

REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF AT
DAVYGATE CENTRE,
DAVYGATE, YORK.



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

**YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
for Excavation and Research Ltd.**

PROJECT REPORT P0362

LOCATION: Davygate Centre, Davygate, York.

GRID REF: SE 6028 5188

CLIENT: NORWICH UNION.

**York Archaeological Trust: A registered charity
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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE,
YORK.

*A report on the watching brief carried out on
groundworks undertaken between 6th and 23rd November
1995.*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Beginning on 6th November 1995, York Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief on exploratory groundworks undertaken on the site of the Davygate Arcade, Davygate, York. (National Grid Reference SE 6028 5188).

1.2 The work was carried out to a specification drawn up by York City Council's Principal Archaeologist dated 7th September 1995 and was undertaken by Russell Marwood and Bryan Antoni for York Archaeological Trust.

1.3 Four soil survey boreholes and the works necessary to prepare up to six piles for a programme of dynamic pile testing were observed. The preparatory excavations were undertaken by C.P.L. Construction (Lincoln) Ltd.

1.4 The object of the watching brief was to determine the character, date and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits disturbed by this initial investigation.

1.5 All records of the archaeological watching brief are stored with York Archaeological Trust under the Trusts accession code P0362.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 The site lies between Davygate, Coney Street, New Street Feasegate/Market Street. (FIG.1) Many of the surrounding buildings are of historic interest and are discussed in the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments volume on Central York. (Volume V).

2.2 The street name Davygate is derived from Davy Hall, the residence nearby of the family of David, kings larderer in the Forest of Galtres in the 12th century.

- 2.3 New Street was planned in 1745 and paved two years later. It crosses ground cleared by the demolition of a derelict house facing Coney Street and Davy Hall. It is illustrated for the first time on Chassereau's plan of York, 1750 (FIG.2) and is also shown on Todd's plan of 1811.(FIG.3)
- 2.4 The Davygate Arcade was constructed above part of York's Roman Legionary fortress. Excavations by L.P.Wenham in 1956 under the Prudential and York Insurance buildings (Numbers 2-4 New Street) identified the rampart, the fortress wall and traces of three barrack blocks. (FIG.4)
- 2.5 Preliminary excavations for the BHS store in 1956 also identified the fortress wall and the position of one of the interval towers (SW1, RCHMY 1, p16). (FIG.5)

3.0 RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

The first phase of work required the exposure of piles beneath the ground beams. The pile locations were shown on a drawing supplied to Norwich Union by Ward Cole, consulting engineers. Eight excavations took place over a period of three weeks.

- 3.1 Dig No.1 was located on the internal face of the eastern wall of Unit No.2 (see FIG.6) After the removal of 0.40m of concrete the top of the ground beam was located. This was followed down to a depth of 2.40m BGL. A probe was pushed down by the face of this and it was discovered that the ground beam continued down to at least 3.00m BGL. Below the concrete blinding over the ground beam the deposits removed consisted of brick, limestone, mortar rubble and several fragments of modern kerb stones. The pile was not located and thus the dig was abandoned. (FIG.7)
- 3.2 Dig No.2 was located almost opposite the first dig on the western wall of Unit No.2 (see FIG.6) 0.40m of concrete was removed before the top of the ground beam was discovered and this was traced to at least 1.80m BGL. The deposits removed consisted of sand and concrete rubble plus the occasional fragment of modern wood. (FIG.8)

- 3.3 Dig No.3 was located in the south east corner of Unit No.5 (see FIG.9). Tiles and concrete were removed to 0.30m BGL before the top of the ground beam was located. It was traced to 1.20m BGL. The small amount of material removed consisted of modern brick and sand in a silty loam matrix. (FIG.10)
- 3.4 Dig No.4 was located along the southern wall of Unit No.9 (see FIG.9). The ground beam was located at 0.30m BGL. Almost 2.00m of the concrete ground beam was removed before the top of the pile was located. Deposits removed from this excavation consisted of modern brick, limestone and mortar rubble above friable sandy silts with charcoal flecking and very occasional patches of redeposited natural sub-soil. (FIG.11)
- 3.5 Dig No.5 did not expose a ground beam or pile.(see FIG.12) Beneath the concrete slab was dark brown silt with modern brick rubble and very occasional animal bone from 0.50m to 1.00m BGL. (FIG.13)
- 3.6 Dig No.6 was located in the southern-most corner of Unit No.10 (see FIG.12) Concrete was removed to a depth of 0.36m BGL before the ground beam was encountered. This was removed to a depth of 1.40m BGL before the pile cap was found. Modern deposits were removed from the entire depth of the dig although the final 0.60m of dig consisted of dark brown silt with modern brick rubble and the occasional animal bone. (FIG.13)
- 3.7 Dig No.7 was excavated towards the centre of Unit No. 21/23 (see FIG.14) The concrete ground beam was located almost directly beneath the floor slab at 0.34m BGL. The ground beam continued to 1.46m BGL before the pile was located. The beam was traced beyond the edge of the excavation. Much modern brick rubble, limestone, mortar and sand was removed from around the beam to a depth of c.1.20m whereupon friable mid brown sandy silts containing brick rubble were encountered. (FIG.15)
- 3.8 Dig No.8 was located in the western corner of Unit No.18 (see FIG.16). The ground beam was located 0.28m below the concrete floor slab. This was removed to a depth of 1.20m BGL whereupon the pile was located. Limited deposits removed from around the beam consisted of brown sand, brick, limestone and mortar

rubble above friable mid brown sandy silts with brick/tile rubble. (FIG.17)

3.9 The second phase of work consisted of the observation of four boreholes which were all dug using a 35mm diameter sampler.

3.10 Borehole No.1 was located in Unit No.1 (see FIG.6). It was sunk to a depth of 6.70m BGL. A series of deposits of crushed limestone, brick and mortar were identified above a substantial concrete floor. Penetrating through this, a natural stiff laminated blue/grey veined clay was discovered at 4.40m BGL. (FIG.18)

3.11 Borehole No.2 was located in Unit No.5 (see FIG.9). Beneath the concrete slab, crushed mortar, brick, sandstone and limestone were encountered until at 1.00m BGL, either a brick floor or the top of a brick wall was found. Part of this brick structure obstructed the core bit and the borehole was abandoned at 1.60m BGL. (FIG.19)

3.12 Borehole No.3 was also abandoned. On this occasion at 1.25m BGL. The concrete slab overlay crushed mortar, brick and limestone which once again obstructed the corer. This borehole was located in Unit No.10. (see FIG.12, FIG.19)

3.13 Borehole No.4 was located towards the northern corner of Unit No. 21/23 (see FIG.14) Several layers of crushed building material were encountered before, at 3.60m BGL, mixed dumps of black, organic/humic material were discovered. These continued to a depth of 4.80m BGL whereupon natural sub-soil was encountered. This consisted of a stiff, laminated blue grey veined clay. (FIG.20)

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The excavations to expose the piles did not reveal any archaeological deposits of significance. All except Dig No.5 were adjacent to ground beams and it would seem that these areas were all disturbed during the construction of the Davygate Arcade.

- 4.2 The boreholes were slightly more informative. It would appear that boreholes 2 and 3 both encountered structures of medieval or post-medieval date. It is not possible to date material from such a small sampler with any confidence. However, they do suggest that archaeological deposits survive at fairly shallow depths between the ground beams in at least part of the Arcade.
- 4.3 Borehole 1 demonstrated that the properties on the Davygate street front may well have been cellared and that these will have removed most, if not all, of the archaeological deposits.
- 4.4 Borehole 4 was located over the presumed position of the defensive ditch around the legionary fortress. The deposits encountered were consistent with ditch fill as was their depth.
- 4.5 Any extension of the ground floor of the existing BHS store at its current level would clearly have a significant impact on the surviving archaeological deposits on the site. Since these will include a stretch of the Roman legionary fortress wall and ditch and any evidence of their continued use in the post-Roman period the site remains one of considerable importance.

Russell Marwood, January 1996.

5.0 SOURCES

Francis Drake (1736) *EBORACUM or the HISTORY AND ANTIQUITIES OF THE CITY OF YORK*. EP Publishing LTD.

Charles Brunton Knight (1944) *A HISTORY OF THE CITY OF YORK*.

RCHM (1962) *EBORACUM, ROMAN YORK*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

RCHM (1981) *THE CITY OF YORK, Volume V, THE CENTRAL AREA*. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

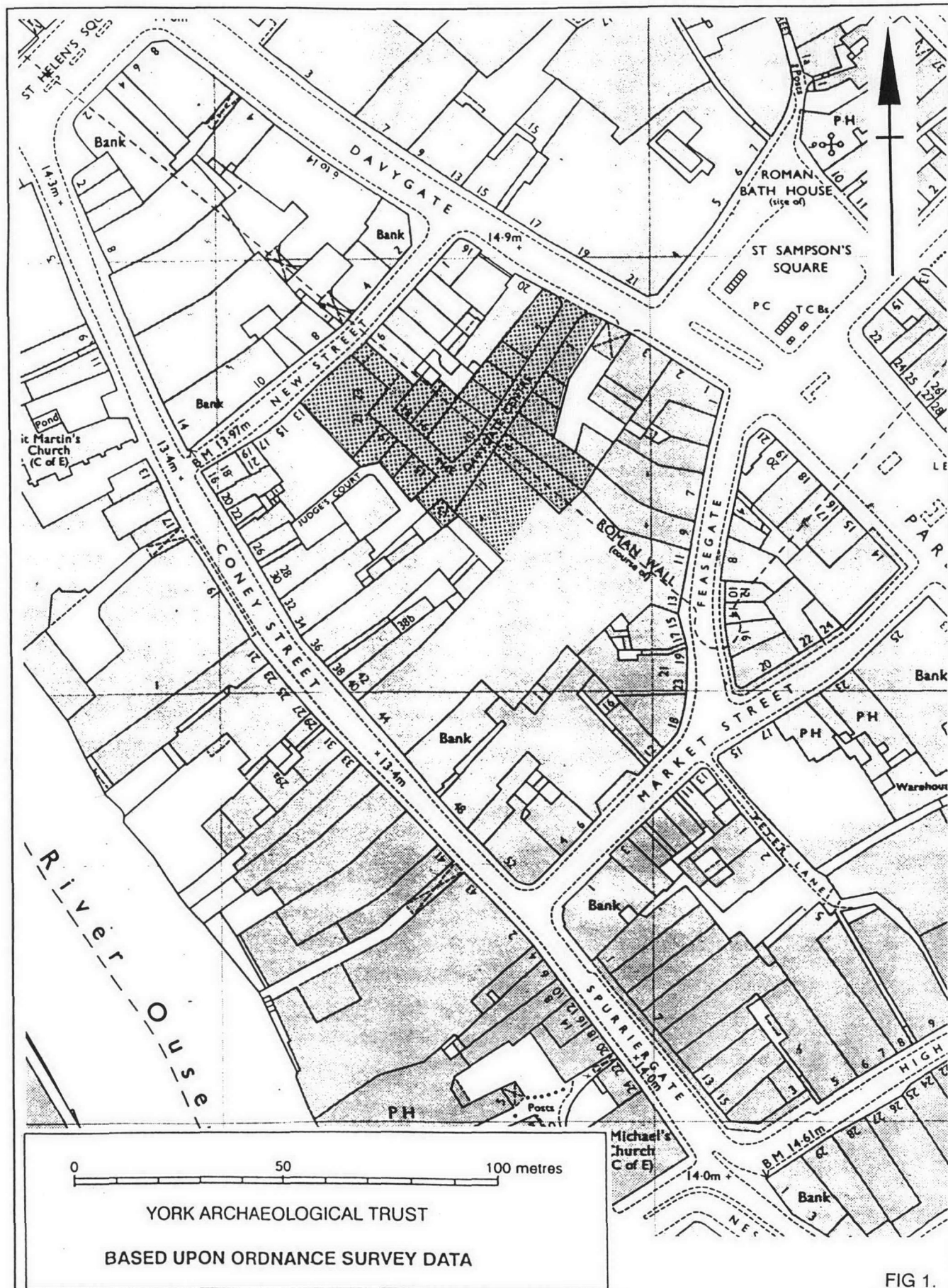
6.0 LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

The main contributors whose efforts were combined to complete the watching brief were:-

Excavation staff: Russell Marwood, Bryan Antoni

Report production: Russell Marwood

Report edited by: David Brinklow



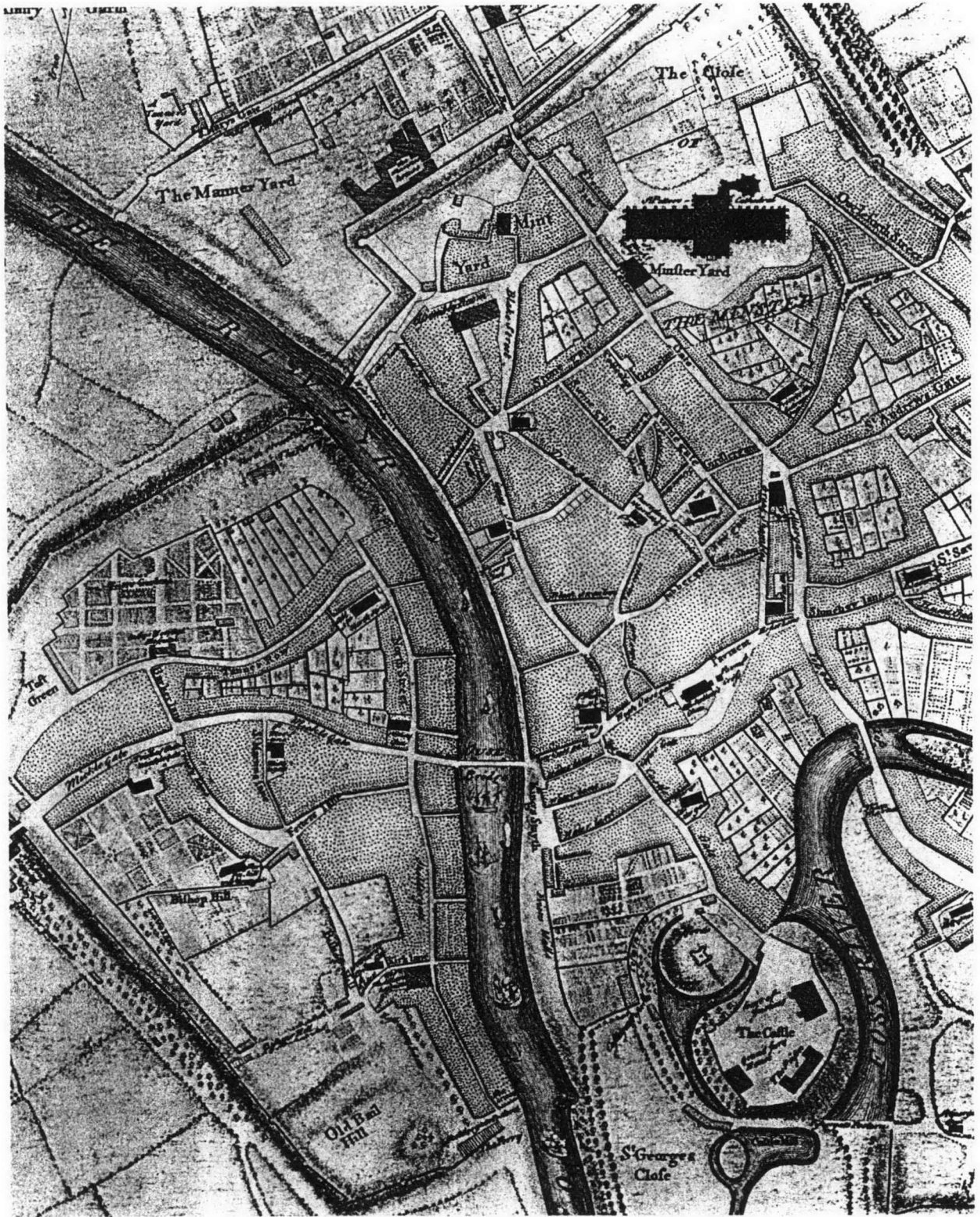
YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: 1250



BASED ON CHASSEREAU'S PLAN OF YORK, 1750.

FIG 2.



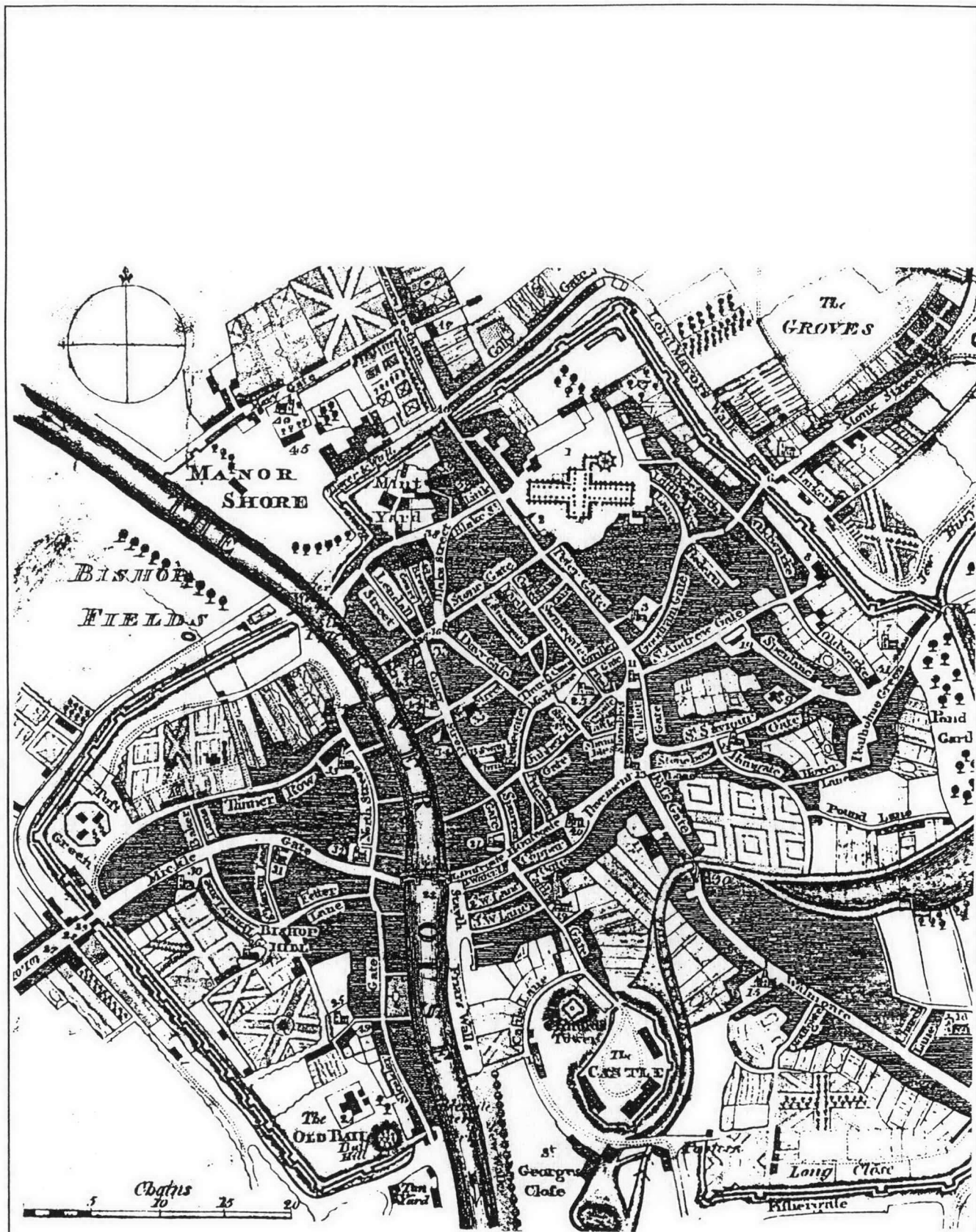
YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown



BASED ON TODD'S PLAN OF YORK, 1811.

FIG 3.



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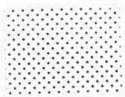
DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

KEY:-



Course of Roman wall

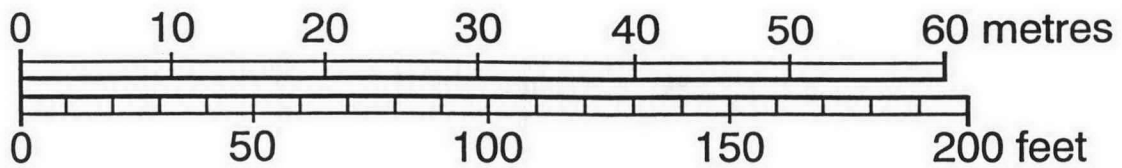
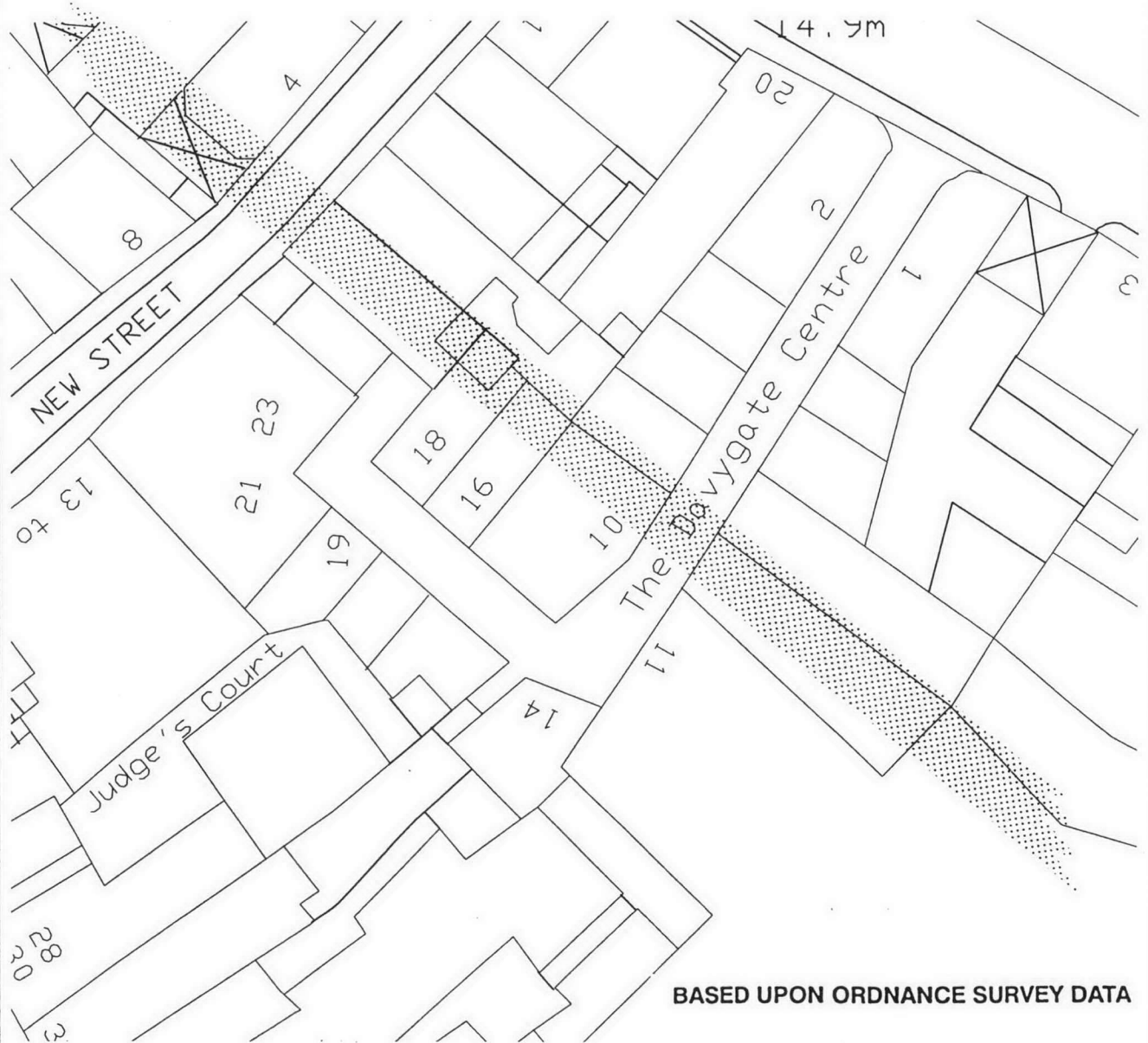


FIG 5.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.


SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

KEY:-

 Area of Excavation

● Location of borehole

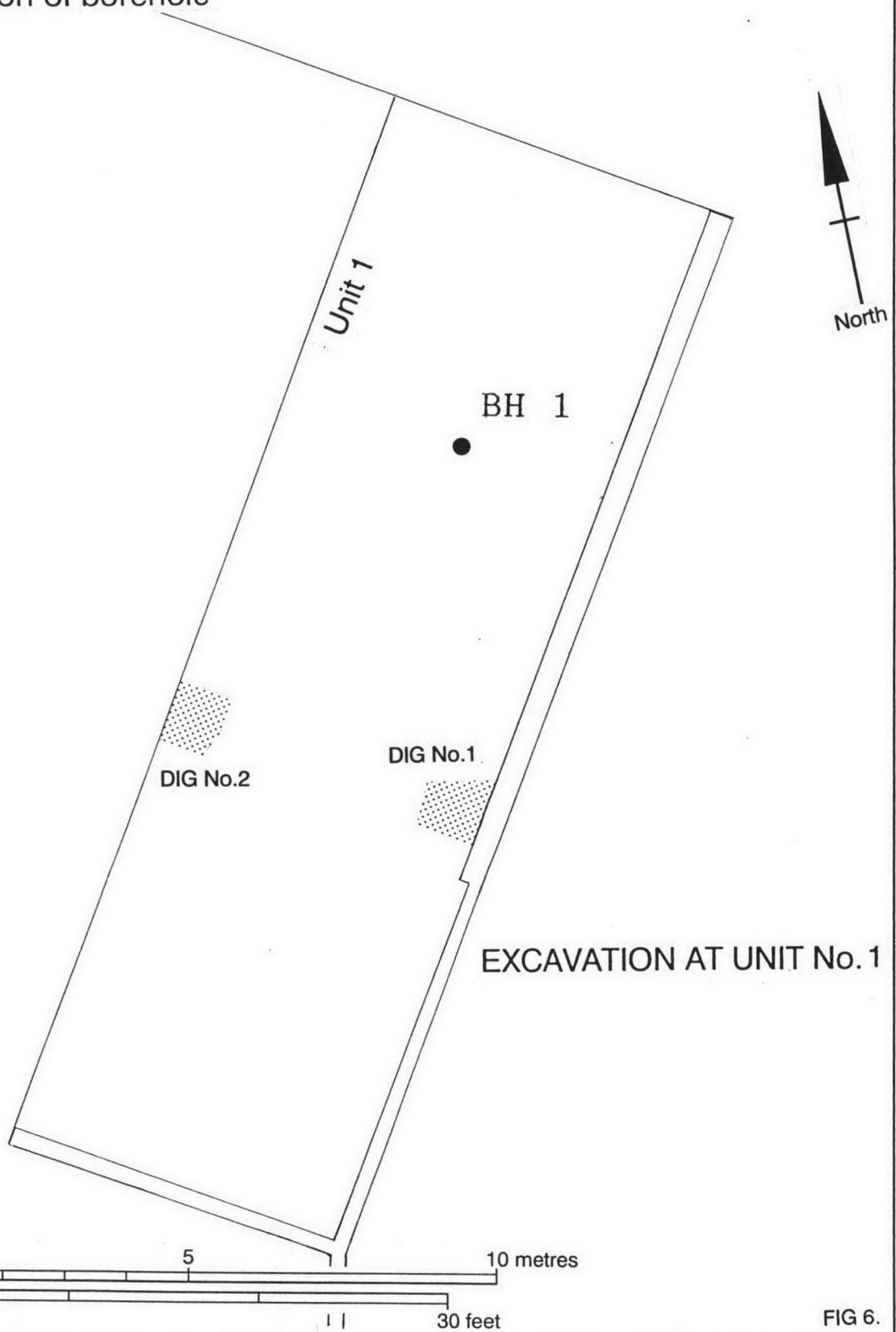


FIG 6.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

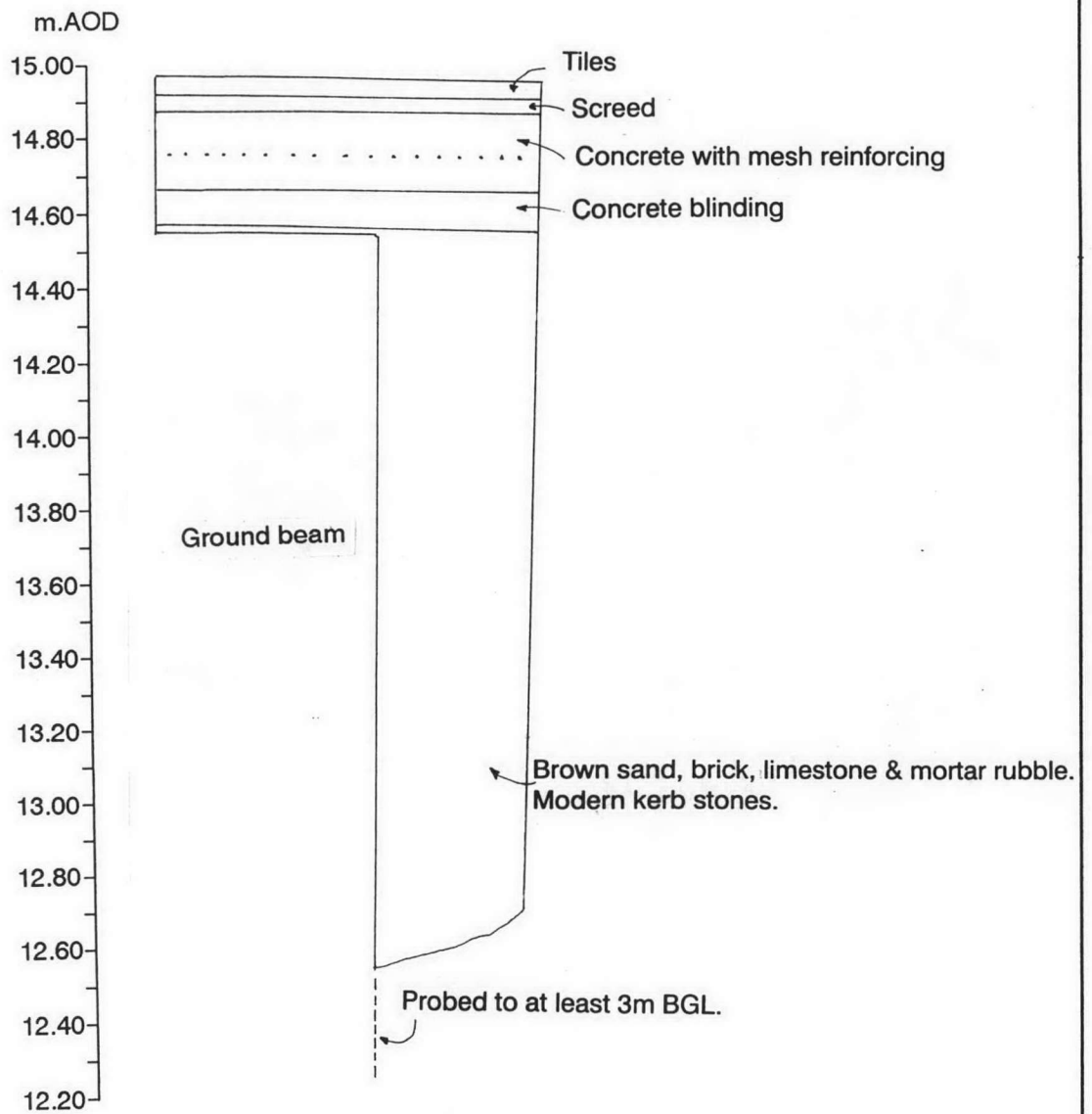
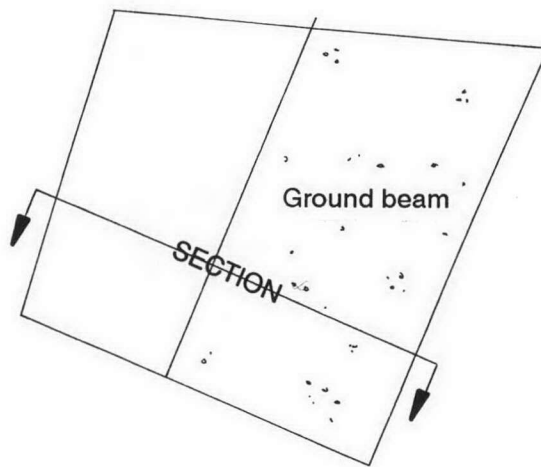
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NGR: SE 6028 5188

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DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.1



Scale 1:20

FIG 7.



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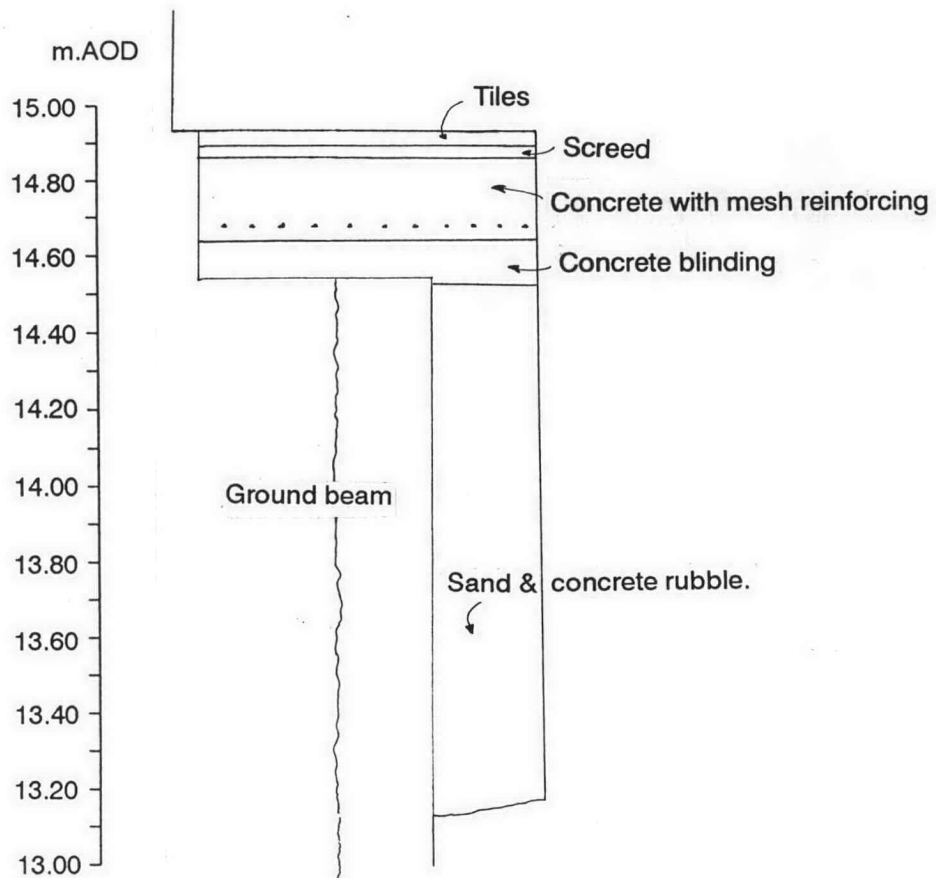
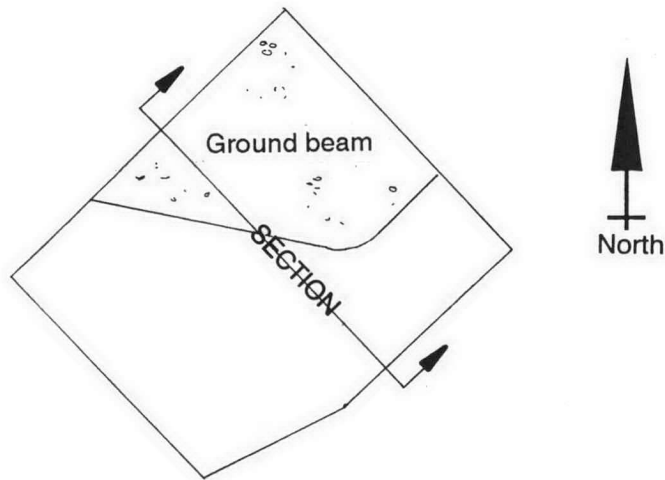
DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

ACCESSION CODE P0362

NGR SE 6028 5188

SCALE as shown

DIG No.2



Scale 1:20

FIG 8.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.


SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188


SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

KEY:-

 Area of Excavation

● Location of borehole

 Course of Roman wall

EXCAVATIONS AT UNIT Nos. 5 & 9

Unit 5

● BH 2

DIG No.3

Unit 7



Unit 9

DIG No.4

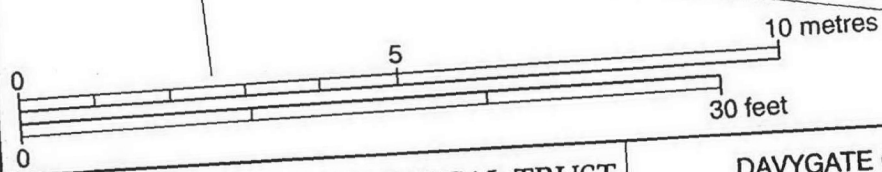


FIG 9.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

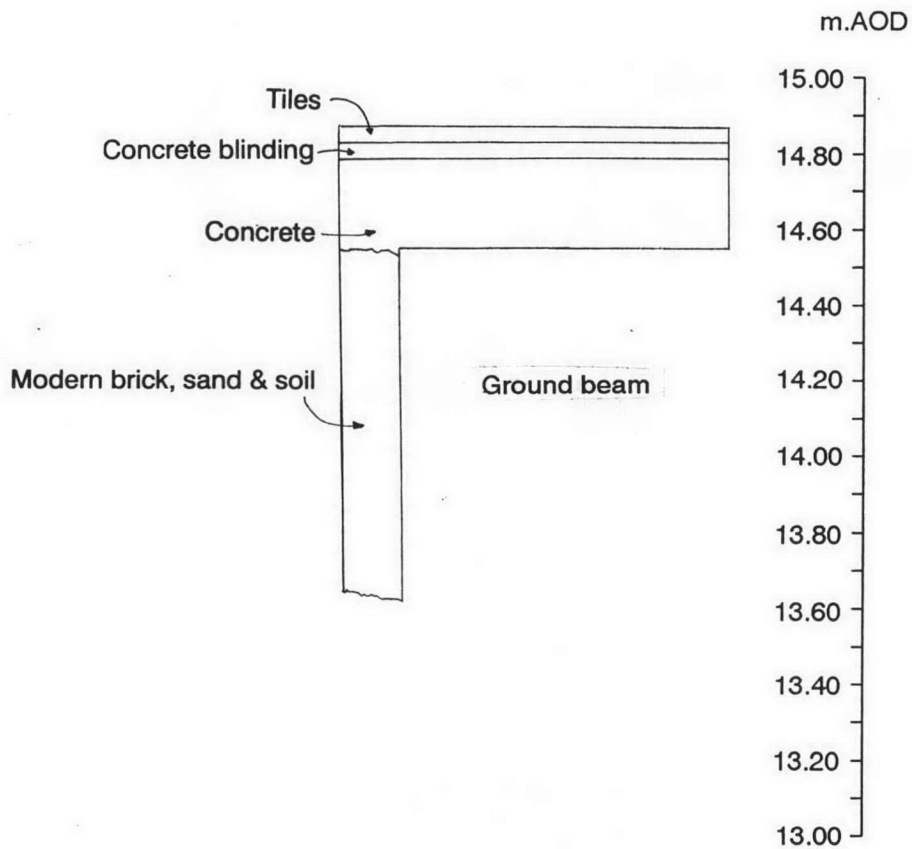
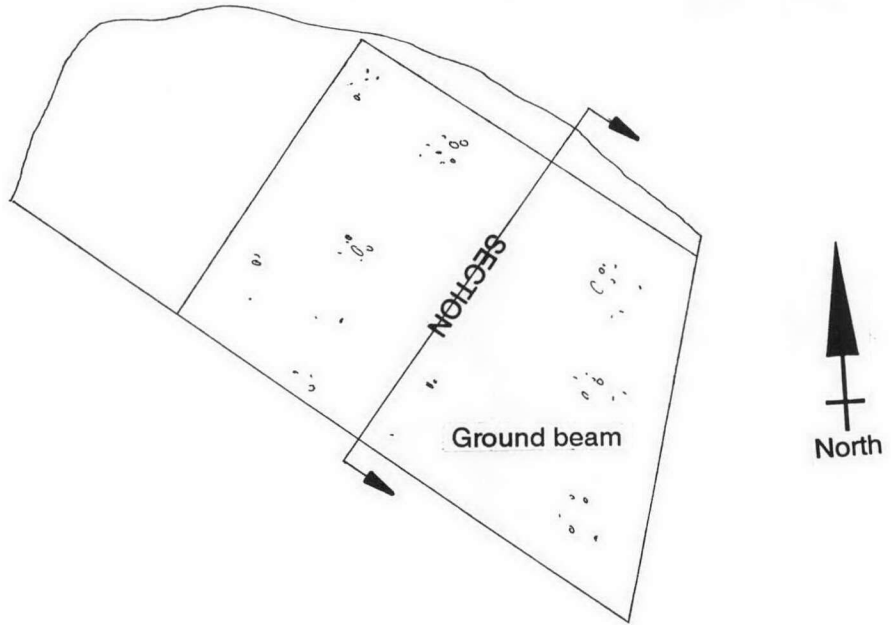
SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.3



Scale 1:20

FIG 10.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

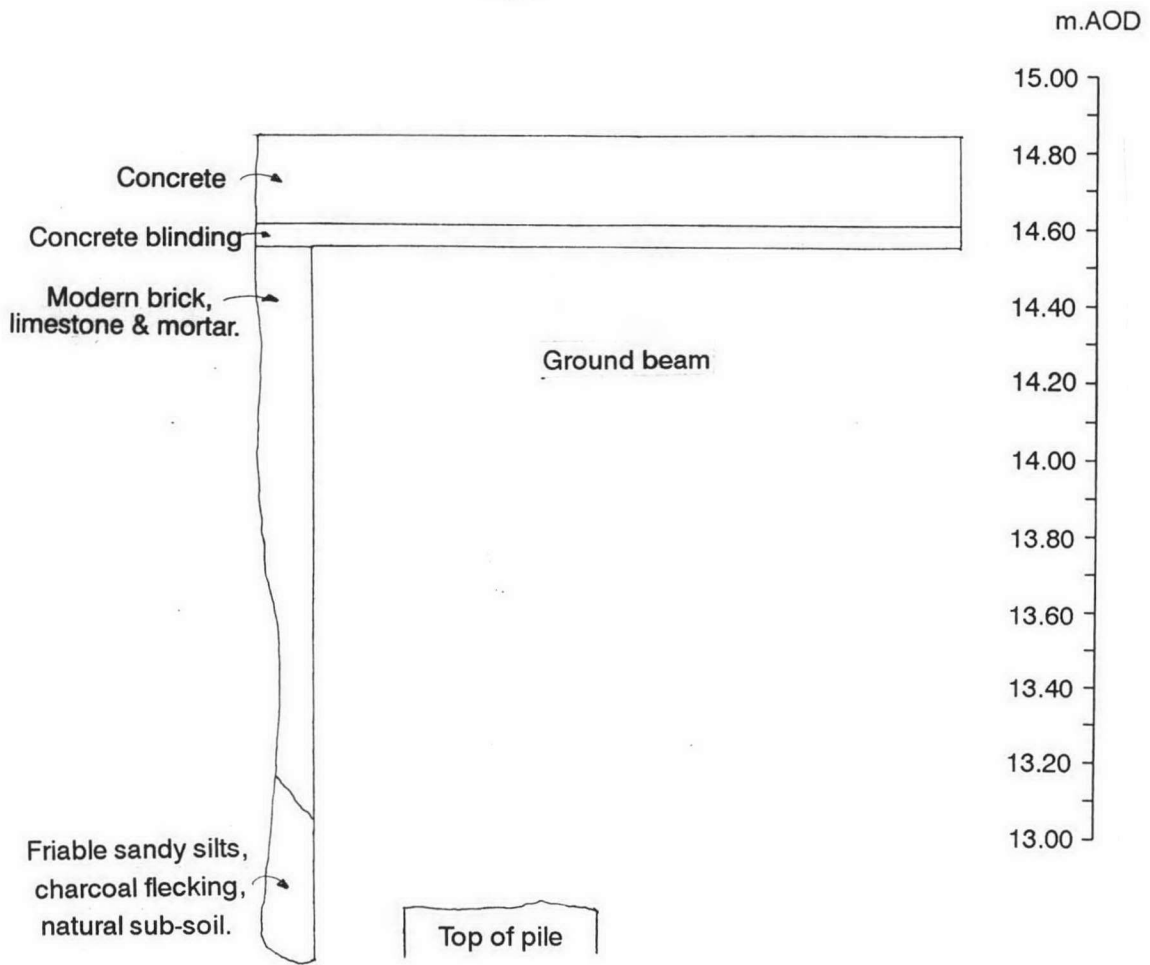
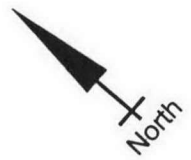
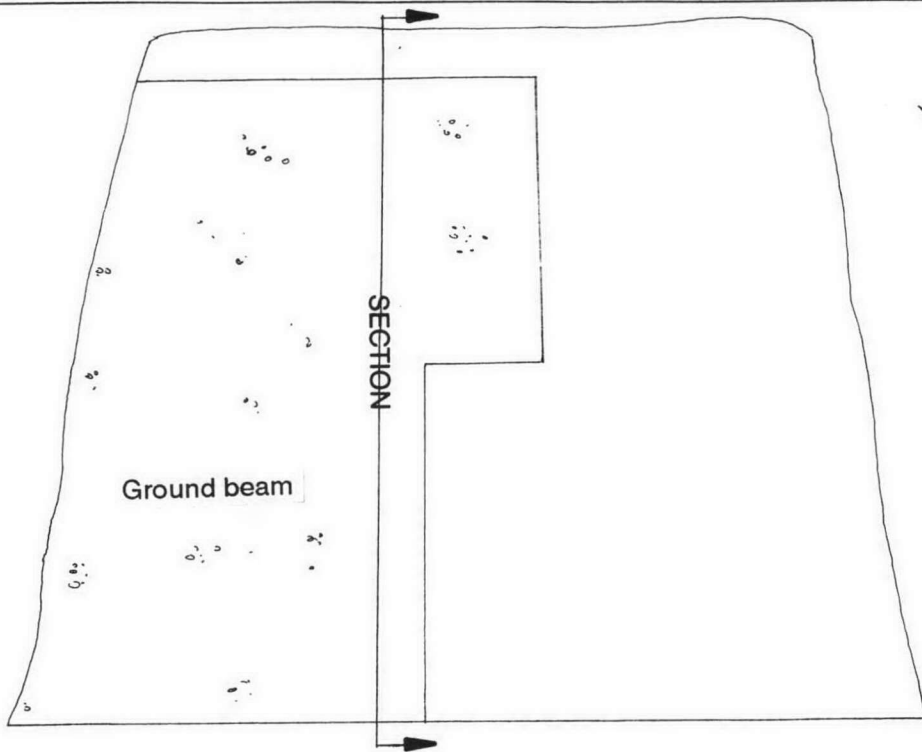
SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.4



Scale 1:20

FIG 11.



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

KEY:-



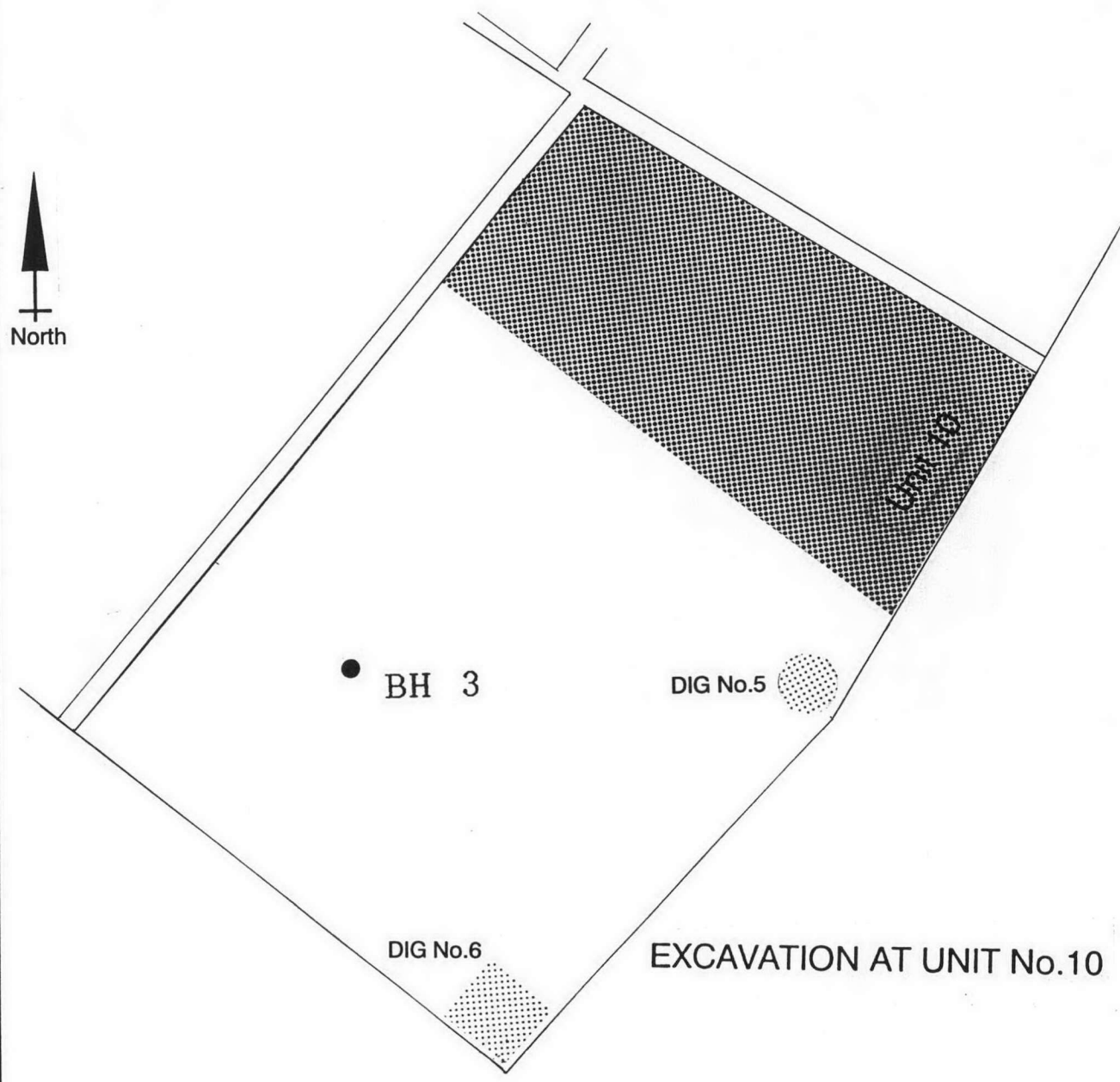
Area of Excavation



Location of borehole



Course of Roman wall



EXCAVATION AT UNIT No.10

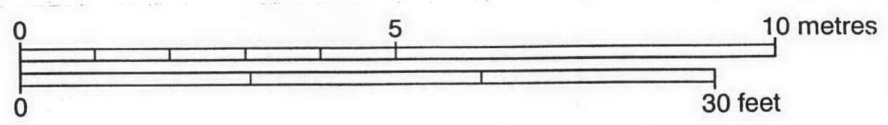


FIG 12.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

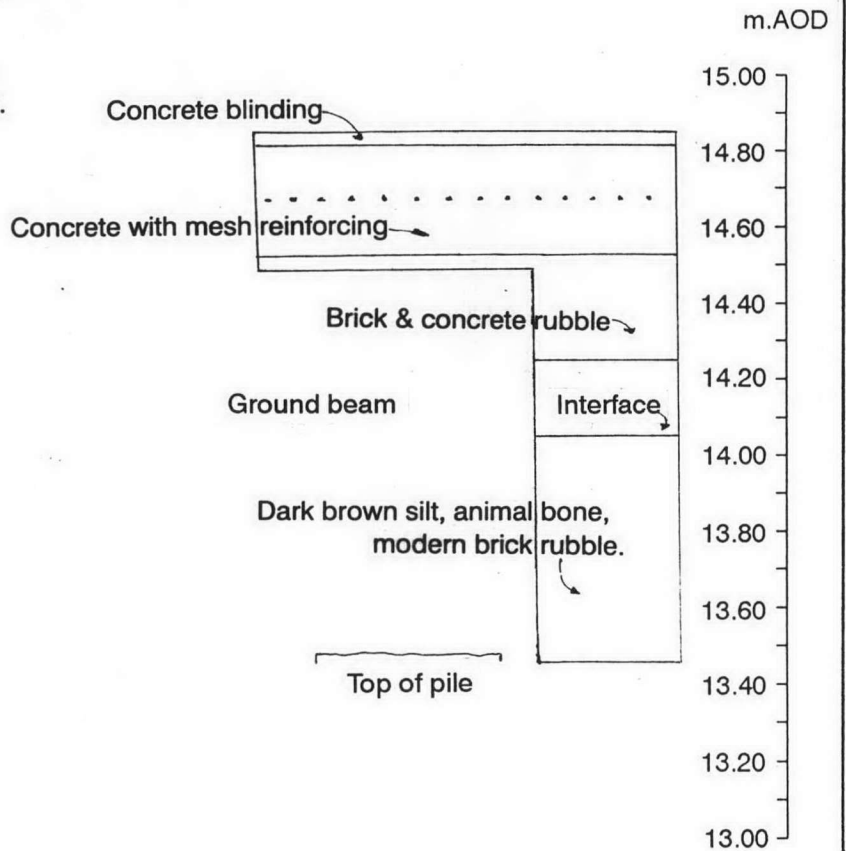
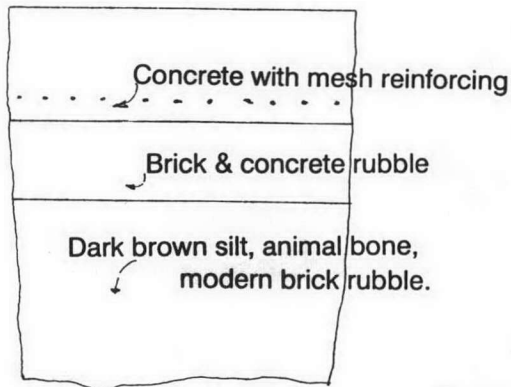
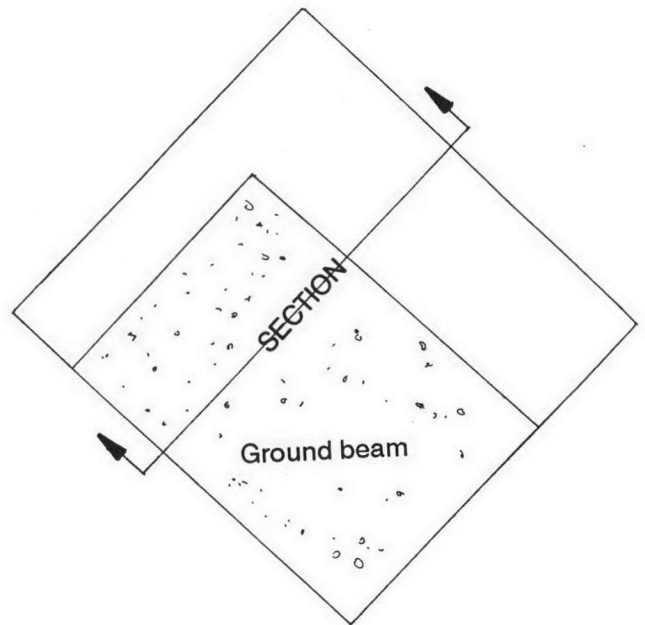
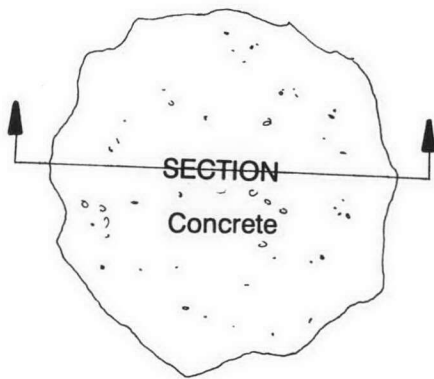
NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.5

DIG No.6



Scale 1:20

FIG 13.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.


SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

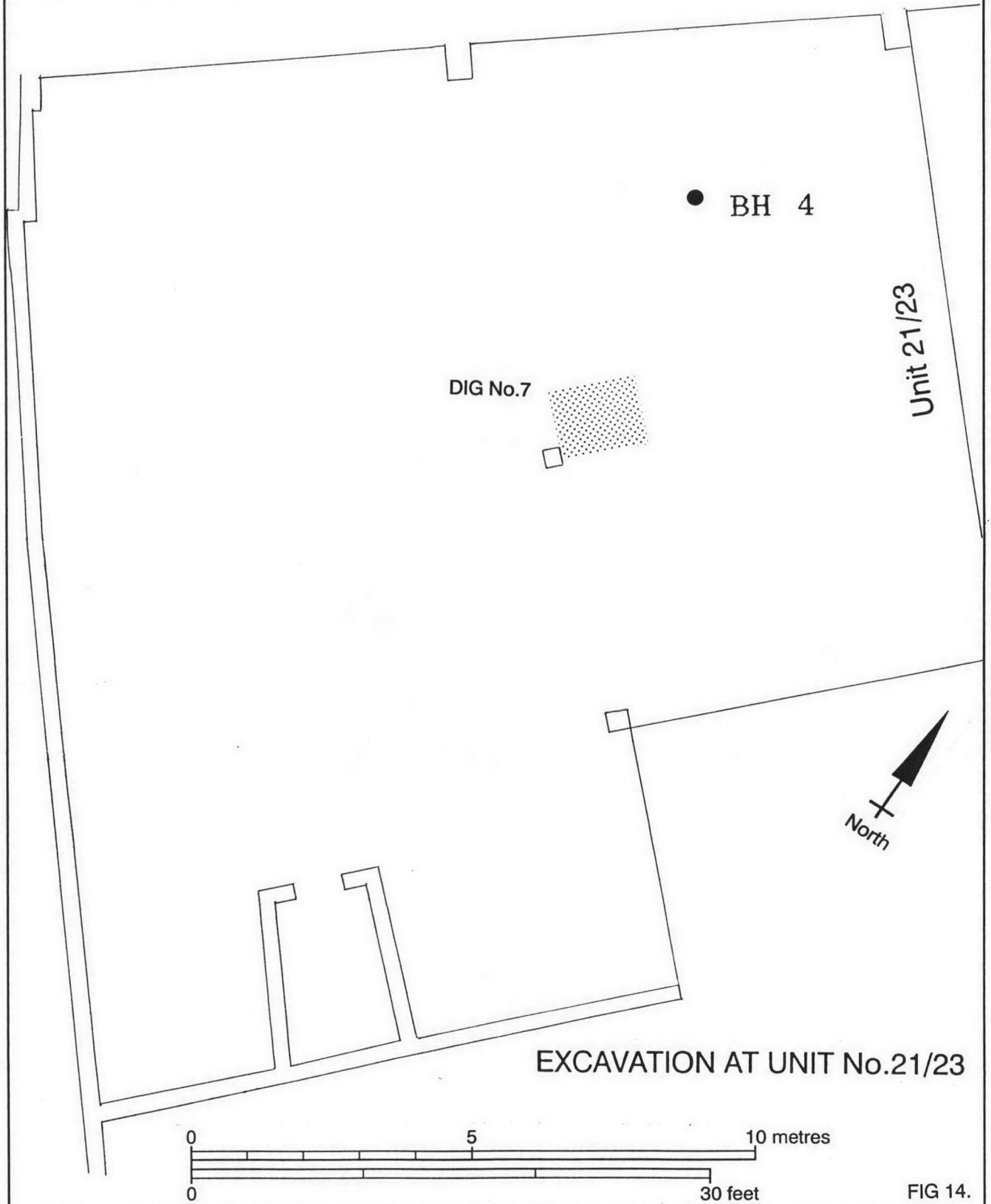
SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

KEY:-

 Area of Excavation

● Location of borehole



EXCAVATION AT UNIT No.21/23

FIG 14.



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

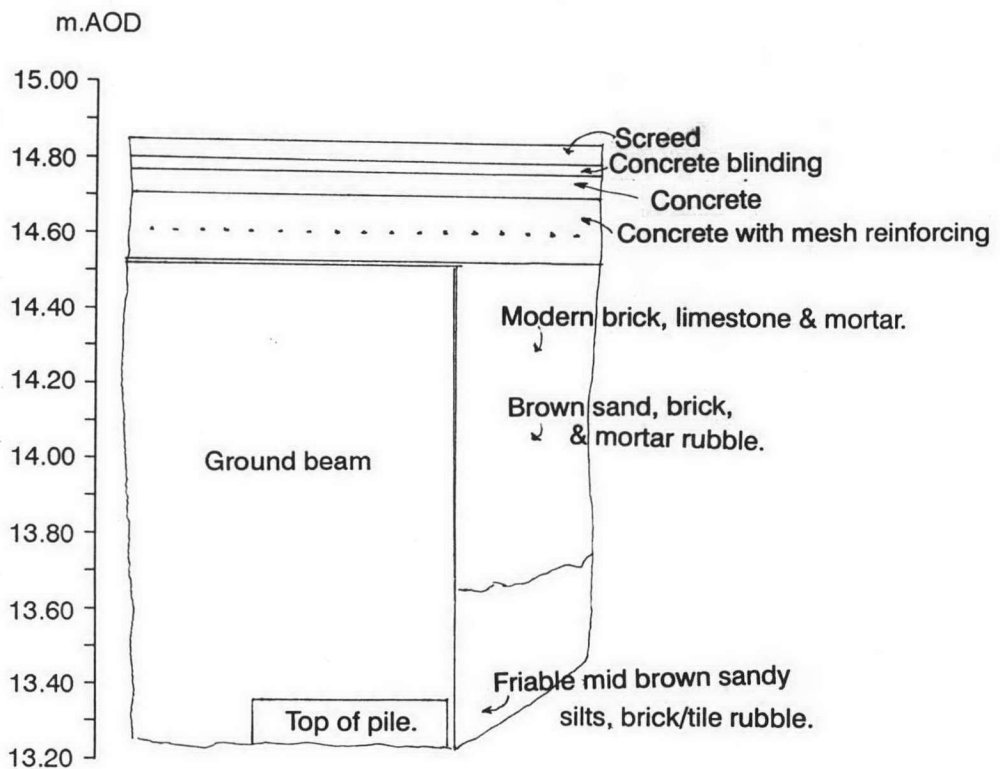
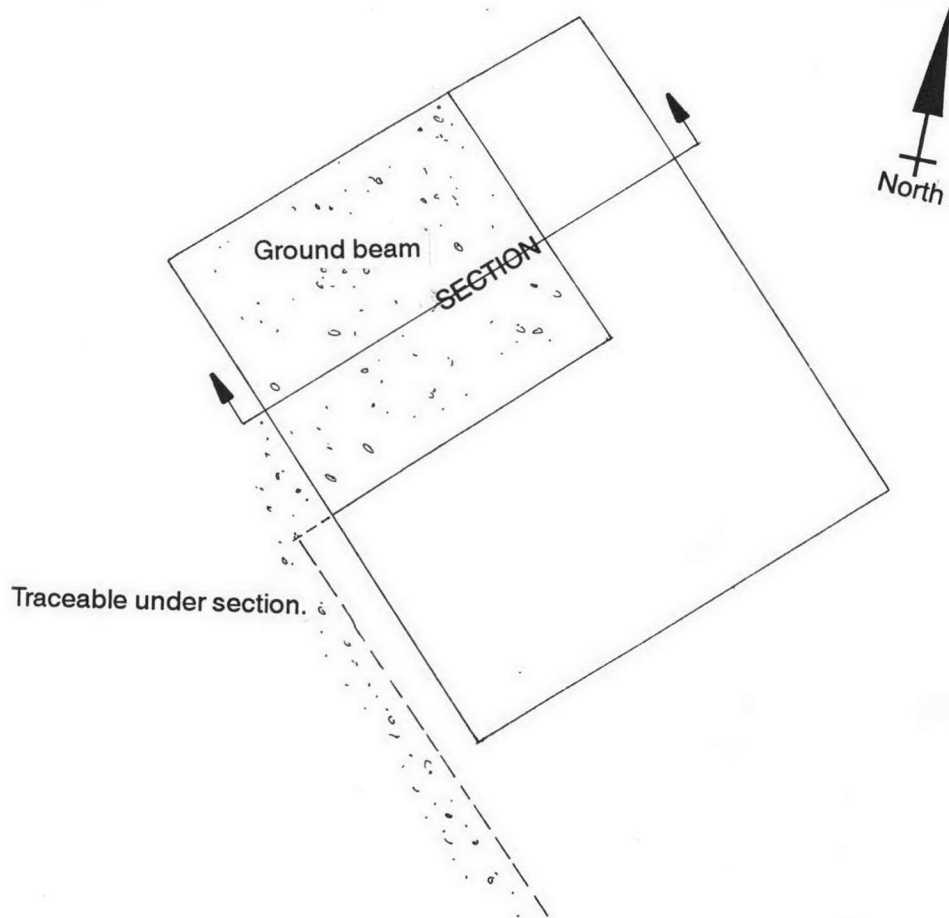
SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.7



Scale 1:20

FIG 15.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.


SITE CODE: P0362


NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

KEY:-

 Area of Excavation

 Course of Roman wall

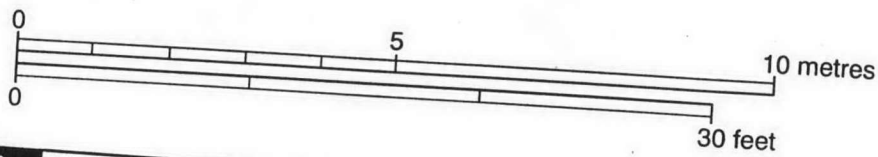
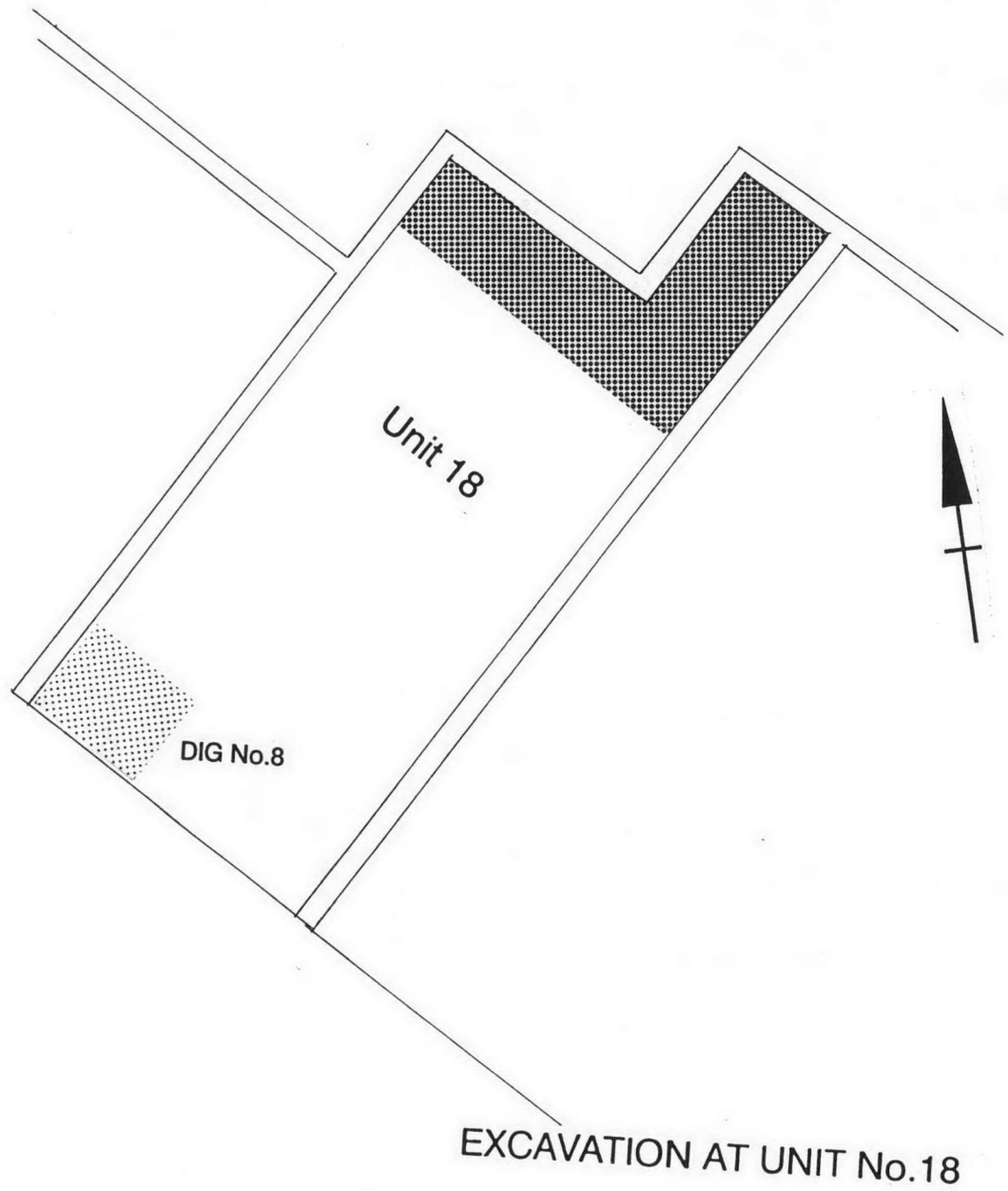


FIG 16.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

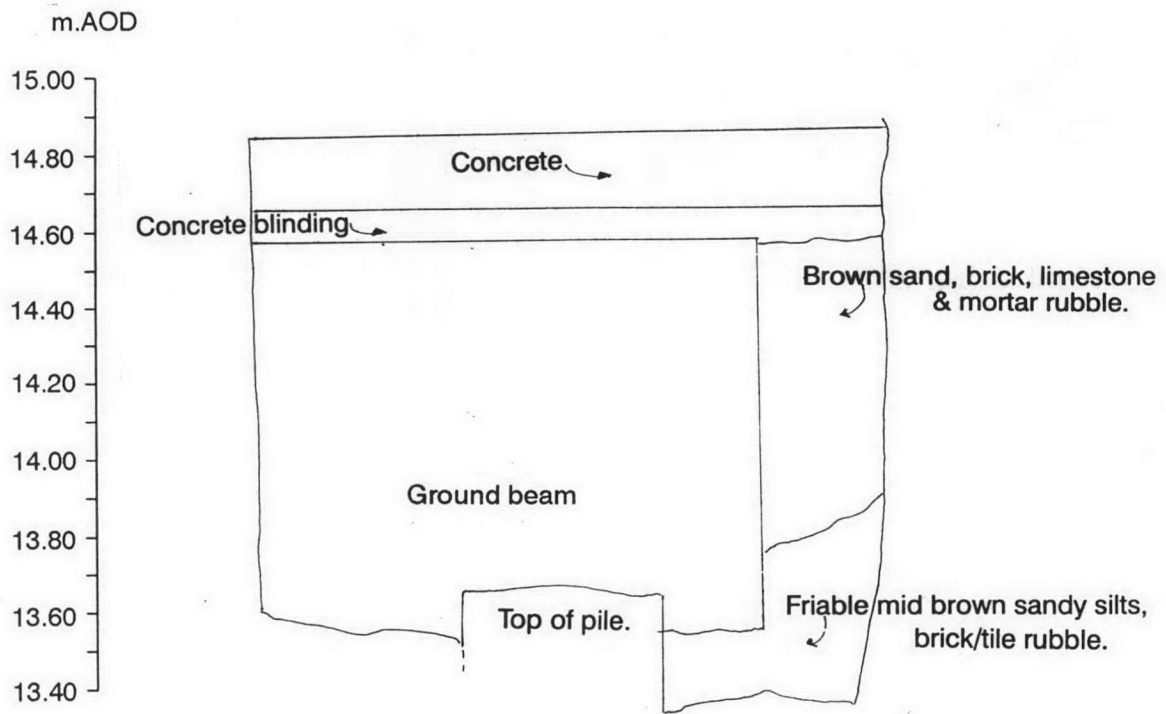
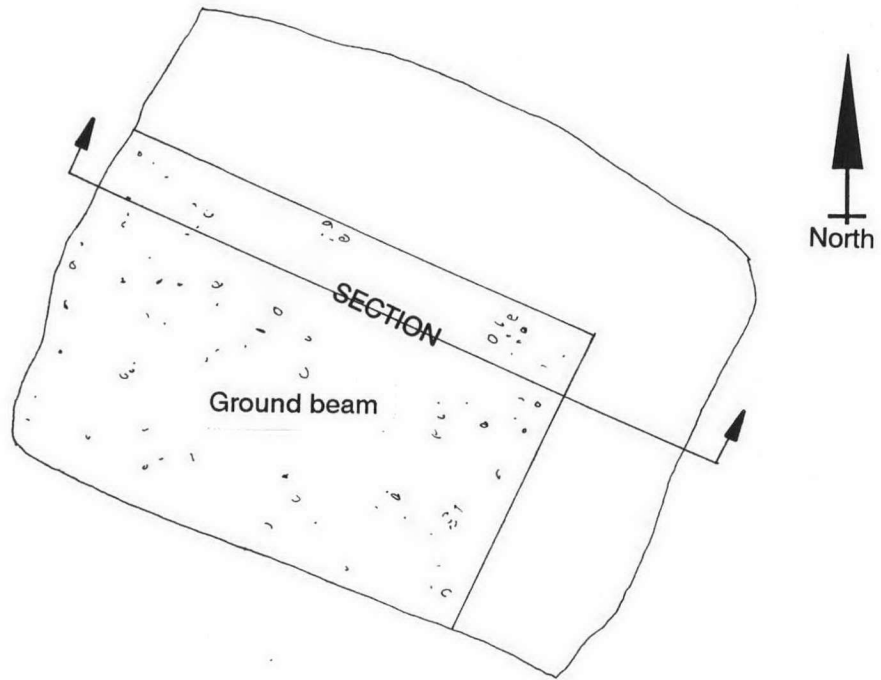
SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

DIG No.8



Scale 1:20

FIG 17.



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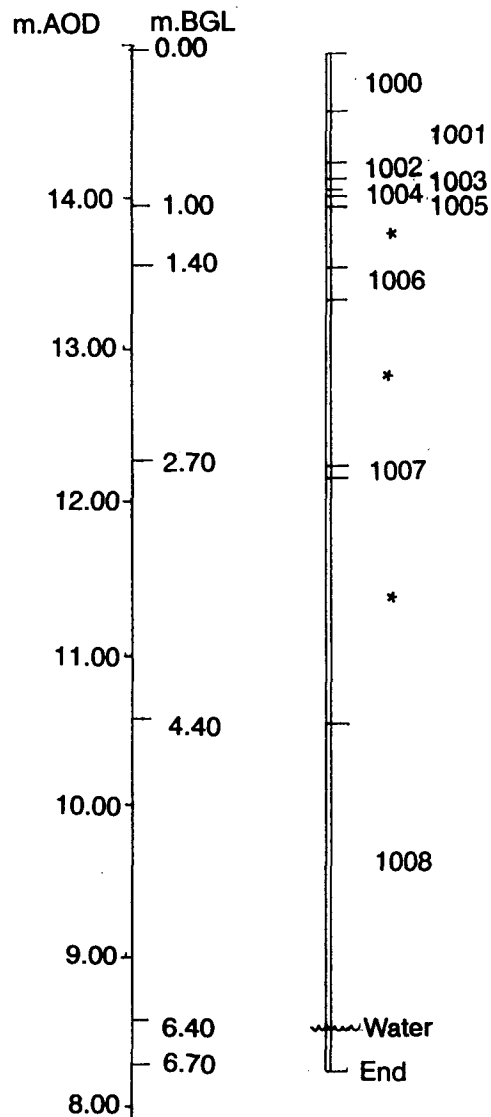
DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.



KEY TO CONTEXTS

- 1000 Concrete.
- 1001 Hardcore.
- 1002 Loose pale brown sand & gravel.
- 1003 Crushed limestone.
- 1004 Crushed brick.
- 1005 Crushed mortar in matrix of brown sand.
- 1006 Crushed mortar, brick, slate, sandstone & limestone.
- 1007 Concrete. ?Cellar floor.
- 1008 Stiff laminated blue grey veined clay. Natural sub-soil.
- * No recovery.

Scale 1:50

FIG 18.



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SITE CODE: P0362

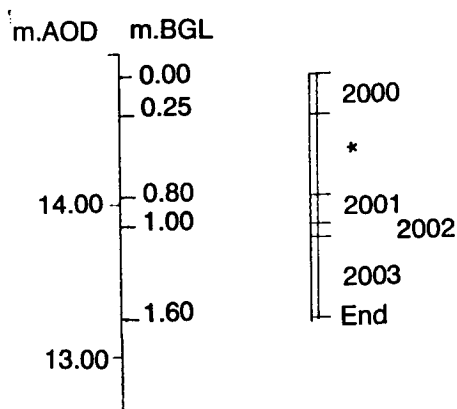
NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

BOREHOLE NUMBER 2.

Sampler used- 35mm Dia.

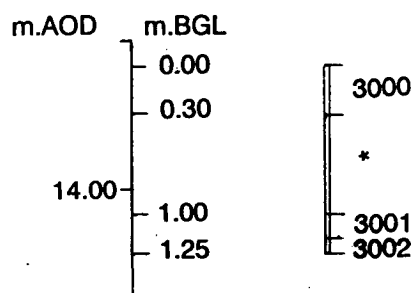


KEY TO CONTEXTS

- 2000 Concrete.
- 2001 Crushed mortar, brick, sandstone & limestone.
- 2002 Brick floor surface\ brick wall top.
- 2003 Core bit blocked by brick fragment. No recovery.
- * No recovery.

BOREHOLE NUMBER 3.

Sampler used- 35mm Dia.



KEY TO CONTEXTS

- 3000 Concrete.
- 3001 Crushed mortar, brick, sandstone & limestone.
- 3002 Limestone block causing obstruction and termination of borehole.
- * No recovery.

Scale 1:50

FIG 19.



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

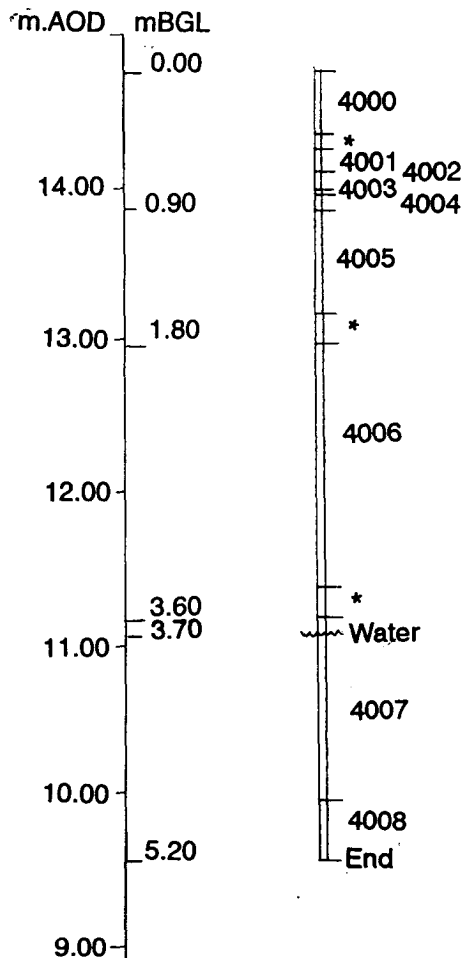
DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.

**KEY TO CONTEXTS**

- 4000 Concrete.
 4001 Crushed mortar.
 4002 Fine grained loose yellow sand.
 4003 Friable mid brown sandy silt. Frequent charcoal flecks.
 4004 Crushed mortar.
 4005 Friable mid brown sandy clay silts. Occasional brick\tile & mortar flecking, charcoal flecking and small fragments.
 4006 Mixed dumps of black, organic\humic material.
 4007 Mixed dumps of black, organic\humic material.
 4008 Stiff laminated blue grey veined clay. Natural sub-soil.
 * No recovery.

Scale 1:50

FIG 20.



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DAVYGATE CENTRE, DAVYGATE, YORK.

SITE CODE: P0362

NGR: SE 6028 5188

SCALE: as shown

DRAWN: R.M.