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**Studforth House
Back Street
Aldborough
North Yorkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation
SE 40487 66156**

Authorised by *DA Ware*

Date: *28th November 2005*

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Non-technical Summary

The site of the evaluation was located to the south of Back Street, Aldborough, North Yorkshire, in the grounds of Studforth House in advance of proposed extensions to the residential property. Studforth House lies within the designated Scheduled Ancient Monument of Aldborough (County Monument No. 436).

The archaeological work comprised the excavation of five archaeological trenches in accordance with a Written Scheme of Works provided by the Heritage Section at North Yorkshire County Council; which were excavated in order to establish the nature, location, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits in the proposed development area.

The earliest archaeological evidence encountered during the Evaluation consisted of pits, a linear feature, and cobblestone deposits and surfaces, all dating to the late Post-medieval period. The subsoil and feature deposits contained a few sherds of residual Roman pottery, including Greyware and Samian ware.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. in the gardens of the residential property at Studforth House, Back Street, Aldborough, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Caroline and Rupert Lawson-Tancred, and commenced on the 31st October 2005, with backfilling completed on the 3rd November 2005. The work was undertaken in advance of a proposed extension to the residential property (Planning Application Refs: 05/02300/FUL).

- 1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching was prepared for Elaine Graham Ltd by Gail Falkingham, the Senior Archaeologist at the Heritage Section, Countryside Services, North Yorkshire County Council (Appendix 5). This document stated *"that a scheme of pre-determination archaeological evaluation be undertaken ... to establish the nature, date, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains within the proposed development area. The evaluation results will enable an assessment of the archaeological impact of the development proposals"* (Land at Studforth House, Back Street, Aldborough, North Yorkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching. North Yorkshire County Council, Heritage Section, 05/90/6064). All work complied with Scheduled Monument Consent HSD 9/2/7657 (Appendix 6).
- 1.3 All work was funded by Caroline and Rupert Lawson-Tancred.
- 1.4 The project was assigned the MAP site code 01-10-05.
- 1.5 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. License No. AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The Proposed Development Site is situated in the town of Aldborough, near Boroughbridge in the Borough of Harrogate, North Yorkshire. Studforth House is located on the east side of Back Street, in the south-eastern corner of the settlement. The garden comprises a fenced off front garden, a driveway to the south of the house and front garden; lawned area and one outbuilding to the south and a lawned area and vegetable patch to the east of the house (Fig. 2).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 The town of Aldborough was established in the 2nd century AD as the civitas capital of *Isurium Brigantiae*, and is a designated Scheduled Ancient Monument (County Monument No. 436). The present town lies within the southern confines of the Roman defences. The draft conservation plan for Aldborough describes the town as being of 'exceptional significance' in regard to the Roman remains (Keevill 2002).

3.2 Back Street, Aldborough is thought to follow the alignment of a Roman Street, which ran parallel to the line of the eastern defences of the Roman town, seen as an earthwork to the east of the development area.

3.3 Archeological Evaluation at Studforth Farm on Back Street revealed Pottery of Roman date, remains of an apsidal building and the earthen rampart of the southern town defences (NAA 1993).

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1 Any ground-works in the area of the proposed development had the potential to damage or destroy *in-situ* archaeological deposits and features.

4.2 The aim of the Archaeological Evaluation was to determine the nature, date, quality of survival and importance of any archaeological deposits present on the site. In order to enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the archaeology and an appropriate mitigation strategy to be formulated.

5. Methodology

5.1 Five Evaluation trenches were excavated covering a total of 14m², as stipulated in the Written Scheme of Works issued, with the location agreed by the Senior Archaeologist, Gail Falkingham (Fig. 3). Excavation took place between the 31st October and the 3rd November 2005. The trenches were backfilled on the 3rd November 2005.

- **Evaluation Trench 1** measured 2m by 1m within the area of the new eastern (rear) extension
- **Evaluation Trench 2** measured 2m by 2m within the area of the new paved patio area
- **Evaluation Trench 3** measured 2m by 2m within the area of the new soakaway to the south-east of the house
- **Evaluation Trench 4** measured 2m by 1m on the site of the new manhole to the south of the house

- **Evaluation Trench 5** measured 2m by 1m close to the site of a new manhole to the south-west of the house.
- 5.2 All trenches were de-turfed and fully excavated by hand. All trenches were hand backfilled.
- 5.3 After removal of overburden, the excavation areas were hand-cleaned. Each archaeological feature or deposit was recorded on *pro-forma* Context Record Sheets (Appendix 1), according to guidelines laid down in the MAP Excavation Manual. Contexts were given for Evaluation Trench 1 from 1000 to 1013; Evaluation Trench 2 from 2000 to 2003, Evaluation Trench 3 from 3000 to 3005, Evaluation Trench 4 from 4000 to 4006, and Evaluation Trench 5 from 5000 to 5001.
- 5.4 The majority of the arefacts were 19th century or early 20th century in date. Two sherds of Medieval pottery and five sherds of Roman pottery were recovered (Appendix 2).
- 5.5 Turf and topsoil were removed as part of the overburden, and were recorded in section and by record only. All other archaeological deposits and features were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on permatrace drafting film. Sections of features and individual layers were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and included an Ordnance Survey Datum height (Appendix 3). In total 24 drawings were archived.
- 5.6 A full photographic record comprising digital, monochrome print and colour transparencies was made. Four films were used. The Photographic Record of features and general trench shots included a film register noting film number, shot number, location of shot, direction of the shot, and a brief description of the subject (Appendix 4).

6. Results

6.1 Evaluation Trench 1 (Fig. 3 Pls. 1 and 2)

6.1.1 Archaeological features in Evaluation Trench 1 comprised a series of features and deposits. Existing ground level was at 34.60m and 34.64m AOD. Natural sands were revealed below deposit 1012, at a depth of 33.63m AOD.

6.1.2 Overlaying the natural sand, was a randomly laid cobble surface, context 1012 which continued to the south. A deposit of sandy clay (context 1011) overlay context 1012. Context 1011 was cut by feature 1010. Feature 1008 was a shallow pit (dimensions 0.47m by 0.37m and 0.05m deep), and was filled by grey silt deposit 1005. Feature 1008 cut into deposit 1006. Feature 1010 was a linear cut along the northern edge of the trench, and continued to the north, east and west (dimensions 1m by 0.60m and 0.10m deep). Feature 1010 was filled by grey silt deposits 1009 and 1006. Overlying these features was a deposit of subsoil (context 1001), which contained a land drain (context 1005), which had been cut by a modern pit 1003. Pit 1003 was filled by deposit 1002.

6.1.3 Deposits 1000, 1001 and 1006 contained fragments of 19th century pottery and post-medieval ceramic building material. Deposit 1006 also contained a sherd of medieval pottery and a sherd of Roman pottery. Deposits 1009 and 1012 contained a single sherd of Roman pottery.

6.2 Evaluation Trench 2 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

6.2.1 Excavation of Evaluation Trench 2 revealed topsoil (context 2000), a modern rubble dump deposit comprising broken glass, ceramic building material, cobbles, rope and wire (context 2001), subsoil (context 2002) and reddish brown clay sand (context 2003). Existing ground level was at a height of between 34.77m and 34.62m AOD. Natural sand and gravel was encountered in Trench 2 at a depth of circa 33.84m AOD. A sondage was excavated in context 2003 to a depth of 33.53m AOD.

6.3 Evaluation Trench 3 (Fig. 5; Pls. 4 and 5)

6.3.1 Excavation in Evaluation Trench 3, revealed a tree stump during the removal of topsoil (context 3000). Excavation could continue in the south-western corner of the

trench revealing subsoil/dump deposits (3001 and 3002) overlying a small patch of cobbles (context 3003) and clay deposit (context 3004). Existing ground level was at a height of between 35.28m and 35.04m AOD. Natural sand and gravels (context 3005) were encountered in Trench 3 at a depth of c 34.47m AOD.

6.3.2 Context 3001 contained sherds of modern pottery, modern glass and animal bone.

6.4 Evaluation Trench 4 (Fig. 6; Pls. 6 and 7)

6.4.1 Excavation in Trench 4 revealed topsoil (context 4000) and two subsoil/dump deposits (contexts 4001 and 4002), a deposit of grey silt (context 4003) overlying a cobble surface (dating from the late 19th to the 20th century; context 4004) on top of natural sand deposits (context 4005). Residual Roman sherds were found in the dump deposits. Existing ground level was at a height of 34.86m – 34.74m AOD. Natural sand and gravel in Evaluation Trench 1 was at a depth of circa 34.31 AOD. A sondage (context 4006) was excavated into natural sand, and ceased excavation at 34.00m AOD.

6.4.1 Modern pottery was found in deposits 4000-4004. Two sherds of Roman greyware were found in context 4000 and context 4002.

6.5 Evaluation Trench 5 (Fig. 7; Pl. 8)

6.5.1 Excavation in Evaluation Trench 5 revealed natural sand deposits (context 5001) directly below the topsoil (context 5000). Existing ground level was at a height of 34.96m AOD, and excavation ceased at c, 34.58m AOD.

6.5.2 Large amounts of 19th century metalwork, glass and pottery was found in the topsoil (context 5000).

7. Conclusion

7.1 Excavations in the gardens at Studforth House revealed features and deposits dating to the Post-medieval period in Trench 1, including a possible linear land boundary, predating the building of Studforth House. Trenches 1 and 4 also revealed a late Post-medieval cobble surfaces. Trench 3 was heavily disturbed by roots from a tree stump.

Small patches of clay and cobbles were uncovered in the north-west corner of Trench 3 (contexts 3003 and 3004).

- 7.2 No features were revealed in Trenches 2 and 5.
- 7.3 Only a few sherds of residual Roman pottery were found. No other material or features relating to the Roman Town were uncovered.

8. Mitigation

- 8.1 The archaeological features investigated in the Evaluation Trenches 1 and 4, all appear to relate to the Post-medieval and Modern periods. No archaeological features were found in the other trenches.
- 8.2 The evaluation has shown that the proposed development will not impact any Roman features, or archaeological deposits in general.

9. List of Contributors

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