

Figure 2, Jeffery's Map of Ripon, 1772

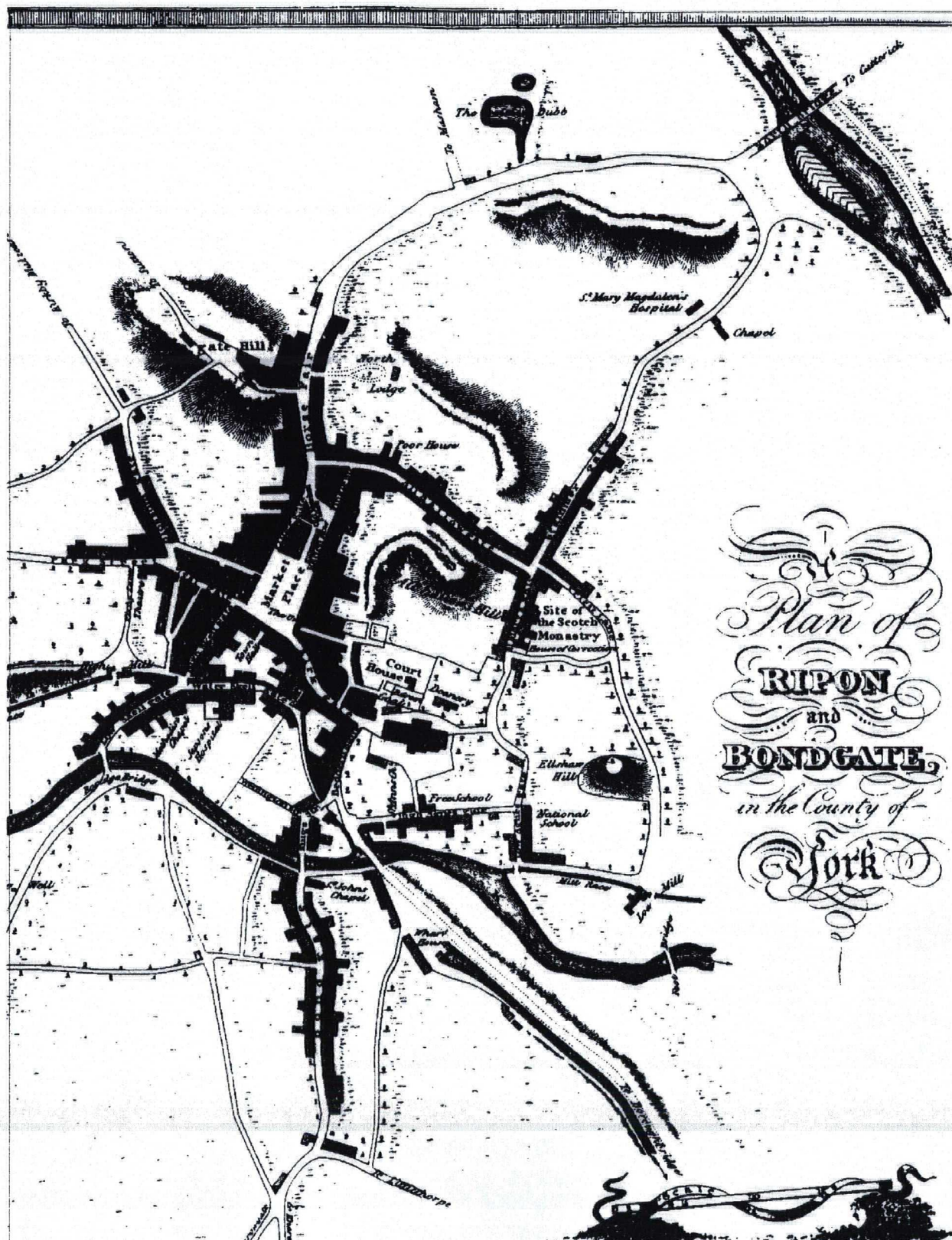


Figure 3, Langdale's Map of Ripon, 1818

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Excavations to the north of the site revealed significant evidence of settlement in this part of Ripon from the 6th century onwards. Generally remains have been uncovered close to the ground surface. The depth of the archaeological strata encountered has varied, for example in excavations at the Deanery Gardens in 1977-8 from between c.1.4m to 0.80m with the greatest depth being found at the southern and eastern end of these excavations (Whyman 1997, 121). At the site of the New School, Priest Lane the depth of deposit has varied from c. 0.50m to c. 1m with some larger features reaching to c.1.5m below ground surface (Johnson 1998, McComish 2001).

Cemeteries of pre-Norman date are often dispersed throughout an extended ecclesiastical precinct around several different foci, and recent excavations at the Old Deanery indicate that new cemeteries may be encountered in this area. The proximity of the site to the ecclesiastical precinct suggests that burials might be encountered here.

Ailcy Hill has been greatly modified by gravel and sand removal in the post-medieval period and it might be suggested that the whole area had been the subject of extensive activity of this nature but the indications from the evidence from excavations at site of the New School, Priest Lane suggest that the area immediately north of the development site was the subject of isolated quarry pit activity rather than general removal of deposits. In the light of this there is a likelihood that this will also be true of the development site and that earlier deposits within the area will not have been severely truncated by sand and gravel extraction. However, some truncation will have occurred due to the construction of the buildings currently standing on site together with associated service trenches.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

Archaeological evidence from the excavations at Ailcy Hill indicates an early medieval burial site close by. The site lies close to the ecclesiastical precinct boundary as identified by Hall and Whyman (1996, 144). Archaeological evidence from sites at Low St Agnesgate and The Deanery Gardens has 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 early medieval and medieval date are likely to survive relatively close to the ground surface. These are likely to be important in allowing a fuller understanding of the history of the development of Ripon and the relationship between the respective boundaries of the ecclesiastical precinct and secular settlement which are not at present fully understood. In general terms it 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. Settlement may have extended southwards towards the River Skell including the site. If the site has not been truncated, even negative archaeological evidence from this site could be of significance in establishing the extents of early medieval and medieval Ripon.

The present post-medieval buildings on the site will have caused some degree of truncation of the deposits within the footprint of the foundations to the building and in areas where associated service trenches have been located. Isolated quarry pits may have caused limited truncation of earlier deposits. Important archaeological deposits of medieval or earlier date may thus be preserved both inside and outside the footprint of the buildings. While precise levels at which they might be encountered cannot be known without evaluation of below ground deposits, it is very likely that any proposed work will impact on these deposits.

Survival of archaeological deposits in Ripon, as in other urban areas, can be intermittent but the proximity of this site to previously discovered significant archaeological evidence indicates the strong possibility of survival here. Thus, any development could have an impact on significant archaeological deposits of the early medieval and medieval periods. Assessment of the area by means of trial excavation in order to assess the degree and extent of survival of remains and to allow development plans to incorporate mitigation strategies to avoid the destruction of surviving remains is strongly recommended. Additionally if the older brick school buildings are to be altered a programme of recording should be undertaken.

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10. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Research and Report	Rhona Finlayson
Illustrations	Rhona Finlayson
Editor	David Brinklow