



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
WYAS

**Street Lighting Columns
Chapel Street, High Street,
Roman Road and Bridge Street
Tadcaster
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1542

June 2006

CLIENT

North Yorkshire County Council

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Roman Road and Bridge Street
Tadcaster
North Yorkshire

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Contents

1. Introduction
 2. Archaeological Background
 3. Method
 4. Results
 5. Conclusions
- Bibliography
Acknowledgements
Figures
Appendices

Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken during ground works to replace existing street lighting along Chapel Street, High Street and Roman road. No significant archaeological features were located and the excavations disturbed mostly previous road make-up, although residual post-medieval and medieval pottery, as well as animal bone, indicates activity from this period in the area, especially around Trench 6.

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Archaeological Services WYAS

PO Box 30, Nepshaw Lane South, Morley, Leeds LS27 0UG

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS was commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation and replacement of existing street lighting on Roman Road, Chapel Street, High Street and Bridge Street, Tadcaster (Fig. 1). The two areas of investigation are centred on NGR SE 486 433 and SE 497 440 and the locations of the street lighting columns, that were located on the road pavements, are shown in Figure 2.
- 1.2 A Written Scheme of Investigation for the watching brief was provided by NYCC Archaeology Service (Appendix IV) and this was adhered to during the course of the works. The numbering system for the street columns investigated has been assigned by ASWYAS, and any previous nomenclature depicted on the plans provided by NYCC has been included.
- 1.3 The underlying geology is of Upper Magnesian Limestone with flatter boulder clay deposits around the eastern part of the town (British Geological Survey 1974).
- 1.4 The monitoring of the excavation and replacement of existing street lighting took place between 14th January 2005, and the 21st and 24th to 25th April 2006.

2. Archaeological Background

- 2.1 A comprehensive archaeological assessment has previously been produced for the area of the site (Roberts 2002). This indicated a number of prehistoric finds suggesting early activity in the Tadcaster area. A polished flint axe has been recovered to the north-west of Roman Road. Excavations on Chapel Street between 1993 and 1994 uncovered a collection of 300 Mesolithic flints (Roberts 2002).
- 2.2 The evidence and nature of Roman Tadcaster is unclear. The settlement was known in the Roman period as *Calacaria* as it was the site of a source of limestone. Tadcaster was also an integral part of the Roman hinterland around York. The majority of Roman finds (including pottery and coins) derive from the castle earthworks and the area to the north of Westgate (Roberts 2002).
- 2.3 Tangible evidence of Saxon activity in Tadcaster is sparse and is restricted to possible early Anglian pottery and potential *grubenhusers* (sunken-floored buildings) which have been identified to the north of Westgate (Roberts 2002).
- 2.4 Medieval activity in Tadcaster centres on the motte and bailey castle dating from the late 11th century, and the church immediately to the south-east of the castle dating to the late 11th and early 12th century. During the late medieval period the focus of the town shifted towards High Street and Bridge Street on the western side of the river (Roberts 2002). In general, the focus of the Roman and medieval town was on the western bank of the river, with limited activity beyond this into the eastern area where the current site is located.

3. Method

- 3.1 The location of the Street light column trenches had already been previously established by NYCC. These were marked out and excavated by the site contractors. ASWYAS were provided with a location plan. All 18 column footings were hand excavated by the site contractor. This process was monitored by an archaeologist throughout. The excavation sections were inspected for archaeological features and all spoil was scanned for potential finds. A written and photographic record was made of the watching brief according to ASWYAS standard methods (2005) and the standard Written Scheme of Investigation provided by NYCC.

4. Results

- 4.1 The results from the monitoring of the 16 excavations for street lighting columns are summarised in Table 1 below. Artefacts are listed in Appendix III.

Tr. /Coord	Size	Depth	Tarmac/ paving slabs/sand	Stratigraphy	Comments
T1 SE 48531 43272	0.8m x 0.6m	0.38m	0.07m.	0.07m-0.38m, Mid yellowish brown sand with tarmac frags – Made ground	No archaeology.
T2 SE 48505 43327	0.8m x 0.6m	0.40m	0.07m	0.07m 0.40m, Mid –yellowish-brown with tarmac frags- Made ground	No archaeology
T3 SE 48474 43384	1.6m x 0.7m	0.46m	0.06 -0.20m	0.20m-0.40m, mid yellowish mortar deposit with patches of gravel (possibly made ground).	Possible stone wall (1001), unstrat. finds
T4 SE 48478 43418	0.85m x 0.6m	0.35m	0.06m	0.06m-0.35m, Sandy gravely made ground	No archaeology
T5 SE 48547 43255	1.5m x 1m	0.34m	0.06m	0.06m-0.34m, Clean mid greyish brown sandy clay, Made ground	No archaeology
T6 SE 48576 43267	2m x 0.5m	0.57m	0.00-0.25m	0.25m-0.57m ,mid –greyish-brown, moist- friable clayey – sand. With hardcore and charcoal flecks.	No archaeology, unstrat. finds
T7 SE 48598 43284	2.23m x0.45m	0.36m	0.00-0.24m.	0.24m-0.36m, mid greyish brown, moist clayey sand. With frequent hardcore and charcoal flecks.	No archaeology
T8 SE 48689 43375	2m x0.5m	0.30m	0.00m – 0.07m	0.07m-0.3m, moist mid orangey grey clayey sand	No archaeology
T9 SE 48614 43316	0.47m x 0.47m	0.30m	0.14m- 0.3m	0.14m-0.3m mid greyey brown, moist clayey sand, with occasional hardcore and charcoal fleck inclusions.	No archaeology
T10 SE 48603 43306	0.47m x 0.47m	0.43m	0.13m	0.13m-0.43m mid- orangey-brown moist sand with occasional rounded pebbles.	No archaeology

Tr./Coordinate	Size	Depth	Tarmac/ paving slabs/sand	Stratigraphy	Comments
T11 SE 48516 43250	0.47m x 0.47m	0.42m	0.00-0.11m	0.11m – 0.42m mid greyish – brown, moist clayey-sand with frequent sand patches	No archaeology Unstrat. finds
T12 SE 48491 43236	1.53m x 1m	0.49m	0.00-0.49m	Excavation stopped at concrete	No archaeology
T13 (77) SE 49704 44022	0.36m x 0.3m	1.18m	0.23m	0.23m-1.18m re-deposited topsoil.	No archaeology
T14 (77A) SE 49762 44017	0.48 x 0.48m	1.15m	N/A	0.68m topsoil 0.68m – 1.15m hardcore	No archaeology
T15 (75) SE 49663 43980	0.47m x 0.32m	1.13m	0.20m	0.20m – 0.43m buried topsoil 0.43m – 1.15m sand	No archaeology
T16 (72) SE 49568 43912	0.35m x 0.35m	1.18m	N/A	0.00m - 0.26m topsoil 0.26m – 0.31m sand 0.31m – 1.18m clayey subsoil.	No archaeology

Table 1. Summary of results

- 4.2.1 No archaeological features were identified in Trenches 1-16 with the exception of Trench 3. No natural ground was observed in any trench.
- 4.2.2 Trench 3 revealed part of a possible roughly constructed stone wall (1001) at around 0.26m below the ground surface that was located in the north-east facing section. The wall was not fully excavated and only 0.5m length was exposed negating inference to its alignment. Constructed from roughly hewn unshaped mortared limestone pieces it may represent the remains a building foundation wall, the date of which it was not possible to ascertain. The limits of excavation prevent any further interpretation and the structure remains *in-situ* with the street lighting column placed to the side.
- 4.2.3 Whilst no archaeology was observed in Trench 6 a re-deposited layer from a previous electric cable trench yielded late medieval pottery sherds, animal bone and glass.

5. Artefact Record

5.1 The Pottery by Chris Cumberpatch

5.1.1 The pottery assemblage consisted of twenty-six sherds of pottery weighing 486 grams and represented twenty-four vessels. All the pottery was recovered from unstratified contexts. The data are summarised in Table 2 (Appendix III).

Trench 3

5.1.2 The unstratified pottery from Trench 3 included one sherd of 18th century date (Mottled ware) and five sherds which are more difficult to date more closely than to the 18th or 19th century. They were accompanied by fragment of undated roof tile.

Trench 6

5.1.3 Trench 6 produced the largest and most diverse group of unstratified pottery from the site. Later medieval to early post medieval wares were represented by Green Glazed Sandy wares and Later Medieval Sandy wares, both similar in general character, the former reduced, the latter oxidised. In both form and fabric, these wares are distinctive and represent the latest expression of the medieval sandy ware tradition (Cumberpatch 1997). Later types include single sherds of Blackware and Yellow ware (17th century) and 18th century Mottled wares and Fine Redwares. Less well dated types (18th to 19th century) include Brown Salt Glazed Stonewares and Brown Glazed Coarsewares. The sherds were from unstratified deposits and it would seem as if this group of pottery comes from a disturbed deposit. Later medieval activity and post-medieval activity might be suggested to have been present in the immediate vicinity of the excavation although possibly disturbed by later activities.

Trench 11

5.1.4 Trench 11 produced only one sherd, the neck of a stoneware bottle dating to the 19th or early 20th century.

Discussion

5.1.5 Few conclusions can be drawn from the small assemblage of pottery from Tadcaster, beyond the fact that the area of the investigation seems to have seen activity between the later 15th and 19th to early 20th centuries. The range of pottery is limited to utilitarian wares and vernacular tablewares, refined earthenwares being absent. Without a greater understanding of the nature of the deposits, it is difficult to account for this observation.

6. *Ecofact Record*

6.1 *The Animal Bone* by Jane Richardson

- 6.1.1 In total, fifteen animal bone fragments were recovered, all unstratified from Trench 6. With the exception of part of a pig maxilla and a sheep-sized rib and scapula fragment, all the bones were identified as cattle. Five of the cattle bones displayed butchery marks caused by cleavers or saws and as a result, are likely to represent the processing of carcasses into useable joints.

7. *Conclusions*

- 7.1 No significant archaeological features were uncovered during the excavation of the street lighting column trenches on Bridge Street, Chapel Street, High Street and Roman Road. However, during the excavation of Trench 6 on High Street several shreds of possible late medieval pottery were retrieved. These are likely to have derived from a previously disturbed deposit indicating activity from this period within the area. The small assemblage of animal bone (cattle and some sheep and pig) may indicate disturbed deposits in the area. A small part of an undated possible stonewall was located in the section of Trench 3. The majority of excavation occurred within previous make-up ground from previous road and service construction. As expected, no Roman activity was identified, although the unstratified post-medieval and medieval pottery, as well as animal bone suggested features dating from this period may have been previously disturbed, especially around Trench 6. Unfortunately undisturbed archaeological deposits were not located.

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Acknowledgements

Project management

Ian Roberts BSc MIFA

Report

Vicky Brown BA

Graphics/illustrations

Vicky Brown

Daniel Lee BSc

Fieldwork

Vicky Brown

Paul Major BSc MA

Richard Szymanski BSc

Specialists

Dr Chris Cumberpatch

Sheffield

Pottery

Dr Jane Richardson

ASWYAS

Animal Bone

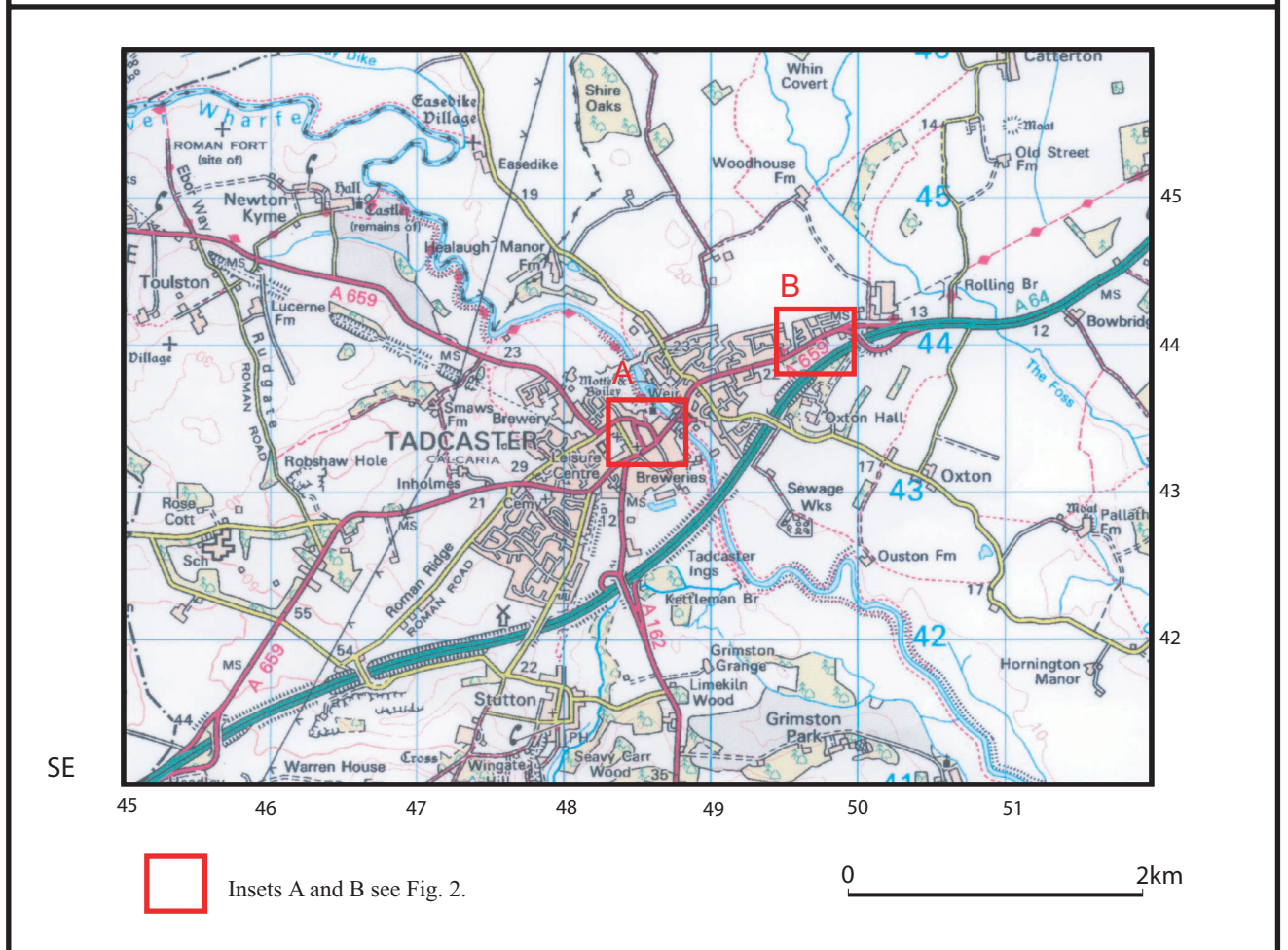
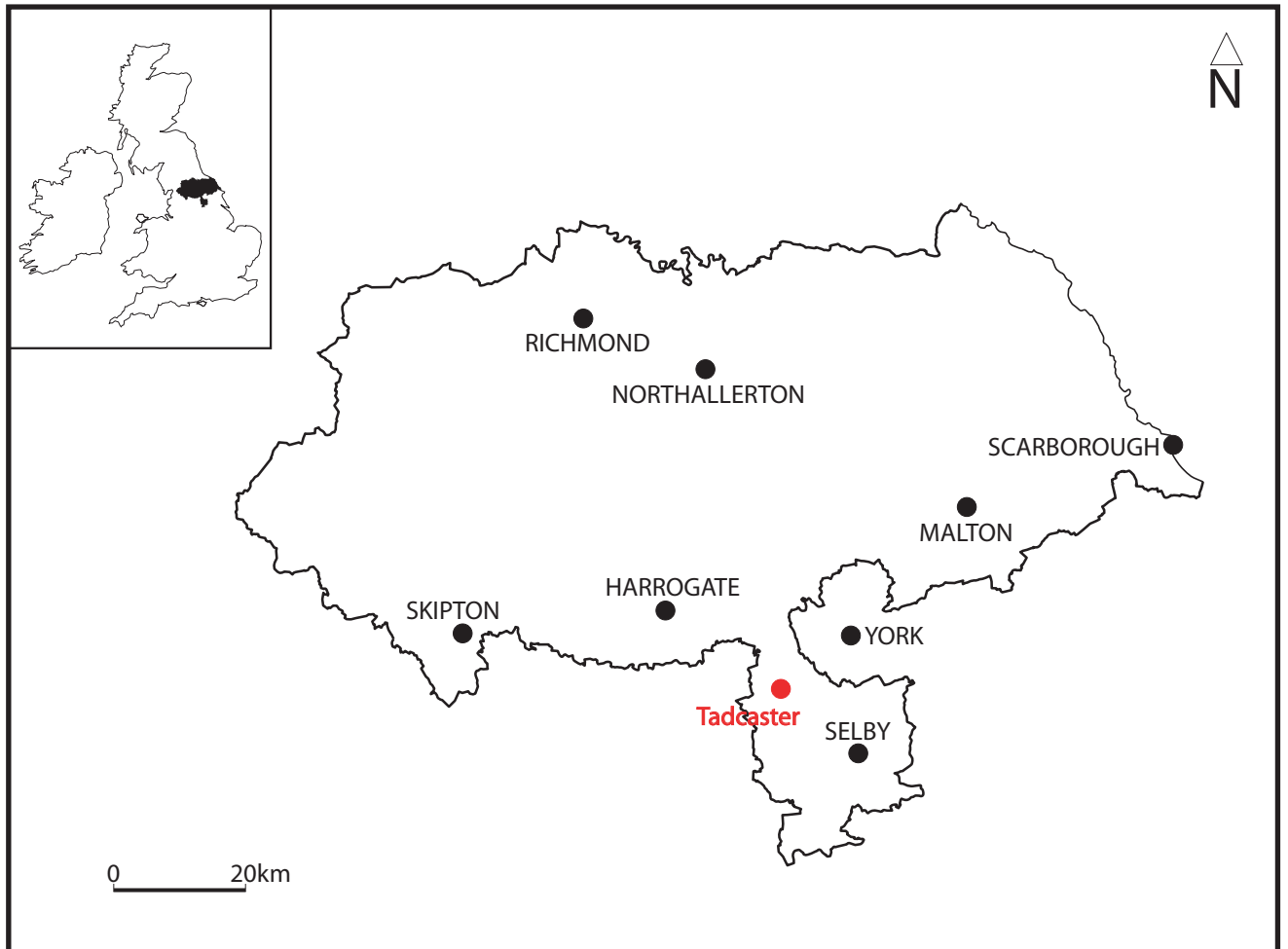
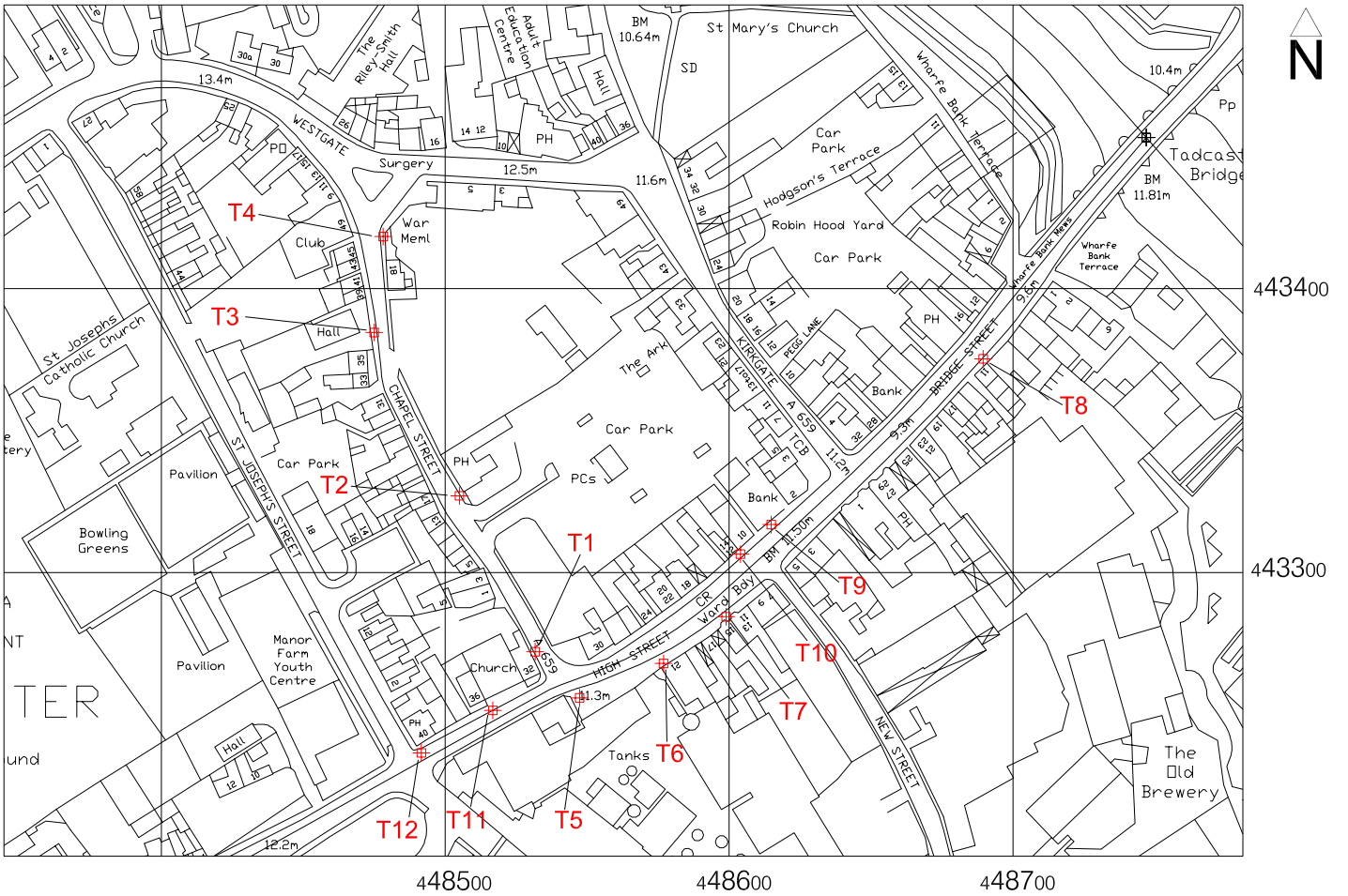


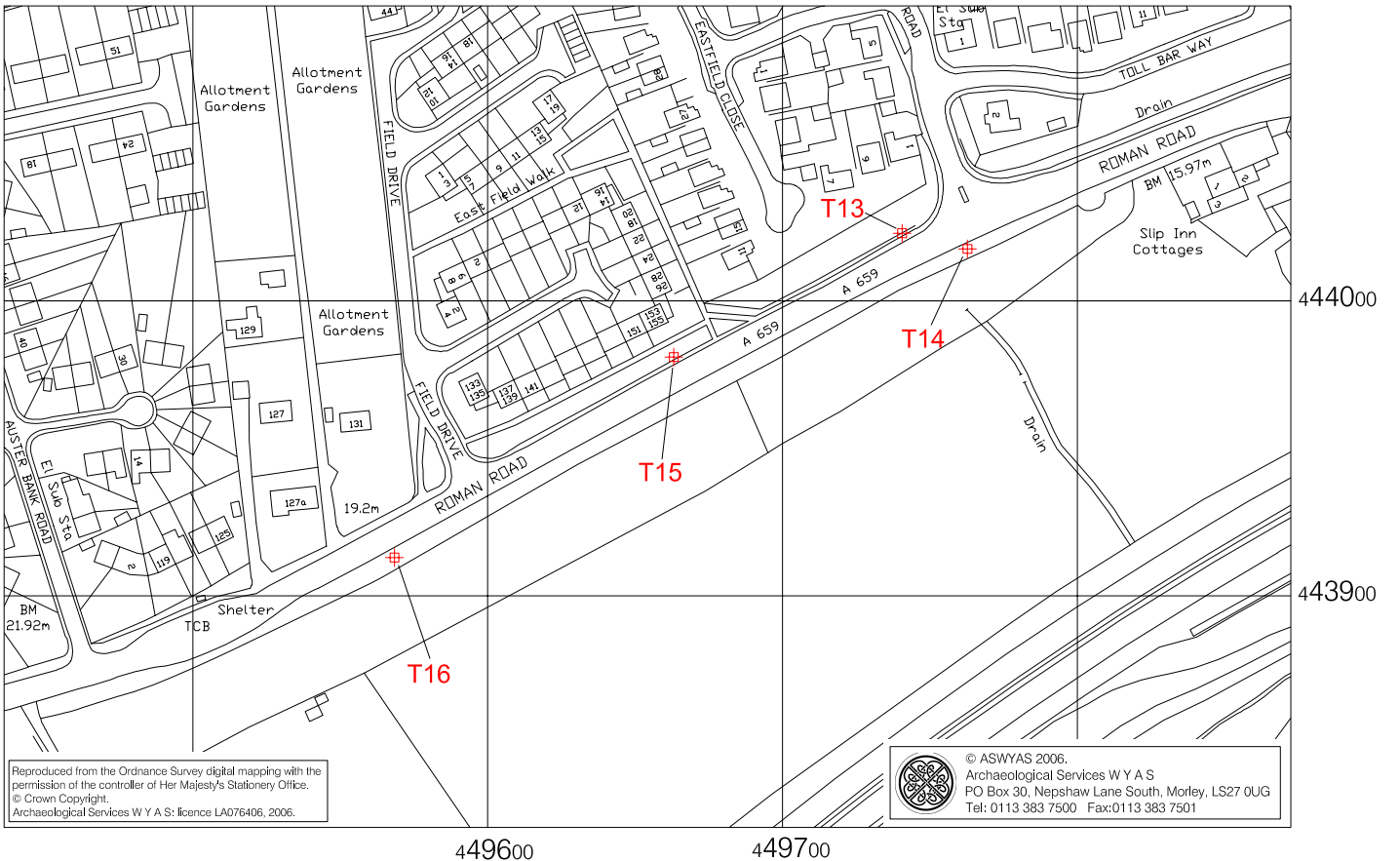
Fig. 1. Site location

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Inset A



Inset B



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Fig. 2. Site location with street lighting columns shown



Appendix I***Inventory of primary archive***

File no.	Description	Quantity
1	Context cards	1
1	Watching brief monitoring forms	4
1	Trench Record Sheets	13
1	Drawing sheet	1

Appendix II***Inventory of contexts***

Context	Trench	Description
1001	3	Possible stonewall

Appendix III

Inventory of artefacts

Fabric	Trench	Context	Quantity	Details
Pottery	-	-	26	See specialist report, Table 1
CBM	6	U/S	1	Roof tile fragment
Animal bone	6	U/S	15	Cattle, sheep and pig, see specialist report
Glass	3	U/S	1	Modern window pane fragment
	6	U/S	2	Bottle fragments
Total			3	

Appendix IV

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief



North

Yorkshire County Council

STANDARD WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI)
FOR LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ("WATCHING BRIEF")
FOR SERVICES WORKS

- 1 The purpose of the work is to enable the recording and recovery of archaeological remains affected to a limited and clearly defined extent by narrow cable, pipe or culvert trenches, electricity pole or lamp standard emplacement, valve or inspection chamber trenches, or access pits for trenchless technology. The archaeological work should not require the emplacement of services to be held up while recording takes place, although some utilities contractors may give such a facility.
- 2 The excavation of all trenches should be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of excavation works. Overburden such as tarmac, concrete, turf, topsoil, made ground, rubble or other superficial fill materials should be removed by machine, using a back-acting excavator fitted with a toothless, ditching or grading bucket. Where surface materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, they should be broken up first, and a toothed bucket used temporarily to open up the materials for lifting.
- 3 Metal detecting of the trenches and spoil should only be carried out subject to archaeological supervision and recording so that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.
- 4 Where structures, soil deposits and features, or finds of archaeological interest are uncovered or disturbed by trenching, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, and where appropriate, hand excavate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators observe archaeological remains during the course of works, they should immediately notify the Archaeologist. Although most services works may be unlikely to require the application of archaeological science to recovered artefacts and samples, this is a standard requirement for all archaeological investigations and the Archaeologist should make arrangements to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.
- 5 Heavy plant or excavators should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Subsoils and sterile parent materials below archaeological deposits can be removed without archaeological supervision using a toothed bucket.

- 6 Upon completion of archaeological field recording work, samples should be processed and all finds identified, assessed, spot-dated, and properly stored. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. Arrangements should be made for the transfer of the archive to a museum or records office.
- 7 A summary report shall be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should contain planning or administrative details of the project, a summary of works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context where appropriate, and a catalogue of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings and roads. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally scaled plans, sections or photographs. Where few or no finds are made, it may be acceptable to provide the report in the form of a letter with plans attached.
- 8 Copies of the summary report should be provided to the utility company, services provider or highways divisional office, the County Heritage Unit (SMR), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works were carried out on or near to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage.
- 9 This WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements to mitigate the effects of services works on sites of archaeological or historic interest as recognised in the Electricity Act 1989, Gas Act 1995, Pipelines Act 1962 and Water Act 1989. It does **not** comprise a full specification, and the County Council makes no warranty that the archaeological works are fully or exactly described. The details of implementation must be specified in a contract between the services provider and the selected archaeological contractor. The County Archaeologist should be notified immediately of any unexpected archaeological remains or variations to work.