear of the properties on the east side of College Green.

### **3.0 Project aims and objectives**

The aims of the project were: -

- To monitor all groundwork undertaken by the contractor.
- To make a record of the extent and depth of all such groundwork.
- To make a record of any archaeological features or deposits exposed.
- To record the presence of archaeological material within the trenches and in the spoil removed during excavation, and to retrieve any potential dating evidence.
- To make a record of all finds and any environmental material recovered.
- To ensure that the location and the area excavated was accurately recorded on a suitably scaled plan.
- To record negative evidence and consider its implications.

### **4.0 Methodology**

#### **4.1 Field methodology**

The following methodology was employed: -

- Suitably qualified archaeologists monitored all activity that involved disturbance of the ground surface and manually excavated all those deposits which were not of demonstrably recent origins.
- An assessment of the archaeological significance of finds, structures and deposits was made and appropriate action taken.
- The presence of artefacts were recorded with a description of their type, quantity and original location.
- Structures, deposits and trenches were photographed and each exposure was recorded in the photographic log.
- All descriptions of structures and deposits, photographic records and drawing numbers were recorded on the relevant data capture documents in accordance with Archenfield Archaeology's standard site recording procedures.
- Staff carrying out the monitoring of the groundwork followed the guidelines laid down in the Archenfield Archaeology Health and Safety Policy.
- Archenfield Archaeology conforms to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Code of Approved Practice for the Regulation of Contractual Arrangements in Field Archaeology. All projects are, where applicable, carried out in accordance with IFA Standards and Guidance or Draft Standards and Guidance.

#### **4.2 Processing Methodology**

- Site drawings were inked and rationalised.
- Huw Sherlock of Archenfield Archaeology examined the ceramic material recovered and has provided spot dates.
- All data was entered into a Microsoft ©Access relational database.

## 5.0 Results

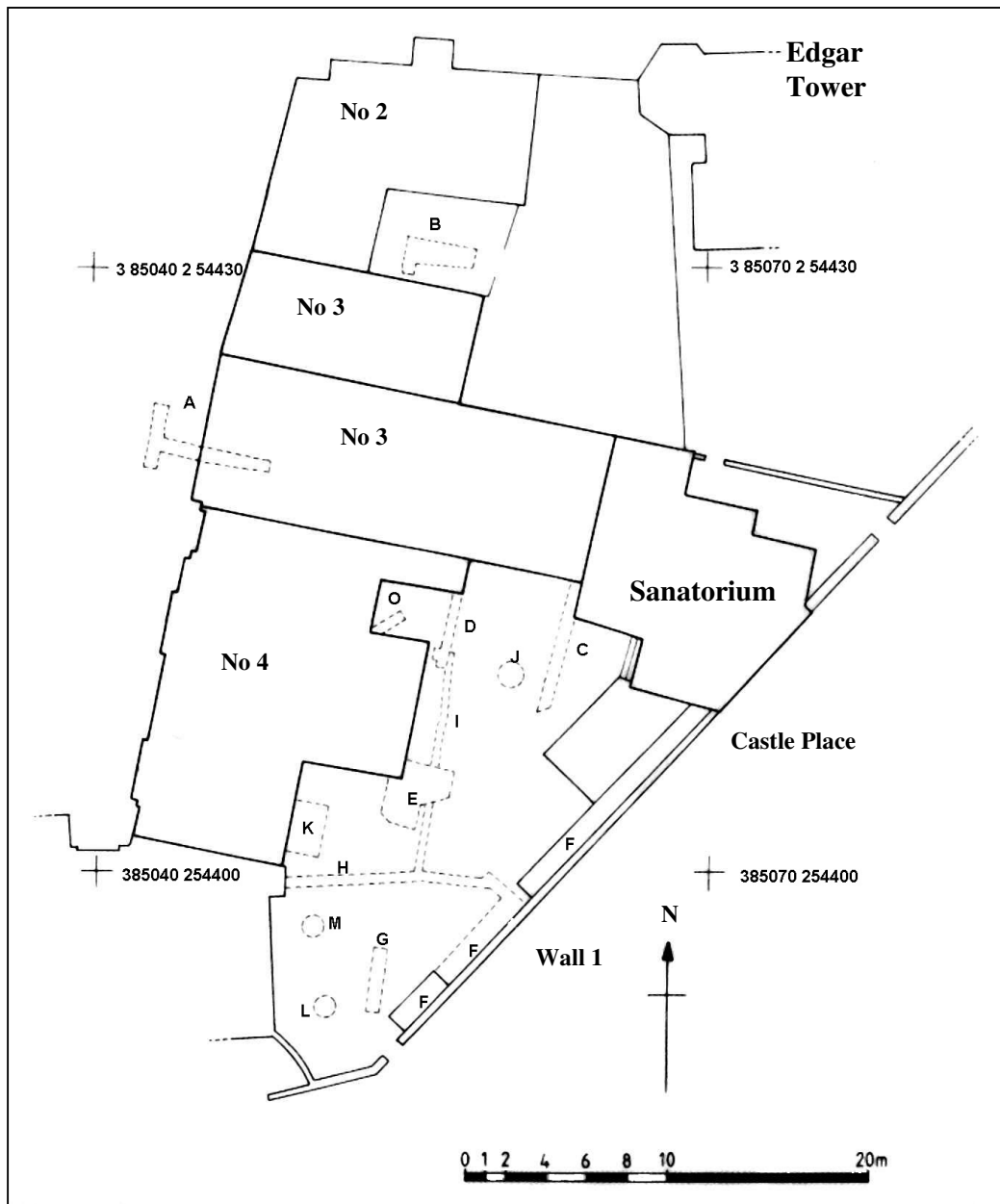


Figure 2: Site plan showing the location of the trenches excavated and the sections of precinct wall recorded.

## 5.1 Stratigraphy

### Trench A

Trench A was excavated in order to upgrade the existing electricity supply from the mains situated under the driveway around College Green to the west of Choir House (number 3, context 44). The trench originated at a point 2.70 metres to the west of the front wall (64) of the house, extending east under the wall, and then beneath the floor to cut through the top of the cellar wall (29), some 3 metres inside the building.

Tarmac layer 19 formed the surface of the Close in this area. This was laid directly above an earlier tarmac layer (20) which had been cut by pipe trench 22 in the relatively recent past in order to insert a new water main. Tarmac 19 had been laid over the whole area including the fill (23) of this trench. The electricity mains trench (24) and its fill (25) had been sealed by tarmac 20.

At the external (eastern) side of the wall was a 140mm wide brick-lined gully (26) which was 220mm deep and had a capping of brick (77). The gully was 350mm below the present ground surface at a level 150mm lower than the projecting foundation courses for the wall, which stood 130mm to the east. Above the capping, rubble layer 76 filled the part of the foundation trench in this area.

Trench 24 cut a compacted sandy clay layer (21) which contained some broken brick, numerous fragments of sandstone and many rounded pebbles. This layer continued westward; under the brick front wall (74) of the house; beneath a concrete floor (78) and finally butting the external face of the wall (29) of the cellar. The foundation trench (75) for wall 74 had been cut into layer 21. At the inside of this front wall the trench was also filled with layer 76.

Inside the building, the removal of layer 21 exposed a dark grey-brown soil with a compacted surface consisting of pebbles and small pieces of sandstone (30). This layer also butted the stone cellar wall (29) which was 0.90 metres thick with a height from the floor of the cellar of 22m OD. Above 29 was a slightly narrower (0.75 metres) piece of walling (28) upon which concrete floor 78 had been directly laid.

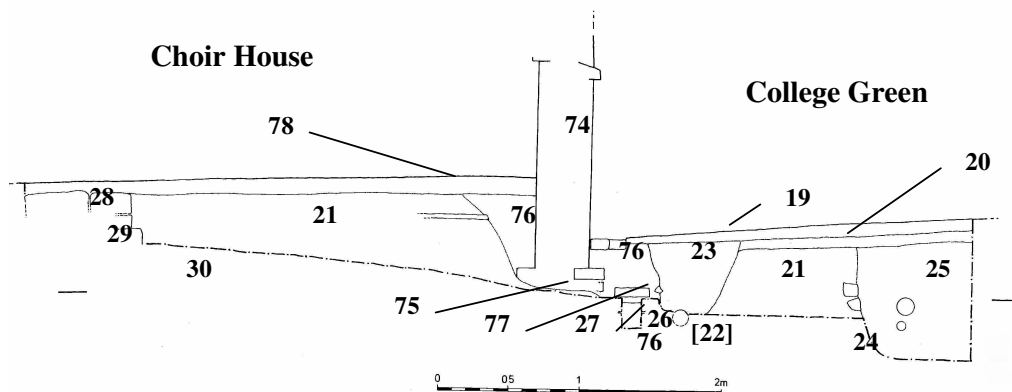


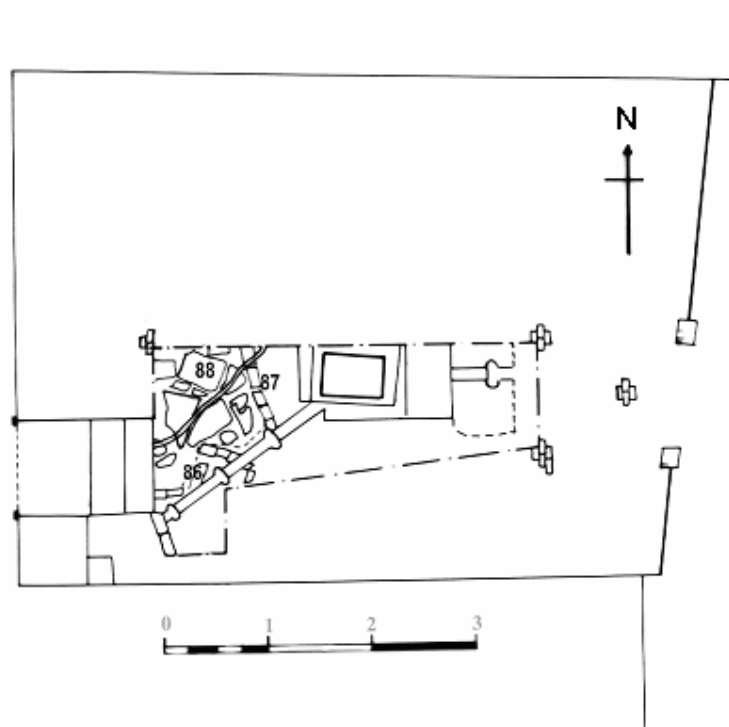
Figure 3: Southern section of trench A

### **Trench B**

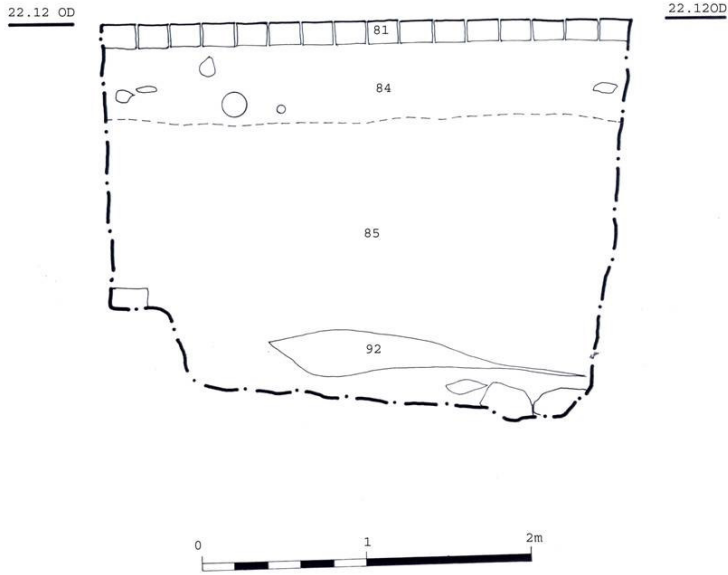
The yard surface in this area was made up of brick sets (81). Trench B was excavated to a total depth of 1.55 metres (20.68m OD) to expose the existing salt-glazed sewer pipes and a brick inspection pit. The trench had approximate dimensions of 2 x 0.70 metres. The upper layers were very disturbed because of the pipes and the inspection pit.

Beneath the brick sets at the eastern end of the trench was a very dark, humic, silty garden soil (82) which was approximately 300mm deep. This contained frequent inclusions of ash, clinker, brick and stone. A large amount of loose rubble, stone and brick (83) had been dumped below the garden soil and a patch of gravel (84), possibly the base of a path, had also been deposited. Below this a very mixed mid-brown silty soil (85) containing brick and patches of mortar which continued to the base of the trench.

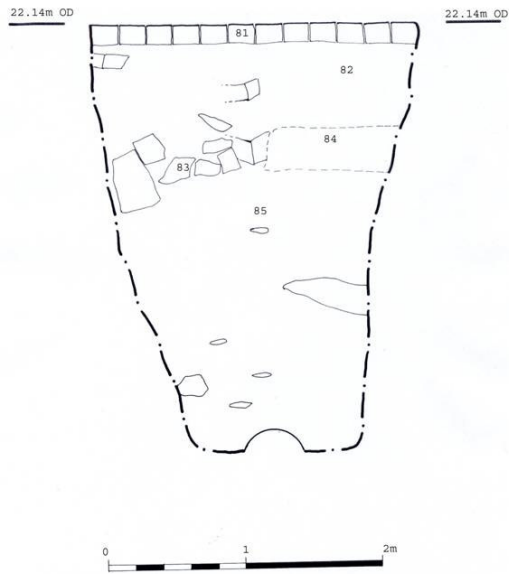
At the western end of trench B, gravel layer 84 was approximately 250mm deep and layer 85 was a darker, humic soil with frequent inclusions of brick and charcoal. A piece of worked ashlar was also recovered from this layer. A narrow brick-lined drain (86) crossed the trench running roughly north-south at the interface between layers 84 and 85. Below this at the western end of the inspection pit was a semi-circular brick feature (87) lined with a mortar render on its inner face. Below layer 85 a patch of decayed lime mortar (92), approximately 150mm thick maximum, extended across the central portion of the trench. At the base of the trench at this end an uneven stone surface made up of roughly-laid sandstone slabs was revealed



**Figure 4: Plan of trench B**



**Figure 5: Eastern section of trench B**



**Figure 6: Western section of trench B**





**Plate 1: General view of Choir House yard during construction work**

The excavation of trench B has showed that the upper layers of the yard have been heavily disturbed and are characterised by successive episodes of deposition of soil and rubble, probably to level up the yard surface. Later building and the insertion of services have in turn further disturbed these make-up layers. The stone slabs and the footings of the wall represent the earliest features uncovered during the excavation. The lack of pottery of medieval date suggests that either any earlier features have been removed by later intrusions, or that these layers are sealed by the slabstone base.

## **The Yard Area – Trenches C to O**

### ***Trench C***

Trench C was excavated in order to replace part of the storm water system beneath the yard. It extended from the internal angle formed by Choir House and the Sanatorium for a distance of 3.60 metres to the south and was 0.50 metres wide.

The northern part of the trench exposed the top of a brick vault (13) which ran along the southern external wall of the house. This had previously been sealed by a thin layer of soil and gravel which had underlay a single row of flagstones butting this wall. The vault was constructed of a single layer of bricks; it adjoined the wall of the house to the north and a stone and brick retaining wall (60) to the south. The brickwork of the vault and the wall appeared to be of one build. The vault had been attached to the external face of the house without bonding and was left *in situ*, although a void of 0.80 metres above a soil fill was revealed through a gap in the apex

The outer skin of the brickwork of the Sanatorium had been arched over the vault although it was blocked inside a few centimetres to the east. The retaining wall of the vault was observed extending westward as far as the southern extension to

number 3. As only the top of the wall was exposed, no further investigation was possible.

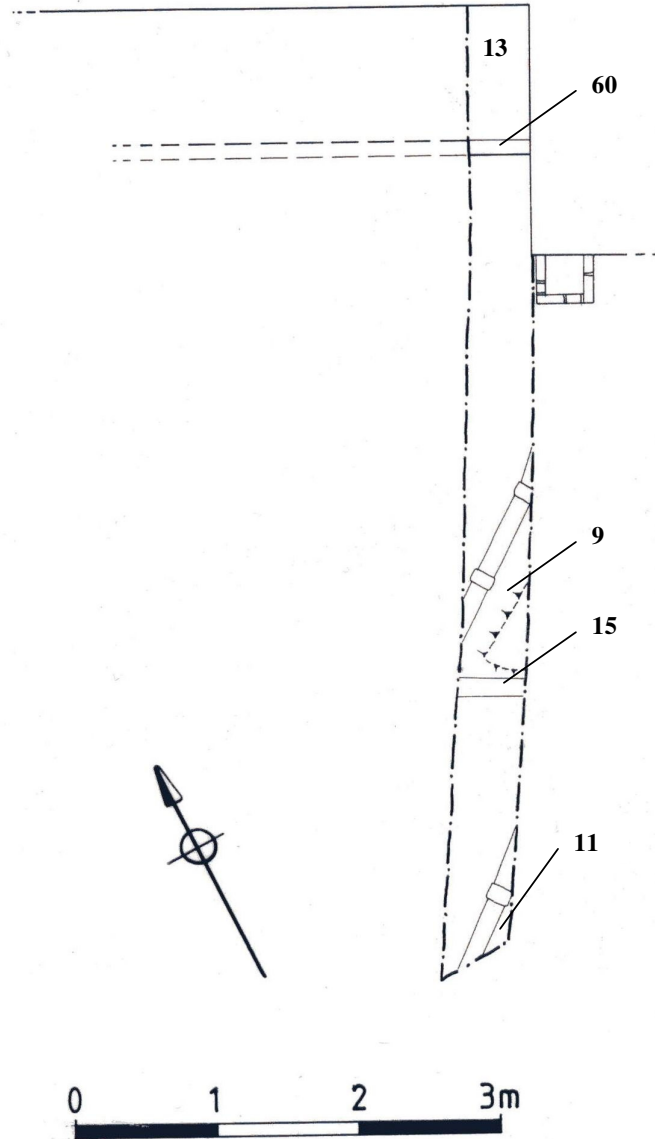


Figure 7: Plan of trench C

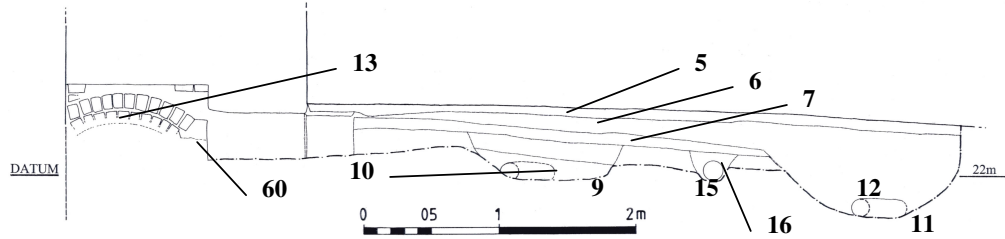
Tarmac layer 5 covered the whole of the yard. It tailed off northwards to a thin spread butting flagstones 17. Beneath it was a rubble hardcore layer (6) which was up to 200mm thick. Beneath 6 another tarmac surface (7) overlay more hardcore (8). Here surface 7 tailed off to the north to stop as a thin spread in the area of the flagstones.

At the northern end of the trench layers 5 and 7 together measured no more than 30mm thick; layer 5 being laid directly on top of 7. At the southern end, tarmac

number 5 was 80mm thick; this was 250mm higher than number 7 which was 60mm thick.

Three service trenches (contexts 9, 11 and 15) crossed trench C. The fills of 9 (10) and 15 (16) were below the hardcore layer (8) of the earlier tarmac (7,) although 8 merged into both fills. Service trench 11 (fill 12) cut through 7 and was associated with the recent toilet block.

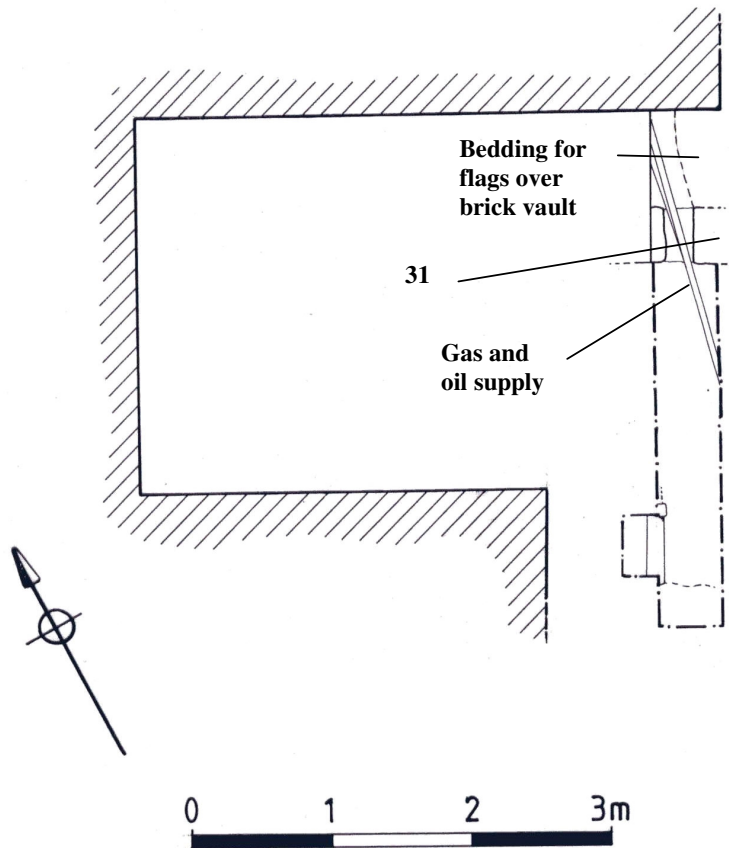
Where the various brick rubble fills and hardcore were entirely removed a dark soil (14) was exposed. This had the appearance of a garden soil and contained



fragments of brick.

Figure 8: Eastern section of trench C

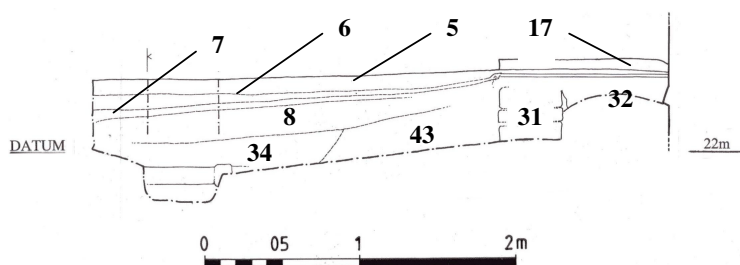
**Trench D**



**Figure 9: Plan of trench D**

This trench was excavated for the insertion of a new storm water pipe. It extended for 3.70 metres south from the south-eastern corner of the southern extension (59) of Choir House and was 0.50 metres wide.

The removal of stone flags (17) exposed a steel plate which covered a hole in the roof of a second brick vault (32). This vault ran along the southern external face of extension 59 and, like vault 13, was retained to the south by a stone-and-brick wall (31) and was also a single course thick. However unlike vault 13, which had simply butted the wall of Choir House, vault 32 was of an integral build and was attached to the extension. A course of bricks in the face of the wall was inclined to



form the base of the arch.

**Figure 10: Western section of trench D**

The upper layers of trench D were identical to those of trench C; tarmac (5) on top of hardcore (6) above tarmac (7) on hardcore (8). At its southern end, trench D crossed service trench 33 with its fill (34) below and then merging into, hardcore (8). To the north of trench 33 and cut by it (and therefore lying below hardcore 8) was a dark, sandy soil with fragments of brick (43), which abutted wall 31. No other features were exposed.

### ***Trench E***

Trench E was an irregularly shaped trench adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century building at Choir House. It was cut to expose and repair the storm and foul water pipes converging on an inspection chamber in the centre of the yard.

The upper stratigraphy was the same as in trenches C and D; namely tarmac (5); hardcore (6); tarmac (7); hardcore (8).

The southern end of service trenches 9, 11 and 33 were observed in this trench together with storm water service trench 42 which ran into the manhole chamber from the west.

A soil layer (14) was observed at the bottom of this trench.

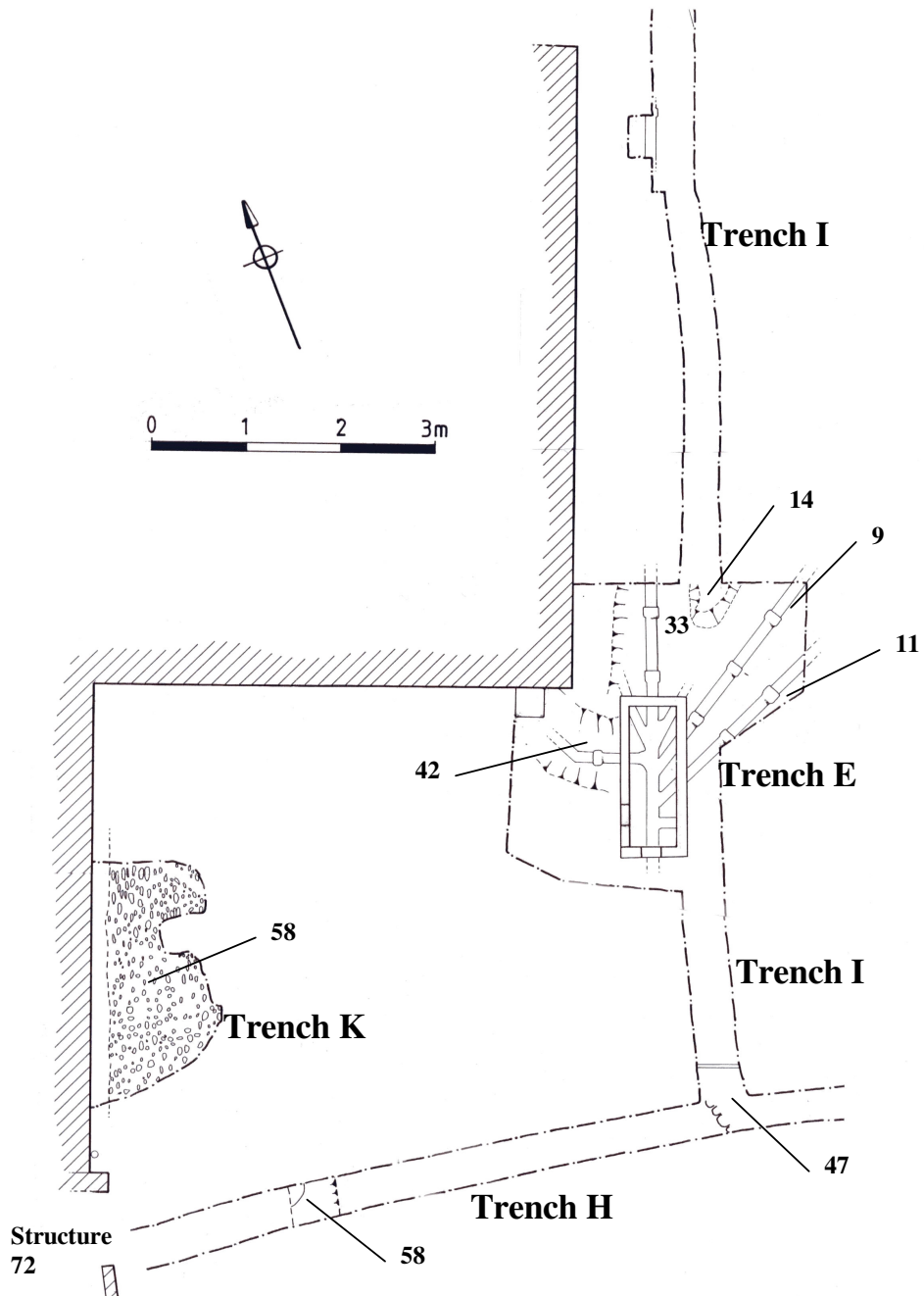


Figure 11: Plan of trenches E, H, I and K

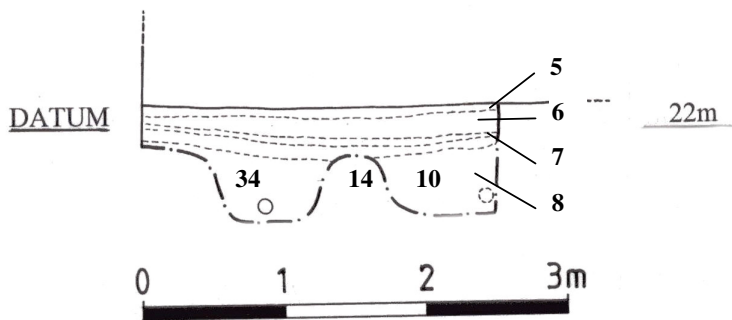
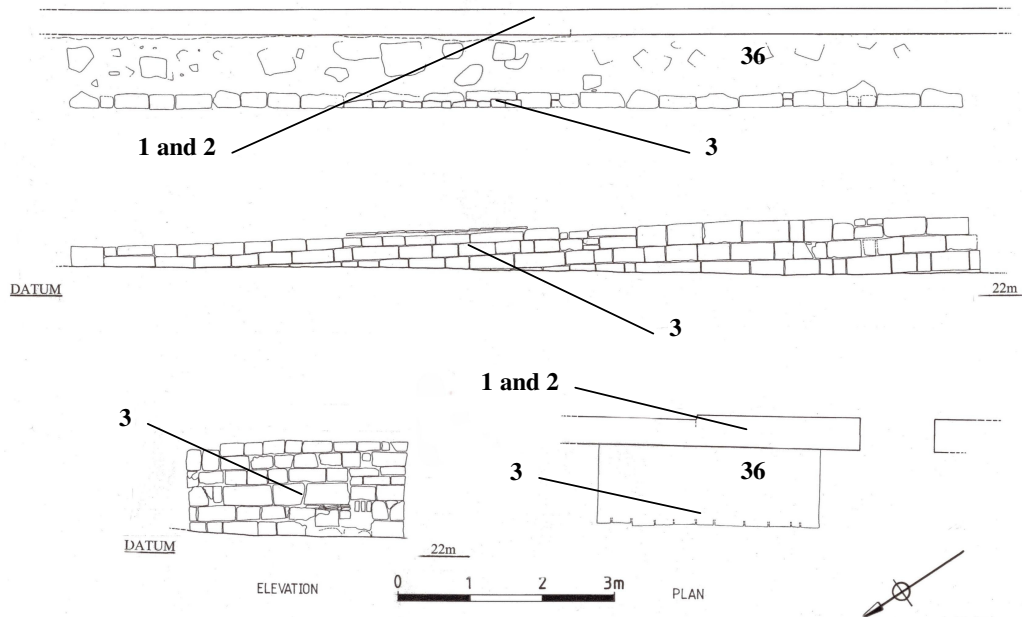


Figure 12: Northern section of trench E

### ***Trench F***

Trench F exposed an internal sandstone ashlar wall (3) along the south-eastern boundary of the yard, from the wall of the Sanatorium to the gate. The original wall seems to consist of two leaves of large trimmed blocks of Alveley stone with a rubble core infilling. Only the inner leaf was visible for this survey as the other was covered by a modern brick wall that was laid directly on top of the original. Wall 3 may have stood to a height of just over 3 metres originally, as can be seen in a possibly surviving or reconstructed piece of associated walling visible from the outside of the Choir House yard.



**Figure 13: Plan and elevation of area F**

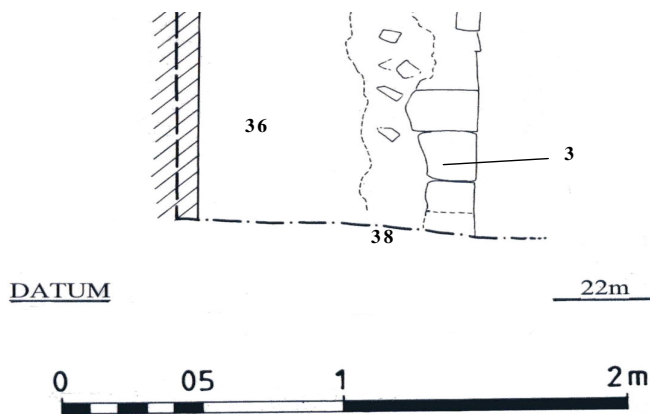
The south-western wall of the yard was composed of three main elements. On the outside in Castle Place worn sandstone blocks (1) stood to a height of 0.50 metres. These formed part of a wall which extended from the Edgar Tower, went around the yard and behind Hostel House. Above these a brick wall (2) stood to a height of 0.36 metres. In Choir House Yard wall 3 formed a lower interrupted internal face of what may have been the original priory precinct wall.

At the start of the project, this wall was visible as two distinct segments. The north-eastern part appeared to originate at the southern wall of the Sanatorium (4) and extended south-west for 11.80 metres before being terminated by a brick wall of the same height laid at a 90° angle. South-west of this brick wall there was a gap of 5.70 metres before the wall continued again for a distance of 3.20 metres to terminate just before (0.50 metres) the gateway into the yard from Castle Place. The blocks forming this wall varied between 150mm and 60mm in height, 360mm and 120mm in width and 190mm and 80mm in depth. In height, wall 3 varied from 2 courses (140mm) high at the north-east to 6 or 7 (700mm) at the south-west. The face of the wall projected about 1.10 metres out into the yard from the internal face of brick wall 2.



**Plate 2: Section of wall 36**

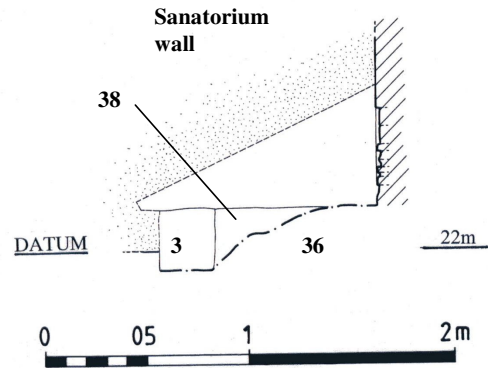
Wall 3 was a single row of ashlar deep and retained a bed of fine gravel (35). Removal of this gravel exposed an older sandstone and mortar wall (36) which appeared to have been re-faced by wall 3. A void between these two walls was filled with a brick and stone rubble (38). Wall 3 seems to be offset from the proposed original line of wall 3 by 1.10 metres and probably was simply a garden feature re-using the original sandstone blocks from the precinct wall.



**Figure 14: Section of wall 36**



Yard re-surfacing entailed the removal of the whole of the upper tarmac, 5. Along the south-western side of the yard this exposed the remaining part of wall 3, joining the original two segments. The earlier walling (36) continued uninterrupted behind it. Tarmac 5 had been laid directly on both walls 3 and 36; its hardcore (6) and the earlier tarmac (7) butted the north-west face of 3.



**Figure 15: Profile of wall 36 by the Sanatorium**

At the north-eastern end of wall 7, the southern wall of the Sanatorium had been laid directly onto 3, 36 and 38 without a foundation trench. Above wall 38 the Sanatorium butted wall 2.

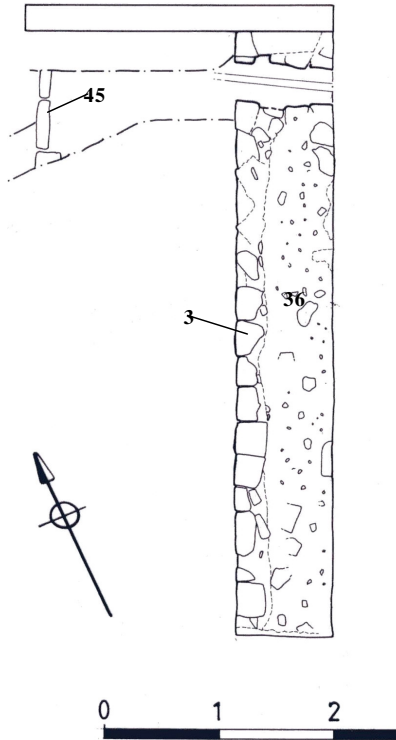


Figure 16: Plan of middle section of area F

### Trench G

Trench G was excavated to gain access to a suspected leak in the main foul water outlet. From the yard this ran to an inspection chamber just inside the gate. It was approximately 3 metres long and 0.50 metres wide.

Here, tarmac 5 was laid directly onto tarmac 7 with no intervening hardcore, these two levels being 0.70 metres deep. Hardcore (8) underlay tarmac (7).

Below this hardcore was a layer of kiln waste and rubble layer (41). This sealed the fill (61) of trench 40, the main storm and foul water pipe leading out of the yard.

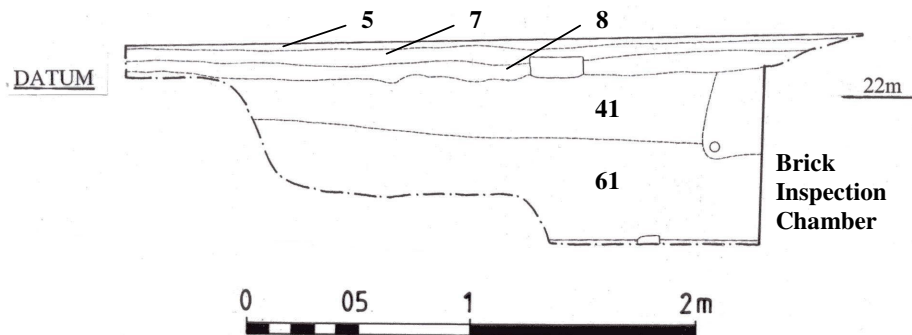
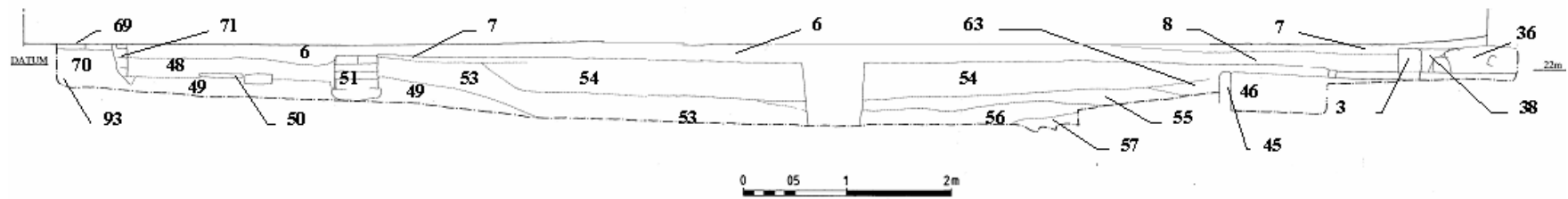


Figure 17: Eastern section of trench G

**Trench H**



**Figure 18: Northern section of trench H**

## **Trench H**

Trench H was excavated in order to insert a new gas main running east-west across the yard. The upper tarmac surface (5) of the yard had already been removed when excavation of this trench began but originally it covered the entire area of the cutting.

The exposed hardcore (6) extended from the western side of the yard eastward as far as wall 3, the inner face of the re-built precinct wall. At this point the tarmac (5) was laid directly on the wall (see trench G, above).

At the western end of trench H was a small two storey structure (1.40 metres x 0.80 metres) butting the eastern end of the range of buildings forming number 5 College Green (Hostel House - context 68). Beneath the brick floor (69) of this structure was compact sandy clay with mortar and broken brick (70) bounded to the east by the foundations of structure.

To the east of this, hardcore 6 overlay a mid-brown sandy soil with fragments of brick (48) beneath which were two large flagstones (50) covering only part of layer 49. This was a dark clayey soil with occasional rounded pebbles. At a distance of 2 metres east of structure 72, 49 was cut by a vertically-sided foundation trench. This trench contained the remains of brick wall (51) which ran from north to south and was also sealed beneath hardcore 6.

East of wall 51 and below hardcore 6, the earlier tarmac (7) (which had been present in the other trenches) had been laid directly on a 300mm deep layer of rubble and kiln waste (54) with no intervening hardcore (8). Layer 54 seemed to be identical with layer 41 in trench G. Tarmac 7 butted against the eastern face of wall 51.

Between the eastern face of wall 51 and the western edge of layer 54, tarmac 7 had been laid directly on a dark greyish-brown firm sandy soil (53) which was not present to the west of wall 51. This soil sloped down steeply from a point 1.10 metres east of wall 51 forming a substantial depression which layer 54 had filled. Layer 53 was immediately above layer 49, which sloped downwards to disappear below the depth of excavation 1.50 metres west of wall 51.

The kiln waste and rubble layer (54) continued across the greater part of the yard becoming thinner and petering out 5 metres to the east. Below 54, layer 53 continued at a lower level towards the east where it merged into layer 56, a firm sandy soil with flecks of brick.

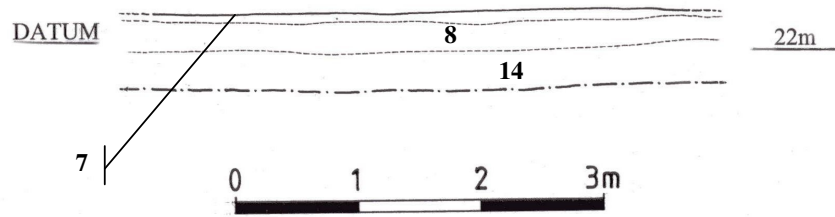
Beneath 56, a very sandy later (57) lay above a scatter of sandstone blocks with brick (47) at the bottom of the trench at 21.6m OD.

Above 56 and below 54 was layer 55, which was composed of compacted red gravel. The eastern edge of this lay beneath a firmer mortar and kiln waste fragment layer (63) and to the east of this layer 63 butted a feature composed of a row of vertically laid stones (45).

Feature 45 lay 1.50 metres to the west of, and parallel to, wall 3. It separated a friable and clean humic soil (46) to the east from the rubble and kiln waste layer (54) to the west. 45 was composed of stones up to 350mm high laid on edge, which formed a boundary between the rubble layers 54 and 63 to the west and layer 46 to the east. Tarmac 7 had been laid directly onto both feature 45 and soil 46. To the east, soil 46 butted the face of wall 3.



### ***Trench I***



**Figure 19: Western section of trench I**

Trench I was excavated to facilitate a gas main running northwards through the yard from the one in trench H.

At its junction with trench H the same sequence as described above was visible; that is tarmac 7 on kiln waste layer 54.

Towards the northern end of trench I, the sequence was hardcore (6); tarmac (7); hardcore (8) and layer 14.

The southern to middle length of trench I was too disturbed by service trenches to obtain any earlier stratigraphic information.

### ***Trench J***

Trench J was a circular trench cut in order to plant a tree and measured 1.20 metres in diameter.

It exposed layer 14 lying beneath the sequence tarmac (5); hardcore (6); tarmac (7) and hardcore (8).

## ***Trench K***



**Plate 3: Area of cobbles, 58, in trench K**

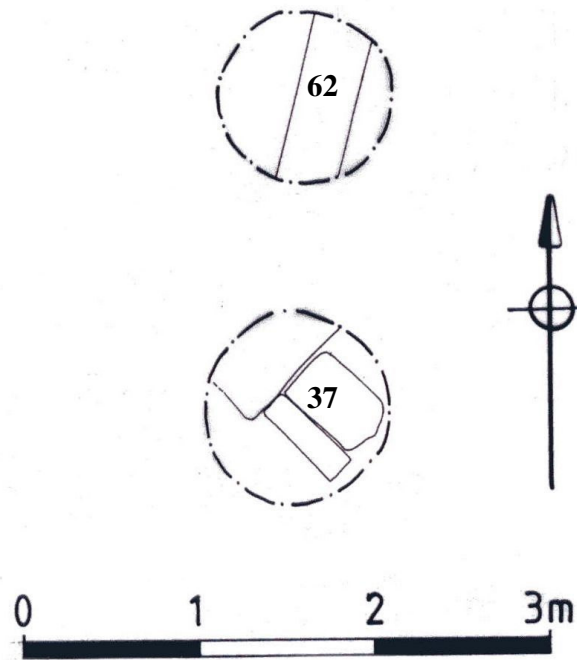
Trench K was an area opened up immediately to the east of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century block of Choir House (number 4 College Green) to investigate an area of cobbles visible below hardcore 6 in this area.

The cobbles (8) had been cut by the foundation trench of the eastern wall of the building. They were laid with a row of bricks running north-west to south-east at the northern surviving edge which measured 2.50 x 1.20 metres.

### **Trench L**

Trench L was excavated in order to plant a tree in the south-western corner of the yard. It was 0.90 metres in diameter.

Immediately beneath hardcore (6) the top of the surviving brickwork of a wall (62) was uncovered at 22.12m OD running north-south. Beneath this was a surface formed of flagstones (37), present at a depth of 21.58m OD; it had a completely different alignment from 62. These flags had been laid on a mid-brown sandy clay layer (65) which had inclusions of mortar, brick and pebbles.



**Figure 20: Plans of trench L**



**Trench M**

Trench M was also excavated in order to plant a tree in the Yard. It was 0.90 metres in diameter.

In this trench hardcore layer 6 overlay wall 62 which was present at a depth of 22.05m OD.

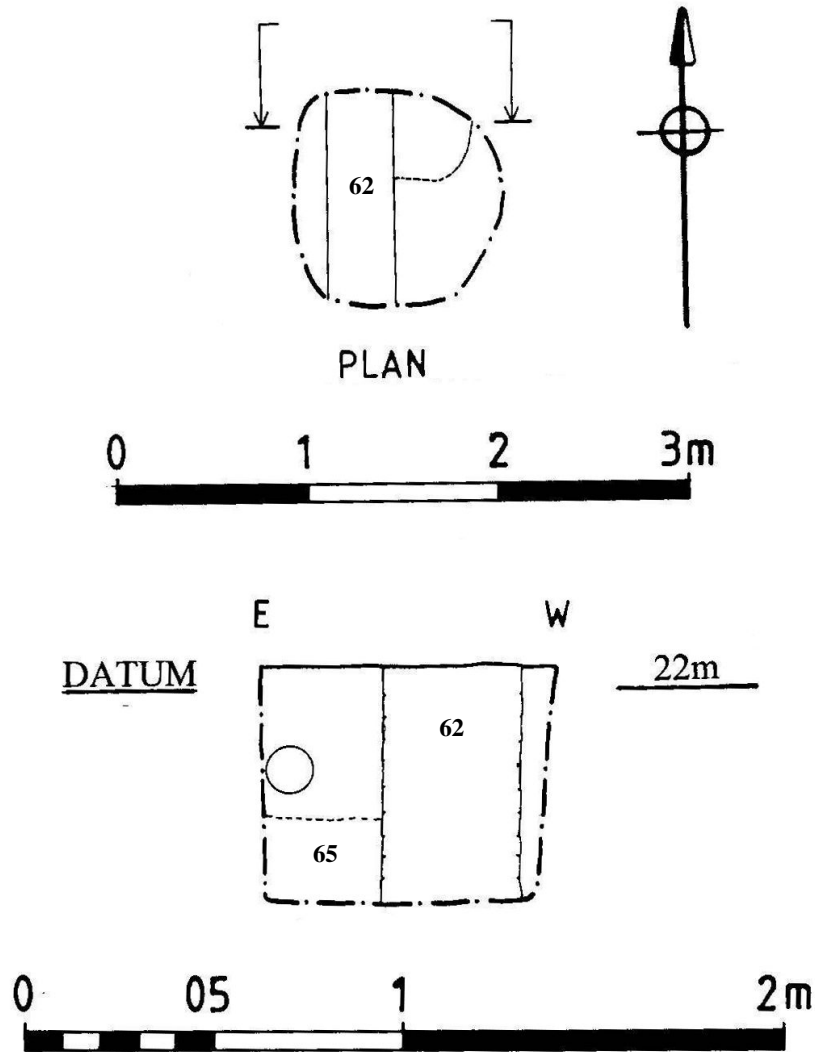


Figure 21: Trench M: plan and section

**Trench O**

Trench O was excavated in order to lay a short length of storm water pipe from a downspout in the internal angle of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century building 4 College Green to the existing drainage system, 2 metres to the north-east.

This trench was entirely within a rubble deposit which was associated with the construction of this building.

## **5.2 Pottery**

The pottery recovered from the excavations was almost exclusively post-medieval in date, the majority from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Transfer-printed wares, pearl wares, tin-paste material and ash were recovered. This has been identified as originating from the nearby Royal Worcester Porcelain works and was commonly used in and around Worcester for the levelling and infilling of areas (pers comm. Wendy Cook). A small number of sherds of green-glazed medieval pottery, probably dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, were recovered from unstratified contexts, suggesting that the medieval deposits are simply at a greater depth than was excavated for this project. One example of decorated floor tile was recovered from the surface of the yard which seems to be of post-medieval date and therefore not of monastic origin.

## **6.0 Conclusions**

### **Phase 1 - 14<sup>th</sup> Century**

The earliest structure on the site was the wall (1) bounding the south-eastern side of the Choir House yard. The wall itself extended from Edgar Tower in the north, along Castle Place and then south. It has clearly had many alterations and additions since it was first built and it seems likely to represent the precinct boundary when it was re-established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This boundary was on land which had been part of the castle from the 11<sup>th</sup> century and at this point it crosses what was earlier the defensive circuit of the castle. The core of the wall is represented by context 36.

### **Phase 2 - 18<sup>th</sup> Century**

The original building at 3 College Green (context 44) is a rectangular shaped brick-built house dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The stone foundation below ground level enclosed a cellar of the same dimensions. It served as a prebendary house and in 1881 was occupied by the Reverend William Wright.

### **Phase 3 - Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Context 14 was a dark greyish brown sandy soil containing fragments of brick (some still having mortar adhering to them) and other building material. This soil seems to date from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and is possibly derived from the remains of an older building, now demolished, and was the final deposit before the laying of earlier hardcore 6. It pre-dates the service trenching in the northern part of the yard and could be the same as context 53 to the south which is a greyish-brown firm sandy soil with few inclusions. This lay immediately below the earlier tarmac immediately to the east of the 19<sup>th</sup> century wall (51) and sloped steeply down to the east where it formed a depression which was filled by rubble and a kiln waste layer (54). Further to the east 53 merged into layer 56.

### **Phase 4 - Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century**

Context 7 was a tarmac layer beneath a hardcore layer (6) which in turn overlay tarmac 5. Context 8 was a hardcore layer found to be present over much of the northern part of the Choir House yard. It was not however present at the western side of the yard where outbuildings appeared to have stood at the time that context 7 and 8 were laid down in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly, it was absent from the middle part of the yard where tarmac 7 appeared to be laid directly onto a kiln waste and rubble layer (54).

Layer 54 appeared to fill a depression in the yard, west of this, against wall 51, tarmac 7 was laid directly on a soil layer (53) which from that point ran westwards under 54.

Context 9 was a service trench containing a storm water pipe from the corner of the Sanatorium and was filled by rubble (context 10)

### **Phase 5 - Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Two buildings were identified as belonging to this phase, buildings 4 and 66. Building 4 (The King's School Sanatorium) consisted of a two storey irregularly shaped building butting the eastern end of number 3, College Green. It was partly built over walls 2 and 3 and also over the end of brick vaulting 13. Building 66 (number 4 College Green) was built *circa* 1910 as the Woodward Memorial Extension to Choir House. The foundation trench of the rear wall of this building cut through cobbles 58, and it is highly likely that it was previously an area of stables and coach houses for the canons.

### **Phase 6 - 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

There are many contexts dating to the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the latest of which is the surviving tarmac surface of the yard, layer 5. As of August 2000 this surface survived at a height of 22.53m OD in the north end of the yard and 22.32m OD against the inside of the yard wall where context 3 had been removed.

## **7.0 Archive deposition**

The primary project archive, consisting of the excavated material and any original paper records, will be prepared and stored in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Guidelines for the Preparation and Storage of Archives*. The primary archive will be stored with Worcester Museum.

A copy of the digital archive, stored on CD and consisting of context and artefact data, together with drawings and selected photographs, will accompany the primary archive.

The client, in consultation with the project manager, will make provision for the deposition of all finds from the excavation with Worcester Museum. On completion of the fieldwork and the processing, collation, recording and analysis of the finds from the excavation all finds will be handed over to the museum staff, along with the project archive. Arrangements will be made with the museum for the transfer of title.

## **8.0 Publication and dissemination proposals**

Paper copies of this report will be lodged with the Worcester Cathedral Archaeologist, Worcester City Sites and Monuments Record and Worcester City Library. A short note on the project will be prepared for publication in *Archaeology at Worcester Cathedral - Report of the Eleventh Annual Symposium*.

CDs of this report, together with the supporting archival material will be available from Archenfield Archaeology.

The complete photographic record, including the negatives, will be retained by Archenfield Archaeology.

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