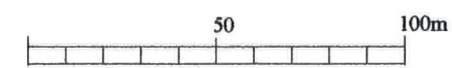


Figure 3, Jeffereys Map of Ripon, 1772, with the millrace and mill at Skellgarths emphasised





Figure 4, Langdale's Plan of Ripon, 1818, showing the mill race at Skellgarths





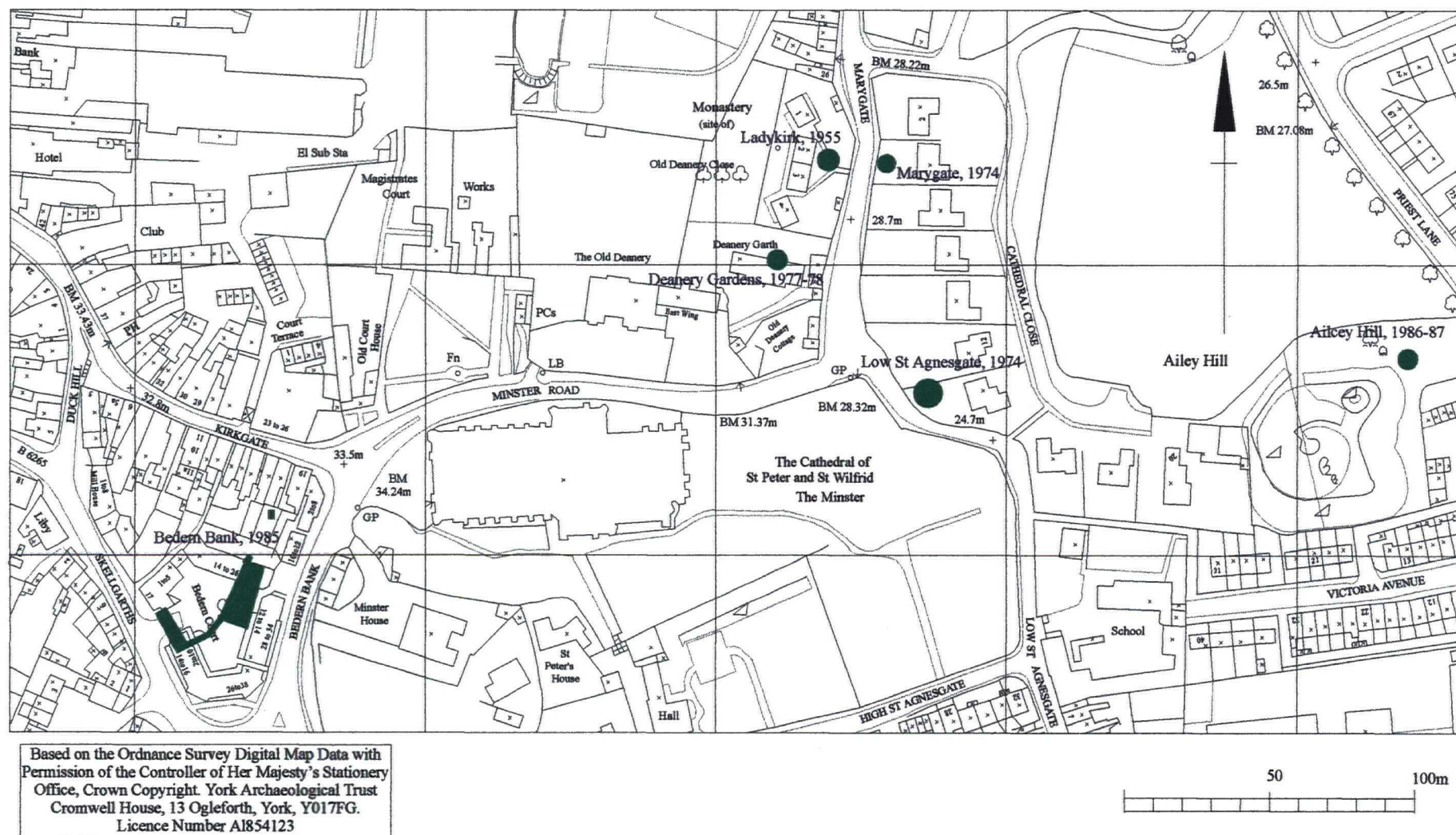


Figure 6, Plan showing the locations of archaeological work referred to in the text



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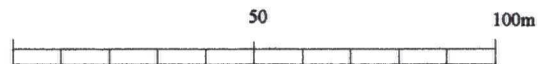


Figure 7, Map showing the approximate location of Bedern Bank excavations in 1985 and the approximate position of the ancient water course





## **5. WALK-OVER SURVEY**

The site is currently (October 2000) vacant but a brick wall aligned south west – north east partly divides the site and there are mounds of loose rubble in some areas of the site. The ground slopes gently down from east to west and slightly more steeply to the street frontage at Skellgarths. The retaining walls which form the north and south-eastern boundaries of the site are c.4m high and are of many builds. Evaluation trenches could not be positioned close to these walls without risking undermining their foundations.

There are several well established trees located around the margins of the northern part of the site which is in parts also overgrown with vegetation. The tree root systems may have affected the deposits below. It should be ascertained if the trees are to remain on the site since evaluation trenches could not be positioned without damaging their root systems.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

The site lies very close to the conjectured area of the early medieval ecclesiastical precinct and associated secular settlement could be located in the vicinity. The excavations at Bedern Bank, (now Bedern Court) recorded well preserved remains, including waterlogged deposits, covering a sequence of occupation from the 12<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the early medieval period this area was occupied by a meander in the River Skell and by the late 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century the banks had been reinforced and a terrace created and drained, probably as a result of the construction of a mill stream which ran alongside the present Skellgarths. By the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century the site had been divided into a number of separate properties occupied by houses and tanning yards. The findings from the archaeological investigations on the adjacent site at Bedern Bank are the most relevant to any attempt to anticipate the depth, character and date of deposits which may survive on the development site. The archive of the site has been consulted by permission of D. Perring, however, in its current condition it is not possible to determine the location and depth of contextual information with ease or accuracy. D. Perring confirmed that the river course and braiding from it covered part of the Bedern Bank site, and that this water course is likely also to appear on the adjacent site in Skellgarths. The approximate position of the excavated trenches has been plotted, and from the description in the archive of the natural deposits found on the site the approximate location of the water channel is shown. Unless it was particularly meandering in its course it almost certainly will also run across the area of the proposed development. While the

precise location and alignment of the terraces and the water course cannot at present be mapped with accuracy without significant further work on the Bedern Bank archive there is a strong likelihood that a similar sequence of deposition will survive in the development area.

Within the water channel the maximum depth of archaeological deposition is likely to be 4m with the final metre of deposits representing extremely well preserved waterlogged material. However, outside the channel the deposits are likely to be shallower, an estimated less than 2m in depth. 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings on the site will have intruded on earlier deposits, particularly in the area of the site closest to the street frontage. It is unlikely that these buildings would have been cellared and therefore the truncation of archaeological deposits it probably restricted to the depth of the footings, together with service trenches for these buildings. The area to the rear of the site is less likely to have been affected by truncation of this nature.

## **7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The area of proposed development lies within an area of archaeological importance at the heart of the historic town of Ripon. It is thought to lie close to the ecclesiastical precinct boundary identified by Hall and Whyman (1996, 144) and could be an area from which more reliable data might be obtained to shed light on the layout and development of ecclesiastical landholdings and their relationship to the secular town. The excavations at Bedern Bank next door in the area known as Bedern Court demonstrated development history of the natural water course and the recorded well preserved remains covering a sequence of occupation from the 12<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> centuries. There is a high potential for a similar sequence of deposits on this site which is one of the last remaining empty plots of land on the eastern side of Skellgarths. While there will have been some degree of truncation of the deposits in part of the site by 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings the archaeological evidence from this site has the potential to add to the knowledge of the milling, cloth making and tanning industries and to illuminate important aspects of the settlement history of Ripon.



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