



JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON POTENTIAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS
FOR THE
PROPOSED SUNKEN PATH LINKING KILLCANON
AND BLUE BOAR QUAD**

On behalf of

Purcell Miller Tritton LLP

For

Christ Church, Oxford

NOVEMBER 2006

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT ON POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DEPOSITS**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The sunken path will run along the south and west sides of Killcanon through the existing Professor Adams' garden and Canon Coulton's garden into Blue Boar Quad. The area lies within the north-west part of the College with the proposed path running from NGR SP 51495 06074 to Blue Boar Quad at SP 51474 06097. This part of the college is situated on the southern extent of the second gravel terrace (BGS 1982).
- 1.2 The path will be c. 3.5m wide and with the retaining wall the impact will be c. 4m wide. The surface of the path will be c. 900-1000mm below existing ground level in the gardens. A concrete retaining wall and foundations for the stone paving will have a deeper impact.
- 1.3 Recent excavations for new services have been carried out since October 2005 and are ongoing. These have included a service trench running through the two gardens. The excavation for this trench was archaeologically monitored by John Moore Heritage Services. Significant medieval and later remains have been found throughout the College during this work although the height and state of survival of archaeological remains has been variable. The most impressive lie on the west side of Peckwater Quad where the height of surviving mid 14th/early fifteenth century walls were only c. 350mm below present ground level.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The college was founded as Cardinal College by Cardinal Wolsey in 1525 and required the clearance of numerous medieval buildings and the closing of medieval streets. By the time Wolsey had fallen from power three sides of the Gothic quadrangle had been virtually finished, but only the foundations of the proposed chapel for its north side were in place. After Wolsey's fall and death, Henry VIII took over the fabric and endowments of Wolsey's foundation and re-designated them 'King Henry VIII's College'. On the east side of quadrangle was the former Augustinian St Frideswide's priory. Following a four year period when the dissolved Oseney Abbey acted as cathedral, Henry in 1546 designated the former priory church as Christ Church cathedral of the new Henrician diocese of Oxford, and as the chapel of the new college of Christ Church. It is thought that the west end of the former priory church was demolished to accommodate the symmetrical Gothic quadrangle

(Sherwood & Pevsner 1974). In the 1660s John Fell completed the north side of Tom quad no earlier than 1668 and the terrace was laid out.

- 3.2 Recent work in the basement of Staircases 3 and 4 on the north side of Peckwater Quad recorded a 13th century building, and pits and deposits from the 10th to 17th centuries. Elsewhere in the college parts of the former medieval roads of St Frideswide's Lane, St Edward Street and Jury Lane have been discovered. Remains of several buildings fronting these streets have been recorded. Recent geotechnical pits dug in Blue Boar Quad have revealed mid 11th -14th century and mid 14th century pits along with a wall dated from after the 15th century.
- 3.3 The proposed path will be within former medieval properties fronting both sides of the medieval street of Jury Lane and the west side of St. Edward Street or Vine Hall Lane. The route will cross Salter SE 127 and 126, George Hall; SE 247, a tenement; before turning north across the line of Jury Lane and into 126 and 248, Ape Hall; and probably into the southern extent of SE 125, Eagle Hall.

4 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

The cartographic evidence for the proposed development area is summarised below.

- 4.1 Agas's map of *c.* 1578: Shows that between the unfinished building of Christ Church and Blue Boar Street (once known as Bear Lane), the area is divided by an E-W wall, which can be seen from the southeast corner of Peck Water Inn across to St Aldates Street (once known as South St & Fish St). This wall is in the approximate position of the present wall separating Blue Boar Quad from the area to the south. The area of Blue Boar is shown as formal gardens with a building standing to the north-west fronting Blue Boar Street, while the area to the south is open. To the south partly covering the area of the present north range of Tom Quad are shown the foundations for Wolsey's chapel.
- 4.2 Speed's map of 1605: Similar arrangement to Agas (but without Wolsey's foundations) and with further buildings fronting Blue Boar Street to the west. Gardens are not depicted on this map.
- 4.3 Woods map of 1644: as for Speed.
- 4.4 Loggan's map of 1673: Shows the Christ Church quadrangle as having the north range complete. Killcanon building also appears for the first time on this map. The area between the north range and Blue Boar Street has been divided up into gardens and orchards. The present Professor Adams' garden is divided into two gardens just west of the west side of Killcanon. West of the north half of Killcanon is a formal garden with an orchard between this and the gardens to the south. Just west of the formal garden is seen a rectangular building (Loggan's drawing of College shows this as having its entrance on the south side and a path from it along the north of side of the formal garden and Killcanon). This must be the "Old Brewhouse". Blue Boar Street appears

to be narrower and straightened with the single building previously fronting Blue Boar Street now set back from the frontage. Additional buildings have been added to the north-western plot fronting onto St Aldates and along the new Blue Boar Street frontage further west in front of the previous buildings which still stand.

- 4.5 Williams map of 1733: Shows Peckwater Quad as having been built with formal gardens in the area of Blue Boar Quad separated from two gardens to the south. These latter two gardens correspond with the present two gardens except where they have been encroached on to the west.
- 4.6 Tailor's map of 1751: The three gardens are depicted as orchards although a small area of formal garden is shown in the south-east corner of the 'Blue Boar' garden. No boundary between the southern two gardens is shown.
- 4.7 Jeffrey's map of 1768: Does not show sufficient detail to determine any new development.
- 4.8 Longmate's map of 1773: Shows the area to the west of Peckwater as orchard with no detail on the area to the south.
- 4.9 Faden's map of 1789: Shows the area to the west of Peckwater as formal garden and orchard similar to that depicted on Taylor's map. To the south are formal gardens. Although the layout of these gardens could represent two gardens no boundary between them is shown.
- 4.10 Davies map of 1797: Shows the site of Blue Boar Quad as a formal garden separated from a further formal garden to the south. The later extends over both Canon Coulton's and Professor Adams' gardens.
- 4.11 Hoggar's map of 1850: Unfortunately the area falls on the edge of two pages. However it appears that the proposal area lies with gardens. On the west side of the present Professor Adam's garden is a building that is not one associated with the present range of buildings attached to the north side of the Tom Quad range of buildings.
- 4.12 1st Edition Ordnance survey of 1876: Shows the Blue Boar Quad as 'Canon's Garden', Canon Coulton's garden with paths and a fountain just west of centre, and Professor Adams' garden as a 'Canon's Garden' with a fountain centrally near the north boundary.
- 4.13 Ordnance survey map of 1921: No detail is shown in the present Canon Coulton's garden. The paths are shown in Professors Adam's garden but the fountain is not shown.
- 4.14 Ordnance survey of 1939: Again no detail is shown in Canon Coulton's garden while the paths are the same in the garden to the south.
- 4.15 Ordnance survey of 1958 and 1969: Show Canon Coulton's garden divided into two areas with an orchard to the east with new paths to the north and west,

and a slight change of the path in the north-east corner of Professor Adams' garden.

5 KNOWN ARCHAEOLOGY

Professor Adams' Garden

- 5.1 Part of the proposed route for the path recently has been excavated for new services. These services were laid on the base of the trench c. 2000mm below present ground level. Modern topsoil of 400mm overlies a dump of garden soil some 500mm thick. Below this is a layer of masons' debris c. 100mm thick over 80mm of soft grey silt, which in turn overlies 450-500mm of sandy silt with limestone fragments. Below this is a further deposit of masons' debris some 300mm thick which overlies an old garden soil that was not fully excavated but was found to be 600mm thick.
- 5.2 While the pottery from these excavations has not been examined most of it appeared to be post-medieval in date. Preliminary interpretations of some of the remains are that the lowest deposit of masons' debris could be associated with the construction of the foundation for the north wall of Wolsey's chapel after 1525. The top of it is at c. 1500mm below existing ground level and is c. 200mm higher than the large base thought to be associated with the chapel or a building to the east of the chapel.
- 5.3 The upper deposit of mason's debris could be associated with the building of Killcanon between 1669 and 1673. Between the two is a single deposit perhaps associated with the use of the area as gardens or orchards. Overlying the upper masons' debris are deposits associated with the use of the area as garden. Remains of one gravel path were seen cut into the top of these deposits under the modern topsoil. The upper topsoil may be a recent dump of material (information from one of the gardeners).

Canon Coulton's Garden

- 5.4 The service trench described above continued through this garden but angling away from Killcanon. However the archaeological remains seen are likely to be similar in the area of the proposed new path on the east side of this garden. The trench was dug to a depth of 900-1000mm except for the southern extent where it was excavated under the garden wall..
- 5.5 Just north of the wall between the two gardens were a series of stone and gravel surfaces. These have been interpreted as the remains of the medieval Jury Lane orientated east/west. The uppermost deposit lies c. 850mm below present ground level. The road surfaces were at least 540mm thick. The present wall separating the two gardens lies on or close to the south edge of the road. Previous modern service trenches had cut this side of the road. There were no traces of the road in the garden to the south where the recent service trench cut under the wall. The uppermost road surface was seen to extend 4.6m away from the garden wall. Lower surfaces may extend even further away from the wall.

- 5.6 Further into the garden fragmentary medieval remains were seen at the base of the new service trench. A possible robber trench (robbed out wall) with an associated cobbled surface was seen c. 950-1000mm below ground level. The cobbled surface was 100-150mm thick. These appear to be within the medieval property of Ape Hall. The remains of a wall were found 900mm below ground surface with a 600mm thick surface, or more likely path, above. This deposit may have been made up of more than one layer of material with part of it abutting the wall. These lie further west and are within the medieval property of White Hall.
- 5.7 Higher paths were seen. A probable garden path lying 450mm below modern ground level and a further surface overlying the thick surface or path probably relate to formal gardens of the 18th or 19th century.

6 IMPACT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

- 6.1 The surface of the proposed path is to be c. 900-100mm below present ground level. Make up for the stone paving will extend below this, as will the concrete foundation for the retaining wall.
- 6.2 Within Professor Adams' garden the level of the surface at the time of Wolsey's building is thought to be c. 1800mm below existing ground level where a 300mm thick deposit of masons' debris was found. Since then the ground appears to have been open or as gardens. The only other event known is thought to be the deposit of building debris associated with the construction of Killcanon. This deposit lies 800mm below existing ground level.
- 6.3 From the remains seen there appears to be little or no impact from the proposed path within Professor Adams' garden. However the foundation for the retaining wall may penetrate pre-Wolsey levels into medieval remains. It is just possible that the medieval street, Jury Lane, may not be totally parallel to the garden wall and may run partly along the north edge of the garden.
- 6.4 Within Canon Coulton's garden the proposed sunken path will have an impact on archaeological remains. Undoubtedly Jury Lane will be disturbed both by the path and the retaining wall. Further northwards medieval remains will be disturbed at a depth of approximately 900m below existing ground level. Above this will be remains of paths and garden features associated with the 18 and 19th century use of the area as formal gardens and orchards.

7 POSSIBLE MITIGATION MEASURES

- 7.1 While the scope of mitigation of the impact on archaeological remains is the responsibility of the Oxford City Council's Archaeologist the following measures are a possibility.
- 7.2 The proposed impact on potential archaeological remains within Professor Adam's appears to be very limited. An archaeological watching brief could be maintained during the bulk excavation of the sunken path in case the medieval street encroaches into the northern limit of the garden. Depending on the

depth of the proposed foundation for the retaining wall a watching brief should be maintained if the impact is to be lower than the putative Wolsey construction level.

- 7.3 The impact on archaeological remains is greater within Canon Coulton's garden. Where the path crosses Jury Lane the ground could be reduced by the main contractor down to just above the level of the road. Thereafter the road could be hand-excavated in order to record the successive surfaces of the road and to obtain dating evidence from these levels. If this was the chosen methodology then the excavation would proceed to the limit of the impact from the path and to the limit of the impact from the retaining wall foundation, with due consideration to Health and Safety measures.
- 7.4 Further northwards the line of the construction could be excavated by the main contractor under a watching brief down to the top of the level of medieval remains. During the watching brief remains associated with the later gardens could be recorded.
- 7.5 The medieval remains appear to survive at approximately 900mm below ground level. The rest of the impact of the path could be excavated by archaeologists. The impact from the foundation trench could be mitigated under a watching brief or by archaeological excavation. The depth and width of the foundation trench would be a factor in determining the methodology, taking into account health and safety issues, and ease of excavation in a potentially narrow trench. If the trench is to be mechanically excavated then measures would need to be taken to protect any surviving un-excavated remains in the base of the excavation for the path.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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