



Archaeological
Research
Services Ltd

**Darley Abbey Pump House, Derby.
Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief.**



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Executive Summary

An archaeological watching brief on behalf of Derby City Council was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd during August 2007 at the site of the Pump House, Darley Abbey. In conjunction with the development of the Darley Barn Outdoor Centre, the Pump House is to be converted into a canoe store. Work consisted of creating an access track across Dean's Field for vehicles and the dismantling of a brick wall that currently blocks any entrance to the rear Pump House. No significant archaeological remains were discovered during the Watching Brief.

1. Introduction

1.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Derby City Council to undertake an archaeological watching brief on work being undertaken to redevelop the disused Pump House into a canoe store for the Darley Barn Outdoor Centre. The work involved creating an access track, across Dean's Field, from the road leading to the car park to the rear of the Pump House. A build up of modern debris and vegetation around the Pump House will also be cleared so that gravel could be laid around the building. A section of brick wall was also demolished and partially re-built to allow access to the Pump House from Dean's Field.



Fig. 1 Location map of Darley Park, Darley Abbey.

2. Location and Geology

- 2.1 The Pump House is situated on Darley Street, Darley Abbey directly opposite the Old Abbey Public House on the corner before the entrance to the Darley Park car park (Fig. 2).
- 2.2 The site is situated on the interbedded Glacial Sands and Gravels of an alluvial river terrace (Aitkenhead 2002).



Fig. 2 View to the rear of the Pump House .

3. Background

- 3.1 Darley Abbey lies a little over 2km north of Derby city centre within the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. By the 17th century the village was a thriving industrial hamlet, eventually home to a large complex of mills. The Evans family, who were keen industrialists, oversaw the development of the Darley Abbey area we see today. The family built much of the housing which consists for the most part of three storey red brick residences, landscaped the area that is now Darley Park and restored the property known as Darley Hall (Robinson 2001, 11) located on the high ground overlooking the river Derwent. Dean's Field is the site of a former cotton Mill built during a time expansion for the Evans family in the 1770's. The mill was demolished in the 1930's.
- 3.2 Darley Abbey was originally an Augustinian priory, founded by Robert de Ferrers, second Earl of Derby, around 1146 (Robinson 2001, 8). The Abbey, ideally situated next to the river Derwent, became one of the most important in Derbyshire. It was surrendered as part of the Dissolution of Monasteries in 1538 and almost totally obliterated. After the dissolution, the land was asset stripped and sold to Sir William West (Robinson, D. 2001, 10). A significant amount of monastic buildings survive because they were converted into capital mansions by their new owners. In some cases the Abbot's private dwellings were reused with little alteration to the original structure as suitable residences for new owners, such as those built by the Abbots of Battle and Ford (Dorset) and the prior at

Watten (East Yorkshire) (Coppack 2006, 176). This has led to the belief that Darley Hall, erected 1727, was originally part of the Darley Abbey complex, possibly the Abbot's private residence, although no proof of this has yet been forthcoming.

- 3.3 The only remaining upstanding building is an upper floor hall house, now a public house, built probably *c.* 1450 (SMR 32468) (Derbyshire SMR Report) (Fig. 2). The public house is situated directly opposite the Pump House. The date of this 'Old Abbey' building is based on a consideration of the general architecture and dendrochronological work undertaken on principle floor joists (Derbyshire SMR Report). Other archaeological finds in Darley Abbey are scarce. Apart from 15th century remains uncovered at No's 7, 8 and 9 Abbey Lane, no other medieval remains have come to light (Derbyshire SMR Report). Although these houses appeared to have monastic masonry in their fabric it is difficult to tell whether the material was reused or *in situ*. In 1965 an area of open ground next to Brick Row and Old Lane was developed for housing. The Derbyshire Archaeological Research Group of The Derbyshire Archaeological Society carried out excavations in eight areas (1.2m by 1.2m), along with trenches amounting to almost 61m in length and found no traces of any occupation (Robinson, D. 2002, 13). The lack of medieval pottery was thought to rule out this area as a location for the abbey. The only other archaeological discoveries were of several skeletons at Hill Square, a few metres north of the 'Old Abbey' building, during the layout of gas mains in the 1920's (Robinson 2001, 14). A local workman who worked on the service drains on New Road during the 1970's recalled the discovery of large sandstone blocks of a structural nature being uncovered, but they were not recorded.
- 3.4 An archaeological watching brief, undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Derby City Council in 2006 during the re-build of The Old Barn, uncovered three walls and a narrow path believed to be associated with the medieval abbey (Shakarian, J. 2006). Two of the walls were substantial structural walls; the third appeared to be a smaller, internal wall. Medieval pottery was discovered beneath the foundation layer of one of the walls, confirming a mid 13th to 14th century date. Whilst excavating the service trenches a wall, with an associated flagged floor level, was uncovered. The stone was comparable to that of the previous walls discovered but the structures were proven to be of a later date. A large arched structure was also discovered in close proximity to The Old Abbey public house and the Pump House. The feature was believed to be a bridge that was located over a previous mill fleam which appears on a 1708 map of Darley Abbey. All the archaeological remains discovered during this watching Brief were all preserved *in situ*.

4. Aims of the Project

- 4.1 The project was an archaeological watching brief and the aims of the project were as follows:
- To observe all groundwork for the presence of archaeology.
 - To alert all interested parties to the possible destruction of archaeological features.
 - To fully record and excavate any archaeological features encountered.

5. Method Statement

- 5.1 All machine excavation on the site was observed by an archaeologist to ensure that no archaeological remains were disturbed. Any features or structures were to be fully cleaned and recorded in accordance with the standards stipulated by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and the guidance provided in 'Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions' (English Heritage 2003).
- 5.2 Any features or structures were to be photographed, recorded and where possible, fully-excavated. All the contexts were to be recorded on pro-forma sheets and within a context and photographic register.
- 5.3 Photographs were taken using a 35mm SLR camera with black and white print film, and colour transparency, as well as with a digital camera (5 megapixel resolution).
- 5.4 All work was carried out wearing appropriate safety equipment. A system of hand signals was agreed before work commenced to allow for easy communication and a safe environment for examining the potential archaeological remains while supervising machine excavation.

6. Summary of results.

- 6.1 The access track across Dean's Field was excavated in level spits by a machine using a toothless bucket. The trench was 0.3m in depth and between 3m and 5m in width (Figs. 4 and 5). The track becomes wider in places to allow for a turning circle for vehicles transporting the canoes. The track is going to be covered with green plastic grids so that the grass can be allowed to re-grow. In this way the track will be less visible. The topsoil (001) existed to a depth of 0.15m. Below this was a thin layer of redeposited clay, approximately 0.2m in thickness. The clay overlay a dark brown loam (003), although the depth of this deposit was not determined.

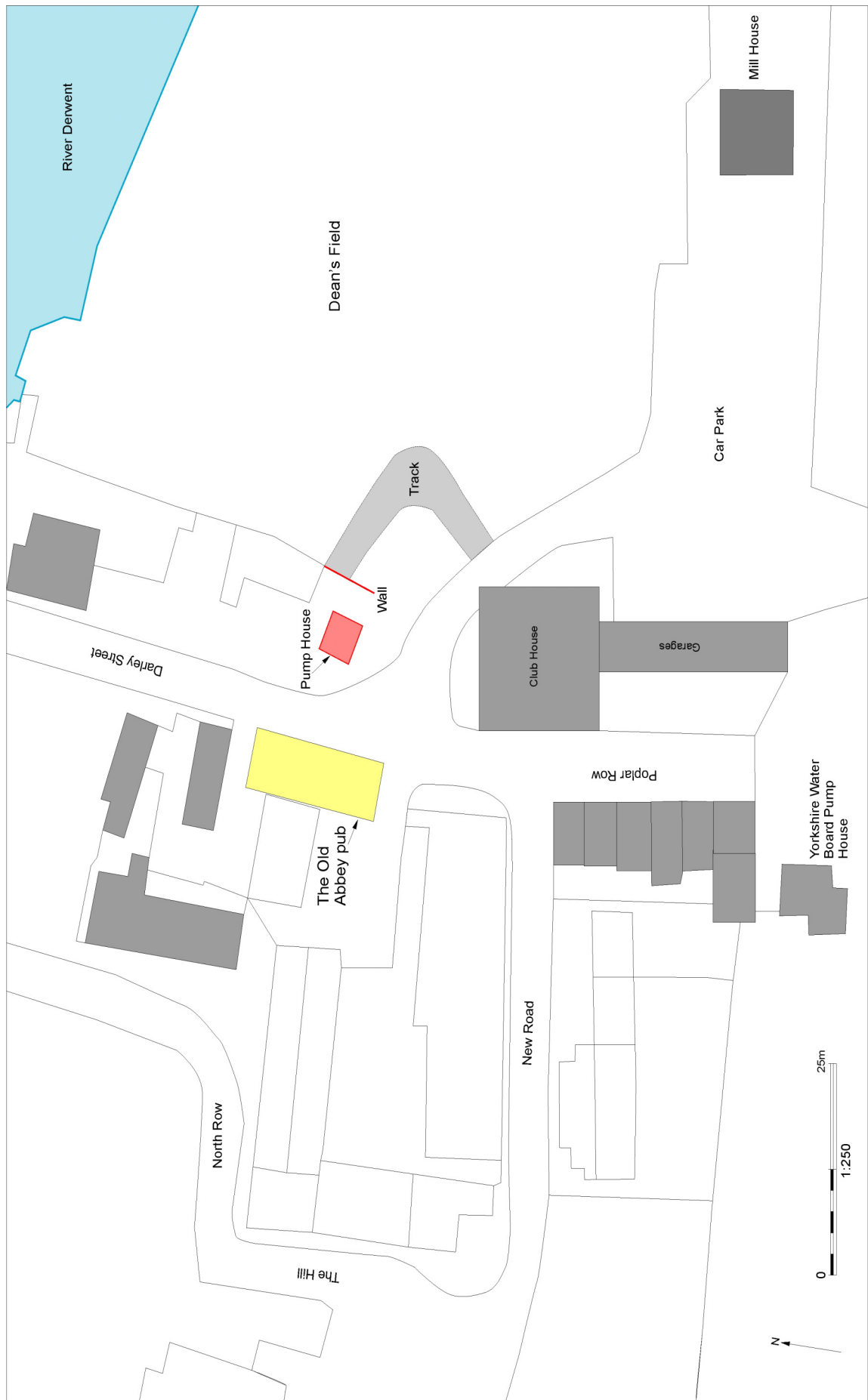


Fig. 3 Plan of Darley Abbey showing the location of the pump house and the wall.



Fig. 4 View of the access track showing the brick wall, looking south. Scale: 2m



Fig. 5 View of the access track abutting kerbstones of road leading to the car park, looking south.
Scale: 2m

- 6.2 The second phase of work involved clearing the area immediately surrounding the Pump House which had become overgrown with vegetation and modern waste (Fig. 6). The cleared area was to be covered with a layer of builders gravel. No archaeological deposits or finds were discovered during this phase of the work.



Fig. 6 View of the area surrounding the Pump House before clearance

- 6.3 Whilst clearing the north side of the Pump House an opening to a cellar or air raid shelter at the side of the building was revealed (Figs. 7 and 8). The opening was 1m x 1m and had a metal access ladder attached to the west side. The cellar was filled with rubble so its depth could not be established but it was approximately 5m in length and 2m in width. This estimate is based on the dimensions of the concrete raft, visible from the surface that is probably the cellar's roof. To maintain the safety of the site the opening was protected on all sides and filled with gravel. A concrete raft was then placed on top to conceal the entrance.



Fig. 7 View of the cellar entrance, looking west. Scale: 2m



Fig. 8. View of the cellar entrance, looking east. Scale: 2m

- 6.4 The final phase of work consisted of dismantling the wall that currently obstructs access to the pump house from Dean's Field. The wall appears on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map of Darley Abbey, 1889 (Fig. 11) and was constructed from coarsely made red bricks (Figs.9 & 10). Frost damage to the wall meant that the lower 12 courses were in poor condition. It was decided that these lower bricks could not be saved and that the wall should be re-built using the bricks from the top courses. The wall was re-built leaving a 2m gap for a gate allowing access to the pump house. The footings for the wall were excavated to a depth of 0.9m. The base of the original wall footings were not reached at this depth.



Fig. 9 View of the brick wall from Dean's Field, looking west (Scale: 2m).



Fig. 10 View of the brick wall from the rear, looking east (Scale: 2m).

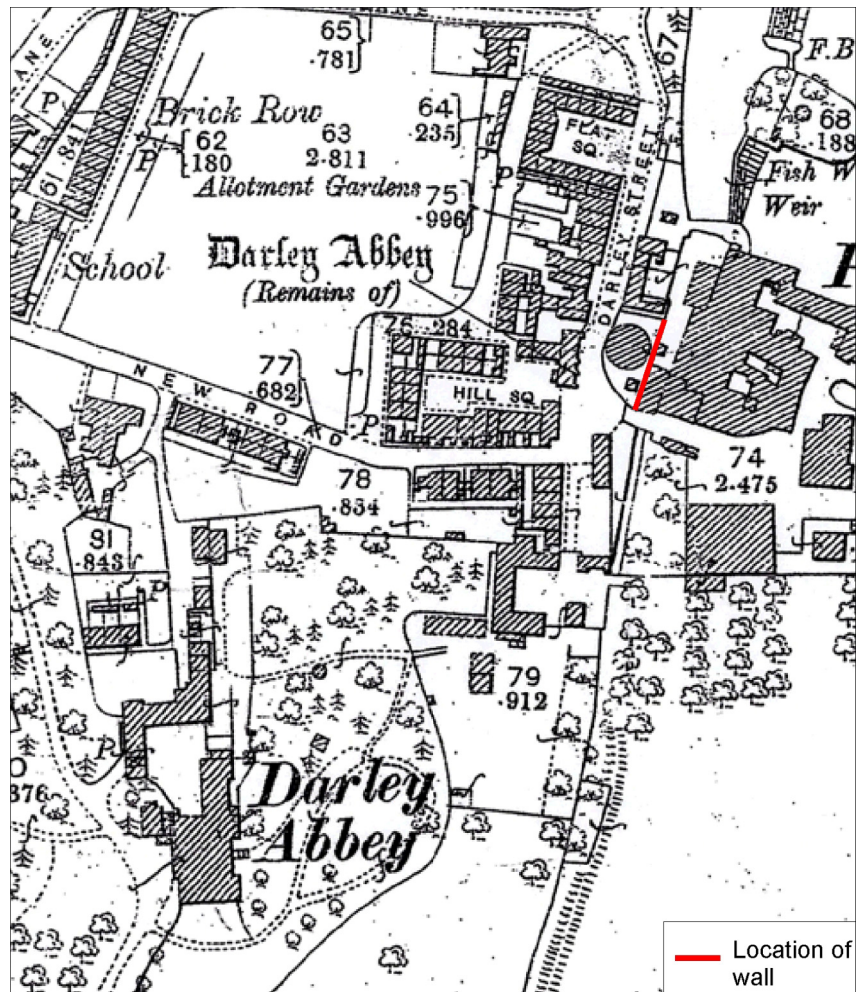


Fig. 11 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey map showing the location of the wall

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The excavation to create a path across Dean's Field did not reveal any archaeological features or deposits.
- 7.2 Work undertaken to clear the overgrown area adjacent to the Pump House revealed a small opening to a probable cellar. The cellar was infilled with rubble and had a metal descent ladder on the east side. The cellar entrance was protected with a concrete raft and left undisturbed.

8. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

- 8.1 Any Publicity will be handled by the client.
- 8.2 Archaeological Research Services will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, 1988.

9. Statement of Indemnity

- 9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the

basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

10. Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank James Garner of Derby City Council and Andy Myers Development Control Archaeologist for their support in this work.

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