



June 2001

BARRISTERS' ROBIN ROOM
SHIRE HALL
LANCASTER CASTLE



Fabric Survey

Barristers' Robing Room, Shire Hall
Lancaster Castle
Lancashire

Fabric Survey

Report no 2000-2001/082/AUA8127

Checked by Project Manager. Date
Passed for submission to client. Date

© Lancaster University Archaeological Unit
Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1TH

June 2001

LANCASTER CASTLE BARRISTERS' ROBING ROOM

INTRODUCTION

In May 2000 a fabric survey was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) of the eastern wall of the Barristers' Robing room in the Shire Hall of Lancaster Castle (SD 4730 6186) (Fig 1); the survey was commissioned by Lancashire County Council. The survey followed on from the removal of plaster from the wall, as a maintenance requirement, which had exposed important structural detail within the elevation; a mitigative record of the elevation was therefore required before it was replastered. The recording could not happen while the courts were in session and it was therefore agreed to delay it until the Easter vacation 2001 when access to the room became available.

METHODOLOGY

Oblique Photographic Survey: a general oblique photographic survey was undertaken of the elevation using black and white print, colour slide and digital photography, as well as selected digital photography on the detailed shots.

Rectified Photographic Survey: the elevation of the wall was recorded by means of rectified photography in conjunction with a reflectorless total station survey to establish the survey control. The rectified photography was taken with a medium format camera with black and white roll film (Fig 2). The use of rectified photography resulted in photographs that had a minimal level of oblique distortion, but was not able to eliminate it entirely. The photographs were processed by Archis software, which, in conjunction with survey control on the photographs, allowed for the digital correction of oblique distortion. The photographs were enhanced using CAD (AutoCAD) and the principal structural features were highlighted and incorporated as a separate line drawing (Fig 3).

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

The robing room butts onto the outside of the former curtain wall of the castle (Fig 1), and the eastern elevation is part of the external face of that curtain wall. Significantly, the face of this elevation is parallel to the western face of the adjacent keep, but is at a slight diagonal to the line of the curtain wall, although it is not clear to what extent this reflects a subsequent truncation of the curtain wall.

The wall has an ornamentive central gothic arch, with a recessed plane of masonry within it, which is distinct from that outside. It would appear that a skin of masonry has been applied onto the face of an earlier wall in order to create the ornamentive arch effect. The recessed plane of masonry within the arch predates its construction and incorporates the line of a wall edge defined by poorly-dressed quoins (Fig 3; feature 1). Set through the line of the wall edge is a rectangular, brick-filled intrusion (Fig 3; feature 2).

The outer plane of masonry incorporates five distinct elements. The first is the voussoir stones for the arch, which are constructed of roughly-dressed field stones (Fig 3; feature 3). The second is the lower section of walling, which comprises large, roughly rectangular semi-dressed masonry and contrasts with the third element, which is the upper section of wall comprising much smaller, and more crudely-dressed stone material; however, the two fabrics merge into each other and there is no obvious interface between them. Around the fireplace at the base of the wall are a series of rebuild lines (Fig 3;

feature 4) reflecting where the masonry has been disturbed for the insertion of the fire place. The final element is the line of a wall edge on the northern side of the wall, comprising well-dressed long and short quoins (Fig 3; feature 5). The masonry skin associated with the gothic arch butts against this wall edge, which was evidently a stratigraphically early element. The precise relationship between the wall line and the arch is uncertain, but it is evident that the wall predates the gothic arch.

Barrister's robing room, Lancaster Castle

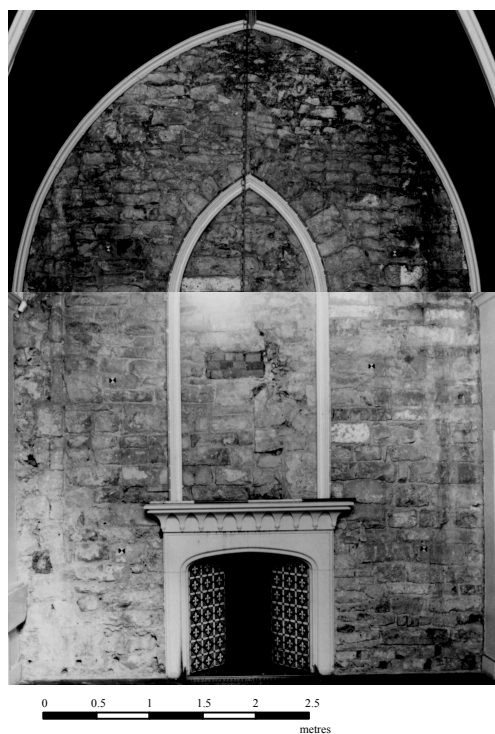


Fig 2: West facing elevation - Rectified Photograph



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

June 2001

Barrister's robing room, Lancaster Castle

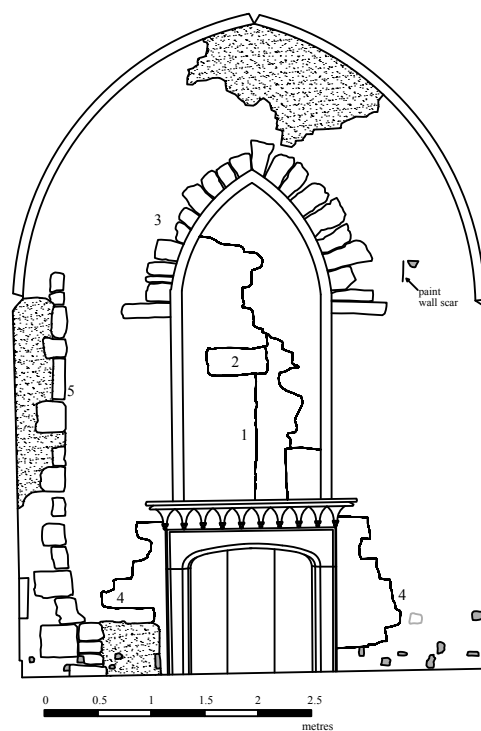


Fig 3: West facing elevation - Architectural detail

KEY

Damaged wall face

Void

Timber within wall fabric

Area of rebuilding



LANCASTER UNIVERSITY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

June 2001