



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

SITE	Queen's Path/Deangate WB		
CLIENT NAME	City of York Council		
YAT PROJECT #	6024	YAT REPORT #	2018/38
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 6040 5210
PLANNING REFERENCE #	N/A	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

INTRODUCTION

A watching brief on ground works for a street lighting scheme was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust on behalf of the City of York Council between 19th March and 20th March 2018 at Queen's Path/Deangate, NGR 6040 5210(Figure 1).

The site lies within the York Central Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI) and the York City Central Conservation Area. It is also within the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the York Minster Cathedral Precinct (<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1017777> - accessed 19/03/18).

The York Minster itself is a Grade I listed structure and is located 20m to the north of the groundworks. A number of listed buildings are located within the vicinity of the site including St Williams College (Grade I), 6 Minster Yard (Grade II*) and 7 Minster Yard (Grade II).

The objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological deposits or structures exposed by the ground works.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site lies within the historic core of the city which has been occupied continuously for the last 2000 years. No prehistoric features or finds have been identified or recovered within the immediate area and the site's significance relates to the Roman period and later.

The Minster and its surroundings, including the Queens Path, are located in the area of the *principia* at centre of the Roman Legionary Fortress and are within close proximity to the crossroads of the *via principalis* and the *via praetoria*, reflected by the modern roads Petergate and Stonegate. Post-Roman occupation is represented by an Anglo-Scandinavian cemetery within the former *principia* area that may relate to the Pre-Conquest forbear of the current Minster, which is thought to have been located nearby. York Minster as it currently stands was constructed between the 12th and 15th century.

The Queens Path was originally part of Minster Yard during the medieval and Post-medieval period when it was the main route within the Minster Precinct. It was fronted by numerous associated religious buildings, including the Archbishops House and various Prebendal Houses. St Williams College and the Minster are the only surviving Medieval buildings in the area; the majority are of 18th century construction, including 7 Minster Yard, formerly the Prebendal House of Strensall and constructed in 1730, as well as 6 Minster Yard, also dating from the Georgian period. These buildings remain standing and now form part of The Minster School. The majority of the school campus lies to the southeast of the Queens Path and was built in the 1830s after a period of clearance that opened up a large swathe of land on the south side of the minster, within the former precinct. The area in front of St Williams College was cleared in the same period forming the College Green.

The area was further opened up with the construction of Deangate in 1903 which was eventually closed to vehicle through-traffic in 1989. The area to the south of the Minster and the Queens Path became pedestrianised and remains so in the modern era.

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Though there is potential for Roman and post-Roman material the excavations that have encountered material from these periods were largely within the Minster footprint itself, particularly in the Undercroft which was created during emergency underpinning works in the 1960s and 70s and investigated further during renovations in 2013 (Milsted 2013a).

An excavation and watching brief at the South Transept Approach and Minster Yard exposed archaeological deposits consistent with 17th century, and possibly earlier, construction close to the south end of the Queens Path (Milsted 2013b).

A comprehensive series of works have taken place at 7 Minster Yard including a watching brief at the front of the property where a wall was underpinned (Evans 2011) and a small evaluation within the property boundary (Johnson & Savine 2013). The watching brief trench exposed no archaeology of significance to the depth of 0.6m though noted that archaeology earlier than the garden soil exposed may exist at a greater depth. The evaluation trench exposed deposits consistent with the 18th century construction of the Minster Yard properties and later activity.

A watching brief at 6 Minster Yard in 1990 resulted in the recovery of a small number of architectural fragments from the 12th to 15th century consistent with the Minster as well as the original 18th century vaulted cellar (YAT Annual Report 1990/91).

METHODOLOGY

A linear trench was excavated between the existing street lights on Queen's Path (Figure 2). In addition pits were excavated for the insertion of a new street light. The trench was 0.45m in width and excavated to a depth of 0.4m.

The groundworks were carried out using a 1 tonne mini excavator equipped with a 0.35m toothless bucket. Trenches were also excavated by hand where tree roots were particularly dense near the intersection of Queens Path and Minster Yard.

Recording proceeded by written notes and digital photography.

RESULTS

The remains of a brick built structure measuring 0.7m x 0.7m (1006) was encountered within the base of the trench at the northern end of the works (Plate 2). This was constructed of bricks measuring 240mm x 110mm x 50mm bonded with a grey lime mortar. No cut for this structure was visible. The feature was found at a depth of 0.4m bgl.

Above the brick structure was a build up deposit (1005) consisting of a friable, mid grey brown, clayey silt with moderate inclusions of cbm fragments and mortar flecks. This was overlain with a makeup deposit (1004) consisting of friable/firm, light brown, sandy silt. At the junction of Queen's Path and Minster Yard three paving stones (1003) were found at 0.15m bgl (Plate 3). These probably represent a previous form of the path.

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Sealing these deposits was a topsoil deposit (1000) or the make-up (1002) and current paving stones of Queen's Path (1001).

CONCLUSIONS

No significant archaeological features or deposits were uncovered during the groundworks. The brick structure encountered is likely to be 16th to late 18th Century in date based upon the brick dimensions (McComish 2015). This possibly represents evidence for former buildings along the Queens Path before land clearance in the 1830s to open up the area south of the Minster. The groundwork monitored as part of this watching brief did not penetrate below post medieval build-up deposits.

REFERENCES

Evans D.T., 2011. *7 Minster Yard, York: WB*. YAT unpublished report 2011/30.

Johnson A & Savine B., *7 Minster Yard, York : Evaluation Report*. YAT unpublished report 2013/19.

McComish J.M., 2015. *A Guide to Ceramic Building Materials*. YAT unpublished report 2015/36.

Milsted I.D., 2013a. *York Minster Revealed, Undercroft Treasury*. YAT unpublished report 2013/42.

Milsted I.D., 2013b. *South Transept Approach, York Minster*. YAT unpublished report 2013/43

York Archaeological Trust Annual Report, 1990-91.

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PLATES



Plate 1 Queen's Path facing south west

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Plate 2 Structure (1006) facing south. 0.2m scale



Plate 3 Section showing paving stones (1003) facing north west. 0.5m scale

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Plate 4 Section facing south east. 0.5m scale

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FIGURES

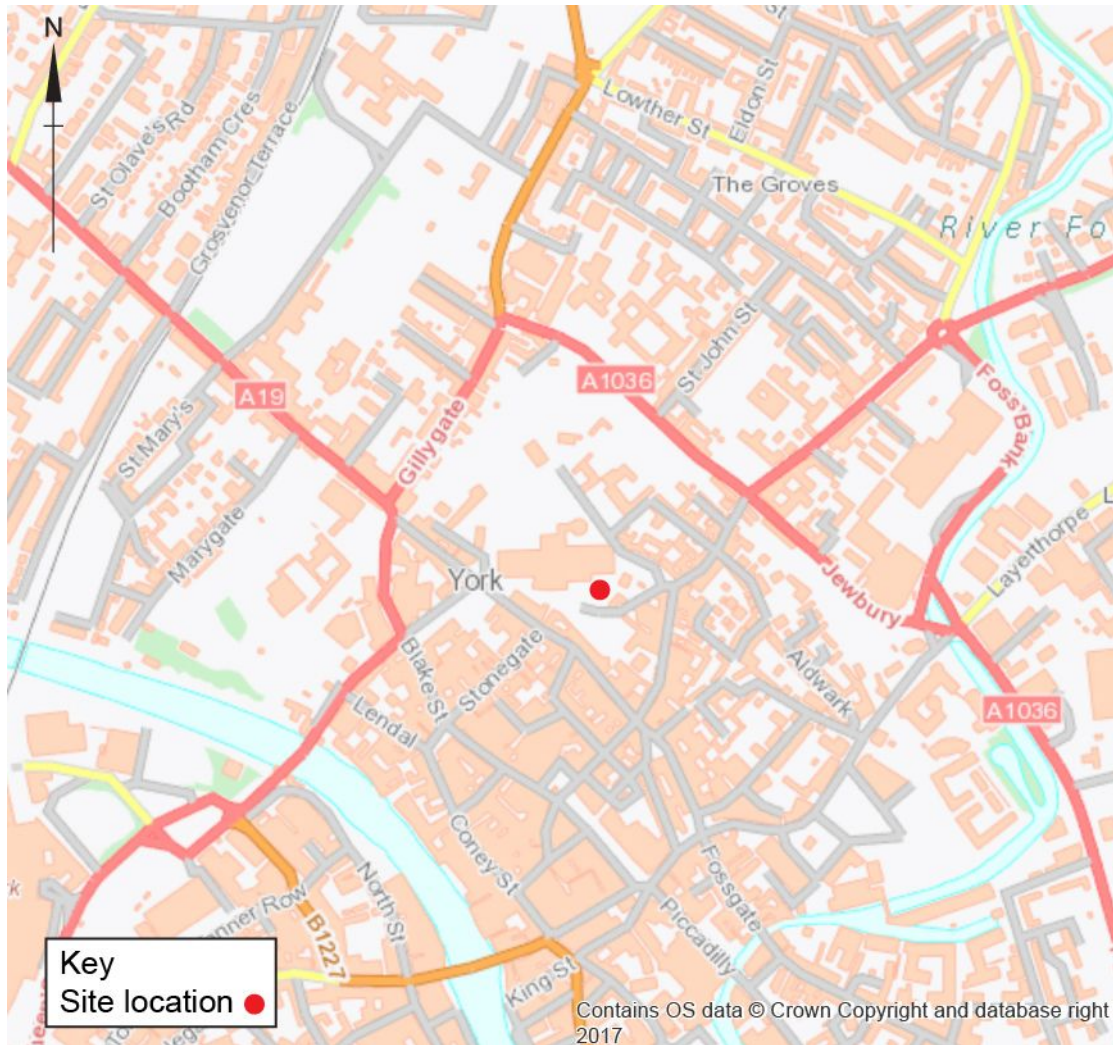


Figure 1 Site Location (1:10000)

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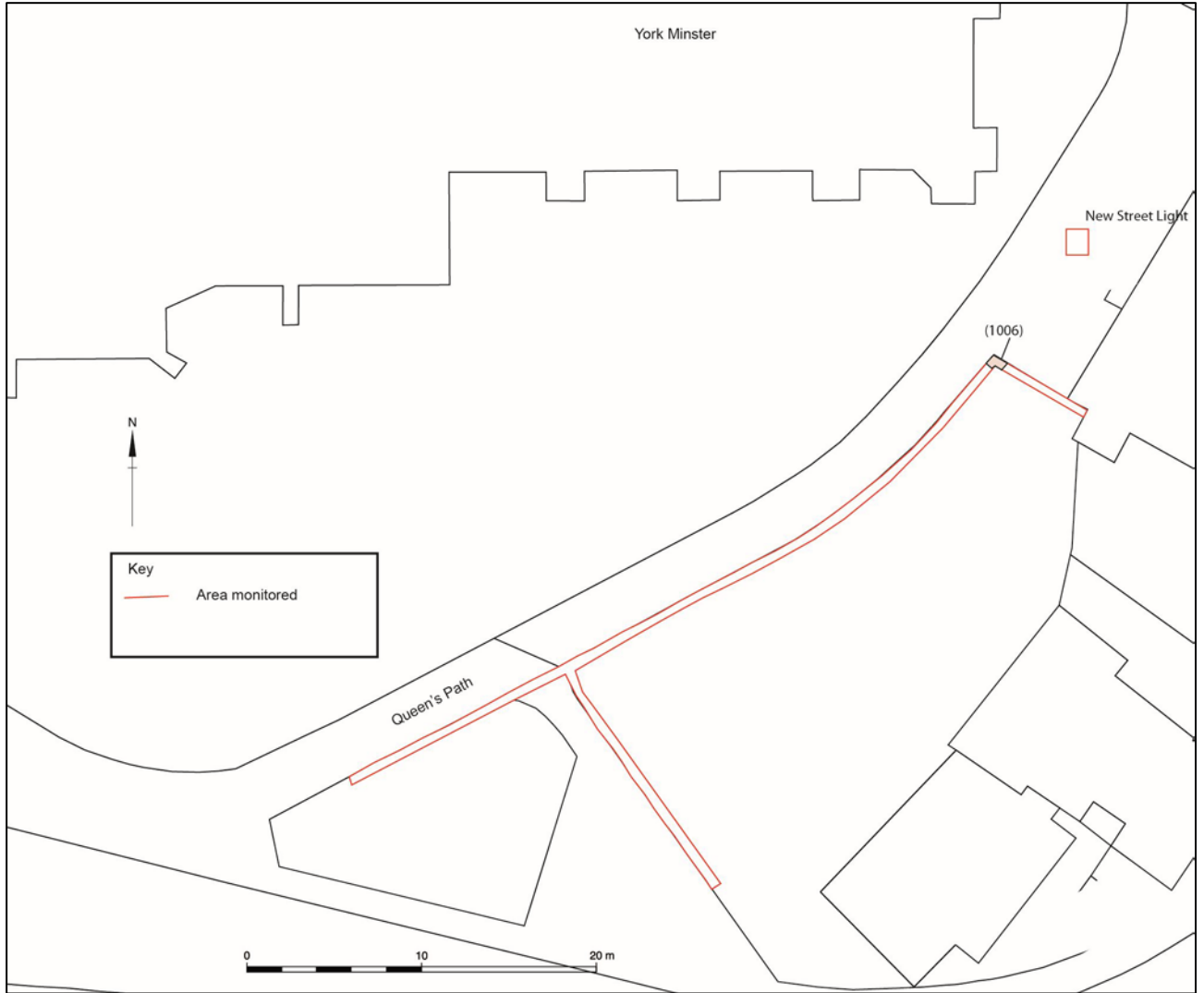


Figure 2 works location

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