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Archaeological Evaluation

**Kings Mill
Malton**



View of King's Mill, facing south-east.



View of King's Mill, facing west.

KINGS MILL - MALTON
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KINGS MILL – MALTON

Archaeological Evaluation

1. Introduction

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd in March, 1995 at the site known as Kings Mill (SE 79260 71510: Fig. 1). The Mill, a Grade II listed building, and the associated land unit are situated on the north bank of the River Derwent and 160m. to the south of the Roman Fort of Derwentio (SAM County No. NY 285).

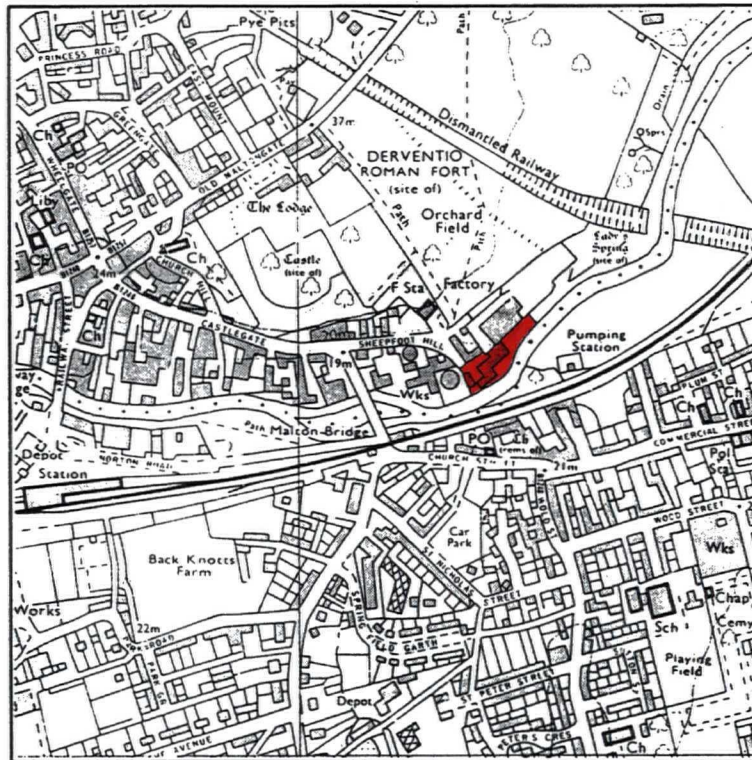


Figure 1.
Scale 1:10000.

The site is the subject of a redevelopment proposal. The mill has detailed planning permission for conversion to residential units and the adjoining riverside has outline consent to construct residential dwellings. In accordance with Ryedale District Council's Planning Decision 3/83/192H/FA no development was to take place without the implementation of a programme of archaeological works.

The archaeological evaluation of the site comprised of five trenches excavated to ascertain the depth, nature and date of deposits on the site. In addition to the excavation (p.14) an archaeological and historical assessment was undertaken (p.4).

All work was funded by Mr I P Scaife.

2. Archaeological and Historical Assessment

During the 19th century re-development of the area to the north and east of Kings Mill produced a substantial amount of information about the previous history of this area of Malton. During excavation of 'The Cut', near King's Mill, several Roman coins and two or three urns containing ashes were uncovered (Fig. 2: No. 1; Hinderwell 1811). In 1836 an urn was discovered near the north bank of the Derwent (Fig. 2: No. 2; Channon ?1865/6).

Development undertaken by the Malton Waterworks in the mid 1860s located a substantial deposit of Roman pottery, coins and several skeletons, excavations also located the remains of red deer, flint implements and unworked bone pins below the Roman levels (Fig. 2: No. 3; MM Jan 1867). The report of these finds also notes that closer to the river the Roman occupation became slighter and was confined to a 'foot or two below the surface'. Further work at Orchard Cottage by Malton Waterworks also located more inhumations accompanied by stone and flint artefacts (Fig. 2: No. 4).

During the excavation of the N.E.R. Viaduct over the Derwent in 1866, a crouched inhumation possibly of pre-historic date was uncovered (Fig. 2: No. 5; MM Jan, Apr, May 1866). A later account refers to a skeleton of Roman date accompanied by two bone pins from the Malton side of the river (Kitson-Clarke 1935).

Sherds of two colour coated jugs were found in the Derwent in ?1887 and a dark green glaze flagon was found at King's Mill (Fig. 2: No. 6; MMCI).

In 1878 a bronze patera, a straight sided platter inscribed with the makers name ALPICVS F (ecit) (2nd century Gaul), and an arrowhead were discovered on the site of the new gasworks (Fig. 2: No. 7).

To the north of the Kings Mill stands the Roman Fort of Derwentio and associated vicus in an area of land known as Orchard Fields. Portions of the Roman Fort were excavated by Kirk and Corder in 1927-30, but investigations concentrated on the Agricolan and later forts and their defences, although pre-Agricolan military activity was also uncovered (Fig. 2: No. 8).

The Agricolan fort covered 8.4 acres (3.4 hectares) with a rampart, ditch, wooden gate-houses, ovens and associated buildings. Trial trenching by Corder in 1930 revealed a 1.83m wide, 2.36m deep, V-shaped ditch thought to be remnants of a pre-Agricolan camp (Fig. 2: A & D).

During the Trajanic period the timber defences and gatehouses were replaced with stone. The fort was abandoned during the Hadrianic and Antonine periods, but was reoccupied after 158A.D. with little known about the fort in the 3rd century. A complete rebuild of the north-east corner of the fort took place at the beginning of the 4th century, but information on the buildings inside the fort is scarce due to the lack of excavation. A watching brief undertaken by MAP for Northern Electric Plc and British Gas Plc along trenches which bisected the Fort and vicus on a north-south alignment located stone constructed building walls and substantial amounts of pottery (Fig. 2: No. 9).

Kirk and Corder also located Prehistoric, Anglo-Saxon and medieval artefacts during the excavations on the fort (Corder 1930).

The vicus (the Roman name for the civilian settlement) was investigated by the excavations of Kirk and Corder (1927-30), Smith (1949-52; Fig. 2: B-C), Wenham and Manby (1968-70; Fig. 2: E-F), and MAP (1990 & 1991-2). Over 20 buildings of stone or wood construction were found, along with ovens, kilns, forges and even a temple. Some of the buildings were obviously houses but others appear to represent shop units. The earliest civilian buildings appear to date from the Domitianic or early Trajanic periods (81-117 A.D.). In the 3rd and 4th century the vicus was at its most prosperous and populous. Many of the buildings showed some degree of comfort and luxury, for example the Town House possessed a hypocaust system and a mosaic floor. After this period of prosperity the events of 367-8 A.D. (this refers to the rebellion of the Picts and Scots in the north and the threat of a Barbarian invasion from the Continent) resulted in abandonment and demolition of

structures and inferior reconstruction. The archaeological record indicates a decline in standards and prosperity from the mid 4th century onwards.

In 1968-69 a robbed out wall 1.5m wide with an earthen rampart measuring 4.28m wide, dated by Wenham to the late 2nd - early 3rd century, was found, marking the eastern side of the settlement (Fig. 2: No. 10). Sectioning and probing, north-east of the vicus wall in 1930 had traced the course of a finely made road, 4.27-4.58m wide, flanked with ditches which ran from the edge of the fort ditch to Lady's Spring where it ended abruptly. A branch road was also uncovered on a differing alignment.

Two mechanically excavated trenches located to the west of Kings Mill in September 1989, located the corner of a building and Roman pottery at a depth of 1.35m (Fig. 2: No. 11; ERARC 1989).

Observations during the reinstallation of gas supplies in December 1991 by MAP, recorded a stone wall in a testhole on Sheepfoot Hill, at a depth of approximately 1m (Fig. 2: No. 12). Further observations during the installation of a gas main on Castlegate in 1994, by MAP, uncovered sections of a well-constructed road surface of possibly Roman date at the base of the excavated trench, c. 1m deep (Fig. 2: No. 13).

To the north-east of Kings Mill, further indications of pre-historic activity is attested by a grouping of 3 barrows, which would have appeared to have been levelled sometime in the very early 19th century (Fig. 2: No. 14; Channon ?1865/6).

The history of the mill is well documented from the late 18th century. The existence of an earlier mill can only be postulated as no conclusive evidence survives either in the archaeological or historical record to date. References to monastic mills can be found for Malton in the Accounts in the Register of Malton Priory 1244-51, where a mill is specifically mentioned although not its location. In 1302, the poll tax returns show a John the Miller being charged 4d. In 1613, Sir J. Egerton, Sir R Spencer and T Spenser aquired form Lord Eure, the manors of New and Old Malton, which included 100 houses, 40 cottages, a watermill and a fulling mill (YAS RS 58, Finesto). Most Post-medieval mills tend to be located on medieval or earlier sites, it is quite possible that there was an earlier mill on the King's Mill site.

The Derwent Navigation began just after 1700 and was completed by 1725. John Settringtons painting of Malton in the 1700's shows the River Derwent much wider and with several islands. On the 1840 map of Malton (Fig. 4) and that by Monkman in circa 1865 (Fig. 3) show islands present in the Derwent, and the mill is shown on the 1840 map to be situated on the most northerly one (Fig. 4). At this point Kings Mill was located on a separate island in the Derwent, but was reclaimed by 1852. The changing course of the Derwent and the infilling of river around Kings's Mill can be seen on the various maps available between 1852 to the present day (Figs. 5-8).

Embanking on either side of the river has reduced its width to its present size (Fig. 6). Huddleston states that in 1808 Malton had two watermills and no steam powered mills (Fig. 4). The competition created by the arrival of railways virually stopped all river traffic and waterpowered mills' dams were destroyed in the interest of land drainage. In 1872 the final part of Malton dam was removed (Huddleston).

King's Mill was probably powered by an undershot wheel due to its topographical location, before steam power was adopted. This form of wheel is mainly located in lowland areas and was used in conjunction with a dam; the mill is often incorporated into the dam. The water exited the dam through sluice gates located at the bottom of the dam. The main problem of under-shot wheels was the inability to get water away into the tail race. This problem was overcome by the millwrights with the introduction of larger blades on the wheel and more importantly the widening of the tail-race. Under-shot wheels were not as effective as over-shot wheels but because there was often no option, millwrights changed the shape of the paddles from straight to curved to delay water leaving the buckets to increase efficiency.