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47-51 SKELDERGATE, YORK
TRIAL EXCAVATIONS

1996 EVALUATION REPORT
NUMBER 3



York Archaeological Trust

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1. INTRODUCTION

Between the 12th and 16th February 1996 York Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation of land to the rear of 47-51 Skeldergate in York (NGR SE 6026 5134) to a specification prepared by John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist for York City Council. The evaluation took place in advance of the proposed redevelopment of the site for housing and comprised the excavation of two trenches each measuring 3m x 3m. and the observation of two small test pits dug for engineering purposes.

The finds and site records are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust under the Trust and Yorkshire Museum accession code YORYM: 1996.435 but will be deposited in the museum at the end of the project

2. SUMMARY OF DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

The street name Skeldergate indicates the antiquity of occupation on the west bank of the river Ouse. The accepted derivation is from the Old Norse "skialdari", meaning the street of the shield makers although the possible derivation from Old Norse "skelde" meaning shelf should not be discounted since there is a topographical basis for this.

The topography of the area to the west was changed considerably in the late 11th century when the motte and bailey castle known as Baile Hill was constructed. It seems likely that any houses on this particular part of Skeldergate would have been cleared during this process.

The enclosure of the street within the city defences, coupled with a long river frontage, encouraged the development of Skeldergate as one of the principal medieval dock areas of York. The "Common Crane", located adjacent to where the Bonding Warehouse stands today, was first mentioned in a contract for rebuilding in 1417. In the same year the City Council ordered that merchants from outside the city who brought their wares by river should store them at the Cranegarth. This continued in use until at least 1590.

Such commercial activity encouraged the building of merchants premises and houses on Skeldergate and North Street. In approximately 1650 Sir Thomas Widdrington wrote that "in Skeldergate and North Street have been and are many ancient built houses, as the fashion of some of them yet shows, which probably belonged to merchants where they might have cranes at their backsides to take up their wares".

From the 17th century onwards Skeldergate appears on maps of York in various degrees of detail and accuracy. The particular site under investigation here, very close to the City Walls, is shown built up with houses on John Speed's map of 1610 whilst Archer's map of 1682 shows small houses on the street front with large gardens behind. A similar situation is depicted on maps throughout the 18th and early 19th centuries. The 1852 Ordnance Survey map shows buildings on the southern part of the site with a timber yard behind and to the north, larger houses on the street front with a range of small buildings known as Coats Buildings behind.

In the 19th century, although Skeldergate was still the main port for vessels, not all of the street was prosperous. Hargrove described the street as "long, narrow and disagreeable" and in 1832 the first cases of the cholera epidemic were recorded in Beedham's Court, otherwise known as the "Hagworm's Nest", which lay off Skeldergate. The court was also described as "filthy and overcrowded" and had the dubious distinction of being the start of several other epidemics. By 1847 Cromwell Road had been laid out and buildings appear fronting the western edge of the new street. The stretch of city wall between the river Ouse and Baile Hill was removed in 1878 when the area was cleared to make the approaches to Skeldergate Bridge.

By the end of the 19th century the site and buildings were used as a builder's yard. In the 20th century part of the site was occupied successively by timber merchants, builders and for the last 50 years by a monumental masons yard, whilst an office block recently occupied by the National Rivers Authority with attached car park was constructed on the northern part of the site in the mid 1960's.

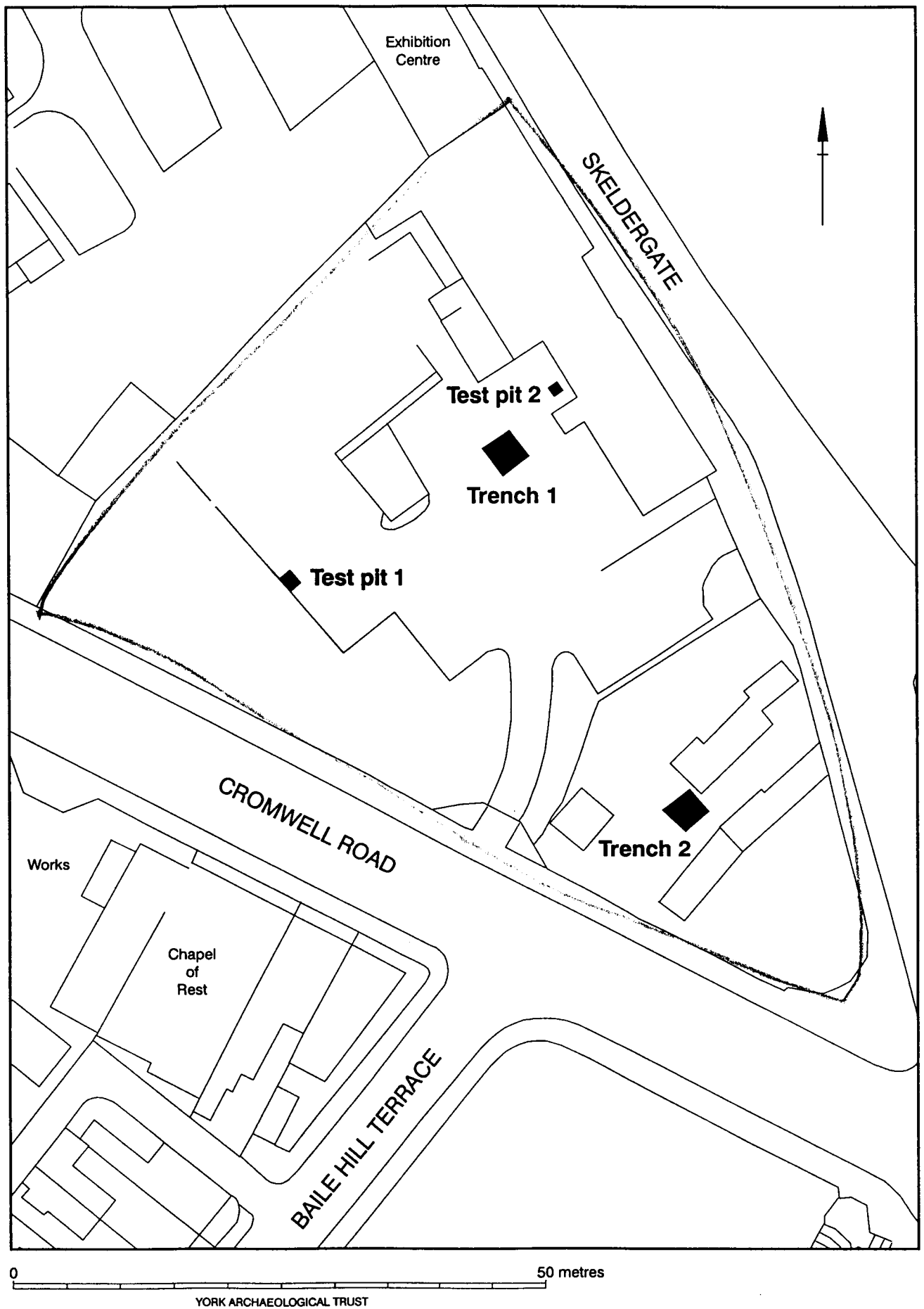


Figure 1 Trench and test pit location plan

3. SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

3.1 The closest previous archaeological excavation of any size to the site under investigation took place on the opposite side of Skeldergate. At the City Mills, Skeldergate site (YAT Site codes 1972.19, 1983.2 and 1983.25) a late 12th century timber waterfront was located approximately 4m east of the modern street front surviving to a maximum height of 6.50m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD). The waterfront was extended into the river with stone walls in the 14th or 15th century and buildings of this date survived on the street front to a height of c.8m AOD.

3.2 At 26-34 Skeldergate (YAT Site code 1989.9) a sloping cobbled water lane which had gone out of use in the late 18th century was located at 8.43m AOD some 7m east of the street front. 18th century building remains with medieval predecessors beneath were identified on the street front itself at a similar level.

3.3 At 58-9 Skeldergate, (YAT Site code 1973-5.14, Carver et al. 1978) slightly more than 100m from the site under investigation, but in the same topographical relationship to the river a sequence of seven superimposed road surfaces of Roman date was found close to Skeldergate. Amongst other traces of Roman activity found was a timber-lined well. Remains of timber buildings dating to the Anglo-Scandinavian period survived to a maximum height of 7.50m AOD at the Skeldergate street front and these were sealed by a sequence of medieval stone buildings to a maximum height of 8.20m AOD.

3.4 At Bishophill Senior (YAT Site codes 1973.15, 1990.16) evidence for Roman occupation on a man made terrace was excavated (Carver et al., 1978) which tied in closely with Roman structures excavated on the adjacent site of St Mary, Bishophill Senior in 1964 (Ramm, 1976). The Roman remains had been extensively disturbed by late Roman and post Roman pit digging and robbing.

3.5 Excavations at Baile Hill by P.V. Addyman in the late 1960's are within 100m of the site under investigation but add little to an understanding of the levels of survival. The nature of the site, a motte and bailey castle, and the greater distance from the river mean that deposit type and depth are specific to this site. However, the construction of the castle in the 11th century may have had an impact on the structures existing at the time in the surrounding area and even if material was not taken from Skeldergate to construct the motte, it does seem likely that demolition of properties in an area so close to the castle would have taken place.

4. THE EXCAVATION

The results from the two archaeological trenches are presented first, followed by the observations of the test pits. The deposits and features are described chronologically, from the bottom upwards. The specification of work required excavation to a depth of 1.5m in both trenches. After discussion with John Oxley and consideration of the deposits and features revealed it was agreed that this depth was only essential in parts of the trenches.

4.1 Trench One (Fig. 2)

This trench was located in the car park to the rear of buildings erected in the 1960's. It measured 3m x 3m and following machine removal of modern deposits, all archaeological deposits were excavated by hand.

4.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered in this trench, lying at a depth of c.1.6m below the modern ground level (c.8.49m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD)), was a mixture of pale yellow mortar and limestone rubble (1021). This was sealed by a thick layer of dark grey clayey loam containing some cobbles and limestone fragments (1012). Occasional patches of ash and charcoal were also identified within this layer which was found across the entire extent of the trench. It contained pottery of the late 11th and 12th centuries.

4.1.2 Three distinct deposits were encountered above 1012, a reddish brown slightly sandy silty clay (1016), a greyish-brown sandy silty clay (1024) and a greyish-brown slightly sandy silty clay (1023), which may have been the same as 1024.

4.1.3 Founded directly on 1016 was a limestone wall aligned north-east to south-west at right angles to Skeldergate. Only a single course survived and the width of the wall is unknown since it was immediately adjacent to the south-east edge of the trench. The limestone blocks were bonded with clay and the largest visible block measured 0.58m x 0.29m.

4.1.4 To the north of the wall lay five deposits which were believed to be contemporary. These were a brown sandy clay (1010) containing 15th/16th century pottery, a reddish-brown slightly sandy silty clay (1018), a brown sand (1011) with 13th century pottery, a brown sandy loam (1027) and a greyish-brown sand (1022) containing pottery of 13th/14th century date. Cut into 1010 was a small feature (1015) at least 0.26m deep with steeply sloping sides. It was impossible to determine the function of this feature since it had largely been cut away by the modern cuts 1005 and 1008. It was filled with greyish-brown clayey silt (1014). Apparently stratigraphically contemporary, but only seen in the north-east section was a dark greyish-brown loam (1028) which appeared to fill a possible small slot or posthole cut through 1027 and 1011. This putative cut was 0.25m wide and 0.20m deep. Also contemporary with 1015 and 1028 was a spread of cobbles and limestone (1019) which was truncated by modern cut 1008 but may have been aligned north-east to south-west.

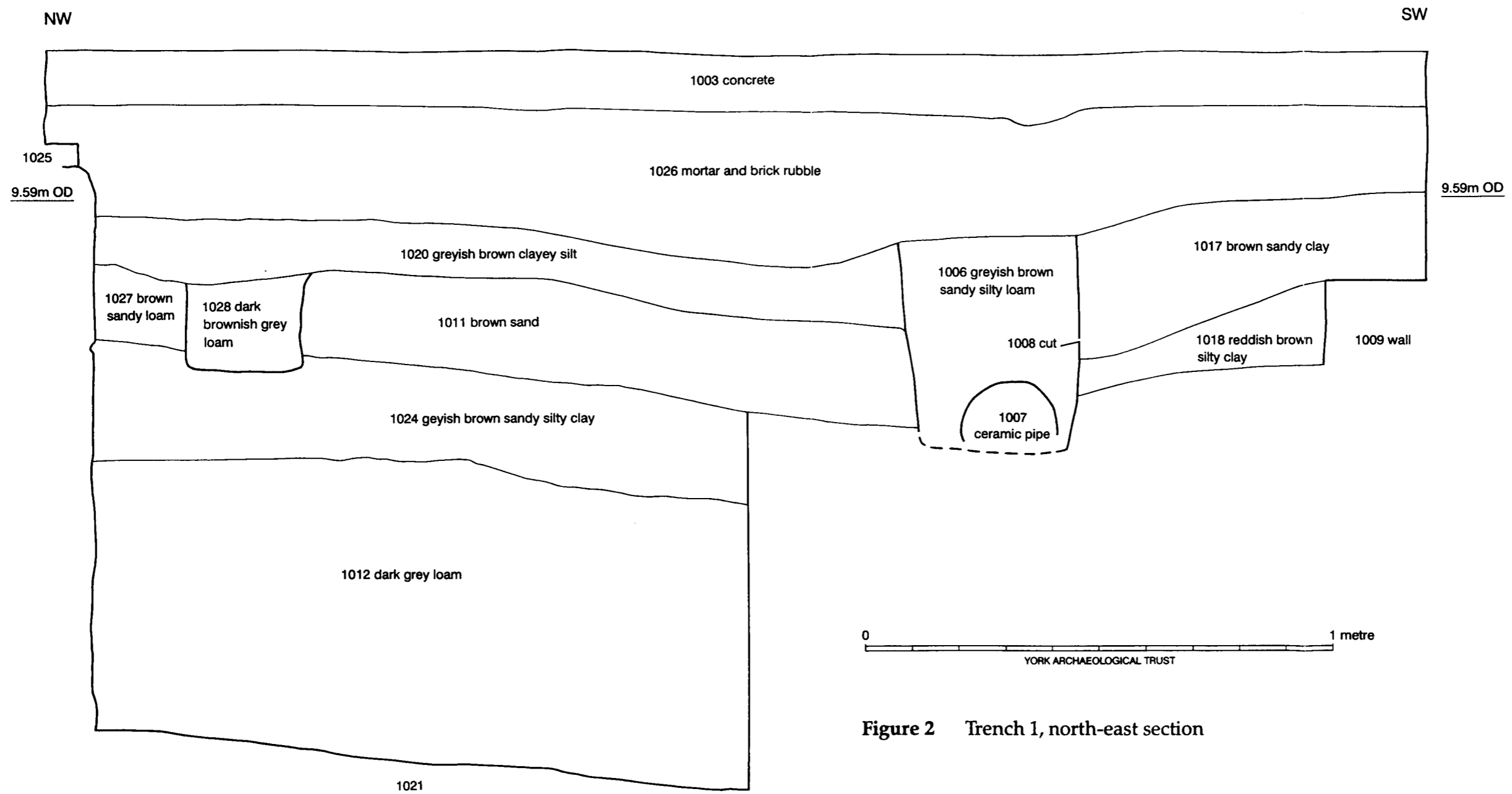


Figure 2 Trench 1, north-east section

4.1.5. A group of contemporary deposits sealed the wall 1009 and the cobbled surface 1019. These were a brown sandy clay (1017) which was above the wall and a greyish-brown clayey silt (1020) containing pottery of 15th/16th century date and a brown sandy clay (1013) with 14th century pottery which overlay the cobble spread.

4.1.6 Another feature only visible in the section was a brick wall (1025) which was aligned north-east to south-west, parallel to wall 1009. Only two courses of bricks bonded with soft white mortar survived. The individual bricks measured approx. 0.23m x 0.10m x 0.05m and the lower course was offset 0.05m to the south-east of the upper suggesting that these were foundation courses.

4.1.7 All deposits and features above 1025 were modern and were associated with the construction and use of buildings on the Skeldergate street frontage and the laying out of the car park.

4.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

This trench was located some 15m back from the Skeldergate street front in the grounds of the former Monumental Masons yard. Prior to laying out as part of the car park, modern disturbance had been negligible in this area. The trench measured 3m x 3m and after the removal of the modern tarmac and make-up by machine, all excavation was undertaken by hand.

4.2.1 The earliest deposit encountered in this trench, at a depth of between 1.20 and 1.60m beneath the modern ground level (c.9.00 - 9.30m AOD) was a dark grey sandy clayey silt (2016) which contained moderate amounts of charcoal but was otherwise quite clean.

4.2.2 The south-east edge of a ditch (2014) aligned north-east to south-west was cut into 2016. The full width and depth of the ditch remains uncertain as it continued beyond the edge of the trench but it was at least 0.60m deep and the excavated edge sloped down at 45 degrees. Traces of very decayed wood were noted against the excavated edge which suggest that it may originally have been timber lined. The fill was a mixture of mid orange-brown clay and mid greyish-brown silt (2012) containing pottery of the late 13th century.

4.2.3 Parallel with 2014, but apparently later than it, was a limestone wall (2013) also aligned north-east to south-west. It was faced with well coursed limestone blocks with a core of limestone rubble and cobbles all bonded with a firm brownish-white mortar. The wall continued across the full width of the trench and was c.0.90m thick. The foundations consisted of small to medium sized cobbles (2015) with no bonding material.

4.2.4 Two deposits sealed wall 2013; a mid yellowish-brown sandy silt (2008) which contained pottery of 11th/12th century date and a dark grey sandy silt (2011) with late 13th century pottery. Above these were two further deposits; a mid brown sandy clayey silt (2010) containing possible 12th century pottery and a compact dirty orange-red clay (2007) with 12th century pot.

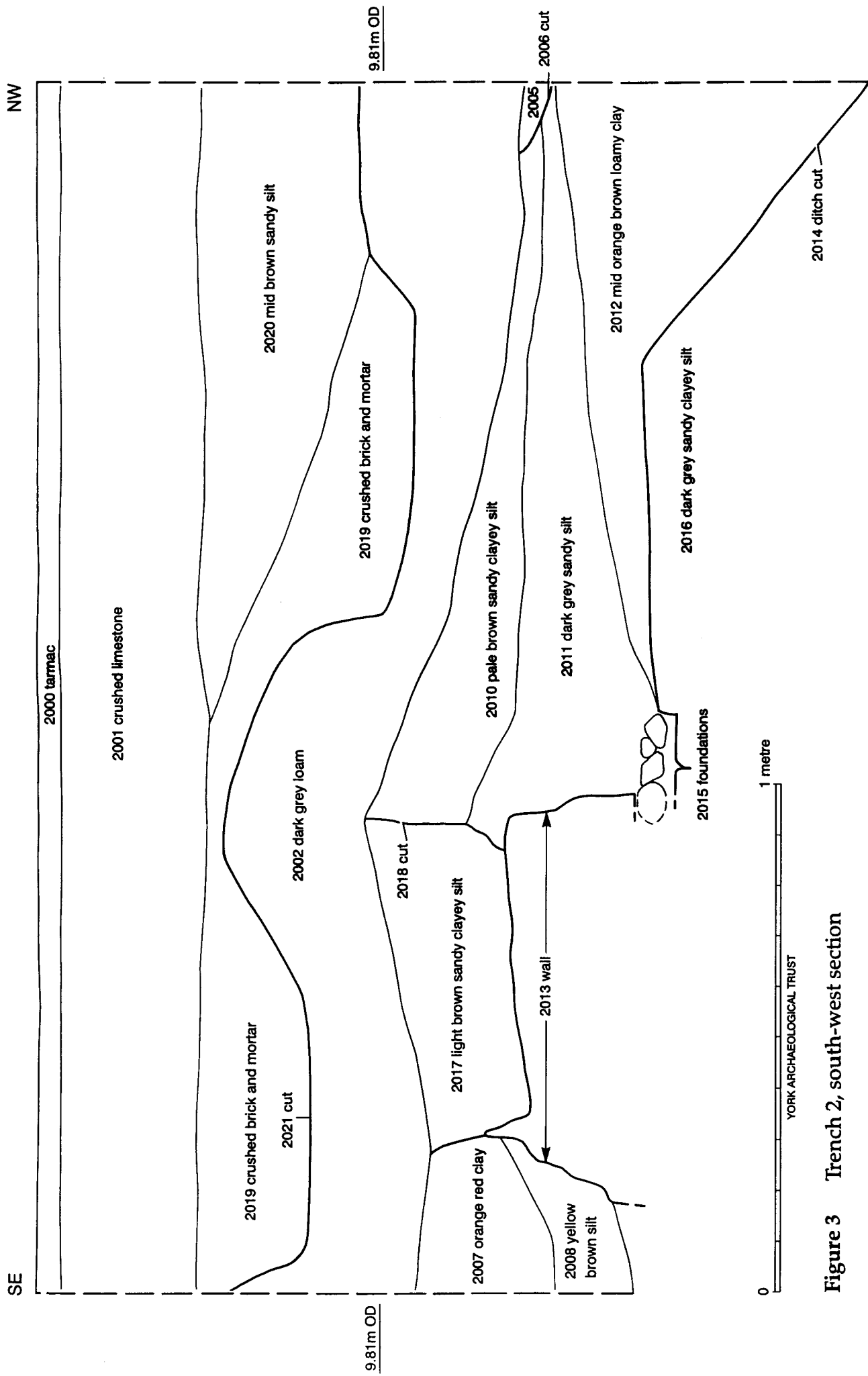


Figure 3 Trench 2, south-west section

4.2.5 A number of features cut the layers described above. A hearth of edge-set tiles with a cobble and limestone surround (2009) was located in the north corner of the trench. Traces of burning and ash were visible and at two points tiles clearly overlay this burning. Indications of lower edge-set tiles indicate that the hearth had a complex history but this was not investigated by excavation. The full extent of the hearth is unknown as it continued beyond both north-east and north-west trench edges. A robber trench (2018) removing the upper levels of wall 2013 was recognised in and largely confined to the south-west section where it was 1.15m wide, 0.25m deep and contained a fill of light brown sandy clayey silt (2017). An ovoid cut (2004) 0.70m in diameter and 0.33m deep with quite steeply sloping sides and a flattish base was filled with mid to dark greyish-brown sandy silt containing pottery of the early 16th century. Finally an irregularly shaped but roughly linear gully (2006) aligned south-west to north-east which continued beyond the trench edge was filled with mid greyish-brown sandy silt (2005).

4.2.6 All of the above features were sealed by a layer of dark grey slightly clayey loam (2002) which was present across the entire trench. This was 0.40m thick, relatively clean apart from small amounts of tile flecks and mortar, and presumably represents dumped material deposited to raise the level of the ground. Cutting 2002 but only seen in the trench section, was an irregularly shaped cut (2021) up to 2m wide and 0.35m deep with steeply sloping sides and an irregular base. It was filled with loose crushed brick and mortar (2019).

4.2.7 Above 2002 and sealing 2021 was a layer of mid brown sandy silt (2020) which was up to 0.30m thick and underlay modern crushed limestone (2001) and tarmac (2000) which formed the car park surface.

4.3 Test Pit 1

This test pit measured 1.70m x 1.00m and was dug to a depth of 0.80m against the retaining wall between the car park and deposits adjacent to Cromwell Road.

4.3.1 From the base of the pit to approximately 0.55m below the modern ground level was a firm brown clay containing a few cobbles. Above this was a layer of modern crushed limestone 0.45m thick and a layer of tarmac 0.10m thick..

4.4 Test Pit 2

This test pit, dug up against the rear of the standing building on the Skeldergate street frontage, measured 1.10m x 0.85m and was 0.80m deep.

4.4.1 A layer of dark grey loam was identified at the base of this pit which may have been pre-modern in origin. Above this were modern foundations and drainage trenches capped with 0.20m of reinforced concrete.

5. FINDS ASSESSMENT

5.1 Pottery

5.1.1 Trench 1

Pottery was recovered from eight contexts in Trench 1. The earliest to produce pottery was context 1012 from which six Stamford ware, ten splashed ware and six gritty ware sherds (together with two residual Roman sherds) indicate a date in the later 11th or early 12th century. Sherds found in stratigraphically later contexts included the usual range of York pottery of the 13th to 15th century and included Brandsby wares, York Glazed wares, Humber wares and red wares. A sherd of post-medieval tin glazed earthenware was recovered from context 1006.

Context	Date	Comment
1002	late 13th century	10 sherds
1006	late 19th/20th century	5 sherds
1010	15th/16th century	3 sherds
1011	13th century	5 sherds
1012	12th century	24 sherds
1013	14th century	11 sherds (all 12th cent. apart from one possibly intrusive 14th cent. sherd)
1020	15th/16th century	2 sherds
1022	13th/14th century	3 sherds

5.1.2 Trench 2

Pottery was recovered from six contexts in Trench 2. Of these the stratigraphically earliest, 2012 (the fill of cut 2014) produced sherds of late 13th century date. Other contexts produced the usual range of pottery of the 11th to late 13th century in York with the exception of context 2003, a fill in cut 2004, which contained red wares and Cistercian wares of the early 16th century. Context 2010 produced four sherds of 11th/12th century wares as well as three sherds of what is believed to be imported wares, possibly French in origin, which may be of the same early medieval date. Further research would be required to establish their precise date and provenance.

2003	early 16th century	4 sherds
2007	12th century	5 sherds
2008	11th/12th century	1 sherd
2010	? 12th century	7 sherds
2011	late 13th century	17 sherds
2012	late 13th century	11 sherds

5.1.3 Summary

The pottery indicates that some of the contexts encountered dated to the late 11th or early 12th century. Material of this date was also found residually in contexts of later

date indicating that the 11th and 12th century deposits had been disturbed later in the medieval period. However, there was no more mixing than would normally be expected in the urban environment. The probable imported medieval wares serve to reinforce a pattern of imported wares found elsewhere along the Skeldergate river frontage, the area in which the majority of goods imported into York during the Middle Ages would be been unloaded. It is likely that further excavation on this site would produce more examples of this type of ware. Otherwise the range of wares and their relative proportions conform to a pattern now well established in the city.

5.2 Ceramic Building Materials

No identifiable fragments of brick or tile were recovered from this evaluation excavation.

5.3 Small Finds

A total of thirty three small finds was assessed comprising twenty iron objects, two pieces of iron slag, two copper alloy objects, two lead alloy objects, three glass fragments, one antler fragment, one piece of fired clay, one flint and one stone fragment.

5.3.1 Iron

The majority of iron artefacts recovered were nails. They were recovered from contexts 1010, 1011, 1012, 1013, 1022, 2003 and 2010. The pieces of slag were recovered from contexts 1010 and 1012. The more significant iron artefacts were a possible knife blade fragment from context 2003 (sf.5) and a large hook, possibly a flesh hook from context 2003 (sf12).

5.3.2 Copper Alloy

The most interesting find of the entire assemblage from this particular evaluation was a copper alloy strap-end (sf17) which unfortunately was from machine excavated material. It is a forked spacer type of strap-end with a moulded acorn knob; similar examples from London are thought to be of 14th century date (Egan and Pritchard, 1991, 145, no. 676). The other copper alloy object was a wire fragment from context 2008 (sf29).

5.3.3 Lead Alloy

The two finds comprised a piece of run-off from context 2003 (sf18) and a fragment of lead sheet from context 2012 (sf19).

5.3.4 Glass

The three fragments were examined by Dr Hilary Cool who comments that a fragment of Roman blue/green prismatic bottle was found in context 2007 (sf16) and that the piece of glass from context 1002 (sf31) is either Roman or modern and that from context 1006 is post-medieval or modern.

5.3.5 Antler

A burnt antler fragment (sf20) was recovered from context 2010.

5.3.6 Fired Clay

A clay tobacco pipe stem fragment was recovered from an unstratified context.

5.3.7 Flint

An apparently unworked flint (sf30) was recovered from context 1012.

5.3.8 Stone

A fragment of gritstone quern (sf21) was recovered from context 2010. It was from the upper stone but showed no signs of wear.

5.3.9 The nature of the assemblage

The only datable finds from this assemblage are the strap-end (sf17) and the glass fragments (sf 16, 31, 32). It is a mixed assemblage containing objects of domestic type such as the quern fragment and the strap-end and industrial waste such as the slag and the lead alloy run-off.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

6.1 Summary

Four samples of sediment and one box of hand-collected animal bone from deposits of medieval and post-medieval date revealed by excavations at 47-51 Skeldergate, York were submitted for an evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential.

Small numbers of poorly preserved plant remains of little interpretative value were recovered from the sediment samples.

Although the small size of the recovered bone assemblage precludes any further detailed recording and interpretation, it is clear that most of the material is fairly well preserved, and from deposits which appear to fit within a well-defined chronological framework. Consequently, it is probable that further excavation would recover a larger collection of tightly dated and well preserved material.

No further work is recommended on the material currently available.

6.2 Introduction

Excavations were carried out by York Archaeological Trust at 47-51 Skeldergate, York early in 1996. Four General Biological Analysis samples ('GBAs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) and one box of bone were submitted for an evaluation of their biological remains. The deposits considered here were of medieval and post-medieval date.

6.3 Methods

All of the GBA samples were inspected in the laboratory; 1 kg subsamples were taken from each of the GBAs for extraction of macrofossil remains, following procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986).

The flots, washover and residues resulting from processing were examined for their content of plant and invertebrate fossils, their quality of preservation, principal taxa, and main ecological groups.

6.4 Results and Discussion

The results are presented in two groups - those from Trench 2 and the borehole samples. Context information provided by the excavator is given in square brackets.

6.4.1 Trench 2

Context 2003, Sample 1/T

[Fill of shallow ovoid cut 2004 - domestically derived pit fill ?]

Moist, mid-brown, crumbly (working sticky when wet), sandy silt with very small to medium-sized stones (2 to 60 mm), brick/tile, mortar, charcoal, large mammal bone and modern rootlets present.

The large washover was mostly charcoal (to 20 mm), with two charred grain fragments, four fragments of very rotted ?fish bone, two mollusc fragments (*Cecilioides acicula* (Muller) - a burrowing species and probably intrusive - and ?*Discus rotundatus* (Muller)), rootlets and other plant detritus and some slag.

The moderately large washover consisted of charcoal to 25 mm.

The small residue consisted of moderate amounts of sand, brick/tile and mortar (both up to 20 mm) with traces of cinder, charcoal, mussel shell and ?fish bone; there was also a snail shell and a mammal tooth. The only plant remains observed were modern root fragments.

Context 2008, Sample 2/T

[Sealing wall 2013. 11/12th century. Redeposited natural or in situ silting in possible drainage gully?]

Moist, mid-brown, unconsolidated, sand with small stones (6 to 20 mm), brick/tile, mortar and charcoal present.

No washover was performed on this sample.

The small residue contained charcoal, root fragments and significant quantities of mortar. These inclusions suggest that the deposit formed by in situ silting - it is certainly not simply redeposited 'natural' (i.e. not glacial, fluvio-glacial or riverine material).

6.4.2 Borehole Samples

Context 5003, Sample 4/T

[Borehole 5]

Moist, mid to dark grey brown, stiff (working soft and slightly plastic), slightly sandy slightly clay silt and fine and coarse herbaceous detritus with small stones present.

The small flot was mostly plant detritus with a small assemblage of invertebrate remains, predominantly decomposer beetle species with mites, a fly puparium, a bug fragment and a *Daphnia* ephippium also noted.

The bulk of the moderately large residue consisted of fragmented dark-coloured fibrous wood, presumably splintered from a timber during boring. It appeared to be oak, and exhibited a texture, hardness and colour typical of the best preserved archaeological material. 'Seeds' were sparse in the subsample but well preserved; most were from probable weeds, all were typical of urban archaeological assemblages. One specimen of note was a fragment of a shoot tip (consisting of two pairs of scale leaves) of conifer, probably in the family Cupressaceae. Such ornamentals are common in urban gardens and some doubt as to its antiquity must be asserted. If it is definitely not a contaminant, it suggests that the deposit concerned is probably post-medieval, perhaps post-1750.

Context 6006, Sample 3/T
[Borehole 6]

Moist, dark grey brown with orange patches, slightly stiff (working soft), slightly humic silt with very small to medium-sized stones (2 to 60 mm), mortar, charcoal and rotted wood present.

The small flot was mostly plant detritus, again with a small assemblage of invertebrate remains dominated by decomposer beetle species. Mites, fragments of insect larvae and pupae and fly puparia were also noted.

The moderately large residue was of sand and gravel with a mixture of occupation debris - mortar, brick/tile, charcoal and wood fragments. There was a small assemblage of poorly to moderately well preserved 'seeds', mainly weeds (and dominated by chickweed, *Stellaria media* (L.) Vill.) with smaller amounts of stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica* L.). Plants perhaps suggesting the presence of food waste included two charred grains of wheat (*Triticum*) and a third, unidentified, charred cereal grain, and a seed fragment which may have been linseed, *Linum usitatissimum* L.

6.4.3 Bone

A single box (31x31x22 cm) of animal bones was submitted. A total of ten bone-bearing contexts was represented, mostly dated to the medieval and post-medieval periods on the basis of information provided by the excavator.

All vertebrate remains were scanned and briefly commented upon. Only 104 fragments (37 identified) were recovered from Trenches 1 and 2, most of which (73 fragments) were from the former. Table 1 shows the species present in the assemblage, along with the numbers of measurable bones and mandibles with teeth.

Overall, the bone was of fair preservation, with much of the material being brown or fawn in colour. A single context (1011) contained poorly preserved, dark brown fragments with rounded edges. Little evidence of butchery was noted, with the exception of material from contexts 1011 and 1012. These deposits produced cattle long bones which had been split longitudinally. Dog gnawing was evident on a small number of fragments.

Cattle, caprine and pig were the most frequently represented taxa, with a single juvenile roe deer (*Capreolus capreolus* L.) metatarsal also present. Additionally, two unidentifiable fragments of fish were recorded from context 2003.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 Sediment Samples

These deposits warrant no further analysis for plant and invertebrate animal remains and it is unlikely that others encountered during development would be worth examining, although if deposits at depth with preservation of the kind seen in Sample 4 are to be destroyed, they should be the subject of detailed recording and sampling. Such deposits should certainly not be damaged by development without proper excavation and sampling and commensurate funding for post-excavation analysis.

6.5.2 Bone

Although the small size of the recovered bone assemblage precludes any further detailed recording and interpretation, it is clear that most of the material is fairly well preserved, and from deposits which appear to fit within a well-defined chronological framework. Consequently it is probable that further excavation would recover a larger collection of tightly dated and well preserved material. Previous work at the neighbouring site of Baile Hill produced a moderate-sized, well preserved vertebrate assemblage of 12th-13th century date, which included a wide range of species (Rackham 1977).

Well dated assemblages from the medieval and post-medieval periods are uncommon both regionally and nationally and, as such, should be considered as high priority for further research. Any destruction of these deposits should be accompanied by an adequate sampling strategy, with appropriate provision for a post-excavation programme.

6.5.3 Retention and disposal

The sediment samples need not be retained.

The bone assemblage should be retained for the present. If no further excavation is to be undertaken at this site then the current material may be discarded.

6.5.4 Archive

All extracted fossils and flots are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Dave Evans and David Brinklow of York Archaeological Trust for providing the material and archaeological information and to English Heritage for allowing AH and HK to work on this material.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Deposit Survival

In both trenches deposits and features were investigated to a maximum depth of 1.60m beneath the modern ground level. There was slight disturbance in Trench 1 caused by a modern drainage trench but otherwise the deposits were well preserved in both trenches. Drainage in the deposits excavated was generally good and there was little evidence for the survival of organic remains. However, the natural accumulation of water in Trench 1 at c.1.50m beneath the surface, the remains of wood in the Trench 2 ditch and the evidence from the boreholes suggests that organic preservation at depth is good.

7.2 Period by Period Analysis

7.2.1 Roman and Anglian (1st - 9th century AD)

No deposits or structures which could definitely be identified as Roman were located but the mortar and rubble spread in the base of Trench 1 may be demolition debris derived from a Roman building. The limestone blocks, brick and a piece of Opus Signinum also found in Trench 1 are likely to have originated in a nearby Roman structure.

7.2.2 Anglo-Scandinavian (9th - 11th century)

No deposits or artefacts dating to this period were identified during the evaluation. The deposits located during borehole observation indicate that well preserved material is present but at significantly greater depth than was reached during excavation.

7.2.3 Medieval (11th - 16th century)

Medieval garden soils were recognised in Trench 1 and structural remains of some complexity in Trench 2. These took the form of ditch, wall and hearth complex. It is possible that the stone wall located in Trench 1 belongs to the tail end of the medieval period.

7.2.4 Post-Medieval (16th -19th century)

The stone wall in Trench 1 may be post-medieval in date and the brick wall in the same trench certainly is. Little sure evidence of post-medieval activity, except perhaps the raising of the ground level, was recognised in Trench 2.

7.2.5 Modern (20th century)

Very little modern disturbance was identified on this site. The area had clearly been covered with material to create a car park surface but in the areas excavated this did not appear to have had any serious archaeological consequences. Where the car park had been cut more significantly into the deposits, towards the Cromwell Road edge of the site, the archaeological consequences are likely to have been much more significant although this part of the site was only observed in an engineering test pit.

8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The site is located in an area of York in which there has been quite a lot of previous work. Despite the shallow extent of the trial excavations significant archaeological deposits were identified close to the surface in both trenches. The natural slope of the land towards Skeldergate suggests that post-medieval remains would be present only just below the ground surface as the street is approached. Any development requiring excavation outside the footprint of the existing building on the Skeldergate street front would thus appear to have implications for the survival of the archaeological deposits.

Deposits on the Cromwell Road side of the site were not examined during this evaluation but were observed in an engineering test pit. In this location it seems likely that car park construction has cut into the archaeological deposits significantly and that Roman deposits, perhaps a terrace floor, will be disturbed if any construction takes place.

9. LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

Excavation and site report	Dave Evans
Site Assistants	Bryan Antoni, Brian Milner
Finds Assistant	Ian Carlisle
Finds Assessment	Nicky Rogers
Pottery Assessment	Ailsa Mainman
Documentary Assessment	Chris Daniell
Environmental Assessment	John Carrott, Allan Hall, Michael Issitt, Deborah Jaques, Harry Kenward and Frances Large, Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York.
Illustrator	Simon Chew
Report Co-ordination	David Brinklow

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