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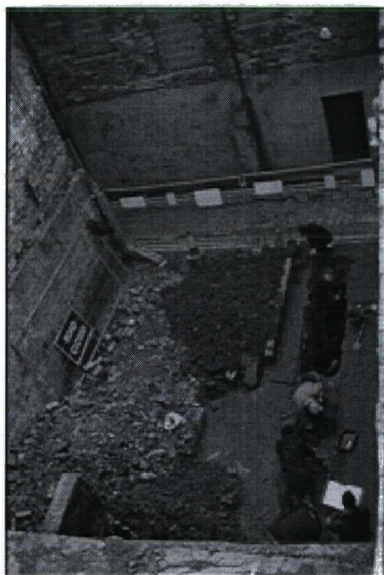
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**AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
AND
WATCHING BRIEF
AT 58 QUAY STREET
SCARBOROUGH**

**Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Interim Report 35: 2003**

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- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Site Description
- 3.0 Historical and archaeological background
- 4.0 Aims and objectives
- 5.0 Methodology
- 6.0 The excavation
- 7.0 The watching brief
- 8.0 Discussion
- 9.0 Acknowledgements



Frontispiece
The site from above

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological excavation and watching brief carried out by Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society (SAHS) on a development site on the northern side of Quay Street in January 2003. The National Grid Reference is TA 05071 88830 and the site code QS 03.

1.1 The archaeological work was carried out on behalf of Go Property & Leisure to satisfy an archaeological condition attached to a planning permission for re-building the fire-damaged warehouse on the site - decision 02/00233/FL.

2.0 Site Description

2.1 The site has a frontage of 7.5 metres to Quay Street and a total front to back depth of 10.2 metres – figure 1. The rear 2.3 metres of the site are on a platform 5.0 metres above the main part of the site and are not affected by this archaeological proposal

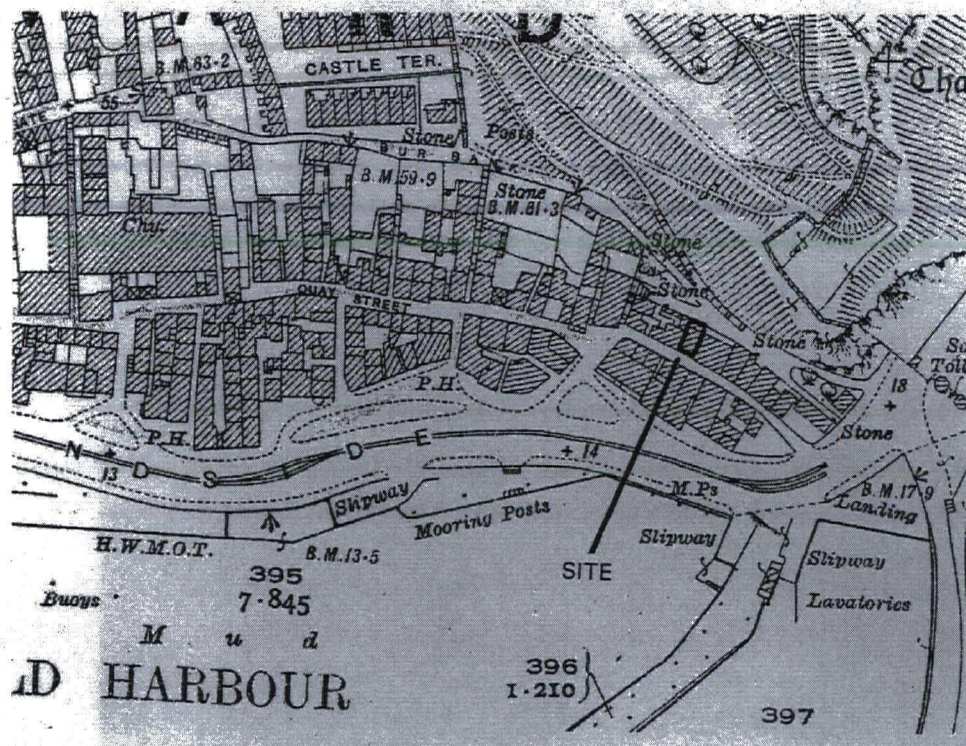


Fig 1: Extract from the 1:2500 Scale Ordnance Survey map dated 1929 showing the location of the site and the previous building

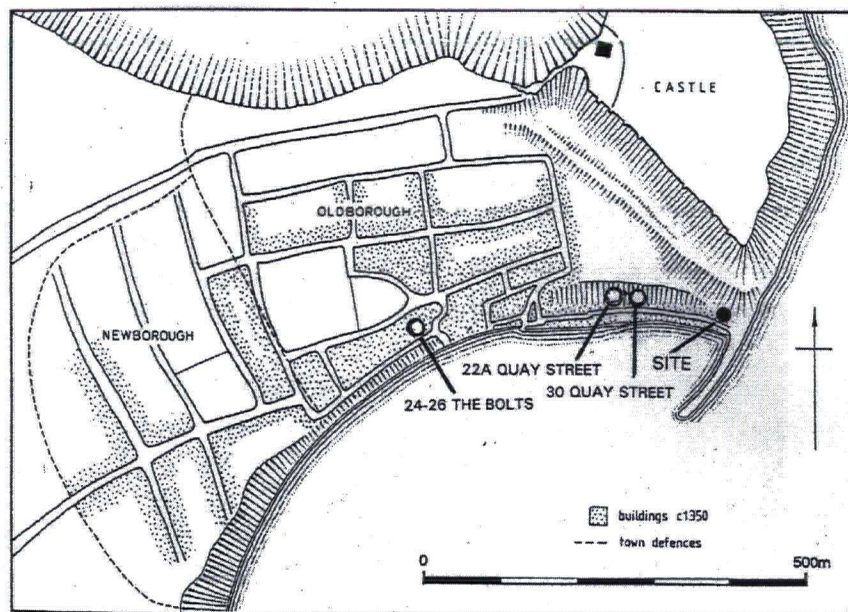
2.2 The site was previously occupied by a 19th century warehouse which, following serious fire damage, had been demolished. This 19th century warehouse was itself a replacement of earlier buildings on the site.

2.3 At its extreme northern end, the site butts on to a narrow lane known as Salmon Steps, which gives access to the Castle Dykes. The retaining wall between the site and Salmon Steps has been observed to consist of large blocks of well coursed stonework. It continues behind numbers 56 and 60 Quay Street. At the current site it has been re-fronted in 19th century bricks.

2.4 The retaining wall between the main site and upper platform was also noted to be constructed from squared stone blocks, again re-faced in 19th century brickwork. Abutting and extending below this retaining wall is a well.

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 The site is situated on or close to what was probably originally the seashore at the foot of the South Bay Cliff. Although claims have been made for Roman and Viking settlements around the South Bay¹, the documented development of the area begins with the emergence of Scarborough as a town and port during the second half of the 12th century². Figure 2 shows the location of previous excavations. An excavation in 1978 at 30 Quay Street³ uncovered an area of stone paving on the natural clay surface and a second area of paving was reportedly found at the junction of Bakehouse Steps and Quay Street in 1971⁴. Both may have been rudimentary slipways constructed on the natural shoreline before the construction of the first harbour wall in this part of the South Bay.



¹ Farmer P G (1976) Scarborough Harbour and Borough, 1 and Farmer PG (1988) Early Medieval Settlement at Scarborough in Manby TG (Ed) Archaeology in Eastern Yorkshire, 140-2

² Pearson T (1987) An Archaeological Survey of Scarborough, 31

³ Pearson T (1978) An Excavation at 30 Quay Street in Transactions of the Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society No 21, 15-16

⁴ Farmer PG (1976) 3

- 3.2 Quay Street could mark the line of the first waterfront which may have consisted of a stone and timber harbour wall. Subsequent reclamation meant that the harbour front moved progressively further south and by the middle of the 14th century it appears to have been mid-way between present Quay Street and Sandside⁵. Reclamation also involved raising the ground level behind the harbour front to provide some protection from flooding during high tides and heavy seas. The 1978 excavation at 30 Quay Street found that clay had been dumped to raise the ground level partially burying the earlier slipway whilst an excavation on the north side of The Bolts in 1990 and on the north side of Quay Street at number 22A in 1996 revealed that domestic refuse had been dumped at the base of the cliff probably for the same purpose^{6 7}.
- 3.3 The area around the harbour was the most densely settled part of the medieval town as is indicated by the high rents paid for land here in the 14th century⁸. Several houses along Quay Street still preserve possible medieval timberwork in their structures, most notably the former Three Mariners Inn on the south side of the street and No 2 Quay Street on the north.
- 3.4 Quay Street is shown on 18th century maps of the town, such as Cossins' of 1725⁹ as being fully developed, but it is not possible to deduce the size and form of the site from such maps.
- 3.5 The first accurate map of the area is John Wood's survey of 1828¹⁰. This shows the site developed by a building right across the frontage with a return wing at the eastern end alongside the boundary with the current 60 Quay Street.
- 3.5 The earliest Ordnance Survey map was published in 1852¹¹ at the scale of 1:1056. This shows the site developed by two long, narrow buildings running back to the present brick back wall to the lower part of the site. The upper platform part of the site appears to be a yard. It would appear that the site had been rebuilt between the publication of Wood's map and the first Ordnance Survey map. There is a further clue to this in a will of 1824 which refers to a house or tenement '...lately untenanted and since in part taken down and on the site whereof a warehouse has lately been erected and built'¹² although there is a slight inconsistency in the dates.

⁵ Pearson T (1987) 30

⁶ Pearson T (1990) An Archaeological Evaluation of 24-26 The Bolts Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Interim Report No 10

⁷ Pearson T (1990) An Archaeological Assessment of land adjacent to 22A Quay Street, Scarborough, Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society Interim Report No 23

⁸ Pearson T (1987) 32

⁹ Cossins J 'New and Exact Plan of Scarborough' 1725

¹⁰ Woods J 'Plan of the Town and Environs of Scarborough' 1828

¹¹ Ordnance Survey 1:1056 Scale Map 1852

¹² Deed of conveyance from Henry Byron & Ann his wife & Emey Edge to Christopher Hill and Francis Hill shipowners 3 February 1824

3.6 By the time the large scale Ordnance Survey map at the scale of 1:500 of 1892¹³ was published, two cross walls had been erected and it is possible that the buildings on the site had been subdivided into four units. The upper, platform level of the site had also been developed, accessed by steps behind number 58A.

3.7 The Ordnance Survey maps of 1912 and 1929^{14 15} appear to show the site fully built up, without a passage between the two frontage units.

4.0 Aims and Objectives

4.1 The aim of the excavation and watching brief was to record any archaeological remains affected by the development, and to provide an historical understanding of the site before foundation works for the new development commenced.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 The replacement building was to be erected off a concrete raft, the ground works to consist of lowering the present surface sufficiently to allow the formation of the raft. This was the subject of the watching brief during machining off over the week commencing 20 January 2003.

5.2 A proposed drain crossing the site south to north, starting at a depth of about 1700 mm in the road rising to a depth of about 1300 mm at the north was hand dug archaeologically into the natural, over the period 5 January, 10-12 January and 18 January 2003.

5.3 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on SAHS's pro forma context sheets.

5.4 Plans and Sections - the sections of the excavation, and plans and elevations of structures were drawn at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film.

5.5 Photographic record. The photographic record comprises colour prints and colour transparencies to record all archaeological features encountered.

5.6 Finds and site archive. All artefacts and the site record will be deposited in the Rotunda Museum in accordance with SAHS practice.

6.0 The Excavation - Trenches 1 (figure 4), 2 (figure 5) and 3

6.1 The alignment of the south-north drain was excavated as two trenches, 1 and 2 (figure 3), separated by a narrow baulk on the alignment of a cross wall. Trench 3 consisted of the removal of the concrete over a three metre

¹³ Ordnance Survey 1:500 Scale Map 1892

¹⁴ Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map 1912

¹⁵ Ordnance Survey 1:2500 Scale Map 1929

length of the cross wall to allow its recording, archaeological evaluation and its careful removal prior to the machining off of the surface.

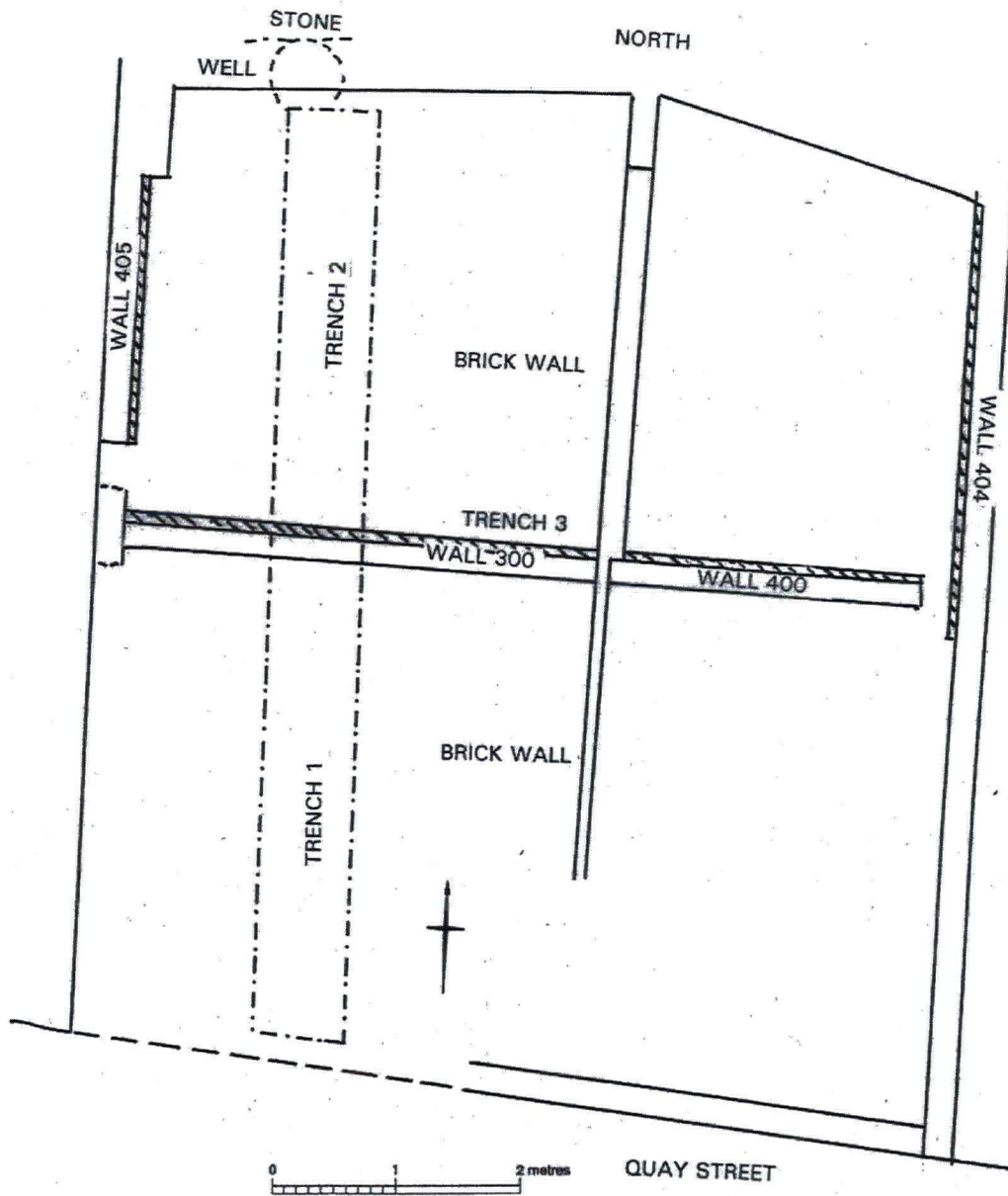


Fig 3 Location of trenches and features revealed during the watching brief

6.2 Phase I. Levelling of natural. A stiff grey-green natural clay was encountered in Trench 2 at 4.450 OD (202) (figure 5), just below the modern concrete. In Trench 1, the natural (110) sloped down at an angle of about 45° (figure 4) north-south from the position just below the baulk cross wall. In Trench 1 this clay was interpreted as the original, natural cliff slope, whilst in Trench 2 it was interpreted that the original cliff slope had been levelled or planed off to form a building platform or yard.

6.3 Phase II Sand 112. In Trench 2 at 3.030 OD the natural was overlain by a clean sand, which contained fragments of medieval pottery. This deposit of clean sand was interpreted as a levelling of the site. However, an

alternative interpretation was that this was the natural beach level, some of the pottery being water washed. This deposit continued down to the maximum depth of this trench at 2.710 OD.

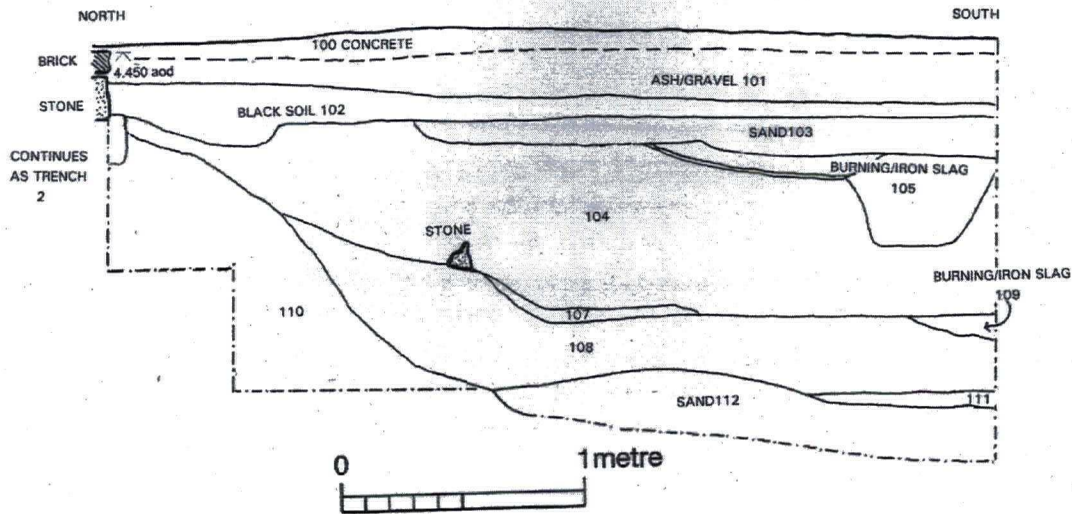


Fig 4 West facing section of trench 1

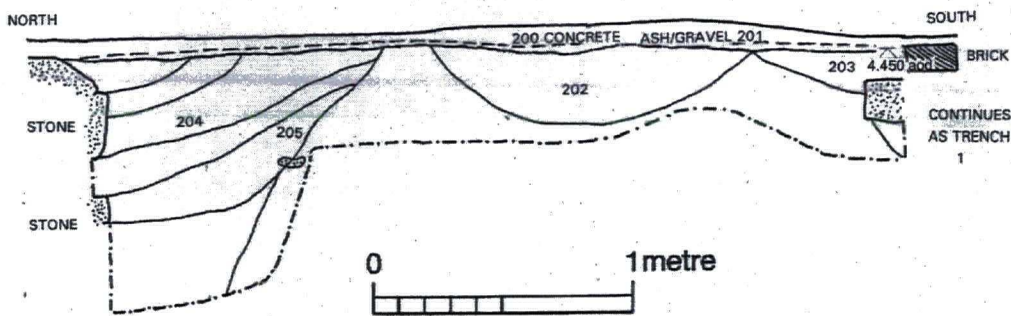


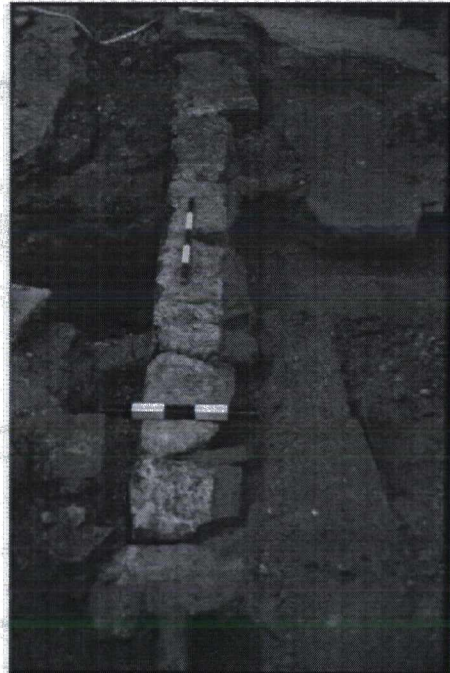
Fig 5 West facing section of trench 2

Phase III. Infilling and levelling the site (108, 107, 104 and 103). The site appears to have been levelled during the medieval period by the dumping of a clayey stony material in Trench 1, from the north. This phase is perhaps contemporary with the levelling of the natural clay in Trench 2 referred to in 6.2 above when the building platform was being formed.

6.4 Sub phase IV - contemporary with the dumping of material to infill the site small scale industrial activity seems to have taken place. Three areas of burnt material containing substantial deposits of iron slag, pottery (some vitrified) and coal were found (105, 106 and 109) interleaved with the deposited material. These were interpreted as the sites of temporary braziers for activities such as nail making.

6.5 Phase V Well. Cut 205 into the natural in Trench 2 was perhaps contemporary with the infilling of the southern part of the site. It represents the first cut for the well. Since at this point the well appears to be below the foundations for the stone retaining wall at 4.450 OD it is likely that the well and the retaining wall were built at the same time as preparatory works for developing the site, possibly contemporaneously with the levelling. Since the well was found to be at least 4 metres deep, a substantial amount of spoil would be created in its excavation, and this would perhaps account for some of the clay matrix used for infilling the remainder of the site.

6.6 Phase VI stone/brick wall (figure 6). The stone wall 300 one course deep and 300 mm thick was set on a stiff brown clay matrix of uniform consistency and appearance. The top of the stone at 4.300 OD was covered by a single course of clamp fired red bricks of 18th or 19th century date set in a lime mortar with coal inclusions. This clay contained no inclusions or artefacts. In Trench 1 the clay bonding material was cut into the medieval intact deposits, whereas uphill it was partially cut into and partially set on top of the natural clay. No dating evidence was found for the wall although it appeared medieval, but a 3 metre length was later investigated in Trench 3 immediately prior to the stripping of the site by the removal of the concrete and brick capping. The wall was recorded



*Figure 6 Stone wall 300
Looking west*

before lifting, during the course of which it was found to contain one fragment of clay pantile and a fragment of lime mortar. The stones appeared to have been re-set some being at an angle to the brick wall above. The tentative interpretation therefore is that wall 300 represents a medieval wall alignment, but the stones had been re-used and re-set for the building of a later wall. This wall alignment is consistent with the back wall of a building shown on Wood's map of 1828.

6.7 Phase VII Floor. Deposit 102 was a black, ashy loamy layer, devoid of artefacts, abutting the stone and interpreted as the floor of the building.

6.8 Phase VIII. The cross wall was re-built, at least one course of small, clamp-fired bricks of typical 18th or 19th century appearance. Associated with this phase was a fragment of brick floor which overlay the earlier ashy floor. Feature 301 was associated with the wall and consisted of a square slot formed by four bricks and with a mortar base. The pottery recovered from this was entirely 19th century and the initial interpretation was that it was a sump associated with a piece of machinery in the building from its

period of use as an engineering works. However, oral evidence suggests that the building may have contained a number of large posts, this could therefore be a post hole.

6.9 Phase IX. Levelling to form base for modern concrete.

7.0 The Watching Brief

7.1 Machining to form the concrete raft did not penetrate deeper than the upper layers and it confirmed the sequence predicted in the excavation trenches 1 and 2 ie the rear of the site was a platform cut into natural clay and the frontage infill deposits, and this was consistent throughout the site. The following additional information was found:

7.2 The cross wall 300 which had only been investigated in part was found to extend across the full width of the site in the same form, except that the central section had been removed and north-south brick walls notched into it - these appear to represent the front to back walls shown on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map .

7.3 The flank walls to 60 Quay Street (404) and 56 Quay Street (405) were also found to contain single courses of stone below brick similar to 300/400. In the case of 404 the wall was sitting directly on the brown clay matrix whilst at 405 it had been cut into it and set in mortar indicating re-building.

8.0 Discussion

8.1 Previous excavations in Quay Street have indicated the presence of rudimentary slipways at the foot of the cliff slope followed by backfilling to reclaim land. This backfilling has usually been organic in nature interpreted as the deliberate and possibly planned dumping of domestic refuse in order to create land behind the quay alignment. This dumping was thought to have taken place over a very short period.

8.2 No such rudimentary slipways were found at the current site and the backfilling although carried out rapidly was not organic in nature. Quay Street was at the heart of the commercial area of the medieval town and the creation of development land by backfilling was to some extent the result of commercial pressures. It appears from the present site that at the eastern end of Quay Street this pressure for building land was partially met by digging back into the cliff and creating a platform on the natural clay, the spoil so produced being used to infill on the seaward side in a form of cut and fill technique. It is not known why this form should be adopted at this end of Quay Street but we can speculate that the slope and form of the cliff in this location made this a more viable option than towards the west where the cliff slope may have been steeper.

9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 The excavation was undertaken at the request of Go Property & Leisure in consultation with their architect Howard Acklam who provided the levels. The excavation was supervised by the Chris Hall and carried out by the following members of Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society: Rachel Alden, Steve Bence, Rachel Cubitt, Chris Evans, Sue Galloway, Barbara Newby, Ken Newby, Sue Ogilvy, Trevor Pearson, Ian Walker, Martyn Watts and Geoff Wood. Finds were processed by Vanessa Milner

I am grateful to Ray Smith for the loan of deeds to this site and to John Rushton for summarising them. The summary is in the excavation archive

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- Report No 2 (1988) 18-22 ST SEPULCHRE ST: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
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