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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

BRIARWOOD

LOW LANE

ALDBOROUGH S.A.M. NO.436

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 440759 466328

COUNTY / PARISH NO. 6064

FOR

MR. & MRS. ELGIN

6.64.454.ful.  
NYC 3570.

JULY 1998

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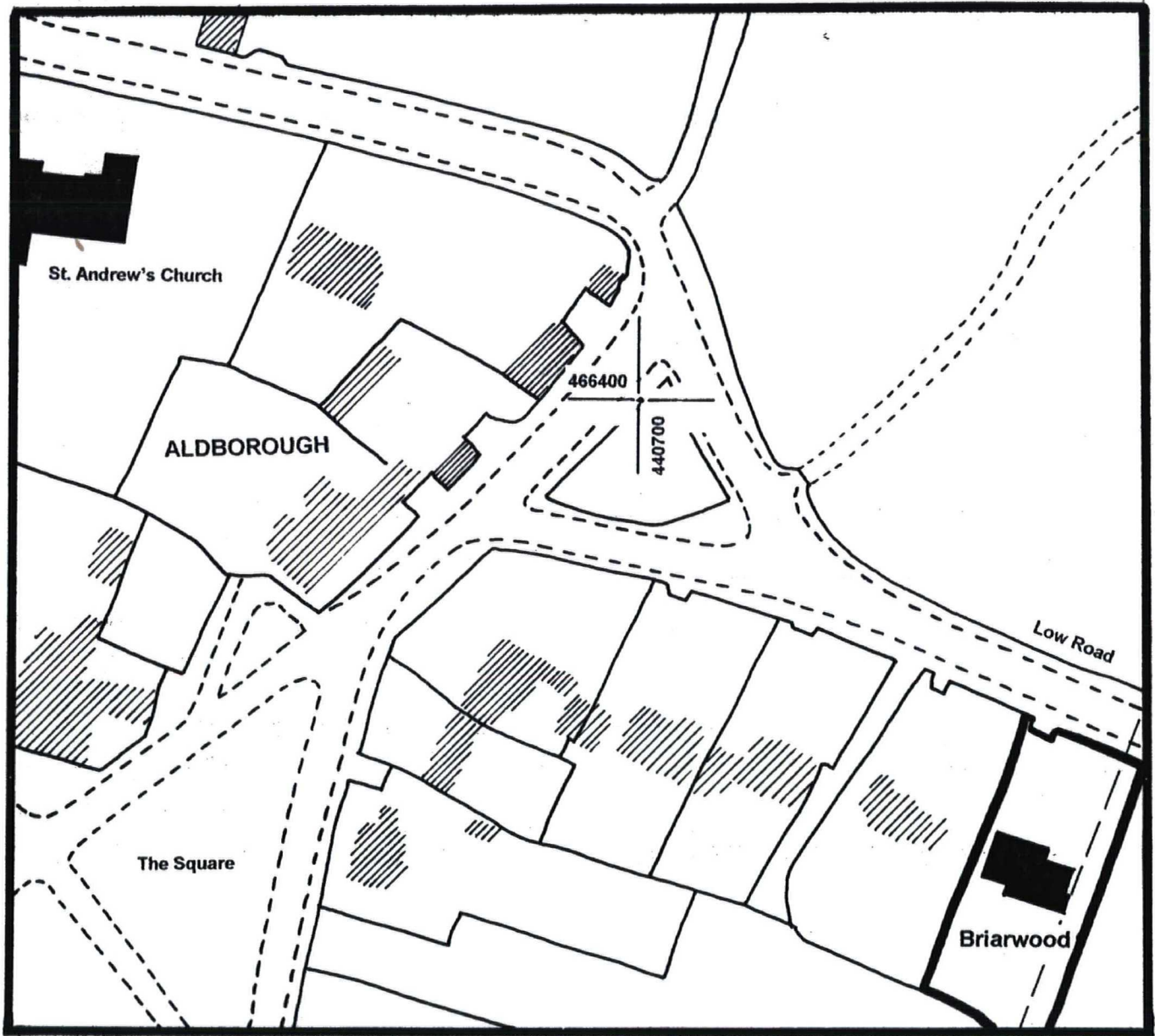
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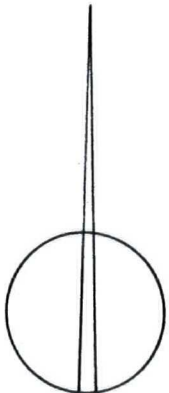
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FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



Not to Scale



**BRIARWOOD  
LOW LANE  
ALDBOROUGH**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION  
JUNE 1997**

## **INTRODUCTION**

An Archaeological Investigation was made in conjunction with ground disturbance associated with a small domestic development within the village of Aldborough. The scope of the archaeological works included a rapid desk top study, and watching brief. The works were commissioned by the occupier of Briarwood, Mr. & Mrs. G. Elgin.

## **LOCATION AND STATUS**

Briarwood is situated within the eastern extent of the village of Aldborough, on the southern side of Low Road. The study area is located on the site of an existing attached garage.

Below ground in this area the site is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Isurium Brigantum, North Yorks, SAM 436) located at SE: 440759 466328 within the parish of Boroughbridge

## **PLANNING HISTORY**

Outline Planning Permission for the erection of a two storey side extension was granted by Harrogate Borough Council.

An Application for Scheduled Monument Consent was launched by Mr. & Mrs. Elgin on 25th February 1997.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The Village:

The present village of Aldborough overlies the Roman town of Isurium Brigantum and remains relatively well contained within the ancient town's perimeter defences. The defences contain an almost rectangular area of approximately 74 acres.

The Roman settlement was a civilian administrative centre, or *civitas* capital for the territory of the Brigantes which covered much of the north of England. There is no substantial evidence of military occupation at Isurium.

#### The Site:

The study area is situated within the eastern extent of the Roman town, within and immediately adjacent to the perimeter defences.

A preliminary desk top study of the proposed site has confirmed that:-

The site has been the subject of a previous archaeological investigation, this was conducted in 1965 prior to the construction of the existing dwelling and the findings from which were reported in D.Charlesworth, 1971 "The Defences of Isurium Brigantum " in *Soldier and Civilian In Roman Yorkshire* Ed.R.M.Butler. Together with these details and other archaeological investigations on the perimeter defences the following can be deduced.

The line of the Roman wall passes through the eastern extent of the site, the nature and size of those remaining, upstanding sections of these defences would suggest the greater majority of the site would have been situated beneath these substantial fortifications.

The fortifications are multi phased, the earliest of which consisted of perimeter bank and ditch situated to the inside of the existing perimeter defences, this feature is thought to date to the mid to late 2nd century. These defensive earthworks were superseded in the 3rd century by the construction of a perimeter wall, this 2.438 m thick wall exceeded 6.096 m in height and would have been faced on both sides with red sandstone ashlar. Situated to the inside of the perimeter wall there would have run a parallel rampart bank that is likely to have measured in the region of 6.401 m wide and 3.658 m high, it would appear that this earthwork replaced the earlier mid to late 2nd century bank.

To the front of the perimeter wall there is likely to have been a berm measuring approximately 4.267 m wide situated adjacent to an outer ditch that would have measured in the region of 5.182 m wide and up to 1.829 m in depth.

The site also supported a bastion one of six such structures that have been identified along the line of the defences. These structures are likely to have been constructed during the mid to late 4th century and are situated on the external side of the perimeter wall overlying the earlier ditch line. The bastions were constructed out of millstone grit, limestone and yellow sandstone. These modifications to the perimeter defences also resulted in the excavation of a new perimeter ditch to replace that lost beneath the building works.

It would appear that the bastions fell into disuse prior to the wall, with re-used masonry from the bastions being incorporated into the wall and used to repair same. It is likely that the perimeter wall was still upstanding into the 5th century.

From available cartographic evidence details concerning the more recent history of the site and it's environs can be established:-

During the early 19th century (1809 Enclosure Awards) the site straddles the boundary between two property parcels that have the characteristics of medieval tenement plots, these units are situated to the rear of those properties fronting Back Lane and are contained by the line of the Roman defences to the east.

The Tenement plots would have been have been utilised during the medieval period for a variety of different uses that would have included animal husbandry, small scale manufacturing industry, gardens, orchards and open yard areas. It is highly probable that the study area was utilised for a number of such purposes during the medieval and post medieval period.

By the mid 19th century (1855, OS 6") many of the property parcels within the eastern extent of the village had been amalgamated into larger trapezoid shaped field units, a number of which supported a high quantity of mature trees. The study area was situated within one such field.

This large field had been partitioned into two smaller fields by the late 19th century (1898, OS 6"), these modifications would appear to associated with the re-routing of Low Lane around Back Lane junction.

The study area is situated within the eastern most field, an area supporting intermittent mature trees and is characteristically agricultural in nature, this field extends beyond the line of the Roman defences to the east.

The topography and field systems remained unchanged well into the mid 20th century, the study area was last depicted as a green field site in 1951 (OS 6", 1951).

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The eastern defences have been the subject of previous archaeological investigation. During 1965 archaeological excavations were conducted to the east of the study area on the presumed site of the East Gate.

However, the exact location of a series of exploratory excavations, that were undertaken in advance of the construction of those modern properties to the west of Briarwood, has not been accurately established. It is suspected that they