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46, OLD MALTONGATE, MALTON.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AND
INVESTIGATION.

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Mark Johnson, 8th July 1991
MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd

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1861.37.500	Garage site : Machine Doc.
100	2 Storey Building
101	PLOT 359. Stableblock
102	- " - BARN
200	PLOT 358 SAW PIT
201	- " - WOODYARD
300	PLOT 360 COTTAGE
301	- " - FIRE ENGINE
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1. INTRODUCTION

This report details the results of a desktop evaluation and minor archaeological investigation concerning a disused motor vehicle repair garage at 46, Old Maltongate, Malton, (NGR SE 7896 7171) (Fig. 1). This property is the subject of proposed structural alterations and re-furbishment into dwelling houses. The work was carried out on behalf of the Fitzwilliam Estate as part fulfilment of an archaeological constraint laid down by the Archaeology Section, Planning Department, North Yorkshire County Council.

Archaeological interest in the site stems from the possibility of Roman burials and/or settlement, and the fact that the site encompasses, in whole or in part, three medieval burgage plots of the Borough of New Malton. Additionally, the rear boundary of the building abuts directly onto the assumed line of the medieval town wall, see section 2 below. (Fig. 1).

To summarise, the development area encompasses, in whole or in part , three Medieval burgage plots of the Borough of New Malton, which abutted directly onto the assumed line of the Town Wall. The eastern part of the area includes both the Medieval street frontage and the entirety of the backyard to the rear. Due to late 19th century improvements in the form of road building and demolition, the western area of the site is of wedge-shaped plan, and consists of a substantial portion of two further plots, minus their street frontages. The likelihood is that the street frontages acted as dwellings and shop areas for various industrial or craft processes conducted in outbuildings in the backyards. In addition, there is the possibility of Roman, and perhaps pre-Conquest, activity.

Therefore it is clear that there is a distinct likelihood of archaeological remains of widespread periods and types occurring, or having at sometime existed, within the development area; a hypothesis tested by the recording of the section of the Inspection Pit, below.

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2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area of the proposed development (SE: 7886 7171) lies outside the northwest corner of the Roman fort at Malton, 'Derwentio' (SE: 7910 7170, Fig. 1), but there are indications of Roman activity in the immediate vicinity.

A Roman urn was found in St. Leonard's churchyard in 1858 (Robinson 1978, no 52) and it is possible that this find represented a complete vessel as might be associated with a cremation or inhumation burial. Further possible Roman burials are suggested by the discovery of bones predating the first burials placed in the churchyard in 1650 (*ibid*, no 172). These burials are essentially undated, a Roman date depends on the supposition that no burials were associated with the original Medieval chapel of St. Leonard.

The finding of a gold coin of Nero "near St. Leonard's churchyard" (*ibid* no 52) and Roman sherds from between Church Hill and Castlegate (*ibid* no 54) makes possible the supposition that some form of Roman settlement spread westwards from the fort.

Nothing concrete is known of any Anglian or Viking activity in the area of the proposed development. Anglian finds were made during excavations at the Roman fort (*ibid* no 148). The occurrence of an Anglian ring, with apparent Danish influences, in the Town Ditch behind Greengate (*ibid* no 147) indicates some form of pre-Conquest presence outside the walls of the Roman fort.

In the medieval period, the development area lay within the boundaries of the borough of New Malton. The assumed line of the town wall follows the actual boundary of the rear of the property (Fig. 1), and also represents the boundary of the Borough of New Malton.

The area was occupied by a series of burgage plots in the medieval period, which survived in substantially the same form into the 19th century. Joseph Dickinson's "Map of the Burrow of New Malton" of 1730 (*ibid* plate X) shows a row of two-storied buildings fronting directly onto Old Maltongate, with the backyards abutting onto the boundary of the churchyard. Copperthwaite's survey of Malton of 1843 (Fig. 2) indicates that the area was occupied by a cottage and the Parish Fire Engine House (plot 360), with a woodyard and sawpit immediately to the east (plot 358).

Sometime prior to 1913 there was a change to the layout of the area in question. On the 1850 6" OS map, along with Copperthwaite's map (Fig. 2), access from Old Maltongate to St. Leonard's church and Church Hill existed as a narrow street, in effect little more than a wide alleyway. This thoroughfare lay at right-angles to Old Maltongate and ran directly to the east end of the church. Subsequently, a wider access to the church was created, the new street running northwestwards from the east end of the church. The new access necessitated the demolition of a stable and barn (plot 359) on the corner with Old Maltongate, along with the cottage and Fire Engine house lying immediately to the south. This process accounts for the triangular form of the development plot.

3. EXCAVATION/EVALUATION METHODS

The investigation comprised the cleaning, context recording and drawing of a section that had been revealed by the removal of the west facing wall of a sunken vehicle inspection pit in the south-west area of the garage (Fig. 4). The ground level in this part of the garage is somewhat higher than that to the north, reflecting the general topography of the site environs. A number of finds were removed from pre-20th century contexts, and at present remain at the MAP premises in Malton.

4. RESULTS

Removal of approximately 4 m of walling within the vehicle inspection pit revealed 1.5 m of stratified deposits (Figs. 4 and 5); most were of 20th century date, the remainder being of 19th century origin, dated by associated finds (Appendix 2). It is clear that certain of the 19th century contexts extend beyond the base of the inspection pit. To the north of the 19th century deposits natural strata were revealed.

The depositional sequence may be described thus :

the encountered natural strata consisted of context 22, a silty sand matrix (10YR 5/6) containing large amounts of slightly rounded fragments of limestone < 8cm. Context 20 (10 YR 5/6), was nearly identical to context 22, whilst contexts 21 and 19 (both 10 YR 8/1), consisted of compacted small fragments of pale coloured limestone. Although contexts 21 and 19 contained no inclusions or finds and were very clean, they were strikingly different from 22 and it cannot be conclusively ruled out that they are the product of human action. In this event, context 20 would best be seen as re-deposited natural of a type identical to context 22.

Context 18 a vertically-sided cut that penetrates contexts 19, 20, 21 and 22, as well as extending beneath the base of the inspection pit, was the earliest positively identified archaeological feature encountered. This was revetted by context 17, a crudely constructed lining approximately 45cm in thickness. Context 17 represents an internal wall comprising limestone rubble together with a few small fragments of brick, tile and sandstone, all weakly bonded together with lime mortar. Contexts 18 and 17 are indicative of what is likely to be a large stone lined pit. The small scale of the investigation precludes the determination of its original depth and extent. An alternative interpretation of 18/17, would be that of an infilled cellar of a demolished building. However, the crudeness and weakness of the walling context 17, which contained several large voids, mitigates against this as does the nature of the fills, (see below, contexts 12-16). Were 18/17 to be a redundant cellar it is perhaps likely that after demolition of its associated building it would have been rapidly in-filled with building rubble; this proved not to be the case.

The earliest observed of the fills of pit 18 was context 16, a dark greyish brown (2.5 YR 3/2) sandy silt. Insufficient of this context was seen to make a more concise description/interpretation. Sealing context 16 was a loose, sandy rubble deposit, context 15 (10 YR 3/2), which contained copious amounts of ash, many discarded iron objects and sherds of 19th century pottery (Appendix 2). Above context 15, occurred context 14 (2.5 Y 2/0), a very dark highly organic deposit consisting primarily of fibrous matter with waste fragments of wood and particularly leather together with some ash. Those pieces of leather that were recovered appeared for the most part to be well worn and broken finished products. A small amount of what may be waste clippings however, may be primary cobblers waste. Context 14, which also contained some sherds of 19th century pottery (Appendix

2), is perhaps best interpreted as a dumping of general waste from a cobblers workshop. Sealing 14, was a silty rubble layer, context 13 (2.5 Y 4/3). This context was of a rather mixed makeup and contained several distinct lenses of varying material including ash and fibrous organic matter similar to that of context 14. Above 13, was situated context 12 (2.5 Y 3/2), a loose sandy silt which again contained large amounts of discarded building rubble and formed the latest fill of the pit. Context 11 (2.5 Yr 4/2), a loose, sandy rubble layer seals the pit and is the earliest of the modern contexts on the southern side of the section. Context 11 in turn is sealed by context 10, a rubble deposit doubtless laid in order to raise the ground level in this area of the garage. Of approximately contemporary date to 10, are contexts 25, 26 and 27, which are again modern rubbly deposits that like 10, are seen as deposits designed to raise the sloping ground level in the southern part of the garage. All the contexts 10, 11, 25, 26 and 27, are cut by a modern vehicle inspection pit, cut 7, consisting of: context 23 (10 YR 4/4 – levelling at the base of the cut), context 6 (a concrete base), and brick walls, context 5. The interpretation of cut 7 as an inspection pit is positive as its eastern end still survives adjacent to the east side of cut 7, the western end being covered by modern concrete, context 1. Fills of the old inspection pit contexts 4, 3 and 2, were again of a largely rubble matrix as were the adjacent deposits contexts 8 and 9, all of which were sealed by the concrete, context 1, which forms the existing floor surface in the southern area of the garage. Context 24 constituted loose slumpage of recent origin that had accumulated behind the wall of the inspection pit.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Whilst examination of a section only, is not a particularly comprehensive technique of archaeological investigation, it has demonstrated that in this area of the garage at least, archaeological remains, other than those of modern date, are unlikely to be encountered. What is likely to a stone lined rubbish pit, dated by pottery to the 19th century, may be considered of some, albeit limited, archaeological interest, but this has itself been severely truncated by the latest vehicle inspection pit. Contexts 19, 20 and 21 are presently thought to be of natural origin but this can only be confirmed by excavation in the horizontal plane.

6. THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The layout of the Proposed Development is shown on Figure 7. No detailed specifications have yet been prepared for either the floor or the new wall foundations; it is anticipated (Mr. H. Rayment, Fitzwilliam Estates Co., pers. comm.) that the foundation trenches will be no more than 0.6m wide

and no deeper than 1.0m from the present surface; floor levels will be 0.35m in thickness, assuming that suspended timber floors are not to be constructed. The route for the new services is unknown. Unit 4, at the northern end of the Development Area, is to be refurbished on the existing lines, ground plan as shown on Fig. 9. No construction work is anticipated within the garage/courtyard area, development being confined to the vicinity of the existing buildings.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The extent of the existing walls and disturbed areas is shown on Figure 7, the implication being that a considerable area has already been affected by walls of later 19th century date, with more recent services, Inspection Pits and Sumps associated with the most recent use of the site as a motor vehicle repair shop, adding to the disturbance.

Examination of the Inspection Pit (Figs. 4 and 5) revealed no evidence for archaeological activity earlier than that of the 19th century, including the radical truncation of that area by a large pit. From this evidence, the likelihood exists that the development will not cause disturbance to any significant archaeological deposits. This factor, coupled with the degree of modern disturbance to the site, suggests that a Watching Brief on the proposed building operations, with a provision for full recording, hand excavation and sampling (where appropriate), followed by a report to Frere Level III, would be a sufficient course of archaeological action.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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