Construction of a Cricket Practice Area, Cathedral School Llandaff, nr Cathedral Close Llandaff

(Application 21/02548/MNR)

Written Scheme of Historic Environment Mitigation

Prepared on behalf of the Cathedral School Llandaff

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Executive Summary

A condition (#3) for mitigation of the effects of the development on the Historic Environment were stipulated in the consent for the development (21/02548/MNR) by the LPA (Cardiff County Council), in accordance with policies KP17 and EN9 of the Cardiff Local Development Plan, reflecting the requirements of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The development entails the construction of a demountable cricket training area (nets).

The development will entail a topsoil strip over an area of approximately 25m by 20m, to a specified depth of 156mm. It is anticipated that the topsoil strip will not encounter archaeological deposits or structures at such a shallow level. To mitigate against the topsoil being thinner than expected and archaeological remains being encountered at depths of only 156mm, an archaeological watching brief will be maintained during the topsoil-stripping operation as a contingency.

Notwithstanding the expectation that archaeological remains will not be encountered during such a shallow strip, concerns over the close proximity of the site to both the medieval structures that lay along the south side what is now Cathedral Close, and to the Cathedral beyond, have been addressed by geophysical survey of the area of the proposed development and an adjacent swathe of the playing fields (report attached). This survey has revealed evidence for what are likely to be medieval enclosed 'fields' to the SE of the known building plots. The ditches bounding these 'fields' do not impinge on the development area. The development area is, however, traversed by a feature associated with a 4m-wide positive magnetic anomaly and a narrower negative resistivity anomaly. To the SE, this feature is approximately aligned on the site of the former Llandaff Mill and to the NW upon some (ruined?) buildings mapped in 1840 and 1880 (these structures were removed in the late 19th century with the creation of the New Graveyard). This feature is tentatively interpreted as a culvert with an inlet from the feeder for the mill, passing below the latrines of the medieval 'College of Vicars Choral' and discharging into the millpond (although other interpretations are possible and are discussed).

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1. Introduction

A condition (#3) for mitigation of the effects of the development on the Historic Environment were stipulated in the consent for the development (21/02548/MNR) by the LPA (Cardiff County Council), in accordance with policies KP17 and EN9 of the Cardiff Local Development Plan, reflecting the requirements of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The development entails the construction of a demountable cricket training area (nets), including removable uprights in combination with an all-weather playing surface, with a total area of approximately 25m by 20m at a location centred upon NGR [315684, 178078].

The site lies in the northern corner of the playing fields of the Cathedral School Llandaff. It is bounded to the west by the rear of No. 8 Cathedral Close ('The Clockhouse') and to the NE by the footpath running between Llandaff Cathedral and Western Avenue.

2. Archaeological and Historical Background

2.1 General

The site lies to the E of Cathedral Close (formerly Pound Lane; the centre of the site lies 90m ESE of the east end of the Cathedral, NPRN 131 and 120m NE of Bishop's Castle NPRNs 94548, 96079, SAM GM073), on sports fields within the grounds of the Cathedral School Llandaff, formerly the Bishops Palace (with the core building being the former Llandaff Court NPRN 137). The Dairy Well (NPRN 32360) lies on the edge of the sports fields 190m to the S of the site.

The sports fields lie upon a terrace of Devensian glacio-fluvial sheet deposits (which lie within a deep valley fill). The surface of the terrace lies at approximately 16.4 m aOD in the area of the development. The solid bedrock, conglomerates and clays of the Triassic Mercia Mudstone Group, forms an upstanding ridge, with a steep bluff marking the valley margin to the SW rising to approximately 29m aOD. Immediately to the NE of the site the ground drops slightly onto the Holocene alluvium of the Taff Valley, the surface of which is at approximately 15.0m aOD.

The major part of the level area below the bluff, now occupied by the sports fields, has had no previous archaeological investigations. The margin of the sports field, at the foot of the bluff, was investigated before and during construction of the sports pavilion (Young 2009, 2011). Here, a relict topography over a Devensian palaeochannel showed accumulation of sediments (probably derived from activity on the adjacent hilltop) in the medieval period. To the NW of the site, some fragments of the Treasurer's House (PRN 00151s) remain (later used a barn) between numbers 6 and 8 Cathedral Close and interventions here have shown the survival of medieval occupation layers below later demolition deposits (Cardiff archaeological Consultants 2011).

2.2 Historical setting and Map Regression

Full description of the historical evidence for the development of the site is presented in the appended survey report (Young 2022).

2.3 Summary of archaeological evidence for the site

The geophysical survey suggests that the site lies within an area partitioned by a system of small ditches of unknown age or ages The geophysical evidence also indicates the presence of a substantial ditch or, more likely, culvert below the centre of the proposed development. Coincidence of both the putative culvert and the ditch system with elements of the post-medieval land divisions closer to Cathedral Close that appear to perpetuate the line of the medieval divisions makes it likely, but not certain that the features identified by geophysics are also of medieval age. There is no cartographic or other evidence for sub-division of the field (Cae Cwm) containing the site during the post-medieval period.

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1 Legal

The overall objective of this WSI is to set out a programme of works meeting the standard required by The Chartered Institute for Archaeologist's **Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief** (2014), in order to identify and record (preserve by record) any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works and thus to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource, in accordance with policies **KP17** and **EN9** of the **Cardiff Local Development Plan**, within the framework provided by the **Historic Environment (Wales) Act** (2016).

3.2 Research

The site lies on a terrace raised above the flood plain of the Taff, chosen as the site for the early medieval ecclesiastical centre, and potentially an attractive zone for agriculture and settlement at other periods too. The site thus has the potential for evidence for activity across a wide range of periods. In particular, the geophysical evidence suggests the sports fields contain features co-aligned with elements of complex of medieval buildings and enclosures immediately to their northwest, part of the chain of properties surrounding the Cathedral providing accommodation for the Prebendary Canons and other church officials. Any improvement in knowledge of these features may shed light on the development of the structures forming the 'Cathedral close'.

4. Methodology

4a. General

The groundworks for the project is a simple removal of topsoil to a depth of 156mm, to be undertaken with a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision.

This watching brief will be undertaken during all groundworks, which are anticipated to take place during a very short period following April 21st 2022.

Contractors will be advised of the possible presence of a substantial culvert to ensure that is not breached inadvertently.

4b. Watching brief

Archaeological specification: For the detailed investigation of archaeological features the following basic specifications will apply as a minimum (unless variation agreed with curatorial archaeologist):

1. Watching brief to be conducted by TY who has extensive (20 years+) experience of the archaeology of Llandaff.

2. The extremely shallow depth of excavation means that no archaeological features are likely to be impacted by the groundworks, which are anticipated to be entirely within topsoil.

3. All discrete features to be defined and planned before the geotextile membrane at the base of the artificial surface is laid down.

4. All drawings and plans to be recorded at scales appropriate for purpose (1:10, 1:20).

5. Given the light construction above, buried archaeological remains will be preserved in-situ, so no investigative excavations will be undertaken below the site base.

6. A full digital photographic archive the work required will be maintained, with photographs of at least 16MP in RAW format in the first instance.

7. All planning and height data will be tied-in to a site grid established by high-resolution RTK GPS.

8. Any articulated human remains encountered will be left in situ. The response to such remains will determined through discussion with the developer (Cathedral School Llandaff), Cardiff City Council and the archaeological representative of the LPA. Any proposal for subsequent disturbance of such remains under license will be a 'last resort'.

9. Any finds will be retained, cleaned, catalogued and stored under the supervision of a qualified conservator (Louise Mumford, NMW and Cathedral School Archivist), in accordance with standards set in the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' **Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials** (2014). The School maintains a registered archive.

10. Finds recovered that are regarded as Treasure under **The Treasure Act** (1996) will be reported to HM Coroner for the local area.

11. Deposits with a significant potential for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental material will be sampled. Should significant potential be established for enhancement of understanding of the site through palaeoenvironmental work, the advice will be sought of a specialist environmental archaeologist. All environmental sampling and recording will follow English Heritage's **Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology** (2011).

12. Specialist input on any finds arising from the works will be provided by Dr T Young (metalwork, metalworking, building stones), Dr A Forward (ceramics), L. Mumford (conservation and organics) and by other specialist colleagues from Cardiff University and NMW as required.

Archaeological standards: the archaeological intervention will be carried out in accordance with the Chartered Institute For Archaeologists '**Standards and guidance: for an archaeological watching brief**'. The works will be undertaken following risk assessment in accordance with the GeoArch Health & Safety Policy. GeoArch has public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Contingency: should significant archaeological features be discovered during the works, activities would be paused and a meeting called with the Cathedral School, their contractors, Cadw, the local planning authority and their archaeological advisors to determine what works and resources would be required to ensure that the archaeological resource was fully investigated and recorded.

Commencement: the archaeological advisors to the LPA will be informed a minimum of 5 working days before the anticipated commencement of the works (anticipated to be 21/4/22).

4c. Output

The project archive will be handled in accordance with the recommendations of **The National Standard and Guidance to Best Practice for Collecting and Depositing Archaeological Archives in Wales** (2017) and CIfA's **Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives** (2014).

The resultant physical archive will be retained by the Cathedral School (which has a Registered Archive).

The digital archive will be supplied to the RCAHMW in accordance with their **Guidelines for Digital Archaeological Archives** (2014).

Data will be submitted to GGAT for incorporation in the HER in accordance with **Guidance for the Submission of Data to the Welsh Historic Environment Records (HERs)** (2018), within the timescale stipulated in the Condition on the Planning Consent. The site report will also be made available via the GeoArch website for general access.

Site summaries of productive projects are published with Archaeology in Wales, Morgannwg and with any relevant period-specific annual round-ups.

5. References

CARDIFF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSULTANTS , 2011 , Archaeological Watching Brief at 6 Cathedral Close, Llandaff, Cardiff.

YOUNG, T.P. 2009*. Archaeological observation of geotechnical testpits, proposed new sports pavilion, The Cathedral School, Llandaff, Cardiff [ST 1568 7794*], GeoArch Report 2009/53, 11 pp.

YOUNG, T.P. 2011. *Watching brief on development at the Sports Pavilion, The Cathedral School, Llandaff, Cardiff [ST 156779]*. GeoArch Report 2011/01, 20 pp.

YOUNG, T.P. 2022. *Geophysical survey on the sports fields, Cathedral School, Llandaff.* GeoArch Report 2022/01, 21 pp.