



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



**LAND OFF MITFORD STREET,
FILEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

By I. Milsted and D. Evans

REPORT NUMBER 2009/78



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

York Archaeological Trust undertakes a wide range of urban and rural archaeological consultancies, surveys, evaluations, assessments and excavations for commercial, academic and charitable clients. It can manage projects, provide professional advice and monitor archaeological works to ensure high quality, cost effective archaeology. Its staff have a considerable depth and variety of professional experience and an international reputation for research, development and maximising the public, educational and commercial benefits of archaeology. Based in York its services are available throughout Britain and beyond.



© 2009 York Archaeological Trust for Excavation and Research Limited

Registered Office: 47 Aldwark, York, UK, YO1 7BX

Phone: +44 (0)1904 663000 Fax: +44 (0)1904 663024

Email: archaeology@yorkat.co.uk Internet: <http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk>

York Archaeological Trust is a Registered Charity No. 509060
A Company Limited by Guarantee Without Share Capital Registered in England No. 1430801

CONTENTS

	page
ABSTRACT	1
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. RESULTS	2
3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS	4
4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	6

Figures

1. Site location	6
2. Trench locations	6
3. Trench 1 final plan	7
4. Trench 2 final plan	7
5. Trench 1 NE facing section	8
6. Trench 1 SW facing section	8
7. Trench 2 NW facing section	8

Plates

Cover: Montage view of site looking north

1. Trench 1 final view looking NW	9
2. Trench 1 final view looking SE	9
3. Trench 1 SE facing section	10
4. Trench 1 NE facing section	10
5. Trench 1 SW facing section	10
6. Trench 2 pre-excavation looking NE	11
7. Trench 2 excavated features looking SE	11

Abbreviations

YAT York Archaeological Trust

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

ABSTRACT

Two evaluation trenches were excavated in the back yard of the former Crown Inn Public House, between Queen Street and Mitford Street, Filey. Natural deposits were encountered at c.0.70m below modern ground level at c.32.70m AOD. Above this, a good sequence of possible medieval pits, drainage gullies and a large ditch was encountered, sealed beneath a 0.30-0.50m thick build-up deposit. Above this were the walls and floors of the current standing buildings and their associated yard. The archaeological deposits encountered are considered to hold good potential for understanding the later medieval landscape of this part of Filey.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 30th November and 4th December 2009 York Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation excavation at a site off Mitford Street, Filey, North Yorkshire commissioned by Dodd Frankland Stocks Partnership on behalf of their clients the Accent Group (fig 1). The site has previously been the subject of a Desk-Based Assessment (Evans 2009) which contains the detailed historical and archaeological information for the site and surrounding area.

Two trenches, each measuring 3m x 2m, were marked out within the footprint of one of the proposed new buildings (fig 2) and after the concrete and tarmac surfaces had been broken up, modern material was removed using a standard sized toothed bucket. As soon as the obviously modern make-up had been removed the mini-digger used a standard sized toothless ditching bucket to continue excavation. The trenches were excavated by machine in shallow, c.0.05m, spits until significant archaeological deposits, structures or sequences were located. The machine and trenches were monitored at all times by a professional archaeologist.

Once archaeological remains of some significance had been located all further excavation was by hand and recording followed procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust, Fieldwork Recording Manual, 2009 Revision.

Provisional results are given below but may be subject to revision when the dating evidence from the finds becomes available. Any conclusions should also be regarded as subject to amendment after all the evidence from this work has been analysed and assessed by the relevant specialists.

2. RESULTS

2.1 TRENCH 1

The earliest identified deposit in Trench 1 was a soft, yellow clayey sand with moderate amounts of gravel, small cobbles and small fragments of sandstone (1023). This was encountered at c.0.62 – 0.70m below modern ground level (32.91 – 32.80m AOD) and interpreted as being of natural origin.

The earliest phase of activity occupied the entire area of the trench and comprised of three ditches or gullies and two pits (fig 3, plates 1-5). The earliest feature, cut directly into 1023, was interpreted as a shallow pit (1022). This was sub-oval in plan, measured 0.50m x 0.25m and was aligned north-east – south-west. The cut was quite ephemeral, being only 0.15m deep and truncated to the north by a shallow gully (1011). Gully 1011 ran north-east – south-west and was between 0.40m and 0.60m wide and 0.15m deep. It had a moderate break of slope from surface, fairly steep sides and a slightly concave base and was filled with a firm-friable dark grey-brown clayey silt (1010).

Gully 1011 was one of three linear features in this phase. 0.50m south-east of cut 1011 was a probable gully (1009) which was cut directly into natural 1023. The full dimensions of 1009 are not known as its south-eastern side lay beyond the limit of excavation (fig 3) but the moderate slope of its north-western side, the slightly concave base and the fact that it was 0.18m deep suggest that it was of similar size to gully cut 1011. Cut 1009 was filled with a firm, mid grey-brown, very clayey silt (1008).

At 0.70m to the north-west of gully cut 1011 was a large ditch (1020) which was cut directly into natural 1023. Like the two gullies described above, 1020 was also aligned north-east – south-west. The cut had a moderate break of slope from surface, steeply sloping sides and a slightly concave base, and was 0.40m deep. At the south-western end, the alignment appeared to turn slightly more north-south, but as the cut extended beyond the limit of excavation it is not possible to say if this is of significance or merely a variation along the length of a generally straight feature. 1020 was filled with a soft, mixed deposit of mid-grey sandy silt and yellow-brown sandy silt with a moderate quantity of small stones (1017). It was felt that some of this deposit derived from the weathering of natural deposits into the gradual silting of the ditch.

Cut through the backfills of the central gully, 1010 and the large ditch, 1017 at the south-western limit of excavation was a large pit (1019). This was 1.1m wide and extended beyond the limit of excavation. The cut had a sharp break of slope from surface and near vertical

sides, except from the south-east where it was steeply sloping. The base was flat, and at 0.75m deep lay at the depth limit of the excavation, c. 1.25m below the modern ground level.

Sealing all the cut features described above was a 0.30m-0.55m thick deposit of firm-friable, mid grey-brown, slightly clayey sandy silt with moderate small stones and occasional charcoal flecks (1001). This was interpreted as a build-up deposit and was cut by the later activity described below.

The next phase of activity started with a large, sub-circular pit cut, measuring 0.80m x 0.60m across, 0.50m deep and aligned north-south (1007) (fig 3). The cut had a sharp break of slope from surface and near-vertical sides, except from the north where it was steeply sloped and slightly stepped; the base was concave. Cut 1007 was filled by a friable mixed brown-grey and mid yellow brown slightly silty sandy clay containing frequent cobbles and gravel and moderate amounts of brick and tile fragments (1006). Cut into 1006 was a 0.10m deep sub-square pit measuring 0.50m x 0.60m (1005) and a posthole measuring 0.20m across and 0.50m deep (1003). These features are thought to be modern, relating to the construction of a range of brick-built outhouses in the yard behind the Crown Inn. Evidence for the construction of these buildings was encountered in Trench 1. A construction cut (1014) cut into 1006 and truncated 1001 across the entire area of the trench. Cut 1014 contained a make-up deposit (1015) two concrete surfaces (1013 and 1016) and a single-skin brick partition wall (1012) which divided the surfaces. The remains of wall 1012 can clearly be seen in the yard wall (plate 1), demonstrating that the surfaces were once floors within the south-westernmost part of the range of outbuildings, which was demolished at an unknown date prior to this evaluation (and visible in fig 2 as a dashed line). Two post-holes (cuts 1025 and 1027) sealed beneath surfaces 1013 and 1016 respectively (see figs 5 and 6), may well be associated with post-hole 1003 identified in the main trench, and probably relate to the outbuildings.

2.2 TRENCH 2

In this trench the earliest deposit encountered, at c. 0.75m below modern ground level, 32.65m OD, was a light orange-yellow slightly clayey sand with occasional to moderate gravel (2008) which was believed to be natural in origin.

Along the south-east limit of excavation, 2008 was cut by a feature of uncertain form and function (2015) which was heavily truncated by later activity (figs 4 and 7, plates 6 and 7). Cut 2015 was at least 0.25m across and 0.25m deep, with a gentle to moderately sloping north-west edge and a flattish base. It was filled with a mid brown slightly clayey silt (2003). Cut into 2003 were two features, 2004 and 2007. The southernmost of these was of

uncertain shape, size and function, and was at least 0.6m across and 0.45m deep (2004). There was a sharp break of slope at the top leading to a side that sloped steeply at the top but moderately to gently lower down where there was a gentle break of slope leading to a flattish base. Two backfills were identified, the lower being a clean, mid greyish-brown slightly clayey silt (2001) and the upper a mid brown slightly clayey silt with moderate patches of mid orange clayey sand (2002). The second feature was at least 0.8m across and 0.4m deep (2007). There was a sharp break of slope at the top leading to quite steeply sloping sides and a moderate break of slope lower down leading to a flattish base. This feature had a lower backfill of mid greyish-brown slightly clayey silt (2006) and an upper backfill of mid brown slightly clayey silt with moderate patches of mid orange clayey sand (2005).

Sealing these earlier features was a c.0.2m deep build-up deposit of mid brown slightly clayey silt (2009) which separated the deposits described above from later activity.

Above 2009 was a probable levelling deposit of mid greyish-brown silt with occasional cobbles and brick / tile fragments (2010) into which had been cut a relatively modern service trench (2012), almost certainly a rainwater drain, aligned approximately north-east / south-west. It contained an iron pipe and a backfill of mid greyish-brown slightly clayey silt with moderate brick / tile (2011). Sealing this was a levelling deposit of compact mixture of mid brown silt, brick fragments and cobbles with occasional white mortar (2013). The uppermost context was a yard surface of tarmac which lay at c.33.15m AOD.

3. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In Trench 1, beneath the modern features relating to the standing buildings, there was a good sequence of archaeological deposits. The large central pit 1007 may be post-medieval, and the build-up deposit 1001 produced pottery of a provisional 16th century date. Deposit 1001 is almost certainly the same deposit as 2009 described above and discussed below, and may represent a hiatus in concerted activity in this area. Beneath 1001, the complex sequence of cut features described above is thought to be medieval to late-medieval in date. The large pit 1019 contained medieval pottery that may have been disturbed from the fills of the ditches it was cut through. The large ditch, 1020, may represent a boundary feature, and the gully cuts 1011 and 1009 probably relate to drainage of the area. All three linear features are broadly parallel to the modern course of Reynolds Street and run perpendicular to Queen Street, possibly suggesting that they relate to plot boundaries running north-east – south-west from Queen Street, which is known to be at least of medieval origin (Evans, 2009). However, their purpose and the significance of their alignment could only be explored further

with a wider programme of fieldwork. The build up deposit 1001 lies only 0.20-0.30m below the current ground surface, with the medieval sequence described above lying at 0.50-0.60m below ground level within the proposed footprint of the new building.

Trench 2 was quite similar to Trench 1 in that below the obviously modern deposits lay a band of clean dark soil (2009) which was probably a build-up or garden soil of uncertain, but probably pre-modern, date. Below this lay intercutting features of uncertain function but possibly of later medieval date. Unlike Trench 1 these were not encountered across the whole trench but were confined to the southern corner of Trench 2. Due to the small area examined the reason for this is unclear. All would have been at least partially within the footprint of the proposed new building and lay just 0.5m below the existing modern ground surface although Context 2009 may be an archaeological deposit and the top of this was no more than c.0.35m below modern ground level.

Across the area assessed during this evaluation, it is clear that good evidence survives for archaeological deposits at around 0.35m below ground level (c.33.10m AOD), with potentially significant medieval activity at around 0.50m below ground level (c.32.90m AOD). The relatively 'quiet' nature of activity in Trench 2 is in marked contrast with that identified in Trench 1, suggesting either that a large, unknown truncation event occurred in the north-western area of the site prior to the deposition of the build-up deposit 1001/2009, or that a significant special variation of activity survives in the development area. Either scenario is of archaeological interest particularly as the evidence from Trench 1 suggests that the current standing buildings appear to have left the earlier remains relatively undisturbed. There is therefore good potential on this site for furthering our understanding of the development of the medieval landscape of this part of Filey.

4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Excavation team	I. Milsted, D. Evans and J. Williams
Research and authors	I. Milsted and D. Evans
Illustrations	I. Milsted
Photography	I. Milsted and D. Evans
Editor	M.R. Stockwell

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Evans, D., 2009. Land off Mitford Street, Filey, North Yorkshire. A Desk-Based Assessment, YAT Report 2009/46



Figure 1 Site location

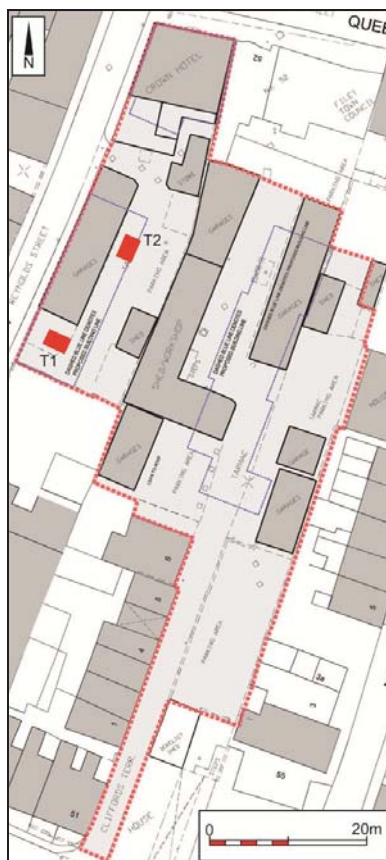


Figure 2 Trench locations

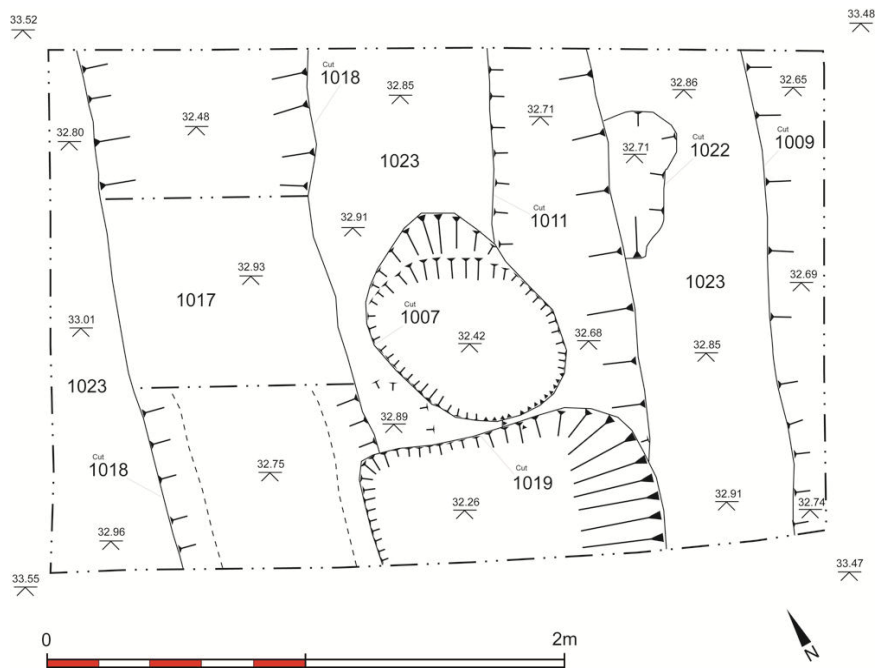


Figure 3 Trench 1 final plan showing earliest phase with later pit in centre

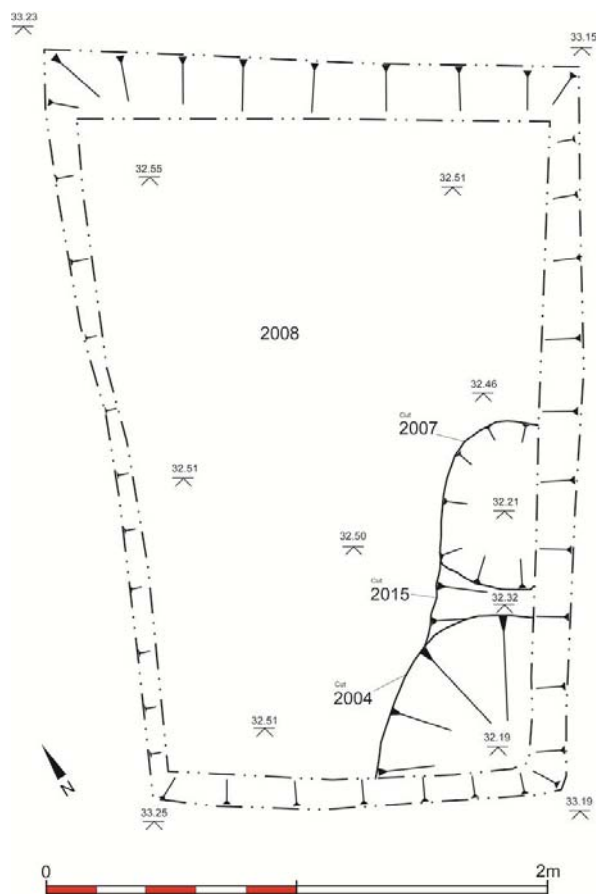


Figure 4 Trench 2 final plan

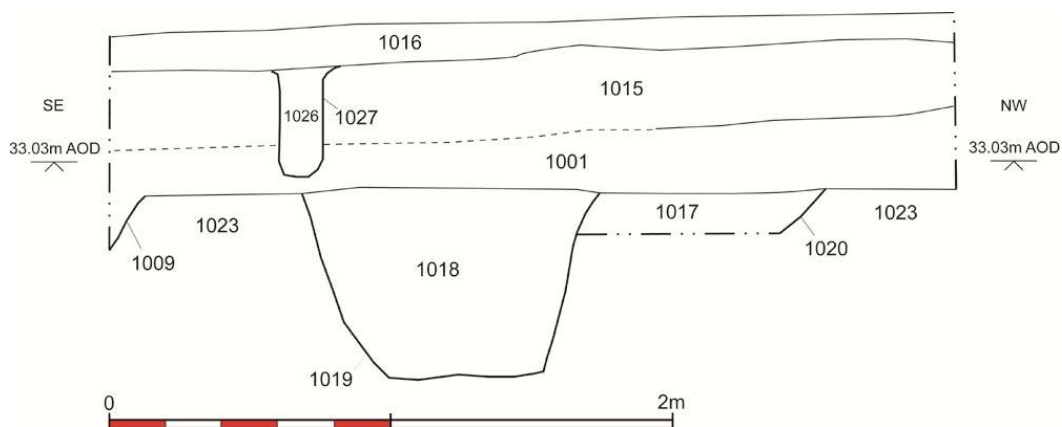


Figure 5 Trench 1 north-east facing section

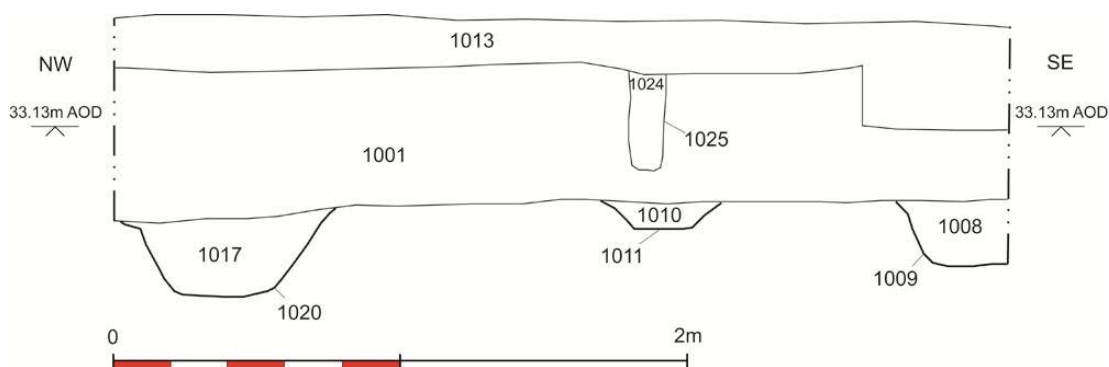


Figure 6 Trench 1 south-west facing section

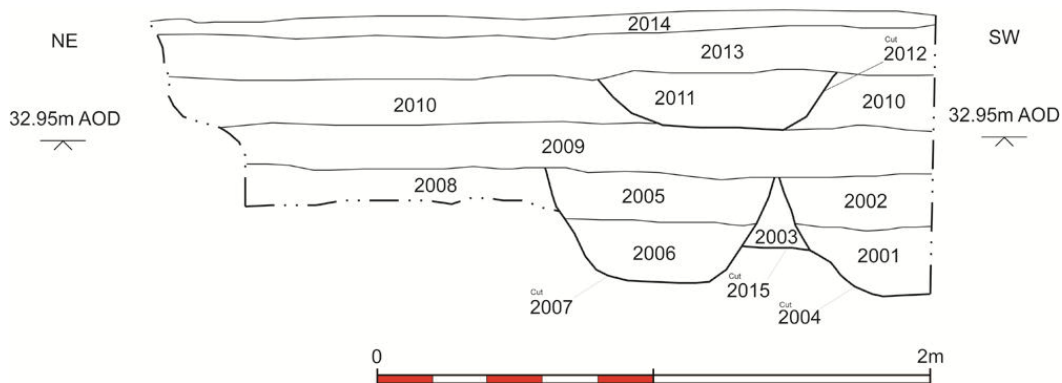


Figure 7 Trench 2 north-west facing section



Plate 1 Trench 1 final view looking north-west



Plate 2 Trench 1 final view looking south-east



Plate 3 Trench 1 south-east facing section



Plate 4 Trench 1 north-east facing section



Plate 5 Trench 1 south-west facing photo



Plate 6 Trench 2 pre-excitation looking north-east



Plate 7 Trench 2 cuts 2003, 2004 and 2007 looking south-east