



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT FORM

SITE ADDRESS	Utility trench in Castlegate/Tower Street, York						
CLIENT NAME	Affiniti, Melborne House, Brandy Carr Road, Wrenthorpe, Wakefield, WF2						
YAT PROJECT CODE	YAT REPORT NUMBER		MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER				
5041	2007/07		YORAT: 2007.5				
GRID REFERENCE	PLANNING/SMR REFERENCE		OPERATIONS NOTICE NUMBER				
SE 6044 5153	N/A		06023				
ARCHIVE LOCATION	York Archaeological Trust						
DATES OF VISIT	02-04/01/07, 10/01/07, 12/01/07						
DESCRIPTION							
<p>A watching brief was carried out during telecommunications cabling works in Tower Street and Castlegate, York. The proximity of the Norman castle and Clifford's Tower make this area of archaeological interest, with the boundary between the city and the castle occurring at the confluence of the C14th Castlegate and Tower Street (RCHMY5, 111), the latter formerly known as Castlegate Postern Lane (RCHMY5, 236). This area was partly enclosed in 1826 by the boundary wall of the Castle Prison, which was demolished in 1936, leaving the current layout (RCHMY, 111). Also of interest are 27 and 29 Castlegate: the former is Fairfax House, completed by 1761, and the latter is a house of early nineteenth century date (RCHMY5, 113).</p>							
<p>A 0.35m wide trench was excavated to between 0.40m and 0.70m BGL from an existing cabling box in Clifford Street, through the footpath along the western side of Tower St, across Castlegate and into a new cabling box against the south wall of No. 29 Castlegate. The trench to hold the new box was excavated through the pavement and measured 1.5m X 0.77m X 0.80m deep. The north facing section in the cabling box was drawn, and all other interventions were monitored for archaeological activity.</p>							
<p>The cable trench started in the carriageway of Clifford Street, following the line of the footpath for approximately 14m until it entered the pavement in Tower Street. This part of the trench was 0.35m wide and 0.60m deep. For 4m from the western end the observed deposits were interpreted as make-up deposits for the road, starting with a firm mid grey sandy silt between 0.60m and 0.48m BGL, followed by a 0.20m thick deposit of crushed brick rubble, then a 0.14m band of tarmac and a 0.14m thick concrete surface. From 4m to 7.5m from the western end of the trench all deposits were completely removed by a series of services cuts and associated make-up and re-surfacing deposits. Approximately 8m from the western end was a possible wall aligned NW-SE, just visible in the SE facing section, consisting of 5 courses of bricks.</p>							
COMPLETED BY	Ian Milsted		CHECKED BY	Christine Kyriacou			
No. SHEETS	4						
PHOTOGRAPHS	Yes	FINDS	No	SAMPLES	No	DATE COMPLETED	31/01/07

**YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST****WATCHING BRIEF REPORT FORM – ADDITIONAL SHEET**

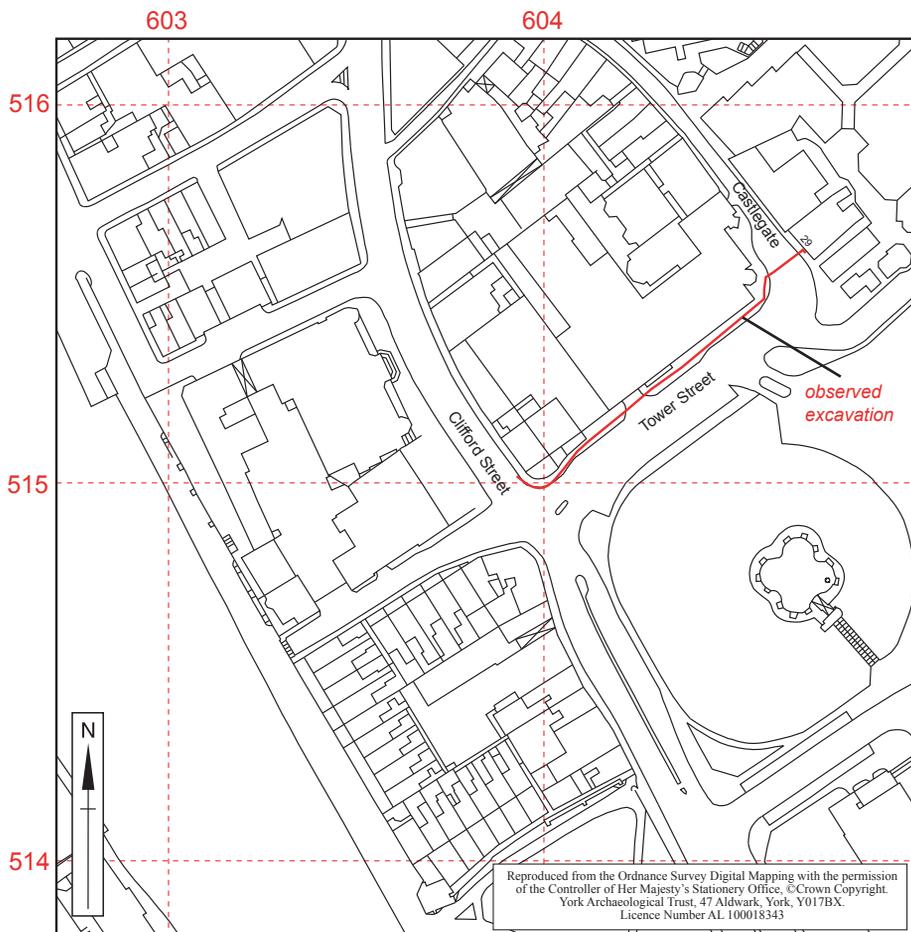
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<p>This was heavily disturbed and it was not possible to identify its nature or purpose. From here to the pavement in Tower Street, deposits consisted of road make-up.</p> <p>The trench through the western pavement of Tower Street was aligned SW-NE and was 0.25m wide, 75m long and 0.40m deep. Observed deposits comprised a grey sandy silt between 0.40m and 0.15m BGL, followed by a 0.07m thick bedding deposit of clean buff-coloured sand, with a 0.07m thick pavement of York Flags forming the surface.</p> <p>The trench through Castlegate ran SW-NE for 12m, through the carriageway, hitting the pavement and running for a further 1.47m until it met the new cable box. This trench was 0.35m wide and 0.60m deep. Observed deposits comprised a loose dark brown sandy silt with frequent CBM fragments between 0.60 and 0.40m BGL, interpreted as a ground make-up deposit. Above this was a 0.10m thick layer of concrete and compacted brick rubble, forming the make-up layer for the 0.10m thick modern tarmac surface.</p> <p>The cable box was 'L' shaped, dug by the sub-contractor SCD against the south wall of No. 29 Castlegate. The long axis was 1.5m wide and approximately 0.80m wide; the southern projecting arm was 0.90m north-south and 0.50m east-west. The western limit of excavation was formed by a brick-built chamber housing BT cables. This butted the southern wall footings of No. 29 Castlegate, the south facing elevation of which formed the northern limit of excavation. This footing formed the top of the building's cellar wall, and was of simple rat-trap bonded brick construction. The west facing section had partially collapsed, as the loose backfill, 1012, of a large cut feature, 1013, was half-sectioned by the trench. All these sections/elevations were recorded photographically. The north facing section, formed by the return of the long axis of the trench and the shallower southern projection, was drawn and photographed.</p> <p>The earliest observed deposit was 1011, a mixed deposit of firm, dark grey-brown, sandy silt with frequent orangey silty sandy patches and occasional lenses of light grey sand. This contained moderate animal bone fragments, some of them displaying butchery or working. This visible extent of this deposit was observed between 0.65m and the depth limit of excavation at 0.80m BGL, and was interpreted as a possible ground make-up deposit associated with the road.</p>			
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<p>Above this was 1010, a 0.03-4m thick band of firm, dark grey, slightly clayey silt which may represent a levelling deposit or possibly a trampled surface. This was truncated by 1006, a construction cut for a ceramic drain, 1005, which ran along the section face. The backfill, 1004, was a loose-friable, slightly orange mid-brown, sandy silt, the top of which was at a depth of 0.40m BGL.</p> <p>Above this was a succession of make-up deposits for the modern footpath. In sequence, these were 1003, a 0.25m thick layer of compact, dark grey brown, sandy silt with occasional CMB fragments and patches of buff coloured sand. Within this were two interrupted bands of soft orange sand and soft light-grey sand. These represent either dumping episodes or separate make-up deposits which were subsequently disturbed; they have been considered as a variation within 1003. Above 1003 was 1002, a 0.02-0.06m thick layer of soft yellow sand with bands of compacted gravel fragments, and 1001, a 0.04m thick band of soft grey sand with occasional small cobbles. This was the bedding deposit for 1000, the surface of the modern footpath, constructed of 0.09m thick York Flags bonded with a resin mortar. Cut through the footpath was 1009, the BT chamber, which truncated all earlier deposits. The cut, 1009, contained a layer of concrete, 1008, exposed at the base of the trench, and a construction backfill, 1007, of loose, dark grey, slightly sandy silt, as well as the brick chamber itself. Also cut through the footpath was a large cut feature, 1013, running against the side of No. 29, Castlegate, which contained a very loose rubble backfill, 1012, and truncated all deposits against the face of the building to the depth limit of excavation. This was probably modern, relating to services works in the footpath, and seems to have obliterated any potential construction cut relating to No. 29 Castlegate.</p> <p>In conclusion, the ground make-up deposit, 1011, represents the only archaeological deposit of any significance encountered during ground works, and this was in any case heavily truncated by later services and road works. More of it would need to be exposed to properly analyse its nature and derivation. All other deposits encountered relate to modern surfaces and services save the possible wall seen in the southern end of the cable trench, of which too little was exposed to investigate and analyse in any detail. All photographs, records and sketches held by YAT.</p> <p>Bibliography RCHMY5 = Royal Commission on Historical Monuments England, <i>An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the City of York: Volume V, The Central Area</i>. (1981) (HMSO, London).</p>			
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