



6.2 STRATIGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Group 1 : Natural Deposits

The natural ground surface was red/brown coarse grained sand with lenses of pebbles and cobbles (1075) and appeared to slope gradually down from c.36.77m AOD in the north-east corner of the site to c.35.98m at the south-west corner of the excavated area.

Period 1 : 11th/12th century

(Group 2 : Quarry pit and its use as a rubbish pit; Group 3 : Small pit)

Immediately beneath cleared modern deposits, located in the northern part of the site, cutting through natural deposits was a stepped pit (1061) which is likely to have initially been used for sand and gravel extraction and then latterly as a rubbish pit.

1057 formed the initial backfill and slumping into the disused quarry sand pit 1061 and was a mixture of redeposited natural deposits, slumpage from the sides of the pit and intermixed dumps of domestic derived material. A series of further dump deposits (1055, 1031 and 1044) backfilled the feature. This material could have been broken down into a series of smaller individual deposits but was excavated as several larger contexts because of the constraints of time. The deposits consisted of many lenses of similar material, representing a series of waste deposits tipped into the pit, rather than a single backfilling episode. The material appeared to be largely domestic in origin, comprising household waste and possible latrine materials. However there was also some indication of waste from craft activities. A small amount of slag was present and animal bone analysis identified a red squirrel bone and primary butchery waste from context 1031. The presence of squirrel bone has, on other sites, been interpreted as waste from the processing of pelts and its recovery may hint at similar activity here. Analysis of the animal bones also noted three sparrowhawk bones, from 1044, and suggests that this may indicate a bird kept for hawking possibly indicating high status occupation. 1044 also contained a Roman coin of the mid 4th century (Sf5).

Despite being located immediately below the modern construction and within free draining sand/gravel natural material the fills of this feature retained an organic content which is quite a

rare occurrence in Ripon. The environmental analysis of samples of this material provided useful data which confirmed the interpretation of the process of deposition of these deposits.

The quarry pit (1061) may indicate use of the area prior to the establishment of a building plot on the site, or it could represent activity to the rear of a building. The fills of the pit, and the small shallow pit (1036), which was stratigraphically above 1031 and was backfilled with 1029 demonstrated that domestic rubbish was being disposed of, which indicates habitation close by. The pottery from the contexts in these Groups dates this occupation to the date range 11th-13th century, suggesting the 12th century as the most likely date within the range, but notes the absence of a framework of absolute chronology.

Period 2 : 12/13th century

(Group 4 : Cobble standing, or capping of pit; Group 5 : Dumps of domestic waste, within hollow formed by settling of fills of quarry pit 1061; Group 6 small pit and fill at the western edge of the excavation area)

A dump of redeposited natural (1043) was found to have been used to fill and level a hollow in the top of the backfills on the eastern side of pit 1061. This material may have been deposited to prepare the ground to form a cobble standing or post-pad (1039) or alternatively the redeposited natural and the cobbles could have been intended as a partial capping to the backfills of pit 1061 below, with the cobbles subsiding into the fills of 1061 as they settled. The series of dumped deposits (1030, 1022, 1018, 1017, 1027) overlay the cobbles and may have been levelling of the hollow formed after settling of underlying deposits within pit 1061.

The pottery from these contexts has a similar date range to the deposits stratigraphically below (Groups 2-3), from the 11th/13th century, there were however a few sherds which were more indicative of a 13th century date. This, together with two finds recovered from 1043, a padlock (Sf 1) and an annular brooch (Sf 6) which date from the 13th/14th century and 13th/15th century respectively, appears to suggest that these deposits should be dated to the 13th century at the earliest.

A large number of sherds of the same pot were recovered from 1027 which dated from the late 12th century and together with 1030, 1022 and 1018 contained organic material. 1018 contained quantities of what appeared to be charred amorphous organic matter, possibly burnt peat. These contexts indicated the continued disposal of domestic waste in this area in the northern part of the site.

A small pit (1071) was the earliest feature in a complex series of inter-cutting pits which was located in the south western quadrant of the site. 1071 was heavily truncated by later pits, by cellaring and the telephone cabinet located at the western edge of the excavation. It was backfilled with a sandy deposit (1033) which contained pottery dating from the 12th/13th century.

The deposits and features (Groups 4-6) indicate habitation close by and suggest that there is likely to have been a building occupying the plot currently occupied by the Wakeman's House from the 12th century onwards. They also indicate that the back yard of the plot in this period was open and not occupied by a range of buildings, at least until the 13th century. While a deposit of cobbles (1039) could be interpreted as a post-pad there appeared to be no other structural elements associated with this context suggesting that the cobbles themselves may not have been a structural element of a building.

Period 3 : 13th century

(Group 7 : A complex of inter-cutting small and large pits and their fills located at the western side of the excavation)

A heavily truncated pit (1069), backfilled with 1068, was stratigraphically above 1033. It in turn was cut by a small pit cut (1066) backfilled with 1046 and 1032, the latter of which contained a 9th century styca. Stratigraphically above these backfills was a large cut (1064). The top of this pit was severely truncated by a cobble lined latrine pit (1049), and by the 19th century cellaring to the west. Its base was established, but its backfill 1048 was not fully removed due to time constraints. 1048 was a mixed sandy fill which contained very few inclusions other than charcoal, which comprised a very small portion of the total deposit. This was not characteristic of a rubbish pit fill and appeared to comprise mainly redeposited natural deposits. It was cut by another large pit (1060) which was truncated by cellaring and by latrine pit 1049. The

excavation of this feature was carried out along a section line immediately east of the cellaring to avoid any contamination from the post-medieval deposits. The sandy backfill (1054) showed tip lines which sloped from north to south.

This complex of inter-cutting small and large pits and their fills located at the western side of the excavation indicated the continuance of pit digging, probably in the back yard of a property fronting the Market Place. The backfills of these pits contained predominantly sandy deposits of homogenous material which were not indicative of the disposal of any waste characteristic of particular activities although it appeared to be domestic in origin.

Period 4 13th/14th century

(Group 8 : Large pit backfilled with dumped materials; Group 9 : Levelling; Group 10 : 13th century pit containing smithing waste; Group 11 : Latrine pit and its use)

The sequence of inter-cutting features (Group 7) in the south west quadrant of the site continued into this period. A large pit (1073) was stratigraphically above 1053 and contained material which appeared to be primary dumps indicating that it was used to dispose of waste material. The substantial remains of several contemporary pottery vessels further substantiates this interpretation. The backfill of 1073 comprising mixed dumps (1067, 1052, 1058) and slumped natural (1063). The southern extent of the cut appeared to continue to the edge of excavation. Contexts 1058 and 1063, located at this margin of the excavation, were probably backfills within 1073 but this area was not fully excavated due to the constraints of time. Part of the northern extent of the feature was truncated by various later pits.

The eastern edge of the fills of 1073 were sealed by redeposited natural material (1065), c.0.10m deep used as a levelling deposit. It may indicate levelling prior to a change in the use of the area. However, it was not a particularly widespread deposit and no evidence of any particular change in use of the area was found. Stratigraphically above 1065 a pit (1051) with clay lining (1045) was located in the south-west quadrant of the excavation area within the complex of inter-cutting features. The original function of the lined pit is not known but it was subsequently used to dispose of industrial waste (1028). This context was predominantly waste from an industrial process, the slag and clinker was iron smithing waste and included hearth bottoms indicating

that a smithy may have been located close by. Substantial numbers of sherds of various contemporary vessels were also recovered from this backfill.

A construction cut (1049) for a cobble lined latrine pit (1047) was found stratigraphically above 1028. Cobbles were laid flat to form courses lining the pit. Pottery recovered from this context was likely to have derived from the contexts through which this feature was cut. A silty use deposit (1038) backfilled the latrine pit (1049). Analysis of the animal bones identified an assemblage in this context which was dominated by duck and suggests that both duck and geese (identified from other contexts) may have been kept as domestic stock. This feature was the latest of the series of inter-cutting pits located in the south-west quadrant of the area of excavation.

Within this stratigraphic sequence a levelling deposit (Group 9) of redeposited natural was not a particularly widespread deposit and probably did not signify a change in use of the area in this period. The sequence of inter-cutting pits (Groups 8, 10 and 11) in the south-west quadrant of the site continued the disposal of domestically derived waste and demonstrates intensive use of the area for this purpose. One of the inter-cutting pits was backfilled predominantly with waste derived from an industrial process, the slag and clinker was iron smithing waste and included hearth bottoms indicating that a smithy may have been located close by. It was cut by a latrine pit (Group 11) which could indicate that a building range may have extended from the Market Place to immediately north of this pit.

Period 5 : 14th century

(Group 12 : Dumps slumping into latrine pit; Group 13 : Dumps)

The latrine pit (1049) fell into disuse and a series of dump deposits accumulated. Some (1035 and 1026) slumping into the backfills of the latrine. 1024, 1023, 1021 and 1019 were dumps of material also above the latrine pit, and both series of deposits indicate the disuse of that feature.

No dating evidence was recovered from these contexts. A series of small dumps (1020, 1025, 1016) were stratigraphically above 1028 and a single sherd of pottery which dated from the 14th century was recovered from context 1025. This was the only dating evidence from this series of

contexts and as it could have been residual cannot be used to define the dating of this period of development of the site.

Period 6 : Undated

(Group 14 : Structural or possible structural features; Group 15 : Wall footing)

A shallow pit (1042) which was truncated by the telephone junction cabinet and by slot 1037 was located at the western edge of the excavation. It may have been the base of a post hole or a shallow pit which could have been associated with a small post hole (1011) which was located c.1.50m to the east. The sandy backfill of 1042 (1041) and the clayey silt backfill (1008) of 1011 contained no sign of post packing, or dating evidence. While these two small pits/post holes may have served a structural purpose they do not provide definitive evidence of structural activity. A construction cut or slot 1037, which was stratigraphically above 1041 contained clay and cobbles (1034). This feature formed a short section of clay and cobble footings for a wall and was truncated on its western edge by the telephone junction box. This may have been the remains of the foundations of a wall of a building which was on the same alignment as the western wall of the present Wakeman's House. It could have been part of a building on the plot which was erected after the area to the east had been used for pit digging. The clay and cobble footing contained pottery which dated from the 12th century and if the feature was part of a building occupying the plot at the rear of the Wakeman's House, it is likely to post date the pit digging activity in the area and these sherds are likely to be residual. An alternative interpretation is that the wall may represent part of a boundary wall between the two building plots, and if so could date to any point in the medieval period.

Period 7 : 19th/20th century

(Group 16 : Cellar walls; Group 17 : Deposits within the footprint of the building extension to the rear of Wakeman's House; Group 18 : Footings of the eastern and southern wall of the extension at the rear of Wakeman's House)

Deposits from this period (Groups 16-18) represent the remains of 19th and 20th century buildings on the two adjacent plots. The standing wall of the building at the southern edge of the site was aligned east-west and was seen to continue below ground as a cellar wall (1002) which was butted by 1003, a cellar wall aligned north-south. 1003 appeared to have been altered and

walls 1004 and 1005 formed a slightly curved V shaped alignment. These walls may have been associated with a stair well, but this was unclear. The main cellar area was divided by 1006, aligned east-west, which butted 1003. To the north of 1003 was a short north-south wall alignment (1006) which may have been associated with the cellaring but was not fully excavated so no specific function was established. A short length of wall (1010) was revealed just below the surface lying to the north and on the same alignment as wall 1003 and together they formed the eastern wall of the property which formerly stood on this plot.

The deeds for the property at 32 Market Place can be traced back to the 16th century but it was rebuilt in early part of the 19th century when High Skellgate was widened. This property in turn was demolished in 1946 due to increasing traffic at this difficult corner. The area of cellaring was partially cleared and cellar walls were recorded in plan and photographically. The walls were left *in situ*.

A rectangular cut (1015), possibly a construction cut, continued beyond the southern edge of the excavation and was cut by the footings of the building extension to the rear of Wakeman's House. The backfill (1014) of this cut included a clay pipe bowl and 19th century bricks. A sub-rectangular pit cut (1074), located at the eastern edge of the excavation, contained a backfill which comprised modern rubble (1072) and was not excavated. A shallow dump of sandy silt (1009) contained roots and may have been the result of horticultural activity.

The recent demolition work left standing the footings of the walls of the building (Group 18) which had formed an extension at the rear of the Wakeman's House. These were recorded photographically and were left *in situ*. No evidence of earlier foundations appeared to have survived along the path of these modern foundations.

Period 8 : 20th century

(Group 19 : Demolition debris)

A sub-circular cut (1013), located at the western edge of excavation contained a modern backfill(1012) which included a lamp with cable together with modern safety glass and is likely to have resulted from the recent demolition activity on the site. It was stratigraphically below the hand clearance of the site after machining resulted in the recovery of finds which were allocated

context number 1001. An spread of irregular depth of brick rubble (1000) resulting from demolition of the 20th century extension to Wakeman's House was removed by machine.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The sequence of deposition recovered from the excavation included a small section of clay and cobble foundations which may represent part of a medieval building built at the rear of, and on the same north-south alignment as the Wakeman's House, or part of a boundary wall between adjacent building plots. Other medieval structural remains may have been removed by the foundation trenches of the recently demolished modern extension to the Wakeman's House. Inside the footprint of the building extension deep inter-cutting medieval features were found to survive. These features enabled the layout and sequence of occupation of property in the medieval period to be examined and suggest that there is likely to have been a building occupying the plot currently occupied by the Wakeman's House from the 12th century onwards and that the back yard of the plot was open and not occupied by a range of buildings until at least the 13th century. There were no pits containing material later than this date in the northern part of the plot and it may be inferred that subsequent to this date a building occupied this part of the rear plot.

The pit digging activity indicated a long sequence of use and occupation of the site dating from the 11th/12th - 15th century. The features included an irregular stepped sand and gravel pit which may have been open before any building was erected on the plot but was then subsequently used over a period for the disposal of domestic waste, together with butchery waste. The humic and organic content found in some of these deposits is quite an unusual survival in Ripon and appears to confirm the domestic origin of much of the material. Further inter-cutting pit features, including a cobble lined latrine pit had been used to dispose of waste, mainly from domestic sources but one pit contained a backfill comprising almost entirely of metal-working waste including hearth bottom waste from smithing. It is possible that a smith worked in the vicinity but other studies of the disposal of medieval smithing waste have shown that the larger pieces of metal-working waste tend to travel the furthest from the production site. Nevertheless the workshop is likely to have been located relatively close by (Truman forthcoming).

The large quantities of pottery sherds recovered from these deposits together with three stratified coins permit dating of the stratigraphic sequence. The pottery assemblage, which includes numerous sherds of individual vessels, is of particular significance providing clear evidence of the primary character of much of the deposition on this site. Further analysis of the assemblage would enable a precise framework of pottery chronology to be established and would allow some of the issues relating to the development of the town to be addressed. The pottery included sherds derived from the coal measures and may suggest trade links between Ripon and prolific production centres in South Yorkshire.

8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The majority of archaeological deposition on this site has been excavated negating the need for further archaeological investigation within the boundaries of the site. The excavation has demonstrated the survival of very well preserved medieval remains immediately below the ground surface and highlights the importance of thorough archaeological investigation of sites within the historic core of Ripon even where significant truncation is known to have occurred. The excavation of the surviving archaeological deposits here has enabled the evidence they contain to be recorded, sampled and for artefactual evidence to be recovered. For the full potential of this data to be realised further analysis of it, in association with other archaeological evidence recovered from nearby sites in the area is required. It would appear that these deposits and particularly the finds assemblage within them have the potential to address some of the important questions associated with the development of Ripon together with local pottery production and trade and other crafts practised in the area.