



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



ACOMB BOWLING GREEN, YORK

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DESK BASED ASSESSMENT REPORT

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Abbreviations

- AOD – above Ordnance Datum
- BGL – below ground level
- YAT – York Archaeological Trust

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Archaeological interventions in the area of Acomb Bowling Green, demonstrate the potential for archaeological deposits to a depth of 0.5m BGL. There is potential to encounter medieval agricultural activity and Roman activity, particularly to the rear of the site within the car park and bowling green area. Historical map analysis has shown there has been little development on the site since the 19th century and therefore there is good potential for survival of any archaeological remains.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

York Archaeological Trust was commissioned by DC Architecture to undertake an archaeological desk based assessment of the likely archaeological deposit sequence on the site of Acomb Bowling Green (Figure 1 and 2). This was carried out during January 2018.

2 METHODOLOGY

There have been a number of archaeological interventions along Front Street, to the north of the site, and an archaeological evaluation to the immediate west of the site was carried out in 2005. The archaeological sequences from the sites summarised in section 4 and Table 1 will provide the data for this assessment. A walkover survey of the site was carried out on the 1st February 2018.

The bulk of the data was collated using the YAT site gazetteer, the York Historic Environment Record (HER) and the York Royal Commission on Historic Monuments Survey (RCHM 1 1962, RCHM 3 1972).

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed development is located within the suburb of Acomb, at the western edge of the City of York. It is irregular in shape and lies between the present streets of Lowfields Drive and Front Street, covering an area of approximately 3293 square meters located at NGR SE 57293 51146.

The underlying bedrock is sandstone from the Sherwood group formed approximately 229 to 271 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian periods. Above this, superficial deposits of glacial fluvial are present consisting of sand and gravel. (www.bgs.ac.uk – accessed 29/01/18).

The site is bounded by Front Street to the north-west and to the south-east by residential properties fronting onto Lowfields Drive. To the north-east the site is next to the Marcia Grey public house, Acomb Parish Church Hall and residential gardens. To the south-west the site is bounded by Acomb Explore Library, gardens and an area of unoccupied scrubland. The site is currently occupied by a landscaped Bowling Green, concrete-surfaced car park and drive, a two-storey brick residential building with attached single-storey brick building, and a wooden lean-to shelter for the Bowling Club.

The site lies within the Acomb Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Historical Background

Roman period

The site is located outside the Roman fortress and settlement at York and the closest suggested Roman road is the current A59, 1.5km to the north of the site. However, some evidence of Roman activity has been recorded in the area, for instance a mosaic pavement uncovered in the 19th century along Front Street, behind Acomb House (RCHME 1962 p64),

possibly the remains of a high status building, and a surface scatter of Romano-British pottery sherds of 2nd-4th century date has been recorded at Bachelor Hill (RCHME 1962).

Medieval period

Acomb originated as a village, recorded in the Domesday Book as property of York Minster and comprising of 14 households. By the 14th century the number of households had increased to 70. The village centred around Front Street, York Road and The Green in a traditional plan with a church, Saint Stephens, to the north of York Road. The church possibly had a pre-conquest foundation, but the original building was dated to the 12th century, before being replaced in 1830 (MAP 1998).

The immediate area around the village was farmed in open fields, names of which survive today. Evidence of medieval ridge and furrow have been recorded from early aerial photographs to the south of the site (YHER; No's 36-39 on fig. 2) and survival of the medieval field system also exists in the presence of extant field boundaries, one of which forms the east boundary of the site.

Post medieval period

From the end of the 19th century the village increased in size, and gradually became a suburb of the City of York, becoming officially part of the city in 1937. There are a number of listed buildings on The Green and Front Street, the closest of which is at 51 Front Street, an 18th century building 50m to the north of the study site (MAP 1998).

4.2 Summary of archaeological investigations

Below is a summary of the relevant archaeological investigations that have been carried out within the area of the proposed development (Table 1, Figure 2)

A number of small archaeological investigations have been carried out along the line of Front Street. These included a small evaluation to the immediate southwest of the site, to the rear of The Poacher Inn, where two small pits containing Roman material were recorded along with modern features and deposits containing medieval material (OSA 2005).

An evaluation was carried out at 95 Front Street, 130m to the northwest of the site, by On Site Archaeology Ltd in 2007 (OSA 2007a). Three probable boundary ditches, aligned parallel to Front Street and dating to the late 15th and 16th centuries were recorded as well as a later linear feature aligned perpendicular to the ditches and dated to the 18th century.

A watching brief was conducted at Ebor Carpet Warehouse, 83a Front Street (OSA 2007b) during the excavation of foundation trenches for new internal walls within the existing building. Two features of archaeological interest were recorded; a linear feature from which no finds were recorded and a truncated soil profile which contained an assemblage of late medieval pottery and roof tile.

A watching brief was undertaken during works associated with the construction of a new dwelling on land to the rear of 44 The Green (OSA 2013). The works involved the stripping of topsoil, followed by the excavation of foundation trenches. No archaeological features were recorded.

A watching brief was undertaken at 20 The Green (OSA 2002), which involved the monitoring of top soil stripping; no significant archaeological activity was recorded.

An evaluation was undertaken by MAP in 1999 on land to the rear of 21 Front Street (MAP 1999). The site lay across two medieval tenements fronting Front Street, and the evaluation did encounter evidence of medieval activity.

This is immediately outside the 250m radius study area, however, it is relevant that a small evaluation was conducted in October 2017 on land to the east of 23 The Green, as well as observations on two engineering test pits (YAT 2017). During the course of the investigations no significant archaeological remains were recorded; extensive terracing had occurred across the site removing much of the deposits leaving only modern pits and a 19th century brick structure.

An archaeological evaluation was also carried out 250m to the southeast of the site, at the former Low Field School (Loffman & Brown 2017). Seven trenches were excavated and no significant archaeological features were encountered.

5 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Natural deposits

Where encountered natural deposits have been found to consist of soft, light-mid orange brown/yellow brown slightly silty sand and recorded at depths of 25.27m AOD (Loffman 2017) and 20.38m AOD (OSA 2006) along Front Street. However, during the evaluation at Poachers Inn, to the immediate southwest of the study site, natural deposits of very light greyish brown sand were encountered at 15.70m AOD (OSA 2005).

5.2 Roman activity

Two small intercutting irregular pits were recorded cutting the natural at a depth of 15.52m AOD (OSA 2005) during an evaluation conducted to the rear of Poachers Inn. The fill of the pits comprised dark greyish brown sand from which two small sherds of late 1st to mid 3rd century pottery were recovered.

During the 19th century a mosaic pavement was uncovered along Front Street, behind Acomb House, 170m to the north east of the site, indicating the presence of high status occupation activity (RCHME 1962 p64). Evidence of occupation was also recorded at Bachelor Hill in the form of pottery sherds dating to the Roman period (RCHME 1962).

5.4 Medieval activity

Buried soils comprising of mid to light brown silty sand containing CBM flecks, and mid to dark greyish brown sand containing CBM and pottery ranging in date from the late 11th to early 14th century were encountered during the archaeological investigations at Poachers Inn (OSA 2005). The soils were encountered at around 16m AOD and were compared to other buried soils, or garden soils recorded in the area.

A buried soil was also encountered during the watching brief at 83a Front Street (OSA 2006). The soil was described as soft brown sand with light brown mottling with a maximum depth of 350mm. The deposit contained an assemblage of pottery and roof tile of late medieval date and was interpreted as a disturbed subsoil or the truncated remains of a garden soil.

An evaluation to the rear of 21 Front Street recorded the clearest evidence of medieval activity in this area (MAP 1999); three intercutting pits were recorded around 23.13m AOD, with the latest pit containing material dating to the 14th and 15th centuries. The nature of the features suggested a domestic origin.

5.5 Post-medieval activity

The evaluation to the rear of 21 Front Street (MAP 1999) recorded a number of features containing material dating to between the 17th and 19th centuries. Intercutting pits and linear features of post medieval date were present in trenches 2 and 3 and a considerable quantity of building material was spread through all the trenches, possibly the remains of nearby 19th century buildings.

Three parallel boundary ditches dated to the later 15th and later 16th centuries were recorded at 0.80m BGL during an evaluation at the rear of 95 Front Street (OSA 2006). The ditches were parallel to Front Street and were truncated by a fourth boundary ditch dated to the 18th century or later. The alignment of the ditches correlate with boundaries dividing gardens associated with street frontages from the agricultural land to the back. Oval pits dated to the 18th and 19th centuries and a series of late post-medieval quarry pits were also encountered during the course of the evaluation.

5.6 Historic map analysis

Historical map regression between 1853 and 1952 (Figures 3-7) show a steady rise in the construction of property and overall expansion of the Lowfield and Acomb areas, in particular with Acomb as a market town hub being merged within the overall development of the west of York.

Within the environs of the site boundary, there appears to be a consistent use of a side access to the extant properties on the main road of Front Street where the proposed access to the development would be; the bulk of the proposed development would take place within the possible garden/plot of land associated with one of the properties situated on Front Street.

The 1853 OS map (Figure 3) shows a possible outbuilding associated with one of the properties to the north. The remnants/foundations may still be visible if exposed as shown in (Plate 5) during the walkover survey, where there is raised ground to the south east of the parking space. This doesn't appear to be shown in the later OS maps so it is presumed it was demolished between 1853 and 1910.

6 POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ACROSS DEVELOPEMENT SITE

The assessment of the potential for archaeological remains to be present within the proposed development area is based on known cultural heritage assets in the vicinity and the nature of current and historic land use. The assessment is a consideration of *potential* based on the currently available evidence.

There is no evidence for prehistoric activity within the vicinity of the site and therefore the archaeological potential for the prehistoric period is **negligible**.

An archaeological investigation undertaken on the site to the immediate west of the study site recorded the presence of residual Roman pottery and two small intercutting pits which

contained a small amount of Roman pottery. A mosaic pavement was also recorded on Front Street during the 19th century, suggesting that there was Roman occupation in the area. However, no other evidence of Roman activity has been encountered in the study area, though this could be due to the high amount of modern terracing that has occurred along Front Street, rather than evidence of no Roman activity. Due to the presence of Roman material and features within the vicinity of the site, the archaeological potential for the Roman period is **moderate to high**.

During the medieval period the area around the proposed development area was part of the field system attached to the medieval village of Acomb, which was focussed around the roads now known as Front Street and The Green. Evidence of buried soil horizons containing medieval to late medieval material have been recorded within the study area. Based on this it is considered that the archaeological potential for the medieval period is **low** and any features or material recovered from the site is likely to be related to agricultural practices.

The proposed development site appears to have been in agricultural use during the post-medieval period, with no buildings present on the site until the modern period. The archaeological potential for the post-medieval period is **low**.

The current development site extends southwards from the south side of Front Street and comprises of a cultivated green space, concrete-surfaced car park and drive, a two-storey brick dwelling with attached single-storey brick building and a wooden lean-to shelter for the Bowling Club. The extent of the foundations of any of the buildings on the site is currently unknown; however it is believed that outside the two brick dwellings there has been little impact on any potential archaeology by the current development.

LIST OF SOURCES

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html?>

York Archaeological Trust. Archive Gazetteer. www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/gaz/index.htm

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APPENDIX 1 GAZETTEER OF SITES

Table 1 Gazetteer of sites

Number	Site Name	Date	Reference
1	Roman Mosaic Pavement	19 th century	RCHME. 1962. <i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments of the City of York, Volume 1 Eburacum Roman York</i> .
2	Land to the rear of 44 The Green, Acomb	2013	OSA. 2013. <i>Land to the rear of 44 The Green, Acomb, York: Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . OSA report no. OSA13WB21.
3	The Poacher Acomb	2005	OSA. 2005. <i>Land to the rear of the Poacher Inn, Front Street, Acomb, York: Archaeological Evaluation Report</i> . OSA Report no. OSA05EV03.
4	20 The Green, Acomb	2002	Diamond, S. & Ferguson, M. 2002. <i>20 The Green, Acomb, York: report on an archaeological watching brief</i> . OSA Report
5	95 Front Street	2007	OSA. 2007a. <i>95 Front Street, Acomb: Report on an Archaeological Evaluation</i> . OSA report No. OSA07EV06.

6	12-24 The Green, Acomb	1999	MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. 1999. <i>21 Front Street, Acomb, York; Archaeological Evaluation</i> . Unpublished report
7	Ebor Carpet Warehouse, Acomb	2007	OSA. 2007b. <i>Ebor Carpet Warehouse, Acomb, York: Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief</i> . OSA report no. OSA06WB38
8	23 The Green, Acomb	2017	Loffman, G. 2017. <i>Archaeological Evaluation at 23 The Green, Acomb</i> . YAT unpublished report no. 2017/92.
13	Former Low Fields School EVAL & Lowfields School GP	2017	Loffman, G. & Brown, C., 2017. <i>Former Low Field School, Acomb Evaluation Report</i> . YAT unpublished report no. 2017/83

Table 2 Gazetteer of Monuments

Number	Monument	Monument Number	Description
9	Broad Ridge and Furrow	222151	Ridge and Furrow York City
10	Broad Ridge and Furrow	222152	Ridge and Furrow York City
11	Broad Ridge and Furrow	223472	Ridge and Furrow York City
12	Broad Ridge and Furrow	223473	Ridge and Furrow York City

APPENDIX 2 FIGURES

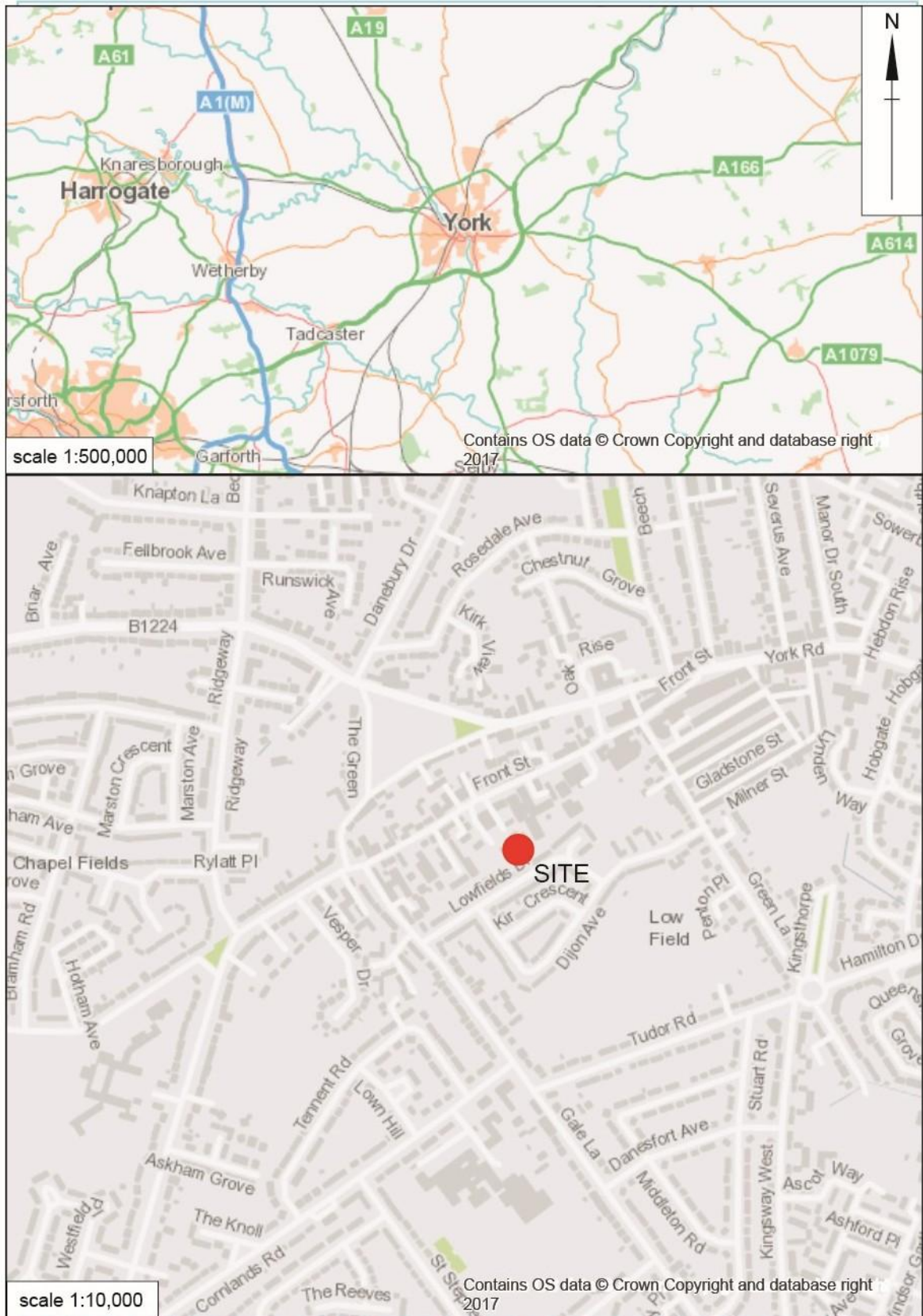


Figure 1 Site Location

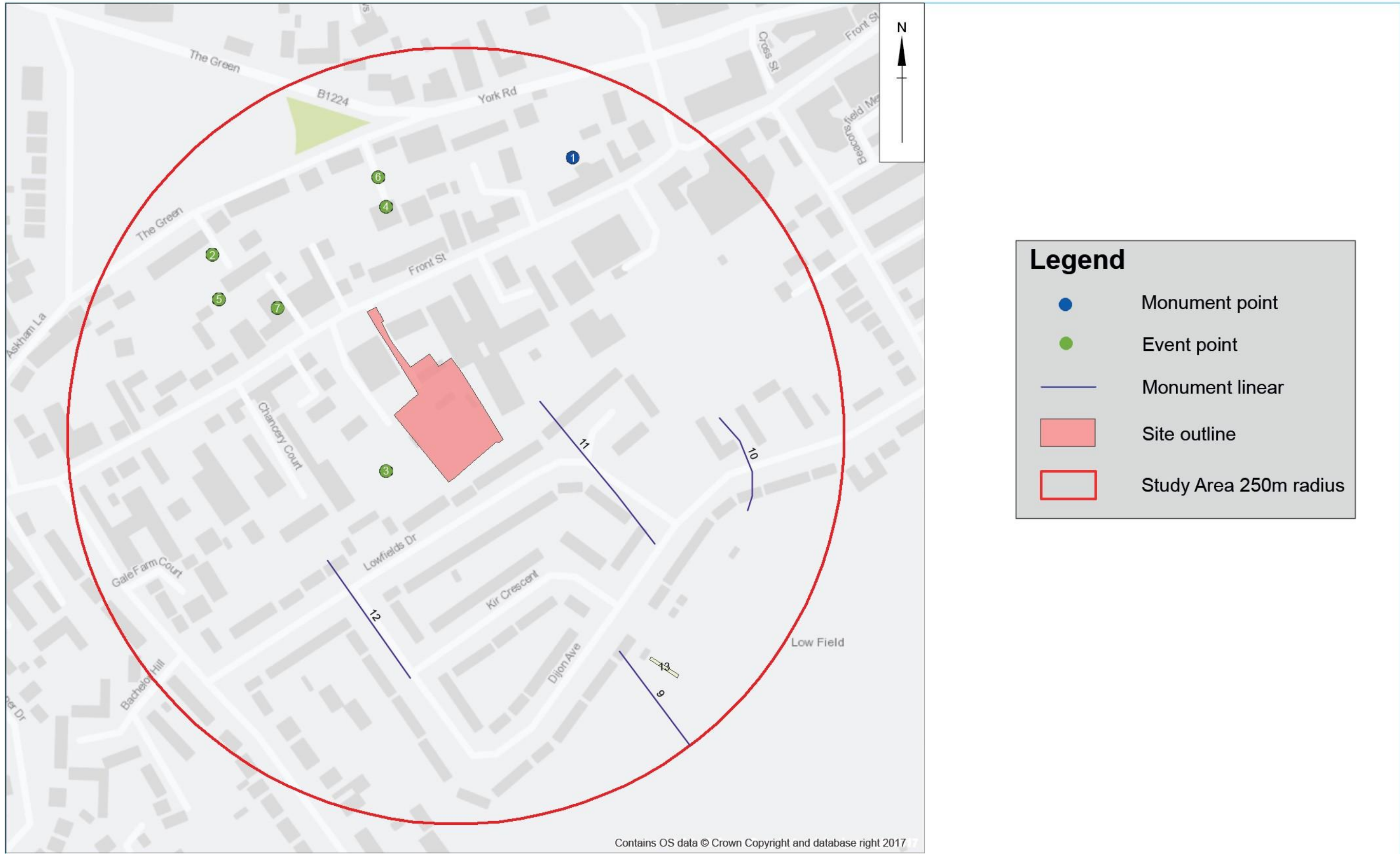


Figure 2 Location of sites from gazetteer within a 250m radius. Scale: 1:2500



Figure 3 OS map (1853) with approximate site location boundary

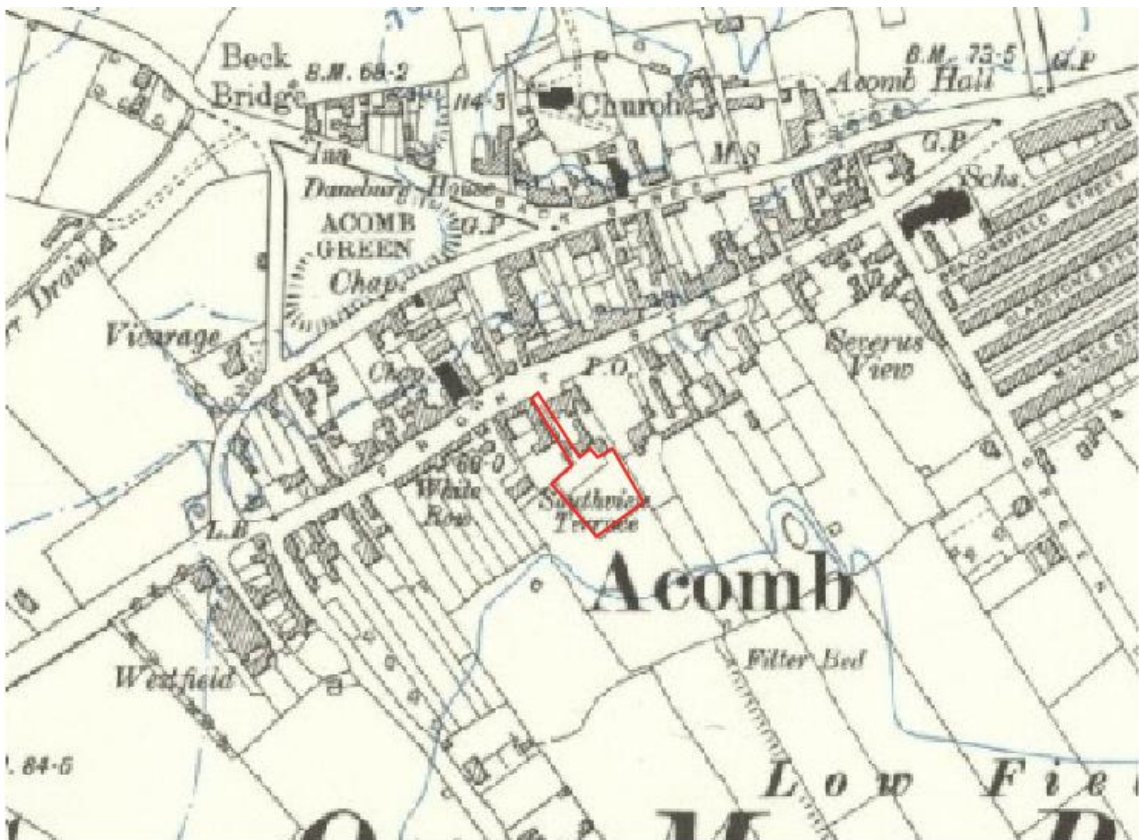


Figure 4 OS map (1910) with approximate site location boundary

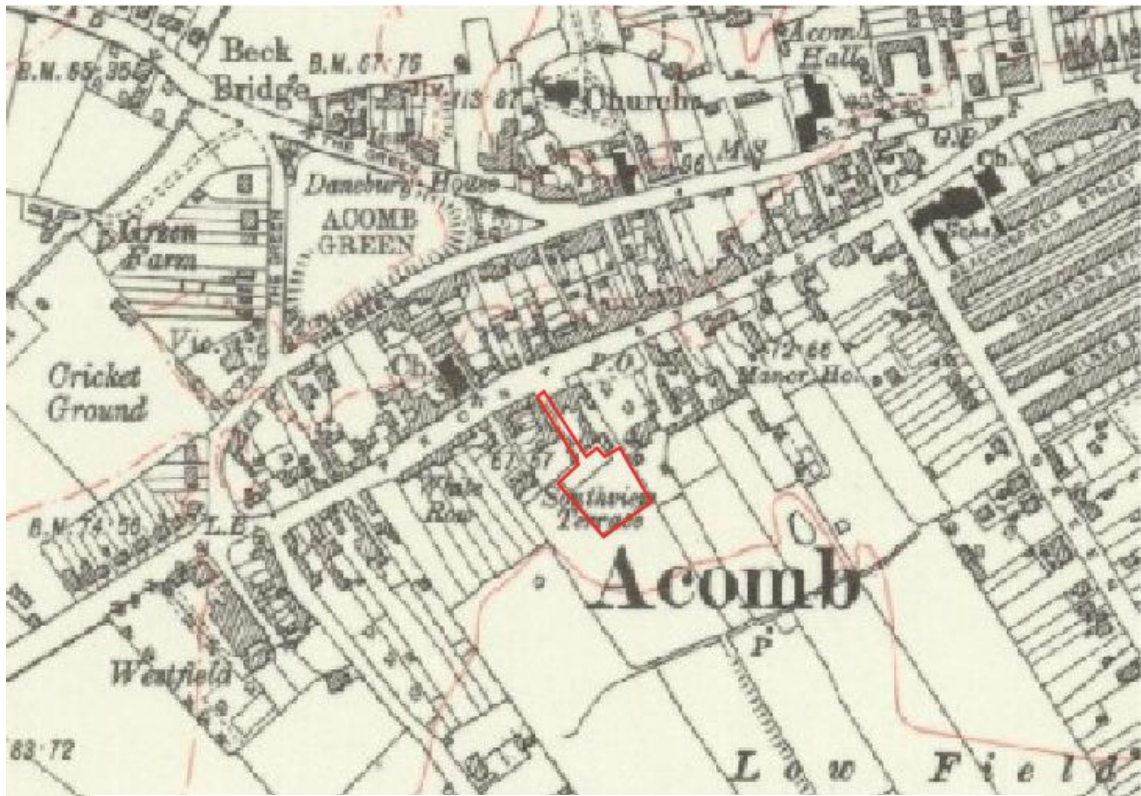


Figure 5 OS map (1932) with approximate site location boundary

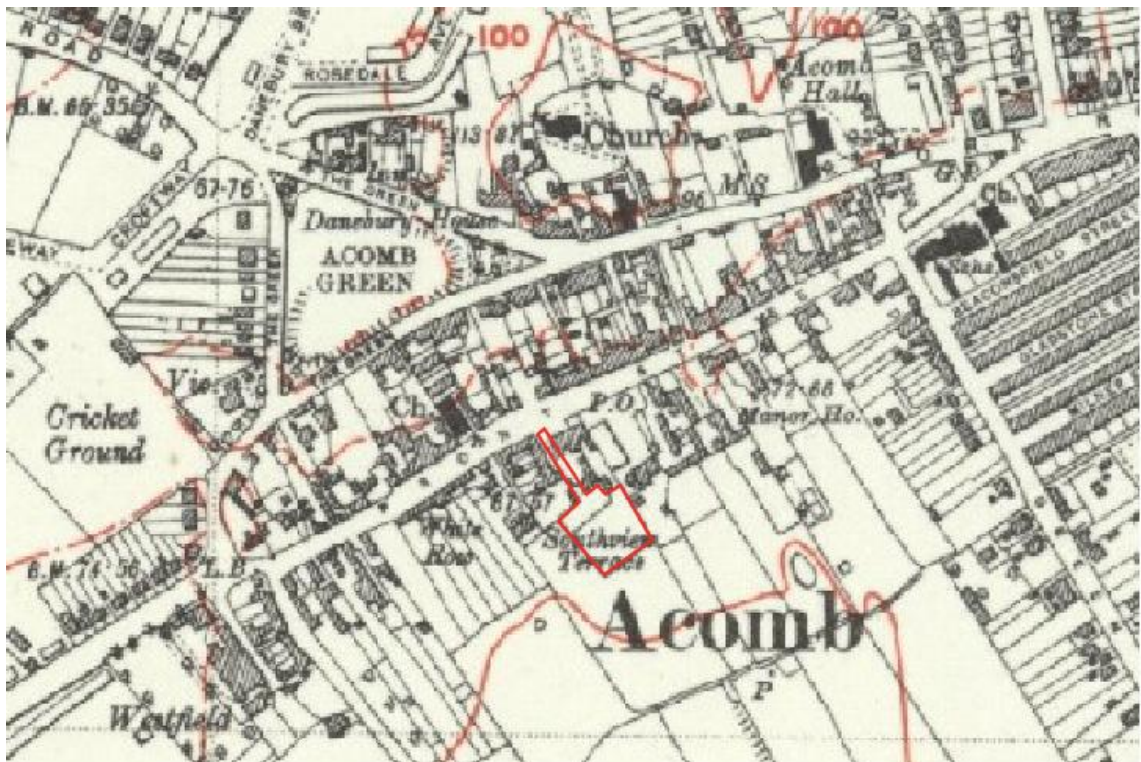


Figure 6 OS map (1946) with approximate site location boundary



Figure 7 OS map (1952) with approximate site location boundary

APPENDIX 3 PLATES



Plate 1 View of access to site, facing north-west



Plate 2 View of two-storey and single-storey brick dwellings, facing north-east



Plate 3 View of car park for Bowling Green, with brick dwellings left of shot. Facing north-east



Plate 4 View of car park for Bowling Green, standing at the entrance, facing south-east. The wooden lean-to can be seen behind the cars.



Plate 5 View of slight mounded grassy area in front of the two brick dwellings, on the eastern edge of the site. Facing north-east



Plate 6 View of Acomb Bowling Green, facing south-east



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