



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE ADDRESS	51 Market Place, Richmond, North Yorkshire		
CLIENT NAME	RBA Moody Bros (Contractors) Ltd		
YAT PROJECT #	5518	YAT REPORT #	2011/29
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	n/a	GRID REFERENCE	NZ 1719 0082
PLANNING REFERENCE #	1/92W/1090Q/FULL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	n/a

INTRODUCTION

A watching brief was undertaken at a site to the rear of 51 Market Place, Richmond, North Yorkshire on 4th May 2011 by York Archaeological Trust on behalf of RBA Moody Bros (contractors) Ltd.

The site is pentagonal in shape (Figure 1), within this plot of land a rectangular building is proposed with the long axis aligned north-west to south-east. The northern-western side of the site is bordered by buildings, the north-eastern side by a narrow path to the rear of a series of properties fronting onto the market place, the northern half of the south-eastern side is bordered by a retaining wall to the south of which the ground drops sharply, the southern half of the south-eastern side is bordered by a Jehovah's Witness Kingdom Hall, and the south-western side of the site is bordered by an alley named Castle Wynd to the south-west of which are domestic properties. Access to the site is via a cobbled lane on the western side. The ground level ranges from 131.78m AOD on the cobbled alley at the western side of the site to 130.66m at the south-western corner of the site. The south-eastern most portion of the site is flagged, the flags being 0.44m².

The buildings on site had been demolished prior to the commencement of the watching brief, leaving a surface deposit of fragments of concrete 0.15m thick, brick rubble and sandstone blocks up to 0.26m x 0.19m x 0.06m in size; this deposit was removed from site during the first hour of the watching brief. The watching brief then comprised the observation of the machine excavation of six test pits, which were numbered in the order that they were excavated, and the partial removal of a modern cellar wall (Figure 2). The machine had a 0.9m wide toothed bucket.

TEST PIT 1

Pit 1 was located at the south-eastern corner of the proposed building, and was approximately 2m² and 3m deep. Along the south-eastern side of the test pit were the remains of the wall of the recently demolished building together with a related cast iron services pipe. The uppermost 3m comprised a mixture of frequent large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.4m x 0.2m in size, frequent smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt; the larger stones were largely in the southern half of the trench. Natural yellow-brown sandy clay was present at a depth of 3m below the present ground level.

TEST PIT 2

Pit 2, which was approximately 1m x 2m in size and 1.62m deep, and was located mid-way along the north-eastern side of the proposed building. The uppermost deposit was a mixture of occasional large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.2m in size, smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt which was 0.8m thick. This sealed dark brown clay 0.75m thick with frequent flecks of charcoal, which in turn sealed soft yellow-brown natural clay which occurred at a depth of 1.55m below ground level.

TEST PIT 3

Pit 3 was located mid-way along the south-western side of the proposed building, and was approximately 1m x 1.5m in size and 0.7m deep. The uppermost deposit was a mixture of occasional large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.2m in size, smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt which was 0.5m thick. This sealed dark brown clay with frequent flecks of charcoal which was 0.2m thick. The earliest deposit seen was soft yellow-brown natural clay which occurred at a depth of 0.7m below ground level.

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FINDS	None	SAMPLES	None	PHOTOS	Yes
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TEST PIT 4

Pit 4 was approximately 1m x 2m in size and 1.2m deep, and was located at the north-western corner of the proposed building. The south-eastern side of the test pit was bordered by a brick cellar wall, the bricks in the wall were 230mm x 110mm x 78mm in size and were of late 18th to mid 19th century date. Within the pit the uppermost deposit of occasional large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.2m in size, smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt was 0.4m thick, this sealed dark brown clay with frequent flecks of charcoal 0.22m thick, with the upper surface of the yellow-brown natural clay occurring at 1.2m below ground level.

Removal of the cellar wall to the immediate east of Test Pit 4 showed that standing water was present 1.7m below the present ground surface, and that the cellar wall was in excess of 1.9m deep.

TEST PIT 5

Pit 5 was located on the north-eastern corner of the proposed building and was approximately 1m x 2m in size and 1.2m deep. The uppermost deposit was a mixture of occasional large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.2m in size, smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt which was 0.35m thick. This sealed dark brown clay with frequent flecks of charcoal which was 0.75m thick. The earliest deposit seen was soft yellow-brown natural clay which occurred at a depth of 1.1m below ground level.

TEST PIT 6

Pit 6 was located at the south-western corner of the proposed building and was 1.5m x 2m in size. It was identical in terms of deposits to Test Pit 1 except that within the uppermost layer there was a dump of pan tiles of 17th century or later date. The natural clay in the pit occurred at a depth of 2.3m below ground level.

CONCLUSION

Test Pits 1-2 were similar with a thick deposit of large stones and rubble above natural sandy-clay the upper surface of which was at 2.3m to 3m below the present ground level. The rubble deposit seemed to represent deliberate dumping to raise the ground level in the area, thus creating an even surface across the plot which would otherwise have sloped markedly downwards towards the south.

Test Pits 2-5 were broadly similar with an upper deposit of occasional large stone blocks up to 0.3m x 0.3m x 0.2m in size, smaller rubble and loose light brown sandy-silt ranging from 0.35m to 0.8m in thickness; this was above dark brown clay with frequent flecks of charcoal which was between 0.22m to 0.75m thick. The earliest deposit was soft yellow-brown natural clay the upper surface of which occurred at a depth of 0.7m to 1.55m below ground level.

Other than a group of pan tiles of 17th century or later date in Test Pit 6 no artefacts were observed in any of the trenches or on the resultant spoil heaps.

Nothing of archaeological interest was observed and it would appear unlikely that any archaeological remains would be uncovered by excavation for the new building foundations, due to the depth of modern build up on the site.

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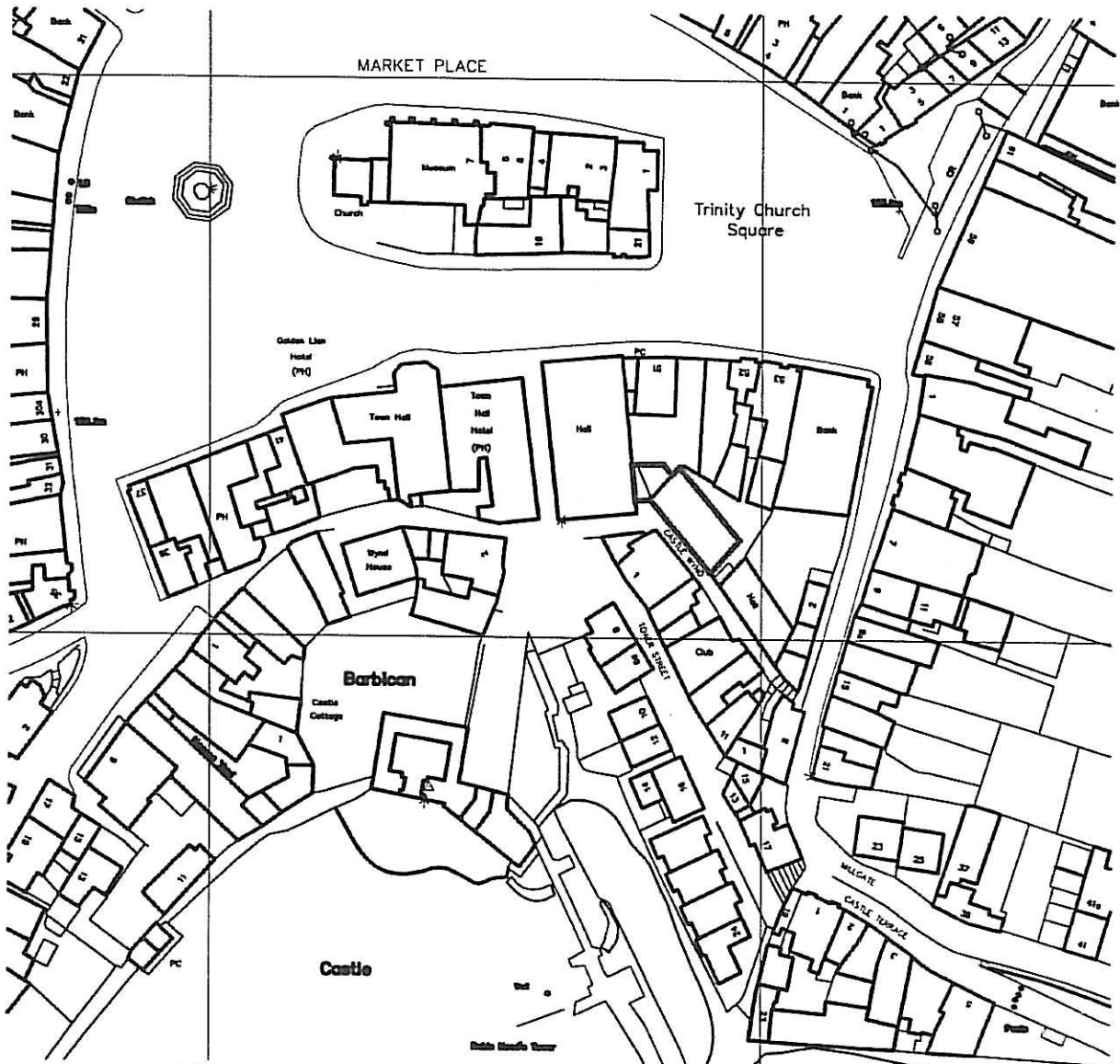


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Figure 1 Site location

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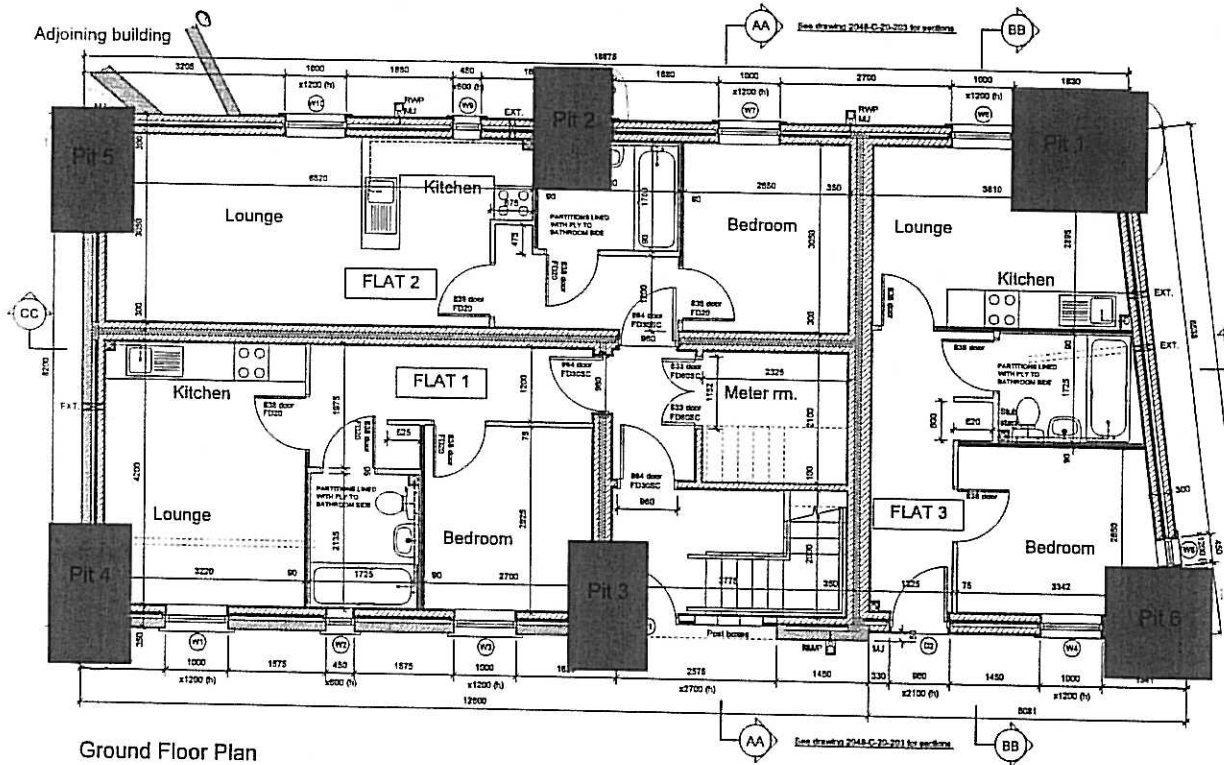


Figure 2 Location of the test pits in relation to the ground plan of the proposed building

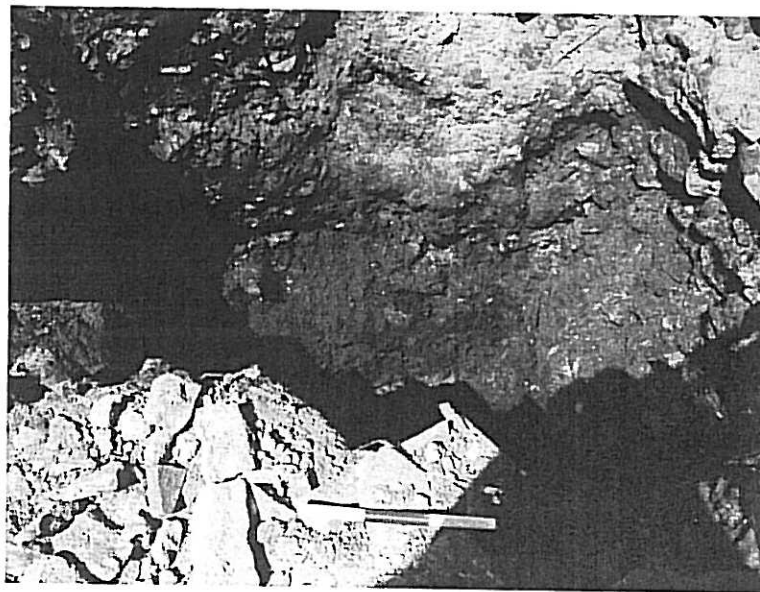


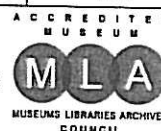
Plate 1 Test pit 1, natural clay just visible at the base of the pit, facing north-west, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 2 Test pit 2, facing north-west, scale unit 0.1m



Plate 3 Test pit 3, facing north-east, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 4 Test pit 4, facing north-west, scale unit 0.1m

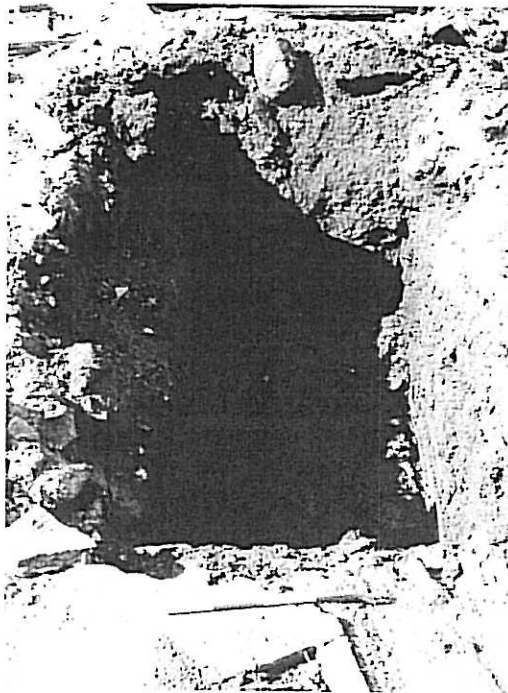


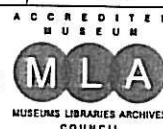
Plate 5 Test pit 5, facing south-west, scale unit 0.1m

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Plate 6 Test pit 6, facing north, scale unit 0.1m

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