



**RICHMOND MARKET PLACE,
NORTH YORKSHIRE.**

Grid Ref NZ 1709 0087

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF DURING THE INSTALLATION
OF AN ELECTRICAL SUPPLY FOR
MARKET STALLS**

**ARCHAEO-ENVIRONMENT LTD for SC
ELECTRICS; ELECTRICAL
CONTRACTOR.**

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RICHMOND MARKET PLACE, NORTH YORKSHIRE.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.

NGR NZ (4)1709 (5)0087

SITE CODE RMP09. (AE PROJECT 0075/09).

Summary

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Cover Photograph. The Butter Cross or Obelisk, Richmond Market Place.

Summary

Archaeo-Environment Ltd, were commissioned by Mr Stephen Cooke of SC Electrics to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of trenches to install a new permanent electrical supply for market traders at the Market Place, Richmond, North Yorkshire. The requirement for the work had been identified by the Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council the specialist advisors on such matters to both Richmondshire District Council (the planning authority), and Richmond Town Council (the developer), as the centre of Richmond is justifiably considered an archaeologically sensitive area and so warrants due consideration guided by national and local planning policy.

The Market Place was historically the outer bailey of Richmond Castle built from 1071 for initially military purposes, and its large cobbled area is now encircled by a fine collection of mostly Georgian Buildings with the 12th century Holy Trinity church at the centre. The centre of Richmond is designated as a conservation area and contains a significant number of listed buildings including the Butter Cross of 1771 (sometimes known as 'the Obelisk'), built on the site of the medieval market cross and around which the new electrical supply was to be installed.

Richmond Market Place is known to have at various times contained a number of buildings since demolished including several market crosses for different products, the 18th century Toll Booth and the butcher's shambles. Due to this long history of martial and market activity the Market Place is rightly regarded as of high archaeological interest.

The development works consisted of removal of the cobbled Market Place surface and excavation of a small trench running adjacent to the base of the Butter Cross.

In summary, the watching brief provided no evidence of in-situ archaeological deposits of any significant antiquity, only revealing sub base and construction debris associated with recent re-cobblings of the market place surface. Based on the evidence from this watching brief, the construction works appear to have had a negligible impact on any archaeological resource at Richmond Market Place. This watching brief has however allowed a report to be produced and lodged with the County Historic Environment Record both to inform future planning in the area and to be available to anyone wishing to study the history and archaeology of the area.

In the light of these results it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required on the archive from these observations and that further keyhole excavation within the immediate area of the Butter Cross would be of limited value due both to repeated phases of post-medieval cobble renewal, and the disturbance caused by the construction of the Butter Cross itself in 1771 to any earlier remains.

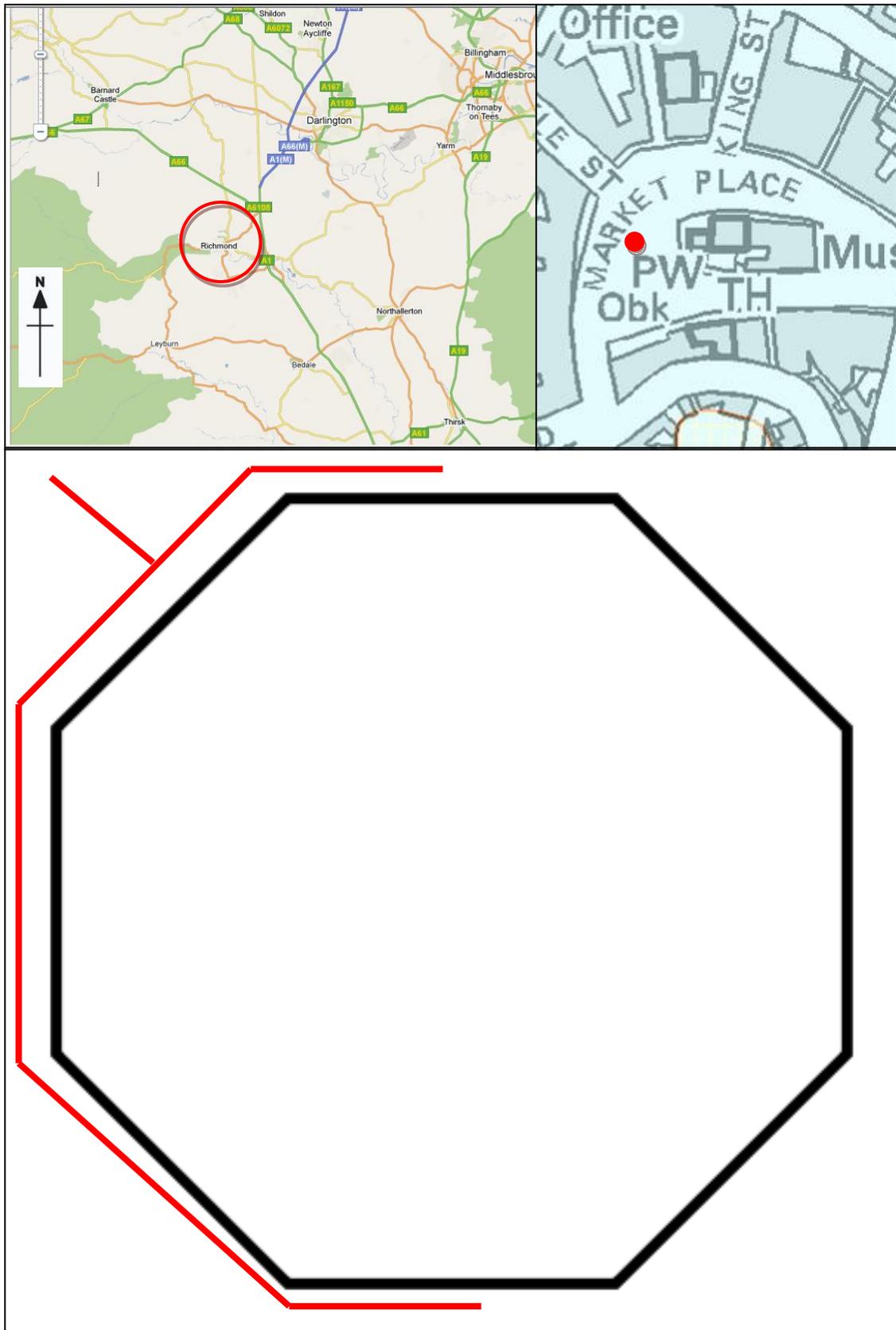


Figure 1. Richmond Market Place. Location. Sketch plan of area of excavation, route of electrical services trenches monitored outlined in red in lower frame.

Acknowledgements

Archaeo-Environment would like to thank Mr Stephen Cooke for commissioning the work, and the Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council for highlighting the need for the work through the planning process.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Archaeo-Environment Ltd (AE) were commissioned by Mr Stephen Cooke of SC Electrics to undertake a controlled archaeological watching brief during the excavation of trenches for the installation of a new electrical supply at Richmond Market Place, North Yorkshire. The project was intended to provide fixed electrical points for market traders considered preferable to the use of diesel generators.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was initiated by Mr Cooke in response to advice from his client, Richmond Town Council, the planning authority Richmondshire District Council and their specialist advisors the Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council. The Heritage Unit had provided to Mr Cooke a standard non-site specific Watching Brief written scheme of investigation to inform the work.
- 1.3 AE attended site on the 15th of June 2009, excavation began once the archaeologist was on site.
- 1.4 Two trenches were excavated, the first around one side of the Butter Cross/ Obelisk; the second to connect this trench to an existing electrical supply on the north-west side and which supplied the in place street lighting around the Butter Cross/ Obelisk.
- 1.5 Neither trench contained any deposits of archaeological interest with only surface cobbling and modern cobble foundation being exposed.
- 1.6 This report has been written to provide basic details of a negative result, in that no archaeological remains were identified in the trenches observed. The report will be submitted to the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record to act both as a record of the event and to guide future planning decisions regarding the need for archaeological work in the immediate area of the Butter Cross and the market place.

2.0 LOCATION AND GENERAL BACKGROUND

2.1 *Location*

Richmond is an historic market town of Norman origin, located in North Yorkshire on the boundary between the lowland Vale of Mowbray and the upland Dales. The Market Place is positioned centrally beneath the Castle which overlooks the River Swale. Richmond is currently with the local authority area of Richmondshire District Council, which in itself sits with the area of North Yorkshire County Council. Both are within the historic North Riding of Yorkshire. The archaeological observation recorded in this report were located adjacent to the Butter Cross or Obelisk, a tall Georgian construction on the site of the medieval market cross and overlying a water cistern/supply installed around 1771. The Butter Cross is located at NZ (4)1709 (5)0087 (Figure 1).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 The limited scope of this work does not permit or indeed warrant a detailed archaeological and historic background to be provided in this instance. Sufficient to say that the centre of Richmond is of high archaeological potential for remains principally of the Norman period up to the present day. In 1994 a medieval midden was recorded during a watching brief for Northern Electric (NY SMR MNY25414) at the west end of the Market Place close to this development.

4.0 AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The primary **aim** of the watching brief was to determine the presence and record any archaeology associated with the medieval and later occupation of Richmond Market Place.

4.2 The **objectives** of the watching brief are summarised as follows;

- 'To identify any surviving archaeological remains within the development ground works and to investigate and record any revealed archaeological remains or deposits'.
- To establish the location, date and nature of any areas of archaeological activity and assess the degree of preservation of any remains encountered.
- To identify to what extent any of the archaeological deposits uncovered might contribute towards our understanding of the archaeology of Richmond.
- To prepare a report on the results of the watching brief and any significant archaeological remains to be published in a local, regional or national journal as appropriate making appropriate reference to any other pertinent archaeological observations/recording in the near vicinity.

4.3 The **Methodology** for the work was as follows. All excavation was to be under archaeological supervision, and all trenches were excavated by hand by the contractor to remove material down to a level at which either significant archaeological remains were first identified or down to the required construction level, whichever came first. Once an archaeological horizon had been identified the methodology required that all deposits were hand excavated by the supervising archaeologist to an appropriate level to understand the stratigraphic relationship of any features.

Figure 2. Area prior to excavation looking north north-east.



5.0 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 5.1 Archaeological observation was undertaken over a single day on June 15th 2009. On the following day electrics were installed and the site re-instated, this was not monitored by the archaeologist.
- 5.2 A trench was excavated on the north, north-west, west, south-west and south sides of the Butter Cross. The trench abutted the base of the cross and measured between 330mm and 400mm in width, and was 300mm in depth. An extension of the trench extended 1.00m to the north-west to connect with an existing electric supply.



Figure 3. Maximum depth of excavation along the west side (right), and on the north-west side where the spur trench connected to an existing electric supply.

- 5.3 It soon became obvious that the trench was being excavated through recently disturbed ground, both for an existing electric supply to street lamps around the cross and due to several previous episodes of re-cobbling of the Market Place surface.
- 5.4 The observed stratigraphy consisted of 100mm of concrete set cobbles, over 210mm of a dry cement/sand mix, over a light brown clay which was at least 50mm in depth before excavation was stopped.
- 5.5 Metal electrical supply boxes were positioned in the centre of the each face of the Butter Cross along the length of the trench. These had metal legs of 25mm rectangular cross section and were hammered into the clay a further depth of 200mm.
- 5.6 No obstructions were encountered and no finds made.



Figure 4. North side of Butter Cross showing maximum excavation and installed metal electrical supply boxes.

6.0 DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

6.1 The impact of the development on the archaeological resource of Richmond Market Place has been negligible due to earlier disturbance.

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 No further work is required on the limited archive.

7.2 Further requests for monitoring work in Richmond market Place should take account of the depth of disturbance caused by the continuing replacement of cobbles to a depth of around 350mm.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 The watching brief provided no evidence of in-situ archaeological deposits. This is likely to have been caused firstly by the construction of the Butter Cross and its underground cistern in 1771 removing any earlier remains, followed by successive episodes of re-cobbling. Richmond Market Place should however still be considered as an area of high potential while bearing in mind the constant re-cobbling events are likely to have removed any deposits within 350mm of the surface. In the light of these results it is recommended that no further archaeological work is required on the archive from these observations.

9.0 ARCHIVE

9.1 As there were no archaeological finds from the watching brief the archive is limited to notes made by the archaeologist and a limited collection of digital photographs. These have been retained by Archaeo-Environment under the project number of AE0075/09.

REFERENCES

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