



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE	204 Mount Vale, York		
CLIENT NAME	Mrs. C. Condon		
YAT PROJECT #	5891	YAT REPORT #	30/2016
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 5929 5088
PLANNING REFERENCE #	15/02574/FUL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

INTRODUCTION

Between 30th March and 4th April 2016 a watching brief on drainage channels and footings for a single storey rear extension to 204 Mount Vale, York YO24 1DL was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust (Figure 1). The objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological deposits, features or buried structures exposed by the groundworks. The site lies within York's designated Area of Archaeological Importance.



Figure 1 Site location plan
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2010

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FINDS	None	SAMPLES	None	PHOTOS	3
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METHODOLOGY

Excavation was carried out with a combination of hand digging and a 1 tonne tracked mechanical excavator employing a 0.6m wide toothed ditching bucket. Excavation to facilitate the rerouting of a drain was undertaken in the SW corner of the site close to the back door of the existing house. This area measured roughly 1.8m X 1.5m with a depth of up to 0.9m. It was irregular in shape with a trench measuring 1.7m X 0.35m X 0.45m projecting from its north corner. The footings of the single storey extension, where they lay outside of the footprint of the existing rear extension, measured 0.6m wide and up to 0.8m deep (Figure 2). These were opened before demolition of all but the furthest NW part of the existing rear extension took place.

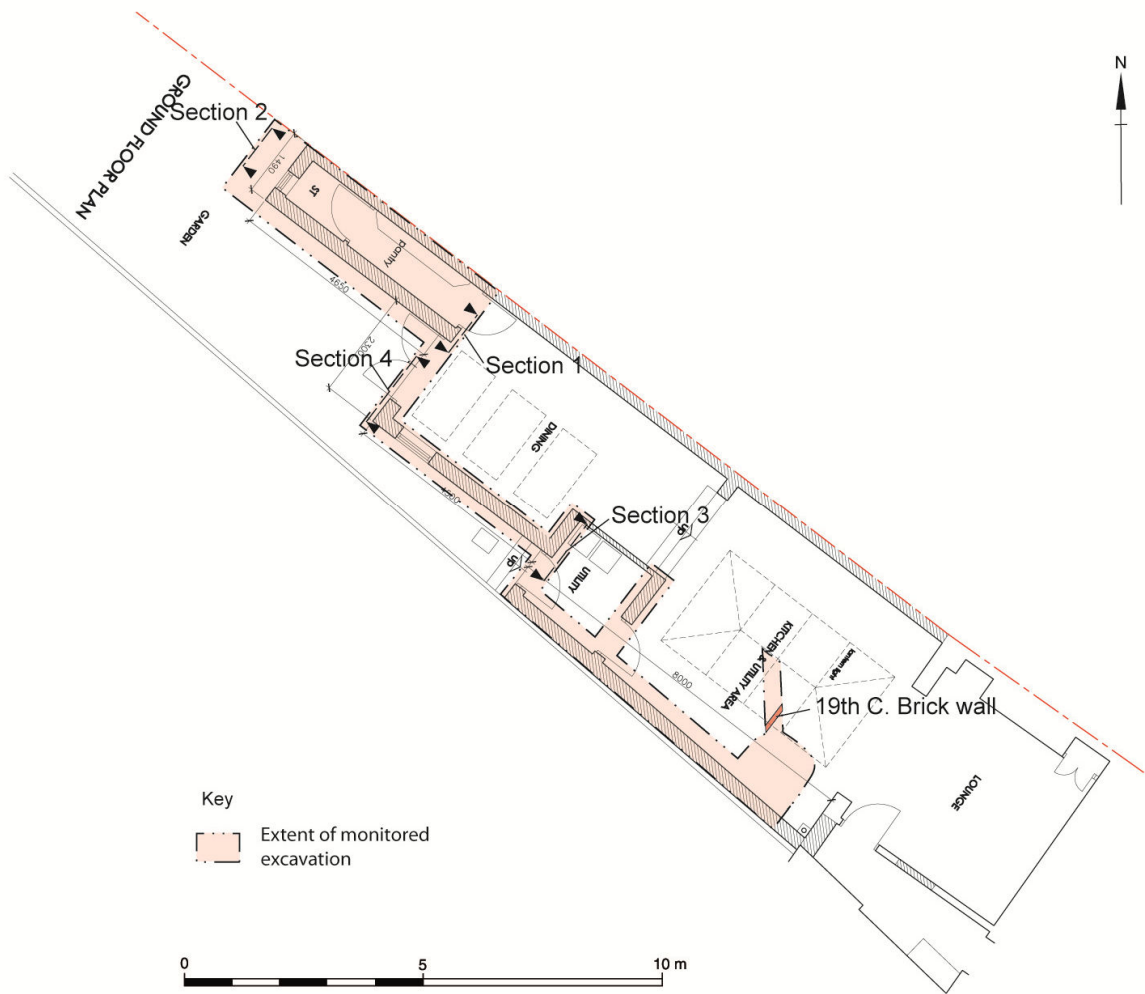


Figure 2 Trench location plan based on drawing by White Rose Architectural Ltd.

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Deposits encountered were recorded in a notebook alongside sketch plans and representative sections where appropriate. Digital photographs were taken at intervals during the watching brief.

RESULTS

The trenches at the SW end of the site, including the drainage channel and the wall foundation trench running up against the NE side of the garden wall, exposed disturbed ground. This disturbance derived from both active and redundant drains as well as a brick wall (Plate 1). The wall was aligned NE – SW, consisted of mortar bonded bricks a single course wide, four courses in height and extended from 0.1m Below Ground Level (BGL) to the base of the drainage channel cut at 0.45m BGL.



Plate 1 NE – SW aligned brick wall, facing SW, 0.1m scale units

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The disturbed area extended to the NW as far as the first NE –SW aligned section of foundation trench. Beyond that point, extending from approximately 5.2m from the back of the house, the sequence of deposits typically followed that shown in the section below (Plate 2). The lowest deposit was of firm, mid brown, sandy clay with red brown streaks running throughout with inclusions consisting of charcoal flecks and small abraded Ceramic Building Material (CBM) fragments. This deposit extended from 0.6m BGL at its observed SE extent, rising to 0.3m BGL to the NW, its thickness ranging from 0.2m to 0.3m, again increasing to the NW. Two pottery sherds, including a fragment of 1st to 3rd century Samian pottery were recovered from this material but were not retained. Above this was a 0.1m thick deposit of firm, mid grey silty clay with occasional charcoal and CBM fleck. A single sherd of 19th century pottery was recovered from this deposit but was not retained. A layer, approximately 20mm thick, of compact mortar and occasional small CBM fragments separated the lower deposits from the continuation of the disturbed upper build-up. The disturbed material measured up to 0.5m thick.



Plate 2

Section 4 showing plough soil underlying post medieval build-up and disturbance, facing SE, 0.1m scale units

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Towards the far NE end of the excavation the disturbed ground gave way to a dark brown silty garden soil (Plate 3).

No archaeological features, buried structures or underlying natural geological deposits were encountered during the course of the works.



Plate 3

Section 2 showing garden soil overlying plough soil, facing NW, 0.1m scale units

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Mount Vale is positioned in a dip, downhill of the SW side of The Mount and the NW side of Tadcaster Road which is close to the line of its Roman predecessor. It lies a short distance from an extensive Roman cemetery which is known to extend at least as far south as Trenholme Drive, approximately 100m to the NE. Although no archaeological features were revealed the top of an extensive layer containing small abraded fragments of Roman brick and pottery was encountered below a sequence of deposits that clearly relate to the construction and use of the house and garden. The upper deposits are 19th and 20th century in date and include a single skin brick wall foundation which probably belongs to a former out building to the rear of the house. The make-up of the lowest deposit is indicative of well worked soil, most likely a plough soil. Being situated at the bottom of The Mount suggests the

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probability of a colluvial element to the plough soil being washed downhill and settling in this area. Should the Roman cemetery extend this far to the SW it is likely to be sealed below a greater depth of later accumulation than found further up The Mount. As such archaeological potential in this area is significant albeit beyond the depths excavated during the course of the works at 204 Mount Vale.

In view of the low archaeological impact of the ground works up to 4th April 2016 it was agreed with John Oxley, the City of York Council archaeologist, to step down the watching brief for the area below the existing rear extension. The footings and drainage channels where they extend below the existing rear extension are not intended to go to a greater depth than those monitored beyond it. The majority of excavation is that area is not expected to be to a lower depth than already achieved and is unlikely to extend to a point below the upper disturbed material, or c 0.5m BGL.

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