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## Archaeological Investigations at 22-26 Blossom Street, York

By C. Jackson-Slater

YAT Assessment Report 2020/8 February 2020



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## CONTENTS

<b>NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>KEY PROJECT INFORMATION</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>5 RESULTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
5.1 Natural .....	3
5.2 Roman .....	3
5.3 Post-medieval .....	3
5.4 Modern .....	3
<b>6 POTTERY ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>7 ANIMAL BONE ASSESSMENT</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>8 DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>LIST OF SOURCES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>PLATES</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>FIGURES</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION</b> .....	<b>23</b>

### Plates

Cover: Working shot of site

Plate 1 Mid excavation of modern demolition rubble C101 with stepped in trench sides .....	11
Plate 2 Wall C102 and Floor C103, facing north-west. Scales 2m and 0.5m .....	11
Plate 3 Possible blocked up entrance in wall C102, facing north-west .....	12
Plate 4 Deposit C105 with C104 in section, facing north-west. Scale 0.5m .....	12
Plate 5 C106-109, facing north-west. Scale 0.5m .....	13
Plate 6 Remains of wall C102 in current south-west boundary wall, facing south-west. Scale 2m .....	14

### Tables

Table 1 Pottery Types .....	5
Table 2 Animal Bone .....	6

Table 3	Index to archive .....	9
Table 4	Context list .....	10

### Figures

Figure 1	Site Location .....	15
Figure 2	Works Location .....	16
Figure 3	Plan of wall C102 and floor C103 .....	17
Figure 4	Plan of Roman deposits C104 and C105 .....	18
Figure 5	Base plan of sondage and Section 1 .....	19
Figure 6	Trench overlaid with OS 1852 map .....	20
Figure 7	Previous Archaeological Investigations .....	21
Figure 8	Proposed Development .....	22

### Abbreviations

AOD – Above Ordnance Datum

BGL – Below Ground Level

CBM – Ceramic Building Material

RCHMY – Royal Commission on Historical Monuments York

TBM – Temporary Benchmark

YAT – York Archaeological Trust

## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Between the 13<sup>th</sup> January and the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020 York Archaeological Trust conducted an evaluation at 22-26 Blossom Street, York (SE 59653 51408).

The work was undertaken for O'Neill Associates to help inform a planning application that was under consideration by the City of York Council (19/01588/FULM), based on a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by YAT. The evaluation involved the excavation and recording of a single trench up to 2.56m BGL.

The evaluation revealed Roman deposits between 1.81-2m BGL (13.25-13.71m AOD). Above these deposits were the remains and the subsequent demolition rubble infill of an 18<sup>th</sup> century wine vault/cellar. Due to the presence of Roman and medieval archaeology recorded in nearby excavations at depths between 14m and 15m AOD, it is highly probable that outside the footprint of the 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings and cellar the archaeology survives at a higher level than recorded here.

## KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	22-26 Blossom Street, York
YAT Project No.	6152
Document Number	2020/8
Type of Project	Evaluation
Client	O'Neill Associates
Planning Application No.	19/01588/FULM
NGR	SE 59653 51408
Museum Accession No.	Pending
OASIS Identifier	Yorkarch1-381854

## REPORT INFORMATION

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	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	CJ	22/01/20	JMcC	30/1/20	JMcC	10/02/20

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Between the 13<sup>th</sup> January and the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2020 YAT conducted a single trench evaluation at 22-26 Blossom Street, York (SE 59653 51408; Figure 1).

The work was undertaken for O'Neill Associates to help inform a planning application that was under consideration by CYC (19/01588/FULM).

The evaluation revealed Roman deposits between 1.81-2m BGL (13.25-13.71m AOD). Above these deposits were the remains and the subsequent demolition rubble infill of an 18<sup>th</sup> century wine vault/cellar.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed the WSI (Appendix 3) save a decrease in trench size due to on-site constraints and the presence of asbestos in the southern part of the trench.

A single trench measuring 4m x 4m x 1m was hand excavated (Figure 2) in the footprint of the proposed development to the rear of the current 22-26 Blossom Street buildings. Once the trench reached 1m below ground level, the sides were stepped in by a metre and a further 1m depth of soil was removed in a trench measuring 2m x 2m. A small sondage measuring 0.6m x 0.5m x 0.5m was then excavated in the base of the 4m<sup>2</sup> trench.

The trench was located by measurement to local permanent features shown on the 2000 Ordnance Survey map of York. All deposits were hand excavated and recorded as per the standard YAT single context recording system (YAT 2009). Finds were retrieved and bagged by individual context number. The trench was backfilled to the client's request.

## 3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site was located at 22-26 Blossom Street, York (SE 59653 51408), 0.1km south-west of the historic city walls. The site consisted of a rectangular shaped garden to the rear of 22-26 Blossom Street, bounded to the north-east and south-west by Premier Inn Hotel and by a small car-park to the north-west. The site is bordered on the south-east side by Blossom Street. The ground level to the rear of the property sloped down from 15.98m AOD at the south-east end of the garden to 15.52m AOD at the north-west end.

The underlying bedrock consists of Sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 237 to 272 million years ago, when the local environment was dominated by rivers. Above this are superficial deposits of glacial moraine, consisting of clay, sand and gravel which were formed up to 2 million years ago when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (British Geological Survey).

## 4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-based assessment of the site (Boast 2019) detailing the history and archaeological background of the area has been produced. Therefore, a summary of the background most relevant to the site will be provided here.

Previous investigations around the site have recorded natural deposits between 11-13.22m AOD.

### **Roman**

Several archaeological investigations in the immediate surrounds of the study site have recovered Roman remains. The earliest and closest to the site was conducted at 14-20 Blossom Street in the 1950's by L. P. Wenham (1966; Figure 7). Twenty-two trenches were excavated to the rear of 18-26 Blossom Street which exposed significant Roman archaeology, including a number of buildings, two Roman roads, a cremation and a stone altar. The Roman road was recorded at a depth of around 13.5m AOD, whilst the top of the Roman ground level closest to the site, only 10m to the south, was recorded at 13.41m AOD.

Two sets of archaeological investigations (Figure 7) were conducted to the south of the site, at 28-40 Blossom Street. The first excavation was conducted by MAP in 2000 and recorded Roman deposits, walls and a cobble surface between 14.7m and 14.9m AOD. The second investigation at the site, conducted by YAT in 2009 (Milsted), also recorded evidence of Roman buildings, as well as a small road and possible industrial and funerary activity. The top of the Roman activity was recorded at 14.32m AOD and extended for over a metre in depth.

In 1991 YAT excavated five trenches to the rear of 14-20 Blossom Street (YAT 1991; Figure 7) along with the recording of 17 boreholes in order to provide a profile of the deposits across the site. The trenches encountered Roman cobbled surfaces, deposits and pits, and recorded potential evidence of industrial and funerary activity. The top of the Roman levels were recorded between 11.62m AOD and 15.95m AOD and the results from the boreholes suggested the survival of up to 2.5m of Roman occupation deposits above the natural.

### **Medieval**

During the medieval the area around the site was mainly agricultural; excavations to the rear of 28-40 Blossom Street (Milsted 2009, 13) recorded a thick medieval plough soil sealing the Roman remains between 14.03m and 14.45m AOD (Figure 7). Pits, boundary ditches and the base of an oven were also recorded.

### **Post-medieval**

During the post-medieval period the site developed from open agricultural land to a two-dwelling property with warehouse and stable to the rear. The house was numbered 22, 24 and 26 Blossom Street, with numbers 22 and 26 fronting Blossom Street, and number 24 to the rear (RCHMY 1972, 64). The property was built in 1789 by John Horner, a wine merchant as a pair of dwellings of unequal size with a central carriageway leading to a warehouse (No. 24). In 1795 the property was described in the York Herald as containing '*...spacious cellars and convenient out-buildings (No. 26) ...with a commodious warehouse and wine-vaults (under No. 24) ..., a yard stabling for three horses, and a very good garden, well stored with a variety of choice fruit-trees*'.

After a number of different owners, the property was sold in 1934 to the York Railwaymen's Club (RCHMY 1972, 64) who made extensive alterations; including forming the ground floor of No. 26 into one single room and combining the first floor of the whole property into one room.

During the late 20<sup>th</sup> century the rear outbuildings were demolished and the area turned into the garden it is today.



## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Natural

A possible natural glacial moraine deposit of orange brown sandy clay (C109; Figure 5, Plate 5) was seen in the base of the sondage at 13.25m AOD.

### 5.2 Roman

The earliest evidence of Roman activity comprised three cut features (C106-8; Figure 5, Plate 5) in the base of the small sondage, cutting into the probable natural clay C109. The features were circular to sub-circular in plan and measured around 0.2m in diameter. Though the features were not excavated, the fill was recorded as dark grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and finds of pottery, animal bone, lava quern stone fragments, oyster shell and iron nails.

Sealing these cut features was a light grey-brown sandy silt (C105; Figures 4-5, Plate 4) with occasional burnt clay, charcoal and small round stone inclusions. The deposit extended across the entire sondage area and was 0.08m thick. The top of the deposit was recorded at 13.33m AOD. Above C105 was another Roman deposit, comprising of mid- grey-brown sandy silt (C104; Figures 4-5, Plate 4) with occasional small round pebbles and charcoal inclusions. Finds recovered from the deposit included pottery, animal bone, oyster shell and fired clay. The top of the deposit was recorded at 13.71m AOD and measured 0.38m in thickness.

### 5.3 Post-medieval

Directly above the Roman deposits, in the base of the 4m<sup>2</sup> trench, was a floor (C103; Figures 3 and 5, Plate 2) and wall (C102; Figure 4, Plates 2-3 and 6) of a brick structure. The floor C103 was bedded on layer of sand and mortar and was constructed from bricks measuring 230mm x 130mm x 25mm thick. The floor covered the entire base of the 2m x 2m trench, at a depth of 13.79m AOD. The floor C103 butted up to and was likely contemporaneous with the wall C102 on the north-west side of the trench. Wall C102 was constructed from bricks measuring 220mm x 110mm x 50mm thick laid out in a stretcher bond pattern, and bonded with a creamy white lime mortar. The wall was on a north-east/south-west alignment and there was evidence of a possible infilled doorway on the south-west end, as there was a slight difference in the bonding pattern. The height of the wall was at least 1.14m high, with below ground remains recorded at a height of 14.71-15.01m AOD. Evidence of scarring in the current south-west boundary wall of the garden heavily suggests that the wall was present above the current ground level at some point.

### 5.4 Modern

The majority of the trench, up to 1.8m in depth, comprised modern demolition infill (C101; Plates 1-2) of the above structure. The infill comprised loose brick and roof tile rubble combined with a gritty silt containing frequent mortar inclusions along with occasional slate and York stone slabs and blocks. Very occasional timber stakes were also present. The current ground layer of topsoil and turf (C100) formed the top 0.42m of deposits. Modern material was recovered from both layers, including cola cans, crisp packets and two Queen Elizabeth II one pence coins.

## **6 POTTERY ASSESSMENT**

By A. Jenner and C. Jackson-Slater

### **6.1 Introduction**

During excavations at 22-26 Blossom Street, York 63 sherds of Roman pottery were retrieved from two contexts (Table 1). The material was domestic or funerary in nature and comprised of small to large sherds, a number of which were abraded. The sample was very small and therefore it is difficult to fully determine its significance in relation to local land use.

### **6.2 Methodology**

A small assemblage was analysed by eye and using x20 microscope where necessary. The standard texts (Monaghan 1997) were consulted regarding fabrics and forms.

### **6.3 Discussion**

The range of ware types within this assemblage is not uncommon for this area at this period. It includes wares that were used in domestic and funerary contexts across York during the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries. Wares include; Samian, Ebor, grey, burnished, colour-coated and amphorae. Evidence of use is notable on the Ebor Mortaria which has light sooting on its external wall and heavy sooting on its upper rim. Whether this is contemporary with use in the Roman period or is a later application is uncertain.

Of all the wares, only the black burnished ware had any form of decoration, which was a lattice pattern. The samian although ribbed was otherwise plain with no elaborate molded decoration. The fact that this assemblage consists of mostly very plain wares may suggest a lack of wealth, or may simply reflect the small size of the assemblage.

### **6.4 Conclusion and further work**

Future excavation would provide further insight into the lives of the inhabitants, and may be able to assess this assemblage in relation to other material recovered in this area.

Context	Quantity	Dating	Details
104	52	Late 2nd to early 3rd century	<p><b>1 Ebor mortaria</b> with white slip and band of sooting along upper rim surface, large sherd</p> <p><b>7 Ebor</b> with white slip, small body sherds</p> <p><b>9 Ebor</b>, small body sherds</p> <p><b>1 Ebor bowl</b> base with central thumb impression, medium sherd</p> <p><b>1 fine Ebor bowl</b> rim, fine fabric, two incised horizontal grooves, medium sherd</p> <p><b>5 Samian</b>, small to large sherds, including rim and ribbed body sherd</p> <p><b>5 amphora</b>, small to large sherds</p> <p><b>1 black burnished ware</b> with lattice decoration, small sherd</p> <p><b>1 rusticated greyware</b>, small sherd</p> <p><b>7 black burnished ware</b> including base and rim, small to large sherds</p> <p><b>1 colour coated indented beaker</b> with vertical applied scales, medium sherd</p> <p><b>6 burnished greyware</b> including rim, small to medium sherds</p> <p><b>3 greyware jar</b>, small to medium sherds</p> <p><b>3 fine Ebor type</b>, light sooting, small to medium sherds</p> <p><b>1 white ware scrap</b> with occasional iron inclusions</p>
105	11	2nd century	<p><b>2 samian bowl</b> including rim, small to medium</p> <p><b>4 Ebor</b> with white slip, small body sherds</p> <p><b>2 black burnished ware</b>, small sherds</p> <p><b>2 greyware</b>, small sherds</p> <p><b>1 scrap</b></p>

Table 1 Pottery Types

## 7 ANIMAL BONE ASSESSMENT

By N. van Doorn

### 7.1 Introduction

Excavations on 22-26 Blossom Street site have produced an assemblage of hand collected animal bone. These animal bones were recovered from two contexts. From those two contexts, a small amount of shell was also recovered. This assemblage has been rapidly assessed focussing primarily on the range of animal taxa present.

### 7.2 Methodology

The faunal remains were examined and recorded with guidance from Dobney et al. (1999, 15) and O'Connor (2008). Evidence of butchery, gnawing, burning or post depositional damage was recorded where present, with reference to Shipman et al. (1984, 307-325) and Stiner et al. (1995, 223-227).

Identification of species was completed using published identification guides (Pales and Lambert 1971). Wherever identification to species could not be achieved, bone fragments were classified using the following categories; unidentified mammal, unidentified bird, or unidentified fish. Mammalian fragments that retained characteristics that enabled estimation of the size of the animal were assigned to one or more of the following categories: large mammal (the size of horse/cow/large cervid [i.e. deer]); medium mammal 1 (the size of sheep/goat/pig/small cervid); medium mammal 2 (the size of dog/cat/hare) and small mammal (the size of rodents, mustelidae (badger/otter/polecat family) etc). Very small bone scraps (usually smaller than 10mm) were recorded as unidentifiable and only counted approximately.

### 7.3 Discussion

The results are outlined in Table 2.

Context	Quantity and description	Taphonomy	Comments
104	Cattle: 1 juvenile metapodial, 2 cattle mandible fragments, 3 metapodial fragments, pelvis fragment, 1 <sup>st</sup> distal phalanx, 1 tooth L mammal: 1 vertebra fragment, 2 rib fragments Sheep: 1 skull fragment, 1 tibia shaft, 1 astragalus M1 mammal: 1 skull fragment, 7 vertebrae fragments, 5 rib fragments Bird (chicken): 1 tibiotarsus, 1 long bone shaft, 1 scapula Dog: 2 <sup>nd</sup> distal phalanx No ID: 31 scraps/fragments Shell: 8 oyster valves, 9 fragments	Medium to dark brown colour, fair preservation	Butchery marks on cattle bones, especially metapodials and pelvis. Pelvis also shows eburnation (pathology).
105	Cattle: 1 metapodial, 1 metapodial fragment L mammal: 4 fragments Shell: 2 oyster fragments	Medium to dark brown colour, fair preservation, significant cassy concretions	Butchery marks on cattle bones

**Table 2** Animal Bone

### 7.4 Conclusion

The animal bone recovered from 22-26 Blossom Street contained mostly mammalian bone, and consists of domestic taxa such as cattle, sheep, dog and common domestic bird species such as chicken or geese, as well as shell from edible oyster.

Most of the assemblage seems to be consistent with undifferentiated domestic refuse. While substantial saw marks and cuts were present, no extensive evidence for specialised butchery could be found due to the limited amount of material. The preservation of the bones was overall no more than fair and bones were sometimes heavily stained with cassy concretions, which may further indicate dumping of domestic waste.

### **7.5 Recommendations for further research**

The collection of animal bone has limited potential for further research. The animal bone does not reflect any specific activity taking place on the site and most elements are incomplete or fragmented.

### **7.6 Recommendations for retention/discard**

It is recommended that the animal bone collection is discarded after recording according to museum disposal guidelines.

## **8 DISCUSSION**

The earliest phase of activity uncovered on site were Roman deposits recorded from a depth of around 1.8m BGL (13.71m AOD). The limited size of the sondage in which these deposits were seen makes it difficult to determine their exact nature. Pottery recovered dated between the 2<sup>nd</sup>-early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries and was a typical range of pottery types for the Roman period in York (Jenner section 6). The pottery indicated a possible domestic or funerary context to the deposits, however, the additional presence of oyster shell and quern stone fragments suggest that a domestic context is more likely. Analysis of the animal bone supports this, as there was some indication of cess material attached to the bones resulting from domestic waste (van Doorn section 7). Similar layers have been seen in nearby excavations, such as at that at 28-40 Blossom Street (Milsted 2009, 16). The results from the excavations at 28-40 Blossom Street suggested that these deposits were related to landscaping of the area.

Above the Roman deposits was a brick-built structure, likely the wine vaults and cellar described in the RCHMY (1972) which lay beneath and to the rear of the No. 24 (warehouse). The wall was not shown on the 1852 OS map and therefore was likely an internal wall. The results of this evaluation combined with the 1852 plan of the site heavily suggests that the top 1.8-2m of ground along the western edge of the site is taken up by these cellars, and therefore it is unlikely that there is any survival of archaeology above 2m BGL at the south-western end of the site and 1.8m at the north-western end. Interestingly the excavated wall extends beyond the eastern limit of the building depicted on the 1852 map (Figure 6). This could be due to the below ground cellars being larger in size than the above ground buildings, therefore the full extent of the structures cannot be determined.

Nearby excavations in the area have recorded the presence of Roman archaeology at depths between 14m and 15m AOD; suggesting that outside the footprint of the 18<sup>th</sup> century structures, particularly in the north-eastern part of the site, there is a potential survival of archaeology at higher levels than that recorded in this evaluation. It is recommended that further archaeological works should be undertaken on any ground works to the east of the evaluation trench (Figure 8). Archaeological monitoring should also take place during any works that extend below 1.8m BGL in the western part of the site.

## LIST OF SOURCES

British Geological Survey ([www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)) [accessed 21/06/2019]

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A big acknowledgement is given to the site team, S. Grimmer, G. Loffman and T. Coates for removing the large amount of brick rubble by hand in a good amount of time.

**APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE**

Item	Number of items
Context sheets	10
Levels register	1
Original drawings	5
Digital photographs	74
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	1

**Table 3** Index to archive

## APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	BGL	AOD	Description
100	0m	15.81m - 15.52m	Topsoil. Dark grey brown sandy silt covered with grass turf. Lens of builder's sand at base in west side of trench. Moderate CBM fragments, mortar flecks and modern plastic and rubbish. Occasional to moderate asbestos corrugated sheets in centre to south end of trench.
101	0.42m	15.10m - 15.39m	Demolition rubble. Loose brick and roof tile rubble with a dark grey silt containing frequent mortar, occasional slate and York stone. Very occasional timber stakes.
102	0.51m - 0.81m	14.71m - 15.01m	Brick wall. Red brick wall in stretcher bond with lime mortar. North-east/south-west aligned. Wall measured 2.90m x 0.24m x 1.14m deep.
103	2.02m - 1.73m	13.79m	Brick floor. Red brick floor comprised of bricks measuring 230mm x 130mm x 25mm thick. Sat on bed of sand and sandy mortar.
104	1.81m	13.71m	Roman deposit. Moderate mid- grey-brown sandy silt with occasional small round pebbles and occasional charcoal. Finds – pottery, CBM, bone and lava quern stone
105	2.19m	13.33m	Roman deposit. Moderate light grey-brown sandy silt with occasional burnt clay, charcoal flecks and round stones. Finds – pottery, bone and oyster shell
106	2.27m	13.25m	Roman cut feature. Sub-circular features containing dark grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks
107	2.27m	13.25m	Roman cut feature. Sub-circular features containing dark grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks
108	2.27m	13.25m	Roman cut feature. Sub-circular features containing dark grey sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks
109	2.27m	13.25m	Natural? Firm, mid orange brown sandy clay

Table 4 Context list



## PLATES



**Plate 1** Mid excavation of modern demolition rubble C101 with stepped in trench sides



**Plate 2** Wall C102 and Floor C103, facing north-west. Scales 2m and 0.5m



**Plate 3** Possible blocked up entrance in wall C102, facing north-west



**Plate 4** Deposit C105 with C104 in section, facing north-west. Scale 0.5m



**Plate 5** C106-109, facing north-west. Scale 0.5m



**Plate 6** Remains of wall C102 in current south-west boundary wall, facing south-west. Scale 2m

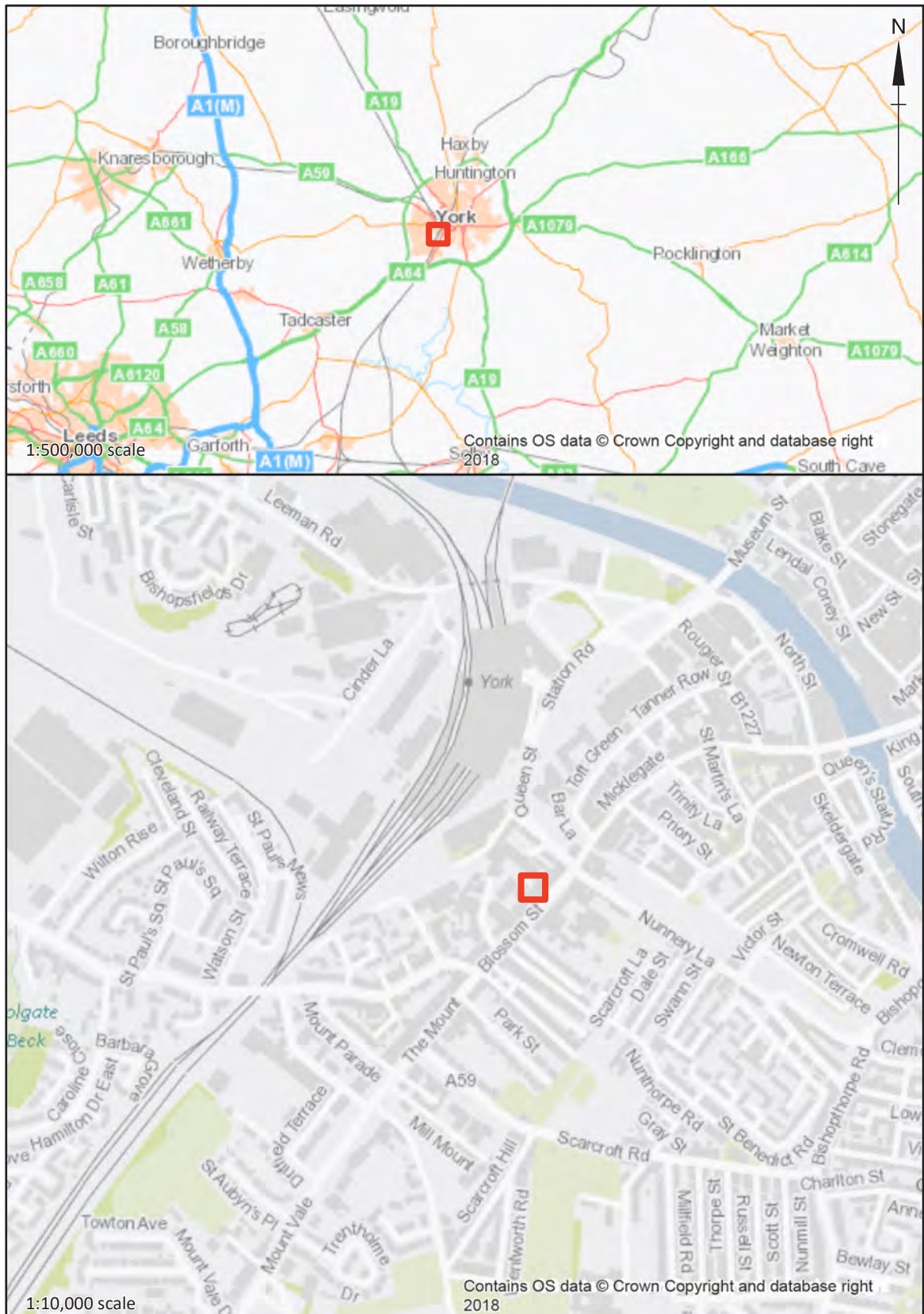
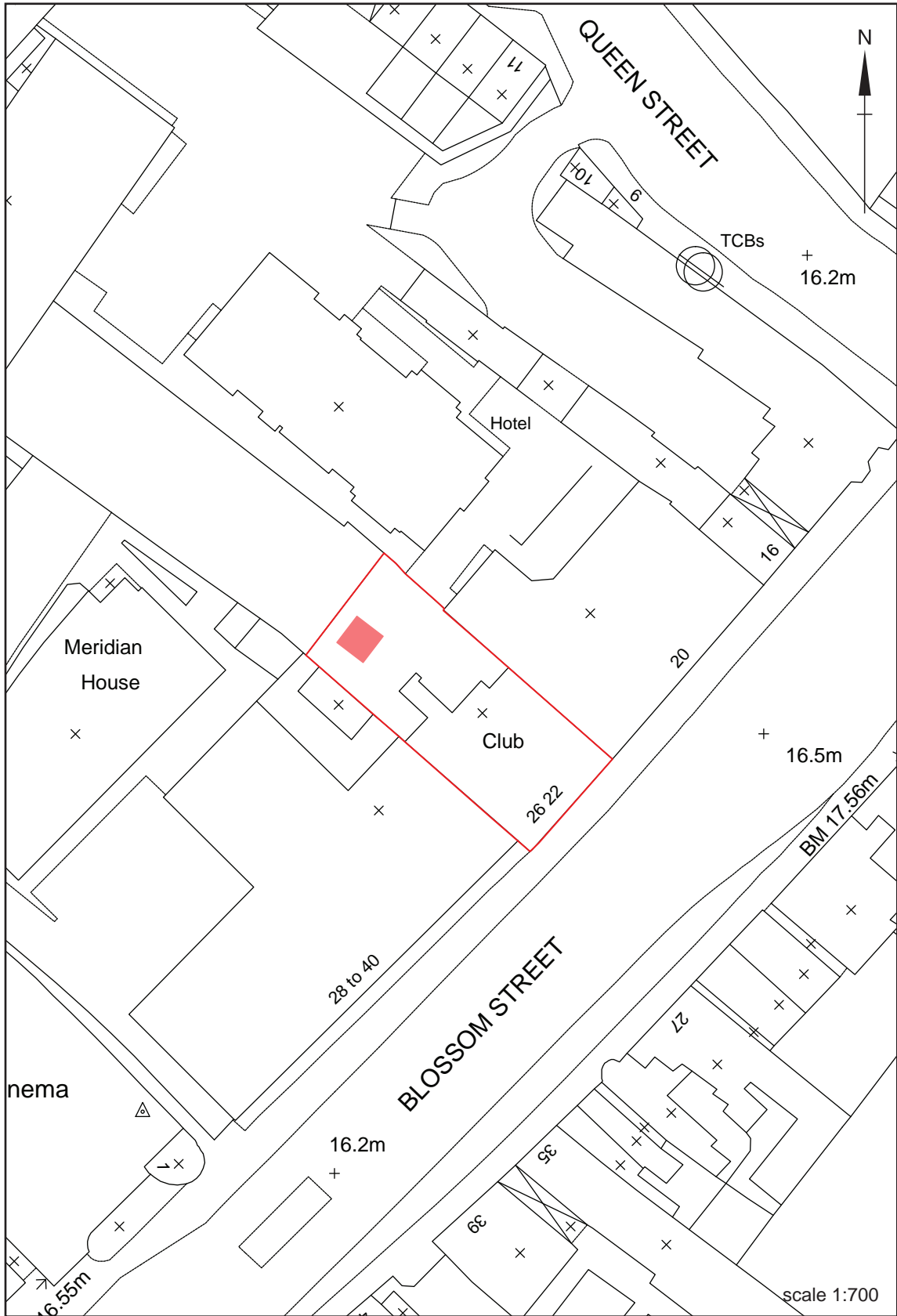


Figure. 1 Site Location

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- Site outline
- 4m x 4m trench

Figure 2 Works Location

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

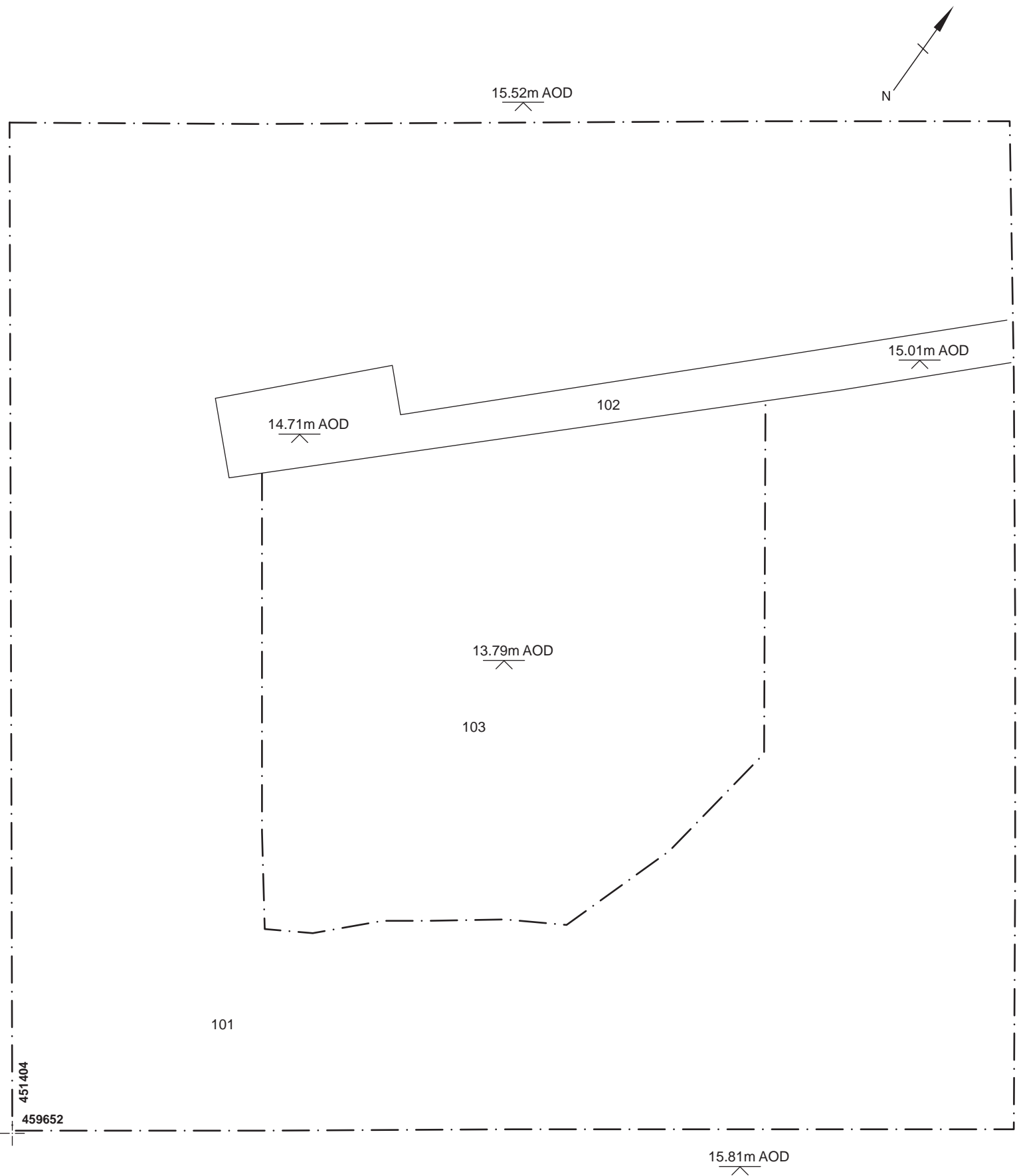


Figure 3 18th century cellar; wall C102 and floor C103



scale 1:20

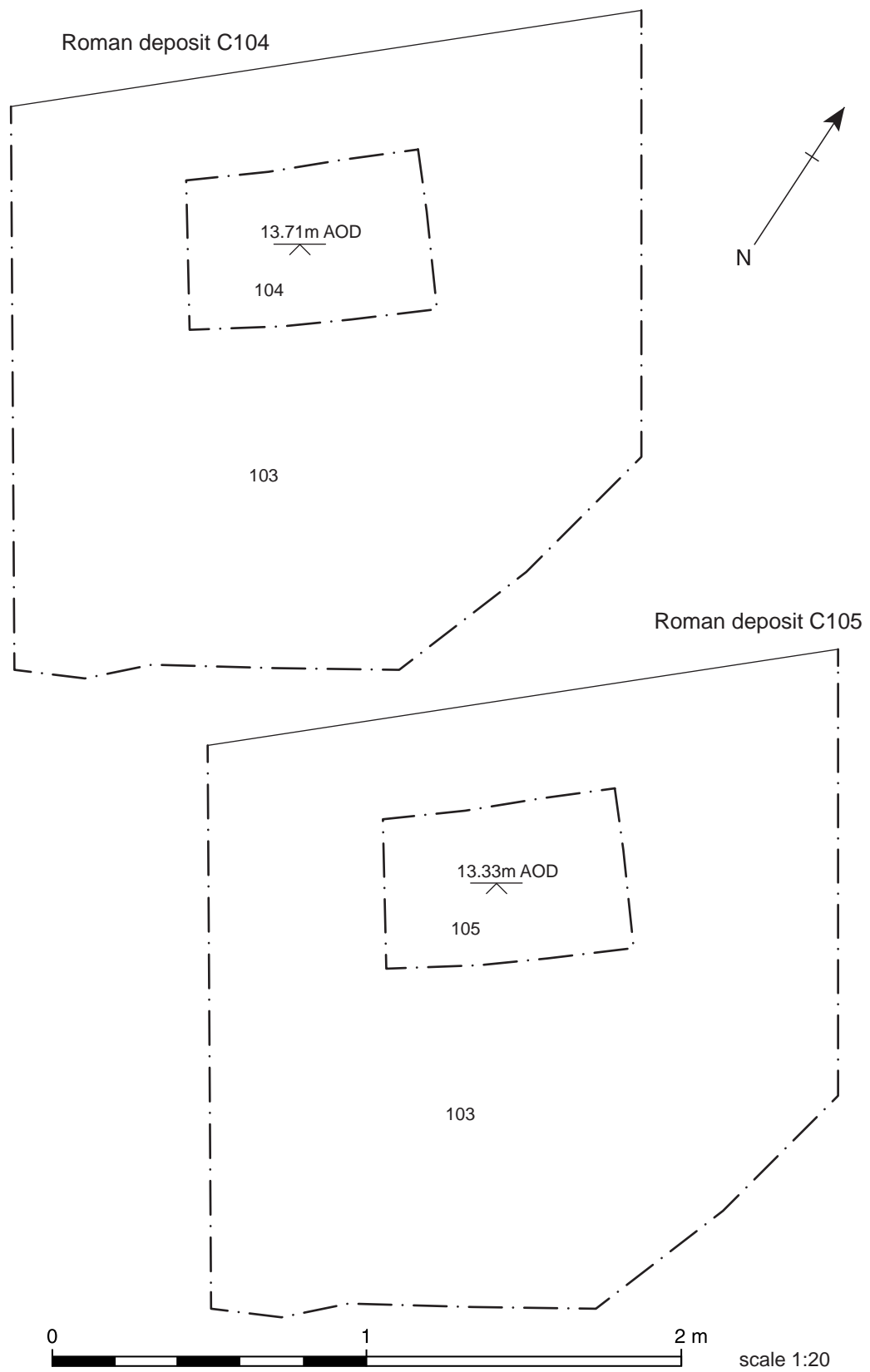


Figure 4 Plan of Roman deposits C104 and C105



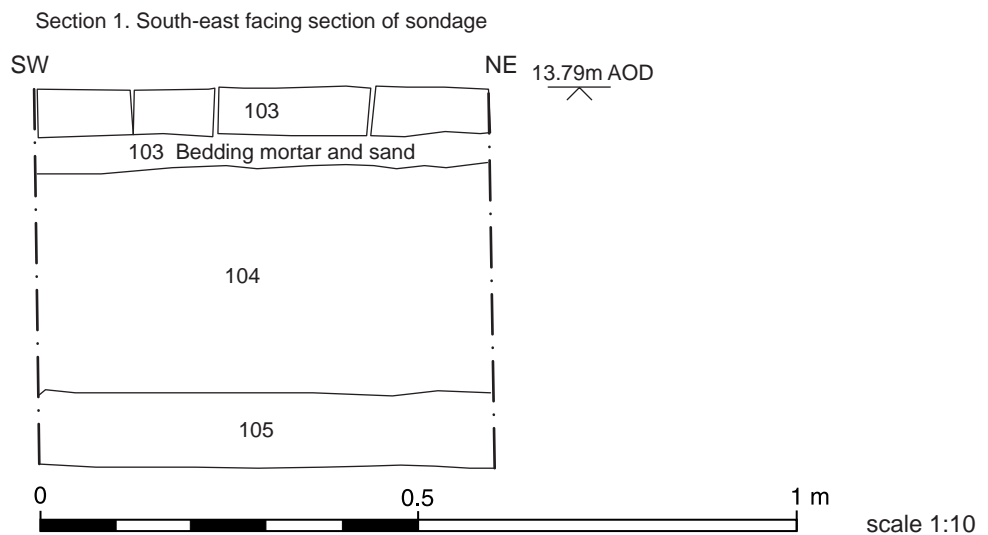
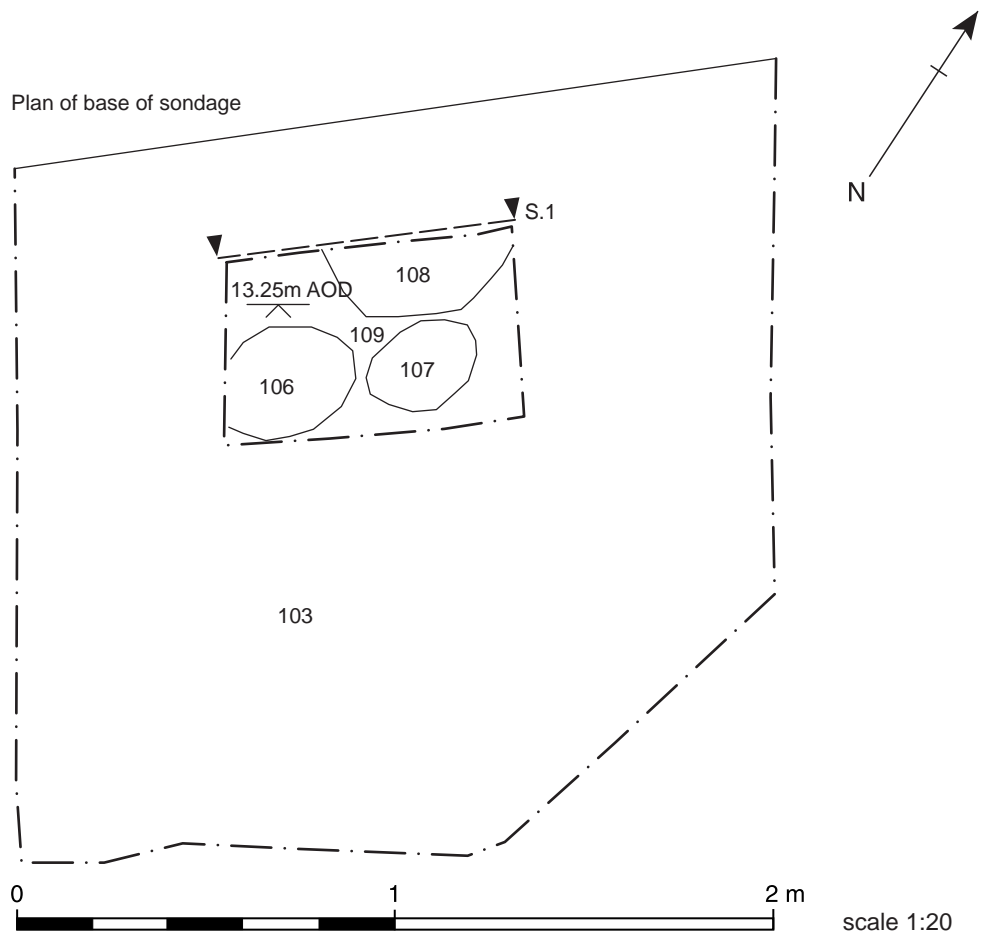
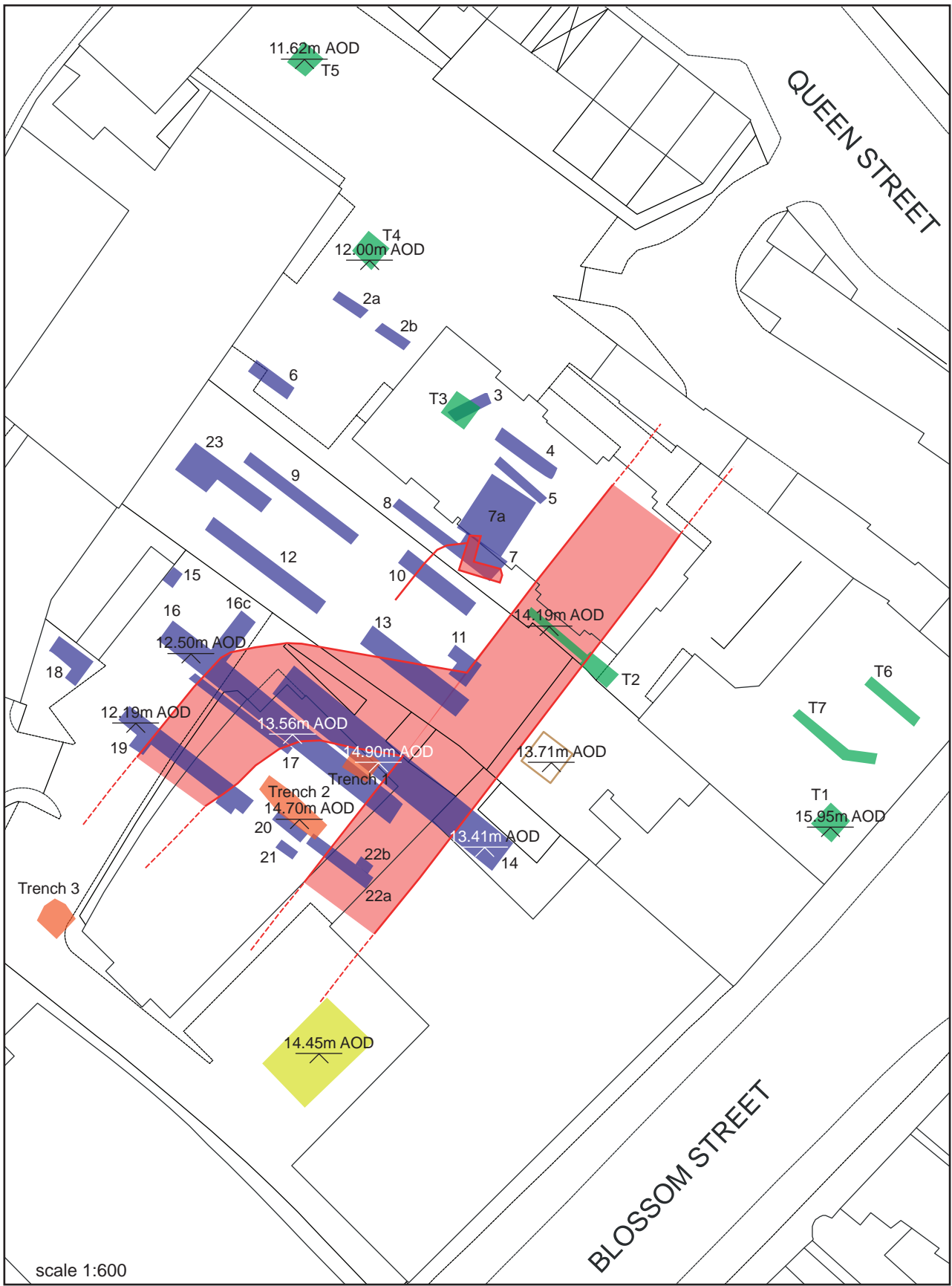


Figure 5 Plan of unexcavated base of sondage & section 1



scale 1:300

Figure 6 Wall C103 and 1852 map overlay



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Figure 7 Previous Archaeological Investigations, with Roman Road and Building. Known AOD heights of archaeology provided

- Wenham 1953-55
- YAT 1991.11
- MAP 2000
- Current site trench
- Milsted 2009
- Roman roads and building



 Trench outline



scale 1:250



Figure 8 Proposed Development with trench  
Drawing provided by the client, drawing no. 18073-110

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS, 22-26 BLOSSOM STREET, YORK**

**Site Location:** 22-26 Blossom Street, York

**NGR:** SE 59653 51408

**Proposal:** Demolition of rear extension to 22-26 Blossom Street and subsequent construction of three storey residential building with associated landscaping.

**Planning ref:** Pre-planning

**Prepared for:** O'Neill Associates

**Document Number:** 2019/106

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	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	CJ	11/07/2019	IDM	12/07/19	IDM	12/07/19

Version	Approved on behalf of Local Authority by:	
	Curator Signature	Date
1		

**1) SUMMARY**

O'Neill Associates are preparing an application for development at 22-26 Blossom Street, York (SE 59653 51408). The scheme comprises the demolition of a rear extension to 22-16 Blossom Street and subsequent construction of a three storey residential building with associated landscaping.

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared in response to a Specification supplied by O'Neill Associates. The work will be carried out in accordance with this WSI, and according to the principles of the Institute for Archaeology (CifA) Code of Conduct and all relevant standards and guidance.

## 2) SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

The proposal site is located at 22-26 Blossom Street, York (SE 59653 51408) (Figure 1), 0.1km south-west of the historic city walls. The site area consists of a rectangular shaped garden to the rear of 22-26 Blossom Street, bounded to the north-east and south-west by Premier Inn Hotel and by a small car-park to the north-west. The site lies on the north-west side of Blossom Street.

The underlying bedrock Sherwood Sandstone Group – Sandstone, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 237 to 272 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian Periods, when the local environment was dominated by rivers. Above this are superficial deposits of glacial moraine, consisting of clay, sand and gravel which were formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period when the local environment was dominated by ice age conditions (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk> – accessed 21/06/19).

The topography of the site is relatively flat; the closest bench mark is located at 19 Blossom Street, directly opposite the site, with a value of 17.40m AOD.

## 3) DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

The site lies within the York Area of Archaeological Importance and is located within York Central Historic Core Conservation Area 1. The conservation area is formed from 24 'Character Areas' of which the site is located within Historic Characterisation Area 23: Blossom Street/Nunnery Lane (CYC 2011; MacRae 2013).

The area is characterised by mixed commercial properties along an important historic gateway route into the city. Blossom Street was one of the early suburbs outside of the city walls and there is a fragmentary historic character to the area with some original cobbled road margins surviving. Predominant building heights are of three storeys, with a row of handsome Georgian buildings counterpoised by 20<sup>th</sup> century development. Landmark City Walls, Micklegate and Victoria Bars run along the border of this character area.

Access to the site is through the existing building at 22-26 Blossom Street, and therefore no plant can be used on the site.

## 4) ARCHAEOLOGICAL / HISTORICAL INTEREST

A desk –based assessment has been produced for the site (YAT 2019), from which a summary of the archaeological background will be provided here.

Previous investigations around the site have recorded natural deposits between 8.95m to 12.77m AOD.

There is likely to be evidence of Roman activity present. The top of Roman deposits were recorded on excavations to the immediate north-west of the site at 13.57m-15.95m AOD. There is potential that deposits relating to Roman Road 10 will be found on the site, along with possible survival of burials, cremation, pits and structures.

It is unlikely that any settlement or burial remains from the early medieval period will be uncovered within the proposed site; however there is potential for deposits and scattered finds dating from this period to be present.

It is highly likely that there will be a medieval plough soil across the proposed site. Other medieval features including pits and ditches may also be present.

There is high potential to encounter 18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century buildings relating to commercial and workshop related use on the site. During the post-medieval period the site underwent dramatic change, from open agricultural land to a two-dwelling property with warehouse and stable to the rear. These buildings within the garden were not demolished until at least after 1962, therefore it is uncertain as to how deep these foundations intrude into the earlier archaeology.

## 5) AIMS

The aims of the evaluation are:

- to determine the extent, condition, character, importance and date of any archaeological remains present
- to provide information that will enable the remains to be placed within their local, regional, and national context and for an assessment of the significance of the archaeology of the proposal area to be made
- to provide information to enable the local authority to decide any requirements for further archaeological mitigation for the site

## 6) EXCAVATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation will comprise the following elements:

- Evaluation Excavation
- Reporting

**Please note that further stages of work or other mitigation measures could be required by the local authority, depending upon the results of the evaluation.**

A single trench will be excavated in the location shown in Figure 2. The trench will be stepped to excavate safely to 2m BGL whilst ensuring its stated size at the base of the trench.

No.	Size (m)	Rationale
1	4 x 6 to 1m BGL; 2 x 4 at 2m BGL	To investigate potential archaeology within the footprint of the proposed development

The trench locations will be accurately plotted by measurement to local permanent features shown on published Ordnance Survey maps using an EDM Total station or GPS unit. All measurements will be accurate to +/-10cm, and the trenches locatable on a 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map to ensure our interventions can be independently relocated in the future.

Turf, agricultural or garden soil, overburden or other superficial fill materials will be removed by hand.

The use of powered digging equipment may sometimes be appropriate to remove hard building materials or deep intrusions such as brick or concrete floors or footings. Powered digging equipment will only be used with the agreement of Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist and will not be used to cut arbitrary test pits through archaeological deposits.

The trench will be sufficiently cleaned by hand to enable potential archaeological features to be identified and recorded. Areas will be recorded as sterile if devoid of archaeological material, the stratigraphic sequence will be recorded after which investigation of those areas will cease.

A sufficient sample of archaeological features and deposits will be stratigraphically excavated in the following manner to fulfil the evaluation aims and objectives:

- Discrete features will initially be half-sectioned, full excavation may follow if deemed necessary or appropriate
- A minimum 25% proportion of the total length of linear features will be excavated in sections of not less than 1m in length
- Relationships at junctions, interruptions or terminations of linear features will be sufficiently explored to determine relationships
- Structures will be investigated sufficiently to understand their form, function, extent and morphology, as well as their date and relationships to other features and deposits

## **7) RECORDING METHODOLOGY FOR EXCAVATION**

All archaeological features will be recorded using standardised pro forma record sheets. Plans, sections and elevations will be drawn as appropriate and a comprehensive photographic record will be made where archaeological features are encountered.

Archaeological contexts will be planned at a basic scale of 1:50, with individual features requiring greater detail being planned at a scale of 1:20. Larger scales will be utilised as appropriate. Sections drawings will be made at a basic scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the size of the feature. All drawings will be related to Ordnance Datum. Where it aids interpretation, structural remains will also be recorded in elevation.

Archaeological contexts will be allocated unique numerical identifiers and described in full on a pro forma context record sheet in accordance with conventional archaeological record methods. All records will be checked and indexes of records compiled.

All site photography will follow accepted archaeological photography guidelines. Work in progress, general views, groups of contexts or features, individual contexts and sections will be digitally photographed

Areas devoid of archaeological material will be photographed and recorded as being archaeologically sterile. The natural stratigraphic sequence within these areas will be recorded.

All finds will be collected and handled following the guidance set out in the ClfA guidance for archaeological materials. Unstratified material will not be kept unless it is of exceptional intrinsic interest. Material discarded as a consequence of this policy will be described and quantified in the field. Finds of particular interest or fragility will be retrieved as Small Finds, and located on plans. Other finds, finds within the topsoil, and dense/discrete deposits of finds will be collected as Bulk Finds, from discrete contexts, bagged by material type. Any dense/discrete deposits will have their limits defined on the appropriate plan.

All artefacts and ecofacts will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication *First Aid for Finds*, and recording systems must be compatible with the recipient museum. All finds that fall within the purview of the Treasure Act



(1996) will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures outlined in the Act, after discussion with the client and the local authority.

Other samples will be taken, as appropriate, in consultation with York Archaeological Trust specialists and the Historic England Regional Science Advisor, as appropriate (e.g. dendrochronology, soil micromorphology, monolith samples, C14, etc.). Samples will be taken for scientific dating where necessary for the development of subsequent mitigation strategies. Material removed from site will be stored in appropriate controlled environments.

Should human remains be discovered they will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected pending notification of the discovery to Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist and the submission to the Ministry of Justice of an application for excavation. Exhumation of human remains will take place in compliance with environmental health regulations and only with a valid licence from the Ministry of Justice. An osteoarchaeologist will be available to give advice on site.

- Any **disarticulated** human remains that are found will be recovered and removed in appropriate packaging/identified and quantified on site.
- Any **articulated** human remains that are found will be excavated in accordance with recognised guidelines (see 7.10) and retained for assessment.
- Any grave goods or coffin furniture will be retained for further assessment.

Human remains will be removed in accordance with the Burial Act 1857 and the Ministry of Justice exhumation licence, and with the guidance of ClfA Technical Paper 13 (1993) and APABE (2017).

## **8) SPECIALIST ASSESSMENT**

The stratigraphic information, artefacts, soil samples, and residues will be assessed as to their potential and significance for further analysis and study. The material will be quantified (counted and weighted). Specialists will undertake a rapid scan of all excavated material. Ceramic spot dates will be given. Appropriately detailed specialist reports will be included in the report.

Materials considered vulnerable should be selected for stabilisation after specialist recording. Where intervention is necessary, consideration must be given to possible investigative procedures (e.g. glass composition studies, residues on or in pottery, and mineral-preserved organic material). Allowance will be made for preliminary conservation and stabilization of all objects and a written assessment of long-term conservation and storage needs will be produced. Once assessed, all material will be packed and stored in optimum conditions, in accordance with Watkinson and Neal (1998), ClfA (2014) and Museums and Galleries (1992).

All finds will be cleaned, marked and labelled as appropriate, prior to assessment. For ceramic assemblages, any recognised local pottery reference collections and relevant fabric Codes will be used.

Allowance will be made for the recovery of material suitable for scientific dating and contingency sums will be made available to undertake such dating, if necessary. This will be decided in consultation with Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist.

## 9) REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION

Upon completion of the site work, a report will be prepared to include the following:

- a) A non-technical summary of the results of the work.
- b) An introduction which will include the planning reference number, grid reference and dates when the fieldwork took place.
- c) An account of the methodology and detailed results of the operation, describing structural data, archaeological features, associated finds and environmental data, and a conclusion and discussion.
- d) A selection of photographs and drawings, including a detailed plan of the site accurately identifying the areas monitored, trench locations, selected feature drawings, and selected artefacts, and phased feature plans where appropriate.
- e) Specialist artefact and environmental reports where undertaken, and a context list/index.
- f) Details of archive location and destination (with accession number, where known), together with a context list and catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
- g) A copy of the key OASIS form details
- h) Copies of the Brief and WSI
- i) Additional photographic images may be supplied on a CDROM appended to the report

The report will be submitted in digital format to the commissioning body as well as direct to Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist for planning purposes and inclusion into the HER.

A field archive will be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections and photographs. Catalogues of contexts, finds, soil samples, plans, sections and photographs will be produced. York Archaeological Trust will liaise with the Yorkshire Museum prior to the commencement of fieldwork to establish the detailed curatorial requirements of the museum and discuss archive transfer and to complete the relevant museum forms. The relevant museum curator would be afforded access to visit the site and discuss the project results.

The owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the information and documentation arising from the work, would grant a licence to the Local Authority and the museum accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions. Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), such documentation is required to be made available to enquirers if it meets the test of public interest. Any information disclosure issues would be resolved between the client and the archaeological contractor before completion of the work. EIR requirements do not affect IPR.

Upon completion of the project an OASIS form will be completed at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>.

## 10) POST-EXCAVATION ANALYSIS & PUBLICATION

The information contained in the evaluation report may enable decisions to be taken regarding the future treatment of the archaeology of the development site and any material recovered during the evaluation.

If further archaeological investigations (mitigation) take place, any further analyses (as recommended by the specialists, and following agreement with Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist) may be incorporated into the post-excavation stage of the mitigation programme unless such analysis are required to provide information to enable a suitable mitigation strategy to be devised. Such analysis will form a new piece of work to be commissioned.

In the event that no further fieldwork takes place on the site, a full programme of post-excavation analysis and publication of artefactual and scientific material from the evaluation may be required by Claire MacRae, City of York archaeologist. Where this is required, this work will be a new piece of work to be commissioned.

If further site works do not take place, allowance will be made for the preparation and publication in a local and/or national journal of a short summary on the results of the evaluation and of the location and material held within the site archive.

The results of the work may be publicised locally and talking to local societies, as appropriate.

#### **11) HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of site works.

#### **12) PRE-START REQUIREMENTS**

The client will be responsible for ensuring site access has been secured prior to the commencement of site works, and that the perimeter of the site is secure.

The client will provide York Archaeological Trust with up to date service plans and will be responsible for ensuring services have been disconnected, where appropriate.

The client will be responsible for ensuring that any existing reports (e.g. ground investigation, borehole logs, contamination reports) are made available to York Archaeological Trust prior to the commencement of work on site.

#### **13) REINSTATEMENT**

Following excavation and recording the spoil from the trenches will be backfilled unless requested otherwise. The backfill material will be levelled and compressed as far as possible by hand, but will not be compressed to a specification. York Archaeological Trust are not responsible for reinstating any surfaces, including reseeding, unless specifically commissioned by the client who will provide a suitable specification for the work.

#### **14) TIMETABLE & STAFFING**

The timetable will be agreed with the client

Specialist staff available for this work:

- Human Remains – Malin Holst, York Osteology Ltd
- Palaeoenvironmental remains – John Carrott, Palaeoecology Research Services Ltd
- Head of Curatorial Services – Christine McDonnell, YAT

- Finds Researcher – Nicky Rogers, Freelance
- Pottery Researcher – Anne Jenner, YAT
- Finds Officers – Nienke Van Doorn, YAT
- Archaeometallurgy & Industrial Residues – Rachel Cubitt and Dr Rod Mackenzie, Freelance
- Conservation – Ian Panter, YAT

#### **15) MONITORING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK**

As a minimum requirement, the City Archaeologist Claire MacRae will be given at least one week's notice of work commencing and will be informed prior to completion on site. Any changes to this WSI may only be made with the written approval of the City Archaeologist. The City Archaeologist will be afforded opportunity to visit the site during the works to inspect the site and the archaeological recording, and discuss the project and any further mitigation requirements. York Archaeological Trust will notify the City Archaeologist of any significant archaeological discoveries that are made during the course of the project.

With the client's agreement illustrated notices may be displayed on site to explain the nature of the works.

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For current Historic England guidance documents see:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/latest-guidance/>



# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

York Archaeological Trust undertakes a wide range of urban and rural archaeological consultancies, surveys, evaluations, assessments and excavations for commercial, academic and charitable clients. We manage projects, provide professional advice and fieldwork to ensure a high quality, cost effective archaeological and heritage service. Our staff have a considerable depth and variety of professional experience and an international reputation for research, development and maximising the public, educational and commercial benefits of archaeology. Based in York, Sheffield, Nottingham and Glasgow the Trust's services are available throughout Britain and beyond.



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