3.0 Archaeological Background

Over the past half century there has been a renewed interest in the history of Ripon, cumulating in the recent publication of several articles that synthesise both the documentary (MacKay 1982) and archaeological (Wyman 1997) research. As a result of this research the development of Ripon is better understood than many other Yorkshire market towns.

Despite this recent research there are major limitations with the present information. Firstly the documentary evidence, by the nature of its survival, is patchy and requires careful interpretation. Secondly the archaeological evidence is based on a hand full of excavations and most of the recent work has been focused within the vicinity of the Cathedral.

A small number of pre-historic and Roman finds have been recorded in Ripon (Cale, 1992, p4) but there is no reason to suggest that these relate to settlement.

The first documentary evidence for Ripon was Bede's account of the siting of a major monastery founded by Eata in c.657. Wilfred re-established the foundation, and the crypt under Ripon Cathedral is a survival from Wilfrid's church that was constructed in *c.*671-8 (Whyman, 1997, p119).

One of the earliest areas of settlement in Ripon are thought to surround the Stonebridgegate - St. Marygate route of access from the Ure to the Minster. This area formed the core lands held by the Chapter, which were recorded in a court case of 1228. A reference in this document to "the place where four roads meet" is ascribed by Mackay to the junction of Allhallowgate, St. Marygate, Priest Lane and Stonebridgegate (MacKay, 1982, p75-6). The latter two roads are mentioned earlier in the document by name.

Recent excavations along St. Marygate suggest that it was established in the 12th or early 13th century as it appears to post-date buildings in use during this period (Whyman, 1997, p160). Whyman postulated that the St. Marygate/ Stonebridgegate axis was laid out over an earlier route following a ridge overlooking the River Ure. The line of this route is at present represented by Kirkgate and The Horsefair/ North Street (Whyman, 1997, p160).

MacKay suggested that the area of Chapter lands recorded in 1228 was also the location of the pre-conquest and Anglian monastic centres, (MacKay, 1982, p75-6). The distribution of archaeological finds from both these periods appear to broadly support this hypothesis.

The area directly west of the site between Priest Lane, St. Marygate and Residence Lane has since the 18th century been marked on maps as the site of the "Scots Monastery" (MacKay, 1982, p76). While this type of attribution should be regarded with caution a 19th century local historian J. R. Walbran recorded the discovery of 9th century Northumbrian Stycas and the foundations of a wall. The latter was composed of large stones with a cylindrical column of grit stone 4ft. 5 inches in circumference (MacKay, 1982, p76).

Walbran also recorded the discovery of a cemetery on All Hallows Hill. This cemetery contained at least one reportedly Christian burial and another that was found to be buried with

an iron cross on its chest. This cemetery may be connected with the lost parish church of All Hallows mentioned by John Leland in the 16th century (MacKay, 1982, p76).

MacKay suggested that All Hallows church should be "considered among the earliest structures in Ripon" (MacKay, 1982, p76). The location of All Hallows is unknown but it is likely that its dedication led to the naming of Allhallowgate and so the church was presumably situated on this street frontage.

At the west end of Allhallowgate just north of the old market place was an area presumed to be the "Archbishop's market place" which was recorded in the 1228 court case. Mackay suggests that by the 13th century this area and Allhallowgate street formed the centre of Ripon (MacKay, 1982, p78).

Based on documentary evidence Ripon appears to have extended southwards, and by 1318 included burgages south of the River Skell, in Barefoot Street (MacKay, 1982, p76). The market place appears to have moved southwards with this expansion taking the commercial town centre with it.

Whyman argues that the surviving documentation only gives a *terminus ante quem* for the existence of streets; and the patterns found by Mackay reflect only the geographical survival of sources. Based on archaeological evidence he suggested that the Market Place, St Marygate and Stonebridgegate were established as part of a deliberate reorganisation in the 12th or early 13th centuries (Whyman, 1997, p160).

Both approaches suggest that by the 14th century Ripon had taken on a street pattern that was to continue until the expansion of the 19th and 20th centuries.

Nineteenth century maps clearly show patterns of burgage tenures over most of the newly developed 13th and 14th century areas of Ripon. The areas covered include the west end of Allhallowgate extending eastward particularly on the north side, also along both sides of the southern end of Stonebridgegate and on the west side of the north end of St. Marygate. Allhallowgate has the earliest evidence for burgage tenures in Ripon with documented sales of burgages from c. 1250 (MacKay, 1982, p78).

Although there is no documentary evidence for burgages in the area around the site there are references to the sale of "Tofts" and "Messuages" (MacKay, 1982, p79) which suggests the land use of this area was mainly for housing. The poll tax of 1379 records 81 individuals under the section titled "Stainbryggate" (MacKay, 1982, p79) which also suggests that this area was densely populated.

3.1 Recent excavations

There have been three recent archaeological excavations within the direct vicinity of the site. In 1992 there was an excavation at 6 Stonebridgegate in advance of development (Cale, 1992). A 13m x 10m area was cleaned. This revealed several "shallow and insignificant" brick features and a cobbled surface. One sherd of un-stratified 15th century green glazed pot was also recovered. Two 2 metre trial holes were machine excavated although no record was

made of their composition. Cale postulated that the layers of sand underlying the demolition rubble were made up ground associated with the 18th century development (Cale, 1992, p9).

Six trenches were excavated in the car park and garden of The Fleece Public House on St. Marygate in 1996 (Turnbull and Walsh, 1996). Four of these trenches (1-4) were within the car park area nearest to The Fleece. These were interpreted as representing modern cellar fills. Two other trenches (5-6) in the raised garden at the western end of the site contained layers of re-deposited natural with few archaeological components.

Observations during building work at 41A and 42 Allhallowgate revealed an early cobble and brick feature of uncertain date (Fiorato, 1997).

3.2 Map sources

The earliest available map is Humphries map of 1800 (North Yorkshire County Records Office ref. DC/RIC XVI 1/2/2). This shows two probable burgage plots fronting onto "Stammergate" now called Stonebridgegate and one to the west fronting onto Allhallowgate on the area of the present site. The property boundaries appear similar to those presently in existence. Buildings are shown on the street frontage of all three of these plots.

The property boundaries apparently continue until the 1910 when on the 6in to the mile Ordinance Survey map the plots appear to be amalgamated.

Due to the different cartographic conventions used for the depiction of buildings there are problems in comparing and interpreting buildings shown on maps. From 1800 until 1911 the site appears to become increasingly built up. Despite this it is probable that at least parts of the buildings represented on the plots marked 781 and 749 on Humphries map, still exist today as number 4 Stonebridgegate.

The 1911 Ordinance Survey 1:2,500 map shows the widening of the road at the corner of the present site. The road was extremely narrow at this point and comparisons with the 1910 map suggest that buildings had to be demolished to accommodate the widening.

4.0 Methodology.

The 4 Stonebridgegate site became available for archaeological investigation after the demolition of the garage buildings and removal of the concrete slab floor that covered a large part of the site.

The first phase of archaeological work was limited to an evaluation of the potential of the site. The excavation by a back acting digger of three geological test pits revealed that most of the central and eastern side of the site had been disturbed. Filled in cellars were seen on the eastern half of the site along the Allhallowgate frontage.

The north central area had been cut away with a revetment placed on the western side in order to create a garden at the same level as the kitchen further down slope. The area south of this and extending to the Allhallowgate street frontage was disturbed by the garage foundation walls and a large inspection pit running west to east parallel with the road.

The written scheme of investigation recommended that the site be evaluated through the excavation of at least a 32 m^2 area comprising one 8m x 4m trench situated west to east in the centre of the site (Falkingham, 1999, p3). Due to the high level of disturbance found over most of the central and eastern areas of the site the decision was made to concentrate on the relatively undisturbed western end of the site where medieval pottery had been recovered from Test Pit 2.

The demolition rubble on the west side of the site was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket down to the level where the archaeological deposits were visible. An area 15 m north to south and 7 m east to west (Area A) was then cleaned by hand, and all the archaeological features revealed were recorded on a 1:20m scale plan and each visible context was described.

In the western half of this area was a vehicle inspection pit 11m long, 1.4m wide and 1.4m deep (Trench 1). The concrete sides were removed and the base was cleared by a mechanical excavator. The sides and part of the base were then cleaned by hand and a 1:20m scale section drawn. Three contexts were created during the cleaning for finds possibly deriving from multiple contexts. Cleaning layer 0001 contained finds from fills 1034 and 1035 on the surface of pit 1054. Layer 0002 were finds collected during the machine excavation of geological test pit 2. Layer 0003 was composed of finds from the north end of the site, in the area of plan 4, during surface cleaning.

The only building works that extended into the area of preserved archaeology were the foundation trench for the western wall of house 3, the site of the foundation slab of house 4 and the service trenches. The foundation slab was to be positioned in an area that in the surface planning was thought to be natural. In order to test this theory a 0.65 metre wide L shaped trial trench (Trench 3), measuring 2.1m north to south and 1.8m east to west, was dug in the proposed northeast corner of house 4.

The second phase of the site was the excavation of in-situ archaeological deposits that were to be disturbed by the building work.

An area 7.1m long north-south and 2.1m wide (Trench 2) was initially marked out by the building contractor as being the area likely to be disturbed by the western foundation trench of house 3. This trench was also designed to hold a service pipe adjacent to the house and another pipe 1.1m to the west.

Initially features were excavated within the whole area of Trench 2 but as the site was more accurately surveyed by the building contractors it became apparent that a smaller area could be excavated as less was to be disturbed. Two narrow north-south trenches were excavated within Trench 2. The eastern trench was 6.20m long, 0.8m wide and around 0.5m deep. The western trench was 6.2m long, 0.2m wide and around 0.25m deep. In addition an area 1.05m by 0.56m was excavated in the centre of the western trench, to the same depth, in order to provide for the insertion of a manhole cover.

The building contractor was unclear as to the exact position of the west-east service pipe that was to run along the northern edge of house 3 and across an area of surviving archaeology to the western edge of the site. In order to accommodate this a 0.9m wide trench was dug which abutted the northern end of Trench 2 and ran from the foundation trench for house 3 to the Inspection Pit.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM) that was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey benchmark. A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

5.0 Results

5.1 Phase 1

5.1.1 Test pits

Three test pits were excavated by a mechanical excavator. Only two of these test pits revealed features of archaeological interest.

The first test pit, Test Pit 1, (Figure 2) was situated at the eastern end of the site 3.03m west of the Stonebridgegate frontage and directly abutting the southern foundation slab of house 4. The test pit measured 1.3m east to west and 1.45m north to south. After encountering a cobble wall the test pit was rapidly hand excavated. The eastern edge of the trench consisted of a 0.2m wide cobble wall (1057). This lay within a vertical sided rectangular feature [1061] that was cut 0.76m deep into an earlier deposit (1062). Feature [1061] had a flat base that continued beyond the trench to the west. Both (1057) and [1061] continued beyond the trench to the south and were truncated to the north by the modern concrete footings (1102) supporting the south wall of 4 Stonebridgegate. Abutting the cobble wall to the west were two worn Magnesian limestone steps rising to the south with brick filling below the treads. These features were interpreted as forming part of a cellar running from north to south. Similar construction techniques were used in cellars under 4 Stonebridgegate directly to the north. The internal area of the cellar within the test pit was filled with fire rakings (1059), which contained items of Victorian household rubbish.

A second test pit, Test Pit 2, (Figure 2) was situated at the north end of the site 1.1m east of the end of the Inspection Pit. This test pit cut 1m down into deposits (1095) and (1029) through which the pit [1064] was cut. The upper fill of context [1064] contained pottery most of which was recovered from the spoil heap, with a few pieces being removed directly from the section.

The third test pit revealed part of a second inspection pit, running west to east parallel to the road, filled with garage rubbish.

5.1.2 Surface Plan (Area A)

A large number of features were recorded in plan during the surface cleaning on the eastern side of the Inspection Pit. Many of these appeared to be large inter-cutting pits. Although stratigraphic relationships can be inferred from planned features the result usually tends to be largely meaningless as only the upper deposits are visible (Figure 2).

5.1.3 *Trench 1 (Inspection Pit)*

Layer (1000) overlay the deposits on the western edge of the inspection pit to a maximum depth of 0.42m. On the eastern side this layer had been removed during surface cleaning. Layer (1000) consisted of materials deposited during the construction and demolition of the garage and was identical to deposit (2041) recorded in Trench 2.

Directly below layer (1000) was the vertical sided pit [1020] filled with a single fill (1007). Pit [1020] was 1.08m in diameter and 0.93m deep. This pit was unusual in that it contained 5% charcoal flecks and animal bone. A possible explanation for the presence of these organic materials may be the late date of the feature.

Feature [1021] appears to have been a shallow pit 2.1m in diameter and 0.11m deep. The single fill (1001) contained pieces of modern brick.

Pit [1022] was 1.7m in diameter, 0.7m deep and contained a single fill (1012) that had a concentration of stones at its base.

Cut [1023] was the southern edge and cut [1024] the northern edge of a feature 3.85m long and over 1.45m deep at the limit of excavation. The southern side of this feature contained four fills which appeared to have slumped by up to 0.65m; the upper fills being most affected. These fills were deepest as they fell away from cut [1023] and became less distinct and shallower as they rose up again towards the centre of the feature.

The upper fill (1011) was over 1.1m long and up to 0.76m deep. Fill (1008) was over 1.58m long and 0.84m deep. Fill (1009) was over 0.9m long and 1.14m deep. The lowest visible fill (1010) was 1.1m long and 0.49m deep. Fill (1010) was also visible at the base of the Inspection Pit where it continued for 0.8m to the east.

In the centre of feature [1023/1024] was a stone lined well [1088]. This well was constructed of roughly squared sandstone blocks, less than 0.36m across, set in rough courses one stone thick, using dry stone walling techniques. Well [1088] had an external diameter of 1.24m and an internal diameter of 0.88m.

Fill (1013) lay towards the north side of cut [1024]. Deposit (1013) was separated from fills (1008)-(1011) by well [1088] and pit [1022]. Fill (1013) was 1.86m long and over 1.22m deep.

It was probable that the cuts [1023] and [1024] were created in order to construct the well [1088]. Cut [1023] was visible at the base of the Inspection pit and appeared to be continuing in an arc roughly 0.75m from the external edge of well [1088]. This edge was only visible for 0.8m where it was filled by (1010). It is possible that it continued beyond this point but due to the uniformity of the deposit this could not be determined without excavation.

The well [1088] appeared to be contained within its own cut, and fills (1009), (1010) and (1013) seemed to butt up against it. This suggests that the well was constructed first and the

fills were deposited later. It seems probable that the fills subsided because they had not been compacted.

The southern half of the well shaft [1023], cut through four layers. The upper most layer, (1003) was 0.52m deep and over 1.16m long. Layer (1003) appeared to continue 3.85m to the north on the other side of the well shaft where it extended for another 2.9m before going beyond the limit of excavation. Below this, layer (1004) was up to 0.28m deep and over 1.22m long. Layer (1005) was 0.6m deep and 2.8m long.

Layer (1006) was over 0.36m deep with an undulating upper surface that might suggest that part of this deposit had been removed by later activity. Layer (1006) was 2.36m long before being truncated by cut [1023]. The distinct nature of deposit (1006) made it likely that a similar deposit visible in the section 3.62m to the north and extending for another 0.85m belonged to the same context. The clean nature of layer (1006) suggests that this deposit may have been natural but on a site largely composed of features with re-deposited natural fills this interpretation must be open to question.

Deposit (1002) was over 2.6m long and 0.96m deep. The components of fill (1002) were very similar to those of (1003) and it is likely that they were part of the same layer divided by pit cut [1020]. If this interpretation is correct it would make layer (1003) over 11.5 long from north to south. Layer (1003) may also continue to the east for 1.4m as layer (1029), which extends beyond the limits of the trench. Layer (1029) was also visible for 0.5m on the west facing trench section until it was truncated by cut [1052].

Cut [1025] was a V shaped pit or possibly a ditch with unclear upper edges but probably around 1.6m across and 0.56m deep. It contained three fills. The upper fill (1014) and the second fill (1015) were both 0.16m deep and around 0.84m wide, while the lower fill (1016) was 0.24m deep and extended to the limits of the cut.

Layer (1017) was 3.24m long and 0.3m deep. Its northern edge with layer (1018) was parallel with cut [1025] suggesting an association with this feature, but there was no other evidence to substantiate this.

Layer (1018) was probably the same as layer (1030) which would combined, make this layer over 1.4m long from east to west and 1.2m wide from south to north with a maximum depth of 0.48m. Layer (1019) appeared to be the same context as (1031) with a combined length of 3.58m from south to north and a width of over 1.4m from east to west across the trench, with a depth of at least 0.5m.

Pit cut [1052] was visible both on the surface and in the section of the Inspection Pit. Cut [1052] was at least 2.34m long west to east with the latter end truncated by pit [1064]. Its southern end was slightly truncated by the Inspection Pit and it continued beyond the limit of excavation to the north. Despite this on its north - south axis it was at least 1.44m wide.

Pit [1052] was 0.58m deep in the Inspection Pit section and contained three fills. The upper fill (1026) was 1.8m wide, over 1.06m long from north to south and 0.26m deep. The second

fill (1027) extended to the edges of the cut and was 0.11m deep. The lowest fill (1028) was 0.21m deep.

Pit cut [1054] was also visible in both the base and the section of the Inspection Pit. Cut [1054] extended for 2.1m north to south and 1.8m from west to east where it continued beyond the edge of the trench. Pit [1054] was 1.18m deep and contained two fills. The upper fill (1034) was 1.76m long and 0.56m deep. The lower fill (1035) was 1.1m deep at the limit of excavation and extended to the limit of the cut.

Cut [1054] heavily truncated pit [1053] that only survived in a 0.45m wide strip on its north edge with a depth of 1.13m. Pit [1053] contained two fills; the upper (1032) surviving to 0.8m deep and the lower (1033) being 0.55m deep.

Two shallow features [1103] and [1104], at the top of the stratigraphic sequence, were probably the bases of pits that were truncated during the garage construction. Cut [1103] was 1.1m long and 0.18m deep and contained a single fill (1043); while cut [1104] was 1.64m long and 0.2m deep also with a single fill (1045).

Pit [1067] was 2.83m long and 0.84m deep but was slightly truncated at its southern end by cut [1103]. Pit [1067] contained two fills, the upper (1040) being 1.18m long and 0.36m deep while the lower (1041) filled the remainder of the cut. The matrix of (1041) contained 60% stones, which appeared to form tip lines.

Only the northern edge and three fills of pit [1055] survive. Its southern end was truncated by pit cut [1105] and part of its northern end by cut [1054]. The central fills of pit [1055] were truncated by pit [1067]. Despite this enough survives of pit [1055] to suggest that it was over 3.24m long, 1.06m deep and contained at least three fills. The upper fill (1042) was at least 2.76m long and 0.84m deep. Below it at the southern end was fill (1044), which was 0.94m long and 0.54m deep. Fill (1039) abutted the northern edge of cut [1055] in a strip up to 0.38m wide and extending to the depth of the cut.

Three layers were truncated by pits [1054] and [1055]. The upper layer (1036) was 0.67m long and 0.42m deep. The middle layer (1037) was 0.85m long and 0.22m deep. The lower layer (1038) was 1.1m long and 0.18m deep. These layers are likely to be a continuation of the levelling layers (1029-31).

Pit [1105] was truncated at its southern end by pit cut [1056]. Cut [1105] was at least 3.2m long, 1.12m deep and contained five fills. The upper fill (1046) was 0.34m long and 0.56m deep and may have been part of an inter-cutting pit. Fill (1046) was 2.12m long and 0.56m deep. Below this fill (1047) was 1.32m long and 0.28m deep. Fill (1048) extended for the length and depth of the cut. The lowest fill (1051) abutted the northern edge of cut [1105] where it was 0.67m deep and 0.55m wide.

Pit [1056] was 1.96m long, 1.1m deep and contained a single fill (1049). Cut [1056] truncated layer (1050) to the north. Deposit (1050) was up to 0.8m deep and extended for 1.4m before continuing beyond the limit of the trench to the south. Deposit (1050) was