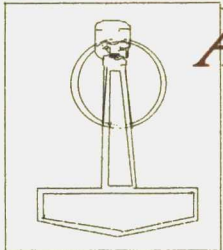


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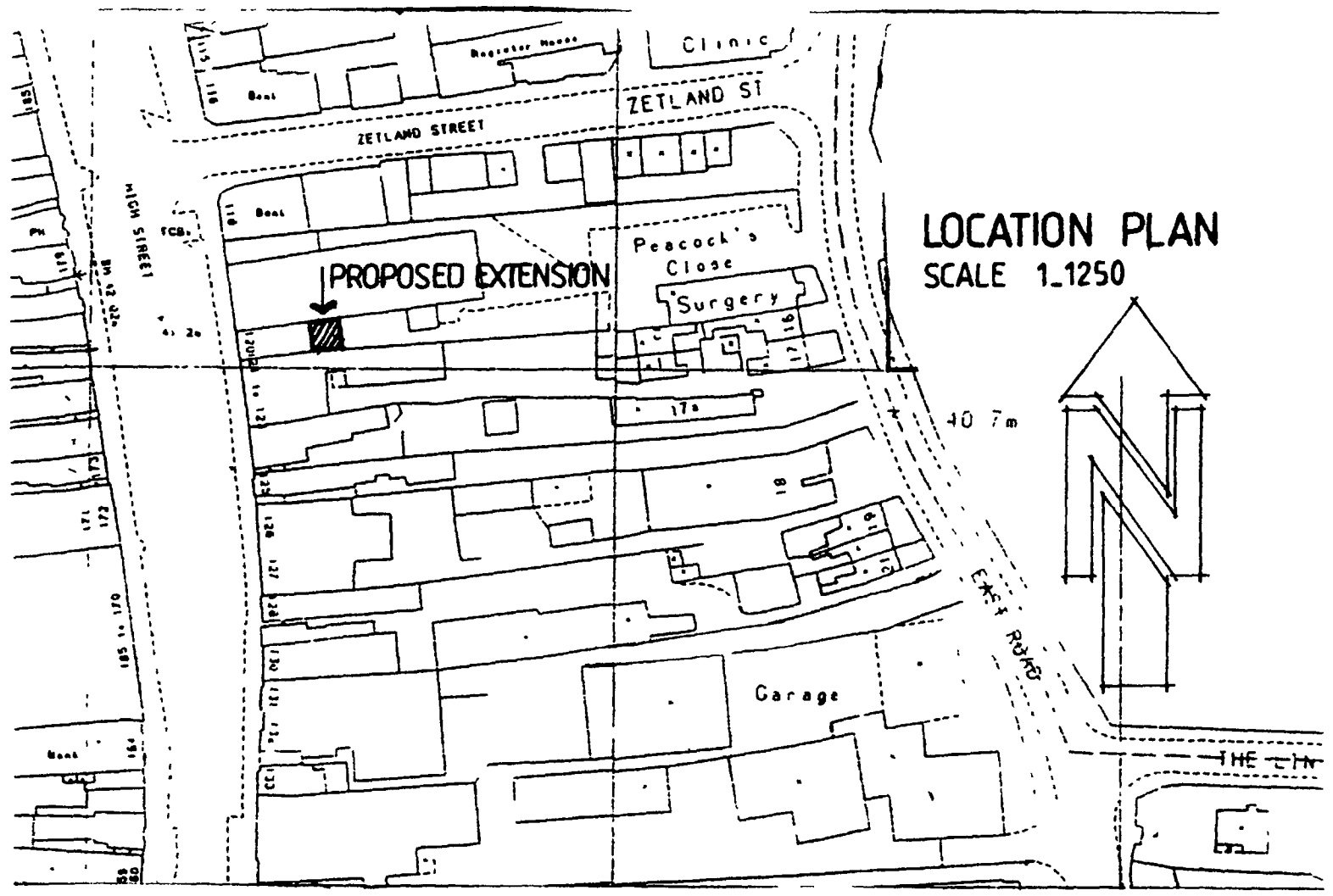
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF  
AT  
120/120A HIGH STREET  
NORTHALLERTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**ALISON CLARKE** **APRIL 2000**

120/120A HIGH STREET NORTHALLERTON

PLAN 1



## WATCHING BRIEF AT 120/120A HIGH STREET, NORTHALLERTON

### INTRODUCTION

The site of 120/120A is a shop on the east side of Northallerton High Street, near the centre of the present shopping area (plan 1). The proposed development involved an extension at the rear of the existing building c. 5.6 metres long and extending across the entire width of the plot (c. 6.3 metres). The rear of the plot prior to development consisted of an open yard with an electricity sub-station at the eastern end. The plots on either side are more fully built over.

The development represented an opportunity to examine the archaeology of a town centre plot that had not been built over in recent years and which might contain evidence of the use of the land back to the medieval period. It was therefore required under the planning permission that an archaeological watching brief be conducted during the development to monitor ground disturbance work and record any features or items of archaeological interest.

### WATCHING BRIEF

A site visit prior to the commencement date of the development works revealed that a trench had already been dug from west to east along the centre of the yard, from the back of the existing building to the electricity sub-station (plan 2). On enquiry, this proved to have been excavated for Northern Electric who needed to undertake alterations in the cables from the sub-station arising from the new development. Further excavation was due to take place at the rear and also in the pavement at the front of the building. After consultation with the Heritage Unit at County Hall, Northallerton and with the developers, it was agreed that the disturbance caused by the electrical work exceeded that of the development itself and that a watching/recording brief on these works would be sufficient to comply with the requirements of the planning permission. This took place on 30 March and 3 – 4 April 2000.

#### Rear Yard

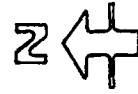
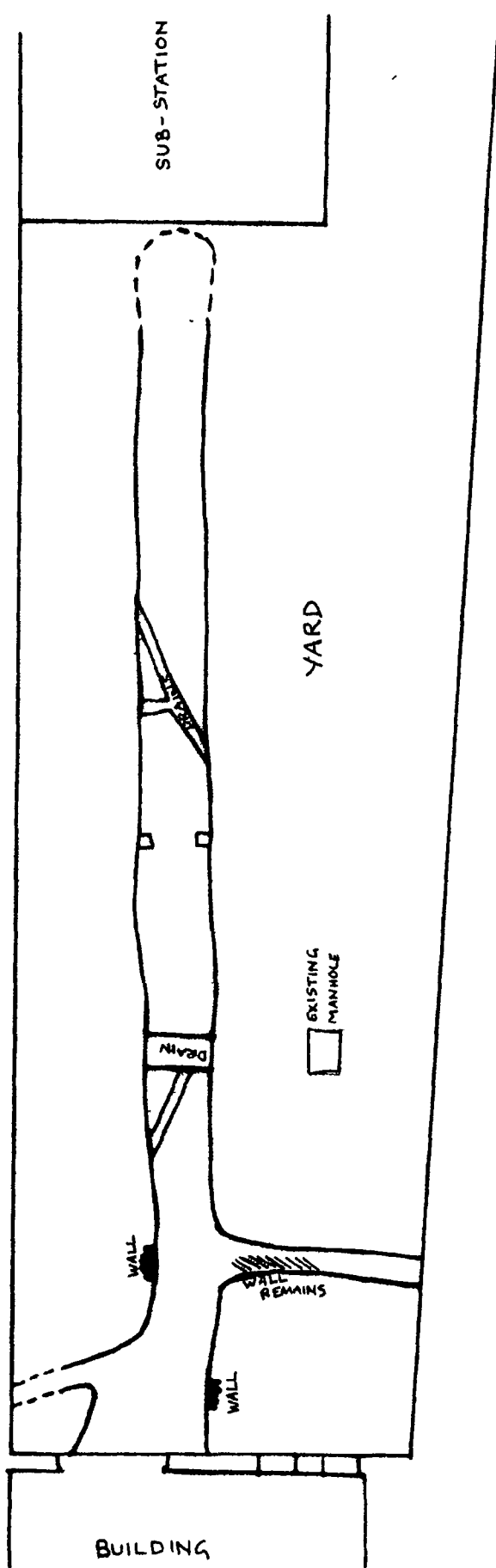
The trench in the rear yard was approximately 1 metre wide and 1 metre deep, and followed the line of an earlier trench which carried three electricity cables from the sub-station to beneath the existing building (plates 1 and 2). Two side trenches were also excavated, one running south into the property on the south side and the other running into the north-west corner to supply the property on the north side. These trenches were narrower (c. 40 cm) and in part shallower than the main trench. The main trench was crossed in several places by drains, one of which was encased in concrete and led to a manhole on the south side of the yard.

Observation of the main trench was limited because it had been excavated prior to an archaeological presence on site, but the sections showed mainly disturbed soil from the original electricity trench.

Approximately 6.5 metres east of the back of the existing building were the remains of a brick wall showing in the north-facing section, and another showed in the south-facing section at 2.7 metres east of the building. This had a plinth or batter on its west side (plate 3), suggesting that this was the outside, and that any building with which it was associated was to the east. The southern spur trench was opposite to this wall, and when this was deepened under observation, it was shown to contain the remains of the brick wall, and a concrete floor which appeared to extend eastwards. There were quantities of brick rubble in the spoil from this area, all consisting of modern red brick.

Also visible in the section immediately west of the wall were several large yellow sandstone slabs, not dressed but apparently tipped against the wall and surrounded by thick pale yellow-brown clay. The remainder of the soil was mixed mid to dark brown clayey loam with frequent stones. From approximately half way along the trench to the east, the stony clay loam overlaid a reddish brown stony friable clay from a depth of c. 8 metres; this was the natural but was not entirely undisturbed. The trench was deepened beneath the concrete-cased

120/120A HIGH STREET NORTHALLERTON  
PLAN 2



SCALE 1:100

drain, and here some reddish brown stony clay was exposed which appeared to be undisturbed. At the eastern end of the trench was an area of darker soil visible in the south facing section, possibly a pit (plate 4). A fragment of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from the section.

Other pottery recovered from the spoil heaps included a piece of 17<sup>th</sup> century black tin glaze and a fragment of heavily abraded medieval green glaze.

### The Front

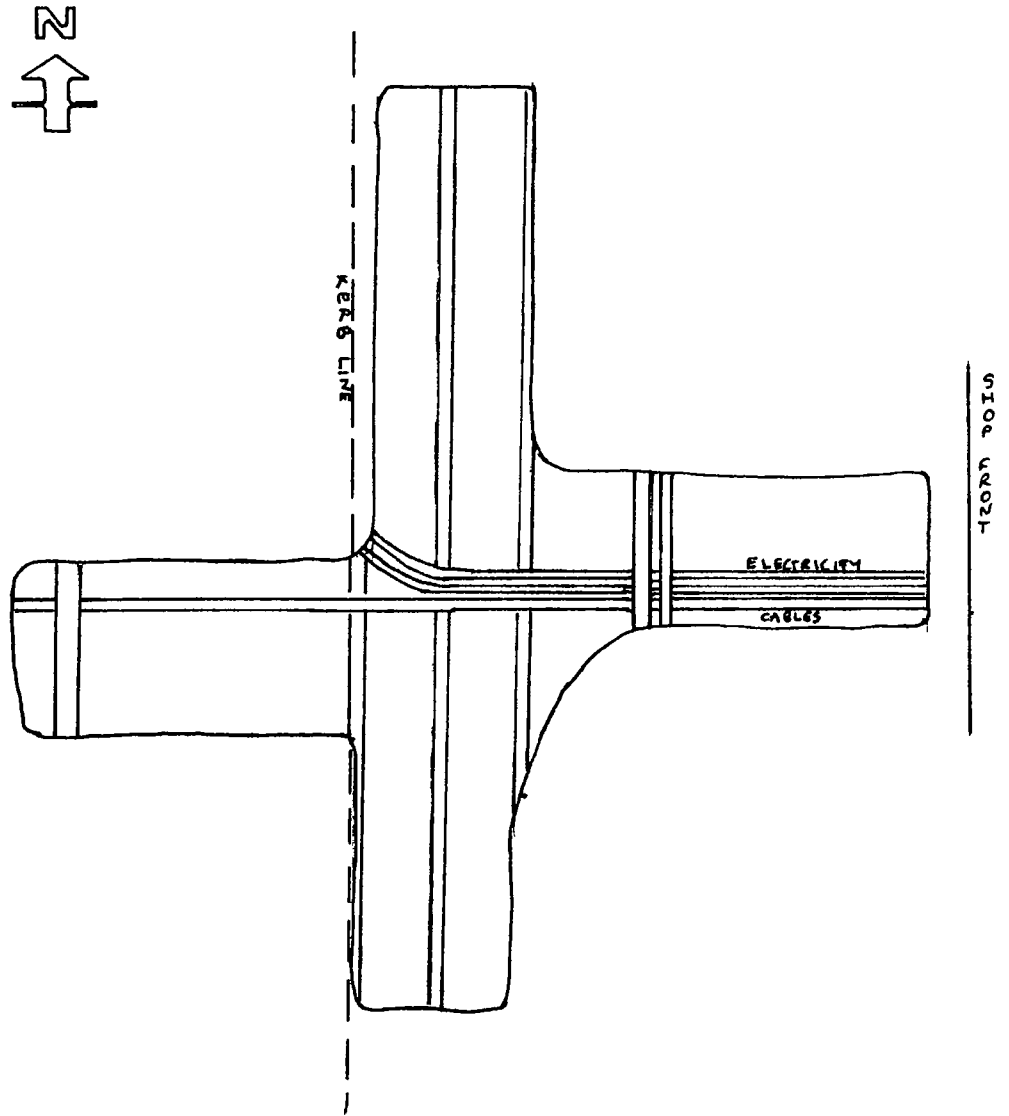
To the front of the building, in the pavement and roadway of the High Street, trenches were machine excavated to renew existing electricity cables (plan 3). Beneath the pavement slabs was sand and hardcore to a depth of 26 metres, then mixed mid brown clayey loam with stones and brick fragments. The fill of the original electricity cable trenches was sandier. The soil became redder and more clayey with depth.

In the roadway the tarmac and road base extended to a depth of 55 metres, below which was reddish brown disturbed stony loamy clay to a depth of c. 95 metres. Beneath this was brown and yellow sand which extended to the base of the excavation at 13 metres.

Numerous services at various depths were encountered, and apart from the very lowest deposits, all the soils were disturbed. No finds were recovered.

### CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief at the front of 120 High Street did not produce any evidence of archaeological interest, but showed widespread disturbance from modern services. The rear yard also had extensive modern disturbance, mainly from drains and services but also from an earlier building which was probably 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, there was evidence of earlier occupation and use of the site from both the medieval and post-medieval periods, although this was slight.



120/120A HIGH STREET NORTHALLERTON

PLAN 3

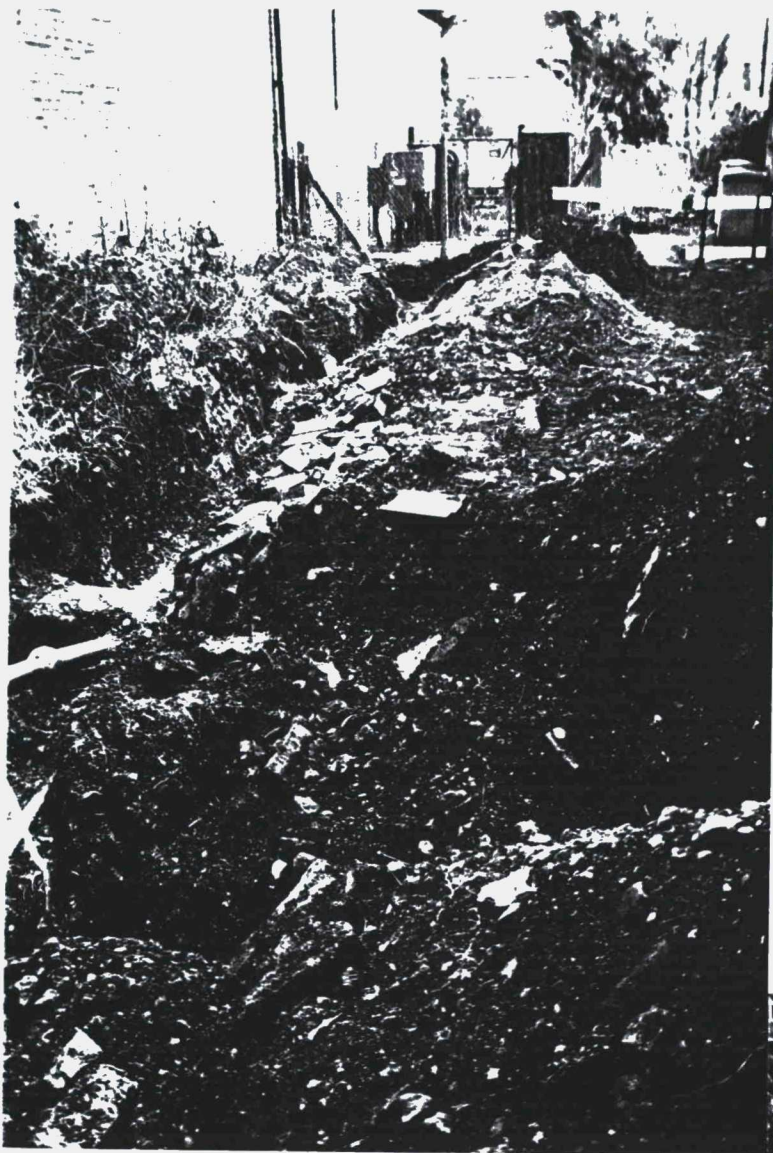


Plate 1  
Rear yard trench  
Looking east

Plate 2  
Rear yard trench  
Looking west





Plate 3 Rear yard trench – wall remains in south facing section



Plate 4 Rear yard trench – possible pit in south facing section