



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE	Clifford's Tower and Bar Walls Lighting		
CLIENT NAME	City of York Council		
YAT PROJECT #	5942	YAT REPORT #	17/2017
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 5985 5983
PLANNING REFERENCE #	N/A	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

INTRODUCTION

Between the 30th of January and 10th of February 2017 York Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief on works involving the replacement of lighting on land between Station Road, YO1 6HU, and Station Avenue, York, YO90 1HX, SE 5985 5983 (Figure 1). The site lies within York's designated Area of Archaeological Importance and has the City Walls Scheduled Monument (MY01715) running across the works site from the south-west to the north-east. There is also the former York and Midlands coal depot on the corner of Station Road (NGR: SE 5995 5990), which is also designated as a Scheduled Monument (MY03727).

These ground works were part of an ongoing programme of works that includes upgrading the lighting at Clifford's Tower, Tower Street which occurred at the end of November 2016 (YAT87/2016). All works were undertaken by Bouygues Energies and Services on behalf of City of York Council.

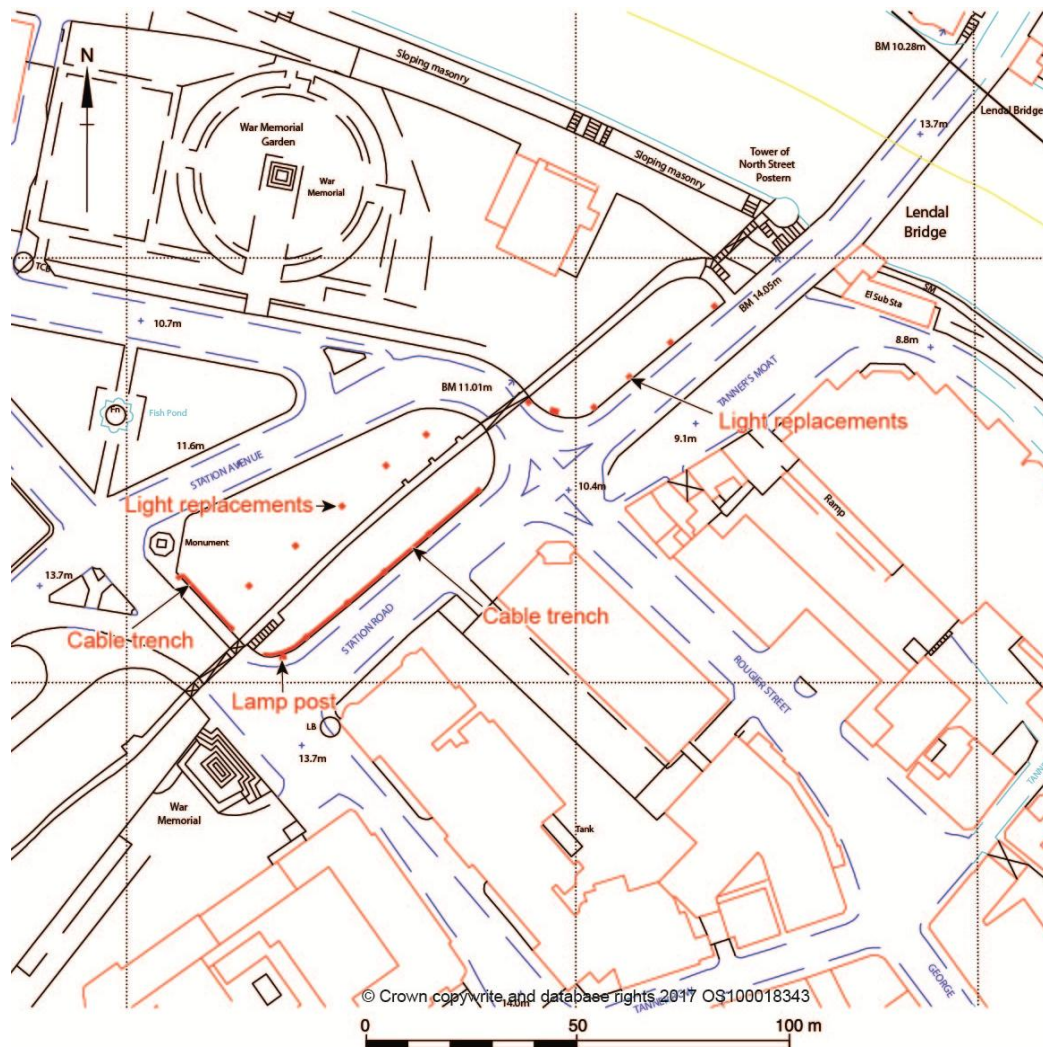


Figure 1. Works Location

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METHODOLOGY

Works included the installation of a new feeder box at the corner of the inner north-east section and the replacing of the five flood lights adjacent to the existing wall, exposing the ducting and electrical cable via the excavation of small investigative slots. On the inner south-east section of the bar walls a lamp post was moved and reconnected closer to the nearby standing wall and observations were made when the 1m deep slot was excavated for the new lamp post. A further five flood lights were replaced with ducting and electrical cable along a 65m length between the grass verge and the standing wall. A smaller section of cable trench was exposed along a 20m section to the west outside the Bar walls, where a feeder box was replaced and reconnected to the mains fuse box. The section to the north-west on the outside of the Bar walls had five flood lights replaced, entailing the removal of the concrete bases of the lighting unit. No replacement cabling or trenching was necessary.

The excavation work was shallow and cut into deposits previously disturbed by the existing concrete plinths and cable ducting for previous lighting. Intermittent observations were undertaken when ground works occurred.

RESULTS

WORKS AT THE NORTH EAST INNER BAR WALL

A series of five small slots were hand-excavated to the north-east of the inner bar walls, running parallel with an existing wall and following the inner curve in the wall to the north-west. These holes were approximately c.200mm wide and positioned in line with above ground fuse boxes that are visible at the side of the wall. These were excavated to expose the ducting and electrical cable, which were visible at c.200mm Below Ground Level (BGL) (Plate 1). Turf and topsoil was observed to extend to a depth of c.300mm. The backfill over the previous service run was identified and consisted of dark brownish grey, sandy, silt containing moderate amounts of brick, broken tile and stones. A small amount of excavation was needed on the corner junction so as to run electrical cabling into the feeder box (Plate 2). Only turf, topsoil, and the backfill of the existing service run was disturbed by that excavation which extended only as far as the existing duct to a depth of no more than 300mm BGL.

WORKS AT THE SOUTH EAST INNER BAR WALL

A trench to the south-east of the inner bar walls was hand-excavated, running parallel with the existing wall and following the inner curve of the wall to the south-west. A 65m section of trenching was exposed at c.300mm away from the standing wall. It was 200mm wide and reached a depth of c.300mm (Plate 3). Turf and topsoil was observed to extend to a depth of c.150mm and was friable, dark brown, sandy silt. The remainder was exposed between a depth of c.150-200mm BGL and was friable to firm, dark brown, clayey silt with lots of whole and partial bricks, mortar, pebbles, limestone and glass fragments. An electrical cable was discovered running the length of the trench and branching off into the light fittings that were being replaced; a 60mm diameter plastic ducting was inserted around the cable and the trench backfilled.

On the south-east corner of Station Road, on the exterior of the lower border wall, a deeper excavation took place to move a lamp post closer to the electrical cabling. The paving slabs were lifted next to the wall and an area c.400mm by c.400mm square was opened up for access, revealing a duct and electrical cable running through the area to the south-east. A slot approximately c.200mm wide was excavated to the right hand side of the existing cabling to a depth of 1m BGL. Underneath the paving slabs there was topsoil present which was c.20-30mm thick and was friable, dark greyish brown, sandy silt with

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occasional small pebbles. The remainder of the sequence exposed between c.30mm-1000mm BGL was friable, light brownish grey, sandy silt with frequent broken brick, tile, mortar and charcoal lumps (Plate 4).

WORKS AT THE WESTERN OUTER BAR WALL

A trench was excavated just on the inside of the grassed area next to the pavement, curving round to the west on the outside of the Bar walls. The trench branched off into a feeder box that was fixed on the inside of the city wall to the east and ran west to the mains junction box situated at the side of the trench on the pavement (Plate 5). The trench was c.200mm wide and 30m long. Turf and topsoil was observed to extend to a depth of c.200mm BGL and consisted of dark brown, sandy silt (Plate 6). An electrical cable was discovered running the length of the trench and plastic ducting 60mm wide was inserted around the cable and the trench backfilled.

WORKS AT THE NORTH WEST OUTER BAR WALL

In this area of works there were five standing flood lights that were being replaced at the bottom of the grass bank. There was no cabling or ducting being replaced and no trenching undertaken. The ground excavations were only interfering with previously disturbed ground for the light fixtures themselves.

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DISCUSSION

The extent of the excavations was very limited and in most cases went into previously disturbed ground between c.200-300mm deep, where modern electrical cable and ducting had been placed and subsequently replaced. The soil deposits encountered throughout the trenches suggest that there has been extensive landscaping and alterations to the ground level, especially to the south-east inner corner where the lamp post slot was excavated. The depth of these levelling deposits appeared to extend below 1m BGL.

The sequence identified during these ground investigations and researched in historical sources suggests and explanation for the presence of solely disturbed and altered ground. On the 1852 OS map of York the site area is shown as railway tracks and sidings for a line that extended northwards and then stopped just before the tower of north street postern (Plate 7). It has also been recorded that the York and Midlands coal depot, which is Scheduled Monument (MY03727), was built on the works site in 1839 then abandoned in 1845 and subsequently demolished between 1856- 1875. This relates to the development and decline of the original York station built in 1839 within the city walls, which was depicted in Nathaniel Whittock's 'Birds-Eye view of the City of York, 1858 (Plate 8) and was only 70meters to the south east of the current works site. There is also an extensive collection of black and white photographs held in archive by the York City Library which depicts the railway tracks and sidings in 1868 (Plate 9).

The old York rail station was closed in 1877 as it was far too small for purposed platform expansions and the current station was built about 200meters to the south-west. The 1891 OS map shows the tracks and railway sidings are gone by this date and that the levelling deposits discovered are due to the re-modelling of this part of the city in the late 19th century.

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PLATES



Plate 1. Lighting fuse boxes visible on the wall with the slots excavated in front, facing north-east.

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Plate 2. Lighting slot and cable running to fuse box, facing south-west.

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Plate 3. Fuse boxes and lighting plinths visible on the inner wall, facing south-east.

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Plate 4. Existing lighting cable and 1m excavation slot for new lamp post, in south-east corner.

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Plate 5. Replacement of ducting and electrical cable. facing east.

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Plate 6. Ducting and electrical cable trench running into mains fuse box, facing west.

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Plate 7. 1852 OS Map of site area, York.

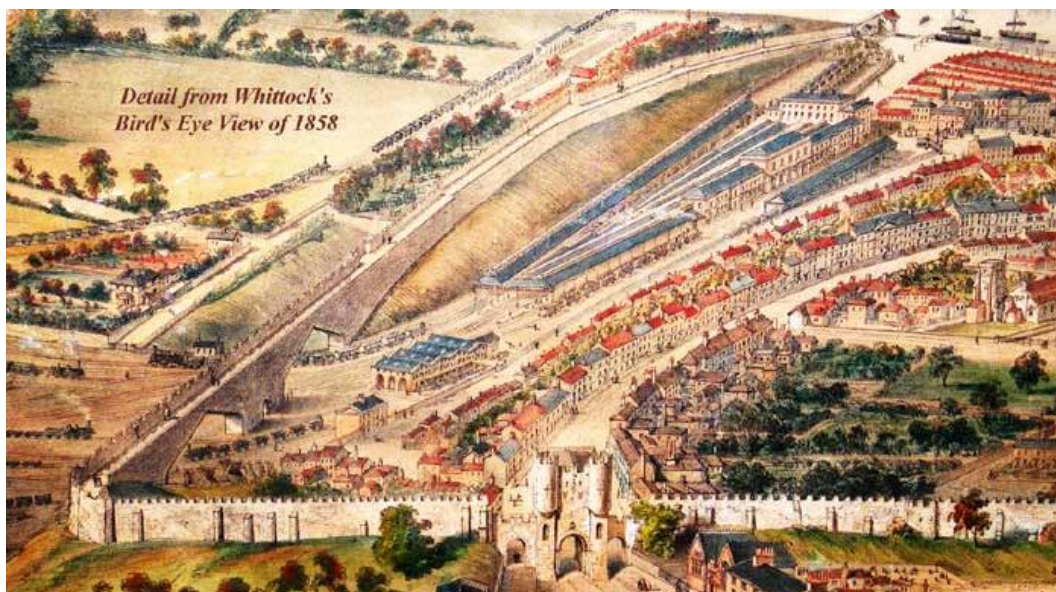


Plate 8. Nathaniel Whittock's bird's-eye view of the city of York, 1850.

(Wilson, B., Mee, F. 2005. *The City Walls and Castles of York: The Pictorial Evidence*, fig.37. pg41.)

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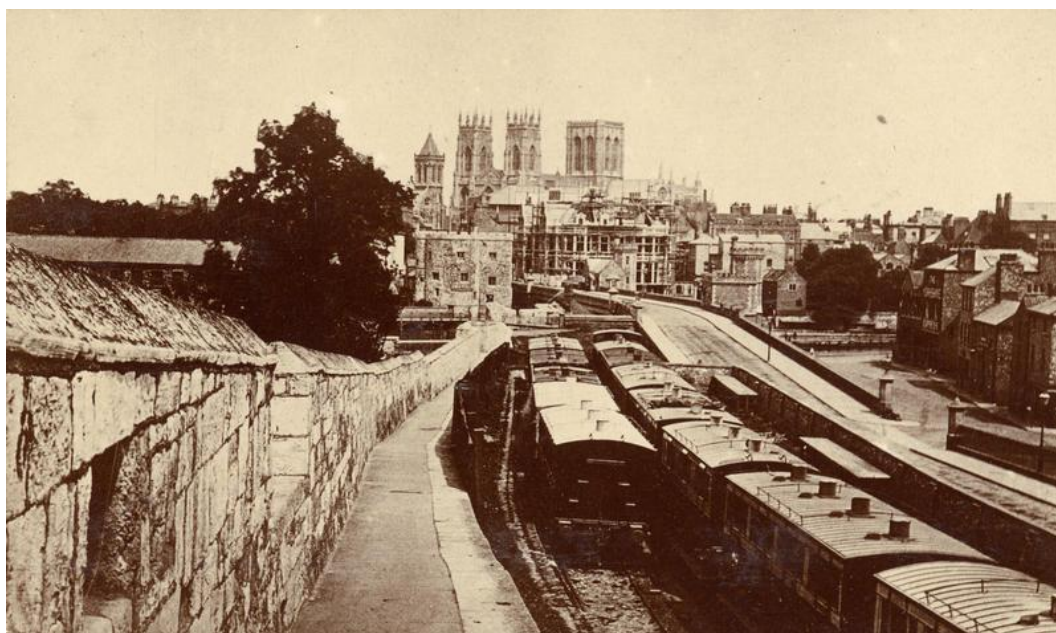


Plate 9. A view of the carriage sidings for the York and North Midland Line which were originally the York and North Midlands coal depot sidings.

(https://cyc.sdp.sirsidynix.net.uk/client/en_GB/search/asset/1012243.
Accessed from Imagine York website, 03/02/2017)

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