

Site Collections Development Statement

Name of Museum: English Heritage – Aldborough

Roman Site Name of Governing Body: English Heritage

Trust

Date on which this statement was approved by the Acquisitions, Loans and Disposals Committee: 16 September 2020

Statement review procedure:

The Site Collections Development Statement is owned by the Senior Curator for the geographical area. It will be reviewed at least once every five years as part of a cyclical process managed through Registry.

Date at which this policy is due for review: September 2025

Arts Council England will be notified of any changes to the Site Collections Development Statement, and the implications of any such changes for the future of the collections.

1. Management Arrangements and scope

- 1.1. This statement covers all the museum artefacts managed by English Heritage from, or associated with the site whether they are held on site, at another English Heritage site or store, or on loan to a third party. This statement does not cover artefacts associated with other English Heritage sites which are stored or displayed at this site
- 1.2. The site and its collections form part of the National Collection of English Heritage.
- 1.3. Aldborough Roman Site is owned by Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred and is managed by English Heritage under guardianship. It lies within the scheduled ancient monument and conservation area of Aldborough Roman Town.
- 1.4. Aldborough Roman Town lies under the current village of Aldborough in the parish of Boroughbridge, the intramural area is roughly rectangular c.390m by 590m and covers an area of approx. 22 hectares. That area and the land extending South East beyond the roman walls to York Road and Studforth Hill is a scheduled ancient monument, list entry number: Historic England 1003133, (EH SM NY 436). The nucleus of the modern village includes multiple private residences as well as areas of public land, surrounded by agricultural land owned by a smaller number of individuals.

The hinterlands of the roman town extend beyond the scheduled area, bounded by the River Ure to the North and Hall Arm Lane and the eastern boundary of Redhills to the East, with York Road (B6265) and Brig Gates western boundary and the Holms western boundary to the South and West. The boundaries of the

conservation area broadly align with those hinterland boundaries to the south and west but extend up to 100m from the SAM to the North and East. There are over 30 listed buildings in the conservation area including grade I and grade II* in private ownership.

- 1.5. Both the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) Act 1990 limit the amount of development or investigation which can take place in this area.

2. Relationships to other relevant policies/plans of the organisation

- 2.1. The national Collections Development Policy approved by the Board of Trustees on 9 November 2016, (together with any amendments to, or replacements for, the policy approved by Trustees), apply to the site. In the event of any disagreement between this site policy and the national policy the national policy will apply.
- 2.2. Without limitation to the above all the procedures, all ethical and legal considerations set out in the national policy apply to acquisitions, disposals and loans from or to the sites collection.
- 2.3. Acquisitions outside the current stated policy and statement will only be made in exceptional circumstances.

3. History of the collections

- 3.1. Aldborough Roman Town (Isurium Brigantum) is a nationally and internationally significant site; founded in the 1st century as a trading town it became the administrative centre of the Brigantes. It is one of the most northerly cities of the Roman Empire and later developed into a Saxon burgh, then a medieval village which is now the modern village of Aldborough.
- 3.2. The archaeological collections held by English Heritage have been developed since the 17th century when Antiquarian interest in the site began. There are in excess of 100 known interventions and discoveries. English Heritage holds the majority of them in their current collections however although we can be reasonably sure that the existing collections derive from Aldborough Roman Town not all are contexted. Work continues to match finds to contexts. There is the possibility that a small number may have been added to the collections by Andrew Lawson and forebears from elsewhere. The known interventions and discoveries are listed in the gazeteer of Ferraby, R and Millett, M, 2020, 'Isurium Brigantum, an archaeological Survey of Roman Aldborough', and the following summary is edited from their work:

After a series of discoveries, including a number of mosaics, in the early eighteenth century the first major archaeological discovery was of the northern range of the forum in 1770. Several mosaics were left exposed and two were displayed within purpose-built structures.

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century Andrew Lawson purchased much of the town and developed Aldborough Manor and its gardens, his descendants still own the land today. He instigated further investigations and in 1852, Henry Ecroyd Smith's *Reliquae Isurianae* was published drawing together findings made by that time. Andrew Lawson also established the first museum at Aldborough, initially in his house, then in a purpose-built museum on the site in 1863

After his death in 1853 there was little archaeological work at Aldborough until after the First World War. New excavations were started as a local initiative in 1924. In 1934-5 and 1937-8 a group within the Roman Antiquities Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society organised a programme of new work in the town.

Following the Second World War excavation was limited to interventions either occasioned by the construction of new buildings, or to investigate the southern defences that had been put into the Guardianship of the then Ministry of Public Buildings and Works (MPBW) by the Dowager Lady Lawson-Tancred in 1952.

By that time the museum held the majority of the collections amassed from all these previous interventions and Lady Lawson-Tancred gifted the contents of the museum to the nation in 1952.

Small excavations were conducted between 1959 and 1974, first by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments for England (RCHME) and then by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works. One project completed in 1964, saw a major excavation just outside the South Gate, together with observations on a sewer trench that cut across the land to the east and north of the town. Work on the Guardianship site also included further investigation of a mosaic found in the nineteenth century, the Helicon mosaic.

These collections were added to the RCHME holdings.

Through the 1980s and early 1990s new field-survey work was initiated by members of the Roman Antiquities Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society. This work, involved systematic field-walking: first, immediately to the north of the town; later, in other areas of arable cultivation within its environs.

These collections were acquired by English Heritage in 2019.

Work at Aldborough since 2009 has been led by Martin Millett and Rose Ferraby and has focused on understanding the Roman town and its hinterlands through geophysical investigation and re-excavation of 19th and 20th century interventions. This work is continuing and the intention is to deposit the archaeological archives with English Heritage.

In 2017 Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred gifted 186 Roman coins to English Heritage which had originally been held back from the 1952 gift. Their contexts are largely unknown but many were part of the Antiquarian collection.

Loans to the collection include items recovered through metal detecting in areas outside of the scheduled monument.

3.3. Works of art in the collection includes a lithograph of an Aldborough mosaic, 1848. There are 2 albums of drawings and a loose painting by Hessey (illustrator of Ecroyd Smith) gifted to English Heritage in 2013 by Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred and an original photographic print of the Yorkshire Naturalists Club visit to Aldborough in 1876 gifted by Martin Millett in 2018.

3.4. The only social history item in the permanent collection is a late medieval parish chest which formed part of the original museum collections at the time of gift by Lady Lawson-Tancred. There are also 2

items registered as related items which are a ticket machine and the site telephone.

4. An overview of the collections

- 4.1. There are just over 4000 current records for the Aldborough Roman Site permanent collection. The majority of the collection is archaeological, and includes bulk finds. The collections range in date from Prehistory to post medieval. The majority are Roman, 1st to 4th century and include small finds, bulk finds of ceramics, animal bone, mosaics and CBM as well as architectural stonework and stone sculpture. The Roman finds form a nationally and some internationally significant groups and include rare Roman military equipment, rare and unique coins, a tile from the 9th legion, blue glass mosaics, Roman glass vessels as well as an understudied ceramic assemblage and wall plaster assemblage both of potential national significance. The later Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post- medieval collections are largely of local and regional significance.
- 4.2 There are 4 works on paper including original albums and paintings by M. Hessey, the illustrator of Ecroyd Smith's volume and these include records of unpublished finds and plans. There is a lithograph of one of the site mosaics discovered in the 19th century as well as a 19th century photographic print showing an Antiquarian study group visiting the site. Additionally there is a copy of Ecroyd Smith's 1852 *Reliquae Isurianae* held in the site archive along-side some archaeological archive from the 1930s excavations and archives relating to MU Jones and Charlesworth's excavations. There is also archive relating to the site as an early visitor attraction including visitor books dating from 1908-1915.
- 4.3 There are 10 items on loan in, eight of which are on long term loans from two related lenders. Two items, excavated in 2019 have been placed on short term loan pending acquisition in order to display in the site museum in 2020.

5. Themes and priorities for future collecting

5.1. Archaeological material:

The geographic area of historic occupation and land use at Aldborough Roman Town is best defined by taking the Scheduled Ancient Monument as the core and extending that area on all cardinal points bounded by the River Ure to the North and Hall Arm Lane and the eastern boundary of Redhills to the East, with York Road (B6265) and Brig Gates western boundary and the Holms western boundary to the South and West. It is sensible to consider this area holistically as a collecting area as surveys,

archaeological discoveries and field-walking to date confirm Roman development and occupation. The area concords with the collecting area by the Lawson/Lawson- Tancred family and earlier HMBCE and English Heritage acquisition policies that an 'object can be demonstrated to have come within the boundaries of the historic Roman settlement, or from directly related environs.' (Acquisition and Disposal Policy Aldborough, English Heritage, 2005). Excepting the guardianship area, the collecting area is not obligatory on English Heritage and may require negotiation of a deposition grant dependent on the nature and scale of the intervention.

We would seek to collect, through negotiation, all known and future archaeological archives (artefactual and paper-based) from the scheduled monument area and wider boundary identified above, plus a 250m buffer zone on the main roads (excluding Boroughbridge to the West) leading to Aldborough Roman Town to ensure that related funerary material in particular is collected. Where interventions lead to potential deposition with English Heritage all periods of finds will be considered for acquisition, with a pre-deposition disposal policy for repetitive and non-diagnostic material, particularly for medieval and post medieval material. Archaeological archive resulting from large scale excavations would only be accepted following negotiations with the excavator/developer, including the issues of capacity and costs.

We would also seek to collect, through negotiation, all known and future chance discoveries (single or small group) from the collecting area (which should be reported to the Portable Antiquities Scheme), including items which fall under the Treasure Act 1996. These will be limited to 1st to 5th century dated finds with clear provenance. Primary consideration would be given to whether those objects could be brought to display at Aldborough, or if a more appropriate institution (eg YMT or BM) could acquire and display to the public instead.

Area map appended.

5.2 Detached architectural material:

Detached architectural material which is diagnostic and non-repetitive will be collected if it cannot be adequately recorded for archiving or it is of display quality.

5.3 Dispersed collections:

- 5.3.1 English Heritage still seeks the return of over 60 stolen permanent collection items outstanding from the 1996 burglary which were not recovered alongside the returned items.
- 5.3.2 A number of other institutions hold single or very small quantities of Antiquarian finds from Aldborough (see list in 7.2 below). English Heritage would accept these collections if their future was otherwise in jeopardy and/or would seek to unite split archives by deposition with English Heritage.
- 5.3.3 English Heritage would collect known archaeological material currently held by private individuals originating from the collecting area if it was to be

offered to English Heritage and fulfilled all other criteria for collecting. This includes metal detecting finds recovered by Jon Beavis-Harrison (current lender) and John Hunt (deceased) from the 1980s to 2000's which were dispersed after his death – these include 100s of coins and a gold finger ring mounted with garnets.

5.3.4 English Heritage would seek to collect the 1920s excavation paper-based archive and other relevant photographs and records relating to historic archaeology at Aldborough Roman Town held by Sir Andrew Lawson-Tancred.

5.4 Collections relating to former owners or occupiers:

Aldborough Museum is the oldest museum in the English Heritage portfolio, established in purpose built premises by 1863. The collection was largely under the ownership of one family (Lawson/Lawson-Tancred) for over 125 years. The guardianship site and much of Aldborough Roman Town remains in the ownership of that family today giving a 200 year continuous history. Although we do not seek to collect ephemera or personal possessions relating directly to family members we would seek to collect ephemera which enlightens knowledge of the history of the collection such as diaries, catalogues, paintings, photographs, postcards and reports. We would also seek to acquire images of the key family members (eg Andrew Lawson and Lady Margery Lawson-Tancred) for interpretation purposes.

5.5 Books:

We would seek to acquire antiquarian books on the history of Aldborough for research and with display potential. In particular:

- Collingwood, R G 1927. 'Aldborough and the Devil's Arrows: handbook for members taking part in excursion no 18', in H E Wroot (ed), Handbook for Excursions - British Association Meeting Leeds Meeting 1927, Leeds
- Lawson-Tancred, Lady Margery 1948. A guide book to the antiquities of Aldborough and Boroughbridge and a short account of their history, Boroughbridge
- Turner, T S 1853. History of Aldborough and Boroughbridge containing an account of the Roman antiquities, Devils Arrows, churches, halls and other curiosities, London

5.6 Prints, paintings and maps:

We would seek to acquire prints, paintings and maps that show key views of Aldborough, in particular those with a detailed level of recording which aid our understanding of the layout and discoveries.

5.7 Photographs and postcards:

We would seek to acquire photographs and postcards that show key views of Aldborough; in particular those which show detailed views of excavated features, site layout, including the arboretum, the historic museum as well as events held at Aldborough which relate to the history of the site.

6. Themes and priorities for rationalisation and disposal

6.1. No reviews of the permanent collection are currently planned as a large proportion of the collection has received recent detailed research and all are either of display quality, further research potential or add to the overall understanding of the site.

7. Collecting policies of other museums

7.1. English Heritage will take account of the collecting policies of other museums and other organisations collecting in the same or related subject areas or fields. It will consult with these organisations where conflicts of interest may arise or to define areas of specialism in order to avoid unnecessary duplication and waste of resources.

7.1.1. Specifically: if an item is offered to a collecting institution from the Aldborough Roman Site collecting area as a result of a finder reporting to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and/or under the Treasure Act 1996, English Heritage would seek negotiation with other institutions to decide the best action in order to safeguard the item and bring it to public display.

7.2. Specific reference is made to the following museums and organisations:

7.2.1. The Historic England archive – with reference to archive material associated with the site.

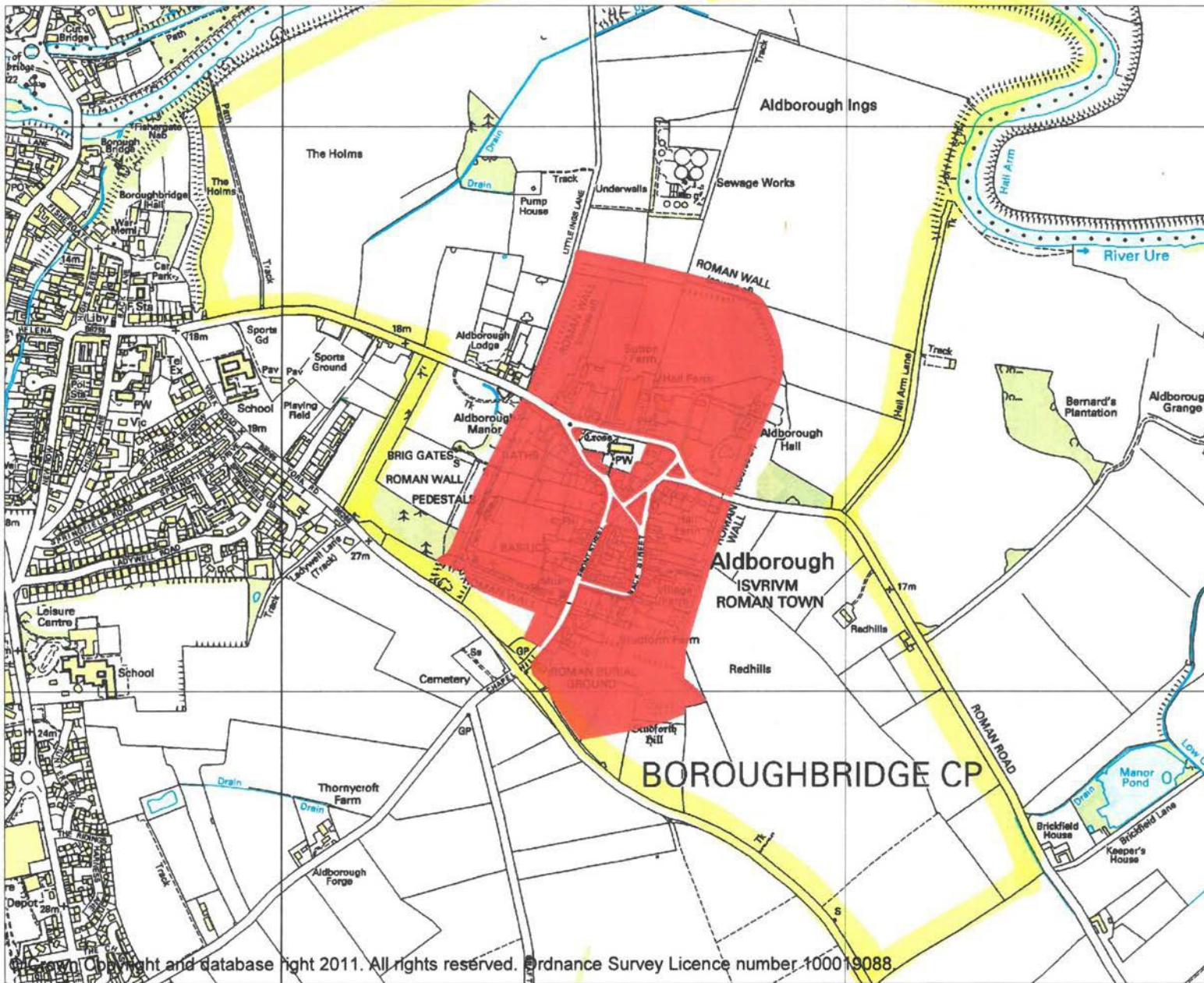
7.2.2. Harrogate Museums, Kent Collection, c. 10 objects Antiquarian donation including marble head of a deity, pottery, pins, chain, lamp and ring. Harrogate Museum and Arts CDP 24/02/2014 states that 'Harrogate Museums & Arts will collect archaeological material from within the political boundaries of the Harrogate District and from all periods. This may include both individual objects and fieldwork archives consisting of objects, written and computer records, and maps or plans. There is a presumption against a split archive, so that when Harrogate Museums & Arts acquire archaeological material, we will collect and preserve the complete archive with objects, written records, photos and drawings.' Harrogate updated by email and stated they are 'no longer able to accept new archaeological depositions due to not having the storage space available' (N. Baxter 10/06/2020) but that they 'consider all of these [treasure items] for the collection and occasionally we do acquire items found.' (N. Baxter 11/06/20). Aldborough is within Harrogate District but to date there has been no active collecting of Aldborough material and future collecting would have to carefully consider the issue of split archive given EHT current holdings.

7.2.3. York Museums Trust; 3 objects, the so-called Horned God (terret ring) found 1794, acquired 1928, a glass rim from Aldborough Manor 1960 and an intaglio accessioned 1990. York Museums Trust has a county remit for the collecting of archaeological archive, but only if another institution is unable to accept the archive. Additionally YMT seek 'to strengthen the research potential and significance of the nationally designated archaeology collection through prioritised...acquisition within...peculiar, particular and significant objects that are outstanding on a national level' (York Museums Trust, Collections Development Policy, April 2013)

7.2.4. British Museum: 1 object, Slave boy copper alloy oil lamp, acquired 1824.

The British Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town but has a national remit of last resort for significant archaeological finds and treasure.

- 7.2.5. Hull Museum: 1 tile stamp and some 1961 Charlesworth pot. Hull and East Ridings Museums does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.6. Leeds Museum: 1 mosaic of the wolf and twins purchased 1863, now shown to be fabricated and 2 tile stamps, both antiquarian gifts. Leeds Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.7. Liverpool museum: 3 objects, 2 tile stamps and a ceramic altar from the Joseph Mayer collection, acquired 1867. Liverpool Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.8. Great North Museum: 1 object, a fragment of tusk or horn (and 1 box of pot accessioned in 1923, lost since 1931) Great North Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.9. Bristol Museum: 4 objects, tile stamps and mortarium rim, loaned 1893 and donated 1921. Bristol Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.10. Whitby Museum: 1 object, base of a samian ware bowl, antiquarian collection. Whitby Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.11. Saffron Walden Museum: small number of objects donated by Ecroyd Smith and Gibson in 1882-3. Saffron Walden Museum does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.12. British Library, Stowe MS 883 Survey of the manor of Aldborough, 1714. The British Library does not have an active CDP for Aldborough Roman Town.
- 7.2.13. North Yorkshire County Council, Historic Environment Record collates grey literature reports from Aldborough since 1990 and has an active policy to continue.



Heritage Category: Scheduling
 List Entry No : 1003133
 County: North Yorkshire
 District: Harrogate
 Parish: Boroughbridge

Each official record of a scheduled monument contains a map. New entries on the schedule from 1988 onwards include a digitally created map which forms part of the official record. For entries created in the years up to and including 1987 a hand-drawn map forms part of the official record. The map here has been translated from the official map and that process may have introduced inaccuracies. Copies of maps that form part of the official record can be obtained from English Heritage.

This map was delivered electronically and when printed may not be to scale and may be subject to distortions. All maps and grid references are for identification purposes only and must be read in conjunction with other information in the record.

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 Map Scale: 1:10000
 Print Date: 15 May 2012

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Name: Aldborough Roman town

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