

NYCC HER	
SNY	8506
ENY	1564
CNY	2276
Parish	6031
Rec'd	04/08/03

8 WESTGATE, RIPON.

**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION.
OSA REPORT No: OSA03EV05.**

June 2003

OSA

ON SITE ARCHEOLOGY

25A Milton Street • York • North Yorkshire • YO10 3EP
telephone • 01904 411673 • fax • 01904 414522 • mobile • 07767 385766
e-mail • mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk

Report Summary.

REPORT NO: OSA03EV05.
SITE NAME: 8 Westgate, Ripon.
COUNTY: North Yorkshire.
NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 3110 7135
PLANNING APPLICATION No: Ref. 6.31.1154.F.FUL.
ON BEHALF OF: Mr Norman Allinson
Leehill Construction Ltd
Camp Hill Close
Dallamires Road
Ripon
North Yorkshire HG4 1QY
telephone 01765 607023
TEXT: Duncan Stirk.
GRAPHICS: Marie-Claire Ferguson.
FIELDWORK: Graham Bruce
Faye Palmer
Duncan Stirk.
TIMING: Fieldwork
14th-16th May, 2003
Post excavation & report preparation
19th May to 16th June 2003
ENQUIRIES TO: Nick Pearson
On Site Archaeology
25A Milton Street
York
YO10 3EP
tel (01904) 411673
fax (01904) 414522
mobile (07767) 385766
e-mail mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk
PERIODS REPRESENTED: Medieval & Post-Medieval

Table of Contents.

1.0 Abstract.....	3
2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.....	5
3.0 Archaeological Background.....	6
4.0 Methodology.....	7
5.0 Results.....	8
5.1 Trench 1.....	8
5.2 Trench 2.....	10
6.0 Discussion and Conclusions.....	15
7.0 Bibliography.....	15
8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.....	16
9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.....	17
10.0 Appendix 3 ~ Finds Assessment.....	18
11.0 Appendix 4 ~ Zooarchaeological Remains Assessment Report.....	24
12.0 Appendix 5 ~ The Plates.....	27

List of Figures.

Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 3110 7135).....	4
Figure 2. Location map, site shown in red. (Scale 1:2000).....	5
Figure 3. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:200).....	7
Figure 4. Trench 1, plan of (1012). (Scale 1:20).....	9
Figure 5. Trench 1 east facing section of [1013]. (Scale 1:20).....	9
Figure 6. Trench 1, east facing section. (Scale 1:20).....	10
Figure 7. Trench 2, plan of [2025]. (Scale 1:20).....	12
Figure 8. Trench 2, plan of postholes [2013] & [2015]. (Scale 1:20).....	13
Figure 9. Trench 2, south facing section. (Scale 1:20).....	14

List of Plates.

Plate 1. Trench 1 (1012), looking south. (Scale of 0.5m).....	27
Plate 2. Trench 1 (1012) & [1013], east facing section. (Scale of 0.5m).....	27
Plate 3. Trench 1, east facing section. (Scale of 1m).....	28
Plate 4. Trench 2, looking south. (Scale of 1m).....	28
Plate 5. Trench 2, showing detail of [2022] & [2025]. (Scale of 1m).....	29

1.0 Abstract.

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by On-Site Archaeology on land to the rear of 8 Westgate, Ripon, North Yorkshire on behalf of Leehill Construction Ltd. This work was conducted in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to the planning permission (Planning Ref.6.31.1154.F.FUL) for a proposed residential development. The archaeological evaluation consisted of 3 days on site from the 14th –16th May 2003.

The archaeological programme consisted of the excavation of two trenches to determine the nature of archaeological deposits in the area. A number of archaeological features and deposits were revealed, including a ditch or terrace, pits and post-holes. Pottery, bone and assorted finds from the Medieval, Post-Medieval, and Early Modern periods were recovered.

29

30

31

32

33



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 3110 7135).

Reproduced from the 1985 Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 maps with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
© Crown copyright. OSA Licence No: AL 52132A0001

2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

The site is located at NGR SE 3110 7135 near the historic core of Ripon. It lies to the north of commercial properties fronting Westgate, which is known to have been a medieval thoroughfare. The property is bounded by similar land at the rear of a commercial property to the west, and to the east and north by car park areas. Access to the site is by a lane from the north. The site is situated on mixed sand and clay natural deposits of probable glacial origin.

The site comprises one L shaped plot, with an approximate area of 240m², and is situated on a slope that has been terraced at the southern end of the property. In the portion of the site that was evaluated the ground rises from a height of 38.74mAOD to 39.65mAOD. At the time of the archaeological work the site was open land from which vegetation had recently been cleared.

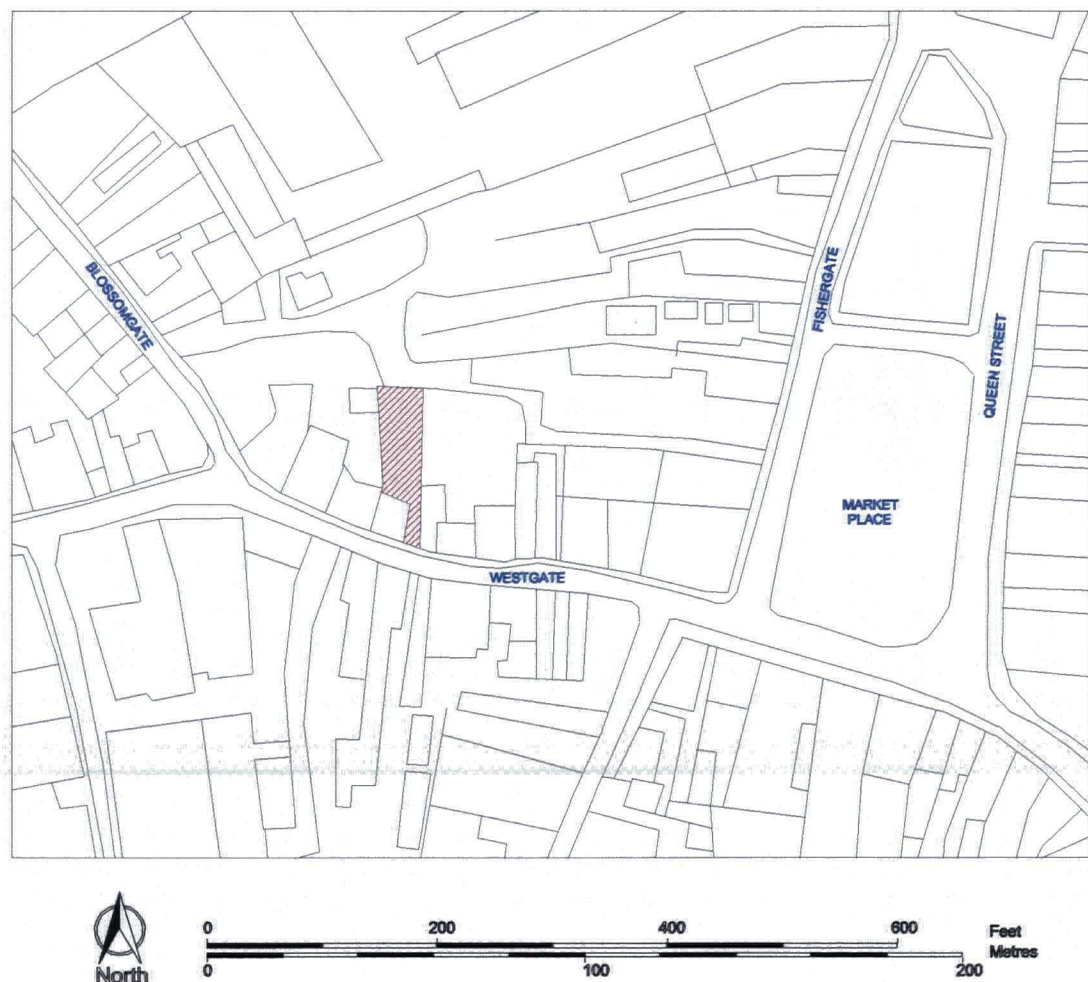


Figure 2. Location map, site shown in red. (Scale 1:2000).

3.0 Archaeological Background.

Ripon in the medieval period became an important ecclesiastical centre and the town grew as a result. Its origins however date to at least the 7th century, when the Anglo-Saxon monastery was founded there by Alfrith in 657 AD. The name Ripon appears in records as Hripis or Hrypis by 715AD and by the more recognizable Ripun by 1089AD in the Domesday Book. This appears to be a 'folk name' referring to the Anglo-Saxon tribal group in the region.

The site lies to the rear of properties fronting Westgate, a thoroughfare that appears in documents from the 13th century. The property therefore is likely to have been laid out as a burgage plot in that period. A similar site was investigated on land to the rear of 8/9 Market Place. That investigation revealed occupation on two burgage plots dating from the 11th to 18th century, with structures to the front of the plots and pits and industrial activity to the rear.

Archaeological work to the southeast of the development site on High Skellgate revealed deposits and features dating from the 11th to 15th century, as well as evidence for smithing activity. (The above information is drawn from the Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation, prepared by North Yorkshire County Council, Heritage Unit).

4.0 Methodology.

Two trenches, each measuring 2m by 3m, were excavated by a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. The overburden was removed down to the level of the first visible archaeological horizon. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Once this had been completed, sections were hand excavated through the archaeological features that had been identified. Following recording of these features, the thick undifferentiated deposits below were further excavated down to the next visible archaeological horizon.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM), which was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey Benchmark (36.47m on the front of a building on the southwest side of Blossomgate). A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

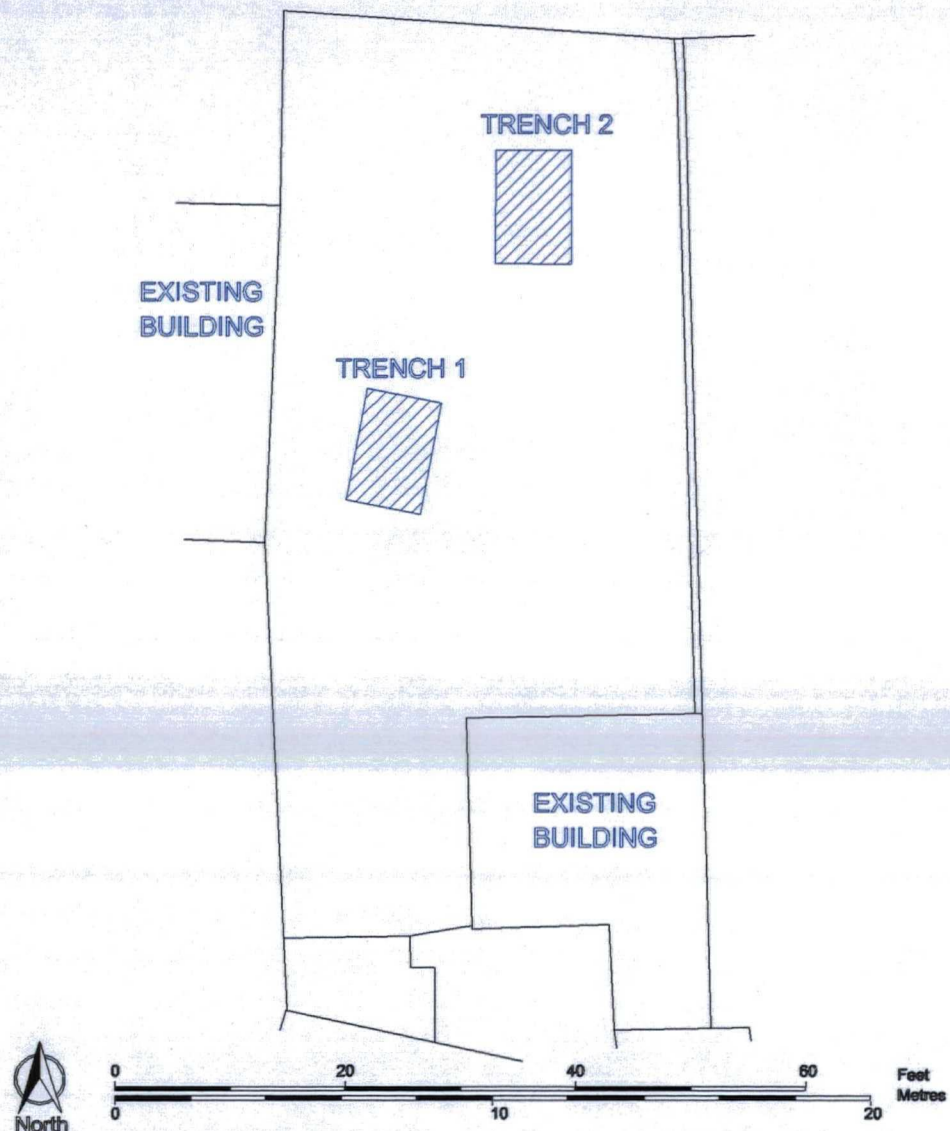


Figure 3. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:200).

5.0 Results.

5.1 Trench 1.

The natural geology was seen at a depth of 1.37m below ground level (BGL) or 37.80mAOD. This geological deposit (1011) was a pinkish red silt sand that was over 0.71m thick. The geological deposit was cut by an east west aligned linear feature [1013]. This feature measured over 1.92m in length, over 1.0m in width, and over 0.71m deep. This extended beyond the east, west and south edges of the trench and the base was not reached within the trench. The cut was filled with a single fill (1012), a mid reddish brown sand silt deposit that contained frequent medium and large sized cobbles. This fill also contained occasional fragments of medieval tile and pottery dated to the 13th century. With only one edge of this feature lying within the confines of the trench its interpretation is problematic. It may be the edge of a large ditch running from east to west through the site. This would seem unusual in the context of medieval burgage plots, where boundaries would be expected to be aligned perpendicular to the street frontage rather than parallel with it. Alternatively, in view of the natural slope present on the site, this feature may represent the edge of a deliberate terrace, with the large numbers of cobbles found within the fill possibly being derived from a disturbed retaining wall or revetment.

The linear feature was sealed by a mid reddish brown sand silt deposit (1002). This was seen across the whole trench and was 0.40m thick. Pottery, dating from the mid 13th century, through to the end of the medieval period, was recovered from this layer. Over this was a 0.60m thick deposit of mid yellowish brown sand silt (1001). Deposit (1001) was cut by two features, [1007] and [1010], that were seen only in the western trench section. Feature [1007] measured over 1.6m by 0.60m deep. It held primary fill (1006), a mid yellowish brown sand silt, secondary fill (1005), a dark greyish brown sand silt, and final fill (1004), comprising CBM and mortar building rubble. Feature [1010] measured over 0.80m by 0.60m deep. It held primary fill (1009), a mid yellowish brown sand silt, and final fill (1008), also a mid yellowish brown sand silt.

The two cut features were sealed by deposit (1000), a dark greyish brown sand silt, which was 0.25m thick across the trench. Over this, at the surface of the trench was deposit (1003), comprising building rubble of CBM, cobbles and mortar. Deposit (1003) was 0.25m thick across the trench.

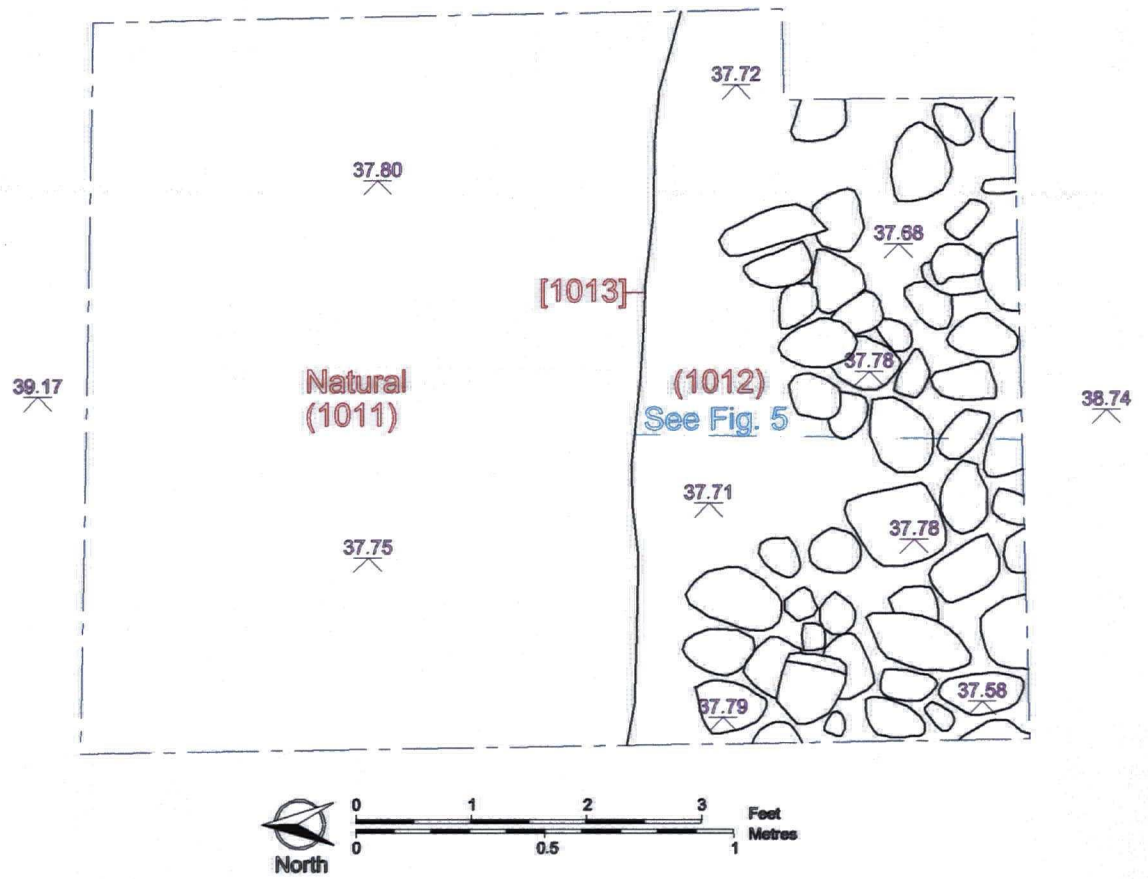


Figure 4. Trench 1, plan of (1012). (Scale 1:20).

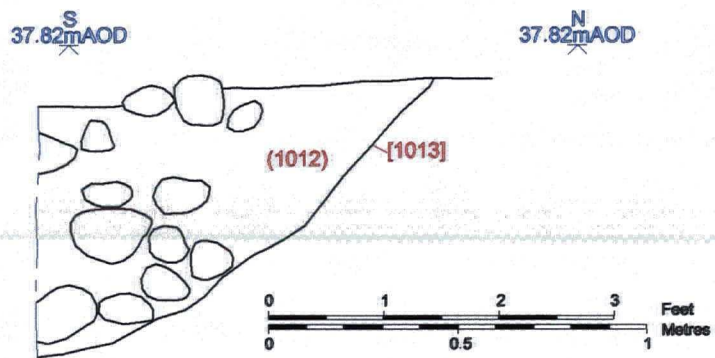


Figure 5. Trench 1 east facing section of [1013]. (Scale 1:20)

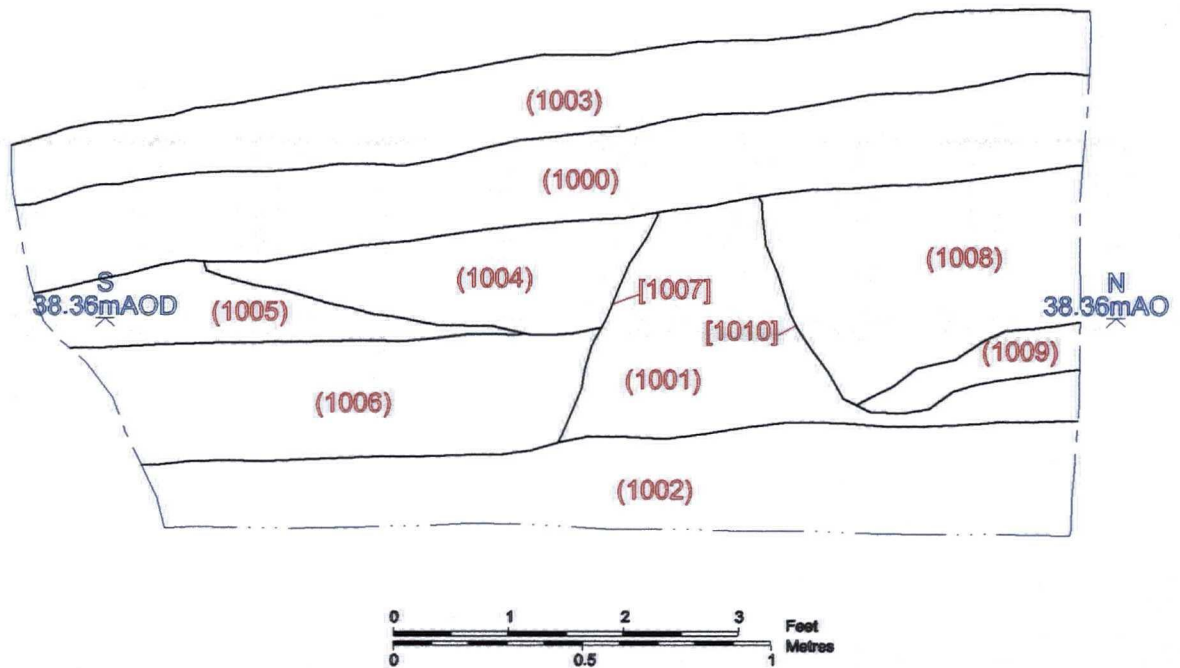


Figure 6. Trench 1, east facing section. (Scale 1:20).

5.2 Trench 2.

The natural geology was seen at a depth of 1.43m BGL or 37.91m AOD. It was deposit (2026), a light red brown silt sand, with seams of light yellow green clay and was at least 0.50m thick.

The natural in Trench 2 was cut by a complicated sequence of pits. The stratigraphic sequence was impossible to determine in the limited area of the trench, so one number was assigned for cuts in the features that were excavated. This number [2025] is likely to have consisted of at least three features, the bases of which were not reached at a depth of 1.81m BGL or 37.41m OD. The sequence was further complicated because the cuts were not fully backfilled before further features were dug. The fills therefore were indistinguishable and very mixed. One number (2023) was assigned to the fill/fills that were excavated, and a further number (2024), to the fills that were not excavated. Fill/fills (2023) was a mixed light reddish brown and mid grey brown silt sand. A small number of sherds of 13th century pottery were recovered from these fills, together with fragments of fired clay. These appear to represent both daub, some of which includes lathe impressions, and possible metalworking mould fragments. Fill/fills (2024) was also a mottled light reddish and mid grey brown silt sand.

These cuts appear to be quarry pits rather than rubbish pits. The quantity of finds is fairly low and there has been very little organic material in the backfill, so they are unlikely to have been for refuse disposal. The backfill is generally very clean natural, which is why it was difficult to determine the sequence. A seam of natural clay is visible in the sides of the pits, so it is likely that this is the material that was being quarried rather than the sand. The pits do not appear to have been cut through topsoil or subsoil deposits, and the earlier pits appear to have still been open when new pits were dug. The ground surface therefore seems to have been reduced down to the level of the sand before the pits were dug. This would explain the clean nature of the backfill. Many of the pits may have finally been backfilled in one levelling event, which would explain the difficulty in separating them during excavation.

Cutting pit fills (2023) was an oval shaped posthole [2022], measuring 0.44m by 0.38m by 0.28m in depth. Within this was packing (2021), a mix of light yellow brown clay and grey brown silt sand, around the edges of the cut, with a central post-pipe fill (2020), a light grey brown silt sand, 0.32m by 0.30m by 0.28m deep.

The cut features described above were sealed by deposit (2011). This was a mottled light red brown silt sand and grey brown sand silt, that was approximately 0.24m thick. The horizon between deposit (2011) and the underlying fills (2023) and (2024) was very diffuse, and it may be that they were part of the same event. A small number of fired clay mould fragments, of the same character as had been found in the underlying pit fill, were recovered from this layer, which again suggests a close relationship between the two contexts.

Deposit (2011) was cut by two small circular postholes. [2013] measured 0.39m by 0.37m and was 0.15m deep, and contained a single fill (2012), a dark reddish brown sand silt. [2015] was located just to the south of [2013] measured 0.42m by 0.38m, and was 0.21m deep. It held fill (2014), a dark reddish brown sand silt, containing a small quantity of ceramic building material. The top of these features was at 1.15m BGL or 38.19mAOD. These post-holes are probably contemporary, even though they held no dating evidence. Their alignment is parallel to the site side boundaries, so they may form part of an outbuilding to the rear of the medieval street frontage property.

The trench was then sealed by deposit (2010), a mid grey brown sand silt, which was 0.30m thick. Deposit (2010) was cut by a shallow feature that was only seen in the eastern trench section. Cut [2019] measured 0.34m by 0.25m deep, and held fill (2018), a dark brown grey sand silt. It may be that [2019] is the same feature as post-hole [2015], and that it is actually cut from a higher level through (2010).

This was overlain by deposit (2009), a light brown sand silt, 0.29m thick, which was cut by a feature [2017] that was seen only in the northern trench section. Feature [2017] was 0.44m wide and over 0.89m deep. The trench only just cut the edge of the feature so none of its mottled mid grey brown sand silt and light red brown silt sand fill (2016) was excavated.

Cut [2017] was truncated by linear feature [2008] that was aligned north-northwest to south-southeast and filled the western section of the trench. This measured over 3.0m by over 0.90m width within the trench and over 0.90m deep. The single fill (2007), a mid to dark grey sandy