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THE CROWN HOTEL, BOROUGHBRIDGE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OSA REPORT No. 98EV06

National Grid Reference: SE 39650 66875

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OSA

ON SITE ARCHÆOLOGY

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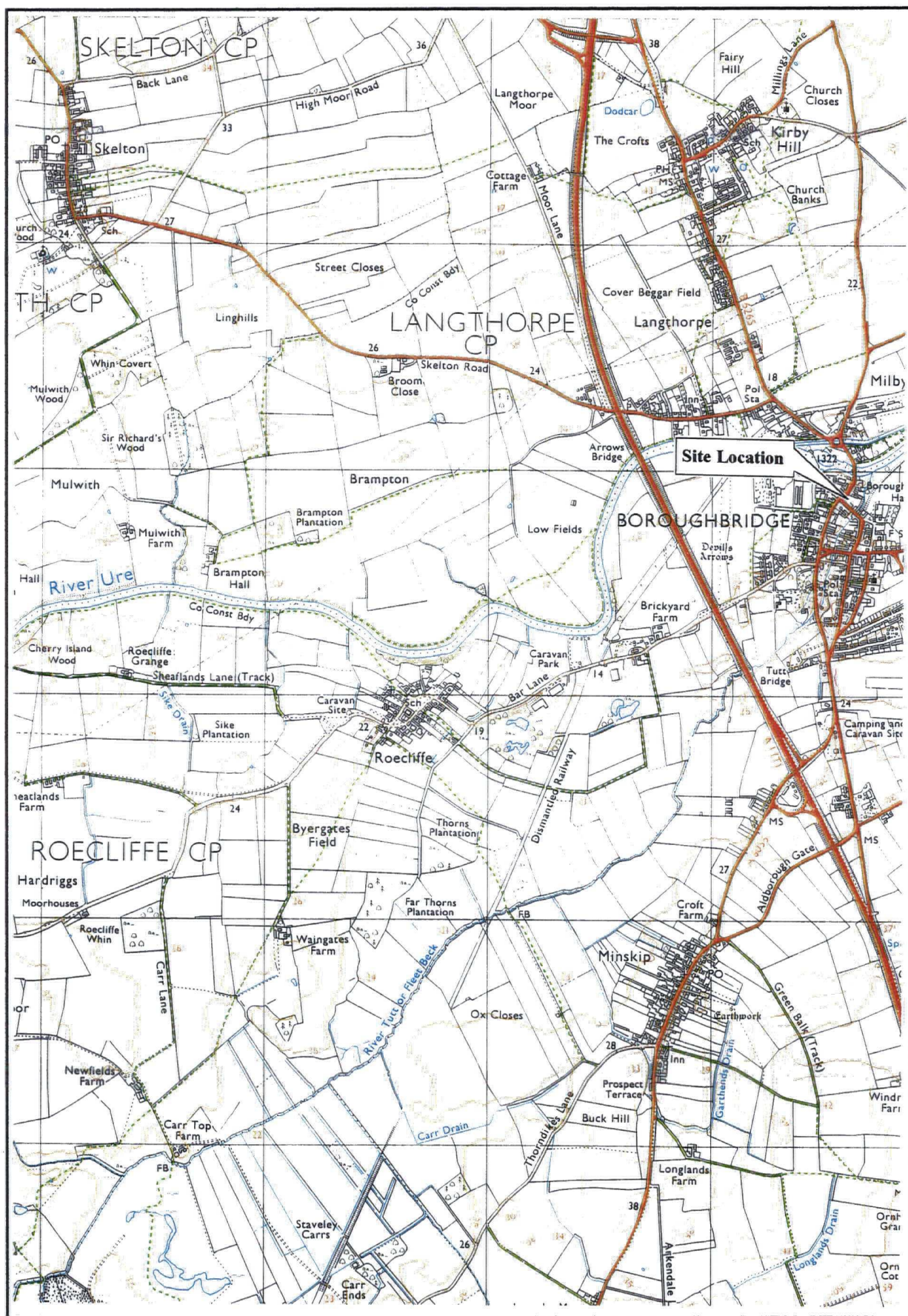


Figure 1. Site Location (SE 39650 66875)

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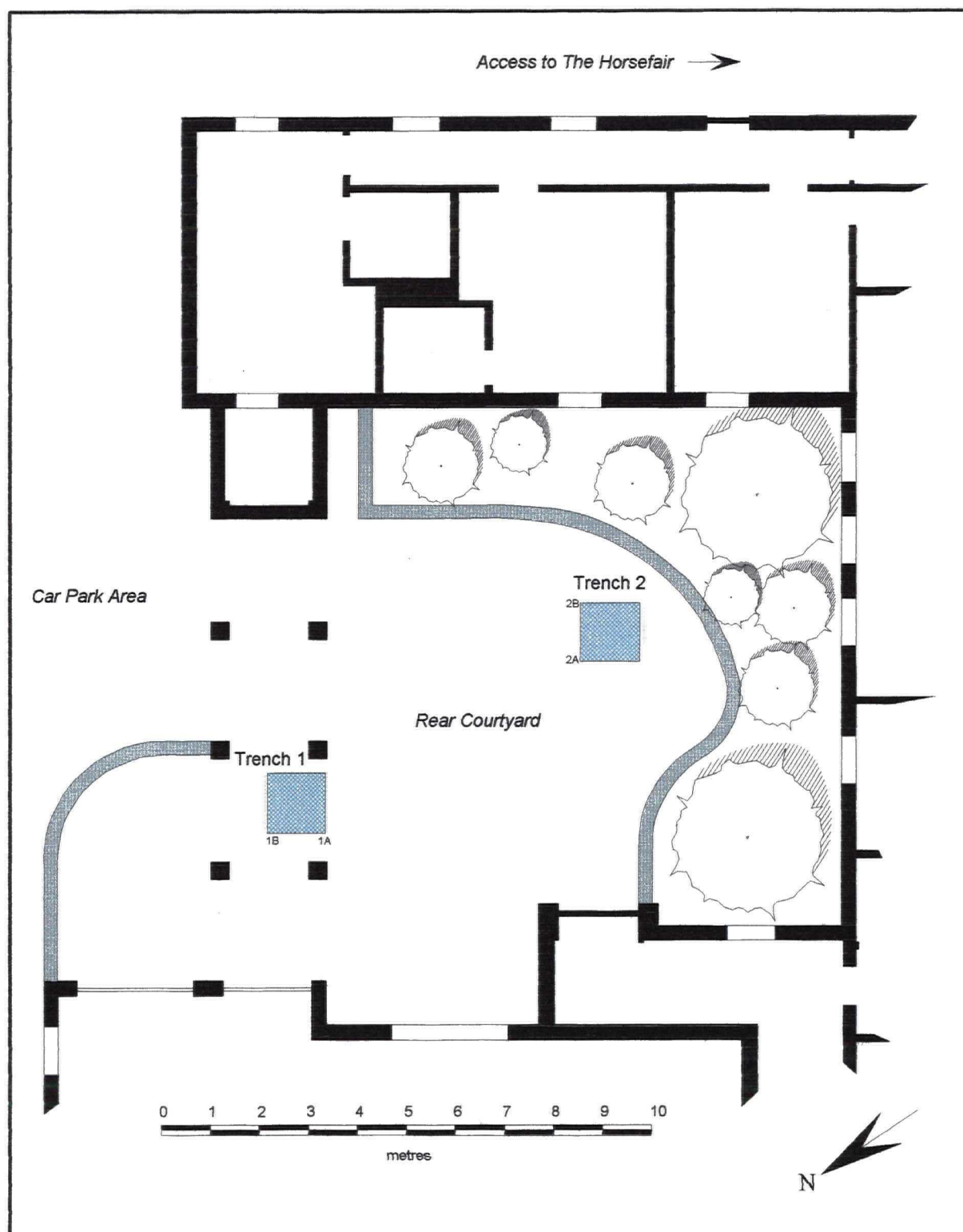


Figure 2. Location of evaluation trenches.
Location of sections denoted by 1A-1B and 2A-2B

1.0 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was carried out on behalf of Mr Richard Stables, in the rear courtyard of the Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge, on the site of a proposed swimming pool intended to form part of a proposed leisure facility. This evaluation commenced on Thursday 27th August and was completed on Friday 28th August 1998. The aim of the evaluation was to examine the nature and sequence of any preserved archaeological deposits on the site.

In the event an area of stone flags of medieval or late medieval date was observed in trench 1, approximately 1.15 m. beneath the level of the modern ground surface. In trench 2 a horizon of demolition material of medieval date was recorded beneath a possible flood deposit encountered 0.70m below the present ground surface. It is recommended in the light of this evidence that in the region of 0.70m - 1.00m of material may be removed over the whole of the 12m x 6m area of the proposed swimming pool by mechanical excavator. In order to determine the nature of the buried archaeological material beneath this level it will be necessary to hand clean the revealed surface. The evaluation exercise would indicate that any further excavation down to the base level of the construction trench of the pool would need to be undertaken by archaeological methods.

The base level of the pool has not yet been firmly decided. Preliminary discussions on site indicated that it will be no more than 1.70m. below the level of the stone flags of the existing hotel courtyard.

This report text was prepared by Nick Pearson, and the illustrations by Guy Hopkinson of On-Site Archaeology.

2.0 Site Location and Archaeological Background

2.1 *Area of proposed development*

The site is situated at the corner of Horsefair and Fishergate in the centre of Boroughbridge. The National Grid reference for the site is SE 39650 66875 (see Figure 1 for location).

The site is currently occupied by the Crown Hotel. This building has been developed and extended throughout the early modern period and given its location so close to one of the major north – south lines of communications on the eastern side of England, was no doubt a coaching inn of some importance in the past. A monumental fireplace of considerable antiquity still present within the Lounge Bar gives an insight into the status of the building. Remedial work in the 1970s uncovered structural remains which have been interpreted as indicating the presence of an earlier phase of buildings on the site, reputed to be that of a medieval manor

house. There is however no outstanding record as to the precise nature of the evidence that was uncovered at that time.

2.2 *Archaeological Potential.*

The past history of the current settlement foci at Boroughbridge has not yet been extensively studied or understood. The limited knowledge of the site that is the subject of this evaluation would however indicate that this precise location has high archaeological potential for the medieval period.

Earlier periods are more problematic. Boroughbridge is not mentioned in the Domesday Book and in the current body of knowledge there is nothing to suggest that it was a focus of settlement in either the Anglian or the Anglo-Scandinavian periods. As for the Roman period the important settlement of Aldborough (*ISURIUM*) lies close by and it is assumed that the current core of Boroughbridge represents a shift away from that site, perhaps as a result of changes in the river regime or crossing point of the River Ure. Such an interpretation would suggest that Roman remains are unlikely at the Crown Hotel site.

The town of Boroughbridge lies within an area which is clearly of significance in the prehistoric period. An alignment of standing stones, known as the Devils Arrows is located close to the town centre, less than half a kilometre from the site of the Crown Hotel. Recent archaeological work associated with residential development has shown that the stones are but the visible part of a complex Neolithic and Bronze age landscape. The presence of remains of prehistoric date must therefore remain a possibility at the Crown Hotel site.

3.0 Methodology

Two evaluation trenches were excavated, both entirely by hand after a modern concrete surface beneath the existing flagstones had been removed by a compressed air heavy breaker. Trench 1 measured 1.20m³ square and was located within the colonnaded area at the car park side of the patio area, to the rear of the hotel. Trench 2 also measured 1.20m³ and was located adjacent to the beds of shrubbery on the far side of the patio area from the car park. The trench locations are illustrated in Figure 2.

4.0 Results.

4.1 Trench 1 (See Figure 3a and Plate 1)

The succession of deposits, in stratigraphic sequence, were as follows;

- 1000..... Layer: York Flagstones.
- 1001..... Layer: Mid brownish yellow sand. Bedding for flagstones. Level on top of deposit: 0.05m BGL. (i.e. below the level of the top of the York Flagstones).
- 1002..... Layer: Concrete. Level on top of deposit: 0.10m BGL.
- 1003..... Layer: Concrete. Level on top of deposit: 0.15m BGL.
- 1004..... Layer: Rounded river washed cobbles set in heavy brown clay. Bedding for concrete. Level on top of deposit: 0.25m BGL.
- 1005..... Layer: Dark brown sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal and mortar flecks and brick fragments. Level on top of deposit: 0.30m BGL.
- 1006..... Layer: Dark brownish grey sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal and mortar flecks and brick fragments. Level on top of deposit: 0.40m BGL.
- 1007..... Layer: Dark / mid grey sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal and mortar flecks and brick fragments. Level on top of deposit: 1.00m BGL.
- 1008..... Layer: Stone flagged surface.

Contexts [1000] - [1004] represent recent resurfacing of the patio area with associated levelling and bedding deposits.

Contexts [1005] and [1006] represent a complex build-up comprising organic accumulation mixed with dumping of domestic waste and building demolition material. Dating evidence indicates this to be modern in origin.

Context [1007] represent a similar process of formation to contexts [1005] and [1006]. In this case however the dating evidence was late medieval in date.

Contexts [1008] comprises a deposit of deliberately laid stone flags, interpreted as a floor or yard surface of (late) medieval date.

4.2 Trench 2 (See Figure 3b and Plate 2)

The succession of deposits, in stratigraphic sequence, were as follows;

- 2000..... Layer: York Flagstones.
- 2001..... Layer: Mid brownish yellow sand. Bedding for flagstones. Level on top of deposit: 0.05m BGL. (i.e. below the level of the top of the York Flagstones).
- 2002..... Layer: Concrete. Level on top of deposit: 0.10m BGL.

- 2003..... Layer: Dark grey sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal fleck and brick fragments.
Level on top of deposit: 0.15m BGL.
- 2004..... Layer: Mid / dark brown sandy silt with inclusions of charcoal fleck and brick fragments. Level on top of deposit: 0.30m BGL.
- 2005..... Layer: Dark yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional charcoal flecks. Level on top of deposit: 0.62m BGL.
- 2006..... Layer: Degraded chalk fragments, light grey in colour, in matrix of mid brown silt with inclusions of charcoal flecks. Level on top of deposit: 0.70m BGL.
- 2007..... Layer: Mid brown sandy silt with inclusions of brick fragments and angular pebbles. Level on top of deposit: 0.80m BGL.
- 2008..... Layer: Dark brown sandy silt with small stone fragments and angular pebbles.
Level on top of deposit: 1.10m. BGL.

Contexts [2000] - [2002] represent recent resurfacing of the patio area with associated levelling and bedding deposits.

Contexts [2003] and [2004] represent a complex build-up comprising organic accumulation mixed with dumping of domestic waste and building demolition material. Dating evidence indicates this to be modern in origin.

Context [2005] was unlike any other found in this evaluation exercise. Its matrix of clean granulated particles of sand may represent deposition by relatively fast flowing water, perhaps an episode of flooding of the Rive Ure. No dating evidence was found from within this deposit. It lay between deposits which were exclusively modern in origin and those which produced only medieval finds. It may therefore be of medieval or later date.

Contexts [2006] to [2008] represent a similar process of formation to contexts [2003 and [2004]. In this case however the dating evidence was medieval in date.

5.0 Conclusions

The results of this evaluation exercise indicate that deposits of medieval and late medieval date are present on this site within the area where it is proposed that the swimming pool will be constructed. It is difficult to be certain as to the nature of this material on the basis of the small size of the sample area excavated, but the presence of the deliberately laid flagstones in trench 1, and the fact that in both trenches the deposits of medieval and late medieval date contained considerable amounts of building demolition material, would indicate the likely proximity of a well constructed structure. The archaeological evidence corroborates therefore the previous indications that the site may be the location of a medieval manor house, perhaps of some considerable size and status.

It is clear from the results of this evaluation exercise that deposits of medieval date are sealed by material which is modern in origin. In trench 1, deposits clearly of (late) medieval date were encountered at approximately 1.0m below the level of the current stone flagged patio area. In trench 2 it is less easy to give a precise depth, but no finds of modern date were found below the possible flood deposit, 0.60m, BGL.

It is clear therefore that should any development take place on this site, that the topmost 0.60m to 1.00m could be removed by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision. Beneath that level it would be appropriate to hand clean the revealed surface. Should medieval features and deposits be found to exist at this level, as is suggested by this evaluation exercise, in order to satisfy planning requirements it will be necessary to remove such deposits down to the base level of the development threat by more appropriate archaeological methods, i.e. hand excavation.

As stated above, the base level of the excavation necessary to construct the swimming pool has yet to be finalised by the design team.



Plate 1. Trench 1 viewed from the south-east. Scale of 1.00m.



Plate 2. Trench 2 viewed from the south-west. Scale of 1.00m.

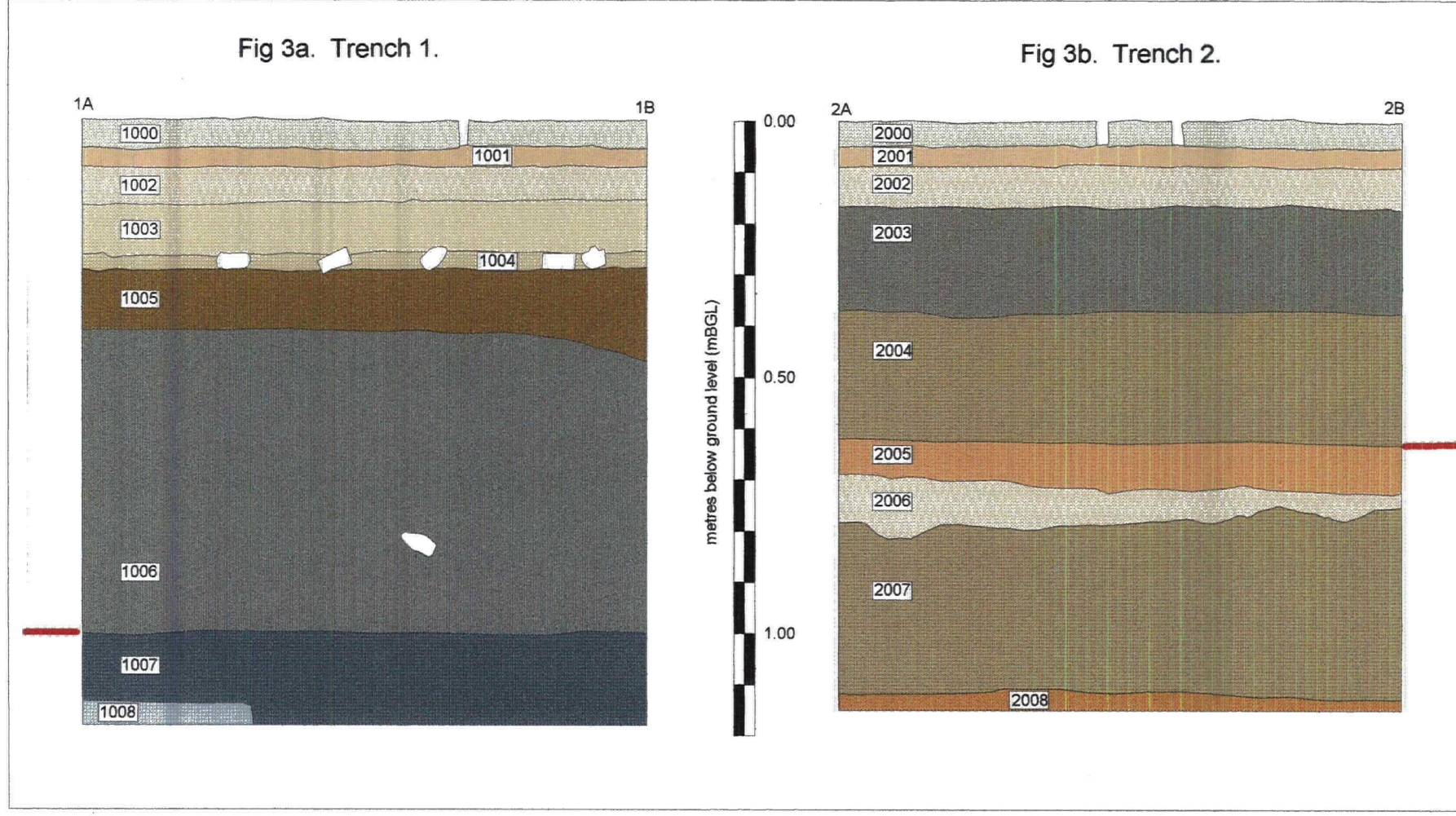


Figure 3. Section drawings of Trenches 1 and 2.

6.0 Appendix 1. Pottery from the Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge. © Alan Vince, 1998

Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge: Assessment of pottery

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Background

Pottery was submitted for identification and assessment from four contexts: 1006, 1007, 2004 and 2007. It was identified and recorded using terminology based ultimately on the Museum of London Archaeology Service system. One sherd, from context 2007, appears to be of 12th/13th century date. Two sherds from one vessel from context 1007 are of late medieval date. The sherds from context 1006 are of late 18th-century date and those from context 2004 are of 19th-century date.

Description

Wares

The wares present are listed in Table One. The two medieval types are likely to be of local origin but with one possible exception (the Blackware from 1006) the post-medieval pottery is unattributable and could be made in Staffordshire, Leeds or elsewhere.

Code:	Full Name	Comments
LONS	London Stoneware	Produced at a number of sites in and around London from the late 17 th to the 19 th centuries.
CREA	Creamware	Produced at a number of centres, including Stoke on Trent and Leeds from the late 18 th century onwards.
BL	Blackware	Produced at a number of centres, including Halifax from the 16 th century to the present century
HUM	Humber ware	Produced at a number of centres, including Cowick and Holme upon Spalding Moor mainly during the 14 th and 15 th centuries. Late Humber wares continue this tradition into the 17 th century.
TPW	Transfer-printed ware	Produced at a number of centres, including Stoke on Trent and Leeds from the late 18 th century onwards.
YG	York Gritty ware	Precise source(s) unknown but probably includes sites in West Yorkshire from the 12 th to the 13 th centuries

Forms

The earlier medieval sherd is probably from a jar used in cooking since it has sooting on both inside and

outside surfaces. The later medieval sherd is from a large hollow ware vessel, probably either a jug or a cistern.

The post-medieval wares are of several forms: a bowl used in food preparation or storage; plates used at table; a tankard, probably used to serve beer and hollow ware transfer-printed vessels. By the 19th century numerous hollow ware forms were produced and it is not possible to determine the exact form(s) of these two sherds.

Recommendations

The pottery indicates medieval and later activity on the site. Since little is known in detail of the composition and sequence of medieval pottery in Boroughbridge any further disturbance of the medieval levels on this site should be recorded archaeologically and the pottery studied.

The pottery should be retained for further study and comparison with future finds.

Context:	cname:	Form:	Nosh:	NoV:	Weight:	PART:	Description:
1006	LONS	TANK	1	1	10	B	WHITE SLIPPED EXT
1006	CREA	PLATE	1	1	4	BS	
1006	CREA	PLATE	1	1	16	R	FEATHERED EDGE - GREEN
1006	BL	BOWL	1	1	10	BS	
1007	HUM	JUG	2	1	75	BS	HANDLE BROWN GLAZE - TRANSITIONAL
2004	TPW	HOLLOW	1	1	7	BS	UNID
2004	TPW	HOLLOW	1	1	8	BS	FLORAL
2004	TPW	PLATE	1	1	1	BS	WILLOW PATTERN
2007	YG	-	1	1	30	BS	SOOTED; GLAZE SPOT INT

7.0 Appendix 2- Archive Index

2.1 *Drawing Register*

<i>Dwg No</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Initials</i>
1	Section 1: Trench 1.	1:20	28/08/98	Guy
2	Section 2: Trench 2.	1:20	28/08/98	Guy

2.2 *Photographic Register*

Film 1

<i>Frame</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Initials</i>
15-18	Trench 1 at completion	1 x 1.00m	28/08/98	Guy
		1 x 0.20m at base		
19-24	Trench 2 at completion	1 x 1.00m	28/08/98	Guy