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**The Old Deanery  
Minster Close  
Ripon  
North Yorkshire  
(SAM NY 1282)**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**MAP 01-07-01  
July 2001**

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**Non Technical Summary**

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken, between the 9th July and the 12th July 2001, within the Scheduled Ancient Monument Area (Monument No. NY 1282 at the Old Deanery, Minster Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire. One evaluation trench, comprising two areas, A and B, was excavated at the west end of the Old Deanery in the area of the proposed stairwall extension.

The Old Deanery is a Grade II\* Listed Building dating from the Seventeenth century, with modifications in the Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries. The area around the Proposed Development Area is known to lie within an area of known Historical and Archaeological significance.

The evaluation uncovered two inhumations, the northern skeleton was only seen in section and the southern skeleton was missing its skull. Both graves were orientated east to west and continued under the west wall of the Old Deanery.

A large pit cut the rubble deposit in Area B and the southern grave; a cranium was found face down in this pit. Disturbed human remains were found in most of the deposits excavated.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 An Archaeological Evaluation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on land to the west of the Old Deanery, Minster Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 3147 7118: Figs. 1 & 2). Scheduled Monument Consent (DCMS Class & approval Ref.: HSD/9/2/1818) was granted to undertake the evaluation.

- 1.2 The work commenced on the 9th July 2001, for four days, and finished on the 12th July 2001.
- 1.3 The site code for the evaluation was MAP 01-07-01.
- 1.4 The Evaluation was commissioned by and funded by the John Witherick, Architect, on behalf on the client.
- 1.5 This report details the results of the archaeological evaluation undertaken prior the proposed Phase II construction works at The Old Deanery, the construction of a new stairwell extension. The programme of archaeological evaluation was carried out to formulate an appropriate response to proposals that may adversely effect archaeological remains on the site.
- 1.6 All maps within this report have been reproduced from the Ordnance Survey with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, License Number AL 5453A.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The Old Deanery is a Seventeenth century building with Eighteenth, Nineteenth and Twentieth century modifications, which is situated within the boundary of Ripon Minster Close (Scheduled Ancient Monument NY 1282 : SE 3147 7118 : Fig. 1) immediately to the north of the Minster. The Old Deanery is a Grade 2\* Listed Building, part three storey with attics and is constructed of thick masonry walls with various existing timber and solid floors related to stories and the natural ground slope.
- 2.2 The area of the Proposed Extension is currently a small garden border and a path leading from a window and door on the west side of the Old Deanery to the gardens and a gateway in the boundary wall to the car park at the front of the building (Figs. 2 & 3 : Pl. 1).

- 2.3 The site lies on soils derived from periglacial sediments and gravel overlying drift geology of boulder clay and solid geology of Permo-Triassic marls and sandstones with gypsum over limestone.

### **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 Both documentary sources and excavation has illustrated the archaeological potential for this area of Ripon.
- 3.2 The site lies within the boundary of the ecclesiastical precinct of the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Wilfrid (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. NY 1282). A number of excavations have been undertaken within the ecclesiastical precinct (Hall & Whyman 1996 & Whyman 1997). In addition Geophysical Survey (GSB 1999 & 2000), in the gardens to the rear of the Old Deanery, has also been undertaken.
- 3.3 Previous investigations in the immediate vicinity of the site have suggested that this area of Ripon has been occupied from the Eighth century and that The Old Deanery stands on land donated in 1414 by Archbishop Bowett for the building of a New Bedern, or College of Vicars Choral, and a chapel dedicated to St Nicholas.
- 3.4 Excavation in the Deanery Gardens by Greenhaugh in 1977-8 recorded settlement activity of Eleventh century date occurring at a depth of between 0.8m - 1.4m. The survival of these earlier deposits has been explained by the presence of a thick layer of post-medieval deposits which protect the earlier activity and have not been removed by later landscaping.
- 3.5 A number of burials were located during the installation of the bay windows to The Old Deanery in 1859 (Finlayson 2000, p. 7).

### **4. Aims and Objectives**

- 4.1 Previous work has suggested that the proposed development works are likely to encounter important archaeological deposits, features and/or structures relating to the previous ecclesiastical history of the site.

4.2 It was the aim of the archaeological works to evaluate an area immediately to the west of The Old Deanery building (Figs. 2 & 3) and:-

- to recover, where possible, artefactual evidence relating to all periods of activity and also to provide information on environmental aspects of the site
- to define activity in this particular part of the Scheduled Area
- to determine the nature, depth, stratigraphic complexity and level of preservation of archaeological deposits
- to provide an assessment of the potential and significance of any identified archaeological features/deposits exposed, including environmental aspects
- to provide an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on the archaeological features or deposits exposed in the evaluation area
- to assess the likely scope and duration of any further evaluation that may be necessary to mitigate the effects of the proposed development scheme
- to provide a mitigation strategy for the proposed development.
- to ensure that information recovered from the excavations is fed into the interpretation of the site as a whole
- to provide information to be used by the Structural Consultant

## 5. Method Statement

5.1 Two areas, Areas A and B, were evaluated (Fig. 4):

**Area A**            2m x 2m - to the top of archaeological deposits or structural formation level (which ever is highest and encountered first)

**Area B**            1.3m x 1.3m - to the top of archaeological deposits or structural formation level or the underside of existing building footings/foundations to gable wall (which ever is highest and encountered first)

5.2 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologist Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).

5.3 Topsoil and overburden were removed by mechanical excavator, using a toothless bucket, under archaeological supervision. After initial topsoil/overburden stripping areas were cleaned, photographed, assessed, and recorded to professional standards. Within Areas A and B features/deposits were excavated to define relationships and establish chronology. All inhumation/cremation burials were left in situ, covered, protected and reported to the Coroner. If further excavation is required the burials will be removed under License.

5.4 All archaeological deposits were recorded on MAP pro forma sheets (Appendix 1). All finds were processed, bagged, labelled and catalogued in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (AML Jan. 1995 : Appendix 2). Archaeological features/deposits were excavated to determine form, nature and date. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at a scale of either 1:50 or 1:20 (Appendix 3). All heights and depths references are to metres AOD. The photographic record was made up of monochrome prints, colour prints and colour slides (Appendix 4).

## 6. Results

6.1 Areas A and B were located west of the Old Deanery in a area of garden borders and gravel and Yorkstone garden path (Fig. 4 : Pl. 1). Four phases of activity, dating from the Medieval Period (Phase 1), Post-medieval (Phases 2 and 3) and Modern Periods (Phase 4) were recorded.

### 6.2 *Phase 1*

6.2.1 Two graves, contexts 1019 and 1022, were found in Areas A and B, cut into the natural gravel, context 1017. The southern skeleton, context 1018, continued east underneath the Old Deanery, and was only exposed to mid-thigh level (Figs. 5 & 7 c-h : Pls. 2-4). The inhumation, context 1018, was in the prone position with the hands clasped over the pelvis. The western end of the grave had been disturbed by Pit 1008 The skull and the right had side of the jaw from skeleton 1018 were missing. This burial was left in situ.



6.2.2 The northern grave, context 1022, was only seen in the north-eastern corner of Area A; with the top of the cranium, context 1021, visible in the west facing section (Figs. 5 & 7 b-d : Pl. 4). Both graves were orientated east to west and were filled with a deposit of reddish silt, contexts 1016 and 1022. The grave fill from both graves was indistinguishable from the 0.4m thick deposit of compact silt which sealed them, context 1009. No datable artefacts were found with these features and deposits.

### 6.3 *Phase 2*

6.3.1 A rubble deposit with large fragments of dressed and undressed limestone and mortar, context 1006, was found in Area B (Figs. 6 & 7 b-h). This deposit was directly beneath, and possibly continued below, the foundations of the Old Deanery west wall, which extended to approximately 0.6m below the ground surface (33.10m OD : Fig. 7 b-h). This deposit was cut by a large rectangular pit, context 1008.

### 6.4 *Phase 3*

6.4.1 A large pit, context 1008, cut the rubble deposit 1006 and the grave 1019 (Figs. 6 & 7 c-d, g-h). This pit was rectangular in plan and continued into the north facing section of Area B and the west facing section of Area A. A shallow cut feature, context 1010, located beneath the modern drainage trench in Area A was the base of Pit 1008. The fill of pit 1008/1010 was similar to 1006 with mortar fragments, but with an ashy feel. An adult cranium was found lying face down in this pit. Animal bones, human remains and two sherds of Twelfth century pottery were found in the pit fill, context 1007.

6.4.2 Two possible stakeholes, contexts 1013 and 1015 (Fig. 6) were also cut into gravel in the base of the large rectangular Pit 1011. The fill of these stakeholes was similar to the Pit 1008.

### 6.5 *Phase 4*

6.5.1 The modern topsoil/overburden, context 1001, the modern gravel and Yorkstone path, context 1002, and the surface water drainage trench, contexts 1003-5, were removed by machine (Fig. 7). Disturbed human remains were found in these deposits.

## **7. Discussion and Conclusions**

7.1 The inhumations found during the evaluation were approximately 1m apart, both were orientated east to west with the lower legs of the inhumations continuing under the west wall of the Old Deanery. The orientation of the burials suggest Christian burials. The skull from the southern grave was most likely disturbed by the later pit cut into the west end of this grave. The skull found in this pit was lying face down and is probably the missing skull from the inhumation. The graves can only be dated from the evidence found in features above them. The graves predate the construction of the Old Deanery in the early Seventeenth century and two residual sherds of Gritty ware in Deposit 1007, possibly date the graves to the medieval period.

7.2 The likelihood of further graves being found is very high as disturbed human remains were found in most deposits excavated. Graves were found at the front of the Old Deanery when the bay windows were inserted in the Nineteenth century.

7.3 All other deposits post date the building of the Old Deanery.

## **8. Development Impact**

8.1 The construction of the proposed extension will have an impact on the medieval graves located beneath its foundations.

## 9. Bibliography

- Finlayson, R. (2000) The Old Deanery, Ripon. Report on an Archaeological Desk-Top Study. York Archaeological Trust Field Report Number 64.
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