

YORK



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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**THE OLD DEANERY,
RIPON,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-TOP STUDY**



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ABSTRACT

In October 2000, York Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological desk-top study of the site of The Old Deanery, Minster Road in Ripon. The study examined the Sites and Monuments Records of North Yorkshire County Council, cartographic evidence from the 18th to the 20th century, published and unpublished reports.

The study identified that the Old Deanery, lying within the ecclesiastical precinct immediately to the north of the Minster, is a 17th - century building which has subsequently been modified in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The site lies within the boundary of the Scheduled Ancient Monument (number 1282) for Ripon Minster Close. Below ground, important archaeological deposits relating both to the medieval Bedern buildings and more generally to the layout and occupation of early medieval and medieval Ripon are likely to survive close to the modern ground surface. There is also a possibility that individual early medieval or medieval burials could be located here.

1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2000, York Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological desk-top study of The Old Deanery, Minster Road in Ripon (NGR SE 3147 7118) (Figure 1). The study was carried out under instructions from J.M. Witherick, Architect, to assess the likely impact of proposed development on any archaeological deposits that may be present at the site. The proposed development involves the construction of a new stair extension extending to basement level, the conversion of the garden store to toilet accommodation, the repair of old and the installation of new drainage lines, alterations to floor levels involving excavation to sub-floor level in places and the repair of steps and a path. The historical and archaeological background to the area was studied via a variety of media.

2. METHODOLOGY

The media consulted in the study consisted of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) of North Yorkshire County Council (records cards and maps), cartographic data (1733 to late 20th century), published and unpublished archaeological reports and works of historical and archaeological synthesis.

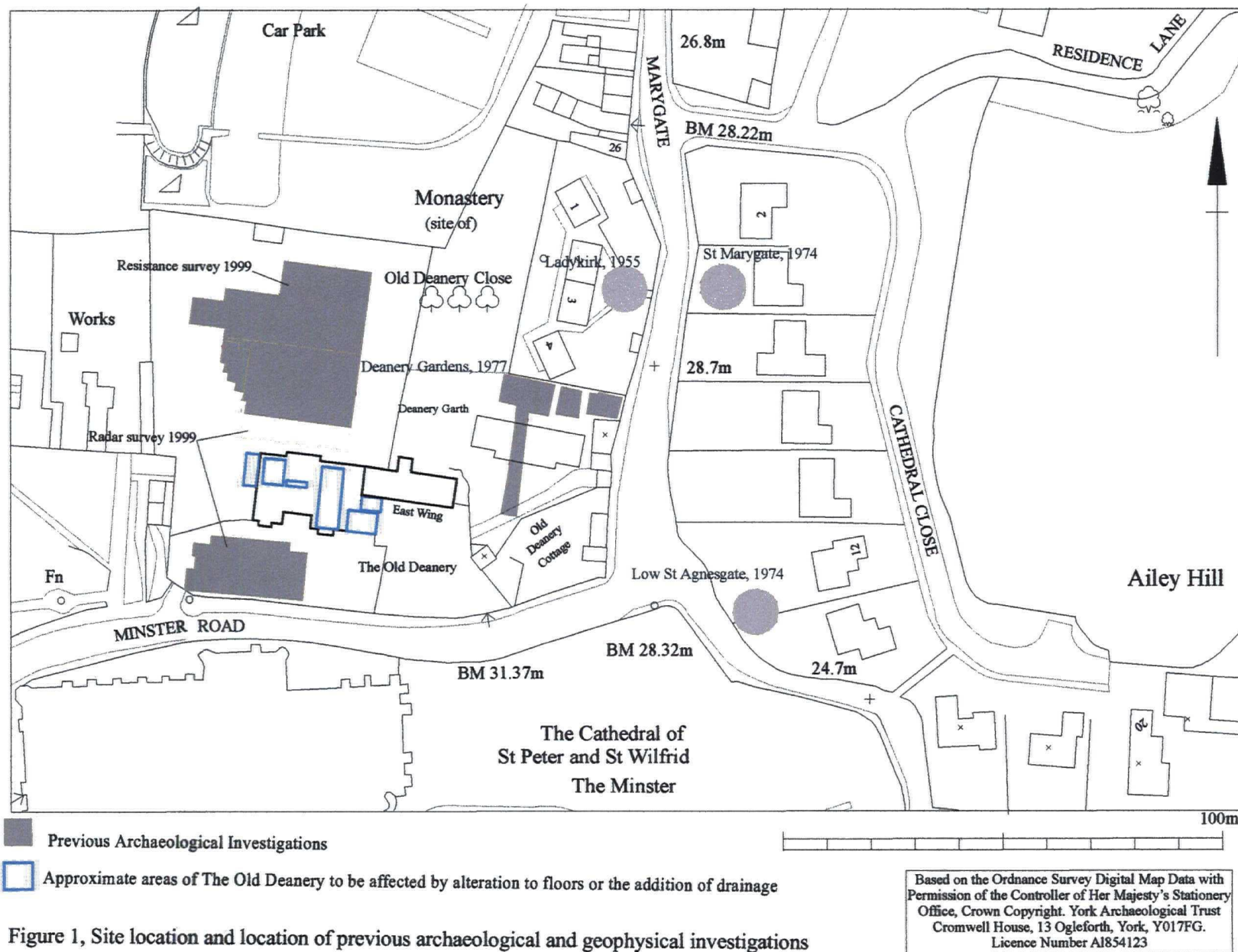


Figure 1, Site location and location of previous archaeological and geophysical investigations

Research notes are currently stored by York Archaeological Trust under the Harrogate Museum accession code HARGM:10454.

3. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Ripon is situated on an escarpment with the Minster standing on a spur of this ridge. The Old Deanery is located c. 30m to the north of the Minster also standing on the spur, with the ground falling away steeply immediately to the east of the building. The drift geology of the area is glacial boulder clay which lies above the solid geology formed by Permo-Triassic marls and sandstones with gypsum over limestone (Geological Survey 1979). Periglacial sediments and gravels which are characteristic of the locality have been observed nearby during excavations in Deanery Gardens and also during excavations in the cathedral crypt (Whyman 1997, 121).

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the boundary of the ecclesiastical precinct of the Cathedral of St Peter and St Wilfrid, within the area defined as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (number 1282). There have been a number of excavations within the area of the ecclesiastical precinct, the findings of which have been published by Hall and Whyman, 1996 and Whyman, 1997. The excavations at Deanery Gardens in 1977-8 directed by D. Greenhaugh lie closest to The Old Deanery. Findings from these archaeological investigations and an examination of the documentary and cartographic evidence for the site is discussed below period by period. A geophysical survey of part of the garden of the Old Deanery was commissioned by York Archaeological Trust in 1999 and the results are summarised below.

4.1 Prehistoric period (to 1st century AD)

There is significant evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Ripon but no finds from this period have been recovered within the town.

4.2 Roman period (1st to 5th centuries AD)

While there is significant archaeological evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of Ripon, to date, no archaeological evidence from this period has been discovered in excavations within the city apart from some sherds of residual Roman pottery from excavations during 1977-78 in the Deanery Gardens (Whyman 1997, 129).

4.3 Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods (5th-11th centuries)

The first documentary evidence of the Anglo-Saxon monastic site dates from the 8th century when Stephen of Ripon recorded the Life of Wilfrid c.AD 709/10 and Bede also wrote of the monastery c.AD 730. This evidence records the foundation of a monastery by Eata and its reallocation to Wilfrid. Although there is no evidence of its layout, or an accurate location for the site, post-medieval tradition suggests that Eata's monastery lay on land to the north of Residence Lane (Hall and Whyman 1996, 140). The site of Wilfrid's church is that of the present Minster where the crypt is generally believed to have been built by Wilfrid because of its similarity to the crypt at Hexham which is known to be Wilfrid's. After the Norman Conquest, the minster church became a part of the diocese of York and remained a significant ecclesiastical centre throughout the medieval period.

The earliest archaeological evidence for settlement at Ripon dates to the 7th century and relates to the monastic site. Archaeological evidence which has been recovered from within this area includes that from an excavation in 1955 by A. Paget-Baggs in the grounds of the former Deanery Garden Hotel. This uncovered the foundations of a two cell church and associated cemetery believed to be the Ladykirk noted by the 16th century antiquarian John Leland. The findings of the 1955 excavation suggest that there was a church and cemetery on the site by the early 11th century, and that both may have been present from the 8th century onwards (Hall and Whyman 1996, 130). What are likely to have been further remains of this cemetery were recorded on the other side of Marygate by P.Mayes in 1974. In 1977 the area immediately to the south of Paget-Baggs's site was excavated by D. Greenhaugh. A few contexts in the north-west corner of the site were identified as possibly pre-Conquest in origin and the "Ripon Jewel" dating from the 7th century was recovered from here. While the position of the pre-conquest ecclesiastical boundary is not known with any certainty, the findings from these excavations, together with antiquarian observations and an examination of the cartographic and topographical evidence have allowed it to be suggested that the area enclosed by Allhallowgate to the north and Marygate to east, encompassing the Minster, is at the core of Wilfrid's monastery (Hall and Whyman 1996, 136-44).

An early medieval secular settlement in Ripon is likely to have pre-dated the important ecclesiastical centre, and its presence was demonstrated by York Archaeological Trust's excavations at Ailcy Hill in 1986-87 (Hall and Whyman 1996) which show that a non-monastic

cemetery on the site dated from the 6th - 7th century. However, nothing is known for certain of the form or layout of early medieval secular settlement at Ripon.

Three inhumations were uncovered in the Deanery Gardens excavation of 1977. Dating evidence was not found but the graves were interpreted as likely to be of early medieval date, and possibly contemporary with the burials found within and around the Ladykirk. One may be regarded as an outlier of that cemetery and the other two may have been outliers of an undated but possibly early phase of a cemetery associated with the Minster (Hall and Whyman 1996, 131).

4.4 Medieval period (11th-16th centuries)

While the form of the early medieval monastic precinct and secular settlement are not yet fully understood, there is clear evidence of ecclesiastical development from the later 12th century onwards and the town may also have undergone a period of expansion at this time. Some time before the Conquest the monastery became a Minster church with a college of canons and in the later 12th century the rebuilding of the Minster church was begun. An assessment of excavations on Low St Agnesgate by P. Mayes in 1974 and in the Deanery Gardens by D. Greenhaugh in 1977-8 revealed significant evidence of occupation and activity in this part of Ripon dating from the 11th century onwards (Whyman 1997, 121). In the Deanery Gardens, two timber built structures were found. The easternmost was represented by a wall slot and an internal cobbled surface. It was thought to be probably two storied, or at least have had a loft space, and could be characterised as a stable block with a likely 13th century date (Whyman 1997, 153). A smaller building to the east was also recorded, and although there was less evidence on which to permit interpretation, construction techniques and ceramic dating evidence indicate it could have dated to the 12th century (Whyman 1997 153). Documentary evidence from 1228 of a court case between the Ripon Chapter and the Archbishop of York makes it clear that the land in this area formed the core of the ecclesiastical holdings in Ripon and it seems probable that the structures recorded in the Deanery Gardens represent outbuildings within a precinct owned or controlled by either Ripon Chapter or the Archbishopric. These buildings, the use of which can be dated to the 12th/13th century, appear to lie across the lie of Marygate, suggesting that this street was established some time after this date (Whyman 1997, 156). Whyman's interpretation of the excavation evidence from the site at Low St Agnesgate and The Deanery Gardens is to suggest that they hint at a major reorganization of settlement and street plan in the 12th or early 13th

century and also imply modifications to the layout of ecclesiastical property holdings to the north of the Minster.

There is documentary evidence that the site within which The Old Deanery now stands was donated by Archbishop Bowet in 1414 for the building of a New Bedern, or College of Vicars Choral, together with its own chapel dedicated to St Nicholas. These college buildings were mainly destroyed when the present Deanery was built although some medieval masonry may survive (Ryder 1990, 4).

The Old Deanery and its gardens are bounded by a high wall constructed of limestone and varying make-up including cobbles. It is known as Huby's Wall, being originally built c.1500 by Marmaduke Huby, one of the last Abbots of Fountains when he intended to form a new cell of Cistercian monks. The scheme failed and the much altered precinct wall was its only survival (Ripon Civic Society 1995). Part of the make up of the wall, adjacent to Minster Road, has a plinth and may date from the later medieval period.

Burials were found in the course of work carried out to install bay windows on the south face of The Old Deanery in 1859. No date was attributed to these burials but Ryder suggests that they may have related to part of a medieval cemetery (Ryder 1990, 6).

4.5 Post-medieval period (16th-19th centuries)

At the Reformation the Minster Chapter was dissolved towards the end of the 16th century and there were plans to form a theological college on the 15th century New Bedern (Old Deanery) site. These plans were abandoned when, in 1604, James I reconstituted the minster with a Dean and Chapter (Taylor 1998, 12). The present Old Deanery buildings were constructed in the early 17th century as the residence of the Dean. The buildings are shown on Langdale's Plan of Ripon dated 1818, set in gardens with no other structures within the garden boundaries. The buildings were considerably altered in the 18th and 19th centuries and are shown with an eastern extension on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1854. A new building was constructed in 1995 alongside the East wing and in the same style as the old (Ripon Civic Society 1995).

Archaeological evidence of post-medieval deposits from the excavations at Deanery Gardens in 1977-78 recorded up to 1m depth of garden soil and a series of shallow linear features aligned north-south which were interpreted as relating to the cultivation and drainage of the site (Whyman 1997, 123). Other features probably represented the voids left by root systems of bushes and small trees and all indicated the post-medieval and modern use of the site as a garden.

4.6 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

A geophysical survey of part of the garden of the Old Deanery was commissioned by York Archaeological Trust in 1999 and 2000 (GSB Prospection 1999 and 2000). Resistance survey of the garden area immediately to north of the Old Deanery located several responses of interest including a possible complex of buildings in the northern half of the survey area. While some of these responses relate to known features, there are suggestions of additional anomalies of possible archaeological interest suggesting further structural remains.

Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey within the garden area to the north of the Old Deanery identified numerous reflections of possible interest. Some of these are likely to relate to modern features or landscaping associated with the construction of the Old Deanery or later landscaping in the late 1800's. However, other reflections may indicate structural remains. The results suggest possible structural remains along the northern limit of the GPR survey which correspond with high resistance anomalies. While some services have been noted, other responses have also been identified which may be of greater significance. A broad curving response may be a drive leading to the Old Deanery which is visible on 1854 and 1890 maps. Responses on the northern limit suggest a rectangular form and as such may be significant, although the possibility of 19th century landscaping here cannot be excluded.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The excavations at Deanery Gardens in 1977-8 directed by D. Greenhaugh which lie immediately to the north of The Old Deanery revealed significant evidence of settlement in this part of Ripon from the 11th century onwards. The depth of the archaeological strata encountered here varied from between c.1.4m to 0.80m, with the greatest depth being found at the southern (that is nearest to the Old Deanery) and eastern end of these excavations. In both of these locations it was due largely to the survival of post-medieval deposits which, elsewhere on the

site, had probably been destroyed by the action of gardening (Whyman 1997, 121). It is therefore likely that the foundations of the 17th century Old Deanery will, in part, have caused some truncation and disturbance of earlier deposits, but at the same time the building is likely to have protected earlier deposits and in this way earlier deposits may well survive close to the floor levels of the building.

Undated burials, of early medieval or medieval date have been encountered in the vicinity of the Old Deanery. Cemeteries of pre-Norman date are dispersed throughout an extended ecclesiastical precinct around several different foci, but none are known to be located in the vicinity of The Old Deanery, and it has been assumed that the medieval burial ground never extended this far north. It is therefore unlikely (although not impossible) that a cemetery will be encountered in the vicinity of the Old Deanery. However, individual burials have been found within the overall curtilage of The Old Deanery and what is now the Mason's Yard, and therefore there is a possibility that further individual burials could be encountered.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The site lies within the ecclesiastical precinct boundary identified by Hall and Whyman (1996, 144) and in general terms is likely to be an area from which reliable data might be obtained to shed light on the layout and development of ecclesiastical landholdings and their relationship to the development of the secular town. Existing archaeological evidence from the sites at Low St Agnesgate and The Deanery Gardens have given rise to the suggestion of a major reorganization of settlement and street plan in the 12th or early 13th century and also imply modifications to the layout of ecclesiastical property holdings to the north of the Minster. The site lies within an area where deposits of medieval date are likely to survive relatively close to the ground surface, and are likely to be important in allowing a fuller understanding of the history of the development of Ripon and the relationship between the ecclesiastical precinct and secular settlement which is not at present fully understood.

The present post medieval-building on the site will have caused some degree of truncation of the deposits within the footprint of the foundations to the building but specifically, below ground evidence of the earlier New Bedern building is likely to survive and it is also possible that medieval fabric may have been incorporated into The Old Deanery itself.

Important archaeological deposits of medieval or earlier date are likely to be preserved both inside and outside the building footprint and are likely to survive close to the present ground surface. While precise levels at which they might be encountered cannot be known without an evaluation of below ground deposits, it is very likely that the proposed work will impact on these deposits. This is particularly the case in the area where a new stair extension will extend to basement level, and although other aspects of the proposed development are less destructive with regard to the depth of deposits, they are still likely to have an impact on significant archaeological deposits which represent previous structures and occupation of this historically very significant area in the early medieval and medieval periods.

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