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**Report on an Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment
of land off Marlborough Street,
Scarborough,
North Yorkshire**

by
Trevor Pearson
Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society

for
Barratt, York

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1. SUMMARY

Documentary, cartographic and archaeological evidence have been combined in an investigation into the archaeological potential of a parcel of land on Marlborough Street, Scarborough. This site may have been occupied in the Roman period and in the medieval period it lay just outside the town defences which ran both to the south and east of the site. The main route leading out of the town's medieval north gate passed the south side of the site which as a consequence may have been occupied by buildings. Archaeological evidence suggests the rest of the site could have been given over to pottery manufacture or to other industrial use. From the 16th century to the middle of the 19th century the site appears to have been largely devoid of buildings and was probably just farm land after which a series of small workshops or warehouses occupied the site as the surroundings became heavily built up. Archaeological deposits will have been destroyed across the middle part of the site by a mid 19th century gravel quarry and the construction of part of the present building has probably also been destructive of the northern two-thirds of the site. Trial excavations are suggested as a means of evaluating the extent of surviving archaeological deposits.

2. INTRODUCTION (Figures 1 and 2)

On 1 August 2000 the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society were commissioned by Barratt, York, to prepare a desk-top assessment of the archaeological potential of land on Marlborough Street, Scarborough. The land is being considered for a housing development and the need for a desk based assessment of the likely archaeological significance of the site was advised by the North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit.

The block of land measures approximately 75m north-south by 20m east-west and is on the east side of Marlborough Street which is on the north side of Scarborough's historic core (site centre at National Grid Reference TA 04330 89060). The site outline used in this report is based on the 1:1250 Ordnance survey map surveyed in 1964 (Ordnance Survey 1965). The site is entirely occupied by a warehouse, partly brick-built and partly of steel frame construction.

The area of the site is fairly level and is 60m south of the cliff top overlooking the North Bay. To the south of the site the ground falls away by several metres to Castle Road which runs at the base of the slope. Victorian hotel buildings dominate this part of the town and an early Victorian row of cottages called Wilson's Mariners' Homes lies between the site and Castle Road.

3. METHODOLOGY

This desk top assessment is based on a search of published secondary sources of documentary, cartographic and archaeological evidence. Each class of evidence is considered in the following sections in order to build up a picture of the past usage of the site followed by an assessment of the site's likely archaeological potential.

The time available for the preparation of this assessment precluded any search for primary historical and archaeological information relating to the site which may be held in local archives and museums. However it is not considered that a search of primary source material would have added a great deal to the final conclusions of the assessment.

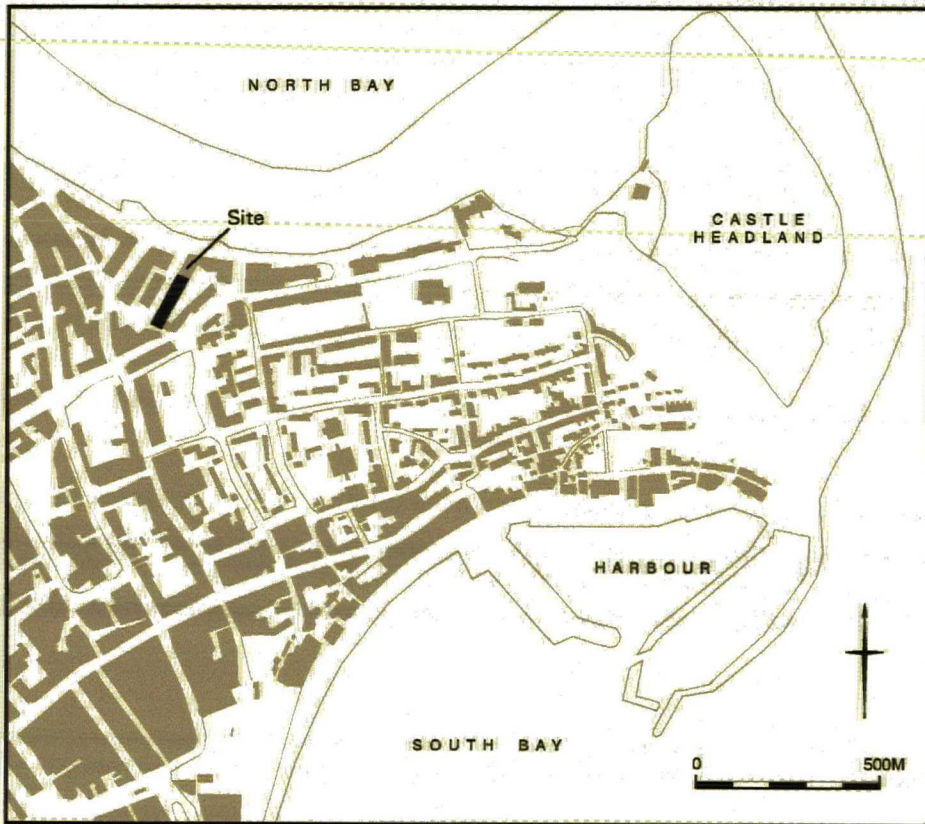


Figure 1:
The location
of the site

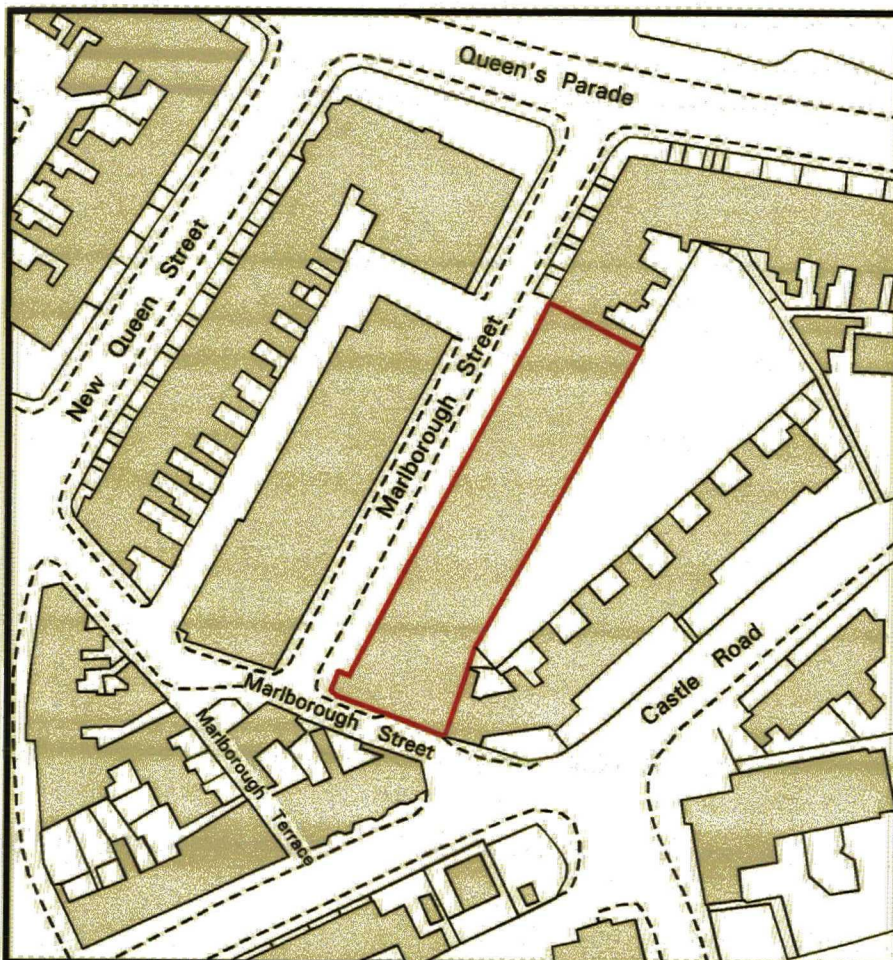


Figure 2:
The environs
of the site

4. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

4.1 Medieval (12th-15th centuries) (Figure 3)

Viking period sagas suggest there may have been a settlement at Scarborough in the 10th and 11th centuries (Pearson 1987, 8-10). However other more historically reliable documentary sources indicate the town was founded in the middle of the 12th century on the orders of King Henry II. This involved the laying out of a grid of streets on sloping ground between the North and South Bays stretching inland from the castle. The town prospered in the subsequent centuries becoming one of the largest medieval towns in the north of England.

The site is on the north-west of the medieval town outside the line of the defences which ran to within 25m of the south of the site. Along this stretch was Auborough Gate, the main entrance into the town from the north. To the east of Auborough Gate the defences curved northwards where they ran close to, or possibly across, the east end of the present site before joining with the North Bay cliff. There are no published medieval documentary references specifically to the area of the site to indicate the use to which the land was put before the 16th century.

4.2 16th century

The earliest view of Scarborough, dated to the 1530s shows open ground outside Auborough Gate suggesting the area of the site was then given over to agricultural land. This is supported by the fact that in a property transaction of 1587 two closes are referred to outside Auborough Gate (Jeayes 1914, 61a). From the description of their abutments, these closes probably lay not far to the west of the present site.

4.3 17th century

On 30 July 1648 a cavalry skirmish took place outside Auborough Gate in the second Civil War siege of Scarborough suggesting this area was open ground and not obstructed by buildings (Binns 1996, 203). Other references are made in the Corporation records to closes of meadow in this general area (Ashcroft 1991,51).

4.4 18th-20th century

From the 18th century onwards the development of the site can be demonstrated adequately through cartographic sources (see below).

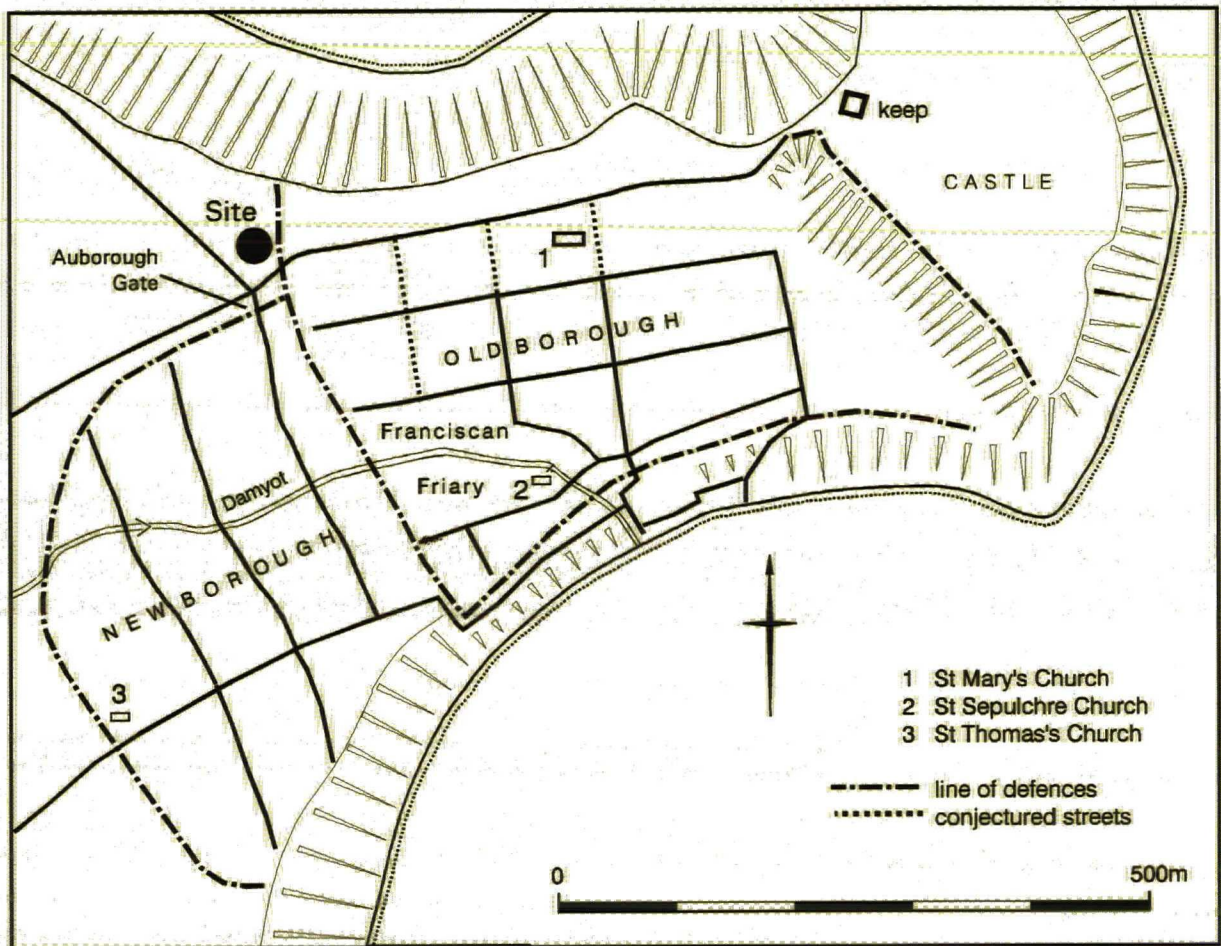


Figure 3: Medieval Scarborough showing the location of the site

5. CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

A range of small and large scale maps were examined. The maps discussed below offer the most detail about the site.

5.1 Vincent 1747 (Figure 4)

This is the earliest map to depict the area of the site and was compiled to commemorate the measures taken to fortify the town in 1745-6 in anticipation of an attack by the Jacobite army of Bonnie Prince Charlie. The plan shows gun positions (a) outside Auborough Gate (b) (referred to as Old Brough Barr on the plan) fronting onto Castle Road (c) with Peasholm Lane (d) heading north-west from the gate. The lower part of present-day Marlborough Street perpetuates the line of Peasholm Lane.

The area of the site is shown as featureless open ground, the south-west side of which abutts Peasholm Lane.

5.2 Wood 1828 (Figure 5)

Auborough Gate was demolished in 11 years before the publication of this map. Both Castle Road (c) and Peasholm Lane (d) are clearly shown with agricultural land with a pond (e) on the north side of Castle Road.

The area of the site is shown as being part of two fields, the boundary between them crossing close to the north end (f). Parts of two buildings occupying the angle between Peasholm Lane and Castle Road impinge upon the south corner of the site (g). There is no clue to the function of the two buildings although they could have been connected with the ropery which the map shows ran along the north side of Peasholm Lane just to the west of the site.

5.3 Ordnance Survey 1852 (Figure 6)

Wilson's Mariners' Asylum (now known as Wilson's Mariners' Homes) was built along the Castle Road frontage of the two fields in 1836 (h), whilst the land behind remained open ground (Fieldhouse 1973, 9). The line of the ditch belonging to the medieval defences is shown (i) along with the site of Auborough Gate (b), however the line of the ditch is probably inaccurate. The map shows it running along the line of Castle Road which is implausible as this was the main medieval route up to the castle. It is more likely that the ditch was aligned further north. The name of the alley which is now Marlborough Terrace is shown as Limekiln Hill (j) indicating lime burning took place at some time on the rising ground north of Castle Road.

The area of the site is shown as partly occupied by the larger portion of a gravel pit (k) and the track leading to it (l). A reservoir at the north end of the site (m) could be the same as the pond (e) shown on in 1828 on Wood's map, whilst a building with an enclosure on its north side impinges on the south corner of the site (n). The building is different in shape to that depicted in this position in 1828 (g) and could therefore be a later structure.

5.4 Ordnance Survey 1912 (Figure 7)

The map shows the general area extensively developed by the early years of the 20th century. Although published in 1912 this map was surveyed in 1891-2 with some revision in 1910 suggesting that much of the development must have taken place in the second half of the 19th

century, mostly connected with the provision of hotel accommodation for Scarborough's expanding number of tourist visitors.

The area of the site appears to have been occupied by a series of small units which are clearly not like the hotel buildings shown on neighbouring streets (o). The buildings may have been warehouses or workshops connected with servicing the surrounding hotel businesses.

5.5 Ordnance Survey 1965 (Figure 8)

The map shows few changes occurred during the first half of the 20th century apart from the replacement of the smaller units in the area of the site with the building which stands today.

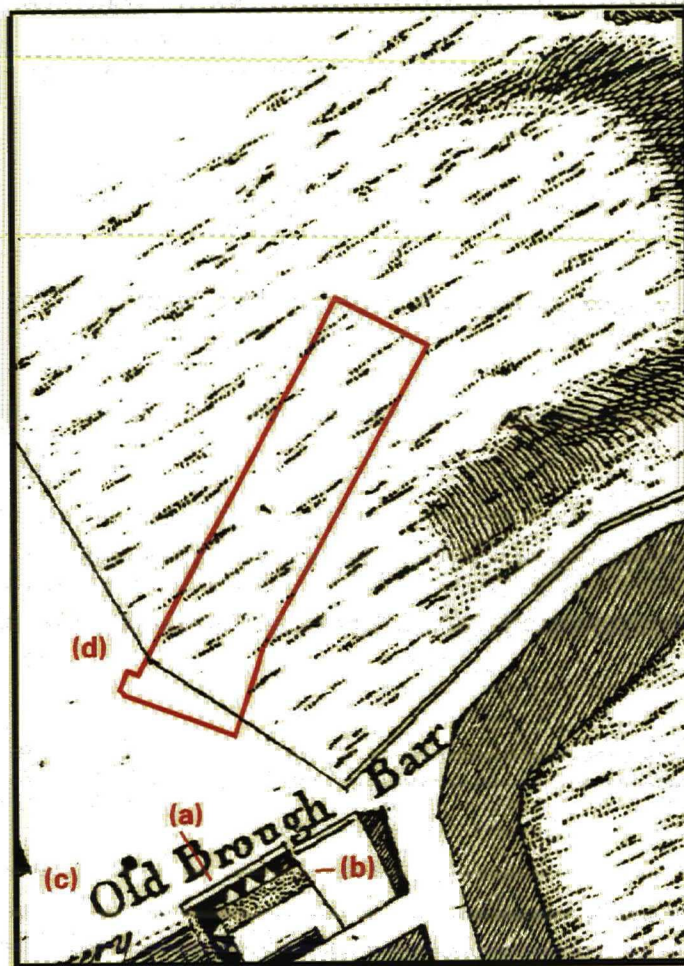


Figure 4: Abstract from Vincent 1747 at an approximate scale of 1:1250 showing the outline of the site (in red) and features referred to in the text

(a) 1745-6 gun position; (b) Auborough Gate; (c) Castle Road; (d) Peasholm Lane

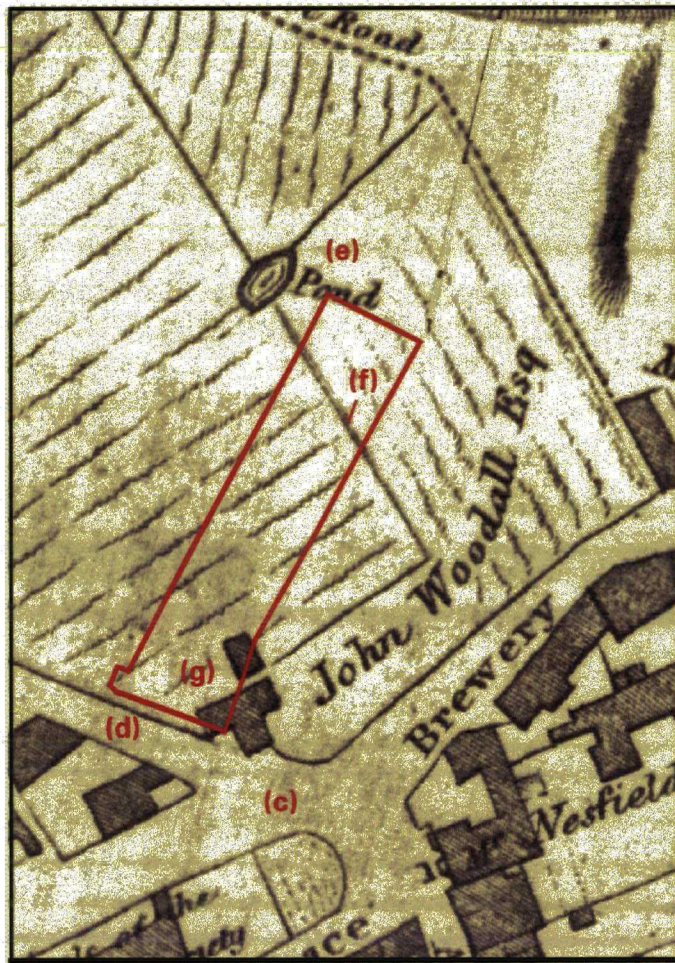


Figure 5: Abstract from Wood 1828 at an approximate scale of 1:1250 showing the outline of the site (in red) and features referred to in the text

(c) Castle Road; (d) Peasholm Lane; (e) pond; (f) field boundary; (g) buildings

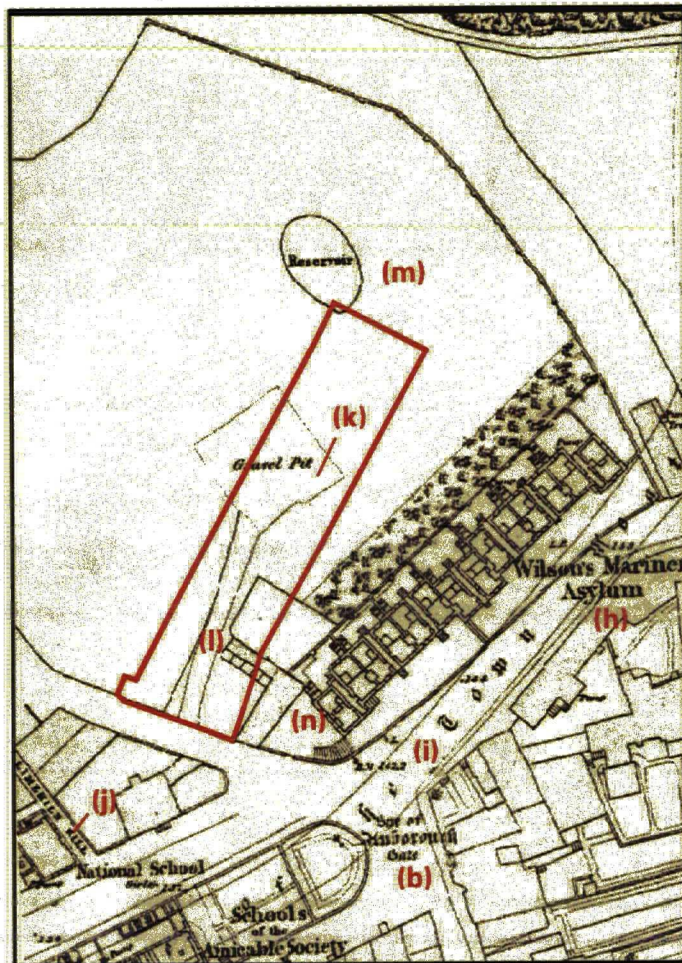


Figure 6: Abstract from Ordnance Survey 1852 at a scale of 1:1250 showing the outline of the site (in red) and features referred to in the text

(b) site of Auborough Gate; (h) Wilson's Mariners' Asylum;
 (i) line of medieval ditch; (j) Limekiln Hill; (k) gravel pit;
 (l) track; (m) reservoir; (n) building and enclosure



Figure 7: Abstract from Ordnance Survey 1912 at 1:1250 scale showing the outline of the site (in red) and site referred to in the text

(o) hotel buildings

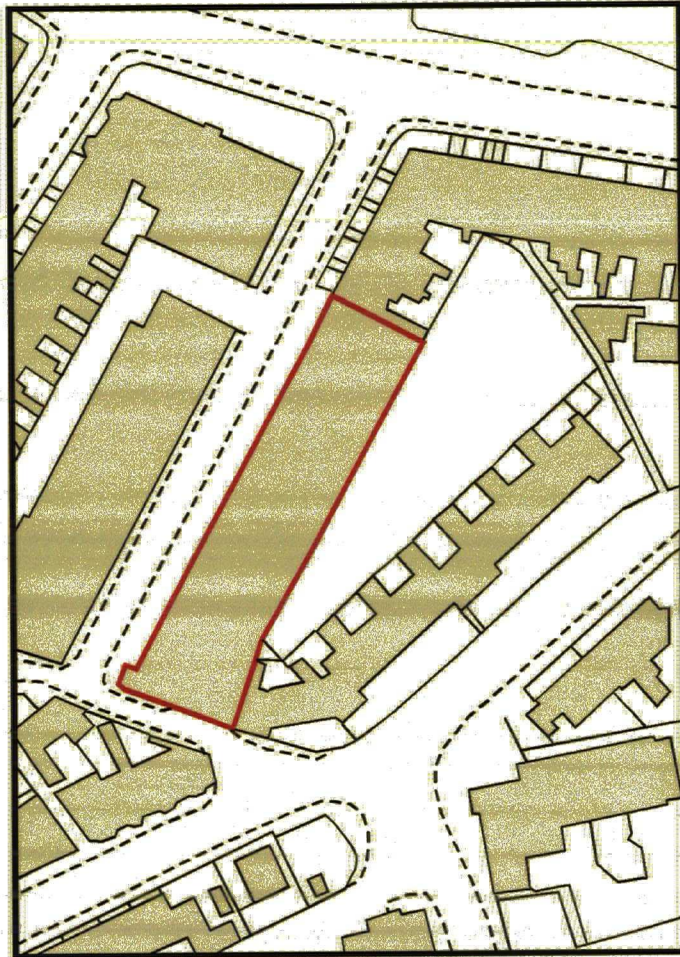


Figure 8: Redrawn abstract from Ordnance Survey 1965 at 1:1250 scale showing the outline of the site (in red)

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE (Figure 9)

6.1. Prehistoric (before 43AD)

There are no records of prehistoric occupation having taken place within the vicinity of the site. The nearest known settlement is the late Bronze Age and early Iron Age site on the castle headland over 500m to the east dating back to around 900-700 BC.

6.2. Roman (43-410)

6.2.1 Castle Road may perpetuate the line of a Roman road from the west leading to the late 4th century signal station on the castle headland. The road approaches as close as 10m from the south corner of the present site (Pearson 1987, 11).

6.2.2 Pottery of 4th century date was recovered from an excavation at the rear of Wilson's Mariner's Homes in 1966 by P. Farmer. The excavation has not been published but the trench is believed to have abutted the south-east side of the present site (Pearson 1987, 11).

6.2.3 Fragments of Roman roof and flue tile were recovered from an excavation at the rear of St Mary's Parish House in 1967 by P. Farmer. The excavation has not been published but the trench is believed to have been about 50m south-west of the present site (Pearson 1987,11) .

6.2.4 In December 1999 an archaeological watching brief at the site of former Convent School in Queen Street recovered Roman remains including pottery and a fragment of rotary quern preserved below the medieval town rampart. The remains were associated with occupation evidence consisting of a curving gully, circular hearth and the possible foundations of a building. The watching brief took place just over 100m to the south-west of the present site (SAHS Site Code STS99; Scarborough Museum accession code 2000.633).

6.3. Dark Age, Anglo-Saxon and Viking periods (410-1066)

There are no records of any occupation of this date having taken place in the vicinity of the site. Claims have been made for a viking period settlement some 400m to the east on the north side of Castle Road based on an unpublished assemblage of early 11th century artefacts (Farmer 1988,124) .

6.4. Medieval Period (1066-1485)

6.4.1 In 1806 the foundations of two bastions 12 feet in diameter (3.65m) were uncovered during the widening of Castle Road (Baker 1882, 389). They were presumed to be the medieval foundations of Auborough Gate though arguably a different structure to that shown on the 18th and 19th century maps discussed above and which was demolished in 1817. The precise location of this discovery is not known but is likely to be within 50m of the present site.

6.4.2 Brick-arched pottery kilns were discovered in 1854 on the south side of Castle Road at Nesfield's malthouse, a location which places it less than 50m south-east of the present site. Further quantities of pottery were apparently recovered at this time along the North cliff between New Queen Street in the west and Mulgrave Terrace in the east, an area which encompasses the present site (Baker 1882, 375).

6.4.3 Excavations at the rear of Wilson's Mariner's Homes in 1966 by P. Farmer uncovered the remains of a medieval industrial complex with evidence for pottery manufacture and lime

burning and /or iron smelting as well as the medieval town defences. The excavation has not been published but the trench is believed to have abutted the south-east side of the present site (Pearson 1987, 70-71).

6.4.4 Excavations at the rear of St Mary's Parish House and in and around St Peter's Church in 1967 by P. Farmer both uncovered extensive evidence for medieval pottery production including kilns, pottery wasters and associated clay quarries. The excavations have not been fully published but the discoveries were made between 50m and 100m south-east of the present site (Pearson 1987, 70-71).

6.5. Post-medieval period 1485-present

6.5.1 A limekiln was recorded in 1972 as visible at the rear of a shop on the north side of Castle Road adjacent to the alley called Limekiln Hill (now known as Marlborough Terrace; Pearson 1987, 74). The limekiln is likely to be post-medieval in date in view of the fact that it appears to have been incorporated in a standing building and because the name Limekiln Hill does not appear in medieval documents. The location is within 25m of the south end of the present site.

7. THE PRESENT BUILDING

7.1 The building is situated within the Scarborough Conservation Area but is not listed as of historic interest.

7.2 Based on an external inspection, the existing building appears to have been constructed in at least two stages. The southern part (about one third) appears to be a conventional masonry structure of the late 19th century although incorporating some earlier brickwork. The northern larger section is a steel and concrete framed building from the 20th century. It incorporates a lower ground floor which, certainly at the north end, is substantially below the level of Marlborough Street. Although the levels relative to the open space behind Wilson's Mariners' Homes have not been checked, it is probable that this 20th century building, with its substantial frame and lower ground floor, has resulted in the loss of any pre-existing archaeology. Archaeology may survive in the forecourt of the northern section and within the southern building with its traditional masonry construction.

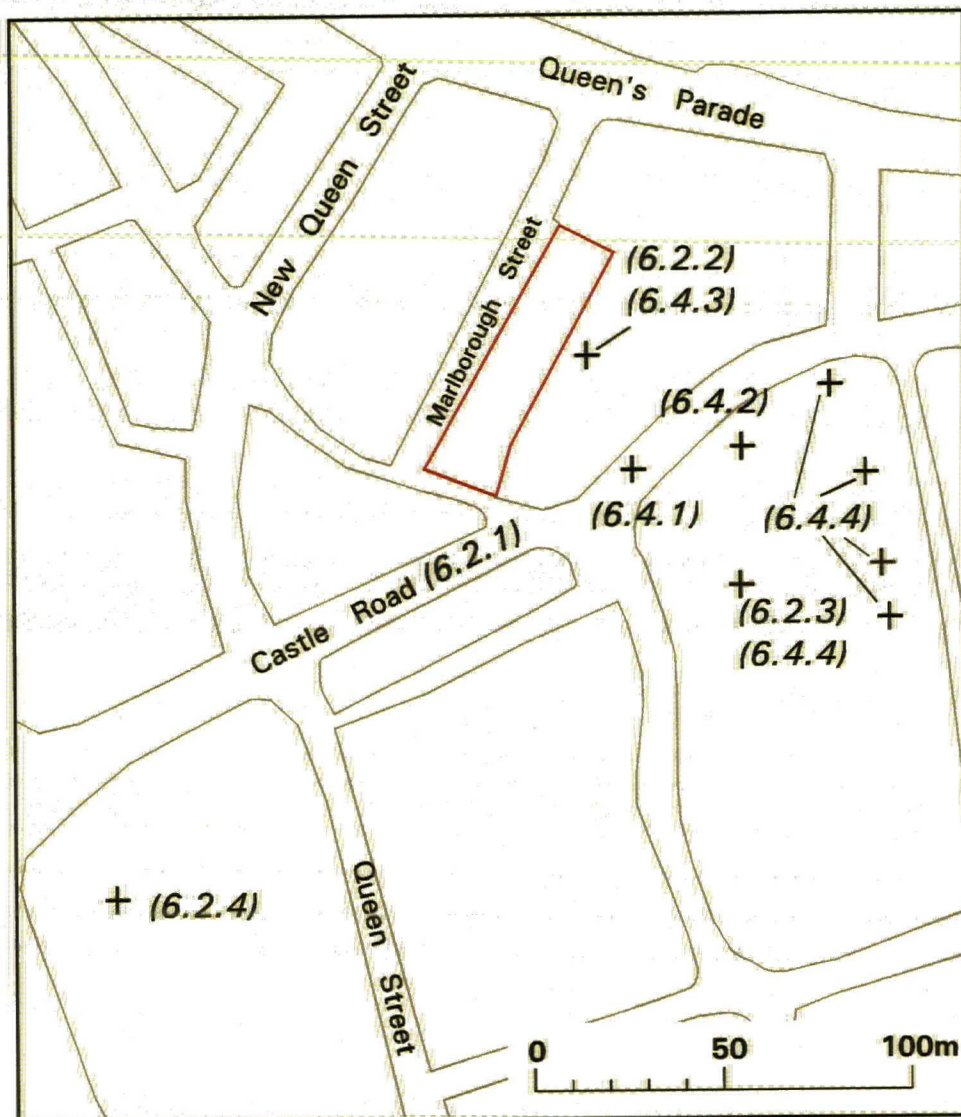


Figure 9: The environs of the site at 1:2000 scale showing the location of archaeological sites and finds referred to in the text. Site shown with red outline

8. STATEMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

8.1 Prehistoric

There is no evidence of any archaeological potential.

8.2 Roman

The site falls within an area of possible Roman activity indicated by the fact that Roman artefacts have been recovered from three neighbouring excavations, a situation which is unparalleled elsewhere in the town. It is possible a settlement existed in this area, perhaps stretching along Castle Road given its supposed Roman origin.

The site may offer an opportunity to investigate the character and extent of the only area of undoubted Roman activity so far discovered within the modern town.

8.3 Dark Age, Anglo-Saxon and Viking periods

There is no evidence of any archaeological potential.

8.4 Medieval Period

Archaeological evidence compensates for the sparsity of medieval documentary evidence for this area and indicates the site may lie within an area of pottery manufacture, ironworking and limeburning. Of these, pottery manufacture is the most likely given previous discoveries of kilns, wasters and clay quarrying in the area. The products of the Scarborough potters (called Scarborough Ware by present-day archaeologists) are found on excavations both in this country and around the north sea coasts of Europe.

The site may offer an opportunity to investigate part of the manufacturing site of Scarborough Ware pottery, which is a type of medieval pottery of interest to archaeologists excavating in this country and on continental Europe.

The south-west side of the site abutts the former Peasholm Lane which was aligned on Aurborough Gate, the north gate into the medieval town. Despite the lack of documentary references, it is not unreasonable to anticipate the remains of medieval buildings along this frontage bordering the main route northwards. To date no excavations have taken place on an area of medieval extra-mural settlement at Scarborough.

The site may offer the first opportunity in Scarborough to examine an area of medieval extra-mural settlement.

The medieval defences ran close to the south of the site and then curved northwards where they are reported to have been excavated in the car park at the rear of Wilson's Mariners' Homes. This line would take them somewhere across the east half of the present site.

The site offers a rare opportunity to examine part of the medieval town defences.

8.5 Post-medieval

Documentary and cartographic evidence indicates the site was largely open ground from the 16th to the middle of the 19th centuries. There may be the remains of lime kilns from this period, but these will be of only minor local importance.

The site may offer only minor archaeological potential.

9. SCOPE FOR FURTHER WORK

The site offers high archaeological potential for the roman and medieval periods but this is somewhat curtailed by the likely destruction of deposits which has taken place. The assessment has recognised two principal causes of this destruction.

The gravel pit shown on the 1852 Ordnance survey map will have destroyed an area of around 250-300 square metres across the middle part of the site, possibly much more if it grew in size after the map was surveyed. However, in view of the fact that archaeological remains were uncovered behind Wilson's Mariners' Homes, the gravel quarry cannot have extended across the whole of the vacant land shown on the map.

Exterior examination suggests the present building may have destroyed up to two-thirds of the northern part of the site with archaeological remains only likely to have survived in the forecourt area. Preservation may be better on the southern one third of the site where the building is of different construction.

In view of the importance of the site it is imperative that further work is considered to establish the likely level of preservation and the character of surviving archaeological deposits. Two areas of the site could be examined by two test trenches. One in the north forecourt area could look for evidence of the medieval defences and for traces of medieval pottery manufacture. A second in the footprint of the building occupying the south 1/3 of the site could investigate the extent of any medieval building remains fronting onto the line of the approach road to Auborough Gate. Both trenches could potentially unearth Roman deposits.

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