

Project Design for an Archaeological Watching Brief at The
Paddocks, Stoneygate Lane, Ribchester Lancashire



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1. Staff

The Watching Brief will be carried out by Peter McCrone, McCrone Archaeological Consulting and Contracting Services. Peter McCrone is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and has over thirty years experience as an archaeologist, including carrying out site assessments, watching briefs and excavations on the complex stratigraphy encountered in major cities and in smaller settlements and rural situations. The project will be carried out in accordance with current ClfA Standards and Guidance.

2. Aims and Research Objectives

It will possibly enable some information to be obtained to assist the exploration of a number of themes from the Archaeological Research Framework for the North West of England, potentially locating the precise line and structure of the Roman road north from the settlement at Ribchester and relating it to the landscape through which it runs. There is also little evidence for burials outside the known extent of the fort and associated extra mural settlement and it is possible that this may reveal some evidence for roadside cemeteries. Negative evidence will also be significant in this area.

3. Non-Technical Summary

As a response to a planning application, No.03/15/0873/ FUL to Ribble Valley Borough Council, to construct a new access drive from Stoneygate Lane to the property named The Paddocks which is sited just to the west of Stoneygate Lane, Lancashire County Archaeology Service advised that a condition requiring the implementation of a programme of works be placed on the planning consent. This is to ensure that any archaeological features or deposits on the site, which lies adjacent to the known and posited line of the Roman Road that ran north from the fort and settlement at Ribchester..

4. Site location and descriptions.

The site lies at National Grid Reference SD 64812 37173, on the western side of Stoneygate Lane, about 1.5 miles (2.25 km) north of the village of Ribchester. The Paddocks stands behind the building known as Haddocks Farm House which property fronts onto the road. The proposed new access will run from a point approximately 70 m south of the current access track, immediately to the south of Haddocks Farm House and curve across the field to the south of The Paddocks, creating c. 100m of new road.

5. Context of the project

The watching brief is being carried out in response to a condition placed on a planning permission on the advice of Lancashire County Council Archaeology Service, issued by Wyre Borough Council. The condition has been placed on the permission as the line of the proposed access drive may cross the line of the Roman road which runs north from Ribchester and which has been recorded at the Hall's Arms on the Clitheroe Road, to the north of the proposed development.

6. Geological and topographical background

The solid geology of the area is the Samlesbury Formation of the millstone Grit Group, comprising mudstones, shaley mudstones and sandstone units. Drift geology is a thick layer of Devensian diamicton (also known as "boulder clay") which was laid down in glacial conditions. Stoneygate Lane rises from the settlement of Ribchester which sits on a river terrace on the north bank of the River Ribble and runs slightly west of north towards the Bowland Fells.

7. Archaeological and historical background

The line of the Roman Road from Ribchester north, over the Bowland Fells to the fort at Low Borrowbridge and then on to Carlisle and the west end of the Hadrian's Wall or north into Scotland runs along the line of Stoneygate Lane, with various commentators and surveyors describing the possible earthworks of the road in the fields beside the Lane where the modern road does not follow the Roman line precisely. There is therefore the possibility that the creation of the new access route will damage or destroy parts of the earthworks of the road and there is therefore a requirement to observe ground works and record any traces of the road structure that are revealed.

8. General and specific research aims of the project

The aims of the watching brief are to observe and record any remains of the Roman road that are impacted by the construction of the new access and to observe the route of the access beyond the probable Roman road line to endeavour to set the road in its landscape.

9. Methods

Topsoil stripping for the construction of the new access will be observed as it happens. Any features that are revealed will be cleaned archaeologically and recorded by drawn plan, written description and photography. Archaeological contexts will be individually recorded and any finds associated with a context will be bagged and identified as such.

10. Photography

Record photographs are to be taken using black and white conventional silver-based film. Ilford FP4 plus will be used. Record photographs shall be printed at a minimum of 5" x 7". Bracketed shots of identical viewpoints will not be reproduced, although these will form part of the archive. Colour images will be made with a digital camera with an effective resolution of 20 mega pixels; using RAW format files for image capture; saved as 8 bit TIFFs for archive purposes.

11. Collection and disposal strategy for artefacts, ecofacts, and all paper, graphic and digital materials.

All artefacts will be collected, cleaned and identified. The numbers and types of each artefact will be quantified. Site notes, context records and photographs will be deposited with a suitable repository. The Roman Museum in Ribchester will be approached to house the site archive.

12. Report preparation

A written report, with appropriate illustrations, will be produced. Electronic copies of this will be provided to the client, the Lancashire County Historic Environment Record and Ribchester Roman Museum (the last with the agreement of the client). A not of the findings will be sent to the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies for inclusion in their records of fieldwork in "Brittania".