



## YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

|                             |   |                         |              |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------|
| <b>SITE ADDRESS</b>         | Utility trench, Foss Islands Road and Lawrence Street, York |                         |              |
| <b>CLIENT NAME</b>          | Morgan Sindall (Infrastructure) plc                         |                         |              |
| <b>YAT PROJECT #</b>        | 5366  | <b>YAT REPORT #</b>     | 2010/79      |
| <b>MUSEUM ACCESSION #</b>   | n/a   | <b>GRID REFERENCE</b>   | SE 6110 5140 |
| <b>PLANNING REFERENCE #</b> | n/a   | <b>AAI OPS NOTICE #</b> | 10009        |

### INTRODUCTION

Between 5<sup>th</sup> May and 4<sup>th</sup> August 2010 York Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief along sections of Foss Islands Road, Barbican Road and Lawrence Street (Figure 1). The objective was to record any deposits, features or buried structures of archaeological interest encountered during the replacement of gas mains in the area. The trenches were generally excavated by machine although the presence of the gas main and many other services meant that there was also a considerable amount of hand digging. At the end of the work over thirty separate observations had been made but those which produced little or no archaeology of any significance are not described in this report. For convenience the described observations are grouped as to the road they lay in but are drawn together in the section on discussion and conclusions. During the works the site was visited on a regular basis, usually once or twice a day. The recording took the form of measured sketches and written notes supplemented by detailed and general colour digital photographs.

### RESULTS

The first set of observations was made along Barbican Road (Figure 2). In Section 1 the earliest deposit noted, at between 0.7m and at least 1.3m below ground level (BGL), was a mid brown sandy clay with moderate cobbles (1000). Overlying this was a 0.25m deep layer of very dark brownish-grey very slightly clayey silt with occasional brick / tile (1001). It was sealed by a mid orange-brown silt with moderate cobbles (1002). All the remaining contexts were definitely modern and consisted of levelling / backfill deposits (1003 and 1004) and the tarmac road surface (1005).

The lowest deposit recorded in Section 2, at between 0.6 and at least 1.2m BGL, was a mid brown clay (1006). Overlying it was a 0.3m deep layer of dark brown slightly clayey silt with moderate limestone fragments and cobbles (1007). Above this was a modern levelling deposit of concrete (1008) and the existing road surface of tarmac (1009).

In Section 3 the earliest deposit seen, between 0.6 and at least 1m BGL, was a firm, mid brown clay with occasional cobbles (1010). Cut into this was a brick culvert (1011) thought to be aligned approximately north-west / south-east. It had walls one brick, c.0.1m, thick and was at least 0.6m tall although the very top of the roof arch had been partially truncated and the base of the culvert lay below the level of the base of the utility trench. Butting the south-west wall of the culvert was a deposit of dark greyish-brown silt with moderate pebbles and occasional pale brown mortar (1012). Butting the north-east wall of the culvert there was a layer of dark brown silt with moderate pebbles and occasional brick / tile (1013). Gradually the culvert filled up with a very dark brown slightly clayey silt (1014) and at some point the top of the culvert was broken through and a ceramic drain (1015) was inserted to replace the culvert. The overlying contexts were modern levelling deposits (1016) and (1017) and the road surface of tarmac (1018).

The earliest deposit noted in Section 4, between 0.7 and at least 1.2m BGL, was a mid greyish-brown slightly sandy silt (1019). Sealing this was a 0.3m deep layer of dark brown very slightly clayey silt (1020). All other contexts were modern and comprised levelling deposits (1021 and 1022) and the road surface of tarmac (1022).

In Section 5 the lowest recorded deposit, seen between 0.7 and at least 1.1m BGL, was a mid – dark greyish-brown slightly sandy clayey silt with occasional pebbles, small cobbles and very

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>1 of 9</b> |





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occasional flecks of brick / tile and charcoal (1023). All other contexts were apparently or definitely fairly modern and consisted of levelling / backfill deposits (1024, 1025, 1027 and 1028), a buried kerb (1026) and the existing kerb (1030) and pavement surface of Yorkstone flags (1029).

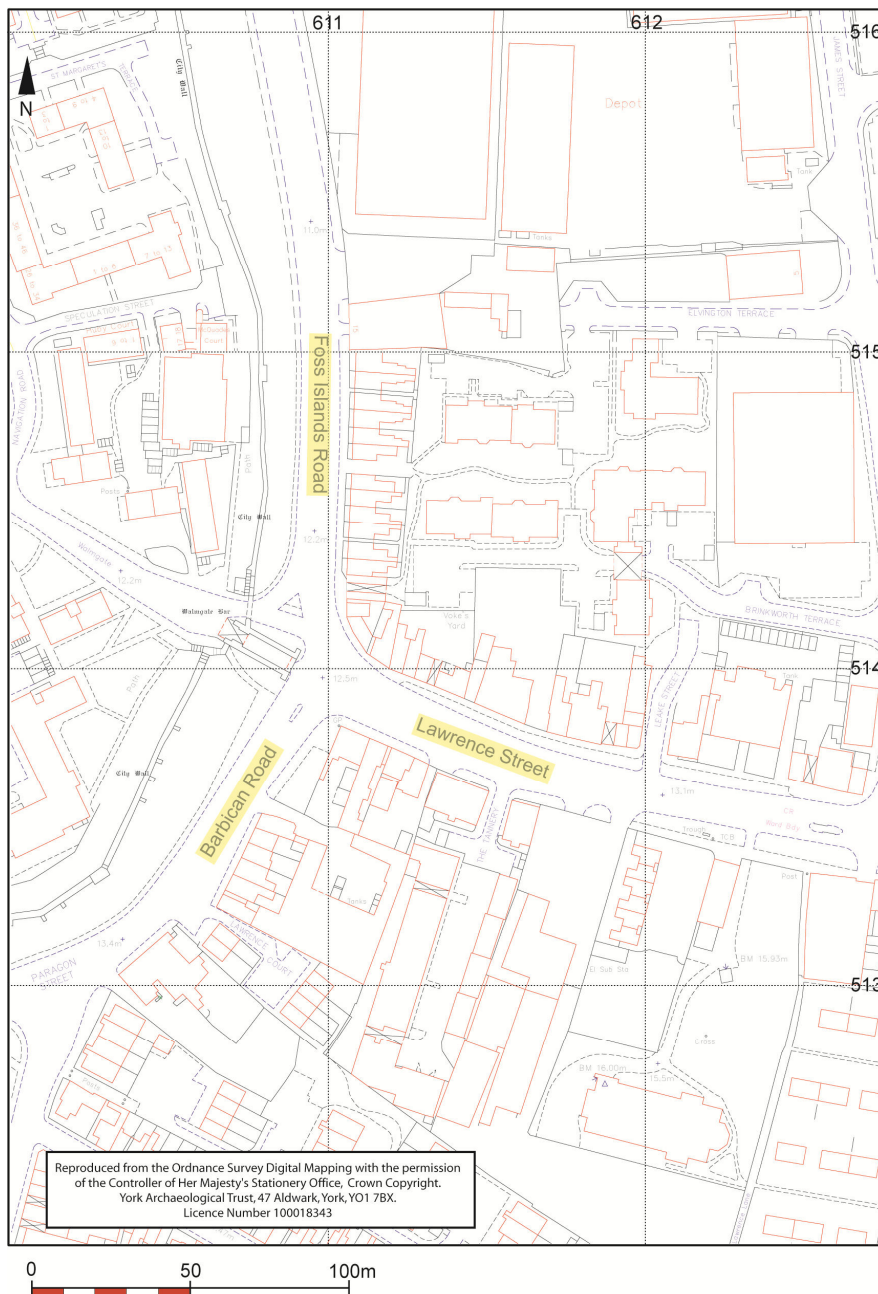


Figure 1 Location of site

|                     |            |                   |                |                 |               |
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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>2 of 9</b> |

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The lowest deposit noted in Section 6, at between 0.6 and at least 1m BGL, was a mid brown sandy silt with occasional pebbles and brick / tile (1031). All overlying deposits were probably or definitely modern and consisted of levelling / backfill deposits (1032, 1033, 1034, 1035 and 1036) and the pavement surface of tarmac (1037).

In Section 7 the earliest recorded deposit, between 0.85 and at least 0.95m BGL, was a mid brown clay (1038). Sealing it was a 0.1m deep layer of mid greyish-brown mortar with occasional brick / tile (1039) and above this there was a 0.05m deep deposit of very dark brown slightly clayey silt (1040). Overlying this was a 0.1m deep layer of light grey ash with moderate charcoal (1041). All later contexts were thought to be modern and comprised levelling / backfill deposits (1042, 1043 and 1044) and the pavement surface of stone slabs (1045).

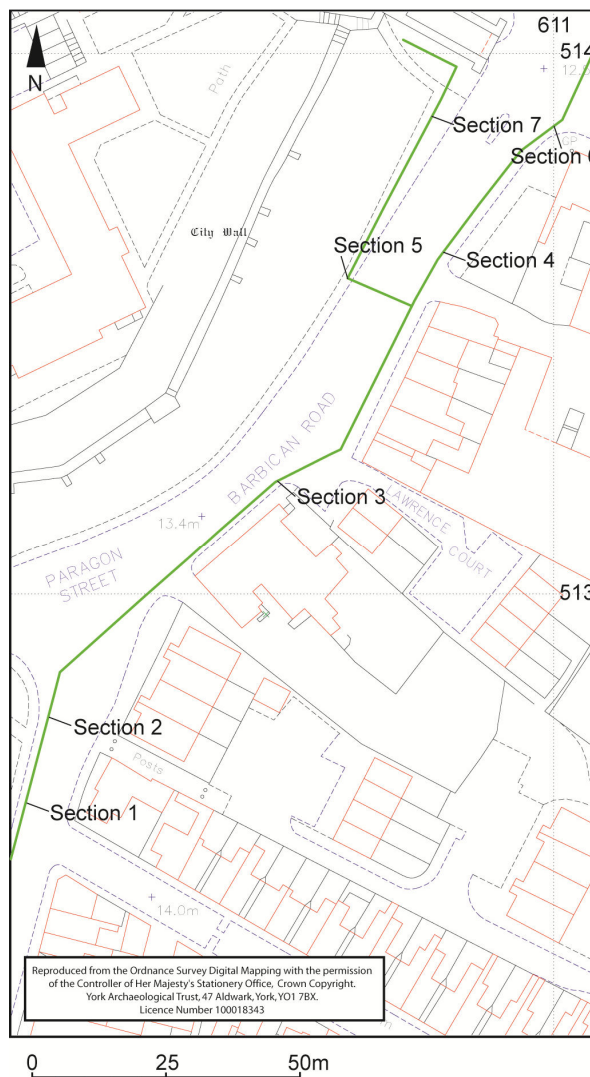


Figure 2 Location of recorded sections in Barbican Road

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>3 of 9</b> |

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The second area of observations was along the southern part of Foss Islands Road. The numbering of the described recorded sections follows on from the sequence established for Barbican Road. In Section 8 the earliest deposit noted, at between 0.6 and at least 1m BGL, was a mid brown slightly clayey sandy silt with very occasional brick / tile (1046). It was overlain by a 0.2m deep layer of mid brown very slightly sandy silt with moderate brick / tile and occasional cobbles (1047). All subsequent contexts were modern and consisted of levelling deposits (1048 and 1049) and the road surface of tarmac (1050).

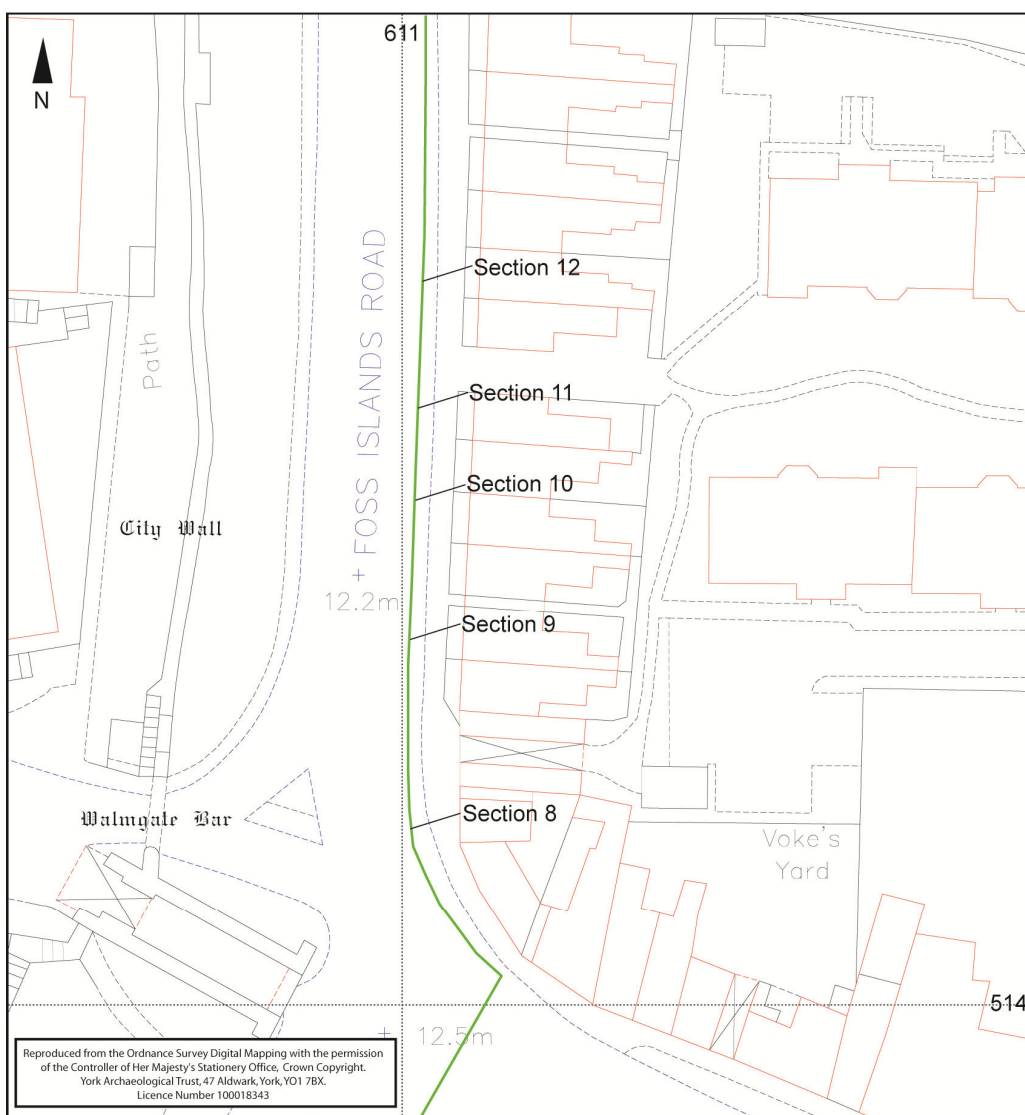


Figure 3 Location of recorded sections in Foss Islands Road

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>4 of 9</b> |

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The lowest deposits observed in Section 9, between 1 and at least 1.4m BGL, were a light orange sand (1051) and a mid brown sand (1052), both believed to be natural in origin. These had been cut by a substantial linear feature (1055) which was around 8m wide and aligned approximately north-west / south-east. Only the upper c.0.4m of this feature, possibly a large ditch, but it was seen to have a sharp break of slope at the top leading to steeply sloping sides. The base was an uncertain depth below the base of the trench. It had at least two backfills the lower of which was a mid grey slightly clayey silt with moderate animal bone and charcoal (1053). The upper backfill was a mid brown very slightly clayey silt with moderate charcoal (1054). The feature had been sealed by a 0.5m deep layer of dark brownish-grey slightly clayey sandy silt with occasional brick / tile (1056). Overlying this was a 0.1m deep deposit of mid brown slightly sandy silt with moderate brick / tile and pebbles (1057). The remainder of the contexts seen at this point were modern and comprised levelling deposits (1058 and 1059) and the tarmac road surface (1060).

In Section 10 the lowest deposit recorded, between 0.8 and at least 1.1m BGL, was a mid brown sticky clay (1061). Above this was a 0.2m deep layer of mid brown clayey sandy silt with moderate brick / tile and cobbles (1062) and overlying this a light to mid slightly orange-brown sandy silt with frequent cobbles and pebbles (1063). All later contexts were modern and consisted of levelling deposits (1064 and 1065) and the road surface of tarmac (1066).

The earliest deposit observed in Section 11, between 0.7 and at least 1.1m BGL, was a dark brown silt with occasional brick / tile (1067). All later contexts were believed to be modern and consisted of levelling / backfill deposits (1068, 1069 and 1070) and the road surface of tarmac (1071).

In Section 12 the lowest deposit, between 1.2 and at least 1.5m BGL, was a mid brown sticky clay (1072). Overlying it was a 0.4m deep layer of dark greyish-brown slightly clayey silt with occasional pebbles (1073). All later contexts were thought to be modern and consisted of levelling / backfill deposits (1074, 1075 and 1076) and the road surface of tarmac (1077).

The third set of observations were made along the western end of Lawrence Street, from Leake Street westward to the junction with Barbican Road and Foss Islands Road. In Section 13 the earliest deposit, between 0.7 and at least 1.2m BGL, was a mid greyish-brown sandy silt (1078). Overlying it was a 0.2m deep layer of mid brown very slightly clayey silt with occasional limestone (1079) and above this was a 0.3m deep deposit of mid brown slightly clayey silt with moderate cobbles and limestone (1080). The remaining contexts were modern and comprised a levelling deposit (1081) and the road surface of tarmac (1082).

The lowest deposit seen in Section 14, at between 0.7 and at least 1.3m BGL, was a dark brown sandy silt with occasional fragments of limestone (1083). Overlying this was a 0.3m deep layer of mid brown silt with moderate pale brown mortar and limestone fragments (1084) and above this was a 0.2m deep deposit of dark brown silt with occasional flecks of pale brown mortar (1085). The remaining contexts were modern and consisted of a levelling deposit (1086) and the road surface of tarmac (1087).

In Section 15 the earliest deposit, seen between 0.7 and 1.3m BGL, was a mid brown slightly sandy silt with moderate pale brown mortar and occasional pebbles (1088). This was sealed by a 0.2m deep layer of mid greyish-brown sandy silt with moderate brick / tile and occasional pale brown mortar (1089). Overlying this was a 0.1m deep deposit of mid brownish-grey sandy silt with

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>5 of 9</b> |





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|                             |   |                         |              |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------|
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moderate flecks of pale brown mortar and occasional charcoal (1090). The remaining contexts were definitely or probably fairly modern and comprised a levelling deposit (1091), a cobbled road surface (1092) and the existing road surface of tarmac (1093).

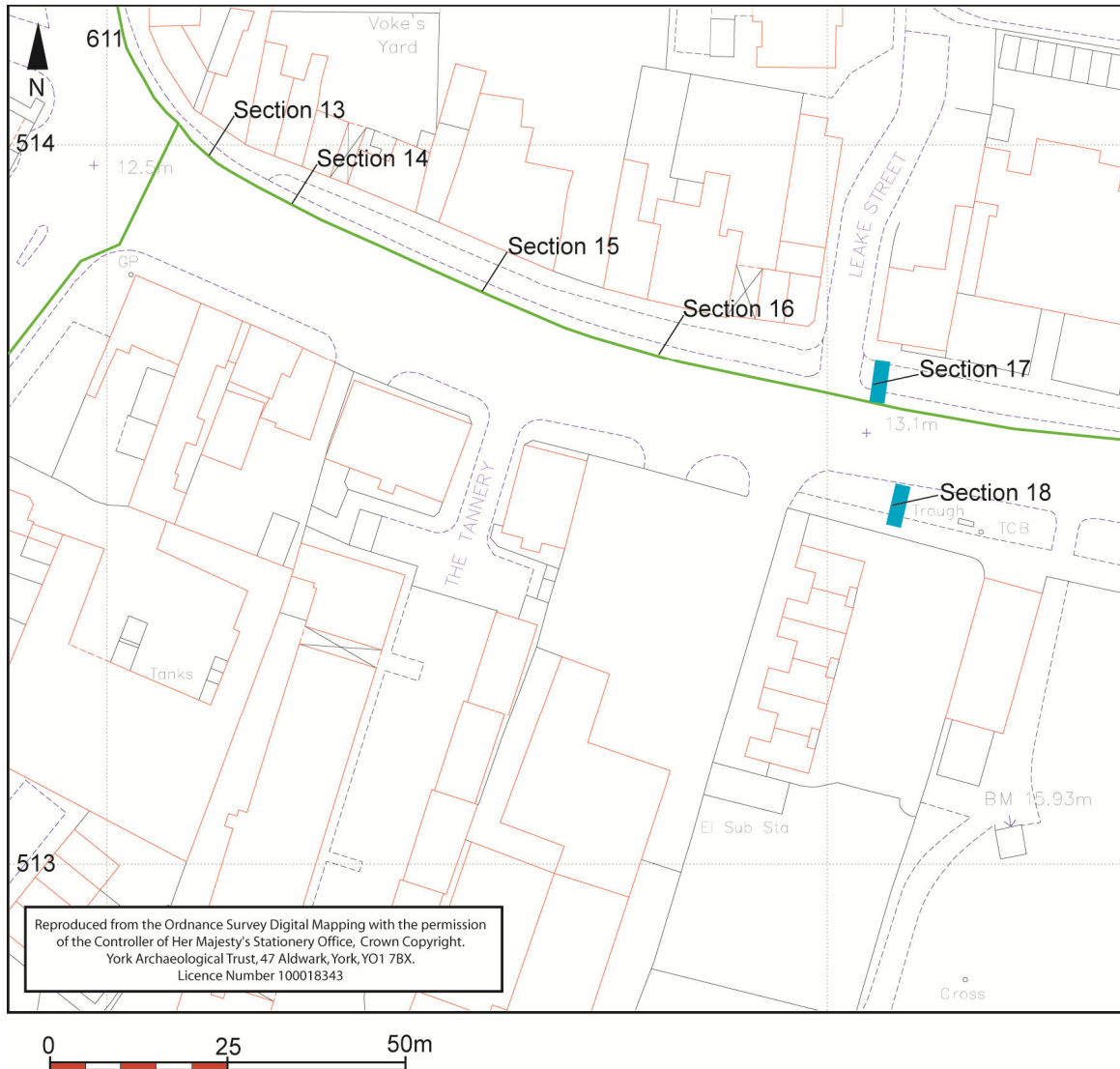


Figure 4 Location of recorded sections in Lawrence Street

The earliest deposit noted in Section 16, between 0.5 and 1.2m BGL, was a dark brown sandy silt (1094). It was sealed by a 0.2m deep layer of dark greyish-brown silt with occasional limestone fragments (1095). All later contexts were modern and consisted of levelling deposits (1096 and 1097) and the parking bay surface of concrete flags (1098).

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>6 of 9</b> |

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In Section 17 the earliest recorded deposit, at between 0.7 and at least 1.2m BGL, was a light greyish-brown silty sand (1099). It was sealed by a 0.2m deep layer of mid greyish-brown sandy silt with occasional limestone and animal bone (1100). Above this was a 0.3m deep deposit of mid brown sandy silt with moderate brick / tile (1101). The remaining contexts were probably or definitely quite modern and comprised a cobbled road surface (1102), a levelling deposit (1103) and the existing road surface of tarmac (1104).

The lowest deposit recorded in Section 18, between 0.8 and at least 1m BGL, was a dark brown silt with occasional brick / tile and cobbles (1105). Overlying it was a 0.2m deep layer of dark brownish-grey very slightly clayey silt with occasional charcoal (1106). Above this was a very dark greyish-brown very slightly clayey silt with occasional charcoal and flecks of mid brown sand (1107) which was sealed by a 0.1m deep layer of dark brown silt with moderate patches of mid brown sand and occasional limestone (1108). The remaining contexts were modern and consisted of a levelling deposit (1109) and the current ground surface of mortared cobbles (1110).

### CONCLUSION

Natural deposits were recorded in at least seven of the sections and was generally a firm mid brown clay although in Section 9 it proved to be sand. The Lawrence Street area is known for having sand rather than clay as the immediate underlying natural deposit. The only definite feature recorded was the large linear cut, Context 1055, in Section 9. Although not precisely datable it was possible to demonstrate that it cut directly into natural and was sealed by clean dark build-up deposits of probable medieval date. It is probable, therefore, that it is of Roman date but this is problematic since it is in the same location, and aligned similarly, as a possible Roman road heading for the Legionary Fortress. It is far too wide to be a roadside ditch and its function remains uncertain. Moderate to large quantities of animal bone from its lower backfill do, however, suggest that it was used for tipping waste bone.

No other definite features were noted during this watching brief but definite or probable build-up deposits were recorded from all the described trenches. The only other context of note was the brick culvert, Context 1011, seen in Section 3. Generally the trenches excavated for this work followed quite closely the line of previous service trenches and overall little damage was done to any archaeological remains.

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>7 of 9</b> |







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|                             |   |                         |              |
|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------|--------------|
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Plate 1 Culvert 1011, looking north-west



Plate 2 Backfilled linear feature 1055, looking east

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>8 of 9</b> |





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Plate 3 View of Section 17, looking south



Plate 4 General view of work in Barbican Road, looking north

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|                     |            |                   |                | <b>PAGE</b>     | <b>9 of 9</b> |

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