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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST

**FORMER LAND ROVER GARAGE,
BORRAGE LANE,
RIPON,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**



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FORMER RIPON LAND ROVER GARAGE

BORRAGE LANE, RIPON,

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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ABSTRACT

Between 10th June and 22nd August 2002 an archaeological watching brief was periodically carried out during the excavation of drains, the construction of a road and other associated ground works linked with the erection of 24 dwellings and associated access road at the former Ripon Land Rover Garage, Borrage Lane, Ripon. No deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during these initial ground works, the earliest materials uncovered related to 19th century houses that formerly fronted onto Borrage Lane at the eastern end of the site. Following discussions with the Heritage Unit of NYCC, it was agreed that no further work was required for the remaining ground works for the building foundations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Periodically between 10th June and 22nd August 2002 York Archaeological Trust (YAT) carried out a watching brief at the former Ripon Land Rover Garage, Borrage Lane, Ripon (NGR SE 3097 7101) (Figure 1). The watching brief was split into two phases, with the initial observations on the sewer and access road (Figure 2) dictating whether any subsequent archaeological recording was required for the erection of the dwellings. The work was undertaken for Barratt (York) Ltd., as part of a planning condition imposed by Harrogate Borough Council on the advice of the Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council.

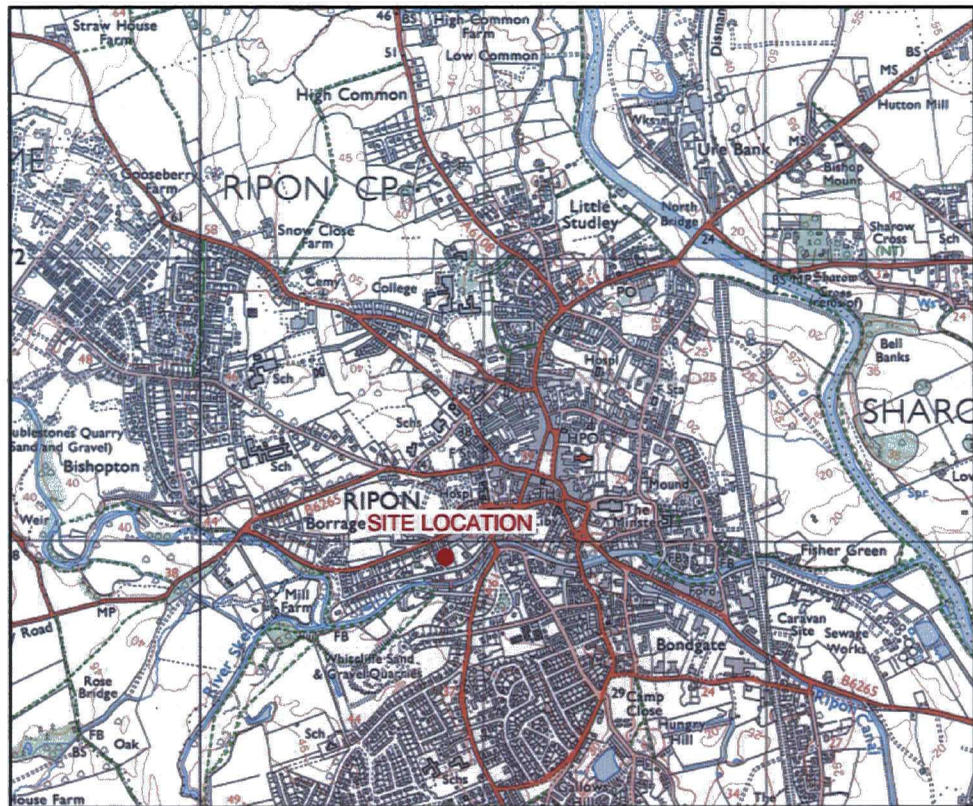
2. METHODOLOGY

The machine excavation of the deep sewer and the landscaping of the access road were carried out under archaeological supervision by a 360 degree excavator using a toothed bucket. The deposits revealed in section were photographed, drawn and recorded following procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust *Context Recording Manual* (1996).

Site records are currently stored with YAT under the Harrogate Museum accession code HARGM:11437.

3. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying solid geology of Ripon is an outcrop of Magnesian Limestone and Permian mudstone, which extends in a north-south direction between the Pennines and the Vale of York (Geological Survey 1979). Overlying this solid geology is a series of glacially deposited sands and gravels, which formed a number of mounds and ridges (kames) in the area. The site lies on the north bank of the River Skell, on a glacial terrace of gravel, cobbles and boulders. Topographically the site appears to be relatively flat at present but the underlying geology, as suggested from boreholes, slopes from north to south towards the river. It is possible that the north side of the site has been slightly terraced into the rising ground on that side.



Based on the 1985 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 scale map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright York Archaeological Trust, Cromwell House, 13 Ogleforth, York YO1 7FG Licence Number AL 100018343



Figure 1 Site Location Plan

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Significant archaeological evidence for prehistoric and Roman activity has been recovered in the vicinity of Ripon, although no evidence from these periods has been discovered within the town apart from some sherds of residual Roman pottery from excavations in the Deanery Gardens. The earliest archaeological evidence for settlement at Ripon dates to the mid 7th century and relates to a monastic site. 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 (Finlayson 1999). There is no evidence of its layout, or an accurate location for the site, but 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 (Taylor and Taylor 1965). After the Norman Conquest the monastery became a part of the diocese of York and remained a significant ecclesiastical centre throughout the medieval period (Finlayson 2000).

An early medieval secular settlement in Ripon is likely to have existed in association with the important ecclesiastical centre and its earlier presence was demonstrated by excavations at Ailcy Hill which show that a non-monastic cemetery on the site dated from the 6th- 7th century (Finlayson 2000).

Little is known for certain of the form or layout of early medieval secular settlement in Ripon. It is thought to have undergone a period of expansion in the 12th century. At this time there is clear evidence of ecclesiastical development. Some time before the Conquest the monastery had become a minster church with a college of canons and in the later 12th century the rebuilding of the minster church was begun. The hospital chapels of St Mary Magdalen and St John date from this same period and the Maison de Dieu, St Anne's chapel may also have been founded in the 12th century. At the end of the 12th century, in 1194, Ripon is first referred to as a borough and there is evidence of burgesses living in the town. Royal charters for a fair and market were also granted in this period (MacKay 1982, 73). Little archaeological work has been carried out in the centre of Ripon which can offer evidence of the early medieval layout of the secular settlement or to what degree there was a significant rearrangement of form in the medieval period. 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 settlement in this part of Ripon dating from the 11th century onwards (Whyman 1997, 121). In addition on recent excavations at The Arcade, Ripon, an 11th-century rubbish pit, together with residual 10th to 11th century pottery, implies occupation of the area (Finlayson 2000, 50). Whyman also suggested that the archaeological evidence hints at a major reorganization of settlement and street plan in the 12th or early 13th century and also implies modification to the layout of ecclesiastical property holdings to the north of the Minster. A large ditch feature found to the east of St Agnesgate is suggested as a pre-13th century boundary to the ecclesiastical precinct, and the suggested date of buildings constructed over the ditch is given as the 13th/14th century. The coincidence of the earliest surviving documentation from the later 12th and the 13th centuries and the reorganization of the town was noted (Whyman 1997, 162).

The cartographic evidence for Ripon provides a good indication of the development of the form of the town in the post-medieval period. Thomas Jeffery's map of 1772 shows Borrage Bridge and the development area built up with housing.

Thus the Borrage Lane site lies within an area of archaeological interest, on the eastern side of the historic town. Recent archaeological work in Ripon, in connection with a number of developments around Fishergate and the Market Place, has demonstrated the survival of well-preserved remains associated with the medieval town from the 11th to the 15th century as evidence at The Arcade (Finlayson 2000) and Wakemans House (Finlayson 2001) suggest. It was therefore thought possible that further evidence of medieval occupation might be found on the Borrage Lane site.

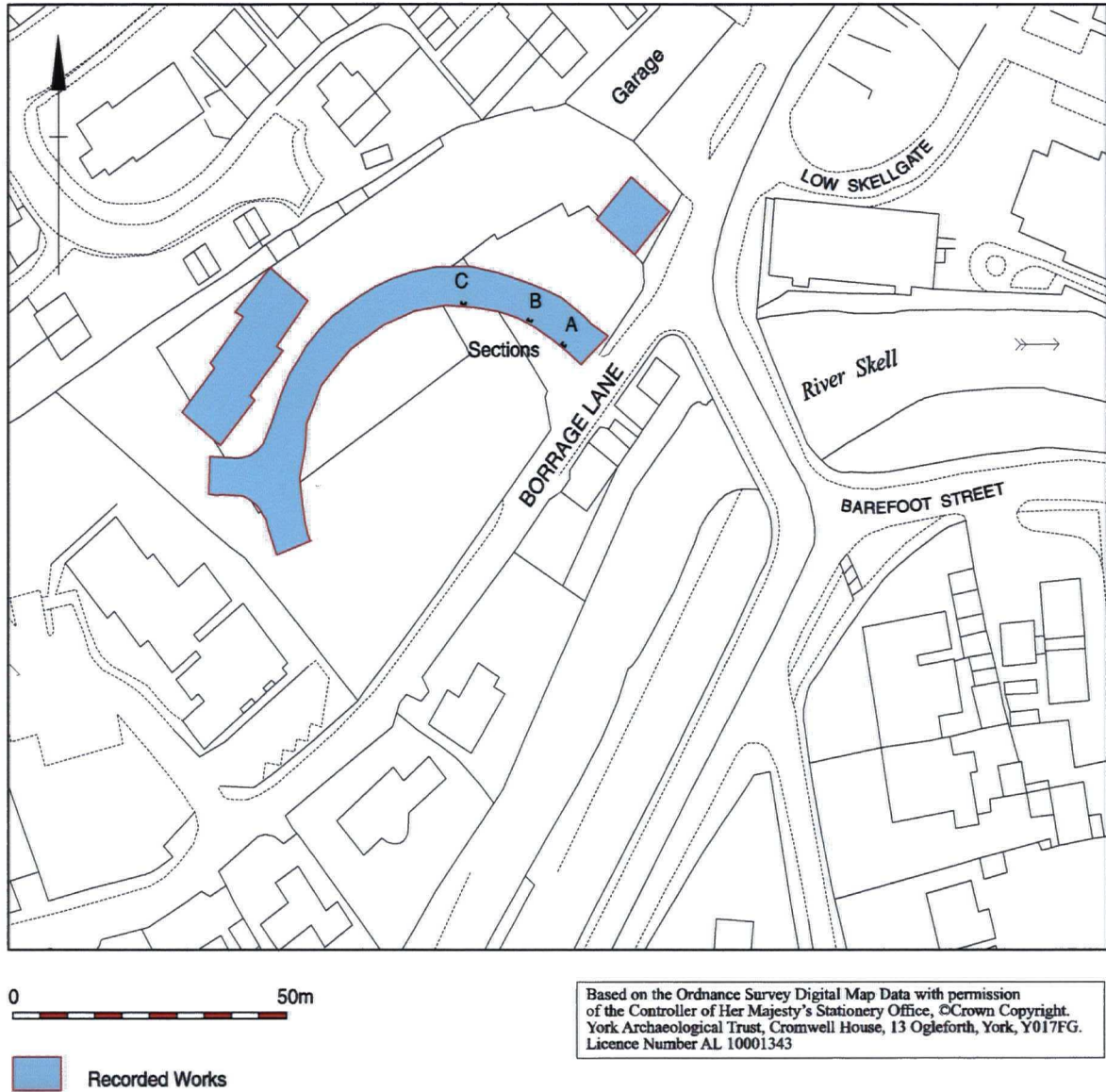


Figure 2 Works Location Plan

5. RESULTS

5.1 The Main Sewer (casement drain)

The trench cut for the casement drain was by far the largest of the ground works to be completed (Figure 2). It ran from one third of the way down the south-east frontage of the site onto Borrage Lane in an arc all the way through the centre of the site to the point where it met the middle of the boundary with Borrage House, at this point it joined the existing north-west/south-east running casement drain. The deposits revealed during the excavation of this trench are described in two parts.

5.1.1 The easternmost 20m of the main drain construction cut from Borrage Lane contained a series of deposits relating to the construction and later demolition of a 19th century dwelling, as well as relatively undisturbed ground to the side and rear. Three section drawings were completed (see Figure 3) at distances of 5, 10 and 20m along this cut and subsequently labelled A, B and C.

The earliest material in section A, 1004, was yellowy orange sandy gravel more than 0.20m thick which continued below the base of the trench. This was sealed by 1003, thin layers of brownish grey silty clay and orange gravel/sand up to 0.45m deep. Both are interpreted as natural deposits formed by glacial, and later by water, action. 1003 was cut by 1017, the construction cut for the cellar (1001) below the 19th century dwelling. The true form of 1017 is unknown as it was exposed at an oblique angle by this trench, though it is likely to follow the shape of the building above. The earliest fill within 1017 was a mixture of cobbles and larger pebbles in a brownish grey silty matrix (1002) which had a maximum thickness of 0.35m. 1002 formed the make up/footing for 1001 the walls, cellar and later backfill beneath the 19th century dwelling which together were up to 1.3m thick. Separate context numbers were not given to the numerous floors, walls and backfill deposits. The top 0.20m of the section was made up of loose demolition rubble from the former Land Rover garage. This sequence of deposits appeared to be typical of those encountered where the natural deposits had been cut away by the construction of dwellings with cellars.

Section B, further along the trench and thus further from the river, revealed a slightly different sequence of natural deposits. The lower 0.30m of the deposits exposed in section consisted of orange 'running' sand (1012). In turn this was sealed by brownish grey clay sand and gravel (1011) c.0.30m deep. Over the top of this was a layer of pebbles and cobbles (1010) c.0.15m deep and then a layer of yellow stone (1009) of the same thickness. Sealing these deposits was 0.40m of 1008 which was very similar to 1003 in section A except that the orange gravel/sand was more patchy. It is believed that the different sequence of natural deposits is the result of formation processes on this irregular river terrace. Cut 1018 truncated the top of 1008 and allowed the construction of 1007, a 0.50m deep large cobble and concrete rubble foundation for wall 1006. Wall 1006 remained to a height of 0.60m and was sealed by 1005, identical demolition deposits to 1000. Section B is interpreted as representing an area outside the main part of the 19th century dwelling and wall 1006 is the boundary wall to the south-west of the building.

At 20m along the trench cut section C revealed a sequence similar to the rest of the site (see 5.1.2 below). The lowest deposit was stiff reddish brown clay with cobble inclusions becoming more frequent with depth (1016). This is thought to have been an undisturbed glacial deposit,

possibly boulder clay. Over the top of this, 1015, was orange sand with cobble inclusions and was up to 1.4 m thick. On top of the natural deposits was 0.30m of brown sandy silt with occasional small pebbles and charcoal flecks (1014), similar to 1020 below. The uppermost 0.20m of deposits (1013) was the same demolition rubble as had been observed in sections A and B.

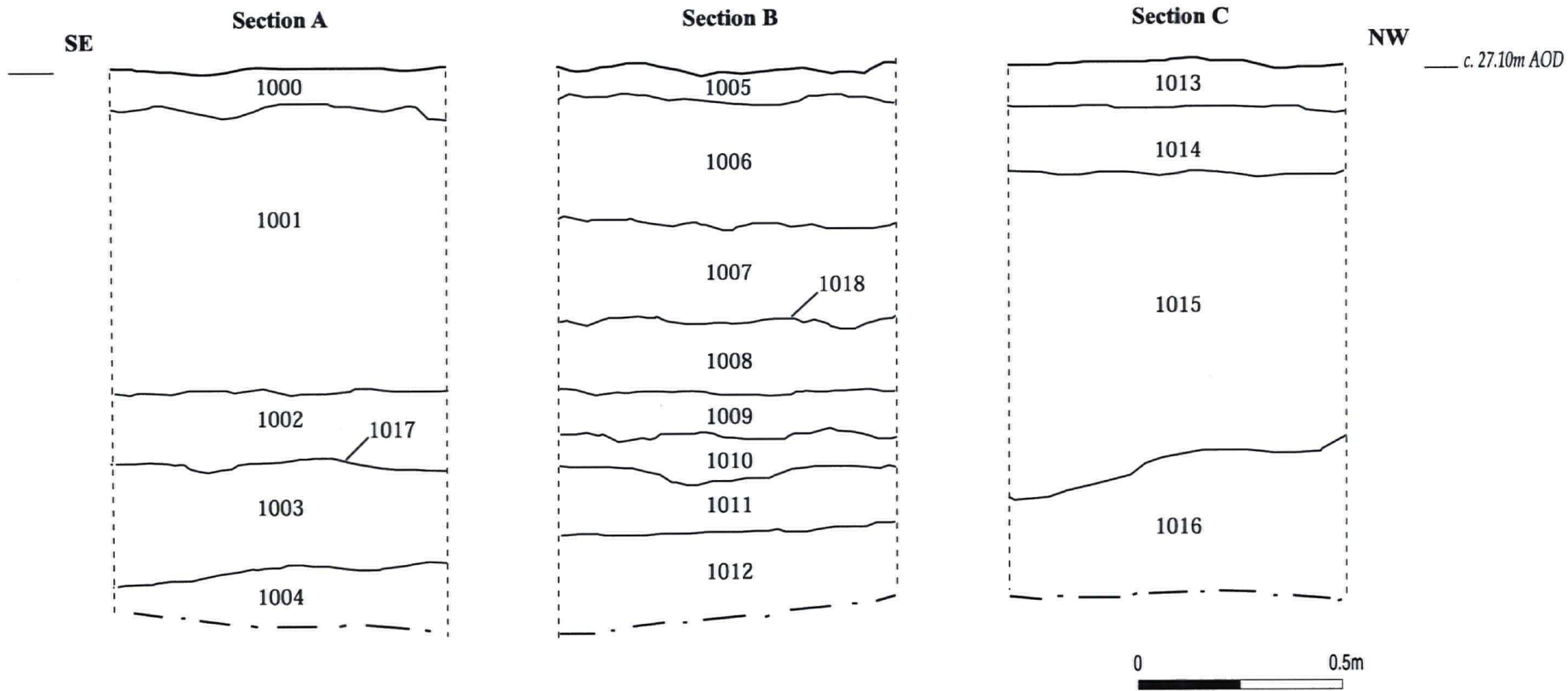
5.1.2 The remaining length of the trench revealed the following sequence of deposits. The earliest were of natural origin consisting of glacio-fluvial gravels, boulders and cobbles in a matrix of mid yellow brown and creamy brown sand (1019). These were sealed by a layer of mid brown sandy silt (1020) which was up to 0.50m thick with occasional rounded pebbles and charcoal flecks. The latter deposit is interpreted as a horticultural or agricultural soil. Several circular land drains truncated this in a west-east direction, probably dating to the 19th or 20th centuries. These was sealed by dark grey brown sandy silt (1021) with occasional charcoal, coke, coal, brick, rounded pebbles, tile and limestone fragments. The latter was up to 0.20m thick and may have formed during the construction of the former garage on the site, as the result of agricultural soil being churned by construction traffic. Recent demolition rubble (1022) was the uppermost deposit recorded.

5.2 House Plots 9 to 14 - Strip foundations.

One section of strip foundations was observed at the western side of the site (see Figure 2). A similar sequence to that described above in 5.1.2 was noted over this area. The only difference noted was that the contractors had dumped up to 0.75m of material that had been excavated from elsewhere on site above the demolition rubble.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The earliest archaeological deposits on site were associated with the 19th century dwellings and the use of the area for agriculture. The agricultural land may have been wet and low lying and prone to flooding as a number of 19th or 20th century land drains had been inserted. The dwellings and associated outbuildings had been demolished to make way for later development of the site for a garage. All of the other deposits observed were of 20th century origin and related to either the former garage and its construction or to its subsequent demolition and site clearance and levelling activities. No significant archaeological deposits were recorded during the watching brief and no further work is required within the present development framework.



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