



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



**1 LANSDOWNE TERRACE,
YORK**

WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

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YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Cover: View of site looking west

Abbreviations

YAT York Archaeological Trust

BGL Below Ground Level

AOD Above Ordnance Datum

ABSTRACT

A watching brief during ground-works at 1 Lansdowne Terrace, York, recorded 13 medieval inhumation burials probably related to the churchyard of St Edward's Church, which was demolished during the mid-late 16th century. Ten full or partial burials were lifted and the rest left in situ.

1. INTRODUCTION

A watching brief was conducted on behalf of Mr Stuart Hamilton during the excavation of foundations for a two-storied pitched roof extension at 1 Lansdowne Terrace, York (Figure 1). Human remains were encountered at 0.40m below ground level (BGL) and were recorded and removed where necessary according to the terms of licence 10-0095 issued under Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857.

2. METHODOLOGY

The foundation required a 0.40m deep general ground clearance within a rectangular former yard measuring 5.95m x 3.90m aligned east-west along the long axis (Figure 2). A 0.90m wide trench along the eastern, southern and western perimeter of this area was excavated to a depth of 0.60m BGL to contain the toe of a concrete raft foundation. Excavation was primarily conducted with a small mechanical excavator. Upon the discovery of human remains, hand-excavation was conducted by the observing archaeologist to confirm articulation, whereupon the remains were exposed and recorded, and then lifted if the excavation was required to continue, or re-buried if the depth limit had already been achieved. All lifted human remains were retained as individuals and are currently stored, along with the disarticulated human material, in YAT facilities under accession code YORYM: 2010.567. They await basic recording and cataloguing, and eventual re-burial under the terms of the burials licence.

3. LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is located in Lansdowne Terrace, 20m north of the junction with Lawrence Street and approximately 300m east of Walmgate Bar, York (Figure 1). The solid geology of the area consists of Bunter and Keuper sandstones, overlain by drift deposits of glacial sands and gravels (Geological Survey, 1967). The area is built over with nineteenth century

terracing, with the site being formerly used as a concrete surfaced yard at approximately 13.7m AOD.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 ROMAN

Roman activity in this part of the city is sparse, and relates chiefly to the road designated 2 by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHMY, 1962, 1) which connected the legionary fortress of *Eboracum* with Brough (*Petuaria*). The surface of the road has been identified in several places nearby, including at 127 and 130 Lawrence Street (Brinklow, 1986, 89) and most recently at Bull Lane (Antoni, 2010), both approximately 200m east of the current site, and both perpetuating the line of road 2 suggested by the RCHM via observations near Grimston Bar and at Walmgate Bar (RCHMY, 1962, 1). This line passes directly under the southern end of Lansdowne Terrace.

4.2 ANGLIAN AND ANGLO-SCANDINAVIAN

Little, if any, evidence for Anglian activity is recorded for this part of the city. Anglo-Scandinavian activity has been recorded nearby at Leake Street, however, consisting of 10th and 11th century pits and structures (Oakey, 1989, 30) and the remains of 9th/10th century buildings and industrial activity closer to the Lawrence Street frontage (Reeves, 2007, 12).

4.3 MEDIEVAL

Medieval activity in this area chiefly concerns the site of St Edward's Church. First mentioned in 1213 (Tillott, 1961), the church was taken down in the mid-late 16th century, and the benefice was united with that of St Nicolas, Lawrence Street in 1586 (Tillott, 1961). Later sources record the churchyard as a surviving entity as it was sold and marked on maps (Raine, 1955, 293), although no topographic evidence survives today of the church or its burial ground.

The burial ground has been disturbed and observed several times since the nineteenth century. The Ordnance survey map of 1852 records the 'supposed site' of the church in an area of garden labelled 'Hope Nursery'. By the map of 1892, this garden has been over-built by Granville and Lansdowne Terrace (Figure 1). Burials were encountered during the construction of Lansdowne Terrace and ascribed to St Edwards (Tillott, 1961); Raine records that 'at least one ton of human bones' were reportedly removed during these works and that some rockery-stones in nearby gardens may relate to the church itself (Raine, 1955, 293-4). Watching briefs conducted by YAT in 1984 and 1996 at 31 and 32 Lansdowne Terrace

respectively recorded *in situ* burials and disarticulated human bone (Stockwell, 1984 and Hunter-Mann, 1996). These properties lie immediately opposite the current site (Figure 1).

4.4 POST-MEDIEVAL

Little is recorded for this area until the building of terraced housing, which as referred to above, occurred between the publishing of the Ordnance Survey maps of 1852 and 1892.

5. RESULTS

The earliest identified deposit, 1009, consisted of a soft, mottled brown-orange sand with frequent gravelly inclusions and was interpreted as natural. This was identified in the more deeply excavated perimeter trench at around 0.60m below ground level (BGL), but only in the south-west and southern margins of the trench. Overlying this was 1008, a friable-soft, mid grey brown very sandy silt with small pebbles. This contained moderate amounts of disarticulated human bone and was interpreted as a grave-yard soil. All the burials were cut into this deposit, which had been truncated by nineteenth-century activity at around 0.35m BGL.

Thirteen confirmed individual burials were identified between 0.40m and 0.80m BGL. All were supine and oriented east-west, with the majority demonstrating one or more flexed limbs (plates 1-13). No coffin traces or fittings were present, and there were no grave goods. A descriptive gazetteer is provided below, and the burial locations presented in Figure 2.

Two graves at the southern end of the trench, cuts 1048 (SK 13/1047) and 1018 (SK 3/1017), exposed natural 1009 at the base of the cuts (plates 13 and 3, figure 2). Both had been truncated by later burials. Intercutting was evident throughout the assemblage, and particularly in the eastern side where a sequence of three adult inhumations (SK 8/1032, SK 7/1029 and SK 6/1026) and two infant burials (SK 5/1023 and SK 4/1020) demonstrated that the burial depth increased from south-west to north-east across the site (Plates 4-10, Figure 2). Graveyard soil 1008 was still present at 0.80m BGL in this area, suggesting a natural slope or underlying terrace existed beneath the graveyard, creating a down-slope to the north away from the Lawrence Street end of the Lansdowne Terrace. The implications of this are discussed further below.

The burial soil 1008 ceased at 0.35m BGL and was overlain by 1007, a 0.17m thick deposit of mid brown sandy silt with frequent nineteenth century brick fragments. This was interpreted as a clearance and ground make-up associated with the construction of Lansdowne Terrace between 1852 and 1892. Cut into this were stepped brick-built

foundations for 1 Lansdowne Terrace (1005) and the western yard wall (1006), which truncated underlying burials SK 2/1014 and SK 13/1047 respectively (Plates 2 and 13, Figure 2). The footings were sealed by the make-up and surfaces of the yard (1004 and 1003, plates 15 and 16) and the modern footpath (1002 and 1001, plate 14) along the western edge of the Lansdowne Terrace roadway.

6. DISCUSSION

The precise location of St Edward's Church is not known, but the recorded evidence for its graveyard now covers an area of at least 30m x 10m (Figure 1). The apparent slope of the underlying deposits may suggest a church position exploiting higher ground close to Lawrence Street immediately to the south or south-west of the current observations. This would accord with the position of the lettering on the 1852 OS map, suggesting that the remains of the church may lie beneath Granville Terrace, with the remainder of the graveyard lying to the east and north-east beneath Lansdowne Terrace. Without further fieldwork, this must, however, remain speculative.

No other archaeological deposits other than those relating to the medieval graveyard or to the early modern housing were identified. The suggestion of a natural slope is of further interest, however, as it adds to the topographic information held for this area of York. This is of particular relevance to the location of the Roman roads, which often exploit natural higher ridges in what still is a generally low-lying environment. The suggested course of Roman road 2 is perhaps reinforced slightly by the confirmed presence of natural higher ground beneath its projected line; modern Lawrence Street continues to exploit this feature, which seems to have influenced road locations throughout York's transport history.

7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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APPENDIX 1: INHUMATION BURIALS

Skeleton 1, context 1011

Complete burial

East-west, adult, supine, identified at around 0.50m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 2, context 1014

Partial skull, right scapula, clavicle, humerus, ribs. Cervical vertebrae.

East-west, adult, supine, identified at around 0.50m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 3, context 1017

Right humerus, ulna, radius, scapula, clavicle, right and left ribs, cervical and thoracic vertebrae.

East-west, adult, supine, identified at 0.65m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 4, context 1020

Right femur, tibia, fibula; left femur, tibia, fibula; pelvis, lumbar vertebrae.

East-west, juvenile (?infant), supine, identified at 0.40m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 5, context 1023

Right femur, tibia, fibula; left femur, tibia, fibula; pelvis, left radius and ulna, ?left hand

East-west, juvenile (?infant), supine, identified at 0.40m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 6, context 1026

Skull, right and left clavicle and scapula, right humerus, left humerus, radius and ulna, ribs, most of spine

East-west, adult, supine, identified at 0.60m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 7, context 1029

Skull, right and left clavicle, right and left scapula, right and left humerus, radius, ulna, ribs, whole spine, sacrum.

East-west, adult, supine, identified at 0.70m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 8, context 1032

Lumbar vertebrae, pelvis, right and left femur

East-west, adult, supine, identified at 0.80m BGL. Not lifted as below limit of excavation.

Skeleton 9, context 1035

Skull.

East-west, adult, supine, identified at 0.40m BGL. Skull lifted; rest of body left *in situ* as it lay in the shallower central area.

Skeleton 10, context 1038

Skull.

East-west, adult. Identified at 0.60m BGL. Not lifted as below limit of excavation.

Skeleton 11, context 1041

Skull.

East-west, adult. Identified at 0.60m BGL. Not lifted as below limit of excavation.

Skeleton 12, context 1044

Skull, sacrum, left radius and ulna, left illia.

East-west, adult, supine, disturbed. Identified at around 0.50m BGL. Lifted.

Skeleton 13, context 1047

Ribs, thoracic and lumbar spine, right and left ulna and radius, hands, pelvis, right and left femur, tibia, fibula, feet.

East-west, adult, supine, identified at around 0.50m BGL. Lifted.

FIGURES



Figure 1 Site location

1852 OS in red, 1892 OS in blue, current site area and earlier burial finds in green

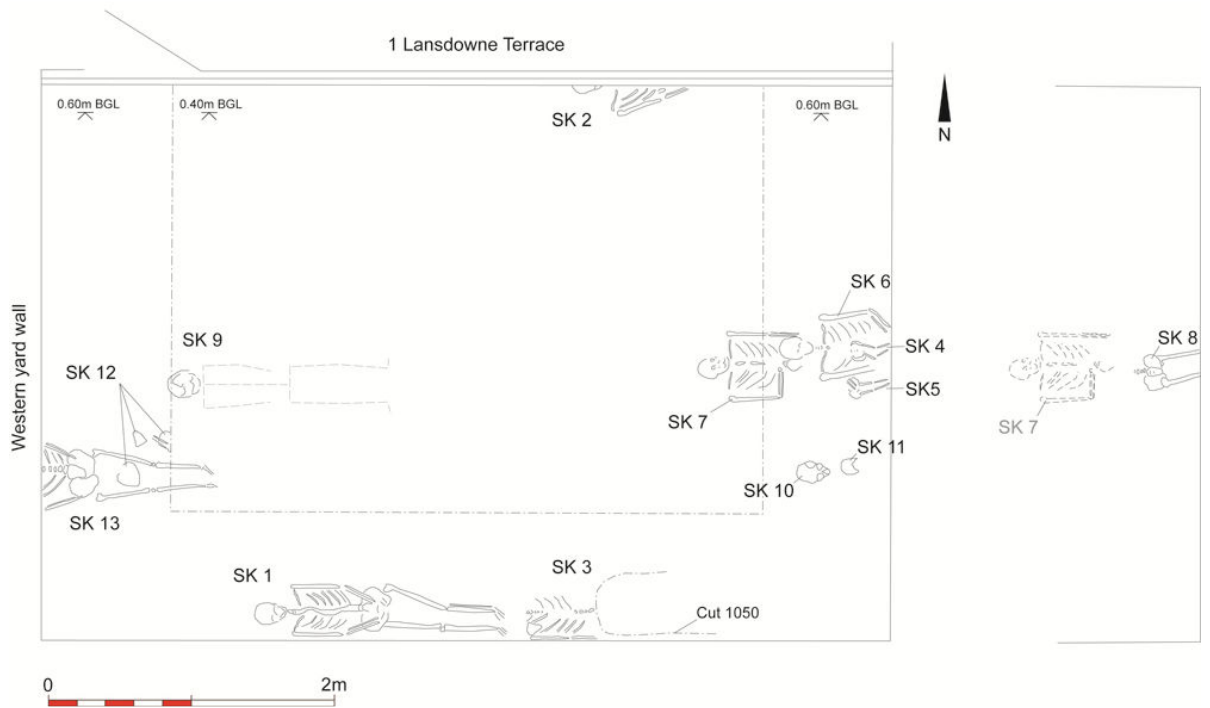


Figure 2 Position of inhumations

PLATES



Plate 1 Skeleton 1, context 1011, looking west



Plate 2 Skeleton 2, context 1014, looking north



Plate 3 Skeleton 3, context 1017, looking west



Plate 4 Skeleton 4, context 1020



Plate 5 Skeleton 5, context 1023



Plate 6 Skeleton 6, context 1026



Plate 7 Skeleton 7, context 1029



Plate 8 Skeletons 4, 5, 6 and 7 in situ



Plate 9 Skeletons 6 and 7 in situ



Plate 10 Skeleton 8, context 1032, beneath skeleton 7



Plate 11 Skeleton 9, context 1035



Plate 12 Skeletons 10 (top) and 11 (centre), contexts 1038 and 1041



Plate 13 Skeletons 12 (right, disturbed) and 13 (left), contexts 1044 and 1047



Plate 14 West facing section



Plate 15 Final view of excavation looking north-west



Plate 16 Final view of excavation looking south-west