

<b>SITE</b>	3-7 Leake Street		
<b>CLIENT NAME</b>	Northern Powergrid		
<b>YAT PROJECT #</b>	Ops Notice 23021	<b>YAT REPORT #</b>	2023/48
<b>MUSEUM ACCESSION #</b>	N/A	<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	SE 61194 51385
<b>PLANNING REFERENCE #</b>	N/A	<b>AAI OPS NOTICE #</b>	23021

## INTRODUCTION

A watching brief on works to locate an electrical cable was undertaken by York Archaeology on behalf of O'Connor Utilities on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 at 3-7 Leake Street, York, NGR SE 61194 51385 (Figure 1).

Leake Street is within the York Area of Archaeological Interest (AAI) (CYC 2023) and the conservation area of Walmgate (CYC 2012; CYC 2023). The area surrounding Leake Street is believed to contain remnants of 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman occupation, Anglo-Scandinavian settlement and possibly 8<sup>th</sup> century medieval industry (RCHMY 1962; Raine 1955; Ottaway 2011, 254-255; MacRae 2013).

The objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological deposits or structures exposed by the groundworks. Excavation reached a depth of 0.66m below ground level (BGL).

The superficial geology of the site was composed of clay, sands and gravels of the Vale of York Formation, deposited by glacial activity approximately 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The bedrock is of the Sherwood Sandstone Group formed approximately 237-272 million years ago in the Triassic and Permian Periods (BGS 2023).

## METHODOLOGY

A 1.7m wide by 2.14m long trench, aligned north-south, was excavated in the footpath outside 3-7 Leake Street. An electrical saw was utilised to remove the road surface. Following this excavation works were carried out using a mechanical breaker attached to a rubber tracked mini-digger, under continuous archaeological supervision.

All deposits, structures and features encountered were recorded in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' (CIfA) *Code of Conduct* (2022) and the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (2020a; 2020b). The work also followed the York Archaeology fieldwork recording manual (YAT 2009).

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A previous watching brief undertaken in 2005 by York Archaeological Trust at the corner of Lawrence Street and Leake Street uncovered a mid-Bronze Age cremation urn, the only prehistoric activity discovered thus far within the historic core of York. Some Roman activity was evidenced by pottery found on the southern side of Lawrence Street and the eastern side of the street showed evidence of possible 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman occupation (MacRae 2013).

Roman road 2 (RCHME 1 1962, 1-4) runs through the area of Walmgate and Fossgate (Character Area 15, Bhalla et al. 2011 315-327). This road runs through Lawrence Street and passes Leake Street (Ottaway 2011, 254). The road approaches the city from the east and enters the legionary boundary gate known as *Porta Principalis Sinistra*, located in what is now King's Square. The Roman road continued to be a principal thoroughfare during the medieval period (RCHME 1 1962; Ottaway 2011; Baxter 2012).

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The area surrounding Leake Street is believed to contain remnants of 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman occupation and later medieval industry (possibly 8<sup>th</sup> century). Little archaeological evidence remains below ground in the more developed sections of this street today. Nevertheless, evidence of Roman, Anglo-Scandinavian and later medieval remains has been encountered in previous excavations, including timbered structures, a burial and pottery fragments (Ottaway 2011, RCHMY 1, Baxter 2013; Raine 1955).

Within the Leake Street area, evidence of possible Roman clay quarries has previously been seen (Oakey 1989; MacRae 2013). In addition, Anglo-Scandinavian timber buildings were encountered further north, beneath Heron House, alongside which 8<sup>th</sup> century pottery sherds were found (MAP 2009; MacRae 2013).

Further evidence of medieval pits and linear features on the south side of Lawrence Street, and the remains of later medieval building structures uncovered at the corner of Lawrence Street/Leake Street was interpreted as evidence of continuous use of this area since the Anglo-Scandinavian period (MacRae 2013).

Decline in river trade and the developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the growth of a busy commercial centre and the slow truncation of the Walmgate/Fossgate quarter.

## RESULTS

Four deposits reaching approximately 0.66m in depth were observed. The very base of the excavation showed a dark greyish-brown loose sand and rubble backfill layer (1005) which was observed across the trench. Above this was a thin, light grey concrete deposit (1004) which acted as a bedding layer upon which rested a brick structure {1006} and its concrete footing {1007} (see below).

At the northern end of the trench, a row of 11 visible glazed red bricks abutting and bonded to a concrete footing was discovered {1006}, which was 0.90m in length and was located at a depth of 0.40m BGL (Plate 1). One of these glazed bricks displayed the brickmaker's mark which read: 'Cliff and Sons. Wortley-Leeds' (Plate 2). This dates this brickwork to the late 1800s and identifies the bricks as being manufactured at Wortley, Leeds, at a brickworks' factory founded by Joseph Cliff in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (Sallery & Kitchings; Lassco 2023).

An electric cable was discovered at the southern end of the trench cutting through the dark grey sand rubble deposit (1005), and was found to be covered by ceramic tiles {1008} (Plate 3),

The brick structure and cable trench were overlain by a demolition dump deposit (1003) which covered the extent of the trench. This was a dark brownish-grey silty rubble deposit which was observed at a depth of 0.15m, over which was a hardcore deposit (1002) with a thickness of 0.10m. Above this layer was a dark grey tarmac layer (1001) with a thickness of 0.08m overlain by the pavement surface {1000}.

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**CONCLUSIONS**

The deposits are interpreted as post-medieval and modern construction layers. The brick structure can be more specifically dated to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Due to the nature of the excavation the bricks remained in situ.

The excavation did not reach the natural geology. No further archaeological finds, deposits or features were encountered.

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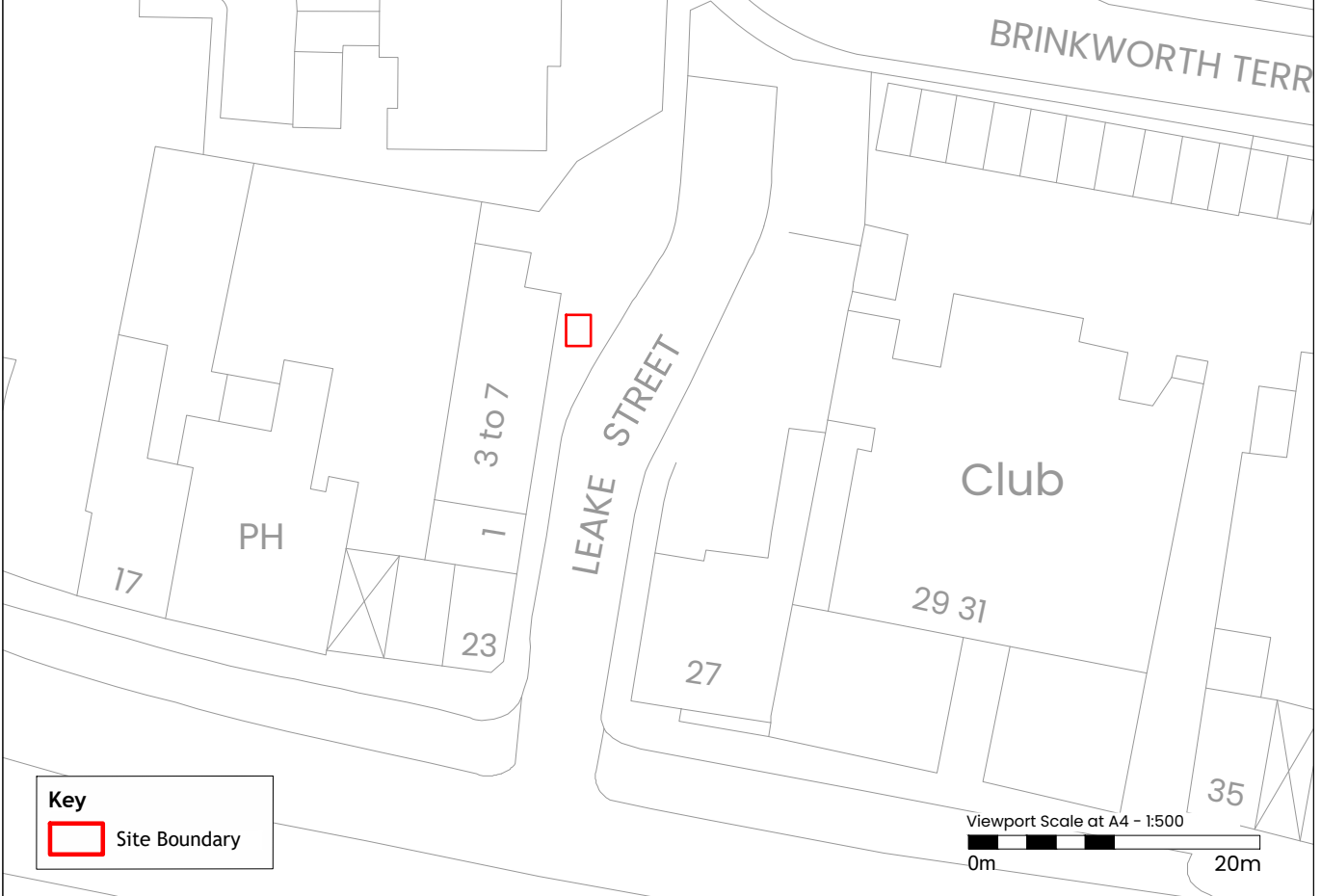
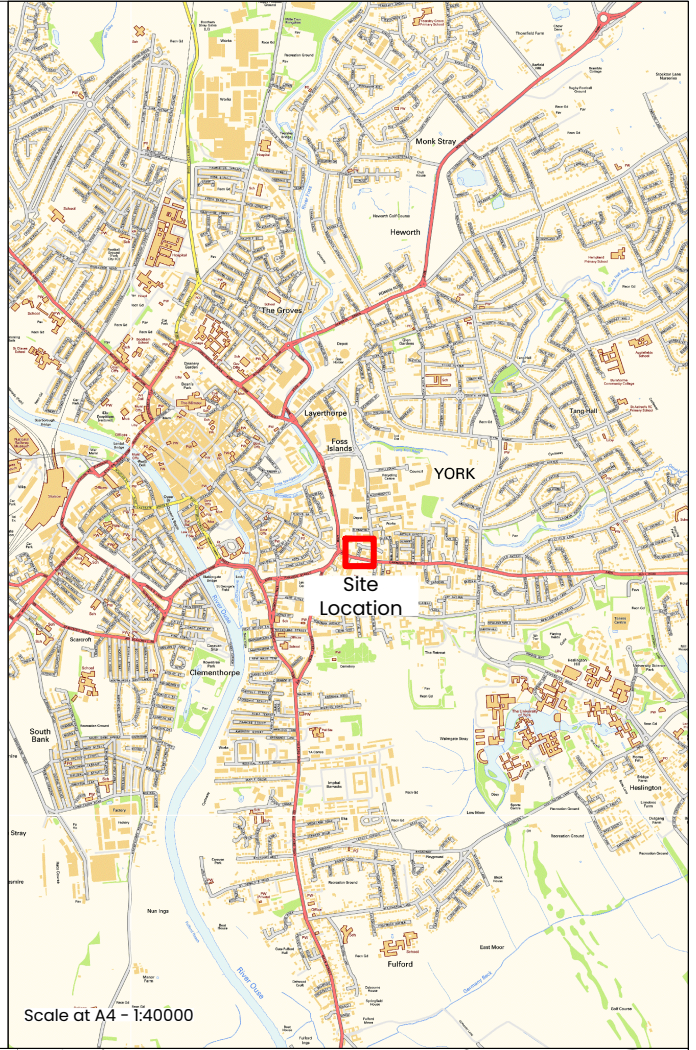
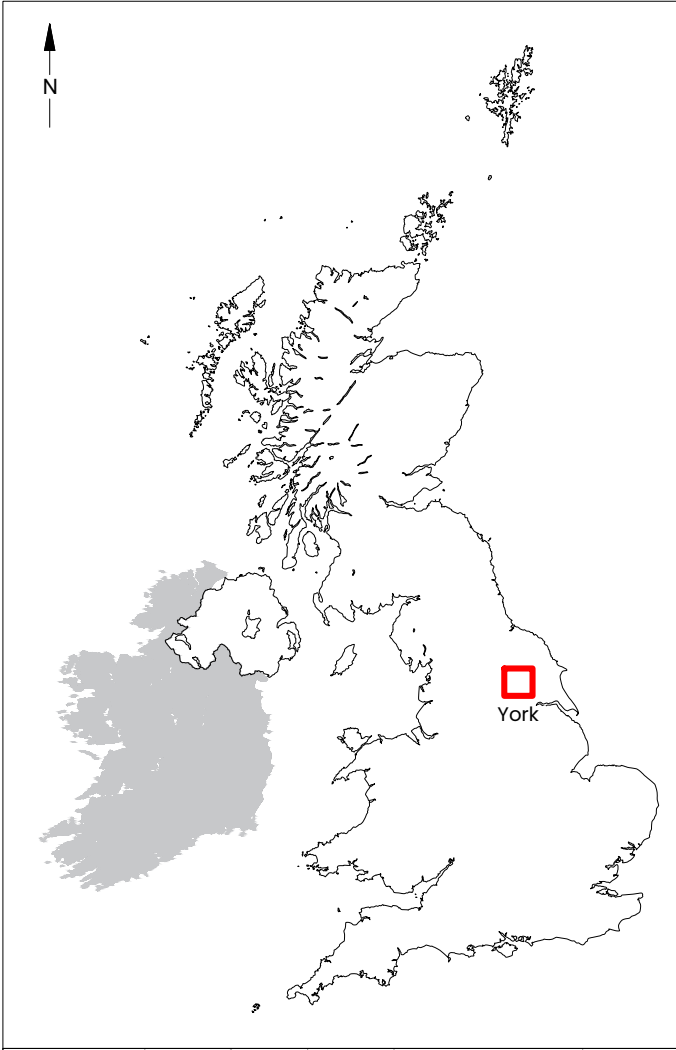


Figure 01 - Location Map  
23021 - 3-7 Leake Street, York

Scale at A4 - Varies  
Drawn by BP

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Plate 1: Plan of Brick structure facing north



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Plate 2: Brick displaying the brickmarker's mark:  
Cliff & Sons / Wortley-Leeds



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Plate 3: Ceramic Tiles covering Electric Cable



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