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**81/82, BONDGATE, RIPON**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

(Planning Reference 05/02945/FUL)

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Joplings

Ripon

May 2007

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**81/82, BONDGATE, RIPON  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

*Summary*

*As a result of a planning application (Reference Number 05/02945/FUL) for the re-development of buildings at 81/82, Bondgate in Ripon (SE 3139 7078,) the condition of an archaeological watching brief was placed on all the ground disturbance works for the scheme. The structure is a Grade II Listed Building (reference number 330008). The ground works included foundations for two small extensions and the insertion of new services in existing trenches both in and around the current standing building. The watching brief was carried out between the 10<sup>th</sup> April and the 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007 and undertaken in conjunction with the recording of the remains of earlier standing building structures within the existing buildings.*

*The results of the watching brief showed that there was at least two phases of earlier archaeological activity on the site. Both phases of activity were identified at the rear of the plot close to the northern boundary wall where an earlier boundary wall, a small patch of cobbles and a small dump of clay were recorded. The first phase of activity was the remains of the stone built wall and probably the small area of cobbles. The cobbles were located adjacent to the end of the current building with the wall running eastwards from them. The wall ran parallel but c.1m to the south of the current boundary line. The wall had been built from dry laid, roughly dressed sandstone blocks and survived to the height of a single course which was c.0.4m wide. The remains were 6.2m long and up to 0.3m high and may represent the remains of the original site boundary. The patch of cobbles, whilst not conclusively contemporary with the wall, was at the same level and built onto the same horizon as the wall. Unfortunately no dating material was recovered from the remains of the wall or the cobbles.*

*The second phase of activity was represented by a dump of clay in a gap between the cobbles and the wall, and seemed to represent the infilling of a removed structure, possibly an earlier timber wall. No dating material was recovered from the clay.*

*A deep layer of topsoil had been dumped extensively across the site which seems to represent an attempt at levelling the whole area. The topsoil contained a small amount of 14-16<sup>th</sup> century pottery along with large amounts of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery along with both butchered and un-butchered animal bone.*

*No other archaeological finds or features were recorded on the development site.*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the ground works for the re-development of 81/82, Bondgate, Ripon, North Yorkshire (SE 3139 7078) in order to fulfil the requirements under planning application number 05/02945/FUL. The structure is a Grade II Listed Building (number 330008) and a full copy of its listing details can be found in Appendix I.
- 1.2 The watching brief was conducted by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) for the Joplings and was carried between 10<sup>th</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### Location

- 2.1 The site is located just on the southern side of the historic core of the medieval settlement of Ripon (centred on SE 3110 7110) and lies to the south of the River Skell. The site is on the junction of Low Skellgate and Water Skellgate in Ripon Civil Parish, Harrogate District. Ripon itself lies between Harrogate (c.14km to the south-west) and Northallerton (c.22km to the north-east) in North Yorkshire.

### Historic Background

- 2.2 The settlement of Ripon has a long history with the name being first recorded in c.715 as *Hrypis* and then in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Ripum*. The origin and meaning of the name are obscure but is thought to mean '(place in the territory of) the tribe called *Hrype*' (Mills, 1998, 288). However, the first recorded archaeological evidence for human activity in the town is of spot finds of Roman-British material, notably pottery from the Deanery Gardens (YAT 2000, 7).
- 2.3 The historic origins of Ripon can be traced to the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries with accounts of the foundation of the monastery in c. AD 709/10. The monastery is again referred to in c. AD 730 (Evans 2003, 6). The importance of the settlement increases during the medieval period, notably from the 12<sup>th</sup> century onwards, with the expansion of the town and ecclesiastical areas. The town was probably granted the royal charters for a fair and market around this time.
- 2.4 Various excavations to the east of the site (e.g. Bedern Bank and Skellgarths) have demonstrated that there is good survival of archaeological features dating from the 12-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, many of them containing waterlogged material. These early activities were in the form of the revetting of the River Skell, reclamation of the land and water management associated with mills and industry along Water Skellgate.
- 2.5 The post-medieval development of this area of the town is quite well recorded cartographically (e.g. the 1744 Enclosure Map for Ripon, Jeffrey's map of Ripon of 1772 and Langdale's Plan of Ripon in 1818). These all show evidence for mills and associated features along the southern side of the town.

These then give way over time to a general spread of the settlement (e.g. Ordnance Survey 1856) with increasing numbers of domestic buildings.

#### **Geology and soils**

- 2.6 The underlying geology of Ripon and the surrounding area is Magnesian Limestone and Permian mudstone. Overlying this, the quaternary geology is predominantly one of glacial sands and gravels. The area where the site is located is close to the River Skell and will have seen extensive modification of the drift geology due to the flooding of the river and variations in its course over time. This will have led to a series of erosion and deposition events depending upon the speed of flow and course of the river. The soils, which have developed from these deposits, have not been classified by the Soil Association Survey of Great Britain (Jarvis *et al* 1984, 194) due to its urban location.

#### **Topography and Land-use**

- 2.7 The site is situated on the eastern side of Bondgate immediately to the south of The Ship public house at a height of *c.*26mOD. The plot of land on which the buildings stand is level with the road along its frontage but has a drop of *c.*1.50m along the northern and eastern sides to the surrounding properties. The majority of the site is occupied by the current standing building with its various extensions and the area to the rear (east) has been used as a domestic garden. The surrounding area is predominantly used for residential housing of various construction dates along with a series of small industrial units to the south.

### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the ground works for the re-development of the site and during the insertion of any associated service trenches. The specific aims were to:

- Archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed or disturbed by the ground works
- Recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the ground works

### **4.0 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 Topsoil stripping, ground reduction and the cutting of the foundation trenches were carried out under direct archaeological supervision by a mini digger using a toothless bucket.
- 4.2 All of the exposed areas disturbed by the ground works were inspected for archaeological features and the resulting topsoil stockpiles were monitored for archaeological artefacts and environmental material.

- 4.3 Drawings were produced of the archaeological features encountered at a scale of 1:10 for the sections and at a scale of 1:20 for the plans. The features were also recorded photographically, on 35mm colour slide and black and white print film and digitally at 5m pixel resolution. 1m and 2m bi-coloured poles were used as scales and a north pointer for orientation. For more detailed photography a 0.5m bi-coloured scale was used. In addition to this a written record was made of the features using a series of pre-printed pro formas. The site was levelled using a spot height in the roadway to the south of the site of 26mOD.

## 5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The results of the watching brief are described below and in the text the context numbers for each archaeological deposit or feature is given in [] brackets. All heights are given as metres above Ordnance Datum (mOD) using the OS spot height described above.
- 5.2 The ground works were undertaken in two stages. The first stage was for the foundation trench to the rear of the southern property (Plate 1) and did not reveal any significant archaeological features. The initial ground reduction encountered the remains of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century midden type material (primarily a range of pottery types and butchered animal bone). This material was concentrated in the remains of a surface dump but small amounts of 19<sup>th</sup> century material were encountered throughout the topsoil.
- 5.3 The topsoil [1] formed a uniform thick layer (c.0.6m thick) of garden type soil to a point 2m to the east of the current end wall of the building. Here a near vertical cut into the underlying natural gravels [2] could be seen in section. There was no apparent archaeological feature relating to the end of the topsoil and it appears to relate to the erection of a modern lean-to type structure at the rear of the property.
- 5.4 Although mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century material was encountered throughout the topsoil, two sherds of medieval pottery (Plate 2) were recovered during the excavation of the footing along with a fragment of worked stone (Plate 3).
- 5.5 The second stage of the watching brief was on the footings for the extension to the property on the northern side of the site (Plate 4). Here the watching brief recorded two phases of earlier archaeological activity.

### *Phase I – Undated, possibly medieval (Figures 2 – 4; Plates 5 - 8)*

- 5.6 The first phase of activity recorded on the site was the remains of a stone built wall [3] (Plate 5) which appears to have been associated with an area of cobbling [4] (Plate 6). The cobbles were located adjacent to the end of the current building with the wall running eastwards from them (Figure 3) and were at a height of 24.91mOD. The area of exposed cobbles could be seen to continue into the unexcavated parts of the western end of trench. The northern edge of the cobbles had been truncated by the later erection of the current boundary wall with public house to the north. They also appeared to have been

disturbed by the removal of a feature between them and the wall [3] to the east (Figure 3). In the area to the east of the cobbles there was a small patch of clayey material [5] which contained moderate amounts of charcoal and unidentifiable ceramic building material (CBM) (Plate 6). This context appears to be part of the clay material [6] which had been dumped over the western end of the wall [3] and the cobbles [4] (Figure 4). The cobbles had been laid onto the subsoil [7] at a height of 24.86mOD. Unfortunately no dating material was recovered from the cobbles.

- 5.7 The wall [3] ran parallel but *c.*1m to the south of the current boundary line. The wall had been built from dry laid, roughly dressed sandstone blocks and survived to the height of a single course which was *c.*0.4m wide. The remains were 6.2m long and up to 0.3m high. The top of the wall was at 25.09mOD and the base was located directly on to the underlying subsoil at *c.*24.86mOD, the same as the cobbling. Towards the western end of the wall there was a short gap in the limestone block construction which had been filled with two large water worn cobbles (Plate 7). It is uncertain whether this was a deliberate part of the original construction or a later event.
- 5.8 At the eastern end of the footings trench a section was excavated across the wall and it could be seen that it was a single row of stones wide and had been laid so that the northern side was the best face (Plate 8).
- 5.9 Whilst it is not conclusive that the wall and the cobbles are contemporary, the fact that both of the features were built from the same level and were the first features construction on at least this part of the site, contemporaneity is at least possible.

*Phase II – Undated (Figure 4 and Plate 6)*

- 5.10 The second phase of activity appears to be represented by a dump of clay [6] in the space between the cobbles and the wall. Within the clay there was a small lens of material [5] adjacent to the cobbles which contained an amount of charcoal and fragmentary CBM. This clay seemed to represent the infilling of a removed structure, possibly an earlier timber wall. No dating material was recovered from clay.

*Phase III – Post medieval (Figure 4)*

- 5.11 Covering the earlier features was a deep layer of topsoil that had been dumped extensively across the site which seems to represent an attempt at levelling the whole area. The topsoil contained a small amount of 14-16<sup>th</sup> century pottery (Plate 9) along with large amounts of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and both butchered and un-butchered animal bone.
- 5.12 No other archaeological finds or features were recorded on the development site.

## 6.0 Finds

- 6.1 As already mentioned above, a deep topsoil covered the whole of the site which contained a small finds assemblage which included CBM, pottery, stone work, metal work and animal bone.
- 6.2 The finds assemblage was dominated by the numerous fragments of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery including stonewares, later slipwares, transfer printed whitewares, mocca wares and black coarsewares. There were, however, several fragments of medieval pottery. From the footings for the southern extension two fragments were recovered, both were body sherds. One was an undecorated, very gritty piece of a jar or similar (?Hambleton type ware typically C14/15<sup>th</sup>) and the other was a slash decorated, green glazed piece (Plate 2). From the northern footings 13 pieces of medieval/early post-medieval pottery were recovered (Plate 9). As before these were mostly body sherds (?Humberware) though one fragment of rim for a shallow bowl or platter was noted.
- 6.2 The ceramic assemblage was not diagnostic but was representative of typical North Yorkshire medieval/early post-medieval pottery of a 13-16<sup>th</sup> century date.
- 6.3 The fragment of worked stone was recovered from the footings trench of the southern building was the remains of a pouring spout from a stone mortar (Plate 2). Originally the mortar would have had a 180mm diameter and was 25% complete. Unfortunately its base was missing so its original height could not be determined from the remaining fragment.
- 6.4 Other worked stones were recorded from the ground reduction works. These included one worked stone and a series of large roughly dressed blocks. The worked stone (0.52 x 0.12 x 0.30m) appeared to have been worn or worked to form a curved shape (Plate 10) with a cut square socket at one end – possibly for a glazing bar or an iron pin to join to the next block (Plate 11).
- 6.5 The nine dressed blocks had been used to edge part of the garden and were all of approximately similar dimensions (0.38 x 0.2 x 0.92m) (Plates 12 & 13). The corner of one of the blocks had been cut to form a curve, possibly as part of an entrance way or corner of a building (Plate 14). Stone of this size and quality would not have been used as a building material for the structures recorded during the building survey. This suggests that the stone work either came from a nearby higher status structure that has been demolished and reused, or that there was a more substantial building on the site previously.
- 6.6 A small to moderate amount of animal bone was encountered and all of it was from domestic species mainly cattle and sheep with a small amount of bird bone (domestic fowl and geese) and dog bones. None of the material could be considered as being unusual in any way and was typical of domestic refuse. Though it was interesting to note that approximately a third of the bone had not been butchered and had the appearance of coming from animal burials, possibly originally from where the topsoil had been imported.

- 6.7 The small assemblage of metal work was all modern domestic material.
- 6.8 The artifactual material recovered from the later levelling layers was all typically 19<sup>th</sup> century in date and appeared to be the remains of dumped and levelled domestic ash with small amounts of refuse. None of the artifactual material was retained due to its unstratified nature.

## 7.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 From the results described above it can be seen that the area to the rear of the properties had been raised using an imported topsoil containing mostly 19/20<sup>th</sup> century midden type material along with small amounts of earlier medieval pottery.
- 7.2 The deep topsoil covered evidence for earlier activity on the site which took the form of a short section of wall and an area of associated cobbling. The location of the wall along the northern edge of the site and built on the underlying subsoil strongly suggests that this was the original boundary wall when the plot was first laid out, probably during the medieval period.
- 7.3 If this was the case then the area of cobbling and the gap between the two features may represent a floor surface and some form of sub-division such as a timber or wattle and daub wall that was later removed. Unfortunately the lack of *in situ* dating material makes this purely speculative.
- 7.4 The nature of the stone work recorded from the site suggested that it had been reused from another building. The most likely candidates for this were the earlier church which stood on the site of the current one adjacent to the bridge over the River Skell or Bondgate Hall to the south.

## References

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- Hall R A and Whyman M (1996) Settlement and Monasticism at Ripon from 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Medieval Archaeology* **40**, 62-150
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Mills A D (1998) *Dictionary of English Place Names*. Oxford University Press

YAT (2000) *Skellgarths, Ripon, North Yorkshire*. YAT report number **2000/56**

**Maps**

1856 1st edition Ordnance Survey 6" series

1977 Institute of Geological Sciences: Geological Survey Ten-Mile Map, South Sheet, Quaternary

1979 Institute of Geological Sciences: Geological Survey Ten-Mile Map, South Sheet, Drift

1993 Soil Survey of England and Wales *Soils of England and Wales: 1 Northern England*

## APPENDIX I

### LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

IoE number: 330008  
Location: 81 AND 82 BONDGATE (east side)  
RIPON, HARROGATE, NORTH YORKSHIRE  
Date listed: 19 March 1984  
Date of last amendment: 19 March 1984  
Grade II

SE 3170 RIPON BONDGATE  
5/210 (east side)  
Nos 81 and 82

SE 3170 RIPON BONDGATE 5/210 (east side) Nos. 81 and 82 II Probably C16 or C17; but C18 or early C19 superficially. Colour-washed brick front. Southern part timber-framed: part of one truss visible internally, arch-braced and wind-braced, and, very close to it, the south wall (evidently the north wall of an adjoining house) retains its timber sill. Pantile roof, with stone slate verges. Two storeys. Three bays: 2 of C19 cased sashes and one of C18 or early C19 Yorkshire casements with glazing bars. Mid-C19 wood shop front consisting of 4 pilasters to an entablature, framing a shop window and a door with 6 panels 5 sunk. Segment-headed passage entrance.

Information taken from [www.imagesofengland.co.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.co.uk)

**APPENDIX II**

**CONTEXT CATALOGUE**

<i>Context Number</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	Topsoil
02	Riverine deposits
03	Limestone wall
04	Water rolled cobbles
05	Burnt material
06	Clay
07	Subsoil