



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE	Kent Street, York		
CLIENT NAME	Morrisons Utility Services (Yorkshire Water) Ltd		
YAT PROJECT #	5887	YAT REPORT #	2016/7
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	NGR SE 6080, 5115
PLANNING REFERENCE #	15/01176/FUL,15/01177/FUL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

On 18th -22nd January 2016, York Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief at Kent Street, York. The objective was to record any deposits, features or buried structures exposed during works associated with the opening of a 1.25m deep hydrant pit (2.6m l, 1.1m w) and a utilities trench to the same depth but 0.5m wide on the north side of the street opposite the entrance to the Barbican Car Park, running west for c.30 m from that point, turning and crossing Kent Street at a 45 degree angle and meeting up with an earlier services trench on the south side of Kent Street. The site lies within the City of York Area of Archaeological Importance.

The works involved the observation of the road surface removal and the mechanical excavation of the utilities trench. The trenching was begun by the contractors on site at 12.35pm on Monday 18th and continued until 2.30pm the same day. The current road surface was cut using a Stihl saw and broken up using a hydraulic breaker attached to a JCB 8018 360° tracked excavator. For excavation a 300mm wide toothless ditching bucket was fitted. Marking out of the next 15m stretch of trench was done that pm (not monitored). Pecking out of tarmac and trench excavation resumed at 8.00am on the morning of the 19th and observed until 10.30am when a break in the excavation works for rearranging traffic management and marking out took place. Excavation resumed at 12.45pm and ceased at 3.00pm due to dropping light levels and the need to collect equipment from the depot that pm by the Morrisons team. Excavation and monitoring resumed the following day at 10.30 am following more pecking out, utilising a more powerful machine (Kubota KX 61-3 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 250mm wide bucket) and the trench along the north side was completed by 2.30pm. At that stage, with no significant archaeological deposits observed, continuous monitoring of the groundworks was stopped. Monitoring visits to inspect exposed sections and spoil were made at 8.45 am on the 21st and at 12.45pm on the 22nd. No deposits of archaeological significance were observed or had been disturbed by this point and the end of the cross road trench intersected with the utilities trench monitored by YAT in 2014 (YAT Project 5760, YAT Report 2014/27). Remaining work was to re excavate 2.5 metres of that previous trench to link up with the water main laid therein.

Such recording as required was undertaken by means of written notes, sketch plan and section and colour digital photographs. No artefacts were recovered and no samples were taken.

RESULTS

The sequence was fairly uniform along the length of the monitored trench. A recent tarmac road surface sat upon a bed of compact tarred hardcore, overlying a make-up deposit containing large amounts of sandstone rubble, CBM fragments and rounded pebbles in a dark yellow brown silty clay matrix. This in turn overlay a deposit of mixed silty clays containing frequent fragments of nineteenth century brick and roof tile and associated mortar. Some localised concentrations of this material were noted but the looseness of the deposits (and the amount of roof tile present) showed these were not structures such as walls or drains but localised dumps of demolition rubble.

Four separate services crossed the trench, each cut into the aforementioned silty clay with nineteenth century CBM fragments. The cuts and fills of these service trenches were largely indistinguishable from the deposit into which they had been cut. In order (east to west) these services included 1. a 200mm diameter ceramic drain across the west end of the hydrant pit, 2. a 125mm diameter grey plastic pipe (unlabelled- function not determined), 3. a 120mm diameter cast iron pipe (function undetermined) and 4. a 75mm diameter cast iron pipe (function undetermined).

These deposits overlay a continuous deposit of undisturbed yellow brown silty clay which is assumed to be the natural subsoil. The utilities trench cut into this deposit to a depth between 0.1 and 0.25m depending on

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undulations in the soil profile. The base of this deposit was not reached.

The hydrant pit and 29 metres of the utility trench were continuously monitored. The spoil was inspected during removal and following completion of the excavation, a walk over of the exposed soil in the trench took place. Other than nineteenth century CBM and the services noted above, no artefactual material was discovered and no archaeological deposits were revealed. In consequence continuous monitoring was stepped down to intermittent visits as and when sections of trench were exposed.

DISCUSSION

The observed sequence shows a largely undisturbed subsoil overlaid by made ground and deposits to prepare the bed of Kent Street, essentially the same sequence as observed by YAT in utilities trenches elsewhere in Kent Street (YAT Project 5760, YAT Report 2014/27). Brick demolition rubble indicated the nearby presence of nineteenth century housing. The ceramic water pipes and cast iron pipes may be related services, through this cannot be proved. All predate the laying of the latest surface of Kent Street. The plastic pipe conforms to the position and orientation of a service trench scar crossing the street in a south easterly direction and post dates the last resurfacing of the street.

Anecdotal evidence suggests this part of Kent Street was subject to extensive disturbance during the installation of a 15" water main and associated works in 1954. This water main was briefly seen at the in the service trench shortly after the 45° turn to cross the street. The top of this pipe was exposed at a level just below the intended depth of the current service trench. The observed depositional sequence is consistent with this event which has apparently removed any evidence of earlier human activity in the area monitored.

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Plate 1: Hydrant pit looking SE.



Plate 2. West end of Hydrant pit and start of utility trench looking W

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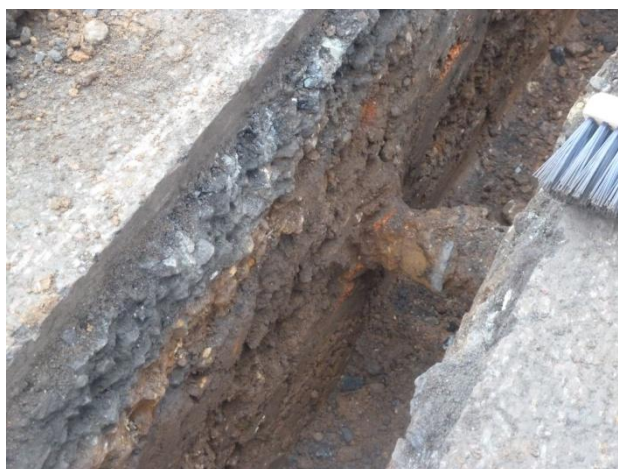


Plate 3. Iron pipework exposed in utility trench



Plate 4. Utility trench looking W

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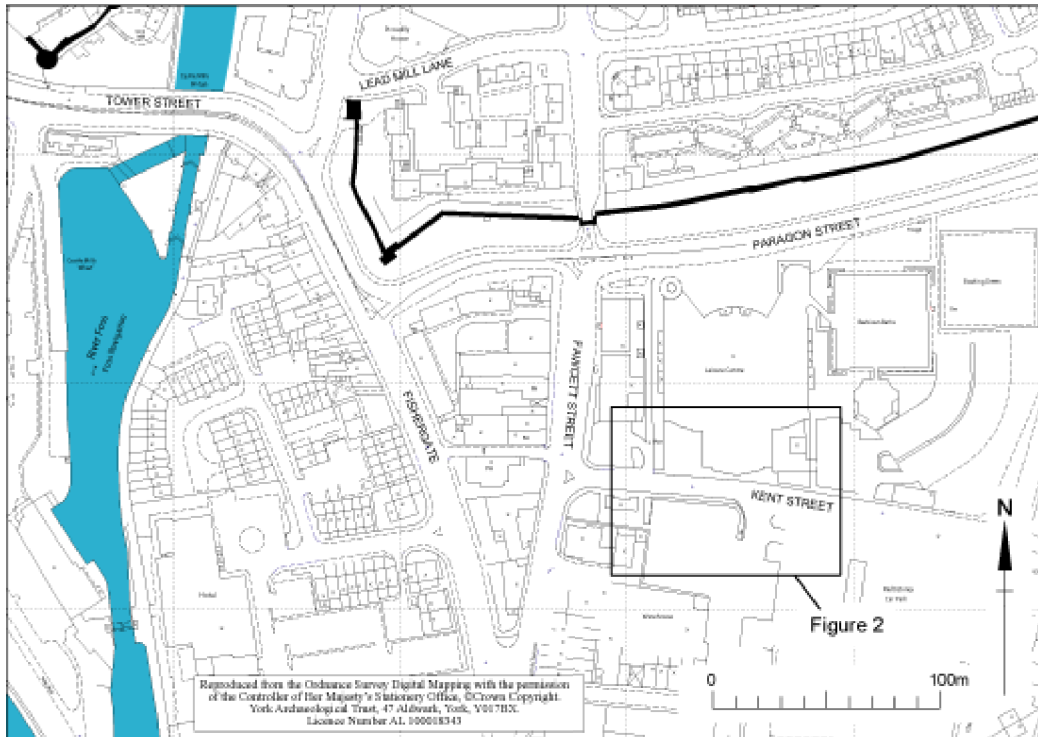


Figure 1. Location of Kent Street, Project 5887

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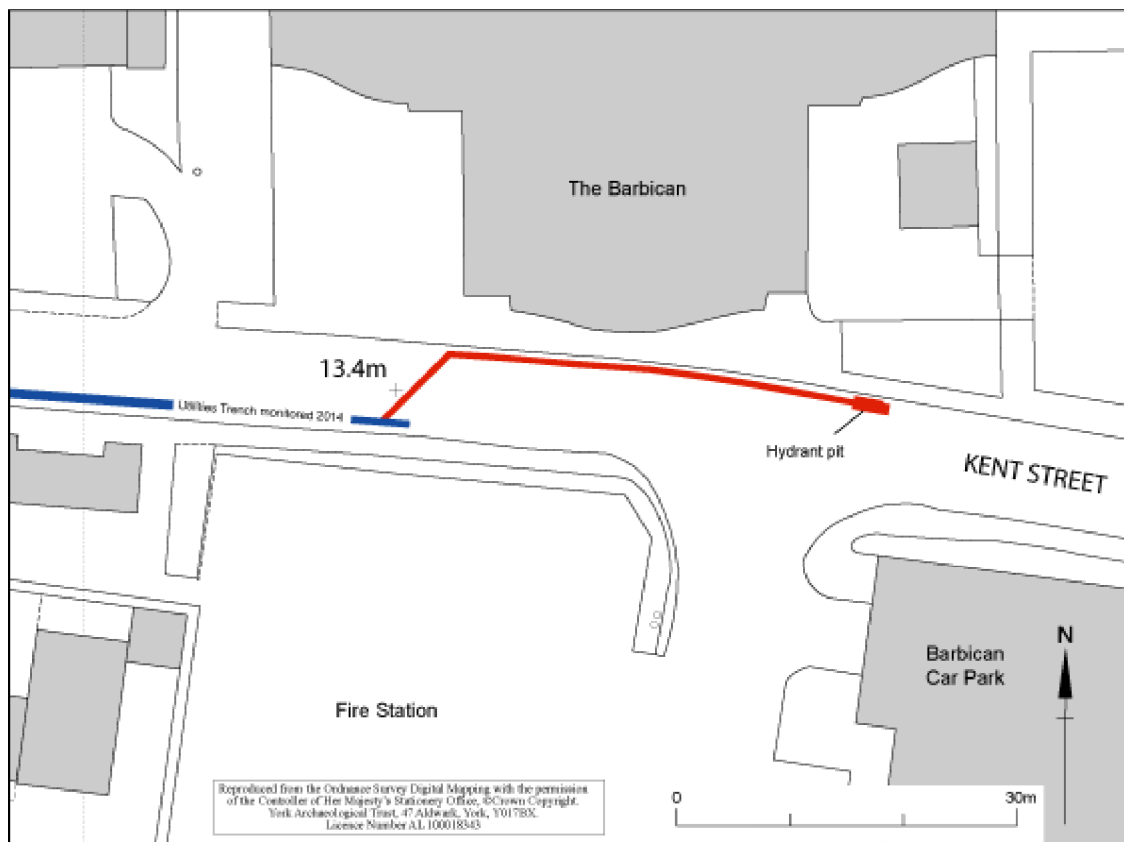


Figure 2. Location of utilities trench, Kent Street, Project 5887

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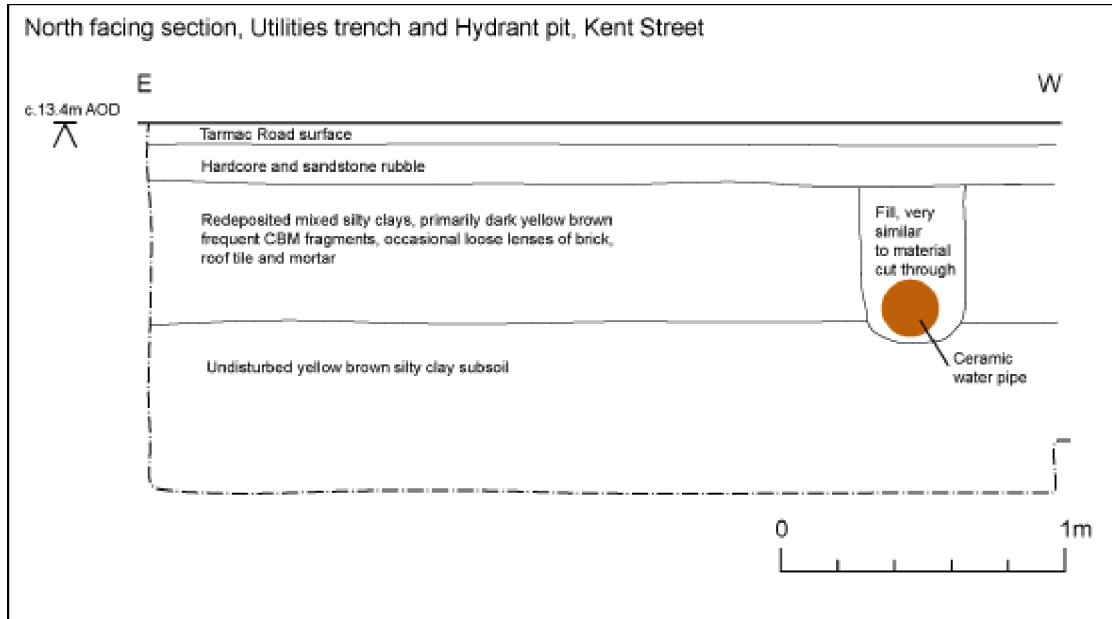


Figure 3. North facing section of hydrant pit, Kent Street, Project 5887

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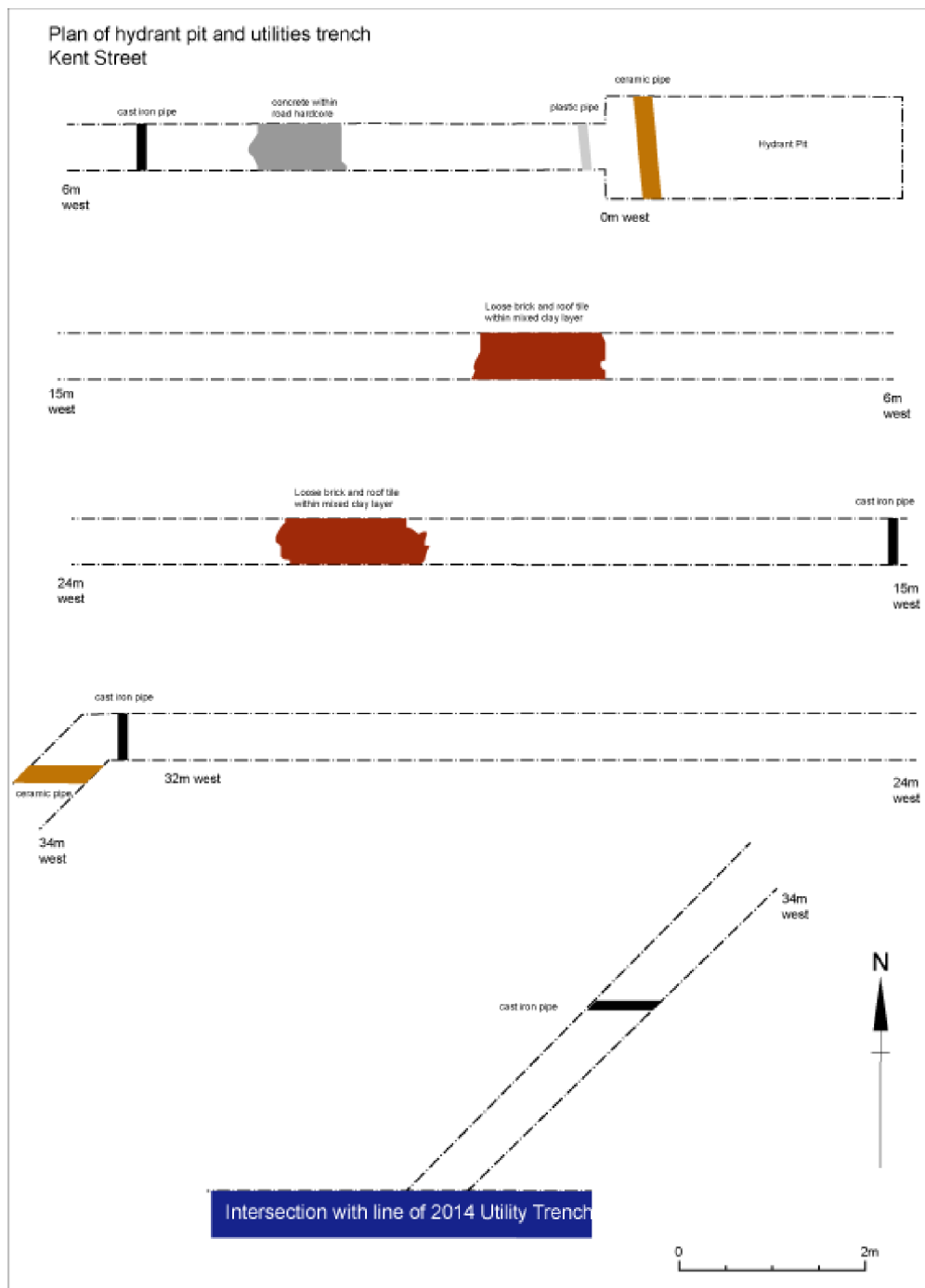


Figure 4. Plan of hydrant pit and utilities trench showing intersected services, Kent Street, Project 5887

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