

The Old Divinity School, St. John's College Cambridge

An Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief



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University of Cambridge
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Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological evaluation and watching brief consisting of 13 test pits was undertaken at the Old Divinity School, Cambridge. These demonstrated that in the area of the building with basements archaeological features still survived, including human burials. In the area of the building without basements the construction of the Old Divinity School appears to have caused relatively little disturbance of earlier archaeological deposits, indicating that there is a high probability of a good surviving sequence of early to mid 10th to early 19th century deposits.

Introduction

On the 21st and 22nd of October 2008 and the 7th of January 2009 the Cambridge Archaeological Unit (CAU) monitored the excavation of 13 test pits at the Old Divinity School, St. John's College, Cambridge, (formerly the Selwyn Divinity School) centred at 544840/128740 and located in the heart of the historic core of the town (Event Number ECB3113, site code JDS08, Figures 1 to 3). Test Pits 1 to 9 (of which Test Pit 6 did not exist) were dug on the 21st and 22nd of October 2008 in the basements of the building to ascertain the nature and depth of the foundations of the standing building. The test pits were hand excavated by the staff of Kingfisher Construction, with a member of CAU staff present at all times. The work was undertaken to a specification designed by Hannah, Reed and Associates Ltd (consulting civil and structural engineers, project managers and CDM co-ordinators), on behalf of the landowner St. John's College. Test Pits 10 to 14 were excavated on the 7th of January 2009 in the area of the building where there were no basements, specifically to determine the extent of disturbance associated with the construction of the Old Divinity School and to determine the height of surviving *in situ* archaeological deposits. The work constitutes pre-determination activity in advance of possible extensive modification of the standing building. The small size of the holes, combined with the artificial lighting, meant that the observations are of necessity limited. Nevertheless the watching brief and evaluation did identify surviving archaeological deposits in a number of test pits.

Background

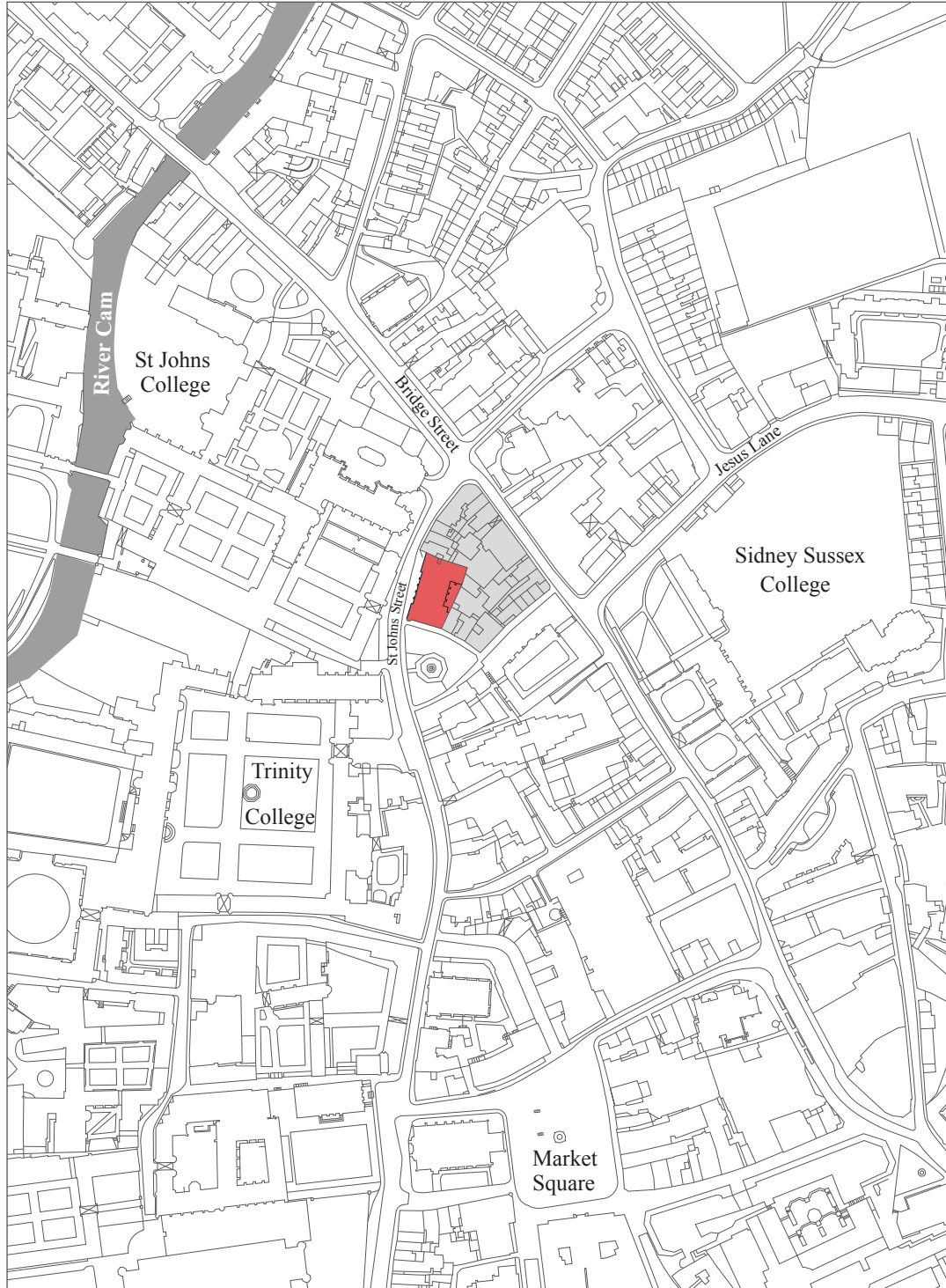
Since 2005 the CAU has undertaken a watching brief (Hall and Dickens 2005) and two phases of excavation (Cessford 2006; Newman 2008) at the St. John's Triangle site, located in the same *street block* (or group of plots bounded by street lines, Conzen 1960, 5) as the Old Divinity School. The recent excavations at St. John's Triangle, plus associated documentary and cartographic research, mean that the archaeological remains likely to be encountered at the Old Divinity School can be predicted with a higher degree of reliability than is normally possible.

Geology

Geologically, the site is situated upon the northern tip of a slightly raised spur of second terrace river gravels overlying Gault clay; this ridge is surrounded to the north and west by the former alluvial floodplain of the River Cam (British Geological Survey, sheet 188). Although the gravel is truncated in most locations, it is likely that the upper surface of undisturbed natural would lie at between 6.8 to 7.2m OD.

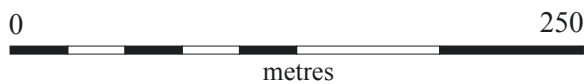
Prehistoric

No definite evidence of pre-Roman activity has been encountered in the vicinity, although a number of Prehistoric artefacts have been found including four residual worked flints at the St. John's Triangle site. Given the proximity of the Iron Age settlement and field system at Jesus College (Evans and Williams 2004), it seems probable that this area lay within an agricultural hinterland at this time.



Based on the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map
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-  Old Divinity School
-  St. John's Triangle

Figure 1: Site location.

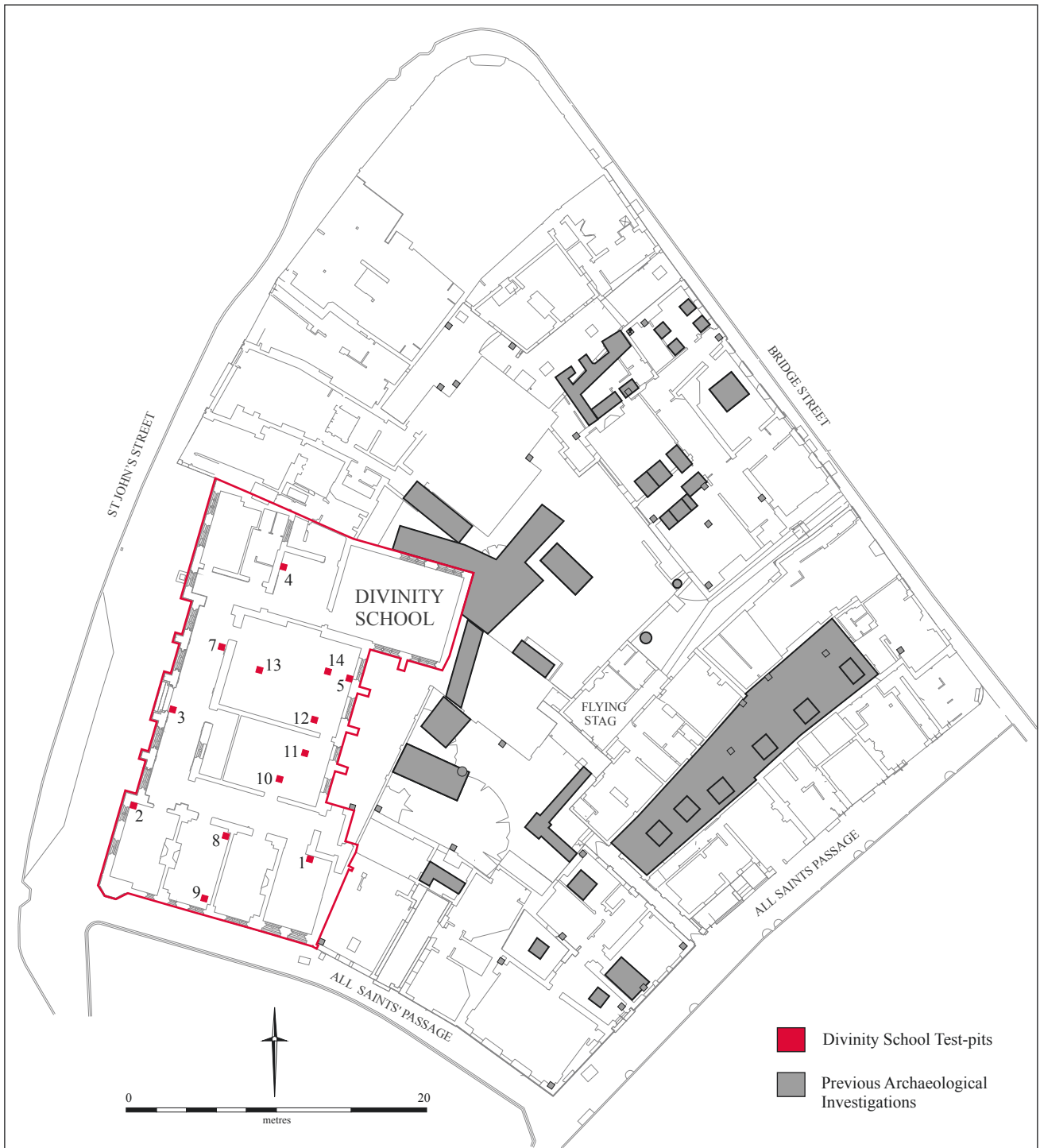


Figure 2: Location of archaeological investigations within street block.

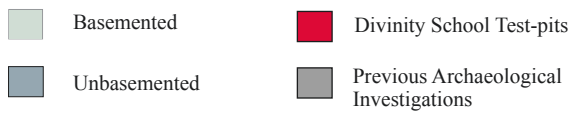


Figure 3: The Old Divinity School Investigations.

Roman

Although the main focus of interest in Roman Cambridge has been on the Castle Hill area, there is a growing body of evidence for activity to the south and east of the river. The St. John's Triangle excavations revealed evidence of quarry pits followed by occupation, the latter focussed upon Bridge Street which follows the line of the Roman road between Colchester to Godmanchester. The Old Divinity School is located over 30m away from Bridge Street so intensive Roman activity and structural evidence is less likely, but it is probable that archaeological features of this date such as quarry pits will be present.

Saxon

Little evidence for activity dating to between the 5th and 9th centuries has been recovered from the area, with only two sherds of residual Middle Saxon pottery recovered at the St. John's Triangle site. It is likely that during this period the area once again lay within an agricultural hinterland.

Saxo-Norman

Activity begins again in the area in the early to mid 10th century at St. John's Triangle; this consisted of a number of quarry pits containing relatively little material culture, suggesting that although the gravel was being sporadically exploited there may have been no domestic activity in the immediate vicinity. From the mid 10th or early 11th century onwards, however, there is strong evidence for a continuous sequence of domestic occupation in the area. It appears that the, admittedly rather speculative, *parent plots* (the original or primary plot from which secondary or derivative plots have been carved by partition; Conzen, 1960, 128) were a series of long narrow plots with their frontages on Bridge Street that stretched back to the area occupied by the churchyard of All Saints in the Jewry (Figure 4). If this is correct then the Old Divinity School is located in the *plot tail* (the rear portion of a strip-plot, which is not occupied by the plot dominant and consists of yards and gardens with plot accessory buildings; Conzen 1969, 128), which is likely to have been a largely open yard or garden area, consisting of up to three plots. Any structures in the plot end are likely to be relatively insubstantial plot accessory or secondary buildings (Conzen 1960, 31-32 and 128), although it is likely that numerous cut features were dug in this area. From c.1135/1144 to 1275 this street block lay within the *vicus Judeorum* (Jewry) of Cambridge.

Medieval

By 1267 the area occupied by the Old Divinity School had become a series of *derivative plots* ('secondary plots carved from a parent plot by partition'; Conzen 1960, 124). It is likely that this division took place in the 12th or early 13th centuries. There appear to have been four of these plots by the Late Medieval period (Figure 5). The derivative plots were probably created in a piecemeal fashion, and it appears that there may initially only have been two of them, which were later both subdivided to create four plots. These derivative plots lay within the parish of Holy Sepulchre and their early documentary history has been studied by Dr Rosemary Horrox, who recorded them as properties 21 to 24 running from south-southeast to north-northwest (On Figure 5 Property 21 is I, Property 22 is J, Property 23 is K and Property 24 is L).

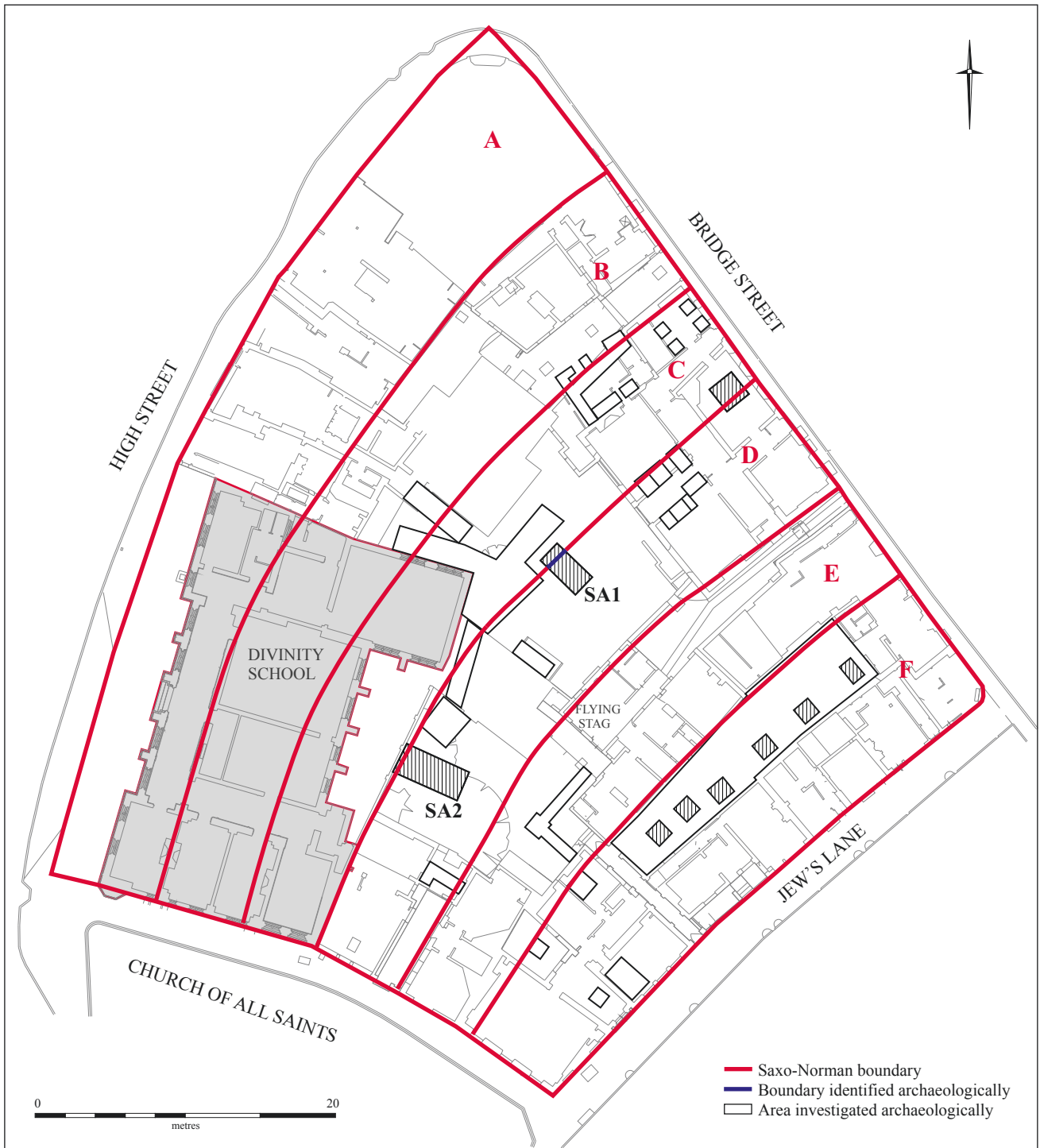


Figure 4: Provisional model of Saxo-Norman properties in the street block.



Figure 5: Late Medieval plots in the street block.

The creation of these derivative plots, which reflects the growing importance of the High Street rather than Bridge Street, led to much smaller and shorter plots. It is likely that these were more densely occupied than the earlier larger parent plots and that the Old Divinity School now lay at least partly in the *plot head* (the front part of a strip-plot, which includes the frontage and any other land under, and close to, a plot dominant placed on or near the street line; Conzen, 1969, 128) along with the more substantial *plot dominant* buildings ('The main building associated with the land use of the plot'; Conzen 1960, 128). These plots plus some other land passed into the ownership of the Hospital of St John the Evangelist, founded c.1200, in the early to mid 13th century; it appears that the Hospital obtained them largely to provide space for a cemetery, but that they then decided to covert the Bridge Street frontage into properties to gain rental income. A small cemetery was, however, established to their rear.

Property 21

In the late 12th or early 13th century this property was owned by Richard Grosse, who subdivided it between his daughters Juliana and Mabil, who then presented it to the Hospital of St John the Evangelist. The land was leased to a series of individuals in the 13th century:

- A) William de Hulleburne, rector of Welthun, who built on it 'at his own expense'.
- B) Walter the chaplain.
- C) William de la Marche, plus his wife Alice.
- D) Nicholas son of Roger, plus Simon son of Radulf of Lolleworthe.

There are then no records until considerably later when it was leased to:

- E) Helen Coole, a tenement for 8s in 1490-91.
- F) Joan Woodlae, a tenement for 8s in 1520-21.
- G) Richard Pacet, a tenement and a garden measuring 3 perch 6 foot in length by 1 perch 3 foot in width for 8s in 1525 (16.9m by 5.95m).

Property 22

In the late 12th or early 13th century this property was owned by Eustace *incisor* and then his son Richard. It was leased to Richard Ketelburn and his wife Mabil for 18d, and during their occupancy the rental income was transferred to the Hospital. William the son of Richard Ketelburn quitclaimed his rights to Mabil the daughter of Richard Gross (see Property 21), who may have been the widow of Richard. The property was then leased to Simon Bernard. There are then no records until considerably later when it was leased to:

- A) Thomas Gibson, a tenement for 8s in 1490-91.
- B) Richard Coke, a tenement in the tenure of Elizabeth Curtes for 12s in 1520.
- C) Robert Coke/Clerk, a tenement and garden for 8s 4d in 1525, measuring 3 perch 16 feet long and 1 perch 4 feet wide (19.95m by 6.25m).

Property 23

Properties 23 and 24 were initially owned by Barnwell Priory, founded 1092, who granted them to the Hospital in 1250 for a rent of 7s. The land was leased by John Roald, who sublet a part of it at the rear measuring 14 feet by 30 feet (4.25m by

9.15m). It was later occupied by John's widow Alice. There are then no records until considerably later when it was leased to:

A) M. Robert de Rypplyngham, clerk, a tenement for 8s in 1490-91. In 1492 he sublet it to John Bentley and his wife Agnes for 13s.

B) King's Hall, a small tenement in 1521 and 1525 for 4s measuring 4 perch 7 foot long by 1 perch 7 foot wide (22.25m by 7.15m).

Property 24

This was leased along with Property 23 from Barnwell Priory in 1250. At this time it was described as formerly the mill of Adam Weriell. The Weriell family owned the corner plot fronting onto Bridge Street, which originally constituted the plot head area of the parent plot from which Plots 23 and 24 had been separated. It was leased up until 1267 by Bartholomew son of John de Cambridge, goldsmith, and was 20ft by 40ft (6.1m by 12.2m) in extent. At a later date the property is described at the horse mill of the Hospital, when a piece of land 12ft long and 32ft wide (3.65m by 9.75m) at the back of it was leased to Peter son of Ralph for 1s. There is then a considerable break until it was leased to:

A) M. Robert de Rypplyngham, clerk, a tenement in 1490-91. In 1498 he sublet it to John Bentley and his wife Agnes, who were already subletting Property 23. The property consisted of a tenement, stable and garden and the rental for it and Property 23 was 20s.

B) King's Hall, a tenement and garden late in the tenure of Peter Symond for 4s, which is 4½ perch long and 1½ perch wide (22.65m by 7.55m)

Post-Medieval

The Hospital became St. John's College in 1511 and by 1580-81 the four plots had been amalgamated into the Pentionary of St John's, which was a pensionary or residence for Cambridge University students not supported by their College. This was 'not new' in 1580-81 and contained 'a barn, stable, fish-house, bake-house, and other conveniences (Willis and Clark 1886, Vol II, 247-8). The earliest maps of Cambridge, such as that of Richard Lyne (1574), do not provide much useful detail about the area. John Hammond (1592) suggests that the property consisted of a single large building on St. John's Street and a large open garden (Figure 6), although this seems unlikely given what is known of the Pentionary. By the time of David Loggan's plan of 1688 the area was densely occupied by a series of buildings and yards; this appears to be largely unchanged in the 1798 map by William Custance (Figure 7).

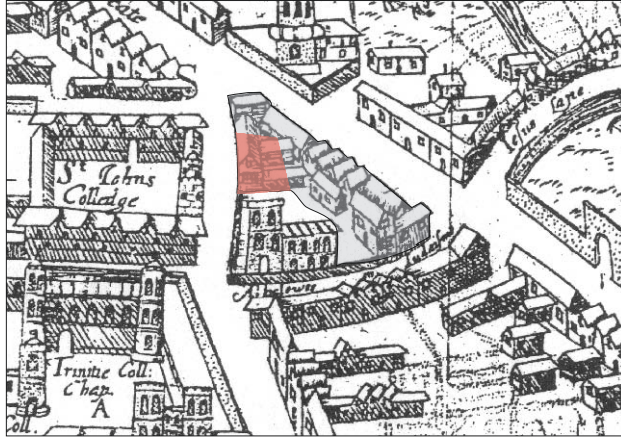
Modern

The Pentionary is last mentioned in 1789-90 and a plan of 1877 (Figure 8) indicates that the area was occupied by the St. John's College bake house, houses occupied by Mr Jones, Mr Peach and Miss Mutton, several stables (including the College stables), a coach house, yards and passageways (Willis and Clark 1886, Vol III 233). The site was sold by the College to the University in 1875, and in March 1877 all the existing buildings on the site were demolished and construction of the Old Divinity School, which currently occupies the site, began (Rupp 1981; Willis and Clark 1886, Vol III 229-40). The building was designed by the distinguished architect Basil Champneys

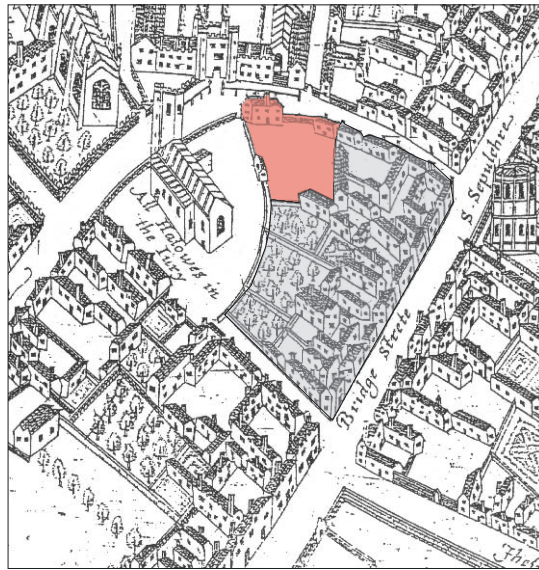
Champneys (1842-1935), who was one of the pioneers of the Queen Anne style, which revived features of 17th and 18th century English architecture plus some Tudor elements, and is Grade II listed. Pevsner notes that ‘The style is Early Tudor and the treatment lively and not at all pedantic’ (Pevsner 1970, 205). It was specified that the building was to contain a ‘large and a small lecture room, a library, private rooms for the four theological professors, a porter's lodge and provision for literary lecture rooms’ (Rupp 1981, 423) and the style was to be ‘English style of the early part of the sixteenth century’ and ‘the material red brick and stone’ (Willis and Clark 1886, Vol III 235-36). During construction ‘It was found that the foundations had to be deepened, and cellars built, though it was hoped to raise money by letting them. And indeed almost at once came an application from the Hatfield Brewery company who thought they might do very well for bringing their seasoned brewed ales into those parts which other beers, under the Guildhall, could not reach’ (ibid, 424).

During the building work in 1877 Professor Thomas McKenny Hughes, the Woodwardian Professor of Geology and a keen local antiquarian, observed a ditch on the site, which has since become known as the ‘St. John’s Ditch’. Hughes observed the presence of a ‘deep ditch’ that he regarded as ‘suggestive of original low ground’ (Hughes 1907, 411). He recorded that ‘where first seen [this feature] was full of human bones, but as these were all scattered and fragmentary it is probable that they were only the bones dug up in making new graves in that overcrowded ground which were disposed of by throwing them into the deep ditch that bounded the churchyard on the north side’ (Hughes 1898, 378). It should be noted that the St. John’s Ditch must have been located in approximately the same location as test Pits 1, 2, 8 and 9 (see below), two of these contained substantial archaeological features with dark fills (Test Pits 1 and 8) and one had a human burial plus disarticulated remains (Test Pit 8). It is possible that these are part of the same archaeological deposits observed by Professor Hughes. Later, in 1893, Hughes observed ‘the cutting of a deep drain ... along the south-west side of the First Court of St John’s College. ‘A ditch with black silt was crossed under the highest part of the new buildings in front of the kitchens, and this may have been an old boundary’ (Hughes 1907, 421-2). Hughes believed that the two ditches were parts of the same feature, as he states that the Divinity School ditch ‘crossed the street and passed away under St John’s College’ (ibid, 411). This seems highly unlikely on a number of grounds, and it must be remembered that 16 years separated Hughes’s two observations of feature(s) briefly revealed during building work. Nonetheless Hughes’s brief comments have given rise to a large volume of speculation, including the idea that the St. John’s Ditch enclosed a settlement of c.8th or 9th century date (Gray 1905, 21-3; Cam 1934, 39 and 42; Hines 1999, 136; Taylor 1999, 44-50), and challenges to this theory (Lobel 1975, 3; Haslam 1984, 17; Cessford with Dickens 2005, 85-6). After around 90 years of University ownership ‘In the 1960’s the enterprising Bursar of St. John’s made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness ... and bought back the land, which it re-let to the University’ (Rupp 1981, 422).

Lyne 1574



Hamond 1592

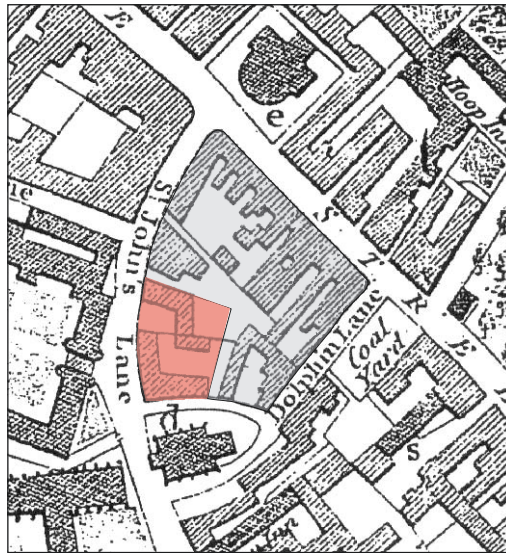


Loggan 1688

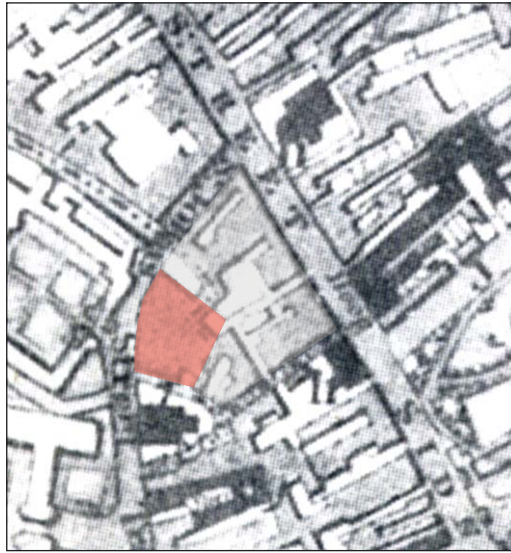


Figure 6: 16th and 17th century historic map sequence.

Custance 1798



Baker 1830



1st Edition OS 1886

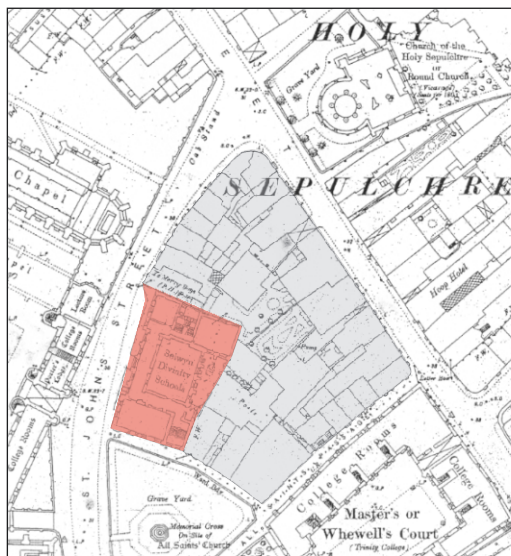


Figure 7: 18th and 19th century historic map sequence.

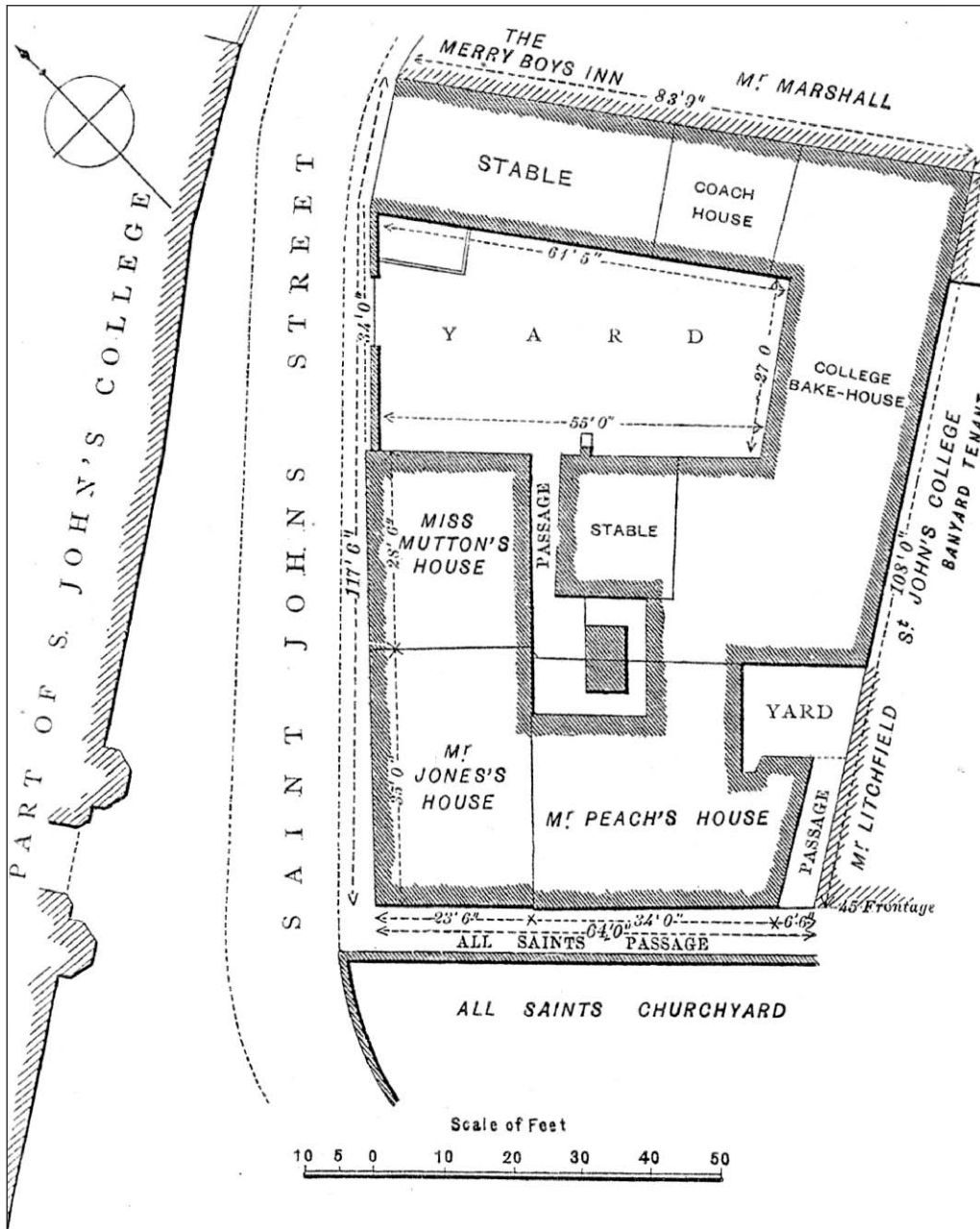


Figure 8: 1877 plan of the site of The Old Divinity School.

Watching brief and evaluation results

The internal area of the Old Divinity School is c.358.5m² and the test pits covered an area of 3.84m², equating to c.1.07% of the total. The test pits were recorded in note form as none of the deposits warranted section drawings. Digital photography was undertaken, but the amount of dust present combined with the need to use flash lighting rendered the results largely unusable. Contexts were only assigned specific context numbers when material was recovered from them. No dating material was recovered from any of the test pits. While the conditions mean that small sherds may well have been overlooked it does make it likely that the features observed all predate the 16th century, as most features of this date or later in Cambridge produce relatively large quantities of material that are easy to spot even under difficult conditions.

Test Pit 1

Test Pit 1 was 0.7m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.77m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.48m thick, base at c.6.29m O.D.
- Mid to dark brownish damp and sticky grey clay, containing occasional gravel, flint, oyster shell and animal bone c.0.32m thick with base at c.5.97m OD. Fill of a feature, there were suggestions of the edge of a cut separating the base of this deposit from the next indicating a pit or ditch.
- Loose brownish orange sand and gravel 0.15m thick, water began to enter at c.5.9m OD and the base appeared to be at c.5.82m O.D. This is unlikely to be undisturbed natural and is probably the fill of a feature.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel, probably undisturbed natural with its upper surface at c.5.82m O.D., although the water made this difficult to determine.

Test Pit 2

Test Pit 2 was 0.6m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.76m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.20m thick, base at c.6.57m O.D.
- Reddish brown moderately firm sand and gravel c.0.40m thick, base at c.6.17m OD. This material could be undisturbed natural, however, based upon the excavations at St. John's Triangle it is more likely to be the fill of a relatively early feature.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel, probably undisturbed natural over 0.4m thick with its upper surface at c.6.17m O.D.

Test Pit 3

Test Pit 3 was 0.8m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.78m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.29m thick, base at c.6.49m O.D.
- Grey Gault Clay 0.16m thick containing occasional brick fragments, base at c.6.33m O.D. Deliberately laid makeup layer associated with the construction of the Old Divinity School, or a later modification to it.
- Firm brownish yellow sand and gravel, probably undisturbed natural over 0.35m thick with its upper surface at c.6.33m O.D.

Test Pit 4

Test Pit 4 was 0.6m by 0.7m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.88m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.19m thick, base at c.6.69m O.D.
- Beneath the basement floor there was a sewer pipe and a water pipe, these had disturbed all the deposits to c.6.40m O.D.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel with its upper surface at c.6.40m O.D., probably undisturbed natural over 0.3m thick.

Test Pit 5

Test Pit 5 was 0.75m by 0.75m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.96m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.12m thick, base at c.6.84m O.D.
- Due to the wall footing stepping out substantially and the presence of a sewer pipe all deposits had been truncated to c.6.51m O.D. The backfill of the sewer trench [002] produced a disarticulated human thoracic vertebra (Natasha Dodwell *pers. comm.*). During the St. John's Triangle excavations large quantities of disarticulated human bones were found nearby in the construction trenches of the Old Divinity School, and this vertebra probably derives from the same source.
- Reddish brown moderately firm sand and gravel c.0.15m thick, base at c.6.36m OD. This material could be undisturbed natural, however, based upon the excavations at St. John's Triangle it is more likely to be the fill of a relatively early feature.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel with its upper surface at c.6.36m O.D., probably undisturbed natural over 0.4m thick.

Test Pit 6

Test Pit 6 was not excavated; this appears to have been either a mis-numbering or to have been scoped out of the scheme of works.

Test Pit 7

Test Pit 7 was 0.65m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.80m OD. Test Pit 7 had already been excavated and backfilled prior to the investigation and was therefore re-excavated. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup c.0.15m thick, base at c.6.65m O.D.
- Mid brown silty layer c.0.11m thick, base at c.6.54m O.D. This is probably related to the construction of the basement floor.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel, probably undisturbed natural over 0.6m thick with its upper surface at c.6.54m O.D.

Test Pit 8

Test Pit 8 was 0.6m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at c.6.76m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup *c.*0.16m thick, base at *c.*6.60m O.D.
- A mid to dark grey sticky sandy silty clay containing occasional gravel, flint, oyster shell and animal bone 0.74m thick with its base at *c.*5.86m O.D. This appears to be the fill of a large feature as no banding or tip lines were apparent.
- Within the overlying layer there was a grave [001], located on the southern side of the test pit. This consisted of the extended west-east aligned inhumation of an articulated juvenile, plus the disarticulated remains of at least one adult (Natasha Dodwell *pers. comm.*). The burial was located at *c.*6.36 to *c.*6.26m O.D. No grave cut was discernible, although under the conditions this cannot be regarded as conclusive. This material is probably related to the human bone in the 'St. John's Ditch' observed by Hughes in 1877.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel with its upper surface at *c.*5.86m O.D. probably undisturbed natural over 0.1m thick. The upper surface of the natural appeared to be relatively flat, suggesting that the feature lying over it was relatively large.

Test Pit 9

Test Pit 9 was 0.7m by 0.6m in extent and the current surface of the basement floor lay at *c.*6.76m OD. The sequence revealed was:

- Basement floor and makeup *c.*0.11m thick, base at *c.*6.65m O.D.
- Reddish brown moderately firm sand and gravel *c.*0.44m thick, base at *c.*6.21m OD. This material could be undisturbed natural, however, based upon the excavations at St. John's Triangle it is more likely to be the fill of a relatively early feature.
- Firm yellowish brown sand and gravel, probably undisturbed natural over 0.25m thick with its upper surface at *c.*6.21m O.D.

Test Pit 10

Test Pit 10 was 0.3m by 0.25m in extent, narrowing to 0.15m by 0.15m lower down due to obstructions. The current surface of the ground floor lay at *c.*9.10m O.D. The sequence associated with the Old Divinity School consisted of:

- Carpet tiles.
- Linoleum type surface on boards.
- West-East orientated joists sitting on North-South orientated joists, which themselves sit on brick footings. The gaps between the joists and brick footings are empty.
- Concrete.

In total these deposits are 0.425m thick, meaning that the underlying deposits are located at *c.*8.675m O.D. These underlying deposits consisted of mixed relatively loose dark soil, sand and mortar that were over 0.10m thick and are probably related to the construction of the Old Divinity School.

Test Pit 11

Test Pit 11 was 0.35m by 0.23m in extent, narrowing to 0.30m by 0.25m lower down due to obstructions. The current surface of the ground floor lay at *c.*9.10m O.D. The sequence of deposits associated with the Old Divinity School was identical to Test Pit

10. These deposits were 0.44m thick, meaning that the underlying deposits are located at *c.*8.66m O.D. The mixed relatively loose dark soil, sand and mortar deposit proved to be 0.16m thick where it came down onto a firmer set of deposits at *c.*8.50m O.D. These appear to represent the top of undisturbed *in situ* archaeology.

Test Pit 12

Test Pit 12 was 0.30m by 0.29m in extent, narrowing to a circle 0.22m in diameter lower down due to obstructions. The current surface of the ground floor lay at *c.*9.10m O.D. The sequence of deposits associated with the Old Divinity School consisted of:

- Wooden floor
- Concrete bedding layer with timber joists in it.
- Firm red coloured concrete with lots of red brick present.
- Loose red bricks.

In total these deposits are 0.34m thick, meaning that the underlying deposits are located at *c.*8.76m O.D. These underlying deposits consisted of relatively firm dark soil and probably represent undisturbed *in situ* archaeology.

Test Pit 13

Test Pit 13 was 0.34m by 0.32m in extent, narrowing to 0.16m by 0.10m lower down due to obstructions. The current surface of the ground floor lay at *c.*9.10m O.D. The sequence of deposits associated with the Old Divinity School was identical to Test Pit 12. These deposits were 0.34m thick, meaning that the underlying deposits are located at *c.*8.76m O.D. These underlying deposits consisted of relatively firm dark soil and probably represent undisturbed *in situ* archaeology.

Test Pit 14

Test Pit 14 was 0.29m by 0.29m in extent, narrowing to 0.19m by 0.19m lower down due to obstructions. The current surface of the ground floor lay at *c.*9.10m O.D. The sequence of deposits associated with the Old Divinity School was identical to Test Pit 12. These deposits were 0.345m thick, meaning that the underlying deposits are located at *c.*8.755m O.D. Underlying this was a floor surface constructed from red hand made bricks of unknown dimensions set in a firm white mortar. This can broadly be dated to the 16th to 18th centuries. Given its height relative to deposits of this period observed nearby during the St. John's Triangle excavations this floor is probably the ground floor surface of a building rather than the base of a cut feature such as a well.

Discussion

Based upon the results of the nearby St. John's Triangle excavations (Newman 2008) it seemed likely that undisturbed natural would lie at between 6.8 to 7.2m OD, with the bases of the majority of cut features at between 6.1 to 6.3m OD and only a few features such as wells penetrating to a greater depth than this. The highest apparently undisturbed natural at the Old Divinity School was at *c.*6.54m O.D. in Test Pit 7 and in several test pits broadly similar results of *c.*6.33 to *c.*6.40m O.D. were recorded (Test Pits 3, 4 and 5). The lower heights in the other test pits indicate that the natural had been substantially truncated in these. The bases of archaeological features varied

somewhat and were as low as *c.*5.82m to *c.*5.86m O.D. In general the results of this watching brief and evaluation broadly confirm the pattern identified at St. John's Triangle, although the archaeology appears to be potentially slightly deeper, perhaps as the result of the presence of a significant feature such as the 'St John's Ditch'.

Definite cut archaeological features were identified in Test Pits 1 and 8, while probable cut archaeological features were present in Test Pits 2, 5 and 9 and only Test Pits 3, 4 and 7 lacked *in situ* archaeological remains. The most significant discovery was the inhumation in Test Pit 8, and disturbed human remains were also encountered in Test Pit 5.

Test Pits 10 to 14 indicate that in the area of the building where there are no basements undisturbed archaeological deposits survive *in situ* at between *c.*8.50m and 8.75m O.D. It seems likely, from the admittedly limited observations, that prior to the construction of the Old Divinity School the earlier standing buildings were demolished down to floor height, assuming as seems likely that the floor observed in Test Pit 14 represents a ground floor level floor of a building rather than a cellar, but that the horizontal stratigraphy was left intact apart possibly from some levelling down of any higher areas.

Assessment of archaeological potential

The archaeological watching brief and evaluation provides enough information to broadly estimate the rough depth of surviving archaeological deposits, which can be compared to the results encountered nearby at St. John's Triangle (Figure 9). The ground floor level of the Old Divinity School is currently located at between *c.*9.09 to 9.12m O.D. with *in situ* archaeological deposits at between *c.*8.50 and 8.75m O.D. The area of the buildings where basements are not present is an irregular roughly rectangular area in the centre of the building; this is broadly *c.*15m by 8m in extent and as far as can be determined there is an area of 120m² of archaeology. This area is likely to have between 1.3 and 1.95m of surviving dense archaeological remains, including both horizontal stratigraphy and cut features. There would then be around a further metre of still relatively intensive cut features, plus a few even deeper features such as wells. The area of the building where there are existing basements, where only cut features are likely to be present, covers around *c.*200 m². Estimating the cubic meterage of archaeological deposits is more problematic, but it is likely to be between 250 and 500 m³ and more probably between 300 and 400m³.

If, as is potentially to be proposed, a basement is created *c.*0.6 to 0.9m below the current basement level covering the entire footprint of the Old Divinity School to around 6.0m O.D. this will remove all the archaeological deposits, apart from the bases of the very deepest features. Essentially, the archaeological remains on the site that are likely to be present consist of five main elements:

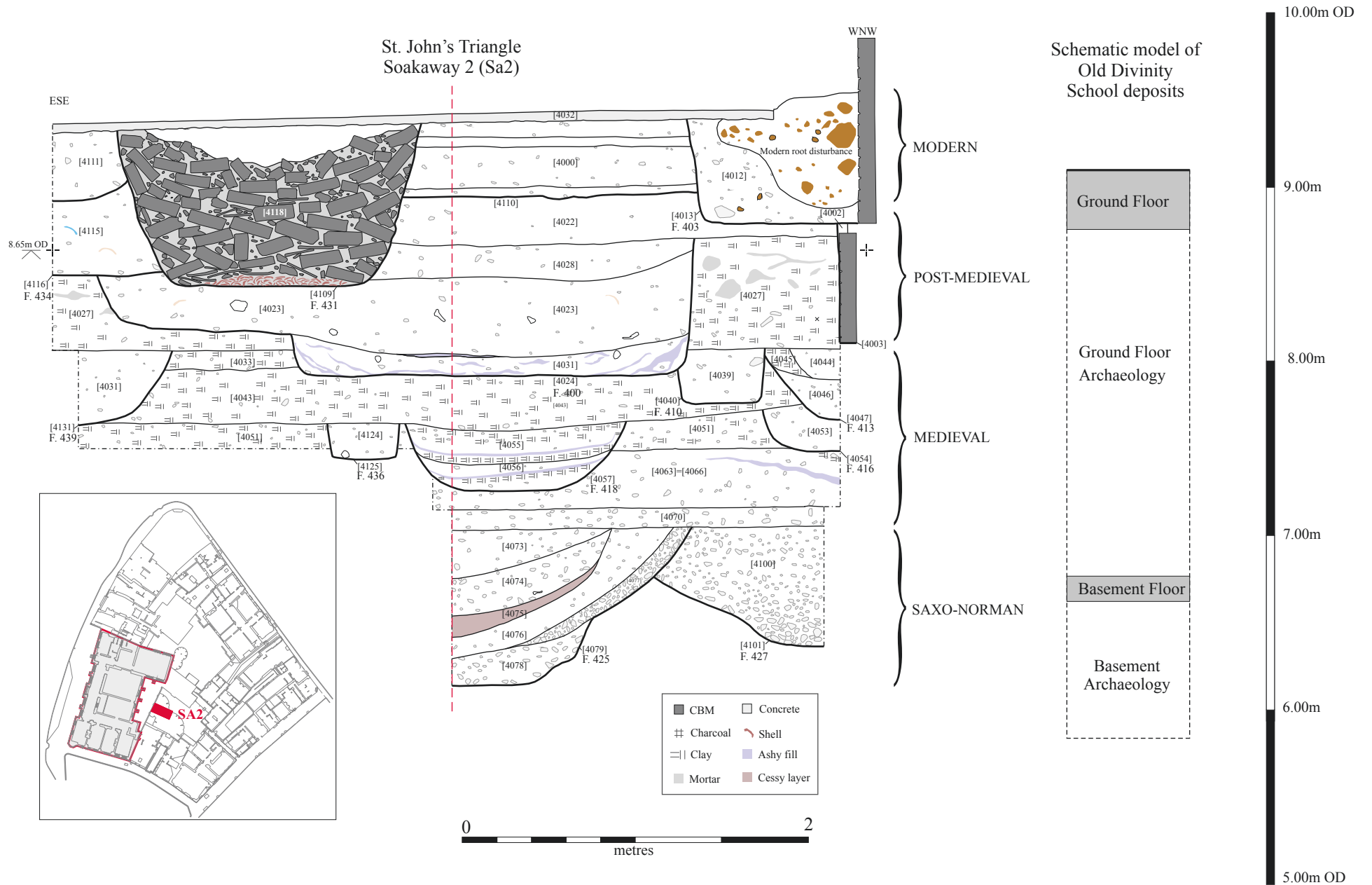


Figure 9: Section of likely archaeological survival in Old Divinity School.

1) Roman features relating to the rear of a zone of occupation with its main focus on Bridge Street. Likely to consist primarily of cut features.

2) 10 to 12th or early 13th century features relating to the rear yard of a property fronting onto Bridge Street (Figure 4). Likely to consist primarily of cut features.

3) 12th or early 13th century to mid 16th century features relating to four properties fronting onto the High Street (Figure 5). These are likely to consist of a mixture of cut features, building remains and horizontal stratigraphy. Of particular significance is the transition in alignment and nature of the occupation when the derivative plots were created, remains relating to a horse mill, the 'St. John's Ditch' plus associated human remains and the fact that between c.1135/1144 and 1275 the lay within the *vicus Judeorum* (Jewry) of Cambridge. It is important to note that although a considerable number of archaeological investigations have been undertaken along the High Street these have generally either taken place in the rear plot tail areas of properties. Where investigations have taken place in the plot head areas towards the street frontage these have usually been in areas where a significant proportion of the archaeological sequence has been removed by 19th and 20th century cellars. The apparent good survival of a significant area of the plot head of a number of adjacent Saxo-Norman and medieval properties along the High Street is an atypical phenomenon in Cambridge and represents a significant archaeological resource.

4) Mid 16th to mid 19th century remains relating to the Penitentiary of St John's (Figure 6 to 8), this includes a bake-house and a number of other buildings. These are likely to consist of a mixture of cut features, building remains and horizontal stratigraphy. It is worth noting that in general investigations of College related properties of the Post-Medieval and Modern periods in Cambridge have been of limited scale and have not recovered large material culture assemblages associated with the University. There is a reasonable likelihood that assemblages of this type do survive on the site.

5) Remains relating to the construction of the Old Divinity School between 1877 and 1879, and later modifications.

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OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: cambridg3-54009

Project details	
Project name	The Old Divinity School, Cambridge
Short description of the project	An archaeological evaluation consisting of 13 test pits was undertaken at the Old Divinity School, Cambridge. These demonstrated that in the area of the building with basements archaeological features still survived, including human burials. In the area of the building without basements the construction of the Old Divinity School appears to have caused relatively little disturbance of earlier archaeological deposits, indicating that there is a high probability of a good surviving sequence of early to mid 10th to early 19th century deposits.
Project dates	Start: 21-10-2008 End: 07-01-2009
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	ECB 3113 - HER event no.
Any associated project reference codes	JDS 08 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	PITS Medieval
Significant Finds	HUMAN REMAINS Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Documentary Search','Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
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 The Old Divinity School, Cambridge
Postcode	CB2 1TW
Study area	3.84 Square metres
Site coordinates	TL 4840 8740 52.4639485347 0.184674158840 52 27 50 N 000 11 04 E Point

Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.82m Max: 6.54m
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Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Project brief originator	Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)
Project design originator	Alison Dickens
Project director/manager	Alison Dickens
Project supervisor	Craig Cessford
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	JDS 08
Physical Contents	'Human Bones'
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Digital Archive ID	JDS 08
Digital Contents	'Human Bones'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Cambridge Archaeological Unit
Paper Archive ID	JDS 08
Paper Contents	'Human Bones'
Paper Media available	'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

Project bibliography 1	
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