



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE	Land to the north-west of 41 and 43 Park Avenue, New Earswick, York		
CLIENT NAME	Mr Gary Kelly		
YAT PROJECT #	5974	YAT REPORT #	2017/68
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 6064 5606
PLANNING REFERENCE #	15/01390/FUL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

Introduction

On the 3rd July 2017 a watching brief took place monitoring the excavations for the foundations of a new house on land located to the north-west of 41 and 43 Park Avenue, New Earswick, York (Figure 1).

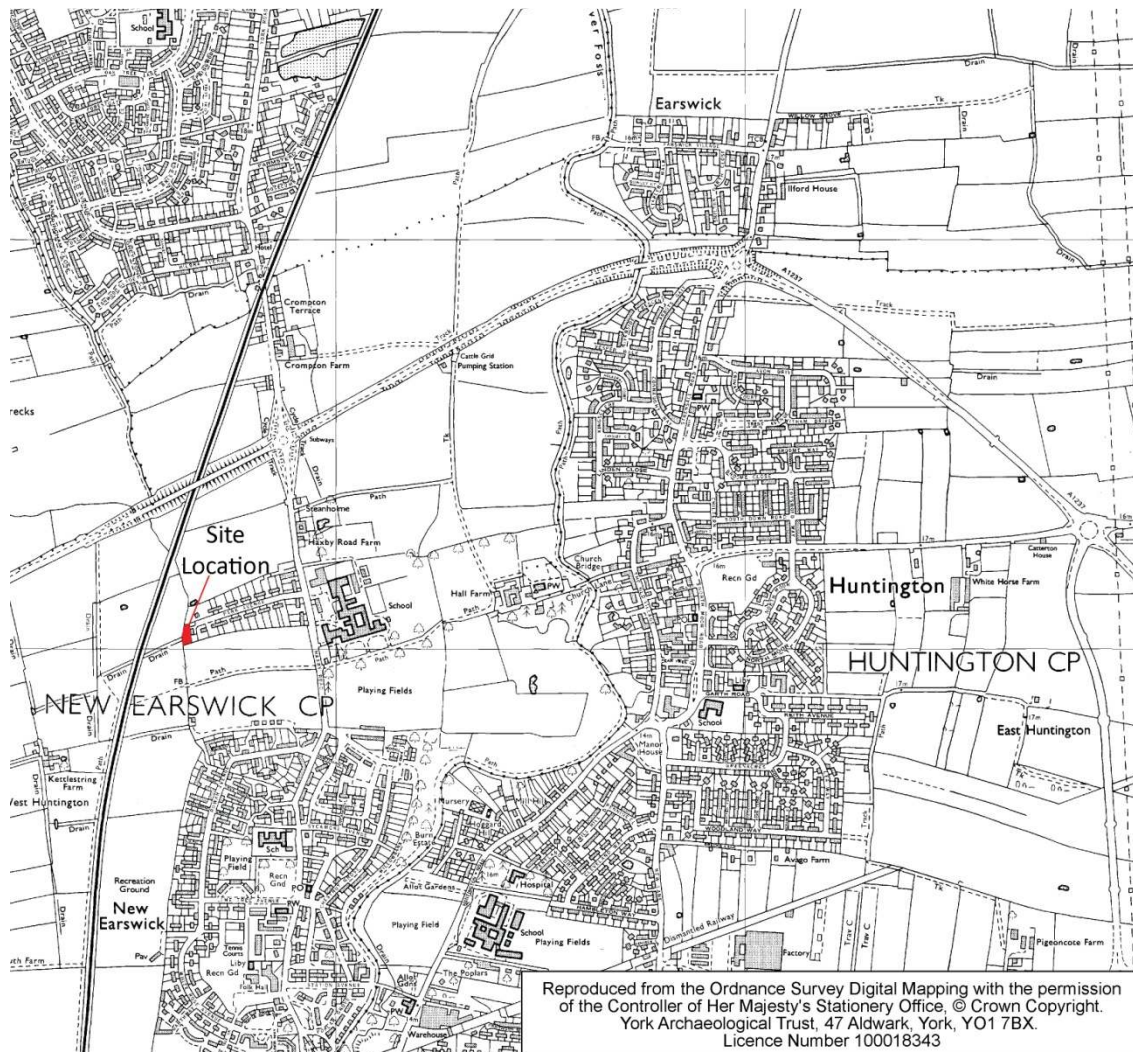


Figure 1: Site Location

Methodology

Preliminary works of stripping the vegetation by machine were undertaken prior to the machine excavation of the strip foundations. A site visit conducted on the 27th of June 2017 was undertaken to ascertain the extent of these works and it was determined that they did not need to be monitored.

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				PAGE	1 of 4

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The foundation strip commenced on Monday the 3rd of the July and these works were monitored continuously from 10am to 2pm. During this time over 50% of the house foundation strip had been completed and no significant archaeological remains were encountered. After consultation with John Oxley, the City Archaeologist, and Claire MacRae, the Heritage Project Officer for the City of York council, the watching brief on the house foundations was concluded.

The deposits encountered were recorded alongside a representative section. Digital photographs were taken at intervals during the watching brief.

Results

No significant archaeological deposits were encountered during these works. The destroyed remnants of 20th century structures which may belong to either a septic tank, filter beds or associated works were encountered in one part of the strip foundation. No residual material was observed in the topsoil across the development area that predated the 19th century (the only 19th century material being fragments of field drains).



Plate 1: Example section, viewed from the east, of the deposit sequence (modern sewer pipe visible to the left)

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				PAGE	2 of 4

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The topsoil (C1000) was a friable, brownish grey sandy silt which contained frequent roots of varying size. This topsoil abruptly gave way to a natural orangish brown sandy clay (C1001) at a depth which varied between 200mm and 400mm below ground level. The strip foundations were being excavated to a maximum depth of c.1.6m below ground level so variation and stratification within the natural was observed. The orangish brown clay overlay a paler yellowish brown clay which was mottled with grey silty clay (C1002). This in turn overlay a much sandier pale orangish brown clay (C1003). This sequence was encountered in much of the excavation area (Plate 1) but localised variations were also observed.

In addition to these deposits a modern sewer service pipe was encountered (Plate 1). This was exposed in the south east corner of the house foundation and in two other wall foundations. It ran heading west-north-west to a manhole outside the house footprint. There was also a higher concentration of frogged brick rubble within the topsoil towards the northern end of the monitored machine strip (Figure 2).

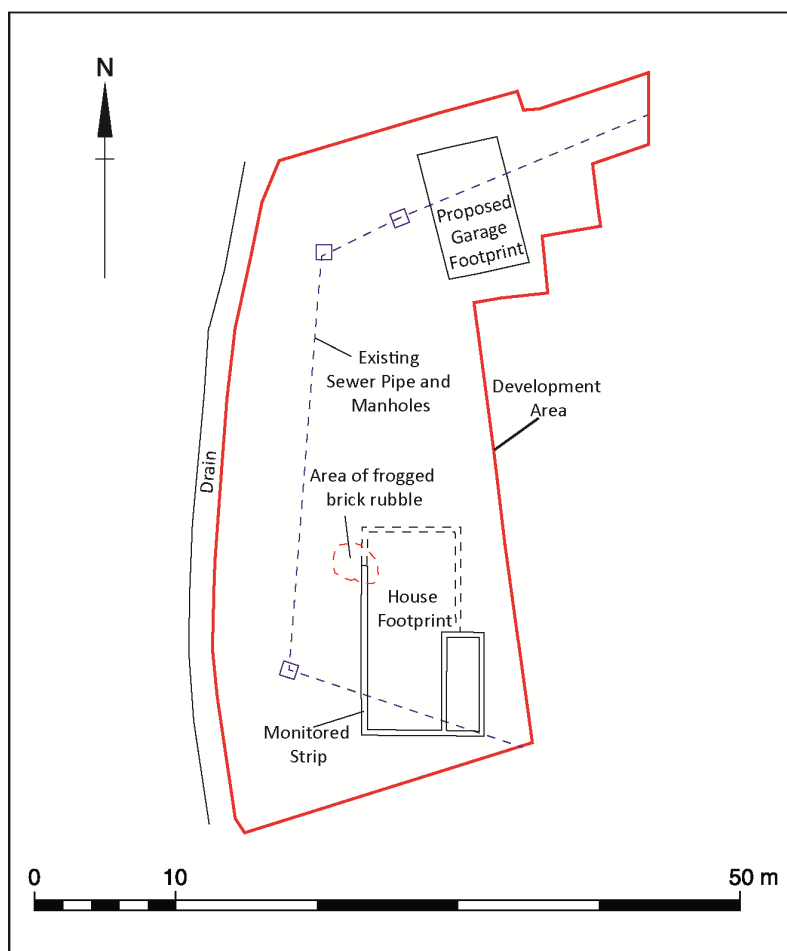


Figure 2: Site Plan (illustrated from base plan provided by client)

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				PAGE	3 of 4

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Discussion

The abrupt interface between the topsoil and the natural clay is indicative of previous activity on the site. This could have been caused by ploughing (the local presence of medieval ridge and furrow makes this plausible) but seems more likely to be the result of a sequence of development, expansion and abandonment all within the 20th century.

The evidence for this 20th century activity includes residual finds material encountered during the watching brief and the OS maps. The first evidence for development in this area on the OS maps dates to 1930 and indicates that Park Lane existed as an access track for a septic tank (probably for a row of houses fronting on to Haxby Road). Between 1936 and 1938 the track was established as Park Avenue and had buildings built along its north and south sides. At this point the septic tank has an associated filter bed. This arrangement appears to exist until 1959-1960 when the septic tank is replaced by a "works" (probably still for sewage) which occupies most of the development area. The row of garages adjacent to the development site has appeared on this map. The "works" has disappeared on the 1967-1968 OS map and the development area has an trees drawn within its northern half. Nothing significantly changes on the OS mapping from this point onwards which indicates that the development area has existed as overgrown scrubland for approximately 50 years.

Conclusions and recommendation

It is likely that further evidence for these 20th century developments will be encountered during the ground works. The septic tank, filter beds and "works" are all of negligible archaeological significance. No evidence for any other archaeological activity, with the exception of 19th century field drain fragments, was encountered.

No further archaeological works are recommended on this site.

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