

Salisbury Cathedral School, The Close, Salisbury,
Wiltshire:

Results of a Programme of Archaeological Monitoring

NGR: 414407 129403

Prepared by:
D Brace

On behalf of:
Salisbury Cathedral
School

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AC archaeology

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL SCHOOL, THE CLOSE, SALISBURY, WILTSHIRE:

Results of an Archaeological Monitoring Programme

NGR SU414407 129403

Summary

A programme of archaeological monitoring was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new external canopy for a classroom at Salisbury Cathedral School, which is located in The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EQ. The work was undertaken in April 2022. While the works lay within an area of archaeological interest, relating to the former grounds of the Bishops' Palace, no archaeological deposits or artefacts were recorded during the archaeological monitoring. There was some evidence of earlier building remains within the footprint of the new development, but these were considered to be modern in date.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the results of archaeological monitoring undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of a new canopy for a classroom at Salisbury Cathedral School, The Close, Salisbury, SP1 2EQ (NGR SU414407 129403). The site location and construction details are shown in Fig. 1.

1.2 The monitoring was undertaken by AC archaeology Ltd and was commissioned by Damen Associates Ltd on behalf of Salisbury Cathedral School. The work was undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the planning consent for the works granted by Wiltshire Council (Ref. PL/2021/10117). Condition 3 of the consent states:

No development shall commence within the area indicated (proposed development site) until:

- *A written programme of archaeological investigation, which should include on-site work and off-site work such as analysis, publishing and archiving of the results, has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority; and*
- *The approved programme of archaeological work has been carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

REASON: To enable the recording of matters of archaeological interest.

1.3 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken in accordance with a written programme of archaeological investigation, which was approved by the Wiltshire Council Assistant County Archaeologist (WCACA) prior to the site work commencing (Robinson 2022).

1.4 The site is within the eastern school grounds and contains buildings dating to the 1960s and later and measures c. 0.5 ha. This area of the school once formed part of the grounds of the Bishop's Palace. The development includes the removal of three windows, to be replaced by French doors, leading to an external surfaced area measuring c. 18m by 3m. A canopy structure will provide shelter to this area and will be supported by posts. The programme of archaeological monitoring consisted of the observation of topsoil removal for the new canopy area and the excavation of four post-pads and a new soakaway.

- 1.5 The BGS website describes the underlying geology as part of the Newhaven Chalk Formation, a sedimentary chalk bedrock formed approximately 72 to 86 million years ago in the Cretaceous Period. Superficial deposits in the area comprise River Terrace Deposits – Sand, Gravel and Clay formed in the Quaternary Period.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As part of the planning application process, a Heritage Statement had been carried out for the site area, the results of which are summarised here (Edwards 2021). Salisbury Cathedral School occupies the former Bishop's Palace within The Close of Salisbury Cathedral, with the palace lying to the south-east of the cathedral with its grounds extending up to the east wall of The Close. The Cathedral was originally planned in the 1190's as part of the transfer from the earlier foundation at Old Sarum, and was established in the city of New Sarum, which would later become known as Salisbury, with the cathedral being consecrated in 1258.
- 2.2 Beyond the site to the east, evidence for medieval activity has been found during investigations at Exeter Street (EWI3960) and the former Robert Stokes Houses (EWI6022). Further medieval discoveries in the area of The Close include a floor, tiles and pottery found at the Old Deanery (SU12NW455); part of a timber-revetted ditch and pottery found during an archaeological evaluation at Palace Gardens in 1995 (SU12NW469) and a 13th century wall found at The Leadenhall in 1993. These records confirm that the medieval settlement occurred near the Cathedral Close. This is comparable with many other cathedral sites found in Britain such as Canterbury Cathedral.
- 2.3 A recently undertaken geophysical survey of the site (Lefort 2020) identified two short linear anomalies of possible archaeological interest, along with possible garden features, trends of uncertain origin and at least one modern service. However, a number of these were located in an adjacent area to the south-west of the site.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The principal aims of the archaeological monitoring were:
- To record any archaeological features and finds which may be revealed or disturbed by the groundworks for the new construction, and;
 - To provide an archive and interpretive report on the results of the monitoring.
- 3.2 The site investigations were undertaken in accordance with an approved written scheme of investigation (Robinson 2022). Attendance by the site archaeologist was comprehensive: an archaeologist was *present during all relevant ground disturbance*.
- 3.3 The archaeological monitoring commenced with the removal of topsoil and lasted until such time as the site archaeologist was satisfied that no further exposure of archaeological deposits was possible.
- 3.4 Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology Ltd *pro forma* recording system, comprising written and graphic records and in accordance with AC archaeology's *General Site Recording Manual, Version 2*. A digital photographic record was also made.

4. RESULTS

4.1 The groundworks were visited on two separate occasions in April 2022. The monitoring comprised the observation of all relevant groundworks during this period. The results are presented below. The deposits encountered during the fieldwork are listed and described in Table 1, while a photographic record is included as a series of plates at the end of the report.

Context Number	Description	Depth	Interpretation
100	Dark brown silty clay with stones, chalk lumps, CBM, brick/tile (building debris)	> 0-400mm	Turf and topsoil
101	Mixed mid brown silty clay with stones, chalk lumps and CBM.	400-1300mm	Subsoil (varied depth)
102	Dark yellow-brown and mottled grey clay with silt	-	Superficial geology (alluvial)

Table 1: The general stratigraphic sequence

4.2 Archaeological monitoring and recording commenced during the removal of c. 300mm of turf and topsoil for the new canopy area. This covered an area of c. 20m x 3.8m (see Plate 1). No archaeological features were observed during this phase of works, with only modern building debris evident within the topsoil.

4.3 Following topsoil removal, four post-pads were excavated in preparation for support stanchions for the new canopy. The post-pads were approximately 900mm² and were excavated to a depth of between 1.2m and 1.5m (see Plate 2). A sequence of topsoil and subsoil overlying clay with silt was observed in all four pads, with modern disturbance (services, building debris) recorded at various depths in pads 3 and 4 (see Plate 3). This is likely to be associated with former buildings within the development area. All of the services were either decommissioned or silted up.

4.4 Groundworks related to a soakaway and feeding trench were also monitored. The soakaway was 1.4m² and excavated to a depth of 1m. Structural elements, including mortared red brick, pipework and the remnants of a concrete post were noted below the topsoil (see Plate 4). These are believed to be 20th century in date and may relate to the former glass houses formerly situated on the site.

4.5 Anomalies noted during the geophysical survey included possible linear anomalies and agricultural features. However, these were broadly located in an area to the south-west of the site. Within the site area the modern ferrous responses noted by the geophysical survey is likely to be the result of modern services and demolition debris and has little archaeological significance.

4.6 Due to the absence of any archaeological deposits or artefactual material, it is proposed not to deposit a site archive with Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum.

5. COMMENT

5.1 Despite the known potential of the area, no significant archaeological deposits or artefactual material was encountered during the monitoring programme. However, a series of structural elements, including mortared brickwork, and modern building debris was noted. This material is

likely to reflect the former use of the area, with buildings and glasshouses known to have existed at this location. There is some potential for deposits of archaeological significance to remain in areas unaffected or impacted by the development.

- 5.2** No finds or artefacts of archaeological significance were recovered as a result of the programme of monitoring. All the observed building material, including brick and tile, was believed to be modern in origin and was not collected.

6. REFERENCES

BGS - British Geological Survey Online Viewer. Available from <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>. Accessed Feb. 2022.

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Edwards, B., 2021. *Minor Alterations to a Classroom at Salisbury Cathedral School, The Close, Salisbury: Heritage Statement*. Forum Heritage Services, September 2021

Lefort Geophysics 2021. *Land at Salisbury Cathedral School, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Gradiometer Survey Report*. Ref 20-0021.01

Robinson, S. 2022, *Salisbury Cathedral School, The Close, Salisbury, Wiltshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for a Programme of Archaeological Monitoring*. AC archaeology Ltd. Document no. ACW1442/1/0.

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHIC PLATES



Plate 1: View of site following the removal of topsoil, with post-pads 1 – 3 visible.



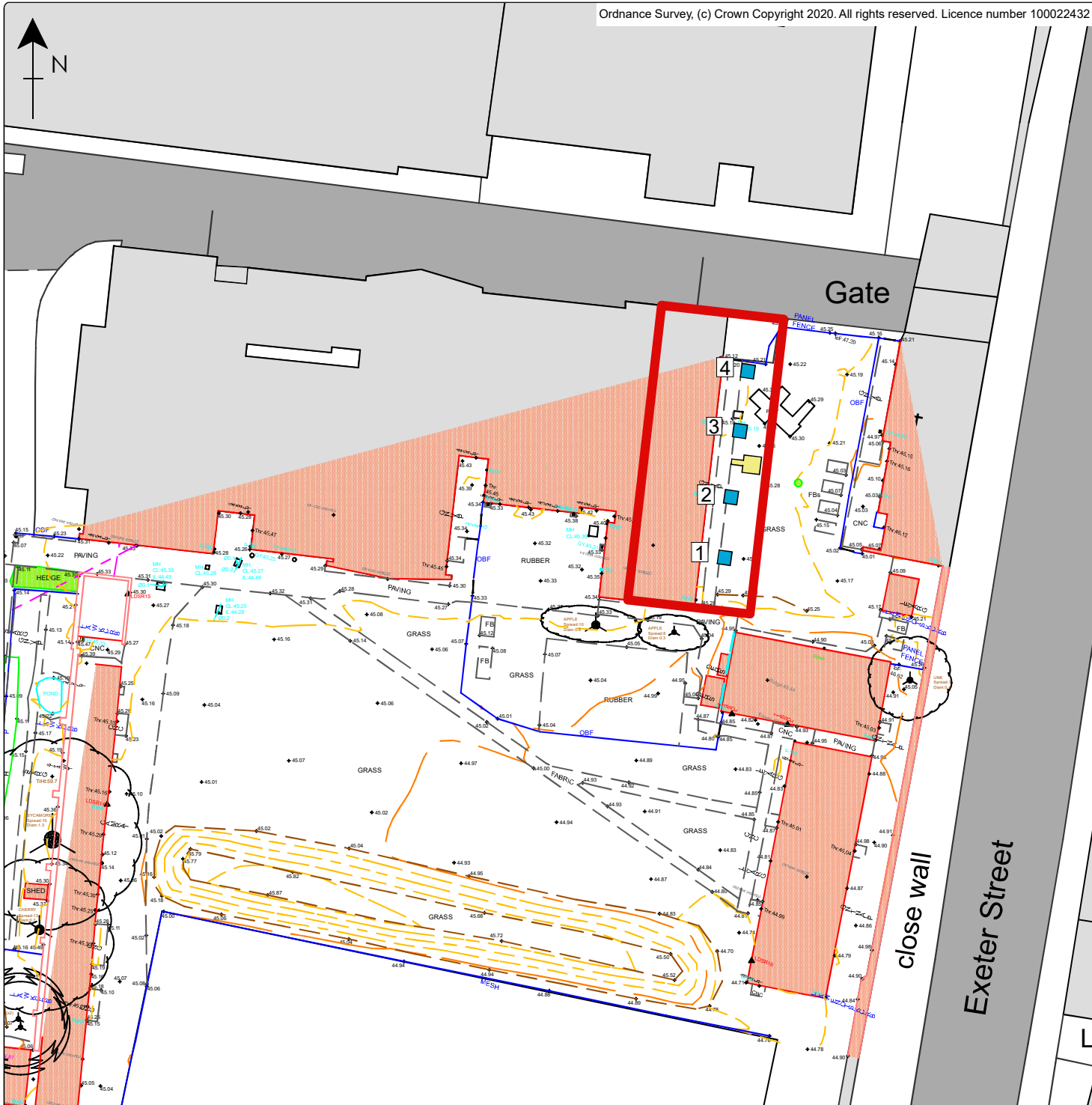
Plate 2: View of excavated post-pad 2 showing the superficial geology



Plate 3: View of excavated post-pad 4 showing brick and tile within the subsoil



Plate 4:View of excavated soakaway (and trench) showing mortared bricks beneath the topsoil



Key:

- Site boundary
- Post pad
- Soakaway



PROJECT
Salisbury Cathedral School, Salisbury

TITLE
Fig. 1: Site location plan and areas that were archaeologically monitored

Wiltshire Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Manor Farm Stables
Chicklade
Hindon
Nr Salisbury
Wiltshire
SP3 5SU

Telephone: 01747 820581
Fax: 01747 820440

Devon Office

AC archaeology Ltd
Unit 4, Halthaies Workshops
Bradninch
Nr Exeter
Devon
EX5 4LQ

Telephone/Fax: 01392 882410

www.acarchaeology.co.uk