



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

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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 rectangular plot, with an approximate area of 240m², and is situated on a slope that has been terraced at the southern end of the property. The ground rises across the site from a low of 36.93mAOD at the southern end to approximately 39.65mAOD at the northern end. During this phase of archaeological work the site was a building site with the remains of the recently demolished post-medieval building covering much of the northern part, and a large hole from which the demolished building had been dug in the southern part.

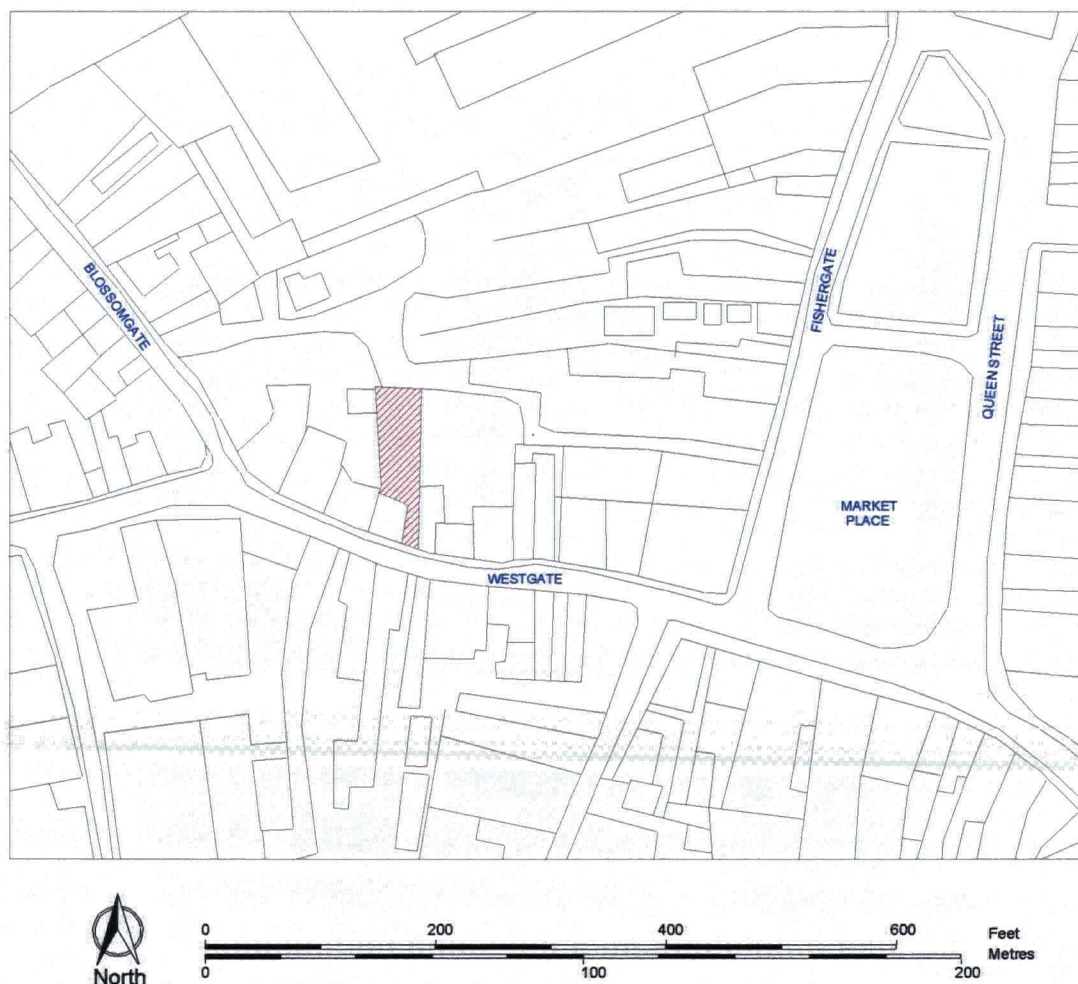


Figure 2. Location map, site shown in red. (Scale 1:2000).

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). The evaluation phase of archaeological work conducted in May of 2003 revealed industrial activity on the site as early as the 13th Century, in the form of quarry pits. Clay mould fragments recovered from these pits indicated the presence of copper alloy vessel (possible bell) production in the vicinity, although not necessarily on the site. A large medieval cobble filled feature was interpreted as terracing of the natural slope. Evidence overall indicated that the area at the rear of the tenement plot was not intensively exploited through the medieval or post-medieval periods.

4.0 Methodology.

Demolition of the post-medieval building to the southern (down-slope) end of the site had been completed before archaeological monitoring began on this phase of work. This had resulted in a hole measuring approximately 7m by 8m being excavated to approximately 37m AOD. The edges and base of this area had been squared up using a mechanical excavator and it is likely that portions of archaeological deposits below and to the sides of the demolished building were lost prior to archaeological monitoring.

Under archaeological supervision the demolished building footprint was further reduced in the foundation positions by use of a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, to a level of approximately 36.00m AOD. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Only one cut feature was visible in plan during excavation, and this was recorded as such. Other cut features were only identified in section as they held re-deposited natural fills.

The foundations to the northern (up-slope) end of site were also excavated by a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothed bucket, to a depth of approximately 36.34m AOD. This resulted in foundation trenches approximately 3m deep at their deepest point. This precluded access to the trench and hand cleaning of the sections for safety reasons, so only the general stratigraphic sequence was recorded in these foundations.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context description 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.

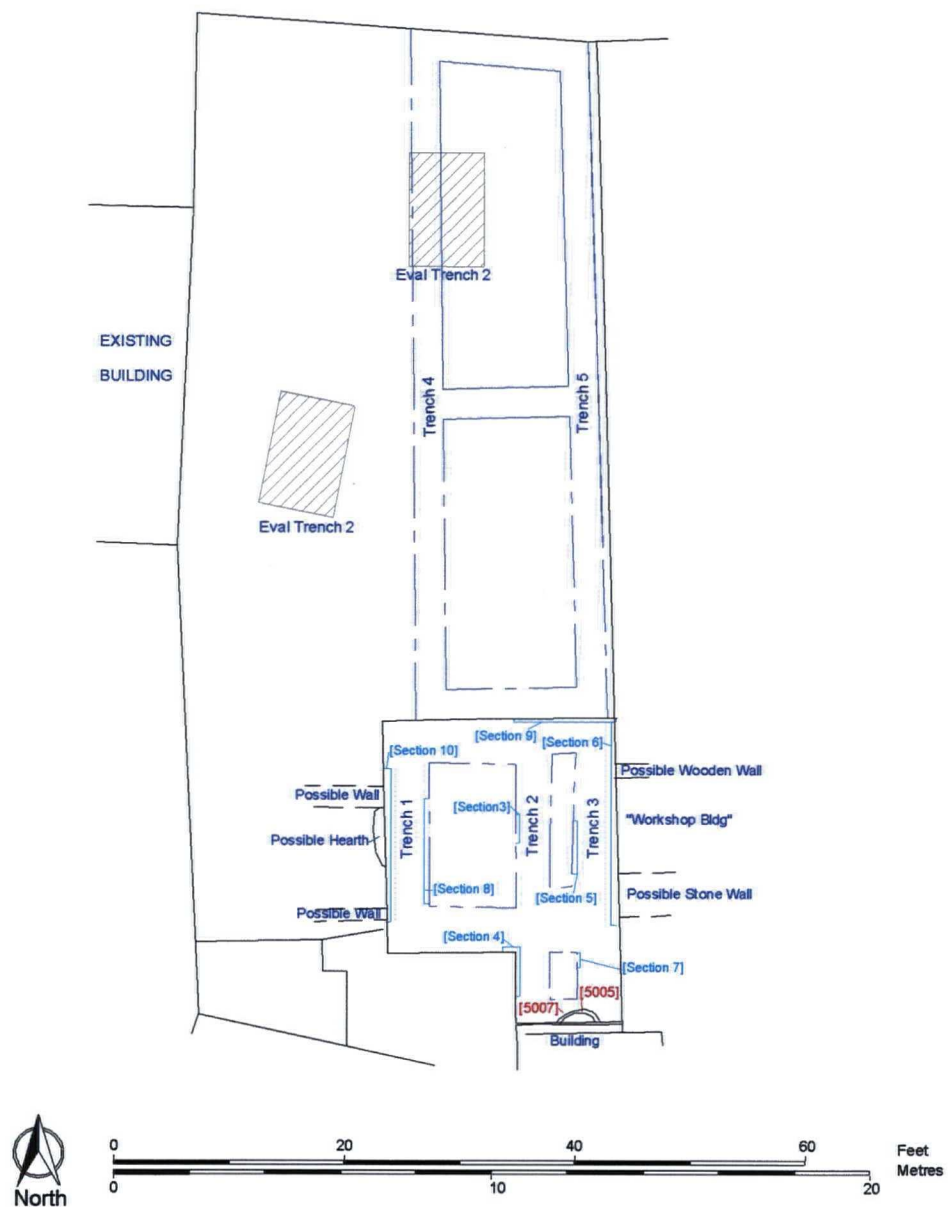


Figure 3. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:200).

5.0 Results.

5.1 *Demolished building Trenches.*

Foundation trenches were excavated in the footprint of the demolished building, that measured 7m by 9m. These trenches were excavated to a depth of approximately 36.01m AOD which was into a pink brown sand and gravel deposit (5047).

5.2 *Trench 1, (see Figs. 4&5, Plates 1&2).*

The natural sand and gravel deposit (5047) was seen at a depth of 36.75m AOD in this trench. Over this, in the western excavation edge section was seen a dark grey sand and gravel deposit (5071). Its positioning beneath a later post-hole (5069), suggests that deposit (5071) may be staining of the natural sand and gravel by the organic contents of the post-hole. This was sealed by deposit (5046), a pink brown sand seemingly natural deposit, 0.16m thick. In light of the results of the evaluation phase of work on this site, these seemingly natural deposits perhaps deserve further consideration. In the evaluation trenches it was discovered that quarry pits had covered a portion of the site. The natural clay had been quarried out while the natural sand had been deposited across the site. Deposits of seemingly natural sand such as (5046), therefore may be redeposited from that quarrying activity.

Deposit (5046), was cut by a large pit [5053] in the eastern section of this trench. This measured over 2.8m across by 0.8m deep, and was filled by (5052), a mixed brown clay and sand fill, and (5051), a pink brown sand fill. Two sherds of 13th /14th Century Brandsby type ware came from this fill. This pit was very similar to quarry pits recorded during the evaluation phase, and is probably part of the same phase of activity on the site.

Deposit (5046) was sealed by a pink brown clay deposit (5070), 0.30m thick, that may be a natural deposit, or perhaps a clay floor for a building. This deposit is not present in the sequence of natural deposits in the other trenches, which perhaps supports the clay floor interpretation. No finds were recovered from the deposit however. Cutting the clay was a shallow feature [5064] measuring 1.8m in length and 0.32m in depth. This held fills (5062), a grey brown clay silt, (5061) and (5063) dark brown ashy silts, (5060) an orange ashy sand, and (5099) a dark grey ashy silt. Two sherds of Brandsby type ware dating to the 13th /14th Century were recovered from these fills, one from (5060), and one from (5062). The high ash content in these fills and the presence of in-situ burning indicates that this feature may be the remains of a hearth or oven. In light of the evidence for metalworking in the vicinity, obtained during the evaluation work, the feature may have been for industrial activity of some type.

The oven/hearth was cut by two possible post-holes. Cut [5058] measured 0.30m across by 0.28m deep, while cut [5067] measured 0.56m across by 0.46m deep. A further possible post-hole [5069] was cut from the same horizon, and measured 0.26m across by 0.46m deep. These features were filled respectively by: (5057) a mixed green grey sand silt, (5066) a mixed grey brown clay sand silt, and (5068) a green grey clay silt. One sherd of medieval pot, one nail, and a fragment of medieval CBM were recovered from fill (5066). Sealing fill (5066) was

a thin lense of dark grey sand silt (5065). The three post-holes may form part of a timber structure, which may have included the oven/hearth, and the possible clay floor. The finds from post-hole [5067] date the building no earlier than the 12th Century, but probably to the 13th /14th Century in line with the finds from the hearth/oven.

These building elements and the quarry pit were sealed by a mixed green grey sand silt deposit (5050), that was 0.38m thick. This deposit was very similar to the fill of two of the post-holes, which suggests that (5050) was laid down immediately after the demolition of the building, and was probably a general make-up layer. Three sherds of medieval pot and one fragment of medieval tile were found with four post medieval brick and tile fragments in this deposit, dating it firmly to the post medieval period.

Make-up layer (5050) was cut by the foundations for the demolished post-medieval building [5055]. These foundations measured approximately 7m by 9m, and in this trench were 0.30m deep. The foundation was filled by (5054), a dark grey clay silt containing frequent cobbles. The top of the stratigraphic sequence in the western excavation edge was deposit (5056), a dark brown grey sand silt, that had an iron pipe within it. This deposit was probably backfill within a 19th Century service trench, which had partly truncated the fill of foundation [5055].

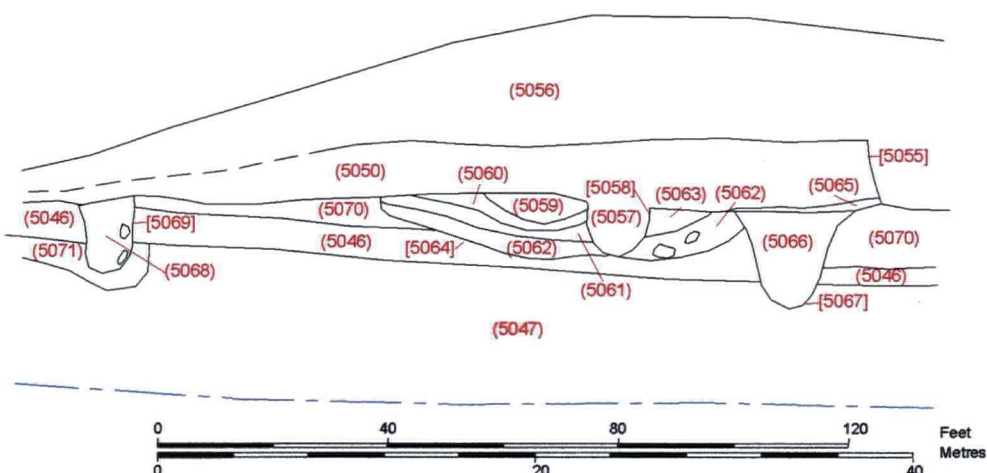


Figure 4. Trench 1, east facing section. (Scale 1:40).

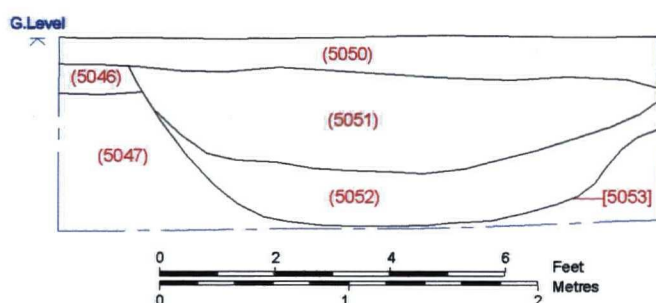


Figure 5. Trench 1, west facing section, showing pit [5053]. (Scale 1:40)

5.3 Trench 2, (see Figs. 5&6, Plate 3).

The sand natural deposit (5046), was overlain by a 0.6m thick deposit of brown grey sand and gravel (5045), in this trench. This is almost certainly a natural deposit similar to deposit (5047). In the southern part of the trench this deposit was cut by a pit [5014] measuring over 1.25m by over 0.6m, and 0.48m deep. This pit held a pink brown sand fill (5014), and is probably a quarry pit similar to others on the site. This feature was sealed by deposit (5012), a dark grey sand silt deposit 0.16m thick.

In the centre of the trench the natural sand and gravel was cut by a steep sided feature [5011], that measured 0.72m across and 0.56m deep. This held a pink brown sand fill (5010). The sand fill of this feature suggests that it may be a quarry pit similar to others on the site. It's shape however may point to it being a structural feature such as a post-hole or foundation slot. The top of this feature was truncated by the demolition and subsequent machining out of the post-medieval building.

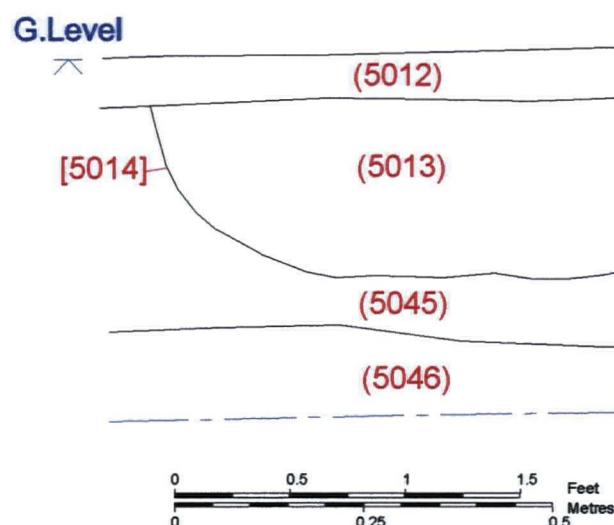


Figure 6. Trench 2, east facing section, showing pit [5014]. (Scale 1:10).

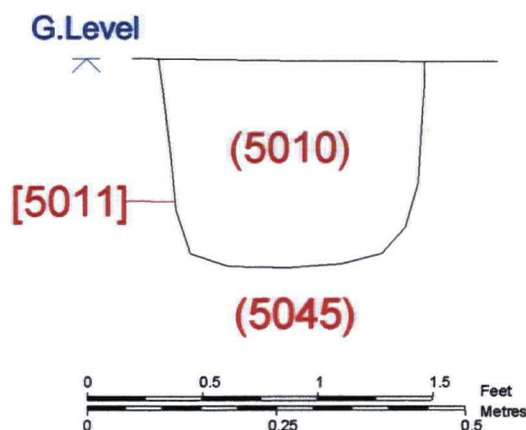


Figure 7. Trench 2, east facing section of pit [5011]. (Scale 1:10).

5.4 Trench 3, (see Figs. 8-12, Plates 4-7).

The natural sand and gravel deposit (5047) was over 0.56m thick in this trench. Deposit (5047) was overlain by 0.30m of natural sand (5046), and 0.46m of sand and gravel (5045). In the centre of the trench, the natural deposit (5045) was cut by a pit [5017], which measured over 1.1m across and 0.7m deep. This pit held fills (5016) and (5015), a pink brown sand and a brown grey clay silt respectively. Fill (5015) produced two sherds of medieval pot, one of medieval tile, and a sherd of clay mould for metalworking. This pit was truncated by the machining of the demolished building, and was probably a quarry pit.

At the southern end of the trench the natural deposit (5045) appeared to be cut by a feature [5007] measuring 1.4m by over 0.4m, which was over 0.52m deep. This held a brown grey gravel and silt sand fill (5006). Over this, and extending beyond the cut was deposit (5009), a pink brown clay sand, and deposit (5008), a brown grey sand. These were cut by feature [5005] measuring 1.2m by over 0.35m, which was over 0.66m deep. Within the cut was fill (5004), a grey brown clay sand and fill (5003), a grey brown clay silt. Four sherds of 14th Century Walmgate ware and one sherd of earlier medieval pot were recovered from fill (5003). These fills had a very organic consistency and this may have been a cess-pit. The earlier feature (5006) may also have been cess-pit fill, but equally it may be staining of the natural gravels as the contents of the cess-pit leached into them. The top of this feature was cut by the foundation for the current building (5002). This was 0.34m deep and held a mid grey clay silt and cobble foundation (5001) which was supporting the 19th Century brick wall.

Towards the southern end of the trench (5029), a pink brown sand, was cut by pit [5049], that measured over 0.54m across by 0.45m deep. This held a grey brown sand silt fill (5048). This pit is likely to have been part of the quarrying activity present across much of the site. Sealing the pit was deposit (5012) that was seen also in trench 2.

The eastern excavation edge revealed a sequence of features and deposits many of which did not extend far into the trenched area. This is likely because the modern property boundary was originally laid out in the medieval period, possibly as early as the 13th century. The sequence visible in this section therefore related to activity in the property strip to the east.

Along the eastern excavation edge the natural sand and gravel (5047) was over 0.55m thick. It was overlain by 0.30m of natural sand (5046), 0.44m of natural sand and gravel (5045), and 0.28m of possibly natural sand (5029). This appeared to be made up of at least 2 very similar deposits. In light of the quarrying activity that has been identified across the site, this deposit may be a re-deposited natural sand. In the northern end of the section, over deposit (5029), was a pink brown clay deposit (5075) 0.18m thick. Over this was a light pink brown sand deposit (5076), that was only 0.03m thick. This was overlain by a pink brown clay deposit (5077), 0.12m thick. Deposit (5077) was sealed by a light tan brown sand silt (5028), that was 0.08m thick.

This block of stratigraphy may be a remnant of natural deposits. Alternately, these deposits may be a build up of material quarried from further up the slope. This however is unlikely if the quarried material was the clay, as the spoil should be sand or mixed sand/clay and not clean

clay like (5075) and (5077). A third possibility remains, these deposits may be clay floors within a building, however there is little evidence of occupation layers between the clay deposits. The most likely interpretation is therefore that this sequence represents a block of natural deposits between buildings/truncations. This has interesting implications for one of the features identified in the evaluation work. The cobble filled linear feature recorded in trench 1 of the evaluation cannot now, in light of the height of the surviving natural deposits, be interpreted as a terrace and demolished retaining wall. It is more likely to be a foundation for a medieval building on the site.

Deposit (5029) was cut by a vertical sided feature [5074] measuring 0.88m across by 0.78m deep. Its fills, (5073), a grey clay sand and gravel, and (5072), a pink brown sand, suggest that the feature may be a quarry pit. Alternately its form suggests that it may be a foundation slot.

Sealing pit [5074] was a sequence of deposits that probably relate to a building on the eastern property strip. It is possible that they relate to a building formed by feature [5074], whose edge the deposits respect, but more likely they relate to a smaller post built structure represented by cut [5041]. The first of these deposits was a grey brown clay sand (5044) that was 0.08m thick. This may have formed the floor within the building. Over this was a thin brown orange ashy silt deposit (5043), only 0.08m thick. Two sherds of burnt clay, an iron nail and a sherd of medieval pot came from the deposit.

Deposit (5043) was an occupational deposit within the building, and its widespread nature perhaps indicates that some industrial activity was taking place in the building. This interpretation is supported by other evidence for industrial activity, such as metalworking, that has been recovered from the site. Perhaps the burnt clay from this deposit may have been wasters from the moulding process. If this building also was involved in metalworking it indicates that at least two properties were involved in this activity.

Deposit (5043) was overlain by a similar deposit (5042) also 0.08m thick, a very dark grey silt, that contained frequent charcoal flecks and fragments. This too is probably an occupation deposit resulting from some industrial activity in the building. Over this was a 0.16m thick grey brown sand silt deposit (5038). Deposit (5038) may indicate a disuse phase of the building, but it may also have been a levelling layer within the building. If so, the building had very rough floors, which may indicate its use as a workshop rather than a habitation. Sealing this was a dark grey brown clay silt deposit (5037) 0.4m thick, that would appear to relate to a disuse phase within the building.

To the north of the possible workshop was a feature that may form the foundation for a second building on the property strip. Cut [5027] measured over 0.48m by over 0.08m, was 0.30m deep, and truncated deposit (5028). It had vertical sides, a flat base, and respected the property boundary. It held fill (5026), a dark pink brown clay sand and pebbles. Sealing the feature was a dark pink brown clay sand deposit (5025), that must have been laid down after the possible building represented by [5027] was demolished.

Deposit (5025) and (5037), the disuse deposit within the workshop, are both cut by [5041]. Cut [5041] measured 0.50m across, and 0.64m deep. It probably represents the space left after

the removal of a large timber post, rather than the post-hole cut when the structure was built. All the floor layers and occupation layers respect this post-hole, so it probably formed the northern wall of the building. Within it was fill (5040) a mixed pink brown and grey brown silt sand, that was overlain by fill (5039), a mixed pink brown clay sand.

Cut from a similar layer (through deposit (5037)), to the south of [5041] was a large pit [5034]. This steep sided and flat bottomed feature was 1.95m wide, and 1.18m deep. Its form was similar to many of the quarry pits on the site, but its fills were not. A more likely interpretation is that this was a robber trench for a substantial stone wall. This is likely because the floors and occupation layers within the workshop building respect the cut (they don't extend to the south of it). If so, the feature would represent the position of the southern wall of the workshop.

Excluding the possibility that a further large foundation exists further to the north (the cobble foundation seen in the evaluation was 11m to the north, so perhaps too far to be related) the workshop building would appear to have comprised a stone southern wall and a timber northern wall. This is exactly the type of building, perhaps a lean-to with an open side, that would be required for the smoky industrial activity that seems to have taken place. The open wooden wall of this building faced what would have been the rear of the property, where industrial activity would likely be situated.

Pit [5034] held fills (5033), (5032), (5031), and (5030). They were a grey brown silt sand, a brown grey clay silt, a mottled pink brown and brown grey clay silt, and a dark brown grey sand silt respectively. Fill (5033) produced a sherd of medieval pot, and fill (5030) produced a sherd of late medieval Humber ware. The wall was therefore likely robbed out in the late medieval period.

Cutting the deposit (5037) in the centre of the section was a small posthole. The cut [5036] had vertical sides and a flat base and measured 0.16m wide and was 0.18m deep. It is not clear what this feature represents, but it probably post-dates the demolition of the workshop building.

The workshop building was sealed by a dark brown grey sand silt deposit (5024) that is most likely a levelling layer for the area following the demolition of the workshop building. This deposit is identical to (and may be the same as) the top fill of the robbed foundation (5030). It also filled the top of the robbed wooden wall [5041], as a large stone was placed in the top of that feature. No finds were recovered from this deposit however (5030) is probably dated to the late medieval or early post medieval periods.

Two deposits at the northern end of the section occupy the same position in the sequence as deposit (5024), but are of different character. Deposit (5023), a mid brown clay silt, and overlying deposit (5022), a dark grey brown sand silt, suggest that there is a different type of activity there. This is probably explained by post-hole [5020] measuring 0.80m by 0.50m deep which the deposits respect. This may be a post-medieval structure and the deposits may be floors or occupation layers. The post-hole was filled by a very dark grey clay silt fill (5019).