



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT 43 TANNER ROW SEWER REPAIR

By Toby Kendall

WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Report Number 2017/116 January 2018

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Abbreviations

AAI - Area of Archaeological Importance

BGL - Below Ground Level

BGS - British Geological Survey

CBM - Ceramic Building Material

OD - Ordnance Datum

YAT - York Archaeological Trust

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Between the 4th and 15th December 2017 York Archaeological Trust conducted an archaeological watching brief during the sewer repair works at 43 Tanner Row, York (NGR SE 59885 51702).

The work was undertaken for Amey Utilities & Yorkshire Water to fulfil the requirements of an Area of Archaeological Importance Operations Notice. In turn this was part of the Operations Notice System which is co-ordinated by City of York Council (Operations Notice no.17034). The work was not following a specific Written Scheme of Investigation, but followed the standard practices for a watching brief as conducted by York Archaeological Trust.

The works involved the recording of archaeological remains exposed during excavations to locate a failure within the live sewer system.

Archaeology was revealed in the form of a possible footing and a separate area of dumped burnt material, both of which were probably Roman. On top of these features a significant mortar and rubble deposit acted as make up for a road surface c.900mm below the current road level. The finds from this make up deposits suggested it was Roman in date. If this is the case there are significant archaeological deposits significantly closer to the extant ground levels on Tanner Row than seen in works to both the northeast and southwest. This complicates further a deposit model from the Roman period which was already difficult to predict.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	43 Tanner Row, York
YAT Project No.	6018
Document Number	2017/116
Type of Project	AAI Operations Notice - Watching Brief
Client	Amey Utilities & Yorkshire Water
Planning Application No.	Operations Notice no.17034
NGR	SE 59885 51702
Museum Accession No.	tbc
OASIS Identifier	yorkarch1-307888

REPORT INFORMATION

Version	Produced by		Edited by		Approved by	
	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	TK	30/01/18	IDM	01/02/18	IDM	01/02/18

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1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 4th and 15th December 2017 YAT conducted an archaeological recording exercise in the form of a watching brief at 43 Tanner Row, York (SE 59885 51702) (Figure 1 Site Location).

The work was undertaken for Amey Utilities & Yorkshire Water to fulfil the requirements of an Area of Archaeological Importance Operations Notice. In turn this was part of the Operations Notice System which is co-ordinated by City of York Council (Operations Notice no.17034).

Observations were made during the opening up, machine excavation and repair of a trench aligned northeast-southwest. The trench initially measure 2m wide and 2.7m long but was extended to the southwest by a further 2.7m, to isolate and repair the full extent of the sewer collapse.

2 METHODOLOGY

A hole opened up within the road surface on Tanner Row at the start of December 2017. Investigation by the Amey Utilities indicated that the sewer top had deflected in this area. Further investigation indicated the that sewer had collapsed and blocked c.6m to the southwest of this hole, with the resulting erosion from the collapse contributing to the sewer deflection and creation of the hole.

To repair the collapse and prevent further damage urgent works were required to excavate c.3.3m BGL, isolate the blocked/collapsed area, and repair the brick sewer.

The first phase of the excavation procedure continued as follows;

- Cut the current road surface as required (2.7m long and 2m wide) using a 'Stihl' saw.
- Break up and remove the tarmac using a hydraulic breaker attached to the excavator. During this process a significant void was encountered, indicating extensive erosion of deposits had taken place (Plate 1).
- Machine excavate (5 tonne, 360°, rubber tracked excavator) material to a depth of c.1.2m BGL. In this case the material was virtually all disturbed by the collapse of the void.
- Insert steel shoring sheets and drive them down to a suitable depth.
- Brace the shoring in place with hydraulic manhole rams.
- Machine excavate down further so that a second set of hydraulic rams could be inserted. In this case there was still significant disturbance of deposits from the collapsed section.
- At c.2.2m BGL insert lower rams.
- Continue excavating until sewer isolated at c.3.3m BGL

This process was significantly hampered by the collapse as indicated above. The collapse was not just isolated to the uppermost deposits as it expanded outwards as excavation continued (Plate 2). In addition further complications were caused by the presence of both live and dead services.

Finally the biggest impact upon this stage of the excavations was linked with the material from the blocked sewer system upstream. Contaminated liquids frequently inundated the

excavation and required constant pumping so the repair team could work (Plates 3 & 4). When the sewer was finally encountered the more solid elements of what had blocked the system then inundated the trench. It was only when the sewer blockage was removed, and the flow running as it should, that it was actually possible for the team to work unhindered.

This obviously meant there was very little opportunity for archaeological recording to take place for this stage of the works. Most of it was recorded by photography, with measurements where possible.

It must be noted that in this case, the first phase of excavation, most of the trench had been directly impacted by the collapse, with other areas slumping into it once exposed.

Finds were noted, but not retrieved, because of the contamination from human faecal material. Discussions with the repair team on site, coupled with the black 'anaerobic' type deposits, indicated the leak to the sewer system had been underway for a significant period of time. Plate 5 indicates the typical material machine excavated from the contaminated section as well as the modern black silt deposits.

The second phase of excavations (2.7m long and 2m wide) went significantly more smoothly and followed the same sequence as outlined above. In this case there was;

- No inundation from the sewer system, so no pumping requirement
- Significantly less in the way of collapse, with loose materials being restricted to the northeast side of the trench, with the deeper element of the excavations being reduced accordingly
- Less, visible, contamination. Finds were only retrieved from where it was possible there had been no liquid contamination.
- Access to the trench for archaeological recording was possible before the first shoring sheets were inserted.

The recording methodology followed the standard archaeological watching brief methodology as employed by YAT. As mentioned above virtually all recording was completed from outside of the trench because of restrictions to access linked with health and safety or contamination of materials due to sewerage.

A combination of notes, sketch plans/sections and photographs were used to record the deposit sequence on site.

Monitoring ceased when sterile, natural, deposits were encountered.

Individual context numbers were assigned during the post excavation process.

The site archive is currently stored by YAT under Project Number 6018.

The excavated trenches have been backfilled and reinstated by Amey Utilities.

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The trench was located in the main highway of Tanner Row, to the front of no.43. The initial collapse of the highway actually occurred 6m further down the road, to the northeast, however this secondary collapse was caused by the breach in the sewer system repaired during these works.

Bedrock in this area is sandstone and this is overlain by superficial clay, sand and gravel moraine deposits (York Moraine Member) (BGS <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/> accessed 05/12/17). A further significant depth of archaeological deposits overlay the undisturbed natural in this area.

Because of its position on the moraine Tanner Row is on a relatively steep slope for the topography of York, in this case sloping from c.19m to c.11m OD. The repair trench is located at c.15.5m OD.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tanner Row and its immediate environs have been studied and excavated many times in the past two centuries. This has produced a relatively comprehensive historical sequence as well as an expansive catalogue of archaeological investigations.

Roman

Sited within the Roman civil settlement, latterly more formally titled *colonia*, the study area is surrounded by archaeology of this period. However, the lack of opportunity to complete large scale open area excavation of this material means that it is not possible to give a detailed description of either the street layout or catalogue of significant public buildings which would have existed.

Settlement will have been initially focussed upon the Roman road leading southwest from the fortress, across the River Ouse, out towards Tadcaster (*Calcaria*). Outside of the limits of Roman occupation a series of significant cemeteries developed, notably under the current railway station and along the Mount.

Construction work linked with excavation for a cellar in the late 18th century, along with the old railway station in the 19th century unearthed significant buildings within this part of the *colonia*. This continued with further construction nearby in the first half of the 20th century (RCHMY 1962).

Anglian & Anglo-Scandinavian

As with much of the area within the former *colonia* there is relatively little evidence for archaeology of this period in the immediate vicinity of the area under investigation. The focus of occupation was likely to be concentrated towards the banks of Ouse and/or where churches with pre-conquest origins have been identified (e.g. Bishophill). Micklegate, to the southeast will have acted as a major routeway through the former *colonia* by the Anglo-Scandinavian period.

Medieval

In the early 13th century the area of land to the northwest of the trench was granted by Henry III and a Dominican Friary was established. This was expanded in the first half of the century and the precinct eventually took up a considerable part of the former *colonia* in this area.

Further northeast medieval buildings may have flanked Tanner Row, particularly as the industry after which it was named developed during this period.

Post-medieval

The dissolution led to the mid 16th century sale and subsequent, subtle, change of use across the area.

The earliest mapping of 1610 (Speed 1610) indicates that there is a road, with buildings on either side, on the same line as Tanner Row/Toft Green. This layout is repeated later on in the 17th century (Richards 1685), though by the end of the century (Horsley 1697) the area to the northwest of the site is suggested as open and illustrated to be the 'Friars gardening'.

Mapping in 18th century continues a similar layout with open gardens or nurseries. The only clear alteration or addition to this open space was the construction of the Lady Hewleys' Hospital building by the middle of the century. This was built to the north of the junction of Tanner Row and Barker Lane.

At the start of the 19th century maps indicate further building on the northwest side of Tanner Row (Baines 1822).

At the very end of the post-medieval period significant upheaval took place during the construction of the old railways station in 1841 (now the City of York Council - West Offices). This impinged upon lots of very significant archaeology, but also revealed a lot of what we now know about the history of this part of the city.

Modern

Mapping, particularly the Ordnance Survey first edition of 1852, indicates very little in the way of changes in the layout of the area of investigation in the last 150 years.

Archaeological works

Due to the sheer volume of archaeological works in the vicinity of the sewer works only those which have a direct link to these excavations are discussed;

- YAT (1997/7) 47-55 Tanner Row Evaluation - Trenches and boreholes to the south and southwest of the site. These indicated that Roman remains were possibly 1m BGL.
- YAT (2009/5) Utility Trench Tanner Row Watching Brief - A machine cut trench on the southeast side of the road investigated during these works. Excavations were only c.600mm deep and found no specific archaeological features.
- On Site Archaeology (OSA09EV05) West Offices, Station Rise, York. Report on an Archaeological Evaluation - Trenches adjacent to Tanner Row revealed an extensive Roman surface.
- YAT (2011/78) Sewer Repair, Tanner Row - Toft Green Watching Brief - A 3m deep hole for sewer repair isolated a Roman wall at depth. This was southwest of the site, southwest of the Barker Lane Junction.
- On Site Archaeology (OSA11EX02) West Offices, Station Rise, York. Report on an Archaeological Investigation - A watching brief to the northeast of the site revealed a Roman wall, or wall foundation, at 1.8m BGL.
- YAT (2012/19) Utility Trench, Tanner Row to Toft Green Watching Brief - This watching brief covered an area which was investigated during these works and identified and extensive demolition layer at 900mm BGL.

- Northern Archaeology Associates (14/09) Emergency Sewer Repair Toft Green Archaeological Monitoring - Works to the southwest found Roman archaeology from c.1m BGL. This included walls, surfaces and a mosaic.

5 RESULTS

The following section is separated into the different phases of activity. Although the excavation took place in two distinct stages it created a single trench and thus is described chronologically.

Context numbers are indicated in brackets, e.g. (1000)

5.1 Natural

Undisturbed natural deposits (1013) were encountered at around 2-2.2m BGL (c.13.3m OD). These were made up of orange/brown sandy clays with large amounts of pebbles and small cobbles. The scale of the excavations and other disturbances meant it was not possible to see any natural slope or similar defining features.

Overlaying the undisturbed natural there was a layer up to c.450mm thick of light brown/yellow sandy silt (1007) this contained no finds where investigated, but was truncated by later, clearly archaeological features. This was interpreted as natural subsoil, but could have been a deliberate terrace feature. Any further investigation should consider the potential for man-made origins of this deposit.

5.2 Roman

The following features were assumed to be Roman in date, primarily due to form but also lack of other dating evidence other than being sealed by a probable Roman road or surface.

Possible footing

At the northern corner of the trench there was a significant concentration of cobbles (1008) (Plate 6). This was at c.1.3m BGL and continued to a depth of c.600mm. The shape in plan was unclear due to collapse and machine excavation but it appear to extend into the trench by up to 700mm. The cobbles were clearly larger than those seen in the undisturbed natural, up to 150mm diameter, and were in a matrix which was more brown than orange.

This feature was interpreted as a possible footing. With a lack of form, orientation and true dimensions further discussion is not possible. It did pre-date the road or surface described below, so indicates more than one phase of activity.

Burnt dumping

Towards the western corner of the trench was a deposit of charcoal and burnt clay/daub (1006) (Plate 7). This was seen at c.1.4m BGL and was c.300mm deep in total. Its shape in plan was not possible to determine due to machine truncation, though it may have been within a shallow pit.

Initially this was thought to have possibly been an oven or similar feature. However, during closer investigation it was clear that there was a layer of charcoal which was overlain by burnt clay/daub fragments. This suggested that there was disposal of materials opposed to in-situ use and collapse. Again this feature pre-dated the road or surface.

Road or surface

Extending across the whole trench, except where truncated or collapsed, was a road or surface (1002) on top of a makeup deposit (1001).

The makeup deposit (1001) was c. 400mm thick and consisted of light brown lime mortar with limestone fragment (including re-used blocks up to 200mm wide, Plate 8), cobbles and a smaller amount of CBM. This 'rubble' layer has been encountered previously (YAT 2012) and interpreted as a demolition layer to the lack of surviving surface. In this case a metallised surface was found.

CBM in the form of Roman tegulae, imbrex and brick was identified. A single medieval brick was also retrieved, but the level of disturbance and lack of other medieval CBM in the form of the more ubiquitous tile suggested this later material was intrusive.

A metallised surface (1002) survived at the southwest end of the trench, initially extending up to 800mm into the excavated area. The surface was c.50mm thick and made up of small cobbles and pebbles compacted into a browner mortar than the makeup below. The surface survived at c.900mm BGL (14.6m OD).

5.3 Medieval

Overlaying the makeup, and road or surface where it survived, was a c.420mm thick soil layer (1005). This was relatively homogenous grey/brown coloured sandy silt which contained small fragments and flecks of mortar, charcoal and CBM. Finds seen in this layer were medieval tile and pottery, but these were not retained as they were easily identified on site and had significant contamination from material which had escaped from the sewer.

This soil deposit may have been active into the post-medieval period, though the original line of Tanner Row may have sealed the archaeology relatively early on.

5.4 Post-medieval

It was not possible to define any specific features of this date. It was not even possible to define the road surface for Tanner Row which must have existed before the modern version described below (1003).

5.5 Modern

The modern archaeology revealed within the trenches was primarily linked with the services and extant road. In this case the sequence was as follows;

A brick 'egg' sewer (1010) which was probably late 19th century in date. It flows down southwest-northeast. The brick sewer was built using a combination of open cuts through the medieval soil, and tunnels. In this case the southwest extent had clearly been tunnelled whilst collapse at the northwest end made it impossible to establish. When the sewer was encountered (c.3.3m BGL) no lamp holes or similar were visible. It was approximately 500mm wide, and the full depth/profile was not revealed during the archaeological works. It was purportedly 'egg' shaped in profile, with the narrow section being at the base to encourage water flow.

Also cut into the medieval soils was a cast iron water/gas pipe (1009), which was late 19th or early 20th century in date. It ran northeast-southwest. The cast iron pipe was encountered at

c.800mm BGL. A single feed pipe to one of the properties to the southeast, possibly 43 Tanner Row, was seen during the works.

Sealing the backfills of the sewer cast iron pipe was a 200mm thick disturbed dark grey deposit (1004) that contained flecks of mortar, limestone, coal and CBM. It was unclear if this was linked with an earlier, modern, road surface or just disturbed as part of the modern road construction.

Cut through the disturbed layer was a British Telecom (BT) ducted wire. It was late 20th century (1011) and ran northwest-southeast. A grey plastic duct contained what was assumed to be a (BT) line. This probably feeds 43 Tanner Row as no overhead lines are visible in the area being investigated.

The trench was topped by 150mm of makeup and 130mm of tarmac for the current road of Tanner Row (1003).

The road had been cut to insert a blue water pipe in 2012 (YAT 2012). Apparently within the same trench as the water pipe was a ducted electrical cable, a single context number was assigned to these features (1012). It is possible that the electrical cable was earlier, but this could not be established during these works.

6 DISCUSSION

The sewer collapse on Tanner Row is part of a legacy related to the aging sewer system in York. In this case it prompted media interest, due to its central location and recent discoveries in similar works to the southwest. This investigation allowed a chance to expand on the works in recent years and gave some new details on the land use and topography, particularly in the Roman period.

Natural deposits were encountered at approximately 13.3m OD. This was almost identical to the depth seen in 2009 (OSA 2009) to the west of the site at 13.37m OD. During investigations in 2012 (NAA 2014), along the line of Tanner Row to the southwest, natural was encountered at between 14.73m - 13.74m OD.

Two possible explanations for the variations in natural exist. Firstly, the terminal moraine which gives rise to the variations slopes both down to the northeast, along the line of Tanner Row, and down to the north of the site, and may account for any variability. Secondly, significant Roman landscaping has impinged upon the natural deposits in this area. In reality it is probably a combination of both of these reasons which gives rise to the variations observed.

Roman landscaping in the way of terracing was not identified during this sequence of repair works. The closest works which had revealed material interpreted as such formed part of the emergency sewer repairs in 2012 (NAA 2014). At the northeast extent of these excavations a c.200mm thick layer of reddish brown clayey deposits was found. This is different from the yellowy brown sandy silts identified overlaying natural during these works.

The earliest structural Roman archaeology was the possible cobble footing identified at c.14.2m OD. During a watching brief on works to the northeast in 2011 (OSA 2013, p24) a substantial masonry wall or footing was recorded at c.13m OD. During the major sewer repair

to the southwest in 2012 (NAA 2014, p20) another significant masonry wall was recorded at 16m OD.

There have been no obvious nearby parallels to the burnt dumping identified in this excavation.

The second phase of archaeology, the Roman surface or road, also has similar examples nearby, however these again were recorded at different levels. The sewer works undertaken in December 2017 revealed an extensive makeup and surface across the whole intervention at c.14.6m OD. To the west a similar significant road or surface was identified in 2009 (OSA 2009). However, it was not the same surface as it had a different, shallower, makeup and was significantly lower at 13.6m OD. In 1997 (YAT 1997) further possible surfaces and possible dumps were identified during evaluations and boreholes to the south and southwest. In this case the surface, or metalling, was not as distinct. It was also significantly higher at c.16m OD.

The Roman archaeological features add significantly to the corpus of information about this part of the *colonia* in York. Unfortunately it does relatively little to clarify the following issues:

- layout of the streets
- location of significant buildings
- topographical form of terracing into the terminal moraine

There is clearly a very complex series of stratigraphic and spatial relationships for the Roman archaeology both beneath and adjacent to Tanner Row. This requires further investigation to be fully unlocked and understood.

The relatively limited remains and lack of any specific features mean that little interpretation is possible of the medieval and later deposits. The soil deposit indicated as medieval may be later, and have been 'active' later than the mid 16th century, but mapping suggests it was sealed by that time.

Any intrusive works in this area from c.500mm BGL will require close archaeological monitoring. If development is to be completed on a larger scale in this vicinity the Roman archaeological sequence needs to be investigated as a priority.

LIST OF SOURCES

1610 Speed Map - York

1685 Richards Map - York

1697 Horsley Map - York

1727 Cossins Map - York

1750 Chassereau Map - York

1772 Jeffrey Map - York

1822 Baines Map of York

1852 Ordnance Survey First Edition York

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YAT, (2011) *Sewer Repair, Tanner Row - Toft Green Watching Brief. (2011/78)*

YAT, (2012) *Utility Trench, Tanner Row to Toft Green Watching Brief. (2012/19)*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the Amey Utilities team, both on and off site. John Oxley (CYC City Archaeologist) also provided invaluable input and guidance regarding previous works during the observations.

APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Context sheets	14
Site record sheets	10
Site note sheets, including sketches	14
Digital photographs	245
Report	1

Table 1 Index to archive

APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST

Context	Date	Description
1000	na	Unstratified/machining
1001	Roman	Road/surface makeup - lime mortar, limestone rubble/blocks & cobbles
1002	Roman	Road/surface - compacted small cobbles & pebbles
1003	20 th C	Road & makeup - tarmac & aggregate
1004	20 th C	Disturbed material - firm sandy silt with inclusions
1005	Medieval	Soils - soft grey brown sandy silts
1006	Roman	Burnt dumping - charcoal and burnt clay/daub
1007	Natural?	Subsoil - soft light brownish yellow sandy silt
1008	Roman	Possible cobble footing - cobbles
1009	19 th C	Water/Gas service - cast iron pipe plus cut & fill
1010	19 th C	Sewer - brick egg sewer, c.450m bore, cut & tunnelled
1011	20 th C	BT line - wire in plastic duct plus cut & fill
1012	21 st C	Electric & water - pipe, cable, duct plus cut & fill
1013	Natural	Natural deposit – red sandy clay with frequent cobbles and pebbles

Table 2 Context list

APPENDIX 3 – CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This overview relates to 12 fragments of ceramic building material (CBM) recovered from the archaeological watching brief at 43 Tanner Row Sewer Repair, York (York Archaeological Trust project code 6018). The CBM ranged in date from Roman to medieval.

METHODOLOGY

The assemblage was retrieved from deposits which may have been contaminated by human faecal material so cleaning and handling was completed to a minimal level.

After washing and cleaning the CBM was visually inspected to establish material, date and any clear makers' marks or similar information.

Full assessment will only be completed if required for further analysis.

DISCUSSION

Roman

The Roman CBM accounted for 11 of the 12 fragment collected. The forms present included tegulae, imbrex and an indeterminate form (termed Roman brick). The material recovered was typical for York as a whole in terms of the sizes and fabrics present.

Medieval

A single fragment of medieval brick of 14-16th century date was recovered.

CONCLUSION

The collection of CBM was typical for York as a whole in terms of the forms, fabrics and dimensions seen. The material was virtually all Roman in date, with a single later brick. The lack of further medieval CBM, in the form of roof tile, would suggest that the later material was possibly an intrusive find within the context.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The collection of CBM has little potential for further research, mainly being of use to provide dating evidence for the context they were retrieved from. No further work is therefore recommended.

None of the material was worthy of museum display.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR RETENTION/DISCARD

For excavations with the City of York, YAT routinely adopts a record and discard policy. In the case of this site the material will be retained if full assessment is required at a later date, or further excavation takes place nearby and a larger assemblage is retrieved.

PLATES



Plate 1 Sewer collapse, facing southwest



Plate 2 Sewer collapse extending lower in deposit sequence with contaminated liquid ingress, facing southwest

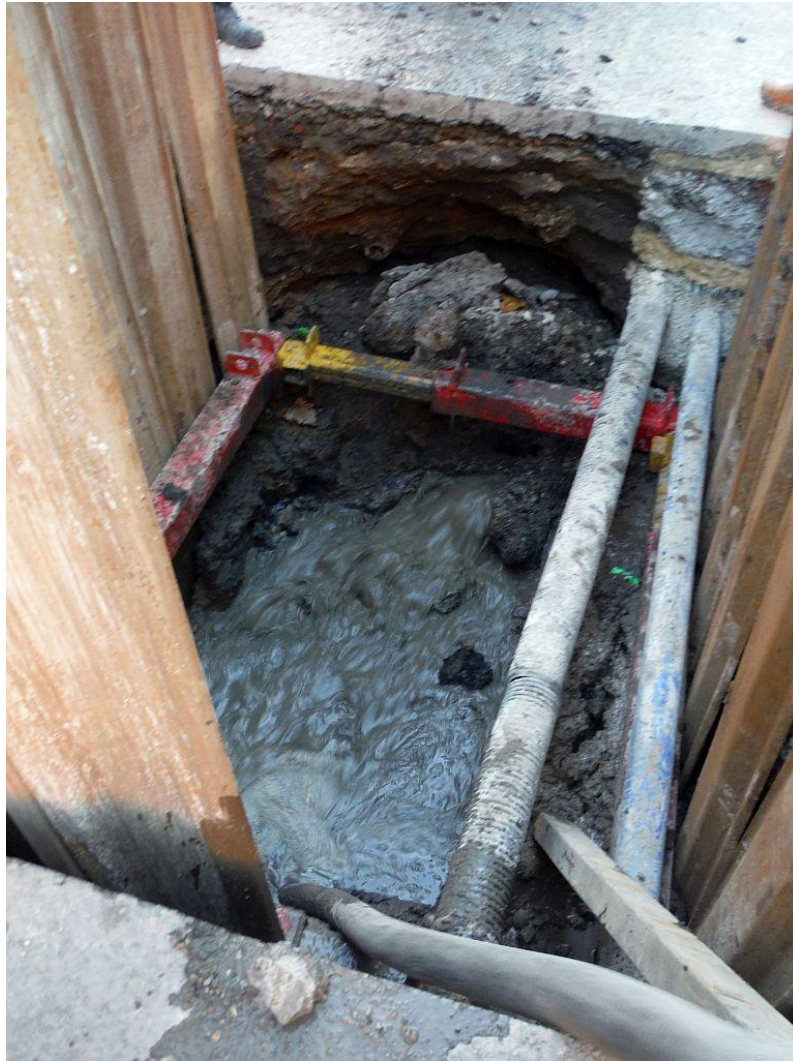


Plate 3 Deeper excavation releasing pressure resulting in further contaminated liquid ingress, facing southsouthwest

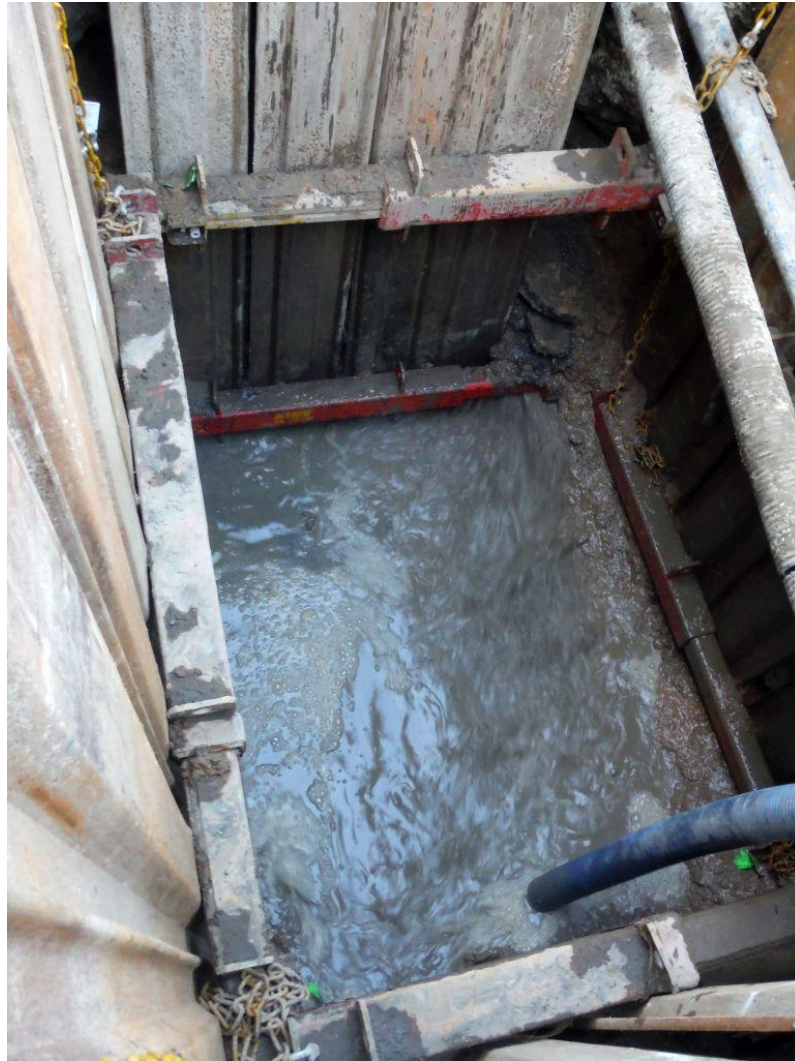


Plate 4 Further ingress of backed up contaminated liquids during deep machine excavation at just above the sewer collapse, facing west



Plate 5 Typical deposits removed from contaminated part of works



Plate 6 Possible footing (1008), facing northwest



Plate 7 Burnt deposit, facing westsouthwest



Plate 8 Limestone blocks from rubble makeup (1001), scale unit 100mm



Plate 9 Metalled road or surface, facing southwest, scale unit 100mm

FIGURES

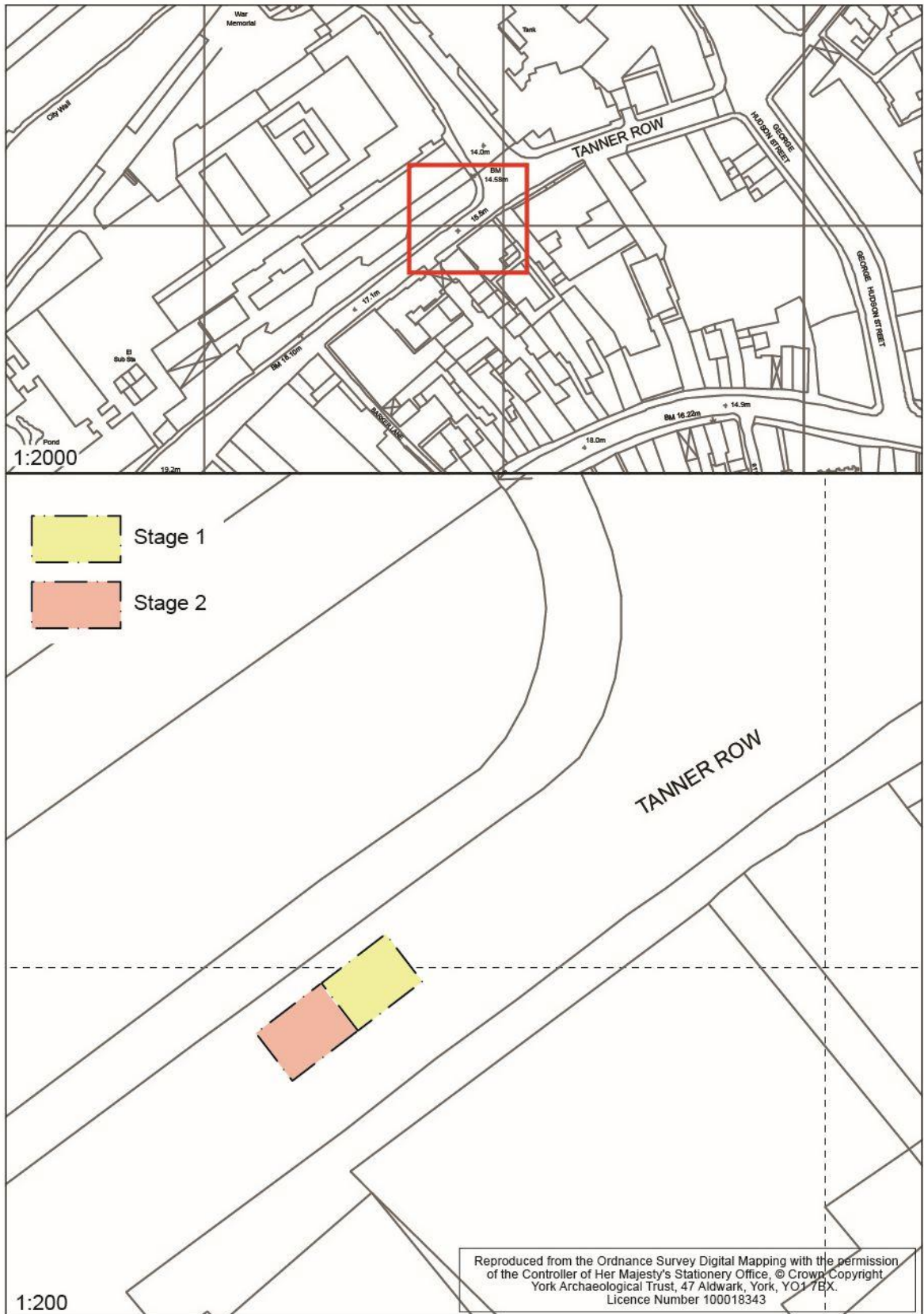


Figure 1 Site Location

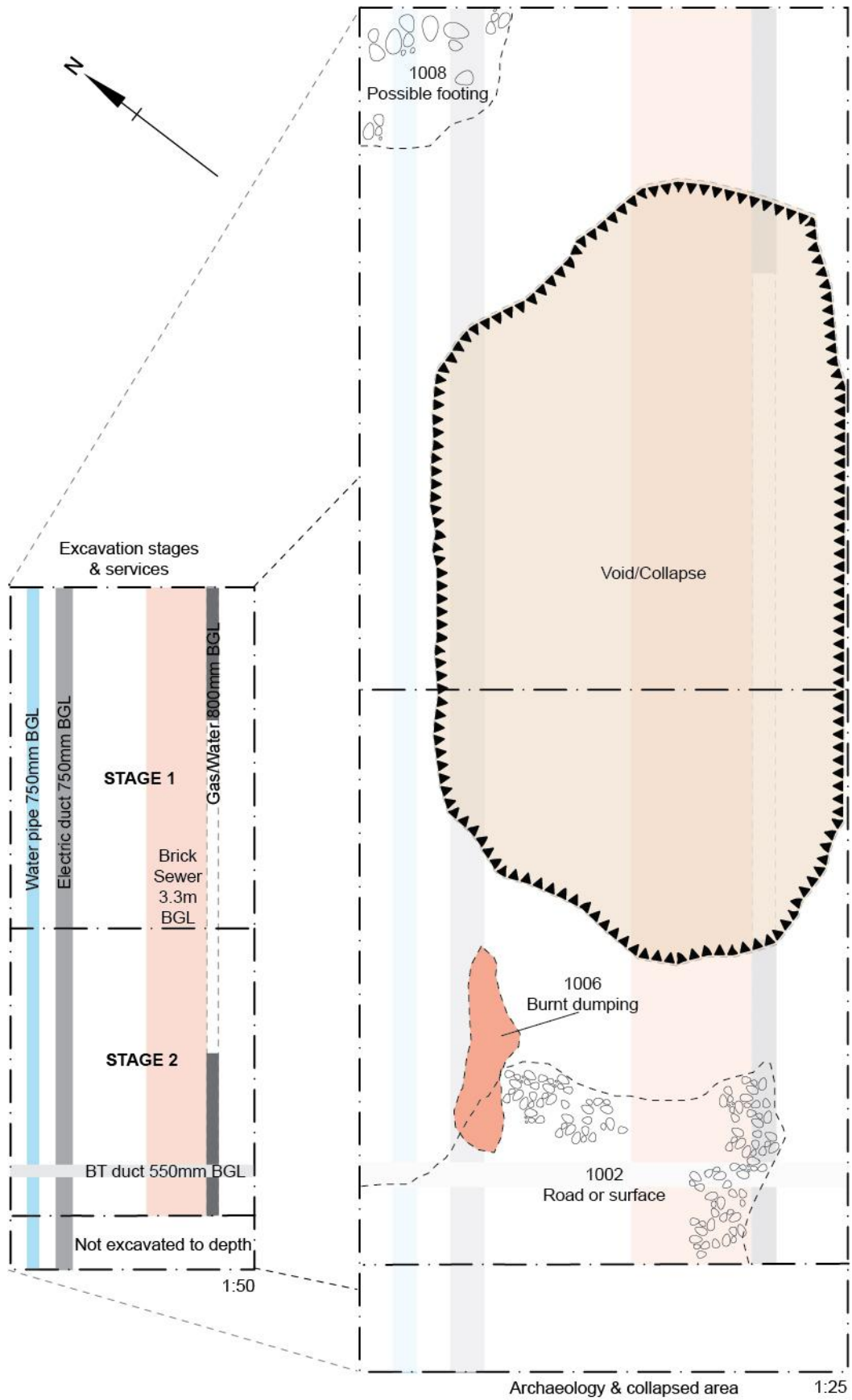


Figure 2 Services & Archaeology

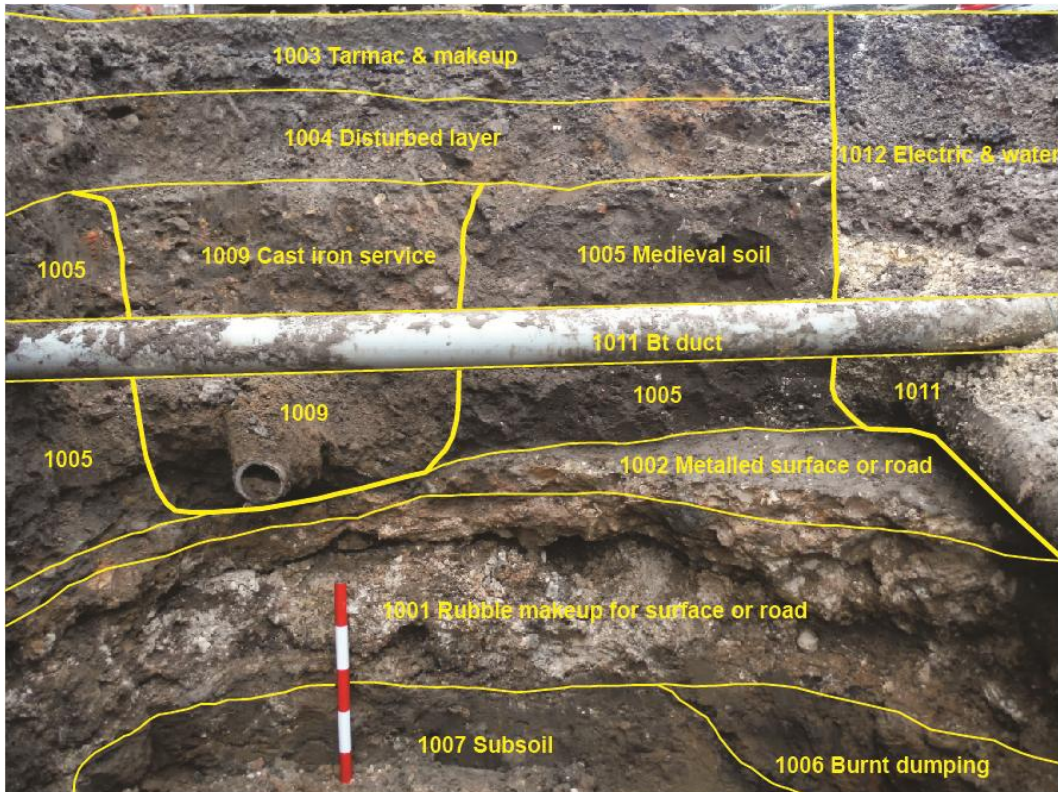


Figure 3 Annotated Trench Section

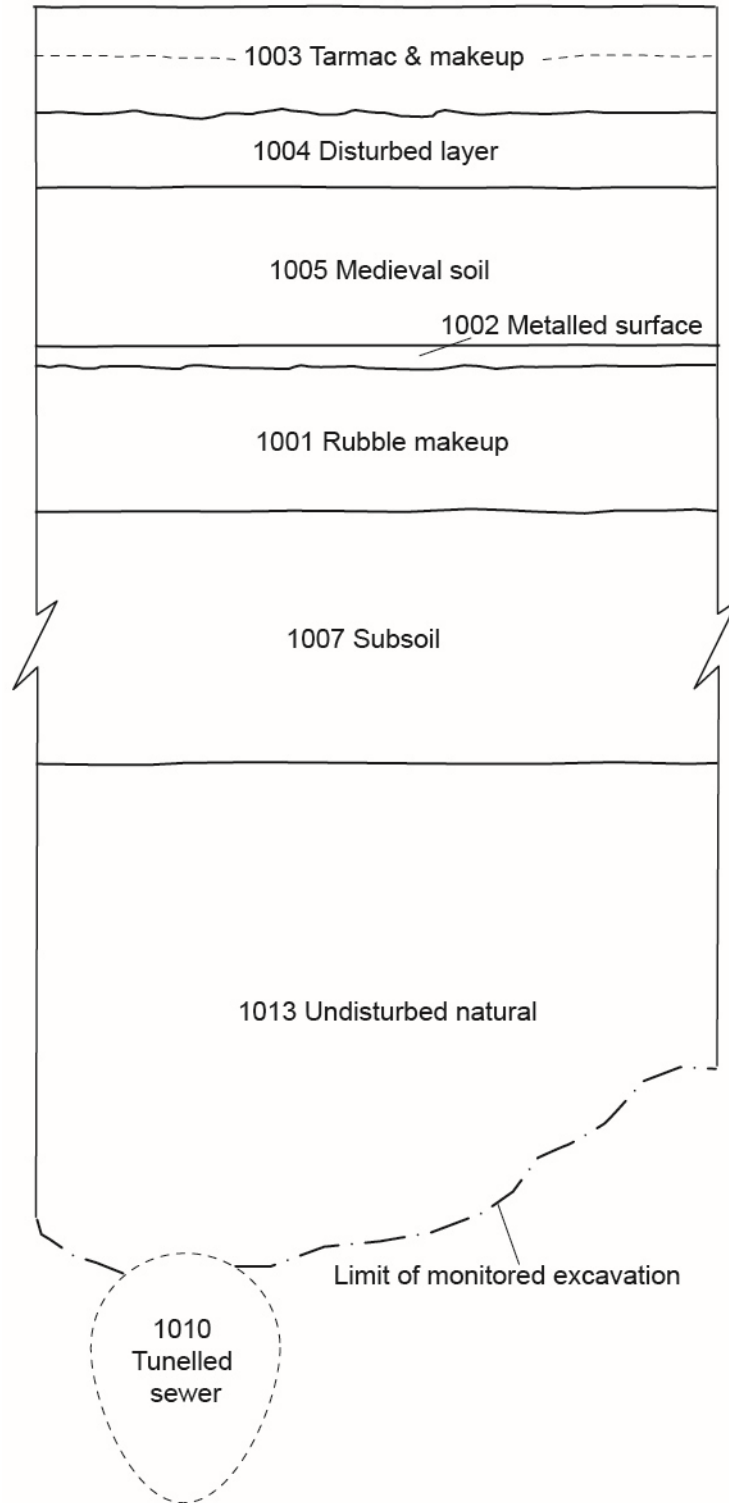


Figure 4 Representative Section 1:20



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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