



**YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**



## **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT 23 THE GREEN, ACOMB**

By George Loffman

*EVALUATION REPORT*

Report Number 2017/92    October 2017



# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



York Archaeological Trust undertakes a wide range of urban and rural archaeological consultancies, surveys, evaluations, assessments and excavations for commercial, academic and charitable clients. We manage projects, provide professional advice and fieldwork to ensure a high quality, cost effective archaeological and heritage service. Our staff have a considerable depth and variety of professional experience and an international reputation for research, development and maximising the public, educational and commercial benefits of archaeology. Based in York, Sheffield, Nottingham and Glasgow the Trust's services are available throughout Britain and beyond.

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### Abbreviations

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by York Archaeological Trust at 23 The Green, Acomb on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 2017. The works involved a trial trench and the monitoring of two engineering test pits. During the courses of the excavation no significant archaeological remains were uncovered. Natural sands were encountered at a shallow depth and following inspection of the bank at the eastern boundary of the site it appears that the land has been previously terraced.

## KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	23 The Green, Acomb
YAT Project No.	6003
Document Number	2017/92
Type of Project	Evaluation
Client	Mass Architecture
Planning Application No.	16/01306/FUL
NGR	SE 5716 5139
Museum Accession No.	PENDING
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## 1 INTRODUCTION

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 York Archaeological Trust carried out an evaluation at 23 The Green, Acomb. This work resulted from a planning condition imposed by City of York Council (CYC) for the development of a dwelling on the garden area to the east of no 23 The Green. A single trench was excavated within the footprint of the proposed dwelling to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains and their character. In addition observations were made on two engineering test pits, one to investigate foundations of no 23, and one to ascertain the depth of the concrete eastern boundary wall of the property.

During the course of the investigation no significant archaeological remains were encountered. Natural sand was encountered at a shallow depth below the topsoil. Inspection of the bank against the eastern boundary of the site showed a sequence of topsoil, subsoil and natural. The area of the proposed site has been terraced removing much of the deposits above. The only activity indicated by the evaluation were modern pits and a 19<sup>th</sup> Century brick structure, possibly a manhole or inspection chamber.

No significant archaeological remains were uncovered during the course of the investigations.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

A single trench was excavated by hand measuring 6m x 1m within the footprint of the proposed dwelling. Excavation proceeded until the first archaeological remains or natural deposits were encountered whichever occurred first. The engineering test pits were hand dug by a contractor and measured approximately 0.9m x 0.5m. The location of these interventions was located by measuring off structures visible on the site survey supplied by the client.

A 1:50 plan of the trench showing the location of features and levels in AOD was produced. A 1.0m representative section and a 1.0m section of the bank on the eastern boundary of the site were drawn. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

Contexts were recorded on pro forma cards using the standard YAT recording system.

Digital record photographs were taken with an appropriate scale.

## 3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed site is located on an area of open ground to east of no 23 the Green, Acomb. The site is bounded by The Green carriageway to the south and residential properties and gardens to the north, west and east.

The underlying geology is sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, a sedimentary bedrock formed 236 to 272 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian periods. This is overlain by sand and gravel formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary period under ice age conditions (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> – accessed 18/10/17).

The topography of the site varies considerably as a result of extensive terracing of the area. The area of the proposed dwellings is located on a flat terrace area bounded by a bank to the east that is approximately 1.5m high. To the north west of this area is a bank that drops

significantly to an area of hard stranding. The area of the proposed dwellings was covered by low lying shrubs and grass.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

A desk based assessment (OSA 2011) previously produced for Land at 42a The Green has suggested that there is the possibility for medieval and post medieval features within the area. These are likely to be in the form of property boundaries, pits and ditches.

## **5 RESULTS**

### **5.1 Trial trench**

The earliest deposit encountered was natural (1003), a friable, mid orange/brown, slightly silty sand. This was found at 25.27m AOD at the eastern end of the trench and sloping to 24.56m AOD at the western end of the trench (Plate 1).

Above this deposit was a small brick structure (1002) in the north western corner of the trench (Plate 4). This measured 1.2m in length and 0.23m in width. It was constructed of red half bricks measuring 115mm x 110mm x 80mm and bonded with a pale grey concrete mortar. A broken stone slab was lain on top, possibly disturbed from its original position. This has been interpreted as a likely 19<sup>th</sup> Century manhole or inspection chamber.

Visibly cut into the natural sand (1003) were three modern intrusive features. These were not recorded as they contained modern material and were clearly fairly recent interventions. They appear to have been the result of refuse disposal.

Sealing these deposits was topsoil (1000) that consisted of a friable, greyish brown, silty sand. This was 0.06m thick at the eastern end of the trench and 0.59m thick at the western end. At its thinnest the topsoil was merely vegetation growth with very little soil on top of the natural sand. This difference in topsoil depth may have been a deliberate effort to level the ground against the natural slope to the west. This contained finds of a variety of post medieval pottery, glass bottles and clay pipes.

### **5.2 Bank deposits at western boundary of site**

A section of the bank on the western boundary of the site was cleaned and recorded (Plate 3). This was in order to ascertain the sequence of deposits present on the hillside that had possibly been removed from the site by landscaping.

The earliest deposit was natural sand (1003) at a height of 26.02 AOD. Above this was a subsoil deposit (1001) of friable, greyish brown, silty sand with moderate CBM fragments and occasional charcoal flecks. The top of this deposit was located at a height of 26.45 AOD.

This was sealed by a layer of topsoil and vegetation the top of which was at 26.63m AOD.

### **5.3 Engineering test pits**

Test pit one was located against the wall of no 23 to examine the foundations of the building (Plate 5). This was excavated to a depth of 0.63m. The deposits visible were 0.37m thickness of topsoil on top of natural sand.

Test pit two was located up against the concrete boundary wall on the eastern boundary bank of the site (Plate 6). This was excavated to a depth of 0.50m. Only topsoil and vegetation was visible within this test pit.

## 6 DISCUSSION

The results of the evaluation suggest that the area of the proposed dwelling have been landscaped significantly. This has probably removed the layer of subsoil (1001) visible in a section of the bank on the eastern boundary of the site. The only activity shown during the evaluation was a 19<sup>th</sup> Century manhole or inspection chamber and modern pits possibly for dumping of refuse.

No significant archaeological remains were uncovered during the course of the evaluation.

## LIST OF SOURCES

British Geological Survey (BGS) <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

## REFERENCES

OSA. 2011. Land at 42a The Green, Acomb, York. A Desk Based Assessment Report. Report No OSA11DT02

## APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Context sheets	4
Levels register	1
Drawing register	1
Original drawings	3
Digital photographs	13
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	1

**Table 1 Index to archive**



## APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST

Trench	Context no.	Description
TR1	1000	Topsoil
TR1	1001	Subsoil
TR1	1002	Brick structure. Possibly manhole or inspection chamber
TR1	1003	Natural

**Table 2 Context list**

## APPENDIX 3 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

### 23 THE GREEN, ACOMB ARCHEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION: EVALUATION

#### CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Site Description
- 3 Summary Archaeological Description and Summary of Previous work
- 4 The Deposit Model
- 5 Evaluation Programme
- 6 Reinstatement
- 7 Health and Safety
- 8 Public Engagement
- 9 Summary

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This document sets out the details of the archaeological evaluation that will be required on this site. Planning consent has been granted for the erection of a single dwelling on the land adjacent to 23 The Green. There is good reason to believe that there are non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest preserved on this site. The information this evaluation will provide is necessary to allow a reasoned decision to be made on the impact this scheme will have on the significance of these assets.
- 1.2 The results of this archaeological evaluation will be used to determine the nature of any mitigation measures that might be necessary and the scale of archaeological work that it might include.
- 1.3 The archaeological policy of the planning authority is to seek to preserve at least 95% of archaeological deposits underneath a new development. City of York Council will advise an applicant on how this preservation target can be achieved.
- 1.4 Where planning, listed building or scheduled monument consent is required for development, a final report on the results of this evaluation will be required as part of the information submitted to validate an application. No application will be determined until this information has been provided and mitigation measures agreed. This follows the archaeology policy adopted by City of York Council and the contained in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).
- 1.5 Where this document is used for securing competitive estimates, it is expected that appropriate professional procedures will be followed. In this respect, the attention of all parties is drawn to the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct and Code of Practice for those involved in Competitive Tendering.

## **2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION**

- 2.1 The site is an open space adjacent to 23 The Green, Acomb located at SE 5716 5139.

## **3.0 SUMMARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION AND SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS WORK**

- 3.1 This site lies within the Acomb Area of Archaeological in an area where archaeological features and deposits of late prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval date have been observed.
- 3.2 A DBA previously produced for The Green area suggests that the medieval and post-medieval archaeological features are likely to comprise property boundaries, probably in the form of ditches, and pits. The site also has

potential to contain Roman and earlier remains. The [report](#) needs to be read by the archaeologist commissioned to carry out this work.

- 3.3 The closest piece of intrusive work took place at 29 The Green, set back from the frontage, in 2009 (E YO6179). No archaeological features were noted and natural sand was revealed at 0.3m below modern ground level.
- 3.4 Archaeological remains on site are not anticipated to be of such significance as to prevent development from taking place.
- 3.5 It is possible that groundworks associated with this proposal may reveal or disturb archaeological features. Prior to development taking place a rapid machine cut archaeological evaluation trench on the proposed dwelling site should be excavated to establish the presence or absence of any archaeological remains and the nature of their character. This trench will inform whether any further monitoring work will be necessary.

#### **4.0 THE DEPOSIT MODEL**

- 4.1 Not available at present.

#### **5.0 THE EVALUATION PROGRAMME**

- 5.1 The following details set out the approach that a field evaluation should adopt. The site allows an opportunity to address the following questions:

- 5.2 The following details need to be established:

- 5.2.1 are there anoxically preserved deposits, wet deposits, and dry deposits preserved across the site within the area proposed for level reduction?
- 5.2.3 can a deposit prediction for the site as a whole, indicating the nature and preservation of prehistoric, Roman, Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian, medieval and post-medieval strata be made?

- 5.3 The on-site evaluation should consist of the following approach (this may be subject to alteration following detailed discussion with the client and the archaeological contractor):

- 5.3.1 the excavation of one trench is required on the site of the proposed dwelling. Exact size of trench to be discussed between archaeologist and City of York Council. Plans of the proposals will need to be provided to the archaeologist on site by the client.

- 5.4 The following methodologies must be used:

- 5.4.1 All operations should limit destruction to that which is necessary to implement this specification. Where the examination of trenches is specified:
- 5.4.2 All overburden will be removed by mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision, down to either the top of undisturbed natural sub-soil or the top of archaeological deposits whichever is the higher. Areas of intensive modern

disturbance will be given a low priority in excavation. Where practicable, the fills of these features will be removed by mechanical excavator.

- 5.4.3 all appropriate records must be made and kept;
- 5.4.4 all archaeological contexts must be sampled in accordance with a sampling strategy which must be agreed in advance with the Science Advisor, Historic England, 37 Tanner Row York and approved in writing by York City Council. All sampling must be in accordance with the recommendations contained in English Heritage 2011, [Environmental Archaeology](#). In addition, the advice of the Regional Science Advisor must be sought with regard to all other aspects of archaeological science, including dating, that might arise on this site. His recommendations must be followed and confirmation of the adoption of his recommendations supplied in writing to *Assistant Director (City Development and Sustainability), City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise York YO1 6GA*
- 5.4.5 all records must be indexed, ordered, quantified, and checked for consistency;
- 5.4.6 all artefacts and ecofacts recovered and retained from the evaluation must be packed and stored in the appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that minimal deterioration takes place and that all their associated records are complete;
- 5.4.7 in addition to this basic work to complete the records to Level 2, the environmental samples must be processed and assessed;
- 5.4.8 the rest of the material archive must be assessed for its potential to contribute to artefactual research;
- 5.4.9 and the stratigraphic sequence assessed.
- 5.4.10 Trenches must avoid known services.

Trenches must stay a safe distance away from pylons and overhead power lines.

The commissioning client will advise of any ecological or biodiversity issues which need to be taken into consideration.

The commissioning client will advise of any protected trees which must be avoided by the evaluation. Damage to trees covered by a Tree Protection Order carries a substantial fine.

Trenches must avoid any **Japanese Knotweed** (it is the commissioning client's responsibility to advise their archaeologist if Japanese Knotweed is present on the site).

- 5.5 The details and processes outlined in 5.1—5.4 will produce the following output as a concise report:
  - 5.5.1 plan of site showing position of trenches;

- 5.5.2 portfolio of drawn sections, trench plans, and, where appropriate, drawings of artefacts; a matrix of all contexts
- 5.5.3 an interpretation of the structural sequence;
- 5.5.4 an interpretation of the archaeological and research potential of the remainder of the site
- 5.5.5 The City of York Council HER(CYCHER) supports the *Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large -scale developer funded fieldwork. **The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at. City of York Council will only accept reports as digital files. The report must be submitted as a PDF file(s).** If in doubt about formats please contact John Oxley on 01904 551346 or e-mail to [john.oxley@york.gov.uk](mailto:john.oxley@york.gov.uk).
- 5.5.6 The production of Site Archives and Finds Analysis will be undertaken according to Historic England's guidance - Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) 2006. The long term care of the archive must be provided for. All the original material and paper archive must be prepared for deposition with an approved archaeological depository such as the Yorkshire Museum. These Institutions will normally make a charge to cover the long-term curation of the archaeological archive. The requirements of the receiving Institution must be identified at the time of producing an estimate for this scheme of investigation. It is assumed that normally all archives relating to archaeological work in the City of York area will be deposited with the Yorkshire Museum. A copy of the report on this evaluation must be deposited with the City of York Historic Environment Record (CYCHER). **CYCHER will only accept reports in pdf format.** If in doubt about format please contact John Oxley on 01904 551346 or e -mail to [john.oxley@york.gov.uk](mailto:john.oxley@york.gov.uk). Once a report has become a public document by forming part of a planning application, City of York Council will place the information on its website. Please ensure that you and your client agree to this procedure in writing as part of the process of submitting the report to the CYCHER.
- 5.6 A synopsis of the narrative report, material archive and research potential of the site must be prepared and submitted with the report so that this can be published in an annual summary of archaeological work in the City of York.
- 5.7 The Contractor will be required to demonstrate by providing CV's that the staff appointed to direct, supervise, and work on this project have relevant experience of working both on complex urban sites and the complex archives which they produce.
- 5.8 All work must be done using the Yorkshire Museum accession and numbering systems.
- 5.9 The Contractor must use a computer-based recording and retrieval system and report publishing system. The recording system must be based on single context recording and planning. The publishing system should be able

to produce text and illustrations in the formats detailed in para 5.5.5 above. The Contractor must have the written approval of City of York Council for the recording system that it wishes to use on this site.

- 5.10 The Contractor must submit a full project design and/or a schedule of works which it develops from this scheme of investigation to the City of York for written approval prior to work commencing on-site.
- 5.11 The Contractor must give at least seven days notice in writing of the start of works on site to *Assistant Director (City Development and Sustainability), City of York Council, West Offices, Station Rise York YO1 6GA*
- 5.12 The Contractor will be subject to regular monitoring visits by the City of York. Reasonable access must be given at all times to the Principal Archaeologist, City of York Council or his agent to the site and to premises used for the purposes of post-excavation work to allow this monitoring to proceed. This will ensure that the scheme of investigation is being followed and that high professional standards are being maintained. It can be anticipated that the City of York Council will want to inspect a 10% sample of all archaeological records generated by the project. Reasonable access must also be given at all times to the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor or his agent to the site and to premises used for the purposes of post-excavation work to allow him to monitor the archaeological science elements of this scheme of investigation.

## **6.0 REINSTATEMENT**

- 6.1 Ground reinstatement standards are not specified in this document.
- 6.2 Contractors must ensure that the question of backfilling and surface reinstatement is discussed with the client/landowner prior to any works commencing on-site.

## **7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 7.1 Health and Safety regulations and requirements cannot be ignored no matter how imperative the need to record archaeological information; hence Health and Safety will take priority over archaeological matters. All archaeologists undertaking fieldwork must do so under a defined Health and Safety Policy. Archaeologists undertaking fieldwork must observe safe working practices; the Health and Safety arrangements must be agreed and understood by all relevant parties before work commences. Risk assessments must be carried out and documented in accordance with Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992. The Contractor should determine whether this project is covered by Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994, and ensure that all requirements under the regulations are met.

## **8.0 PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

- 8.1.1 The general public has a strong interest in archaeological issues. Excavations, both large and small, often attract a great deal of public interest. They also represent an opportunity for people to experience at first hand the excitement of archaeological work. This is recognised in the NPPF and by the City of York Council in its emerging policy framework.
- 8.1.2 The archaeological contractor should, therefore, discuss with the Client the level and range of approaches which can be used to present archaeology to the general public. An appropriate level of public engagement should be defined and a sum of money set aside to pay for this element of the project

## 9.0 SUMMARY

- 9.1 This document sets out the background to and outlines a programme for an archaeological evaluation on this site. There is good reason to believe that there may be heritage assets of archaeological interest preserved on this site. The archaeological evaluation will provide information that will allow the City of York Council to put in place appropriate mitigation measures.

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## PLATES



Plate 1 Trench 1 facing east. 0.5m scale



**Plate 2 Representative section facing south. 0.2m scale**



**Plate 3 Section through eastern bank. 1.0m scale**



**Plate 4 Brick structure 1002 facing north east. scale 0.5m**



**Plate 5 Engineering test pit 1 facing sw. scale 0.5m**



**Plate 6 Engineering test pit 2 facing east. scale 0.5m**

FIGURES

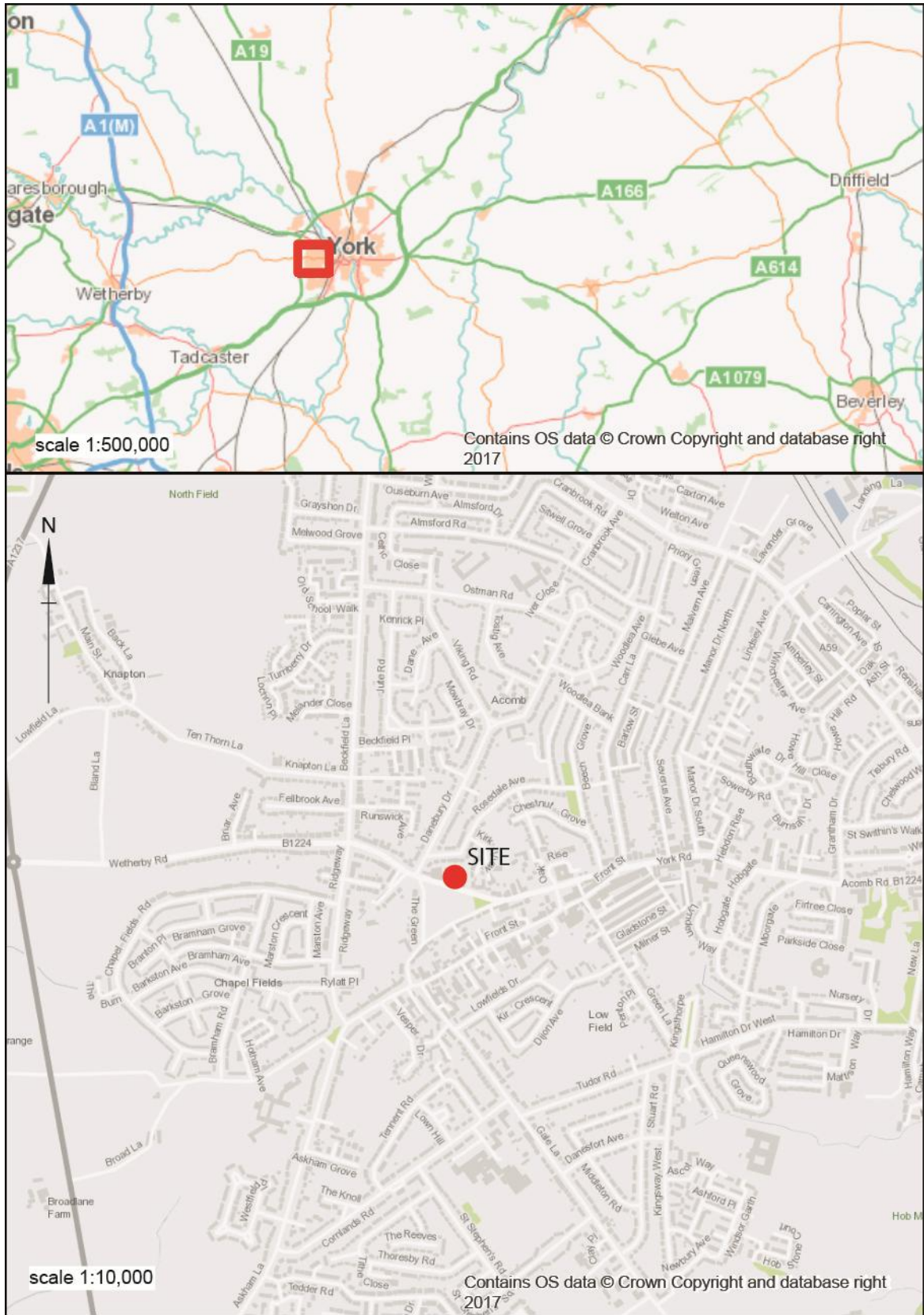


Figure 1 Site location

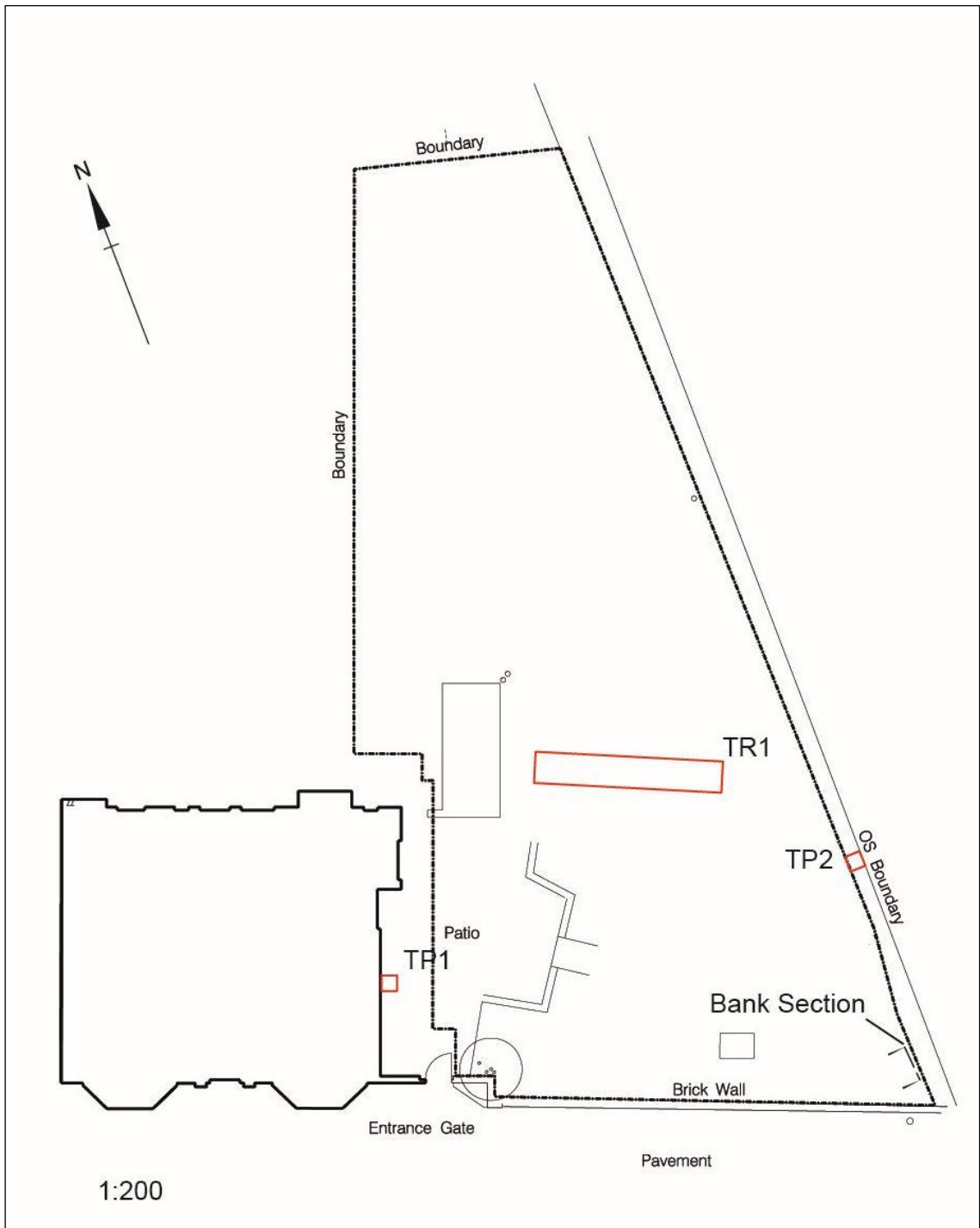


Figure 2 Works location