



PLATE 1 Trench 1 Base of trench after initial cleaning, facing east



PLATE 2 Trench 1 View of quarry pit, facing west



PLATE 3 Trench 3 View of stone feature 3003, facing north



PLATE 4 Trench 5 Excavated features, facing south

OLD SCHOOL SITE
LOW ST AGNESGATE
RIPON

**Written Scheme of Investigation:
Archaeological Evaluation
To Support Re-Development
At NGR SE 3163 7107**

September 2002

For:

Turley Associates
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Leeds
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By:

The Heritage Unit
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Low St Agnesgate, Ripon

Supporting Information

1.0 Location and Description

- 1.1 The site is located at the junction of High St Agnesgate with Low St Agnesgate in Ripon, North Yorkshire at NGR SE 3163 7107. The site is approximately 2870 square metres in area, and was the former site of the Ripon Cathedral C of E Primary School. A playground and school buildings currently occupy the site.

2.0 Archaeological Importance

- 2.1 A desk-top assessment report has been completed by York Archaeological Trust (2001 Field Report No 53). The report indicates that there is the potential for important archaeological deposits of medieval origin to survive both outside and within the existing building footprints. The assessment recommends field evaluation to determine the extent and degree of survival of archaeological remains, and to allow development plans to incorporate mitigation measures to avoid loss of archaeological interest. The report also recommends a programme of building recording if the older buildings are to be refurbished. The evaluation will help to support a planning application for re-development.

3.0 Aims and Objectives

- 3.1 Archaeological evidence from this site has the potential to illuminate the industrial, political and ecclesiastical history of Ripon. Remains from the pre-Conquest, Anglo-Norman, high medieval, and early post-medieval periods may be present. Excavation may bring to light evidence of specialised activities such as malting or hide processing, as well as generalised or repeated activities such as land layout, rebuilding and levelling.
- 3.2 The general aim of the work will be to provide information on the nature, extent, depth, preservation, and quality of archaeological remains. This general aim should also be extended to above-ground standing buildings, and an assessment of the architectural components and fabric of the buildings should be undertaken.
- 3.3 The general aim will be augmented by 2-4 additional research aims. The archaeological contractor will be expected to formulate and clearly state these additional aims based on the archaeological importance of Ripon as perceived by the discipline, their own research interests, and the methodology to be applied. Further specification of these aims is given below in Clause 6.2.
- 3.4 These aims will be achieved through trial trenching, building inspection, post-excavation assessment, preparation of an evaluation report, and accessioning of the finds with the Harrogate Museums Service.

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4.0 Conditions

- 4.1 Although the Health & Safety Executive does not consider archaeological investigations to fall within the definition of "construction work" in the Construction (Design & Management) Regulations 1994, archaeological work on site should not start until an archaeological project risk assessment has been lodged in the Health and Safety File of the client.
- 4.2 Archaeological work should not start until the Curator of Harrogate Museums Service and environmental specialists have confirmed formally that they are aware of the proposed work and are available to give advice or specialist services, nor should work start until a contingency plan for bad weather has been agreed as part of any contract.
- 4.3 The County Archaeologist should be informed of the names of the project manager for the construction contractor and archaeological contractor, and the start date of archaeological works at least two weeks prior to the commencement of operations.
- 4.4 Copyright in the documentation prepared by the archaeological contractor and specialist sub-contractors should be the subject of a non-exclusive license in favour of North Yorkshire County Council and Harrogate Borough Council to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions.
- 4.5 This scheme summarises the elements of archaeological work needed to mitigate the impact of the current development proposals on archaeological interests. It is **not** a contract or complete specification, and the County Heritage Unit makes no warranty that the works are full or exactly described. The details of implementation must be the subject of a contract between Robert Turley Associates and their selected contractor.

5.0 Access and Monitoring

- 5.1 Access to the site should be arranged through Robert Turley Associates, 43 Park Place, Leeds, LS1 2RY, Tel (0113) 386 3800. Enquiries about archaeological matters should be directed to the County Archaeologist, The Heritage Unit, County Hall, Northallerton, tel (01609) 780780 ext 2330.
- 5.2 Archaeological work will be subject to a programme of monitoring, the details of which should be agreed between the archaeological contractor and the County Heritage Unit. This programme of monitoring should include at least one site visit during fieldwork, and an inspection of the archive by the Curator of the Harrogate Museums Service, who should also be invited to any on-site monitoring meetings.

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Scheme of Works

6.0 Research Design Document

- 6.1 A one to three page document should be produced detailing two to four research aims to be pursued above and beyond standard archaeological evaluation objectives. The document should briefly summarise the theoretical or substantive issues to be addressed, identify the evidence which may inform on these issues, and formulate the aims in terms of questions or hypotheses (cf Thomas 1999) which can be tested against the finds or deposits likely to be found on the site. The document should not provide a potted history of Ripon, nor should it refer in general to previous investigations in Ripon except where these works have raised particular issues or questions relevant to the site. The research design should also outline the strategy or programme for the recovery of finds and environmental evidence. The research aims should be submitted to the County Archaeologist before trial trenching starts on site.
- 6.2 The research aims should include several classes of evidence, so that even if archaeological remains are limited, then at least one of the aims should be capable of effective investigation. As a guide, the research design should take into account or encompass the following considerations:
- a) evidence of pre-Conquest domestic, industrial or ecclesiastical activities,
 - b) evidence for the layout or use of land as part of the development of the ecclesiastical precinct,
 - c) evidence for change of site activities from pre-Conquest to post-medieval times,
 - d) analysis of deposits to show the taphonomy of their components i.e. charred materials, industrial materials, CBM, bone for food vs bone for crafts, pot sherds, etc and their function and origin, and
 - e) evidence for crafts or small scale industries

7.0 Trial Trenching

- 7.1 Six (6) number trial trenches should be opened up to investigate archaeological remains. These trenches should expose a minimum of 180 and a maximum of 200 square metres of below ground deposits. The removal of surfacing and overburden in general for all six trenches will be subject to intensive archaeological observation. Removal should be undertaken by a back-acting excavator, using a wide, toothless or ditching bucket. Two of the six trenches should be located close to the Low St Agnesgate frontage.

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7.2 Machine excavation should proceed only to the top of archaeological deposits or natural whichever is the higher. Thereafter, investigations should proceed by hand excavation and scientific recording. Deep homogenous fill deposits may be excavated by machine subject to archaeological supervision.

8.0 Metal Detection and Unstratified Finds Recovery

8.1 Where feasible, spoil from machine clearance and archaeological excavation should be subject to the detection and collection of metal objects. All cleaned surfaces of features and archaeological layers should be scanned for metal object signals, and excavation priorities assessed taking these signals into account. Metal objects should be recovered from the surface of in situ deposits before the end of each day, subject to archaeological supervision such that the finds are properly recorded and conserved. Where feasible, local detectorists should be contacted to assist in this work. All metal detection should be undertaken according to the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.

8.2 Other non-metallic unstratified finds arising from overburden removal should be recovered and incorporated into the investigations in accordance with an appropriate finds collection, conservation and disposal strategy which should be included in the research design document.

9.0 Recording

9.1 All in situ archaeological features and deposits should be hand cleaned, given context numbers, and planned at conventional scales to show the horizontal distribution of contexts. The elevation of the underlying natural subsoil where exposed should be recorded. The excavation area should be plotted with respect to nearby roads and buildings.

9.2 All major discrete features should have their shape, character, and depth determined by hand excavation of cross-sections, and appropriate sampling for environmental remains. Any large features such as pits and "quarry" holes likely to extend deeper than 1.2m below surface should be augured to find their approximate depth. Any other unknown or enigmatic features should be investigated similarly on a sampling basis. In respect of post and stake holes, a representative sample of these should be investigated to obtain a general understanding of their character, depth and size distribution across the site. All metal finds should be X-rayed to determine their character.

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- 9.3 Using the information and artefacts collected to this stage, all features and deposits should be assessed as to their origin or function, probable date, and importance for further recording. At this stage and in conjunction with a site visit, the County Archaeologist should be consulted to discuss the potential of the remains, and agree further targeted investigation in relation to the research aims of the evaluation.

10.0 Environmental / Deposit Analysis

- 10.1 All deposits with the following Munsell colour notations should be automatically sampled and their composition and origin determined

- a) Values of less than or equal to 3 and Chromas of less than or equal to 2,
- b) Values of higher than or equal to 7 and Chromas of less than or equal to 2

- 10.2 The contribution of metal-working industrial debris to deposits should be assessed. The quantities of slags and hammer scale in deposits should be determined. Stone used for crucibles, whetstones, anvils, etc should be recovered and analysed.

- 10.3 The contribution of building materials to deposits should be assessed. Where coherent fragments of mortar occur, these should be collected and analysed. All tile, and dressed, decorated, carved or marked stone should be collected and analysed.

- 10.4 Other deposits should be sampled in accordance with the programme of sampling given in the research design.

11.0 Building Inspection

- 11.1 All buildings on site should be inspected, and their fabric assessed for historical importance or relevance to archaeological questions arising from the trial trenching. Any architectural features or components of interest should be recorded by photographs and a list or schedule of features prepared.

12.0 Post-Excavation Assessment

- 12.1 All plans and sections should be checked prior to backfilling or leaving the site. The content of field records at this stage should be sufficient to meet NYCC guidelines on reporting. Harris matrix diagrams should be prepared to show visible relationships amongst contexts, and concordances between trenches.

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- 12.2 Following Management of Archaeological Projects (1991) guidelines, an assessment report enumerating the different kinds of evidence from the site, their potential, and costs for further analysis should be prepared and submitted as part of the evaluation report.
- 12.3 All finds should be identified, cleaned as appropriate, and properly packaged and stored. A site archive should be compiled, consisting of all photographs and primary written records such as plans, sections, site narrative, concordance of contexts, and the assessment report. Catalogues of finds, plans, sections, and photographs should be produced and cross-referenced. The site archive should be inspected by the Curator of the Harrogate Museums Service, and should be packaged in accordance with the curatorial requirements of the Harrogate Borough Museums Service.
- 13.0 **Summary Report**
- 13.1 A summary report should be prepared following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should incorporate a brief introduction, a summary of works carried out including photographs of operations, a description of the remains including all relevant plans and sections, summaries of all specialist investigations, interpretation and assessment of the significance of the remains in relation to the research aims, catalogues of finds, plans and sections, and photographs, and copies of this WSI and the research design. This summary report should also incorporate the results from the building survey.

14.0 **References**

English Heritage (1991) Management of Archaeological Projects

Thomas, R (1999) "Writing Excavation Reports, a question of questions?" In: The Archaeologist 34:19

York Archaeological Trust (2001) Ripon Cathedral Primary School: Report on an Archaeological Desk-top Study. 2001 Field Report No 53

FORMER C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL, LOW ST AGNESGATE, RIPON, NORTH YORKSHIRE: RESEARCH DESIGN

By David Evans

1.0 INTRODUCTION, SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 1.1 The site lies to the east of the junction of Low St Agnesgate and High St Agnesgate, Ripon (SE 3163 7107) It is c.0.3ha (c.0.75 acre) in extent and is currently occupied mainly by the brick structures and tarmac yards of the former school. A wide strip along the northern perimeter of the site is overgrown waste ground or gardens as is a narrow strip along the northern half of the west boundary of the site.

The drift geology of the area is glacial boulder clay and a series of glacially deposited sands and gravels which formed a number of mounds and ridges. The sands and gravels overlie Magnesian limestone and Permian mudstones. The site is reasonably level and lies at c.24m Above Ordnance Datum.

2.0 RESEARCH DESIGN

- 2.1 The initial aim of the evaluation shall be to gather sufficient information to establish the presence / absence, nature, date, depth, quality of survival and importance of any archaeological deposits. This will enable an assessment of the potential and significance of the archaeology of the site to be made, and the impact which development will have upon them.

This work also provides an opportunity to investigate aspects of Ripon's history suggested by documentary evidence and archaeological investigations in the past thirty years. These include examination of the history of land use in the area, the structural history of the site, and the economic development of this part of Ripon. The evidence gathered from this site investigation could then be compared to existing knowledge of Ripon and, as well as illuminating current aims and objectives, may possibly be used to generate further relevant objectives.

Much of the information in this report is derived from an earlier desktop study (Finlayson 2001a)

- 2.2 The Prehistoric Period.

There is considerable evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Ripon, but no finds from this period have been recovered within the city. Given the location of Ripon, and the relatively well-drained soils of the area, one might expect some activity of the period in the part of the city under examination.

2.3 The Roman Period.

Although material of Roman date has been found around Ripon, very little has actually come to light within the city. Some residual pottery was found in the Deanery Gardens in 1977-78 (Whyman, 1997) and a coin of 330 – 47 AD was recovered from excavations to the rear of Wakeman's House (Finlayson 2001b, 21). Also a small quantity of residual brick and a part of a hypocaust flue tile came from the site of the New School, Priest Lane (McComish 2001, 46). The significance of these finds is as yet uncertain, although they come from an as yet unrecognized area of Roman activity within Ripon. Any Roman archaeology on the Low St Agnesgate site would be of considerable value in giving these finds a context.

2.4 The Pre-Conquest Period.

The evidence for this period, both documentary and archaeological, is relatively extensive. An early medieval secular settlement in Ripon is likely to have pre-dated the important ecclesiastical centre, known to have been in existence by the early 8th century. Its presence was demonstrated by York Archaeological Trust's excavations at Ailcy Hill in 1986-87 (Hall and Whyman 1996). These indicated that a non-monastic cemetery on the site dated from the 6th - 7th century and that this was replaced by an all male cemetery, interpreted as a monastic burial site of 9th century date. An excavation in 1955 by A. Paget-Baggs in the grounds of the former Deanery Garden Hotel 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).

Other work and finds from central Ripon (Johnson 2001, 7, 33; McComish 2001, 46; Finlayson 2000b and 2001a) demonstrate that pre-conquest Ripon consisted of both an ecclesiastical and secular settlement. Little, however, is known of their history and development. Burials of the pre-Conquest period have been found quite frequently in the area of the present site, but it is not yet known whether they belong to a series of discrete cemeteries or to an extensive burial zone. The Low St Agnesgate site, situated between Ailcy Hill and the presumed site of the ecclesiastical precinct, may clarify this issue and resolve some of the questions pertaining to this period of Ripon's history.

2.5 The Medieval Period

Analyses of the historical and archaeological evidence (MacKay 1982, Finlayson 2001a) have shown that in the 12th – 13th centuries Ripon entered a phase of ecclesiastical and secular expansion, becoming an urban centre with regularly planned burgrave plots in certain central areas. Investigations at the site of a new school in Priest Lane may indicate that the eastern part of the city was encompassed by the expansion of medieval settlement and the present site may confirm this. Evidence for the function of the site as residential, industrial etc will add to knowledge of the character of the medieval city.

A ditch seen in excavations, 60m north-west of the present site, in Low St Agnesgate in 1974 is thought to mark the boundary of the ecclesiastical precinct, and may run close to the street front. Identification and excavation of this feature at the present site would help define more closely the extent of the precinct on its eastern side.

2.6 The Post-Medieval Period.

More detailed information about the site and general area is available for this period. An early map of Ripon by Jeffreys (1772) shows Low St Agnesgate built up along its full length, encompassing the present site, but a later map, by Langdale (1818) only shows certain buildings immediately south of the site. Possible isolated buildings may be indicated on the site close to the street front. Aims of the evaluation should be to determine archaeologically if the map evidence is correct, to establish whether the structures shown on them are medieval or post-medieval in origin, and to establish why, and when, they were demolished. The cartographic evidence suggests that the street-front structures, in the area of the present site, were demolished between 1772 and 1818, probably to make way for the school which is indicated on Langdale's map.

3. SOURCES

- Finlayson, R., 2001a. *Ripon Cathedral Primary School, Low St Agnesgate, Ripon, North Yorkshire*, York Archaeological Trust Field Report 53
- Finlayson, R., 2001b. *Wakeman's House, High Skellgate, Ripon*, York Archaeological Trust Field Report 16
- Hall, R.A. and Whyman, M., 1996, 'Settlement and monasticism at Ripon from the 7th - 11th centuries', *Medieval Archaeology* 40, 62-150
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- Mackay, W., 1982, 'The Development of Medieval Ripon', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 54, 73-80
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- Whyman, M., 1997. 'Excavations in Deanery Gardens and Low St Agnesgate, Ripon', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal* 69, 119-63