
LAND TO THE REAR OF 23 FINKLE STREET, SELBY.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OSA REPORT No: OSA07WB02.

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OSA

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Report Summary.

REPORT NO: OSA07WB02

SITE NAME: Land to rear of 23 Finkle St., Selby

COUNTY: North Yorkshire

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 6145 3255

ON BEHALF OF: Mack @ Lawler Builders Ltd.
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TEXT: Tim Robinson

GRAPHICS: Marie-Claire Ferguson

FIELDWORK: Tim Robinson

TIMING: Fieldwork
17/05/07 – 27/06/07
Post excavation & report preparation
07/2007

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PERIODS REPRESENTED: Post Medieval, Medieval?

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1.0 Abstract.

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by On Site Archaeology on land to the rear of 23 Finkle Street, Selby. The work was carried out during the months of May and June 2007, on behalf of Mack and Lawler Builders Ltd. The works monitored comprised of a machine dug raft foundation, carried out under close archaeological scrutiny. Disturbance of archaeological material was minimal due to careful and considerate design of the building foundation. Throughout the excavated area the depth was sufficiently shallow that the bulk of the exposed surface was within areas of heavy truncation. The only archaeological features encountered were a fragment of red brick wall and a stretch of rough hewn masonry, both likely to relate to relatively recent activity on the site. The principle deposits encountered were rubble heavy demolition spreads from the most recent structures on the site.



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 6145 3255)

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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

It is proposed to construct 4 town houses with a parking court. The site lies within the historic core of the medieval town of Selby to the rear of No 23 Finkle Street, Robert Street, Selby.

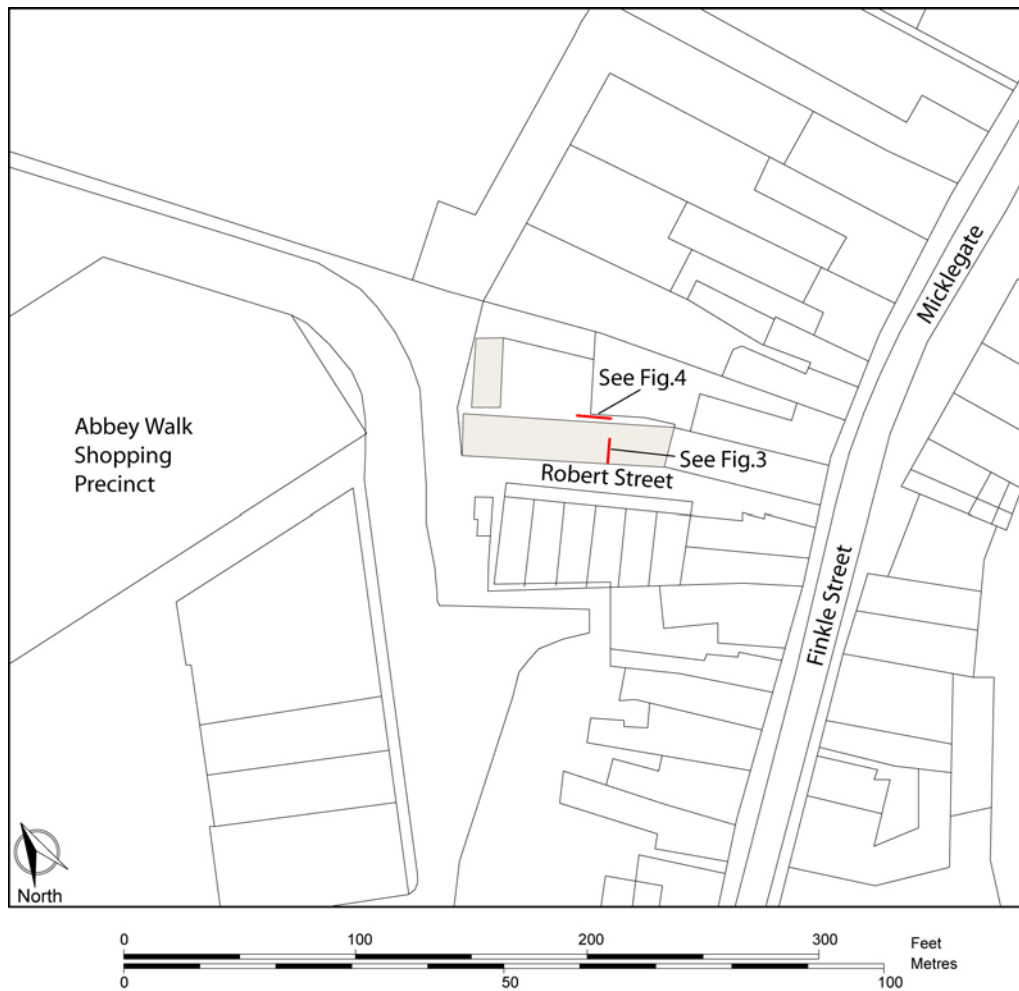


Figure 2. Plan showing location of excavated trench and position of walls uncovered.

3.0 Archaeological Background.

Prior to the Norman Conquest little is known about settlement in the Selby Region. This is perhaps as a result of the fact that the area is located in the centre of what was one of Britain's largest post-glacial lakes, the so-called "Lake Humber". Even after this lake subsequently began to drain into the North Sea, Selby was still submerged beneath the Humber marine estuary. It is therefore in an extremely low lying area and as such not considered to be an ideal settlement site.

The first continuous occupation of the Selby area is therefore unsure. The traditional academic view is that the area was so inhospitable that it was avoided by all early settlers up to and including the Romans. One writer described the Selby area during the period of Roman occupation as "an irrelevant interlude, intractable even to their remarkable technological and road building skills". It is interesting therefore to note that recent archaeological excavations between the north end of Gowthorpe and Selby dam have uncovered evidence of probable Roman occupation. Any development therefore in the Finkle Street area may provide a further opportunity to uncover deposits close to one of the major street frontages and might shed more light on the development of this part of the town.

The history of Selby since the Norman Conquest is well documented, due to the foundation of the Abbey in 1070, although the date at which Finkle Street itself was laid out is unknown. The name of the street may however give us a clue. The word, formerly '*Fenkle*' is derived from the Anglo-Scandinavian word "*vincle*", meaning an angle or corner. The presence of a possible Anglo-Scandinavian connection close to the City of York with its known links to the Vikings, on a river which links the two towns to the North Sea is perhaps not unexpected.

Excavations in 1854 for drainage along Finkle Street revealed traces of solidly built stone structures that have been interpreted as part of a Norman Castle, although this remains unproved.

Recent Archaeological Evaluations undertaken in the vicinity at the Abbey Walk Shopping Precinct and at No 25 Finkle Street have recorded in situ archaeological deposits surviving at a height of up to 5.25m AOD.

4.0 Methodology.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the watching brief. These involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit, structure or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM) which was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey benchmark. A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

5.0 Results.

Excavation for the new build properties and associated bike store revealed a range of modern disturbances within their relatively shallow depth of c1m below existing ground level. The natural soils were not generally encountered within the excavation area. The bulk of the lower deposits encountered were a complex and disturbed series of rubble heavy demolition spreads from the in-situ destruction of brick built structures. This raked material was subsequently cut by a whole range of ceramic drains, gully's and modern foundation stretchers. As a consequence of the intensity of modern activity the archaeological strata was heavily truncated within the excavated depth of the trench.

The natural soils were not generally encountered but, when they were (mainly at the northern end) they consisted of a red brown clay (1007)

A single NW – SE aligned stretch of rough hewn masonry (1014) was unearthed. The masonry took the form of a small wall and was constructed not entirely of sandstone, but with brick and cobble incorporated within. It was contained within a narrow cut [1016] which had been backfilled with mid brown clayey sand (1015). This structure was encountered at an area of the trench below the finish level, and after recording it was covered back up.

Arranged at right angles to this structure and lying just to the south was a fragment of red brick wall (1011). This consisted of a number of reused 2” bricks arranged as stretchers within a shallow cut [1013]. The construction cut was filled with (1012) ashy dark grey gritty silty sand. It was sealed by (1010) a band of hard cream mortar, a remnant of a later floor, itself sealed by (1009) a trench wide deposit of ashy black grainy silt sand and rubble. This rubble rich material was sealed by (1008) a mixed red brown/green sand with frequent rubble.

The remaining sequence of deposits comprised of (1001) a pale loose coarse brown sand and the existing top cover (1000) or to the west concrete (1002). This was only varied in the western most limit of the trench where (1008) was overlain by (1006) a mixed red brown and green grey sandy clay. This had been cut by a large drain [1005] that ran for the entire length of that side of the trench.

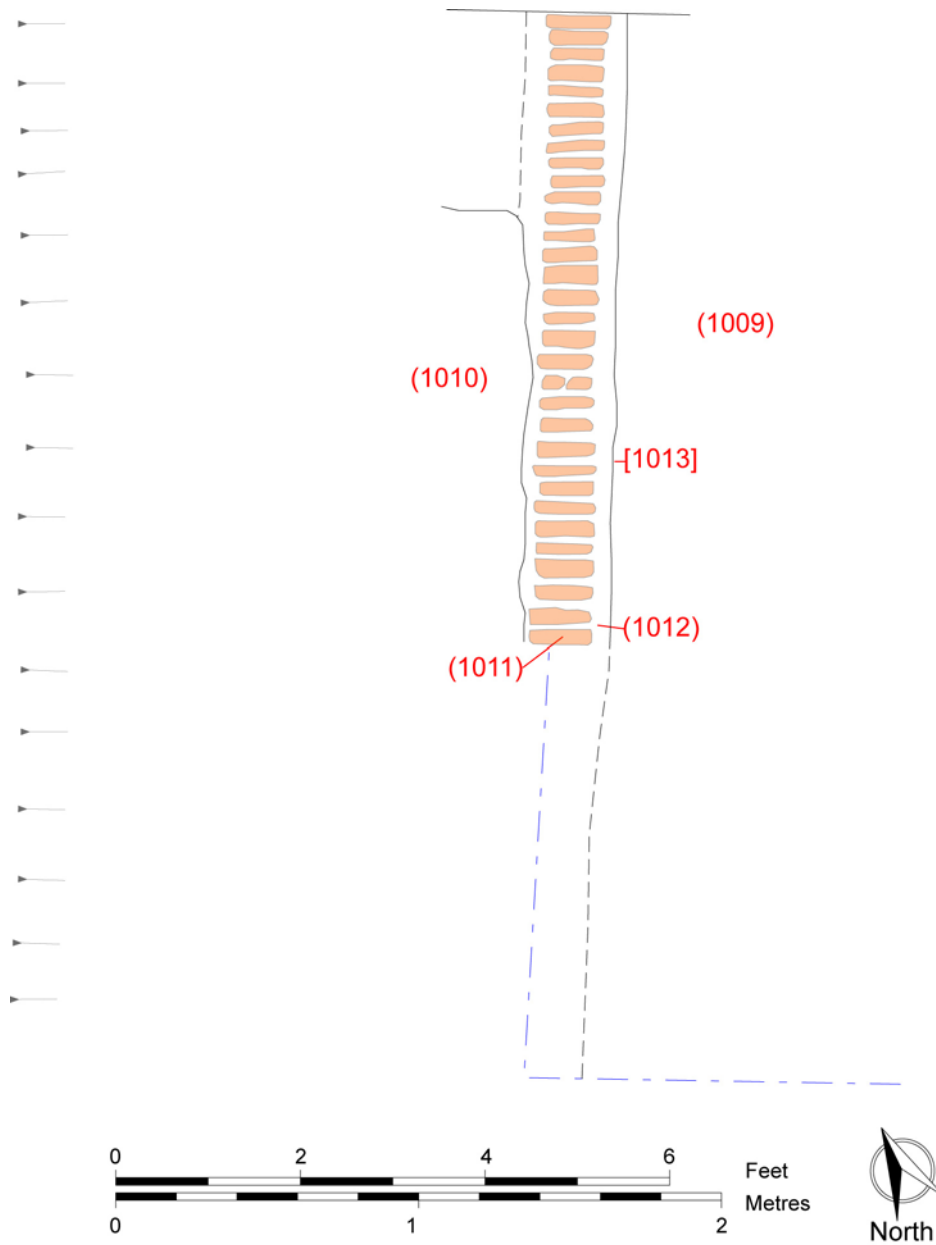


Figure 3. Plan of wall (1011).

7.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context no.	Description	Thickness	Extent
1000	Topsoil and turf	0.20	Tr
1001	Pale loose coarse brown sand	0.10	Tr
1002	Concrete	0.20	Tr
1003	Drain backfill	0.60	Tr
1004	Drain	0.20	Tr
1005	Drain cut	0.65	Tr
1006	mixed red brown and green grey sandy clay	0.10	Tr
1007	Red brown clay	Un-Ex	5m x 5m
1008	mixed red brown/green sand with frequent rubble	0.20	Tr
1009	Ashy black grainy silt sand and rubble	0.10	Tr
1010	Hard cream mortar	0.05	5m x 5m
1011	Ashy dark grey gritty silty sand.	0.10	Tr
1012	Brick wall	0.20	3m
1013	Construction cut	0.25	3m
1014	Sandstone/cobble/brick wall	Un-ex	0.40m x 3m
1015	mid brown clayey sand	Un-ex	0.40m x 3m
1016	Construction cut	Un-ex	0.40m x 3m

8.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

8.1 *Drawing Register.*

Drawing no.	Description	Scale	Initials	Date
1	Wall (1012)	1:20	TPR	18/05/07
2	Wall (1014)	1:20	TPR	18/05/07

9.0 Appendix 3 ~ The Plates.



Plate 1. Photo showing the shallow nature of the raft foundation.



Plate 2. Photo showing the truncation at northernmost end.