



# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>	Utility pits, Regent Street, York		
<b>CLIENT NAME</b>	BT Openreach		
<b>YAT PROJECT #</b>	5426	<b>YAT REPORT #</b>	2010/89
<b>MUSEUM ACCESSION #</b>	n/a	<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	SE 6129 5130
<b>PLANNING REFERENCE #</b>	n/a	<b>AAI OPS NOTICE #</b>	10026

## INTRODUCTION

On 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 York Archaeological Trust undertook a watching brief on land towards the northern end of Regent Street, off Lawrence Street, York (Figure 1). The objective was to record any deposits, features or buried structures of archaeological interest encountered during the excavation of two pits for new telegraph poles. In each case modern obstructions were encountered above the required depth, c.1.8m below ground level and the pits were both relocated (Figure 2). All four pits are described in this report. The pits were each approximately 0.4m square and up to 1.8m deep. The test pits were mainly dug by hand although a lorry-mounted mechanical drill was used to excavate the lower parts of the pits. The recording took the form of written notes and measured sketches supplemented by colour digital photographs.



Figure 1 Location of Regent Street

<b>COMPLETED BY</b>	D.T. Evans	<b>CHECKED BY</b>	M.R. Stockwell	<b>FINISHED</b>	19/11/10
<b>FINDS</b>	No	<b>SAMPLES</b>	No	<b>PHOTOS</b>	Yes
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## RESULTS

In Foundation Pit 1 the lowest deposit noted, between 0.6 and at least 1m below ground level (BGL), was a dark brown silt with occasional brick / tile and cobbles (1000). Also within this context were at least two ceramic drains and the pit was abandoned at this depth. Above Context 1000 there was a 0.2m tall stretch of brickwork bonded with a firm, pale brown mortar (1001). Its alignment and function could not be determined with any certainty due to the confined nature of the pit but its depth suggested that it was not a drain. Overlying Context 1001 was a 0.35m deep layer of dark greyish-brown silt with occasional white mortar, brick / tile and patches of mid brown sand (1002) which was capped by grass in dark brown silt (1003).

Foundation Pit 2 produced the following sequence; Between 1 and at least 1.8m BGL there was a deposit of mid orange sand and gravel (1004). Overlying this was a 0.3m deep mixture of dark brown silt and mid brown sand with occasional cobbles (1005). This was sealed by a 0.4m deep layer of dark brown silt with occasional flecks of charcoal and very pale brown mortar (1006) and above this was a 0.25m deep mixture of dark brown silt and pale brown mortar with moderate brick / tile and pebbles (1007) which was capped by grass in dark brown silt (1008).

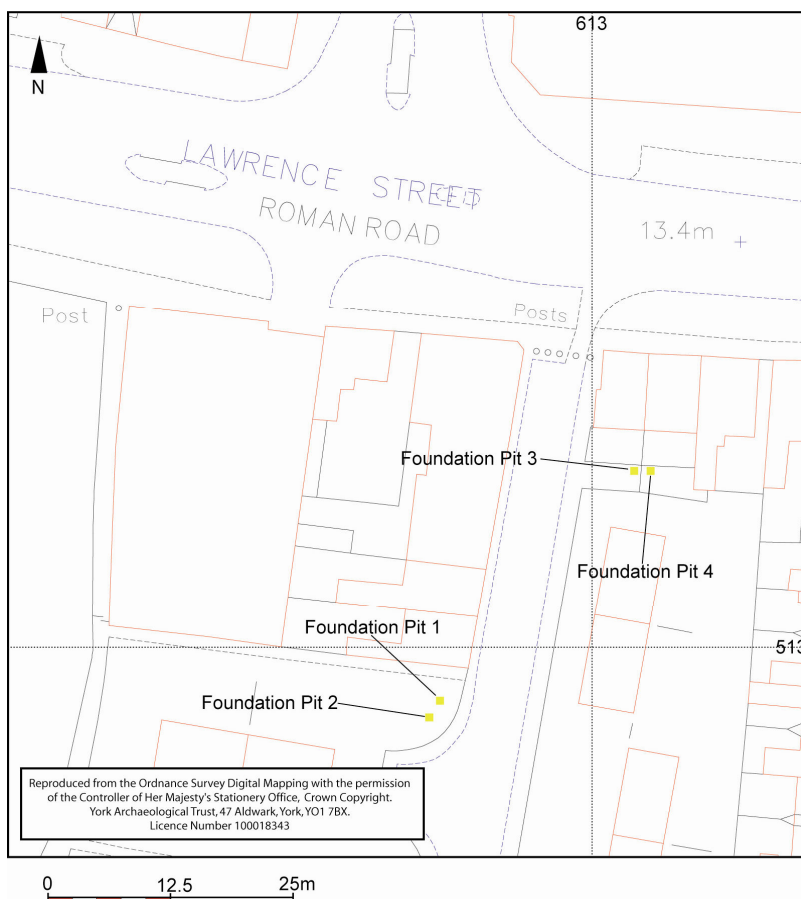


Figure 2 Location of observed foundation pits

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In Foundation Pit 3 the lowest context seen, at 1.2m BGL, was a modern live ceramic drain (1009). Above this was a 1.1m deep deposit of dark brown silt with moderate limestone fragments and occasional brick / tile (1010). The uppermost context was a dark brown silt with occasional limestone fragments and capped by weeds (1011).

In Foundation Pit 4 the lowest deposit recorded, between 1.4m and the base of the pit at 1.8m BGL, was a mid brown sandy clay (1012). Sealing this was a 1.3m deep layer of dark brown silt with occasional limestone fragments and brick / tile (1013) and the topmost deposit was a dark brown silt with occasional limestone fragments and capped with weeds (1014).

### CONCLUSIONS

No dating evidence from this watching brief was recovered but some useful conclusions can be made. The sand and gravel 1004 from Foundation Pit 2 and sandy clay from Foundation Pit 4 are both likely to be of natural origin and are typical of the Lawrence Street area of York where the natural varies considerably from clay to gravel to sand. Of some note is its depth below modern ground level, between 1 and 1.4m perhaps suggesting that there has been some build-up of ground level in the area although this could be modern and associated with the pre-fab structures still present along the west side of Regent Street. The insertion of drains had removed any trace of archaeology from Foundation Pits 1 and 3 and there were no clearly archaeological deposits within Foundation Pit 4. Contexts 1005 and 1006 in Foundation Pit 2 may have been build-up deposits of uncertain date but probably medieval or post-medieval. The brickwork noted in Foundation Pit 1 may have belonged to one of the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses believed to have occupied this street prior to the erection of the pre-fab buildings. No archaeological remains of any significance were encountered during the works.



Plate 1 Natural sand and gravel from Foundation Pit 2, looking west

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Plate 2 View of top of Foundation Pit 4, looking north

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