

*Ryedale Archaeology Services Ltd*

**The Old Palace a Desktop Study  
for  
The Chapter of York Minster**

Survey work and report undertaken by  
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York Minster

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A company registered in England No 0472067

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## **1. Background**

It is the intent of the Chapter of York to redevelop the site of the Old Palace (**Fig 1**) to give improved educational facilities and better provision for the library and archives. The most modern part of the building which was constructed in the 1990s is structurally unsound due to settlement and spread of the main roof. Other parts of the building also have roofs which are sub-standard and need substantial attention or repairs. The medieval chapel has recurring problems with outbreaks of mould infecting the books.

### **1.1 Previous Accounts of the History and Development of the Site**

Ron Butler gave a detailed account of the history of the site at the time of the Ingram Mansion in the 17th century and later, published in the York Historian. Kate Giles cast a broader net and also mentioned what is known of the archbishop's palace, published in the archaeology report on the excavations during the construction of the new library extension in the late 1990s edited by Justin Garner-Lahire. It is from these and other original sources that the necessarily briefer account detailed below has been composed.

### **1.2 History of the Site: The Relationship to the Roman Fortress**

In the Roman period the site was occupied by the buildings of the legionary fortress. Parts of these were seen in two excavations. The first by Derek Phillips was in the eastern half of the medieval chapel where the foundations of a military barrack block were recorded. The second was on the site of the library extension in 1997 and also found part of the same barrack block (**Fig 2**). Remains of both timber and stone phases of buildings were identified. Both sites have been published see Phillips and Heywood and Garner-Lahire.

### **1.3 History of the Site: The Relationship to the Medieval Layout**

In the medieval period the site largely formed the York palace of the archbishops of York but that also bordered a row of prebendal houses along the east side of Minster Yard. In the twelfth century an account mentions a great hall built by archbishop Roger Pont l'Eveque (1154-81) which had marble columns. This may have been the great aisled hall described in an account of the fifteenth century which stated it was 122 feet long and 77 feet wide (Giles in Garner-Lahire 15).

The main part of the medieval palace was sited in the general area where the Old Palace now stands and would have consisted of a Great Hall, with associated Buttery and Pantry, most likely with a passageway between them to the Kitchen, and at the other end of the hall a Great Chamber, Solar and Chapel. It was a substantial complex of large buildings but it was only one of numerous palaces and manors attached to the archbishopric. Medieval bishops, like great lords, tended to be peripatetic and travelled round their diocese and also attended the court. Once the latrines became noisome they tended to move on to the next palace or manor. Jonathan Clark has also discussed the likely layout of the buildings linked to the Old Palace structures and excavation in Garner-Lahire

All that now remains of archbishop Roger's time is part of a twelfth-century arcade of seven round-headed arches (at least nine originally) that are subdivided into two trefoil-headed sub arches (**Fig 3**). Often described as a cloister arcade they are in fact a row of paired windows originally fitted with wooden shutters. They may actually be part of the south aisle wall of the great hall. They survived because they formed part of the south wall of the tennis court and later riding school (see below). No excavation has ever been recorded to determine the

medieval ground level against either side of the arcade but the suspicion is that it lies around a metre below the present level.

The restored later mid thirteenth-century first-floor Chapel of archbishop Walter de Gray survives together with one wall of a secondary range on its north side. This chapel, as Giles pointed out, was likely to be that mentioned in a grant of 13 oaks by Henry II in 1231-4 'to build a certain chapel at York' (Giles in Garner-Lahire 15). The attached range formed the vestibule passageway to the chapel entrance set at the west end of its north wall. Some foundations to its north were seen when the ground was excavated for the 1990s extension and geophysics has indicated the presence of other buried foundations to the east and west sides. They indicate the presence of another building that was notably of aisled construction (**Fig 4**). Notably this plan does not show the existing medieval east wall of the vestibule to the chapel and Giles (Garner-Lahire 14) mistakenly suggests that a painting by Moses Griffiths show that wall as having Romanesque detailing. These will be discussed in more detail below.

#### **1.4 History of the Site: The Ingram Mansion**

In the post reformation period the archbishops tended to favour Cawood and Bishopthorpe Palace and their other palaces and manors and somewhat neglected the York palace. archbishop Young removed the lead from the great hall roof in 1570 (Giles in Garner-Lahire ). In the early part of the seventeenth century the palace and grounds were let to Sir Arthur Ingram. He was a London merchant and civil servant who was rich enough to purchase the Temple Newsam estate near Leeds in 1622 for £12,000.

The Ingram mansion seems to have been located to the west of the main site and to have been a development of the medieval gatehouse range to the palace (**Fig 5**). That stood on a north-south axis and was attached to the north west tower of the minster. It included parts of the collegiate establishment known as St Mary and the Holy Angels or St Sepulchre which originally had a staff of thirteen which was later expanded to fifteen and more. It was established by archbishop Roger Pont l'Eveque in the twelfth century and suppressed in 1547. The development of a new house there rather than on the actual palace nucleus suggests it had already been severely reduced and was ruinous. While the mansion was set to the western end of Deans Park the rest was developed as formal gardens. As mentioned above the subject of the Ingram Mansion was first discussed in detail by Ron Butler in the York Historian 8 and his work was reviewed and updated by Kate Giles in Garner-Lahire 2015.

In 1649 Sir Arthur Ingram the younger, a supporter of the Royalist cause during the Civil War, was declared delinquent and he compounded with parliament and then retired to his estate at Temple Newsam. Interest in the York house and gardens gradually waned after the death of the first Arthur Ingram but given the costly support of the family for the king, when many grand houses fell into ruin or declined, it is not surprising.

#### **1.5 History of the Site: The 18th Century Post Ingram Mansion Period**

It seems that the western gatehouse range and mansion declined following the gradual loss of interest by the Ingram family in the 18th century and became subdivided into tenements let to various parties. To the east the Old Palace appears to have lost most of its main buildings by the seventeenth century with the chapel the sole surviving structure. It survived, together with the smaller range to its north side, because they were used as barns and stabling and therefore brought in an income. A map of the area showing the Ingram Mansion and written accounts show that a building immediately to the west of the old chapel was a tennis court (**Fig 5**).

This was later to briefly become in 1734-7 a playhouse and then a riding school. As mentioned above it incorporated the twelfth-century arcade of archbishop Roger and was a large building. Rents from this building feature in the Fabric accounts of the minster in the early nineteenth century. The giving up of the lease is also noted after which it was demolished in 1818. John Browne's illustration **Fig 2**) shows the arches of the twelfth-century arcade walled up and differential wear on the stonework of their jambs testify to the presence of the blocking wall which was removed following the demolition of the riding school.

John Browne first published an outline plan of the gatehouse range which was then added to the Ordnance Survey maps. Derek Phillips excavated the original south end of the range which abutted the west front of the eleventh-century minster in the early 1970s and which was later truncated in the early fourteenth century when the north west tower was built. Much of the gatehouse range was seen when Bernard Fielden stripped off the topsoil and laid down hardcore to establish hard fire grounds for emergency vehicles in the 1970s. This was done without archaeological recording and led to protests to Chapter from Derek Phillips. A plan made at the time has survives in the archives and shows some walls then seen. There seems little doubt, from Phillips comments at the time, that a great deal of damage was done to the remains.

The main gatehouse range was demolished in the 1820s as part of the Dean and Chapter's campaigns to tidy up the precinct and a number of drawings and partial plans of the buildings have survived. The buildings included the original tavern known as the Hole in the Wall whose name is perpetuated by a modern public house in High Petergate. There was also a chamber notoriously called Hell and when the demolition took place a cellar was supposedly revealed. It was at that time that a small tympanum, now in the Yorkshire Museum collection, was discovered. It shows demons capturing the soul of a recently deceased man. This is perhaps not unconnected with the description of the room as Hell mentioned above. The sculpture was made by the same people who carved the great Doomstone now exhibited in the eastern crypt of the minster.

### **1.6 The History of the Site: The Acquisition of the Old Palace and the Rental Income**

In 1803 the 1802-1803 accounts (**E3/171**) to Martinmass note that the fund received the proportion of the rents due since the Old Palace was purchased from Mr Markham which was the sum of £5-12-6d. This seems to mark the decision to purchase the site and move the library from its original location. The accounts to Martinmass 1805 (**E3/170**) show rents received of £40-9-0d. The accounts to Martinmass 1807 show a substantial decrease in rents of £29-13-6d from the Old Palace. This was at the time Shout was renovating the chapel and presumably constructing the building on its north side. It indicates that the minster had taken over part of the site for its own uses and the rents for the barn and stables was no longer being received. The rents of the year 1810 show an even larger reduction to £12-16-0d and it seems likely that by this time the riding school had been closed and was eventually demolished.

### **1.7 Ordnance Survey Map Regression**

A review of old maps of the area shows some changes. The map of York in 1694 by Benedict Horsley (**Fig 6**) shows the archbishop's chapel but curiously not the mansion of Stillington which stood close by it. It was a prebendal house and no doubt medieval at its core. There is also a rectangle shown, presumably a building, to the north west of the archbishop's chapel set parallel to the city walls. The chapel itself is not indicated but the tennis court/riding school to the west of it is and numbered 65 on the plan.

The map of 1771 by Thomas Jefferys (**Fig 7**) also omits the prebendal houses set along Minster Yard- the cobbled road and also doesn't show the archbishop's chapel.

The very informative map by Alfred Smith and published in Edward Baines' 1822-3 *History, Directory and Gazetteer of the county of York*, (**Fig 8**) shows the prebendal houses including that of Stillington which appears to abut the south wall of the archbishop's chapel. The old tennis court/riding school is not shown indicating that by then it had most likely been demolished.

The 1852 Ordnance Survey map of York (**Fig 9**) shows the area in detail with the deanery built in the late 1820s and what remained of the mansion of Stillington that was partially incorporated into the deanery site.

### **1.8 The History of the Site: The William Shout 1806 Restoration of the Old Palace Chapel and Conversion to a New Library**

The day book kept by William Shout the minster master mason in the first quarter of the nineteenth century mentions the chapel twice. In 1806 he was rebuilding the great west window and a margin note mentions turning the five arch heads of the lancet windows. A second note mentions completion of the west gable in the second week of August 1806. As we shall see below illustrations show that the original gable lancet window arrangement had been replaced at some time and Shout restored the original appearance.

At this time the day book shows that Shout was supervising a quite large team of masons, 18 men in total, some of them related to each other with the same family names. He was paid the same weekly rate of one guinea for six days as the other masons but also received £20 salary twice yearly as master mason. The overall costs in the annual fabric book accounts show that Shout's operations could at times cost the Chapter a thousand pounds a year. Unfortunately they did not specify what costs were incurred and when in renovating the Old Palace.

Shout was working on the chapel and the smaller northern range in 1806 and detailed drawings survive for much of the work to that range. They show that the northern range retained only the east wall relatively intact from the medieval building and a lower west wall of later date. The upper range of windows survives and shows twin pointed openings within a single wide arch. On the exterior there is a hoodmould carried over the twin openings as a single round arch. It was that which gives the wall a superficial Romanesque effect but the details are all mid 13th century in date.

The building had a single sloping roof facing west which is shown in a cross section (**Fig 10**). That drawing and another show the entrance doorway to the first floor chapel had survived together with the two flanking blind arches on its east side. Cutting across them was the later single sloping roof. That now shows as a line in the ashlar masonry (**Fig 11**). The details of the doorway and two arches show they were extensively renewed by Shout leaving little original carving. Considerable renewal of details such as capitals can also be seen inside the chapel.

Another drawing also shows the proposed arrangement of the armorial glass in the five western gable lancet windows with the names of the family shields of arms which are depicted. That is dated 1812 at the head of the central window. Looking at the actual window

glass it is possible to see that there are differences in some aspects of the design which was actually executed.

Two drawings indicate the design and location of the staircase in the northern range and another the design of the new west wall and doorway, all apparently the work of Shout. A detail drawing shows the intended fireplace in the first floor lobby to the entrance to the chapel and its chimney. Notably the details are not the same as those of the actual fireplace but the overall scheme is the same. One drawing for the main chapel shows the proposed floor beams and joists indicating that the first floor was replaced in the restoration.

Halfpenny's interior view (**Fig 12**) shows the floor in poor condition with many holes in the boarding. Some drawings show the coursings for new masonry and one in particular is annotated in faint pencil with the names of the masons that cut each course. These names match the lists of masons employed that are shown in Shout's day book.

Notably nothing amongst this material mentions the fitting out of the buildings to convert them into the minster library. Shout's day book and the elevation drawings are solely concerned with the main fabric.

In the 1881 R H Scaife made detailed sketch elevation drawings of the walls of the chapel and inserted measurements on the drawings (**MS Add.188**). This was apparently done in order to build a replica of the chapel in Catterick.

## **2. Pictorial Evidence of the Chapel**

The minster library archives have remarkably few pictorial representations of the archbishops chapel before it was restored by Shout but no doubt there are more in the City art gallery and library collections. There are enough though, to show the state of the buildings before that event took place. Two of the most well-known were published by Joseph Halfpenny and show an internal view from the west end, mentioned above (**Fig 12**) and external view from the north east (**Fig 13**) that compares well with a view by Moses Griffiths, illustrated in Garner-Lahire Fig 2.6, with importantly the lost prebendal house of Stillington in the background. Both show the dilapidation of the fabric and that the chapel roof was not the original 13th-century one but a much later replacement. The internal flooring was in a poor condition with many holes shown in the boarding.

A third view from the north east (**Fig 14**) is similar to that shown by Halfpenny and Griffiths and the major features agree with their depictions. The main east gable of the chapel had been reduced down to the enclosing arch over the five graduated lancet windows and this shows clearly the lower pitch of the post medieval roof. There were two ground floor windows in the east wall and one in the north wall towards the junction with the north range wall. Towards the east end there was another tall square-headed opening, presumably a doorway and traces of what may have been another window immediately to its west. A tall intermediate buttress and chimney stack had been extensively robbed away in its lower third.

What must have been an inserted square-headed doorway with some steps set within its reveals was aligned with the central lancet window of the western bay. It must have had some form of external stair which had been destroyed. No trace of that feature can now be seen on the external (now internal) north wall. The internal view shows the staircase emerging through a doorway into the chapel (**Fig 12**) but that area of wall is now concealed by bookcases.

The return wall to the north, forming the medieval vestibule passage had a similar appearance to today with three first floor windows of paired lights each enclosed in a round-arched hoodmould. On the ground floor were three openings consisting of two tall windows which had been broken away at the bottom and one doorway at the north end. These now face into the Hailstone wing. The west sloping roof of the northern wing is clearly shown and the high roof of the riding school can be seen in the background.

The details of the lower two windows show the shouldered arch type of head often referred to as a Caernarfon arch due to its extensive employment in Edward I's late 13th century castle at Caernarfon in Wales (**Fig 15**). It is likely, though, that the design had been in use for some time before its employment at the castle. It certainly occurs at Buildwas Abbey in Shropshire in what looks like an earlier context. It might suggest that the northern range was an addition to the existing chapel built by archbishop de Gray. That seems to be confirmed by the use of a plinth of different profile at the base of its one remaining original wall. Yet the upper stone coursing at the corner junction seems to perfectly match between the two structures (**Fig 16**).

Two other key depictions (**Fig 17 and 18**) show the chapel from the south and also from the south west and show that the original west gable lancet windows had gone leaving only the outermost jambs as evidence of their former presence. In their place were two rows of square-headed windows. The upper gable was lost and the roof was hipped at the west end. In the ground floor the windows were paired lights with a transom with four in the south wall and most notably one in the west wall. It also looks like a second window in the west wall had been enlarged into a doorway. There was no central doorway and it seems that and the rest of the west elevation we now see is largely the creation of Shout in 1806.

In the south wall, at the west end, there was what looks like a pointed lancet arch opening which breaks the stringcourse that marks the baseline of the chapel windows. One can only assume that it was a doorway and may have been approached by an external staircase. The south west corner buttress has been robbed out and also the next buttress to the east. Given the evidence of the first floor doorway it might be the case that there was another building attached to the chapel at these points and its removal had left the ragged wall ends that Shout converted to the buttresses we now see (**Fig 1**).

Today the restored twin light ground floor window with transoms remain and show cusped heads. They are clearly not the original windows which would have been some form of lancets, or square-headed windows with lintels, probably fitted with iron bars and shutters. Internally the windows have stone window seats and hollows with stops on the angle jambs.

In both views to the west can be seen part of the riding school with one ground floor pilaster buttress and a offset in the wall at first floor level with more buttressing. There was also a single tall narrow opening and what may have been a round-headed doorway. In both views the large prebendal house of Stillington can be seen to the right side with large Georgian-style sash windows.

### **3. A Parallel for the Archbishop's Palace Chapel**

The closest parallel for the archbishop's palace chapel is to be found at Fountains Abbey in the great infirmary complex of the choir monks where there is the ruin of a very similar

building. It formed the infirmary chapel attached to the south side of the infirmary chamber block. Most likely it was built by abbot John of Kent who died in 1247. Now ruined to its plinth courses enough architectural fragments have been identified to reconstruct the design of the building with confidence. It had a similar kind of plinth course, buttressing system and lancet window groupings as the York chapel and these windows also seem to have been enclosed within comprising arches. The details and overall design are so close to suggest the same master mason, or one of his subordinates may have been responsible for the building.

#### **4. The Old Deanery of 1830**

Note the Greene Collection, referred to below, of 7,500 glass plate negatives shows various views over time from c1920-1960 of Dean's Park and the Old Palace. The photographs were taken by a previous Clerk of Works and form a valuable record of the minster and its precinct through time.

The deanery built in the late 1820s and in use by 1830 lasted until 1937 when it was demolished and the present deanery was built on a new site. It was linked to the library chapel on the south side with a private doorway that gave the dean access to the library. The connection, referred to as a cloister, had a single lean-to roof facing west. It is clearly shown in a photograph in the Greene Collection (**Fig 19**). The deanery extended beyond the east end of the chapel and that part of the building appears in another photograph in the Greene Collection. The architectural details showing sash windows and map evidence suggest that it was part of an existing building that was absorbed into the new deanery in 1830. Today the scar of the lean-to roof is all that remains to show the existence of the range. A photograph in the Greene Collection (**Fig 20**) shows the area shortly after the demolition of the old deanery and the completion of the present deanery with landscaping of the old site and a new vehicle turning point at the end of the cobbled road.

#### **4.1 The Wartime Construction of the Static Water Tanks**

During the war the cathedral constructed a large static water tank close to the Old Palace on the south side. The plans of this survive in the archive and one photograph in the Greene Collection shows it under construction (**Fig 21**). Unfortunately there was no archaeological monitoring of this large excavation and construction project. It was a cut and cover operation digging a large hole for the tank and then constructing it in brick and concrete. It evidently stood proud of the surrounding ground surface and was then covered with the spoil created by the excavation. It may therefore have not penetrated into the Roman levels but would have destroyed any Anglo-Saxon or later medieval and post reformation remains.

#### **4.2 The Evidence for Extensions to the Library**

It seems that with time the buildings that Shout converted to provide the new library proved inadequate as no doubt the library holdings expanded. In 1958 the Friends Annual Report p15-16 mentioned £400 being donated for new furnishings for the library. In the 1960 edition p10-12 this is mentioned again and also the new Hailstone wing extension with details of the overall cost. In the archives there are numerous plans for proposed extensions which were never built. It seems that the Hailstone wing was subsequently added in 1958-9 and ultimately a modest extension towards the north which was replaced by the larger Alcuin extension in the 1990s. Photographs in the Greene Collection show the building before it was extended.

In tandem with the expansion of the building the Friends Annual Report for 1962 p22 gave an update on the appointment of Bernard Barr as assistant librarian the previous year. This

was a new post and marked a considerable expansion of the library facilities etc. The 1963 FOYMAR p19 tells of a second extension for a reading room which had been begun. It also relates increasing interactions with the new University of York. The 1964 report p18 mentions the completion of this second extension and the first use by the university students.

### **5. Geophysics Survey of the Area**

The area was surveyed prior to the excavations for the foundations of the library extension in the 1990s. It showed some interesting features but were interpreted in the excavation report as mainly of late date with some, such as drain culverts and a brick sump, relating to earlier extensions to the library (**Fig 22**).

The foundation walls of a medieval building were located within the foundation trenches for the new building and possibly more walls from that extending westwards in the geophysics plots. I recently confirmed that aspect when discussing the site with the excavator. This was an important discovery as it means that other medieval walls may lie not too deeply buried below the present ground surface.

One aspect that the excavator mentioned was the great depth to which the new library extension foundation trenches had been taken, into the Roman levels and that meant a huge amount of concrete had been poured into them. That in turn he thought would have compressed the clay soils of the natural and might explain some of the settlements and movements observed in the library extension as the sheer weight of the building bore down on the clay subsoils.

The significance of this evidence suggests that the outline foundation walls of the palace buildings may have survived and that the overall plan may be recoverable in future excavations of the area. Much would of course depend upon the extent and footprint of any future development.

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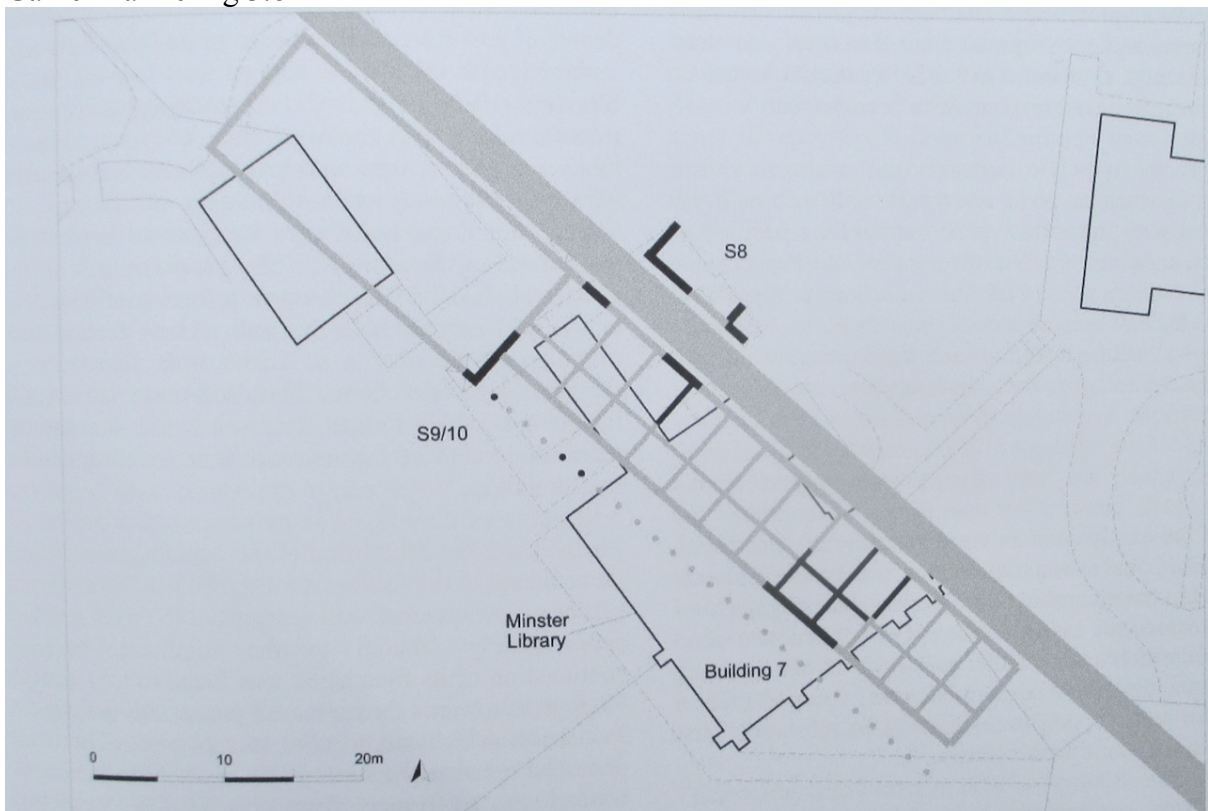
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**Below Fig 1:**General view of the Old Palace from the south west



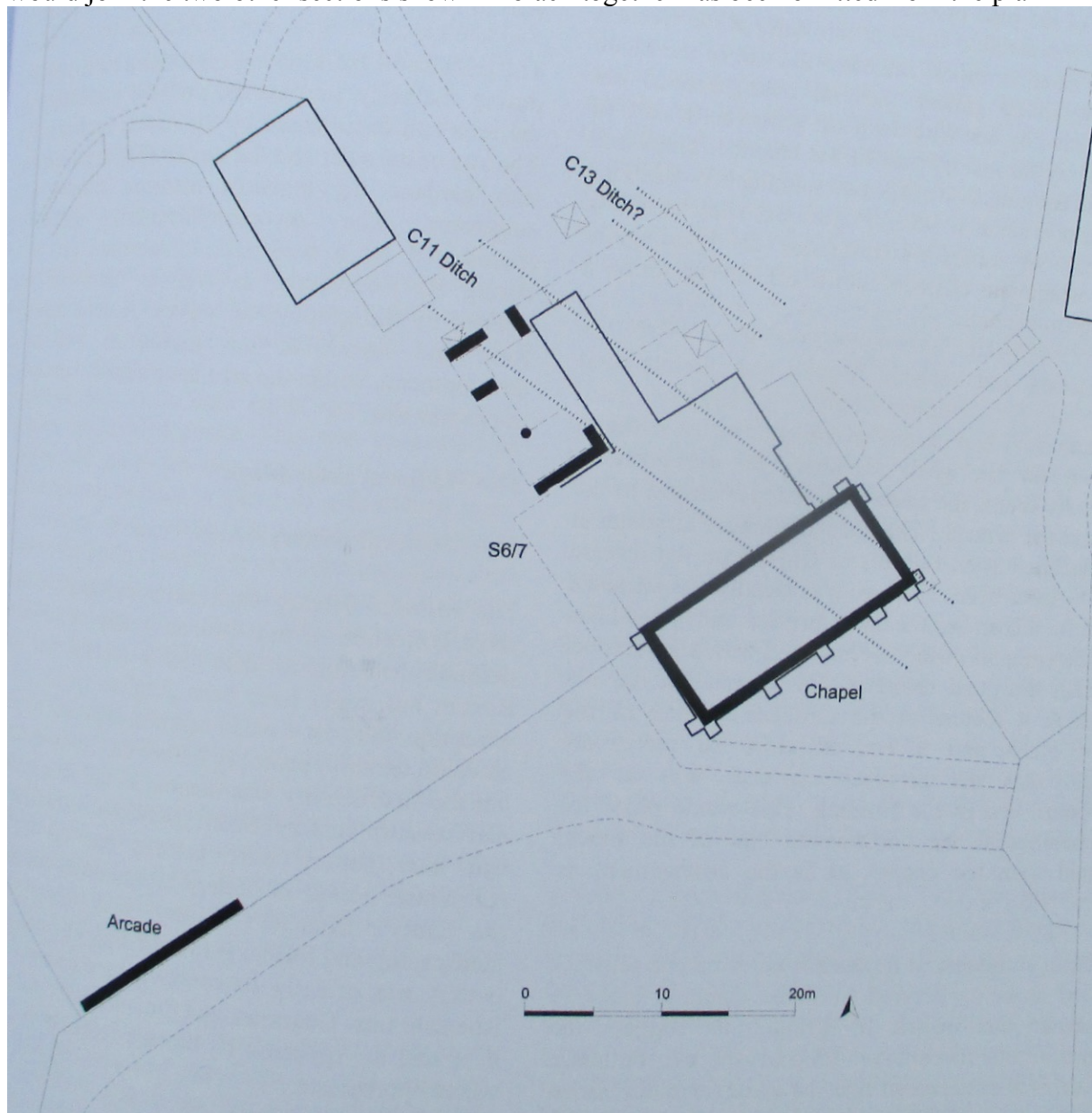
**Below Fig 2:** Plan by FAS in publication showing excavated Roman barrack block which also includes information derived from the earlier excavation by Derek Phillips, Justin Garner-Lahire Fig 3.8



**Below Fig 3:** John Browne's drawing of one of the seven twelfth-century arches built by archbishop Roger. Note the blocking to the arch since removed.



**Below Fig 4:** Medieval palace foundations found beneath the 1990s library extension Justin Garner-Lahire Fig 5.5 Note that the surviving east wall of the medieval vestibule, which would join the two other sections shown in black together has been omitted from the plan



**Below Fig 5:** Outline plan of the Ingram Mansion in 1782 which was based on the western end of the park and showing how little of the medieval palace then remained (Historic Towns Atlas)



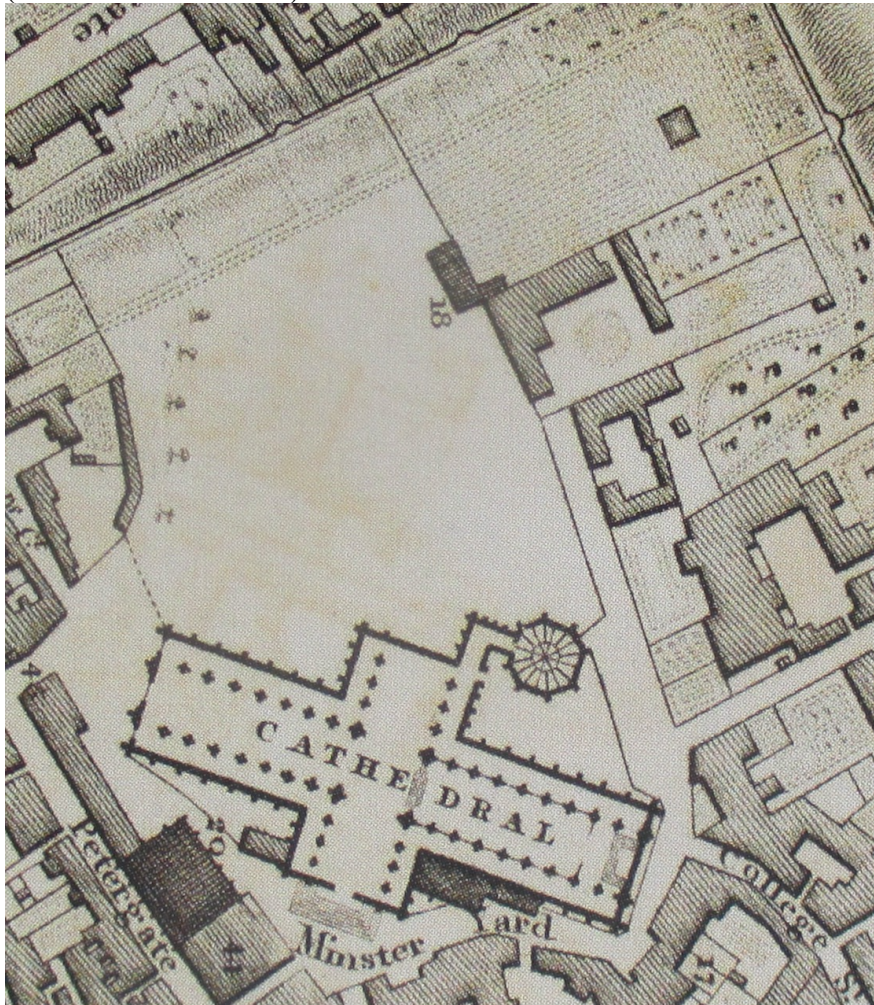
**Below Fig 6:** Benedict Horsley's map of York of 1694 (Historic Towns Atlas) Shows the tennis court as number 65



**Below Fig 7:** Thomas Jeffreys' map of 1771 (Historic Towns Atlas) seems to omit the Old Palace



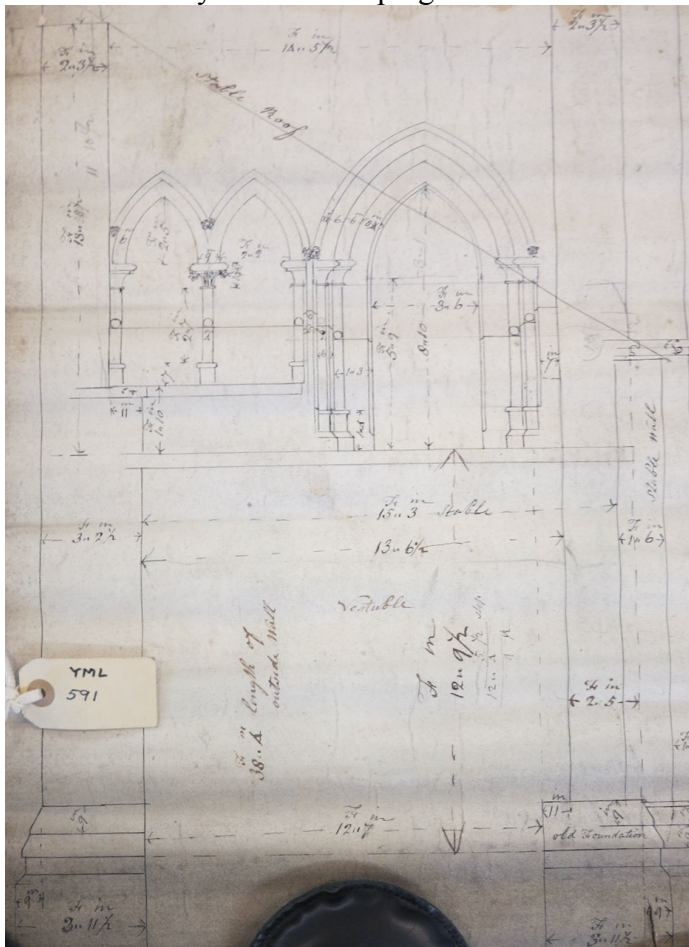
**Below Fig 8:** Alfred Smith's map of 1822-23 published in Edward Baines' Directory (Historic Towns Atlas)



**Below Fig 9:** Ordnance Survey map of 1852 (with permission) shows the remnants of the mansion of Stillington attached to the deanery of 1830



**Below Fig 10:** Shout's cross section drawing of the chapel vestibule showing the entrance doorway and later sloping roofline YML 591



**Below Fig 11:** The doorway as restored by Shout showing the sloping mark of the later roofline above it to the left



**Below Fig 12:** Joseph Halfpenny's engraving of the chapel interior before it was restored



**Below Fig 13:** Engraving by Halfpenny showing the chapel and the surviving wall of the vestibule passage from the north east. This compares well with a view by Moses Griffiths illustrated in Garner-Lahire Fig 2.6. Note the large prebendal house of Stillington east of the chapel



**Below Fig 14:** A similar view to Fig 9 which confirms the details shown in both illustrations. Source an anonymous slide in the Minster Archive collection



**Below Fig 15:** Caernarfon type of shouldered arch, actually a linteled opening in the east wall of the vestibule



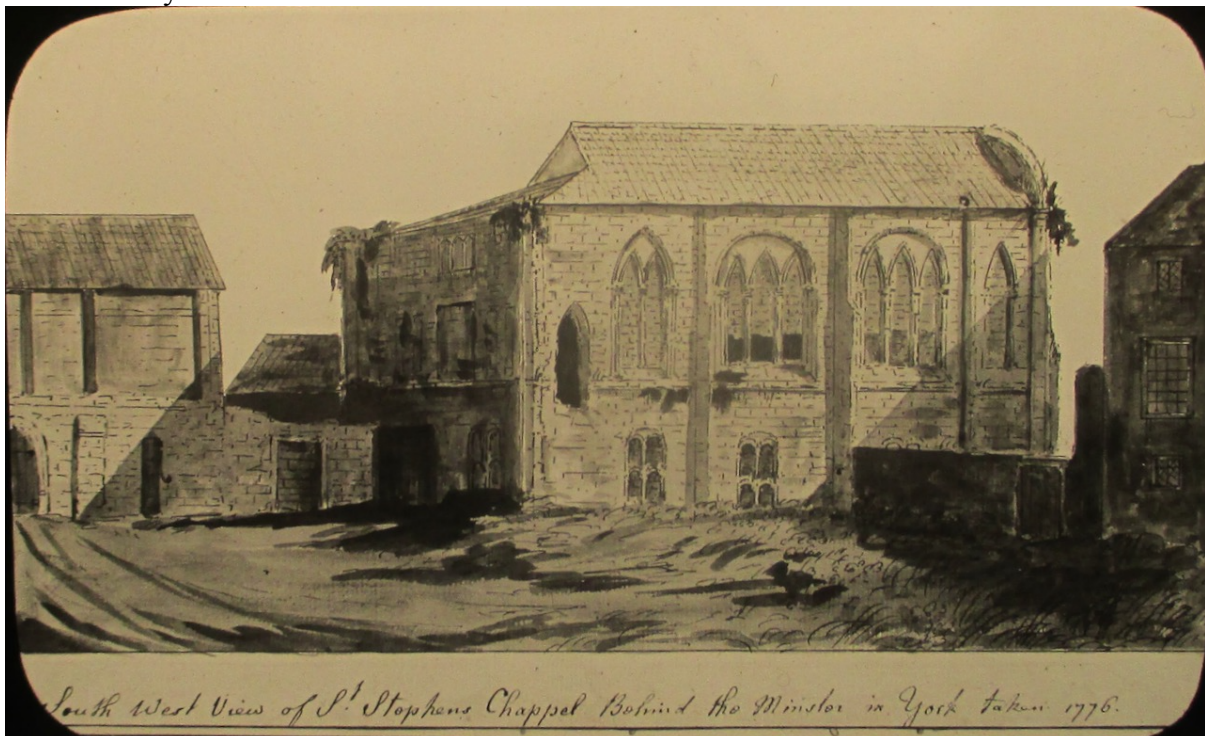
**Below Fig 16:** Corner junction between the chapel north wall and the vestibule east wall showing even coursing between the two walls.



**Below Fig 17:** View from the south west showing the chapel and the riding school. Note the missing west gable and later fenestration together with the pointed first floor doorway. Source an anonymous slide in the Minster Archive collection



**Below Fig 18:** A similar view to the previous figure and which confirms most of the details shown in both views are correct. This one is notably dated 1776. Source an anonymous slide in the Minster Archive collection



**Below Fig 19:** The 1830 deanery seen from the south west in a winter snow cover showing how it abutted the library chapel. (Greene Collection)



**Below Fig 20:** The area shortly after the completion of the new deanery in 1938 with a new turning circle at the end of Minster Yard (Greene Collection)



**Below Fig 21:** The wartime static water tanks under construction in 1941 (Greene Collection)



**Below Fig 22:** Geophysics plan from a survey in the 1990s showing various features. (Garner-Lahire Fig 6.6)

