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SNY	10026
ENY	181
CNY	1078 1687
Parish	2110
Rec'd	17/11/05

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION AT
EAST ROAD, NORTHALLERTON,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

Post-Excavation Assessment Report

previous work = (E 579 + E 97)

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An Archaeological Excavation at East Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire

Post-Excavation Assessment Report

Central National Grid Reference: SE 3702 9371

Site Code: ERN 99

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SNY	10026
ENY	181
CNY	1078 1687
Parish	2110
Rec'd	17/11/05

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PART A: PROJECT SUMMARY

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological excavation undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at East Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire. The central National Grid Reference of the site is SE 3702 9371. The excavation was undertaken between the 17th August 2000 and the 2nd March 2001, in advance of a commercial development by Tesco. The work was commissioned by Walter Thompson (Contractors) Limited on behalf of the developer.
- 1.2 The site is located between High Street and East Road in Northallerton, immediately to the north of an existing Tesco supermarket. The development area was approximately 0.8 hectares in size. Prior to the fieldwork the site was occupied by an assortment of disused buildings and open areas, including access routes to the rear of High Street premises.
- 1.3 The site lies close to the historic core of Northallerton, a North Yorkshire market town of Saxon origin, which is well-documented throughout the medieval period. The development site encompassed parts of approximately ten ancient burgage plots - the long narrow plots organised end-on to main thoroughfares that were a characteristic feature of medieval town plans.
- 1.4 The archaeological excavation was preceded by an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise conducted in association with geotechnical investigations in July 1999 and an archaeological trial trenching evaluation undertaken in May 2000. Both earlier pieces of work were commissioned by W.A. Fairhurst and Partners on behalf of the developer and undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. The aim of the evaluation was gain a greater understanding of the nature and extent of survival of the archaeological resource in the western part of the development area and the broad conclusion of the work was that important remains of medieval date survived there.
- 1.5 On the basis of the findings of the evaluation, a phased programme of open area archaeological excavation was undertaken within five defined areas in the western part of the development site, as dictated by access requirements and the progress of the demolition and construction programme. The first four areas were ultimately contiguous, forming a block of land measuring up to c. 60m north-south x up to c. 45m east-west, with the fifth area, a few metres to the north, measuring up to c. 28m east-west x up to c. 11.50m north south. The total area subject to archaeological excavation was approximately 0.25 hectares.
- 1.6 The earliest evidence for human activity at the site originated from the late 1st century AD, specifically the period of the Roman invasion of northern England. Evidence for occupation of the site at this time comprised linear features and simple linear structures, broadly indicative of land or stock management.
- 1.7 There was no evidence for further activity at the site until the medieval period, when a ladder of burgage plots was set-out, these probably to the rear (east) of, but directly associated with, street frontage properties along (what is now) High Street. Dating evidence indicates that the burgage plots were probably installed from the 12th century onwards, with re-organisation and general utilisation of the plots throughout the medieval period. Structural remains of medieval date were recorded at the southern limit of the site and various other specific types of activity, such as well digging, were also recorded.

- 1.8 The archaeological record shows that there was a hiatus in activity at the site during the late medieval period. Thereafter, several sub-phases of post-medieval activity were identified, incorporating evidence of waste from specific commercial operations, possibly a tawyer, parchment maker or roofer in the mid to late 18th century, and a fishmonger around the turn of the 20th century. Many structures of post-medieval date were recorded, mostly below ground, although standing remains derived from a 19th century or earlier building were recorded in the northernmost excavation area prior to ground reduction.
- 1.9 The archaeological project at East Road is important in a local and regional context as it offered a rare opportunity to examine the development of an extensive backlot area close to the historic core of a market town from medieval times to the present day. In addition, the evidence of earlier, Roman, activity is of significance, as it indicates, albeit in fragmentary form, hitherto unknown utilisation of the area at the time of Roman military occupation of northern England.
- 1.10 This Post-Excavation Assessment Report is divided into four parts (Parts A-D). Part A, the Project Summary, includes an introduction to the site, its location, geology and topography, planning and archaeological background, and a full description of the archaeological methodology employed during the investigations. It concludes with detailed descriptions of the archaeological remains representing each of the main phases of occupation, supported by summary discussions and detailed illustrations. Part B, the Data Assessment, quantifies the written, graphic and photographic elements of the project archive and contains specialist assessments of the artefactual and palaeoenvironmental evidence, with recommendations for further analysis for each category of data.
- 1.11 Part C, the Summary of the Archaeological Resource and Research Agenda, summarises the main elements of the archaeological resource by historic period, and addresses the revised research agenda of the project through discussion of a set of six research objectives. Part C concludes with summary of the potential of the site data for further analysis. Part D contains the acknowledgements and bibliography. The report has six appendices.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

- 2.1.1 An archaeological excavation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (hereafter PCA) between August 17th 2000 and March 2nd 2001 at East Road, Northallerton, North Yorkshire (Figure 1). The work was undertaken in advance of a commercial retail development by Tesco and was commissioned by Walter Thompson (Contractors) Limited on their behalf.
- 2.1.2 The archaeological fieldwork involved excavation and recording within two areas whose maximum dimensions were c. 60m north-south x c. 45m east-west and c. 28m east-west x c. 11.50m north south, covering a total area of c. 0.25 hectares and representing c. 50% of the development site (Figure 2). An assortment of buildings, mainly disused business premises, previously occupied the development site, which also encompassed a number of access routes to the rear of High Street properties. A phased approach was adopted for the archaeological excavation, to take into account a staged demolition programme, the availability of different portions of the development site and public rights of way.
- 2.1.3 The excavation was undertaken as a planning condition of North Yorkshire County Council, upon the recommendation of the County Heritage Unit, in order to mitigate the impact of the development upon the archaeological resource. The extent of the archaeological work was defined following discussions between PCA and the Heritage Unit following a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording of geotechnical investigations¹ and an archaeological evaluation at the site.²
- 2.1.4 The archaeological excavation was undertaken by PCA under the direction of Mark Randerson and the project management of Robin Taylor-Wilson. The investigations were undertaken according to a Project Design prepared by PCA.³ The fieldwork was monitored by the County Heritage Unit.
- 2.1.5 The format of this post-excavation assessment report for the archaeological project at East Road, Northallerton follows the methodology set out in '*Management of Archaeological Projects - 2nd Edition*' (hereafter MAP2).⁴
- 2.1.6 The completed project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, as well as artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material, will be deposited with Yorkshire Museum, Museum Gardens, York, YO1 7FR, under the site code ERN 99.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The site was located between High Street and East Road in Northallerton, immediately to the north of an existing Tesco supermarket, at NGR SE 3702 9371.

¹ PCA, 1999a.

² PCA, 2000a.

³ PCA, 2000b.

⁴ Andrews, 1991.

- 2.2.2 The development site was c. 0.8 hectares in size and the archaeological excavation was undertaken in its western half in four, ultimately contiguous, areas with a distinct fifth area slightly to the north. The investigation area totalled c. 0.25 hectares.
- 2.2.3 Prior to the archaeological excavation, a garage occupied the southeastern portion of the development site and the remainder was occupied by a short terrace of houses, a builder's yard, a brick warehouse (Naylor's warehouse), various parking areas and rear access routes for several High Street properties.

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 The solid geology of the Northallerton area is formed by the Triassic Mercia and Mudstone Group. Superficial deposits consist of Pleistocene glacial material, including till (boulder clay) and sand and gravel, as well as glaciofluvial sand and gravel.⁵
- 2.3.2 The town of Northallerton occupies a secluded position in the Vale of York between the River Swale and the Hambleton Hills. The development site lies to the south-east of the ancient core of Northallerton, where street level is at c. 41.0m OD. The site itself was basically flat at the time of the fieldwork, although there was an imperceptible slope up to the north.

2.4 Planning Background

- 2.4.1 The need for early consultation in the planning process in order to determine the impact of development schemes upon the archaeological resource is identified in the document *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (hereafter PPG16).⁶ That document provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 2.4.2 The Heritage Unit at North Yorkshire County Council is responsible for archaeological development control in North Yorkshire and, throughout this project, advised Hambleton District Council on archaeological issues associated with the development. Planning permission for a commercial development by Tesco was granted by Hambleton District Council in August 1999. As a result of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken pre-determination by PCA in association with geotechnical investigations, a standard PPG16 condition was appended in December 1999 to allow for archaeological recording within the development area in order to mitigate the impact of the development upon the archaeological resource.
- 2.4.3 A 'Written Scheme of Investigation' (WSI) and 'Variation to the WSI' were prepared by the County Heritage Unit, in April and May 2000, respectively, to set out the overall scope of the required archaeological works. The 'Variation to the WSI' was required in order to take into account evolving construction and foundation design details and specified a requirement for limited trial trenching evaluation within the western part of the development area. This portion of the site was considered to be the most archaeologically sensitive, due to the relative proximity to High Street frontage properties.

⁵ Frost, 1998.

⁶ Department of the Environment, 1990.

- 2.4.4 An archaeological field evaluation of the site, commissioned by W.A. Fairhurst and Partners on behalf of Tesco, was undertaken by PCA in May 2000. Its purpose was to gain a greater understanding of the nature and extent of survival of the archaeological resource in the western part of the development site. Archaeological features and deposits of medieval and post-medieval date were encountered during the evaluation.
- 2.4.5 The likely impact upon the archaeological resource within different parts of the development site was categorised on the basis of knowledge of previous landuse, the proposed foundation plan for the new build, the proposed layout of new services and the nature and date of archaeological remains, gained through observation and recording of the geotechnical trial pits and the evaluation. Two levels of development impact were distinguished: maximum and minimum.
- 2.4.6 Maximum impact was considered likely within areas where lines of pile caps were to be located; across the northernmost third of the new build, where there were to be three east-west orientated rows of pile caps, including one row along the line of the north wall, and along the lines of the east, west and south walls of the new build, where there were to be single lines of piles and/or foundation pads. Maximum impact was also considered likely within areas where foul sewers were to be inserted. Minimum impact was considered likely across areas where rows of piles and service trenches were not to be located. In such areas, preparatory groundwork in advance of development was to entail reduction to a formation level, at c. 40.50m OD. The findings of the evaluation suggest that this level lay partway through a late medieval/early post-medieval soil horizon. This deposit, up to 0.55m thick, was encountered during the evaluation overlying and sealing features of medieval date. At the formation level the ground was to be rolled and blinding laid for protection at the onset of the construction programme.
- 2.4.7 Within the eastern two-thirds of the development site, it was considered likely that the proposals would have minimal impact upon the archaeological resource, for two reasons. Firstly, there was less likelihood of features typical of medieval backlot situations being encountered across the development site in an eastwards progression, away from High Street frontage properties. Secondly, a garage occupied much of this part of the site prior to the re-development. The observation of geotechnical trial pits indicated that the garage, particularly its subterranean fuel storage facilities, had caused severe localise truncation (and contamination) of early strata. The delineation of an eastern limit of the area to be subject to further archaeological investigation was included within the Heritage Unit's 'Variation to the WSI' in May 2000.
- 2.4.8 PCA's Project Design for the archaeological investigations was prepared after discussions with representatives of the County Heritage Unit, W.A. Fairhurst and Partners and Walter Thompson (Contractors) Limited. The overall scheme described within that document was intended to form a framework for the execution of the archaeological project through to completion.



Figure 1. Site location
Scale 1:25,000



Figure 2. Excavation areas location
Scale 1:1250

2.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The work of Christine Newman is gratefully acknowledged in providing information for this summary.⁷

- 2.5.1 Northallerton is an ancient and historic town occupying a central position in the Vale of York between the Hambleton Hills and the River Swale. All Saint's Church in the northwestern part of the modern town centre has a Saxon origin. In the medieval period, the town itself and some thirty or so adjacent villas and townships combined to form the Bishop of Durham's liberty of Allertonshire, wherein town and rural hinterland were administered as a single entity. The liberty lay some twenty-five miles north of York and extended in a long strip from some three miles north of Thirsk up to the banks of the River Tees at High Worsall, near Yarm. The core of the liberty was centred around the pre-Conquest manor of Allerton, which was held by Earl Edwin of Mercia in 1066. By the time of the Domesday Book, 'Aluertune' comprised '*forty-four carucates of land for geld, with forty acres of meadow and five leagues of plain and woodland*'. Like many northern estates, the manor was probably burnt and raised to the ground during the 'harrying of the north' by William I in 1069-70.
- 2.5.2 Perhaps the earliest documentary record of the town itself appears in royal exchequer records dating from the end of the 12th century. The town is named as 'Alurton' in a document that details the revenues of the bishopric of Durham. The strategic location of the town, on the main road north out of York, meant that it had a prominent role in the Anglo-Scottish wars of the medieval period. For example, the town was attacked on at least two occasions during the years 1311-23, when the northern counties of England were subject to a series of regular and systematic raids by the Scots; one very destructive raid in 1318 led to the church having to be rebuilt.
- 2.5.3 Like many medieval settlements, the residential and commercial core developed along a main street, in this case, the modern High Street, with street frontage buildings and long narrow strips of land to the rear. The surviving form of High Street properties indicates that they broadly follow the boundaries of long-established plots held on burgage tenure in the medieval period.⁸ Plots were often delineated through the insertion of fences or the digging of boundary ditches. The effect was to parcel out the backlands and such plots were held by people who carried on trades and crafts independently of agriculture, though they often cultivated parts of their plots and kept livestock in outhouses. Middens and cesspits were often dug in the rear parts of the plots well away from the dwelling. The East Road site occupies such a backlot situation, with the development area affecting approximately ten ancient burgage plots.
- 2.5.4 Despite the ongoing troubles of the 14th century, documentary evidence suggests that the town of Northallerton enjoyed reasonable vitality at this time, with cloth manufacture being a notable industry, as identified by documentary evidence. The extent of the Black Death and subsequent plagues is not well documented although the tithes of the church fluctuated markedly after 1348 and then fell into steady decline from the 1370's, suggesting that the liberty, like many other regions, was suffering from the demographic upheavals of the period.

⁷ Newman, 1999.

⁸ Grenville, 1997, 161-163.

- 2.5.5 Although population estimates for the medieval and early post-medieval period are always difficult to assess, Newman has calculated that, at the time of the 1377 poll tax assessment, Northallerton probably had about 750 inhabitants. Documentary evidence also indicates that the population of the town, together with its cloth industry, fell into further decline during the 15th century as part of a general long-term recession affecting the economy of the North-East of England. There were many causes of this down-turn: frequent and continuous bouts of high mortality and pestilence, a general agrarian crisis fuelled by years of poor harvests, and a general contraction of regional and national trade.
- 2.5.6 The antiquary John Leland, writing in the 1540s, described a visit to Northallerton in some detail, noting the principal buildings, including the ancient hospital of St. James, whose foundation has been attributed to the second half of the 12th century, the parish church of All Saints and, to the south-west of that, the manor house - the Bishop's Palace - known later as the Hallgarth and now the site of a Victorian cemetery. Adjacent to the manor house stood the soke mills of the manor, while to the north-west were Castle Hills, even then simply earthwork remains of the '*castelle of Alverton*'.
- 2.5.7 When Thomas Langdale wrote an account of the town in the late 18th century, he noted that High Street was then about half-a-mile in length. At approximately one-third of its length, from the south, stood the tollbooth (a two-storey building with ground floor shops), while further along stood the market cross and the shambles. Langdale also established the position of a watercourse, the Sun Beck, earlier noted by Leland, which ran from east to west, crossing the street '*about the middle of the town*', running into a more substantial brook, the Willow Beck, in the vicinity of the Bishop's palace. The existing High Street frontage is largely of 18th century date, while mapping from the 19th century onwards suggests that the plots fronting High Street may have had some of their ancient boundaries removed in recent times in order to form larger plots as street frontage properties were amalgamated and rebuilt.
- 2.5.8 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition map from 1857 shows the site straddling several well-defined gardens to the rear of properties fronting High Street, with two buildings occupying the southeastern portion of the site, these evidently amongst the earliest buildings to front East Road, then known as Back Lane. The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition map from 1894 shows that there had been further development on the Back Lane frontage within the site.
- 2.5.9 The archaeological monitoring and recording exercise and subsequent trial trenching evaluation undertaken by PCA in 1999 and 2000, respectively, represented the only archaeological interventions at the development site prior to the excavation. Although limited in scale, the monitoring and recording exercise demonstrated that there had been little or no horizontal truncation of archaeological strata across the area. This implied that evidence of anthropogenic activity from the medieval and post-medieval periods would survive at the site, if it had ever been present.

- 2.5.10 The evaluation demonstrated that remains of 12th-14th century date survived within the western part of the development site. The features recorded comprised two pits of uncertain function, a shallow ditch or gully, a probable well and a posthole. The features were broadly interpreted as representing medieval activity undertaken in the backlots of street frontage properties. An extensive developed soil horizon sealed all medieval features, indicating that this part of the town fell into disuse in the late medieval period, with these backlot areas perhaps being amalgamated for general agricultural activity or pasture. Strata and features of post-medieval and modern date were also recorded.
- 2.5.11 In sum, the excavation area was considered to have the potential to provide important information about the history and development of the southeastern portion of Northallerton during the medieval and early post-medieval periods.

3. AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Prior to the excavation, and on the basis of the findings of the earlier monitoring and recording and trial trenching evaluation, it was considered that archaeological remains at the site had the potential to illuminate the medieval and post-medieval history of Northallerton. The original WSI, from April 2000, for archaeological investigations at the site had set out a broad research agenda, from which site-specific research objectives were to be formulated in light of the findings of the evaluation.
- 3.2 The research agenda for the programme of archaeological excavation can be summarised thus:
- To identify evidence of generalised or repeated medieval or post-medieval activities, such as pitting, well-building, horticulture and agriculture;
 - To identify evidence for the layout or use of land as part of the development of the town core;
 - To identify evidence for change of site activities from medieval to early modern times;
 - To identify evidence for crafts or small scale proto-urban industries, such as brewing or butchery;
 - To analyse deposits to show the taphonomy of their components, such as charred materials, ceramic building material, pottery sherds and bone as a by product of food production and consumption against bone used in crafts.
- 3.3 The research agenda has been revised in light of the findings of the investigations, as described in Section 16 of this report.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overall Scheme of Fieldwork

4.1.1 The archaeological excavation at East Road, Northallerton was undertaken within the methodological framework outlined in PCA's Project Design. All work was carried out with respect to the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.⁹

4.1.2 A staged programme of archaeological excavation was undertaken at the site, to take into account public rights of way and phased demolition programme, which meant that different archaeologically sensitive areas were available for investigation successively.

4.1.3 Archaeological excavation was undertaken in five areas:

- Area 1 was square in plan measuring c. 16.0m north-south x c. 16.0m east-west, and was an open area located immediately to the south of Naylor's warehouse, which was being demolished at the time of the work. This area was designated as being one of minimum impact, situated towards the southwestern corner of the new build.
- Area 2 was rectangular in plan measuring c. 34.0m east-west by c. 17.50m north-south and was formerly occupied by a brick building and access routes. This area was designated as being one of maximum impact within the northwestern corner of the new build. Three lines of closely spaced pile caps were to affect this area, as well as foul and surface water sewers.
- Area 3 was rectangular in plan measuring c. 26.50m east-west by c. 19.0m north-south and was the area formerly occupied by Naylor's warehouse, which was demolished immediately in advance of the work. This area was to straddle the western wall of the new build. A 9.0m wide strip along the line of the wall was designated as being subject to maximum impact due to a line of closely spaced pile caps and foul sewers. The two parcels of land either side of this strip (approximately two-thirds of Area 3) were designated as being subject to only minimum impact.
- Area 4 was irregularly-shaped measuring up to c. 43.0m east-west x up to c. 39.0m north-south and was formerly occupied by open yards and parking areas. Part of this area, an L-shaped area measuring c. 24.0m north-south x c. 22.0m east-west was designated as being an area of maximum impact, occupied by the southwestern corner of the new build. North-south and east-west aligned lines of closely spaced pile caps were to meet at the corner point within this area, which was also to be the location of foul and surface water sewers. To the west of this, an area measuring c. 44.0m north-south x c. 21.0m east-west was designated as being an area of minimum impact as it was to lie outside the foundation plan of the new building but was to become a service yard. Groundworks for a diverted main sewer involving the machine excavation of a trench c. 1.50m wide and up to c. 3.0m deep across the south-western portion of Area 4 and beyond its southern and eastern limits were monitored archaeologically. These groundworks were considered to be of maximum impact due to the depth of the sewer trench.

⁹ IFA, 1999.

- Area 5 was sub-rectangular in plan measuring c. 28.0m east-west x c. 11.50m north-south, located to the north-west of Area 2 and formerly occupied by a workshop, an area of hardstanding and various small storage facilities. This was designated as an area of maximum impact due to the foundation layout of a new garage building. The floor of the workshop was considered to be of archaeological significance due to historic fabric of 19th century or earlier date and accordingly a detailed record was compiled prior to demolition.

4.2 Machine Excavation and Planform Recording of Archaeological Remains

- 4.2.1 In general, archaeological investigation within each area adopted one of two methodologies or a combination of the two, as detailed below.
- 4.2.2 In areas of minimum impact, the removal of surfacing, modern overburden, homogeneous strata of post-medieval and medieval/early post-medieval date by mechanical excavator was subject to archaeological supervision down to the construction formation level. A hydraulic breaker attached to the mechanical excavator was used to break out concrete slab and other modern structures as required. The mechanical excavator used only a toothless ditching bucket to remove deposits down to the formation level. At this level a team of archaeologists cleaned the exposed surfaces by hand in order to assess and prioritise deposits for recording
- 4.2.3 In areas of maximum impact, surfacing and modern overburden were initially removed by machine. Underlying homogeneous soil horizons were then removed carefully in spits of no more than 100mm by a mechanical excavator acting under archaeological supervision down to the definition level of archaeological features of interest. A toothless ditching bucket was utilised for this work. In practice the definition level was the interface between the natural sub-stratum and the overlying medieval soil horizon. However, when linear and/or discrete features and/or structural remains of post-medieval date were exposed before this level was reached, machining ceased to allow their cleaning and investigation. Subsequently, surviving horizontal strata were removed by machine, where possible, down to the natural sub-stratum. At any definition level exposed surfaces were cleaned by hand in order to assess and prioritise deposits for recording.
- 4.2.4 Excavation of the main sewer trench within and around Area 4 was undertaken by mechanical excavator but monitored by an attendant archaeologist. Periods of time were set aside for archaeological recording within the sewer trench when archaeological features of significance were exposed.

4.3 Feature and Deposit Assessment

- 4.3.1 A team comprising a Supervising Archaeologist and up to six Archaeologists undertook the archaeological excavations in Areas 1-5.
- 4.3.2 In both methodologies set out above, all archaeological features and deposits exposed were given context numbers and planned at a conventional scale (1:20) to show the horizontal distribution of features. A site survey grid was established, using a Geodimeter Total Station EDM, for the purposes of archaeological planning. Each overall area of investigation was plotted with respect to nearby roads and buildings using a total station. Where possible, at least one long section in each excavation area was drawn at a conventional scale (1:10) to show the formation/definition level and the positions of features and layers with respect to that level.

- 4.3.3 All major discrete features had their shape, character and depth determined by hand excavation of cross sections, along with appropriate sampling for environmental remains.
- 4.3.4 Where configurations of postholes and/or stakeholes were identified, a representative sample of these was investigated to obtain a general understanding of their character, depth and size distribution across the area of investigation.
- 4.3.5 Structured, layered deposits were hand excavated on a sampling basis to determine their character, information content and stratigraphic relationships. Sections were used to record the vertical distribution of these layers.
- 4.3.6 Using the information and artefacts collected to this stage, all features and deposits were formally assessed as to their origin or function, probable date and importance for further recording.

4.4 Targeted Excavation

- 4.4.1 Features and deposits identified during the 'assessment' stage as having potential for further recording were fully excavated by hand as appropriate, sampled and recorded. Additional full excavation was carried out on features and deposits of limited potential where the stratigraphic relationships, phasing or origin of these were still unclear. Assessment and targeted excavation essentially proceeded without delay as a continuous operation.
- 4.4.2 *Pro forma* recording sheets were used to compile a full and proper record of all written, graphic and photographic work undertaken. Detailed written records were made of all archaeological features and deposits encountered, comprising both factual and interpretative elements. Drawings were on polyester-based drawing film at a scale of 1:20 for plans and 1:10 for sections. All site drawings were related to the site survey grid.
- 4.4.3 A strategy for sampling archaeological deposits for palaeoenvironmental remains was formulated prior to and refined throughout the excavation programme. Different sampling strategies for ecofacts were employed according to the perceived importance of the deposit or feature under investigation. Close attention was given to sampling for date, structure and environment. Sample size took into account the frequency with which material was likely to occur.
- 4.4.4 In total, 22 bulk samples were collected for palaeoenvironmental and other material during the programme of excavation. Bulk samples were double bagged in thick, securely fastened polythene bags, containing two spun bonded polyethylene labels marked using permanent black marker pen, showing the site code, the archaeological context number and a sequential sample number.
- 4.4.5 The evaluation had suggested that preservation of plant macrofossils would be poor within features of medieval date across the site. With this in mind, only six uncontaminated unequivocally medieval deposits were sampled in an attempt to determine the composition and origin of plant material within them. In addition, two deposits of probable Roman date were sampled, along with three deposits of probable 18th century origin. The remaining 11 deposits to be sampled were of probable 19th century date, all but one of these being sampled due to the frequency of faunal remains within them, rather than for possible plant macrofossils.
- 4.4.6 The height of all principal strata and features was calculated in metres above Ordnance Datum (m OD) and the values were indicated on the appropriate plans and section drawings.

- 4.4.7 Artefacts and faunal remains were recovered by hand from archaeological features and deposits during the fieldwork. Ceramic material, metal objects and faunal remains were bagged unwashed in polythene bags, along with a spun bonded polyethylene label marked using permanent black marker pen, showing the site code and the archaeological context number. Glass objects were cushioned in acid free tissue and similarly bagged and labelled.
- 4.4.8 Certain artefacts (glass and metal) were recorded as 'small finds'. These artefacts had their two-dimensional grid co-ordinates recorded, along with their absolute height above Ordnance Datum. Each 'small find' was assigned its own unique 'small find' (SF) number and a register of these artefacts was maintained.
- 4.4.9 A detailed photographic record of the excavations was compiled. This included black and white prints and colour transparencies (on 35mm film), illustrating the principal features and finds discovered in detail and in general context. All photographs of this nature included a clearly visible graduated metric scale. The photographic record also included 'working shots' to illustrate more generally the nature of the archaeological investigations.

4.5 Post-Excavation

- 4.5.1 This report is the culmination of a phase of post-excavation assessment of the findings of the archaeological excavation. It includes an assessment of the stratigraphic, artefactual and palaeoenvironmental data recovered, in accordance with the guidelines of English Heritage, as set out in MAP2.
- 4.5.2 The site's stratigraphic data is represented by the written, drawn and photographic records. Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records, grouping contexts, enhancing matrices, consulting with external specialists and phasing the stratigraphic data. A written summary of the archaeological sequence has been compiled and is set out in Section 5 of this report. The contents of the written, graphic and photographic archive are listed in Section 6.
- 4.5.3 The artefactual material from the site comprised assemblages of ceramic material (pottery and building material), glass and metalwork. All material was washed, dried, marked and packaged, as appropriate, and according to relevant guidelines.¹⁰ Specialist assessment of each category of material was undertaken, as described below in Sections 7-12. No other categories of inorganic artefactual material were represented.
- 4.5.4 Organic material, in the form of bone, was recovered by hand and through bulk sediment sampling. The material was washed, dried, marked and packaged, as appropriate and according to relevant guidelines.¹¹ Specialist assessment of the assemblage was undertaken, as described below in Section 13.
- 4.5.5 From the total of 22 bulk sediment samples collected during the fieldwork, all were sub-sampled for processing and assessment. The flots and residues from the sub-samples were examined for palaeoenvironmental remains and other archaeological material, with specialist assessment then being undertaken, as described below in Section 14.

¹⁰ Watkinson and Neal, 1998; UKIC, 1983.

¹¹ *ibid.*

- 4.5.6 Survival of all materials recovered during or generated by archaeological projects depends upon suitable storage. The complete project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation) and all recovered materials will be packaged for long term curation according to relevant guidelines.¹² None of the recovered materials required specialist stabilisation or an assessment of its potential for conservation research. The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the Yorkshire Museum, will be met in full.
- 4.5.7 Data will be prepared for accession to the North Yorkshire County Historic Environment Record.

¹² UKIC, 1990.

5. PHASED SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

The overall excavation area was investigated in five stages, as dictated by the requirements of the demolition programme. For the purpose of this report the archaeological sequence is described across the site as a whole.

5.1 Phase 1: The Natural Sub-stratum

Phase 1 encompasses all natural drift deposits at the site. These were the earliest deposits to be exposed at each location, and individual context numbers were assigned in each of the excavation areas.

5.1.1 Phase 1: Natural Boulder Clay

Area	Context	Maximum recorded height
Eval. Tr 2	[119]	40.00m OD
2 & Eval. Tr 1	[137]	40.41m OD
1	[203]	40.09m OD
3 & 4	[666]	40.26m OD
5	[1528]	40.82m OD

5.1.1.1 Deposits assigned to Phase 1 are listed in the table above. The deposits have been equated, due to their stratigraphic position, broad similarity in composition and identification as natural boulder clay material. In the southern part of the site, in Areas 1, 3 and 4, the material was typically described as firm light to mid yellowish orange sandy clay, while to the north, in Areas 2 and 5, it was more typically described as mid to dark brownish red clayey sand. However, there were variations in composition across all open areas, as is typical of the boulder clay in the region. Inclusions were typically frequent fine and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles and occasional large angular, sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles. Where undisturbed, there were no other inclusions.

5.1.1.2 The relative heights of the untruncated natural sub-stratum, as set out in the table above, demonstrate that the natural topography of this part of Northallerton is of land slightly sloping down from north to south. At the site, this was manifest as a drop in the height of the natural sub-stratum of c. 0.80m over a distance of c. 60m between Area 5 in the north and evaluation Trench 2 (within Area 4) to the south.

5.2 Phase 2: Romano-British Activity (Figure 3)

Phase 2 comprises a small number of contexts representing activity at the site during the Romano-British period. Two sub-phases, Phase 2.1 and Phase 2.2, have been assigned, both seemingly representing the establishment of land boundaries

5.2.1 Phase 2.1: NE-SW aligned boundaries

Fenceline [1183], fill [1183]; posthole [1185], fill [1184]
Posthole [1189], fill [1188]; linear feature [1167], fill [1166]

5.2.1.1 A NE-SW aligned linear feature, [1183], with a rounded terminal in the south-west was located in the eastern part of Area 4. It measured 7.82m in length, truncated to the east by later activity, and was 0.32m wide x 0.14m deep, with vertical sides and a flat base. The highest level at which the feature survived was 40.16m OD and the base was generally level, at c. 39.95m OD. A posthole, [1185], oval in plan with vertical sides and a flat base was revealed in the base of the linear feature towards its eastern extent. This measured 0.43m x 0.22m x 0.15m deep and was filled with mid grey clayey silt, [1184]. The fill, [1182], of the linear feature comprised mid grey clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular stones.

5.2.1.2 The linear feature is interpreted as a possible fenceline, on the basis of its profile and dimensions. In addition, one posthole was identified within the base of the feature. Five fragments of samian pottery were recovered from the fill of the fenceline; these fragments conjoined and formed most of the base of a samian cup. This has been dated to the Flavian period, that is c. AD 70-100.

5.2.1.3 An oval posthole, [1189], was located to the south of the fenceline. This had near vertical sides and a flat base and measured 0.34m x 0.22m x 0.19m deep. Its fill, [1188], comprised dark yellowish brown sandy clay which did not yield any dating evidence.

5.2.1.4 The northern edge of posthole [1189] was truncated by what may have been part of a linear feature, [1167]. The surviving portion measured 0.70m x 0.40m x 90mm deep. Since only a small part of this feature survived truncation by later activity, any interpretation cannot be definite, although it is possible that it represents the northern edge of a linear feature running parallel to fenceline [1183]. It was located at a distance of 3.60m from fenceline [1183] and survived at a highest level of 40.14m OD. Its fill, [1166], comprised dark greyish brown silty clay with occasional peagrit.

5.2.2 Phase 2.2: NW-SE aligned boundaries

Ditch [1208], fill [1207]; ditch [1377], fill [1376]; ditch [109], fill [108]; posthole [1191], fill [1190]; posthole [1213], fill [1212]; stakehole [1211], fill [1210]
Stakehole group number [1209]: stakehole [1193], fill [1192]; stakehole [1195], fill [2294]; stakehole [1200], fill [1199]; stakeholes [1200-1206] (even numbers), fills [1199-1205] (odd numbers); stakeholes [1219-1235] (odd numbers), fills [1218-1234] (even numbers)
Feature [341], fill [342]

5.2.2.1 A NW-SE aligned linear feature, [1208], interpreted as a ditch, truncated the terminal of fenceline [1183] and ran at right angles to this feature. It had gently sloping sides and a shallow rounded base and was 1.22m wide x 0.25m deep. The base of the feature had been recorded as feature [109] in evaluation Trench 2. To the south, beyond truncation by later activity, the feature continued as feature [1377]. Overall, the ditch was recorded for a length of c. 21m and the highest level at which it was recorded was 40.17m OD.

- 5.2.2.2 Two postholes, [1191] and [1213], were recorded in the base of ditch [1208] towards its northern extent. Posthole [1191] was sub-circular with moderately sloping sides and a rounded base. It measured 0.38m x 0.28m x 0.20m deep and its fill, [1190], comprised mid greyish brown silty clay. It had been truncated to the north by the second posthole, [1213], which was irregular in plan with vertical sides and a rounded base. It measured 0.36m x 0.32m x 0.30m deep and was filled with mid greyish brown silty clay, [1212].
- 5.2.2.3 A stakehole, [1211], was recorded in the base of the ditch to the south of the two postholes. This had vertical sides and a rounded base and measured 110mm x 100mm x 140mm deep. Its fill, [1210], comprised mid to light brownish grey clayey, sandy silt.
- 5.2.2.4 The fill of ditch [1208], which overlay the previously described stake- and postholes, comprised firm, light to mid greyish brown clayey, sandy silt, [1207]. This fill was recorded as deposit [1376] to the south, where the ditch was recorded as feature [1377].
- 5.2.2.5 A group of 15 stakeholes, group number [1209], ran parallel to ditch [1208] at a distance of c. 3.20m to the east. All were circular in plan with near vertical sides and pointed bases. They ranged in size from 40mm to 60mm in diameter, although the majority were c. 40mm, and in depth from 70mm-110mm. Their fills were generally similar, comprising mid brownish grey sandy silt. A single fragment of Roman grey ware was recovered from the fill, [1205], of stakehole [1206]. This arrangement of stakeholes is interpreted as being remains of a timber fenceline, erected on the same alignment as ditch [1208].
- 5.2.2.6 To the north, in the southern part of Area 2, was a short linear NW-SE orientated feature, [341]. It appeared to terminate to the south-east and was traced for c. 0.70m, having been truncated to the north-west. It was 0.30m wide and survived to a maximum depth of only 70mm. Its dark clayey silt fill, [342], did not yield any cultural material. Because of its orientation, the feature has been tentatively assigned to Phase 2.2.

5.2.3 Summary discussion of Phase 2

- 5.2.3.1 Artefactual material was recovered from only two of the Phase 2 features. However, it is the relative alignments of the features (or arrangements of features) in Phase 2 which indicates that they can be reasonably assigned to the same period of activity. Ditch [1208]/[1377] formed a right angle with fenceline [1183] and, since the ditch only slightly truncated the terminal of the fenceline, it is perhaps plausible to suggest that these features may have been in use as boundaries contemporaneously. Stakehole group [1209] has been interpreted as representing a fenceline which ran on the same alignment as ditch [1208] and was therefore also possibly from the same period of activity. If the ditch represented a main boundary delineation, perhaps the fencelines, if associated as suggested, formed sub-divisions of the land parcel to the east.
- 5.2.3.2 The fact that the Phase 2 features have alignments that are completely at odds with those of features that represent the medieval burgage plot boundaries, as described below in Phase 3, supports the theory that a pre-medieval phase of activity was recorded at the site. The Phase 2 features lay on NW-SE or NE-SW orientations, whilst boundary features from Phase 3 were generally aligned east-west (later elements being north-south), an arrangement that is fossilised in the existing layout of properties off High Street.

5.2.3.3 The discovery of activity during the Roman period is arguably the most significant archaeological discovery of the project. Previous to this excavation, the earliest known activity in the town of Northallerton dated from the Saxon period. The samian pottery recovered dates from the Flavian period, c. AD 70-100, and the date may be further refined to the period c. AD 70-85. The occurrence of a late 1st century AD samian vessel at this site is of some note, since the material dates to the period of the Roman invasion of northern England. The grey ware sherd recovered from the Phase 2.2 stakehole is an undiagnostic fragment, which cannot be closely dated.