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## North-east access road, west of Market Place, Ripon, North Yorkshire

### archaeological works

*on behalf of*

**North Yorkshire County Council**

**Report 1960**

September 2008

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***Business and Environmental Services, County Hall,  
Northallerton DL7 8AH***

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## **1. Summary**

### ***The project***

- 1.1 This report presents the results of archaeological works conducted in advance of a proposed development at the west of Market Place, Ripon. The works comprised the excavation of an evaluation trench in the south part of the site and a monitoring programme.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council, and conducted by Archaeological Services in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) approved by North Yorkshire County Council.

### ***Results***

- 1.3 A feature of probable medieval date was recorded within the evaluation trench. This short linear feature contained two sherds of medieval pottery; a post-medieval feature was also recorded in the trench.
- 1.4 The monitoring programme recorded several post-medieval and modern brick and stone-built features including a wall, an out-building, a well, cellars and vehicular inspection pits. Two linear soil-filled features were also recorded; these are thought to be modern in date and may be garden or drainage features.
- 1.5 No plant macrofossil remains were recorded in the environmental samples. The presence of fuel waste and burnt bone in the samples may have originated with domestic waste disposal.

### ***Conclusions***

- 1.6 As no significant archaeological features have been uncovered, no further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

## **2. Project background**

### ***Location (Figure 1)***

- 2.1 The site is located to the west of the city centre at Ripon, North Yorkshire (centred on NGR: SE 3110 7135). The site covers an area of 1371 sq m and is bounded by Coltsgate Hill to the north, the rear of properties along North Street to the east and south, and St. Winifred's Road to the west.

### ***Development***

- 2.2 The development comprised an access road between Blossomgate and the junction of North Street and Coltsgate Hill.

### ***Objective***

- 2.3 The objective of the evaluation was to assess the nature, extent and potential significance of any surviving archaeological features within the proposed development area, so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in advance of development. The objective of the monitoring programme was to identify and record any archaeological features uncovered during groundworks.

### ***Methods statement***

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a WSI (written scheme of investigation) provided by Archaeological Services (reference number DS 07.279) and approved by North Yorkshire County Council.

### ***Dates***

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken between 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008. This report was prepared between 17<sup>th</sup> May and 12<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

### ***Personnel***

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Janice Adams, Matthew Claydon, and David Graham. This report was prepared by Janice Adams, with illustrations by David Graham. Specialist analysis was conducted by Jennifer Jones (ceramics) and Dr Helen Ranner (macrofossil analysis). Samples were processed by Bryan Atkinson. The Project Manager was Daniel Still.

### ***Archive/OASIS***

- 2.7 The site code is **RCH08**, for **Ripon Coltsgate Hill 2008**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services and will be transferred to Ripon Museum in due course. Archaeological Services is registered with the **Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations project (OASIS)**. The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-48276**.

## **3. Landuse, topography and geology**

- 3.1 At the time of the survey the proposed development area comprised an area of commercial buildings and yards and an area of tree and scrub.

- 3.2 The site lies at a mean elevation of around 39m AOD on a plateau to the north of the River Skell, around 1km west of its confluence with the River Ure.
- 3.3 The solid geology of the area consists of Permian strata; the Edlington Formation (formerly Middle Marl) is across most of the site with the Brotherton Formation (formerly Upper Magnesian Limestone) along the north-west edge (BGS 1992). Geotechnical boreholes drilled across the site identified rock head depths between 7.0m and 12.5m. Deposits of glacial till up to 7m in depth overlay this solid geology, with up to 4m of fluvioglacial deposits overlying this. The fluvioglacial deposits mainly consisted of fine orange-brown sand, with clay or gravel in places (GRM 2004).

#### **4. Historical and archaeological background**

##### ***The prehistoric and Roman periods (up to 5<sup>th</sup> century AD)***

- 4.1 In spite of a relatively large number of Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in the general vicinity (especially funerary and ritual monuments such as henges), there is a paucity of such remains in the city itself. A small number of prehistoric objects have reportedly been found in the city, although all are now lost or lacking proper provenance. Similarly, few Romano-British objects have been found, although a Roman urn was found on the west side of North Street in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (OAN 2003).

##### ***The medieval period (5<sup>th</sup> century AD to AD 1540)***

- 4.2 Ripon is first documented in the 7<sup>th</sup> century, when St Wilfred established a monastery in c. AD 660 (Hall and Whyman 1996). This is thought to have been on the site of the present cathedral (Whyman 1997). The early town developed around this focus, to the east of the current Market Place (*ibid*).
- 4.3 It is not clear exactly when the Market Place was laid out in its current form. MacKay (1982), purely on documentary evidence, suggests that the Market Place and surrounding burgrave plots had been laid out by 1320, although more recent archaeological work suggests that it was not fully established until the mid to late 14<sup>th</sup> century (Archaeological Services 2001, YAT 2000b).

##### ***The post-medieval period (AD 1541 to AD 1899)***

- 4.4 The medieval settlement pattern survived almost intact until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as shown by early maps of the area (OAN 2003). These show long, thin burgrave plots running westwards from the Market Place /Fishergate / Horsefair (now North Street) and smaller properties fronting Westgate and Blossomgate.

##### ***The modern period (AD 1900 to present)***

- 4.5 Modern changes are largely restricted to the amalgamation of properties into larger plots and a number of in-fill buildings to the rear of the street frontages. The fields to the north of the proposed development area were developed as terraced housing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> / early 20<sup>th</sup> century (*ibid*).

***Previous archaeological works***

- 4.6 Archaeological interventions have been carried out under the Market Place (Archaeological Services 2001, YAT 2000b) and to the rear of properties to its east (WYAS 1999, YAT 2000a). An additional scheme of archaeological evaluation, excavation and monitoring has also been conducted as part of this development (Archaeological Services 2005 & 2008). Further from the site, excavations have been carried out around the cathedral (Whyman 1997). The current site has been subject to two archaeological assessments (Briden 1995, OAN 2003).

**5. The evaluation**

***Introduction***

- 5.1 An evaluation trench was excavated in the land to the west of Nos. 3 & 4 Smithson Court, Ripon. The trench area was disturbed by a large amount of tree roots with a concentration in the south-western end of the trench.

***Trench 1 (Figures 3-7)***

- 5.2 This trench was 9m by 3.20m in size and was located in the north-west corner of the plot. Natural subsoil, red-brown sandy clay and gravel [03] was reached at a depth of 0.37m. Cutting the natural subsoil in the centre of the trench was a short, narrow, sub-rectangular linear feature [F7: 2.00m by 0.50m by 0.09m deep]. This feature [F7] was filled by brown friable sandy loam [6: 0.09m thick] and contained a large quantity of small rounded river cobbles; two small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this deposit. Also cutting the natural subsoil in the south-west corner of the trench was an oval shallow scoop [F5: 1.00m by 1.20m]. This feature was filled by grey-brown silt [4: 0.03m -0.08m thick] and contained brick fragments and mortar; it is possible that this feature relates to the building of the adjacent wall. The feature continued out of the area of investigation.
- 5.3 Overlying both features was a layer of moderately compacted mottled red-brown clay silt [2: 0.13m to 0.15m]. Above this layer was a modern concrete path [F15: 0.05m thick by 0.80m wide]. Overlying this was the topsoil layer [1: 0.27m to 0.37m]; a piece of modern glass was recovered from this layer.

**6. The monitoring programme (Figures 3, 8 -11)**

- 6.1 The monitoring programme was conducted in the area immediately surrounding the evaluation trench and along the route of the road (Figure 2).
- 6.2 The initial works comprised the monitoring of the removal of the undergrowth in the area surrounding the trench followed by the removal of the topsoil and underlying deposits overlying the natural subsoil.
- 6.3 The natural subsoil [3] was reached at depths varying from 0.37m immediately around the evaluation trench rising to 0.74m to the rear of the garden plots of Nos. 5-8 Coltsgate Hill.

- 6.4 In the area to the south and east of the evaluation trench a number of modern features were recorded cutting the natural subsoil. These included two contemporary parallel linear features [F9 & F11: 0.40m wide by 4.50m long] orientated south-west north-east; these may be modern garden or drainage features (Figure 8). These were filled by grey-brown clay silt [8 & 10: 0.08m & 0.06m thick] that contained modern glass, brick fragments and two pottery sherds. To the west of these features the remains of a modern brick and mortar out-building with associated service pipe [F12 & F13: 2.35m long x 1.50m wide, 3.32m by 0.40m: Figure 9] were recorded. A made ground deposit containing demolition debris, modern pot, and glass [14: from 0.18m to 0.74m] partially covered these features and abutted the dividing wall [F16] of the plot. The majority of F12 & F13 were overlain by topsoil [1].
- 6.5 To the north of the dividing wall and to the west of WM Abbott Furniture, a number of features were identified cutting the natural subsoil. A series of small brick vehicular inspection pits [F18] were located cutting the natural subsoil to the rear of WM Abbott Furniture. These pits measured 7m east-west by 2m north-south. To the north of these pits a brick well [F17: Figure 10] was recorded, which had previously been identified in an earlier evaluation trench (Archaeological Services 2005). To the north of the well a cellar [F19: Figure 11] was located stretching back from Coltsgate Hill, measuring 12m wide by 6m. Overlying these features was a made ground deposit [20] which contained demolition debris comprising brick, tile and stone.

## **7. The finds**

### ***Pottery assessment***

- 7.1 Two very small (10 x 7mm max) pottery fragments came from context [6]. These are non-joining, but are a very similar mid brown/grey, coarse, gritty fabric, and are probably from the same vessel. They are undecorated. These sherd fragments are likely to be medieval in date, but their small size precludes identification to fabric.
- 7.2 A small quantity of modern glazed ceramic and glass fragments was recovered from contexts [1, 2, 8, 10 & 14]. These were not retained as part of the site archive.

### ***Recommendations***

- 7.3 No further work on the assemblage is recommended.

## **8. Plant macrofossil assessment**

### ***Methods statement***

- 8.1 Plant macrofossil assessment was carried out on one bulk sample taken from context (6), the fill of a small linear feature. The entire bulk sample was manually floated and sieved through a 500µm mesh. The residue was described and scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were dried slowly and examined at × 40 magnification.

### **Results**

- 8.2 The material was dominated by fire waste, principally clinker, with coal, charcoal, fragments of magnetic fuel waste and traces of semi-vitrified fuel waste. There was a background level of metal dust, which is commonly associated with deposits from occupation sites. A single indeterminate fragment of burnt bone was recovered. Modern plant material, principally roots and uncharred seeds, was present, together with insect remains and terrestrial snail shell. There was no suitable material available for radiocarbon dating. There were no plant macrofossil remains present. The results are presented in Appendix 2.

### **Discussion**

- 8.3 The absence of any plant macrofossil remains in this context precludes any further interpretation. The presence of fuel waste and burnt bone may indicate some waste disposal, although this assemblage may have accumulated from background waste about the occupation site.

### **Recommendations**

- 8.4 No further analysis is recommended due to the absence of plant macrofossil material.

## **9. Conclusions**

- 9.1 As no significant archaeological features have been uncovered, no further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

## **10. Sources**

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## Appendix 1: Context data

Summary list of contexts. The • symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of finds of the following types: P pottery, and G glass.

No	Description	P	G
1	Topsoil		•
2	Layer	•	•
3	Natural subsoil		
4	Fill of F5		
F5	Oval scoop feature		
6	Fill of F7	•	
F7	Short linear feature		
8	Fill of linear	•	
F9	Cut of linear feature		
10	Fill of linear	•	
F11	Cut of linear		
F12	Modern out-building remains		
F13	Modern out-building service trench		
14	Layer	•	•
F15	Concrete path		
F16	Dividing wall		
F17	Well		
F18	Inspection pits		
F19	Cellars		
20	Made ground layers		

## Appendix 2: Data table

**Table 1:** Data from plant macrofossil assessment

Context	6
Sample	1
Volume processed (l)	7.5
Volume of flot (ml)	150
Volume of flot assessed (ml)	150
<i>Residue contents (relative abundance)</i>	
Bone (burnt) indet. frag.	1
Fuel waste (magnetic)	2
Metal dust	2
<i>Flot matrix (relative abundance)</i>	
Bone (unburnt) indet. frag.	1
Charcoal	1
Clinker	3
Coal	2
Insecta remains	1
Mollusca (terrestrial) shell	1
Roots (modern)	4
Semi-vitrified fuel waste	1
Seeds (uncharred)	3

Relative abundance is based on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)