



*LS*

*Archaeology*

---

Report of an Archaeological Evaluation, at;  
Oliver House, Bishop Hill, York, North Yorkshire

---

By Luigi Signorelli BA MA  
December 2012

LS Archaeology ☞ Sideways ☞ Main Street ☞ Terrington ☞ North Yorkshire  
☞ Tel. 01653648493 Mob. 07912485125 ☞ Email: [gigi.signorelli@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:gigi.signorelli@hotmail.co.uk)

---

**Site:** The site is situated within the York medieval walls, at the southern end of Priory Street, and at the corner of Bishophill Junior and Lower Priory Street.

**Site Codes:** YOH12

**County:** North Yorkshire

**NGR:** SE 5996 5140

**Planning Application No:** TBC

**HER References No:** Consultation: CYO218  
Event: TBC

**Development:** Restoration of Oliver House to be used as offices and erection of new extension at the rear of the dwelling.

**Date of Issue:** 05/12/12

**Site Dates:** 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012

**Project by:** LS Archaeology Sideways Terrington North  
Yorkshire YO60 6QB Tel: 01653 648493

**Client:** York Council for Voluntary Services

## Contents

<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>SUMMARY</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
Archaeological Background	6
Previous Excavations	6
Aims and Objectives	7
Method	7
Results	8
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>APPENDIX A:</b>	<b>12</b>
Contents of the Site Archive;	12
<b>APPENDIX B:</b>	<b>12</b>
OASIS entry; OASIS ID: lsarchae1-138751	12

## List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location (copy from Streetmap.co.uk).....	4
Figure 2: Site location in red (picture from Google Earth).....	5
Figure 3: Ruble deposit, looking south west.....	8
Figure 4: Plan of site showing the location of the Evaluation Trench in relation to the 1852 and modern maps .....	9
Figure 5: Section 1 facing north east showing the deposits found within the trench ....	9
Figure 6: The empty cavity revealing the presence of a cellar .....	10

## Summary

*An archaeological evaluation at Oliver House, Bishophill Junior, York North Yorkshire was undertaken in the form of a single trench, to inform a planning application for the construction of a new extension at the rear of the property. The trench was located at the centre of the enclosed back yard.*

*No archaeological deposits were or features were recorded. Instead the presence of a cellar associated with one of the Grays Buildings was discovered backfilled with modern building materials.*

## Introduction

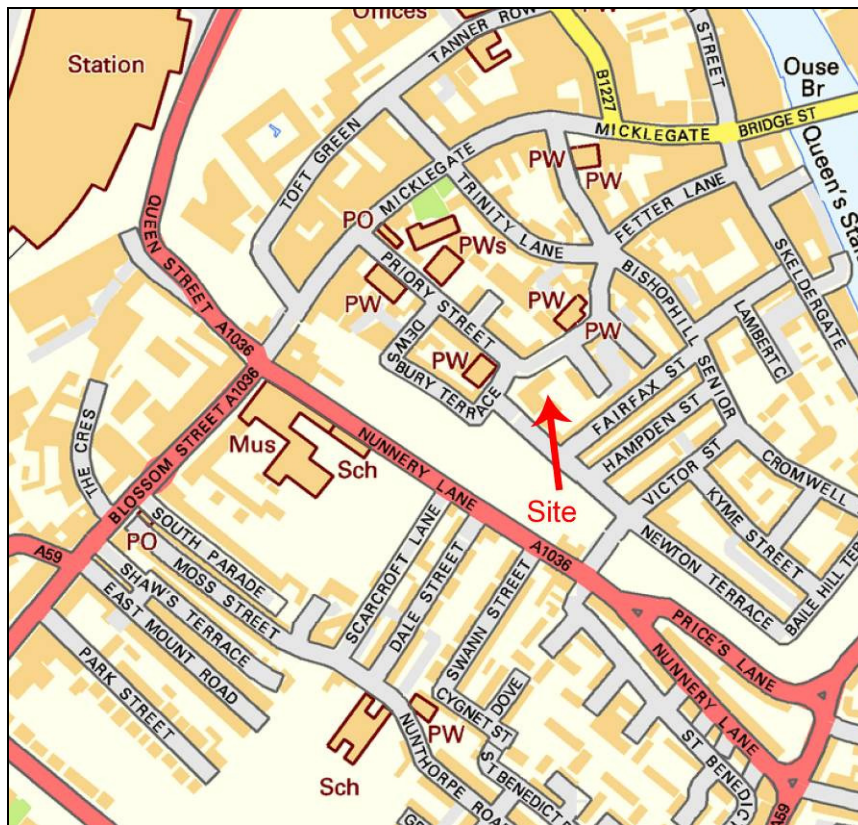


Figure 1: Site location (copy from Streetmap.co.uk).

An archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at Oliver House, Bishophill Junior, York, was requested by the City of York Council (CYC); Directorate of City and Environmental Services, Design Conservation and Sustainable Development.

L S Archaeology was commissioned by Mass Architecture on behalf of York Council of Voluntary Service, to undertake the work based upon the document provided by the CYC archaeologist. It states that one trench measuring 2.0m by 2.0m in plan and 1.25m in depth to be excavated at the rear of the building, in order to assess the presence / absence of any archaeological deposits or feature preserved on this site.

The results of this archaeological evaluation will be used to determine the nature of any mitigation measures that might be necessary and the scale of archaeological work that it might be necessary and the scale of archaeological work that it might include.

This is in accordance with the archaeology policy adopted by CYC and complies with the guidance of PPS 5 on *Archaeology and Planning*), the English Heritage Research Agenda (2005-2010), and Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Field Evaluation Institute for Field Archaeologists (1994, revised 2008).

The site ground level is approximately 18m Above Ordnance Datum. The proposed development area is set at the end of Priory Street at the corner with Bishophill Junior and Lower Priory Street, centered on SE 5996 5140.

Oliver House lies within the Roman colonia and the south-west portion of the medieval town. It also may have been within or immediately outside the former precinct of Holy Trinity Priory and close to St Mary Bishophill Junior, both ecclesiastical establishments of pre 11<sup>th</sup> century date.



**Figure 2: Site location in red (picture from Google Earth)**

The drift geology is: *Sherwood Sandstone Group - Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 227 to 256 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian Periods. Local environment previously dominated by rivers.*

**Setting:** *rivers. These rocks were formed from rivers depositing mainly sand and gravel detrital material in channels to form river terrace deposits, with fine silt and clay from*

*overbank floods forming floodplain alluvium, and some bogs depositing peat; includes estuarine and coastal plain deposits mapped as alluvium.*

(<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>)

## Archaeological Background

The development site lies within a major archaeological landscape containing heritage assets dating to the Romano-British and Medieval periods. Several excavations located within the proximity of the site have revealed an extent Roman occupation dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> century. From the 4<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century there seems to have been no occupation of the site. The first church built in the 11<sup>th</sup> century was preceded by a simple rectangular enclosure possibly dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> century.

## Previous Excavations

A significant archaeological sequence beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and the remains of an Anglo-Scandinavian graveyard were revealed by an excavation adjacent to St Mary Bishophill Junior.

Excavations in the former Bishophill car-park, Bishophill Senior, revealed a Roman sequence comprising three main periods of activity, which began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Towards the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century a large artificial terrace was constructed, and on top of it evidence of three buildings were recorded. Activity on this site continued until the end of the Roman period. In addition one pit and two burials which possibly date to the Anglo-Scandinavian period were also found.

Evidence of Roman occupation dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century and early Medieval feature were also discovered from excavations at St Mary Bishophill Junior.

At the Ideal Laundry site in Trinity Lane an evaluation revealed the presence of medieval and Roman deposits, which survived to a height of 17.95m AOD.

A substantial well preserved Roman building was recorded during an evaluation at the former Kennings Garage site, now Dewsbury Court.

In 1906 during the excavation of a sewer in Bishophill Junior a Roman street fountain was discovered.

An analysis of the map evidence for this site indicates that for most of the late-medieval and post-medieval periods the site was given over to gardens. This means that the potential for well-preserved Roman deposits and structures (houses, mosaic pavements, and hypocausts, etc) is very high (Archaeological Scheme of Investigation CYC 2012).

## Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to;

- Establish the date, character and significant of any archaeological features and deposits preserved within 1.25m of the ground surface.
- Establish if any deposits relates to Roman activity on the site.
- Look for evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation on the site.
- Identify the nature of the use of the site during the medieval and post-medieval period.
- To establish the presence of any preserved anoxically deposits, wet deposits, and dry deposits across the site within the area proposed for level reduction.

The objectives were met by excavating a single trench within the area impacted by the footprint of the new development.

## Method

One trial trench was proposed to be excavated in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and to assess the impact of the development. The suggested location for this trench is indicated in [Figure 4](#). This trench measuring 2m x 2m was located at the center of the back yard at the rear of Oliver House.

The trench was hand excavated by a qualified archaeologist and undertaken in a series of level horizontal spits. In accordance to the Archaeological Scheme of Investigation prepared by the City of York Council archaeologist.

Archaeological supervision of all ground works was undertaken in order to map and record any archaeological remains encountered in the process.

The work was undertaken on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2012.

## Results

The trench measuring 2m in length and 2m in width, occupies an area of 4.0m<sup>2</sup>, and was located at the rear of Oliver House within the backyard area (Figure 4).

The trench was hand excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m revealing the presence of a cellar, filled with modern rubble material (102). This cellar appears to belong to one of the Grays Building, shown on the 1852 map (Figure 4).



Figure 3: Ruble deposit, looking south west

The back yard ground surface consisted of square concrete slabs of 0.60m in length and 0.05m thick (context 100). The removal of these slabs revealed the presence of a thin yellow brown sandy gravel deposit (context 101) which functioned as the base upon which the slabs were laid.

Beneath context 101, a thick rubble deposit was encountered. This deposit (context 102) consisted of bricks, sporadic plastic and metal objects, sand and gravel and discarded layer of mortar (Figure 4).

The removal of this deposit stopped at a depth of 0.80m from ground surface, since a hole appeared revealing the presence of a cellar (context 103). Due to safety reasons the cellar was not excavated.

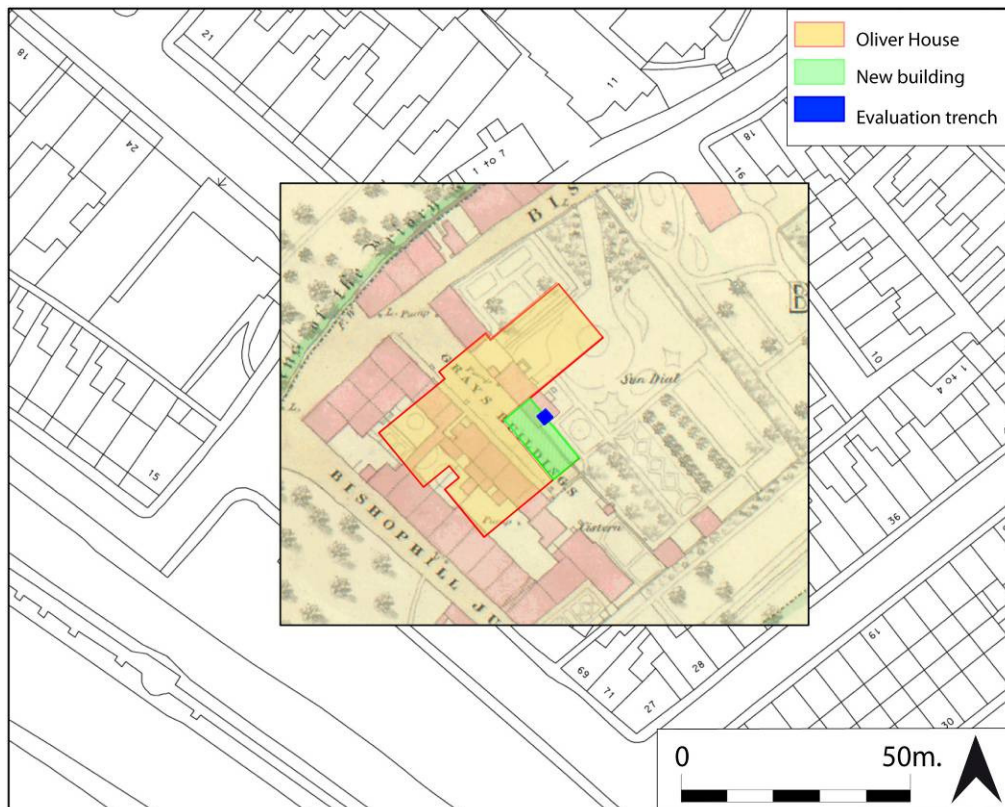


Figure 4: Plan of site showing the location of the Evaluation Trench in relation to the 1852 and modern maps

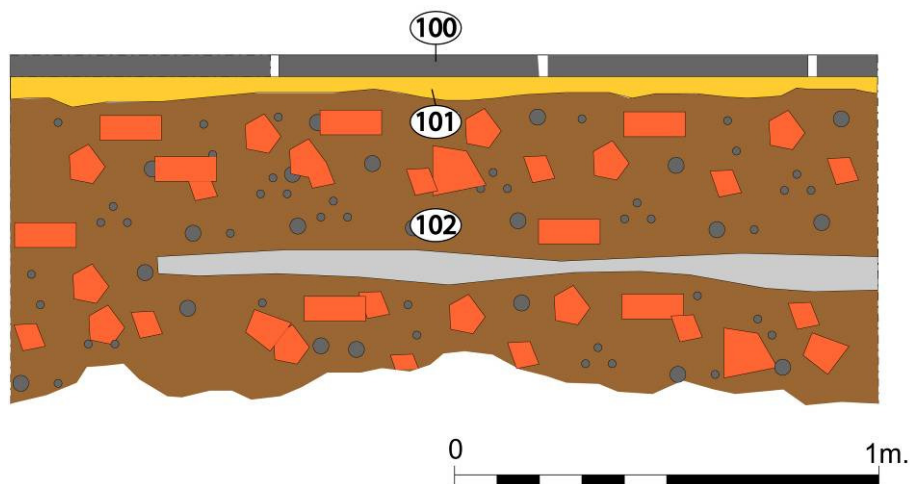


Figure 5: Section 1 facing north east showing the deposits found within the trench



**Figure 6: The empty cavity revealing the presence of a cellar**

## Conclusion

The small trench excavated within the area impacted by the footing of the new building, revealed the presence of a cellar, which belongs to one of the north-east side Victorian Grays Buildings. These buildings were demolished around the 1960.

No other archaeological deposits or features were present within the limits of the trench.

On the basis of the result of the trench alone, the northern area impacted by the new building is to have a low archaeological potential. Nevertheless archaeological deposits could still be present within the southern part of the area.

**G. Signorelli**  
December 2012

## Bibliography

English Heritage 2006. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) London

Institute for Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2001, 2008). 'Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief'

(NPPF) 2012 National Planning Policy Framework: *Planning Building and the Environment Practice Guide*

Archaeological Scheme of Investigation, City of York Council 2012; Unpublished

## Appendix A:

### Contents of the Site Archive;

The archive consists of few digital photographs and paper records.

Contest No	Description	Length m.	Width m.	Depth m.	Finds	Date
100	Concrete slabs	0.60	0.60	0.04	None	Modern
101	Orange sandy, gravel	NA	NA	0.05	None	Modern
102	Building rubble	NA	NA	0.80	None	Modern
103	Brick wall	NA	NA	NA	None	19 <sup>th</sup> Century

Table 1: List of contexts

## Appendix B:

OASIS entry; *OASIS ID: Isarchae1-138751*