

5. ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURAL SEQUENCE

Areas 2 and 4

Initially approximately half of Area 2 was machine stripped using a Kubota machine. This process was carefully controlled and monitored, with small areas excavated by hand to allow the levels of the modern overburden to be established accurately and to recover artefacts from which a date of deposition could be established. Once the depth of modern overburden had been established, the remainder of Area 2 was stripped by machine to remove deposits of this date. Deposits below the modern overburden within Area 2 were excavated by hand and are discussed here in stratigraphic order (Fig. 3) in groupings which have been made on the basis of the character of the deposits and features. These groupings have been dated by pottery and artefact analysis, and placed in dated periods. To the north-east of this was Area 4. Here the modern overburden was removed by machine and all earlier archaeological deposits were excavated by hand. These deposits are discussed along with those from Area 2 in the appropriate period sections. Outside Area 2, over the greater part of the site, the machine stripping to the construction formation level was carried out by contractors and the work was archaeologically monitored.

Natural deposits

Natural deposits (2177, Group 1), a glacial sand and pebbles, were encountered at c.39m AOD. The material immediately above was a similar deposit (2171, Group 1), c.0.30m deep, but it exhibited the effects of biological action. In Area 4 the natural sub-soil was encountered at 37.20m AOD and was recorded as Contexts 4011 and 4012.

5.1 Period 1, 11th or 12th century (Fig. 4)

Above natural deposits the earliest excavated feature was located to the rear of 8/9 Market Place. It was a cut sub-circular in plan (2122, Group 2) which measured c.1.90m in diameter and was heavily truncated by a later post-hole (2102, Group 3). The pit was backfilled with a clay silt (2099, Group 2) which included a quantity of charcoal and metal working slag, indicating its use as a rubbish pit. The presence of a rubbish pit here demonstrates habitation in the vicinity and analysis of the slag indicated the possibility of a smithy close by in this period. The backfill of the pit contained 23 sherds of pottery; most were dated to the 11th or 12th century but one sherd indicated a later date (see p.40). This may be intrusive material since this cut was substantially truncated by a later feature. The feature should therefore be dated by the main body of the pottery assemblage. This makes it the only excavated feature in Area 2 which dates to before the mid 12th century, although residual pottery sherds of this date were recovered from later contexts, suggesting occupation on or near this site.

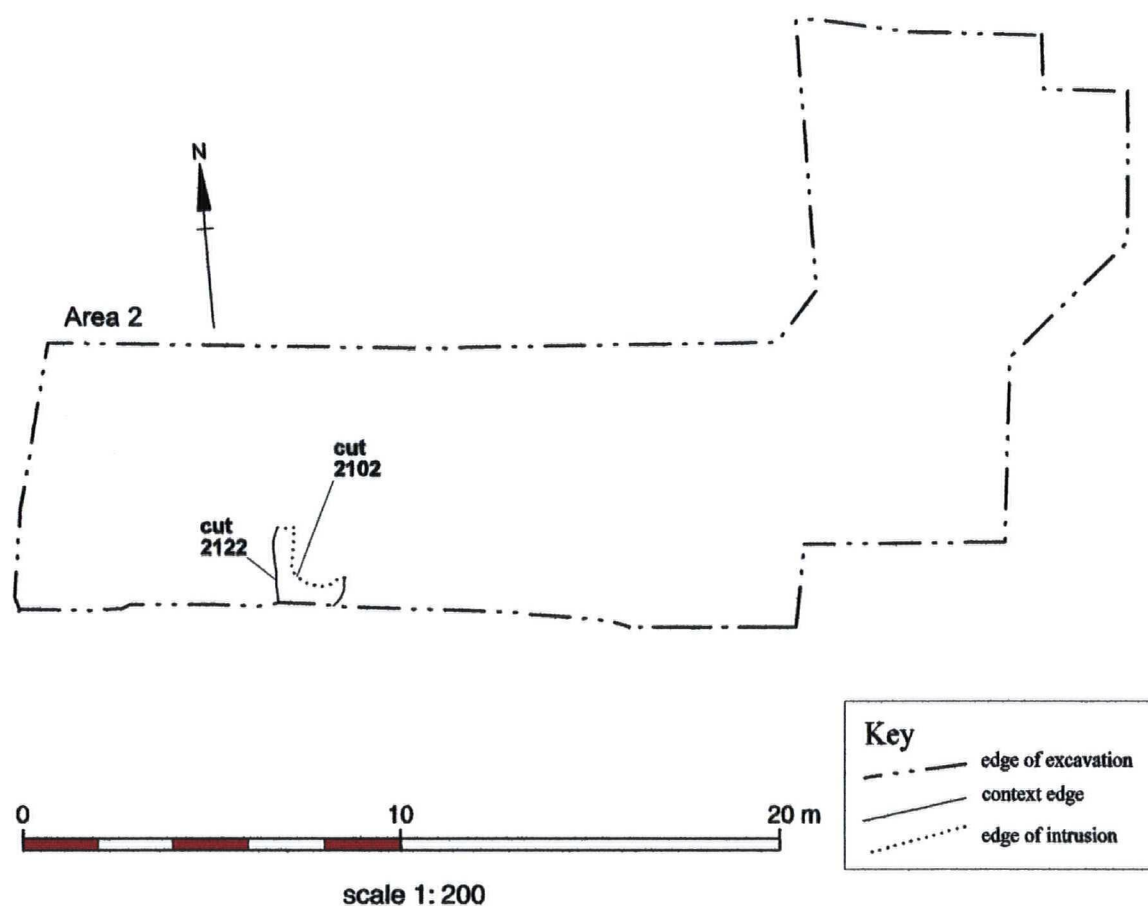


Fig. 4 Plan of Period 1, 11th or 12th century

5.2 Period 2, mid 12th–13th century (Figs. 5 and 6)

In Area 4, which lay to the north-east of Area 2 and c.50m to the rear of 15 Market Place, the earliest excavated feature was a portion of a linear ditch (4006) aligned north-north-east/south-south-west. It was c.0.80m deep and c.0.90m in width, widening towards the south to 1.40m. The profile of the ditch was established by hand excavation of a portion of this feature within the small area where a lift shaft was to be sited. The ditch continued to the north-east and south-west beyond the area of excavation, and the edges of the feature were established for a total length of c.10m. The ditch was backfilled with a very homogeneous slightly silty sand (4005) with no sign of gradual silting, indicating that the ditch was probably kept cleaned out until it was backfilled. A second portion of backfill (4010) was removed from an area outside the proposed lift shaft and its composition appeared to be consistent with that of 4005. Pottery from the 12th or 13th century was recovered from 4005. This large ditch (4006) most likely represented a property boundary to the rear of the burgage plots fronting the Market Place. Overlaying the 2nd edition OS map on modern digital mapping allows the alignment of this ditch to be compared with the boundary of the burgage plots in the 19th century (Fig. 5). The ditch lies on the same alignment, c.1.60m to the west of the 19th-century boundary. This boundary seems to have been continually respected from the 12th century until the bus station was constructed in the 20th century. The boundary ditch may have been the feature known as 'The Archbishop's Ditch' which defined the curtilage of the Archbishop's Palace grounds, with the land to the east of the boundary falling within the ecclesiastical precinct.

In this period there were two large pits at the rear of 8/9 Market Place, 5.40m apart, measuring centre to centre. The westernmost pit (2102, Group 3) measured c.2m in diameter and c.0.90m deep, and was stratigraphically above the earlier rubbish pit (2122, Group 2). To the east another pit (2115, Group 3) measured c.3.50 x 4m and was c.1m deep. The fills of these pits (contexts 2092 and 2107 respectively, Group 3) included cobble packing, suggesting that they were post-pits. This is confirmed by the large post-holes found within each of these post-pits (2116 and 2094, Group 3). The material within these post-holes (2109, 2088, Group 4) contained quantities of charcoal and appeared to be backfill rather than packing deposits. The post-pits and the post-holes contained similar pottery assemblages, dating from the 13th century. These features are likely to have been main structural posts in a building which fronted onto the Market Place, possibly constructed during the mid 12th–13th century and subsequently demolished some time later in the 13th century. This construction date would correspond with the date of the boundary ditch (4006) to the rear of the plots and indicates the establishment of clearly defined building plots and buildings on the Market Place street frontage, probably at the beginning of this period. A fence, forming a boundary between two properties fronting the Market Place (8/9 and 10), was also likely to have been constructed in this period. This fence was represented by six post-hole cuts, four (2183, 2181, 2155 and 2168) of similar dimension aligned east–west, and two further post-holes (2173 and 2163) lying very close to this axis. Dating evidence for the disuse of this fence is derived from the backfills (Group 6) which contained pottery dating to the 14th century (see Period 4, Phase 2).

No features at the rear of 10 Market Place were found to date from this period, but it is likely that a building stood on this plot at the same time as the building on 8/9 Market Place. In the backland area to the rear of 10 Market Place the earliest features excavated were dated to Period 3.

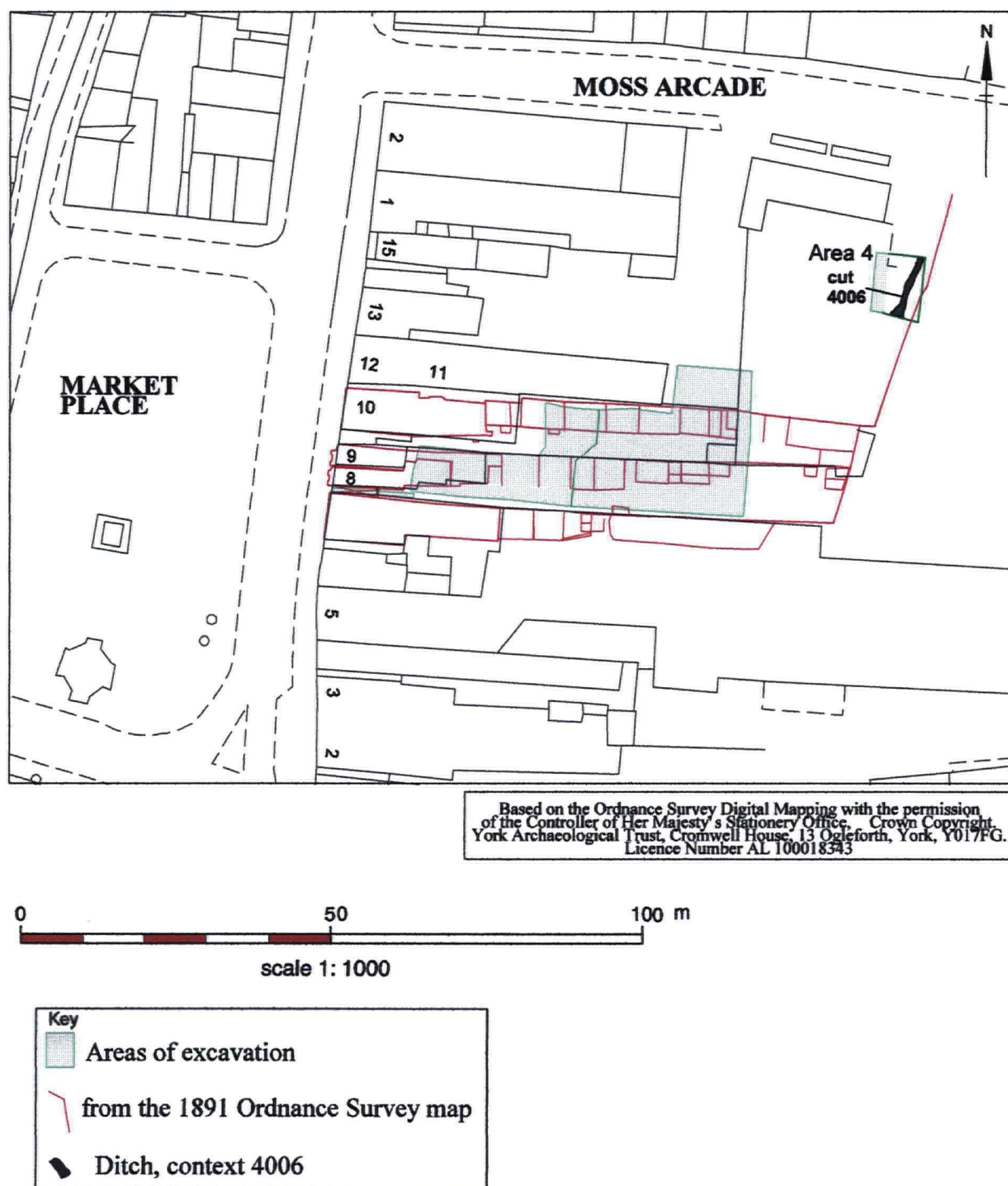


Fig. 5 Period 2, mid 12th–13th century, Area 4

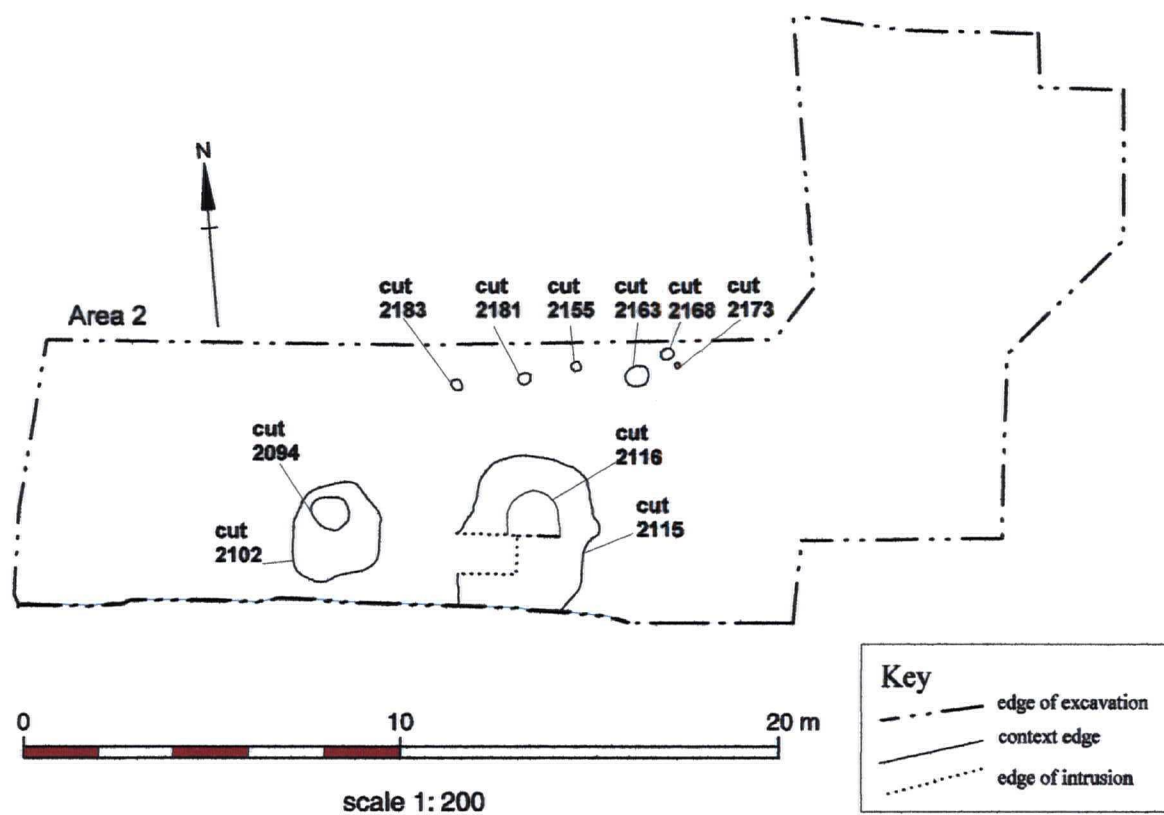


Fig. 6 Period 2, mid 12th–13th century, Area 2

5.3 Period 3, late 13th or early 14th century (Fig. 7)

To the rear of 10 Market Place a large rectangular pit (2072, Group 8) measuring c.2 x 2m and 1.17m deep may have been cut initially to extract the natural sand and gravel, but was subsequently used as a rubbish pit. It was backfilled with charcoal-rich deposits (2071 and 2056, Group 8) which contained pottery dating to the late 13th or early 14th century. Although no dating evidence was recovered from the backfills (2054 and 2053, Group 8) of two post-holes (2058 and 2057, Group 8), these features, also to the rear of 10 Market Place and in a similar stratigraphic position to the large pit (2072, Group 8), may have represented contemporary activity. The two post-holes were both c.0.40m in diameter and c.0.30m deep; they were c.0.50m apart and probably represented part of a small structure in the backland area to the rear of 10 Market Place.

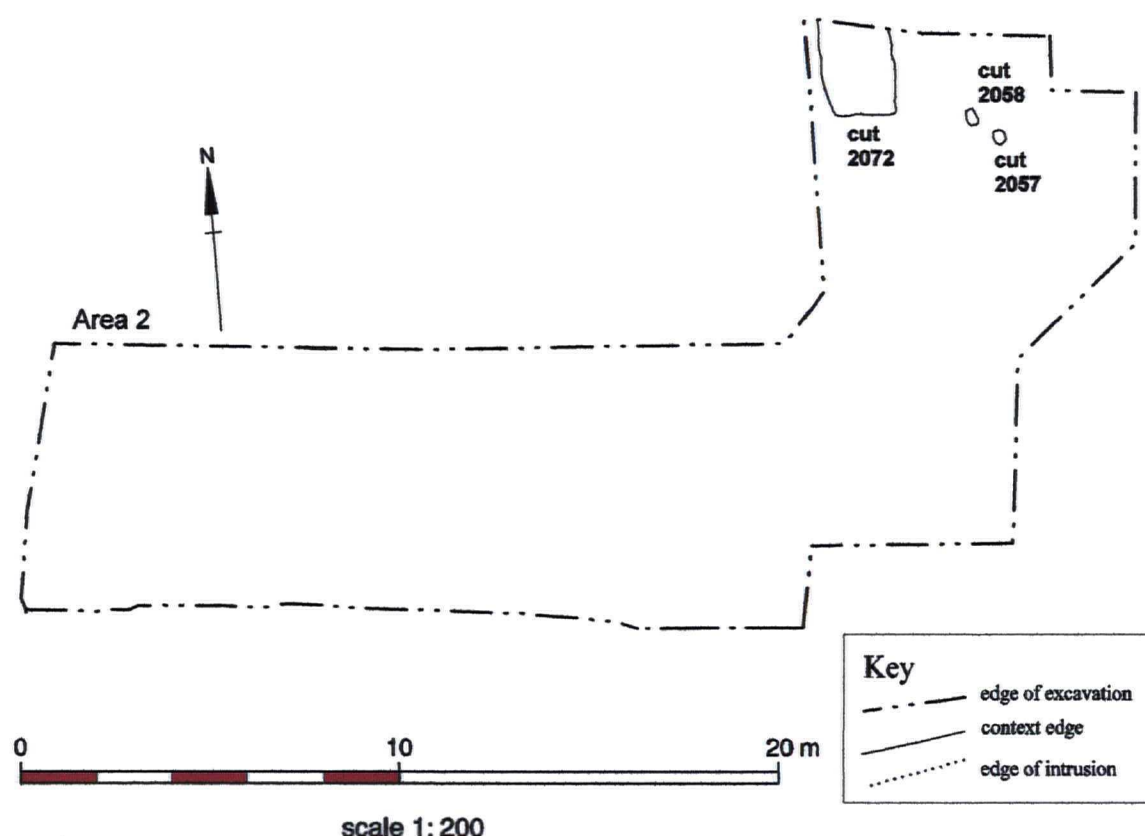


Fig. 7 Period 3, late 13th or early 14th century

5.4 Period 4, Phase 1, later 14th century (Fig. 8)

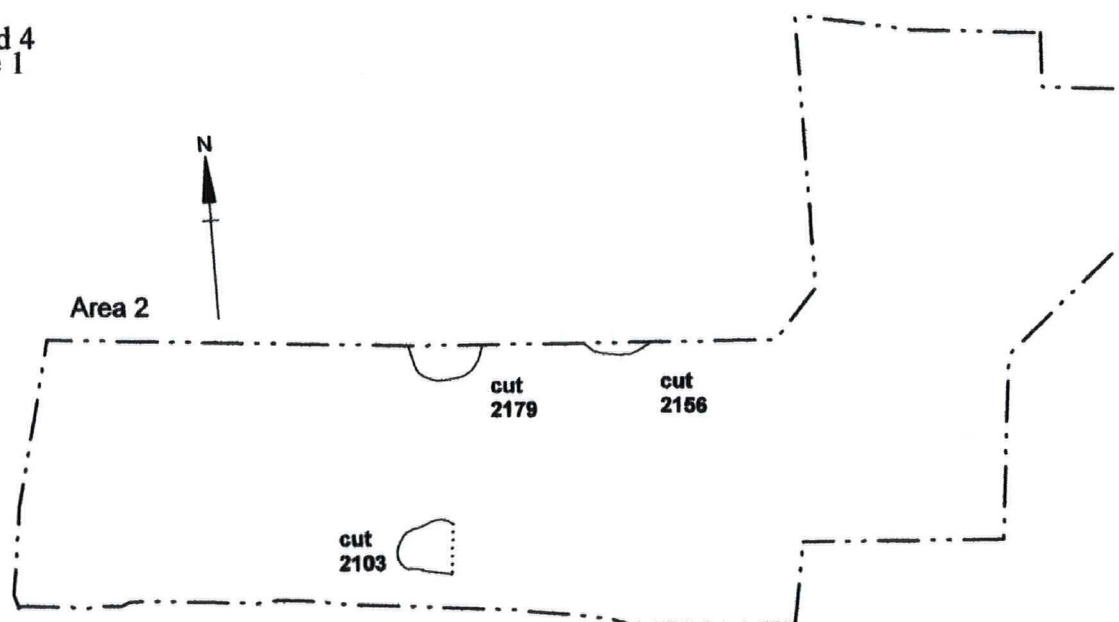
Two features (2156 and 2179, Group 7) lay very close to the northern boundary of the 8/9 Market Place plot; both continued beyond the northern edge of excavation. One (2156) measured c.1.50m in diameter and was a post-hole filled with a packing deposit of small pebbles (2154). It could have represented a post in a boundary fence between 8/9 and 10 Market Place. To the west lay a larger sub-circular cut (2179), c.2m in diameter and c.0.44m deep, which may have served a similar structural function although it contained no packing material and could have been used as a rubbish pit. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill of 2156 but pottery of late 14th-century date was recovered from the fill of 2179.

In this period this area of plot 8/9 Market Place had become part of the 'backlands' to the rear of property where rubbish pit digging occurred. A pit (2103), measuring c.1.40m in diameter and c.0.60m deep, post-dated the removal of the 12th- or 13th-century building on this plot. Pottery from the late 14th century was recovered from the backfill (2093) of this pit and a horseshoe (sf55) dating from the late 13th–14th century provided confirmation of the date. The pit also contained artefacts which may indicate the type of craft working being carried out locally. Single horn cores were found, indicating they had been deliberately removed from the animal skulls with the intention of using the horn. Part skeletons of cats were recovered, possibly suggesting pelt working nearby.

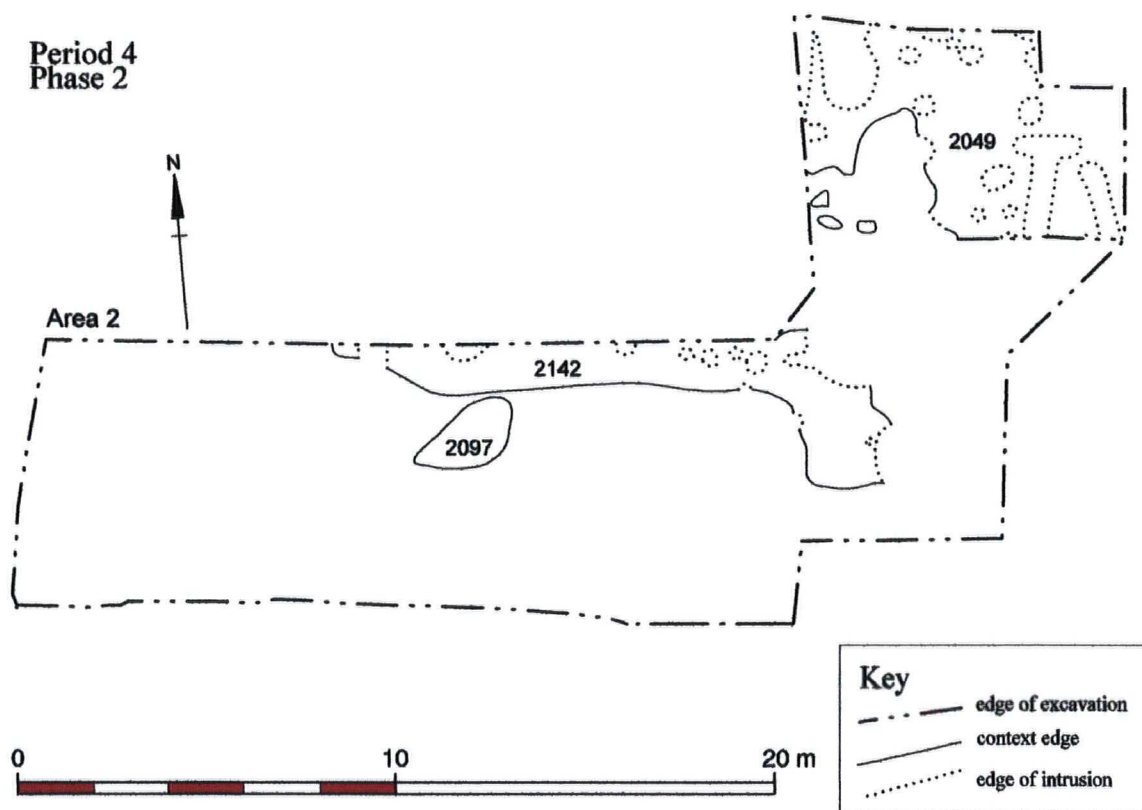
5.5 Period 4, Phase 2, later 14th century (Fig. 9)

Later in this period there appears to have been activity in preparation for widespread reconstruction in the area. The six post-holes representing a property boundary (Group 6) were backfilled with material (2153, 2180, 2182, 2172, 2162, 2167) which was very similar to the widespread levelling deposit (2049, 2142, 2097, Group 9) which sealed them. The levelling material used was red sand with frequent small cobbles and pebbles, similar in composition to the natural but including artefacts. The levelling deposit (2049) in the area to the rear of 10 Market Place extended to the south to the area to the rear of 8/9 Market Place (2142 and 2097). Here it was removed mainly by machine due to the constraints of time. The levelling was absent from the area immediately behind the street frontage of 8/9 Market Street, suggesting that both the levelling and other archaeological deposits were truncated to this depth when buildings were constructed in the 18th century but that outside the footprints of the buildings deposits survived, albeit partially truncated by later modern features.

Period 4
Phase 1



Period 4
Phase 2



scale 1: 200

Figs. 8 and 9 Period 4, phases 1 and 2, later 14th century

5.6 Period 5, late 14th–early 15th century (Figs. 10 and 11)

To the rear of 8/9 Market Place was a deep post-hole (2121, Group 27). It was a cut sub-circular in plan c.1.10m in diameter and c.0.90m deep. It was of similar size to and located approximately 0.20m west of the earlier post-hole 2094 (Group 4). 2121 could have been a later post associated with 2094 or it could represent the repositioning and replacement of the earlier post. Pottery from the later 14th century was recovered from the mixed backfill (2118). Environmental analysis of a sample of 2118 indicated the inclusion of burnt bone, but offers little further interpretation of its source of deposition. *Note: In the Assessment Report post-medieval glass was wrongly attributed to this context; it should have been attributed to Context 2018.*

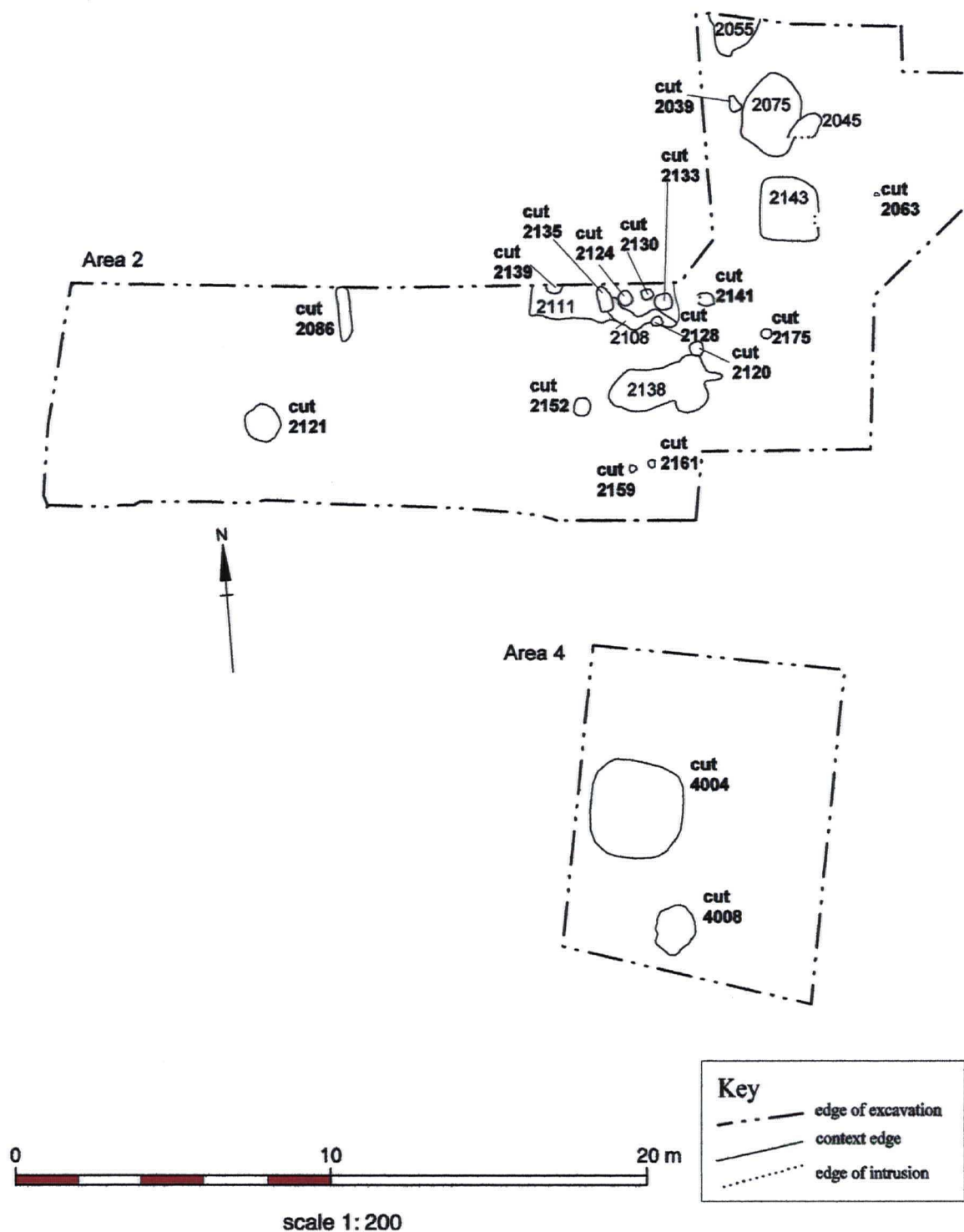
A linear cut, interpreted as a beam slot (2086, Group 13) c.1.80m long, 0.40m wide and 0.90m deep, with a north–south axis, was located close to the northern edge of the 8/9 Market Place plot and continued beyond the edge of excavation. It was backfilled (2089, Group 13) with material which incorporated burnt remains including two small pieces of oak and another fill (2087). This feature was stratigraphically above the levelling deposits (Group 9) but could not be directly associated with other structural features, possibly confirming that contemporary structural features at this level within the footprints of the 18th-century buildings had been truncated (see Group 9).

The lower fill (2089) of the beam slot (2086) contained only one residual sherd of 12th-century pottery; the upper fill (2087) contained 136 sherds of pottery including substantial parts of one jug. The dating of this pottery was uncertain because of a large number of residual sherds, but a late 14th or early 15th century is suggested. The stratigraphic position of the slot, above the later 14th-century levelling deposit confirms a late 14th or early 15th century date for further building constructed on this plot. This beam slot could have been a part of a building fronting the Market Place, or one adjoining to the rear. Alternatively, it could represent a dividing wall within a long range extending back from the street front. Surface deposits survive outside the truncation of the footprint of the 18th-century building, which may demonstrate that the external surface to the rear of the building had become a more formal ‘yard’. These deposits (Group 10) comprised a small layer (2117) which appeared to be similar material to that used in the larger-scale levelling process (2142). Above it were the remains of two yard surfaces. The first was a clayey surface (2111) and, above it, were the scant remains of a mortar surface (2108).

Physically separate from 2117, 2111 and 2108 but also stratigraphically above the generalised levelling were two contexts, 2138 and 2136, which indicated urban occupation here. The ash within 2138 included small residues from the waste of metal working. Environmental analysis of a sample from 2138 indicated that it included modest numbers of beetles and mites which are typical of urban occupation deposits but with very poor preservation.

The yard surfaces were cut by five post-holes (2139, 2135, 2124, 2130, 2133, Group 11) which probably delineated a boundary fence between 8/9 and 10 Market Place. They contained packing and backfill deposits (2123, 2127, 2129, 2132, 2134 and 2137) incorporating pottery from the late 14th–early 15th century and are likely to

represent the replacement of the Group 6 boundary fence line between plots 8/9 and 10 Market Place.



Figs. 10 and 11 Period 5, late 14th–early 15th century, Areas 2 and 4