



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT THE
PROPOSED HEALTH AND RETAIL FACILITIES,
HESLINGTON, YORK**

By Arran Johnson

ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report Number 2016/81 January 2017



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



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CONTENTS

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY.....	III
KEY PROJECT INFORMATION	IV
1 INTRODUCTION	1
2 METHODOLOGY	1
3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY.....	1
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	2
5 RESULTS	2
6 DISCUSSION.....	6
LIST OF SOURCES	7
REFERENCES	7
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE	8
APPENDIX 2 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION.....	9
1 SUMMARY.....	9
2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION.....	10
3 DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS	10
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST	10
5. STRIP, MAP AND RECORD METHODOLOGY	11
6 RECORDING METHODOLOGY.....	12
7 REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION.....	13
8 HEALTH AND SAFETY	14
10 TIMETABLE & STAFFING	14
10 COPYRIGHT.....	15
11 KEY REFERENCES.....	16
FIGURES.....	19

Plates

Cover: Machine excavation of modern overburden.

Plate 1. Aerial view from November 2008. The haul road is visible in the right of the image. 3

Plate 2. Exposing heavily disturbed deposits in the south-western area of the development area. 4

Plate 3. Late-19th century brick footing, looking north-east..... 5

Plate 4. Typical cross-section view showing landscaping dump overlying disturbed topsoil and natural clays. Facing north-west. 6

Tables

Table 1 Index to archive 8

Figures

Figure 1. Site location.

Figure 2. 2016-17 development area and 2003-8 evaluation trench locations.

Figure 3. Schematic profile.

Abbreviations

YAT – York Archaeological Trust

CYC – City of York Council

AOD – Above Ordinance Datum

BGL – Below Ground Level

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Between November 2016 and January 2017, York Archaeological Trust (YAT) carried out an archaeological investigation at a proposed health and retail development in Heslington, York (NGR SE 63730 50930). The work was undertaken for Kilmartin, Plowman and Partners Limited in relation to a planning application (15/00049/FULM) and was based upon a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) written by YAT and approved by the City Archaeologist (Appendix 2).

The monitoring of intrusive groundworks revealed traces of historic plough scars, land drains and hedgerows, however, no significant archaeological deposits were encountered. The removal of modern overburden revealed that the lower lying south-western half of the development area was particularly heavily truncated by landscaping and services associated with the compound of the recent Heslington East development.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	Archaeological Investigations at the Proposed Health and Retail Facilities, Heslington, York.
YAT Project No.	5939
Document Number	YAT Report 2016/81
Type of Project	SMS/WB
Client	KPP Architects
Planning Application No.	15/00049/FULM
NGR	SE 63730 50930
Museum Accession No.	
OASIS Identifier	yorkarch1-274847

REPORT INFORMATION

Version	Produced by		Edited by		Approved by	
	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	AJ	02/02/17	GM	09/02/17	IDM	09/02/17

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1 INTRODUCTION

Between November 2016 and January 2017, York Archaeological Trust observed the preliminary groundworks at the site of Proposed Health and Retail Facilities, Heslington, York (NGR SE 63730 50930, Figure 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of Kilmartin Plowman and Partners Limited in relation to a planning application (15/00049/FULM) and was based upon a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) written by YAT and approved by the City Archaeologist (Appendix 2).

The aim of the investigation was to ensure that any significant archaeological remains affected by the development were appropriately mapped and sampled prior to their destruction. The findings of the project will be added to the considerable body of work that has been carried out over the course of the Heslington East development in the mid to late 2000s.

2 METHODOLOGY

To minimise the prolonged exposure and subsequent erosion of ground surfaces excavated to formation depth, the scheme of works was adapted from a full-scale strip, map and sample excavation to the observation of intrusive groundworks within individual development areas under watching brief conditions.

Topsoil and up to 1m of 21st century landscaping deposits were removed by a Komatsu D61PX-15EO crawler dozer. Underlying layers of overburden were removed by a Volvo EC300DL 30.5 ton tracked mechanical excavator using a 2m toothless bucket. All mechanical excavation was carried out under the supervision of a YAT archaeologist.

As no significant archaeological deposits were observed, no context numbers were assigned and no single context records were compiled.

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The proposal site (Figure 1) is situated to the east of Kimberlow Lane at the northern side of the Heslington East campus of the University of York (NGR SE 63730 50930) and covers an area of roughly 2.9 hectares. It is bounded by Kimberlow Lane and roundabout to the west, car parking to the south and landscaping/arable field systems to the north and east.

The western extent of the site has already been significantly landscaped as part of the Heslington East campus development, whilst the eastern side is still relatively undisturbed though has been superficially disturbed by planting and a path/cycle route.

Current levels across the site reflect the landscape both before and after the redevelopment of the Heslington East campus with a slope upwards from west to east with levels ranging between c.17m and c.28m OD.

The solid geology is Bunter and Keuper sandstones (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 63). However this is masked by a significant glacial moraine made up of sands, gravels and boulder clay. The picture is complicated further by natural springheads as well as naturally occurring peat deposits.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site is situated in a landscape which has proven to be rich in archaeological remains dating from the Mesolithic period onwards. The terminal moraine upon which the site is located has been used continuously through time, but particular concentrations of occupation have been recorded in the Iron Age and Roman periods.

Since 2002 the surrounding area has been subjected to intensive archaeological investigation linked with the Heslington East campus development for the University of York. Previous interventions within the current development area are briefly reviewed below:

- The 2003-4 evaluations across the site excavated within Fields 5 and 5A and found evidence of farming from the medieval period onwards as well as earlier features which contained material from the Iron Age and Anglian periods. Trench 24 (Figure 2) of this evaluation sits within the present development area and contained a shallow pit with a scorched fill. No dateable material was recovered from the feature. It did, however, truncate a buried plough soil and was interpreted as a possible bonfire pit of post-medieval to early modern date (Macnab 2004,66).

- Trench 2 of the 2008 evaluations was located along the north-west edge of the present study area (Figure 2). This trench revealed a shallow, undated linear feature which may have lined up with the roughly east-west ditch alignments in the larger areas of excavation to the south (Johnson 2008, 1). The northernmost part of Trench 3 of the same evaluation was also located within the current development area, although the only archaeological feature to be observed was an ephemeral tree bole (ibid, 3).

- Assessment of organic deposits at the western extent of the study area showed that the material was natural in formation rather than archaeological deposits.

- Monitoring of Archaeological Trial Pits in January 2016 has revealed that the previous ground levels had been truncated during the removal of topsoil, and to a lesser extent subsoil, during landscaping in the mid to late 2000s (Kendall 2016, 3).

Although this work has potentially truncated archaeological deposits there is still an inherent risk that significant archaeological features will be encountered during groundworks which further impinge upon the natural deposits. A feature of this landscaping is a clear disturbance horizon of dark silts and debris that is likely to be the result of machinery tracking across the site and is an indicator as to the level which archaeology may survive beneath.

5 RESULTS

A highly uniform pattern of deposition was observed across the whole site, broadly following the trends observed during YAT's monitoring of a series of test pits in 2016 (Kendall 2016, 3). Deposits in the lower lying land in the south-western area of the site, close to Kimberlow Lane, were found to have been extensively damaged by a haul road and underlying services for a site compound relating to the construction of the new university campus in 2009 (Plates 1 and 2).

Ground levels in much of this area will be raised during construction of the new retail development. Only areas scheduled to be reduced were monitored archaeologically.

Below a thin landscaping layer of topsoil, the area around the former haul road contained service trenches for electrical cables, layers of tarmac and hardcore make-up and frequent dumped refuse presumably derived from the compound (litter, Heras fencing panels and feet, traffic cones, etc.).



Plate 1. Aerial view from November 2008. The haul road is visible in the right of the image.

Heavily disturbed subsoils mainly comprised of soft, mid-orange brown clay silt were exposed along both sides of the former haul road. As the depth of excavation was limited, no natural geological deposits were reached.

No deposits of archaeological significance were observed in this area, although it remains possible that some may survive at a greater depth. Considering the level of disturbance from recent construction works and the shallow nature of features observed in nearby evaluation trenches the likelihood of any significant remains surviving in this area is very low.



Plate 2. Exposing heavily disturbed deposits in the south-western area of the development area.

To the north-east of the former haul road area, the heavily truncated remains of a roughly built L-shaped brick structure were observed running beyond the south-eastern boundary of the site (Plate 2). The structure survived to a single course in height and comprised of re-used post-medieval and 19th century brick fragments in a shallow bed of mortar. The structure is visible on the 1888-1913 Ordnance Survey map on the boundary between fields 5A and 3 (Figure 2). It is not depicted, however, on any later or earlier maps (<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=16&lat=53.9505&lon=-1.0302&layers=171&b=1> Accessed 23/11/2016).

Due to the poor preservation of the structure and the possible presence of more significant deposits below, a photographic record of the structure was made and machine excavation continued.



Plate 3. Late-19th century brick footing, looking north-east.

Ground levels in much of the north and eastern extents of the development area were significantly raised following the construction of the Heslington East development, creating a uniform pattern of deposition across the majority of the site (Plate 4). Machine excavation of modern overburden in these areas revealed a depth of between 1.00m and 1.50m of mixed levelling material comprised of re-deposited natural sands and clays and topsoil beneath present day turf.

A 0.10m to 0.30m thick layer of soft to friable, dark greyish brown, clayey silt was almost universally present beneath the overlying landscaping material. This deposit was highly disturbed and presumably relates to material left behind when topsoil was removed from the site in 2008-9. Underlying this material was a thin layer of disturbed sandy subsoil that was heavily affected by root damage.



Plate 4. Typical cross-section view showing landscaping dump overlying disturbed topsoil and natural clays. Facing north-west.

Natural geological deposits varied across the site, although a firm, mid-orange brown sandy clay with frequent concentrations of gravel, cobbles and lenses of sand was most common. Recent planting and the former hedgerow between fields 5A and 5 (Figure 2) has caused considerable root damage to the natural horizon.

No archaeological features or deposits were observed to overlay or cut in to natural geological deposits with the exception of modern plough scars following a north-west/south-east alignment.

The natural slope underlying 21st century landscaping deposits was found to follow the trend outlined in a schematic profile created following the observation of archaeological test pits in January 2016 (Kendall 2016, Figure 3).

6 DISCUSSION

While little in the way of archaeological significance has been uncovered at the Proposed Health and Retail Facilities development, the opportunity to observe another large area within a landscape that has recently seen such extensive archaeological research and intervention has nonetheless allowed for a more complete understanding of the area's development.

The absence of any significant archaeological features in this area is not problematic to the current understanding of the local sequence as recent work has revealed a landscape filled

with concentrations of occupation and exploitation of the landscape alongside areas that are relatively devoid of activity.

The site's elevated position within a landscape pitted with bogs and palaeochannels may have resulted in relatively unobtrusive agricultural use being favoured over more intrusive activities. It should, however, be borne in mind that the few features that have been identified in the site's immediate vicinity have tended to be extremely shallow. With the high level of truncation from modern ploughing and landscaping, it is also possible that in-situ archaeological remains have failed to survive.

LIST OF SOURCES

National Library of Scotland

<http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/#zoom=16&lat=53.9505&lon=-1.0302&layers=171&b=1>

Accessed 23/11/2016

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Excavation Team – Craig Brown, Arran Johnson, Ben Savine.

APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Digital photographs	139
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	1

Table 1 Index to archive

APPENDIX 2 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION



WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL PITS FOLLOWED BY STRIP, MAP AND RECORD.

Site Location:	Proposed Health and Retail Facilities, University of York, Heslington, York
NGR:	SE 63730 50930
Proposal:	Erection of doctors surgery (use class D1) and shopping parade (use classes A1 (shops), A2 (office), A3 (restaurant/cafe), A5 (hot food takeaway) and D1 (dentist) with associated access, car and cycle parking and earthworks
Planning ref:	15/00049/FULM
Prepared for:	Kilmartin Plowman & Partners Limited by York Archaeological Trust [January 2016]

Version	Produced by		Edited by		Approved by	
	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1 Draft	TLK	29/01/16	IDM	16/02/16	DA	16/02/16
Final	DA	24/10/16	IDM	24/10/16	DA	24/10/16

1 SUMMARY

1.1 The planning application for the development has been approved (July 2015).

1.2 The following archaeological condition has been imposed as condition 16 of the planning approval:

No work shall commence on site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (an archaeological excavation and subsequent programme of analysis and publication by an approved archaeological unit) in accordance with the specification supplied by the Local Planning Authority. This programme and the archaeological unit shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

Reason: The site lies within an Area of Archaeological Importance and the development will affect important archaeological deposits which must be recorded prior to destruction by any ground works proposed.

1.3 This Written Scheme of Investigation is an updated version of the WSI initially prepared in November 2015. The update is based on the results of a transect of Archaeological Trial Pits which were excavated across the site on the 25th January 2016.

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared in response to discussions with John Oxley, the City of York Archaeologist. The required mitigation of this site is Strip, Map and Sample. The work will be carried out in accordance with the discussions and this WSI.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The proposal site (Figure 1 Site Location) is situated to the east of Kimberlow Lane at the northern side of the Heslington East campus of the University of York (NGR SE 63730 50930). It is bounded by Kimberlow Lane and roundabout to the west, car parking to the south and landscaping/arable field systems to the north and east.

The western extent of the site has already been significantly landscaped as part of the Heslington East campus development, whilst the eastern side is still relatively undisturbed though has been superficially disturbed by planting and a path/cycle route.

Current levels across the site reflect the landscape both before and after the redevelopment of the Heslington East campus with a slope upwards from west to east with levels ranging between c.17m and c.28m OD.

The solid geology is Bunter and Keuper sandstones (Geological Survey of England and Wales, Sheet 63). However this is masked by a significant glacial moraine made up of sands, gravels and boulder clay. The picture is complicated further by natural springheads as well as naturally occurring peat deposits.

3 DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

3.1 The site is situated within York's Area of Archaeological Importance.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

4.1 The site is situated in a landscape which has proven to be rich in archaeological remains dating from the Mesolithic period onwards. The terminal moraine upon which the site is located has been used continuously through time, but particular concentrations of occupation have been recorded in the Iron Age and Roman periods.

4.2 Since 2002 the surrounding area has been subjected to intensive archaeological investigation linked with the Heslington East campus development for the University of York. It is not within the scope of this WSI to fully review this data; however direct interventions on the site are reviewed below:

- The 2004 evaluations across the site (Macnab 2004) excavated within Fields 5 and 5A and found evidence of farming from the medieval period onwards as well as earlier features which contained material from the Iron Age and Anglian periods.

- In 2008 (Johnson 2008) an evaluation trench across the study area revealed a shallow undated ditch which may have lined up with the ditch alignments in the larger areas of excavation to the south.

- Assessment of organic deposits at the western extent of the study area showed that the material was natural in formation rather than archaeological deposits.

4.3 Monitoring of Archaeological Trial Pits in January 2016 (Kendall 2016) has revealed that the previous ground levels had been truncated during the removal of topsoil, and to a lesser extent subsoil, during landscaping in the mid to late 2000s.

Although this work has potentially truncated archaeological deposits there is still an inherent risk that significant archaeological features will be encountered during groundworks which further impinge upon the natural deposits. A feature of this landscaping is a clear disturbance horizon of dark silts and debris that is likely to be the result of machinery tracking across the site and is an indicator as to level which archaeology may survive beneath.

5. STRIP, MAP AND RECORD METHODOLOGY

5.1 A model will be created by the developers indicating the levels of truncation below OD across the site – specifically relating to the formation levels for the proposed build (Figure 3). This will then be compared to the results of the Archaeological Trial Pits, and geotechnical investigations where appropriate, to give an area of investigation via Strip, Map & Sample (Figure 2).

5.2 Any areas where previously undisturbed natural deposits will be impacted upon will be investigated archaeologically.

5.3 The area for investigation will be stripped of topsoil and/or overburden to expose undisturbed deposits with the potential to contain archaeological material. The area must be stripped using a machine fitted with a suitable toothless bucket (e.g. ditching bucket) to produce a clean, flat surface for archaeological inspection. The stripping activity will be monitored at all times by an archaeologist. Areas will be cleaned by the archaeologist(s) as necessary to allow any archaeological features to be identified. After consultation with City of York Archaeologist John Oxley any archaeology will be investigated and recorded prior to the removal of deposits to the required formation depth (Figure 3).

5.4 It is proposed that the area for investigation be dealt with in two parts (Figure 2), with topsoil/overburden stripping to undisturbed deposits taking place under archaeological supervision in the first half before inspection by the City of York Archaeologist John Oxley. Any recording and further investigation required will be carried out in the first half whilst topsoil/overburden stripping takes place under archaeological observation in the second half of the site. After inspection of the second half, recording and excavation will then take place.

5.5 Plant or excavators shall not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the archaeologist on site has given explicit permission for operations to recommence at that location.

5.6 Following excavation and recording of all archaeological deposits in the first or second half of the site and in consultation with the City of York Archaeologist, that half will be passed for ground works to reduce the level to that required for construction.

6 RECORDING METHODOLOGY

6.1 If a base plan of intervention areas is available, the areas being monitored will be determined using this information. This will be augmented by the use of GPS survey for the initial outline of all features.

6.2 Unique context numbers will only be assigned if artefacts are retrieved, or stratigraphic relationships between archaeological deposits are discernable. In archaeologically 'sterile' areas, soil layers will be described, but no context numbers will be assigned. Where assigned, each context will be described in full on a pro forma context record sheet in accordance with the accepted context record conventions.

6.3 Archaeological deposits will be planned at a scale of 1:20 where this is required. Larger scales will be utilised as appropriate. Cross-section of features will be drawn to a basic scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the size of the feature. All drawings will be related to Ordnance Datum. Where it aids interpretation, structural remains will also be recorded in elevation. All drawings will be drawn on inert materials. All drawings will adhere to accepted drawing conventions.

6.4 Photographs of archaeological deposits and features will be taken. This will include general views of entire features and of details such as sections as considered necessary. Digital photography will be used in the first instance though this may be supplemented by BW print or colour slide as appropriate. All site photography will adhere to accepted photographic record guidelines.

6.5 Areas which are inaccessible (e.g. for health and safety reasons) will be recorded as thoroughly as possible within the site constraints. In these instances, recording may be entirely photographic, with sketch drawings only.

6.6 All finds will be collected and handled following the guidance set out in the IfA guidance for archaeological materials. Unstratified material will not be kept unless it is of exceptional intrinsic interest. Material discarded as a consequence of this policy will be described and quantified in the field. Finds of particular interest or fragility will be retrieved as Small Finds, and located on plans. Other finds, finds within the topsoil, and dense/discrete deposits of finds will be collected as Bulk Finds, from discrete contexts, bagged by material type. Any dense/discrete deposits will have their limits defined on the appropriate plan.

6.7 All artefacts and ecofacts will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication *First Aid for Finds*, and recording systems must be compatible with the recipient museum. All finds that fall within the purview of the Treasure Act (1996) will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures outlined in the Act, after discussion with the client and the local authority.

6.8 *A soil sampling programme will be undertaken for the recovery and identification of charred and waterlogged remains where suitable deposits are identified. The collection and processing of environmental samples will be undertaken in accordance with English Heritage guidelines (Historic England 2011). Environmental and soil specialists will be consulted during the course of the evaluation with regard to the implementation of this sampling programme. Soil samples of*

approximately 40 litres for flotation (or 100% of the features if less than this volume) will be removed from selected contexts, using a combination of the judgement and systematic methodologies.

- **Judgement sampling** will involve the removal of samples from secure contexts which appear to present either good conditions for preservation (e.g. burning or waterlogging) or which are significant in terms of archaeological interpretation or stratigraphy.
- **Systematic sampling** will involve the sampling of all cut features and buried ground surfaces. The spatial distribution of systematic samples can not be predetermined, given the relatively small nature of the areas available in an evaluation.

6.9 Industrial activity is unlikely to be found on the site, but if industrial activity of any scale is detected, industrial samples and process residues will also be collected. Separate samples (c. 10ml) will be collected for micro-slags (hammer-scale and spherical droplets) (Historic England 2015).

6.10 *Other samples will be taken, as appropriate, in consultation with YAT specialists and the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor, as appropriate (e.g. dendrochronology, soil micromorphology, monolith samples, C14, etc.). Samples will be taken for scientific dating where necessary for the development of subsequent mitigation strategies. Material removed from site will be stored in appropriate controlled environments.*

6.11 *In the event of human remains being discovered during the evaluation these will be left in-situ, covered and protected, in the first instance. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with environmental health regulations and following discussions with, and with the approval of, the Ministry of Justice. If human remains are identified, the Ministry of Justice and curator will be informed immediately. An osteoarchaeologist will be available to give advice on site.*

- If **disarticulated** remains are encountered, these will be identified and quantified on site. If trenches are being immediately backfilled, the remains will be left in the ground. If the excavations will remain open for any length of time, disarticulated remains will be removed and boxed, for immediate reburial by the Church.
- If **articulated** remains are encountered, these will be excavated in accordance with recognised guidelines (see 7.12) and retained for assessment.
- Any grave goods or coffin furniture will be retained for further assessment.

6.12 Where a licence is issued, all human skeletal remains will be properly removed in accordance with the terms of that licence. Where a licence is not issued, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with the requirements of Civil Law, ClfA Technical Paper 13 (1993) and Historic England guidance (2005).

7 REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION

7.1 Upon completion of the strip, map and sample exercise, a report will be prepared to include the following:

- a) A non-technical summary of the results of the work.
- b) An introduction which will include the planning reference number, grid reference and dates when the fieldwork took place.
- c) An account of the methodology and results of the operation, describing structural data, associated finds and environmental data.

- d) A selection of photographs and drawings, including an overall plan of the site accurately identifying the areas monitored.
- e) Specialist artefact and environmental reports as necessary.
- f) Details of archive location and destination (with accession number, where known), together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
- g) A copy of the key OASIS form details
- h) Copies of the Brief and WSI
- i) Additional photographic images may be supplied on a CDROM appended to the report

7.2 Copies of the report will be submitted to the commissioning body and the HER/SMR (also in PDF format).

7.3 The requirements for archive preparation and deposition will be addressed and undertaken in a manner agreed with the recipient museum. In this instance the Yorkshire Museum is recommended and an agreed allowance should be made for the curation and storage of this material.

7.4 Provision for the publication of results, as outlined in the Brief, will be made.

7.5 The owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the information and documentation arising from the work, would grant a licence to the County Council and the museum accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions. Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), such documentation is required to be made available to enquirers if it meets the test of public interest. Any information disclosure issues would be resolved between the client and the archaeological contractor before completion of the work. EIR requirements do not affect IPR.

8 HEALTH AND SAFETY

8.1 Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

8.2 A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of site works.

10 TIMETABLE & STAFFING

9.1 The main strip, map and recording element will be scheduled in discussions with the Client, most probably during early 2016.

9.2 Specialist staff available for this work are as follows:

- Human Remains – Ruth Whyte (Dickinson Laboratory for Bio-archaeology)
- Palaeoenvironmental remains – Dr Jennifer Miller (Dickinson Laboratory for Bio-archaeology)
- Head of Curatorial Services - Christine McDonnell
- Finds Researcher - Nicky Rogers
- Pottery Researcher - Anne Jenner
- Ceramic Building Material Researcher – Jane McComish
- Finds Officers – Nienke Van Doorn

- Archaeometallurgy & Industrial Residues –Dr Rod Mackenzie
- Conservation - Ian Panter

10 COPYRIGHT

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11 KEY REFERENCES

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See also the **Historic England** website for a full list of English Heritage Guidance documents. <http://historicengland.org.uk/advice/>



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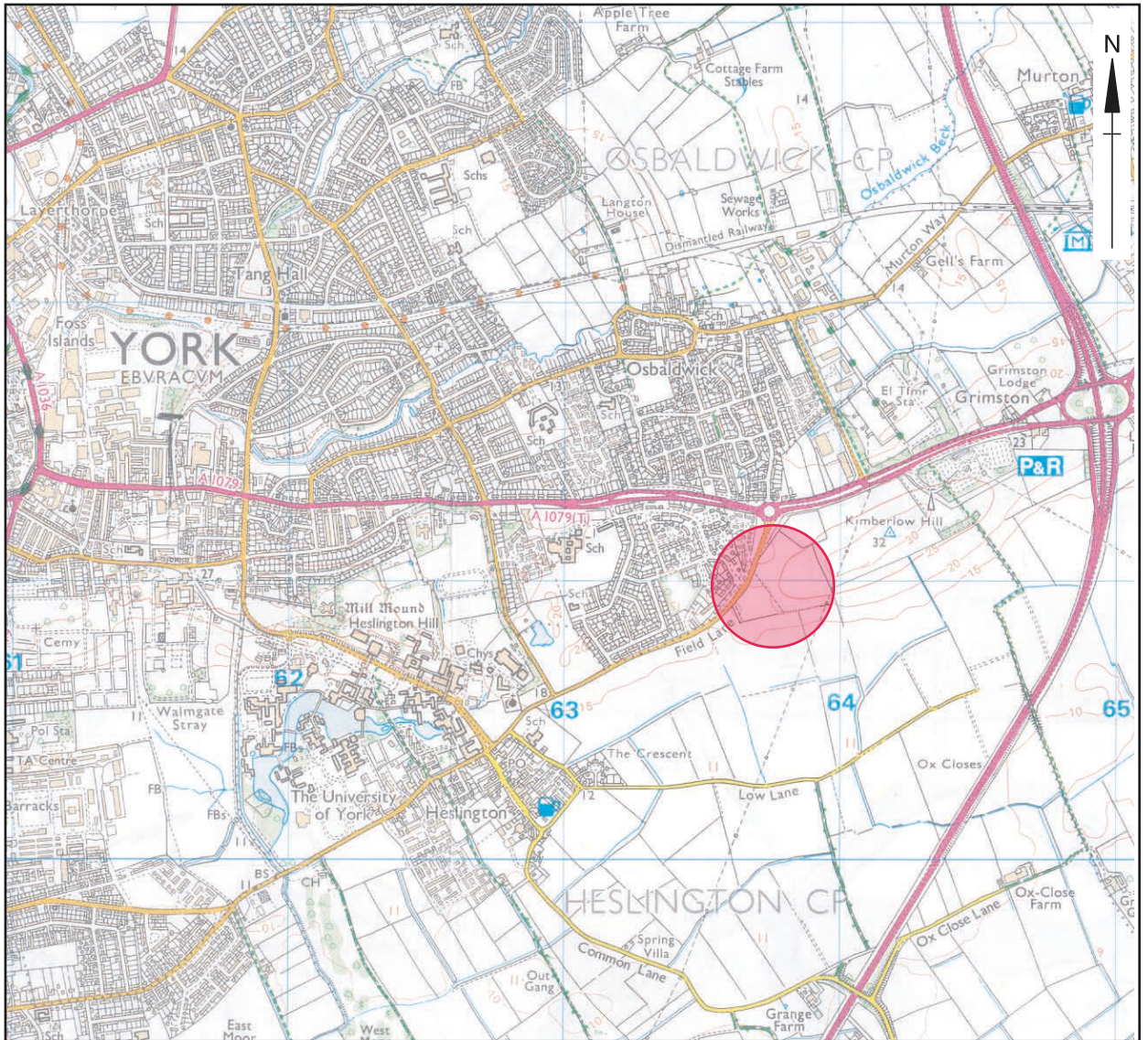
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FIGURES



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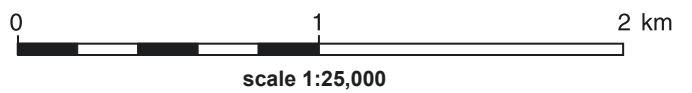


Figure 1 Site Location

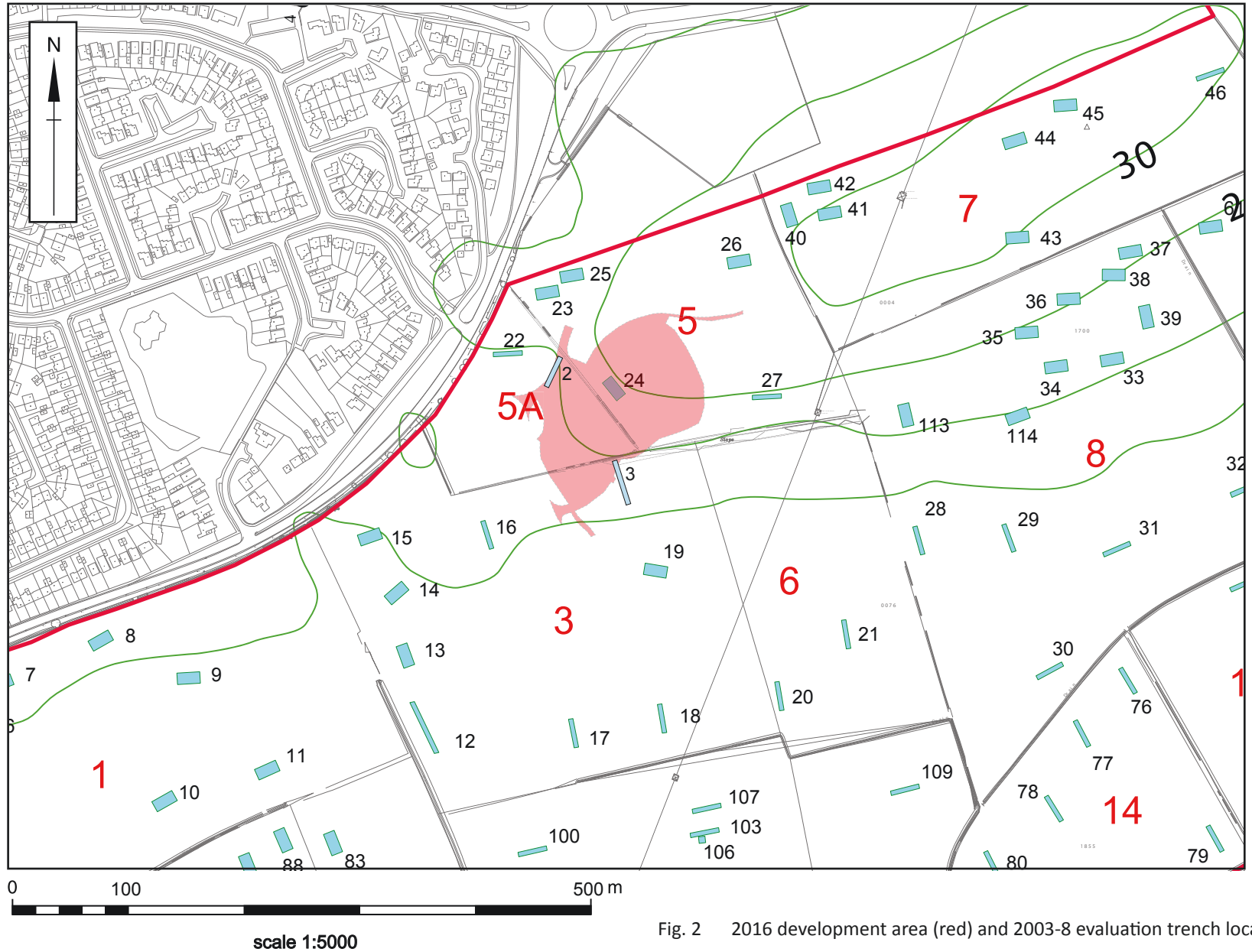


Fig. 2 2016 development area (red) and 2003-8 evaluation trench locations

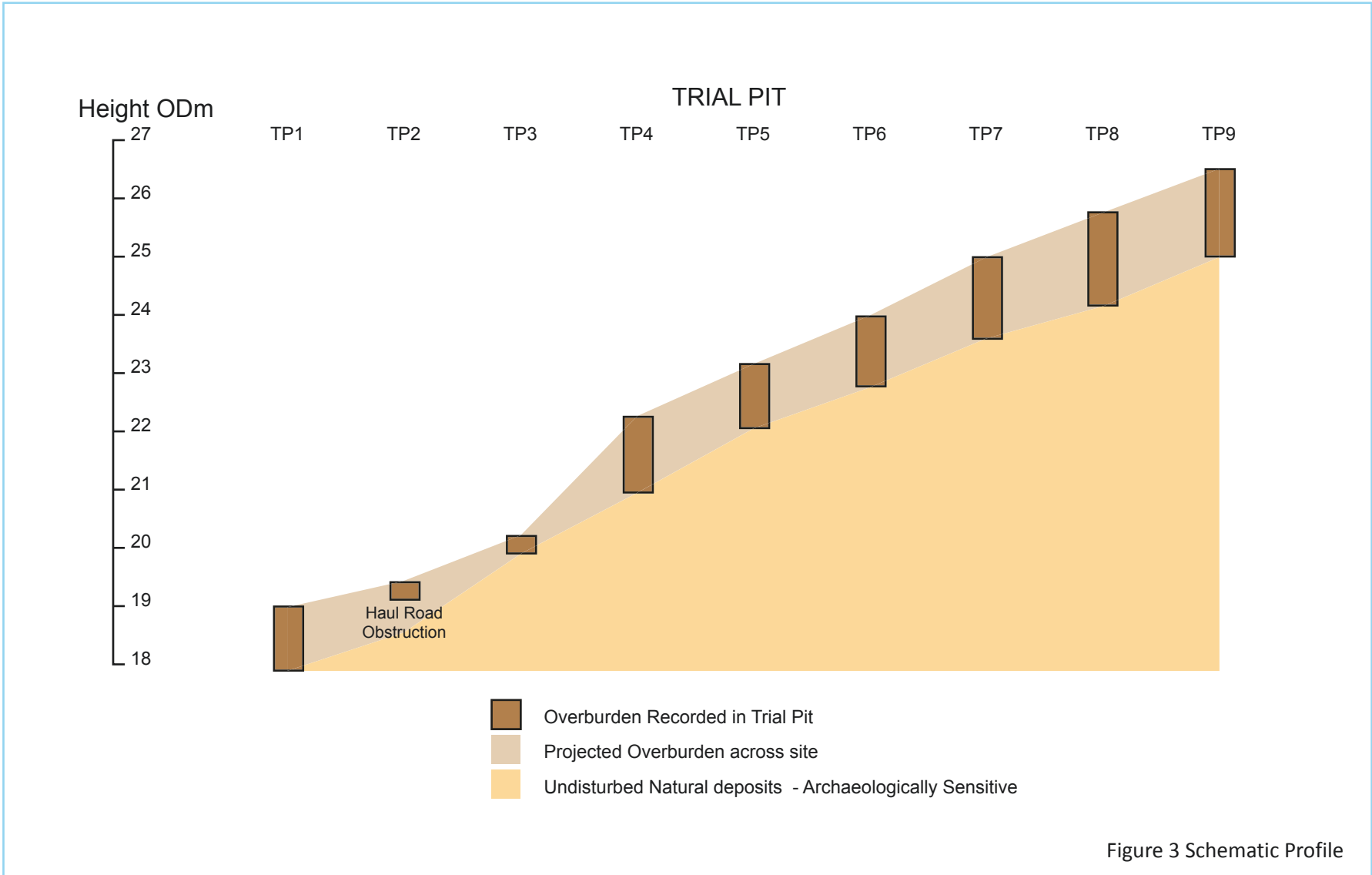


Figure 3 Schematic Profile