

## Lincoln Cathedral Connected

Since 2016 AAL have been working with Lincoln Cathedral to provide consultancy and fieldwork services for the archaeological mitigation required for the Lincoln Cathedral Connected project, a National Lottery Heritage funded project to restore the area of the Dean's Green to the north of the Cathedral, introduce a new lighting scheme, renovate an existing building and construct a new visitor centre. The area around the Cathedral is predominantly scheduled and contains nationally significant Roman, Saxon and medieval archaeology.



*Medieval structures exposed during evaluation trenching*

Initial involvement was through providing consultancy services to establish an overarching archaeological strategy, working with the Cathedral Archaeologist. This comprised extensive deskbased research, followed by evaluation trenching, both of which were used to inform the future landscaping and construction design. Considerable discussion and negotiation on behalf of the client and with the construction team was required to ensure that a suitable foundation design could be implemented that would have minimal impact on the underlying archaeology. Because of the location of the project, the City Archaeologist and Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments must approve all works and over the duration of the fieldwork, numerous area/phase specific WSIs and mitigation strategies have been written by AAL for approval by them. AAL are embedded within the project team and attend fortnightly project meetings meaning that we are able to rapidly advise on how design changes may change impact and require alterations to the archaeological work.

Full-scale excavation was undertaken within an area adjacent to the cloister and recorded Tudor, medieval and Roman structures and deposits and a watching brief was maintained on all works associated with the lighting scheme and service trenches, as well as soft landscaping. Our advice enabled the landscaping scheme to be redesigned to avoid known archaeology and for this to be updated as new discoveries were made.

More than 50 complete and partial burials have been recovered, primarily from the West Front. Many of the burials were in stone-lined graves and it appears that they may be of an earlier medieval date (12th or 13th century), with later burials truncated by the extensive landscape reduction undertaken in the Victorian period. Understanding the likely levels of disturbance became key in enabling the project team to make decisions about the scope of landscaping work.

During the project we also took part in three community events and created display boards for the hoarding. The team were often working in full public view in an area of high tourist traffic and so communicating back to the visitor team at the cathedral and being aware of how to pass information to the public was essential.



*Tudor stables exposed during the Lincoln Cathedral Connected project*

The AAL team utilised single context recording and a total station and have risen to a number of logistical challenges posed by working with multiple interventions over a wide area and long duration. We were also able to rapidly identify items requiring specialist conservation and ensure that they were preserved. We have maintained continuity within the team throughout the project, with the same supervisor and key team members deployed. Fieldwork was halted during the coronavirus pandemic but has recently been completed.

Our success with this project shows that we are able to manage complex, multiple phase project work, involvement with multiple stakeholders and where reporting to and consultation with a variety of archaeological monitors (City, HE and Cathedral) is key to smooth progress. It also shows that we have a flexible team who can rise to the challenge of explaining archaeological significance to a non-specialist audience and who are able to adapt rapidly and respond pragmatically to the ever-changing needs of such a complex project.