



Capital Project and Facilities Consultants

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Desk Top Study
at
Borrage Lane, Ripon
for
Bryant Homes

Project Management
Desk Top Study
January 2001

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Richard Clare
Chairman

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bryant Homes are proposing to redevelop the former Land Rover garage and showroom on Borrage Lane, Ripon, North Yorkshire. EC Harris have been commissioned to undertake a desk-based assessment in order to assess the archaeological potential of the site.

The proposed development site lies on the south-eastern edge of the medieval town of Ripon. The town grew up around a monastery established there in the 7th century and there is slight evidence to suggest there may have been a Roman precursor to the town. Throughout the Anglian and medieval periods Ripon was an important religious and trading centre. It went into decline in the 15th and 16th centuries, with the collapse of the wool industry and the dissolution of the monastery.

Historic map evidence shows that the site was partially developed from at least 1744. The post-medieval structures have since been demolished and replaced with the current buildings and hard-standing of the Land Rover garage and showroom.

It is recommended that a small-scale evaluation be undertaken to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and the extent of disturbance caused by the current buildings.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Planning

Bryant Homes are proposing the redevelopment of this site for residential housing. The site is located on the south-western edge of the historic core of Ripon, an area of archaeological and historical interest. EC Harris have been commissioned to carry out a desk top study of the known and suspected archaeology and history of the site and its environs in order to assess the implications of the proposed development on any historical or archaeological remains that may exist.

Methodology

The study has considered the evidence of the county Sites and Monuments Record and that of relevant published and archived documentary and cartographic sources. Evidence from within the boundaries of the site is compared with that from adjacent areas in assessing the potential for archaeological remains to have existed. This is further compared with evidence for more recent impacts on any such remains that might negate or lessen their importance.

- visited 11 Jan '01

The study concludes by identifying any areas of archaeological potential and determining the extent of any further investigation of the site that may be required prior to a planning determination being made. Consultation has been maintained with the archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority and any recommendations made are based on these discussions. The work has been undertaken in accordance with *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1994, revised 1999).

Site Description

The site is located on Borrage Lane, Ripon, centred on NGR SE 30967 71003. It covers a total area of 7000m², currently the empty buildings and yards of a Land Rover showroom and garage.

2.0 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located on Lower Magnesian Limestone, with overlying river terrace gravel being the predominate drift geology. The site is relatively level at approximately 27m above Ordnance Datum.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Prehistoric & Roman

There is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the town of Ripon, although many Neolithic and Bronze Age sites are known from the surrounding area. Similarly, despite the evidence for extensive Roman activity in the surrounding countryside, there is comparatively little evidence for Roman activity within the town. The 18th century antiquarian, Gale, recorded that a tessellated pavement and numerous Roman coins had been found in the town. A 19th century record claims that a Roman funerary vase was found in North Street at a depth of 7 feet (Mackay 1980).

Early Medieval (Anglian / Scandinavian / Anglo-Scandinavian)

Although the town's precise origins are unknown, the place-name suggests it may be as early as 5th century. It is derived from the folk-name *Hrypum*, indicating the people and territory of the *Hrype*. The monk and historian Bede, writing in AD 731, recorded that a Celtic monastery had been established at *In-Hrypum* in AD 660, four years later being transferred to the Roman Catholic tradition under the leadership of Wilfrid (Bede 1990 edition). The building was completed in AD 672 and dedicated to St Peter the Apostle. With the land grant given for the establishment of the monastery came an existing population of thirty houses or families and their land (Tyler 1977).

An inhumation cemetery apparently in use from the 7th to 11th centuries has been identified to the east of the Minster. Excavations in 1986 and 1987 identified a number of burials and various grave goods, mainly concentrated on the east-facing slopes of Ailcy (or Ailey) Hill. This site is protected as a nationally important monument (Scheduled Ancient Monument N Yorks 265). Further burials are known from St Marygate to the west of the Minster (www.riponcathedral.org.uk).

The town prospered through the 9th – 11th centuries, despite being burned down by the king of Wessex in AD 948 (Tyler 1977). By the time of the

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Norman conquest in 1066, it was recorded to be worth £32. The Domesday Survey recorded a significant drop in value to £7 10 shillings in 1086, suggesting the Norman invasion may have had a detrimental effect on the local economy, at least in the short term (Faull & Stinson 1986).

The main focus of the original medieval (Anglian) settlement was in the area to the north of the Minster, at the crossroad of Stonebridgegate and Allhallowgate. A mill dating to this period, known as *Bymilne*, was located at the bottom of Duck Hill, to the north west of the proposed development site. The millrace associated with this ran along the line of Skellbank and Skellgate, rejoining the river at Bondgate Bridge (Tyler 1977). This effectively created an island between the millrace and the river, within which the proposed development site was located.

Medieval

In the medieval period, settlement spread south and west, probably due to the construction of Bondgate Bridge in c.1100. This moved the main thoroughfare from Stonebridgegate to King Street and the market. The town continued to grow and by the 12th century a suburb on the southern bank of the River Skell had grown up, known as Bondgate, housing the archbishop's tenants. The town was clearly prosperous, having two mills, two bridges, two hospitals and a grammar school in the 12th century. The Minster was also rebuilt in the Norman transitional style in the mid-12th century. The building which now stands retains much of the 12th century minster, with more recent additions and alterations. The Minster Close, which contains remains of the earliest monastic buildings, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (N Yorks 1282).

By the 14th century, Ripon had an international trade in wool, through Hull. It again suffered being burnt down in 1319, this time by the Scots. The 1378 poll tax records show that the Skellgate area was the wealthiest part of the town at that time. The woollen industry continued to prosper into the 15th century, bolstered by the collapse in York's wool trade. This only lasted until

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c.1520, however, when Ripon's industry went through a similar collapse to that in York in the previous century. The area along the millrace supported the houses and mills of the cloth workers (Tyler 1977).

Post Medieval

The dissolution of the monasteries throughout England from 1536 resulted in much of the land belonging to the church being sold. However, Ripon remained a small, but important town. The Ripon Canal, which opened in 1733, again brought trade to the town and the population doubled from 300,000 to 600,000 in the 99 years to 1900.

Historic Maps

The earliest map available for this site dates to 1744, being the Enclosure Award map. This shows no development within the proposed development site, although the bridge and the millrace are both shown. By 1800, several buildings are shown in the eastern part of the site and by 1832, further buildings are shown in the western part of the site. The southernmost of these would appear to be the original Borrage House, a building that is shown in its extended form on the 1929 and 1938 Ordnance Survey maps. Formal gardens appear to have been a feature of this property. Borrage House was demolished in advance of the construction of the present buildings.

4.0 CURRENT CONDITIONS

The site currently comprises the former garage, showrooms and yards of Land Rover. All areas of the site are under hardstanding or floor surfaces and it is likely that this development has affected at least the upper levels of any archaeological deposits. It is unknown whether there are any deep inspection pits within the garage but these, and any services will have affected deeper levels.

None of the buildings currently on the site are considered of archaeological or historic interest.

5.0 LIAISON WITH LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

The site has been discussed with the North Yorkshire County Archaeological Officer, Gail Falkingham. Previous planning applications made on this site have resulted in no request for archaeological investigation. This however has been due to the designs' footprint falling entirely within the footings of the existing building. Should the new proposal extend beyond the limits of disturbance caused by the existing structure, it is expected that a watching brief would be requested.

Any recommendations made in this report are subject to discussion with and the agreement of the planning authority's archaeological advisor.

6.0 ASSESSMENT

There is relatively little known about this part of the town of Ripon. No evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity is known close to the site, and the site falls outside the area known to have been inhabited during the Anglian and medieval periods. Historic maps show that development of the site has occurred since at least 1744, although only on the eastern side of the site.

The buildings currently standing on the site are likely to have had at least a moderate impact on any archaeological remains that might have existed. The current buildings have no archaeological or historical value.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The site has a low potential for significant archaeological remains due to its location just outside the known medieval development of Ripon. The North Yorkshire Archaeology Service has indicated that any development that takes place beyond the footprint of the existing building should be subject to a watching brief.

However, it is recommended two trial trenches should be excavated within the yards to determine whether archaeological remains exist or not. Due to the site's position in relation to the river, it is likely that if any remains exist on the site, they would be waterlogged. The excavation and recording of such features during a watching brief could create a substantial delay to the development programme. By undertaking an evaluation of the site in advance, it will be possible to programme a method of recovery of any remains identified in advance of the development, or negate the need for a watching brief. In addition, a number of test pits adjacent to the current buildings will determine the level of disturbance created by the existing wall foundations.

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Enclosure Award

A Map of the Common Field Lands of Ripon, Littlethorpe and Bondgate in the County of York. Surveyed by M Beckwith 1744. (MIC 1540/478)

A Plan of the Average Lands &c in Ripon, Bondgate and Littlethorpe in the County of York made in 1800 by John Humphries of Ripon. (MIC 1540/525 & 533)

A Plan of the Borough of Ripon. . .in the West Riding of the County of York. Made by Thomas Robinson 1832. (Doc. VR/Z 2)

Ordnance Survey Maps

119.5, 1929 25" : 1mile (MIC 1895/85)

119.NW, 1930 6" : 1 mile (MIC 1816/174)

119.NW, 1938 (provisional) 6" : 1 mile (MIC 1816/175)