

AD396

**10 West Street, Yarm,
Stockton-on-Tees**

Archaeological Evaluation



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

AD Archaeology Ltd. was commissioned by Mowden Park Estate Co Ltd to carry out evaluation trenching in advance of the construction of carpark at Yarm.

A comparison of levels of known archaeological features on adjacent previously investigated sites, to the required levels of reduction for the construction of the carpark sub-base suggested that significant archaeological horizons would not be reached by the construction of the carpark. Two archaeological evaluation trenches were sited in the south-eastern and south-western sectors of the site to establish this with certainty. The two archaeological trenches excavated to the required construction depths of 0.52m BGL (Trench 1) and 0.94m BGL (Trench 2) respectively, confirmed that made ground deposits extended beyond these depths. It can be concluded therefore that any potential significant archaeological deposits lie at a depth beneath the levels of ground disturbance required by the construction of the carpark and its foundation and will therefore remain undisturbed.

During the course of the subsequent ground reduction for the car park two short lengths of an east-west sandstone wall were exposed (0.52m BGL) at the base of the groundworks. These lengths of sandstone wall were established as being of post-medieval date as they were cut through black silty clay post-medieval deposits, exposed on the base of the groundworks. An east-west yard wall is depicted at this location on the Ordnance Survey plans of 1894 and 1915 and it is likely this represents the wall exposed in the groundworks.

It can be concluded therefore that no significant archaeological features have been exposed or disturbed during the groundworks associated with the construction of the carpark.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Project

1.1.1 The project consists of archaeological evaluation trenching in advance of the construction of a carpark. The site is located at 10 West Street, Yarm, Stockton-on-Tees (NGR centre: NZ 4169 1301). It is irregular in plan and covers an area of approximately 0.2ha. The evaluation work was undertaken on 7th January 2022. A further site visit was undertaken on 17th January 2022 to record a wall exposed during the groundworks.

1.2 A desk top assessment (ASDU 2021) has been undertaken in advance of the proposed development.

1.3 Geology

1.3.1 The underlying bedrock geology of the area comprises Permian strata of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, which are overlain by Devensian diamicton till formed in the Quaternary period. The proposed development area is within Natural England's Tees Lowlands National Character Area. It is defined as a broad, open plain dominated by the meandering lower reaches of the River Tees and its tributaries, with wide views to distant hills.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 A detailed analysis of the archaeological and historical background is contained in a site-specific desk top assessment (ASDU 2021), from which the below information is drawn.

2.2 In terms of potential significant archaeological remains the most likely archaeological features to be present at the site would be of medieval/early post-medieval in date. These could include the remains of buildings associated with the medieval street frontage to the west and evidence for activity in burgage plots to the rear. The original focus for medieval settlement in Yarm was along West Street (formerly known as Westgate) immediately west of the site. The focus had shifted to the east along the High Street by 1700, with West Street becoming a back street.

2.3 Previous archaeological work in the immediate vicinity of the site have led to some understanding of the nature, scale and extent of medieval deposits in the area. Excavations in 1977 to the immediate south of the site identified the archaeological remains of medieval settlement at depths of 4.54m AOD and below. Within the excavated area (30m x 10m) the earliest phase of activity included an aisled timber building (HER 484) and outbuilding. A hearth (HER 4926) containing two ceramic crucibles that held slag was also found. A half-penny of King Stephen (HER 4927) dating to 1141 to 1152 was found in a posthole of the outbuilding. A level of 3.98m AOD was recorded at the top of a post-pit within the structural phase. The

aisled building was disused by the 13th century when riverine clay was imported to level the ground surface. Another probable stone-founded building (HER 4928) with a hearth was built onto the clay surface. A series of cess pits and a well was also attributed to this phase, which was dated to the 14th Century. A level of 4.54m AOD was recorded at the top of the well.

2.5 In 1975 an archaeological excavation (HER 1160) was undertaken at the frontage of 1 to 4 Westgate, directly to the west of the site. The work recorded 1.8m of made ground deposits, beneath which medieval features cut the natural subsoil. The features included a possible earlier surface of Westgate and evidence for iron working, with archaeological features at an estimated depth of 5.15m AOD.

2.6 A watching brief (HER 947) just to the north of the site at 8 West Street did not expose any features. However, the work recorded topsoil overlying 0.8m of alluvial deposits which contained medieval pottery sherds. Another watching brief (HER806) at 5 West Street, c.50m to the north of the site, recorded stone rubble walls and a compact brown earth floor. A watching brief (HER 807) on Bridge Street, c.70m north of the site, recorded made ground and no significant archaeological deposits.

2.7 A scheme of excavation and monitoring works was undertaken on land to the rear of West Street during the construction of the Yarm flood defences. Medieval alluvial deposits (c.1m deep) and 13th-15th century pottery were found to the rear of Nos. 3 (HER 120), 4 (HERs 110 & 116) and 5-9 Westgate (HER 119), and to the rear of No. 9 West Street (HER 113). To the rear of 5 Westgate (HER 111) a medieval posthole was found beneath post-medieval garden soils. In a trial trench (HER 115) behind Nos. 5-6 Westgate several archaeological features were excavated, including a medieval gully and pit. Alluvial subsoil was again recorded during a watching brief (HER 360) at 3 Westgate, which contained 13th-14th century pottery. Other archaeological works have been undertaken on West Street at the Church of St Mary Magdalene (HER 1167). Evidence for post-medieval burials, charnel and medieval burials were recorded.

2.8 During the later post-medieval period the area of the site appears to have been vacant and used for garden plots, with small sheds located on the site. The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1895 records the construction of the former sawmill adjacent to the site. At this time the site itself has been divided across three yards which contained several small structures. The Ordnance Survey map edition of the 1960s records extensions to the saw mill on its west, north side and south sides. The western and southern extensions lay within the site boundary. In 1849 the Leeds Northern Railway (later incorporated into the North-Eastern Railway) built a line between Leeds and Stockton. In order for the line to pass through Yarm a railway viaduct (HER 3541) was built through the western side of the town between 1849 and 1852. The viaduct defines the eastern side of the site.

2.9 Site Investigations (Geotechnical Survey)

2.9.1 The existing ground levels across the proposed development area vary between 5.89m AOD and 6.09m AOD in the southern part of the site, excluding a raised border and an elevated concrete platform. In the northern parts of the site the ground levels were substantially higher, up to 7.18m AOD. Construction of the carpark requires excavations to depths typically 0.30-40m with localised greater depths in raised areas of the site. As noted above archaeological deposits immediately adjacent to the south of the site are recorded at a depth of 4.54m AOD and below. Opposite the site across West Street archaeological deposits were recorded at c.5.15m AOD, below 1.8m of made ground.

2.9.2 Trial pits and bore holes undertaken as part of site investigations (included in BGP 2020 Ref: 19N2047) indicated a considerable depth of made ground of mixed gravels, clays and sands containing crushed brick and concrete. Along the southern side of the site these made ground deposits were traced to depths of 0.50m, 0.80m, 0.60m and 0.90m beneath ground level. In the northern part of the site, which is at a raised level these deposits of made ground, were located to depths of 0.90m, 0.80m and 1.0m beneath ground level.

2.9.3 A comparison of levels of known archaeological levels on adjacent sites to the required levels of reduction for the construction of the carpark sub-base suggested that significant archaeological horizons would not be reached by the construction of the carpark. Two archaeological evaluation trenches were sited in the south-eastern and south-western sectors of the site to establish this with certainty in order to ensure that any deeply buried archaeological deposits would not be impacted on by the construction of the carpark and its foundation.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of the evaluation trenching was to establish whether groundworks associated with the construction of the carpark and its foundation has the potential to impact on significant archaeological deposits on the site. Two trenches were sited on the lower southern portion of the site, where potential archaeological deposits are likely to lie closer to the present ground surface.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 General Methodology

4.1.1 The evaluation was carried out in compliance with all the relevant codes of practice by suitably qualified and experienced staff.

4.2 Excavation and Recording

4.2.1 The evaluation trench strategy was agreed with the County Archaeology Officer.

5 RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION

5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 2; Plates 1-2)

5.1.1 Trench 1, which was 10m by 2m in size, was oriented east-west and located in the south-western area of the site. The trench was 0.52m BGL (5.34m AOD) at its western end and 0.44m BGL (5.26m AOD) at its eastern end, being cut to the level required for the construction of the sub-base of the new carpark surface. The previous concrete surface had already been removed from this area. Mixed layers of grey and brown clay (1000) containing concentrations of brick rubble and ash were exposed continuing beneath the base of the trench.

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 2; Plates 3-4)

5.2.1 Trench 2, which was 8m by 2m in size, was oriented east-west and located in the south-eastern corner of the site. The trench was 0.94m BGL (5.49m AOD) at its eastern end and 0.47m BGL (5.31m AOD) at its western end, being cut to the level required for the construction of the sub-base of the new carpark surface. Beneath an asphalt and concrete surface (2000) 0.12m in depth, was a dolomite and brick foundation (2001), 0.20m in depth. These deposits sealed mixed layers of black and grey silty clays (2002) containing brick, ash and demolition material that continued beneath the base of the trench. These layers (2002) contained sherds of 19th Century pottery and bottle fragments.

5.3 Sandstone Wall (Figs.2-3; Plates 5-8)

5.3.1 Two short lengths of an east-west sandstone wall (3000) were exposed (at 0.52m BGL; 6.28m AOD) at the base of the ground reduction. The wall survived at foundation level being constructed from yellow sandstone fragments averaging 0.30m by 0.25m by 0.12m in size, set in a mixed matrix of lime mortar and brown clay. Two stretches of wall foundation survived, the easternmost length being 2.80m long by 0.55m wide, the westernmost being 4.20m long by 0.55m wide. The two stretches of wall foundation lay 6m apart, the wall being disturbed between these two points. A 1m length of the southern side of the westernmost stretch of wall was constructed from a line of four bricks (7and half inches by 4 inches by 3 inches in size) set in a firm white cement. Both stretches of the wall were cut through black silty clay post-medieval deposits, exposed on the base of the groundworks.

5.3.2 The line of the wall approximates closely to the line of a yard wall depicted on Ordnance Survey 2 (1894) and 3 (1915) when the area was sub-divided into yards associated with a saw mill.

6 DISCUSSION

6.1 A comparison of levels of known archaeological features on adjacent previously investigated sites, to the required levels of reduction for the construction of the carpark sub-base suggested that significant archaeological horizons would not be reached by the construction of the carpark. Two archaeological evaluation trenches were sited in the south-eastern and south-western sectors of the site to establish this with certainty. The two archaeological trenches excavated to the required construction depths of 0.52m BGL (Trench 1) and 0.94m BGL (Trench 2) respectively, confirmed that made ground deposits extended beyond these depths. It can be concluded therefore that any potential significant archaeological deposits lie at a depth beneath the levels of ground disturbance required by the construction of the carpark and its foundation and will therefore remain undisturbed.

6.2 During the course of the subsequent ground reduction for the car park two short lengths of an east-west sandstone wall were exposed (0.52m BGL) at the base of the groundworks. These lengths of sandstone wall were established as being of post-medieval date as they were cut through black silty clay post-medieval deposits, exposed on the base of the groundworks. An east-west yard wall is depicted at this location on the Ordnance Survey plans of 1894 and 1915 and it is likely this represents the wall exposed in the groundworks.

6.3 It can be concluded therefore that no significant archaeological features have been exposed or disturbed during the groundworks associated with the construction of the carpark.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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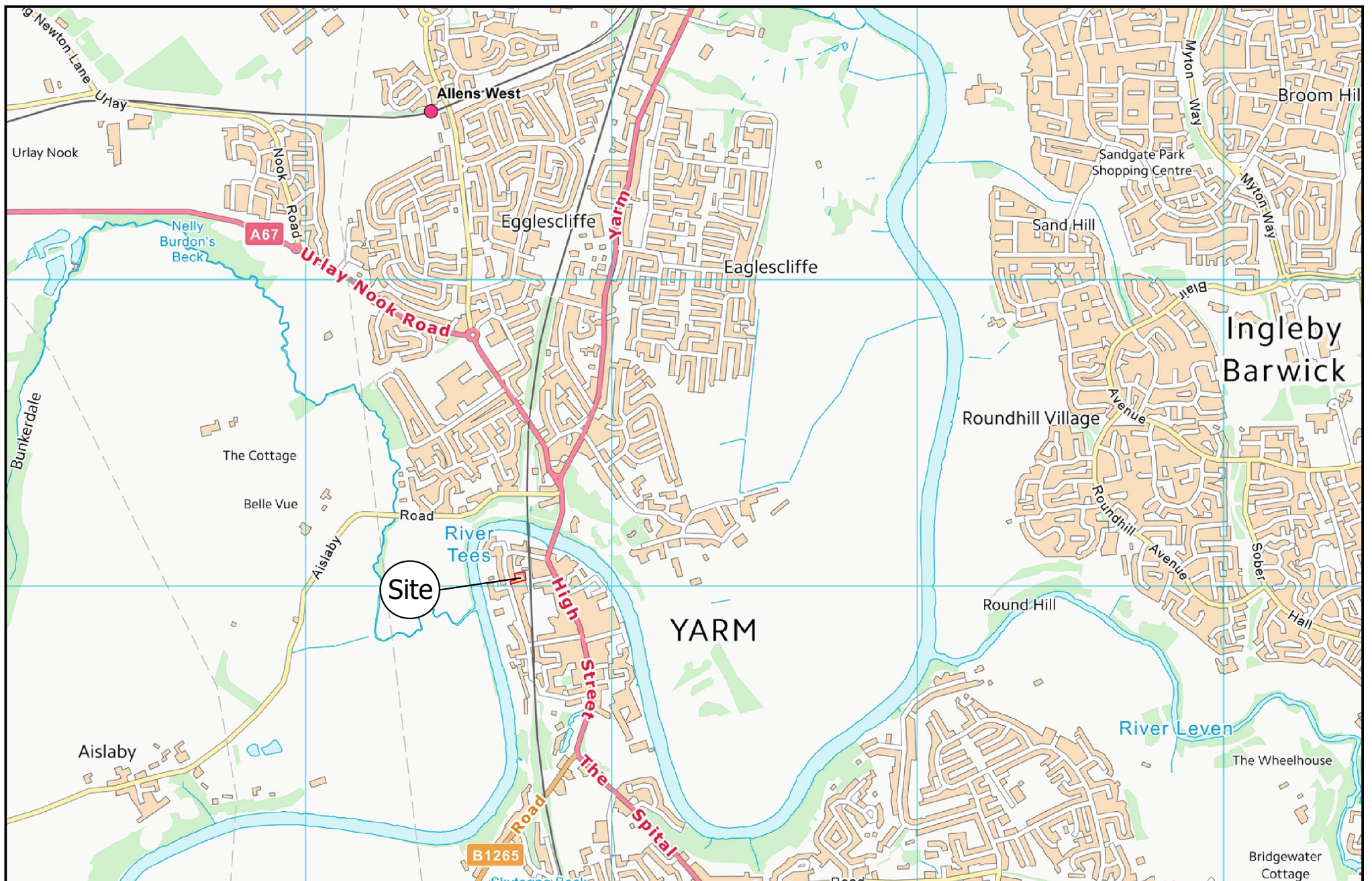
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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF CONTEXTS

Context	Depth	Description
1000	0.52m+	Trench 1- Mixed layers-levelling deposits
2000	0.12m	Trench 2 – Asphalt/Concrete
2001	0.20m	Trench 2 – Foundation
2002	0.62m+	Trench 2 – Mixed layers – levelling deposits
3000	0.14m	Sandstone Wall



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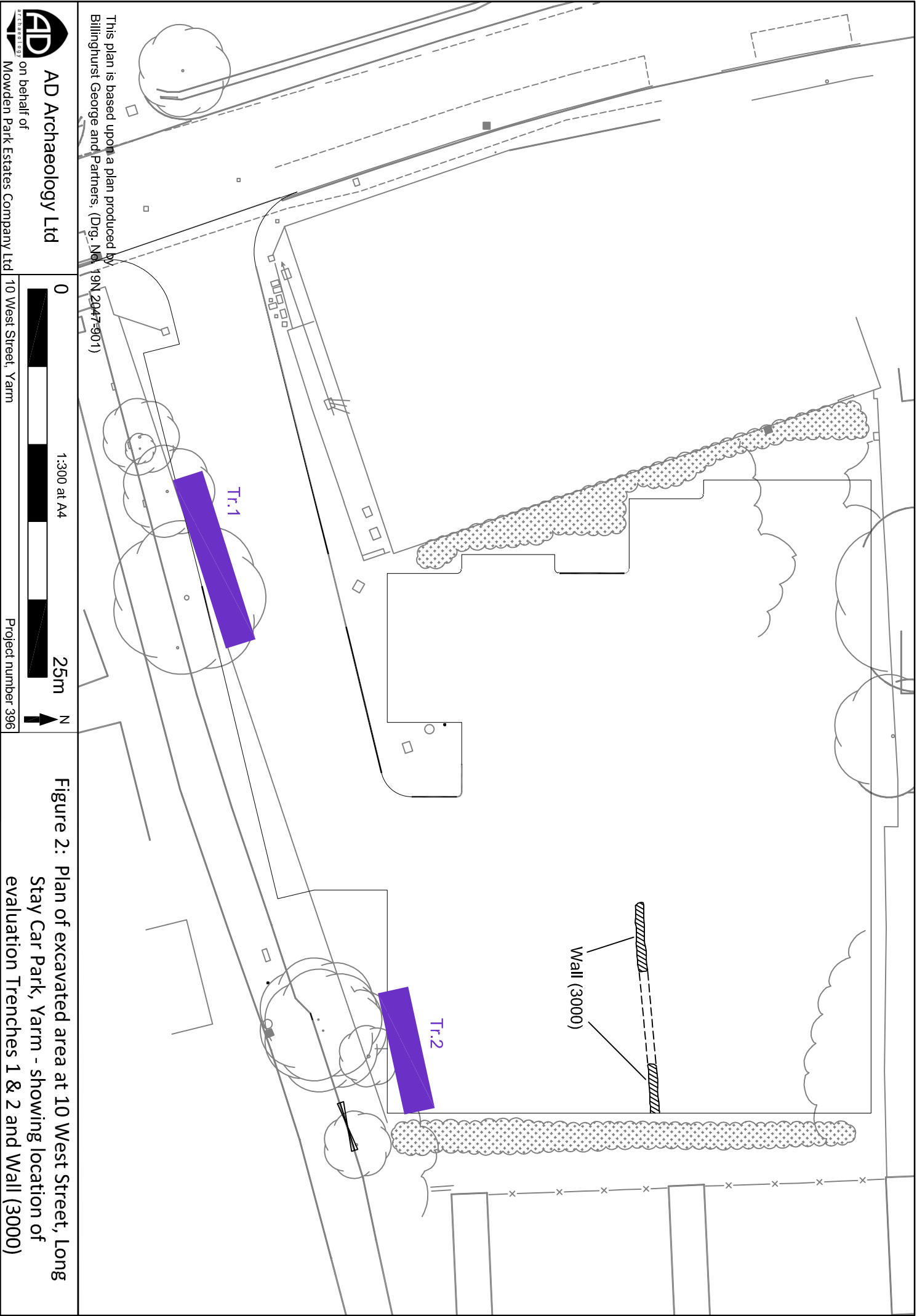


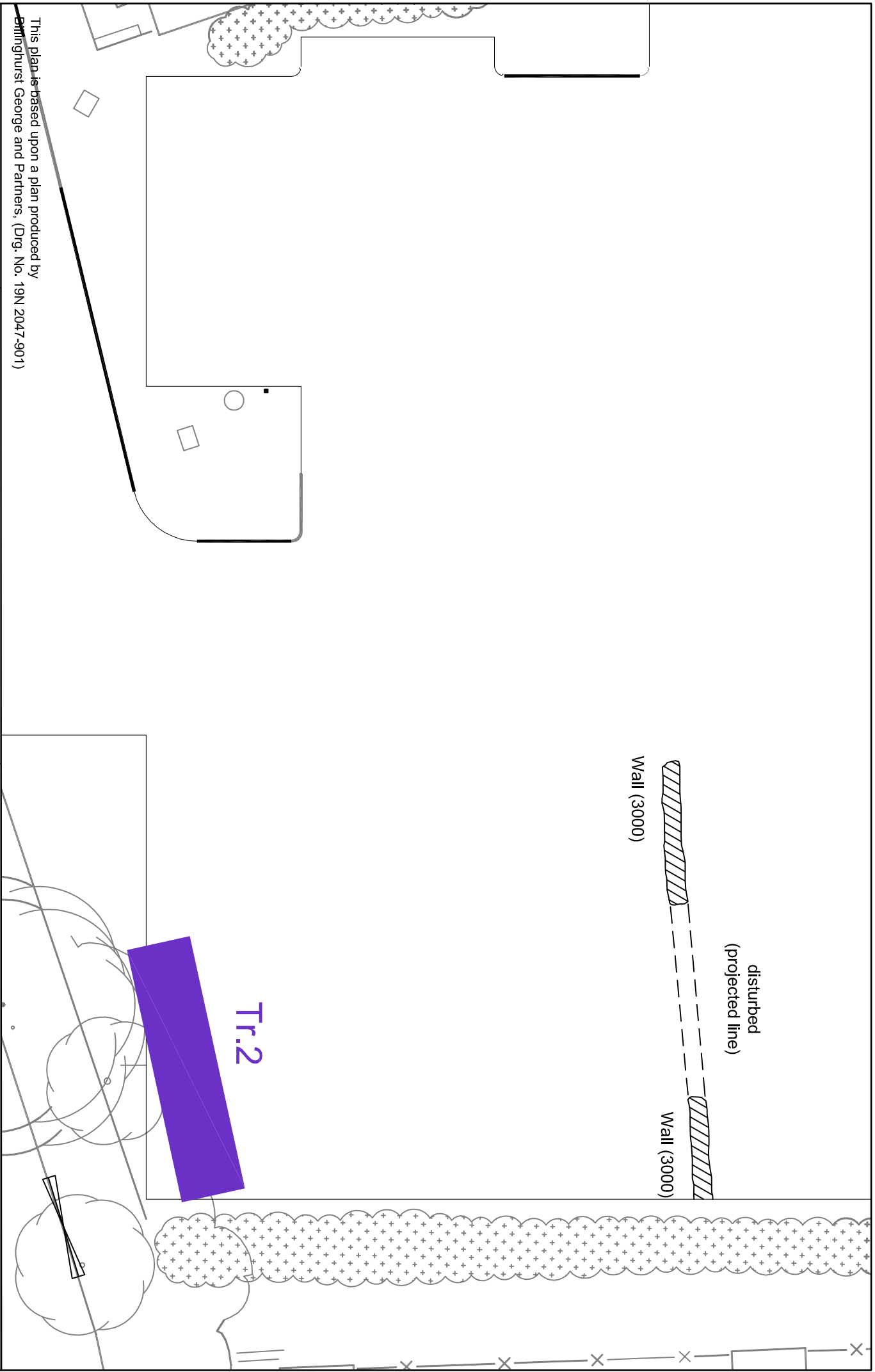
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Figure 1: Location of site at 10 West Road, Yarm





This plan is based upon a plan produced by
Bellinghurst George and Partners, (Drg. No. 19N 2047-901)

Figure 3: Detailed location of Wall (3000)



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking west



Plate 2: Trench 1 looking north-east



Plate 3 Trench 2 looking east



Plate 4 Trench 2 looking east



Plate 5 Sandstone Wall 1003 looking south-west



Plate 6 Sandstone Wall 1003 (easternmost length) looking north-east



Plate 7 Sandstone Wall 1003 (westernmost length) looking east



Plate 8 Sandstone Wall 1003 (westernmost length) looking east