

**MOAT HOUSE HOTEL,
NORTH STREET
YORK**

**A REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

by

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ABSTRACT

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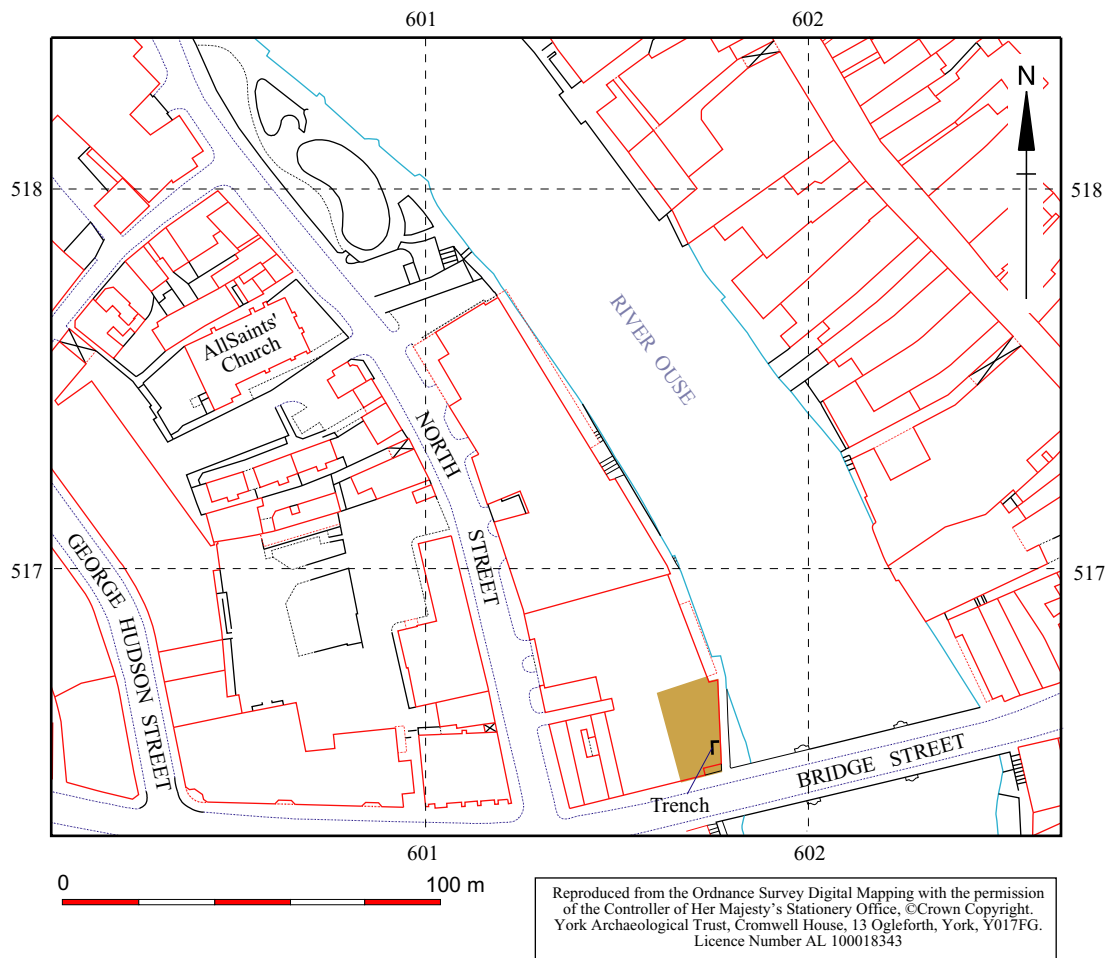


Fig. 1: Site location

ABSTRACT

A watching brief in the basement car park of the Moat House Hotel during consolidation of river Ouse flood defences exposed the top a brick barrel-vaulted cellar in a trench that ran at 90° to the river. In a trench which ran parallel to the river deposits associated with the backfill of cellars sealed by the present concrete of the car park floor were found.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 16th January 2004 The York Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief in the underground car park of the Moat House Hotel, North Street, York (NGR SE6015 5171; Figure 1). This involved monitoring the excavation of an L-shaped trench dug as part of the consolidation of the flood defences on the south-west side of the river Ouse. Access to the site was gained from North Street c.20m north of Bridge Street.

The work was carried out on behalf of Black and Veatch working to a commission from the Environment Agency.

All the records are stored at the York Archaeological Trust under the Yorkshire Museums accession code number YORYM:2004.11

2. METHOD STATEMENT

The watching brief required the monitoring of a machine-excavated L-shaped trench in the underground car park of the Moat House Hotel. The area of the underground car park is defined by the walls of earlier cellars and it was the external wall of one of these former cellars that required strengthening as part of the consolidation of the flood defences. The trench, 2m wide and 0.3m - 0.6m deep, was excavated along two sides of the cellar wall in the car park. The stretch along the north wall was 3.2m long, the stretch along the west wall, parallel to the river, was 5.2m long.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The watching brief was undertaken because it was located adjacent to the waterfront of the Roman civilian town (*colonia*) south-west of the Ouse, and of the Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval towns.

Considerable evidence for Roman activity in the area has been identified in excavations at, for example, Wellington Row (1988-89.24, 1990.24, 1993.1), Tanner Row (1983-84.32) and North Street (1992.1). Excavations have also identified occupation associated with the Anglo-Scandinavian period (1987.24) in Tanner Row (1983-84.32) and North Street (1992.1, 1993.1). The first documentary reference to North Street dates from c.1090 and at that time the name was given to a street running north from Mickelgate close to the river before turning to the south-west. The latter part of the street is now known as Tanner Row (RCHMY3, 96). In the 13th century the area of the Moathouse Hotel was known as the *Divelnesstanges*, translated as the Dublin Stones, and the name

is thought to refer to the area where ships from Dublin moored to unload goods (Hall 1994, 39). Medieval structures surviving in North Street include the church of All Saints on the opposite side of the road to the Moat House Hotel and a row of timber-framed houses adjacent to the church.

In the post-medieval period the North Street area was largely used for warehouses. The 1852 Ordnance Survey map shows that the area around the Moat House Hotel consisted of properties fronting on to North Street with yards and store buildings to the rear. The area of the watching brief was formerly Nos 6-10 North Street which originated as a single property, probably in the 16th century. This was altered when a new building, No. 0, was constructed in the 18th century with a yard at the rear (RCHMY 3, 96). The alley on the north side of these properties still serves as the access to the subterranean car park.

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 Post-Medieval and modern

In the portion of the trench that was at 90° to the river the earliest structure exposed was the top of a brick barrel-vaulted cellar (1004). The cellar was constructed of bricks that measured 0.2m long x 0.1m x 0.15m deep and were bonded with a hard grey mortar. Where the trench turned to run parallel with the river a section of brick wall (1003) located 0.75m from the west wall of the cellar and 1.5m long extended from the barrel vault and ran parallel to the west wall of the cellar. This section of wall was constructed of bricks of very similar dimensions to those used in the construction of the barrel vault and perhaps indicated the location of a staircase leading into the cellar.

The space between this wall and the western cellar wall was filled with loose, dark grey silt sand with frequent inclusions of brick rubble and mortar (1002). This deposit also formed the backfill within the rest of this stretch of the trench. Overlying this deposit was a thin layer, 0.1m-0.15m thick, of crushed stone and brick (1001) that formed a bedding or the 0.1m thick layer of concrete (1000) that formed the present floor level of the car park.

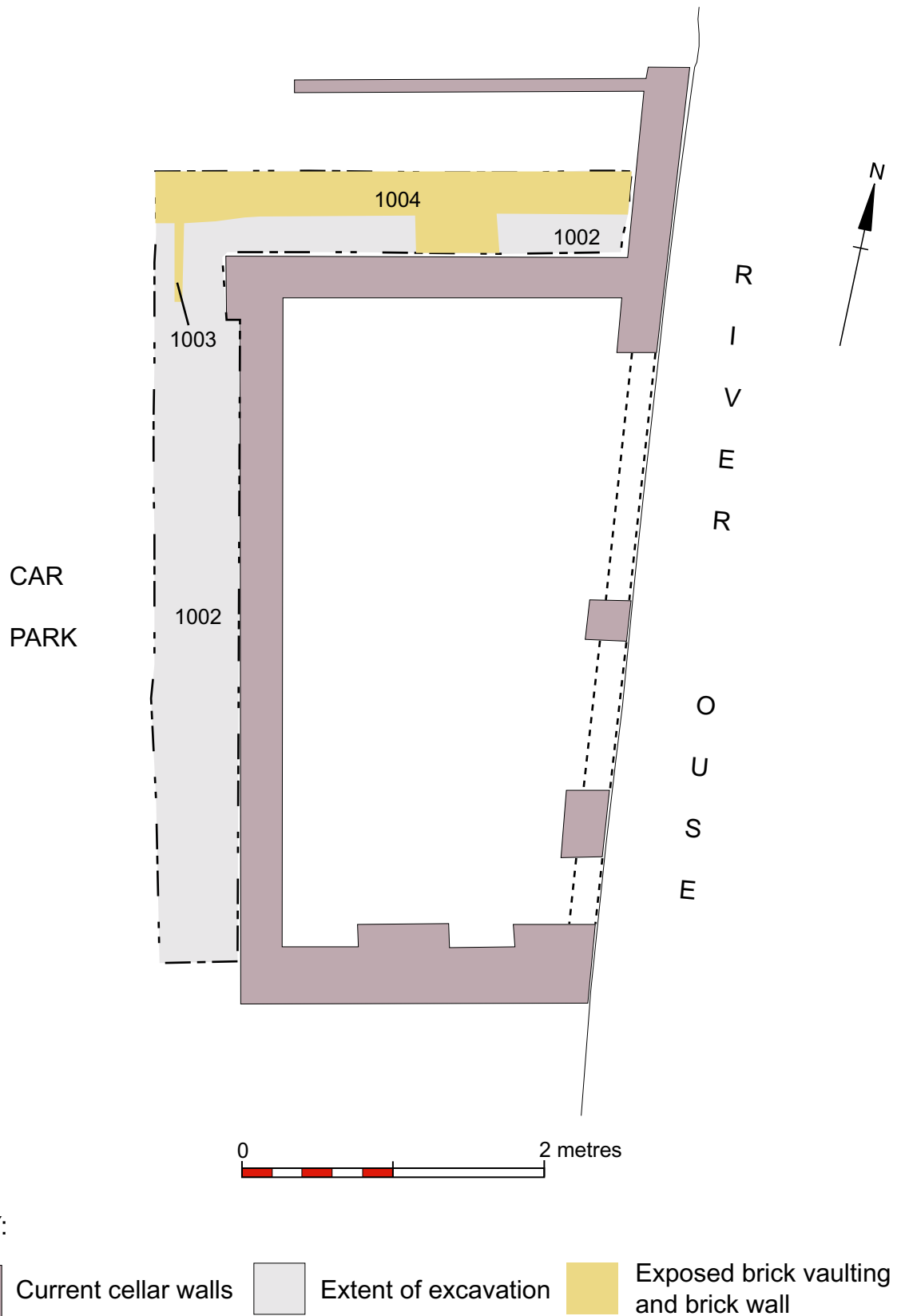


Fig. 2: Trench location and observed features

5. CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief exposed the top of cellars probably associated with the warehouses located on this site prior to the alterations to the east side of North Street during the 1960s. From Ouse Bridge it is possible to see the external wall of the cellars extending down to the river and it is possible that any earlier archaeological deposits have either been truncated by these cellars or are located at a depth greater than that reached during the watching brief.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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