

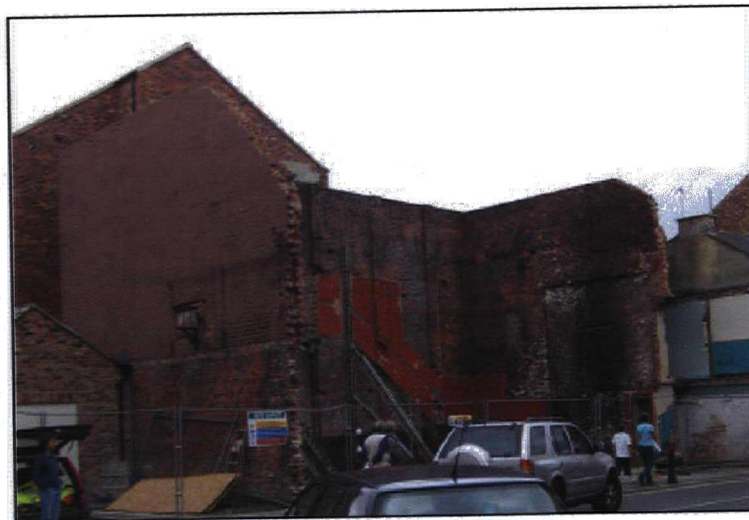
THE BRIGANTIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE



ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the FORMER REGENT BINGO HALL, 3, MARKET PLACE, THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

NYCC HER	
SNY	11187
ENY	3093
CNY	5082/5500
Parish	2452
Rec'd	19/09/2006

A report to Blackett, Hart and Pratt



14th September 2006

N. Y. C. C.	
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
19 SEP 2006	
Pass to	RS
Ackd.	
Ansd.	

THE BRIGANTIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

BRITANNIA CHAMBERS
18a HORSEMARKET
BARNARD CASTLE
Co DURHAM DL12 8LZ



Tel/fax: 01833 630125 Email: enquiries@brigantiaarchaeology.co.uk

***ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the
FORMER REGENT BINGO HALL,
3, MARKET PLACE,
THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE***

In connection with planning consents 05/02349/FUL and 06/00685/FUL

A report to Blackett, Hart and Pratt

Percival Turnbull

14th September 2006

Percival Turnbull, BA, MIFA, FSA

Deborah Walsh, BA, AIFA

rec 19/9/06.

2152 Parish
C5082
C5500
E3093
S11187

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING at the
FORMER REGENT BINGO HALL,
THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE.**

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. On instructions from Messrs Blackett, Hart and Pratt, acting on behalf of Mr Andy Swales, a programme of archaeological recording was carried out at the site of the former Regent Bingo Hall, Thirsk. Fieldwork was carried out over a series of visits between February and September, 2006. The site is located at 3, Market Place Thirsk (Fig. 1).
2. A programme of archaeological works was required by a condition attached to the planning consents (05/02349/FUL and 06/00685/FUL), in view of the site's position close to the centre of the mediaeval core of the market town of Thirsk, and on the margin of the mediaeval castle mound. Mediaeval features and deposits have been recorded in the immediate vicinity.
3. Because of several changes to the programme of building works, and to the foundation design of the proposed redevelopment, it was difficult to follow an agreed archaeological specification. The recording strategy, therefore, of necessity developed in an *ad hoc* fashion: to this end, close communication was maintained throughout between this Practice and the office of the County Archaeologist.
4. The existing building on the site appears to have been of early 20th century date, and to have been built originally as a cinema. It was without particular architectural or historical merit.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

5. Initial work by the developer involved stripping-out the interior of the building: an initial visit at this stage revealed the presence of a basement, almost 2.5 metres deep, running along the entire frontage of the former cinema building (Figs 3 and 5). It was immediately clear that remaining archaeological potential of this cellared frontage must be accounted as very low; although in the rearward part of the building, still at this stage under a concrete slab, there appeared to be the possibility of surviving deposits.
6. The decision having been made by the developer to retain the rear (northern) wall of the building while demolishing the rest, it now became necessary to dig trenches which could be filled with concrete to hold the supporting struts for the wall which are visible in Fig. 4: their positions are shown in blue in Fig. 5.
7. It was at this point possible to record the sections of those trenches, which were all effectively identical and of which that shown in Fig. 2 is typical. This is the west-facing section of the western of the two trenches. The deposits present were as follow (measurements are averages, taken vertically down from the top of the concrete slab):

[101]	0-22 cms	Concrete floor slab of Bingo Hall
[102]	22-93 cms	Clay fill, containing some bricks and 20 century rubbish
[103]	93-125 cms	Broken brick rubble
[104]	125-135 cms	Brick floor
[105]	135-160 cms	Clay, interleaved with small brick rubble
[106]	160- ? cms	Dark grey clay soil, containing charcoal flecks, specks of brick and mortar, occasional small pebbles. Limit of excavation was at 165 cms.

8. The interpretation of the sequence seems straightforward. The brick floor [104] represents the floor of a cellar of 19th century or late 20th century date, and the underlying clay and brick of [105] is packing and levelling material for that floor: [102] and [103] are 20th century fill, deliberately levelling-up the cellar.

9. The bottommost layer [106] is of more interest. It does not resemble a deliberate dump of inert material, and is at much too low a level to represent a buried land surface. It does, however, look very much like the fill of a major cut feature and, in view of the position of the trench it is very likely that [106] is part of the fill of the castle ditch, almost certainly at this point truncated by the original excavation of the backfilled cellar. Only a few centimetres of the deposit appeared in section, its upper surface being effectively coterminous with the bottom of the excavated trench. No datable object was found in [106].

10. The level of the pavement kerb immediately outside the site was recorded as 35.34 metres above Ordnance Datum. The floor of the cellar on the building's frontage was at 32.62 m.a.O.D. and the top of the floor slab towards the rear (*id est*, of the recorded section) was at 35.03 m.a.O.D. This means that the floor level of the backfilled cellar would have been at 33.78 m.a.O.D., and that the highest surviving level of the fill of the suspected castle ditch was at 33.43 m.a.O.D.

11. The maximum depth of any further excavation on the site is 1.050 metres below the rear slab (= approx. 33.98 m.a.O.D.). At this level, disturbance would be restricted to 20th century cellar fill.

DISCUSSION

12. The following points emerge from the investigation:

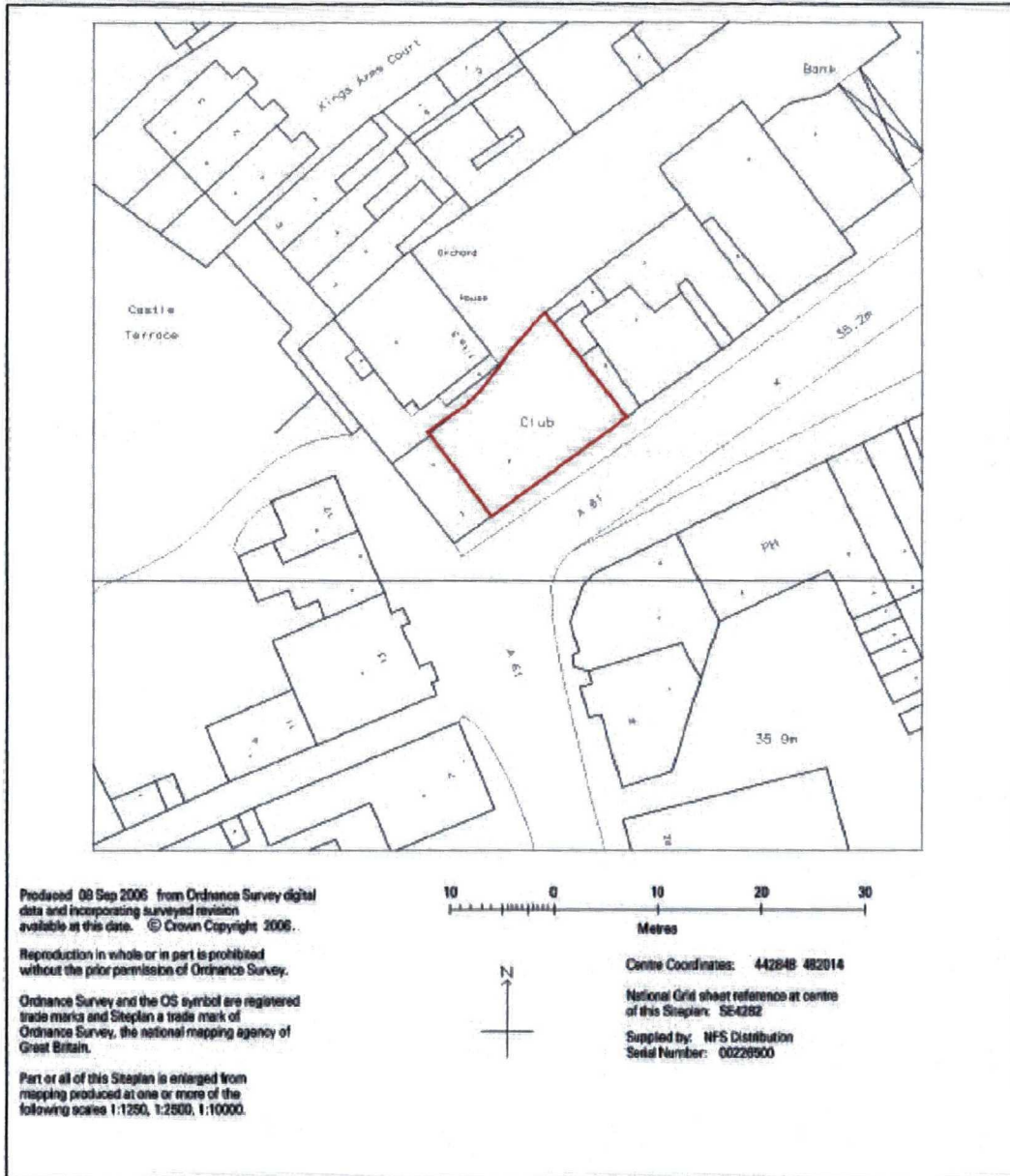
(i) The frontage of the building is deeply cellared. It is unlikely that archaeological deposits will survive below the slab, although there is a possibility of severely truncated ditch fill. There is, however, no plan to break through this slab.

(ii) The rear of the building has also been cellared, but not to quite such a depth as the frontage. This cellar was probably associated with an earlier building on the site; it

has been filled in during the early 20th century, probably at the time of the building of the cinema which became the Bingo Hall.

(iii) Deposits exist below the floor of the backfilled cinema, and probably represent the fill of the truncated castle ditch.

(iv) No excavation carried out in connection with the present development is at all likely to disturb any archaeological deposit.



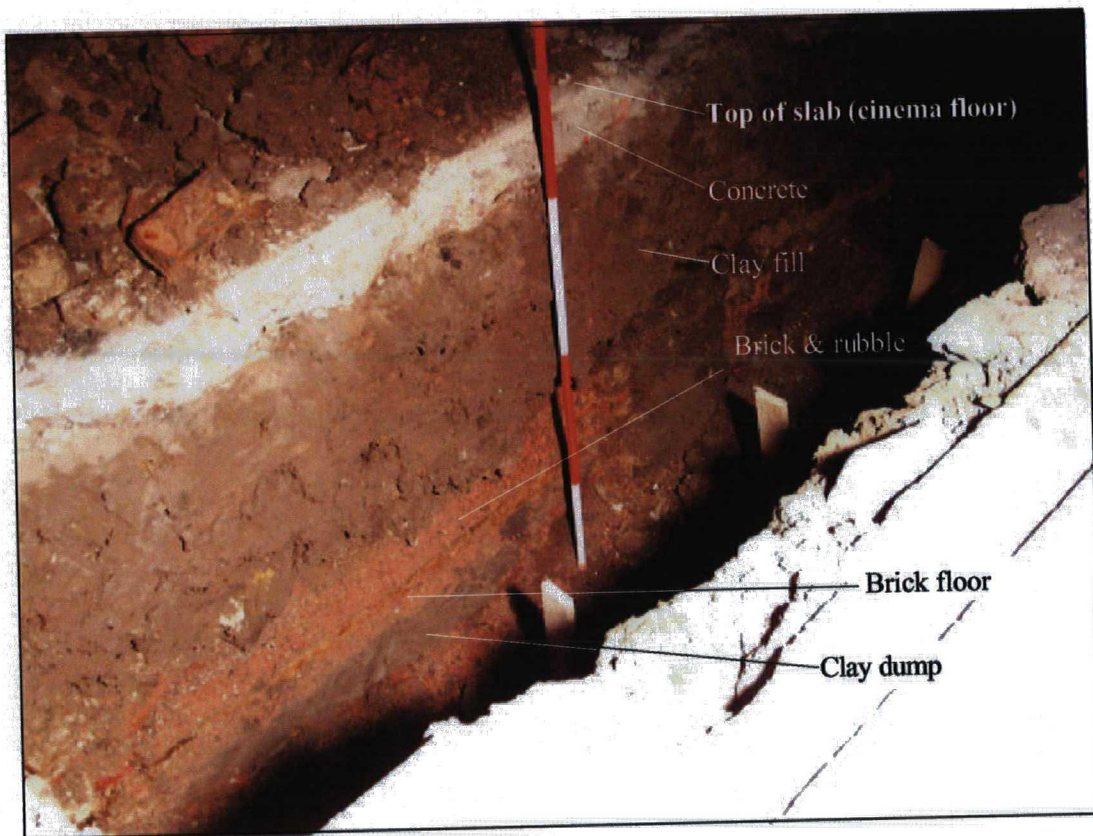
Regent Bingo, Thirsk

Fig. 1

Site location



**THE BRIGANTIA
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL
 PRACTICE**



Regent Bingo, Thirsk

Fig. 2

Typical section



**THE BRIGANTIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PRACTICE**



Regent Bingo, Thirsk

Fig. 3

Cellar on street frontage



**THE BRIGANTIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PRACTICE**



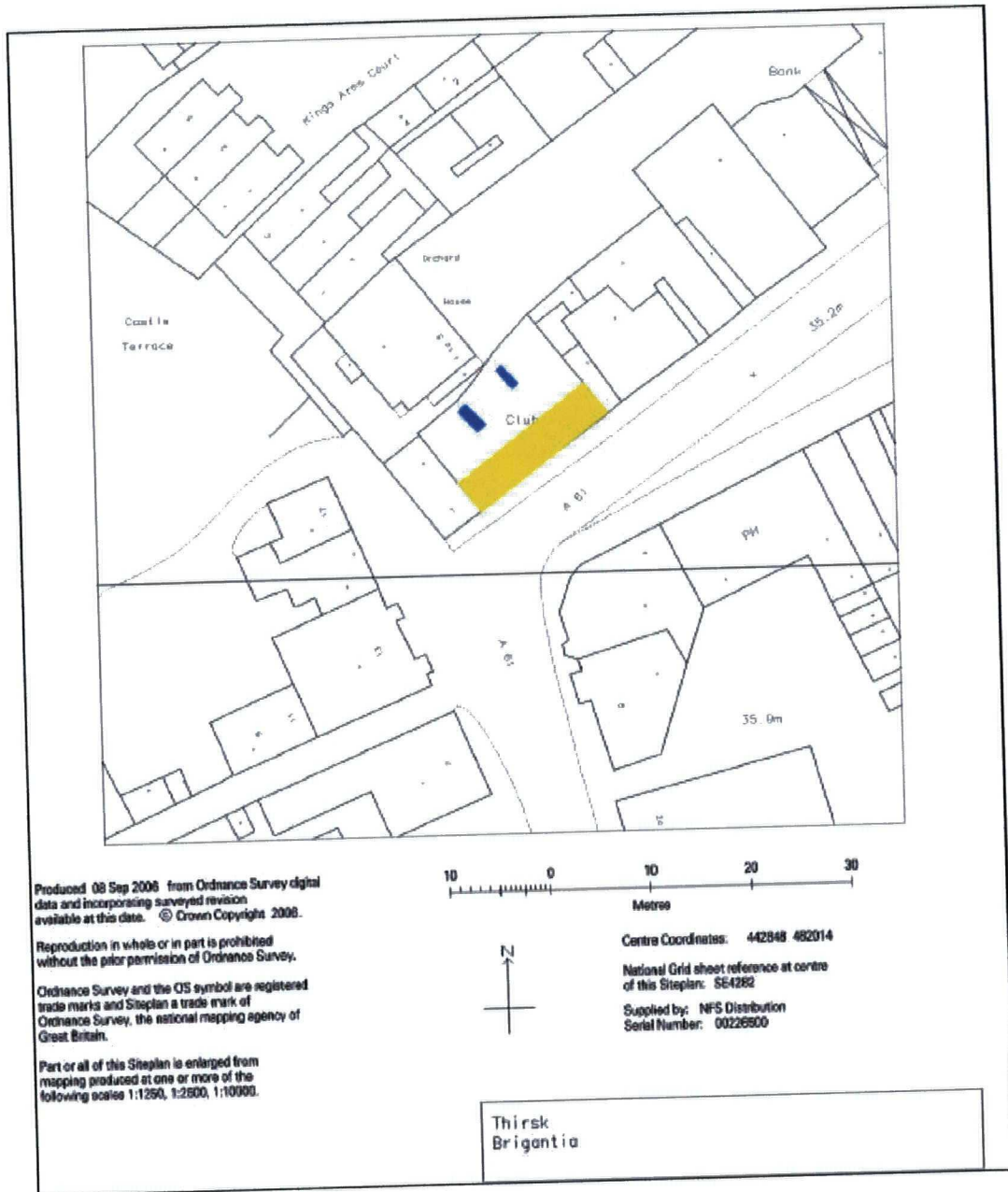
Regent Bingo, Thirsk

Fig. 4

Locations of concrete supports



**THE BRIGANTIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PRACTICE**



Regent Bingo, Thirsk

Fig. 5

Location of trenches (blue). The 'open' cellar is shown yellow



**THE BRIGANTIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PRACTICE**