

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

The College of St George, Windsor Castle

Desk-based Assessment
for a new Service Trench through the Canons Cloister



By
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CAP Report No. 478

Non Technical Summary

The following report is the result of work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. for Martin Ashley Architects on behalf of the Deans and Canons of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, Berkshire. The report details the results of a rapid archaeological desk based assessment prior to a proposal for new water and gas services in the area of the Canons Cloister, St. George's Chapel.

The desk based assessment managed to gather archive material dating between the years c. 1770 – 2000 from the St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library detailing the positions of former services including water and gas trenches. Photographs from the 1960's of the east facing external wall of the cloister garden were also inspected.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The following report is the result of work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. for Martin Ashley Architects on behalf of the Deans and Canons of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, Berkshire. The report details the results of a rapid archaeological desk based assessment prior to a proposal for new water and gas services in the area of the Canons Cloister, St. George's Chapel.
- 1.2 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological desk based assessment* and current Health and Safety legislation.

Planning Background

- 1.3 Prior to a proposal for a series of new water and gas services being laid in the exterior garden area of the Canons Cloister at Windsor Castle in the area of the Lower Ward, a rapid preliminary desk based assessment of all readily available archive material was to be inspected from the St George's Chapel Archive. The results from this desk based assessment were to help aid Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC) as well as to help assess the design of the proposed new services. As part of the SMC, a series of three exploratory trial pits are proposed in the area of the cloister garden so as to assess the sensitivity of the archaeology in the area prior to any ground-works. The proposed size of the pits to be dug are 600 x 600 mm and to a maximum depth of 450 mm. It was hoped that the results from the desk based assessment would act as a preliminary guide to the archaeology of the immediate area as well giving an idea of the positions of existing services in the area.

Site Location & Description

- 1.4 Windsor Castle (NGR: SU 9698 7702) is located on top of an isolated chalk dome which has been cut away on the north to form a steep cliff, by the Thames. At its highest the dome rises to approx. 52 m OD. To the west the site is bounded by Thames Street, the northern extension of Windsor High Street. To the north, east and south the greater part of the castle limits are surrounded by the more rural setting of the Home Park.
- 1.5 The site is situated on an outcrop of upper chalk in places covered with 'clay with flints' and surrounded by Terrace Gravels (Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet number 269). The Scheduled Ancient Monument (Ref: WN 80) is c. 5.3 ha in area.
- 1.6 The Canon's Cloister is located in the area of the Lower Ward, north-east of St. George's Chapel. The cloister is probably the earliest surviving example of timber framed collegiate architecture in Britain and continues as the home of the canons to the present day.

Soil and Geology

- 1.7 The underlying natural chalk is not known in detail in this area, although excavation adjacent to St George's House in 2001 (EVANS 2001) located natural chalk at a depth of 1.6m below the tarmac. Deposits recorded below the tarmac further west in the area of Denton's Commons (JONES 2005) comprised stone chippings 0.80m thick, over brick and stone rubble 0.40m thick and over chalk rubble and clay 0.40m thick. Lower levels in the Canons' Cloister area are unknown.

Archaeological Background

- 1.8 Over a period of nearly 1,000 years Windsor Castle has been inhabited continuously, and altered and refurbished by successive monarchs. Some were great builders, strengthening the Castle against uprising and rebellion; others, living in more peaceful times, created a palatial Royal residence.
- 1.9 William the Conqueror chose the site, high above the river Thames and on the edge of a Saxon hunting ground. It was a day's march from the Tower of London and intended to guard the western approaches to the capital.
- 1.10 The outer walls of today's structure are in the same position as those of the original castle built by William the Conqueror in the 1070s. So too is the central mound supporting the Round Tower and the Upper Ward, where successive monarchs have had their private apartments since the fourteenth century.
- 1.11 In the 1170s Henry II rebuilt - in stone instead of wood - the Round Tower, the outer walls of the Upper and most of the Lower Ward, and the Royal apartments in the Upper Ward.
- 1.12 Between 1352 and 1355 Edward III erected lodgings for the whole community of canons and priest vicars serving his newly established college of St George. These were squeezed around a courtyard between the 12th-century great hall of Henry II's palace, now given over to the college for its own use, and the Dean's Cloister. The lodgings were built in timber-frame and were arranged on two stories (*see fig 3*), the upper jettied out over the lower to create an internal cloister walk at ground level. There must originally have been about twenty-six sets of chambers within the cloister. It has been suggested that those on the upper floor served to house the canons and the lower their juniors, the priest vicars.
- 1.13 Remarkably, much of the medieval timber framing for these medieval lodgings has survived to the present day, though it is now obscured in many places by a host of later extensions and adaptations. The cloister is probably the earliest surviving example of timber framed collegiate architecture in Britain and continues as the home of the canons to the present day.
- 1.14 St George's Chapel was begun by Edward IV (r. 1461-70 and 1471-83) and completed by Henry VIII. It is dedicated to the patron saint of the Order of the Garter, Britain's highest order of chivalry, and ranks among the finest examples of late medieval architecture in Western Europe.
- 1.15 Ten British monarchs lie buried in the chapel: Edward IV, Henry VI, Henry VIII, Charles I, George III, George IV, William IV, Edward VII, George V and George VI.
- 1.16 Oliver Cromwell captured Windsor Castle after the Battle of Edgehill in 1642, and for the rest of the Civil War it became a prison as well as the headquarters of the parliamentary forces.
- 1.17 In 1648 Charles I was held there before his trial and execution in London; his body was brought back for burial in St. George's Chapel during a snowstorm.

- 1.18 Following the Restoration, Charles II was determined to make the Castle as splendid as possible. He created a new set of State Apartments in the 1670s, using the skills of the architect Hugh May, the artist Antonio Verrio for murals and ceiling paintings, and the famous wood-carver Grinling Gibbons.
- 1.19 The King's Dining Room and the Queen's Presence and Audience Chambers retain many of these original features. Charles II also laid out the 5km Long Walk leading due south from the Castle into Windsor Great Park.
- 1.20 George IV was a great lover of art and fine decoration. Much of Windsor Castle's present appearance is due to the alterations he instigated in the 1820s with his architect, Sir Jeffry Wyattville. The buildings were refashioned in the Gothic style, with the addition of crenellations, turrets and towers.
- 1.21 In the Upper Ward the private apartments were moved from the north side of the quadrangle to the south and east side. The rooms on the north side were designated, as now, as for use on formal occasions and State visits.
- 1.22 One of George IV's most remarkable additions was the Waterloo Chamber, which was created in the 1820s to show portraits commissioned from Sir Thomas Lawrence to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo in 1815.
- 1.23 They represent the monarchs, soldiers and statesmen who were involved in that defeat and its aftermath. They include George III, George IV and the future William IV, the Duke of Wellington, Field Marshal von Blücher, the Emperors of Austria and Russia, the Kings of Prussia and France, and Pope Pius VII.
- 1.24 Queen Victoria and Prince Albert were devoted to Windsor, where they spent much of their time. It was during the reign of Queen Victoria that, in 1845, the State Apartments were first opened to the public.
- 1.25 Prince Albert died of typhoid at Windsor in 1861 and was buried in a spectacular mausoleum that Queen Victoria constructed at Frogmore in the Windsor Home Park.
- 1.26 During the Second World War, Windsor Castle was home to the young Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose while their parents supported the war effort in London and around the country. Today The Queen uses the Castle regularly, spending most of her weekends there.
- 1.27 The twentieth-century history of the Castle is dominated by the major fire that started on 20 November 1992. It began in the Private Chapel, when a spotlight came into contact with a curtain and ignited the material.
- 1.28 It took 15 hours and one-and-a-half million gallons of water to put out the blaze. Nine principal rooms and over 100 other rooms over an area of 9,000 square metres were damaged or destroyed by the fire, approximately one-fifth of the Castle area.
- 1.29 The next five years were spent restoring Windsor Castle to its former glory. It resulted in the greatest historic building project to have been undertaken in this country in the twentieth century, reviving many traditional crafts.

2 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 In accordance with IFA's *Standards and guidance for an archaeological desk based assessment* the primary objective of this assessment was to gather readily available archive material from the St George's Chapel Archive and Chapter Library pertaining to the area of the Canons Cloister. The most essential material was that illustrating any former service trenches in the area as well as any material that may help shed some light on the potential buried archaeology in the area prior to the proposed exploratory pits and proposed ground works for the new services.

3 Methodology

- 3.1 All material gathered from this rapid desk based assessment was collected from the St. George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library
- 3.6 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and guidance: for an archaeological desk based assessment*.

4 Results of the Desk Based Assessment (see Figures 2-11)

- 4.1 The rapid desk based assessment managed to gather material from the St George's Chapel Archive and Chapter Library pertaining to the area of the Canons Cloister. Dates of the archives span the years 1770 – 2000. All of the archive listed below and illustrated within this report were supplied in a digital format. Four other service plans have been identified within the archive of the canons cloister area dating from 1952-1965. These were plans showing the heating mains and builders work ducts and electrical distribution plans. Unfortunately these plans were not readily available as they were either in the process of being digitised or else were only accessible via appointment. A list of these plans, with references, has been included within the bibliography section at the end of the report.

Service Plan of Canons Cloister Area, c. 1770 (see fig 4).

- 4.2 The earliest plan dates to c. 1770 and shows the positions of former *old* lead pipes and cisterns. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service Plan of Canons Cloister Area, 1854[a](see fig 5).

- 4.3 The next readily available plan dates to 1854 and shows the area of the canons cloister courtyard as the 'Little Cistern yard'. Shown is the position of an old well at the east end of the cloister with a series of lead and red earthen-ware water pipes. The west end is marked as having a series of drainage pipes running across the courtyard. This plan shows the north-south cloister cross walk in a slightly different position than it is today, staggered further to the west. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service Plan of Canons Cloister Area, 1854 [b] (see fig 6).

- 4.4 This plan is a sub plan of the same 1854 plan discussed above. It shows the same drainage and water services and old well. Like the other plan of 1854 this plan shows the north-south cloister cross walk in a slightly different position than it is today, staggered further to the west. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service plan of 1884 (see fig 7)

- 4.5 This plan of 1884 shows the position of two fire hydrants in the Canons cloister area along with a linking water main. Since 1854, a span of 30 years, the north-south cloister cross walk has now been moved over to its present position. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service plan of 1952 (see fig 8)

- 4.6 This plan of 1952 details the positions of services, likely electric, along the cloister walkways. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service plan of 1965 (see fig 9)

- 4.7 This architects plan of 1965 shows the position of the external water heating pipes in the area of the canons cloister. Shown is the main pipe trenches, the calorifier chambers and anchor points. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green. The position of the longest east to west length of proposed services across the cloister yard will likely occupy an already existing service trench. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service plan of 1966 (see fig 10)

- 4.8 This plan shows the position of the mains water and a gully, possibly a revised position of the above heating pipes. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Service plan of 2000 (see fig 11)

- 4.9 This fairly recent plan shows the position of most of the former services as marked on the earlier service plans from the 1960's. The position of the proposed new services and exploratory pits have been overlain and are shown in green.

Photograph of c. 1950 of east facing wall of Canons cloister (see fig 12)

- 4.10 This photograph shows the east facing wall of the canon's cloister prior to consolidation work.

Photograph of c. 1960 of east facing wall of Canons cloister (see fig 13)

- 4.11 This photograph shows the east facing wall of the canon's cloister prior to consolidation work.

Photograph of c. 1966 of east facing wall of Canons cloister (see fig 14)

- 4.12 This photograph shows the east facing wall of the canon's cloister prior to consolidation work.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The rapid desk based assessment of all readily available material from the Chapel Archive and Chapter Library managed to gather together a series of plans and photographs of the Canons Cloister area from 1770 – 2000. From these plans it is clear that the area of the cloister yard, both the east and west ends have been heavily disturbed in the past by continually evolving services. The greater part of the present position of the proposed new services appear to possibly occupy an earlier water heating service trench running east – west. Inspection of the archive managed to locate the positions of the mains water supply in the cloister yard area. The archive also made it clear that the cloister yard north-south cross walk was formerly in a slightly different position than it is today, being at an angle located slightly further to the west.

6 Acknowledgements

Thanks to; Susan McDonough of Martin Ashley Architects for her help and advice and also thanks to Ian Poole (Clerk of Works) and the consulting engineer Ian Brown and David from WAGS.

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- SGC P.108/8 - 1854
- SGC P.5 – 1884
- SGC 05368/27F – 1965
- SGC PH CC.18.b – c.1966
- SGC PH CC.18.c – 1950
- SGC PH CW3.A.5.12 – 1960s
- SGC PH FR.13/3 – n.d.
- SGC P.374/1 – 1966
- SGC P.426 – 1952
- SGC XVII.61.43 – 1770s(?)
- Services 3 - 2000

Archive material not consulted, not digitised.

- AT/18/5/11 – SGC P.468/1 – The cloisters, Windsor Castle, builders work ducts for heating mains, plan by G. N. Haden and Sons Ltd. 24 October 1965.
- AT/18/5/12 – SGC P. 468/2 - The cloisters, Windsor Castle, builders work ducts for heating mains, plan by G. N. Haden and Sons Ltd. 24 October 1965.
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- AT/18/5/2/1/33 – SGC P.485 – Lower Ward, Winsor Castle, electrical distribution to Cloister residences, plan by Winton Thorpe, Tunnadine, consulting engineers. May 1952.

ARCHIVE COVER SHEET

Canons Cloister, Lower Ward, Windsor Castle

ARCHIVE DESTINATION – WINDSOR CASTLE ARCHIVE DEPT

Site Name: **Canons Cloister, Lower Ward, Windsor Castle**

Site Code: **WCCC/07/DBA**

PRN:

NPRN : **N/A**

SAM: **N/A**

Other Ref No: **CAP Report No.**

NGR: **SU 9698 7702**

Site Type: **14th century Cloister**

Project Type: **Desk Based Assessment**

Project Officer: **Richard Scott Jones**

Project Dates: **June 22nd 2007**

Categories Present: **N/A**

Location of Original Archive: **Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd.**

Location of duplicate Archives: **Windsor Castle Archive Dept**

Number of Finds Boxes:

Location of Finds:

Museum Reference: **Not assigned**

Copyright: **CAP Ltd**

Restrictions to access: **None**

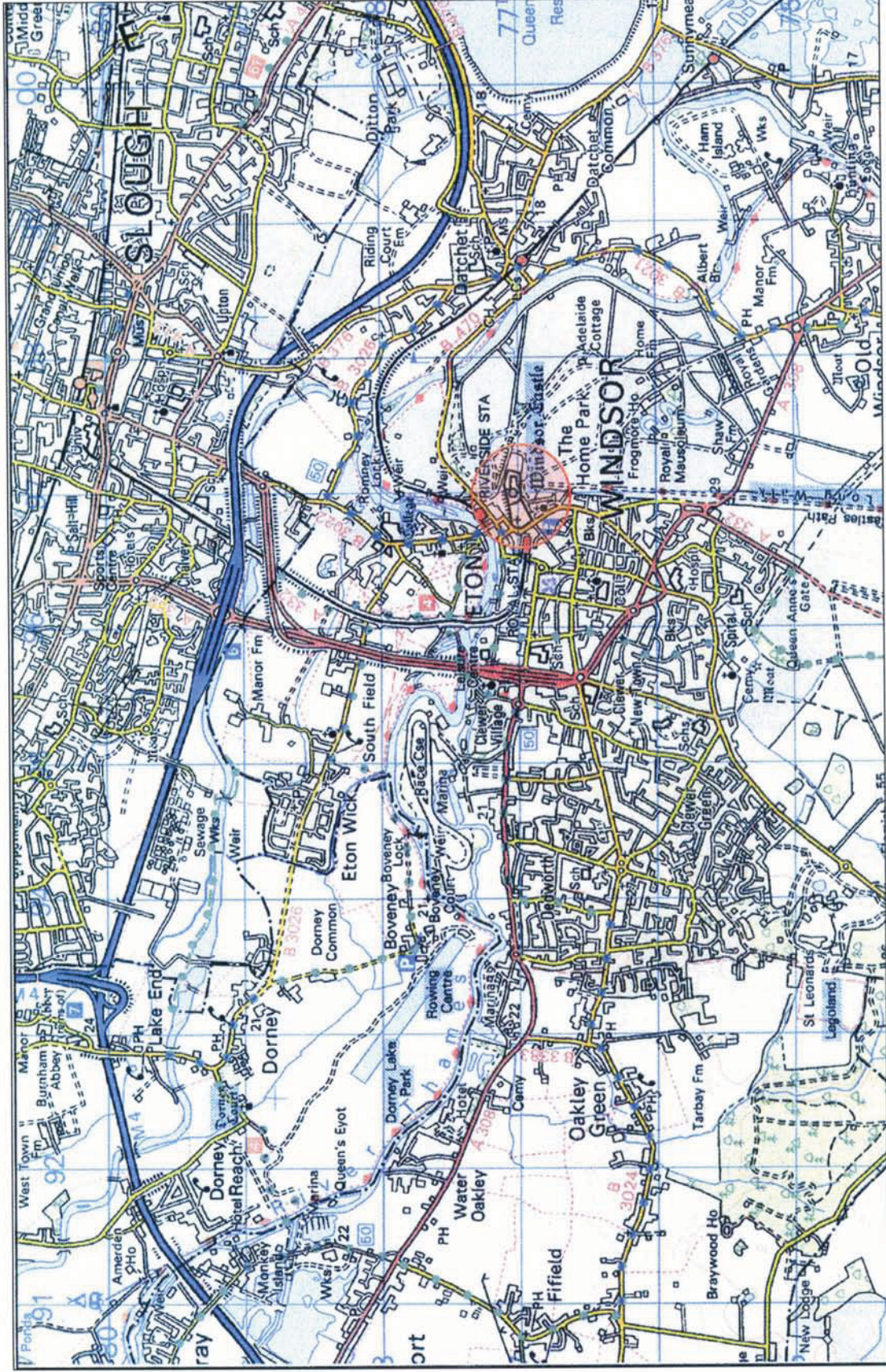


Figure 1. Location of Windsor Castle, Berkshire.



Figure 2. Proposed route of new services through yard of Canon's Cloister.

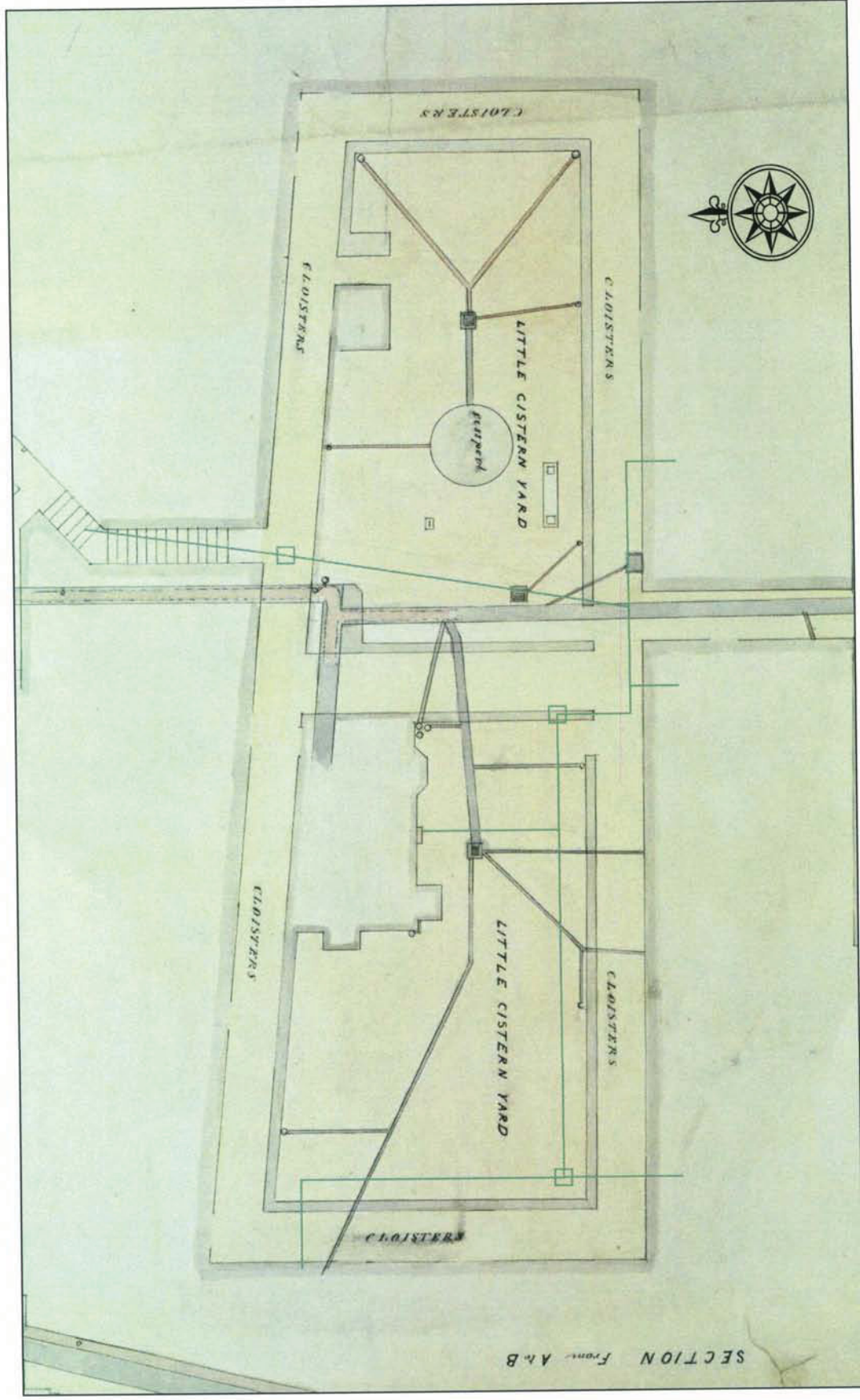


Figure 6. Area of Canons cloister - Plan c. 1854 of services. Approximate route of proposed new services and trial pits highlighted in green.

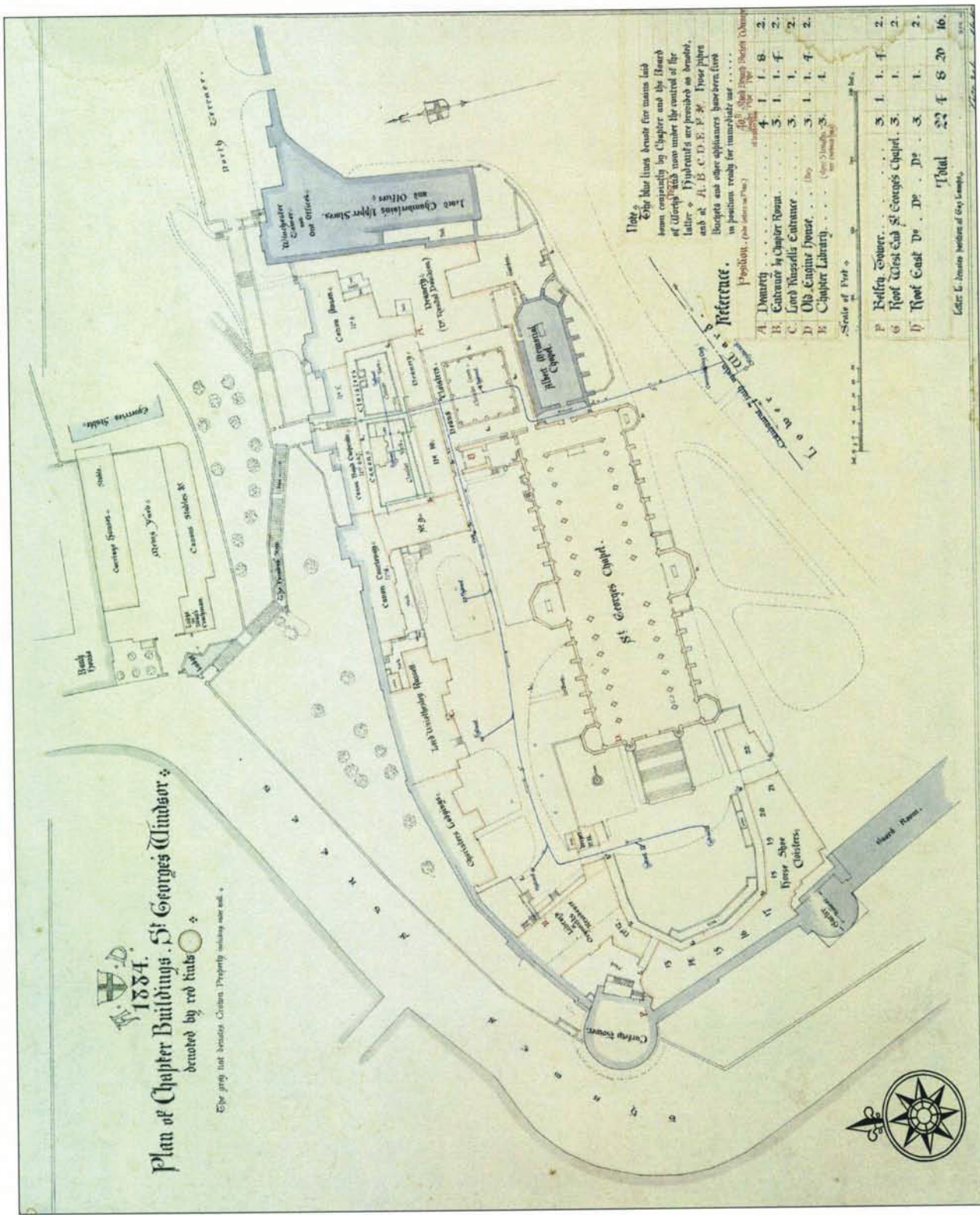


Figure 7. Plan of Windsor Castle (Lower Ward), 1884, showing fire hydrant and water service pipes. Approximate position of proposed new services highlighted in green.

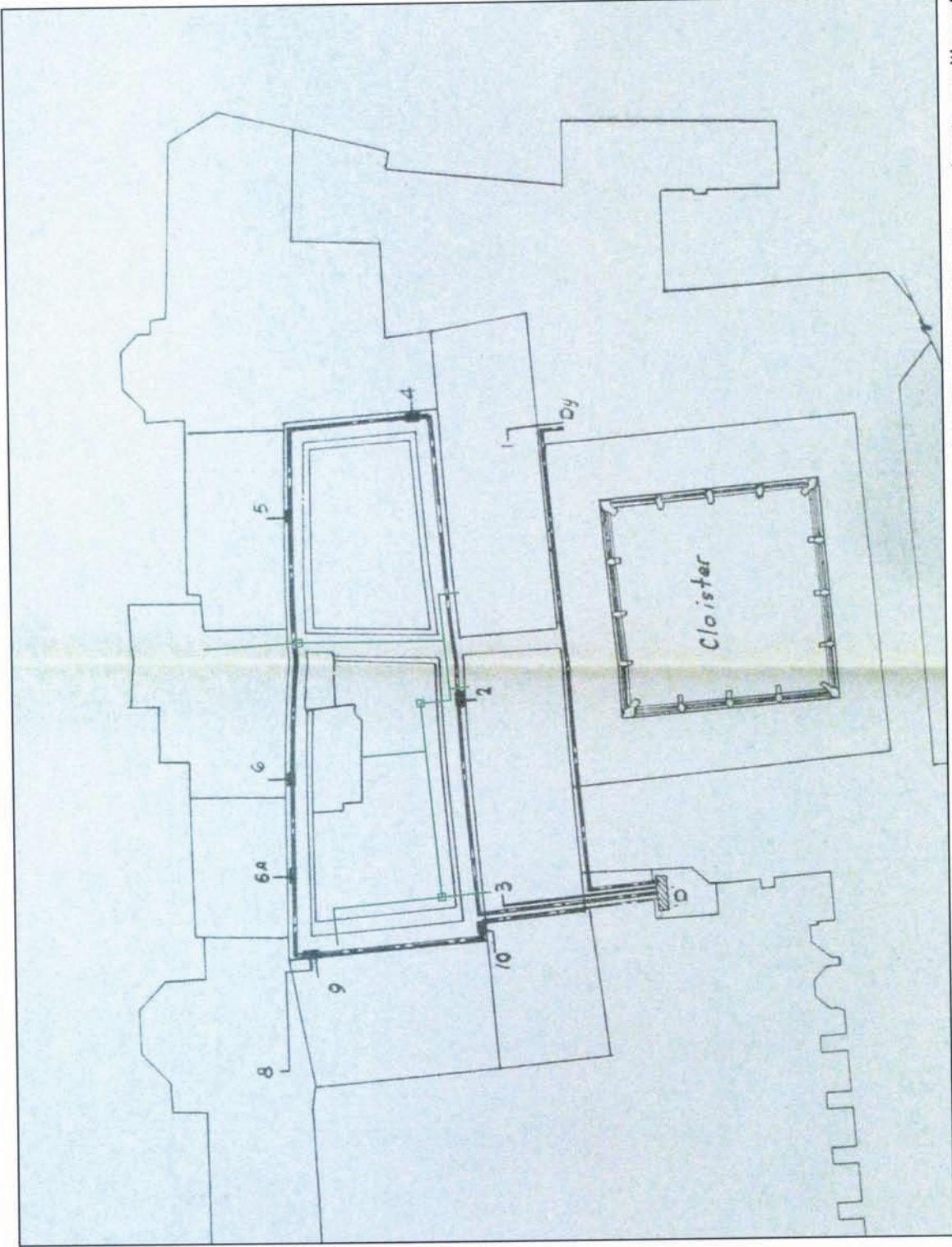


Figure 8. Plan of Canons cloister dated 1952. Service plan, likely electric (SGC P.426 -1952). Approximate position of proposed new services highlighted in green.

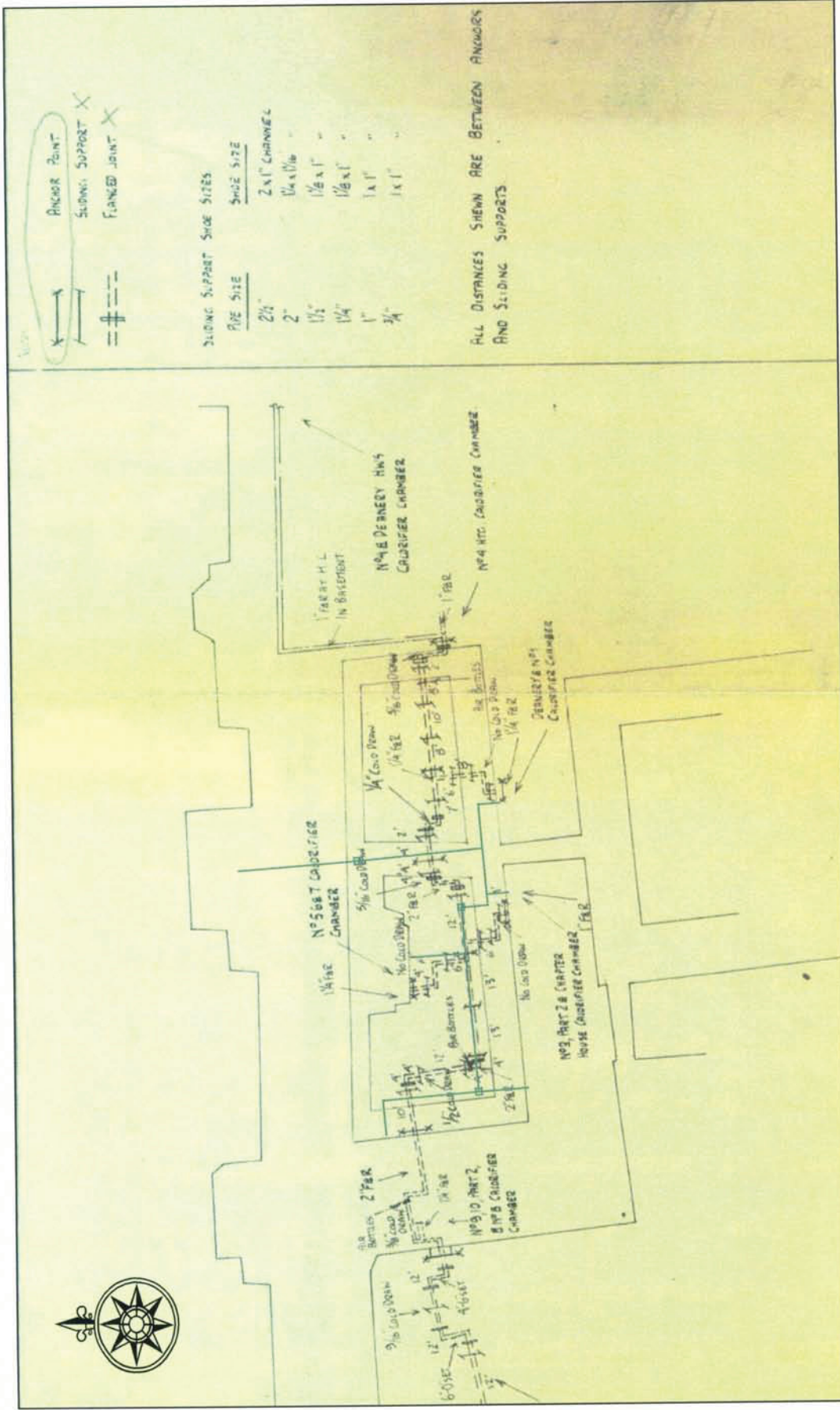


Figure 9. Plan of Canons cloister dated 1965. Service plan (SGC 05368/27F - 1965). Approximate position of proposed new services highlighted in green.

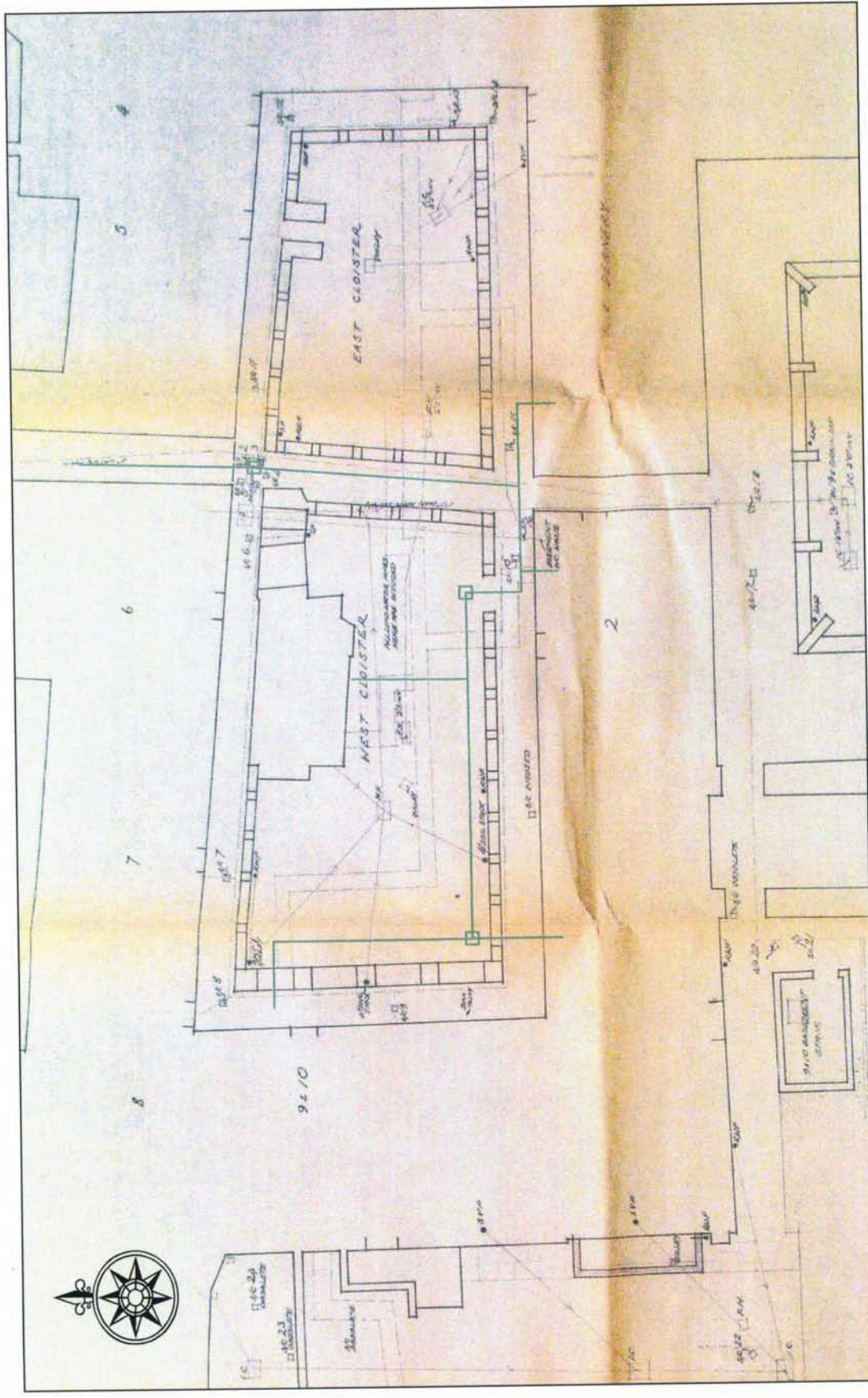


Figure 10. Plan of Canons cloister dated 1966. Service plan (SGC P.374/1 - 1966). Approximate position of proposed new services highlighted in green.

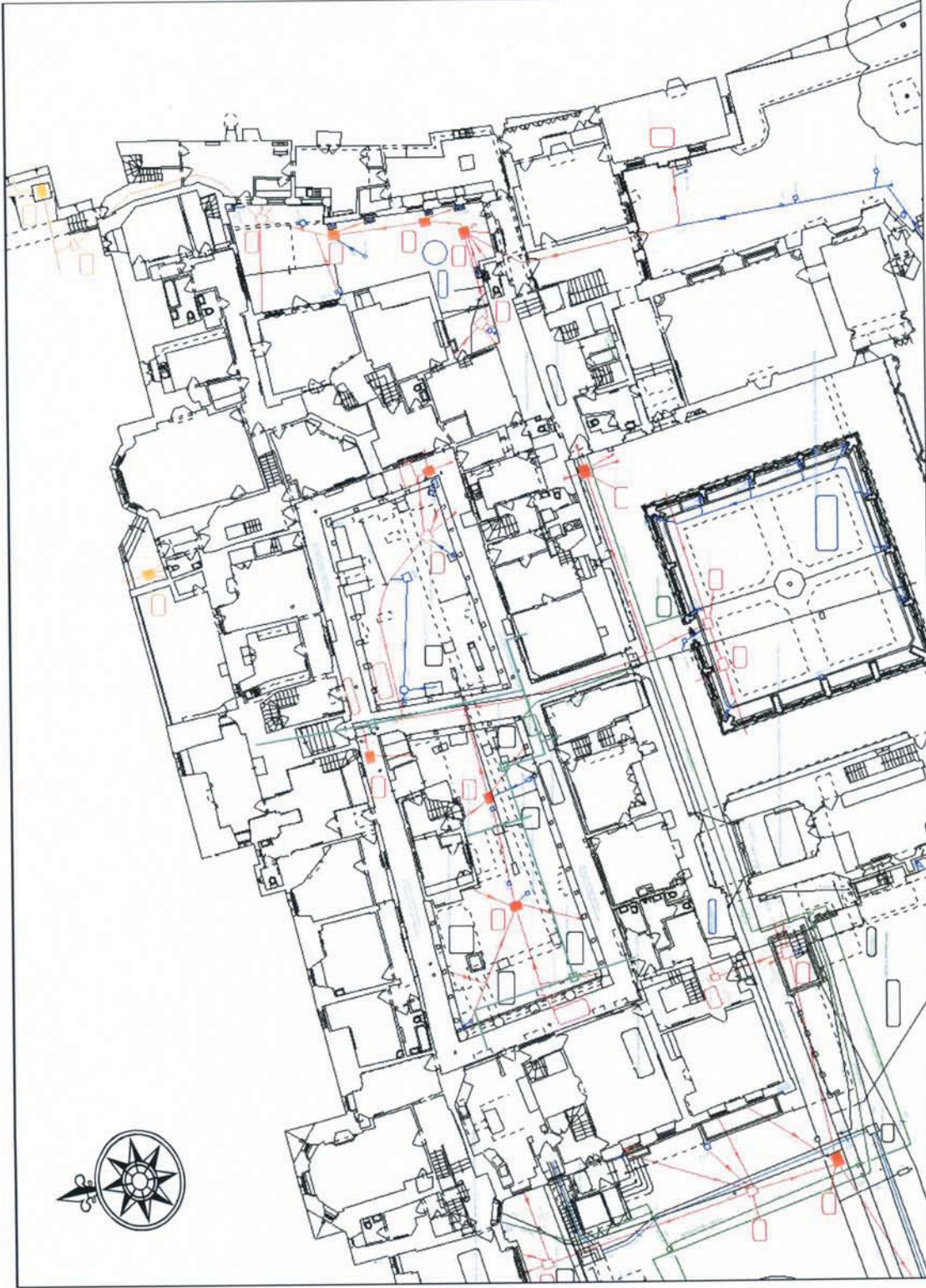


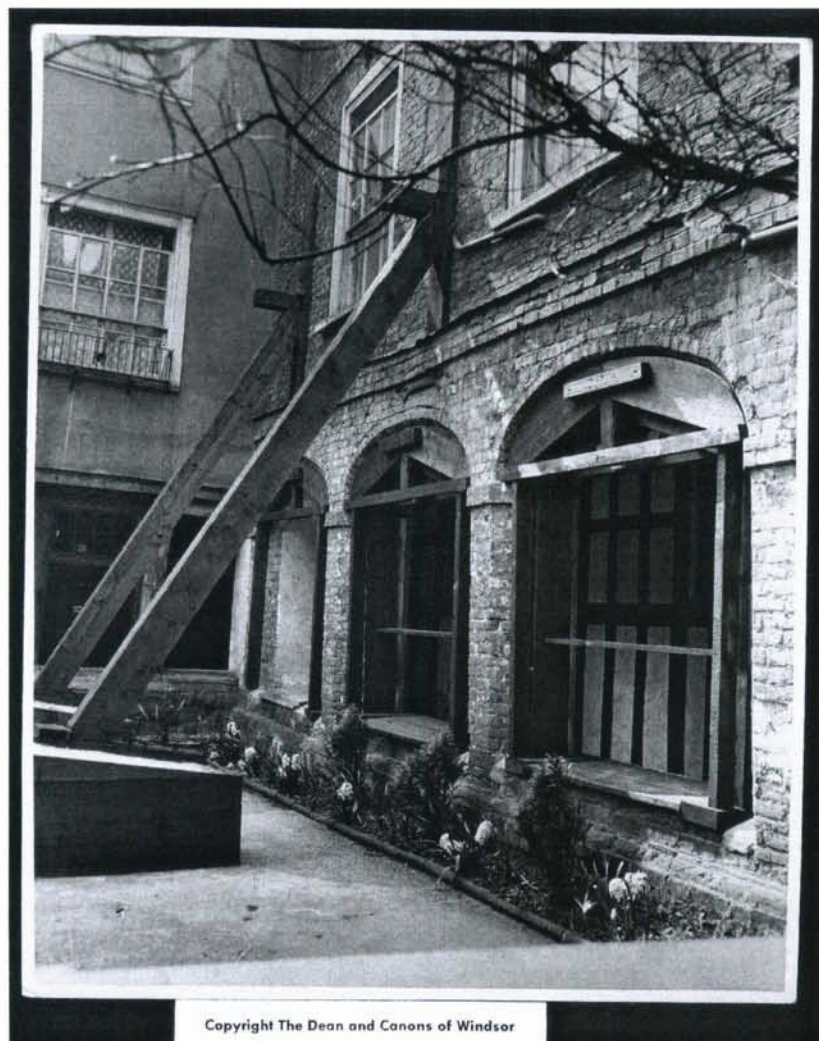
Figure 11. Plan of Canons cloister dated 2000. Service plan (Services- 2000). Approximate position of proposed new services highlighted in green.



Figure 12. Photograph of east facing wall within courtyard area of Canons cloister, c. 1950, prior to consolidation work.



Figure 13. Photograph of Canons Cloister courtyard area looking eastwards, c. 1960.



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Figure 14. Photograph of Canons Cloister courtyard area looking eastwards, c. 1960, prior to consolidation work.



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