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**23 Fishergate,
York**

Archaeological Watching Brief

October 2010

Report No. 2121

CLIENT

RH Developments (Property) Limited

23 Fishergate, York

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

The archaeological watching brief carried out at 23 Fishergate, York identified probable Victorian cellarage fronting on to Kent Street which runs east/west along the southern boundary of the site. The cellars were constructed of red, un-frogged, brick bonded with lime mortar. The cellar infill contained modern, 20th century, material indicating that they were backfilled and the houses demolished shortly before the construction of the warehouse that until recently occupied the site. The groundworks were not deep enough to impact on any archaeological features or deposits, if present.



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Report Information

Client: RH Developments (Property) Limited
Address: Lenton Lane, Nottingham, NG7 2NR
Report Type: Archaeological Watching Brief
Location: 23 Fishergate, York
County: North Yorkshire
Grid Reference: SE 607 511
Period(s) of activity represented: Victorian
Report Number: 2121
Project Number: 3517
Site Code: FIY10
Planning Application No.: 06/02506/FUL
Museum Accession No.: -
Date of fieldwork: August-September 2010
Date of report: October 2010
Project Management: Alistair Webb BA MifA
Fieldwork supervisor: Phil Weston BSc, MA
Report: Phil Weston
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Martyn Jones of MPJ Design Associates Ltd on behalf of RH Developments (Property) to monitor ground reduction within the footprint of a now demolished warehouse at 23 Fishergate, York prior to the construction of a new residential development (Planning Application ref. 06/02506/FUL). The monitoring took place between August 25th and September 1st 2010.

Site location and topography

The site, centred at SE 607 511, is located approximately 100m south-west of Fishergate Bar and south-west of part of York's city walls, at approximately 13m above Ordnance Datum. It faces onto Kent Street and is bound to the east by the Woolpack Inn, to the north by the Sea Horse Hotel, to the south by the Edinburgh Arms public house and by residential buildings to the west.

Soils, geology and land-use

The underlying geology of the site is recorded as glacial sands and gravels (British Geological Survey, 1968 Selby sheet 71 solid and drift edition, 1:50 000 series), and the soils are in an unrecorded urban area (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Although the Fishergate area is located outside both the line of York's city walls and the historic core of the city it has played an important role in the history of York since its foundation. One of the Roman roads into the city is probably located along the course of Fishergate and the land around Fishergate is also thought to have been the location of one of the many Roman cemeteries located outside the Roman city of York. The area of Fishergate is also the suggested location of 'Eoforwic' the post-Roman settlement and trading centre of York.

The early medieval period saw Fishergate develop into a suburb area of the city. Further significant development took place during the 12th century with the establishment of the Gilbertine Priory of St Andrews in the western area of Fishergate. The high archaeological potential of the site is reflected in the fact that Fishergate lies within one of York's Areas of Archaeological Importance

In December 2009 the current site was subjected to a borehole survey, carried out under archaeological supervision (Williams 2009). The cores identified a layer of earthy material at a depth of 1.25m below the then current ground surface that contained flecks of charcoal, suggestive of human activity.

3 Aims and Objectives

The primary aim of the watching brief was to identify the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological features and deposits disturbed or revealed by the groundworks.

The archaeological programme was designed to mitigate the destruction of buried archaeological remains through 'preservation by record'.

4 Methodology

The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with recognised professional standards, specifically *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008), *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008) and *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991) and in line with the Specification (see Appendix 3) which was approved by John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist at City of York Council prior to the commencement of the fieldwork. ASWYAS's own methodologies (ASWYAS 2009) were also adhered to.

The groundworks involved the excavation of 1m of made ground overburden (see Plate 1). This material was then sorted, removing anything larger than half a house brick, and then re-instated and compacted (see Plate 2) creating a stable base, at 11.40m above Ordnance Datum, for the raft foundation of the new building.

All archaeological investigations were undertaken by hand. Artefactual evidence was collected whenever encountered and an environmental sampling strategy was in place should appropriate deposits be encountered. All archaeological features and deposits were photographed and drawn to scale as appropriate and recorded using a standardised *pro-forma* system. Feature sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

5 Results

The ground reduction works revealed a brick-built well (Plate 3 - 1003), cellarage walls (Plate 4 - 1004, 1005, 1006, 1008 and 1010), a dark brown earthy deposit (1002) and a live drain and manhole (see Fig. 2).

The well, located to the north of the excavation, was constructed of a single skin of unfrogged red bricks (235mm x 120mm x 70mm) bonded with lime mortar (Plate 3). It had an internal diameter of 0.94m and was backfilled with demolition rubble. As the well was encountered exactly at the formation level depth (11.40m aOD) it was not threatened by the groundworks and so was recorded in plan but not investigated further.

The cellarage walls were encountered along the southern edge of the site, adjacent to Kent Street (see Fig. 2). They are probably associated with a row of houses (tenements) that fronted on to Kent Street and which were demolished for the construction of the warehouse (the most recent building on the site), itself recently demolished in advance of the current building works.

The wall (1006) fronting on to Kent Street consisted of two skins of red, un-frogged, bricks bonded with lime mortar. Survival was patchy but it is thought likely that 1006 originally ran the full east/west length of the site and that it constitutes the foundation of the tenement frontage. Three brick-built alcoves were recorded in Wall 1006 (Plate 4), two of which still contained coal.

The dividing cellar walls were constructed of single skins of red, un-frogged, bricks bonded with lime mortar. Three cellars were conclusively identified but more may have been present prior to the imposition of modern services. The backfill deposits within the cellars (1007, 1009 and 1011) were a mix of demolition building rubble with frequent inclusions of wood, concrete, plastic piping and household rubbish such as plastic bottles and bags and glass bottles.

The cellar walls were abutted by deposit 1002 which extended across the remainder of the site. Layer 1002 comprised a dark brown earthy deposit which contained butchered animal bone but no dateable finds.

6 Discussion and Conclusions

The archaeological watching brief carried out at Fishergate, York identified wall foundations and cellarage probably relating to a Victorian terrace that fronted on to Kent Street which runs east/west along the southern boundary of the site. All structural remains were constructed of similar red, un-frogged, brick bonded with lime mortar. The backfill of the cellars contained modern materials indicating they were backfilled and demolished shortly before the construction of the warehouse that until recently occupied the site. A well, probably of the same period, was also identified but was at a level that was not impacted by the current scheme of works. No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the watching brief. It is considered likely that any archaeological features or deposits, if present, are beyond the depth of the current groundworks.

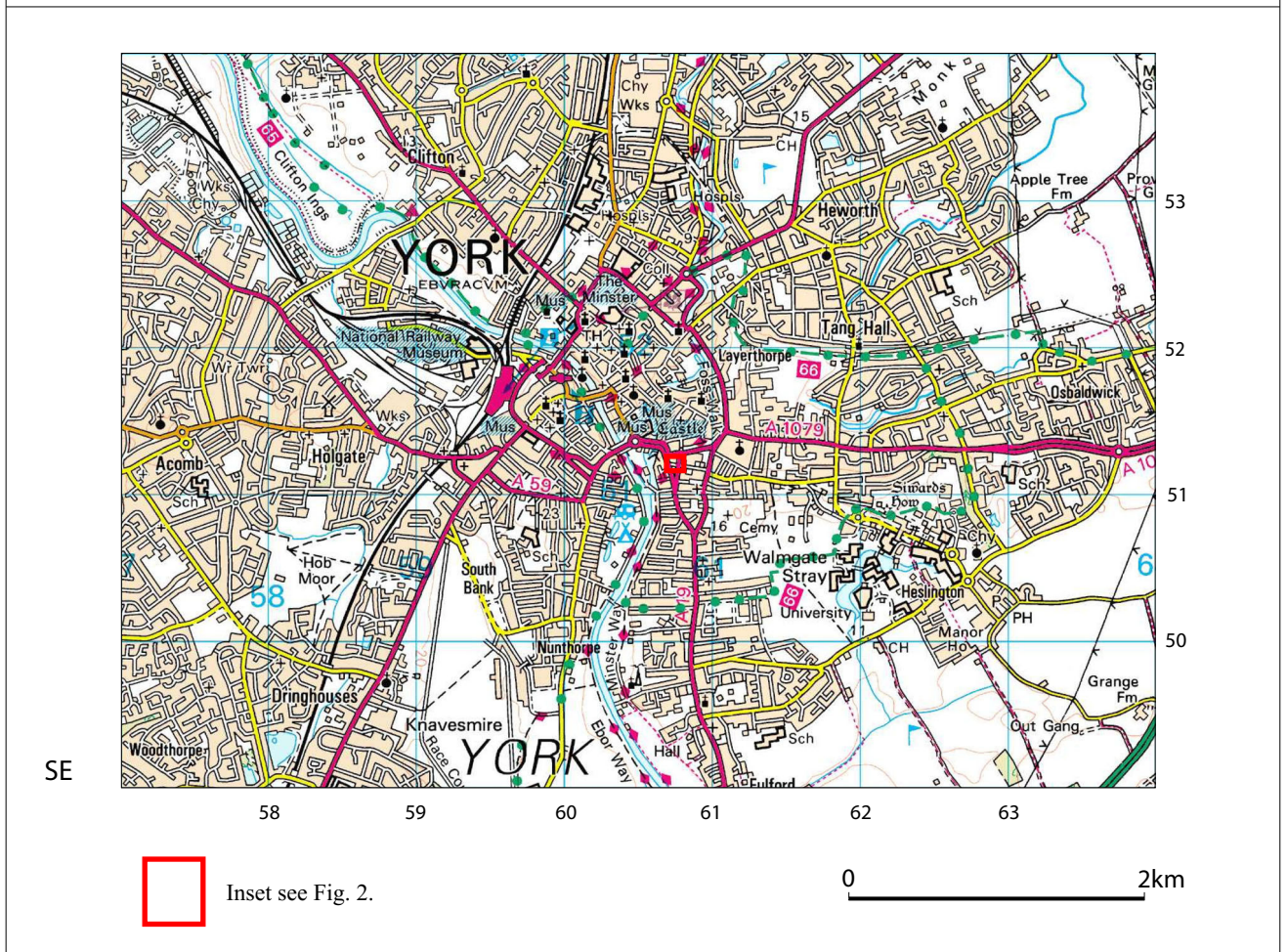
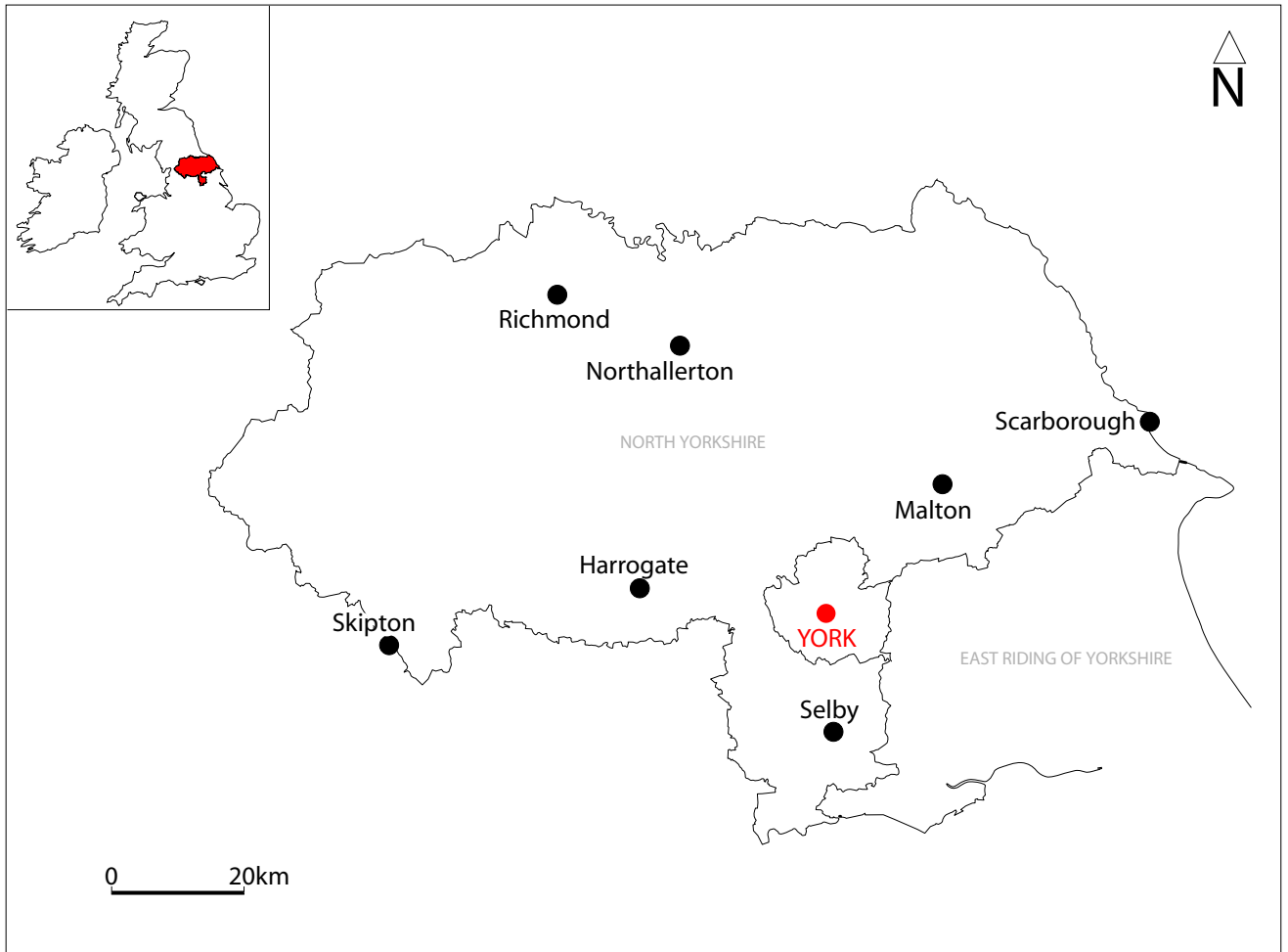



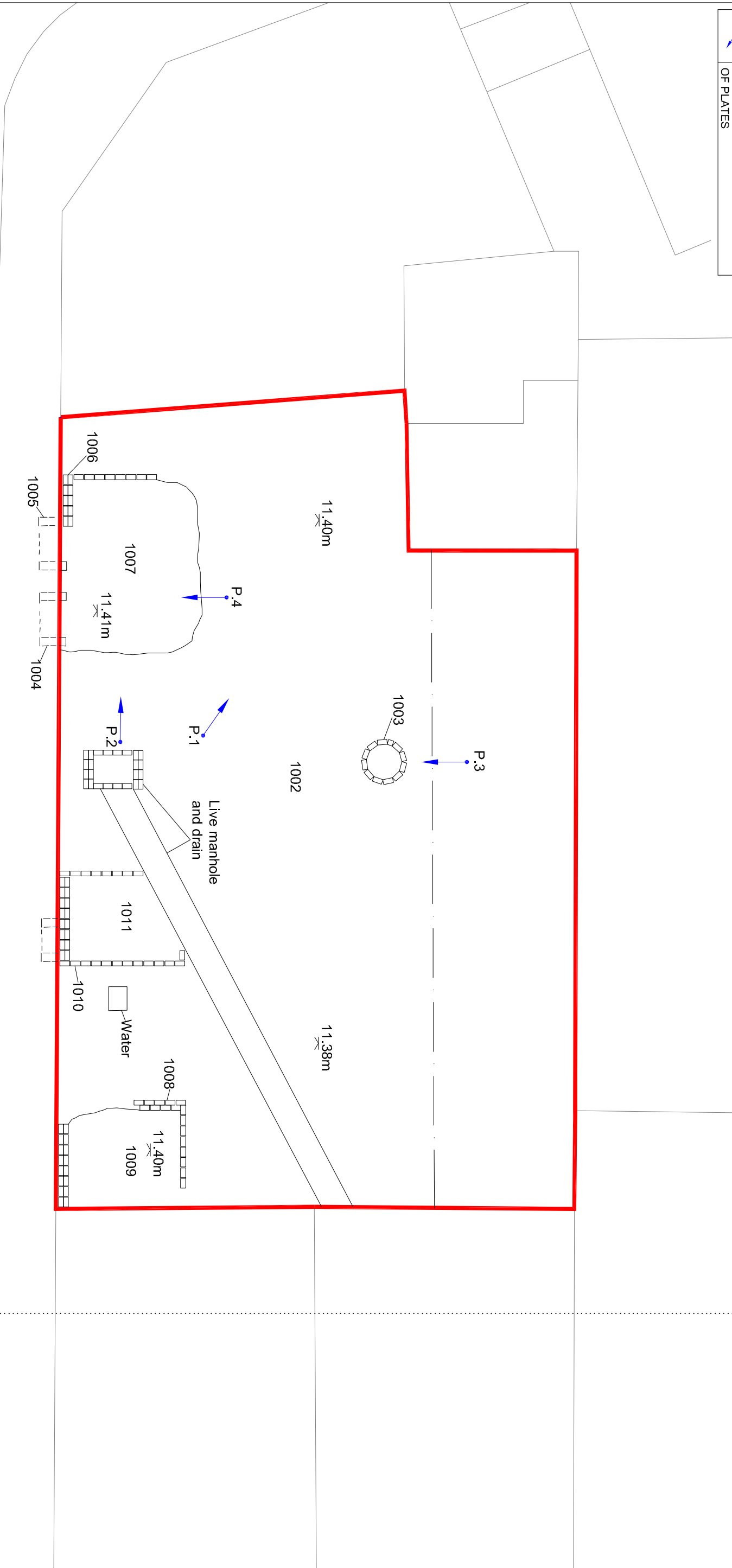


Fig. 1. Site location



	SITE BOUNDARY
	VICTORIAN? FEATURES
	LOCATION AND DIRECTION OF PLATES



Kent Street

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Fig. 2. Site location showing identified features (1:100 @ A3)



Plate 1: The groundworks, view north-west



Plate 2: Backfill 1007 of westernmost cellar prior to rolling, view west



Plate 3: Well 1003, view south



Plate 4: Brick arches 1004 (left) and 1005 (right), view south

Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive

Phase	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no.1	Context register sheets	1
		Drawing register sheets	1
		Sample register sheets	0
		Finds register sheets	0
		Photo register sheets	1
		Colour negative strips	1
		B&W negative strips	1
		Context sheets	12

Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts yielding artefacts or environmental remains

Context	Description	Artefacts and environmental samples
1000	Mixed overburden	-
1001	Sandy deposit	-
1002	Dark brown earthy deposit	Animal bone
1003	Brick-built well	-
1004	Cellar alcove	-
1005	Cellar alcove	-
1006	Foundation wall	-
1007	Cellar backfill	-
1008	Cellar walls	-
1009	Cellar backfill	-
1010	Cellar walls	-
1011	Cellar backfill.	-

Appendix 3: Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 23 Fishergate, York

SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 23 FISHERGATE, YORK

Specification prepared on behalf of Mr Martyn Jones

Planning Application ref: 06/02506/FUL

1. Summary

1.1 A limited amount of archaeological work consisting of a watching brief is proposed to identify and record any archaeological remains which are revealed or disturbed by groundworks during the re-development of a site at 23, Fishergate, York.

1.2 This specification has been prepared by Alistair Webb of Archaeological Services WYAS on behalf of the client for submission to John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist at City of York Council (hereafter CYC).

NOTE: The requirements detailed in paragraphs 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 and 10.1 are to be carried out by the archaeological contractor prior to the commencement of fieldwork

2. Site Location & Description

Grid Reference: SE 607 511

2.1 The work comprises the removal of a concrete slab and made ground and the creation of new foundations for a proposed residential development at Fishergate. The site is currently a disused workshop.

2.2 The site lies in the City of York.

3. Background

3.1 Planning approval has been approved (Application No. 06/02506/FUL), subject to conditions, for the erection of four, three storey, town houses following the demolition of the disused workshop. Although it is not thought that the groundworks will be deep enough to encounter any potential archaeological features or deposits the possibility cannot be entirely ruled out. Therefore John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist at City of York Council has advised that there is reason to believe that important archaeological remains may be affected by the proposed development and that a programme of archaeological work is required.

4. Archaeological Interest

4.1 Although the Fishergate area is located outside both the line of York's city walls and the historic core of the city it has played an important role in the history of York since its foundation. One of the Roman roads into the city is probably located along the course of Fishergate and the land around Fishergate is also thought to have been the location of one the many Roman cemeteries located outside the Roman

city of York. The area of Fishergate is also the suggested location of 'Eoforwic' the post-Roman settlement and trading centre of York.

The early medieval period saw Fishergate develop into a suburb area of the city. Further significant development took place during the 12th century with the establishment of the Gilbertine Priory of St Andrews in the western area of Fishergate. The high archaeological potential of the site is reflected in the fact that Fishergate lies within one of York's Areas of Archaeological Importance.

5. Aim of the Watching Brief

5.1 The aim of the watching brief is to identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date (as far as circumstances permit) of any archaeological features and deposits that are disturbed or revealed during the groundworks.

5.2 This work will mitigate the destruction of buried archaeological remains through 'preservation by record'.

6. General Instructions

6.1 Health and Safety

6.1.1 The archaeologist on site will naturally operate with due regard for Health and Safety regulations. In this case, where archaeological work is carried out at the same time as the work of other contractors, regard should also be taken of any reasonable additional constraints that these contractors may impose. This work will require the preparation of a Risk Assessment of the site, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Regulations.

6.2 Confirmation of Adherence to Specification

6.2.1 Prior to the commencement of *any work*, the selected archaeological contractor will confirm adherence to this specification in writing to the CYC, or state (with reasons) any proposals to vary the specification. Should the archaeological contractor wish to vary the specification, then written confirmation of the agreement of CYC to any variations is required prior to work commencing. Unauthorised variations are made at the sole risk of the contractor. Modifications presented in the form of a re-written specification/project design **will not** be considered by CYC.

6.3 Confirmation of Timetable and Contractors' Qualifications

6.3.1 Prior to the commencement of *any work*, the archaeological contractor will provide WYAAS **in writing** with:

- a projected timetable for the site work;
- details of the staff structure and numbers;
- names and CVs of key project members (the project manager, site supervisor, any proposed specialists, sub-contractors *etc.*),

6.3.2 All project staff provided by the archaeological contractor will be suitably qualified and experienced for their roles. The timetable should be adequate to allow the work to be undertaken to the appropriate professional standard, subject to the ultimate judgement of CYC.

6.4 Notification and Monitoring

6.4.1 The recording exercise may be monitored as necessary and practicable by CYC in its role as curator of the county's archaeology. CYC should be provided with as much notice as possible (in writing) of the intention to start the watching brief. A copy of the site specific risk assessment of the site will accompany the notification.

6.4.2 The museums officer named in paragraph 10.1 will be notified in writing of the commencement of fieldwork at the same time as CYC.

7. Fieldwork Methodology

7.1 In order to maximise the potential for identifying archaeological remains all groundworks will be undertaken using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, where possible.

7.2 An archaeologist will be present on site during the excavation/ground reduction of any area below a depth of 0.15m. The archaeologist should view the area as it is being dug and any trench sections after excavation has been completed. Where archaeology is judged to be present, the excavated area should be rapidly cleaned and the need for further work assessed. Where appropriate, any features and finds should then be quickly hand excavated, sampled if appropriate, and recorded.

7.3 Features/deposits of archaeological concern should be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, scale drawings and written descriptions sufficient to permit the preparation of a report. Section drawings (at a minimum scale of 1:20) **must** include heights O.D. Plans (at a minimum scale of 1:50) **must** include O.D. spot heights for all principal strata and any features.

7.4 The actual areas of ground disturbance (even if no archaeological remains are present) should be recorded on a suitable base map/development plan and the stratigraphic sequence and the depth/nature of the excavations will be briefly recorded. If archaeological remains are identified, their location is to be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on an up-to-date 1:1250 O.S. map base.

7.5 Excavated soil should be searched as practicable for finds. All artefacts are to be retained for processing and analysis except for unstratified 20th century material, which may be noted and discarded.

7.6 All securely stratified contexts should be sampled for environmental analysis and scientific dating. Additional 'spot' samples should be taken if suitable material is encountered during the watching brief.

7.7 The intention of the archaeological watching brief is not to unduly delay the work of other contractors on site, however, a degree of flexibility is also expected of the developer in order that the archaeologist can fulfil the terms of this specification (see 8.1 below). The archaeologist shall not excavate any area beyond those scheduled for destruction by the development.

7.8 If, in the professional judgement of the archaeologist on site, the watching brief reveals below-ground conditions which indicate that potentially archaeological levels

are absent, the archaeologist should contact CYC to discuss reducing or curtailing the requirements. The work may only be curtailed with the prior agreement of CYC and written confirmation will be provided by CYC.

8. Unexpectedly Significant or Complex Discoveries

8.1 Should there be, in the professional judgement of the archaeologist on site, unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries made that warrant more detailed recording than possible within the terms of this specification, then the archaeological contractor is to urgently contact CYC with the relevant information to enable the matter to be resolved with the developer.

8.2 Any human remains that are discovered must initially be left in-situ, covered and protected. CYC will be notified as soon as possible. If removal of burials is necessary, this must comply with a valid Department of Justice licence and any local environmental health regulations.

8.3 The terms of the Treasure Act, 1996 must be followed with regard to any finds, which might fall within its purview. Any such finds must be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner as required by the procedures laid down in the Code of Practice. Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures must be taken to protect the finds from theft.

9. Post-excavation Analysis and Report Preparation

9.1 On completion of the fieldwork, any samples shall be processed and all finds shall be cleaned, identified, analysed, dated (if possible), marked (if appropriate) and properly packed and stored in accordance with the requirements of national guidelines. Finds of 20th century date should be quantified and summarily described, but can then be discarded if appropriate. All finds of 19th century or earlier date should be retained and archived.

9.2 A fully indexed field archive shall be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and fully labelled photographs/slides. Labelling should be in HB pencil on the *back* of the print and should include film and frame number; date recorded and photographer's name; name and address of site; national grid reference. Photographic prints should be mounted in appropriate archivally-stable sleeves. A quantified index to the field archive should form an appendix to the report. The original archive is to accompany the deposition of any finds, providing the landowner agrees to the deposition of finds in a publicly accessible archive (see Section 10 below).

9.3 A fully illustrated report should be produced, which should include background information on the need for the project, a description of the methodology employed, and a full description and interpretation of the results, placing them in a local and regional, and if appropriate, national context. It is not envisaged that the report is likely to be published, but it should be produced with sufficient care and attention to detail to be of academic use to future researchers.

9.4 Location plans should be produced at a scale which enables easy site identification and which depicts the full extent of the areas investigated (a scale of 1:50,000 is not regarded as appropriate unless accompanied by a more detailed plan or plans). Plans should be at an appropriate scale showing: areas excavated and the identified (and, where possible, predicted) archaeological features/deposits. Trench and feature plans must include O.D. spot heights for all principal strata and any features. Section drawings must include O.D heights and be cross-referenced to an appropriate plan.

9.5 All artefacts and environmental material will be analysed by qualified and experienced specialists who can document and demonstrate levels of professional competence and technical expertise and access to comparable materials. Artefact analysis is to include the production of a descriptive catalogue. Finds critical for dating and interpretation should be illustrated.

9.6 Details of the style and format of the report are to be determined by the archaeological contractor, but should include a full bibliography, a quantified index to the site archive, and as an appendix, a copy of this specification.

9.7 All work will be undertaken in a professional manner in accordance with IfA Standards and Guidance documentation.

10. Archive Deposition

10.1 Before commencing any fieldwork, the archaeological contractor must contact the relevant museum archaeological curator in writing to determine the museum's requirements for the deposition of an excavation archive. The letter should be copied to CYC. In this case the contact is the Yorkshire Museum. The contractor should also contact the Assistant Director (Planning and Sustainable Development), 9 St Leonard's Place, York at least seven days before the commencement of site work and will be supplied with a City of York HER Event Number.

10.2 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to endeavour to obtain consent of the landowner, in writing, to the deposition of finds.

10.3 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to meet the requirements and standards of the Yorkshire Museum with regard to the preparation of excavation archives for deposition and to make provision for any costs associated with the deposition of archives.

10.4 An on-line OASIS form will also be completed.

11. Report Submission and Deposition with the SMR

11.1 The archaeological contractor will supply a copy of the report **directly** to the CYC within a period of **two months** following completion of fieldwork, unless specialist reports are awaited. In the latter case a revised date should be agreed with CYC. Completion of the project and a recommendation from CYC regarding the planning condition are dependant upon receipt by CYC of a satisfactory report that has been prepared in accordance with this specification.

11.2 The report will be supplied on the understanding that it will be added to the County Historic Environment Record and will become publicly accessible once it is deposited with CYC, unless confidentiality is explicitly requested in which case it will become publicly accessible six months after deposition.

12. General Considerations

12.1 Authorised Alterations to Specification by Contractor

12.1.1 It should be noted that this specification is based upon records available in the County Historic Environment Record. If, upon visiting the site or at any time during the course of the recording exercise, it appears in the archaeologist's professional judgement that:

- i) a part or the whole of the site is not amenable to recording as detailed above, and/or
- ii) an alternative approach may be more appropriate or likely to produce more informative results,

then it is expected that the archaeologist will contact CYC as a matter of urgency. If contractors have not yet been appointed, any variations which CYC considers to be justifiable on archaeological grounds will be incorporated into a revised specification, which will then be re-issued to the developer for redistribution to the tendering contractors.

12.2 Unauthorised Alterations to Specification by Contractor

12.2.1 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that they have obtained CYC's consent in writing to any variation of the specification prior to the commencement of on-site work or (where applicable) prior to the finalisation of the tender. Unauthorised variations may result in CYC being unable to recommend either further work or the discharge of the planning condition to the Local Planning Authority based on the archaeological information available and are therefore made solely at the risk of the contractor.

12.3 Technical Queries

12.3.1 Any technical queries arising from the specification detailed above should be addressed to CYC without delay.

12.4 Publicity

12.4.1 If the project is to be publicised in any way (including media releases, publications etc.), then it is expected that CYC will be given the opportunity to consider whether its collaborative role should be acknowledged, and if so, the form of words used will be at CYC's discretion.

12.5 Valid Period of Specification

12.5.1 This specification is valid for a period of one year from date of issue. After that time it may need to be revised to take into account new discoveries, changes in policy or the introduction of new working practices or techniques.

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