

The brigantia archaeological practice



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION of LAND to the REAR of Nos 16 & 18, FINKLE STREET, RICHMOND, NORTH YORKSHIRE

A report to GSC Chartered Surveyors



The granting of the Honour of Richmond.
From a mediaeval manuscript

1st March 2007

THE BRIGANTIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

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*ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION of
LAND to the REAR of
Nos 16 & 18, FINKLE STREET,
RICHMOND, (RICHMONDSHIRE DISTRICT)
NORTH YORKSHIRE*

In connection with Planning Application no 1/92/97Q/FULL

A report to GSC Chartered Surveyors

Fieldwork: Percival Turnbull & Deborah Walsh

Report: Percival Turnbull

1st March 2007

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION of
LAND to the REAR of
Nos 16 & 18, FINKLE STREET,
RICHMOND, NORTH YORKSHIRE***

EPITOME

On instructions from GSC Cartered Surveyors, an archaeological evaluation was carried out on land to the rear of nos 16 & 18, Finkle Street, Richmond, North Yorkshire. The proposed development site lies near the eastern edge of the historic core of the mediaeval town of Richmond, at the rear of Finkle Street, a narrow street of mediaeval origin which connects the large Market Place area with the later suburb of Newbiggin, and close to the known site of the Town Wall and one of the mediaeval gates.

Two trenches were excavated, with results which were archaeologically negative. The results from the two trenches are strikingly similar to each other, and indicative of a very high degree of modern disturbance and intrusion. The absence of mediaeval or early modern pottery is striking.

The remaining archaeological potential of this site appears very low, and it is suggested that further archaeological intervention in this case would be otiose.

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION of
LAND to the REAR of
Nos 16 & 18, FINKLE STREET,
RICHMOND, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

INTRODUCTION

1. On instructions from GSC Cartered Surveyors, an archaeological evaluation was carried out on land to the rear of nos 16 & 18, Finkle Street, Richmond, North Yorkshire. This was requested by the office of the County Archaeologist, advising Richmondshire District Council in accordance with *Planning and Policy Guidance Notes 16: Archaeology and Development* and with Policy 40 of the Richmondshire local Plan, in response to proposals to develop four flats on the site (Application no 1/92/97Q/FULL).
2. Work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by this Practice and submitted to the office of the County archaeologist, and with the Standard Procedures of this Practice.
3. Fieldwork was carried out on Monday, 26th February 2007.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4. The proposed development site lies near the eastern edge of the historic core of the mediaeval town of Richmond, at the rear of Finkle Street, a narrow street of mediaeval origin which connects the large Market Place area with the later suburb of Newbiggin, and close to the known site of the Town Wall and one of the mediaeval gates. To the north of the site, the area is dominated by the grounds and standing remains of a house of Grey Friars, established in 1258.
5. The origins of Richmond lie in this original grant of land by William I to Alan, Earl of Brittany:

I, William, surnamed the Bastard, do give and grant to thee Alan, my nephew, Earl of Bretagne, and to thy heirs for ever, all the towns and lands which lately belonged to Earl Edwyn in Yorkshire, with the Knights fees, churches, and other privileges and customs, in as free and honourable a manner as the said Edwyn held them.
6. So vast an estate called for a reliable stronghold from which it could be administered, and the first foundations of Richmond Castle were laid in 1087, taking advantage of a site which offered considerable natural advantages. The castle, then, predated the town, and formed the reason for the town's development. The town was designated a borough from its earliest origins, and its townspeople burgesses; it was eventually incorporated by Elizabeth I (in whose reign Richmond first returned Members to Parliament). The large upper and lower parts of the Market Place correspond to the Outer Ward of the castle, round the margin of which the town developed; the early suburb of Frenchgate is of early origin and has been associated with the settlement of the artisans who constructed the castle.

7. The town wall of Richmond was started in 1311, as a response to Scotch raids under the Bruce and others. It seems not to have been maintained for very long; there were murage grants in 1313 and 1337, but it certainly was by Leland's time so dilapidated that virtually nothing remained of its gates (though two posterns, the Bar Gate and the Friar's Wynde postern, survive to this day). The gate in Finkle Street had gone by this time, though its position can be established by the line of the former wall, a short way to the east of the Black Lion and within *circa* 30 metres of the development site. A wall of coursed stone rubble has been seen in a corresponding position in Finkle Street, and though only a metre thick it seems to represent continuity of the use of the town wall as a boundary.

8. The location of the former Finkle Street Bar raises a question about the status of Finkle Street to the west of the wall: the origins of this narrow thoroughfare are undeniably mediaeval, but the location of the wall might suggest that the western end of the street, including the proposed development site, might still have lain outside the developed area of the town in the first half of the 14th century (the Grey Friars certainly did lie outside the walls, which might have been thought a rather precarious position considering that its clergy had been particularly charged with the duty of preaching against the Scotch).

THE PRESENT STATE of the SITE

9. The proposed development site comprises an area of derelict and overgrown garden and yard. The east and west sides are mostly covered with old concrete, showing numerous signs of disturbance by drains and other excavations for services: the large central part of the site is occupied by former garden beds. There are signs of recent fly-tipping on the site. There are no earthwork, masonry or other remains of possible archaeological significance.

10. The buildings on the western side of the site consist of the rear aspects of buildings on Rosemary Lane, for the most part modern additions to the original structures and of no historical interest. On the eastern side, the site is flanked by low shed-like buildings, evidently services for 16-18 Finkle Street and probably of 19th century date, on the other side of which are the yards and buildings of the Black Lion public house. To the north lies a mortared stone boundary wall, separating the site from an overgrown former garden; on this side a narrow vennel leads to Victoria Road. To the south lie 16-18 Finkle Street, most of this side being taken up by a 20th century red brick extension.

11. The buildings at the Finkle Street frontage of the site, nos 16 and 18, are recorded together as a single Grade II Listed Building. The Listing entry reads:

Finkle Street 1549 (East side) Nos 16 & 18. NZ 1700 NW 1/346 II CV. C18. 3 storeys. Rough rendered. Slate roof. 5 windows, hung sashes, some glazing bars. Late C19 and modern shop fronts. Nos 2 to 18 (even) form a group.

12. The ground floor of the building is currently used as a charity shop; the upper floors appear to be storage and offices.

THE EVALUATION

13. Two trenches were excavated, their locations as shown in Fig. 1. In each case, topsoil and other overburden was removed by a small, tracked mini-digger (which was just able to get through the narrow vennel from Victoria Road), fitted with an edentulous ditching bucket. Spoil and heaps were constantly scanned for the presence of loose finds. Surfaces were then hand-cleaned for the identification and recording of any possible archaeological features. Trenches were located to avoid the more obvious hazards, such as drains and other obvious disturbances, which seemed particularly thick on the ground on the easternmost side of the site. After excavation, trenches were mechanically backfilled.

14. Vertical measurements are given from the ambient surface level immediately adjacent to the trench. 'Absolute' levels are corrected to a Temporary Bench Mark established on site and given an arbitrary value of 100m, and have yet to be corrected to Ordnance Datum.

Results were as follow:

15. TRENCH 1

This trench measured 2 metres wide by 3 metres long, and was located in the south-eastern corner of the area of former garden beds.

[101]	0-25 cms	Loose, black topsoil with modern rubbish
[102]	25-35 cms	Dirty yellow redeposited clay
[103]	35-53 cms	Crumbly dark grey soil mixed with yellow clay

Below this level, the eastern side of the trench exposed natural yellow boulder clay. In the western side of the trench, however, a disturbance was cut deeply down to a total depth of 1.29 metres below the surface: the fill of this was indistinguishable from [103]. The only finds were small pieces of modern bottle glass. The nature of the natural boulder clay (a sandstone boulder was embedded in it) was tested and confirmed after recording by further excavation.

The top of the trench was established on the eastern side as 100.12 m.a.T.B.M: the top of natural clay on the eastern side was 99.59 m. and on the western side, at the bottom of the disturbance, 1.29 m. (the actual depth of the disturbance was rather greater, as the ground surface was 15 cm higher at this point).

16. TRENCH 2

This trench measured 2 metres square, and was located in the north-western corner of the area of former garden beds.

[201]	0-30 cms clay	Loose, black topsoil with modern rubbish and yellow clay
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- [202] 30-40 cms Dirty yellow redeposited clay
- [203] 40-75 cms Crumbly black soil with clay, brick and modern rubbish
A lead water pipe was encountered in the eastern edge of the trench at this level
- [204] 75-150 cms Crumbly dark grey soil mixed with yellow clay and large amounts of modern bottle glass

Below this level lay the natural yellow boulder clay seen in Trench 1. Because of safety reasons and the rather unstable nature of this deep trench, the bottom was not hand-cleaned: the machine bucket, however, was able to scrape it sufficiently clean that it was evident that no archaeological feature or deposit lay within it.

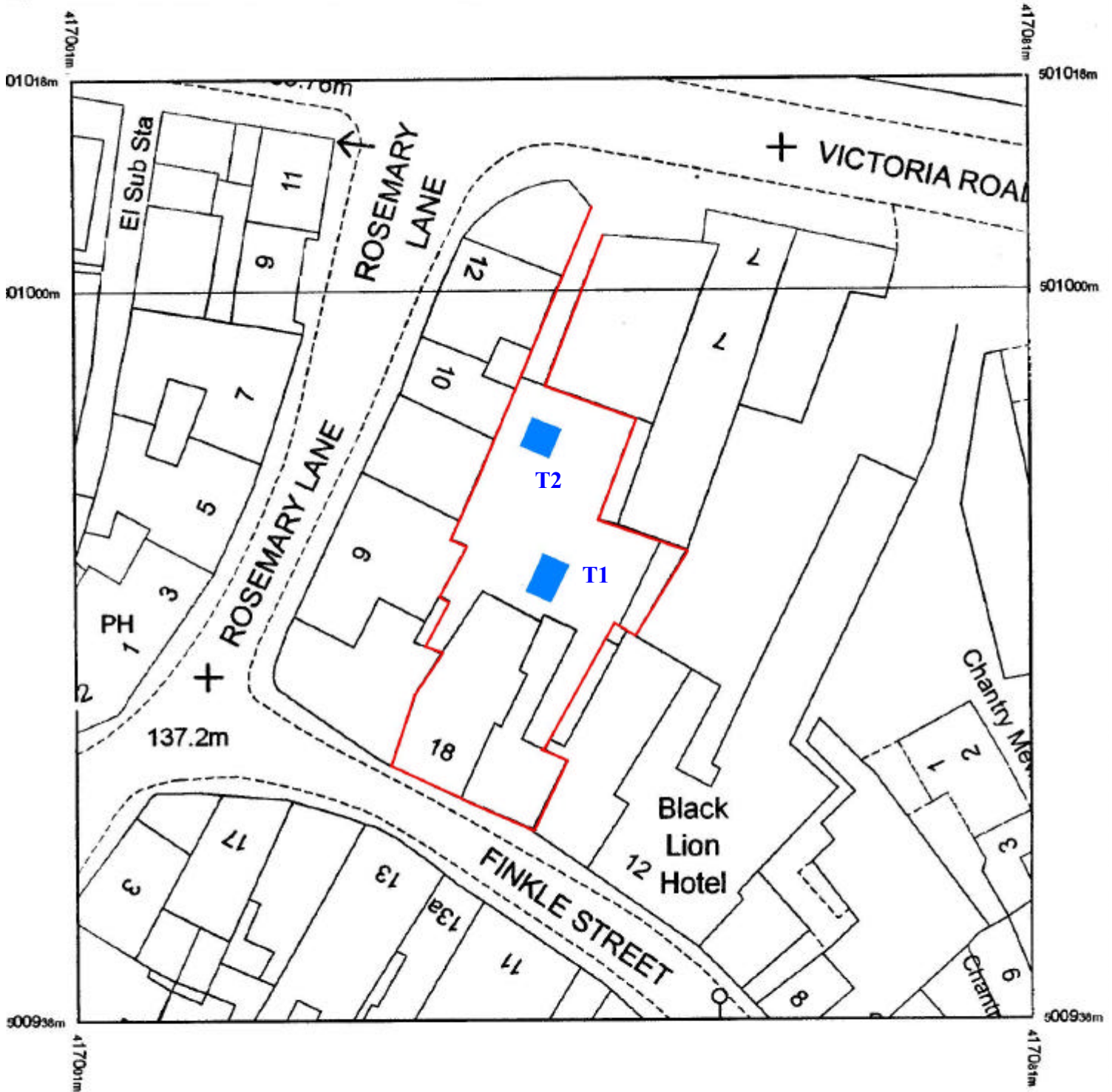
The western edge of the trench was coterminous with the trench for a 6" ceramic drain running towards Victoria Road and lying just above the natural clay: in order to avoid damage to this, the extreme easternmost 20 cms of the trench were not excavated below the level of [203].

The eastern side of the top of the trench was established as 99.68 m.a.T.B.M., and the top of natural clay as 98.18 m.

DISCUSSION

17. The results from the two trenches are strikingly similar to each other, and indicative of a very high degree of modern disturbance and intrusion. The presence of occasional brick fragments in [203] suggests that this disturbance was associated with the construction of the extension to the rear of 16-18 Finkle Street, believed to have happened in the 1960s or 1970s (there has been rebuilding of much the same period at the back of no 8, Rosemary Lane on the western side of the site). Surface indications, of drains and suchlike, suggest that disturbance is general across the site; in view of the fairly high level of natural clay (within half a metre of the surface in Trench 1) the prospects for the survival of archaeological deposits are poor. The absence of mediaeval or early modern pottery is striking; had there in fact been mediaeval deposits on this site which had been destroyed by modern activity, such material could be expected to have survived in disturbed or redeposited material.

18. The remaining archaeological potential of this site appears very low, and it is suggested that further archaeological intervention in this case would be otiose.



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16-18, Finkle Street

Fig. 1

Location, showing boundary of site (red) and Excavated trenches (blue)

Scale 1:500



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16-18 Finkle Street

Fig. 2

Trench 1



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16-18 Finkle Street

Fig. 3

Trench 2



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