



Newton's College, Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief



By
Kevin Blockley MIfA, MPhil, FSA

Report No. 582

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Old Chapel Farm, Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JR
Telephone: 01686 413857
E-mail: info@cambarch.co.uk





CAMBRIAN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECTS

Newton's College, Lichfield Cathedral, Staffordshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Prepared for: Dean and Chapter, Lichfield Cathedral

Edited by

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Authorised by

Signed:

Position:

Date:

By

Kevin Blockley MifA, MPhil, FSA

Report No: **582**

Date: August 2009

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Old Chapel Farm, Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JR
Telephone: 01686 413857
E-mail: info@cambarch.co.uk



CONTENTS

1	Introduction	1
1.1	Location and scope of work	1
1.2	Geology and topography	1
1.3	Archaeological and historical background	2
2	Aims and Objectives	2
2.1	Recording	2
3	Watching Brief Methodology	2
3.1	Scope of Fieldwork	2
3.2	Finds	3
3.3	Palaeo-environmental evidence	3
4	Watching Brief Results	7
4.1	Soils and ground conditions	7
4.2	Distribution of deposits	7
5	Discussion and Interpretation	8
5.1	Reliability of field investigation	8
5.2	Overall interpretation	9
5.3	Significance	9
6	Acknowledgements	9

Appendix I
Appendix II
Appendix III

Figures
Plates
Archive Cover Sheet

List of Figures

Figure 1 General location plan

List of Plates

Plate 1 Trench 1
Plate 2 Trench 2
Plate 3 Trench 3
Plate 4 Trench 4
Plate 5 Trench 5
Plate 6 Trench 5, section

Copyright Notice:

Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd. retain copyright of this report under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, and have granted a licence to the Dean and Chapter of Lichfield Cathedral to use and reproduce the material contained within.

The Ordnance Survey has granted Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd a Copyright Licence (No. AL 52163A0001) to reproduce map information; Copyright remains otherwise with the Ordnance Survey.

Non Technical Summary

This report results from work undertaken by Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd (CAP) adjacent to Newton's Commons, Lichfield Cathedral. This work involved a watching brief on the hand excavation of five trenches to locate and cap electrical cables. No significant archaeological deposits were located.

1 Introduction

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 The trenches were located to the west and north of Newton's College on the west side of the cathedral close at Lichfield.
- 1.1.2 The watching brief is situated at National Grid Ref: SK 114 096.
- 1.1.3 The work was undertaken on site on 11th-12th August 2009.

1.2 Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The site of the work overlies New Red Sandstone of the Permian and Triassic Sandstone.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The earliest known structure on the site was the medieval west gate. The Snape plan of 1781 shows the west gate and an area to the east which was not built up until the construction of Newton's College in 1800. The construction of the college saw the demolition of the west gate, widening and lowering of the access track.
- 1.3.2 The watching brief comprised five trenches: one on the main road outside the close (Trench 1) and four adjacent to the north wall of Newton's College (Trenches 2-5). Trench 5 is on the site of the south part of the west gate. See Figure 1 for locations of trenches.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Desk Based Assessment

- 2.1.1 The main scope and objectives of the watching brief were to record archaeological features and deposits within the area of the trenches, particularly Trench 5, which lay on the site of the medieval west gate.
- 2.1.2 The work was conducted in accordance with standards and guidance as laid down by the *Institute for Archaeologists*.

3 **Watching Brief Methodology**

3.1 **Scope of Fieldwork**

- 3.1.1 All five trenches were hand dug to a depth suitable to locate the electrical cable for cutting and sealing the cables. See Figure 1 for location of the trenches.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief was undertaken by Kevin Blockley (Cathedral Archaeologist).
- 3.1.3 All works were undertaken in accordance with both the IFA's *Standards and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief* and current Health and Safety legislation.

3.2 **Finds**

- 3.2.1 No significant finds were made during the course of the work.

3.3 **Palaeo-environmental evidence**

- 3.3.1 No palaeo-environmental samples were taken from the site

4 **Watching Brief Results**

4.1 **Soils and ground conditions**

- 4.1.1 Generally the site and weather conditions were good when the work was undertaken.

4.2 **Deposits**

- 4.2.1 Trench 1: The top level was of concrete flag stone, over a cement bedding. The depth of the excavation was 1.5m, with the fill below the cement bed being sand within the original electricity cable trench. The depth of deposits was due to the fact that the cable ran east into a backfilled cellar adjacent to the north side of No. 10. The depth may also indicate the location of the medieval ditch around the close. No significant archaeological deposits were recorded.
- 4.2.2 Trenches 2-5: These trenches averaging 1m square, were cut to a depth of up to 1.2m. The deposits were the same in all four trenches, and were as follows: paving slabs set in cement bedding, over reinforced concrete, over mixed reddish-brown sand. A ceramic sewer pipe ran along the north side of each trench, and contained other service pipes. The base of the reddish-brown sand was not located, but contained only 19th century brick fragments. No evidence of the medieval west gate survived within trench 5.

5 **Discussion and Interpretation**

5.1 **Reliability of field investigation**

- 5.1.1 Although the watching brief only covered five small areas, the location of a general 19th century levelling layer over 1.2m deep is a valuable piece of information when work is undertaken in the area in the future.

5.2 Overall interpretation

5.2.1 The watching brief revealed that the area of the west gate has been destroyed by the work undertaken in 1800 with the construction of Newton's College.

5.3 Significance

5.3.1 The location of a 19th century levelling deposit suggests that the area was substantially altered when Newton's College was built. Only much larger-scale excavation on the site of the west gate may reveal its medieval plan.

6 Acknowledgements

6.1.1 Thanks to the on site contractors who undertook the hand excavation of the trench.

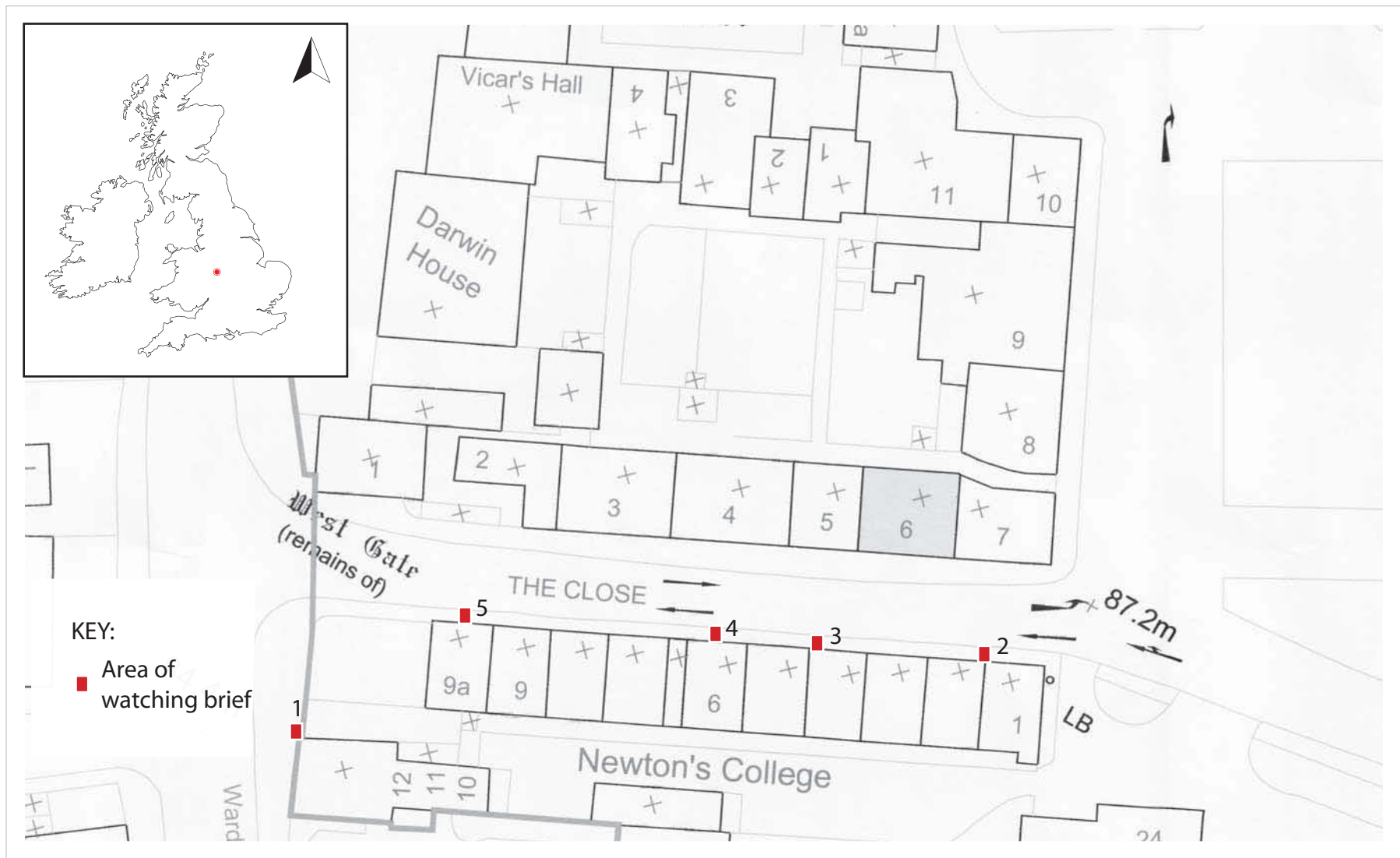


Fig 1: Location of Newton's College watching brief (trenches 1-5)



Trench 1, looking east, scale 1m



Trench 2, looking south, scale 1m



Trench 3, looking south, scale 1m



Trench 4, looking south, scale 1m



Trench 5, looking south, scale 1m



Trench 5, section looking east, scale 1m



Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd
Old Chapel Farm, Llanidloes
Powys SY18 6JR
Telephone: 01686 413857
E-mail: info@cambarch.co.uk

