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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

NO.19 HIGH STREET

BOROUGHBRIDGE

NORTH YORKSHIRE

N.G.R. 439620 466697

COUNTY / PARISH NO. 6064

PLANNING APPLICATION NO. 6.64.98.1.FUL

FOR

MR. P.THOMAS

NOVEMBER 1997

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**NO.19
HIGH STREET
BOROUGHBRIDGE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
NOVEMBER 1997**

INTRODUCTION

The proposed archaeological investigation has been drawn up in advance of the commencement of ground disturbance associated with the construction of a domestic garage to the west of the property known as No.19, High Street.

Ms.V.Fiorato , Deputy Archaeologist, Heritage Unit, North Yorkshire County Council had informed Mr.P.Thomas, the occupier that the proposed works were to be undertaken within an archaeologically sensitive location within the designated Conservation Area that surrounds Boroughbridge and as such it would be necessary to engage the services of an approved archaeologist to maintain a watching brief on any ground disturbance.

The nature of the proposed ground disturbance relates to the excavation of four strip foundation trench's with a combined length of 29.500m.

A site inspection that was made prior to the commencement of works indicated that the ground levels within the study area appeared to have been heavily disturbed during the previous development of the site. From a rapid survey of the fabric of the existing, brick, boundary walls it is evident that the property parcel formerly supported a small number of outbuildings that were situated to the north of the site.

LOCATION AND STATUS

The Town:

The market town of Boroughbridge on the western fringe of the Vale of York, on the banks of the River Ure. This nucleated settlement is situated at 18 metres above sea level on a gentle slope that rises from the southern bank of the River Ure. The settlement is located within the gently undulating, rural landscape of the parish of Boroughbridge.

The town is situated approximately 6 miles to the south east of the city of Ripon via the B6265 and 7 miles to the north east of Knaresborough via the A6055. The settlement is located to the immediate east of the A1(M).

The settlement is made up of three parallel streets known as Horsfair, High Street and Back Lane. This street pattern compartmentalises four areas of urban development and three market places.

The town is contained to the north by the River Ure and is bisected by the sinuous tributary known as the River Tutt. The settlement is transected by the Great North Road, this thoroughfare was the main London to Edinburgh road prior to the construction of the existing A1(M). The road originally passed through the centre of town along the line of the street known as Horsfair crossing the River Ure at Borough Bridge.

The Study Area:

The study area is situated within the centre of the built up area of the market town on the western side of the High Street and within the north eastern corner of St. James Square. The site is located within a small property parcel to the rear of the street frontage at N.G.R 439620 466697 at an elevation of 15.500 metres.

To the north of the site there are located an intense complex of single and twin storey, brick, outbuildings. These structures are situated to the rear of those properties that front onto the High Street and are accessed from a limited number of narrow service roads. To the south a number of such ancillary buildings have, in recent years, been demolished and the site re-developed with residential housing and car parking. To the west of the site a single storey detached dwelling has been constructed.

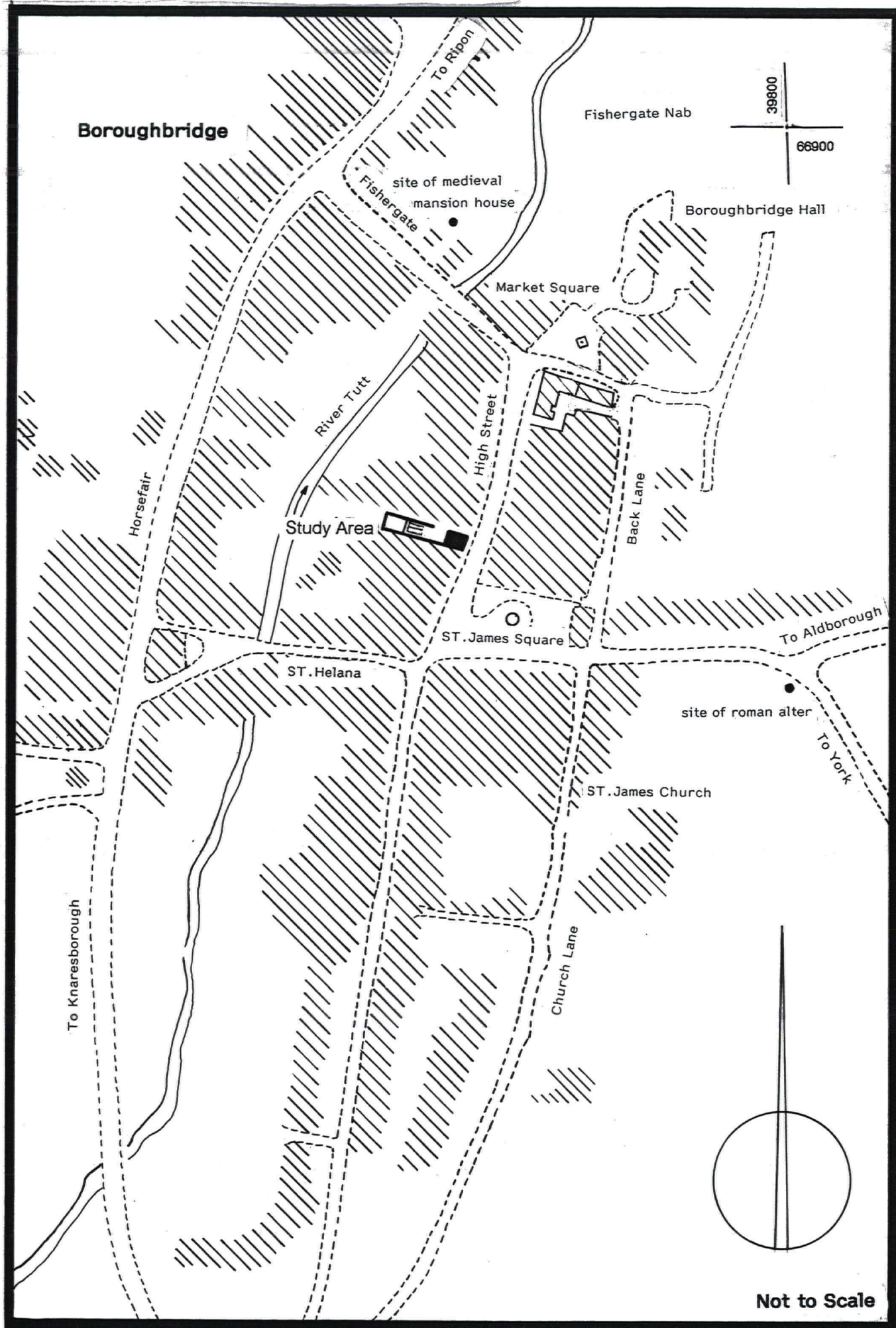
SITE DESCRIPTION

The narrow, sub-rectangular property parcel extends from the rear No.19 to the west. The site is accessed from the north east off a narrow service road. The site is contained to the north and south by, substantial, brick boundary walls, within which there are intermittent, walled up, entrances. Sections of the northern wall appear to be 19th century in origin and from occasional areas of in-situ wall plaster appear to have originally functioned as internal walls to the, now demolished, outbuildings. Until very recently the site was contained to the west by a concrete blockwork wall, however, recent land transactions have now reduced the area of the property parcel by 25 %. The western boundary to the holding is presently defined by a pre excavated foundation trench (disused).

The site is relatively level, rising very gently to the west. The yard was not surfaced, and consists of areas of gravel, scrub vegetation, and demolition rubble.

FIGURE 1

SITE LOCATION PLAN



PLANNING HISTORY

Outline Planning Permission for the erection of a single storey, detached garage was granted by Harrogate Borough Council in January 1997, Application No. 6.64.98.1.FUL. A revision to this application was submitted and approved in May 1997 for the relocation of the garage.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Boroughbridge and the immediate environs

The Prehistoric Period:

The Devils Arrows prehistoric monument is situated to the west of Boroughbridge and on the fringe of the existing settlement. This stone row consisting of three grit stone monoliths is approximately 170 metres long. According to the Tudor antiquarian John Leyland, there was formerly a fourth orthostat, it is believed that this was broken up in the 17th century and used in the foundations of the nearby bridge.

There have been a number of small scale excavations around the bases of the standing stones though these have contributed nothing to providing a date for their erection. With the exception of a quantity of flints found some 270 metres east of the central stone and some others found from around the stones themselves there is no record of any evidence of other activities which might be associated with these monoliths.

Recent archaeological landscapes studies commissioned in advance of the major programme of road improvements of the A1 motorway, would indicate that the fields to the immediate west of this road were well populated in the late prehistoric period. The area of limestone would appear to have supported complexes of small farmsteads and accompanying field systems that may have been occupied into the Early Iron age period. From a recent programme of fieldwalking it would appear there are concentrations of flint scatters to the west and north of Boroughbridge with little similar activity to the south.

The Roman Period:

Boroughbridge is situated centrally between two main centres of Roman occupation, the Roman town Isurium Brigantum, Aldborough and the Roelcliffe Military Complex.

The Roelcliffe Military complex was only recently discovered during archaeological excavations in advance of the improvements to the A1 motorway. A square shaped fort was identified with double ditches and a box rampart together with evidence of

an extramural settlement. The eight acre fort site would appear to have been constructed during the Flavian period in order to guard and police an east/west road crossing of the River Ure.

It is suspected that the Roecliffe Fort was occupied for only a relatively short period of time (possibly for only 15 years) and was later superseded by the development of the Aldborough fort, Isurium Brigantum which was situated on the line of the principal roman road artery into the north, Dere Street. The line of Dere street forded the River Ure to the east of Boroughbridge at Milby.

The Medieval Period:

The settlement of Boroughbridge was the 44th New Town to be established by the Normans during the early 12th century. It is evident from a charter of Newburgh Priory that the settlement was well established by 1145.

The present market town still bears the tell-tale signs of a Norman establishment, with a sub-rectangular area of development with three market areas and a centrally located church, serviced by a rectilinear arrangement of roads.

There is no mention of pre Norman settlement on the site, and it is likely that the site began to develop shortly before 1115 when significant changes were made in land ownership and administration within the region. It was during this period that the already well established, neighbouring settlement of Aldborough was transferred to the Honour of Knaresborough becoming at the same time a Compact Lordship that also included the settlements of Milby, Grafton, Dunsforth and Boroughbridge.

The settlement was favourably located at the cross-roads of passing land based and waterborne traffic.

The River Port of Boroughbridge had by the late 12th Century become well established and prosperous, benefiting directly from the east - west trade axis between the Pennines and the Vale of York and beyond to the coastal port of Hull. During this period Boroughbridge was situated at the head of the Ouse navigation system and was ideally located to supply the market towns of Knaresborough and Ripon together with the large ecclesiastical establishments within the hinterland.

By the 14th century a Charter of King Edward 1st confirmed that the Rivers Ure and Ouse as far as the city of York were the property of the Lords of Aldborough and Boroughbridge and that they were entitled to exact a toll on all river traffic. The trade being handled by the port included outgoing lead from Nidderdale and Wensleydale together with linen from Knaresborough, imports included wines and spices from the continent and timber from York.

Boroughbridge was ideally located to benefit from the passing road traffic, provisions for which were actively encouraged during the 12th century by the construction of the "Pons Bulgi" the bridge of the borough to the immediate north of the town, and by so doing the ancient ford across the River Ure that was situated downstream at Milby was superseded and thereafter the majority of road traffic was redirected through the town.

This through traffic stimulated the growth and success of fairs and markets that were regularly held within the three market places within the town. It is known that during this period the economy of this community was diverse and as well as agriculture which supported at least two corn mills and one fulling mill, fishing and butter manufacture supplemented the towns economy.

During 1318 Yorkshire was invaded by the Scots, and Boroughbridge along with the other market towns of Northallerton and Knaresborough were attacked, plundered and burnt during these incursions. It was as a result of the ensuing border politics that lead to the uprisings of Thomas Earl of Lancaster and his eventual defeat and capture at the Battle of Boroughbridge in 1322. The site of the battle field is situated on the banks of the River Ure at Milby the ford and beneath the bridge at Boroughbridge.

By the later medieval period the settlement was experiencing an economic boom due to the increased waterborne trade in exporting linen that was manufactured in Knaresborough to York and beyond, and due to the increased road traffic passing through and stopping off in the town. The latter generated work in the towns Inns and coach houses, together with growth of the smithying industry and related off-shoots associated with the maintenance and repairing of carts and wagons and the shoeing of livestock.

In 1562 the earlier medieval wooden bridge across the Ure was rebuilt in sandstone.

It was during this same period that Boroughbridge became a centre of refuge for the post reformation Catholics within the area. It is reputed that the Tankard family of Boroughbridge Mansion House hosted a meeting of the Council of the North in 1569.

The Post Medieval Period:

The town continued to develop and prosper as a result of the increased, passing road traffic, Boroughbridge was a convenient stopping off point on the main herding route between Scotland and the Smithfield market. But it was during this period that the port of Boroughbridge began to decline with the majority of waterborne imports and exports being re-directed through Milby Wharfe which was situated downstream from the town on the northern banks of the Ure.

In 1644 it is reputed that Prince Rupert's Royalist Army billeted within the town on their journey to engage the Parliamentarians at York.

During 1680 work commenced on the construction of Boroughbridge Hall, this large Jacobean building was the home of the Wilkinson family. The hall is situated within open grounds to the immediate north of the town and access to the property is gained through the market place.

The 18th and 19th centuries:

During the mid 18th Century an Act of Parliament was passed that sanctioned the transport, by water, of goods into Ripon via the Ure and a length of recently constructed canal. The growth of the flax industry in Ripon during the early 19th century lead to the importing of large quantities of Baltic Flax via the Ure/Ouse watercourse. These imports effectively eclipsed the port at Boroughbridge and marked it's decline.

The improvements to the regional and national road networks during this period continued to inject the towns economy, the continued development and success of which was reflected in the requirement to rebuild the Ure Bridge in 1785.

The Site

The site lies within the rectangular area enclosed by the medieval road network it would therefore seem highly probable that the site would have been developed during the medieval period. The sites close proximity to the St.Jame's Square and the site of St.James Church would make it a valued property parcel.

In 1846 the site is depicted on a Tithe Map of the locality, it would appear that the site formed the central and extent of a narrow tenement strip that extended between the River Tutt and the High Street. Access into which was limited to pedestrian access obtainable through the property itself. The northern side of the tenement is developed and supports a substantial, detached, structure with adjoining outbuildings. It is likely that this is the building referred to by Mrs.Thomas as "the row of terrace cottages".

By the 1968 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 map the size and form of the property parcel remains as depicted in the early 19th century, however the larger building within the yard had, by this time, been demolished with only a small detached outbuilding remaining extant.

No previously recorded archaeological works have been conducted on this site.

METHODOLOGY

The development site lies within the Conservation Area of Boroughbridge and within an area of the town that may well have been developed during the medieval period, and it was considered that the proposed foundation trench excavations would have impact on any surviving archaeological features or deposits, the development would therefore require an archaeological provision incorporating into the scheme of works.

It was therefore recommended by the Deputy Archaeological Officer, North Yorkshire County Council that an archaeologist should be engaged to oversee and monitor the proposed ground disturbance within the study area.

The watching brief condition makes provision for an archaeologist to be present on site, to witness the excavation processes, allowing the archaeologist a reasonable length of time to satisfactorily record any archaeology encountered.

The Brief Of Works:

It was agreed that archaeologist would be in attendance to monitor the machine excavation of the strip foundation trenches.

It has been calculated that this will amount to 29.500m of trench and include the west and southern elevations and two partition walls.

It was agreed that if finds or features of archaeological interest are revealed during the course of these excavations, reasonable time should be allowed for the archaeologist to record these.

SUMMARY OF WORKS

The watching brief commenced on Saturday 21st November 1997 and the commission had been completed by the close of works on the same day.

From the inspection of the excavated trench sections it was noted that a pure layer of sand taken to be the natural sub soil was encountered within the southern extent of the site at 15.160 m AOD, the surface of which appeared to fall away on a moderate slope to the north.

Within the northern extent of the site a layer of sandy loamy clay was identified within the base of excavation, overlying the sub soil at 14.580 m AOD. Unfortunately no archaeological features or finds were identified within this layer and as such no accurate date can be placed on what appear to be the earliest anthropogenic deposit across the site.

However stratigraphic relationships would date the deposit prior to the 19th century. Comparisons can be made with a similar deposit of pink orange clay that was identified during a recent archaeological investigation at Back Lane (K.J.Cale 1995), here the deposition of this layer was dated accurately to the Late Medieval period and appears to have been imported onto site as a flood prevention measure. A similar motive can not be ruled out for this layer due to the close proximity of the site to the River Tutt.

It was confirmed that the entire site had been subjected to a moderate to high level of disturbance associated with the construction and demolition of the row of brick built buildings that had formerly occupied the northern extent of the site. As anticipated the level and depth of disturbance increased towards the northern extent of the site (upto 0.920 m deep) and within the footprint of the former building. This activity had resulted in the deposition of two distinct layers. Upon which an early 20th century cobble yard surface had been laid.

CONCLUSION

The recent archaeological watching brief conducted by Mr.K.J.Cale on behalf of Mr.P.Thomas at No.19 High Street, Boroughbridge has provided a useful although relatively negative picture of the chronological development of this property parcel.

The watching brief identified three main phases of activity on the site:-

A possible late medieval programme of landscaping / flood prevention measure.

An 18th Century redevelopment of the site, during which period it would appear the former brick built building was erected on the northern side of the site.

During the 20th century the two phased demolition of the 18th century buildings and the subsequent laying of a cobble yard surface.

A very small quantity of finds were identified during the watching brief these included late 19th century pottery and glass, none of which was recovered or removed from site.

EXCAVATION RECORD

Trench A

Type: machine excavation
Class: trench : foundation : strip
NGR: 439614 466697
Planform: linear
Profile: flat bottom U
Aligned: east
Length: 7.300 metres
Width: 65 cm
Depth: 1.10 cm
Context No's. 1000 - 1004
Comments:

The foundation trench was excavated at the southern extent of the site, running parallel and adjacent to the southern, brick, boundary wall. The trench fell on a very gentle gradient from the west.

The stratigraphy identified within the sections of the trench had been previously cut and displaced by a moderate level of recent disturbance resulting from the installation of foul/surface water drains.

The natural subsoil, a pure orange yellow sand, was identified within the trench at 15.160 metres above sea level and appeared to slope gently downwards to the west. The earliest evidence of man's activity within this area of excavation was the deposition of a medium brown coloured layer of clayey loamy sand that contained a low quantity of inclusions together with a small quantity of 19th century pottery. This layer was sealed by a buried topsoil, this sandy loam contained a high quantity of inclusions dominated by brick and tile fragments, materials that would indicate that this layer is associated with the demolition of the adjacent brick buildings. The stratigraphy was sealed by an intermittent cobble surface, the surface of which was obscured by modern trample and vegetation cover.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were identified during the excavation of this trench.

The spoil excavated from the trench was deposited and then levelled to the immediate west of the site.

Trench B

Type: machine excavation
Class: trench : foundation : strip
NGR: 439611 466702
Planform: linear
Profile: flat bottom U
Aligned: north
Length: 7.600 m
Width: 0.600 m
Depth: 1.200 m
Context Nos: 2000 - 2004
Comments:

The foundation trench was excavated at the western extent of the site, running parallel and adjacent to the pre-excavated, open, strip foundation trench. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified within the sections of the trench had been heavily disturbed during the construction and demolition of the large, brick building situated to the north of the site.

The natural subsoil, a pure orange yellow sand, was identified within the southern extent of the trench and sloped on a moderate gradient downwards to the north. Towards the centre of the trench this sand passed beneath the base of the excavation at which point it was sealed by a layer of pink brown coloured sandy loamy clay, unfortunately no evidence was found to satisfactorily date this layer, although on comparison with other soils in Boroughbridge a Late Medieval date of deposition can not be ruled out.

The remaining stratigraphy within the trench relate entirely to the construction and demolition of the large, brick, building that occupied the northern extent of the site.

Towards the southern extent of the site the stratigraphy was sealed by an intermittent cobble surface, the surface of which was obscured by modern trample and vegetation cover.

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

The spoil excavated from the trench was deposited and then levelled to the immediate west of the site.

Trench C

Type:	machine excavation
Class:	trench : foundation : strip : partition
NGR:	439614 466700
Planform:	linear
Profile:	flat bottom U
Aligned:	east
Length:	6.650 m
Width:	0.450 m
Depth:	0.580 m
Context Nos:	3000 - 3002

Comments:

This narrow foundation trench was excavated within the centre south of the site, within the footprint of the building, running parallel and adjacent to the trench's A and D. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified within the sections of the trench had been heavily disturbed during the construction and demolition of the large, brick building situated to the north of the site.

The remaining stratigraphy within the trench relate entirely to the construction and demolition of the large, brick, building that occupied the northern extent of the site.

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

The spoil excavated from the trench was deposited and then levelled to the immediate west of the site.

Trench D

Type:	hand excavation
Class:	trench : foundation : strip : partition
NGR:	439614 466702
Planform:	linear
Profile:	flat bottom U
Aligned:	east
Length:	6.650 m
Width:	0.450 m
Depth:	0.580 m
Context Nos:	4000 - 4002

Comments:

This narrow foundation trench was excavated within the centre north of the site, within the footprint of the building, running parallel and adjacent to trench C. The existing ground levels were relatively level.

The stratigraphy identified within the sections of the trench had been heavily disturbed during the construction and demolition of the large, brick building situated to the north of the site.

The remaining stratigraphy within the trench relate entirely to the construction and demolition of the large, brick, building that occupied the northern extent of the site.

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

The spoil excavated from the trench was deposited and then levelled to the immediate west of the site.

Kevin John Cale

November 1997