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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
WYAS

**40 High Street
Knaresborough
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1544

June 2006

CLIENT

Yorkshire Trading Company Ltd.

**40 High Street
Knaresborough
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief, at land to the rear of 40 High Street, Knaresborough was maintained during the excavation of seven geotechnical test pits. No archaeological remains were identified during the watching brief. It appeared, however, that the site has been landscaped and this may have impacted upon the survival of archaeological features on the site.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS was commissioned by Horsley Townsend Architects on behalf of Yorkshire Trading Company Ltd., to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical investigations, at land to the rear of 40 High Street, Knaresborough. The geotechnical investigations were undertaken in advance of a proposed extension to the existing building.
- 1.2 The development is situated to the north of High Street, within Knaresborough town centre and is bounded by commercial properties (centred SE 3510, 5710, Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.3 The solid geology of the site is mapped as Lower Magnesian Limestone (British Geological Survey 1987) and the soils are unsurveyed (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).
- 1.4 At the time of the watching brief the ground coverage comprised a concrete/hardcore drive with sloping grassed areas along the eastern and western boundaries.
- 1.5 The watching brief was undertaken on 25th May 2006.

2. Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The earliest documentary reference to Knaresborough or 'Chenareburg' is in the Domesday book of 1086. A parish church was in existence in Knaresborough by 1114, when it was granted to Nostell priory and a castle was established in the early 12th century (Richardson 2003). By 1169 there were burgesses in the town and a market was first recorded in 1206 (Falkingham 2001). In the 13th century Knaresborough was the centre of an iron-working industry, however, this was in decline by the 14th century. The town was also the focus of a thriving woollen industry, which continued until the 17th century before being replaced by linen weaving (Falkingham 2001).
- 2.2 The proposed development lies within the historic core of Knaresborough, within an area of possible medieval settlement. High Street is believed to have been the main thoroughfare of the medieval town and as such it is likely that medieval burgage plots fronted onto this street. The site is also situated close to the projected line of the medieval town defences that are believed to follow the line of Gracious Street (to the south-east of the site).

3. Method

- 3.1 Due to the potential of below-ground archaeological remains being uncovered during the geotechnical investigations, Gail Falkingham, of North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all groundworks. The geotechnical investigations comprised the excavation of six test pits (TP1-6) in predetermined positions at the rear of 40 High Street. An additional test pit (TP 1A) was excavated, as it was not possible to complete the excavation of TP1 to the desired depth due to concrete foundations.
- 3.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Limited Archaeological Recording ("Watching Brief")

provided by North Yorkshire County Council (Appendix III) and Archaeological Services WYAS Guidelines for Watching Briefs (ASWYAS 2006).

- 3.3 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the geotechnical investigations and record any archaeological features revealed during this process.
- 3.4 An archaeologist was present during the excavation of all test pits. Mechanical excavation was carried out using a back-acter (JCB) fitted with a 550mm wide toothless ditching bucket. Excavations ceased when the natural was reached and the archaeologist was afforded the opportunity to inspect the resulting surfaces/sections for archaeological remains and record the test pits. Where further clarification of the natural was required the test pits were then extended through natural deposits.
- 3.5 All recording was undertaken in accordance with Archaeological Services WYAS standard methods (ASWYAS 2005). The trenches were tied into fixed boundaries, using 30m hand tapes.
- 3.6 The site archive is presented in Appendix I. It is currently stored by Archaeological Services WYAS with the intention that it will be deposited with Harrogate Museum, within a timescale agreed between the two parties.

4. Results

- 4.1 In total, seven trenches were excavated and the results are summarised in Table 1. A detailed description of the deposits identified is presented in Appendix II. Natural was exposed in all trenches and was found to comprise a red silty clay.

Test Pit	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Trench Description and stratigraphy
TP1	1.5	0.8	0.6	Trench excavated to investigate perimeter wall foundations. Topsoil (0.2m), overlying rubble deposit 101 (0.3m) above natural. Deposits slope towards south-east.
TP1A	1.4	0.6	0.75	Additional trench to investigate perimeter wall foundations. Topsoil (0.1m), overlying deposit 101 (0.65m) above natural. Deposits slope towards south-east.
TP2	1.8	0.8	0.25	Trench excavated to investigate wall foundations. Topsoil (0.1m), above natural. The wall was observed to be constructed upon natural deposits, no foundation cut noted.
TP3	3.0	0.7	2.0	Topsoil (0.6m), overlying 0.2m of hardcore, which sealed natural.

Test Pit	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Trench Description and stratigraphy
TP4	1.8	0.8	1.5	Topsoil (0.3m) above deposit 101 (0.35m), overlying demolition deposit 103 (0.2m), sealing deposit 104 (0.2m), overlying natural. All deposits slope steeply to the north-west.
TP5	3.0	0.9	3.0	Hardcore (0.36m) overlying rubble deposit 105 (0.3m), sealing buried topsoil (0.36m) above natural.
TP6	3.6	0.85	2.0	Topsoil (0.5m), overlying natural.

Table 1: Summary of results of watching brief

5. Discussion and Conclusions

- 5.1 No archaeological remains were identified during the course of the watching brief. The rubble and hardcore deposits observed in the majority of trenches are believed to be associated with the construction of the modern perimeter walls and concrete driveway. It would appear, from the results of the investigations and the existing topography (e.g. the two steep grassed banks to the east and west), that landscaping has been undertaken on the site.
- 5.2 Topsoil was noted above the modern hardcore and rubble deposits in TP1-4 and 6, and may indicate that the site has been stripped of topsoil and possibly reduced in height to create a level surface for the driveway. It is possible this landscaping has impacted upon the original level of the site and hence may have removed any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits.
- 5.3 The only area of the site investigated, which appears to have been undisturbed, was to the north-west of the site, in the area of TP5. The excavation of this test pit revealed a buried topsoil sealed by hardcore and indicates that this area had been raised rather than reduced in height.
- 5.4 It is possible that the landscaping indicated by the watching brief has impacted upon the survival of archaeological features on the site. There is potential, however, in the north-eastern area of the site where a buried topsoil was identified, for archaeological remains to be preserved.

Bibliography

ASWYAS, 2005, 'Archaeological Services WYAS site recording manual', ASWYAS unpubl.

ASWYAS, 2006, 'Archaeological Services WYAS watching brief guidelines', ASWYAS unpubl.

Falkingham, G. 2001, 'Bus Station, High Street, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation', North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, unpubl.

Richardson, J., 2003, 'Knaresborough Bus Station: Archaeological Excavation' Rep. No. 1091, unpubl.

Acknowledgements

Project management

Louise Martin BSc

Report

James Gidman BSc

Louise Martin

Graphics/illustrations

Louise Martin

Fieldwork

James Gidman

Appendix I**Inventory of primary archive**

File no.	Description	Quantity
1	Context register	1
1	Context cards	7
1	Trench sheets	7
1	Site plan	1
1	Watching brief daily monitoring form	1
1	Photographic register	1
1	Black and white contacts	1

Appendix II**Inventory of contexts**

Context	TP	Description	Interpretation
100	All	Dark brown silty clay	Topsoil
101	1, 1A, 4	Mid-grey cream rubble containing mortar and brick	Rubble associated with the construction of perimeter walls and driveway
102	2	Red brown gravel/clay	Deposit formed following the construction of perimeter wall
103	4	Cream grey sand with mortar and gravel	Demolition layer possibly relating to deposit 101
104	4	Dark red brown sandy silt	? Natural
105	5	Mid-brown silty clay containing brick and sandstone fragments	Levelling deposit
106	5	Dark brown grey loamy silty clay	Degraded, buried topsoil

Appendix III

Standard Written Scheme of Investigation for Limited Recording

(North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit)



North

Yorkshire County Council

**STANDARD WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI)
FOR LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING (“WATCHING BRIEF”)**

- 1 The purpose of the work is to record and recover archaeological remains which are:
 - a) affected by proposed development only to a limited and clearly defined extent,
 - b) not available or susceptible to standard area excavation techniques, or
 - c) of limited importance or potential.The work should not require the construction programme or development to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.
- 2 The WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements needed to comply with an archaeological planning condition or obligation. The scheme does **not** comprise a full specification or Bill of Quantities, and the County Council makes **no** warranty that the works are fully or exactly described. No work on site should commence until the implementation of the scheme is the subject of a standard ICE Conditions of Contract for Archaeological Investigation or similar agreement between the Developer and the Archaeologist.
- 3 The Archaeologist should notify by letter or e-mail the County Archaeology Service (archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk) at least 10 working days in advance of the start of work on site.
- 4 The removal of overburden (that is vegetation, turf, loose stones, rubble, made ground, Tarmac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) should be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.
- 5 Removal of overburden by machine should be undertaken using a back-acting excavator fitted with toothless or ditching bucket only. Where materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils (B horizons) or deep, uniform fills of features may also be removed by back-acting excavator but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with archaeological supervision. Bulldozers or wheeled scraper buckets should not be used to remove overburden above archaeological deposits. Where reinstatement is required, topsoil should be kept separate from other soil materials.
- 6 Metal detecting within the development area, including the scanning of topsoil and spoil heaps, should only be permitted subject to archaeological supervision and recording such that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.
- 7 Where structures, finds, soil features and layers of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators notice archaeological

remains, they should immediately tell the Archaeologist. The sampling of deposits for palaeo-environmental evidence should be a standard consideration, and arrangements should be made to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.

- 8 Heavy plant should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until they have been recorded, and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Sterile subsoils (C horizons) and parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision. Where reinstatement is required, subsoils should be backfilled first and topsoil last.
- 9 Upon completion of fieldwork, samples should be processed and evaluated, and all finds identified, assessed, spot-dated, properly stored, and subject to investigative conservation as needed. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. The Archaeologist should arrange for either the County Archaeologist or an independent post-excavation specialist to inspect the archive before making arrangements for the transfer of the archive to an appropriate museum or records office.
- 10 A summary report should 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 catalogues of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings, roads and field boundaries. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally-scaled plans, sections, and 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.
- 11 Copies of the summary report should be provided to the client(s), the County Heritage Section (HER), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works are on or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage. A licence should be granted to the accepting museum and the County Council to use the documentation arising from the work for its statutory functions and to give to third parties as an incidental to those functions.
- 12 Upon completion of the work, the Archaeologist should make their work accessible to the wider research community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>). Submission of data to OASIS does not discharge the planning requirements for the Archaeologist to notify the County Archaeology Service of the details of the work and to provide the Historic Environment Record (HER) with a summary report on the work.
- 13 Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR) information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'. Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. The Archaeologist should inform the client of EIR requirements, and ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.
- 14 The County Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible of the discovery of any unexpected archaeological remains, or changes in the programme of ground works on site. Any significant changes in the archaeological work should be specified in a variation to the WSI to be approved by the planning authority. If there is a need to remove human remains, an exhumation licence should be obtained from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (coroners@dca.gsi.gov.uk), or a faculty obtained where the remains are buried in land consecrated according to the rites of the Church of England.

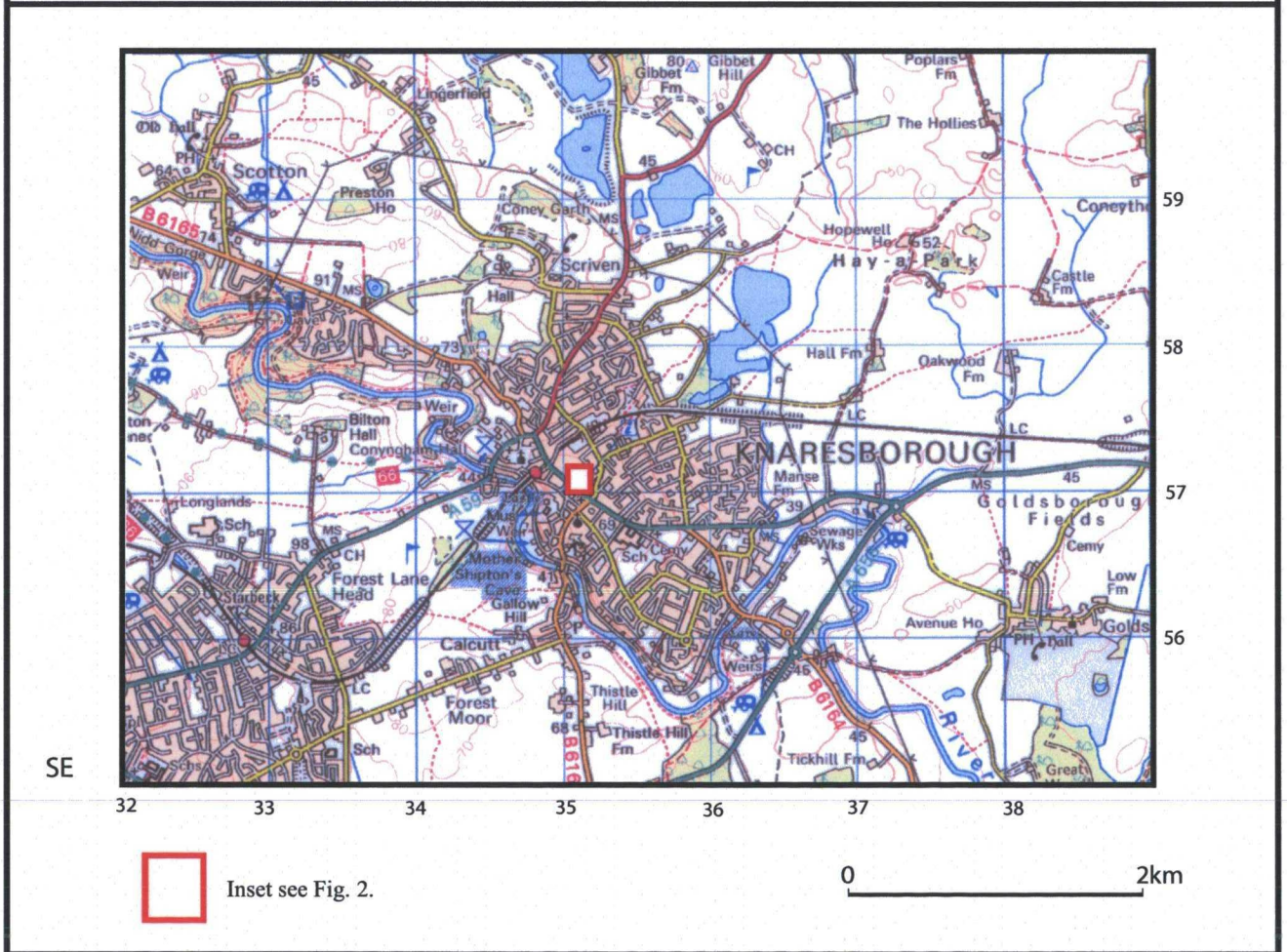
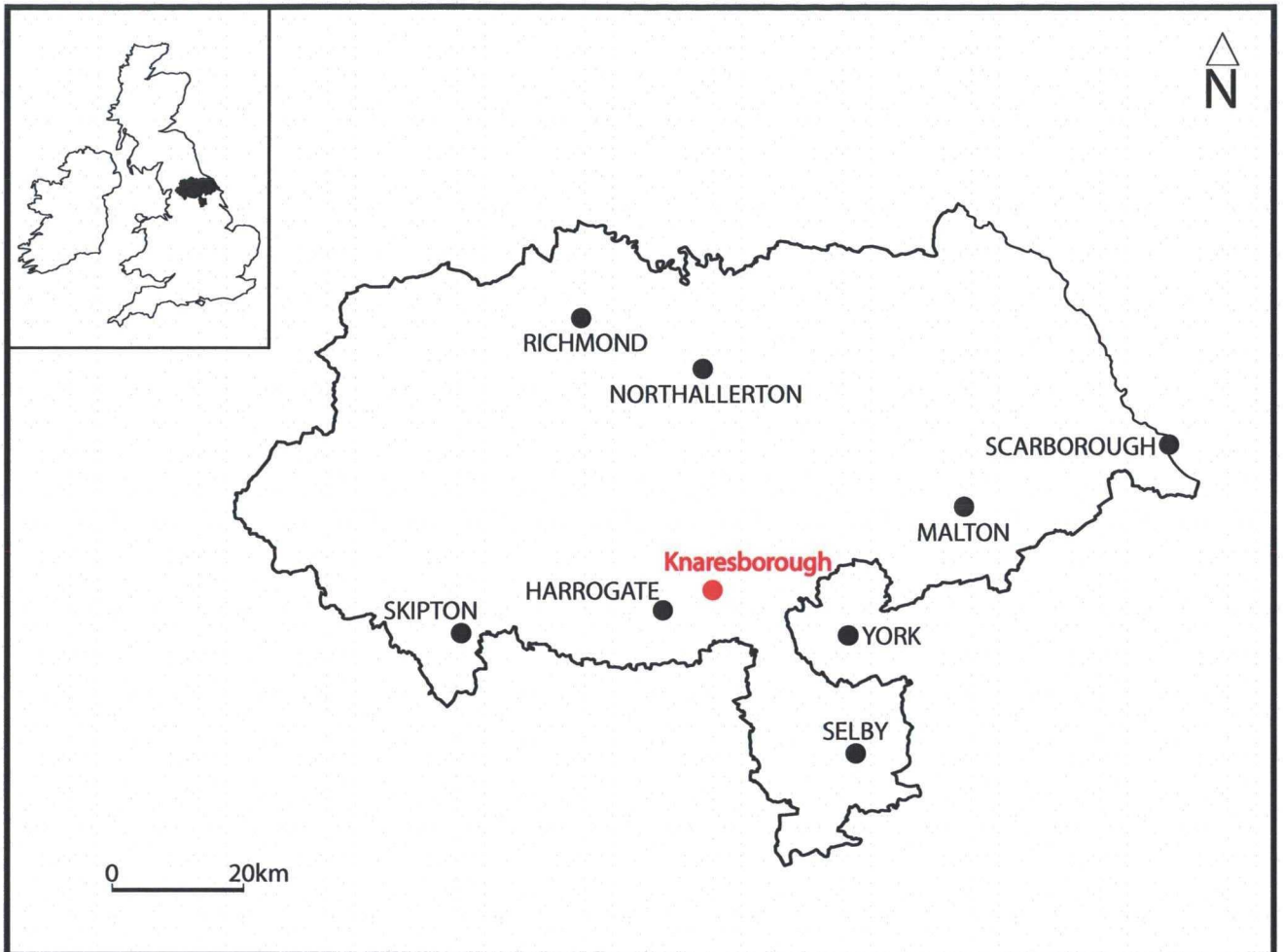


Fig. 1. Site location

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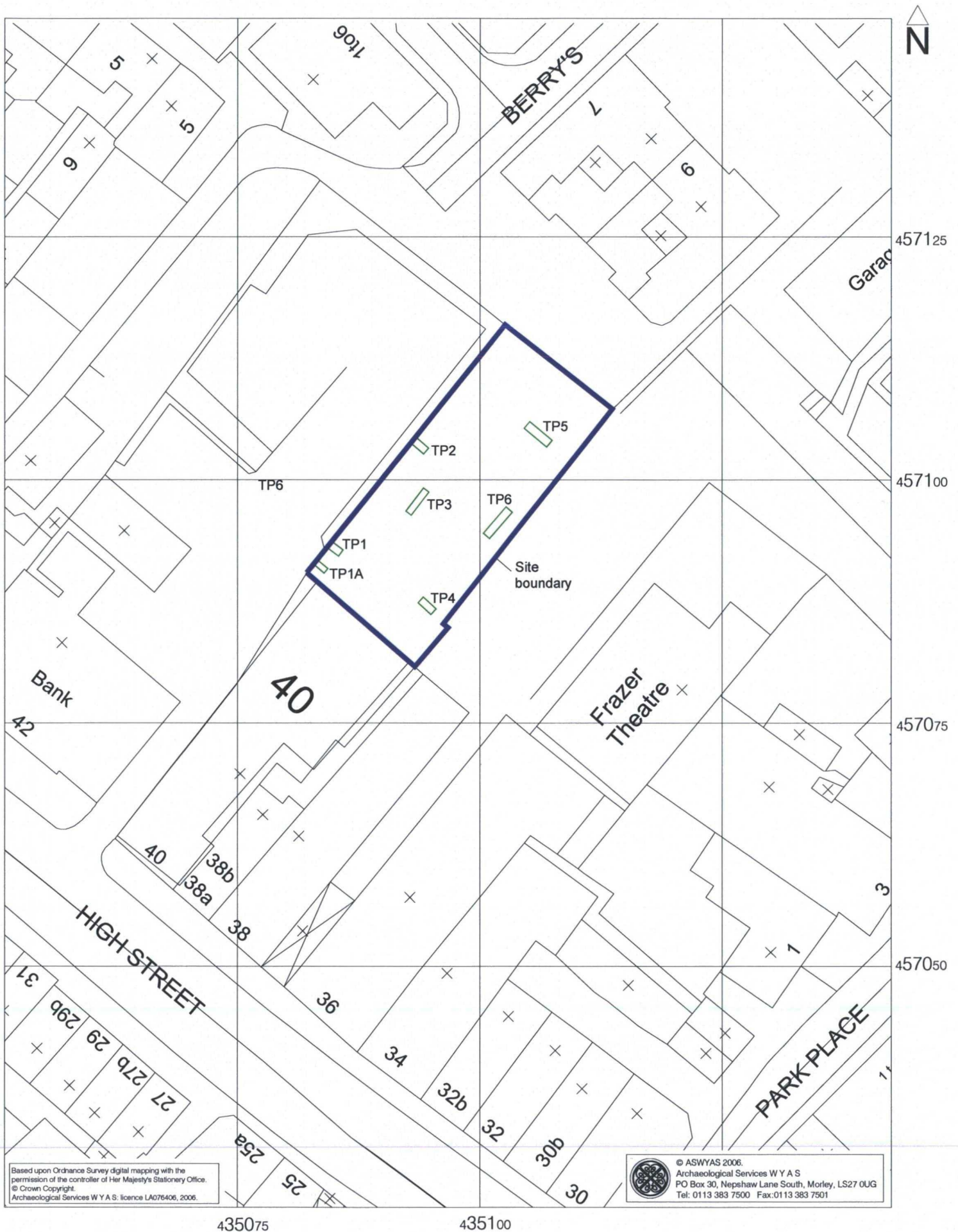


Fig. 2. Site location showing test pit positions (Scale 1:500)

0 25m