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YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



CABLE TRENCH  
MOUNT TERRACE  
MOUNT PARADE  
YORK

A Report on an  
Archaeological  
Watching Brief

by D.T. Evans

**CABLE TRENCH;  
MOUNT TERRACE,  
MOUNT PARADE,  
YORK**

**A REPORT ON AN  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

by

**D.T.Evans**

*Cover illustration:*  
Looking south along Mount Parade from Holgate Road

*ABSTRACT*

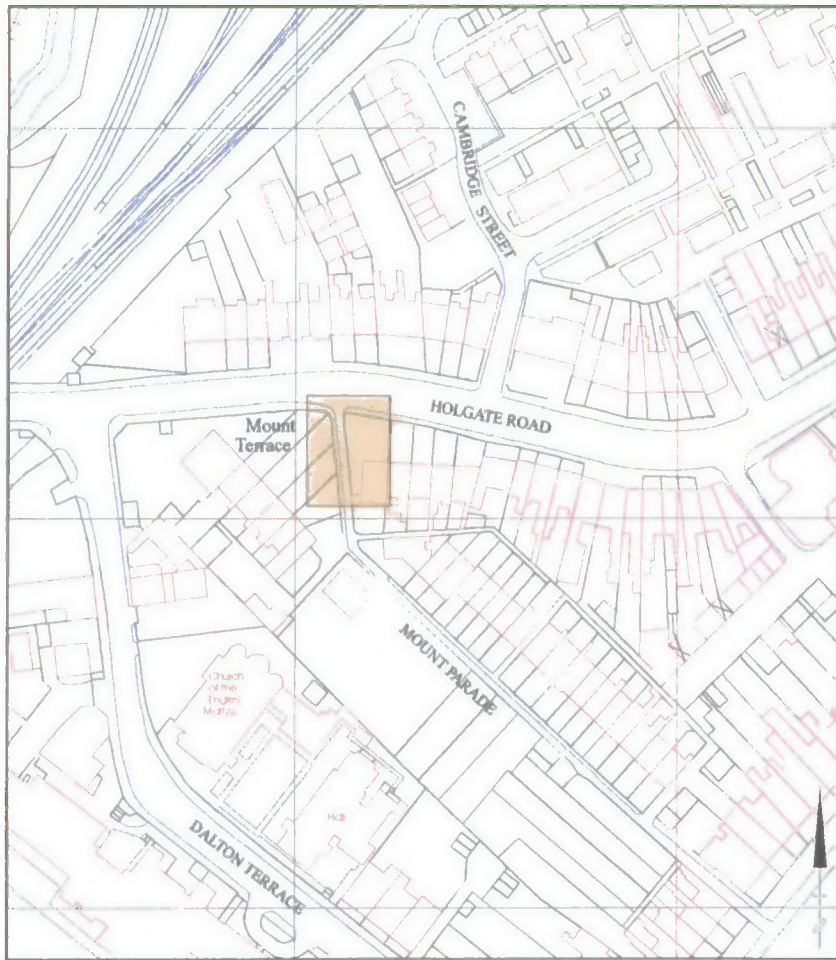
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**List of Abbreviations**

BGL	Below Ground Level
OD	Ordnance Datum
NGR	National Grid Reference
YAT	York Archaeological Trust



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Figure 1 Site location

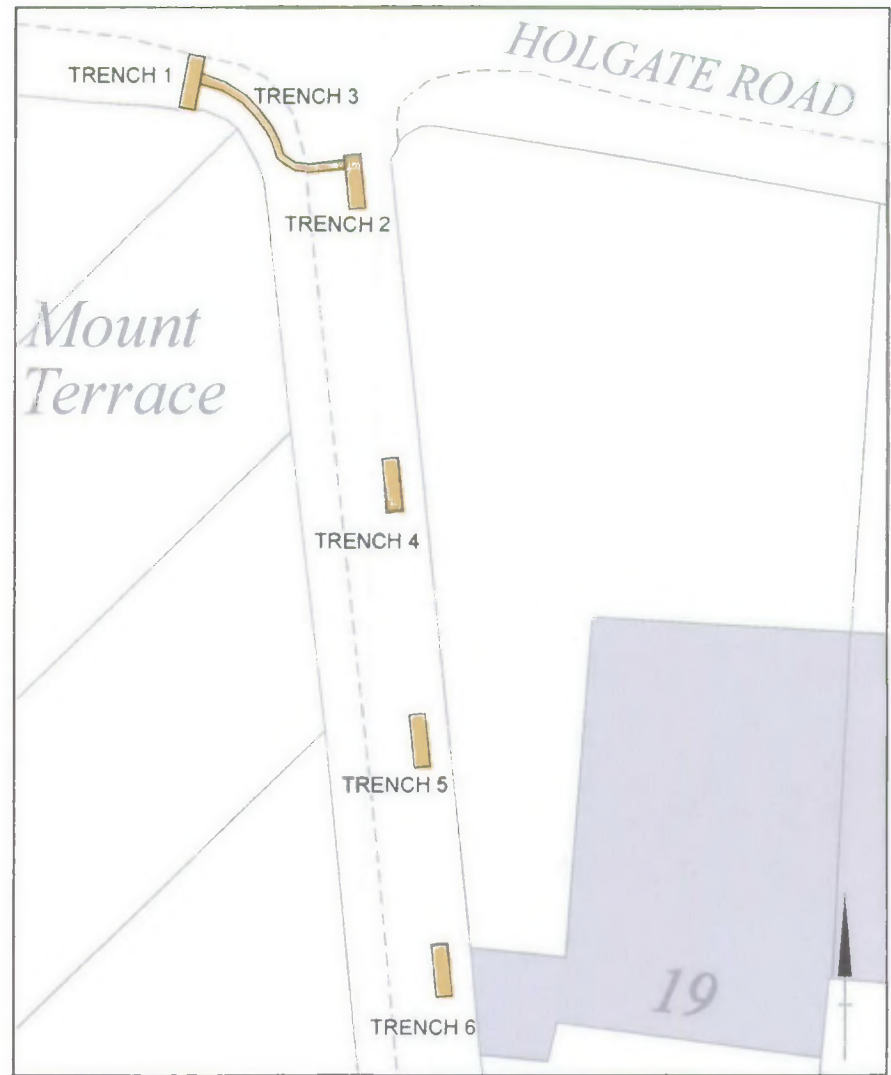


Figure 2 Trench location



## **ABSTRACT**

*Natural deposits of firm brown clay were noted in all but Trench 1. Although no finds were recovered from the watching brief, all deposits and features overlying the natural were definitely or very probably modern in origin and associated with the installation of modern services. Nothing of notable archaeological significance was observed in any of the trenches.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Between 23<sup>rd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February York Archaeological Trust (YAT) monitored cable laying work along Mount Terrace, Mount Parade, York (NGR SE59315122). A total of six small trenches (Figure 2) were observed of which three were recorded in detail. The cable laying work was undertaken by Morrison Utility Services on behalf of BT Network Access.

## **2. METHOD STATEMENT**

The site was visited on a regular basis during the digging of the trenches. Measured sketches and written notes were made on site of any deposits, features, or structures encountered, and then formally drawn and written up shortly afterwards.

All site records are currently stored at the York Archaeological Trust under the Yorkshire Museum's accession code YORYM 2004.145

## **3. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY**

The site is located at the junction of Mount Parade and Holgate Road, c.100m east of Holgate Road Bridge over the main east coast railway line and c.500m south-east of the medieval walled city south-west of the River Ouse. The site slopes up moderately from north to south and lies at c.15m OD at the junction with Holgate Road.

The underlying drift geology of the site is Boulder clay over Lacustrine clays with deposits of sand, lying within and over the clay in places. Beneath this the solid geology is of Bunter and Keuper sandstones laid down in the Triassic period some 225 million years ago (Geological Survey 1967).

## **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The reason for the watching brief was that the proposed trenches lay within an area of known archaeological significance. The site lies close to the known or presumed route of Roman Approach Roads 9, 10, and 11 (RCHMY 1, 3) and between two major cemeteries centred on the Railway Station and The Mount (RCHMY 1, 76-106). An inhumation burial, with hobnail sandals, excavated in 1980 at the Kilima Hotel, 129 Holgate Road (YAT 1997, 1980.31) may belong to the Mount Cemetery although the extent of this is still uncertain. It did not, apparently, extend as far west as 39 Holgate Road where in 1998 Roman deposits, a ditch, and a post-hole were excavated (YAT 1997, YORYM: 1998.332).

A rare, and important, pagan Anglian cremation cemetery (Tweddle et al, 1999, 167-170) was discovered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century on the north-east side of Dalton Terrace, c.120m to the south-east of the current site.

The limited amount of available evidence suggests that that area was largely agricultural in nature throughout the medieval period. Deposits associated with agriculture have been excavated at 39 Holgate Road and at 112-114 Holgate Road (YAT 1997, YORYM: 2000.567)

Cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the Holgate Road area was still largely occupied by fields up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century when large scale domestic development commenced (RCHMY 3, 67).

## **5. THE WATCHING BRIEF**

### **5.1 Trench 1**

#### **5.1.1 Modern**

In this trench the earliest deposit was a compact, friable mid-brown silt (1001) with occasional brick and cobbles. This was seen from c.0.1m BGL to the base of the trench at c.0.6m BGL. It was overlain by a layer of tarmac (1000), c.0.1m thick, forming the modern pavement in this area.

### **5.2 Trench 2 (Figure 3)**

#### **5.2.1 Natural**

The earliest deposit recorded in this trench was a firm mid-brown clay (2006). This was present at c.0.2m BGL over much of the trench, to a depth of c.0.6m, and was believed to be natural.

#### **5.2.2 Modern**

The natural clay had been cut by a linear feature (2005), probably aligned roughly east-west. The base of this cut, a modern drain trench, was not seen but it was c.0.45m wide and at least 0.4m deep with nearly vertical sides. Two backfills were noted. The lower was a black clayey silt (2004) with moderate brick and the upper was a loose pale brown mortar (2003) covering a ceramic pipe, c.0.2m in diameter.

Natural and the drain trench were both sealed by a levelling deposit of black clinker and silt (2002) above which was a layer of pale grey concrete (2001). This formed the bedding, of sandstone setts (2000), for the modern road surface, in this part of Mount Parade.

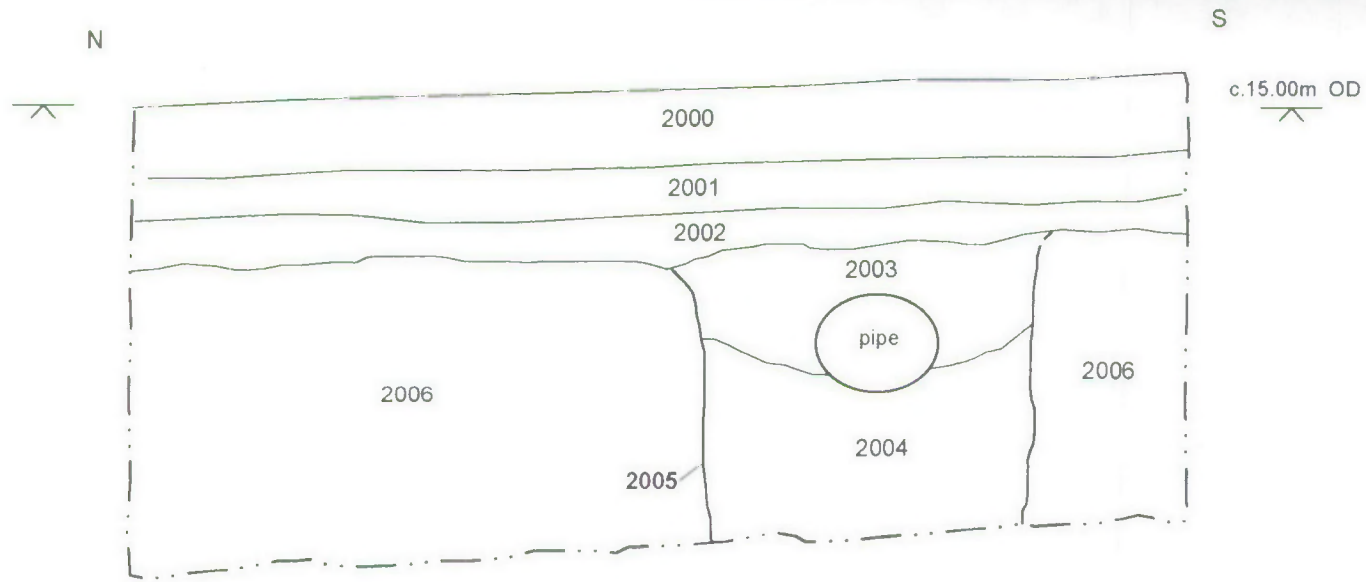


Figure 3 Trench 2 west facing section

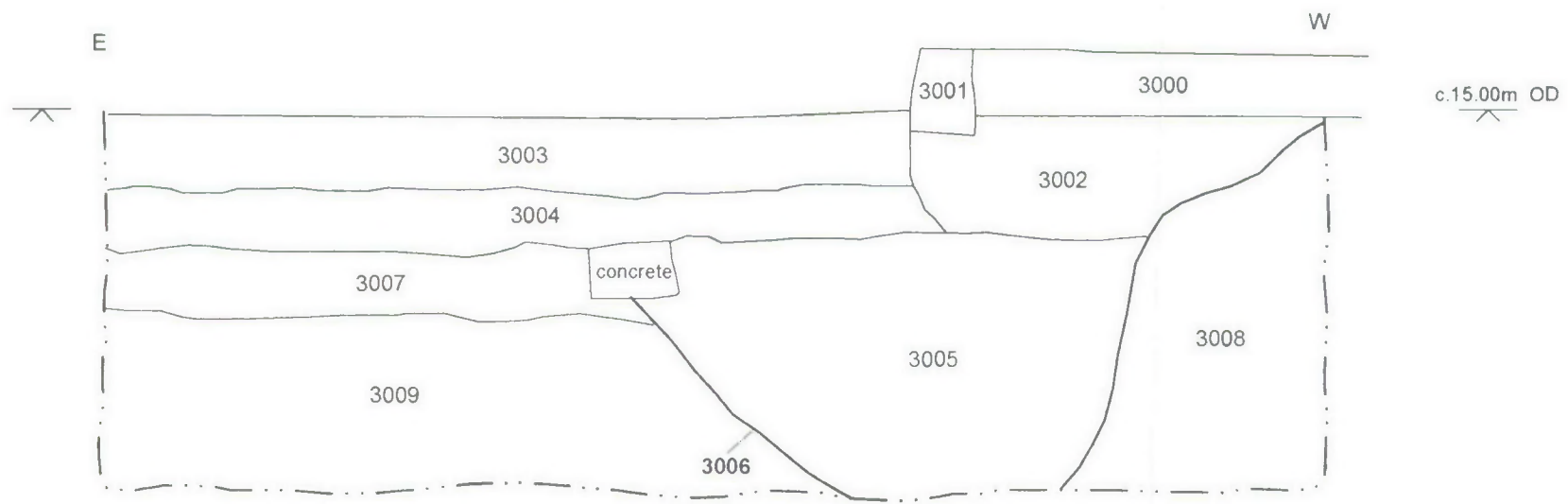


Figure 4 Trench 3 north facing section



### **5.3 Trench 3 (Figure 4)**

#### **5.3.1 Natural**

In this trench the earliest recorded deposit was a firm mid-brown clay (3009). This was thought to be natural and was seen in the eastern half of the trench only from c.0.25m BGL to the base of the trench at c.0.6m BGL.

#### **5.3.2 Modern**

Sealing clay 3009 was a levelling deposit of very light brown crushed limestone (3007) containing a few concrete fragments. Possibly contemporary with 3007, within the western end of the trench, was a mid-brown silt (3008) with moderate flecking of mid-yellow mortar.

Both 3007 and 3008 appeared to have been cut by a feature (3006). This was of uncertain shape, size and function but may have been linear and aligned approximately north-south. It was at least 0.7m wide and 0.35m deep with moderately to steeply sloping sides. The base was not seen. The single backfill recorded was a mid-brown slightly clayey silt (3005) with occasional limestone fragments.

Backfill 3005 was partly sealed by a layer of pale grey concrete (3004) which formed the bedding for the modern road surface of sandstone setts (3003). Apparently later than 3003 was a deposit of cream crushed limestone (3002). A sandstone kerb (3001) was recessed into the eastern part of this crushed limestone and the rest of the limestone overlain by the modern pavement surface of tarmac (3000).

### **5.4 Trenches 4, 5 and 6**

#### **5.4.1 Natural**

In all of these trenches the earliest deposit recorded was a firm mid brown clay which was believed to be natural. This was seen at c.0.2m BGL and was still present in the bases of the trenches at c.0.6m BGL

#### **5.4.2 Modern**

The clay was overlain in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 by a layer of pale grey concrete which formed the bedding for the modern road surface of sandstone setts.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Apart from natural, all contexts seen and recorded were definitely or probably modern. There was evidence for considerable disturbance, probably from modern services at the junction of Mount Parade and Holgate Road, Trenches 1, 2 and 3, but this appeared to diminish noticeably further south in Trenches 4, 5 and 6 where the modern road appeared to be built directly onto the natural clay. Any archaeological deposits in the immediate area of the works have probably been removed by relatively modern activity. No archaeological deposits of any significance were noted or disturbed during this work.



## 7. LIST OF SOURCES

### 7.1 Printed Works

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### 7.2 Archives

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## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Illustrations and report production

Russell Marwood

Editor

Dr. Patrick Ottaway