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ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

ALDENE, BACK LANE

ALDBOROUGH S.A.M. NO.436

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 440552 4661073

COUNTY / PARISH NO. 6064

FOR

MR. & MRS.B.G.CRABTREE

NOVEMBER 1997

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**ALDENE
BACK LANE
ALDBOROUGH**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
OCTOBER 1997**

INTRODUCTION

An Archaeological Investigation was made in conjunction with ground disturbance associated with a small domestic development within the village of Aldborough. The nature of the ground disturbance relates to construction of a conservatory and kitchen extension to the southern elevation of the dwelling.

The scope of the archaeological works included a rapid desk top study, and watching brief. The works were commissioned by the owner / occupier of Aldene, Mr. & Mrs.B.G.Crabtree.

LOCATION AND STATUS

Aldene is situated within the southern extent of the village of Aldborough, North Yorkshire and is located on the southern side of Back Lane. The study area is situated to the immediate south of Aldene at N.G.R. 440552 4661073.

Below ground this site is Scheduled as an Ancient Monument (Isurium Brigantum, North Yorkshire, S.A.M.No.436) located within the civil parish of Boroughbridge.

PLANNING HISTORY

Outline Planning Permission for the erection of a conservatory and single storey extension was granted by Harrogate Borough Council.

A formal application for Scheduled Monument Consent was submitted by Mr. & Mrs.B.G.Crabtree to the Department of National Heritage on 11th April 1997. The Secretary of State granted consent on the 15th October 1997 on the condition that the applicant engage the services of an approved Archaeologist in order to maintain an Archaeological Watching Brief on the proposed ground disturbance.

General Site Location Plan

Aldene
Back Lane
Aldborough

Isurium Brigantum

Site of Existing Village

Back Lane

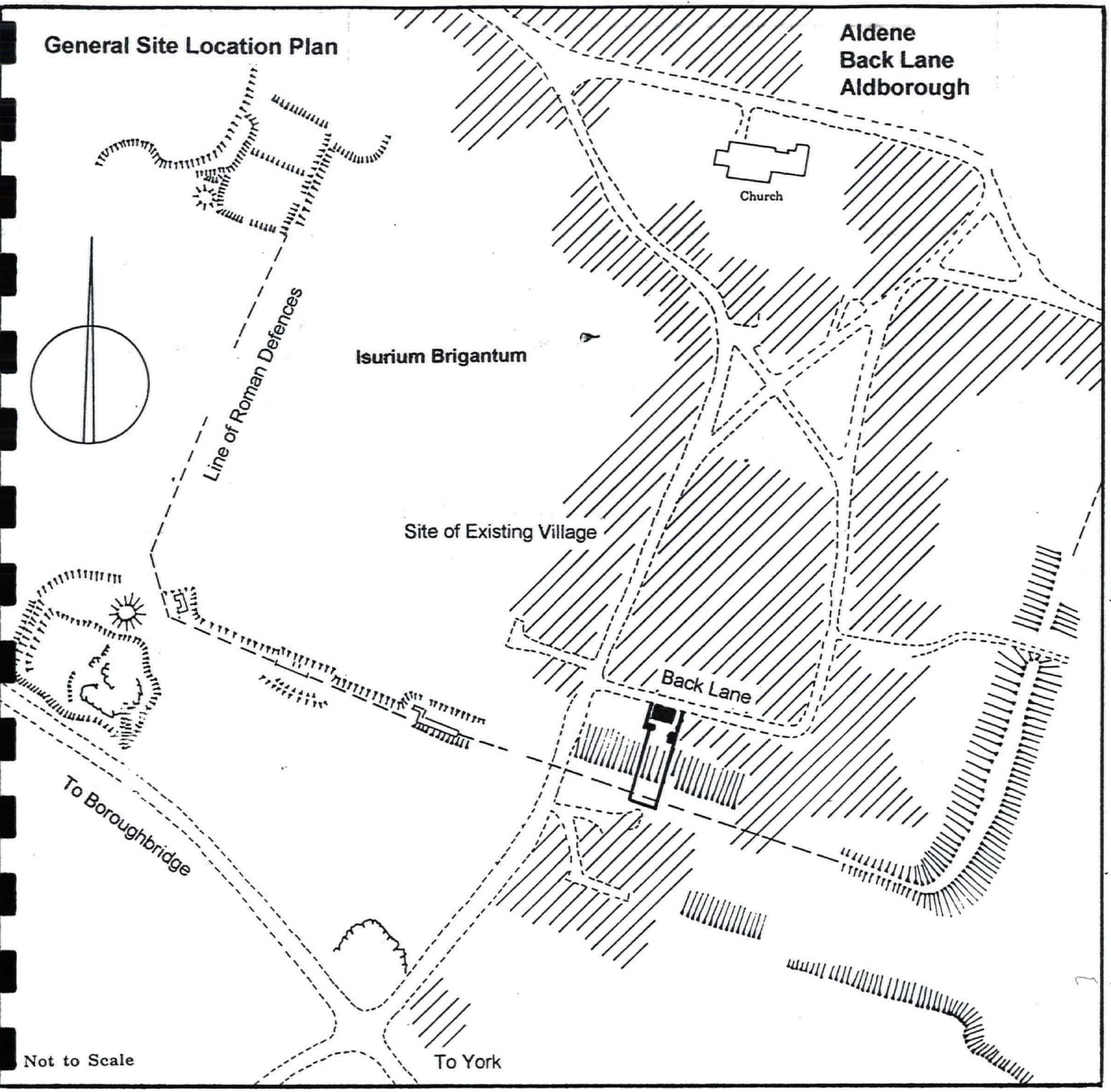
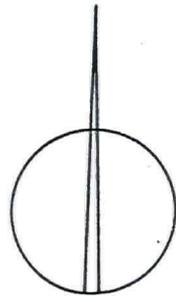
Church

Line of Roman Defences

To Boroughbridge

To York

Not to Scale



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Village:

The present village of Aldborough overlies the Roman town of Isurium Brigantum and remains relatively well contained within the ancient town's perimeter defences. The defences contain an almost rectangular area of approximately 74 acres.

The Roman settlement was a civilian administrative centre, or civitas capital for the territory of the Brigantes which covered much of the north of England. There is no substantial evidence of military occupation at Isurium.

The Site:

The study area is situated within the southern extent of the Roman town, within and immediately adjacent to the perimeter defences.

A preliminary desk top study of the proposed site has confirmed that:-

The site has not been the subject of any previous archaeological investigation.

The line of the Roman wall passes through the southern extent of the site, the nature and size of those remaining, upstanding sections of these defences would suggest the greater majority of the site would have been situated beneath these substantial fortifications.

The fortifications are multi phased, the earliest of which consisted of perimeter bank and ditch situated to the inside of the existing perimeter defences, this feature is thought to date to the mid to late 2nd century. These defensive earthworks were superseded in the 3rd century by the construction of a perimeter wall, this 2.438 m thick wall exceeded 6.096 m in height and would have been faced on both sides with red sandstone ashlar. Situated to the inside of the perimeter wall there would have run a parallel rampart bank that is likely to have measured in the region of 6.401 m wide and 3.658 m high, it would appear that this earthwork replaced the earlier mid to late 2nd century bank.

To the front of the perimeter wall there is likely to have been a berm measuring approximately 4.267 m wide situated adjacent to an outer ditch that would have measured in the region of 5.182 m wide and up to 1.829 m in depth.

Early Modern History

From discussions with Mr. & Mrs. Crabtree and from an inspection of the available cartographic evidence details concerning the more recent history of the site and its environs can be established:-

During the early 19th century (1809 Enclosure Awards) the site is situated within the northern extent of a small property parcel, that is located on the south side of Back Lane. The size of the holding is slightly narrower than that held by the present owners, and is contained to the south by the steep north facing aspect of the Roman defences. The northern western quadrant of the holding supports a large rectangular building that straddles the boundary between this and the adjacent property parcel to the west.

By the mid 19th century (1855, OS 6") the holding had been divided into two by a partition. The larger, southern, unit appears to be devoid of any buildings, containing only a number of mature trees. The smaller, northern, unit is situated adjacent to Back Lane and supports a large, rectangular, building that is located within the north western corner of the property parcel and fronts onto Back Lane. It would appear that this building is the same as that depicted on the 1809 map. It can therefore be concluded that during the first half of the 19th century the western boundary of the holding was extended to include a narrow strip of the land to the west.

By the early 20th century (1909, OS 25") the property parcel remains divided. No change of land use is noted in the southern unit, with the exception that the mature trees are not depicted. Further development is, however, apparent within the northern unit, with the construction of a range of outbuildings on the line, and to the south of, the partition wall. An additional, narrow, strip of land had also been acquired for access / maintenance along the western side of the main building. The size and footprint of the main building remains unchanged from the mid 19th century.

Shortly after the completion of the 1909 survey it is evident that the main building was extended on it's south western corner, forming a large L shaped building (1910, OS 25").

On the 1951, OS 6" Map the site has been incorrectly surveyed, giving the false impression that the greater majority of the buildings across the site had been demolished, leaving a small square building within the north west corner of the holding. However it has been confirmed that the partition wall had, by this time, been removed to form a single area of open space.

The existing site is occupied by a detached two storey dwelling with attached outbuildings. The existing development is located within the north western corner of the sub-rectangular property parcel that fronts onto Back Lane. The property is accessed by a drive, from Back Lane, that is situated to the east of the house. Gardens occupy the remainder, and the greater majority, of the property parcel.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

No known previous Archaeological work had been conducted within the study area and therefore no exact details could be provided regarding the state of Archaeological preservation or the depth at which Archaeological remains were likely to be encountered.

To the immediate west of the study area an Archaeological Watching Brief was maintained, by K.J.Cale, on the excavation of strip foundation trench's at The Cottage, Back Lane (N.G.R.44064 46617) in advance of the construction of a small domestic extension. These works identified what would appear to have been the remains of a red sandstone wall. The surface of this structure was identified at 0.420 m below the existing ground level and was aligned north west. The fabric and alignment of the wall suggests a possible Roman origin. Unfortunately the greater majority of the site had been disturbed during recent excavations associated with the construction of an earlier brick extension and during the installation of service trench's.

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AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

It is acknowledged that the study area may well contain the remains of the Roman and Medieval occupation of Aldborough, however, from the results of the desk top study it is anticipated that there has been a high level of ground disturbance across the site since the early 19th century and this may well have destroyed any archaeology that may have survived to this date.

Furthermore the curtilage of the proposed extension includes that area presently occupied by an attached porch.

In my opinion, due to the above there was a low probability that archaeology survived in situ within the proposed development area. Should any archaeology have survived it was anticipated that this would comprise of Post Medieval and Medieval deposits and these would all most certainly overlie a stratified sequence of deposits associated with the Roman perimeter defences.

It was therefore recommended that following the demolition of the existing porch and removal of modern overburden from the site an archaeologist should maintain a Watching Brief on the hand excavation of the strip foundations.

A total of 5 foundation trench's are to be excavated, it is anticipated that these will measure, in total 15 m long x 0.67 m deep x 0.70 m wide base width. The exact depth of these excavations will be dictated by the suitability of the ground for load bearing.

In order to satisfy the archaeological condition placed on these excavations, it will be necessary for the principal archaeologist:-

to be present, on site, during these excavations down to the required depth or to the surface of any archaeology that maybe encountered.

The aims of the archaeological investigation were as follows:

to record any finds, features or structures of archaeological interest and obtain information on the presence, extent, character, date and depth of these remains;

to assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The site is situated immediately adjacent to the rear of the Aldene, an area, until very recently occupied by a single storey kitchen extension and a concrete slab yard surface. This relatively level yard area at 36.489 m AOD is accessed from Back Lane at 35.021 m AOD by a relatively steep gravel driveway located to the immediate east of Aldene. The drive also affords access from Back Lane to the existing detached garage (constructed during the late 1970's / early 1980's). The yard area is contained to the west by a range of single storey, brick, outbuildings, to the east by the gravel drive and to the south by a brick retaining wall. The ground level beyond this retaining wall rises on a constant and moderate gradient to the south.

SUMMARY

The Natural sub-soil was encountered towards the base of the trench excavations at 36.329 m AOD. The surface of this layer of Clayey Silty Sand was gently undulating across the site. Within the eastern extent of the site, the layer had been cut by a 'pit' like feature. The cut had a shallow, broad and rounded profile and had been backfilled with a context that was indistinguishable from the loamy sand that sealed the sub soil. The function and date of this feature could not be accurately established.

The sub soil was sealed by an overall layer of disturbed, made up, ground. This loamy sand accounted for the greater part of the stratigraphy across the site. The layer contained a small quantity of 19th / 20th Century pottery, glass and ceramic tile, together with a small sherd of, undecorated, Samian Ware. The finds were largely domestic in origin and were largely consistent with the known social history of the property, during the late 19th century / early 20th century the property was used

as tea rooms.

It would appear that the ground levels were made up during the late 19th century / early 20th century following the demolition of the outbuildings that were situated within the yard to the rear of the property.

The layer has been disturbed more recently during the installation of surface and foul water ceramic drains and the construction of the former, single storey, kitchen extension. The surface of the layer had been subjected to a high level of trampling associated with the laying and removal of the concrete yard.

A very small quantity of finds were recovered from these excavations, this assemblage was predominantly pottery dating to the 19th and 20th century's, together with, the above mentioned, single sherd of Roman pottery.

It is recommended that these finds do not merit any further analysis and should not be the subject of curation.

CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Mr.&Mrs.Crabtree at Aldene, Aldborough has provided a useful although relatively negative picture of the development of this site.

The watching brief identified three main phases of activity on the site:-

A major programme of landscaping was undertaken during the 19th century that involved the reduction and removal of ground towards the northern extent of the property parcel to form a level yard area, adjacent to the property. These excavations effectively reduced the existing fall of slope down to the surface of the sub soil and consequently were responsible for the removal of any post medieval, medieval, Anglo Scandinavian and even Roman archaeological deposits that may have accumulated to the rear of the property.

The excavation of a pre 19th century pit like feature, cut into the surface of the sub soil. The date of this feature is unknown, however, Roman activity can not be discounted as the feature had been excavated into the upper surface of the sub soil. However as the fill of the cut was comparable with surrounding late 19th century deposits it's antiquity is unproved.

During the late 19th / early 20th century it would appear that a heavily mixed soil was imported onto site as a series of small tipplings and then levelled in order to raise ground levels. The layer was subsequently disturbed during the installation of services and for the construction of the former Kitchen extension.

Kevin John Cale

November 1997

APPENDIX A

Foundation Trench Excavations

Trench A

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 440551 466171

Length: 3.400 m
Width: 0.700 m
Depth: 0.640 m

Planform: Liner
Aligned: West
Area: 2.300 square metres

Context No's: 1000 - 1003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the south elevation of the proposed conservatory and was situated within the south western corner of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The concrete (context 1000) surface of the former yard was identified at 36.705 metres AOD. The concrete was bedded on a superficial sub base of gravel (context 1001).

Within the western extent of the trench the brick foundations of the single storey outbuilding were exposed.

The sub base was excavated to reveal an overall layer of made up ground (context 1002). This layer of medium grey brown (7.5YR 4/3) Loamy Sand contained a moderate to high quantity of inclusions including 19th century and modern building materials, together with fragments of red sandstone (<0.18m). Within the layer a number of sand and clay lenses were identified. A small assemblage of 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from this layer together with occasional fragments of animal bone. The layer had the characteristics of having been imported onto site and tipped in small loads prior to being levelled across the site.

The made up ground was excavated down on to the sub soil (context 1003). The surface of this pink brown (5YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was identified at 36.229 m AOD and was relatively level. This layer was moist and well compacted, the upper 0.200 m of this layer was slightly disturbed by worm action this had resulted in the migration of pea grit and loam down into this layer. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with just the occasional water worn pebble. Two fragments of magensian limestone (each measuring 0.250 x 0.040 m) were identified within close proximity to one another at 36.149 m AOD in the north facing section of the trench (N.G.R. 440551 466171) These unworked stones appeared to have been arranged in a step like configuration, no surrounding cut or traces of disturbance was identified, which may cast doubt on the interpretation of this layer as natural sub soil. No finds were identified within this layer. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer.

Trench B

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 440555 466169

Length: 4.000 m
Width: 0.700 m
Depth: 0.740 m

Planform: Linear
Aligned: West
Area: 2.800 square metres

Context No's: 2000 - 2003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the south elevation of the proposed kitchen and was situated within the south eastern area of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified during the hand excavation of this trench were very similar to those identified during the excavation of the other trenches.

The concrete (context 2000) surface of the former yard was identified at 36.705 metres AOD. The concrete was bedded on a superficial sub base of gravel (context 2001).

Within the eastern extent of the trench the concrete kerb of the existing driveway were exposed.

The sub base was excavated to reveal an overall layer of made up ground (context 2002). This layer of medium grey brown (7.5YR 4/3) Loamy Sand contained a moderate to high quantity of inclusions including 19th century and modern building materials, together with fragments of red sandstone (<0.18m). Within the layer a number of sand and clay lenses were identified. A small assemblage of 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from this layer together with occasional fragments of animal bone. The layer had the characteristics of having been imported onto site and tipped in small loads prior to being levelled across the site. The layer also appeared to form the fill of a pit like cut (context 2003) that was identified within the central area of the south facing section of the trench (N.G.R. 440555 466168). The feature had a shallow, broad and rounded profile and had been excavated into the sub soil context 2004. The cut could not be identified within the base of the trench or within opposing section, suggesting that the trench had just clipped the feature. The cut measured 1.700 m wide x 0.400 m deep. It would appear that the feature was open and not backfilled immediately prior to the deposition of context 2002.

The made up ground was excavated down on to the sub soil (context 2004). The surface of this pink brown (5YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was identified at 35.969 m AOD and was relatively level. This layer was moist and well compacted, the upper 0.200 m of this layer was slightly disturbed by worm action this had resulted in the migration of pea grit and loam down into this layer. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with just the occasional water worn pebble. No finds were identified within this layer. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer.

Trench C

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 440552 466173

Length: 3.800 m
Width: 0.700 m
Depth: 0.720 m

Planform: Linear
Aligned: North
Area: 2.660 square metres

Context No's: 3000 - 3003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the east elevation of the proposed conservatory and was

situated within the central area of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified during the hand excavation of this trench were very similar to those identified during the excavation of the other trenches.

The concrete (context 3000) surface of the former yard was identified at 36.705 metres AOD. The concrete was bedded on a superficial sub base of gravel (context 3001).

Within the northern extent of the trench the multiple courses of the property's brick foundation were exposed.

The sub base was excavated to reveal an overall layer of made up ground (context 3002). This layer of medium grey brown (7.5YR 4/3) Loamy Sand contained a moderate to high quantity of inclusions including 19th century and modern building materials, together with fragments of red sandstone (<0.18m). Within the layer a number of sand and clay lenses were identified. A small assemblage of 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from this layer together with occasional fragments of animal bone. The layer had the characteristics of having been imported onto site and tipped in small loads prior to being levelled across the site. The layer had been heavily disturbed during trench excavations prior to the installation of ceramic foul water drains.

The made up ground was excavated down on to the sub soil (context 3003). The surface of this pink brown (5YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was identified at 36.349 m AOD and was relatively level. This layer was moist and well compacted, the upper 0.200 m of this layer was slightly disturbed by worm action this had resulted in the migration of pea grit and loam down into this layer. The surface of this context had, in places, been truncated during the excavation for the above drains. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with just the occasional water worn pebble. No finds were identified within this layer. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer.

Trench D

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 440554 466173

Length: 2.850 m
Width: 0.700 m
Depth: 0.500 m

Planform: Linear
Aligned: North
Area: 1.960 square metres

Context No's: 4000 - 4003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the west elevation of the proposed kitchen and was situated within the central area of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified during the hand excavation of this trench were very similar to those identified during the excavation of the other trenches.

The concrete (context 4000) surface of the former yard was identified at 36.705 metres AOD. The concrete was bedded on a superficial sub base of gravel (context 4001).

Within the northern extent of the trench the multiple courses of the property's brick foundation were exposed.

The sub base was excavated to reveal an overall layer of made up ground (context 4002). This layer of medium grey brown (7.5YR 4/3) Loamy Sand contained a moderate to high quantity of inclusions including 19th century and modern building materials, together with fragments of red sandstone (<0.18m). Within the layer a number of sand and clay lenses were identified. A small assemblage of 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from this layer together with occasional fragments of animal bone. The layer had the characteristics of having been imported onto site and tipped in small loads prior to being levelled across the site. The layer had been heavily disturbed during trench excavations prior to the installation of ceramic foul water drains.

The made up ground was excavated down on to the sub soil (context 4003). The surface of this pink brown (5YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was identified at 36.347 m AOD and was relatively level. This layer was moist and well compacted, the upper 0.200 m of this layer was slightly disturbed by worm action this had resulted in the migration of pea grit and loam down into this layer. This surface of this context had, in places, been truncated during the excavation for the above drains. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with just the occasional water worn pebble. No finds were identified within this layer. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer.

Trench E

Type: Foundation : strip : hand
N.G.R: 440558 466172

Length: 2.850 m
Width: 0.700 m
Depth: 0.600 m

Planform: Linear
Aligned: North
Area: 1.960 square metres

Context No's: 5000 - 5003
Plate No: -
Fig. No: -

The trench was excavated to contain the concrete foundations for the eastern elevation of the proposed kitchen and was situated within the eastern extent of the site. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified during the hand excavation of this trench were very similar to those identified during the excavation of the other trenches.

The concrete (context 5000) surface of the former yard was identified at 36.705 metres AOD. The concrete was bedded on a superficial sub base of gravel (context 5001).

Within the northern extent of the trench the multiple courses of the property's brick foundation were exposed.

The sub base was excavated to reveal an overall layer of made up ground (context 5002). This layer of medium grey brown (7.5YR 4/3) Loamy Sand contained a moderate to high quantity of inclusions including 19th century and modern building materials, together with fragments of red sandstone (<0.18m). Within the layer a number of sand and clay lenses were identified. A small assemblage of 19th/20th century pottery was recovered from this layer together with occasional fragments of animal bone. The layer had the characteristics of having been imported onto site and tipped in small loads prior to being levelled across the site. The layer had been heavily disturbed during trench excavations prior to the installation of ceramic foul water drains.

The made up ground was excavated down on to the sub soil (context 5003). The surface of this pink brown (5YR 4/4) clayey silty sand was identified at 35.972 m AOD and was relatively level. This layer was moist and well compacted, the upper 0.200 m of this layer was slightly disturbed by worm action this had resulted in the migration of pea grit and loam down into this layer. This surface of this context had, in places, been truncated during the excavation for the above drains. The layer contained a low quantity of inclusions with just the occasional water worn pebble. No finds were identified within this layer. The required excavation depth for the foundations was achieved within this layer.