



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



RYEDALE HOUSE, 58–60 PICCADILLY, YORK

By Clare Jackson

DESK BASED ASSESSMENT REPORT

Report Number 2018/56 April 2018

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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 Ryedale House, Piccadilly demonstrate the potential of archaeological deposits to a depth of 7m BGL at the eastern side of the site, though the depth decreases significantly to the west which has potential archaeological deposits to 4.5m BGL. There is potential at the site for Roman and Anglo-Scandinavian remains beneath alluvial silts pertaining to early attempts at land reclamation and industry along the edge of site fronting Piccadilly. Medieval deposits and/or a possible revetment are also potentially present along the eastern edge of site, under around 2.5m of modern to late post-medieval made ground. The rear of the site towards the River Foss was under the King's Fishpool for all of the medieval period and into the post-medieval period, therefore there are thick deposits of alluvial silts present in that part of the site overlaid potentially by deposits dating from the 17th century onwards.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

York Archaeological Trust was commissioned by Newby Developments to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of the likely archaeological deposit sequence on the site of Ryedale House, 58–60 Piccadilly, York (Figures 1 and 2). This was carried out during April 2018.

2 METHODOLOGY

This report aims to provide a proposed deposit model of below-ground conditions at the site based on a number of excavations in the immediate vicinity, and other documentary sources. 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 attempted on the 2nd May 2018, however access was limited due to hoarding fronting the site.

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 (RCHMY 1 1962, RCHMY 3 1972).

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The proposed development area is sited on the east bank of the River Foss on the southern side of the City of York. The underlying bedrock on the site is sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group with superficial deposits of alluvial silt, clay, sand and gravel (BGS).

The site was once located within the middle of the River Foss, which after the last glaciation cut through the York Moraine. After the Norman Conquest the river was dammed to feed Clifford's Tower, which is situated directly opposite the site on the west bank of the river. Over subsequent centuries human occupation and land reclamation in this part of the city has caused the ground level to rise. The current ground level on the site is around 9.3m AOD.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5 The Piccadilly area has been subject to numerous archaeological interventions since the 1980s. In this section a brief overview is given of the current knowledge based on various sources to provide context for the Ryedale House site.

4.1 Historical Background

Prehistoric period

There has been scant evidence for prehistoric activity in York, however evidence is increasingly being found for Bronze Age and Iron Age activity along the York Moraine, suggesting that this area of high ground was a focus for prehistoric activity (RCHMY 1972 xxxvii-xxxix). The closest of these discoveries, at Blue Bridge Lane around 0.5km to the south of the study site, was scattered lithic material recorded in an area thought to be a prehistoric route (FAS 2005). A Bronze Age cremation urn was also discovered at 25 Lawrence Street, some 0.6km east of Piccadilly and an assemblage of Neolithic flint tools were recovered from recent excavations at Hungate (Kendall 2009).

Prehistoric water levels at the study site would have fluctuated in tandem with those of the River Ouse (Briden 1997; Duckham 1967), creating a marshland environment with valuable resources for the local population (Whyman and Howard 2005). The location of the study site within this environment could mean there is potential for valuable information about the fluvial landscape morphology and environment during this period.

Roman period

The site is located outside the Roman fortress, in an area of relatively sparse archaeological evidence compared to the fortress area, though what has been found has suggested that the area was utilised throughout the Roman period. Excavations at 38 and 50 Piccadilly (Finlayson 1992) suggest there was a significant occupation and river front land use during the late 2nd and 3rd centuries comprising evidence for management of the riverside, dumped occupation material including domestic pottery and evidence of possible industrial activity. Roman Road 1a, leading from *Eboracum* from *Throlam* near Holme-on-Spalding-Moor is thought to have converged with a minor Road 1b about 0.5m south of Dixon Lane.

Anglo-Scandinavian period

The site lies within an extensive area of Anglo-Scandinavian activity to the south-east of the Roman fortress. Evidence of craft and trade activity was recorded at Dixon Lane/George Street in 2007 and during excavations along Walmgate evidence of Anglo-Scandinavian activity suggests that Walmgate was an important thoroughfare during this period and a substantial suburb developed in the area. The nearby churches of St Stephen, Fishergate and St Denys, Walmgate are thought likely to be of pre-Conquest origins. Along Piccadilly a number of sites have revealed traces of Anglo-Scandinavian activity such as bone working evidence from excavations at 38, 50 and 84 Piccadilly (AY 8/4 469–472).

Medieval period

Following the Norman Conquest the River Foss was damned close to its confluence with the River Ouse in order to form the water defences of the castle. This resulted in an area upstream being turned into a lake, known as *Stagnum Regis*, the King's Pool. The eastern bank of the River Foss was inundated, though the presence of medieval burials beneath Piccadilly suggests that the flooding did not extend far to the east of the study site. Land reclamation from the floods occurred intermittently from the 14th–15th centuries; evidence from excavations along Piccadilly give varying dates of initial land reclamation, borehole evidence recovered at Ryedale House suggests that here land was reclaimed in the 18th/19th centuries (YAT 2000).

Post-medieval period

Canalisation of the River Foss began in the 18th century, in accordance with the Foss Navigation Act of 1793, with the first stretch from Castle Mills to Monk Bridge being opened in 1794. It was continued to Sheriff Hutton in 1801. The modern street Piccadilly began as a lane or open space which was widened and re-named Piccadilly after the London street around 1840. It was extended north to meet Pavement in 1912 (RCHMY 5 199).

4.2 Historic map analysis

The 1610 Speed map (Figure 2) showed the King's Fishpool extending across the western portion of the site, with an open space and possible lane running north–south. The road that is

now known as Dixon Lane is shown on Speeds map, extending towards the river off George Street, and a row of houses were shown to front onto the lane. St Denys Church can be seen to the north of the site, with a lane extending on its north-western side between Walmgate and the River Foss; a couple of isolated buildings were shown on either side of the lane. Rows of houses were illustrated on either side of Walmgate, as well as bounding the east side of St Denys Church.

Despite there being only 35 years between the two maps there are some differences between Speeds map and Richards map of 1685 (Figure 3). Richards map also shows the King's Fishpool only covering the western portion of the site, though not as considerably as Speeds map. Also Dixon Lane is missing on Richards map, and instead the area between what is now known as Dennis Street and George Street was shown to be covered with small fields or orchards. Individual plots were drawn on the Richards map and it can be seen that the study site potentially encompasses three plots. This should be tentative conclusion though, as the accuracy of this map, along with Speeds, is far from perfect.

The River Foss has narrowed by 1818 (Figure 4), and the site clearly lay outside the confine of the river. The land on which the site is located is open and undeveloped, though a stream or drain is shown running north south, crossing the northeast corner of the site, towards the southern corner the open land. A lane or track is illustrated running along the eastern edge of this land, and is potentially the precursor to Piccadilly.

Baines' 1822 map (Figure 5) of York indicated the site lay still on unoccupied land, surrounded by gardens and orchards, suggesting that the land was prone to flooding. St George Street, Dixon Lane, St Denys Road and Walmgate can be clearly seen, and though there is an increase in building development along Walmgate, along the lanes and streets running off it to the north and south, little development has occurred close to the river.

The 1852 OS map (Figure 6) shows that site is located over two plots of undeveloped land, possibly associated with the timber and stone yards to the south. A set of terraced houses bounded the site to the north and a 'Maison Dieu' lay to the north. The beginnings of Piccadilly can be seen to the southeast, stopping just south of the study site. By 1907 (Figure 7) Piccadilly had been extended northwards to meet St Denys Road, just north of the site, but not to its current full extent. The site was shown as a timber yard on the OS map and was one of the few areas on this stretch of river that had not been developed on. A small building is shown partially occupying space on the southwest corner of the site.

By 1936 (Figure 8) the site had been built on and an iron works occupied much of the site. Piccadilly had been fully constructed to meet with Parliament Street and Pavement. The area round the site comprised mainly of residential terraced housing and industrial works including mills, warehouse and a brewery. The iron works continued on the site until the 1960's, when Ryedale House was constructed.

4.3 Summary of archaeological investigations

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

A trial trench evaluation and borehole survey was undertaken at 84 Piccadilly, to the immediate south of the study site in 1992 (YAT 1992a). Seven boreholes were observed and

four trenches excavated during the course of the investigations; a buried soil dated prior to the flooding of the River Foss in the 11th century was recorded. This material was sealed by alluvial deposits from the River dating to the 14th and 15th centuries. Evidence from the site suggests that land reclamation began in the 18th to 19th centuries, and there was around 3m of modern ground build-up to the north of the site.

At 41 Piccadilly, to the south-east of the study site, six trenches recorded evidence of Roman, Anglian and medieval activity in 1992 (YAT 1992b). Roman deposits and evidence of structures dating to the 4th–5th centuries were revealed under dumped deposits and pits dating to the 10th–11th centuries, of which one pit contained evidence of bone comb manufacture. Medieval activity took the form of domestic rubbish pits and dumps, with some traces of structural activity. The dumping of refuse at the site continued into the post-medieval period which was then succeeded by a build-up of garden soil in the 18th and 19th centuries.

A watching brief at United House, Piccadilly (YAT 1980), directly opposite the study site on the other side of Piccadilly, recorded potential organic Anglo-Scandinavian deposits below 0.5m of modern and post-medieval ground build-up.

An excavation at the junction between Dixon Lane and George Street in 2005/2006 (YAT AYW9) uncovered a complex sequence of archaeology dating from the Roman period through to the medieval. Key features recorded on the site included evidence of Anglian settlement activity, with a significant collection of pottery dating from this time, a pre-Norman Conquest burial ground and part of the cemetery of St Stephens Church, which included 105 burials dating from the late- 11th to mid- 14th centuries.

In 1992 YAT undertook an evaluation at 50 Piccadilly (YAT 1992c); to the immediate north of the study site, close to the Piccadilly street frontage. The evaluation uncovered a series of Roman deposits dating to between the mid 2nd century and early 3rd century, along with two small drainage ditches. A cobbled surface dating to the 3rd century was also recorded. A sequence of deposits dating to the 14th century were also recorded, which included highly organic material and structural timbers which seemed to form a substantial revetment with the King's Fishpool located to the west of the trench. Horizontal timbers and loosely woven wicker work lay immediately to the east of the timber uprights and may have consolidated the ground surface. Deposits above these timbers indicate that the area was subsequently used for dumping of domestic waste through to the 19th century when a deposit of cultivation soil was laid over the area.

A borehole survey at 46–50 Piccadilly was undertaken in 2017 by YAT (Reeves 2017) and recorded potential Roman, medieval and post-medieval deposits. The deposits thought to be from the medieval period were highly organic and were assessed as having potential for well preserved plant and macrofossil remains.

At the study site YAT conducted a borehole survey and subsequent trial trench evaluation in 2000. The evaluation revealed post-medieval and modern levelling deposits containing building demolition material. The earliest deposits encountered dated to the 16th–18th centuries and were waterlogged with good organic preservation.

5 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

5.1 Natural deposits

Where encountered natural deposits have been found to consist of firm, orange brown clay. To the south of the site the natural glacial deposits were encountered at approximately 2.30m AOD (YAT 1992a) and to the north were tentatively identified at 2.11m AOD (Reeves 2017). To the southeast of the site (YAT 1992b), the natural subsoil of clay and bands of sands and gravels were encountered at between 9.39m AOD and 11.75m AOD, distinctly sloping downwards towards Piccadilly and the river. Natural deposits were also encountered at the junction between Dixon Lane and George Street at around 9.49m AOD (YAT AYW9). On the site itself (YAT 2000) the natural glacial till was encountered at 0.0m AOD on the western side of the site, rising to 2.6m AOD to the north-east, indicating the presence of a possible post-glacial river channel crossing the site.

5.2 Roman activity

Roman levelling deposits

A series of Roman dump deposits were recorded at 41 Piccadilly (YAT 1992b), the earliest of which was recorded at 7.41m AOD. At 50 Piccadilly (YAT 1992c) deposits dating to between the late 2nd century and 3rd century were encountered, raising the ground level to around 4.5m AOD. The deposits were shown to have been dumped close to the river edge, with the tip lines running from east to west. The raising of the ground surface was subsequently consolidated by a cobble surface, which was later sealed by an organic build-up. Roman deposits were tentatively identified during the borehole survey on the same site (Reeves 2017) between 7.8m and 6.3m BGL. During the Roman period through to the medieval period the study site lay within the course of the River Foss, and evidence from the borehole survey in 1992 (YAT 2000) showed that there are thick alluvial deposits present along much of the southern and western part of the site. However, the evidence of Roman land reclamation at 50 Piccadilly indicates that there are potential Roman deposits extending into the north-east part of the study site, though this is speculative.

Roman settlement/occupation activity

Evidence of structural activity dating to the Roman period was recorded at 41 Piccadilly (YAT 1992b). Post-pads, post-holes along with a pebble floor surface, gullies and pits were uncovered from which material dating to the late Roman period were recovered, indicating the possibility of late 4th-century and 5th-century occupation. At the junction of Dixon Lane and George Street (YAT AYW9) a series of rubbish pits dating to the late 1st/early 2nd century and evidence of mid 2nd-century to late 3rd-century terracing and possible timber revetment or building were recorded. A series of late 4th-century post-holes, gullies and rubbish pits were also recorded, one of which contained a small jet pendant in the shape of a bear and a shale bracelet.

5.3 Early medieval activity

At 84 Piccadilly occupation deposits were recorded at a depth of 2.90m AOD which were dated to the Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian periods (YAT 1992a) and a significant amount of residual Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian artefacts were recovered, including pottery, a metal pin, part of a quern stone, worked antler and a spindle whorl. Artefacts dating from this period

were also recovered from 41 Piccadilly (YAT 1992b); a glass bead and a small amount of pottery were recovered from a series of clay dumps which raised the ground level by 0.5m. Most significantly a pit dating to the very end of the Anglo-Scandinavian period was found to contain waste material from bone comb manufacture.

A significant amount of Anglian pottery was recovered from the site at Dixon Lane and George Street (YAT AYW9) along with a few contexts securely dated to the period, including a boundary ditch, rubbish pits and five timber buildings which were interpreted as Anglian. The settlement continued into the Anglo-Scandinavian period with evidence of rubbish pits and hearths dating to the late 10th and early 11th centuries recorded on the site. The site was also the location of a pre-Norman Conquest burial ground; 13 burials were uncovered on the site from which 10th–11th century dating evidence was recovered. Organic deposits dating to this period were recorded at United House, Piccadilly (YAT 1980), the top of which was recorded 0.5m BGL.

5.4 Medieval activity

Much of the area to the west of Piccadilly was flooded by the damming of the River Foss in 1069, and this is reflected to some extent in the results of excavations on and in the immediate vicinity of the study site. At 84 Piccadilly (YAT 1992a) silts containing pottery dating to the 14th and 15th centuries were recorded at 4.70m AOD, immediately above alluvial deposits, indicating that the King's Fishpool was allowed to silt up during the later medieval period. Borehole evidence collected at the proposed development site (YAT 2000) suggests that alluvial deposits accumulated across the site during the medieval period and it wasn't until the late medieval period that the first reclamation of land took place.

However, results from 50 Piccadilly (YAT 1992c), indicate that the edge of the King's Fishpool did not extend as far east as previously thought, and along that part of the River Foss the Fishpool ran more parallel with the river. A sequence of 14th century deposits were recorded on the site which included highly organic material, suggesting alternating episodes of flooding and dry periods when domestic dump deposits accumulated. A substantial timber revetment was constructed during this period, comprising of large horizontal timbers, woven wicker work and timber uprights. Wicker and clay layers were deposited to the east of the revetment, possibly forming a lining. In the 15th century substantial horizontal planking was added to the revetment along with levelling of the sloping ground surface to the east of the revetment with thick clay. After the ground was level the area was continually used for the dumping of domestic waste into the post-medieval period and the ground level was considerably raised during this time.

On the eastern side of Piccadilly the evidence relates to settlement and occupation activity; at 41 Piccadilly (YAT 1992b) medieval domestic rubbish pits and dumps were recorded, along with traces of structural activity and during excavations at Dixon Lane and George Street (YAT AYW9) the cemetery of St Stephen's church was uncovered; 105 burials were recorded dating to between the 11th and 14th centuries.

5.5 Post-medieval activity

During the post-medieval period the activity in this area related mainly to land reclamation and the raising of ground levels. Close to the banks of the River Foss mixed dumps and deposits dating to the 18th and 19th centuries were encountered at 7.20m AOD during the

evaluation at 84 Piccadilly (YAT 1992a). These dumps were determined to be deliberate attempts to reclaim the land from the Foss after the Foss Navigation Act of 1793. Similar deposits were recorded at 50 Piccadilly (YAT 1992c), 41 Piccadilly (YAT 1992b) and during the evaluation at the study site in 2000 (YAT).

6 POTENTIAL DEPOSIT SEQUENCE

The potential deposit sequence for the site will be taken mainly from the results of the previous evaluation and borehole survey undertaken on the site (YAT 2000). As mentioned above, the north-east corner of the site could contain similar archaeology to that found at 50 Piccadilly (YAT 1992c) and therefore the results of that excavation will also be considered.

6.1 Natural

The depth of natural is likely to be around 0.0m AOD towards the western area of the site, rising to around 2.6m AOD to the north east. The 2000 report suggests that this significant difference in height is due to the presence of an early post-glacial river channel running down the western edge of the site, extending towards the south-east. It was supposed that the channel could represent the position of a stream that joined the River Foss from the east. The presence of the stream would mean that occupation prior to the later medieval period would have been confined to the higher ground to the north-east corner of the site.

6.2 Prehistory

There are no known prehistoric sites located within the study area and the site was likely to have been under the River Foss during this period.

6.3 Roman

There is potential for evidence of Roman activity in the north-east corner of the study site as Roman deposits at least 1.5m thick were recorded at 50 Piccadilly. The top of the deposits were recorded at 4.50m AOD and were presumably part of an attempt to reclaim land from the river.

6.4 Anglian/Anglo-Scandinavian

There is no evidence of early medieval activity on the site; however to the south of the site there has been evidence of deposition dating to between the 5th and 11th centuries recorded at 2.90m AOD (YAT 1992a). A small amount of build-up containing material dated to the 10th and 11th centuries was also recorded to the north of the site at 50 Piccadilly at around 5m AOD. These deposits were recorded close to Piccadilly, and therefore there is potential for Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian remains on the high ground at the proposed development site at a depth between 2.90m and 5m AOD.

6.6 Medieval

Alluvial deposits were seen across the study site during the borehole survey, confirming the supposition that the site lay within the King's Fishpool during the medieval period. Late medieval deposits found at the bottom of one of the trenches during the evaluation in 2000 were deemed to relate to the earliest attempts at reclaiming the land. There is therefore potential for evidence of late medieval land reclamation along the eastern edge of the site at a depth of around 6.25m AOD.

Furthermore, during excavations at 50 Piccadilly evidence of a medieval revetment was encountered on a north–south alignment; if the revetment extended fully along the edge of the King’s Fishpool there is potential for it to be present on the study site at a depth of around 5.20m AOD.

6.7 Post-medieval

Evidence of material dumped on the reclaimed land during the 16th century was uncovered during the course of the evaluation at Ryedale House; animal bone recovered from one of the deposits suggests that tanning, butchery and domestic waste was being dumped. In the late 17th or early 18th century another stage of land reclamation occurred, raising the ground level to around 6.5m AOD across the site. In the 18th century the ground level was raised again to around 8m AOD, and was likely related to the canalisation of the River Foss.

6.8 Modern

The land was largely unoccupied during the 19th century, though after the land was raised again to a little over 9m AOD in the later 19th century it was soon built upon.

7 POTENTIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ACROSS DEVELOPEMENT SITE

At the time of writing the depth of development across the site is unknown, however the evaluation by YAT in 2000 concluded that up to 2.5m of material on the site could be disturbed by development without harm to significant archaeological deposits.

LIST OF SOURCES

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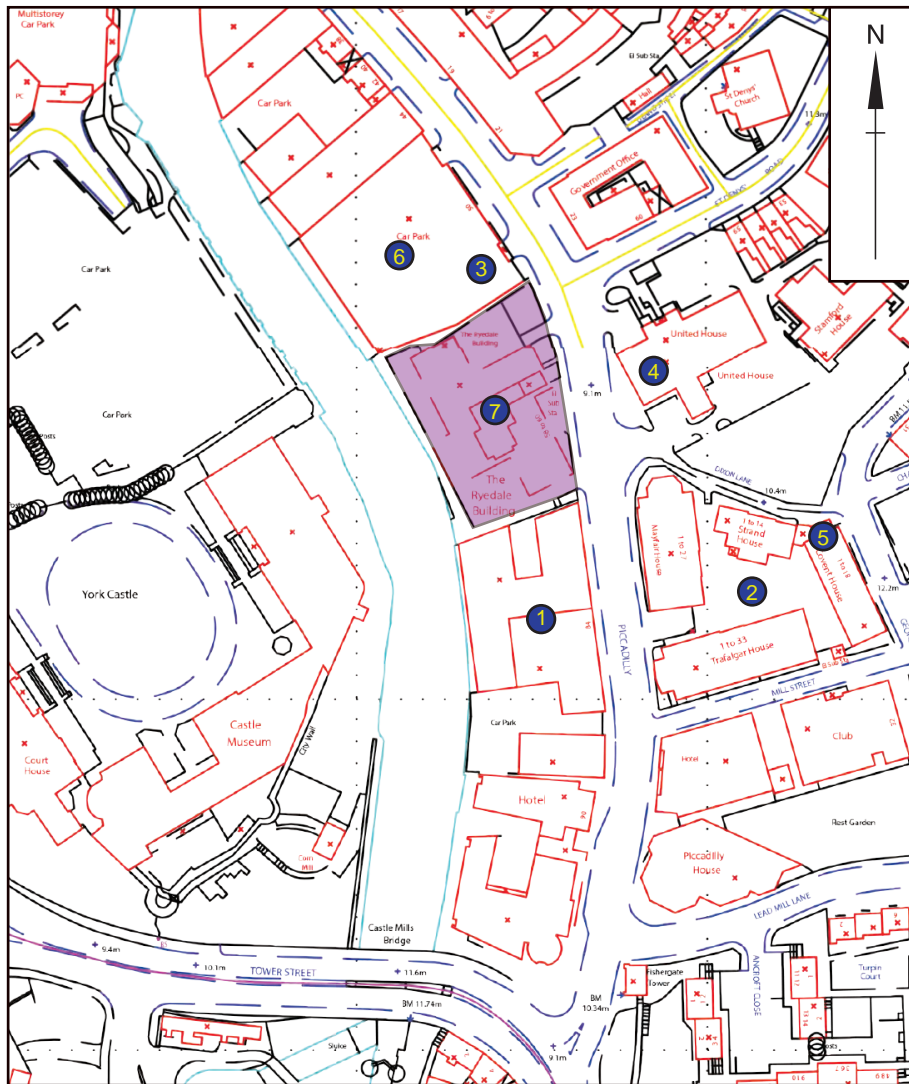
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APPENDIX 1 GAZETTEER OF SITES

Table 1 Gazetteer of sites used in study

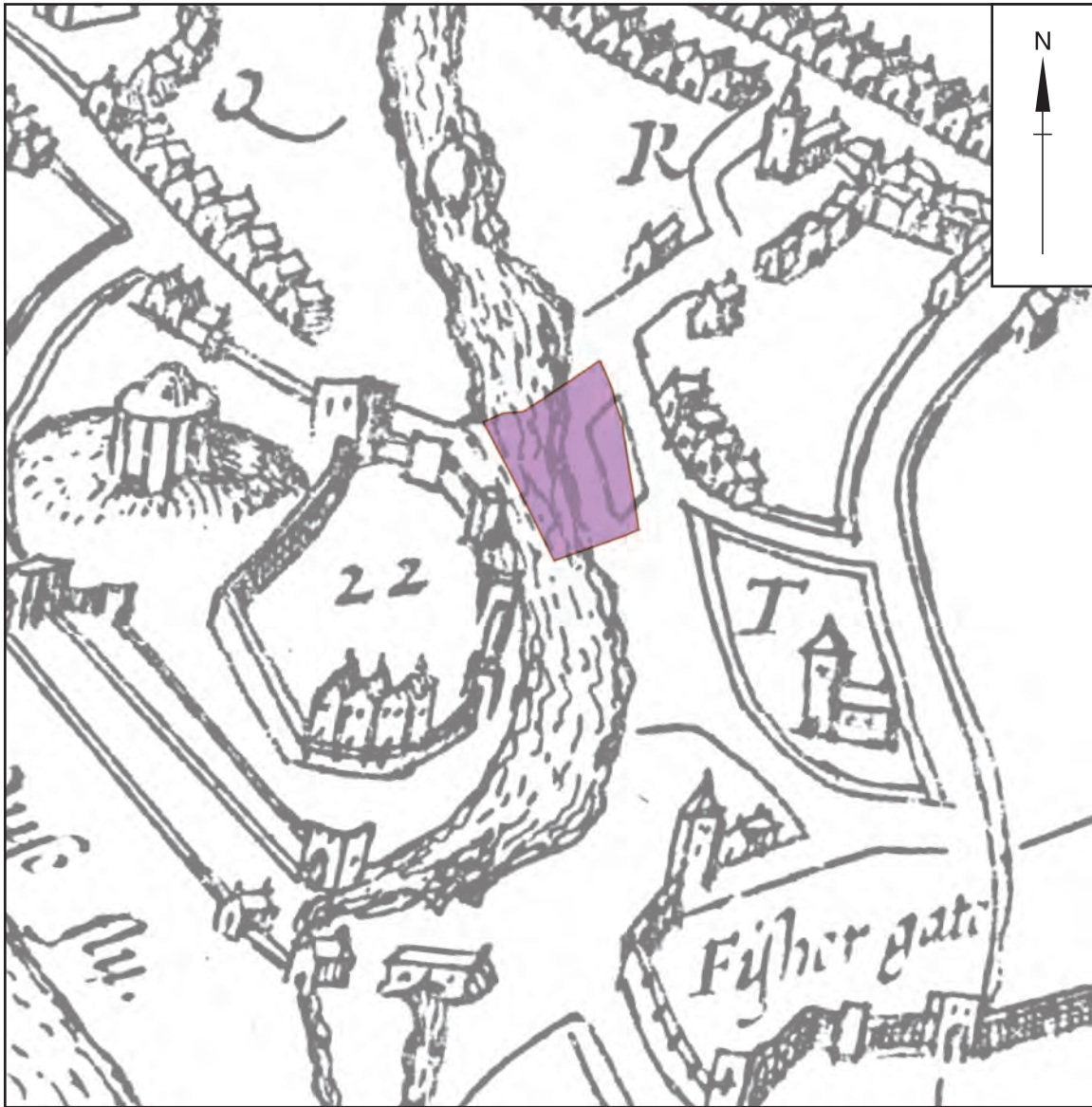
Number	Site Name	Date	Reference
1	84 Piccadilly	1992	Finlayson, R. 1992a. <i>A Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at 84 Piccadilly, York</i> . YAT report 1992/1
2	41 Piccadilly	1992	Lilley, J. 1992b. <i>A Concise Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at 41 Piccadilly, York</i> . YAT report 1992/16
3	50 Piccadilly	1992	Finlayson, R. 1992c. <i>A Report on an Archaeological Evaluation at 50 Piccadilly, York</i> . YAT report 1992/14
4	United House	1980	YAT Gazetteer entry 1980.1001
5	Junction of Dixon Lane and George Street, York	2007	AYW/9 McComish, J. 2007. <i>Roman, Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian Activity and a Medieval Cemetery on Land at the Junction of Dixon Lane and George Street, York</i> . http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/AYW9-Dixon-Lane-and-George-Street1.pdf
6	Archaeological Borehole Investigations at 47-50 Piccadilly, York	2017	Reeves, B. 2017. <i>Archaeological Borehole Investigations at 47-50 Piccadilly, York</i> . YAT report 2017/89
7	Ryedale Buildings, 58-60 Piccadilly, York	2000	Hunter-Mann, K. 2000. <i>Ryedale Buildings, 58-60 Piccadilly, York</i> . YAT report 2000.11



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 Proposed site outline

Figure 1 Site Location and Gazetteer locations




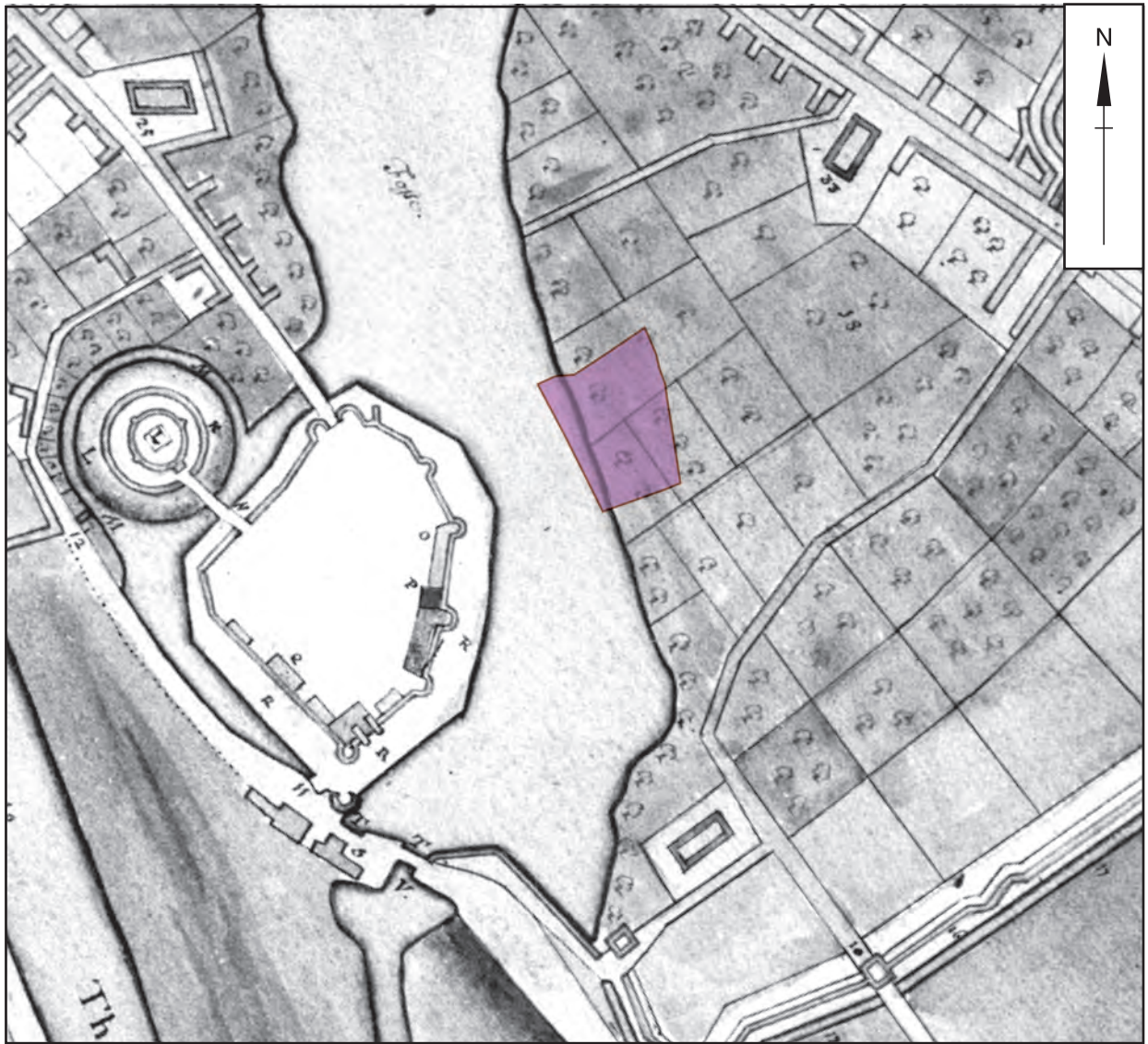
 Approximate site location

Figure 2 Speed 1610 Map




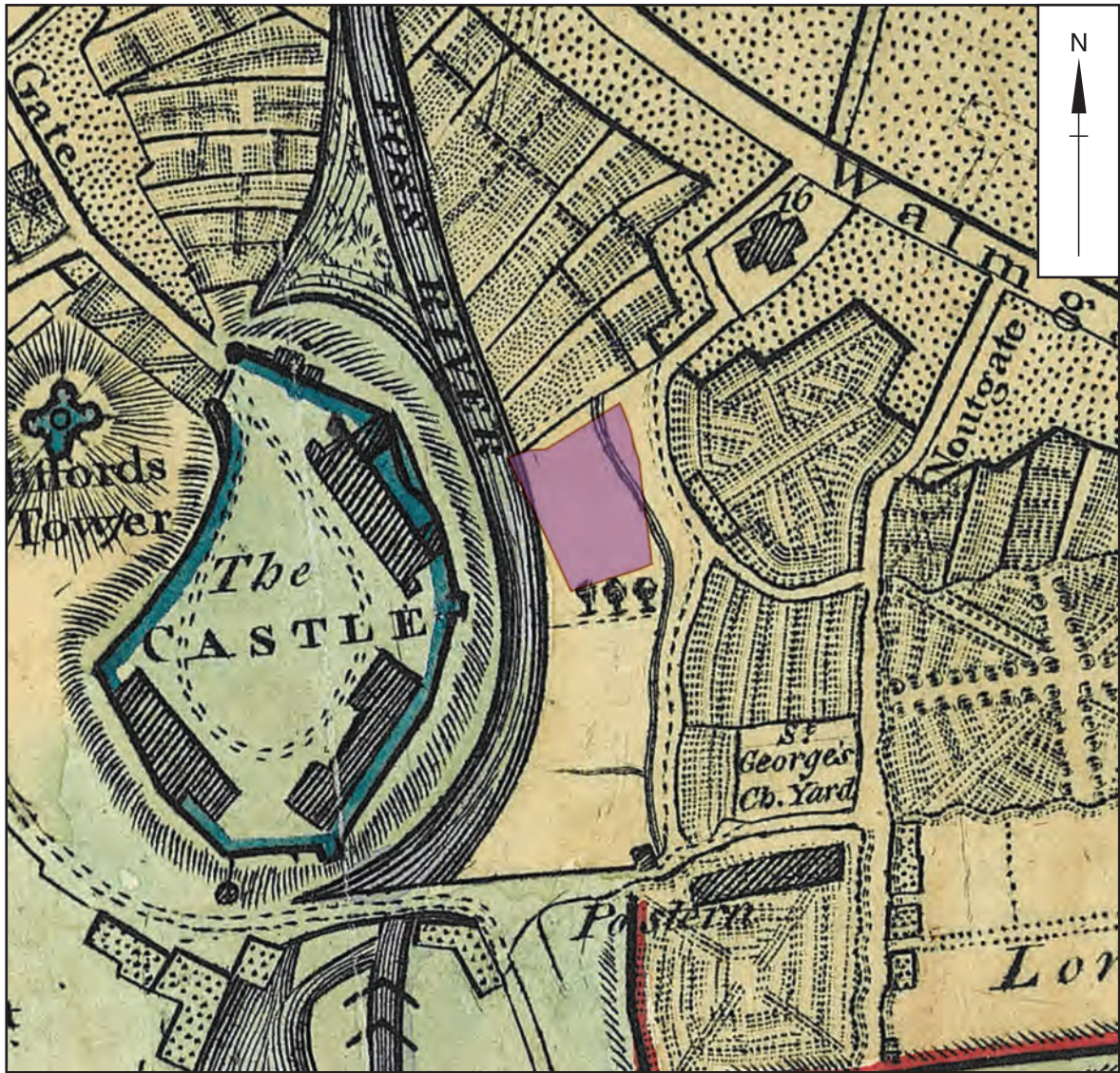
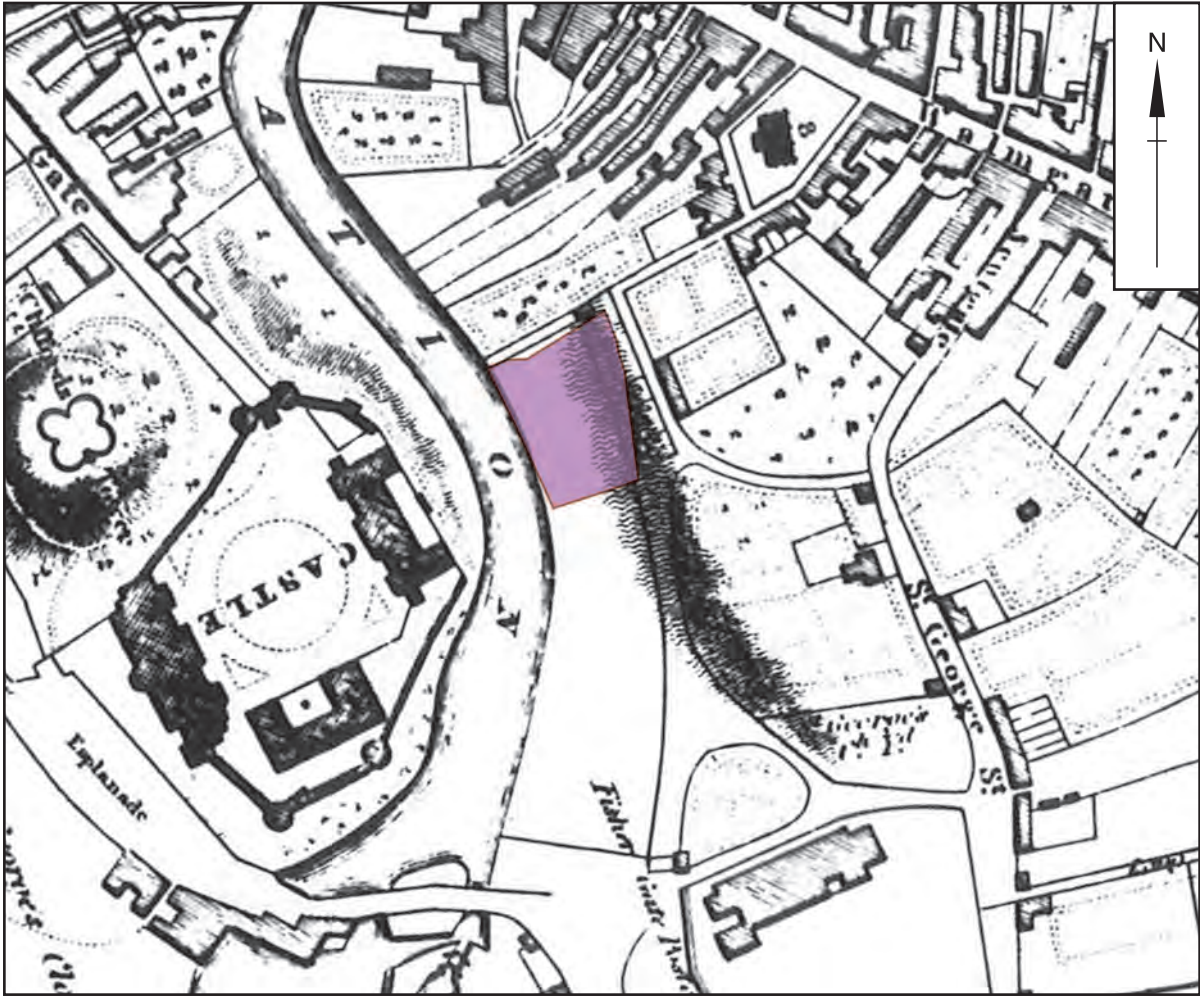
 Approximate site location

Figure 3 Richards 1685 Map



Approximate site location

Figure 4 Hargrove 1818 Map



Approximate site location

Figure 5 Baines 1822 Map



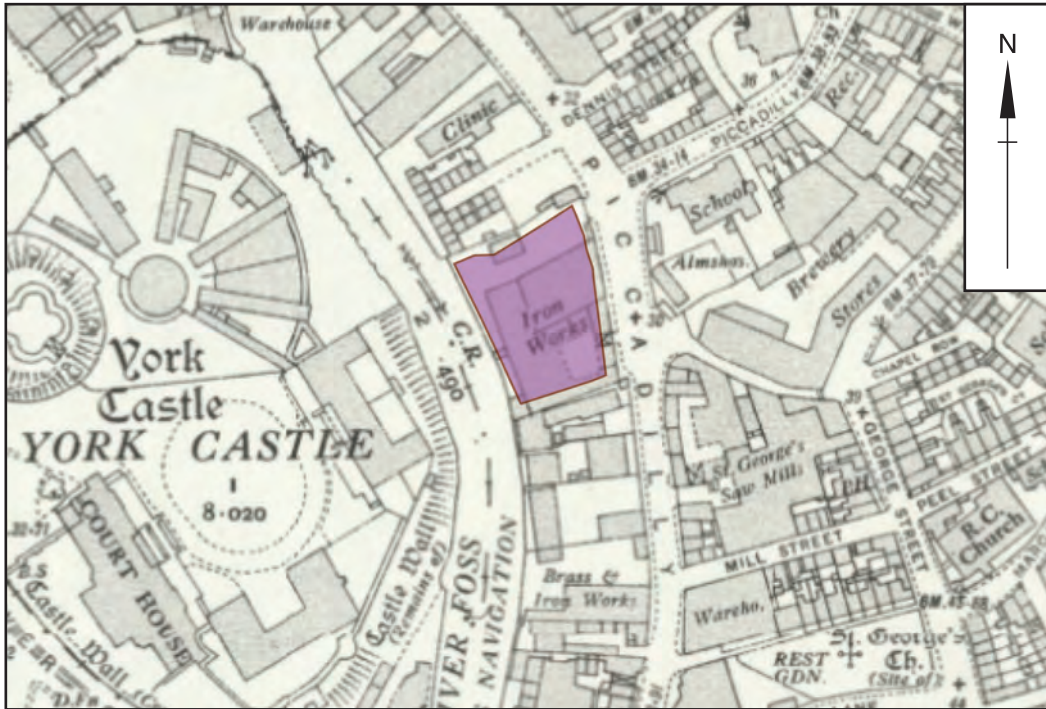
 Site location

Figure 6 OS 1852 Map



Site location

Figure 7 1907 OS Map



Site location

Figure 8 OS 1936 Map

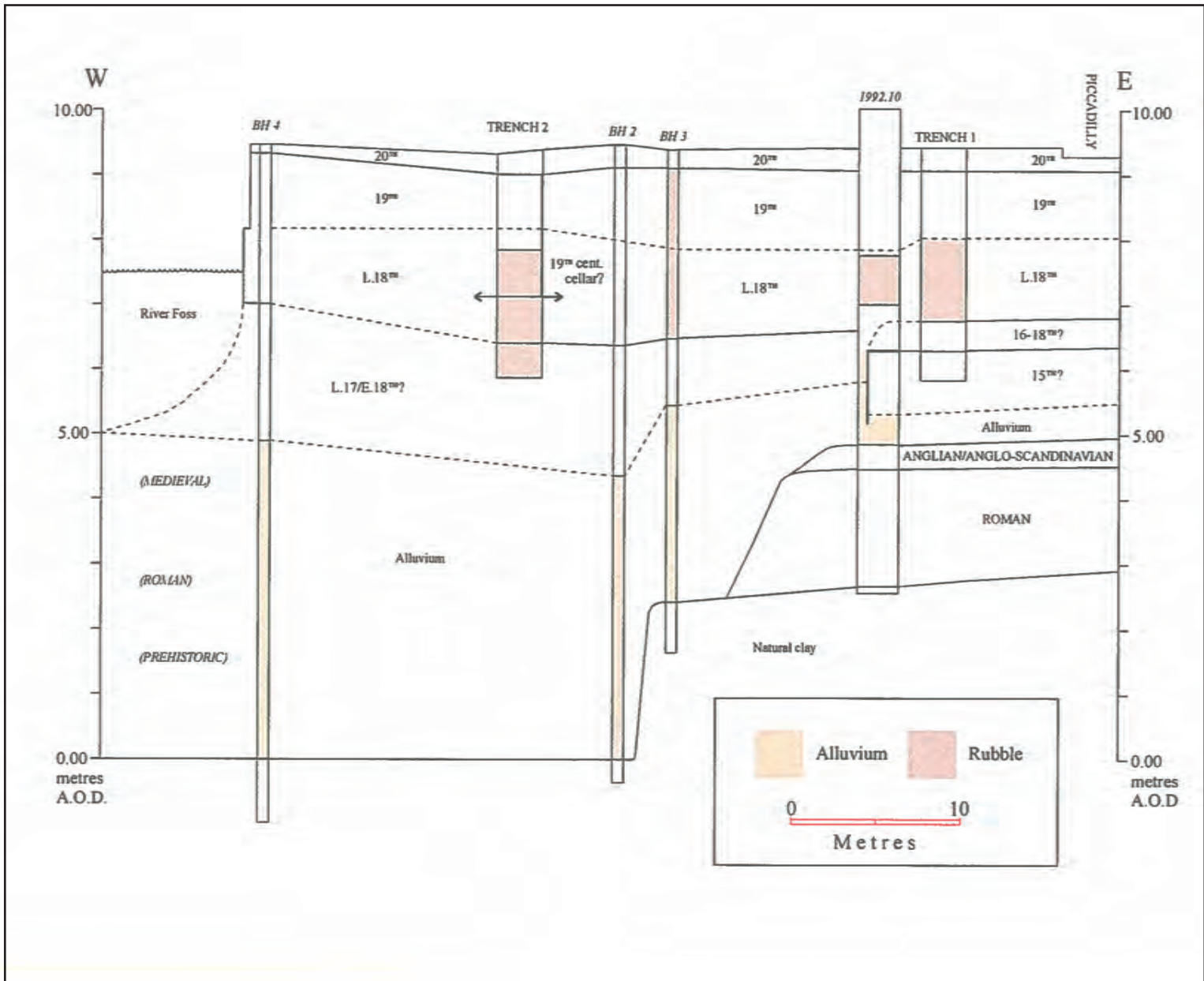


Figure 9 South facing site profile taken from YAT 2000 report on Ryedale House

APPENDIX 3 PLATES



Plate 1 View of Ryedale House from Piccadilly facing west



Plate 2 View of Ryedale House and Piccadilly facing north



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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