



**YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST**



**LAND AT GALMANHOE LANE,  
YORK**

**EVALUATION REPORT**

*by I.D. Milsted*

**REPORT NUMBER 2009/71**



# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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## **List of Abbreviations**

YAT York Archaeological Trust

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

## **ABSTRACT**

*An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 at the former YAT Wet Wood Laboratory on Galmanhoe Lane, York. A single trench measuring 4m x 2m was excavated to a depth of 1.25m below ground level.*

*A former ground surface of post-medieval date was encountered, which contained an animal burial and was overlain by a 0.60m thick garden soil, also of post-medieval origin. The area remained undeveloped until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, when a sequence of structures culminating in the current building was constructed at the above location.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

An archaeological evaluation was conducted between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> October 2009 within a building formerly used by York Archaeological Trust as a laboratory and office.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

A single trench measuring 4m x 2m was excavated to a depth of 1.25m below ground level (BGL), taken as the surface of the floor within the building. The trench was aligned south-east – north-west, to lie perpendicularly to the line of Marygate (fig 2). The concrete floor of the standing building was cut through with a stone saw and the underlying modern deposits initially removed by mechanical excavator. A small machine with a 1.2m wide toothless ditching bucket was used to remove overburden and modern material under archaeological supervision. Beneath obviously modern deposits, a homogenous soil was identified and removed by machine in shallow spits until features could be observed. This soil is described in detail and interpreted below, but extended to approximately 1m below the floor level. The remaining 0.25-0.35m of deposits was removed by hand under fluorescent lighting.

Excavation continued until the depth limit of 1.25m below floor level, at which point the two long sections were recorded. All finds, records and photographs are held by YAT under the accession code YORAT: 2009.2.

### **3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

The site was located within a brick-built building that is positioned to the south-west of Galmanhoe Lane, a small street heading north-west off Marygate (figs 1 and 2). The site is some 240m WNW of Bootham Bar. The drift geology consists of glacial sands and clays, overlying the solid geology of Bunter and Kueper sandstones (Geological survey 1967). Galmanhoe Lane is generally level for around 30m west from its junction with Marygate, at around 16.85m AOD, and then steadily drops away to around 15.45m AOD at the end of the lane, some 50m from the Marygate junction. This fall reflects a general sloping trend downwards from south-east to north-west in the area, which results in both the laboratory building and especially the wooden 'terrapin' style structure to the north of it appearing to sit on a spit of significantly raised ground (plates 2 and 3). The floor level within the former YAT laboratory was generally flat, with a slight slope downwards from 16.85m AOD in the southern corner to 16.78m AOD in the northern corner behind the roller-door loading bay which fronts onto Galmanhoe Lane. This floor surface was taken as the reference point for determining the depth limit of 1.25m below ground level (BGL) (plate 4).

### **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

There is no documentary evidence for Roman, Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian occupation of the site. Excavations conducted at 26-28 Marygate in 1992 did, however, encounter significant deposits and features dating to the Roman period. Landscape features dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century or earlier were levelled during the mid 3<sup>rd</sup> century with significant dumps of refuse material, prior to the land being cultivated. In the 4<sup>th</sup> century, several inhumations were inserted into the cultivated landscape before a major truncation event signalled a post-Roman change of land-use, with up to 2m of homogenous soil being deposited during the development of an orchard or gardens (Whyman, 1992, 1-4). This excavation was the sole archaeological intervention in the area north-west of Marygate until the current project.

The area lies immediately north-west of a long-suggested 3<sup>rd</sup> century annexe to the Roman fortress of *Eboracum* (RCHMY 1, xxxiii). Walls and cobbled surfaces found within the area subsequently occupied by St Mary's Abbey and now containing the Museum Gardens, King's Manor and a bowling green, are suggested to define the annexe (Ibid, 45), which would therefore have had an area of 35000m<sup>2</sup>. Subsequent work has re-dated walls found beneath those of the Abbey enclosure walls to the 12<sup>th</sup> century, casting some doubt on the evidence for the annexe (Ottaway, 2004, 49). Additionally, the 3<sup>rd</sup> century RCHM date depended on the traditional interpretation of a 3<sup>rd</sup> century re-modelling of the main fortress walls, which has

now been challenged by new radiocarbon dates which place these massive stone structures to the late first – early second century (Hunter-Mann, 2009, 3). In the light of this, and given the presence of early Roman material in the area of the putative annexe (Ottaway, 2004, 49) and the discovery of Roman cobbled areas during the 2005 YAT training excavation within the abbey walls (Toby Kendall pers. com.), it is clear that a re-assessment of the annexe theory is overdue. The proximity of the current site to this area, and the near-by Roman activity identified in 1992, therefore strongly suggest the potential for significant Roman material in the Galmanhoe Lane area.

The next available records of activity for Marygate detail housing which was present from at least the mid 12th century onwards (Whyman, 1992, 5). The area became part of the borough of St Mary's following the building of the abbey wall in the 13<sup>th</sup> century which was the consequence of on-going disputes between the city and the abbey over control of the area and its security (RCHMY 3, 5). There are no records for Galmanhoe Lane, which also does not appear in DM Palliser's 1972 survey of York's street names. Galmanhoe Lane is not recorded cartographically until 1822 (fig 7), but the 11<sup>th</sup> century church of St Olaf occupied land 'at Galmanho' which was later incorporated into the abbey (Ibid, 3) and Bootham Bar appears to have been referred to as 'Galmanlith' by the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Ibid, 4). The earliest maps of this part of the city show houses on Marygate with gardens behind to the north-west (figs 3-6), with the former YAT laboratory building clearly in place by the 1960 Ordnance survey map. This building straddles the former gardens of nos. 20 -24 Marygate and 48 Bootham (RCHMY 3, map 3 and 85), which can clearly be seen on the 1853 Ordnance survey map (fig 8). It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that the development of a cultivated soil identified in the post-Roman period persisted into at least the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, before the area became more built-up after 1945, when the current building was probably constructed. Its original purpose is unknown, but it was used as a bacon processing plant prior to its occupation by York Archaeological Trust in 1980 (M Stockwell and J Spriggs, pers. com.). YAT used the building to house its Wet Wood Laboratory and offices, which along with the 'terrapin' style building to the north, formed the heart of its Artefacts and Conservation operation until 2005 when they moved to the current YAT premises. Both properties have remained unoccupied since then.

## **5. RESULTS**

### **5.1 PHASE 1: POST-MEDIEVAL LAND-USE**

The earliest identified phase of activity was a friable, firm mid-brown silty sand, context 1007, which sloped gently downwards from south-east to north-west and was interpreted as the buried surface of a former worked soil (plates 1 and 6, fig 9). This was identified at c.15.80m AOD (1m BGL) and continued below the depth limit of the excavation. This soil contained abraded late medieval pottery and residual building material, along with charcoal fragments and two copper alloy pins of typical post-medieval form (SF2; see appendix one, artefactual data). 1007 was interpreted as a probable cultivated soil which pre-dated the development of gardens behind the Marygate houses, with the latest pot dating to the 16th century.

Cut into this soil at the south-eastern end of the trench was a shallow pit 0.70m across, context 1006, the fill of which (context 1005) (plate 7) contained semi-articulated animal bone and a single copper alloy pin of typically post-medieval form (SF1). This feature was interpreted as a burial of a small animal, probably a dog, and had clearly been disturbed, probably by burrowing animals, of which there was ample evidence across the surface of 1007. Given that the pit was only 0.15m deep, however, it is entirely possible that it was actually cut from higher up, within the later garden soil 1004 (described below), and that some of the disturbance occurred during the removal of that deposit.

Phase 1 concluded with the development of a 0.50-0.60m thick homogenous very dark brown-black silty sand, context 1004, which was interpreted as a garden or orchard soil (plates 1 and 8, fig 9). This overlay the earlier surface 1007 across the entire trench and was mostly removed using a mechanical excavator as no features were apparent within it. Along with some residual late and post-medieval pottery and large fragments of 13th-16th century roof tile, the garden soil also contained nineteenth century pot and ceramic building material, along with 19th century nails and a piece of modern pipe (SF 3 and 4), which may be intrusive. This assemblage suggests that 1004 continued to develop into the modern period prior to the area being developed.

### **5.2 PHASE 2: FIRST MODERN BUILDING/STRUCTURES**

This phase began with a large, irregularly shaped pit up to 2m across, context 1013, which contained banded deposits of clay, mortar rubble and a final dump of soil (contexts 1012, 1003 and 1011, plate 1, fig 9). This was interpreted as facilitating the disposal of clearance or demolition material prior to the development of the site.



The pit was sealed by a thin, mixed deposit of trampled mortar and sand, 1014, interpreted as a construction spread, which was overlain by a clean soil levelling deposit, context 1010, that brought the level of the ground up to around 16.43m AOD (0.20m BGL) (plate 1, fig 9). On top of this was a 0.05m thick layer of rough concrete on a 0.06-0.12m thick make-up deposit of brick rubble (context 1002), which formed a level surface that sloped downwards gently from 16.60m AOD at the east to 16.54m AOD at the west. Cut into this concrete surface was a single square post-hole measuring 0.28m across, context 1009, which was aligned north-south and contained a concrete post-pad, 1008 (plate 9). At only 0.15m deep, this was not considered sufficiently large to form part of a building, and was therefore interpreted as part of a boundary alignment or other spacial delineation of an exterior surface. This interpretation was supported by the thin nature of the surface, and the relative courseness of its appearance (discussed further below). The purpose of this surface, and the extent and alignment of any boundaries, are unknown, as is the precise date of construction.

This surface is interpreted as representing an earlier structure than the current building as it is markedly different in character to the later floor (see below), but it is possible that it represents the first floor of the current building.

### **5.3 PHASE 3: SECOND MODERN BUILDING**

This phase consists of the 0.10m thick concrete floor of the current building, which lay on a 0.10-0.16m thick make-up deposit of edge-set bricks and brick rubble (context 1001, plate 1, fig 9). There was no evidence of a demolition spread associated with the removal of phase 2 structures, which leaves open the possibility that this floor is actually a replacement for an earlier one, and that surface 1002 in phase 2 is actually the original floor of the current building. However, the surface of 1002 was very coarse and resembled that of a car-park or yard rather than the interior surface of a warehouse, whilst surface 1001 had a much smoother, cleaner appearance consistent with a floor. This observation resulted in the phased interpretation of the site presented here. Given the limited size of the trench, however, this cannot be taken any further.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

It is clear that the current excavation did not encounter deposits earlier than the post-medieval period, suggesting that, if present, they lie below an extensively built-up landscape.

The earliest phase of activity identified during this evaluation concurs with the later deposits identified during the 1992 excavation at 26-28 Marygate, where up to 2m of homogenous

gardens soils were identified overlying earlier activity (Whyman, 1992, 1-4). The 1992 site was located to the north-west of the current project, further down the slope described above. The current site's location closer to Marygate may explain the relatively shallower depth of garden soil encountered, as the pre-garden deposits survived at a higher level on a naturally higher topographic position, and the later soils may have washed down-slope onto the lower areas.

The early York maps of Speed (1610) and Richards (1685) show houses on the north-western side of Marygate, with the latter also illustrating gardens (figs 3 and 4). The maps by Chassereau (1750) and Todd (1810) show some structure to the gardens around Galmanhoe Lane (figs 5 and 6) whilst the Baines map of 1822 and the Ordnance Survey of 1953 show plot boundaries that are recognisable in the current landscape (figs 7 and 8) as well as Galmanhoe Lane itself. The buried soil 1007 produced material no later than the 16th century, suggesting that the development of the garden soil 1004 began after 1600. The location of the former YAT laboratory across the gardens behind Marygate confirms the interpretation of 1004 as a garden soil, with the further refinement that the position of the trench lies in the former garden of 24 Marygate. Without any evidence for boundary features, or a larger excavation area, it is not possible to be more accurate than this.

However, it is possible to suggest that the naturally sloping topography of the Marygate area was augmented in the south-eastern part of Galmanhoe Lane by medieval cultivation and post-medieval gardens, creating an artificially high terrace above the lower ground to the north-west, and in the process contributing to the great depth of post-medieval soils encountered there. The amount of overlying material encountered during the 1992 26-28 Marygate excavation would tentatively suggest that deposits pre-dating the 16th century in the current development area lie at least 0.25m and possibly as much as 0.75m below the depth limit reached during this evaluation, although it must be stressed that this cannot be confirmed without further excavation.

The later phases of the site relate to definitively 20<sup>th</sup> century activity, with the probable date of development being the 1940s. It is believed that the 'terrapin' style building to the north-west of the former YAT laboratory is built on extensive brick rubble of a post-war date (Steve Allen pers. com.), some of which may derive from the demolition of the suggested phase 2 structures described above, of which surface 1002 was a constituent part. It is equally likely, however, that the earlier concrete surface is simply the original floor of the current building, thus further simplifying the phasing of the site. Only further excavation, however, would resolve this issue.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research and author	I.D. Milsted
Fieldwork	J. McComish and I.D. Milsted
Illustrations	I.D. Milsted
Editor	M. Stockwell

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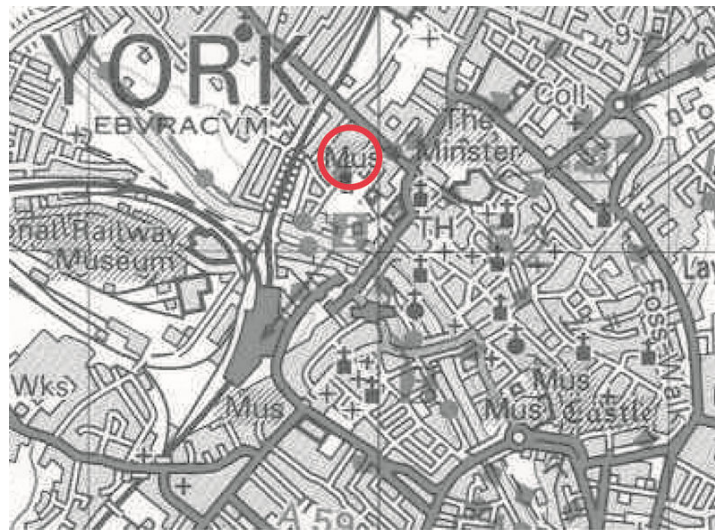
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**Figure 1** Site location



**Figure 2** Extent of works: former YAT premises in red, with evaluation trench in green

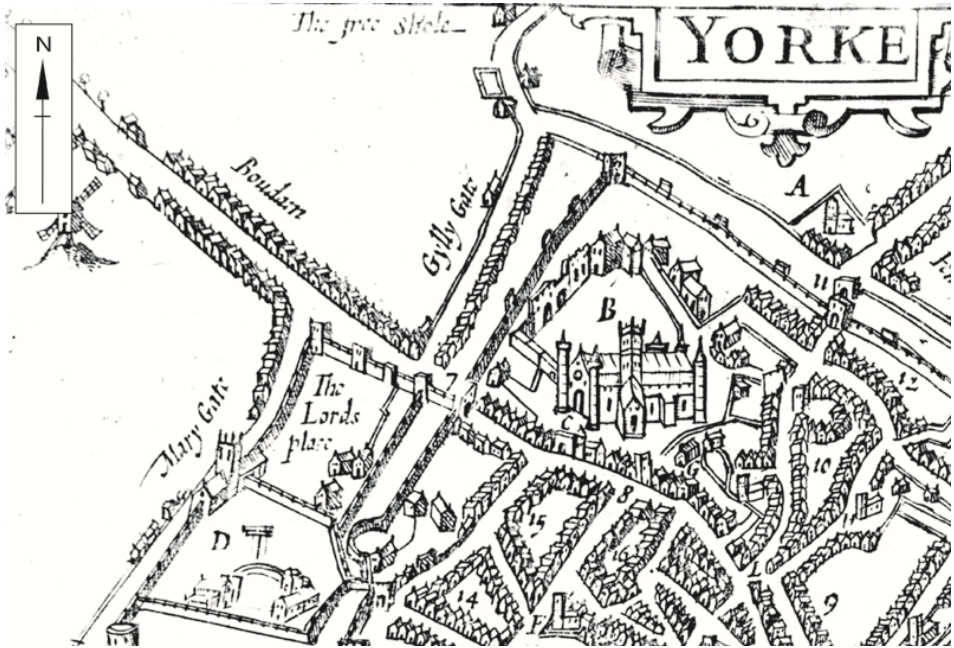


Figure 3 Excerpt from Speed's map of 1610 showing Marygate area

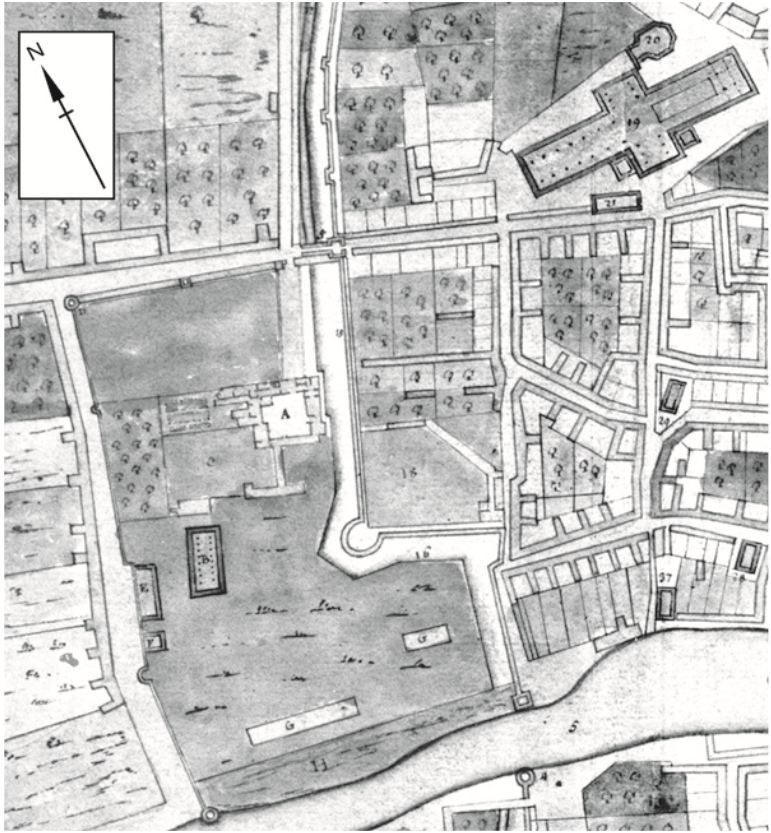


Figure 4 Excerpt from Richards' map of 1685 showing Marygate area



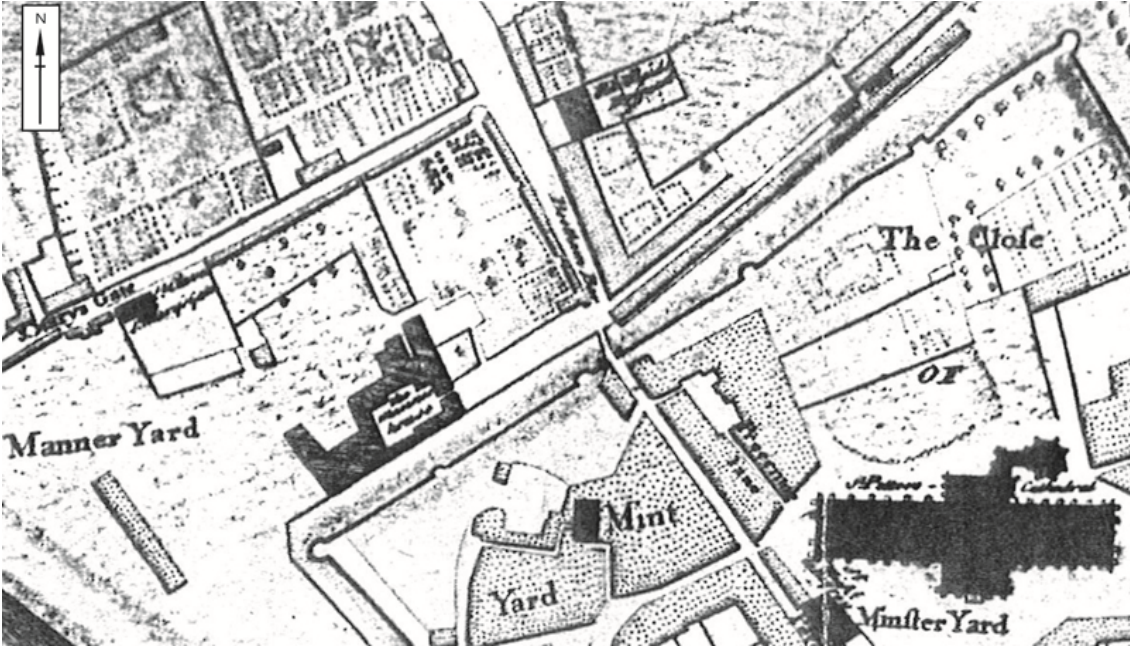


Figure 5 Excerpt from Chassereau's map of 1750 showing Marygate area

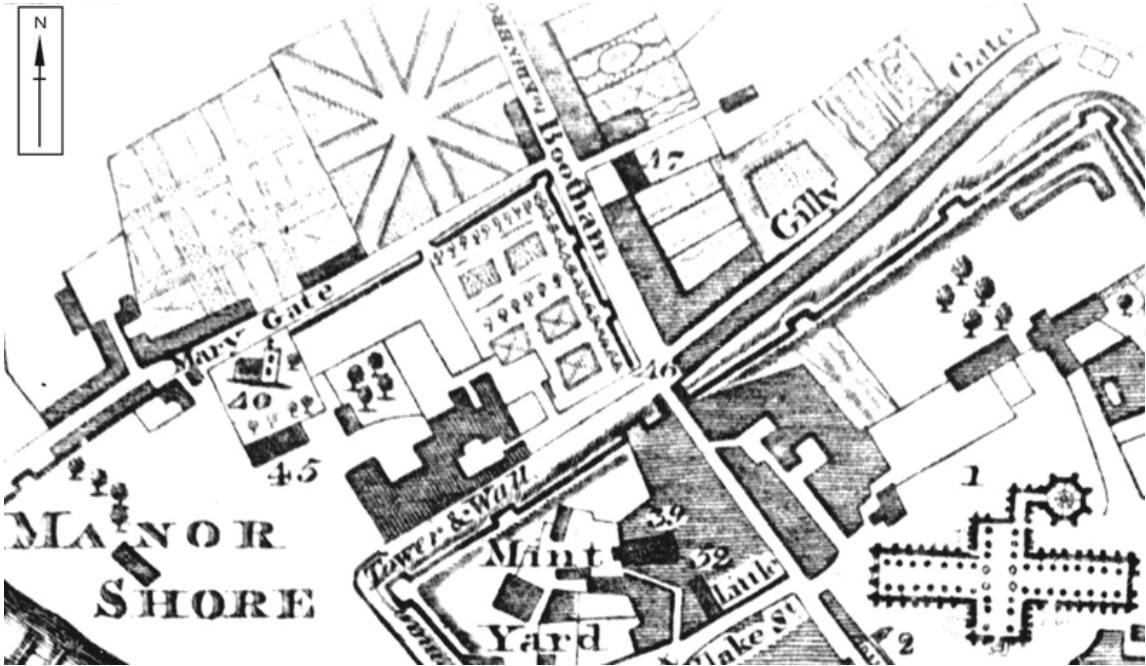
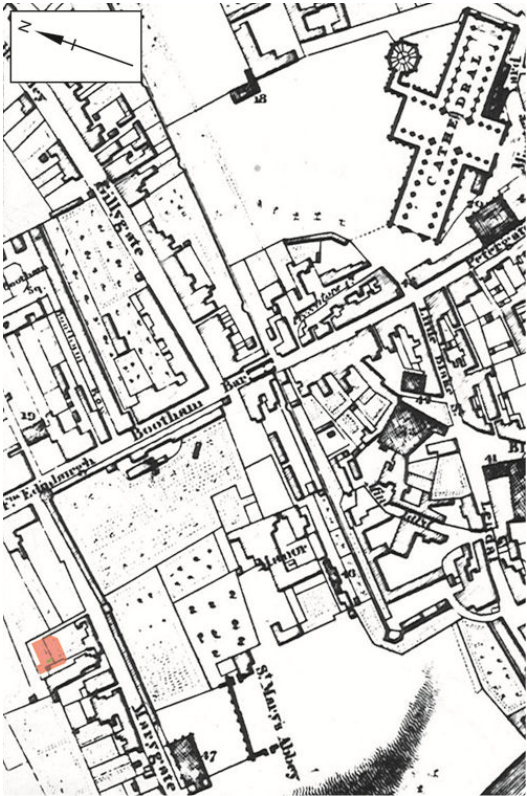
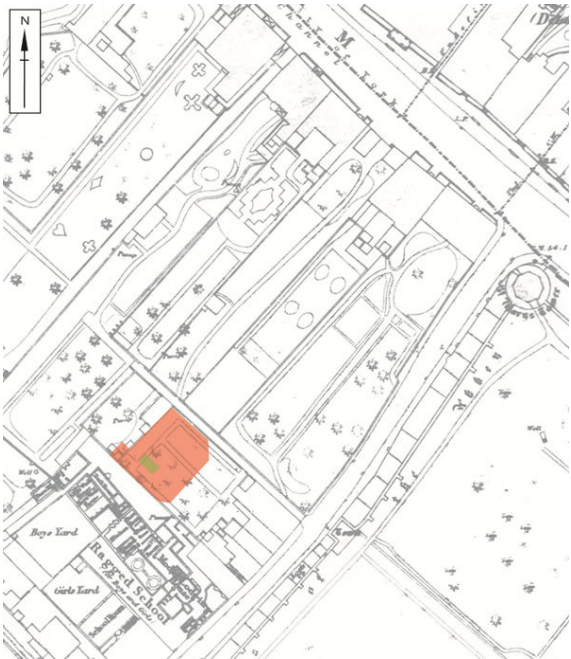


Figure 6 Excerpt from Todd's map of 1810 showing Marygate area

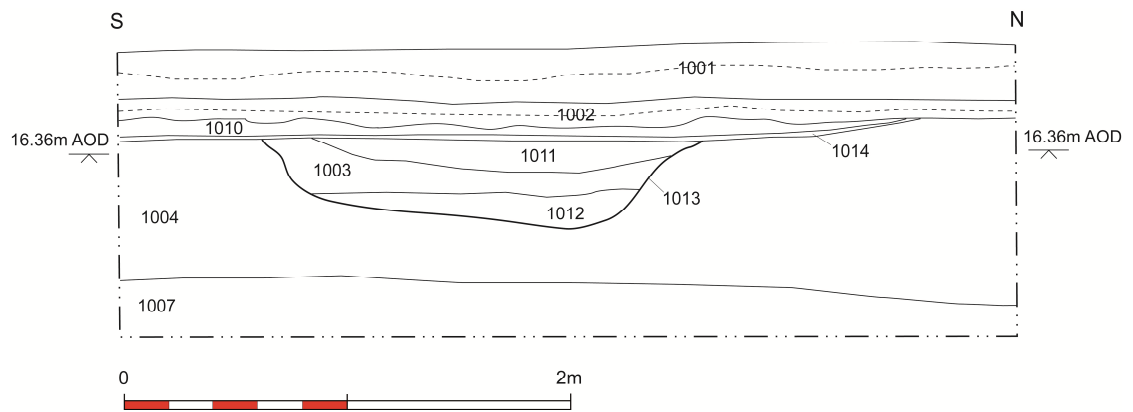


**Figure 7** Excerpt from Baines' map of 1822 showing the Marygate area and the approximate position of the former YAT laboratory and evaluation trench

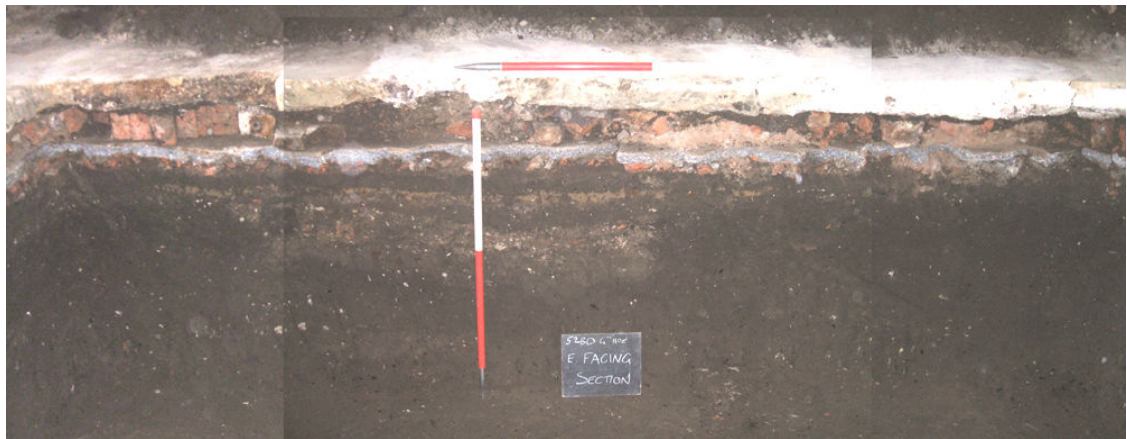


**Figure 8** Excerpt from the Ordnance Survey map of 1853 showing the Marygate area and the position of the former YAT laboratory and evaluation trench





**Figure 9** North-east facing section



**Plate 1** North-east facing section photographic montage





**Plate 2** Brick-built laboratory with Terrapin building behind, looking north-west



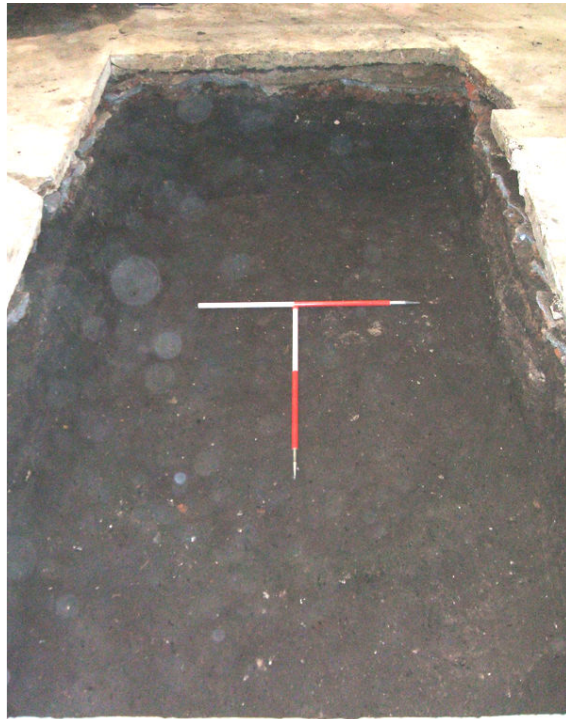
**Plate 3** Terrapin building, showing extent of made-ground, looking south-east



**Plate 4** Interior view showing trench and light conditions, looking north



**Plate 5** Depth limit of excavation, looking south-east



**Plate 6** Buried surface 1007, looking south-east



**Plate 7** Pit backfill 1005, at south-east end of trench





**Plate 8** Pit backfill 1003 during excavation, with garden soil 1004, looking north-west



**Plate 9** Post hole 1009 in lower concrete surface 1002, looking north-east

## APPENDIX 1: ARTEFACTUAL INFORMATION

### 1. CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIAL

**By J. M. McComish**

A total of 6,805g of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) and stone roofing/flooring material was examined from the excavations. A number of forms were identified, all of medieval date. The material was recorded following standard YAT procedures.

The overwhelming bulk of the collection was of 13-16<sup>th</sup> century roof tile fragments. The majority of these were plain tile (i.e. the method of fixing to the roof was impossible to determine), but there were three peg tile fragments, one nib tile fragment and one ridge tile fragment. The roofing material was typical for York in terms of dimensions. Although all the material was in fabrics previously recorded in York there was a higher than average presence of sandy fabrics, notably M27 and M68. Three fragments of brick of 14-16<sup>th</sup> century date were also present, which were again of typical form and fabric for York.

While the material from the site is of use for providing dating evidence for the various contexts concerned, there is nothing unusual or of note within this collection. No further work is recommended.

Phase	Context	Date	Keywords
1	1004	14-16TH	Plain, Medieval brick
1	1005	14-16TH	Plain, Medieval brick, Ridge
1	1007	14-16TH	Plain, Medieval brick, Peg, Nib

**Table 1** CBM summary by context

### 2. POTTERY

**By Dr. A. Mainman**

A very small assemblage (25 sherds) was recovered, most of which was of late medieval and post-medieval date.

Types represented are typical of pottery circulating in York during these periods and there is nothing of particular note. The assemblage includes a number of residual medieval types (Humber, Brandsby and Hambleton-type wares) and is arguable from the archaeology that the entire assemblage is residual. Cistercian wares, early Staffordshire type and later earthenwares are all typical of a domestic assemblage in York in the 16<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century. Context 1007, which may represent a soil surface, is of late 16<sup>th</sup> date on the basis of the

latest pottery, a sherd of Staffordshire-type yellow ware. No further work is recommended for this assemblage.

Phase	Group	Context	Spot-date	Details
1	1	1005	15TH CENTURY	1 Humber, 1 red ware
1	1	1007	16TH CENTURY	2 Cistercian, 1 German stoneware, 3 Humber ware, 1 Staffordshire-type yellow ware, 1 Brandsby-type
1	2	1004	MID 19TH CENTURY	2 flower pot, 2 Cistercian, 2 yellow ware, 1 Humber ware, 1 Hambleton, 1 painted ware, 1 tin glazed, 2 unknown
2	3	1010	MID 19TH CENTURY	1 earthenware pancheon sherd, 2 late yellow wares

**Table 2** Pottery summary by context

### 3. SMALL FINDS

#### By Dr. N. Rogers

Four small finds were recovered during these excavations. SFs 1-2 comprised late medieval to post medieval copper alloy pins: SF1, and one of SF2 were pins with wire wound heads, which are typically 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century in date, but which have (rarely) been recovered from earlier (13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century) deposits. The second pin of SF2 appears also to be of a post medieval form.

The iron finds comprise two nails (SF3) and a piece of pipe (SF4), all of which are undatable in form, but the conditions of which indicate a likely date for all of 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century.

No further work on these finds is recommended.

Find	Context	Material	Assessment
1	1005	Copper Alloy	Pin
2	1007	Copper Alloy	Pins
3	1004	Iron	Nails
4	1004	Iron	Pipe

**Table 3** Small finds assessment

## APPENDIX 2: STRATIGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

### CONTEXTS

Context	Set	Group	Phase	Context description
1000	8	4	3	Unstratified
1001	8	4	3	Concrete and make-up
1002	6	3	2	Concrete and make-up
1003	4	3	2	Backfill of 1013
1004	3	2	1	Garden soil
1005	2	1	1	Backfill of 1006
1006	2	1	1	Pit cut
1007	1	1	1	Possible surface/soil
1008	7	3	2	Post pad
1009	7	3	2	Post hole
1010	6	3	2	Levelling deposit
1011	4	3	2	Backfill of 1013
1012	4	3	2	Backfill of 1013
1013	4	3	2	Pit cut
1014	5	3	2	Trample/construction spread

**Table 4** Contexts with phasing data

#### SETS (CONTEXT MEMBERSHIP)

- Set 1: Former ground level (1007)
- Set 2: Animal burial (1005, 1006)
- Set 3: Garden soil (1004)
- Set 4: Demolition/clearance pit (1011, 1003, 1012, 1013)
- Set 5: Construction spread (1014)
- Set 6: Levelling and surface (1002, 1010)
- Set 7: Post hole (1008, 1009)
- Set 8: Levelling and surface (1000, 1001)

#### GROUPS (SET MEMBERSHIP)

- Group 1: Open ground (1, 2)
- Group 2: Garden (3)
- Group 3: Clearance and structure (4, 5, 6, 7)
- Group 4: Standing building (8)

#### PHASES (GROUP MEMBERSHIP)

- Phase 1: Post-Medieval land use (1, 2)
- Phase 2: First modern structures (3)
- Phase 3: Current modern building (4)