



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

SITE	FORMER PARKSIDE COMMERCIAL CENTRE, TERRY AVENUE, YORK		
CLIENT NAME	MR P. MANKU		
YAT PROJECT #	6010	YAT REPORT #	2017/111
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 6040 5100
PLANNING REFERENCE #	15/02321 FULM	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

INTRODUCTION

Between November 14th and December 13th 2017, the excavation of seven trial pits and a subsequent scheme of ground reduction was observed by York Archaeological Trust at the site of the former Parkside Commercial Centre, Terry Avenue, York, NGR SE 6040 5100 (Figure 1). The objective of the watching brief was to characterise the nature of archaeological deposits or structures that occupy the site in advance of a proposed redevelopment. The work was carried out by Arc Environmental on behalf of Mr P. Manku.

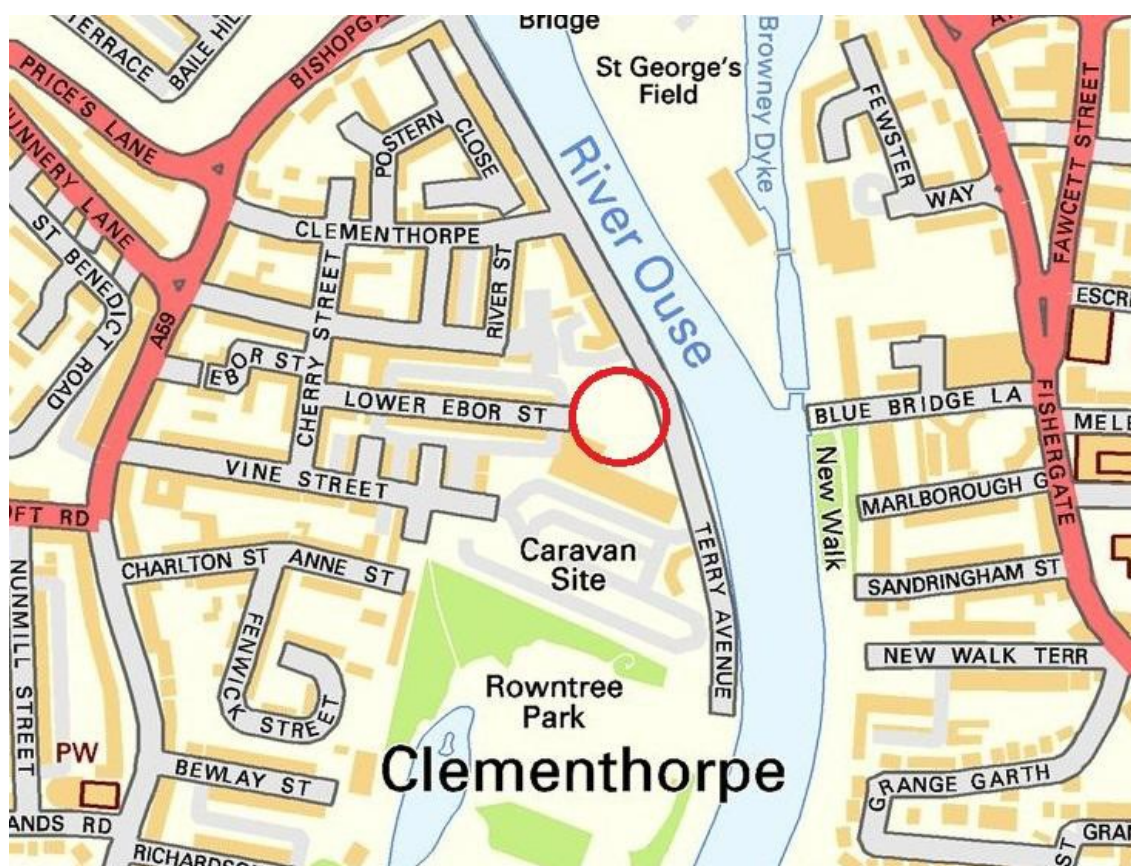


Figure 1. Site location

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METHODOLOGY

A total of seven geotechnical trial pits were excavated using a JCB 3CX equipped with a 600mm toothed bucket. The trial pits measured approximately 2.00m by 0.60m in plan and ranged in depth from 2.65m to 4.00m, dependant on the stability of trench edges. Once open, the trenches were

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recorded with digital photography and measured sketch sections. Due to the depth and instability of the trenches, all recording was carried out from the surface and they were backfilled immediately upon completion of recording.

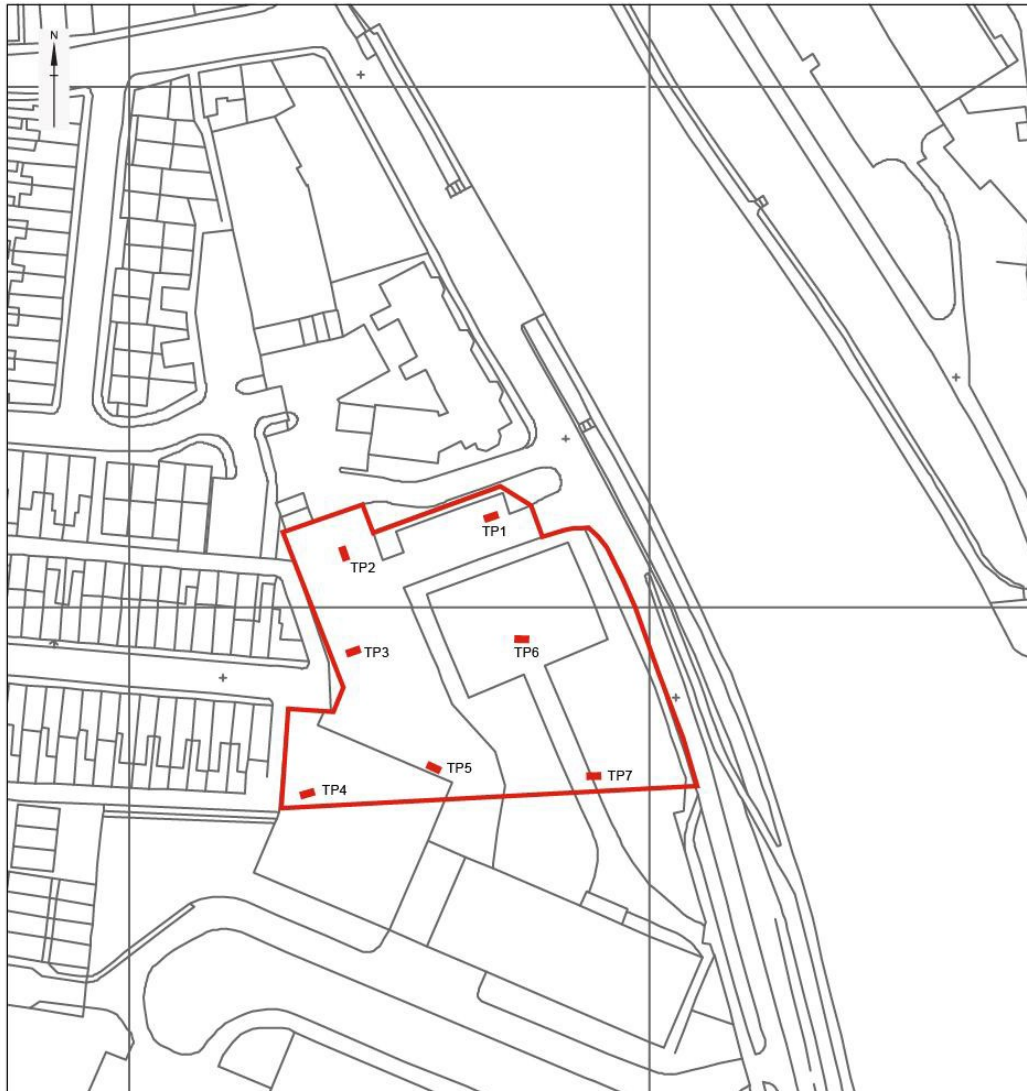


Figure 2. Trial pit locations. Scale 1:1,250

Following the completion of the geotechnical investigations, the ground level across the whole site was reduced by 1.00m to 1.50m. This process was monitored by YAT following the same recording system as detailed above.

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RESULTS

TRIAL PITS

The trial pits revealed a very consistent pattern of deposition across the whole of the site. This was typified by 19th-20th century surfaces and make-up deposits overlying successive sandy levelling deposits. In the deeper trial pits, the lower layers consisted of alluvial material that was dated in one trial pit to the medieval period.

TRIAL PIT 1

The earliest deposit observed in Trial Pit 1 was a layer of firm, mid-brown sandy clay with laminations of sand and silt. (Context 107, Plate 1). This context was present between 3.20m and the trial pit's maximum depth of 3.50m below ground level (BGL) and was interpreted as alluvium deposited during successive flooding events.



Plate 1. North-west facing view of Trial Pit 1.

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Overlying the alluvium was a 1.20m thick layer of soft, mid-greyish brown clayey silt with occasional flecks of charcoal and CBM (Context 106). Two further levelling deposits were observed (Contexts 104 and 105) which raised the ground level to 0.62m BGL. These deposits contained a moderate amount of CBM rubble, particularly flat 13th-16th century roof tile. This process of deliberately levelling up the ground surface was followed by two successive tarmac surfaces with associated make-up and bedding layers that are likely to be 20th century in date (Contexts 100-103).

TRIAL PIT 2

Located in the north-west corner of the site, Trial Pit 2 was excavated to a maximum depth of 4.00m BGL. The earliest deposit to be observed was a laminated layer of soft, mid-blue grey alluvium containing fragments of medieval/post-medieval CBM and decayed wood (Context 207). This highly organic deposit was present from a depth of 2.40m BGL and continued down beyond the limit of excavation.

The alluvium was sealed by a sequence of three levelling deposits containing a moderate amount of CBM and mortar (Contexts 204-206) that raised the ground level to 1.00m BGL. This levelling event was post-dated by a pair of make-up deposits containing brick and mortar rubble (Contexts 202 and 203). Overlying these deposits, at a depth of 0.20m BGL, was a sequence of rough surfaces made up of bands of ash, clinker, mortar and tarmac fragments that are likely of 19th/early 20th century date (Context 201). The uppermost deposit was a 200mm thick layer of crushed limestone hardcore (Context 200).

TRIAL PIT 3

A recent intrusion filled with topsoil, rubble, plastic etc. had removed archaeological deposits entirely to a depth of 1.65m BGL in this area (Context 300). From this point to the trial pit's maximum excavated depth of 3.50m, a single layer of soft, mid-brown silty sand containing occasional small fragments of CBM was present (Context 301). This deposit was interpreted as another substantial post-medieval levelling event.

TRIAL PIT 4

As in Trial Pit 3, the upper 0.30m of material in this area comprised of 21st century earth, rubble and plastic refuse (Context 400). This material covered a 0.30m thick make-up layer of clinker, cinder and occasional mortar fragments (Context 401) that in turn overlaid a 0.25m thick make-up layer of friable, mid-greyish brown sandy clay silt with frequent brick and mortar rubble inclusions (Context 402). At a depth of 0.85m BGL, a 200mm thick layer of mortar rubble (Context 403) was observed to overlie a north-west/south-east aligned brick wall (Context 404). The wall survived to a height of three courses and is likely to be associated with the recently demolished range of 19th-20th century warehouse buildings.

Between 1.45m and the maximum depth of 2.65m BGL, a levelling deposit of soft, mid-brown silty sand was observed (Context 405). Occasional small fragments of CBM suggested a medieval/post-medieval date for the deposit.

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TRIAL PIT 5

In Trial Pit 5, a 0.50m thick layer of concrete and sand bedding (Contexts 500 and 501) was observed to cover a 0.40m thick make-up deposit comprised of friable, dark-greyish brown sandy clay silt and CBM and mortar fragments (Context 502). Below this context, a series of three levelling deposits were observed, the uppermost comprising a 0.60m thick layer of mid-brown silty sand with occasional CBM inclusions (Context 503). At 1.50m BGL, 0.30m of friable, dark-greyish brown sandy silt containing a moderate amount of 19th century CBM and mortar fragments (Context 504) overlaid a levelling layer of soft, mid-brown silty sand with occasional fragments of medieval/post-medieval CBM (Context 505). This deposit continued beyond the maximum excavated depth of 2.65m BGL.

Two layers of tarmac and associated make-up (Contexts 600-604, Plate 2) made up the top 0.60m of the sequence in Trial Pit 6 (Figure 3). These deposits are likely contemporaneous to the recently demolished 19th-20th century warehouse buildings.



Plate 2. North facing view of Trial Pit 6.

A series of levelling deposits made up the remainder of the exposed sequence, the uppermost being

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a 250mm thick deposit of soft, dark greyish brown clay silt with occasional flecks of CBM, charcoal and mortar (Context 605). Between 0.85m and 3.10m BGL, a substantial levelling layer of soft, mid-orange brown silty sand with occasional CBM fragments was observed (Context 606). This context was interpreted as a medieval/post-medieval levelling event. The earliest deposit to be observed was a 0.80m thick layer of soft, mid-greyish brown silty sand (Context 607). This laminated deposit was highly organic, contained a small amount of CBM fragments and may represent a combination of alluvium and deliberate levelling.

TRIAL PIT 7

The uppermost deposits observed in Trial Pit 7 were a 250mm thick layer of topsoil (Context 700) overlying 0.15m of soft ash, cinder and clinker make-up (Context 702). Underlying this make-up material was a substantial levelling layer of soft, mid-brown silty sand that was present to a depth of 3.80m BGL (Context 702). The deposit contained a moderate amount of medieval/post-medieval CBM and very occasional fragments of animal bone. The earliest deposit in Trial Pit 7 was a laminated layer of soft, mid-greyish brown silty sand that extended beyond the maximum depth of 4.00m (Context 703). The deposit was highly organic and contained a small amount of animal bone and CBM, as well as the only pottery recovered during the watching brief. Two sherds were recovered in total; one fragment of 11th-12th century Gritty Ware with an unusual cream slip and one fragment of Humber Ware that is most likely 14th century in date. Both sherds were not notably abraded, suggesting that this layer of alluvium/levelling may be medieval in date.

SITE STRIP

The removal of the upper 1.00m – 1.50m of deposits across the site was monitored by YAT and revealed that the pattern of deposition recorded within the trial pits was consistent across the whole site. As no new observations were made, it was not necessary to assign any further context numbers.

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Plate 3. North-east facing view of site strip and laying of piling mat.

CONCLUSIONS

The seven trial pits and site strip observed during this watching brief revealed a very consistent pattern of deposition. In most cases, the uppermost contexts were either related to the demolition or use of the 19th-20th century buildings that previously occupied the site. Prior to the 19th century development of the area, there appears to have been a concerted attempt to raise the ground level with the deposition of a levelling layer of silty sand. This was evidenced in all trial pits by Contexts 106, 206, 301, 405, 505, 606 and 702. Each of these deposits contained a moderate amount of 13th-16th century CBM, predominantly plain roof tile, perhaps suggesting deliberate dumping as opposed to long-term accumulation. This event may have been a response to repeated flooding of the site.

Due to the soft nature of the archaeological deposits at this site, it was not possible to excavate all trial trenches to the proposed depth of 4.00m. In Trial Pits 1,2, 5, 6 and 7, however, the levelling event was observed to overlie a mixture of alluvium and deliberate levelling material. This was characterised by laminated, highly organic layers of silty sand (Contexts 107, 207, 505, 607 and 703) and may be evidence of the sequence of flooding that led to the subsequent landscaping of the

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site.

The archaeological sequence observed during the watching brief supports the conclusions of previous site investigations, with the site being used as marginal farmland prior to its development in the 19th and 20th centuries (Bruce 2003, 11).

REFERENCES

Bruce, G, 2003, *Report on an Archaeological Evaluation*. OSA Report No. OSA03EV11

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