



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

SITE	The Mount School Field off Towton Avenue, York		
CLIENT NAME	Mulgrave Property Group Ltd		
YAT PROJECT #	6048	YAT REPORT #	2018/55
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	N/A	GRID REFERENCE	SE 5900 5088
PLANNING REFERENCE #	N/A	AAI OPS NOTICE #	N/A

INTRODUCTION

A watching brief on ground investigations for a proposed housing development was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust on behalf of Mulgrave Property Group Ltd on the 23rd April 2018 at The Mount School Field off Towton Avenue, York, NGR SE 5900 5088 (Figure 1). The objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological deposits or structures exposed by the investigations.

METHODOLOGY

A series of 6 machine dug test pits and additional windowless samples were distributed across the site (Figure 2). All 6 of the machine dug test pits and two of the other windowless samples were observed.

The excavation of the machine dug test pits was completed with a small rubber tracked 360° excavator fitted with a toothed bucket. Ground conditions were found to be too compacted for a toothless bucket to be used.

Recording was completed using a combination of written notes, representative sections and digital photography.

No finds were retrieved.

The paper and digital archive are currently stored by York Archaeological Trust under project code 6048.

RESULTS

The observation of the uppermost hand dug element of the windowless samples showed topsoil of c.300mm depth over undisturbed natural deposits. Observation of the machine dug test pits indicated a similar sequence and the result logs for the test pits can be found at the end of this document.

The uppermost portion of the test pit, the section that would ordinarily contain the archaeological sequence, was identical for pits TP02-06. This was topsoil directly on top of undisturbed natural deposits. This suggested that the ground had been cleared previously as there was not a sequence of topsoil, subsoil and then natural, as would be expected.

Test pit TP01 was the only investigation which contained the anticipated sequence with subsoil grading between the topsoil and natural. TP01 was also at the lowest point of the site.

There was very little cultural material in the topsoil with isolated fragments of brick and tile and a single sherd of white, 19th century pottery.

CONCLUSIONS

The site was anticipated to contain remnants of the medieval ridge and furrow farming regime as seen on the 1936 aerial photos (Plate 1). The results on site indicated there was nothing, bar possibly TP01, which remained of this. The site must have been cleared and extensively landscaped

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as the school expanded its playing field into this area in the immediate post WWII period. The lowest lying test pit TP01 may have preserved its soil sequence as it was not graded flat during the works.

The topsoil which was present on the site lacked residual pottery and brick and tile, indicating it may have been imported during the landscaping process.

The geophysical survey of the site supports these conclusions (Plate 2) with the only clear anomalies being linked with the land drain system across the site. These land drains were seen during the test pitting.

Given results of this watching brief it is likely that little of archaeological significance survives in the area observed. However, due to the site's proximity to areas of known archaeological sensitivity, and in particular to Roman burials, it cannot be confirmed that the site is archaeologically sterile.

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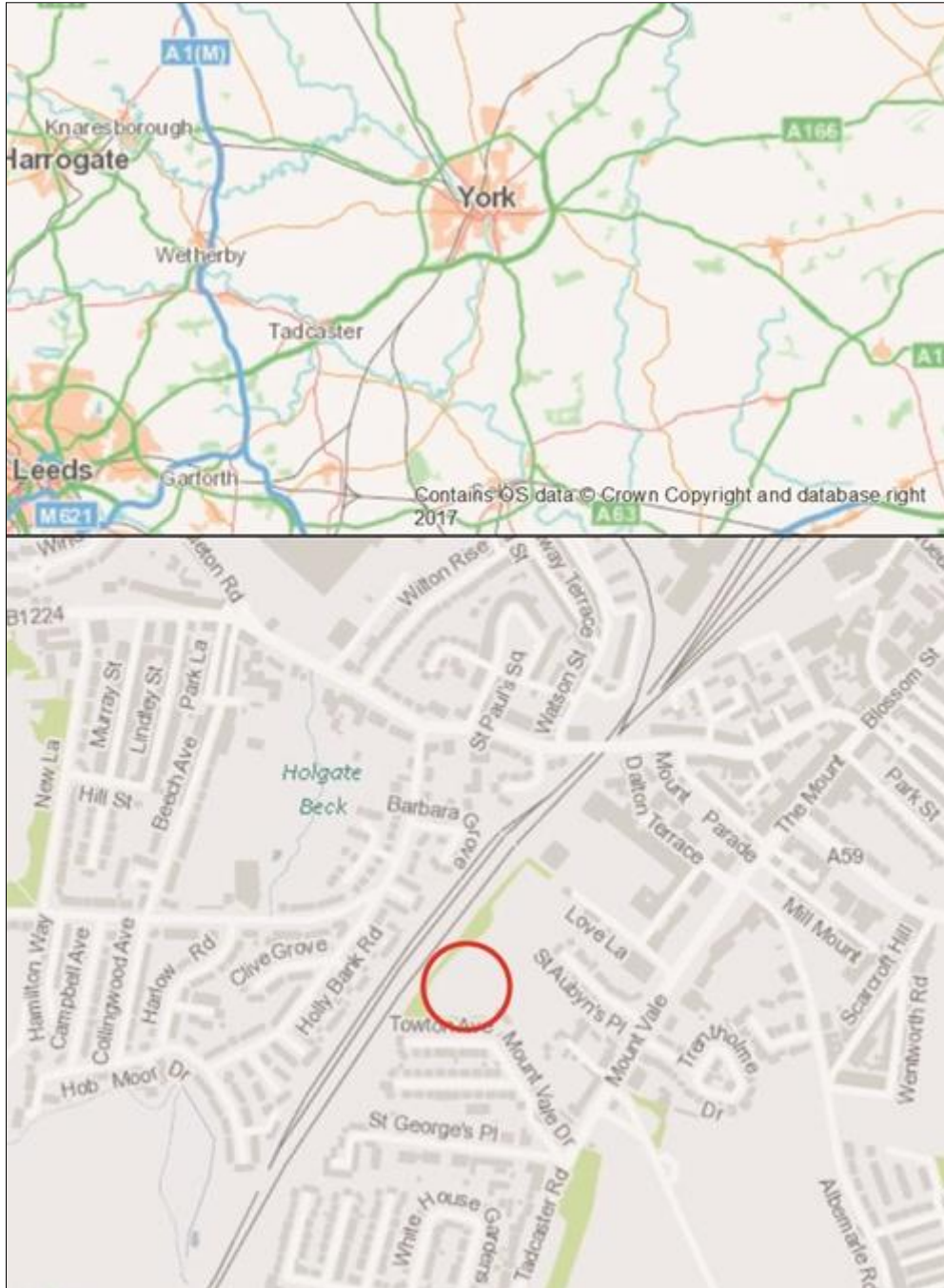


Figure 1 Site Location 1:500,000 and 1:10,000

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Figure 2 Works Location (not to scale)

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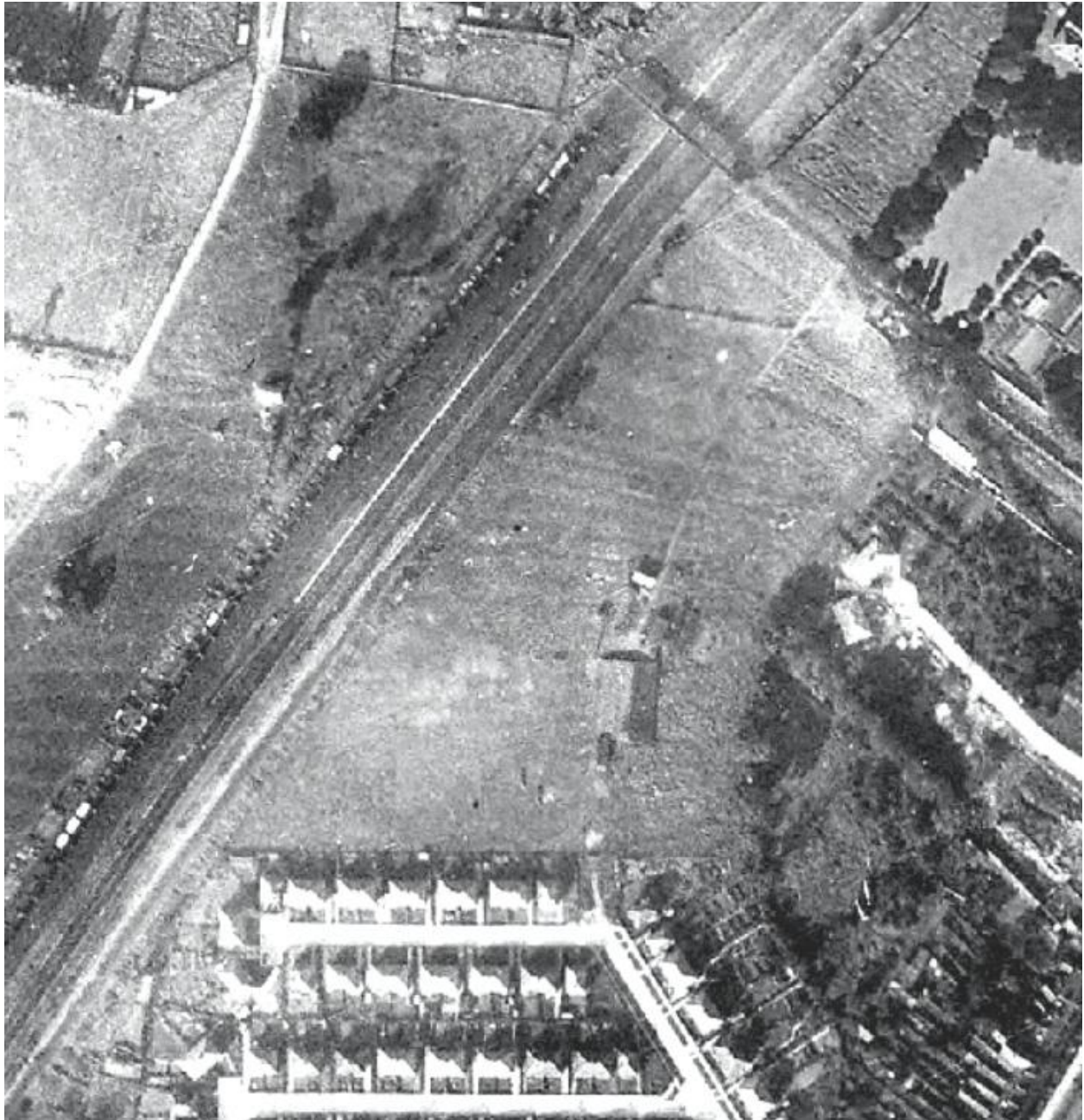


Plate 1 1936 Aerial photograph (localview.york.gov.uk/

<https://cyc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=6e02c41a806e46879e7dc215f1275afb> - accessed 24/04/2018)

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MSSE283 - The Mount School
Figure 3 - Magnetic Gradient
1:1000 @ A3
Copyright Magnitude Surveys Ltd 2018
Contains satellite imagery © Google 2018

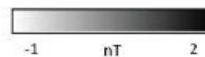


Plate 2 Geophysical survey results (MSSE283 - The Mount School Figure 3)

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Intervention No. TP 01	
Time/Date am 23/04/18	
Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	240mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	160mm thick. Friable, orangey grey brown, silty sand.
Natural	Stiff, orangey brown sandy clay. Changes at depth.
Notes	
1.7m long, 0.6m wide & 1.45m deep.	
Lots of root activity at top & C19th Brick	
Only TP with sequence through subsoil.	

Sketch Section / Photo	
Representative section 1:20	

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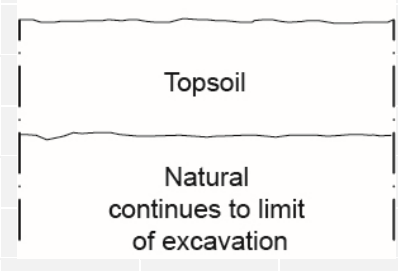



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Intervention No. TP 02	
Time/Date am 23/04/18	
Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	300mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	Not present.
Natural	Firm, brownish orange, sandy gravelly clay. Changes at depth
Notes	
	1.9m long, 0.6m wide & 1.5m deep.
	Land drains x2.

Sketch Section / Photo			
Representative section 1:20			
			
			

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Intervention No. TP 03	
Time/Date am 23/04/18	
Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	250mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	Not present.
Natural	Stiff, reddish brown, sandy pebbly clay. Does not change at depth.
Notes	
1.7m long, 0.6m wide & 1.3m deep.	
Land drain, previously broken.	
Same profile as TP 04	

Sketch Section / Photo	
<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Representative section 1:20</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Topsoil</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Natural continues to limit of excavation</p> </div> </div>	
	

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Intervention No. TP 04	
Time/Date am 23/04/18	
Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	300mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	Not present.
Natural	Stiff, reddish brown, sandy pebbly clay. Does not change at depth.
Notes 1.7m long, 0.6m wide & 1.35m deep. Same profile as TP 03. .	

Sketch Section / Photo	
<p>Representative section 1:20</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Topsoil</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Natural continues to limit of excavation</p>	

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Intervention No. TP 05	
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Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	300mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	Not present.
Natural	Firm, orangey brown, slightly clayey pebbly sand. Changes at depth.
Notes	1.6m long, 0.6m wide & 1.8m deep. Large cobbles, rocks at depth.

Sketch Section / Photo	
Representative section 1:20	

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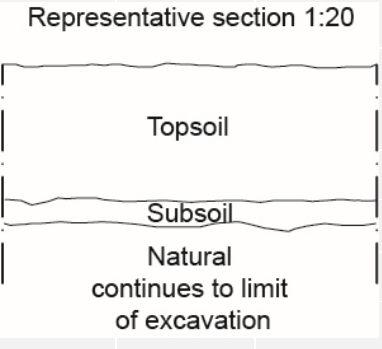
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Intervention No. TP 06	
Time/Date am 23/04/18	
Contexts / Numbers Assigned	
Topsoil	260mm thick. Friable, dark brownish grey, sandy silt.
Subsoil	60mm thick. Friable, orangey brown, slightly silty sand.
Natural	Friable, brownish yellowy orange, sand. Changes at depth.
Notes	
1.2m long, 0.6m wide & 1.4m deep.	
Land drain.	

Sketch Section / Photo

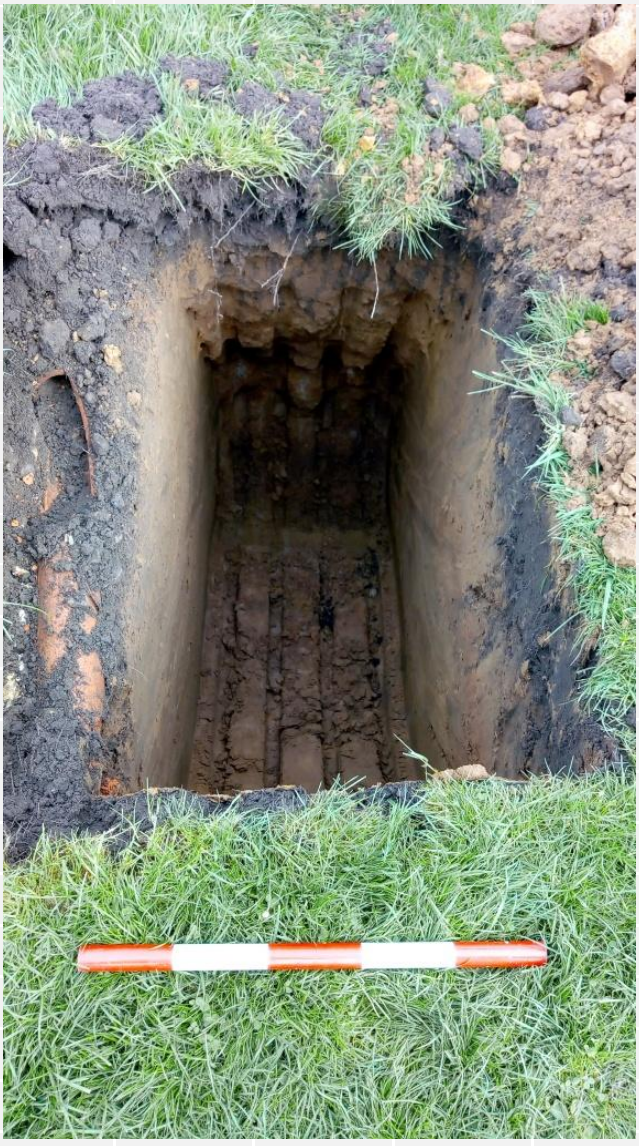


Representative section 1:20

Topsoil

Subsoil

Natural continues to limit of excavation



A photograph of a vertical excavation pit. The topsoil is dark brownish grey, and the subsoil is orangey brown. A measuring rod is placed horizontally in front of the pit for scale. The pit is surrounded by grass.

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