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Archaeology at St. Andrew's Rectory - 1982

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Introduction

Excavations in 1980 (Priess 1981; n.d.) had established the location and general nature of the remains of the original annex. It had also located an unexpected stone foundation and associated cellar and established the presence of substantial fill layers in the rectory and annex area. Archaeological involvement with the site had continued after this initial field season with the beginning of restoration of the structure and discussions within a planning team context to identify resources available for the rectory and consider options for its development or interpretation. With architecture already recognized as the major theme (Parks Canada, 1980) it was realized that the appropriate period for restoration and interpretation would be roughly the third quarter of the 19th century; the time when the rectory was first occupied and prior to significant alterations or deterioration.

Reconstruction of the annex, which had existed during this period and which also comprised a component of the architectural style to be interpreted, was considered an essential undertaking. Thus as preparations continued on a management plan, which included a recommendation on annex reconstruction, further archaeology was proposed for the annex area, in anticipation of approval on reconstruction.

Archaeology in 1982 had as its major objective a complete excavation of the annex area, including the lean-to on its west side. This would allow for maximum recovery of archaeological data prior to its disturbance by restoration activities and would also prepare the area for restoration by exposing all structural remains. Theoretically, no surprises would remain, to be discovered later when they could not be observed and recorded as well during excavation by



labourers. A second season would also provide the opportunity to re-examine the extensive and occasionally confusing stratigraphy that had accumulated in the area.

A secondary objective, in terms of time allotted, was to locate evidence of a wooden fence which had originally enclosed the rectory's front yard. The fence appears in several 1858 photographs and is a major component of landscape restoration. It was hoped, through archaeology to precisely establish its location and possibly provide some details of its construction.

Annex and Lean-to

No major new discoveries regarding the annex (Figs. 1, 2) were made. As previously interpreted it was a single storey structure of mortared limestone with a cellar (Figs. 3, 4) across its west end and a lean-to against its west wall. The annex was found to be 6.45 m wide and 10.25 m long, along its south wall. Foundation thickness was variable, up to 0.74 m, but the wall built on it was more regular at about 0.6 m. The cellar had used the north, south and west foundations as its walls. For the east side it had a separate wall 0.36 m thick and apparently not tied at either end to the annex foundations. Cellar width had been about 2.47 m, length about 5.25 m. The cellar floor seems to have been raised over the years by frost heaving but its original depth is estimated to have been at least 1.4 m. (Fig. 4). There is no evidence that the cellar ever had more than a clay floor.

The nature of the annex's east wall was further substantiated by the discovery of the final segment of the east foundation (Fig. 2) at a distance of about 3.0 m from the rectory as anticipated. The annex's south wall had continued and been attached to the rectory's west wall. The annex itself had been a separate building, some 3.0 m from the rectory but connected to it by a covered, possibly enclosed, passageway.

Existence of such a passageway had become known through consideration of archaeological data from 1980 and reconsideration of historical data, some of which became available only after 1980 (Priess n.d.). Existence of the passageway also provides a basis for interpretation of why the annex was removed and replaced by a smaller one butting directly onto the rectory.

It was eventually recognized that the original annex had not been completely removed when the smaller annex was constructed. Rather, only the east end had been removed to make way for the replacement. The west

end had been retained, provided with a new east wall and used for another half century as a free-standing outbuilding. This was reflected in an almost complete foundation, 0.4 m thick (Fig. 4), built on top of the ruins of the cellar's east wall (Fig. 5) and extending from the south foundation almost to the north foundation. This would have reduced the annex's length to 3.8 m but included its original door in the north wall. The renovated annex would have occupied approximately the same location as the original cellar and initially, also included the original lean-to.

The lean-to also appears on the 1858 photograph and is thus considered to be contemporary with the annex and built at the same time as the rectory. Information on location and some structural information is available from the photograph. Archaeology was able to provide further details. Existence of lean-to evidence had already been established in 1980 when sections of wooden flooring were discovered in the area. Further excavation uncovered an almost complete stone footing for a structure about 3.6 m long, measured in the direction of the annex's length, and 6.28 m wide, measured in the direction of the annex's width (Fig. 7). The footing consisted of a single row and course of limestone for each wall, set on fill around the annex and levelled with some mortar. For reasons not yet clear, the north footing had been aligned with the north annex foundation (Fig. 8) but the south footing was positioned slightly inside the south annex foundation (Fig. 9). No traces of a wall remained but such a footing is likely to have been intended only for a wooden (log) wall. The floor consisted of planks parallel to the building's longest dimension laid directly on clay fill and anchored on two or three joists set into the clay (Figs. 7-10). Archaeological evidence for the super structure also included a vertical timber set into the fill in the northeast corner against the exterior of the west annex foundation. The timber may have provided support for the lean-to roof. A thumb-latch catch located directly on the floor near the middle of the west wall (Fig. 10) provides the best indication of presence and approximate location of a doorway and the type of latching mechanism.

The excavations again provided indications of the quality of workmanship or design for the annex. All walls around the cellar had been affected to some degree by ground pressure. The east wall was the most severely affected, having been moved more than half a metre (Fig. 5). The north wall was bowed inward and the west wall stood at an angle. Construction had not

succeeded in compensating for pressure on only one side of a foundation. Over the years, the foundations had shifted and presumably weakened the structure. Foundations outside of the cellar area were again found to have been built with little attention to coursing. Attention to coursing and regularity was evident in the cellar area (Fig. 6), where the inner face of the foundation would have been exposed, but elsewhere the foundation again appeared to have been constructed as a rubble filled trench. One unusual feature, in the north foundation, was the use of a course of logs above an initial course of limestone. This feature did not extend to the cellar and no evidence of a similar arrangement for the other foundations was found.

Further sections of a pre-annex foundation were uncovered including the first evidence of the west foundation located, as previously predicted, in a metre-wide balk left in 1980. The foundation was mostly 0.6 m wide and ranged in height up to 0.26 m. It had been built of two rows and courses of limestone, bonded with mortar and set on the ground or into a very shallow trench dug to establish a level. Building length was established as 10.5 m and width as 6.0 m. No new evidence was discovered about the uncribbed square cellar pit near the north end. The building's identification is also still not known.

Fencelines

The rectory's front yard had originally been enclosed by a picket fence. Existence and design of this fence is shown on two photographs of 1858. It was hoped that archaeology would be able to provide more precise information on location, spacing of posts or other details. From the photographs, it was known that the fence's west side was in line with the rectory's west wall and this information was used to locate a number of test excavations. It was hoped that once the west side was located, it could lead to a corner, to the south side and on to the other corners.

The excavations located fragmentary remains of several small posts and a number of vertical planks or plank ends in roughly the right location. However, it is difficult to consider this as substantiative evidence of the early fence. The posts are somewhat small and it is difficult to see the plank ends as lower ends of a set of pickets. Setting pickets into the ground is not a way to prolong their life. It can not, however, be ignored that this is the only evidence located and it is in the correct location for the early fence. The evidence was too fragmentary to allow for identification of a corner and other tests to encounter the south fenceline were unsuccessful.

The fencelines may also be indicated by a number of large trees south of the rectory. One tree, located just inside the supposed west fence line, and another possibly near the south fence line were cored to obtain some indication of their age. Three samples, of which none were a complete representation of the tree, provided ring counts of about 115 or a date of 1867. In other words, at least two trees were planted early in the history of the rectory, probably several years prior to 1867, and were quite likely planted along the fenceline. The one tree on the south side could be part of a line now represented by a series of well developed bushes; the latter possibly being regrowth from trees which had been removed at some time.

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Figure 1. Excavated annex remains, facing away from rectory; cellar is across top of photograph. (Photo by author.)



Figure 2. Excavated annex remains, facing southwest corner of second annex; south foundation extends obliquely across photograph and south end of eastwall is at centre right. (Photo by author.)



Figure 3. Annex cellar; floor is an approximation of original floor level. (Photo by author.)



Figure 4. Annex remains; new east wall for renovation of original annex extends from centre to top centre of photograph. Cellar appears to right of this wall. (Photo by author.)



Figure 5. Construction details: south end of cellar's east wall, now extensively displaced, appears at bottom of photograph; east wall for renovation of original annex is directly above it. (Photo by author.)



Figure 6. Construction detail: inner surface of south foundation in cellar area; note presence of a continuous line between courses, possibly representing a levelling course. (Photo by author.)



Figure 7. Lean-to footing and portions of flooring; northwest corner of annex appears in top right corner of photograph. (Photo by author.)



Figure 8. Lean-to, north footing; note how footing aligns with annex foundation. (Photo by author.)

30

Figure 10. Detail of lean-to
nails, indicating
chump-itch case



Figure 9. Lean-to south footing; note how footing does not align with annex foundation. (Photo by author.)

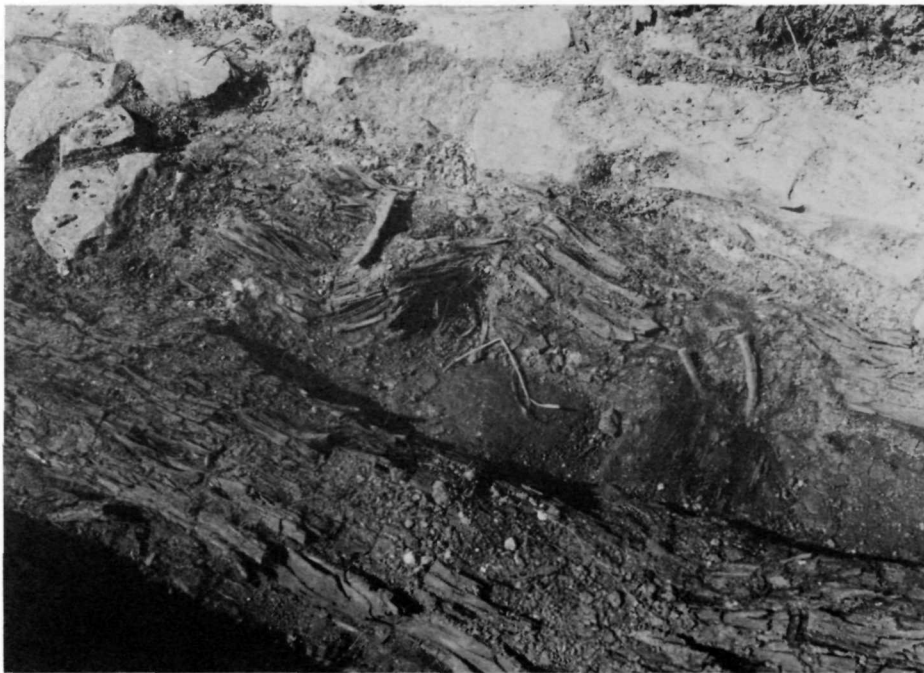


Figure 10. Detail of lean-to flooring showing two nails, indicating joist location, and thumb-latch catch. (Photoby author.)



Figure 9. Lean-to south footing; note how footing does not align with annex foundation. (Photo by author.)



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Detail of lean-to flooring showing two
nails, indicating joist location, and
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