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YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

CABLE TRENCH
NORTH STREET
TO THE
STONEBOW
YORK

A Report on an
Archaeological
Watching Brief

by Gareth Dean

**CABLE TRENCH;
TANNER ROW TO
THE STONEBOW,
YORK**

**A REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

by

Gareth Dean MA PIFA

ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION
2. METHOD STATEMENT
3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND
4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, DISCUSSION
 - 4.1 North Street-Bridge Street
 - 4.2 Low Ousegate-Pavement
 - 4.3 Parliament Street to Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate
5. LIST OF SOURCES

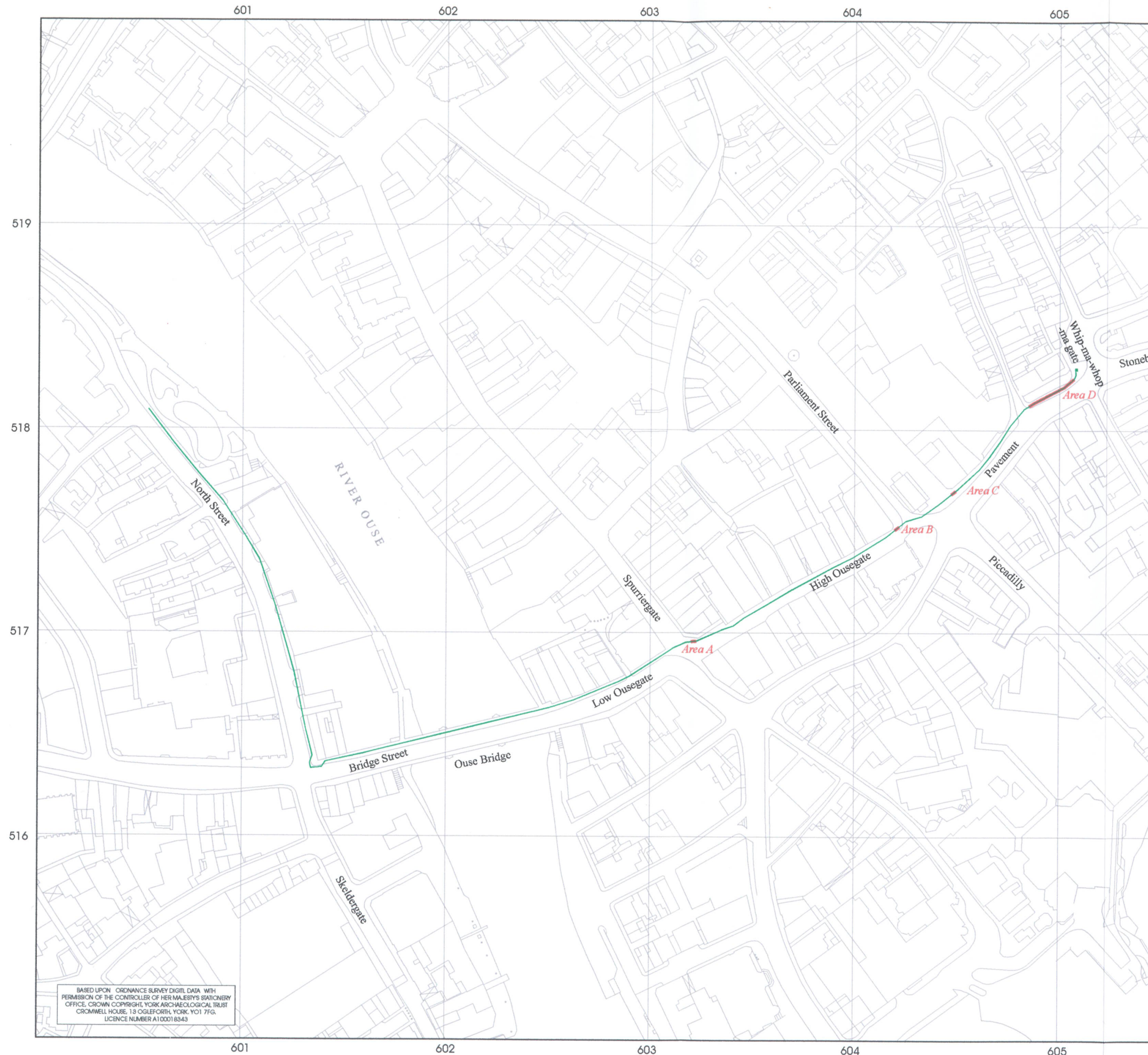
List of Illustrations

Figure 1 Trench location plan


page
3

List of Abbreviations

BGL Below Ground Level



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KEY:

 Line of observed works


0  100 metres
 1:2000

Figure 1 Trench location plan

ABSTRACT

Between November 2003 and January 2004 the York Archaeological Trust monitored the excavation of a cable trench through several of the historic streets of the city; North Street, Bridge Street, Low Ousegate, High Ousegate, Parliament Street, Pavement and Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma-Gate. Limited deposits of archaeological importance were encountered during the works but fragmentary remains of redundant cellars in High Ousegate and Pavement may indicate the line of the street frontages prior to widening or alteration of streets from the 19th century. A number of disarticulated human remains were encountered on the corner of Pavement and Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate associated with the burial ground of the church of St Crux.

1. INTRODUCTION

Between November 2003 and January 2004, York Archaeological Trust maintained an archaeological watching brief during the hand excavation of a cable trench along several streets within the city; North Street, Bridge Street, Low Ousegate, High Ousegate, Parliament Street, Pavement and Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate (NGR SE 6034 5172; Fig. 1).

The client for the work was Global Crossing.

All site records are currently stored by York Archaeological Trust under the Yorkshire Museums accession code YORYM 2004.7

2. METHOD STATEMENT

The watching brief entailed recording any archaeological deposits, features, or structures encountered during the excavation of the cable trench. The stretch of trench in North Street was excavated during the day along the south-western side of the street within the footpath. At the junction with Bridge Street the trench was taken into the carriage way due to the number of services within the footpath before returning to the footpath along the north-west side of Bridge Street. The trench was excavated along the north-west side of Low Ousegate and High Ousegate, and then across the south-eastern end of Parliament Street before continuing along the north-west side of Pavement into Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma-Gate. This last stretch of trench was excavated at night. Neither the stretch of trench from the junction of North Street and Bridge Street to Ouse Bridge, nor the stretch that crossed the bridge was monitored.

The trench was excavated by hand with areas of concrete broken out with a pneumatic drill. The trench was an average width of 0.45m with an average depth of 0.3m - 0.4m BGL. A chamber was excavated 2m from the boundary wall of St Crux parish room in Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate was 1.2m x 0.9m in size and was excavated to a depth of 1.1m.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The watching brief was carried out because the trench lay entirely within the medieval walled city and ran through several of the historic streets of York. It was thought possible

that it would add to understanding of their development in the late medieval and post-medieval periods. A brief summary of the history of these streets follows below.

North Street lies within the medieval walled city south-west of the river Ouse and the first documentary reference to it dates from c.1090 (RCHMY3, 96), although it may have earlier origins. In the 1960s demolition took place on the south-west side of North Street as part of a redevelopment and widening of the street (RCHMY5, 66-67). The 1852 Ordnance Survey map clearly shows the buildings demolished. Bridge Street connects Micklegate to Ouse Bridge beginning at the south-eastern end of North Street. Originally known as Briggate it was entirely redeveloped in 1815-1822 when the current Ouse Bridge, successor to Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval predecessors, was built.

The first record of the name Ousegate for a street extending from the east end of Ouse Bridge to a junction with Pavement dates to 1120-33, but it is probably of Anglo-Scandinavian origin. Ousegate is divided into Low and High Ousegate at the junction with Spurriergate. The distinction between them was certainly in existence by the 14th century (Palliser 1978, 13). What are now High Ousegate and Coppergate, and the space between them are thought in the early Anglo-Scandinavian period (c.850 – 1066) to have formed an open area with the church of All Saints Pavement at one end and the church of St Michael Spurriergate at the other. However, two separate streets had probably been created before the Norman Conquest.

On High Ousegate there are now no buildings on the street earlier than 1700 due to a fire in 1694 (RCHMY5, 147). Low Ousegate was formerly much narrower than it is today and houses stood between St Michael's Church and the street frontage. In 1769 the south-east side of the street was rebuilt, set back from its original alignment. In 1810-1820, during the reconstruction of the new bridge, the whole of the north-west side was rebuilt so as to allow the doubling of the width of the street.

Parliament Street was built between 1835 and 1840 as a new market place. The existing markets in St Sampson's Square and Pavement were considered inadequate and by Act of Parliament in 1833 a new market was approved by opening up the land between them. Pavement, one of the two medieval market places in York, extended between the churches of All Saints Pavement and St Crux as a wide street. The name of the street is not recorded until 1329 prior to which it was known as Marketshire, one of the seven wards of the city mentioned in 1086. At its south-west end the street was much altered by the creation of Parliament Street in 1836 and of Piccadilly in 1912 (RCHMY5, 174).

The church of All Saints Pavement is a pre-Conquest foundation and was rebuilt in the 14th century. In 1782 the chancel was removed to extend the market place and a new east wall was built (Mee and Wilson 1998, 33). Originally the church cemetery was larger and has been encroached upon by the surrounding streets and by houses including a row constructed in the churchyard in 1336 and pulled down in 1671. Burials have been found immediately below the street surface at the Coppergate – Pavement junction.

St Crux was located at the north-east end of Pavement, between its junctions with the Shambles and Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate, and is first mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086). It was rebuilt in the 15th century, but by the 19th century the church was

considered to be in a poor state of repair and between 1886-7 it was demolished. The site is now occupied by the St Crux parish room incorporating fragments from the earlier church (Wilson and Mee 1998, 62). St Crux once had a larger churchyard than that surviving today which was gradually in-filled with housing (RCHMY5, 174). Disturbed burials associated with the St Crux graveyard have been found in previous watching briefs in 1985 and 1989.

Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate is the short street that connects Colliergate and Pavement. A form of the name is first recorded in 1505. An alternative name of Salvey Rents or Salvigate appears in 17th and 18th century documents. The street was widened in the 1750s by the demolition of the buildings against the north-east end of St Crux (RCHMY5, 220).

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.1. North Street to Bridge Street

The earliest deposit identified within the trench was brown silt sand with inclusions of brick rubble and mortar identified 0.3-0.4m BGL. This deposit was heavily cut through by existing services. Overlying this deposit was either crushed stone or concrete 0.3m thick that acted as the bedding for the present ground surface that consisted of block paving near the Moat House hotel with the rest of the present path consisting of concrete slabs 0.15m thick.

4.2 Low Ousegate to Parliament Street

Within Low Ousegate the trench was heavily disturbed by existing services. The earliest deposit encountered within the trench was dark brown silt sand with brick rubble inclusions. This was overlain by 0.25-0.3m of crushed stone bedding for the present 0.15m thick concrete slabs of the present street surface. Running across the junction of Low and High Ousegate with Spurriergate a 0.3m thick layer of concrete was located directly below the 0.15m thick present ground surface make-up.

On the corner of High Ousegate and Spurriergate (Fig. 1 *Area A*) the earliest deposit encountered was dark brown silt sand that had a high concentration of brick rubble and mortar within it. In the north-west facing section was a stub of brick work two courses high. Overlying this was a thin sand bedding between 0.05-0.1m thick for the present street surface. Along High Ousegate the main deposit within the trench was brown silt sand, similar to that exposed within other stretches of the trench, cut through by modern services. This was overlain by the bedding of either crushed stone or sand 0.15m thick for the present ground surface make-up. On the corner of High Ousegate and Parliament Street (Fig. 1 *Area B*) 1.5m from the wall of Barclays Bank, 1-3 Parliament Street, a redundant cellar was exposed. Across the south-eastern end of Parliament Street the earliest deposit within the trench was concrete 0.2m thick that was in places overlain by tarmac of a former road surface. This was overlain by a thin 50mm layer of sand bedding for the present block paving road surface.

4.3 Pavement to Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate

In Pavement the earliest deposit within the trench was dark brown silt sand with frequent inclusions of brick rubble and mortar. At the junction with Parliament Street 2m from the present street frontage (Fig. 1 *Area C*) a wall aligned with Pavement was exposed that formed part of a cellar. Overlying the cellar and the dark brown silt was a deposit of sand bedding on average 0.15m thick for the present street. Where the trench crossed the base of the Shambles and the loading bay for a shop the brown silt and brick rubble fill was sealed by 0.2-0.3m of concrete.

From the north-east side of the Shambles, along the front of St Crux parish rooms in Pavement to the junction with Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate (Fig. 1 *Area D*) the earliest deposit exposed was a mid-brown silt sand and brick rubble that contained a large quantity of disarticulated and partially articulated human remains. This was overlain by 0.2-0.3m of crushed stone and sand bedding for the present flagstone ground surface. In Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate the earliest deposit again consisted of a deposit overlain by a sand bedding for the present flagstone street surface. The only deposit observed within the junction box excavated in Whip-ma-whop-ma-gate was a brown silt sand and brick rubble. The north side of the chamber was disturbed by an existing BT junction box. No human bone was observed within any of the deposits exposed in Whip-m-whop-ma-gate.

5. CONCLUSION

Although the trenches dug for the new cable were only 0.3-0.4m deep and tried to follow the line of existing services, they did encounter fragmentary remains of walls and areas of cellars offset from the modern street frontage at the junctions of High Ousegate and Spurriergate, High Ousegate and Parliament Street, and Pavement and Parliament Street. At the corner of Spurriergate and High Ousegate the quantity of brick rubble and the presence of a wall stub are the result of the demolition of buildings on this corner during the 1950s. At the corner of High Ousegate and Parliament Street the exposed fragment of cellar is probably associated with the earlier building demolished in 1959 when the present building was constructed. On the corner of Parliament Street and Pavement a cellar was also exposed that is presumably associated with earlier buildings on the site. It is possible that these cellars represent the line of earlier street alignments although it is not uncommon for cellars to project beyond the façade of a building. On the corner of Pavement and Whip ma whop ma gate along the boundary of St Crux parish church a number of disarticulated and partially articulated human remains was exposed. These human bones are associated with the burial ground of the former parish church of St Crux.

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