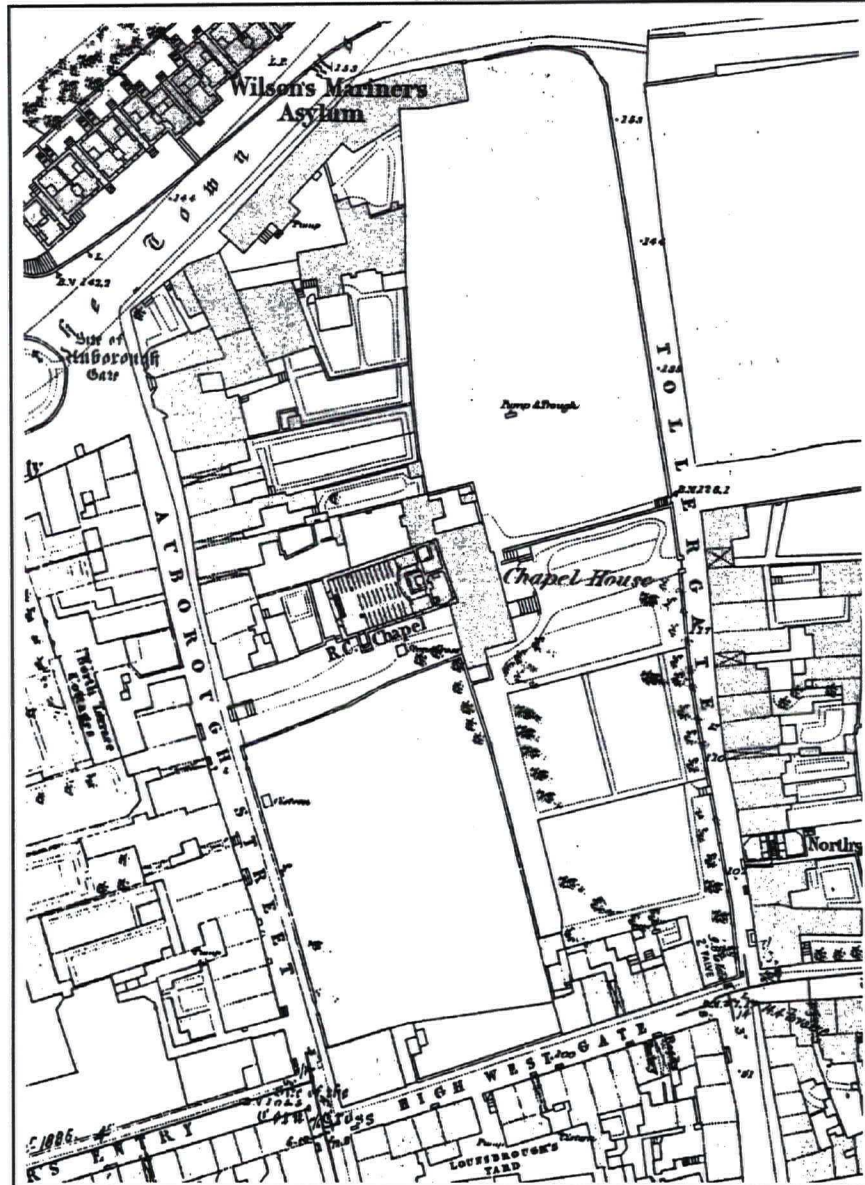


AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT ST. PETER'S SCHOOL, AUBOROUGH STREET SCARBOROUGH

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The site and its environs shown on the 1:1056 scale OS map of 1852

1. INTRODUCTION (figure 1)

Over the period 5th and 6th, 19th and 20th, and 25th and 26th April and 3rd May 1997, the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society carried out an evaluation excavation in the grounds of St Peter's School, Auborough Street, Scarborough (NGR TA 0443 8899; SITE CODE AS/97). The work was commissioned by Ashfield Architects (job architect Mark Bramhall) on behalf of their clients, Scarborough Borough Council Economic Development Unit, and in consultation with the North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit. The evaluation was in response to a condition imposed on a planning permission for a Business Centre and Women's Centre, which involves the extension of the former school dining room building to form walkway and lounge, and the creation of a terrace.

The school occupies a site immediately south of St Peter's Roman Catholic Church, built in 1858, and is bounded to the west by Auborough Street and to the East by Tollergate. To the south there is a substantial retaining wall, below which there are residential properties. The excavation was confined to the Tollergate side of the site (Figure 2) on a grassy slope which falls in a north-south direction. This slope is substantially elevated above Tollergate. This was previously a block of undeveloped land, until the school was extended on to it in 1929 and 1967. This area is referred to as 'the site' in the report.

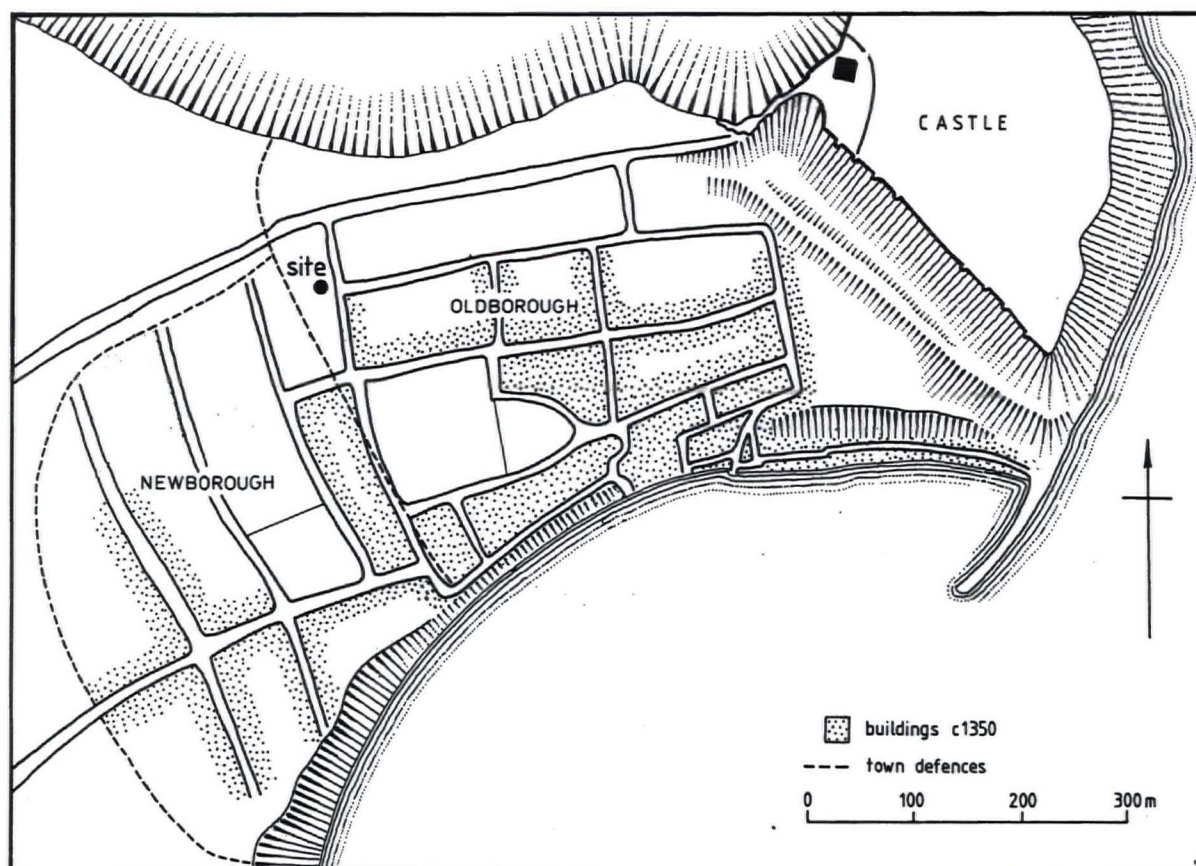


Figure 1: Medieval Scarborough showing the location of the site.

2. *SITE HISTORY (figure 2)*

A Viking age saga recounts that Scarborough was founded by an Icelandic warrior with a nickname Skarthi, who is supposed to have established a fort here around the year 966, the name Scarborough meaning "Skarthi's Fort"[1]. This is probably a legend and the documented history of the town starts several centuries later in the middle of the twelfth century when King Henry II founded a settlement around the time he ordered the construction of the castle on the headland overlooking the south bay.[2] That new settlement was divided between the old and new boroughs, the Oldborough being the earlier of the two and sited closest to the castle (Figure 1). The current site straddles the Oldborough defences marking the boundary between the Old and New Boroughs. A section of the Oldborough defence wall was found just to the north of the school in 1967[3], in an area now occupied by St Mary's Parish House. The actual excavation site is, however, entirely within the Oldborough.

The site forms part of what had been a long, north-south strip of land running from Castle Road to High Westgate (now Longwestgate), shown as undeveloped on Cossins' map of 1725.[4] This long strip was still largely undeveloped when Wood's map was published in 1828,[5] the exceptions being Chapel House (a large house immediately south of the present south boundary wall - later known as Tollergate House) and a terrace of five houses on High Westgate. At that time the ownership is shown to be the Catholic Estate. The upper part of the strip was developed in 1858 when St Peter's Roman Catholic Church was built. The central section, which comprises the present site was undeveloped until 1929 and 1967 when firstly classrooms and then the dining room were added to the school. An Elliott mobile classroom was erected in 1976 on a higher terrace. St Peter's School itself has a complex developmental history which is set out in more detail in Appendix 1.

This area of the town has strong associations with the medieval pottery industry. In 1854 Nesfield uncovered a long series of brick arches believed to be medieval pottery kilns of the Scarborough Ware industry [6] on the site now occupied by 95 and 97 Castle Road. Excavation by Farmer in 1967 produced evidence of pottery kiln waste, and the site of a pottery kiln [7]. Apparently the plan of a phase II kiln was found. It was described as a clay structure built only slightly below the then ground surface 6m long and 1.5m wide with a stoke pit at one end. Part of the clay arch survived. A clay pit was discovered in a second trench to the north in the area now occupied by the mobile classroom.

Unfortunately no detailed photographs, drawings or excavation reports have been published. A site plan published in 1979[8] shows the location of the kiln referred to above, along with an adjacent building, and the second trench containing the clay pit. However, this plan has a 33% inaccuracy in its linear scale so that it has not been possible to properly relate the trenches excavated in 1967 to the trenches excavated under the present evaluation. A manuscript reference on the 1967 building plan refers to the approximate location of the kiln towards the south east corner of the dining room[9]

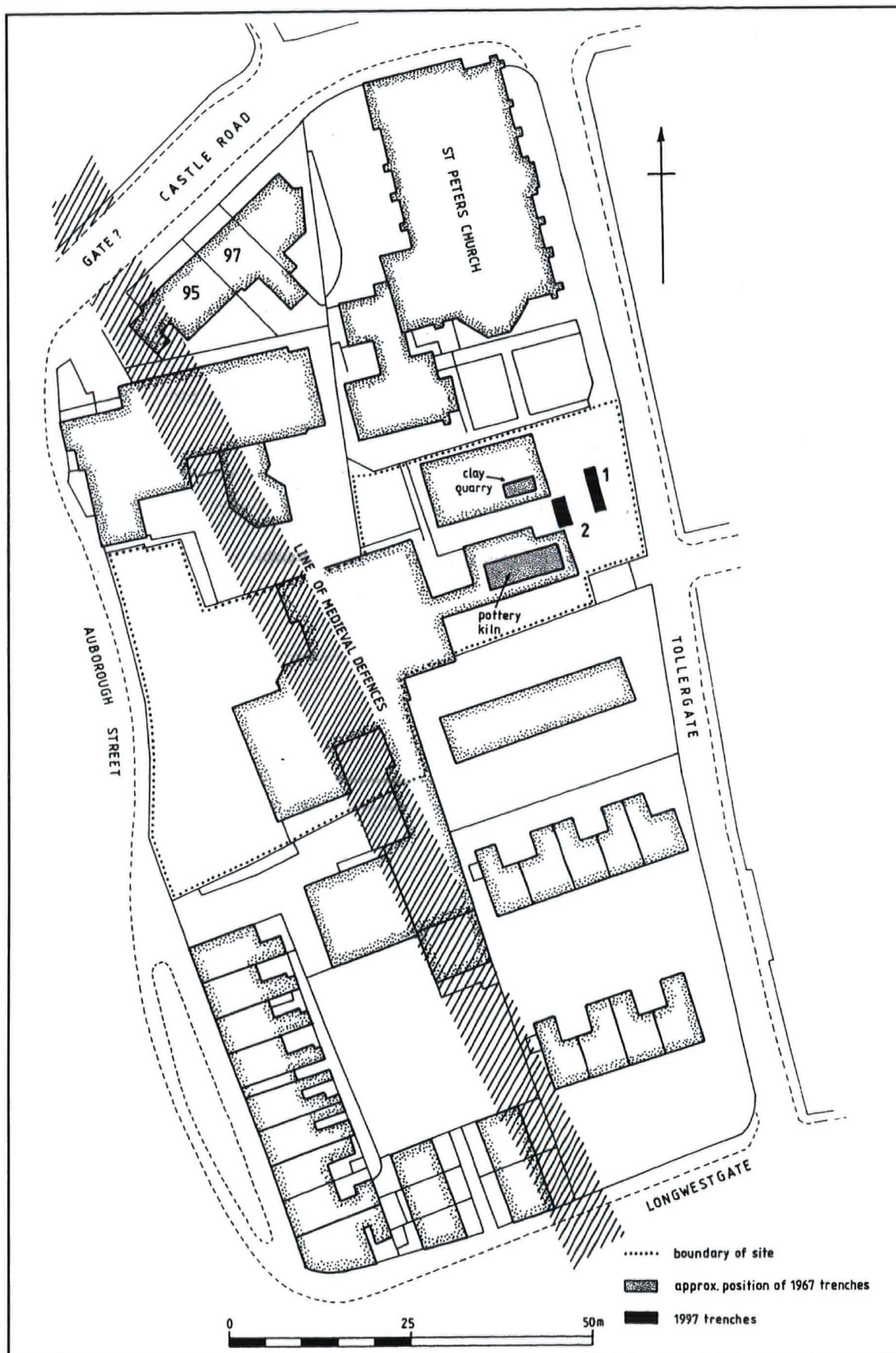


Figure 2: The environs of the site showing course of the Oldborough ditch and location of nearest 1967 trenches

3. THE EXCAVATION

TRENCH 1 (figures 3 and 4; plate 1)

Trench 1 measured 6.0 metres by 1.5 metres and was aligned north-south roughly parallel to the wall forming the boundary with Tollergate. At this point the grassy bank into which the trench was cut, by hand, falls from north to south on an average gradient of 13%.

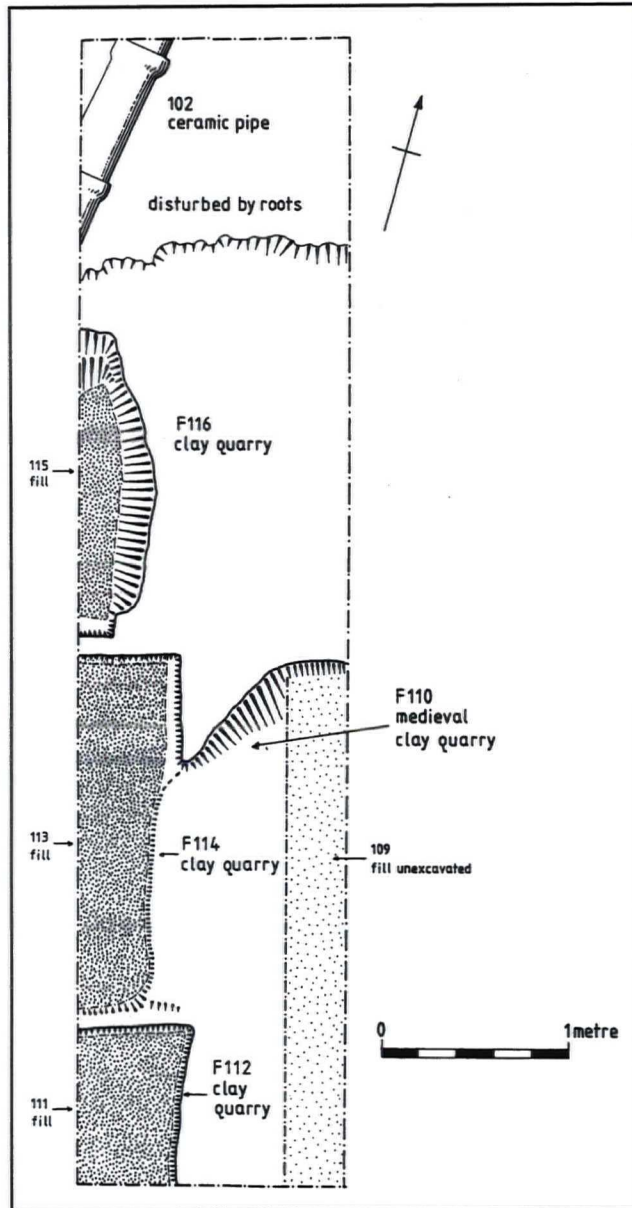


Figure 3: Plan of Trench One

natural further north, and again separated from F114 by a 100mm wide baulk. The profile of this cut was somewhat more saucer shaped than the other two. It seems likely that the top of this quarry cut, and the adjacent natural, have been levelled off at a later date and that at one time F116 was considerably deeper. Its depth and narrowness would perhaps have resulted in its uneven bottom profile during clay digging. The fill of this quarry cut (115) was virtually identical to (111) and (113) in colour, consistency and pottery finds.

At the northern end of the trench natural clay was encountered at an average depth of 1.4 metres (40.20 A.O.D.). The natural clay at this point has a broken, pitted surface which was attributed to a combination of clay digging and tree root activity, a large tree nearby having been removed in recent years. At the southern end of the trench the natural had been cut into on two different occasions.

F110 was a shallow, saucer-shaped depression which had been back filled with a looser clay-based fill (109) contaminated with loam and containing a significant amount of medieval pottery, predominantly Scarborough ware, and charcoal. This feature has been interpreted as a clay quarry pit for the medieval pottery industry, similar to that found by Farmer in 1967.

F110 and its fill had been partly truncated by two vertically cut features F112 and F114, which had been taken deeper and hence had cut into the natural clay. These two features were separated by a clay baulk which had a width of 100mm. Both F112 and F114 were infilled by a stiff, mid-brown soil with charcoal flecks (111 and 113) and overlain by a mid brown soil with clay lenses (108). The fill was not fully excavated in F112 due to the depth of the trench but in F114 the height of the baulk was found to be 340mm. Fill 111 only yielded one shard of pottery, which has been attributed to the late 18th century or early 19th, whilst in 113 two of the six shards are also of the same period, the remainder being medieval.

A third, similar feature F116 was cut into the

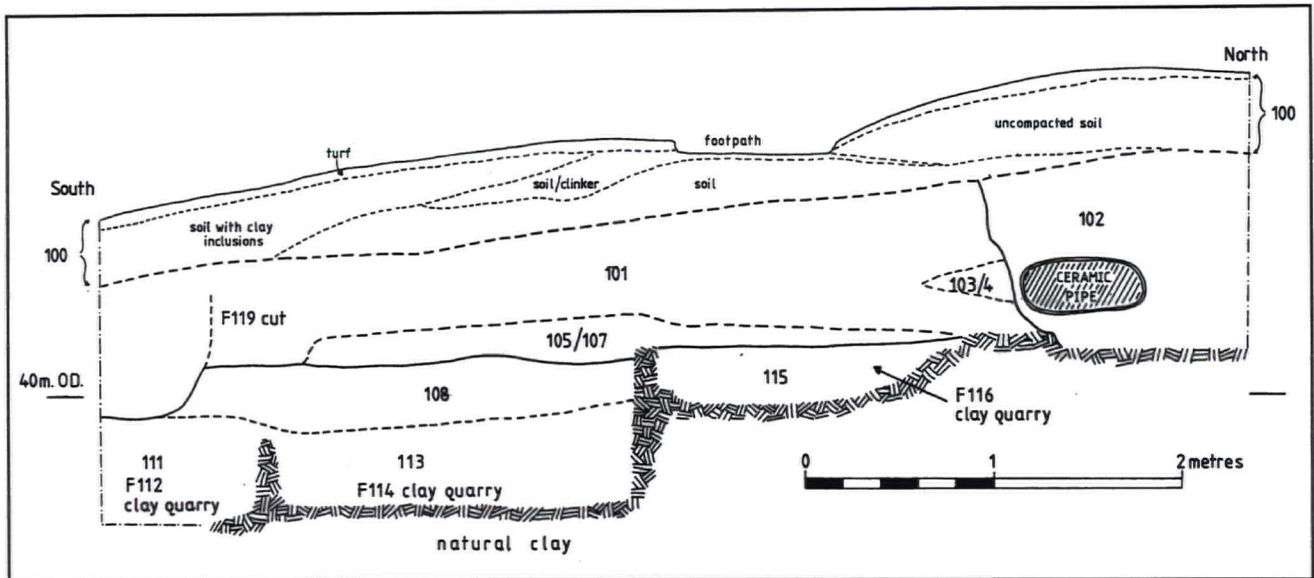


Figure 4: East facing section of Trench One

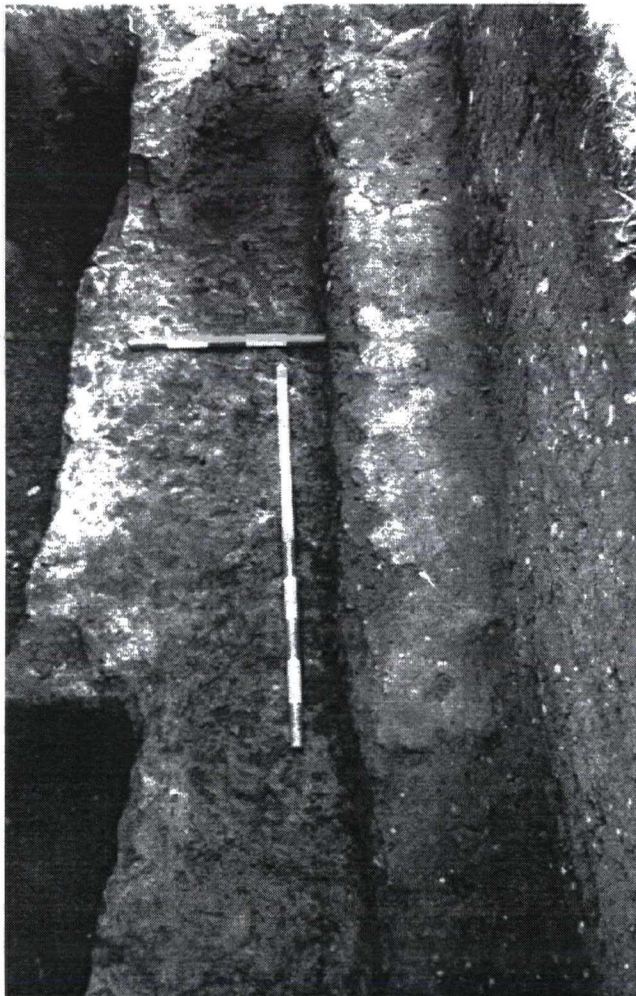


Plate 1: Trench One looking north showing partially excavated medieval clay quarry F110 (right) and post-medieval quarries F112 and F114 (left)

These three vertically cut features were interpreted as clay quarries dug to extract material for brick or tile making. Similar features were found at Paradise House in 1988 [10] and at the former Queen Street Convent in 1996 [11]. At Paradise, it was thought the clay was extracted in a series of parallel trenches. As a new trench was opened, spoil was used to back fill the earlier neighbouring one, a narrow baulk being left to avoid contamination. The quarries found at St Peter's School probably had a similar function. The staggered layout could be a result of trying to maximise the quarry length,, whilst avoiding the contaminated fill of F110, or in order to provide strength to the intervening baulk or a combination of the two.

All four quarry pits F110, F112, F114 and F116 and their associated fills were overlain by a re-deposited clay matrix containing substantial amounts of mostly medieval pottery, including wasters, but also sherds dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Small amounts of furnace or kiln slag were also present. Several tip lines were recognised (101 to 107). This material was interpreted as being re-deposited down slope, from the levelling of the ground to the north for the building of St Peter's R C Church in 1858. The large amounts of medieval pottery, including wasters, is attributed to the presence of waste material from the medieval pottery industry on the church site which had lain vacant for several centuries.

The lack of a former surface under this tipping is indicative of a levelling phase as referred to above before the tipping took place, and presumably in connection with the post-medieval quarrying of clay for brick or tile making.

In the north-west corner of the trench, this redeposited clay matrix was cut by a salt glazed clay pipe and its associated back fill (102), the pipe draining St Peter's R C Church. The similarity of 102 to the deposits into which it was cut indicates that the pipe was inserted fairly soon after the tipped deposits were laid. This would be consistent with the tipped deposits being generated by site levelling for the building of St Peter's Church, the pipe being inserted when church construction was further advanced. The upper layers of the section consist of a firm brown soil tipped from north to south and a looser soil similarly tipped, representing 19th century imported deposits presumably to landscape the site. An intervening 'leaf' of clinker represents the formation of footpaths and a cut F119 of unknown purpose was identified at the south end of the trench.

TRENCH 2 (figures 5 and 6; plate 2)

Trench 2 measured 3.9 metres by 1.8 metres and was cut by hand into a 23.5% slope between the 1960s dining room which occupies a lower terrace and the Elliott temporary classroom which occupies the upper terrace. Natural clay was encountered at a depth of 1.6 metres below the north section ie 39.84 metres A.O.D. A 100mm deep sondage was dug into the clay along the full length of the trench to confirm its natural origin.

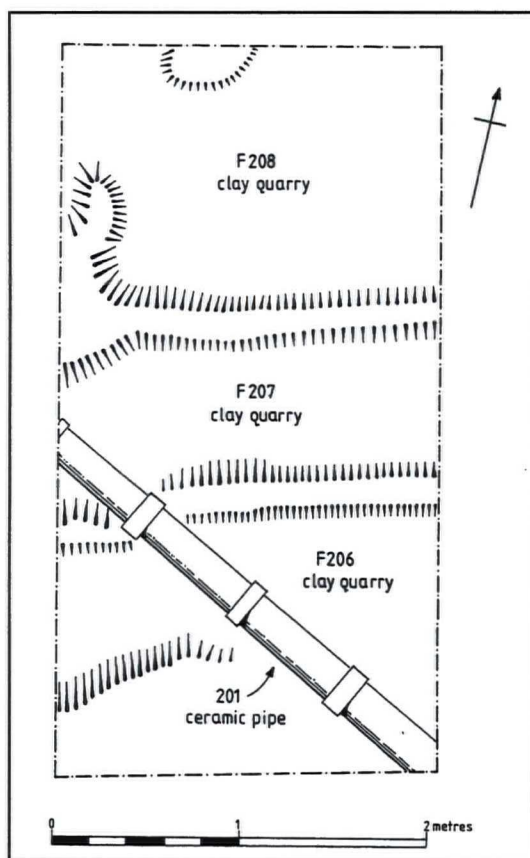


Figure 5: Plan of Trench Two

The natural was crossed by three low ridges crossing the trench laterally, separating cuts 206, 207 and 208, which all produced medieval and later pottery. These features were interpreted as 18th or 19th century clay quarry cuts, similar to those found in Trench 1, but severely truncated due to later levelling, possibly when the adjacent dining room was built. Overlying this was a substantial dark brown fill 203 and 205 with a maximum thickness of 1.0 metres containing significant amounts of pottery extending over the period from the medieval through to the 19th century. 29 fragments of tobacco pipe were present. These layers represent backfilling and slope grading possibly using imported material. At its southern end, the fill is cut by a salt glazed drainage pipe and its associated back fill (201), which is sterile and must date from the erection of the Elliott mobile classroom in 1976.

Overlying both the pipe fill and the tipped layers referred to above were two further tipped layers 200 and 204 again containing substantial amounts of pottery from the medieval through to the 19th century periods, tobacco pipe fragments, metal, brick, roof tiles and 1 fragment of slag. This material must have been pushed down slope during the levelling for the erection of the temporary classroom on the terrace above.

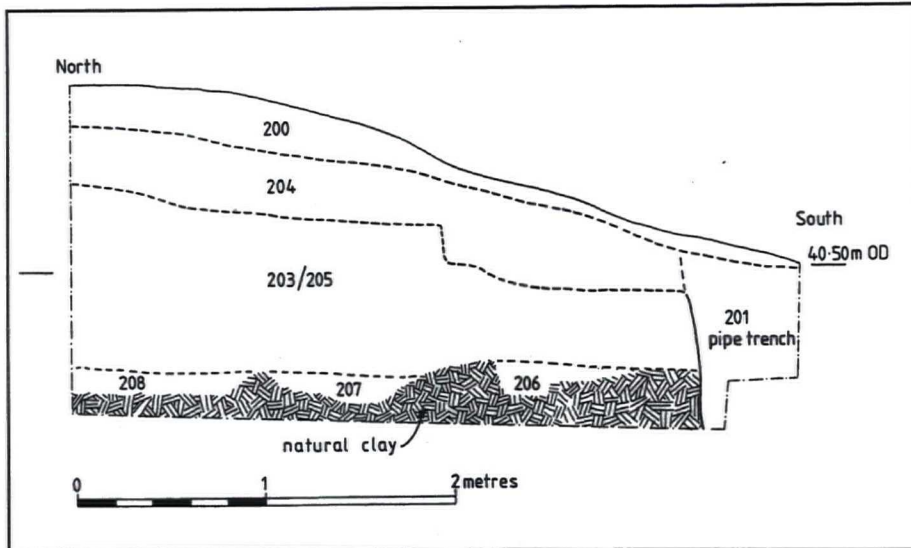


Figure 6: West facing section of Trench Two

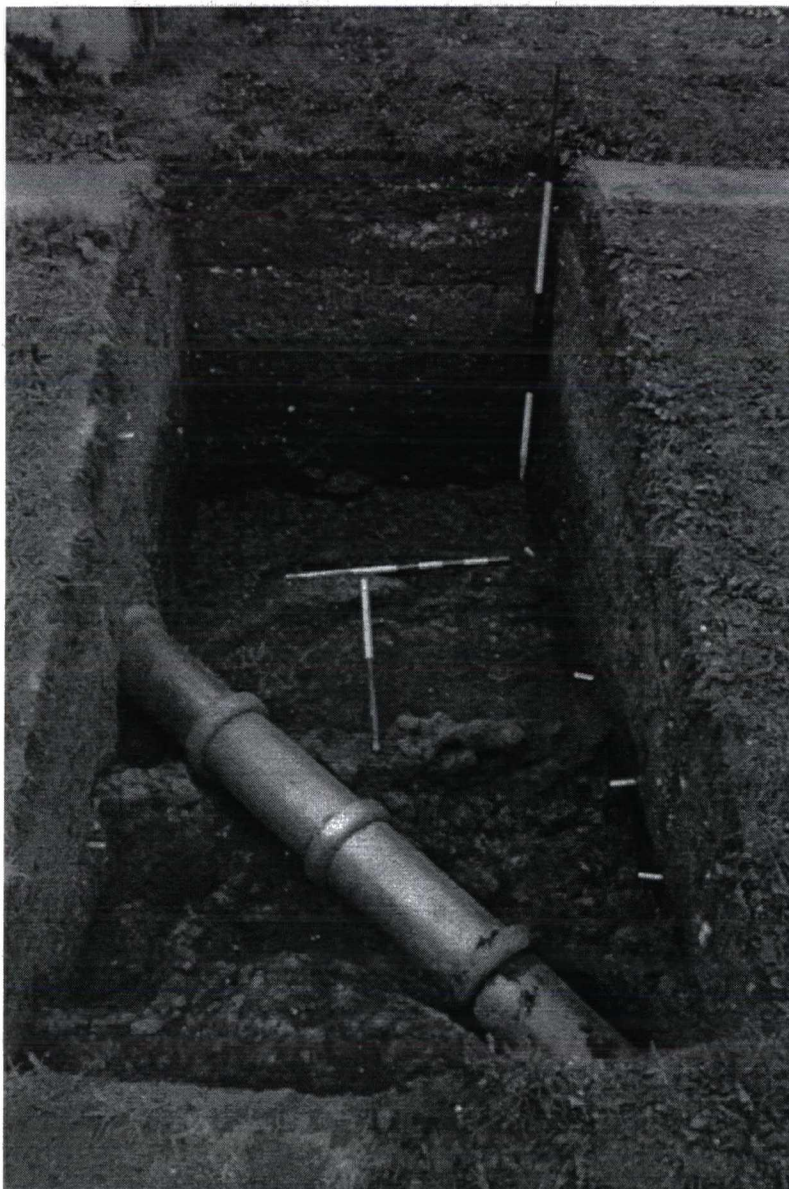


Plate 2: Trench Two looking north showing residual clay baulks separating 206, 207 and 208

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of medieval pottery kilns was found in either of the trenches, the only possible evidence of the Scarborough Ware pottery industry being the clay quarry in Trench 1 and the re-deposited material also in Trench 1 containing a very small number of wasters. Trench 1 adds to our picture of areas of open land within the town, such as Paradise, the Convent site and here being used for clay quarrying in the late 18th and 19th centuries, presumably for brick making in connection with the rapid expansion of the town which was taking place at this period. The following recommendations are made:

1.Lounge and walkway. Trench 2 has indicated that there has already been substantial damage to the archaeology in this area and that little of interest survives. No further action is recommended.

2.Terraced area. The upper retaining wall may be taken down to natural clay without damage to archaeological deposits. Provided the terrace ground level, drains and the curvilinear wall are not taken lower than 1.2 metres below existing ground level this will not cause damage to archaeology. If it is intended to go below this level a watching brief should be maintained.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The excavation was arranged in association with Mark Bramhall of Ashfield Architects and Veronica Fiorato of the NYCC Heritage Unit. The following members and friends of the SAHS are thanked for their hard work in carrying out the excavation expeditiously: Lynn Avrill, Colin Barnes, Martin Bland, Alex Charles, Kay Dunderdale, Chris Evans, Danny Ferguson, Ron Lewis, Carolyn Milner, Vanessa Milner, Dan Normandale, Mike Horncastle, Trevor Pearson, Helen Pickering, Helen Rowley, Ron Storr, Jo Warburton, Chris Williams. Alex Charles is additionally thanked for finds processing. The Department of Technical Services is thanked for access to the building plans used in the compilation of Appendix 1. Trevor Pearson commented on a draft of this report and prepared the drawings. The report was typed by Frances Hall.

6. REFERENCES

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- 2.Curia Regis Rolls, xvi, p.491 No 2482.
- 3.Medieval Archaeology Vol 12 (1968) p.187
- 4.Cossins J, A New and Exact Plan of Scarborough 1725
- 5.Wood J, A Plan of the Town and Environs of Scarborough 1828
- 6.24th report of Scarborough Philosophical Society p.27.
- 7.Transactions Scarborough and District Archaeological Society No 10 (1967) p.36.
- 8.Farmer P, 1979 An Introduction to Scarborough Ware and a Re-assessment of Knight Jugs p.12.
- 9.Town Hall records
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- 11.Pearson, T, 1996, An Archaeological Excavation at the Former Convent School, Queen Street, Scarborough. SAHS Interim Report No 24.

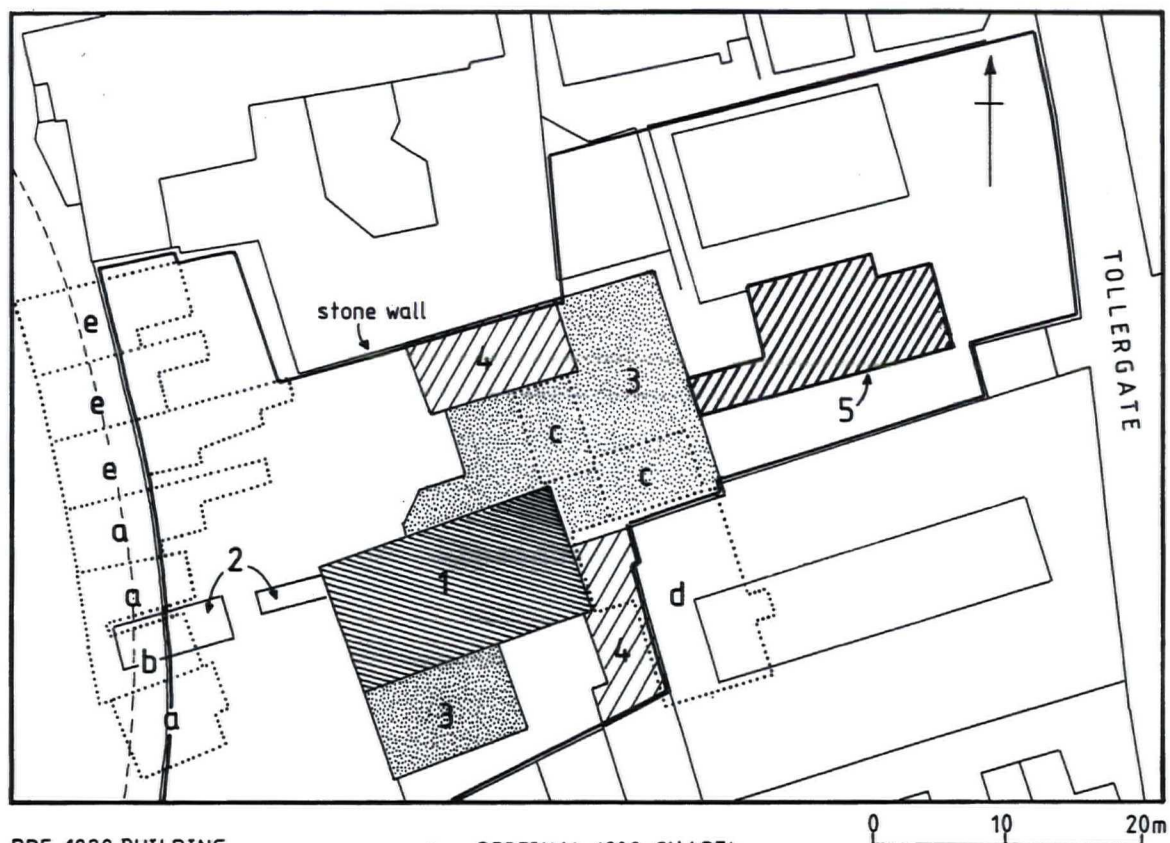
APPENDIX 1 (figure 7)

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE ST PETER'S SCHOOL GROUP OF BUILDINGS

This assessment of the developmental history of St Peter's school is mainly based on an analysis of old maps, principally the various Ordnance Survey maps, and archival building plans.

The core of the school is the former Roman Catholic Chapel built in 1809 on land bought from the late Rev. Cornelius Burgh[1]. It was a simple brick structure 18 metres long, 10 metres wide and 11.5 metres high of four bays on the south elevation and two on the west. There were no windows on the north elevation. The 1852 Ordnance Survey map at the scale of 1:1056 shows the interior of public buildings, and this shows three lines of pews separated by two aisles. Apparently about 400 persons could be seated[2].

The chapel became a Roman Catholic School after St Peter's Roman Catholic Church was built in 1858. The 1892 Ordnance Survey map shows the western part (about 7 metres long) for 'infants'; the rear 11 metres 'boys and girls' ie juniors.



PRE 1828 BUILDING	1 ORIGINAL 1809 CHAPEL
a demolished pre 1892	2 ADDED 1916 DEMOLISHED 1957
b demolished 1916	3 ADDED 1929
c demolished 1929	4 ADDED 1957
d demolished pre 1939	5 ADDED 1967
e demolished pre 1957	

Figure 7: Map showing the development of the St Peter's School site 1828-1976 (outline of present site shown in bold)

Prior to 1892, two houses on Auborough Street were demolished to provide a better yard and access. Outside toilet blocks were added in 1916 when two further houses on Auborough Street were demolished. These Auborough Street houses were pre 1828. Substantial additions were made in 1929 of three classrooms (one to the south) and a practical room. Although the windows of the chapel were altered, the building could still be distinguished rising above the additions, as it can to this day.

Toilet block and cloakroom additions were made in 1957 when the 1916 century outside facilities were demolished to make way for road widening in Auborough Street. By this time three further Auborough Street houses had been demolished, as had Tollergate House. At this time the school yard was extended northwards through a stone wall which was a pre 1828 structure, probably pre 1725 and possibly a medieval terracing wall. The north wall of one of the 1957 extensions is on the line of this wall, although it is not clear whether the 1957 wall replaces the earlier one, or abuts it.

Should the modifications to the building in this area involve taking down this later wall, then investigations should take place of what remains of the stone wall and its age and to record it.

In 1967 a dining room extension was built, and the final phase of development was an Elliott mobile classroom built in 1976 . Trench 2 is sited between these two buildings.

Notes

1. Hinderwell T, 1832 The History of Scarborough 3rd edition p162
2. Headley C, 1890 Memorials of Old Scarborough