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Thanet's Yard
Skipton
North Yorkshire

Archaeological Trial Trenching

Report No. 1452

November 2005

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Thanet's Yard
Skipton
North Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

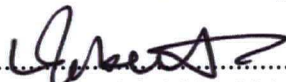
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Summary

An archaeological evaluation at Thanet's Yard, Skipton was undertaken in advance of the proposed development of the site. The majority of the excavated trenches did not contain any archaeological features although one, Trench 1, excavated within the remaining standing building on the site, did reveal remnants of masonry structures of probable post-medieval date and also yielded six sherds of residual medieval pottery.

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Archaeological Services WYAS

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Wales, Wales and Rawson on behalf of their client Pennine Motor Services to undertake an archaeological evaluation within the area of Thanet's Yard, Skipton in advance of a proposed retail development that includes the conversion of an existing post-medieval building (Planning application no. 63/2004/4024).
- 1.2 The site is located in the centre of Skipton at grid reference SD 991 517. It is bound to the west by the Red Lion public house and High Street, to the north by the town hall and Jerry Croft, to the east by Albion Yard and to the south by a small car park.
- 1.3 The geology of the site is mapped as Skibeden shales from the lower Carboniferous limestone (Institute of Geological Sciences 1974) with overlying fine loamy soils of the Brickfield 2 association derived from sandstone and shale (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983)

2. Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The site lies within the core of the historic town of Skipton and occupies the rear of the tenement fronted by the Red Lion public house, easternmost out building of which are thought to date from the early 15th-16th century (Williams 1981, figs 1 and 7).
- 2.2 The development of the site during the 19th and 20th centuries is documented mainly through old maps of the town (Johnson 2004, plus a subsequent study submitted to the Sites and Monuments Record by Wales, Wales and Rawson). The use of the site prior to this, however, is not definite, except that is assumed to have lain within the core of the medieval settlement.
- 2.3 A programme of geotechnical investigations was undertaken by Strata Surveys Limited (Johnson 2004), with some trial pits being monitored by Archaeological Services WYAS (Thompson 2004). The results of the monitoring were inconclusive with only a possible cobbled surface observed within that building still remaining at the time of the evaluation (see 4.1.8, Trench 1, below). There have been no other known archaeological investigations on the site.

3. Method

- 3.1 The majority of the buildings on the site were demolished prior to the archaeological evaluation except a barn, known to have been built in 1830 (Fig. 2), that is to be incorporated into the proposed development.
- 3.2 Five trenches were excavated on the site. None could be targeted over areas of known archaeological survival and their locations were designed to provide a representative sample across the site.
- 3.3 The area of each trench was excavated by a 360° mini digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Topsoil and any overburden were removed in level spits under direct archaeological control until the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed natural was reached.

- 3.4 The area and section of each trench was then inspected for archaeological remains with further cleaning and excavation being conducted by hand. A full written, drawn and photographic record of all trenches and archaeological remains was made in accordance with ASWYAS standard method (ASWYAS 2005).
- 3.5 The site archive contains all the information gathered during the investigations and is indexed in Appendix I. Inventories of contexts and artefacts are listed in Appendices II and III.

4. Results

4.1 Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3)

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 was located within the remaining building on the site. This trench was excavated on an east-west alignment and measured 5m in length, 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m. The majority of the trench showed the stratigraphy to be comprised of a rubble deposit measuring less than 0.1m in depth, derived from the remains of the concrete floor that the developers had removed. Below this was a dark brown silty deposit measuring 0.22m in depth at the base of which was a thin band of material derived from mortar fragments measuring less than 0.05m in depth. Below this, lying directly upon natural deposits, was a layer of mid brown silty soil up to 0.1m in depth.
- 4.1.2 Although the majority of the trench did not contain any archaeological remains two blocks of stonework (003 and 007) were revealed at the western end. To clarify the extent and nature of the stonework an additional area measuring 3.3m in length and 1.5m in width was exposed (Fig. 3). This revealed three further blocks of stonework (008, 009 and 010) and a possible wall rob trench (006).
- 4.1.3 All of the exposed stonework was formed from roughly shaped sandstone pieces that were bonded with a light grey mortar. None of the exposed faces were dressed or had any rendering so determining whether they were internal or external features was not possible. Each block sat on layer 004 which in turn sat directly onto natural silty clay. Deposits 002 and 001 seemed to have built up around the stonework at a later date. There was no physical relationship between any of the 'structures', although, a possible wall rob trench (006) extended eastwards from 005 to 003 suggesting that at one time they were part of the same structure.
- 4.1.4 Block 003 measured 0.6m in length, 0.4m in width and 0.38m in height with three courses remaining. The second block of stonework (007) was positioned approximately 1m to the south. This was exposed for a length of 0.54m in length and measured 0.5m in width, 0.26m in height and stood three courses high. One meter to the south-west of 007, block 008 was partially exposed within the section of the trench. The exposed section measured 0.3m in length, 0.9m in width and was 0.16m in height with only two courses remaining.
- 4.1.5 The two other blocks of stonework (009 and 010) were seen in the western section of the trench and lay directly opposite 003 and 007. They lay approximately 0.7m apart with the gap mirroring that between 003 and 007. The section of the trench at this point showed the build up of deposit 001

surrounding the stone, with the concrete floor laid directly on top of it (Fig.3 S.2).

- 4.1.6 Block 009 was exposed for 0.68m in width and stood three courses high at 0.27m. The uppermost course consisted of a flat slab of dressed sandstone with no visible evidence that it continued any higher. This arrangement suggests that this particular piece of stonework was a plinth or stone-built bench within a building.
- 4.1.7 Block 010 was exposed for 0.72m in width and was three courses high at 0.33m. Directly in front of 010 was a linear cut (006) filled by a loosely compacted deposit (005), which ran on a east-west alignment towards 003. This feature was thought to be the rob trench for a section of wall linking 010 and 003 to form a single wall.
- 4.1.8 The only finds recovered from Trench 1 derived from the deposit 004 onto which the stonework sat (see 5.1.1). No finds were found in relation to the structures and no specific use could be identified. Although this trench was excavated adjacent to the area where a geological test pit revealed the remains of a possible cobble floor, no evidence was observed to suggest its continuation.

4.2 Trench 2

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was relocated slightly from the proposed position as the original location fell outside of the development area. It was located on the outside of the demolished bus depot building on a north-east to south-west alignment. It measured 5m in length and 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.84m.
- 4.2.2 The excavated section of this trench showed a dark greyish brown silt deposit that contained large pieces of stone and occasional brick that sat directly on top of the natural silty clay. No archaeological remains were observed in this trench.

4.3 Trench 3

- 4.3.1 Trench 3 was located in the south of the site on a north-south orientation. It measured 5m in length and 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m. The southern end of this trench was cut through the line of the pathway of Thanet's Yard and showed at depth of 0.1m of tarmac, which sat on 0.23m of hardcore. Below this and in the rest of the trench was a deposit of mixed rubble that continued for a depth of 0.3m.
- 4.3.2 Under the rubble layer was a dark brown silty band measuring less than 0.1m in depth that was thought to be a buried topsoil horizon. Below this was a 0.3m thick deposit of a mid greyish brown silt which included stone and mortar fragments. This in turn sat on yellow silty natural. A square modern cut was observed within the trench but no archaeological remains were identified.

4.4 Trench 4

- 4.4.1 Trench 4 was positioned along the eastern side of a demolished cow shed which lent up against the back wall of the Red Lion barn. It measured 10m in length and 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.43m. A deposit of mixed rubble and a dark ashy deposit measuring up to 0.4m in depth

was removed straight onto the natural silty clay. At the southern end of this trench a stone built drain was uncovered, which was related to the demolished buildings on the site.

4.5 Trench 5

- 4.5.1 Trench 5 was located perpendicular to Trench 4 and extended from that trench to within 1m, of the western wall of the remaining barn. This trench measured 5m in length and 2m in width and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. A layer of rubble measuring 0.17m in depth was removed onto a patch of cobbles forming a partial surface associated with the barn. This surface measured 0.1m in depth and no visible bonding material was seen. Below this was a dark/black very compact layer measuring 0.16m in depth that lay upon the natural ground surface.
- 4.5.2 The continuation of the stone drain seen within Trench 4 was observed and was joined by a later ceramic pipe drain which tapped into the original drain. No other archaeological remains were observed within this trench.

5. *Artefact Record*

5.1 Pottery By Chris Cumberpatch

- 5.1.1 The pottery assemblage from Thanet's Yard, Skipton consisted of eight sherds weighing ninety-four grams and represented a maximum of eight vessels. All the material was from a single context (004). The details of the assemblage are summarised in Table 1.
- 5.1.2 The mixed nature of the assemblage implies that the medieval material is residual within a later (probably 19th century) context, but even allowing for this the group is of some interest in that the range of wares shows certain similarities with assemblages from the Tees Valley area.
- 5.1.3 The *Reduced Greenware* sherd is an example of a tradition that is widespread in the north-east in the later medieval period (later 13th to 15th centuries) and has certain affinities with the more southerly Humberware tradition. It co-exists with the *Tees Valley ware* tradition, although it outlasts this, continuing in different forms into the early post-medieval period. The Tees Valley A type sherd from Skipton shares the distinctive bifid rim form with true Tees Valley wares (Wrathmell 1987, 1990) but differs in terms of the fabric which contains large (up to 2mm) non-crystalline red grit alongside the commoner quartz grains. The sherd of Oxidised Sandy ware resembles the Tees Valley B type ware more closely than the rim sherd does type A and may in fact have originated in that area. The Buff Gritty ware is probably of local manufacture and cannot be accurately ascribed to a specific source.
- 5.1.4 The two sherds of recent pottery are typical of 19th-century assemblages in representing common domestic wares. The Brown Glazed Coarsewares are difficult to date accurately although on balance the example in this assemblage is most probably of 19th century date rather than earlier. The sherd of stoneware is most probably from a cooking pot of the type introduced after the development of the domestic kitchen range.

Table 1 Pottery from Thanet's Yard, Skipton.

Context	Type	No	Wt	ENV	Part	Form	Date range	Notes
004	Brown Glazed Coarseware	1	31	1	BS	Pancheon	C18th - C19th	
004	Brown Salt Glazed Stoneware	1	3	1	BS	Hollow ware	C19th	Probably a stewpot
004	Buff Gritty ware	3	17	3	BS	Hollow ware	C11th - C15th	A distinctive reduced coarse sandy ware with buff margins internally and externally
004	Buff Sandy ware	1	11	1	Bifid rim	Jar	C13th - EC15th	Form resembles Tees Valley A ware, but the fabric is coarser and with prominent red grit ?local
004	Oxidised Sandy ware	1	2	1	BS	Hollow ware	C13th - C14th	A fine oxidised sandy ware with clear glaze externally, somewhat resembling Tees Valley ware B
004	Reduced Greenware	1	30	1	BS	Hollow ware	LC13th - C15th	
Total		8	94	8				

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The archaeological remains identified by the trial trenching are very fragmented and probably of later post-medieval date. The majority of the site had been disturbed by 19th and 20th century activity on the site and the drains seen in Trenches 4 and 5 almost certainly relate to this.
- 6.2 The general lack of archaeological remains suggests that the site was little developed prior to the late 18th early 19th century. Even though the adjacent buildings of the Red Lion Inn date from the early post-medieval period there is no evidence to suggest that any considerable activity took place at that time within the development site. However, a small amount of residual medieval pottery is the only evidence for the earlier activity expected by the sites position within the medieval town and its close proximity to the Red Lion.

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