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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF****25 CASTLEGATE****KNARESBOROUGH****NORTH YORKSHIRE****N.G.R. 34867 57000****FOR****MR. & MRS. DI'ORIO****NOVEMBER 1999**

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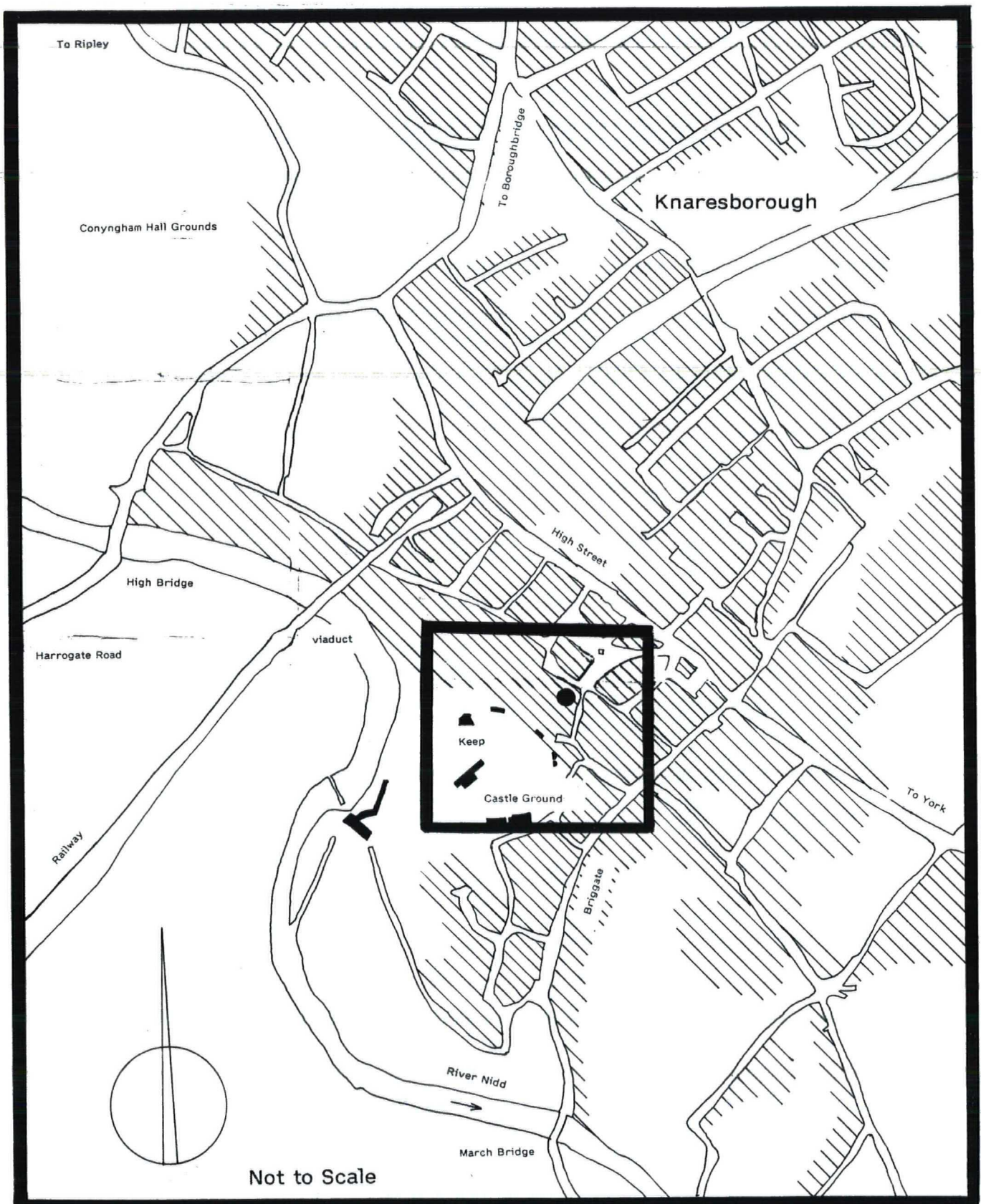
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FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



## **25 CASTLEGATE KNARESBOROUGH**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF NOVEMBER 1999**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This archaeological investigation was maintained during ground disturbance associated with the construction of a new kitchen extension within an existing yard area to the rear of 25 Castlegate, Knaresborough.

On the 26th October 1999 Mr. & Mrs. Di'orio, the owners of "The Bella Rosa" Italian Restaurant, 25 Castlegate, Knaresborough engaged the archaeological services of Mr. K. J. Cale.

The archaeological watching brief, concluded on Saturday 20th November 1999. The following statement outlines the nature of my findings.

#### **SITE LOCATION**

The site is located within the Civil Parish of Knaresborough (District/Parish No. 6100) in the District of Harrogate.

The market town of Knaresborough is situated on a outcrop of Magnesian Limestone that forms an area of relatively high ground on the 76 metre contour on the western side of the Vale of York. The town is situated approximately four miles to the north east of Harrogate and eighteen miles west of York. The settlement is located on the eastern side of Knaresborough Gorge a natural fissure cut by the River Nidd.

The study area is located within the centre west of the market town of Knaresborough at N.G.R. 34867 57000, at approximately 76 metres A.O.D. The study area is accessed from north east off Kirkgate.

#### **OWNERSHIP**

The development area is owned by Mr. & Mrs. Di'orio.



## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The existing site occupies the south eastern extent of a small, enclosed yard area, that is situated to rear of 25 Castlegate. The yard is accessed from Bowling Green Yard via a narrow pedestrian ginnel.

The yard is presently contained on three sides, to the north west by a large derelict building constructed out of magnesian limestone and known as "The Smithy", to the north east by the range of brick built commercial units, Plot No's 1, 3 and 5, a stone stairwell affords access down into the basement of Plot No.5, to the south east by the brick built 25 Castlegate, to the south and south west by a brick boundary wall.

The yard currently supports a small timber hut and a wheeled plastic refuse bin.

The yard is presently surfaced in gravel with paved walkways, the ground level of the yard is gently undulating and raised by upto 0.4m above the surface of the path leading to Bowing Green Yard.

## **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### Knaresborough:

The origins of the settlement of Knaresborough are relatively obscure. The first reference to the town is in 1086 in the Domesday Book, where it is recorded as Chearesburg, this place name evidence would suggest that the site may have been fortified and may date back to Anglo Saxon period, 'burg' meaning defended enclosure. There is however no physical evidence of the pre-Norman settlement at Knaresborough, and from references within the Domesday book it would appear that the 11th century settlement if not deserted was greatly reduced.

It seems likely that the settlement began to develop during the first half of the 12th century, when it is known that both the Castle and the parish church were in existence, both structures continued to develop well into the late medieval period.

By the 13th century Knaresborough was acting as the centre of an iron-working industry, processing the ironstone mined from the Forest of Knaresborough.

During the 14th century the settlement continued to develop and expand, largely as a result of it being ideally situated as a catchment foci for the trade and exchange of goods between the Pennine economy to the west and that of the Vale of York to the east. The documentary evidence confirms that by 1307 Knaresborough had been granted a weekly market and an annual fair and the inhabitants of the town were made free burgesses. Trade and industry during the later medieval period would appear to have centred around the woollen industry, but also included a wide variety of other trades such as cobblers, brewers, butchers, tanners, metalworkers and blacksmiths.



The post medieval period witnessed a transition from the woollen to the linen industry. This industry continued to grow during the 18th and early 19th centuries and the town benefited from this boom.

However during the second half of the 19th century this industry contracted and Knaresborough was eclipsed by the growth of the new, regional administrative centre at Harrogate.

#### The Site:

A rapid consultation of available map sources for Knaresborough that date back as far as the early 19th century would indicate the following;

#### Early 19th Century: (*The Castle Grounds & Market Place, Knaresborough, 1849*)

That by 1849 the configuration of the developed area and the surrounding road network is in place. The site is depicted as an enclosed yard area that is contained to the south east by a complex of adjoining buildings that include 25 Castlegate, together with two named properties "Castle Lodge" and "The Grapes Inn". The irregularity in both the size, planform and alignment of these buildings would suggest a protracted period of development, possibly commencing during the late 17th century. To the north east the yard is contained by a range of buildings that front Kirkgate, these buildings are of a similar size and form, possibly reflecting a single phase of development, suspected to be late 18th century in date. To the north west the yard is contained by a large detached building that has a similar alignment to the Kirkgate terrace i.e north east.

The enclosed yard area is sub triangular in planform and is depicted as open space, suspected to be lawn, that is dissected by a path that runs from the rear of 25 Castlegate to the large detached building to north on a north western alignment. The yard is accessed via a pedestrian thoroughfare from a Timber Yard to the north, the narrow ginnel is gated and would also appear to afford access to a stairwell that descends into the basement of a property on Kirkgate. The rear of 25 Castlegate has a water tap fixed to same.

#### Early 20th Century: (OS 1:2500 1909)

By 1909 the configuration of the surrounding thoroughfares remains largely unchanged. The footprint of the developed area is similar, however, it would appear that there have been some alterations in the boundaries between adjoining properties, this is particularly noticeable on the Kirkgate street frontage where the early 19th century trend in north eastern aligned boundaries has been replaced with an ad-hoc arrangement of boundaries. The detached building to the north west is named as the "Smithy".

The enclosed yard has been reduced in size as a result of the construction of a sub triangular shaped ancillary building in its western extent.

The internal area of the yard remains open and dissected by two footways, one aligned north east which appears to afford access to the Smithy from the yard entrance, the second aligned east north east running from the rear of 25 Castlegate to the Smithy. The yard supports a single large deciduous tree, this was located in the eastern extent of the yard.

## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

Knaresborough is a historic town of interest and importance, and as there has been only a limited amount of modern development within the town centre, there is a high potential for the survival of historical standing structures and there is a high potential for the preservation of buried archaeological deposits.

Within the town centre, over the last number of years, a series of watching briefs have been maintained on local authority trench excavations and private developments in an attempt to locate and examine the nature and form of the town defence's. Unfortunately these works have failed to identify any evidence of these defensive structures.

A number of small scale archaeological excavations have been undertaken within the castle grounds, these have taken place, intermittently, over the last sixty years, unfortunately the records for these works are incomplete and sketchy.

Recently a three year programme of ground investigation has concluded, these excavations, located immediately adjacent to the north and east elevations of the keep were conducted by Harrogate Museums and Art Galleries. These works were undertaken in support of a ten phase building repair programme to the historical fabric of the fortification. The excavations which were conducted to the immediate west of the Keep revealed evidence of the earthwork defence's of the 12th century fortification as well as confirming the site and nature of the 14th century northern gatehouse. The excavations to the immediate south of the Keep exposed a series of floor surfaces associated with the post medieval and more recent activity around the Keep, together with evidence of the 14th and pre 14th century buildings.

Other entries in the archaeological record are from the declared chance finds, information of which has been noted since the 18th century.

The finds range from a Bronze Age perforated stone axe that was found at Blind Lane Farm, to a Roman urn or cooking pot of Antonine date that was recovered from south of Tentergate Avenue. The greater majority of these finds are isolated coins dating from the Roman period onwards.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The site is situated within Knaresborough Conservation Area, this together with its close proximity to the Castle Yard and the uncertainty as to the nature of surrounding



archaeological evidence lead the Deputy Archaeologist, Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire County Council to place an archaeological condition on this development.

It was recommended by the Deputy Archaeologist 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 for the hand excavation of the strip foundation trench's.

It was noted from design specification and copy plans that the proposed kitchen extension would be built upon concrete strip foundations, the depth of which will be dictated by the suitability of the ground for load bearing.

The archaeological watching brief would be required during:-

The hand excavation of the strip foundations, the perimeter of the footprint measures 7 metres in length.

#### **SUMMARY OF WORKS**

Mr.K.J.Cale was notified of the commencement of works on the evening of Friday 19th November 1999, and was asked by the client to inspect site on Saturday 20th November 1999 as it was anticipated that groundworks would be complete by the following Monday. On arrival on site at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday 20th November 1999 Mr.Cale found that 75% of the groundworks were complete and the remaining section of trench was being hand excavated.

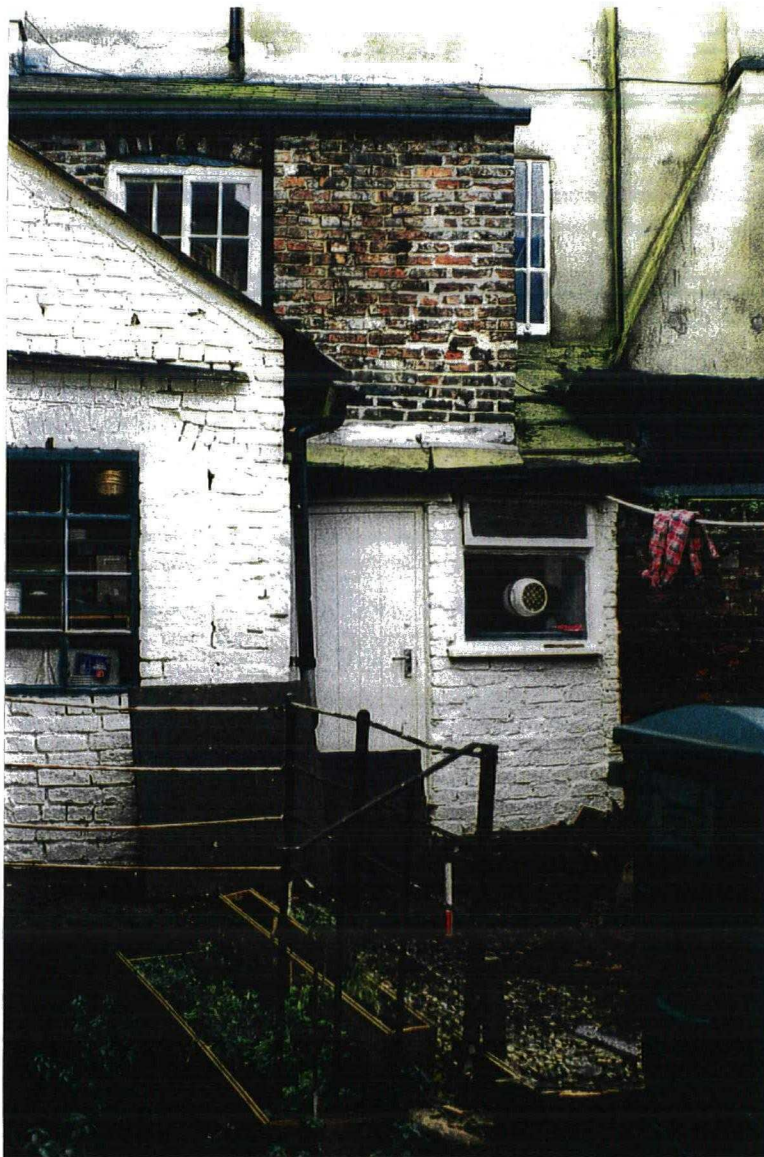
The trench measured a total length of 7.0m x 0.55m wide and 0.80m deep and was excavated in four short lengths, forming three elevations of the proposed kitchen extension.

Natural sub-soil was not encountered during the 0.80m depth of dig.

The earliest anthropogenic deposit was a light brown (10YR5/4) clayey sand, this layer of disturbed ground was identified towards the base of excavation within all the trench's. The layer was moist and well compacted. The layer passed beneath the required depth of dig and therefore is known to exceed 0.34m in depth. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions, these were dominated by small angular fragments of magnesian limestone and sandstone fragments measuring < 0.04m in size. The inclusions were evenly mixed throughout the layer. The surface of the layer sloped gently down to the north. The layer has the overall appearance of a sub soil, however the presence of a



PLATE 1



Site During Excavation

small quantity of animal bone (sheep/goat) would rule out this possibility, rather it would seem that the context is a redeposited sub soil, possibly the up cast derived from the excavation of the adjacent stairwell.

This disturbed soil was sealed by an overall layer of dark brown (7.5YR2/0) sandy loam, the layer had the characteristics of a buried topsoil. The layer was moist and relatively well compacted. The layer measured upto 0.38m in depth. The layer contained a moderate quantity of inclusions that were all <0.04m in size and included brick, lime, magnesian limestone and charcoal fragments together with the occasional water worn pebble and root. The inclusions were well mixed throughout the layer, the majority of which have the appearance of residual fragments from building works. The layer increased in depth towards the north, apparently compensating for the falling ground level of the clayey sand beneath. The layer contained a small quantity of late 19th century pottery and glass fragments. The surface of this layer was gently undulating. It would appear that this layer of topsoil accounts for the raised ground level of the existing yard, i.e. 0.40m above the level of the access path.

The layer has been cut and disturbed during drainage works, this includes the construction of a box culvert and more recently the installation of a foul water drain and lead water service. The box culvert emerges from beneath the existing kitchen at 0.28m below the existing ground level and drains to the north west running parallel with the revetment wall of the stairwell. This 19th century drain has been constructed out of clamp brick (0.23m x 0.10m x 0.04m in size) side members, two courses deep and bedded in lime mortar, the base and surface of the drain has been constructed out of sandstone slate. The invert of this drain was identified at 0.35m below the existing ground level. It is evident that the drain has been replaced during the 20th century by the clayware foul water drain that respects the same alignment as the culvert. The lead water pipe emerged from beneath the existing kitchen, the service was live, its location appears to correspond with the location of the "Water Tap" annotated on the 1909 OS map.

The sandy loam was sealed by a 0.03m deep layer of coarse gritty sand that formed the sub base for the existing gravel yard surface.

## CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Mr.& Mrs.Di'orio at 25 Castlegate, Knaresborough was largely negative, but has provided details on the chronological development of this site.

The watching brief identified three main phases of activity on the site that have taken place over the last 150 years:-

- I. The disturbance of sub soil across the site, suspected to be associated with the excavations to the rear of 1 Kirkgate during the construction of the steps leading down into the basement. Unfortunately, due to the absence of dateable finds no exact date can be placed on these works, although a mid/late 18th century date would seem likely.



It is interesting to note that on the completion of these early landscaping works it would be expected that an occupation level would be present in the form of a trampled surface or a paved/gravel surface, no such evidence was found, rather it would appear that a topsoil was imported immediately on to site.

- ii. A 19th century deposit of topsoil across the site. This identification of this layer would support the 19th and early 20th century map evidence which depicts a yard of open space / lawn dissected by paths.
- iii. The recent surfacing of the site with gravels.

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**

**November 1999**