



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



PUREY CUST, PRECENTORS COURT, YORK

PLANNING ASSESSMENT REPORT

by Mark Johnson

REPORT NUMBER 2013/01



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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Registered Office: 47 Aldwark, York, UK, YO1 7BX

Phone: +44 (0)1904 663000 Fax: +44 (0)1904 663024

Email: archaeology@yorkat.co.uk Internet: <http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk>

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1. SUMMARY

Proposals to create a new dwelling at the site of the former Purey Cust Hospital site entail the incorporation of the fabric of an old cellar, a generator enclosure, a boundary wall, potting shed, flight of steps and archway within the building. All but the generator enclosure are of some historic significance. The cellar formed part of the demolished 17th century Ingram's Mansion and may even have an origin within the Archbishop's Palace that preceded this. The archway leading into the cellar may have a similar origin. Examination of archaeological archives together with survey data suggests the likelihood of survival of archaeological deposits beneath the existing cellar/generator enclosure.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The former Purey Cust Hospital buildings have recently been converted to form a number of houses and apartments. Consideration is presently underway to form an additional dwelling within the grounds of the site. This proposed dwelling would reuse a redundant subterranean chamber at a basement level and a potting shed, together with a boundary wall at ground level. Access between the two levels would be via an existing flight of stone steps. The northern part of the subterranean chamber is believed to date to the earlier 20th century and later but incorporates, at its southern end, the remnants of an earlier cellar with a brick arch ceiling. The date of the steps, together with a stone archway at its foot, are of uncertain date. The potting shed and boundary wall date to the 19th century. It is understood that development may require the lowering of the existing basement floor level.

The purpose of this report is to assess the impact of the proposed development on historic fabric of the cellar and related historic structures and on any archaeological deposits that may lie below the existing basement level.

2.2 SITE LOCATION

The site lies in the core of the historic and modern city of York. The wider Purey Cust development is bounded to the south-west by the historic street of Precentors Court, by historic buildings, green space and the city walls to the north-west, by green space and historic boundary walls to the north and east and by York Minster to the south-east (Figure 1, Site location map).



Figure 1 Site location map. The proposed development area is highlighted red.

2.3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The solid geology of the area is of sandstone of the Sherwood Group. This is overlain by a superficial Devensian Till (BGS). This part of the city is relatively flat and low lying and the area of proposed development has a surface height of a little over 16m Above Ordnance Datum.

3. METHODOLOGY

This assessment represents a commitment to provide early advice concerning the Archaeological and Cultural Heritage Resource of the site and surrounding study area.

The assessment was conducted with regard to standards set out by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Standards and Guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment* (IfA, revised 2011). The general approach and methodology has been to consider the archaeology in terms of the archaeological sites and monuments present within the study area. These resources may be nationally or locally designated (by registration, listing or scheduling), may appear in the national or local archaeological record, or may be identified here from specialist scrutiny of the landscape and historic records.

In summary the work has involved:

- identifying the client's objectives;
- identifying the sources available for consultation;
- assembling, consulting and analysing the available resources within a wider study area surrounding and including the site.

This information is drawn together to produce a report and deposit model which:

- Describes the evidence
- Assesses the evidence
- Assesses the potential impacts development might have on the site

4. STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY PROTECTED FEATURES

The Potting Shed and Generator Enclosure, along with the wider Purey Cust re-development, lies within the Area of Archaeological Importance as designated by the Ancient Monument and Archaeological Areas Act of 1979. The development also lies within the city's Conservation Area 1: Central Historic Core as well as within Scheduled Ancient Monument 13280 which incorporates the Minster Precinct, including a section of the city walls. The magnesian limestone boundary wall forming the south-eastern limit of the proposed development is part of a Grade II Listed Building: Purey Cust Lodge, Attached Walls and Gateways (English Heritage Listed Building ID: 463321). Within the wider Purey Cust development, the early 19th century Purey Cust Chambers, originally the new residence of the Canons Residentiary of York Minster and which lies around 30m to the north is also a Grade II Listed Building (English Heritage Listed Building ID: 463320).

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL REVIEW

This section uses a variety of sources to provide an overview of the archaeological and historical data in the immediate locality and considers the character of the existing structures that form the object of proposed development. Consideration of the impacts of proposed development on the archaeological fabric and deposits is given in Section 6.

5.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the archaeological and historical background of the immediate surroundings of the proposed development area on a period by period basis. It is based on the HER and York Archaeological Trust Gazetteer events data and a number of published and unpublished documentary and cartographic sources. These are intended to characterise the nature of adjacent archaeological deposits and aid in understanding the likelihood of encountering currently unrecorded heritage assets within the application site.

5.1.1 PREHISTORIC (TO 43 AD)

No finds or features of the prehistoric period have been located in the immediate locality.

5.1.2 ROMANO-BRITISH (43 – 410 AD)

The area of proposed development lies within the site of the Roman legionary fortress, roughly mid-way between the *Principia* headquarters building and the *Porta Principalis dextra*, or north-eastern gateway (Ottaway 1993, 27). A number of archaeological trenches were excavated adjacent to the Purey Cust Hospital, mostly to the north-western side of the building (site 1985-6.22). The earliest remains were features of the 1st century AD cutting into natural clay and interpreted as timber buildings relating to the earlier occupation of the fortress. Above this early horizon a number of 2nd century stone walls associated with successive floor and occupation surfaces, and almost certainly relating to barrack blocks were examined. Further barrack blocks were revealed in areas immediately adjacent to the west end of York Minster in the early years of the 1970s (RCHM 1995, vol 1).

5.1.3 EARLY MEDIEVAL (410 – 1066 AD)

Deposits of 'dark earth' were present above the Roman deposits in a number of the trenches at the Purey Cust site (site 1985-6.22). Although York developed as an ecclesiastical centre during this period and a pre-conquest cemetery is known to lie beneath parts of the Minster, there have been no significant finds relating to this period in the immediate environs of the proposed dwelling.

5.1.4 LATER MEDIEVAL (1066 – C.1540 AD)

York Minster flourished during this period and an extensive Archbishop's Palace was built around 1100 during the archiepiscopate of Thomas of Bayeux immediately to the east of the proposed dwelling. This palace is said to have been neglected during the 14th and 15th centuries in favour of the Archbishop's other palaces at Cawood and Southwell and his manor houses of Bishopthorpe and Scrooby (Butler 1988, 26). A number of medieval rubbish pits relating to this period were encountered in the Purey Cust excavations (site 1985-6.22). The remains of three limestone walls, all aligned north-east / south-west, were revealed in works to the flower-bed on the Dean's Park side of the eastern boundary wall to the Purey Cust site in 2010 (McComish 2010). These walls, which appear likely to have been demolished in the early 19th century, relate to either the Archbishop's Palace or the post-medieval Ingram's Mansion. During the recent watching brief on the conversion works to the hospital re-used blocks of limestone, some moulded, were seen to form footings for a post-medieval brick wall (Evans 2012). These may have been re-used fragments from the former Archbishop's Palace.

5.1.5 POST-MEDIEVAL AND MODERN (C.1540 – PRESENT)

The demise of the Archbishop's Palace is said to have begun in the 1560s when Archbishop Young removed the lead from the great hall to buy an estate for his son (VCH 1961, 337-343). By 1600 the Archbishop's Palace was a ruin (Butler 1988, 26). The ruins of the old palace together with its appurtenant buildings and land were leased to Sir Arthur Ingram in a lease of 1616. These holdings were subsequently expanded and consolidated in further leases (VCH 1961, 337-343; Butler 1988, 26). Ingram was Secretary to the Council of the North and built a splendid mansion and gardens to rival other great houses in the city. Whilst parts of Ingram's Mansion were newly built it is also known that it incorporated elements of the old Archbishop's Palace complex, including its western range. In the later 18th century Ingram's mansion was leased to numerous tenants in multiple occupancy and became progressively ruinous. In the second decade of the 19th century the mansion was demolished and the site cleared to make way for a Minster stone-yard and gardens. It was during this re-development that the large wall forming the eastern boundary to the Purey Cust site was constructed together with a number of other buildings relating mostly to the stoneyard and New Residence of the Canons Residentiary of York Minster.

Wall foundations thought to relate to the 17th century Ingram's Mansion were revealed in two of the trenches at the Purey Cust site (site 1985-6.22). In a watching brief held at the Purey Cust Hospital in 1985 (site 1985.1039) stone footings of standing walls together with post-medieval build-up deposits were observed whilst 17th century walls were seen in a watching brief held in 1991 (site 1991.1016). Three walls encountered close to the eastern boundary

wall of Purey Cust in 2010 may also relate to Ingram's Mansion. During the watching on the recent conversion works of the Purey Cust Hospital a brick-built well was found to the north side of the former Residence building and a number of stretches of brick walling elsewhere across the site (Evans 2012). The size and form of the bricks to the majority of these suggests that they may relate to the Ingram Mansion buildings.

5.2 OUTLINE OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS

The existing historical structural components to be impacted on by the proposed development have already been identified by Seven Renew, a division of Seven Architecture which specialises in the conversion and restoration of historic buildings. These components are: below ground archaeological deposits, the remnants of a brick arched cellar, a basement generator enclosure, the Purey Cust boundary wall, the potting shed and a flight of steps with an archway at their foot that provides access to the basement areas. The floor level of the below ground components lie between approximately 1.8m – 2.5m below the surrounding existing ground level. All of these components are shown in one of Seven Architecture's drawings reproduced here as Figure 2. The proposed development site was the subject of a walkover survey by archaeologists from York Archaeological Trust on 17th January 2013 when a series of photographs, see Plates 1-5, were also taken.

The walling to the remnants of the brick arched cellar are largely obscured by concrete, though coursed blocks of lime mortar bonded magnesian limestone bearing claw tooling are visible to the upper part of the southern, end, wall. The shallow brick arch forming the roof of the cellar is rendered with a thin skin of lime mortar. The northern part of this cellar is truncated by the later generator enclosure and its original extent is not known. It has been suggested that this cellar relates to Ingram's Mansion and was built in the early years of the 17th century (Seven renew).

Using historic and modern cartographic data an attempt has been made to superimpose the position of the cellar onto a plan of the Palace, Figure 3. Although the topographic features on the historic map do not tally exactly when superimposed on modern survey data and therefore displays 'best' rather than 'exact' fit the cellar clearly lies immediately north-west of the north-western corner of what was the entrance yard to the mansion. This entrance area is depicted in a view of 1776, Figure 4. In his study of Ingram's Mansion Butler states that Ingram erected a building that linked to the western range of the old Archbishop's Palace in 1623-5 and that this held the main entrance and probably the hall, great chamber and principal staircase (Butler 1988, 29). Butler further states that to the right (east) of the main entrance door was a bow window built of brick (Butler 1988, 36) This entrance range with bow window is the principal elevation depicted in Figure 4. Curiously, Butler states that the

three storey range to the west of the main entrance (that to the left side in Figure 4) was probably built in 1624. The architectural features depicted in both ranges, namely square headed doors and windows, the form of window mullions and particularly the entrance doorway itself are entirely consistent with an early 17th century date. However, the claimed building sequence in this area, for what are purported to be virtually contemporary ranges, is most unusual. One range is of two storey's, the other of three, the eaves heights between the ranges are totally mismatched and none of the floor levels, bar the ground floor, correspond? Further, the statement that the bay window was built of brick, whilst the rest of the entrance range appears to have been built of stone, provides another anomaly for what are supposed to be structural elements built contemporaneously.

On the basis of these observations it is suggested that the building sequence in this part of Ingram's Mansion may not be so straightforward and may in fact incorporate elements of the older Archbishop's Palace, much as is known to have been the case to the east of the entrance range. The implication of this is that there is a possibility that the remnants of the cellar could conceivably have an origin in the context of the medieval Archbishop's Palace rather than in the early 17th century work of Ingram. Some support for this suggestion may be found in the observation of 17th cellars at the Ideal Laundry site, Trinity Lane, York, where both the walls and arched ceilings were entirely of brick (site 1991.5). This contrasts with the Purey Cust cellar remnant where the ceiling is of brick but the visible part of the wall is of stone. Could it be that the arched ceiling of the cellar is actually a replacement by Ingram? Whilst not wishing to overemphasize the case, it is worth noting in this regard that Ingram was advised in 1628 about roofing his new cellar to give it a height of six feet (Butler 1988, 37).

The basement generator enclosure is believed to have been built to serve the Purey Cust Hospital, with the construction of the hospital itself dating to the years 1914-16. This is constructed of brick walls and a concrete floor whilst the exterior of those parts above ground level are clad with stone. Internally however, the majority of the brick walling is of very recent date, perhaps relating to 1960s or later re-modelling. This space is of the same width and alignment as the remains of the older cellar whose northern end has been truncated. It is possible that the area of the generator enclosure was originally occupied by this older cellar, its northern limits perhaps coinciding with the northern building line shown in Figure 3.

The large eastern boundary wall of the Purey Cust property is said to date to 1845 (Listing details). Baines 1822 map of York (Figure 5) shows a boundary of similar alignment though it may be that the existing stone wall forms a replacement. During the first half of the 19th century the area occupied by the Purey Cust site was largely cleared of earlier building

arrangements, and replaced, under the auspices of the Minster Chapter, by a Minster stone-yard and gardens. The large wall, its gateways and adjacent Lodge were established within the context of the re-planning of this area.

The potting shed, which forms a lean-to against the eastern boundary wall, has walls of brick to north and south ends, is largely open fronted to the western side and has a roof of pantile. This structure, and those to its south, again relates to the re-planning of this area by the Chapter in the first half of the 19th century.

The stone steps and archway provide access to the cellar. The spatial relationship of these elements, to the boundary wall suggests the likelihood that they again relate to the works in this area in the first half of the 19th century. If it is assumed that the steps do date to the 19th century then of necessity they pre-date the generator enclosure. As the northern side of the steps lie beyond the limit of the existing fabric of the old cellar it is reasonable to infer that the cellar originally extended further to the north; as indeed appears confirmed by the rough truncation of the northern side of the cellar roof. The three-centred arch at the foot of the stairs bears claw-tooling and shows signs of weathering. Stylistically the arch is of a form current at a time centred around the 15th century. The grandeur of this doorway is somewhat at odds with its humble function of below ground access to a cellar whilst the stonework of its jambs does not course through well with that of the walling to either side of the steps. There is a possibility therefore that this archway is an old, reused architectural element, quite possibly set in place in the early 19th century. The context of origin of this archway may be the Archbishop's Palace.

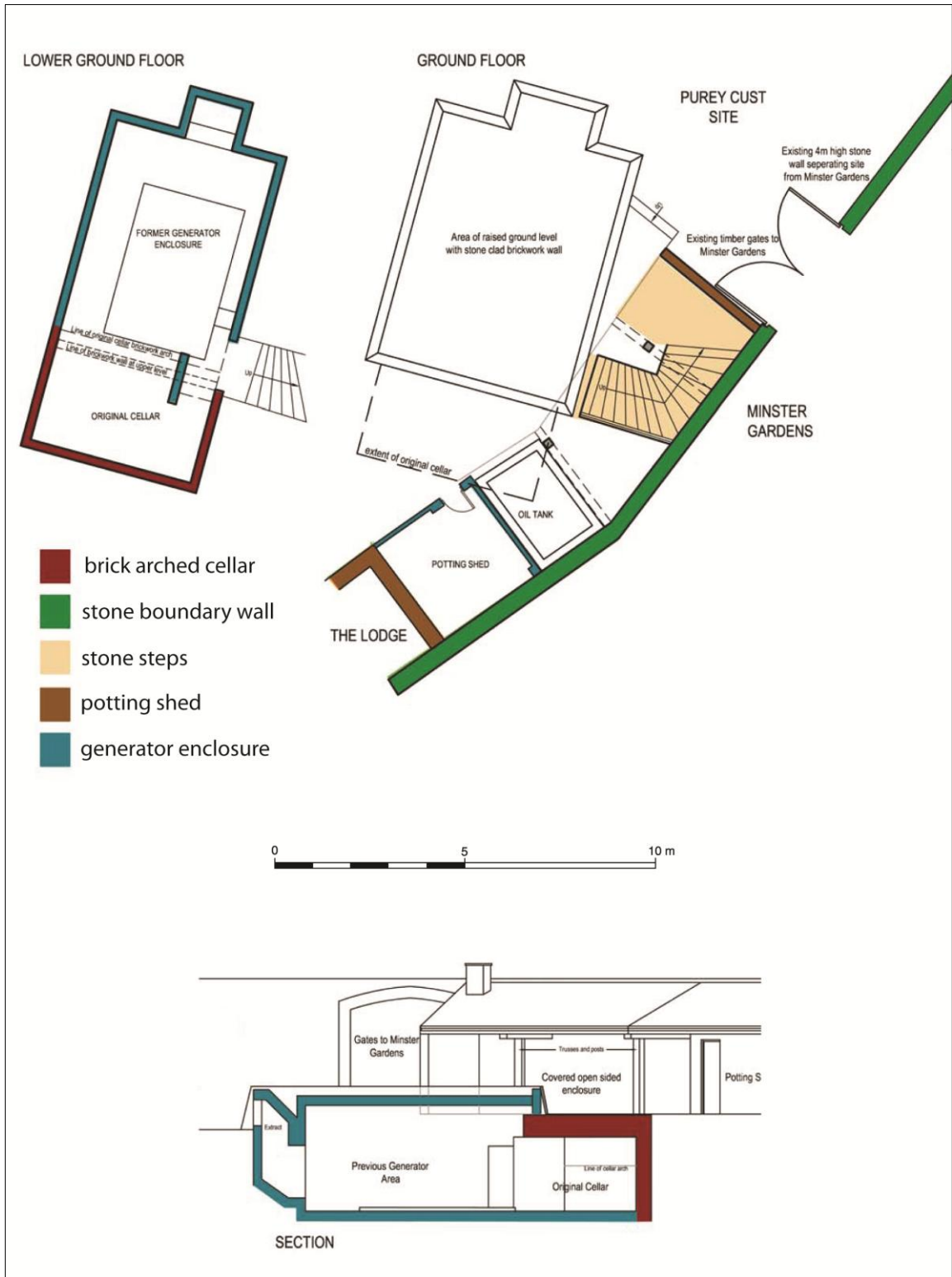


Figure 2 Plans and section of existing structural arrangement at site with individual elements colour coded

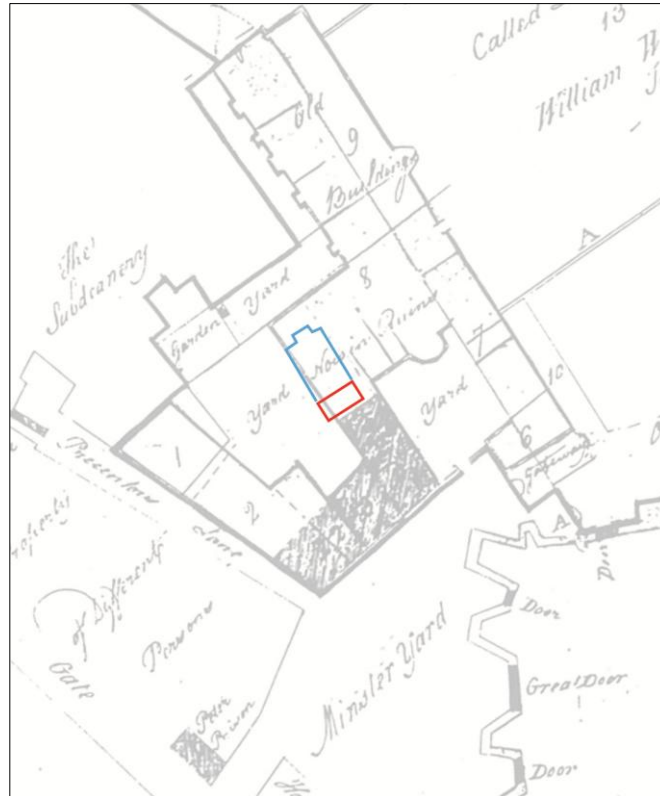


Figure 3 'Best fit' location of the cellar (red) in relation to Ingram's Mansion (generator enclosure shown blue). The NW – SE aligned linear range to the right is known to have formed part of the Archbishop's Palace

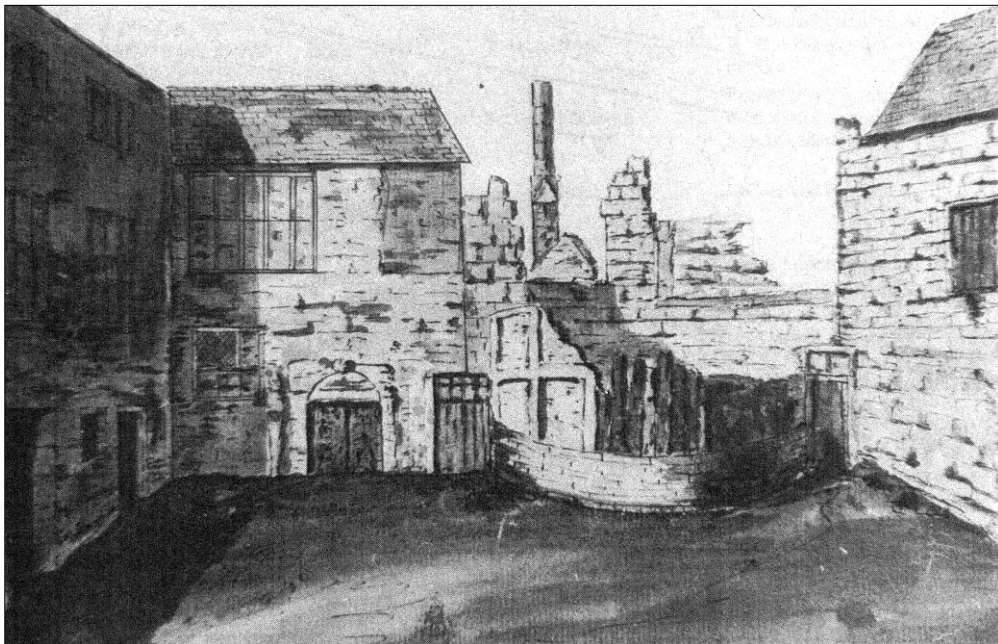


Figure 4 View of 1774 showing the entrance courtyard to Ingram's Mansion. The cellar remnants lie behind the angle of the two ranges to the left.

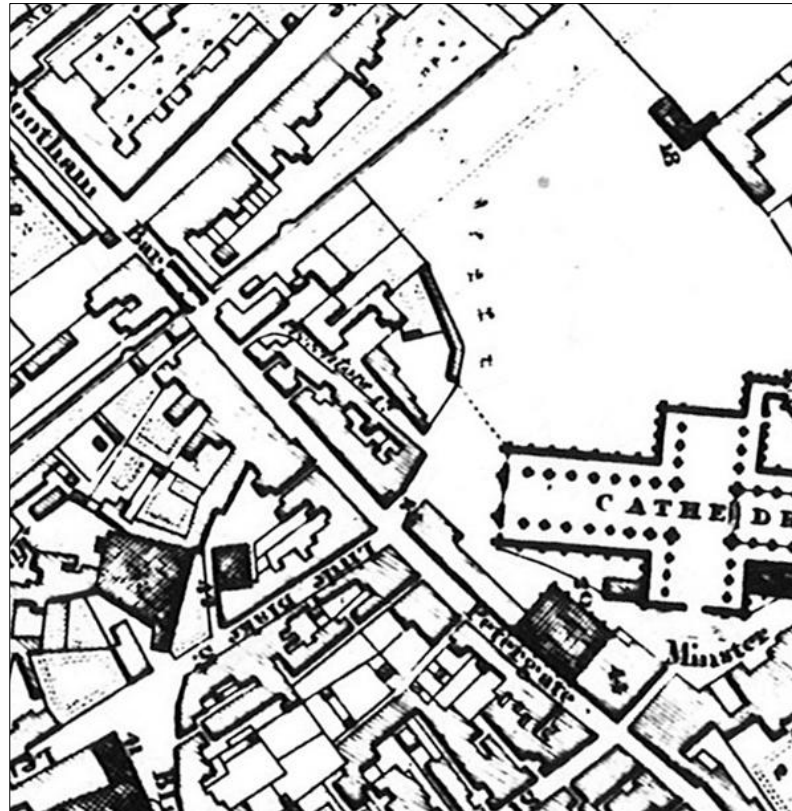


Figure 5 Extract of Baines map of York of 1822 showing eastern boundary around the Purey Cust site. The double line may indicate the line of lean-to buildings



Plate 1 View of the generator enclosure and potting shed, looking SE



Plate 2 View of interior of the generator enclosure, with old cellar beyond and entrance to the left. Note the truncated brick arch of the cellar roof. Looking SSW



Plate 3 View of interior of the generator enclosure, looking NNE



Plate 4 View of interior of the cellar, looking SSW. Note the concrete lining to the cellar walls excepting the uppermost part at end.



*Plate 5 Claw-tooling visible in raking light to stonework of upper part of S wall of cellar.
Looking SSW*



Plate 6 Entrance to the cellar and generator enclosure, looking WSW



Plate 7 Steps leading to the entrance to the cellar and generator enclosure, looking S

6. ASSESSMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

It is understood that the proposed development may require the existing concrete floors of the cellar and generator enclosure to be removed and new floors set at a lower level. This section of the report therefore considers the data pertinent to establishing the likelihood of archaeological deposits beneath the existing floors whilst comment is also made with regard to building recording.

During the recent watching brief works on the conversion of the former Purey Cust Hospital to residential accommodation natural geological deposits were observed during underpinning works. In relation to existing ground level this was generally encountered at a depth below ground level of around 3.40m, with stratified archaeological deposits lying above this. Some height data, in relation to Ordnance Datum, is also available for the heights of natural deposits across parts of the former Purey Cust site, with this ranging between 12.70m – 13.65m AOD. Heights for the top of Roman period deposits are also available for the exterior of the west end of York Minster, this being in the region of 13.70m AOD. Heights to a similar Roman horizon in the area of the Principia somewhat further to the east-south-east are somewhat lower, the implication of these differences is that they appear to relate to a slight ground slope in the Roman period from the area of Purey Cust down to the east.

The height to the upper side of the floor slab in the cellar/generator enclosure is approximately 14.65m AOD.

The potential for archaeological remains to survive beneath the existing floor of the cellar and generator enclosure is very likely. Allowing for a depth of around 0.3m for the existing cellar and generator enclosure floors it is anticipated that around 1m or more of archaeological deposits may survive and that these are likely to be of Roman date and quite probably relate to barrack blocks within the Roman legionary fortress. The presence of remains of later date above these cannot be ruled out. An unknown factor is the thickness of the existing floors. Given their location below ground and their function in providing a stable base to a large and heavy generator it is possible that they are of a considerable thickness. However, unless the floors are exceptionally thick their construction is unlikely to have involved the destruction of all archaeological deposits down to the level of the natural drift geology.

Should the proposed development proceed, historic building recording to all historic fabric in advance of development would be warranted. In particular, attention should be focussed on attempting to establish the date and context of origin of walling of the cellar and of the

entrance archway. If such development involves the lowering of the present floor levels underlying archaeological deposits will also require investigation.

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8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Research and author	M. Johnson
Photographs	M. Andrews
Illustrations	Seven Renew, D. Evans, M. Johnson
Editor	M. Stockwell