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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRUST

**THE FIRE STATION,
SHEEPFOOT HILL,
MALTON,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

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**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

**1998 FIELD REPORT
NUMBER 8**



THE FIRE STATION, SHEEPFOOT HILL,

MALTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL

WATCHING BRIEF

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1. INTRODUCTION

On 21st January 1998, York Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological watching brief during the removal of existing structures and ground clearance prior to the construction of a new equipment bay on the western side of Malton fire station on Sheepfoot Hill in the town of Malton, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 792716). This work was carried out on behalf of North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The ground reduction and digging of a trial trench were carried out by mechanical excavator. The initial ground reduction was carried out before the arrival of an archaeologist. All subsequent machining was carried out under archaeological supervision. Deposits and structures revealed during these works were drawn and recorded in note form following procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust Context Recording Manual 1996.

Site records are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust under the Yorkshire Museum accession code YORYM:1998.9

1.2 GEOLOGY and TOPOGRAPHY

The underlying solid geology of the area is oolitic limestone; this was not reached in the watching brief works. The site lies on ground that slopes down from the north-west towards south-east in the direction of the river Derwent some 100m to the south. The land to the immediate north and east of the site is occupied by parkland and gardens. The area to the south is part of the built up area of the town of Malton.

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL and HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The existing fire station building is of post-war construction and lies just a few metres to the east of the southern corner of the Roman fort of "Derwentio" (Malton), in the area traditionally identified as the civil settlement or "vicus". The vicus was situated between the Roman fort and the river Derwent. In the immediate vicinity of the fire station a number of Roman buildings and finds have been made in the past (Robinson, 1978. See Robinson gazetteer No's 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 95, & 96)). A number of excavations have also taken place in both fort and vicus during the 20th century, the most extensive being those of Corder, who concentrated on the fort defences, in the 1920's, (Corder, 1930). Excavations in 1949 - 52, (Mitchelson, 1964) and 1968 - 70, (Wenham & Heywood, 1997) were restricted to the vicus and have yielded a considerable amount of information about structures in this area. A number of subsequent watching briefs in the immediate vicinity and excavations slightly further afield have added further detail (Wenham & Heywood, 1997). Although only a short

distance to the south-west of Malton Castle and close to the outer limits of the medieval town of Malton, there is no record of post Roman and medieval remains having previously been found on or close to the site.

2 RESULTS

Initial ground reduction had already removed approximately 1.0m of deposit from the development site when the archaeologist arrived. This work had uncovered the lower parts of an "L" shaped stretch of walling (context 1005) approximately 0.40m wide and 0.45m high, constructed of limestone and sandstone with the occasional brick, which had also been removed. The nature of the brickwork in the wall was suggestive of a post-medieval date for the feature. Ground reduction in this area served to bring the level of the ground down to the same as that in the car park to the west of the adjacent retaining wall. The trench was extended by 1.0m to the south whilst the archaeologist was in attendance. During this phase of reduction a stretch of modern brick wall was uncovered and removed. The base of this wall lay below that of the reduced ground level.

In order to examine the nature of the ground at reduced level a machine cut trial pit measuring some 2.3m x 1.0m was dug in the south-west quarter of the site. Intact archaeological deposits were seen in the base of this trial pit. The east facing section of the pit was recorded (Fig. 3). A wall foundation, context 1005, was present at the extreme north of this pit. Although no foundation trench cut was apparent for this wall it was determined that its base lay at a depth of some 1.45m below the pre reduction ground level. The remnants of a ceramic service pipe were located on top of the wall foundation.

The earliest deposit encountered in the test pit was a mid brown clayey silt, context 1004. This deposit extended below the base of the pit, some 2.05m below pre reduced ground level. No finds or other dating evidence was recovered from this material. A thin deposit of grey ashy silt, context 1003, sealed context 1004 and produced a single sherd of Roman pottery. Overlying this ashy deposit was a somewhat ill defined layer, context 1002, which was composed predominantly of greyish brown clayey silt with patches of sand and small amounts of mortar. The uppermost context revealed in the test pit was context 1001, a mixed deposit of greyish brown, friable, slightly clayey silt containing occasional fragments of mortar, limestone and animal bone. Three sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved from this deposit.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The initial ground reduction showed little in the way of archaeological deposits. It is clear that there is in the region of 1.0m build up of modern dumping/levelling deposits over the entire area investigated. This was reflected in all sections around the reduced area. Below this level the test pit revealed a sequence of deposits which produced Roman pottery of the 2nd/3rd century AD. Although cut by a number of modern features it appears fairly certain that these latter deposits represent in-situ archaeology.

The construction of the new equipment bay therefore proceeded on a cast slab base at the level of the initial site reduction. In-situ archaeological deposits were thus not disturbed.

4. LIST OF SOURCES

Corder, P. (1930) "The defences of the Roman fort at Malton." Roman Malton & Dist. Rep. 2.

Mitchelson, N. (1964) "Roman Malton: The Civilian Settlement. Excavations in Orchard Fields 1949 - 52." Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, 41. 209 - 261.

Robinson, J.F. (1978) "The Archaeology of Malton and Norton". Yorkshire Archaeological Society.

Wenham, P. & Heywood, B. (1997) "The 1968 to 1970 Excavations in the Vicus at Malton, North Yorkshire". Yorkshire Archaeological Report No. 3.

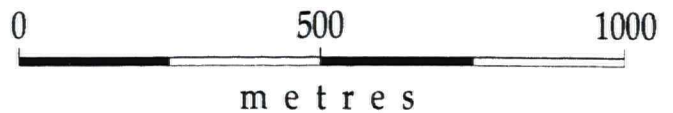
5. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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Report	Russell Marwood & Brian Milner
Editor	David Brinklow

SHOWING LOCATION OF SITE.



BASED UPON THE 1986 ORDNANCE SURVEY 1:25000 SCALE MAP WITH PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONARY OFFICE. CROWN COPYRIGHT, YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST CROMWELL HOUSE, 13 OGLEFORTH, YORK. YO1 2JG.



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Fire Station, Sheepfoot Hill, Malton, N. Yorks.

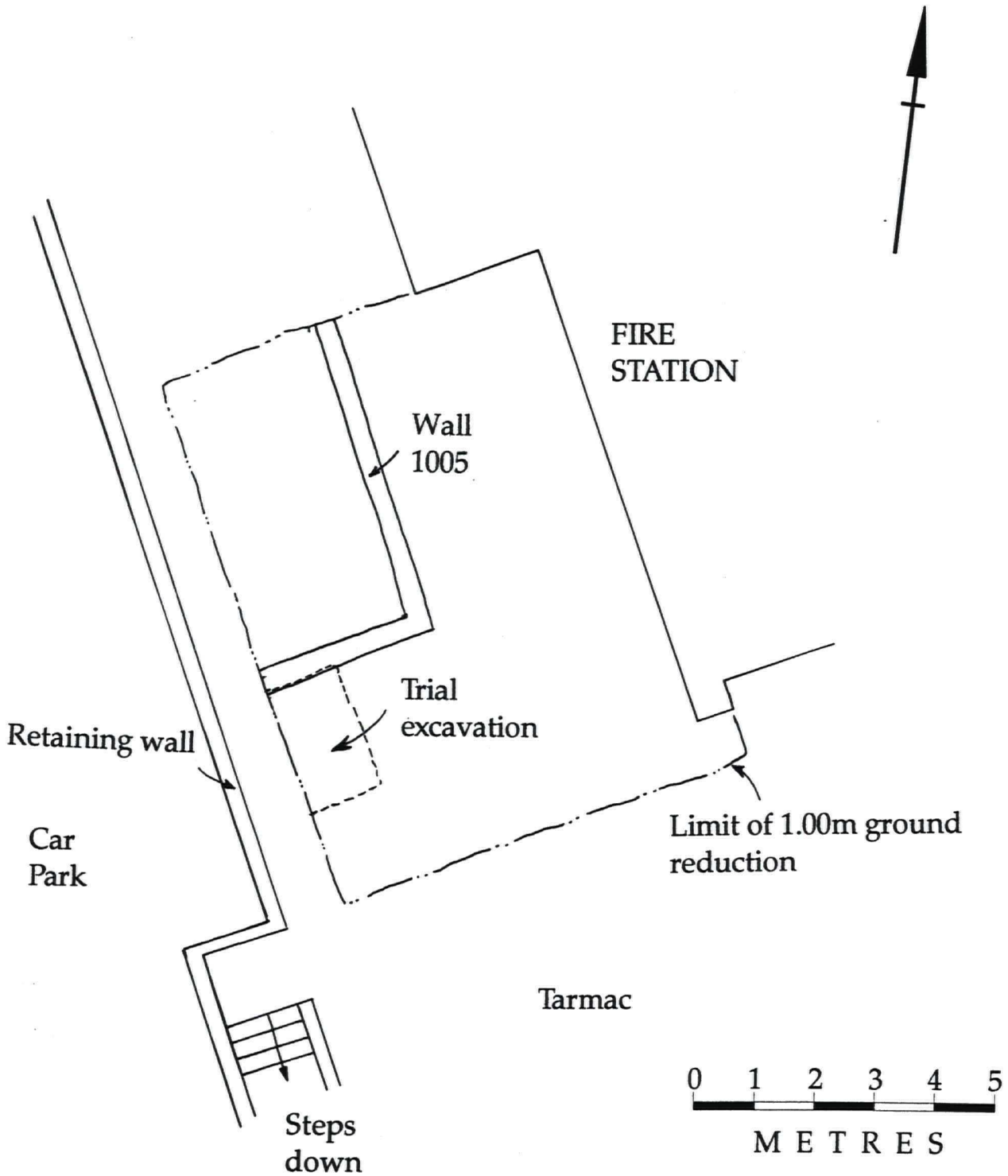
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SCALE: as shown

Fig. 1

SHOWING LOCATION OF EXCAVATIONS



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Fire Station, Sheepfoot Hill, Malton, N. Yorks.

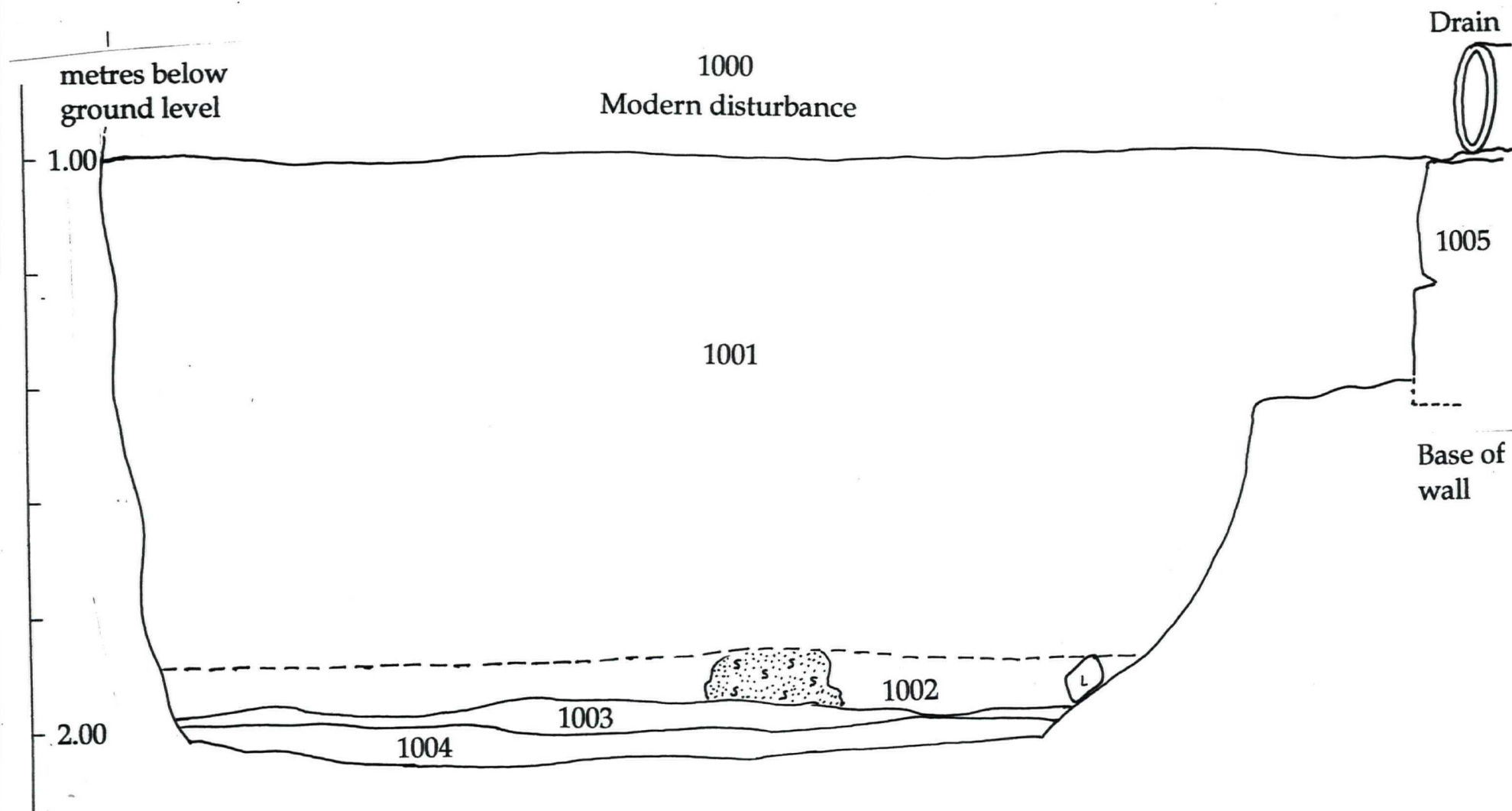
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Fig 2

SHOWING EAST FACING SECTION OF TRIAL EXCAVATION.



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Fig. 3