



Minster Yard, York
Archaeological Monitoring and Recording Report

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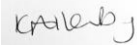
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KEY DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Project name	Minster Yard, York
Type of project	Monitoring and recording
YA code	9599
National Grid Reference	SE 60341 52307
OASIS ID	Yorkarch3-527408
Planning Reference	Operations notice related to 22/00803/FUL
Client	Northern Powergrid
Report version no. and status	V1 Interim report for client comments
Author Illustrator Editor	P Howlett B Price K Allenby
Report approved by date	 28/10/2024
Report number date	YA/2024/185 15/08/2024
Filename	YA_9599_Minster_Yard_York_ON_Report_V1

ABBREVIATIONS

AOD	Above Ordnance Datum
AF	Architectural Fragment
BGL	Below Ground Level
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CYC	City of York Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
QDARS	QGIS-based Digital Archaeological Recording System
WSI	Written Scheme of Investigation
YA	York Archaeology
YAT	York Archaeological Trust

SUMMARY

Between the 15th and 17th July 2024 York Archaeology (YA) conducted a programme of archaeological monitoring at Minster Yard, York, to the south of the entrance to the Minster Deanery (YO1 7JQ, NGR SE 60341 52309; Figures 1 and 2).

The work by Northern Powergrid involved the excavation of a trench outside the Deanery entrance in order to install electrical cables to link a service conduit at the Deanery entrance with existing electrical services below Minster Yard at the south-eastern end of the trench. This work forms part of the infrastructure requirements for the re-development of the Deanery garages into the Heritage Quad.

The recording and removal of any archaeological deposits was undertaken by York Archaeology on behalf of Northern Powergrid in response to an Operations Notice submitted to City of York Council. This complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023, 211) and the stipulations designated under Part 2 of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, as the site lies within the City Centre Area of York's Archaeological Area of Importance (AAI).

This report presents an overview of the historical and archaeological background of the area, the results of the monitoring work and a specialist assessment of building materials recovered.

The formation depth of the trench did not extend into geological deposits and the trench had no evidence of in situ structural archaeology of Roman or early medieval date. However, the trench did reveal a sequence of archaeological deposits that appeared to range from the post-medieval period through to the modern day. An earlier post-medieval cobbled surface, residual medieval magnesian limestone architectural fragments, a precinct boundary wall and a possible walled and brick-surfaced walkway were recorded.

This monitoring work provides evidence of the past layout of this area of Minster Yard which could be compared with historical records for this area to contribute to an understanding of its development.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 Between 15th and 17th July 2024 York Archaeology (YA) conducted a programme of archaeological monitoring at Minster Yard, York, to the south of the entrance to the Minster Deanery (YO1 7JQ, NGR SE 60341 52309; Figures 1 and 2).
- 1.1.2 The work, undertaken by Northern Powergrid, involved the excavation of a trench in the cobbled roadway outside the Deanery gates in order to install electrical cables linking a service conduit at the Deanery entrance with existing electrical services below Minster Yard at the south-eastern end of the trench.
- 1.1.3 This work forms part of the infrastructure requirements for the re-development of the Deanery garages into the Heritage Quad which will repurpose existing garages to provide facilities for the Minster's masons, scaffolders and gardeners, and provide residential accommodation for apprentices, exchange visitors and trainees.
- 1.1.4 As a condition of the Heritage Quad planning application (22/00803/FUL) archaeological monitoring of the works was required. The recording and removal of any archaeological deposits was undertaken by YA on behalf of Northern Powergrid in response to an Operations Notice submitted to City of York Council (CYC).
- 1.1.5 This complies with the York Minster Neighbourhood Plan (Policy C3) Where development proposals that affect Scheduled Monuments must have Scheduled Monument Consent. This also complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023, 211) and the stipulations designated under Part 2 of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, as the site lies within the City Centre Area of York's Archaeological Area of Importance (AAI) (CYC 2024; MacRae and Sydes 2024).
- 1.1.6 The monitoring work was required because the site is located within the York Minster Cathedral Precinct Scheduled Ancient Monument and contains curtilage listed as part of the Grade II Listed Deanery and the Grade II* Listed 2 Minster Court (RCHMY). The site is also within an area of archaeological importance within the boundaries of the Roman fortress. The area has seen continuous development since that time and, as a consequence, any intrusive structural or service groundworks may affect important archaeological deposits.
- 1.1.7 This report presents an overview of the historical and archaeological background of the area, the results of this monitoring and investigation, and the specialist assessment of building materials recovered. The work provides evidence of the past layout of this area of the Minster yard which could be compared with historical records for this area to contribute to an understanding of its development.

2 SITE BACKGROUND

2.1 Location, Geology and Topography

- 2.1.1 The site is located at the north-western end of the cobbled road surface of Minster Yard on the eastern side of the road's turning circle (NGR SE 60341 52309; Figures 1 & 2). The site is bounded by the gated entrance to the Deanery to the immediate north, with Dean's Park to the west and south. The access road to the Deanery garages is to the north-east with the buildings of Minster Court to the south-east and York Minster situated 65m to the south. The height at the south-west end of the alleyway is c. 15m AOD and the topography of the site is generally flat.
- 2.1.2 The underlying bedrock of the site as mapped by the British Geological Survey (BGS 2024) is of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, which comprises sandstone formed in the Triassic and Permian periods (approximately 237 to 272mya). Superficial deposits mapped by BGS are of the Vale of York Formation, which is mainly glacial till with interbedded sand, gravel and laminated clay, which was formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago in the Quaternary Period.

2.2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Prehistoric

- 2.2.1 No definitive evidence of prehistoric activity has been found in the area; residual flints were observed during the Minster rescue excavations, as well as a coin of 91 BC from a 4th century context (Phillips and Heywood 1995).

Romano-British (AD 71- AD 410)

- 2.2.2 The Site is situated within the north-eastern quarter of the Roman legionary fortress, halfway between the north-eastern corner of the fortress and the site of the *Porta Decumana* gateway. The Roman fortress was founded in AD 71 on a site that had been cleared and levelled to depths of 12.19m – 12.80m AOD (Phillips and Heywood 1995). The Site is located close to the location of the headquarters building (*principia*) which consisted of a large hall (*basilica*) and two wings from the basilica around a courtyard. The *principia* stood at a T-junction formed by the *Via Principalis*, along the line of modern Petergate and the *Via Praetoria*, down modern Stonegate (Ottaway 2011, 32).
- 2.2.3 Between 1967 and 1972 over 50 rescue excavations were undertaken during works to save York Minster from subsidence, approximately 50m from the Site (Phillips and Heywood 1995). As a result of these excavations, the sequence of the construction of the Roman fortress within the modern-day Minster precinct was observed. The barracks were constructed in timber in the first century, followed by the layout of streets and the construction of the *principia* in stone in the 2nd century (Phillips 1995, 33). The *principia* was reconstructed in stone at some time after the late 1st/early 2nd century (Phillips 1995, 33). There was a lack of evidence of activity in the 3rd century, perhaps due to prosperity, decline or the out-posting of a legion (Carver 1995, 184). During the 4th century there was evidence of major reconstruction and redesign (Carver 1995, 184); in the earlier part of the century repairs and alterations are evidenced in every structure, while in the latter half of the century evidence for a change in ideology is evidenced by ritual arrangements in the basilica as well as modified rooms and heating facilities within the barracks. This has been interpreted as a change from a more utilitarian arrangement of space to 'urban villas' (Carver 1995, 184).
- 2.2.4 Excavations undertaken in the 1980s within the former medieval Archbishop's chapel, now part of the York Minster Library, encountered Roman foundations and walls at a depth of 12.77m AOD

(Phillips 1995, 160). The sequence of building observed in the Minster Library excavations consisted of an initial timber construction phase during the late 1st century with a reconstruction phase in stone, followed by a decline in the third century. It was refurbished in the late 4th century (Phillips and Heywood 1995).

- 2.2.5 Further excavations in 1995 for the extension of the Minster Library encountered Roman archaeology which was interpreted as barracks and a minor street. Again, an initial phase of timber construction of the barracks was evidenced from c AD 71, being replaced in stone c AD 120 with evidence of occupation into the late 4th century before a period of decline and abandonment (Garner-Lahire 2016).
- 2.2.6 Roman wall foundations were observed elsewhere in the Minster precinct during excavations at Purey Cust lodge, 225m south-west of the Site. A length of wall was uncovered which was interpreted as an internal sub-division of a barrack block building, the top of which was located at 14.29m AOD. The wall was comprised of several different builds suggesting various phases of the building's use, the lowest located at 14.05m AOD (Antoni 2014).

Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian (410-1066 AD)

- 2.2.7 The Anglian cathedral is documented as being founded in AD 627 at the north-eastern corner of the Roman Fortress on the site of the present cathedral precinct. Its exact location is currently unknown, but a topographic analysis has proposed that it is situated within the grounds of Dean's Park (Norton 1998). The sequence of post-Roman archaeology has been widely debated over the years due to the fragmentary evidence for this period.
- 2.2.8 As a result of the York Minster rescue excavations, Martin Carver (Carver 1995, 194) proposed three models for the use of the area in the post-Roman period:
- Model A: no sub-Roman or Anglian phase in the area, with only Late Roman and Anglo-Scandinavian activity occurring.
 - Model B: the area was used for ruralised activities at the end of Roman government, with the basilica functioning as a market hall or farm, and during the 6th to 8th centuries the area was largely abandoned.
 - Model C: there was continuous activity in the 5th-9th centuries.

The results of excavations at the Minster Library conformed most to 'Model B'.

- 2.2.9 Abandonment of the area in the Anglian period has been evidenced within the vicinity of the Site in the form of deposits of 'dark earth' including at Purey Cust, the Minster Library and the most recent excavations at the Minster, the latter containing a 9th century sceat (Garner-Lahire 2016).
- 2.2.10 Excavations undertaken in 2012 during development works for a new visitor attraction in the Minster undercroft revealed elements of a possible post-Roman or early Anglian post-built structure (Milsted 2012). During the excavations for the Minster Library extension, features were observed cutting into the lowest level of the dark earth deposit, which was interpreted as activity in the immediate post-Roman period (Garner-Lahire 2016). In the most recent excavations at Purey Cust, the Roman barrack block was observed to have been in use until the 9th century, evidenced by a sequence of trampled earth occupation floors built up against the wall between the 4th and 9th centuries. The wall was then sealed in the 10th century by a building of possible pre-conquest date (Antoni 2014).

2.2.11 In the Anglo-Scandinavian period, the area was used for light industry, the activities zoned by the remaining stub-walls of the remains of the basilica (Phillips and Heywood 1995). During the most recent works at the Minster an 11th century cist burial was revealed (Milsted 2010).

Later Medieval (1066 – 1600 AD)

2.2.12 Following the Norman conquest a new cathedral was built on the site of the present-day Minster by Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux (1070-1100). Between 1089 and 1092 reforms were made by the Archbishop, establishing a dean and canons supported by individual prebends, meaning a formal distinction between the properties and privileges belonging to the Minster and clergy, and those belonging to the Archbishop (Norton 1998).

2.2.13 Subsequent Archbishops of York in the 12th and 13th centuries refurbished the cathedral and built a palace to the north, located to the south-west of the Site. In the most recent excavations at the Minster Library a substantial building identified as the archbishop's solar was uncovered (Garner-Lahire 2016). During the 1980s Minster Library excavations, a flat-bottomed ditch that had fallen into disuse by the 12th-early 13th centuries was found, which was interpreted as a boundary ditch associated with the Minster precinct of the 12th century or earlier (Phillips and Heywood 1995). Further excavations for the Minster Library extension identified the same boundary ditch, as well as another to the north, which appeared to have been deliberately backfilled in the 14th century (Garner-Lahire 2016).

2.2.14 Norton's topographic study of Minster Close (1998), suggests that the boundary between the land of the Archbishop's Palace and the canon's houses, which is likely to predate the prebendal houses, dates back to the division of the Minster estates in c.1090 by Thomas of Bayeux. Norton further proposes that the extra parochial area to the north of the Archbishop's Palace and to the west of the canon's houses formed part of land donated to St Cuthbert by King Egfrith and Archbishop Theodore of Canterbury in 685AD (Norton 1998).

2.2.15 During the later medieval period the Archbishops of York shifted away from the palace at York to other archiepiscopal residences at Cawood, Bishopthorpe, Sherburn in Elmet and Reste, and by the 16th and 17th centuries the palace was reported to be in a dilapidated state.

Post-Medieval (1540-1901 AD)

2.2.16 During the 16th and 17th centuries the natural environment of the Minster Close was 'well managed and orderly, with the management of gardens, green fields and animals within the Close connected to economic considerations and contemporary ideas of health and medicine' (Perring 2010). During this time there were various phases of redevelopment within Minster Close: in the mid-16th century, the Great Hall of the Archbishop's Palace was demolished, after which time a period of great building activity and investment occurred, where existing mansions were redeveloped by new tenants (Perring 2010).

2.2.17 By the 1600s the Archbishop's Palace, located to the south of the Site, was in ruins and was sold to Arthur Ingram in 1618, who repaired parts of the palace into a mansion with elaborate formal gardens. The Site is situated on the boundary of the Ingram gardens, in the area that would have been occupied by an orchard and fishponds and by the prebendal Mansion of Stillington (1782 map).

Modern (1800 – the present)

2.2.18 In 1814 and 1825 the land relating to the Ingram mansion and gardens was obtained by compulsory purchase by the Dean and Chapter, and in 1828 the medieval Deanery located opposite the south

transept of the Minster was demolished and rebuilt close to the Minster Library (Garner Lahire 2016). Minster Yard may have come into existence as a cobbled surface in this period (Harrison 2014).

2.2.19 The 1852 OS map shows the prebendal Mansion of Stillington still complete, with the Minster Deanery located to the south-west of the mansion. The mansion and deanery were both demolished in 1938 ahead of the construction of the present Deanery and associated garages.

2.2.20 In 1971 Minster Yard was in a state of disrepair and was refurbished.

2.3 Recent Archaeological Investigations in the vicinity

2.3.1 Two recent archaeological works undertaken in 2014 and 2023 at locations in the immediate vicinity of the site have provided significant information regarding the archaeological deposits of Roman, medieval and post-medieval date. These provided guidance as to what evidence could be encountered within the area of this current investigation.

2014 Ryedale Archaeology Services

2.3.2 In 2014 a desk-based survey was carried out to research the history of the cobbled road and Dean's Park for The Chapter of York Minster (Harrison 2014). This detailed the known history of the road and adjacent precinct.

2015 Ryedale Archaeology Services

2.3.3 To inform and determine the mitigation required for the future of the Minster Yard surface percolation tests were carried out to determine the porosity of the underlying strata. This entailed the digging of three 0.4m x 0.4m x 0.4m test pits adjacent to the park wall on the western side (Harrison 2015).

2.3.4 Test Pit 1 showed the modern nature of the strata beneath the road at this point. Test Pit 2 indicated compacted hardcore. Test Pit 3 was similar, though it contained some brick and tile. The conclusion was that the upper 0.40m of the road was very poorly constructed, resulting in the bad condition of the upper surface (Harrison 2015).

2023 York Archaeology

2.3.5 Between 5th and 22nd June 2023 YA conducted an archaeological evaluation in the grounds of the Deanery allotment, to the rear of the Deanery garages on Minster Court. Further to this work, a watching brief was undertaken between 18th and 22nd September 2023.

2.3.6 The work involved the excavation and recording of a single evaluation trench from the present ground level to the invert level of the attenuation tank, followed by a watching brief for the installation of drainage.

2.3.7 The evaluation trench revealed a sequence of archaeological deposits, ranging from the Roman period to the present day. Demolition deposits and a wall dating to the 17th/18th centuries were identified. These deposits post-dated a substantial boundary ditch which was backfilled in the 14th century. The boundary ditch was cut through a thick soil deposit, likely to be the result of a period of abandonment at the site. Below this horizon was a series of surfaces, a robber trench and discrete features relating to various phases of later Roman structural activity, both truncating and overlying

an earlier Roman building. The structural Roman features were left in situ at the formation level of the proposed attenuation tank and, therefore, geological deposits were not observed.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General Aims

3.1.1 The aims of the monitoring were:

- To record the archaeological resource within the specified area using appropriate methods and practices.
- To determine the extent, condition, character, importance and date of any archaeological remains present.
- To provide information that will enable the remains to be placed within the local, regional and national context and for the assessment to reveal the significance of the archaeology of the proposed area.
- To provide information which will help enable the local authority to determine any requirements for further archaeological mitigation that may be needed for the area.
- To create an ordered archive for deposition with York Archaeology archives.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 In order to achieve the aims stated above, the objectives of the watching brief were:

- To monitor any intrusive groundworks undertaken as part of the designated work.
- To produce a written and digital record of archaeological deposits encountered during intrusive groundworks.
- To retain any finds and take samples, where these will aid the interpretation of archaeological deposits encountered.
- To produce a clear and concise report detailing the results of the work.

3.3 Research questions

3.3.1 The monitoring of the operations notice work provides an opportunity to better understand the historical development of this area through the archaeology encountered at the relatively shallow depths the groundwork reached.

3.3.2 It is proposed that particular questions of potential relevance to achieving this understanding could include the following:

- Is there any evidence of Roman or post-Roman archaeology in this area?
- Due to the location of the site within the York Minster precinct is there any evidence of earlier medieval or post-medieval structures or re-development of this area that can be linked to historical documentary evidence?

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation Methodology

- 4.1.1 All aspects of the watching brief were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (CIfA 2022), *Standard for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* (CIfA 2023) and all other relevant guidance.
- 4.1.1 Due to the concreted nature of the ground surface in Minster Yard the upper layer of cobbles (C1000) and its associated concrete substrate (C1003) in the central and northern end of the trench was removed with a small machine-operated percussion breaker (Plates 3 & 4). At the southern end of the trench nine slabs of Yorkstone paving (C1002) were removed by hand and retained for re-instatement (Plate 2). After this a toothless bucket was used to remove the spoil before excavation of the underlying deposits continued. Hand digging of the trench around the existing services was carried out by the groundwork team, where necessary. All Minster Yard cobbles, including the concreted ones, were separated out for later re-instatement of the yard surface.
- 4.1.2 Any features or structures encountered in the trench above formation depth were planned, photographed and recorded before excavation. Where possible all archaeological features were recorded and left in situ.
- 4.1.3 All groundwork was observed by the monitoring archaeologist and the schedule was not unduly delayed. However, Health and Safety considerations took priority, and where safe access to the trenches and archaeological features was not possible or was impeded, care was taken to adjust the methods by which the archaeology could be safely and accurately recorded in accordance with the best practices outlined in 4.1.1 above.

4.2 Recording Methodology

- 4.2.1 Recording was undertaken on YA pro-forma context sheets and tablet utilising the YA QGIS-based Digital Archaeological Recording System (QDARS) and following the procedures set out in the YA recording manual (YA 2023). All excavated contexts were registered and given unique numbers. A stratigraphic record was created for the trench and all context attributes were noted including details of location, composition, shape, dimensions and relationships, and contexts were cross-referenced to other contexts. Representative sections were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate.
- 4.2.2 A comprehensive photographic record was made where archaeological features were encountered. Digital photographs were taken with a DSLR camera in both Raw and JPG format, and as a supplement to archive photos taken with the DSLR camera a mobile phone camera set to high resolution was used to generate general working and reference photographs.
- 4.2.3 Finds of bottle glass, pot fragments and fragmentary animal bone retrieved from modern or post-medieval deposits and with no archaeological significance were noted and discarded after examination by the YA Post-Excavation Officer (Plate 20). Similarly, any rough limestone masonry found within the service backfills and made ground layers which had no architectural significance were also discarded (Plate 21).
- 4.2.4 The location of the trench and the proximity of nearby buildings meant that a consistent and accurate satellite reading could not be obtained by GNSS for levels and survey purposes. Therefore, a hand plan was drawn based on planning points triangulated from nearby fixed structures with known coordinates.

4.3 Post-Excavation Methodology

- 4.3.1 All site records were ordered, checked for consistency, quantified and indexed according to YA standard practice. The field archive, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections and photographs, will be compiled in compliance with CifA guidelines (2020). This will be stored at YA Headquarters in York. Two versions of this report will be held within the YA archives: A .PDF and a Microsoft Word document.
- 4.3.2 All site records for this excavation were digitised and are currently stored with York Archaeology under the project number 9599.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Background

5.1.1 Over the site as a whole the characteristics of the various service trench backfills, made ground and levelling deposits were uniform, varying only in depth. For this report, due to the commonality of these layers across the area their characteristics will be described in summary form only. Detailed descriptions for these deposits and all contexts are available in the context list (Appendix 2, Table 2).

5.2 Minster Yard Trench

5.2.1 The irregular linear trench was located in Minster Yard immediately to the south-east of the Deanery entrance gates and about 2.5m south of the entrance way to the Heritage Quad (Figures 2 & 3). The trench extended south-eastwards for approximately 11.60m, running from the edge of the pavement 1.90m in front of the north-eastern Deanery gate pillar. It averaged between 0.35 and 0.50m wide with the last 3m at the south-eastern end widening to 1.20m in width. The depth varied depending on the clearance required around the numerous modern services crossing the trench. At the south-eastern end the maximum depth was 0.75m below ground level (BGL) while to the north-west it varied between 0.50m and 0.70m BGL. The ground level was at c 15m AOD.

5.2.2 The underlying glacio-fluvial deposits of sandy clays were not seen as they were below the maximum formation depth of the trench. In previous borehole investigations within the vicinity of the Minster Garages they were encountered at a depth of 2.4m BGL to 3.4m BGL, 11.79m – 12.59m AOD (Harrison 2023, 4).

Made ground

5.2.3 The earliest deposit encountered within the trench was C1019 at 0.40m BGL (Plate 12). C1019 was interpreted as a post-medieval made ground consisting of a dark, blackish brown, gravelly, sandy clay. It contained frequent small CBM and limestone fragments with occasional small charcoal fragments. This layer was not fully excavated and was at least 0.30m thick. There was no pottery or other bulk finds found within this deposit. However, three residual medieval architectural fragments of magnesian limestone were found at 0.50m BGL in the base of the trench and recorded: AF1, AF2 and AF3 (see section 6.2; Plates 13, 14 & 15).

Cobbled surface

5.2.4 Above C1019 at 0.30m BGL was C1018, a compacted, mid-orange brown sandy gravel approximately 0.10m thick. This layer extended south for 1.95m, about 6m from the northern end of the trench. It was interpreted as the bedding layer for cobble surface C1017 (Plates 11 & 12). There were no datable finds in C1018 and the deposit was clearly truncated at the southern end by modern gas service trench cut [C1024] and to the north by BT-comms service trench [C1016].

5.2.5 Bedded into C1018 was C1017, a cobbled surface seen at approximately 0.28m BGL and interpreted as an earlier iteration of the Minster Yard surface (Figure 4.1; Plates 9, 10 & 12). C1017 was only present within a 0.65m length of the northern end of bedding deposit C1018. There were no cobbles present in the 1.30m length of the southern end of bedding layer C1018. It is probable that any cobbles that had originally been laid into that southern end of the bedding layer and were contemporary with C1017 had been robbed at some time in the past and perhaps re-used elsewhere. There were no datable finds in C1017 and it was also truncated at the northern end by a BT-comms service trench [C1016].

- 5.2.6 Above C1017 a 0.20m thick layer of made ground was encountered, C1007, which had the same characteristics as C1019 and which extended for approximately 3.00m across the width of the trench.

Structural remains

- 5.2.7 At the south-eastern end of the trench the remains of a structure were exposed bedded into the apparent continuation of layer C1019. This feature consisted of a north-east to south-west aligned wall, C1011, which was partially exposed in the southern trench limit of excavation (LOE) at 0.70m BGL. C1011 was of mixed fabric and consisted of a rough limestone masonry block with no visible tooling, and limestone fragments and bricks of medieval or later date. These were all un-bonded, although traces of mortar suggested the re-use of material (Plate 19).
- 5.2.8 Abutting C1011 and laid out on the same alignment was a brick surface, C1012. This brick surface was seven rows wide and one course deep and set into the underlying deposit C1019. C1012 measured 0.90m long and covered the full width of the trench at this point (0.80m). At its southern end the surface was at 0.75m BGL, rising to 0.55m at its northern end (Figure 4.2; Plates 16 & 17). There appeared to be two types of brick used and examples were retained for assessment (see section 6.2).
- 5.2.9 The modern excavation of an electrical service trench [C1005] appears to have removed wall C1011 at the southern end and brickwork of C1012 on the northern side. This truncation may have destroyed a possible relationship between C1011/C1012 and remnants of a possible wall C1010 situated some 2.0m north of C1011.
- 5.2.10 C1010 was seen at approximately 0.40m BGL and was also aligned south-west to north-east across the trench. This was 0.50m wide and approximately 0.40m deep to formation depth. The upper surface had been broken up to accommodate the modern electrical service pipework within [C1005] and appeared to comprise one or more blocks of limestone bonded with soft yellow gritty mortar (Plate 18).
- 5.2.11 Excavation of the backfill of the modern service trench (C1004) at the southern end of the trench partially exposed a limestone wall C1006 on the south-eastern side of the trench. This wall was 0.16m BGL and consisted of hard, light creamy grey limestone blocks bonded by a soft, orange brown mortar. Five blocks were seen in two rows aligned north-north-east/south-south-west. The southern end was apparently robbed in the past or truncated when the service trench C1005 was originally excavated. The eastern side continued on under the south-eastern trench LOE. The wall C1006 was recorded and left in situ (Figure 4.3; Plates 6, 7 & 22).

Modern services

- 5.2.12 A number of modern service trenches truncated the above deposits. They all had similar fills of re-deposited post-medieval made ground (Figures 2 & 3, Table 2, Plates 10 & 22).
- 5.2.13 At the northern end a BT comms trench, backfill and pipes, C1015 and [C1016], truncated cobbled surface C1017. In the central area, trench cuts, pipes and backfills for a gas service C1023 [C1024], cast iron water pipe C1013 [C1014] and a gas service C1008 [C1009] merged. At the southern end a salt glazed sewer pipe, water pipe and iron conduit for an electrical service ran on a north/south alignment within a merged cut and backfill C1004 [C1005].

Modern deposits

- 5.2.14 Covering the whole area of the trench and deposits noted above was a 0.07m thick layer of hard, yellowish grey pebbly concrete, C1003, used as a bedding layer for both the upper cobbled surface C1001 and paving C1002. C1001 was removed over an area extending 9.0m long, 0.40m wide (max) and depth of 0.12m (max).
- 5.2.15 The Yorkstone paving slabs C1002 were only encountered at the southern end of the trench covering an area 3.00m long, 1.20m wide and 0.06m thick. Only nine slabs needed to be removed to access the modern service trench cut [C1005].

6 BUILDING MATERIALS ASSESSMENT

By J.M. McComish

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 Three architectural fragments (AF's) and two bricks were examined on 19/7/2024. Two of the architectural fragments were examined from photographs taken on site. AF1 was removed from the trench and photographed with appropriately sized photo scales before detailed measured drawing were made. The partially exposed AF2 was left in situ and also photographed, measured and sketched. AF3 was small enough to be retained and physically examined.

6.2 Results

Bricks

6.2.1 The two bricks were both from context C1012. The first was a medieval brick dating to the 14th - 16th century which weighed 2650g and was 240 x 117 x 47mm in size. This was made in a sanded mould which was the standard technique for the manufacture of medieval bricks. The second brick was 15th - 18th century in date, weighed 3370g, and measured 270 x 125 x 55mm. It was slop moulded which was the standard manufacturing technique at the time. The fact that two bricks of different date were present in the same structure shows that the builders used/re-used whatever material was available.

Architectural fragments

AF1 (C1021)

6.2.2 AF1 (C1021), was from context C1019 (Plates 13 & 14) and was recorded with measured sketches. It was 460 x 220 x 270mm in size. The block had two opposing vertical chamfers, one of which was adjacent to a large roll 120mm in diameter. Striated tooling was present on the lower/upper beds. The original elevations had drag tooling. A mason's mark in the form of an X was present on the roll (Plate 15), and the block was presumably originally from a jamb. This AF was left at York Minster to form part of their collections.

AF2 (C1022)

6.2.3 AF2, also from context C1019, lay partially beyond the limit of excavation and could not be removed from site. The photographs (Plate 13) show that this was a rectangular block with a vertical keel-moulding with a chamfer to either side on one corner. There was a horizontal socket on the upper or lower bed adjacent to the keel moulding. The function of the socket is unclear but it may indicate that the stone was re-used at some stage. This was possibly a jamb originally.

AF3

6.2.4 AF3 was accidentally removed by the machining but originated close to AF2. It was 130 x 85 x 45mm in size and was a small fragment of a roll moulding with a hollow curve on one side. The original elevation had drag tooling and traces of fine white plaster. This was too small to merit retention.

6.2.5 All three AFs date from anywhere between c.1170-1540.

7 DISCUSSION

- 7.1.1 The results from this site provide evidence that can contribute to a greater understanding of the post-medieval archaeology and development of this area and contributes to answering the proposed questions noted in Section 3.3.

Is there any evidence of Roman or post-Roman archaeology in this area?

- 7.1.2 There is no evidence for any Roman, post-Roman or early medieval archaeology within the extent of the trench and no residual finds from these periods were found. This is not unexpected given that the depth of this trench did not exceed 0.55 – 0.75m BGL and the Roman archaeological horizon noted in the recent excavations at the Minster garages approximately 50m to the north-east show the Roman archaeological horizon at about 1.60m BGL (c 13.55m AOD) (Johnson and Howlett 2024).

Due to the location of the site within the York Minster precinct is there any evidence of earlier medieval or post-medieval structures or re-development of this area that can be linked to historical documentary evidence?

- 7.1.3 There was no evidence of earlier medieval structures within the trench. However, the probable post-medieval brick and limestone walls and associated brick floor (C1011, C1012 and C1010) may be evidence of structures related to the New Deanery which stood in this area adjacent to the chapel of the archbishop's house (now the Minster library). This was demolished in 1940 when the present brick-built Deanery was built to the north of the site (Tillott 1961). The re-use of medieval brick in C1012 may also suggest an earlier feature on this site.
- 7.1.4 The interpretation for C1010, C1011 and C1012 is that they were probably all originally part of the same feature, possibly a walled walkway or garden feature. The subsidence evident at the southern side of brick surface C1012 and wall C1011 may be due to an underlying pit feature or loose demolition deposits.
- 7.1.5 The wall remnant C1006 may represent the precinct boundary wall or the edge of the 18th-19th century boundary of the Minster court building to the east of the cobbled road surface (RCHMY 1981).
- 7.1.6 The remnant of earlier cobbled surface C1017 was encountered in the central part of the trench at 0.28m BGL and poses the question of whether this build up in the ground level relates to the re-laying of the cobbles in 1970, or whether it is a remnant of an earlier Minster yard surface. However, the watching brief on three test pits excavated in the road in 2015 to a depth of 0.40m BGL showed no evidence of an earlier surface, although it may not have extended as far west as the northernmost test pit (Harrison 2015; Figure 5). C1017 may be evidence of the existence of the cobbled surface prior to the 1820s, as speculated by Harrison (2014, 12). Documentary evidence may provide further insight.
- 7.1.7 This information provides evidence and understanding of the possible earlier development and layout of the Minster precinct which could be compared with historical maps for this area relating to Dean's Park and Minster Yard held by the Minster Library.

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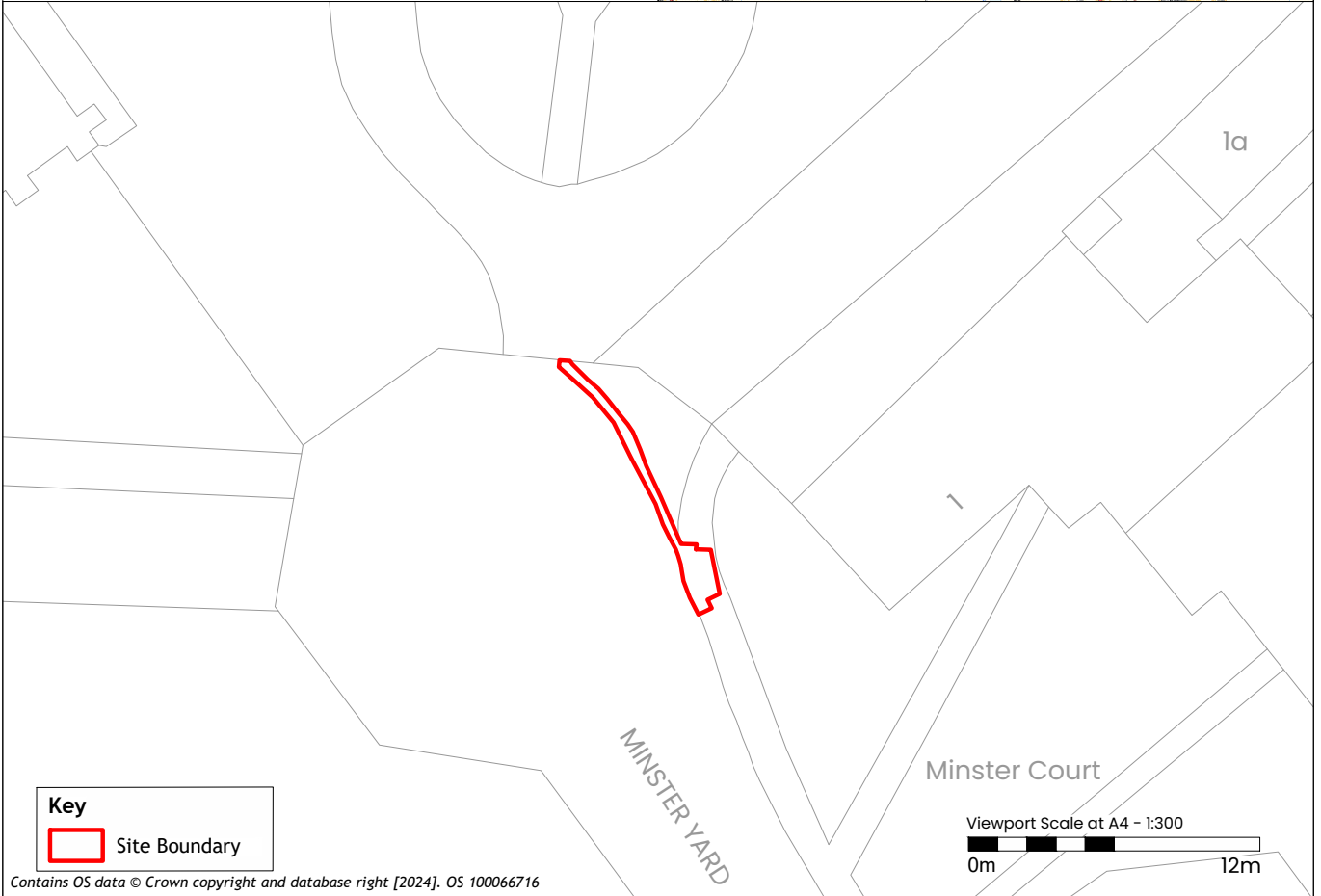
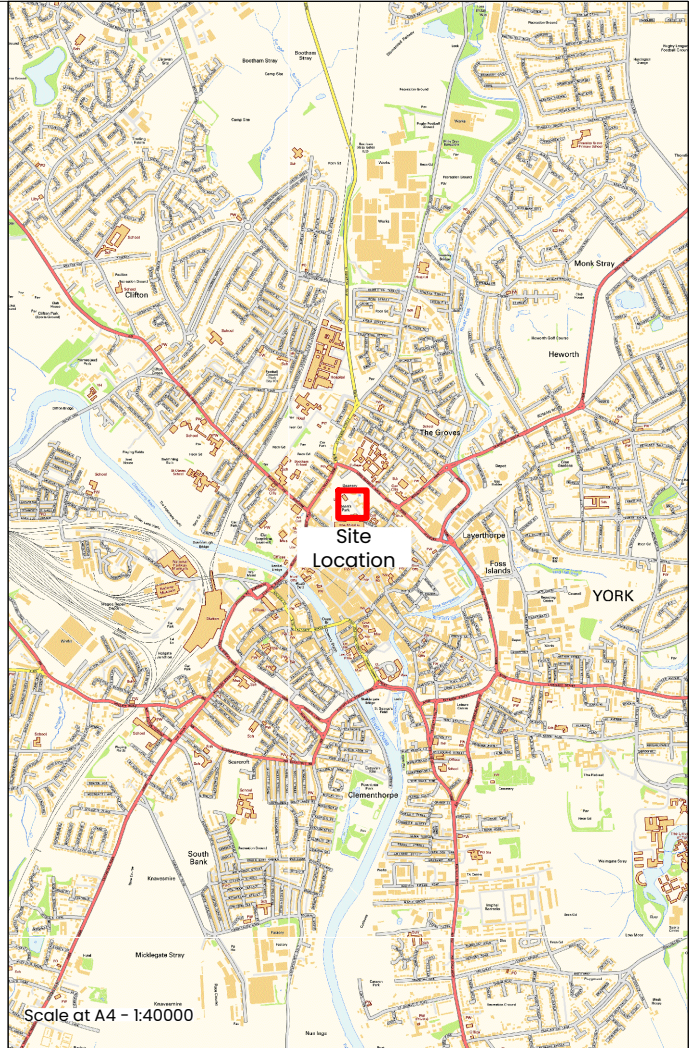
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9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1.1 York Archaeology would like to thank Northern Powergrid for their commissioning of the archaeological works, and C. Partington of Simpsons (York) Ltd for help during the works.
- 9.1.2 The watching brief was carried out by P. Howlett. The text was written by P. Howlett with illustrations prepared by B. Price. The specialist report was written by J. M. McComish. The project was managed by M. A. Slater and the post-excavation work was managed by K. Allenby with administrative help from S. Hughes.

FIGURES

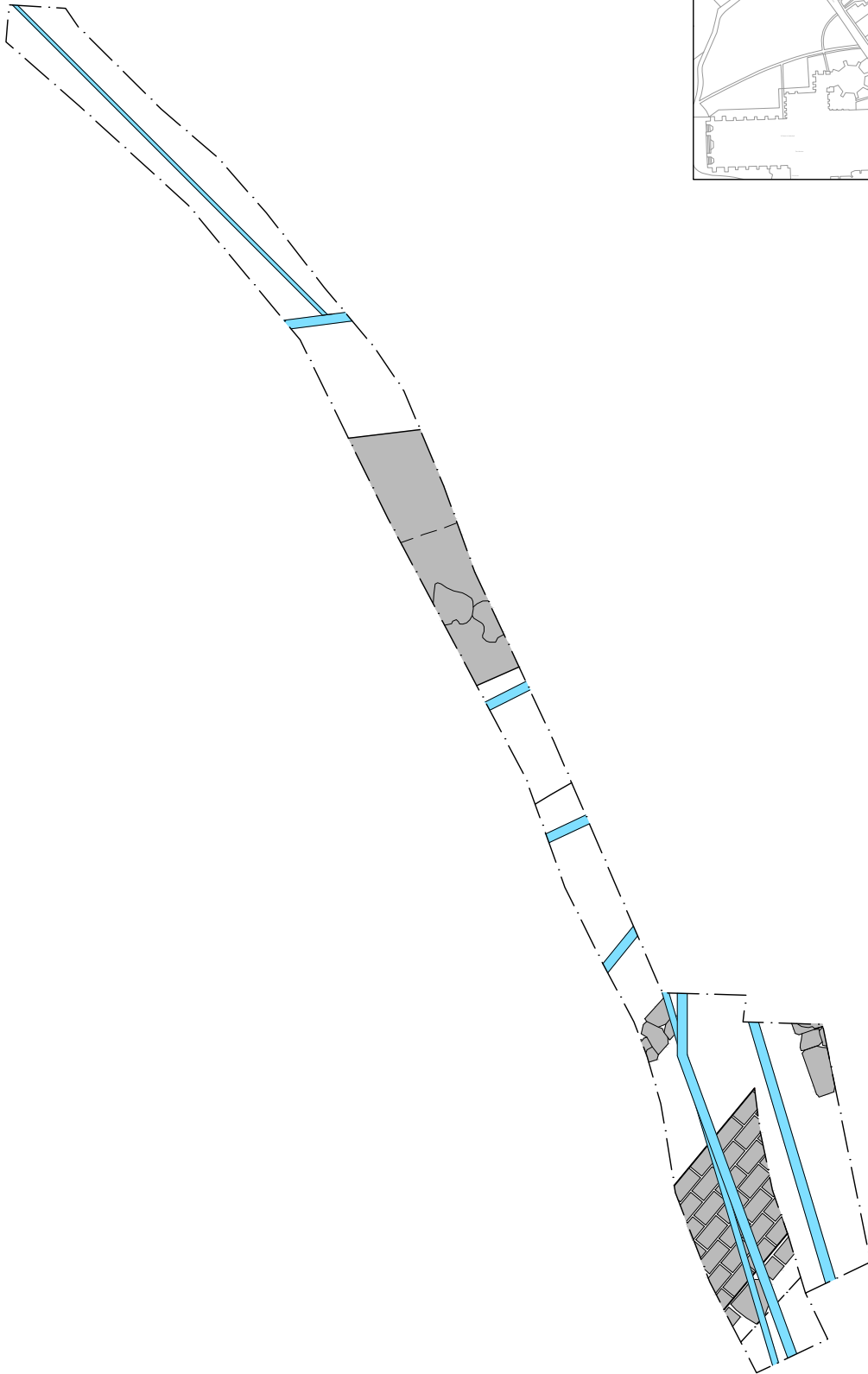
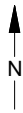
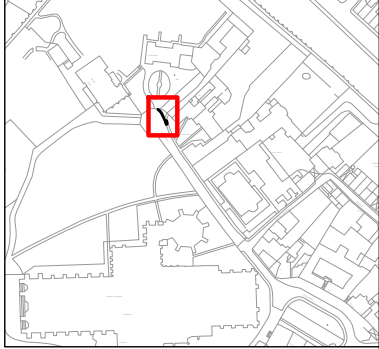


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Figure 01 - Location Map
9599 - Minster Yard, York

Scale at A4 - varies
Drawn by BP





Key	
	Archaeological Feature
	Modern Service



Figure 02 - Site Plan
9599 - Minster Yard, York

Scale at A4 - 1:50
Drawn by BP

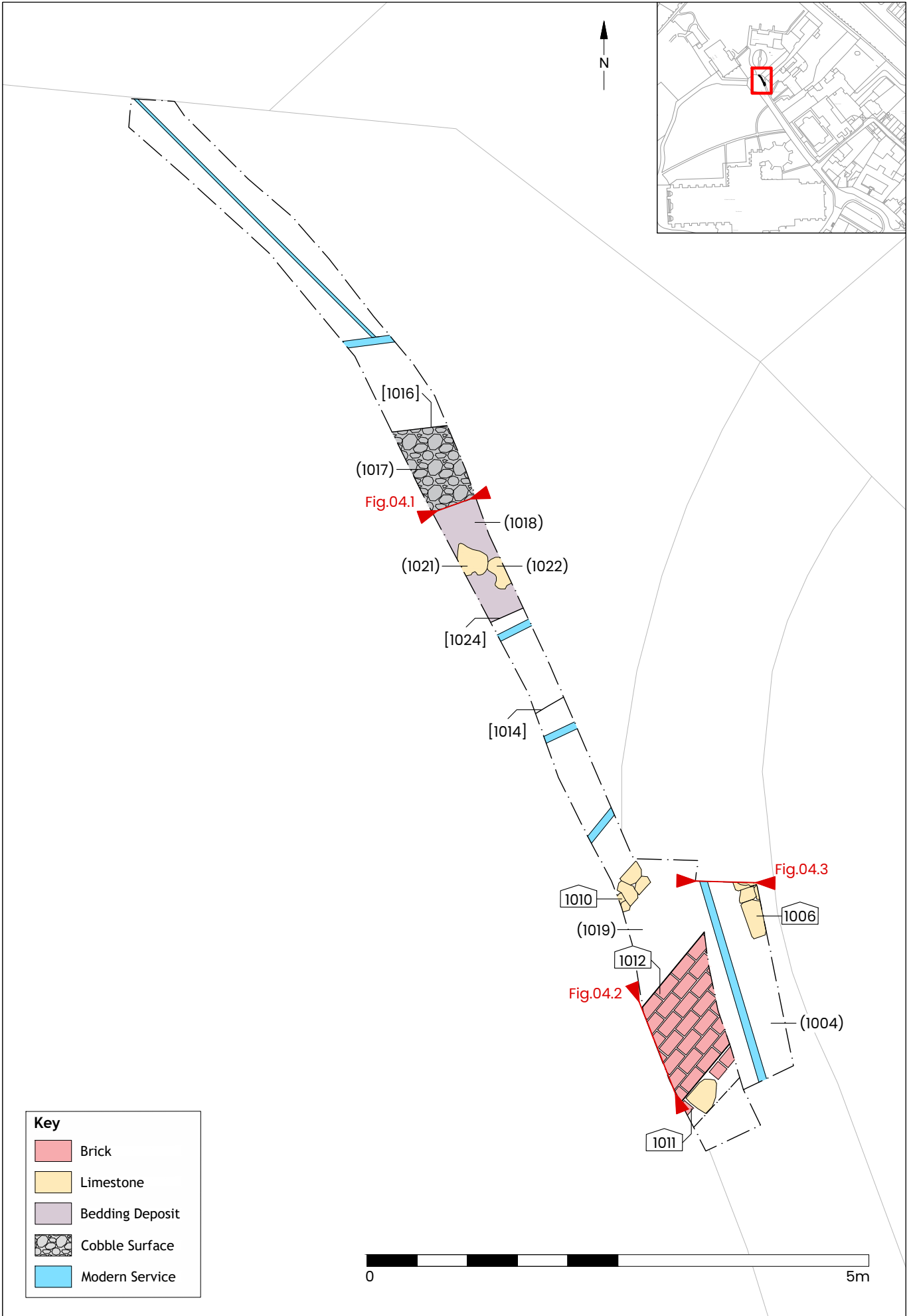


Figure 03 - Plan Showing Archaeological Features
9599 - Minster Yard, York

Scale at A4 - 1:50
Drawn by BP

Fig.04.1
South East Facing Section Through Bedding Deposit (1019)

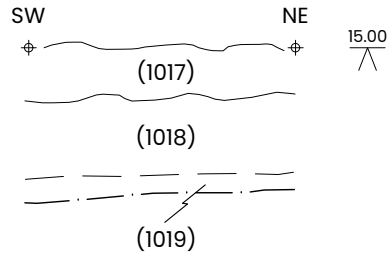


Fig.04.2
North East Facing Section of Brick Surface (1012)

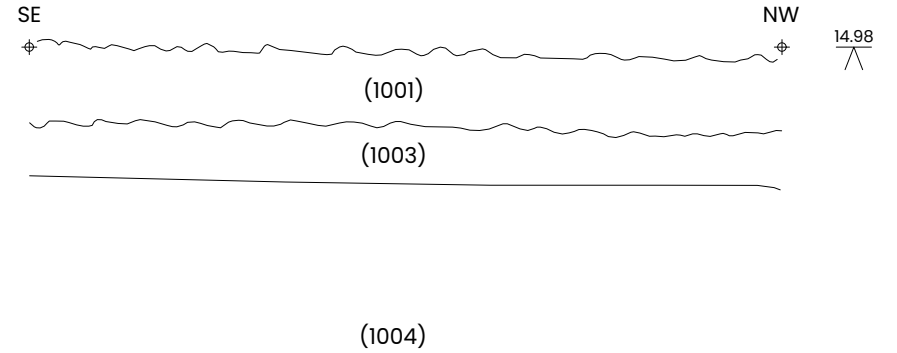
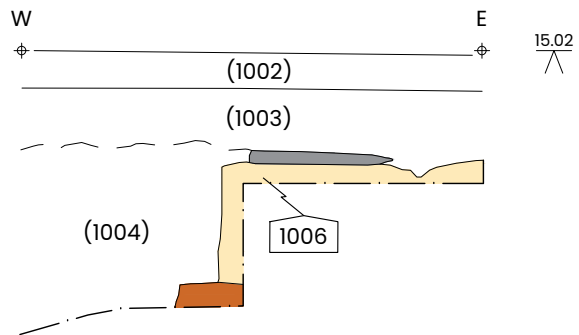


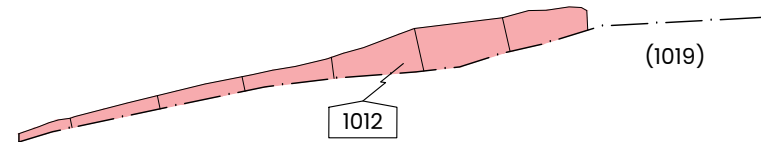
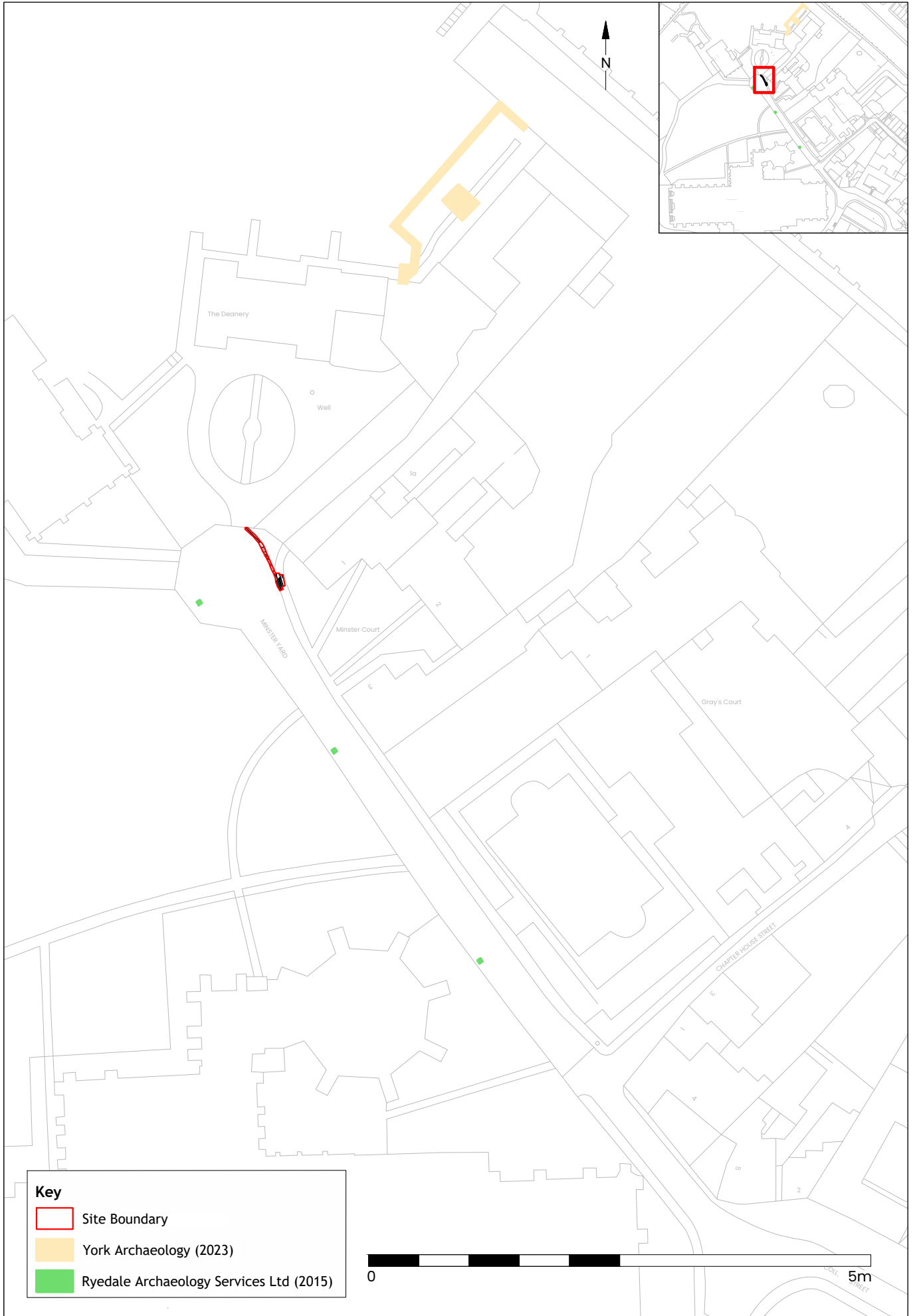


Fig.04.3
South Facing Representative Section



Key	
	Brick
	Limestone
	Mortar
	Slate





Key

- Site Boundary
- York Archaeology (2023)
- Ryedale Archaeology Services Ltd (2015)



Figure 05 – Site Plan Showing Previous Archaeological Works
9599 – Minster Yard, York

Scale at A4 – 1:50
Drawn by BP

PLATES



Plate 1: Minster Yard cobbles C1001, looking south, scale unit 0.50m



Plate 2: Removal of paving C1002, looking south-west



Plate 3: Removal of concrete base C1003 below cobbles C1001 and paving C1002, looking south-west



Plate 4: Removal of cobble yard surface C1001, looking north



Plate 5: Backfill C1004 of electric service trench at the south end, looking south-south-east, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 6: Limestone wall C1006, looking north-east, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 7: South facing representative section at wall C1006, looking north, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 8: Made ground C1007 cut by gas service trench [C1009], looking north-north-west, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 9: Early cobble surface C1017, looking north, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 10: Overview, early cobble surface C1017 truncated by BT service trench [C1016] on the north side, looking north, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 11: Bedding layer C1018 for cobbles C1017, looking north, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 12: South facing representative section through cobbles C1017 and bedding layer C1018 with underlying made ground C1019 in foreground, looking north, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 13: Architectural magnesian limestone blocks C1021 (AF1) and C1022 (AF2) on the right within made ground deposit (C1019), looking north-east, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 14: Architectural magnesian limestone block C1021 (AF1)



Plate 15: Masons marks on limestone block C1021 (AF1), Scale unit 0.01m



Plate 16: Brick surface C1012 with wall C1011 on the left, looking south-west, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 17: North-east facing representative section showing brick surface C1012 dipping down to the south, looking south-west, scale units 0.50m, 0.10m



Plate 18: Limestone wall C1010 cut by electric service trench [C1005], looking south-west, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 19: Limestone and brick wall C1011, looking south-east, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 20: Discarded finds from Post-medieval deposits, scale unit 0.10m



Plate 21: Discarded rough limestone blocks from Post-medieval deposits, scale unit 0.10m

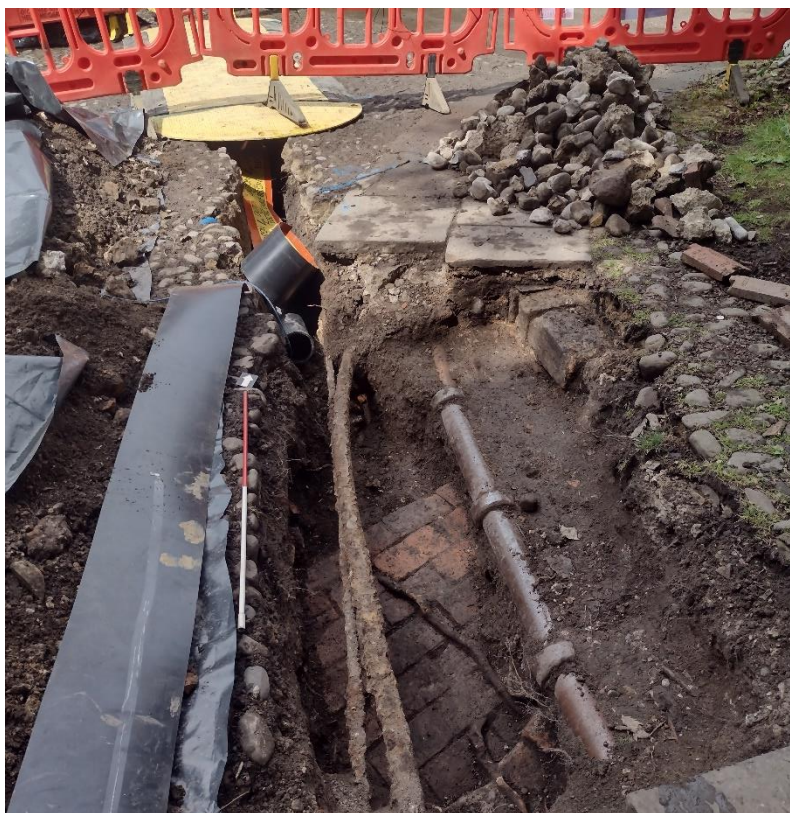


Plate 22: Post-excavation view of trench looking north, scale unit 0.50m

APPENDIX 1: INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Table 1: Index to Archive	
Item	Number of items
Context sheets	25
Context register	1
Drawing register	1
Original drawings	2 sheets
Matrix sheets	1
Digital photographs	Plates = 23 Phone = 16 Photos = 126
Report	1
Oasis summary form	1

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT LIST

Table 2: Context list			
Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions
1000	Unstratified	Unstratified finds	-
1001	Layer	Modern cobble surface of Minster Yard	Trench covers 9.0m length, 0.30m – 0.40m wide, 0.10m-0.12m thick
1002	Layer	Modern Yorkstone paving - Grey sandstone. Assorted sizes. Average size 0.60m x 0.55m x 0.06m	Trench covers area 3.0m long, 1.20m wide.
1003	Layer	Concrete bedding for 1001 and 1002	Full extent of trench. 12.0m long, 0.30-0.40m wide, 0.07m thick
1004	Fill	Modern backfill of service trench 1005. Containing electric service cable conduits and salt glaze sewer pipe. Compacted, dark blackish brown with orange and white patches, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small – medium fragments CBM (brick and tile), angular stones. Occasional broken oyster shell, glass and modern pot	3.0m long, 1.40m wide, 0.55-0.75m thick
1005	Cut	Modern service trench containing 1004. Rectilinear in plan, aligned north – south. Sharp break of slope at top, steep sides to west, stepped to east. Flat base sloping down to south.	3.0m long, 1.40m wide, 0.55-0.75m thick
1006	Structure	Limestone masonry wall. Linear in plan aligned north-north east. 2 rows (5 blocks). Bonded by soft	Extent to LOE = 0.60m long, 0.30m wide,

Table 2: Context list			
Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions
		orangey brown mortar. Base not seen, east side not seen. Largest block = 600mm x 400mm x 160mm	0.16m thick
1007	Layer	Post-medieval made ground. Compacted, dark blackish brown with orange and white patches, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small – medium fragments CBM (brick and tile), angular stones. Occasional broken oyster shell, glass, animal bone and modern pot	Only seen in central area. 3.00m long, 0.35m – 0.50m wide, <0.20m thick
1008	Fill	Backfill of modern gas service trench 1009 containing yellow plastic pipe. Compacted, dark blackish brown with orange and white patches, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small – medium fragments CBM (brick and tile), angular stones	>0.35m long, 0.35m – 0.50m wide, <0.60m thick
1009	Cut	Modern gas service trench containing 1008. Rectilinear in plan, aligned south-west/north-east. Sides not seen (outside LOE). Base flat.	>0.35m long, 0.35m – 0.50m wide, <0.60m thick
1010	Structure	Limestone masonry wall remnant. Linear in plan, aligned south-west/north-east Cemented, mid-yellow brown, magnesian limestone block(s) with soft, yellow gritty mortar	0.30m long, 0.50m wide, >0.40m thick
1011	Structure	Limestone and brick masonry wall. Linear in plan, aligned south-west/north-east Hard, grey and orange. Magnesian limestone block and 2 bricks.	<0.50m long, <0.30m wide, 0.10m thick
1012	Layer	Brick built surface. Aligned south-west/north-east 7 rows, 1course deep staggered placement, unbonded. 2 brick sizes 245mm x 120mm x 48mm	0.90m long, <0.80m wide, 0.06m thick

Table 2: Context list			
Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions
		275mm x 130mm x 60mm	
1013	Fill	Backfill of modern water service trench 1014 containing cast iron pipe. Compacted, dark blackish brown, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small – medium fragments CBM (brick), angular stones	<0.35m long, <0.35m wide, <0.50m thick
1014	Cut	Modern water service trench containing 1013. Rectilinear in plan, aligned east/west. Sides not seen (merges with other service trenches). Base flat.	<0.35m long, <0.35m wide, <0.50m thick
1015	Fill	Backfill of modern BT comms service trench 1016 containing 2 grey plastic pipes 40mm pipe aligned north/south, 100mm pipe aligned east/west. Compacted, dark blackish brown, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small – medium fragments CBM (brick), angular stones Occasional medium cobbles	3.40m long, 0.40m wide, <0.50m thick
1016	Cut	Modern BT comms service trench containing 1015. Rectilinear in plan, aligned east/west and north/south. Sides and base not seen	3.40m long, 0.40m wide, <0.50m thick
1017	Layer	Early cobble surface below 1007. Compact, grey and orange brown, medium size cobbles in gritty matrix	0.65m long, 0.40m wide, <0.06m thick
1018	Layer	Bedding deposit for cobbles surface 1017. Compact, mid-orange brown, sandy gravel. Occasional small fragments CBM and angular stones.	1.95m long, >0.40m wide, 0.10m thick
1019	Layer	Post-medieval made ground below 1018 Compacted, dark blackish grey/brown with orange and white flecks, gravelly, sandy silt.	In central area = 1.95m long, 0.40m wide, >0.30m thick

Table 2: Context list			
Context Number	Context Type	Description	Dimensions
		Frequent small fragments CBM, limestone, angular and sub-angular stones. Occasional small fragments of charcoal.	
1020	Layer	Soil layer. Friable, mid-brown, sandy silt. Occasional small angular stones and animal bone fragments.	North end of trench only. 1.0m long, 0.40m wide, Not fully excavated
1021	Masonry (AF1)	Limestone architectural masonry block With mason's mark (see section 6.2.2)	460mm x 220mm x 270mm
1022	Masonry (AF2)	Limestone architectural masonry block Left in situ (see section 6.2.3)	460mm x 220mm x 270mm
1023	Fill	Backfill of modern gas service trench 1024 containing yellow plastic gas pipe. Compacted, dark blackish brown, gravelly, sandy silt. Frequent small fragments CBM Occasional medium cobbles and angular stones	0.30m long, Width unknown, >0.40m thick
1024	Cut	Modern gas service trench containing 1023. Rectilinear in plan, aligned east/west. Only north side seen, south side merging with 1014	0.30m long, Width unknown, >0.40m thick

APPENDIX 3: OASIS SUMMARY

OASIS Summary for yorkarch3-527408

OASIS ID (UID)	yorkarch3-527408
Project Name	Watching Brief at Minster Yard, York YO1 7HH, United Kingdom
Sitename	Minster Yard, York YO1 7HH, United Kingdom
Sitecode	9599
Project Identifier(s)	9599_Minster_Yard_York
Activity type	Watching Brief
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Scheduled monument consent
Organisation Responsible for work	York Archaeology
Project Dates	15-Jul-2024 - 17-Jul-2024
Location	Minster Yard, York YO1 7HH, United Kingdom NGR : SE 60327 52299 LL : 53.963259, -1.081982 12 Fig : 460327,452299
Administrative Areas	Country : England County/Local Authority : York Local Authority District : York Parish : York, unparished area
Project Methodology	<p>All aspects of the watching brief were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct (CIfA 2022), Standard for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording (CIfA 2023) and all other relevant guidance.</p> <p>Any features or structures encountered in the trench above formation depth were planned, photographed and recorded before excavation. Where possible all archaeological features were recorded and left in situ.</p> <p>All groundwork was observed by the monitoring archaeologist. However, Health and Safety considerations took priority, and where safe access to the trenches and archaeological features was not possible or was impeded, care was taken to adjust the methods by which the archaeology could be safely and accurately recorded in accordance with the best practices outlined above.</p> <p>Recording was undertaken on YA pro-forma context sheets and tablet utilising the YA QGIS-based Digital Archaeological Recording System (QDARS) and following the procedures set out in the YA recording manual (YA 2023).</p> <p>Digital photographs were taken with a DSLR camera in both Raw and JPG format, and as a supplement a mobile phone camera was used to generate general working photographs.</p> <p>Findings with no archaeological significance were noted and discarded after examination by the YA Post-Excavation Officer.</p> <p>A consistent and accurate satellite reading could not be obtained by GNSS for survey purposes. Therefore, a hand plan was drawn based on planning points triangulated from nearby fixed structures with known coordinates.</p> <p>All site records were checked according to YA standard practice. The field archive will be compiled in compliance with CIfA guidelines (2020). All site records were digitised and are currently stored with York Archaeology under the project number 9599.</p>

Project Results	<p>No evidence of in situ structural archaeology of Roman or early medieval date was found.</p> <p>Results consisted of evidence for an earlier post-medieval cobbled Minster yard surface as well as residual medieval magnesian limestone architectural fragments. A precinct boundary wall and a possible walled and brick surfaced walkway were also revealed.</p> <p>This monitoring work provides evidence of the past layout of this area of the Minster yard which could be compared with historical maps for this area to contribute to an understanding of its development.</p>
Keywords	<p>Architectural Fragment - MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Floor - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p> <p>Feature - POST MEDIEVAL - FISH Thesaurus of Monument Types</p>
Funder	Electricity company Northern Powergrid
HER	<p>Historic England review - unRev - STANDARD</p> <p>City of York HER - noRev - LITE</p> <p>Scheduled Monument Casework - unRev - STANDARD</p>
Person Responsible for work	Mary-Anne Jackson-Slater
HER Identifiers	
Archives	

