H E R I T A G E LINCOLNSHIRE



Auger Survey

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9-17, BRIDGE STREET, Horncastle

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BRIDGE STREET, HORNCASTLE Auger Survey - May 1990

Background :

In May 1990 Heritage Lincolnshire were asked to investigate the deposits beneath the yard to the rear of 9 and 11, Bridge Street, Horncastle. The work was commissioned by S A Wright (Chartered Architect). The architects were designing a redevelopment scheme involving 9-17, Bridge Street. a series of listed (grade II) properties owned by Mr L G Taylor. The survey was carried out on 16th May 1990.

The site :

The proposed redevelopment site lies immediately to the north of the circuit of the Roman wall at Horncastle (See figure 1). There are indications of subsidence affecting 9 Bridge Street, and an auger survey was requested to establish the nature of the archaeological stratigraphy and surface geology. Given the site's nearness to the known line of the wall, it was thought possible that the subsidence affecting No. 9 could be due to the buried fill of a Roman defensive ditch.

Roman defences usually consist of a a rampart or wall coupled with one or more external ditches. There is no firm evidence for such a ditch at Horncastle, although excavations by Henry Hurst in 1968 (Field & Hurst, 56-57) at the southern corner of the Roman wall produced tentative but inconclusive evidence for such a feature. Previous excavations by Wheatley (Field & Hurst, 54-56) at the western corner and along the northern line of the wall showed no ditch. The rivers Bain and Waring may have formed natural defences to the north, west, and south of the Roman town. The base of the wall is eroded in some places suggesting that the river once flowed close to the wall. Whether by accident or design, either a change of the river's course, or regular flooding, appears to have destroyed any evidence there may have been for defensive ditches.

A series of 4 auger bores were made in the yard at the rear of 9 Bridge Street cutting across the possible line of the defensive ditch (Figure 2). The bores were c. 10cm diameter, the deepest penetrating to 2.12m below present ground level. The detailed results of these bores are shown in Appendix 1 and the generalised stratigraphy is given in Figure 3

Results:

Layer 1:

Part of the area had been floored with bricks and the rest, presumably a yard, was cobbled. The layer beneath the metalling was "made ground" containing tile and flooring materials, coal, brick, sand and some post medieval pottery sherds. There is a suggestion that a mud and stud cottage once occupied the site and these deposits are compatible with demolition and levelling activities. A possible late Saxon sherd (probably residual) was recovered from the base of this upper layer, in hole 4.

Layer 2:

A light grey clay with chalk inclusions. Occasional fragments of charcoal, coal and animal bone. Occasional flints, with a worked piece (core?) from hole 2.

Layer 3:

Dark grey or grey brown loamy clay. Late Saxon pottery recovered from the upper parts of this layer in holes 3 and 4. Increasing quantities of mortar and sandstone fragments as the layer proceeded – presumably derived from rubble scatter from the Roman wall. The material does not resemble a ditch fill

Layer 4:

Coarse yellow sand with flints. Presumed to be a natural (probably fluvial or glacial) deposit.

The ground surface was not levelled so it is not possible to give an accurate profile, but the ground only sloped very gently down from 2 - 4 (SE-NW) and figure 3 gives a reasonable indication of the profile. One could argue for a deepening of the deposits towards the NW, perhaps the edge of the Roman ditch, but this would place the ditch far too near the wall. There is no doubt as to the position of the wall as fragments of the wall core are visible in the yard of the adjoining property. None of the deposits examined resemble ditch fills and, perhaps surprisingly, no Roman pottery was recovered.

There is no convincing evidence for the existence of a buried Roman defensive ditch at this site, although that still leaves the ground subsidence affecting No 9 unexplained.

The site lies close to the River Bain and all of the lower deposits examined were waterlogged. The Saxon pottery may relate to Saxon settlement in this area (although equally it may not) in which case, there may be good preservation of archaeological material by virtue of the waterlogging.

Bibliography:

Field, F. N. and Hurst, H., 'Roman Horncastle' in Lincolnshire History and Archaeology Vol. 18, 1983 p 47-88.

FIGURE 1



Area of Figure 2

FIGURE 2



9-17, Bridge Street. Horncastle. Location of Roman wall and boreholes

BRIDGE STREET. HORNCASTLE

Generalised stratigraphy : Auger holes 1-4, rear of 9, Bridge Street, Horncastle. 16 May 1990

FIGURE 3



KEY to Figure 3

LAYER 1

LAYER 2

LAYER 3

3

sand, tiles and flooring materials. Some peat.

Made ground. A variable mixture of brown soil,

Loose, dry, loamy/crumbly, light-grey clay, containing chalk, coal, charcoal, flints. tile fragments and similar debris. Generally there was a firmer, clayier transition downwards from B to C.

Dark grey or grey-brown loamy clay, often tenacious, containing flint, bone, charcoal and some Late Saxon pottery; also containing downwardly increasing quantities of sandstone and mortar fragments presumably from the Roman wall.

Coarse yellow sand with many, poorly sorted. flints (ranging in size from gravel to cobbles), with a few rounded pebbles of quartzite and other rocks - presumably a natural deposit (fluvial or glacial).

LAYER 4

APPENDIX 1

0 - 0.35	Brown soil with mortar and rubble at top
0.35 - 0.39	Brown soil with roof tile frags
0.39 - 0.45	Dark brown, highly humified peat with sand
0.45 - 0.50	Light coloured (buff) chalky clay containing rounded chalk and small angular flints. Some plant roots and animal bone
0.50 0.55	(? demolition layer ? mud & stud)
0.50 - 0.55	As above
0.55 - 0.61	Dark brown soil. Contains some coal frags
0.61 - 0.67	Reddish burnt(?) earth. Change in last 2 cms to grey/brown slightly loamy clay with traces of charcoal
0.67 - 0.70	As above. Just hitting top of next layer
0.70 - 0.75	Chalky clay with rounded chalk inclusions (common) and small angular flints (few)
0.75 - 0.81	As above then layer change in last 3 cms back to grey/brown slightly loamy clay. Slightly firmer than before. Contains some animal bone and coal frags
0.81 - 0.90	As above then change in bottom 3cms to dark grey/brown loam with charcoal frags
0.90 - 1.00	As above. Getting sandier and damp. Some flecks of charcoal
1.00 - 1.09	As above
1.09 - 1.16	As above. Some flints, bone and plant roots
1.16 - 1.23	As above. Mortar frags and sandstone frags
1.23 - 1.30	As above last 2cms has much more mortar
1.30 - 1.38	As above. More clayey and wetter
1.38 - 1.46	As above. Some charcoal
1.46 - 1.56	As above. Some charcoal & shell. Lots of flints (?sandier)
1.56 - 1.60	As above. Still many flints. lump of chalky clay and charcoal frags. Mixed deposit
1.60 - 1.67	As above. Change in last 3 cms to very coarse yellow sand
1.67 - 1.74	As above (coarse yellow sand) with few flints and chalk
1.74 - 1.80	Heavy going. Sand with flints (up to 5-6 cms)
1.80 - 1.86	Heavy going. Very wet. V coarse sand with angular flints
1.86 - 1.91	As above. Sand slightly finer
1.91 - 1.97	As above. very wet
1.97 - 2.05	As above
END at 2.05	

APPENDIX 1

0 - 0.29	2" brick floor set on very light grey chalky clay (?mortar) frag of early post med pot
0.29 - 0.32	Highly humified peat. Dry & crumbly
0.32 - 0.37	Into chalky clay. Frags of roof tile and flints
0.37 - 0.40	As above. With charcoal frags. Dry & crumbly
0.40 - 0.42	As above. Roof tile with nib and Fe object
0.42 - 0.49	As above. Change in last 3cms to brown soil with coal frags, brick frags and bone
0.49 - 0.53	As above. Brown soil with brick & charcoal frags and lumps of light clay
0.53 - 0.56	As above soil a little cleaner. Getting more clayey
0.56 - 0.60	Mainly clay. Thin, dark layer of organic material at very bottom of core
0.60 - 0.66	Grey/brown loamy clay with rounded chalk, charcoal frags and flints
0.66 - 0.73	As above
0.73 - 0.86	As above. With sandstone frags
0.86 - 0.93	As above. Contains worked flint (?core)
0.93 - 1.02	As above. Change in last 2 cms to dark grey brown loamy clay with some sand
1.02 - 1.10	As above - dark grey brown loamy clay with some sand. Deposit mixed, with band of clay running through
1.10 - 1.17	As above. (no longer disturbed)
1.17 - 1.27	As above. Some charcoal. slightly silty
1.27 - 1.30	As above. Slightly lighter colour. Some flints
1.30 - 1.36	As above. Some charcoal & more flints. Getting sandier
1.36 - 1.45	As above. Many flints. Some charcoal and chalk
1.45 - 1.52	As above.
1.52 - 1.59	As above.
1.59 - 1.66	As above. some sandstone frags
1.66 - 1.74	As above. With bone frag
1.74 - 1.81	As above. Getting wetter
1.81 - 1.90	As above. Bone frag
1.90 - 2.00	As above. Large piece of bone. Wetter
2.00 - 2.07	As above. Start of change to sand at very bottom of core. Thin layer (2cms) of peaty soil just above change to sand
2.07 - 2.12 2.12 END	Yellow, very coarse sand with flints

0 - 0.44	Cobbled surface (yard) over black mixed soil with much rubble and roof tile and many flints.
0.44 - 0.60	Coarse, dirty dark yellow/brown sand
0.60 - 0.67	Grey clay with frags of chalk and charcoal and flints. Loose deposit
0.67 - 0.68	Roof tiles (heavy going)
0.68 - 0.72	Grey clay with many roof tile frags
0.72 - 0.78	still grey clay but getting more soily. Still mixed.
0.78 - 0.86	As above. Getting loamier.
0.86 - 0.91	As above. more consolidated
0.91 - 0.94	As above. Bone fragment
0.94 - 0.98	As above.
0.98 - 1.00	As above. but becoming much stiffer. Contains sandstone & mortar frags (?Roman wall)
1.00 - 1.09	As above but now quite dark (actual change point not noted). Contains Roman potsherd
1.09 - 1.14	As above. Now very dark grey
1.14 - 1.22	As above.
1.22 - 1.28	As above. Contains bone
1.28 - 1.34	As above. Contains sandstone frags
1.34 - 1.37	Stuck on large lump of sandstone
1.37 END	

0 - 0.55	Through layer of cobbles to soil with tile frags. 0.55 is
0.55 0.66	Start of dirty brownish yellow loose sand - slightly loamy
0.55 - 0.66	Sand as above + pone
0.66 = 0.70	As above. Starting to hit top of clay. Potsherd recovered
	from top of clay
0.70 - 0.75	Light grey/brown loamy clay. Loose. with rounded chalk,
	flints and charcoal
0.75 - 0.80	As above but stiffer
0.80 - 0.87	As above - now quite firm
0.87 - 0.92	As above. With larger flints
0.92 - 0.99	As above.
0.99 - 1.06	As above. Getting wetter layer of large flints. Still charcoal
	frags
1.06 - 1.12	As above. Then change in bottom 5 cms to dark grey loamy
	clay with sandstone frags
1.12 - 1.18	As above. With lump of peat
1.18 - 1.28	As above. With potsherd
1.28 - 1.32	As above.
1.32 - 1.37	As above.
1.37 - 1.41	As above but more inclusions
1.41 - 1.46	As above.
1.46 - 1.48	As above but much stiffer. Some wood/charcoal on bottom
	of core. some red (?burnt) sandstone
1.48 - 1.56	As above with mortar lumps and ground up sandstone
1.56 - 1.60	As above but cutting through decayed stone and mortar
1.60 - 1.62	As above getting lighter
1.62 - 1.67	As above - lighter, still with sandstone frags and mortar
1.67 - 1.75	As above Change at bottom to peaty grey layer. Bottom 1cm
	is start of light brown clavey sand with small flints
1.75 - 1.83	Yellow sandy clay, wet, with large flint gravel and
	peaty/woody frags
1.83 - 1.88	As above but vellower, sandier and wetter, Many flints
1.88 - 1.90	Yellow clayey sand with flints
1.90 END	