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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**12 MILLGATE**

**MASHAM**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**N.G.R. 422666 480731**

**APPLICATION NO.6.3.227.FUL, 99/00047.**

**FOR**

**MR. & MRS.DAWLING**

**MAY 1999**

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
SITE LOCATION	3
SITE DESCRIPTION	3
HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	4
METHODOLOGY	4
SUMMARY OF WORKS	6
CONCLUSION	8

*Bibliography missing*

### LIST OF FIGURES

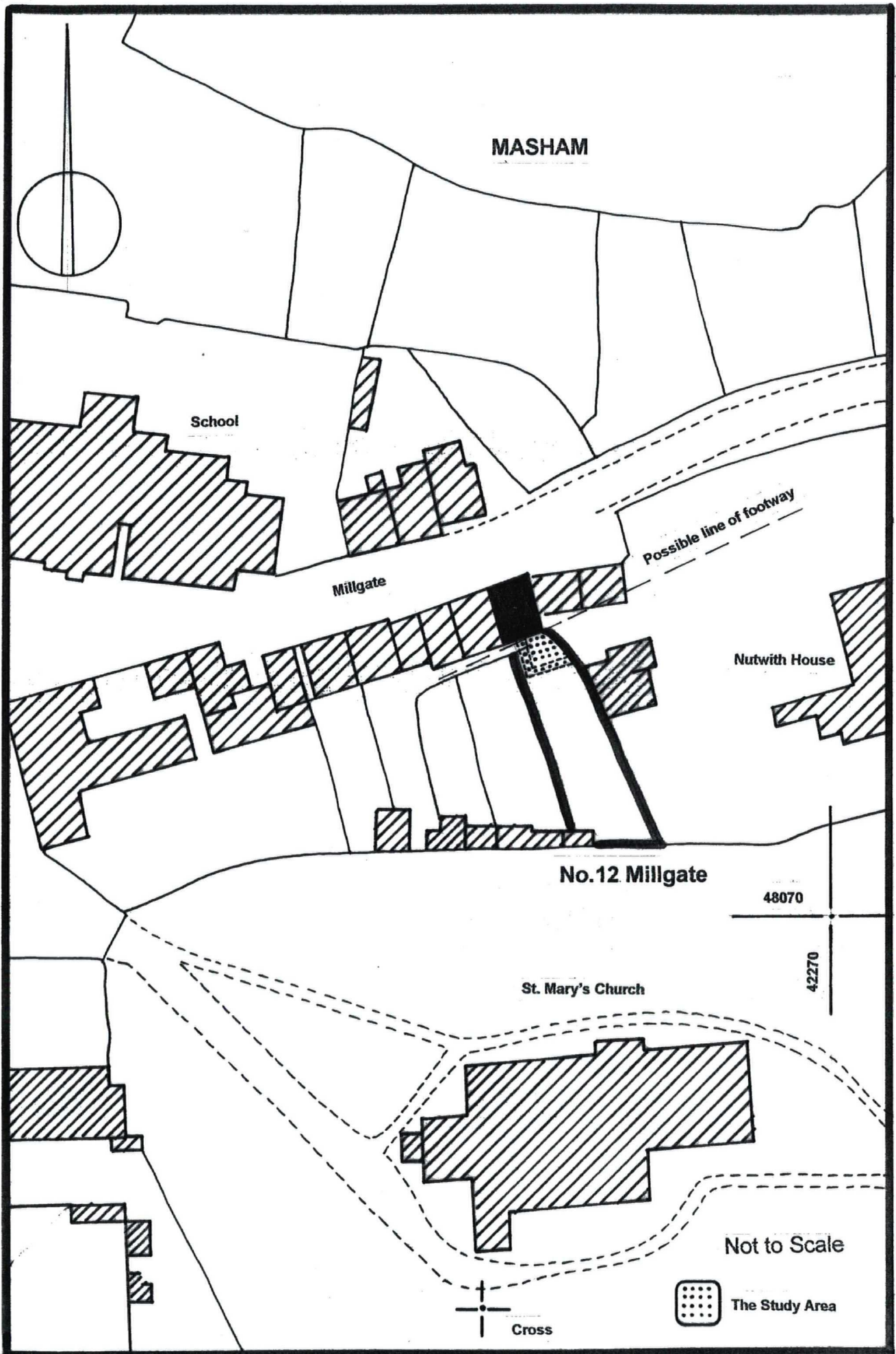
FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN	2
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### LIST OF PLATES

PLATE 1 - SITE LOCATION	5
PLATE 2 - SITE DURING EXCAVATION	5
PLATE 3 - LATE / POST MEDIEVAL FOOTWAY	7
PLATE 4 - LATE / POST MEDIEVAL FOOTWAY	7

FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



**12 MILLGATE  
MASHAM**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
MAY 1999**

## **INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological watching brief was maintained during ground disturbance associated with the construction of a new single storey domestic extension to the rear of 12 Millgate, Masham. This development was being undertaken by D.Walden & Son Builders for the owner of the above property, Mr. & Mrs. Dawling.

The archaeological watching brief, concluded on Monday 17th May 1999. The following statement outlines the nature of my findings.

## **SITE LOCATION**

The former garden and yard that comprises the study area is situated at N.G.R. SE: 22666 80731 at 84 metres A.O.D. The site is located within the eastern extent of the market town of Masham, to the rear of a row of terrace cottages on the south side of Millgate. The terrace is typically Late 18th / Early 19th century in character and indicative of an estate build.

## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The sub rectangular shaped study area is situated within the rear garden of 12 Millgate. The site measures approximately 4.50 metres x 2.70 metres and has until recently been partially occupied by domestic ancillary buildings; namely a Toilet, Wash House and Fuel Store. These small brick and wooden buildings were situated adjacent to the eastern 2.0m high sandstone boundary wall. The remainder of the site was open yard and footways surfaced in concrete.

There is evidence to suggest that areas of the site will have been previously disturbed during the installation of a foul water drain and a water service.

The existing ground levels are relatively level.

The site is contained to the east by a 2 metre high sandstone and clamp brick garden wall, this structure is characteristic of an 19th century garden wall. The wall has been subject to intermittent repairs but there is no significant variation in it's fabric or form to suggest any previous usage. Within the north eastern corner this wall curves and ties into the south eastern corner of the dwelling.

To the south the site is contained by the boundary wall common with the Churchyard. To the west by a post and rail fence. The ground levels within the adjacent property parcels to the west are equal to that of the study area.

The site is accessed by a footpath that runs along the rear of the terrace properties that doglegs to the north onto Millgate.

## **HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

The study area is located to the immediate north of the site of St.Mary's Church. The church is documented in the 11th century but architectural analysis has identified fabric dating to the Anglo Scandinavian period. This early ecclesiastical activity is supported further by the survival of a 9th century round shafted cross support. This column is carved with biblical scenes and motifs. It is suspected that the cross may have preceded the construction of the Anglo Saxon church and may have been sited elsewhere in the settlement. Recent archaeological excavations (Kershaw 1987) identified early Christian burials within the Dixon Keld area of Masham. Subsequent investigations (Cale 1989 & Clarke\Cale 1996) confirmed that the burial ground extended into the Little Market Place with intermittent burials extending to the south side of the Market Place.

This same programme of investigation identified the remains of a substantial medieval stone structure in the south east corner of the Market Place. Furthermore a concentration of Late Medieval pottery, indicative of settlement, in the south west corner of the Market Place in the vicinity of Chapman Lane.

## **METHODOLOGY**

It was the close proximity of the above archaeological remains to the site and the uncertainty as to the nature of surrounding archaeological evidence that lead Gail Falkingham, Archaeologist North Yorkshire County Council to place an archaeological condition on this development.

It was recommended by the Archaeological Officer, North Yorkshire County Council that an archaeologist should be engaged to oversee and monitor the proposed ground disturbance within the study area.

The watching brief condition makes provision for an archaeologist to be present on site, to witness the excavation processes, allowing the archaeologist a reasonable length of time to satisfactorily record any archaeology encountered.

### **The Brief Of Works:**

It was agreed that archaeologist would be in attendance to monitor the machine excavation of the strip foundation trench's, together with a reduction of the existing ground level within the footprint of the proposed extension.

PLATES 1 & 2



General view of site, facing north.



Site during excavation, facing north north east.

It has been calculated that this will amount to the excavation of two foundations trench's with a combined length of 7.10 m and 0.60m wide and up to 0.90m deep.

It was agreed that if finds or features of archaeological interest are revealed during the course of these excavations, reasonable time should be allowed for the archaeologist to record these.

## SUMMARY OF WORKS

Natural sub-soil was encountered at 0.78 metres below the former ground level within the southern extent of the site, the surface of which sloped down to the south on a gentle gradient. This layer of medium orange brown (7.5YR3/3) clayey silty loam was moist and well compacted. The layer contained a very low quantity of inclusions, namely water worn pebbles and occasional limestone fragments, these were well mixed throughout the layer with no noticeable concentrations. The surface of this layer was exposed across the greater majority of the site with the exception of the northern extent of the site where it passed beneath the required depth of dig. The layer had been cut and disturbed in places during the installation of the lead water pipe.

In the northern extent of the study area the sub soil was sealed by a 0.18m deep layer of buried topsoil. This deposit of silty loam (10YR2/1) was moist and contained a moderate quantity of inclusions dominated by water worn pebbles with occasional pebbles, these were evenly mixed throughout the layer. This was the earliest anthropogenic deposit identified during the excavation. A single sherd of 13th century pottery was recovered from this layer. The sherd was most likely derived from a wheel thrown bowl or similar such vessel that would have been used in a domestic environment for holding a liquid. The sherd has a hard, flakey fabric with a pink brown (7.5YR4/3) coloured exterior and a pink orange (5YR6/6) interior, the surface of the latter has been formerly decorated with a lead/copper based glaze (5Y6/4). The core of the sherd has been reduced to a dark blue grey (2.5Y3/0). The fabric contains a high quantity of inclusions dominated by mica.

This layer of buried topsoil was sealed by a footway. This thoroughfare had been formed from a deposit of lime based mortar and at its western extent from a heavily crazed paving slab of limestone. The surface was bedded level and aligned north east. The surface of this feature was identified at 0.61m below the former ground level, buried by a disturbed layer associated with the construction of the present dwelling. The path measured up to a maximum of 0.75m wide at it's south western tapering to a minimum of 0.54m to the north east and measured a maximum of 0.05m in depth. The alignment of the surface was slightly askew to that of the south elevation of the existing dwelling, and towards it north eastern extent it may have been cut and partially destroyed during the construction of this property. At it's north eastern extent the surface of this path passes beneath the eastern boundary wall.

As mentioned above the path was sealed by a 0.20m deposit of clayey loam (7.5YR3/3) that was moist and well compacted. The layer contained a moderate quantity of inclusions dominated by lime flecking and sandstone fragments these were evenly mixed throughout the layer.



Late / Post Medieval mortar and limestone footway.



The deposit was restricted to an area measuring 1.5m wide adjacent to the southern elevation of the building, the layer butted the lower courses of masonry and foundations of this property. The layer contained occasional 19th century pottery together with a sherd of post medieval pottery that had a internal / external copper based glaze. The layer was sealed by a layer of buried topsoil.

A single deposit of topsoil was overlying the entire site, this dark brown (10YR2/1) clayey loam was moist and well compacted. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with 19th century and modern finds. The topsoil increased in depth towards the southern extent of the site from 0.12m up to 0.60 m in depth. With the exception of that area in the north of the site occupied by the buried footway the topsoil sealed the sub soil. The layer had been deposited against the lower wall courses and foundations of the adjacent garden wall. The topsoil had been cut and disturbed during the installation of a lead water service pipe and a 7" ceramic salt glazed foul water pipe.

The topsoil was sealed by the crushed brick sub base of the former concrete paths and yard area.

The small quantity of modern artefacts that were recovered from these excavations were not removed from site.

The single sherd of medieval pottery has been retained by the Archaeologist pending any further arrangements pertaining to it's future curation.

## CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Mr.& Mrs. Dawling at 12 Millgate, Masham has provided a useful picture of the chronological development of this site.

The watching brief identified seven main phases of activity on the site that have taken place over the last 800 years:-

- I. A 12th / Early 13th century deposit of topsoil.
- ii. The subsequent construction of a mortar and limestone path, overlying the medieval topsoil running parallel and to the south of Millgate Lane . It is suspected that this path is late medieval in origin and as such is likely to predate the construction of the existing terrace.

It is interesting to note that no related features or deposits were identified with this path, it is possible that any such remains were removed during later landscaping across the site.

- iii. The Late 18th / Early 19th Century development of the site, during which period it would appear the row of cottages adjacent to Millgate were constructed together with the existing eastern boundary wall.

- iv. The deposition of builders waste immediately adjacent to the south elevation of the new property, this layer may have functioned as a sub base for unidentified path leading to the rear entrance of the property.

It was not possible to determine the ground levels to the rear of the property during the immediate post build period.

- v. The installation of a lead pipe bringing water from the adjacent property Nutwith House to 12 Millgate.
- vi. The deposition of up to 0.60m of topsoil associated with the major programme of landscaping, it is suspected that this swiftly followed the construction of the property. Comparison of existing ground levels with adjacent gardens would suggest that the landscaping extended to the rear of all property's on the terrace.
- vii. During the 20th century the two phased construction of ancillary buildings and the subsequent laying of a concrete yard surface.

A very small quantity of finds were identified during the watching brief these included late 19th century pottery, glass and bone, none of which was recovered or removed from site.

**Kevin John Cale**

**May 1999**