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DESK-TOP STUDY

NEW RUGBY GROUND
Old Malton Road
Malton

M R Stephens
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MAP
Archaeological Consultancy Limited
39, Greengate, Malton,
North Yorkshire, YO17 0EL.
Telephone (0653) 697752
Fax (0653) 694747

Desk-top Study, new Rugby Ground, Malton.

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Figure 1 – Site Location (Scale 1:25 000)

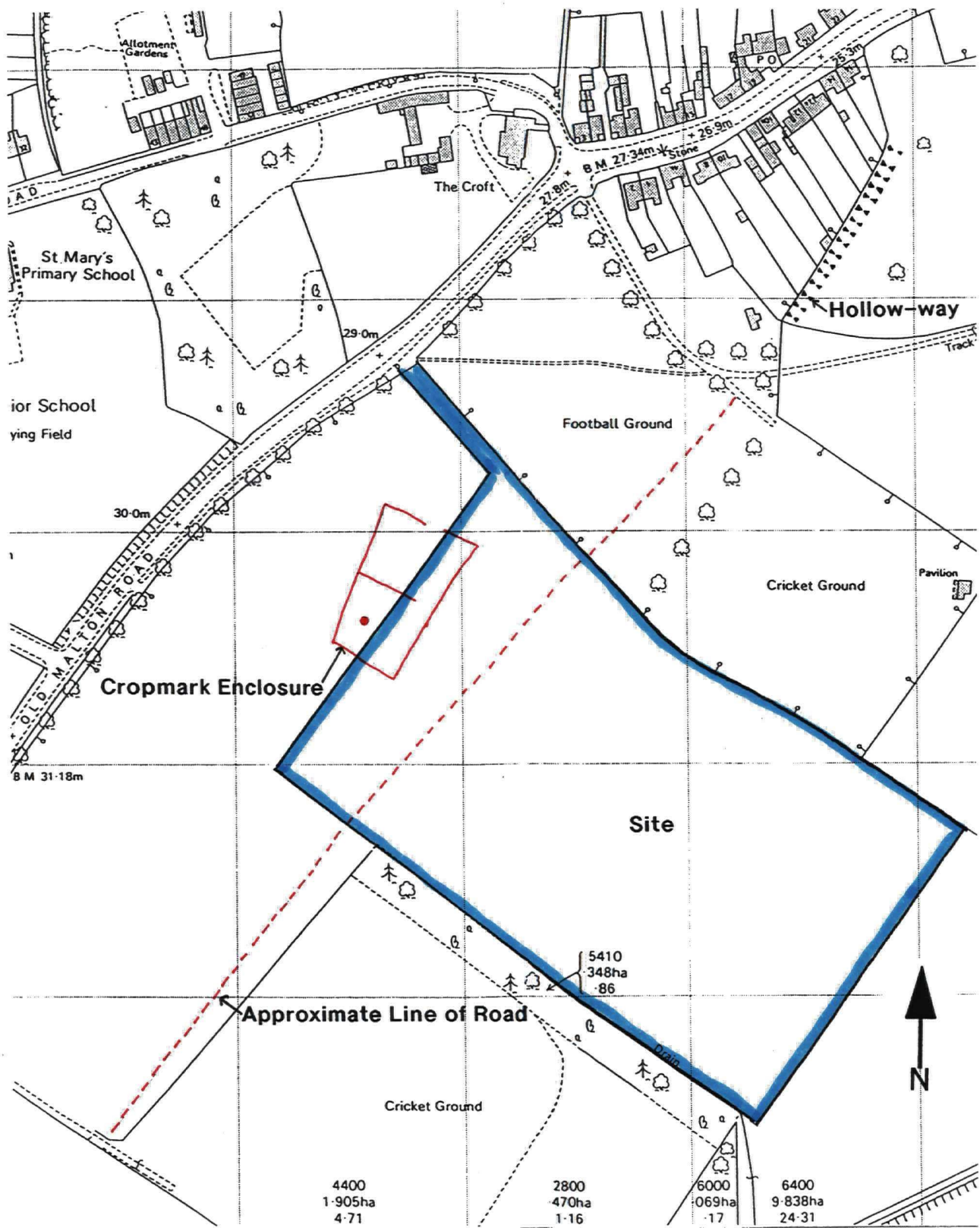


Figure 2 – Site Environs with Cropmarks (Scale 1:2500)

Introduction

This study concerns an area of arable land to the south-east of Old Malton Road, Malton Parish, North Yorkshire, SE 796 722 (Fig 1). The site is the subject of a proposed development to create a new Rugby Ground. The study also encompasses the present Football and Cricket Grounds, and an area of land known as the Gannock, to the south-east.

The site lies on a south-east facing slope, which dips downwards to an artificial watercourse known as The Cut, with the River Derwent lying beyond. The elevation of the site drops from c25m AOD at the north-west to c21m AOD at the south-east.

The underlying geology consists of Coralline Oolitic limestone of the Middle Lias (OS 1960), with soils of the Elmton 2 Association (SSEW). It is likely that the geology of the extreme south-east of the site, where the slope levels out, consists of River Alluvium with overlying soils of the Fladbury 3 Association (*ibid*).

This Desk-top Study seeks to identify the archaeological history of the site and its environs, and make suggestions for the mitigation of the affects of the proposed development on the archaeological remains at the site.

The principal sources consulted for this work are the Sites and Monuments Register at County Hall, Northallerton, and *The Archaeology of Malton and Norton* by J F Robinson.

Archaeology and History of the Site

Prehistoric activity in the environs of the site is suggested by the presence of a ploughed-down round barrow in The Gannock, c140m east of the site at SE 79757229 (Robinson, no 12). Three further barrows occurred to the south-east of the Roman fort, c500m south-west of the site, centred at SE 793717 (Robinson, nos 21-3).

The site lies approximately 500m east of the Roman fort and civilian settlement of *Derventio*, at SE 79127172, the subject of a number of excavations this century (Corder 1930, Mitchelson 1964 and Wenham 1974). Roman remains are also known to exist in between the fort/civilian settlement and the development area. Two Roman coins were found behind Quarry Bank in 1951, c400m south-west of the site (Robinson, no 38). Wenham implies the existence of Roman buildings in an area c50-75m north of the fort (Wenham, Fig 13), and also recorded the presence of Romano-British 'occupation' debris immediately east of the former Malton-Thirsk railway line. Indeed, such debris, in the form of pot sherds, animal bone and marine shells is currently visible over a large area centred at SE 79257183. In addition, a Romano-British feature has been recently observed and recorded in a service trench at SE 79207202, c300m south-east of the site (Finney, forthcoming). Finally, a Romano-British bronze bust was found in The Gannock, c150-200m east of the site (Robinson, no 42).

An Anglian presence in the vicinity of the site is suggested by the occurrence of an Anglo-Saxon brooch from the same source as the Romano-British bust above (*ibid*).

In the medieval period, the site apparently existed as open ground between the village of Old Malton, with its Gilbertine Priory, and the Borough of New Malton, which was a walled town with a castle.

Such is the archaeological and historical background; the following two records are specific to the site.

A road is known to have issued from the eastern gate of the Roman fort, and to have proceeded to the area now occupied by the remains of Old Malton Priory (Robinson, no 79), passing through the north-western part of the site, and through the Cricket ground/Football pitch to the north-east (Fig 2). Robinson mentions the presence of a line of limestone rubble, representing this road, curving around the Cricket Ground along the 75' (23m) contour. This road is believed to join, or become, an extant south-west to north-east hollow-way situated behind 2-16 Town Street, Old Malton (SMR 1864.03.200) (Fig 2).

The cropmark of a trapezoidal enclosure (SMR 1979) appears on an aerial photograph (CUAC SE 7971 BQR 014; NMR SF 966/043, 049), centred at SE 79477227. From a sketch plot of this cropmark (Fig 2), it appears that the south-eastern part of this enclosure extends into the development area. The enclosure is aligned south-west to north-east with an approximate length of 70m, and a

maximum width, at the north-east end, of 45m. An internal division occurs approximately midway along the northern ditch or boundary of the feature, extending c25m towards, but not meeting, the southern ditch or boundary. A large pit-like anomaly occurs in the north-western sector of the enclosure (Fig 2).

Archaeological Potential

The trapezoidal enclosure described above is of clear archaeological significance. A natural origin for this feature can be discounted, because the limestone bed-rock of the site is not conducive to the formation of enclosure-like features, which were created in gravel sub-soils by peri-glacial ice-cracking elsewhere in Ryedale (eg SMR 3407.02.210 in Settrington parish).

Essentially, the enclosure is undated. The axis of the enclosure approximates to the line of the road which passes to the south of it. However, this need not imply contemporaneity, as this alignment represents the contours of the hillside. It may be relevant to mention an enclosure of similar size at Langton Road, Norton (Robinson, no 355), which has been interpreted as a Romano-British walled-cemetery, although similarity in form need not necessarily reflect a similarity in function.

The road that crosses the site to the south of the enclosure, would appear to be of Roman origin, for it issues from the gate of the Roman fort. However, for the road to be visible as a hollow-way at the north-east end of its course, suggests re-use in medieval times at that location at least; but medieval use of the road might be anticipated if the ramparts of the Roman fort were re-used to enclose the bailey of the medieval castle, as Robinson suggests (Robinson, 13).

An aspect of Roman roads is that they often formed the focus for human burials, which were forbidden by law to be carried out within the boundaries of settlements. The walled cemetery at Langton Road, Norton, is an example of an organised burial ground adjacent to a Roman road, being situated alongside the road from *Derventio* to York. Therefore, there is the possibility that Roman burials may be present on the site, associated with the Roman Road.

Impact of the Development

The following processes involved with the development of the site can be identified as potentially disturbing or destroying archaeological remains:

- (a) the scarping of the slope to create a relatively horizontal surface for the three new Rugby pitches; this will be most severe at the north-west end of the site (unfortunately, the location of the trapezoidal enclosure and road).
- (b) The creation of vehicular access to the site; this will cut through or pass over the line of the road.
- (c) The erection of a clubhouse and stand.
- (d) The provision of drainage for the playing surfaces.
- (e) Services to the clubhouse, flood-lights etc.

Recommendations

It is of great importance to accurately locate the trapezoidal enclosure and road in relation to the development area, and also to address the possible presence of burials within the area.

A Geophysical Survey has been arranged to provide Magnetometry in the vicinity of the enclosure, and resistivity in the vicinity of the road. In addition, the remaining, ie south-eastern, area of the site will be scanned, and any areas of potential archaeological significance so revealed will undergo a Magnetometer Survey to define and locate the anomalies.

Following the Geophysical Survey, one option may be to move the position of the pitches south-eastwards away from the north-western area that is presently assumed to be of greatest archaeological potential. If this is not possible, and if anomalies of potential archaeological significance are identified on the remainder of the site, a number of sample trenches should be archaeologically excavated to identify the potential of the site. The excavation of these archaeological sample trenches should lead to the accurate determination of any further necessary archaeological constraints, eg larger scale excavations, Watching Briefs etc.

Bibliography

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