

**40 High Street  
Knaresborough  
North Yorkshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

*Report No. 1544*

*June 2006*

Yorkshire Trading Company Ltd.

**40 High Street  
Knaresborough  
North Yorkshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS was commissioned by Horsley Townsend Architects on behalf of Yorkshire Trading Company Ltd., to undertake an archaeological watching brief during geotechnical investigations, at land to the rear of 40 High Street, Knaresborough. The geotechnical investigations were undertaken in advance of a proposed extension to the existing building.
- 1.2 The development is situated to the north of High Street, within Knaresborough town centre and is bounded by commercial properties (centred SE 3510, 5710, Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.3 The solid geology of the site is mapped as Lower Magnesian Limestone (British Geological Survey 1987) and the soils are unsurveyed (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).
- 1.4 At the time of the watching brief the ground coverage comprised a concrete/hardcore drive with sloping grassed areas along the eastern and western boundaries.
- 1.5 The watching brief was undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2006.

## **2. Archaeological Background**

- 2.1 The earliest documentary reference to Knaresborough or ‘Chenareburg’ is in the Domesday book of 1086. A parish church was in existence in Knaresborough by 1114, when it was granted to Nostell priory and a castle was established in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century (Richardson 2003). By 1169 there were burgesses in the town and a market was first recorded in 1206 (Falkingham 2001). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century Knaresborough was the centre of an iron-working industry, however, this was in decline by the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The town was also the focus of a thriving woollen industry, which continued until the 17<sup>th</sup> century before being replaced by linen weaving (Falkingham 2001).
- 2.2 The proposed development lies within the historic core of Knaresborough, within an area of possible medieval settlement. High Street is believed to have been the main thoroughfare of the medieval town and as such it is likely that medieval burghage plots fronted onto this street. The site is also situated close to the projected line of the medieval town defences that are believed to follow the line of Gracious Street (to the south-east of the site).

## **3. Method**

- 3.1 Due to the potential of below-ground archaeological remains being uncovered during the geotechnical investigations, Gail Falkingham, of North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, recommended that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all groundworks. The geotechnical investigations comprised the excavation of six test pits (TP1-6) in predetermined positions at the rear of 40 High Street. An additional test pit (TP 1A) was excavated, as it was not possible to complete the excavation of TP1 to the desired depth due to concrete foundations.
- 3.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation for Limited Archaeological Recording (“Watching Brief”)

provided by North Yorkshire County Council (Appendix III) and Archaeological Services WYAS Guidelines for Watching Briefs (ASWYAS 2006).

- 3.3 The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the geotechnical investigations and record any archaeological features revealed during this process.
- 3.4 An archaeologist was present during the excavation of all test pits. Mechanical excavation was carried out using a back-acter (JCB) fitted with a 550mm wide toothless ditching bucket. Excavations ceased when the natural was reached and the archaeologist was afforded the opportunity to inspect the resulting surfaces/sections for archaeological remains and record the test pits. Where further clarification of the natural was required the test pits were then extended through natural deposits.
- 3.5 All recording was undertaken in accordance with Archaeological Services WYAS standard methods (ASWYAS 2005). The trenches were tied into fixed boundaries, using 30m hand tapes.
- 3.6 The site archive is presented in Appendix I. It is currently stored by Archaeological Services WYAS with the intention that it will be deposited with Harrogate Museum, within a timescale agreed between the two parties.

#### **4. Results**

- 4.1 In total, seven trenches were excavated and the results are summarised in Table 1. A detailed description of the deposits identified is presented in Appendix II. Natural was exposed in all trenches and was found to comprise a red silty clay.

<b>Test Pit</b>	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Trench Description and stratigraphy</b>
TP1	1.5	0.8	0.6	Trench excavated to investigate perimeter wall foundations. Topsoil (0.2m), overlying rubble deposit 101 (0.3m) above natural. Deposits slope towards south-east.
TP1A	1.4	0.6	0.75	Additional trench to investigate perimeter wall foundations. Topsoil (0.1m), overlying deposit 101 (0.65m) above natural. Deposits slope towards south-east.
TP2	1.8	0.8	0.25	Trench excavated to investigate wall foundations. Topsoil (0.1m), above natural. The wall was observed to be constructed upon natural deposits, no foundation cut noted.
TP3	3.0	0.7	2.0	Topsoil (0.6m), overlying 0.2m of hardcore, which sealed natural.

<b>Test Pit</b>	<b>Length (m)</b>	<b>Width (m)</b>	<b>Depth (m)</b>	<b>Trench Description and stratigraphy</b>
TP4	1.8	0.8	1.5	Topsoil (0.3m) above deposit 101 (0.35m), overlying demolition deposit 103 (0.2m), sealing deposit 104 (0.2m), overlying natural. All deposits slope steeply to the north-west.
TP5	3.0	0.9	3.0	Hardcore (0.36m) overlying rubble deposit 105 (0.3m), sealing buried topsoil (0.36m) above natural.
TP6	3.6	0.85	2.0	Topsoil (0.5m), overlying natural.

Table 1: Summary of results of watching brief

## **5. Discussion and Conclusions**

- 5.1 No archaeological remains were identified during the course of the watching brief. The rubble and hardcore deposits observed in the majority of trenches are believed to be associated with the construction of the modern perimeter walls and concrete driveway. It would appear, from the results of the investigations and the existing topography (e.g. the two steep grassed banks to the east and west), that landscaping has been undertaken on the site.
- 5.2 Topsoil was noted above the modern hardcore and rubble deposits in TP1-4 and 6, and may indicate that the site has been stripped of topsoil and possibly reduced in height to create a level surface for the driveway. It is possible this landscaping has impacted upon the original level of the site and hence may have removed any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits.
- 5.3 The only area of the site investigated, which appears to have been undisturbed, was to the north-west of the site, in the area of TP5. The excavation of this test pit revealed a buried topsoil sealed by hardcore and indicates that this area had been raised rather than reduced in height.
- 5.4 It is possible that the landscaping indicated by the watching brief has impacted upon the survival of archaeological features on the site. There is potential, however, in the north-eastern area of the site where a buried topsoil was identified, for archaeological remains to be preserved.

***Bibliography***

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Falkingham, G. 2001, 'Bus Station, High Street, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation', North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, unpubl.

Richardson, J., 2003, 'Knaresborough Bus Station: Archaeological Excavation' Rep. No. 1091, unpubl.

## ***Acknowledgements***

### **Project management**

Louise Martin BSc

### **Report**

James Gidman BSc

Louise Martin

### **Graphics/illustrations**

Louise Martin

### **Fieldwork**

James Gidman

***Appendix I***  
***Inventory of primary archive***

<b>File no.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1	Context register	1
1	Context cards	7
1	Trench sheets	7
1	Site plan	1
1	Watching brief daily monitoring form	1
1	Photographic register	1
1	Black and white contacts	1



## ***Appendix II***

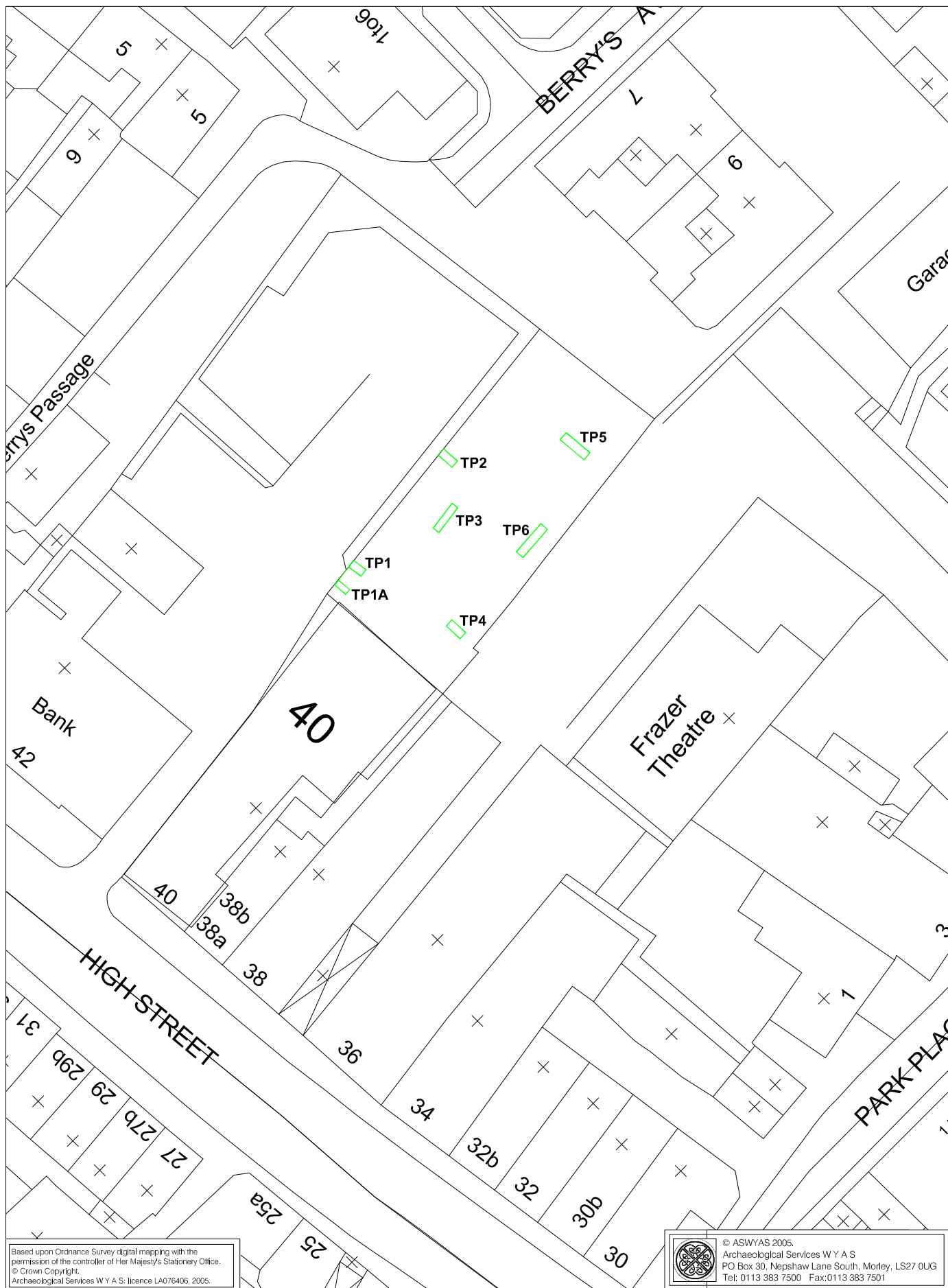
### ***Inventory of contexts***

<b>Context</b>	<b>TP</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
100	All	Dark brown silty clay	Topsoil
101	1, 1A, 4	Mid-grey cream rubble containing mortar and brick	Rubble associated with the construction of perimeter walls and driveway
102	2	Red brown gravel/clay	Deposit formed following the construction of perimeter wall
103	4	Cream grey sand with mortar and gravel	Demolition layer possibly relating to deposit 101
104	4	Dark red brown sandy silt	? Natural
105	5	Mid-brown silty clay containing brick and sandstone fragments	Levelling deposit
106	5	Dark brown grey loamy silty clay	Degraded, buried topsoil

### ***Appendix III***

#### ***Standard Written Scheme of Investigation for Limited Recording***

***(North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit)***



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