

An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Old Coach House, Belper.



ARS Ltd Report 2009/28

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Executive Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Central Networks (E.ON UK Trading Ltd).

The watching brief was carried out between the 23rd and 26th of March 2009 and consisted of the observation of groundworks to excavate a trench for a new electricity supply to the Old Coach House. These groundworks formed part of the final phase of renovation work at the Old Coach House.

The watching brief was requested by Derbyshire County Council as the works were to be undertaken within the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, as well as the Belper Conservation Area. The works were also in close proximity to the building previously known as Unity Mill.

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of Work

The archaeological watching brief at the Old Coach House, Derwent Street, Belper, Derbyshire was undertaken by Jessika Shakarian and Brian Marshall of Archaeological Research Services Ltd from the 23rd to the 26th of March for Central Networks (E.ON UK Trading Ltd). The watching brief was requested by Derbyshire County Council as the site falls within the Derwent Valley World Heritage Site, as well as, the Belper Conservation Area. The watching brief consisted of the observation of groundworks during the excavation of a trench measuring approximately 44m x 0.3m wide and between 0.45 - 0.5m deep. The trench was excavated for an electricity cable to supply the Old Coach House. The trench ran from the substation, located close to Bridge Street, along the northern border of the property originally known as Unity Mill.

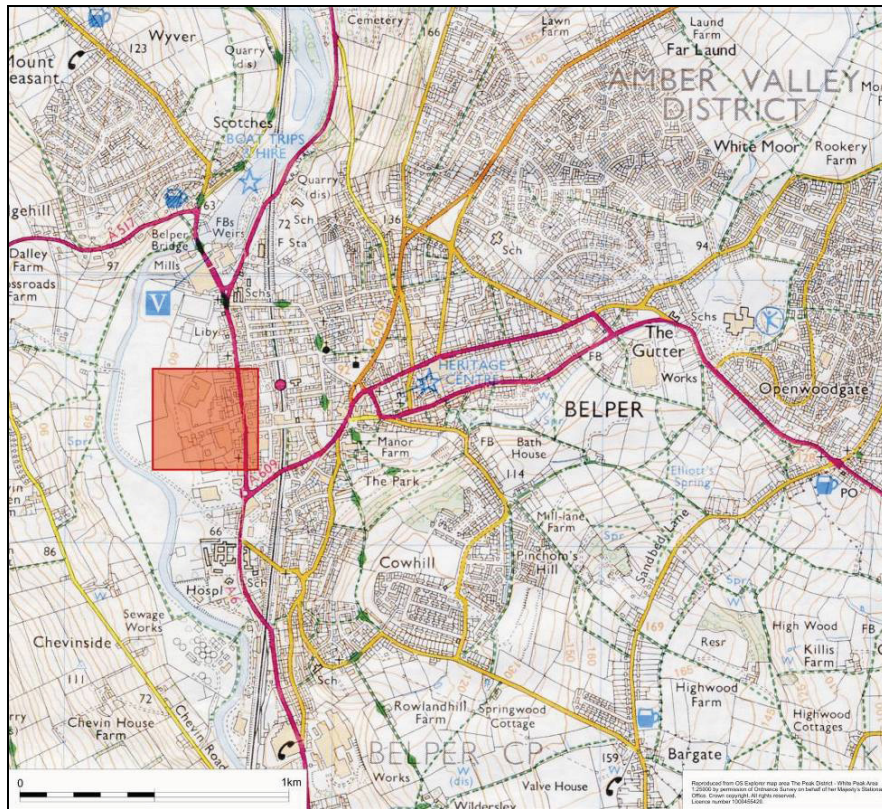


Fig. 1 location map showing site

1.2 Location and Geology

1.2.1 The site is located to the west of Bridge Street (A6) (SK3447). The Old Coach House is located to the rear of Derwentside Antiques which occupies the building previously known as Unity Mill.

1.2.2 The trench ran along the edge of the northern boundary of Unity Mill and connected the Old Coach House with the electricity substation located within the car park for the Thomas Ryde & Son funeral directors (Fig. 2).

1.3 Background

1.3.1 The town of Belper played a significant part in the Industrial Revolution; this is reflected in the fact that the Belper mills and their historic industrial neighbours at Cromford, Darley Abbey and Derby were given World Heritage Site status in December 2001. Derbyshire County Council has identified the proximity of the development to the property previously known as Unity Mill which dates to 1838. To the north of the site are the properties on Chevin View some of which date to as early as 1835. It was thought that groundworks in this area may impact on remains relating to the towns industrial and post-medieval history.

2. Aims of the Project

2.1 The project was an archaeological watching brief as stipulated by the local planning authority. The aims were as follows:

- To observe all groundworks for the presence of archaeology.
- To alert all interested parties to the possible destruction of archaeological features.
- To achieve an appropriate level of preservation by record for any archaeological deposits exposed during the development groundworks.

3. Methodology

3.1 A watching brief was maintained by a representative of Archaeological Research Services Ltd during groundworks to excavate a trench from the substation close to Bridge Street along the border of the property known as Unity Mill to the newly renovated Coach House. The trench measured approximately 44m in length by 0.3m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.5m (Fig. 2).

3.2 The excavations were undertaken with a small 360° excavator using a toothless bucket with the additional use of grinding and drill equipment to break up the concrete layers. The entire process was monitored by an archaeologist from Archaeological Research Services Ltd in order that any features or structures uncovered by the groundworks were identified and recorded.

3.3 All aspects of the investigation and reporting were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct (Revised 2008)* and *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (Revised 1999)*.

3.4 Where archaeological features and/or deposits were identified during the watching brief, then a sufficient quantity of the said features were investigated by hand to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascribed. Any identified archaeological features were photographed and recorded. Feature plans were made at 1:20 scale and sections at 1:10 scale. All identified contexts were recorded on *pro-*



Archaeological Research Services Ltd Angel House Portland Square Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1HB	<p align="center">Figure 2</p> <p align="center">Site plan showing location of trench</p>	<p>Key:</p> <p align="center">— Location of trench</p>	<p>Copyright/Licencing:</p> <p>This drawing © A.R.S. Ltd</p> <p>Ordnance Survey data if applicable © Crown Copyright, all rights reserved reproduced with permission. Licence No. 100045420</p>
Site Code: BELP 09 Drawing Ref: Date:26-03-09 Drawn: JS Scale: 1:400	Notes:		

forma sheets, and a context register, along with a photographic register, were produced for inclusion in the archive. A copy of the context register can be found in Appendix I of this report.

- 3.5 For brick structures, the record included details of brick dimensions and type (handmade/machine-made, plain/frogged), mortar (colour, composition, hardness) and the extent of structures (number of courses, thickness in skins).

4. Results

- 4.1 The current ground surface was tarmac (1001) below which a layer of concrete (1002), up to 0.3m in depth, was found to exist in places. Removal of the concrete required a breaker. Below the concrete intermittent areas of sandstone (1003) survived which were probably flags relating to a previous floor level (Figs. 4 and 5). Beneath the sandstone flags was made ground (1004) which contained red bricks and some 19th century pottery.



Fig. 3 Trench shown running below the archway, looking east. (Scale: 2m)



Fig. 4 Sandstone flag (1003) found to exist below the tarmac. Also showing depth of the made ground (1004) below, looking north. (Scale: 0.25m)



Fig. 5 Sandstone flag (1003) shown above a red brick within the made ground (1004), looking north. (Scale: 0.25m)

- 4.2 The tarmac was less compacted close to the 'Timekeepers' cottage beneath which was more intact area of stone flagging. In this area the sandstone flagging was fully revealed and recorded (Fig. 6). The area of flags measured approximately 2m by 0.5m. The flags were on average 0.15 - 0.2m deep and measured between 0.3 x 0.2m. The flags abutted the brick wall to the north and overlay the made ground (1004) identified earlier. The flagged area, although small, gives a good indication of the original floor surface.



Fig. 6 View of the flagged floor level found below the tarmac close to the Timekeepers cottage, looking east. (Scale: 2m)

- 4.3 Foundations relating to the southern corner of a sandstone building were found below the modern tarmac surface close to the substation within the funeral parlour car park (Figs. 7 and 10). The building appears to be contemporary to the mill as it has been constructed from the same sandstone and may have acted as a store house. The foundations were exposed to a depth of 0.36m within the excavation limit and 0.3m below the current ground level. The foundations appear to have been roughly constructed with varying sizes of sandstone blocks and slabs measuring 0.09m x 0.1m x unknown to 0.46m x 0.3m x 0.09m. A coarse, sandy lime mortar (1007) had been used as the bonding agent. The mortar was found to

exist between varying thicknesses of 0.01m x 0.05m and had lumps of lime between 0.01m by 0.007m throughout.

- 4.4 The western face of the structure was constructed using dressed stone at three courses high, whilst the south east face of roughly hewn red sandstone slabs. The maximum width of the foundations observed in the trench was 0.8m. The structure continued north below a set of steps attached to the sandstone building.
- 4.5 A lead pipe service, bedded on hand made red bricks, was found to run over the southern corner of the foundation level (Fig. 9). The pipe and bricks were removed during the excavation but the sandstone foundation was left *in situ* by diverting the electricity cable around the southern corner of the foundation.
- 4.6 It is likely that the remains represent the substantial sandstone foundations of the building above. The set of exterior steps attached to the building overlay the top stone of the foundation level demonstrating that the two were clearly associated (Fig. 8). The alignment of the foundations also corresponds to that of the above building and both appear to have been constructed from the same type of sandstone (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7 View of sandstone foundation corner (106) showing the proximity to the steps and building above (Scale: 2m)



Fig. 8 Image showing how the sandstone steps overlaid the foundation level (106).



Fig. 9 View showing the depth of the foundation level, looking east.
(Scale: 2m)

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 As expected, the excavations for the electricity cable revealed some fragmentary below ground remains relating to the Unity Mill in the form of sandstone flags and the substantial foundations of an existing building probably constructed around the same time as the mill.
- 5.2 The building rubble (1004) found to exist below the sandstone flags only revealed three sherds of 19th century pottery and a stem fragment of a clay pipe. No other finds were recovered during the watching brief.

6. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

- 6.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 6.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7. Statement of Indemnity

- 7.1 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.

8. Acknowledgements

- 8.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with the watching brief, especially, Dave Barrett the Archaeologist for Derbyshire County Council, and the on-site groundworkers from E.ON UK Trading Ltd for all their help during the works.

APPENDIX I

CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Register – Coach House, Derwent Street, Belper

Context	Type	Description
101	Tarmac	Layer of thin tarmac (0.1m deep) that covered the site.
102	Concrete	Layer of modern concrete below the tarmac. The concrete was found to exist to a maximum depth of 0.5m and was removed using ground breaking machinery.
103	Sandstone	Intermittent layer of sandstone flags found below concrete in places.
104	Made ground/demolition deposit	Made ground with broken and whole bricks. Frequent charcoal flecks and 3 sherds of 19 th century pottery and a clay pipe stem. The deposit was found below the sandstone flags and was between 0.25m to 0.3m deep. The layer probably represents a demolition or levelling layer for the flagged floor level. Was disturbed in places by modern services.
105	Levelling layer	A modern deposit of crushed building rubble found below the concrete where the flags do not exist. Up to 0.3m in depth and overlaid the earlier made ground/ demolition rubble (104).
106	Structure	Foundations of an already standing sandstone building from the time the mill was in operation. Constructed from roughly hewn sandstone blocks with some facing to the east side. Measured 0.36m deep by 0.8m before continuing east under the steps of the building.
107	Mortar	Coarse sandy lime mortar matrix. Light brown in colour with lumps of lime up to 0.01m x 0.007m. Bonding agent used to construct (106) used at varying thicknesses to allow for rough construction and infilling of large gaps.