

First Court, St. John's College, Cambridge

An Archaeological Investigation



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Summary

Three phases of archaeological investigation – consisting of a test pit evaluation, a watching brief and an investigative trench – were undertaken within the First Court of St John's College, Cambridge, between the 26th of October 2010 and the 21st of March 2011. These works were focused upon the location of the former college chapel, which was demolished in 1869-70. This building had previously served as the chapel of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist, an institution that had been founded upon this site by c. 1200. Although limited in scale, the investigations produced a number of important results. In the first instance, a number of in situ masonry blocks were identified. These included the base of a stair turret, a door jamb and part of a clunch-built foundation, the latter of which most probably formed a footing for stalls within the medieval quire. Overall, it appears that the floor height of the chapel was raised by approximately 0.5m when the building was converted from ecclesiastical to collegiate use in 1514-6. The lower portion of this sequence thus appears to have remained relatively undisturbed when the chapel was demolished, and significant architectural remains of between two and four courses in depth lie preserved beneath the lawn of First Court.

Introduction

Three phases of investigation were undertaken by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) during recent maintenance and renovation work conducted at St John's College, Cambridge, between the 26th of October 2010 and the 21st of March 2011. This work took place at the northern end of First Court, in close proximity to the locations of the former chapel and infirmary of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist and the extant 19th century college chapel (Figure 1). In the first instance, seven archaeological test pits were excavated at the site between the 26th and the 29th of October 2010. These were inserted in order to evaluate the potential archaeological impact of a proposed new path, which would connect with the pre-existing paths in First Court and thus establish a complete circuit of the area (Figure 2). An interim report on this work was produced (Newman 2010), the results of which are fully incorporated below. Subsequently, between the 24th of January and the 4th of February 2011, a watching brief was conducted during the installation of the new path and the renovation of the walls of the former chapel (Figure 2). Finally, on the 21st of March 2011, an exploratory trench was inserted at the site. This was carefully positioned so as to investigate the degree of archaeological survival within the area of the former quire (see Figure 2). In contrast to the preceding test pits, this trench was not limited to a predetermined depth but extended as far as was practicably possible through the extant sequence. Overall, therefore, these three phases of work have presented a valuable opportunity to evaluate the degree of archaeological preservation at the site.

The project followed the specification issued by the CAU (Dickens 2010) and was monitored by Dan McConnell, Development Control Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire's Historic Environment Team (formerly CAPCA). The work was commissioned by St John's College, Cambridge.

Landscape and Geology

First Court, which represents the oldest quadrangle within St John's College, was established in 1511 upon the site of the former Hospital of St John the Evangelist. At present, the ground surface within the investigated area – which consists of a relatively flat and even lawn – lies at a height of between 8.42 and 8.48m OD. Geologically, the site is situated upon Second Terrace river gravels overlying Gault clay (British Geological Survey, sheet 188), and the uppermost horizon of natural gravels was identified via augering at 6.54m OD.

Methodology

Both the test pits and the investigative trench were excavated by hand and recorded using the CAU-modified version of the MoLAS system (Spence 1994). Base plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, whilst sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A digital photographic archive was also compiled. Throughout the following text, context numbers are indicated by square brackets (*e.g.* [001]) and feature numbers by the prefix F. (*e.g.* F.01). Individual assessment reports of the associated material culture from the site are presented as a discrete chapter within the main body of the report. All work was carried out in strict accordance with statutory health and safety legislation and the recommendations of the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (Allen & Holt 2010). The sitecode for this project is **JFC 10**, and the HER event number is **ECB 3559**.

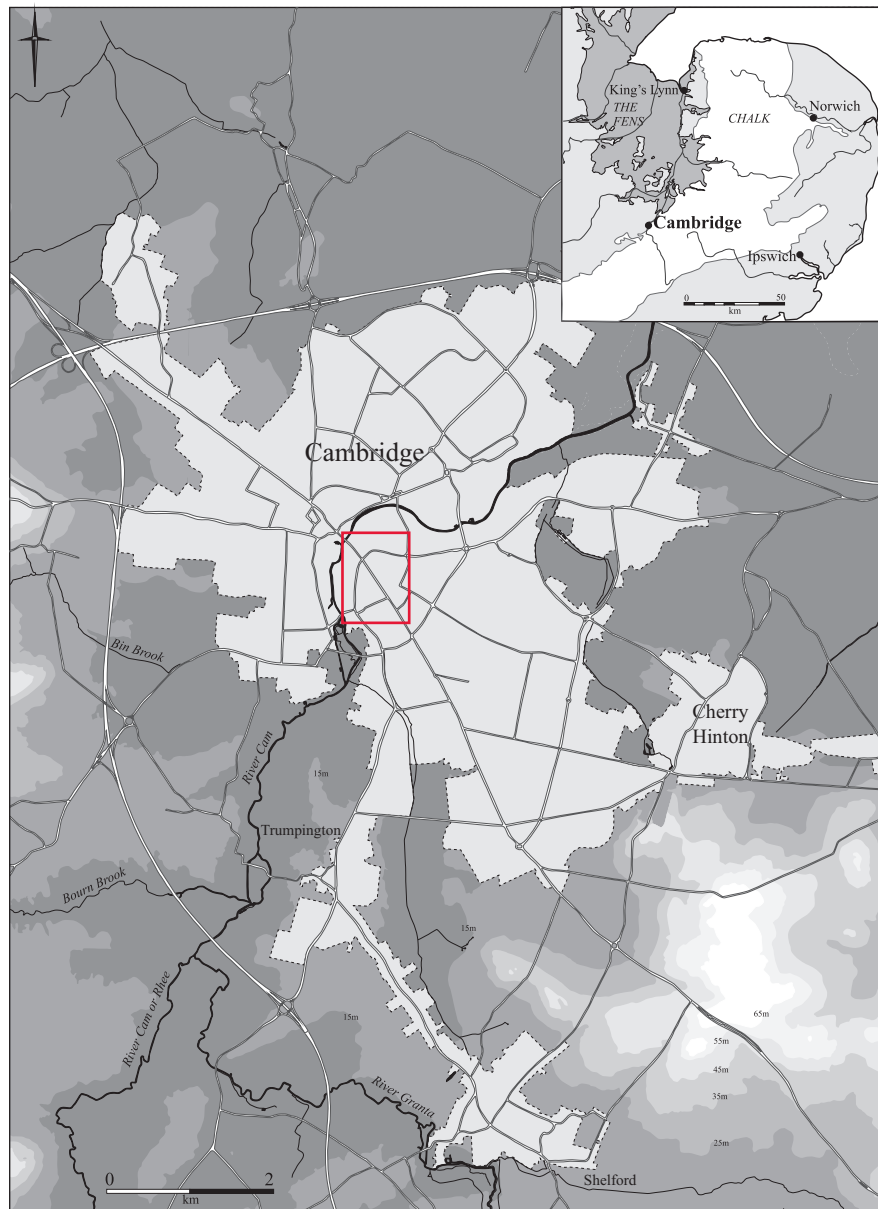


Figure 1: Site location.

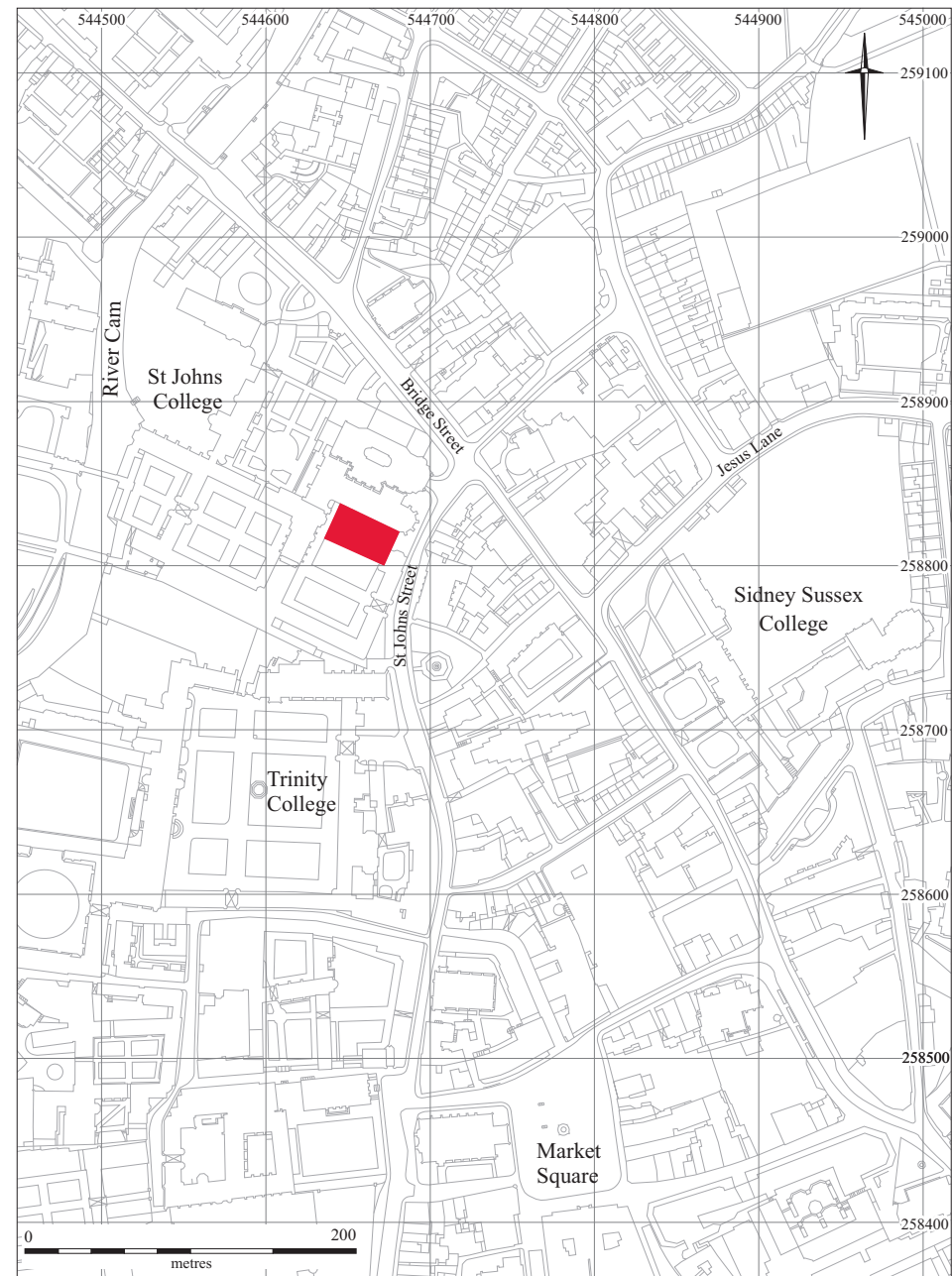




Figure 2. Location of present investigations.

Historical and Archaeological Background

Prior to the commencement of medieval reclamation works in this vicinity, the present area of investigation was situated on the fringe of the alluvial floodplain of the river Cam. Environmental evidence recovered during riverside excavations conducted at the nearby St John's College Chapel Court and Master's Garden (Evans 1991; Miller 1993; Dickens 1996) and Trinity Hall (Alexander 1997) sites – plus, a little further to the north, at 24 Thompson's Lane (Newman 2008) – has allowed a provisional model of the environmental history of the area to be constructed (Newman & Cessford *in prep.*). From this it seems probable that during the Neolithic period, and continuing throughout later prehistory, the Cam was a broad, slow flowing river that occupied a wide marshy floodplain. Subsequently, however, during the 2nd to 4th centuries AD, the evidence suggests that the area became markedly drier (whether due to anthropogenic intervention, or simply via natural environmental change, is not clear). At this time, a limited degree of activity is known to have taken place in the surrounding area. Perhaps most pertinently, a number of late Roman quarry pits – along with an associated metallated surface – were excavated at the Chapel Court and Master's Garden of St. John's College site in 1992 (Dickens 1996, 4-8). During the succeeding Early to Middle Saxon period, however, the area reverted back to being an active floodplain with evidence of regular seasonal inundation. At this time the principal focus of settlement was centred further to the north, in the Castle Hill area (see Cessford with Dickens 2005; Cessford *et al.* 2007), and very little activity appears to have taken place to the south of the river. Indeed, right up until the mid 10th century, the town remained only a small “economically viable backwater” (Hines 1999, 136). Following this date, however, it emerged as a significant urban centre.

By the late 10th century a mint had been established (Lobel 1975, 3) and Cambridge was being linked to a group of important trading centres including Norwich, Thetford and Ipswich (Fairweather 2005), thereby emphasising the central role played by river trade in its rapid economic growth. This prosperity led to a period of rapid expansion, beginning in the 11th century, during which a series of churches were established along the length of what was to become the medieval High Street – now Trinity Street/King's Parade (Cam 1959, 123-32; Addyman & Biddle 1965, 94-6). Work also began on draining the adjoining marshland beside the river, where a series of hythes, barge-pulls and quays were created. At the St John's College Chapel Court and Master's Garden site, three such drainage ditches were inserted during the 12th to 13th centuries (Dickens 1996, 16-18). The most significant of these was around 4.5m wide by 0.5m deep and orientated east-southeast to west-northwest; it had steeply sloping sides leading to a flat base and an associated bank to the northwest that was 2.0m wide and at least 0.6m high (*ibid.*, 18). This feature was thus large enough to have accommodated shallow-draughted vessels and may well have acted a minor channel or barge pull. At some time during the 13th century, the reclamation work evidently having been completed, a series of timber buildings were established to the north of the channel. At least five separate structures were constructed in this location, and – as they were situated at the rear of their respective property plots, in close proximity to the probable barge channel but at some distance from the medieval street frontage – they are most likely to have been commercial as opposed to domestic in nature (*ibid.*, 23-8).

At the present site, in common with the wider pattern of landscape use in this area, it is likely that some degree of domestic settlement was established during the 11th

century. By *c.* 1200, however, the area had been occupied by the Hospital of St John the Evangelist. This latter foundation comprised an ecclesiastical institution dedicated to the relief of the poor (see further Sweetinburgh 2004). Its history has previously been discussed in detail in a number of published sources (*e.g.* Haigh 1988, 9-10; Rubin 1987; Underwood 2008) and will not therefore be repeated in detail here. The hospital precinct occupied the area of what is today the First, Second and Third Courts of St John's College (Underwood 2008, xxvi), although the majority of its buildings appear to have been located in the area of First Court. In 1511, the site was converted from ecclesiastical to collegiate use when St John's College was founded (see Underwood 2001). At this time the majority of the hospital's former structures were demolished, although two major medieval buildings were retained. The first of these consisted of the hospital's chapel, which had probably been constructed during the mid to late 13th century; this was converted for use as the college chapel. Four chantry chapels were subsequently appended to the structure, while part of its nave was also converted for use as the Master's Lodge (see further Babington 1874, 12-28; Willis & Clark 1886 II, 280-309). The chapel remained in use until 1869, when it was demolished. The former footprint of this building is currently demarcated upon the lawn of First Court by stone edging. The second structure to have been retained by the college consisted of an early 13th century building that may have functioned as the hospital's infirmary (although it has also been variously interpreted as a dormitory or refectory; Willis & Clark 1886 II, 296). Following the foundation of St John's College, the 'infirmary' was converted into stables and a storehouse – in *c.* 1561 – and then later into three stories of student accommodation – in *c.* 1584. The original function of the building was forgotten, and the heavily modified structure became known as the "Labyrinth" (see further Babington 1874, 6-11; Willis & Clark 1886 II, 296-302).

As was the case with the former hospital chapel, the 'infirmary' building was demolished during the 1860s to make way for the present college chapel (RCHM(E) 1959 II, 188). In contrast to the former structure, however, the outline of the latter building has not been demarcated upon the lawn of First Court. Nevertheless, the 'infirmary' has previously been the focus of small-scale archaeological investigation. In November 1991 a narrow trench was excavated in the front lawn of St. John's College, in close proximity to St. John's Street. This trench, which measured 10m long by 0.6m wide and 0.8m deep, was excavated by machine, although part of it – measuring 1.8m by 1.5m in extent and 0.9m deep – was hand-dug (Miller 1991, 1-2). Because this work was conducted in order to monitor the insertion of the Granta Network Cable, only the uppermost portion of the sequence was investigated. The earliest features to be encountered at the site comprised two west-east aligned uncoursed limestone and clunch walls, which represented elements of a major structure. These walls were 0.6m wide and the building had an internal width of 5.4m; traces of clay floors – the uppermost of which lay at 7.89m OD – were preserved within it (*ibid.*, 2-4). This building clearly comprised the remnants of the hospital's 'infirmary'. To the north of the structure a probable laneway was identified and, beyond that, the remains of a second stone-built building were also encountered (Miller 1991, 4). This latter structure almost certainly lay outside the boundary of the hospital precinct, however, and was most probably domestic in nature.

Two further excavations have been conducted in relatively close proximity to the present site, and both encountered human remains that are likely to have been

associated with the hospital's former population. In the first instance, between the autumn of 1938 and the spring of 1939 Glyn Daniel conducted a series of observations during construction works undertaken to the north of Second Court on the south side of Bridge Street. During the course of these works, *"immediately to the north of Second Court and in the angle between the north wall of Second Court and the west wall of the Chapel, test excavations and excavations for the foundations of the new arcade revealed at a depth of some ten feet a pit cut into the natural ground surface which had been filled up with a miscellaneous assortment of skeletal fragments. No purposeful excavation was possible, but from the holes dug by the builders were recovered the remains of at least a dozen individuals... The bones which filled up the pit were in a very confused state and clearly did not represent a cemetery of any kind: it seems likely that they had been dug out from some other cemetery and thrown in this pit, or possibly the pit may be a plague pit... Without careful excavation for many days it would have been impossible to determine the extent of this pit and to estimate the number of people buried in it; but from observations in a number of the holes cut, it seemed to me that the pit was an extremely large one and that it probably extended originally underneath the present chapel"* (Daniel 1939, 144-46). More recently, excavations undertaken at the Old Divinity School site – which is situated on the opposite side of St John's Road to the hospital – have encountered the remains of the hospital's lay cemetery (Cessford *in prep.*). In all, around 400 articulated skeletons have been recovered, representing approximately 80% of the surviving cemetery population. Dating between the early 13th and late 15th centuries, these skeletons represent a valuable resource for examining the composition of the hospital's population.

Results

The results derived from the three phases of work are presented in chronological order below. This section is then followed by a chapter presenting combined specialist assessment reports on each of the various categories of material culture that was recovered from the site.

I) Test Pit Evaluation

The first phase of work to be conducted at the site consisted of the insertion of seven test pits along the proposed route of the new path around First Court. These were situated so as to target the areas of greatest archaeological potential (Figures 2 and 3). Test Pits 1 and 7, for example, were located immediately adjacent to grave slabs preserved on the college lawn in order to determine whether these remained *in situ*. Test Pit 2 was located immediately adjacent to the line of the old chapel wall, and Test Pit 3 within the hospital's infirmary building (which was formerly situated between the old and new chapels). The remaining Test Pits – numbers 4 to 6 – extended to the northwest, parallel to the present college chapel, along the line of the proposed path. The results of this work, which were previously the subject of an interim report (Newman 2010), are presented below:

Test Pit 1

This test pit was situated towards the northeastern corner of First Court, in close proximity to the Old Music Room. It measured 1.0m by 1.0m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. At the top of the sequence, a large gravestone – [010], which measured 0.13m thick – was present.

This was inscribed with the name 'Joannis Newcome S[TP]/ Obit 10 Jan 1765/ Anno Ætatis 82'. Abutting this slab was [011], a layer of modern turf and topsoil 0.13m thick. Beneath both the topsoil and the adjacent gravestone were situated mixed demolition deposits [012], [013] and [017], which each consisted of banded mid to pale greyish brown sandy silt with frequent mortar fleck and CBM fragment inclusions. These layers were a maximum of 0.15m thick. To the south, beneath the slab, [017] sealed friable mid brown sandy silt deposit [015]. This latter material, which was 0.20m+ thick and continued below the limit of excavation, contained projecting disarticulated human remains, including a pelvis, a long bone and a rib (these were not recovered, but left *in situ*). To the north, outside the area of the slab, additional demolition deposits [014] and [016] were present. These appeared to abut [015], and were near identical to deposits [012] and [013] described above. They measured 0.13m+ deep, but were not bottomed. Both contained 19th century material.

Test Pit 2

This test pit was situated towards the northeastern corner of First Court, adjacent to the line of the old chapel wall. It measured 1.0m by 1.0m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. In the first instance, stone edging [020] was encountered; this demarcated the wall of the former hospital chapel, and measured 0.13m thick. It was set upon a concrete foundation, which in turn measured 0.18m thick. Abutting [020] was turf and topsoil deposit [021], which measured 0.16m thick. Beneath this was encountered [022], a stone-capped drain that was aligned north-northeast by south-southwest. The drain consisted of large flat flagstones (measuring 0.38m+ across) that were set with rough concrete and proud jointed. Its upper surface lay at 8.29m OD. This feature had partially truncated [023], a 19th century demolition layer which consisted of friable pale grey and yellowish brown silty mortar with frequent mortar, CBM and clunch fragments inclusions. The layer measured 0.26m+ deep (but was not bottomed) and in turn abutted [024], the remnant of a lime mortared limestone foundation. A single block of this foundation, measuring 290mm by 120mm by 100mm, was fully exposed, with the truncated remnant of a further block remaining above it and additional masonry extending below. This foundation represents part of the footing of the former hospital chapel; its uppermost surviving element was situated at 8.14m OD.

Test Pit 3

This test pit was situated at the northeastern end of First Court, in close proximity to the standing college chapel. It measured 1.0m by 1.0m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. The uppermost deposit in this location comprised turf and topsoil [030], which measured 0.13m thick. This overlay backfill deposit [031], which consisted of firm mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional CBM fragment inclusions measuring 0.72m+ wide and 0.10m deep. The latter material had been deposited above stone-capped drain [033], which may well represent a return of drain [022] that was encountered in Test Pit 2. [033] was aligned east-northeast by west-southwest and consisted of large flat flagstones (measuring 0.57m across) that were set with rough concrete and proud jointed. Its upper surface lay at 8.29m OD. The final deposit to be encountered in this trench consisted of 19th century demolition spread [032]. This comprised a mixed layer of semi-friable dark brownish grey clay silt, with frequent CBM and clunch fragment inclusions, which measured 0.29m+ deep (but was not bottomed).

Test Pit 4

This test pit was situated at the northeastern end of First Court, in close proximity to the standing college chapel. It measured 2.0m by 0.5m in extent (being placed longitudinally so as to avoid a known service) and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. Here, the uppermost deposit comprised turf and topsoil layer [040], which measured 0.19m thick. This overlay dark greyish brown sandy silt deposit [042], which had itself been backfilled into vertically sided cut [043]. The latter measured 0.25m+ deep, but was not bottomed. Given its location, in close association to one of the buttresses of the present college chapel, it is possible that this feature represents the construction cut for the standing building. Alternatively, however, it may represent the remnants of a former bedding trench or flower bed. Also present in this trench was the very edge of stone-capped drain [044], which represents a continuation of drain [033] from Test Pit 3. Its upper surface again lay at 8.29m OD. At the base of the sequence friable 19th century demolition deposit [041] was encountered. This consisted of pale brownish grey silty mortar with frequent mortar, clunch and CBM fragment inclusions. It measured 0.23m thick, but was not bottomed.



A



B



C



D



E



F

Figure 3. Photographs of Test Pit 1, facing southwest (A), Test Pit 2, facing southwest (B), Test Pit 3, facing northwest (C), Test Pit 4, facing northeast (D), Test Pit 5, facing southeast (E), and Test Pit 6, facing northwest (F).

Test Pit 5

This test pit was situated at the northeastern end of First Court, in close proximity to the standing college chapel. It measured 1.0m by 1.0m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. At the top of the sequence, turf and topsoil layer [050] was present; this measured 0.13m deep. Sealed beneath the topsoil was [051], the backfill of a modern pipe trench. This consisted of a relatively loose deposit of mid to dark greyish brown clay silt with very frequent CBM fragment inclusions, which had been backfilled into vertically sided cut [052] that measured 0.40m wide. The top of the brown salt-glazed ceramic pipe was situated at 7.82m OD and was visibly falling to the east, where it presumably connected to stone-capped drain [033] = [044]. The pipe trench was cut through 19th century banded grey silt and coarse yellow sandy mortar demolition deposit [053], which contained frequent clunch fragment inclusions as well as ceramic and stone peg tile fragments. This deposit appears to represent a continuation of [041] to the east; it measured 0.28m+ thick, but was not bottomed.

Test Pit 6

This test pit was situated at the northeastern end of First Court, in close proximity to the standing college chapel. It measured 1.0m by 1.0m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.40m. Here, an identical sequence was identified as has been described above in Test Pit 5. Beneath turf and topsoil layer [060], which measured 0.18m thick, pipe trench [061] = [051] and [062] = [052] was again identified. In this location, the top of the brown salt-glazed ceramic pipe was encountered at 7.98m OD. Banded demolition deposit [063] = [053] = [041] was also present. Here, this measured 0.28m+ (and was again unbottomed).

Test Pit 7

An additional test pit was situated towards the northeastern corner of First Court, in close proximity to the Old Music Room. Test Pit 7 was specifically excavated in order to investigate the thickness of the adjacent tombstone and to determine whether any additional supporting structure was present. It measured 0.35m by 0.2m in extent and was excavated to a depth of 0.30. The adjacent gravestone, [070], measured 0.15m thick. Although the inscription was in poor condition enough elements were legible to identify it as one recorded in the late 19th century as reading 'Depositum/ Roberti Worsley'. Abutting this slab was [071], a layer of modern topsoil 0.13m thick. Beneath both the topsoil and the adjacent gravestone was a mixed deposit, [072], consisting of lenses of dark topsoil and pale brown sandy silt gravel. A narrow slot was dug for 0.20m under the tombstone and no structure was located.

II) Watching Brief

The second phase of work at the site consisted of monitoring the hand-reduction of a 2.0m wide linear strip, which was excavated to a depth of 0.25m, around the northeastern corner of First Court (Figure 2). Due to the limited depth of this intervention it rarely extended below the modern topsoil horizon, and no results of archaeological interest were obtained. In addition, however, the walls of the former hospital chapel – which were previously demarcated on the lawn by stone edging, infilled with turf – were also partially exposed at this time, prior to being re-covered with protective cobbling. As a result, a number of *in situ* masonry blocks were revealed (Figure 4). Prime amongst these were the remains of a stair turret (F.01; Figure 5) and the jamb of a doorway (F.02; Figure 6). A discussion of the results derived from this work is presented below:

Stair turret F.01 consisted of the lowest three, or probably four, steps of the spiral staircase which had originally provided access to the chapel's rood loft. The surface of the top surviving step lay at 8.45m OD, and the internal diameter of the staircase was 1.46m. The entrance to the stairwell was narrow, at only 0.76m wide, and was situated on the southern side of the turret. It was therefore accessed from within the central tower of the medieval chapel.

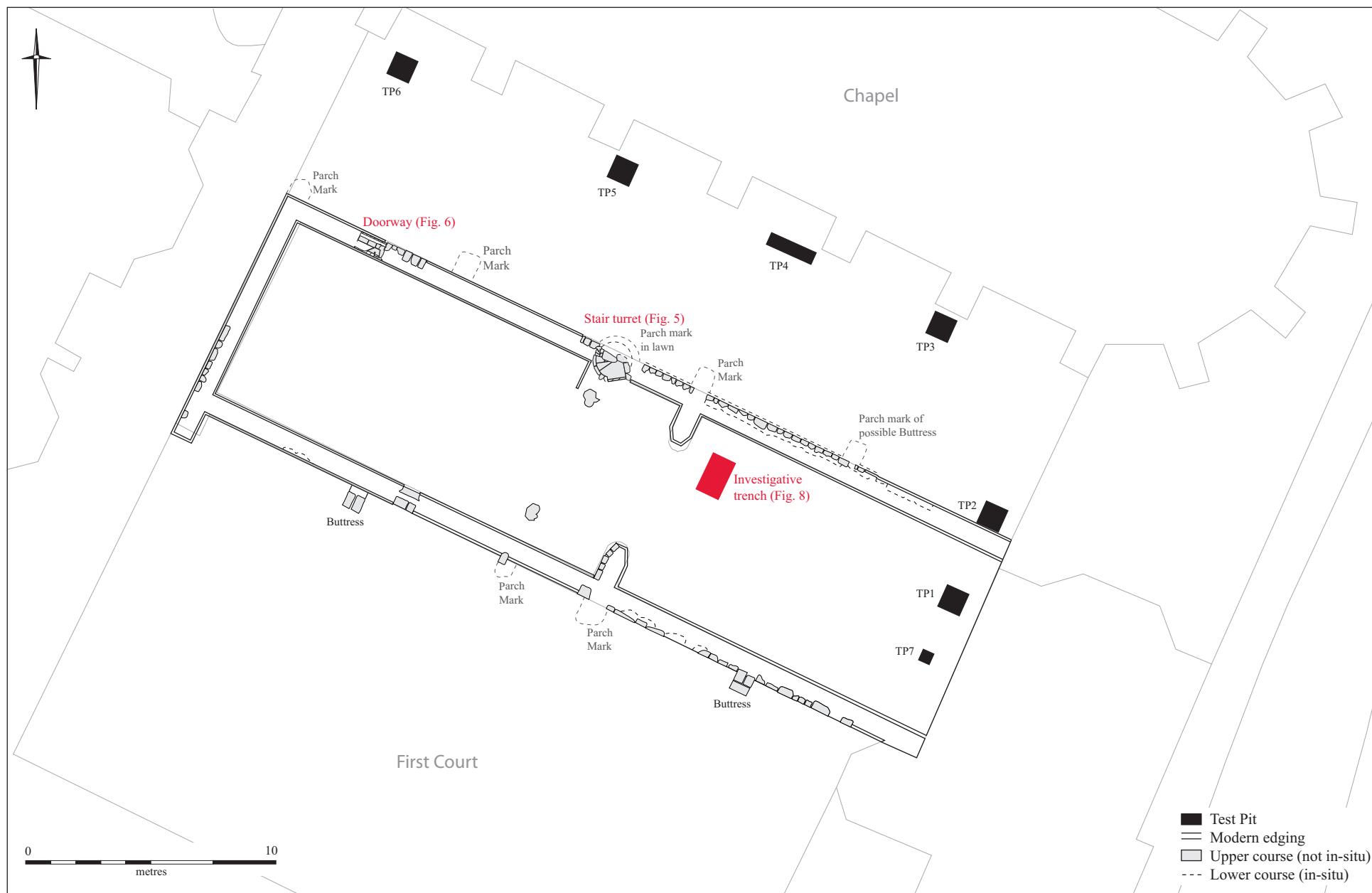


Figure 4. Results of watching brief on chapel walls.

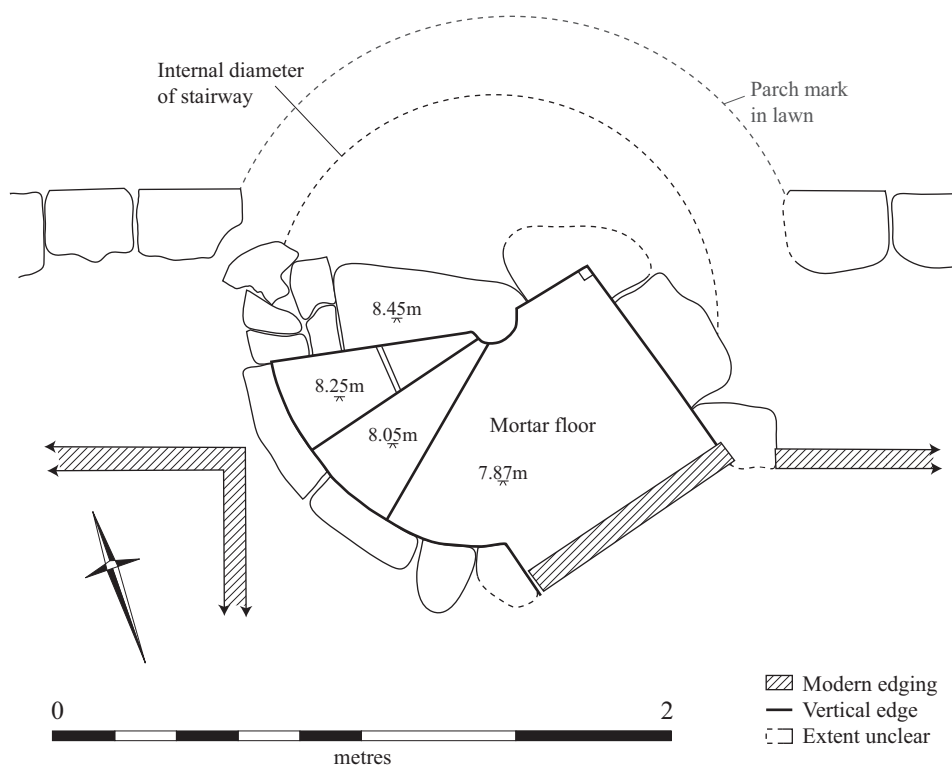
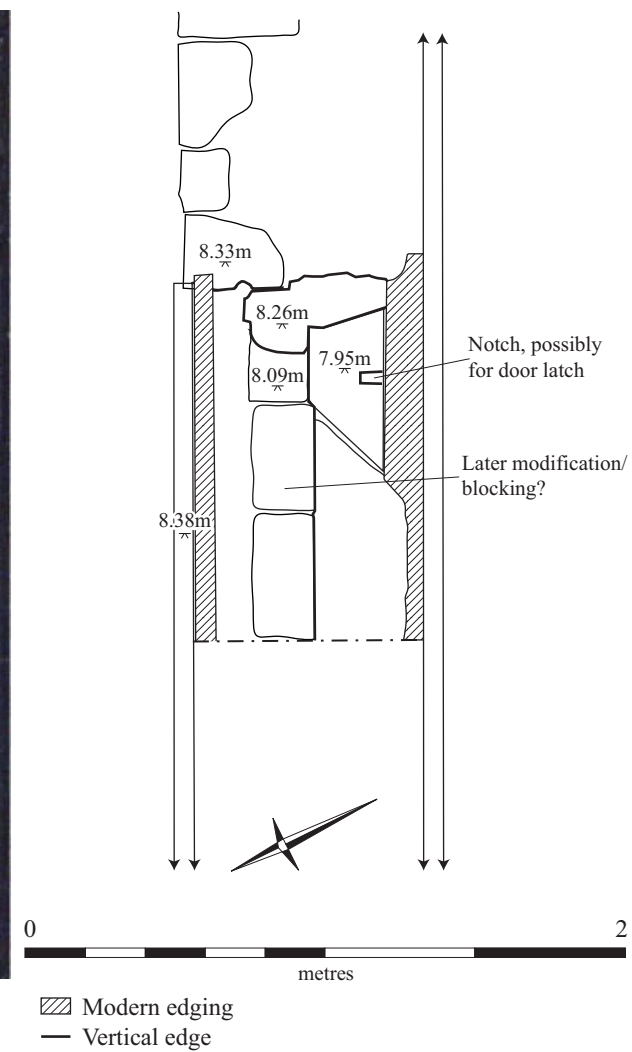


Figure 5. Base of stair turret F.01, facing north.



Figure 6. Eastern jamb of doorway F.02 in north wall of ante-chapel.



This entrance is known to have been infilled in 1514-16, when the tower was demolished (Babington 1874, 18-19; Willis & Clark 1886 II, 303-4). At this time a new doorway was inserted to the southwest, thereby providing access to the new organ loft from the ante-chapel. No evidence of either the blocking or the replacement doorway was present, however. At the base of the stairwell lay a compacted mortar floor deposit, which appeared to be relatively well worn. This floor – the surface of which lay at 7.87m OD – had almost certainly subsumed the lowest step of the staircase, as it sounded distinctly hollow on the eastern side. The original floor height of the turret thus appears to have lain at *c.* 7.7m OD. Above the mortar floor, which was preserved *in situ*, levelling/demolition deposit [102] was encountered. This material consisted of pale creamish yellow mortar with occasional to frequent masonry fragment inclusions and was 0.49m deep. It appears most likely to have been deposited when the chapel was converted from ecclesiastical to collegiate use. This would account for the absence of the later doorway, which was presumably cut at a higher level and has since been entirely removed. It is also possible, however, that it was deposited in 1869-70 when the building was finally demolished. A large iron key was recovered from towards the base of this deposit.

Doorway **F.02** consisted of the eastern jamb of a doorway situated in the north wall of the nave or ante-chapel. Here, two courses of *in situ* masonry remained extant. The moulding of the jamb itself was relatively simple; it predominately consisted of a *three-quarter hollow* flanked by *fillets*. A notch was also present on the interior tread that may have been intended to receive a door latch (Figure 6). A slight step was identifiable from the threshold, at 8.09m OD, down into the interior, at 7.95m OD. No trace of the western jamb of the doorway was present, although this was searched for carefully. Instead, the masonry immediately to the west of the surviving remnant, although *in situ*, appeared to represent a later addition or repair. This was most probably inserted in 1514-6, when a stair turret is known to have been constructed in this location to provide access to the newly converted Master's Lodge (Babington 1874, 28; Willis & Clark 1886 II, 307). The survival of the eastern jamb, and the absence of any extant remains of the turret, once again indicates that the internal floor level was raised at this time. Across the remainder of the chapel's walls it was apparent that the uppermost course of masonry (which is detailed in Figure 4) did not remain *in situ*. This material appears instead to have been used, post-demolition, for decorative effect, as well as to help demarcate the outline of the structure on the lawn. Immediately below this layer, however, the uppermost surface of a large number of extant ashlar blocks was encountered at *c.* 8.32m OD. Perhaps most notably, a plain chamfered plinth was identified on the exterior of the building. Extending at 45° from 8.32m OD to 8.20m OD, this plinth would originally have been situated above the contemporary external ground height.

III) Investigative Trench

The third phase of work consisted of the excavation of an investigative trench situated within the northwest corner of the chapel quire (Figures 7 and 8). This measured 1.6m by 1.0m in extent, and was excavated to a depth of 1.32m; natural gravels were determined to lie a further 0.60m below the limit of excavation via augering. Here, a complex archaeological sequence was identified. Beginning with a probable pit of early or pre-hospital date ([116]), a possible cemetery soil – [114], which contained a disarticulated human vertebra – was also present. This was overlain in turn by a foundation deposit – [119] – which represents the earliest identified element of the hospital chapel. Above this was encountered a large, well-built 'L-shaped' clunch foundation (**F.03**) that may have acted as the base for a set of stalls. Also associated with this phase was the mortar bedding for a robbed tile surface ([111]). Subsequently, in *c.* 1514-6, widespread levelling deposit [110] was introduced that raised the floor level above the height of the earlier foundation. No trace of the replacement floor itself was identified, however. Finally, a 19th century brick-built burial vault was also present (**F.04**), along with a posthole (**F.05**) that appears to have been associated with the demolition of the chapel in 1869-70; a widespread demolition deposit of this date, [104], was also identified. In full, the sequence comprised:

The earliest deposit to be investigated within the trench consisted of homogeneous dark brown clay silt [116], which contained occasional charcoal and oyster shell inclusions as well as a single sherd of Medieval Ely ware. The latter dates to the 13th to 15th centuries, with a 14th century *flourit*, although similar sherds have previously been recovered from early to mid 13th century contexts (see further Spoerry 2008). The deposit measured 0.26m+ deep, and continued below 7.14m OD; the upper horizon of the underlying Second Terrace river gravels was determined to lie at 6.54m OD via augering. This material most probably comprised the fill of a pit which predated the construction of the overlying chapel. Above [116] lay thin trample lens [115], which consisted of firm yellowish brown sandy gravel that measured between 0.01m and 0.05m thick. This was in turn overlain by a further deposit of homogeneous dark brown clay silt. In this instance, however, the latter deposit – [114] – contained a disarticulated human vertebrae; it measured 0.18m thick. Then, above [114], lay a relatively loose deposit of pale yellowish brown coarse sandy mortar with occasional clunch fragment inclusions that measured 0.17m thick. This material, [119], represents the earliest identifiable element within the chapel sequence. It appears to have acted as bedding/foundation material for overlying clunch-built foundation F.03. The latter feature, which was 0.30m high, consisted of three elements: [112], a retaining wall composed of squared and dressed clunch blocks bonded with yellow sandy mortar; [117], a core of clunch rubble bonded with identical mortar; [118], a deposit of pale grey clay that appears to have acted either as packing or as a possible surface (Figures 7 and 8). The foundation was ‘L-shaped’ in form, and its upper surface lay at 8.00m OD. Its outer edge was offset 1.66m from the chapel’s north wall. Within the interior of the quire, and abutting the base of F.03, clay foundation deposit [113] was then set down. This material, which consisted of relatively sterile firm grey clay that measured up to 0.13m thick, contained a sherd of Ely-Grimston ware that is most probably 14th century in date. Above this deposit lay 0.03m thick concreted mortar surface [111], whose upper horizon lay at 7.70m OD. This latter layer was unabraded, and was not overlain by any discernable trample deposits; it therefore appears most likely to have acted as bedding for a tiled surface which was subsequently removed. Notably, an incised line which ran around the adjacent clunch foundation at 7.84m OD may well represent the height of the original floor (or perhaps a later resurfacing of it).

Following the removal of the tiled surface, relatively sterile pale creamish yellow mortary rubble deposit [110] was introduced. This layer, which was up to 0.29m thick and partially overlay F.03, most probably represents early 16th century levelling/demolition material that was associated with the conversion of the chapel from ecclesiastical to collegiate use in 1514-6 (Willis & Clark 1886 II, 281-2). At this time a new floor surface was most probably introduced at a higher level, although no trace of this has survived. Next, truncating the preceding sequence at the southwestern end of the trench was [109], the cut for early 19th century intramural burial vault F.04. The upper surface of the brick-built wall of this sepulchre, [108], was encountered at 7.59m OD. A minimum of five courses of machine-made, unfrogged reddish yellow bricks were revealed, and the vault potentially continued for some distance below the limit of excavation (at 7.17m OD). The vault was capped by a gravestone which named the occupant as James Wood, who was Master of St John’s College from 1815 until his death in 1839 (for further information, see the appendix). Also cut into the top of foundation F.03 was probable posthole/scaffolding pad F.05. The cut of this feature – which measured 0.56m by 0.29m+ in extent, and was 0.37m deep – was irregularly sub-oval/sub-rectangular in form. It was filled by [105], a relatively loose deposit of pale creamish yellow mortar with occasional masonry fragment inclusions. Also present was a copper alloy jetton, of Nuremberg Rose/Orb type, which was struck by Hans Krauwinckel II (fl. 1586-1635). Because this area is known to have been sealed beneath the college stalls from 1516 until the demolition of the chapel in 1869-70, F.05 was most probably associated with scaffolding that was utilised during the demolition process. Of very similar origin was late 19th century demolition horizon [104], which extended across the entire trench. This deposit consisted of relatively loose pale grey mortar with occasional to frequent masonry fragment inclusions; it measured 0.27m thick. Amongst the masonry fragments were a number of mouldings that had been trimmed from larger blocks, presumably in order to facilitate their later reuse. Finally, the sequence was capped by modern topsoil deposit [103], which measured 0.20m thick.

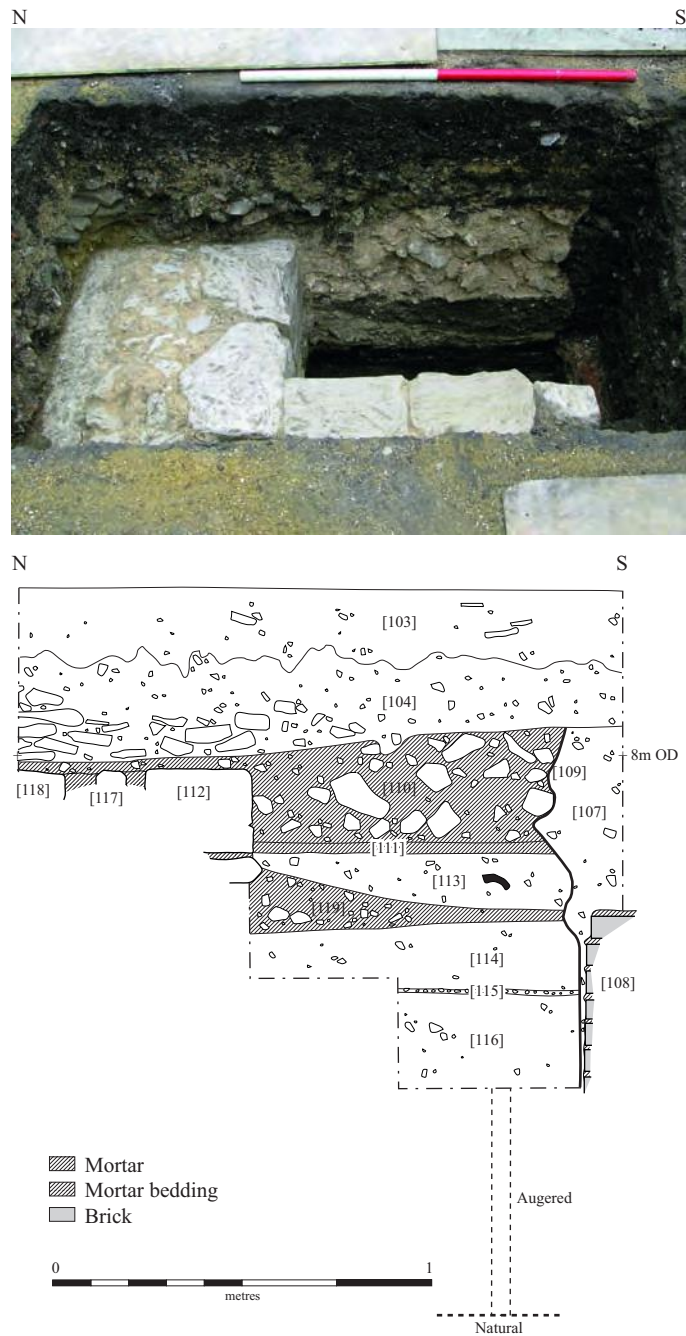


Figure 7. West facing section (left) plus photograph, facing north, of the investigative trench (above).

Material Culture

Small quantities of material were recovered during all three phases of investigation. The assemblages were dominated by pottery, with smaller quantities of metalwork, clay pipe, moulded stone, window glass and human bone also being present. The overwhelming majority of the artefacts were recovered from the modern topsoil.

Metalwork (Martin Allen & Grahame Appleby)

Jetton (Martin Allen)

A single cracked copper alloy jetton, of Nuremberg Rose/Orb type, was recovered from <023>, [105]. It was struck by Hans Krauwinkel II (fl. 1586-1635) and reads *Gott allein die eer esei* on the reverse (Mitchiner 1988, 1518-28). It weighs 1.29g and measures 21mm in diameter.

Ironwork (Grahame Appleby)

A limited quantity of ironwork was recovered, consisting of a probable Medieval key and three fragments of door decoration. The key is almost certainly a door key as opposed to a casket or padlock key and X-ray will reveal the form of the bit. The three pieces of door fitting are decoratively similar, although one piece is more crudely manufactured with evidence that the decorative scheme was initially applied to the wrong, reverse, facing.

<011>, [100]: Three fragments of decorative ironwork (weighing 146g, 151g and 235g) with gothic style leaf and flower motif; two pieces have two terminal buds with the larger piece possessing three. The motif is executed by the use of a rounded channel ending in an almost tear-drop shaped curved device with a central raised dot. One fragment is crudely manufactured compared to the other two, with 'marking-out' lines on the reverse of the terminals indicative of initially working the wrong side. Initially thought to be parts of strap-hinges the reverse of two of the fragments are painted, clearly showing these objects were part of a large piece of ironwork exposed on both sides, possibly a gate or internal screen, for example those placed around a tomb or as part of a parclose screen between chantry or side chapels and nave, with the decorative sides facing outwards.

<012>, [102]: Very corroded large key: weight 64g. Possible solid stem with broken kidney-shaped bow (internal openwork decoration/motif may have originally been present. The stem, 110mm long, has possibly two and stepped above the mid-point of the bit. The bit is relatively large (32.7mm long), divided equally by a central groove, with each half (c. 14mm) also most likely possessing a central groove. This form of key are relatively common and date from the Medieval period to the 19th century, with parallel examples found in Norwich (Margeson 1993: 160) and York (Ottaway & Rogers 2002: 2874 & 3142).

Although this is a very small assemblage (if it can actually be called such) the recovery of the key and decorative metalwork may relate to the original chapel and were incorporated into backfill following its demolition in the mid 19th century. The good condition, presence of paint and lack of corrosion on the decorative ironwork, however, suggests these are relatively late. It may be of interest, therefore, to see if similar pieces are still extant within the fabric of the college.

Pottery (Richard Newman & Craig Cessford)

In total 116 sherds of pottery, weighing 1568g, were recovered during the three phases of work that were conducted at the site. The majority of this material, however – consisting of 97 sherds weighing 1214g (or 83.6% of the assemblage by count and 77.4% by weight) – was modern in date. Significant earlier fragments included single sherds of Medieval Ely ware from [032], <004> in Test Pit 3 and [116], <021> in the investigative trench. A sherd of generic medieval coarseware and a sherd of Cambridge-type Sgraffito ware were also recovered from [050], <008> in Test Pit 5. Finally, a sherd of Ely-Grimston ware was present in [113], <020> within the investigative trench.

Period	Fabric	Count	Weight (g)	MSW (g)
<i>Medieval</i>	Cambridge-type Sgraffito	1	3	3
	Ely-Grimston ware	1	54	54
	Medieval Ely ware	2	55	27.5
	Medieval coarseware	1	21	21
<i>Post-medieval</i>	German stoneware (Frechen/Raeren)	7	132	18.9
	Babylon-type lead-glazed earthenware	1	2	2
	Tin-glazed earthenware	2	9	4.5
	Bichromatic red earthenware	3	22	7.3
	Plain red coarseware	1	56	56
<i>Modern</i>	Chinese export porcelain	2	35	17.5
	Lead-glazed earthenware	2	5	2.5
	Yellowware	2	32	16
	Red earthenware plantpot	7	87	12.4
	Staffordshire white salt-glazed stoneware	1	20	20
	English utilitarian stoneware	5	330	66
	Refined white earthenware	78	705	9
		116	1568	13.5

Table 1: pottery assemblage by fabric.

The vast majority of the material, however, predominately consisting of modern wares, was recovered from the topsoil. Much the largest and most interesting such group was recovered from <015>, [100] during the watching brief conducted during the path's insertion. This consisted of the following:

<015>, [100]: The majority of this assemblage consisted of refined white earthenware, and a large percentage of the latter material appears to have been derived from St John's College plates. In the first instance, there were 15 sherds, weighing 149g, derived from a minimum of four plates with blue decoration. These have thick and thin hand-painted lines around the rim, and transfer prints of the college crest in the centre. A single sherd, weighing 5g, from a matching cup – again with a blue transfer-print of the college crest – was also recovered. In addition, there were a further six sherds derived from a minimum of three plates with brown decoration, weighing 93g. These again have thick and thin hand-painted lines around the rim, plus an additional line around the rim's inner edge. A differing transfer print in brown, again apparently showing the college crest, was also present. A further three sherds, weighing 19g, had purple transfer-printed ribbon decoration, a design which has previously been found in association with named college wares. The remaining refined white earthenware included four sherds with transfer-printed 'willow pattern' decoration (weighing 34g) and two sherds with transfer-printed 'Asiatic pheasants' decoration (weighing 20g). Both of these designs have previously been found in association with vessels bearing the names of college cooks. A further 14 sherds of undiagnostic refined white earthenware, weighing 104g, were also recovered. Furthermore, a small quantity of other types of material was also identified. This included a fragment of a late 17th or early 18th century Chinese porcelain saucer (weighing 27g), two sherds of German stoneware (weighing 22g), three sherds of 19th century English Utilitarian Stoneware (weighing 294g), two sherds from refined white earthenware jars (weighing 22g) – one of which originally contained Keiller's marmalade – and two sherds of 19th century coarse red plantpot, weighing 24g; one of these bore the name 'SANKEYS Ltd'. Finally, a plain red coarseware handle of 16th to 19th century date (weighing 56g) was also recovered.

Clay Tobacco Pipe (Craig Cessford)

A fragmentary clay tobacco pipe bowl and two stem fragments, weighing together 15g, were recovered from the site. In general, the presence of clay tobacco pipe fragments in a context indicates a date between late 16th to early 20th centuries (c. 1580-1910). Bowls, however, can often be more closely dated via comparison to Oswald's simplified general typology (1975). In this particular instance, the bowl – which was recovered from topsoil deposit <013>, [100] – could only be dated to no earlier than c. 1730. Of the two remaining fragments, one – from <009>, [061] in Test Pit 6 – consisted of a partial heel that was marked with a probable six-pointed star on the base. Although this stamp is generic and cannot be linked to a specific maker, it was most probably manufactured during the 17th or 18th centuries.

Glass (Richard Newman)

A single trimmed pane of medieval window glass was recovered from <022> [042], the backfill of the present College Chapel's foundation in Test Pit 4. This fragment had been cut to shape and was most probably grisailled, although no evidence of decoration could be discerned due to the extent of later patination (see further Marks 1993).

Architectural Fragments (Richard Newman)

In total, 17 architectural fragments – weighing 8.52kg – were recovered from the area of the former hospital chapel. All of these pieces consisted of mouldings that had been trimmed from larger blocks in order to facilitate their reuse. This trimming activity appears most likely to have occurred in c. 1869-70, when the chapel was demolished, as all of the fragments were recovered from 19th century demolition deposits. The group included seven fragments, weighing 2850g, which were derived from <019>, [104] in the investigative trench; seven fragments, weighing 3206g, which were derived from <017>, [102] in stair turret F.01; and three fragments, weighing 2463g, which were derived from <001>/<002>, [014] in Test Pit 1. Although several of these pieces were too small/fragmentary to be identifiable, a number of relatively diagnostic elements were present (see Table 2 and Figure 9).

Catalogue Number	Context	Material	Pattern	Date	Comments
002	014	Clunch	Roll and fillet	c. 1250-1400	Two fragments
017	102	Clunch	Roll and fillet (with three-quarter hollow?)	c. 1250-1400	Three fragments
017	102	Clunch	Elaborate, almost <i>fleur de lis</i> style moulding	c. 1250-1400	A single fragment
017	102	Clunch	Roll with flanking hollow	c. 1250-1400	A single, heavily abraded fragment
019	104	Mortar	Ogee, with partial quirk	c. 1380-1520	Three conjoining fragments

Table 2: Significant components of the moulded stone assemblage by element.

Unfortunately, although the stylistic pattern of several of the trimmed mouldings could be identified, the precise nature of the architectural blocks from which they had been removed could not be discerned. Furthermore, the original association of the various mouldings – which forms a key element in establishing the date of the architectural order of which they once comprised a part – remains similarly unclear. Nevertheless, it is apparent from their form that the clunch fragments in particular were probably medieval in origin. Indeed, the majority of these mouldings appear most likely to have comprised *three-quarter hollows with fillets*, a category of moulding that – lacking context or additional associations – can only be broadly dated to c. 1250-1400 (Morris 1978, 39-43). Both the material and the form of the sculpted mortar fragments, in contrast, suggest that they may well have formed part of the alteration/updating of the chapel that was conducted during the early 16th century when it transferred from ecclesiastical to collegiate use. The building is known to have been remodelled in the Perpendicular style at this time (Willis & Clark 1886 II, 281). Because of their fragmentary nature, the clunch pieces do not provide a reliable date for the construction of the chapel. In addition, historical records indicate that numerous moulded clunch blocks were also reused as patching within the fabric of this building during various episodes of repair/alteration (Babington 1874, 28). As a result, a reliable assessment could only usefully be conducted upon complete *in situ* architectural elements (see further Morris 2003). Significantly, the degree of preservation that was encountered within the investigative trench indicates that the potential for the survival of suitable architectural remains – such as the pier bases of the central tower – is high. A targeted program of excavation and recording, with the aim of establishing a clearer date for the construction of the building, might therefore be possible in the future.



Figure 9. Significant elements of the moulded stone assemblage.

Ceramic Building Material (Richard Newman)

A fragment of glazed floor tile was recovered from [032], <105> in Test Pit 3. This consisted of a coarse red earthenware fabric with a very dark greenish brown glaze. It was most probably 16th or 17th century in date, and may well have been associated with the collegiate phase of the chapel's use. The fragment was well worn and measured 92mm+ by 62mm+ in extent and 14mm+ thick; it weighed 85g.

Human Bone (Richard Newman)

All bones – including both recognisably human and animal material, along with any indeterminate fragments – that were encountered during the investigations were bagged, labelled and reburied. With particular reference to the human bone, a small number of broken and abraded fragments were identified as residual material within 19th century demolition deposits, whilst a disarticulated human vertebra was present within possible medieval cemetery soil [114] in the investigative trench.

Discussion

It is clear from the above results that significant remains lie preserved beneath the lawn of First Court. The following section will therefore evaluate the archaeological potential of this material in conjunction with a review of the extent and reliability of the earlier, 19th century investigations at the site. Of the two medieval structures that remained standing following the hospital's conversion in 1511, the 'infirmery' was demolished in 1863 and the chapel in 1869-70 (RCHM(E) 1959 II, 188). Given the location of the recent investigations, and the nature of the remains that were encountered, it is the latter building which forms the focus of the following discussion. During the late 1860s – and thus, significantly, prior to the chapel's demolition – this structure was recorded by Professor Robert Willis, a noted mechanical engineer and architectural historian. Upon his death, Willis left the uncompleted manuscript of his work on *The Architectural History of the University of Cambridge* to his nephew, John Willis Clark, who completed it in 1886 (Willis & Clark 1886). During the intervening period, however, the old chapel had been demolished. Its remains were investigated at this time by Charles Cardale Babington, a Professor of Botany and keen local antiquarian, who published an account of his work in 1874 (Babington 1874); a series of photographs from this book, which were taken during the course of the chapel's demolition, are reproduced in Figures 10-12. Due to the differing circumstances in which these two phases of recording took place, the former account is principally historical in nature whilst the latter is primarily architectural. Nevertheless, perhaps the most fundamental difference between the two concerns their dating of the construction of the chapel.

On the one hand, Willis stated quite categorically that "the walls of the chapel ... are of Early English construction [c. 1180-1275], as may be plainly seen on the north side, and on the east side, where the buttresses remain with Early English string-molds, and corbel-table along the wall, and traces of the heads of the Early English windows. The proportion and projection of the buttresses next the quadrangle are also of that period... [as is] ...the Early English arch which still spans the organ-loft" (Willis & Clark 1886 II, 297). Willis also believed that the 'infirmery' and the chapel were broadly contemporary, and that the former building may have originally comprised a chapel, refectory or dormitory (*ibid.*, 296-7). Babington, in contrast, believed quite firmly that the chapel was constructed somewhat later than the 'infirmery' and that it conformed to the succeeding Decorated (c. 1275-1380) as

opposed to Early English style (Babington 1874, 12-20). This disparity may in part be a result of differences in the application of architectural terminology. The successive styles of 'Early English', 'Decorated' and 'Perpendicular' architecture were first identified and defined during the early 19th century (Rickman 1817) and, whilst this model is still broadly accepted today, the precise date range of each period remains the subject of ongoing debate. Alternatively, however, it is also possible that several phases of construction, of differing styles, took place within the chapel during the medieval period. Historically, for example, it is known that the hospital population expanded markedly during the early 1280s (Underwood 2008, xxvi). Although it has been suggested that this increase precipitated the construction of a new and larger chapel (*ibid.*), it might just as easily have stimulated the expansion or alteration of a pre-existing structure at the site. Given the limited access which appears to have been afforded to both Willis and Babington, it is certainly possible that they relied upon individual elements within what was in fact a complex sequence of structural alterations to date the entire building.

It is generally agreed that, during at least the majority of the Hospital period, "the chapel was about 121ft. long by 25½ft. broad. It was divided into three parts by two transverse walls each pierced by a large and lofty arch 15ft. wide and 47½ft. high and placed about 13ft. apart. To the east of them was the quire and to the west the nave or ante-chapel. These walls were probably connected above by arches and supported a slender tower 15 or 16 feet square, but of which no trace, except the existence of one of these walls and the foundations of the other, remained after the building had been altered to suit the requirements of the college" (Babington 1874, 12). The quire, which was reserved for the ordained brethren of the hospital, appears to have been accessed via a doorway located in the southern wall of the central tower (see Figure 11). This area was separated from the nave by a large stone screen, which occupied the western arch. In addition, Babington proposed that a second screen may once have been present within the eastern arch, thereby fully enclosing the central space, although his evidence for this appears to have been largely conjectural (*ibid.*, 17). In the northwest corner of the tower, a semi-circular stair-turret was present. This extended partly outside the building and gave access to a rood loft, into which an organ was later installed during the collegiate period (the lowest portion of this turret was investigated as **F.01**). Access to the nave, for the laity, was made via a doorway situated towards the western end of the north wall. The eastern jamb of this doorway was also identified and recorded during the recent watching brief (as **F.02**). Other features of the chapel at this time included a single-storey sacristy, which appears to have been attached to the eastern end of the south side of the building (*ibid.*, 20). Within the interior of the chapel "the walls were decorated with fresco paintings in the time of the Hospital. Traces of them were found in various places, and especially the remains of a large and elaborate painting of St Christopher which existed behind the wainscot in the secularised [*i.e.* western] part of the nave" (*ibid.*, 20). Notably, a fragment from one of these frescos – depicting part of a probable crucifixion scene – is currently displayed in the College's new chapel, although no further record of their appearance has yet been identified.



Figure 10. Exterior views of the eastern end of the north side (top) and the middle of the south side (bottom) of the chapel (from Babington 1874, plates 1 and 2).

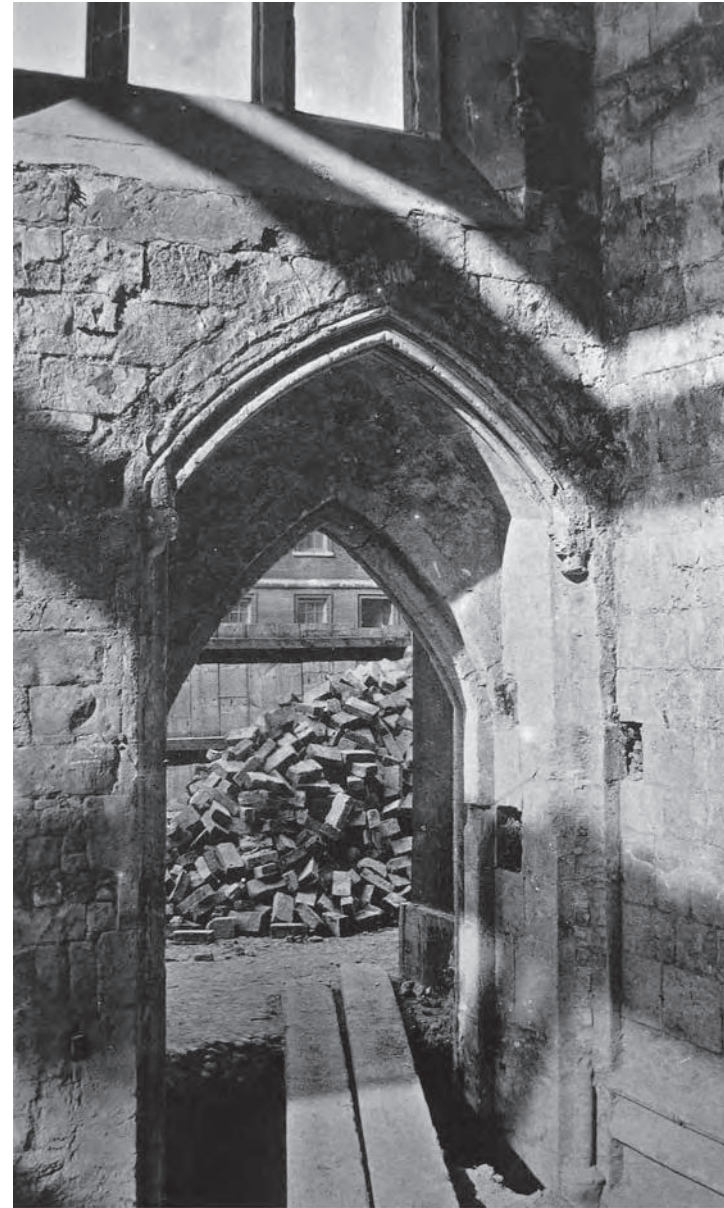


Figure 11. Interior views of the chancel arch, facing west (left), and of the doorway in the south wall of the quire, facing south (right) (from Babington 1874, plates 3 and 5).



Figure 12. Interior views of the eastern end of the south side (top), and the altar-tomb of Keyton's chantry (bottom) (from Babington 1874, plates 4 and 6).

A sense of the scale of the truncation which occurred throughout the chapel during the later 19th century can be gained by comparing Babington's account of the standing remains with the surviving architectural elements that were encountered archaeologically. In the first instance, at least three – and probably four – courses of stonework remained extant within stair turret **F.01**. Babington recorded that access to the rood-loft “had originally been obtained by a door 2ft. 3in. wide, in the north-west corner of the space under the tower. This latter doorway was quite closed and partly removed when the modern access to the staircase was formed. This probably happened when the chapel was remodelled by Bp. Fisher, for the wall closing the doorway was quite hidden by stalls of that date” (Babington 1874, 18-19). No trace of any blocking remained, however, nor did any evidence of the later doorway. This strongly suggests that the internal ground level was raised between the hospital and collegiate periods, and that the demolition removed all trace of the upper, collegiate phase alterations. A similar pattern may also be observed in relation to doorway **F.02**. Here, Babington recorded that the original entrance to the ante-chapel “was on the north wall, nearly, but not exactly, in the same place as the door to the stairs leading to the lodge ... for there were no traces of a south or west door except that of late Perpendicular date, forming the modern entrance to the chapel. They were searched for carefully when the walls were pulled down” (*ibid.*, 19). Furthermore, “when the brick turret which led to the lodge was taken down ... the two lowest stones of the eastern jamb were found in their original place, and shewed by their mouldings that this doorway belonged to the Decorated building” (*ibid.*, 28). These two courses remained *in situ* and were rerecorded during the recent investigation. Their presence beneath the later stair turret – no trace of which remained extant – once again indicates that the ground level had been raised prior to the alterations being conducted.

Perhaps of equal, if not greater, significance with regard to the reliability of Babington's testimony is the disparity between his record of the jamb's mouldings and the nature of the remains that were recently encountered (Figure 13). Although broadly similar, a number of significant differences are apparent. Babington's drawing is not to scale, and the mouldings he depicted are markedly more elaborate than those which were actually present. This suggests that Babington's time and access to the site during the period of demolition may well have been limited. His drawing was probably based upon hastily compiled notes, which were restricted to broad outline as opposed to concentrating upon fine detail. This of course raises concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of his recording of other aspects of the structure. Similarly elaborate drawings of additional mouldings – such as those of the chancel arch and the mullions of the west window, for example – are also presented. Other elements of potential interest might perhaps have been missed entirely. In this particular instance, the moulding of **F.02** can now be seen to have comprised a relatively simple wave mould. This was the most common decorative style of the Decorated period, and was first employed in *c.* 1280 (Morris 1978, 21-9). Yet this identification would be much less clear-cut if based solely upon Babington's depiction.

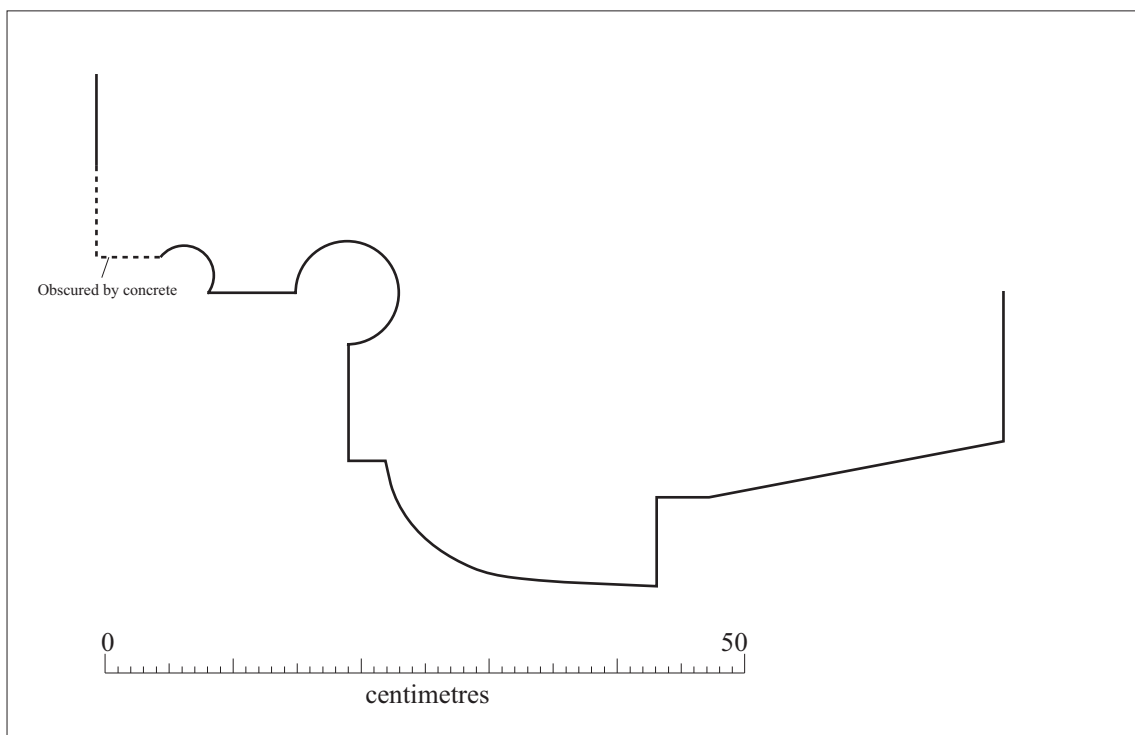
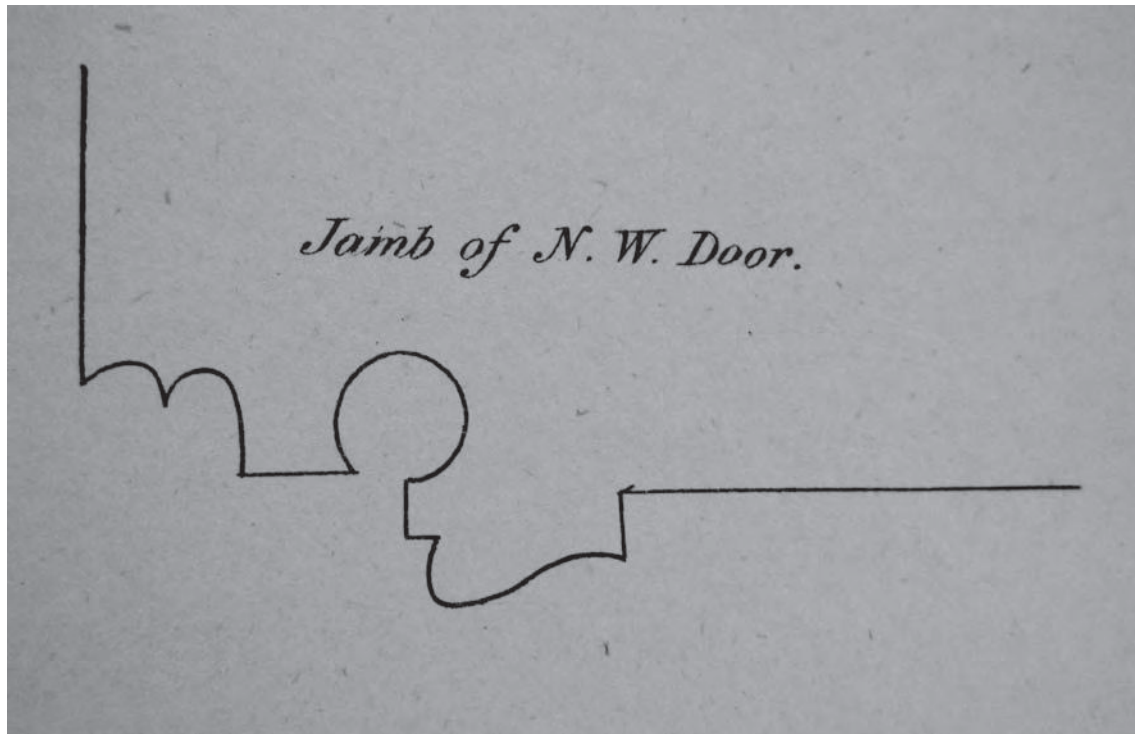


Figure 13. The moulding of the eastern jamb of the doorway situated in the north wall of the ante-chapel, as recorded by Babington in 1874, plate 8 (top), and as encountered during the recent investigations (below).

Historical accounts indicate that when the chapel was transferred into collegiate ownership in 1511, its fabric, fixtures and fittings initially remained largely unaltered (Willis & Clark 1886 II, 292). By 1514, however, extensive works are known to have been conducted. The eastern arch supporting the central tower was demolished, and the quire thereby extended to the west. The nave, or ante-chapel, was also subdivided, with the western portion being converted for use as the Master's Lodge. This latter part was divided into chambers via the insertion of two floors, and new windows and doors were also installed. Three new doorways were also made into the chapel, and new lights were inserted into the original window frames. Furthermore, the original, steeply-pitched roof was replaced with a much flatter one and "the quire was fitted with a new rood screen and new stall-work ... to suit its extended dimensions" (*ibid.*, 281-2). These latter elements were installed in 1516. An indenture survives from this period documenting the contract of 'Thomas Loveday, Carpenter' to construct 24 stalls on either side of the quire, to be based upon the pattern of those at Jesus College and Pembroke Hall (*ibid.*, 243). Significantly, however, Babington recorded that "there seem to have been old stalls which did not cover so much of the wall as those lately in use: for at a height of 10 feet 4 inches from the old pavement there was a stringcourse extending all along both sides from the east end to the position of the eastern quire-arch. It was cut away to allow the application of the late stalls to the wall" (Babington 1874, 16). Yet both Willis and Babington agreed that the stalls which were present when the building was demolished, and which are now housed within the replacement chapel, were those that had been installed in 1516 (Willis & Clark 1886 II, 295; Babington 1874, 16). This implies that probable stall foundation **F.03** within the investigative trench is most likely to have been pre-collegiate in origin.

This interpretation is supported by the position of the foundation's return. As can clearly be seen in Figure 8, this respected the original, easternmost arch of the central tower; a feature which was demolished in 1514-6. The collegiate phase stalls extended further to the west, thereby necessitating the blocking of stair turret **F.01**. Indeed, the position of the return would appear to have greatly hindered access along the centre of the quire during the latter period. Once again, however, it seems that the floor level was raised prior to the alterations taking place. The mortar bedding of a lower, robbed floor surface was encountered at 7.70m OD, for example. Furthermore, Babington stated that the foundations of the eastern arch remained extant, along with their lowest mouldings (Babington 1874, 12). These elements would also have risen above the original floor surface, and thus appear to have been similarly subsumed during the conversion process. Yet this evidence directly contradicts Babington's account. He stated that "the original floor was apparently about 2ft. lower than the recent one in all the western part of the building. It was certainly 2ft. lower on both sides of the transverse walls. But at the east end there was no trace of any lower floor than that which existed to the last, nor was it ascertained with any certainty where the difference of original level had commenced" (Babington 1874, 20). It was certainly common during the medieval period for the hierarchical divisions between different portions of the church, which were often physically demarcated by architectural features such as screens, to be further reinforced by the use of different flooring materials and sometimes also differing surface levels (Rodwell 2005, 158). But the evidence recovered during the recent investigations indicates that Babington's account is again somewhat unreliable. He either did not recognise, or else was not

present to witness, the depth and complexity of the archaeological sequence that remains extant within the quire.

Two further pieces of archaeological evidence are known to have survived from the medieval hospital chapel. These both comprise inscribed blocks of clunch that were recovered during the building's demolition. The first was published in brief by Babington (Babington 1874, plate 9) and then later reconsidered in more depth by Martin Biddle (Biddle 1961). It consists of a simple ashlar block upon which was incised part of an architectural sketch for an elaborate, six light window. "It seems likely that the drawing on the stone represents the original east window of *c.* 1280 and that it was the mason's rough working out of the design, the block afterwards being reused in the east wall of the chapel" (Biddle 1961, 105). Such sketches are rare, and the fragment is therefore of importance. (Notably, a very similar fragment has also been identified elsewhere in Cambridge within the wall of the Master's Lodge of Jesus College; Begg 2001). The second inscribed clunch block, which is preserved in the College Library, has not previously been reported upon. It again consists of a fragment of ashlar, which measures 205mm by 155mm by 65mm. One face of this block has been carved with a crude human figure in profile and an eight-pointed star; similar medieval graffiti are particularly well represented across the Cambridgeshire area (see Pritchard 1967, 24-64). The fragment also bears two inscriptions, which read: *OMNIBUS EST NOTUM QUOD ORESEULIA [?] AMAT BENE POTUM*, and, to the right and above, *ADAM FECIT HOC*. A label attached to the display case states that the style of the writing is that of "the latter part of the 13th century", although the reliability of this attribution is uncertain.

Aside from the levelling/make-up deposits which sealed the floors of the earlier hospital phase, the only evidence of collegiate activity to be encountered during the recent investigation of the chapel was sepulchral in nature. This is because "when the old chapel was pulled down, it was considered advisable to leave the slabs covering the graves of those who were interred within it in their places, and to mark out the site by not removing the foundations of the old building" (Babington 1874, 29). Although burials within churches were comparatively rare prior to the 14th century, they became relatively common from around the late 15th century onwards (Peters 1996, 73-4). This practice was especially prevalent in monastic contexts, such as hospital chapels (Gilchrist & Sloane 2005, 57). Subsequently, after *c.* 1600, the provision of brick-lined burial vaults became almost ubiquitous (Gilchrist & Morris 1996, 119; Gilchrist 2003, 402). Indeed, across England four main types of intramural burial vault have been identified. These consisted of: large dynastic vaults, which were typically located beneath aisles or in side chapels; family vaults, which were usually brick-lined graves with a barrelled roof; single-width brick-lined graves capped by a ledger stone identifying the occupant(s); and extensive private and parochial vaults, which often contained a large number of individuals (Litten 1991, 211-2). At the present site, it is clearly the third of these types which is represented. Although the gravestones themselves would of necessity have been removed and then reinstated following the conclusion of the demolition process, they do nevertheless appear to demarcate the presence of associated burial vaults beneath. The vault of Jacob Wood, for example, who died in 1839, was encountered within the investigative trench. Here, the brick-built wall of the vault was identified lying approximately 0.9m beneath the present ground surface; it clearly continued to some depth below the limit of excavation. This indicates both that the interment is likely to be relatively well preserved, and that the

burial most probably truncated the majority of the preceding sequence. Further details of the arrangement of, and the inscriptions on, the various gravestones preserved on the lawn of First Court are presented in an appendix, below.

Conclusion

In the first instance, it is clear that a significant body of evidence relating to the earliest, hospital phase of the chapel remains extant. This is because the internal floor level appears to have been raised by *c.* 0.5m in 1514-6, thereby preserving between two and four courses of *in situ* masonry along with the remnants of any associated floor surfaces. In general, this material does not appear to have been disturbed when the chapel was demolished in 1869-70. Although the present investigation was undertaken on a very limited scale, features were encountered that had not previously been recorded. In particular, the presence of probable medieval stall foundation **F.03** indicates that the hospital chapel is likely to have been both well-attended and of relatively high status (Rodwell 2005, 157). Evidence was also encountered which suggests that several phases of medieval activity are most probably represented. The lowest step within stair turret **F.01** appeared to have been sealed beneath a mortar floor surface that was introduced at some point during the later medieval period, for example. Furthermore, the identification of a wave moulded door jamb in the nave (**F.02**) is at odds with Willis's identification of Early English mouldings in the quire. Whilst caution must be exercised – and further investigation would be required – it is certainly possible that more than one structural phase is represented. This might in part account for some of the disparity between Willis's and Babington's interpretations of the structure (although one important result of this investigation must surely be that it highlights several weaknesses in Babington's 1874 publication).

As Figure 14 shows, the chapel formed only one small part of the former monastic complex. To the south would have been located a series of claustral structures, which are likely to have been arranged about a central garth. Accounts dating to *c.* 1498-1507 indicate that repairs were undertaken to the hospital's "hall, cloister, kitchen, buttery, bakehouse and almshouse" at this time (Underwood 2008, xxviii). Additional buildings that may also have been present within the cloister include a refectory (possibly the 'hall' mentioned above), a dormitory and a chapterhouse (Greene 1992, 4-11). References to 'claying and splinting' within the accounts suggest that some portions of these structures may have been of timber or wattle-and-daub construction. Nevertheless, the potential degree of archaeological survival in this area appears high. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, the rise in floor level within the chapel upon its conversion strongly indicates that the external ground height was also raised at this time, thereby potentially protecting the foundations of the recently demolished buildings. Secondly, the lawn of First Court – beneath which the majority of the structures probably lie – has remained undeveloped since 1511. It is extremely unusual for such a large area, situated in such a prime urban location, to have lain largely undisturbed for so long. The potential for a non-invasive geophysical survey to elucidate elements of the layout of the former monastic precinct is therefore clear. Finally, the archaeological potential of the pre-hospital sequence also appears high. Beneath the lowest foundation deposits of the chapel, a *c.* 1.5m deep sequence was identified via augering. This material is likely to have been preserved via the same conditions that have potentially protected the remains of the overlying hospital.

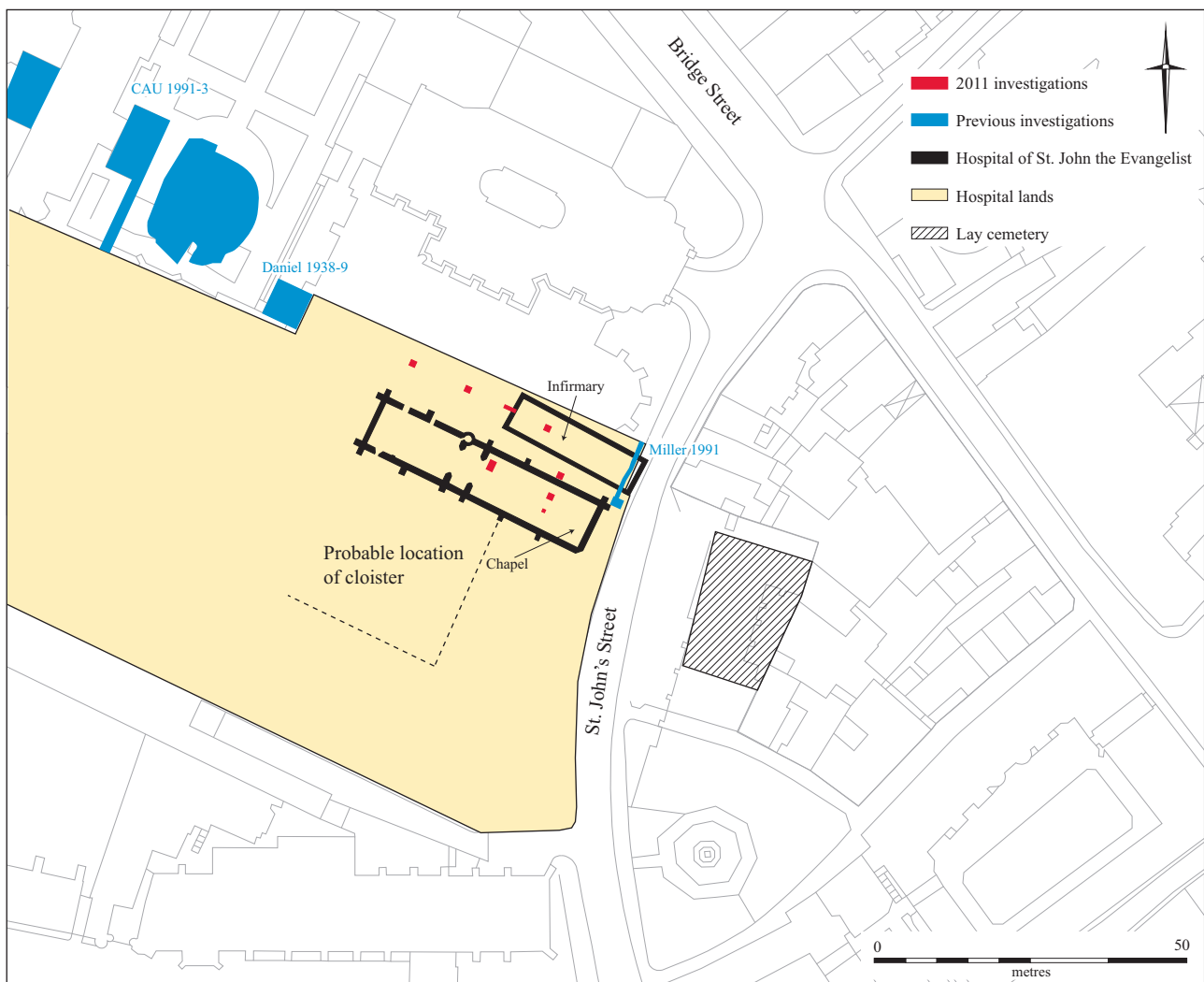


Figure 14. Position of current investigation (in red) in relation to known elements of the hospital site, and previous excavations.

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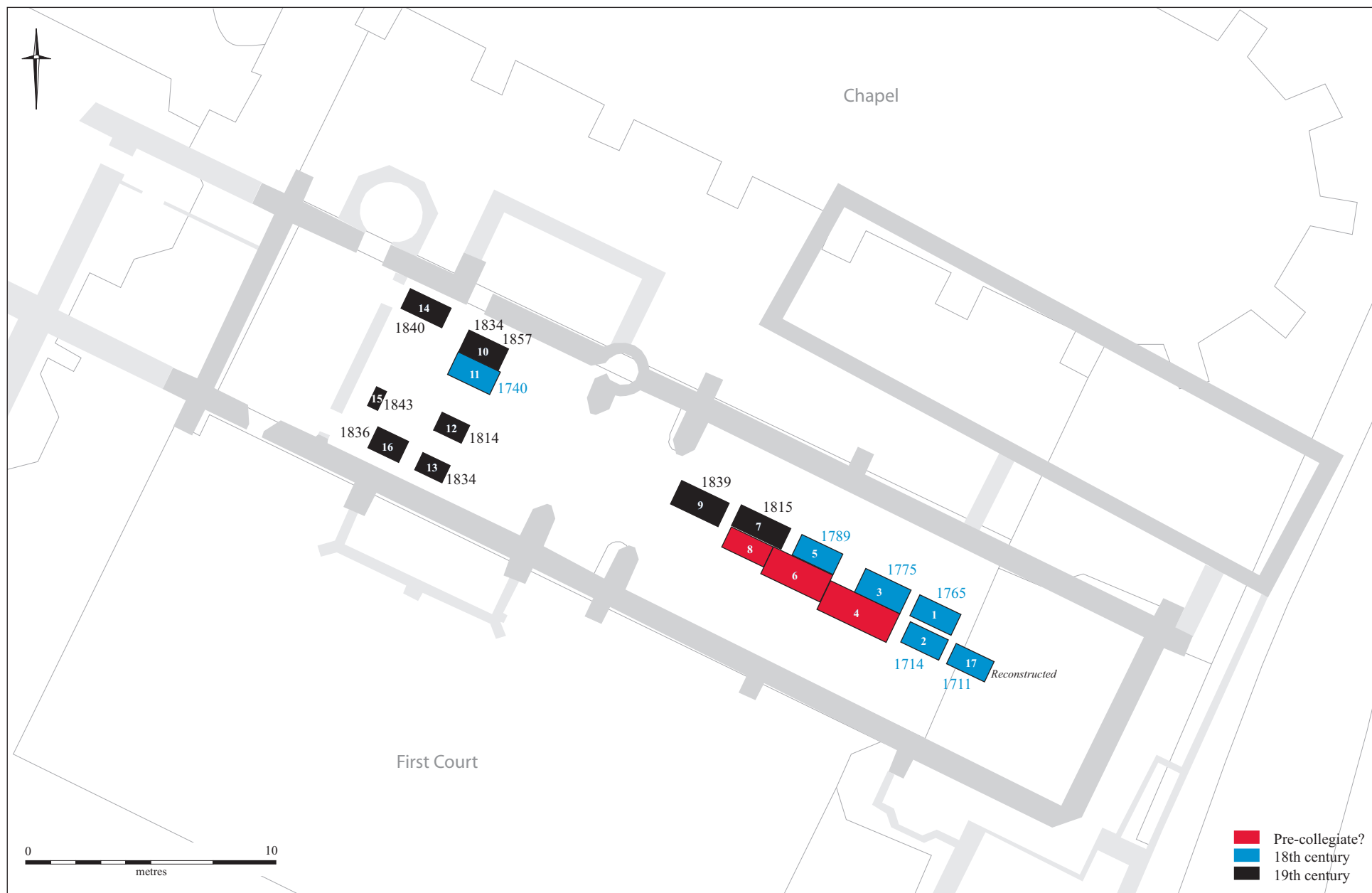


Figure 15. Locations of gravestones, with dates of interment.

Appendix: Monumental Gravestones

Presented below are the inscriptions that Charles Cardale Babington recorded on the gravestones from the Old Chapel that were preserved on the lawn of First Court (Babington 1874, 29-31). Their numbers correlate with the plan presented in Figure 15; this represents a record of the positions of the original gravestones as they were arranged in November 2010. Subsequently, these monuments – which were very badly eroded, rendering them in many cases almost indecipherable – have been replaced by newly engraved replicas. A photographic record was obtained prior to their removal. Three slabs (numbers 4, 6 and 8 in the catalogue below) were in a particularly poor state of preservation. Notably, Babington did not record the presence of an inscription on any of the monuments in this latter group, although one – 6 – appears to have originally been surmounted by a 14th century sepulchral brass (see below). Indeed, given the similarities in their composition, size, and advanced state of deterioration, it is possible that all three of these slabs were pre-collegiate in origin. At present, their former positions are unmarked. Finally, an additional gravestone – 17, which was recorded by Babington as being “nearly covered by the new lecture room building, but is relieved from pressure by an arch” (*ibid.*, 31) – could not be located. This has either been removed, or else become wholly subsumed, during the subsequent expansion of this building.

The positions of the gravestones also reveal clear patterns of temporal and hierarchical differentiation in burial location. With very few exceptions, for example, the gravestones decrease in age as they progress westwards from the altar (Figure 15). Thus it can be seen that those of 19th century date are primarily clustered in the ante-chapel, whilst those of 18th century date are predominately located in the quire. By extension, therefore, it seems probable that the earliest interments may have been located still further to the east, in the area which now lies sealed beneath the Old Music Room. A similarly distinct pattern is also observable in regard to the social status of the various individuals concerned. In general, it is apparent from the catalogue below that former Masters and/or Senior Fellows were interred within the quire, while more junior members of the college lie within the ante-chapel.

- 1) *M.S. / Joannis Newcombe, S.T.P. / Decani Roffensis / Pro Domina Margareta / Prælectoris Theologici; / et / hujusce Collegii / per triginta fere annos / Præfecti integerrimi / Obiit 10 Jan. 1765 / Anno Ætatis 82.* [Measures: 2.00m by 1.00m]
- 2) *Depositum / Roberti Worsley, A.R. / 1714.* [Measures: 1.80m by 0.91m]
- 3) *M.S. Guelielmi Samuel Powell, S.T.P. / Hujus Collegii per decem annos / Præfecti / Archidiaconi Colcestriensis, / et Collegii redivis / conservandis et augendis / juventuti instituendæ ornandæ regendæ, / Academiæ Ecclesiæ Reipublicæ tuendis, / vitam heu nimium brevem / fortiter et feliciter impendit, / Obiit Januarii 19^{no} 1775, Natus annos 58.* [Measures: 2.01m by 1.00m]
- 4) Disintegrated stone – no inscription recorded. [Measures: 3.08m by 1.31m]
- 5) *Joh. Chevallier, S.T.P. / Magister Collegii / Electus Feb. 1, 1775. / Obiit Mart. 14, 1789. / Anno Ætatis 59.* [Measures: 2.02m by 0.98m]
- 6) Disintegrated stone, with mounts for brass (removed). This was most probably the “fine brass in memory of Eudo (or Guido or Ivo) de la Zouch” that was previously recorded as having lain in approximately this location (Babington 1874, 30). Moreover, Babington stated that “the slab remains, but the remnants of the brass have been removed into the room under the new organ chamber and fixed to the wall. No

inscription remained, but fortunately the arms of Zouch in an early form, “Bezantee, a canton”, exist on part of the brass. This shews that the tradition that it is the tomb of a del la Zouch is correct. But the reason is not apparent why so eminent a man as Eudo de la Zouch, the first free Chancellor of the University, A.D. 1396, was buried in the Chapel of St John’s Hospital” (*ibid.*). [Measures: 2.74m by 1.12m]

- 7) *Gulielmus Craven, S.T.P. / Magister Collegii / Electus Mart. 29, 1789. / Obiit Jan 8, 1815. / Anno Ætatis 59.* [Measures: 2.08m by 0.99m]
- 8) Disintegrated stone – no inscription recorded. [Measures: 1.84m by 0.85m]
- 9) *Jacobus Wood, S.T.P. / Hujus Collegii per XXIV. Annos Magister / Decanus Eliensis / Decessit XXIII April., A.D. M.DCCC.XXXIX. / Ætatis suæ LXXIX.* [Measures: 2.11m by 0.99m]
- 10) *H.S.E. Gulielmus Tatham, S.T.B. / Hujus Collegii Socius / Ecclesiæ de Oakley Magna / In Agro Essexiensi Rector. / Natus VI. Id. Jun. A.D. M.DCC.LXXVII. / Decessit V. Kal. Septembr. / M.DCCC.XXXIV.* Below this is a second inscription, which reads: *Radulphus Tatham, S.T.P. / Hujus Collegii Per XXIV. Annos Magister / Decessit XIX. Jan. A.D. M.DCCC.LVII. / Ætatis suæ LXXIX.* [Measures: 1.84m by 0.96m]
- 11) *H.S.E. / Thomas Baker, S.T.B. / Collegii hujus olim Socius / Qui ex Senatus Consulto, A.D. 1716 ejectus / in his Ædibus / Hospe postea consenuit; / Pius, modestus, doctus / Antiquitatis peritissimus / Obiit Jul. 2, 1740, Æt. 84.* [Measures: 2.03m by 1.01m]
- 12) *Gawen Braithwaite, S.T.B. / Socius Collegii / Obiit Oct. XXX. / MDCCCXIV. / Anno Ætatis XL.* [Measures 1.16m by 0.81m+]
- 13) *Gulielmus Jones, S.T.B. / Collegii Socius Senior / Obiit Apr. XXII / A.D. MDCCCXXXIV. / ÆT. XLIV.* [Measures: 1.15m by 0.80m]
- 14) *H.S.E. / Johannes Palmer, S.T.B. / Litterarum Arabicarum / Olim Professor / Hujus Collegii Socius Senior / Obiit / Apr. IX. A.D. MDCCCXL. / ÆT. 71.* [Measures: 1.83m by 0.95m]
- 15) *H.S.E. / Georgius Langshaw, S.T.B. / Coll. Soc. Ob. Die Feb. XX. / A.S. 1843. ÆT. XXXVII.* [Measures: 0.80m by 0.37m]
- 16) *Josephus Taylor, S.T.B. / Collegii Socius / Obiit 30 Jun. A.D. 1836 / Ætat. 37.* [Measures: 1.29m by 0.92m]
- 17) *M.S. / Depositum / “Viri admodum Reverendi / Humfredi Gower / S.T.P. / Coll.Div.Johannis / Præfecti / S.Theol. pro Dna Margareta /Professoris / Ecclesiæ Eliensis / Canonici / Qui Collegium per annos / Triginta et amplius / Strenue ac feliciter / Rexerat / Obiit XXVII Martii anno-que / Dom. MDCCXI / ÆT.suæ 74.* Also, a shield of arms bearing “a chevron between three wolves’ heads erased” (Babington 1874, 31). [No longer present]

Oasis Form

OASIS ID: cambridg3-112941	
Project Details	
Project name	First Court, St John's College, Cambridge
Short description of the project	Three phases of archaeological investigation - consisting of a test pit evaluation, a watching brief and an investigative trench - were undertaken within the First Court of St John's College, Cambridge, between the 26th of October 2010 and the 21st of March 2011. These works were focused upon the location of the former college chapel, which was demolished in 1869-70. This building had previously served as the chapel of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist, an institution that had been founded upon this site by c. 1200. Although limited in scale, the investigations produced a number of important results. In the first instance, a number of in situ masonry blocks were identified. These included the base of a stair turret, a door jamb and part of a clunch-built foundation, the latter of which most probably formed a footing for stalls within the medieval quire. Overall, it appears that the floor height of the chapel was raised by approximately 0.5m when the building was converted from ecclesiastical to collegiate use in 1514-6. The lower portion of this sequence thus appears to have remained relatively undisturbed when the chapel was demolished, and significant architectural remains of between two and four courses in depth lie preserved beneath the lawn of First Court.
Project dates	Start: 26-10-2010 End: 21-03-2011
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3559 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	JFC 10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Residential 2 - Institutional and communal accommodation
Monument type	CHAPEL Medieval
Significant Finds	ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	JETON Post Medieval
Significant Finds	WINDOW GLASS Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Documentary Search','Targeted Trenches','Test Pits','Visual Inspection'
Development type	Building refurbishment/repairs/restoration
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16
Position in the planning process	After full determination (eg. As a condition)
Project Location	
Country	England

Site location	CAMBRIDGESHIRE CAMBRIDGE CAMBRIDGE First Court, St John's College, Cambridge
Postcode	CB2 1TP
Study area	700.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4479 5876 52.2075896293 0.119228145337 52 12 27 N 000 07 09 E Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 6.54m Max: 6.54m
Project Creators	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Richard Newman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	St John's College, Cambridge
Project Archives	
Physical Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Physical Archive ID	JFC 10
Physical Contents	'Ceramics','Metal','other'
Digital Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Digital Archive ID	JFC 10
Digital Contents	'Ceramics','Metal','other'
Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography','Spreadsheets'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	JFC 10
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Photograph','Plan','Section'
Project Bibliography	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	First Court, St John's College, Cambridge: An Archaeological Investigation

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