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36 Coney Street

York

Historic Buildings Assessment

REPORT v1
February 2023

HISTORIC BUILDING ASSESSMENT

36 CONEY STREET

YORK

NORTH YORKSHIRE

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Summary

This report presents the results of a Historic Building Assessment (HBA) of the Grade II* Listed 36 Coney Street, York. The HBA was prepared by FAS Heritage during November 2022 and January 2023.

The HBA included a visual inspection of the fabric of the buildings, consultation of published resources, archival searches and historic map regression.

The timber-framed building dates to 1397-1420, confirmed by dendrochronology, with a fragment of replacement roof likely to date to the 17th century. Although other interpretations are possible, the balance of evidence points to the building being constructed by one of the numerous medieval landlords that owned property in ‘Coneystreet’ such as the Ousebridgemasters' estate who rented out 20 tenements. Located to the rear of the property plot, the tenement is a rare surviving example of housing that would have been common in medieval York.

Acknowledgements

FAS Heritage would like to thank North Star (Global) Limited for commissioning the work and Paul Brown of Alder Brown Limited for arranging access. Thanks are also given to Neil Brown of Vincent and Brown (architects) for providing the drawings and other information. We are grateful to Historic England for their grant support of dendrochronological dating undertaken by Robert Howard and Alison Arnold of the Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a Historic Building Assessment (HBA) which focusses on a historic timber-framed element of the Grade II* Listed 36 Coney Street, York. The HBA has been prepared by FAS Heritage on behalf of Northstar during November 2022 to January 2023. Dendrochronological analysis was undertaken by the Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory, and the results are incorporated.

1.1 LOCATION AND LAND USE

No. 36 Coney Street lies on the northeastern side of Coney Street, within the centre of the historic city of York (Figure 1). The building forms part of a terrace of three houses; No. 36 is of three storeys and incorporates a range to the rear, which forms an L-shaped building with associated yard, the latter accessed via an alley from Coney Street (Figure 1; Plate 1).

The building is currently used for retail; the shop premises occupy the ground-floor frontage, with upper storeys and rooms to the rear used for storage and staff facilities. The ranges extending to the rear are in poor condition and are not currently in use.

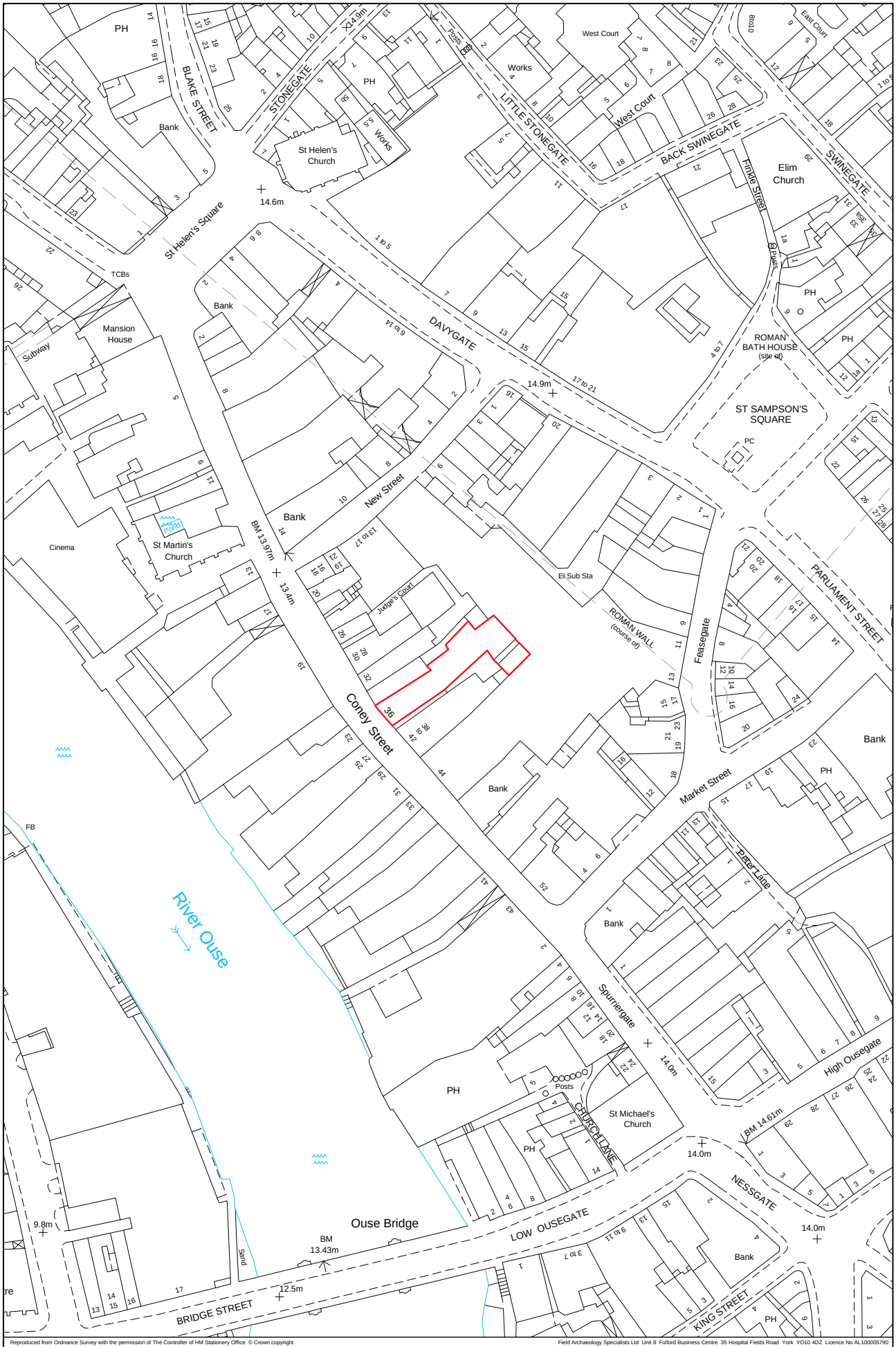
The current study focuses in particular on elements of the building to the rear of the shop premises, rising through all three floors (see Figure 1).

1.1.1 Statutory Designations

The building is Grade II* Listed as part of *Numbers 36-42 (Even) Coney Street (including Number 38A)*. The Listed Building description is included at Appendix A.

The site also lies within the York Area of Archaeological Importance and City of York Central Historic Core Conservation Area No 11: Central Shopping Area.

Plate 1 Aerial view of Coney Street, showing No. 36



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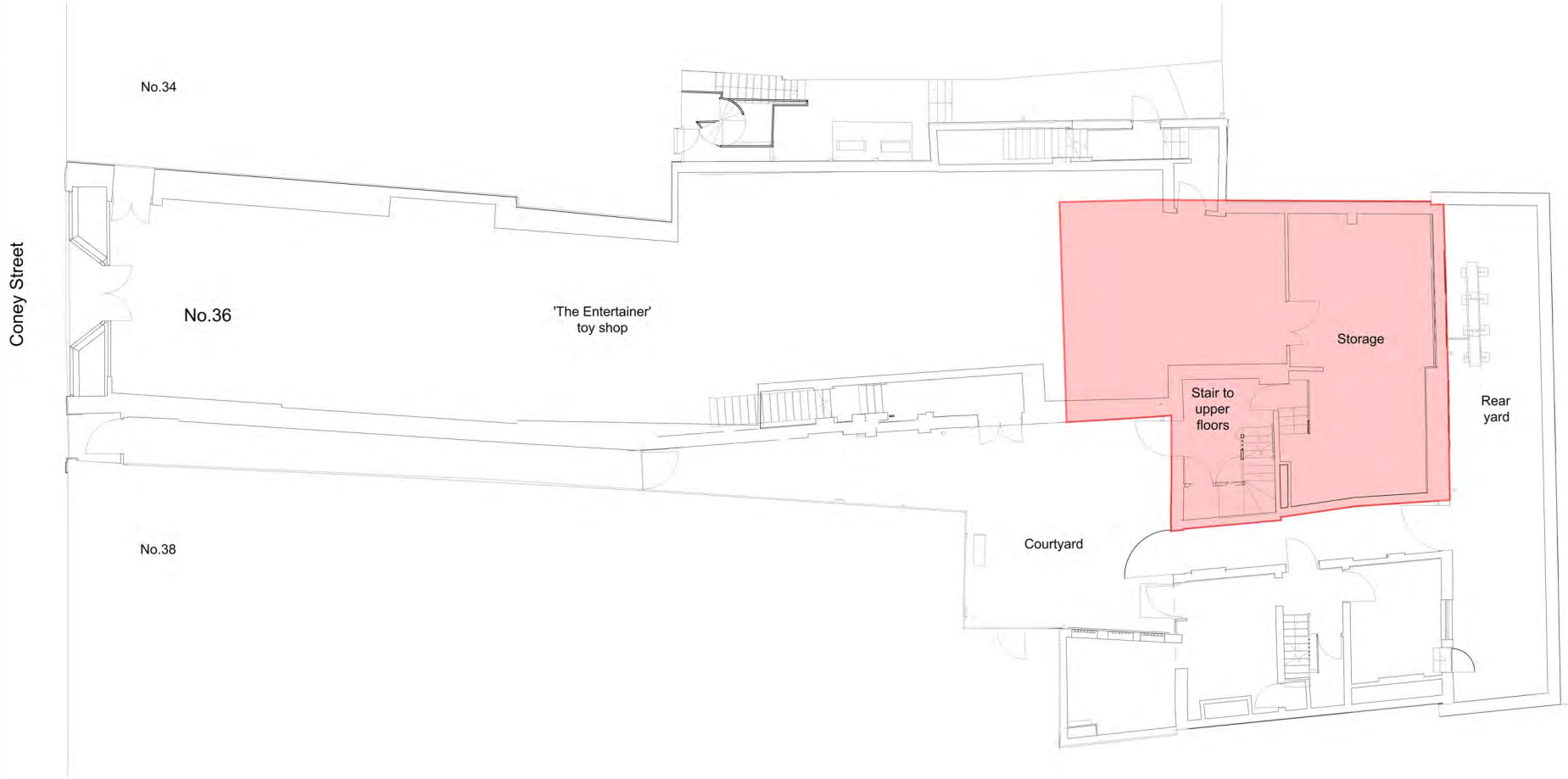
Location map | Scale 1:1500 | Figure 1



Site plan showing the area covered by the HBA (survey after Vincent & Brown)

Scale 1:200

Figure 2

1.2 PLANNING CONTEXT

A planning application (22/01044/FUL) and Listed Building Consent application (22/01044/LBC) have been submitted for conversion of the upper floor and part of the ground floor of 36 Coney Street to 8no. flats.

These applications were supported by a Historic Building Report which provides a room-by-room description of the property, and interpretation of the development (Vincent and Brown, September 2022). Following consultation with the City of York Conservation Officer, it was determined that further study was required to fully understand the historic, timber-framed elements of the building. The HBA was commissioned in order to achieve that aim.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this HBA is to provide further information and interpretation of the timber-framed building that survives encased by 18th- and 19th-century development, in order to fully inform development proposals.

In order to achieve this, the HBA has the following objectives:

- to summarise the current state of knowledge, based on existing reports;
- to undertake a detailed inspection of the relevant elements of the building;
- present an updated understanding of the potential historic form and function of the building;
- assess the significance of the surviving elements;
- make further recommendations.

1.4 LEGAL FRAMEWORKS AND PLANNING GUIDANCE

The HBA aims to address the requirements of relevant legal frameworks and planning policy pertinent to the site and proposed development. The following apply:

National and Regional Planning Framework

- Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act, 1990
- National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2019)

Guidelines

- National Planning Policy Guidance (MHCLG 2018)

2.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The HBA has included the following stages of investigation:

- archival research;
- site visit;
- preparation of annotated plans and elevation photographs;

- dendrochronological sampling and dating.

2.1 SITE VISIT

A site visit was undertaken on Friday 16th December 2022. All relevant areas of the building were inspected, record photographs taken, and drawings annotated.

2.2 DESK-BASED RESEARCH

Information on the Listed Building was obtained from the National Heritage List for England (NHLE).

The historic building file on the property was consulted at the Historic England Archives on 14th December 2022 (BF60512).

Relevant editions of historic Ordnance Survey maps were consulted.

2.3 PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

This report does not represent a formal photographic record of the building; this is likely to be required in due course.

High-resolution digital photographs have been taken of the key elements of the timber-framed building in order to illustrate the report. The photographs are included in Appendix B, with photographic location plans in Appendix C. Appendix photographs are referenced throughout the report; key photographs have been reproduced within the text where necessary.

2.4 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In line with NPPF, heritage significance has been assessed taking into account:

- archaeological interest
- architectural interest
- artistic interest
- historic interest

and considered using the four heritage values set out in Historic England (2008) *Conservation Principles*:

- evidential
- historical
- aesthetic
- communal

The following grades of significance have been employed:

- **Exceptional significance** - resources which can be demonstrated to have international or national significance and/or are of extraordinary or unique archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic merit. This will include World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments (or those monuments which otherwise meet scheduling criteria) all Listed Buildings Grades I and II*, Registered Historic Parks and Gardens grades I and II*, and Registered Historic Battlefields;
- **Considerable significance** - resources with importance within a national or regional context, due to special archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest. This category will include Conservation Areas, Grade II Listed Buildings and Registered Parks and Gardens Grade II;
- **Moderate significance** - resources of local importance. This might include heritage assets with archaeological, architectural, historic or artistic interest, but which do not meet the criteria for designation;
- **Some significance** - resources of limited local importance, due to their high frequency, lack of provenance or limited survival. This might include resources of local significance that have been partially destroyed by past land use, whether by agricultural activity or built development;
- **Unknown significance** - resources of uncertain importance based upon their type or condition.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 MEDIEVAL AND POST MEDIEVAL

By the 12th century, Coney Street lay within a significant urban area in York, with a high density of housing, mainly in the ownership of various landlords. In the 12th century, it was also known for its Jewish population, with its residents including Aaron of York, considered one of the wealthiest Jews in England.

Unlike other areas of York, documentary sources for medieval tenements and houses along Coney Street have not received sufficiently detailed study to allow the distinct properties of 36 Coney Street to be traced in the medieval and post-medieval periods.

By the 12th century, the Hageth and Lewin families were particularly notable owners of property in Coneystreet. They made various grants to religious institutions such as St Mary's Abbey, Fountains Abbey and St Leonard's Hospital. St Leonard's was particularly aggressive at building on these grants by acquiring further property in Coneystreet between *c*.1180 and *c.*1270 to consolidate and expand their holdings (Rees Jones 1987, Vol1, 156-157).

Religious institutions based outside Yorkshire also benefitted in this way, including grants made between 1190 and 1210 by Gerard de Stokeslay and Hugh his brother, sons of Lewin, who gave Durham Priory their land and stone house in Coneystreet which their father had held of the priory

(EYC, 1,198-200). Durham retained interests in Coneystreet and, in 1445, the Priory still drew a free rent of 4s. from the site of the new Guild Hall then being rebuilt (TNA SC.6/708 m.10).

In addition to references to stone housing by the 13th century, rows (ranks of cheap housing for rent) were being built in the churchyards of St Martin, Coneystreet, by the 1330s (Cal. Pat. Rolls 1334-38, 121). A row of cottages built in the churchyard 1335 cost 62 marks; the rent levels meant it would have taken 15 to 20 years to recover the costs (Salzman 1967, 430-2).

By the 15th century, other landlords with properties in Coneystreet included the Ousebridgemasters' estate (the income from the estate used to maintain the bridge) which in 1440-41 had 20 properties in Coneystreet (Rees Jones 1987, Vol1, 258-9). The bridgemasters accounts mention tenements, gardens, cottages and stables in Coney Street, which were occupied by skinners, tailors, cordwainers and spurriers, amongst many other trades and professions. More often than not, however, it is not possible to identify the location of the properties in question (Stell 2003).

While it is not possible to conflate historical sources to identify any of these owners of the property now forming No. 36, it does characterise the nature of the properties in Coney Street by the late medieval period and shows a high density of tenanted properties in the area.

The structure that forms the focus of this study lies to the rear of the Coney Street frontage; in the 1980s York Archaeological Trust examined exposed timber framing and concluded it was 15th-century in date (previously, the earliest element had been assigned a 17th-century date, see Plate 2). At the same time, a medieval barrel well was exposed beneath the timber floor of the building; this feature was filled with concrete after recording (Brinklow 1987, 24).

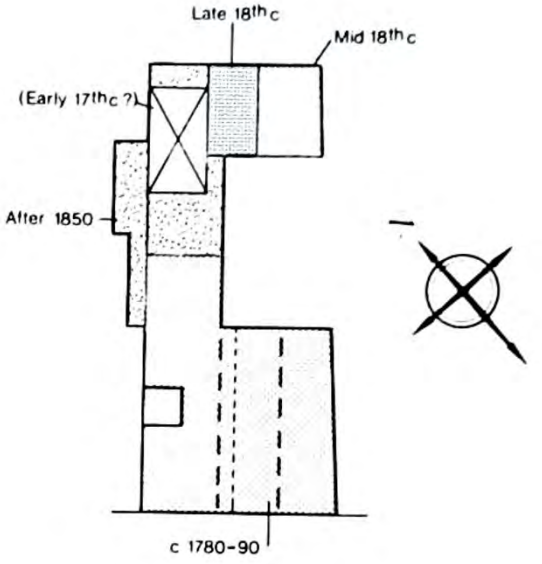


Plate 2 Extract from plan by RCHME (1981)

Plate 3 Extract from Ordnance Survey, 1852

3.2 POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

The structure of interest previously formed a separate building to the rear of the main street frontage of Coney Street. A further house was added to this structure in the 18th century, aligned west-east (see Plate 2).

The frontage of No. 36 Coney Street – with adjoining structures – was built c.1780-1790, with shops on the ground floor. In the late 18th century,

No. 36 was interconnected with No. 38; historically there was a large lightwell centrally, which is now roofed at third storey level. A possible interpretation is that there was a large central stair to the building.

By the 19th century, No. 36 had been extended to the rear, incorporating the timber-framed building and adjoining 18th-century house. The 1852 Ordnance Survey edition shows the complexity of the range extending to the rear of Coney Street and forming a small yard area to the rear (Plate 3). The 1891 Ordnance Survey edition shows further detail of the building and changes to the rear yard, which at that time was labelled ‘Bland’s Yard’ (Plate 5)

Plate 5 Extract from Ordnance Survey, 1891

3.3 PREVIOUS AND CURRENT INVESTIGATIONS

The building was first examined by the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments England (RCHME) in December 1970/September 1971 (Historic England Archives BF060512). The RCHME suggested that the timber-framed building dated to the early 17th century, presumably on the basis of the truss form consisting of coupled rafters with collars. The roof structure was photographed during the course of the inspection and, other than some of the posts and a single brace, appears to have been the main area of framing exposed at the time of the Royal Commission examination. The investigators noted that no framing was visible on the ground floor.

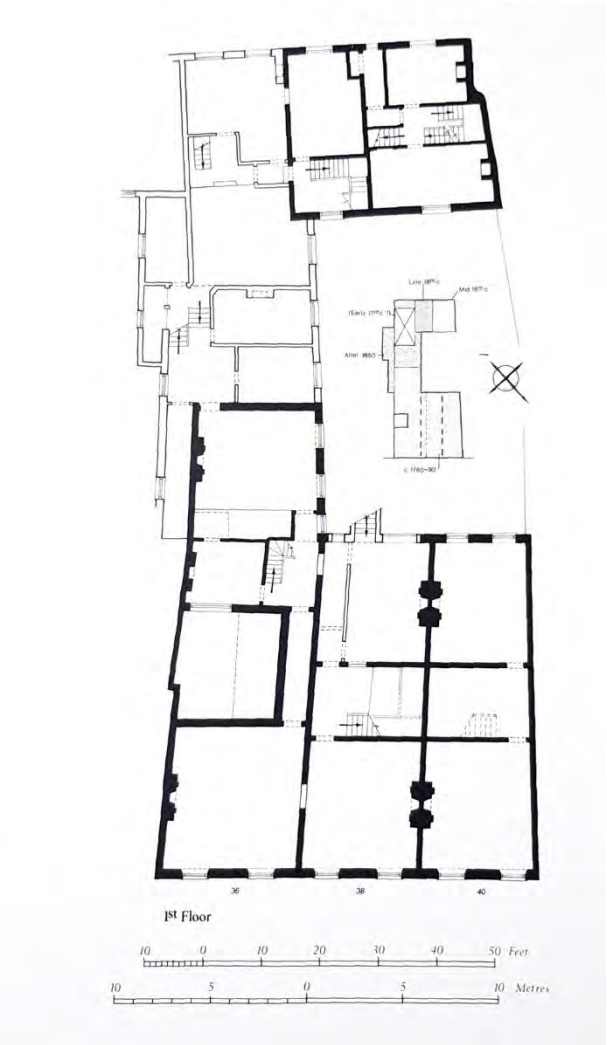


Plate 4 RCHME plan prepared in 1970/1 (HEA BF060512)

The RCHME prepared a plan of the first floor which shows the location of timber framing, and the accompanying account indicates that they observed some features that are no longer visible or have since been removed (Plate 4). Notably, they did not identify any features relating to the southeast wing of the timber-framed building and, thus, assumed a single range of three bays orientated NE-SW (see Plate 2).

In 1986, No. 36 Coney Street was redeveloped from a Boots to accommodate a Virgin Records store. In the process of the conversion works, the remains of the timber-framed building were examined again by the York Archaeological Trust (YAT) and a summary article was published (Brinklow 1987, 20-24). At that time the extent of timber framing visible today appears to have been exposed; the resulting reconstruction shows an L-shaped plan (Plate 7).

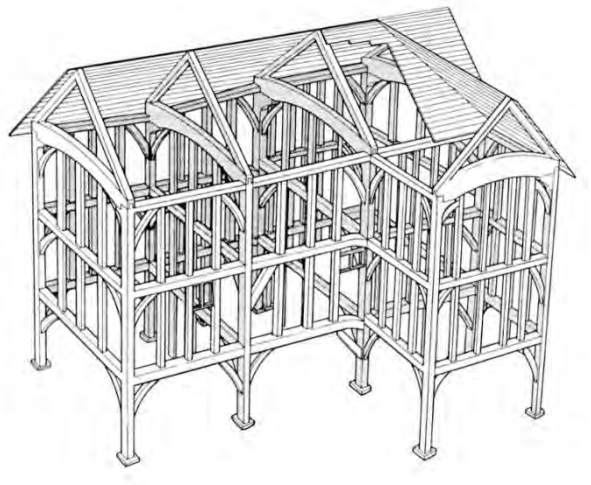


Plate 7 Reconstruction of the timber framing by York Archaeological Trust (Brinklow 1987)

A recent unpublished technical report provides a summary of the more recent history of the entirety of No. 36 Coney Street, with photographs of each of the rooms (Vincent & Brown September 2022).

4.0 DESCRIPTION

The following account details the form and layout of the early, timber-framed structure only.

4.1 GENERAL LAYOUT

This report focuses on the earliest phase of building identified on the site. Although initially interpreted as a rectangular structure, subsequent observations have shown an L-shaped plan. A further house attached to the southeast side of the timber-framed structure appears to be entirely of brick and mid-18th century with later modifications; this has not been considered further.

4.2 EXTERIOR

The exterior of the timber-framed building is now entirely encased in brick and no framing is visible. The encasing brick walls are of mid-18th to mid-19th-century date, with opening positions that are unlikely to relate directly to the position of those that were in the timber-framed building (Plate 6, Appendix B: YCY001-008).

Plate 6 Exterior brick walls of the building (YCY008)

4.3 INTERIOR

4.3.1 Ground floor

There was no timber framing exposed at ground-floor level, and so the reconstructed floor plan has been inferred from posts on the floors above (Figure 3). While it can be inferred where the timber-framed structure should be at ground-floor level, particularly where corner posts should be located, there was no exposed framing at this level.

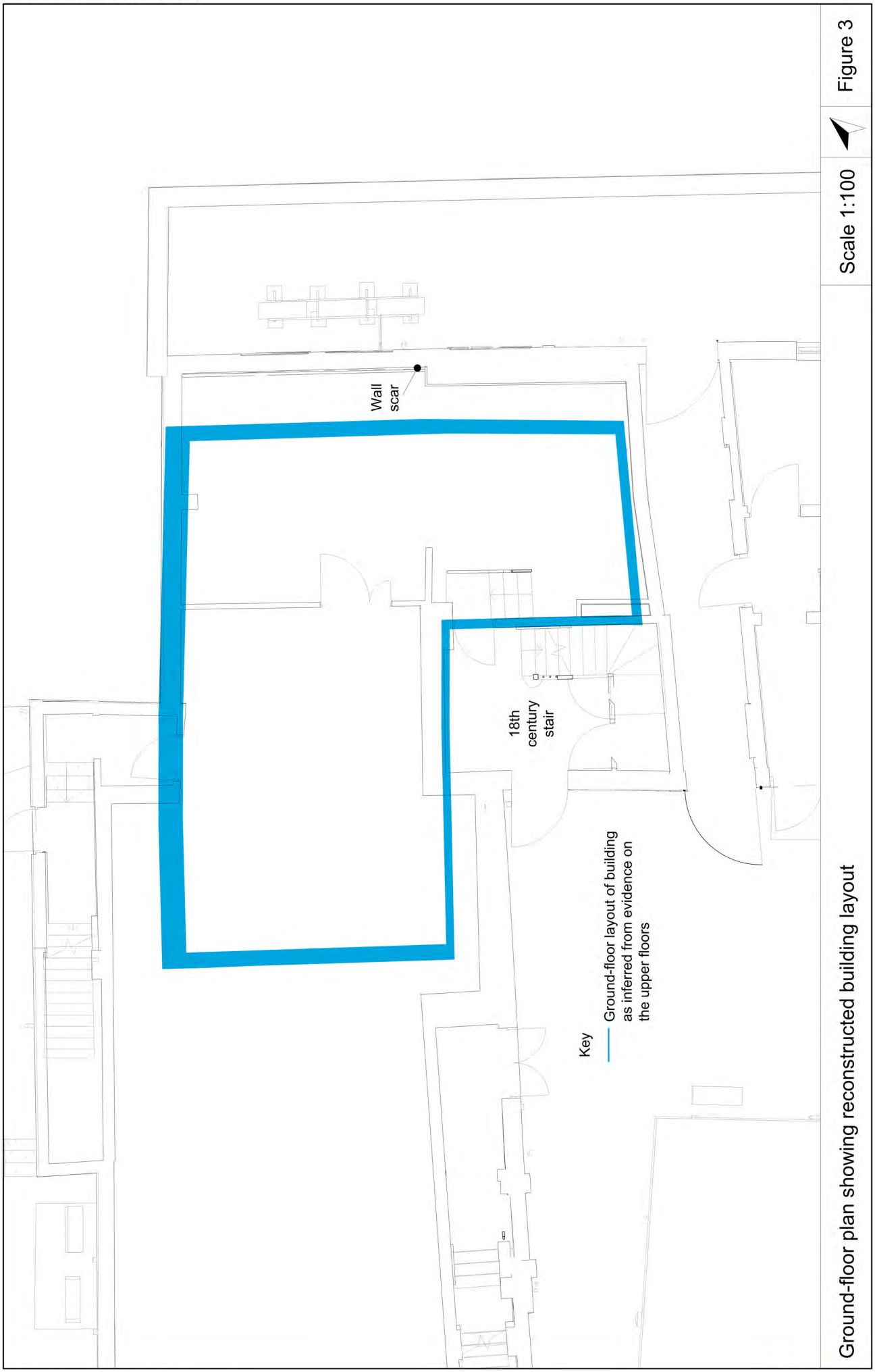


Figure 3

Scale 1:100

Ground-floor plan showing reconstructed building layout

The main feature of note at ground-floor level is a wall scar within the brickwork, in the northeast wall (Plate 8, see Figure 3). Although this accords with the alignment of a timber-framed wall seen on the upper floors, it would have been outside the envelope of the original building.

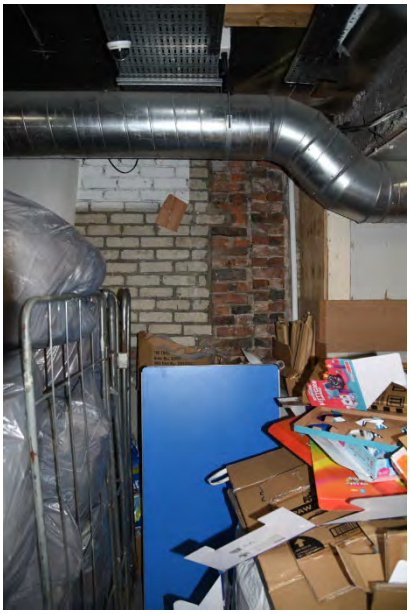


Plate 8 Wall scar at ground-floor level (YCY011)

The York Archaeological Trust summary article suggests that the upper part of a post was visible, but this is no longer the case.

4.3.2 First floor

The main surviving visible framing at first-floor level consists of three corner posts and a wall plate, although some other elements were identified by the Royal Commission.

All of the timbers at first-floor level have had their faces cut back to a greater or lesser degree, probably in the 18th or 19th centuries, which has removed much evidence.

The following description considers the visible timber-framing as two main elements; the northwest range, which is orientated NE-SW and the subsidiary southeast range which has the same alignment (Figure 4).

Northwest range

The northwest range measures c.5m in width and c.10m in length, with three bays each of c.3.2m to 3.5m in length. It is possible that this range originally continued, with further bays to the southwest, although evidence at second-floor level would suggest that by the 17th century this was not the case.

Of the northwest range, the main exposed timber-framed elements are in its southeast wall and shared with the southeast range. Two posts (A and B) and a section of wall plate survive (Appendix B: YCY014-017, 022; Plate 9). The northwest face of post A has a truncated mortice towards its top which would have seated a bridging beam running northwest across the width of the range. Lower down the post is a long-angled mortice that would have received a brace, the upper end of which would have been jointed into the bridging beam. The evidence for the brace would suggest that beneath the bridging beam there must have been a partition, dividing Bay 1 from Bay 2 of the northwest range. At the bottom of the post is a single further peg; the joint which it secured is not exposed but it is likely to relate to joint between ground and first-floor posts.

Plate 9 First floor showing posts A (right) and B (left) and wall plate (looking E, 2m scale) (YCY015)(scale 2.0m)

First-floor plan showing area of timber-framed building

Scale 1:100

Figure 4

The northeast face of post A has a wall plate jointed into the side of the post and the remains of an empty mortice hole for an arch brace; both of these components would have formed part of a stud wall that divided the northwest and southwest ranges. The southeast face of the post has been cut back considerably and any joint information has been lost.

The wall plate that links post A to post B now has a highly irregular appearance almost entirely due to the cutting back of the soffit (under) face to accommodate various door openings between the northwest and southwest ranges. However, it is possible to observe where an arch brace (from post A) joined into the soffit of the wall plate, in addition to a central stud. A further mortice and securing peg, c.1m from the northeast end of the wall plate, indicates the position of a further stud that acted as a door jamb. The door opening was evidently extant when the Royal Commission conducted their survey in 1970/71 (see Plate 4).

Plate 10 Corbel at first-floor level, between Bay 1 and Bay 2 (YCY025)

Post B would originally been located at the east corner of the northwest range, and also formed the north corner of the southeast range. The positions of now-removed arch braces can identified springing from the northwest and southeast sides of the post, indicating solid walls in both directions; there is no surviving evidence for a brace to the southeast which is not surprising, given that this is a likely original door location.

Although no further timber framing remains clearly exposed on this floor, the former positions of posts can be inferred from other evidence. Two corbels are located along the southeast wall of the range (see Figure 4). One corbel is probably of stone and is supporting a post which might be a medieval timber post the lower part of which has been cut away (Appendix B: YCY025; Plate 10). The second corbel is in the form of an elongated moulded bracket (Appendix B: YCY027; Plate 12). This also might be supporting the upper part of a timber post the lower part cut off. Finally, the Royal Commission observed a further post in the northwest corner of the range. This feature is no longer obvious, but the location would be where a post would be anticipated.

Plate 11 Corbel at first-floor level, (YCY027)(scale 2.0m)

Southeast range

The southeast range is nearly square in plan, being c.3.5m in length and c.3.2m in width, the long side abutting with the long side of the northwest range (see Figure 4). Posts A and B and the wall plate between them would have formed a shared wall between the southeast and northwest ranges.

Post C is located in the eastern corner of the building and retains evidence for arch braces springing from its northwest and southwest faces, indicating solid walls in these directions (Appendix B: YCY020; Plate 12).

Plate 12 View of post C, looking NE (YCY020)

Little else remains exposed on the first floor of the southeast range although it possible that a further post is located in the south corner of the room.

As noted above, the southeast face of post A has lost any joint information and, with no other evidence visible, it is possible that the southeast range extended a further bay to the southwest, into the area now occupied by the 18th-century stair.

4.3.3 Second floor

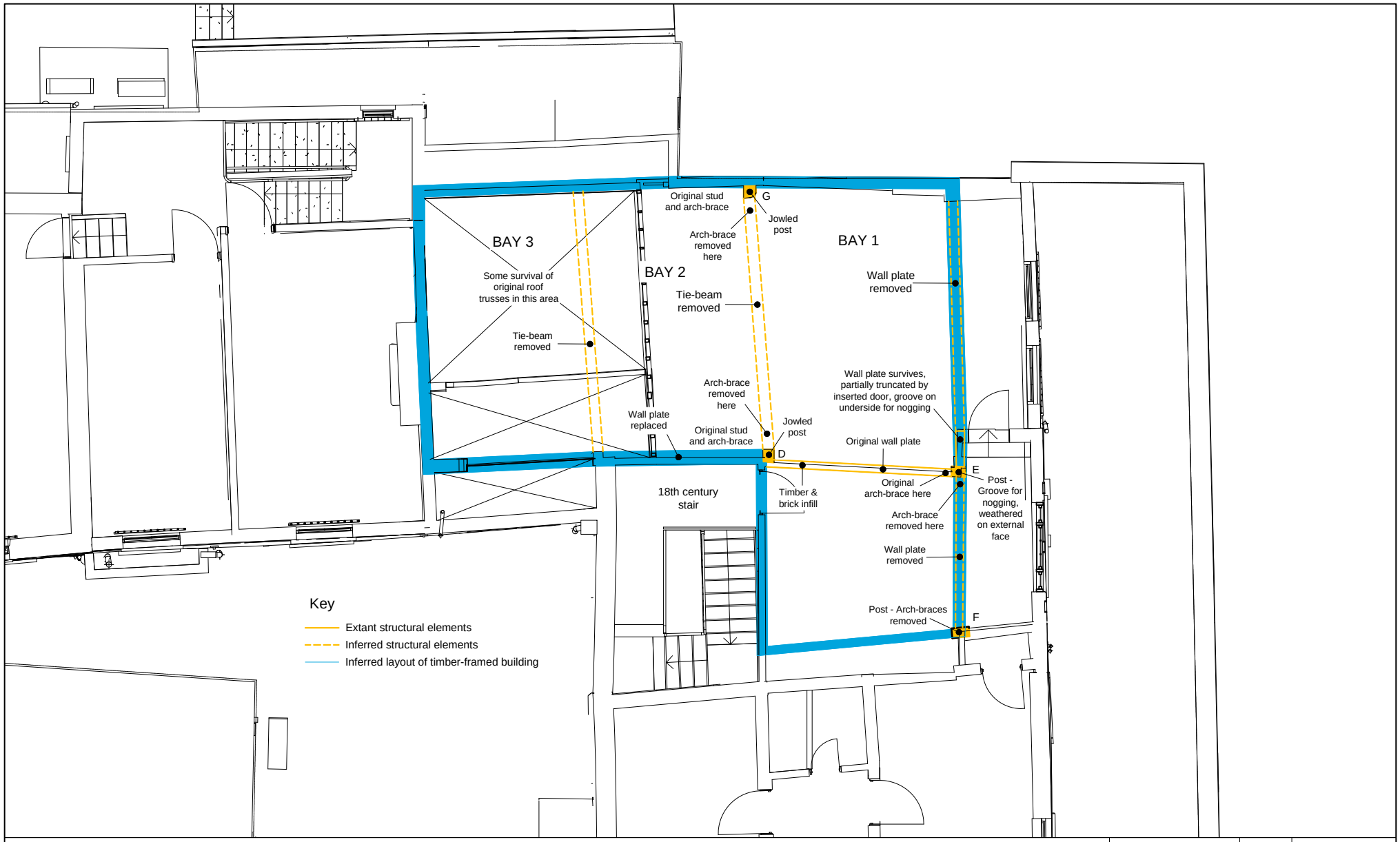
The second floor provides the greatest surviving area of exposed timber-framing in the building. The plan of the second floor follows that observed on the first floor consisting of two ranges, with the division between the ranges surviving more fully (Figure 5).

Northwest range

Three posts can be seen clearly within the northwest range at second-floor level (Posts D, E and G; see Figure 5). Posts D and E are in the southeast wall and are linked by an original section of wall plate (Appendix B: YCY046-7). Post E has an original arch brace from its southwest side that is jointed into the wall plate (Plate 13). The jowled head of the post is evident but much of the northwest face is obscured by brickwork. However, seated on the top of the post, running northwest, is a short remaining section of wall plate. The plate has a groove on its soffit, visible from the northeast side, which would have been used to locate nogging.

Plate 13 View of post E, looking E (YCY046)(scale 1.0m)

Two sets of three pegs in the lower part of the northwest face of post D indicates that arch braces would have been jointed into either side of the post and braced up to the wall plate; both braces have been removed (Plate 14). In addition, post D has a long empty mortice, also in its northwest face, for a further brace springing to the northwest. This would have braced a tie beam that would have been located between posts D and G.



Second-floor plan showing area of timber-framed building

Scale 1:100

Figure 5

Post G retains similar evidence to post D with a long empty mortice in its southeast face that would have braced the tie beam which liked across to post D (Appendix B: YCY048). Unlike post D, post G retains one arch brace to the wall plate it supports, in addition to three pegs which would have secured a further brace from its northeast side (Plate 16).

Studs remain along both the northwest and southeast walls fixed to the wall plates (Appendix B: YCY041-2, 044; Plate 16). Most are replacements and nailed in place, but there some secured with pegs which are likely to be original.

Plate 14 View of post D, looking S (YCY047)(scale 1.0m)

It is evident that the floor has been raised slightly from its original level, probably when a lime ash floor was replaced with a boarded floor. The southwest end of the building has undergone much more drastic alteration. One and half bays of the southwest end have had the floor removed to allow for a tall ceiling to be inserted over the floor below; this appears to be an alteration from the 19th or early 20th century. It possible to glimpse around the raised area of the ceiling towards southwest end of the timber-framed building, where it is evident that the timber-framing terminates in a brick wall which retains a three-centre head window which has been blocked. The general proportions of the window and the form of its head indicate a 17th-century date.

Plate 15 View of post G, looking W (YCY048)(scale 1.0m)

Southeast range

As with the first floor, the southeast range shares a timber framed wall with northwest range, and its northwest wall repeats what can be seen from the northwest range side (see Figure 5).

Post E also retains evidence for a removed brace and wall plate on its southeast face. Further, it is evident that the northeast face of the post has been subject to considerable weathering, confirming that this must have been the original external elevation of the timber-framed building.

Plate 16 View of NW wall (YCY041)

Post F formed the east corner of the southeast range and retains evidence for arch braces on its northwest and southwest faces (Appendix B: YCY035; Plate 17). The former certainly braced a wall plate that connected with post E.

Plate 17 View of post E, looking N (YCY035)(scale 2.0m)

It is not clear whether the southeast range continued for a further bay to the southwest into the area now occupied by the 18th-century stair, but this is a possibility.

The floor is lower in the southeast range compared to the (replacement) floor in the northwest range and likely to be close to its original level. It is notable that it retains floorboards of 18th or early 19th-century date (Appendix B: YCY036).

4.3.4 Roof structure

The roof structure above the southeast range appears to have largely been replaced. The roof structure over the northwest range has also been subject to reconstruction, probably during the early 1980s repairs. However, the southwest end retains several close coupled trusses of collar form (Appendix B: YCY049-54).

Plate 18 View of roof structure (YCY050)

Given the arrangement of the main timber-framing, the close coupled collar truss form is surprising; it would be expected that the trusses would be seated on the main wall posts where they were at least provided with a tie beam. Common rafters would have been employed between these main trusses seated directly onto the wall plates.

Given these anomalies, the surviving elements of the historic roof might be a replacement arrangement dating to sometime after the original timber-framed structure.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 DATE AND PHASING

As part of the current investigation the timber-framing was subject to tree-ring dating (dendrochronology) by the Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Laboratory and a felling date for the timber successfully obtained (Arnold and Howard January 2023 – Appendix D). Analysis undertaken on a number of oak samples from the timber-framed structure resulted in the successful dating of seven

samples. These timbers are now known to have been felled in the period AD 1397 to 1420, with construction of the framing likely to have followed almost immediately on felling.

The dating was consistent across the first and second floors, where the timber-framing survives and is exposed, and also between the northwest and southeast ranges. This indicates that the timber-framed building is of one phase of original construction in the period 1397 to 1420. However, the remaining historic collar trusses in the northwest range were unsuitable for dating with very wide growth rings being too few for successful dendrochronological analysis. The difference in characteristics between the main timber-frame timbers and the roof structure would indicate that they had come from different sources and are thus likely to be of different dates. The collar truss roof form is much more consistent with a late 16th or 17th-century date and, indeed, misled the Royal Commission to date the entire structure to the early 17th century (RCHME 1981, 124).

The likely later date for the roof structure suggests that the building underwent significant alteration in this period. This is perhaps consistent with the blocked 17th-century window that is evident in the brick southwest wall of the northwest range.

5.2 PLAN AND FUNCTION

Given the date of the timber-framed structure, a typical medieval domestic plan might have been anticipated consisting of services (buttery, pantry and kitchen), hall, solar and perhaps sleeping chamber. This typical plan would normally provide for relatively open spaces to accommodate the hall and solar and smaller spaces for the other rooms.

In contrast, the timber-framed structure at No. 36 Coney Street provides a series of spaces which would have been a single bay in length arranged over three floors. There are perhaps three possible explanations for this arrangement: that the remaining timber-framed structure was part of a much bigger house; that it former part of a high-density tenement arrangement; that it was not intended for domestic use.

In the first scenario, the surviving structure would represent one element of a larger dwelling which might perhaps have contained sleeping chambers etc., with the large rooms towards Coney Street to the southwest having been lost through rebuilding. The evidence of a brick wall being built in the 17th century, across the southwest end of the building might represent the truncation of the original house at this time with the demolition of the adjacent hall and solar.

The second possibility, a high-density medieval tenement building, would be consistent with the compartmentalisation that is evident in the northwest range. There are surviving examples of small tenements in York, such as Lady Row, Goodramgate, which consist of little more than two rooms per dwelling. It is possible that No. 36 Coney Street was also arranged along similar lines with a series of sets of living and sleeping chambers. Due to poor survival, tt is difficult to identify directly comparable buildings in York, although the Royal Commission have identified one such building also arranged over three floors at the rear of No. 87 Low Petergate. This also follows an L-shaped plan and was dated to the late 14th or early 15th century; a deed of 1694 calls this building ‘The Old Rackett’ (RCHME 1981, 196-7).

The final suggestion – that the building was not intended for domestic use – might instead mean that it was constructed as an industrial building such as a warehouse although this seems less plausible. Warehousing was known to have existed on the opposite side of Coney Street where access to the River Ouse would have been convenient. Tucked behind other buildings on the opposite side of street seems to be a less than ideal location for a warehouse. Further, the compartmentalisation evident across at least two floors seems incompatible with such use.

On balance, the timber-framed building of No. 36 seems to be the remains of a modest, higher density, medieval tenement building and a rare survivor of such a modest building.

6.0 SUMMARY AND ASSESSMENT

6.1 EXTENT OF SURVIVAL

The main surviving elements of the timber-framed structure are the frames that formed the outer walls of the original building and the division between the two ranges. Floors appear to have largely been removed and set at different levels, other than second-floor level in the southeast range. This could be confirmed by lifting areas of floorboards.

Of the roof structure, only a fragment of the later roof, probably dating to the 17th century, appears to have survived.

6.2 SUMMARY

The timber-framed building dates to 1397 to 1420, with a fragment of replacement roof dating likely to date to the 17th century. Although other interpretations are possible, the balance of evidence points to the building being constructed by one of the numerous medieval landlords that owned property in ‘Coneystreet,’ such as the Ousebridgemasters' estate who rented out 20 tenements. Located to the rear of the property plot, the tenement is a rare surviving example of housing that would once have been common in medieval York.

6.3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

No. 36 Coney Street is a Grade II* Listed Building, which reflects the exceptional significance already attached to the structure.

This study has demonstrated the illustrative historical value of the timber-framing, in preserving the remains of a modest residential building of 14th- to 15th-century date. This is a rare survival of a type of building that does not generally survive in York.

The property has evidential value, due to the survival of timber-framing elements that provide clues as to the structure and layout of the building. The timbers have been securely dated, which enhances this value. Generally, however, evidential value has been significantly eroded by the lack of survival, or later alteration, of other key components of the structure.

Currently, the building has limited communal value. Aesthetically, the timber-framing is not highly visible, but what remains visible at second-floor level allows the scale and construction of the building to be appreciated.

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Vincent & Brown September 2022. *36 Coney Street, Historic Building Report* (Unpublished Technical Report)

APPENDIX A LISTED BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Official list entry

Heritage Category: Listed Building
Grade: II*
List Entry Number: 1257947
Date first listed: 24-Jun-1983
Date of most recent amendment: 14-Mar-1997
Statutory Address: NUMBERS 36-42 (EVEN) INCLUDING NUMBER 38A, 36-42, CONEY STREET
The building or site itself may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

District: York (Unitary Authority)
Parish: Non Civil Parish
National Grid Reference: SE 60234 51819

Details

YORK

SE6051NW CONEY STREET 1112-1/28/263 (North East side) 24/06/83 Nos.36-42 (Even) including No.38A (Formerly Listed as: CONEY STREET Nos.36, 38, 38A AND 40)

GV II*

Terrace of three houses, with range of buildings attached to No.36, right angled to form rear yard; now shops, warehouse and language school. Late C18 terrace, extended in late C19 to incorporate early C17 and early C19 buildings at rear; late C19 shopfronts, altered in C20. MATERIALS: street front of orange-buff brick in Flemish bond with sharply projecting dentil and modillion eaves cornice and cast-iron and timber shopfront; rear of red brick in Flemish bond with brick dentilled eaves cornice. Hipped slate roof with brick stacks. Late C19 extension of pink-grey brick in Flemish bond with brick dentilled eaves cornice, slate roofs, one hipped with scrolled corner brackets, and brick stacks. C17 building timber-framed, later encased in re-used orange-brown brick, Flemish bond at front, rear part stretcher bond, part English garden-wall bond; moulded modillion eaves cornice of timber at front, and pantile roofs. Early C19 house of orange brick in Flemish bond at front, with similar timber cornice, returned at left end; rear of Flemish garden-wall bond over lower courses of random bonded brick; hipped slate roof. EXTERIOR: 4-storey 6-window front. Full width shopfront of elliptical arched windows on colonnettes with moulded capitals; fascia shaped to segmental arches by attenuated tulip foliage with tulip heads in spandrels; shallow cornice rises in centre over wide segmental pediment between heavy brackets ornamented with entwined tulip flowers and leaves. Panelled door with overlight beneath pediment leads to rear yard. Windows on first floor are 12-pane sashes over raised sill band; on second floor, unequal 9-pane sashes except for two altered at right end; on third floor, two original 6-pane sashes remain, the others altered. All windows have flat arches, with painted sills to those on second and third floors. Fluted bowl rainwater head on right return. Rear of front terrace 4 storeys, 2 windows, extended at right end into 2- and 3-storey 6-window range; yard closed by 3-storey early C17 bay and early C19 2-bay house front. Ground floor of front terrace obscured by later additions, except for round-arched passage opening. Extension has blocked central doorway in inserted doorcase with segment-headed arch on moulded corbels and cogged brick cornice hood: towards right end, window altered to plain door beneath cambered brick arch.

First floor windows are mostly 12-pane sashes, on second floor 4-pane sashes. C17 bay has altered door beneath tall staircase window with semicircular arch of rubbed brick and painted stone sill. Early C19 house

incorporates passage arch with semicircular head to left of plain door with blocked overlight. First floor window is 16-pane sash, second floor squat 8-pane sash, both with narrow sills and flat arches of rubbed brick. Rear of C17 building is twin-gabled with altered openings and blocked original window with flat arch of brick in left gable. INTERIOR: No.36: front rooms on first and second floors have fireplace surrounds of timber painted to resemble marble, one on second floor retaining cast-iron range and grate. Rear room on second floor has plain fireplace with hob grate. First floor front room has plaster anthemion and palmette frieze, coved cornice and sunk-panelled window shutters. Other rooms on first and second floors retain moulded cornices. Three fireplaces survive on third floor, one of cast-iron, one with remains of cast-iron grate and range. Nos 38 and 40 have top-lit open-string staircases from first floor to attic, with tall column-on-vase balusters, slender moulded handrails ramped-up to detached turned newels. Cornices survive in most rooms on first and second floors. No.38: second floor front room has painted timber fireplace with fluted jambs and fluted dentil cornice shelf; rear room has cast-iron fireplace with floral moulded architrave in fluted surround, and pulvinated frieze enriched with rosettes and horizontal flutes. No.40: first floor front room has painted timber fireplace with Corinthian pilaster jambs, plain shelf and late C19 basket grate. Second floor front room has plain fireplace with ornate basket grate, rear room painted fireplace in raised panelled surround with plain shelf and hob grate with cornucopias and medallions on sidepieces. On third floor, both rooms retain fireplaces with fluted friezes and cornice shelves, that in front room with basket grate with scrolled back plate. C19 extension: open string staircase with heavy turned balusters and moulded handrail rises from first to second floor. On first floor rear room has plain pilastered fireplace with flat shelf and cornices to front and back rooms. Second floor front room has moulded cornice and round-arched fire grate, rear room stone fireplace with incised frieze and grooved keyblock, and round-headed grate. C17 block: open string staircase from ground to first floor, with slender column-on-vase balusters, shaped tread ends and delicate ramped-up handrail with turned newel at the foot. On first and second floors framing survives with full height braced posts, wall plates, and some studding on second floor. In early C19 house main staircase with re-set column-on-vase balusters rises from ground to second floor. Fireplaces survive on first and second floors. (City of York: RCHME: The Central Area: HMSO: 1981-: 124).

Listing NGR: SE6023451819

Legacy

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.
Legacy System number: 463255
Legacy System: LBS

Sources

Books and journals

An Inventory of the City of York V Central, (1981), 124

Legal

This building is listed under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended for its special architectural or historic interest.

APPENDIX B PHOTOGRAPHIC ARCHIVE

YCY001 External southwest elevation (2m scale)

YCY002 External southwest elevation (2m scale)

YCY003 External southeast elevation (2m scale)

YCY004 External southeast elevation looking towards Coney Street (2m scale)

YCY005 External northeast elevation (2m scale)

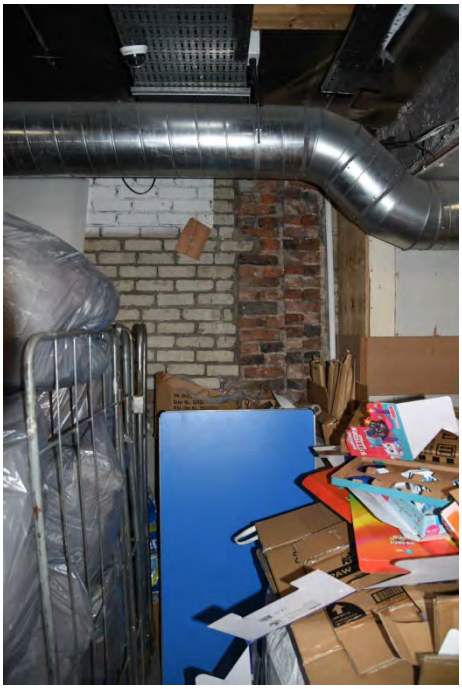
YCY006 Blocked opening in northeast elevation (2m scale)

YCY007 Blocked window openings in northeast elevation (2m scale)

YCY008 Upper part of northeast elevation with taking in door at first floor level

YCY009 Upper part of northeast elevation showing window openings

YCY010 Interior ground floor looking northwest (2m scale)

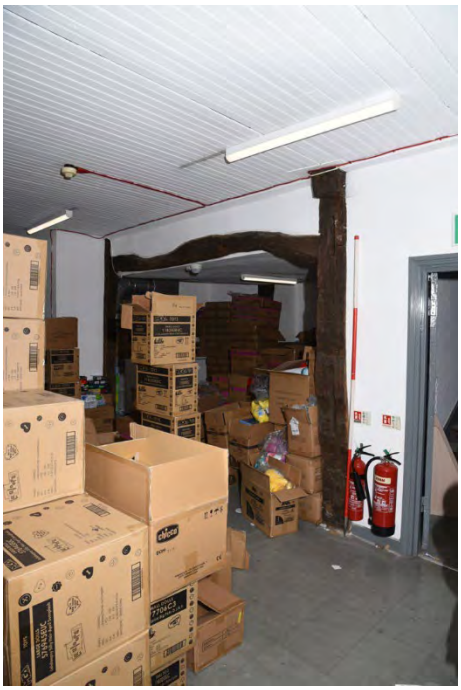


YCY011 Interior ground floor looking northeast showing wall scar (2m scale)

YCY012 Interior ground floor looking northwest (2m scale)

YCY013 Interior ground floor looking southeast showing 18th century stair (1m scale)

YCY014 Interior first floor looking east showing post B and wall plate (2m scale)



YCY015 Interior first floor looking east showing posts A and B and wall plate (2m scale)

YCY016 Interior first floor looking north east showing post B and wall plate (2m scale)

YCY017 Interior first floor looking north showing post B (2m scale)

YCY018 Interior first floor looking north east showing post A and wall plate (2m scale)

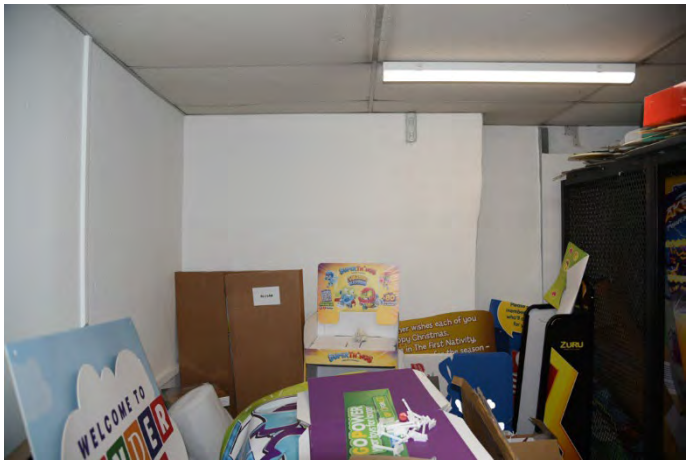
YCY019 Interior first floor looking southwest showing post A and wall plate

YCY020 Interior first floor looking northeast showing post C and wall plate

YCY021 Interior first floor looking south showing possible corner post C location

YCY022 Interior first floor looking northwest showing post A (left), post B (right) and wall plate

YCY023 Interior first floor looking north showing post position and boxed replacement bridging beam



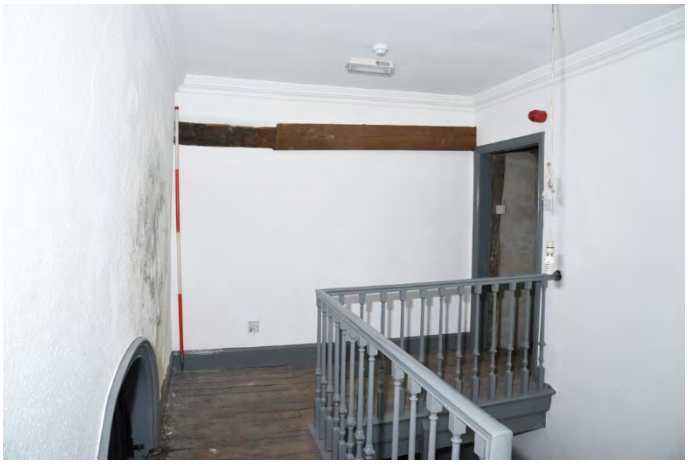
YCY024 Interior first floor looking southwest showing stack position and end wall

YCY025 Interior first floor looking southeast showing corbel with post above

YCY026 Interior first floor looking east showing corbel with post above

YCY027 Interior first floor looking southwest showing moulded bracket with small section of post above (2m scale)

YCY028 Interior first floor looking north showing stack position and end wall (2m scale)



YCY029 Interior second floor looking northwest showing wall plate with replaced section (right) (2m scale)

YCY030 Interior second floor looking southwest showing wall plate and studs (right) (2m scale)

YCY031 Interior second floor looking north showing wall plate, studs, arch brace and post D (right) (2m scale)

YCY032 Interior second floor looking northeast showing wall plate, arch brace and post D (left) and post F (right) (2m scale)

YCY033 Interior second floor looking south showing and post F (2m scale)

YCY034 Interior second floor looking south showing and post F (2m scale)

YCY035 Interior second floor looking northeast showing and post F (2m scale)

YCY036 Interior second floor looking northeast showing floor boards (1m scale)

YCY037 Interior second floor looking south showing roof structure

YCY038 Interior second floor looking west showing brace, wall plate and post E (2m scale)

YCY039 Interior second floor looking southwest (2m scale)

YCY040 Interior second floor looking west showing brace, wall plate, studs and post G (2m scale)

YCY041 Interior second floor looking northwest showing brace, wall plate, studs and post G (2m scale)

YCY042 Interior second floor looking northwest showing brace, wall plate, studs and post G (2m scale)

YCY043 Interior second floor looking northeast (2m scale)

YCY044 Interior second floor looking southeast showing brace, wall plate, studs and posts E (left) and D (right) (2m scale)

YCY045 Interior second floor looking east showing brace, wall plate, studs and posts E (left) and D (right) (2m scale)

YCY046 Interior second floor looking east showing brace, wall plate, studs and posts E (1m scale)

YCY047 In erior second floor looking south showing wall plate, stud and post D (1m scale)t

YCY048 Interior second floor looking west showing wall plate, arch brace, studs and post G (1m scale)

YCY049 Interior second floor looking south west showing southwest wall and collar roof trusses

YCY050 Interior second floor looking southwest showing southwest wall and collar roof trusses

YCY051 Interior second floor looking southeast showing common rafters

YCY052 Interior second floor looking south showing common rafters

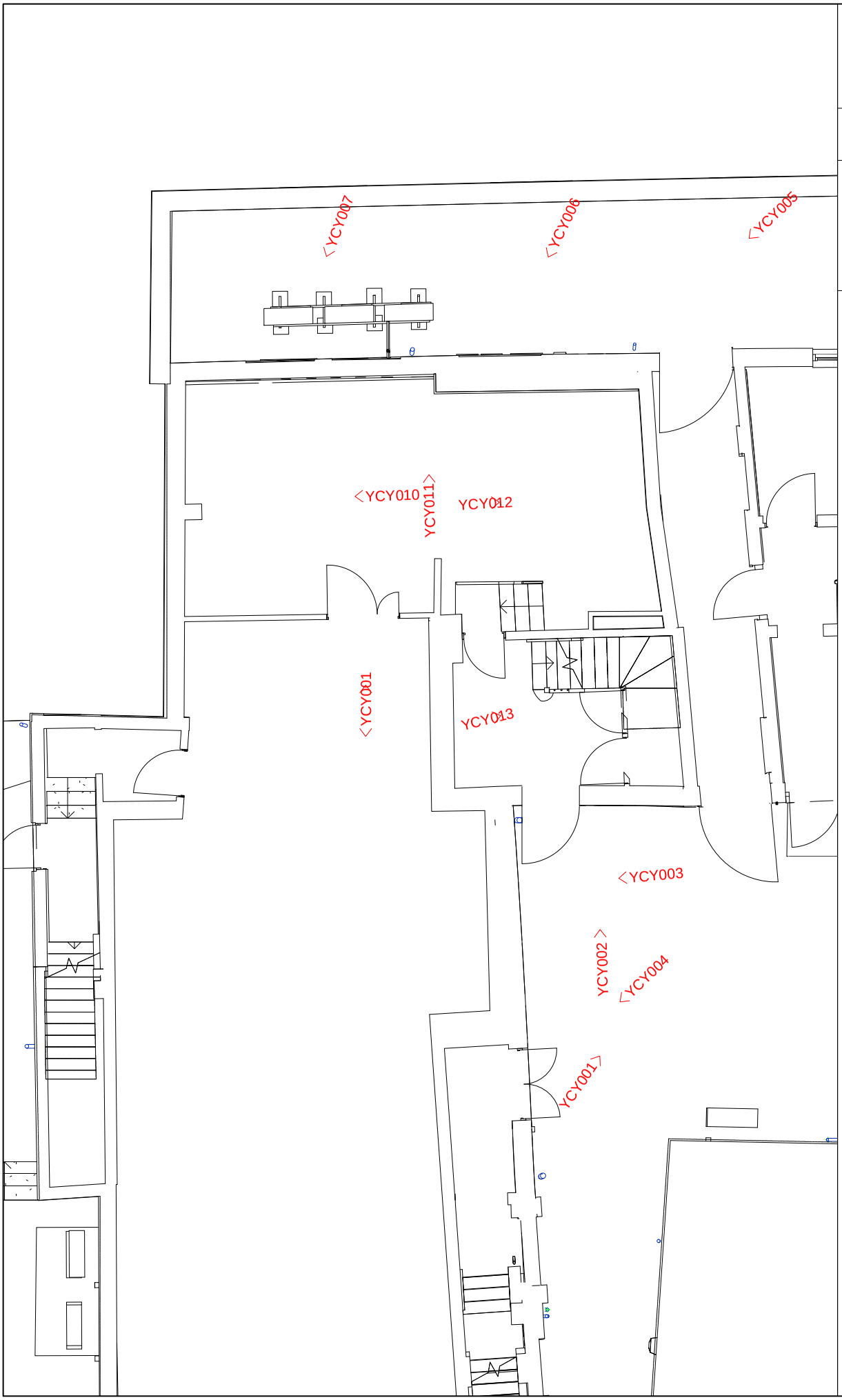
YCY053 Interior second floor looking northwest showing common rafters

YCY054 Interior second floor looking west showing common rafters

APPENDIX C PHOTOGRAPHIC LOCATION PLANS

Appendix C1

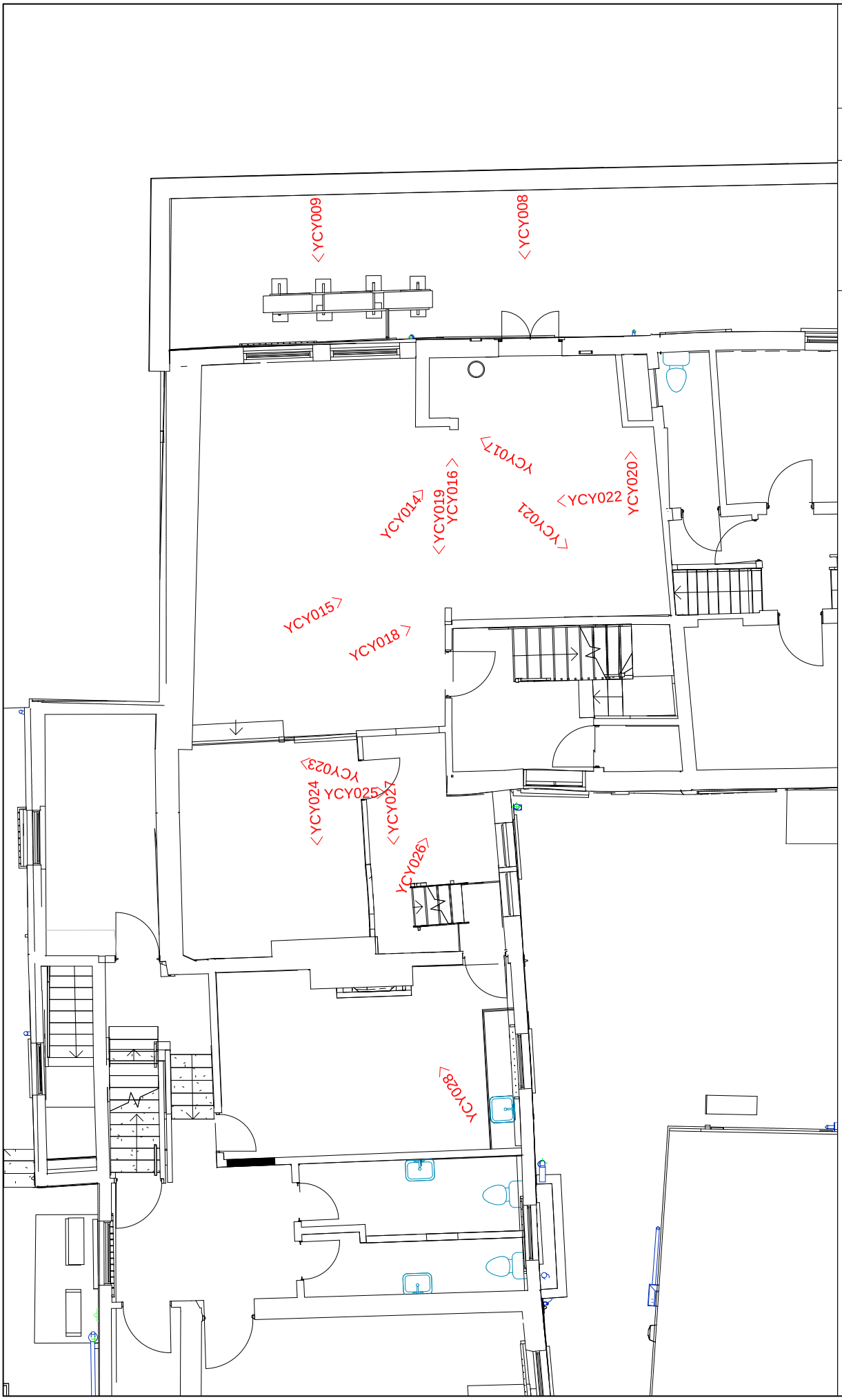
Scale 1:100



Ground-floor photographic location plan

Appendix C2

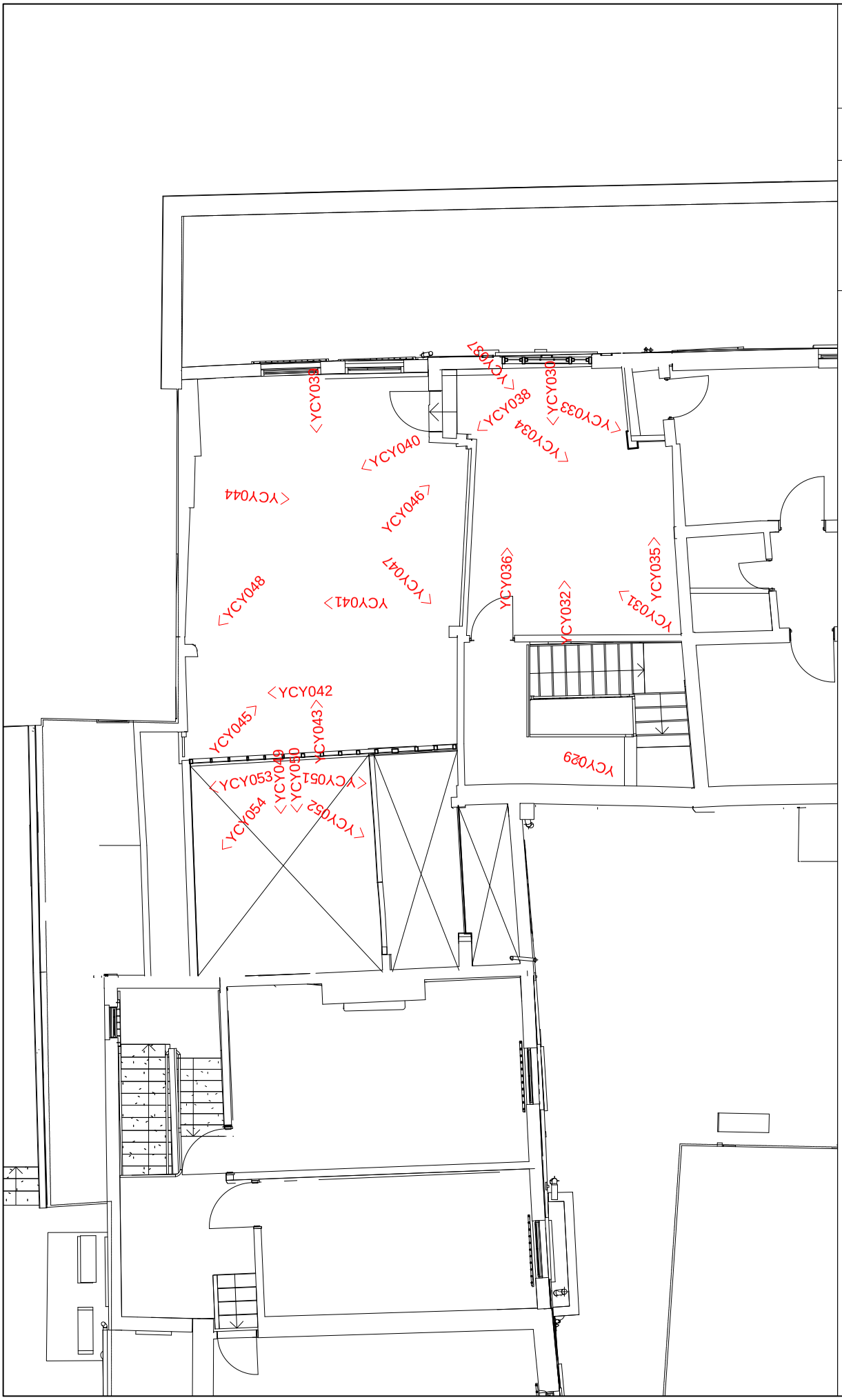
Scale 1:100



First-floor photographic location plan

Appendix C3

Scale 1:100



Second-floor photographic location plan

APPENDIX D TREE-RING DATING REPORT

ntrdl the nottingham tree-ring dating laboratory

36 CONEY STREET
YORK
NORTH YORKSHIRE

TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS

Alison Arnold and Robert Howard
NGR: SE 6023451819
January 2023

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TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM 36 CONEY STREET, YORK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ALISON ARNOLD
ROBERT HOWARD

SUMMARY

Analysis undertaken on a number of oak samples from timbers at this building resulted in the successful dating of seven of them. These are now known to have been felled in AD 1397–1420, with construction likely to have followed shortly after.
The surviving, historic roof trusses were unsuitable for tree-ring analysis due to their wide growth ring pattern.

TREE-RING ANALYSIS OF TIMBERS FROM 36 CONEY STREET, YORK, NORTH YORKSHIRE

INTRODUCTION

This Grade II* building is located on the north-east side of Coney Street in the city of York (Fig 1) and forms part of a terrace of three houses. Within this much altered building are the remains of a timber-framed building with exposed posts, beams and framing visible on the first and second floors (Figs 2 & 3).

PRINCIPLES OF TREE-RING DATING

Tree-ring dating relies on a few simple, but fundamental, principles. Firstly, as is commonly known, trees (particularly oak trees) grow by adding one, and only one, growth-ring to their circumference each, and every, year. Each new annual growth-ring is added to the outside of the previous year's growth just below the bark. The width of this annual growth-ring is largely, though not exclusively, determined by the weather conditions during the growth period (roughly March to September). In general, good conditions produce wider rings and poor conditions produce narrower rings. Thus, over the lifetime of a tree, the annual growth-rings display a climatically determined pattern. Furthermore, and importantly, all trees growing in the same area at the same time will be influenced by the same growing conditions and the annual growth-rings of all of them will respond in a similar, though not identical, way.

Secondly, because the weather over any number of consecutive years is unique, so too is the growth pattern of the tree. The pattern of a short period of growth, 20 or 30 consecutive years, might conceivably be repeated two or even three times in the last one thousand years. A short pattern might also be repeated at different time periods in different parts of the country because of differences in regional micro-climates. It is less likely, however, that such problems would occur with the pattern of a longer period of growth, that is, anything in excess of 60 years or so. In essence, a short period of growth, anything less than 40 rings, is not reliable, and the longer the period of time under comparison the better.

The third principle of tree-ring dating is that, until the early-to mid-nineteenth century, builders of timber-framed houses usually obtained all the wood needed for a given structure by felling the necessary trees in a single operation from one patch of woodland or from closely adjacent woods. Furthermore, and contrary to popular belief, the timber was used "green" and without seasoning, and there was very little long-term storage as in timber-yards of today. This fact has been well established from a number of studies where tree-ring dating has been undertaken in conjunction with

documentary studies. Thus, establishing the felling date for a group of timbers gives a very precise indication of the date of their use in a building.

Tree-ring dating relies on obtaining the growth pattern of trees from sample timbers of unknown date by measuring the width of the annual growth-rings. This is done to a tolerance of 1/100 of a millimetre. The growth patterns of these samples of unknown date are then compared with a series of reference patterns or chronologies, the date of each ring of which is known. When a sample "cross-matches" repeatedly at the same date against a series of different relevant reference chronologies the sample can be said to be dated. The degree of cross-matching, that is the measure of similarity between sample and reference is denoted by a "*t*-value"; the higher the value the greater the similarity. The greater the similarity the greater is the probability that the patterns of the samples and references have been produced by growing under the same conditions at the same time. The statistically accepted fully reliable minimum *t*-value is 3.5.

However, rather than attempt to date each sample individually it is usual to first compare all the samples from a single building, or phases of a building, with one another, and attempt to cross-match each one with all the others from the same phase or building. When samples from the same phase do cross-match with each other they are combined at their matching positions to form what is known as a "site chronology". As with any set of data, this has the effect of reducing the anomalies of any one individual (brought about in the case of tree-rings by some non-climatic influence) and enhances the overall climatic signal. As stated above, it is the climate that gives the growth pattern its distinctive pattern. The greater the number of samples in a site chronology the greater is the climatic signal of the group and the weaker is the non-climatic input of any one individual.

Furthermore, combining samples in this way to make a site chronology usually has the effect of increasing the time-span that is under comparison. As also mentioned above, the longer the period of growth under consideration, the greater the certainty of the cross-match. Any site chronology with less than about 55 rings is generally too short for satisfactory analysis.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

A total of ten samples was taken from *in-situ* timbers at this building. Each sample was given the code YRK-P and numbered 01–10. The location of all samples was noted at the time of sampling and has been marked on Figures 4 and 5. Further details relating to these samples can be found in Table 1. Posts have been numbered from north to south (second floor) and west to east (first floor). The timbers of the roof were assessed for their suitability for tree-ring dating but were found to utilise very fast

grown trees which would have had too few growth ring (<30) for secure matching against the reference chronoloigies.

ANALYSIS & RESULTS

At this stage one of the samples (YRK-P04) was found to have too few growth rings for secure dating to be a possibility and so was rejected prior to measurement. The other nine samples were then prepared by sanding and polishing and their growth-ring widths measured. These growth-ring widths were then compared with each other at which point seven samples were found to match.

These seven samples were then combined at the relative offset positions to form YRKPSQ01, a site sequence of 95 rings (Fig 6). This site sequence was compared against a series of relevant reference chronologies for oak where it was found to match securely and consistently at a first-measured ring date of AD 1302 and a last-measured ring date of AD 1396. The evidence for this dating is given by the *t*-values in Table 2.

Attempts to date the remaining two samples by individually comparing them against the reference chronologies were unsuccessful and these remain undated.

INTERPRETATION

Tree-ring analysis has resulted in the successful dating of seven samples, all of which have the heartwood/sapwood boundary. In all cases, the date of this ring is broadly contemporary and suggestive of a single felling. The average heartwood/sapwood boundary ring date is AD 1380 which, using the estimate that 95% of mature oak trees in this region have between 15 and 40 sapwood rings, allows an estimated felling date to be calculated for the timbers represented to within the range AD 1397–1420. This felling date range allows for sample YRK-P06 having a last-measured ring date of AD 1396, with incomplete sapwood.

DISCUSSION

Prior to analysis being undertaken on these timbers it was unclear as to the earliest origins of this building. It is now known to utilise timber felled at the very end of the fourteenth/early-fifteenth century in its construction, and is therefore, thought likely to date to this period.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Laboratory would like to thank North Star (Global) Limited for commissioning the work and Paul Brown of Alder Brown Limited for arranging access for sampling. Thanks are also given to Jonathan Clarke of FAS for his invaluable *on-site* advice and for providing the drawings used to locate samples.

Table 1: Details of samples taken from timbers from 36 Coney Street, York, North Yorkshire

Sample number	Sample location	*Total rings	**Sapwood rings	First measured ring date (AD)	Last heartwood ring date (AD)	Last measured ring date (AD)
Second floor						
YRK-P01	West post 2	73	h/s	1306	1378	1378
YRK-P02	East post 2	76	11	1320	1384	1395
YRK-P03	East wallplate	81	h/s	1302	1382	1382
YRK-P04	West wallplate	NM	--	----	----	----
YRK-P05	Stud south of west post 2	52	--	----	----	----
YRK-P06	East post 1	95	20	1302	1376	1396
First floor						
YRK-P07	North post 3	71	06	1314	1378	1384
YRK-P08	South post 3	72	h/s	1311	1382	1382
YRK-P09	North post 4	67	h/s	1311	1377	1377
YRK-P10	Bridging beam	71	h/s	----	----	----

Table 2: Results of the cross-matching of site sequence YRKPSQ01 against the reference chronologies at a first-ring date of AD 1302 and a last-measured ring date of AD 1396

Reference chronology	*t*-value	Span of chronology	Reference
Church Cottage, York, North Yorkshire	5.7	1239–1315	Arnold and Howard 2013
2 Coffee Yard (Barley Hall), York, North Yorkshire	5.3	1200–1357	Howard *et al* 1992
St Peter's Church, Claybrooke Parva, Leicestershire	5.2	1271–1416	Arnold 2003
Merchant Taylor's Hall, York, North Yorkshire	5.1	1240–1413	Howard *et al* 1992
Windsor Castle Round Tower, Berkshire	5.1	1231–1354	Miles and Haddon-Reece 2003
New Inn, Oxford, Oxfordshire	5.1	1303–1381	Haddon-Reece and Miles 1996
Bedern Hall, York, North Yorkshire	4.9	1231–1369	Hillam 1982
Chethams Library, Manchester	4.7	1185–1428	Tyers 2002
Nappa Hall, Askrigg, North Yorkshire	4.7	1300–1476	Arnold and Howard 2013
Upper Spon Street, Coventry, West Midlands	4.7	1306–1454	Miles and Worthington 2000

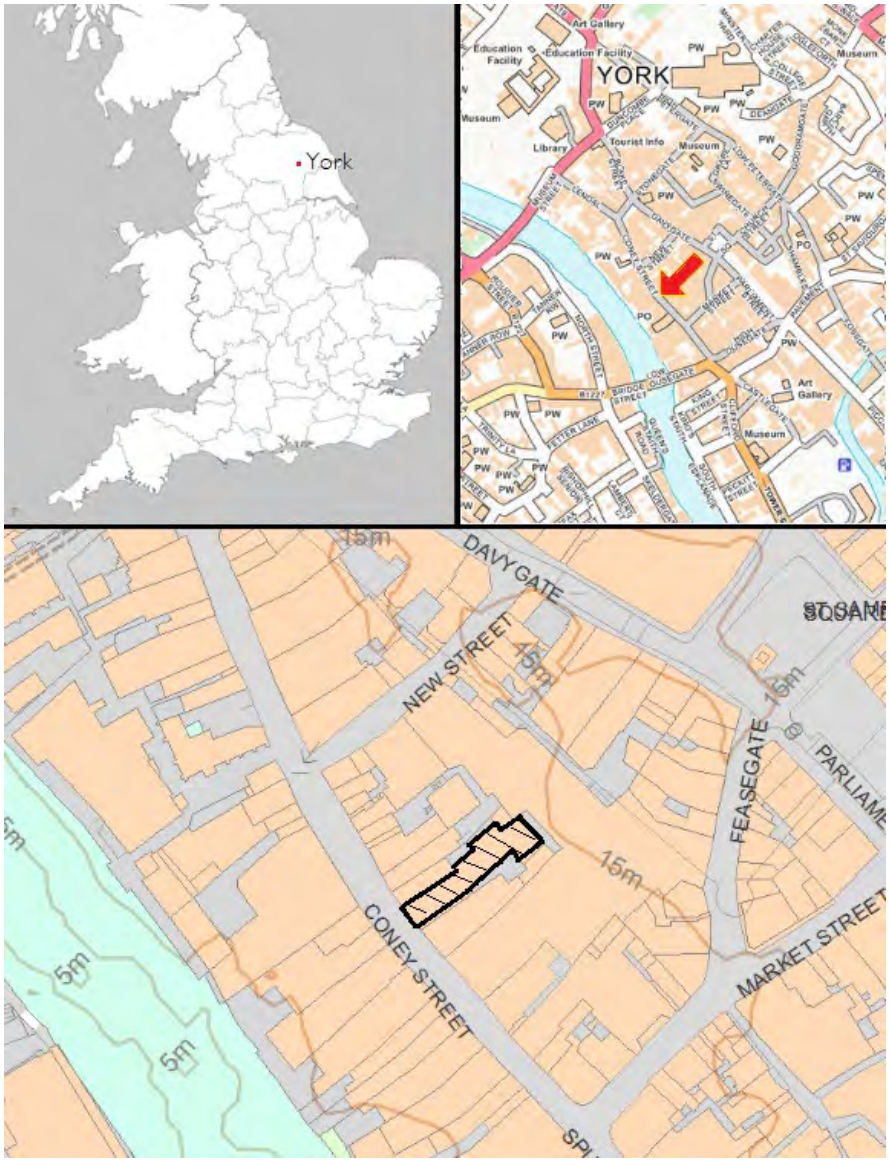

Figure 1: Maps to show the location of 36 Coney Street, in York, North Yorkshire, hashed. Scale: top right 1:10,000, bottom 1:1250 © Crown Copyright and database right 2022. All rights reserved. Ordnance Survey Licence number 100024900.)

Figure 2: Posts and framing at second-floor level, photograph taken from the north

Figure 3: Posts and bridging beam at first-floor level, photograph taken from the north

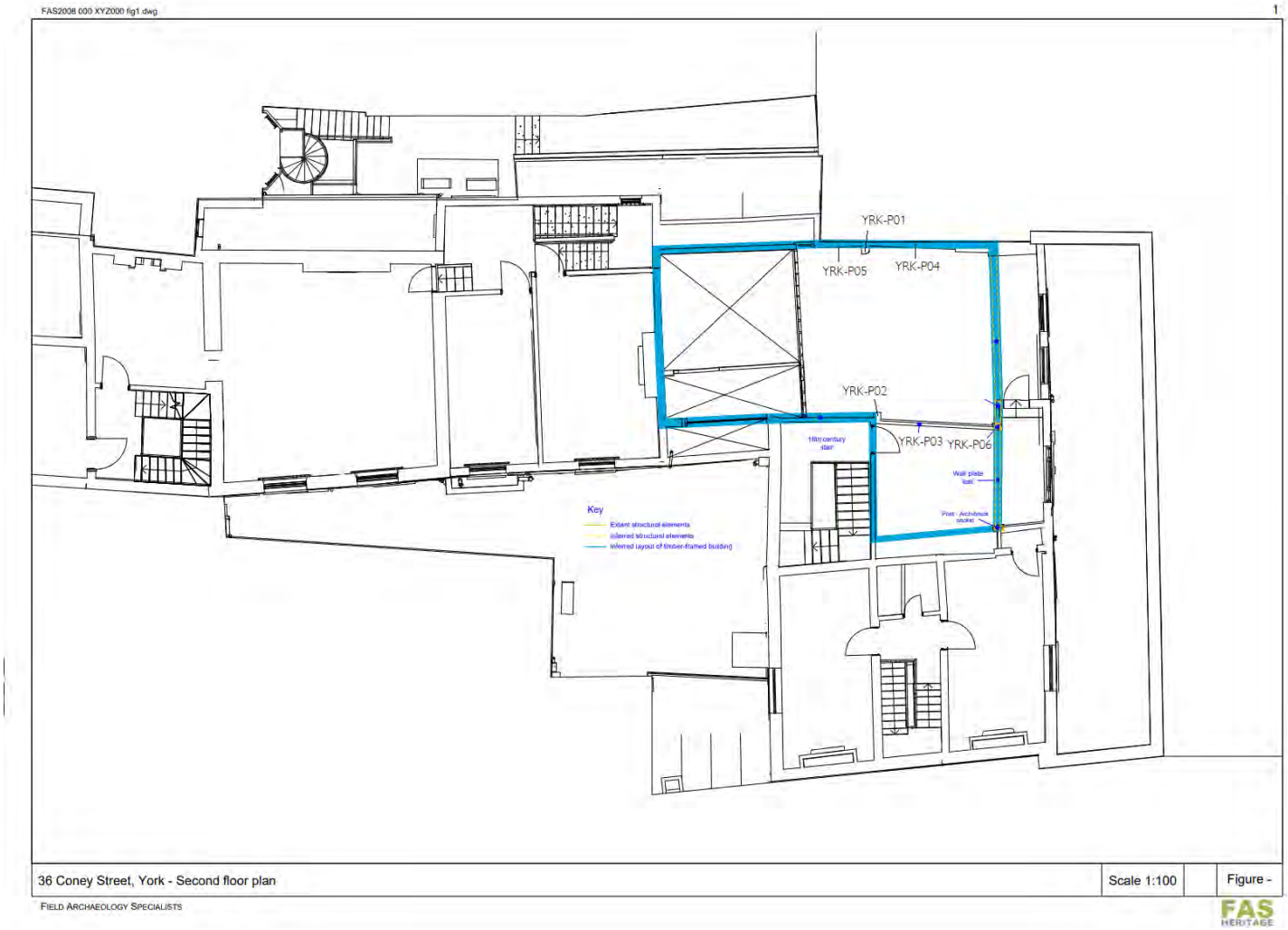

Figure 4: Second-floor plan, showing the location of samples YRK-P01–06 (FAS)

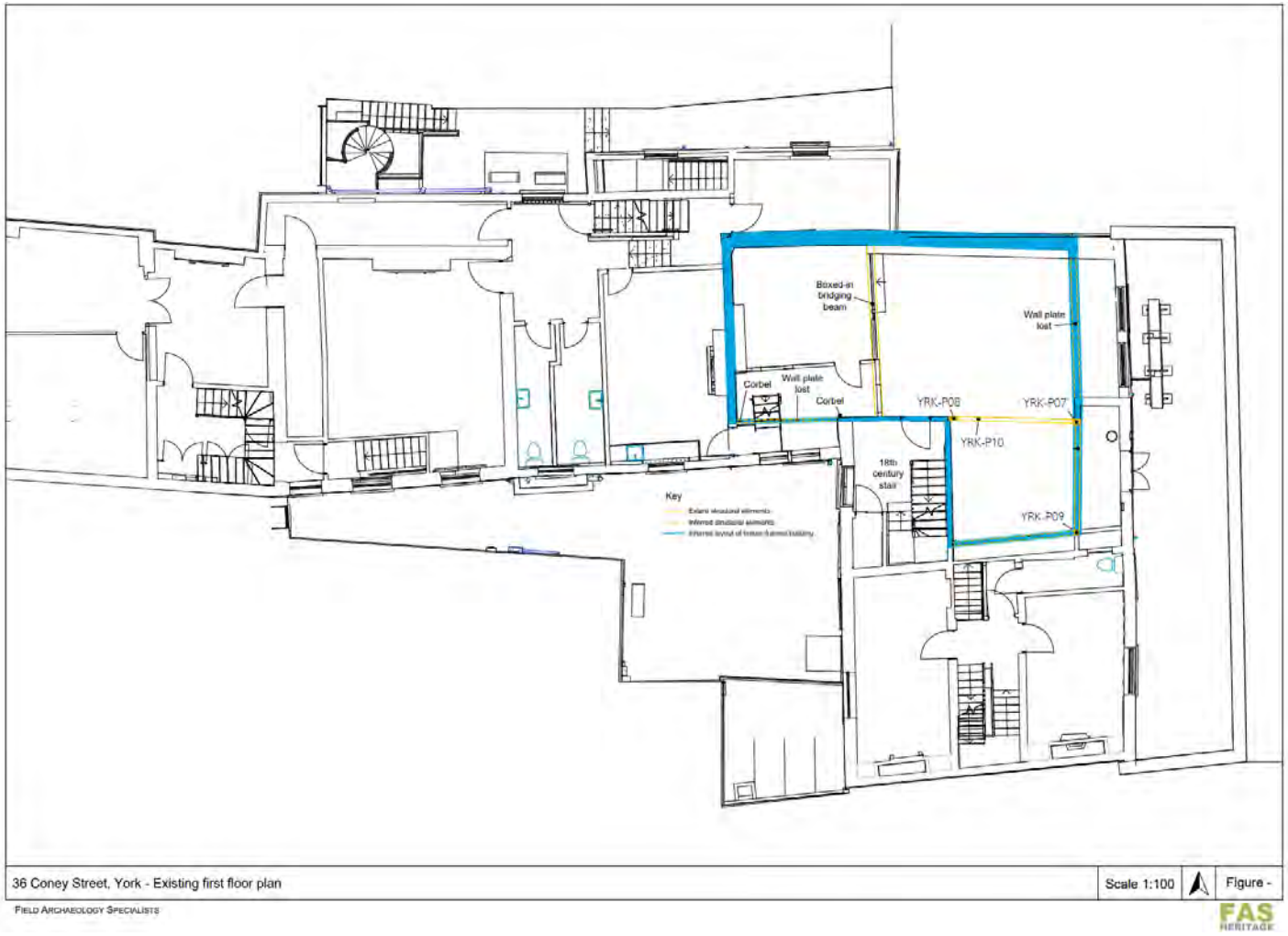

Figure 5: First-floor plan, showing the location of samples YRK-P07–10 (FAS)

Figure 6: Bar diagram of samples in site sequence YRKPSQ01