

PLATE 5



The remains of a late medieval cobble yard surface and a contemporary section of magnesian limestone walling.

Wall B

Type: YARD BOUNDARY: STRUCTURAL
Alignment: north / south

Fabric: brick
Features: none
Finish: plastered

Demolished: yes
Related to: wall A

Pit No: 1
Fig. No: 2
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: -

Description:

This wall has survived as an interruption in the regular coursing of Wall A, the fabric of this wall which matched the clamp brick fabric of Wall A, and was identified within the eastern extent of the elevation of this wall. The wall was found to be keyed into Wall A and aligned north south indicating that it may well have functioned as a ground floor partition wall that was situated within a brick structure that had previously occupied the eastern extent of the yard area.

Inspection of the foundations of this wall during the excavation of the underpinning pits revealed that the wall was constructed on shallow brick foundations.

It is suspected that this wall is 19th Century in origin, contemporary with the now dismantled brick walls identified within the yard to the rear and recently exposed during the archaeological evaluation.

Wall C

Type: STRUCTURAL
Alignment: east / west

Fabric: brick
Features: none
Finish: plastered

Demolished: yes
Related to: wall A

Pit No's: 3, 4, 6
Fig. No's: 1, 2
Plate No: 3
Film / Frame No: 3 / 14-16

Description:

This wall had formerly functioned as the southern wall of the now demolished extension to the rear of 4, Fishergate.

This two storey wall had been constructed out of regular coursed clamp bricks bonded by a hard, white-grey coloured lime based mortar. The north facing, internal elevation of the wall was plastered, inspection of the south facing elevation which had previously been obscured by Wall D revealed that this surface had also been plastered. It was therefore confirmed that Wall C pre-dated the construction of Wall D, and would appear to have originally functioned as a partition wall between two interior spaces, belonging 2 and 4 Fishergate.

Inspection of the foundations of this wall during the demolition of the extension revealed that the wall was constructed on a shallow brick foundations.

It is suspected that this wall is early 19th Century in origin, contemporary with the now dismantled brick walls identified within the yard to the rear and recently exposed during the archaeological evaluation.

Wall D

Type: STRUCTURAL
Alignment: east / west

Fabric: brick
Features: none
Finish: roughly bonded

Demolished: no
Related to: wall Di

Pit No's: 3, 4, 6
Fig. No's: 1, 2
Plate No: 3
Film / Frame No: 3 / 14- 16, 19-21

Description:

This wall currently functioned as the north facing elevation of the earliest of two brick built extensions to the rear of 2, Fishergate. This three storey wall had been constructed out of regular coursed clamp bricks bonded by a hard, grey coloured lime based mortar.

The ground floor level of this wall had not been pointed and the mortar used during it's construction had not been scraped flush with the brickwork, this indicated that this extension had been constructed from within the yard to the south and built against but not tied into an existing structure, Wall C.

Inspection of foundations of this wall during the excavation of the underpinning pits revealed that the greater part of this structure was cellared. The clamp brick walls of which were found to extend nearly the full length of this extension, however, the alignment of this subterranean wall did not correspond exactly with rectilinear footprint of the extension. It is possible that this may indicate the cellar pre-dates the existing structure, alternatively it is not uncommon for the ground plan of 18th and 19th Century cellars to be irregular.

The western extent of the structure which was not supported by the substantial cellar walls had been constructed on shallow foundations. These magnesian limestone and water worn cobble foundations were bonded by a hard, grey mortar that had towards the lower courses of the structure been substituted with a brown coloured clay, the foundations were bedded into a 14 cm deep deposit of dark grey brown sandy clay. The masonry incorporated within the foundations was roughly hewn and had not been dressed. Unfortunately no dating evidence was recovered from this structure, the incorporation of 19th Century timber within the foundation work would suggest that these footings are contemporary with the extension.

It is suspected that this the earlier of the two extensions to 2, Fishergate is late 19th Century in origin, clearly post dating the earlier 19th Century brick wall to it's immediate north, and yet pre dating the construction of the secondary extension to the immediate west.

Wall D1

Type: YARD BOUNDARY: STRUCTURAL
Alignment: east / west

Fabric: brick
Features: none
Finish: rough and partially rendered

Demolished: no
Related to: wall D

Pit No's: 1, 2, 5
Fig. No: 2
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: 3 / 21

Description:

This wall currently functioned as the north facing elevation of the second and most recent brick built extension to the rear of 2, Fishergate.

This two storey wall had been constructed out of regular coursed clamp bricks bonded by a hard, white-grey coloured lime based mortar.

The ground floor level of this wall had not been pointed and the mortar used during it's construction had not been scraped flush with the brickwork, this indicated that the wall had been constructed from within the yard to the south and built against but not tied into the existing structure, Wall A.

Inspection of the foundations of this wall during the excavation of the underpinning pits revealed that the wall was constructed on shallow brick foundations that were bedded on edge onto a 12 cm deep deposit of dark grey brown sandy clay.

It is suspected that this structure is 20th Century in origin, clearly post dating Wall D the earlier, 19th Century extension to it's immediate east.

PLATE 4



Detail of the 18th Century external chimney flu.

Features exposed during the demolition works

The demolition of the extension provided a useful opportunity to inspect in some detail the recently exposed west facing elevation of the 18th Century brick built property. The construction of the 19th Century and more recent extension had, unfortunately resulted in a significant amount of disturbance and alteration to it's character. However a small number of load bearing timber beams were exposed together with a external chimney flu, associated with a blocked fireplace.

The box flu had survived subsequent alterations, having been incorporated into the internal first floor space of the 19th Century extension, in conjunction with this the flu had been plastered. The ground floor fireplace which it served had been badly disturbed during recent alterations, but it's size would indicate it served a domestic role. The survival of these features does indicate that the fireplace continued to be used well into the 20th Century, and that the ground floor of the building had originally been partitioned into shop-front and domestic areas, the latter of which may also have contained the original internal staircase, that was later replaced by that stairway recently demolished.

Site Clearance

On completion of the demolition phase of works the greater part of the debris was broken down and utilised as hard core for the proposed structure. In order to accommodate this material an area the size of the proposed extension had to be excavated, and reduced to a level that would accommodate the compacted hard core and bring it in line with proposed floor levels.

PLATE 2



The partial demolition of the former extension to the rear of the property.

PLATE 3



The west facing elevation of the property after the demolition of the former extension.

THE REDUCTION AND REINSTATEMENT OF GROUND LEVELS

On the 26th August 1993 a rectangular area of the yard, measuring approximately 15 metres x 8 metres was mechanically excavated and reduced to a maximum 38.222 metres above sea level. The 65 cm depth of dig was reduced in spits measuring up to 15 cm in depth. The spoil from these excavations was removed and deposited to the immediate west of the site on an area of waste ground. The ground disturbance was monitored at all times by the archaeologist.

The flagged yard surface was lifted, and the Yorkshire paving stone fragments were stored for later re-use. The stratigraphy revealed during this phase of excavation correlated with that previously identified within the hand excavated trial holes. The greater part of which related directly to the construction of brick out buildings and the installation of services during the 19th Century, together with raising of ground levels and associated landscaping.

No evidence of the later medieval activity on the site was revealed or disturbed during this phase of works.

On completion of this phase of works the excavated area was backfilled with the demolition rubble, in preparation for construction.

THE UNDERPINNING OF THE ADJACENT, BRICK STRUCTURE

In advance of the excavation of the strip foundation trenches, three exploratory test pits were hand excavated immediately adjacent to southern yard walls to determine the quality, depth and strength of the wall foundations. The present foundations for this two storey, brick built structure were found to be shallow, insubstantial and constructed on the natural sand. It would therefore be necessary to underpin and consolidate the foundations of this structure prior to the excavation of foundation trenches.

The underpinning operation would be achieved by the hand excavation of a series of interconnecting pits along the line of the existing foundation, upon the completion of the excavation of each pit they were immediately backfilled with reinforced concrete.

The archaeologist was present to monitor the excavation of six underpinning pits.

Each of the sections of the exposed excavation were inspected, the south, east and west facing aspects of which contained a stratigraphy that had been largely disturbed and redeposited during the recent excavations. However, the north facing section provided a useful indication of the buried soil horizons and the nature and types of wall construction.

PLATE 1



The excavation of the former yard surface, revealing the alignment of 19th Century brick walls.

PIT NO.1

Type: UNDERPINNING: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31192 71317

Length: 150 cm
Width: 130 cm
Depth: 200 cm
Area: 1.9 sq m

Wall Types: A, B, C, D

Fig No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: 3 / 21

Description:

The excavation was initially commenced at a reduced size as a test pit to establish the nature and depth of the foundations of the load-bearing wall of the property to the immediate south, and were then enlarged to the above dimensions.

This pit was located at the point at Wall A, B, C and D converge. The area had as might be expected been subjected to a high level of disturbance associated with the construction and subsequent alterations to these structures.

The insubstantial and shallow brick foundations of Walls A and B were removed without appearing in the section of the excavation, however, the foundations of the most recent of the two brick built extensions to the rear of the adjoining property, Wall D were revealed within the north facing section of the underpinning pit. This wall was constructed on shallow brick foundations that were bedded on edge onto a 12 cm deep deposit of dark grey brown sandy clay.

The orange pink coloured sand that has been taken for being the surface geology across the site was revealed at 14 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.803 metres above sea level), this layer was found to be well compacted and had not been previously disturbed.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

PIT NO.2

Type: UNDERPINNING: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31186 71316

Length: 125 cm
Width: 130 cm
Depth: 121 cm
Area: 1.6 sq m

Wall Types: A, Ai, Di

Fig No: 1

Plate No: 5

Film / Frame No: 3 / 1-7, 17-18

Description:

The excavation was initially commenced at a reduced size as a test pit to establish the nature and depth of the foundations of the load-bearing wall of the property to the immediate south, and were then enlarged to the above dimensions.

The pit was excavated on the line of the now demolished brick and cobble yard wall, Wall A, at the north western corner of the more recent of the two brick built extensions of the adjoining property. The excavation was situated within what had formerly been the recessed and blocked, arched doorway within Wall A.

It was therefore possible to inspect the nature of the foundations of both the earlier boundary wall, Wall A and those of the later extension, Wall Di.

The upper level of the stratigraphy had been disturbed by the construction of the boundary wall. The brick, water worn cobble and sandstone foundations of Wall A, the clamp bricks had been set on edge, where as the other materials had been loosely arranged and bonded with a white grey coloured mortar. These foundations were found to be extremely shallow up to 18 cm deep, this structure was bedded directly upon the orange pink coloured sand, a layer that has been identified as the surface geology.

Within the north facing section of the excavation which was situated directly beneath Wall Di, the foundations of this wall were revealed as a single course of clamp bricks, 12 cm deep, the bricks were set on edge and were directly bedded onto a cobble layer that was identified at 20 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.743 metres above sea level).

The cobble surface made up of a single layer of water worn cobbles measuring up to 20 cm in size, the cobbles were horizontally bedded on a relatively level plane. The cobbles were arranged edge to edge with an upward facing level surface. The layer was identified as continuing eastward, uninterrupted towards and butting up to the base of Wall Ai, thereafter the surface reappears within Underpinning Pit No's 1 and 5, however, the full extent of the surface is not known.

This layer is comparable with a similar cobble surface, context 3013 revealed during the excavation of Trial Hole No.3, and as such is thought to be part of a late medieval yard surface.

The cobble surface was bedded into a grey brown sandy clay, a layer that was well compacted and contained a high quantity of inclusions that included sandstone fragments, magnesian limestone fragments, water worn pebbles, charcoal and lime flecking, a single sherd of late medieval pottery was recovered from this 36 cm deep layer. This layer was found to be sealing the surface geology.

The orange pink coloured sands that have been recognised as the surface geology were noted as having been previously disturbed, within the north facing section of the pit, a cut with a U shaped profile was identified. The cut measured 56 cm deep and had a width of 50 cm, it had been backfilled by a single fill of water worn cobbles that were less than 24 cm in size, this high concentration of cobbles was proud of the lip of the cut, the cobbles were suspended within a soil matrix that was indistinguishable from the layer of grey brown sandy clay which also sealed this feature.

PIT NO.3

Type: UNDERPINNING HOLE: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31197 71318

Length: 150 cm
Width: 120 cm
Depth: 210 cm
Area: 1.8 sq m

Wall Types: C, D

Fig No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: 4 / 2-3

Description:

The excavation was initially commenced at a reduced size as a test pit to establish the nature and depth of the foundations of the load-bearing wall of the property to the immediate south, and were then enlarged to the above dimensions.

The pit was excavated well within the footprint of the former extension, the upper level of the stratigraphy had therefore been heavily disturbed during the laying of the concrete raft which supports the greater part of this structure. The concrete was bedded on a 14 cm deep layer of limestone based hard-core. The hard-core was reduced down onto the less well compacted and upper levels of the orange pink coloured sands at 28 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.663 metres above sea level), this deposit has been identified as the surface geology.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

PIT NO.4

Type: UNDERPINNING: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31194 71317

Length: 130 cm
Width: 90 cm
Depth: 150 cm
Area: 1.1 sq m

Wall Types: C, D

Fig No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: 3 / 15-16

Description:

This pit was located at the south eastern extent of the former yard, Yorkshire Paving stones were lifted and removed from this area prior to it's excavation. The paving stones were found to seal a layer of dark brown clayey loam, this layer of buried topsoil measured up to 20 cm deep and contained a high quantity of 20th Century pottery sherds and glass fragments. This layer was reduced down onto an orange pink sand which was found to be highly compacted, and has been identified as the surface geology.

Within the north facing section of the excavation the foundations of the earliest of the two brick built extensions to rear of the adjoining property were revealed. It would appear that the greater part of the extension was supported on a brick cellar the north western corner of which was exposed in section, the cellar had been constructed out of clamp bricks bonded by a hard, white coloured mortar. The depth of the cellar walls was not established from this excavation. To the immediate west of the cellar the remaining structure was supported by magnesian limestone and water worn cobble foundations. The masonry incorporated within the foundations was roughly hewn and had not been dressed. These shallow foundations (up to 48 cm) deep were bonded by a hard, grey mortar that had towards the lower courses of the structure been substituted with a brown coloured clay.

The foundations were bedded into a 14 cm deep deposit of dark grey brown sandy clay.

The orange pink coloured sand that has been taken for being the surface geology across the site was revealed at 54 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.403 metres above sea level), this layer was found to be well compacted and had not been previously disturbed.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

PIT NO.5

Type: UNDERPINNING HOLE: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31189 71316

Length: 120 cm
Width: 100 cm
Depth: 220 cm
Area: 1.2 sq m

Wall Types: A, Di

Fig No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: 4 / 4

Description:

This pit was excavated adjacent to the secondary extension to 2, Fishergate, Wall D1, following the complete demolition of the former brick and cobble yard wall, Wall A.

The upper level of the stratigraphy had therefore been heavily disturbed by the construction of this boundary wall. The brick, water worn cobble and sandstone foundations of Wall Di were exposed within the north facing section and were found to be bedded within the dark grey brown coloured sandy clay that has been identified elsewhere across the site.

A cobble layer comparable with that previously identified within Pit No.2 was identified as running though the north facing section of this excavation at 20 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.743 metres above sea level). This would indicate that the late medieval cobble floor surface may well have in places continued further to the east than previously noted.

The orange pink coloured sand that has been taken for being the surface geology across the site was revealed at 35 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.593 metres above sea level), this layer was found to be well compacted and had not been previously disturbed.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

PIT NO.6

Type: UNDERPINNING HOLE: HAND EXCAVATED
Planform: Rectangular

NGR: SE 31198 71318

Length: 100 cm
Width: 120 cm
Depth: 188 cm
Area: 1.2 sq m

Wall Types: C, D

Fig No: 1
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: -

Description:

This pit was excavated well within the footprint of the former extension, the upper level of the stratigraphy had therefore been heavily disturbed during the laying of the concrete raft which supports the greater part of this structure. The concrete was found to seal the same dark grey brown coloured clay that has been identified elsewhere across the site, up to 60 cm of this layer was reduced down onto a orange pink coloured sand.

The sand, recognised as the surface geology across the site was identified at 62 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.323 metres above sea level), this layer was found to be less well compacted than previously noted, the reason for this would appear to be down to the disturbance of this area of the site during the construction of the cellar at 2, Fishergate.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

THE EXCAVATION OF THE STRIP FOUNDATIONS

On the 30th September 1993 work commenced on the excavation of the foundation trenches for the proposed extension. The ground disturbance was monitored at all times by the archaeologist. On the completion of the excavation of the foundation trench's and in advance of the construction of the extension a machine cut trial trench was excavated at the base of the west facing elevation of the property in order to establish the nature and strength of the existing foundations.

TRENCH A

Type: FOUNDATION: MACHINE EXCAVATED
Planform: Linear

NGR: SE 31192 71317

Aligned: east / west

Length: 14 metres

Width: 110 cm

Depth: 90 cm

Fig No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: 4 / 5-6

Description:

The first of the three trenches to be excavated was that situated to the north of the centre of the former yard area.

The machine cut trench was aligned east / west and measured 14 metres x 110 metres and was to be excavated down to a maximum depth of 38.043 metres above sea level. The 90 cm depth of dig was reduced in spits measuring up to 20 cm in depth. The spoil from these excavations was removed and deposited to the immediate west of the site on an area of waste ground.

The upper 70 cm of the excavated material consisted of the recently deposited demolition rubble and was of no archaeological significance. This overburden was reduced down onto the surface geology, the interface down onto these orange pink sands had been heavily impacted and contaminated by the spread of the demolition rubble. The consistency and make up of the rubble spread made the sections of the trench unstable and prone to collapse. Consequently the lower levels of stratigraphy that had been previously revealed within the hand excavated trial holes, were not identified.

The pink orange coloured sand, recognised as the surface geology across the site was identified at 75 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.193 metres above sea level).

Two sherds of a late medieval roof furniture were recovered as unstratified material from the spoil of this trench excavation. The coarse dark grey fabric of this fired clay object had been originally of an zoomorphic form. A small assemblage of late 18th Century bottle glass and 19th Century pottery and butchered bone fragments were recovered from these excavations.

TRENCH B

Type: FOUNDATION: MACHINE EXCAVATED
Planform: Linear

NGR: SE 31192 71317

Aligned: north / south

Length: 680 cm
Width: 100 cm
Depth: 85 cm

Fig No: 1
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: 4 / 7-9

Description:

The second of the three trenches to be excavated was situated to the west of the centre of the former yard area.

The machine cut trench was aligned north / south and measured 6.80 metres x 1 metres and was excavated down to a maximum depth of 38.093 metres above sea level. The 85 cm depth of dig was reduced in spits measuring up to 20 cm in depth. The spoil from these excavations was removed and deposited to the immediate west of the site on an area of waste ground.

The upper 50 cm of the excavated material consisted of the recently deposited demolition rubble and was of no archaeological significance. This overburden was reduced down onto the surface geology, the interface down onto these orange pink sands had been heavily impacted and contaminated by the spread of the demolition rubble. The consistency and make up of the rubble spread made the sections of the trench unstable and prone to collapse.

The east facing section of the excavation had not been subjected to the disturbance associated with the earlier building works, but had been disturbed by the intense and prolific tree root activity of a mature Sycamore tree.

The stratigraphy revealed within this section was dominated by a substantial deposit of topsoil / garden soil measuring up to 45 cm deep, this layer contained a high quantity of 19th and 20th Century glass and pottery fragments.

The topsoil was found to seal a 10 cm deep deposit of grey brown coloured sandy clay, a soil similar in every respect to that identified within the preceding excavations, and that has previously been found to contain late medieval material. No finds or archaeological features were identified within this layer.

The orange pink coloured sand, recognised as the surface geology across the site was identified at 55 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.393 metres above sea level).

TRENCH C

Type: FOUNDATION: MACHINE EXCAVATED
Planform: Linear

NGR: SE 31192 71317

Aligned: east / west

Length: 15 metres
Width: 100 cm
Depth: 90 cm

Fig No: 1
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: -

Description:

The last of the three foundation trenches to be excavated was situated adjacent to and running parallel with the Walls D and Di and butting to the recently strengthened concreted foundations of these two walls.

The machine cut trench was aligned east west measured 15 metres x 1 metre and was excavated down to a maximum depth of 38.043 metres above sea level. The 90 cm depth of dig was reduced in spits measuring up to 15 cm in depth. The spoil from these excavations was removed and deposited to the immediate west of the site on an area of waste ground.

The trench was situated in an area that had been subjected to a high level of disturbance associated the machine excavation of this area of the site, which reduced the ground level by up to 60 cm, the area of dig was then backfilled with demolition rubble. The upper levels of stratigraphy within this trench were therefore of no archaeological significance.

The substantial layer of overburden was reduced down onto the surface geology, which was identified at 55 cm below the former yard surface (at 38.393 metres above sea level), the interface down onto these orange pink sands had been heavily impacted and contaminated by the spread of the demolition rubble.

A small assemblage of late 18th Century bottle glass and 19th Century pottery and butchered bone fragments were recovered from these excavations.

TRENCH D

Type: TRIAL: MACHINE EXCAVATED
Planform: Linear

NGR: SE 31198 71319

Aligned: north / south

Length: 4 metres
Width: 60 cm
Depth: 120 cm

Fig No: 1
Plate No: -
Film / Frame No: -

Description:

The trial trench was excavated as a conclusion to the ground disturbance works in an attempt to understand and assess the quality and strength of the foundations of the west facing elevation of 4, Fishergate.

The machine cut trench was aligned north south and measured 4 metres x 60 cm and was excavated down to a maximum depth of 37.743 metres above sea level. The 120 cm depth of dig was reduced in spits measuring up to 10 cm in depth. The spoil from these excavations was removed and deposited to the immediate west of the site on an area of waste ground.

The trench was situated in an area that had been subjected to a high level of disturbance associated with foundation works and the varying floor levels of previous extensions. The upper levels of stratigraphy within this trench were therefore of no archaeological significance. Approximately 80 cm of overburden was reduced down onto the surface geology, which was identified at 85 cm below the former floor surface (at 38.343 metres above sea level).

Within opposing east and west facing sections of this trench a total of four east west aligned brick foundation walls were identified, these structures were insubstantial and their location correlated with the ground floor plan and the partition walls within the recently demolished extension.

At the southern extent of the trench within it's west facing section a magnesian limestone wall was identified, Wall E.

No finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this underpinning pit.

Wall E

Type: STRUCTURAL

Alignment: east / west

Fabric: magnesian limestone

Features: none

Finish: rough

Related to: wall Ai, context 1024

Demolished: yes

Trial Trench No: 1

Fig. No: 1

Plate No: -

Film / Frame No: -

Description:

This wall was identified during the excavation of the trial trench at the eastern extent of the site at the base of the west facing elevation of 4, Fishergate. This surviving fragment of magnesian limestone foundation walling was four courses high and two courses deep, measuring 70 cm x 30 cm.

Inspection of these foundations revealed that the stonework was roughly hewn into sub-rectangular blocks measuring 25 cm x 14 cm x 15 cm, and bonded with a dark grey brown coloured sandy clay. The foundations were bedded directly onto the layer of pink orange sand that has been taken for the surface geology across the site, no evidence of a construction trench for this structure was identified, the wall being butted to the north and south by the recently deposited layer of hard-core.

These foundations correspond in fabric type, size and treatment with the lower foundation levels of wall D that is situated 2 metres distant, to the immediate south. However, the age and function of this structure can not be determined, it's location and depth may suggest that it was constructed as part of a previously unidentified cellar beneath 4 Fishergate and as such may date to the mid to late 18th Century.

CONCLUSION

The archaeological watching brief maintained throughout the recent demolition and construction work at 4, Fishergate, Ripon, has provided a useful opportunity to make an inspection of the fabric type within the existing structure and make comparisons with other extant and buried walls within the immediate area, furthermore it was possible to compare and understand more fully the nature of the buried soil horizons across the site.

The watching brief has shown that there is the potential for the survival late medieval fabric within the later 18th and 19th Century yard walls.

The incorporation of a dressed magnesian limestone wall, of a load bearing capacity, within the lower courses of the former boundary wall, is comparable with a similar structure revealed during the earlier archaeological evaluation, it is probable these fragmentary structures are the surviving remains of a stone structure that occupied the eastern area of the former yard during the later medieval period.

It would appear that this medieval structure was butted by a cobbled yard to the west, this surface similar to that previously revealed within Trial Hole No.3 was identified beneath the foundations of the former boundary wall. The eastern extent of the cobbles and their relationship to the medieval walling may also indicate that the interior ground floor surface of this medieval building was cobbled.

Comparison of the relative depths at which the medieval cobble surface survives would indicate that the yard to the rear of 4, Fishergate had a considerably lower floor surface than that identified in the yard of the adjacent property 2, Fishergate. However, by the late 18th and early 19th Century when freedom of access between the two properties can be first recognised, the difference in floor levels had been corrected by the raising of ground levels to the rear of 4, Fishergate.

It has become clear that following the construction of the existing brick built structure occupying the street frontage on this site, during the mid to late 18th Century, a complex and intense period of development took place within the yard to the rear of this property. This involved the raising of ground levels and the construction of multiple extensions and brick out buildings, the footprint of which occupied the greater part of the former yard area. From the inspection of the construction techniques and fabrics used in these buildings it evident that the development within the yard was organic in nature, responding to local needs and demands.

It is clear that this development took place over a protracted period of time, from the late 18th Century to the present day, and during this time the developed area has both grown and contracted.

The inspection of the foundation work of the adjacent property, 2, Fishergate would indicate that a similar, complex sequence of development took place within the yard to the rear of this property. The incorporation of both interior and exterior interconnecting doorways between the two property parcels may indicate that at least during the late 18th and early 19th centuries the properties were under single ownership and, or, shared a common usage.

In the light of the results obtained from the recent archaeological investigation of this site, it is considered that there is a high potential for the preservation of late medieval deposits within those property parcels to the west of the market place. Attention should also be drawn to the likely-hood of the survival of in-situ medieval fabric within the 18th Century yard walls.

It is recommended that the small, medieval finds assemblage recovered from the watching brief receive further consideration from specialists, and a supplementary report produced on their findings. The finds should eventually be submitted to Harrogate Museums Service for proper storage.

Kevin John Cale
November 1993