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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

MILL GARTH, HOLLY HILL ROAD

WELL

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 426530 481840

APPLICATION NO.2/93/167/0044A

FOR

MR. & MRS.P.NISBET

DECEMBER 1997

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**MILL GARTH
HOLLY HILL ROAD
WELL**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
DECEMBER 1997**

INTRODUCTION

An Archaeological Investigation was made in conjunction with ground disturbance associated with a small domestic development within the village of Well. The nature of the ground disturbance relates to construction of an ancillary extension to the eastern elevation of the existing, detached, garage.

The scope of the archaeological works included a rapid desk top study, and watching brief. The works were commissioned by the owner / occupier of Mill Garth, Mr. & Mrs. P. Nisbet.

LOCATION AND STATUS

Mill Garth is situated within the west south western extent of the village of Well, on the northern side of Holly Hill Road. The study area is located to the rear of an existing single storey garage at National Grid Reference SE: 426530 481840 within the parish of Well.

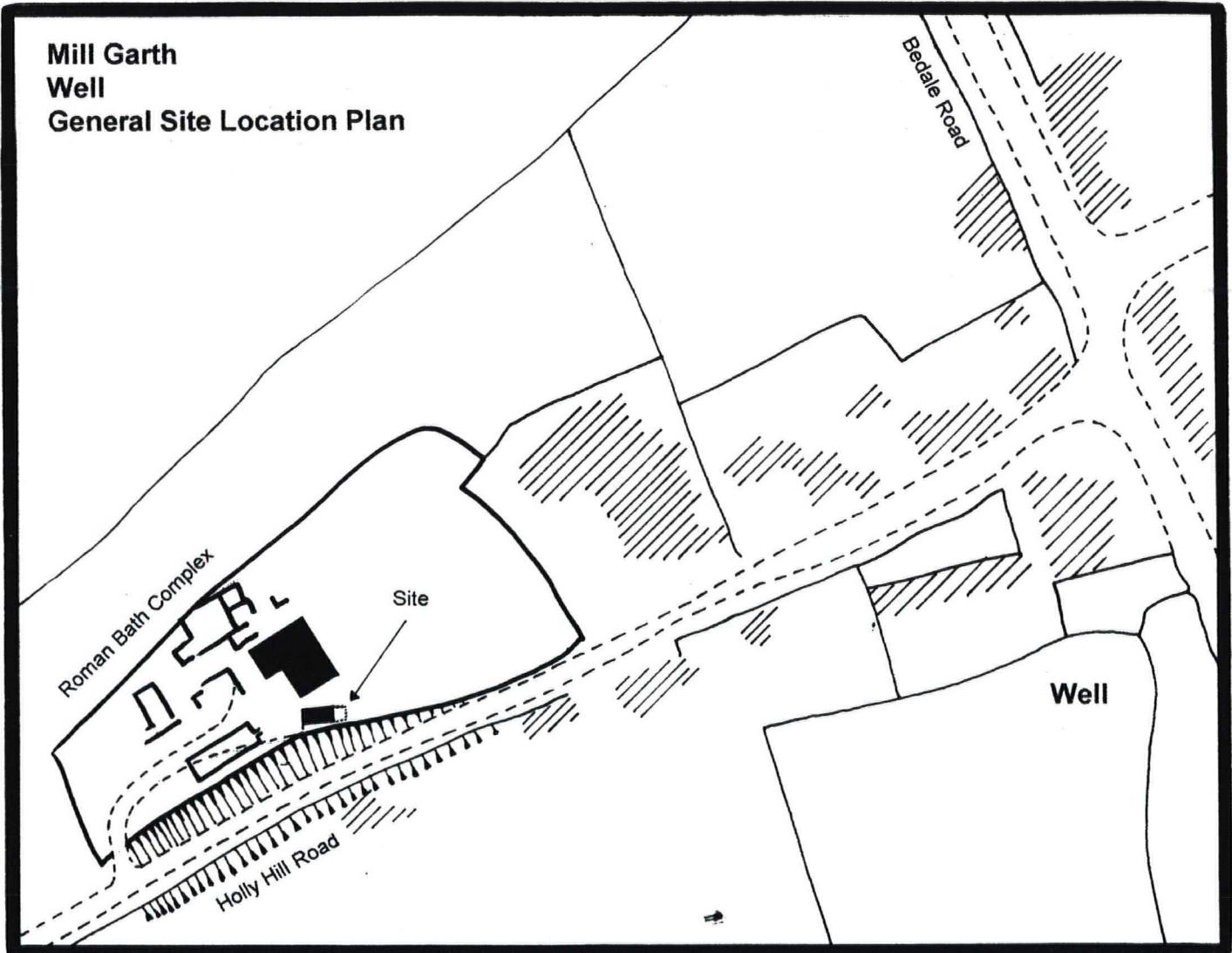
PLANNING HISTORY

Full Planning Permission for the erection of a single storey garage and dwelling extension was granted by Hambleton District Council, dated 2nd June 1993.

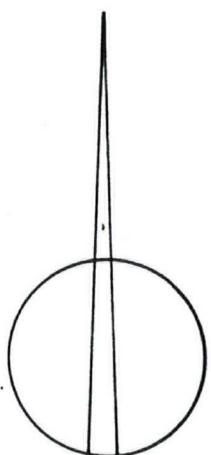
OWNERSHIP

Mill Garth and the attached ground are owned by Mr. & Mrs. M. R. & P. Nisbet.

**Mill Garth
Well
General Site Location Plan**



Not to Scale



3.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Evidence of Roman activity, within and around the village of Well has been recorded over the last 200 years. The body of evidence is dominated by the structural remains of a Roman Bath complex, however, other finds include isolated coins and even botanical specimens (*Verbena officinalis*) that are thought to have Roman origins. Reliable reports have recently been made by members of the metal detecting fraternity of a site, located close to the village and presently under plough that is producing a high quantity of Roman artefacts that are consistent with an occupation site.

The Roman Baths:

The remains of which are located on the northern side of the valley of the Well Beck. The foundations of the Roman buildings have been constructed on the Magesian Limestone bedrock and on a layer of grey alluvial deposit. These records make reference to the presence and survival of tessellated pavements (Minute Books of the Society of Antiquarians of London, 1735/6) the surface of which was sealed by a white layer of plaster and identified at approximately 1 metre below the existing ground levels.

The bath complex has unfortunately been subjected to a high level of disturbance relating to stone robbing and the excavation works in advance of a water management scheme. During 1876 a water service trench was excavated across the Mill End of the Garth and it was reported that a small portion of tessellated pavement was uncovered (Lukis.W.C.1882 YAJ Vol vii, Roman Villa at Well, near Bedale). The surface of the pavement was identified at approximately 0.60 metre below the existing ground levels. Stone walls coated in pink plaster were found to contain the floor surface, it was noted that the room appeared to be aligned east.

The destruction of the site was compounded still further by the prospecting activities of late 19th century antiquarians, records exist that would indicate that lead water pipes were unearthed (Letter from Rev. Reginald Gatty to Mr. Cheesbrough Hunt, 1906).

During 1885/6 the remains of a Roman Building was identified, the walls for which were partially extant, measuring up to 0.30m high. The walls contained a tessellated pavement, the form and nature of which were interpreted as the remains of a bath house (Dr.J.P.Pritchett, 1896 - communication recorded in The Journal of the British Archaeological Association Vol.xlii.).

In 1938 the first, systematic and recorded, programme of archaeological works were undertaken by R.Gilyard - Beer, MA. These were protracted over nine years of excavation. The excavations identified four Roman buildings

The Site:

The study area is situated approximately 5 metres to the south east of the known buildings associated with the Roman bath complex.

AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

It was anticipated that the study area may well contain the remains of the Roman activity at Well, however, the results of the desk top study would indicate that there may well have been a high level of, recent, ground disturbance across the site from the previous archaeological excavations and resulting from the construction of the existing dwelling. It is acknowledged that this activity may well have destroyed any archaeology.

In my opinion, due to the above there was a low probability that archaeology survived in situ within the proposed development area. Should any archaeology have survived it was anticipated that this would comprise of a stratified sequence of deposits associated with the Roman bath complex. From previous archaeological works it is known that structural remains may survive at 0.600m below the existing ground level.

It was therefore recommended that an archaeologist should maintain a Watching Brief on the hand excavation of the strip foundations. The principal archaeologist would be present, on site, to monitor these excavations down to the required depth or to the surface of any archaeology that maybe encountered.

The approved plans by A.F.R Design, dated February 1993 specify concrete strip foundations, requiring a minimum excavation depth of 825 mm. In my archaeological specification it was recommended that, if at all possible, these should be replaced with a concrete raft foundation, which could reduce the required excavation depth by 50%. Further to negotiations held with the Client and the Contractor it was agreed that three strip foundations would be excavated, the depth of which would be kept to the absolute minimum.

A total of 3 foundation trench's were excavated, these measured, in total 10.260 m long x 0.320 m deep x 0.450 m wide.

The aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

- a. to record any finds, features or structures of archaeological interest and obtain information on the presence, extent, character, date and depth of these remains;
- b. to assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is occupied by a bungalow and a detached double garage surrounded by gardens. These buildings were constructed in a single phase during 1965 on a *Green Field* site. The dwelling is centrally located within an irregular shaped property parcel. The property commands an elevated aspect overlooking the village of Well and the Plain of York. The site is accessed from the south by a drive that rises from Holly Hill Road.

The buildings are surrounded by a level flagged area, with terraced gardens occupying the remainder of the property parcel.

The site is situated to the rear of the detached garage, an area, that was until very recently occupied by a paved patio and gardens. This level paved area is 65.000 m AOD, with the ground levels falling to the east on a moderate gradient and more steeply to the south.

CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Mr.&Mrs.Nisbet at Mill Garth, Well proved negative with no archaeological features or deposits being identified.

The watching brief identified a single phase of activity on the site:-

This was associated with the raising of ground levels with hard core and building rubble prior to the formation of a concrete slab and the laying of a concrete paved surface. It would appear that this programme of works was undertaken during the mid 1960's immediately prior to the construction of the bungalow and detached garage.

The trench excavations with were largely contained within this area of recently made up ground with the exception of the southern extent where the trench was excavated through very lean and poor quality top soil.

A very small assemblage of modern pottery, cable and miscellaneous metalwork was identified during these works. These finds were not retained.

Kevin John Cale

December 1997

APPENDIX A

Foundation Trench Excavations

Trench A

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 426529 481842

Length: 2.500 m
Width: 0.450 m
Depth: 0.300 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: East North East
Area: 1.125 square metres

Context No's: 1000 - 1003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the north elevation of the proposed ancillary building and was situated within the northern area of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The concrete paved (context 1000) surface of the former patio was identified at 65.000 metres AOD. The flags were bedded on a substantial concrete slab (context 1001). The concrete was in turn bedded on a layer of hardcore (context 1002), a layer that consisted entirely of crushed and broken brick, roof tile, magnesian limestone together with gravels all suspended within a matrix of coarse grained, gritty sand. This layer contained a small assemblage of modern pottery, and metalwork. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer at 64.650 m AOD.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within this trench.

Trench B

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 426531 481841

Length: 5.260 m
Width: 0.400 m
Depth: 0.310 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: North North East
Area: 2.104 square metres

Context No's: 2000 - 2004
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the east elevation of the proposed ancillary building and was situated within the eastern area of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level, sloping very gently downwards to the east south east.

The concrete paved (context 2000) surface of the former patio was identified at 65.000 metres AOD within the northern half of the trench, here the stratigraphy was as noted within Trench A (context 2001-2002). The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer at 64.600 m AOD. The stratigraphy within the southern extent of the trench was made up of a single layer of sandy loam (context 2003) that contained a very high quantity of inclusions dominated by crushed and broken building material comparable to that forming the sub base for the concrete slab. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer at 64.600 m AOD. A small assemblage of modern finds were recovered from each of the layer identified within this trench.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within this trench.

Trench C

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 426528 481840

Length: 2.500 m
Width: 0.450 m
Depth: 0.280 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: East North East
Area: 1.125 square metres

Context No's: 3000
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the southern elevation of the proposed ancillary building and was situated within the southern area of the site, within very close proximity to the ridge line of the steep, south facing, banking that falls down onto Holly Hill Road. The existing ground levels sloped gently downwards to the south east.

The stratigraphy within this trench was made up of a single layer of sandy loam (context 3000) that contained a moderate quantity of inclusions dominated by crushed and broken building material comparable to that forming the sub base for the concrete slab, together with occasional tree roots. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer at 64.720 m AOD. A small assemblage of modern finds were recovered from each of the layer identified within this trench.

No archaeological features or deposits were identified within this trench.