

15. DEAN'S YARD.

WESTMINSTER, S.W.

20 May 1893

To the Master and Fellows of  
Jesus College Cambridge

Gentlemen,

I have according to your instructions examined the ancient work lately found and partly uncovered on the east side of your cloister. The discovery, which is a most interesting one, is of the front of the monks' chapterhouse. It is almost perfect in its preservation, except in one place where a modern window cuts through it, and its date, which is about the year 1200, is earlier than that of work generally found in collegiate buildings. Indeed it is earlier than the foundation of the oldest colleges in either

University. The arrangement of a cloister-way with an unglazed window on each side is the common one for a monastic chapter house of the time. And the whole is a very good example of one of the most interesting periods of English architecture. It appears that it was built up and the wall made plain by Bishop Adcock when he adapted the old conventual buildings to the use of his new foundation. He then cleared out the whole of the dormitory range, of which the chapter-house was part, leaving only the outer walls, and dividing up the inside with new floors and partitions. In his time no value was put on work of this sort either from the historical or the art point of view. To the founder it was merely an old wall which it suited his purpose to keep, and as he did not want the openings in it he blocked them up. But now we have



learned its value, and there is no doubt that, having been found, it ought to be completely opened out and kept open, and that it should be carefully protected from injury.

The tracing, which I send with this, shows what I advise should be done. But from shortness of time I have not been able fully to consider all details, and therefore I must ask you to take it ~~as~~ as only a general suggestion.

The level of the old cloister was three feet below that of the present, so to show the old part we must make an area of that depth. That which I have shown will not inconveniently reduce the passage way, and will allow of the full examination of the old work. I would finish it entirely with a stone curb a few inches above

the present cloister pavement, and above that put an iron screen which may be made with close wire work if you think it necessary for safety.

On the inside I would take off a strip from the unused room next the song school and use the present song school door as an approach to the area, putting a new door in the passage further east as I have shown it. The area would also cut into the bedroom on the north. But that room is scarcely fit ~~to be used as~~ for a bedroom and I hope some other use may be found for it.

When the opening out of the old work is completed, benches may be found under the windows and perhaps grave stones on the floor. Beyond opening out it wants nothing more done to it, except that the missing part of the south arch must be filled up to make it constructively



Sound. If that is done I think  
the old work will be strong enough  
to carry all that is new upon  
it.

If there are any further questions  
which you wish to ask me I shall  
be glad to answer them

and I remain

gentleman

Your obedient Servant

J. T. Mickelthwait